




WEB 2.0 AND TOURISM: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Abstract

Purpose – The tourism sector has undergone profound transformations due to digital technologies. The shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has created an interactive environment characterized by social networks, intermediary platforms, mobile devices, Big Data, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). This study examines the role of these technologies in tourism, assessing their benefits and challenges.

Methodology/Design/Approach – Through a systematic literature review, this research analyzes the correlation between social networks, intermediary platforms, and business performance. It highlights advantages such as increased visibility, customer loyalty, and brand reputation while addressing the risks of dependence on third-party platforms. Additionally, it explores the impact of Big Data and AI on personalized tourist experiences and business process optimization.

Findings – The results show that digitalization enhances marketing strategies and destination management. However, businesses must invest in technological infrastructure, staff training, and data management to maximize benefits.

Originality of the research – This study provides insights for tourism enterprises and future research, emphasizing a strategic and sustainable approach to digital innovation. By examining both opportunities and risks, it contributes to understanding how businesses can effectively adopt new technologies to remain competitive.

Keywords Web 2.0, tourism, social media, intermediary platforms, Big Data, artificial intelligence, digitalisation

Review paper

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the tourism sector has undergone a profound transformation due to the evolution of digital technologies, which have revolutionised the way businesses and consumers interact within the market. From Web 1.0, characterised by one-way communication (Berners-Lee, 1989), to Web 2.0, which introduced a participatory and interactive network (O'Reilly, 2007), and to emerging technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence, technological progress has redefined both business practices and travellers' experiences (Gretzel et al., 2015).

Web 2.0 introduced a range of innovative tools that can be divided into four main categories: social networks, intermediary platforms, mobile devices connected to the Internet, and emerging technologies such as social big data and AI (Sigala et al., 2012; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Blanco-Moreno et al., 2023). These technologies have enhanced customer relationships, optimised business operations, and fostered personalised offerings, thereby generating significant benefits for tourism enterprises. However, the adoption of these tools is not without challenges. Among the main risks is the dependency on intermediary platforms, which could reduce businesses' strategic control over their sales channels. Moreover, emerging technologies require an appropriate organisational structure to be effectively integrated into business processes. However, the literature still reveals unresolved theoretical tensions: on the one hand, the transformative role of digital technologies is widely emphasised; on the other, there is a lack of studies that critically examine the long-term effectiveness of such innovations, particularly within real organisational contexts. In particular, a misalignment persists between the enthusiasm for technological adoption and the limited evidence of concrete and sustainable long-term impacts.

Building on these premises, the study aims to investigate two main research questions:

Q1a: Is there a positive correlation between the use of social networks and intermediary platforms and business performance (e.g., sales, customer loyalty, brand image)?

Q1b: How might the risk of dependency on intermediary platforms influence these outcomes?

Q2a: Is there a positive correlation between the use of emerging technologies (e.g., Big Data, artificial intelligence) and business performance?

Q2b: How does the presence of an appropriate organisational structure (e.g., training, investment, processes) affect this relationship?

To address these questions, this study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, following the PRISMA protocol to ensure transparency, replicability, and comprehensive coverage of the scientific contributions on Web 2.0 and tourism.

The main objective of this work is to provide a review of the literature on Web 2.0 and tourism, analysing the benefits and risks associated with the adoption of various technologies and identifying the organisational conditions that facilitate their effective implementation. Understanding the dynamics between technologies, organisation, and business performance will help outline useful guidelines for tourism enterprises and future research, providing a solid foundation to address the challenges of a constantly evolving sector.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 1 describes the methodology adopted. Section 2 provides a literature analysis of Web 2.0 technologies in tourism. Section 3 presents the main results across four technological domains. Section 4 discusses the implications and future research directions. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper.

1. METHODOLOGY

The literature review aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis of both established and emerging literature, using as the unit of analysis articles published in national and international scientific journals.

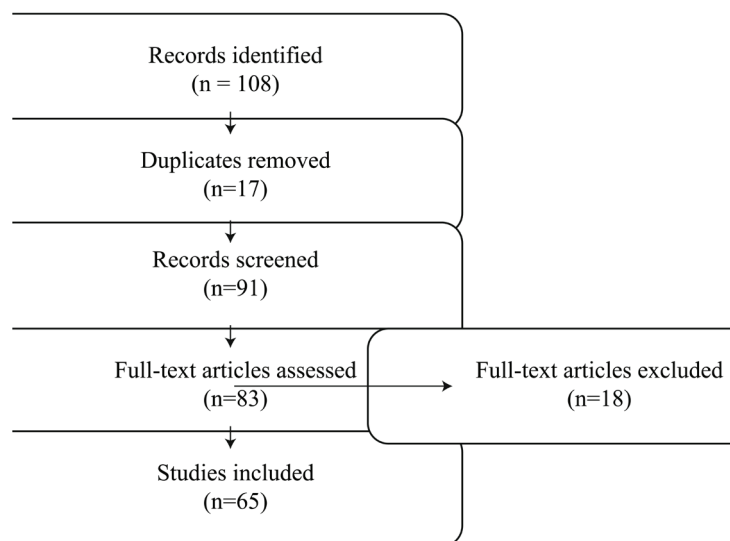
The body of literature on this topic is extensive and, in our view, can be grouped into several main streams of thought that trace the effects of digital technologies from Web 1.0 to the current landscape dominated by AI and Big Data analytics:

- The theme of Web 2.0, examining how the advent of social media has reshaped market approaches;
- The theme of the evolution of emerging technologies, exploring how the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced techniques can enhance online interactions and transform large volumes of unstructured data into actionable insights for marketing strategies and customer engagement.

To systematically analyse the role of Web 2.0 technologies in the tourism sector, these have been divided into four main categories: social networks, intermediary platforms, mobile devices connected to the Internet, and emerging technologies.

The research was conducted using major academic databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and EBSCO, employing a targeted set of keywords, including “Web 2.0”, “tourism”, “Big Data”, “artificial intelligence”, and “social media”. These keywords were selected based on their recurrence in existing literature and their ability to cover both established aspects and emerging innovations. The systematic review was conducted following a protocol structured in three main phases: identification of sources, application of inclusion/exclusion criteria, and content categorisation. A total of 108 articles were initially identified through queries in academic databases. After removing duplicates ($n = 17$), 91 articles were subjected to preliminary screening (titles and abstracts), resulting in 83 potentially relevant studies. Full-text analysis led to the exclusion of 18 contributions due to a lack of methodological rigour or thematic relevance. Consequently, 65 studies were included in the final review. The process was carried out in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines and is illustrated in the flow diagram presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: PRISMA flowchart



Source: Author's own creation

1.1. Identification of Sources

The first phase aimed to build a comprehensive and representative corpus of scientific articles exploring the role of Web 2.0 technologies and their impact on the tourism sector.

Through the use of Boolean operators, it was possible to construct complex search queries, which expanded the scope of the investigation while maintaining a high degree of specificity. This process resulted in an initial corpus of articles that was broad and diverse, including contributions focusing on social networks (e.g., Facebook and Instagram in tourism promotion), intermediary platforms (such as TripAdvisor and Booking.com), mobile devices (used to personalise experiences and improve accessibility), and emerging technologies (such as Big Data and artificial intelligence applied to tourism).

1.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The second phase focused on the rigorous screening of the collected material, aiming to ensure the quality and relevance of the selected articles. Initially, the titles and abstracts of the identified articles were examined to assess their relevance to the objectives of the review. Articles addressing non-relevant topics, such as those not directly related to Web 2.0 or tourism, were discarded. Additionally, studies that were not peer-reviewed, lacked robust methodologies, or did not meet the predefined quality standards were excluded. These standards included: (i) publication in peer-reviewed journals; (ii) clear and consistent research design; (iii) relevance to at least one of the two research questions; and (iv) sufficient methodological transparency to allow evaluation of validity.

Subsequently, the articles that passed this initial selection were analysed in full. This in-depth review allowed for an evaluation of methodological robustness, the relevance of the findings, and the originality of each study's contribution. Articles demonstrating a high level of consistency between the data presented and the conclusions drawn were included in the review. An additional step in this phase involved categorising the articles according to the four identified technological categories, ensuring a balanced distribution of the final corpus. The classification of studies into four technological domains was initially performed during the screening phase based on titles and abstracts. This categorisation was then confirmed and refined during the full-text analysis stage.

1.3. Categorisation and Analysis

The third phase involved the systematic and detailed analysis of the selected articles, aiming to synthesise key information and construct a structured overview of the available evidence. The articles were organised into thematic clusters corresponding to the four technological categories:

- Social networks: Studies explored the use of social platforms to promote destinations, gather feedback, and generate engagement with tourists.
- Intermediary platforms: Articles investigated the role of portals such as Booking.com and TripAdvisor in managing bookings, reviews, and building online reputations.
- Mobile devices: Studies in this category highlighted the role of smartphones and apps in improving the accessibility of tourist information and personalising experiences.
- Emerging technologies: Research delved into the use of artificial intelligence and Big Data to enhance marketing strategies and optimise destination management.

Although each of the four technological domains—social media, intermediary platforms, mobile devices, and emerging technologies—has developed as a distinct area of research, they are deeply interconnected in the digital transformation of tourism. However, these domains cannot be fully understood in isolation. A more segmented analysis might have allowed for deeper and more domain-specific insights; however, the decision to integrate these domains into a single systematic analysis was intentional. This reflects the convergence of technological tools and platforms in practice, where businesses and users often engage with them simultaneously. For instance, mobile devices serve as access points to both social media and intermediary platforms, while emerging technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence are increasingly applied to data generated across all three of the other domains. This integrated approach enables a holistic view of the evolving digital ecosystem and offers a more strategic understanding of how Web 2.0 technologies contribute to shaping tourism operations and experiences.

To ensure a rigorous and reproducible process, a structured approach was employed, comprising the following steps:

- Definition of analysis dimensions: A set of standard categories was established to guide data extraction, including elements such as the main theme, core research question, investigation methodology, and key findings. These categories were defined based on the objectives of the review and methodological guidelines for systematic reviews.
- Coding and recording: For each article, relevant information was extracted and coded consistently. The data were entered into a predefined matrix to ensure uniformity in recording and to facilitate comparative analysis.
- Preliminary synthesis: The collected data were synthesised to provide a structured overview of the evidence, forming the foundation for subsequent qualitative and quantitative analyses.

Table 1 presents the extraction table of the clusters, designed to provide an overview within the four domains and to ensure the logical structure of the literature review from 2000 to 2024.

Table 1: **Extraction table of the clusters**

Cluster	Number of Studies	Main Focus
Social Networks	34	Impact of social media, digital marketing, online reviews, influencer dynamics
Intermediary Platforms	12	Role of digital platforms, online reviews, and transformation in tourism marketing
Mobile Devices	5	Use of mobile apps, digital communication in tourism, and customer loyalty
Emerging Technologies	14	Big Data, AI, technological innovation, and the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 4.0 in tourism

Source: Author's own creation

With regard to the methodological orientation of the included studies, a prevalence of qualitative approaches was observed. Specifically, 38 studies (58%) employed a qualitative design, primarily involving case studies, interviews, and observational techniques. Seventeen studies (26%) adopted a quantitative approach, mainly through structured surveys and statistical analyses. Finally, 10 studies (15%) utilised a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative tools.

The data collection methods employed in the reviewed studies reflect a wide variety of techniques, consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of the topic. In particular, 28 studies (43%) relied on individual interviews, while 21 studies (32%) used structured questionnaires or online surveys. Nine studies (14%) employed focus groups, and seven studies (11%) adopted methods such as direct observation, web scraping, or document analysis. In some cases, multiple data collection methods were used in combination. This methodological heterogeneity reflects the literature's interest in balancing subjective experiential data with structured and traceable measurement tools.

The 65 studies included in this review exhibit a wide range of methodological approaches, reflecting the multidisciplinary and evolving nature of research on Web 2.0 technologies within the tourism context. A substantial proportion of the contributions are based on qualitative methodologies, including case studies, conceptual models, and literature reviews, with the aim of exploring emerging phenomena or specific organisational contexts. In parallel, numerous studies adopt quantitative approaches, such as survey-based investigations and statistical analyses, particularly aimed at examining consumer behaviour, technological adoption factors, or impacts on business performance.

Although both qualitative and quantitative paradigms are represented, the review highlights two recurrent methodological gaps. On the one hand, there is a limited presence of longitudinal studies capable of capturing the evolution over time of digital technology adoption and its impacts. On the other hand, the use of mixed-methods approaches—integrating qualitative and quantitative data within a single research design—remains sporadic, thereby constraining the development of more nuanced and comprehensive analyses.

This overview does not seek to directly address these imbalances, but rather to document them systematically and highlight their implications. The observed fragmentation suggests the need to promote more integrated and comparative research designs, capable of offering a more comprehensive, robust, and generalisable understanding of digital dynamics in tourism.

This systematic approach ensures not only that the selected articles are of high quality and relevance but also that the entire research process remains aligned with the highest scientific standards and the specific objectives of the study. Through this bibliographic research methodology, we aim to outline current trends and future challenges in the management of Web 2.0 combined with emerging technologies by tourism industry operators, providing a solid foundation for further research or the development of practical strategies.

A cross-sectional analysis of the studies revealed several recurring theoretical frameworks, including Value Co-creation, the Platform Economy, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, and the TOE (Technology-Organisation-Environment) model. However, in approximately one-third of the contributions, no explicit theoretical framework was identified, highlighting the conceptual fragmentation of the field and the need to develop more integrated interpretative models.

The main theoretical frameworks identified in the analysed literature are briefly described below to provide a clearer understanding of the conceptual foundations guiding the studies:

1. **Value Co-creation:** Rooted in the Service-Dominant Logic, this framework explains how value is co-created through the interaction between various actors—such as customers, companies, and partners—rather than being unilaterally delivered by the firm.
2. **Platform Economy:** This perspective describes the economic and organisational dynamics of digital platforms that facilitate exchanges between producers and consumers. It highlights the importance of network effects, scalability, and the emergence of new business models.

3. Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 1962): A foundational model that examines how innovations spread within a social system over time, categorising adopters into five groups: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.
4. TOE Model (Technology–Organization–Environment Framework): Developed by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), this framework explores how technology adoption in organisations is influenced by three contextual factors: technological readiness, organisational characteristics, and the external environment.
5. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): Proposed by Davis (1989), this model examines the determinants of individuals' acceptance of new technologies, focusing on two core constructs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These factors shape users' attitudes towards a technology and their behavioural intention to use it.
6. Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT): Developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003), this integrative framework consolidates elements from eight previous models to explain technology adoption. It identifies four key constructs—performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions—which are moderated by variables such as age, gender, experience, and voluntariness of use.
7. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991): An extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, this theory seeks to predict deliberate behaviour by considering three main factors: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These elements collectively influence behavioural intention and, ultimately, actual behaviour.

2. LITERATURE ANALYSIS

As part of this systematic literature review, an analysis and synthesis of relevant contributions on Web 2.0 and tourism have been conducted. To facilitate the understanding of the main topics addressed and the research questions explored by the scientific community, a data extraction table has been developed to collect and summarise the findings from the analysed literature. Table 2 provides an analysis sheet for each included contribution, structured according to key dimensions such as thematic focus, fundamental research questions.

Table 2: **Data Extraction Table**

Author / Publication	Year	Journal / Publisher	Research Question
Buhalis D. eTourism. Information Technology for Strategic Tourism Management	2000	Pearson	What are the main implications of ICTs in tourism?
Buhalis D., O'Connor P. Information Communication Technology Revolutionizing Tourism	2005	Tourism Recreation Research Vol. 30(3), 7-16	What are the key changes brought by ICTs in revolutionising the tourism industry?
O'Reilly, T. What Is Web 2.0? Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software	2007	Communications & Strategies, 65, 17-37	What are the characteristics of Web 2.0?
Kotler P., Keller K. L. Il marketing nel nuovo millennio	2007	Pearson	What are the new focuses that emerged with Web 2.0?
Vescovi T. Ritardi e sorpassi: web marketing tra imprese e clienti	2009	Mercati e Competitività, 1, 13-17	How do delays and advancements in web marketing affect the relationship between companies and customers?
Cozzi P. Turismo e Web	2010	Franco Angeli	What is the impact of Web 2.0 on tourism?
Milano R., Baggio R., Iattelli R. The effects of online social media on tourism websites	2011	In R. Law, M. Fuchs, & F. Ricci (Eds.), Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2011 (pp. 471–483). Vienna: Springer.	Is there a correlation between social media activity and commercial success?
Kapoor C., Juman D., Quinby D. Social Media in Travel 2011: Traffic, Activity and Sentiment	2011	PhoCusWright Report	What is the role of social media in relation to demand and supply in the e-Tourism market?

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Dickinson, J. E., Ghali, K., Cherrett, T., Speed, C., Davies, N., & Norgate, S. Tourism and the smartphone app: capabilities, emerging practice and scope in the travel domain.	2012	Current Issues in Tourism, 17(1), 84–101.	What is the role of the smartphone as a tool for tourist travel?
Gretzel, U., Kennedy-Eden, H. Meta-Analyses of Tourism Research	2012	Handbook of Research Methods in Tourism, pp. 459-471	What is the applicability and value of meta-analyses in tourism research?
Meini M., Spinelli G. Il territorio nella comunicazione turistica digitale	2012	Annali del turismo, 1, pp. 327-343. Geoprogress Edizioni, Novara.	What is the role of geographic information in shaping the image of places for tourism?
Kastner, M., & Stangl, B. Mapping Segments Accessing User Generated Content and Website Applications in a Joint Space	2012	International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 6(4), 389 - 404	Do user-generated content (UGC) influence consumer choices?
Pesonen J. A., Horster E. Field Communication technology in tourism	2012	Tourism Management Perspectives, 4, 11-18	What is the impact of Near-Field Communication (NFC) technology on tourism?
Sigala, M., Christou, E., & Gretzel, U. Social media in travel, tourism and hospitality: Theory, practice and cases.	2012	Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.	How to maximise the potential of social media in the tourism sector?
Becheri, E., Biella, A. L'intermediazione della filiera del turismo organizzato.	2013	Maggioli Editore	How has tourism intermediation changed with Web 2.0?
Leung D., Law R., Van Hoof H., Buhalis D. Social media in tourism and hospitality: A literature review	2013	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 30(1-2), 3-22	Can social media influence supply?
Bizirgianni I., Dionysopoulou P. The influence of tourist trends of youth tourism through social media (SM) & information and communication technologies (ICTs)	2013	Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 73, 652-660	What are the effects of the rise of social media on young tourists?
Mayer-Schonberger V., Cukier K. Big Data. Una rivoluzione che trasformerà il nostro modo di vivere e già minaccia la nostra libertà	2013	Garzanti	How are Big Data changing the way we live?
Capecchi, S. L'audience «attiva». Effetti e usi sociali dei media	2015	Carocci Editore	What are the effects of Web 2.0 on society?
Ejarque, J. Social media marketing per il turismo: Come costruire il marketing 2.0 e gestire la reputazione della destinazione	2015	Hoepli	How has Web 2.0 influenced the consumption habits of modern tourists?
Pencarelli, T., Cioppi, M., Forlani, F. The impact of web 2.0 on small business hotel marketing	2015	Small Business/Small Business Magazine, p. 2.	What is the impact of Web 2.0 on small hotel businesses?

Author / Publication	Year	Journal / Publisher	Research Question
Şahin, G.G., Sengün, G. The Effects of Social Media on Tourism Marketing: A Study among University Students.	2015	Management and Administrative Sciences Review, 4, 772-786.	What are the effects of social media on tourism marketing for new generations?
Drozdowska, M., & Duda-Seifert, M. Travel websites: a relevant source of statistical information?	2016	Tourism, 26(2), 7–13	How have OTAs integrated UGC?
Garofalo, S. Applicazioni mobili per guide virtuali interattive	2016	In V. Greco (a cura di), Visualizzare il paesaggio. Nuove forme di narrazione e rappresentazione dello spazio geografico (p. 97). BraDypUS Editore	The impact of apps on the relationship between culture and territory
Solanki I, M.R., Abhijit Dongaonkar, A. A Journey of Human Comfort: Web 1.0 to Web 4.0	2016	International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI) Volume III, Issue IX, September 2016 ISSN 2321–2705	What are the technological characteristics of the World Wide Web from Web 1.0 to Web 4.0?
Xiang, Z., Du, Q., Ma, Y., Fan, W. A comparative analysis of major online review platforms: Implications for social media analytics in hospitality and tourism	2017	Tourism Management, 58, 51-65	What is the impact of online platforms on consumer decision-making?
Antonio, N., de Almeida, A., & Nunes, L. Hotel online reviews: Different languages, different opinions	2018	Information Technology & Tourism, 18(1), 157-185	What are the methods for analysing online reviews in the tourism and hospitality sector?
Del Vecchio, P., Mele, G., Ndou, V., Secundo, G. Creating value from Social Big Data: Implications for Smart Tourism Destinations	2018	Information Processing & Management, Vol. 54, Issue 5, pp 847-860	How do Social Big Data create value?
Ivanov, S. Tourism beyond humans – robots, pets and Teddy bears	2018	International Scientific Conference “Tourism and Innovations”, 14-15th September 2018, College of Tourism	Who are non-human travellers in the tourism sector, and how should tourism and hospitality businesses address the related strategic, operational, and marketing challenges?
Li, J., Xu, L., Tang, L., Wang, S., & Li, L. Big data in tourism research: A literature review	2018	Tourism Management, Vol. 68, pp 301-323	How are Big Data revolutionising tourism research?
Mellinas, J. P., & Reino, S. eWOM: The importance of reviews and ratings in tourism marketing	2018	In M. Camilleri (Ed.), Strategic perspectives in destination marketing (pp. 143–173). IGI Global	How do electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), reviews, and ratings influence tourism marketing strategies?
Moretta Tartaglione, A., Berné Manero, C., Vicuta Ciobanu, A. L'e-WOM come strumento di gestione nel settore alberghiero italiano	2018	Micro & Macro Marketing, 1, 57-84	How can electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) be utilized as a management tool in the Italian hotel industry?
Yogitha, L J. Social media as a tool of marketing: A study of the hospitality industry	2018	Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, 5(12), 166-172	How do social media platforms serve as marketing tools in the hospitality industry?

Author / Publication	Year	Journal / Publisher	Research Question
Li, C., Guo, S., Wang, C. L., & Zhang, J. Veni, vidi, vici: The impact of social media on virtual acculturation in tourism context	2019	Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 145, 513-522	How does social media usage influence virtual acculturation processes among tourists?
Ivanov, S., Gretzel, U., Berezina, K., Sigala, M., & Webster, C. Progress on robotics in hospitality and tourism: a review of the literature.	2019	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, 10(4), 489-521	What is the state of academic research on robotics in the tourism and hospitality sectors, and what are the gaps and future directions in this field?
Gupta, M. A study on impact of online food delivery app on restaurant business: Special reference to Zomato and Swiggy	2019	International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, 6(1), 889-893	How do online food delivery apps like Zomato and Swiggy impact restaurant businesses?
Pencarelli, T. La rivoluzione digitale nel settore dei viaggi e delle vacanze: verso il turismo 4.0	2019	In S. Barile & C. Simone (Eds.), <i>Industria 4.0. Tra suggestioni emergenti e soluzioni effettive</i> (pp. 239-275). Nuova Cultura	How is the digital revolution transforming the travel and vacation sector towards Tourism 4.0?
Sigala, M., Rahimi, R., & Thelwall, M. Big data and innovation in tourism, travel, and hospitality	2019	Springer	What are the practical implications of the role and use of Big Data in driving and sustaining innovation in tourism?
Cha, S.-S., Seo, B.-K. The effect of food delivery application on customer loyalty in restaurant	2020	Journal of Distribution Science, 18(2), 5-12	What factors influence consumer satisfaction with apps?
Fyfe, J., Bent, R., Seaman, C. Business internet use in small, family owned and managed hotels in Scotland	2020	International Journal of Business and Globalisation, 24(2), 256-274	What is the impact of new digital technologies on small hotel businesses in Scotland?
Huerta-Álvarez, R., Cambra-Fierro, J. J., Fuentes-Blasco, M. The interplay between social media communication, brand equity and brand engagement in tourist destinations: An analysis in an emerging economy	2020	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 16, 100413	How has the impact of social media on tourism changed?
Pateli, A., Mylonas, N., Spyrou, A. Organizational adoption of social media in the hospitality industry: An integrated approach based on DIT and TOE frameworks	2020	Sustainability, 12(17), 7132	What factors influence the adoption of social media by hospitality firms, considering technological, organizational, and environmental perspectives?
Belias D., Malik S., Rossidis I., Mantas C. The Use of Big Data in Tourism: Current Trends and Directions for Future Research	2021	Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 10(5), 357-364	How is Big Data transforming the tourism industry, and what are the current trends and future research directions in this field?
Mortara A., Scramaglia, R. Comportamenti turistici e accoglienza alberghiera. Un'indagine esplorativa sull'impatto di Internet	2021	Micro & Macro Marketing, 3/2020, pp. 467-487	What is the impact of the Internet and new technologies on consumer purchasing behaviour?
Zhang, P. Research on the revolution of the catering industry in the platform economy	2021	In Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Financial Innovation and Economic Development (ICFIED 2021) (pp. 19-24). Atlantis Press	What is the impact of digital platforms on the traditional restaurant industry?

Author / Publication	Year	Journal / Publisher	Research Question
Panahande, A. Strategie di marketing basate sui social media	2021	New Marketing Research Journal, 11(1), 201-216	What are the perspectives of small tourism business managers on the value and importance of social media?
Brito, M., Pacheco, K. M. M. Design, turismo e tecnologia: mercado e a necessidade de uso de tecnologia mobile para auxilio do turismo em Manaus	2022	DAT Journal, 7(1), 280-290	What is the impact of mobile technology on tourism?
Remigio, B. L'Influencer Marketing nel turismo: l'influenza nel travel customer journey.	2022	Università Ca' Foscari Venezia	Does influencer marketing in the tourism sector effectively impact the travel customer journey?
Rivetti, F., Migliaccio, M. Un magazzino di esperienze su Internet. Cosa succede nel turismo?	2022	Micro & Macro Marketing, 31(1), 71-96	How do shared online experiences influence the evaluation of tourism products?
Kuss, A. C., & Medaglia, J. Turismo e tecnologia de informação: das agências tradicionais às travel techs	2022	Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa em Turismo, 16, e-2668	How have digital transformations influenced the evolution from traditional travel agencies to travel techs in the context of Tourism 4.0?
Blanco-Moreno S., González-Fernández A.M, Muñoz-Galleg, P.A. Big data in tourism marketing: past research and future opportunities	2023	Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC, 27(3), 266-286	What are the emerging research areas in marketing, tourism, and Big Data?
Centra M, Deidda M, Della Ratta, F. L'economia delle piattaforme digitali. Prime evidenze dall'indagine inapp sul turismo, la ristorazione e i trasporti	2023	Inapp	What is the impact of digital platforms on market share and labour organisation in the sale of products and services?
Della Ratta-Rinaldi, F. Il ruolo delle piattaforme nella ristorazione e nel turismo	2023	Inapp	What are the possible reasons for not using digital platforms in the restaurant and tourism sectors?
Gritta, F., Calabrese, M. Internet use in small tourism in Italy: what will be the role of local government?	2023	Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy, 17(4), 632-654	How do small hospitality businesses use the Internet for marketing, and what role can local policy play?
Kumar, S. Impact of Digital Innovations and AI on Gastronomy, Tourism, and Local Food Experiences	2023	Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, 10(11), 70-78	What is the impact of digital innovation on enhancing and personalising the gourmet travel experience?
Osorio-Andrade, C. F., Arango Pastrana, C. A., Rodríguez Orejuela, A. Evolution of scientific research on electronic word of mouth in the tourism industry: A bibliometric analysis	2023	Estudios Gerenciales, 39(166), 110-123	How has scientific research on eWOM in the tourism industry evolved, and what are the future research opportunities in this field?
Prado, D. P. El turismo y el Internet post Covid1-9	2023	Universidad-Verdad, 1(82), 80-97	How has the use of the Internet by tourism businesses changed after COVID-19?
Abashidze, I. The Influence of Online Platforms on Decision-Making Process and Behavioural Traits of International Travelers	2024	European Scientific Journal, 20(37), 51-63	What role do online platforms play in the decision-making process and behavioural traits of international travellers?

Author / Publication	Year	Journal / Publisher	Research Question
Benhaida, S., Safaa, L., Perkumienė, D., Labanauskas, G. Creative Tourism: Two Decades of Conceptual Evolution and Characterization	2024	Administrative Sciences, 14(8), 172	What are the key trends, thematic developments, and the impact of creative industries on tourism?
Carranza López, B.V. Comercio electrónico y competitividad empresarial en las agencias de viajes y turismo de Puno	2024	Impulso, Revista de Administración, 4(6), 14-24	Is there a correlation between e-commerce and business competitiveness in travel agencies?
Das, I. R. Implication of Artificial Intelligence in Hospitality Marketing.	2024	In Utilizing Smart Technology and AI in Hybrid Tourism and Hospitality (pp. 291-305), IGI Global	How have AI technologies transformed marketing strategies and customer interactions in the hospitality industry?
Deidda, M., Cirillo, V., Guarascio, D., Tramontano, J. Piattaforme digitali, imprese e lavoro in Italia. Un'analisi dei trasporti, della ristorazione e del turismo	2024	Sinappsi, 2(14), 21-49	How has the adoption of digital platforms influenced the organisation of work in the catering and tourism sectors in Italy, both before and after the pandemic?
Maikhuri, A. Customer Satisfaction and Service Excellence in India's Hospitality, Leisure, Sports, and Tourism Sectors.	2024	Journal of Propulsion Technology, 45(04)	How do emerging technologies and modern business practices influence service quality and customer satisfaction in India's hospitality, leisure, sports, and tourism sectors?
Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. B., Tamayo Salcedo, A. L., Guadarrama Tavira, E. Comunicación persuasiva del influencer en el turismo: Teorías disponibles para su estudio	2024	Turismo: Visão e Ação, 26, e19601	What type of communication do influencers use in tourism?

Source: Author's own creation

Based on this information, a critical analysis of the identified contributions is now conducted, aiming to explore connections between studies, highlight the most relevant theoretical and methodological perspectives, and discuss implications for the tourism sector in the Web 2.0 era.

From Web 1.0 to the present, research shows a significant increase in publications, including conference proceedings and academic journal articles, confirming the growing role of digital technology in the tourism industry (Ivanov et al., 2019). This technological evolution has led to a transformation across multiple fields, including communication, information systems, business monitoring, and improved organisational structures (Ivanovic et al., 2015).

Tourism industry operators quickly recognised the importance of the Internet, which, starting in the mid-20th century, had a disruptive effect, radically transforming the dynamics of online distribution through the use of the "read-only Web" (Berners-Lee, 1989), conceived as a one-way communication channel (Król, 2020). A 2006 study (Franch et al., 2006) revealed that, beyond its potential for online sales, the Internet was also used for competitor analysis, tourism trend monitoring, and professional and cultural development. This confirms that tourism businesses adopted the Web early on for managing tourism services.

The major organisational shift occurred with the emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which transformed the strategic management of tourism destinations. ICTs had a combined impact on the production, distribution, and delivery of tourism products (Buhalis, 2000), leading to a redefinition of industry roles and the emergence of new opportunities and challenges (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005). The focus shifted from simple transactions and customer satisfaction to relationship-building, highlighting the profound transformations that marketing underwent in the ICT era (Kotler & Keller, 2007). This shift significantly impacted the tourism sector, particularly in consumer behaviour, as travellers became increasingly inclined to share their experiences in multiple ways (Vescovi, 2009), influencing customer relationship management (Cozzi, 2010).

The transition to a highly participatory web, leveraging the wisdom of crowds, was defined by Tim O'Reilly (2007) as Web 2.0, emphasising the new paradigm based on five principles of interaction (Table 3).

Table 3: Principles of Interaction According to O'Reilly

Principles	Description
The Web as a Platform	The Web is not merely a content distribution medium but a platform that enables user interaction, contribution, and collaboration.
Data as the New 'Intel Inside'	Data management and refinement have become central, as companies develop methods to aggregate and leverage data to create value.
The Continuous Evolution of Web Applications	Simplicity and ease of access to APIs and web services are essential, enabling developers to create applications that leverage available Internet functionalities.
The Programmability of the Web	Web 2.0 enables software to operate across platforms, rather than being restricted to a single device. This fosters a seamless user experience across multiple devices.
Rich User Experiences	Design and functionality are essential in Web 2.0, driving the development of richer and more interactive user interfaces that enhance the overall user experience.

Source: O'Reilly, T. (2007)

In the analysis of Web 2.0, technologies relevant to the tourism sector have been categorised into four main groups, as outlined in the methodological section: social networks, intermediation platforms, mobile internet-connected devices, and emerging technologies. This classification allows for a deeper understanding of each technology's role in reshaping business practices and enhancing consumer experiences (O'Reilly, 2007; Gretzel et al., 2015).

2.1. Social networks

In the current Web 2.0 landscape, social media platforms play a crucial role in travel planning, profoundly influencing tourist decisions, shaping travellers' sentiment (Kapoor et al., 2011), and enabling young tourists to take an active role in structuring tourism offerings, which are increasingly influenced by traveller-generated online opinions (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). Tourism organisations, including hotels, airlines, and travel agencies, leverage the Internet and social media as key marketing strategy tools to promote destinations (Milano et al., 2011) and enhance external communication (Şahin & Sengün, 2015). Facebook, in particular, is central to online reputation management and the creation of engaging travel experiences (Kapoor et al., 2011; Leung et al., 2013).

Technological advancements and the intensive use of social media and online platforms have transformed the tourism system (Becheri & Biella, 2013), effectively engaging users to compete in today's market (Yogitha, 2018). This shift has revolutionised modern tourists' consumption habits, making them more inclined to co-create their travel experiences (Ejarque, 2015). Moreover, businesses are increasingly expected to offer personalised and interactive services that align with user-generated content trends. As a result, adapting services to meet evolving customer needs represents both a future challenge and an opportunity for businesses to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive and dynamic market (Ivanov, 2018). In this scenario, understanding the factors influencing social media adoption by tourism businesses is particularly relevant. According to Pateli, Mylonas, and Spyrou (2020), these factors fall into three categories: technological, organisational, and environmental. The authors highlight that internal company characteristics—such as size, centralisation or formalisation of processes, workforce, and management practices—positively influence social media adoption. This suggests that medium and large hospitality businesses are more likely to implement structured social media strategies (Pateli et al., 2020). The impact of social media on the tourism sector has become increasingly significant, as these platforms have radically transformed user-generated communication (UGC), which is gaining traction over traditional media due to its perceived authenticity and reliability (Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020). The massive amount of user-generated data has turned the web into a "warehouse of experiences" (Rivetti & Migliaccio, 2022; Mortara & Scramaglia, 2021), enriching tourists' knowledge (Li et al., 2019) and reinforcing the growing role of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Osorio-Andrade et al., 2023). The impact of e-WOM on hotel selection plays a crucial role in shaping brand image and potential guests' choices, leading to tangible benefits, such as increased bookings and a broader customer base (Moretta Tartaglione et al., 2018). In this context, the active and strategic management of social media is essential—not only as a marketing tool but also as a means of collecting valuable customer behaviour insights and market trends (Sigala et al., 2012). This aligns with the clear strategy of integrating user-generated content (UGC) into digital marketing efforts (Antonio et al., 2020).

The use of Web 2.0 has strengthened significantly, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, during which social networks became an essential tool for tourism service providers (Prado, 2023). This period also saw the rise of influencers, both as content creators and as key figures shaping consumer choices and perceptions through online platforms (Belén Rodríguez-Hidalgo et

al., 2024). Influencers play a significant role in the early stages of the customer journey, stimulating needs and influencing decisions through storytelling and user experience content creation. However, their impact remains mostly confined to the information-seeking phase, where experience-based content helps guide consumer choices (Remigio, 2022). In contemporary tourism, the use of hashtags has emerged as an expanding strategy for destination promotion and visibility. The strategic application of hashtags on social media allows tourists to share experiences, creating an easily accessible content network that further contributes to building the online reputation of visited locations. As research highlights, the integration of creative industries into tourism not only enhances the tourism offering but also promotes a sustainable development model that actively involves local communities (Benhaida et al., 2024).

2.2. Intermediary Platforms

In the Web 2.0 context, Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) have revolutionised how consumers plan and book their travel experiences, enabling users to add, modify, and enhance content while leveraging the “wisdom of crowds” to facilitate unique and personalised experiences (Dolnicar, 2018). These platforms—including Booking.com, Expedia, TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Airbnb—not only provide a wide range of accommodation and service options but also incorporate user-generated content (UGC), such as reviews and ratings, which strongly influence travellers’ decisions. While OTAs offer advantages in market expansion and diversification (Xiang et al., 2017), they also pose risks related to technological and financial dependence on platforms as sales channels (Centra et al., 2023). However, they also pose risks related to technological and financial dependence on platforms as sales channels. Through OTAs, users share personal experiences that impact choices regarding destinations, hotels, and attractions, generating electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Similar to social networks, e-WOM plays a crucial role in the travel planning phase, fostering a more interactive and participatory approach to itinerary preparation (Amaral et al., 2013). According to a study, Booking.com and TripAdvisor serve as prime examples of OTAs integrated with UGC, demonstrating how such platforms can enhance customer trust and improve the overall travel experience (Drozdowska & Duda-Seifert, 2016). The growing influence of online reviews has reshaped market dynamics, as tourists increasingly rely on peer evaluations and shared experiences to make informed decisions. This phenomenon, described by Mellinas & Reino (2018), underscores how online reputation profoundly shapes consumer choices, turning intermediary platforms into hubs of social interaction and information exchange between users and tourism service providers. According to a recent study, these platforms are considered more reliable than traditional communication channels, intensifying the impact of negative reviews on businesses (Abashidze, 2024). As a result, to maintain their reputation, tourism operators must continuously monitor online conversations and promptly address customer feedback (Abashidze, 2024). Given the challenge of controlling large-scale information dissemination, businesses need a comprehensive reputation management strategy that integrates data analytics tools and active engagement techniques to build and sustain customer trust.

In the Web 2.0 landscape, travel agencies have been among the most affected sectors by digital transformation. The implementation of direct consumer channels—through airlines, hotels, and the emergence of online travel agencies (OTAs)—has necessitated a sector-wide restructuring (Kuss & Medaglia, 2022). Recent studies have also identified a positive impact in the restaurant industry, particularly in streamlining the food delivery process (Mitali, 2019). Case studies on companies such as Ele.me, Deliveroo, and Haidilao reveal that the key benefits of digital platforms include cost reduction, overcoming spatial and temporal constraints, and improving occupancy rates (Zhang, 2021). Regarding the use of intermediary platforms, Deidda’s research examines how these systems have transformed labour organisation in Italy, particularly in the restaurant and tourism sectors. The study highlights a shift towards greater digital proximity, where technology plays a central role in redesigning work processes and business models. This transformation is a response to market changes and evolving consumer demands, which increasingly favour platform-based interactions and service purchases in both tourism and hospitality (Deidda et al., 2024).

A growing body of research on small tourism businesses is highlighting how they are responding to the commercial power of OTAs through innovation, service differentiation, and the strategic use of social media, particularly in the hospitality sector, where they can offer unique experiences (Pencarelli et al., 2015; Fyfe et al., 2020; Panahande, 2021). In the restaurant industry, small businesses tend to focus on renovating premises, outsourcing services, and opening new locations, whereas online-based businesses direct innovation towards adjusting or expanding working hours and operating schedules (Della Ratta, 2023). A notable trend is also emerging among traditional travel agencies, which, through the implementation of e-commerce services, can compete with digital platforms by reaching a broader audience, enhancing the purchase experience, and improving booking management (Carranza López, 2024). Aligned with this perspective, recent research highlights the potential for public support measures to enhance the competitiveness of small businesses, enabling them to participate more actively in the market, despite the constraints of their limited size (Gritta & Calabrese, 2023).

2.3. Apps and Internet-Connected Mobile Devices

The transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has been marked by the widespread adoption of mobile devices connected to the Internet (Capecchi, 2015). These have become indispensable tools that, together with technological applications, serve as enabling factors supporting the core constructs of smart destinations (Boes et al., 2015).

Table 4 outlines the main ways in which mobile devices influence tourism.

Table 4: **Application of Mobile Devices in Tourism**

Web 2.0 Technology	Applications in Tourism
On-the-Go Bookings	Mobile devices enable travellers to book flights, accommodations, attraction tickets, and transportation services anytime, anywhere. Dedicated apps, such as Booking.com, Airbnb, and airline platforms, make this process highly convenient.
Navigation and Maps	With access to mapping services like Google Maps, travellers can easily navigate unfamiliar locations.
Tourist Information and Guides	Many travellers use their mobile devices to access digital travel guides, location reviews, museum and attraction opening hours, travel tips, and other valuable information that enhance the travel experience.

Source: Author's own creation

By integrating Near Field Communication (NFC) technology with marketing strategies, the tourism sector has experienced a significant impact on social interaction, particularly in proximity-based communication. This has enhanced the tourist experience by providing instant and seamless access to information and services (Pesonen & Horster, 2012). When used in synergy with social media, NFC plays a crucial role in shaping destination images and increasing visitor engagement (Garofalo, 2016). Its effectiveness as a powerful tool for tourism planning and management is maximised when business owners actively participate, as they can directly update and manage their platform pages (Meini & Spinelli, 2012).

In recent years, mobile applications have completely transformed the travel booking landscape, making the process more accessible and immediate for consumers and deeply influencing purchasing decisions (Mellinas et al., 2018). These technologies provide instant access to reviews and recommendations, enabling more informed and sustainable tourism choices (Dickinson et al., 2012). The integration of mobile technologies in the tourism sector has not only optimised booking processes but has also reshaped consumer interactions with the market. Among mobile devices, smartphones have become essential tools for navigating unfamiliar places, allowing tourists to stay “connected”, plan trips directly from their devices, and establish a new tourism paradigm, where they share experiences and access local information before, during, and after their journey (Brito & Pacheco, 2022). In the restaurant industry, mobile technology has primarily impacted distribution services, affecting customer loyalty and demonstrating that usability, mobility, and reliability significantly influence consumer satisfaction (Cha & Seo, 2020). Moreover, the combination of mobile technology and artificial intelligence could shape the future of gastronomic tourism, fostering meaningful interactions between travellers and local culinary experiences (Kumar, 2023).

2.4. Emerging technologies

In modern tourism, adapting to new technologies is essential to remain competitive and meet consumer demands. The importance of user-generated content (UGC)—including reviews, travel blogs, photos, and videos—is widely recognised (Kastner & Stangl, 2012), along with meta-analyses as rigorous research tools that generate robust and generalisable findings (Gretzel & Kennedy-Eden, 2012). The massive interaction with social media and the abundance of UGC (Solanki & Dongaonkar, 2016) have led businesses to process Big Data on a large scale (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). Hotel managers, supported by AI and machine learning, can identify customer trends, preferences, and opinions, gaining advantages in decision-making, personalised marketing strategies, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and the development of new business models (Del Vecchio et al., 2018). This is particularly evident in AI-driven systems that allow real-time adjustment of offers and predictive modelling of customer behaviour. Big Data is revolutionising tourism research, enabling a deeper understanding of tourist behaviour, travel trends, and market dynamics (Jingjing et al., 2018). Beyond marketing strategies, the availability of digital data is shaping new solutions and industry practices, including business operations optimisation, customer experience personalisation, and the creation of tailored services based on consumer needs and preferences (Sigala et al., 2019). The use of Big Data in tourism is an increasing trend (Belias et al., 2021), particularly for developing more effective strategies (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2023). A recent study analysed how AI is transforming hospitality industry strategies, enabling businesses to adapt to customer needs more efficiently and personally. AI is used to analyse vast amounts of customer and market data, identify trends and behavioural patterns, and customise offerings and experiences (Das, 2024). Additionally, emerging technologies and trends, such as data analytics and AI, are reshaping tourist interactions with destinations, enhancing personalisation and immersive experiences (Maikhuri, 2024), particularly through the growing use of hashtags on social media.

Table 5 presents a summary of how Big Data, generated by Web 2.0 technologies, influence the tourism sector.

Table 5: **Impact of Web 2.0-Generated Big Data on Tourism**

Web 2.0 Technology	Data Type	Applications in Tourism
Social Network	Texts, Images, Videos	Personalisation of Offers
Connected Devices	Texts, Reviews	Sentiment Analysis
Intermediation Platforms	Texts, Reviews	Destination Trends

Source: Author's own creation

The personalisation of tourism offerings is one of the key applications of social network data. By analysing this data, tourism businesses can create tailor-made packages adapted to customers' preferences and specific needs. This approach enhances customer satisfaction and potentially increases loyalty, as the offerings are perceived as more relevant and personalised. Unlike social media, connected devices such as smartphones and tablets allow tourists to leave real-time reviews and ratings. These data include textual comments, which can be analysed to understand tourists' sentiment toward specific services or destinations. Sentiment analysis helps tourism businesses better understand customer perceptions and emotions. Through natural language processing (NLP) techniques, it is possible to identify positive and negative trends in reviews. Finally, intermediary platforms collect vast amounts of data from user reviews and ratings, which can be analysed to identify patterns and trends in travel preferences.

In conclusion, Web 2.0 and Social Big Data have had a profound impact on tourism, transforming marketing practices, enhancing customer experience, and influencing operational decisions. However, challenges related to data management and privacy protection remain critical issues, requiring continuous attention and adaptive strategies.

2.5. Synthesis of Current Knowledge

From the analysis of the literature on the topic of Web 2.0 technologies in tourism, which is the focus of this study, it emerges that the field is increasingly structured, yet still appears fragmented. The analysis also reveals that it is widely acknowledged that social media influence tourists' decision-making processes, facilitate co-creation, and strengthen destination image and engagement. Moreover, the studies reviewed in this work highlight how intermediary platforms—such as OTAs and review websites—are revolutionising traditional distribution models, impacting consumer trust and purchasing behaviour. Mobile technologies are considered essential tools for delivering real-time and location-based services throughout the entire travel cycle. It is evident from the literature explored that emerging technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and automation are gaining growing attention from practitioners due to their strategic and operational potential. Although these domains have often been analysed separately until now, an integrated perspective is emerging, recognising the convergence of these tools within unified digital ecosystems. Despite methodological heterogeneity, the literature agrees that Web 2.0 tools have become key enablers of competitiveness and innovation in tourism, laying the groundwork for identifying research gaps and guiding future studies.

Although the literature offers valuable insights, it remains conceptually and geographically fragmented. Many studies adopt cross-sectional designs, lacking longitudinal perspectives that would allow for the evaluation of long-term impacts. Additionally, most research focuses on technologically advanced contexts, with limited attention to emerging economies or peripheral destinations. This highlights a gap in understanding the diverse realities of digital transformation in tourism.

3. RESULTS

This literature analysis provides a dual perspective: on one hand, the temporal evolution of academic publications offers insight into how scientific interest in Web 2.0 technologies and tourism has grown over the past two decades; on the other, comparing research questions allows for an assessment of these technologies' effectiveness in relation to business outcomes and associated risks. Several studies also point to the risks associated with Web 2.0 adoption in tourism. These include reputational risks linked to negative user-generated content, data security breaches, and organisational dependence on third-party platforms for visibility and customer acquisition (Centra et al., 2023; Xiang et al., 2017). Addressing these risks requires not only technical solutions but also managerial strategies and governance frameworks

3.1 Evolution of Academic Literature on Web 2.0 and Tourism

In terms of publication trends, the review highlights a steady increase in studies since 2000, with notable growth from 2010 and significant peaks in 2021 and 2024. During these years, social networks and emerging technologies have been the most extensively analysed topics, reflecting a growing awareness of the role of digital technologies in reshaping the tourism sector. Scientific articles remain the dominant publication format, indicating that academic journals continue to be the primary channel for research dissemination. Additionally, interest in the various categories of Web 2.0 technologies—social networks, intermediation platforms, mobile devices, and emerging technologies—is evenly distributed, suggesting that digitalisation has been approached from both technological and marketing perspectives.

Table 6 clearly illustrates the evolution and expansion of tourism research from 2000 to 2024.

Table 6: **Quantitative Results of the Literature Review**

Year of publication	2000	2006	2011	2016	2021	Tot.	
2005	2010	2015	2020	2024			
Total number of publications	2	4	17	20	22	65	
Type Publications	Conference paper		2	1	1	4	
	Journal article	1	2	10	16	20	49
	Book chapter	1	2	5	3	1	12
Categories Tourism	Hospitality		5	6	6	17	
	Catering				2	5	7
	Services					2	2
	All tourism sectors	2	4	12	12	9	39
Focu Research	Demand side		2	7	9	5	23
	Supply side	2	2	5	7	9	25
	Both			5	4	8	17
Research Areas	Social networks	2	4	8	9	9	32
	Intermediation platforms			2	5	5	12
	Mobile devices			3		2	5
	Emerging technologies			4	6	6	14

Source: Author's own creation

The “Quantitative Results of the Literature Review” table highlights several important findings in tourism research:

1. **Growing Interest:** Since 2010, publications have surged, reflecting increased academic focus on tourism’s global economic impact.
2. **Publication Formats:** Journal articles dominate (49 out of 65 studies), underlining the value of peer-reviewed research.
3. **Multidisciplinary Scope:** With 39 studies covering all tourism sectors, the research embraces a holistic approach to tackle the field’s complex challenges.
4. **Balanced Focus:** Studies are evenly distributed among demand-side (23), supply-side (25), and combined aspects (17), emphasizing the need to understand both consumer behavior and service management.
5. **Digital Trends:** A strong emphasis on digitalization is evident, with numerous studies on social networks (34) and emerging technologies (14), as well as focused research on mobile devices (5) and online travel agencies (12).
6. **Emerging Technologies:** Research on AI, VR, AR, and similar innovations (14 studies) points to their growing role in enhancing operational efficiency and personalizing tourist experiences.
7. **Future Outlook:** The continued growth in publications and projections for 2024 confirm tourism as a dynamic field, essential for sustainable development and informed policy and business decisions.

In summary, the study underscores modern trends in digitalization, innovation, and sustainability within tourism, offering crucial insights for advancing research, best practices, and strategic planning in the industry.

3.2. Comparison with Research Questions: Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Technologies

The literature analysis robustly addresses two research questions. The first examines the positive correlation between the use of social networks and intermediation platforms and business performance. Social networks—such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok—enhance visibility, reputation, and customer engagement by leveraging user-generated content (Milano et al., 2011; Kapoor et al., 2011). However, their success depends on strategic online management, including storytelling and influencer collaborations, which have become even more critical post-pandemic (Prado, 2023; Rodriguez-Hidalgo et al., 2024). Intermediation platforms like Booking.com and TripAdvisor expand market access and streamline booking processes, thereby boosting sales and customer loyalty. Yet, they also introduce risks; high commission fees and diminished control over sales channels can compromise strategic autonomy, particularly for SMEs (Centra et al., 2023; Xiang et al., 2017). In contrast, businesses that develop direct sales channels may achieve greater strategic autonomy.

The second research question explores the link between emerging technologies—specifically Big Data and artificial intelligence—and business performance. Big Data enables the analysis of consumer behaviour, trend anticipation, and personalisation of services, enhancing customer satisfaction and competitiveness (Del Vecchio et al., 2018; Sigala et al., 2019). Similarly, AI optimises business processes and supports strategic decision-making through predictive analytics (Das, 2024). Nonetheless, the full potential of these technologies is contingent upon an innovation-driven organisational structure, specialised skills, and robust technological infrastructures (Sigala et al., 2019; Blanco-Moreno et al., 2023). The successful integration of emerging technologies depends on the presence of a supporting organizational infrastructure, which includes employee training, a digital strategic vision, and investment in technology (Sigala et al., 2019; Blanco-Moreno et al., 2023). These structural factors determine the extent to which digital tools translate into performance improvements.

Additionally, mobile devices are pivotal in enhancing the tourist experience by offering real-time information, navigation, and personalised services (Capecchi, 2015; Brito & Pacheco, 2022), though many businesses have yet to fully capitalise on these benefits (Cha & Seo, 2020). In summary, the analysis confirms both research questions, highlighting the advantages of digital and emerging technologies alongside the challenges that must be addressed to fully harness their potential.

3.3. Research Streams

The detailed and systematic selection and analysis of the literature on the topic of this study allowed us to categorise the reviewed scientific works into four main research streams, as previously outlined in paragraph 1.3 Categorisation and Analysis. Below is a summary of the key content associated with these four research streams. The first area focuses on the role of social media and user-generated content in shaping tourist experiences, destination marketing strategies, and online reputation management (Sigala et al., 2012; Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020). The second stream concentrates on the impact of intermediary platforms in terms of disintermediation, booking dynamics, and consumer trust (Xiang et al., 2017; Drozdowska & Duda-Seifert, 2016). A further line of inquiry explores the contribution of mobile technologies to enhancing the real-time tourist experience, through geolocation features and instant access to information (Del Vecchio et al., 2018; Sigala et al., 2019). Finally, there is a growing interest in advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and automation, which are analysed for their strategic and decision-making potential.

3.4. Research Gaps and future research lines

A critical review of the literature on this topic reveals that, despite notable advancements in the field, substantial research gaps remain. These gaps hinder both theoretical development and the practical application of findings. Among the most prominent limitations, the scarcity of longitudinal studies stands out. Very few contributions systematically examine the long-term implications of Web 2.0 technology adoption, especially from organisational and strategic perspectives. Most of the available contributions are cross-sectional in nature and tend to provide static representations of technology use, failing to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of digital transformation processes within tourism organisations. This temporal limitation reduces the possibility of identifying causal relationships and hinders the evaluation of long-term impacts on performance and innovation.

Another major gap is related to the fragmentation of the scientific approach, with studies often confined to specific technological silos (e.g., focusing solely on social media or mobile technologies) and narrow disciplinary frameworks. This compartmentalisation hampers a holistic understanding of how different technologies interact, integrate, and co-evolve in real-world contexts. This fragmentation also reflects a theoretical limitation: there is a marked lack of interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks that draw on insights from information systems, management, marketing, and tourism studies in order to analyse the converging effects of digital innovations on business models, organisational routines, and territorial competitiveness. In particular, the limited application of conceptual models such as the Technology–Organisation–Environment (TOE) framework, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, or the Service-Dominant Logic restricts the theoretical robustness and generalisability of the findings.

Moreover, a further research gap is linked to the observation that few studies delve into the socio-technical dimensions of technology adoption, including factors such as organisational culture, leadership, and stakeholder engagement, which significantly influence the effectiveness and sustainability of digital integration processes. These human, relational, and institutional dimensions remain underexplored despite their central role in enabling or inhibiting the success of innovation. Additionally, the current literature is strongly biased towards technologically advanced countries and popular tourist destinations. Under-researched contexts such as rural areas, emerging economies, or culturally peripheral regions are rarely considered, despite presenting unique adoption challenges and innovation potentials.

Moreover, specific groups—such as small and micro tourism enterprises, local communities, and minority stakeholders—also remain largely underrepresented, even though they are often most affected by digital transitions and may adopt different strategies, constraints, and forms of resistance.

Therefore, we argue that addressing these gaps is essential not only for strengthening theoretical constructs related to digital ecosystems and organisational adaptation, but also for developing actionable knowledge that can guide managerial strategies, public policies, and capacity-building initiatives in the tourism sector. To this end, it is important to clearly distinguish the areas where empirical evidence is lacking from those where new conceptual contributions are needed.

It is thus recommended that future research adopts longitudinal, interdisciplinary approaches that combine perspectives from management, information systems, marketing, and tourism studies, and systems-based approaches grounded in established frameworks such as the Technology–Organisation–Environment (TOE) model or Service-Dominant Logic, in order to generate more comprehensive and practically relevant contributions. Researchers are also encouraged to apply integrative theoretical models and to extend empirical investigations to diverse and less studied geographical areas, thereby promoting inclusivity and contextual relevance in digital tourism research.

4. IMPLICATIONS

The implications emerging from this literature review revolve around two fundamental dimensions: strategies to balance the benefits and risks associated with the use of social networks and intermediation platforms, and the adoption of emerging technologies, such as Big Data and artificial intelligence. These themes not only provide practical insights for tourism businesses but also suggest promising directions for future academic research.

4.1. Social Networks and Intermediation Platforms

Regarding the first research question, the literature highlights that social networks are essential tools for enhancing the visibility of tourism businesses and strengthening customer loyalty. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have transformed the way businesses interact with customers, enabling more authentic and engaging communication. However, success in using these tools requires active management and a clear strategy. Businesses must leverage user-generated content (UGC)—including reviews, images, and videos—not only to promote their services but also to build a strong and lasting reputation (Milano et al., 2011; Rodriguez-Hidalgo et al., 2024). Additionally, influencer marketing and digital storytelling have emerged as key approaches to expanding the reach of promotional campaigns and engaging new market segments, particularly in the post-pandemic context.

Regarding intermediation platforms such as Booking.com and TripAdvisor, the analysis reveals that while these platforms provide immediate access to a global audience, businesses face the risk of technological and financial dependence. The high commission fees charged by these platforms and the loss of control over sales channels represent significant challenges, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Centra et al., 2023; Xiang et al., 2017). To mitigate these risks, businesses must develop autonomous strategies, such as implementing direct sales channels and introducing customer loyalty programmes. Offering exclusive benefits for direct bookings, such as discounts or personalised packages, can be an effective step toward reducing dependence on OTAs and improving economic sustainability. In this context, public policies could play a crucial role, providing financial and training support to encourage the digitalisation of small businesses (Gritta & Calabrese, 2023).

4.2. Emerging Technologies: Big Data and Artificial Intelligence

The second research question highlights the transformative role of emerging technologies, particularly Big Data and artificial intelligence (AI), in enhancing the competitiveness of tourism businesses. Big Data enables companies to analyse large volumes of information, gaining a deeper understanding of consumer preferences, anticipating market trends, and personalising offerings (Sigala et al., 2019; Blanco-Moreno et al., 2023). Moreover, it allows for segmentation of customer bases and the design of customised marketing strategies based on behavioural data. However, the implementation of these technologies requires not only adequate technological infrastructures but also specialised skills to effectively interpret and utilise data. The lack of proper training and limited financial resources are significant barriers, particularly for smaller businesses.

Artificial intelligence (AI) stands out for its ability to automate complex operational processes, such as booking management and customer support, while also enhancing strategic decision-making through predictive analytics (Das, 2024). However, the literature emphasises that fully leveraging AI requires an organisational shift that fosters a culture of innovation and data-driven analysis. Businesses should view these technologies as an opportunity to improve operational efficiency and create added value for customers. However, they must also address challenges related to data privacy protection and transparency in data management. Despite the potential benefits of digital technologies, several studies highlight persistent challenges related to data governance, including user privacy, compliance with data protection regulations, and the need for secure infrastructures (e.g., Xiang et al., 2017; González-Torres et al., 2021). These issues remain central to the responsible deployment of Web 2.0 tools.

4.3. Academic implications and future developments

From an academic perspective, this review highlights the need for further research to explore the link between technology adoption and business performance. Developing theoretical models that examine how different Web 2.0 technologies can be sustainably integrated into business strategies would be particularly valuable.

Special attention should be given to:

- Managing technological dependence,
- Identifying organisational practices that facilitate the adoption of emerging technologies by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),
- Defining specific metrics to measure the impact of digital technologies on business performance, which remains a key gap in the existing literature.

In summary, Web 2.0 technologies and emerging innovations present remarkable opportunities to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism sector. However, their successful adoption requires a strategic and informed approach. Businesses must balance the benefits and risks of these technologies by investing in infrastructure, skills, and long-term strategies. At the same time, academic research should provide tools and models to support an effective digital transition, fostering a more innovative and resilient tourism industry.

CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This literature review has examined the role of Web 2.0 technologies in the tourism sector, addressing two key research questions: the correlation between social networks and intermediation platforms and business performance and the potential of emerging technologies, such as Big Data and artificial intelligence, in enhancing business performance. The findings indicate that the strategic adoption of these technologies has profoundly transformed the operational and relational dynamics of the sector, creating new opportunities while also posing significant challenges for businesses. Social networks remain crucial tools for enhancing visibility, building customer relationships, and strengthening corporate reputation. However, their effectiveness depends on a company's ability to actively manage its digital presence. Intermediation platforms, while serving as essential channels to reach a global audience, pose economic and strategic dependency risks. This highlights the need to balance their use with the development of direct distribution channels and personalised loyalty programmes. At the same time, emerging technologies such as Big Data and artificial intelligence offer unprecedented opportunities for personalising offerings and improving operational efficiency. However, they require significant investments in technological infrastructure and specialised expertise.

From a practical perspective, the adoption of these technologies must be accompanied by balanced and targeted strategies. Tourism businesses face challenges such as: staff training, developing adequate infrastructure, managing data transparently and responsibly. Furthermore, it is crucial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to receive public support and foster private collaborations to overcome economic and organisational barriers that often limit their ability to innovate. These approaches can help build a more resilient and competitive tourism ecosystem.

From an academic perspective, this review highlights several gaps in the existing literature. In particular, there is a need for further research exploring sustainability models for the adoption of Web 2.0 technologies and emerging innovations, with a focus on small businesses and their specific needs. Additionally, developing more precise metrics to assess the impact of these technologies on business performance would be valuable, considering variables such as customer satisfaction, profitability, and long-term sustainability.

This review has certain limitations that should be taken into account. Firstly, the analysis was primarily based on academic sources published in journals and conference proceedings, which may have excluded relevant contributions from other sources, such as industry reports or corporate white papers. Secondly, the classification of Web 2.0 technologies into four main categories (social networks, intermediation platforms, mobile devices, and emerging technologies) may not fully capture all aspects of digitalisation in tourism, as new technologies and approaches continue to emerge. Finally, although the comparison with the two research questions has provided a clear framework, the findings rely on a qualitative analysis of the existing literature, without an empirical component to validate its practical implications. Future research could explore these topics further through empirical investigations, case studies, or comparative analyses across different geographic areas or market segments. In conclusion, this review highlights the importance of Web 2.0 and emerging technologies in the tourism sector while also emphasising the need for a strategic and informed approach to address the challenges associated with their adoption. Both the academic community and industry professionals play a crucial role in driving innovation and sustainability, ensuring that businesses can fully leverage the opportunities offered by digital transformation.

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