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POSSIBILITIES AND DEGREES OF DIGITAL TOURISM

Abstract:

Introduction. This article describes possibilities and degrees of digital tourism. Digitalization processes and technologies in tourism, the hospitality industry, the restaurant business and the catering sector have been able to expand the target audience due to the improvement in the quality of service. Digital tourism is a great way to save not only money, but also nerves and precious time thanks to the electronic services provided to travelers before, during and after the trip. The article provides copyright comments, conclusions and suggestions, as well as an analysis of the relevant literature.

Research methods. The methodology used by this study was based on the study and analysis of the relevant literature. In doing so, we used the integrated literature review method. The study examines past and present research focusing on digitalization of the economy, digital tourism, e-tourism. Lectures, conference proceedings, Internet publications and journals, as well as new literature and prospective project information on the subject were studied, and methods such as analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, and generalization were used.

Results and discussions. Digital tourism in the modern world of technology, almost all travel operators are trying to create a personal website that contains basic information about all the hot offers and tours of this organization, where you can also see customer reviews, evaluate the benefits of this company. All companies operating in accordance with the requirements of clients - tourists in the Internet spaces are based on different sites; these sites can represent the interests of several such companies, so the client can even make a comparison between them. However, the tour operator cannot simply place information on the provided tours to various foreign countries on the site.

Conclusion. Digitization in tourism is forcing the tourism business not only to adapt to modern events, but also to become more competitive in the evolving "digital world". The development of digital tourism in our country will provide us with great conveniences and benefits for our customers, and in turn will help to provide a situation that will allow the owners of tourism enterprises to earn more. Thanks to information and communication technologies, ubiquitous and universal accessibility, modern technologies are no longer just a tool for digital tourism, but the possibility of wide use in all aspects of life and travel.

Keywords: tourism, digital tourism, tourism info structure, degree of digital tourism, digital economy

Introduction. Great work is being done in our country on the development of modern information and communication technologies, the creation of an integrated system of electronic public services, the introduction of new mechanisms of communication between government agencies and the population. Along with the introduction of innovations in the system of economic relations, he noted the need for the formation of a digital space in Uzbekistan and the socio-economic research of the digital economy. In

addition, today the introduction and improvement of the digital economy is becoming a priority and important task of every developing country.

As one of the largest tourist destinations in Central Asia, our country has a great potential for the development of this sector of the economy. Over the past   5 years, the country has paid great attention to the further development of the regulatory framework in the field of tourism, the development of tourism infrastructure, promotion of tourism potential, strengthening human resources. Such reforms in the tourism sector will certainly serve to increase the number of tourists.

At the present stage, one of the development trends of the global tourism industry is the development of Internet technologies, in other words, the modern development of tourism is taking place in the digital economy. In other words, the process of digitization has not bypassed the tourism industry as well as many other industries.

Extensive use of web resources by potential tourists has led to the emergence of digital tourism, the development of intelligent web services to help customers make travel guidelines and decisions in the field of tourism.

In particular, raising the level of tourism in the economy to a strategic level, diversifying and sharply increasing the volume of domestic tourism services, creating the necessary conditions to acquaint citizens with the tourism potential of the country, improving the quality and competitiveness of tourism services in world markets. The use of electronic platforms and mobile applications is envisaged in order to create additional opportunities for the rapid development of modern service infrastructure [1].

The rapid development of advanced information technologies and telecommunications systems has led to the digitization of the tourism industry. Many scientists around the world have expressed their views on this. For example, Abovd G. and other scientists (1997) have noted the use of a mobile guide installed on your smartphone while traveling [2], Ardissono L. and others (2003) point out that digital support before, during, and after a tourist activity is a system of recommendations that allows you to find suitable accommodation during your trip [3].

Uriely N. (2005) wrote in his article that the goal is to further improve the quality or level of the tourism experience through the use of technology [4].

De Karolis B. and another group of scholars (2009) have argued that tourists use a variety of tools and solutions, such as interactive maps, tourist assistants, in their processes such as sightseeing, souvenir search, and shopping, and that these tools and approaches represent digital tourism design [5].

Durrant A. and others (2011) in another study focused on the benefits of using digital tourism in a variety of areas, such as museums, rural areas, zoos, and theme parks. [6]

Schinke T. et al (2010), Vatanabe A. Another group of scholars, such as (2012), focused on the important aspects of mobile devices in tourism, emphasizing the importance of tourism and geolocation applications, virtual reality applications in the display of tourist destinations [7], [8].

Benyon D. et al (2014) focused on the meaning of digital tourism, emphasizing it as supporting the tourism experience through digital means. Digital tourism is an information and communication tool, IT solution means the use of tools that help meet the needs of tourists and increase the competitiveness of organizations and enterprises in the field of tourism [9].

Dmitrios Buhalis, a professor at the University of Bournemouth in the UK, is one of the leading experts on digital tourism, emphasizing that digital tourism is synonymous with e-tourism, smart tourism is the digitization of service chains [10].

As a result of the analysis of the literature in this field, we believe that digital tourism is the use of digital tools in the process of planning, organizing, controlling and enjoying travel, with a set of electronic services provided to travelers before, during and after the trip [11].

Materials and methods. The methodology used by this study was based on the study and analysis of the relevant literature. In doing so, we used the integrated literature review method. The study examines past and present research focusing on digitalization of the economy, digital tourism, e-tourism. Lectures, conference proceedings, Internet publications and journals, as well as new literature and prospective project information on the subject were studied, and methods such as analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, and generalization were used.

Results. The tourism potential of the Republic of Uzbekistan is developing rapidly. In recent years, as one of the strategic sectors of the national economy, comprehensive measures have been taken to develop tourism, which is aimed at its rapid development, creating new jobs, increasing incomes, improving living standards and quality of life, as well as increasing investment attractiveness.

It should be noted that important trends of digital transformation are emerging in the field of tourism, and the integration of these technologies into tourism products and services is a key element of the innovative process leading to digital tourism.

The current state of the tourism industry depends in many respects on the Internet, electronic transactions and services provided through the network, in this regard, the expansion of the use of digital solutions is a prerequisite for adapting tourism enterprises to business needs.

It is clear that a similar situation is occurring in other sectors of the economy, but it should be noted that the tourism industry is different from other industries, so there is a growing need for Internet technology.

According to Internet live stats, today about 5.3 billion people around the world have access to Internet resources. They send more than 178 billion emails a day, more than 5.5 billion searches on Google, more than 549.5 million messages sent via Twitter, more than 5.2 billion videos viewed, more than 63.7 million photos Instagram and the remarkable thing is that these numbers are increasing day by day [17]. However, Internet users are people of different ages, different incomes and social status. Interestingly, among the active users of Internet resources, every year there is an increase in older people who communicate on social networks and use the Internet to search for information.

In line with global trends, the total number of Internet users in Uzbekistan has exceeded 27.2 million. Of these, the number of mobile Internet users is 25.3 million. To date, 95% of the population is covered by mobile internet, and 54% of households have access to high-speed internet [18]. Also, the number of mobile base stations is increasing and the capacity of the international data transmission network is accelerating. These indicators of digitalization in the economy of our country make it necessary to develop digital tourism in Uzbekistan.

The first digital services for tourists appeared in the early 2000s and were focused on online booking of accommodation and buying tickets. Booking.com made it possible for potential customers to see small hotels around the world. Airbnb has replicated the success of Booking.com by creating a new apartment rental market. Uber, Gett - taxi

aggregators, attracted a huge number of people to small businesses, gave them the opportunity to earn money using their own car, and at the same time made taxi services much more affordable.

Discussions. Currently, digital tourism is developing in various forms, one of which is the online purchase of tours designed by tour operators.

One of the modern forms of digitalization of tourism is mobile applications for cell phones. These applications are not only useful, but also necessary for the implementation of tourist travel. So, for example, services for booking rooms, various tickets, as well as services for choosing a travel route can be carried out through Internet systems, in particular, through search engines and websites of tourism organizations. In addition, potential consumers have the opportunity to search for this information using installed applications on smartphones.

Mobile applications are indispensable in obtaining reference information about the location of an individual, about the objects surrounding him at the place of temporary residence. For example, Google Maps allows users to display photos and give descriptions of tourist places, leave reviews, thereby making it easier for tourists to get acquainted with tourism objects. Yandex Maps and Google Maps give tourists the opportunity to create an individual route of their movement from one point to another using a personal car (GPS system).

Most of the currently used tools for digitalization of the tourism sector are occupied by various applications and computer systems.

Targeted work is underway to accelerate the development of tourism, create a decent infrastructure for tourists, further improve the quality of services, effectively use the tourist potential of the regions and create new jobs, increase the production of national tourism products.

Digital tourism in the modern world of technology, almost all travel operators are trying to create a personal website that contains basic information about all the hot offers and tours of this organization, where you can also see customer reviews, evaluate the benefits of this company. All companies operating in accordance with the requirements of clients - tourists in the Internet spaces are based on different sites; these sites can represent the interests of several such companies, so the client can even make a comparison between them. However, the tour operator cannot simply place information on the provided tours to various foreign countries on the site. Usually sites try to protect the rights and interests of all network users, therefore, the tour organizer is required to provide warranty obligations, the travel agency undertakes to be responsible for the quality of all tours it provides. In addition, all travel agencies must pay a certain amount as a fee for using the Internet space for advertising and selling tours. The site creates a general template for placing tourist offers, according to which all the tours in the database are systematized. Thus, network users can easily choose the appropriate option for themselves, because such templates require an indication of the cost of the tour, the characteristics of the hotel provided, all the directions provided for recreation and tours popular among vacationers.

A client who has visited the portal of the tourist base can independently set the conditions that he needs for a vacation (country, hotel, cost of a tour, air travel conditions and ticket prices, meals, etc.). By typing a specific request on such a travel site (depending on their preferences), the client automatically selects the most suitable offers for themselves. Travel portals make it possible to visit and be interested in information about tours for almost any Internet user.

In our opinion, in order to further develop tourism in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to improve the tourism info-structure, along with the necessary tourism infrastructure.

Tourism info-structure

Traditional booklets, flyers, leaflets, brochures, ...

Digital form:
- websites and portals,
- pages on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, ...)
- channels and bots in messengers (WhatsApp, Telegram)
- profiles on video portals (You Tube, Rutube, Mytube)
- mobile application and QR-code for smartphones and tablets

Figure 1. Tourism info-structure
Source: Prepared by the author as a result of research

Tourism info-structure is a set of information on all types of services related to tourism. The introduction and rapid improvement of innovative sources of information in all areas related to the development of tourism, the formation and effective use of the digital space is one of the important factors not only for domestic travelers but also for foreign tourists. This includes not only the production of booklets, flyers, leaflets, brochures and banners in the traditional form, but also digital web pages and portals, pages on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, ...), channels and bots on messengers (WhatsApp, Telegram), Preference will be given to profiles, mobile applications and QR-codes for smartphones and tablets on video portals (You Tube, Rutube, Mytube) (Figure 1).

The rapid development of unorganized tourism in Europe and the United States (i.e., without any tour operators and travel agents) is precisely the contribution of digital tourism. Before choosing a tourist destination, a tourist can get detailed information about the place via the Internet (even through 360-degree and panoramic views) without leaving home independently, buy electronic air tickets (rail, bus) on convenient routes, hotel at will chooses one of the types from the offers of many Internet portals, reviews and offers opinions of similar tourists about travel on social networks, and during the trip from online and offline maps such as Google Maps, Maps.me, geolocation services, mobile application, QR achieve maximum satisfaction through the effective use of code technology.

Digital tourism services can advise the traveler on finding the accommodation they need to help them plan their itinerary. In addition, they will be able to install it on their mobile phones as a mobile app guide.
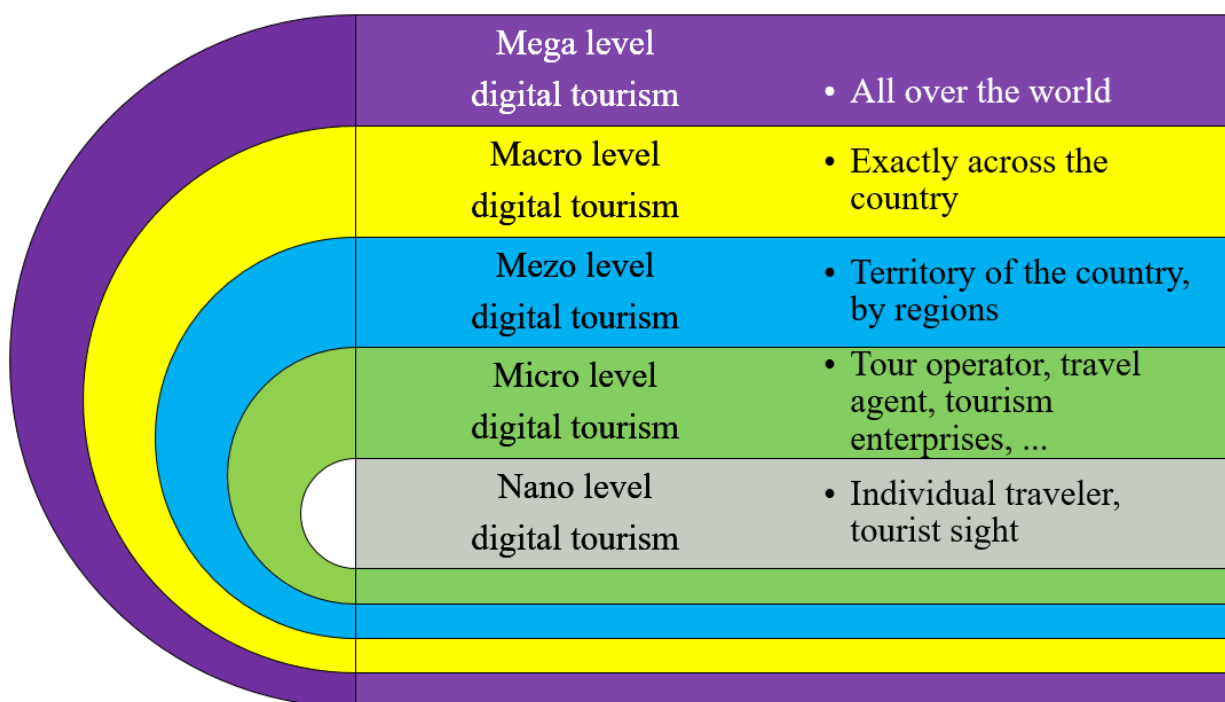
Figure 2. Conceptual model of interdependence of digital tourism at different levels
Source: Prepared by the author as a result of research

In the context of the digitalization of the tourism business, the customer himself searches for information about a particular type, selects a particular company and compares the prices of services. The process ends with the customer purchasing the type they like and the services are provided to him around the clock, which improves the quality of service and increases customer satisfaction. Note that the digital possibilities are constantly expanding and the possibilities of using them are increasing.

We can list the advantages of digital transformation for the tourism industry by increasing the knowledge of the tourist by providing detailed information about places of rest and travel, the availability of reasonable payment mechanisms and the ability to quickly and easily make payments for services consumed by the customer.

Conclusion. The rapid digitalization of tourism products in the global and domestic markets, the management system of the tourism industry, a process exacerbated by the challenges of modern history imposed by the global pandemic, indicates that global changes will take place in the industry in the near future. The identification and study of the main directions of ongoing transformations, a comparative analysis of the proposed digital solutions in countries and regions, and the technologies for their implementation are more relevant for both science and the business community than ever before. Since the further development of tourism is inextricably linked with digital transformations and information technologies, there is a need to turn to its general terminology, transformation and possible development models.

Thus, the availability and diversity of travel information based on digital tourism technology-based searches, feedback from users about a particular destination, photos and videos help them decide, plan and implement whether or not to choose that location.

It is expedient to identify the following priorities for the development of digital tourism in our country:

a) Development of tourism info-structure in conjunction with tourism infrastructure.

b) digital marketing, e-business opportunities, GoogleAnalitics, Yandex.Metrics, Social media, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram opportunities, regular participation in training seminars and trainings of local experts and foreign experts on digital knowledge and modern information technologies, such as e-mail marketing, mobile marketing (QR code, mobile application), innovative methods of Internet advertising. As a result, employees who have acquired modern knowledge during the trainings will be able to identify shortcomings in their work, eliminate them, as well as develop promising practical recommendations and suggestions, and further develop their field.

c) Support for scientific research, applied research, development of textbooks, manuals and guidelines for the development of digital tourism in Uzbekistan will further improve this area.

In the future, the digitalization of tourism will be accompanied by a further process of ousting traditional companies with offline offices from the tourism market, the development of designing tours according to parameters individually set by each specific client. Consequently, those tourism organizations that can best implement the process of customization in the provision of tourism services to consumers will receive competitive advantages.

Digitization in tourism is forcing the tourism business not only to adapt to modern events, but also to become more competitive in the evolving "digital world". The development of digital tourism in our country will provide us with great conveniences and benefits for our customers, and in turn will help to provide a situation that will allow the owners of tourism enterprises to earn more.

Thanks to information and communication technologies, ubiquitous and universal accessibility, modern technologies are no longer just a tool for digital tourism, but the possibility of wide use in all aspects of life and travel.

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