


On the agenda: The challenges for the preservation of school heritage

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Adriana Duarte Leon¹, Adrian Barboz Roschild², Tobias de Medeiros Rodrigues³, Márcio Pereira Garcia⁴, Carolina Ceno Machado⁵, Waleska Ribeiro Villar⁶ and Julia Petiz Porto⁷

ABSTRACT

The objective of this reflection is to present the research called "The digitization of the Institutional Collection as a possibility of Preserving the Memory of Professional and Technological Education" and to announce some of the possibilities identified in the use of technology for the preservation of institutional memory. Understanding that the conscious appropriation of the history of an institution makes it possible to signify and resignify its identity and social function, we seek to stimulate other actions in the context of preserving the history and memory of school institutions.

Keywords: History and Memory, History of EFA, Digital Collection, Digital Repository.

¹ Doctor in Education from UFMG
Professor at IFSUL/Campus Pelotas

² Master in Education from IFSUL/Pelotas Campus
Doctoral student in Education at IFSUL/Campus Pelotas

³ Master in Education from UNIPAMPA
Doctoral student in Education at IFSUL/Campus Pelotas

⁴ Degree in FPGNL from IFSUL/Pelotas Campus

⁵ Degree in FPGNL from IFSUL/Pelotas Campus
Master's student in Education at FaE/UFPEL

⁶ Master in Education from UFPEL
Student at FPGNL at IFSUL/Campus Pelotas

⁷ Master in Arts from UFPEL
Student at FPGNL at IFSUL/Campus Pelotas



INTRODUCTION⁸

This reflection presents the research called "The digitization of the Institutional Collection as a possibility of Preserving the Memory of Professional and Technological Education", approved by PROPESP⁹ and developed at IFSUL/Campus Pelotas in the period 2022-2024. The investigation in question continued the studies that were carried out by the project "The Institutional Collection as a Space for the Preservation of the Memory of Professional and Technological Education", also approved by PROPESP and developed between the years 2021 and 2022, at the time aimed to survey, catalog and clean part of the documentation of the IFSUL/Pelotas Campus.

The project "The digitization of the Institutional Collection as a possibility of Preserving the Memory of Professional and Technological Education", approved in 2022 and renewed for another year in 2023, sought to digitize part of the institutional documentation of IFSul/Campus Pelotas with a focus on preserving the institutional memory of Professional and Technological Education. This proposition consolidated the creation of the Digital Repository History and Memory of Professional and Technological Education (HeMEPT), located on the Pelotas Campus page and available for public consultation at the electronic address: <http://hemept.pelotas.ifsul.edu.br/hemept/>.

The research developed here locates in the field of the history of education and analyzes in the documentation issues related to the consolidation of an identity for technical-professional education in the southern region of RS/Brazil. It contemplates the initial years of operation of the institution until the 1950s, considering the limit of human resources for the work of cleaning, organization, cataloging, digitization and finally availability in the digital repository. However, the relevance of such a project in the context of the preservation of institutional memory and in the promotion of research in the field of Education and History is highlighted.

Given the context of the creation of professional technical schools and the dissemination of an identity for technical courses in the early twentieth century, it is considered significant to understand the local particularities and their connections with the regional and national context, considering for this the access to the history of IFSUL/Campus Pelotas, which is among the first schools to offer professional education in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

THE CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF SCHOOL HERITAGE

The study of the History of Brazilian Education is mainly anchored in the analysis of documents produced throughout history, in the different regions of the country (documents, books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, photos, etc.) that record educational practices and the

⁸ This production is part of the reflections carried out within the scope of the research project entitled "The digitization of the Institutional Collection as a possibility of Preserving the Memory of Professional and Technological Education", in the process of completion, promoted by IFSUL/ Campus Pelotas and with financial support from CNPQ and FAPERGS.

⁹ The acronym PROPESP refers to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies of IFSUL.



individuals involved in this process. Analyzing the remnants of each era in order to establish meanings is one of the great challenges of historiographical research.

However, access to documents or traces of the past is not always easy, as they are often not public knowledge, or have not gone through an appropriate archiving process. They are not properly indexed and cataloged, or they are stored inadequately, suffering from deterioration from their use, the action of time, temperature, humidity, physical, chemical and biological agents. Often, such documents are kept in geographically distant collections, making it impossible for students and researchers to access these historical sources.

Institutions such as libraries, museums, archives and documentation centers are initiatives that have been adopted and that intend to face the aforementioned challenges, through the safeguarding of documents that are cultural heritage. At the same time, digital repositories and collections are added to these initiatives.

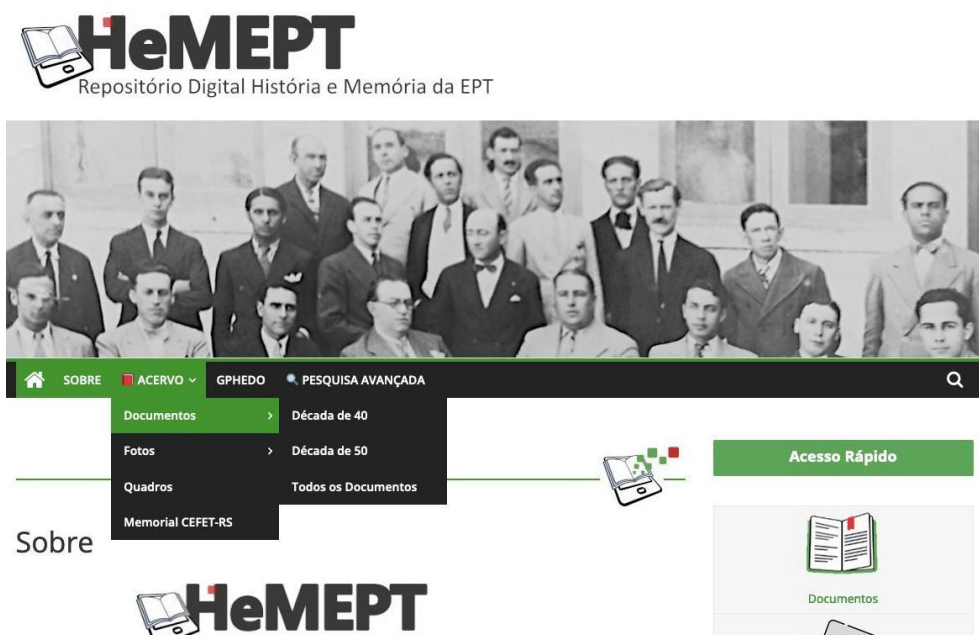
In order to join efforts to solve this problem, the dissemination and access to these documents, considering the advent of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the possibility of their digitalization arises, thus enabling their conservation, publicization and free and easy access to these contents through the Internet. In this context, with the resources of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) it is possible to convert elements of physical and material reality to digital reality, facilitating the access, diffusion and dissemination of information through the internet.

Certainly, one of the biggest challenges for those who work with historical collections is to make these materials reach the interested public. Digitization is one of the ways to facilitate and democratize access to these historical sources, but there are several challenges involved in this process to be overcome, both because of the technological resources involved, and in terms of access and visibility of these digitized materials on the Internet.

The digitization of school collections allows the preservation of heritage and its availability to researchers and interested parties from the general public, it is a strategy that publicizes the history of the institution and enables access in an easy and agile way. In addition, digitization allows the preservation of documents that are often subject to harmful weather and environmental conditions. By digitizing these documents, we consolidate a digital version that can withstand time unscathed.

Another benefit of digitization is that it allows for a better organization of the institution's history. With digitized documents, it is possible to carry out more accurate and detailed research, in addition to making access to information quick and practical, it is an efficient form of preservation, since technology can avoid handling the material and consequently its wear and deterioration.

Image 1 - HeMEPT homepage



Source: HeMEPT, 2024

In an attempt to illustrate the power of digitizing documents for the preservation of institutional memory, we use the illustration in image 1, on the opening page of HeMPET, which is available for public consultation on the Pelotas Campus page and at the address: <http://hemept.pelotas.ifsul.edu.br/hemept/>. The repository was created from the research project presented here and today democratizes access to the history of the school, as explained in the highlighted image, when entering the repository it is possible to access documents, photos and other records of the daily life of the school.

It cannot be denied that, at the very least, digital technology can provide excellent access to the intellectual content of digitized artifacts, safeguarding the originals from unnecessary manipulation, and delaying their deterioration. To prevent degradation caused by direct and constant access, valuable items are stored in secure archives, available to few researchers. This is frustrating because when documents are out of reach of the public, the task of keeping memory alive is not being properly fulfilled. Digital technology emerges as a possibility to break the compromise between preservation and access of opposites, these dimensions become cooperative. (VALLE; ARAÚJO, 2005, p. 132)

Digitization can expand the possibilities of analyzing the document that becomes available to a larger number of people, access to texts, images, documents and many others can be carried out in real time by a greater number of people, who can appropriate, reformat and return to cyberspace new information, the documents, which were once defined only as guardians of memory, they become emissaries of past events, with the possibility of resignification in the present. And this new function may earn them a place in the future (DODEBEI, 2011).



METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

All the material, in the established cut, has already been properly sanitized and cataloged during the project "The Institutional Collection as a Space for the Preservation of the Memory of Professional and Technological Education", after this work, the digitization phase of the materials of the collection was carried out, which is still in progress. The materials located in the collection are divided into three types: books, photos and paintings.

The books are stored in cabinets and the paintings are wrapped in TNT or cardboard boxes. The photos cover a periodization that covers from 1930 to the 2000s, which are stored in 14 Styrofoam boxes for their better conservation, it should be noted that this article only addresses the initial periodization until the 1950s, as established in the project cited here.

Caring for materials during scanning is an important step and that is why all materials are handled with the use of gloves in an airy environment. The scanning stage is carried out on a table attached to a specific light and with the help of a cell phone. In the scanning, photos are obtained in jpg format, which need to be processed in the Notebloc or ClearScanner applications, which are obtained free of charge for Android and iOS systems that allow the conversion of jpeg to a PDF file.

The digitization of materials is a slow step, especially in relation to books, where the pages need to be handled with great care. The photos are stored separately and with an identification card, all on a cardboard wrapped in a sheet of tissue paper, the digitization includes the card and each photo individually.

Books need to be careful when handling because they are sensitive materials that can suffer page breaks, especially sheets that are, in some cases, made of fragile and thin paper. The digitization of books is time-consuming because it is done from the cover, front and back cover, in addition to all the front and back pages, which some books have approximately 900 pages. Thus, it was decided to digitize the first 50 pages of all the books and, only after this digitization process, will the other pages be digitized.

The paintings are placed on the white TNT fabric and the photos of the materials are taken, but some of these paintings are arranged in the corridors of the institution and the photos are taken at the place of origin.

The database is collected and stored on a drive, which contains all this information in an organized way. To date, it has been possible to identify 57 books, 1 box with 134 photos and 7 graduation pictures up to the year 1959.

The established survey corresponds to all the material that we have located in the institution so far, but it should be noted that we eventually receive the donation of new materials that are incorporated into the total amount of documents listed in the project "The digitization of the



Institutional Collection as a possibility of Preserving the Memory of Professional and Technological Education".

Thus, some books were received after the cataloging process, which were sanitized, cataloged, digitized and incorporated into the total amount of the survey carried out. These books were related to those exhibited in the Institutional Memorial, entitled 'Identification Book', 'Protocol Book' and 'Exam Book', the three were worked on and returned; we also received a 'Book of Teaching Methods' that was kept in a specific course at the institution. All the materials located bring the history of the institution to the current context and are relevant in preserving the memory of professional education.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The context of the creation of professional technical schools and the dissemination of an identity for technical courses at the beginning of the twentieth century was a milestone for the development of education in the country. The history of education at IFSUL - Pelotas Campus portrays the changes that have been happening over time, so it is considered relevant to understand some of the local particularities, considering the access to documentation present in the Institutional Collection of Campus Pelotas.

Digitization brings multiple possibilities for the preservation of historical documents, preserves documents, books, photos and paintings, which bring to light the identity existence of the institution. It is also important to highlight that the digitization of collections in educational institutions can be a strategy for promoting access to information and social and cultural development, making the content available to a wider audience, including people who do not have physical access to the original materials, playing an important role in promoting access to information and the democratization of knowledge, The digitization of collections in educational institutions is an ongoing process.

The Project is important for the possibility of using the institution's future digital collection as a research tool, allowing access to historical materials, for study, research and development purposes, stimulating the production of new knowledge and the promotion of institutional culture. It is also noteworthy the use of metadata to organize the material allocated in the virtual environment, providing contextual details about a given document, helping in interpretation and playing an important role in long-term preservation, as metadata is an instrument to organize, describe and facilitate access to stored resources, enabling the provision of additional important information, that will allow the discovery, retrieval and understanding of these resources.



Finally, the facilitated access to institutional history can serve as a support for numerous researches at the local, national or international level and consequently contribute with new elements to the understanding of Brazilian professional education.



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