

Reconfiguring tourism systems: digital intelligence, territorial governance and organizational transformation

Reconfiguração dos sistemas turísticos: inteligência digital, governação territorial e transformação organizacional

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is currently going through a particularly intense period of transformation, marked by the expansion of digital technologies, the growing centrality of data and the search for more sustainable, resilient and inclusive territorial development models. In this context, part 2 of the special edition of **e³** – Journal of Economics, Businesses and Entrepreneurs in the CPLP (**e³**) brings together a set of studies that reflects the complexity and multidisciplinary nature of contemporary tourism systems, articulating perspectives on territorial governance, smart destinations, digital transformation, tourism experience, competitiveness, entrepreneurship and organizational change. The included contributions show the consolidation of data-driven approaches, integrating smart technologies, recommendation systems, digital platforms, immersive experiences and sustainable territorial management mechanisms. In parallel, they reinforce the importance of the human, social and organisational dimensions of tourism, particularly through discussions around female entrepreneurship, labour participation, organisational agility and business resilience in contexts of continuous change. The integrated reading of these works allows us to understand tourism not only as an economic activity or experiential phenomenon, but as a deeply interdependent territorial, technological and social system, where innovation, sustainability and digital intelligence influence each other. The volume thus seeks to contribute to the deepening of the scientific debate around the challenges that mark contemporary tourism, offering relevant perspectives for researchers, public decision-makers and professionals in the sector.

Keywords: Smart tourism, Digital transformation, Territorial governance, Sustainability, Tourist experience, Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship, Organizational innovation

RESUMO

O turismo atravessa atualmente um período de transformação particularmente intenso, marcado pela expansão das tecnologias digitais, pela crescente centralidade dos dados e pela procura de modelos de desenvolvimento territorial mais sustentáveis, resilientes e inclusivos. Neste contexto, a parte 2 da edição especial da **e³** – Revista de Economia, Empresas e Empreendedores na CPLP (**e³**) reúne um conjunto de estudos que reflete a complexidade e a natureza multidisciplinar dos sistemas turísticos contemporâneos, articulando perspetivas sobre *governance* territorial, destinos inteligentes, transformação digital, experiência turística, competitividade, empreendedorismo e mudança organizacional. As contribuições incluídas evidenciam a consolidação de abordagens orientadas por dados, integrando tecnologias inteligentes, sistemas de recomendação, plataformas digitais, experiências imersivas e mecanismos de gestão territorial sustentável. Em paralelo, reforçam a importância das dimensões humanas, sociais e organizacionais do turismo, particularmente através das discussões em torno do empreendedorismo feminino, da participação laboral, da agilidade organizacional e da resiliência empresarial em contextos de mudança contínua. A leitura integrada destes trabalhos permite compreender o turismo não apenas enquanto atividade económica ou

fenômeno experiencial, mas como um sistema territorial, tecnológico e social profundamente interdependente, onde inovação, sustentabilidade e inteligência digital se influenciam mutuamente. O volume procura, assim, contribuir para o aprofundamento do debate científico em torno dos desafios que marcam o turismo contemporâneo, oferecendo perspectivas relevantes para investigadores, decisores públicos e profissionais do setor.

Palavras-chave: Turismo inteligente, Transformação digital, *Governance* territorial, Sustentabilidade, Experiência turística, Competitividade, Empreendedorismo, Inovação organizacional

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is going through a particularly intense period of transformation, driven by digitalisation, the growing centrality of data and the search for more sustainable and resilient development models. In recent years, the consolidation of smart destinations, the expansion of digital platforms and the integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence, recommendation systems, immersive experiences and data-driven infrastructures have profoundly changed the way tourist destinations are planned, managed and experienced (Wu et al., 2024).

Tourism systems have become, at the same time, more complex, interdependent and subject to permanent dynamics of change. In addition to their economic relevance, destinations face challenges related to territorial sustainability, pressure on local resources, transformation of visitor expectations and the need for more adaptive and articulated governance models. In this context, digitalisation clearly goes beyond the idea of simple technological modernisation. Its effects extend to territorial management, the competitiveness of destinations, the organization of tourist experiences and the institutional capacity itself to respond to contexts marked by instability, volatility and rapid transformation.

Recent literature has been highlighting precisely this convergence between digital intelligence, sustainability and territorial governance. Smart destinations emerge as interconnected ecosystems where connectivity, data, innovation, and institutional coordination play a central role in decision-making and planning processes (Vaz et al., 2025). The development of open platforms and data-driven information systems also reinforces the importance of territorial intelligence as a strategic mechanism for management and competitiveness (Celdrán-Bernabéu et al., 2026). **e³** itself has followed this evolution, particularly through discussions around smart tourism destinations and the role of technologies in the construction of tourist experiences (Pereira et al., 2023).

This volume seeks to highlight the multiple relationships between territory, technology, experience and organizational transformation. The contributions gathered here reflect the thematic diversity that currently characterizes tourism studies, as well as the growing need for interdisciplinary approaches capable of interpreting the complexity of contemporary tourism systems.

TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE, PLANNING, AND SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Discussions around tourism planning and territorial governance have gained renewed relevance in a period marked by the intensification of environmental pressures, the growing competitiveness between destinations and the search for more balanced and sustainable development models. Tourism today operates in particularly complex territorial systems, where economic growth, environmental preservation, tourist mobility and social dynamics often coexist in tension. In this scenario, planning no longer appears only as a technical or administrative instrument and is progressively approaching a strategic dimension

associated with the ability of territories to respond to change, instability and continuous pressure on resources and infrastructure.

The contributions gathered in this first axis reflect precisely this transformation. Analysis of tourism development models, territorial dynamics and visitor profiles shows that destinations can no longer be managed through fragmented or excessively quantitative growth-oriented approaches. The very idea of territorial governance has become more demanding, implying institutional coordination, adaptive capacity and articulation between multiple public and private actors. Pereira et al. (2023), in the discussion developed around Smart Tourism Destinations, they underline precisely this growing interdependence between information, connectivity and territorial management, highlighting how tourism decision-making processes increasingly depend on the articulation between technology, planning and territorial intelligence.

The integration of digital systems and information platforms has also changed the tourism planning processes themselves. Monitoring tools, digital infrastructures and data-driven mechanisms have come to play a strategic role in the management of destinations, allowing the monitoring of tourist flows, supporting decision-making processes and developing more adaptive management models. Vaz et al. (2025) note that the evolution of smart destinations depends largely on the ability to articulate technology, sustainability and governance in more coordinated and responsive territorial structures, capable of simultaneously integrating competitiveness, sustainability and institutional capacity.

Still, incorporating technology into tourism planning is far from eliminating structural weaknesses or automatically resolving imbalances associated with destination development. In many contexts, the intensification of digitalisation exposes new asymmetries related to institutional capacity, access to information, interoperability and territorial coordination. When discussing open data ecosystems applied to smart destinations, Celdrán-Bernabéu et al. (2026) draw attention to the strategic value of information as a management resource, but also to the challenges associated with data governance, system interoperability and articulation between territorial stakeholders.

Visitor behaviour patterns have also become more difficult to anticipate and manage. Tourist flows today show greater fragmentation; a strong influence of digital environments and high levels of volatility associated with transformations in tourism consumption. Understanding mobility profiles, motivations and dynamics has therefore become a central element of the territorial management and sustainability processes of destinations. Yap et al. (2025) demonstrate that intelligent technologies influence not only the tourist experience but also the very processes of interaction between visitors, destinations, and digital platforms, contributing to the redefinition of forms of communication, decision-making, and territorial engagement.

These transformations reinforce the idea that the sustainability of destinations will progressively depend on the ability to combine territorial intelligence, adaptive governance and long-term planning in contexts marked by high complexity and continuous change.

SMART TOURISM AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The digitalization of tourism has accelerated a transformation that had been built gradually, but which has gained particularly visible expression with the consolidation of smart destinations and data-driven digital infrastructures (Abreu et al., 2026). The functioning of destinations has become progressively dependent on interconnected platforms, intelligent recommendation systems, immersive technologies, artificial intelligence and automated

interaction mechanisms capable of influencing everything from tourism promotion processes to the visitor's own experience. Digital transformation has thus ceased to occupy a peripheral position in discussions about tourism and has become part of the center of competitiveness, territorial management and organizational innovation strategies.

The contributions gathered in this axis follow precisely this evolution. Bibliometric analyses dedicated to smart destinations and the dynamics of digital transformation in tourism show a rapidly expanding scientific field, marked by the approximation between tourism, data science, artificial intelligence and digital ecosystems. Wu et al. (2024) note that digital tourism has evolved from simple computerization processes to broader models of integration between technological platforms, digital economy and intelligent experiences, producing profound changes in the forms of organization and functioning of the tourism sector.

The incorporation of recommendation systems, immersive experiences and intelligent technologies also shows significant changes in visitor expectations and behaviours. Yap et al. (2025) demonstrate that smart tourism technologies directly influence satisfaction, personalization of the experience and co-creation processes of value, especially in tourism environments strongly mediated by digital platforms. San Martín et al. (2026) also highlight the impact of smart technologies in the construction of tourist experiences, particularly through interactivity, accessibility and permanent digital communication between visitors and destinations.

Smart tourism ecosystems depend, in turn, on data infrastructures, interoperability and territorial management systems supported by real-time information. When discussing open data ecosystems applied to smart destinations, Celdrán-Bernabéu et al. (2026) show how data has come to assume a strategic role not only in the monitoring of tourist flows, but also in the territorial governance processes themselves. The articulation between connectivity, information systems and territorial intelligence progressively redefines the ability of destinations to anticipate behaviour, adjust management strategies and respond to increasingly unstable demand patterns.

Still, this transformation remains marked by ambiguities and tensions that are difficult to ignore. The intensification of technological mediation introduces new dependencies associated with digital platforms, data governance and technological concentration. In many destinations, the expansion of digitalization coexists with institutional weaknesses, interoperability limitations, and inequalities in access to technology, exposing asymmetries that innovation itself sometimes tends to deepen. Vaz et al. (2025) underline precisely that smart destinations cannot be reduced to sophisticated technological infrastructures, since their operation also depends on institutional capacity, territorial coordination and organisational sustainability.

The relationship between technology and the tourist experience also remains far from linear. Digital platforms and immersive environments expand possibilities for interaction, personalization, and real-time communication. At the same time, the growing platformization of tourism reopens discussions around authenticity, the standardization of experiences and the excess of technological mediation. Kemala Sari et al. (2025) draw attention to this paradox by suggesting that intelligent systems can simultaneously enrich the tourism experience and reduce more spontaneous forms of sharing and engaging with destinations.

If, on the one hand, digital transformation represents a structural reorganization of tourism systems themselves rather than an exclusively technological process, on the other hand,

smart destinations thus assert themselves as hybrid spaces where data, digital platforms, territorial governance, experience and organizational capacity coexist in a deeply interdependent way.

EXPERIENCE, COMPETITIVENESS AND TOURISM VALUE CREATION

The digitalization of tourist destinations has profoundly changed the way value is produced, communicated and experienced in tourism. Competitiveness progressively ceased to depend only on physical infrastructures or attractiveness and began to relate much more intensely to experience, territorial identity, digital communication and symbolic differentiation. In a context marked by high connectivity and permanent circulation of information, destinations today compete not only for visitors, but also for attention, reputation and relevance in progressively more saturated digital ecosystems.

The contributions gathered in this axis accompany precisely this transformation. The analyses dedicated to city marketing, digital communication channels, gastronomic tourism, wine tourism, hospitality and revenue management strategies show how destinations seek to build value propositions increasingly associated with authenticity, memory and personalization of the experience. The growth of segments linked to wine tourism, olive oil tourism and cultural experiences also shows the appreciation of territorially differentiated tourism models, strongly associated with local identity and the creation of more immersive experiences.

Recent literature has increasingly reinforced the role of smart technologies in transforming the tourist experience. San Martín et al. (2026) emphasize that interactivity, personalization, and accessibility have come to occupy a central position in experience co-creation processes, while Yap et al. (2025) show that smart tourism technologies directly influence visitor satisfaction, behaviour, and destination perception. Matyusupov et al. (2025) also highlight the relationship between smart technologies, destination image, loyalty, and e-WOM, particularly in tourism environments characterised by strong digital mediation and continuous real-time communication.

The very construction of the tourist image has become more dynamic, fragmented and distributed among multiple digital actors. Social platforms, user-generated content, recommendation systems and immersive environments have come to play a decisive role in the way destinations are perceived and experienced. In many cases, the tourist experience begins before the physical journey and extends beyond it, developing through continuous digital interactions that influence expectations, behaviours and decision-making processes.

The discussions around gastronomic tourism and wine tourism particularly reinforce this appreciation of authenticity, cultural differentiation and territorial identity. The search for local experiences, identity narratives and more sensorial forms of involvement with destinations shows a gradual move away from excessively massified tourism models towards more specialized and emotionally significant experiences. Gastronomy, hospitality and cultural heritage assume, in this context, a progressively more relevant role in the construction of tourism competitiveness.

Still, the relationship between digitalization and experience remains marked by ambiguities that are difficult to ignore. If, on the one hand, digital technologies expand possibilities for personalization, connectivity, and interaction, on the other hand, they also contribute to growing forms of mediation, standardization, and technological dependence. Kemala Sari et al. (2025) draw attention to precisely this paradox by suggesting that intelligent systems can

simultaneously enrich the tourist experience and reduce spontaneity, authenticity, and more organic forms of interaction between visitors and territories.

Jokom et al. (2025), when analysing sustainable tourism experiences mediated by digital technology, also demonstrate that the effects of digitalization strongly depend on the way technology, institutional support and territorial experience are articulated. Technological integration tends to generate greater experiential value when associated with contexts capable of preserving cultural identity, social involvement, and territorial significance.

Discussions around hospitality and revenue management strategies also introduce issues related to organizational efficiency, adaptation, and economic sustainability. Tourism competitiveness progressively depends on the ability of organizations to integrate technological innovation, experience management and flexible business models in environments characterized by high volatility and continuous transformation.

Value creation in tourism thus moves away from an exclusively transactional logic and towards relational, emotional, and territorial processes in which experience, communication, cultural identity, and technology coexist in a deeply interdependent manner.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND RESILIENCE

The final section of the volume shifts the focus from technological infrastructure to organisations, work, and the social dynamics that underpin current processes of tourism transformation. This shift becomes particularly significant at a time when the sector faces environments characterised by economic instability, technological acceleration, business model transformation, and increasing competitive pressure (Sousa et al., 2023). Innovation in tourism has long ceased to depend solely on the adoption of technology. It equally relies on the ability of organisations to respond to contexts of continuous change, financial vulnerability, and the ongoing reconfiguration of work practices.

The contributions gathered in this section explore precisely these tensions through the analysis of women's entrepreneurship, labour participation in the tourism sector, the financial constraints faced by firms, and organisational agility as a mechanism for adaptation and transformation. Taken together, they reveal a sector in which technological innovation, organisational sustainability, and social inclusion often coexist in a fragile balance, particularly in economic contexts that are heavily dependent on tourism activity.

Discussions surrounding women's entrepreneurship make particularly visible some of the structural fragilities of contemporary tourism. Despite the strong presence of women across multiple segments of the sector, limitations persist in areas such as access to finance, business stability, organisational leadership, and career progression. Research focused on women's labour participation likewise shows that many of the inequalities associated with tourism work have not disappeared with the sector's digitalisation and, in several contexts, have become more complex in environments marked by precariousness, seasonality, and the ongoing reorganisation of work structures.

Digital transformation processes have also profoundly altered the way tourism organisations operate and position themselves. Wu et al. (2024) note that the digitalisation of tourism clearly goes beyond the mere incorporation of technological tools, generating structural changes in the sector's organisational models themselves. The growing reliance on digital platforms, intelligent systems, and data-driven infrastructures demands more flexible organisations, capable of responding swiftly to shifting visitor preferences,

fluctuations in demand, and the intensification of competition in highly connected environments.

In this context, the discussion surrounding agile mindsets and organisational transformation becomes particularly significant. The adaptive capacity of organisations has become a central element of tourism systems, especially in sectors characterised by strong seasonality, financial instability, and rapid technological change. Organisational agility thus emerges less as a management trend and more as a necessary condition for survival, innovation, and business sustainability. Jokom et al. (2025), in their analysis of sustainable tourism experiences supported by digital technology, demonstrate precisely that the effects of innovation depend heavily on organisational and institutional capacity to integrate technology, coordination, and territorial experience in a balanced manner.

The financial constraints faced by tourism businesses also reveal structural vulnerabilities that remain present in many destinations. Excessive dependence on specific markets, exposure to economic fluctuations, and the financial fragility of small and medium-sized enterprises make it particularly difficult to consolidate more resilient and sustainable development models. These limitations become even more evident in territories that are heavily dependent on tourism as their main economic activity and are subject to strong fluctuations in demand.

Recent literature on smart tourism destinations has increasingly recognised that technological innovation and competitiveness depend heavily on the institutional and organisational capacity of territories. Vaz et al. (2025) emphasise precisely that smart destinations cannot be reduced to sophisticated digital infrastructures, as the functioning of these ecosystems equally relies on governance, institutional coordination, and the adaptive capacity of the organisations involved. Pereira et al. (2023), in their discussion in **e³** on smart tourism destinations, also reinforce the importance of articulating information systems, organisational management, and territorial development. Celdrán-Bernabéu et al. (2026), in their examination of open data ecosystems in smart destinations, likewise draw attention to the challenges associated with interoperability, data governance, and coordination among multiple territorial stakeholders.

The transformations discussed throughout this section make it particularly clear that tourism cannot be understood solely as an economic activity oriented towards mobility, consumption, and experience. The sector now asserts itself as a territorial, technological, and organisational system that is deeply interdependent, where decisions related to labour, governance, innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation generate economic, social, and institutional impacts simultaneously.

Tourism is currently undergoing a structural reorganisation that places new demands on organisations, territories, and the very forms of tourism development. The ability to articulate digital intelligence, territorial sustainability, social inclusion, and organisational resilience increasingly tends to define the limits and possibilities of contemporary tourism systems.

CONCLUSION

The contributions gathered in this volume highlight the growing complexity that currently characterises tourism systems. Digital transformation, territorial sustainability, destination competitiveness, the tourist experience, and organisational adaptation have ceased to function as isolated dimensions and have instead become part of deeply interdependent

processes in which technology, territory, governance, and innovation coexist in increasingly interconnected ways.

The discussions developed across the different thematic axes show that tourism is undergoing a structural reorganisation marked by the intensification of digital mediation, the centrality of data, the need for more sustainable development models, and the growing pressure on organisations and territories to respond to environments characterised by high volatility and continuous transformation. Smart tourism destinations, intelligent technologies, digital ecosystems, and data-driven infrastructures illustrate only part of a broader process of redefining the very models of tourism management, planning, and experience.

At the same time, the studies presented reinforce that the challenges of contemporary tourism cannot be understood solely through a technological lens. Issues related to social inclusion, sustainability, labour, organisational resilience, territorial preservation, and institutional capacity remain central to the future of destinations. Tourism innovation is therefore inseparable from the social, economic, and territorial conditions that sustain the functioning of tourism ecosystems.

This volume seeks precisely to contribute to this interdisciplinary reflection, bringing together research that articulates different analytical perspectives, methodologies, and territorial contexts. The thematic diversity present in the contributions highlights not only the current breadth of tourism studies but also the growing need for approaches capable of interpreting tourism phenomena in environments marked by permanent connectivity, accelerated transformation, and increasing interdependence between technology, territory, and society.

The contributions gathered here reinforce the importance of continuing to deepen discussions on destination sustainability, digital transformation, the tourist experience, and the adaptive capacity of organisations and territories. Contemporary tourism increasingly asserts itself as a field in which innovation, territorial intelligence, governance, and sustainability cease to function as parallel agendas and instead become integral to the very foundations of tourism development.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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ETHICS STATEMENT

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Generative artificial intelligence tools were used exclusively to assist in the translation and linguistic revision of this editorial. The authors reviewed and validated all content and remains fully responsible for its accuracy and integrity.