



## Digital Tourism in Algeria and the Role of Women in Its Promotion under the Tourism Development Plan

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### **Abstract:**

*This research paper aims to highlight the importance and role of digital economy mechanisms or digitization in developing the tourism services sector in Algeria, in its various fields such as handicrafts, traditional industries, hospitality, and others.*

*With the rapid technological development and the Internet's penetration of all areas of life, it has become imperative for the national economy to keep pace with digitization mechanisms to achieve development.*

*The tourism sector is considered one of the vital economic sectors, especially given the country's natural, material, and cultural resources. However, interest in this sector has not yet reached the level given to other sectors such as agriculture and industry. Therefore, efforts must be enhanced to promote tourism in Algeria by mobilizing the necessary mechanisms, foremost among them digitization and electronic marketing tools.*

**Keywords:** Digital economy, e-tourism, e-marketing.

## Le tourisme numérique en Algérie et le rôle des femmes dans sa promotion dans le cadre du plan de développement touristique

### **Résumé :**

*Cet article de recherche vise à souligner l'importance et le rôle des mécanismes de l'économie numérique ou de la numérisation dans le développement du secteur des services touristiques en Algérie, dans ses différents domaines tels que l'artisanat, les industries traditionnelles, l'hôtellerie et autres.*

*Avec le développement technologique rapide et la pénétration d'Internet dans tous les domaines de la vie, il est devenu impératif pour l'économie nationale de suivre le rythme des mécanismes de numérisation afin de se développer.*

*Le secteur du tourisme est considéré comme l'un des secteurs économiques vitaux, notamment en raison des ressources naturelles, matérielles et culturelles du pays. Cependant, l'intérêt pour ce secteur n'a pas encore atteint le niveau accordé à d'autres secteurs tels que l'agriculture et l'industrie. Il convient donc de redoubler d'efforts pour promouvoir le tourisme en Algérie en mobilisant les mécanismes nécessaires, au premier rang desquels la numérisation et les outils de marketing électronique.*

**Mots clés :** *Économie numérique, e-tourisme, e-marketing.*



## **Introduction:**

The tourism sector is an economically and socially vital sector with important international dimensions. With the digital revolution brought about by technological development, promoting tourism in Algeria requires the activation of digitization mechanisms to support tourism development in all its directions. E-tourism is one of the most important concepts emerging from the digital revolution. Algeria, keeping pace with these developments, has sought to digitize the tourism sector and use digital economy tools to promote tourism in its various forms. Today, it strives to intensify attention to this sector, especially with its available resources and potential capable of making it a distinguished tourism hub.

### ***Importance of the Study:***

The importance of the study stems from the significance of the digital economy and the necessity of harnessing its mechanisms to serve the tourism services sector in Algeria.

### ***Objective of the Study:***

The study aims to assess the reality of the digital economy in Algeria and to emphasize the feasibility of developing the tourism services sector based on digitization and electronic marketing and communication means.

It also seeks to highlight the role of women in promoting this sector through electronic promotion and marketing of handicrafts and traditional industries. Accordingly, this paper attempts to answer the following question:

*To what extent are digitization mechanisms used in developing the tourism services sector in Algeria, and what is the role of craftswomen in promoting digital tourism in Algeria?*

**Research Method:**

Given the nature of the study topic, the descriptive method was adopted.

**Study Methodology:**

To answer the research problem, the paper was divided into three main sections:

1. General concepts on the digital economy.
2. The reality of digital tourism in Algeria.
3. The role of women in promoting digital tourism in Algeria under the tourism development plan.

**1. General Concepts on the Digital Economy**

**1.1. Definition of the Digital Economy:**

Many definitions have been given to the digital economy as a new term resulting from innovative communication and technological methods, also referred to as the Internet economy, the web economy, or the electronic economy – different names, but the same concept. The digital economy is defined as “an advanced economic model based on the extensive use of information technology and the Internet in various aspects of economic activity, especially in e-commerce, strongly relying on creativity, knowledge, and technological development, particularly in information and communication technologies.”

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines it as “the global network of economic and social activities enabled by the Internet and smart devices, as well as the efforts made to



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achieve efficiency and productivity in the processes of producing and storing knowledge.”

## **1.2. Characteristics of the Digital Economy:**

The digital economy has a set of key characteristics:

- It spreads information technology across all sectors and levels, allowing for the establishment of e-government, e-enterprises, e-banking, and e-administration.
- The use of appropriate technology creates virtual markets and institutions where spatial and temporal boundaries disappear. For example, e-commerce offers many advantages, such as reducing costs, improving efficiency, and speeding up transactions worldwide. Thus, the focus is primarily on developing markets, partnerships, and strategic alliances with external parties before focusing on product development.
- The success and growth of the digital economy depend on the ability of individuals and institutions to participate in information networks and various Internet platforms. Effective participation in this economy requires adequate infrastructure, low service costs, available equipment, skills, education, training, financial resources, and the use of e-money such as credit cards.
- Information technology affects the degree and methods of competition and enhances competitive positions. The market structure varies according to the degree of application of ICT in the digital economy, both locally and internationally.

Information technology must integrate with various sectors, especially manufacturing, training, education, and financial services.

- Information technology plays a key role in increasing economic growth rates, capital investment, and both domestic and international e-commerce. The Internet affects how commercial transactions are conducted and how work processes are performed.
- Information can be managed effectively through the use and employment of data to support economic decisions and policies. The digital economy provides up-to-date, accurate, and verifiable information, enhancing influence, persuasion, and decision-making.

The digital economy rests on four main pillars:

- Technological infrastructure and equipment.
- A legal framework regulating the digitization sector.
- The financial sector's ability to provide and develop investments and venture capital to support smart ideas.
- Human capital focused on education and training.

### **1.3. Requirements for Developing the Digital Economy in Algeria:**

The digital economy is part of the overall digital transformation that has particularly affected economic activities. Developing it in Algeria requires several initiatives and policies, the most important of which are:

- Strengthening telecommunications infrastructure to ensure high-speed and wide-range networks that provide quality services meeting international standards.



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- Developing and training human resources in advanced technology.
- Promoting scientific research and innovation, as the digital economy requires strong interaction between research, development, and the global economy.
- Enhancing the national legal framework in line with international practices and the requirements of the information society, thereby creating a climate of trust to support e-government.
- Encouraging digital investment, particularly in technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet, and big data analytics, while maintaining flexibility and openness to new experiences and innovations.

## 2. The Reality of Digital Tourism in Algeria

Before examining Algeria's tourism assets, the degree of sector digitization, and the extent of e-marketing practices in tourism, it is necessary to provide a general overview of tourism.

### 2.1. Definition of Tourism:

Tourism (*Tourisme*) has been defined in many ways, depending on scholars' perspectives on its nature and components. According to *Le Petit Larousse*, tourism is "the act of traveling for pleasure," and a tourist is a person who travels to satisfy a need for enjoyment and entertainment. Tourism thus refers to people traveling from one place to another for a relatively short period for purposes such as leisure, relaxation, exploration, treatment, performing

religious rites, or learning about other peoples' civilizations and cultures.

## 2.2. Types of Tourism:

Tourism has been classified based on different criteria, but the most common is the purpose or motivation of travel, leading to the following categories:

- **Cultural tourism:** focused on archaeological sites, historical landmarks, and cultural traditions.
- **Recreational tourism:** includes leisure activities practiced in resorts, parks, mountains, and sports facilities.
- **Social tourism:** also called popular or vacation tourism.
- **Religious tourism:** involves travel for performing or visiting religious rituals or sites, such as pilgrimage and Umrah.
- **Therapeutic tourism:** one of the most important forms in developed tourism countries, generating significant income.
- **Conference tourism:** focused on organizing conferences, seminars, and meetings at all levels.
- **Sports tourism:** satisfies tourists' sporting interests and provides suitable conditions for practicing sports.
- **Desert tourism:** based on the exploration of desert landscapes and their natural charm.
- **Space tourism:** a modern form resulting from technological advancements and space exploration.

## 2.3. Importance of Tourism:

Tourism has great significance in several respects:



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- **Economic:** According to the World Tourism Organization, there were 62.8 million tourists worldwide in 1997. Tourism contributes about 1.5% of global GDP and creates around 5.5 million jobs annually up to 2010. It also attracts foreign capital, becoming the leading industry in the developing world.
- **Social:** Tourism enhances cultural awareness and interaction between tourists and local populations.
- **Political:** Tourism improves international relations and helps solve political problems.
- **Cultural:** Tourism fosters cross-cultural understanding among peoples.

#### 2.4. Tourism Assets in Algeria:

Algeria enjoys numerous tourism assets, both natural and cultural-historical.

- **Geographical location:** Algeria lies in the western Mediterranean basin between the Maghreb and the Middle East, occupying a strategic position in global communication routes, with an area of 2,381,741 km<sup>2</sup>.

Its climate varies between Mediterranean (in the north), semi-continental (in the high plateaus), and desert (in the south). Algeria features diverse landscapes – coastal plains, mountain ranges, oases, palm groves, sand dunes, rocky plateaus, and stone plains.

It also possesses several mineral springs, such as Hammam Bougrara (Tlemcen), Hammam Bouhadjar (Ain Témouchent), Hammam Esh-Sharaf (Djelfa), and Hammam Chelala (Guelma). Over 60% of these thermal springs remain

in their natural state, offering potential for developing competitive spa tourism, particularly in therapeutic tourism.

### **Historical Assets:**

The Tassili site is considered one of the most important historical and cultural sites in Algeria, dating back to 6000 BC. As for museums, there is the *National Cirta Museum* in Constantine, established in 1852, which serves as a reference for researchers and students. There is also the *National Museum of Popular Arts* in Algiers, and the *Timgad Museum* located in the Batna province, founded by Emperor Trajan in 100 AD. The site of *Timgad*, formerly known as *Thamugadi*, was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1982.

### **Traditional Industry Assets:**

Traditional industrial activities in Algeria are distributed as follows:

- Traditional and artistic industrial activities.
- Traditional handicraft activities for material production.
- Traditional handicraft activities for services.

### **Transport Infrastructure:**

Transport is considered the main artery of the tourism sector, and Algeria possesses an extensive transport network including roadways, railways, international and national airports, in addition to seaports.

## **2.5. Digital Tourism and Electronic Marketing of Tourism Services in Algeria**

The digital revolution our world is experiencing today has caused a true transformation in the tourism industry as a



whole, affecting all aspects of tourism activity and all actors in this field. The tourism industry, in all its forms, is now based on the use of information and digital technologies, which has led to the emergence of a new concept known as *e-tourism (E-Tourisme)* and another known as *mobile tourism (M-Tourisme)*.

### **E-Tourism:**

E-tourism is defined as the sale, marketing, and promotion of tourism products and services through an electronic system. It includes the electronic transfer and modification of data, management of electronic distribution and marketing, and automatic collection of tourism data. It assumes the presence of tour operators, travel agencies, and all institutions active in the tourism field in the virtual space through specialized electronic portals and platforms. Hence, e-tourism is based on three essential aspects: electronic information, electronic booking, and electronic payment.

### **Mobile Tourism:**

Also known as *mobile tourism (Mobile-Tourisme)*, it is the latest technological solution used in tourism through applications downloaded onto mobile phones. It involves the reception or transmission of tourism data and services via a wireless communication system, with the main goal of providing tourism information and offers, and accompanying the tourist through mobile phones before, during, and after their travel.

In this context, Algeria has in recent years entered a rapid phase of keeping pace with the tremendous technological development at the global level and its reflection on Algeria,

especially with the development of the third-generation system on smart devices, followed by the introduction of the fourth generation and its gradual coverage of the national territory. These applications have entered the tourism sector to provide more connectivity and better product promotion, as most hotels in Algeria now have websites allowing online reservations.

In recent years, Algeria has attempted to keep pace with enormous technological developments and benefit from them in the tourism sector by introducing many applications and shifting toward what is called *electronic marketing of tourism services*.

### ***2.5.1. The Role of Electronic Marketing in Promoting Tourism Activity in Algeria***

Electronic marketing plays an important role in promoting tourism activity through the following:

- Facilitating the provision of information on which the tourism industry depends, as the tourist client can now access all data and information through the Internet.
- Helping meet the tourist's desires and basic needs without the need to travel from one place to another.
- Reducing the costs of tourism services, thus granting the tourism product an advantage due to lower prices; for example, hotel reservations can be made by email.
- Effective promotion of tourism services.
- Targeting a wide audience of customers inside and outside the country.



## 2.5.2. *Digital Tools Used in the Electronic Marketing of Tourism Services*

Algeria has adopted some digital tools and techniques that are still less developed compared to those used in advanced countries; however, they have contributed effectively to the electronic marketing and promotion of tourism services in Algeria. The most important of these are:

- **Granting a new center for electronic information for the benefit of the National Agency for Handicrafts Industries:**

On 28/09/2009, the *Electronic Information and Documentation Center (CIDEAT)* related to handicrafts and trades was inaugurated.

- **Electronic websites for the development of Algerian tourism:**

Various websites are considered a fundamental factor in providing a true image of Algerian tourism, supporting Algeria's image, and enhancing tourism appeal.

- **Telecom Algeria's services to support the tourism sector:**

Algeria has recently relied on offering the best services to modernize the tourism sector, especially amid intense global competition and local market expansion. The most important of these services are:

*Remote conferences:*

Telecom Algeria provides hotel and tourism establishments with video-equipped rooms and kits across the national territory to hold meetings and conferences remotely.

*Multi-channel contact center service:*

Tourist satisfaction represents a strong indicator of success in the tourism sector. In this regard, Telecom Algeria partnered with a global leader in call center and interactive voice response (IVR) solutions. The call center structure consists of human resources and communication tools operating on a telephonic platform, functioning as remote management for tourists.

*Website hosting service:*

Telecom Algeria allows professionals to host their institution's domain names and handles all necessary procedures for registration and domain management. It offers a professional web hosting service on high-performance servers.

*Innovative mobile applications in Algeria:*

Although there are not many applications, some modest attempts exist, such as: The *ALGERIA* app (iOS system), utility apps providing pre-travel information (documents, Algerian embassies abroad, currency comparisons, etc.), and discovery apps offering identity cards about Algeria's economy and culture.

### **2.5.3. Shortcomings Facing Electronic Marketing in Algeria**

Digital tourism revolves around digital communication, which forms the basis of tourism promotion and electronic marketing. However, the effectiveness of this communication remains limited due to the following shortcomings:

- Limited use: despite the spread of digital applications, the tourism sector still lags behind in their utilization.



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- Most tourists and users of digital communication tools belong to high-income and highly educated groups, which limits expansion and reduces the target audience.
- The widespread presence of fraudulent or fake websites and digital piracy hinders the work of digital sites.
- Slow Internet connection and lack of access in some regions, especially southern areas of the country.

### **3. The Role of Women in Promoting Digital Tourism in Algeria under the Tourism Development Plan**

#### **3.1. Definition of the Tourism Development Master Plan in Algeria**

The state aims through this plan to provide a vision of Algerian tourism over different periods – short term (2009), medium term (2015), and long term (2025) – in addition to determining its implementation priorities and the conditions for achieving them.

The Tourism Development Master Plan expresses the state's will to achieve social justice, economic efficiency, and ecological support across all regions of the country over the next 20 years, within the framework of sustainable development. It also seeks to integrate Algeria into its natural spaces of belonging and development, ensuring economic openness and promoting national identity.

The plan aims to achieve several goals, including:

- Ensuring sustainable territorial development.
- Creating regional rebalancing dynamics.
- Ensuring territorial attractiveness and competitiveness.

- Ensuring sound regional governance.

### *3.1.1. Dimensions of the Tourism Development Master Plan:*

The plan seeks to achieve several dimensions:

- Making tourism one of the engines of economic growth.
- Promoting synergy between tourism and other sectors.
- Achieving harmony between tourism promotion and the environment.
- Valuing historical, cultural, and religious heritage.
- Continuously improving Algeria's image.

### *3.1.2. Prospects for Digitizing Tourism under the Tourism Development Master Plan:*

The plan reflects a genuine will to revitalize and modernize the tourism sector, providing competitive advantages to Algerian tourism offers locally and internationally. The most important efforts to digitize tourism under this plan include:

- Supporting projects and initiatives aimed at developing tourism in Algeria, resolving sectoral constraints, and strengthening the economic, social, and institutional environment.
- Establishing the **electronic tourism portal (2021)**, which includes tourist guidance, hotel investment promotion, and the use of natural water resources, in cooperation with various sectors such as culture, arts, youth, and sports.
- Adopting the **“homestay accommodation”** formula to involve local populations in tourism activities,



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showcase handicrafts, and create job opportunities within families.

- Participating in **international tourism events**, benefiting from global digital experiences. In Algeria's latest participation at the International Tourism and Travel Exhibition in Russia, 3D digital promotional materials were presented to showcase Algerian tourist destinations.
- Organizing a **contest for the best tourism project** to encourage tourism institutions and actors, improve service quality, and promote investment in the tourism and hotel sectors.
- Relying on the **knowledge economy** to strengthen tourism market balance, enhance cooperation with sectors such as transport, culture, and environment, and promote traditional crafts and local cuisine.
- Expanding international openness through **digitization of tourism diversity** – including religious, therapeutic, and historical tourism – to generate foreign currency and boost crafts and trade in tourist regions, using modern digital tools.
- Launching the **“Namlatic” platform** (<https://hotel.namlatic.com>) in April 2019 – a digital interface for hotel reservations in Algeria with a 25% prepayment system, secure and efficient, allowing users to cancel bookings anytime without financial penalties. “Namlatic” also offers mobile apps on Google Play and App Store for fast, responsive access to content.

### **3.2. The Role of Women in Promoting Electronic Marketing of Handicrafts and Traditional Industries**

Linking tourism with handicrafts and manual industries is a method adopted by successful countries in this field, as developing tourism directly and indirectly revitalizes handicrafts – and vice versa. High-quality local crafts attract tourists and create tourism activity, especially with the spread of digital communication.

To complete the tourism cycle, handicraft production reflects the cultural and civilizational heritage of a country. Each handmade artistic piece embodies the nation's historical and cultural richness. Tourists often buy such handmade souvenirs – made of wood, metal, or fabric – as mementos of their visit.

Many countries develop their traditional industries by allocating part of tourism revenues to enhance handicrafts, providing raw materials, training new generations of artisans, and organizing exhibitions abroad for marketing and promotion. Tourism creates opportunities for women's participation in the workforce and increases female leadership and entrepreneurship more effectively than in other economic sectors.

Experts believe that increasing women's participation in the tourism sector helps better address family tourism needs and makes the industry more attractive to women workers. Policymakers now recognize women as active partners in development in all its forms.

The spread of e-commerce and digital marketing – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic – has enabled Algerian women to promote their handmade and traditional products through websites and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. These tools



help women artisans convert followers into customers, thus promoting local tourism.

Algeria is rich in traditional crafts and artistic industries, and Algerian women across regions are pioneers in this domain. Prominent crafts include weaving in the Aurès and Djelfa regions, traditional clothing and leatherwork in Tamanrasset and Tlemcen, copperwork in Constantine, wood carving practiced in various areas, and traditional garments such as the *Ferghani dress*, *Kabyle robe*, *Karako*, *Chaoui dress*, and *Tlemcen chedda*. Many craftswomen also work from home without joining the Chamber of Handicrafts.

To empower rural and artisan women and integrate them effectively into sustainable development, Algeria has implemented a *Traditional Industry Sector Plan* that not only promotes the sector itself but also strengthens national economic competitiveness, particularly in tourism. This includes supporting artisans, improving their skills, and meeting community needs in training, employment, and tourism attraction.

With the rise of digital communication platforms, women artisans can now promote and market their products online through:

- **Direct advertising through friends** on the product page – a highly effective method, as most customers make purchasing decisions influenced by close social circles.
- **Direct advertisements on social media platforms**, another form of Internet-based advertising.
- **Indirect advertising through creating “groups” or “pages”** – an innovative marketing method where

women can create dedicated pages or groups, allowing customers to join, purchase products, and engage with content.

- **Using innovative mobile applications in Algeria**, such as the *ALGERIA* app.

### **Within the Framework of the Tourism Development Master Plan**

To valorize Algeria's historical, cultural, and traditional heritage and based on the *homestay accommodation* approach for expanding tourist services, it has become possible to involve local residents and communities in tourism activities through displays of traditional crafts at tourist reception facilities, creating job opportunities within families. This also includes training artisan women to enable them to interact with foreign and local tourists and to promote and market their products, including handicrafts, traditional industries, and decorative crafts, using digital tools.

### **3.3. Challenges of Digital Tourism in Algeria**

Digital tourism in Algeria faces several difficulties and challenges, similar in nature to the challenges of digitizing the economy in Algeria, the most important of which are:

- **Organizational Challenges:** Developing business through electronic marketing requires fundamental changes in the structural framework of tourism institutions, integrating activities, and ensuring effective communication for e-marketing in line with modern technological developments.
- **High Costs of Website Creation:** Creating a website requires specialized experts, a high degree of competence, and marketing and technical studies to



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ensure the website provides added value to the customer.

- **Rapid Technological Development of Websites:** The rapid pace of technological advancements in website design, development, and enhancement of competitiveness is one of the main challenges affecting the continuity and success of e-marketing.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers:** Language is a significant challenge that hinders interaction between many customers and websites. Additionally, local customs, traditions, and societal culture can create further obstacles.
- **Lack of Trust in Electronic Payment Methods:** Payment by credit cards online is the most common form of e-marketing payment. Money transfer is a central component of any online commercial transaction and represents a significant challenge for electronic marketing.

## Conclusion

Algeria possesses everything necessary to make it an excellent tourist hub, whether in terms of natural assets such as the coastline, forest and desert cover, and diverse mineral springs, or in terms of history and cultural and traditional heritage. However, the attention given to this sector has not yet reached the level of the importance of tourism in developing the national economy and increasing its revenues. Therefore, efforts must be intensified, and public and private investment encouraged, utilizing modern

techniques and mechanisms, particularly digital economy tools, including tourism digitization and e-marketing.

Women, as active participants in economic development, play a crucial role in promoting digital tourism by marketing handicrafts, traditional industries, and the cultural heritage of each region, especially when they receive adequate support, financial backing, and training in digital marketing skills.

### **Recommendations**

- Strengthen digital communication infrastructure to provide wide bandwidth and high speed, capable of covering all regions, especially desert areas with high tourism potential.
- Expand and improve Internet networks, which form the foundation of digital tourism.
- Train human resources to enable the use of modern digital technologies.
- Develop rural tourism and empower artisans to market their artistic crafts through websites to promote traditional industries and showcase national culture.
- Provide government facilities to private investors to open tourism agencies through national support institutions such as ANADE.
- Increase tourism advertising via websites to attract foreign and domestic tourists, using digital brochures and videos to showcase Algeria's tourist and historical sites.
- Digital tourism and marketing can increase tourism exports and foreign currency revenues, while enhancing domestic tourism if audiences collectively



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focus on promoting it as a vital economic sector alongside other sectors.

- Promote desert and spa tourism, leveraging Algeria's outstanding natural assets in these areas through electronic marketing, and encourage tourism investment in these regions, as natural assets alone are insufficient without hotels and tourist infrastructure.
- Raise awareness about the importance of e-marketing for traditional crafts, particularly as consumers increasingly engage with websites and online stores.
- Develop women's roles by using advertising to highlight their contribution to the national economy through home-based activities such as cooking, weaving, and sewing, whether in rural or urban areas, and provide support for electronic marketing of these services.
- Organize exhibitions in foreign countries to promote national tourism, traditional crafts, and Algerian cultural heritage.

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