

Call for Papers for *The Service Industries Journal* Special Issue and **APA Paris Summit 2026**



The American Phygital Association (APA) is excited to announce a call for papers for the **APA Paris Summit 2026**. This groundbreaking event, themed “Phygital Services for Positive Change,” is in collaboration with the A-ranked leading *The Services Industries Journal*. We are inviting submissions for a Special Issue on:

“The Phygital Service Economy (PSE) for Transformative and Resilient Service Experiences”

Important Dates

- Deadline Abstract Submission to the APA Paris Summit 2026: **May 20, 2025**
- Acceptance Notification: **July 5, 2025**
- APA Summit 2026 Attendance in Paris: **February 26-27, 2026**
- Submission Window for the Special Issue: **March 5 - July 15, 2026**
- Special Issue Publication: Expected by the **end of 2026**

Special Issue Editor

Dr. Wided Batat, University of Lyon 2, France.

Aim and Scope

The Phygital Service Economy (PSE) stands at the forefront of an evolving research landscape where physical and digital realms intertwine (Batat, 2022) to create transformative and resilient service experiences for both customers and employees. This special issue seeks to examine this emergent field, addressing the intricate dynamics and multifaceted impacts of phygital integration on service delivery, consumer experiences, and employee engagement. As we navigate through an era marked by rapid technological advancements (Wirtz et al., 2023) and shifting consumer expectations (Banik, 2021), the PSE offers a fertile ground for scholarly inquiry and practical innovation.

The philosophical roots of PSE lie in the phygital research paradigm (Batat, 2024), which advocates for a holistic ecosystem blending tangible and metaverse virtual interactions (Dogan et al., 2023, Tili et al., 2023). This paradigm necessitates a rethinking of traditional service models and theories. The special issue aims to establish a robust academic framework for PSE, emphasizing the significance of human-centric and comprehensive approaches that prioritize the well-being and community impact of all stakeholders involved in the servicescape (Addis et al., 2022). By exploring the phygital service economy through a critical lens, we seek to uncover how these hybrid environments foster resilience and adaptability within service ecosystems. Central to this inquiry is the examination of how phygital interactions enhance consumer well-being and satisfaction. Human-centric design principles (Ystgaard et al., 2023) play a pivotal role in creating service experiences that are not only seamless but also deeply meaningful and impactful for both customers and employees. This involves a comprehensive analysis of strategies and methodologies that facilitate the integration of physical and digital elements, ensuring cohesive service delivery across multiple platforms. By placing the human experience at the core of phygital services, we can better understand and optimize the interplay between these blended environments. Technological integration is another cornerstone of PSE, where extended reality technologies such as augmented and virtual reality or haptics (Batat and Hammedi, 2023; Dey et al., 2018) serve as catalysts for innovation in service delivery. However, a critical perspective requires that we move beyond the mere integration and application of technology as a unique solution for enhancing consumer and employee service experiences. Embracing PSE necessitates considering technology interaction with humans from a multilevel approach, evaluating the broader socio-economic and environmental implications of phygital services. This holistic approach addresses the diverse effects of phygital integration on all involved parties, from consumers to service providers and beyond. Moreover, methodological diversity is crucial for advancing the study of the phygital service economy. This special issue encourages the development and application of innovative research methods, such as immersive ethnography suitable for phygital settings (Kozinets, 2023), to capture the nuanced realities of phygital interactions. By embracing methodological pluralism, we can foster a deeper understanding of the complexities and contradictions inherent in phygital spaces within the service industry, thereby contributing to theoretical and practical advancements in the field.

Looking ahead, this special issue seeks to identify emerging trends and address the challenges associated with creating sustainable and resilient phygital service environments. The transformative potential of PSE lies in its ability to reconfigure service experiences in ways that are both technologically advanced and profoundly human. Through interdisciplinary research and critical analysis, this special issue aims to provide valuable insights into the future of service delivery in a phygital world. By focusing on these comprehensive and critical aspects, we hope to significantly enhance the theoretical foundations and practical applications of the phygital service economy. We invite contributions that offer groundbreaking perspectives and solutions, driving forward the

discourse on how phygital integration can lead to transformative and resilient service experiences. A list of the special issue topics includes, but is not limited to:

- How can design principles within the Phygital Service Economy (PSE) enhance both customer and employee well-being and satisfaction in hybrid environments?
- What strategies can effectively integrate physical and digital service elements within the PSE to create resilient and transformative service experiences for customers and employees?
- In what ways do phygital service interactions impact consumer and employee behavior within the PSE, and how can these interactions be optimized to foster resilience and transformation?
- How can the integration of advanced technologies in the PSE contribute to both consumer satisfaction and employee engagement?
- What are the socio-economic and environmental impacts of phygital service models within the PSE, and how can they support sustainable and resilient communities?
- How can we develop innovative research methods to study the complexities of phygital interactions within the PSE and their effects on both customers and employees?
- What role does leadership play in managing transitions within the PSE, and how can leaders foster a culture of adaptability and resilience in service organizations?
- How do phygital service environments within the PSE influence traditional service quality metrics such as customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and overall service effectiveness?
- What are the future trends in phygital service design within the PSE, and how can these trends be harnessed to create sustainable, resilient, and transformative service experiences?
- How can interdisciplinary research enhance our understanding of the PSE and contribute to the development of innovative and impactful service models?

Submission instructions

We cordially invite all participants to submit a **500-word abstract proposal** for the American Phygital Association (APA) Summit 2026, which will be held on February 26-27, 2026, in Paris, France. Authors should submit their abstracts via the [APA Summit Website Portal](#). The deadline for abstract submission is **May 20, 2025**.

Full article submissions from all APA attendees and other scholars will be accepted after the summit, with the submission window opening shortly thereafter (between **March 5 and July 15, 2026**). The publication of the Special Issue is expected by the end of 2026 or early 2027.

Submission Requirements and Information

Inquiries can be directed to the special issue editor: Dr. Wided Batat. Submissions should follow the manuscript format guidelines for *The Service Industries Journal* found at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/fsij20>. All manuscripts should be addressed with a cover

letter and note to be considered for “*The Phygital Service Economy (PSE) for Transformative and Resilient Service Experiences*” Special Issue.

References

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