

Chapter 1

Folk Culture and Cutting- Edge Technologies: Digital Folklore

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ABSTRACT

One of the fields of popular culture science is digital folklore. The field of science also focuses on a new field of folklore research, that of digital folklore (e-folklore or digital folklore) as well as on issues related to research and popular culture, education, and the production of digital folklore material, tools of distance education (e-learning), digital storytelling, and in general, the tools of ICT (digital humanities). The chapter seeks to define the concept of digital folklore, to contribute to the understanding of its content and its internal divisions, to propose a classification of internet tools, which finally make it a privileged field of production, development, rescue, and dissemination of various kinds of folk culture.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2000, there has been a worldwide scientific dialogue on what we mean by digital folklore. There is also scientific research concerning the digital practices, methods, and technologies with which modern digital studies interact. Another field of study is the “conversation” of traditional folklore methods with digital technology. So today’s folklorists are called upon to take a stand on a range of digital internet technologies and folklore theory issues. A vital issue in the above questions and the searches of folklorists is how digital technologies mediate in folklore research. That is, what and what kind of analysis can be implemented in digital cultural environments.

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DIGITAL FOLKLORE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, CLARIFICATIONS

Trying to decipher the relationship of folklore with new technologies, we will conclude that a large volume of editing, searching, presenting, researching and interacting logographic material with digital environments occurs on the internet (Papadakis, 2021). Thus, the view that the internet has become a privileged place for spreading and disseminating popular culture seems to be supported by many folklorists and scientists (Kapaniaris, 2020: 48).

McClelland (2000: 182) states that “the internet functions as a folklore conductor...” Howard (2008: 99) argues that the internet functions as a “powerful, new channel” that ensures the rapid transmission of various types of folk culture, Katsadoros (2013: 99) emphasizes that the internet appears as a “space for free movement and development of folk culture”, while Blank (2013: 5) considers that “technology is a conduit for expression, a fertile ground, enabling users to participate in the circulation and dissemination of traditional forms of expression in new ways “. Blank (2016: 162) also, in a recent article, argues that the internet is a new opportunity to study urban legends and their derivatives, which may be chain mail and fraudulent emails. At the same time, he believes that the internet is ideal for transmitting folk narratives due to its anonymity and effectiveness in rapidly disseminating ideas.

Blank (2009), having thoroughly studied the relationship between the internet and folklore, defines the latter as the external expression of creativity by individuals and their communities in innumerable forms and interactions.

Hubert (2003: 151), when referring to the people of the internet, refers to the “internet browser” for whom information gathering has become a way of life, highlighting another area of digital folklore at the research level.

Michael (2009) perceives the world of the internet as a world par excellence folkloric. He talks about homo internetcus that creates a peculiar culture, the “internet culture”. He presents this culture as a new need, a new tendency for individual and community life.

Oring (2013) puts another dimension to the study of popular culture as a field of digital folklore by stating that popular culture, with its traditional creations resulting from face-to-face social interactions, is now transmitted over the internet. So the informal or folk culture of the World Wide Web is folk culture indeed.

To this international dialogue on the internet as a field of reproduction and dissemination of popular culture, the views on the oral tradition on the internet can be added, which works, as Katsadoros (2013: 99) points out, as “... electronic orality...”, as well as the views of Bacon (2011: 60) and Blank (2009), who consider those elements of digital popular culture that are transmitted and disseminated on the internet as “digital vernacular”, characterizing them as a direct descendant of the oral tradition.

Dundes (2005) also claim that urban folklore allows the coexistence of the individual with the collective identity of the specific folk group. Thus, a new type of folk wisdom and knowledge is developed on the internet in a cultural environment without specific limits, such as that of the internet (online discussions, chat, blogs, fora, etc.), creating new traditions and new folk groups (Kapaniaris, 2020: 46).

Today, humanity studies, and folklore, are confronted with new research environments that are evolving as new research fields with the corresponding new terms, such as cyber ethnography, netography, virtual communities, cyber people, indigenous digital, digital immigrants, etc., making the ethnography of digital life an essential aspect of modern social research that uses and studies internet and ICT tools. (Gasouka & Foulidi, 2012: 102). Blank (2013: 163) urges folklorists to become more actively involved in internet field research and to lead the emerging field of cyber ethnography because the internet fa-

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