

The Silver Economy on the Move:

Co-Creating Human-Centred Tourism Experiences towards Smart Ageing

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Track Overview

As we look toward Tourism in 2040, one of the most significant demographic shifts will be the continued rise of the “silver economy.” The ageing population is not a monolithic group of passive consumers but a diverse, active, and technologically adept cohort redefining the very meaning of leisure, travel, and later life. The intersection of active ageing and technological advancement will redefine what it means to travel in later life.

This track invites scholars and practitioners to move beyond traditional narratives of accessibility and care, and instead explore how the co-creation of value between older travellers, technology developers, tourism providers, and host communities can foster genuine human-centred experiences. We are interested in the concept of “smart ageing” within tourism contexts: a vision where technology empowers older adults to maintain autonomy, pursue lifelong learning, foster social connections, and contribute meaningfully to the places they visit.

This track seeks to challenge ageist stereotypes by positioning the active older traveller as a co-creator, an innovator, and an essential participant in building the smart and regenerative tourism ecosystems of tomorrow. We welcome critical, conceptual, and empirical contributions that place the lived experiences and aspirations of older adults at the heart of tourism’s technological evolution.

Expanded Themes and Topics

1: Co-creating Meaningful Experiences through Technology

This theme explores the role of technology not just as a tool, but as a medium for creating profound, personalised, and memorable tourism experiences for older adults. How can technology move beyond simply assisting to truly enriching?

- Personalisation and AI in silver tourism
- Co-design methodologies with older adults
- Virtual reality for pre-travel familiarisation
- Augmented reality for on-site enrichment
- Intergenerational co-creation platforms
- Digital storytelling and memory preservation
- Gamification for active engagement
- Smart audio guides and adaptive content
- User-generated content and peer recommendations
- Balancing automation with human touch

2: Fostering Independence, Safety, and Well-being

This theme focuses on the technologies that empower older adults to travel with confidence and peace of mind, transforming potential vulnerabilities into managed comforts.

- Wearable health monitors for travellers
- GPS tracking and autonomous navigation
- Smart hotel rooms and ambient assistance
- Telemedicine and remote health support
- Real-time accessibility information systems
- Emergency alert and response technologies
- IoT-enabled luggage and personal items
- Medication management across time zones
- Voice-activated assistants in tourism contexts
- Discreet safety designs for solo travellers

3: Digital Literacies, Inclusion, and the Digital Divide

A human-centred future cannot ignore the disparities in technological access and ability. This theme critically examines the barriers and enablers to technology adoption among older travellers.

- Digital skills training for older travellers
- Barriers to technology adoption
- Socio-economic dimensions of the digital divide
- Ageism in tourism technology design
- Peer learning and social support networks
- Trust and credibility in online information
- Accessibility features in mainstream platforms
- Urban-rural disparities in digital access
- Post-pandemic digital behaviour shifts
- Co-designing for low-digital-literacy users

4: Active Ageing, Lifelong Learning, and Regenerative Travel

This theme connects the active ageing agenda with the conference’s broader focus on regenerative futures. It explores how older travellers can be agents of positive change.

- Silver voluntourism and skill-sharing
- Educational travel and lifelong learning
- Slow travel and well-being outcomes
- Intergenerational tourism experiences
- Citizen science engagement for seniors
- Sustainable consumption behaviours
- Encore careers and work-integrated travel
- Cultural heritage preservation through storytelling
- Measuring regenerative impacts of older travellers
- Wellness tourism for healthy longevity