

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AS A TOOL FOR PRESERVING HISTORICAL MEMORY AND DEVELOPING HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: Historical memory represents an essential component of individual and collective identity. Through knowledge of the past, societies develop an understanding of their cultural heritage, political development, social transformations, and national identity. For Central Asian societies, historical memory is particularly significant because the region experienced profound political and social transformations throughout the twentieth century.

The Soviet period constitutes one of the most complex stages of Central Asian history. Political repression, collectivization, ideological campaigns, restrictions on religious institutions, and persecution of intellectuals significantly influenced the development of local societies. Thousands of people were arrested, imprisoned, deported, or executed. Writers, scholars, educators, political figures, religious leaders, and representatives of national intellectual elites were among those affected.

For many decades, however, access to information about these historical events was restricted. Consequently, younger generations may encounter difficulties in understanding the personal experiences and social consequences associated with political repression.

The emergence of digital technologies provides new opportunities to address this problem. The Internet, digital archives, social media, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and interactive educational platforms can transform the transmission of historical knowledge.

The central research question of this article is:

How can digital technologies contribute to the preservation of historical memory and the development of historical consciousness among young people in Central Asia?

2. Historical Memory in the Digital Age

Historical memory is not limited to textbooks or archival documents. It is formed through museums, monuments, literature, family narratives, educational institutions, media, and public commemorative practices.

The digital environment has introduced a new dimension to this process.

Young people increasingly obtain information through digital platforms rather than traditional printed sources. As a result, historical institutions must consider how historical knowledge can be effectively represented within digital environments.

Digital historical memory may include:

- digitized archival documents;
- historical photographs;
- biographies;
- documentary films;
- podcasts;
- interactive timelines;
- online exhibitions;
- digital maps;
- oral-history interviews;
- virtual museums;
- educational applications.

These resources can create a multidimensional representation of the past.

Instead of simply reading that a historical figure was arrested in a particular year, students can potentially access the person's photograph, biography, archival document, place of residence, profession, and historical context.

This transformation can make history more personal and meaningful.

3. Digital Archives and Accessibility of Historical Sources

Digital archives represent one of the most important instruments for preserving historical memory.

Traditional archival materials are often difficult to access because they are physically located in specific institutions. Researchers and students may need to travel to archives or obtain special permission to examine particular collections.

Digital archives can reduce these geographical barriers.

A digital archive dedicated to the history of political repression could contain:

1. scanned archival documents;
2. photographs;
3. manuscripts;
4. letters;
5. official records;
6. court documents;
7. rehabilitation documents;
8. newspaper publications;
9. biographical information.

Search functions can allow users to find information by name, date, geographical location, profession, or historical event.

For students, such archives provide an opportunity to work directly with primary sources rather than relying exclusively on secondary interpretations.

Conclusion: Digital technologies have significant potential to preserve historical memory and strengthen historical consciousness among young people in Central Asia. Digital archives, artificial intelligence, virtual museums, social media, GIS, digital storytelling, and interactive educational platforms can make historical knowledge more accessible and engaging.

For the study of political repression, digital technologies can provide particularly valuable opportunities. They can restore the visibility of individuals whose lives were marginalized or forgotten, connect fragmented archival materials, and create new ways of communicating historical evidence to younger generations.

At the same time, digital historical projects must be based on academic rigor, source verification, ethical responsibility, and respect for the dignity of historical subjects.

The future of historical education in Central Asia will increasingly depend on the ability of universities, archives, museums, and technology specialists to cooperate in developing reliable digital resources.

Ultimately, digital technology can serve not only as a means of preserving the past but also as a bridge connecting generations. By giving young people access to authentic historical sources and encouraging them to critically examine the past, digital technologies can contribute to a stronger historical consciousness and a more informed society.

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