

TOP 5 TECH TRENDS TO IMPACT THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY



Technology is moving forward and with it all the other sectors that are related. Any industry not willing to stay behind needs to adapt to the newest demands in order to be successful. This obviously applies to travel industry, as one of the key sectors of many economies. Travel technology company Sabre Labs put together the Radar Report, analysing nine technological trends that are expected to affect the travel sector. Tourism-Review.com team named Top 5 Tech Trends to Impact the Travel Industry based on the report.

Virtual Reality in Travel

Virtual Reality is growing in prominence and the question is, whether it will replace tourism completely. There are many unanswered questions regarding the Virtual Reality tech trend in many forms, however, Sabre Labs believes that VR will never replace the travel industry. Instead it will improve and inspire more travel experiences.

VR makes new kinds of experience possible. Sabre Labs provided an example of a Virtual Reality tour of Rome during the Roman Empire. Such new experiences can be very useful and can provide deep historical context. Moreover, the VR experience is more accessible and helps in terms of mental preparation for real world experiences or experiencing activities like diving with sharks.

The most important thing in the physical world, however, is its authenticity. This is what really matters and with Virtual Reality growing in prominence, the value of real experiences is likely to increase as well.

Space Travel

Humankind is greatly excited about the possibility of exploring the universe. The most basic form of space tourism is reaching an altitude above the Karman Line – the barrier between the earth's atmosphere and space.

For years there have been plans, but only Virgin Atlantic seem serious to start flights by the end of 2018. 500 passengers have already prepaid this trip for about \$250,000 each. However, as of now, the cost is a big problem. Anything more than a quick jaunt into space causes costs to increase greatly.

Between 2001 and 2009, seven civilians visited the International Space Station. Costs were from \$20 million to \$40 million at that time. Though perhaps in the next few years a privately-owned, tourist-friendly space station opens. But as of now, costs are high.

The planned SpaceX trip around the moon will cost between \$175 million and \$300 million per passenger (there will be two of them). However, the long-term goal is to reduce space flight prices to

\$200,000 for round trip tickets to Mars.

BlockChain

Blockchain is a word that has been used thoroughly in the past years. It is essential in the transformation of all spheres of society. Blockchain is blocks of data sequentially added to a chain of similar blocks. Once a block is in place, it can't be moved or changed without taking the whole chain apart. How is this relevant for the travel industry?

Blockchain is important when you need a clear and immutable record of any type of information to be accessible to multiple parties who perhaps do not trust one another. Some Blockchain prototypes are already being used in the industry: Webjet is piloting hotel room inventory on Blockchain, while Airbus has brainstormed Blockchain possibilities and is already a part of the Hyperledger Blockchain consortium.

However, centralized authorities will be necessary to ensure proper identity, policy compliance and security. The cost of this tech trend is potentially huge, but Blockchain is sure to have a big impact on the travel industry in the coming years.

Streamlining Travel

Trust is an essential factor in streamlining travel. We choose to share information about ourselves to gain a measure of trust from other people. The more trust given, the more streamlined the experience can become.

Travel problems such as Korean Smart Entry System or German EasyPASS have been established with an aim to streamline travel. It is done through questionnaires, background checks and interviews, they establish trust between individuals. The most important goal is being able to establish identity quickly and accurately at every point on a journey.

Australia has ambitious goals in this sense, as they plan to automate 90% of incoming international air travel by 2020, using a combination of facial recognition, fingerprints and iris scanning to identify passengers. At some gates at German and French airports, passports are scanned and photos of faces are taken to make sure that IDs and travelers match. And some airlines are trying a similar path. Thus, perhaps trust and streamlining travel is the way to go towards the future.

Hands Free Travel

It is easy to imagine a world in which travel becomes a virtually hands-free process, especially when combined with many other technologies such as biometric identity. Autonomous suitcase and an autonomous personal porter are in production and who knows, maybe it will soon be common to see small robots following their owners at airports, train stations etc.

Perhaps luggage will check itself in and enable you to pick up a snack or anything else at the airport. It may seem a bit too exaggerated, at least for now, but we may not be that far from flying taxis

transporting us from one place to another. Or one might fancy a pizza delivery by drone? It seems that travel and society is heading this direction.

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