



# **DARK TOURISM**

**Post-WWI Destinations of Human Tragedies  
and Opportunities for Tourism Development**

Proceedings of the International Workshop

Edited by Anton Gosar, Miha Koderman  
and Mariana Rodela





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KOPER, 2015

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Scientific Monograph

*Dark Tourism: Post-WWI Destinations of Human Tragedies and Opportunities for Tourism Development – Proceedings of the International Workshop*

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*Design and Typesetting* ■ Davorin Dukič

*Published by* ■ University of Primorska Press, Titov trg 4, SI-6000 Koper,  
Koper 2015

*Editor-in-Chief* ■ dr. Jonatan Vinkler

*Managing Editor* ■ Alen Ježovnik

ISBN 978-961-6963-28-2 ([www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-28-2.pdf](http://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-28-2.pdf))

ISBN 978-961-6963-29-9 ([www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-29-9/index.html](http://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-29-9/index.html))

ISBN 978-961-6963-30-5 (printed edition; not for sale)

*Print* ■ Grafika 3000, d. o. o.

*Print-run* ■ 200 copies

© 2015 University of Primorska Press



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA  
MINISTRSTVO ZA IZOBRAŽEVANJE,  
ZNANOST IN ŠPORT



*Naložba v vašo prihodnost*  
OPERACIJO DELNO FINANCIRA EVROPSKA UNIJA  
Evropski socialni sklad

UP IN SVET – Mednarodna vpetost Univerze na Primorskem: operacijo delno financira Evropska unija iz Evropskega socialnega sklada ter Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport. Operacija se izvaja v okviru Operativnega programa razvoja človeških virov za obdobje 2007-2013, razvojne prioritete 3: Razvoj človeških virov in vseživljenjskega učenja, prednostne usmeritve 3.3: Kakovost, konkurenčnost in odzivnost visokega šolstva.

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CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji  
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

338.48(082)(0.034.2)

DARK tourism [Elektronski vir] : post-WWI destinations of human tragedies and opportunities for tourism development : proceedings of the international workshop : scientific monograph / edited by Anton Gosar, Miha Koderman and Mariana Rodela. - El. knjiga. - Koper : University of Primorska, 2015

Način dostopa (URL): <http://www.hippocampus.si/isbn/978-961-6963-28-2.pdf>

Način dostopa (URL): <http://www.hippocampus.si/isbn/978-961-6963-29-9/index.html>

ISBN 978-961-6963-28-2 (pdf)

ISBN 978-961-6963-29-9 (html)

1. Gosar, Anton, 1945-

279001344

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# Marketing for Dark Tourism Purposes: The Case of WWI Remnants, Battlefields, and Memories on the Isonzo-Soča Front

Chiara Beccalli, Igor Jelen, and Moreno Zago

## The Standardization of War: Some Marketing Reflections

### *Basic Characteristics of War Remnants Marketing*

The marketing of WWI remnants tourism (WRT) has to consider many potential arguments that tourist operators may have to deal with: in addition to the primary target of marketing (i.e. the maximization of the economic and cultural use of such resources), they must face a set of cultural, emotional, and even ideological circumstances potentially affecting this job (Cohen et al., 2013; Miles, 2014; Korstanje, 2011). Therefore, the intrinsic elements synthesized in the so-called four »Ps« (product, promotion, price, place) cannot ignore the ethical aspects, such as the necessity of maintaining a respectful approach in order to preserve such arguments from triviality, from an even (possible) nationalist drift and from any speculation. It is not merely a matter of efficient market segmentation to plan a consistent and durable economic initiative, but also to avoid situations causing contempt of feelings and lack of respect for the various memories embedded in WWI. The »war remnants«, just like other niche tourism economies (religious, experience or cultural tourism) characterized by particular set of motivations, show a broad set of incompatibilities with other forms of tourism, especially with mass-seasonal tourism.

The standardization of WRT offers (in itineraries, museums and exhibitions, packages, promotion strategies, communication material, etc.) risks provoking a loss of solemnity and significance, making this object something artificial. Therefore, the marketing technique has to carry out a method of developing cultural activities that are to be significant, stimulating and desirable as a tourism service while simultaneously maintaining a clearly respectful approach that takes into consideration the fact that the »product« consists of monuments, cemeteries, battlefields, remnants and relics, solemn celebrations and ritual ceremonies.

For these reasons, in order to make the product a useful instrument for making not just culture, but also economically productive, it is necessary to elaborate a strategy to reconvert a potentially disruptive argument (the war remnants, with all their evocative potential) into something culturally and experientially interesting (but not pleasant); in fact, this is the main goal of the marketing method.

Such an operation is necessary, but not with the aim of purifying the WRT from unpleasant significances and nuances (which is, in principle, impossible and inappropriate). Rather, it is necessary in order to treat the specific content in an appropriate way, offering the possibility of a humanly interesting experience.

All this indicates the importance of a communication strategy in order to trace any possible meanings of such a concept, in order to make it usable for wider audiences. In this effort, it is necessary to apply all possible marketing devices, in order to create renewable formats: WRT is challenging because it implies strong non-economic significances that are ethical, individual and ideological values, etc.

Just like other difficult tasks, the »war product« is suitable for a decomposition of significance: an operation to make more interesting the difficult »tasks« and to discover always new elements to widen the visitor segments (in principle those not interested in this tourist target) and consequently for justifying the organization of economic efforts in this activity (e.g. investments and planning). All these concepts, even if included in a stratification model of motivation, have to be assembled and disassembled continuously (composed and de-composed), in order to discover always new elements of interest and new possible synergies.

### *The Normalization of the War*

Evidently, in order to make of this activity something usable for economic purposes, not merely for evocative-cultural rituals, the normalization of such elements in a standard tourist discourse (or package) is important, thereby also making it attractive for persons otherwise not interested in this argument (which is a niche segment, i.e. a specific interest target) (Gillen, 2014; Iles, 2008; Jelen, Weixlbaumer, 2011).

All such elements can be derived from the deconstruction process, from which the meanings can be converted and re-organized into further product variants that have to be classified in order to avoid incongruences and disturbing effects, to make the narrative (of words, images and contexts) fluid and coherent through the invention of term and the use of images to juxtapose, to connect and then interpret them. For marketing purposes, the matter is the same: mix the uniqueness of the »WWI product« and the exigencies/necessity of standardizing it. Without a process of standardization, it would be much more difficult to develop the economic potential (also useful are practical necessities, e.g. financing the cost of maintenance of monuments, museums and remnants of the WWI, etc.) and preserving the emotional/sacred significance of the product (risking the decline of authenticity).

A successful marketing offer will attain not merely a tempering of the unpleasant and undesirable effects of such experiences, but work to deconstruct the limited significance through appropriate narrative-devices; for example, the close-combat narration or the description of tragic daily life of the infantry soldier can become a portrayal of the complexity of human events, in which all the soldiers were actually heroes and victims of the same militaristic, autocratic and colonialist regime (even when, it should not be forgotten that the Austro-Hungarian Empire begun the war with a preventive attack on Serbia). Moreover, the description could also consider some particular effects in tactics and battlefield organization, such as the organization of trench lines, which was done in order to create the effect of a trap, to literally constrict the soldier to fight in order to save his own life. The elaboration of new meaning should not consider a shortcut, but instead elaborate a narrative suitable for anyone, and to predi-

pose the visitor to meditation and cultural deepening (instead of instinctive reaction). In this case, the discourse could reach some more abstract level, achieving a deeper impact on cultural satisfaction, more utility (value, effect) as well for marketing purposes.

Furthermore, nowadays it is impossible to define the social, national and political borders in univocal terms, and it is improper and grotesque to consider a neo-nationalist celebration for the centennial because the European geopolitical balances are completely different: many victorious regimes disappeared (immediately after the war or in the following decades), some are part of other political coalitions and, especially in Central Europe, some still have no political stability. Such discourses may be difficult to accept in political-ideological terms, but with regards to tourist marketing purposes, it represents a further argument of a discussion about a scenario that consists of a mix of heroes and cowards, people loyal or not to the central powers, most of which have disappeared.

The war is an element of the human (past) experience; therefore, it must be dealt with; for this reason, war remnant marketing could contribute to overcoming the fact that the category of »war« may lose concrete significance after a few generations.

To prevent possible ethnic misunderstanding or nationalistic drift, it is necessary to develop ideological tools in order to deal with the dramatic experience; therefore, the past could assume a new meaning: not the sums of errors favoured by imperialistic ideology but the past as a reservoir of human experiences, personal elements, and memories. These elements could become the guideline for an inter-fungible language capable of being used in any situation, with any interlocutor.

### *Concrete Realizations and Applications: Product and Place in WRT Marketing*

The intrinsic contradiction of dark tourism - represented by the paradox of conducting promotion for war remnants - could be overcome by both marketing and ideological narration, as well by concrete applications. This is the case with the exhibitions of museums, as well of variations of the itineraries, including memory tales, peace parks, etc., which must be configured to produce a cultural effect capable of stimulating the interest even for uninterested visitors. As suggested above, the activity relies on a continuing adaptation, which is in principle reconciled in a wider scale, namely on the level of the ethical values (e.g. the futility of the war, the vanity of the officials, the passivity of the soldiers) at which point an appropriate marketing methodology based on developing specific adaptive methods can begin and which consists of several practical devices: the interchangeability of the museum exhibition panels and posters, the arrangements of open air itineraries, the »critical« reconstruction of battlefields and war scenarios, with the aim of representing a multi-lateral approach.

In the Isonzo-Soča area, dark tourism marketing could plan a trans-border »corporate landscape design«. This specific landscape is already evident mainly on Italian side of the border (because there was such interest in constructing a monumental geographical iconography after a victorious war, mainly with propagandist intentions), but since a part of the eastern border currently lies in Slovenia and Croatia, it is actually possible to plan a common landscape. This is an occasion to develop a unique tourism (and political) asset. At present, the memorial landscape is composed of rows of cypress trees (along Highway 55, the so-called »Strada del Vallone«) evoking the image of a cemetery and the sacrifice of the soldiers; a sequence

of »remembrance parks« spread out in several cities, monuments for the Unknown Soldier and many others, sometimes neglected. Regardless, they continue to represent something, even when in a reversal context: not just symbols of a victorious and glorious war, but as symbols of peace such as peace parks or monuments dedicated to all the victims of all the wars, namely as symbols of historical tragedy.

When conducting contextual (area) planning, it is important to create a coherent disposition of the different elements, with the aim of preserving an aesthetic and ideological message, in order to underline some significance, and to immunize against others. In principle, the context may help to produce some sensation, some predisposition, in order to avoid the shocking approach to contact with battlefield or the narrative of cruelty etc., and simultaneously in order to avoid banalization and to give to such contents an adequate format. Such landscapes must be preserved in order to maintain the original characteristic, whose integrity and uniformity is *per se* an added value, suitable for being used for WWI tourism purposes. In this border area, such corporate design plan can moderate the sense of the dark as something of macabre, morbid or simply sad and depressing, but use the dark tourist services to realize a new motivation and a new consciousness.

WWI tourism marketing is merely a technique to optimize the use of resources and, in this case, cultural resources; the WWI marketing plan relates to memories and reproducing society: it is not just a common place, a fancy or a speculation, but a systemic-ideological necessity. Peace speeches and the knowledge of the experience of the war are necessary in order to prevent a »banalization drift«.

## Case Study: The WWI Museums on the Isonzo-Soča Front

### *Territory and Memory*

Territory and memory are the two elements to start with for the organization of an offer of Dark Tourism for WWI in the Isonzo-Soča area. The sociological literature stresses the importance of the territory as a space in which memories can be found and re-found in the present time (Miles, 2013; White, Frew, 2013; Jansen-Verbeke, Wende, 2013). Just as collective memories do not remain unaltered, but change over the present, so too do territories alter, transform, disappear into oblivion and then re-emerge following the current needs and wills of social groups. This concept relates to the studies of the sociologist of Alsace Halbwachs (1941) about the localization of the holy places in Palestine; he argues that collective memory should connect to something concrete, material, to an image and a place; it does not matter that this place is fitting to reality or that certain traditions have remained over time while others have fallen into oblivion, because this happens when the material goes along with the symbolic value and with the meaning that the group gives to the place. Fabietti and Matera (2000, 43–44) explain that the needs to represent Christianity have changed over the centuries, but the bond with places and concrete elements ensures the continuity over time: »Christian collective memory adapts to every age its recollection of details of Christ's life and of places linked to it [...] whichever age you study, the attention is not directed to the origin [...] but to the faithful and to their memorial work«.

The meaning of the recognized past for a group can, through the identification of a material medium, become its memory and durability as well as the chance to become the reference for other groups if the meanings attributed to events, places, and materiality are shared, be-

coming a bridging metaphor. The Jewish Genocide has become a universally shared grief only when the »evil« perpetrated by the Nazis has taken on a universally shared meaning, that is when survivors and fields have become reification of absolute evil (Alexander, 2002). The materiality of places – such as battlefields, war memorials, cemeteries, burial sites of military leaders, war museums, peace parks, battle, re-enactments and battlefield tours – are fundamental to the restoration of the memory because they oblige us to recall historical facts especially linked with death, suffering and sacrifice (Gough, 2008, 224). War, argues Smith, is a »stimulus to tourism through [...] nostalgia, memorabilia, honorifics and reunions. [...] The US entrepreneurial activities established a style of tourism that has dominated the industry for half a century, and will probably continue for several decades to come« (1998, 224). In accord with Stone and Sharpley's (2008, 508) conclusions: »Within a social structure, to address issues of personal meaningfulness—a key to reality, thus to life and sustaining social order, and ultimately to the maintenance and continuity of ontological security and overall well-being. It is with this latter point in mind that dark tourism may have more to do with life and living, rather than the dead and dying«.

As suggested before, the central core of a dark, or light dark, tourist services is to create an emotion and touch deeply the visitors/tourists without trivializing the events and the numerous memories (individual, familiar, collective) embedded in a specific place or in a specific environment of memory. In order to understand what visitors consider important and attractive in a light dark tourist place of memory, such as museums of WWI built on two important territories, we present the visitors' responses of the Provincial Museum of Gorizia – First World War Museum, and the Kobarid Museum. For the presentation of the case studies, we have selected a total of 100 »open questions« questionnaires administered to the visitors of museums, from which we have transcribed some excerpts. In addition, short interviews with those responsible for the museums (Alessandra Martina, Ph.D., and Prof. Zelco Cimpric) were conducted in order to deepen the communication objectives of both museums.

### *The Emotional Dark Elements in the Gorizia and Kobarid Museums*

Removed from conflicting elements and without witnesses, presentations of WWI memories have the possibility of resorting to numerous material elements and to new narrative techniques not only to present the events, but also to organize an experiential tourist service. The Gorizia Museum, located in the medieval hamlet, has been renewed since the beginning of the 1990s, and the rooms of the permanent collection run along a chronological path: from the European situation in 1914 to the signing of the Armistice, paying attention to the war and the local civil situation. The Kobarid Museum, opened in October 1990, is focused on the 12<sup>th</sup> Battle of the Isonzo-Soča, through thematic rooms concentrating on life in the frontlines, civil life during the war and the harshness of mountain war.

Regarding the narrative aspects, both facilities have strong points from which to start to organize a possible dark tourism marketing service; in fact, they are located in areas of primary importance for the Eastern frontline; they are the focal point of collective, individual and familiar memories; they relate by juxtaposing official documents, images, old newspapers, official statements and materials that reconstruct the history of border areas; they stimulate the visitors' emotional involvement: reconstruction of trench and of a military shelter in a mountain cave, dioramas, sounds, images of military and civil life, tombstones, epitaphs, etc.; they

show materials (videos, maps, topographic maps, etc.) that help visitors to contextualize historical events from 1914 to 1918.

Table 2: Main tools used in the museums of Kobarid and Gorizia.

Tools	Kobarid	Gorizia
Bloody images	X	
Captions (more languages)	X	X
Dairies, postcards, etc.	X	X
Didactic laboratory		
Dioramas		X
Environments (trenches, cave, etc.)	X	X
Evocative sounds of war		X
Gravestones, epitaphs	X	X
Guided tours, school visits	X	X
Images of civil life	X	X
Images of life in the trench	X	X
Old newspapers	X	X
Plastic models of battlefield	X	
Soldiers' handworks	X	X
Soldiers' letters	X	
Technological devices		
Videos (more languages)	X	
Weapons for close combat	X	X

The lack of technological devices leads to defining the facilities as *no tech engaging*, because they do not use touch screens, tablet computers, holographic projections or wireless devices that can recognize the visitor's location in space so as to provide information about the selected object in order to improve the visitor's experience. This weakness, which would require a structural reconsideration and innovation, is partially overcome by other tools used to reach the objectives that the directors of the two exhibitions defined: not only to disseminate historiographical notions, but also to enhance reflection on the presented themes, because the suggestions are developed from the protagonists: not only generals, commanders, heroes, uniforms and weapons, but also soldiers, civilians, dairies, letters, postcards and faces; these elements that have little or nothing to do with glory but much with violence and suffering. The visitors' responses suggest how the bloodiest elements and the devices that attempt to reproduce (even in watered-down form) the facts can maintain high interest and ensure visitors' emotional involvement.

»The Black Room (the room with bloody images): terrible but it shows what war really is. No uniforms and heroes, but terrible suffering.« (Kobarid: I, m, 48 y.o.)

»I was mainly affected the exhibits on weapons, pictures of the wounded pris-

oners and angry words against the generals (engraved on the door of the prison).« (Gorizia, I, f, 44 y.o.)

»Photos always fascinate me; it is like going back to a moment of the past and in feelings through the subjects' facial expressions. In this museum, the uniforms and the daily objects also impressed me.« (Gorizia, I, f, 25 y.o.)

»Photographs, weapons for close combat.« (Gorizia, A, m, 28 y.o.)

»Attention to the soldier's experiences, thanks to the many photographs depicting the living conditions.« (Kobarid, S, f, 34 y.o.)

These first responses show the emotion of some visitors and those that follow suggest that the feelings arise parallel to the humanization of the conflict. Sometimes, they are reactions of surprise in discovering ignored aspects such as the number of deaths, number of weapons, war costs, the number of bullets fired, and so on, and even the brutality perpetrated against the enemy, until they realize that the killers were not only the others (Audoin-Rouzeau, Becker, 2000).

»Sadness for the destructive war; the face images really touching.« (Kobarid, UK, m, 47 y.o.)

»The museum is very complete (reminds me of Auschwitz in some places), I think it's one of the best museums because you can empathize with the events.« (Kobarid, SLO, f, 43 y.o.)

»Confusion, astonishment, uneasiness, curiosity, empathy with people's lives that giving rise to compassion, pain, etc. the exposed material created in me strong interest, empathy, reflection on daily life in wartime. The emotional involvement is inevitable.« (Gorizia, SLO, f, 29 y.o.)

»Depressed as humans are so cruel to each other. The official ignorance of the very high number of killed and wounded soldiers.« (Gorizia, DK, m, 61 y.o.)

It is clear how the bloody aspects, disfigured faces and bodies and soldiers' terrified looks before an assault represent a strong attraction for the visitor; they are the core around which to develop a personal reflection that is often linked to family and local memories. There are people who return to the places where grandparents fought and whose stories they have impressed in their memory; others, such as the Hungarians, choose these places to learn more about the history of their nation, or those from overseas who return on holiday and discover their roots, the territories and the events that led their ancestors towards new territories.

The few sentences herein, although they do not value the possibility of communication of the two borderland museums, certainly call to refer to »light dark« elements as opportunities to build a tourism marketing proposal. Although the term »dark« can raise doubts, the visitors' words are explicit; thus, even the gravestones in the Kobarid Museum and Gorizia Museum have great significance. In the first case, the commemorative stones do not have inscriptions, but they are placed in front of the wall with the images of dead soldiers in Kobarid battle. In the second case, the gravestones are carved by soldiers' friends on the battlefield. War, death, and suffering are evocative moments for visitors, who need to be guided inside the dark; otherwise, the visit would merely be a macabre visit, and the tourist experience deprived of cultural value.

## Dark and Slow Tourism: An Experimental Approach to the WWI Offer

The paragraphs above highlight some aspects that will be explored here: customer focus, development of experiential tourism, use of new technologies. Above all, we will attempt to connect the WWI dark tourism to the approach developed with the cross-border project »Slow Tourism« for the implementation and promotion of slow tourism itineraries between Italy and Slovenia, for which slow tourism is an approach to the supply and the use of tourism products that require planning aimed at improving the quality, enhancing the specificity of places, preferring non-frenetic rhythms and involving a multi-sensory experience (Zago, 2013).

### *The Slowness and the Experiential Dimension*

The sociologist Bauman (2009) highlights that in liquid modernity, in which the central role of work has been replaced by consumption actions, everything is entrusted to temporary experience. We live in a society that has lost the sense of time, and that has emptied the criteria by which it is possible to distinguish the enduring from the ephemeral, the essential from the superfluous. Bauman echoes the words of Kundera (1996), who writes in his novel *Slowness*, that there is a secret bond between slowness and memory, between speed and forgetting. If the degree of speed is directly proportional to oblivion, we can only slow down and take a slow approach or »the way that provides solutions that help achieving a high degree of quality to whom that is willing to commit the necessary time and attention to put at stake their personal capacities« (Mancini, Jegou, 2003, 165).

Slow tourism must arise, first of all, from the desire to become involved. The journey is not just the final landing, but it is the verification of many experiences and sensations. The contemporary tourist is a multisensory tourist in search of playful, liminal, experiential component and of sense gratification (Costa, 2005). As shown by Bruno (2006), places become generators of moods, feelings, emotions that come along, going through known roads or unusual places, but of which we perceive the soul. All of this is emotional geography. A visitor needs to share both the natural landscape and the urban sites as »soul atmospheres«. In the era of being everywhere, but feeling disoriented, sensory experiences, touch, smell, taste, inner reverb are the anchors that help to perceive the space that you live. Through the discovery, which occurs through movement and travel, inner landscapes, landscapes of the soul, or inner maps are generated, which are to remain in the atlas of our memory. The memory is linked, in fact, to the space and no more to the time. The memory, like the history, becomes a question of geography, in which reality is redrawn by suggestions.

In other words, the slow tourist is a special traveller who prefers quality over quantity, likes new things, discovers simple relationships, looks for authentic elements, situations and objects rich in symbolic value, wants to learn, looks for cultural excitement, while not objecting to calmness and fun (but not banality). In this sense, the slow tourism operators are not merely providers of services, but also of emotions. They know, deepen and emphasize the themes of history/literature and of local culture/tradition/environment, and they have an educational and didactic aim toward their guests: they encourage their active involvement through learning and (re)discovering of local reality. Therefore, the experiential dimension is central to a modern tourism service (Smith, 2006). It uses enthusiastic and competent guides; it plans



stops where tourists are invited to a multisensory moment that requires time and peace; it avoids crowd-pulling situations, but instead suggests an original reading/visit that is distinct from the traditional one; it selects and develops the many components of the supply following the structure and the principles of the storyline and coherently with the chosen theme. Enthusiasm and play are important elements for the learning (*edutainment*) and the creation of unforgettable moments.

### *The ICT for the WWI Experiential Tourism*

In the museum approach, the use of technologies in order to attract visitors has always been important. In 1675, the philosopher Leibniz already believed that museums should combine scientific interest and educational exhibitions with sensational entertainment (in Cremers, 2002, 21). As previously highlighted, there is a lack of modern technologies with regard to the usability of Gorizia and Kobarid WWI museums, but the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) on contemporary tourism is profound. Temporal rhythms of perception of the market by tourists have changed: there are new rhythms for holiday organization and (regarding the supply and demand of tourism prices), new time spans for travelling, new time dimensions that tourists directly discover in the places they visit.

The diffusion of Web 2.0, of applications for smartphones, of sites for mobiles and of social networks have segmented the available information for tourists: the demand and supply of products have found new definitions following interests of old and new niches of consumers. Flexibility has become a dogma: tourist information should be easily available, transparent and verifiable. Tourist marketing has, as a consequence, moved from the traditional 4P (product, price, promotion, point of selling) to the current 6P approach (personal customization, peer to peer, participation, prediction, process and performance). However, following the results of the Slow Tourism approach, there is not just one type of techno-slow tourist. It is possible to distinguish four types categorized on two dimensions: their attitude towards technology (*pro* or *contra*) and their use of technology (*low* or *high*) (Spizzo, 2011).

*Moderate pro-technological* (pro attitude-low use): the tourist included in this type is committed to a technological world. He prefers to live in a human-controlled world or on territories that are in some way urbanized and that satisfy his psychological needs of security. The slowness he loves is defined by the devices he uses to gather information about his route or during his stay.

*Extreme pro-technological* (pro attitude-high use): the tourist of this type lives from and for technology. ICT technologies should allow him to enjoy different tourist spaces: a mountain trip, an adventure park or the visit of a museum. This is the most demanding tourist who looks positively at the most innovative ICT products.

*Extreme anti-technological* (*contra* attitude-anti use): this type of tourist refuses technology almost *in toto*, at philosophical and also at concrete levels. He has a very limited demand for technology and, as a consequence, ICT is not relevant for him.

*Moderate anti-technological* (*contra* attitude-high use): in this case we can also observe a refusal of technology and a profound exaltation and defence of nature. However, at the same time, there is the approval of an instrumental use of technology in order to reach common goals.

Then, in the techno slow sector, a rather diverse tourist demand of products clearly emerges. This demand requires the development of offer channels that can satisfy a deeply diffe-

rentiated request of time-sensitive information. These technologies require a typical 6P marketing approach. First, personal customization is required: the techno slow product must be constructed for the specific needs of the final consumer, by using his communication codes, by offering emotions, pathos and rich experiences that respond to technology and nature needs. Second, a peer-to-peer approach must be adopted, i.e. one that is able to enter the communication networks of persons that have a common identity: an identity that can be used to build up a strong feeling of community. The third crucial aspect is the participation of the tourist who (according to a traditional consumer status) should become an effective *prosumer* of products, i.e. a role in which he actively promotes product through social networks, websites, word of mouth, etc. Fourth, a strong prediction capacity is also required, in order to anticipate new trends in the market through active listening practices. The fifth point insists on the fact that new processes of product invention should be activated in order to always keep in contact with the techno slow tourist. Finally, performance is also important: a constant monitoring of produced results should always be done at the end of a specific marketing action.

The following are some European examples of use of technology in the different phases of promotion and visit of a museum of the First World War. With a remarkable collection unparalleled anywhere in Europe, the Museum of the Great War in Pays de Meaux (France) offers a new vision of the conflict, through innovative scenography illustrating the great changes and upheavals in society that resulted from it. The museum seeks to encourage visitors to question their preconceptions, and its scenography is designed make them do so; for example, they are plunged into the midst of armies marching off to war in the summer of 1914. The immersive scenography uses the most innovative technologies, bringing all five senses into play: objects to touch and handle, and olfactory and sound ambiances await visitors throughout the itinerary ([www.museedelagrandeguerre.eu](http://www.museedelagrandeguerre.eu)).

The Imperial War Museums of London explores how the history of modern conflict affects all people, from the frontline to the home front. Exhibits range from objects of war to photographs and personal letters. Visitors will see a realistic representation of what life was at the front and experience the sights and sounds of a recreated trench, with the Sopwith Camel fighter plane and Mark V tank looming above them. Projected silhouettes of soldiers and a soundscape evoke the drudgery, discomfort, danger and comradeship which characterized the experience of a »British Tommy« on the Western Front, from a sudden thunderstorm to a gas attack ([www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)).

Fifteen meters below ground, the Cave of Dragon (Chemin des Dames, France) gives visitors an inside look at the hellish daily lives of World War I soldiers on the front. With its amazing and powerful scenography, it uses modern animation techniques, objects, sound and image archive material and video footage to recount a bit of history from different angles, be it geographical, social or military ([www.caverne-du-dragon.com](http://www.caverne-du-dragon.com)).

The In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres (Belgium) presents the story of WWI in the West Flanders front region. The focus of the scenography is the human experience, and it emphasizes the personal stories. Lifelike characters and interactive installations confront the contemporary visitor with his/her peers in the war. Every visitor receives a personal poppy bracelet on arrival. The microchip in the bracelet enables the visitor to discover four personal stories. The museum has a high reputation to uphold for multimedia presentation methods (touch screens, interactive poppy bracelet, video projection, soundscapes, etc.) which contributes

to an intense experience and an authentic submersion into life on the front (*www.inflanders-fields.be*).

Located on the exact site of the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and the Battle of Picardy in 1918, the Historical of the Great War Museum of Péronne (France) offers an international view of a conflict. The presentation of the collection, more orientated towards social than military history, is centered on the individual's experience. It encourages constant comparisons among the different belligerent countries while making a clear distinction between life on the front and on the home front (*en.historial.org*).

In conclusion, as underlined above, the aspect of experience is a crucial point in the offer of post-modern tourism. In terms of marketing, the slow tourism approach applied to the dark tourism of conflict sites category (Stone, 2006) shows rather than describes and, in particular with reference to the ICT, encourages visitors to actively participate in the experience in consideration of the fact that in the tourism experience, today, *what you remember* is most important than *what you buy*.