



CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue on Digital Nomadism

Guest editors:

Inge Hermann and Cody Morris Paris

- Short abstracts should be submitted no later than April 15th, 2019
- Full papers should be submitted no later than September 15th, 2019

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Background

While Tsugio Makimoto and David Manners already published their future-looking manifesto *Digital Nomads* in 1997, only recently we have seen the rapid expansion of digital nomadism as a new and revolutionary lifestyle movement. Although it is difficult to identify any specific number of digital nomads, rough estimations are up to 4.8 million in the United States alone (MBO 2018). Information about digital nomads is also on the rise: for example, a Google.com search in January 2019 generated over 1,300,000 results, including a variety of online news feeds, websites, blog posts, tutorials and other sites promoting travelling the globe while working remotely as something everyone *can* or, as some state, *should* act on.

The urge to be “location independent” is often associated with a search for (personal) freedom, adventure and an escape from the traditional work environment (Muller 2016; Reichenberger 2018; Sutherland and Jarrahi 2017). While nomadic workers typically travel *by* their work, digital nomads travel *while* working and, therefore, instead of moving merely between spaces and locations for work, digital nomads also have to be flexible around whatever spaces they find in the locations they choose to travel (Nash et al. 2018). As such, many digital nomads combine ‘perpetual’ leisure travelling with remote work, giving up their permanent house, employment and often provisions such as health care and pension schemes. In addition to being geographically mobile, digital nomads easily move between different jobs and positions in order to sustain their remote lifestyle. The increasing interrelation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into everyday have provided digital nomads with the professional flexibility and adaptability to select particular jobs based on their current situation (and location). Operating as freelancers or self-employed ‘internet entrepreneurs’, the majority works in tech-(supported) fields including web design, software engineering, computer programming, virtual assistance and language tutor.

Despite being portrayed as beach-bound laptop workers with high levels of self-reliance and minimal constraints, digital nomads greatly suffer from the precariousness, high risks and uncertainty that comes with the lifestyle. In an attempt to overcome these issues, many seek to be around (but not necessarily interact with) like-minded others in exotic locations around the globe, such as Chiang Mai, Medellin, Ubud and Phuket. In response, companies have started offering

(relatively) expensive, all-inclusive community settings such as co-living/co-working spaces, camps and cruises, providing digital nomads with a bubble-like comfortable, middle-class, Western environment in which visible social interactions can take place within any location around the globe, though excluding the local population and cultural contexts (Thompson 2018). These enclosed communities of practice, supported by a mixture of digital platforms, correspond with what brings and binds digital nomads together, namely (a sense of) “true freedom” through digital work, an extreme form of mobility and travel, and independence from organizations.

Topics of specific interest

Due to the novelty of digital nomadism, research has been scarce and fragmented (Schlagwein 2018), examining the emergence of digital nomadism as a lifestyle phenomenon (Reichenberger 2018), a personal consideration (Müller 2016; Nash et al. 2018) or a new way of working and organising (Thompson 2018). In this Special Issue, we aim to further address, explore, merge, or even critique, these perspectives to advance knowledge and understandings on the phenomenon of digital nomadism within and beyond the context of travel and tourism. The collective task of the contributors is to examine and debate current developments and issues (related to) digital nomadism through conceptual, theoretical, methodological and empirical insights which critically seek also to inform future actions in tourism research, policy making and daily practices. Important topics to be discussed evolve around (but are not limited to):

- Business and government responses
- Community and senses of belonging
- Identity constructions and meaning-making practices
- Enclave formations and structures
- Enabling and emerging technologies
- Future of work (digital work, gig work, mobile work, etc.)
- Digital Nomads and the Digital Divide
- Geographies and socialities

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- Thompson, BY (2018) The Digital Nomad Lifestyle: (Remote) Work/Leisure Balance, Privilege, and Constructed Community. *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-018-00030-y>

Schedule and Deadlines

- **Short abstracts and Expressions of Interest by April 15th, 2019.**
- **Full Papers are required no later than September 15th, 2019.**
- **Notification of outcome will be provided by november 15th, 2019.**
- **Final papers should be submitted by December 15th, 2019.**

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Any questions related to this special issue should be directed to:

Dr. Inge Hermann, Saxion University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands i.hermann@saxion.nl
Dr. Cody Morris Paris, Middlesex University, Dubai c.paris@mdx.ac.ae