

Disney Tech Primer - Part 1: All About MyDisneyExperience

by William J. Garmer, Jr., PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

Disney has always been willing to try new technologies to improve the guest experience and make their own operations more efficient.

And in 2013 they embarked on a new technological program that totally remade the guest experience at Walt Disney World (WDW), starting almost from the time you make your reservation.

The program is generally called My Disney Experience (abbreviated as MDX), and in fact is more than just one program - it's a revamp of several existing technologies, and a linking of those technologies via an integrated computer system. The Disney guest accesses these new and revamped programs in four ways:

□

□1) Via the MyDisneyExperience.com web site

□

□2) Via the [MyDisneyExperience smartphone apps](#) which access all the same functions as the web site

□

□3) Via interactive kiosks scattered throughout Walt Disney World property, which access some of the same functions as the web site

□

□4) Via RFID** media at the parks, namely Magic Bands and new Key to the World (KTTW) cards

□All of this technology seems a little daunting at first, but much like any new technology, once it becomes commonplace, we'll wonder how we ever got along without it.

□

□** RFID Stands for [Radio Frequency Identification](#), an electronic tagging system that uses small microchips to identify objects. These chips can be embedded inside cards, keyfobs, and wristbands, and there are even RFID chips available that can be embedded beneath your pet's skin to identify him and help bring him safely home if he is lost.

Lots of new Technology - How does it all fit together?

□

□My Disney Experience (MDX) integrates a number of existing and new technological programs at WDW, allowing the guest to check and alter many aspects of their Walt Disney World stay remotely. The system replaces the old Key to the World card, which already integrated the room lock, park pass, dining plan, and room charging systems, and at the same time integrates several other systems that were not previously

linked together. All together, these systems include:

- * WDW resort reservations
- * Disney's Magical Express
- * WDW resort room locks
- * WDW resort room charging
- * WDW park passes (both Magic Your Way passes and Annual passes)
- * FastPass+ (a new system replacing the legacy FASTPASS system)
- * Disney Dining Plan
- * Disney's PhotoPass
- * WDW Resort Refillable mugs (future)

□ Additionally, interactive features can be added to in-park attractions which will use MDX to customize the attraction experience and perhaps even save preferences. Thus far, only Test Track in Epcot has such a feature, but more attractions with this capability could easily be added in the future.

□ Getting Started with My Disney Experience - Creating Your Account

□ All of these systems are tied together by Disney's computer system.

Guests access the system by creating a free account on MyDisneyExperience.com. You don't need to have a Walt Disney World resort reservation to create an MDX account. Once you have created your account, you can link various features to it in preparation for your upcoming Walt Disney World vacation.

□ -> Link your family Start by linking your family's accounts to yours, so that the system will know you are traveling as a group.

□ -> Add your resort or package reservations Next, link your Walt Disney World resort reservations to the account. Once you link your reservations to your account, the MDX site will allow you to do additional things like on-line check-in and customizing Magic Bands.

□ -> Tickets If you have purchased tickets from the Disney Store, DisneyShopping.com, or an authorized ticket broker like Undercover Tourist (including Annual Passes), you can link them to the account, as well as the tickets included with a WDW resort package.

□ -> Arrange Your Dining Most Walt Disney World restaurants allow you to make Advance Dining Reservations (ADRs) up to 180 days in advance of your check-in date. If you have already made ADRs by phone or by some other means, you can link them to your MDX account with the confirmation numbers. If you have not, you can make dining reservations directly from the MDX site, and they will be linked to your account automatically. You can now use your MDX account to manage

your ADRs, add new ones, look for duplicates, delete any which you don't need, or reschedule.

□ **FastPass+ (FP+)** FastPass+ is a reservation system for rides, shows, and attractions at Walt Disney World. By selecting an attraction, and a one-hour time window in which you'd like to experience the attraction, you make an appointment for the attraction. The number of people who can make such a choice in any given hour is limited, which means that FastPass queues for any attraction are virtually guaranteed to never be longer 20 minutes.

□ FastPass+ is a new system, replacing the older legacy FASTPASS system, which only allowed reservations for one attraction at a time, with no advance selection. Along with FastPass+'s new advance selection capability, however, come some new restrictions - each Guest is limited to 3 FP+ selections per day, and all three selections must be in the same park, even if you have a park-hopping ticket linked to your MDX account. Additionally, Disney is also experimenting with a "tiered" approach to attractions; at Epcot and Disney's Hollywood Studios, the guest can select one "headliner" attraction and 2 "minor" attractions. The tiered approach may or may not become standard at all parks once the FastPass+ testing phase is complete in early 2014.

□ In order to make your FastPass+ selections, you must first link a park pass and a Walt Disney World resort or package reservation to your MDX account. Once that is done, you will be able to make FP+ selections up to 60 days before your check-in date, for a stay of up to 7 days.

□ If you don't have a Walt Disney World resort or package reservation, but you are a WDW Annual Passholder, you can link your AP to your MDX account, and you will be able to make FP+ selections up to 7 days in advance, for one day at a time.

□ If you don't have a Walt Disney World resort or package reservation, and you are not an Annual Passholder, you will not be able to make FP+ selections in advance. You can still link a park pass to your MDX account, but you will be able to make FP+ selections only on and for the day of your visit, one day at a time.

□ **PhotoPass** Disney's PhotoPass is a system of roving photographers on WDW property who will take your picture with digital cameras. The pictures are stored on the PhotoPass computer system for 45 days after they are taken, and you can access them online through your PhotoPass account to order prints, digital downloads, and other products. The PhotoPass system is completely separate from the MDX

system. However, there are links from MDX to take you to your PhotoPass account, where you can view, customize, and order your photos.

□ & Walt Disney World Resort room charging Hotels have allowed guests to charge things to their rooms for decades, and Disney resorts are no exception. With the size and complexity of WDW, however, this becomes an extremely useful feature, since Disney allows resort guests to use room charge to pay for anything bought from any Disney venue on Walt Disney World property - meals, souvenirs, ticket add-ons, golf, tours... if you're buying it from a Disney-owned shop, store, restaurant, or cart, you can charge it to your Walt Disney World resort room.

□ In order to utilize this feature, the guest must put a credit card on file; the credit card on file is used to pay for anything charged to the room. In the past, putting a credit card on file was done at time of check-in, but now, you can do it in advance, using your MDX account. Note: If you don't want to put a credit card on file in your MDX account, you also have the option of using cash, travelers checks, or Disney Gift Cards to establish a credit for room charging. However, this must be done at time of check-in. Perhaps in the future, MDX will be amended to allow Disney Gift Cards to be put on file, instead of a credit card.

□ Coming next week... Magic Bands!

About The Author: Will Garmer is a native Marylander from the suburbs of Baltimore, who works for an engineering firm as a CAD (computer-aided drafting) and GIS (geographic information systems) specialist. In plain language, he makes maps. And he's a bit of a technophile who likes to keep abreast of current tech trends. He's been going to Walt Disney World yearly since 1990, enjoying the parks and resorts and taking thousands of photographs along the way. His Leave A Legacy address is East 3-G-24-5-19. Stop by and say hello!

Article last updated: 01-23-2014

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/disney-tech-primer-mydisneyexperience1.html>

Copyright by William J. Garmer, Jr.. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>

PassPorter Deluxe: Cut, punch holes, and insert in binder.
PassPorter Spiral: Cut, print at dotted line, and insert in PassPorter.

