

## **THE INFLUENCE OF VIRTUALIZATION AND MUNICIPAL MUSEUMS IN THE ACTIVITIES ON THE HISTORICAL EDUCATION OF CITIZENS**

### ***A INFLUÊNCIA DA VIRTUALIZAÇÃO E DOS MUSEUS MUNICIPAIS NAS ATIVIDADES DE EDUCAÇÃO HISTÓRICA DE CIDADÃOS***

### ***LA INFLUENCIA DE LA VIRTUALIZACIÓN Y LOS MUSEOS MUNICIPALES EN LAS ACTIVIDADES DE EDUCACIÓN HISTÓRICA DE LOS CIUDADANOS***

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of the study is to reveal the influence of virtualization on the role and contribution of municipal museums to the activities of the historical education of citizens and the development of cultural tourism. Based on the analysis of scientific literature, the study examines the features of the functioning of municipal museums and analyzes the phenomenon of its virtualization. The study deals with the transformation of municipal museums into territorial socio-cultural centers. Based on the analysis of the work of the Museum Association "Museums of the Korolev science city", the contribution of municipal museums to the historical education of the population has been analyzed, recommendations for the creation of virtual exhibitions based on the website of the said Museum Association have been proposed. In the end, it was concluded that virtualization of municipal museums is a modern advertising tool that informs about the tourist benefits of the city and the region, increases the possibilities of museums for the historical education of citizens, and forms a new type of motivation for cultural tourism.

**KEYWORDS:** Municipal museum. Virtual museum. Virtualization. Education. History. Tourist and local history expeditions.

**RESUMO:** *O objetivo do estudo é revelar a influência da virtualização no papel e contribuição dos museus municipais nas atividades de formação histórica dos cidadãos e no desenvolvimento do turismo cultural. Com base na análise da literatura científica, o estudo examina as características de funcionamento dos museus municipais e analisa o fenômeno de sua virtualização. O estudo trata da transformação de museus municipais em centros socioculturais territoriais. Com base na análise do trabalho da Associação de Museus "Museus da cidade da ciência Korolev", foi analisada a contribuição dos museus municipais para a formação histórica da população, e recomendações para a criação de exposições virtuais com base no site do referido Associação de Museus foram propostas. Ao final, concluiu-se que a virtualização de museus municipais é uma moderna ferramenta publicitária que informa sobre os benefícios turísticos da cidade e da região, amplia as possibilidades dos museus para a formação histórica dos cidadãos e constitui um novo tipo de motivação para Turismo cultural.*

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Museu municipal. Museu virtual. Virtualização. Expedições de educação. História. Turismo e história local.

**RESUMEN:** El propósito del estudio es revelar la influencia de la virtualización en el papel y la contribución de los museos municipales a las actividades de educación histórica de los ciudadanos y al desarrollo del turismo cultural. A partir del análisis de la literatura científica, el estudio examina las características del funcionamiento de los museos municipales y analiza el fenómeno de su virtualización. El estudio aborda la transformación de los museos municipales en centros socioculturales territoriales. A partir del análisis del trabajo de la Asociación de Museos "Museos de la ciudad de la ciencia de Korolev", se ha analizado la contribución de los museos municipales a la educación histórica de la población, recomendaciones para la creación de exposiciones virtuales basadas en el sitio web de dicho Se han propuesto asociaciones de museos. Al final, se concluyó que la virtualización de los museos municipales es una moderna herramienta publicitaria que informa sobre los beneficios turísticos de la ciudad y la región, aumenta las posibilidades de los museos para la educación histórica de los ciudadanos y configura un nuevo tipo de motivación para Turismo cultural.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Museo municipal. Museo virtual. Virtualización. Educación. Historia. Expediciones turísticas e históricas locales.

## Introduction

The development of computer technology has caused the emergence of many different phenomena, one of which is "virtual museums". Its attraction lies in the free mass access of visitors to cultural heritage and world artistic achievements.

However, there is another side of the issue: not only the visitor is interested in finding and receiving impressions from cultural objects (the consumer goes to the museum) but cultural organizations, including municipal museums, having access to the Internet, as well as using the potential of mobile communications, new gadgets and social networks, also realize the opportunity of expanding the communication with visitors.

Currently, municipal museums practices provide a wide variety of educational events, such as educational tour cycles; museum public lectures; clubs for schoolchildren and preschoolers; educational projects, including engaging a wide range of participants; competitions; museums festivals, the off days of the museum; concerts, workshops, evening meetings, and performances; round tables, conferences, seminars, consultations, and symposiums; film, video screenings; presentations, etc.

Features the history and development of municipal museums, the composition and structure of their museum collections in a variety of types of the above activities increase the importance of historical education for both local people and tourists, holidaymakers residing

in other municipalities. This is largely facilitated by the transformation of the municipal museum into the territorial socio-cultural center, which can be greatly facilitated by the virtualization of the museum space since the boundaries between the distant original exhibits and their exact digital counterparts in the screen image are blurring. As a result, especially due to restrictions, for example, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the visitor gets the opportunity to engage the cultural and historical heritage. The museum also benefits from a convenient service of access to collections, increasing the interest of the audience in its activities.

Another issue of traditional municipal museums, as territorial socio-cultural centers, is that most of their collections in terms of accessibility are out of the reach of visitors due to the spatial limitations of the exhibition space. Therefore, traditional museums often have to turn to temporary exhibitions. Compared to it, virtual space appears as a living imitation of reality, in which a long (not limited in time) and indestructible life of virtual copies of real life artifacts placed in archives that are in digital form on the Internet is possible.

## **Literature Review**

The perception of the museum as such has undergone several changes in recent years. One of the large-scale studies (ARISTARKHOV *et al.*, 2019) has shown that the significance of the main values that the museum brought to society has transformed, the very concept of the museum has blurred in the perception of visitors. At the same time, the museum remains an integral part of the algorithms or stereotypes of consumer behavior or life scenarios of Russians.

In general, the educational activities of municipal museums are considered by many scientists (KARASEV, 2019; RYGALOVA, 2019b; MERCIU *et al.*, 2018). The analysis of these works and several others shows that the municipal museum and its partners see a significant difference between educational and enlightenment activities in domestic practice. Thus, within the framework of educational activities, the content of programs must correspond to the educational programs implemented in the relevant educational institutions.

Therefore, much attention in the study of educational activities is paid to the interaction of the municipal museum and the education sector, as well as higher education in general (MELNIK, 2019; MERTENS, 2019). Certainly, the role of museums in the formation of the historical consciousness of the population is recognized as key (KOLESNIKOVA, 2015; OVCHINNIKOVA, 2018; SHERESHEVA, KOLKOV, 2018). Practices of educational

and enlightenment work of municipal museums together with schools or higher educational institutions are well known.

Another research area is the study of the socio-cultural phenomenon of the municipal museum. The municipal museum appears as a space of social pedagogy, a direct participant, and more often an organizer of social partnership, a platform for social projects, building network interaction of various communities and structures (KRIVOSHEEVA, 2016; RYGALOVA, 2019a; BELYAEVA; POLYANSKOVA, 2016; NUYKINA *et al.*, 2016). Researchers talk about multiplication of the functions and tasks of the municipal museum as a socio-cultural center.

This is related to the accelerated integration of municipal museums and the tourism industry over the past few years, which has stimulated the search for their place in this industry. One can often find a tourist product on the market, whose program includes a visit to the municipal museum. Therefore, searching and analyzing the attractiveness of museum collections and their interpretation for tourists, studying the role and functions of municipal museums as attraction sites of tourist demand in small towns and rural areas should be constantly updated (BERDYUGINA, 2019; LESOVSKAYA, 2018; MARTYNOV, 2018; MERCIU *et al.*, 2018). This, in turn, has stimulated the search for uniqueness, authenticity, and originality directly in the collections of municipal museums (AGARKOVA, 2019; IVANOVA, 2018), which many see in local, regional history, connections with local dynasties, events, and phenomena (RYGALOV, 2019c; YUTINA, 2019; MERCIU *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the municipal museum becomes attractive to visit for various target audiences – residents, residents of nearby areas, tourists, professionals, schoolchildren and students, local historians etc.

The phenomenon of virtual museums as an independent object of scientific research has not yet received wide coverage, and the existing individual studies are of a general nature. This is because there is no clear definition of this concept; therefore, there are two ways to interpret it:

- a virtual museum is a museum that exists only in the virtual space and does not have representative offices of real-life museums (PESCARIN, 2014; HERMON; HAZAN, 2013);
- a virtual museum is a digital analog of the corresponding museum, which is presented on the institution's website, for example, using a virtual tour (SYLAIYOU *et al.*, 2008; KOSTAS *et al.*, 2009).

In accordance with the second definition, the peculiarities of the creation and support of museum representations in the virtual space, modern forms of museum communication, the

role of Internet technologies in the preservation of cultural heritage, the issues of using museum Internet projects as a source in historical research are considered. Researchers point to difficulties in the study, largely due to the dynamic development of the Internet.

Thus, in articles (LEBEDEV, 2006; TARANOVA, 2020) new ways of presenting exhibits on the Internet are considered. The characteristics of the software that is used to create virtual exhibitions, collections, excursions, the reconstruction of individual monuments or entire complexes, and the reconstruction of already lost objects and objects are partially given, the features of the implementation of the main functions carried out by virtual museums are highlighted, namely: educational, communicative and security (preservation of cultural heritage).

According to researchers (SAVAŞ; DUMAN; ŞAHİN, 2016), the use of Internet technologies in exhibition and exposition activities will allow museums to ensure the safety of museum collections, expand access for people who are physically unable to familiarize themselves with them, and provide its information support.

The issues that scientists focus on in studying the state of the "information presence" of museums on the Internet is the issue of clearly setting goals (why create an Internet resource) (ANDERSON, 2008); the issue of selection of museum information that is posted on the Internet (HUHTAMO, 2002); the issue of choosing the form of representation of museums in the virtual space (website, blog, forum, social networks) (MARTY, 2007); the issue of the professionalism of the development team (BENHAMOU, 2016); definition of the concept of a virtual museum and its main characteristics (NEGRI, 2012).

Despite the large number of publications related to the educational activities of the municipal museums themselves, their participation in educational projects and events, scientific ideas about the impact of virtualization on the role and contribution of municipal museums to the historical education of citizens and the development of cultural tourism have not acquired a comprehensive and systemic nature.

The hypothesis of the study: virtualization of municipal museums is a modern advertising tool that informs about the tourist benefits of the city and the region, increases the possibilities of museums for the historical education of citizens, and forms a new type of motivation for cultural tourism.

The objectives of the study:

1. to consider the transformation of municipal museums into territorial socio-cultural centers and the possibilities of virtualization in this process;

2. to analyze the contribution of municipal museums to the historical education of the population and the possibilities of virtualization in this process.

## Methods

The study used the following methods:

- source research and analysis of documents on the topic using methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization to determine the state of development of a scientific problem;
- information analysis method was used during the analysis of the information content and structure of museum Internet resources identified using the search engines, Google and Yandex, which allowed to study their content online;
- comparative method to compare different virtualization options for use by museums.

At the first stage of the research, the sources of information necessary to prove the hypothesis and solve the research problems were selected:

- the first group of sources: articles published in the indexed journals Scopus and Web of Science, and speeches at conferences of researchers, containing conceptual provisions on the role and contribution of museums in the activities of historical education of citizens and the development of cultural tourism;
- the second group of sources: articles published in the indexed journals Scopus and Web of Science, and speeches at conferences of researchers dedicated to the virtualization of the museum space.

At the second stage of the study, considering the existing limitations in the application of the document analysis method (the quality of the selected sources, their completeness, and the subjective positions of the authors), we conducted an expert survey (by e-mail) to assess the reliability of the selected sources.

The selection criteria for experts (23 people) were the presence of at least 3 articles on this topic published in journals included in the Scopus or Web of Science citation bases or at least 10 years of experience in municipal museums.

The experts assessed the list of sources on the Harrington scale and rated the selected documents as high on average (0.64-0.8).

At the third stage of the study, the analysis of the collected information was carried out, with the interpretation of the results.

Thus, the methods of scientific research and the research model used in the study allowed to not only consistently and logically present the material, but also to objectively reflect the features of virtualization in the practice of municipal museums.

## **Results and discussion**

In scientific and practical publications, one can find a widespread perception and understanding of the development model of the museum in the 21st century as a multifunctional cultural and scientific complex. At that, its role is reduced to forming a socio-cultural center of the region, which protects and uses the historical and cultural heritage through the study, design, restoration, and museumification of objects; developing scientific, educational, and enlightenment programs; restoring the system of traditional economy and crafts; implementing museum marketing and providing tourist and other services. Such a complex representation of the museum has a more modest scale for municipal institutions compared to regional or federal ones. However, it is noteworthy that the described concept is now being extended to municipal museums.

The historical heritage and social environment of the territory, as well as the implemented socio-cultural practices, become conditions for preserving and developing cultural and educational space. The identification, formation, support, and translation of history are concentrated in the activities of the municipal museum, which thereby turns into a tool for organizing and implementing socio-cultural processes and becomes a socio-cultural center within the boundaries of a certain territory.

The activity of the municipal museum on historical education reflects the attitude of society towards the natural and cultural heritage, so it becomes part of local cultural processes that have different areas, such as education, entertainment etc.

Municipal museums play an increasingly important role in the cultural revival, unity, and formation of civil society, taking on the functions and tasks of the socio-cultural institute. For the municipal museum, the fulfillment of the tasks of the socio-cultural center is expressed in the organization of a platform to investigate various social and cultural functions, of which the most important is historical education, which organically complements the main components of museum activities.

The activity of the municipal museum on historical education is associated with several functions of the municipal museum as a socio-cultural institution, and often is a driver of these functions, namely:



- socialization of museum relations (preservation of socio-cultural heritage, control over the formation, use, and storage of exhibits); historical education becomes one of the basic areas of use of museum objects and collections;
- coordination of research, educational, enlightenment, local history, and publication activities introduces historical education to the main tasks of the municipal museum;
- developed marketing activities, which are integral to the socio-cultural institute, encourage the municipal museum to more actively use the tools of tourist interpretation, introduce deeper segmentation of target audiences, implement a policy of personalization when receiving, serving, and building communications;
- integration of museum practices into the social medium through specific social groups emphasizes the search for various forms of educational work, including the new ones, the introduction of work elements outside the museum, and the encouragement of on-site activities for historical enlightenment.

Thus, the transformation of municipal museums into socio-cultural centers of territories actualizes the role of these institutions and increases the importance of their activities not only in the formation and support of historical memory but also in its translation. The study and preservation of historical and cultural heritage become the basis for solving the most important task of attractively presenting the history and culture of the municipality, and attracting the human in the cultural space, involving residents in creative activities. The museum starts to do the job, not just for residents' leisure and rendering tourist services, but solves the critical task of historical education, preservation, and interpretation of historical truth, reducing the destructive information impacts associated with the distortion of history.

An example of a municipal museum as a territorial socio-cultural center is the Salvador Dali Theater-Museum, Figueres, Spain. It provides opportunities for autonomous movement across the vastness of this unique institution. The virtual visitor has the opportunity to get acquainted with the layout of the museum and move from floor to floor. There is also a distance measurement option.



**Figure 1** – Fragment of the Salvador Dali Virtual Theater-Museum



Source: Author's collection

The space is organized as a huge stage with many decorations, images for hallucinations and illusions. Moving virtually through the space of the theater-museum, viewers can also visit its courtyard. The reception of virtual exhibits is largely based on allusion – one of the leading principles of the functioning of contemporary art.

The theater component plays a significant role in the functioning of the museum, which to a certain extent influences the interaction with visitors. Theatrical communication manifests itself as a multi-level process, involving the participation of curators of museum expositions and visitors.

In Russia, a municipal museum is usually the guardian of the historical memory of the local territory since it reflects various aspects in its collection, which contributes to their diversity. Many types of municipal museums are known. For example, in the Moscow Region, there are museum preserves, historical and art museums, local history museums, historical and literary museums, local history museums, memorial houses, house-museums, city museums, military history museums, museum associations, and museum and exhibition centers/complexes. However, regardless of what kind of institution the museum belongs to, it is quite difficult to identify a single specialization or direction for scientific research in museum collections. Museum collections reflect a diverse heritage, which creates prerequisites for the use of various options in the development of museum programs, their interpretation, and publication, including issues beyond the territory of the very museum.

The contribution of the municipal museum to historical education can be most significantly represented by the next example. For example, consider G.O. Korolev Municipal Budget Cultural Institution located in the Moscow Region – "Museum Association of Korolev Science City Museums" (n.d.) and its work on the preservation and transmission of memory about the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945).

The museums of Korolev science city are known for combining five authentic museum sites, where guests can get acquainted with the material and intangible cultural and historical heritage of the city. The broad semantic content of the exhibition space allows tourists and holidaymakers to learn about the history of literature and theater, everyday life, scientific achievements, space exploration, and much more.

The heritage of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) is represented in various artifacts, information, and programs at almost all sites of the Museum Association. Visitors can see original military equipment, expositions of household items that were used by soldiers and officers, learn the history of creating unique design solutions for famous artillery pieces. The Museum Association presents personal household items of Soviet soldiers and home front workers. Anti-fascist playing cards, the book "Satellite of the partisan" and other Museum items are exhibited in the Hall of Military Glory of the modern history sector of the urban Yubileyny microdistrict.

The topic of the Second World War is covered in the program "Nineteen-year-old forever" in the Memorial House-Museum of Marina Tsvetaeva in Bolshev.

The memorial House-Museum of Sergei Durylin, writer, poet, theater and literature theorist, religious thinker, Professor of the Russian University of Theatre Arts (GITIS), Doctor of Philology, priest of the Russian Orthodox Church, is a symbol of the 20th century. The house itself was built from the remains of the Strastnoy Monastery destroyed in Moscow. Durylin's book "Pen and Sword: Russian writers in the war of 1812" became the basis for the exhibition "Pen and sword", a joint project with the Moscow Panorama Museum "The Battle of Borodino". Interestingly, the book was published 77 years ago during the Great Patriotic War, when comparisons with the battles of 1812 were very important.

The destinies of people and the city are closely intertwined, so the excursion programs dedicated to the Great Patriotic War are not limited to the Museum space but go out to the streets of today's Korolev. These include the lectures "Heroes in our city", and the educational campaign "The history of one exhibit", implemented by the Museum Association "Museums of the Korolev science city". The Museum has restored and made available stories about the heroes of the Great Patriotic War, whose names were given to the streets of contemporary science city, some of these heroes lived or worked in the territory of today's Korolev.

Visitors can get a variety of information from videos about the engineering achievements of Soviet designers, their contribution to the Great Victory, including the legendary 45-mm anti-tank gun of the 1937 model (factory index 53-K), the 37-mm gun of

the 1939 model, and the ZIS-3 gun. It touches on the industrial history of the city, the history of plant No. 8 named after M. I. Kalinin, the works of M.N. Loginov, V.G. Grabin, and other designers who have worked in the Central Artillery Design Bureau from 1942 to 1945. Due to the efforts of the Museum Association, the exposition of the Memorial Cabinet of Vasily Grabin was created where the ZIS-3 gun and the 61-K anti-aircraft gun are exhibited.

The municipal museum, due to the specifics of its activities and the composition of its collections, has significant potential and greater impact on the visitor's impressions. Often, the emotions of a visitor to a municipal museum are deeper than when visiting the exposition or excursions of regional or federal museums. The main factor is the association with a specific area, famous people, events that residents of the municipality or their descendants remember. Besides, the "distance" between the museum object and the visitor in a municipal museum is much smaller than in large institutions. It is obvious, however, that such a strong impact will primarily be exerted on the quasi-tourist flow, i.e., on the residents of this municipality or the nearest populated localities.

The Museum Association "Museums of the Korolev science city" is currently represented on the Internet by a website (<http://museumkorolev.ru/>); there are the following sections: "Home", "About the Museum", "Current Events", "News", "Information for the Visitors", "Collections (About Funds)", "Media", "Science (Editions)", "Editions and Publications".

Figure 2 – Home page of the "Museums of the Korolev science city" site



Source: Author's collection

At the same time, to attract a larger number of visitors, including Russian citizens who are not residents of the city, as well as foreign citizens, based on the website of the Museum Association "Museums of the Korolev science city" it is possible to create an electronic museum exhibition on any topic related to the historical education of the population.

On many websites of Russian museums, one can find photographic materials that are positioned by the organizers as electronic exhibitions, and in most cases, this is an ordinary photo gallery in which photographs of exhibits are collected chaotically, without any logic (LEBEDEV, 2006). Often, on the websites of Russian museums, the materials presented do not have the characteristics that are inherent in electronic exhibitions. The most significant characteristics of electronic exhibitions are interactivity and multimedia aspects – the combination of various types of information, such as text, graphics, sound, video, and animation.

According to the authors, considering the possibilities of modern communication in consumers (SHUBTSOVA *et al.*, 2020; TROSHIN *et al.*, 2020), an electronic exhibition on the website of the museum association "Museums of the Korolev science city" will be able to provide additional opportunities:

- more opportunities for perception: demonstrating exhibits in the form of slide shows, photo tours, using all the possibilities of computer graphics to demonstrate digitized copies of museum items (SAVAŞ *et al.*, 2016); quickly replacing the image of the exhibits and their location (MARTY, 2007);
- wide audience: exhibitions on the museum's website can be viewed by everyone who is connected to the Internet;
- expanded opportunities for the demonstration of exhibits: a larger number of exhibits can be presented, historical information is provided as well;
- expansion of interaction with the consumer: a visitor can express their attitude to the exhibition in different ways, increase interest in exhibits, and get acquainted with historical objects by remote means (TARANOVA, 2020);
- there are no geographical and time restrictions: any electronic exhibition is open, relatively speaking, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is accessible from anywhere in the world, unlike a real exhibition, which is held for a certain time and is strictly localized (ANDERSON, 2008; PONKRATOVA *et al.*, 2021).

## **Conclusion**

The work of municipal museums focused on the history education of citizens is implemented in tourism, quasi-tourism, as well as in communication with the local population. The role of municipal museums in the course of historical education involves intense activities towards the formation, support, and transmission of historical memory, which in turn affects the historical consciousness of the individual. Municipal museums, by identifying and exhibiting artifacts of material and intangible heritage that are translators of history, support the processes of cultural diversity, including globalization, that is, identification of an increasing number of features of local cultures.

The role of municipal museums in historical education among children and young people is extremely relevant and important. The established practice of preferences of large (regional and federal) museums in the organization of tourist and excursion trips, expanding the general outlook, impoverishes knowledge of the history of the small homeland. Knowledge about great events, such as the Great Patriotic War, is often not associated with a place of permanent residence. The general information that is repeatedly reflected in learning materials, excursions, and television programs, supports a certain superficial representation that does not touch the emotions of today's youth. The municipal museum has higher potential for embedding its content in educational programs of educational institutions, increasing the effectiveness of tourist interpretation of historical heritage. The attributes of museum objects and collections associated with a specific territory allow creating an extremely clear association of historical events and those cultural spaces that are relevant for young people.

Thus, the results of the study confirmed its hypothesis that virtualization of municipal museums is a modern advertising tool that informs about the tourist benefits of the city and the region, increases the possibilities of museums for the historical education of citizens, and forms a new type of motivation for cultural tourism.

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