

## CONFERENCE REPORT

### **16<sup>th</sup> International ENTER 2009 Conference** *28-30 January 2009, Amsterdam, Holland*

The 16<sup>th</sup> ENTER conference took place between the 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at the RAI Exhibition in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The title of the conference “*eTourism: dynamic challenges for travel and tourism*” explicitly reflects its aim, which was to present and discuss a collection of cutting edge academic and industry research that deals with the new challenges and business models of doing business in a rapidly changing and highly dynamic environment. The conference programme has featured numerous prolific academic and industry speakers as well as attracted more than 200 delegates, which successfully enabled the debate and presentation of cutting edge research in the field of eTourism.

As every year, the quality of the research track of the conference is reflected in the selection and presentation of research papers that have a great impact on eTourism research. Overall, more than 70 papers have been submitted to ENTER 2009 from which 42 papers were finally selected by the scientific committee of the conference which was chaired by three leading researchers namely Wolfram Hopken, Ulrike Gretzel and Rob Law. The papers cover a range of cutting-edge topics that adopt a large variety of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Research papers have been clustered under the following nine categories:

- *Online communities*: papers in this category deal with the process, culture and benefits of the virtualization of tourism communities
- *User generated content*: papers categorized in this field investigate the impact of travel reviews and blogs on the travel decision making process of travelers by examining issues related to the significance, trust and importance of user-generated content
- *Recommender systems*: this category includes papers proposing approaches for developing knowledge-based decision support models for recommender systems; papers





also discuss the acceptance and use of such recommender systems in tourism-specific settings.

- *Mobile technology*: papers in this category present applications and analysis results from mobile services and travel guides
- *Platforms and tools*: papers in this field present the development and application of several innovative IT tools in tourism
- *Website optimization*: this category examines different approaches for measuring and improving the performance of tourism websites
- *Electronic marketing*: papers in this category investigate in more details specific issues related to electronic marketing such as affiliate marketing and e-mail communication
- *ICT and tourism destinations*: this category includes papers examining various issues in eTourism from a tourism destination context, i.e. from an approach that considers all different tourism suppliers and stakeholders as an amalgam
- *Technology acceptance*: papers in this field examine issues related to technology acceptance and adoption in travel and tourism.

ENTER 2009 also featured a “conference best paper award”. After a difficult evaluation and selection process, the ENTER 2009 scientific committee decided to give the “conference best paper award” to Tariq Mahmood, Francesco Ricci and Adriano Venturini for their joint paper titled “Learning Adaptive Recommendation Strategies for Online Travel Planning”. The other two runners for the “conference best paper award” were the following two papers:

- *“Travel Queries on Cities in the United States: Implications for Search Engine Marketing in Tourism”* Zheng Xiang and Bing Pan
- *“Adoption of a destination-wide CRM approach: An empirical analysis of the determinants in the Swiss hospitality industry”* by Michael Fux and Thomas Myrach

Overall, the papers presented at the ENTER 2009 research track (and so the conference proceedings) provide a rich collection of cutting edge studies in the field of eTourism. Research papers address various topical and important eTourism issues by using a wide variety of research methodologies. All papers also discuss the practical and theoretical implications of their findings providing many ideas and directions for



future research. In this vein, the conference proceedings are a useful guide to eTourism research for both tourism academics and professionals.

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