

## FYI BEACONS

Beacons can detect when Bluetooth-enabled devices are approaching and can then send tourists information that is relevant to them in that particular setting. The settings where beacons can be used are only limited by suppliers' imaginations. Museums become interactive when a visitor walks up to an exhibit and the dates and description of the display pop up on their phone screen.

When a pre-registered guest enters a hotel, it triggers a check-in alert to their phone where they can choose their room number and receive keyless access bypassing the front desk entirely. Navigating large places like airports or busy train stations is easier for the traveler when a set of beacons provides them with a constantly updating map and directions based on their current location and

also alerting them of gate changes and flight delays. As a tourist wanders in an unfamiliar city, beacons can send information for sales at gift shops or reviews of nearby restaurants and even provide notification of impending weather. In addition to having their Bluetooth enabled, some locations require an app download to receive all the benefits of information that can be derived from beacons.

Geo-based technology, such as car navigation systems, geo-based software and applications on personal computers or mobile technology, location-based portable recommender systems, and/or GPS-based devices for outdoor activities, is an important element in daily life as well as travel experiences. Geo-based technology helps people to identify the unique features of the current place, thus establishing a sense of orientation. It provides opportunities for tourists to sense the different qualities of the destination and recognize that the destination is distinguishable from other places.<sup>4</sup>

Database marketing, based on **data mining**, is aiding tourism suppliers in targeting microsegments of their markets and customizing marketing mixes to fulfill the needs of specific travelers. Because of seemingly endless capacity of cloud-based storage marketers can access and rapidly sift through vast amounts of information, allowing them to build immense databases providing extremely detailed profiles of prospective consumers. Information in the database could come from a variety of sources, including customer provided information upon reservation or joining frequent guest program, employee observation, consumption record, guest complaint, and customer survey. Web browsers' behaviors, such as searches and product click-throughs (e.g., looking at 4-star hotels), can also be recorded and used for future target marketing purposes. For example, if you search the airfare from Hong Kong to Sanya, China, through one of the online travel wholesaler sites, promotional information about airfare between these two cities and other tailored recommendations will pop up on your computer screen regularly in the next few weeks as you surf the Net. The Amazon model of additional product recommendations is what the travel industry mirrors after.

For another example, Harrah's created individualized promotion packages to tempt players to come to its casinos more often. Using information collected from its Total Gold frequent gambler cards, Harrah's began testing different promotions and learned which promotions worked best in bringing back players. Marketers for the chain determined that different players responded better to different promotions, such as free room nights, whereas others returned when offered free gaming tokens. Now, when a player has not come to Harrah's within a set time period, for example, two weeks, that player receives a promotion tailored to his or her tastes. This use of data mining has increased the response rate for Harrah's mailed promotions from 3% to 8%.<sup>5</sup>

Cruise lines are another industry segment that can capture vast amounts of customer data largely due to the cashless consumption (a requirement for all purchases to be made through a cruise line's "credit card") onboard. All expenditures incurred during the cruise; including spa, beverages, shopping, specialty restaurants, land tours, and casino plays, are charged to their account. This information can be helpful in designing future marketing mix targeted at individual consumers based on their tastes and preferences.