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## **Philosophical Dimensions of Digital Transformation and Their Impact on the Future**

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**Abstract:** This article aims to highlight digital transformation within the context of an in-depth philosophical analysis from the perspectives of epistemological, axiological, ethical, and anthropological dimensions. The period of general philosophical interpretation of the practical-everyday status of digitalisation has evolved into a need for a comprehensive characterisation of the essence of the digital space. The tasks of the article involve organising various philosophical characteristics of digital transformation and aligning them within the scientific worldview paradigm of the future. The article's methodology is based on a qualitative study of the problem of digitalisation within the scientific-philosophical discourse of the last five years. A varied sampling in the literature review has facilitated the analysis of most philosophical dimensions of digitalisation in its contemporary manifestation. The scientific-philosophical synergetic approach is intended to ensure a holistic understanding of the essence of digitalisation as a socio-cultural phenomenon and to optimise the use of its practical structural-technological characteristics. The research results demonstrate the alignment of thematic clusters within the philosophical dimension of digitalisation. The initial dominance of epistemological themes related to the innovation of the digital space is gradually being transformed into a more balanced philosophical interpretation with the actualisation of axiological, ethical, and anthropological contexts. The impact of digital products on individuals and society requires evaluation and understanding how to regulate their activity. Therefore, a review of the literature dedicated to the philosophical aspects of digitalisation indicates a quantitative increase in works of a value-ethical and anthropocentric nature. Philosophy is dynamically shaping the content and format of the structural analysis of digital transformation as a critical sociocultural phenomenon of modernity. At the same time, prospects for philosophical research into the digital space are emerging, which involve outlining short-term tactics for understanding digital transformation in the ethical and anthropological segments and long-term strategies for the axiological and epistemological dimensions. Conclusion: Digital transformation has reached a large scale and intensity within the sociocultural dimension and requires a comprehensive worldview interpretation from science, philosophy, and cultural perspectives. A complete philosophical characterisation of digital transformation should consist of epistemological, axiological, ethical, and anthropological justifications for digitalisation's institutional-organisational and structural-functional aspects.

**Keywords:** ethical aspects of digitisation, theory of knowledge in the digital era, social consequences of technology, cultural changes, concepts of human identity.

## **Introduction**

Philosophy has developed a traditional framework for characterising significant sociocultural processes and phenomena. Typically, the epistemological component is brought to the forefront of philosophical reflection, as it involves exploring and understanding the foundations of innovative dimensions. Understandably, the first cluster of scientific discourse is dedicated to this philosophical-epistemological problematics. Let us analyse the philosophical works from the early 21st century that describe the period of the digital space's establishment. There is a clear predominance of practically descriptive aspects (Williams &

Piccinini, 2024)—initially, philosophical research focused on the actualisation of the cognitive-informative and cognitive-comprehension aspects of digital transformation.

Today, an innovative type of societal development prevails. Consequently, philosophy addresses the worldview needs of individuals and society in the context of informational and technological progress. Truth in the modern world is based not only on facts and explanations but also on the perspective of development (Johnson et al., 2020). Such sociocultural orientations drive the philosophy of the future to focus more on forecasting prospects rather than interpreting the existing cultural-historical experience.

### ***Research Problem***

The philosophical problem under investigation focuses on the increasing impact of digitalisation and the expansion of its characteristics within every day and institutional-functional dimensions. This has led to a reorientation of philosophical research towards a more human-centred context. Digital transformation has begun to affect the lives and activities of individuals and society directly, necessitating a new positioning of this process within individual and collective consciousness. Consequently, a division of roles has emerged within the scientific worldview regarding the study and communication of digital transformation:

- The scientific-technological cluster has been responsible for addressing the practical characteristics of the digital space.
- The scientific-philosophical segment has defined the essence of digitalisation in terms of its scope of influence, role, and status in the lives of individuals and society.

### ***Research Focus***

The article's research focuses on balancing the scientific-philosophical discourse on digital transformation. The analysis of the dynamics in the shift of philosophical reflection on digitalisation—from an epistemological to a value-oriented dimension—reveals the need for regulating innovative processes and aligning them with the existing fundamental principles of the sociocultural environment.

### ***Research Aim and Research Questions***

This article aims to evaluate the positioning of the digital transformation process within contemporary scientific-philosophical discourse. The status of digitalisation within the scientific-technological paradigm is evolving by the scale and intensity of society's engagement with innovative advancements. Consequently, philosophical interpretation of digitalisation is becoming more human-centred, bringing value-ethical aspects to the forefront. The objectives of this research include an analysis of the scientific-philosophical discourse regarding the distribution of emphasis on digitalisation across anthropological, epistemological, axiological, and ethical dimensions.

The research question focuses on the challenge of selecting the direction of philosophical activity in both the short-term and strategic perspectives concerning the characterisation of the prospects for digital transformation in the sociocultural sphere. There are two approaches to forming a philosophical and worldview interpretation of digitalisation:

1. *General approach*: In which the digital world finds its place within the broader world order system and is interpreted by philosophy within the familiar sociocultural coordinates.
2. *Active approach*: In which the digital space constructs unique systems that require philosophical justification in various manifestations.

## Literature Review

Reviewing the philosophical dimensions of digital transformation aims to shed light on expanding digitalisation themes within the sociocultural context of modernity. The recent years have been pivotal in shaping the conceptual dimensions of digital society. Alongside the traditional global characteristics of the digital space, specific philosophical worldview investigations—focusing on value, ethical, cognitive, and anthropological aspects—have emerged.

The problem of digital transformation has pervaded contemporary scientific discourse. This popularisation has also driven the need for a philosophical interpretation of digitalisation processes. The initial philosophical works on digital development aimed to popularise innovative intentions and explore the prospects of their integration into the sociocultural space (Nyhlén & Gidlund, 2022). As the first global results of digitalisation projects became evident, philosophy shifted towards a more in-depth analysis of the impact of this process on individuals and society (Nadkarni & Prügl, 2021). By engaging specific philosophical clusters, the scientific discourse now examines various aspects of digitalisation, including:

- The correlation between cultural development and digital activity during civilisational progress (Butt et al., 2024);
- The socio-economic factors driving the actualisation of the digital world (Lazzeretti et al., 2022);
- The transition from functional to institutional dimensions of digitalisation (Verina & Titko, 2019);
- The positioning of digitalisation not merely as an element of adaptation but as a means of altering conditions (Shahi & Sinha, 2021);
- Maintaining a moral balance (Atika, 2022) of ethical norms in the process of digital activity (O'Reilly et al., 2020);
- The potential for replacing human potential with machine capabilities (Michel, 2020).

It is worth noting that despite the significant number of philosophical works dedicated to digitalisation processes, questions concerning the full cognitive potential of the digital world, the moral-ethical implications of digital advancements, and the value-based characteristics of digitalisation achievements remain underexplored. The actualisation of these questions is a matter of short-term urgency, as digitalisation has attained considerable trust (O'Neill, 2020) and demand (Avny, 2019) in society.

A problematic issue remains the limited scope of scientific and technological research, where the problem of digital potential is confined to concepts of its demand and efficiency. Simultaneously, questions of safety and morality are largely excluded from scientific discourse.

For philosophy, such positioning of digitalisation (like any other process or phenomenon) is uncharacteristic, as it does not account for blind spots in the development of sociocultural activity. Unlike science, philosophical analysis is not burdened with maintaining the status of the digital world. Thus, philosophy supports the development of digitalisation in various spheres of societal activity (Haltaufderheide & Ranisch, 2023) and critiques its negative manifestations (Cawood & Amiradakis, 2022).

Some perspectives suggest that the multifactorial philosophical study of digital transformation is linked to the finalisation of digitalisation's impact on society. Jandrić and Knox (2022) emphasise the formation of a post-digital society, which has already established its paradigmatic foundations. The concept of digital maturity only confirms the completeness of innovative transformation (Teichert, 2019). Pfeiffer (2021) identifies digitalisation as a component of humanity's transformation in the context of its progress.

Overall, the level of inquiry into digital transformation within contemporary scientific-philosophical discourse allows for exploring specific worldview manifestations of this sociocultural process. However, certain questions related to value-ethical and cognitive-anthropological dimensions require correlation with the technological aspects of digital potential. The large volume of scientific and technological publications on the functioning of the digital space needs to be analysed for their alignment with the humanistic principles of modern society.

## **Research Methodology**

This scientific study is based on the principles of conducting a qualitative review of philosophical literature on the problem of digital transformation in the contemporary sociocultural space and the prospects of this process. A critical factor in such works is the sampling parameters, which determine the comprehensiveness and integrity of the research problem. A homogeneous sample focused on the philosophical cluster investigated digital transformation. A variation sample, used in the same manner, would have included the scientific and technological clusters in the review, which could have complicated the achievement of the study's goals and objectives and diluted the focus of the research question. Instead, concentrating on the philosophical dimensions of digitalisation allowed for a focus on the human-centric aspects of this process.

Overall, the sampling was based on the following characteristics:

- Scientific works were selected from scientometric platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science.
- Time limitations: Works from the last five years (2019–2024).
- Only articles published in English with a length of at least 5,000 words were considered to ensure the inclusion of fundamental review and empirical studies on the current issue.
- Key search terms included human-centric, ethics, values, and cognition in the digital space.
- No regional or institutional restrictions were applied.

Identifying and selecting literature was conducted according to the methodological dimensions of qualitative review research. Specifically, the total number of works retrieved during the search on the subject exceeded 5,000. However, after filtering according to the general characteristics of the sample, approximately 4,500 studies were excluded. The specificity of the research topic allowed for a focus on 50 scientific papers that deeply explore the specific philosophical dimensions of digitalisation: epistemological, axiological, ethical, and anthropological.

For a comprehensive overview of the research, it is crucial to analyse the works and systematise them within a content-analytical framework. Studying the essence of digital transformation processes through content analysis enables exploring this process from various angles within the philosophical worldview dimension.

A significant methodological point is the consistent use of a synergistic approach, which allowed for the utilisation of the interdisciplinary potential and the integration of necessary scientific, technological, and humanitarian characteristics of digitalisation. The synergistic methodology is also essential in correlating technological characteristics with moral and value norms. Moreover, the synergistic model is more favourable from an epistemological perspective, as it allows for the systematisation of the potential of digitalisation and the identification of fundamental strategies for its development.

## **Research Results**

The philosophical interpretation of digitalisation principles began with introducing digital products into various spheres of societal activity. To be precise, at a worldview level, digital innovations were characteristic of the futuristic imaginings of society in the latter half of the 20th century, which actively promoted the prospects of digital progress. Therefore, the early manifestations of digitalisation were not perceived by society as a surprise but rather in the context of anticipation. Such realities were crucial for the establishment of digital space in societal consciousness. Distrust and doubts, typical of global sociocultural transformations, were not relevant in the case of digitalisation, leading to its rapid development and integration into societal life.

At the same time, these favourable conditions for establishing digitalisation generated several problems related to value and anthropological issues that became deferred. The competitiveness gained from digital transformation led to a dynamic sociocultural activity (Kraus et al., 2021), which required individuals to exhibit the activity and effectiveness typical of technology. The reciprocal process of aligning digital and human potential has been termed digital humanism (Fuchs, 2022). According to Peters & Besley (2019), the colonisation of digital intelligence is inevitable. The humanitarian aspect of digitalisation in the modern dimension and strategic forecasts no longer notes contradictions between humans and technology but offers solutions.

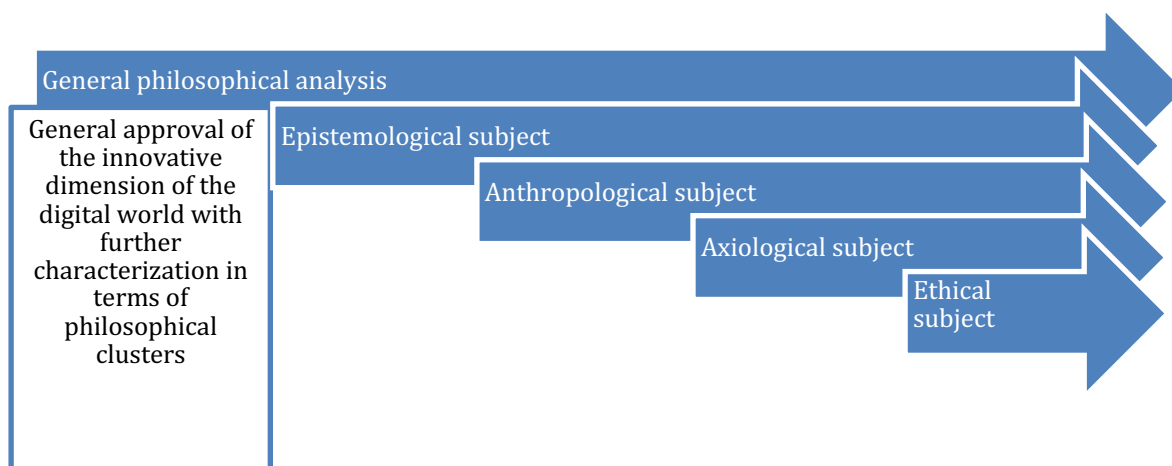
On the other hand, the formation of a digital society is a result of the digital revolution (Levin & Mamlok, 2021). This algorithm of digital transformation introduces new dominants to the philosophical worldview paradigm. In such a system, the role of technologies is defined, which, in turn, challenges the human-centric trends of the contemporary worldview.

During the initial period of the rapid success of digital transformation, they have effectively ignored the potential threats that arose during this process. It is worth noting that the philosophy of the late 20th century also had a certain global euphoria regarding the prospects of digital development. The overwhelming majority of positive reactions to the application of digital potential confirms this.

However, the early 21st century revealed all the problems (Turel et al., 2021) that had been deferred due to the excessive popularisation of the digital world. The philosophical discourse gradually began to fill with a deeper evaluation of digital transformation. The general emphasis on the efficiency and relevance of information-technology character shifted towards humanitarian and socio-oriented dimensions. The philosophical paradigm started to comprehensively interpret the problem of digital transformation, incorporating its activity into epistemological, axiological, and anthropological components (see Figure 1).

### Figure 1

*The Evolution of the Philosophical Interpretation of Digital Transformation*



Source: Authors' development.

A general philosophical analysis of digital transformation can be misleading regarding the relationship between the format and content of worldview potential. On the one hand, the overall philosophical interpretation of digitalisation is predominantly positive, emphasising the benefits of this sociocultural process. The socio-philosophical context of digitalisation focuses on quantitative indicators confirming digital potential's effectiveness and its positive impact on human life and society.

At the same time, the philosophical worldview approach that regards the socio-philosophical aspect as determining the essence of digitalisation and defining its existential characteristics is flawed. The popularity of the digitalisation trend sets its social-cultural or even civilisational format as a priority. However, as cultural-historical experience shows,

philosophy has always attempted to examine societal trends from multiple perspectives without highlighting a dominant aspect. Thus, the existential dimension of digital transformation also includes a human-centred component.

The first element of the human-centred dimension of digitalisation is the epistemological dimension. The uniqueness of the digital space lies in its inexhaustible potential for further development. There is a possibility that, at some point, the space created by humans will not just function but become autonomous. Such realities deprive humans of control over the created digital world, which automatically relates it to the dimension of existential being. This immediately raises the question of the essential content – why does humanity need another environment that it cannot fully understand (especially considering its experience with the religious-existential world)? Therefore, the epistemological aspect shifts the essence of digital transformation to a functional dimension that humans can control and regulate, thus preventing the creation of a digital space independent of human influence.

The anthropological dimension is the next human-centred element in the philosophical interpretation of digitalisation. The scale of digitalisation directly and globally impacts human life and activity. Gradually, digital transformation alters the familiar material and spiritual world of humans. At the same time, digitalisation affects the status of humans in the modern worldview, introducing an element of uncertainty regarding their future potential. The replacement of physical strength with mechanical power already revolutionised the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, there is a proposal to replace human intellectual potential, moral-spiritual, and creative forces with digital equivalents. How prepared human civilisation is for such transformations remains an open question. Philosophy, in turn, emphasises that the issue of the status of humans and technology is a central question in digital transformation. In contrast, questions of functional changes related to digital potential only obscure the actual problem of this process.

Finally, one of the critical dimensions of the philosophical interpretation of digital transformation is the axiological-ethical component. Any innovative changes lead to a reassessment of individual, societal, and global value dimensions. As a result, the axiological and ethical clusters of philosophy have actively engaged with the scientific worldview characteristics of digitalisation. Forming a value paradigm for the digital space allows for balancing advantages and disadvantages and addressing feasibility and risks. At the same time, the ethical dimension ensures the establishment of moral guidelines for functioning the digital world and human activity within it.

This evolution reveals the layers of philosophical analysis of digital transformation in the context of the foundational nature of its sociocultural establishment. The need for a more thorough philosophical interpretation of digitalisation has emerged in the context of intensifying problematic situations resulting from digital transformation.

Specifically, the digital space implies an entirely different format of informational activity. Speed, mobility, and accessibility are just a few advantages of the digital model of informational activity (Ikpeazu, 2023). At the same time, information culture and security issues (Maati et al., 2023) have become acute. It is evident that with the expansion of the information space, risks and threats automatically increase. At the beginning of the digital boom, these issues were

submerged under the advantages of positive character, but over time, the problem has reached quite threatening proportions. This has become not only a problem of functional security but also a value-oriented philosophical issue.

The philosophical discourse has continued to address the security issue in the digital space and the threats to its functioning, highlighting the prospects of uncontrollability of this environment (Nelson, 2021). Technological standards and characteristics have been established for the functioning of the digital world. However, unlike science, philosophy considers not only the potential functioning but also the existence of the digital world, which significantly alters the status of technologies and humans within it.

To understand the prospects for philosophical contemplation of digitalisation, it is essential to grasp the role of the digital component within existing philosophical traditions. In this context, philosophy cannot rise above the process, as the digital format increasingly influences the formation of ideas and thoughts among thinkers and the development of societal worldviews (Zaagsma, 2023).

A crucial aspect of philosophical activity regarding digital transformation has been transferring this process to the public domain (Skowroński, 2020). This is particularly relevant due to the somewhat closed nature of science and the obscurity of its methodological and practical approaches. In the case of technologies, such a format is ineffective, as the digital space requires an understanding of its functioning for individuals to use it fully. It is evident that most users do not understand digital activity algorithms, which creates a crisis of trust in the digital format (Elliott et al., 2024). Additionally, the digital format is shrouded in theories and myths requiring explanation or debunking. Nevertheless, the dynamism of digital transformation suggests a rapid increase in trust in the digital space (O'Neill, 2020).

Thus, expanding the philosophical worldview understanding, perception, and translation of digitalisation holds significant potential. Technological characteristics of the digital world require substantial scientific support. When the human-centred component is added to the digital space, such a volume of worldview issues can only be managed through the synergy of philosophy, science, and technology.

## **Discussion**

The review of works dedicated to the philosophical characterisation of digital transformation highlights the contentious nature related to reconciling different philosophical and worldview dimensions. On the one hand, the general philosophical understanding of digitalisation positions this process in harmony with innovative scientific and technological interpretations of its potential. On the other hand, a more profound philosophical analysis of axiological, ethical, and anthropological aspects reveals various issues concerning the alignment of digitalisation principles with societal norms and individual human development.

The research findings confirm the need for a multi-faceted analysis from the perspective of philosophy regarding the problems of digital transformation. The initial emphasis on the progressive and prospective nature of the digital realm, which once absorbed all nuances of its functioning at the beginning of this socio-cultural technological process, is gradually losing its

relevance in the worldview paradigm. Instead, the scientific-technological aspect is transforming within the context of a humanitarian orientation (Buongiorno & Chiaramonte, 2024), where both the positive and negative impacts of digitalisation on individuals and society are examined.

The results trace a connection to the conclusions of other contemporary philosophers who note that the philosophical discourse on digitalisation has undergone several stages of development (Jandrić, 2019). Some researchers argue that changes in the philosophical analysis of digitalisation correlate with the pace of technological development. In contrast, others emphasise the initiative of philosophy in highlighting specific aspects of studying the digital world according to socio-cultural demands. Ultimately, a general trend in contemporary philosophical discourse is the recognition of the all-encompassing (Nosthoff & Maschewski, 2019) global nature of digitalisation and its positioning within the worldview.

The rapid establishment of digitalisation in the modern world creates imbalances in the cognitive capabilities of paradigms designed to shape it. Specifically, the educational sector fails to keep up with its activity in the context of digital innovations. Other areas of societal activity (Mugge et al., 2020) often utilise digital potential in a post-factum manner. In the scientific realm, digital technologies also require a qualitatively different approach to study and mastery. One idea equates digitalisation with a trend of human progress (Lang, 2021).

Philosophical-anthropological issues indicate two paradigms: the digital world is subordinated to societal structure, and humans are subordinated to digital dimensions. In one model, digitalisation is an element of technological support for societal development (Cheng et al., 2023). At the same time, it is asserted that in the digital paradigm, the nature of human behaviour undergoes a radical change (Spahn, 2020), indicating the dominance of the digital element.

Meanwhile, the synergistic philosophical model emphasises the cooperation between human and digital worlds (Sanders et al., 2019). Digitalisation can alter the interaction structure within the world order system, yet its potential is aimed at enhancing this interaction (Lindgren et al., 2019).

The anthropological dimension of the philosophical interpretation of digitalisation generates discussions on the tension between individual identity and the overall systematisation of this process. On the one hand, there is a noted personalisation of digital development (Hodgson & Ramaekers, 2020), which views information and technological elements as tools. The other position is based on forming a global digital world in which humans are positioned as elements of this world (noting that a similar role was assigned to humans in the religious worldview). Clearly, under these conditions, the issue of autonomy or sovereignty of the digital component (Martin et al., 2022) within the human paradigm and that of humans in the technological-digital paradigm is highlighted.

The problem of the relationship between the digital and human worlds generates a value-ethical dilemma. Digital communication (Seubert & Becker, 2019), despite advancements in methods of communication and interaction, does not necessarily lead to a deepening of culture and meanings in communication. Thus, the philosophical-ethical discourse addresses issues

related to the correlation of human values and technological characteristics, which are expressed in discussions such as:

- The intellectual capability of humans to withstand the power of AI (Peters et al., 2023);
- The replacement of human creative activity with artificial and virtual potential (Näslund & Wasielewski, 2020);
- The appropriateness of substituting human activity with technological-digital analogues (Wellner, 2022);
- Responsibility for breaches of traditional moral-legal norms by digital tools (Blok, 2023);
- Cultural compatibility between human achievements and digital elements within a hermeneutic analysis (Romele, 2019);
- The coexistence of human dignity and freedom with digital tools (Becker, 2022).

At the same time, not all reviewed works indicate the need for a multi-dimensional examination of digital transformation through philosophical clusters. Contradictory to the findings, which note the complexity and diversity of the philosophical discourse on digitalisation, are ideas of philosophical understanding of the existential nature of digitalisation. Such thoughts concentrate on analogies between the digital world and the natural (Omenukwa, 2024) or religious (Benedikter, 2020) worlds, which operate according to their laws. Humans are assigned the role of active participants but not creators of the digital space.

Moreover, the burden of the current scientific-philosophical discourse on digitalisation creates several limitations, which lie in the impossibility of eliminating the technological element, leading to the dominance of format over the content of digital transformation. The problem of eliminating humanitarian-oriented dimensions in the digital space emerges as a critical philosophical worldview perspective in the scientific discourse. It is evident that under such conditions, a scientific contradiction arises, which lies in the impossibility and impracticality of limiting the scientific-technological progress of digitalisation while also facing risks associated with the uncontrollability of digital transformation processes.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

Thus, digitalisation processes within the socio-cultural space have reached a scale and impact on society that necessitates their evaluation within a worldview paradigm. Philosophy, which traditionally provides a comprehensive interpretation of socio-cultural processes and phenomena, has begun to thoroughly analyse the essence, content, and format of digital transformation. An analysis of philosophical research over the past five years indicates a growing specificity in the study and interpretation of the fundamentals of digitalisation from various philosophical clusters.

The epistemological dimension points to several contentious issues and uncertainties in digitalisation processes. The increase in value-oriented aspects of digitalisation in philosophical discourse reflects the entrenchment of this process within both individual and societal consciousness at a fundamental level. Ethical concerns highlight the potential negative consequences of utilising digital potential. The philosophical-anthropological cluster

establishes an overall characterisation of the role and status of the digital world in the lives of individuals and society.

Overall, philosophy is beginning to organise digital activity at a worldview and mental level, signalling a shift from a purely enthusiastic evaluation of digitalisation to a more transparent normative-conceptual framework for digital transformation. Philosophical clusters are contributing to identifying strategic vectors for the development of digitalisation in the context of individual needs, societal demands, and global progress.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Prospects for researching the philosophical dimensions of digital transformation involve further expanding the worldview frameworks for interpreting the digital world. The current expansion of the rational dimension of digital space (Dufva & Dufva, 2019) has led to a contemporary, multifaceted analysis of digitalisation within the realm of science. At the same time, philosophy is poised to interpret digital transformation within other components of the worldview paradigm. This represents a critical factor in broadening the philosophical analysis of digitalisation.

In the future, the philosophical dimension of digital transformation should identify the problems arising in the new digital environment and be tasked with addressing them (Nony, 2019). The synergy of digital technologies, scientific potential, and humanitarian strategies (Borysenko et al., 2024) for societal development will enable the formation of a comprehensive concept of global well-being (Loi, 2020). Consequently, philosophy will overcome the unrealised nature of its activity, and the digital space will acquire a human-centred character.

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