A TRAVEL GUIDE MODEL FOR
SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY ON A
SECTION OF A9 ROAD

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is identified as an important thrust area of the Sri Lankan economy. The country is blessed with abundant resources to make this objective a reality. However, lack of a user friendly, comprehensive tour guide is a barrier to promote Sri Lanka as a top-end destination, more importantly among the high spending Free Independent Travellers. Tourism is inherently linked to travel and points of attractions. The service facilities too play an important role in making the trips, safe, pleasant and enjoyable. The conventional navigational systems only show the route, but neither offers sufficient description of the attractions nor indicates the time to be spent on location. The studies on characteristics of the modern day travellers reveal that bits of desired information are needed at their fingertips on the go. The capability of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to link spatial data with relevant attributes and its powerful analyzing techniques can ideally fulfill that need. This study is an effort to identify GIS techniques that facilitate development of an interactive travel guide, which could be used in all stages; pre-trip, on trip and post trip and demonstrate how. The study reveals that several techniques, especially the network analysis tools, could be adopted to meet travel needs. Major challenge encountered was the lack of information, i.e. detailed digital maps of the road network, historical and current road traffic data, verified information sources on points of attractions. That overcome and software customized, with further study, the concept developed in this study can be nurtured to be a commercial mobile travel guide application.

Key Words: GIS, Tourism, Travel Guide, Trip
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