

The UNESCO site of Castel del Monte becomes a HoloMuseum: with Hevolus, Infratel Italia and Microsoft the museum experience becomes digital

AI, Cloud Computing and Hololens Mixed Reality will revolutionize the visit to the the castle built at the behest of Federico II of Svevia, a masterpiece of medieval architecture.

The initiative is part of Piazza Wi-Fi Italia project of the Ministry of Economic Development and Infratel Italia to support the spread of connectivity and digital tools and enhance the cultural heritage of our country

Andria, January 14, 2021 – Castel del Monte, 13th century fortress and UNESCO heritage since 1996, becomes a **HoloMuseum**, a project developed by **Hevolus Innovation in collaboration with Infratel Italia and Microsoft Italia**, with the aim of contributing with the Regional Directorate of the Museums of Puglia **to enhance local art and culture through digital technology**, offering visitors **innovative and engaging experiences**, to revamp and give new competitive impetus to tourism in the Alta Murgia National Park, an area of naturalistic, landscape, historical and cultural interest, located between Bari and Barletta-Andria-Trani provinces.

HoloMuseum, a project based on Microsoft Cloud Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Mixed Reality technologies, **strengthens and infinitely amplifies the narrative and display capacity of an exhibition**, offering the possibility to integrate **additional information and experiential levels** compared to those provided by the physical set-up during the visit. Everything completely customizable according to the curatorial needs and objectives of the scientific committee of the museum.

As soon as the Museums will be able to safely reopen, it will be possible to experience Castel del Monte museum itinerary in **phygital mode**; the visitor, once entered the museum using **his/her smartphone**, he/she will be able to access, through the download of the dedicated **MVRGIA app** (available for both Android and iOS), a wide set of augmented reality contents to enrich their visit: from the dedicated guide service, the 3D avatar of Federico II of Svevia who will accompany the visitor by illustrating the different stages of the exhibition, to the display of multimedia contents and audio-visual materials on the history of Castel del Monte and interviews with art critics for example, up to the interaction with 3D digital models to deepen some themes and elements of the architectural structure of the castle such as the main stone doorway, the fireplaces, the vaulted roofing technique of the trapezoidal rooms and the sculptural decorations of the rooms. The experience is possible thanks to the installation of totems inside the castle, that make multimedia contents available.

Moreover, the solution is ready to be used **in Mixed Reality mode** thanks to the **Microsoft HoloLens 2** holographic computer that enables both in presence and remote Castel del Monte visit, allowing anyone and anywhere in the world to virtually enter the Castle, follow the exhibition itinerary and interact with all the multimedia elements, reaching the same level of involvement as an in loco visit. This is a key opportunity to make culture increasingly accessible, smart and inclusive in a historical moment where physical travel is not always possible. Castel del Monte will in fact allow you to book a virtual visit remotely: thanks to HoloLens 2, the guide in the Castle can share with the remote visitor his/her view of both the real environments and the extra digital contents.



"From the tourism point of view, culture has an extraordinary power" declares **Antonella La Notte, CEO of Hevolus Innovation**. "So we conceived HoloMuseum, a concept of a phygital museum, which makes the traditional exhibition context evolve into a hybrid exhibition environment by making physical world and virtual digital contents coexist: thanks to Microsoft Extended Reality, Artificial Intelligence and Cloud Computing technologies, visiting a museum or an exhibition can become an amplified, immersive, highly engaging, immediate and interactive experience".

"Generally speaking, 2020 had a crucial impact on the ways of fruition of cultural works and contents. Due to the continuous restrictions and closures caused by the COVID19 pandemic suffered by museums and cultural sites belonging to the Puglia Regional Museums Directorate, we have witnessed several digitization processes, given the proliferation of podcasts and audiovisual materials that can be used remotely. Within this scenario, the project that is being developed in the Unesco site of Castel del Monte - Andria BT, as a result of Piazza Wi-Fi Italia memorandum of understanding, is dedicated to a broader exploration of the Unesco heritage monument in a reading key integrated with the landscape, with the territory, in order to return an image that is increasingly responsive to the "intercultural" thought that inspired Federico II of Svevia, and to the recognition of the multiple functions of the medieval "castrum". The project, born in 2020 during the confinement period with the use of new digital tools, aims to make visitors live alternative museum experiences responding to the new demand for cultural offer" comments **Elena Silvana Saponaro, Director of the National Archaeological Museum of Altamura (Bari) and of Castel del Monte (Andria)**.

The initiative is part of **Piazza Wi-Fi Italia** memorandum of understanding, signed among the **Ministry of Economic Development, the Puglia Region, the Alta Murgia National Park and Infratel Italia** which aims to federate existing networks of municipalities, public administrations and large private entities, which manage spaces open to the public, and create new free Wi-Fi areas by installing access points close to places of cultural, artistic and tourist interest. The object of experimentation in Alta Murgia is, in addition to the spread of Wi-Fi connectivity, the installation of intelligent platforms and the implementation of experimental measures and best practices for the enhancement of natural and cultural heritage.

"Tools such as augmented reality engage visitors in a dynamic and always accessible way, for an innovative and above all immersive experience – declares **Francesco Tarantini, President of the Alta Murgia National Park - The Piazza Wi-Fi Italia project, as well as enhancing connectivity in rural areas of Alta Murgia, will make Castel del Monte known in a way never experienced before, improving the use of the cultural and architectural heritage**".

"The Ministry of Economic Development supports the important combination of technology and culture through several initiatives and Piazza WI-FI Italia represents a consolidated model of connectivity and digital transformation support also for museums. In fact, the conception of Castel del Monte HoloMuseum is an example of how technology and digital application to cultural heritage will increasingly represent a strategic lever for the enhancement of the artistic heritage of our country" says **Mirella Liuzzi, MiSE Undersecretary**.

"The collaboration between institutions, public companies and successful startups such as Hevolus Innovation has led to a unique experimentation in our country to renew the ways of enjoying our historical and artistic heritage. A heartfelt thanks to the Park Authority and to the director Saponaro who enthusiastically embraced the project that, like Infratel Italy, together with the Ministry of Economic Development, we intend to bring to other realities by activating digital communities as we did in Puglia" comments **Marco Bellezza, CEO Infratel Italia**.

"The project designed for Castel del Monte is the demonstration of how new technologies - AI, Cloud Computing and Mixed Reality - are important strategic levers for the growth and innovation of this sector and, in general, for the enhancement of our artistic and cultural heritage. In fact, a digital transformation process like this one, on one hand, generates new opportunities for relaunching the territory, in a complex moment where tourism and culture sector are



severely tested by the health emergency, on the other hand, new digital tools allow people to experience extraordinary museum experiences and to gain new knowledge through innovative and engaging ways of using them, bringing them even closer to the culture of our country" says **Silvia Candiani, CEO of Microsoft Italy**.

Images are available here [LINK ONEDRIVE](#)

Hevolus Innovation

Hevolus Innovation specializes in research and development of innovative business models for a phygital customer experience. Microsoft international partner for Mixed Reality, winner of the SMAU 2020 Innovation Award, winner of the 2020 Retail Week Awards in the Game Changer category, already present in the list of the top ten European suppliers of AR / VR platforms, Hevolus Innovation is a leader in the world of disruptive technologies (Mixed Reality, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Microsoft Dynamics and cognitive services) that uses to innovate the shopping experience and business strategies in its reference markets. It addresses the entire retail industry, the maintenance sector, the Tourism and Culture sector and deals with Corporate Open Innovation for the multinational Würth, with successful projects for some key sectors of the group, including carpentry, cruise ships and yachts building, wood and manufacturing industry. Hevolus has CDP Venture Capital SGR at its side, as its sole investor supporting the company's global growth.

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