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Development of the Digital Economy in Uzbekistan: Strategic Importance, Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract: The article analyzes the relevance of the development of the digital economy in Uzbekistan, its strategic importance and impact on the country's economy. The concept of the digital economy, the state programs being implemented to form it, as well as the main opportunities and existing problems in the field are discussed. The article pays special attention to the shortcomings of the Internet infrastructure in rural areas, issues of personnel training and problems related to cybersecurity. The conclusion provides recommendations for the development of the digital economy and considers the prospects in this area.

Key words: digital economy, Uzbekistan, digitization, e-government, IT sector, internet infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital literacy, government programs, economic development.

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The second decade of the 21st century has been a period of fundamental change in the world economy. Through digitalization processes, new business models, types of services and products are emerging in the global market. Types of economic activity based on Internet technologies have become the main criterion of global competition. These processes are also gaining importance for Uzbekistan.

In recent years, a number of state programs have been implemented in our country to develop the digital economy. This article analyzes the content of the digital economy, its role in the economy of Uzbekistan, its main opportunities and existing problems.

In today's globalized world, the digital economy is becoming an important factor in the economic growth of each country. Especially during the pandemic, the demand for digital services is increasing, and this has led to the need for rapid development of digital infrastructure. Uzbekistan has also achieved certain successes in this area in recent years.

Digital economy is a concept that encompasses types of economic activity based on the Internet and digital technologies. This area includes online commerce, digital payment systems, IT services, data analytics, and artificial intelligence-based solutions.

Digital economy is a form of economic activity carried out through the Internet, digital platforms and information technologies, which involves the digitalization of production, distribution, exchange and consumption processes.

World experience shows that through the digital economy:

- Production efficiency increases;
- Tax revenues increase and corruption decreases;
- Transparency of public services is ensured;
- New jobs are created;
- Market mechanisms are activated.

The digital economy ensures not only the development of the IT sector, but also systemic changes in such areas as industry, agriculture, education and medicine.

In recent years, great attention has been paid to the development of the digital economy in Uzbekistan.

- The “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy has been adopted;
- Public services are being transferred to an electronic platform (my.gov.uz);
- Uzcard and Humo payment systems are expanding;
- IT parks are being created and attention is being paid to training young specialists.

1. Increased economic efficiency: digitization improves tax collection, reduces corruption.

2. Export opportunities: Possibility of exporting IT services (through outsourcing).

3. New jobs: Jobs are created through startups and businesses in the digital sector.

Problems

1. Infrastructure shortage: Internet coverage and quality are low, especially in rural areas.

2. Human resource shortage: The level of knowledge of digital technologies is still low.

3. Cybersecurity issues: Cyber threats also increase with digitization.

The development of the digital economy in Uzbekistan is a necessity of the time. This sector not only ensures economic growth, but also forms a new innovative environment. However, this requires sufficient attention to infrastructure, education, and security issues.

Initiatives aimed at shaping the digital economy in Uzbekistan

The transition to a digital economy in Uzbekistan has been active since 2017. The “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy, adopted in 2020, set out the main directions and goals in this area. The following reforms were implemented within the framework of this strategy:

1. Electronic government system: the activities of online platforms such as my.gov.uz, e-hujjat, e-sud, e-auksion have been expanded.

2. Payment systems: the share of cashless payments through payment systems such as Uzcard, Humo, Payme, Click has increased significantly.

3. IT parks and technoparks: modern IT parks have been opened in Tashkent, Nukus, Andijan and other cities.

4. IT training: new directions and courses have been organized in IT schools and universities.

5. New digital services: More than 300 services are being provided through the "Single Interactive Public Services Portal".

Opportunities and prospects

The expansion of the digital economy in Uzbekistan creates the following strategic opportunities:

1. Increasing export potential

The country can gain new potential in foreign trade by exporting IT services and software products. Currently, Uzbekistan is considering the possibility of exporting software products to the USA, Europe, India and Russia.

2. Increasing efficiency in sectors

The introduction of digital solutions in agriculture, industry and healthcare will create opportunities to increase productivity and service quality. For example, the use of drones and sensors in agro-technologies can increase productivity by 20-30%.

3. Economic transparency and government efficiency

The digitalization of tax, customs and statistical authorities will reduce corruption and ensure efficient allocation of resources.

4. New opportunities for youth

The IT sector is becoming a source of income for young people through freelance work, startups and international outsourcing. Thousands of young people are receiving education in the digital field as part of the "One Million Uzbek Coders" program.

Problems and obstacles

At the same time, there are a number of serious problems in the implementation of the digital economy:

1. Insufficient infrastructure

The lack of high-speed Internet, especially in rural areas, is slowing down digitalization. As of 2024, 4G coverage in cities alone will be more than 90%, and in rural areas - about 50%.

2. Shortage of specialists

The demand for IT specialists is growing, but there is a shortage of qualified personnel in educational institutions. Educational programs often do not meet modern market requirements.

3. Cybersecurity and personal data protection

Along with digitalization, the protection of personal data is becoming an urgent problem. The number of database leaks and cyberattacks is increasing.

The level of digital literacy among the population is low

The lack of digital skills, especially among adults and rural residents, is slowing down this process.

The development of the digital economy in Uzbekistan is one of the key factors for the country's future economic independence and global competitiveness. This area requires close cooperation between the state, the private sector and society.

Recommendations:

- Expanding the Internet infrastructure in rural areas;
- Reforming the IT education sector and increasing investment in training specialists;

- Developing programs to increase the digital literacy of the population;
- Strengthening the national cybersecurity strategy;
- Encouraging financing for startups and innovative projects.

If these recommendations are systematically implemented, Uzbekistan can become one of the leading countries in the digital economy in Central Asia in the near future.

Adabiyotlar ro'yxati.

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