

>> SYNTHESIZE MOUNTAINS OF KNOWLEDGE <<

Submitted Abstract

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First Author First Name Last Name	Stefano Duglio
Submitting Author First Name Last Name	Stefano Duglio
Correspondence	stefano.duglio@unito.it
Co-Authors >> E-Mails will be not listed	
Organisations	University of Torino, Italy
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Abstract

A tourism destination can be defined as “a geographical region, political jurisdiction, or major attraction, which seeks to provide visitors with a range of satisfying to memorable visitation experiences” (Bornhorst et al., 2010). In considering mountain contexts, a tourism destination may assume different perspectives: from vast geographical areas, as natural parks, to regions explicitly devoted to tourism activities, as ski resorts, characterized by territorial hallmarks - as a distinguishing mountain, a traditional mountain village, a cultural event/festival, a veneration place - able to contribute to the attractiveness of the area. In this heterogeneous panorama, the application of new technologies can play an important role in promoting mountain tourism destinations by giving a new set of services for enhancing the visitors’ experience.

This contribution reports a case study under the umbrella of smartization of tourism activities for a specific territorial hallmark. The aim of it is to boost a minor mountain destination in the Italian Alps, the Soana Valley - Piedmont Region - by integrating smart technologies with a devotion place, the Sanctuary of San Besso. The Sanctuary of San Besso (2,019 m a.s.l.), reachable on foot in two hours’ hiking from the village of Campiglia Soana, represents an important religious attraction in Soana Valley and hosts hundreds of hikers every year. The project carried out thanks to a scientific collaboration between the University of Torino and the Municipality of Valprato Soana, aims at renovating the 4 chapel-shrines alongside the path that leads to the Sanctuary. Together with the recovery of the ancient iconographies and the architectural and structural renovation of the chapel-shrines, smart panels will be integrated. The panels will contain a set of basic information (altitude, distance, location, etc.) and a QR-Code, in order either to enrich the tourism experience by providing more evidence on the cultural and natural context either to share practical tourism information on the hospitality sector, local habits, typical local productions and important tourism events.

This action has to be considered as a first and forward-looking attempt of traditional artifacts’ recovery in this area by integrating smart technologies as a flywheel for fostering a small mountain tourism destination.

References

Bornhorst, T; Brent Ritchie, J.R.,; Sheehan, L. (2010) Determinants of tourism success for DMOs & destinations: an empirical examination of stakeholders’ perspectives. *Tourism Management* 31: 572-589.