

Editorial: Tourism futures researchers of inspiration

Ian Seymour Yeoman

Ian Seymour Yeoman is based at the Hotel Management School, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands and School of Management, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

I have been a tourism futures researcher for the last 25 years, starting as the Scenario Planner at VisitScotland (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2005) and now as a Professor of Disruption, Innovation and New Phenomena at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences. So in this issue, we celebrate some of the writers who have inspired that journey, those that helped me and those that have developed into tourism futures writers through their publications in the *Journal of Tourism Futures*.

Dr. Daniel Wright, University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom

Dr. Daniel Wright is an emerging academic at the University of Central Lancashire, as part of a tourism team with a growing reputation for researching dark tourism, dystopian futures and destination management. Daniel's work came to my attention when reading the article, "Hunting humans: A future for tourism in 2200" (Wright, 2016) as one those researchers that pursues a creative agenda using science fiction. Daniel's approach to research was one of the inspirations for the book I have enjoyed writing and edited the most – "Science Fiction, Disruption and Tourism" (Yeoman *et al.*, 2021). Daniel is an exceptional academic who is willing to push out the boundaries and understandings of tourism and its future by delving into the unknowns, unfeasibles and uncertainties that many of us are skeptical in doing, as this approach to research is perceived as not mainstream research (Alexander, 2009). COVID-19 (Yeoman *et al.*, 2022) has taught us we need to think better and beyond the norms of rationality, take a more creative perspective, be multidisciplinary and draw inspiration from social sciences and the arts in how we position tourism research. Daniel is not a positivist and does not write about topics in which we already know the answer (this seems to be a trend in many academic fields). He is willing to take a risk and say things we often do not hear. The *Journal of Tourism Futures* is proud of his contributions to the field of tourism research. In this issue, we highlight a number of papers recently accepted for publication.

"The Future Past of Travel" (Wright, 2023) highlights how society is never far away from presenting visuals and ideas of humanity living on the edge of existence. In the near future, *Homo sapiens* could be faced with an increasingly uninhabitable planet. The paper emphasizes the importance of adventure tourism and its associated activities as a means of supporting individuals to develop more outdoor survival skills. Imagine living forever? Wright and Zascerinska (2023) explore the relationship between immortality and the wellness and medical tourism industry to seek potential relationships between them and ultimately, they ask difficult questions about the growth of these tourism sectors and the potential need for greater regulation of them. Film tourism has always been an important means to portray the future (Chakravorty, 2020; Fergnani and Song, 2020; Reichenberger, 2021; Sangkyun and Stijn, 2018; Toivonen, 2021; Yeoman *et al.*, 2021).

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[Wright et al. \(2023\)](#) in the paper the “The Twilight Effect” looks at the visitor economy of Forks which now clearly relies upon a niche form of tourism – as fans of The Twilight Saga are drawn to the setting and filming locations of the films. The purpose of this study is to consider the process of diversification and subsequently present recommendations that could inform a future diversification strategy for Forks, in preparation for a post-film tourism scenario.

Professor Stanislav Ivanov, Varna University of Management, Bulgaria

Dr. Stanislav Ivanov is a professor of tourism economics and vice-rector (research) at Varna University of Management and Director of Zangador Research Institute. He has been the champion of robots and technology ever since I have been involved in tourism futures.

His passion for the topic is beyond approach. A global expert who has been driven to bring the concepts of technological singularity ([Callaghan et al., 2017](#)) into tourism research. To the extent, he is the founding editor of ROBONOMICS: The *Journal of the Automated Economy* [1]. He even coined the saying “in robonomics we trust” which can be found on his webpage [2]. He is also a nice guy, a mentor to young researchers and a champion of tourism futures. He is a forefront of tourism education and thrives to make it relevant for students connecting teaching, research and industry. We highlight a number of papers by Professor Ivanov in this issue.

The paper “Game of Algorithms”, [Ivanov and Soliman \(2023\)](#) explores the rise of the artificial intelligence agent “ChatGTB” and how it is going to disrupt tourism education and research because it can do what students and researchers should do, namely, generate text (assignments and research papers). Ivanov and Soliman discuss the disruptive effect through a range of scenarios to make sense of this new phenomenon. Every futurist has to find a connection to science fiction ([Yeoman et al., 2021](#)) and Stanislav does through Star Wars. In his viewpoint paper “What can we learn from Star Wars about the future of tourism? Absolutely everything!” ([Ivanov, 2023](#)), Stanislav compares Stars Wars with [Yeoman’s \(2022a, b\)](#) editorial about Sunderland AFC making a series of metaphorical claims about the future of tourism. [Ivanov and Webster \(2023\)](#) in “Restaurants and Robots” raise the concerns that in the hospitality industry in many developed countries labor shortages are more than likely to bring about further automation in food and beverage operations. The research investigates the public’s perceptions of the use of robots in food and beverage operations to learn about how the public perceives automation in food and beverage. These concepts are further investigated in a research paper as a contributing author “The digital skills divide” ([Carlisle et al., 2023](#)) which reports on the findings from a European study on the digital skills gaps in tourism and hospitality companies.

Dr. Stefan Hartman, European Tourism Futures Institute, Netherlands

Dr. Stefan Hartman holds the position of head of department of the European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI) at NHL Stenden University, Leeuwarden, Netherlands. A post he has held since 2017. Stefan was a PhD student when I first met him in 2010 at the University of Groningen studying spatial planning. Findings from his PhD include [Hartman et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Hartman \(2021\)](#). As Programme Manager at EFTI, Stefan has formed a partnership with Professor Albert Postman with a roadmap to make ETFI Europe’s leading tourism think tank. ETFI has had notable success with research projects with impact for the European Parliament, World Travel and Tourism Council, UN World Tourism Organisation, OECD and the European Union. In addition to delivering scenario planning projects in the Netherlands, Stefan is a young researcher who in the future will be a professor of tourism futures and foresight. He is calm, respected by his colleagues, a mentor, has an eye for detail and the ability to deliver projects on time. In this issue of the *Journal of Tourism Futures* we highlight a number of his publications. [Hartman’s \(2023\)](#) paper “Destination Governance in Times of Change” brings together the literature on theories of complexity adaptive systems (CAS), develops an analytical framework, applies this framework to the development of tourism destinations and critically reflects on the use of this perspective. In his second paper, [Hartman and Heslinga \(2023\)](#) explore [Raworth’s \(2017\)](#) Doughnut Economy perspective and

accompanying “Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist” which can be applied to rethink the future of tourism destination management for the better.

Professor Brian Hay, Heriot-Watt University, United Kingdom

Professor Brian Hay was my mentor at VisitScotland. It was Brian who had the foresight to hire me as the tourism industry’s first scenario planner in 2002. Brian gave me the freedom to develop a process of scenario planning based upon economic modeling, trend analysis and scenario construction. At the same time, he gave me space to finish my PhD. He also encouraged me to publish and speak about the future of tourism at international conferences, ensured industry was aware of my research and worked with VisitScotland’s communications team to create publicity about my research. Brian was a champion of people, focusing on getting the best out of them through a coaching style of leadership. For all of this, I am eternally grateful to Brian. Brian is now an Honorary Professor at Heriot-Watt University and also works as freelance consultant. He was Head of Research at VisitScotland for 20 years. He has a bachelor’s degree in town planning from Heriot-Watt University and a PhD from Texas A&M University. In this issue, we highlight Brian’s most recent publication (Hay, 2023) which reflects on Burkart and Medlik’s (1974) book “Tourism: Past, Present, and Future”. Brian explores the future visions outlined in one of the first academic books on UK tourism to venture into tourism futures. Through today’s lens, their visions are explored through three topics: future markets and destinations; future resources; and the future organization of tourism.

Most importantly: the regenerative tourism thinkers

Without doubt, the most critical future of tourism is linked to climate change. For some reason, the future thinkers that have dominated, contributed and championed this debate are female. Vol 8.3 of the *Journal of Tourism Futures* (Ateljevic and Sheldon, 2022) was devoted to this topic. Papers by Dredge (2022), Sheldon (2021) (Cave et al., 2022), Bellato et al. (2022) Mathisen et al. (2022), Tomassini and Cavagnaro (2022), Boluk and Panse (2022), Nitsch and Vogels (2022), Morón-Corujeira and Fusté-Forné (2022) are cutting edge, accessible, have impact and demonstrate leadership. These female authors represented 11 of the 14 papers in the special issue. In June 2022, I spoke at Future Tense (Yeoman, 2022b) and one of the scenarios about the future of tourism in Croatia was regenerative tourism. A number of names sprung to mind when I was writing this scenario. They included, Professor Susanne Becken (Becken and Loehr, 2022) who has championed sustainable tourism throughout her career. Susanne is the UNWTO Ulysses prize winner in 2019, the highest accolade in tourism research. Anne Pollock coined the term the “conscious travel” (Pollock, 2012) before regenerative tourism became mainstream. Anne is a renowned champion of regenerative tourism and has had the foresight to challenge our present thinking about tourism in order to take a new pathway. Emeritus Professor Pauline Sheldon (Sheldon, 2021) has been at the center of creating a new future for Hawaiian tourism not based on the model of resorts but its community, indigenous population, land ownership and creating the right balance between economics, sustainability, community and tourism.

On a final note(s)

On a final note, I could not forget to mention Dr. Jeroen Oskam (Yeoman, 2017), now of the Hague Hotel School whose drive and leadership made ETFI and my colleague, Professor Albert Postma who has simply flourished.

Notes

1. <https://journal.robonomics.science/index.php/rj>
2. <http://stanislavivanov.com/>

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