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The changing face of the tour guide: one-way communicator to choreographer to co-creator of the tourist experience

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The Changing Face of the Tour Guide: One-way Communicator to Choreographer to Co-Creator of the Tourist Experience

ABSTRACT

Thirty years after Cohen's seminal work on tour guiding, the role(s) played by and skills required of tour guides continue to evolve. As 'experience' has come to be considered central to tourism, research on the guide as communicator and experience-broker has expanded. Guides broker experience in at least four domains – physical access, understanding, encounters and empathy. This conceptual paper examines, via the literature particularly on the mediatory and brokering roles of the tour guide and its intersections with social, economic and political trends, how and why the guide's role is changing. Together these bodies of literature on guiding and on societal trends are used to underpin a typology of future guided tour experiences distinguished by the target market, style of guiding and use of communication, with varying outcomes for the tourist. To meet the needs and expectations of 21st century tourists and the challenges of the global communication environment, tour guides need to become more highly skilled experience-brokers, including embracing technology to choreograph memorable experiences. To satisfy tourists in search of personalised and meaningful experiences, guides in some cases need to actively engage tourists in the co-creation of their own guided tour experiences. The typology provides a management and research framework for examining these relationships and their consequences.

Keywords: tour guide; experience-broker; co-creation; information and communication technology

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Introduction

Thirty-five years ago, Schmidt (1979: 441) defined a guided tour as “a form of tourism where the itinerary is fixed and known beforehand, and [involving] some form of planning and direct participation by agents apart from the tourists themselves”. As such, a tour guide has been defined as a person, usually a professional, who guides groups (and sometimes individuals) around venues or places of interest such as natural areas, historic buildings and sites, and landscapes, interpreting the cultural and natural heritage in an inspiring and entertaining manner (adapted from European Federation of Tour Guides Associations 1998). Subsequent research on tour guiding has gone some way towards illuminating what tour guides do and the range of skills they need, including communication and interpretation.

That said, the emphasis in the above definition remains on one-way communication, positioning the *guide as presenter and entertainer*, and the tour group as the audience. In the meantime, much has changed over the past three decades in our understanding of the tourist experience and, as will be illustrated later in the paper, in the context in which guided tours are now developed, marketed and delivered. Prior to the early 1970s the tourism literature was largely focussed on tourism destinations and products. MacCannell’s (1976) and Cohen’s (1979) work launched decades of exploration and debate among scholars regarding the tourist experience as a construct, but it was not until Pine and Gilmore (1999) published *The Experience Economy*, arguing that memorable experiences are the key to competitive advantage and sustainability of any service provider, that the construct of experience was widely embraced as central to tourism. Pine and Gilmore (1999) posited that businesses should be perceived as ‘theatres’ and service personnel as ‘performing artists’. This new perspective is evident in the “performance turn” in the tourism literature where, like Pine and Gilmore, dramaturgical metaphors are used to describe how tourism occurs through encounters and enactments (Ek, Larsen, Hornskov, and Mansfeldt 2008; Pearce 2011). According to Pearce (2011: 3), the contributing components to the tourist experience as it is now understood are “the sensory inputs, the affective reactions, the cognitive abilities to react to and understand the setting, the actions undertaken and the relevant relationships which define the participants’ world”. Pearce likens the nature of the tourist experience to music produced by an orchestra where there are multiple sections each of which has its own elements, contributing different components at different times.

More recently some scholars have observed and even advocated that the tourist be empowered to take a more active role as a creative, interactive agent (Richards and Wilson 2006) and co-creator of tourist spaces (Ek et al. 2008; Mossberg 2007). Ek et al. (2008) extend the dramaturgical metaphor to include not only service personnel but also tourists as performers who actively, corporeally, technically and socially perform and produce experiences, while Richards and Raymond (2000) argue that consumers are increasingly looking for more engaging, interactive experiences which can help them personalise and create meaning.

In summary, the tourism literature now widely embraces experience-centred tourism (Uriely 2005) and describes tourist experiences as not only entertaining and memorable (Oh, Fiore and Jeoung 2007; Tung and Ritchie 2011), but in some cases interactive and personal phenomena highly influenced by individual consumers seeking to create meaning (McIntosh and Siggs 2005; Uriely 2005). This suggests the need for a fresh look at guided tours and at the communicative role of the guide; traditional one-way communication appears too limiting in an experience- and consumer-centred tourism industry.

This paper is based on a systematic review of 280 research publications on tour guides and tour guiding, most having been published post-1990 (Weiler and Black 2015), and in particular on the subset of 146 empirical studies and conceptual papers identified in scholarly journals. Several authors of this body of tour guiding literature have noted the need for a shift in tour guiding communication from presenter/entertainer to an experience focus, and have described the need to view tour group members as active participants and the tour guide as orchestrating or choreographing the experience (Edensor 1998, as cited by Beedie 2003). This paper assesses the capacity of guides to do this by drawing mainly on the body of research on *guides as experience-brokers*. Largely focused on cultural brokering and social mediation and consisting of 28 research papers most of which were published in scholarly journals, this literature is the point of departure for the present paper. We first review this research on the mediatory/brokering roles of the guide, drawing also on key literature on visitor satisfaction with guides and guided tours, to highlight the domains in which guides are required to broker experiences. We then present a selection of trends, particularly technological and socio-demographic trends, that are shaping and potentially threatening the value and sustainability of guided tours, as a basis for arguing that guides may need to re-invent themselves if they are to continue to be relevant in the 21st century and add value to the tourist experience. The capacity of guides to acquire and adapt their communication approach and skills in response to these trends is central to their future and that of the guided tour itself.

The Guide as Experience-Broker

For their recent book *Tour Guiding Research: Insights, Issues and Implications*, Weiler and Black (2015) used search engines and library databases to identify peer-reviewed journal papers, book chapters, conference papers, textbooks, doctoral-level theses and some grey literature on tour guiding. A critical review of this literature uncovered a body of research on mediation/brokering (e.g. Cohen 1985; Dahles 2002; Holloway 1981; Jensen 2010; Macdonald 2006; Scherle and Nonnenmann 2008; Weiler and Yu 2007; for others, see Weiler and Black 2015), as well as on visitors' satisfaction with guided tours (e.g. Arnould and Price 1993; Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland 2011; Bowie and Chang 2005; Chang 2006; Holloway 1981; Huang, Hsu and Chan 2010; Hughes 1991; Wolf, Stricker, and Hagenloh 2013; Wong 2001; for others, see Weiler and Black 2015), that together provide a platform from which to examine how the guide's brokering role is and could be used to facilitate memorable experiences for tour participants. In the present paper, the terms 'mediator' and 'broker' are used interchangeably to include any active attempts by a guide to broker the experience, and may range from decisions about where and when to access a site, community or destination, to verbal communication, to role-modelling, to intervening and controlling what tourists see, hear and do. In the scholarly literature on tour guiding, the focus to date has been on mediation between visitors and destinations (host communities and environments) rather than on mediation within tour groups or indeed mediation of an individual's inner journey or experience, a point to which we return later in the paper.

It is worth that most, if not all, tourist experiences are highly mediated by both personal (human) and non-personal (often self-directed) media (Jennings and Weiler 2006) including but not limited to guidebooks, websites, signs, visitor centres, podcasts and social media pages. In addition to tour guides who are formally employed to act as mediators/brokers, there are many others who formally and informally mediate, such as taxi and bus drivers, local residents and friends and relatives.

The body of research on tour guides' mediation and brokering does point to some distinct dimensions or domains of experience-brokering. Macdonald (2006) distinguishes between *communicative* mediation (influencing how tourists understand a site or destination) and *interactional* mediation (influencing how, where, when and with whom tourists interact with host people and environments). Weiler and Yu (2007: 15) categorise cultural mediation into three domains or areas of influence: mediating physical *access*, mediating cognitive/affective access or *understanding* via the provision of information (roughly equivalent to Macdonald's communicative mediation), and mediating social access by facilitating the opportunity for *encounters* (roughly

equivalent to Macdonald's interactional mediation). Finally, McGrath (2007) highlights *emotional access* (empathy for host people/communities/cultures) as a fourth area that tour guides can influence as part of mediation, including empathy for historical people and cultures.

These researchers collectively investigated guiding in a range of mainly intercultural or heritage guiding contexts (Weiler and Black, 2015). Several of the researchers observed that mediation can both facilitate and inhibit tourist access and thus can contribute to a positive but also sometimes a negative experience across these domains.

While all empirical studies on mediation and brokering have limitations, collectively they illustrate the full range of mediatory roles played by the guide, particularly vis-à-vis the destination. Drawing on all of these schemas, Weiler and Black (2015) suggest the following framework within which to examine mediation by tour guides: (1) brokering physical access, (2) brokering encounters (interactions), (3) brokering understanding (intellectual access) and (4) brokering empathy (emotional access). The following sections highlight where research on mediation/brokering has focussed on each of these domains of influence. As already foreshadowed, aspects of mediation and brokering not evident in the literature such as tourist self-development and within-tour mediation are revisited later in the paper.

Domain 1: Brokering Physical Access

Macdonald (2006) and Weiler and Yu (2007) acknowledge that guides broker physical access to places and spaces, while Arnould, Price, and Tierney (1998: 94) outline how guides provide a "cocoon of civilization" through which adventure tourists can experience the wilderness. Beedie (2003) describes mountain guides as gatekeepers with technical and logistical know-how upon which adventure tourists depend for safety. Guides are important in staging the physical experience, including channelling and controlling tourists to be in the right place at the right time. They do this not only by physically manoeuvring tour groups but also by what Arnould et al. (1998) refer to as communicative staging; that is, by controlling what and how they present and interpret to tourists. In what MacCannell (1973) calls staged authenticity, guides can focus on the 'front stage', they can introduce tourists to real and authentic backstages in response to tourists' desire for authenticity or they can construct a pseudo 'backstage' that gives tourists the impression of authenticity. In other words, tour guides can mediate physical access by not only facilitating what tourists see and experience but also by determining what is not revealed to tourists (Hollaway 1981).

In a cross-cultural context, Howard, Thwaites, and Smith (2001) found that Indigenous tour guides at an Australian national park mediated (limited) physical access to sites through the use of both communication and role-modelling. Guides can also broker physical access by providing tourists with opportunities to use all of their senses to appreciate the host culture and share and experience local stories, music and food (Weiler and Yu 2007).

Domain 2: Brokering Encounters

As originally highlighted by Cohen (1985), tour guides can play an important role in mediating social interaction between tour group members and host communities. This has its challenges, particularly when there are cultural, social and economic disparities between tour group members, the guide and the host community. Both Macdonald (2006) and Weiler and Yu (2007) stress that mediation involves brokering interactions between the group and host communities, for example by providing language translation and facilitating two-way communication. Guides can also limit tourists' interactions with local people by drawing a group's attention inwards toward the guide and the tour group rather than outwardly directing it to the host community (Holloway 1981; Cohen 1985). Tour guides can passively or actively mediate external encounters between tourists and host communities and between tourists and staff working in hotels and tourist attractions. There is evidence of local guides in particular acting as a go-between and language broker, and as role models for appropriate environmental, social and cultural behaviour (Gurung, Simmons, and Devlin 1996; Jensen 2010; Ormsby and Mannle 2006; Salazar 2006; Weiler and Yu 2007), although all of this is often difficult for guides who are not "local" with sufficient understanding of and connections in the host environment.

While Cohen (1985) acknowledged that guides can also mediate interaction among tour group members, there has been little research focusing on the *social* mediatory role of the guide (compared to the cultural mediatory role) (Jensen 2010; Macdonald 2006) and no research has focused on the guide's role in mediating *within* tour groups (Weiler and Black 2015). The latter is thus not explored in the present paper but is highlighted as an avenue for future research.

Domain 3: Brokering Understanding

The most researched domain of mediation is the guide as a broker of understanding (Macdonald 2006; Weiler and Yu 2007) or intellectual access (McGrath 2007). Tour guides are

considered by some to be the quintessential intercultural mediators of the tourism industry (Scherle and Kung 2010; Scherle and Nonnenmann 2008). In the former paper, the authors refer to the guides' informal and friendly communication with local people and their interpretation of local behaviours and customs as brokering cultural understanding. Tour guides can mediate understanding by using information and enrichment as a tool for conveying the significance of a place or site (Ap and Wong 2001; Bras 2000; Hughes 1991). Often their multi-lingual skills bridge communication gaps. Many of the techniques used by guides to foster understanding and appreciation are well-known interpretive techniques such as non-verbal communication, asking questions, making use of anecdotes, examples, analogies and personal references, and using props (e.g. artefacts and photos from the past).

Similarly, Howard et al. (2001) concluded in their case study of Indigenous guides that guides mediated access to information (understanding) through the use of interpretive techniques and role-modelling, but also by challenging stereotypes and tourists' misconceptions about Australian Aboriginal culture. The guides' cultural brokering role revolved largely around communicating and interpreting local cultural values, both those of the site and those of Aboriginal society more generally.

There are also studies that report guides as potentially negative mediators, in the sense of inhibiting rather than fostering understanding. In Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Dahles (2002) found little evidence of the use of cultural mediation by guides to enhance the tourist experience. She attributes this to the political regime at the time, leading to tour guides being trained and directed to present a specific political commentary to tourists that promoted the government's views. The guides' performances were thus both staged and routinised, potentially limiting tourists' understanding. A similar conclusion was drawn by Mitchell's (1996) ethnographic case study of Malta. In an in-depth case study that analysed the training and practice of tour guides, Mitchell demonstrates the critical role played by guides in creating and perpetuating positive images of a modern and highly European Malta and Maltese culture, expressly to support the country's application for accession into the European Union (EU). This is another example of a tourist's understanding of Malta's heritage and culture being highly mediated by the guides. A final example of potentially negative mediation of understanding is McGrath's (2007) critique of tour guiding of archaeological sites in Peru. She notes that the predominant type of guiding is the transfer of knowledge rather than cultural mediation as understood in a Western context.

While acknowledging that much of the research that underpins contemporary approaches to tour guide communication and interpretation has been in Western contexts, a body of research is

emerging about effective and appropriate communication in other contexts such as Chinese culture (Xu, Cui, Ballantyne and Packer 2012). These studies reveal that the application of interpretation principles can be but are not always appropriate for experience-brokering in other cultures and may require adaptation.

Domain 4: Brokering Empathy

The domain of mediation that is least developed conceptually is that of empathy or emotion. Macdonald (2006) provides a useful historical review of early research focused on the role of cultural broker, highlighting a gulf of understanding and a certain lack of empathy between the culture of the visitor and the visited. Generally the term 'broker' implies action that bridges this divide, mainly as a means to enhance the experience of the tourist. McGrath suggests that guides need to help visitors "get under the skin" (2007: 376) of visited areas rather than just providing physical and intellectual access. This can include brokering empathy and affinity not only for people and cultures but also for places and landscapes, by "setting up extraordinary aesthetic experiences" (Beedie 2003: 157). Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry (2011), in their case study of a southern US plantation house museum, provide an evocative illustration of how the emotional connection facilitated by museum guides can also lead to empathy for historical figures and sectors of society. They observed how guides use interpretive techniques such as storytelling to create not only cognitive but affective connections with the White American plantation owners. However, through selectivity in narrative content and in how and where they move visitors through the site they actually fail to create empathy for the enslaved community.

Although words such as script, narrative, story-telling, staging and interpretation are often used by these researchers in describing the techniques used by tour guides, Beedie (2003) is one of the few to refer specifically to the choreography of the guide. Drawing on the metaphor of a theatrical performance, he cites Edensor as having first developed the idea of the guide as choreographer in the context of tourists visiting the Taj Mahal (Edensor 1998, as cited by Beedie 2003). In the case of guides brokering the experience of climbing a mountain, Beedie (2003: 156) describes how the guide "choreographs the detail of the experience ... where to walk, when to stop, how the group are positioned on and off rope, how to walk and conserve energy, how to move around obstacles" In addition to safety considerations, he argues that this is done to "frame" parts of the experience, to "reinforce communal solidarity", and "to provide space for contemplation" (p.157).

These bodies of research on experience-brokering illustrate that tour guides can and do use their communication skills to broker the experiences of their tour group, facilitating physical access, encounters, understanding and empathy on the part of their tour group. In fact, these examples of tour guides as experience-brokers illustrate the evolution and sophistication of the tour guide as a communicator, having moved well beyond the role of entertainer and one-way provider of information implied in definitions of the guide still used by international tourist guide associations (World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations 2014). The literature on experience-brokering provides many concrete examples of guides using interpretation to choreograph experiences, not only through the telling of anecdotes and stories but also through the use of role-plays and drama (Davidson and Black 2007; Skibins et al. 2012), and in some cases through involving their clients as active participants in choreographing their own experience (Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009).

It is evident that much of a tour guide's experience-brokering relies on his/her verbal and non-verbal communication with tour groups and in some cases with host communities. However, many social, political and economic factors are influencing and challenging the traditional communication roles of the tour guide and the guided experience. The next section of the paper overviews some of these trends, identified as critical by interpretation and tour guiding experts in an on-line survey and a follow-up workshop conducted by the authors (Black and Weiler 2013). Focus is particularly on information and communication technology and changing tourist profiles and preferences that are shaping the way guides may need to deliver their tours in the future. In particular, technological trends are challenging the extent and the way in which guides will be seen as (and will play a role) central to facilitating physical access, encounters, understanding, and empathy both pre-departure and on-site. These developments include the widespread availability of the internet, social media, mobile devices and other digital media. At the same time, the profile of the tourist is changing, becoming more diverse and more demanding. After examining some of these trends in the following section, we return to the issue of guides' communicative role(s) in order to broker memorable experiences and engage clients.

Trends and Implications for Tour Guiding

The Growth and Availability of Information and Communication Technology

The so-called digital revolution beginning with the explosion of the internet / world-wide web has influenced and changed human communications and global productivity, providing a mass communication and social networking platform unprecedented in history (Bosco 2006). Studies have

shown a phenomenal penetration of the internet globally (ABS 2014; ITU 2013; Pease et al. 2007). For example, in Australia the number of households with access to the internet at home continues to increase representing 83% of all households in 2012-2013 (up from 6% in 1996) (ABS 2014).

Following the internet's inception as a mass provider of information via search engines such as Google, the appearance of other types of services have allowed for user-generated content via social media, including Wikipedia, YouTube, MySpace, FaceBook, and Twitter, that are reshaping the tourism industry (Buhalis 2000; Pearce 2011), creating a wide range of opportunities and as well as threats for stakeholders including tour guides. Digital media are used to learn about consumers; to provide them with information; for communication, transactions and relationships between various sectors of the tourism industry; and to influence tourist behaviours and experiences (Buhalis 2000; Hannam et al. 2014; Pease et al. 2007). From a tourist experience perspective, probably the most important advance of the past decade has been the development of user-friendly interfaces (Hannam et al. 2014) such as smartphones, tablets and MP3 players. The services enabled by these devices and web-based services have expanded communications including apps, podcasts, vodcasts, peer-to-peer networking, blogs, wikis, tag clouds, and smart cards.

Buhalis (2000) highlights many ways that digital technology enhances consumer satisfaction such as user-friendly and customised interfaces, more information and greater choice. These translate into greater involvement of consumers in planning their travel, building their own itineraries and managing their own experiences. Evidence suggests that, empowered by new tools such as mobile devices, consumers will increasingly seek and co-create personalised experiences (Anacleto et al. 2014).

Over the past decade electronic media and new technologies are also increasingly being used by the tourism industry to mediate and enrich the on-site tourist experience (Gretzel et al. 2011; Hannam et al. 2014; Kang and Gretzel, 2012; Wang et al. 2012) including mobile electronic "tour guides" that are interactive and highly personalised such as via smartphones. Technology-assisted interpretation enroute and on-site are becoming more common, including highly interactive visitor centres, phone apps, podcasts in the language of the visitor's choice (Kang and Gretzel 2012) and Global Positioning System-triggered multi-media "guided tours" (Chu, Lin, and Chang 2012; Wolf, Stricker, and Hagenloh 2013). These devices allow the tourist to 'see backstage' and redistribute the power and control of staging and accessing experiences to the tourist. More than technological devices, they are social objects that allow tourists via social media to record and share their experiences and emotions, which in turn influences and informs others (Hannam et al. 2014;

Jacobsen and Munar 2012; Xiang and Gretzel 2010). These technological changes and developments have implications for guided tours and tour guides' communication.

Socio-demographic trends: Changing Profiles and Preferences of Tourists

The volume of international travel is predicted to grow despite any slowdown in economies and growth in global conflict and risk. For example, in 1950, 25 million people took an international holiday; a hundred years from now it is predicted to be 4.7 billion people (Yeoman 2008).

While overall volume is likely to grow, many socio-economic and demographic trends will potentially change the practice of tour guiding in the future. For example, indicators show that the world economic order is shifting, with Mexico, Brazil, Russia, India and China (MBRIC) emerging as the dominant economies (Stancil and Dadush 2010; Yeoman 2008). Personal prosperity is a key driver in modern society, thus growth in spending power of consumers from these emerging nations is driving growth in outbound tourism from these countries.

Paralleling this trend, Buhalis (2000) argues that personal prosperity has produced a 'new' technologically-savvy tourist who is a more knowledgeable, experienced and "... emboldened consumer-citizen, a more demanding, sophisticated and informed actor with intensified expectations of, for instance, quality innovation and premium choices, and efficient and ever-personalised customer service..." (Yeoman 2008: 23).

Demographic changes will also significantly impact on the future of tourism demand. In most developed countries populations are ageing and there are falling birth rates and increased longevity (United Nations 2014; Yeoman 2008) with increased demand for well-being products and medical tourism (Richter 2000). Up until 2030 most of the growth in tourism will be influenced by baby boomers retiring with their wealth, however post-2030 it is predicted that retirees will lack sufficient funds to travel especially in Europe where there will be pension policy reforms (Yeoman 2008). Generation Y, that is, those born between 1977 and 2003, may form a significant tourist market. This generation by 2020 may well be the leaders, managers and consumers of travel experiences. A study of over 8,000 Gen Y travellers cited by Benckendorff et al. (2010) found that they were intrepid, travelling more often, exploring more destinations, spending more on travel, booking more on the Internet, and getting a lot out of their travel. A number of key societal events are likely to have influenced Gen Y including the digital revolution, global terrorism and global financial uncertainty (Benckendorff et al. 2010), and yet the extent to which they will want to engage the services of

tour guides has not been examined by researchers.

There are many other trends that may well affect experience-brokering, such as the enhanced awareness and pursuit of health and wellness (Smith and Kelly 2006; Voigt, Brown and Howat 2011) and of personal growth and self-development (Devereux and Carnegie 2006; Saunders 2013) as part of travel. Such trends suggest that the guide's brokering of the tourist's 'inner journey' (Picard 2012) may emerge as an equally or more important role than brokering the outer journey. The implications of these and other trends are revisited in the conclusion as fruitful avenues for future research.

Travellers' Expectations Regarding Social and Environmental Responsibility

Scholars have noted a growth in environmental and social conscience of some sectors of the travelling public. For example, Pearce (2011) observes evidence of greater concern and interest in the environment and host communities among some tourists, suggesting that these tourists will be increasingly concerned and interested in environmental issues and will demand social and environmental responsibility from the tourism industry. Yeoman (2008) goes further, arguing that tourists seek visible corporate commitment to tackling the environmental and ethical problems of the day by the industry. Traditionally, it has been difficult for tourists to gain information on the environmental and social responsibility of tourism suppliers, let alone find ways to personally support a local project or cause (O'Brien and Ham 2012), but increasingly tourism businesses recognise the demand for these types of experiences.

There has also been an increase in travel philanthropy and fund raising (Powell and Ham 2008; O'Brien and Ham 2012) that can create valuable opportunities to involve visitors in supporting local projects or causes. Travel philanthropy refers to the goodwill of travellers in supporting the welfare of humankind and the conservation of nature in their travel destinations. Some of today's travellers particularly from developed countries are conscious of the wealth and resource disparity between their own country and developing countries. Volunteering or contributing in some way allows some tourists to make meaning from their travels by giving back to communities. The growth in volunteer tourism is also an example of some tourists' concern about environmental and social issues in host communities (Broad 2003), with many travel companies now offering holidays with a volunteering component or opportunities to donate to foundations set up by these companies (Intrepid Travel 2014; World Expeditions 2014).

Implications and Responses by the Guided Tour Industry

The selected trends reviewed in the foregoing sections, that is, the growth and sophistication of digital technology, the changing profile of the tourist, their desire for meaningful travel experiences and their expectations of environmental and social responsibility, are trends that have been highlighted by interpretation and guided tour experts as being critical for the future of tour guiding (Black and Weiler 2013). In particular, these trends have the potential to influence how guides will interact and communicate in order to broker future tourist experiences.

As evidenced in the review of literature, many tour guides are already well-equipped for and actively engaged in brokering the tourist experience, particularly in terms of gaining physical access. However, technology may be increasingly viewed by some as a substitute for the directional and access services provided by a tour guide, as well as one-way delivery of information, commentary, site interpretation and language translation. Zatori (2013: 125) notes that “Modern digital and web-based technologies allow companies to eliminate the tour guide physically” for these kinds of services. For example, digitised guide books are now available through mobile applications designed for smartphone operators such as Nokia, Apple, Google and Android (Yeoman 2012).

On the other hand, the widespread availability of guidebooks and electronic media for information gathering and navigation for tourists frees up tour guides to progress from the delivery of one-way commentary to a greater emphasis on experience-brokering, particularly the non-physical dimensions of brokering highlighted in the literature: brokering understanding, encounters and empathy. In some contexts, high-quality interpretation and personalised mediation may be the key reasons for employing a guide in the future (McGrath 2007). This underlines the need for the guide’s communication to be innovative and marketed as a service that adds value in ways that technology cannot.

Technology can, of course, be embraced by guides to enhance the delivery of guided tours, such as incorporating podcasts and smartphone apps into their tours. A tour guide’s communication can be interactive with both tourists and host communities, and technology also allows guides to customise the experience to tourists’ needs and expectations. Based on Gen Y’s high use of and familiarity with technology and desire for new experiences, it appears this market segment will be comfortable with and expect the integration of digital media into their travel experiences pre, on-site and post-tour.

Evidence from the literature together with changing socio-economic and demographic trends suggest that future tourists will be more demanding and sophisticated and seek their guides to broker more engaging, interactive experiences that help them personalise and create meaning (Pine

and Gilmore 1999; Richards and Raymond 2000). In the case of Gen Y tourists who are adventurous, enjoy travel and seek meaningful experiences, guides can play an important part in brokering empathy and affinity not only for cultures and communities but also as change agents and facilitators of volunteer experiences.

With regard to tourists' expectations of environmental and social responsibility, guides may be engaged as care-takers and monitors of both tourists and their behaviour, and as information trackers in relation to tourism impacts. Similar to the use of volunteer tourists who engage in data collection for the purposes of monitoring impacts and changes in natural and cultural environments, guides can be trained, equipped and rewarded for such activities. Guided tours are already being used as a tool for change in urban areas for participants to visualise possible futures (Hansson 2009). This type of guided experience is a form of citizen participation where people are being taken through the process of 'experiencing – understanding – taking action'. This is also happening with art tours where some guides are adopting the role of provocateur and change agent by presenting alternative view points and counter-culture narratives. In a similar vein, in Europe young people are employed as guide-activists, guiding and facilitating groups of young people through cities using experiential activities to raise tourists' awareness of environmental and social issues and to engage them in solutions (www.touristsavetheworld.com). Tour guides who can adapt their communication approach to foster environmentally and socially responsible outcomes may well be in greater demand and more highly valued by some tourist segments in the future than guides who simply deliver information or even those who broker interactive experiences that are primarily tourist-focused.

Whether or not assisted by technology, whether targeted at Gen Y or environmentally and socially aware tourists seeking to do something meaningful with their travel, tour guides can channel their communication expertise to personalise, customise and even co-create tours in ways that truly value-add to the tourist experience. The concept of co-creation is relatively new to the tour guiding literature, and is discussed more fully in the following section.

The Guide as Co-creator

As noted at the outset of this paper, much of the literature on tour guides as experience-brokers positions the guide as the choreographer and even the controller of the guided tour experience with the tourist playing a more passive or at best a reactive role. However, as tourists gain experience and confidence, they may seek intellectual or emotional engagement both in the

planning and execution of the guided experience, and some may seek a sense of ownership or control. Rather than leaving these tourist segments to their own devices, tour guides can provide the space and opportunity for these types of experiences. Using the metaphor of a play, Prebensen and Foss (2011), like Beedie (2003), describe tourists as actors and tour companies providing the set, other actors and scenes. These tourists have the capacity and expectation of actively contributing to the design and production of their own experiences (Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009; Richards and Wilson 2006;). In this context, Binkhorst and Den Dekker (2009) argue for a guiding approach that goes beyond choreography; if control is appropriately balanced based on the strength of the actors, the guide can facilitate self-expression and a sense of ownership by tourists, thereby allowing for co-creation of the experience (Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009).

As illustrated in Table 1, co-creation of guided tour experiences requires flexibility, commitment to transparency, openness to dialogue, and investment of time on the part of the tour operator and the guide. In the first instance, the guide needs to invite tourists to actively contribute to constructing the experience and provide avenues for them to do so. This requires communication at an individual and group level before, during and even after the tour. Morgan, Elbe and De Esteban (2009) note that co-creation also requires a mindset by the tourism operator (as well as the guide and tourist) that the product (the tourist experience) will not always be the same, even for tourists on the same tour at the same time. As outlined in column two of Table 1, guides need to develop different communication skill sets involving listening and facilitating rather than presenting and entertaining and this will require a degree of adaptability, creativity and the capacity to innovate that may be strengthened through guide recruitment and selection, together with training, education and professional development. This is an area that requires more attention by researchers, practitioners and educators/trainers.

TABLE 1 HERE

Table 1. Co-creation and Its Implications for Tour Guides

Co-creation experience concept: <i>Adapted from Zatori (2013)</i>	Implications for tour guides: <i>Authors' application of co-creation to tour guides</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essential building blocks of experience co-creation are dialogue, access, and transparency. • Co-creation of experience requires interaction between the consumers and the organisation and is in the organisation's best interest. • Products and services are intermediaries of co-created experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide offers to broker communication between customers and tour company. • Group members are encouraged and acknowledged by the guide for their contribution. • Guide needs to listen and foster open communication among all parties.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations can provide an experience environment for the creation of personalized experiences; the product may be the same but customers can be encouraged to construct different experiences. • The individual consumer and his/her co-creation of the experience (with the company) are at the centre of the value creation process. • Consumers need not stand alone; they can form a consumer community and co-create an experience together. • To enhance experience co-creation with the consumer, organisations should cooperate and network. • The context and the level of consumer involvement will contribute to the sense of ownership, level of personalisation and meaning that the customer takes away from co-creation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide needs to encourage and provide opportunities and examples of how group can value-add to aspects of tour “product”. • The tour guide needs to communicate with tourists individually and as a group to identify expectations, preferably prior to the start of the tour. • Time needs to be allocated at different times for group discussion with the guide about all aspects of the tour experience. • Guide needs to provide time for the group to discuss the tour on their own. • Guide may seek resources outside the company to facilitate the experience. • Guide needs to use tools and strategies to encourage personal reflection by the group. • Guide uses communication during and post-tour to enhance memorability and meaningfulness of the tour. |
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Source: Adapted from Zatori (2013)

The Changing Nature of Tour Guide Communication: A Typology

Drawing on the foregoing review of research on tour guides’ communicative roles in mediating experiences together with current trends, we now turn to mapping the factors that will influence how guides communicate with tourists in the future, against their communication styles, skills and outcomes. This is presented as a typology (Table 2), in recognition that there is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to tour guide communication and in the hope of providing a foundation for further research.

While a commentary or script-based style of communication will continue to suit some guiding contexts and clients including first-time MBRIC travellers, there are at least two contexts in which a radically different style of communication is needed (see Table 2). The first context is an experience-focused group tour, where tourists may be either passive or active participants. In this type of tour, the guide choreographs the experience for the group, and uses verbal, non-verbal, interpretive and mediatory skills to broker physical access for the group, but more importantly to also broker understanding, encounters and empathy. The result is an experience that is both enjoyable and memorable. The second context is a customised or personalised tour, where tourists

must be active participants. The guide together with tourists co-create this type of tour, with the guide once again harnessing his/her communicative, interpretive and mediatory skills but also applying adaptability and improvisational skills. The guide uses these skills to broker the experience on a range of dimensions as shown in Table 2. The result for the tourist is an experience that is enjoyable and memorable but also meaningful, because the tourist has been able to channel the guide's communication toward his/her own needs and interests. In all tour contexts, information and communication technology can value-add to the tour.

TABLE 2 HERE.

Table 2. A Typology of Guided Tours, Tour Guiding Communication and Tourist Outcomes

Type of tour experience:	Examples of target markets:	How tour group is perceived by the guide:	How tour guide is perceived by the tour group:	Tour guide's communication style:	Potential for use of technology as part of the experience :	Communication skills required:	Outcomes for tourists:
Traditional group tour	MBRIC* and other inexperienced travellers	Audience (passive and reactive)	Entertainer/ - guide in control	Commentary/ script	To add value	Presentation skills (verbal and non-verbal)	Enjoyable
Experience-focused group tour	Experienced travellers e.g. baby-boomers	Actors (passive or active)	Choreographer - guide in control	Experience-brokering: especially encounters, understanding, and empathy	To add value	Presentation skills (verbal and non-verbal) plus Interpretation and Mediation skills	Enjoyable and Memorable
Customised / personalised tour	Gen Y; Socially and environmentally responsible travellers	Co-creators (pro-active)	Co-creator - shared control	Variable – customised to groups, individuals and contexts	To add value and customise experiences	Presentation skills (verbal and non-verbal) plus Interpretation and Mediation skills plus Adaptability/improvisation skills	Enjoyable and Memorable and Meaningful

*Mexico, Brazil, Russia, India and China (Yeoman 2008)

The typology presented in Table 2 demonstrates that there is still room for the traditional guided tour, and that there is still a need for guides in all types of tours to communicate in ways that provide an enjoyable experience. However, the previous discussion on the changing nature of tourism, society and technology suggests that guides need to deepen and broaden their communication and experience-brokering, if they are to remain relevant and appealing to the full range of potential clients. The literature on mediation provides a point of departure regarding the skills and techniques required to be a good experience-broker, particularly brokering access, encounters and understanding. The changes in digital technology reviewed in this paper provide challenges as well as opportunities for guide communication, and in particular underline the need for guides to embrace technology in order to add value to the tourist experience.

If the demand for co-created tours continues to grow, it is guides prepared to adapt and improvise their communication who will be best positioned to meet this demand. Mossberg (2007) suggests that professionals in creative industries, such as actors trained in performance, could be useful in roles as educators, entertainers and value creators, and this may well be true of future tour guides.

Conclusions

It is clear that the traditional communicative role of the tour guide as a one-way presenter and entertainer is inadequate for the marketplace of 21st century tourism. The literature points to the value of an experience-centred approach for improving and maintaining the relevance of guided tours and thus to the need for guides to be equipped to deliver enjoyable, memorable and in some cases interactive and personally-relevant experiences. Together with responding to technological and socio-demographic trends, guides need to utilise new and diverse communication approaches. The future of the tour guiding industry requires guides to choreograph and in some cases co-create experiences, which in turn requires guides to adapt their communication approach and skills to match the context and client expectations.

There are several avenues requiring more research in order to better advance the tour guide as an effective communicator in the 21st century. A nuanced understanding of the guide as choreographer, and particularly in relation to brokering empathy with host communities as well as relationship building within tour groups, is fundamental and in need of in-depth research. In addition, virtually no research has examined the guide as co-creator, as discussed in the final section

of the paper. The antecedents and outcomes of these two approaches to tour guiding as depicted in Table 2 need further exploration and testing.

In addition to the selected trends explored in this paper, there are others that may well impact tour guiding. For example, there is evidence that some tourists may look to their guide to facilitate or support a personal inner journey toward self-development. All guides need to be cognisant that, especially for longer tours, the journey for the individual participant may be an inner one as well as an outer one. While the roles of the guide in brokering dimensions of the outer experience have been researched, the guide as broker or facilitator of the tourist's inner journey has been largely unexplored.

In some cases tourists may be searching for personal meaning, intellectual or spiritual enlightenment, or life change, and thus guides may need to develop skills as change agents. The outdoor education literature has engaged with the concept of personal transformation for many years (Mortlock 2011) and may offer insights to researchers and to guides wishing to enhance their capacity to foster tourists' personal growth. It may well be that transformation can be an outcome for both experienced-focused tours and customised/personalised (co-created) tours. That said, not every tourist seeks to be transformed or changed and even a tour designed to be transformational may not achieve this for all tour group members.

In conclusion, the emergence of trends such as changing technologies, socio-demographics and tourists' expectations comes with the need for broadening how the communicative role of the guide is conceptualised. Many tourists want not only enjoyable but memorable and in some cases meaningful experiences, including the opportunity to co-create experiences that are customised and personalised to their interests and needs. Research that can elucidate this new approach to communication by tour guides is central if tour guides in the 21st century are to maintain relevance and guided tours are to be sustained.

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