

The fourth industrial revolution: what are the realities for maritime and tourism dependent countries?

The prevailing view of those who study trends in technology is that a fourth industrial revolution (4IR) is occurring and that on-going digitalization will affect societies in new and often unanticipated ways. In the introduction to its World Tourism Day (27 September 2019), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) observed that tourism was one of the first sectors to digitalize business processes on a global scale by bringing flight and hotel bookings together online. They argue that further innovation is needed to underpin competitiveness, growth and sustainable development, and an important aspect of this is the interface between tourism and travel.

In this issue, Ibrahim Ajagunna, Fritz Pinnock, Evette Smith Johnson and their team of contributors explore current and likely impacts of 4IR on maritime and tourism-dependent countries. I should like to thank them for a thought-provoking review, particularly in relation to on-going development in Caribbean nations.

Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (WHATT) aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development, and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a *WHATT* theme editor, do please contact me via the Emerald website.

Richard Teare
Managing Editor, WHATT

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The third industrial revolution – sometimes called the digital revolution – involved the development of computers and information technology. A 4IR is emerging from the third but is considered a new era rather than a continuation because of the explosiveness of its development and the disruptiveness of its technologies. According to Klaus Schwab, the Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum and the Author of *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, this new era is differentiated by the speed of technological breakthroughs, the pervasiveness of scope and the tremendous impact of new systems. What is precipitating the great economic transformation is the unanticipated rise of the near-zero marginal cost phenomenon, brought on by the digitization of everything. Today, companies seek to exploit new technologies to increase productivity and reduce the marginal cost of producing and distributing goods and services, so they can lower prices, win greater customer shares and secure profits for investors. To grasp the enormity of the economic changes taking place, both tourism and maritime need to understand the technological forces that have given rise to new economic systems. Tourism and maritime as economic activities require elements of communication and transportation to interact with the other elements in the supply chain so as to create a productive and profitable system and to move economic activities across the value chain.

Given the advances in technology, robotics, the Internet of Things and on-going investment in tourism, maritime and logistics infrastructures, there is increased recognition in academia, government and industry that a higher level of synergy in maritime and tourism services is required. In particular, advances are needed in maritime, logistics and



tourism development in the Caribbean, and so, this theme issue creates a platform for the exchange of ideas, opinions and research with industry stakeholders. The aim is to focus on the key issues relating to the impact of the 4IR on the maritime and tourism industries and the related implications for maritime and tourism education.

Ibrahim Ajagunna, Fritz Pinnock and Evette Smith Johnson
Theme Editors

About the Theme Editors

Ibrahim Ajagunna is a Professor and a Deputy President of the Caribbean Maritime University, and he holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Sustainable Development from the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. He also holds a Master of Science Degree from Sheffield Hallam University, UK, among other qualifications. In July 2017, Ibrahim was conferred with an honorary professorship by the Europe Academic Union, Oxford, UK, and in October 2017, he became a Professor at the Caribbean Maritime University. He was presented with the Prime Minister's Medal of Appreciation for Service to Education in June 2019. Ibrahim is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, UK (FCILT). He is also a member of the Caribbean Tourism Educators Alliance (MCTEA) and a member of the Institute of Hospitality, UK. Ibrahim has written a number of book chapters and has co-authored academic books. He has published over 50 articles in peer-reviewed journals and magazines and is a reviewer for two journals. He is also managing editor of the *International Journal of Maritime Themes (IJMT)*. In 2018, Ibrahim received an Emerald Literati Award for his contributions to scholarly research.

Fritz Pinnock is a Professor and a President of the Caribbean Maritime University and holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Sustainable Cruise Tourism from the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. He also has an MSc in International Shipping and Logistics from the University of Plymouth, UK, and a BSc (Hons) in Economics and Accounting (management studies) from the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics Transport, UK (FCILT), a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute, UK (FCMI), a member of British Institute of Management (MBIM) and a member of the Institute of Logistics and Distribution Management (MILDM). He has published in academic peer-reviewed and industry journals and magazines worldwide and in multiple languages, including French, German and Spanish. He is also a contributing writer and columnist (*the Human Factor*) for the *Caribbean Maritime* and *Portside* magazines – the leading shipping magazines published by the Caribbean Shipping Association. Professor Pinnock is a Justice of the Peace for Kingston and an adviser to various charities.

Evette Smith Johnson is a Dean of the Faculty of General Studies at the Caribbean Maritime University and holds a diploma in the teaching of English from Shortwood Teachers' College, Jamaica. She also has a bachelor's degree in School Counseling and a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Florida International University. She is currently a PhD candidate with an education major at Northern Caribbean University. Evette has specialized in teaching boys, which she did for almost a decade at Jamaica College, where she served as a Senior Teacher and a Head of English. She has spent the past decade in Maritime Education and Training (MET). Her research interests include engaging boys in the language arts, the evolution of the MET curricula, curriculum evaluation, quality assurance in higher education and the impact of market needs on specialized HE curricula. A Manchester High School alumna, she embraces the challenge of the school's motto: "Sic luceat lux" – let your light shine.