

DIGITALIZATION OF MUSEUM COMMUNICATIONS IN LIBRARIES

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Abstract

Libraries of the Republic of Belarus, following the world trends, have been actively collecting and preserving museum collections in their funds for more than a decade. The most effective forms of popularizing museum collections of libraries and presenting information about them have always been traditional museum expositions and exhibitions. However, the aggravation of the epidemiological situation around the world in 2020 associated with the spread of coronavirus infection (COVID-19) significantly accelerated the transition of museum collections to the online space, which allowed library users around the world to familiarize themselves with the collections without leaving their homes. To this end, libraries are digitizing their collections and using digital communication tools to promote them on the Internet. In order to the online promotion of designated collections be effective, library professionals must have the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to implement technology and establish communication between users and museum collections of libraries through library sites and social media. The ways of presenting materials about museum objects and collections through library sites can be virtual tours, audio and video guides, virtual exhibitions and catalogs.

An effective presentation tool, with the help of which a visual and fascinating demonstration of any museum expositions actually organized in the space of libraries is possible, is a virtual tour. The organization of virtual excursions on library websites requires library specialists know the technologies of their creation using special software. To use audio and video guides (tours), which are a reference guide in the form of audio or video recording, library specialists need to know the technologies for creating videos. Technologies briefly describes the objects that are exhibited in museum expositions of libraries. Also specialists need to know the technologies for digitizing items in museum collections of libraries and creating audio recordings with a narrated story about them. The technology of creation of virtual exhibitions involves demonstration on websites of libraries of specially selected and digitized museum items, which are organized and structured according to thematic areas, artistically designed, and creates a single museum image.

The most difficult thing is to create virtual catalogs. They are a database with a list of digitized items from museum collections of libraries and descriptions to them. Virtual catalogs also have filters for searching by name, type, etc. To use virtual catalogs as a tool to popularize museum collections, librarians need to know the technologies for their development and creation, as well as the technology for digitizing items in museum collections of libraries and replenishing the database with them.

To organize communication with target audiences on social networks, library specialists need to be able to determine the goals and objectives of popularizing museum collections of libraries, target audience and social networks, develop a content strategy, organize and evaluate the effectiveness of the work done. The possibilities of social networks make it possible to maintain interactive headings, organize polls, contests, quizzes, etc., which is an effective means of popularizing museum collections of libraries among its users.

Keywords: libraries, museum collections, professional competencies, digitalization, library sites, social networks, internet promotion.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries of the Republic of Belarus, following global trends, have been actively collecting and

preserving museum collections in their funds for more than a decade. In the Republic of Belarus, the museum's collection has all the major libraries like: the National Library of Belarus, the Presidential Library of the Republic of Belarus, the Republican Scientific Medical Library, the Central Scientific Library named after Yakub Kolas of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Traditional museum expositions and exhibitions have always been effective forms of popularizing museum collections of libraries and presenting materials about them. However, the aggravation of the global epidemiological situation in 2020, associated with the spread of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), has significantly accelerated the transition of museum collections to the online space, which allowed library users around the world to familiarize themselves with them without leaving their homes. To this end, libraries are digitizing their collections and using digital communication tools to promote them on the Internet. To carry out effective activities to promote the identified collections in the online space, library specialists must have the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to implement technologies for their popularization and to establish communication between users and museum collections of libraries through library sites and social media.

To date, not enough attention has been paid in the scientific literature to the knowledge, skills and abilities of library specialists required for the implementation of digital communication tools used to establish communications between users and museum collections of libraries on the Internet. The majority of librarians in the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other countries of the world (T. A. Kovalchuk, P. I. Shipilin, V. Y. Sokolov, L. N. Nabiullina, etc.) in their articles emphasize the lack of qualified personnel, lack of knowledge and other factors that impede the quality digitization of objects in museum collections of libraries and their popularization among their users.

METHODOLOGY

In this regard, we analyzed digital communication tools that modern libraries use in their activities to popularize museum collections on the Internet. We have studied the official websites of libraries and pages in social networks in order to do this. Based on the analysis of digital communication tools that libraries use to popularize (promote) their collections, we identified the knowledge, skills and abilities that library professionals need to effectively use these tools when establishing communication between museum collections and users through library websites and social media.

RESULTS

Library specialists should know and be able to use in their professional activities the technologies of popularizing museum collections of libraries through library websites and social media.

Technology of popularizing museum collections through library websites

In addition to announcements of events and chronicles of past events, virtual tours, audio and video guides, virtual exhibitions, and catalogues can be used to present materials about museum items and collections via library websites.

Virtual excursions (tours)

A virtual excursion (tour) is an effective presentation tool that can be used for a visual and fascinating demonstration of any museum expositions actually organized in the space of libraries is possible. The use of virtual excursions (tours) as a digital communication tool for the popularization of museum objects allows library users to see interactive panoramas of exhibitions organized in the library space without leaving their homes, to study works of culture

and everyday life that libraries collect and preserve in their collections from different angles and at different scales. In the Republic of Belarus, the Book Museum of the National Library of Belarus, the Museum of the History of Medicine of the Republican Scientific Medical Library, the P. Glebka Memorial Office of The Yakub Kolas Central Scientific Library of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus use virtual excursions (tours) to popularize museum collections through the library websites. Among the libraries of foreign countries, virtual excursions are used by the Gogol House - the memorial museum and scientific library (Russian Federation), the Victor Balaguer Museum & Library (Catalonia, Spain), the Museum of the National Library of Spain, etc. Among the disadvantages of some virtual excursions (tours), with the help of which libraries of the Republic of Belarus and foreign countries popularize their collections, it should be noted that outdated technologies and outdated software were used to create them. The organization of virtual excursions (tours) on library websites requires library specialists to have knowledge of modern technologies for their creation, which, as a rule, includes three stages: photographing the exhibition halls in the library, processing the images obtained and the final assembly of the virtual excursion. In the first stage, spherical and cylindrical 360° panoramic photographs are created, which are assembled from many separately taken frames into one image. For this, shooting is performed with a camera using additional devices designed specifically for shooting panoramic images. At the second stage, the process of "stitching" the taken photos into a panorama takes place using specialized software. At the last stage, the finished image is placed in one of the programs for creating virtual excursions (tours) (Kovalchuk, 2019).

Virtual Exhibitions

The technology of creating virtual exhibitions involves demonstration of specially selected and digitized items of museum collections on the websites of libraries, which are organized and structured according to artistically designed thematic areas and create a single museum image. The Gogol House, a memorial museum and scientific library in the Russian Federation, actively uses virtual exhibitions in its activities. The library's website, for example, displays a digitized museum collection of postcards dedicated to the life and work of N.V. Gogol and everything connected with his name. Also among the libraries that use virtual exhibitions to popularize their museum collections take example the Victor Balaguer Library-Museum (Catalonia, Spain). Through the library's website, you can visit a virtual exhibition created in collaboration with the commercial project Google Arts & Culture. When using virtual exhibitions as a tool to popularize museum collections, librarians should know and be able to apply their digitization technologies to different types of objects in museum collections. The method of digitizing objects of museum collections in libraries and converting them into electronic form depends on the characteristics of these objects, their shape, dilapidated state, size, format, weight, relief and occurs with the help of special equipment. For example, digitization of rare books is carried out on planetary scanners, large-format contactless scanning systems are used for paintings, and three-dimensional exhibits are photographed using specialized equipment (Digitizing museum collections: how exhibits and records are scanned, 2016), etc.

Virtual catalogs

The most difficult thing is to create virtual catalogs, which are a database with a list of digitized items of museum collections of libraries and descriptions to them, and also have filters for searching for items: by name, by author, by types and types of objects, etc. An example of the use of virtual catalogs to popularize their museum collections is the Museum of the National Library of Spain. The library possesses not only valuable handwritten and old printed editions, but also collections of prints, paintings, sculptures, typewriters and so on, all of which the library has collected throughout its history. Some of these exhibits have been digitized and are available in the virtual catalog on the library's website. Other examples of the promotion of

cultural heritage with the help of virtual catalogs are the project "Gallica" of the National Library of France and Internet Culturale - an Italian project of digital catalogs and collections, where photos, posters, maps, magazines, manuscripts, scores, book miniatures, numismatic items, audio and video recordings, decorations, costumes, etc. are digitized and available for viewing to users around the world. To use virtual catalogs as a tool to popularize museum collections, library specialists need to know the technologies for their development and creation, as well as the technology for digitizing items in museum collections of libraries and replenishing the database with them.

Audio and video guides

Audio and video guides are other digital communication tools that libraries use to promote their collections. They are an audio or video reference guides to exhibitions created in libraries. Video guides in the Republic of Belarus use the Gomel regional universal library named after V. I. Lenin and the Central scientific library named after Yakub Kolas of the national Academy of Sciences of Belarus to promote their collections in the digital environment. On the websites of these libraries there are videos that tell about the expositions organized in the libraries and the exhibits presented in them, dedicated to the writers of the Republic of Belarus: Ivan Melezh, Ivan Shamyakin, Ivan Naumenko and the Belarusian poet, academician Pyotr Glebka. Audio guides on library sites are used to narrate the history of digitized artifacts. For example, on the Russian philosophy and culture library website "A. F. Losev house" in Moscow (Russian Federation), anyone can view photos of personal belongings, digitized book covers, fragments of manuscripts, photos and personal belongings of the Russian philosopher, Professor, doctor of Philology A. F. Losev, which are accompanied by a voiced story about each of them. The use of audio and video guides (tours) as a tool for popularizing objects (items) in museum collections of libraries makes it necessary for library specialists to master not only the technology of digitizing objects in museum collections of libraries, but also the technology of creating video recordings and audio recordings with a voiced story about them. Modern library professionals should be able to use specialized equipment for creating video and audio recordings, be able to create presentations that can be turned into a decent video sequence, and also be able to use various specialized programs for video editing, suppression of background noise when recording sound, etc.

Technology of popularization of museum collections of libraries through library sites

Social networks are a no less important communication tool for popularizing museum collections among Internet users. The use of social networks as a tool to popularize museum collections in libraries should be meaningful, planned, with clearly defined goals and objectives. However, the analysis of the official pages in social networks of libraries of the Republic of Belarus and other countries that have museum collections in their structure allows us to conclude that this experience can not always be called positive.

In our opinion, first of all, this is due to the fact that the establishment of communication between users of libraries and museum collections, as a rule, is carried out by the library specialists themselves, who do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to use in their activities as a set of measures to promote museum collections of libraries in social networks. In scientific literature, specialists in social media promotion among the key mistakes of microblogging, as a rule, highlight "the lack of an accurate action plan and understanding of the goals and strategies of promotion" (Ermolova, 2016). In this regard, library specialists, first of all, need to develop a clear plan and strategy for popularizing museum collections of libraries, which will allow them to "competently organize time, spend resources and establish a scheme of interaction between library staff", in order to organize communication with target audiences on social networks. The effectiveness of the implementation of such a strategy depends on the

ability of library specialists to determine the purpose and objectives of using social networks to popularize the designated collections, target audience and social networks, develop a content strategy, organize and evaluate the effectiveness of the work done.

Purpose and objectives of popularizing museum collections of libraries in social media

Library professionals need to be able to identify the purpose for which they are promoting museum collections on social media, since setting a clear goal will help determine the range of tasks that need to be solved, as well as formats and methods of work. As a rule, the popularization of museum collections of libraries on social networks occurs in order to increase the interest of users in highly organized expositions and cultural and educational events in libraries, however, due to the epidemiological situation prevailing throughout the world in 2020, the purpose of popularizing museum collections on social networks for example, there may be an increase in attendance at virtual exhibitions, catalogs, and tours of library sites. For example, on the official pages of the Yakub Kolas Central Scientific Library of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus in the social networks Vkontakte and Facebook, there are publications in which users are invited to visit the virtual memorial office of P. Glebka on the library website, and on the official pages of Vkontakte and Facebook of the Gogol House - the memorial museum and scientific library (Russian Federation), users are invited to visit the online lectures held by the library, as well as the virtual exhibitions of the library presented on the website. In the tasks of popularizing museum collections of libraries, it is necessary to consistently list those actions that will lead to the achievement of the stated goal.

Target audience and social media

It is very important that the target audience coincides with the characteristics and composition of the audience of certain social networks (Ermolova, 2016). To determine the portrait of the target audience, it is worth analyzing potential user groups interested in information about museum collections of libraries, identifying their average age, education, professional affiliation, range of interests, communication style, etc. After determining the characteristics and composition of the target audience, one should choose social networks with the help of which it is possible to draw attention to the museum collections of libraries, exhibitions organized in libraries, exhibitions and cultural and educational events. To establish communication between museum collections, libraries and users, libraries of the Republic of Belarus and foreign countries use social networks such as "VKontakte" (the largest network in terms of the number of active users in the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation), Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.

For example, The National Library of Belarus actively promotes cultural and educational events that take place at the Museum of the Book mainly through the social network Vkontakte, and the Museum of the National Library of Spain uses Twitter and Instagram for these purposes. Since the audience is different in different social networks and each social network has different capabilities, library specialists, when developing a strategy, should know the characteristics of the opportunities offered by this or that social network, as well as be able to analyze how these networks will help solve the assigned tasks. The greater the number of networks from which the user receives information about the museum collections of libraries, the higher the likelihood that he will perceive and remember information about them (Nagieva, 2017).

Content strategy

Without high-quality content, the use of any tools to popularize museum collections among library users on social networks is useless. In this regard, library staff need to be able to plan a content strategy based on the interests of the target audience. The elements of the content strategy include: definition of topics, frequency, style and time of publication (Nagieva, 2017).

- Defining Publication Topics

Publication topics should cover information about museum collections of libraries, but at the same time there should not be too many of them, since a wide variety of topics may not be of interest to readers.

Therefore, library specialists should be able to identify topics that are most interesting to the target audience, as well as be able to create publications about objects of museum collections of libraries, which will be a source of relevant and useful information for readers. For example, on the official pages of Vkontakte and Facebook of a memorial museum and a scientific library called the Gogol House, the subject of publications can be determined by the categories that they constantly maintain, such as "in the time of Gogol", "Gogol's dictionary", "exhibits of the Gogol House". Within these categories, readers are shown digitized copies of exhibits: paintings, furniture, photographs from albums, etc., which are accompanied by relevant and interesting information about them.

- Determining the frequency of publication

Social media promotion specialists recommend posting regularly, but not too often (Ermolova, 2016). It should be noted that not all libraries maintain columns aimed at popularizing their museum collections on social networks regularly. For example, on the official pages of "Vkontakte" of the Republican Scientific Medical Library and the National Library of Belarus, one can only occasionally see announcements of upcoming events and a chronicle of those that have already passed. In the Republic of Belarus, in this respect, the experience of the Gomel Regional Universal Library n.a. V.I. Lenin, which regularly maintains the "exhibit of the week" column on the Vkontakte social network. Under this heading, weekly publications appear on interesting exhibits presented in the library's museum expositions.

- Stylistics of publications

Social networks are a place of informal communication, so you should write your publications emotionally, optimistically, friendly and simply, while avoiding business style and dry official language (Ermolova, 2016). In addition, library professionals need to be able to leverage the interactive features of various social media platforms to generate reader's feedback, attract new subscribers and foster discussions. Analysis of pages in social networks of libraries of the Republic of Belarus allows us to conclude that not all libraries use the interactive capabilities of social networks, for example, on the official pages of Vkontakte of the Yakub Kolas Central Scientific Library of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus of Belarus, library staff publishes only a chronicle of past events and announcements of upcoming cultural and educational events. An example of a positive work experience, in this regard, can be the employees of the Golol House - a memorial museum and a scientific library in the Russian Federation, who on the pages of the library on the social networks Vkontakte and Facebook, in addition to chronicles of past events and announcements of current events, use interactive headings and polls, which allows them to organize communication with target audiences. Another striking example of the use of the interactive capabilities of social networks can be considered the Austrian National Library, which popularizes the objects that are presented in the library's museum expositions using quizzes on the Instagram social network.

- Time of publications

Timing content posting on any social media site helps attract new subscribers and affects reach. Research shows (Social Networks Users Activity Report, 2019), that users visit social networks most often in the morning, lunchtime and evening. However, the time of publications aimed at popularizing the museum collections of certain libraries may differ, since the publication time depends on the target audience, which may visit social networks at completely different times. Therefore, in our opinion, library specialists should constantly study and monitor the activity of

the target audience in social networks that are used to promote museum collections of libraries.

Organization of work

In our opinion, the popularization of museum collections on social networks should be carried out by those librarians who are well familiar with the collections and can promptly communicate with target audiences. In this regard, the employees who administer library accounts in social networks should have clearly distributed their job responsibilities and set up all working mechanisms.

Evaluation of effectiveness

With regard to assessing the effectiveness of the work done, in order to understand whether the goals set for the library to popularize its museum collections are being fulfilled and whether corrective actions are required, it is necessary to define a system of performance indicators in advance and focus on them in the process (Nagieva, 2017). Library professionals should be able to measure community statistics every day, be able to create weekly reports on group / public activity, analyze the number of likes, the number of shares, the reach of subscribers, the number of people who joined or subscribed to the library profile, the number of unsubscribers, etc. (Senatorov, 2015).

The sections described above can become the main strategy document for popularizing Museum collections of a particular library in social networks, which over time can be adapted and adjusted to meet the needs of readers and constantly emerging new trends in social networks.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, our analysis of digital communication tools, with the help of which libraries popularize their museum collections on social networks, showed that the use of virtual tours, audio and video guides, virtual exhibitions, catalogs and social media helps to attract the attention of users as to really organized museum expositions in libraries, and virtual excursions, exhibitions, catalogs. However, not all libraries in the Republic of Belarus that use such digital communication tools to popularize their museum collections on the Internet carry out this type of activity effectively. This, in our opinion, determines the introduction of special disciplines into the educational process of educational institutions that train library personnel, aimed at their formation of professional knowledge, skills and abilities that will allow library specialists to effectively use digital communication tools to popularize museum collections on the Internet.

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