

Mobile Applications in Culture

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Abstract: *In this paper, entitled "Mobile Applications in Culture", I aim at analysing mobile applications and their role in capitalizing on cultural heritage. This study is intended to be a presentation of how mobile digital tools are used as strategic tools to support community cultural tourism. In support of the aforementioned, I will present an analysis of one of the mobile applications developed to support the cultural space of Timisoara. Also, in order to find out the objectives set by the public institutions in the process of the cultural promotion of the city, I intend to take an interview to Mr. Robert Kristof, City Manager of Timisoara. In doing this study, I have decided to use qualitative research methods such as analysis and individual interviewing, considering that they are best suited to achieving the proposed objectives. Therefore, I am of the opinion that the theme addressed in this paper deals with an important, but also very fresh topic.*

Keywords: *mobile applications, culture, cultural tourism, promotion.*

1. Introduction

We are currently witnessing the spectacular evolution of the mobile industry, now in the maturity stage. In recent years, there have been many achievements in this field, which have led to an increased

interest in the subject. Among the many areas of activity that have come into contact with the software industry, in particular mobile applications, there is also tourism with its cultural branch. According to dexonline, culture is represented by "the totality of material and spiritual values created by mankind by means of which the image of a community is reconstituted" (DEX). Due to the social, economic, and political importance, the culture of a community must be known and promoted both among those who hold these values and among the citizens belonging to a different culture. To this end, mobile technology has been used for a more effective promotion of culture. Thus, a series of mobile applications have been developed to support culture in a current and easy manner.

As far as I am concerned, choosing the topic of this work was an important part. I wanted to choose a topic that would allow me a thorough study, but at the same time I wanted to approach an interesting and different field. Finally, I have decided to study a topic from the mobile industry, namely mobile applications for culture. In December 2017, I attended a workshop organized by the e-Learning Centre. This workshop was called "Digital Competences and Skills for Creativity" and there was a series of presentations that attracted my attention, representing a starting point for the topic addressed in this paper.

In the research conducted for this paper, I have set some main objectives. First of all, I was interested in learning about the features of a mobile application for culture, its structure, design, and last but not least the type of information presented. Then I wanted to find information about how public institutions are involved in capitalizing the cultural heritage and what digital tools are used for this purpose.

2. Research Methods

The topic of the research involves analysing a mobile application for culture. In this analysis I will follow:

- the structure and sections of the application

- the type of content presented (text and image)
- the design used (colours and style)
- elements such as interactivity, fast access to information, and the usefulness of the application

In this way, I will analyse an example of a mobile application used in culture to identify the most important features of such an application, being very interested in its usefulness.

The second part of the study will be done using the interview as an investigative tool. I intend to create an interview guide with up to 10 questions, addressed to the City Manager of Timisoara.

3. Results

The following example is an analysis of the mobile application for culture, Timisoara City Art. City Art TM is a mobile application developed to support tourists, but also the citizens of Timisoara to discover the monuments in the public area of Timisoara.

In terms of structure, City Art TM is divided into four distinct sections. The first is the "Home" page where the application opens. At the top right there is the option to select the desired language (Romanian or English). Also, an "About" button has also been created where information can be found about the application, the facilities offered, and the specialists who made it. At the top of the screen is the logo, below which the main purpose of the application is mentioned. Below there are a series of pictures of the various existing monuments within the application. The pictures refer to information about that monument. The second section consists of a map of the city that can be synchronized with the user's location so that he / she can see the location of the monuments and those in the vicinity. These monuments are marked on the map with 3 different colours, depending on the category they belong to. In the third section, "Itineraries", the monuments are presented divided into 3 categories, the fourth one being under construction. The last section is called "Favourites" and offers the opportunity to memorize your favourite monuments.

Analysing the application in terms of content, we can say that there are two types: text and image. For each monument we have found information such as: data on the author of the work (the author's name and a brief biography of the author) and information on the monument (year of completion, material from which it was made, dimensions, the context in which it was built and placed in that place, a brief description, the address and access to the monument, the means of transport that can reach the address, the accessibility of people with disabilities and, last but not least, a link to a web page that leads to additional information). The text is available in two languages (Romanian and English) and uses the same font type. The information is clearly constructed, concise, easy to understand and assimilate. The images included in the application are very good, and each monument is associated with one or more pictures.

Referring to the design, City Art TM presents a simple colour scheme that has a beneficial effect on the user experience. In this application, a monochromatic colour scheme is used, starting from the blue colour, which gives a sense of calm and clarity. The monochromatic colour schemes are done starting from a certain colour from which several shades are derived. The minimalist, clear, simple and modern design blends perfectly with the colour scheme used.

Timisoara City Art presents an extremely simple and intuitive interface that allows quick access to information. Being an application for culture, it is most likely used on the street when the user is looking for the monuments he / she is interested in. City Art TM is a good application being the only one of its kind in Timisoara. This application is extremely useful, incorporating most of the monuments of Timisoara in one place and providing information about them.

Therefore, Timisoara City Art is an application model designed to support the city's culture. This is an example, a starting point for future mobile applications for the culture of Timisoara.

4. Expert sources consulted

The topic addressed in this paper is part of the mobile industry that supports the promotion of culture. I wanted to highlight how culture can use the new technologies to develop it. Referring to these aspects I have used, in particular electronic bibliographic sources, but I have also used printed books.

The mobile industry is a relatively new field, most of the information has been searched in different reports, specialist studies, and different sites, and less in books. For example, information on the current mobile industry and its application in many areas of activity, I have found in a report from the Mobile Academy entitled „Mobile Tech Report 2016“. Data on the use of mobile applications in tourism and culture can be found from Dan Wang, Zheng Xiang, and Daniel R. Fesenmaier, the authors of the scientific paper “Smartphone Use in Everyday Life and Travel” published in Journal Travel Research. For a definition of culture and its importance I have used the book of Alexandra Zbucea, "Marketing in the Service of Cultural Heritage" (Zbucea, 2008: 8). The theoretical knowledge about the research methods used in this scientific paper were acquired from two different books. I have used content analysis that is a set of research techniques that support the identification of some of the elements of interest for this study (Nadolu, 2014:55). Antonio Sandu (2012:57) – *apud* Roger Daval et al. (1967:121) – brings relevant information about the interview. The interview is a research method that uses mainly oral, face-to-face techniques, which attempts to thoroughly probe the opinion of those interviewed.

5. Conclusions

Based on the theoretical knowledge from the above-mentioned sources, I have conducted an analysis of a mobile application for culture in

order to observe its usefulness and the importance of introducing technology in the capitalizing on the cultural heritage.

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