

08 - 14 May 2016 Wonderful Outdoors Wallonia : WOW

An Assessment on the Use of Social Media in
Tourism in the Area of Wallonia



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Introduction

Digital marketing is an umbrella term used to define the marketing of products or services using a range of digital technologies. This mainly includes internet activity, digital advertising, the myriad of social media channels that exist today and of course the smartphone revolution. The latter has become increasingly important in tourism as smartphone sales have soared in the last ten years across the globe, becoming essential travel companions in many established markets.

This study visit to Wallonia in Belgium was completed in May 2016. The Digital and Social Media case study group was required to identify how digital marketing and technology was being used by the many tourism businesses and destinations that we visited throughout Wallonia and assess their effectiveness.

The study only focused on those elements of digital marketing that were clearly evident or that we were exposed to. This allowed us to identify examples of best practice and discuss how improvements could be made to enhance the promotion of tourism assets, and how to improve the visitor experience on location.

We were also able to document how the experience of the study visit had benefited us as a group of tourism professionals. Discussions within the group around some of the key themes and issues as to how to use social media in a productive way have contributed significantly to our own professional development and this has been documented in the report under 'key learnings'.

Background

Belgium is a federal state made up of three communities and three regions, each with considerable autonomy which led in our experience to a highly bureaucratic and administratively burdened tourism industry. Wallonia is one of Belgium's three regions. It is predominantly French-speaking, accounts for 55% of the territory of Belgium, and a third of its population. Unlike Flanders, the Walloon Region was not merged with the French Community of Belgium which is the political entity that is responsible for matters related mainly to culture and education.

The Walloon Region is governed by the Walloon Parliament which even has its own foreign policy; including the signing of treaties. Wallonia is also home to about 80% of the population of the French Community of Belgium, and as such has political responsibility for matters related mainly to culture and education. However Wallonia is also home to the small German-speaking Community of Belgium in the east, which has its own government and parliament for culture-related issues. Although in Flanders, the Flemish Region assigned all of its powers to the Flemish Community, the Walloon Region remains in principle distinct and independent from the French Community, and vice versa. Despite this, the French Community's parliament is almost entirely composed of members of Wallonia's and Brussels' parliaments, so the bodies are governed by the same individuals. (Source: Wikipedia)

Additionally, the French Community of Belgium has controversially begun referring to itself exclusively as the 'Wallonia-Brussels Federation' to emphasize the links between the French Community, Wallonia and Brussels.

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This culturally and linguistically divided region of Belgium is therefore significantly challenged when trying to put together a strategically comprehensive tourism strategy that can take into consideration the various sources and culturally sensitive requirements of the community.

As a backdrop to this report, it may be beneficial to place digital marketing in Belgium into context. There are a number of references online that provide a detailed insight into the current and future projected digital landscape in the country, two of which we have included below:

1. http://www.referencedata.be/en/press_release.html
2. https://www.slideshare.net/TheReference/digital-marketing-landscape-in-belgium?from_m_app=ios

It may be useful to refer to these documents before considering the findings from our study visit, which will now be outlined below.

Methodology

The Case Study intends to investigate the attitudes and approaches to Social Media and Digital Marketing in the tourism businesses that we encounter. The aim of which is to develop a qualitative understanding as to how the Wallonia region uses Social Media in order to engage with its visitors.

The following questions have been drafted to help in our assessment and are based on a SWAT analysis.

Questions

1. Did the business demonstrate any social media presence and did it display any innovation or good practice?
2. What in our opinion could have been done better or enhanced?
3. Were there any missed opportunities or areas requiring any further development?
4. Did we feel there were barriers to Social Media involvement? And if so what were they and if possible why did they exist?

A diary of the visits to businesses conducted was kept by the group. This is attached at Annex A detailing our findings of how Social Media and Digital Marketing are used and its effectiveness. Recommendations and Key Learnings were added subsequently as a result of group discussion.

Findings

Attached at Annex A: Diary of a Social Media Tourist

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Conclusions

Wallonia is Belgium's best kept secret! It is a spectacular and beautiful area in which to enjoy the great outdoors.

Despite this, it was clear that many of the business we met understood that there is a need to engage with customers and market themselves more effectively using digital media. However, it was also apparent that not all the businesses believed in the value of such activity or felt that there would be sufficient return on investment to warrant the effort required to set up and manage.

Belgium's history has left it scarred and at times uncertain as to who it really is and what Belgium the "brand" stands for. As a country and a region it has to contend with different languages and competing agendas all of which adds to the complexity of marketing the area. In addition the many layers of government and bureaucracy make collaboration difficult and progress slow. This often creates duplication from region to region and a closed approach to marketing their own area rather than looking at a more 'joined up' approach across the whole of Belgium.

There were some excellent examples of how social media could be used to engage, educate and inspire the visitor by both large internationally renowned attractions as well as small family owned businesses. These were relatively isolated incidents in our travels across the region and were in stark contrast to the more traditional approach followed by many of the businesses we visited. Although many businesses were making some effort to engage digitally with their customers, their involvement was often not thought through, lacked impact and commitment and most importantly strategic focus.

Our impression was that Belgium still lags behind some other countries within the European Union in terms of digital maturity and e-commerce. Certainly we felt that their reliance upon traditional paper and print based marketing products reflected more closely the tourism industry of the UK some 10-15 years ago. Given that Tourism seemed to be very well funded by both regional and central government we must look elsewhere for reasons as to why Digital Marketing has not been more proactively encouraged among tourism operators. Speculation might even suggest that because funding of traditional marketing methods is still available there is no incentive to be more inventive in the Digital arena in the way that UK businesses have had to be. In addition, the complexity of Belgium's political and administrative structures and the laws surrounding E-commerce also show how unready the Belgian economy may be to embrace a digital approach to marketing. Belgium does not allow overtime or weekend working hours in certain businesses such as distribution centres. One might even suggest that a climate of mistrust permeates and efforts to build trusted alliances are in the early stages of development. Finally, the impact of a rigid job market and high taxes may also hinder the trust in developing a digital strategy.

It would appear that the Government is aware of many of these issues and has devised a plan to ensure that by 2020 Belgium is in the top digital three of the European Digital Economy and Society Index and for the digital revolution to deliver 50,000 new jobs in a variety of sectors. (Source: <http://www.digitalbelgium.be/en#pillars>)

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Summary

Technology is undoubtedly a key driver for change. The speed with which information is now disseminated has made the world smaller. Embracing change and learning to adapt is key to success and potentially survival in this fast moving industry and if tourism businesses in Wallonia are to continue to compete in the world market place they will need to embrace this change.

Innovation and creating an 'experience' must now be their aim as opposed to selling a product. This will require a significant change of attitude and approach among many of the businesses we encountered and will only be embraced once the businesses fully recognise the advantages that digital marketing can offer businesses operating in the tourism industry.

The study trip to Wallonia provided our group with the opportunity to reflect upon the value of Digital Marketing and Social Media in the tourism market and to our own businesses in particular. All our businesses are actively engaged in Social Media as an integrated part of a wider Marketing Strategy; by observing the growth of such activities in Wallonia we were able to reassess the value and importance of such activities in our own businesses in an objective way. As a result through peer group discussion and observation we developed new skills, techniques and acquired new friends and most importantly time to reflect.

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The Authors

Yvonne Park: an experienced Manager of Corporate Hotels & Visitor Attractions. Board member Love Loch Lomond Tourism association in Loch Lomond

Beth MacLeod: owner of a four star country house hotel on the banks of Loch Long and currently Chair of Love Loch Lomond – the regional Destination Organisation, where she is actively involved in helping develop the destination’s tourism potential to enhance the customer experience.

Jack Harris: founder of Tally Ho Cycle Tours providing a fun and unique experiences of London on two wheels. Tally Ho Cycles consistently ranks in the top ten London activities on TripAdvisor.

Andrew Lloyd Hughes: a highly experienced tourism marketing professional with particular expertise in destination management and the application of digital media in contemporary destination marketing and interpretation.

Richard Drakeley: Richard has been involved in developing and promoting high profile and emerging tourism destinations at both a strategic and operational level for over 16 years

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Annex A:

Diary of a Social Media Tourist



Figure 1: Digital Wall in Brussels Hotel

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Day One: Monday 9th May 2016

The Tournai Tourist Information Centre

Website: <http://www.visittournai.be/pratique/office-du-tourisme/article/tourist-office?lang=en>

The Tournai Tourist Information Centre hosted us for the first day of our tour with a series of presentations following a short educational film on the history of this historic town.

The Centre itself was well appointed with digital materials; upon arrival we were seated in front of an A/V presentation screen in a theatre layout and shown a video about the history of Tournai. This was dubbed into English albeit a little hard to follow due to the pace of the presentation. Within the main lobby of the Centre there was a 'selfie wall' to encourage sharing of visitor photos showcasing the visitor centre experience.

In the conference room where the presentations took place there was a clearly positioned sign promoting free Wi-Fi along with the access key. A nice touch however we felt it was a missed opportunity, as by changing the default router password to something more memorable could have assisted in reinforcing the brand location, e.g. Wallonia/Tournai etc

The presentations were focused on the *Introduction to the Year of the Bike Wallonia*, *The Velo Scheme*, *Chemins du Rail*, and *Points Noeuds* (Bike Path Junctions).

Recommendations

The presentations seemed to indicate that the tourism industry in Wallonia was still heavily dependent on print media for marketing to trade. For example it was considered not professional to direct people to a website preferring to have something in print to hand over.

In addition there appeared to be a lot of duplication of content and online tools without much collaboration, particularly between regions.

In the afternoon we took a fantastic bicycle tour of Tournai and the surrounding area. While there was no mention of social media, or encouragement to share the experience online, tweets of the photographs that we posted as we cycled were picked up by @visittournai and retweeted. We felt that this was a fabulous experience that could be significantly enhanced by encouraging participants to share their tour.



Figure 2: Tournai Tourist Office

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Key Learnings

We felt that the most impressive uses of digital and social were;

- The slick promotional YouTube videos to promote cycling routes on the Belgian Tourism website advertising Wallonia Cycling. This however could be made more of to encourage others to post and share their cycling videos. <http://opt.be/contenus/travel-by-bike-in-belgium-a-in-2016-cycle-across-wallonia-/en/8316.html>
- Routes were accessible to research via a website, and a free mobile phone app was also available to enable people to take the routes and information with them when they were out cycling. <http://opt.be/contenus/tourisme/en/8423.html#menu>
- The Wallonia Bikes Welcome Scheme was well thought through and encouraged businesses to network and cross promote each other through the adoption of the 'Bikes Welcome' scheme.
- The Cycling WAPI scheme has 200 cycling testers to ensure the route and signage is signed clearly and correctly. However, members of the public can also report issues by email, SMS or phone by using the unique code placed on each sign post.



Figure 3: Cycle tour of Tournai

Day Two: Tuesday 10th May 2016

Youth Hostel at Champlon

Website: http://www.lesaubergesdejeunesse.be/en_US/page/homepage

The day began with a visit to the Youth Hostel at Champlon.

Presentations were made by Caroline Raedemaeke representing the Belgium Youth Hostel Association, Antoine Genart from Hainaut Rando and Stéphanie Pahaut from the local Tourist Information Centre Houffalize - La Roche-en-Ardenne covering Festival Rando and how they have used social media techniques to enhance their very limited marketing budget.

After lunch we were taken for a short walk using one of the Youth Hostel's digital walking apps.

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Figure 4: #BEYoungBEHostels

We were pleased to see that there were numerous examples of digital best practice being employed by the Youth Hostel Association in general and this hostel in particular. Including:

- Effective use of third party apps including Wikiloc <http://www.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/home.do> and Cirkwi, www.cirkwi.com instead of using own platforms, to upload walking trails.
- Youth Hostel free public Wi-Fi included a splash page linking to the Youth Hostel Association website.
- App led experience walks included a simple gamification element encouraging users to answer questions during the walk.
- The Youth Hostel was experimenting with user generated content across social media platforms using the hash tag #beyoungbehostel.

Key Learnings

- The Youth Hostel acknowledged that they needed to do more digital and were rolling out free Wi-Fi across their hostels. However, they acknowledged that staff capacity was an issue for them.

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- The group also concluded that in accordance with the Youth Hostel Association's core values, there could be a potential conflict with encouraging visitors to use technology instead of interacting with each other.
- Using third party apps and devices to distribute content such as walking and cycling trails should form part of any digital content distribution plan. These platforms are already known to users and destinations have a role to curate content to ensure quality is maintained.

Recommendations

The Youth Hostel has developed a good selection of on brand packages and experiences which could benefit from wider promotion across digital platforms.

However, there is a need for a digital marketing strategy and to review learnings from the current #beyoungbehostel campaign. This campaign was developed in response to the terrorist attacks in Brussels and is being trialled on Instagram and Facebook as a tool to gather user generated content. This type of approach would benefit from further amplification by tactically targeting other on brand influencers and organisations by tagging them into posts.

While the Youth Hostel Association has some concerns that enabling their hostels to be more digital friendly may conflict with their core value to encourage their visitors to interact with each other, this could be done sensitively. For example, their educational programmes could include a digital slant by using go pro cameras to capture the moment when delivering activities such as foraging walks etc.

Day Three: Wednesday 11th May 2016

Travel to Lakes of Eau d'Heure

Website: <http://www.lepaysdeslacs.be/uk>

Visited the holiday park Le Pays des Lacs which is situated around 5 artificial lakes in the south of Belgium and received a variety of presentations from other members of the team plus representatives from Belgium's tourism authorities.

On arrival Free Wi-Fi was signposted and customers were encouraged to share content on Facebook and Twitter however when we assembled for the seminar there was no access to the internet.

The morning consisted of 6 seminars – the highlights from these seminars are outlined below:

Incoming Tours - OUFTI Corinne Grenier

Website: http://www.ouftitourisme.be/uk/il4-oufti_p33-discover.aspx

This was the first time we had seen a will to collaborate both geographically and across sectors. Corinne explained that she had developed an online platform in four languages linking tourist products of accommodation, visitor attractions and events. It is free to join and the aim is to provide the operator with an online booking platform with secure payment. They charge a 5% credit card transaction fee for the service. This was heralded as best practice and the Tourism Minister indicated that she would like to see this being used in other areas of Belgium.

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Tally Ho Cycle Tours Jack Harris

Website: www.tallyhocycletours.com

Their mission is to provide incredible experiences of London by bicycle. It's all about the experience. The key markets identified and well targeted – chic eco travel for tourism. Digital marketing on trend, selling the “sizzle” rather than the “sausage”.

Bike marketing and The Vennbahn Danny Heck

Website: <http://www.vennbahn.eu/en/vennbahn-cycle-route/>

They have developed an Ecommerce platform for Hiking Tourism, Cycling Tourism 1. Mountain Bike, 2. Node 3. Vennbahn. This integrated map houses accommodation, eating establishments and places of interest as well as recommending trails. Great innovative way to encourage cycling participation by supplying Electric Bikes to hotels for £65 per month and then hotels able to rent them out at £25 per day.

Santiago De Compestella – Monique Arends

Monique demonstrated a product developed by the provenance of Namur. Using an App and Augmented Reality further information was provided when hovering over the brochure.

We found it hard to assess the success of this very complex product as we were unaware of the age profile of their customer. If for older people (or those not particularly media savvy) they might struggle with the technology.

Figure 5: Presentations at Lakes of eau d'Heure



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Digital marketing – Andrew Lloyd Hughes.

Andrew's presentation consisted of bite size best practice in social media. His main message was that user content is king and the smart phone has changed the pace at which information is disseminated. No longer do we trust adverts but we do trust consumer feedback.

Key Learning

- If you are going to embrace Social Media and encourage user generated content, it is essential to have a robust infrastructure in place to be able to deal with the volume of customers using the WIFI over all public areas.
- Selfie Board to be visible around the centre especially where people are queuing.
- Know and understand who your customers are and where they find their information.
- Social media requires a plan and takes time to get right. -----plan, plan & plan

Walcourt Hostellerie Dispa

Website: <http://www.hostelleriedispa.be>

The day was completed with a gourmet dinner in a family restaurant, Walcourt Hostellerie Dispa. While they do have a website there are no visible links to social media, however on departure the owner personally handed a business card asking for a TripAdvisor review.

Recommendations:

A link from Trip Advisor to their Website would assist their aim of gaining more reviews. We also felt that they should set up an Instagram account as the food is beautifully presented and would sit well on Instagram. Website could be more visually enticing if pictures of the stunning food, its provenance and the beautiful and intriguing interior of the restaurant were used rather than text.

Day Four: Thursday 12th May 2016

The fourth day was spent investigating a range of smaller tourism businesses including a visit to the Abbeys at Maredsous which is one of the biggest tourist attractions in the area.

The Beautiful Villages of Wallonia

Website: <http://www.beauxvillages.be/>

This collection of villages in the south Wallonia area are promoted to encourage visitors to see the region as it was over 100 years ago. The villages due to economic depression were not changed in almost 80 years of history. This has ensured that they remained preserved for our enjoyment today. The scheme was created 25 years ago to find ways of funding the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings. Public funds have been provided to restore the buildings, and improve the local infrastructure.

It would appear that as with many attractions in the area, the tourist market is geared specifically to the domestic or the near neighbour and thus English is not facilitated.

Recommendations:

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As this project is apparently well funded there are a range of digital activities that could be introduced to enhance the overall experience especially for non-French or Dutch speaking visitors.

In today's Digital Age, onsite digital interpretation is expected especially when there is a proliferation of mobile devices, wearable technology and increased connectivity. Digital Interpretation in a variety of guises could be used to improve the experience considerably – especially as there appears to be few people around to ask – even bread is bought from a slot machine!

Quick Response (QR) codes, iBeacons, iBeaken, Apps and Augmented Reality are examples of what are available and although initially expensive provide a more comprehensive experience and are more easily maintained than physical signs and boards and posters.

The website is amateurish and poorly laid out with only essential information listed. Leafleting again seems the main method of informing the visitor to the area about the activity. The Facebook logo indicates a presence – but not found on searching. However – on carrying out a further search it was clear that people are sharing their images of this activity online and enjoying the experience which is not acknowledged.

Interpretation panels have been produced, leaflets created, a self-guided walking tour introduced however, given the level of investment there seems to be little to show for it which could lead to a feeling of anti-climax for the visitor.



Figure 6: Traditional Interpretation Panels

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Rail Bikes at Molignee

Website: <http://www.molignee.be/draisines.htm>

A relaxing and unusual activity, cycling on a rail bike on the disused railway along the valley of Moignee.



Figure 7: Rail Biking

Recommendations

Funding for such a small operation is possibly an issue but given that at the embarkation point offers free Wi-Fi and they promote a Facebook page, simple methods of engagement with guests could see further promotion such as the use of promoted hashtags – which could perhaps, be printed on the handlebars or seats of the bikes. This would be a simple and relatively cheap method of promoting this unique activity more widely and as the photograph shows provides attractive and tempting images to encourage further visitors.

Simple inexpensive and very effective websites are now widely available – such as WIX, Canvas or Squarespace. This could easily improve the impression and the customer experience.

Abbeye Maredsous

website: <http://www.maredsous.be/>

The abbey advertises itself as; ‘A community of Benedictine monks, brought together around the Gospel, the Rule of St. Benedict and the people who want to make this place live to make it attractive for everybody : hosts, pilgrims, pupils, passersby and surfers.’ An impressive building built by a private benefactor for the monks to work, educate and study. Today it has an International customer base and is the 3rd biggest visitor attraction in Wallonia; a place of learning, study, retreat, beer and cheese production and a tourist attraction.

Recommendations:

The website is somewhat informative but simply produced. There is no Wi-Fi in the restaurant and café but it is extremely busy with a huge throughput of visitors annually thus it would appear its methods of promotion obviously work without the potential intrusion of Social Media which possibly is culturally

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juxtaposed to the life of a monk. A digital audit is required to identify opportunities in keeping with the surroundings to enhance the interpretation of the site.

Dinant Adventure

Website: <http://www.dinant-evasion.be/en/home.html?IDC=15>

We experienced only a very small part of the offering with adventure climbing in an old quarry. The programme advertise activities for a wide range of groups from, schools, families, couples to individual travellers and is available all year round. It is professionally run by engaged and friendly staff and highly enjoyable.

Website is professional and in English – branded leaflet matches the website and is comprehensive. The company offers a wide variety of activities: Kayaking, adventure, events, cruises, and bespoke visits.

Figure 8: Adventurous Activities



Recommendation:

There is a Facebook page – but no indication of Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest all of which would capitalise on the fabulous images that these activities will create. This is an experience and those who take part wish their memories to be recorded to promote their achievements and capture the thrill. There is potentially an opportunity therefore for digital sales such as GoPro rental.

Encouraging wider engagement from participants is recommended, as is an audit of where their audience is currently sharing these experiences so that they may be able to join in the conversation and harness the marketing potential.

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Maison Leffe

Website: <http://www.leffe.com/en/maison-leffe>

This converted convent has been turned into a beautiful interior restaurant with a surprising educational exhibit / museum dedicated to beer production. As the website says,

'A story you can savour through the nine varieties of Leffe. A story that will stir all your senses through interactive experiences, touch screens and of course, tasting. You will discover the true meaning of the word "zythology", the craftsmanship behind every Leffe variety, and the surprising pleasure of food-pairing.'

The exhibit itself is well thought out and uses a variety of media to inform the senses to promote the history of Leffe beer.

Recommendations:

This is a corporate business and using a range of social media platforms to promote its business and engage with its customers. The website is informative and professional and in English, it advertises its social media links prominently to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. However, the Facebook and Twitter pages have not been updated recently and appears to be somewhat geared to promoting beer directly as opposed to the wider experience of the restaurant and the exhibit. Its TripAdvisor page is being actively visited and comments left but does not appear to be managed by the business. Finally the exhibit could also make excellent use of some of the digital interpretation options discussed above to enhance an informed self-guided approach to the tour.

Key Learning for Whole Day

- Social Media need not be expensive – engagement with the customer is key
- The tourist is no longer who you think, and in an ever shrinking world experiences must be accessible to all thus interpretation in other languages is increasingly essential if your business is going to grow.
- Marketing costs for small businesses can be prohibitive thus social media interpretation tools – while time consuming initially to set up and potentially costly will have greater longevity, be more flexible in how they can be accessed by the visitor and be more cost effective in the long term.
- Social Media can bring a static exhibit to life such as in the Beautiful Villages by storytelling and adding value that traditional methods cannot exploit.
- Memories are the currency of holidays and providing an appropriate Social Media platform for these memories to be recorded and shared is now essential for your visitor. If you do not provide it they will find their own and you will lose the marketing potential.
- Finally having made the decision to engage in Social Media strategy it is important to keep it fresh current and relevant.

Day Five: Friday 13th May 2016

The day commenced with a guided tour of the Collegiate church of St Gertrude in the city of Nivelles and a walk around some of the main sites in the centre. Following lunch we then visited the Waterloo Battlefield before concluding the day in Brussels.

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St Gerturde Church

Website: <http://www.tourisme-nivelles.be/>

We were offered two tours – one of the church followed by one of the town immediately surrounding the church – both of which were carried out by an extremely well informed English guide.

Recommendations

The story of the church and the town is fascinating and exactly the sort of information a visitor would wish to know. Reading review sites however it is clear that this information is not always readily available, there is very little interpretation freely available and on occasion the church is closed!

It is clear some form of digitally downloadable guide would significantly enhance the experience for the visitor without the need of a guide always being on hand. The Church was built over time and the undercroft told the story of its development through the exposure of its foundations and skeletons. Digital interpretation overlays would significantly improve the exhibit and provide a more educational experience.

Waterloo Battlefield

Website: <http://www.waterloo1815.be>

Our final visit was to the Waterloo battlefield site and museum where we were provided with a presentation on the challenges that the museum faced in marketing the site leading up to the bicentennial celebrations of the battle last year. Interestingly the use of Social Media and in particular the use of the #1815 hashtag proved to have much more engagement with potential visitors than more traditional methods of marketing, resulting in marketing and advertising spend being moved to on-line.

A sizeable budget has been spent on the experience with digital best practice clearly in evidence throughout the exhibit including:

- Excellent high quality AV 4D presentation of the battle at Waterloo all catering for visitors from outside Belgium.
- Social media is being used to develop an appetite for events with their audience and using storytelling at attractions.
- Managing a programme of daily updates on their website producing excellent and dynamic content.
- Effective use of YouTube for event promotion.

Recommendations:

Atop the hill at Waterloo, we would recommend the use of Augmented Reality (AR) to help locate and interpret points of interest.

A live tour experience has since been added to the overall exhibit which was one of our recommendations above. <http://waterloo1815.be/index.php?page=live-tour-exerience>. Atop the Memorial 1815 the museum has introduced a 'virtual reality' experience of the Battle of Waterloo. Using specially adapted virtual reality headsets it is now possible to see the battle unfold in front of you, instead of the interpretation panels that we saw.

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However the Waterloo user experience throughout the attraction is inconsistent digitally, and should be reviewed as there are potential improvements. Such as engagement with the guest – further added value information beyond the brochure and the ubiquitous shop.

Key Learning:

- The importance of using social media channels in the promotion of events as demonstrated during the Battle of Waterloo bicentennial events.
- AV must be high impact to have the desired effect and create a memorable experience for visitors
- Regular reviews of your strategy are essential regardless of how much money you spend to ensure your offering remains fit for purpose
- Budget and the latest technology is not always the answer sometimes simple well thought out and actively managed social media campaigns can be just as, if not more effective in engaging with potential visitors.

