

8 Think Global, Act Local: Transforming local commerce through smart shopping

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The objectives of this chapter are to:

- ☐ Explore how digital tools like smart shopping and digital platforms transform local street markets and small businesses.
- ☐ Investigate how digital technology, such as mobile apps, is used in cities to boost local economies and make services more accessible.
- ☐ Investigate how digital districts influence community participation and governance and make commerce more inclusive and engaging for small businesses.
- ☐ Highlight the difficulties and breakthroughs for local businesses going digital, focusing on expanding reach, efficiency, and eco-friendly practices.

Introduction

The integration of technology into local commerce and small businesses is causing profound transformations, redefining the way cities support economic activity, innovation and community well-being. Concepts like ‘smart shopping’, ‘smart cities’ and ‘digital commercial districts’ are fostering sustainable urban development, while emerging as strategic tools to revitalise traditional commerce.

In this chapter, we analyse how smart technologies, such as digital platforms, public Wi-Fi and mobile applications, are used in urban environments to strengthen local economies and improve the accessibility of services. This debate, which explores the intersection between digital transformation and local business ecosystems, fits into the broader European agenda for economic resilience and territorial cohesion, and in Portugal the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) and its role in promoting digitalization at the local level.

Our aim is to understand, from a multidisciplinary perspective, how digital business districts are technological innovations and socio-political tools that shape