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PROMOTING ARCHIVES: PUBLIC OUTREACH IN THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICES OF UKRAINIAN ARCHIVES

Abstract

Purpose: *The article highlights the rethinking of the role of archives in society, focusing on how archival institutions develop strategic and marketing approaches to promote their activities among broad audiences and engage diverse user groups. These efforts aim not only to preserve historical and cultural heritage but also to foster dialogue, mutual understanding, and a more democratic construction of collective memory. The article examines the contemporary experience of Ukrainian archives in implementing public outreach and engagement initiatives, comparing their strategies and practices with those adopted in other countries.*

Methodology: *The study employs a combination of critical analysis, synthesis, and comparative methods which are applied to examine the conceptual foundations, structure, and functional dynamics of archival practices within the broader context of public outreach, cultural mediation, and the promotion and advocacy of archives. The methods of critical analysis and synthesis make it possible to identify key tendencies and to systematize the theoretical and practical aspects of archival communication strategies. The comparative method facilitates a comparison between Ukrainian approaches and global trends in archival practices connected with public outreach. Additionally, the study applies elements of content and discourse analysis to selected policy documents, institutional strategies, and communication materials of Ukrainian and foreign archival institutions.*

Results: *The study reveals that Ukrainian archival institutions are actively developing new forms of communication with society, demonstrating a gradual shift toward user-oriented and participatory models of archival engagement. Archives increasingly integrate digital tools to enhance access to collections and visibility in the information space, while also fostering partnerships with educational, cultural, and civic organizations. The comparative analysis shows that these*

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efforts align Ukrainian archival practices with international trends in archival advocacy, accessibility, and community participation. At the same time, the research highlights that Ukrainian archives operate under specific conditions shaped by the ongoing war, which significantly influence their outreach strategies and priorities.

Conclusion: *The past decade has witnessed significant progress in the development of archival outreach in Ukraine, reflected in the growing public engagement of archivists through social media, exhibitions, educational programs, and public engagement. Under the challenging conditions of war, archives have assumed a critical role in safeguarding documentary heritage and proactively collecting materials that capture diverse facets of contemporary life. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts, it is essential to strengthen partnerships with educational institutions, promote the establishment of community archives, and enhance the professional and communication capacities of archivists. Equally important is the expanding grant-based and institutional support for educational, academic, and publishing initiatives for strengthening archival science and the professional community of archivists.*

Keywords: *archives; archival practices; public outreach; collective memory; Ukraine.*

PROMOZIONE DEGLI ARCHIVI: SENSIBILIZZAZIONE DEL PUBBLICO NELLA GESTIONE STRATEGICA E NELLE PRATICHE DEGLI ARCHIVI UCRAINI

Abstract

Scopo: *L'articolo mette in evidenza il ripensamento del ruolo degli archivi nella società, concentrandosi su come le istituzioni archivistiche sviluppano approcci strategici e di marketing per promuovere le loro attività presso un vasto pubblico e coinvolgere diversi gruppi di utenti. Questi sforzi mirano non solo a preservare il patrimonio storico e culturale, ma anche a promuovere il dialogo, la comprensione reciproca e una costruzione più democratica della memoria collettiva. L'articolo esamina l'esperienza contemporanea degli archivi ucraini nell'attuazione di iniziative di sensibilizzazione e coinvolgimento del pubblico, confrontando le loro strategie e pratiche con quelle adottate in altri paesi.*

Metodologia: *Lo studio utilizza una combinazione di analisi critica, sintesi e metodi comparativi applicati per esaminare i fondamenti concettuali, la struttura e le dinamiche funzionali delle pratiche archivistiche nel contesto più ampio della divulgazione pubblica, della mediazione culturale e della promozione e difesa degli archivi. I metodi di analisi critica e sintesi consentono di identificare le tendenze chiave e di sistematizzare gli aspetti teorici e pratici delle strategie di comunicazione archivistica. Il metodo comparativo facilita il confronto tra gli approcci ucraini e le tendenze globali nelle pratiche archivistiche legate alla divulgazione pubblica. Inoltre, lo studio applica elementi di analisi dei contenuti e del discorso a documenti politici selezionati, strategie istituzionali e materiali di comunicazione di istituzioni archivistiche ucraine e straniere.*

Risultati: *lo studio rivela che le istituzioni archivistiche ucraine stanno sviluppando attivamente nuove forme di comunicazione con la società, dimostrando un graduale spostamento verso modelli di coinvolgimento archivistico orientati all'utente e partecipativi. Gli archivi integrano sempre più strumenti digitali per migliorare l'accesso alle collezioni e la visibilità nello spazio informativo, promuovendo al contempo partnership con organizzazioni educative, culturali e civiche. L'analisi comparativa mostra che questi sforzi allineano le pratiche archivistiche ucraine alle tendenze internazionali in materia di promozione archivistica, accessibilità e partecipazione della comunità. Allo stesso tempo, la ricerca evidenzia che gli archivi ucraini operano in condizioni specifiche determinate dalla guerra in corso, che influenzano in modo significativo le loro strategie e priorità di divulgazione.*

Conclusioni: *L'ultimo decennio ha visto progressi significativi nello sviluppo della divulgazione archivistica in Ucraina, che si riflettono nel crescente coinvolgimento del pubblico da parte degli archivisti attraverso i social media, le mostre, i programmi educativi e il coinvolgimento pubblico. Nelle difficili condizioni di guerra, gli archivi hanno assunto un ruolo fondamentale nella salvaguardia del patrimonio documentario e nella raccolta proattiva di materiali che catturano i diversi aspetti della vita contemporanea. Per garantire la sostenibilità a lungo termine di questi sforzi, è essenziale rafforzare le partnership con le istituzioni educative, promuovere la creazione di archivi comunitari e migliorare le capacità professionali e comunicative degli archivisti. Altrettanto importante è*

l'ampliamento del sostegno istituzionale e basato su sovvenzioni alle iniziative educative, accademiche ed editoriali volte a rafforzare la scienza archivistica e la comunità professionale degli archivisti.

Parole chiave: *archivi; pratiche archivistiche; divulgazione al pubblico; memoria collettiva; Ucraina.*

PROMOCIJA ARHIVOV: JAVNO POSREDOVANJE V STRATESKEM UPRAVLJANJU IN PRAKSAH UKRAJINSKIH ARHIVOV

Izvleček

Namen: *Članek obravnava na novo premišljeno vlogo arhivov v družbi, s podarkom na tem, kako arhivske ustanove razvijajo strateške in marketinške pristope za promocijo svojih dejavnosti med širšo javnostjo in za vključevanje raznolikih skupin uporabnikov. Ti napori niso namenjeni le ohranjanju zgodovinske in kulturne dediščine, temveč tudi spodbujanju dialoga, medsebojnega razumevanja ter bolj demokratične izgradnje kolektivnega spomina. Članek preučuje sodobne izkušnje ukrajinskih arhivov pri izvajanju pobud za javno posredovanje in vključevanje, pri čemer primerja njihove strategije in prakse s tistimi v drugih državah.*

Metodologija: *Raziskava uporablja kombinacijo kritične analize, sinteze in primerjalnih metod za proučevanje konceptualnih temeljev, strukture in funkcionalne dinamike arhivskih praks v širšem kontekstu javnega posredovanja, kulturnega posredništva ter promocije in zagovornišva arhivov. Metodi kritične analize in sinteze omogočata prepoznavanje ključnih trendov ter sistematizacijo teoretičnih in praktičnih vidikov arhivskih komunikacijskih strategij. Primerjalna metoda omogoča primerjavo med ukrajinskimi pristopi in globalnimi trendi arhivskih praks, povezanih z javnim posredovanjem. Poleg tega raziskava uporablja elemente analize vsebine in diskurzivne analize izbranih političnih dokumentov, institucionalnih strategij in komunikacijskih gradiv ukrajinskih in tujih arhivskih institucij.*

Rezultati: Študija razkriva, da ukrajinske arhivske ustanove aktivno razvijajo nove oblike komunikacije z družbo, kar kaže na postopni premik k uporabniško usmerjenim in participativnim modelom vključevanja v arhive. Arhivi vse bolj vključujejo digitalna orodja za izboljšanje dostopa do zbirk in povečanje prepoznavnosti v informacijskem prostoru, hkrati pa krepijo partnerstva z izobraževalnimi, kulturnimi in civilnimi organizacijami. Primerjalna analiza kaže, da se ti napori ujemajo z mednarodnimi trendi v arhivskem zagovorništvu, dostopnosti in vključevanju skupnosti. Hkrati raziskava poudarja, da ukrajinski arhivi delujejo v specifičnih pogojih, ki jih oblikuje potekajoča vojna in ki bistveno vplivajo na njihove strategije in prioritete javnega posredovanja.

Zaključki: V zadnjem desetletju je v Ukrajini prišlo do pomembnega napredka pri razvoju arhivskega posredovanja, kar se odraža v naraščajočem javnem vključevanju arhivistov prek družbenih omrežij, razstav, izobraževalnih programov in javnih dejavnosti. V zahtevnih razmerah vojne arhivi prevzemajo ključno vlogo pri varovanju dokumentarne dediščine in proaktivnem zbiranju gradiva, ki zajema različne vidike sodobnega življenja. Za dolgoročno trajnost teh prizadevanj je bistveno krepiti partnerstva z izobraževalnimi ustanovami, spodbujati vzpostavljanje skupnostnih arhivov ter izboljševati strokovne in komunikacijske zmožnosti arhivistov. Prav tako je izjemno pomembno širjenje projektnega in institucionalnega financiranja izobraževalnih, akademskih in založniških pobud za krepitev arhivske vede in strokovne skupnosti arhivistov.

Ključne besede: arhivi; arhivske prakse; javno posredovanje; kolektivni spomin; Ukrajina

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the end of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century, there has been a rethinking of the role of archives in society, which has correspondingly affected the tasks and functional responsibilities of archivists as well as the image of the profession. Archives today are evolving toward greater diversity and inclusivity, striving to reflect the polyphony of society in all its richness and complexity. This means not only preserving records of dominant institutions and voices, but also giving space to the histories of marginalized, underrepresented, and once-silenced communities. By embracing multiple perspectives and narratives, archives become spaces where social diversity is acknowledged and valued, fostering dialogue, understanding, and a more democratic construction of collective memory. In this way, archives are transformed into inclusive cultural institutions that both mirror and shape the pluralism of contemporary society.

2. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK

This role began to take shape at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, influenced by theories of the information society and postmodern thought. Western archival theorists, such as Terry Cook, Randall Jimerson, and Eric Ketelaar, developing these theoretical frameworks, emphasized the active role of archivists in shaping the collective memory of society and, consequently, its social “image.” They argued that archivists are not merely custodians of records but play a fundamental part in documenting, interpreting, and presenting the past in ways that inform public understanding, cultural identity, and societal self-awareness. This perspective underscores the importance of proactive engagement by archival institutions in education, public outreach, and cultural mediation, positioning them as key actors in preserving and transmitting collective memory. Promotion and advocacy of archives, as well as enhancing their visibility and significance in society, are strategic directions for the development of archival practice.

The process of memory and identity formation has attracted the attention of many scholars over the last decades. A number of important and key insights on the transformation of the image of archives and shifts in archival paradigms were formulated by the renowned Canadian archivist and archival theorist Terry Cook (1947–2014) (Cook, 2013). He argues that “the justification for archives has shift-

ed from being grounded in concepts of the nation-state and its scholarly elites (primarily historians) to broader socio-cultural justifications grounded in public policies of accountability, freedom of information, and wide public/citizen use of archives for protection of rights, heritage education at all levels, and the employment of personal and community connection with the past” (Cook, 2011, 630). He also portrayed the archivist as a conscious mediator, actively guiding society in shaping its collective memory and identity. At the same time, he highlighted the growing importance of collaboration and the broadening of user communities, noting that archivists increasingly sought to reflect the multidimensionality and diversity of society in their work.

In this context, it is worth noting the long-standing promotional activities carried out by the Society of American Archivists (SAA) in archival outreach and advocacy. The Society defines its mission as “promoting the value and diversity of archives and archivists, as well as their vital work in preserving records of enduring value” (SAA, 2025). The Society advocates for the interests of archivists and archival institutions before policymakers, funding bodies, and the broader public. The SAA’s Committee on Public Awareness provides the SAA Council with recommendations on ways to promote the value of archives and archivists among institutions, communities, and the general public.

For several decades, one of the most prominent advocates of the social role and openness of archives has been the well-known American archivist Randall C. Jimerson (a Fellow and past President of the Society of American Archivists in 2004–2005). In a whole series of his presentations from the late 1980s, as well as in articles and lectures, he consistently sought to draw the attention of the archival community to the importance of change. As early as 1989, in his article “Redefining Archival Identity: Meeting User Needs in the Information Society”, Jimerson emphasized that in order to maintain their relevance in the modern information society, archivists must rethink their professional identity and societal role, acquire new skills in planning and marketing, and demonstrate the importance of archives in meeting users’ needs (Jimerson, 1989, 332). He anticipated that both the archival landscape and the profession of archivist would undergo significant transformations under the influence of the information society and therefore called for greater openness and the formation of a new image of the ar-

chivist. He stressed that in order to change “old habits,” archivists need to develop skills in communication, management, strategic planning, motivational training, marketing, public relations, and related areas, noting: *“It won’t be easy. But it is necessary for survival. We cannot afford not to change.”* (Jimerson, 1989, 335) Archivists, in his view, needed to become more “user-friendly”, adopt a marketing orientation in order to attract users and meet their information needs. He was one of the first to point out the role of marketing, considering archival outreach to be a key priority, and consistently highlighted that for archivists *“visibility is essential.”* (Jimerson, 1989, 338; see also Jimerson, 2006)

In turn, the renowned Dutch archivist Eric Ketelaar, in his influential address at the 1992 International Congress, reflecting on the significance of archives in the life of society argued that archives exist not only *“for the proper functioning of governments and other institutions”* but above all *“for society, for the people: archives of the people, by the people, for the people.”* He urged archivists to *“climb out of the safety of your institution, take your responsibility towards society at large, be true to your profession, and become an activist archivist, an archivist without borders.”* (Ketelaar, 2012, 358)

Director of the International Institute for Archival Science, well-known Slovenian archivist and educator Peter Pavel Klasinc, in examining the interrelations between archival institutions, the archival profession, and politics, emphasized that these connections can be divided into two main dimensions. First, there are relations that have influenced (and continue to influence) the functioning of archives within the framework of public policy. According to Klasinc, archives can impact policy-making through their records, especially in the context of political decision-making, public appearances, and struggles between political opponents. Archival records can also play a role in shaping policies on economic development, urban planning, infrastructure, culture, education, and science. He stresses that what is even more significant is the extent to which archives around the world have tied their own fate, existence, and development to political structures. In this context, the term “policy” or “politics” refers to the relationships established between the archival profession and those who implement national or local policy. Second, Klasinc points out that the relationship between archives and politics is often reflected in the process of adopting new archival legislation. Too often,

archivists and civil society are excluded from participating in the drafting of archival laws. However, this trend has been gradually changing, with individual professionals and civic associations increasingly being invited to contribute to discussions on new legislative initiatives (Klasinc, 2014).

Finnish archivist Isto Huvila, known for his extensive research on “participatory archives”, advocates a broader user-oriented paradigm in archival theory and practice, emphasizing the increasing role of education and communication. He underscores the need for archivists not only to preserve and manage records but also to foster meaningful interactions between users and archives. I. Huvila explores various forms of user participation within archival contexts, including the active engagement of users in building archival collections. In this regard, he discusses practical examples of how Web 2.0 technologies can be applied to digital archival environments to encourage user input, foster collaboration, and create more dynamic, interactive archival systems that reflect the needs and contributions of diverse communities. (Huvila, 2008)

In Ukrainian historiography, certain aspects of archival outreach and promotion have been raised in the works of Tetiana Bilushchak, Oleksii Onyshchenko, Olena Levchuk, and Maryna Paliienko, as well as in an interview with Anatolii Khromov, head of the State Archival Service of Ukraine. O. Onyshchenko identifies four key dimensions for promoting (actualizing) archives as sociocultural institutions: the archives themselves, archival documents, archival services, and the profession of the archivist. In his view, the innovative development of archival science requires archivists to integrate three essential literacies – archival, digital, and media – thus enabling them to respond more effectively to the challenges of the contemporary information society (Onyshchenko, 2023). T. Bilushchak emphasized the crucial role of archival institutions within the system of social communications and highlighted the importance of using archival information in addressing significant social issues. Due to the preserved sources of information in archival repositories, researchers are able to explore, analyze and better understand historical events, phenomena, and facts. In this context, the researcher stressed the importance of employing modern digital marketing technologies to shape a positive image of archival institutions, to promote and represent archival information, to enhance communication policies in archival practice, and to de-

velop innovative forms of public outreach and engagement. (Bilushchak, 2020).

O. Levchuk's research addresses the complex problem of the socialization of archives through the lens of their ongoing transformation and activities in the rapidly changing information and communication environment. (Levchuk, 2020) The author emphasized that archivists seek to make the fullest possible use of IT technologies as allies and tools which, in the long term, should enable them to adequately respond to the ever-growing demands of a new type of user, to become more accessible and understandable to representatives of different social strata and age groups, to ensure a continuous presence in the information space, and to strengthen their institutional image.

Analyzing the development of archival science and education, M. Paliienko notes the crucial importance of linking theoretical and academic knowledge with practical application. At present, archivists have broadened not only their digital competencies but also their communicative capacities, thereby underscoring the growing necessity for the advancement of soft skills alongside more advanced study of archival management and marketing. It is particularly important for archivists to acquire professional competencies and practical skills for working under conditions of war and emergency. A positive factor of the present day is that archivists are becoming more "visible" to society, as they increasingly use web resources, social media, and appearances on television and radio, as well as organizing exhibitions both online and in urban spaces. In this way, the active role of Ukrainian archivists as mediators of knowledge and documentary information becomes evident – something that clearly distinguishes the archivists of the information society from those of previous eras. (Paliienko, 2024).

To summarize, the term 'archival outreach' is used not only to engage the public with archival collections and institutions but also to highlight the crucial role these institutions play in preserving our collective history and heritage.

3. PROMOTION AND OUTREACH IN THE STRATEGY OF UKRAINIAN ARCHIVES

The promotion of archives in society has assumed an increasingly prominent place in the strategy of Ukrainian archives in recent years. On December 24, 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the *Strategy for the Protec-*

tion of Documentary Heritage as a Guarantee of Preserving National Identity and Statehood for the Period until 2027 and an operational plan of measures for its implementation in 2025–2027 (Стратегія, 2024). The main objective of the Strategy is to modernize Ukraine's current archival system so that it complies with national and international standards, takes into account the needs of society, and responds promptly to challenges, particularly those caused by Russian aggression against Ukraine. It was developed on the initiative of the State Archival Service of Ukraine with the participation of Ukrainian archivists, scientists, and representatives of various public organizations. This fundamental document outlines new conditions for interaction between the governing body in the archival sphere, archival, scientific, and educational institutions, and users of archival information as representatives of civil society for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of documentary heritage as a guarantee of the preservation of Ukrainian statehood and national identity.

It emphasizes that archives are an important tool for shaping the historical memory of every country, nation, and humanity as a whole, contributing to the realization of the human right to information, the protection of democracy, and the development of the state and civil society. In order to determine the place and role of archives in the political and socio-cultural life of society, the functioning of state bodies, and the development of industry and business in the context of digital transformation, special attention should be paid to the role of archives as institutions that ensure the protection of Ukrainian cultural and information space. This document places particular emphasis on the development of a proactive communication strategy. The current level of internal and external communication requires reaching as wide an audience as possible to ensure communication in various areas. The problem is the lack of systematic cooperation in the field of communications with archival institutions of all forms of ownership and the low level of media planning at all levels. Communication policy requires proactivity, truthfulness, and consistency, i.e., the active participation of archival institutions in shaping a positive image of archival work as a whole. Strengthening external and internal communication focused on civil society is necessary to deepen understanding of the value of archival documents as cultural heritage and the shared historical past of Ukraine and other countries around the world.

The development of effective communications in the field of archival affairs will be based on the philosophy of the information society and the use of various available communication channels. It will contribute to the formation of a positive image of archives, the understanding by civil society of the value of the National Archival Fond, deeper integration into the European and global archival community, the use of truthful information about the historical past of the Ukrainian state and its people, the refutation of false Russian propaganda, and the support of Ukraine's position by international organizations and partners regarding the introduction of sanctions and other restrictive measures aimed at ending any cooperation with the archival institutions of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, supporting archival institutions in the context of the Russian Federation's armed aggression against Ukraine, and returning illegally removed archives from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

One of the strategic objectives includes formation and development of a communication policy for the Ukrainian archival institutions aimed at strengthening public trust and ensuring that citizens perceive archives as effective and socially relevant institutions. Achieving this objective requires a systematic approach that integrates modern communication tools, targeted media engagement, and active collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders. The strategy emphasizes the need to raise public awareness of archival information resources and shaping a positive image of archival institutions. This entails creating archives that respond to user needs, which implies enhancing the inclusiveness and accessibility of archival institutions, fostering partnerships with civil society institutions that provide expert support, and implementing joint projects with enterprises, institutions, organizations, and private initiatives in the field of archival acquisition and use.

For building strong interaction with society, archival institutions need to transform their web resources into primary communication platforms equipped with extended user functionality and adaptive design. This will allow them not only to provide access to archival information but also to engage users in an interactive and user-friendly environment. Equally important is increasing the visibility and promotion of archives across social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Platform X, etc.) and through traditional media channels. This requires the

systematic implementation of media planning strategies to ensure a continuous presence of archival institutions in the public information space.

Another priority is the identification and analysis of society's potential needs for archival information, which will guide the development of services and ensure their relevance. Expanding cooperation with government agencies, cultural and scientific institutions, educational establishments, and civil society organizations, as well as actively searching for new partners, will create synergies and significantly enhance the role of archives as institutions of national and social memory.

Currently, Ukrainian archivists identify as one of the key priorities the expansion of Ukraine's presence within the international archival community that involves:

- engaging archival institutions in the implementation of programs of the International Council on Archives (ICA) and other international organizations active in archival science and culture;
- strengthening the participation of Ukrainian archival institutions in UNESCO initiatives aimed at safeguarding the world's cultural heritage, particularly through the international program *Memory of the World*;
- developing cooperation with European archival networks, especially the European Bureau of National Archives (EBNA) and the European Archives Group (EAG), and ensuring the visibility of Ukrainian archives on the European Archives Portal;
- building partnerships with international institutions and donors to implement long-term projects supporting Ukrainian archival institutions both during the Russia's war against Ukraine and in the post-war recovery period;
- expanding collaboration between archival institutions, research organizations, and national as well as international archival centers.

4. ARCHIVAL OUTREACH IN THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF UKRAINIAN ARCHIVES

Over the past decade, Ukrainian archivists have taken an active part in programs aimed at the archival outreach and promotion of the nation's documentary heritage. These initiatives encompass a wide range of activities, including the promotion of archives through social media, the organization of exhibitions (both online and in physical spaces), as well as hosting lectures, guided tours, and cultural

events within archival institutions. Such activities not only help to raise public awareness of archives but also strengthen their position as vital cultural and educational institutions within society.

One of the most important forms of archival activity during the ongoing war has been the interaction with society in the preservation of documents and in the proactive formation of collections that reflect various aspects of people's lives and activities. These efforts underscore the role of archives as custodians of collective memory and as active participants in documenting contemporary history, ensuring that future generations will have access to authentic sources that testify to both the resilience of communities and the challenges they face.

Ukrainian archives actively participated in the International Archives Week held from 9 to 13 June 2015, which was organized under the slogan '*Archives are Accessible*'. The events focused on four main themes: 1) overcoming barriers to archival access, 2) leveraging information technology to enhance access, 3) reshaping society's perception of archives, and 4) promoting inclusiveness and representation in archival practice. In particular, the Central State Archives of Public Organizations and Ucrainica prepared a presentation entitled '*Barrier-Free Archives*', which showcased the results of initiatives undertaken by the archives to ensure physical, informational, and communicative accessibility. The presentation also highlighted the archives' plans for further enhancing accessibility for users (TsDAHOU, 2025).

Another important dimension of archival outreach is the connection between archivists and educational institutions. In particular, cooperation with universities that realized through joint research projects, academic conferences and lectures, students' internships and training in archives. A notable example is the collaboration with Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, where students are engaged in internships, practical classes, and project-based activities that familiarize them with archival theory and practice. Such cooperation not only enhances students' professional competencies but also strengthens the connection between academic education and the practical work of archives, thereby fostering a new generation of specialists equipped with both theoretical knowledge and applied archival skills (Paliienko, 2020).

Focusing the attention of archives on different age groups can be illustrated by the project of the Central State Archives of Public Organizations and Ukrainianica (TsDAHOU) “*Seniors*” *Explore Archival Criminal Cases*. This initiative was carried out in cooperation between the archives and the public organization *German House – Kyiv*, within which participants of the *Academy of Seniors* project visited on June 24, 2025 the reading room and, with the assistance of archivists, became acquainted with archival files – particularly those concerning their repressed relatives, as well as other Kyiv residents, including ethnic Germans from ‘the Collection of Extrajudicial Cases of the Rehabilitated’ of TsDAHOU (TsDAHOU, 2025, The “Seniors” explore...).

Community engagement in the archival field is not yet widespread in Ukraine, with the main focus to date placed on proactive documentation of wartime events. However, there is a pressing need to strengthen the role of archives in collecting and preserving stories from community life through the development of community archives. Such initiatives, based on collaborative and participatory models, enable local communities to contribute to the preservation of their own histories and identities. While this area is well established in countries such as Poland and the United States, in Ukraine it is only beginning to take shape. Nevertheless, positive steps have already been taken. Ukrainian archives are increasingly cooperating with oral history centers and civil society organizations to implement joint projects. A notable example is the *Community Archiving in Ukraine* project, carried out by the Good Will Foundation (Kraków, Poland) in partnership with the Ukrainian Oral History Association. This initiative represents an important step toward fostering participatory archival practices in Ukraine and demonstrates the potential of collaborative projects to bridge institutional archives and community-based historical memory. A webinar dedicated to the legal and institutional aspects of establishing and operating community archives, that took place on 6 May 2025 and brought together more than 40 participants from Ukraine and Poland, featured contributions from Oleksandr Lashko, Deputy Head of the State Archival Service of Ukraine for Digital Development, and Olha Bazhan, Director of the Central State Archives of Public Organizations and Ukrainianica (TsDAHOU). In her presentation, O. Bazhan outlined the archive’s practical experience in cooperating with document owners, both legal entities and private individuals, as well as the regulatory and organiza-

tional foundations underpinning the functioning of community archives in Ukraine (Ukrainian Oral History Association, 2025).

Crowd-sourcing initiatives in archives encompass projects in which archival institutions engage the wider public in working with archival documents, so called collaborative projects. Public involvement can take various forms, including the transcription of texts (such as diaries, letters, and other manuscripts), the creation of annotations, and identification of individuals in photographs. One of the most significant examples of crowdsourcing projects on Ukraine's digital cultural heritage is *SUCHO – Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online*, launched in response to the threats posed by war (SUCHO, 2025). This global volunteer initiative has united more than 1,500 participants worldwide, including information specialists, librarians, archivists, and researchers. Its primary aim was to create backup copies of the websites of museums, libraries, and archives in Ukraine, thereby safeguarding valuable digital cultural heritage that might otherwise be lost due to military aggression. Beyond the preservation of data, the project also highlights the importance of international solidarity, digital resilience, and the role of civic engagement in protecting cultural memory during times of crisis.

The most widespread form of cooperation between archivists and the public in Ukraine today is proactive documentation – collecting materials from individuals in order to supplement archival holdings with private documents, photos, and oral testimonies. A particularly important area of this work has been the collection of personal testimonies and audiovisual documents from the Russian Ukrainian war. One significant initiative in this field is the *Museum of Civilian Voices* – an online archive established by the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation with the mission of documenting and preserving the experiences of civilians affected by Russian aggression against Ukraine. The project collects video, audio, and written testimonies, thereby creating one of the largest repositories of personal wartime narratives in the country. By May 2025, the archive had accumulated more than 130,000 individual stories (Rinat Akhmetov Foundation website, 2025). This initiative not only serves as an invaluable source for researchers, historians, and human rights defenders, but also plays an essential role in safeguarding collective memory, amplifying the voices of victims, and ensuring that evidence of human suffering and resilience is preserved for future generations. The Museum

of Civilian Voices demonstrates how digital archives can contribute to both the humanitarian mission of giving voice to those affected by war and the broader goals of transitional justice and historical accountability. Such activities and cooperation are important for both archives and society, reflecting the expansion of access to documents, the acceleration of processing large amounts of sources, the popularization and promotion of archives, the involvement of the public, and the formation of new communication strategies between archives and society.

Today, Ukrainian archivists are actively developing digital outreach through social media platforms, with the aim of sharing archival content and creating opportunities to engage with a broader audience. Archives are also placing increasing emphasis on user-oriented communication through their official websites. A notable example is the Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (TsDAVO of Ukraine), whose website is explicitly structured to provide services and resources to users. The site contains well-organized sections such as “Resources” and “Services”, offering access to digitized archival collections via “E-resources: Digitized Holdings” and downloadable “PDF Finding Aids”. Equally important is the services menu, which contains user-focused options including: “Register for the Reading Room”, “Order a Copy Online”, “Submit a Request to the Archive” (TsDAVO, 2025). This service-oriented design not only simplifies access to archival resources but also enhances transparency, efficiency, and user-friendliness in communication between the archive and its users.

The website immediately provides access to the key regulatory document governing the use of archival materials – *The Rules for the Use of Documents of the National Archival Fond Owned by the State and Territorial Communities*, approved by the Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on 19 November 2013, No. 2438/5. The document is accompanied by commentary and explanations of its content and main provisions. In addition, users can download applications and request forms required to access and use the archival documents. A clear step-by-step algorithm is provided for ordering document and case file copies online. The website explains in detail the legal grounds on which archival requests are processed, as well as the types of requests that may be submitted, including social and legal, thematic, personal, and property-related inquiries. The procedure for fulfilling these requests is set out in full. Users are offered sample application

forms for different kinds of requests. The website also specifies which requests are processed free of charge and which may be subject to fees (TsDAVO, 2025). The website also features short video presentations introducing the archive itself as well as selected collections, making the institution and its holdings more accessible to a wider audience. Among these are short video presentations introducing the archive itself, as well as unique documents and thematic projects such as *The Ukrainian Revolution* and *The Declassified Archive*, among others.

Online exhibits and databases are extremely and rapidly developing in Ukraine, providing broad digital access to archival collections through websites and online platforms. At the same time, there is a pressing need in Ukraine to strengthen the advocacy for archives and the archival profession, as well as to promote their societal value through public events and civic initiatives. A positive trend is the increasingly visible presence of archivists in the public information space. This is particularly reflected in the efforts of the State Archival Service of Ukraine and both central and regional archives in promoting the significance of Ukrainian archives. Notably, this visibility has been reinforced through the interviews and public addresses of Anatolii Khromov, Head of the State Archival Service of Ukraine, who has actively communicated the importance of archival heritage and institutions (Khromov, 2024). At the same time, however, the “voice of the profession” – that of the broader archival community – remains insufficiently heard. This situation is largely attributable to the near-complete suspension of the active work of the Union of Ukrainian Archivists. Therefore, there is a pressing need today for a more active engagement of the entire archival community in promoting both the archival profession and the societal role of archives. Strengthening the professional voice of archivists would not only enhance public awareness and recognition but also contribute to building a more resilient archival sector, better equipped to respond to contemporary challenges.

One striking example of an archival project uniting archivists with representatives of other professions is a *Place of Resistance: Infrastructure Projects of the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works*, implemented by the Central State Scientific and Technical Archives of Ukraine (CSSTAU, director – Marat Balyshev) under the auspices of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. The CSSTAU and several partner organizations have provided the documentary basis for a multimedia presentation

of the history of the unique industrial site – Azovstal Iron and Steel Works, granting open access to unique design and engineering materials that illustrate key stages in the development of the enterprise’s production and infrastructure. These documents have been made available on the Project’s website, enabling researchers, students, and the wider public to explore the material heritage of Ukrainian metallurgy in digital format. (Place of Resistance:) The combined efforts of state, corporate, and public institutions have made it possible to form a comprehensive vision of the historical and technological heritage of the enterprise, much of which is now either seriously damaged or completely destroyed as a result of hostilities. The *Place of Resistance* project not only highlights the image value of Ukraine’s cultural and educational sphere by showcasing the role of archives and libraries as active participants in public dialogue but also demonstrates how archival documents can be transformed into elements of national memory, support, and the aspiration for renewal through modern communication formats.

An important achievement of the State Archival Service has been securing support of from international foundations and initiatives for the preservation of archives and digitization programs – support that has become especially crucial in the context of the ongoing war. At the same time, grant-based support for educational, academic, and publishing initiatives remains critically insufficient. Without strengthening this dimension of support, there is a real risk of losing the momentum of professional development. In the long term, the archival profession may find itself deprived of its scholarly foundation, as archivists could be replaced by information managers who, despite their technical skills, lack the necessary preparation to evaluate, select, systematize, and safeguard historical collections and cultural heritage.

Such a scenario would not only undermine the intellectual and scientific underpinnings of the profession but would also endanger the integrity and authenticity of archival materials. The archival field requires specialists whose expertise extends beyond technological solutions to encompass historical knowledge, methodological training, and a deep understanding of cultural heritage. Ensuring sustained grant support for research, education, and dissemination activities is therefore essential to maintaining a strong professional identity, safeguarding the future of archives, and fostering the next generation of archivists as both practitioners and scholars.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Today it is particularly significant that Ukrainian archives are becoming increasingly visible. The importance of archives is being actively emphasized in numerous public speeches and interviews by the Head of Archival Service. Archival collections are being digitized at a growing pace and represented in databases such as *Archium*, on institutional websites, and across social media platforms, where archivists strive to maintain active dialogue with a broad audience. Exhibition projects are carried out in various spaces, both physical and online, and often in collaboration with libraries and museums. Archives are also represented in the Verkhovna Rada and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which further strengthens their visibility and enhances the recognition of their significance by state authorities.

At the same time, it is essential to encourage the more active engagement of archivists from different institutions, to foster the consolidation of the professional community, and to articulate the core values and guiding principles of the profession at this stage of its development. A profession with such deep and longstanding traditions cannot be diminished or allowed to “dissolve” in Ukraine under the pressures of educational reforms or financial constraints.

Ukrainian archivists would be well advised to draw on the experience of other countries when developing strategies and recommendations for promoting and defending the interests of archives. A particularly valuable model is provided by the Committee on Public Awareness of the Society of American Archivists (SAA), which actively advocates on behalf of its members and their institutions to a wide range of audiences, including policymakers, funding bodies, and the general public. Through its activities, the Committee works to strengthen recognition of the societal value of archives and to broaden the profession’s collective voice. Such an approach demonstrates how systematic advocacy and outreach can enhance the visibility of archivists, secure greater institutional support, and build stronger connections between archives and the communities they serve.

Examining international experience, it can be noted that British archivists have also established a dedicated promotion team and developed a comprehensive strategic plan entitled *Archives for Everyone* (Strategic Plan: Archives for Everyone) This initiative underscores the commitment of the archival sector in the United Kingdom to ensuring openness, inclusivity, and engagement with a wide range of audiences. An

important section of the program's website, specifically designed for different user groups, is entitled "*Education and Outreach.*" (Outreach) It contains a diverse set of resources tailored to the needs of teachers, students, and families. For teachers, the website offers ready-to-use educational materials, thematic resources linked to the school curriculum, and opportunities for participation in workshops. Students are provided with videos, creative archival projects, work experience placements, and interactive quizzes that foster both learning and creativity through direct engagement with primary sources. Families can take part in specially designed events and activities that open up archives as accessible cultural spaces, encouraging intergenerational dialogue and learning. Through such initiatives, the British archival community illustrates how strategic planning, targeted communication, and diversified programming can transform archives into dynamic centers of education and cultural participation. This experience provides a useful model for Ukrainian archives in strengthening their outreach strategies and building lasting connections with society.

It is important to further expand cooperation between archivists and secondary schools. Such collaboration may involve assisting in the development of curricula that integrate archival materials, thereby enabling pupils to learn national and local history through the direct use of primary sources. By introducing school students to archival documents at an early stage, archivists help cultivate historical thinking, critical analysis, and an appreciation of documentary heritage. Joint initiatives may include interactive lessons, workshops, guided visits to archives, and digital projects that encourage pupils to engage with authentic historical evidence. This type of outreach not only strengthens historical education in schools but also fosters greater awareness of the role of archives in preserving cultural memory and identity.

Archivists are faced with the dual responsibility of, on the one hand, preserving and further developing the theoretical and practical achievements of previous generations, while, on the other hand, actively studying and integrating the experiences and practices of their international colleagues – both archival theorists and practitioners – as well as experts from related fields such as librarianship, museum studies, and information management. The archival profession does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it is deeply interconnected with broader intellectual, cultural, and technological developments, and must remain open to dialogue and exchange in order to secure its relevance and resilience in the modern world.

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Summary

In the article, the author illuminates the rethinking of the role of archives in contemporary society, focusing on how archival institutions develop strategic and marketing approaches to promote their activities among broader audiences and engage diverse user groups. These efforts aim not only to preserve historical and cultural heritage but also to foster dialogue, mutual understanding, and a more democratic construction of collective memory. The research examines the current experience of Ukrainian archives in implementing public outreach and engagement initiatives, comparing their strategies and practices with those adopted internationally.

At the turn of the 21st century, archival theory and practice have undergone significant transformation, leading to a redefinition of the archivist's professional role and public image. Archives are increasingly evolving toward diversity and inclusivity, seeking to represent the multiplicity of voices within society. This shift reflects a broader understanding of archives not merely as repositories of dominant institutional records but as living institutions that also preserve the histories of marginalized, underrepresented, and once-silenced communities. By embracing multiple perspectives, archives become spaces that recognize and celebrate social diversity, thus contributing to dialogue, empathy, and the democratic construction of collective memory. In this sense, archives are both mirrors and agents of social pluralism.

The article emphasizes that archives play a crucial role in shaping historical memory at national and global levels. They contribute to realizing the human right to information, supporting democracy, and fostering civic development. In the contemporary context of digital transformation, particular attention is drawn to the role of archives as institutions responsible for protecting Ukraine's cultural and informational space, especially amid wartime challenges.

Over the past decade, Ukrainian archivists have significantly advanced public outreach through exhibitions, educational events, guided tours, and the active use of digital communication platforms. Social media, online exhibitions, and open-access databases have become important tools for raising public awareness of archives and promoting access to documentary heritage. However, despite these achievements, the collective "voice of the profession" remains insuf-

ficiently articulated. The suspension of the Union of Ukrainian Archivists has weakened professional advocacy, underscoring the urgent need for greater consolidation of the archival community and the reinforcement of its institutional presence in public life. Strengthening professional solidarity and communication will contribute to building a more resilient archival sector capable of responding to modern social, technological, and political challenges.

The article concludes that the archival profession carries a dual responsibility: to preserve and develop the intellectual and practical legacy of past generations while actively engaging with international best practices and interdisciplinary perspectives from fields such as librarianship, museum studies, and information management. The archival domain does not exist in isolation; it is deeply embedded within the broader currents of cultural, academic, and technological development. Maintaining openness to dialogue and exchange is therefore essential for ensuring the continued relevance, adaptability, and resilience of archives and the archival profession in the modern world.

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