

Technology and Shared Touchpoints: A Wine Tourism Customer Journey Framework

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1. INTRODUCTION

Businesses in the tourism sector have been innovating their business models using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for over three decades (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2000; Buhalis and Law, 2008). The Internet introduced new avenues for the marketing and selling of goods on-line and wineries were early adopters (Davies, 2000; Lynch and Ariely, 2000; Mueller, 2000; Goodman, 1999). The web provided a cost-effective technology allowing even smaller wineries global reach (Cooper and Burgess, 2000) and globally wineries have accelerated their presence on the Internet since then (Yuan et al., 2004).

Though the Internet is now a mainstay, many wineries employ only Web 1.0 technologies; while wine tourists have smartphones and are using social media platforms to access an increasing number of tourism businesses and third-party sources of information about wine and travel (i.e., blogs, travel sites, wine comparator apps, etc.). Wineries have been slow to adopt more interactive Web 2.0 technologies (Pucci et al., 2019; Szolnoki et al., 2018; Kolb and Thach, 2016; Forbes et al., 2015; Thach, 2009;; Zhu et al., 2009). So wine tourism generally lags the technological practices of other hospitality and services (Canovi and Pucciarelli, 2019; Kirova and Thanh, 2018, Thach, 2010). Similarly, wine business research has also lagged that found in the broader tourism domain (Sigala and Robinson, 2019).

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The lack of treatment of advanced technology in wine tourism is a critical gap as the evolution of Web 2.0 and emergent Web 3.0 technologies heralds a coming revolution in the tourist sector. A radical shift in how tourism information is gathered, analyzed, and managed using technologies such as geolocation, blockchain, artificial intelligence, personal agents, and big data analytics. The transition to *smart tourism* is a development fraught with tumultuous change as well as opportunity (Gretzel et al., 2015a). In the coming era of *smart tourist*

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ecosystems (Gretzel et al., 2015b) wineries must adopt these newer capabilities to effectively meet the needs of tourists seeking wine experiences.

3. CUSTOMER JOURNEY AND THE WINE TOURISM ECOSYSTEM

Though tourism has always been a service-intensive sector (Zeher, 2009) wine tourism is increasingly becoming even more service-dependant as wine tourists seek *experiences* (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Service approaches such as the Customer Journey Map (CJM) are valuable tools for designing customer experiences. CJM is the conceptual representation of service interactions between a customer and a business; from pre-purchase information searches through the purchase experience and then the post-purchase assessment (Følstad, and Kvale, 2018; Stickdorn et al., 2018.). CJM's have recently been used in tourism studies to identify touchpoints between tourists and businesses providing, enabling, or contributing to tourist experience (Stickdorn et al., 2014; Stickdorn and Zehrer, 2009). While the importance of service in the wine tourism experience has long been acknowledged (c.f., Kunc, 2019; Fernandes and Cruz, 2016; O'Neill and Charters, 2000) we were unable to find evidence of the application of CJM in the wine literature.

From a CJM perspective, the wine tourism experience is multi-layered and comprised of encounters with regional cultures, geography and winescapes, with wineries and wine festivals, and the desire to experience local food and wines (Bruwer et al., 2017; Quintal, Thomas, and Phau, 2015; Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2012; Hall and Macionis, 1998;). Throughout the range and complexity of these offerings, service quality is critical; from the initial travel planning stage to the cellar door and wine tasting room experience (Pelet et al., 2018; Charters et al., 2009; Charters, 2006; Getz and Brown, 2006; Carmichael, 2005; Correia et al. 2004;; O'Neill and Charters, 2000). This means that technological service touchpoints include both those controlled by wineries as well as belonging to a complex set of organizations external to the winery.

4. PURPOSE OF STUDY

In answering calls to “look at the bigger picture” for technology in tourism in general (Sigala, 2018, p. 152) and wine tourism specifically (Sigala and Haller, 2019), the intent of this study is to generate a comprehensive ecosystem map of potential technological touchpoints between wine businesses and the wine tourist.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Drawing upon CJM, service co-creation and a review of wine tourism literature dealing with technology use, a conceptual framework (Miles and Huberman, 1999) of Web 1.0 and 2.0 for a smart wine tourism ecosystem was developed.

6. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

A map of technology touchpoints in a smart wine tourism ecosystem is proposed (see Figure 1). A secondary mapping of potential points of co-created value is derived (see Figure 2).

Figure 1

Technology Map in a Smart Wine Tourism Ecosystem

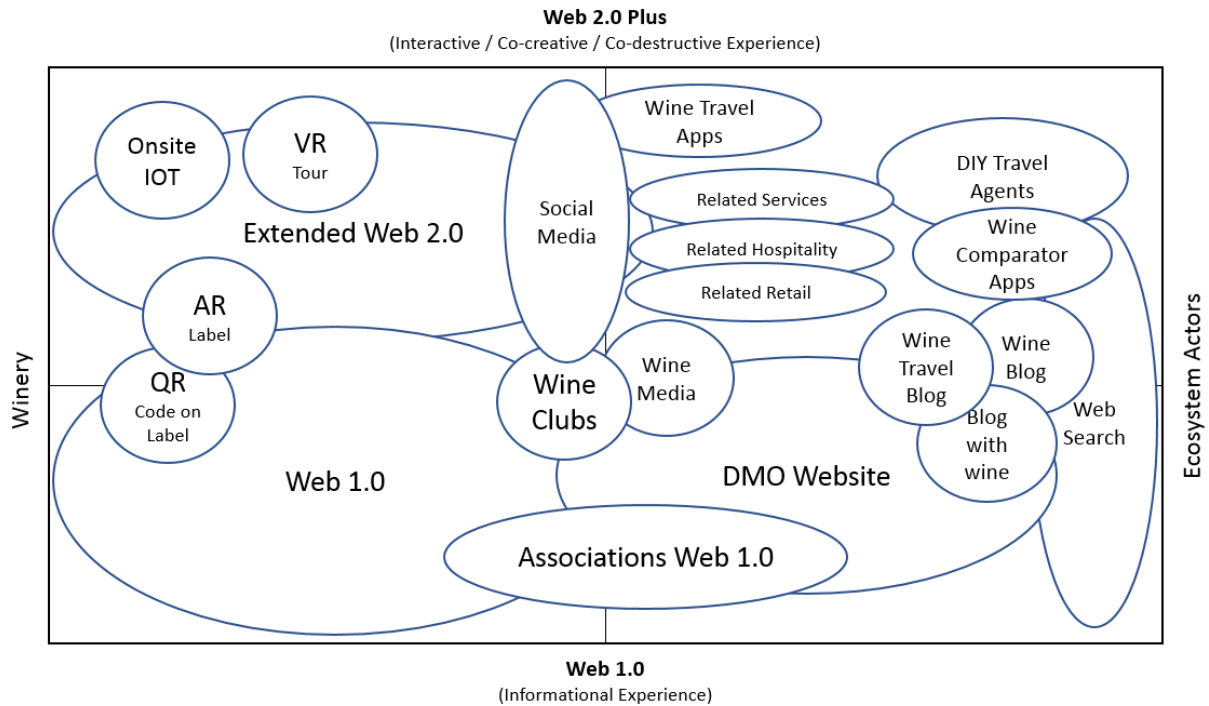
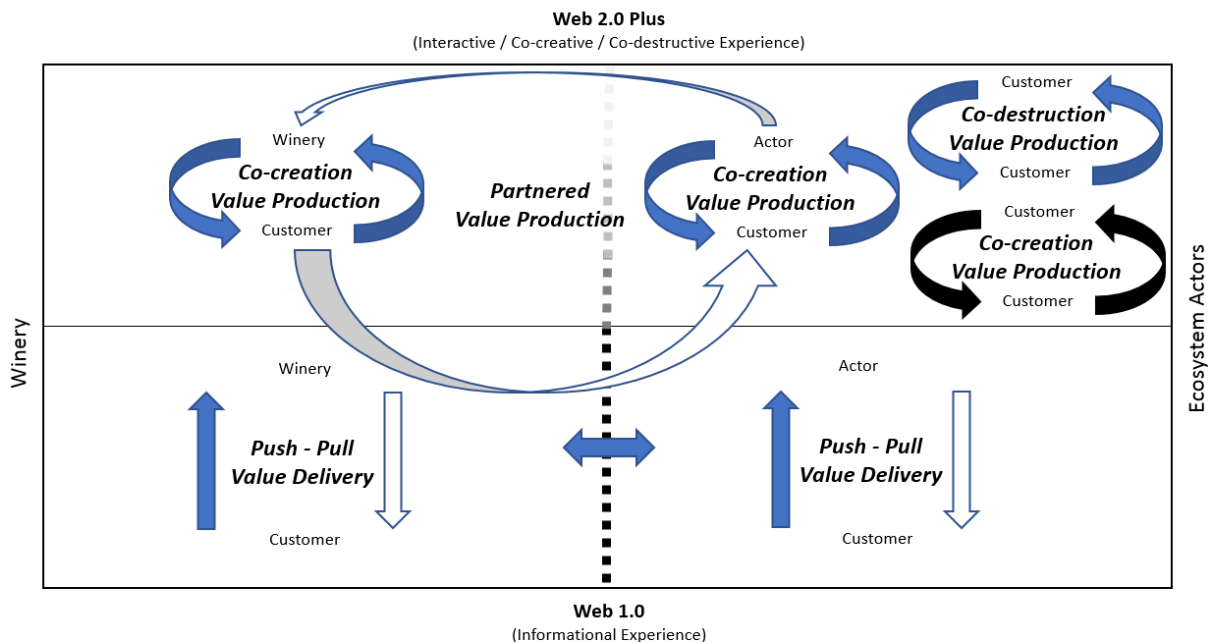


Figure 2

Value Potential in a Smart Wine Tourism Ecosystem



7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

To date, the collective potential for technology-mediated touchpoints in the wine tourist experience remains understudied. The proposed ecosystem maps provide a systematic way for wine tourism researchers to identify gaps and to situate their research contributions within a smart wine tourism ecosystem. As we advance this research agenda, researchers will be better positioned to advise practitioners in how to move to Web 2.0 and other advanced technologies.

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