

Using Technology to Plan Your Disney Trips: Tech Travels Part 2

by Justine Fellows, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Walt Disney World is constantly looking for new technologies to assist their guests.

I am the first to admit that I am drawn to Disney year after year because they continue to add, change, and improve the many technologies that enhance and accommodate visitors. If you are a techie like me, you probably find yourself pouncing on the latest app, website enhancement, or planning tool that Disney puts out. From the ability to [make dining reservations online](#) to the brilliance of [FASTPASS](#), these cutting-edge technologies enhance our visits and always get us thinking, how do they do it? On top of the mainstream technologies, Disney also offers an incredible array of tools to address specific guest needs.

Timing is everything, as Disney has just launched an ambitious redesign of their Keys to the World - the MagicBand; the controversial wrist band that gives you the ease to do just about everything beyond flying. I can't help but drum up an old line for those of us of a certain age - "wonder twin powers activate, form ofâ€¦," when picturing myself banded up with my jazzy wrist band. Swoosh, I've just charged a \$150 meal, swoosh, I'm into Epcot, swoosh, I've entered my hotel room without diving through the backpack for the key. Some say scary, I say bring it on! I recently got into a discussion at work about the new system. My coworkers questioned the creepy factor - would you really want your kids name and birthday associated with their band? The educator side of me says, no, too much information, but the Disney side of me says heck yah! Who wouldn't want Mary Poppins leaning over to say, "Hello Miss Emma, I hear your birthday is coming up?" The kids will be warped for years! Fantastic. With the very strong advice that I always have given, track your purchases every day and only give out basic information, I can't help to be excited about the ease the convenience of this all inclusive wristband but I'm also cautious and heavily use technology to track credit card purchases. I'm also pretty sure I will be the sucker buying the little add-ons that they will be selling to "Disnify" my wristband even more!

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□ Along with the new Keys to the World, Disney also has enhanced the current FASTPASS system by allowing visitors to pre-book their entry times - FASTPASS+. This reminded me of a trip we took about three years ago where we were awarded Dream FASTPASSes because of

volunteer work. During the week we had no reason to rush, run, or watch the clocks because we had entry at anytime to any ride. Now, please take the next comment with a grain of salt (I'm the mom who had her kids playing the Amazing Race on our last trip), but both of us agreed - it was boring! No sending the runner ahead to Soarin' while three of us jog it out to Test Track and then retrace our steps to collect a pass to Maelstrom. No race. Ok, ok, we could definitely adjust to this and sleeping late a few days would be incredible, but it is going to be different. Now that I think of it, maybe we can finally use the tennis court at the resort or check out those fancy fitness areas they always talk about - we might have time to!

☐ Hand in hand with all this change, comes the new app for smartphones, [My Disney Experience](#). Interestingly enough, this is where Disney is truly lacking. Their online and app planning tools have yet to enhance my experience. In fact, they mostly frustrate me. I was hopeful that My Disney Experience would break this mold, but it just seems to be another slow app that shows me what I already know - where I'm staying and my dining reservations. The map feature is nice, but still just too slow. I'm still hopeful for two reasons - it is getting better (they just added resort information) and I haven't used it onsite yet. Maybe there will be features only available at Disney World that make it more useful. I will keep you posted.

Features such as Fast Pass and the Keys to the World are available to all of us, but what if you need a bit more assistance. Here Disney proves their dedication to all visitors with some pretty amazing technologies:

☐ Hearing Disability Services
☐ [Assistive Listening, Sign Language interpretation and more](#) are available to help Guests with hearing disabilities.

☐ Visual Disability Services
☐ Guests with visual disabilities can maximize their enjoyment of our parks with tools like [Audio Description and Braille maps](#).

☐ Disney's Show Translator- Ears to the World

☐ For Guests with limited English fluency, [complimentary devices](#) are available to translate attraction narration.

☐ All in all, I am constantly surprised and amazed by Disney's amazing use of technology and we haven't even gotten into rides and shows yet

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About The Author: Justine is the Author of PassPorter's Disney Speed Planner e-book. Rumor has it, Justine's love of Disney World stems from being deprived by her non-Disney parents. Much to their dismay, she has more than made up for it, with more than 15 trips under her

belt!

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