



SmartCulTour Game at the Living Lab Rotterdam Metropolitan Area

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Type of best practice

VR/AR & Technologies, inc. Gamification & Immersive performances

Keywords

serious gaming, playful intervention, policy game, cultural tourism, heritage management

The SmartCulTour Game is a vital component of intervention toolkits for SmartCulTour Living Labs, developed in 2021 by the Research & Development Lab 'Cradle' at Breda University of Applied Sciences. This innovative game adopts a playful approach to policy-making, engaging stakeholders in the realm of cultural tourism sustainability. It draws from previous research on cultural interventions and the future of cultural tourism, translating concepts into a workshop with interactive elements. This serious game employs a hybrid role-playing format, incorporating a digital dashboard, mobile app (for iOS and Android), and physical intervention cards. Players, acting as cultural heritage stakeholders, aim to achieve their goals through interventions, fostering discussion and evaluation for sustainability in various contexts.

Organisation in charge of best practice

Breda University of Applied Sciences

Location

Living Lab Rotterdam Metropolitan Area, The Netherlands

Dates

Spring 2022 - Winter 2022

Description

The SmartCulTour Game is a dynamic project developed as part of the SmartCulTour initiative, funded through Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 870708. It is the brainchild of the research and development lab within the Media & Games Department at Breda University of Applied Sciences. The game's primary objective is to provide valuable support to a diverse array of professionals, including policy makers, cultural heritage managers, tourism experts, and cultural/creative entrepreneurs, as well as administrators. The focus is on fostering collaborative efforts aimed at shaping the future of cultural tourism, particularly in urban and regional destinations.





Within the SmartCulTour Game, the primary goal is to evaluate the effectiveness of different intervention policies for a predefined cultural heritage destination. The evaluation is carried out by a diverse group of professionals, including those with backgrounds in tourism, heritage, and related fields.

Objectives of the Game

1. **Cultivating Collaboration:** The SmartCulTour Game seeks to serve as a catalyst for collaboration between cultural heritage managers and tourism professionals. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the development of sustainable heritage destinations.
2. **Helps to empathise with other stakeholders:** through role play, the game helps to collaboratively reflect and decide on interventions needed in the cultural tourism. Helps to negotiate/create consensus on priorities with limited resources
3. **Understanding Heritage Policies:** An important goal is to facilitate a deeper understanding of various heritage policies and their potential sustainable impact on cultural heritage destinations. This insight can prove invaluable in shaping the future of such destinations.
4. **Safe Space for Interventions:** The game is designed to provide a safe and controlled environment where participants can experiment with interventions. These experiments can then yield insights that are transferable to real-life scenarios, enabling more informed decision-making in the field of cultural tourism.

Game Format The SmartCulTour Game adopts a unique format. It is a multiplayer experience that combines digital and physical elements, providing a hybrid role-playing game. The core components include a digital dashboard with a backend, a mobile application designed for both iOS and Android devices, and physical intervention cards that are complemented by game coins. This combination of elements creates an immersive and engaging experience. The game's design is modular and flexible, offering a building block concept that can be adapted by the game facilitator to suit the specific session's goals, the number of participants, and the characteristics of the regional or urban cultural heritage area being explored. This adaptability ensures that the game can be customized to meet the unique needs of each session.

Participants: The game is structured to accommodate a total of 10-15 players, with the optimal configuration featuring 2 or 3 players per role for an enhanced gaming experience. However, the flexibility of the game design allows for variations, including fewer or more players, or even uneven distribution of players among the available roles. It's important to note that these variations may impact the dynamics of gameplay, so careful consideration is needed when deviating from the recommended configuration.

To ensure a consistent and enjoyable experience for all participants, it is not advisable to have more than 25 players, as the engagement and gameplay experience may become less satisfying when the numbers exceed this limit.

The SmartCulTour Game stands as a versatile and interactive tool designed to promote collaboration, knowledge transfer, and informed decision-making in the realm of cultural





tourism and heritage management. Its innovative design and adaptability make it a valuable asset for professionals looking to shape a sustainable and vibrant future for cultural destinations, whether urban or regional.

Links

<http://www.smartcultour.eu/smartcultour-game/>

Resources needed

Materials needed are the SmartCulTour Game 1) One Android phone/iPhone (with the SmartCulTour app installed) per stakeholder 2) Room setup for (playful) negotiations with 10-15 stakeholders 3) Pens and paper 4) Beamer/screen. Online resources (can be downloaded from the Online training aid): 1) Facilitator manual 2) Poster, badges and intervention card templates 3) Find the SmartCulTour app in the app store

Challenges encountered

The SmartCulTour game presents several notable challenges: 1) Time Investment: One significant challenge is the substantial time commitment required from players, as the gameplay session typically spans at least half a day. This extended duration may pose difficulties for participants, especially for those with busy schedules or other commitments. 2) Diverse Player Acquisition: Another challenge is ensuring a diverse mix of players. To achieve a well-rounded and representative experience, it is essential to attract participants from a wide range of backgrounds and expertise. This diversity can enrich the gameplay but can also be challenging to coordinate. 3) Learning Transfer: A fundamental objective of the game is to facilitate learning and foster understanding about cultural tourism and sustainability. However, a challenge arises in translating the knowledge gained during gameplay into real-world applications. Participants must find ways to apply their insights and ideas within their respective working fields, which can be a complex and ongoing process. 4) Stakeholder Engagement: Creating scenarios within the game involves convincing relevant stakeholders in tourism destinations to buy into the proposed interventions. Ensuring that these stakeholders understand and support the proposed solutions is vital for the game's effectiveness. Moreover, reaching out to stakeholders who were not present during the game session to gain their support can be a challenging task, requiring effective communication and persuasion. 5) Sometimes playfulness leads to developing unfeasible or unrealistic ideas, which may be difficult to implement in real world contexts. Addressing these challenges requires careful planning, communication, and follow-up efforts to maximize the game's impact and ensure that the knowledge and ideas generated during gameplay can be effectively applied in the real world to enhance cultural tourism sustainability.

Evidence of success

The SmartCulTour Game has proven to be a valuable addition to a toolbox of tools and techniques designed for cultural tourism interventions. Its success is evident in several key aspects: 1) Versatility for Complex Questions: The game stands as an adaptable resource for addressing intricate questions related to sustainable development, resilience, and capacity building within cultural tourism. It offers a dynamic platform to explore and address multifaceted challenges. 2) Enhancing Destination Capabilities: Through gameplay and interaction, the SmartCulTour Game empowers destination stakeholders





with a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This newfound awareness equips them to collaboratively work toward sustainable and resilient destinations. 3) Real-World Testing: The game has been rigorously played and tested in a variety of real-world scenarios, including the Huesca, Rotterdam, and Split Living Labs. These settings represent diverse cultural tourism destinations, each with its unique challenges and dynamics. The game's success in these varied contexts showcases its adaptability and applicability across different locations and scenarios. 4) Perspective and Solution Exploration: The game encourages stakeholders to immerse themselves in the roles and perspectives of other stakeholders. While players may portray caricatures of these roles, the emphasis lies in fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. The game's success is not measured by accentuating differences but by uncovering common ground and shared objectives. This approach promotes inclusivity and facilitates the development of solutions that benefit all stakeholders, thus contributing to successful destination management. 5) Idea Generation for Multimethod Processes: The ideas and interventions generated during gameplay serve as valuable input for subsequent stages of destination development, such as the Multimethod process flow and Destination design road mapping. The game serves as a creative catalyst, sparking innovative ideas and strategies that can be further refined and integrated into comprehensive destination planning. In conclusion, the SmartCulTour Game has demonstrated its success as a versatile, practical, and collaborative tool for cultural tourism intervention. Its ability to adapt to complex challenges, enhance stakeholder understanding, and stimulate creative problem-solving makes it a valuable asset for any destination looking to foster sustainability and resilience. By bridging perspectives and promoting common ground, the game facilitates effective solutions and lays the foundation for successful destination management and development.

Potential for transfer

The SmartCulTour game is a highly adaptable tool suitable for cultural tourism destinations globally. It offers the flexibility to be customized and implemented in any city or region and accommodates 10-15 players. The game's design is versatile, allowing it to be tailored to specific local contexts, offering a variety of scenarios to explore. Furthermore, participants have the capacity to introduce additional policies during gameplay, enabling a personalized and context-specific experience. Throughout the project's development, the game has undergone testing in three distinct living labs, each featuring a diverse mix of stakeholders, including individuals from the cultural and creative industries, tourism professionals, and academics. This diversity of participants ensures that the game's applicability is broad and inclusive. The setup of the game is straightforward, with the game readily available for download from the SmartCulTour website. The accompanying game manual offers comprehensive instructions on technical requirements and print assets, simplifying the preparation process. To guide facilitators, a detailed facilitator guide is provided, outlining all the necessary steps to successfully conduct the gameplay. The SmartCulTour game's adaptability and ease of implementation make it a valuable resource for promoting sustainable cultural tourism and engaging stakeholders in various settings worldwide.





Further Information

By interest in the SmartCulTour game, please visit the website smartcultour.eu or reach out to Dr. Jessika Weber-Sabil, Professor of Digital Transformation in Cultural Tourism at BUAS. You can contact her at weber.j@buas.nl.

