WiT INDIE

July 27, 2023 | Penang Institute, Malaysia

WiT Indie was our last physical event of 2020, before you-know-what shut our world down. In 2023, we re-emerge into a new world that has profound impact on the independents and creatives, from hoteliers to tours and activities providers to all sorts of entrepreneurs in travel. New tech, new trends, new travellers have changed the landscape. Whether it be engagement through short form videos, or productivity and content creation with generative AI tools like ChatGPT, or new means of digital marketing and distribution, it is imperative that those who make experiences with love stay on top of their game. Maybe it's time for a revolution to be led by the indie movement.

Programme correct at time of publishing
All times shown are in Malaysia Time (GMT +8)

PROGRAMME

Thu • 27/07/2023

9:00 AM - 9:10 AM

Experiential Travel as Antidote for a Pandemic-weary World

Dato' Dr. Ooi Kee Beng
Executive Director
Penang Institute

9:10 AM - 9:20 AM

Hello, New (Indie) World

Speaker:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

9:20 AM - 9:40 AM

Coffee Chat: From Indie To Unicorn

Before it became a travel unicorn, it was a home-grown Jakarta-based startup wanting to change the way Indonesians planned and booked their travel. That was back in 2012. More than a decade on – it's hard to believe it is entering its teen years – Traveloka has grown to become a dominant force in South-east Asia. Yet even as it has fundraised, and expanded to a user base of 40 million users, its leadership team has stayed close to its indie roots. In this conversation, learn how its independent roots have helped to give it wings, and how an Asian homegrown brand competes on a global level.

Interviewer:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Speaker:

Iko Putera
CEO of Transport
Traveloka

9:40 AM - 9:55 AM

Key Traveller Trends And Why They Matter to Indie Operators

In this presentation, learn about key traveller trends, in particular the ones that matter to indie operators and suppliers, and how different destinations stack up in the quest to build back.

Speaker:

Branavan Aruljothi
Cluster Market Lead, Malaysia
Booking.com

9:55 AM - 10:15 AM

The Changing Landscape of Tours & Activities

Much has changed in the land of tours and activities – from extreme digitisation of consumers to the growing power of OTAs, and adoption of tech by suppliers. Fact is, though, the market still favours the big. But the tech landscape is becoming increasingly democratic for those who know how to navigate it. So how do indies and the long tail get discovered? And how do they arm themselves with new tools and tech to become more efficient and more profitable? An analysis of the landscape by two veterans in the tours and activities space.

Presenters:

Dawn Jeremiah
Vice President, Marketing & Ecommerce – APAC
Go City

Chan Chee Chong
CEO & Co-founder
GlobalTix

10:15 AM - 10:25 AM

Chains Vs Independents: An Analysis

We know the South-east Asian hospitality market is dominated by independent hotels. But is it a sector that's growing or are chains taking over as the industry gets too complex for individual owners and operators? And how do independents perform vs chains?

Speaker:

Kim Ong
Regional Director, Southeast Asia
STR

10:25 AM - 10:55 AM

Kopi & Kueh (Coffee & Cake)

10:55 AM - 11:20 AM

Case Study In Sustainability: Nikoi & Cempedak Islands

Building A Sustainable Business: Lessons in Community, Culture, Conservation, Commerce and, Tying It Together, Collaboration. We get first-hand insights from a banker-turned-island hotelier who believes "sustainability starts from the get-go, it's not a switch you turn on".

Interviewer:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Speaker:

Andrew Dixon
Accidental Hotelier/
Owner, Nikoi & Cempedak Islands

11:20 AM - 11:35 AM

The New World of Indie Hospitality

How is technology, from AI, to data, to robotics, changing the landscape and what opportunities are there for independent hotels and accommodation providers to find their place of passion in the crowded market and find the right traveller? We hear from a hospitality technology player which built its original business in the indie hospitality market in South Korea, grew into a superapp and now is going global with its technology and cloud services.

Interviewer:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Speaker:

Andrew Kim
Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships
Yanolja Cloud

11:35 AM - 12:05 PM

Letter From Sarawak

We hear from two different voices from Kuching. One, an entrepreneur who entered hospitality with a boutique hotel in Kuching, little knowing what she was getting into. Ten years on, she's still going strong and has aspirations to craft her brand beyond hospitality. The other, a veteran tour operator who's seen the changing of the times and who will share the evolution of his business, from offline to online.

Moderator:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Panel:

Rosemarie Wong
Owner, Creative & Project Director
The Ranee/ The Marian Boutique Lodging House

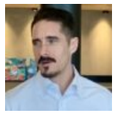
Robert Basiuk
CEO
Borneo Adventure

12:05 PM - 12:15 PM

Sustainability & How It Affects Customer Choices. Or Does It?

There are plenty of surveys out there that tell us consumers are looking for sustainable choices when they travel, but are they really buying them? We get the perspectives from a leader in hospitality sustainability in the region.

Speaker:



Eric Ricaurte
CEO
Greenview

12:15 PM - 12:45 PM

State of Startups – A Tale of Three Perspectives

We live in interesting times. On the one hand, it's been a challenging time for startups with many falling by the wayside, crushed by the last two years. On the other, those who have survived have made it out alive to thrive. What separates the winners from the losers? What does it take to build a startup these days in an age of intense competition and consolidation and accelerated tech? We hear from an investor and two founders.

Moderator:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Panel:

Mary Li
Founder & CEO
Atlas

Vikram Malhi
Co-founder & CEO
ZUZU Hospitality

12:45 PM - 2:00 PM

The WiT Indie Street Food Fair

Because it's Penang, we know it cannot just be any lunch break, which is why each year, we bring the best of Penang's street food to our event. Come hungry.

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Workshops

▪ Hospitality: Getting Your Business Tech-Ready For Efficiency & Profit

A practical workshop to equip independent hotels with the latest information and knowledge on topics such as:

• What to look out for in reservation and operations tech
• Connectivity, Partnerships & API? What can they do for your business
• How to work with OTAs
• Driving Direct Sales. SEO/SEM and Google Analytics
• Online reputation management

And more. Bring your questions to this workshop and get them answered.

Led by:

Christine Tan
ASEAN Commercial Director
Yanolja Cloud

Including:

Bernard Quek
CEO
Global Hospitality Solutions (GHS)

▪ In-Destination: Getting Your Business Tech-Ready For Efficiency & Profit

A practical workshop to equip independent hotels with the latest information and knowledge on topics such as:

• Latest in tech – chatbots for customer service, chatGPT for content creation, fintech for seamless payments
• What to look out for in reservation and operations tech
• Connectivity, Partnerships & API? What can they do for your business?
• How to work with OTAs
• Understanding Marketing and Tech – example Meta, Google Things To Do.
• Driving Direct Sales. SEO/SEM and Google Analytics
• Online reputation management
• Content Creation, Social and Chat Commerce

And more. Bring your questions to this workshop and get them answered.

Led by:

Dawn Jeremiah
Vice President, Marketing & Ecommerce – APAC
Go City

Chan Chee Chong
CEO & Co-founder
GlobalTix

3:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Kopi & Kueh (Coffee & Cake)

Enjoy a spread of the kueh-kueh that makes Penang the place to be when it comes to kopi & kueh.

4:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Power of Sound In The Age of Generative AI

Can't see the obvious? Listen up. Generative AI is revolutionising the world, ushering in the Creators Economy era. To triumph, creatives must shatter norms and elevate their game. Ready to conquer the transformation age? Discover the power of sound.

Speaker:

Martin Reiher
Head
amp Asia

4:15 PM - 4:45 PM

Meet The WiT Startup Alumni

Meet the startups who have come through the WiT community. Take lessons from their journey and be inspired by their aspirations.

Moderator:

Arvindh Yuvaraj
Content Lead
WiT

Panel:

Jason Jeeshen Lee
CEO & Founder
Softinn, Malaysia (WiT Japan & North Asia Startup Finalist, 2017)

Noelia Novella
Chief Vision Officer & Co-founder
Doinn (WiT & Phocuswright Global Startup Pitch finalist, 2022)

So Iizuka
Founder & CEO
Trambellir, Malaysia (Shortlisted in WiT & Phocuswight Global Startup Pitch, 2022)

4:45 PM - 5:15 PM

Meet The Creators, Curators and Community Builders

These are the folks who make it happen – they make products and experiences with love, run it with passion and are fuelled by purpose. We ask them how they connect the dots to make travel a more meaningful experience for those indie travellers seeking something different.

Moderator:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Panel:

Dara Huot
CEO
Phare, The Cambodian Circus

Andrew Real
Sustainable Tourism Development
Phatara8, Thailand

Lee Chong Chee
Foundder & Co-owner
Juju Lounge, Penang

Daniel Cheng
Founder & President
RTM (Redefine Tourism Mixer), Taiwan

5:15 PM - 5:30 PM

Imagination: The New Superpower In The Age of AI

We always thought art and creativity would be the last to fall against the machine. But the emergence of generative AI in images, videos, music and story telling has put paid to that notion. Is imagination the only human superpower we have left? How do we fuse man and machine to tell soulful stories?

Speakers:

Jason Chan
Co-founder
Cinewav

Christian Lee
Co-founder
Cinewav

5:30 PM

It's A Wrap

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

WiT Indie party, hosted by My Indie World

Join us for an evening of cocktails and canapes under the stars to celebrate the indie spirit of travel, with **My Indie World**.

Venue:
Thirty Two at The Mansion
32, Jln Sultan Ahmad Shah, George Town, 10050 George Town

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