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## Academic discipline „Travel services market” in the digital age

**Olena Binytska**

Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department  
of Higher Education Pedagogy and Education Management,

Pro-rector of Economic Matters,

**Khmelnyskyi Humanitarian-Pedagogical Academy**

(Khmelnyskyi, Ukraine)

[o.binytska@gmail.com](mailto:o.binytska@gmail.com)

ORCID ID 0000-0001-8746-3515

### Abstract

The article discusses the possibility of using digital technologies in teaching the discipline ‘Market of tourist services. It is emphasised that digitalisation of education is a prerequisite for the training of competitive specialists in the tourism industry. The introduction of innovative technologies, such as artificial intelligence capabilities, immersive technologies, and large data sets, are changing approaches to teaching professional disciplines, providing students of the speciality ‘Tourism’ with opportunities for the development of professional skills. The article also analyses how to use online platforms, social media and content marketing when studying the course ‘market of tourist services’.

Thus, the article emphasises the importance of digital transformation in education and tourism business, which contributes to better training of competitive professionals and meeting the needs of modern consumers in the tourism industry.

**Keywords: discipline “Market of Tourist Services”; speciality “Tourism”; digital technologies; digitalization.**

**Навчальна дисципліна «Ринок туристичних послуг» в еру цифрових технологій**

**Біницька Олена Петрівна,**

кандидат економічних наук, доцент,

доцент кафедри педагогіки вищої школи та менеджменту освіти, проректор з економічних питань

**Хмельницької гуманітарно-педагогічної академії,**

**м. Хмельницький Україна**

**o.binytska @gmail.com**

**ORCID ID 0000-0001-8746-3515**

У статті можливість використання цифрових технологій під час викладання навчальної дисципліни «Ринок туристичних послуг». Акцентовано, що цифровізація освіти необхідною умовою для підготовки конкурентоздатних фахівців у туристичній галузі. Впровадження інноваційних технологій, таких як можливості штучного інтелекту, імерсивні технології, та великі масиви даних, змінюють підходи до викладання фахових дисциплін, надаючи студентам спеціальності «Туризм» можливості для розвитку професійних навичок. У статті також аналізується як використовувати онлайн-платформи, соціальні мережі та контент-маркетингу під час вивчення курсу «ринок туристичних послуг».

Таким чином, стаття підкреслює важливість цифрової трансформації в освіті та туристичному бізнесі, яка сприяє кращій підготовці конкурентоздатних фахівців та задоволенню потреб сучасного споживача туристичної галузі.

**Ключові слова: дисципліна «Ринок туристичних послуг»; спеціальність «Туризм»; цифрові технології; цифровізація.**

The modern world, characterised by unprecedented technological progress, undoubtedly has a significant impact on the modernisation of the education system, including tourism education. The growing role of modern digital technologies implies significant changes in the teaching and training of future tourism professionals. Gone are the days when

education was limited to the walls of lecture halls and the pages of textbooks. The digital revolution has given birth to a generation that is inextricably linked to the virtual world, where knowledge is accessible, shared and created at the touch of a finger. In an era when digital technologies are gaining importance in every aspect of our lives, higher education is not left behind. Digitalisation in university education has become not only a buzzword, but also a key element that can revolutionise the way we learn. In this digital ecosystem, tourism education is on the verge of profound change, seeking to harness the enormous potential of technology to go beyond traditional learning [7].

The relevance of our study is due to the fact that it is necessary to introduce digitalisation of the educational process in the training of future tourism professionals, which should be a prerequisite for training a competitive specialist, as the tourism industry is constantly transforming thanks to new technologies in almost every aspect. According to the report of the Digital Transformation Initiative [2], digitalisation processes in the travel, tourism and aviation sectors will reach a value of up to USD 305 billion by 2025. The same report states that they will transfer approximately \$100 billion in value from traditional travel companies to their new digital competitors [2].

In the course of studying the discipline “The Market of Tourist Services”, students are emphasised that digitalisation is a direction of development of the tourism sector at many levels. An example is given that thanks to the Internet, new models of competition are emerging and new competitors are entering the market. An example of significant changes in the sector related to digitalisation is the operation of portals such as Booking.com or Airbnb.com. Booking.com is an online booking tool for tourists. Airbnb is a major competitor to the services offered by hotels. The existence of these two portals has forced the hotel sector to be more flexible. At the same time, the widespread use of the Internet to search for accommodation is a chance to advertise lesser-known places. Digitalisation is also associated with the growing importance of the image and opinion of companies offering travel services. There are numerous portals that offer ratings of tourist, hotel and public services, such as Tripadvisor, Wakacje.pl, Eataway, Freewalkingtours, or reviews collected by Google. Therefore, tourism service providers should pay great attention to the quality of the services they provide. The Internet and social media are also one of the most important channels for promoting the industry. Another aspect of digitalisation is the need to provide consumers of tourism services with access to broadband Internet, which requires investment costs from entrepreneurs [8].

With the development of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, in particular ChatGPT, immersive technologies (such as virtual and augmented reality), large data sets, and the development of new digital solutions and products, approaches to the training of future tourism professionals are also influencing the industry. Digitalisation in the higher education system is driven by digital changes that are clearly visible in the tourism industry - we are increasingly hearing terms such as 'tourism 4.0' or 'smart tourism'. Digital transformation in tourism means the adaptation of modern solutions to standard travel-related tasks - from choosing a destination and planning a route to booking airline tickets and other vehicles, accommodation, local attractions and restaurants, as well as changing approaches to teaching educational subjects. In our research, we will focus on the use of digital opportunities and tools in the study of the Travel Market course. The purpose of the educational component "The Market of Tourist Services" is to form theoretical and methodological knowledge of the principles and patterns of functioning of the market of tourist services of different hierarchical levels and skills in the methods of assessing the market of tourist services, the basics and principles of marketing in a tourist enterprise, including digital technologies.

In particular, it is advisable to consider the possibility of using digital platforms in the educational process that are intuitive, intelligent for creating travel experiences that generally contribute to the development of the tourism industry in the context of the digital revolution.

The course "The Market of Tourist Services" emphasises that the digitalisation of the tourism industry is aimed at providing customers with more personalised offers, and this is where the sector is focusing its activities. Modern travellers expect a convenient and transparent presentation of various travel options and access to them anywhere and anytime. There are increasing opportunities to tailor offers to the individual needs of potential travellers, for example, through the aforementioned mobile apps or IoT devices used by hotels to control air conditioning by voice or airlines to identify travellers with luggage. Also noteworthy is the potential of a popular tool such as ChatGPT, which can now be compared to several different destinations in terms of the different aspects it uses.

The use of digital technology in tourism is not only a convenience for the customer, but also a way to reduce travel costs, which is possible, among other things, thanks to increasingly sophisticated pricing mechanisms that optimise occupancy while maintaining value for money. In addition, digitalisation allows for a larger scale of information impact and makes it possible to reach new recipients. In our practical sessions, we emphasise that modern companies in the travel, hospitality and aviation industries are constantly using the power of

artificial intelligence, machine learning and future analytics, for example, in marketing campaigns or online events and seminars for the tourism industry. All of this leads to increased brand awareness, which makes customer acquisition much easier and, most importantly, profitable [9].

For example, when studying the topic 'Marketing Research', it is advisable to draw students' attention to the study of social media. Thus, thanks to the analysis of travellers' behaviour in the book 'Influencing Travel: How to Turn Lookers into Bookers' [6], the author showed that as many as 86% of them became interested in a particular trip after seeing other people's photos on the Internet. This effect is even more pronounced in the case of Generation Z, as 92% of this age group gave this answer. This phenomenon also has another aspect: the data provided by travellers online can be aggregated and analysed to personalise offers or periodically monitor trends.

When studying Communication Policy, students focus on SEO optimisation. Yes, in today's digital marketing world, search engine optimisation (SEO) is essential for every travel website. We emphasise to students that they should start with well-thought-out keywords related to tourism and travel, which should be used both in the textual content and in the meta-titles and ALT descriptions of photos. It is worth focusing on local SEO, especially if the website promotes specific regions, attractions or travel services.

The next important issue to consider is the possibility of using social media and viral marketing as an ally in promoting a travel service. Social media is playing an increasingly important role in tourism promotion. Engaging content, such as posting inspirational photos and videos, can not only increase brand awareness but also help position a website [5].

In the course of studying the topic 'Communication Policy' of the course 'Market of tourist services', we consider the issue of digital content marketing in tourism. Content marketing appears in brochures, articles, advertising materials and on the Internet. It entertains, intrigues, educates, persuades and inspires. Content - after all, that's what we're talking about - is now the key to capturing customers' attention, building relationships with them and ultimately buying goods and services. This is especially important in the tourism industry, where consumers often make decisions influenced by information found online. Their quality and adaptation to the preferences of the recipient is often a factor that determines the attractiveness of the offer and makes some companies in the tourism sector achieve impressive results, while others have problems operating in the market.

Creating content - textual, graphic, video content, as well as skilful analysis of their performance indicators - is now an important competence of every specialist in the tourism

and recreation sector. Websites, social media posts, press articles, guidebooks, reports, and advertising slogans are essential for advertising and selling travel services. Research shows that consumers are no longer attracted to arbitrary, correct content - they expect inspiration, stories and narratives tailored to their needs and values [1].

Professionally created content has become an integral element of modern marketing communication and requires the use of many techniques: storytelling, RTM, adaptation of content to the appropriate communication channel, use of lead magnets, analysis of performance indicators, targeting, and content promotion. That's why content marketing is more than just writing, photographing or creating videos - it is a strategic marketing communication tool that requires knowledge and practical skills.

We also actively use educational platforms in the learning process - a modern form of knowledge acquisition that is revolutionising the way we learn and access information. Thanks to technological advances and the growing demand for flexible learning methods, these platforms are gaining popularity, offering users the opportunity to learn anywhere and anytime.

In a digital learning environment, it is advisable to use a variety of tools and resources, such as video courses, interactive tests, and self-study materials, to provide a rich learning experience. One of the key advantages of educational platforms is that they can be adapted to the individual needs of the user and the pace of learning. This makes learning more personal and effective. In addition, many of these platforms offer certificates or diplomas upon completion of the courses, which can help to advance one's professional career [4].

Thus, in order to train a competitive specialist in the tourism industry, in particular when studying the discipline 'Market of tourist services', higher education institutions should remain open to technological innovations that meet social needs and trends and at the same time help to increase financial efficiency.

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