

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE DIGITALISATION OF SERVICES: BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION, INNOVATION AND SOCIAL IMPACT

EDITORS OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE:

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Driven by the digital revolution, the transformation of the service economy is accelerating considerably. This leads to new forms of experience and behaviours.

These transformations are achieved through technological innovations, such as digital service delivery platforms (Lindh and Nordman, 2018), but also through organisational and service innovations. In this vein, companies are developing 'phygital' (i.e., physical and digital) customer experiences and new service relationships are being devised, enabling the integration of customers, partners and service providers (e.g., online consultation) (Banik, 2021) and thus reducing the number of intermediaries.

In this renewed context, service industries, such as banking and retail, have changed the nature of production as well as service delivery thanks to digital technologies that offer 'the possibility of creating ecosystems and connecting to the infrastructure of partners and contractors' (Shcherbakova, T.S., 2019).

Moreover, digital transformation in the service economy has significant social implications. For example, it raises new organisational and human challenges regarding work (López Peláez and Marcuello-Servós, 2018). In fact, while some service activities are increasing their hiring processes, other service professions are experiencing real difficulties in attracting people. AI-based self-learning systems on the service economy and society are having a considerable impact (Jarrahi, 2018). The analysis of service data and user behaviour is becoming essential. In addition, the digitalisation of services will make it possible to respond to specific societal challenges, such as financial inclusion (Kanungo and Gupta, 2021).

Furthermore, digitalisation raises the question of the changing role of the players involved. Customers are developing new purchasing behaviours, with purchasers attaching importance to comments on booking websites to validate their choices. This is the case in the tourism



industry. The health crisis linked to COVID-19 has completed consumers' move towards digital technology (Rahmanov et al., 2021).

Specific organisations have a new role to play in monitoring and promoting equitable access to digital technologies. Human factors, including institutional factors such as trust and the protection of privacy, are part of the challenges of digital transformation. These challenges require service researchers to adopt a prospective and counterfactual approach to projecting into the future (Barrett et al., 2015). This will enable them to provide information and strategies to deal with future risks, which may differ greatly from those encountered in the past (Kottmeyer, 2021). The recovery of services in this VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) world should also provide service sector actors with strategies to deal with risks and new crises that will arise in increasingly complex 'phygital' contexts (Schrijvers et al., 2021).

Additionally, challenges related to climate change, energy scarcity, social inclusion and ethics are adding further complexity.

This call for papers is the result of RESER 2023 Conference entitled '*Digital Transformation and the Service Economy: Exploring the Societal Impact*', which took place at the *Swiss Digital Center*, hosted by HES-SO Valais-Wallis, Haute Ecole de Gestion. This special issue is the first concrete result of the partnership between the RESER Association and the RRI network established in 2024. This call for papers is open not only to authors attending the RESER 2023 Conference but also to any researcher wishing to publish on the subject.

For this special issue of *Technology and Innovation*, authors are invited to submit empirical research, methodological or conceptual papers that focus on topics related to digital transformation in services. Papers may be based on qualitative or quantitative methods. **The following themes are expected:**

- 1) Innovation in digital services: exploring the potential and challenges of personalised healthcare, fraud detection, virtual assistants, chatbots, advertising, image and speech recognition, social media, smart home automation and e-learning.
- 2) The sociological implications of digital transformation: understanding the social impact on individuals, organisations and society in the context of trust, privacy, ethics and the human factor.
- 3) The transformation of public services through the introduction of digital technologies into their services, but also the role of public services in promoting equitable access to digital technologies, reducing the digital divide and improving digitisation while maintaining human contact.

- 4) The impact of digitalisation on the future of work and the organisational aspects of servitisation: innovating service approaches in the digital age.
- 5) The territorial and spatial dimension of digital transformation: understanding the relationship between ecosystems, value chains, social structures and inequalities in the digital age.
- 6) The impact of AI-based self-learning systems and data analytics on service innovation, user behaviour and the service economy: exploring opportunities and challenges for society.
- 7) The development and design of resilient and inclusive services for businesses to meet today's challenges, including climate change, energy scarcity, and talent shortages.
- 8) Risk and crisis management in the digital transformation of services: exploring strategies and practices for managing the risks associated with the digitisation of services, including the prevention of cyber-attacks, the protection of personal data, the resilience of digital infrastructures and the management of emerging crises such as pandemics or security incidents.

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CONDITIONS OF SUBMISSION:

- **Receipt of abstracts (2 pages):** 31 November 2024

Notes: submission of an abstract (2 to 3 pages) - in Word format, times 12, line spacing 1.5 - giving an idea of the importance of the subject, the methods used and the expected results.

Abstracts should be sent to celine.merlin@univ-lille.fr , emmanuel.fragniere@hevs.ch

- **Response to authors:** 20 December 2024

- **Deadline for submission of full papers:** 15 February 2025

- **Text evaluation process:** February to mid-September 2025

- **Receipt of final articles:** mid-September 2025

- **Publication:** January 2026