



There is hardly any doubt that ICT (internet and communication technology) enjoys primacy in tourism marketing. We can all easily agree with this statement and we can observe this phenomenon at most tourist spots. For example, we use Booking.com when we look for appropriate accommodation at a tourist destination. Further, the software used by Booking.com can automatically provide a host of transportation options from an airport to the place of accommodation. The taxi driver you hail at the airport uses his smartphone to communicate courteously with you. The smartphone can immediately translate a message in one's mother tongue into the local language of the area being visited.

Thanks to up-to-date information and advanced communication technology, we do not feel any stress even when we first visit a foreign country. This kind of revolution in tourism can currently be observed throughout the world. According to the outstanding report on future trends, *Deep Shift*, published by the World Economic Forum, mobile phones will begin to be implanted in our body for commercial purposes by 2023. Once that happens, there is little doubt that all of us will use the implanted smart phones without hesitation. The highly publicized report declares that everyone will be able to access information from all over the world. In addition, the neural network of our neocortex will be replaced by the web of information on the net because the creation of knowledge will occur not in the brain but in the electric neural networks on the internet. Concurrently, there will be a huge accumulation of knowledge being produced on the net.

However, it is not easy to describe what we have gained from this revolution. The smartphone was first introduced in Japan in early 2007. Since then, our information environment has changed drastically—from an economy of scarcity to one of scale—currently 70 % of the Japanese population owns a smartphone. It can provide limitless information available on the net. However, have we become happy and better off in our daily lives? Sadly, the answer is “no” because we mainly utilize the information available, instead of creating new knowledge. Knowledge is networked information and can be used to do something in our life. I am not saying that most of the information we use is meaningless. However, it is hard to understand the meaning of something

when we collect information. What is important for us to enjoy fulfilling life is to find the reason for doing something.

Based on the understating of the above relationship between information and knowledge, we principally collect and use information, such as the timetable of flights or trains, during our travel. In this sense, we are the consumers of information, regardless of the place we visit. Further, we merely notice this consumption because there is a huge supply of information and the sophisticated computer systems provide more information than was possible before the onset of the information age. However, we sometimes forget the purpose of our travel. This means that we need to ask ourselves the reason for our travel or why we chose a particular destination. Knowing is important for maintaining comfortable travel; however, we need to ponder to find the reason for our travel.

Back home, we need to think about the future of our tourism. The development of modern tourism has kept pace with economic development. The growing economy and support from up-to-date ICT systems offers the best chance for a large number of middle class people to experience comfortable tourism. Our system of tourism brings the greatest satisfaction and happiness to the greatest number of tourists. In this situation, what we need to reconsider is the social meaning of tourism. This means that we should revisit the efficiency supported by ICT and the cost effectiveness brought about by the overabundance of information. If we are now traveling into the knowledge of tourism, there must also be a journey to the tourism of knowledge. With the end of patience, we can reach the destination.

About the author

Asami Shikida is a leading member of the Japanese association of tourism studies. He had work experience as an expert in tourism management for a sustainable regional and community development. Currently, he is a Professor of Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST). He has been actively involved in ecotourism and community resource based tourism strategy research and community development through tourism with particular reference to the rural and urban creative relationship.