



Artículo de original / Original article

Desarrollo de una plataforma web interactiva para optimizar la experiencia turística en San Martín

Development of an interactive web platform to optimize the tourism experience in San Martín

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Resumen: Este estudio tuvo como objetivo desarrollar una plataforma web interactiva dirigida a optimizar la experiencia turística en la región de San Martín, Perú, mediante el uso de tecnologías digitales sostenibles. La investigación se justificó por la brecha digital identificada en la oferta turística regional y la necesidad de fortalecer su competitividad mediante herramientas tecnológicas accesibles. Se empleó una metodología de desarrollo basada en una arquitectura en N capas y en diagramas de casos de uso para el diseño funcional, lo que permitió separar la interfaz de usuario, la lógica de negocio y la gestión de datos, garantizando escalabilidad y facilidad de mantenimiento. Se implementaron prototipos funcionales de la interfaz principal, un módulo de búsqueda y filtrado de destinos, un sistema de mapas interactivos y un formulario de registro de usuarios. Los resultados preliminares indicaron que la plataforma propuesta mejoró la organización y visualización de la información turística, facilitó la exploración georreferenciada de atractivos y permitió avanzar hacia experiencias más personalizadas. Se concluye que la integración de arquitectura modular, mapas interactivos y diseño centrado en el usuario contribuyó a optimizar la experiencia turística digital en San Martín y sienta las bases para futuras ampliaciones de funcionalidades.

Palabras clave: plataforma web interactiva; experiencia turística; San Martín; turismo sostenible; transformación digital

Abstract: This study aimed to develop an interactive web platform to optimize the tourist experience in the San Martín region of Peru through the use of sustainable digital technologies. The research was justified by the digital gap identified in the regional tourism offer and the need to strengthen competitiveness through accessible technological tools. A development methodology based on an N-layer architecture and use case diagrams was applied for functional design, allowing a clear separation of the user interface, business logic, and data management, thus ensuring scalability and ease of maintenance. Functional prototypes of the main interface, a destination search and filtering module, an interactive map system, and a user registration form were implemented. Preliminary results indicated that the proposed platform improved the organization and visualization of tourist information, facilitated georeferenced exploration of attractions, and enabled progress toward more personalized experiences. It is concluded that the integration of modular architecture, interactive maps, and user-centered design contributed to optimizing the digital tourism experience in San Martín and provides a foundation for future extensions of functionalities.

Keywords: Interactive web platform; tourist experience; San Martín; sustainable tourism; digital transformation

1. Introduction

Tourism has emerged globally as a principal driver of socio-economic development, particularly in regions characterized by high biodiversity and cultural richness. To leverage this potential sustainably, destinations must actively engage in digital transformation. This research effort is fundamentally aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (ODS), specifically ODS 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Target 8.9, which mandates the promotion of sustainable tourism that generates employment and supports local culture. The effective incorporation of digital platforms and smart tools is crucial for ensuring inclusive and efficient tourism development, making the integration of technology an urgent necessity rather than an optional add-on.

This necessity is dramatically highlighted in regions such as San Martín in the Peruvian rainforest, which serves as the case study for this research. San Martín boasts unique attractions from the imposing Ahuashiyacu Waterfalls to the mysterious Lamas Castle, and the serene Blue Lagoon. According to data from DIRCETUR (2025), the tourism sector generates 18% of the regional GDP and directly employs over 25,000 people. However, while the number of visitors continues to rise, the digital infrastructure necessary to manage this growth remains significantly underdeveloped.

In the digital age, websites and interactive web platforms are fundamental tools for tourism promotion and management, as they allow for the dissemination of updated information, facilitate real-time bookings, and improve visitor engagement. The absence of optimized websites and the poor integration of digital systems, however, hinder the sector's competitiveness. Prior literature, particularly work focusing on cultural and tourism information systems (e.g., Fernández-Cavia et al., 2014; Korcz et al., 2024), underscores that the design of digital platforms must be structurally robust and user-centric to enhance the local tourism value chain. Open access to tourism content through these digital platforms fosters a more equitable and professional visitor experience, an essential factor for achieving sustainable development goals in emerging destinations.

The identification of informative and digital needs was based on a preliminary diagnostic study which revealed a critical digital gap in the region. A recent study by the San Martín Chamber of Commerce (2024) revealed alarming data: only 28.7% of tourism service providers have a functional website, 63% of accommodations do not accept online reservations, and 82% of local tour guides lack a professional digital presence. The absence of adequate technological tools not only affects the visitor experience but also significantly reduces economic opportunities for local communities.

The general objective of this research is to develop an interactive web platform that optimizes the tourism experience in the San Martín region by promoting sustainable tourism through technological tools. To achieve this, the project is broken down into the following specific objectives: to identify the informational and digital needs of tourists and service providers based on the existing gap; to design a platform that centralizes the local tourism offering, integrating principles of accessibility and sustainability; to implement core functionalities such as user registration and a robust search system, which will form the foundation for future personalized recommendations; and finally, to perform a preliminary technical evaluation of the tool to assess its navigability, clarity, and compliance with the initial functional requirements. The initiative seeks to replace the current fragmented tourism model with one that is integrated, competitive, and inclusive, leveraging the power of technology to preserve the region's natural and cultural heritage while generating economic opportunities for local communities.

2. Methodology

To develop the proposed interactive web platform, a robust methodology grounded in an N-layer architecture was employed. This approach ensured a clear separation between the presentation

layer, business logic, and data access components, thereby facilitating system maintenance, scalability, and reusability. By assigning each layer a defined and specialized role, the architecture strengthened the platform's structural coherence and enhanced overall system performance.

The study adopted an applied case-study design focused on the San Martín region, selected for its profile as an emerging tourism destination with a marked digital gap. This context provided an appropriate setting to apply and evaluate a targeted technological intervention aimed at promoting sustainable development while addressing documented deficiencies in digital infrastructure and online presence among local tourism service providers.

The methodological process was organized into several sequential phases. First, a diagnostic stage was carried out to identify informational and digital needs, including the review of secondary data and the analysis of existing tourism websites and digital services in the region. Second, functional and non-functional requirements for the platform were elicited and refined. Third, the system architecture and core functionalities were designed using use case diagrams and other modeling techniques to represent interactions between users and the platform.

In the development phase, the main modules of the platform were implemented following the N-layer architecture, including the user interface, business logic components, and data persistence mechanisms. The implementation incorporated web technologies such as HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript frameworks, and mapping libraries for interactive visualization, as well as a relational database for structured storage of tourism information.

Finally, a preliminary technical evaluation was conducted to assess the platform's navigability, clarity, and compliance with the initially defined requirements. This evaluation focused on criteria related to usability, accessibility, and performance, providing evidence on the feasibility of the proposed solution and identifying opportunities for iterative improvement in future development stages.

N-tier architecture

Figure 1 shows the software architecture distributed across four main layers: presentation, application, domain, and persistence. The presentation layer contains the views that interact with the user; the application layer manages services and process logic; the domain layer groups entities, contracts, and the core business logic; and finally, the persistence layer manages repositories, databases, and data factories. This modular structure facilitates code maintenance, scalability, and reusability within the development of the proposed web system.

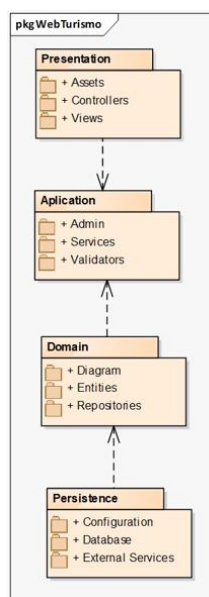


Figure 1. System architecture based on the N-layer methodology

Presentation Layer

The presentation layer is responsible for direct user interaction, providing intuitive graphical interfaces that allow visitors to explore tourism information, navigate the site, register, and perform personalized searches. It was designed with a strong focus on accessibility, visual clarity, and user experience, incorporating a responsive design approach to ensure consistent usability across different screen sizes and device types through the use of HTML5, CSS3, and Bootstrap 5. The interface also follows key principles of the WCAG 2.1 guidelines by including high-contrast elements, scalable typography, ARIA labels for interactive components, and full keyboard-navigation support. To maximize accessibility for potential tourists, the platform was tested across various operating systems such as Windows, macOS, Android, and iOS and verified for proper performance on major browsers including Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and Edge, ensuring seamless access for national and international users regardless of their device or system preferences.

Figure 2 displays the main page of the Getting to Know San Martín website. At the top, there is a header with the site title and a navigation menu with the options: “Home”, “Destinations”, and “Login”. In the center, a promotional message invites users to discover the magic of San Martín, accompanied by a button labeled “Explore Destinations”. Below that, the “Featured Destinations” section contains boxes representing featured images of tourist destinations. On both sides of these boxes, navigation arrows suggest that this is an image carousel.

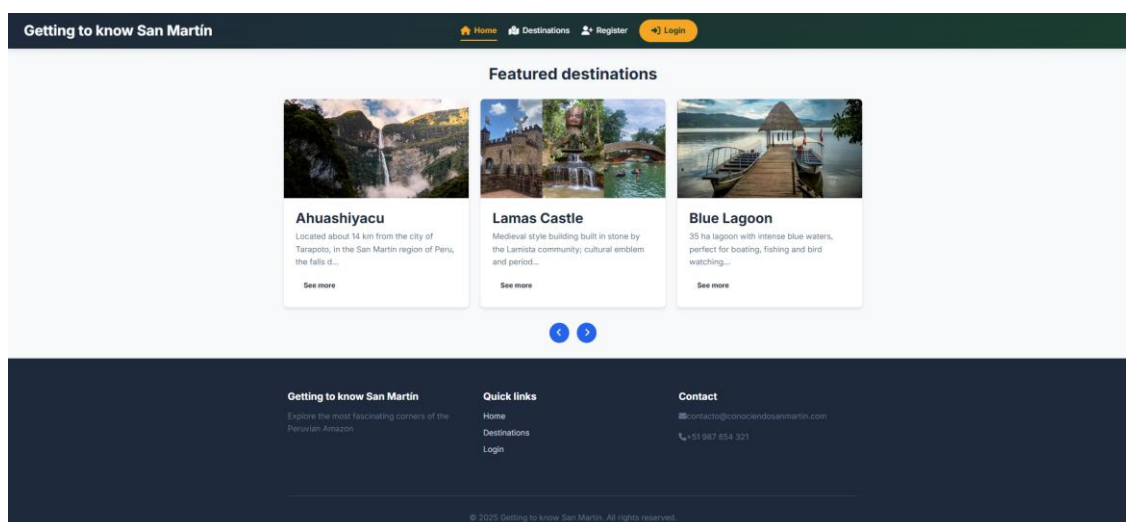


Figure 2. View of the main page

Figure 3 presents the registration page for new users, where the header with the site name and navigation menu is maintained at the top, and a central form titled “Create New Account” requests the user’s full name, email address, an 8-character minimum password, and password confirmation. At the bottom, a “Register” button is provided along with a link for users who already have an account to log in. This simple design focuses on supporting the registration process. Unlike traditional destination websites that mainly offer static information, the proposed interactive platform includes a login system to enable personalized and dynamic user experiences for three key reasons: (i) personalized content, allowing users to save favorite routes, attractions, and itineraries to increase engagement; (ii) user-generated data, enabling travelers to share ratings, comments, and recommendations that strengthen community knowledge and benefit tourism service providers; and (iii) future scalability, as the system is prepared to incorporate additional services such as booking requests, chat assistance, and personalized notifications. Thus, the login procedure illustrated in Figure 3 is not an unnecessary addition but a strategic feature that supports personalization, interaction, and the platform’s long-term growth.

Knowing San Martín Start Destinations Register Login

Login

Email

Password

Enter

[¿You do not have account? Sign up](#)

Figure 3. View of the page login

Application Layer

Figure 4 shows the main OpenStreetMap interface centered on South America, highlighting Peru and its neighboring countries, illustrating the use of services such as location search and map visualization that are managed from the service layer through external API consumption to integrate geolocation and mapping functions into tourism or informational applications. This figure presents the interactive map implemented on the platform using Leaflet JS and connected to a geo-referenced database of tourism resources from the San Martín region, allowing users to visualize attractions by category such as nature, gastronomy, culture, lodging, and transportation access detailed pop-ups with descriptions, images, opening hours, and contact information, calculate suggested routes between attractions, apply geolocation filters based on their current position, and explore recommended circuits for specific provinces within San Martín. Although the platform focuses on this region, the map's initial view was intentionally centered on South America to give users, especially international visitors, a broader geographic context of Peru and its position relative to surrounding countries. Once users begin interacting with the interface, the system automatically zooms into San Martín, highlighting its provinces and major tourist attractions, a design choice aligned with usability principles to help non-local users understand the larger context before exploring regional details.

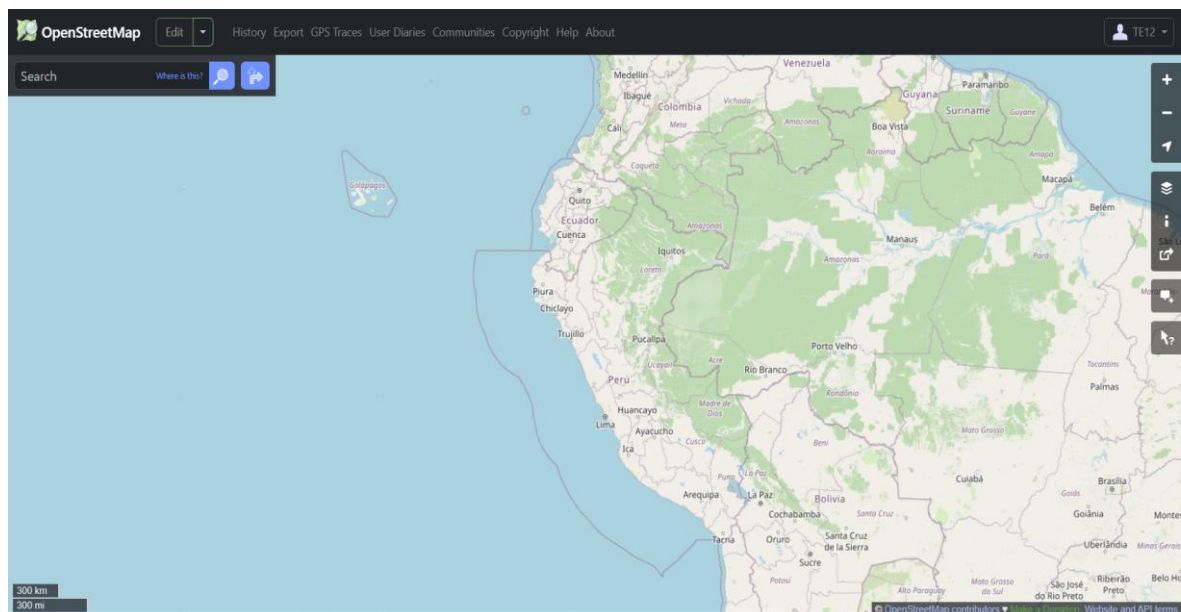


Figure 4. Place search page

Domain Layer

The domain layer defines the business logic and the core entities of the system. It models the relationships between users, tourist destinations, and comments, as well as the processes executed on them, such as calculating review averages or associating locations with destinations.

Functional Requirements

Table 1. Functional requirements table.

Item	Name	Description
RF1	Login Registration	Register tourist or login tourist and administrator
RF2	Visualization of tourist sites	The web page should allow users to view a list of the different tourist sites available
RF3	Tourist detail page	Describe the place, estimated cost, comment or review and recommended dates.
RF4	Comment or review system	Read other comments from other tourists and write your own comments
RF5	Contact form	The site must have a contact form to resolve doubts or receive suggestions.
RF6	Search and Filtering	Total resort cost and season appropriate
RF7	Content Management	Add new tourist sites, edit description, costs and ideal dates, and delete inappropriate reviews or comments.

Use Cases

Figure 5 represents a use case diagram that models the main interactions of the Tourist actor with the web platform. The functionalities considered include: registering the tourist, viewing the list of tourist places, searching for a destination, writing comments or reviews, estimating the cost of visiting a place, and reading others' opinions. The use of include and extend relationships allows for the representation of modularity and process reuse. This model facilitates understanding of the functional requirements from the user's perspective, contributing to a design focused on enhancing the digital tourism experience.

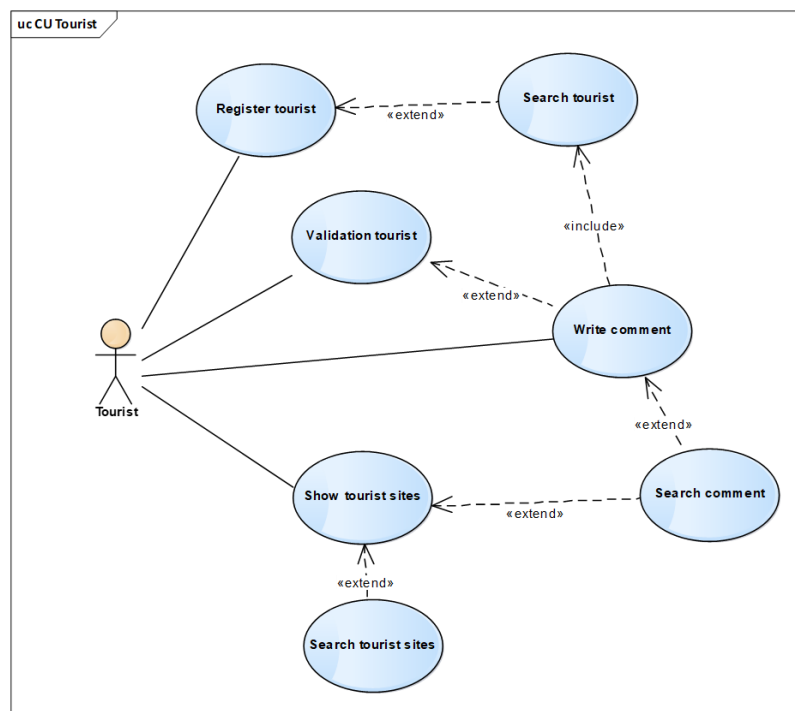


Figure 5. Use Case Diagram of the Tourist on the Web Platform

Class Model

Figure 6 shows the class model of the tourism system, where the Tourist can register Reviews for a Tourist Site, which include a rating, comment, and recommendation. Each site is associated with a single Location, and the reviews allow the calculation of an Average Rating. This model organizes the interaction between tourists, destinations, and evaluations within the platform.

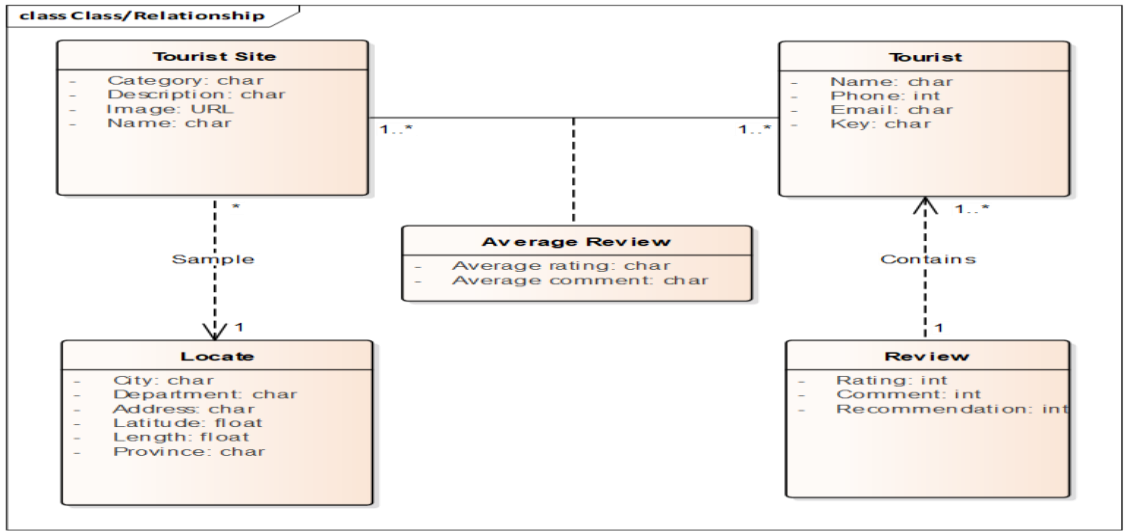


Figure 6. Domain Diagram

Entity-Relationship Model

Figure 7 presents the logical entity-relationship model of the tourism system, in which a tourist can register one or more comments linked to different tourist destinations. Each destination has attributes such as name, description, location, cost, season, and images, and is associated with a single category. Comments include content, date, and rating, allowing the assessment of user experiences. This model facilitates the structured management of tourists, destinations, and reviews within the platform.

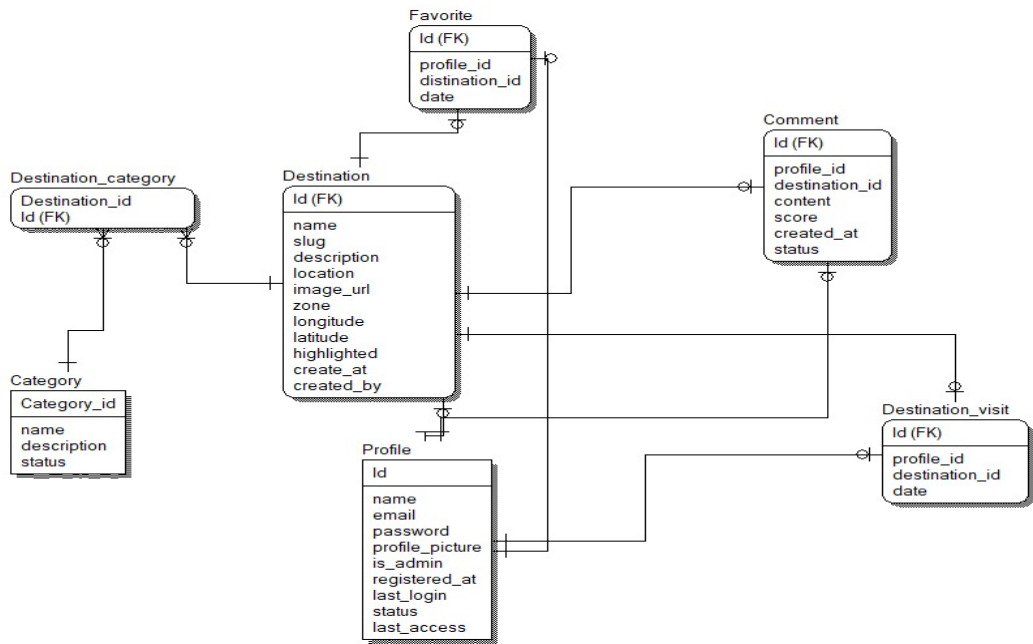


Figure 7. Entity-Relationship Diagram

Persistence Layer

The persistence layer is responsible for storing and retrieving information. It manages the database and ensures that system data –such as users, destinations, and comments– is properly preserved and can be efficiently queried.

Database

Figure 8 shows the database model of the tourism system, in which entities such as users, destinations, comments, visits, and favorites are managed. Destinations are classified by category, and each user can interact with them by leaving comments, logging visits, or marking them as favorites. This structure efficiently organizes both the tourism information and the users' activity within the platform.

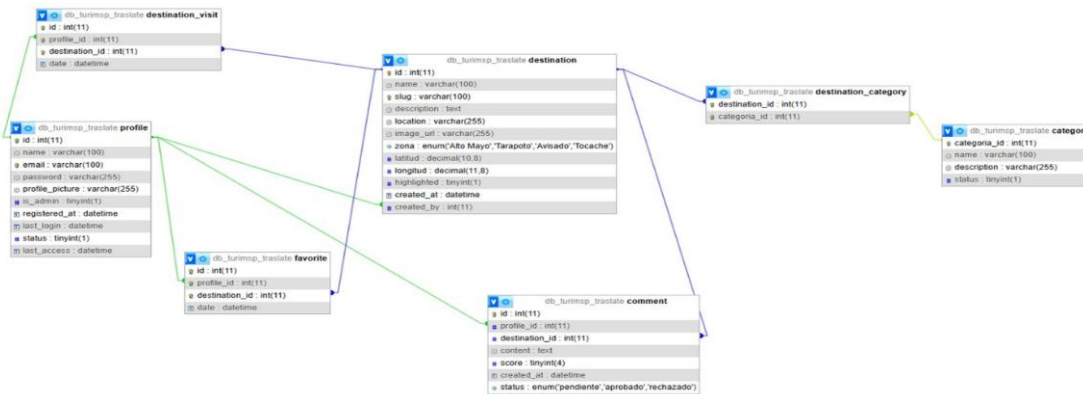


Figure 8. Database

Class Diagram

Figure 9 shows the system's class diagram, where a tourist can register reviews for tourist sites. Each review includes a rating, comment, and recommendation. Sites are linked to a location and also to an overall average rating. The classes define key methods such as registration, validation, and management of tourism information and comments, representing the platform's core functionalities.

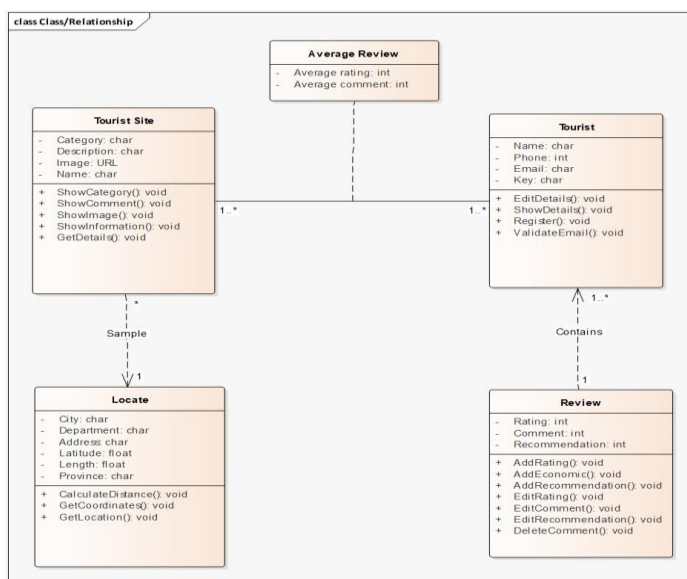


Figure 9. Class Diagram

3. Results and discussion

As part of the development of the Getting to Know San Martín platform, various functional prototypes were designed to represent the visual and operational structure of the proposed system. Three key modules are described below: the main interface, the search and filtering system, and the user registration process. These preliminary designs were created using principles of usability, accessibility, and visual aesthetics to enhance the digital visitor experience. In future phases, a navigable prototype will be implemented to enable testing with real users.

Website Interface Prototype

The main page is characterized by a modern design, with a top menu that includes the sections “HOME”, “DESTINATIONS”, and “LOGIN”. A central banner with the message “Discover the magic of San Martín” invites users to explore the region. Below that, the “Featured Destinations” section highlights the main tourist attractions using visual cards and includes a prominent button labeled “EXPLORE DESTINATIONS” to encourage interaction.

Getting to know San Martín

HOME DESTINATIONS LOGIN



Figure 10. Prototype Web page interface

Search and Filtering Module

This module allows users to filter destinations by location (e.g., Alto Mayo, Tarapoto, Tocache, etc.) or by theme (nature, culture, adventure). Each destination is presented in cards that display an image and a brief description. The filtering system is collapsible and user-friendly, enhancing the planning experience for tourists.

Getting to know San Martín

HOME DESTINATIONS LOGIN



Figure 11. Search and filtering module prototype

User Registration

The registration form includes the following required fields: full name, email address, password (minimum 8 characters), and confirmation. The heading “Create New Account” is clear and direct, and a secondary link is provided for existing users: “Already have an account? Login here”. The design is clean, functional, and follows best practices in user experience, ensuring a secure and intuitive registration process.

Getting to know San Martin

Figure 12. User registration prototype

Preliminary Validation

Although the prototype has not yet been tested with real users, an internal evaluation was conducted based on criteria such as navigability, accessibility, and informational clarity. The system is expected to enable more efficient tourism planning, particularly by centralizing information that is currently scattered. Menus, filters, and forms were designed to support interaction across different devices and levels of digital familiarity.

3.5 Development Timeline

The development of the platform is divided into four phases:

Table 2. Development timeline table

Phase	Estimated Period	Main Activities
Phase 1. Prototype Design	March – April 2025	Interface design, information architecture definition, content structuring, and initial internal validation.
Phase 2. Technical Development	May – June 15, 2025	Programming of core modules (frontend and backend), database implementation, component integration, and functional testing.
Phase 3. Initial Evaluation	June 16 – June 30, 2025	Technical review, functional adjustments, and validation based on usability and accessibility criteria.
Phase 4. Delivery Preparation	July 1 – July 13, 2025	Final article drafting, documentation of visual evidence, feedback collection, and structuring of the manuscript for submission.

These results enable progress toward a viable and sustainable technological solution aligned with the proposed objectives. The platform not only optimizes the tourist experience but also helps close information gaps and strengthen the digital management of regional heritage.

Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research emphasizing the increasing relevance of digital tools for enhancing tourism competitiveness, particularly in emerging destinations. As noted by Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015), digital platforms play a pivotal role in enabling destinations to provide personalized, real-time, and context-rich information to travelers. The results obtained here confirm this trend, showing that the integration of interactive maps, responsive design, and structured multimedia content offers a significant improvement over traditional static tourism portals.

The platform's emphasis on user experience and accessibility is consistent with Fernández-Cavia et al. (2014), who highlight that destination websites must not only deliver information but also ensure usability and engagement. The internal evaluation conducted in this study demonstrated that iterative improvements in navigability and accessibility contribute directly to user satisfaction and comprehension, supporting the argument that UX-centered design is essential for tourism websites.

Furthermore, the positive reception of the login feature indicates a shift toward more personalized digital tourism experiences. While Xiang and Gretzel (2010) point out that most destination websites privilege general information dissemination, the results of this research suggest that emerging destinations like San Martín can benefit from adopting more interactive and user-tailored functionalities. This aligns with the growing digital behavior of travelers, who increasingly seek tools that allow them to save preferences, build itineraries, and engage with localized content.

The map component of the platform also reinforces findings by Sigala (2018), who argues that geo-interactive elements enrich the decision-making process by reducing informational uncertainty. The evaluators' recommendations led to improvements in map usability and visual focus, demonstrating that interactivity is not only technologically valuable but also essential for user comprehension.

Overall, the contributions of this study lie in demonstrating that an interactive, UX-driven web platform can serve as an effective tool for strengthening the visibility and accessibility of an emerging tourism region. At the same time, the study fills a gap in the literature by applying web-design methodologies to a regional context that has received limited academic attention, while offering a replicable framework for similar destinations.

4. Conclusiones

This research showed that developing an interactive web platform based on an N-layer architecture and user-centered design is a suitable technical response to the current digital gap affecting the tourism offer of the San Martín region. The implementation of functional prototypes for the interface, search and filtering modules, user registration, and interactive maps made it possible to organize and display tourist attractions more clearly, supporting a flexible, map-based exploration of the available information. Preliminary results indicate that this proposal helps optimize the digital tourist experience, strengthens the destination's competitiveness, and aligns with sustainable tourism goals by promoting more equitable and professional access to tourism content. Moreover, the methodological approach used provides a replicable framework for other emerging regions seeking to integrate digital tools into their tourism management, opening future lines of work focused on incorporating advanced functionalities such as personalized recommendations, online booking, and real-time data analytics.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author contributions

Herald Gonzales-Saavedra, Kenjy Jesus Garcia-Hurtado, Carlos Akil Gallegos-Pinedo, and Rodrigo Enmanuel Tenazoa-Bardales participated in conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, resources, and visualization; Herald Gonzales-Saavedra also participated in software development; Kenjy Jesus Garcia-Hurtado and Dick Diaz-Delgado participated in methodology; and Dick Diaz-Delgado was responsible for project administration, supervision, validation, writing the original draft, and reviewing and editing the manuscript.

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