

## Mobile technology, (dis)connection and the tourist experience

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Mobile technology is playing an increasing role in the tourist experience and a growing body of tourism research focuses on this area. There is often an implicit assumption that tourists embrace mobile connectivity and much research analyses the opportunities this brings and the strategies to leverage benefits. Relatively little research has explored the tourist experience of disconnection. This can be purposeful or imposed by technological limitations. Research shows the tourist is not 'always connected' and there is ambiguity about some forms of digital connectivity. Drawing on empirical data from several studies and contemporary literature from the tourism, leisure and geography fields I raise questions about established tourism concepts such as 'escape'. Mobile technology has led to new social practices which have to be carefully negotiated by users. New perspectives are emerging of the tourist experience, the connection to home and the friction encountered in corporeal and virtual travel. This will be discussed in the context of mobile technology solutions in tourism and leisure.



*Janet Dickinson is a Professor of Tourism within the Faculty of Management, Bournemouth University where her research focuses on transport, mobile technology and collaborative communities, underpinned by a sustained interest in the social experience of time. Her research has analysed the concept of slow travel and, more recently, analysed mobile enabled collaborative communities. She is currently exploring how digital technologies may transform reciprocal practices to bring about more sustainable travel, health and well-being benefits for a variety of communities. Her teaching spans the Tourism, Leisure and Event Management undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.*