

ITALIAN DIGITAL TOURISM REACHES WORTH OF MORE THAN 14 BILLION EUROS



The digital tourism market in Italy continues to grow and is currently worth 14.2 billion euros. This year it grew by 8% compared to 2017, according to the estimates of the Observatory for digital innovation in tourism at the Polytechnic University of Milan.

Digital tourism is now running and contributes to a quarter of the total value of tourism (58.3 billion). **Online travel agencies are pushing the digital trends more forward, but now also small receptive structures invest in this innovation.**

The main part of tourism is still represented by transport (61%), followed by housing (29%) and packages (10%).

Regarding instruments and sales channels, direct bookings still account for 71%, above all due to the strong impact of direct transport bookings. But the incidence of indirect channels on digital platforms is increasing. The market share of online travel agencies and various aggregator sites is equal to 29%. This is an increase of 14% compared to last year.

For many small Italian hoteliers, online agencies are still convenient. At the same time, however, direct bookings to accommodations have gone from 43% in 2017 to 46% this year, with a preference for email (20% of the total) and websites (10%).

“Those who grow more in terms of bookings on digital channels are those structures that have the biggest growth forecasts, regardless of the size. This is a sign that investing in digital innovation is a growth factor,” says Eleonora Lorenzini, an expert on the matter.

Among the rising technologies, chat bots stand out. They have now passed the experimental phase, as demonstrated by the case of LiveHelp. **With the experience gained in digital tourism (with 325 thousand chats managed each year), the company has made it available to the airline AirItaly.** It deals with the presale phase. With the introduction of the bot, the managed chats have increased from 9 thousand per month to 15 thousand, with an exact response rate of 80%.

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