

PRESS RELEASE:



**For immediate release**

**ENTER 2012 Conference Conclusions: Memorable Experiences Thorough Augmented Reality and Gamification.**

ENTER 2012, the annual IT and Tourism conference, was held from 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012 in Helsingborg, Sweden. Organised by IFITT, the leading international organisation for information technologies in travel and tourism, this conference is biggest tourism IT and tourism related event of the year, attracting 300 delegates from more than 40 countries, covering all the continents.

This edition had 150 presenters which attended the conference to discuss the present and the future of eTourism. Overall, the event included 6 keynotes, 51 research papers, 59 industry presentations, 16 PhD students' presentations and 14 Scandinavian day presentations.

IFITT President Professor Dimitrios Buhalis said that "ENTER has again identified the most critical development in tourism and technology. It is evident from the presentations that social media is becoming the most critical communication tool for organizations to engage dynamically with consumers. Applications which are location and context aware and facilitate a range of sensors also emerge to provide dynamic solution for the travellers. Perhaps the future will emerge through innovations in augmented reality and gamification where the virtual will blend with the real world. This will enable tourism and travel organizations to co-create memorable experiences with, rather for tourist, throughout their journey from inspiration to travel experience and post trip sharing in the social world.

Rodolfo Baggio, ENTER2012 Chair said: "A wonderful team has been able to provide a well-balanced and high quality program. Good and insightful presentations from the academia, the industry and the destinations have given the audience examples and ideas. The social program, and the Swedish hospitality has then helped strengthening the most important aspect of the whole IFITT community: the willingness to work together for the advancement of the field."

During ENTER2012 KLM was awarded with the prestigious IFITT innovation award because of the innovations on social media marketing and state -of-the art approach in customer service via social media in airline industry. Additional IFITT Awards were presented: the

Hannes Werthner Tourism and Technology Lifetime Achievement Award to Inkeri Starry from Regional Council of Lapland (Finland), Dr. Carlos Lamsfus from Cic-Tourgune (Spain) won the Thesis Excellence Award while Malgorzata Ogonowska (Poland) won the best PHD proposal Award. ENTER2012 Best Paper Award goes to Ada Lo, Joey Wu and Rob Law (Hong Kong Polytechnic University); Andrew Lepp, Heather Gibson, Charles Lane won Journal Paper of the Year Award for a study about Image and perceived risk: A study of Uganda and its official tourism website published in Tourism Management. Finally, John Fotis won the picture competition with a prize offered by the Thailand Tourism Board.

Key facts:

300 participants in Innsbruck

Almost 1000 participants including over 600 participants online

1450 total tweets

Reaching around 586'525 people

362 average tweets per day

**ENDS – 448 words**

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**Notes for Editors**

- ENTER 2012 offers a worldwide and unique forum for attendees from academic, industry, government and other organisations to actively exchange, share and challenge state of the art research and industrial case studies on the application of IT to travel and tourism.
- Social networking has become a critical marketing tool and workshops, IFITT publications and events such as ENTER provide an opportunity for industry experts to discuss the latest innovations.
- IFITT was founded in 1997 and is one of the world's oldest tourism and technology non-profit organisations.
- The IFITT mission is to network eTourism stakeholders and nurture eTourism innovation, exploration and knowledge.
- eTourism can enable the efficient networking of information systems within the tourism industry and therefore, become a competitive marketing tool.
- The President, Professor Dimitrios Buhalis, is a Strategic Management and Marketing expert and specialises in Information Communication Technology applications in the Tourism, Travel, Hospitality and Leisure industries.
- For more information please see [www.ifitt.org](http://www.ifitt.org)