Preface

Here we are – ENTER 2005, the 12th ENTER and back again in Innsbruck, where the first of these annual events was initiated. We may have returned to ENTER’s spiritual home but we have come a very long way to get here including en route some fabulous destinations; Edinburgh, Istanbul, Montreal, Barcelona, Helsinki, and most recently Cairo. The conference has also matured considerably along the way and is now rightly regarded as the premier event in ICT in Travel and Tourism with a body of research knowledge that is internationally recognised as second to none. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the conference is that while it has a unique research core, including the highly-regarded Ph.D. workshop which prefaces ENTER, the structure and emphasis of the overall conference have never stood still. Each new overall conference chair brings their own individual style into play and this year in Hannes Werthner we are privileged in having not only one of the founders of ENTER and IFITT but also one of the most highly respected and experienced researchers in our field.

The research track chair Frank Go, assisted by two outstanding co-chairs in Jamie Murphy and Francesco Ricci, has built an excellent research programme which not only incorporates the research papers of these proceedings, along with work-in-progress papers, but also engages directly with the industry. This year we further develop the structural changes of ENTER 2004 and organise our programme around a Research track and an eSolutions track, i.e., a track which offers the research work which is the scientific core of ICT in travel and tourism and one which demonstrates real research application and practical solutions for industry. Of course, the key objectives of the ENTER research track continue to be dissemination of research findings and strong interaction among researchers and practitioners.

The conference theme this year is “eBusiness is here – what is next?” but long-standing ENTER aficionados will know that we always interpret the theme in a liberal way to encourage excellent research from any source. This time, again, there are some truly thought-provoking pieces from across a very wide research spectrum; nevertheless, the theme has a strong emphasis. What is next? This future is being explored by researchers from all perspectives – we have papers examining the basic architectures and systems underlying how we provide tourism information and how the marketplace is responding. Trip advisory research is now moving from the speculative to the sophisticated reflecting the rapidly changing individual skill sets, motivations and goals of today’s tourist while an emerging collection of work is investigating the growing phenomenon of collaboration and community-building. Destination-oriented research will of course always be with us, however, we have moved from examining the central raison d’être of such systems to asking much more subtle questions about their form and purpose within a wider systems context. It is no surprise to see trust, privacy and confidentiality issues gaining ground as ‘hot topics’, and we have some interesting insights to offer here, however, there is an unexpected resurgence of interest in hotel and hospitality ICT. This latter may indicate a much
more widespread penetration of ICT into hospitality business in general and as with 
destinations research; the questions being asked are more complex and more 
sophisticated than first time around. Where early hotel research may have focused, 
e.g., on guest history implications, today’s researchers are examining all aspects of 
CRM and doing so in the context of maturing distribution strategies and fourth 
generation ICT use. Marketing research has always been a feature of ENTER and this 
year is no exception; there are three full marketing sections in the proceedings but this 
categorisation is, as always, subjective and a close examination of the 51 research 
papers in these pages will reveal the full extent of marketing-oriented research. A 
further examination would also show just how strong the link is between ICT devel-
opments per se and business adoption and use of the new technologies and systems.

Finally, a sign that research on ICT in travel and tourism is now moving beyond 
infancy and into adolescence is the increasing body of work looking more closely at 
what we can measure and how we do so in meaningful ways. Assessment approaches 
and evaluation techniques are beginning to emerge in all areas of our domain and in 
part this may help us sum up the ‘what next?’ – We can see technology developments, 
adoption of innovation, explorations of the marketplace and a quest to understand 
business models – but perhaps the next sea-change will be in the greater demand by 
all stakeholders for explicit metrics and benchmarks against which to measure perfor-
ance.

As always, these proceedings represent an end point in a process involving an 
impressive amount of selfless effort and sheer hard work from a great many research-
ers and reviewers – thank you for making it possible. One of the characteristic 
features of ENTER is the strength and depth of the review process which can stand 
comparison not only with any conference but with most refereed journals. This fact is 
entirely due to the diligence and industry of the review committee. An enormous 
amount of unseen time and effort is devoted to this process by a committed and highly 
professional review team, freely giving of their time in an effort to continue to raise 
the standard of our emerging field. It would be invidious to identify individual 
reviewers for their specific contributions, however, I would like to depart from 
traditional protocol and pay particular thanks to Peter O’Connor, ESSEC for not only 
taking his share of the reviews but for providing a constant stream of candid, insight-
ful and constructive observations on the overall process. Thanks are also due to my 
colleague Roberto Daniele for his patient comments on the draft structure. Of course, 
as always, a special thanks to Helene Forcher back at IFITT central for keeping us all 
on track!

I hope you enjoy reading these research papers as much as I have.

Andrew J Frew
Innsbruck, 2005
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Twelfth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies in Travel and Tourism, Innsbruck, Austria, January 26–28, 2005

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