Dublin Discovery Trails App

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Type of best practice
Innovation (including 3D, AI, Big data, Metaverse, etc)

Keywords
Digitalisation, Smart Tourism, Dublin, Docklands

Dublin City Council (DCC) launched Dublin Discovery Trails – 'Doors into Docklands', the first in a series of mobile application (App) based immersive discovery trails with innovative Augmented Reality (AR). The App which has been funded by Fáilte Ireland under their Destination Towns Initiative is to provide an enhanced visitor experience in the Docklands area. Dublin Discovery Trails, 'Doors into Docklands' developed by Peel X in partnership with DCC and Fáilte Ireland, is an innovative way to see the history of the Docklands come to life through Augmented Reality which combines the real-world history with smart technology.

Organisation in charge of best practice
Dublin City Council

Location
Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Dates
2022-2023

Description
The Aim: In 2019 Dublin City decided to invest in a new and unique story telling App for the city. The aim was to use technology to bring Dublin's old stories to life in a new way. The core idea was to help drive visitors to less frequented areas of the city and encourage the development of new experiences thought out Dublin.

The Idea: During Covid 19 we noticed that many people became accustomed and used to exploring and researching destinations via their smart phone. We decided to use this emerging trend as an opportunity to help visitors explore the city in a new and digital way. We knew that Dublin was full of stories, history, heritage and culture and that we needed to come up with a way to unlock that information and put it into the hands of visitors. Ultimately the core idea of the App was to help direct visitors, both local, domestic and

international to lesser visited parts of Dublin city in a way that was exemplary of the cutting edge of digital experience development.

The concept: At the time (2019) mobile apps we not very popular or available for the purposes of story telling. We decided to explore the area of Digital Tour guiding and Digital Trails more. To do this we consulted with many other destinations which had already developed such Apps, such as Linz, London and Derry. However many of these applications did not go as far as we wanted in creating an outstanding digital experience. We knew that we needed something more advanced. Having decided on core requirements we decided to consult the market for our solution in 2020.

Creating efficiencies and scale through a framework approach: Having spoken to colleagues in other destinations we knew that one of the core challenges for these kinds of projects was in creating efficiencies and scale. We knew that many destinations were developing many Apps at the same time and that the market was getting crowded and confusing from the perspective of the visitor. That is why we did something very unique in terms of procurement of this digital service. In order to stop the development of many similar apps with small budgets spread out amongst many diverse stakeholders we decided to create a centralisted heritage trail platform for Dublin. This meant that we would procure these services together as a group of clients rather than separate entities. This would mean that we could centralise our resources and content onto one app and focus our budget and promotion directly in one place. This multi-client approach to digital heritage product development is something that was very unique to Dublin at the time. This meant that we could now build one platform that would tell the story of Dublins unique heritage and history and the platform would be shared between the major city partners of Dublin.

The Market Solution: In 2020 we put out a PIN or Prior Indicative Notice to consult the market on Digital Heritage Trails solutions. Having received many submission from developers we decided to proceed with an EU tender to acquire the service directly. In 2021 we published the EU Tender for Digital Heritage Trail App design services at a total contract value of €500,000. At the time this was the largest of its kind Digital Heritage Trail app project.

Doors Into Docklands Trail Development.
In 2021 we appointed the developer Peel X to develop our new Digital Trails Platform called Dublin Discovery Trails. Along with Peel and a dedicated project development team we began work on the first trail which would be Doors into Docklands a new immersive trail which would tell the unique history and heritage of Dublins Docklands thought immersive technology and Augmented Reality. The working group was made up of representatives from across the city as well as historians and city mangers.

Content Development: In Dublin we know that we have an incredible rich history. In order to bring that history to life we needed excellent content for the Doors Into Docklands Trail. We deiced to use a first of its kind AR Portal development which would allow the user to experience the past as a 360 degree portal. We identified four heritage hero points which would be appropriate for this new AR technology. These included, the recreation of the

Crimean Banquet in the CHQ building. The animation of the famine memorial statues on the quay. The recreation of heritage Guinness barges sailing up the Liffey river and the famous burning of the Custom House in 1921. Much of this content and archival material was crowd sourced from historians, museums, partners, attractions and local historians and community groups within the area itself.

Testing and Launch: As we neared the launch of the App we tested it amongst several diverse stakeholder groups in the city including internally with city stakeholders and externally with local history groups and citizens. Finally, after much successful testing we launched the app on the 11th of January 2023 in the CHQ Building in Dublin City Centre. Since its launch the App has been very successful with over 4k downloads with an average user time of 30 minutes. This means that there is now more visitors exploring more diverse and under visited areas of the city than ever before. The launch of the app has also been a huge success in terms of the network it has created. Since the launch of the Doors into Docklands Trail there has been three additional trails in other parts of Dublin added to the App with two more planned for late 2023. For us in Dublin this demonstrates a great example of how a city can come together to create best in class immersive digital heritage experiences.

Review and Learnings: During the development of Dublin Discovery Trails we launched the first ever Digital Trails Toolkit (attached), so that others could learn from our experience.

Links
https://doorsintodocklands.com/ https://www.bu.edu/bhr/2021/10/04/digital-trail-development-opportunities-for-tourism-and-hospitality-lessons-from-ireland/

Resources needed
n/a

Challenges encountered
n/a

Evidence of success
Since the launch of the App in January 2021 the App has had 4500 downloads. The average dwell time for each user has been 30 minutes. This means that there has been an additionality of over 2100 hours of users spent in the location of the Dublin Docklands. In terms of the original aims of the development of the app we feel that these metrics have matched our expectations.

Potential for transfer
During the development of Dublin Discovery Trails we launched the first ever Digital Trails Toolkit (attached), so that others could learn from our experience.

Further Information
https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Dublin/dublin-trails-toolkitupdated-2022.pdf https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-41045846.html