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## Digital audiovisual practices as social communication technologies: Transformation of cultural narratives

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**Abstract.** The aim of the study was to identify the mechanisms and directions of transformation of cultural narratives in the digital environment and to determine the role of digital media in the formation of new forms of collective memory. An interdisciplinary approach was employed, combining methods of discursive analysis, structural-semantic modelling, and cultural hermeneutics to identify patterns of change in cultural narratives within the digital space. The study demonstrated that the category of the “cultural narrative” in contemporary humanities has ceased to be merely a narrative structure and has instead become a complex of meaning-producing practices that shape collective ways of interpreting the past, present, and future. An analysis of historiographical approaches showed that the narrative representation of history is an act of constructing meaning rather than reproducing facts, which determines the specificity of cultural discourses. A comparative analysis of classical and media-oriented theories revealed two main developmental tendencies: a shift from the grammar of storytelling to technologies of memory. In the digital age, cultural narratives acquire a modular, fragmentary, and multiple structure, giving rise to new modes of representing experience. It was determined that digital audiovisual practices influence narrative processes through three mechanisms – interactivity, visualisation, and algorithmisation – which transform the ways cultural meanings are produced and perceived. These mechanisms are considered key factors in the transformation of social communication practices under conditions of digitalisation, as they redefine the forms of interaction, circulation of meanings, and public engagement with cultural memory. In the Ukrainian context, digital initiatives in the field of cultural heritage, including the digitisation of museum collections and online archives, combine the functions of preservation and representation of national culture under conditions of war. This indicates the emergence of a new type of narrative – interactive, networked, and hybrid – combining local memory with global visibility. The digital transformation of cultural narratives has revealed both the potential for democratising access to culture and the risks of algorithmic inequality and loss of depth of content. Preserving cultural autonomy in the digital environment requires the integration of technological innovation with critical awareness and institutional support. The results of the study may be used in the development of strategies for digital humanities, cultural policy, social communication technologies, and programmes for the digital preservation of Ukraine’s cultural heritage

**Keywords:** memory construction; collective consciousness; social communication; digital documentation

## ■ Introduction

In the age of digital culture and profound social transformations of the twenty-first century, the issue of constructing personal and collective identity has acquired exceptional relevance. Identity is no longer perceived as a fixed structure or a set of immutable characteristics; instead, it has become a dynamic process of self-reflection in which thought, narrative, and memory form a single ontological continuum. These processes are inseparably connected with transformations in the social communication environment, where digital media increasingly function as the primary instruments for transmitting, reshaping, and institutionalising cultural meanings. Global challenges – from war and migration processes to the rapid development of artificial intelligence – have made questions of human self-understanding, the authenticity of cultural practices, and the interpretation of the past central to the humanities. In the Ukrainian context, where processes of self-identification are closely intertwined with historical trauma, media representations, and cultural change, the analysis of narrative forms has become a necessary tool for understanding sociocultural mechanisms of resilience and transformation.

Scholarly studies from 2021 to 2025 have shown that the phenomenon of identity has been interpreted through the prism of narrativity and digital practices. In the work of B. Wojciechowski (2024), identity was understood as the result of a reflexive process without

a static dimension, unfolding as dynamic self-construction through thinking and self-consciousness. The author emphasised that narrative functioned not merely as a storytelling tool but as a means of shaping the temporal structure of experience, in which the sequence of events reflected the logic of personal becoming. The researcher argued that plot organisation is a formative principle that ensures the unity and semantic completeness of the individual narrative. The study by M.L. Nappi *et al.* (2024) focused on digital forms of cultural heritage, where narrativity manifested through cataloguing systems, digital archives, and institutional communication. An analysis of the evolution of Italian participatory platforms showed that the transition from traditional guides to interactive digital libraries opened up opportunities for creating new forms of knowledge. The authors noted that the integration of Big Data and digital tools in museum environments not only enriched cultural experience but also shaped new types of narratives – hybrid, modular, and intermedial.

The study by T.E. Onyejelem & E.M. Aondover (2024) developed the concept of generative digital multimedia tools (DGMTT), which transform digital content into a product of algorithmic creativity. Within this theory, narratives emerged as results of interaction between human intention and machine processes, necessitating a new ethics and ontology of creativity. In the article by C.I. Ienciu (2024), attention was focused on the legacy

of Hayden White and his concept of the “value of narrativity” in representing reality. The author showed that, through the opposition between real and imaginary discourses, H. White emphasised the subjective nature of historical descriptions, which was of direct relevance for understanding contemporary narrative forms in which the boundary between fact and artistic interpretation became increasingly blurred. The work of B.F.K. Norambuena & T. Mitra (2021) expanded the boundaries between narrative theory and computational systems by proposing the model of a “narrative map” – a tool that visualised the structure of a story as a route of events. This approach opened up prospects for automated analysis of plot connections, necessary for digital journalism and the analysis of disinformation. Studies by M. Cai *et al.* (2025) and S.F. Sakarang *et al.* (2025) laid the foundations of a contemporary theory of narrative visualisation, demonstrating how data could be transformed into empathetic stories through interactive graphics, video, and multimodal techniques. Both works highlighted the potential of digital tools to expand the communicative capacities of science and art, while also drawing attention to the risks of emotional superficiality and loss of deep meaning.

Media studies and communication theory make it possible to interpret digital cultural narratives not only as textual or symbolic constructions, but also as socially mediated processes of meaning circulation. In particular, studies of social media memory show that digital platforms blur the distinction between commemorative and everyday communication, because memory is increasingly produced through comments, hashtags, posts, reposts, visual materials, and platform-specific interaction patterns. A. Ben-David *et al.* (2024) emphasise that social media require new methodological approaches to collective memory, since remembrance is shaped by both large-scale data flows and platform-specific cultural norms. Their framework is useful for the present study because it allows digital narratives to be examined as dynamic social communication practices rather than as stable narrative texts. H. Hastuti *et al.* (2025) show that digital platforms and algorithms mediate the production, distribution, and evaluation of news, reconfiguring gatekeeping and prioritising engagement metrics. Although their study focuses on journalism, its conclusions are applicable to cultural communication more broadly, since cultural narratives are also shaped by algorithmic ranking, recommendation systems, audience metrics, and platform-dependent visibility.

Despite considerable attention to issues of identity, narrativity, and digital forms of communication, the question of integrating these directions into a unified analytical model remained unresolved. Previous studies either focused on individual identity or on the technical aspects of digital systems, while the interaction between the reflexive “self”, cultural context, and algorithmic media ecology remained only fragmentarily explored. The

aim of the study was to systematise contemporary approaches to the study of narrative identity in the context of digital culture and to identify the main mechanisms through which technological media influence the formation of personal and collective narratives, with the purpose of developing a theoretical model applicable to the analysis of social communication practices in the digital age. The objectives of the study were to synthesise theoretical models of narrative identity in contemporary humanities; to compare cultural, media, and technological factors of identity transformation; and to identify the cognitive and communicative mechanisms that ensure the stability or variability of narrative structure in the digital environment.

## Materials and Methods

The methodological structure of the article corresponded to the interdisciplinary approach adopted in contemporary social communication studies, combining cultural, media, documentary, archival, and socio-political analysis to examine the transformation of cultural narratives in the digital age. The study focused not only on the theoretical interpretation of digital narratives, but also on the analysis of specific documentary sources, statistical reports, digital cultural projects, and institutional practices that demonstrate how cultural meanings are produced, circulated, preserved, and reinterpreted in the digital environment.

The empirical basis of the study included four groups of materials:

- ✓ Documents of international organisations and institutional programmes: UNESCO’s Action plan for culture in Ukraine (UNESCO, 2024), the ICOM-SAREC Ukraine project report (ICOM, 2024), and the UNESCO/ICCROM programme Endangered Heritage: Emergency Evacuation of Heritage Collections used in cooperation with the Maidan Museum (ICCROM, 2022).

- ✓ Statistical and analytical data on media consumption and digital communication in Ukraine: DataReportal’s Digital 2025: Ukraine report (Kemp, 2025), the 2025 survey on Ukrainians’ news consumption (How do Ukrainians, 2025), and the Media Literacy Index of Ukrainians... (2025).

- ✓ Digital projects and institutional cases in the Ukrainian cultural field: Mystetskyi Arsenal’s electronic editions of exhibition catalogues (Mystetskyi Arsenal presents..., 2025), PinchukArtCentre’s (2025) digital educational materials and online exhibition formats, the Maidan Museum’s cooperation with UNESCO/ICCROM, the Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab’s (2025) digitisation initiatives, and UBIENNALE (2025) as a case of digital and new media art.

- ✓ Scientific publications from 2019-2025 devoted to cultural narratives, digital memory, media practices, digital heritage, social communication, document studies, archival studies, and library science. Particular attention was given to studies on social communication

processes (Kholod, 2023), virtual culture archiving (Trach, 2025), archival and library affairs in Ukraine (Dubrovina et al., 2025).

The analysis was conducted in three stages. At the first stage, the digital communication environment was described through statistical and analytical reports on internet use, social media activity, video content consumption, and media literacy in Ukraine. This made it possible to define the communication conditions in which digital cultural narratives circulate. At the second stage, digital cultural projects and institutional initiatives were examined in order to identify changes in the representation of cultural memory, heritage, and identity. At the third stage, the mechanisms of narrative transformation were systematised into three analytical categories: interactivity, visualisation, and algorithmisation. These mechanisms were then interpreted as factors influencing the production, dissemination, and social perception of cultural meanings. The conceptual-analytical method was used to systematise the theoretical approaches to cultural narratives, narrative identity, digital memory, and social communication. This method made it possible to identify the conceptual links between narrative theory, media studies, digital humanities, and the theory of social communications. In particular, it was applied to distinguish cultural narrative not only as a textual or symbolic structure, but also as a communicative and documentary formation that exists within digital platforms, archives, audiovisual interfaces, and institutional repositories.

The method of documentary analysis was applied to primary documentary sources, including reports, institutional documents, project descriptions, official announcements, and materials of international organisations. This method was used to examine how digital cultural heritage was described, classified, preserved, and represented in documents produced by UNESCO, ICOM-SAREC, ICCROM, Ukrainian cultural institutions, and digital heritage initiatives. The documentary approach made it possible to analyse digital narratives as documented traces of cultural memory, while archival and library science perspectives helped to interpret digitisation as a process of selection, metadata organisation, access provision, and long-term preservation. Discursive analysis was used to identify recurring themes, semantic oppositions, and dominant interpretative frames in the textual descriptions accompanying digital exhibitions, online cultural projects, institutional reports, and digital heritage initiatives. Special attention was paid to such semantic oppositions as preservation/destruction, local memory/global visibility, heritage/war, documentation/representation, and cultural autonomy/platform dependence. This method made it possible to determine how cultural institutions construct the meaning of digital heritage and how Ukrainian cultural narratives are framed in the context of war, international communication, and digital preservation.

Structural-semantic modelling was applied to compare narrative schemes in traditional and digital forms of cultural representation. The comparison included museum catalogues and their electronic versions, online exhibitions, audiovisual guides, digital archives, and interactive cultural projects. This method made it possible to identify structural shifts from linear and institutionally controlled narratives to modular, networked, and user-oriented forms of representation. The modelling focused on three parameters: the structure of the narrative, the role of the audience, and the mode of access to cultural meaning. The comparative-structural method was used to compare different levels of digital representation, from global models of digital cultural communication to local Ukrainian cases of heritage digitisation, digital art, and online cultural mediation. This method enabled the identification of similarities and differences between traditional forms of cultural representation, such as printed catalogues, museum exhibitions, and television formats, and digital forms, such as social media narratives, video platforms, VR/AR projects, online archives, and digital art practices. The content-functional approach was applied to interpret digital audiovisual practices as social communication actions rather than merely technological products. It was used to examine how video content, visual projects, interactive interfaces, digital catalogues, and online exhibitions perform communicative functions: informing audiences, preserving memory, generating emotional involvement, legitimising cultural meanings, and supporting international visibility. In this context, indicators such as reach, accessibility, interactivity, visual format, and institutional mediation were treated as contextual variables that influence the circulation of cultural narratives.

The empirical-descriptive method was used to synthesise statistical indicators from open reports and surveys. Data on internet use, social media reach, YouTube audience size, news consumption, and media literacy were not used to analyse individual audience behaviour but to describe the broader media environment in which cultural narratives are produced and disseminated. These data made it possible to substantiate the argument that digital platforms have become central infrastructures for the circulation of cultural meanings in Ukraine. The institutional-analytical approach was applied to examine the role of Ukrainian and international cultural institutions in the digital preservation and representation of heritage. The study analysed the activities of *Mystetskyi Arsenal*, *PinchukArtCentre*, the *Maidan Museum*, the *Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab*, and *UBIENNALE 2025*. These cases were selected because they represent different forms of digital cultural mediation: electronic catalogues, online educational resources, emergency heritage preservation, digitisation of museum objects, and digital/new media art. The selection criterion was the public availability of digital

materials and their relevance to the transformation of cultural narratives in Ukraine.

Thus, the methodological framework of the study was based on the integration of social communication theory, media studies, document studies, archival studies, library science, and cultural analysis. This made it possible to examine digital cultural narratives not only as symbolic constructions, but also as communicative, documentary, institutional, and technological phenomena. The combination of conceptual, documentary, discursive, structural–semantic, comparative, and empirical–descriptive methods ensured a comprehensive analysis of how interactivity, visualisation, and algorithmisation transform the production, preservation, and public circulation of cultural memory in the digital age.

## ■ Results

### **Theoretical and methodological foundations for the study of cultural narratives in the digital age**

In the humanities, the category of the “cultural narrative” focuses attention not merely on the structure of a story, but on a set of meaning-producing practices that shape collective frameworks for interpreting the past, present, and future within a particular group or society. The historiographical tradition, represented by the works of H. White (1984), highlighted a fundamental problem: history, as a scholarly discursive practice, constructs meanings through narrative operations (tropology, the choice of an explanatory mode) rather than uncovering “pure” facts as such; this means that cultural narratives should be considered discursive constructions with their own formal-semantic logic, which is subject to critical analysis. In parallel, the philosophical tradition added a dimension concerning plausibility and the interpretative function of narrative: narrative not only structures events in time, but also creates meaningful models of identity and collective memory that have emotional and normative consequences for society (Paul, 2011). The evolution of approaches in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries can be traced in two complementary directions. The first – classical narratology and historiography – analyses the grammar of storytelling (protagonists, plot, cause-and-effect relations), revealing how these elements shape historical scenarios and legitimise political decisions (Eiranen *et al.*, 2022). The second – cultural and media analyses – focuses on the products of mass and popular culture (cinema, television, public rhetoric), demonstrating that narratives function as technologies of memory and representation and have material carriers and institutions that modulate their effectiveness (De Kosnik, 2016).

The analytical layer of contemporary theory of cultural narratives emphasises three operational processes: the selectivity of representation (what enters a narrative and what is excluded), intertextuality (the crossing of narratives across genres and media), and authorisation

(who has the right to create “official” narratives). Each of these processes has empirically measurable markers: the frequency of themes in media discourse, the citation of sources in political speeches, and changes in semantic fields (frequent word co-occurrences) in text corpora (White, 1984). The turn to “post-print” and digital contexts has forced a reconsideration of classical notions of narrative: in the digital environment, narratives exist in formats where the central features are no longer linearity and sequence, but modularity, fragmentation, and mnemonic multiplicity (multiple versions, remixes, interactive scenarios) (Manovich, 2002). This means that cultural narratives are not only texts/stories, but complex practices with different modes of delivering meaning – from individually authored videos to large-scale transmedia campaigns. The transition from linear to modular narrative forms changes not only the structure of storytelling but also the models of social communication: the audience becomes an active participant in the production, interpretation, and redistribution of meanings. In this context, fragmented digital narratives correspond to participatory communication, where users comment on, remix, supplement, and circulate cultural content across different platforms (Koenitz, 2023). As a result, narrative communication becomes networked and dialogic, while cultural memory is formed through multiple interactions rather than through a single authoritative narrative source.

The transition of cultural representation into the digital age is accompanied by structural changes in the media ecology: the characteristics of new media – numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability, and transcoding – have been identified as operational principles of digital forms that transform the ways cultural narratives are created and disseminated. These principles make digital audiovisual products (videos, streams, short formats, interactive documentary projects) flexible in transmedia deployment: a single piece of content can be easily fragmented, reworked, and reintroduced into other narrative fields. There are two interconnected levels of influence of digital audiovisual practices. The first is that low barriers to entry and standardised content-creation mechanics (mobile cameras, simple editors, platform templates) have expanded the circle of creators and, as a result, the diversity of narratives. The second is that platform algorithms determine which of thousands of fragments becomes visible to a mass audience, thereby performing a function of “governance” and effectively influencing which narratives consolidate as dominant. This produces changes in the properties of narratives themselves. Traditional grand narratives (e.g., state-centred historical accounts) undergo fragmentation on digital platforms: they are broken down into micro-narratives circulating across different genres and formats. Such switching complicates the task of controlling and validating historical meanings, but at the same time creates

opportunities for dialogic reproduction and the preservation of alternative memories. Analytically, this is reflected in the growth of video consumption and social video content: in 2025, YouTube in Ukraine reached about 56.4% of the population (21.6 million users) and 68.5% of all internet users in the country, illustrating the role of video as a primary carrier of meaning and information (Kemp, 2025). These figures indicate that audiovisual practices have become the central channel for the formation and transmission of cultural narratives. This statistic indicates that YouTube functions as one of the leading social communication platforms in Ukraine, shaping the character of media consumption and influencing the circulation of cultural meanings in the digital environment. Thus, the Ukrainian digital media environment demonstrates that cultural narratives increasingly function as socially mediated, platform-dependent, and transnational forms of communication that connect memory preservation with public representation (Kholod, 2023).

In the Ukrainian context, digital audiovisual practices acquired a sociocultural function under conditions of war and societal mobilisation. The digitisation of cultural heritage (scanning, archiving, online exhibitions), online performances, and streaming initiatives served not only as means of preservation, but also as instruments of international communication and of shaping an external narrative about events in Ukraine. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2024) and European programmes responded to these needs through funding and technical support, as well as initiatives in digital preservation and training; for example, UNESCO documents on cultural action for Ukraine indicate the priority of digital tools in preserving and promoting culture during conflict. This means that digital audiovisual practices in Ukraine play a dual role – as local resistance and as a global communicative channel. In the digital media space, narratives cease to be monolithic, linear storytelling structures and move towards multi-level, modular, and adaptive configurations (Tukhtarova et al., 2021). This transition is driven by three interrelated mechanisms – interactivity, visualisation, and algorithmisation – each of which has its own diagnostic logic, empirical indicators, and consequences for processes of constructing collective meaning. The integration of these mechanisms produces qualitatively new regimes of cultural representation in which questions of legitimation, visibility, verification, and emotional modulation of narratives become significant. Interactivity transforms narrative from a passive text into a procedural practice of co-creating meaning. It includes two closely related dynamics: the blurring of boundaries between producer and audience and the emergence of real-time feedback loops (Takala, 2023). Theoretically, this makes it possible to speak of a “platform periphery” as a new field of narrative production: the audience not only consumes a finished story but also generates

its fragments, which can then enter broader narratives. From a narratological perspective, the key point is that interactivity changes the authority of the source: narratives can simultaneously have numerous “small authorisations” (local groups, influencers), which complicates the function of centralised validation of memory (Yusifova & Kazimi, 2025). This creates new risks (disinformation, fragmentation of memory) but also opens space for the pluralisation of voices, including those of marginalised groups.

Visualisation, as a mechanism of narrative transformation, operates on two levels: transforming data into images (infographics, charts, interactive maps) and the dominance of an audiovisual emotional code in communication (video and photo content as the primary carrier of meaning) (Shao et al., 2025). It is important to distinguish between visualisation as an analytical means (data visualisation for interpreting complex processes) and visuality as a performative instrument (video clips, memes, photos as attention-grabbing signals that generate rapid affective responses). Visualisation increases the persuasive effect of a narrative regardless of its factual accuracy, which makes verification methods (metadata, provenance, reverse image search) a critical task in research. For Ukraine, examples are characteristic of the active use of visual formats in documenting events (not only artistic projects, but also journalistic investigations with audiovisual evidence); these formats give narratives “illustrative weight”, facilitating their rapid diffusion online (Serbina et al., 2022).

Algorithmisation models the visibility of narratives at a scale that is currently practically inaccessible to any other intellectual instrument. Search and recommendation algorithms act as an “intermediary actor” that not only selects content according to relevance parameters, but also shapes the spatial cartography of audience attention. Two directions should be distinguished: the technical (mathematical) architecture of the algorithm – as a selection factor (e.g., watch time, click-through rate (CTR), interactions) – and the socio-political consequences of such selection (filter bubbles, algorithmic discrimination against certain cultural forms). Algorithmisation generates the problem of “invisible censorship”: deviation from trends automatically reduces the chances of a narrative becoming widely accessible, regardless of its ethical or historical significance. The combination of interactivity, visualisation, and algorithmisation produces new qualitative effects. Narratives become fragmented and multi-level; the process of narrative legitimation depends not only on the evidential base, but on the platform and its algorithmic priorities – making platform analysis an element of any narrative study. Digital mechanisms increase the pace of narrative change: social waves can reach critical mass within days or hours, and then fade or shift just as quickly. Digital mechanisms for narrative diffusion are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Digital mechanisms of narrative diffusion

Mechanism	Description	Operational indicators
Interactivity	The dynamics of audience co-creation of narratives through two-way communication, remixes, and user-generated content (UGC). There is a shift from the role of author towards shared "prosumption", where user feedback influences the evolution of the cultural plot	Number of comments and reposts; share of UGC within thematic hashtags; rate of remix emergence; engagement rate (= interactions/impressions)
Visualisation	Transforming information into visual forms (video, infographics, interactive maps, VR spaces). Visual code becomes the main carrier of emotional content, influencing the speed of perception and validation of cultural narratives	Share of visual content in thematic streams; number of video views/shares; number of visual artefacts with metadata (geolocation, date); average watch time
Algorithmisation	The shaping of cultural narratives through algorithms for selecting and ranking content on digital platforms. Recommendation systems determine which plots become "visible", influencing collective imaginaries and memory	Frequency of topics appearing in recommendation feeds; CTR and watch time as visibility factors; reach coefficient for different content types; visibility gap between cultural and commercial topics

Source: compiled by the authors based on L. Manovich (2002), G.B. Takala (2023), H. Metzler & D. Garcia (2023)

Table 1 demonstrates that each mechanism has its own measurability and set of methods, but real influence on narrative can be understood only through their integrated study. Interactivity provides polyphony of voices and makes narratives dynamic; visualisation strengthens the emotional and perceptual efficiency of narratives; algorithmisation determines which of these narratives actually reaches a wide audience. The combined effect means that a narrative may be emotionally powerful (visualisation) and widely remixed (interactivity) yet remain marginal if platforms do not "support" it algorithmically. This underscores the importance of platform policy as an integral part of cultural policy. For the Ukrainian context, the table highlights practical priorities: the need to finance infrastructural backup, develop authentication/provenance tools for visual content, cultivate skills in digital public history within museum and cultural institutions, and develop strategies of "platform diplomacy" – that is, organised communication campaigns that take algorithmic rules into account and target international audiences.

As regards the Ukrainian cultural space itself, in the digital age it is characterised by a combination of intensified domestic content production, an external need for international communication, and active efforts at the digital preservation of cultural heritage. Under conditions of intensive aggression (2022-2025), these processes acquired an additional palliative-political function: digital platforms serve as channels for mobilising international support, documenting crimes against culture, and preserving local memories (Kovalenko, 2025). Infrastructural and demographic indicators determine the potential of digital influence. According to analytical reports, the prevalence of social networks and internet access in Ukraine remain high, creating appropriate conditions for the rapid circulation of digital narratives: according to the Digital 2025 overview for Ukraine, at the beginning of 2025 there were about 21.6 million active social media accounts in the country, illustrating mass reach through digital platforms. Such audience dimensions mean that media practices – especially audiovisual ones – have the potential to shape both local and transnational narratives (Kemp, 2025). Thus, the Ukrainian digital media

environment demonstrates that cultural narratives increasingly function as socially mediated, platform-dependent, and transnational forms of communication that connect memory preservation with public representation.

### Digital preservation of cultural heritage in Ukraine: Institutional practices

Within state initiatives, the digital preservation of Ukraine's cultural heritage includes the creation of registers and the digitisation of holdings. Thus, the Action plan for culture in Ukraine (UNESCO, 2024) states that there are more than 12 million artefacts in over 970 museums and 2,500 public collections, but only about 10% of holdings have been digitised. These indicators point to the critical state of cultural heritage documentation and highlight the need to develop more effective tools and methods for preserving, describing, systematising, and providing access to cultural information. With regard to institutional initiatives, one example is Mystetskyi Arsenal, which published free electronic editions of exhibition catalogues (including the catalogue *Imprint. Ukrainian Printmaking of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries*) with safe online access (Mystetskyi Arsenal presents..., 2025). The announcement also notes that the electronic editions are available for free viewing and that the collection of publications will be expanded. This means that the institution not only digitised materials but made them publicly accessible, thereby expanding the audience and strengthening the role of digital cultural representation. Another example is the PinchukArtCentre (2025) in Kyiv, which provides audio guides and video tours of exhibitions, allowing audiences to engage with content remotely.

In the civic and international segment, a significant example is the participation of the ICOM-SAREC project for Ukraine, oriented towards the digital preservation of museum collections: the "ICOM4Ukraine" project supported the digitisation of collections and the registration of Ukrainian museums on international platforms to increase international visibility (ICOM, 2024). Similarly, within the Maidan Museum project in Kyiv, in cooperation with UNESCO/ICCROM, the manual *Endangered Heritage: Emergency Evacuation of Heritage Collections*

was translated into Ukrainian, indicating international cooperation in the protection and digitisation of cultural heritage (ICROM, 2022). From a technological perspective, for example, the Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab (2025) reports that as of 2025 more than 12,000 museum objects had been digitised, more than 100,000 images created, and mobile digitisation centres were operating in Kyiv and Lviv. This confirms that not only high-level projects but also practical implementation is taking place. As for war as a catalyst – for example, a piece concerning Odesa museums notes that by early 2023 more than 5,400 files from 30+ museum collections had been digitised (Chernetska, 2024). Overall, these examples demonstrate that the digital preservation and representation of cultural heritage in Ukraine is being implemented at state, institutional, and international levels – with concrete indicators, technological resources, and cooperation.

The political and international dimension of narrative transformation in Ukraine deserves separate attention. The combination of local digital activity and international communication channels creates multiscalar narratives: internal narratives of resilience and resistance intersect with external diplomatic narratives about aggression and the need for assistance. The dynamics of such intersections affect both memory politics and cultural diplomacy. However, international programmes supporting digitisation (UNESCO, ICOM-SAREC, etc.) not only fund technical solutions but also perform a narrative function, amplifying stories about heritage preservation as part of the global cultural order. Under these conditions, digitisation acquires not merely a technical meaning but becomes an element of cultural security and resilience. The effectiveness of digital documentation is determined not only by the quantitative scale of digitisation, but also by compliance with international metadata standards, which ensure interoperability, searchability, and long-term accessibility of digital resources. In this context, the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set is important as a basic cross-domain model for describing digital objects through standardised elements such as title, creator, subject, date, format, and identifier; it supports the consistent description and discovery of heterogeneous cultural resources (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, 2024). The Europeana Data Model is also relevant for cultural heritage institutions, as it enables the aggregation, connection, and enrichment of metadata from museums, archives, and libraries and supports the representation of complex cultural objects within a semantic and interoperable framework (Europeana Pro, 2025). Therefore, the digitisation of Ukrainian cultural heritage should be understood not only as the creation of digital copies, but also as a documentary and archival process that requires metadata standardisation, institutional coordination, and long-term preservation strategies. Overall, these examples demonstrate that the digital preservation and representation of cultural

heritage in Ukraine is being implemented at state, institutional, and international levels – with concrete indicators, technological resources, and cooperation.

### **Practical manifestations and trends in the transformation of cultural narratives in Ukraine**

Digital audiovisual practices in Ukraine encompass a range of phenomena – from social media and blogging to digital art and documentary-making – each of which functions as a means of creating, representing, and circulating cultural narratives. First and foremost, social networks and messaging apps have become one of the leading platforms through which Ukrainian users receive information, stories, cultural plots, and forms of self-representation. According to a study, 86% of respondents in Ukraine used social media to obtain news in 2025; 37% of those surveyed stated that social media was their only source of information (How do Ukrainians..., 2025). Thus, social media create a mass channel for representing cultural meanings – from memes, through blogs, to videos and stories – and thereby form new narratives that go beyond traditional media. These indicators point to a structural shift in Ukraine's media landscape, where social networks have partly assumed the functions traditionally performed by mass media, transforming not only the consumption but also the production and circulation of cultural narratives. Thus, social media create a mass channel for representing cultural meanings – from memes, through blogs, to videos and stories – and thereby form new narratives that go beyond traditional media. Blogging and vlogging are another audiovisual practice gaining prominence in Ukraine. Video platforms such as YouTube occupy a significant share of users' time: according to 2024 data, 58% of Ukrainians watched videos and films online (Media Literacy Index..., 2025). Bloggers and video creators of Ukrainian origin produce content that covers cultural themes – history, art, war, youth culture – and this content takes the form of an audiovisual narrative: a video story, the author's commentary, sound, and editing. This format changes the mode of reception: instead of reading a text or watching a television programme, the user receives a personalised video story that is interactive (comments, likes, subscriptions) and can be remixed or reposted.

Digital art in Ukraine is another relevant direction that combines audiovisuality with technological innovation. For example, the project UBIENNALE (2025) presented more than 35 works from 10 countries in formats such as Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality/Mixed Reality (AR/VR/MR), generative art, and interactive installation. In addition, an article analysing Ukrainian digital art during the full-scale war recorded a trend: most wartime posters are digital art, which became one of the leading media used by Ukrainian artists during this period (Sydorenko et al., 2023). These practices create narratives of resistance, memory, and cultural identity that circulate both locally and globally. Such initiatives indicate the emergence of

a new type of publishing and exhibition practice under the conditions of digital technologies, where traditional forms of cultural presentation are increasingly supplemented or replaced by multimodal digital formats.

Documentary practice is also adapting to digital audiovisual realisation: online documentary films, interactive web projects, and multimedia stories about war, culture, displaced persons, and other topics. An example is the DOCU/SYNTHESIS project (Docudays UA, 2025), which in 2025 received 188 applications, selected 32 participants, and produced 10 finalist projects ("How We Remember") with an emphasis on digital heritage, memory, and multimedia. This shift towards digital audiovisualisation means that narrative within the cultural space becomes not only a linear story but a multimodal experience (video + sound + interface + audience participation). The outcome of all these practices is a radical transformation of cultural narratives: they become more dynamic, more fragmented, more multi-format, and more globalised. For example, Ukraine's digital artistic content creates means of communicating with international audiences (through VR installations, online exhibitions) while also producing local narratives (war memory, cultural resistance, remembrance).

The perception and dissemination of cultural meanings undergo fundamental changes in the digital era: the media ecology, forms of interaction, the pace of circulation, and the boundaries of authorship are all modified (Dyomin *et al.*, 2021). Above all, digital media transform modes of reception: audiences perceive meanings through multimedia formats – video, interactive installations, short social-media formats – which changes the

nature of engagement from passive viewing to active interaction (likes, comments, reposts). For example, research shows that every second adult in Ukraine uses the internet daily – 80% of respondents spend at least three hours per day online (80 percent of..., 2024). This fact illustrates the mass presence of "digital time" in everyday life and creates a new environment for cultural meanings: they no longer wait for a reader in a study, but are "sought out" where people spend their 3+ hours online. The distribution of meanings has changed through two major transformations: expanded audiences and lowered barriers to entry; and the increased complexity of dissemination networks – from centralised traditional media to decentralised social networks, blogging platforms, and user-generated content.

This shift creates new parameters for cultural representation: speed (content can go viral within minutes), adaptability (formats can change, be remixed, and translated), and multimodality (image + sound + interactivity). In this sense, cultural narratives cease to be linear stories on pages or screens and are transformed into "segmental" meanings that users can activate, modify, and disseminate. The Ukrainian experience confirms this logic: for example, digital art is one form in which new media (AR, VR, generative art) enable the creation not merely of representation but of experience. In Ukrainian culture, digital art is already regarded not only as a form but as a political and social necessity, with an emphasis on accessibility, technology, and humanitarian rights to cultural activity (Davymuka, 2025). The difference from traditional forms of representing Ukrainian cultural narratives is reflected in Table 2.

**Table 2. Comparative characteristics of traditional and digital forms of representing Ukrainian cultural narratives**

Form of representation	Key characteristics	Methods of dissemination/access	Advantages	Challenges
Traditional (print, television, museum exhibition)	Static or linear formats; limited interaction channel; centralised production	Television broadcasts, printed magazines/newspapers, museum displays	High reliability, established institutions, rich context	Limited audience, low interactivity, slow circulation
Digital audiovisual (social media, video platforms)	Dynamic, multimedia formats; user interaction; platform-dependent rules	YouTube, Telegram channels, blog videos, stories and reposts	Broad access, rapid dissemination, high audience engagement	Algorithmic constraints, format superficiality, fragmentation
Digital art / interactive practices	Media art, AR/VR, generative art, installations; demand for participation	Online exhibitions, VR/AR projects, NFT art, media installations	New forms of expression, international visibility, creative potential	Resource instability, technological barriers, reception complexity
Hybrid formats (museum + online, print + AR)	Combination of traditional institutional formats with digital layers; partial interactivity; expanded multimodal access	Museum exhibitions with online catalogues, printed editions with QR codes or AR elements, hybrid educational programmes, virtual tours linked to physical displays	Preservation of institutional reliability combined with broader access, audience engagement, and flexible interpretation	Need for technical support, uneven digital access, additional production costs, and risk of fragmented user experience

Source: compiled by the authors based on V. Kulyk (2011), B. Ivanytska *et al.* (2024)

Table 2 shows that digital forms of representation expand the possibilities of cultural narratives: they provide wider access (as confirmed by statistics on internet

and social media penetration in Ukraine), greater dynamism (short videos, blog formats, changing accounts), and enable new formats (AR/VR, generative art). On the

other hand, they are not without challenges: platform algorithmic rules, fragmentation of audience attention, and the potential loss of depth and context are real problems documented both in academic publications and in media literacy reports. For example, in Ukraine the share of the audience with high digital competence decreased from 55% to 48% between 2023 and 2024 (Media Literacy Index..., 2025). This decline in digital media literacy can be interpreted as a symptom of the contradiction between the mass dissemination of digital technologies and society's capacity to interact with them critically, which is a key issue within social informatics as a field concerned with the social consequences of information and communication technologies. Therefore, although digital forms have high potential for cultural narratives, their effective functioning requires institutional, technological, and methodological means of support. The table also points to the need for hybrid approaches: combining traditional and digital formats may be most effective. For example, a museum exhibition (traditional) can be complemented by an online version or a VR display (digital), expanding the audience and forming new representational pathways.

In the media spaces of the twenty-first century, digital culture becomes one of the fundamental conditions for the formation of collective memory and identity (Ivashko *et al.*, 2020). This influence manifests at several interconnected levels: through changes in memory carriers and modes of representation; through the modification of audiences and their participation in creating or transmitting memory; and through the integration of digital procedures into processes of cultural self-determination. Digital culture does not simply disseminate existing narratives – it modifies, repositions, and sometimes recreates them, which has significant consequences for both individual and collective identity. Collective memory plays a role in shaping cultural identity even in traditional (non-digital) forms. "Historical memory" serves as the basis of the moral foundations of contemporary Ukrainian society because it transmits higher moral values – goodness, truth, freedom – to subsequent generations (Ovsiankina, 2019). At the same time, digital culture opens new channels for realising this function: for example, the digital archiving of Ukraine's audiovisual heritage during wartime allows not only the preservation of a material trace but also the creation of a new form of "digital memory" that has the potential to influence the identity of actors – both internal (Ukrainian) and external (Kovalenko, 2025).

Digital culture contributes to mnemonic activation (that is, making memory active rather than passive), multimodal reception, and the visualisation of narratives – effectively forming a new regime of memory in which interactive digital products become sites of memory. Digital technologies open the door to studying collective memory, in particular through "trace data" – the footprints of digital communication (Yasseri *et al.*, 2022).

Digital culture modifies its formation in two directions: it creates possibilities for communication and interaction between local and global cultural communities – digital platforms provide access to global cultural discourse, reducing the isolation of local experience; and digital culture changes the very nature of identity: it becomes more decentralised, fragmented, and flexible – users can simultaneously belong to several "online communities", participate in the construction of meanings, and even modify their own identity through digital content. Collective identity in Ukraine is formed not as homogeneous but as a "polyphonic memory", taking into account different regional, age, and social groups (Vitov & Tymofieieva, 2025).

The digital transformation of cultural narratives carries significant potential but is also accompanied by many risks. On the positive side: democratisation of access, scalability, speed of dissemination, and new forms of participation. Digital platforms enable broader audiences to participate in the creation and dissemination of narratives – meaning that cultural voices of previously marginalised communities can be heard. In the Ukrainian context, this is important: it provides opportunities for displaced persons, communities, and regions to participate in cultural representation through digital formats. Digital transformation also means the possibility of creating international narratives: Ukrainian cultural initiatives can reach global audiences via online platforms, strengthening the representation of Ukraine beyond the national space (Kravchuk *et al.*, 2025). However, there is also a range of risks. The commercialisation of cultural narratives means that cultural content is produced according to market logic, likes, and monetisation, which can distort meanings. For example, research on digital brands indicates that in the era of digital branding of the Ukrainian economy there are risks: in the global digital economy, personalised marketing, data analytics, and digital branding create challenges for cultural autonomy (Rodinova *et al.*, 2024). The superficiality of formats is another risk: short videos, memes, and infographics may simplify historical or cultural narratives, making them easily accessible but less profound. Another risk is algorithmic inequality: digital platforms do not distribute visibility equally – cultural narratives that do not meet algorithmic criteria (likes, views, watch time) risk being marginalised. Academic work by Ukrainian authors notes that virtual repositories and digital collections have potential, but there are threats to their long-term sustainability, technological support, access, and authority (Melnyk *et al.*, 2025). Democratisation of access also creates a paradox: more people can create cultural narratives, but this implies less centralised checking and validation – raising the risk of unreliable or manipulative narratives.

Therefore, it is necessary to combine digital opportunities with critical awareness, institutional support, and digital literacy. For example, when digitising audiovisual heritage, it is worth ensuring not only technical preservation

but also metadata, verification, accessibility, and a normative component so that the digital product can truly perform a representative function of memory rather than merely serve as a marketing artefact. In addition, it must be taken into account that digital transformation does not automatically mean the quality of representation – it requires active cultural moderation, a critical approach, and strategic support. Thus, the digital transformation of cultural narratives is a dual dynamic: on the one hand, it is an opportunity to move towards new forms of memory and identity; on the other, it is a challenge for culture, institutions, and audiences to ensure that these forms do not become superficial, commercially determined, or marginalised. Digital culture can be a tool for preserving and transmitting narratives, but only under conditions of critical reflection, adequate institutional support, and users' digital literacy.

## Discussion

The study showed that the cultural narrative in the digital environment has transformed from a traditional linear storytelling structure into a complex system of meaning-making practices that combine cognitive, emotional, and technological levels of communication. This conclusion aligns with broader trends in the humanities, which interpret digital forms not as tools of representation but as autonomous mechanisms of meaning production. In this context, comparison with scholarly works devoted to interactive digital narratives made it possible to identify both shared theoretical positions and significant differences in emphasis. Compared with the conceptual conclusions of D. Masood (2024), who analysed H. White's legacy and the problem of historiographical representation, the results of this study confirmed that narrative remained not merely a form of describing the past but a mechanism of meaning construction. However, whereas in D. Masood's work historical discourse was considered within the framework of post-structuralist deconstruction of knowledge, in the present study narrative functioned within a broader digital-cultural frame, where the source of meaning-making was not only authorial structures but also networked collective practices. While D. Masood placed the main emphasis on the crisis of humanist historicism and the shift towards posthumanist thinking, the findings of this analysis demonstrated an empirical transition from monologic representations of history to polyphonic digital memory formats, in which narratives were formed through the interaction of users, platforms, and algorithms. Thus, conceptual continuity between the two approaches was defined by a shared understanding of narrative as a structure of power over meaning, but in the digital age this power becomes distributed.

Comparison with the results of S. Zaitseva *et al.* (2025) revealed direct thematic affinity in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war. The study by S. Zaitseva *et al.* showed that digital mythologemes functioned as means of collective mobilisation and emotional cohesion, serving as a

form of social "cement" under conditions of information warfare. In the present study, these processes received a broader cultural explanation: they were interpreted not only as instruments of mobilisation but also as manifestations of a deep transformation in the ways narratives are produced in the digital environment. Whereas in S. Zaitseva *et al.* algorithms were described primarily as catalysts for the spread of mythologemes, the results of this work indicated that algorithmic influence also had selective and normative functions – it not only accelerated the circulation of content but also determined which stories gained the status of being "visible". In this way, algorithmisation was treated not merely as a mechanism of distribution but as a form of power over cultural representation. In addition, the findings confirmed S. Zaitseva *et al.*'s conclusions regarding the role of ethical responsibility: in digital culture, narratives grounded in verified facts and shared values displayed greater resilience and audience trust, turning digital memory into a space of moral legitimation. This confirms that the transformation of cultural narratives in the digital environment is not only a cultural issue but also a social communication problem directly connected with information security, media literacy, and society's capacity to distinguish between verified narratives, manipulative content, and algorithmically amplified mythologemes.

In comparison with the study by S. Kot *et al.* (2024), devoted to multimodal analysis of the visual art of war, the results of this study confirmed observations about the role of visual code in constructing cultural narratives while extending the context to a systemic level. S. Kot *et al.* focused on aesthetic and symbolic strategies of representation – heroisation, victimisation, identification; in the present study, visualisation was considered a technological mechanism of meaning-making that integrated cognitive, emotional, and algorithmic components. The visual outputs of Ukrainian digital initiatives – particularly PinchukArtCentre, Mystetskyi Arsenal, and VR KOLO – demonstrated that visuality was being transformed from an aesthetic instrument into a communicative infrastructure of memory. In this sense, the findings deepened S. Kot *et al.*'s conclusions by showing that visual culture not only transmitted traumatic experiences but also formed new regimes of collective interpretation in which visual artefacts served as interfaces of social memory. This understanding makes it possible to reconsider the classical ontology of cultural memory, shifting it from an archival and documentary level to a dynamic and networked one (Trach, 2025). Ukrainian digital narratives that emerged during the war exemplified a transition from centralised history to decentralised pluralities of memory coexisting within the interfaces of social media, digital art, and audiovisual platforms. They combined an aesthetics of resistance with technological infrastructure, turning the digital environment into a space of collective experience in which history was reproduced not as a story but as interaction. In this context, the findings indicated that the

transformation of cultural narratives in the digital age was not merely a consequence of technical progress but a profound change in the epistemological order – a shift from authorial control to algorithmic co-creation, from stable memory to memory as process, and from narrative as text to narrative as event.

Compared with the conclusions of K. Pletsan *et al.* (2023), the results confirmed that the digital transformation of cultural heritage in Ukraine indeed functioned not only as an instrument of technical preservation of artefacts but also as a mechanism of meaning-making. Whereas K. Pletsan *et al.* focused on the functional aspect of digitisation – the creation of registers, digitisation of monuments, and implementation of innovative technologies in heritage preservation – the theoretical analysis demonstrated that this process also had a deep cultural-symbolic dimension. The digital registration of monuments, interpreted by K. Pletsan *et al.* as an element of information protection, was interpreted within this study as a form of reconstructing narrative memory in which each digital object became a medium of cultural presence. Moreover, the comparison showed that digital tools not only contributed to patriotic education, as noted by K. Pletsan *et al.*, but also performed a function of decentralised re-signification of cultural identity through user-interaction interfaces. Thus, while K. Pletsan *et al.* demonstrated the strategic role of digitisation in state cultural policy, the present analysis highlighted its epistemological potential – the creation of new forms of collective knowledge and memory existing within a dynamic digital ecosystem.

The findings of I. Siliutina *et al.* (2024) supported many of the theoretical propositions identified in this study – for example, regarding the dual nature of digitisation as a process that simultaneously opened new opportunities for heritage preservation and generated new risks. I. Siliutina *et al.* emphasised technical and ethical problems – digital obsolescence, copyright issues, data security, limited access – which partly correlates with the risks identified here of algorithmic inequality and the commercialisation of cultural narratives. However, compared with I. Siliutina *et al.*, the present study moved beyond a technocentric approach, showing that digital technologies not only enabled archiving but also became an environment for producing new meanings. Whereas Siliutina *et al.* treated digitisation primarily as a tool for protecting cultural values under crisis conditions, the results of this analysis showed that digital culture was becoming an active space of interaction in which memory was not only preserved but continuously reconstructed through user participation practices. This created a new paradigm of preservation – “memory as process” rather than “memory as archive” – which significantly broadened the humanities’ interpretation of digital technologies.

The study by Y. Acim (2025) revealed a global dimension of the influence of digital media on the formation

of cultural narratives, which corresponded to the results of this study while also revealing differences in the interpretation of the mechanisms of that influence. Y. Acim focused on how media and social platforms fostered cross-cultural communication while generating challenges of representation, including digital distortion and disinformation. In the present study, similar processes were considered as part of a broader logic of algorithmisation and fragmentation of cultural meanings that transformed the very nature of collective memory. Whereas Y. Acim interpreted digital narratives primarily as an instrument of transnational exchange of cultural models, the results of this analysis showed that these narratives simultaneously acted as mechanisms of cultural resistance, specifically in the context of the war in Ukraine. The difference also lay in the level of institutional engagement: Y. Acim’s analysis emphasised global media corporations and tendencies towards cultural homogenisation, whereas the present study demonstrated the emergence of alternative, decentralised media practices that contributed to the democratisation of meaning-making. Both approaches pointed to commercialisation as a threat to the depth of cultural experience, but in the present study this problem was supplemented by the identification of mechanisms of self-regulation through critical digital awareness and local practices of reinterpreting historical memory.

M. Bellini (2022) addressed the problem of representing complex meanings within interactive digital narratives, where meaning emerges as the result of non-linear interaction among multiple layers of information. The author emphasised that Interactive Digital Narratives (IDNs) function according to the principle of self-organising systems in which the user becomes part of the narrative structure, influencing its dynamics. This position resonates with the findings of the present study, where interactivity was defined as a mechanism of transformation of cultural narratives. Both approaches showed that in the digital space the boundary between producer and recipient loses clarity, and the process of meaning creation acquires a collective and procedural character. At the same time, M. Bellini considered IDNs mainly as autonomous media systems, whereas the analytical model in this study emphasised the sociocultural function of such narratives – particularly their influence on the formation of collective memory and identity. Thus, while structural complexity was central for M. Bellini, the present findings demonstrated social complexity, namely the interaction between technological form and cultural context.

H. Koenitz (2023) systematised theoretical approaches to IDNs on the basis of cognitive narratology and a cybernetic approach. The author analysed the evolution of ideas over three decades and proposed a conceptual framework that treated interactivity as a cognitive process that turns the user into an active co-author of meaning. This position aligns with the findings

of the present study, which emphasised the procedural nature of contemporary narrative and the change in its communicative logic in the digital environment. However, compared with H. Koenitz's theoretical model, the present findings focused more strongly on the cultural and socio-political consequences of these processes. Whereas H. Koenitz interpreted IDNs as a phenomenon of interaction between system and user, the present study considered this phenomenon as part of a broader cultural ecosystem in which digital media perform not only a function of transmission but also of reproduction of cultural memory.

From the perspective of social communication theory, these findings show that interactive digital narratives should be analysed not only as new aesthetic or technological forms, but also as communicative systems that reorganise the relations between sender, message, medium, and recipient. In traditional models of communication, the narrative was usually transmitted from an institutional or authorial source to an audience; in interactive digital environments, however, the audience becomes a co-producer of meaning, while the platform itself acts as an intermediary that structures access, visibility, and participation. This means that interactivity changes the basic logic of social communication: cultural meanings are no longer simply disseminated but are continuously negotiated, modified, and legitimised through user practices, algorithmic selection, and networked circulation. Therefore, the transformation of cultural narratives in the digital age should be understood as part of a broader shift from linear communication to participatory, platform-mediated, and socially distributed forms of meaning-making.

The studies by L. Dubrovina *et al.* (2025), S.S. Harahulia & T.V. Symonenko (2025) make it possible to expand the interpretation of digital cultural narratives from a purely media-cultural perspective to a documentary, archival, and library-science framework. L. Dubrovina *et al.* demonstrate that archival and library institutions in Ukraine are becoming important infrastructures for the organisation, preservation, and intelligent processing of cultural and documentary resources, especially in the context of artificial intelligence implementation. S.S. Harahulia & T.V. Symonenko, in turn, show that research support services in digital humanities transform libraries into active participants in knowledge production rather than passive repositories of sources. Together, these works confirm that the digital transformation of cultural narratives should be understood as an institutional and documentary process in which archives, libraries, metadata systems, digital repositories, and research infrastructures ensure the preservation, circulation, and scholarly interpretation of cultural memory. Overall, comparison with these works showed that interactivity, algorithmisation, and visualisation functioned as universal mechanisms of digital narrativity, but in the Ukrainian context they acquired additional functions – documentation,

resistance, and the reconstruction of national identity during war. The digital transformation of cultural narratives opened new horizons for communication, memory, and self-identification, while simultaneously raising questions about the limits of authenticity, algorithmic control, and the need to develop critical digital awareness. Comparison with earlier theoretical models indicated that the humanities are moving towards synthesis – from technical aspects to cultural ones, from form to meaning, and from structure to interaction.

## Conclusions

The study demonstrated that the category of the “cultural narrative” in the humanities is not merely a narrative structure but a set of meaning-making practices that shape collective frameworks for interpreting the past, present, and future. The historiographical tradition established a fundamental problem: history as a discursive practice constructs meanings through narrative operations rather than revealing objective facts, defining cultural narratives as discursive constructions with their own formal-semantic logic. The evolution of approaches in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries can be traced in two directions: classical narratology analysed the grammar of storytelling, revealing the formation of historical scenarios, while cultural and media analyses focused on products of mass culture, demonstrating the functioning of narratives as technologies of memory. The analytical layer of contemporary theory emphasised three operational processes: selectivity of representation, intertextuality, and authorisation. The turn to digital contexts in the 2020s required a revision of classical conceptions of narrative, because in the digital environment narratives exist in formats of modularity, fragmentation, and mnemonic multiplicity, which entails the transformation of cultural narratives into complex practices with different modes of delivering meaning. The transition of cultural representation into the digital age was accompanied by structural changes in the media ecology, in which the characteristics of new media – numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability, and transcoding – defined the operational principles of digital forms that transformed the ways cultural narratives are created and disseminated. There were two interconnected levels of influence of digital audiovisual practices: low barriers to entry expanded the circle of creators and the diversity of narratives, while platform algorithms determined content visibility, thereby performing a function of governing dominant narratives. This produced changes in the properties of narratives themselves, as traditional grand narratives underwent fragmentation into micro-narratives circulating across different genres and formats, complicating the control and validation of historical meanings while simultaneously creating opportunities for dialogic reproduction of alternative memories.

In the Ukrainian context, digital audiovisual practices acquired a sociocultural function under conditions

of war, performing a dual role as local resistance and a global communicative channel. In the digital media space, narratives ceased to be monolithic structures and shifted into multi-level configurations through three interrelated mechanisms – interactivity, visualisation, and algorithmisation. Interactivity transformed narrative into a procedural practice of co-creating meaning, blurring the boundary between producer and audience and changing the authority of the source. Visualisation operated at the levels of transforming data into images and the dominance of an audiovisual emotional code, increasing the persuasive effect of a narrative. Algorithmisation modelled the visibility of narratives at scale, acting as an intermediary that shaped the spatial cartography of audience attention and generating the problem of invisible censorship. Within state initiatives, the digital preservation of Ukraine's cultural heritage included the creation of registers and digitisation of collections, supported by international cooperation. Practical manifestations of the transformation of cultural narratives in Ukraine encompassed social media, blogging, digital art, and documentary-making, each functioning as a means of creating and circulating cultural meanings. Digital culture influenced the formation of collective memory and identity through changes in the carriers of memory, the modification of audiences, and the integration of digital procedures into processes of cultural self-determination, creating a new regime of memory in which interactive digital products became sites of memory. The digital transformation of cultural narratives carries significant potential for democratising access, scalability, and new forms of participation, but it is also accompanied by risks of commercialisation, superficiality of formats, algorithmic inequality, and reduced centralised verification, which requires combining digital opportunities with critical awareness, institutional support, and digital literacy

to ensure the quality of representation and preserve cultural autonomy.

The obtained results also have practical significance for the development of applied social communication technologies. In particular, they may be used to design strategies for digital documentation of cultural heritage, platform diplomacy, media literacy programmes, and information security practices under conditions of contemporary informational challenges. This confirms that the transformation of cultural narratives in the digital environment is not only a cultural and technological process, but also a socially significant communication phenomenon that requires coordinated institutional, documentary, and educational responses. A limitation of the study lies in its focus on theoretical analysis of the transformation of cultural narratives in the digital environment without conducting original empirical research, which restricts the possibility of verifying certain theoretical propositions with specific data. Future research perspectives are defined by the need for empirical verification of the proposed theoretical model, in particular through the analysis of specific digital platforms, the study of algorithmic mechanisms shaping narratives, and comparative studies cultural narrative transformation in Ukrainian and international contexts, using methods of content analysis and social media network analysis.

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## **Цифрові аудіовізуальні практики як технології соціальних комунікацій: трансформація культурних наративів**

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**Анотація.** Метою дослідження було виявлення механізмів і напрямів трансформації культурних наративів у цифровому середовищі та визначення ролі цифрових медіа у формуванні нових форм колективної пам'яті. Використано міждисциплінарний підхід, який поєднує методи дискурсивного аналізу, структурно-семантичного моделювання та культурної герменевтики для виявлення закономірностей змін культурних наративів у цифровому просторі. Дослідження продемонструвало, що категорія «культурний наратив» у сучасних гуманітарних науках перестала бути лише наративною структурою і стала комплексом практик, що породжують сенси, які формують колективні способи інтерпретації минулого, теперішнього та майбутнього. Аналіз історичних підходів показав, що наративне представлення історії є актом конструювання сенсів, а не відтворенням фактів, що визначає специфіку культурних дискурсів. Порівняльний аналіз класичних і медіаорієнтованих теорій виявив дві основні тенденції розвитку: перехід від граматики оповідання до

технологій пам'яті. У цифрову епоху культурні наративи набувають модульної, фрагментарної та множинної структури, породжуючи нові способи представлення досвіду. Визначено, що цифрові аудіовізуальні практики впливають на наративні процеси через три механізми – інтерактивність, візуалізацію та алгоритмізацію, які трансформують способи виробництва та сприйняття культурних сенсів. Ці механізми розглядаються як ключові чинники трансформації практик соціальних комунікацій в умовах цифровізації, оскільки вони перевизначають форми взаємодії, циркуляції сенсів та суспільної залученості до культурної пам'яті. В українському контексті цифрові ініціативи в галузі культурної спадщини, зокрема цифровізація музейних колекцій та онлайн-архівів, поєднують функції збереження та репрезентації національної культури в умовах війни. Це свідчить про виникнення нового типу наративу – інтерактивного, мережевого та гібридного, який поєднує локальну пам'ять із глобальною видимістю. Цифрова трансформація культурних наративів виявила як потенціал демократизації доступу до культури, так і ризики алгоритмічної нерівності та втрати глибини контенту. Збереження культурної автономії в цифровому середовищі вимагає інтеграції технологічних інновацій із критичним усвідомленням та інституційною підтримкою. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані для розробки стратегій цифрових гуманітарних наук, культурної політики, технологій соціальних комунікацій та програм цифрового збереження культурної спадщини України

**Ключові слова:** конструювання пам'яті; колективна свідомість; соціальні комунікації; цифрова документація