The broad picture: Socio-economic impact of ICT at heritage sites

Jaime Kaminski
Brighton Business School,
University of Brighton, Brighton, UK
Socio-economic impact research at EPOCH

“To develop models suitable to assist owners and managers of monuments, sites and museums to make business decisions on technological investments and to improve policy makers understanding of the necessary conditions for successful investment.”

www.epoch-net.org
Why is this important?

- Few business skills in heritage
- Even fewer technology skills
- Most heritage sites are small and resource poor
Conceptualising the heritage site
A dynamic holistic impact model for cultural heritage sites
A dynamic holistic impact model for cultural heritage sites

CHS impact context

Macro environment
Funding, policy, legal, social, tech context

Local environment
Local demographic, political, funding, competition, infrastructure, social needs, user/client influence

The site
Socio-economic impacts/outcomes framework

Direct use
- Visitors to cultural heritage sites

Economic impacts
- Spending by visitors at the cultural heritage site itself, causing an increase in...
Technology investment considerations at heritage sites
A holistic investment contingency model for technology impact evaluation at heritage sites
A holistic investment contingency model for technology impact evaluation at heritage sites

CHS technology impact

Macro environment: Economic, technological and cultural

Local environment: Political, funding, competition

Site: Scale, location, funding, governance, quality

Technological aspects

Expectations

Strategic rationale for technology investment
Key attributes of the impact frameworks

- Robust basis for conceptualising impact
- Holistic
- Dynamic
- Management process driven
- Strategic and operational
- Emphasises the importance of site context
- Has a key role for stakeholders
- From site level to investment (technology) level

A practical tool for CHS managers
Case study
Audio guides at the Royal Pavilion Palace, Brighton, UK
Case study: Audioguides at the Royal Pavilion Palace, Brighton
A holistic investment contingency model for technology impact evaluation at heritage sites
• Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995)
  ▪ change practices, policies or procedures which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service

• Visitor requests for “better interpretation”
  ▪ Visitor demand

But

• Unable to find the funding
A holistic investment contingency model for technology impact evaluation at heritage sites.
Rationale

- Improve the quality of the offer
  Through
  - Better interpretation
  - Better access – disability/

Not investing in technology for its own sake
A holistic investment contingency model for technology impact evaluation at heritage sites
Specific objectives

• Why this technology?
• Fulfils requirements
• Well-established – low risk
• Did not require excessive rewiring of the historic building
A holistic investment contingency model for technology impact evaluation at heritage sites
Management decision making

Business model

- Increase the entry fee to the site to cover the cost of the audioguides and offer them to all visitors
- Leasing the hardware reduces the risk
  - Maintenance
  - Future proofing
- Additional costs
  - Signage
  - Redesign front desk
  - Extra demand on staff at front desk, café and shop
  - Surprisingly labour intensive
A holistic investment contingency model for technology impact evaluation at heritage sites.
Impact is central

- The ICT can generate its own impact data
  - Cybermetrics
  - More visitors fill out questionnaires on the handsets compared to paper questionnaires
  - Analysis is automated
- Marketing information from the visitor questionnaire

*This information can feedback into operations at the site*
Financial

- Visitor income from the café increased
- Retail income *may* have increased
- Revenue from entry has increased (incidental)
What was your overall impression of the Pavilion?
The missing ones (the staff)

Potentially negative impacts (1)

- The technology could be a big threat to the human guides
  - Management – cost saving but a negative employment impact
- Negative impact on job satisfaction
  - Fewer people to talk to
  - Reduced social interaction (both staff and visitors)
Impacts and outcomes

The missing ones (the staff)

Potentially negative impacts (2)

• Managing change – a different way of working
  ▪ Extra demand on staff at front desk and shop
  ▪ “Surprisingly labour intensive”
  ▪ Less interaction
- Interpretation has been improved
- Accessibility has been improved
- The investment has paid for itself
- Leasing has lowered the risk
- The ICT provides the means of acquiring some impact data
BUT

There are major change management issues for staff

Not all staff benefit from the introduction of ICT
Note

It is the context, business process and the technology together that create a positive outcome.

There will never be a simple equation relating ICT deployment and revenue/visitor numbers …
Other studies of audio guides?
The Royal Pavilion will use the ICT framework to guide their investment in a ticketing system at the Palace this year.

A derivative of the socio-economic impact model is being independently tested in 40 social enterprises in the South-east of England, before roll-out in London.
Heritage Impact 2007
The socio-economic impact of ICT in cultural heritage

21-22 June, 2007, the Royal Pavilion Palace, Brighton, UK

Presented by EPOCH, Brighton Business School and the Brighton & Hove Museums Service