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Historical reenactment festivals in Ukraine in context of world trends of event tourism

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Abstract. The purpose of the article is to analyze the current trends in the development of historical reenactment festivals as an integral part of event tourism; as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the industry. The author also investigates the impact of economic, social and technological innovations on tourist preferences in recent years. The purpose of the article is to determine the potential for the development of historical reenactment festivals in Ukraine and the world in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to provide recommendations on the use of virtual technologies to increase audience interest and ensure the long-term development of this type of event tourism.
Research objectives: to study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the development of historical reenactment festivals; to identify changes in tourist preferences caused by economic, social and technological transformations; to assess the use of digital technologies in historical reconstruction festivals in different regions of the world.
Research methodology: based on the analysis of modern publications and examples of successful practices from different countries; Using the comparative method, the author finds out how digital technologies are used in the organization of historical reenactment festivals, what challenges and advantages are associated with this process.
Scientific Novelty: the author notes that the festival movement in the world, as well as in Ukraine, has been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, changes in event formats have occurred due to their mass cancellation, which led to the decline of traditional practices, a decrease in the number of audiences, and a shift in attention to local events. Nevertheless, in many cases this crisis has served as an impetus for innovation. First of all, this concerns the introduction of virtual and augmented reality technologies, which contribute to the creation of new formats of cultural events. Online formats adopted within the framework of historical reenactment festivals have not only maintained ties with the target audience, but also significantly expanded the geographical reach of participants, providing wide access to them from different countries of the world.
Conclusions: Organizers of historical reenactment festivals in Ukraine have begun to integrate digital technologies, which allows them to highlight the national cultural heritage, despite the challenges associated with the ongoing Russian invasion. At the same time, the author notes that the interest of young people in modern technologies, in particular the gamification of content, raises concerns about the potential erosion of "cultural authenticity" as a defining characteristic of historical reenactment festivals. This situation emphasizes the importance of actively involving professional experts in shaping the content of these events. Nevertheless, the general implementation of VR and AR technologies, the development of multilingual content and the use of online platforms can increase the authority of Ukrainian historical reenactment festivals

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in the event tourism market. Thus, although the COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for the industry, it has also prompted important changes. The continued existence of the festival movement depends on the ability of organizers to judiciously apply technologies that improve accessibility, interactivity, and personalization of events, while preserving the established traditions that define their "cultural authenticity." With its rich historical heritage, Ukraine has the potential to become an example of the successful integration of tradition and innovation in the event tourism industry.

Keywords: event tourism; historical reenactment festivals; virtual events; tourism policy; cultural heritage; event management; digital technologies.

Problem statement

At the present stage, the so-called "historical reenactments" have become one of the foundations of event tourism. And this is understandable, because it is the actualization of a particular event through a kind of theatrical performances that is becoming the most effective form of attracting the attention of tourists. The number of such historical reenactments has been growing rapidly: before the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of such events were organized in the world every year. However, the pandemic has caused their mass cancellation or postponement to an indefinite future. The trend has also become obvious that modern tourists seek not only new impressions and inclusivity, but also safe space and convenience, for example, without the need to cross borders. This trend raises questions about the future of event tourism and, in particular, the organization of these historical reenactments.

The study covers several key aspects. In particular, some attention was paid to festivals in general, in order to determine which types of festivals are losing popularity. An important research task was to find out exactly how historical reenactment festivals have changed in the world and in Ukraine during and after the end of the pandemic, as well as how these changes reflect general trends in the development of event tourism. An important question was whether the current situation can be characterized as a crisis in the development of event tourism in general, or should we talk about a crisis specifically of historical reenactment festivals? Due to the fact that a possible way out of this situation may be the active implementation of virtual historical reenactments and festivals, it is important to determine whether the transition of this type of tourism activity to the virtual space is a qualitatively new phenomenon, or is it just a temporary form, or a kind of tool for attracting the attention of potential tourists. One of the tasks is also to develop certain recommendations for the development of virtual festivals of historical reenactments and virtual event tourism in general in Ukraine during the war and subsequent post-war recovery.

The purpose of the article is to analyze trends and prospects for the development of historical reenactment festivals in Europe in the context of post-COVID recovery, as well as to develop recommendations for the expansion of the virtual component of event tourism in Ukraine.

Review of Sources and Recent Research

In Ukraine, the tourism industry as a complex economic, social and cultural phenomenon is studied by O. Lyubitseva, A. Parfinenko and others. Many studies have also been devoted to event tourism and event management as one of the types of tourism activity [7; 11; 17; 21; 27]. A significant contribution to the development of problems of organizing and assessing the effectiveness of historical reenactment festivals in tourism was made by foreign researchers D. Getz, D. Baldwin, E. Bruner and others [17; 21; 26]. However, in the Ukrainian historiography of event tourism, the role of historical reenactments is covered only in passing [4; 8; 28].

Results of the Research

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant social, economic and cultural shifts around the world. Restrictions on movement and social interaction have been imposed, leading to some isolation and changes in people's behavior. The pandemic has led to the cancellation or modification of many tourist events. Tourism as an industry has suffered significant material losses due to reduced demand and restrictions on activity [9].

In response to these challenges, the tourism industry has been reimagined to focus on more local and safe formats. Domestic tourism has become more popular as travelers prefer closer, less crowded destinations that provide safety and comfort. This trend has continued and is contributing to the development of local tourist destinations [12].

Event tourism has suffered particular losses: mass gatherings have been limited or canceled, prompting organizers to look for alternative solutions. In particular, digital technologies have become increasingly important, as many events have moved online. This has allowed for some connection with the audience and continued relevant activities, but at the same time has fundamentally changed its established forms [6].

Thus, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for the transformation of the tourism industry, accelerating the implementation of digital solutions and adaptation to new realities. This period has certainly been a significant challenge, but it has also opened up opportunities for innovation and rethinking approaches in the tourism industry [1].

As is known, event tourism encompasses a variety of events that attract tourists, including historical, cultural, sports, music, and other festivals. Each of these types has its own characteristics and audience. For example, historical festivals, such as medieval battle reenactments, allow visitors to immerse themselves in the past, while music festivals bring together music fans from all over the world. However, recently, there has been a certain decline in traditional festivals. For example, some note that music festivals are facing a decline in attendance due to monotony of programs and lack of innovation [7].

The COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of digital technologies have led to the growth of virtual tours and online festivals. Music festivals were among the first to move to online formats, offering live streams and interactive concerts. This has allowed them to maintain contact with their audience and even

expand it, as virtual events have no geographical restrictions. For example, many music events have been canceled or postponed, but some of them have quickly adapted by offering online broadcasts for their fans [3]. Sporting events and, consequently, sports tourism have also undergone significant changes. Traditional competitions have been canceled or held without spectators, which has reduced their tourist appeal. At the same time, the popularity of cybersports (eSports), which do not depend on physical presence and can be held online, has increased.

Historical reenactment festivals have always been popular among local communities, as such events provide an opportunity to immerse themselves in their own past and feel the atmosphere of a certain era. They can be considered a unique component of event tourism, due to the combination of educational and entertainment functions. Inclusivity, as a characteristic feature of these festivals, allows visitors not only to observe, but also to feel the atmosphere of past eras through their own participation in the reenactments of battles, crafts, or everyday life. However, due to restrictions on mass gatherings, many such events have been canceled or postponed, which threatened to interrupt their traditions. Since 2020, many historical festivals have been canceled around the world, which has negatively affected the tourist attractiveness of the respective regions. Despite this, the need for a "live" experience remains high, and with the easing of restrictions, these festivals are slowly but gradually recovering.

Thus, the least resilient to the crisis were those festivals that were unable to quickly adapt to new conditions and implement digital technologies. In particular, historical and cultural festivals based on physical presence and interaction suffered the most losses. In contrast, music and sports festivals that fully or partially moved to an online format were able to maintain their audience and even expand it thanks to global access. For example, the international festival "South by Southwest" (SXSW) in 2020 was completely transferred to an online format, providing participants with access to virtual performances, panels and film screenings. Although this event is not a historical reenactment, its successful experience can be adapted for holding virtual historical festivals.

It can be argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has also significantly affected the format of historical reenactments. The cancellation of mass events in 2020—2022 has also forced organizers of such events to look for ways to adapt to new realities. For example, the Battle of Nations festival, an international championship in medieval battles, was initially postponed for several years, and then some of its activities moved to an online format. In Poland, where the famous reenactment of the Battle of Grunwald is traditionally held, organizers created virtual broadcasts, which allowed viewers to follow the event remotely.

A reduction in the number of participants and a predominant focus on local audiences have become typical for historical reenactment festivals in the post-pandemic period. In France, the organizers of the Puy du Fou festival have significantly reduced the number of visitors, but have implemented dynamic schedules to avoid crowds. In Italy, where historical reenactments are an important element of event tourism, the popularity of local festivals focused on residents of small regions, such as the Palio di Siena, has increased.

In Ukraine, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some historical festivals, such as "Tu Stan!" in Lviv region and "Forpost" in Kamianets-Podilskyi, also

tried to integrate digital elements. For example, online streams were introduced for those who could not come, and mini-events with a limited number of participants were created for local visitors. Thanks to this, the organizers managed to maintain audience interest and even attract new fans through the digital format [5].

Later, in 2022—2023, due to restrictions on mass events due to the war, festival organizers mainly in the western regions of the country (in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi regions) actively cooperated with local communities, creating small thematic events for local communities. This helped to preserve the festival movement during the difficult period of full-scale war. These changes demonstrate that historical reenactment festivals, despite certain crisis phenomena, are gradually adapting to new conditions, in particular by involving modern information technologies.

Clarifying the state of historical reenactment festivals indicates a transition to the next stage of their development, and therefore, the question arises of distinguishing certain periods: birth, rise, flowering, crisis or decline. This can be done by analyzing the history of the largest festivals of this kind in different countries.

Historical reenactment festivals, as a form of reenactment of the past, have deep roots in European and American cultures. Some medieval fairs, which combined trade, entertainment, and religious ceremonies, can be considered, to some extent, the predecessors of modern reenactment festivals [8]. Over time, interest in reenacting historical events, especially military battles, grew, which led to the emergence of specialized events dedicated to specific eras and events. In the 19th century, the first official military reenactments began to be held in Europe and the United States. For example, in 1859, the first reenactment of the Battle of Bunker Hill, dedicated to the events of the Revolutionary War, took place in the United States. In Europe, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, veterans and enthusiasts first tried to organize reenactments of key battles, such as the Battle of Waterloo, to honor the memory of the dead and preserve military traditions. Today, the reenactment of the Battle of Waterloo is one of the most famous historical reenactments in Europe. The first large-scale reenactments of the battle began in the 1970s, but this event gained real momentum in the 1990s. The peak moment was 2015, when the 200th anniversary of the battle was celebrated: more than 5 thousand reenactors from 52 countries took part in the event, and the number of spectators exceeded 60 thousand people. This success is explained by the significance of the event in European history and the careful preparation by the organizers. After the anniversary event, interest in this reenactment decreased somewhat, which is natural after major anniversary events. However, these annual events continue to be held, attracting hundreds of participants and thousands of spectators [30].

The Battle of Gettysburg Reenactment, which is dedicated to the events of the Civil War, is one of the largest in the United States. The first official reenactments took place in the 1960s, but the event gained momentum in the 1990s. The 150th anniversary of the battle in 2013 was a culmination, with more than 12,000 reenactors and tens of thousands of spectators participating. The event's popularity is also due to the significance of the battle in American history. However, in subsequent years the festival faced challenges such as

increasing costs of organization, competition from other events, and changes in public interest, which led to a certain decline [16].

Here are some examples of the development of historical reenactment festivals in Ukraine. The "Tu Stan!" historical reenactment festival is a landmark event in Ukraine dedicated to medieval culture. In the early 2000s, the festival had a local format with small-scale reenactments, craft workshops, and folklore performances. Its goal was to popularize the historical heritage of the Tustan Fortress. During its heyday (2010—2018), the festival expanded significantly, attracting professional reenactors, musicians, and artisans from Ukraine and the world. It became one of the largest events of its kind in Western Ukraine. However, after 2019, the festival faced financial difficulties, the impact of the pandemic, and changing cultural priorities. The organizers began to introduce online formats and interactive elements, which helped maintain some interest in the event, at least in the virtual space.

Another example of Ukrainian historical reenactment festivals is the Battle of Nations, a championship in historical medieval combat founded in 2009. The first tournament was held in Khotyn. The most successful years for the festival were 2013—2015, when the number of participants and spectators increased significantly, and the geography of teams expanded to over 30 countries. The popularity of the event is explained by the observance of historical rules to ensure the "authenticity of the battles" and the growing interest in medieval culture. However, after 2015, the festival faced certain challenges, such as financial difficulties, internal conflicts in the organizing committee, and competition from other similar events. This led to a decrease in the number of participants and spectators in subsequent years.

Thus, the active development of historical reenactment festivals (for Europe — since the second half of the 20th century, for Ukraine — since the early 2000s) can be explained by several factors: the growing interest in history, the democratization and massification of tourism, the desire to take direct part in theatrical performances, so to speak, to immerse oneself in "living" history, the availability of educational and entertainment programs, as well as the development of tourism infrastructure. For example, in the 2000s, many European countries, such as Germany, France, and Poland, actively supported historical reenactments through state grants, recognizing their importance for cultural tourism.

However, in the 2010s, factors began to emerge that led to the decline of individual events. First, there was market saturation—the growth in the number of such events made it difficult to attract new participants and spectators. Second, financial difficulties arose, in particular, there was a reduction in state funding, and the high costs of organizing events, costumes and scenery forced some historical reenactment festivals to reduce their scale or cease their existence altogether.

Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has become more of an additional challenge for historical reenactment festivals than a major factor in the crisis. However, as already noted, this blow has been quite powerful. Restrictions on mass gatherings, border closures, and economic difficulties have forced the organizers of many such events to adapt to the new conditions, or to suspend their activities altogether. In 2020—2023, many key historical reenactment festivals were

canceled or moved to a virtual format. This has sparked discussions about the future of such events and how they can remain relevant in the face of global change. Obviously, the future of such events depends on the ability of their organizers to adapt to new realities, in particular, a certain path into the future is associated with the use of digital technologies to create interactive and personalized experiences.

Thus, we can say that we are observing significant crisis phenomena in the development of historical reenactment festivals in different countries of the world and in Ukraine in particular. These processes occur not only due to economic factors, but also due to the general need to rethink the directions of further development of these events in the real or virtual world. This crisis concerns the development of event tourism in general.

On the one hand, economic difficulties have become one of the key factors influencing the decline of historical reenactment festivals. The organization of such events requires significant financial resources to ensure the authenticity of costumes, scenery and locations. In periods of economic instability, during the pandemic, funding for cultural events has been reduced. And this also applies to quite wealthy countries. For example, in the UK, some local festivals have been canceled due to lack of funding, which has negatively affected the tourist attractiveness of the regions.

It is clear that the situation in Ukraine is even more difficult. Over the past five years, there has been a constant reduction in funding, or even the cancellation of many cultural events. In particular, the lack of state support and sponsorship funds significantly complicated the organization of historical reenactment festivals, which, in turn, reduced the interest of tourists and local residents in participating in such events.

As already noted, modern audiences are also increasingly drawn to interactive and technologically intensive entertainment [2; 10]. Traditional forms of historical reenactment may seem less appealing to the younger generation, who prefer digital entertainment and virtual experiences. This leads to a decrease in attendance at such events and, consequently, their decline.

A similar trend is observed in Ukraine: young people are more interested in modern festivals that combine music, technology, and interactive elements than in traditional historical reenactments [9; 14]. This poses a challenge for organizers to adapt the format of events to changing audience preferences, introducing new technologies and interactive elements to maintain public interest and attract visitors.

Historical reenactments also face strong competition from other types of tourism, such as gastronomic, extreme or ecological tourism, which are gaining increasing popularity. In particular, in Ukraine, the development of other tourism areas, such as green tourism in the Carpathians or wine tours in Transcarpathia, creates additional competition for historical reenactments. That is, the diversity of tourist offers distracts potential visitors from participating in historical festivals, especially since the latter lose the competition in terms of investment-profit ratio. This requires organizers to find unique offers and approaches to stand out from other tourism products and attract a wider audience.

Thus, the combination of economic constraints, changing audience interests, and competition with other types of tourism creates serious challenges for historical reenactment festivals both globally and in Ukraine.

At the same time, we are also observing similar processes in the development of event tourism in general. Restrictions on mass events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, border closures, and general uncertainty have led to the cancellation or postponement of many planned cultural events around the world. This includes, for example, even such large-scale events as the Tokyo Olympics.

In Ukraine, event tourism has also suffered significant losses. Many traditional events, such as Atlas Weekend in Kyiv and Fine City in Ternopil, have been canceled or postponed, which has negatively affected the local economy and the tourist attractiveness of the regions. According to research, event tourism is an important segment of the Ukrainian tourism industry, and its decline has in turn led to significant economic losses.

Due to the challenges mentioned above, some event organizers have also moved online, using digital platforms to host now virtual events. To some extent, this has allowed to maintain audience interest and partially compensate for losses. This shows that although event tourism is experiencing a crisis, it has also begun to find a way out in the face of global changes in the virtual world.

All of the above makes us take a closer look at the innovative approaches that have emerged recently. We are talking primarily about virtual formats. They have an obvious advantage in accessibility. For example, festivals that are broadcast online become open to people with disabilities or those who live in remote regions. In addition, digital content can be viewed at a convenient time, which adds flexibility. At the same time, a significant disadvantage is the loss of "live" contact. The emotions that arise while being on a "real battlefield" or the atmosphere of communication with reenactors cannot be transmitted through a computer screen or smartphone. This creates a situation that is the opposite of the declared "authenticity" of the events.

Let us consider several strategies that can help overcome this crisis and adapt to the modern conditions of the virtual world. Obviously, the integration of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies in the festival of historical reenactments opens up new opportunities for audience engagement [2;10]. In particular, virtual technologies allow us to recreate battles in detail, which is difficult to do in real life. For example, the "VR Battle of Waterloo" project, implemented by British historians together with game developers, offers users to feel like participants in the legendary battle. The virtual platform recreates the landscape, tactics of troops, and even the sounds of battle. This format has attracted tens of thousands of viewers from different countries, including those who were not previously interested in historical reenactments.

Online broadcasts of historical reenactments have become an important tool during the pandemic, when mass events were impossible. It was then, for example, that the American "Gettysburg Virtual Re-enactment" began broadcasting a Civil War reenactment on YouTube, collecting tens of thousands of views. Thanks to an interactive chat, viewers could ask questions to the reenactors in real time, which made the event not only spectacular, but also one that turned into an educational project (by involving specialists from various profiles in lectures and discussions) [16]. In Europe, a similar format is now used by "Vikings Live", which offers online streams from festivals dedicated to the Vikings. Participants exchange knowledge, search for new historical facts, demonstrate craft skills and participate in interactive lectures.

Ukraine is also witnessing a trend towards virtualization of cultural events. For example, the "Tu Stan!" festival, which usually takes place in the format of a live historical reenactment, in 2020 offered an online program with virtual excursions, lectures, and master classes, which allowed to maintain the audience's interest in the conditions of quarantine restrictions. In particular, a series of online lectures on the history of the region had over 20 thousand views [2; 10].

The use of digital platforms allows historical reenactment festivals to expand their audience beyond national borders. For example, the organizers of the Medieval Khotyn festival plan to introduce online broadcasts of battles and master classes, which will allow viewers from all over the world to join the event without the need for physical presence [14]. Meanwhile, the aforementioned Battle of Nations festival, which traditionally attracts thousands of tourists to watch medieval battles, is already experimenting with online broadcasts and interactive master classes, which now allows it to attract a fairly wide international audience.

In Ukraine, the possibilities of introducing new technologies are being actively discussed. For example, the organizers of the reenactment of the Battle of Berestechko are considering including elements of VR excursions for visitors who cannot be physically present. This approach allows not only to maintain interest in historical events, but also to attract a new audience that was not previously interested in reenactments. Initiatives such as "Virtual Lviv", which allows you to immerse yourself in a medieval city, demonstrate significant potential. The uniqueness of this technology lies in the possibility of combining educational and entertainment components, which contributes to the popularization of history among young people.

In parallel with technological innovations, it is important to create unique event concepts that will stand out from other tourism products. Equally promising is the combination of, for example, historical reenactments with gastronomic festivals or craft workshops. This can attract a more diverse audience. Events such as the Kamianets-Podilskyi Medieval Fair festival have already successfully integrated such elements, attracting both local residents and tourists from neighboring regions [2].

However, it is important to maintain the emphasis on "authenticity of the event" so that the event does not turn into an ordinary fair. For organizers, this means maintaining high standards of quality of reenactments, even with a limited budget. But how to ensure authenticity when it comes to a virtual space? Perhaps, with the further development of historical reenactments and computer technology, "authenticity of the thing" should give way to "authenticity of experience".

Creating multilingual content and interactive virtual tours of historical locations can increase the international community's interest in Ukrainian festivals. Such initiatives promote cultural heritage, which is relevant in the context of security restrictions. For example, the "Pocket Country" project has been implemented in Ukraine, which uses VR technologies to recreate historical and cultural heritage sites, giving users the opportunity to virtually travel to the country's landmarks [10]. Obviously, this contributes to people's awareness of the cultural heritage available in Ukraine and, perhaps, encourages these people to visit the places they liked in the future.

Additionally, the first VR and AR art festival was held in Kharkiv and Kyiv, integrating digital art into the urban space of cities. QR codes were placed on the streets, allowing smartphones to view virtual sculptures created by artists specifically for the project [2].

Thus, although historical reenactment festivals are facing serious crises, they also have the potential to adapt to modern conditions and further develop. The use of new technologies, the creation of unique concepts, and the preservation of authenticity can become key strategies for their further development.

The gradual transition of various components of tourism activities, including historical reenactments, to virtual space raises the question of the specificity of these events in a new format, because watching a video on a screen is also a kind of "immersion" in certain cultural content. So, what is the difference in interactive phenomena that existed 10 or 20 years ago with those that we have now? Obviously, today we are already talking about interaction with the virtual environment. We are talking about a metaverse—an interactive 3D space that combines elements of physical and virtual reality, allowing users to interact with the environment and other participants in real time. For example, unlike the virtual stands in museums that are already familiar to tourists, which usually offer a static viewing of exhibits, a metaverse provides the opportunity for deeper immersion and active participation in events. For example, in a metaverse, one can not only view historical artifacts, but also participate in their "creation" or "reenactment" of historical events. Virtual museums are often limited to the representation of real exhibits in digital format, while a metaverse can include completely fictional or altered worlds that go beyond reality. This opens up new possibilities for entertainment programs, where users can interact with content in a way that is not available in the physical world. For example, in a metaverse, one can visit a virtual museum that uses elements of virtual reality and multimedia to create an immersive and interactive experience [13]. At the same time, this gives rise to the problem of "clash of imaginations", when ideas formed in the process of entertainment can conflict with those acquired in the process of educational activities.

Today, there are voices in our country that virtual reenactments of military actions (from recent history) can serve as educational tools, helping people better understand the scale and consequences of such events. However, at the same time, difficult ethical questions arise, in particular, regarding the aestheticization of violence and possible traumatization of viewers. Recreating tragic events in a virtual environment can devalue the suffering of real people and turn them into entertainment for virtual tourists. In addition, there is a risk that such historical reenactments can be used to propagate or justify violence. For example, in the context of modern conflicts, virtual platforms can become a means of spreading one-sided judgments that will only intensify hostility. This requires the involvement of specialists from various fields of the humanities, a careful and responsible approach to the creation and use of such digital reconstructions.

Certainly, the digitization of historical sources and artifacts opens up new opportunities for their preservation and popularization. However, questions arise about the accuracy of such representations. There is a risk that attempts to recreate complex historical events in a virtual format may lead to simplification or distortion of facts, threaten to lose the broader context and many important nuances, which will affect the perception of history by users.

Without proper moderation and fact-checking, there is a danger that users of numerous digital platforms will receive a distorted view of historical events. If we "entrust" the creation of content to artificial intelligence, with its growing capabilities in producing not only text, but also video and sound, we may get a "product" that will have no relation to real history at all, but very similar to it. This emphasizes the importance of the participation of professional historians and other experts in the process of creating digital content to ensure its compliance with modern scientific conclusions and approaches.

Thus, virtual technologies provide new opportunities for the development of event tourism in Ukraine. For example, the use of VR and AR can help recreate important historical events that have previously remained out of the attention of reenactors, such as the Battle of Berestechko or the Battle of Konotop, creating an interactive experience for tourists. Such projects will allow attracting young people and an international audience, providing an opportunity to see "alive" history. To do this, Ukraine can adopt the best practices of European and US countries in virtual reconstruction of the battles of Gettysburg or Waterloo, where viewers can "visit" the battlefield through VR glasses. Involving the latest technologies in organizing, for example, the "Ancient Kyiv" festival in the "Kyiv Rus" park or in the Tustan fortress could expand their audience. Online broadcasts using 360-degree cameras can allow people from different countries to "visit" these events. The introduction of such technologies can help preserve festivals, making them accessible even in the crisis conditions of modern war. Moreover, after the war, historical reenactments can play an important role in the process of further national revival. Such events are already able to attract the attention of the international community to the history of Ukraine and attract investments in culture. Although we emphasize once again that such an approach may be associated with various dangers. It is also important to conceptually develop such events so that they take into account the requests of both domestic and international audiences, different age groups of virtual tourists, etc.

Creating projects that combine the virtual component with physical locations can become a competitive advantage for Ukraine in the global tourism arena. For example, for many historical cities, such as Lviv or Kamianets-Podilskyi, it is possible to create augmented reality that will revive ancient streets, showing how these objects looked several hundred years ago. Tourists, walking around the city, can use a mobile application to see reconstructions of events or everyday life. It is time to develop such unique routes that would combine real places with virtual elements. For example, a route dedicated to the National Liberation War led by Bohdan Khmelnytskyi may include visiting real places of ancient battles with a parallel viewing of virtual reconstructions of these events through AR glasses. This approach is already being used in Germany and France, where VR technologies are integrated into tourist routes to display historical events.

For the effective development of virtual tourism in Ukraine, it is important to establish international cooperation. Platforms like Google Arts & Culture can become a tool for popularizing Ukrainian history in the world. For example, cooperation with platforms specializing in virtual tours will allow developing interactive programs for demonstrating historical reenactments, as has been done, for example, with cultural monuments in the Vatican or Egypt.

Conclusions

Event tourism is currently undergoing a transformation under the influence of various factors. These include force majeure circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or modern warfare, as well as new economic challenges and changes in the behavior of the tourist audience. The impact of digital technologies has become particularly noticeable. There is a clear trend towards hybrid event formats: combining real events with virtual ones. For example, music festivals offer online streams of concerts to attract millions of viewers around the world. In Ukraine, this approach is still developing slowly, but it has significant potential for expanding the audience.

An important trend is the localization of tourism. Tourists are increasingly focusing on traveling within their own country due to economic, environmental, and security considerations. This requires a closer look at the regional characteristics of Ukraine.

Thus, historical reenactment festivals, despite the current crisis, can become one of the most innovative areas of event tourism in the new digital era. The use of virtual reality (VR) technologies allows to create large-scale reenactments that are accessible to the widest audience. Event organizers in different countries of the world are already actively using VR, which provides the effect of immersion in history and the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills in an interactive form.

Such innovations are already becoming an effective tool for preserving cultural heritage. The use of 3D scanning of historical monuments allows us to preserve their digital copies, even if they are destroyed or damaged as a result of natural disasters or military conflicts. Of course, the use of technological innovations helps to effectively popularize history among young people. The combination of educational content with gamification, as is done in Western Europe, can be successfully adapted in Ukraine to preserve national memory and integration into the world cultural context. However, there is no doubt that such a path of innovation requires a professional approach, because otherwise it will be very easy to run into various and numerous dangers.

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