

Virtual Reality Digital Destination

**Mazlina Mahdzar*, Humaira Fatiha Sapawi, Khairul
Musfirah Abd Karim, Nurul Nabilah Ramlee, Wan Nur Izzah
Ilyana Wan Mohamed Kahar, Siti Aishah Yusoff**

Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam Campus, 43300 Bandar Puncak Alam,
SELANGOR

*Corresponding Author Designation

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30880/mari.2021.02.03.003>

Received 05 September 2021; Accepted 05 October 2021; Available online 15 December 2021

Abstract : Virtual digital destination is a platform created for the tourists to gain more knowledge or information about the destination that they want to visit during Covid-19. This digital platform was created to minimize face-to-face communication between tourists and operators due to the pandemic that requires us to always stick with the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP). Besides, live virtual can also add knowledge about tourist places whether for students or tourists themselves. Tourist will be able to communicate and join live sharing sessions about the local places by subscribing to website created. By implementing this concept of combining digital and modern innovation, travel companies are able to reduce their operating costs.

Keywords: Digital Technology, COVID-19, Tourists, Virtual Reality Travel, Virtual Digital Destination

1. Introduction

From the travel ban due to the COVID19 outbreak, applying virtual reality in tourism opened a new universe to evolution in travel, the era of virtual experiences. Countries around the world including Malaysia currently suffer a significant effect from COVID19 and travel restriction. By which, virtual reality (VR) in tourism is believed to wake up the depressed industry [1]. In fact, many travelers are afraid of the traveling business future due to the risk of having quarantines after traveling.

VR tourism offered a unique experience, enabling users to experience parts of travel journeys at home via their computer [2]. Many countries have come up with an aggressive solution of borderline closing for the effort of deterring virus infection spread. Additionally, several social distancing policies have been imposed keeping people staying at home. During the time of reality diminishment, virtual reality could be a treatment. VR tourism might not be a new concept in the recent world. It has entered

*Corresponding author: nina@uitm.edu.my

2021 UTHM Publisher. All rights reserved.

publisher.uthm.edu.my/periodicals/index.php/mari

the initial stages of innovation for some applications being available in several markets. Accordingly, VR tourism might become a must-have technology for travel agents.

Thus, virtual reality digital destination is a platform created for the tourists to gain more knowledge or information about the destination that they want to visit during Covid-19. The idea for creation of digital platform is to minimize face-to-face communication between tourists and operators due to the pandemic which requires us to always adhere to the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP). Tourists and travelers alike may watch the videos posted on the website for their references and it also functions as teaser videos for delivering information on the interesting places in Malaysia.

This platform is also suitable for people with disabilities where they too can enjoy travel and leisure experience without the trouble of leaving their homes. The platform provides useful information and it can be accessed anywhere using our smartphones and is easy to use. With the help of internet, this platform provides benefits for all people, making the information widely available, reducing the difficulties in purchasing, marketing and distribution [3]. Hence, this platform created offers benefits which include promoting domestic tourism during the pandemic, providing information and enhancing knowledge of local destinations to tourists who are unable to travel due to disability and pandemic, gain information through participating in live sharing sessions and consultations from the local community.

2. Materials and Methods

A survey was conducted to obtain the information about this platform and their willingness to use the platform from local which consists of a group of UiTM tourism students. An interview with an employee of one destination operator also is conducted to know whether they recommend this platform useful or not for the tourism sector. The sources of information such as videos and pictures of a local destination came from contributors from the local community of the destination [4]. This platform is set up using the knowledge of technology acquired during authors' study at the university about Tourism Information Technology. Generally, the concept of VR tourism enables interaction between users and the virtual space created by VR tourism video. Accordingly, it creates another reality for users visiting without really coming to the location [5]. **Figure 1-4** illustrates the steps in using the platform.

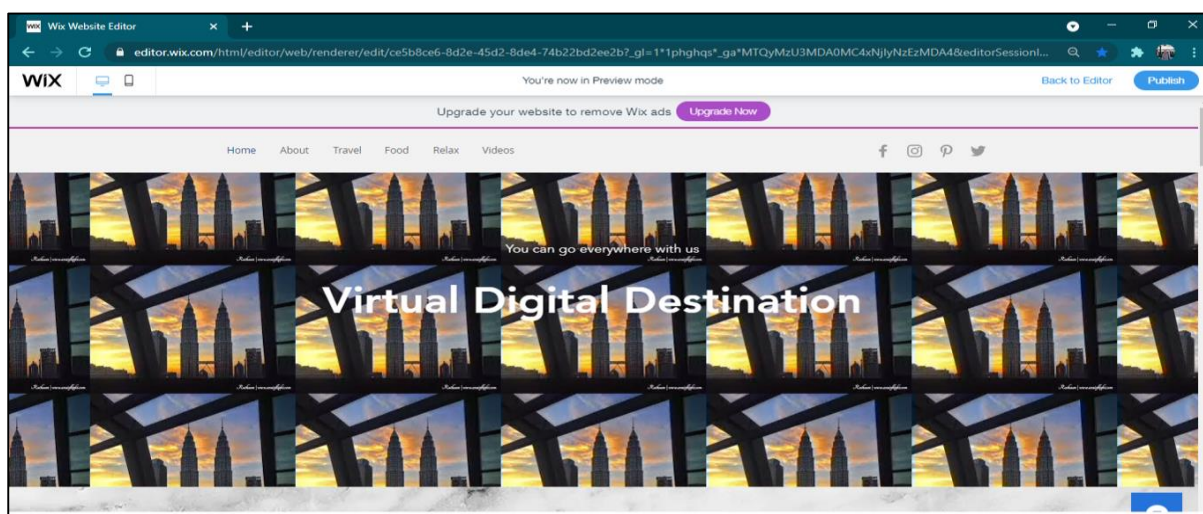


Figure 1: STEP 1 - Search website on 'Virtual Digital Destination'.

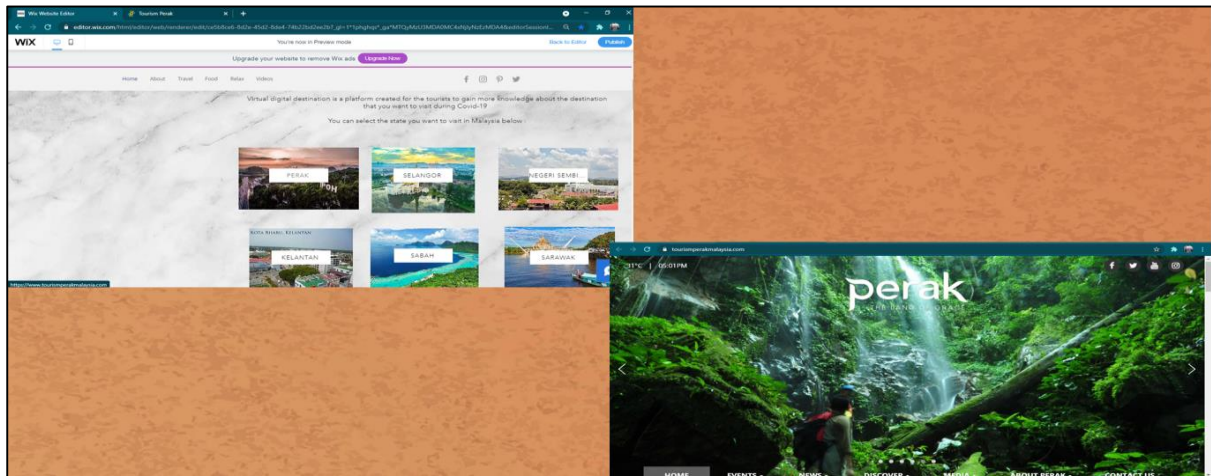


Figure 2: STEP 2 - Click on any states in Malaysia for more information

The purpose of the list of states in Malaysia is to make it easier for tourists to find out more about the specific attraction available in each state before they join the virtual live destination for live sharing and consultation session. It also provides knowledge about the state they plan to visit. For example, if they click the Perak state button, it is link to the official Perak tourism website. The tourists can discover a lot about interesting places they want to know.

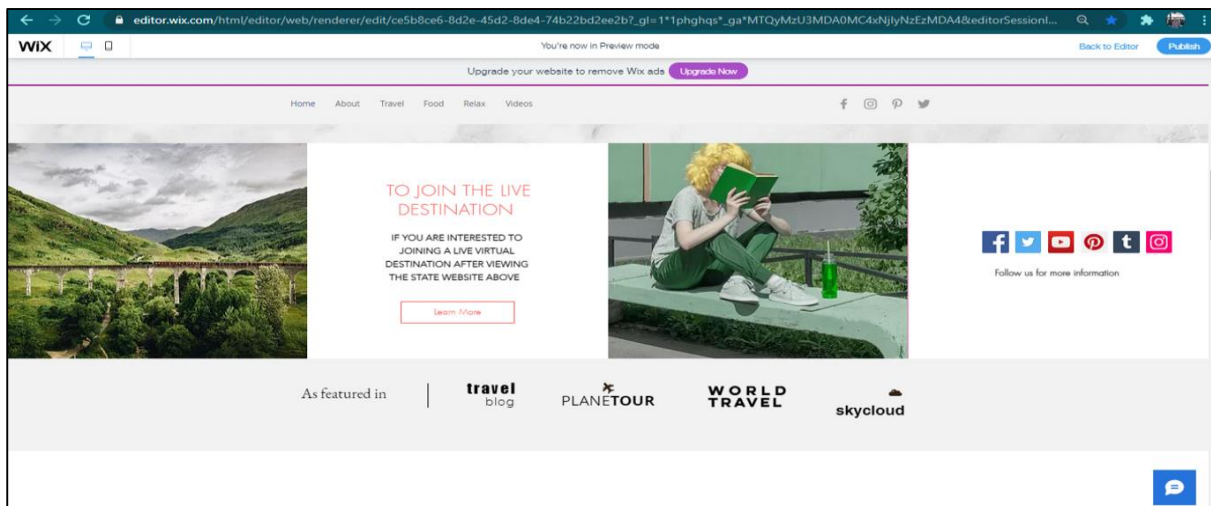


Figure 3: STEP 3 - Join a Virtual Destination Live session

For tourists who are interested in joining the virtual destination they need to click the “Learn more” button.

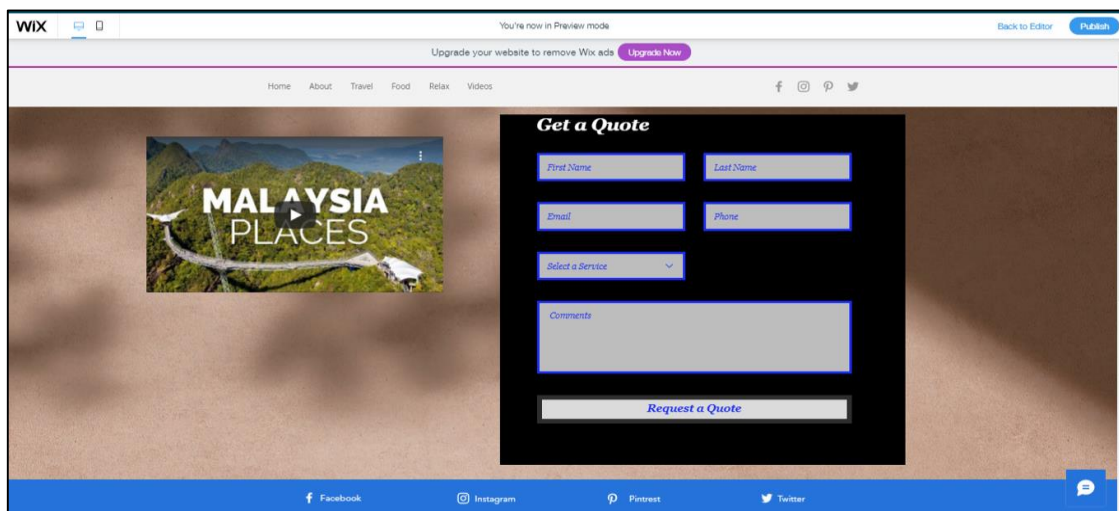


Figure 4: STEP 4 - Registration form

After clicking the “learn more” button they will find a registration form to fill out. Once submitted, the organizers will get back and provide further details on the time, date and payment they should pay.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

The technologies of virtual reality in tourism currently contribute to many activities, contributing to the traveler value chain. Not only enhancing virtual travel experiences to travelers, but it also creates a new spacious market for players and new entrances.

With the pandemic, one will at home most of the time and don't know what else to do. This platform on virtual digital destination can be visited and use to in solving their problem. This platform can release their stress because they can still travel virtually to local states and other attractions in Malaysia while at home. Furthermore, this platform can reduce cost from actual visits to the attractions and destinations. It is because they no longer need to spend more money on virtual destinations, and it will become more convenient to them. This will minimize face to face interaction among people and save guard people from being affected and become positive covid. We do not want to spread the virus of Covid-19 and we also want to make sure our safety during the virtual. The last one is to gain more knowledge. Virtual events can give more information about the place that tourists would like to visit

Virtual digital destinations can give tourists the opportunity to find out about the destination they want to visit. Besides, it can be easily accessed from the comfort of people's homes using a smartphone or tablet. Virtual events can give tourists a cost-effective yet entertaining option that delivers the same level of material to attendees.

The digital destination is one of the platforms that we innovated in the tourism industry during Pandemic Covid-19. In fact, Virtual reality in travel and tourism cannot replace the authentic experience that traveler spending on tourist attraction as beaches, luxury resources, or swimming pools. However, it can simulate the space, helping you to escape from the reality. Especially in this time of travel ban due to the danger of COVID19, travelholics might not find other solutions to their desire except VR tourism. This digital consists of live virtual destinations to show to tourists about the place chosen in

Malaysia. The digital destination are created on website so that visitors or users of the internet can browse information on destinations at any time they require.

References

- [1] A. Digital, "The Concept of Virtual Reality In Tourism – Future Of Travel Software Development," 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://adamodigital.com/blog/virtual-reality-in-tourism/>. [Accessed Sept. 7, 2021].
- [2] A. Digital, "Digital Technology In Hospitality Industry: Role Of Information Technology," 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://adamodigital.com/blog/digital-technology-in-hospitality-industry/>. [Accessed Aug. 10, 2021].
- [3] L. Cailles, "5 Advantages of Hosting Virtual Events," 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.wtcmanila.com.ph/blog/advantages-hosting-virtual-events/>. [Accessed Sept. 21, 2021].
- [4] A. Digital, "Technology In Tourism Reshaping The Travel And Hospitality Industry Globally," 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://adamodigital.com/blog/technology-in-tourism-reshaping-the-hospitality-industry/>[Accessed July. 25, 2021].
- [5] A. Europe, "Research Understanding Dementia Research/ Types of Research/ Research Methods", 2009.