

ITB Berlin Expands Its Floor Area for over 230 Travel Technology Exhibitors from 15 Countries



Nowadays travel technology is omnipresent in the global travel industry: this includes the back office, electronically-supported personalised sales and location-sensitive mobile travel services. At ITB Berlin 2012 this rapid development has led to an unprecedented rush of exhibitors: over 230 travel technology companies from 15 countries are expected from 7 to 11 March in Berlin. The event features back office technology (Hall 6.1), hotel software and reservation machines (Hall 8.1 and 10.1) as well as social media, travel portal and mobile travel solutions (eTravel World, Hall 7.1.c).

The traditional travel technology display areas have been fully booked since December 2011. For this reason, some exhibitors from this sector are in Hall 25 for the first time. Here visitors can find online travel agencies as well as providers of event and airline software. With a joint stand for the Thai Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) as well as new technology providers from Greece, India, Romania and the United Kingdom, ITB Berlin once again highlights its major international importance in this segment.

"We are particularly pleased that we have been able to inspire many new innovative companies and the regular, high performing participants as well as previous exhibitors to come to ITB Berlin", says David Ruetz, Director of ITB Berlin. This can be attributed not just to the general travel technology boom but also to the wide range of attractions at the world's leading travel trade show: "In the last few years we have continually increased the number of forums and discussion platforms at ITB Berlin. This year the papers will be interpreted on the stage of the eTravel World. As part of the ITB Berlin Convention we examine industry trends, which are more than ever driven by further developments in the field of travel technology".

Travel Technology Trends 2012

The travel technology trends for 2012 continue to include the development of **mobile travel applications (apps)**, which have grown rapidly over the last two years and are continuing to expand. The 2012 issue of the "Mobile Travel App Guide", which is published by m.volution with the support of ITB Berlin, has more than 100 pages.

In the field of analysis new evaluation tools are now available for review portals: the discipline is referred to as **Social Review Management**. At ITB Berlin, solutions for hotel review portals and suitability of the user-generated content available there for promoting sales are highlights of the programme.

Through the use of **innovative search technology** companies are also endeavouring to make it easier for customers to access an ever increasing amount of data. Two search technologies which could, in the future, help to consolidate accurate and genuinely relevant information and filter out cheap offers are semantic or free text searches (natural language search, automatic evaluation of search queries based on language expressions) and gesture based searches (whereby facial expressions and gestures are interpreted in order to incorporate the searcher's emotions in a

presentation of the findings).

Internet driven product innovations with a promising potential include **social trip planning**, also in combination with **group buying portals**: Travellers with the same destination who meet on social networks or travel discount portals can combine their purchase power online in order to obtain particularly favourable conditions when booking city tours, journeys to attend specific events or cultural trips .

Last but not least, there remains the issue of how the enormous costs of IT and networking can be optimised in the long-term. In an industry that has been dominated by proprietary solutions for so long, **open sourcing** or **cloud computing** are newly emerging concepts in innovative infrastructure, architecture and software development, and no-one need renounce any part of what are in any case narrow profit margins.

Visitors can find out more about this topic from the exhibitors, either at the ITB Berlin Convention or the eTravel World.

Travel Technology in the convention programme

Travel technology topics are represented several times in the programme of the ITB Berlin Convention: **PhoCusWright@ITB** (7 March, Hall 7.3, Europa Hall) is the forum for travel technology experts and CXOs, who will be discussing market developments under the slogan "Travel Unleashed: Any. Every. Always." Visitors can find out interesting information about the state and development of social media at the **Marketing and Distribution Day** (9 March, Hall 7.1b, London Hall). The programme on the stage at **eTravel World** (Hall 7.1c) also provides insight into trends such as Social-Mobile-Local (SoMoLo), couponing, mobile payment and review management. An all-day **travel app marathon** (10 March, eTravel World Hall 7.1c) informs visitors about the most exciting smartphone applications when on the move.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2012 will be taking place from Wednesday, 7 to Sunday, 11 March, and from Wednesday to Friday will be open to trade visitors only. Parallel with the trade show, the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest travel industry event of its kind in the world, will be held from Wednesday, 7 to Friday, 9 March 2012. Additional information is available at itb-convention.com. ITB Berlin is the global travel industry's leading trade show. In 2011 a total of 11,163 companies from 188 countries displayed their products and services to 170,000 visitors, who included 110,791 trade visitors.

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