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## **Digital transformation of the tourism industry in the conditions of globalization: world experience and conclusions for Ukraine**

**Abstract. Introduction.** *Digitalization is becoming a key factor in updating the national tourism system. It ensures the modernization of services, increases the competitiveness of enterprises, expands the availability of tourist products, and integrates Ukraine into the global digital space.*

**Purpose.** *This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the state and dynamics of the digital transformation of Ukraine's tourism industry, determine its factors and barriers, assess the role of innovative services and digital infrastructure, and form strategic directions for the further development of digital tourism.*

**Results.** *Based on international ratings and the TTDI index methodology, Ukraine's position in the global tourism landscape was determined, as well as the reasons for its temporary absence from official global assessments after 2019. A comparison with neighboring countries revealed that regional leaders in digital tourism are developing integrated online services, national tourism platforms, and digital infrastructure. These can serve as reference points for Ukraine. A survey was conducted among Ukrainian tourists regarding the growing role of digital tools in travel planning and changing consumer priorities. The survey also addressed the increased importance of safety, cost, and service availability during wartime. The survey emphasizes that domestic tourism remains a key form of tourist activity for Ukrainians. Technological innovations, such as VR/AR, digital maps, mobile applications, blockchain, analytics systems, and FinTech, can drive industry recovery and increase its competitiveness.*

**Conclusions.** *Strategic directions for developing digital tourism in Ukraine have been formulated. These include developing the digital tourist ecosystem, modernizing infrastructure, strengthening state coordination, developing sustainable and niche types of tourism, harmonizing legislation with European standards, investing in human capital, and increasing digital literacy. The importance of digitalization as a tool for post-war recovery, economic growth, and Ukraine's integration into the European tourist space is emphasized.*

**Keywords:** digital transformation; digital economy; tourism; tourism industry; digital technologies; innovative services; FinTech in tourism; digital infrastructure; smart tourism.

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## Цифрова трансформація туристичної галузі в умовах глобалізації: світовий досвід та висновки для України

**Анотація.** Проведено комплексний аналіз цифрової трансформації туристичної галузі України в умовах глобалізаційних процесів, з урахуванням сучасних технологічних трендів, змін туристичної поведінки та викликів воєнного часу. Цифровізація стає ключовим чинником оновлення національної туристичної системи, забезпечуючи модернізацію сервісів, підвищення конкурентоспроможності підприємств, розширення доступності туристичних продуктів та інтеграцію України до глобального цифрового простору.

Проведено аналіз цифрової інфраструктури національної туристичної системи – розвиток онлайн-платформ, цифрових гідів, електронних карт, AR/VR-маршрутів, сервісів бронювання та інформаційних порталів. Опитування серед українських туристів показало зростання ролі цифрових інструментів у плануванні подорожей, зміну споживчих пріоритетів та посилення значення факторів безпеки, вартості та доступності сервісів у воєнний період. Внутрішній туризм залишається ключовим напрямом активності українців.

Обґрунтовано, що технологічні інновації – VR/AR, цифрові карти, мобільні застосунки, блокчайн, системи аналітики та FinTech – можуть стати драйверами відновлення галузі та підвищення її конкурентоспроможності. Сформульовано стратегічні напрями розвитку цифрового туризму в Україні, зокрема – розбудову цифрової туристичної екосистеми, модернізацію інфраструктури, підсилення державної координації, розвиток сталіх і нішевих видів туризму, гармонізацію законодавства з європейськими стандартами, інвестиції в людський капітал та підвищення цифрової грамотності.

**Ключові слова:** цифрова трансформація; цифрова економіка; туризм; туристична галузь; цифрові технології; інноваційні сервіси; FinTech у туризмі; цифрова інфраструктура; смарт-туризм.

**JEL Classification:** L10; L83; M21; O31; Z32

**Formulation of the problem.** In the context of globalization, the digital transformation of the tourism industry is one of the key factors in the development of the modern economy. For Ukraine, which is facing socio-economic, geopolitical, and security challenges, the digitalization of tourism is becoming an important tool for adapting to global changes, increasing the competitiveness of national destinations, and integrating into the European and global tourism markets.

Despite actively implementing digital services, Ukraine's tourism sector still faces several restraining factors. The main problems include uneven development of digital infrastructure, a lack of digital competencies among industry specialists, limited opportunities to finance innovative solutions, weak integration of information resources, and a lack of a single digital tourism platform.

Full-scale war exacerbates these challenges, making digital tools necessary to support domestic tourism, promptly inform the population, ensure travel safety, and preserve the functioning of tourist enterprises. Therefore, a systematic study of Ukraine's tourism industry is necessary to assess its current state, identify key barriers and development potential, and analyze digital modernization strategies that can ensure the national tourism sector complies with European standards and promotes its effective recovery in the post-war period.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Analyses of modern research and analytical reports confirm that digitalization is a determining factor in increasing the competitiveness of tourist destinations and forming the basis for their adaptation to global and military challenges. Analytical reports from the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 and Tourism Analytics [1; 2] emphasize the key role of digital platforms, data management tools, smart solutions, and innovative services in developing the industry. These elements shape the quality of the tourism experience and

the effectiveness of managing tourist flows. Regarding Ukraine, current research indicates that digital modernization is critically important in wartime. I. Nightingale, B. Lugovy, and Z. Gerasimov note that Ukrainian tourism's competitiveness directly depends on implementing digital tools, such as reservation systems, electronic services, online communication, and data analytics. R. Gorchak [3] highlights the issue of domestic tourism and the practical aspects of its digitalization, emphasizing the importance of mobile applications, route platforms, and digital directories as tools to support tourism. R. Gorchak and I. Golubets [5] emphasized in their study that the digital infrastructure of navigation, security, booking, and online information systems ensures the functioning of tourist services, even in difficult conditions, during wartime. N. Poguda emphasizes the need to increase the digital competence of tourism workers and to modernize the technological infrastructure as a basis for effectively functioning in the market. These studies demonstrate that digital tools, ranging from booking platforms to VR technologies and smart navigation, are pivotal in driving the development of Ukrainian tourism. These tools ensure the availability and security of tourist services, support internal population mobility, and establish the foundation for the industry's competitive recovery in the post-war period.

**Formulation of research goals.** The study aims to comprehensively examine the features of Ukraine's tourism industry's digital transformation in a globalized context. It will analyze the state and dynamics of digitalization, identify its contributing factors and barriers, evaluate the role of innovative services and digital infrastructure, and propose strategic directions for the future development of digital tourism.

**Presentation of the main research material.** Digitalization has become one of the key drivers of development in the global tourism industry, significantly changing the operational models of tourism enterprises.

In today's globalized environment, digital technologies provide quick access to information, service automation, offer personalization, and interactive tourist engagement. These technologies create new formats for tourism experiences and contribute to the formation of integrated digital ecosystems.

Digital technologies are gradually forming a new architecture of the tourism market. Within this architecture, e-commerce, online booking, virtual tours,

automated hotel resource management systems, CRM systems, digital marketing, and integrated tourism ecosystems are becoming important (Fig. 1). These tools not only expand the market but also improve service quality and create competitive advantages. Digital transformation ensures the transition from fragmented services to complex tourist solutions integrated into a single digital space, which allows prompt response to changes in tourists' requests [7].

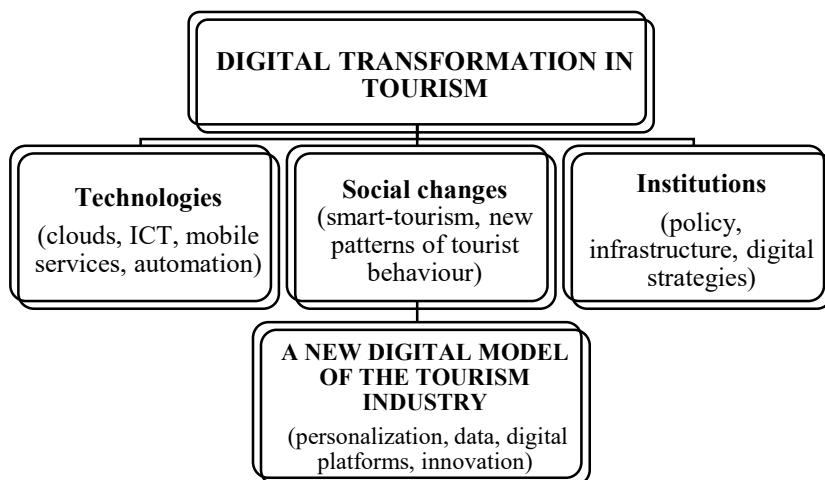


Figure 1 – Generalized model of digital transformation in tourism

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of [7; 8; 9].

One of the key manifestations of digitalization in tourism is the use of online booking systems, mobile apps, digital maps, information platforms, and data analytics tools. These elements form the basis of a modern tourism

product and ensure its competitiveness in a global environment. The introduction of VR/AR technologies is especially important because it strengthens the value of tourist locations and creates new travel formats [10; 11].

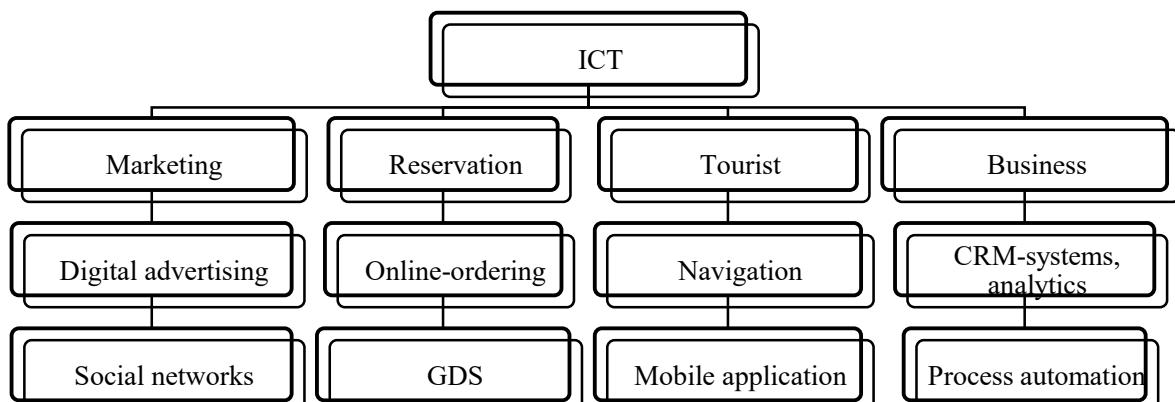


Figure 2 – 2 Impact of ICT on the tourism industry

Source: compiled by the authors.

Globalization processes emphasize the importance of digital transformation because the global tourism market is highly competitive. The roles of innovation, service

automation, digital marketing, data analytics, and international standardization are growing. Digitalization has become not only a tool of modernization but also a

prerequisite for integration into the international tourism sector.

The digital development of the Ukrainian tourism industry has significantly accelerated under the influence of global trends and internal challenges. The updated TTDI (Travel & Tourism Development Index) [1; 2], which

assesses digital readiness, sustainability and institutional capacity (Fig. 3), shows differences between European countries and Ukraine, which is temporarily excluded from the ranking after 2019 due to the complexity of data collection and security restrictions.

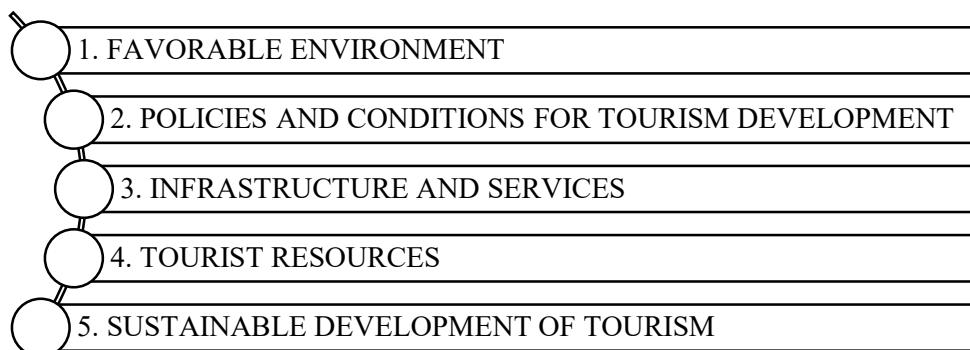


Figure 3 – Main dimensions of the updated TTDI index

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of [1; 2].

Comparison with neighbouring countries shows that centralised digital tourism platforms, electronic services, developed infrastructure and strategic public policies are

key success factors. For Ukraine, this approach can become the basis of a future return to global ratings.

Table 1 Comparative characteristics of Ukraine's neighboring countries by key TTDI dimensions

Digital services	Infra structure	Sustainability and Ecology	Institutional environment	Natural / cultural resources	Commentary
POLAND					
High level of integrated digital services, national tourist portals	Developed transport system	Sustainable programs	Stable regulations	High potential	One of the regional leaders
HUNGARY					
Developed digital marketing, online platforms	Strong tourist infrastructure	Average level of environmental sustainability	Enabling environment	Powerful cultural resources	Focus on health tourism
SLOVAKIA					
Digital mountain services, eco-tech	Regional infrastructure	High environmental orientation	Stable institutions	Natural resources (mountains)	A strong position in the economic direction
ROMANIA					
Development of digital tourism platforms	Infrastructure is growing	Sustainable tourism programs	Improvement of regulations	Nature, cultural routes	The potential increases every year

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of [1; 2].

Our analysis of Ukrainian tourist behavior during martial law confirms the growing importance of domestic

tourism and the security factor, as well as the active use of digital tools for trip planning. To gain a deeper

understanding of the current state of Ukraine's tourism industry, we surveyed Ukrainians about their travel habits during martial law.

First, it is worth noting that young people aged 18-25 dominated among the interviewees and represented the largest proportion of the sample. Respondents in the 18-

25, 26-35, and older age groups were also represented (Fig. 4). The largest share of respondents' average monthly income – 52,9% – falls within the 20,000-30,000 UAH range, which illustrates the predominance of this income level among surveyed Ukrainians during martial law (Fig. 5).

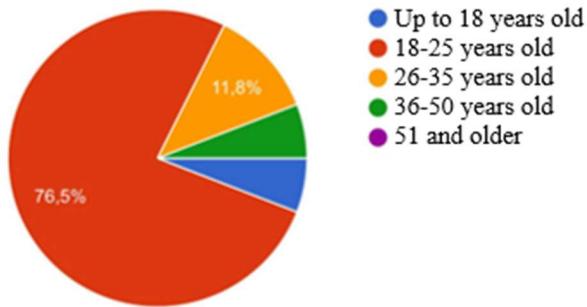


Figure 4 – Average age of respondents surveyed

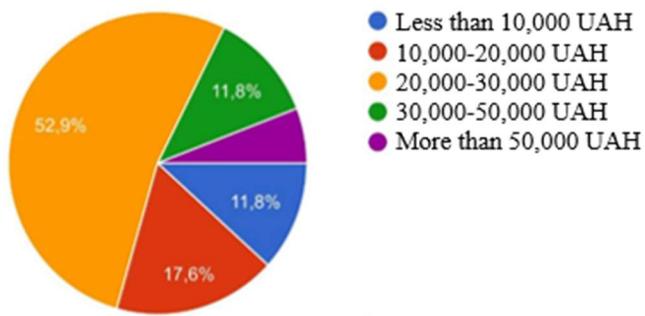


Figure 5 – Average income of surveyed respondents

Source: Compiled by the author based on the results of the survey.

In the section of the survey related to travel destinations (Fig. 6 and 7), respondents demonstrated interest in domestic tourism and caution about foreign travel. Most Ukrainians continue to choose domestic

travel, citing convenience, short trip duration, accessibility, and safety as motives. At the same time, some still travel abroad but emphasize that they do so much less frequently than before the full-scale war began.

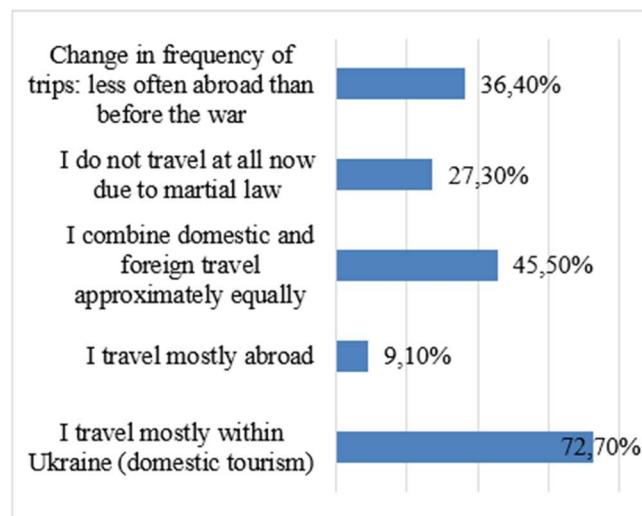


Figure 6 – Current state of travel of interviewed respondents during martial law: within Ukraine, abroad, a combination of both options

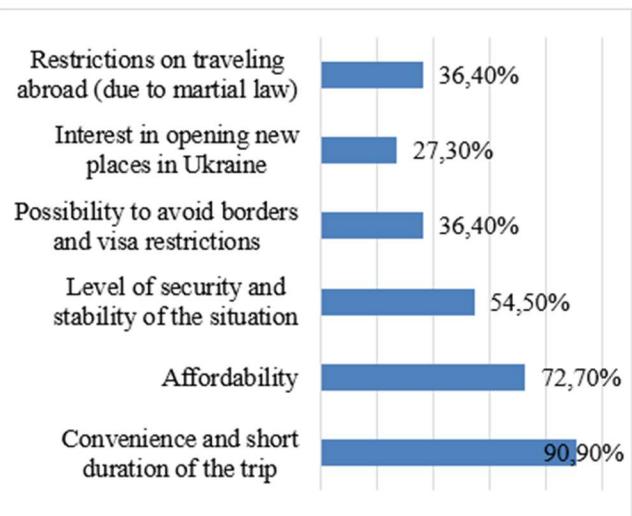


Figure 7 – Factors influencing the choice between domestic and foreign travel during martial law in Ukraine

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey.

The survey paid special attention to issues of digitalization of tourist activities. A large majority of respondents regularly use mobile applications and online services when planning trips (Fig. 8, 9). Tools such as:

- online maps (Google Maps etc.);

- accommodation and transport reservation services;
- search engines and information web portals;
- social networks that play a role in finding recommendations and reviews.

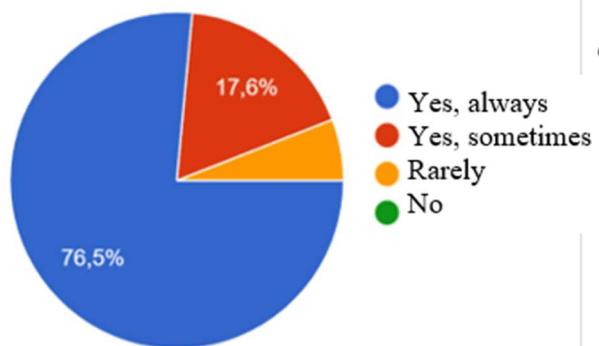


Figure 8 – Use of mobile applications or online services when planning trips

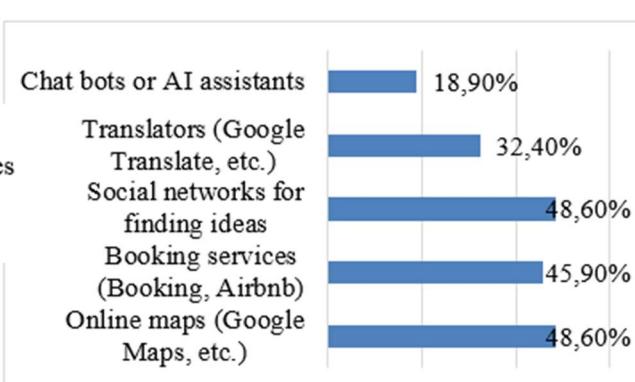


Figure 9 – The digital tools most used by respondents when travelling

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the results of the survey.

The study also revealed several factors influencing travel decisions during martial law. The most significant of these factors are security concerns, high travel costs, lack of time, and uncertainty about the situation in the country. At the same time, some survey participants noted that nothing deters them from traveling, indicating that part of the population has adapted to wartime

conditions. Digitalization significantly strengthens the ability to organize travel, even in crisis conditions.

Digital infrastructure and innovative services, such as cloud platforms, geoinformation systems, mobile applications, navigation services, AR/VR technologies, and flow monitoring and management systems, play a special role in the development of the industry (Fig. 10).

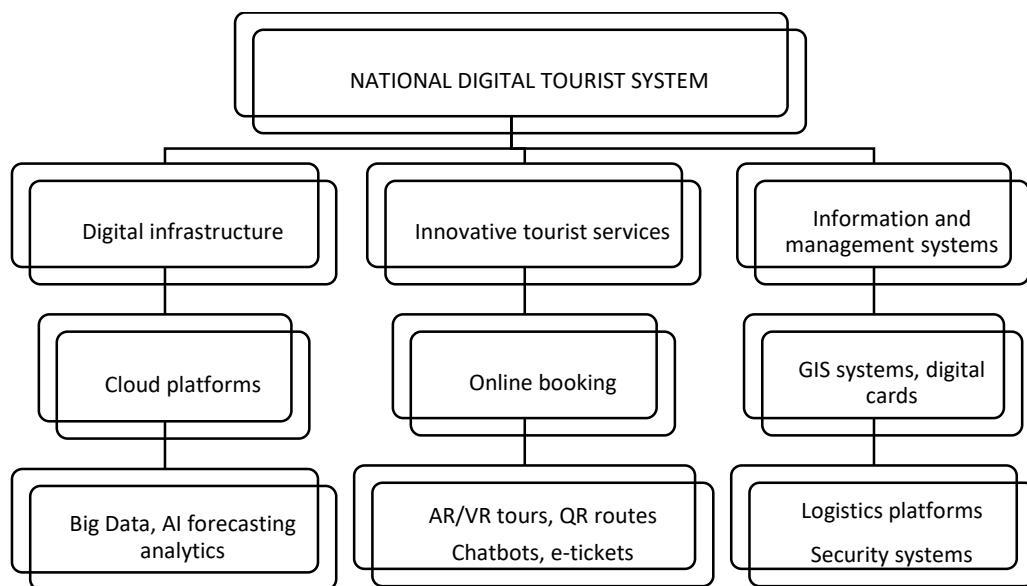


Figure 10 – Structural and functional model of digital infrastructure and innovative services in the national tourist system

Source: Compiled by the authors on the basis of: [4; 6]

Below is a comparative table (Table 2) showing the key digital solutions of the leading countries, the logic of their

effectiveness and the relevance of such experience for the Ukrainian tourism sector.

Table 2 **Experience of countries and their digital approaches in tourism**

Country	Main digital solutions/approaches	What it gives /why it succeeds	Which of these can be useful for Ukraine
Italy	<p>Creation of «Tourist Digital Hub» (TDH) within the national program; Large-scale integration of SMEs: more than 33 000 enterprises have already joined. Use of AI, analytics, VR /AR for the presentation of hotels, routes, tourist products.</p> <p>Investments in «green» and sustainable tourism: a special fund for ecotourism, managing tourist flows, stimulating out-of-season tourism.</p>	<p>Improves digital accessibility even for small businesses. Strengthens the competitiveness of Italy as a tourist destination. Ensures a balance between technology and maintaining authenticity.</p> <p>Adds sustainability (environmental, economic) to tourism.</p>	<p>In Ukraine, it is possible to create a similar «tourism digital platform», which would unite the public, private sector and small/medium tourism businesses. Use II, VR/AR and analytics to popularize regions and strengthen interest in domestic tourism.</p> <p>Form a policy to support «green» and sustainable tourism - primarily for rural, small destinations.</p>
France	<p>Active digitalization of the work of travel agencies, hotels, cultural objects: transition to online booking, digital marketplaces, customer experience management systems. Using VR /3D /interactive visualizations to sell tours and vacations: agencies provide «phygital» (physical + digital) experience, demonstrate routes, buses, hotels in 3D/VR.</p> <p>The growth of specialized digital services for the back-office: recruitment of employees, online legal platforms, management systems for hotels and tour operators.</p>	<p>The tourism business is quickly adapting to new customer expectations. Reduces the administrative burden, simplifies operational work, and increases efficiency.</p> <p>Enables small and medium-sized companies to compete with large ones through technology.</p>	<p>In Ukraine, it is possible to stimulate the introduction of digital tools not only at the state level, but also among travel agencies, hotels, and excursion companies. VR/3 D and interactive tours can help promote little-known regions, cultural attractions, tourist routes.</p> <p>Online services for employees, booking, hotel/tour operator management – is an important step to modernize the industry.</p>
Sweden	<p>Launch of a national open tourism API integrating data from 21 regions - more than 14000 properties: hotels, events, routes, services. Open data according to the schema.org – standard, any developers can use information to create applications, smart services, chatbots, and scheduling systems.</p> <p>Collaboration of state bodies, regional structures, private business – common digital infrastructure.</p>	<p>Eliminates the problem of fragmented local data, standardizes and centralizes information about tourism. Creates simple conditions for innovation: applications, startups, services – can focus on a single database. Provides equal opportunities for small operators, regions, small businesses – regardless of scale.</p>	<p>In Ukraine, it is useful to consider the creation of a similar «national tourist base» – with open data on routes, attractions, services, events, housing. This would stimulate the development of travel startups, mobile applications, online services, facilitate the marketing of regions and improve the country's tourist visibility.</p> <p>It would help to attract small and medium-sized businesses from all regions to the digital tourism market.</p>
Australia	<p>Wide implementation of II-assistants for travel planning, personalized recommendations, dynamic booking and pricing. Cloud reservation and management systems that provide flexibility, scalability, integration with other services. IoT, 5G, «smart» hotels /infrastructure, mobile apps for a comfortable, modern travel experience.</p> <p>Using digital tools for sustainable tourism: environmental guidelines, impact analysis, «green» packages.</p>	<p>The tourist experience becomes more personalized, flexible, convenient for modern travelers. Businesses receive tools for optimization, efficiency, and adaptability.</p> <p>The competitiveness of the tourist market is improving, the level of automation and innovation is increasing.</p>	<p>In Ukraine, it is advisable to implement II assistants, chatbots, personalized services for tourists, which will increase the level of service and competitiveness. You can modernize hotel and tourist infrastructure, use mobile applications, «smart» solutions for a comfortable tourist experience.</p> <p>Digital solutions can help popularize sustainable &amp; responsible tourism, which is gaining special importance today.</p>

Source: compiled by the authors on the basis of [10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15].

As Table 2 shows, the European model for the digital transformation of tourism is based on the integrated implementation of interconnected digital components. Digital information platforms play an important role by providing access to integrated tourist catalogs, mobile guides, and route services. Effective management of tourist flows is achieved through e-booking systems, attendance monitoring, and demand forecasting. VR/AR solutions, which are used to create virtual tours, 3D reconstructions, and interactive museums, are experiencing significant development. Smart tourism involves using big data, personalized services, and sensor systems to improve the quality of the tourist experience. Meanwhile, the automation of tourist enterprise activities is achieved through the implementation of CRM and ERP

systems, cloud services, and digital marketing tools. This experience is valuable for Ukraine because it enables the development of effective strategies for modernizing the industry.

In the face of military challenges, digital technologies are key to the recovery of Ukraine's tourism industry. Virtual tours, electronic routes, digital guides, information services, and automated management allow the industry to persevere in difficult conditions.

A strategy for developing digital tourism in Ukraine should include the following: creation of a national digital tourism ecosystem; improvement of digital infrastructure; development of innovative services and startups; standardization and integration of tourist data; adaptation of best European practices.

1. Provision of affordable and economically profitable digital tourist services
2. Integration of security features into digital products
3. Adaptation of services for a youth audience and group trips
4. Strengthening digital support for domestic tourism
5. Optimizing the tourist experience based on the most common digital tools
6. Development of digital solutions for emotional recovery and social travel
7. Reducing barriers to travel through information and financial digital interfaces
8. Increasing digital literacy and accessibility of services for all user groups

**Figure 11 – Recommendations for the development of digital tourism in Ukraine**

*Source: Compiled by authors based on survey.*

**Conclusions.** Digital transformation has become a determining factor in the development of the modern tourism industry. It has formed a new model for how the tourism market functions and has changed approaches to organizing travel, managing resources, and interacting between tourists, businesses, and the state. In a globalized world, the success of tourist destinations depends on their digital readiness and their ability to integrate technology into their services, management, and marketing processes. It also depends on their ability to ensure the transparency, availability, and security of their services.

For Ukraine, digitalization is of strategic importance for two reasons. First, it allows the industry to maintain functionality in the face of military challenges. Second, it creates a foundation for future integration into the European and global tourist spaces. Analyzing the travel habits of Ukrainians reveals that digital tools are the primary means of searching for and planning trips, and that domestic tourism is a prevalent form of recreation.

This necessitates improving digital infrastructure at the national and regional levels. Simultaneously, security, availability, cost, and convenience determine the majority of citizens' decisions, which underscores the importance of innovative services and automated systems for managing flows, routes, and information.

A comparison of Ukraine with neighboring countries shows that successful modernization is driven by complex digital platforms, stable tourism policies, high-quality transportation and IT infrastructure, and the implementation of European sustainable development standards. Ukraine can effectively adapt these elements to increase its competitiveness once the security situation is restored. Ukraine's significant tourist potential — natural, cultural, and historical — combined with innovative digital solutions, can create a unique offering for domestic and international tourists.

Under current conditions, the state and businesses should prioritize developing the national digital tourism ecosystem, unifying data on single information platforms,

supporting tourism startups, expanding VR/AR solutions, digital guides, and navigation services, and implementing international sustainable destination management practices. These measures will create the prerequisites for a qualitative leap in the industry, ensuring the availability of tourist services, increasing consumer confidence, and strengthening Ukraine's position in the global tourism market. Digital transformation is a tool not only for

recovering the tourism sector but also for achieving strategic growth. It creates new opportunities to increase competitiveness, promotes the development of domestic tourism, ensures the industry's sustainability in crisis conditions, and establishes a solid foundation for Ukraine's future integration into the global tourism economy.

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