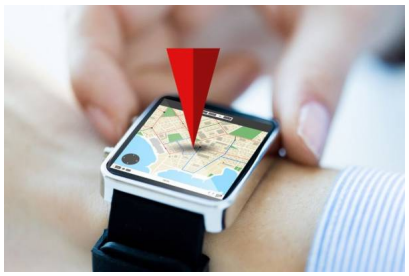
BIG DATA AND SENSORS: SEVILLE USES TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST TOURISM



Seville, the Andalusian capital, has launched a 'Smart Tourist Office' in order to automatically analyze big data – the occupation of spaces, consumer habits and much more – in order to improve the tourist offer.

In recent years, digital transformation has increasingly penetrated every corner of society. Technology is advancing and is revolutionizing every sector, from the health sector to the financial or tourism sectors.

Speaking of the tourism sector, one of the cities with the highest tourist traffic in Spain has just gained momentum: Seville, which had 271,000 visitors between April and June, according to official figures.

Seville has recently launched a 'Smart Tourist Office'. Intelligently managing the big data - the city's information from a tourism point of view allows the different municipal areas to easily share, examine and coordinate all the data they have in their hands. In other words: from now on, the Andalusian capital will be able to automatically analyze the occupation of spaces to consumption habits, the flow of people, demand for services and much more in order to improve the tourist offer and to boost tourism. Another goal is to create predictions to ensure the tourist behavior is compatible with the welfare of all Sevillians.

This new unit of tourist innovation, dependent on 'Sevilla City Office' and managed by Contursa (a municipal public company that manages FIBES - Palace of Congress and Exhibitions), will be a pioneering control center in Europe, according to the company itself, and will feed on data provided by many sources: official agencies such as the INE, satisfaction indexes on the most attractive points of the city, air data, behavior of tourist housing or spending by tourists in the city.

To collect part of the data, sustainability indicators will be included by companies specialized in making indexes: Everything will be measured, from satisfaction or demand in hotels, to the level of spending each month in accommodations, restaurants or excursions, prices or days of stay, among others.

Seville will be the first destination to work with this technology and big data, and according to the partners involved in the project, the intention is to "build a use case based on public-private collaboration that pivots on the axis of sustainability and to a position of Seville as a leading destination in this area".

It will also include data from optical motion sensors installed in Barrio de Santa Cruz and Fibes (although expanding to other areas is planned) which will allow, for example, to monitor the flow of people in order to inform visitors in real-time about the level of occupation of the spaces of interest. To do this, the City of Seville has signed an agreement with Bosch Security Systems, a company that is already working on the pilot tests.

"Seville will be the global reference of the company for the development and validation of intelligent

solutions," says Daniel Fernandez, director of Bosch Security & Safety Systems for Spain and Portugal.

The Tourism Intelligence System (SIT in Spanish) on which all this data will be based is a 'big data' platform in the 'cloud' that studies and analyzes all these sources of information to subsequently develop reports that will reveal hidden patterns or unknown correlations that facilitate decision-making processes to operators in the tourism sector.

The 'Smart Tourist Office' launched by the City Council of Seville in the Palace of Congress and Exhibitions (FIBES), will also provide the information collected both to professionals related to the sector, so that they can develop reports or make faster decisions, and to the tourist themselves so that, based on the occupation levels, for example, they can organize their trip more effectively.

"Analyzing tourist flows through artificial intelligence will allow us to predict behaviors and thus offer personalized services," a project representative commented. The multinational technology services company will also be responsible for training and educating the necessary staff for the design, implementation, configuration and maintenance of these solutions associated with the 'Smart Tourist Office', as well as developing a master plan for intelligent management of tourist areas of the city.

Another feature of the tourist office is that it will allow researchers and members of the university community to access the data. So the office will also be, in a way, a training environment to identify entrepreneurs whose object of study or business interest is tourism. This means that professionals, companies in the sector, researchers, or public administrations, among others, can continue to delve into these new technologies to continue taking steps to improve the sector.

In this sense, the University of Seville is having some interest in the development of this project: since 2019 the 'Smart tourist destinations: Sustainability, Innovation, Technology and Accessibility' group is associated with the university, **the main objective of the group is to study new technologies applied to sustainable tourism**. Antonio Muñoz, delegate of Urban Habitat, Culture and Tourism department says that "the analysis of tourist flows through artificial intelligence will allow the design of a predictive model of behaviors which will help to offer personalized services and real-time information that covers any incident or demand for developing sustainable tourism in the city", and adds that "tourism can be managed not only from the point of view of attraction, but also to address the management of tourism within the city".

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