

Palestine Smart Tourism Augmented Reality Mobile Application

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Abstract : Tourism is considered an important sector for most countries, while maintaining good tourism attractions can promote national economic development. The State of Palestine is historically considered a wealthy country full of many archaeological places. In the city of Bethlehem, for example, the Church of the Nativity is the most important touristic site, but it does not have enough technology development to attract tourists. In this paper, we propose a smart mobile application named "Pal-STAR" (Palestine Smart Tourist Augmented Reality) as an innovative solution which targets tourists and assists them to make a visit inside the Church of the Nativity. The application will use augmented reality and feature a virtual tourist guide showing views of the church while providing historical information in a smart, easy, effective and user-friendly way. The proposed application is compatible with multiple mobile platforms and is considered user friendly. The findings show that this application will improve the practice of the tourism sector in the Holy Land, it will also increase the number of tourists visiting the Church of the Nativity and it will facilitate access to historical data that have been difficult to obtain using traditional tourism guidance. The value that tourism adds to a country cannot be denied, and the more technological advances are incorporated in this sector, the better the country's tourism sector can be served. Palestine's economy is heavily dependent on tourism in many of its main cities, despite several limitations, and technological development is needed to enable this sector to flourish. The proposed mobile application would definitely have a good impact on the development of the tourism sector by creating an Augmented Reality environment for tourists inside the church, helping them to navigate and learn about holy places in a non-traditional way, using a virtual tourist guide.

Keywords : smartphones, tourism, tourists guide, augmented reality, Palestine

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