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TOP TEAM

Meet the people rebuilding Shakespeare's birthplace in China

Adlabs Imagica

Inside India's largest theme park

WHEEL THE WORLD

Opening doors for disability tourism

RIDING IT

All the major ride openings of 2019

HARRY & MEGHAN

Committed to saving African wildlife with the African Parks Network, p18

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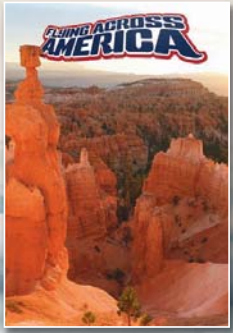

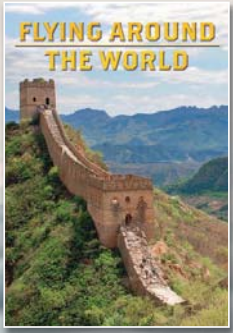

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Sustainable travel

Attractions and tourism are important parts of many global economies. They need the full support of government departments, with joined up thinking to avoid conflicting priorities which undermine sustainability

Having efficient transport links is one of the biggest determinants of the success of an attraction – second only to having good weather. If people can't get there, it won't thrive.

As well as ensuring we position attractions in locations with great transport links, we must have a strong eye for sustainability and encourage people to travel by train.

This thought was going through my mind recently when I spotted a public information poster at my local railway station shouting "Do not travel this bank holiday 24th-25th August 2019." It went on to say, "We're starting work to improve services...and we strongly recommend customers do not travel by train on these days."

The advert was sponsored by 'The UK Government' and also by six major train operators.

What were they thinking? Bank holidays are some of the most important times of year for families and friends to visit attractions. Discouraging them from doing so, and doing so sustainably, is bad for attractions, bad for tourism, bad for consumers and bad for the environment.

At the same time as attractions in the northern hemisphere are ramping up summer holiday promotions and government tourism departments are promoting travel and attractions visits, this counterforce is marketing against them, and doing so using tax-payer-funded marketing.

The scenario isn't confined to the UK. As a g lobal publisher, we get reports of a lack of joined-up thinking from all over the globe, with a range of government departments simply not communicating when it comes to policy which impacts the tourism and attractions industries.

The international attractions community must come together to create a charter of best practice expected from policymakers around issues such as this and to tackle governments to get them on-side in supporting the industry.

SHUTTERSTOCK.IMONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES

Holiday visits to attractions are more sustainable by train

> We'd love to see the international attractions community tackling governments to get them on-side

There's clearly a lack of awareness of the impact this kind of messaging has on both the attractions sector and the opportunities which are available to people to travel by train to enjoy their leisure time in a sustainable way.

We need to unite as a sector to clearly articulate a better way forward, whereby government departments collaborate for the greater good of the industry to avoid such conflicts.

Liz Terry, editor
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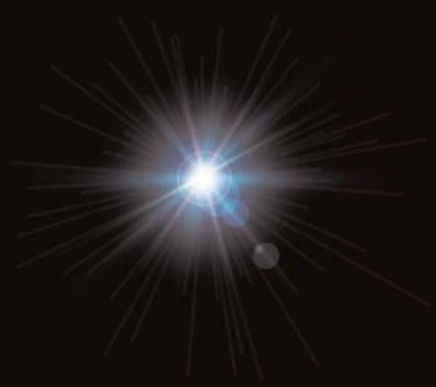

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Attractions People

‘We’re on track to contribute more than US$1bn to conservation efforts by 2021’

Dan Ashe president and CEO, Association of Zoos and Aquariums

In the last two years, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has undergone significant changes.

By adopting a member-driven model, the organisation has enjoyed significant growth, which has included the expansion of its primary conservation initiative, resulting in investments of more than US$200m a year by its members.

The AZA also enhanced its already rigorous accreditation standards to reflect the latest in scientific research and animal welfare assessments, as well as acquiring the Wildlife Trafficking Alliance, which works to reduce the purchase and sale of illegal wildlife and wildlife products.

The association additionally embarked on a national campaign, which aims to tell powerful stories about the animal care taking place in our facilities every day. It also swelled its own ranks, welcoming ten newly accredited and certified facilities and hosting four conferences with record-breaking attendance.

It’s a lengthy list of achievements and behind these successes is the AZA’s president and CEO, Dan Ashe. Taking up his position in January 2017, Ashe, the former director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), has taken the organisation to new heights, using his experience in government to help advocate for change, while also driving the AZA with a number of new initiatives.

Ashe is responsible for 233 facility and more than 6,000 individual AZA members

“In my role, I’m charged with advancing AZA’s vision, mission and strategic priorities,” says Ashe. “No day is the same in this role; one day I may be representing our association at an international conservation conference, and the next, I may be testifying before Congress advocating for the protection of wildlife.”

Government ties

Prior to joining the AZA, Ashe spent more than a decade working within and leading the USFWS, an important conservation partner of AZA and its members.

Named the 16th USFWS director by the US Senate in June 2011, he led the agency through a number of challenges. Spanning the course of 13 years, he held roles of increasing responsibility within USFWS, including assistant director for external affairs, chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System, science advisor to the director, and deputy director.

“Performance is the measure and I think my experience managing complex and controversial issues, leading people and building relationships has been key to success,” says Ashe.

“Hardly a day goes by where I don’t draw on the lessons I learned during my 35 years in government. I still understand science, the scientific method and can frame good critical questions about scientific information. That ability has always been an asset and is in this position.”

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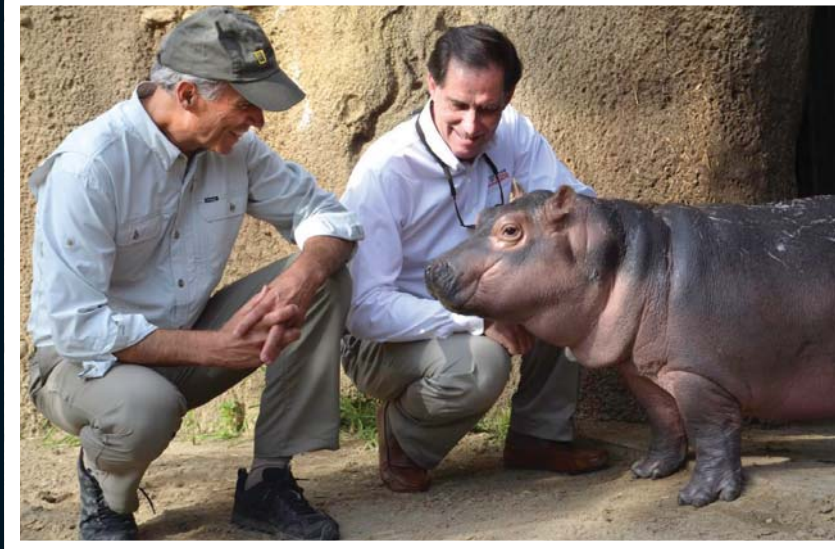

With his team of staff and over 400 volunteers, Ashe is charged with advancing AZA's vision, mission and strategies

Billion dollar baby

Having taken these strides in his first two years in the role, Ashe still has grand plans for the AZA, which are intended to help provide the best possible services to AZA members and to help advance the zoological profession.

"We're planning to expand our services and adapt – based on the changing needs of our members – in light of the latest technology," he says. "We'll also engage the public to grow confidence in the AZA-accredited community and we'll help our animal programmes increase the long-term sustainability of a wide range of species."

In September last year, the AZA revealed that it was on target to spend US$1bn on conservation efforts within the next five years, reporting record-breaking contributions from its members which are benefitting multiple initiatives worldwide.

For 2017, its members funded a record-breaking US$220m for field conservation initiatives. Included within that figure, AZA members contributed US$15.7m towards the organisation's SAFE (Saving Animals From Extinction) programme – a scheme that prioritises strategic planning for field conservation within the AZA community and builds on existing recovery plans for the world's most threatened species.

"While the AZA and its members have always invested in conservation, 2016 was the first time we exceeded the $200 million mark, which put us on track to contribute more than US$1bn by 2021," says Ashe. "These funds benefit more than 860 species and sub-species worldwide, hundreds of which are endangered or extremely endangered. AZA-sponsored projects took place in over 120 countries around the world and engaged more than 1,000 conservation partners.

"Collectively, the most important efforts are animal care and welfare, fighting extinction and assuring our animal

A lifelong animal conservationist, Ashe joined AZA in January 2017 after serving for six years as the director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service

populations are sustainable. Personally, I have a passion for butterfly conservation, particularly the Monarch butterfly and I'm hoping to see the Mariposa Monarch added as a SAFE species."

Public pressure

While most members of the public support and see the necessity and benefit of zoos for wildlife and conservation, others oppose it, calling the practice of keeping animals in captivity unethical. This is a regular challenge faced by Ashe.

Based on the words of former US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, who said: "Politics is human beings; it's an addition rather than subtraction" – Ashe says he practices "the politics of addition," believing we become stronger as we add others to our community or coalition and weaker when we exclude participants.

"When we develop a more positive relationship with diverse audiences – even if they disagree with us on some things – we increase their awareness and understanding of what we do and reduce the potential for them to treat us as adversaries. Recently, we saw the benefits of this approach, when PETA supported the Cincinnati Zoo in efforts to rescue a gorilla being held in a solitary 'sanctuary'.

"In that instance, with PETA's backing, the zoo has filed a lawsuit in the federal district court in San Francisco seeking to compel the Gorilla Foundation in California to release the gorilla – Ndume – a gorilla isolated from its own species following the death of his companion Koko. If transferred back to the zoo, he could live in a multigenerational group. The outcome of the case is still to be determined, but it shows a rare collaboration between an anti-zoo group such as PETA with a zoo, with shared interests for the greater good.

"It's in our best interest to work with other organisations on issues in which we both agree, using opportunity and allies to advocate for our work," Ashe says.

Future endeavours

"Challenge and opportunity represent two sides of a coin – where you have one, you have the other," says Ashe.

"We're a member organisation, but to be a member, a facility must be accredited by our independent accreditation commission.

"AZA's accreditation standards are widely accepted as the gold standard for a modern aquarium or zoo. This presents the opportunity for us to set and reset the high bar for member performance, as we learn more about things like animal care and welfare, sustainability, education, guest experience, finance and safety.

While accreditation as an AZA zoo can be very beneficial, Ashe says it still needs to be appealing to its members.

"We have to find a balance where accreditation is viewed as a benefit and not a disadvantage," he says.

"I think we're finding that balance. We've adopted new standards in areas such as elephant and cetacean care, welfare assessment and conservation. We've also expanded our membership, and we currently have a record number of institutions in our pipeline for accreditation."

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> ‘It’s amazing to see such unbelievable creatures being moved in a way you could never dream of. To be with elephants – such massive beasts – is a unique experience’

Prince Harry Duke of Sussex

The African Parks Network is a non-profit conservation organisation that takes on responsibility for the rehabilitation and long-term management of national parks in partnership with governments and local communities. At its head is one of the world’s most influential figures – His Royal Highness, Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, with support from his wife, Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex.

Having visited Africa many times, the prince has taken a personal interest in conservation projects, working to protect Africa’s natural heritage and support both wildlife and local communities. This included in 2015 when, after leaving the army following a decade of service, he spent three months working on a number of projects across the African continent.

Harry’s first experience working alongside African Parks was in July 2016 in Malawi, where he served as an integral member of their team, carrying out one of the largest elephant translocations in history, as well as translocating a rhinoceros, a host of game species including antelope, buffalo and zebra. He also assisted in the re-collaring of three lions to help better protect them from poachers.

“There has to be a balance between the numbers of animals and the available habitat, just as nature intended it,” said Harry. “Elephants can’t roam freely like they used to without coming into conflict

Prince Harry spent 10 years working in the Armed Forces before turning his attention to charitable causes

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PHOTO: @SUSSEXROYAL

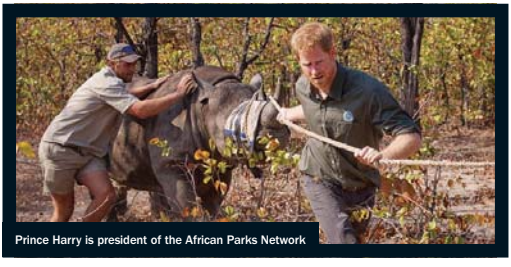
The Duke and Dutchess of Sussex share a passion for supporting wildlife in Africa

with communities, or being threatened by poaching and persecution. To allow the coexistence of people and animals, fences are increasingly having to be used.

"African Parks, in partnership with the Malawian government, has re-established a safe area for elephants to move to," he said.

Named president of African Parks in December 2017 – which, with 13 parks under its management, has the largest area under conservation for any NGO in Africa – Prince Harry's focus remains on elephants, using the recent Earth Day event on 22 April to highlight the work APN is doing to protect these animals.

"When a fenced area passes its carrying capacity for elephants, they start to encroach into farmland, causing havoc for communities," says Harry. "APN relocated 500 Elephants to another park within Malawi to reduce the pressure and human-wildlife conflict and disperse tourism."



Prince Harry is president of the African Parks Network

In his role as APN president, Harry helps to advance the NGO's mission in protecting the continent's national parks and promoting wildlife conservation in Africa and around the world, using his global reach to spread the network's message: "It's amazing to see such unbelievable creatures being moved in a way you could never dream of. To be with elephants – such massive beasts – is a unique experience."

YURIY YURCHENKO / SHUTTERSTOCK

‘I’ve been visiting Europa Park with my children for years. My dream is to create a similar park in Kyiv’

Vitali Klitschko
Mayor of Kyiv and three time world heavyweight boxing champion

Vitali Klitschko is planning to develop a theme park in the Ukranian city of Kyiv

Vitali Klitschko, the former three-time world heavyweight boxing champion and now mayor of Kyiv, has grand plans for the Ukranian city, seeking guidance from Europa Park’s founders – the Mack family.

Klitschko, who is a frequent visitor to the popular theme park, in Rust, Germany, recently held talks with the Macks over the possibility of a similar development in Kyiv – a city he has governed since 2014.

“I’ve been visiting Europa Park incognito with my children for years,” he says. “It’s the most interesting family theme park, offering new rides, a wide range of activities and a nice setting. It’s also got lots of activities for children to have fun and learn. My dream is to create a similar park in Kyiv and I will do my best to make that dream come true.”

During his visit, Klitschko received a tour of the attraction, being given an in-depth briefing about the park and its operations. He was also briefed on Rulantica – the new waterpark and hotel development set to open later this year.

Klitschko’s plans rely on finding a suitable investor. If realised, Hydropark – a 1.3 square kilometre island on the Dnipro River – will be developed to capitalise on the already popular recreation spot’s tourism potential.

“The recreation zone isn’t located far from the Kyiv city centre,” says Klitschko. “We’re currently seeking an investor who is ready to fund such an ambitious project and to contribute expert advice and ideas.”

The timing is good for Kyiv, which is among the fastest-growing cities in Europe, thanks to a strong portfolio of real estate and commercial developments.

In the last three years, the city has made 37 major real estate investment agreements and laid out plans to develop brownfield sites, which will result in the transformation of abandoned land into locations for contemporary architecture.

With the significant boom in construction and population – the city of three million is gaining around 200,000 new residents each year – Klitschko believes now is the right time for international investors to consider the capital for development.

“Over the past few years, Kyiv has been the largest recipient of investment in Ukraine, welcoming 60 per cent of total investment in the country and a third of all capital investment coming from overseas,” he told *Business Ukraine* recently.

“Anyone visiting Kyiv will see the dynamic pace of the city’s development for themselves and will quickly appreciate the investment opportunities this creates. My advice is to seize these opportunities now while they are at their most attractive.”

Klitschko met with Michael, Roland and Jürgen Mack (left to right) to discuss the plans

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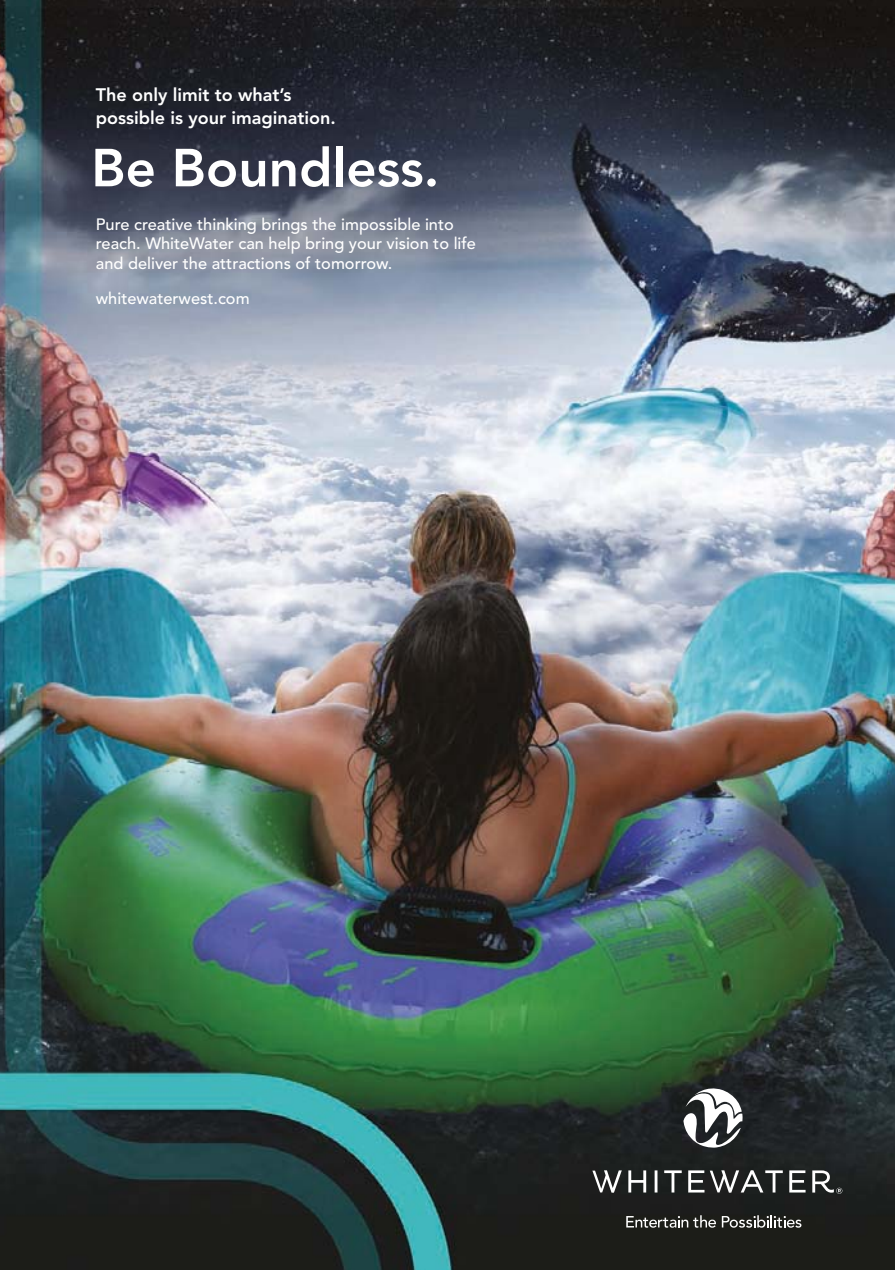
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SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Techniquest's £5.7m large-scale expansion to use fish as power source

Welsh science discovery centre Techniquest is building a £5.7m (US$7.4m) expansion that will more than double its exhibition space and use a remarkable power source – fish.

Techniquest's new building, called Science Capital, sits on Cardiff Bay in the Welsh capital and the centre has consulted a number of STEM, energy and marine biology specialists across Wales for the Scale-ectric power project.

Bream, carp and rudd in the bay will be penned into a smaller area near the building for up to an hour a day. There, motion sensitive wires will capture their energy and transfer it back to Techniquest for use as power.

■ The expansion will add around 60 per cent more exhibit space

"This ground-breaking initiative is in keeping with our ongoing mission to become more sustainable and promote greater sustainability across Wales," said Techniquest CEO Lesley Kirkpatrick.

MORE: http://lei.sr/f8a9d_T

We have an ongoing mission to become more sustainable

Lesley Kirkpatrick

PLANETARIUMS

Morehead Planetarium and Science Centre to close for US$5.2m TakeUpSpace revamp

We will be solidly positioned among America's leading university-based science outreach centres

Todd Boyette

Morehead Planetarium and Science Centre in North Carolina, US, has closed its doors to begin the first phase of a US$5.2m refurbishment project.

Closed until 17 June for renovations to its Fulldome Theatre, this is the first step for Morehead in the full revamp programme it's calling '#TakeUpSpace'.

Los Angeles-based design practice Mycotoo has been drafted in to create the interiors for the project, which will see a number of technological upgrades introduced and five times the amount of floor space dedicated to public use.

"Morehead will soon provide the kind of experiences visitors and students expect today," said Todd Boyette, Morehead Planetarium and Science Centre director.

"The results will be transformative. We will be solidly positioned among America's leading university-based science outreach centres."

MORE: http://lei.sr/E3C3T_T

INDUSTRY OPINION

Celebrate, reflect, act

Herbert Münder, Ecsite president

Thirty years ago the European science centre field was a confidential but very rapidly growing stage.

Convinced that learning from each would help them serve their audiences better, two dozen European science centres founded their own professional exchange hub: Ecsite, the European network of science centres and museums, was born.

In three decades, membership numbers have grown exponentially. In spite of this impressive growth and diversification beyond Ecsite's "historic" science centre and science museum membership, the founding values of cooperation, openness, professionalism, generosity and diversity are intact.

Mirroring the network's gestation that took multiple gatherings and several revolutions around the Sun, thirty years later we decided to grant ourselves the luxury of time: the whole science engagement field is invited to an anniversary season that started last year and is spanning the next several months.

This is an invitation to celebrate, reflect and act. Of course we take pride in our accomplishments and cheered together at the 2019 Ecsite Conference in June. But we are also using this opportunity to look ahead and shape the future, building on our strategic insights and collective creativity.

APPOINTMENTS

George RR Martin joins collective Meow Wolf

George RR Martin has taken up a position at Meow Wolf, with the immersive art collective naming the *Game of Thrones* author as its chief world builder.

Martin has been involved with Meow Wolf for more than a decade, helping to secure a former bowling alley in which its multidimensional House of Eternal Return is based. Opened in 2016, the venture has attracted more than 1.5 million visitors since.

Vince Kadlubek, CEO at Meow Wolf, said the attraction "wouldn't be what it is today without George's generous support", adding: "He took a chance on us and gave our artists the platform they needed to create the House of Eternal Return. It's an honour to have him as part of our team and we can't wait to see what he can help us accomplish as chief world builder."

Martin himself said the idea from Meow Wolf captured his curiosity: "They really sparked my interest and their vision pushed all my buttons – a sci-fi world spanning multiple universes. They delivered something we've never seen before."

In addition to the Santa Fe attraction, Meow Wolf created Kaleidoscape, an interactive art-themed ride and attraction at Denver's Elitch Gardens theme and waterpark. It has announced plans to open a permanent installation in Denver next year.

MORE: http://lei.sr/h4Z4T_T

The popular author has taken on a new role at Meow Wolf

They really sparked my interest and their vision pushed all my buttons

George RR Martin

EDUTAINMENT

KidZania plans expansion with first four sites in the US

In the US, we're onboarding industry partners and identifying new local champions

Greg Stevens

KidZania, the children's edutainment centre operator, has announced plans to expand into the US, with its first centre due to open in Frisco, Dallas, Texas later this year and another three cities – New York, Chicago and Los Angeles – to follow through to 2021.

There are currently 27 KidZania centres in 21 countries, with the US plans further expanding the franchise's global reach.

"At KidZania, kids have an opportunity to role-play more than 100 professions within an 80,000sq ft indoor city designed just for them," said Greg Stevens, chief executive officer of KidZania USA.

"In the US, we're onboarding industry partners and identifying new local champions, because that is what makes the immersive learning experiences real and meaningful."

KidZania's offering is a kid-sized city, where children can play a variety of real-life roles in realistic simulations. Role-play professions include firefighter, journalist, chef and surgeon.

MORE: http://lei.sr/E3V8x_T

Children can roleplay a range of professions

INVESTMENT

Expansion for Dubai's Atlantis Aquaventure as host of new rides set to open in 2020

Dubai's Atlantis Aquaventure waterpark has a major expansion on the cards, with plans to open a dozen new rides in the middle of 2020.

An addition to adding to the 20 rides and rivers already spread across its 170,000sq m (1.8 million sq ft) at Palm Island, the 34-metre (111.5ft) tall Trident Tower will feature a number of rides supplied by ProSlide, including MammothBlast, a 449-metre (1,473ft) family adventure water coaster that uses water propulsion technology; the Dueling PipelineBlast/FlyingSaucer 20 hybrid ride, which propels guests through "gravity-defying" turns at high speed; and RallyRacer 32, a ride for competitive visitors.

Trident Tower with Proslide rides

"Enhancing the Atlantis Aquaventure's offering is the natural next step in providing the best experience possible for our visitors," said Tim Kelly, executive vice president and managing director at Atlantis The Palm and The Royal Atlantis.

MORE: http://lei.sr/H9u6B_T

It's the next step to provide the best experience for visitors

Tim Kelly

EXPANSION

Outdoor waterpark completes Soundwaves expansion at Gaylord Opryland

The initial success of the expansion has contributed to growth

Colin Reed

Having opened the indoor part of its new Soundwaves Water Experience in December 2018, Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville, Tennessee, has now opened phase two of the waterpark – the outdoor part of its offering.

Opened on 17 May, Soundwaves is an indoor/outdoor waterpark designed and built by the Aquatic Development Group (ADG) as part of a US$90m (€80.7m, £70.8m) expansion. Blur Workshop also played a part in the development, helping with some structure and design elements not usually seen in resort waterparks.

"The initial success of the expansion has contributed to growth in occupancy at the property," said Colin Reed, chair and CEO of Ryman. "We're thrilled with the early contributions of these growth projects and remain enthusiastic about their role in maximising the strong outlook we see for the group segment in the years ahead."

MORE: http://lei.sr/u6A4b_T

INDUSTRY OPINION

Addressing GDPR one year on

Aleatha Ezra, WWA

As an owner or operator of a leisure business looking to market your business to guests, you're likely very familiar with the GDPR and all of its implications in the storage and use of personal and public data.

You've probably already taken steps to ensure that your privacy policy includes full transparency on how your site collects and uses data. You've likely also reaffirmed opt-ins for those individuals who are on your email marketing lists and made sure that they still wish to receive your email marketing.

However, if you haven't fully addressed GDPR compliance, then you might want to make it a higher priority because complaints are being filed and fines are being levied against large and small companies. Since GDPR came into force, there have been more than 59,000 personal data breaches notified to regulators. These range from minor breaches, such as errant emails sent to the wrong recipient, to major cyberhacks affecting millions of individuals and making front-page headlines.

Since this is a complex issue, you might consider hiring a privacy compliance consultant. However, if you aren't able to hire someone to aid you in this, then consider the checklist provided by GDPR.eu

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OPENINGS

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge opens at Disneyland

The hotly anticipated Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge has opened its doors at the Disneyland resort in California, following a three-year construction project.

First announced in 2015, work on the 14-acre attraction began in April 2016 and it's believed the final cost could have topped US$1bn.

It is the first of two Galaxy's Edge attractions, with the second set to open at the Walt Disney World in Florida on 29 August.

"What we wanted to do was to create this universe, laying out and introducing new stories, characters and places, and to include the guest in these stories should you want to take part," said Disney imagineer Scott Trowbridge, who oversees everything Star Wars-related for the operator's parks.

"A significant part of our audience who want to feel more engaged and more connected to the stories they're experiencing, so we're trying to find ways to take that and extend it to our parks."

Rides and attractions in the area include Millenium Falcon: Smugglers Run, which will give guests the opportunity to get behind the controls of the *Star Wars* franchise's most iconic spaceship in one of three flight crew roles. Elsewhere, Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance, will put visitors in the middle of an epic battle between Resistance and Imperial troops.

MORE: http://lei.sr/f3k6J_T

Attractions include the iconic *Millennium Falcon*

Our audience want to feel more engaged and more connected to the stories they're experiencing

Scott Trowbridge

FINANCE

Zhonghong loan default "won't affect" SeaWorld finances

We do not expect these matters to have a material effect on our business

Gus Antorcha

SeaWorld CEO Gus Antorcha has revealed more details about its failed China projects, after its majority shareholder, Zhonghong Group, defaulted on outstanding loan payments, forcing the operator to terminate exclusivity agreements with the property developer.

Speaking during an earnings call, Antorcha said that when Zhonghong acquired a 21 per cent stake in SeaWorld in 2017, part of that acquisition included shares of common stock which secured its loan obligations. When Zhonghong defaulted on its loan, the lenders took ownership of those shares.

"These matters are primarily between Zhonghong and its lenders, and we do not expect these matters to have a material effect on our business," said Antorcha.

"In connection with these events, Zhonghong's Yongli Wang has resigned from our Board. We have asked Yoshi Maruyama to remain as board chair given his experience and skillset."

MORE: http://lei.sr/c2V2z_T

SeaWorld increased revenues by US$3.4m in Q1

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VISITORS

Overcrowding forced temporary Louvre closure

The Louvre in Paris was forced to close recently due to overcrowding.

The recent TEA/AECOM Theme and Museum Index showed that the attraction, which was already the world's top-attended museum, had a record-breaking year with 10.2 million visitors in 2018 – an increase of 26 per cent or two million people.

However, the union for security and visitor services staff (the Sud Culture Solidaires) says that general staff numbers have declined by more than 7 per cent, while security and surveillance staff numbers are down by almost 18 per cent.

These factors have led to long queues at the museum, especially to see Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa, with staff bearing the brunt of visitors' frustration. A union representative told Associated Press that renovation work around the masterpiece had exacerbated the problems. Workers walked out on 27 May, citing the overcrowding as the reason for the strike.

A meeting was held the next day to decide whether the museum would open again after the usual Tuesday closure. The decision was made to reopen after management agreed to bring in 30 more employees on a temporary basis over the summer. Visitors to the Louvre are being told to buy tickets online to ensure their entry to the "exceptionally busy" museum.

MORE: http://lei.sr/J2A5N_T

The Louvre had the most visitors for any museum last year

> **Workers walked out on 27 May, citing the overcrowding as the reason for the strike**

GALLERIES

Elton John makes V&A donation for photography collaboration

> **This commitment to education and this mission to celebrate the medium present a perfect partnership**
>
> Elton John

London's V&A Museum has announced a partnership with Elton John and his husband, David Furnish, that will see its Gallery 101 in the newly opened V&A Photography Centre renamed 'The Sir Elton John and David Furnish Gallery'.

The musician and his husband have also made a huge but undisclosed donation to the museum, which John says is "known for its dedication to teaching, public research facilities and learning-based exhibitions focused on photographic arts".

"This commitment to education and this mission to celebrate the medium presents a perfect partnership," said John. "The new Photography Centre, along with the 2022 extension, will not only elevate photography but will also help foster new artists, patrons and collectors, like myself.

"We hope that audiences will walk away with the same excitement and appreciation for photography, as I did when I first started collecting," he said.

MORE: http://lei.sr/A8m9Z_T

Sir Elton John and David Furnish

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DEVELOPMENTS

Notorious prison soon to reopen as museum

Portugal's new National Museum of Resistance and Freedom opened to the public on 27 April – the 45th anniversary of the closure of the building where it is situated: the notorious Peniche political prison.

The 16th Century fortress at Peniche in Leiria, nestled among the rocks overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, about an hour to the north-west of Lisbon, was used to hold dissidents and opponents of Portugal's Fascist regime between 1934 and 1974.

Now it will become the country's first national centre dedicated to this turbulent past, with an important role in teaching younger generations that freedoms did not come without cost. The inaugural exhibition at the museum will take place alongside the unveiling of a "memory wall" inscribed with the names of the 2,500 people who entered the prison during the Estado Novo regime of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar.

The regeneration of the bleak structures has cost €3.4m (US$3.8m, £2.9m), with architect João Barros Matos of AR4 studio being given the task of designing the museum as a fitting tribute to the political prisoners and torture victims who inhabited the prison.

In 1960, Peniche was the setting for a remarkable escape, when ten inmates drugged a jailer and abseiled down the walls to waiting getaway cars.

MORE: http://lei.sr/y5h4D_T

The fortress at Peniche overlooks the Atlantic Ocean

"The inaugural exhibition at the museum will take place alongside the unveiling of a "memory wall" inscribed with the names of the 2,500 people who entered the prison during the Estado Novo regime of Antonio de Oliveira Salaza

TOURISM

Airbnb teams with 23andMe to promote DNA heritage travel

"We can make it easier for travellers to plan trips as unique as their DNA

Joe Gebbia

Airbnb has teamed up with genetic testing company 23andMe to make the finding of heritage travel experiences based on DNA tests simpler.

According to 23andMe's research, 53 per cent of buyers of genetic kits took the test because they wanted to know about the ancestry of their family. Airbnb's study of 8,000 people across the US, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, India, France, the UK and Australia, found that many respondents had travelled to at least one country of their ancestry: 89 per cent in India, 69 per cent in France, and more than half of Americans.

"We believe that authentic travel experiences help you connect with local cultures and create a sense of belonging anywhere in the world – and what better way to do that than travelling to your roots," said Joe Gebbia, co-founder of Airbnb. "23andMe is the leader in helping people learn about their genes and ancestry, and together we can make it easier for travellers to plan trips as unique as their DNA."

MORE: http://lei.sr/t7b7n_T

Ancestry travel is offering new opportunities to Airbnb

ZOOS

US$11.5m expansion in the works for St Louis Zoo's primate habitats

The St Louis Zoo in Missouri, US, has announced plans for a major US$11.5m expansion of its Primate House, with the 35,000sq ft (10,668sq m) addition set to be completed in 2021.

The outdoor expansion will provide eight new outdoor homes adjacent to the existing Primate House – home to around 40 primates from 14 different species currently.

New overhead tunnels will connect the Primate House to new outdoor habitats, allowing the primates, which include lemurs and monkeys, to explore different habitats at different times.

"Primate Canopy Trails allow us to improve animal care, health and well-being by providing access to enriching outdoor habitats, sunlight and fresh air," said St Louis Zoo president and CEO, Jeffrey P Bonner. " It also will allow visitors to experience primates like never before."

MORE: http://lei.sr/6v3T8_T

The new habitats will be beneficial to animal welfare

It will allow visitors to experience primates like never before

Jeffrey P Bonner

AQUARIUMS

Aquarium of the Pacific envisions the future of ocean life with biomorphic expansion

Pacific Visions is about the future designed around the world ocean

Joseph Cortina

The long-anticipated Pacific Visions wing at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, opened its doors to the public on 24 May.

Devised by Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis (EHDD), the two-floor annex boasts a unique design that takes cues from the motion and biodiversity of the Pacific Ocean.

"In designing this new wing," the architects explained, "we embraced the concept of fluidity – both in the biomorphic façade and in how visitors flow through the spaces."

Multimedia storytelling studio Cortina Productions conceived the immersive facilities, while Edwards Technologies engineered and installed the AV.

"Pacific Visions is about the future designed around the world ocean," said Joseph Cortina, founder of Cortina. "We really wanted to use the media to tell that story, to take people out into the world, to feel the scale of it."

MORE: http://lei.sr/N5b3K_T

INDUSTRY OPINION

Providing missing data to fight extinction

Dalia A Conde, director of science, Species360

In early May, worldwide headlines carried news that one million species are destined for extinction.

Conservationists worldwide have been scrambling to save species struggling to endure multiple issues.

Data on species birth and death rates are essential to inform species conservation policies.

Responsible aquariums, zoos, wildlife parks, and refuge centers worldwide are becoming increasingly more critical to species conservation success. In addition to serving as insurance populations of targeted critically endangered species, these facilities are storing vast reserves of species information that can help scientist and conservation managers.

Critical information is missing or unavailable for more than 98 per cent of known species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. The Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS) could increase that information by as much as eightfold, with information on birth and survival rates, curated by wildlife professionals in 97 countries.

ZIMS is maintained by Species360, a non-profit member-driven organization that facilitates information sharing among its nearly 1,200 institutional members.

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competition

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VIRTUAL REALITY

Disney-backed Tyffon plans US expansion

Immersive entertainment company Tyffon has successfully raised US$7.8m (€7m, £6.17m) in new funding to help it expand its Tyffonium free-roam virtual reality location-based experiences outside of Japan.

The new funding round brings the company's inward investment to more than US$12m (€10.78m, £9.49m) to date, with existing investors including Disney, Sega Sammy Holdings and Mizuho Capital. They will be joined in the new round of funding by Tokyo Broadcasting System.

A graduate of the Disney Accelerator initiative, Tyffon currently has two Tyffonium venues in the Tokyo area and is gearing up to open a third Japanese venue as well as its first in the US, with a new addition coming to Los Angeles later this year.

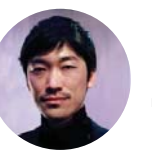
Immersive content and character-driven experiences are being developed, with Tyffon saying its priority is to focus on the quality of its content and experiences.

"We are gratified at the tremendous pedigree of our investors, who have placed their faith and trust in us," said Tyffon CEO Ken Fukazawa. "They represent some of the leading media, entertainment and technology innovators.

"We at Tyffon are committed to honouring that creative legacy and creating and sharing the highest quality and most innovative immersive experiences in the world."

MORE: http://lei.sr/V4m9N_T

The company has created three different immersive experiences



Tyffon is committed to creating and sharing the most innovative immersive experiences in the world

Ken Fukazawa

MUSEUMS

Smarter museums with 'express train of digital technology'

Cultural heritage resources should take the express train of digital technology to reach more people

Guan Qiang

Increasing use of digitisation and technologies such as AI and VR are to be used in China's heritage sector to deliver smart museums that have the capabilities to reach more people.

The plans were announced at the recent Digital China Summit by Guan Qiang, deputy head of China's National Cultural Heritage Administration (NCHA). Guan said the organisation was promoting the use of AI, VR, augmented reality, immersion display and smart guidance to the country's fast-growing cultural heritage sector. China had less than 350 museums in 1978 and now has more than 5,000.

"Cultural heritage resources should take the express train of digital technology to reach more people," said Guan, who added that the NCHA is building a nationwide database of cultural relics, which is being increasingly used in cultural heritage protection. China owns 767,000 sites of immovable cultural relics, and 100 million movable artefacts.

MORE: http://lei.sr/r2s6d_T

Beijing's Palace Museum is working on digitisation

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ALVARO SILBERSTEIN

Alvaro Silberstein, a wheelchair user himself, founded Wheel the World as a way to offer accessible tourism to all

Bringing together a passionate community of explorers, Wheel the World is opening new doors for disability tourism. Its co-founder, Alvaro Silberstein, speaks to *Attractions Management* about the company, his story and the organisation's grand plans to bring accessible tourism to the mainstream

Tom Anstey, managing editor, Attractions Management

Alvaro Silberstein has been a wheelchair user since the age of 18. Now 33 years old, the Chilean says he's always pushed himself to make his life as normal as possible.

Wanting to explore the world and visit wild tourist destinations, one location – Torres del Paine National Park in Patagonia, Chile – had always been a special dream of his.

A few years ago, his best friend, Camillo Navarro, approached him to see if the pair could feasibly organise a trip to the destination. They contacted several tour operators and local travel services, who told them they had never seen a wheelchair being used in the park.

To make their dream a reality, the duo would have to do some extended research, which led to the discovery of a specially manufactured wheelchair specifically for traversing rough terrain – the Joëlette.

"The technology would allow us to do the W Trek – a five-day hike along Torres del Paine's most famous route," says Alvaro. "But it was expensive, costing US$8,000 to buy and ship it there and we didn't have that kind of money."

To raise the necessary funds, Silberstein and Navarro decided to transform the trip into a project, fundraising the venture through a series of sponsors. Setting out with a plan to purchase and leave the equipment behind, also training local guides on how to use the technology so the experience could be repeated, Silberstein and Navarro went on the life-changing adventure.

"It was amazing for me, for my friends and for people who worked in the travel industry in Patagonia because we didn't know if it would be possible," he says.

"We filmed a low-cost documentary telling our story. As a result, our plans went viral on social media and we started receiving requests from people all over the world wanting to take the trip themselves.

"We started organising trips for others purely because we wanted them to enjoy the amazing experience we did. Not long after, we co-founded Wheel the World."

 ©CYBERTREK 2019

Wheel the World's main goal is to completely redefine what is possible in the recreation sector for people with disabilities

Empowering expansion

With a goal to "empower people with disabilities to explore the world without limits", in 2018, Wheel the World started replicating what Silberstein and Navarro had done in Patagonia, repeating the process with other wild travel destinations in South America – starting with Easter Island.

"We looked at how tourists would normally explore the island, which included a bike ride, hikes to archaeological sites, trips to the beach and scuba diving. We then established how we could enable all these experiences for people with disabilities," explains Silberstein.

"We took a range of equipment to the island, including special bikes, a hiking chair and beach-compatible wheelchairs. We then trained two scuba diving instructors on how to assist people with different disabilities to take part.

"We also found accessible accommodation and ways to transport our customers to locations around the island."

From there, the company expanded its reach across the Americas, with trips across both continents to Chile, Mexico, Peru, Hawaii and California. Wheel the World would later introduce a safari experience in Tanzania.

"The goal for us is to become the marketplace for accessible travel and to connect people with disabilities," says Silberstein. "We're continuing to create experiences from scratch as we have done in multiple locations now and we're also partnering with local operators who already offer services to people with disabilities so we can promote these things as well."

"THE GOAL FOR US IS TO BECOME THE MARKETPLACE FOR ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL AND TO CONNECT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES"

Life-changing

Depending on the experience, costs can range anywhere from US$100 to US$8,000, though the average cost works out at around US$1,000 per person. According to Silberstein, the experiences are worth every penny.

"It's very emotional for our clients," he says. "From first-hand experience with my trip to Patagonia, you never think that kind of experience will be available to you. To have an adventure in somewhere like that, realising that it's possible and being ▶

"WE HAVE A SPECIAL PURPOSE – TO EMPOWER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO EXPLORE THE WORLD WITHOUT LIMITS"

Parts of Machu Picchu that were previously inaccessible to disabled tourists can now be explored

there in the middle of nature exploring that beautiful place with your friends, it's super special and that's why I committed full time to building this organisation."

Eye in the sky

Wheel the World recently made headlines by creating an accessible tour set high in the Andes Mountains of Peru to the ancient Incan citadel of Machu Picchu.

One of the seven wonders of the world, the Unesco World Heritage Site was previously very difficult or impossible to access for many disabled visitors. The experience created by Wheel the World means the site is more accessible than ever before to disabled visitors, with the tour allowing them to explore the sanctuary in places that would have previously proved impossible.

The entire experience lasts a total of five days, starting with an accessible tour of Cusco city on day one.

On the second day, guests travel to the Inca Ceremonial Center of Sacsayhuaman. Using the special hiking wheelchair to travel to the top of the citadel with trained tour operators. From there, they can observe a special view of Cusco from high up in the surrounding hills.

For day three, visitors explore the Sacred Valley for a day using accessible bikes, ending their journey with a stay in an accessible hotel in the valley.

On the final day, they embark on a three-hour train journey to Machu Picchu. They then climb to the summit using hiking wheelchairs, spending three hours on-site, before returning to Cusco. There is an additional optional fifth day, where guests can choose to visit a lake in the Sacred Valley for a kayaking experience using adaptive kayaks.

"We've found a way to give disabled visitors the chance to have a fun and interesting experience that allows you to explore much more of the sanctuary in a safe and more accessible way," says Silberstein. "Using these different technologies makes it possible. We want to make these experiences available to as many people as possible."

Challenges and successes

Doing something in areas where similar feats have never or rarely been attempted has presented new challenges to Wheel the World. Not only did Silberstein and Navarro have to strategically plan out each trip with accessibility at the forefront of everything, but they also had to convince authorities that it was viable for repeat trips.

"Getting the people who run things like national parks and travel attractions to collaborate with us is the main challenge we continue to face," explains Silberstein.

"There's a range of equipment if you don't want to modify your infrastructure. It's about providing the right information to accommodate these visitors and to make services more accessible.

Silberstein wants to raise awareness for diablsed people who wish to live their life to the fullest

"We want to inspire accessibility everywhere. It's not just one organisation doing this. It's about getting the governments and different organisations related to tourism to commit as well."

Future plans

Looking forward, within the next few months, Wheel the World will launch new trips in Maui, Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands, with even more projects planned for the future.

In its first year, the company has successfully had more than 500 disabled customers travel to experience exotic locations all over the world. For Silberstein, it's the reason he started the business, replicating the emotions he felt for thousands of people in the future.

"In one year, hundreds of people have travelled to places they wouldn't have thought possible," he says. "What makes us really proud and happy is when we have a new customer go to a place that they wouldn't have been able to otherwise. I love to hear from them about these amazing experiences in these extraordinary places they've travelled.

"We have a special purpose – to empower people with disabilities to explore the world without limits. We want to inspire accessibility everywhere." ●

Some of the world's most famous sites are now accessible for people with different disabilities

THE TECHNOLOGY

The Joëlette

The primary model for Wheel the World's trips, the Joëltette is an all-terrain one-wheeled chair that enables any person with reduced mobility or disability to take part in hiking excursions or running activities with the help of two guides.

To operate the chair, the rear guide handles balance, while the front controls traction and steers.

Designed for both family outings and more intense sports and recreation, the chair offers users access to significantly rougher terrain that a classic wheelchair couldn't handle. The chairs have suspension and disc brakes, so you can go downhill in a safe and controlled way.

The design is also compact and folds down into an easily transportable size.

Force G Handcycle

The Force G handcycle's aerodynamic design offers an adjustable seat suitable for people with a range of disabilities and is designed specifically for people with lower body paraplegia or amputees. Riders use their hands to pedal and steer instead of their legs.

Beach Wheelchair

The beach wheelchair is an ideal aid for use on sand and in water. Designed to be simple, highly portable and submersible with no parts to rust or corrode, the chair can easily go from land to sea and comes with inflatable collars, inflatable footrests and beach wheelchair sun canopies.

Mountain Trike

An all-terrain, self-propelled chair, the Mountain Trike is ideal for outdoor use. For those who find it difficult to self propel the model can be converted into an electric eTrike. Comes with suspension and disc brakes for ultimate control.

Grit Freedom Chair

Developed by MIT engineers, this easy-to-push, lever-driven wheelchair comes armed with rugged mountain bike wheels, a big, sturdy front wheel that doesn't get stuck, and optional trail handles, allowing users to make their own path through difficult terrain.

The TrendsWatch 2019 Report from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the Center for the Future of Museums (CFM), explores important cultural,technological, economic, environmental, and policy events, identifying the major trends that will shape the way museums worldwide will handle affairs, do business and engage visitors

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

Trust in government, media, academia, industry, and even nonprofit organisations are at an all-time low, according to the latest edition of *TrendsWatch* – an annual report on the future of museums.

Compiled by CFM's vice president of strategic foresight and founding director, Elizabeth Merritt, "Truth, Trust and Fake News" is one of five major trends identified in the eighth edition of the report.

With declines in trust, it questions how nonprofits in general, and museums in particular, can remain among the most trusted sources of information, asking how museums, which are rated as extremely trustworthy by the general public, can build on this trust. It also asks how they can help society re-establish a framework for telling fact from fiction.

Blockchain can be used to maintain an accurate record as to the ownership of a museum artefact

BLOCKCHAIN

The way in which blockchain will transform multiple types of transactions is the second trend identified.

Blockchain, in its simplest form, is a set records, linked using cryptography, to create a list of physical or digital transactions between two parties in a verifiable and permanent way.

The technology has been around for more than a decade, but in the past year, there has been huge growth in its experimental applications, including refugee aid, educational credentialing, land registries and provenance tracking.

Because blockchain has such wide-reaching potential for every sector, it means that museum leaders must understand what the technology is and how it's likely to impact their communities.

"Museums are all about keeping secure, immutable records of transactions about collections," says the report. "In past centuries, these records were kept in paper ledgers and more recently on in-house databases. The distributed nature of blockchain ledgers could make this data less vulnerable to loss or degradation."

It also suggests that using blockchain means museums can be transparent about the history of their collections, enabling anyone to access data by use of a public key. This will help to support claims from indigenous communities, identify the lineage of Nazi-era assets and better help repatriation of artefacts.

DECOLONISATION

While many museums successfully address the dark side of history, one of the most profound challenges is to address colonisation, which for many older institutions, is the basis of their existence.

"Decolonisation is the long, slow, painful, and imperfect process of undoing damage inflicted by colonial practices that remain deeply embedded in our culture, politics, and economies," says the report.

"Many museums reflect a Eurocentric view of the world. Many were born directly from colonial practices, serving as trophy rooms of conquest and superiority.

"All museums share a responsibility for helping their country and their society address the legacy of damage."

To resolve this, museums can actively take part in the return of heritage removed by colonial occupiers – though

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WHILE MANY MUSEUMS SUCCESSFULLY ADDRESS THE DARK SIDE OF HISTORY, ONE OF THE MOST PROFOUND CHALLENGES IS TO ADDRESS COLONISATION, WHICH FOR MANY OLDER INSTITUTIONS, IS THE BASIS OF THEIR FOUNDATION

some argue their collections are for all the people of the world and that they should not have to return these treasures.

This work should also extend, says the report, to examining how museum governance and operations may perpetuate colonial attitudes and power structures – how, for example, are indigenous people given authority and voice in museums that serve their communities, preserve heritage and influence how society sees their culture?

"Museums, in their cultural roles of memory keeper, conscience, and healer, have an obligation to provoke reflection, rethinking, and rebalancing," says the report. "Museums can help us deal with the dark side of history, not just emotionally and personally, but in a way that helps us build a just and equitable society, despite our legacy of theft and violence."

HOUSING INSECURITY

Housing insecurity, a significant social or cultural challenge that's difficult to solve for multiple reasons, is something that museums should be thinking more about.

"Housing security is both a symptom and a cause of the deepening inequality of wealth, opportunity, and access that characterises the start of the 21st century, and solving these problems will require all actors – government, industry, non-profits, and philanthropy – to rethink their roles and responsibilities," the report explains, asking how a cultural non-profit can play a bigger role in the area, saying that museums need to serve not just people who have reached the "tip of the pyramid" but "those who are not yet adequately housed, fed, or safe".

The report suggests that museums find ways to serve families and individuals experiencing this insecurity, by making them feel welcome. By prioritising social inclusion, museums can combat the isolation that often results from homelessness, helping people to build social networks and foster self-worth.

SELF-CARE

The final trend identified in the report revolves around museum staff and helpers. In the face of rising stress and stretched resources, it's more important than ever for individuals and institutions to recognise the need for setting aside time and resources for restorative practice.

CFM points to research by Tech Impact, which indicates that nonprofit workers often feel overstretched and that their productivity drops when the workweek reaches 50 hours or more. Post-recession trends in the form of low pay, long hours and high expectations mean that 30 per cent of the nonprofit workforce is experiencing burnout, with a further 20 per cent at risk.

The welfare of museum staff and volunteers has been highlighted, with stress resulting in high turnover

The impact of this stress can come at a high price for museum employers.

"Turnover of staff results in a loss of knowledge, experience, and institutional memory. It necessitates recruitment, hiring, and training, as well as incurring the hidden costs of work that goes undone while a vacancy is unfilled," says the report, which suggests talking to employees about what conditions drive stress in their jobs, reviewing policies to identify practices such as working from home and flex time, and creating an annual quality of life survey to benchmark progress in lowering stress. ▶

FORWARD THINKING

Elizabeth Merritt, vice president of strategic foresight and founding director for the Center for the Future of Museums speaks about the report and what it could mean for the culture sector.

How can museums retain trust in an era of fake news?

Trust is rooted in accountability, and museums can foster trust by being transparent about their own operations. Some people are vaguely aware that there are directors and curators in a museum, but most people don't know who decides what a museum collects, and how it is interpreted. More museums are beginning to abandon the anonymous voice of authority, and to identify whose voice is reflected in the label copy.

If trust has been lost how can it be rebuilt?

If an institution or an individual has lost the public's trust because they made a mistake, I think the first step is to take full responsibility. If they are simply wrong on a matter of fact, correct it! Don't say "we'll fix that when the exhibit is renovated in ten years." If a museum has acted in a way that damages a community, it can apologise, and ask what it can do to make amends.

How are museums currently viewed in terms of trust?

Museums are one of the most trusted sources of information, in a time when trust in government, journalism, academia and business is in rapid decline. Libraries are highly trusted too. The public recognises the work of museums and libraries is, at heart, helping them learn for themselves.

Elizabeth Merritt is the report's author

What applications does blockchain have for museums that haven't used it yet?

I'm intrigued by the potential applications for blockchain-based smart contracts. A museum could collect micropayments when someone downloads or shares a digital derivation of works from the collection. Or an artist whose work is displayed in a museum might receive fees based on a museum's visitation numbers.

How will blockchain affect issues such as war relics, colonial-era artefacts and trafficked/stolen property?

If we develop resilient, tamper-proof ways to link artefacts to digital records, that could make it easier for museums and law enforcement to proactively identify stolen material. A global, publicly accessible ledger of artefacts could make it easier to identify stolen or trafficked property.

How do museums confront historic wrongs when it could mean losing parts of their own collections telling this story?

I'd rather not think of it as "losing their collections," but as "playing a key role in restitution." It's important for museums to document and share difficult stories about injustice, but not in a way that itself perpetuates historic wrongs.

How does a museum, intrinsically colonial at its core, address the issue of colonialism?

Confronting their own past is a good place to start. Any institution, if it survives

Colonialisation and the rise of fake news are currently hot button topics in the world of museums

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IT'S IMPORTANT FOR MUSEUMS TO DOCUMENT AND SHARE DIFFICULT STORIES ABOUT INJUSTICE, BUT NOT IN A WAY THAT ITSELF PERPETUATES HISTORIC WRONGS

long enough, accumulates problematic episodes in its history, some more than others. Owning up to that history can be painful and difficult, but it is a first step towards de-colonising the future.

How can a museum better support its indigenous communities?
That's exactly the question the museum should be asking the indigenous communities it serves. Better yet, go beyond asking for input, and actually share the power to make decisions about how the museum operates. That could be through advisory councils or by recruiting significant indigenous representation to the board of trustees.

What is a museum's responsibility to its community and homelessness?
I think all museums should be aware of issues that are important to their communities, and in many, many communities in America homelessness and housing insecurity is a significant challenge. What a particular museum can do to help address that issue will depend on its mission, resources and circumstances. Many museums are playing a role in educating the public about the facts of homelessness, fostering awareness and empathy.

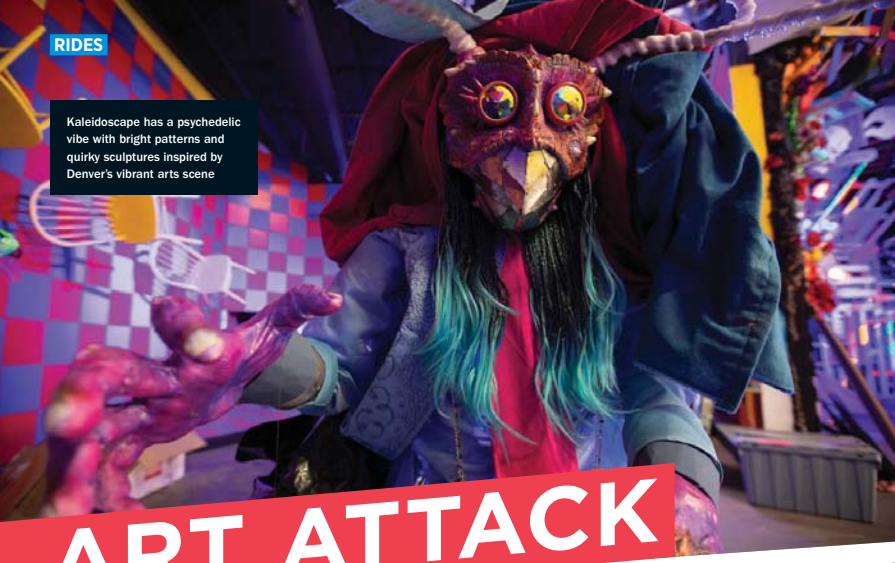
How can a museum serve its homeless population?
That would be a very good question for any museum's board to consider. At the least, any museum can have a thoughtful policy about how to welcome all visitors (including people who might be experiencing homelessness) and make them feel welcome. If a museum has a significant number of people without shelter in their neighbourhood or on their grounds, why not partner with other organisations to help connect these people with essential services?

How can museums keep their workforce happy?
I think that answer is the same for museums as for any other organisation: give people the chance to do meaningful work, as much control over their working environment as possible. Treat employees with respect, recognise them as individuals, and be flexible in creating an environment that supports them in doing their best work.

What's the best balance for staff in terms of work and life?
I think that is for every one of us to figure out individually – and it will probably change as a person moves through life.

Merrit says museums could do more to serve its homeless population through outreach and programming

Where are museums succeeding right now?
I think museums collectively are doing a splendid job of questioning the received wisdom about "what a museum does." The more museums experiment around the edges, the more new ways we discover for museums to become essential assets for their communities. ●



Kaleidoscope has a psychedelic vibe with bright patterns and quirky sculptures inspired by Denver's vibrant arts scene

ART ATTACK

From artistic endeavours to creations inspired by nature's fiercest predators, we take a look at some of the major ride openings happening at visitor attractions worldwide

KALEIDOSCOPE

Elitch Gardens

Denver, Colorado, US

MEOW WOLF

Created as a precursor to a blockbuster art exhibition taking place in Denver in 2020, Elitch Gardens' newest attraction has been created by art collective Meow Wolf and built in a former interactive shooter dark ride, where art is replacing guns.

Originally created in 1999 by Sally Corp, the dark ride started its life as Ghost Blasters – a journey through a themed haunted manor where riders competed with laser guns to get the high score, shooting targets as they travelled through.

In 2008 the ride was refurbished, reopening as Ghost Blasters II. Meow Wolf's version becomes its third iteration.

Called Kaleidoscope, the reimagined ride opened to the public on 20 April, turning the ageing attraction into a series of mind-bending landscapes.

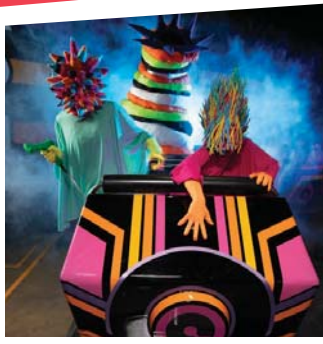
The installation takes passengers on an interactive, artist-driven voyage "from minimal to maximal and back again". The ride experience says Meow Wolf, "takes a tiny point of light on its journey to becoming a planet-sized hyper being".

Meow Wolf's team, led by co-founders Emily Montoya and Matt King, took charge of the project, with seven Denver artists – Frankie Toan, Laleh Mehran, Kenzie Sitterud, Chris Coleman, Michael Ortiz, Brick Suede and Katie Caron – contributing.

Jenny Weinbloom acted as executive producer of Kaleidoscope and is also overseeing the upcoming 2020 exhibition.

"Elitch Gardens were ready to do something different with the space," she told *The Denver Post*. "What made it feel like such a great fit is that we're best at working with salvaged materials, so when we inherited the facility there were all kinds of crazy items to use in creative ways".

"The ride is filled with unique art scenes," says Lori Kaupp, Elitch Gardens' director of operations. "Our visitors want to ride it over and over again to see everything that is Kaleidoscope."



Meow Wolf has repurposed Elitch's 20-year-old Ghost Blasters II dark ride to create the one-of-a-kind experience

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YUKON STRIKER

Canada's Wonderland

Vaughan, Ontario, Canada

BOLLIGER & MABILLARD

Yukon Striker is the world's tallest, fastest and longest dive coaster.

Opened on 3 May, the coaster is the centrepiece of the park's Frontier Canada area and themed to the Klondike Goldrush,

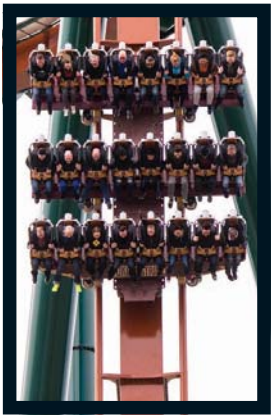
Yukon Striker was designed by Bolliger & Mabillard. It stand at 75m (245ft) and reaches speeds of up to 80mph (130kmph) over a 1,105m (3,625ft) track. Yukon Striker also features floorless trains and in a first for any dive coaster – a 360-degree loop – as well as having the most inversions on a dive coaster, at four.

"Yukon Striker soars through four inversions in the newly themed area Frontier Canada," says Norm Pirtovshek, Canada's Wonderland general manager.

"At its summit, you'll stare directly down 245 feet at 90 degrees into an underwater tunnel for three seconds before dropping."

Yukon Striker becomes Canada's Wonderland's seventeenth rollercoaster, tieing it with Cedar Point and only topped by Six Flags Magic Mountain, which boasts 19 rollercoasters in its portfolio.

Part of a new land themed on Canada's Klondike Goldrush, Yukon Striker claims several world records and is now one of the world's premier rollercoaster experiences



COLOSSOS: KAMPF DER GIGANTEN

Heide Park

Soltau, Germany

INTAMIN & MERLIN MAGIC MAKING

Originally opened in April 2001, Heide Park's Colossos ride has undergone a major refurbishment and retheming to the cost of €12m (US$13.4m) for 2019.

The ride, which is both the tallest and the fastest wooden rollercoaster in Europe, was forced to close in July 2016, after inspections revealed significant problems with the track.

On 19 April 2019, nearly three years on from its closure, it reopened with essential repairs carried out and a major retheming of the ride undertaken by the park.

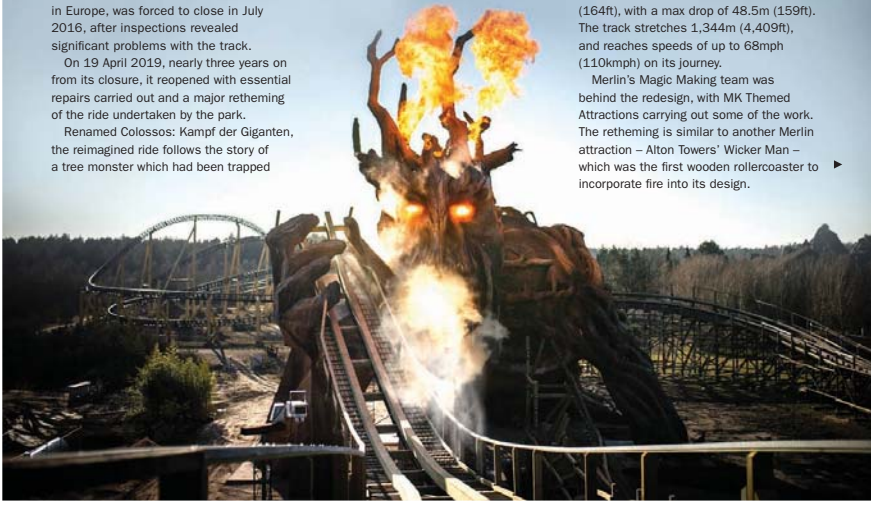
Renamed Colossos: Kampf der Giganten, the reimagined ride follows the story of a tree monster which had been trapped beneath the old ride, but following the works it has broken free and taken over.

Colossos now incorporates a range of special effects to immerse riders in the experience, including new lighting, audio and dramatic fire effects.

Unlike a traditional wooden coaster, the Intamin-designed ride's track was originally laser-cut in a factory, with sections of track designed to fit together like puzzle pieces.

This cut costs and sped up construction. The ride reaches heights of up to 50m (164ft), with a max drop of 48.5m (159ft). The track stretches 1,344m (4,409ft), and reaches speeds of up to 68mph (110kmph) on its journey.

Merlin's Magic Making team was behind the redesign, with MK Themed Attractions carrying out some of the work. The retheming is similar to another Merlin attraction – Alton Towers' Wicker Man – which was the first wooden rollercoaster to incorporate fire into its design. ▶



TIGRIS

Busch Gardens Tampa

Tampa, Florida, US

PREMIER RIDES

Tigris is the ninth rollercoaster at Busch Gardens

Florida's tallest launch coaster, Tigris, has now opened at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, boasting a 45.7m (150ft) skyward surge and an inverted heartline roll, getting riders up to speeds of more than 60mph (97kmph).

Opened on 19 April, the steel launch coaster is the ninth roller coaster at Busch Gardens, and has been designed to mimic the agility of a tiger, running through a series of looping twists with both forward and backward motion.

Tigris sits in the Stanleyville area of Busch Gardens, adjacent to Jungala, which is home to the theme park's endangered Bengal tigers. The ride's queue is lined with educational material about the plight of wild tigers and the action conservationists are taking to protect them – part of a larger initiative by Busch Gardens' parent company, SeaWorld Entertainment, to create 'experiences that matter'.

"This ride is unlike anything we have in our rollercoaster collection," says Stewart Clark, president and general manager of Busch Gardens Tampa Bay.

"Tigris is a testament to our continuing investment in the park, and to bringing new and innovative experiences to our guests."

COPPERHEAD STRIKE

Carowinds

Charlotte, North Carolina, US

MACK RIDES

Debuted as the anchor attraction for Carowind's new Blue Ridge Junction area, Copperhead Strike is the Carolinas' first double-launch coaster, going from 0 to 68kmph (42mph) in just 2.5 seconds.

Custom-designed by Mack Rides for Carowinds, the new coaster – the first major rollercoaster to arrive at the park since Fury 325 in 2015 – pulls out a series of fast, tight, close-to-the-ground manoeuvres, including five inversions.

The ride is themed after a visit to 'Old Granny Byrd's farmhouse'.

According to the story, Granny has been making jam for more than 40 years, but her farm is filled with signs warning trespassers to leave and watch out for snakes. As it begins, riders happen upon a moonshine still in Granny's shed and flee when she comes after them.

The addition is the 14th rollercoaster to come to Carowinds, with only four theme parks in the world now having more.

Blue Ridge Junction is a new immersive area inspired by nature and culture of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the eastern US.

Copperhead Strike simulates the harrowing chase of getaway cars racing through rolling farmland

In addition to Copperhead Strike, the area also features the new Blue Ridge Country Kitchen restaurant and the Mountain Gliders family ride.

"Each year we've added events and attractions for guests of all ages, and this year represents our biggest investment to date," says Pat Jones, Carowinds' vice president and general manager. "We're excited to bring all these experiences to Blue Ridge Junction."

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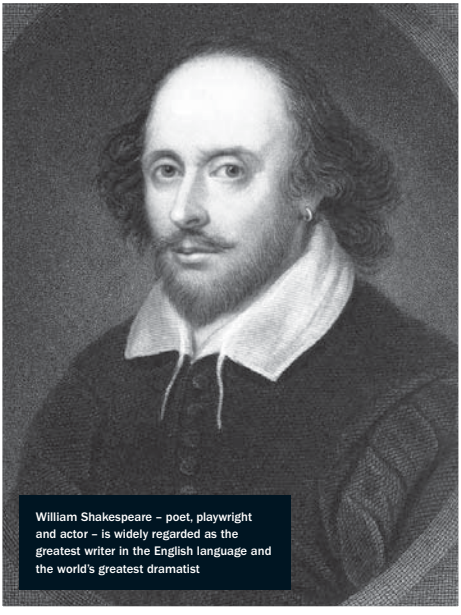
MADE IN CHINA

The birthplace of William Shakespeare will be recreated 6,000 miles away at the home of China's most famous playwright. Tom Anstey, spoke to the team behind the ambitious project

"Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt"



William Shakespeare – poet, playwright and actor – is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist

This line from William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* encourages us to try new things.

It's also an apt way to introduce a new project dedicated to the legacy of the playwright, which will see a replica of his home built in Fuzhou, China.

Both Shakespeare's Birthplace and Shakespeare's New Place – the latter demolished in the 1800s – will be recreated with historical accuracy near Fuzhou City in southern China. The location is notable because it was the birthplace of Chinese playwright, Tang Xianzu.

Along with Spain's Miguel de Cervantes, the trio of iconic wordsmiths – who all died in 1616 but never met during their lives – will have a cultural centre constructed and dedicated to their legacies.

Called San Weng (which translates to 'Three Masters'), the 890,000sq m development will encompass a theatre park, tourism and leisure zones. Each writer will have a dedicated area.

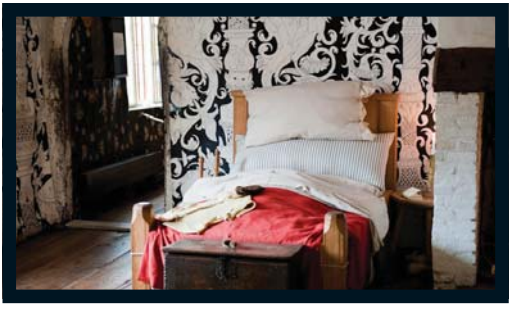
The new Shakespeare development sits at the heart of the Stratford Quarter, while Cervantes will be represented by a Spanish Alcala Quarter and Xianzu an ancient Chinese village.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Fuzhou Culture and Tourism Investment Company signed an exclusive Co-operation Agreement in September last year to recreate the heritage listed buildings, which the trust will oversee to ensure the replicas faithfully represent the originals.

Dedicated to caring for the world's greatest Shakespeare heritage sites and collections in the playwright's home town of Stratford-upon-Avon, England, key members of the trust involved in the process spoke to *Attractions Management* about the plans.

 ©CYBERTREK 2019

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and spent his childhood years living in the house



SHUTTERSTOCK_MYSTOCK

Shakespeare's Birthplace

William Shakespeare was born in the house in Stratford upon Avon and grew up there with his parents John and Mary and his seven siblings.

Shakespeare would also spend the first five years of his marriage to Anne Hathaway living there.

The property was purchased in 1847 by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, which has cared for it ever since. Today, visitors can walk in Shakespeare's footsteps and explore the house, hearing tales of his family life, enjoying live theatre on demand and getting up close to rare artefacts from the Trust's collections.

John Russell
vice chair
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

What is your role?
I'm an executive trustee on the board. I've got a business background so among the diverse range of skills we have across the 12 trustees, I tick that box. In particular, I've done quite a lot of business in China for companies such as Land Rover.

Why China?
The team in Fuzhou team came to us with this proposition and we felt it was a good way of putting a marker down in China.

We've always had a relationship with them, as you do with many cultural organisations around the world. This is a project they wanted to do to increase their footprint. It was something that was of immediate interest to us. We evaluated it, decided it had merit and went from there.

As a market there's massive interest in all things English in China and creating a point of interest there for people who couldn't necessarily get to the birthplace in England will be good business for us.

How is Shakespeare understood in China?
Around a third of the Chinese population are currently learning to, or can already speak English. The number of people interested in Shakespeare varies on which studies you read, but those numbers would dwarf the statistics of most countries.

If you look at Stratford and our other properties, the number of Chinese people wanting to visit is growing very, very fast.

Will you develop in other countries?
We have close ties with a number of countries, including the US and in Europe, where we have established Shakespeare appreciation societies, theatre groups and more. There may well be projects that come to fruition as a result of that.

What was the internal reaction?
Fascination. We have a very passionate group of people at the Trust. Curiosity is the first thing when an organisation does anything new. People have been wanting ▶

to hear and understand more, and most importantly understand how they can support we've been doing.

How can you ensure the authenticity of what you're trying to recreate?
In China, you get these replica attractions, but a lot of them don't really have a purpose other than to exist.

Our project in China is a proper homage to Shakespeare and it's also a basis for further education and to get people interested in the whole story.

At the very heart of the decision to go ahead with the project was our belief that our partners had the right intentions and their hearts were in the right place.

We've satisfied ourselves completely that that is the case here. We want to create a base where Shakespeare can be presented to a Chinese audience.

Will this new development have an impact on the Stratford site in the UK?
China's economy is developing rapidly. More than a third of the population has benefited from this economic boom and there's more to come.

The world will see more Chinese people travelling internationally and we expect that this – when combined with increased interest because of the new site in China – will boost visitation to Shakespeare's Birthplace in Stratford as a result.

> WE WANT TO CREATE A BASE WHERE SHAKESPEARE CAN BE PRESENTED TO A CHINESE AUDIENCE

Shakespeare's New Place was demolished in 1759 but a garden has been designed to commemorate the importance of the site

Shakespeare's New Place

Shakespeare's New Place was the first place of pilgrimage for literary fans, long before his Birthplace was saved for the nation in 1847.

Purchased by Shakespeare in 1597 it was his home until his death there in 1616.

The house was demolished 86 years later in 1702 and replaced by another family home – also known as New Place.

This second house was in turn demolished by the Reverend Francis Gastrell in 1759, in the wake of disputes with the local authorities and as a result of his annoyance with visiting Shakespeare fans.

In 2016 the site of Shakespeare's New Place was transformed to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. It now features contemporary sculptures, beautifully-restored gardens and an exhibition shining fresh light on the man behind the famous works, with specially commissioned artworks.

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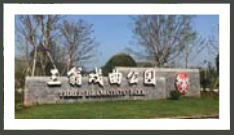
Fuzhou Culture Tourism Investment Group

Founded in 2013, the Fuzhou Culture Tourism Investment Group engages in the protection, development, operation, and management of historical and cultural facilities, parks, scenic sites, and tourism resources. It's also involved in investment and the development of cultural tourism, commercial real estate, and film and television media industry businesses; investment and operation of cultural industry, cultural property rights, and cultural and sports events; and investment management and operation of cultural and financial products.



The new site in China will be developed by the Fuzhou Culture Tourism Investment Group

Debbie Beardall
head of sales and business development
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

What is your main role at the trust?
I handle the business to business side of things, working with tour operators and education providers – both domestically and internationally – to promote the Trust and everything that we do.

When it comes to things like visiting our properties, our learning offer, after hours events, anything like that, I'm the one that goes over to China to tell them all about it.

The Trust also tends to align what it does internationally with VisitBritain, the UK's tourism body. We work closely with them on everything we do.

What markets outside of Britain appeal most to the trust?
We tend to align ourselves with the key markets that demonstrate a desire for Shakespearean culture. The US is one of our biggest markets. In Europe, France, Spain and Italy are big for us. China is the farthest afield. Asia is a growing market. A lot of emerging countries are coming from south-east Asia. Countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia are all growing.

Why China for this first project?
It's appealing because they already like Shakespeare there. It makes my job so much easier. On my visits, I haven't had to explain to anybody who he was. They study him at school. They know his work. They like things which are quintessentially British. He ticks all those boxes.

What will China do for Stratford?
There's a massive market of people from China that's untapped when it comes to visiting the UK. When people come over, they don't just come for Shakespeare's Birthplace, they come for all the culture and heritage that our country has to offer.

Chinese visitors have mainly been coming over from first-tier cities such as Shanghai, Chengdu and Beijing. Visitors from second-tier cities are only just starting to emerge and there have been high levels of interest from tour operators.

Hopefully, the new development at Fuzhou will make them keener to come over to see the original Birthplace and what the rest of what the UK has to offer. ▶

Visitors to the Birthplace are given the chance to walk in Shakespeare's footsteps and explore the house he was born and grew up in

Nic Fulcher
project manager and historian
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

> WITH THIS DEVELOPMENT, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN CHINA WILL BE ABLE TO GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH SHAKESPEARE

What was your role in the project?
I've been involved for a couple of years. I'm the trust's project manager, where I deal with our larger capital projects. When this started to emerge, I was brought on board to see what our partners in Fuzhou wanted to do and how they wanted to do it.

How do you go about recreating an English Heritage site and putting it on the other side of the world?
The Birthplace is easier because the building still exists. New Place is more challenging, having been demolished twice.

It was a substantial property when it was bought in 1597 but a much older building dated back to the 1480s. It was built by the Clopton family. Shakespeare owned it as his family home for his adult life and died there in 1616. It passed through the Shakespeare family line to his granddaughter. In 1702 it hit the open market and was bought by a member of the Clopton family, who demolished it to build another building – called New Place as well. By the time you hit the middle of the 18th century, the then owner Reverend Francis Gastral, demolished the house again. This caused a public outcry so significant that the land was never built on again. We have that site today, which is a park and garden.

To commemorate the 400-year anniversary of his death, in 2016 we re-presented the site. Part of that process was an extensive archaeological investigation. That information enabled us to start to build a more accurate picture of what the house was made of, what its footprint was and the size of the building.

That and subsequent research and work with architectural experts and historians has enabled us to build a better picture and greater understanding of what the house is most likely to have been like.

What is the goal of this project?
As a trust, part of our raison d'etre is to promote the worldwide enjoyment and understanding of Shakespeare's work, life and times. With this development, millions of people in China will be able to get up close and personal with Shakespeare. It's the first time we've authorised a recreation of the house and it's an important thing.

Tell us about the site
The location is about 20 minutes outside Fuzhou. Once you get out of the city – home to about four million people – you hit the mountainous regions. It's mainly an agricultural area surrounding the city, with natural springs and spas.

The new Sang Wen attractions will represent the three cultures behind the three most spoken languages in the world – Mandarin, Spanish and English. You end up with an immersive experience of the lives of these three great writers.

How does this compare to previous projects?
It's a major undertaking for us. We haven't done anything like this before. It's a unique opportunity to engage with the people of a country on the other side of the world we frequently see visit the birthplace. It's one of our largest growing tourism markets and it's a really interesting relationship right now.

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Commissioned artworks and displays in New Place evoke a sense of Shakespeare's life there

Philippa Rawlinson
director of operations
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

What was your role in the project?
I have direct responsibility for operations and marketing. My teams are the ones that are welcoming the visitors, interpreting the sites and bringing them to life, while also driving revenue.

In my role, I look at opportunities for the trust to expand its reach and increase its financial stability. As an independent charity, we have to work hard for every penny to look after the site in Stratford-Upon-Avon.

What's the project plan?
The first stage of the project is to send over building plans, archeology plans, ideas of what New Place looked like – everything they'll need to recreate these buildings.

Once the buildings have been built and we've given our quality assurance, we will work with them to interpret those spaces.

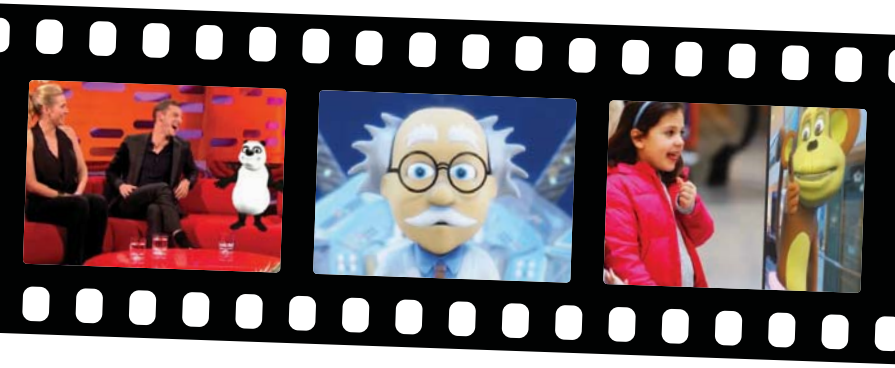
In New Place, we might have some cutting-edge interpretations to recreate the stories we tell about Shakespeare. If we're happy, they'll open in the early 2020s.

What does this development mean for the trust?
The greatest benefit is to work with a partner in China to recreate our heritage.

We can tell our story to a whole new audience, as they're looking at about 500,000 visitors a year. The quality control on a standard building will be there and the story of Shakespeare will be told in the way we want to tell it.

Will this boost tourism in the UK?
There's nothing like standing on the spot where history happened. When you're standing on that spot, it's incredible.

In the birthplace, we've got the flagstone floors straight from the period where Shakespeare would have run around as a child. We get people coming in and taking off their shoes to run around in that same space. You can't beat where history happened. Culture and history is a great driver for inbound tourism in the UK and were happy to be a part of that. ●



ANIMALIVE

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Animalive is a premier manufacturer of interactive animation products. Its founder, Ali Kord, explains how its recent joint venture will take the company's award-winning products to the next level

With clients including the likes of Europa-Park, Ferrari World and Merlin Entertainments, Animalive is placed as an industry leader in its field.

Based in Lewes, UK, the company's systems are manufactured in Taipei, with its Field Application Technicians stationed to service systems in locations worldwide.

Animalive's technologies are used for a wide range of experiences, including theatrical shows, themed attractions, party rooms and interactive information points. The company offers a bespoke package to its clients, from consultation and customisation through to equipment installation, training and ongoing customer support.

"We advise all partners that require next-level animation to elevate their offering and really connect with their audiences," says Ali Kord, who founded Animalive in 2007.

"We're experts at bringing characters to life," says Kord. "Our aim is to provide supporting digital media around this technology to make our live interactions even more meaningful and endearing for visitors. To do this, we use the latest motion capture technology for enhanced user experience"

Animalive's experience in creating live 3D characters is unrivalled, says Kord. The company has now added AnimaChat to its offering, which allows

Animalive has introduced its Tabatinga brand, which offers a low-cost set of Animalive IPs to its customers

 ©CYBERTREK 2019

Animalive offers character animation solutions for real-time live interaction

Animalive's real-time interactive animations bring laughter and wonder to film studios, theme parks, FECs, museums and shopping malls across the globe

clients to stream its services remotely across the web, spreading the cost of a single motion capture system to multiple venues.

"AnimaChat allows our clients to scale their reach and operate various sites remotely using a single broadcaster/server station," he explains. "One operator can stream multiple characters into multiple venues.

For the first time, your operator can be live, interacting with an audience in Melbourne at midday, and ten minutes later, the same operator can be live entertaining in Hong Kong, then Taipei."

AiQ-Synertial (AiQS)

A newly-created joint venture AiQ-Synertial Ltd (AiQS) will utilise Animalive's IPs, including codes, copyrights and trademarks, owned by various individuals or holdings. To form the company, AiQS purchased 87.5 per cent of Animalive, in exchange for an undisclosed number of shares in AiQS, with Kord taking up the position of COO.

Additionally, Animalive's Jake Slack was appointed to head up AnimaChat and AnimaAR technologies for AiQS, with the board approving a 24-month business plan for the venture.

"We've put Animalive online, added better motion capture systems for the face and fingers and improved sound quality," says Kord. ►

THE ANIMALIVE CORE TEAM:

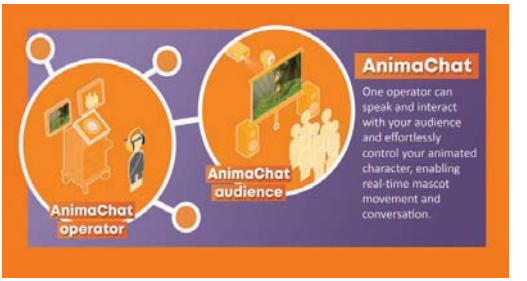
ALI KORD: founder and innovator

JAKE SLACK: head of tech and engineering

BRIAN PARKER: founder of Tabatinga FECs and the AnimaChat testing grounds

TIM HEALEY: Marketing manager

ALEX DIPLOCK: director 3D production



Animachat enables an animated mascot to have real-time interaction and 2-way chat with visitors

► "Thanks to this partn ership, we can now also offer supporting 3D content spread around an FEC, including AR entertainment or edutainment touchscreens in the form of quizzes, map quests, jokes and dance skits.

"Animalive has reduced the cost of transforming an FEC from a local benign brand, into a scalable, affordable attraction that will keep things fresh, with no content older than three months."

The acquisition means that with AiQS funding, Animalive can now produce what it calls "the best no-lag voice and lip-synching technology, combined with the best-animated VOIP and squeaky clean AR app", as well as offering a team of people to create new content and live animation systems for its franchisees.

Using their phone or rental tablets provided by the FEC or attraction, users can trigger content to either play a video on the screen or an animation in AR.

With the real-time animation server – AnimaChat – the Animalive characters can appear on any screen in the FEC, like a celebrity 'popping in'. Animachat can also be hired on a pay-as-you-go basis for FEC and attraction owners who operate a smaller facility not needing its own dedicated Animachat performance system.

Creating magic

One of Animalive's offering is the digitisation of an FEC's mascot or IP, which involves taking a two-dimensional model and rendering it as a 3D character. That character is then programmed to interact on a touchscreen, AR and with live operators.

For smaller FECs, which have no particular mascots but want to tap into 3D digital media entertainment possibilities, Animalive has introduced its Tabatinga brand, which offers an entertaining set of Animalive IPs that can be tapped into, even pay-as-you-go live animation.

While FECs are Animalive's bread and butter, it has worked with its technology in other settings.

"Parks and malls can use our technology to set up live information kiosks or children's sitting areas – we come with previous experience in these type of projects," Kord says. The wow factor you get from this technology doesn't cease to amaze audiences. In turn, it inspires us to keep it coming. We're the pioneers of real-time motion capture technology and have configured it to cater to various applications for the last 25 years."

Edutainment

While its characters and IP can be used for fun, Animalive can also add in an element of education, which is exactly what it has done for Merlin's Sea Life brand.

Ideal for locations such as museums, science centres, aquariums and zoos, the Animalive Edutainment systems deliver key messages in a fun and exciting way. According to Kord, this

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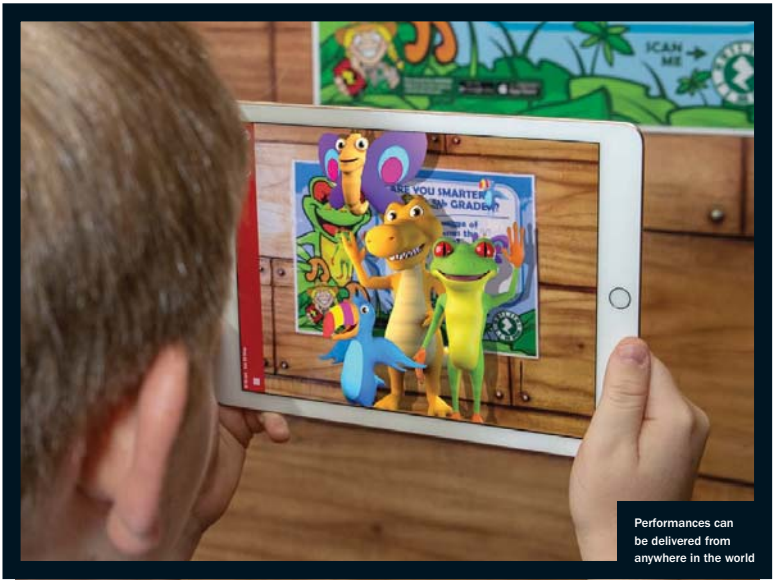

Performances can be delivered from anywhere in the world

kind of guest experience results in a higher level of retained information and improved visitor satisfaction.

For Sea Life, Animalive created Kiah the Turtle, who is the host of an interactive quiz using questions supplied by the operator's animal husbandry experts. In this example, children compete in two teams, answering questions on the sea creatures they encountered as they've explored the aquarium. Using the same system, Kiah can also greet visitors to the aquarium, provide promotional information and educate visitors on environmental issues.

Initially installed in Brighton, the system proved so popular that Merlin and Sea Life decided to expand the system to multiple Sea Life Centres across the UK.

Changing landscape

As the attractions industry develops with new and exciting technologies appearing almost daily, Kord believes a key trend will see the internet reduce the cost of live entertainment for FECs, something Animalive wants to be a leader in.

"We want to stay at the front of the pack as animation and 3D content service providers," he says.

"We want to create content that will help smaller FECs stay relevant, while allowing children visiting these attractions to let off some steam as well.

Using its motion capture technology, Animalive has worked with car factories, hospitals, running tracks, opera houses and even stadiums. But the most rewarding place to work, says Kord, is in an FEC: "The best place it has ever been used must be at FECs, where the kids want to talk to someone funny and fuzzy, who's a living, breathing cartoon. They're the greatest audience to entertain and we're very good at what we do." ●

> "We're the pioneers of real-time motion capture technology and have configured it to cater to various applications for the last 25 years"

KEY CLIENTS:

- Merlin Entertainments:
- *Sea Life*
- *Chessington World of Adventures*
- *Warwick Castle*
- Atlantis Resorts
- Ferrari World
- Butlin's
- Rainbow's End
- Bavaria Filmstadt
- NAMCO

animalive
interactive animation
www.animalive.com

DAY OUT AT THE MUSEUM

In an effort to better engage Europe's leading politicians, the Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) has launched a Political Internships scheme. *Attractions Management*'s managing editor Tom Anstey spoke to the programme's creator to find out more

"We want to build a sustainable relationship with politicians", says NEMO's Julia Pagel.

The European umbrella organisation for all national museum organisations, NEMO represents more than 30,000 museums across the continent. Pagel has been its secretary general since 2014 and last year spearheaded an initiative to bring these museums closer to their respective governments on a more personal level.

"For the politicians who make decisions at the highest levels, we needed them to experience these museums firsthand, so they really know what it all means," she says. "We wanted them to go beyond the walls of an exhibition and to get a behind the scenes look at the museum. This meant taking them into the depot, putting them in the shops, having them sell tickets – having them do real museum work."

Based on some smaller initiatives, which had already happened in places like Finland and Germany, Pagel created a bespoke 'political internship programme' – the first to cover the whole of Europe – to engage politicians and gain their support.

With the aim of offering a unique and engaging experience to high-level policymakers, the programme is designed to allow politicians to do a "day in the life" of a museum worker – the goal being for them to better understand the inner-workings of the sector and its needs.

Learning the ropes

The first politician to enrol in the scheme was Julie Ward, a member of the European Parliament representing the north-west of England. Also a member of the UK government's committees on Culture and Education and Women Rights', Ward is a member of Culture Action Europe and the Platform for Intercultural Europe.

In May last year, Ward interned at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht in The Netherlands. Selected because she was already a strong advocate for education and culture, Ward took part in a full-day internship, which started in the morning with an introduction to the museum and its collections, by artistic director Stijn Huijts. In the afternoon, she interacted with the museum's visitors when selling tickets. She also got to answer questions from visitors when minding the information counter and worked in the museum's shop.

Later, Ward was given the chance to make a condition report in the museum's depositary, before meeting members of the Bonnefantenmuseum's youth department – called the Young Office. The day ended with a walk through the museum, together with its security staff.

"For our internship programme, we really look at the person we invite, finding out their interests, their biography and identifying what we want them to do to help us change," explains Pagel. "Then we look for a suitable museum, thinking about why this politician is interested in our work.

"We want them to learn while they're with us. Those taking part will always visit the backstage areas and we always give them meaningful interaction with our collections, either by prepping an artefact for a loan or arrival, or – for example – cleaning them."

Life experience

"Politicians spend a lot of time in their offices," says Pagel. "Being able to get their feet on the ground is a rare opportunity for them, so going out and having the day while they see and experience it for themselves is a really special thing. ►

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MEP, Julie Ward 'interns' at the Bonnefantenmuseum in the Netherlands. NEMO wants to build better relationships with decision makers by having them experience a typical day in the life of a museum

> FOR THE POLITICIANS WHO MAKE DECISIONS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS, WE NEEDED THEM TO EXPERIENCE THESE MUSEUMS FIRSTHAND, SO THEY REALLY KNOW WHAT IT ALL MEANS

Ward carried out tasks in collaboration with the team at the Bonnefantenmuseum

"If you have a very old object – for example, a sarcophagus – being able to touch that artefact is something that they will likely only experience once in their life.

"In doing this, you open up communication channels and can reach out in a way you couldn't with any other advocacy initiatives," she says.

Luca Jahier, president of the EEFC (European Economic and Social Forum), was the next politician to take part in the scheme. Taking place on 24 May, his visit is set to be followed by the minister for culture in the Netherlands, Ingrid Katharina van Engelshoven, various politicians in Finland and other politicians in Flanders, Belgium, and within Germany.

With the programme rapidly expanding, NEMO has set a strict set of guidelines, emphasising that it's important to let the participating intern do real work and to take their role seriously.

According to these guidelines, museums should not give interns a private tour or a "PowerPoint Presentation to sell the museum and its ideas. Instead, the politicians should work with the museum's staff and patrons to get a true understanding of how a museum operates. Through the day, the guidelines also suggest the educator or curator feeds the politician with facts and figures on visiting numbers, educational programmes and volunteer work. The main aim of the internship, says the guidelines, is for the politician to have a pleasant day.

The political internships will see participants take part in all facets of the inner workings of a museum

"Politicians spend a lot of time in their offices," explains Pagel. "Being able to get their feet on the ground is rare, so going out and having a day and seeing it for themselves is huge. You're able to open up communication channels and can reach out in a way you couldn't do with any other advocacy initiative."

Ingrid Katharina van Engelshoven and Luca Jahier both signed up for internships

ABOUT NEMO

The Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) was founded in 1992 as a network of national museum organisations representing the museum community of the member states of the Council of Europe.

NEMO's mission is to ensure museums are an integral part of European life by promoting their work to policymakers and by providing museums with information, networking and opportunities for co-operation.

NEMO aims to foster European policies that help museums in fulfilling their role as keepers of cultural heritage and supports European museums in their aim to learn from each other by networking and co-operation and shows them ways to participate in the existing European cultural policies in its function as an information channel between European institutions and museums.

Changing perceptions

For NEMO, the aim of the scheme is not only to give politicians a better understanding of museums, but also to achieve direct contact with someone who can make real change and help grow and improve the sector.

"Many politicians ask themselves why museums don't have more communication activities or bring more people into the museum, while not recognising the whole machine that runs it. They're still perceived as places where you invest a lot of money and there's no return," explains Pagel.

"We want them to see how the people in the museum work and that they need to be skilled and need more money for the work that they're doing."

Aiming for the highest positions in European government with the new initiative, Pagel wants to see the model replicated across the Continent by as many museums and associations as possible.

"The beauty of this initiative within NEMO is it's easily transferable," she explains. "Everyone can do it. Every museum and every association can start a scheme and handpick the museums and politicians they want to target. It doesn't cost a lot of money, because it's so down to the ground. It's so direct with the politician that it's perfectly transferable and always has a tangible outcome.

"The result is you build these very good relationships with politicians all over Europe and they get a 360-degree picture of what museum work really means." ●

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Miko, a little marmot, encounters a magic stone that reverses the flow of time and changes the seasons

Building a new IP

Red Raion, the CGI studio specialised in media based attractions, has collaborated with Unlimited Leisure Holdings to create a new 4D movie, which will be presented at Unlimited Snow's newest park. Valeria Rizzo, business development director at Red Raion, takes us through the development process

Opening inside the brand new Mall of Muscat, Unlimited Snow will be the first snow-based theme park to come to Oman. Following a Swiss theme, the attraction will have climbing walls, a snowball arena, slides, inflatable bumper cars an ice carousel and, most importantly, a 4D cinema.

"Unlimited Leisure was looking to hire a film studio that could produce the first movie based on their own IP" says Valeria Rizzo, business development director. "This would launch at its Oman snow park in an 80-seat 4D cinema."

Called *Miko and the Spell of the Stone*, Red Raion has created a custom 4D movie for the attraction, which features a family of marmots and alpine wildlife on an adventure. Miko, a little marmot, encounters a magic stone, which reverses the flow of time, changing the seasons. Miko must then go on an adventure to get winter back.

"During our first conversation, the client felt it was in good hands understanding that we have a clear and standardised process for both pre-during and post-production," says RIzzo.

"We could give them the content they were expecting to have in the necessary timeframe and at a reasonable budget for our industry."

The pre-production process started with Red Raion's Magicboard, a product that gives the client the chance to have a detailed script and a coloured storyboard that acts as an exact preview of how the final movie will look, with exact costs and delivery time.

Miko is set to premiere in Oman later this year, with the film now ready to be distributed to new and existing Unlimited Leisure snow parks around the world.

"Considering their snow parks are visited by kids and families, *Miko and the Spell of the Stone* is the perfect movie for whoever enjoys a sweet but thrilling tale," says Rizzo.

"We specialise in CGI content for media-based attractions. Thanks to this focus, we're able to suggest the best immersive content according to location and provide the right solution for a venue.

"We make sure the client's selection fits perfectly with the intended audience and, during the year, we ask how the guests have reacted to the movies and make further suggestions on what new movies they would like us to produce next."

Valeria Rizzo, PR & Business Development Director

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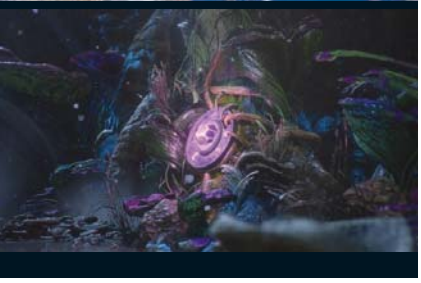

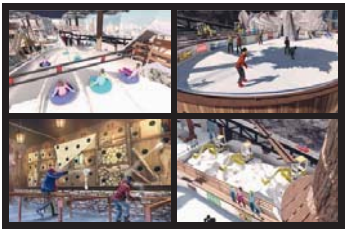

The immersive movie was created for Unlimited Snow in Oman

> "It will be screened in a 4D cinema inside a room with a very low temperature, recreating the cold as if you are in an Alpine environment"

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Antonio Cannata, strategy director and co-founder at Red Raion

How do you work with your clients to ensure they get the product they desire?

"We help shopping malls and FECs that have XD/dome/VR simulators with licensed movies since we have a library that grows every year and that can be enjoyed by kids, families and thrill seekers.

"For venues with a strong theme such as theme parks and museums, we recommend CGI tailor-made contents for their media based attractions so they can increase their brand value over time and by doing so, they can express their own story, show their mascots and create exciting adventures directly connected to the experience."

What makes this project stand out?

"*Miko and The Spell of the Stone* is the first CGI film for indoor snow parks developed by Unlimited Leisure. It will be screened in a 4D cinema inside a room with a very low temperature, recreating the cold as if you are in an Alpine environment."

What makes Red Raion stand out from its competitors?

"We know exactly how to create a content depending on specific hardware and its technical requirements. We also analyse creative aspects and by the time we finish, our client's movie will perfectly match the attraction.

"Holding our activities in-house, we also have direct communication with our clients who need CGI content for their attractions. This means that our client won't have to deal with middlemen and companies that do other types of 3D work. This will avoid the unpleasant situation of incurring in delays, misunderstandings and any issues that could lead to a budget raise."

Kees Albers, founder at Unlimited Leisure Holding

How did the project come about?

"Originally, we were seeking an external IP and actually had an agreement for use of the *Ice Age* franchise, which we were quite excited about. When new management at the IP provider did not want to pursue this any longer, we decided to create our own IP and it was one of the best decisions we've ever made. We've since developed a story-based attraction, dedicated music, apps, games, merchandising and more."

How was working with Red Raion?

"We're pleased to have landed at Red Raion for the creation of an affordable 3D animation film solution, from concept to production. We've very much enjoyed working with them and are looking forward to our first film."

What was the development process like?

"After reading the script, we got the chance to see the coloured storyboard with clear scenes and included dialogues. It was really useful to us, both as a creative concept and gave a clear direction before starting the actual production of our movie.

"It all went very smoothly. Red Raion had great ideas for a story and was very much willing to accommodate our input."

What's next?

"We plan to develop more attractions including AR and VR experiences. Our highly ambitious aim is to build the Miko and friends brand up to eventually produce a feature-length film, following in the footsteps of *Ice Age*, *Happy Feet* and *Frozen*. There's a lot of work ahead!"

GLOBAL APPEAL

Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) events inspire attractions professionals across the world. Christine Kerr reports from both the TEA's Summit and Thea Awards in Los Angeles, US, as well as its TEA SATE Europe conference on experience design in Paris, France.

TEA SUMMIT & TEA THEA AWARDS

The TEA Summit organisers work to bring fresh elements, ideas and programming to the curation of the conference each year, reflecting the needs and culture of the themed entertainment industry. The two-day TEA Summit consists of a business forum (Day One) and a showcase of the current year's TEA Thea Award recipients (Day Two).

The conference has continued to grow in attendance and receives positive feedback each year. Each day has its own co-chairs and moderators. It's followed the next day by the annual TEA Thea Awards Gala.

The business of business

The focus of the TEA Summit's first day was "the business of the business" and remains a private session with emphasis on the state of the industry and hot topics that are relevant to all business leaders working in the industry.

The programme began with Thea Classic Award recipient Dollywood. Pete Owens, Dollywood's VP of Marketing and Public Relations, gave the presentation. The business partnership between Herschend Family Entertainment and Dolly Parton is an impressive shared commitment to their employees and their community.

The day closed out with the popular "Conversation with", featuring Mark Woodbury, vice chair of Universal Parks and Resorts and President of Universal Creative, honored as this year's recipient of the Buzz Price Thea Award for a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements. He was joined by long-time colleague Mike West, who is senior director and executive producer at Universal Creative. Woodbury began his career as an architect before joining Universal to work on the Universal Studios Park in Orlando. Over the decades, he has distinguished himself, and inspired others, with his passion for the industry, working with significant IP holders, and an open-door leadership approach.

Day one co-chairs were myself and the TEA Eastern North America Division Board president Melissa Ruminot of The Companies of Nassal.

TEA president Michael Mercadante and former TEA president Christine Kerr were integral parts of the TEA Summit and the TEA Thea Awards

The Summit's education programme was focused on 'the business of business'

Masterclassing

Day two of the TEA Summit is always an information-packed day, as each of the projects being recognised with a Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement has the opportunity to take to the stage and share the story of their work.

Co-chairs Roberta Perry, TEA past president and senior vice president at Edwards Technologies, and Pat MacKay – president of Ones&ZerosMedia and a past recipient of the TEA Peter Chernack Service Award – were joined by Brian Morrow, founder of B Morrow Productions; Shawn McCoy, vice president at JRA; and TEA founder and past president Monty Lunde, president of Technifex. The projects were presented in moderated groups: theme parks and attractions (moderated by Morrow); museums (McCoy); technology (Lunde); and live shows (MacKay).

The opportunity to ask questions was available after hearing from a group of two to three projects, creating opportunities to make connections between similarities and highlighting contrasts.

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The TEA Thea Awards Gala brings together some of the biggest names in the industry

THEA AWARDS

The Summit concluded with the 25th Annual TEA Thea Awards Gala, an elegant, black-tie evening of fine dining and awards presentations.

The international prestige of the Thea Awards, combined with the quality of the event and its benefits in professional development and networking, make it a must-attend event that sells to capacity year after year.

A few simple moments of acknowledgment for 25 years of Thea Awards and the familiar faces of friends, colleagues and industry leaders onstage as presenters, is certainly the right formula for a high-impact and memorable evening.

Different strokes

A great example of stark contrasts was presented in three "museum-style" projects. All featured very different stories, were located in very different places and followed specific development processes.

The first, Be Washington, is an interactive, media-driven attraction located at George Washington's Mount Vernon, which required the filming of hours of historically accurate footage. The new media for the attraction is then cleverly woven within the interactive decision-making process that allows guests to "Be Washington" and respond to crises the US's first President faced during his time in office and then learn how he himself acted.

The story of how the Evel Knievel Museum came to be built adjacent to a Harley Davidson Dealership in Topeka, Kansas, by passionate people who had no previous experience in the museum world is a fun and fascinating one. It's a pop culture tribute that captures the story of an iconic daredevil and uses an extensive collection of memorabilia and motorbikes.

Finally, the Lego House, designed by Danish architect Bjarke Ingels, embraces play and the story of Lego in the centre of the toy giant's home in Billund, Denmark. The entire project is quite remarkable but is made even more so by the fact that in addition to content, exhibits and activities designed by Lego, the facility also embraces the work of AFOLS (Adult Fans Of Lego) and includes extensive gallery space for rotating exhibits featuring their work.

Artistic endeavour

Two projects – the MORI Building Digital Art Museum from teamLab Borderless and the collaboration between the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, artist Sarah Fuller and Moment Factory – are both art installations at their core.

Working with artists to develop and curate content in order to present deep and meaningful storytelling, the immersive world created by teamLab blurs the lines of where the physical world begins and ends as guests are immersed in and interact with moving projections of vivid imagery.

Illuminations: human/nature was developed as a Canada 150 initiative – a year of activities focused on engaging and inspiring youth; celebrating diversity and encouraging inclusion; establishing a spirit of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, discovering Canada's natural beauty and strengthening environmental awareness.

Described as "a magical, nighttime, digital discovery experience", two shows were presented for a limited run. One was held in the country's oldest National Park in Banff, Alberta, and the other in the newest National Park in Rouge Valley, Toronto. The interactive, media-based presentations came with constraints – outdoor venues, a unique interactive audience dynamic and battery powered gear. Groups of 15 were dispatched, carrying all they would need with them: a sound system, projector, lighting, a map and other materials to present the show for themselves. All groups left no trace or environmental impact.

Attendance at both days of the Summit set new records with a high level of interest and demand for the content being shared. ▶

TEA SATE EUROPE

The TEA's SATE Europe conference has established itself as a unique experience with a strong sense of place, influencing the spirit of the overall programme. This year's event at Parc Asterix, north of Paris was no exception.

Compagnie des Alpes and the host park outdid themselves with accommodation at their new hotel – Cité Suspendu and evening entertainment in the park that immersed attendees in the fun and spirit of Asterix and Obelisk and their stories.

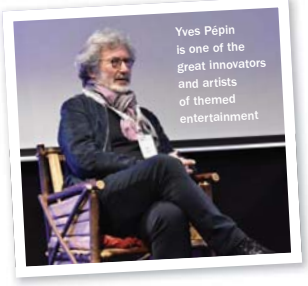
The conference began with keynote speaker Yves Pépin – the 2005 recipient of TEA Thea lifetime honors – in conversation with Margreet Papamichael, principal of CLEAR Associates. The discussion was wide-ranging and included Yves' early study of music and its influence on his life.

An inspiring start to the day, the discussion included the early work of ECA2 and Yves' eventual sale of the company so he could move on to new projects that allowed him to further explore his passions.

Moving people

The other keynote session featured Phillip van Stratum of P&P Projects, and one of the newly-named TEA Masters – a member of the TEA who has made a significant and sustained contribution to the growth and development of the industry through their innovation, design, craftsmanship and artistry. In conversation with TEA past president David Willrich of DJ Willrich, Phillip was recognised for his skill as a creative director as part of the inaugural Masters of their Craft programme. The story of Phillip's journey as a model rocket maker to creative director for projects for the biggest names in the business served as a reminder to everyone that anything is possible.

SATE Europe offers both educational and networking opportunities to visiting delegates



Yves Pépin is one of the great innovators and artists of themed entertainment

The SATE conference structure encourages presenters to speak as thought leaders and share ideas rather than simply deliver a series of case studies. The most successful presentations are thought-provoking and challenge the attendees to think differently about their work and the way they consider the various aspects of a "themed entertainment" project. The 2019 theme of "Moving People" provided a great basis for exploring the idea of movement in both the physical and the emotional senses.

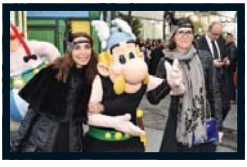
Educational networking

A new networking session explored the idea of "Who Does What?" as a foundation for getting attendees to talk to each other and to consider what skills and roles are involved in the different project phases. It was a practical and well-received way to lay the groundwork for the more creative discussions that would follow. There were also many conversations around the role of the operator in the development of a project and the importance of ensuring that those ultimately responsible for delivering and maintaining the guest experience have a voice throughout the development of all projects.

Effective communication among project team members was also a recurring theme which was summed up very effectively in the final presentation by Paul Osterhout: "Talk Nerdy to Me". He translated conversation points between creatives and engineers through a humorous series of examples that had everyone nodding.

THE STRUCTURE ENCOURAGES PRESENTERS TO SPEAK AS THOUGHT LEADERS AND SHARE IDEAS, RATHER THAN SIMPLY DELIVER A SERIES OF CASE STUDIES

TEA added SATE to its slate of industry events in 2007, to foster dialog in the business community about the methodology of Experience Design.



TEA past president Nick Farmer, director of Farmer Attraction Development, spoke as a champion of "Why the little room is the most important experience". The room he was referring to was, of course, the bathroom. He said that the careful and practical design of these rooms can have a major impact on the overall guest experience and if they are forgotten, not kept clean or too sterile, they destroy the impact of everything you have done throughout the rest of the experience. Attendees to SATE Europe will see every "little room" they visit through new eyes.

Perceptions and challenges

The presentation by Manuel Faria, CEO Indigo Sound, called "Sound Bites" will probably have a similar impact on the way attendees listen to and perceive the world around them. Manuel reminded us about the importance of sound and how it can evoke emotional reactions in unexpected and surprising ways, often contradicting what we actually see.

TEA SATE Europe 2019 looked at "Moving People", exploring how we take people on journeys within the themed entertainment industry

Other speakers who challenged the attendees included economist Lesley Morisetti, director of Morisetti Associates, who shared new trends, highlighting immersive experiences that have the potential to impact traditional visitor attractions. Her examples demonstrated a divide of awareness among the attendees and provided many "aha" moments.

Fundamental to the conversation is the definition of "immersive" and whether technology and/or media are necessary ingredients for immersion. Fri Forjindam, chief development officer from Mycotoo shared the impact of immersive, theatrical experiences where audiences become willing participants in a carefully planned and executed show, set in a themed environment and interacting with live performers. The impact of these experiences is consistently and overwhelmingly positive and effective.

Universal truths

The SATE conference series also convenes in Asia and North America, and we are inspired to draw a connection between SATE Europe 2019 and SATE LA 2017. With a theme of "Beyond the Screen," it explored immersion in its many forms, with attendees sharing their favourite experiences.

The result was a tie between Diagon Alley at Universal Studios and *Sleep No More*, the immersive theatre production. This was a conclusion echoed in 2019 at SATE Europe. Moving people still requires the essential ingredient of human connection in the real world to create the most impactful emotional connections. This is what our guests are looking for all over the world. ●

More: attractionsmanagement.com/SATE

After bringing multiplex cinemas and Imax to India, film industry entrepreneur Manmohan Shetty broke ground in the theme park industry in 2013 when he launched Adlabs Imagica, the country's largest destination theme park. Joint CEO Dhimant Bakshi, shares the story with Kath Hudson

PURE IMAGICATION

Dhimant Bakshi has been joint CEO of Adlabs Entertainment since September 2017

A massively ambitious project, Adlabs Imagica was inspired by entrepreneur, Manmohan Shetty's, trip to Disneyland. He asked himself why nothing on that scale existed in his homeland and then decided to create the largest theme park in India, with the development between Mumbai and Pune spanning a 1.2sq km site.

"Mr Shetty loves to build an oasis in a desert," says Dhimant Bakshi. "After 40 years' experience in the entertainment business, he likes to create innovative entertainment experiences.

"After selling his film processing business, he was looking for a new challenge. It was then he was inspired to build a world-class entertainment destination targeting the people of India and South Asia. India is a large country with many regions and dialects. Imagica is like taking a ride around the country."

Still in its infancy, India's amusement and theme park market was even smaller when Shetty gathered a team and started scoping out his proposal: there were around 120 total amusement/waterparks across the country.

"There were no templates to follow in India," says Bakshi. "Mr Shetty didn't want to do what other Indian parks were doing. He wanted to create something groundbreaking. His philosophy has always been to think global and act local, so he looked to major operators such as Universal and Disney for his inspiration."

The end result was a park which includes multiple firsts for the country, including the largest indoor snowpark; Mr India, the

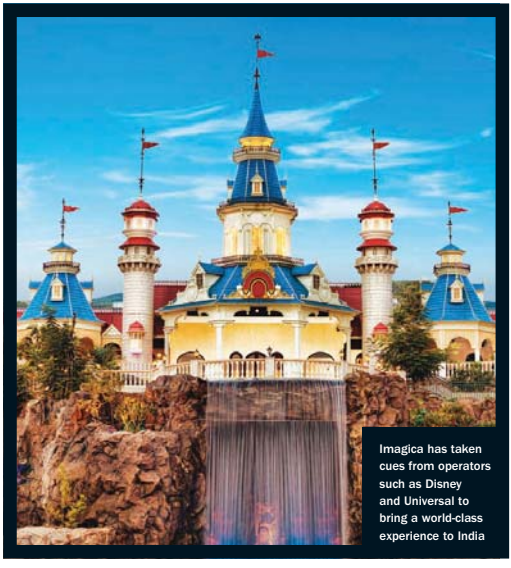
 ©CYBERTREK 2019

The pop jet lawn at Adlabs Imagica is among the offerings at the theme park

"Mr Shetty didn't want to do what other Indian parks were doing. He wanted to create something groundbreaking"

first motion simulator ride; Deep Space, the first indoor dark rollercoaster and Hot Wheels Nitro, India's biggest and longest rollercoaster, (132ft high with a track length of 2,800ft). Shetty's film industry experience was put to good use with the content generation, all of which was in-house and targeted to suit the market. For example, Mr India, the E2M-manufactured simulator is a Bollywood version of The Simpsons ride at Universal Orlando.

Snowparks aren't a completely new concept in India: there are a handful of small scale snowparks in mall-based FECs, but at 15,000sq ft (1,400sq m), this is India's largest, featuring real snow for people to play and sledge on. "Most regions of India don't get any snow at all, so people get very excited and indulge in snowball fights," says Bakshi. ►



Imagica has taken cues from operators such as Disney and Universal to bring a world-class experience to India

Imagica features a number of rides and attractions that have never been seen before in India

The same investment and innovation has been applied to the themed waterpark, which at more than 65,000sq m (700,000sq ft) is, again, India's finest. "It offers a real immersive fun experience, with a large wave pool, aqua funnel, best in class slides from WhiteWater West and Polin, and a lazy river," says Bakshi.

Another USP for the park is Imagica's extensive high-quality food and beverage operation, offering multiple cuisines and taking into account religious sensibilities and allergies. "With everything, we have applied the principle of think global, act local," says Bakshi. "So, although we have an extensive Indian option, we also have Indo-African, BBQ, Chinese, Thai and an American diner. Southern Indian cuisine is the most popular, followed by Italian – pizzas and pasta are very popular with children visiting the park."

Educating the market

However, breaking new ground does come with many challenges, including educating the market – who do not know the difference between an amusement park and a theme park – and also finding staff. Only two members of the original team had any previous theme park experience.

"Over the past six years, we have really learned how complex the business is," says Bakshi. "We have had to learn granularly and be nimble. We have visited many major parks for a deeper understanding of operations, before coming home to adapt it to the local market."

Although people in the industry have been friendly and welcoming, they haven't been very forthcoming with sharing information or data, says Bakshi, who adds that there is a need for collaboration and building synergies, which the Indian Association Of Amusement Parks And Industries (IAAPI) is currently striving to achieve.

"Collaborating more, particularly on subjects such as service standards, technology and safety would be good" he says. "Safety is an important topic for us. Because theme parks are so new to Indian culture, we've had to work hard to make our visitors feel comfortable and communicate our safety standards and protocols to them."

Culture shock

As well as the theme park industry being in its infancy in India, leisure time is less defined in South Asia than in the west. Many people still work a six-day week and only have two weeks holiday a year, so their free time is often focussed around festivities with family and friends. Larger companies, however, are now beginning to introduce two day weekends.

The Imagica Snow Park covers 15,000sq ft and generates real snow for visitors to enjoy

HOT NUMBERS

- How much did the park cost?: 16bn INR (US$229.7m)
- Ticket prices for adults: 1499 INR, (US$22)
- Annual combined visits to the theme park, waterpark and snowpark: 1.7m–1.8m.
- How many visitors to date?: 8 million
- The park has a 4.4 out of 5 star rating based on more than 45,000 Google reviews
- 27 per cent of visitors have returned to the destination

 ©CYBERTREK 2019

The Wrath of the Gods attraction at Imagica

In terms of competition, Imagica sees itself as competing with parks in Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai, which geographically are the closest comparable parks. However, its ticket price is around one-third of the price of its international players.

"Our target market is middle and upper-middle-class families and young couples. We draw large numbers of visitors from Mumbai and Pune, which are 90 minutes away and around 13 per cent will stay for one or two nights at the hotel," says Bakshi. "For the next three to five years we will be focussing on activating the domestic and South Asia market. To draw visitors from places such as the UK or US is still quite a long way away for us."

With such a large initial investment and with more work still to be done to educate and grow audiences from the local market, Bakshi says there is no need for large scale investment for the next four years. "We already offer seven new attractions for the first time in India, so it will take some time for the appeal to wear off," he says.

"We've visited many major parks for a deeper understanding of operations, before dapting to the local market"

Brand power

However, what the Imagica team is planning to do is make strategic partnerships with synergistic brands. The operator's recent partnership with Mattel is a prime example of this. Through the new agreement, Imagica now offers a Hot Wheels-themed rollercoaster – Hot Wheels Nitro – as well the Hot Wheels Driving School, which teaches children the rules and manners of driving a car.

"Both ourselves and Mattel were very excited about this partnership. They have the same brand values as us and there's plenty of opportunities to leverage the brand," says Bakshi. "We also have another partnership with a local indigenous character, Chhota Bheem, which is very popular in India and have branded a rollercoaster around this character – a first of its kind association for a theme park in India."

Imagica has also introduced a novel and unique proposition called Imagica High Street, which allows Imagica Water Park guests to access the theme park and experience the Grand Imagica Parade – a spectacular show with characters and performers dancing through the park, another first for India.

Collaborative partnerships with like-minded companies are something which Imagica is very keen to pursue and indeed another such partnership is underway to create a second park in Amaravati, which is the new capital city of Andhra Pradesh located around 1,000km from Mumbai.

"We have teamed up with a local partner, Riverbay Resort, to create this 73,000sq m (784,000sq ft) park which will have 14 to 16 rides, as well as food and beverage offerings," says Bakshi. "Unlike Imagica, it won't be a national scale tourist attraction, but the new park will have local appeal and will be branded differently.

"This will be our smaller template for B towns and cities. We think the opportunity is very large in this space in India and we could probably open six to eight small parks within the next 10 to 12 years through partnerships with other entrepreneurs."

Regarding the scope to expand the Imagica brand, Bakshi believes there is potential for two to three more destination theme parks in India, all of which would be based in metro cities: "Our plan for the next three years will be to stabilise the business and find out how best to make the next one feasible and then we will announce another location in the next few years." ●

SCIENCE FOR THE SENSES

New interactive exhibits offer a range of scientific activities to visitors

How does it feel to be in the eye of the storm? What would your body look like if it turned into ice? Experiencing science with all the senses is what Experimenta is all about. Tom Anstey spoke to Wolfgang Hansch about one of Germany's premier science institutions

Heilbronn – a city on the Neckar River in southwest Germany better known for its wine making industry – might not be the first place that springs to mind when you think of elite learning centres for STEM subjects.

But the city is in fact home to the country's largest science centre, which has recently undergone a major transformation, with four new permanent exhibition galleries set across 3,200sq m adding new facilities to the 25,000sq m site.

Years in the making

The idea to open a science centre in the city was first concieved in 2005. To make the vision a reality, the city turned to a man already familiar with it, Wolfgang Hansch.

Originally director of the Natural History Museum of Heilbronn from 1994 up until his appointment as managing director of Experimenta in 2005, Hansch was given the task of establishing a brand new science centre in the city, developing a former storehouse into the first iteration of Experimenta.

Wolfgang Hansch wants to inspire Experimenta's visitors with science, a mission he has been on since joining as managing director is 2005

The attraction became a reality in November 2009 when it opened with the creed of "Discover Experience and Understand Science".

"By 2012 our visitor numbers were exceeding expectations by far," says Hansch. "That's when we started talking about an expansion of the site, eventually deciding on an entirely new development to better serve the public."

Backed by the Dieter Schwarz Foundation, a non-profit investment arm of supermarket giant Lidl, the centre broke ground on its expansion by Berlin-based ▶

 ©CYBERTREK 2019

Experimenta opens up a world of scientific knowledge with 275 interactive exhibits set over four new galleries

THE GALLERIES

Two of the four permanent galleries were created by Dutch experience specialist NorthernLight, with the remaining two produced by Hüttinger and designed by Berlin company Triad and Stuttgart firm Milla and Partner respectively.

"We worked with around 50 people, including engineers, robotics, designers and more," says NorthernLight co-founder and director, Steven Schaeken.

"It's one of the best projects I've worked on in my 20 years in the field. Experimenta helped to get some of the most innovative thinking out of our heads."

The institution promotes a wide range of future-oriented ideas

The NorthernLight-designed galleries – Nature of Things and World View – took three-and-a-half years to create. The former is based on matter and explores five elements of everyday matter, how light affects matter, the structure of matter and organic matter – while the latter allows visitors to make and do things on given topics from computer science to robotics.

"With the Nature of Things gallery, our thoughts were that lots of the modern world is built around immaterial things so we wanted to focus on the world through its physical qualities," says Schaeken.

"The concept we had at the beginning for World View, however, was kind of an atelier. We wanted a learning centre-cum-makers centre. We assembled this with stand-alone, hands-on exhibits and then designed a yellow snake that connects them all throughout the gallery."

The third gallery KopfSachen, asks how complex and diverse man perceives the world with his senses. The final gallery, Metabolism, shows how the inner workings of things makes the invisible visible.

architects Sauerbruch Hutton in 2016. In July 2017, the site closed completely so it could undergo a full transformation, with new exhibits, reimagined spaces and a new building. It reopened on 31 March, complete with a dome theatre, an observatory and workshop spaces.

All Aboard

While the science centre was closed for redevelopment, Hansch and his team came up with a novel way of continuing to serve the population – converting an oil tanker into a floating science centre.

Called the *MS Experimenta*, the vessel is 105m long and offers more than 500sq m of interactive attractions. Opened in January 2018, a number of primary and secondary school courses are offered onboard the vessel, with schools accommodated inside two labs and an open workshop area. The floating attraction also offers a series of interactive exhibits for visitors, while there are areas for open workshops.

Its first year was a huge success, with 30,492 visitors in 2018. This success led to *MS Experimenta* taking a trip to Stuttgart, ahead of a nationwide tour.

Between 17 April and 16 October 2019, the ship will be anchored in Heilbronn to coincide with the Federal Garden Show with content tailored towards the event.

THE SCIENCE DOME

Perhaps the most significant and high-tech part of the reimagined Experimenta is its Science Dome.

Created by Austrian company Kraftwerk and US manufacturer Spitz, the high tech experience space combines a traditional planetarium with a full dome system and a performance stage. Inside, the audience sits on a rotating platform that can be turned 180 degrees, with special technology to stage lectures, digital cinema performances and theatre productions. The dome also offers full 360-degree projection using six Barco projectors. One innovative element is a water curtain.

Kraftwerk was responsible for the technical design and detailed planning of the Science Dome. It also handled everything from the implementation, programming and commissioning of AV right down to the seats.

Thomas Gellermann, head of Special Projects, Kraftwerk

"Despite the new building being quite large, space was limited due to its location on an island in the Neckar river," says Thomas Gellermann, head of Special Projects at Kraftwerk.

"There was an extensive wish list of different venues and scenarios that Experimenta wanted to include and integrating them all in one area was a challenge. Soon, we came up with an idea to combine a planetarium or a full dome system together with the stage scenario to enhance the multipurpose venue while still allowing it to be located in one space. This was the birth of a highly innovative installation."

"We came up with an idea to combine a planetarium or a full dome system together with the stage scenario to enhance the multipurpose venue"

With the combination of planetarium and theatre, visitors can travel virtually into space or experience exciting experimental shows

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Polin Aquariums, as the result of the partnership between Polin and Ocean Aquariums, has a team of experts that can provide all details needed in projects including conceptual designs, engineering, architecture, construction, business plans, procurement of living creatures and brand identities. With this team of experienced architects, engineers, biologists, veterinarians and technical experts, the success of the attraction centers is built with a deep knowledge and wealth of experience.
polinaquariums.com

The galleries and programming teach science in a way which is highly acessible for children and other visitors

"This variety is extraordinary. For science centres in Germany, I think it's a new step in their development"

"When we first decided to launch the ship, it was set to be a permanent offer for Experimenta," says Hansch. "It was such a great success however that we've decided to anchor it in large cities all over Germany going forward starting in 2020."

A world class offering

Following the three-and-a-half year redevelopment, which included the new galleries, renovation of the old storehouse and refurbishment of the *MS Experimenta*, Hansch believes the science centre now offers one of the premium experiences in Europe, if not the world.

"We have three main offers on site," he says. "First, there are our galleries, where you can use different exhibits from biology, chemistry, physics and so on. Second, we have our Discovery World with its well-equipped labs. Finally, we have the Science Dome. These are our primary offerings. We also have an observatory on the roof and a small theatre for teenagers aged 5- to 10-years-old. This variety is extraordinary. For science centres in Germany, I think it's a new step in their development.

WHO DID WHAT?

- **Galleries:** NorthernLight, Hüttinger, Triad, Milla and Partner
- **Exhibition design and production:** Jochen Hunger, Ligneolus, Hüttinger
- **Construction:** Drees & Sommer
- **Architects:** Sauerbruch Hutton Berlin
- **Science Dome:** Kraftwerk Living Technologies, Spitz
- **Sponsors:** Dieter Schwarz Foundation, Bechtle AG, Lidl, Kaufland

"This is the largest science centre in Germany. The most important point, however, is our extraordinary lineup of exhibitions. It's not just that we're the biggest, but also that we have the best content anywhere on the Continent."

Nobel goals

The centre is targetting 250,000 visitors a year, an ambitious goal for a city with a population of 125,000 people. But what's even more ambitious is Hansch's ultimate goal, inspiring one of Experimenta's visitors to take science's most coveted prize.

"We want to become a science centre where the visitors have fun and where they can learn about science and technology," he says. "My dream is that, in 20 or 30 years, we have a Nobel prize winner, whose first step in science was making a visit to Experimenta." ●

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Volatarium at Europa-Park, Rust (DE) | (c) Frank Baudy

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AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT AN ABSOLUTE UNIT

Adam Koszary is the man behind MERL's social media successes

Using meme culture and a collection of farmyard animals, the Museum of English Rural Life has soared into the upper echelons of the social media stratosphere.

Adam Koszary , the mastermind behind the museum's jump from 9,700 followers in 2018 to more than 134,000 in 2019, explains exactly how he made that happen...

A sheep, a duck, a mouse, a chicken, a bat and Elon Musk. Probably not what you think of when trying to work out how to gain global recognition and in the process successfully engage your museum with the rest of the world. But those and more are exactly what the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) in Reading, UK, has used to achieve cult fame as one of social media's brightest stars.

Mousetrap

Adam Koszary first harnessed the power of social media in early 2016. Unbeknownst to staff, the MERL – which is a museum, library and archive dedicated to recording the changing face of farming and the countryside in England – had a mouse on the loose in its archives. The archives were, as described later by the museum in a blog post "the promised land" for the rodent, with straw, wood, and textiles from the museum's collection perfect for the creature to build itself a nest. Sadly for the mouse, out of the 35,000 objects it could have destroyed, it managed to zero in on a shelf dedicated to historic mouse traps.

"He got caught inside a humane Edwardian device called the perpetual mousetrap," says Koszary. "Our curator found it in the trap and sent an email asking if people had put it in there as a teaching aid. They hadn't."

Built 155 years previously, the trap had successfully captured the mouse. The museum shared the story on its blog. From there it was picked up by Buzzfeed, giving the museum a nice boost in online traffic in the coming days.

For Koszary, he saw the moment as an opportunity and continued to try and engage the museum's audience in unique and interesting ways.

"We knew we could reach a new audience with good content but we were trying to work out how," he explains. "We're constantly experimenting with how to make our collections relevant and it just happened that this one kicked off."

Absolute unit

The social media revolution at MERL however wouldn't truly kick off until 9 April 2018, as Koszary explains: "That day, one of the archivists at the museum let me know that it was international unicorn day.

"Museums have a time-honoured tradition of tracking trending hashtags and then doing appropriate posts to shoehorn their collections in there in a bid for attention. That's what we were essentially trying to do.

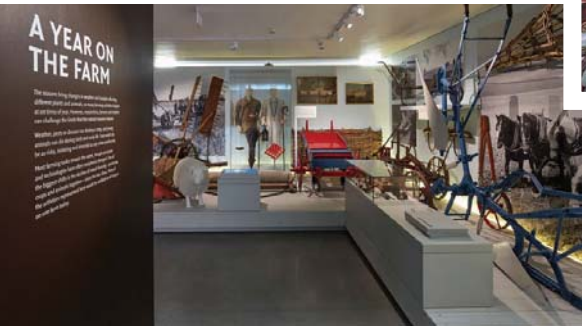
"We have more than a million photographs in our collections," he continues, "Around 40,000 have been social media approved. I was trying to find an image of a sheep with a horn growing out of its forehead, because that sometimes can happen. Instead, I found one of a huge Exmoor Horn aged ram."

Koszary posted the image along with a caption which read "look at this absolute unit".

MERL's first viral hit came when a mouse managed to get caught in a 155-year-old mouse trap

 ©CYBERTREK 2019

MERL is part of the University of Reading, also working with Reading Museum as the Arts Council England-funded Museums Partnership Reading



In just a matter of days, the locally-known museum was trending worldwide on Twitter, with the post receiving hundreds of thousands of likes, shares and retweets across social media, not to mention the countless articles from major publications and websites that were written just about that single social media post.

Chicken in trousers

From there, things really went up a gear, with MERL going from the odd well-received tweet to each post on the social media platform receiving responses from people all over the world, often in their thousands.

Koszary realised that to get a true reaction from the audience he was trying to reach, he had to create relatable content. Enter the chicken in trousers.

Starting with the assumption that people could find the subject matter and collections boring, he set out to convince social media it was interesting.

"A new book had come into our collection," he explains. "It was an 18th-century mathematics book by a 13-year-old from Kent in England. In this book, we found a doodle of a chicken in trousers but rather than just posting the picture, we created a story around it."

The 'absolute unit' – this image of a ram has had a major impact on MERL

> WE'RE CONSTANTLY EXPERIMENTING WITH HOW TO MAKE OUR COLLECTIONS RELEVANT

Using a Twitter thread to tell the story, the post built anticipation of the mystery at its conclusion, in this case, the chicken in trousers. Koszary says that putting an image online and describing what's in it is only useful to those who already know why those objects are interesting. By taking a different look at the collection, you can draw in a new audience – Harry Potter author JK Rowling included.

Rowling, who has nearly 15 million followers on Twitter, called the doodles and the thread "truly wonderful". After she shared the thread with her audience, Koszary asked the author to make her "next series of novels track the adventures of a chicken who wears trousers". Rowling replied that she was already "way ahead" of him, adding that the chicken would be "best friends with a duck in a balaclava." ▶

GETTING SOCIAL

MERL asked the British Museum to show its best duck and was inundated with ducks from collections worldwide

Interactions with Elon Musk have led to Koszary being named the new social media manager for Tesla

Duck dynasties

These interactions continued to shine a spotlight on MERL as its follower count steadily trended upwards and following these successes, Koszary had room to experiment. He could send things out into the Twitterverse, see what kind of content would land and see which would not.

With this mindset, one day he absent-mindedly sent a tweet, not expecting much from it – "hey @britishmuseum give us your best duck". What he got in response was so many images of ducks from museums around the world, that Twitter declared these institutions were "sending each other solicited duck pics".

"That was a weird day," says Koszary. "I thought so little about that tweet when I sent it. We'd been tweeting about ducks and so I asked the British Museum to send us a duck not expecting them to. After they did it exploded.

"We managed to get the Louvre to send us a picture of a cockerel at one point, which we made a rude joke about. We then knew we could get the bigger museums to play with us but it relied a lot on our audience who were in on the joke. They kept prodding the British Museum and then every other museum they knew from their local museum down the road all the way up to the Getty. It really relied on having that community in place."

> WE GET PEOPLE FROM THE US, NEW ZEALAND, CANADA AND EUROPE COMING INTO READING TO VISIT THE MUSEUM WHEN THEY OTHERWISE WOULDN'T HAVE, ALL BECAUSE WE SHARED A PHOTO ON TWITTER

If the world's most significant museums tweeting about ducks for several days wasn't strange enough, things took a weird turn when MERL found a bat in its library.

"It was a very rare bat from the Baltics, which is part of a conservation project," says Koszary. "One of our librarians coincidentally also worked at the bat conservation trust, so she nursed it back to health before we released it."

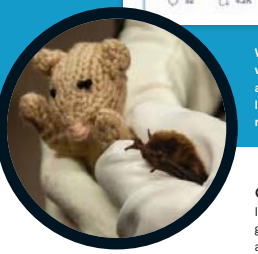
This story, of course, also played out on social media. Not only did the museum tell the story of the bat being found and what the museum did to help it, but it intertwined that with facts about bats, teaching readers about migratory patterns and threats to the species. The bat was also made an honorary member of the University of Reading, which printed out a library card in case the animal every decided to come back.

SheepX

The strangest, perhaps of all these events, was when Elon Musk – the celebrated technology entrepreneur, investor, engineer and 25th most powerful

The tale of the chicken in trousers led to Harry Potter author JK Rowling sharing the thread with her millions of followers on Twitter

When an endangered bat found its way into MERL's library, its rescue and subsequent rewarding of a library card were shared through the museum's social media by Koszary



person in the world – changed his Twitter profile picture to none other than the absolute unit that had started everything off, the Exmoor Horn aged ram.

"Universe is big, but rendering complexity is not," Musk told his 25 million followers, followed by his new picture, "but I'm just a simple sheep/ram."

Koszary took what to him seemed the only logical next step on this journey of social media madness – he changed MERL's profile picture to an image of Musk and renamed the account the Muskeum of Elonglish Rural Life, with the caption "two can play at this game", sparking an exchange between the two accounts.

"I didn't coordinate this with Elon Musk. It just happened. The best I could do was react," says Koszary.

The move was not only a success for the museum, which once again, had millions of eyes looking at its content and programming, but also on a personal level for Koszary, who as a result of the exchange will join Musk in July, becoming Tesla's new social media manager.

"All of this has been reacting to something and jumping on a story," says Koszary. "We have hundreds of things which could be stories but we only have so much time in the day, so we take the ones which appear to have the most value and share them with the world."

Social success

The reaction to Koszary's work – far exceeding what anyone would have expected for a small farming museum in Reading – has been remarkable for the museum's online presence. But how has it affected the museum itself?

"We've had a big boost in visitor numbers, which we think is partly the social stuff, partly the museum getting into its groove of big events," explains Koszary.

"Our online statistics are crazy. It's started influencing how we do our marketing and we're revising our strategy. Our tone can be a lot more relaxed and we find that people enjoy that.

"We get visitors from the US, New Zealand, Canada and Europe coming into Reading to visit the musum, when they otherwise wouldn't have, all because we shared a photo on Twitter."

Creative spark

In addition to a stroke of luck and some good timing, how did Koszary help to drive a small rural museum in the south of England into the position it now sits?

"At the core of the approach, you need creativity," he says. "You can have all the social media skills and you can understand your institution, but if you don't have that spark then it will always fall flat. Creativity and a willingness to react is key."

And what advice would Koszary offer anyone wanting to repeat his success?

"Give up 'the fear' and experiment all the time. Focus on what makes your museum unique. Because we've done something with the MERL, that doesn't mean it's going to work for everyone else.

"When you do a gallery, you're writing a label for an exhibit that has to stand the test of time for 10 or more years. With social media, you can be a lot more agile in how you explore history. You can relate it to present day things which might be gone in a week, but they can inform whatever debate is happening. You can be a bit more silly because the thing won't be there to look at in 10 years time. It's a much more dynamic way to look at the past." ●

The event returned to Shanghai for the first time since 2016

IAAPA EXPO ASIA

The Asian edition of IAAPA's trade show took place in Shanghai, China recently. We look at what was on offer from leading industry suppliers

IAAPA EXPO ASIA

When: 11 - 14 June 2019
Where: Shanghai New International Expo, China

Formerly the Asian Attractions Expo, (AAE) the newly-named IAAPA Expo Asia (IEA) took its first steps under its new brand from 11-14 June. IEA is Asia's leading international business event for industry professionals in the region.

More than 8,500 people from 60 countries travelled to the event from locations such as Asia, North America, Europe, the Middle East and beyond, descending on Shanghai to buy, learn and network at the hub of Asia's multi-billion dollar attractions industry.

More than 8,500 people descended on Shanghai for the show

Over 400 companies exhibited over the course of three days, presenting the latest products and services, including rides, virtual reality attractions, motion simulators, waterpark attractions, videogames, design and theming services, ticketing solutions, food and beverages, and more. At 13,000sq m, the trade show floor was the largest in the event's history.

Joe Schott, president and general manager at Shanghai Disney, delivered the event's keynote speech during the Leadership Breakfast on 13 June. Also speaking were Luke Riley, senior vice president of Village Roadshow, and June Ko executive director and vice president of IAAPA Asia Pacific Operations.

Also on offer were IEA's education programme, which offered a wide variety of learning opportunities.

Attendees to the show took part in a number of special events and networking opportunities throughout the event. Key highlights included the Opening Night Reception at the new Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park, a safety EDUTour of Shanghai Disney Resort and a post-show four-day tour of Hangzhou.

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Vekoma's Space Warp launch coaster

Holovis

Booth: 1632

Holovis and partners KingJoy showcased their next generation of Li-Fly the world's first true Flying Theatre.

The technology experience designer has 're-volved' the traditional experience by taking guests out of their seats and letting them soar through content as if truly flying.

This patented and scalable attraction is a complete multi-sensory experience, combining visuals, audio and synched motion with SFX and real-time media, connected to data capture which measure guest reactions and take them on a personalised journey.

Vekoma

Booth: 1322

Vekoma Rides is one of the largest rollercoaster manufacturers in the world, with many installed family and thrill coasters, and special attractions to its name.

The company has almost 20 coasters opening globally in 2019 alone.

With all disciplines under one roof, Vekoma has gained worldwide recognition.

With a presence in more than 40 countries, as well as corporate offices in The Netherlands and representations worldwide, the manufacturer comes to Shanghai to meet with buyers and showcase its portfolio.

JRA

Booth: 1202

JRA plans, designs, and realises visitor experiences for theme parks, visitor centres and museums around the world. The company helps clients realise their vision, whether they want to create an entirely new attraction or refresh an existing one.

JRA has created a number of award-winning projects, which combine imaginative design and storytelling with solid operational planning to achieve clients' operational goals. On offer at the JRA booth were a multitude of recently opened projects, as well as an exciting preview of what's to come.

DreamCraft Attractions

Booth: 2762

DreamCraft is pioneering fully immersive experiences using advanced VR and AR technology. The company has secured two major patents since 2016 and continues to contribute to the next wave of immersive experiences.

Picsolve

Booth: 2812

An evolution of the popular panoramic Super Selfie, Picsolve introduced its Epic Selfie at this year's Asian Attractions Expo.

The technology takes users to fantastical new worlds and iconic destinations, with Picsolve producing a video that begins with a selfie and dramatically zooms out to reveal a panoramic backdrop.

The first installation is set to go live this year at one of Merlin's London attractions.

Triotech

Booth: 1602

Triotech is the creator of award-winning immersive and interactive media-based experiences. The supplier brought its XD Dark Ride interactive theatre experience to the IAE show floor in Shanghai, where it presented its brand-new film *Carnival*.

Earlier this year, Triotech launched The Flyer San Francisco and visitors to the Triotech booth were able to learn more about this flying theatre project, as well as its key offerings, including interactive theatres, interactive dark rides, 4D theatres, VR attractions, flying theatres, walkthroughs and dark coasters.

Visitors to the expo learned more about Triotech's flying theatre

Lagotronics

Booth: 2122

Lagotronics Projects provides turnkey solutions for theme parks, FECs, museums and experience centres. From interactive dark rides, outdoor rides, VR and AR projects, the supplier can supply a wide range of show experiences. Its latest project is the interactive Farm Fair Dark Ride at Nagashima Spa Land in Japan. Another recent project is Tekzone, an FEC in Kuwait, where it delivered AV and lighting shows. This year, the company celebrates its 40-year anniversary.

Seeper

Seeper designs and builds for visitor attractions and events.

Recently launching at Little Big City in Beijing China, as well as Sealife in Sydney is a new projection mapped head technology. Seeper is also ▶

Whitewater's spinning rapids ride is a new addition to Haichang Polar Ocean World

supplying interactive Lego Playtables across the globe.

The company provides technical and creative design and delivery as a part of a turnkey service. This includes everything from software development for interactive VR, AR, mobile and gesture, through to 3D animation and projection mapping, live-action film, audio, show and lighting design and programming.

Huss

Booth: 1222

Huss Park Attractions GmbH has announced that it has installed two major attractions, a Top Spin Suspended and a Giant Frisbee 40, at a brand new park in India.

Called Magic Mountain Park, the Huss attractions offer two key, high capacity rides for the venue's target market, while also being important additions from an operational point of view.

Kraftwerk

Gold Sponsor

Audiovisual system integrator Kraftwerk promoted its technical expertise in media-based attractions as a Gold Sponsor of this year's show.

The company recently completed the largest contract in its history at the Tongguan Kiln International Cultural and Tourism Center in Changsha, China – a state-of-the-art flying theatre attraction and a 800-seat turn-key 5D theatre installation at a brand-new cultural centre.

Kraftwerk has also completed its first Hybrid Dome installation in Germany at Experimenta in Heilbronn (see p72)

Clip 'n Climb exhibited its colourful climbing walls at IEA

Kraftwerk promoted its new flying theatre in Changsha, China

Whitewater

Booth: 1430

WhiteWater showcased the world's longest Spinning Rapids Ride at this year's IAE.

Located at Haichang Polar Ocean World in Shanghai, it's also the first Spinning Rapids Ride in China.

Vantage – the company's newest tech product – elevates the guest experience and gives operators in-depth insights into visitor patterns.

WhiteWater also revealed world firsts at Wanda Wuxi and Wanda Guangzhou, details of which will be announced soon.

Red Raion

Booth: 3232

Red Raion, the CGI studio specialising in media-based attractions, attended IAAPA Asia for the first time.

With an in-house studio, the company produces custom-built content for venues with a strong theming and offers ready-made CGI films under license.

The company also premiered its latest immersive movie – *Aladdin - The Bachelor Party* – which will be available for licensing in VR, XD, and dome formats.

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Clip 'n Climb

Booth: 2162

Clip 'n Climb exhibited its colourful climbing challenges at IEA.

The company invited visitors to discover its latest range of outdoor challenges, including brand new Ascendor – a 26ft climbing challenge.

Clip 'n Climb also shared details of its 17-Challenge climbing zone at the Kaisa Kingdom in Huizhou, China.

Polin

Booth: 1150

Polin Waterparks has had a busy year designing rides and experiences, which it showcased at this year's show.

Among the highlights were a look at the world's first fully transparent composite waterslide and a hologram model of Polin's newest waterslide – Stardust – which allows riders to impact their journey through its twists and turns.

Polin also displayed its Splash Bucket, a competitive interactive game.

Forrec

Booth: 1142

Creating entertainment designs for places of escape, Forrec has worked with some of the world's biggest brands.

Forrec's Changsha Dawang Deep Pit Water World (above), and Vortex's RiverQuest (right)

Visitors who stopped by the Forrec booth were able to see its latest projects which are slated to open next year, including Changsha Dawang Deep Pit Water World. This site's unique elevation allowed the team to design a multi-level waterpark.

In addition to waterparks, Forrec designs theme parks, visitor attractions, mixed-use entertainment and resorts.

Simworx

Booth: 1650

Simworx's capabilities extend from full turnkey solutions, custom attractions, product development, manufacturing and service support, to film content, motion programming and themed attractions.

In addition to projects within the UK, Simworx has designed, built and installed its products throughout the world, including in Europe, North America, South America, Asia and the Middle East. They're also due to begin installing fourteen new attractions for one client in China in 2019, along with attractions in Vietnam and Indonesia currently undergoing their installation.

Vortex

Booth: 1258

Vortex showcased its latest family adventure attraction – RiverQuest – at this year's IAE in Shanghai.

Combining river rides and waterslides with multi-sensory dreamscapes, RiverQuest is designed as an adventure ride for the entire family to enjoy together. Its highlights include a DreamTunnel and DreamPassage – immersive areas that are designed to surprise riders.

Zamperla

Booth: 1330

A major project for Zamperla in 2019 will be the creation of a new indoor themed Family Entertainment Centre within FICO, the largest agri-food park in the world, in Bologna, Italy.

Guests will enter the FEC from the back of a 'farmhouse' and find themselves in a typical Italian farm, which will feature 12 rides.

The attraction will be created operated and managed by Zamperla.

The development, due to open in Q3 2019, will mark the return of Zamperla to park management in Italy, after the success of Luna Park in Coney Island, US and Victorian Gardens in New York City. ●

Zamperla is launching a new FEC at FICO Eataly World in 2019

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PRODUCT INNOVATION

Suppliers tell *Attractions Management* about their latest product, design and technology launches

Testing starts on world's first rollercoaster at sea, reveals Maurer's Torsten Schmidt

German manufacturer Maurer Rides is putting its Bolt Ultimate Sea Coaster – the first rollercoaster to be installed aboard a cruise liner – through special testing, to ensure its vehicles can remain up to scratch on the open ocean.

The company will begin production and pre-assembly of the 220m-long (722ft) electric Spike coaster ride during Q3 2019. The coaster will be installed on the top deck of Carnival Cruise Line's new ship, *Mardi Gras*.

Among the challenges of the installation is factoring in the design and movement of the ship, which doesn't have to be accounted for with a land-based coaster, but Schmidt said the biggest challenge was allowing for the "aggressive atmosphere" at sea, caused by salt in the air.

"We have to see which components are sensible to use in this atmosphere," says Torsten Schmidt, business development manager at Maurer. "The wind and movement of the ship are not so much of a challenge, because with Bolt we will have 100 per cent traction control all of the time."

The ride accommodates two cars at a time, each holding two passengers and each able to reach speeds of nearly 40mph (60 kph), with an acceleration of 1.2g. The track reaches a height of 57m (187ft) above sea level, culminating with a hairpin bend around the ship's funnel. Riders' speeds are posted after the race.

According to Maurer, the ride will have capacity for 190 people per hour. At full throttle, the cars can complete a circuit in about a minute, with changeovers possible in 25 seconds. Passengers can control the speed of the cart with a pedal, so the experience will be different for all.

The *Mardi Gras* is set to launch in 2020 and will be based at Port Canaveral, Florida, US. Carnival Cruise Line said the ship will be the "ultimate playground".

Torsten Schmidt, business development manager, Maurer

The Bolt Ultimate Sea Coaster will be on the top of the outdoor deck of the *Mardi Gras*, which is set to launch in 2020

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

MAURER

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Mark Calvert on world's largest permanent video installation at Qatar's National Museum

RES installed 112 Panasonic 4K projectors and 172 media servers

Realtime Environment Systems (RES), a London-based visual tech firm, has completed the world's largest ever permanent video installation at the National Museum of Qatar.

The museum, which opened in March, features a number of cinematic display zones showcasing specially created film content that takes visitors on an immersive and experiential journey through the country's history, as well as showcasing its current identity and future aspirations.

The attraction features custom content commissioned by the Doha Film Institute (DFI) and is powered by 112 Panasonic 4K projectors and 172 media servers that process 21 billion pixels per second.

To ensure all the AV equipment is synchronised, HIVE Media Control – a UK-based company formed by RES and Harrison Digital Media – created HIVE, a bespoke software package capable of controlling and monitoring systems across the site.

"This is the biggest project RES has ever undertaken," says co-founder Mark Calvert.

"When we first learned about the ambitions for video playback, projection mapping and technical planning, the sheer size of it became apparent. It took all of the skills, experience and technical wizardry we possess to make it happen. This is visual technology on an unprecedented scale."

Visitors take an immersive journey through the country's history

Mark Calvert, RES co-founder

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

RES

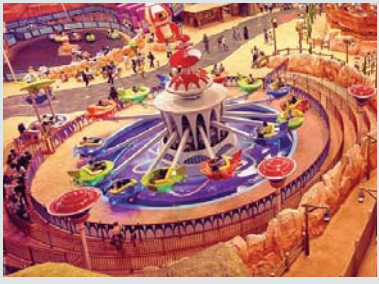
Alberto Zamperla on work at Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi

Italian coaster designer and manufacturer Zamperla has revealed details of its involvement with Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi.

Managed by project development firm Miral Asset Management under licence from Warner Bros Consumer Products, the park is the first Warner Bros-branded indoor theme park in the world and features zones dedicated to a host of its own IPs, including the likes of Superman, Wonder Woman, Bugs Bunny, Scooby Doo and The Flintstones.

Zamperla supplied a number of key attractions across the park, including Tom & Jerry's Swiss Cheese Spin, Zamperla's Super Twister Coaster, located in Cartoon Junction. In the Gotham City area, the supplier installed its Disk'O Coaster, named The Riddler Revolution after the Batman villain of the same name. In Dynamite Gulch is the AeroTop Jet; named the Jetson's Cosmic Orbiter and the Bumper Cars, called Marvin the Martian Crate Crashers, whilst in the ACME area is Tweety Wild Wockets, the MiniJet ride and back in Cartoon Junction is the Speedway attraction, named Ricochet Racin' with Taz.

Antonio Zamperla



The Jetson's Cosmic Orbiter is among the Zamperla rides at the park

"We're honoured to be part of this new tourism destination and we are very satisfied with the outcome of our work," says Zamperla's CEO and president, Alberto Zamperla.

"We thank Miral for choosing us and for giving us the opportunity to demonstrate Zamperla's engineering and theming capabilities."

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

ZAMPERLA

Legacy's Lee Roe reveals details of stunt show dark ride in Indonesia

Legacy Entertainment has partnered with Trans Studio to create Road Rage – the world's first ever stunt show dark ride.

More details are due to be released later in the year, however, the attraction, billed as a 'world-first', is set to break new ground with the inclusion of live performers and high-octane stunts inside a more traditional dark ride set up.

Road Rage will be the first attraction to combine a stunt show with a dark ride experience

To serve as the signature attraction at Trans Studio Bali, Legacy were responsible for the design and production of the ride, while engineering firm Oceaneering provided the dynamic ride system. Benoit Jutras, the composer behind Cirque Du Soleil and Dragone, has created the musical score for the attraction.

"For the first time ever, visitors to an Indonesian theme park will experience a dark ride that exceeds those in many of the world's top international theme parks," explains Lee Roe, creative director at Legacy Entertainment.

"Trans Studio are pioneers. They have no interest in rehashing what's been done elsewhere. Our teams are united by a singular creative challenge – to create the best regional park dark rides ever imagined."

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORDS

LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT

Lee Roe, Legacy Entertainment

Thibault De Lestré on launch of Alterface's Madgix ScreenPlay kit

Madgix has announced the launch of its ScreenPlay kit, which is designed to transform existing spaces into play and gaming arenas without operators having to modify their screens.

Developed in collaboration with Alterface, the ScreenPlay kit is based on Alterface's NOMAD camera detection technology. It uses real-time technology to operate wireless 'point and shoot' devices, while individual ID tracking enables operators to identify and link device IDs with loyalty cards or bonus systems, incentivising players.

Thibault De Lestré, MD

The solution is simple to install, users just have to plug Screenplay into their existing projection systems and motion seat hardware and software. The technology is capable of accommodating a large number of players at one time.

"For the first time a multi-user interaction kit is available as an open architecture, says Thibault De Lestré, MD of Madgix.

"The ScreenPlay kit contains parallel independent hardware for playback and shooting detection, designed for seamless integration with existing 4D theatres and cinemas. This new solution offers great potential to various markets."

The Magdix technology has now been launched worldwide

Benoit Cornet, founding president of Madgix, adds: "ScreenPlay opens a world of new opportunities for cinema and attraction venue owners. Content, format and gameplay can be adjusted to fit their infrastructure and audiences.

"The future lies in interactive non-linear storytelling, so this is a perfect solution to bring interactivity to everyone, everywhere."

ATTRACTIONS-KIT KEYWORD

MADGIX

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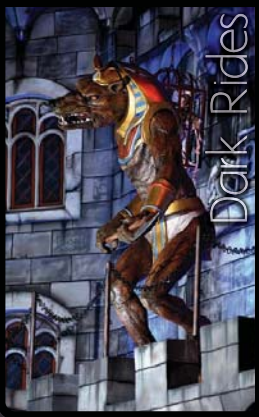

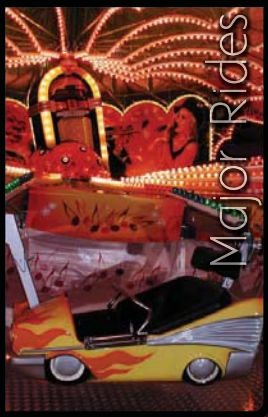

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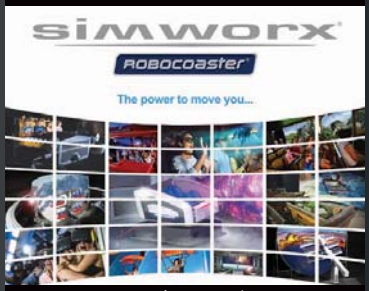

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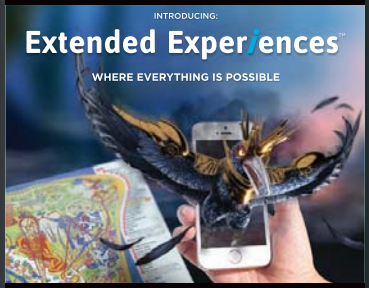

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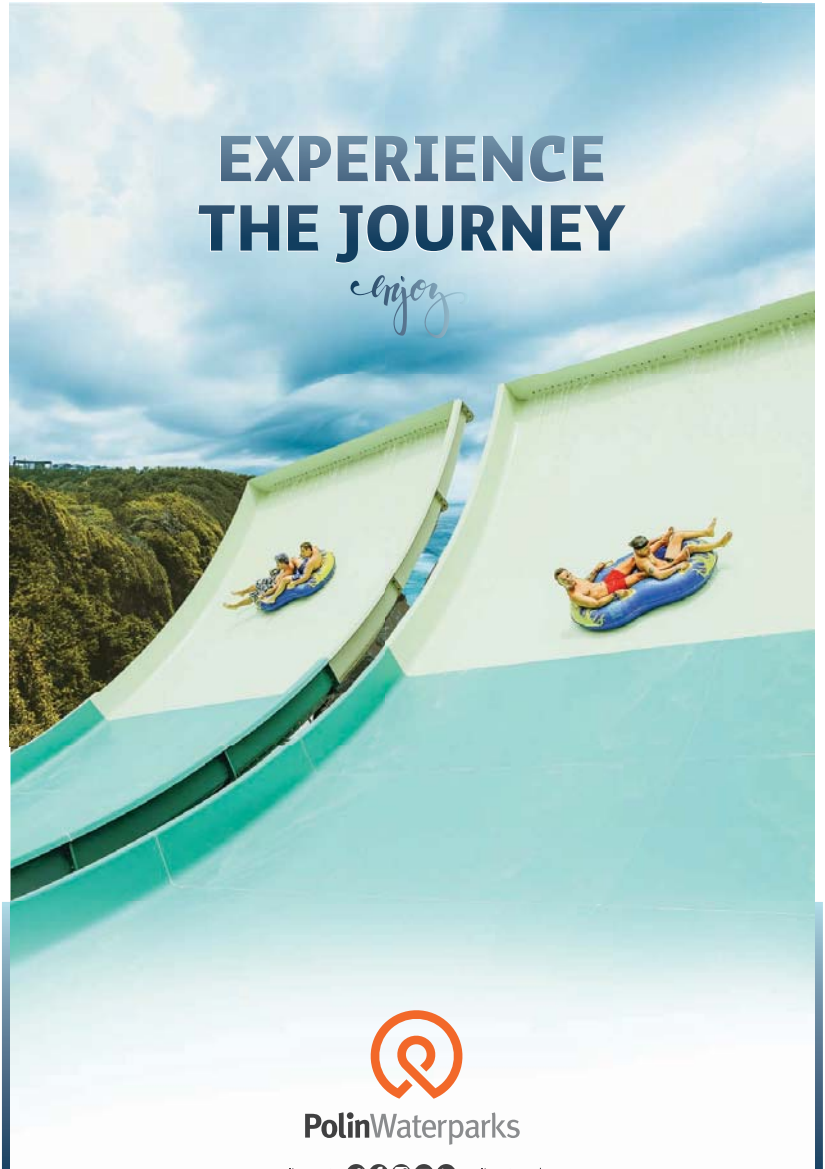
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