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Economic Theory in the Digital Age: A Socio-Philosophical Analysis of Global Challenges and Opportunities

Olena Kabanova*

Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Logistics Management, Branch of the Classical Private University in Kremenchuk, Kremenchuk, Ukraine, https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9206-3995

Lyubov Lytvyn

Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Faculty of History, Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ternopil, Ukraine, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3850-6587

Andrii Varvus

PhD candidate, Ukraine, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4529-6223

Alla Meish

PhD in Economics, Associate Professor of the Khmelnytskyi National University, Ukraine, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6836-6904

Nataliia Pochernina

Candidate of Economic Sciences (PhD), Associate Professor at the Department of Economics and Business, Faculty of Economics and Business, Dmytro Motornyi Tavria State Agrotechnological University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6109-6099

***Corresponding author:** *desigura15@gmail.com.*

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Abstract: The growing integration of digital technologies into economic processes necessitates a philosophical and ideological reevaluation of economic theory. This study aims to justify the transformation of economic theory in the context of digitalisation, emphasising the need for a worldview and mental understanding of the digital economy. The research combines a dialectical approach — which views digitalisation as contradicting and reshaping existing economic laws — with a synergetic perspective that considers digital resources as complementary to productive, human, and financial capital. Findings confirm that digitalisation has deeply penetrated the foundations of economic theory, shaping its modern form. However, an information-digital singularity remains unlikely in the coming century. The study also highlights digital inequality, resulting from disparities in digital literacy, culture, and access among economic actors. Economic activity enhanced by artificial intelligence, neural networks, cloud storage, and cyber-management systems is now characterised by speed, scale, security, and diversity, contributing to innovative economic dynamics and sustainable development. The research emphasises the importance of integrating digital factors into existing theoretical frameworks, including the circular economy, platform economy, and economic-ecological systems. A promising direction is the development of a synergistic model that considers digitalisation as a catalyst for harmony among economic components and as a foundation for a human-centred socio-economic environment. The study's novelty lies in the philosophical interpretation of digitalisation as a transformative force in economic theory. It argues for a balance between pragmatic economic principles and ethical human standards, warning against risks such as inequality, inefficiency, and ideological distortion. By grounding digital economy concepts in philosophical reflection, the study contributes to both theoretical advancement and practical understanding of digital-era economics.

Keywords: digital inequality, social responsibility, technocracy, information society, innovative technologies, digital transformation.

Introduction

Each cultural-historical epoch has shaped its paradigm of socio-economic life. Economic theory, in turn, has provided professional characterisations of the fundamental dimensions of economic activity. The current stage of civilisational development is increasingly associated with the information-digital segment. Therefore, economic theory today stands on the verge of transformation by new realities and the demands of societal development. The information society highlights innovative digital tools that ensure and support economic relations (Levin & Mamlok, 2021). The digital era is gradually transforming traditional principles of economic, production, or commercial activity, giving rise to new economic models that require systematisation within modern economic theory. The relevance of this research lies in the inevitability of creating a digital economic ecosystem, which will require theoretical and methodological support (Horoshko et al., 2021).

Currently, there is a growing uncertainty of a philosophical and ideological nature, as there is no clear strategy for the new positioning of economic theory. On the one hand, the digital era has created a new instrumental-functional system of societal space, which should result in a new economic model (with new characteristics of economic theory). On the other hand, the philosophical interpretation of the digital element in the modern socio-cultural space

is predominantly pragmatic-instrumental in nature, which permits consideration of economic theory within its existing framework. L. Williams (2021) formulated a dichotomy in modern economic theory, which boils down to the relationship between the digital economy and the digital segment of the (traditional) economy. These realities create academic gaps in characterising key elements of economic activity within a theoretically substantiated format. The concept of resources as the foundation of economic theory is under the total influence of the digital paradigm, necessitating a new positioning of human, production, and financial capital.

The novelty of the research lies in the idea of a philosophical-synergetic approach within economic theory, which envisages the dominance of the principle of interaction over the principle of dichotomy. Consequently, fundamental antagonists of economic life, under the influence of the digital factor (which effectively acts as an attractor of the synergetic space), are gradually taking on a character of concordance. These transformations of fundamental economic concepts require regulation primarily on a worldview and mental level. Therefore, the philosophical comprehension of the new dimensions of economic theory comes down to recording and explaining the development of the economy under new socio-cultural conditions.

The international academic and economic community is actively studying the dynamics of digital advancement in economic life. In particular, the digital economy is acquiring a civilisational and evolutionary dimension in the context of the Industry 4.0 concept (Fernandez-Escobedo, Eguía-Peña & Aldaz-Odriozola, 2024). In turn, Rachmad (2024) emphasises the need to shape appropriate behaviour and perception formats for new digital economic realities.

This study aims to assess the current state of economic theory and the necessity for updating its fundamental principles. The philosophical and ideological characteristics of economic theory have a fundamental influence on socio-economic life on global, local, and individual levels. The specifics of the functioning of the economy are a subject of research within the economic community. However, from a cultural-historical perspective, the issue of translating the economic model to the broader public (which predominantly lacks deep economic knowledge) has always remained relevant. Therefore, one of the aspects of economic theory is the development of mechanisms for explaining economic realities and standards to meet societal demand. This translation of the principles of economic theory to the public cannot be carried out exclusively in the language of economics; thus, sociological, cultural, psychological, and philosophical aspects are actively involved in this process to facilitate better understanding.

This defines the topic of the current scholarly exploration, in which economic theory is considered through the lens of socio-cultural development realities. At the same time, philosophy serves as a familiar tool for interpreting contradictions in the context of modern digital advancement. To achieve the objectives of the present study, an appropriate type of research is proposed, based on the principles of writing a qualitative article employing philosophical reflection on the problem.

Research Problem

The modern scientific and economic discourse faces the need to rethink economic theory in the context of integrating the digital dimension into fundamental economic concepts. Digitalisation is a process that not only transforms the economy but also reshapes the principles of influence in the contemporary world. While traditional models of economic life focused on the dichotomy between centralisation and the freedom of economic processes, the innovative subject matter of economic theory now emphasises the impact of the information-digital factor on social relations in general and economic activity in particular. The latest studies reveal the practical consequences of economic digitalisation, which pose significant risks of increasing socio-economic inequality (Baffour Gyau, Li & Appiah, 2025) and technological divides in the spheres of production and services (Adam et al., 2025).

Research Aim and Research Questions

The article aims to analyse the philosophical dimensions of economic theory and to explore the impact of digital transformation on the fundamental elements of economic activity. The objectives of the scholarly inquiry focus on identifying the digital potential within the modern economy's paradigm and positioning digitalisation within the economic system's processes. The expected results of the study are the formulation of philosophical-synergetic guidelines, which should serve as the theoretical and methodological foundation for a new digital economic paradigm.

The working hypothesis of the research suggests the necessity of moving away from the traditional positivist approach to interpreting economic theory, advocating instead for the timely integration of the technological and digital dimensions into the future economic paradigm.

The key research question of the article focuses on understanding the degree of digitalisation's influence on contemporary economic processes, from the format of digital support for the economy to the transformation of the traditional economic model into a digital one. In the practical dimension, the core issues that define the role of digitalisation include the following aspects:

- Economic (the transformation of the concepts of labour, ownership, and value in the digital age).
- Socio-economic dimension (challenges and threats posed by the digital economy to society).
- Ethical in scope (value-oriented and goal-driven principles for the formation of a new economic theory).

Materials and Methods

The methodological toolkit employed in the present study is oriented towards a philosophical analysis of the digital potential within the paradigm of economic theory. A comparative analysis is conducted between the dialectical and synergetic approaches in defining the fundamental laws of economic theory. The dialectical approach conceptualises economic development as a result of the confrontation between various organisational and institutional dimensions of this field of societal activity. The synergetic method focuses on

establishing principles of correlation among the fundamental theories of economic development. Through theoretical and worldview-based modelling, the key drivers of the economy in the digital age and their status within the economic system are identified.

Criteria for source selection:

- Keywords: digitalisation, digital economy, innovative economic theory, ethics of the digital economy, digital divides, digital inequality, philosophy of the economy of the future;
- Timeframe: scholarly works from 2020–2025 (excluding fundamental works from the turn of the 20th–21st centuries that outline the foundational principles of the digital economy);
- Scientific platforms: Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, ResearchGate.

Sources for the current study were selected according to academic standards of reliability from peer-reviewed scientific publications. Relevant characteristics were taken into account, particularly those directly related to the issue of developing economic theory in the digital age. At the same time, through the principles of interdisciplinarity, the study establishes guidelines for a synergistic model of the economic paradigm within the digital space.

In the process of literature selection, works lacking scientific justification, those driven by purely technological-digital trends, or those incorporating elements of science fiction were excluded. Additionally, due to the chosen analytical timeframe (2020–2025), early 20th-century works were excluded from the search—except for fundamental economic ideas and schools of thought—because of their moral obsolescence and the need to reflect the development of the digital economy in light of its dynamic nature.

The analytical cluster of the research was implemented using several key methodological approaches: content analysis (for systematising the scientific-economic discourse on the development of the digital economy); thematic and historical-logical analysis (to identify key elements of experience, current state, and prospects for economic theory in the digital era); discourse analysis and comparative analysis (to determine the problematic and debated aspects of economic theory development in the context of the digital environment's dynamics).

The criteria of validity align with the conventional principles for analytical scientific research: conceptual focus, methodological relevance, critical reflexivity, and heuristic significance. It is essential to note that these elements have been applied in both the context of interpreting sustainable economic development and addressing the dynamic nature of innovative (digital) economic advancement.

Results

Theoretical Foundations of Economic Thought

Since antiquity, the issue of human economic activity has been a subject of reflection and ideas among thinkers of the time. The philosophical interpretation of the science of household management, governance, and property had a practical-applied significance. It was not distinguished from the general worldview issues addressed by philosophers. At the same time, concepts such as property, activity, and governance became the foundation for the formation

of the fundamentals of economic theory. However, the most significant contribution to the development of economic theory was the formation of two opposing views on societal activity: one paradigm argued for strict vertical control (by the state, authority, leadership, etc.), while the other advocated for self-organised development at the horizontal level. These perspectives underpinned the formation of two fundamental ideas in economic theory: mercantilism (a managed economy) and physiocracy (a free economy).

During the era of modern European philosophy, based on the accumulated experience of human civilisation in management, production, and trade, economic science began to emerge as a systematised body of knowledge interpreting one of the fundamental spheres of social activity. The founder of economic theory, Adam Smith (2024), identified the key dimensions of economic theory that defined its institutional and functional characteristics within the context of cultural and historical epochs. Resources constitute a fundamental parameter of economic theory, consisting of three main elements: material-production, human, and financial. These components shape economic activity, determining the value- and goal-oriented characteristics of economic theory. The philosophical and ideological understanding of this economic structure necessitated a departure from the traditionally vertical organisation of economic processes and the actualisation of the horizontal dimensions of the economy.

Economic activity was interpreted at the practical-object level of microeconomics, considering direct production, economic management, or trade. In another perspective, a model of economic governance was proposed, assigning appropriate roles to the state and owners. This led to a lack of understanding of the economy's functioning as "an economy per se" with its laws and standards, and as part of socio-cultural activity, interacting with politics, culture, and religion.

Smith, who referred to economics as "political economy," was among the first to distinguish between the roles of economically active participants at the macro and micro levels, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of this sphere of societal activity (Smith, 2024). From that moment, economics acquired a full-fledged socio-cultural status, requiring a corresponding public understanding of its foundations. J. Robinson highlighted the dichotomy of "a constant struggle between economics as a science and economics as an ideology" (Robinson, 2021), laying the groundwork for the worldview and mental substantiation of economic theory. A separate section of economic theory emerged as the cluster of the economic theory of culture (Bisin & Verdier, 2023).

The acquisition of socio-cultural status by economic theory immediately brought into focus philosophical and ideological guidelines for its characterisation within the framework of social order. This was of great institutional and methodological significance, as from that point onwards, economic theory was considered not only in the context of economic, production, and trade dimensions, but also gained social weight, addressing anthropological and moral-ethical issues. A significant transformation occurred in the justification of the economy, from a purely goal-oriented to a value- and goal-oriented dimension.

The 19th–20th century period was marked by the emergence of several economic schools that complemented existing economic theory in response to new conditions of socio-economic development. However, the shift toward value-and-goal-based foundations of economic theory did not allow for the elimination of the human dimension, nor a focus solely on specific

economic indicators. Every economic component henceforth acquired a fundamental economic character and was simultaneously interpreted from both a societal and individual perspective. For example, economic definitions such as value and productivity (Duque Garcia, 2022) acquired anthropological characteristics, as they shape not only economic theory but also substantiate the status of the "economic human."

At the same time, findings from contemporary scientific and economic discourse indicate the positive impact of the digital economy on total factor productivity (TFP) (Pan et al., 2022). Modern information theory proposes new variations for calculating value (Vuong & Nguyen, 2024), fundamentally altering the existing economic essence of this indicator.

Such transformations in economic theory have deep-rooted philosophical foundations, as society during this period was undergoing another anthropological shift on a global scale. Philosophy thus sought to reconcile the dynamics of economic development with the human-centred essence of this domain. Drawing parallels, contemporary philosophical thought is generating similar anthropologising ideas in response to the large-scale and intensive digitalisation of the economic sphere.

The early modern era also challenged economic theory with a similarly all-encompassing and overwhelming process of industrialisation. It was compelled to develop human-centred principles to preserve the humanistic and ethical standards of societal development, which were at risk of being marginalised from the socio-civilisational agenda.

Avoiding an anti-humanistic scenario in economic development is the key task of the philosophical community, which has historically served to establish barriers against the risks of unchecked economic principles dominating societal standards of ethics and morality. In the context of the present study, which examines the impact of digital potential on the development of the economy within social life, the application of the value-and-goal-oriented principle in assessing this field of activity allows for a comprehensive characterisation of the realities and prospects of the digital economy concept.

The Digital Age as a Challenge to the Traditional Economic Paradigm

Economic theory in the digital age has evolved, as the fundamental characteristics of key elements of economic development have been shaped by digitalisation, leading to their transformation. Productive, human, and financial resources have been reinterpreted within the framework of economic theory in the digital era.

One of the main components of economic theory transformed under the influence of digitalisation is the concept of "labour" (Ehrenberg, Smith & Hallock, 2021). Traditional understandings of labour as physical (and later intellectual) activity began to lose their original meaning during the industrial age when machines replaced manual labour. In the age of digital technologies, labour has become even further removed from human activity, as the use of robotic systems, information technologies, and INTERNET platforms allows not only for the elimination of physical labour but also for the reduction of human intellectual effort previously required for planning and constant control over technological processes. Modern software that effectively manages technological operations eliminates the need for active human involvement in production or trade.

Economic theory in the digital age promotes the trend of “dematerialisation”, which applies to key dimensions of economic activity—production processes, value, and even capital (Chaisuwan, 2021). The digital world gradually, yet systematically, shifts capital from the conventional gold-currency dimension to the format of electronic assets. Advancing the idea of the dematerialisation of the economy requires digital tools that ensure the functioning of economic life. Among the key digital elements used in the digital economy model are:

- Artificial intelligence (Kampouridis et al., 2022);
- Big data;
- Digital money;
- Cloud technologies;
- Digital management systems;
- Cyber systems of business model 4.0 (Chen & Huang, 2023).

In the context of the digitalisation of economic life, a specific segment has gained relevance — the "platform economy" (Acs et al., 2021). From a professional economic standpoint, the concept of the platform economy does not significantly differ from classical economic models. The key parameter of a platform is ensuring the functioning of economic activity by organising data and commands that guarantee the efficiency of this process. In contrast, the philosophical and worldview interpretation of the platform economy suggests the emergence of a qualitatively new economic ecosystem (Gawer, 2021), characterised by an informational-digital and technological mode of structuring economic activity (Aksoy, 2023). The Harmel and Buchynska (2025) emphasise that digital transformation not only reshapes the technological infrastructure of the media market but also generates new models of responsibility, interaction, and trust within society. This aspect can be translated into the field of economic theory by demonstrating that the digital-age economy requires not only technical innovation but also a rethinking of the social and ethical mechanisms of market regulation.

The material-production cluster of economic resources has also changed, and its transformation has impacted economic development models. Classical economic guidelines were based on quantitative indicators and qualitative characteristics. The digital resource has supplemented this traditional format with informational support. Today, economic activity is being redirected toward informational and digital data, which has become the calling card of any product or process. Simultaneously, the process of informational-digital description has led to the formation of a new type of capital—data that describes economic activity.

The Socio-Philosophical Dimension of Digital Economic Transformations

A detailed analysis of the principles of the digital economy indicates the inevitable transformation of the socio-economic cluster, as the traditional social structure concerning economic activity reveals changes in the role and status of the individual as an economically active unit.

Social differentiation caused by economic parameters has become a key issue in economic theory. Virtually every economic model implies social inequality in various proportions or interpretations. The establishment of market relations as the basis of modern economic theory ultimately consolidated the principles of social inequality on a global civilisational scale (Crary, 2022). With the introduction of digital economy elements, a pertinent question has arisen: will

socio-economic inequality be preserved, intensified, or mitigated? Some studies suggest that digital tools can help balance the social sphere (Gloria-Palermo, Boettke, & Bohm, 2003).

The philosophical and worldview analysis of this issue reveals the emergence of a new type: digital inequality. Digital inequality is driven by a range of factors that are critical in the integration process into the digital economy:

- Uneven access to digital infrastructure (Chinoracky & Corejova, 2021);
- Varied levels of digital literacy (Koskelainen et al., 2023);
- High turbulence of digital economic assets.
- Uncertainty in the algorithms for developing the digital economy.

Overall, digital inequality does not align with the classical understanding of social status, but instead defines the degree of access to the digital potential of the economy, the ability to utilise digital tools in economic activity, and the absence of established moral and ethical standards for evaluating the digital economy. The digital economy has the potential to eliminate digital divides in society (Ding et al., 2022), which would be a step toward addressing broader social inequalities.

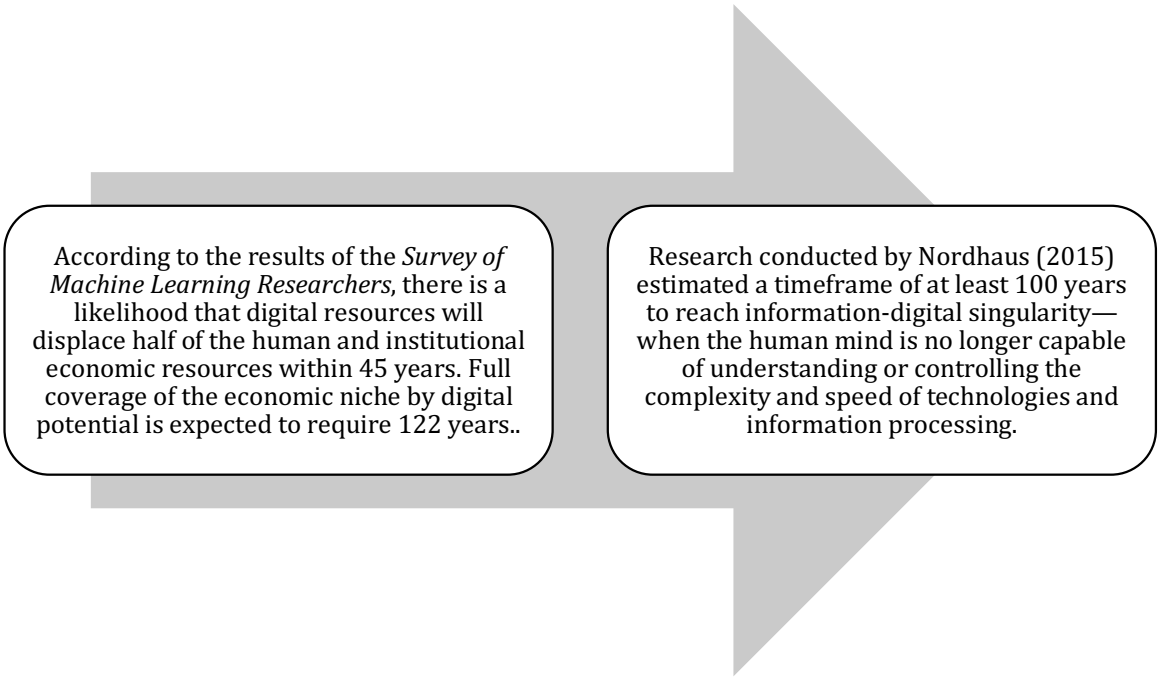
The Issue of Identity in the Digital Economy Paradigm

The issue of identity plays a crucial role in the digital economy paradigm. Humans have always played a key role in the economic system. Since the emergence of the "economic man" concept, their identity within the system of economic activity has been defined by fundamental characteristics. However, the digital age has gradually initiated the process of blurring traditional traits of human identity within the economic paradigm. Instead, a new process has emerged—the formation of a digital identity of economic activity. In this context, information has become the basis for identifying the economic laws and processes characteristic of modern economic theory. Digital data of economic indicators has become a new source of information that identifies human activity in the economic sphere. Humans are effectively transformed into a set of economic activity data, encompassing elements of labour, production, consumption, and levels of general engagement in economic processes, as well as specific manifestations of economic activity.

In this context, forecasts made by scholars under the auspices of the OECD in 2021, within the framework of a study on the impact of artificial intelligence on the labour market, are highly relevant. These forecasts were based on the dynamics of digitalisation processes. The average indicators obtained over a 100-year horizon (Fig. 1) cast doubt on the potential for revolutionary transformations in economic theory under the influence of digital potential.

Figure 1

Expert Forecasts on the Attainment of a Dominant Status by Digital Resources in the Economic Sphere



Source: Nordhaus (2015), Grace et al. (2017)

At the same time, society and individuals are acquiring powerful mechanisms for improving economic activity. The development of digital thinking is becoming one of the key priorities for the actor within the digital economy (Hensellek, 2020). Another tool of economic theory in the digital environment is the behavioural model of traditional economics (Ramon Saura et al., 2020), or the format of an alternative "behavioural economics" (Hansen & Presskorn-Thygesen, 2021).

With the new realities of identification in the digital economy, innovative algorithms for the information-digital support of economic activity are emerging. The digital portfolio in the modern socio-cultural space is being developed for virtually all types of human activity. The economic digital portfolio is also becoming one of the key indicators of a person's economic identity within the economic paradigm.

The New Ethics of the Digital Economy: Value, Labour, Ownership

The active integration of innovative digital components into economic theory creates the need for new ethical guidelines to regulate societal progress in this area of activity. The all-encompassing influence of the digital factor is transforming traditional perceptions of the fundamental elements of economic life. Under these circumstances, the need arises for a philosophical and worldview-based alignment of the new formats and meanings of economic theory.

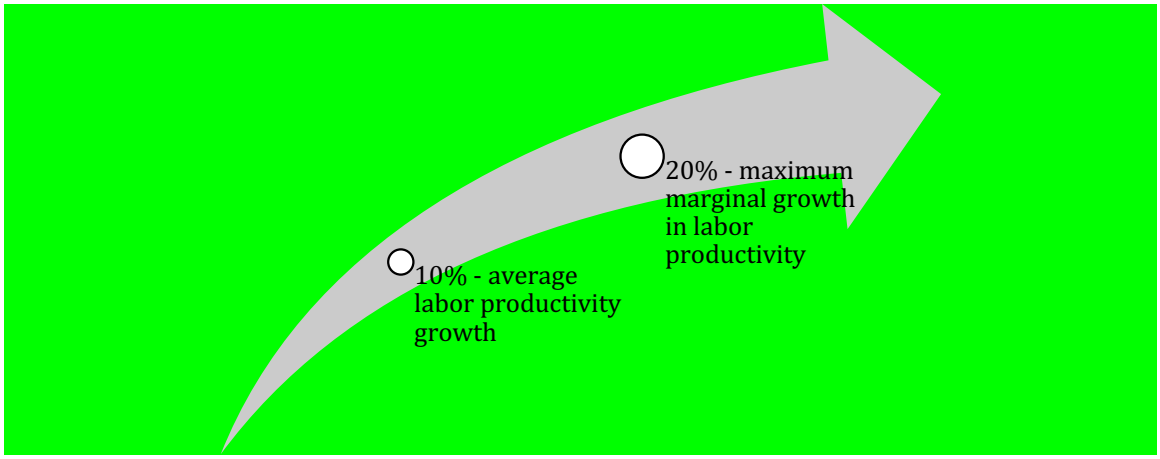
The concept of pragmatism is dominant in the modern worldview of social development. Under these conditions, economic processes are focused on achieving results and enhancing

the efficiency of all economic activities. Digitalisation repeatedly demonstrates its positive role in supporting and enabling a pragmatically oriented economic paradigm. In this context, the issue of ethical norms and regulations becomes increasingly relevant, as these will serve as safeguards against inhumane and immoral manifestations of economic activity.

The economy operates under internal laws and norms that must be aligned with the general rules and standards of societal life. As statistical data show, digitalisation of the economy meets the criteria of a pragmatic approach to the contemporary worldview (see Fig. 2), ensuring a significant increase in labour productivity—one of the key indicators of economic performance. In 2019, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) assessed the growth rate of the Eurozone economy, taking into account the impact of digitalisation from 2015 to 2019.

Figure 2

Labour Productivity Growth Rate with the Use of Digital Tools in the Economy



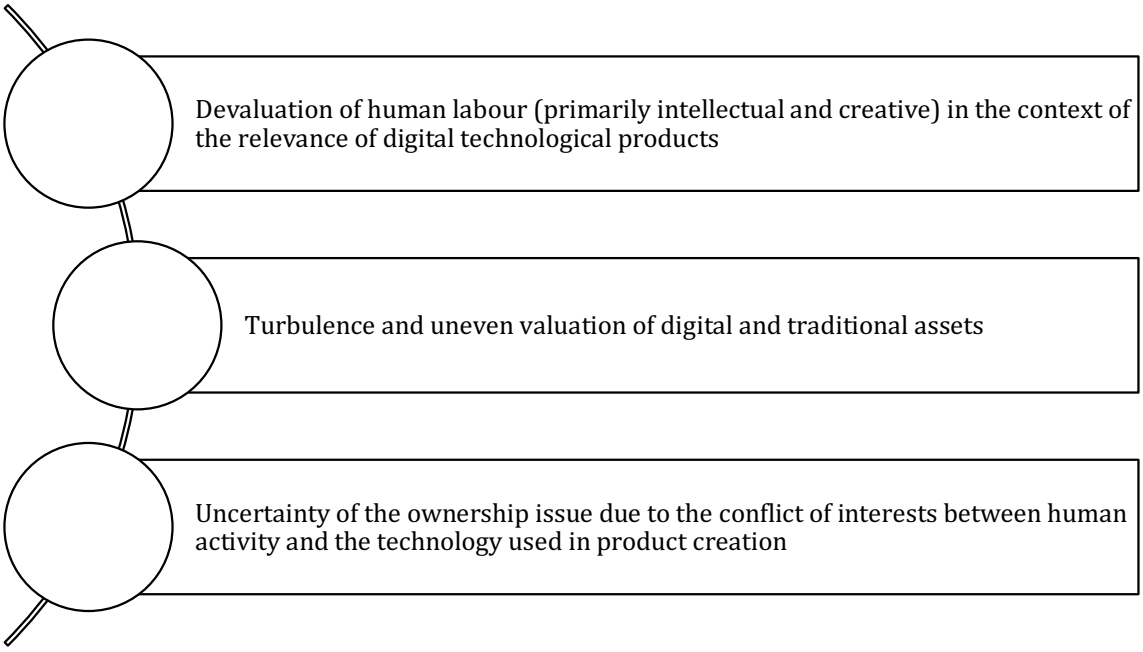
Source: *Gal et al. (2019).*

However, as cultural and historical experience shows, economic processes require additional control regarding compliance with ethical norms. For example, the initial accumulation of capital in the capitalist world involved coercion, restriction, and exploitation, which are poorly tolerated by moral and ethical standards. Therefore, society faced a dilemma of expediency: on the one hand, the need to establish the foundations for the then-progressive capitalist economic order, and on the other, the necessity to uphold moral and ethical values.

A similar situation is observed in the modern digital economic paradigm. The digital space is characterised by a high level of functionality and efficiency, making it an attractive model for organising economic activity. At the same time, digital mechanisms pose several potential threats concerning adherence to universal human values (Fig. 3).

Figure 3

Digital Threats to the Value Dimension of the Economy



Source: Author's compilation

Digital tools significantly expand the horizon of human capabilities in the context of economic activity. This gives rise to new powers that require regulation. The author of the concept of responsibility, H. Jonas, proposes a simple algorithm which states that as human capabilities and powers expand due to technology, the scope of responsibility for the acquired potential must be proportionally extended, forming an "ethics of technology" (Jonas, 2014). The essence of responsibility in the context of the digital economy is the combination of traditional mechanisms of control and regulation of economic processes with digital tools of ethical standards.

Relevant to this sphere of economic activity is the concept of "surveillance capitalism." According to S. Zuboff, modern digital and information technologies are a kind of lens capable of revealing the content and format of economic problems and prospects (Zuboff, 2015). However, surveillance is a passive form, and the dynamic nature of contemporary socio-economic development requires active tools that involve the use of information in economic activity. The operational model of Big Tech is an example of economic progress within the framework of digital activity (Petit, 2020).

The digital age, in the ideas of contemporary thinkers, presents an acceptable environment for the implementation of justice and its economic interpretation — specifically, the socially just distribution of wealth in society. John Rawls proposes a new approach to addressing the socio-economic dimension of justice, which lies in maintaining a balance between two principles: the principle of liberty and the principle of difference (Rawls, 1971). In this respect, the role of digital tools becomes essential: by operating with informational data, they are capable of verifying the concept of justice. Previous attempts to realise the principles of justice have failed in everyday practice because society lacked practical tools for monitoring

and ensuring their observance. Modern technologies and digital potential can now, practically in real-time, process vast and intensive flows of economic information, allowing developed algorithms to determine whether the principles of justice are upheld in the course of economic activity.

Digital economy development strategies include several elements that are either already being implemented or remain promising theories. Among the practical solutions for the digitalisation of the economy, T. Sturgeon (2021) highlights: modularity, open innovation, and the platform economy. The results of the present study confirm this.

A promising direction for the development of digital technologies within the economic paradigm of the future is their integration into existing innovative models of traditional economics, particularly in:

- The sustainable development economy, where a holistic philosophical approach to the use of digital potential prevails (Hariram et al., 2023);
- The circular economy, where the intellectual component supported by digitalisation becomes a factor in the development of a regenerative economy (Velenturf & Purnell, 2021);
- The unified "new" economy, based on social responsibility and intellectual activity, both of which require digital support (Choong & Leung, 2022);
- The ecological economic paradigm, which involves coexistence with the natural environment (Ouyang, Guan & Yu, 2023), with digitalisation acting as a safeguard against predatory economic models (Massenberg, Hansjürgens & Lienhoop, 2023);
- The constructive economy, with the active use of digital software (Myers, 2022);
- The informal economy, for which digital mechanisms are virtually the only tools capable of analysing the content and characteristics of "informal economic units" (Dell'Anno, 2022);
- The engagement economy (Rachmad, 2023), which focuses on diversifying the economic space and revitalising the activity of economic actors.

Discussion

The modern paradigm of economic theory creates new opportunities for rethinking within the digital dimensions of the 21st century. The new realities of the socio-cultural space lay the groundwork for new value- and goal-oriented guidelines for economic development. The present study reveals the key contradictions arising in the process of establishing the digital dimension of economic theory.

The scale and intensity of digital technologies' implementation into practical economic life necessitate a re-evaluation of the content and format of economic theory within academic and economic discourse. The core of the debate surrounding digitalisation lies in the positioning of the status of digital potential in economic processes. Two primary schools of thought have emerged in this context: the conservative-traditionalist and the innovative-liberal, each interpreting the role of digitalisation in the new paradigm of economic theory differently. Both approaches recognise the fundamental relevance of the digital economy at the current stage, while offering differing interpretations of the scale of digital potential.

To clearly understand both perspectives, it is important to analyse the influence of digital resources on individual components of economic life. A key aspect of the modern understanding of economic theory is the differentiation between macroeconomics and microeconomics. This allows for a distinction between the strategic-global dimension of economic processes and the situational-practical manifestations of the economy. The informational-digital space ensures the identification and separation of practical economic realities from the theoretical and ideological positioning of long-term economic theory itself. Carbaugh (2024), using the example of short-term microeconomic system deficit formation, points to the balancing dynamics of supply and demand. In this context, the fundamental components of economic theory do not shape, but rather reflect the economic paradigm. Meanwhile, macroeconomics in the modern world reacts immediately to imbalances in key elements, leading to instability, crises, and a recognition of flaws in the current economic course.

Support for the working hypothesis of the study — the need to go beyond the positivist interpretation of economic theory — can be found in the concept of libertarianism, which gained significant popularity within the economic community through the ideas of the Austrian School of Economics. One of its main tasks was the development of a mechanism for addressing the uncertainty of economic processes influenced by dynamic socio-cultural factors. Friedrich von Hayek famously asserted that the main task of economics is "to show people how little they know about what they imagine they can design" (von Hayek, 1989). Hayek's approach became a theoretical foundation for the new theoretical-economic paradigm and initiated a shift from postmodern philosophical trends towards attempts to structure self-organising processes in the economy synergistically. Economic neoliberalism is gradually distancing itself from postmodernist ideas of Foucault, identifying the ethical dimension as one of the fundamental aspects of economic activity (van Wijk, 2021). Digital ethics is forming value-based guidelines for economic relations that simultaneously operate within both the economic and digital realms.

However, some scholars dispute the prospects of digital ethics in economic theory, instead relying on institutional and human-centred shifts in social welfare brought about by digitalisation (Trittin-Ulbrich et al., 2020). Despite the lack of global data on the displacement of traditional actors and components of economic life by digital potential, socio-philosophical modelling indicates serious risks associated with digitalisation as a dominant element in the economy (D'Cruz et al., 2022).

Synergetic processes in the economy have become the primary philosophical and ideological trend in this sphere of social activity. The model of interaction and self-organisation enabled by digital technologies has become a valid driver of the post-capitalist socio-economic paradigm, which is centred around ecological (Dermody et al., 2021) and socially constructive activity (Nelson, 2024). One of the fundamental principles of the post-capitalist world is adherence to the principle of diversity (Cameron, 2022). The digital world is precisely the environment of diversity that is necessary for a post-capitalist model of economic activity.

A vivid example of a synergetic, self-organised model of economic relations in today's world is the concept of the "gig economy." The organisation of such a format of economic activity became possible thanks to the development of information and communication

technologies, which enabled stable connections between producers and consumers of goods, content, and so on (Tan et al., 2021). Without digital potential, this format would have remained at the level of self-employment and retained an individual character of economic activity. The digital space makes it possible to design a comprehensive economic model in which the work of freelancers is organised and systematised in all dimensions: productive, fiscal, and efficient.

The most debated aspect of the digital economy concerns social issues. The study analyses statistical data showing no critical indicators of digitalisation's impact on social presence in the economy. In other words, at this stage, the physical displacement of labour, capital, and resources by digital equivalents has not become decisive. However, the pace of integration of digital tools into economic life is accelerating rapidly, especially in the capital cluster, with the growing popularity of digital capital.

One of the key innovations in today's economy is the transformation of the resource management system, which is fundamental to this field of social activity. The digital model of resource management ensures the timely activation of economic life drivers, dictated by the dynamic changes in the socio-cultural space. Traditional management mechanisms are oriented towards the stability of the economic environment. Classical positions of economic mercantilism or physiocracy view resource management as either an administratively regulated or self-regulating process. In contrast, the digital nature of resource management provides tools that bring clarity and transparency to these processes in today's dynamic world. Zhang & Chen (2024), using the example of human resource management, demonstrate the advantages of the digital dimension in the modern economic system. When a technology or tool exists that can organise, systematise, or compute large datasets of macroeconomic indicators or variable parameters of microeconomics, economic theory gains a functional extension. Digital methods of economic complexity (Hidalgo, 2021) are intended to optimise the statistical domain of economic theory for the further organisation of large-scale economic data flows.

The dominance of the principle of interaction is reflected in socially oriented concepts. Notably, the principle of social solidarity presents an opportunity to revive a new post-active model of economic development (Marx, 2022). In this case, the ideas of Marxist social equality are continued, albeit without dogmatism — and with that, without utopianism. Solidarity is achieved through digital interaction and mutual monitoring, which can potentially equalise the opportunities available to participants in economic life.

Ultimately, modern research on the digitalisation of the economy is unified in its recognition of the significance of these processes for economic life. Thus, the global scale of the practical implementation of digital dimensions in economic processes creates the prerequisites for integrating this component into the paradigm of economic theory. At the same time, such integration is being realised through various scenarios and algorithms, each characterised by its specifics of responsiveness, intensity, and validity.

Conclusions and Implications

Thus, the socio-philosophical analysis of economic theory in the digital age identifies two fundamental directions for the development of economic life: an entirely innovative model of the digital economy, and the digital support of traditional economic formations. The positioning of the digital component within economic theory depends on the social indicator of digital

coverage and the involvement of economic actors in digital dimensions. At the same time, digitalisation introduces innovative characteristics to the fundamental resource elements of economic theory: material production, human capital (labour), and financial capital. In the socio-philosophical context, digital tools are forming a new paradigm of economic realities, in which the concepts of value, productivity, ownership, and other core components of economic theory are being transformed.

The research results identify the innovative elements of the digital economy and outline the algorithm of digital transformation within the paradigm of economic theory, from the stage of implementation and initial assessment to its integration into the economic system as an autonomous and practical component. The socio-philosophical analysis focuses on balanced indicators of the positive experience of digitalisation and its associated risks. Current statistical data provide sufficient evidence for a global assessment of the practical manifestation of digitalisation in economic realities. However, the inclusion of new elements into the paradigm of economic theory is still delayed. Therefore, we are currently witnessing the accumulation of a critical mass of data, indicators, and experience, which, once they gain significant weight in the transformational processes of economic development, will allow for the integration of the digital component as an element (or foundation) of a new economic theory.

The socio-philosophical analysis is based on the synergy of existing data, economic functionality, and promising innovations in economic life. The digital space has become an integral part of contemporary economic realities. The scale and intensity of digitalisation in economic processes are now the guarantee of the digital dimension's integration into the paradigm of economic theory.

Suggestions for Future Research

The future research prospects of the philosophical and ideological dimensions of economic theory in the digital age lie in correlating innovative models of information society development with the economic laws and processes of the new socio-cultural ecosystem. Solving global social issues arising from economic realities is possible not only through the correction of economic parameters, but also through the application of digital tools that optimise governance, production, labour, and trade processes—establishing value- and goal-oriented priorities in favour of the "economic human." In addition to implementing new economic models, digital mechanisms are a valuable tool for revitalising classical economic theories, giving them new potential for development.

The findings of this study identify the strategic priorities for the development of economic theory under the influence of the dynamics of the socio-cultural space. The departure from traditional positivist models of scientific and economic discourse has resulted in a lack of relevant instruments for strategic economic development at both local and global levels. It is noted that platform-based ecosystems, data-driven models, and decentralised autonomous organisations (DAOs) are successfully implemented models on a global scale—evidence of the effectiveness of digitalisation in this field.

Practical recommendations can be summarised as the positioning of theoretical and philosophical guidelines regarding the prospects of a digital model of economic theory, which are oriented along two main vectors:

- Further deepening of the integration of the digital component into economic theory, granting it the status of an autonomous element in this domain;
- Development of safeguards to prevent gaps and inequalities, which are the main negative manifestations of the digital economy.

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