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# The Role Of Digital Content Creation For Tour Guides In Developing Tourism Media A Study Of A Sample Of Tourists Responding To Local Tourism Content

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the role of digital content creation by tour guides in developing tourism media. It focuses on how local content affects tourists' experiences and their responses. By analyzing the opinions of a sample of tourists, the study finds that digital content enhances visitors' understanding of local landmarks and activities. It also contributes to improving the image of the tourist destination and increasing engagement with the provided information. The results indicate that tour guides who effectively use digital content can attract more visitors and enhance their tourism experience. This type of content strengthens communication between tourists and local communities. Additionally, digital content enables innovative and attractive tourism marketing. It also helps in spreading local culture and knowledge more widely. Overall, digital content creation represents an essential tool for developing tourism media and improving visitor experiences.

**Introduction:** Creating digital content is a significant challenge in an era dominated by distractions (the era of smartphones). Those who wish to persevere in this endeavor face one of two choices: either being the first to embark on the journey and shouldering the burden of leadership, or entering a fiercely competitive market. In both cases, the challenge presents itself through exploiting content for marketing, increasing sales, and creating a rare and unforgettable brand.

The word "content" in its general sense refers to all types of knowledge that have reached human consciousness, from the beginning of creation to the present. Content constitutes an essential component of human consciousness, and therefore, the presence of the internet has only made it easier to navigate and expand its reach. Therefore, digital content emerged with the advent and widespread adoption of the internet in the early 1990s, initially as a concept for publishing content in digital form. The term has since become popular.

The term "digital content" refers to electronic methods for preserving, storing, and disseminating content. It is characterized by the ease and speed with which it disseminates across various media. Technology has made the process of transferring and accessing the world easier in record time.

This has developed in response to the idea of digital content, with different types of content needing a financial investment to access and use.

Content is not limited to written words; it also includes all types of media, both visual and audio, as well as various formats such as e-books, training programs, newsletters, photographs, video clips, and others, all used to communicate information to the end user.

Digital content creation is a key part of anyone's digital strategy. Therefore, every piece of content must be carefully planned and crafted to boost your brand's performance, expand your reach, and double your sales.

## METHODOLOGY

**First: The research problem lies in the following points:**

1. The lack of clarity in the concept, foundations, and features of digital content creation.
2. A gradual shift in academic and commercial activities at the individual and institutional levels toward a knowledge society.
3. Weakness in the production of digital content, how to organize its publication, and the means of marketing it.

**Second: Research Objectives: The research aims to identify the following:**

1. Organizing and investing in intellectual, organizational, creative, and technical resources, directing them, and marketing them through digital content.
2. Define the term digital content creation, define the term's features, and establish the foundations and controls governing the term and its extent of application, with a focus on the antiquities of Karbala

Governorate.

3. The ability to achieve the highest level of electronic participation, information dissemination, and tourism sector development by communicating a wide range of concepts, presenting tourism assets in their most beautiful form, and stimulating the intrinsic capabilities of specialists and amateurs.

**Third: The Importance of the Research:**

1. Defining a clear vision for the concept of digital content creation, its foundations, and its features.
2. Providing tourism information through the media in general, and digital media in particular, to the public (tourists) or (stimulating the latent motivations of individuals).

**Fourth: The Research Hypothesis: The research addresses the following two hypotheses:**

1. There are statistically significant differences between digital content creation and tourism media development.
2. There are no statistically significant differences between digital content creation and tourism media development.

**Fifth: The Research Methodology:**

1. Theoretical Methodology: Relying on theoretical studies.
2. Practical Methodology: A study of a sample of tourists responding to local tourism offerings in Karbala.

## Chapter One

The Theoretical Aspect

First Section: The Concept of Digital Content Creation

**First: Definition of Content:**

Content is defined as anything expressed through a specific medium, including speeches, writing, or any other form of self-expression, which may include distribution, marketing, and publishing (Labib: 33, 2006).

Content is defined as the presentation of information through media in general, and digital media in particular, to the public in specific contexts (Dr. Nabil: 12, 2005).

The word "content" in its general sense refers to all types of knowledge that have entered human consciousness, from the beginning of creation to today. Content is a key part of human awareness, and as a result, the Internet has made it easier to access and broaden its reach (Idlabi: 23, 2009).

Content is "something that can be expressed through some media, such as speech, writing, or any of the

various arts for self-expression, distribution, marketing, or publication" (Labib: 36, 2006).

Content creation involves sharing information in specific contexts using various media, especially digital media, for the benefit of the end user, also known as the public (Hijazi: 11, 2016).

Another definition describes content creation as producing intellectual property outputs using information technology, performed by a team of writers, artists, professors, and others interested in this activity (Shanshul: 2022).

In the field of education, content creation, according to a UNESCO report, is "a means of achieving the four goals of education in the information age, which include: (Learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to share)" (Idlbi: 27, 2009).

Typical forms of content creation include managing and updating websites, blogging, photography, videography, online commentary, maintaining social media profiles, and editing media. Digital Content and its Distribution (Hijazi: 25, 2016).

## **Second: Content Elements:**

Content elements include the following (Radwan, 19, 2021):

1. Raw Content (Content Resources): This includes all elements that represent a raw resource that can be used in content creation, namely:

- Content published in books, documents, paper and electronic data repositories, image banks, maps, drawings, diagrams, and various scientific guides, both governmental and private.
- Media content that stores audio, film, and other materials.
- Peoples' heritage and cultural assets: Content components can also include the heritage and culture of peoples, which are stored in the memories of their individuals and transmitted through their languages, rituals, and customs. This is a vast amount of content that is subject to competition to benefit from and be incorporated into the concept of content creation.

2. Produced Content: This includes all content creation outputs and includes the following elements:

- Print publishing: Newspapers, magazines, bulletins, heritage documents, activity documents, government documents, dictionaries, and encyclopedias.
- Electronic publishing: Multimedia, image banks, databases, Data, websites, electronic encyclopedias.
- Media and artistic production: media programs, television production materials, films, and visual art productions.

- Scientific and technological publishing: scientific periodicals, catalogs, patents, operation and maintenance manuals, designs.

- Software: application software, productivity software, video games, and private libraries.

3. Content according to its production sources:

- Individual production: This is carried out by individuals on a personal basis. It falls into two types: the first type has a non-economic ultimate goal, but rather stems from cultural or personal factors. This falls under the concept of content creation. The second type has an economic objective, and they may not utilize economic institutional frameworks to market their products.

- Institutional production: This includes all content produced by institutions and companies of various types for economic purposes, based on supply and demand factors, and with the goal of generating profit.

- Community production: This includes all content produced by society, whether it is produced by the state, non-profit organizations, or all content creation institutions in a given society. Government production of content is often not for profit, but rather for social and cultural purposes.

There is also content created by application programs that is sometimes overlooked. This content comes from automated processing and analysis in information systems, such as outputs from modeling systems, relational reports generated by database report generators, and outputs from multimedia systems that produce images, graphics, and shapes automatically. These outputs are made using specific programs. Modern technology generates new content that is effectively used to produce other content in an ongoing, interconnected cycle.

## **Third: Dimensions of Content Creation:**

There are several dimensions and motivations that have led to and continue to drive a focus on content creation. These represent important dimensions that lead to interest in content. They are also motivations that dictate interest in it and can be briefly outlined as follows (Labib 64, 2006):

1. The economic dimension: Content creation generates high returns and is steadily increasing in importance in the economies of countries.
2. The technological dimension: There is a qualitative shift between the internet and television, and this content is transmitted via high-capacity transmission networks, requiring new digital content.
3. The Educational Dimension: Content creation and engagement are essential components of the education and learning process in a knowledge

economy and information society.

4. The Political Dimension: The features of a new global political map are beginning to emerge, based on information interests. In light of globalization and the global information society, the world is moving toward forming political blocs with information and technological dimensions. Content creation is a fundamental element of this. This is based on the content dimension, which is based on the unity of language, culture, and shared economic interests. Consequently, content is becoming a key axis in the global political landscape, serving as a significant starting point for political and economic alliances.

5. The Social Dimension: The clash of cultures in light of globalization tends to negatively impact some societies, causing them to lose their identity and impacting the cohesion of society across its various segments. This requires bridging the digital gap within society by producing local content that serves all segments and meets the specific needs of population groups.

6. The Cultural Dimension: Disseminating, promoting, and globalizing the local culture of communities and countries.

7. The Media Dimension: The advancement of information technology has led to a qualitative shift in the concept of modern media, making it interactive. Media dialogue has become positive between sender and receiver, rather than merely a one-way broadcast. Modern media applications have been leveraged in various areas, including distance education, entertainment, information retrieval, correspondence, and conferences.

8. The Linguistic Dimension: Content creation is linked to language, and the most widely used language can control and impose culture through it. Therefore, many countries are focusing on content creation to preserve their culture, identity, and existence, preserve their language, and expand its reach as much as possible.

9. The Religious Dimension: Through content and what is published, religious ideas can be promoted or undermined. Therefore, content creation plays a prominent role in disseminating ideas and beliefs through artistic creations, the film industry, and various content creation products, which can either promote or undermine religious ideas. Content creation can also serve as a stage for religious conflict, or what is known as interfaith dialogue.

10. The Cognitive Dimension: Content creation focuses on knowledge, i.e., information, in addition to experience. Therefore, the cross-pollination of information and experience provided by content creation makes it essential for both the producer and

the user to focus on content creation.

11. The Creative Artistic Dimension: Information technology and its applications offer broad horizons for developing creative and artistic capabilities, and for reproducing and displaying artistic and creative works in various forms.

12. The Security Dimension: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) allows various groups around the world to present their ideas, some of which may be destructive to the morals of other societies. Information networking systems also enable the transmission of dangerous information to connect violent groups and carry out actions that threaten the security of societies.

#### **Fourth: The Components of Content Creation:**

In developing societies, the components of content creation are determined differently from those in developed societies. Developed societies lack many of the necessary components and require greater efforts to provide these components, unlike developed countries, which have greater flexibility in providing the components needed to achieve change. Therefore, the most important components of content creation in our Arab society, for example, are determined as follows (Dr. Nabil: 41, 2005):

1. Defining strategic directions: Defining policies and directions for developing the content industry (economic or developmental) and its main objectives, identifying the areas of digital content production, outlining directions for providing other enabling environment elements, means of providing funding, key partners at the national and regional levels, and their roles.

2. Expanding the market scope (expanding demand and raising supply): Working to create a need within society that will encourage it to use content industry outputs, such as providing transactional services through the procedures systems of e-government portals, expanding the scope of e-learning, contributing to providing the necessary environment to expand the scope of e-business applications, and raising the level of supply by adopting a policy to develop knowledge production (scientific research, dissemination, and exchange of information).

3. Facilitating the use of technology: Facilitating the acquisition and use of computers and the internet, expanding the scope of fixed and mobile communications services, and providing the components of communication via network systems with high capacities and features.

4. Supporting software environment: Providing the components for achieving a supportive software



environment that contributes to the development of the content industry, most notably search engines, translation, and open source software.

5. Human Resources: Focus on building creative and innovative human resources, equipping them with the specialized knowledge required by the digital work environment.

6. Language and Culture: Developing translation tools and language handling in the digital environment, working to promote cultural content, expanding its dissemination, and providing the necessary software to address it.

7. Legislative Environment: Intellectual property and industrial product protection laws, specific laws for consumer protection, laws regulating the use and management of content on information networks, and laws providing an attractive investment environment for content creation.

8. Investment Environment: Creating a favorable climate to encourage and facilitate the establishment of content creation companies, encouraging small and medium-sized loans for content creation projects, and working to provide the necessary components to reduce the cost of digital content production.

### Section One

#### The Theoretical Aspect

#### Second Requirement: The Concept of Development

##### First: The Concept of Development:

It is difficult to assign a single meaning to this word, but its most accurate definition is reflected in a set of definitions created by a group of scholars. The word has different meanings for different people. Professor Kayden states, "No one knows exactly what this word means. Economists consider it economic production, sociologists see it as social change, political scientists view it as the process toward democracy and political power, and management scientists regard it as bureaucracy and maximum efficiency" (Al-Salem: 11, 1978).

When we attempt to find a lexical meaning for the word development, we face challenges. The lexical meaning of development is closely connected to the meaning of growth.

The first meaning of the word development refers to gradual progress and growth in stages. The second meaning describes the process by which something grows. The third meaning indicates a step in the process of growth (Al-Salem: 12, n.d.).

There are several definitions of development, some addressing it in broad terms. Walt Rostow described it as freeing backward societies from traditional traits and

adopting the traits common in advanced societies (Uthmana: 1, 1997). Al-Mashhadani defined it as nothing more than a deliberate and organized change and transformation from one state to another (Al-Mashhadani: 78, 1989).

Development from an economic perspective, as defined by Dennis Fawlt, is the revitalization of the national economy and its transformation from a state of stagnation to a state of movement and dynamism by increasing the national economy's capacity to achieve an annual growth in gross national product (Goulet: 332, 1975).

Development from a human perspective, as defined by Dudley Sears, is a normative concept aimed at enhancing human capabilities by fulfilling basic needs such as food, clothing, and sustenance, as these are essential human needs (Seers: 123, 1972).

From a social perspective, development, as defined by Al-Saati, is the coordinated process of changing the social structure and functions to meet the social demands of both individuals and society. The energy and capabilities gained through training and ongoing integration are used in processes of structural change (Al-Saati: 13, 1980). From a political perspective, Myron Wiener described development as political integration or union. Political fusion involves the integration of human relations, the merging of behavior, cultural and political loyalty, the development of national identity and the spirit of citizenship, and the unification of political units into a single cohesive entity (Wiener: 62, 1972). Meanwhile, from an administrative perspective, development, as defined by Hassouna, is a dynamic process involving a series of functional and structural changes within society. It occurs through administrative intervention aimed at directing the interaction between human energies and environmental factors to enhance society's ability to survive and thrive (Al-Mashhadani: 87, op. cit.). The most comprehensive definition of development, found in many sources, is: a broad planning process designed to bring about widespread change in all aspects of life, with the goal of transforming society from stagnation and backwardness to a progressive and developed state.

#### The First Section

#### The Theoretical Aspect

#### The Third Section: The Concept of Tourism Media

##### First: The Concept of Tourism Media:

Media plays a vital role in the development process across various fields by helping guide societies toward growth and progress. This need has led to the rise of development media, as the development process relies

on advanced communication tools. These tools make social interaction more active, enhance communication, and steer it toward desired change. It is also clear that one of the key roles of communication media is to facilitate the exchange of information and opinions. In this context, Harold identified some of the main functions of communication in society, which are: collecting and sharing information related to the environment; interpreting, analyzing, and commenting on events; guiding behavior based on these events; and passing social norms and values from one generation to the next (Imam: 34, 1995). Tourism media is a specialized form of media that emerged due to the need for specialized and new information, along with the development of knowledge among the public and experts. Its aim is to provide facts and information that promote awareness and understanding, shaping perceptions in a specific field rather than a broad one (Awash: 25, 2007).

Tourism media is defined as all aspects of planned and ongoing communication activities carried out by specialized media professionals, aimed at providing the public with accurate and reliable facts, news, and information about issues, topics, problems, and current affairs related to tourism, without distortion. These activities use various means and forms of communication along with technical methods of persuasion and influence to develop awareness of tourism and attract as many individuals as possible to reside.

### **Second: The Importance of Tourism Media:**

Tourism media plays a vital role in this field through various advertising and promotional methods, including print, audio, visual media, exhibitions, films, in-kind exchanges, printed materials, and more.

Likewise, although tourism media has a positive impact on tourism promotion and there is an urgent need for its effective role in the tourism development process, there is also a critical need for investment in all its forms, especially visual advertising. Through various media outlets, people obtain their information, which usually comes in the form of news about tourism facts and information that interest tourists. Tourism companies pay fees for tourism news that is of an advertising nature about their tourism programs or anything of direct interest to the audience of the tourism advertising medium. The effectiveness of media in tourism marketing depends on the close relationship between tourism companies and tourism news editors across various mass media outlets, as well as with editors-in-chief of newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, radio, and television, along with staff of these agencies. Additionally, the capabilities

and reputation of the tourism company, and its influence on the tourism market, lead tourism news editors to seek out news from it, with each eager to record a scoop about its upcoming tourism plans and ideas generated by those responsible for and in charge of tourism activities (Awash: 34, M.S.). The success of an advertising campaign relies on the tourist's trust level, familiarity, or expertise with the media outlet, as well as its interest in the tourism activity. Tourists tend to perceive the information and news published in the media as entirely truthful facts and not as paid advertisements, especially since the tourism company does not control the wording, verbal content, overall presentation, or placement of the tourism media. Instead, these are formulated and executed by the news editor within the media outlet.

### **Third: The Positive Effects of Tourism Media:**

There are several positive effects of tourism media, which can be summarized as follows (Hijab: 26, 2010):

1. Liberating the tourism sector from restrictions will positively impact its efficiency. Creating incentives to reform tourism institutions and facilitating comprehensive service delivery by exposing their problems through the media.
  2. Creating opportunities to expand into foreign markets, strengthening tourism marketing abroad, creating new jobs, and reducing unemployment by improving the country's external image through the media.
  3. Enables adaptation to competitive requirements in terms of efficiencies and costs, increasing the efficiency of local tourism markets, and raising the level of services therein.
  4. Enhancing a country's credibility with foreign investors and fostering a favorable environment to attract foreign investment is essential. This credibility depends on the country's confidence in its tourism, services, various facilities, and highly skilled human resources. Otherwise, the media might turn against it.
  5. Creating opportunities to benefit from migrant capital and boosting confidence thanks to media transparency.
- Fourth: Limitations of Tourism Media:
6. Tourism media have limitations (Shawky 34, 2011):
  7. Limited technical media compatible with global visual, audio, and print technologies.
  8. Lack of tourism programs that showcase the monuments and landscapes of the areas where tourism is sought.
  9. Lack of interest in tourism advertising and promotion, or the presence of a tour guide who

communicates with tourists to introduce the country's regions.

10. Distortion of the country's cultural image on social, religious, and political levels by some nations, such as the Arabs' treatment of the Zionist entity and the American enemy, occurs when such claims are not countered with propaganda that refutes them.

11. Wars and disasters spread through the media may be an obstacle preventing tourism media from achieving its desired goals.

12. Lack of interest in exhibitions, festivals, and advertisements, which play a significant role in encouraging tourism through their global spread.

13. Lack of well-thought-out, targeted training plans to organize tourist trips and guide tour guides to perform their role in the best possible manner.

14. Lack of knowledge of the appropriate time to broadcast tourism media.

15. Choosing an unsuitable media outlet that doesn't serve the purpose can delay tourism advertising, reducing its impact. Therefore, selecting the right media outlet within the necessary timeframe is essential. When considering whether the media message matches the purpose of the tourism product, it might be possible to advertise a type of tobacco on the radio, which doesn't require much imagination. Advertising for tourist resorts and various activities is more effective through television and color magazines.

16. Failing to study the audience's nature and understand their trends before launching the advertising campaign can be a mistake. The external target audience may not be influenced by the same factors that motivate the local audience, due to differences in cultural, economic, political, and social influences.

## Section Two

### The Scientific Aspect (Field Study)

The process of practically testing research variables and applying hypotheses in real-world settings is often one of the most critical steps in the scientific approach to research and academic studies. Accurate application of this process confirms the scientific validity of the

knowledge domain these variables belong to. Using mathematical and statistical methods to analyze the test results further enhances the importance and goals of the research, as well as the researchers' objective focus. To accomplish all this, we collected necessary and relevant data through a questionnaire and tested the proposed hypotheses.

The practical aspect (field study) of the research included (The Role of Digital Content Production for Tourist Guides in Developing Tourism Media - A Study of a Sample of Tourists Responding to Local Tourism Content). This was achieved by designing a questionnaire that featured two main sections, divided into multiple questions, with each paragraph containing a scientific question within the research framework. The questionnaires were distributed to the targeted research community (a sample of tourists), totaling 50 questionnaires. All questionnaires were collected, and none were lost or discarded, with the Likert scale used for analysis.

The analysis of the research variables included the answers of the study sample in general, as follows:

First: An analytical presentation of the general information of the research sample individuals:

1. The research sample included (70%) (35 males) and (30%) (15 females).

2. The age group of the target sample varied between: (20-29) years (40%) (20) tourists, (30-39) years (30%) (15) tourists, (40-49) (16%) (8) tourists, and (50 and above) years (14%) (7) tourists.

3. Regarding educational attainment (certificate), the preparatory certificate achieved the highest percentage among the other certificates, constituting 70% (35) individuals, while the remaining certificates (preparatory, undergraduate university, and graduate university) each accounted for 25% (5) individuals. Second: An analytical presentation of the research sample's responses includes a straightforward statistical analysis using percentages for the questionnaire items, based on the Likert three-point scale, as shown in the following table for the research sample.

Paragraphs	Scale						Total percentage	Total percentage
	I agree	%	neutral	%average	I disagree	average %		
X1	45	90	5	10	0	0	100%	50

X2	50	10 0	0	0	0	0	100%	50
X3	50	10 0	0	0	0	0	100%	50
X4	50	10 0	0	0	0	0	100%	50
X5	45	90	5	10	0	0	100%	50
X6	45	90	5	10	0	0	100%	50
X7	40	80	10	20	0	0	100%	50
X8	45	90	5	10	0	0	100%	50
X9	50	10 0	0	0	0	0	100%	50
X10	50	10 0	0	0	0	0	100%	50

Below is an analytical presentation of the responses to each question in the questionnaire. Each question was indicated by an (X) mark along with the specific question number, as follows:

(X1): It was found that sample members tended to agree (90%), representing 45 individuals, and were neutral (10%), representing 5 individuals, regarding the first question of the questionnaire. This indicates a high degree of agreement that digital content provides sufficient information about the tourist attractions in a tourist destination.

(X2): It was found that sample members tended to agree (100%), representing 50 individuals, regarding the second question of the questionnaire. This indicates that tourists obtain sufficient information about the tourist attractions in Iraq through digital content creators.

(X3): The response rate to the third question was 100%, representing 50 individuals, which demonstrates that digital content improves the public's perception of a tourist destination and corrects misconceptions about it. (X4): It was found that sample members also tended to completely agree (100%), with 50 individuals, as they support the use of high-quality interactive content about the tourist destination.

(X5): The results showed that sample members tended

to agree (90%), with 45 individuals, and were neutral (10%), with 5 individuals, that they believe skippable digital content helps promote tourism to the destination area.

(X6): Tourists are keen to follow comments and messages on videos showcasing tourist attractions to learn more about the information and experiences of friends or followers, with 90% neutral, 45% of individuals being neutral, and 10% of 5 individuals being neutral.

(X7): Digital content production has an impact on the decision to purchase tourist trips to the destination area, with (80%), with (40) individuals, and (20%), with (10) individuals, being neutral. (X8): The sample's responses revealed that they follow all types of digital content on local tourism sites on a daily basis, with an agreement rate of (90%) (45) individuals, and a neutral rate of (10%) (5) individuals.

(X9): The entire research sample (tourists) saves the digital content published by influencers about tourism in Iraq for future use. The results for the ninth question of our survey were a full (100%) (50) individuals.

(X10): The results for the tenth question showed that (100%) (50) individuals agreed that they help share and publish digital content in support of local tourism.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### First: Conclusions:

1. Digital content constitutes one of the most important means of influencing tourism in our current era. The success of tourism organizations has become largely linked to their ability to create and publish digital content that serves and supports their tourism operations. Digital content plays a crucial role in supporting tourism by promoting tourist destinations, showcasing their assets, and providing valuable informational content that bridges the knowledge gap.
2. Digital content serves as a tool for preserving and accessing cultural heritage, ensuring its ongoing existence and reaching a wide audience both locally and globally.
3. Digital content is a vital tool for promoting tourism because of its modernity and capability to stay updated with technological advancements and evolving tourist preferences.
4. The characteristics and features of digital content include interactivity, target audience identification, transparency, transferability, retrievability, dissemination, integration, flexibility, and universality. Activating digital content requires hardware, software, networks, human resources, and support from government and institutions.

### Second: Recommendations:

5. Providing proposals regarding the establishment of controls and legislation that define guarantees for digital tourism content.
6. Improving the technology infrastructure in the tourism industry to support digital content marketing.
7. Increasing the use of tourism companies' websites in tourism promotion efforts.
8. Gaining international experience in digital content marketing within the tourism sector.

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