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# Integrating New Technologies in Human-Driven Professions: How Can Tourist Guides Leverage Digital Transformation?



Dicen *IDF*

Sous la co-tutelle de :  
CNAM  
UNIVERSITÉ GUSTAVE EIFFEL  
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS NANTERRE

# OBJECTIVES AND AIMS OF OUR RESEARCH

Our reflection is about:

- the way in which the qualified tourist guides can rely on digital technology during a tour.
- the new skills that student guides must acquire during their scholarship.

We propose to analyse the evolution of the profession of qualified tourist guide in the global context of digital transformation and Covid pandemic.

We seek to understand where and how digital technology can be an ally of qualified tourist guides without replacing them.

We will rely on the professional degree of qualified tourist guides, prepared in our Gustave Eiffel University, as well as on our connections with the National Federation of Qualified Tourist Guides, to analyse the digital approach of future professionals in the sector.



# SCIENTIFIC POSITIONING

**This work is placed in a perspective of research-action and transdisciplinarity, with the construction of knowledge for action starting from new uses of socio-technical devices.**

Our scientific position is in the field of information and communication sciences, within a research team: DICEN-IdF (Information and Communication Devices in the Digital Era). We therefore have an approach that integrates the dimensions of communication (exchanges, interactions), uses and production of data and the use of socio-technical devices.

Our work is mainly action research, in particular to analyse activity situations, with the dimension of social constructivism: construction of social reality by the actors.

This positioning allows us to be particularly proactive in a reflection on the employability of new graduates and the evolution of this profession of mediation for the development of cultural and tourist heritage in the territories.



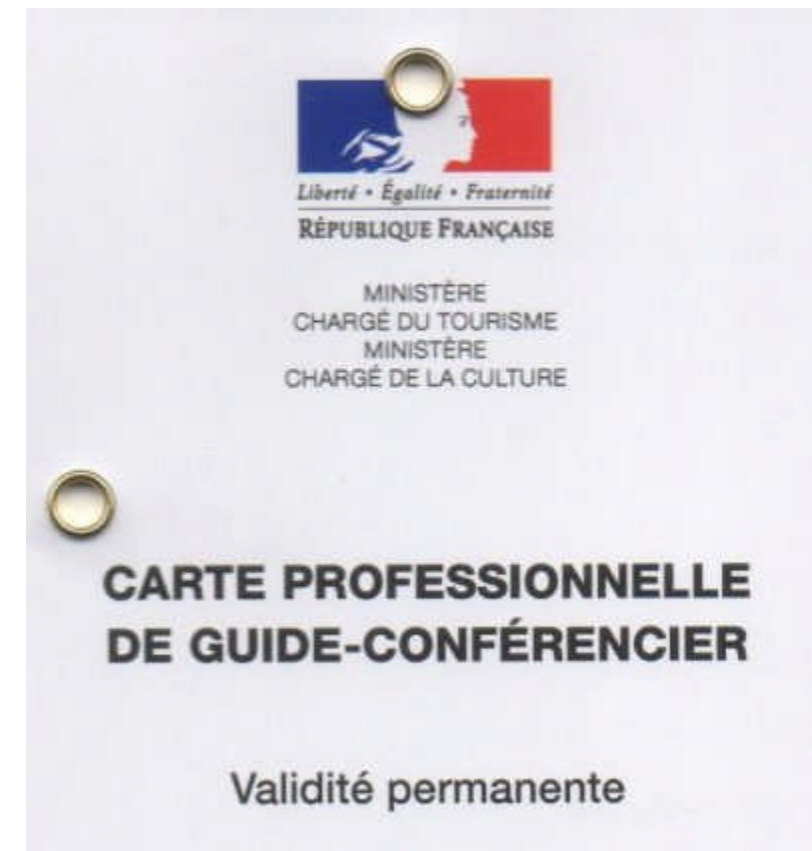
# HOW TO BECOME A QUALIFIED TOURIST GUIDE IN FRANCE

Decree n. 2011-930 of August 1st 2011, relating to persons qualified to conduct guided tours in museums and historical monuments. Only one professional figure that groups together the four professions that existed until 2011: the qualified tourist guide.

Credits: <https://www.tour-guides.fr/guide-conferencier/>

Obtain the professional licence = validation of a professional bachelor's degree or a master's degree if the following courses units have been validated: tourist guide skills, professional practice, and modern foreign language.

The bachelor's degree proposed at the Gustave Eiffel University focuses on three fundamental aspects: history of art, cultural heritage and general knowledge; practical aspects with guiding techniques and oral mediation of the public; professional aspects of communication, marketing and occupational integration. The aim is to provide students with tools allowing to deal with any type of situation and being able to practice their profession independently or in collaboration with tourist offices and other tourist or cultural establishments.



# HOW MEDIATION HAS CHANGED

**Mediation approaches, whether human or digital, are based on the knowledge of public's expectations.**

The *modus operandi* of mediation's professionals has evolved to adapt to the expectations of the public, with the rise of performative and participative interventions.

Many guides and lecturers invented new forms of mediation, in which the public speaks up more easily during debates, physically invests the tour framework in artistic forms (dance, poetry, meditation, etc.) or playful forms (photo rally, treasure hunt).

From the mid-2000s onwards, Wikipedia revolutionised public access to online information: tourist guides gradually lost their status as knowledge holders.

Since the explosion of social networks in the mid-2010s, the youngest users now rarely consult traditional media and instead lock themselves into information loops. For these audiences, the discourse of the qualified tourist guide has evolved further with the return of popularisation content combined with increased vigilance on discernment since the explosion of fake news from 2016.





Our reflection is about the way in which the qualified tourist guide can rely on digital technology during a guided tour.

We will try to show how digital can be a complementary tool for guides without trying to replace them.

The Covid 19 pandemic has proved the need of human relationships and interactions in education and leisure activities. Hence the importance of closely associating and balancing the level of intervention of the digital world and the human in the mediation with the public.



Credits: Denis Juillière

# 100% IMMERSIVE

Public wanders through spaces with high level of scenography which use interactive digital tools in different contexts and for different purposes and where tourist guides don't have a lot of opportunities for their intervention:

- *Atelier des Lumières*
- *Château d'Auvers sur Oise*
- *Hôtel de la Marine*



Atelier des lumières, Paris.  
Credits: Denis Juillièrè

# IMMERSIVE EXHIBITIONS

Some cultural places offer interactive or immersive contents while allowing the guide to intervene at key moments in the visit.

It is necessary for the guide or scientific mediator to be aligned with the imposed scenography by becoming familiar with contents and operating modes of the digital tools in order to integrate them into his tour and its discourse.

Consequently, he must be a specialist in the subjects covered in order to be able to deliver the necessary information, answer to certain questions from the public and achieve an optimal customer experience.



Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie Credits:  
<https://www.onetwotrips.com/cite-des-sciences-la-villette/>



# AUGMENTED REALITY AND 3D RECONSTRUCTIONS

More opportunities for the tourist guide to integrate digital technology into his visit.

Augmented reality offers a significant cognitive support in understanding and reinforcing the content delivered by the guide. Here again, the guide must be familiar with the contents and functionalities of the tool in order to be able to integrate them perfectly into his tour scenario.

*Histopads* can easily be integrated into a tour and be an ally for the tourist guide enabling him to evoke the atmosphere of a place that is now not so furnished and decorated.



L'Histopad de la Conciergerie. Credits: <http://www.paris-conciergerie.fr/Actualites/Decouvrez-la-Conciergerie-avec-l-Histopad>

# TOURIST GUIDE, THE GREAT FORGOTTEN

**The emergence of digital technology must be integrated into a perspective of human interaction to encourage the creation of new services.**

The digital visit materials are very often designed and produced without taking the tourist guide into account, not involving them into the creative, design and planning process.

We can only encourage a dialogue between museums and their guides or mediators for the selection of digital tools and the drawing up of specifications for the contents and operating methods.





The 100% immersive obliges the actors of cultural and scientific mediation to a new approach of service definition and guides more precisely to an in-depth reflection on how to give a new added value to their profession.

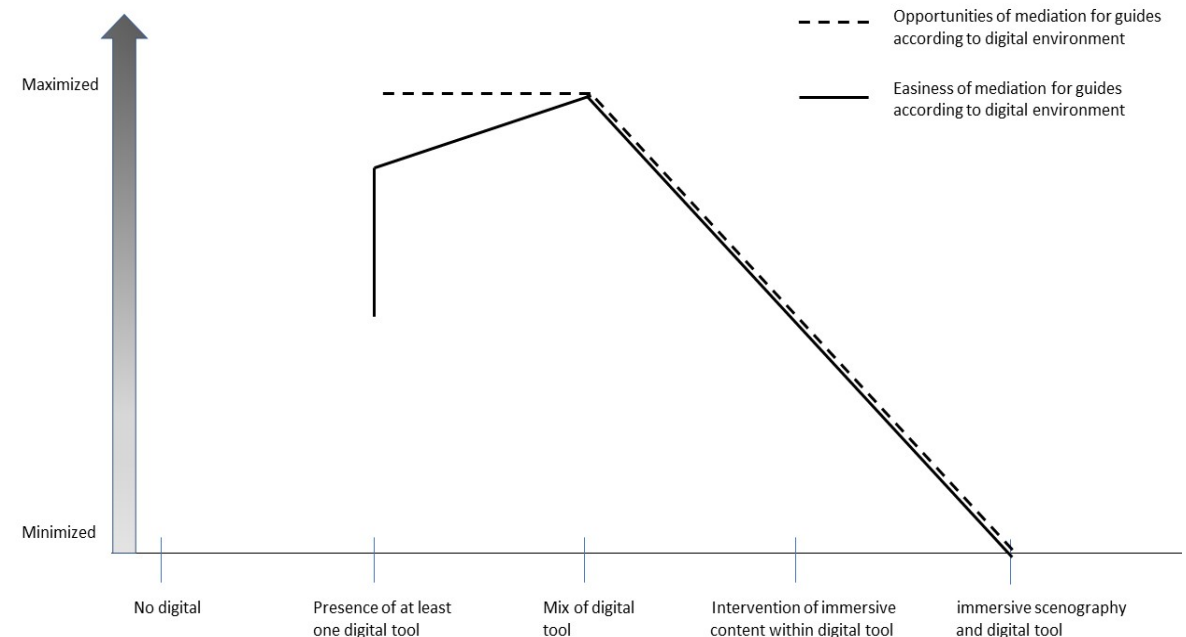
Despite the interest and progress brought by the variety of digital tools, we do not think that 100% digital is the most relevant approach in terms of services, public mediation, and product.

# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OPPORTUNITIES OF MEDIATION AND EASINESS OF MEDIATION ACCORDING TO THE DEGREE OF DIGITIZATION

- Opportunities (dotted line) exist as soon as there is at least one digital tool, and they decrease with the intervention of immersive content and scenography
- Easiness for the guide is optimal when he has more variety of choice of digital supports as he is not forced to use the one and only available which may not be relevant for his visit.

Easiness starts to drop as soon as the content is immersive (histopad for example with its predetermined immersive scenario), and collapses in an immersive scenographic environment.

Note that the difficulty of mediation also depends on the complexity of the scenario of the digital tool, which the guide should manage and be comfortable with to integrate it in his visit.





# TOURIST GUIDES FACING ICT

**Appropriating new technologies would allow guides to position themselves in the market of 3D reconstructions and 100% immersive, thus ensuring the continuity of the profession.**

The profession of tourist guide is still largely perceived in a purely interactional reading without measuring the interest and need of the integration of new technological tools.

The relationship with digital technology is still limited to treasure hunts or to a complementary communicative role, which may raise questions about the employability of future tourist guides.



# HOW FILL THE GAP

- Encouraging a close collaboration between touristic sites and guides to involve them in the creation of digital tours.
- Setting up exchanges between student guides and students of the Tourism and New Technologies professional degree, and also to help our future guides to integrate an ICT dimension into their end-of-study projects in order to better prepare themselves to accompany publics who make increasing use of tools, applications and digital practices.
- Encouraging our students to realise projects that involve museums or cultural organisations. Some of our students are currently working on a project for a guided tour of the Louvre Museum in Paris in the form of a treasure hunt using digital tablets.



# CONCLUSIONS

To ensure the sustainability of their profession, qualified tourist guides must know how to adapt to this new context and give added value to their interventions.

All these developments in the digital transformation take on an additional significance in times of the Covid pandemic, which reminds us how essential and necessary human interaction is.

It is therefore not a question of putting ourselves in opposition to digital media, but rather of learning to use them so that they become our allies.



# PERSPECTIVES

Starting from this initial analysis, we wish to conduct research among the students of our professional bachelors' degree to better understand their approach to digital technology and to propose an educational pathway that meets the requirements of the market.

Secondly, we would like to develop collaborations between guides and computer scientists to make the tour app even more effective.





# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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<https://www.dicen-idf.org/> ;

<https://ifis.univ-gustave-eiffel.fr/formations/licence-professionnelle-guide-conferencier>



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