

REGIONAL LIBRARIES AND REGIONAL HISTORY MUSEUMS IN BULGARIA IN THE CONDITIONS OF LOCKDOWN: SOCIAL NETWORK CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Social networks are playing an increasingly important role in our daily lives; they are the universal means of connection, as the distance is irrelevant, only an Internet connection is needed. The lives of all of us have changed over the past year and we continue to learn and get used to our new normal routine. After the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the spread of COVID-19 as a pandemic, it made us appreciate the freedom of movement we were used to. And when we had to face complete isolation for the first time, we sought salvation on social networks.

The goal of the paper is to analyse the activity of the regional libraries and the regional history museums in Bulgaria in the period 13 March – 13 May 2020, when a state of emergency was declared, all institutions were closed, and all people had to stay at home. In the conditions of full lockdown, the regional libraries communicated with their users mostly with the help of social networks, in this case Facebook, as the most widespread social network in the world (with over 2,7 billion monthly active users as of the second quarter of 2020), is the subject of research. Both cultural institutions have used all the possible options that Facebook offers to attract, engage, and retain the attention of users without age restrictions.

The methodology for achieving the main objective of the study and solving the set research tasks include the following specific methods: content analysis, social media analysis, comparative analysis.

The research is part of a research project KP 06-M35/3 from 18.12.2019 entitled: “Research of contemporary educational programs of cultural institutions in Bulgaria”, funded by the National Science Fund, part of the Ministry of Education and Science, led by Chief Assist. Sonya Spasova, PhD. The aim of the project is to study the various educational activities that are implemented in two of the organizations within the institutional system of cultural heritage – museums and libraries in the country. Until now, they have not been a subject of a comprehensive study to systematize and categorize the sustainable, long-term, and thematic educational programs implemented by them in recent years. In accordance with the project goal, this paper gives an overview of all the 27 regional libraries in Bulgaria, separated in six areas.

In conclusion, it has been found that each cultural institution has a presence on social networks, and some of them have created their own Facebook pages, precisely because of the limitations that the pandemic created. They managed to create content that is educational for all age groups, but also entertaining.

Keywords: social network, Facebook, regional library, regional history museum, COVID-19, lockdown.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the modern information society, the use of social media has become a necessary daily activity and it is currently among the most popular online activities. In general, social media is used for social interaction and access to news and information. It is a valuable communication tool with others locally and worldwide, as well as to share, create, and spread information. But it is not only a means of informing and entertaining, but it dictates the thoughts, behaviour, and action of people, especially among young people [1]. On average, internet users spend 144 minutes per day on social media and messaging apps, an increase of more than half an hour since 2015. In 2020, over 3,6 billion people were using social media worldwide. As of January 2020, the global social media usage rate stood at 49 percent. The latest data show that there are 4,33 billion social media users around the world at the start of 2021, equating to more than 55 percent of the total global population, i.e., an increase of almost one billion users for just a year [2]. As Facebook was the first social network to surpass one billion registered accounts and currently boasts approximately 2,5 billion monthly active users, it is considered as the most popular social network worldwide. The number of social media users in Bulgaria was equivalent to 62,1% of the

total population in January 2021, which is 6,92 million people. In Bulgaria, the most popular and used network is Facebook. As of April 2021, there was over 4,46 million Facebook users in Bulgaria [3].

That is why it is extremely important for cultural institutions, which for the purposes of the study are limited to regional historical museums and regional libraries, to have a presence on social media, in this case Facebook as the most popular one in Bulgaria. In this way, they will be able to reach most of the population and spread their activities.

This is especially important after the world has been battling the COVID-19 pandemic for a year now. But social exclusion cannot and should not be a reason to restrict access to cultural institutions, especially with the ICT boom. The introduction of augmented and virtual reality technologies is crucial, and their promotion with the help of social media is more than recommended, mostly because the new user interfaces are designed in a much more visual and intuitive way [4].

2 METHODOLOGY

The goal of this paper is to analyse and summarize the activities of the regional history museums and regional libraries in the Republic of Bulgaria in the social network Facebook in the conditions of lockdown, as the period is limited from 13 March to 13 May 2020. This was a period of total closure of institutions given the epidemiological situation around the world. During this period, the cultural institutions in question, subject of this paper, operated entirely in an online environment, with visitor access being completely limited. After the end of this period, all institutions were reopened, but with a limited capacity for visits. The methodology for achieving the main objective of the study and solving the set research tasks include the following specific methods: social media analysis and comparative analysis. The method of research and content analysis is applied in the identification, systematization, summarization, and analysis of the selected information.

3 RESULTS

The research is part of the project “Research of contemporary educational programs of cultural institutions in Bulgaria”, financed by National Science Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria with Contract № KP-06-M35/3 from 18.12.2019, led by Assist. Sonya Spasova, PhD, and covers one national history museum, one national library, 27 regional history museums and 27 regional libraries in Bulgaria. It considers the geographical location of the respective cultural institution, relative to the regional administrative division in the country, covering six planning areas, each of which includes from 4 to 5 regional cities.

Detailed results from the study of the activities of the museums in the social networks during the studied period from the South-West area were published by the members of the team under this project in a previous scientific publication – Dimitrova, S., S. Spasova, S. Dusheva, P. Gindev. Social Networks and Educational Programs of Cultural Institutions in Bulgaria – Good Examples in The Conditions of Lockdown. INTED2021 Proceedings: 15th International Technology, Education and Development Conference, 8-9 March 2021, Online Conference, 1896-1902.

3.1 Regional historical museums

3.1.1 South Central area

The Facebook page of the *Regional Historical Museum in the town of Kardzhali* was created on 29th October 2014 and has 2125 followers. The publications are related to the traditional holiday calendar as well as to the celebration of some international professional holidays. The exhibition “The Living Wealth of the Sacred Mountain” was presented, which was opened in 2008, but is now freely available on the Internet. The presented photos are the work of professional photographers and reflect the unique nature of the Eastern Rhodopes. During the period under study, the museum shared with its audience a link to a virtual tour of the museum’s halls, which is actively shared on Facebook. There is also active work with local radio stations that broadcast information about the museum’s exhibits.

The *Regional Historical Museum in Pazardzhik* has two Facebook pages – the first one was created on 13th April 2015 and has 90 followers and the second one was created on 25th November 2015 and has 1388 followers. The published information is dedicated to current emergency in the country and also about the Easter holiday.

This practice is followed by the *Regional Historical Museum in Plovdiv*. On 30th March 2020, the director of the museum took part in the Bulgarian National Radio, in which he called on the audience to take advantage of the opportunity to virtually view collections and exhibitions available from the menu “Virtual Museum” on the official website of the museum [5]. The Facebook page, which was established on 24th November 2011 and has 6,447 followers, publishes detailed information on all projects related to the digitalization of cultural heritage. The Gallery of the Regional Historical Museum – Plovdiv, created under a project “Digital Cultural and Historical Heritage of the Municipality of Plovdiv” contains metadata, scans, photos, and 3D models of 8000 works of art, books, printed materials, documents, objects, weapons, and photographs. The “Virtual Walk” program demonstrates the potential of new technologies to create a detailed virtual copy of the exhibition “Unification of Bulgaria from 1885”, which can be downloaded from the Internet and installed on any computer. In this way, modern man can realize the so-called First-person virtual visit to the museum at any time and from anywhere in the world [6].

An interesting initiative is organized by the *Regional Historical Museum in the town of Smolyan*, as the page was created on 15th October 2013 and has 3,256 likes. Under the title “Let’s visit the virtual tours of the Hermitage Museum together” the Facebook audience is offered access to a series of online tours organized by the specialists at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. They are dedicated to the famous treasure from Malaya Pereshchepina, also known as the treasure of Khan Kubrat. Bulgarian subtitles have been added to the video. Museum staff are urging: “Stay home, let us take the opportunity to travel without getting up from the couch! Be healthy and responsible!” [7].

The *Regional Historical Museum in the town of Haskovo*, which was created on 20th February 2017 and has 4,036 followers, is also active in the social network. During the lockdown period, interesting and diverse publications on the history of the region are shared here with the presentation of photos of authentic archival documents from the museum’s collection. A frequently shared publication is the current topic for the period, dedicated to the history of healthcare in the region [8]. Links to the official site of the museum are published, which has a blog and several author’s texts on various topics. A new column called “History in a Minute” was launched on 30th April, presenting short videos dedicated to the history of the city.

3.1.2 Southeast area

On the Facebook page of the *Regional Historical Museum – Stara Zagora*, which has 4,089 followers and was created on 10th September 2012, video materials published on the official website of the museum are periodically shared, which acquaint the audience with the exhibitions and cultural values from its funds.

Constantly updated activity in the social network is observed on the page of the *Regional Historical Museum – Sliven*, which was established on 15th July 2014 and has 2297 followers. During the lockdown, presentations are published daily in the form of videos, as well as interesting facts about the exhibits and the history of the region. On spring, museum specialists turn to their youngest visitors – “All spring rituals and customs are aimed at health, fertility, and well-being, and are related to the reviving nature. Many children have touched them thanks to the Ethnographic Museum in Sliven. Students and their teachers for years recreated in the house-museum “Sliven Life XIX-XX century”. These meetings have always aimed at education, training, socialization and most importantly – have contributed to the connection between the generations, and so kept alive the traditions associated with the rituals of the Bulgarians. The thirsty mind of children together with their curiosity makes them sensitive to everything around them. They easily perceive the Bulgarian holidays and customs, which to a large extent help them to get to know the life of their ancestors.” [9].

The *Regional Historical Museum – Yambol*, created on 4th July 2017 and has 1150 followers, also publishes several references to virtual tours in various world museums. The initiative “Stay at home & watch science!”, organized by MediaBricks.bg, was presented. “Walks” through some of the world’s largest museums related to science and technology have been selected. At that time, they were open online with all their exhibits thanks to Google Art [10]. It is an interesting fact that the experts from the museum in Yambol publish information about actions taken and changes in their official website, as a reaction to the new reality and improving the work of the museum in conditions of lockdown. These sections are shared daily with the audience on Facebook.

Active publishing activity is also observed on the page of the *Regional Historical Museum – Burgas*, which has 6237 followers and was created on 28th March 2010. Already in the first days of the period under review, the four expositions of the Burgas Museum offer a virtual tour with 360 degree shooting in Google Maps. The appeal to the audience reads “View them freely while you stay at home!” and this

post is actively shared by users [11]. Interesting facts about the Bulgarian traditions related to the spring traditional holiday calendar are presented daily. Just before the end of the lockdown, the museum specialists from Burgas call on the citizens to use the new service for a preliminary request, one day before a physical visit to the museum, which is a new practice for access.

3.1.3 Northeast area

The page of the *Regional Historical Museum – Varna*, with 2170 followers and that created on 14th January 2011, has little activity in the social network during the lockdown. But on 19th March 2020 they published information about a new initiative organized by the National Archaeological Institute with a museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – begins providing free access to electronic versions of their publications and film products created on the occasion of various exhibitions. All boards from the poster exhibitions of the National Archaeological Museum, organized after 2014, have been uploaded. Electronic versions of most of the series and periodicals published after 2015 have been uploaded in the pages of the publications [12].

The page of the *Regional Historical Museum – Dobrich* was created on 18th April 2013 and has 2225 followers who receive interesting and curious information about the traditions and customs associated with the spring holidays. A poetry competition is held for students aged 13 to 19. In connection with Easter, a video greeting was published by a student who is a member of the Club “Do you know Bulgarian?” at the Dobrich school “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The page of the *Regional Historical Museum in Targovishte* was created on 20th June 2016 and has 2062 followers but begins to periodically publish original videos on its Facebook page from 9th April 2020. They present selected exhibits from the museum’s fund and cultural heritage sites in the region in the form of presentations and with interesting and curious facts. Poster exhibitions are also published. An interesting initiative aimed at the youngest audience is the sharing of an educational game “Know and connect historical places and their names” on the platform Learningapps.org [13].

The *Regional Historical Museum in Shumen* (the page was created on 6th April 2015) periodically publishes links to its YouTube channel on its Facebook page. Author’s videos are presented, which show selected objects of cultural values in the museum. Each post is accompanied by detailed information on the topic. Prominent historical and public figures from the region are also presented. This is one of the leading museums in terms of social network activity for the period of lockdown – a total of over 70 publications and over 6,500 followers.

3.1.4 North Central area

The Regional Historical Museum in Veliko Tarnovo also has a well-developed page (created on 18th November 2013) and regularly updated publishing activity for the period. Over 6,700 followers get acquainted daily with interesting details related to the museum’s exposition, the life and works of prominent historical figures. The innovative technique of publishing videos on the museum’s YouTube channel is used, which are later shared on the Facebook page. As the medieval capital of Bulgaria, the city has an extremely diverse and numerous cultural heritage sites, which the museum promotes to the public on the Internet.

The Facebook page of the *Regional Historical Museum in Gabrovo* was created on 22nd January 2013 and has a total of 2525 followers. On 16th March, the museum started publishing research materials of the curators working in the museum and a request is made to recall interesting moments from past events and initiatives. The planned exhibitions – for 25th March “Embroidered from Gabrovo” and for 1st April “Gabrovo style in every season”, are planned to be presented in a virtual version on the museum’s website [14]. On the day of the International Theatre Day (27th March), information is presented about the partnership of the Regional Historical Museum – Gabrovo with the Drama Theatre “Racho Stoyanov” – Gabrovo in the implementation of the project “Non-formal education in a revitalized museum environment”. Short video presentations on various interesting historical topics and personalities are published regularly. Many archival documents are presented virtually.

One of the most popular museums on Facebook is the one from the city of *Ruse*, which has over 7,500 followers and the page was created on 3rd November 2010. Messages and results of scientific research related to the preservation and socialization of the regional cultural heritage are actively published here.

The Facebook page of the *Regional Historical Museum – Razgrad* was created on 28th March 2013 and has 6811 followers, but there are no new publications from 05.03.2020, i.e., there are none for the considered period.

The Facebook page of the *Regional Historical Museum – Silistra* was created on 31st August 2016 and has 2253 likes. Due to the limited opportunity to visit the museum's exhibitions, the museum presents a virtual tour of the exhibition "Builders of Modern Silistra", which was exhibited in May 2019. An initiative is launched, through which they periodically publish photos and a link to the Facebook page of their partner project Liverobg. Thus, they present 3D models of artifacts that have been digitized under the ROBG-9 ARCHIVE project.

3.1.5 Northwest area

At the beginning of the presented period, the ethnologist Desislava Bozhidarova, appointed acting director of the *Regional Historical Museum in Vidin* (the Facebook page was created on 3rd May 2018 and has 1597 followers), said: "The employees of our museum now have time to look for the interesting in history, to write, to work in the funds. I hope people visit the museum's website to see our virtual tours. We will also try to upload movies that we have shot. We plan to develop the page more and more, to bring more information." [15].

An interesting example of the introduction of new initiatives for working with the audience through the social network can be given by the *Regional Historical Museum in Vratsa* (the page was created on 4th October 2013 and has 3591 followers) by broadcasting videos in which presentations on various topics are presented live by the museum. A series of announcements related to the popularization of interesting artifacts from the museum fund has also started. The educational activity of the museum is reflected in the new section in the YouTube channel of the museum, where video lessons are published, aimed at the youngest audience – children. The topics are diverse: Video tutorial – workshop "How to make a model of a prehistoric home"; Video tutorial – workshop for traditional women's costumes from Vratsa; Video tutorial "How to make an ancient Thracian kneecap"; Video tutorial on the symbols and signs of culture "Gradeshnitsa" and others [16].

The Facebook page of the *Regional Historical Museum in Montana* was created on 23rd May 2012 and has 1111 followers. In the period they are sharing information and updates about the situation in the country from their website.

The Facebook page of the *Regional Historical Museum in Pleven* was created on 3rd March 2012 and has 5737 followers. In the period they post information about different initiatives, such as the World Water Day, Week of the Forest, Earth Day.

The series "Osam Historical Stories" is a project of the *Regional Historical Museum – Lovech* implemented in 2019. The aim is to present to a wider audience the place of Lovech in the Bulgarian cultural space. The series consists of nine stories with topics from different fields of historical knowledge, and the authors of the individual parts are specialists from all museum departments – experts in their field. The stories are presented as videos published in 2019 on the official YouTube channel, which are periodically shared on the Facebook page. In case of direct inclusions in the social network, the specialists from the museum present the exposition as a kind of walk among the exhibits and hold a conversation in an online environment.

On the positive side, it can be interpreted that some of the museums and libraries create their own pages in the social network precisely because of their discontinued work on site and the need to engage audiences through the Internet and virtual communication with users. This is one of the examples that can be cited as progress in their activities in terms of their more active presence in the Internet environment and promotion of their exhibitions, funds, and educational initiatives.

3.2 Regional libraries

3.2.1 South Central area

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Nikola Vaptsarov" Kardzhali* was created on 23rd February 2017 and has 1285 followers. Among the publications for the period are those on the epidemiological situation in the country, as well as guidelines for official rewriting of borrowed books. Among the much-liked publications are the inclusion of the library in the 15th edition of the Reading Marathon, which takes place from 2nd to 23rd April [17], presentation of books and shop windows from the library.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Nikola Furnadjiev" – Pazardzhik* was created on 2nd June 2010 and has 2159 followers. Among their publications are those dedicated to the International Children's Book Day (2nd April), as well as links to YouTube channels with children's stories. The audience's attention is also focused on the World Book and Copyright Day (23rd April) with an album

with quotes from many authors. They also share videos with the children from Primary school “L. Karavelov” – Pazardzhik that participate, together with the library in online reading on the occasion of the Reading Marathon [18].

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Ivan Vazov” in Plovdiv* was created on 16th January 2010 and has 5474 followers. Their publications have a variety of content – performances by the Berlin Philharmonic, paintings (Sandro Botticelli, etc.), tips for recognizing fake news, as well as steps to disinfect library collections in a pandemic. During the period, “In Focus: Book of the Week” was launched – a column for new titles from the collection of the Plovdiv Library, presented by its librarians.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Nikolay Vranchev” in Smolyan* was created on 2nd July 2020 and has 325 followers. The library is an example of those who understand the power of social media, especially in the conditions of social isolation. It is the limited visitors that are the reason they enter Facebook – so that they can communicate more easily with their readers. Accordingly, there are no publications from the period 13.03.-13.05.2020.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Hristo Smirnenski” in Haskovo* was created on 28th March 2011 and has 1568 followers. In connection with their participation in the Reading Marathon, they publish a weekly literary game “I will find the mistake now” for their readers – they publish a biography and a quote from an author, and readers need to find where they made a mistake in the post.

3.2.2 Southeast area

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Zaharii Knyazheski” in Stara Zagora* was created on 29th November 2012 and has 3496 followers. They share both information about the situation in the country and useful and educational resources (links to library collections), provided in open access for students, as well as free access to the issues of the newspaper “Third Age”. They also share information about virtual productions of the puppet theatre in Stara Zagora. Like other regional libraries, they also take part in the Reading Marathon, in connection with which they hold online competitions “Reading Stara Zagora 2020”, aimed at students from Stara Zagora schools aged between 14 and 19 years.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Sava Dobroplodni” in Sliven* was created on 2nd December 2011 and has 335 followers. Unfortunately, during the research period they have no publishing activity on the page.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Georgi Rakovski” in Yambol* was created on 5th September 2012 and has 1294 followers. According to the emergency safety instructions, the library does not work with readers, but to be useful to students, they offer links that can help fourth and seventh graders prepare for the upcoming exams. They dedicate publications to the World Book and Copyright Day and to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great Bulgarian artist Valeri Petrov.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Peyo Yavorov” in Burgas* was created on 19th September 2016 and has 2116 followers. They provide information on various educational resources and distance learning courses, as well as a series of audiobooks. The library is also involved in the “All Digital Week” digital skills campaign. To engage readers, they publish works, jokes, and pranks related to libraries, librarians, reading, and books [19]. They also participate in the Reading Marathon with the initiative Reading Burgas 2020.

3.2.3 Northeast area

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Pencho Slaveykov” in Varna* was created on 31st March 2010 and has 4739 followers. They share information about borrowing books, when they are expected to reopen, as well as about the World Meteorology Day, International Aviation and Cosmonautics Day, and other holidays. They take the initiative “Think and tell which is your favourite book or literary character, share what made a strong impression on you, what made you laugh from the heart” or what made you cry, what changed you! Write a review for it and inspire someone else to read it! [20].

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Dora Gabe” in Dobrich* was created on 10th February 2015 and has 1410 followers. In a publication they offer “an easy way to be informed and of course to have fun with a variety of virtual cultural walks. On the library’s website <http://www.libdobrich.bg/> in the section Useful for you, you will find over 90 quick links with useful web information about health, education, employment and culture.” [21] The online series “Once Upon a Time” are started with reading fairy tales. They participate in the Reading Marathon 2020 with the poet Petranka Bozhkova, as well as with many children.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Petyr Stypov" in Targovishte* was created on 5th June 2011 and has 2041 followers. They share information about the coming of spring, the change to summertime, the newly arranged windows in the library, the days of media literacy, free access to electronic educational resources and more. In connection with the Reading Marathon, they publish: "Every day, until the end of the Reading Marathon, we will publish one question, and they will be many and varied to make it more interesting. Write your answers below the post and let us have fun! [22]. For a week, they posted one question to movie buffs.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Stoyan Chilingirov" in Shumen* was created on 26th November 2010 and has 2597 followers. During the state of emergency declared in the country, the library reminds its readers that they can use the online services offered on the library's website, as well as the digitized book collections published on its Digital Library website and the local history content on the websites.

3.2.4 North Central area

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Petko Rachev Slaveykov" in Veliko Tarnovo* was created on 10th April 2017 and has 1387 followers. For the convenience of its readers for the period from 17 to 27 March 2020, the library offers the service "Delivery of books to homes", and subsequently extended it until the end of the state of emergency. Presentations of various books also begin.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Aprilov-Palauzov" in Gabrovo* was created on 14th July 2010 and has 2134 followers. Readers of the library can use the new module i-Lib PRIMA – The Library on the INTERNET: From the library's website. They fully fulfil the social function of the library; they even share information about the vacancies as of 23rd March 2020. They share information about the International Children's Book Day. On the Reading Marathon, they share videos with children and students reading stories.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Lyuben Karavelov" in Ruse* was created on 7th March 2011 and has 6139 followers. Posts dedicated to the Reading Marathon predominate, which include numerous videos with children and adults and stories by famous authors; as well as information about the international competition EX libris, organized by the library.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Prof. Boyan Penev" in Razgrad* was created on 29th March 2012 and has 1623 followers. They have been more active in their publications since April. Library staff, and later students, are involved in reading a variety of literary works. They share information about Easter, World Book and Copyright Day, etc.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Partenii Pavlovich" in Silistra* was created on 3rd May 2016 and has 2021 followers. They share information about freely available educational resources. In connection with the Reading Marathon, they announce a challenge to send photos, video, or audio recordings with a favourite book. The library is also among the many that participate in the National Online Forum "COVID-19: the answer of libraries".

3.2.5 Northwest area

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Mihalaki Georgiev" in Vidin* was created on 29th March 2013 and has 3517 followers. They are sharing publications with available online free books; exhibition "150 significant personalities and events" – 15 boards, which include 150 photos tracing the history of the library in Vidin from 1870 to the present day; online meetings with writers. They also show part of their fund in the departments of Art, Foreign Literature and others.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Hristo Botev" in Vratsa* was created on 24th February 2016 and has 3158 followers. Among the publications is the popular celebration of the International Day of Fairy Tales – 20th March, with the fantastic story created by the participants in the creative writing training in the library, within the project "Teenagers in the Library". In connection with AllDigitalWeek they provide online resources to improve digital skills among children and adults. They also share information about organized virtual meetings with writers, useful video content for children and adults, fun book quizzes, staying true to their motto is "Tradition meets modern thinking in the library", even if we are physically separated" [23]

The Facebook page of the *Regional library "Geo Milev" in Montana* was created on 22nd October 2010 and has 3676 followers. The library continues to help students and pupils to provide reference information related to the preparation of course, diploma and homework. They start reading fairy tales, but online. In connection with 1st April – International Day of Humour and Joke they make a challenge –

together with readers to create a photo library album “Laughter in isolation”, which includes fun moments of the social isolation of your family, friends, pets, or anything that causes smiles along with a brief description.

The Facebook page of the *Regional library “Hristo Smirnenki” in Pleven* was created on 19th March 2011 and has 2266 followers. Although in the previous months they were not so active, during the lockdown, they started to publish almost every day in Facebook. They provoke logical thinking and general culture of the readers with some fun questions, selected from the series of books “Intelligence Tests for Children” from the fund of the Children’s Department. They publish information in the sections “Health”, “Art”, “In the world of fashion”, “In the world of cinema”, “Literary portraits”, “Great world museums and galleries”, “Virtual travel”, etc., and on 22nd April they mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Valeri Petrov. For young readers they share various animated fairy tales.

The Facebook page of the Regional library “Prof. Benyu Tsonev” in Lovech was created on 13th May 20122 and has 1627 followers. “Vasil Levski” Foundation, Lovech Municipality and the Regional Library organize an international essay competition for students from V to XII class in Bulgarian schools abroad – “Levski, the revolution and the future world”. They challenge young readers with the “Tales from Home” initiative – they must send a video of their favourite story read with mom, grandma, grandpa, or dad. They share information about those wishing to study abroad – present a list of links to consulting agencies and companies that offer distance and online consultations for study in Europe in terms of COVID-19.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Presenting good examples of the activity of regional libraries on Facebook in the condition of full lockdown is a current topic that is being studied by other researchers as well. Thus, the scientific community has the opportunity to exchange information and enrich research to summarize the overall picture of the transformation, which was carried out in a short time and in force majeure conditions for rapid adaptation and contact with the public of cultural institutions in the country [24].

Some libraries orient themselves quite quickly in the emergency and use Facebook as a means of communication with their readers. Others take a little longer (about 1 month from the introduction of the state of emergency) until they can use the potential of the social network. Some other libraries create their pages in the social network, namely during the period under review. There are also libraries that create their pages after the period of complete isolation. Some libraries rely on individually created content, i.e., they generate content themselves – share photos of authors and books with information about them. Another part relies on many publications during the period, but a large part of it is the sharing of links to external sites. Other libraries combine the model.

In summary, we can say that the cultural organizations in question intensify their activities to create posts on social networks by creating virtual exhibitions, virtual walks, activating YouTube channels by adding new videos with interesting and curious facts about the preservation of cultural values. Some of them are also related to the promotion of the intangible cultural heritage, given the numerous publications aimed at the traditional spring holiday calendar. There is a tendency for these activities to be a permanent fact to this day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not be possible without the financial assistance of the following project: “Research of contemporary educational programs of cultural institutions in Bulgaria”, financed by National Science Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria with Contract № KP-06-M35/3 from 18.12.2019, led by Assist. Sonya Spasova, PhD.

For more information: Official website of the project – <https://educulture.unibit.bg/>; Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/eduCulturebg>

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