TEXTOUR

Infopack

ROAD TO INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE DIGITAL VALORISATION

Lessons learnt from the Kreenholm district

This road is for:

ENTREPRENEURS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE SECTORS, REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND MUNICIPALITIES AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN VALORISING ABANDONED HISTORICAL SITES.

Abstract

Estonia's third largest city Narva has very specific district, called Kreenholm, mostly built in the 19th century. It was the biggest textile powerhouse with numerous factories, famous for its production far beyond Europe. By the end of the 19th century, the Kreenholm district was like a separate town with its hospital, and educational and leisure facilities. Nowadays Kreenholm is the heart of Narva's historical and cultural heritage, which shapes the cultural life and cultural tourism throughout the city and the wider region. One of the ambitious plans of Narva authorities and the active local community is to **awaken the Kreenholm area and give it a new vibrant life in the form of a multifaceted cultural quarter.**

Thanks to the EU-funded project TexTOUR, the Narva City Government moved one step forward to the popularisation of the Kreenholm district. As one of the project's pilot sites, a series of cultural tourism actions has been developed. One of them is the **digital guided tour in the district via QR codes** accessible to residents' and tourists' devices. The success of this pilot initiative led to the development of another thematic route in the region, following the same model of using QR codes for enhanced exploration and learning.

What to pack:

KNOWLEDGE, TOOLS, AND SKILLS REQUIRED BEFORE IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION

- A deep knowledge of the historical, cultural, and informational content that will be featured in the digital tour.

- Ability to create engaging digital content such as videos, images, audio recordings, and written descriptions that will be linked to QR codes.

- Familiarity with QR code generation tools or software

- Mobile app or web-site development to host and organise the digital tour content.

- Knowledge of marketing strategies and techniques to effectively promote the digital tour.

Preserving Kreenholm's Heritage through the digital tour

The Kreenholm cotton and textile factory with its huge complex and living areas is one of Narva's branding symbols. The famous Kreenholm and its main industrial buildings were built in the 19th century on two islands: the eastern Kreenholm and western Joala islands, close to Narva waterfalls. In the 19th century, Kreenholm was the largest textile factory in the Russian Empire. **Thanks to this factory**, at the end of the same century, **Narva was the leading industrial town in Estonia.** In 2007, plans were made to stop production in Kreenholm's historic block and adapt the spaces for new, non-industrial purposes. A significant part of Narva's population had been connected in some way to the Kreenholm factory for several decades.

A thematic digital tour with QR codes for the Kreenholm cotton and textile factory solved several important problems with preserving its heritage. By digitising stories, pictures, audio, and visual material, **this heritage can be archived and shared with current and future generations**, ensuring that the significance of Kreenholm is not lost over time. This immersive digital tour engages visitor by accessing detailed information, historical facts, and multimedia resources related to Kreenholm's history and impact, enriching their overall experience during the tour. **The digital tour improves accessibility to information about Kreenholm for a wider audience.** It's possible to discover more about the district at your own pace and convenience, and the inclusion of audio descriptions or translations can also cater to visitors with different language backgrounds or disabilities, **ensuring inclusivity.** It serves as a **marketing tool** to promote tourism and attract visitors interested in heritage sites and industrial history.

To develop a digital tour, a route around the Kreenholm area was established. Subsequently, 18 of the most intriguing objects along the route were carefully selected—these are places that people often pass by without considering their historical significance. The historian, who also served as the mayor of Narva during the route's development, crafted engaging narratives intertwining historical facts with life stories of individuals whose fates were linked to Kreenholm in various ways. This method has transformed the texts from mere historical sketches into **vivid narratives** with a literary flair, connecting them intimately with real people. Once the 18 texts were completed, they were edited and translated into English and Russian. Using these texts as a basis, audio files were recorded in three languages. A photographer then documented all the objects along the route, and a short video was produced to introduce the tour.

*Pic 1: Opening of the Kreenholm tour. Photo credits: Olga Smirnova*

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Pic 2: Kreenholm factory. Photo credits: Olga Smirnova

Subsequently, a webpage was created to host all the available materials, including the mapped route and the 18 QR codes. Special signs with QR codes were produced and strategically placed along the route. Additionally, a booklet containing the route, map, and brief descriptions of the objects was developed and distributed through the Tourist Information Center in Narva, at tourism events, and via partner channels. This strategy ensures that anyone interested can engage with the captivating stories of Kreenholm while walking the route or from any convenient location, as all materials are available in digital format.

This comprehensive approach not only educates visitors about the historical significance of the area but also fosters **a deeper connection to the community and its heritage.**

Feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive, praising the initiative for its innovative and immersive presentation of local history and culture. The collaboration between historians, locals, storytellers, photographers, and digital experts has resulted in a captivating and educational experience that continues to attract visitors and promote appreciation for Kreenholm's rich heritage.
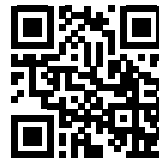
DISCOVER THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF NARVA AND KREENHOLM BY VISITING
https://qr.visitnarva.ee

Roadmap:

THE MAIN STEPS TO EMBARK ON

1
MONTH 1-2
Selection of the historical heritage

2
MONTH 3-6
Collaboration among historians, local authorities, and storytellers to create the content of the digital tour

3
MONTH 6
Translation of materials

4
MONTH 7
Webpage development to include all the materials

5
MONTH 8
Mapping of the route and QR Code installation among the route

6
MONTH 9-10
Booklet production with the route, map, and brief descriptions of the historical objects was produced and distributed through the Tourist Information Center

7
MONTH 11
Launch of the digital tour for the tourists and the locals

Testimonials

"Overall, the success of the Kreenholm digital tour underscores the importance of innovation, collaboration, and storytelling in preserving and promoting cultural heritage in today's digital age. These lessons can be applied to future projects aimed at showcasing and celebrating heritage sites worldwide".

OLGA SMIRNOVA - NARVA CITY GOVERNMENT

New fellow travellers

WHO JOINED AND FORMED THE NETWORK

- Narva Municipality specialists
- Narva Gate OÜ, Narva former major
- Narva Museum, Narva Art Residence
- Narva Tourism Information Centre
- Regional tourism cluster (Ida-Viru tourism cluster)

- Regional creative industry cluster
- Regional development project Ida-Viru tourism
- Active local community
- Mass media
- Visit Estonia department.

Souvenirs

BEST ACHIEVEMENTS RELATIVE TO THE PROJECT'S IMPACTS

CULTURAL IMPACTS

- By crafting compelling narratives that intertwine historical facts with personal stories, the tour not only educates but also emotionally connects visitors to the significance of the sites.

- Additionally, the integration of digital technologies such as QR codes, audio guides, and online platforms has significantly enhanced accessibility and convenience for users.

POLICY IMPACT

- Established collaborations between public and private entities

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Stimulation of local tourism and increase in tourist revenue

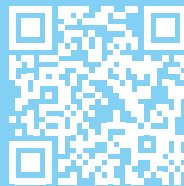# Contact us to learn more about preserving your historical site

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