

# Geotourism: The Tourism of Geology and Landscape



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# 4 Centralized data management approaches in geotourism: a view from Finland

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## Introduction

This chapter discusses the current situation of Popularization of Geology (PoG) and geotourism with focus set on Finland. An introduction to Centralized Data Management (CDM) is given and its potential benefits for PoG and geotourism are investigated. Additionally, the pathway for producing CDM-driven geotourism is explored. Finally, practical examples that were planned and realized by the author introduce the use of CDM systems.

After explaining the distinction between geotourism and PoG some thought is given to the matter of using modern technology to develop them. Ideally, by taking advantage of today's possibilities (the Internet to say the least), we may be able to bind different instances acting within geotourism and PoG development together and thus increase the level of communication and output. This results in a positive effect on the local economy. CDM itself is no specific system designed to produce geotourism. Instead, it is an outline that describes a pathway to improve communication where the free flow of information plays a central role.

This chapter describing the use of CDM should not be considered to be a step-by-step guidebook for developing geotourism using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). However, it can and could be utilized as a tool when data management, people and businesses are bound together with geology. Finally, existing geotourism solutions can benefit from ideas presented in this chapter by taking advantage of CDM and thus strengthening current interactions between active parties involved.

## The popularization of geology

It is hard to tell when geoscience popularization began. A potential candidate as a popularization pioneer was the *Penny Magazine*, published in Britain during the 1830s. One of its features was its geology-related articles which discussed scientific phenomena such as lavas use as fertilizer or the extraction of quicksilver from ore (*Penny Magazine* 1835a, 1835b). In other words, the articles explained how our Earth works by giving geoscience a context from familiar surroundings and thus connecting it to everyday life. This is pretty much what one would expect from the popularization of geology.

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PoG may include a wide variety of aspects. It can be viewed as a general way to educate the public about basic geology or on the other hand to encompass very specific geological data. Although great for science popularization, PoG essentially lacks a supporting structure that allows it to be turned into a commercial touristic venue. In recent years such supporting structures have been fused into PoG thus giving birth to geotourism.

PoG and geotourism can be thought to contain the same data (Figure 4.1). However, there is a distinct difference between these two (in addition to the touristic structures). PoG only goes as far as educating people about geology whereas geotourism involves aspects familiar from other forms of tourism. Such aspects include sleeping, eating and logistic services. Also, PoG may be realized as a single entity but geotourism can bound together with neighbouring branches of tourism such as eco and active tourism. Bundling other activities together with geotourism is wise as it appears that only people with a specialist interest in geology are ready to pack their family and travel hundreds of kilometres for a specific outcrop although spectacular landscapes such as the Grand Canyon in the USA are notable exceptions.

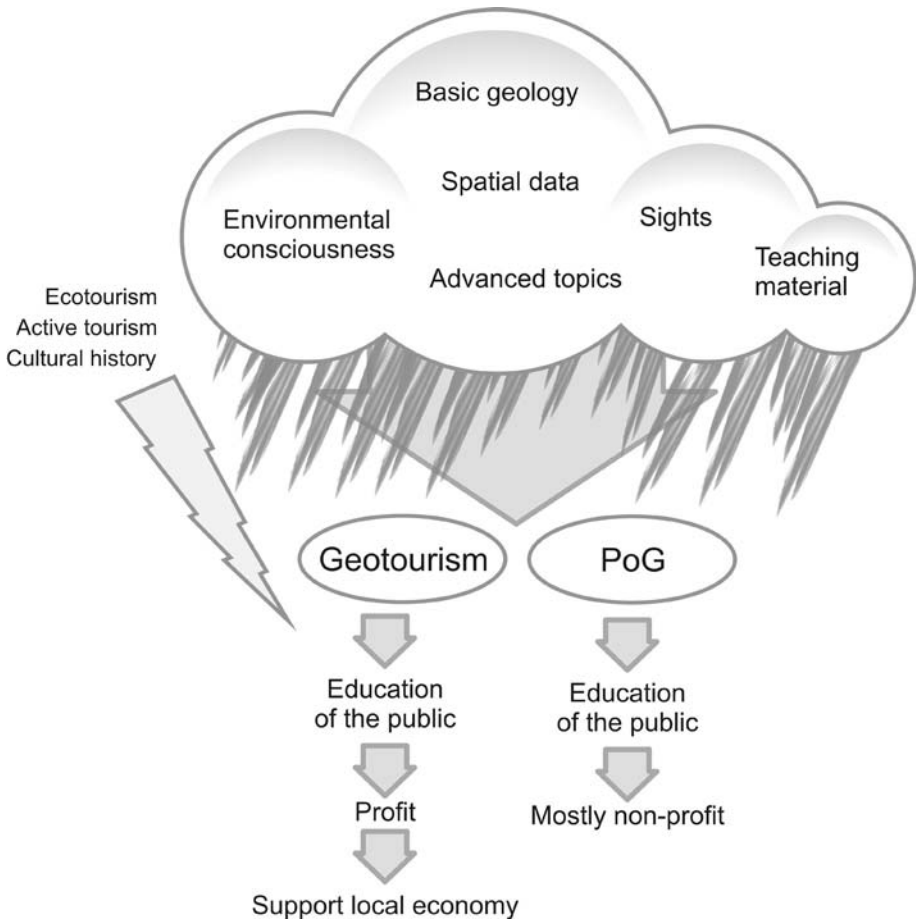


Figure 4.1: Geotourism and PoG.

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