

***The importance of digital marketing for the development of the tourism and travel sector in Algeria: application requirements and obstacles .***

أهمية التسويق الرقمي في تطوير قطاع السياحة والسفر في الجزائر: متطلبات التطبيق ومعوقاته

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***Abstract:***

*The success of tourism institutions is related to their ability to keep pace with technology, employ digital technologies in their activities, and devise new ways to present their products and services. The study concluded with a statement of the importance of electronic tourism marketing to facilitate transactions, activate and promote the tourism sector and improve the image of Algeria as a tourist destination. In order to achieve the previous goals and advance the tourism sector in Algeria, most of the difficulties, especially progress in the structure of information technology, and the dissemination of culture among members of society To accept the idea of commerce and e-tourism, and most importantly, recruit communication sites, influencers and various means of e-tourism marketing.*

***Keywords:*** Digital marketing; Digital tourism marketing; Digital tourism; Digital tourism marketing obstacles.

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## **Introduction :**

Tourism institutions face great challenges in light of the rapid developments, most notably the digital transformation, the spread of digital technologies, and keeping pace with modern technological developments in this field, which requires these institutions to reconsider their traditional methods and strategies, hence, the use of modern technology methods, not only to increase its competitiveness, but also to ensure its survival and continuity in the market.

In this context, digital tourism is considered one of the most important challenges facing tourism companies in Algeria. The research paper aims to shed light on "digital tourism marketing in Algeria and its importance in accelerating the development of the tourism and travel sector, and trying to explore the requirements and obstacles to its application.

## **Research importance:**

The study derives its importance from the importance of digital transformation and the importance of applying and adopting digital marketing in tourism establishments in light of the current technological development, Especially with the changing of lifestyle of consumers and their ways of thinking, and the tendency of many of them to use different electronic technologies to meet their various needs.

## **Research objectives:**

- This research aims to achieve a number of objectives, including:
- Highlighting various concepts related to digital tourism and digital tourism marketing;
- Clarifying the reality of adopting digital tourism marketing in Algeria, and identifying the requirements for its implementation to achieve sustainable tourism development;
- Highlighting the potential benefits that digital tourism marketing can bring in Algeria and the difficulties of implementing it, and proposing appropriate solutions to advance tourism in general and digital tourism in particular.

To cover the topic, the following topics will be covered :

- Basic concepts about digital tourism and digital tourism marketing;
- The importance of digital marketing in activating tourism activity;
- Tourism digital marketing tools;
- Requirements for the application of digital tourism marketing;
- The reality and indicators of digital marketing for tourism in Algeria;
- Future projects to create digital applications and stimulate digital tourism in Algeria;
- Obstacles to applying digital marketing in tourism establishments.

## **I-Basic concepts about digital tourism and digital tourism marketing**

Tourism has multiple definitions, and each one differs from the others due to differences in vision for each definition of tourism activity. The United Nations Statistical Commission and the World Tourism Organization agreed in 2000 (Anthony, 2019, p. 10) on the following definition: "Tourism includes the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for a consecutive period not exceeding one year, to spend leisure time and engage in an activity. What and other reasons are not related to the exercise of paid employment in the place visited." Tourism may be defined as the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors (Amoako, Obuobisa-Darko, & Ohene Marfo, 2021).

Accordingly, we conclude that tourism is the phenomenon of individuals moving legally to places other than their permanent place of residence for a period of not less than twenty-four hours and not more than one year for any purpose other than obtaining work, and the economic, social, cultural and civilizational effects that result from that.

The International Foundation defines digital tourism as “the services provided by information and communication technology for the purpose of implementing and promoting tourism and hotel services across various open and closed networks, relying on the principles and foundations of electronic commerce.” In fact, its concept goes beyond that, as it even includes mobile tourism for mobile electronic devices. Such as mobile phones, portable electronic notebooks,...etc(2021, بن نوي). Digital tourism means the use of telecommunications and information technology that can help to meet the needs of tourists and improves the competitiveness of organizations in tourism.(Happ & Horváth, Digital tourism is the challenge of future – a new approach to tourism, 2018). Digital marketing is a phenomenon that combines personalization (dealing with the needs of each individual individually) and comprehensive distribution to achieve the desired goals. It is a concept that focuses on the user, is more measurable, widespread and interactive.(Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, September 2016, pp. 38-39)

Digital marketing includes all the digital interactive tools to promote products and services in the context of personal and direct relationships with consumers. Digital marketing facilitates and enhances the implementation of participatory marketing, amplifying the phenomenon of information dissemination and helping to transform word of mouth into viral marketing that brands more or less control. (CREG: Centre de ressources en économie-gestion,, 2013). (Vinh & Ly, 2021, p. 04)indicated that digital marketing is the use of electronic media to promote products or services in the market with the aim of attracting customers and allowing them to interact with the brand through electronic media. Among the most important techniques in digital marketing: social media marketing, online marketing, whether through websites, online advertisements, emails, interactive kiosks, interactive television, or mobile phones.

Many factors influence tourist behaviour in making a travel decision, especially with the presence of digital information (Klaasvakumok & all, 2020, p. 393). Many tourists choose their destinations based on marketing efforts. This means that these destinations must be promoted to create some awareness among tourists. Individuals, companies, and tourism institutions typically promote these tourism destinations and activities through advertising, publicity, word of mouth, or other forms of marketing. (Odigbo, Ogbu, & Alfred, 2015, p. 40)

## **II- The importance of digital marketing in activating tourism activity**

The use of digital technologies in marketing has the following effects (Sokolova N.G., 2019, p. 512):

- Differentiation (through marketing research, advertising and extensive data analysis);
- Creating new sources of income (by increasing online sales, creating virtual copies of customers and monetizing them);
- Cost reduction (through increasing the number of virtual retail outlets, inventory management, big data analysis, demand forecasting, use of revenue management and automation of supply chain elements);
- Increasing the value of the organization due to marketing resources enhanced by the introduction of digital technologies (by strengthening the marketing information system, increasing brand strength, increasing loyalty, and strengthening strategic relationships).

In the field of tourism the impact of online communication and the subsequent spread of information exchange has been studied by many researchers, who all agree that advances in technology and the development of the tourism sector are linked, as Buhalis and John (2011) say: “The adoption of ICT and the Internet has led to a paradigm shift In the tourism industry, it is known as e-tourism, where valuable online content is created and shared in a computer-mediated environment, and in this way “the experience can simulate real visits and virtual experiences and provide realistic experiences.” (Pitana & Pitanatri, 2016, p. 117).

Today, the Internet is one of the most effective communication tools. This promotional channel is designed to inform potential visitors about tourism products and share the most attractive and innovative features with them. In addition, it is less expensive(Odigbo, Ogbu, & Alfred, 2015, p. 40). Digital marketing helps provide individuals with information of interest to them, such as tourist attractions, accommodations, restaurants, travel agencies, and shopping centres. In addition, it provides tools equipped with prices, payment systems, maps, distance calculations, travel routes, etc, which provides great potential to influence a person's decisions(Klaasvakumok & all, 2020, p. 393).

Many tourism organizations face many problems due to the failure to communicate with the public virtually, as today's traveller can virtually tour destinations with the touch of a finger, communicate with distant islands and plan special adventures, likely before individuals choose their destination, which festival to visit or which festival to visit. In other areas, they are looking for the opinions of others, especially since not all tourists can easily reach the office to obtain information or provide comments, which may create a gap between the destinations and the potential tourists. Without the right mix of tourism marketing strategies, tools and technology, travel and tourism companies will be unable to find potential customers, and more importantly, those potential customers will not be found. Hence, a successful tourism business requires a brand that speaks to its target markets, content that successfully generates leads and a level of service that listens to customer requests(Odigbo, Ogbu, & Alfred, 2015, p. 40).

Information technology development is changing how businesses are conducted and contributing to developing competitiveness, sustainability and communication strategies. Tourism institutions must, therefore, promote an active dialogue with beneficiary groups, and it is certain that the Internet has greatly changed the way tourists and travellers communicate with each other, exchange views, and interact with the tourism industry in general while organizing their trips, or commenting on the services provided in hotels and restaurants. ...etc. (Pitana & Pitanatri, 2016, p. 117). Tourism organizations can also implement an online word-of-mouth strategy using various social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, websites, blogs, etc. It is worth noting that a large percentage of new tourists plan and organize their own trips, thanks to the widespread availability of information online. By using digital marketing, the state can spread awareness of its tourism products, increase its market share, and be able to appear in conversations conducted through social networking sites and blogs, thus enhancing its tourism brand. It is also considered a relatively inexpensive way for the state to implement its tourism marketing campaigns, as it is available to anyone with Internet access(Odigbo, Ogbu, & Alfred, 2015, p. 41) .

On the other hand, artificial intelligence and virtual and augmented reality facilitate interaction with consumers, which leads to loyalty to a particular institution. These technologies allow collection of information about people's daily lives, their TV program preferences, Facebook likes, etc. Credit card purchases, searches, and activities performed using a mobile phone also allow data to be stored(Zeqiri, Dahmani, & Ben Yous, 2020, pp. 68-69) .

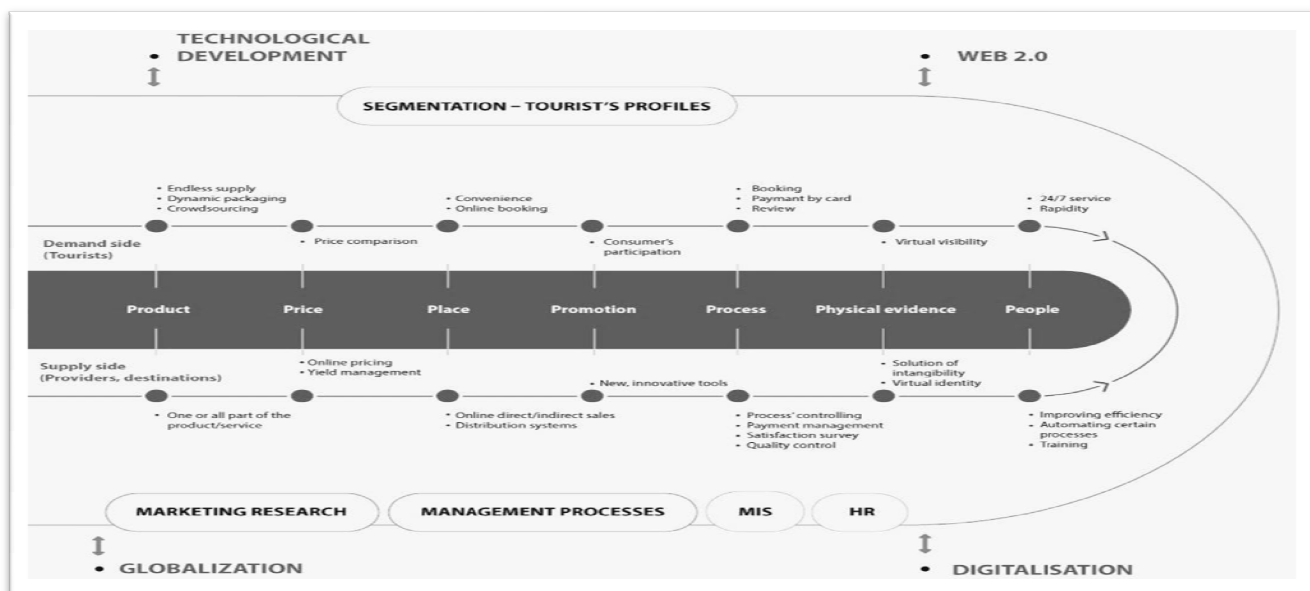
On the other hand, tourism represents 5% of global carbon emissions, with transportation accounting for 75% of carbon emissions in this sector. Therefore, Industry 4.0 technologies are environmentally friendly and one of the solutions to achieve sustainability. (Zeqiri, Dahmani, & Ben Yous, 2020, pp. 68-69) suggest five ways Hospitality 4.0 can help achieve sustainability: increased energy efficiency, more efficient water use, reduced food waste, circular hospitality, and using virtual reality to reduce transportation and travel.

Finally, we point out that the Corona pandemic has greatly affected tourism in many countries, and here, the importance of digital marketing has become more prominent to mitigate these effects. Digital platforms have allowed developing alternatives “free of direct contact.” For example, many museums have developed completely virtual experiences that allow people to visit spaces and exhibitions and interact with them remotely (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021, p. 53).

### III- tourism digital marketing tools

Through Figure 1, the electronic elements of digital tourism and digital marketing can be illustrated

**Figure n°1 The model of digital tourism in a marketing-oriented approach**



Source: Happ, E., & Horváth, Z. I. (2020). A study of digital marketing tools usage habits among hungarian tourists,;. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 32(04), 1283-1289.

From the figure, it can be seen how complex the digitization process is in tourism. With recent technological developments, a qualitative shift has occurred and a new era of tourism has begun, which is the era of digital marketing for tourism, which has gone beyond the traditional concept, as it not only takes into account the needs of the consumer, but is now actively involved in digital processes and the consumer is now participating in designing products, as well as About developing prices in real time. The main place of sales is the electronic/virtual space, and online communication occupies the first place in building relationships with the consumer, which at the same time means a personal message that fits the customer profile. Marketing activities are influenced by the consumer, his behavior and the tourist profiles identified in it. (Happ & Horváth, A study of digital marketing tools usage habits among hungarian tourists, 2020)

Digital marketing is a strategic process of promoting goods and services to a target market on the Internet by incorporating important marketing concepts through digital resources, activities at tourist sites are fundamentally influenced by how tourists perceive the destination. We limit tourism digital marketing tools to four elements (Muddassar Khan & all, 2022, p. 04): blogs, search engine optimization, mobile applications, and social media:

**III-1-Blogs:** Thousands of individuals have started writing blogs about their travels. The latter covers all elements of travel, such as applying for a visa, booking tickets/vehicles/accommodation, describing local lifestyles, explaining customs processes, advising on on-site errand activities, and providing travel tips. Travellers are increasingly considering online reviews when choosing vacations due to the huge increase in the popularity of blogging.

**III-2- Social media:** Mainstream social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter, have proven their influence and effectiveness in tourism institutions.

**III-3-**The current popularity of **mobile applications** and their introduction into the marketing of tourism products can be traced to the widespread use of mobile phones, which have long helped organize visitor experiences.

**III-4-Search engine marketing:** It has become important for organizations to better understand their foreign customers and the type of ecotourism destination they should promote. These engines have evolved into an essential way for travellers to find and filter information and an important channel for hospitality and tourism companies to reach potential customers.

#### **IV- Requirements for applying digital tourism marketing:**

Digital tourism marketing needs to meet several requirements in order to be applied, especially in developing countries. It can be summarized as follows: (شعابنية و بن جلول ، يومي 24 و 25 أفريل 2017)

##### **IV-1- Providing institutional support and cooperation:**

It relates to the importance of cooperation between government institutions, the private sector and civil society, as governments can provide support to various tourism institutions and brokers in order to use Internet applications in their field of work, as well as providing detailed databases on tourism resources and tourism products and supporting websites.

##### **IV-2- The existence of a specific legal framework at the international and local levels:**

The most important legal requirements necessary to regulate digital tourism can be identified as follows:

-The existence of an integrated legal system for electronic transactions at the international and national levels that joins forces with the tireless efforts of countries in providing the material and technical capabilities for tourism companies to work on activating the digital tourism pattern and increasing tourism investment incentives to encourage national and foreign capital to enter seriously into the fields of tourism, especially digital;

- The existence of legislation and regulations regulating the work of tourism institutions and agencies that are compatible with the new forms imposed by digital tourism and setting rules for regulating electronic signature, electronic payment, and other means of electronic transactions and developing legal legislation to regulate the work of tourist guides electronically.

#### **IV-3- Progress in the field of information technology infrastructure:**

These requirements relate to the state of the existing technical infrastructure, how to develop it and how to invest in the field of digital tourism marketing. This includes the following:

- Developing the infrastructure for modern means of communication and information to provide a broader opportunity to connect to Internet services, whether in the tourist producer country or the countries targeted by tourism marketing.

- Encouraging the emergence of the electronic intermediary in the tourism sector by working to encourage the establishment of a network of parallel websites for all workers in the tourism sector - whether in the field of hotels, airlines, travel agencies, tourist guides, and others. This is done in cooperation with traditional intermediaries in the field of tourism, as they complement each other.

- Creating new types of institutions and bodies for promoting tourism that relies on their work on websites provided on the Internet. These websites must be designed per recognized international standards so that they can compete with competing tourist sites in other countries.

#### **IV-3- There is a minimum level of use of electronic commerce in various transactions:**

This includes using Internet applications and other modern technological means directly related to tourism, such as airline tickets and services, hotel services, transportation and car rental companies, tourist restaurants, etc.

#### **IV-4- Focus on developing human resources and providing a supportive cultural environment:**

To implement digital tourism marketing and the transactions associated with it, it is necessary to have a cultural environment prepared for this type of transaction. Moving forward with digital tourism marketing programs would cause harm to agencies in which current employees resist new work systems due to their lack of familiarity with the necessary skills. This drives the need to build a clear strategy for developing human resources that qualifies them to join digital tourism and develop appropriate training programs.

#### **V- The reality and indicators of digital marketing for tourism in Algeria.**

In recent years, Algeria has entered an accelerated phase by keeping pace with the tremendous development in the field of technology at the global level. The establishment of e-tourism is linked to the establishment of e-commerce. Therefore, tourism development is linked to the development of marketing and commerce via the Internet. In the case of Algeria, we find e-commerce weak compared to other and neighbouring countries, and thus, the weakness of e-tourism as it is part of e-commerce.

#### **V-1- Digitization indicators in Algeria:**

Through the annual report issued by the PORTULANS Institute for the year 2021, which includes 121 countries, it appears that Algeria is still ranked 100 with a total of 38.98 points, which is considered a lagging rank that reflects the digital gap that Algeria suffers from. The following figure shows the network readiness index for Algeria 2021 (Dutta & Lanvin , 2021).

**Figure n° 2: Network Readiness Index for Algeria in 2021**

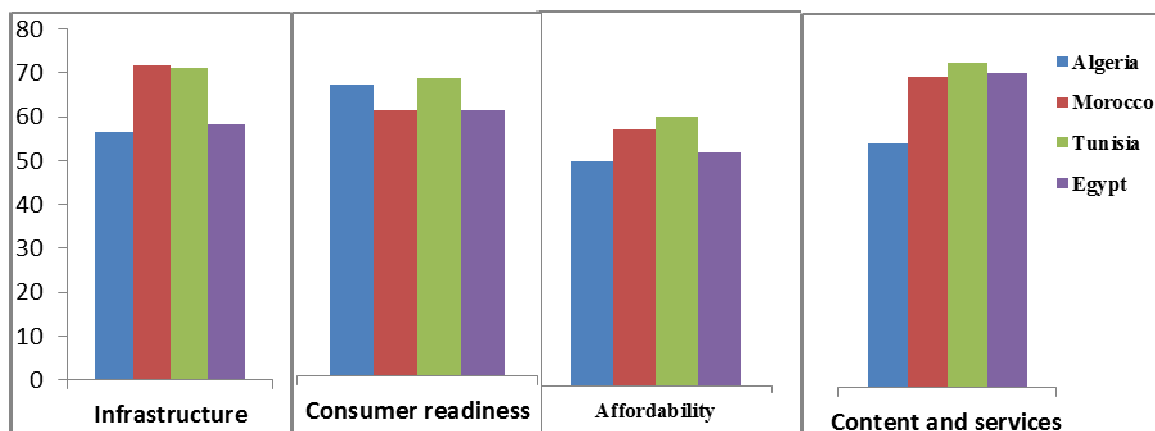


Source: Dutta, S., & Lanvin, B. (2021). *The Network Readiness Index 2021 : Algeria*. PORTULANS Institute. Retrieved 10 15, 2022, from <https://networkreadinessindex.org/wp-content/uploads/reports/algeria.pdf>

Despite the various projects and strategies followed since 2008, the results achieved in the field of digitization reflect slow development in Algeria compared to the qualitative leaps that many countries have recently achieved in this field, such as Singapore, or some Arab countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain. It is noted that there are problems with regard to the strategy followed and the structuring of the national economy, which is built on the basis of oil rents and not a real economy with an orientation towards the knowledge economy (Bachari, 2020, p. 590). It appears from the figure that Algeria ranked late in several areas and did not even reach the level of middle-income countries. We also notice a delay in terms of information and communications technology infrastructure, as well as sector governance and the business environment.

A study of BPS\* conducted around the world since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic indicates increased reliance on digital tools (e.g. use of the Internet, online social media, specialized apps, and digital platforms), but digital inequality between companies still exists, and this has proven to be more pronounced in MENA countries than in other developing regions. Although reliance on digital tools remains limited in Algeria, the BPS indicates that companies have used them more in response to the COVID-19 crisis (The World Bank, 2021). Figure 02 shows the mobile connectivity index for the year 2021.

**Figure n° 3: Mobile phone connectivity index in 2021 (GSMA, 2022)**



<https://www.mobileconnectivityindex.com/#year=2021>

In Algeria, the Mobile Connectivity Index reveals that despite relatively high consumer readiness and affordability, digital infrastructure lags behind peer countries such as Egypt, Morocco



and Tunisia. This partly explains the fact that content and services are less developed. In Algeria, it faces frequent interruptions in service, which provides consumers with a low quality of service. Algeria's level of electronic maturity has not reached the level achieved by other more developed economies in the field of digital government, and it has not even reached the level of transformation reached by some Arab countries. But there are efforts or signs that help develop the tourism sector in Algeria, which we will explain in the following elements.

## **V-2- Modern means of communication that are used to exchange information about Algerian tourism**

Tourism bodies in Algeria work to strengthen institutional communication and seek to bring the administration closer to the citizens. In light of this, several platforms and websites have been activated in their dealings, whether with government bodies, tourism institutions or even tourists, as follows (بولعوينات، 2021، الصفحات 265-267):

\* **For government bodies:** such as chambers of traditional industry and offices, training schools affiliated with the Ministry of Tourism, tourism directorates, and others, they rely on communication through e-mail (yahoo, outlook, google...etc).

• **For tourism institutions:** such as hotels, tourist vehicles, tourism agencies, and others, a number of electronic platforms have been allocated, including the travel and tourism agencies platform, which facilitates following up on the file and procedures for opening tourist agencies. It is a platform for monitoring investment projects to follow up on all stages of establishing a tourism project, such as establishing a hotel, or a tourist barn, and monthly follow-up of tourism activities and traditional industries that take place at the level of state directorates.

• **For the tourist or citizen:** A special electronic platform has been allocated for the electronic promotion of tourism in Algeria, [visitalgeria.dz](http://visitalgeria.dz), in order to promote the tourist destination of Algeria. It is a portal that was recently launched on September 27, 2018. It is considered a tourist guide par excellence that contains all the tourist information related to the Algerian states in detail and to facilitate browsing. The inclusion of three languages, Arabic, French, and English, and a soon-to-be project to add the Amazigh language. This portal aims to:

- Introducing the diversity of Algerian tourism and the most essential destinations available from geographical regions, climate diversity, aquatic and animal resources, tourist facilities, archaeological monuments, museums, cultural events and demonstrations, and Algerian celebrities, in addition to information about the weather;
- Promoting all types of tourism, in addition to highlighting the art of cooking and the richness of traditional industry;
- Information about embassies, banks and currency exchange;
- Information about visa and entry procedures to Algeria;
- The ability to search for tourism agencies, classified or unclassified hotels, or restaurants by specifying the state and city in the search to obtain the available list in addition to information such as phone numbers, the official website, email, and the location on the map;
- Providing information about available transportation companies (air, sea, rail, and taxi companies), including telephone numbers, e-mail, fax, and addresses;
- Obtain a list of national tourist trips and outings organized throughout the week;
- Providing a list of available medical tourism centers;
- Providing tourist brochures and maps services.

Therefore, it is considered a single platform that collects all the information that a tourist needs, facilitating the hassle of searching and helping him organize his trip or vacation within the country. This portal has also been linked to a YouTube channel that can be accessed directly through the portal itself. It is considered a promotional channel, in turn, as it displays videos about events, developments, and activities that take place at the level of the tourism sector, in addition to promotional videos and reports about tourist areas and tourism in Algeria and other programs related to tourism, which you promote.

This portal has also been linked to a Twitter page and a Facebook page, the latter of which has great interaction as it registered 10,000 subscribers within a month of its opening. This page, in turn, displays all developments about tourism events and activities, such as organizing salons inside the country or participating in salons and exhibitions outside the country to promote the tourist destination. As well as pictures of tourist areas and sites and introducing them and their most essential features. This page allows direct interaction for followers by submitting their comments, contributions, questions and inquiries. In addition to the above, this page provides the possibility of interacting and communicating with craftsmen, owners of traditional industries, photographers, as well as hotel owners and agencies by making it a means to display and promote their creativity, products, and the offers they offer.

In addition to the digital platforms or websites of tourism agencies that are dedicated to introducing their tasks, mechanisms, sub-directories, and activities. Which in turn is considered a means of communicating and promoting tourism, such as: the official website of the Ministry of Tourism (mta.gov.dz), which in turn contains information about Algerian tourism, regions and sites, activities and outcomes, concluded agreements, investment in the field of tourism, etc. It is a website that is updated every week; Signed by the National Office of Tourism (ont-dz.org), Algerian National Office of Tourism (onat.dz), Hotel, Tourism and Baths Complex (groupe-htt.com), National Agency for the Promotion of Traditional Crafts (anart.dz), National Chamber of Traditional Industry and Crafts (cnam. dz), these floors are linked to pages on social networks to increase interaction and bring information closer to the citizen or tourist. It is also keen to update these pages in real time and publish developments.

**In addition to the above, innovation and information and communication technology were used through the tourism development master plan**, where the following was recorded:

- Completion of the electronic portal for the Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industries.
- Digitization of administration.
- Organizing a tourism statistical development workshop in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (February 2016)

Information and communication technology has also been integrated into the various dynamics of the tourism development plan (SDAT 2030), including the following:

\* **Activating the design of the marketing strategy** by using marketing tools used by most tourism departments (website, Facebook pages, use of flyers, CDs...)

\* **Regarding the implementation of the promotion and communication plan**, the following was implemented:

- Study, implement and equip 25 tourist information and guidance centers (CIOT) \* in 25 states
- Some states prepare a communication plan.
- Developing the infrastructure of local tourism offices.

-Increasing the number of travel and tourism agencies to 2,220 tourism and travel agencies as of 12-31-2017.

**\*In terms of developing a sustainable system for tourism monitoring and vigilance (SPOET),** the following has been embodied:

- Creating a database by the National Tourism Development Agency (ANDT)
- The creation of a geographic information system (SIG) is under progress by ANDT.

#### **VI- Future projects for electronic marketing of tourism services.**

Regarding future applications to keep pace with the digital transformation in the field of tourism, we mention:

- A digital guide to Algeria was launched in the form of a mobile app in 2018, with the aim of promoting tourism in the capital and providing information on services such as hotels, restaurants and museums. The Ministry of Tourism is also working to improve the reputation of travel and tourism agencies, conducting 295 inspections of Algiers-based agencies in 2017, resulting in 152 formal actions against companies involved in some form of malpractice. There were 2,378 travel agencies and 44 local tourism bureaus operating in 2017, up from 2,041 agencies and 35 bureaus in 2016. (Oxford business group, 2019):
- Establishing an intranet and extranet network;
- The digital portal project for managing the tourism sector and traditional industries;
- Updating the platforms: for tourism agencies and following up on investment projects;
- Creating a digital platform for tourist guides;
- Establishing three websites for training and distance education and providing them with electronic libraries;
- Establishing an information system for the traditional industries sector in cooperation with the Ministry of Post and Information and Communication Technologies;
- Creating a web-sig application, which is a geographic information system that allows displaying the search results indicated on the map of each state (for example, a search for agencies, treatment centres (baths), hotels...etc)

#### **-Smart city project in Algiers:.**

The Algeria Smart City project represents a local continuation of broader ICT measures, including investment in infrastructure to enhance connectivity and the development of a more appropriate regulatory framework. Although Algeria has faced the same challenges as many other emerging markets, the Algeria Smart City initiative demonstrates the benefit of approaching development from a less traditional perspective. Smart city developers face a particular challenge in developing and deploying technologies, as the rate of innovation often exceeds their ability to absorb and adopt such developments. The success of the Algeria smart city project will depend on the ability to adopt a different approach to progress based on leapfrog technologies and new development models (Oxford business group, 2019).

### Use of electronic payment methods in tourism institutions:

Aware of the importance of electronic payment as a necessary link to complete electronic exchanges and thus give an impetus to electronic tourism, an agreement was signed to generalize the use of electronic payment methods in tourism institutions between the tourism, postal and telecommunications sectors with the aim of improving the quality of services provided by hotels and reducing cash and traditional transactions.

This agreement was concluded between the operators of the tourism sector, which are the Hotel, Tourism and Spa Groupe HTT, the National Office of Tourism, Tourism and Travel, the National Federation of Hotel Operators (FNH) and the National Federation of Tourist Associations (FNAT) on the one hand, and the Algeria Post Corporation on the other hand, under the supervision of the Minister of Tourism, Traditional Industries and Family Work, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications.

The agreement aims to adopt electronic payment technologies that allow visitors to these institutions to pay for the services they provide without needing to carry or trade cash. Under this agreement, the Algeria Post Corporation facilitates the opening of current postal accounts for customers of tourism institutions and also provides them with assistance in installing electronic payment devices (TPE) that operate using the "Golden" card.

- A new web portal has been created on the MTA website to provide information about top destinations, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants and transportation services, as well as culinary arts and crafts. The portal is available in three languages - English, Arabic and French (Oxford business group, 2019).

### VII- Obstacles to applying digital marketing in tourism institutions

Promoting a destination is not an easy task. The challenges and difficulties faced by digital marketing stem from the multi-characteristic nature of the destination on the one hand and from the heterogeneous demand of travellers on the other hand (Pitana & Pitana, 2016, p. 121). Through a study completed by (Dredge & all., 2019, p. 23) on some European institutions, five main groups of challenges or difficulties facing these institutions in using digitization emerged:

- **Lack of financial capabilities:** The inability to provide the necessary resources results in a set of challenges that are difficult to address - time, skills, trained personnel, knowledge, the need for investment, etc.

- **Technology-Strategic Issues:** A set of difficulties arise related to the availability, cost and choice of technologies, possible solutions available and the need to persuade employees, convince managers to adopt new technologies, and the need to identify solutions efficiently and effectively.

- **Difficulties of digitization:** Difficulties include ICT hardware costs, ongoing maintenance costs, and employee training costs, which are balanced against the size of the business, expected benefits, and other priorities. These issues are complex and interrelated and cannot be easily acted upon.

- **Internet (availability, cost, and reliability):** includes availability and cost of infrastructure, poor Internet connections, and issues related to Internet service providers.

**-Technological-operational issues:** A number of issues arise associated with appropriate techniques and technologies, including technical issues such as virus protection, data loss, outdated software, time and effort required to maintain online stores, etc.

Among the shortcomings and obstacles facing digital marketing for tourism in Algeria, we mention the following (بن نوي، يناير 2021، صفحة 17):

#### **VII-1-The absence of online sales curbs digital tourism in Algeria:**

Selling tourism products and services is a trade that is still slow in Algeria, as the lack of tourist sites specialized in this field is reflected in this. Even if there are sites with some tourist agencies or actors in tourism activity, they do not care much about marketing and promoting their products, as they only offer appointments. For flights, destinations and other services. The reason for this is the slow process of e-commerce and digital transactions in Algeria, and the absence of competition among tourism players does not lead to the search for differentiation, the discovery of new methods, and the innovation of ways to communicate with customers.

#### **VII-2-Limited representation of tourism agencies online:**

Tourism agencies are still far from modern competition from the perspective of the World Tourism Organization, whether globally, regionally, or even in the Maghreb, as they are through the few websites that exist for some agencies that display their services and proposed destinations only. Some may go beyond that in offering the reservation process for trips and hotels.

#### **VII-3-Lack of rapprochement between the tourism and banking sectors:**

This made tourism institutions lose many customers, as electronic reservations alone are not enough to make the tourist consumer remain loyal to the destination in light of the intense foreign competition. The absence of electronic payment in Algeria is considered one of the most important basic factors that prompt the electronic tourist consumer to postpone the electronic purchasing process via the Internet. This postponement has a direct negative impact on the national tourism corporation because it has no guarantee that this tourist who has booked its tourism service will Electronically not change his purchasing position and tourist destination.

#### **VII-4-Failure of tourism actors to keep pace with developments in information and communications technology:**

Despite the state's efforts to advance its sectors with regard to its use of information and communication technology, the Algerian tourism sector continues to appear modest in its use of modern technologies. Hence, the tourism sector suffers from the scarcity of tourist sites promoting the Algerian tourism product, so we find only a few sites belonging to the sector. Public and some to the private sector, including the leading tourism portal, "www.algeriantourism.com".

This portal secures communication and reservations with various travel agencies, airlines, and tourist hotels. The site includes all information related to tourist trips. We also find the National Tourism Office website (www.dz-ont.org), which is characterized by its lack of dynamics. We may also find some forum sites that display Algeria's most important tourist areas, which contribute little to promoting this sector.

## Conclusion:

E-tourism has become the means to help advance and recover the tourism sector in light of technological development and the tendency of most institutions and sectors to benefit from this technology. This will put tourism institutions before new challenges, whether in terms of reconsidering their management methods or marketing methods for Algeria as a tourist destination. As a result of this trend, organizations must be more prepared for a new kind of competition or new challenges, and they must use e-marketing tools and techniques as a mechanism to confront these changes and challenges and win customers and communicate with them despite the challenges and obstacles they will face. Accordingly, the study reached a number of results, the most important of which are:

- The biggest obstacle to implementing digital tourism marketing in Algeria is the weak infrastructure, the huge financial burdens necessary for its implementation, and the lack of specialized human competencies and training courses to support the application of digital tourism in Algeria.

- The success of the tourism industry at the present time is based mainly on digital tourism marketing tools and techniques due to their ability to improve the experience of tourists in searching for information, and it also allows for comparison between places, prices and offers. It enables institutions to achieve tangible marketing efficiency by providing competitive tourism services of international quality in a new marketing environment characterized by rapid changes and the elimination of spatial boundaries.

- Digital marketing helps to overcome several shortcomings of traditional marketing through several advantages and greater flexibility in facilitating transactions, providing a sufficient amount of information, expanding the target segment, and ease of interacting with them. Digital marketing provides the opportunity to target shoppers individually, manage the relationship with them, and provide bridges of communication with customers, reducing costs and efforts.

## Suggestions:

- The necessity of expanding and developing the electronic communications and information infrastructure in the tourist destination country and tourism exporting countries to increase the movement of travel sales and ensure its management and rapid access to it to activate digital transformation mechanisms and tools;

- Providing facilities and equipment for integrating information and communications technology within the tourism sector, and the need to pay attention to the Internet and modern technological means, develop and expand them, and make them accessible to all employees and all tourism institutions;

- The necessity of developing well-thought-out strategies to develop tourism, focusing on the importance of digital tourism, based on the available human and material capabilities, and making digital tourism more familiar and establishing it legally by developing and activating legal legislation.

- Providing appropriate regulatory and institutional frameworks that ensure the application of e-commerce rules and principles within the tourism sector and enhance the rules of competition and sales. Providing legal frameworks for concluding and liberalizing e-commerce transactions between

different countries of the world in a way that ensures that tourism institutions are enabled to activate e-tourism;

- Developing digital marketing by expanding the establishment of various websites that provide internet services related to introducing the tourism product. The management of the tourist destination must also organize the use of various digital data to predict sales movement in the future and control any bottlenecks related to tourism demand.

- Spreading the culture of electronic transactions for tourism by securing and disseminating electronic payment methods, contracting with large companies to provide various electronic services to consumers, and encouraging private hotel owners to use electronic marketing in reservations, payments, and exchanging information and services with customers.;

-The government should create an active website and tourism pages on major social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, etc., and ensure that the page is updated regularly and that questions and complaints from potential consumers are addressed quickly and appropriately.

-Tourism establishments should employ a social media expert with great knowledge and skill in search engine optimization who can understand internet statistics that reveal the progress of consumer interest and help create a database of tourists.

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