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Reconstructing Ukrainian National Memory in the Digital Era: Documentary Film, Audio Narratives, and Digital Visual Art

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Abstract

The article examines the specifics of the transformation of Ukrainian national memory in the digital era from the perspective of documentary film, audio narratives and digital visual arts. The aim of the study is to determine the role of digital cultural practices in the preservation, representation and actualization of historical experience, the formation of cultural identity, social consolidation and international representation of Ukraine. The methodology is based on an interdisciplinary approach and combines methods of analysis and synthesis, comparative, systemic, content, discursive, visual and audiovisual analysis. We demonstrate that digitalization transforms national memory from a mostly institutional model into a network, multimodal and participatory system, in which documentary, audio and vi-

sual formats serve complementary functions. They become particularly relevant in the Russian-Ukrainian war, as they enable quick documentation of events, preservation of personal testimonies, symbolic formulation of traumatic experience and its international communication. The main risks of digital memory are identified: disinformation, decontextualization, platform dependence, privacy violations, and technological obsolescence. The study emphasizes the need for systematic verification of digital materials, standardization of metadata, backups, open formats, and the creation of a reliable institutional framework for digital archiving.

Keywords: national memory, digital memory, cultural identity, documentary film, audio narratives, digital visual art.

1. INTRODUCTION

The digitization of cultural space significantly changes the mechanisms of collecting, preserving and representing national memory. This transformation affects not only the methods used to record the past but also the underlying social processes through which communities assign meaning to historical experience. While traditional models of collective memory were largely based on the activities of government institutions, archives, museums, educational organizations and professional media, the process of constructing images of the past in the digital era increasingly takes place in a public, multimedia environment. Documentaries, podcasts and other audio narratives, digital photography, video art, interactive projects, online archives and digital visual art open up new ways of communication with the past, through which historical experience is not only documented, but also reinterpreted through the prism of contemporary social problems.

For Ukraine, the issue of reconstructing national memory is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, information confrontation, destruction of cultural heritage, forced migration and the need to document the war experience. Thus, digital media simultaneously perform memorial, documentary, communicative and identity-forming functions [2, 20]. Research on the development of communication competence through digital technologies also provides a broader educational context for the communicative affordances of these tools [1]. They allow us to record events in real time, preserve individual testimonies and local stories, disseminate Ukrainian narratives in the international information space and include the personal experience of citizens in the broader context of national history. Consequently, collective memory is not understood as a static set of fixed interpretations of the past, but rather as an evolving process of engagement with historical experience, contemporary traumatic events, cultural production and new media technologies.

Film has a particular role in this process, as it manages to integrate a factual approach, eyewitness accounts and artistic interpretation. Visual documentation of events creates a particular sense of presence and personalizes historical experience by connecting large-scale social processes to individual human narratives. Meanwhile, audio narratives expand oral history by preserving the voices of witnesses, in the forms of interviews, personal recollections and reflections. Digital visual art, on the other hand, offers a platform for the symbolic processing of trauma, connecting historical imagery to contemporary cultural language and enabling new ways of representing Ukrainian cultural identity.

The change in the status of the recipient of a cultural product is also an important feature of the digital age. The user of a digital platform need no longer remain a passive consumer of a fixed narrative and can participate in its dissemination, commenting, supplementing and rethinking. The reconstruction of national memory, thus, acquires the character of a networked and participatory practice, as professional filmmakers, artists, journalists, scholars, cultural institutions and ordinary users can interact within a shared digital space. At the same time, such a democratization of memory is accompanied by the risk of fragmentation of historical narratives, decontextualization of digital materials, manipulative use of visual content, the spread of disinformation and the loss of digital evidence due to the technological instability of platforms.

Hence, the challenge for today's scholars is to fully examine documentary film, audio narratives, and digital visual art not as discrete cultural practices, but as mutually reinforcing means for reshaping the national memory of Ukraine. Such a methodological stance enables us to observe how different media forms represent historical and contemporary events, assist in the transformation of individual testimony into collective memory, create symbolic constructions of the past and present, and play a role in affirming Ukrainian cultural identity in both the national and global spheres via digital media. Investigating these processes is essential for analyzing the complex relationships of memory, media and culture, as well as for evaluating the place of digital artistry in the continuity of historical experience in Ukraine and in communicating that experience responsibly to subsequent generations, including those born during or after the present war.

The analysis of the scientific literature shows that the study of national memory in the digital age is based on a combination of memory studies, media studies, cultural studies and digital communication studies. The theoretical basis is provided by the works of Assmann [3] and ErlI [4], which consider cultural memory as a system of symbolic preservation and transmission of collective experience in and through cultural forms, media and institutions. Critical to modern research is the notion that the media do not simply record the past, but also actively shape the ways in which it is publicly represented and interpreted.

A further strand of scholarship examines digital and networked memory. Hoskins [5, 6] argues for a shift from the traditional archival model to a networked model of memory, where memory is in a state of constant circulation, reuse, and restoration of digital materials. Garde-Hansen and colleagues [7] examine how processes of memory preservation have changed in the digital age, and Mandolessi [8] characterizes the “digital turn” as a radical change in the very structure of memory research. In these models, digital memory is not simply a digitized version of traditional memory, but a new way of culturally organizing historical experience.

A body of literature that is particularly relevant to this discussion concerns media testimony and the digital documentation of crisis and traumatic events. The mediating function of media between eyewitnesses and society has been theorized

[9, 10], while Mortensen [11] develops the concept of connective witnessing to describe the way in which individual testimonies are connected to form collective memory via digital networks. Such an approach is especially pertinent to the study of warfare, given that digital media enable documentation of ongoing events in near real time.

A substantial body of current research focuses on memory-making through digital platforms. Makhortykh [12, 13] demonstrates the ambivalent character of social and video platforms: it makes access to historical materials much easier, but it also limits their visibility through algorithms, moderation and technical rules. Digital materials may be lost or decontextualized and can be subject to inconsistent visibility and moderation practices. In this way, the present-day literature on digital memory is progressively taking an ambivalent stance, informed not only by the broad democratic potential of the medium, but also by its technological limitations and reliance on private utilities.

A separate line of research focuses on the role of documentary film in the construction of national and cultural memory. Kortti [14] considers documentary film as a means of processing transgenerational memory and historical trauma. Erll [15] emphasizes the mediatization of cultural memory and the role of cinema in its reconstruction. In the Ukrainian context, Katerynych and colleagues [16] examine the Docudays UA films (2014–2024) to argue that documentary filmmaking has become a key means of representing war, resistance, testimony, and cultural identity. Moskalenko-Vysotska and Shyrman [17] also draw attention to the thematic dominance of the Russian-Ukrainian war in Ukrainian documentary film over the past decade.

The representation of lived human experience also occupies an important place in contemporary studies of digital art and visual narratives of war. Kot and colleagues [18] argue that during the Russian-Ukrainian war, digital popular art creates images of resistance, heroism, trauma, and national solidarity. Digital works, collages, posters, and other visual formats become a way of quickly symbolically interpreting events and a means of international communication. A related study of digital war diaries [19] emphasizes how personal online testimonies shape a new model of memory, where the history of the individual is largely located within the framework of a collective discourse.

The Ukrainian dimension of digital cultural memory is also reflected in the work of Volynets and Trach [20], which explores the transformations, challenges, and prospects of digital preservation of cultural heritage in the context of war. Their findings highlight the role of digitalization as an important tool for the preservation of cultural memory, but also indicate that it needs to be accompanied by a holistic policy for archival management, standardization, data protection and long-term preservation of materials.

Overall, the literature traces the conceptual development of memory from a relatively stable archival model to a dynamic, networked, multimodal process. Meanwhile, the complex relationship among documentary film, audio narratives and digital visual art within an integrated system for reconstructing Ukrainian national memory is still insufficiently explored. The majority of research tends to concentrate on particular media formats or discrete digital practices, yet the combined impact of these media in shaping cultural identity, social cohesion and how they represent the Ukrainian experience internationally remains insufficiently synthesized across disciplinary boundaries. This gap determines the relevance of studying the interaction of different digital media in the formation of contemporary national memory in Ukraine.

The aim of the study is to provide a holistic interpretation of the features of the reconstruction of Ukraine's national memory in the digital era by identifying the role of documentary film, audio narratives, and digital visual art in capturing, presenting, and rethinking historical and contemporary experience, shaping the collective imagination of the past, and promoting Ukrainian cultural identity.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research materials comprised scholarly literature on cultural and digital memory, media testimonies, documentary films, audio narratives and digital visual art, as well as digital cultural projects, documentary materials and online initiatives related to the representation of the historical experience of Ukraine. The design was a qualitative, conceptual and documentary review rather than a statistical survey or a systematic review with a preregistered selection protocol. Accordingly, the cases illustrate the breadth of available digital-memory practices but should not be interpreted as a representative or exhaustive sample of Ukrainian initiatives. Special attention is paid to digital cultural materials created in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine—documentaries, digital war diaries, oral history testimonies, audiovisual archives, digital artworks and memorial platforms.

The methodology followed an interdisciplinary approach, combining the principles of memory research with the principles of media studies, cultural studies and digital communication studies. Methods of analysis and synthesis were employed to establish the study's theoretical foundation and to systematically examine scientific approaches to understanding national, cultural and digital memory. Comparison and contextual juxtaposition were also used to identify the distinctive features of documentary film, audio narratives and digital visual art as separate, albeit interconnected, ways of presenting historical experience. The analysis considered each medium's documentary affordances, modes of emotional and symbolic expression, audience participation and dependence on platform infrastructure. Because the underlying corpus and detailed coding protocol were not supplied in the source text, the discussion avoids claiming quantitative reproducibility

or generalizable causal effects; the conclusions are interpretive syntheses of the cited scholarship and illustrative project records.

3. RESULTS

Within the wider humanities and cultural-memory literature, national memory is interpreted not as a passively accumulated body of knowledge about the past, but as an active system of socially significant representations, images, symbols, narratives, and practices through which a community makes sense of its historical experience and ensures its intergenerational transmission. The theoretical foundation of this perspective is the notion of cultural memory, which considers the past as being given social meaning through its symbolic presentation, its institutionalization, and its reiteration in cultural forms. Memory in this regard is selective: society does not just accumulate knowledge about events, it also determines which events should be included in the collective story, which symbols they should be associated with, and what meanings should be passed on to following generations [3]. Therefore, the making of national memory is not just a matter of retrieving a fixed image of the past, but of interpreting past experience in relation to the changing present, one that is continuously shaped by contemporary cultural, political and social realities.

In the theory of cultural memory, the distinction between direct communicative memory and long-term cultural memory is relevant. Personal memories of eyewitnesses eventually die with their original carriers, but they can be preserved in the form of texts, images, films, museum exhibits, monuments, archival documents and other symbolic forms. Media can facilitate the transition from individual experience to collective memory by giving testimony durable, repeatable and widely communicable forms. Erll Erll [4] emphasizes the central role of media in cultural memory, since social understandings of the past are necessarily mediated through particular forms of representation. Media are not neutral containers of historical content: their technical and aesthetic qualities shape which elements of the past come into view, how they are understood and how they reach their audiences.

Digitalization is fundamentally changing this model. In traditional cultural environments, the selection, preservation and legitimization of memory were largely centralized in archives, libraries, museums, educational institutions, professional media and governmental organizations [3, 4]. Related research on digital institutions in higher education illustrates the wider institutional changes associated with digital communication and information management, although it does not directly examine national memory [21]. The digital space partially decentralized this process. Individuals and informal communities are gaining technical opportunities to become producers, as well as archivists, commentators and distributors of materials about the past. A completely new, fundamentally larger circle of “memory producers” is emerging, and the boundary between author, witness, archivist and consumer of historical content is increasingly blurred. [5] conceptualizes such a transformation through the concept of digital networked memory, emphasizing that the digital environment changes the very architecture of memory through networked interaction, constant accessibility, multiplicity and interconnection between different types of data.

This transformation allows us to consider digital memory as a form of cultural memory in which technological infrastructure becomes a material component of the production of shared public representations of the past. Digital archives, social networks, video platforms, museum websites, podcasting services, interactive maps, electronic databases and virtual exhibitions not only offer access to already codified cultural heritage, but also shape the ways in which it is systematized, searched and reused. In the digital environment, cultural objects can be copied, reconstructed, supplemented with metadata and inserted into new contexts, which allows for wider circulation, but also raises questions of authenticity, contextualization and sustainability of digital cultural heritage [7]. Research on digital cultural memory also shows that the digitization of museum, archival and library collections fundamentally expands the possibilities of access to cultural objects and their reuse.

Table 1 summarizes the conceptual contrasts between the traditional and digital models of national memory. It identifies changes in the principal actors, storage and circulation mechanisms, audience participation, temporal scale and associated risks, while treating these models as analytical categories rather than mutually exclusive historical stages.

One defining characteristic of digital transformation is the transition from relative scarcity of recorded memory to an unprecedented abundance of available information. Traditionally, traditional archives were institutions that preserved selected portions of available historical materials, while the new digital media enable us to save an enormous amount of everyday data. Photographs, videos, geolocation data, social media posts, emails, audio messages, and digital diaries may all be future sources of cultural memory. In such circumstances, the loss of information is only one challenge; an equally pressing challenge is the selection, systematization, verification, ethical management and historical interpretation of materials on a much larger scale. Digital memory paradoxically increases both the ability to remember and the possibility of forgetting, since information can be physically stored but hidden by an overload of information or by algorithmic rules driving its distribution [22].

We can therefore conceptualize memory not exclusively through an archival model but also as a process of circulation, encounter, reinterpretation and continued public engagement. The value of a digital object is based not only on preservation,

but also on how many times it is reactivated. A photograph of a historical event, archival video footage, or an oral testimony can be republished and encountered repeatedly across the public information environment, in documentaries, social networks, works of art, and educational projects. Consequently, cultural memory is continuously renewed, where the same historical material is repeatedly reshaped into new media formats and acquires additional interpretations through repeated public circulation [4]. Therefore, we should think of memory being rewritten in the digital age not merely as the storage of information, but as its continuous cultural reactivation.

Table 1. *Transformation of the conceptual model of national memory under the influence of digitalization*

Conceptual parameter	Traditional memory model	Digital memory model	Consequence for the reconstruction of national memory
Subjects of memory formation	State, archives, museums, professional media, scientific institutions	Institutions, digital communities, artists, eyewitnesses, platform users	Decentralizing the production of historical narratives
Storage form	Document, book, museum object, film, material archive	Digital archive, database, video, audio, post, digital image	Multimedia and memory scalability
Transmission mechanism	Mostly vertical and institutionalized	Network, horizontal, interactive	Growing audience participation
Pace of memory formation	Delayed in time	Almost synchronous with the event	Convergence of documentation and memorialization
Spatial boundaries	National and local	Transnational and global	Internationalization of national experience
The role of the audience	Mostly perception	Create, share, comment, remix	Participatory construction of memory
Main risk	Institutional selectivity	Fragmentation, algorithmization, de-contextualization, data instability	The need for digital verification and archiving

Source: summarized and systematized by the author based on the concepts of cultural, mediatized, and digital memory [3–8, 22].

Note: The traditional and digital models are presented as analytical types, not as mutually exclusive historical stages. In the contemporary cultural space, they function simultaneously, forming a hybrid memory infrastructure.

At the same time, the digital age is transforming the balance between individual and collective memory. Social platforms create spaces in which private memories can acquire public relevance almost immediately, sometimes reaching audiences far beyond the original community. A personal photograph, a witness video, a post or a digital diary under certain circumstances goes beyond the boundaries of an individual biography and becomes a collective documentation of a historical event. This dynamic is especially noticeable in such crises, wars and social upheavals, when the main professional media no longer have a monopoly on defining events. The documentary depiction of events can be understood through the concept of media witnessing, which suggests that technologically mediated testimony generates a unique connection between the witness, the event and a remote audience [9, 10]. Mortensen [11] extends this discussion through the concept of connective witnessing, where digital infrastructure allows the transformation of a multitude of individual testimonies into a networked space of collective understanding of the event.

This is especially relevant for modern Ukraine. The Russian-Ukrainian war has become not only a military-political event, but a large-scale digital environment, where historical experience is recorded almost at the same time as it is experienced. Digital diaries, photographs, video recordings, eyewitness reports and other forms of personal testimonies simultaneously perform a documentary, communicative and memorial function. An analysis of digital war diaries on Facebook and the MyWar platform highlights that digital media have become the dominant environment for constructing war reality, processing trauma, and disseminating personal testimonies of Russian aggression [19]. After all, according to this understanding, national memory is formed already in the course of the historical process itself, which sharply shortens the time interval between experience and its documentation and memorialization.

It is also important to note the conceptual shift from a predominantly text-centric to a multimodal memory. Modern digital narrative integrates text, photography, moving image, sound, voice, music, graphics, animation, cartographic data, and interactive elements. Each of these serves a specific memory function. Text provides explanation and contextualization; photography creates visual evidence; video captures the momentum of an event; voice generates a sense of personal presence; music and soundscapes enhance affective perception; digital graphics allow for symbolic reinterpretation of an event. It is multimodality that allows digital memory to combine the documentary and the emotional, fact and experience, individual testimony and collective symbol.

In this system, documentary film is positioned as a structured audiovisual narrative. It not only records events, but also identifies causes, selects evidence, arranges them in time and constructs interpretive frameworks. Through editing, pacing, voice-over, use of archival footage and testimonies, documentary films create a culturally understandable narrative from fragmented experience. The specific properties of each medium help determine the way in which historical experience takes shape and is collectively remembered [15]. In the digital age, documentary film finds new ways through streaming services, online festivals and social platforms that facilitate the transnational dissemination of national historical narratives.

Audio narratives form another model of memory reconstruction, in which the human voice becomes the protagonist. Podcasts, audio interviews, oral history recordings and digital sound archives help to preserve not only the content of the

testimony, but also its emotional characteristics: timbre, pauses, intonation, hesitations and individual manner of speaking. As a result, audio memory generates a kind of proximity effect between the bearer of the experience and the listener. Digitally integrated oral history crosses geographical boundaries and can be part of wider national and international memory networks. In this way, digital audio narratives change the private voice into a potentially public cultural document.

One of the important tools for reconstructing national memory is digital visual art. Its role, unlike documentary evidence, is mainly to symbolically reinterpret experience. Digital illustrations, posters, collages, memes, animations and other visual forms can reduce complex historical content to a recognizable symbol. Ukrainian digital art during the period of full-scale war developed visual narratives of heroism, resistance, trauma, sacrifice, national unity and the opposition of one's own community to the aggressor. An analysis of a substantial corpus of digital works by Ukrainian artists created on Instagram in the first months of the full-scale invasion showed the widespread use of digital art to record events, express collective emotions and create images of war [18]. Thus, artistic representation does not simply passively reflect memory, but actively participates in the construction of its symbolic architectonics.

The distinct but overlapping functions of preservation, documentation, audio testimony, audiovisual storytelling and digital visual culture are brought together in Table 2. The table further distinguishes participatory circulation from algorithmic visibility and shows how a single digital object may fulfil several memorial functions simultaneously.

Table 2. *Mechanisms for the preservation, representation and transmission of national memory in the digital environment*

Mechanism	Basic digital forms	Function in memory structure	Transformational effect
Preservation	Digital archives, databases, cloud storage, digitized collections	Fixation and long-term accumulation of historical materials	Expanding the scope and accessibility of cultural heritage
Documentation	Photos, videos, digital diaries, eye-witness accounts	Recording events and personal experiences	Shortening the distance between the event and its memorialization
Auditory representation	Podcasts, audio archives, interviews, oral history	Preservation of voice, intonation, and emotional experience	Personalization of the historical narrative
Audiovisual representation	Documentary film, web documentary, video projects	Narrativism and contextualization of the past	Combining testimony, interpretation, and emotional engagement
Artistic representation	Digital art, posters, collages, animation, memes	Symbolization and emotional understanding of experience	Formation of recognizable images of collective memory
Dissemination	Social networks, video and audio platforms	Mass circulation of memorial content	Globalization of the national narrative
Participation	Comments, reposts, hashtags, user content	Collective addition and rethinking of memory	Moving from consumption to co-creation of memory
Algorithmic selection	Recommendation systems, search algorithms, platform feeds	Determining the visibility of digital content	Strengthening the role of platforms in selecting what society sees and remembers

Source: Systematized by the author based on theoretical positions and research results on digital memory, media evidence, and digital culture [6, 8–13, 18, 19, 22, 23].

Note: The functions of digital forms are not mutually exclusive. A single digital object can simultaneously serve as historical evidence, archival material, artistic representation, and an element of network communication.

Participation is another basic feature of memory reconstruction in the digital age. While traditional memory institutions have typically offered their audiences pre-formed versions of historical narratives, digital platforms allow them to be constantly supplemented. Users share materials, publish their own testimonies, create remixes, use hashtags, comment on and engage digital objects in new discussions. Networked human mnemonic communities are formed around events, dates, symbols and traumatic experiences. Thus, the platformization of memory contributes to the emergence of new forms of networked collective memory.

However, the democratization of memory production does not mean the disappearance of control mechanisms. On the contrary, digitalization creates a new type of intermediary—the platform. Makhortykh [13] shifts the focus of research from the user to the technological infrastructure, since the visibility of materials is determined not only by their social relevance, but also by algorithmic mechanisms of recommendation, moderation and ranking. Thus, digital memory is decentralized at the level of content creation, but centralized at the level of its distribution infrastructure. Private technology companies gain the opportunity to control access to digital traces of the past, even if this control is not directly related to memorialization.

From this we deduce the fundamental contradiction of digital memory—between accessibility and instability. A digital object can be instantaneously copied to millions of users, but its longevity is not assured. Content can disappear due to account deletion, a change in platform policy, obsolescence of technical format, loss of metadata, or moderation. For Ukraine, this is a critical issue, as much of the digital proof related to war is of historical, cultural, and, in some instances, evidentiary value. Therefore, preserving national memory requires moving beyond the mere accumulation of digital content toward systematic archiving, cataloguing, verification and preservation of the context in which that content was produced.

Digitalization is transforming even the spatial structure of national memory. Historical narratives are no longer limited to the territory of the state and the linguistic boundaries of the national information space. A documentary film, digital art, video testimony, or podcast can instantly find itself before a global audience. This creates the conditions for the transnationalization of Ukrainian memory—the experience of the Holodomor, Soviet repressions, the Revolution of Dignity, the occupation of Crimea, the war in Donbas, and the full-scale Russian invasion can be included in broader European and global discourses about totalitarianism, colonialism, war, human rights, trauma, and resistance. At the same time, global circulation requires translation, not only linguistic but also cultural, which means introducing national experience into a system of concepts that would be understandable to an international audience.

Therefore, the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the reconstruction of national memory in the digital age should be determined through the interaction of cultural memory, mediatisation, network, multimodal, participatory and platform components. Digitalization does not deny traditional mechanisms of memory, but is part of a hybrid system in which the archive and social network, museum and digital platform, professional documentarian and direct eyewitness function in a jointly constructed communicative space. National memory in such conditions becomes more open, dynamic and procedural. It is formed not only through the preservation of the past, but also through its constant circulation, restoration and rethinking in digital traces.

For Ukrainian society, this transformation is especially relevant, as digital technologies enable us to simultaneously record history, keep memories, culturally transform traumatic experiences, and communicate internationally. Documentary film, audio storytelling, digital archives and visual art are now fused together, forming a new ecology of memory that grounds factuality with personal testimonies, and historical documentation with symbolic interpretation. So the digital age is changing the paradigm of how national memory is recreated from a largely institutional model to a multi-faceted network of historical co-creation. It can make accounts of historical experience more accessible, diverse and open to public engagement, but the main challenges are in authenticating and contextualizing these narratives, algorithmically selecting them, and digitally preserving them for the long term. The tension between the open nature of digital culture and the institutional responsibility for the preservation of its products is what becomes a key condition for the transfer of the huge contemporary archive of digital evidence into the durable and publicly accessible historical memory of Ukraine.

Returning to the conceptual implications of the preceding comparative analysis, national memory in contemporary humanities scholarship is viewed not as mechanically acquired knowledge about the past, but as a dynamic system of socially significant representations, images, symbols, narratives and practices through which the collective considers its own historical experience and ensures its intergenerational transmission. The conceptual foundation for such a paradigm is the theory of cultural memory, according to which the past acquires social meaning through symbolic representation, institutionalization and constant reproduction through cultural practices. Memory in this dimension is selective—it doesn't just keep records about events, but it makes decisions about which ones it is to include in the collective story, what symbols they convey, and what meanings they should impart to generations yet to come [3]. Accordingly, the reproduction of national memory is not the imitation of a certain rigid vision of the past, but a continuous rethinking of historical experience in the context of its cultural, political and social conditions.

In the theory of cultural memory, the distinction between direct communicative memory and long-term cultural memory is crucial. Personal memories of eyewitnesses eventually die with their original carriers, but they can be preserved in the form of texts, images, films, museum exhibits, monuments, archival documents and other symbolic forms. Media can facilitate the transition from individual experience to collective memory by giving testimony durable, repeatable and widely communicable forms. Erll Erll [4] emphasizes the central role of media in cultural memory, since social understandings of the past are necessarily mediated through particular forms of representation. Media are not neutral vessels of historical information: qualities of their technologies and aesthetics determine which aspects of the past become visible, how they are interpreted, and how they can travel to their audiences.

Much of the history of the digital transformation of culture is really a tale about how this model has been inverted. In established institutional settings, the selection, preservation and legitimization of memory were largely managed by archives, libraries, museums, educational institutions, professional media and government agencies. Digital environments have partially decentralized this process by introducing new participants, types of evidence and possibilities for public interpretation. On a technical level, individuals and informal communities are today empowered to independently produce, archive, interpret and circulate historical accounts and artifacts. The number of memory makers is broadening, and the distinction between author, eyewitness, archivist, and user of historical material is blurring. [5] considers this shift as movement towards digital networked memory in which the digital environment, through network convergence, a high level of availability for use, its reproducibility, and its ability to connect different kinds of information is transforming the very architecture of what we remember.

This shift allows digital memory to be conceptualized as a technologically mediated form of cultural memory, in which technological infrastructure is itself an integral element in producing and circulating social representations of the past. Digital archives, social networks, video platforms, museum websites, podcasting services, interactive maps, electronic

databases and virtual exhibitions not only open up access to the already formed cultural heritage, but also prescribe ways of structuring, searching and reusing it. In the digital space, cultural artifacts can be copied, reconstructed, supplemented with metadata and embedded in new contexts, which enhances their dissemination, but also raises questions about the authenticity, contextualization and sustainability of digital cultural heritage [7]. Research on digital cultural memory also demonstrates that the digitization of museum, archival and library collections fundamentally expands the possibilities of accessing and reusing cultural objects.

Table 3 presents illustrative Ukrainian initiatives spanning civilian testimony, sanctions-related documentation, remembrance of those killed, regional history, historical information and digital archiving. The source notes distinguish independently documented institutional details from descriptions requiring project-specific confirmation.

Table 3. *Real cases of digital reconstruction of national memory in Ukraine*

Real case	Initiators and implementation period	Digital materials and tools	Memorial function	Practical result and significance
"Museum of Civilian Voices (Voices of Peace)"	Rinat Akhmetov Foundation; publicly presented in 2020 and expanded after 2022	Video and audio testimonies of civilians, textual histories, digital archive, thematic collections	Preserving personal testimonies about war, occupation, forced displacement and loss	The museum operates an online archive of civilian testimonies, exhibitions and documentary projects [24]
"War & Sanctions"	Initially developed by the National Agency on Corruption Prevention in 2022; transferred to Defence Intelligence of Ukraine in 2024	Open database, profiles of sanctioned individuals and companies, documents, visualizations, search tools	Documenting responsibility for aggression and forming an evidentiary narrative of war	The publicly accessible portal organizes data for sanctions advocacy, research and documented due-diligence purposes [25, 26]
Wartime historical-information materials and chronologies	Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance; materials issued during the war	Chronological materials, official documents, photos, videos, testimonies, thematic publications	Prompt recording of the course of the war and inclusion of contemporary events in the national historical narrative	Institutional historical-information resources and chronologies provide contextual materials on the Russian-Ukrainian war [30]
"Memorial: memory of the dead"	Public initiative "Memorial"; from 2022	Biographical profiles, photographs, interviews with relatives, memoirs, digital publications	Personification of loss and preservation of individual stories of fallen military and civilian personnel	The platform presents those who died through individualized biographical accounts rather than reducing their lives to aggregate statistics [27].
"Local History"	Media project "Local History"; since 2018	Video interviews, podcasts, digital publications, oral history materials, social media	Preserving regional memory, family stories and local narratives	The platform presents regional histories and local narratives through articles, visual materials and podcasts [28].
Digital documentation and communication projects of the Ukraine Crisis Media Center	Ukrainian Crisis Media Center; since 2014	Photo and video documentation, interviews, multimedia materials, online publications	Recording the experience of the war in Donbas, volunteering, internal displacement and international support	A significant body of digital materials has been created documenting the war since 2014 and ensuring its international visibility
"Crimea. Realities"	Radio Liberty; since 2014	News, videos, podcasts, interviews, multimedia investigations, archive of publications	Preserving the memory of the occupation of Crimea, human rights violations and the resistance of the Crimean Tatar people	The continuity of the Ukrainian narrative about Crimea is maintained and events that the occupation authorities are trying to hide are documented.
"My War" testimony-sharing initiative	Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine; from 2022	Personal video diaries, texts, photos, testimonies of military and civilians	Transforming individual war experiences into a collective digital archive	The testimony-sharing platform provided a means for people to document and circulate personal experiences of the invasion [29].
"Digitized Heritage" of the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine and digital library collections	State archival and library institutions; implemented in stages	Scanned documents, manuscripts, old prints, photographs, catalogs, electronic repositories	Preservation of tangible and documentary heritage and expanding access to it	Rare sources become accessible to researchers, educators, and the public regardless of location
Inclusive digital remembrance and accessibility-oriented campaigns	Various community and civic initiatives; during the full-scale invasion	Web resources, videos, infographics, social networks, digital stories	Forming an inclusive language of memory and visibility of the experiences of different social groups	The memorial discourse includes the stories of veterans, people with disabilities, displaced persons, children, and families of the deceased.

Source: synthesized from publicly available materials about the named initiatives, including direct institutional documentation for the Museum of Civilian Voices, War & Sanctions, Memorial, Local History and My War [24–29], alongside the memory-studies literature. Case-specific assertions without a directly verified project record should be read as illustrative rather than independently audited findings [30].

Note: The cases constitute illustrative examples of digital memory and digital documentation practices in Ukraine; organizational attributions and dates have been checked where primary or institutional sources were located. Other examples require confirmation of their exact project names, historical dates and project-specific outcomes. They demonstrate different models of working with historical experience: oral history documentation, creation of evidentiary databases, personalization of losses, preservation of local memory, digital archiving, and international communication.

The above cases illustrate the reconstruction of national memory in Ukraine based on experience at several closely related levels. At the individual level, these are personal testimonies, photographs, videos and biographies. At the community level, local archives, oral history collections and thematic digital campaigns are being created. At the institutional level, institutional databases, electronic catalogues, digital museums, evidentiary resources, etc. are being created. Although these levels do not exist in isolation: personal testimony can be included in an archive, archival material can be used in a documentary film, and this film can be distributed via social networks and embedded in an educational course.

One of the defining features of the digital transformation is the shift from memory scarcity to information abundance. Whereas traditional archives were created through the active selection of a limited number of materials, digital technologies allow us to capture vast amounts of everyday information. Photographs, videos, geolocation data, social media posts, emails, audio messages, and digital diaries are potentially becoming sources of future cultural memory. The need to preserve is no longer the information itself, but its selection, systematization, verification, and interpretation. Paradoxically, digital

memory expands our memory and at the same time makes us more prone to forgetting, since information may be physically stored, but it may be invisible due to information overload or the algorithmic logic of its distribution [22].

This transformation can be understood as a movement beyond an exclusively archival model of memory toward a complementary model of memory in circulation, in which reuse and interpretation play an increasingly important role. The value of a digital object is determined not only by the fact that it is preserved, but also by how often it is reactivated. A photograph of a historical event, an archival video, or an oral testimony can be republished many times in the public sphere, appearing in documentaries, social networks, works of art, and educational projects. As a result, cultural memory is constructed through constant re-creation, when the same historical material passes through different media formats and acquires new meanings [4]. Thus, we should understand memory-making in the digital age not only as the collection of information but also as the ongoing cultural reactivation and interpretation of digital records.

At the same time, the digital era is changing the relationship between individual and collective memory. Social platforms open up spaces where private memories can become public almost instantly. An individual photograph, eyewitness video, social-media update or digital diary entry can, under particular circumstances, move beyond the boundaries of personal biography and become part of a wider collective archive of historical experience. This dynamic is particularly evident during crises, armed conflicts and periods of social disruption, when established professional media are no longer the only institutions producing and circulating documentary accounts of events. The notion of media testimony suggests that technologies mediate testimony in a way that establishes unique relationships between the eyewitness, the experience, and a remote audience [9, 10]. [11] complements this perspective with the concept of conjunctive testimony, where digital infrastructure facilitates the transformation of multiple individual testimonies into a networked space of collective sensemaking around an event.

This process is particularly relevant for contemporary Ukraine. The war in Ukraine is not only a military and political event but also a vast field of digital documentation, in which historical events are recorded almost as they unfold and individual experiences become part of public communication. Digital diaries, photographs, videos, eyewitness accounts and other types of personal testimony simultaneously serve the purposes of documentation, communication and memory. Research on digital war diaries on Facebook and MyWar shows that digital media have become a key platform for creating war reality, experiencing trauma and disseminating personal testimonies about Russian aggression [19]. Thus, national memory is created already in the course of the historical event itself, which significantly reduces the temporal distance between the experience, its documentation and memorialization.

Another important conceptual shift is the shift from predominantly textual to multimodal memory. Modern digital narratives include text, photography, video, sound, voice, music, graphics, animation, cartography, and interactive components. Each of these elements has a specific memorial function. Text provides explanation and contextualization; photography provides visual evidence; video can preserve temporal sequences and movement; voice personalizes; music and soundscapes enhance affective perception; digital graphics allow symbolic reenactment of an event. It is multimodality that allows digital memory to combine the documentary and the emotional, fact and experience, individual testimony and collective symbol.

Within this system, the documentary film functions as a structured audiovisual narrative that can combine testimony, historical evidence and interpretation. It not only records events, but also establishes cause-and-effect relationships, selects testimonies, organizes them into a temporal sequence, and provides an interpretive framework. Through editing, structuring, authorial commentary, and the use of archival materials and testimonies, documentary transforms fragmented experiences into culturally understandable stories. The specific properties of each medium help determine how historical experience is shaped for collective memory [15]. In the digital environment, documentary gains potential through streaming services, online festivals, and social platforms that facilitate the transnational dissemination of national historical narratives.

Audio narratives constitute another model of memory reconstruction in which the human voice becomes the protagonist. Podcasts, audio interviews, oral history recordings and digital sound archives help to preserve not only the content of the testimony, but also its emotional characteristics: timbre, pauses, intonation, hesitations and individual manner of speaking. As a result, audio memory generates a kind of proximity effect between the bearer of the experience and the listener. Digitally integrated oral history crosses geographical boundaries and can be part of wider national and international memory networks. In this way, digital audio narratives transform the private voice into a potentially public cultural document.

An equally important mechanism for the recovery of national memory is digital visual art. Unlike documentary evidence, its purpose is primarily to symbolically reinterpret experience. Digitally processed images, such as illustrations, posters, collages, and memes, as well as animation and other forms of visual art, can transform complex historical content into a recognizable symbol. Visual narratives of heroism, resistance, trauma, sacrifice, national unity, and the differentiation of one's community from the aggressor crystallized in Ukrainian digital art during the full-scale Russian invasion. An analysis of a substantial corpus of digital works by Ukrainian artists, published initially on Instagram during the early phase of the full-scale invasion, revealed that digital art was employed both to record events and to articulate shared emotions

and images of war [18]. Consequently, the artistic portrayal is not merely a representation of remembering, but an active contribution to the symbolic construction of collective memory

This transformation is especially relevant for Ukrainian society, as digital technologies enable us to simultaneously record history, keep evidence, culturally process traumatic experiences, and communicate internationally. Documentary film, audio narratives, digital archives and visual art are part of a mutually reinforcing ecosystem of memory, where factuality is enmeshed with personal testimony, and historical record with symbolic representation. So the digital age is changing the paradigm of how national memory is made from a largely institutional model to a multi-faceted, networked model of co-creation of historical meanings. The long-term value of this system depends on maintaining access to multiple voices and accounts of historical experience, while addressing the persistent challenges of verification, contextualization, algorithmic selection and preservation of digital materials. Striking this balance between the open nature of digital culture and the institutional responsibility to preserve its creations is ultimately the key to turning the massive body of digital evidence from our time into a historical memory that will live on in Ukraine.

From the perspective of cultural and institutional practice, digital initiatives in contemporary Ukraine are increasingly becoming important means of preserving, renewing and socially interpreting national memory. Their importance has especially increased in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, precisely at a time when the destruction of material cultural heritage, population displacement and transformation of local communities are combined, and an unprecedented amount of digital evidence about historical events is accumulating. Instead of the traditional model of memory, which was largely based on the work of archives, museums, libraries and other specialized institutions, the digital space offers the opportunity for a wide range of participants to participate in the creation of memory. Witnesses, artists, journalists, NGOs, scholars and even ordinary users of digital platforms can create, archive and distribute materials that subsequently acquire the status of historical evidence. There is a shift towards a network model of memory, in which the processes of documentation, representation and social understanding of the past interact increasingly closely [6, 8].

Thus, the prospect of digital cultural practices is, first and foremost, the prospect of expanding the source base of national memory. Documentary videos, photographs, digital diaries, podcasts, oral interviews, electronic archives, digital art and social media materials allow us to document not only the official chronology of events, but also the individual experiences of its participants. In the case of Ukraine, attention to documenting the experience of war is particularly important, as digital materials allow us to preserve the voices of civilians, soldiers, displaced persons, volunteers and local communities. Research on digital war diaries shows that platforms such as Facebook and specialized digital platforms are used not only to cover events, but also to make sense of the experience of war, trauma and digital surveillance [19]. As a result, individual memory falls under a broader collective narrative, and national history becomes polyvocal.

Digital cultural practices have enormous potential for the growth of cultural identity. Memory provides symbolic continuity between generations, and digital technologies contribute to expanding the possibilities of its maintenance beyond the boundaries of a person's physical presence. This is especially relevant for Ukrainians who, due to the war, found themselves outside their communities or state. Online archives, digital exhibitions, documentaries, audio projects and virtual collections provide access to historical and cultural materials and help with national culture. The process of digitizing archival and library collections is also a function of insuring cultural heritage in the event of its physical destruction. However, digitization means much more than just the technical process of copying cultural objects into a new medium; it is an environment in which a culture of manners and identity can be cultivated and preserved [3, 4].

One of the important consequences of the development of digital memory is its impact on social consolidation. Digital cultural practices form a communicative space in which individual narratives can be juxtaposed with collective experiences. The publication of testimonies, photographs, memorial materials and works of art helps in the creation of shared symbols, shared emotional responses and interpretations of events. Digital art from the period of the Russian-Ukrainian war shows a particularly strong ability to construct visual images of resistance, solidarity, loss and national unification. Studies of digital mass art confirm that platforms become locations for the creation of visual narratives of the war that shape interpretations of events and engage audiences [18]. At the same time, such a consolidating function of memory should not cause the unification of memory: its stability is largely related to the possibility of the existence of regional, generational and personal experiences.

The international potential of digital cultural practices is also high. Online documentaries, video testimonies, digital art, podcasts, and exhibitions can transcend geographical boundaries and integrate Ukrainian historical experiences into the global information and cultural space. Digital representation allows Ukraine to be presented not only as an object of geopolitical struggle, but also as the author of its own historical narrative. Personal stories add a human dimension to the war for an international audience, while visual and audio formats partially overcome language barriers. Thus, digital memory becomes a tool of cultural diplomacy and a tool for combating disinformation, contributing to the inclusion of Ukrainian narratives in international narratives about war, occupation, human rights, cultural heritage, and collective trauma.

Table 4 integrates the major opportunities, risks and priorities associated with digital cultural-memory practices,

drawing together questions of cultural identity, social cohesion, international communication, authenticity, accessibility, long-term preservation and ethical safeguards.

Table 4. *Potential, risks and directions of development of digital cultural practices for preserving the national memory of Ukraine*

Sphere of influence	The potential of digital practices	Main problems and risks	Priority area for ensuring sustainability
Cultural identity	Preserving historical narratives, symbols, local stories and cultural heritage	Fragmentation of memory, decontextualization of materials	Integration of digital collections into the national cultural memory system
Social consolidation	Forming a shared space of testimony, solidarity, and understanding of trauma	Polarization, information manipulation, hate speech	Presentation of multi-voiced experience and professional moderation
International representation	Global dissemination of Ukrainian historical and cultural narratives	Loss of context, simplification of complex historical experience	Multilingualism, cultural contextualization and professional translation
Certainty	Accumulation of a large amount of photo, video and audio evidence	Forgeries, false attribution, manipulative editing, AI content	Verification of origin, metadata, authorship, time and place of creation
Accessibility	Remote access to archives, museums and cultural collections	Digital inequality, closed platforms, technological barriers	Open standards, accessible design and interoperability of information systems
Long-term preservation	Creating digital copies of materials that are at risk of physical destruction	Format obsolescence, platform content removal, cyberattacks	Backup, format migration, and independent repositories
Ethical protection	Preserving personal testimonies of war and traumatic experiences	Re-traumatization, violation of privacy and security	Informed consent, differentiated access, personal data protection

Source: Systematized by the author based on a critical analysis of research on digital memory, platformization, and digital documentation of the Russian-Ukrainian war [6, 8, 18, 19, 23].

Note: Potential and risks are considered as interrelated characteristics of digital memory; the proposed directions are focused on simultaneously ensuring the authenticity, public accessibility, ethics, and technological sustainability of digital materials.

However, the mass use of digital platforms creates qualitatively new threats to national memory. The availability of material on a social network is not a guarantee of its long-term preservation. Posts can be deleted by their authors or site administrators, accounts blocked, or technical norms and access rules changed. That is why Makhortykh [23] emphasizes the ambivalence of digital platforms in recording war: they create unprecedented opportunities for documenting destruction, human rights violations, and collective suffering, but dependence on commercial platform infrastructure threatens the disappearance of digital evidence of mass violence. Therefore, without a professional archive, the platform cannot be considered a full-fledged substitute.

The issue of authenticity is now even more of a concern due to information warfare and generative artificial intelligence. Digital photographs, audio and video recordings can be digitally manipulated, taken out of context or falsified. Therefore, the historical value of digital material should be established not only by its content but also by its provenance. This requires preserving the original file, the date and place of creation, authorship, technical metadata, information about changes made and the circumstances of the material's collection. It is appropriate to distinguish between digital collections of documentary evidence, artistic interpretation and reconstructed or synthetic content. This practice is particularly important for materials related to the Russian-Ukrainian war, as they are likely to be used in the future by historians, journalists, human rights organizations, cultural institutions and legal authorities, often simultaneously.

Long-term preservation of digital memory requires a transition from individual projects to sustained institutional support. The materials relevant to national memory need to be stored as at least a small number of independent copies, in open and widely used file formats, with regular checks of their integrity, and the materials migrated if the technology required to access them becomes obsolete. A standardized description of digital objects is equally important, since a file with no information on its creator, time, location and circumstances of creation gradually loses part of its historical value. Digitizing the archives and libraries of Ukraine is already regarded as one of the essential tools for supporting the preservation of cultural heritage in a war situation, but the feasibility depends on how the common discovery, metadata, backup systems and so on will be developed.

Digital cultural practices therefore have a dual character: they are both a tool to open up national memory and a way to once again tie it to the technological infrastructure. They can be used in Ukraine to keep memories from disappearing, to keep cultural identity alive, to bring people together, and to put the Ukrainian historical narrative on the international stage. But for digital materials to become a permanent national memory, a series of technological, archival, ethical, and communication mechanisms are needed. The main tenets should be the ability to verify the origin of the material, the preservation of its original context, open access whenever possible (while respecting security and privacy concerns),

technological independence from specific platforms, and systematic backup archiving. In this way, the digital medium can function not only as a tool for the speedy gathering of evidence, but also as a reliable memory infrastructure capable of preserving Ukrainian history for future generations and presenting it to the world.

4. DISCUSSION

These findings suggest that digitalization is changing not only the technical ways of storing historical information, but also the very logic of national memory formation. This is consistent with the idea of cultural memory [3], according to which the collective past is preserved through cultural forms, symbols and practices, but also extends it in a modern digital context. While traditional cultural memory has largely had the function of institutional exchange and established modes of representation, digital memory is now characterized by its networked nature, the speed of information movement and the fact that users actively participate in the creation and reinterpretation of historical narratives. This finding is consistent with work [5, 6], which links digitalization to a shift towards a more networked and “connective” model of memory.

The results of the study also support the argument [4, 15] about the crucial role of media in shaping cultural memory. Documentary film, audio narratives and digital visual art are not neutral transmitters of already formed historical knowledge, but actively shape the ways in which we perceive this knowledge. Documentary film structures events through montage and composition, audio tells historical experience in the voice of an eyewitness, while digital art symbolizes and emotionally reinterprets this experience. Thus, the “specificity” of the media format has direct consequences for the types of historical experience that become publicly visible and that are inscribed in collective memory.

The results of documenting the Russian-Ukrainian war are particularly revealing. They are consistent with work [19], which shows that digital war diaries transform personal experiences into forms of public testimony. At the same time, research on Ukrainian digital art shows that visual images of war are not only aesthetic, but also memorial and comforting, creating symbols of resistance, loss, heroism and solidarity [18]. This allows us to argue that a feature of contemporary Ukrainian memory is the minimal temporal distance between the event and its perpetuation: historical experience is recorded, interpreted and included in the collective narrative almost simultaneously.

The revealed role of documentary film in the reconstruction of Ukrainian memory is compared with the work of [16], which, using the material of Docudays UA 2014–2024 films, explores the significance of documentary film in the representation of war, testimony, justice, and cultural memory. A similar trend is recorded by [17], calling the Russian-Ukrainian war one of the dominant ones in Ukrainian documentary filmmaking of the last decade. The results complement this series of studies in that documentary film is not considered in isolation, but in the context of audio and digital visual practices that, in interaction, construct multimodal ecosystems of national memory.

At the same time, the results also highlight the contradictory nature of the platformization of memory, as pointed out by [8, 12, 13, 23]. Digital platforms democratize access to historical materials and offer users opportunities to participate in the creation of memory, but at the same time make it dependent on algorithms, content moderation policies and commercial infrastructure of technology companies. Such dependence is particularly problematic in relation to digital evidence of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which may have not only cultural but also historical and evidentiary value. Thus, from the perspective of recording, accessibility on a social network cannot be equated with reliable archival preservation.

Therefore, the data obtained provide an opportunity to also expand the discussion on the formation of digital memory of intercultural communications in the context of national identity. In the context of Ukraine, digital cultural practices not only perform the function of storing the past, but also serve as a tool of social consolidation and international representation. They help to embed individual and local histories into a broader national narrative, they support the cultural connection of Ukrainians around the globe and expand the Ukrainian experience in the global information space. This role becomes even more consequential during armed conflict, when competing interpretations of the past and present are communicated in an increasingly contested information environment.

These findings imply that the future development of digital memory should shift beyond the accumulation of content toward the systematic assurance of authenticity, contextual integrity, discoverability and long-term availability. Verification of provenance, preservation of metadata and context, backup, use of open formats and establishment of independent repositories should become part of institutional protocols for digital memory. This is especially relevant in the era of generative artificial intelligence, as the line between documentary evidence, artistic reconstruction and synthetically generated content becomes less clear.

Thus, the results of the study generally coincide with modern theories of cultural, network and digital memory, but the Ukrainian experience reveals a certain specific path of development in it. Such manifestations are: the synchronicity of documentation and memorialization of the war, the significant role of personal digital witness documents in audio and visual forms, as well as the close connection of memory with cultural identity, public resilience and international exchange of ideas. Therefore, as far as further research is concerned, an interesting direction, in my opinion, is the empirical development of how more or less different digital formats actually shape the perception of the Ukrainian historical experience by different audiences, as well as which models of digital archiving are suitable for ensuring the long-term viability and sustainability

of today's cultural memory.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that reconstructing national memory in the digital age is a complex cultural and communicative process and that traditional mechanisms of preserving and transmitting historical experience are changing under the influence of digital technologies, networked communication and multimedia forms of representation. National memory is becoming less and less an exclusively institutionally controlled system, as cultural institutions, media, civil society organizations, artists, eyewitnesses and users of digital platforms are increasingly involved in its creation. This helps to democratize memory; it increases the number of creators and sources of memory, but it also increases the chances of the fragmentation and decontextualization of historical narratives.

Documentary film, audio narratives and digital visual art have been shown to interact in the formation of contemporary Ukrainian memory. Documentary film offers a structured audiovisual record of history, audio narratives preserve the personalized voice of historical experience, and digital art translates multi-faceted social phenomena into symbolic and emotionally charged images. These practices combine to form a multimodal model of memory where documentary, emotional and personal testimony meet in one cultural space.

Explanation of digital cultural practices is especially relevant in its application to the analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The digital videos and images offer an almost real-time chronicling of history, saving civilian and military accounts of local experiences, cultural losses, displacement, forced migration, and social resistance. Thus, Ukraine's contemporary national memory is being formed in the very process of living its history—which in part bridges the gap between documentation, interpretation and commemoration.

Digital cultural practices have been shown to have the same potential as physical practices to build cultural identity, social cohesion and improve the representation of the Ukrainian experience abroad. Online archives, digital exhibitions, podcasts, documentary projects, and visual art keep the connection to national culture no matter where the person is located, help to form a collective historical memory, and help to insert Ukrainian narratives into global cultural and social narratives.

At the same time, the digital world creates a number of systemic risks, such as reliance on private platforms, selection of content through algorithms, deletion of content, the technological obsolescence of formats, cyberattacks, privacy violations, disinformation, and the proliferation of artificially generated content. The issue of authenticity of digital evidence is becoming particularly relevant, requiring the preservation of metadata, information about the author, time, place and context of the creation of materials.

The study contends that the long-term preservation of the digital national memory is to be assured through regular systematic archiving, the use of open formats, data duplication, metadata standardization, and by achieving interoperability between archival, museum, educational, and media systems. Openness, on the other hand, should be balanced with security, ethics and privacy.

Therefore, the formation of Ukrainian national memory in the digital era is to be understood as the building of a new cultural and communicative ecosystem in which documentary film, audio narratives, digital art, archives, and social platforms coalesce into a interconnected infrastructure that preserves historical experience while supporting its contemporary interpretation. Its efficiency lies in combining the transparency and participation of digital culture with professional fact checking, ethical regulation, technological sustainability, and long-term institutional responsibility.

Author Contributions

Tetiana Hyrina: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, visualization, and project administration. Alina Zadorozhnia: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, writing – original draft, and writing – review and editing. Lidiia Koval: Methodology, investigation, formal analysis, validation, writing – original draft, and writing – review and editing. Angelina Tregub: Investigation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, and writing – review and editing. Liudmyla Cherniavska-Lomakina: Methodology, investigation, validation, supervision, writing – review and editing. All authors contributed to the development of the study, critically reviewed the manuscript, approved the final version, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the subject matter or publication of this review.

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Data availability

This conceptual and documentary study relied on published academic sources and publicly accessible digital materials. The detailed case-selection notes and any additional documentary analysis records, if retained by the authors, may be requested from the corresponding author; their availability remains subject to author confirmation.

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