

Assessing the content-device combination in the promotion of hospitality through pre-experiences with virtual and augmented reality

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Abstract

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are increasingly shaping customer-companies interactions. Previous research has not compared their effectiveness. Thus, this study compares both VR and AR by considering the perceptions of presence generated by different contents (real vs. digital), together with the degree of embodiment of the devices used (head-mounted display vs. smartphone), and their impact on potential guests' pre-experiences with a hotel room. Results from a lab experiment show that real content (compared to digital) prompts higher presence states, and significantly influences the perceptions of visual appeal, the ease to imagine the real experience, and booking intentions. Additionally, perceptions of visual appeal and ease of imagination mediate the effect of the content on booking intentions. All these relationships are strengthened when embodied devices are applied. Results offer interesting theoretical and managerial implications.

Keywords: *Virtual Reality; Augmented Reality; Presence*

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