

# THE PROFITABILITY OF AUGMENTED REALITY FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

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The [Augmented Reality](#) encompasses technologies and devices that allow virtual information to be superimposed on real images, and in real time, so that a "mixed reality" is created that combines real and virtual elements. For those of us who are already a few years old, it is a more sophisticated and less violent version of the computer vision of [that first Terminator](#).

Although announced a long time ago, the truth is that augmented reality is taking a long time to come into our lives, perhaps due to the relatively high cost of its applications. However, little by little this is changing and we find more and more applications in advertising, mobility, leisure...

Recently, [Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona \(TMB\)](#) has launched a innovative citizen information service to support urban mobility. The service highlights the latest advances in augmented reality to superimpose information on stops, times, schedules, places on the real image. To do this, it uses geo-location and the possibilities offered by the Apple iPhone.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=mR5D2rAbH98](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mR5D2rAbH98)

The possibilities of augmented reality in mobility are enormous. Not only in cities but also within **large spaces** (airports, train stations, fairs, exhibition centers, etc.) and, why not, in the **natural environment**. For example, it would be wonderful to be able to see, in real time and on the ground, the valleys and peaks of the Pyrenees or the Picos de Europa. Historical information such as the battles they witnessed could also be superimposed on these landscapes. On the other hand, augmented reality could also be used in the [Reina Sofia Museum](#). Surely we would love to understand the creative process of each of the parts of the [Guernica by Picasso](#) as we point our finger at each of the tightly packed pictorial elements.

In this sense, we were recently able to learn about the development of a [Sevillian company that allows to know the history of this city through its historical figures](#). Although the application only exploits the possibilities of augmented reality on the surface, it serves to illustrate the great possibilities that this technology opens up in the field of leisure, tourism and mobility.

### **An opportunity for public services**

The technology is there and it can be used by public agents to provide excellent and differential services both in urban and interurban transport and mobility, as well as in its leisure, cultural and entertainment offer . Its social profitability is evident, but what about its economic profitability?

Probably **it has been the cost of these developments that have inhibited up to now** the deployment of this technology. However, augmented reality **also opens up new business models for public-private collaboration**. Just as [JCDecaux exploits real advertising spaces](#), augmented reality opens up new virtual public spaces by presenting Huge opportunities for embedded advertising and thus generating potential new revenue streams for public agents. The opportunity is there, surely someone takes advantage of it.

(Creative Commons image via Flickr thanks to [sndrv](#))

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=4jnGY6qFPxg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=4jnGY6qFPxg)

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