



The Reality of Tourism Electronic Applications and the Key Requirements for Their Development in Algeria

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Abstract:

This study examines the current state of tourism electronic applications in Algeria and highlights their role in promoting tourism and facilitating travel services. It emphasizes that these applications have become essential tools in the global tourism industry, contributing to improving user experience through easy access to information, online booking, and service comparison.

The research reveals that, despite Algeria's rich tourism potential, the use of such applications remains limited in terms of availability, quality, and user adoption. This weakness is mainly linked to the underdevelopment of e-commerce, limited digital infrastructure, lack of trust in online transactions, and insufficient awareness among tourism stakeholders.

Furthermore, the study identifies the key requirements for developing e-tourism in Algeria, including strengthening information and communication technology infrastructure, promoting electronic payment systems, improving the legal and regulatory framework, supporting innovation and digital entrepreneurship, and enhancing human resources through specialized training.

The study concludes that advancing tourism electronic applications is a strategic necessity for achieving sustainable tourism development in Algeria. It can contribute to increasing competitiveness, attracting more tourists, and diversifying the national economy in line with global digital transformation trends.

Keywords: *Tourism electronic applications, Algerian tourism potential, tourism in Algeria*

Résumé :

Cette étude examine l'état actuel des applications touristiques en ligne en Algérie et met en évidence leur rôle dans la promotion du tourisme et la facilitation des services de voyage. Elle souligne que ces applications sont devenues des outils indispensables dans l'industrie touristique mondiale, contribuant à améliorer l'expérience utilisateur grâce à un accès facile à l'information, à la réservation en ligne et à la comparaison des services.

La recherche révèle que, malgré le riche potentiel touristique de l'Algérie, l'utilisation de ces applications reste limitée en termes de disponibilité, de qualité et d'adoption par les utilisateurs. Cette faiblesse est principalement liée au sous-développement du commerce électronique, à une infrastructure numérique limitée, au manque de confiance dans les transactions en ligne et à une sensibilisation insuffisante parmi les acteurs du tourisme.

En outre, l'étude identifie les conditions essentielles au développement du tourisme électronique en Algérie, notamment le renforcement des infrastructures des technologies de l'information et de la communication, la promotion des systèmes de paiement électroniques, l'amélioration du cadre juridique et réglementaire, le soutien à l'innovation et à l'entrepreneuriat numérique, ainsi que le renforcement des ressources humaines par le biais de formations spécialisées.

L'étude conclut que la promotion des applications touristiques électroniques est une nécessité stratégique pour parvenir à un développement touristique durable en Algérie. Elle peut contribuer à accroître la compétitivité, à attirer davantage de touristes et à diversifier l'économie nationale, conformément aux tendances mondiales de la transformation numérique.

Mots-clés : *Applications électroniques dans le domaine du tourisme, potentiel touristique algérien, tourisme en Algérie*



Introduction:

As tourism and travel services have become a major global industry, and are expected to continue growing, the number of international tourists has increased threefold over the past two decades. This has led tourism and travel service providers to compete in using new technologies in customer service. Electronic transactions have become a prerequisite for providing competitive tourism and travel services.

Digital indicators show that the size of electronic tourism has achieved high increases and continues to evolve, especially in B2B and B2C formats. Consequently, this reflects on the tourism sector and the opportunities it provides, as it works to eliminate obstacles and allows for direct relationships between different tourist segments through the websites of tourism organizations.

The emergence of new competitors enables tourism organizations to become successful global competitors in international markets. However, the most significant impact of electronic tourism to date has been limited to developed countries, creating a substantial gap between these countries and others around the world. This places developing countries that rely on the tourism industry in a challenging position to adapt to this form of tourism.

Therefore, they are obligated to provide the necessary requirements for developing electronic tourism applications and to secure the essential support from governments, organizations, and various entities. From this, the following issue arises: What is the reality of electronic tourism

applications in Algeria? What are the main requirements for their establishment?

1. Definition of Electronic Applications :

Electronic applications are defined as "independent programs designed to operate on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets¹." They vary in purpose and fall under what is known as electronic marketing, which is defined as "the use of modern technologies such as the internet and mobile phones to achieve marketing objectives."²

Due to rapid technological advancement, the use of various social media platforms has increased, making electronic applications significant for internet users, especially as they facilitate users' movements and tasks. Thus, developing and updating these applications has become a priority for major global technology companies that focus on customer interests in various aspects of life.

Electronic applications serve as a platform for tourism advertising, which is defined as "those impersonal efforts aimed at influencing the sentiments, emotions, and perceptions of tourists and directing their tourism behavior towards participating in tourism activities."³

¹ Akila Brik, "The Impact of Electronic Applications on Educational Discourse Directed to Non-Arabic Speakers: The Tarjman Application as a Model," *Alif Journal of Language, Media and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2016, p. 86.

² Leila Matali, *A Concise Guide to E-Marketing*, 1st ed., Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 2016, p. 25.

³ Samira Ben Alia & Salmi Abdelmadjid, "Tourism Electronic Applications in Algeria: A Linguistic-Semiotic Study," *Alif Journal of Language, Media and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2019, pp. 233–234.



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Therefore, the content within these applications must be engaging, and the visuals must capture attention, encouraging tourists to want to visit the featured locations.⁴

2. Criteria for Designing Tourism Websites:

The tourism field is one of the most important areas for investment. Therefore, before designing any tourism website, it is essential to study and create a distinctive plan to attract many customers, facilitating the process of exploring the tourism programs offered by the tourism organization without having to visit it physically.⁵

- Focus on the main objective of the website.
- Present the actual tourism product transparently and honestly.
- Create websites that allow for communication with consumers, considering the diversity of tastes, income levels, and age groups, resulting in varying tourism demands.
- Coordinate with the websites of various participants in the industry and establish electronic links between those sites.
- Consider that the target audience in this tourism sector includes people from all over the world, requiring the site to be available in multiple languages to ensure maximum reach.
- Provide tourism data in an organized and clear manner for online browsers.

⁴ Mustapha Youssef Kafi, *Tourism Industry and Tourism Security*, Dar Raslan for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2009, p. 23.

⁵ Jalal Badr Khadra, Mustapha Youssef Kafi, et al., p. 74.

- Exchange tourism information at an international level.
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3. Important Websites and Applications Promoting Tourism and Travel :

Websites of all types are essential for presenting the true image of Algerian tourism and supporting Algeria as a destination. However, weaknesses still overshadow this sector in Algeria, such as the lack of effective search engines, poor content, absence of modern applications, and a lack of actual references, including promotional videos for tourist destinations. Photos alone are insufficient, and websites do not utilize awareness-raising tools for either tourists or citizens, leading to a lack of diversity and attractiveness of the tourist destination. For instance, social media plays a crucial role in guiding and improving the image while raising awareness among both residents and tourists. Tourism stakeholders must take responsibility for enhancing the image of Algeria's tourist destination by utilizing all available means, especially advertising and promoting tourism products aimed at attracting visitors. They should understand that they are the first beneficiaries of this activity.⁶

⁶ Mokhtar Selim & Fathi Alian, "The Role of Websites and Electronic Applications in Promoting Tourism and Travel in Algeria," with an analytical study of Booking.com, *Daftars Boudex Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 01, 2023, p. 392.



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Table (1): The Best Travel and Tourism Websites and Apps Worldwide

The website.	Its definition.	The number of app downloads in 2022.
Airbnb	This website and application promote the rental of houses, apartments, and various types of accommodations across different countries around the world, including Algeria. They display millions of photos of these places, present and compare prices, and also help facilitate various booking processes.	53.1 million downloads per month worldwide.
Booking	It is a website and a mobile application that promotes various accommodation options around the world and facilitates different booking processes for hotels, restaurants, and places to stay.	82.6million downloads per month worldwide
Expedia	It is a global travel agency available as a website and a mobile application, providing travelers with the	27.7million downloads per month worldwide

	ability to find suitable trips at the best value through the promotional offers it provides.	
Hopper	It is a new app for booking flights and hotels that uses fintech solutions aimed at providing customers with greater flexibility and security.	20.3 million downloads per month worldwide
. Vrbo	Its mission is to find rental accommodation or book hotel rooms for families to enjoy their time, by promoting important tourist destinations across different countries around the world.	20.7million downloads per month worldwide
Hotels.com	It is a subsidiary of Expedia that promotes hotels by displaying photos of the property, its various facilities, and pricing information.	14.7 million downloads per month worldwide
Trivago	This application provides a feature that allows users to compare millions of hotels worldwide through hundreds of booking websites.	12.6 million downloads per month worldwide
Skyscanner	It offers the best available deals for hotel bookings, car	17 million downloads



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	rentals, and various trips through low prices, with transparency and security..	per month worldwide
. Kayak	It is one of the subsidiaries of Booking.com, operating in a very similar way and considered a one-stop shop for all travel needs.	7.1 million downloads per month worldwide
.. Priceline	It is a subsidiary of Booking Holdings, specializing in booking hotels, flights, and car rentals. It is known for providing secure and fast reservations, as well as offering discounts for VIP customers.	5.5 million downloads per month worldwide

Source: Mokhtar Selim and Fathi Alian, "The Role of Websites and Electronic Applications in Promoting Tourism and Travel in Algeria," with an analytical study of Booking.com, Boudex Journal, Vol. 12, No. 01, 2023, p. 392.

Algerian websites and applications: Similar to global platforms that promote tourism and travel, there are local websites and applications that are still in their early stages. They promote domestic tourism and aspire to reach a global level. Among them are:

Table (2): Algerian websites and applications that promote tourism and travel

<p>The M'zab Valley Ksour app.</p>	<p>It is a tourism electronic application developed by the Algerian Ministry of Culture and the Office for the Protection of Heritage of Ghardaïa Province. It serves as a guide to the ksour and historical landmarks of the M'zab Valley in Ghardaïa, in Arabic, and promotes tourism by displaying photos of various tourist areas in the province.</p>
<p>Alegeria Travel and Explore ;offline country guide .</p>	<p>This application uses only the English language, with a complete absence of Arabic. Its interface contains three sections, and it promotes tourism by displaying images of various Algerian provinces</p>
<p>Cities in Alegria</p>	<p>It is an application that uses only the English language, except in some cases where the city name is written in Arabic. Its interface includes icons for 72 tourist cities, each containing descriptive sections about the city's history, geographical location, and famous attractions, accompanied by a set of illustrative images.</p>
<p>The ONAT app (National Office of Tourism).</p>	<p>The ONAT app uses only the French language. It contains many images categorized according to the types of tourism it promotes, along with a</p>

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	collection of visuals that attract both domestic and international tourists. It also includes promotional clips about organized tourism programs in the form of short videos. Moreover, the app promotes tourism in its various types and forms.
Tourism Algeria	This application provides a brief introduction in paragraph form, ranging from five to six lines, for a number of Algerian cities not exceeding ten. These paragraphs are written in English, and the app is completely devoid of illustrative images, maps, or location features
Siyaha DZ	This application uses the French language along with some specific terms. It is primarily a service-oriented app that presents a limited selection of hotels, indicating the services they offer, their locations, and prices in textual form – some brief and concise, others more detailed – accompanied by a few illustrative images.

Alger city guide touristique	This application uses only the French language. Its interface includes 12 icons, each dedicated to a specific purpose, such as hotels, beaches, restaurants, etc., along with some images to attract tourists.
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Source: Mokhtar Selim and Fathi Alian, “The Role of Websites and Electronic Applications in Promoting Tourism and Travel in Algeria,” with an analytical study of Booking.com, *Boudex Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 01, 2023, p. 393.

4.The Emergence of E-Tourism in Algeria

A solid infrastructure alone cannot yield good results unless it is supported by serious efforts. Therefore, Algeria needs to take the necessary measures to open the way for the development of e-commerce. Consequently, the development of tourism is closely linked to the development of marketing and online commerce. In Algeria, however, e-commerce remains weak compared to neighboring countries, which in turn leads to the weakness of e-tourism, as it is a part of e-commerce.

4.1 The Absence of Online Sales as a Constraint to E-Tourism in Algeria:

The sale of tourism products and services remains slow in Algeria. The limited number of specialized tourism websites reflects this situation. Even when some travel agencies or tourism stakeholders have websites, they often do not focus



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on marketing their products effectively; instead, they mainly display travel schedules, destinations, and other services. This is mainly due to the slow pace of e-commerce and digital transactions in Algeria.

Moreover, the lack of competition among tourism actors does not encourage differentiation, innovation, or the adoption of new methods of communication with customers. The low level of awareness regarding the importance of these technologies in developing their services also contributes to the lack of competition in adopting them.

a. Limited Online Presence of Travel Agencies:

To date, there are no statistics in Algeria on travel agencies that use modern information and communication technologies, especially the internet. By the end of 2016, there were 2,041 agencies classified under categories "A" and "B." However, these agencies remain far from modern competition standards according to the World Tourism Organization, whether globally, regionally, or even within the Maghreb. The few existing websites of some agencies merely present their services and suggested destinations. Some go slightly further by offering booking options for trips and hotels in the region, but modern applications are largely absent.

In late 2010, the Ministry of Tourism proposed that agencies establish international partnerships with advanced institutions in this field. However, many agencies did not respond due to concerns about the costs of improving their websites.

b. Failure of Tourism Stakeholders to Keep Up with ICT Developments:

In 2008, some private developers launched the website *VoyageAlgerie.com* with the aim of facilitating the work of agencies that do not have their own websites or do not use advanced applications, and this at lower costs. However, the response was limited despite the promotion carried out by the ministry to support it among tourism stakeholders. Some of them claimed a lack of trust in the internet for promoting their services and products, arguing that their customers are already guaranteed, in addition to the limited scope of their activities and concerns about additional costs and taxes.

4.2. The Use of Electronic Tools in Marketing Tourism Products and Ensuring Their Sustainability

a. Establishing a New Electronic Information Center for the Benefit of the National Agency of Traditional Industries:

On September 28, 2009, the Electronic Information and Documentation Center (CIDEAT), dedicated to traditional industries and crafts, was inaugurated at the headquarters of the National Agency of Traditional Industries (ANART) in Sidi Fredj, Algiers. It consists of a database and a space dedicated to knowledge and research, made available to artisans, researchers, students, tourism stakeholders, economic actors, and all those interested in traditional crafts. The center contains diverse content related to the sector, spread over an area of 200 m², including 2,086 units of books and electronic documents accessible through computer systems connected to the internet.

This center contributes to the development of traditional crafts and industries with the aim of supporting tourism



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growth and sustainability, by facilitating the exchange of expertise between researchers and professionals in the field. This is further strengthened through various partnerships, including an agreement with a Spanish association for training in traditional crafts. The sector has also witnessed significant growth, as by the end of 2016 it employed 875,636 workers across 462,674 crafts.⁷

B. Developing Tourist Destinations through E-Tourism:

Despite the slowdown experienced by e-tourism in recent years, some improvement was observed in 2016 and 2017 by tourism stakeholders. This was reflected in their competition to adopt the latest technological tools and integrate them into the marketing and sale of their tourism products. The process began with upgrading tourism websites by incorporating advanced global methods, which enhanced the promotion of tourist destinations and increased customer loyalty toward their agencies and offerings.

This development did not occur by chance, but rather as a result of significant investment in information and communication technology tools, especially with the introduction of 3G and 4G systems in various digital devices, particularly smartphones. The aim was to provide customers with real-time information and better guidance toward tourist destinations through marketing, booking, organization, and transportation services. However, a major concern remains the absence of regulatory frameworks

⁷ Directorate of Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Tourism, Traditional Industries and Family Work.

governing e-marketing and its exchange among tourism stakeholders.⁸

5. Key Requirements for the Development of E-Tourism in Algeria

The information and communication technology (ICT) sector is considered the fundamental pillar for building a digital economy and keeping pace with global developments, thereby enabling entry into the world of e-commerce. However, in Algeria, e-commerce remains weak compared to other countries and even neighboring ones such as Tunisia. Consequently, e-tourism is also weak, as it is an integral part of e-commerce.

a. Availability of E-Commerce in Various Transactions:

A strong infrastructure alone cannot yield positive results unless supported by serious efforts. Therefore, Algeria must take the necessary measures to open the way for the development of e-commerce. The most important measures include:⁹

- The need for banking reform in Algeria through the modernization of electronic payment methods, expanding the use of credit cards, and reducing reliance on cash.
- The necessity of establishing an appropriate legal and regulatory environment for e-commerce.
- Implementing technical systems to ensure the security and confidentiality of electronic transactions.
- Providing a strong telecommunications infrastructure and widespread internet access at low costs, by

⁸ Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies.

⁹ Sofiane Bensaïd, "Enjeux de l'e-commerce en Algérie: Un énorme potentiel à développer," *Djzaircom*, No. 13, 2010, p. 12.



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encouraging investment and competition in this sector to improve service quality.

- Liberalizing the telecommunications sector by encouraging privatization to enhance efficiency and service quality.
- Increasing spending on research and development to keep up with technological progress and reduce the gap between Algeria and other countries in this field.
- Promoting awareness and building a culture within society to accept e-commerce through awareness campaigns that highlight its benefits and advantages.
- Relying on skilled human resources by developing specialized training systems in technology and information, and establishing schools and institutes to train qualified professionals.
- Revising and updating educational curricula to align with modern educational requirements and available technologic

b. Progress in ICT Infrastructure:

These requirements relate to the current state of technical infrastructure and how it can be developed and utilized in the field of e-tourism. This includes the following:¹⁰

- Developing the infrastructure of modern communication and information technologies to provide broader access to internet services, both in the country of origin and in target markets for tourism promotion.

¹⁰ Mohamed Mostafa, "How to Organize E-Tourism and Its Impact on the Tourism Industry," working paper presented at the Tourism and Travel Industry Forum, pp. 7–8.

- Encouraging the emergence of electronic intermediaries in the tourism sector by promoting the creation of a network of websites covering all stakeholders in tourism, such as hotels, airlines, travel agencies, tour guides, and other related sectors. This should be done in cooperation with traditional intermediaries, as both complement each other.
- Creating new types of institutions and organizations dedicated to tourism promotion that rely on advanced websites on the internet, while providing them with technical and informational support. These websites must be designed according to international standards to compete with similar platforms in other countries.

C. E-Marketing:

E-marketing offers several advantages for tourism, which can be summarized as follows:¹¹

- Providing tourists with the information they need about destinations and services such as accommodation, catering, entertainment, as well as travel bookings, currency exchange, and payment methods.
- Saving time and effort, as tourists can directly access the internet, browse various tourism websites worldwide, and compare prices, booking methods, and payment options, thus avoiding the cost of physically visiting travel agencies or airline offices.
- Attracting new categories of tourists who are constantly connected to the internet.

¹¹ Malika Zghib & Soussen Zirek, previously cited reference, p. 14.



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- Reducing the costs of promotion and advertising of tourism products while improving and developing tourism services.
- Enhancing competitiveness and expanding beyond regional boundaries into the global market.
- Stimulating e-tourism, which in turn activates related sectors such as hospitality, encouraging them to provide higher-quality services.

-Stages of E-Tourism Marketing:¹²

- Collecting tourism data, including offers, prices, maps, and reports.
- Digitizing the collected data using technological tools.
- Publishing the information electronically Through the web and other digital media in multiple languages.
- Providing tourism bodies, agencies, offices, and hotel establishments with adequate internet connections adapted to their size, along with email services in addition to telephone and fax.

5. Prospects of E-Tourism in Algeria

In recent years, Algeria has entered a phase of accelerated development by keeping pace with the rapid global advancements in technology and their impact on the country. This is particularly evident with the development of 3G technology on smart devices, followed by the introduction and gradual nationwide coverage of 4G. As a result, most tourism institutions have begun competing to develop their websites and align with international tourism platforms, which has compelled Algeria to adapt to these changes and work on improving them.

¹² Same previous reference, p. 15.

6. Future Projects for Developing Digital Applications:

Regarding future applications to support digital transformation in tourism, the following initiatives can be highlighted:

- Developing an electronic tourist guide in the form of a mobile application, in collaboration with startups led by young entrepreneurs, by presenting innovative ideas in travel and promoting Algerian tourist destinations.
- Establishing intranet and extranet networks.
- Creating a digital portal for managing the tourism and traditional industries sector.
- Updating platforms related to travel agencies and investment project monitoring.
- Developing a digital platform for tour guides.
- Creating three websites dedicated to training and distance learning, supported by electronic libraries.
- Establishing an information system for the traditional crafts sector in cooperation with the Ministry of Post and ICT.
- Developing a web-based GIS application (Web-SIG), a geographic information system that displays search results on maps for each province (e.g., searching for agencies, thermal centers, hotels, etc.).

7. Use of Electronic Payment Methods in Tourism Institutions:

Electronic payment is a crucial component for completing online transactions and boosting e-tourism. In this context, an agreement was signed to generalize the use of electronic payment methods in tourism institutions between the tourism sector and the postal and telecommunications sector.



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The goal is to improve service quality in hotels and reduce reliance on cash transactions.¹³

This agreement was concluded between key tourism operators – including hotel and tourism groups, the National Tourism Office (ONT), travel agencies, the National Federation of Hotel Operators (FNH), and the National Federation of Tourism Associations (FNAT) and Algeria Post, under the supervision of the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Post and Telecommunications.

The agreement aims to adopt electronic payment technologies that allow customers to pay for services without needing to carry cash. Under this framework, Algeria Post facilitates the opening of postal accounts for tourism operators and supports them in installing electronic payment terminals (TPE), which operate using the “Edahabia” card.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative, a pilot launch was conducted using electronic payment terminals (TPE) and mobile payment via QR code, along with the “Baridi Pay” application, at Marina Residence “H3” in Sidi Fredj.

The agreement covers both public and private sector entities. However, a key challenge highlighted is the lack of adequate network coverage in some tourist areas. Mobile operators are therefore urged to improve their services, as promoting electronic payment in areas without proper network coverage would be ineffective.

¹³ The agreement was signed on Monday, September 7, 2020, in Algiers.

Conclusion:

this research shows that tourism electronic applications are among the most important modern tools that contribute to the development of the tourism sector and enhance its attractiveness, especially in light of the global digital transformation. Despite Algeria's vast tourism potential, the actual use of these applications remains below the required level in terms of their number, quality, and level of adoption among users.

The study also reveals that developing this field requires the integration of several key factors, including improving digital infrastructure, encouraging investment in technological innovation, supporting local expertise in programming and digital marketing, and adopting clear strategies by the relevant authorities to promote digital transformation in the tourism sector.

Accordingly, advancing tourism electronic applications in Algeria is not a secondary option but an inevitable necessity to keep pace with global developments and achieve sustainable tourism development. This would contribute to diversifying the national economy and strengthening Algeria's position as a distinguished tourist destination.

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