

# AM2

The news & jobs magazine from Attractions Management

AM2.jobs

10 AUGUST 2016 ISSUE 58

## Ferris Wheel reinvented with world-first i360

The British Airways i360 – the world’s first vertical cable car, tallest moving observation tower and most slender tower – has opened in Brighton, UK.

Opened 4 August, the so-called “vertical pier” by Marks Barfield Architects sits on the foundation of Brighton’s former Victorian-era West Pier, which was destroyed by an arson attack in March 2003.

“When the West Pier was built and when the Palace Pier was built, there was a sort of rivalry between them,” said studio MD Julia Barfield, speaking to *AM2* at the launch, explaining the concept. “It was all about enjoying the view back to Brighton as



The i360 comes to Brighton’s seafront after 11 years of development

much as enjoying the air and the promenade. This is really a vertical way of replicating that. When you were at the end of the pier

you could look back at Brighton and now you can look over it.”

The 162m (531ft) tall i360 is literally a reinvention of the wheel,

with the vertical tower offered by Marks Barfield – also designers of the London Eye – as an alternative to the traditional Ferris Wheel.

“It’s a very discreet intervention, if you can call a 162m tower discreet that is,” said Barfield. “It’s very, very slender – almost impossibly so. It is one to 40 in its proportions which makes it the most slender tower in the world.”

The i360 cost £42.2m (US\$56.2m, €50.3m) to develop. During each ‘flight’, passengers board the pod – similar in style to that of the London Eye but on a significantly larger scale – and take a 20 minute journey for unobstructed views of Brighton. *More: [http://lei.sr?a=k4a6m\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=k4a6m_A)*

## Ending orca captivity ‘most difficult decision I’ve ever made’

SeaWorld CEO Joel Manby did not anticipate having to put an end to orca captivity when he took up the role last year, revealing the passionate public outcry changed his opinion.

When SeaWorld first opened its doors 52 years ago, it’s was without its killer whales. Those arrived later in 1965 but have since become and continue to be the stars of the show. Following his appointment in 2015, Manby was faced with a tough choice – bring an end to SeaWorld’s most iconic attraction or risk alienating its millennial audience.

“I did not think this was something we were going to have to do,” said Manby speaking exclusively to *AM2*. “I thought coming in, as long as we got the truth out

about the company, we would be ok. Our research was quite pervasive and our millennial audience showed even worse data – those are our future customers.

“Making this kind of decision shows the people we are listening and we are trying to change. We get it – having animals this magnificent and this large in a captive environment is a tough sell over the long term.

“No I didn’t think we’d have to do it, but we listened to public opinion and looked at what our research told us. It was an incredibly difficult decision. I think the most difficult decision I’ve ever been involved with in a business.”

*Continued on back cover*



SeaWorld’s current orcas are its last generation

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South Korea's government wants to become a leader in the virtual reality sector

## Lotte developing VR for South Korea

Lotte World – South Korea's largest indoor theme park – will lead a consortium of 12 companies tasked with developing a virtual reality (VR) theme park programme.

The move is part of the Korean government's Virtual Reality Flagship Project – a scheme which covers a number of sectors with the aim of developing VR technologies ahead of international competitors.

The VR content will be distributed to markets such as Asia and the Middle East, before going to Europe and Americas.

Lotte World has been budgeted W10bn (US\$9m, €8m, £6.8m) for the landmark project, which will be raised by both the operator and by South Korea's Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=x3N7Q\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=x3N7Q_A)

## Brexit bonus for Merlin as weakened pound boosts company profit margins

Merlin Entertainments is expecting a boost in profits as a result of the fall in value of the pound stemming from Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU).

Merlin – one of the largest attractions operators in the world, second only to Disney – has forecast a percentage boost for the UK-based company, with 70 per cent of what it earns coming from outside Britain.

Reporting its half-year results, Merlin, which operates more than 100 attractions worldwide, recorded profits of £50m (US\$65.8m, €59.2m). The operator added that overall revenue year-on-year had grown 5.3 per cent to £573m (US\$754m, €679m), with a 3 percentage point benefit from currency movements.



Merlin said it expects further recovery for its Resort Theme

Visitor numbers for the period grew 1.1 per cent to 28 million, but like-for-like revenue was down 1.1 per cent, which Merlin attributed to a "challenging landscape" for its midway attractions and lower visitor numbers at Alton Towers stemming from the Smiler accident.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=z3S9w\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=z3S9w_A)

# Fresno Chaffee CEO lays out zoo masterplan

Since opening its US\$57m (€51.5m, £43.7m) African Adventure, California's Fresno Chaffee Zoo has experienced a 40 per cent upturn in attendance – and that's only the start, according to the zoo's CEO and director, Scott Barton.

Funded mainly by a levy tax to help support new zoo projects and programmes, the 13-acre (57,000sq m) project offers a modern home for a number of species, including African elephants, lions, cheetahs, wildebeest, giraffes, ostrich, springbok and more.

"It's by far the largest project we've done both in footprint size and cost," Barton told *AM2*. "What's been remarkable is the impact it's had. We're almost a year in now and still seeing very strong numbers."

The zoo is now entering the second phase of development in African Adventure with the addition of a river expansion. The second phase of development is expected to cost between US\$10m (€9m, £7.7m) and US\$20m (€18m, £15.4m).

As part of its masterplan, the zoo is about to launch a new Australian walkthrough



Since African Adventure opened, the zoo has experienced a 40 per cent upswing in attendance

experience, while also planning new Asian and South American areas. The zoo is also planning a new entrance to improve flow around the museum.

"We want to make the zoo a great space for all ages," he said. "We're

starting to see a really nice diversity of guests and we're only an hour away from Yosemite National Park. We're looking at marketing more to the people visiting the park. There's lots ahead for us."

*More: [http://lei.sr?a=4V3w2\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=4V3w2_A)*

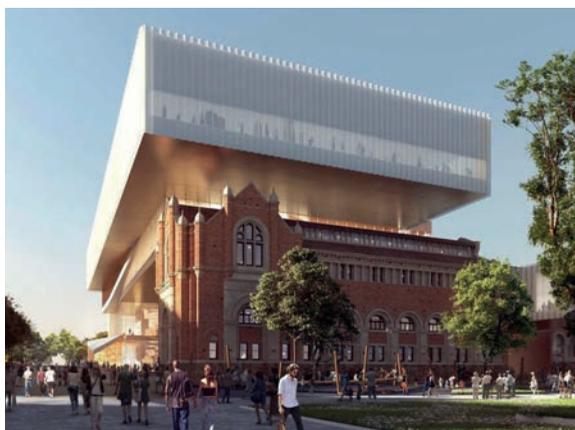
## Past meets the future as architects unveil design for Perth's WA Museum

Architects Hassell + OMA have unveiled their design for Perth's AUS\$428m (US\$325m, €290.8m, £245.7m) Western Australian Museum building, with global contractor Brookfield Multiplex chosen to lead the landmark development.

The design by the two international design practices combines a mix of heritage and contemporary architecture, with a modern roof and new buildings intersected by refurbished

heritage buildings on the museum campus. The building, which will house the state's scientific and cultural collections, will be formed of a 23,000sq m (247,569sq ft) extension to its current home – quadrupling its size.

A large temporary exhibition space is incorporated into the new design, while the museum



Heritage and modern design meet in the new WA Museum

will also host a number of retail and dining experiences. Concept images for the project also reveal large public space that the designers described as an "outdoor room" which is "the central point of the new museum, in terms of both location and programming".

*More: [http://lei.sr?a=x9s2J\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=x9s2J_A)*



A waterpark will feature in the design

## Emerald Isle green lights first Center Parcs resort

Center Parcs has been granted permission to build its first resort destination in Ireland, with the €230m (US\$255m, £193m) holiday attraction coming to County Longford in 2019.

Set in 395 acres (1.6sq km) of woodland near the village of Ballymahon, Center Parcs Longford Forest will have a capacity of up to 2,500 guests, employing 1,000.

Incorporating Center Parcs' classic features, the new resort will include a subtropical indoor waterpark, as well as a spa, restaurants and shops.

*More: [http://lei.sr?a=d8Q8a\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=d8Q8a_A)*

# Twitter headhunts tech wizards for new VR unit

With Twitter preparing to launch its own virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) division, the social media giant sent a team to the annual Siggraph technology showcase to seek out elite programmers, designers and visionaries in the field.

Led by ex-Apple designer Alessandro Sabatelli, Twitter revealed its AR and VR ambitions with the acquisition of Magic Pony Technologies – a machine learning company which uses algorithms with potential applications for VR and AR – in June.

Twitter has been quiet on what it actually plans to do in regards to virtual realities, but made its intentions clear with the invitation-only mixer at the event in Anaheim, California hosting 200 VR and AR innovators to utilise the cutting-edge technology as the company aims to expand its social offering.

With its alternate reality plans, the social media network joins the likes of Disney, Sony, Facebook, Microsoft, Google and YouTube, all of which have launched their own dedicated virtual reality divisions.



Twitter joins a host of major companies investigating the potential of virtual reality

Deloitte predicted in March that 2016 would be the year of virtual reality with its first billion-dollar year, providing new opportunities to businesses that want to create more immersive experiences for consumers, according to a new

study. The success of Pokémon Go recently has shifted that idea, with AR thought to become the dominant force in the alternate reality market sooner rather than later.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=H2q9t\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=H2q9t_A)



The planetarium will gain a new fulldome

## Cape Town Planetarium plans digital upgrade

South Africa's Iziko Museums – an agency of the government's Department of Arts and Culture – is enhancing its planetarium in Cape Town with a R27m (US\$2.2m, €2m, £1.7m) digital upgrade.

The Iziko Planetarium, part of the Iziko South African Museum, will get the much-needed upgrade to its 30-year-old facility, which has welcomed more than two million visitors through its doors since opening.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=R5H5B\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=R5H5B_A)

## Harry's magic and a feast in the east drive Universal's Q2 earnings success

Universal's theme park division saw its Q2 revenue surge by 47 per cent year-on-year as a result of higher consumer spending due to the launch of a new Harry Potter-themed attraction and its Japanese expansion.

The jump in revenue to US\$1.1bn (€999m, £837m) was attributed the launch of its new Wizarding World at Universal Studios Hollywood while the company's acquisition of a majority stake in Universal Japan had a significant effect on income with operating cash flow for the Osaka theme park increasing by 5.3 per cent.

Without the Japanese influence, theme park revenue for Universal rose by 10.6 per cent, which Comcast said reflected a higher spend at its new Potter attraction in California.



Revenue across the board rose by 47 per cent to US\$1.1bn

Operating cashflow for the theme parks experienced an increase of 40.5 per cent to US\$469m (€426m, £357m), while its half year results were also impressive. For the six months ending 30 June 2016, revenue increased by 51.8 per cent to US\$2.2bn (€2bn, £1.7bn).

More: [http://lei.sr?a=j5Q8H\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=j5Q8H_A)



# THE SIGNIFICANT REVENUE INCREASE

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John Gannon, General Manager,  
Zoombezi Bay  
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Ohio

# BP cutting its UK arts sponsorship by a quarter

Oil giant BP is cutting its controversial sponsorship of UK cultural institutions by 25 per cent to £7.5m (US\$9.9m, €8.9m).

The sum – pledged over a period of five years to the Royal Opera House, British Museum, National Portrait Gallery and Royal Shakespeare Company – will come into effect from 2018.

BP had previously sponsored the Royal Opera House, British Museum, National Portrait Gallery, plus Tate Britain for a combined £10m (US\$13.2m, €11.9m) in deals running up to 2017. Earlier this year, BP announced it would be ending its 26-year relationship with Tate Britain in 2017.

A spokesperson for BP said that due to “cutting costs and reducing staff numbers” the company “could not continue all of our sponsorships at the same level”.

The renewal of BP’s sponsorship deal has drawn the ire of anti-oil protesters, who have promised to “escalate protests”.

“At a time when the world needs to urgently shift away from fossil fuels, the idea that these institutions will still be



The renewal of BP’s sponsorship deal has drawn the ire of anti-oil protesters

promoting an oil company into the 2020s is deeply irresponsible,” said a spokesperson for campaign group BP or Not BP.

“As the devastating effects of climate change becomes ever more apparent, this decision will look more shortsighted with every passing day.”

Earlier this year, campaign group Art Not Oil published new information on what it described as the “corrupting influence” of BP over national museums and galleries receiving its sponsorship in the UK.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=x5e7t\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=x5e7t_A)



Erin Wallace joins from Learning Care

## Great Wolf adds three new executives to team

Waterpark operator Great Wolf has announced the appointment of several executives to its management team, with Bryan Robinson joining as senior vice president and chief people officer, Greg Miller as executive vice president and chief development officer, and Erin Wallace as chief operating officer.

Working as part of the leadership of Great Wolf, the newly appointed executives will aim to continue the company’s growth strategy based on expanding the Great Wolf brand.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=h5T8e\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=h5T8e_A)

## Social lives significantly more important than space, elephant study suggests

A social study looking into the welfare of elephants in captivity has found that good social lives and a stimulating environment are more important than extra space.

Limited exhibit space has previously been raised as a concern for the animals, which in the wild roam for up to 50 miles (80km) a day.

But the first-of-its kind study, published in the journal PLOS One, found no link between exhibit size and the key indicators of poor elephant welfare.

Quality of space was identified as much more important for wellbeing than amount of space. Environments with diverse enrichment, such as hanging



Mental stimuli is more important than space for elephants

or hidden food, were more closely linked to improved lifestyle, while factors such as hard floors were linked with musculo-skeletal problems.

A large stable and diverse social group was

also found to be a major factor in wellbeing, with elephants inhabiting these sort of groups less likely to show negative repetitive behaviours such as rocking.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=p4z9Z\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=p4z9Z_A)

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# AM2

## DIARY DATES

18-22 SEPTEMBER 2016

### **Euro Attractions Show 2016** **Fira Gran Via, Barcelona, Spain**

With innovative ideas and products from more than 425 exhibiting companies from around the world, join your fellow colleagues and decision-makers at the year's premier event for international attractions and amusement professionals. Enter into an inspiring world of exhibits, seminars and networking events and catch an exclusive glimpse of Ferrari Land, PortAventura's latest attraction yet to be revealed to the public.

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6 OCTOBER 2016

### **The Annual National Conference of Visitor Attractions** **Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London, UK**

The Annual National Conference of Visitor Attractions (VAC) is the pre-eminent event for all types of visitor attractions in the UK. VAC is run by the industry, for the industry and is firmly established as the key place to meet and network with contemporaries. The event also features a thought-provoking programme of conference sessions to keep you up to date and help you find new directions for your business.

Email: [vac@zibrant.com](mailto:vac@zibrant.com)

Tel: +1 913 599 0300

[www.vacevents.com](http://www.vacevents.com)

11-14 OCTOBER 2016

### **World Waterpark Association Symposium & Trade Show** **New Orleans, Louisiana, US**

The WWA's Annual Symposium & Trade Show brings together hundreds of water leisure owners, operators, developers, designers and manufacturers for four days of education, networking and exhibiting – the only event specifically for waterparks.

Email: [aezra@waterparks.org](mailto:aezra@waterparks.org)



The day includes a behind-the-scenes tour of the Mass Effect attraction at Great America

25 AUGUST 2016

### **SATE Academy Day** **Silicon Valley, California, US**

This SATE Academy Day by the TEA specifically highlights immersive attractions present in the South Bay Area, from the technologically-

advanced 4-D Theater experiences to local gems. The day includes tours of California's Great America, the Tech Museum of Innovation and the Winchester Mystery House.

Register: <http://lei.sr?a=D2k7w>

Tel: +1 818 843 8497

7-9 NOVEMBER 2016

### **World Travel Market London 2016** **ExCeL London, UK**

World Travel Market (WTM) London, the leading global event for the travel industry, is a three-day business-to-business exhibition for the worldwide travel and tourism industry. Almost 50,000 senior travel industry professionals, government ministers and international press attend the event to network, negotiate and discover the latest industry opinion and trends. The event is expected to generate around £2.5bn of travel industry contracts over the three days.

Email: [wtmworld.helpline@reedexpo.co.uk](mailto:wtmworld.helpline@reedexpo.co.uk)

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with two days of curated presentations on the theme of 'Transformation'.

Email: [kala@museumnext.com](mailto:kala@museumnext.com)

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14-18 NOVEMBER 2016

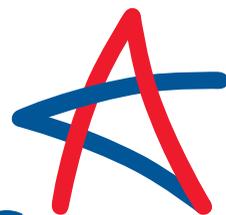
### **IAAPA Attractions Expo 2016** **Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida, US**

With more than 30,000 industry professionals expected to attend this year's IAAPA conference, including 20,000 buyers coming from more than 100 countries, the event will explore the theme of 'Every Experience Matters'. The trade show floor will cover over 550,000sq ft, with more than 1,000 companies set to exhibit their latest projects and cutting-edge innovations from 125 categories. Industry leaders, decision-makers, and trendsetters from across multiple sectors, including manufacturers and suppliers, and the owners and operators of theme and amusement parks, waterparks, FECs, zoos, aquariums, science centres, museums, resorts, and more, will be on-hand at the event.

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# VAC2016



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# Plan unveiled for US\$45m North Carolina waterpark

The New York-based Aquatic Development Group (ADG) has started work on a US\$45m (€40.3m, £34.2m) waterpark coming to Currituck County, North Carolina, in 2017.

The newly-formed OBX Waterpark Adventure – a company owned by 25-plus-year waterpark veterans Arthur Berry III and Kenneth Ellis – will own and operate the park. It will reunite the development team used for the Aquatopia project at the duo's US\$163m (€146m, £124m) Pennsylvania ski resort, Camelback Mountain.

The attraction will be designed and built by ADG, a company for which Ellis is president and CEO. Weber Group will produce the themed environments for the attraction, which according to OBX will “draw upon the inspiration of familiar icons, including historic lighthouses, famous pirate ships, the Wright Brothers legacy, all set in an open coastal atmosphere.”

The plans – which will feature WhiteWater West's patented FlowRider surf technology, as well as multiple waterslides, a wave pool, adventure lagoon and lazy river



The attraction will be designed by ADG, with Weber Group producing themed environments

supplied by WhiteWater – were approved last month by Currituck commissioners.

More than two acres (8,000sq m) of the 80-acre (324,000sq m) nautical-themed

attraction will be dedicated to a children's adventure area with a double entry wave pool and interactive play areas and structures.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=G9J3b\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=G9J3b_A)



Van den Kerkhof is CEO of Plopsa Group

## Van den Kerkhof set to deliver keynote at IAAPA

Plopsa Group CEO Steve Van den Kerkhof has been announced as the keynote speaker for IAAPA's 2016 Attractions Expo in Orlando.

Van den Kerkhof – who is also chair of Belgian amusement park operator and children's TV producer Studio 100 – has been leading Plopsa Group for more than 17 years, co-founding its theme park division in 1999.

He will deliver his keynote address during the GM and Owners' Breakfast, which takes place on 16 November.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=W6n8J\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=W6n8J_A)

## North Korea increases culture offering with new museum and redeveloped zoo

North Korea's government has unveiled a new nature museum and a complete redesign of its historic zoo, according to the country's official news agency.

The Pyongyang-based 35,000sq m (376,800sq ft) museum features areas dedicated to space, exhibition halls detailing the Paleozoic to Cenozoic era, animal and plant halls and an electronic library.

The remodelled zoo, which is entered through the head of a roaring tiger and first opened in 1959, has 40 new enclosures set up for reptiles, monkeys, giraffes, elephants and more. Work on the attractions started in



The remodelled zoo is entered through the head of a tiger

late 2014 on the order of President Kim Jong Un.

Speaking on the opening, North Korean premier Pak Pong-ju said the construction of the Nature Museum and the Central Zoo was the

“fruit of the wise leadership of Marshal Kim Jong-un who is devoting his all to the work for providing the people with the world-level base for cultural and leisure activities.”

More: [http://lei.sr?a=y5z2X\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=y5z2X_A)



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Orlando officials will be hoping its major players like Disney can maintain momentum



## Tourist turmoil

Problems pile up for Orlando as Brexit, Brazil, Zika and safety hit tourism

**B**ritain's decision to leave the European Union (EU), Brazil's recession, the Zika virus in Florida and heightened tensions in the wake of violence in the US, are having an adverse effect on Orlando's tourist-driven economy.

Orlando – considered by many the attractions capital of the world – relies heavily on its tourism industry, which counts for a large part of its income, mainly driven by its theme parks.

### Brexit

The shockwaves delivered by the Brexit vote have reached beyond Europe, with the UK one of Orlando's key markets for inbound visitors.

In 2015, more than 1.7 million Britons travelled to Florida – 40 per cent of all European visitors to the state and about 15 per cent of all of Florida's overseas visitor numbers.

As Britain's consumers and businesses delay spending decisions amidst EU uncertainty, economists have predicted

a sizeable drop in growth for country's economy for the second half of 2016, with the trend continuing into 2017.

The weaker pound is certainly providing a boost to inbound and domestic tourism, but for outbound locations such as Orlando, visitor numbers are likely to diminish with higher costs for the city's British customers.

“The vote by the UK to leave the EU will have the immediate effect of increasing volatility in financial markets, and will likely lead to reduced foreign direct investment in Florida,” said a statement from the state's Chamber of Commerce. “We know from history that increases in uncertainty and volatility typically have a negative effect on investment and trade.”



THERRY ROEPE / BELGA / PRESS ASSOCIATION

A weakened pound post-Brexit is likely to affect trips to Orlando from the UK



Joel Manby says Orlando's problems are a "Florida issue" rather than a SeaWorld one

### Brazil

A similarly large market for Orlando is Brazil, which is suffering from the country's worst recession since 1930, putting an economic stranglehold on one of Orlando's strongest inbound markets.

In 2013 Brazil overtook the UK in terms of visitors to Central Florida, according to statistics from Visit Orlando. In the past decade, Brazilian travel to the region has increased 900 per cent, fuelled by groups of teenagers wanting to visit its theme parks, specifically Disney, Universal and SeaWorld.

Those numbers have shifted dramatically since then, with visitors coming from Brazil to Orlando dropping 10 per cent in 2015. Overall for the state of Florida, 1.5 million Brazilians visited in 2015, dropping behind the UK as the leading overseas market.

In an upcoming interview with *Attractions Management*, SeaWorld CEO Joel Manby said that while these

**We have issues like Brexit and Brazilian business in Florida but it's not as much a SeaWorld issue as it is a Florida issue.**

issues are affecting his company, the issue is something the state of Florida needs to address.

"I do feel good about where the SeaWorld brand is headed," said Manby. "We have issues like Brexit and Brazilian business in Florida but it's not as much a SeaWorld issue as it is a Florida issue."

### The Zika virus

While it hasn't made its way to Orlando yet, Florida's department of health has reported 15 cases of the Zika virus in a Miami suburb. This could prove costly if Zika spreads across the state, which is bracing itself for a potential health epidemic.

There is no treatment or vaccine for Zika, which generally produces mild symptoms such as headache, fever and red eyes, and 80 per cent of healthy people infected suffer no symptoms. The virus can have terrible implications for pregnant women however, leading to brain defects in unborn babies.

Because of the outbreak, health experts have warned pregnant women from travelling to Florida because of the risk of contracting Zika. They have also predicted that given the geographic distribution of the Zika-transmitting *Aedes aegypti*



**Tourists are being advised against travel to Florida because of a Miami Zika outbreak**

breed of mosquitoes in the US, the virus is expected to have more cases in Florida.

### Heightened tensions

Amid financial woes, Orlando experienced turmoil in June following a tragedy that saw more than 50 people killed in a mass shooting at an LGBT nightclub in the city.

Disney was left reeling in June after an alligator snatched a two-year-old boy from one of its resorts and on a wider scale gun-related violence in the US has the potential to scare some off from visiting.

Increased safety concerns US-wide related to gun control, coupled with financial worries from overseas nations, paints a rather bleak picture for Orlando's tourism outlook.

The true effect won't be apparent until new tourism figures are released next year. The most recent set of statistics, released at the start of May, said that 66 million people visited Orlando in 2015 – surpassing record figures by 3 million people. Whether those numbers can be maintained with the successes of the likes of Universal and Disney remain to be seen.

A crowd of players seen playing Pokémon Go after an in-game lure is set down

ROMA / EPA VIALESI/OWEN/REDA / PRESS ASSOCIATION



# Pokétractions management

As visitor attractions are capitalising on Pokémon Go, should you be too or are there still issues to address?

**Y**ou've probably seen it, large groups of people wandering seemingly aimlessly around your city or town, heads buried in their phone with a vacant expression on their face.

Initially there was public confusion with these groups mistaken for anything from drug dealers to teenage gangs. But what's really happening is quite astonishing – the advent of augmented reality and the arrival of Pokémon Go.

Capturing the hearts, minds and eyeballs of the millennial generation, the game – first released in February 1996 – turns what was originally a pixelated adventure on the Game Boy handheld console into an adventure that quite literally is playable all over the world – the canvas for the first-of-its-kind Pokémon adventure.

In just a matter of weeks, people who preferred to sit on the sofa playing videogames have taken the game with them into the big wide world,

dramatically increasing outdoor activity and actively seeking out special landmarks and heritage sites in their quest to 'Catch Em All'.

## Pay day

The success of Pokémon Go is unprecedented. In less than 30 days, the game passed 100 million downloads and US\$160m (€143.5m, £121.7m) in revenue, surpassing Twitter on active users and Facebook on engagement. In the space of two weeks the valuation of Nintendo more than doubled and the company briefly overtook rival Sony in terms of share value. That was before even launching in Japan, the home of Pokémon. The game is currently available in more than 30 countries thanks to a steady rollout across Europe and is generating around US\$10m (€9m, £7.6m) a day from its pool of users through in-game purchases.

MATTHEW CORELY / SHUT-





DAREN PENTIMAN/ZUMA PRESS/PA IMAGES

As the game's popularity increases, so do reports of injuries caused by careless users

**Mind the gap**

While the game has been widely recognised as a roaring success, there have been a couple of bumps in the road to world domination. The popularity of the game has caused the servers to collapse multiple times, while reports of injuries caused by careless users have also surfaced in recent weeks.

One of the game's flaws, when it comes to appropriateness and taste, is the location of some of its 'Gyms' and 'Pokéstops'. Based on heritage landmarks, museums and other significant locations, the game has had to deal with some uncomfortable situations, such as the poisonous Koffing pokémon spawning at

**The Japanese government had to ask Niantic – the game's creatoras – for the Fukushima nuclear exclusion zone to be classified as a no-go area for Pokémon**



KTOTO / PRESS ASSOCIATION

Pokémon locations sometimes lack taste, here seen at the A-Bomb Dome in Hiroshima

Pokéstops inside Washington's Holocaust Museum and Pokémon appearing at Auschwitz-Birkenau – the site where approximately 1.1 million people were murdered during World War Two.

Just a day after the game's launch in Japan, many of the country's most popular tourist attractions urged caution about playing the game or put a halt to it altogether. One such example was the Izumo-taisha shrine, considered the second most sacred site in Japan, which banned the use of Pokémon Go within its premises to preserve the "solemn"

atmosphere of the sanctuary. Safety in some attractions is also a concern, with Himeji Castle, Japan's best preserved feudal fortress, placing signs around its grounds urging visitors not to play while walking through the complex fearful of visitors risking injury by entering restricted or dangerous parts of the historic location.

Japan's government has also become involved such has been the excitement among players, with the nation's leaders launching a campaign promoting safe use

of the game. The government also had to ask Niantic – the game’s creators – for the Fukushima nuclear exclusion zone to be classified as a no-go area for Pokémon after the discovery of at least one of the game’s characters on the power station’s site.

Such a large and expansive game is a trial and error process and Niantic says that for those who don’t want the attention, they’ll be working on removing certain locations to stay respectful of the real world.

### An augmented evolution

Virtual reality is dead and Pokémon Go killed it. That’s the opinion of some tech leaders, who have called the augmented reality tech a “watershed moment in technology history”.

If Pokémon Go turns out to be more than a fad and the dawn of the augmented reality era, it poses questions for technology companies as products previously confined to the home or the device become more prominent in relation to public space. The success of Pokémon Go is sure to inspire imitators who must try to address the issues Niantic is still struggling with. When companies such as Google and Facebook start to blur the worlds of virtual and physical, as they plan to, they will

have to take a responsible approach to the physical environments in which their technologies operate – something that could be achieved with the dawn of the smart city – in which technology almost self-governs city infrastructure.

### The attractions angle

For the attractions industry, the potential of Pokémon Go and the games that will be inevitably spawned by its existence is huge. Already operators from every sector within the industry have experienced increased visitor numbers with people up and about who might have opted to stay indoors otherwise. Many of these operators are being proactive, using the game to draw in customers, hosting what have become known as “lure parties” – events where lures are put down in-game to attract more Pokémon – and are hosting Pokémon-themed events in an attempt to get a slice of the Poké-pie.

English Heritage is one example of a body which has fully-embraced the spirit of the game, which is linked to cultural and heritage locations for its Pokéstops and Gyms.

Creating a guide, which covers more than 400 sites across Britain, English Heritage has urged players to bring a battery pack

**We launched something over the weekend where we told our customers to come to our parks for a Pokémon Go experience. We jumped on it, it’s a great idea and it has a lot of potential.**

Special Pokémon Go days held by attractions are drawing visitors in their thousands



IMAGE: LUIS LOURO / SHUTTERSTOCK POKEMON PICTURED © NINTENDO



The AR technology means the game is playable literally anywhere in the world with internet

POKEMON GO © NIANTIC, INC. PIKACHU © NINTENDO IMAGE: LITTLENY / SHUTTERSTOCK



### How the game works:

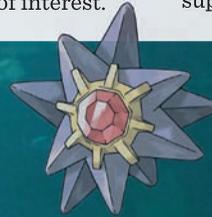
The game for smartphones – based on the popular Pokémon gaming series first released in 1996 on the Game Boy console – lets players locate, capture, battle, and train virtual creatures in AR, combining GPS with real-world exploration to create a first-of-its-kind experience.

Features of the game include Pokéstops and Pokémon gyms. Pokéstops provide players with items, while gyms serve as battle locations typically located at places of interest.

During an encounter with a wild Pokémon, the player throws a Poké Ball at it by flicking it from the bottom of the screen up. If the Pokémon is successfully caught, it becomes a playable character for the user.

At level five, the player is able to battle at a gym and join one of three teams. If players enter a Pokémon gym controlled by a player from another team, they can battle for the location. If they win they can deposit one Pokémon to defend it King of the Hill-style.

The game is free to play but does support in-app purchases of items.



owing to the lack of power sources at most of its sites, stay focused so as not to get injured, avoid accessing areas not open to the public, let the on-site teams know if they can't reach a location and, embracing the theme of heritage, take tips from history, comparing Pokémon battles to those from real-life battles dating back hundreds of years.

Some have underestimated the popularity of the game however, with Bristol Zoo forced to close its doors after promoting a Pokémon Go event that attracted more than 2,000 people, reaching capacity within 30 minutes of opening. The zoo, which raised around £6,000 with a £3 donation per entry, held a second event for those who didn't make it in, with fans queuing up for a reported four hours.

With visitor attractions all over the world using Pokémon Go to entice would-be customers to their various offerings, Pennsylvania's Da Vinci Science

Center put a spin on the game, using it as an education tool to teach guests about the science behind its workings.

On the back of increased attention from Pokémon Go players, the institution held its very first Pokémon Go Day in which educators from the science centre offered hands-on scientific activities explaining the game's mechanics, held Pokémon exhibit scavenger hunts and offered an opportunity for young people to play the game in a friendly environment.

With it being impossible to escape the Pokémon Go phenomenon, SeaWorld got in on the act, going out of its way to accommodate players pursuing Pokémon glory, hosting a lure event and becoming the first major destination in Orlando to do so.

During the event, pass holders were offered early access, giving them the ability to explore a significantly quieter SeaWorld while visiting the park's 50 Pokéstops.

"It's a very organic thing that's happened," says SeaWorld CEO Joel Manby. "We launched something over the weekend where we told our customers to come to our parks for a Pokémon Go experience. We had a really good weekend with it. We jumped on it, it's a great idea and it has a lot of potential."

### Should you stay or should you Go?

While Pokémon Go has some issues that need to be fine-tuned, it's certainly proving to be popular, capturing a nostalgic audience's attention, turning the much beloved game once confined to a Game Boy to something that can be played all over the world.

So is it a fad or is it the next big thing? Either way – taste and common sense permitting – attractions operators should be jumping on the popularity of the game, which is gaining more and more traction every day.

# 50

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Guests must join one of the clans to play the game

**Holovis develops augmented reality game for Cedar Point**

Cedar Point has added a games-led experience to its mobile app, designed and developed by Holovis.

The free interactive game, called The Battle for Cedar Point, involves guests scanning items and symbols inside the park to win points. Once an item has been scanned, augmented reality does the rest – giving the user an encounter

with a special character or an animated reward.

Guests must join one of five clans to play against one another on the day of their visit.

Players who ride Cedar Point’s Valravn dive coaster can unlock hidden points in the queue line and points can also be won by answering questions about the theme park.



The ProSlide custom complex opened in July in Kentucky

**ProSlide’s towering four-slide complex unveiled**

ProSlide has unveiled its latest installation, Spinning Out, a tower combining four of the company’s iconic slides.

The custom complex, which opened in July in Bowling Green, Kentucky, is centred around a 17-metre (55-foot) tower and boasts a throughput of up to 1,620 riders per hour.

The first is Cyclone Saucers, with three FlyingSAUCER

features tilted on a 15 per cent gradient for maximum dropping sensation.

The other slides are Tidal Wave, where riders surge up a wall and hang weightless before rocketing back down, Riptide which splits into two separate funnels, and Polynesian Plunge, which drops riders into a swirling bowl.



The deal applies to Universal’s theme park and CityWalk

**Universal signs deal for Christie projection systems**

Global visual technologies company Christie signed a contract with Universal Parks and Resorts to become its official projection systems provider in the US.

According to the partnership, Christie is now Universal’s preferred partner for the buying and installation of projection software and hardware, as well as tailor-made solutions for

upcoming attractions.

“Universal Parks and Resorts continues to push the limits of technology and innovation,” said Jeff Klaas, Christie’s vice president of sales, Americas. “Christie is honoured to have this long-term opportunity to bring its extensive technology and service resources to bear to support [Universal] venues.”



MediaMation has demoed its ReactiVR motion platform

**MediaMation injects teamwork and competition into VR**

Attractions technology company MediaMation has launched a virtual motion gaming platform, the ReactiVR, a machine that combines multiplayer interaction, player freedom and competition in one package.

The ReactiVR, demoed at IAAPA, is an ATV that’s been turned into a 3DOF motion-base. Player one drives the ATV

and player two shoots other vehicles. The pod dynamically reacts to the gameplay, so the physical experience is matched with the visual experience inside the HMD.

According to MediaMation vice president Daniel Jamele, integrating VR with motion technology is more likely to tempt people away from playing VR games at home.

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# AM2

The news & jobs magazine  
from Attractions Management

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## Head of HR

**About Us:** Set in 280 acres of glorious lakes and woodland, Drayton Manor Park boasts over 40 rides and attractions as well as an on-site 4-star hotel. A family run business, currently celebrating its 66th year, Drayton Manor Park prides itself on its hard working and dedicated employees that ensure that its 1.2 million visitors have a fun filled day out.

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■ **Cluster Facilities Manager**

Sea Life

Salary: Competitive

Job location: Orlando FL, United States

For more details on the above jobs visit [www.am2.jobs](http://www.am2.jobs)

# Zoological community must address 'false notion' around animal captivity

*Continued from front cover*  
SeaWorld CEO Joel Manby has said there is still work to be done – not just by SeaWorld, but by zoos and aquariums worldwide – in terms of public perception around animal captivity.

“We all have to do a better job, SeaWorld included,” said Manby, speaking to *AM2*.

“There is a false notion out there, and I think a very dangerous one, that all animals held under human care is always a bad thing. That is just not true. Rescue alone is a reason for our unbelievable zoological community to exist.

“SeaWorld is the largest rescue organisation in



SeaWorld's rescue operation saves thousands of animals a year

the US. Without our facilities, hundreds of dolphins, thousands of sea lions, manatees and birds, would die every year.

“I do believe society will begin to understand

that but this notion that captivity is a bad thing is seemingly popping its head up more than it used to and it needs to be addressed.”

*More: [http://lei.sr?a=k6y9w\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=k6y9w_A)*

# Young boy killed in tragic accident on world's tallest waterslide in Kansas

A boy has died after an accident on the world's tallest waterslide at Schlitterbahn waterpark in Kansas on 7 August.

The boy, identified as Caleb Thomas Schwab – son of state representative Scott Schwab and his wife Michele – died while riding the record-breaking Verrückt, which requires two-to-three riders to be strapped in a raft with a total weight between 400 and 500 pounds.

The waterpark has released no further details surrounding the circumstances of the boy's death, which is being investigated by Kansas state police. The waterpark has been closed for the investigation and



Caleb Thomas Schwab died while riding the waterslide

the ride has been closed indefinitely.

Schlitterbahn first opened the ride in July 2014, which is not only the world's tallest waterslide, but also the fastest.

The 168ft (51.2m) Verrückt's opening was delayed several times, with technical glitches costing around US\$1m (€902,000 £767,000) to fix.

*More: [http://lei.sr?a=W5D7X\\_A](http://lei.sr?a=W5D7X_A)*

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