

The role of 3D technology in enhancing the visitor experience in the 21st century.

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Tourism at World Heritage Sites Challenges and Opportunities

International tourism seminar
Çeşme (Izmir), Turkey, 26 March 2013

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The role of 3D technology in enhancing the visitor experience in the 21st century

Mr. Douglas Pritchard

Mr. Pritchard gave a demonstration of a new computer graphics platform that uses multiple high definition photography of an historic place to construct very accurate three dimensional computer graphic representations. It can be used to record the existing condition and integrity of an historic structure to form the basis for a conservation programme. In the tourism context it can become a powerful technique that enables the site manager to graphically illustrate the growth and evolution of an historic building or complex over time, helping the visitor to better understand the current nature of the place.

As demonstrated by the commercial success of interactive tablet technology or the latest animated movies, the average person's expected standard of visual quality and level of technical sophistication is constantly on the rise. 3D technologies offer an exciting way for the tourism sector and site managers to engage the 21st century visitor, especially younger generations. Different sources of funding and applications of the technology may need to be explored by site managers and others. However, the long term value of the data that has been captured is immense for both conservation and communication opportunities.

Mr. Pritchard demonstrated the use of 3D content and presentation technology at heritage sites, including a current recording project on a number of world heritage sites around the world that is being led by Historic Scotland. It also addressed the issue of shared interest as a way of reducing presentation and exhibition costs but at the same time, provide valuable conservation material for the site. One very interesting advantage of the technology is the ability for site managers, funding agencies and planning authorities to better understand the nature and potential visual or heritage impacts of new building proposals such as visitor centres within the site, or of new retail, commercial or hotel projects around the outskirts of the heritage site.