Sentiment Analysis of Creative Tourism Experiences: The Case of Girona, Spain

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Abstract : Creative tourism involves the participation of tourists in the co-creation of their own experiences in a tourism destination. Consequently, creative tourists move from a passive behavior to an active behavior, and tourism destinations address this type of tourism by changing the scenario and making tourists learn and participate while they travel instead of merely offering tourism products and services to them. In creative tourism experiences, tourists are in close contact with locals and their culture. In destinations where culture (i.e. food, heritage, etc.) is the basis of their offer, such as Girona, Spain, tourism stakeholders must especially consider, analyze, and further foster the co-creation of authentic tourism experiences. They should focus on discovering more about these experiences, their main attributes, visitors' opinions, etc. Creative tourists do not only participate while they travel around the world, but they also have and active post-travel behavior. They feel free to write about tourism experiences in different channels. User-generated content becomes crucial for any tourism destination when analyzing the market, making decisions, planning strategies, and when addressing issues, such as their reputation and performance. Sentiment analysis is a methodology used to automatically analyze semantic relationships and meanings in texts, so it is a way to extract tourists' emotions and feelings. Tourists normally express their views and opinions regarding tourism products and services. They may express positive, neutral or negative feelings towards these products or services. For example, they may express anger, love, hate, sadness or joy towards tourism services and products. They may also express feelings through verbs, nouns, adverbs, adjectives, among others. Sentiment analysis may help tourism professionals in a range of areas, from marketing to customer service. For example, sentiment analysis allows tourism stakeholders to forecast tourism expenditure and tourist arrivals, or to analyze tourists' profile. While there is an increasing presence of creativity in tourists' experiences, there is also an increasing need to explore tourists' expressions about these experiences. There is a need to know how they feel about participating in specific tourism activities. Thus, the main objective of this study is to analyze the meanings, emotions and feelings that tourists express about their creative experiences in Girona, Spain. To do so, sentiment analysis methodology is used. Results show the diversity of tourists who actively participate in tourism in Girona. Their opinions refer both to tangible aspects (e.g. food, museums, etc.) and to intangible aspects (e.g. friendliness, nightlife, etc.) of tourism experiences. Tourists express love, likeliness and other sentiments towards tourism products and services in Girona. This study can help tourism stakeholders in understanding tourists' experiences and feelings. Consequently, they can offer more customized products and services and they can efficiently make them participate in the co-creation of their own tourism experiences.

Keywords : creative tourism, sentiment analysis, text mining, user-generated content
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