

New report: Bots, AI, wearables, VR to create billion-dollar savings in tourism

Latest research from Colliers International, in partnership with ATM 2019, reveals potential multi-billion dollar savings for the tourism industry thanks to the impact of disruptive technologies such as IoT, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR) and wearable technology.



In addition to vast cost savings, the report shows that the customer experience is set to be more streamlined with travel set to become better, smoother and more personalised with travel bookings on VR platforms, AI chatbots guiding customers through the booking process and IOT providing internet-based inter-connectivity between everyday devices.

Danielle Curtis, exhibition director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: “Technology, and the use of technology, is evolving every day. The tourism industry is at the very forefront of tech innovation with companies investing huge sums of money to improve the customer journey and experience.

“Airports and airlines accounted for \$30bn of investment in IT in 2018, however this will be offset by the implementation of technology that will see fuel savings alone top \$30bn in the next 15 years.

“We’ve seen incredible developments in recent years, SITA, the multinational tech company to the air transport industry for example, is using robots to check travelers onto flights and to transport their luggage, while, although in the infancy stage, robots have been used in some hotels to welcome guests and show them to their room.”

Emergence of innovative technologies

Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2019, which takes place at Dubai World Trade Centre from 28 April – 1 May 2019, has adopted cutting-edge technology and innovation as its main theme and this will be integrated across all show verticals and activities, including focused seminar sessions. Running throughout the event, professionals from across the industry spectrum will discuss the ongoing unprecedented digital disruption, and the emergence of innovative technologies that will fundamentally alter the way in which the hospitality industry operates in the region.

Discussing the defining evolutions of hospitality technology, the Travel Tech Show will return to ATM 2019 with 45 international exhibitors and an agenda of discussion and debate in the Travel Tech Theatre.

Launching this year will be the inaugural Arabian Travel Week, an umbrella brand which comprises four co-located shows: ATM 2019; Connect Middle East, India and Africa – a new route development forum, ILTM Arabia and new consumer-led event – ATM Holiday Shopper.

Curtis said: “The success of both ATM and ILTM Arabia has provided us with the platform to not only introduce two new events for 2019, but to create a travel week which encompasses the Middle East’s inbound and outbound markets for general leisure tourism and luxury travel as well as providing a dedicated networking forum, Connect Middle East India and Africa 2019 for the region’s top airline specialists, aviation authorities, tourism boards, airports and tour operators.”

Arabia China Tourism Forum

Another debutant this year is the Arabia China Tourism Forum at ATM which takes place on the Global Stage on Sunday, 28 April. With China set to account for a quarter of international tourism by 2030, an expert panel will discuss how destinations around the world can capitalise on this growth. The forum will also include a 30-minute networking session with over 80 Chinese buyers. The UNWTO Ministers Summit will once again take place on the Global Stage on Sunday as well.

Other Global Stage highlights will include a focused seminar on Saudi Arabia’s tourism potential, the Global Halal Tourism Summit and the debut ATM Hotel Industry Summit which will host various expert panels to debate and provide an insight on the latest hotel developments and innovative digital infrastructure shaping the future of the hospitality sector.

Following a successful launch last year, the second edition of ATM Student Conference – ‘Career in Travel’ will return on the final day of ATM. This programme allows students and graduates to listen to a range of guest speakers and travel industry leaders. It will also help provide a greater understanding of the industry and potential career paths.

As well as the ultra-innovative Travel Tech Show at ATM, other features returning to the show repertoire this year include the Digital Influencers and Buyers’ Speed Networking Events which will feature 20 Chinese buyers for the first time, the ATM Best Stand Awards and the Travel Agents Academy.

ATM, considered by industry professionals as a barometer for the Middle East and North Africa tourism sector, welcomed over 39,000 people to its 2018 event, showcasing the largest exhibition in the history of the show, with hotels comprising 20% of the floor area.