

AR Technology in Hospitality Industry: A Case of Holiday Inn London



Source: Unsplash (2018)

Background

At the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games, Holiday Inn London was one of the first hotels to introduce augmented reality (HolidayInnUKIreland, 2012). In collaboration with an AR company, Aurasma, the hotel offers guests the opportunity to meet Olympic athletes in different areas of the hotel. For example, BMX World Champion Shanaze Reade could be seen performing tricks on her bike at the hotel lobby and windsurfing world champion Nick Dempsey pretending to windsurf on a hotel bed (Zou, 2022). Through the official hotel app, guests can access the AR chroma video footage of the athletes by pointing their phone's rear camera at different locations within the hotel.

The implementation of AR technology and Olympic elements has helped Holiday Inn differentiate itself from other hotels. The hotel reported an increase in RevPAR of 2.5% and overall increase in revenue of 8% during the period of the games (IHG Financial Report, 2013). Furthermore, the development also helped the hotel to expand its market segment, attracting tech-savvy individuals and sports lovers to stay in the hotel.

Challenges

Despite the success of the hotel's use of AR technology during the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, the long-term viability of using AR as a selling point for the hotel is debatable. While the AR experience featuring Olympic athletes might be captivating, it could only be perceived as a one-time event, which calls for new themes and new AR videos to be made regularly to keep the guests interested. This may pose a huge financial burden on the hotel, as the production of high-quality AR experiences can be both time-consuming and costly.

Discussion Questions

1. Is AR application in hotels appealing to you in terms of influencing your decision to stay there?
2. How can hotels ensure a seamless and user-friendly AR experience for guests of all ages and tech proficiency levels?
3. How can hotels differentiate their AR offerings from those of competitors to maintain a unique market position?
4. What are the emerging trends in AR technology that could be applied to the hospitality industry in the future?

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Keywords

- Hotel
- Augmented reality (AR)
- Interactive guest experience
- Technology
- Digital marketing
- User experience

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