

IFITTtalk

Department of Economics, University of Colombo wins Best IFITTtalk 2015

The International Federation for Information Technology and Travel & Tourism (IFITT) actively supports deal with topics related to Information and Communication Technologies in the travel, tourism, leisure, hospitality and events context.

Within this topical context the main objectives of the IFITTtalk workshops is to spark conversations, introduce new approaches, stay informed, find strategic partners and network, transfer knowledge between academia and the industry, or position an organization/ community/ group/ person.

In October 2016, Department Economics at University of Colombo hosted IFITTtalks@Colombo on the theme of "Modern ICT for interactive Tourism Learning and Education". IFITTtalks@Colombo won the best IFITTtalk 2015 award during the enter2016 conference held in Bilbao, Spain on 6th February 2016.

'Modern ICT for interactive IFITTtalk @ Colombo Tourism Learning and Education'

October 15, 2015

In parallel to the IFITTtalk@Colombo, a workshop on MOOCs was conducted by IFITT representative Prof. Jamie Murphy, at Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort, in the southern region of Sri Lanka on the 15th of October. Perhaps this is the world's first MOOC workshop which is conducted at a Hotel. The hotel staff was delighted to gain new knowledge on MOOCs and the role MOOCs can play education and training for hotel staff was identified. Ms. Paloma Scott, Director of the Calamander Unawatuna Beach Hotel, Mr. Udana Wickremasinghe, Director of ICT for Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority were also present.

October 16, 2015

After completing a successful workshop at Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort, Prof. Jamie Murphy, IFITT representative arrived at Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo and received a warm welcome by the Hotel staff. Prof. Jamie was humbled to accept the special request made by Mr. Udana Wickremasinghe, to conduct another workshop for Sri Lanka Tourism officials on the same day. Commencing the presentation, Prof. Murphy highlighted that Sri Lanka Tourism is the 1st NTO to have such workshop. The workshop was attended by about 30 officials including senior executives who are responsible for driving tourism in Sri Lanka.

October 18, 2015

The IFITTtalk@Colombo, under the theme of "Modern ICT interactive Tourism Learning and Education" was held on 18th October at the main library auditorium of the University of Colombo (UOC). The seminar is organized conjointly by the IFITT and students who are following the Postgraduate diploma and master's degree in Tourism Economics and Hotel management of the Department of Economics at the University of Colombo. This is the 2nd edition of IFITTtalk series which held at different locations in the world. More than 150 participants who are interested in tourism from various divisions of hospitality & travel sector were present.



The IFITTtalk@Colombo was conducted with the view of giving more insights to the people who are employed and engaged in travel and hospitality industry. Impact of the ICT on tourism industry, application of ICT in interactive tourism education,

information on world's reputed MOOCs in the related field, and current E-Tourism application for the promotion and development of the tourism field was discussed at the seminar.

The event was carried out in two main sessions, focusing on ICT enabled interactive tourism learning & Role of ICT focusing on academic research & industry applications. In the first half, after the welcome speech by Dr. D.A.C Suranga Silva, chief guest for the event Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Mr. Paddy Vithana addressed the gathering. During his speech, he emphasized the importance of ICT in tourism learning to produce quality tourism products and services. Prof. Jamie Murphy, the Director of research at the Australian School of Management and Board member of IFITT delivered the keynote speech on "Learning, Working, Collaborating; Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for Hospitality Professionals." During the afternoon session



Dr. Rohantha Athukorala, Former Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau and Commissioner General of EXPO 2015 spoke on "Role of ICT for Tourism Promotion" and Mr. Ruwindhu Peris, Managing Director of STAX Inc. delivered his speech on "ICT and Business Intelligence". Following the industry speakers, two students from the Masters in Tourism Economics and Hotel Management program of Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Mr. Dileepa Siriwardene spoke on "Social media Marketing in Promoting Hotel Industry in Sri Lanka", and Mr. Sisitha Weerasekare on "Impact of E-tourism on Travel Agency Operations in Sri Lanka". The event was concluded after a networking & evening snacks & refreshment break.

Representing Prof. Lakshman Dissanayake, Vice Chancellor of the UOC, Prof. Chandrasiri, dean of the graduate studies, and Paddy Vithana, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Dr. Rohantha Athukorala, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Authority were present at the event.