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Seigneur, Jean-Marc

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# Towards Geneva Crypto-Friendly Smart Tourism

Dr. Jean-Marc Seigneur  
Jean-Marc.Seigneur@reputation.com  
University of Geneva & Réputation SAS

## Introduction

I'm honored to have been invited by the Republic and Canton of Geneva to present the vision for the future of tourism for Geneva 2030, also known as "smart city, smart canton" at its strategy definition event called "Etats Généraux du Tourisme" in May 2018 launched by Pierre Maudet, dynamic politician currently in charge of business and security.

I'm quite crypto-currency friendly not only from a business point of view but also from a technical breakthrough point of view, which I may call distributed ledger technology (DLT) for attack-resistant global consensus [1]. Of course, this includes the blockchain, which is the most well-known thanks to Bitcoin because it was the first to introduce it but blockchain is not the only existing DLT. No DLT is perfect as of yet. On one hand, blockchain attack-resistant proof-of-work consumes a lot of energy [2] and, on the other hand, hashgraph [3] is not attack-resistant in permissionless environments such as Bitcoin.

They chose me not because of my recent successful crypto-currencies project but for my previous work and projects on smart cities, including the first EU-funded smart ski resort project [4] proposed in 2009. I guess that my 6 years experience as vice-president of the tourism board of Megève, ski resort member of the Best of the Alps that includes Davos, combined with my recent Google Excellent Research in Academia Award for the creation of the Augmented Human International Conferences [5], helped too. However, it doesn't mean that I shouldn't talk about crypto-currencies as I believe that they are going to be more and more woven into our daily lives.

## **A transparently augmented tourism experience for increased local business revenues**

One main thread of my presentation will concern the importance of trying to always facilitate the tourism experience. The new technologies may augment the tourism experience but they shouldn't complicate it. They should transparently augment the tourist journey without disturbing the traveler, ideally without any additional action from the tourist. This means also that if the tourist is used to use crypto-currencies abroad, the tourist may expect to be able to use crypto-currencies in Geneva too. A region open to crypto-currencies will surely attract the new generation of business women and men, who still need a nice place for their business congress.

Another thread of my presentation will be that tourism should increase the wealth of the local people of the destination. It is important to try to regain the share of tourism revenues that the GAFAs (Google, Amazon, Facebook...) and other e-services like Booking and Trip Advisor have already succeeded to capture. For example, it isn't uncommon that Booking takes 25% of the night price paid by the tourist. The e-tourism data battle has been lost by the local tourism stakeholders against the GAFAs. However, smart tourism, based on smart cities technologies relying on locally deployed Internet of Things (IoT), from the smart hotels to the smart taxis, restaurants and connected shops, enables a new lake of data that are still out of reach of GAFAs. Crypto-currencies may help here too because, although some media present Bitcoin as anonymous, Bitcoin transactions are far from anonymous since all transactions are public in the blockchain open ledger. This opens the door for better tourist preferences knowledge and recommendations, for example, even showing the tourist relations, who have worked on the product or service that they are experiencing, as enabled by the Reputacion token and app [6].

## **Situation in Geneva and worldwide**

Dubai is the most advanced smart city regarding tourism, for example, thanks to its recent project of blockchain marketplace for tourism [7] that I will detail during the presentation.

In addition, Dubai smart city tourism [8] clearly shows that such initiatives are also aimed at developing the business in the region, beyond mere leisure tourism up to business tourism and innovative companies creations [9].

Still there is plenty of room for innovations and business development in this emerging field. There is already a political will in Geneva thanks to the dynamism of the politician Pierre Maudet. Switzerland is also known to be crypto-friendly: proposing legal guidelines for Initial Coin Offerings (ICOs) [10] and hosting several major blockchain platforms foundations such as the Ethereum [11] foundation or the ICON [12] foundation (the Korean Ethereum, the foundation is in Switzerland but the developers are in Korea). In Switzerland, it started with Zug and its "Crypto Valley Association" [13] but Geneva, famous for its traditional private banking history, is moving fast as a place open to fintech, blockchain and crypto-currencies, becoming the "Crypto Wall Street" with already established major financial institutions and dedicated associations, e.g., the "Global Blockchain Business Council" [14] and the "Swiss Blockchain Association" [15]. Switzerland and Geneva have already local currencies, even one called the Leman, which has now an electronic version on the blockchain called e-Leman [16]. Geneva can surely go beyond local crypto-currencies!

## Conclusion

This vision of accepting crypto-currencies for smart tourism in the Geneva region is only at its beginning but the region goal of "Geneva 2030, smart city, smart canton" has still many years to implement it.

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