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YOUR LOCAL GUIDE

DIGITAL SKILLS IN TOURISM

Handbook 1 - Digital Skills in Tourism Handbook

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UNIT 1: Digital skills required in tourism

Get ready

The role of digital Technology in tourism is rapidly shifting, from a more marginal role to principal driver of innovation. What are the **new technological trends** in the sector? Have you ever thought about **what kind of digital skills** are required in tourism?

In this unit, we will learn **what are the new digital technology trends** and **what kind of skills** are needed in order to enter the sector.



Take up

Tourism sector approach to the shift to technological tools

Current tourism digital skills have been a continual challenge for tourism operators and destination marketers all over the world ever since **customers started the migration to the online world**, passing from travel agents and brochures to websites, social media and mobile devices. Tourism operators, like small business operators across all industry sectors, have been left in the digital dust of consumer tech adoption. The internet is the top source for both leisure and business travel planning. 80 % of people book their holiday or work trip on an online platform.

It is essential that tourism operators keep up with the technological change in order to be as competitive as possible and to attract as many customers as they can.



What are the top 5 digital transformation trends? in the tourist industry?

- I. **Integration of internet of Things (IoT)**: The Internet of Things (IoT), also sometimes referred to as the Internet of Everything (IoE), consists of **all the web-enabled devices that collect, send and act on data they acquire from their surrounding environments** using embedded sensors, processors and communication hardware. IoT's rapid digitization of machines or physical things as smart connected devices is significantly impacting service offerings, business models, and traveller expectations. As more and more devices get connected to the IoT, the **travel and hospitality sectors can use this data to improve customer experience significantly.**
- II. **Artificial Intelligence and chatbots:**



Today, **travellers can do anything** from asking their smartphone if their flight is on time to having **their queries answered by a chatbot.** This is made possible with the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Travel service providers can provide all the information via AI-powered apps and technology. By merging historical data with sophisticated machine learning algorithms, **travel companies can now predict when and where travellers might want to go and generate personalized ads,** thereby boosting sales.

- III. **Virtual Reality:** VR technology is the ideal supplement to travel brands marketing and promotional campaigns. With the immersive experiences that are readily available, **travel companies can offer customers an opportunity to see new sights** or enjoy exotic adventures without leaving the comfort of their own space. The **possibilities of VR technology in travel are endless.** So much that it can transform the travel industry like never before.



- IV. **Redefining travel with big data:** A traveller leaves behind a vast quantity of data from multiple devices and channels at several stages including planning, research, price search, booking, cancellation, and feedback. Many players in the tourist business have already adopted big data analytics to deliver real-time, personalized and targeted travel experiences.



V. **Wearable Technology:**

Wearable devices are being designed with consumer convenience in mind, and their **fundamental goal is to enhance the overall experience of the traveller**. Wearable devices become a mini-screen that can perform many of the same functions as a smartphone. Boarding pass reminders, reservation information, gate updates, QR codes, and all the

associated information that fuels a traveller's trip would be available right there on the wrist.

What are the digital skills needed from both the consumer and the tourism sector?

- ✓ **Mobile** → More than **87% of travellers use their mobiles in booking** hotels/flights/services. Smartphone users use their phones to be inspired on travel choices in their spare time, such as when waiting, commuting. Travel agencies/airlines/hotels must **optimize their website** for mobile or **create apps** that facilitate the experience for the consumer.
- ✓ **Google search continual change** → There is a growing importance of location awareness in search. **85% of leisure travellers rely on search engines** via smartphones to find local information whilst in destination. It has become a **high priority for businesses** to have a full and professional listing on Google with their **pin on the map**.
- ✓ **Social** → More than **50% of the consumers access the social network every day**, and **56 %** of the leisure travellers are **highly influenced by information** shared by friends and family, and **83%** consider social network as top sources for online inspiration. It is **crucial** for



businesses working in the sector to be **very active in the social networks** and pin their social pages to their websites.

- ✓ **Reviews** → There are **90 new contributions** written on **TripAdvisor** every minute, and consumers are less sensitive to high prices if the ratings are high. 53% of consumers won't book a hotel with 0 reviews, and 33% of people would change their choice based on the review. It is strongly suggested to **tourism operators** to have a **strongly and healthy presence on review websites**.
- ✓ **Video** → Consumers are **highly influenced by video advertisement**, and it can be crucial for their last decision. Businesses operating in tourism must adopt **more endearing videos** as a way to present a route or a hotel in order to engage as many travellers as possible.
- ✓ **Value-driven cultural shift:** Industry leaders and digital change agents need to collaborate in order to keep the sector as in line with the new trends as possible. Three key values that tour operator should adopt:
 1. **Culture of continual learning:** Keep on the pace being updated with the newest digital skills.
 2. **Culture of good will:** Tourism operators should engage more with their customers online.
 3. **Test and Measure:** Tourism businesses should not be afraid to test new digital ways of communications and reshape them in connection with travellers' opinions.



Check it out

1. Is this statement true or false?

The internet of things IoT consists of an all web-enabled device that collect, send and act on data they acquire from their surrounding environments using embedded sensors, processors, and communication hardware.

- a) True
- b) False

2. Is this statement true or false?

Many travellers are still booking through travel agencies because they don't trust online transactions.

- a) True
- b) False

3. Is this statement true or false?

Travellers are highly influenced by social media when deciding where to travel to.

- a) True
- b) False

DIY – Do it yourself

Activity: (reflection and practical application of the content of Unit 1)

Organise your students in groups of four. Give to each group a different new technological tool: Social network, Reviews, Google search and Video. Each group should use a technological device to look online for an example of this technology used in tourism, for example:

- **Social Network** → what kind of commercial, what kind of video a business working in the tourist sector is using on Social networks? What kind of strategy is being used?
- **Reviews** → which site for reviews is the most used? How a bad review can affect the business? How to repair to a bad review?
- **Google search** → Take a famous holiday destination as an example and let them find it on the maps, let them check if all the main points of attraction are registered. In this way they can understand and practice how to use Google search and the maps.

· **Video** → Ask the group to research videos promoting holiday destinations. How are they structured? Which part is more stressed in respect to the others? Which type of consumers the video is directed to?). At the end of the research let each group present their findings in order to share all the information with all the students.

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UNIT 2: Use of big data in tourism

Get ready

Do you know what “big data” is? Do you know it’s used in tourism? What are the benefits for an organization working in the sector?

In this unit, we will learn **what big data is, how big data is used and what are the benefits for businesses.**



Take up

Understanding what big data is

First, it is important to establish what big data actually is. Essentially, it is a term used to refer to large data sets, that are too big to be processed through more traditional processing methods. This kind of data can originate from internal and external sources, and is typically associated with customer views, habits and behaviour.

Here’s a [link](#) where you have a clear and easy explanation on big data.



But how big data is used in Tourism?

The industry of tourism is developing on information. Big data can deliver up-to-date and immensely informed inferences regarding behaviour and human activity that **enhance the tourism industry**. Tourists leave multiple digital traces behind when using mobile technologies on the web. Through every tourist, enormous amounts of data are present about everything that is relevant to different stages of travel — before, between and after a trip. Most



information is of an external nature like social networking feeds or in the form of Twitter or other social network.

Due to the vast amounts of data availability, analytics has become a need to make sense of the information present in the data. If you are a new customer planning a trip, you are probably looking into more sources on the internet when you are buying tickets, researching attractions or reserving accommodations. Members of the tourism industry are slowly turning to big data to find **new ways**

for improving opportunities, decision-making and overall performance, for example, an interconnection of scattered information can be made possible through big data.

Moreover, internal data like past occupancy rates, room revenue and current bookings can be combined with external data, such as information about local events, flights and school holidays, in order to more accurately predict and anticipate demand. As a result of this, hotels are then better able to manage prices and room rates, increasing them at times of high demand, in order to maximise the revenue that is generated.

5 ways big data can help people working in Tourism:

1. **Revenue Management:** maximise financial results, hotels and other tourism companies need to be able to sell the right product, at the right moment, for the right price, via the right channel, and big data can be invaluable for this.
2. **Reputation Management:** In the internet age, customers can leave reviews on a wide range of different platforms, including social media sites. This data, combined with feedback acquired internally, can be used to spot the most significant strengths and weaknesses, and where customers are impressed or disappointed.
3. **Strategic Marketing:** Big data can help businesses identify the main trends that exist among their customers, where the similarities are, and what the best marketing opportunities are.
4. **Customer Experience:** Hotels and other businesses in the travel and tourism industry have a vast array of interactions with customers, and each of these interactions can provide valuable data. Used effectively, this information can reveal which services customers use the most, which ones they do not use at all, and which ones they are most likely to request or talk about.



5. **Market Research:** those in the travel and tourism industry can also use big data to compile and analyse information about their main competitors, in order to gain a clearer understanding of what other hotels or businesses are offering to customers.

What are the benefits of the use of big data in tourism?

- ✓ **New information flow** → Tourism big data is typical information produced by travellers themselves. It improves the thought process of tourism businesses by analysing the customers' demand for various services and products.
- ✓ **Reliability** → Big data is not based on surveys but users' real actions.
- ✓ **Efficiency & quality** → Based on people's trends tourism can change and make its services more efficient and of higher quality.
- ✓ **Personalized offers** → Thanks to big data it is possible to tailor an offer for a particular person or group of people.
- ✓ **Respond to tourist needs timely** → Big data can be used not just as a tool to predict future trends, but also in real time to anticipate tourist demands.



What is it still possible to improve?

- ✓ **Difficulty of sharing information across sources** → Information are often spread out across multiple organizations that don't combine data clusters.
- ✓ **Standard way of collecting data** → There is not a standard way to proceed and this prevents big data of reaching its full potential.
- ✓ **Too complex and unmanageable data** → Some organizations may have some difficulties in managing the data. An Easy visualization is the key.
- ✓ **Must be not too invasive** → Big data must focus on their **experience** without making it too invasive. Protecting consumer privacy is essential.



In the following video you can get a global summary on how collecting data for tourism purposes works:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfBWgnWWuwc

Check it out

1. Is this statement true or false?

Big data is not connected to people's online behaviour.

- a) True
- b) False

2. Is this statement true or false?

It is possible to tailor an offer for a particular person or group of people.

- a) True
- b) False

3. Is this statement true or false?

It is very simple to transfer and share information across sources even if organizations use different data clusters.

- a) True
- b) False

DIY – Do it yourself

Activity: (reflection and practical application of the content of Unit 5)

Organise your students in groups of four, and divide each group in tourists and travel agency employees. The tourists just got back from a holiday somewhere in the world where they had a really bad experience (e.g. too expensive, missing services, low quality of food etc..). Ask them to simulate writing a detailed bad feedback online to the travel agency where they booked. The travel agency must immediately shape a new offer with a new destination taking into account all the complaints made by the tourists and present it to them. Then change the roles in the group and repeat the exercise. Imagination is a must!

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UNIT 3: Cyber-security and data protection

Get ready

How can you create a valid data protection strategy? What steps should you follow to develop an efficient cyber-security plan? Cyber-security and data protection must go hand in hand. In this unit, we will learn about cyber threats, how to make a cyber protection plan, and about data protection according to European legislation.



Take up

Cyber-security needs a holistic approach

The destination, which is the real tourism product, offers a variety of goods and services mostly exposed to cyber threats. Because the cyber threat is expanding over the entire economy including the tourism sector, it is necessary to develop a new and stronger policy on a higher awareness among all stakeholders. Cyber security refers to the body of technologies, processes, and practices designed to protect networks, devices, programs, and data from attack, damage, or unauthorized access. Cyber security may also be referred to as information technology security. For an effective cyber security, an organization needs to coordinate its efforts throughout its entire information system.



e.g. laptops and mobile phones. Each endpoint represents an opportunity for a hacker to gain unauthorized access to the system.

There are four main layers within an organisation where cyber security measures need to be taken:

- **Email** – a lot of data is probably going to enter the business via email. Cyber-criminals will often hack into or imitate valid email addresses (either from staff or external contacts) in order to launch a cyber-attack.
- **Endpoints** – endpoints are the devices used by the employees of a business to access the network

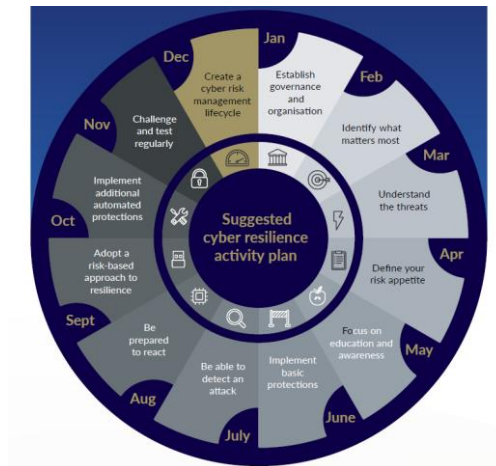
- **Network** – this is what links sector together, allowing staff to communicate with each other and access shared resources. If a cyber-criminal were to install malware on a business's systems so that the network went down, the business may not have any access to its resources
- **Server** – servers are made up of the software and hardware that store all the valuable resources and data of a business. It is arguable that servers should be the most protected part of any computer system.

To study some examples of good practices on cyber security in the hospitality industry, you can access the following [link](#)

Developing a cyber defence plan in a company

Businesses should consider implementing the following practices when assessing how to improve the levels of their cyber security:

- Install encryption software and implement internal procedures to prevent email phishing, a new practice that consists of sending emails pretending they are big companies in order to steal people's personal information.
- Backup business systems so that they can be restored quickly in the event of a cyber-attack. It is recommended to have multiple back-ups, with one stored outside the business network.
- Keep up-to-date with patching so as to minimise the risk of hackers exploiting vulnerable and out-of-date software. The ICO revealed that this was something that Carphone Warehouse was particularly guilty of and which made it easier for the business to be hacked.
- Install security software on each endpoint and ensure that employees do not use personal devices to access the business's systems.
- Implement a security system on the business's server. This could include the use of firewalls, passwords, limiting access to business critical data and keeping the location of your servers secret. There are also many professional organisations offering cyber security solutions which can be tailored to a particular business.
- Provide regular cyber security training to staff to raise awareness, educate them on the best practices so as to avoid being deceived by email phishing. Businesses may even wish to run a simulation testing to see how employees respond to a cyber-attack.



A cybersecurity strategy in 12 steps

Image source: https://www.ncsc.gov.ie/pdfs/Cybersecurity_12_steps.pdf

Cyber Security and Data Protection: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Poor data privacy leads to poor cybersecurity and vice versa. There is a close relationship between data protection and cyber security and if businesses fail to adopt a robust approach in respect to cyber security this can significantly increase the risk of committing a serious breach of the data protection law.

GDPR – An Opportunity to Rethink Data Security

Establishing robust cyber security policies and procedures is not only going to reduce the risk of a business being exposed to a cyber-attack; it is also going to help reduce the risk of the security of its personal data being compromised, thus assisting the business to comply with its obligations under the GDPR.

As cyber threats continue to grow and evolve, it is very likely that costly data breaches will become more frequent. While the GDPR introduces severe penalties for compliance failures, it will also force organizations to pay more attention to data security in the face of the looming cyber threat.

The European Union's enforcement of the Global Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) commences on 25 May 2018, and with it comes sweeping changes in the privacy and data security policies for the vast majority of companies operating, not only in the EU, but across the globe. This is because the GDPR applies to all companies processing the personal data of subjects residing in the EU, regardless of the company's location, and generally governs how companies manage and share such data.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the most significant overhaul of European Union (EU) data protection legislation in over 20 years. Amongst other things, it is intended to provide better protection to individuals and to give greater certainty to organizations in navigating data protection across EU member states.

The GDPR will replace the various legal interpretations of the current EU Data Protection Directive with a standardized, pan-European set of requirements about how organizations must manage data on their employees, customers, and other relevant stakeholders.



Image source: https://boyanov.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/regulation-3246979_1280.jpg

Key recommendations of GDPR in the tourism sector:

1. Obtain explicit consent for each specific data use case
2. Audit your current personal data and its purpose
3. Review contracts about personal data exchange with partners
4. Be ready to present data, explain the purpose of collection and delete it
5. Appoint a data protection officer in charge of data processing and security
6. Enable data breach notifications to ensure effective reaction
7. Provide data portability.

As a conclusion, in the next video, you can find some information about GDPR compliance in tourism sector → <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEp5FoFkuus> .

Check it out

Are this statements true or false?

1. *In cyber-security and data protection it's important to have a proactive and holistic approach.*
2. *Poor data privacy leads to strong cybersecurity.*
3. *According GDPR legislation, a company can retain the data for a necessary limited period and then delete it.*

DIY – Do it yourself

SCENARIO: An employee within your organization used the company's digital camera for business purposes. In the course of doing so, they took a scenic photograph that they then loaded onto their personal computer by inserting the SD card. The SD card was infected with malware while connected to the employee's personal computer. When re-inserted into a company machine, it infected the organization's system with the same malware.

Discussion questions:

- Who within the organization would you need to be notified?
- How would your organization identify and respond to malware infecting your system through this vector?
- What is the process for identifying the infection vector?
- What other devices could present similar threats?
- What should management do?
- How can you prevent this from occurring again?
- Does your organization have training and policies in place to prevent this?
- Do policies apply to all storage devices?

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UNIT 4: Digital content creation

Get ready

If you are familiar with digital marketing, you may have heard the phrase “Content is king”. But what does that mean? What exactly is digital content and how can you use it to successfully promote your business?

So, what’s digital content creation?

Digital content creation is the creation of written or visual content for digital media. It is the process of generating topic ideas that will be appealing to your potential and existing customers. Some common forms of digital content are blog posts, text on a website, posts on social media accounts, video creation, and online commentaries.

Why is it so important?

Through digital content you are providing free and useful information to your audience, which you use to both attract new customers and retain existing ones through quality engagement.

Take up

Let’s explore some basic content creation tips to get you started!

Determine your purpose

There is **no one-size-fits-all solution** when it comes to content. That’s why it’s important to determine your purpose before starting the creation process, as having a clear goal in mind will improve the likelihood of achieving the desired results. Having your end goal in mind will help you adapt your content accordingly in order to get the most out of it. More specifically, before starting creating the content ask yourself why you are doing it:



Do you want to

- ✓ educate your audience?
- ✓ drive traffic to your website?
- ✓ drive social media engagement?
- ✓ increase brand awareness?



Understand your audience

It is highly important to understand who your audience is and how you can create valuable content that will attract their interest and help you achieve your goals. Depending on your audience's profile, you may need to apply different strategies, different media, or different topics. Creating customer/user **personas** could help you understand who you are speaking to and where to find them. For example, are they on social media and which ones? Are they using their mobile phones or their laptop? Are they reading blog posts? This will take a bit of research and effort from your part but it's certainly worth it. You could use [this tool](#) by Hubspot to help you create your user personas.

Create useful and quality content

The rule of thumb in digital content creation is that every piece of content that you publish is **useful** to your audience but also of **good quality**. If the content provides valuable information to your audience, they are more likely to engage with your business, develop a positive perception of you, and share it with their friends and family.

Additionally, every piece that you publish represents your brand, thus, it should be of high quality. Always double check your content for any spelling or grammar mistakes, make sure that it's visually pleasant, and any images that you use are high quality.

Use multimedia and images

The internet is primarily a **visual platform**, thus, using photos, videos, infographics, etc. is the best way to make your written content more appealing to your audience. Overall, users are more likely to engage with and share

visual content. Just make sure that you don't overdo it. It is easy to get overly excited – keep in mind that your content needs to be easy-to-read, clear and pleasant to the eyes.

Promote the content online

Now we have a wide variety of platforms to reach out to our customers, and not everyone is everywhere. **Social media** is a good place to promote your work. For example, if you've written a blog post don't just post about it on your blog or your website: share it on your social media accounts as well to increase your outreach and drive traffic to your blog/website. You may increase your social media followers as well!

Track and analyse the content

Don't just produce a piece of content and leave it to live on the internet. Track and analyse its progress. That's one of the most important parts as it will help you understand what to improve the next time you create something.

Depending on your medium and your needs, there are different **data** to track. Some useful data include Facebook likes, Facebook post reach, website page views, and engagement on a blog post (comments, likes, shares).

Always remember to analyse your results, make the necessary changes to keep up with the constantly evolving digital costumers.

Extra tip: Implement a SEO program

As you may already know there is a huge range of content out there, and it's easy for your content to get lost. In order to make your creations more visible, try to optimise it for search engines based on the latest SEO (**Search Engine Optimisation**) content strategies. These include changes and adaptations you can make to your content & your website that will rank it higher on search engines and thus, make it more visible to potential users. Check out this [guide](#) to find out more about SEO.

Check it out

True or false?

1. The same content works for everyone.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. A post on Facebook is not considered digital content.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. After you publish your content online you don't have to do anything else.
 - a. True
 - b. False

DIY – Do it yourself

Create a short blog post (approx. 400 words) to promote your organisation. Before starting, write down any important aspects to take into account: your purpose, who your audience is, if you could use any multimedia and which ones, which social media channels you can promote your blog post on, etc.

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UNIT 5: Digitalisation in tourism sector's strategies

Get ready

Do you know what digitalisation is? What are the main trends in digitalisation, which are important for tourism sector's strategies? What do you have to do to be ready to adapt to digital transformations?

In this unit, we will learn more about digitalisation and how it affects the tourism sector's strategies.

Take up

The European Commission has taken steps to facilitate a European-wide policy response to foster a competitive single digital market. However, these initiatives must also be met with local creativity, innovation, and empowerment of local businesses and business network. The Single Digital Market Strategy for Europe provides the key directions for the digital transformation of Europe's economy by unlocking the full potential of a single European market, and by supporting the free movement of goods and services across Europe's internal borders. Tourism sector has shown a high capacity of adapting to the requirements and modifications of international markets, actively contributing to the development of new jobs and being an important economic factor at a global level.



Digitisation is the process, which is caused by the adoption of digital technologies and the application systems that build upon them. Digitisation can be defined according to different levels of intensity: from the pure presentation and information (website), the sales channel function (e-commerce), business process integration (E-Business) to new business models with virtual products or services. Digitisation offers many new opportunities that can be exploited by providers in the tourism industry.

Digitisation provides the tools, frameworks and technologies to create and/or add value to tourism products and experiences but the success of digitalisation depends on the capacity of the tourism sector to share, learn and collaborate.

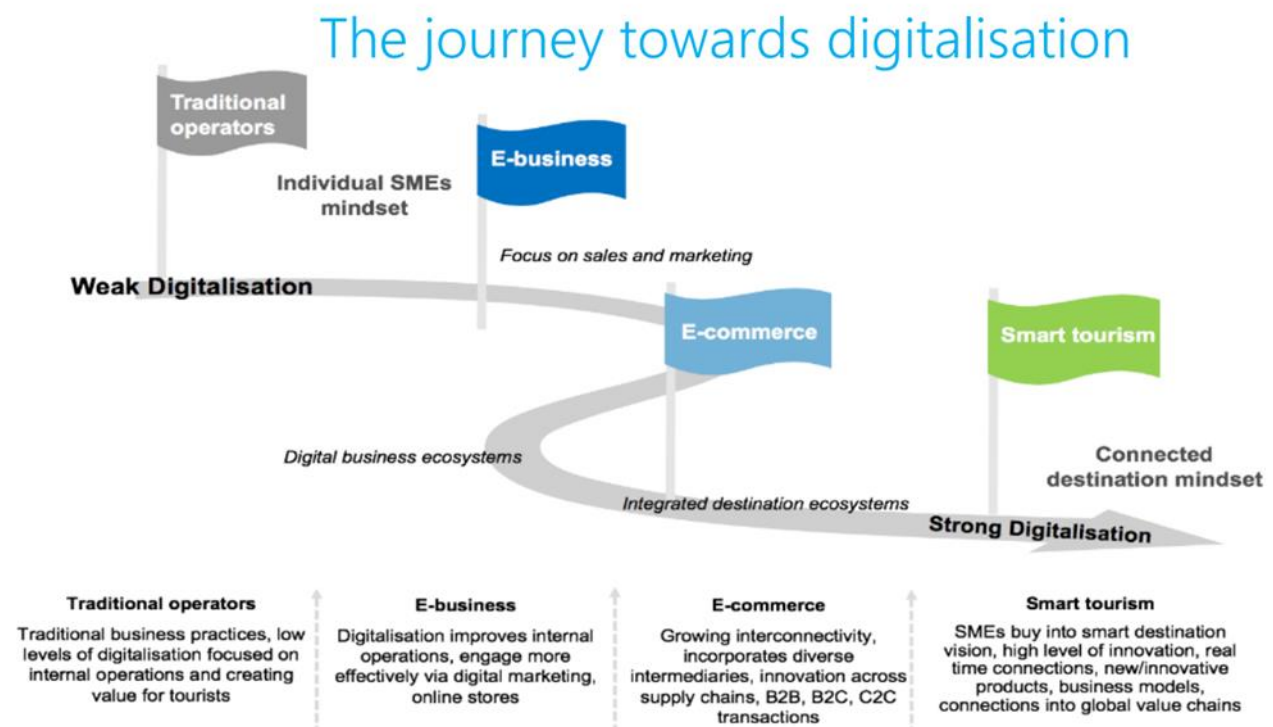
Digitalisation - a motor of transformation for the tourism industry in the age of the internet economy

The digitalisation of tourism leads to better performances in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. There are important transformations in the tourism sector, including booking systems, social media usage, and online reviews as well as focus on data, reputation and virtual reality.

Due to the digitalisation, you are able to learn and understand customers’ needs, desires, preferences and behaviours, have more options to offer services and products to consumers, whereas you have also a006E increased ability to advertise and promote your business.

A low-level digitalisation is characterised by digital tools and practices that assist with the internal management and daily running of the tourism companies. Knowledge sharing and communications tend to be unilateral.

A medium-level digitalisation is characterised by tools and practices that improve both the effective management of the tourism companies and its connection with value chains (consumers, suppliers, industry networks etc.). Communications and knowledge sharing are multi-directional/shared.



Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/33163/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native>

5 Digital trends in tourism strategies

When you want to create a tourism strategy, you should consider some aspects of the evolution of digitalisation:

1. Multimodality - The speed and usefulness of information sharing is growing exponentially. We consume and share information using multiple modalities - words, images, sound and video. It's instant, intuitive, and helpful. We swiftly search, watch, listen, read, type, and talk – all at the same time. The multimodal mindset is about speed, choice, and the “cool factor”.



2. IoT (Internet of Things) - “Things” are devices at home, on your wrist, in the car, everywhere that generate automated and live customer interactions. It is believed that IoT will change the world, as now it is only starting to take off with new smart sensors that have reach the market, making it possible to apply sensors to machines and things. Ecosystems of computers, smartphones, transport vehicles, wearables, smart clothing, smart shelves etc. will revolutionize retail, create “Smart homes” and “Smart cities”, - infrastructure oriented applications with the aim of improving the quality of life of citizens. Smart Destinations transform IoT infrastructure of Smart Cities into a service design for visitors.

3. Data Science - Effective use of data analytics will determine who survives in this new era of digital enlightenment. Winners will operationalize key insights derived from big data and math to deliver customer service that is far more proactive, timely and cognitive.

4. Bots - A bot is a software that performs an automated task over the Internet. They have traditionally addressed more repetitive, mundane work, but breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and machine learning are transforming bots into brilliant digital tools. Automating business processes with bots is expected to become a large opportunity for almost every enterprise.

5. Microservices - Most older cloud applications are monolithic under the covers, offering limited innovation, scale and reliability. Modern microservices cloud architecture, where applications are divided into hundreds of independent microservices, introduces innovation, resilience, and simplicity. A failure in one microservice has no impact on the others, providing unsurpassed reliability where “if one fails, another one is waiting right behind”.

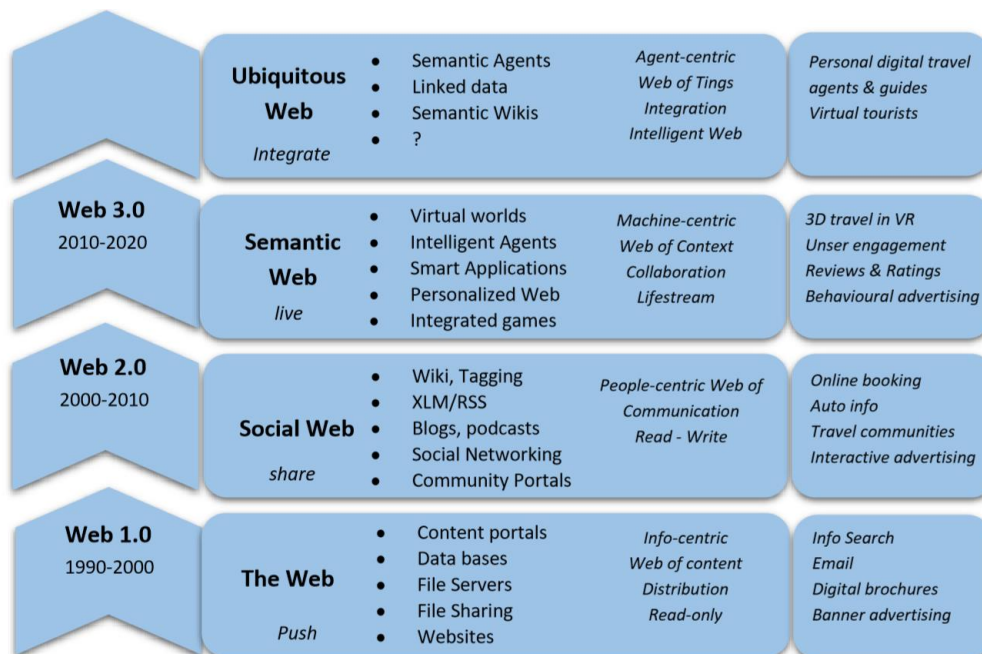
Nowadays, a digitalised tourism strategy must include communications through minimum 7 platforms, such as:

- iOS;
- Mobile friendly web;
- Android;
- Facebook Live Stream, Stories, Follower rewards;
- YouTube;
- Instagram Live Stream, Stories, Pictures;
- WIFI hotspots;
- VR360;
- Video Embrasive media;
- GPX routes;
- GPS navigation;

Digital transformation in the tourism sector is continuous and dynamic

The digital revolution is not behind us; it lies ahead of us. As web 3.0 gets more empowered and slowly transform into web 4.0, and digital technologies such as Internet of Things, Predictive Big Data Analysis, the Automation of knowledge work, mixed reality, virtual reality travel, and increased mobility in wearables, we will see a drastic transformation of the tourism industry. This puts strong forces on any tourism business and organisation to keep up with the digital development to stay in tract in the ever-increasing competition within the industry.

Conclusion: The evolution of digitalisation&Perspectives in tourism sector



Source: <http://www.lme.fi/media/vae-outcomes/rd-results/report-visit-arctic-europe-mission-3-summary-2.pdf>

Check it out

1. Is this statement true or false?

In smart tourism, the level of innovation and real time connections is very low.

- c) True
- d) False

2. Is this statement true or false?

Due to digitalisation, you are able to learn and understand customers' needs and you have also an increased ability to advertise and promote your tourism business.

- c) True
- d) False

3. Is this statement true or false?

A digitalised tourism strategy must include communications through minimum 7 platforms.

- c) True
- d) False

DIY – Do it yourself

SCENARIO: Organise your students in two groups. Taking the following scenario: a touristic village which is located in a traditional area of Apuseni Mountains must create a tourism strategy for their area. Each group has to develop their own strategy, with a special view to identifying the right digital partners and choosing the right communication platforms. Each group should also identify at least three proposals or digital themes that would favour the promotion of the tourist area.

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UNIT 6: Communication strategies and use of social media

Get ready

The rapidly changing modern tourism and hospitality industry and the increasing need to respond to the needs of demanding customers has changed the way the industry communicates and has put a growing emphasis on communication strategies. In this unit, we will explore some useful communication strategies to raise brand awareness and increase engagement on social media.

Take up

Create and share content

- Reviews

Travellers research their destinations before they go and they give great credibility to Facebook reviews, TripAdvisor, travel blogs, articles on online newspapers. The users tend to look for information for where to sleep, what to eat, what to do, and what to see in the destination that they are planning to visit. They read articles and reviews of must see and must do.



What can you do then? Be there and be present. Add your business on tourist review websites, on Google maps, create a Facebook page, etc. Ask your happy customers to leave you a review or even write an article about their experience with you. Reviews influence the tourists' decision making of their perception of the destination. And then share the reviews on as many social media and channels as you can.

- Advertorials and informational articles

Advertorials are advertisements that use the format, the style and layout of editorials. Therefore, when you see a product or service mentioned by name in a article, online or offline, that is referred to as an advertorial.

You can work with a magazine or a public relations professional to write an advertorial that will help you gain exposure and generate sales.

Additionally, you can write **informational articles** about a travel destination regarding the things that will be useful to your potential costumers. For example, local food tips, fun facts about the destination, travelling safety tips etc. This way, you will promote your business and also position yourself as an expert in the field. Also, you will have great content to share on your social media accounts.

Share user-generated content



Getting your costumers to write something about you that you can post on your channels is a great way to increase engagement and improve brand awareness and brand loyalty. You can ask them to create **content** in return of an award, points, special offers, or discounts. The content can be anything from a short article, a funny story, a review, or even a video.

Additionally, encourage your customers to tag you when posting a picture of their holidays. You can reshare the pictures and why not run a **photo contest** and reward the best one(s).

Form Partnerships

Another thing that you could do to increase brand awareness is to **partner** with other local companies in the tourism and hospitality industry. Think of ways that you could work with other businesses and contact them to propose a partnership. You can promote each other's work on social media, co-write a blog post, provide shared discounts and special offers.

Check it out

True or false?

1. Advertorials are articles that a customer writes about your business.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Travellers trust a lot the reviews they read online.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. It is advisable to create by yourself all the content that you share on your social media accounts.
 - a. True
 - b. False

DIY – Do it yourself

Imagine that you are the owner of a hotel and you wish to promote your business as well as your area as a travel destination. Write an advertorial of approximately 600 words that will be published in a large online magazine.

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Guidelines for a practical activity

Developing a full digital strategy for a hotel

This practical activity can be:

- *done as a project-based activity organised in small groups after the completion of Handbook 1 during the face-to-face training*
or:
- *distributed step-by-step within the Handbook 1 Units and intended for self-study/ autonomous work of learners with a final presentation (Step 6) at the face-to-face training*

The activity is carried out as follows:

Step 1. Identification of the needs

What do you need in terms of *digital strategy* in relation to a *tourism structure* like a **hotel**?

- Think about the main needs and write them down in bullet points;
- Point out which kind of hotel is going to be the target of the practical activity (e.g. 2-star, 3-star, etc., hotel on the seaside, mountain, etc.)

Step 2. Analysis of the existing demands

What do you need for developing a complete *digital strategy* for a hotel?

- Think about the devices you may need;
- Think about the different tasks and roles;
- Think about how many people should be working on the identified different tasks;

Step 3. Analysis of the legal framework of the country/ region

What do you have to check **before** starting the actual development of the digital strategy?

- Check if there are any restrictions for the development of the full aspects included in the digital strategy for the hotel you have in mind;
- Adapt your idea to the current legalisation to avoid any issues

Step 4. Analysis of the promotion channels

Having previously identified the *physical* devices you may need, point out how your strategy should be pursued:

- Write down what channels are the most efficient to develop the strategy online;
- Point out how many channels you should focus on the most;
- Develop sub-strategies for each channel you identified

Step 5. Define your target group

Decide on the main target groups according to the average guests of the chosen kind of hotel:

- One or more target group/s;
- Develop different sub-strategies according to the different target groups you may address to

Step 6. Presentation of the plan

Present a document that sums up all the points developed through the previous steps, adding up a step-by-step strategy since the launch of it until the final phase.

Solutions to the exercises

Unit 1 Digital skills required in tourism

Question 1: True

Question 2: False

Question 3: True

UNIT 2: Use of big data in tourism

Question 1: False

Question 2: True

Question 3: False

UNIT 3: Cyber-security and data protection

Question 1: True

Question 2: False

Question 3: True

UNIT 4: Digital content creation

Question 1: False

Question 2: False

Question 3: False

UNIT 5: Digitalisation in tourism sector's strategies

Question 1: False

Question 2: True

Question 3: True

UNIT 6: Communication strategies and use of social media

Question 1: False

Question 2: True

Question 3: False



YOUR LOCAL GUIDE

DIGITAL SKILLS IN TOURISM

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