



Heritage Dissemination Through Education: Potential and Impact of Restoration Center's Communication

#heritage communication #museum education #restoration #digital heritage #social participation





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Abstract

This article examines how restoration centres function as both educational and communicative platforms in the dissemination of cultural heritage. Focusing on the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre in Lithuania, it analyses participatory practices, educational strategies, and digital communication tools that shape public understanding and strengthen cultural awareness. Restoration centres are explored not only as technical institutions but also as dialogical spaces where professionals and the public meet. By organizing guided tours of restoration workshops (fig. 1) and practical programs such as the educational gilding workshop (fig. 2), the Centre fosters experiential learning and public engagement. Digital innovations such as virtual tours, livestreams, and social media communication extend its impact beyond physical boundaries, contributing to inclusive and sustainable heritage education. The article contextualizes these practices within contemporary theories of heritage communication, participatory museology, and digital culture. It concludes that restoration centres, when empowered with educational missions, not only safeguard heritage but also build trust, prevent amateur interventions, and contribute to long-term cultural participation.

Cultural heritage today is understood as a dynamic process that encompasses not only preservation but also active communication, interpretation, and education. Museums and their restoration centres/workshops are increasingly seen not merely as technical institutions but as spaces for cultural dialogue where specialists and the public can interact. This is particularly relevant in today's context, where digital technologies and social media are transforming the ways knowledge is disseminated [1].

The growing role of the information society and technological advancements have created new challenges for cultural heritage institutions, which must adapt to modern communication trends. Heritage communication is no longer unidirectional — it is a dialogue in which society actively participates. According to M. Carrozzino and M. Bergamasco [2], only sustainably implemented digital strategies can ensure a deep and unfragmented understanding of heritage. Therefore, it is important to examine how educational and communicative initiatives influence societal behavior toward cultural heritage. Heritage institutions also face pressure to become more open to the public and to involve visitors in decision-making processes. This trend reflects a broader shift from “top-down” heritage protection models to co-creation approaches, in which visitors' knowledge, experiences, and emotional connections are valued [3]. Heritage becomes not just an object, but a medium of connection between generations, communities, and cultural identities.

The Educational Role of Restoration Centres

For example, the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre organizes guided tours of the restoration workshops, led by re-

storers themselves (fig. 1), allowing visitors to directly observe the tools, techniques, and principles of conservation. In addition, the Centre offers a gilding educational program, during which participants apply gold leaf to a frame decoration fragment (fig. 2), thus gaining hands-on experience of historical techniques and processes.

Restoration centres, such as the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre, implement educational programs that help visitors understand conservation ethics and restoration practices. According to Sani [4], the educational activities of museums and related institutions should focus on critical thinking, experiential learning, and inclusive interpretation. It is essential that knowledge is delivered purposefully, which is why the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre has introduced interactive tours led by professional restorers who act as educators or guides. Educational workshops, lectures, and practical activities not only foster cultural awareness but also cultivate respect for professional work.

Global practice shows that educational projects in the heritage sector empower visitors and encourage their engagement. For example, Canada's Ingenium museum network integrates interactive screens, tactile material zones, and educational platforms for schools. This transforms the visitor from a passive observer into an active explorer [5]. Similarly, the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre offers educational programs based on a constructivist approach to learning. It is important to note that education in these centres functions as a two-way process — not only does the public learn from professionals, but specialists also gain valuable insights into visitors' expectations and understanding. This two-way dialogue fosters visitor empowerment, particularly among youth. Research shows that educational activities involving experimentation and independent exploration have a stronger impact on students' perception of heritage value [6].

Application of Digital Technologies in Heritage Communication

Virtual reality (VR) and extended reality (XR) solutions open new possibilities for exploring cultural heritage. Studies show that VR technologies not only enhance the understanding of complex restoration processes but also strengthen visitors' emotional connections to heritage [7]. According to Wang and Zhang [8], metaverse technologies allow for the creation of personalized heritage experiences that expand the boundaries of educational content.

Digital tools empower visitors to experience objects interactively rather than merely visually. For instance, the Smithsonian Institution has developed a digital restoration archive that allows users to follow the process of restoring a work of art in a virtual environment. This model not only increases transparency but also builds trust in institutions. Scholars note that such tools not only inform but also cultivate ethical sensitivity in visitors [9]. The application of digital technologies also enables the capture and preservation of fragile forms of heritage. For example, 3D scanning is used not only for object reconstruction but also for creating educational simulators in which users can practically "perform" restoration actions. This method is especially useful in academic contexts, where theoretical and practical knowledge is combined [10].

The Role of Social Media

Social media is not only a communication channel but also a tool for community building. Research emphasizes that strategic content planning and audience analysis are essential for effective dissemination [11]. Restoration centres that are active in the digital space have the opportunity not only to disseminate knowledge but also to shape cultural discourse and respond to inaccurate interpretations.

Recent studies show that social networks are becoming not only means



Fig. 1 Guided tour in the restoration workshops.
Source: Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre.

of content dissemination but also platforms for collective memory-making [12]. This is especially important for marginalized groups, who can contribute to pluralistic heritage narratives through digital expression. For effectiveness, it is necessary to consistently apply network analysis methodologies and evaluate impact using communication indicators. Communication with visitors must be clear and consistent. Information should be easily understandable and delivered in a way that helps visitors grasp the intended message [13]. Consistency ensures that across all communication channels, users receive the same message and are kept informed about updates and changes.

In addition to traditional social media, new platforms like TikTok are emerging, enabling quicker access to younger audiences. For example, European cultural institutions have started using interactive challenges (e.g., #HeritageRestorationChallenge) to encourage users to share personal stories related to heritage. This demonstrates that digital communication is dynamic and constantly evolving, requiring ongoing monitoring and adaptation.

Among the activities are practical workshops such as the gilding program (fig. 2), where par-

ticipants perform gilding on decorative frame fragments, and guided tours led by professional restorers in the workshops (fig. 1). These activities foster not only knowledge but also experiential understanding, strengthening visitors' respect for restoration work.

The Case of the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre

In addition, the Centre collaborates with regional museums in Lithuania by organizing educational trips and dissemination events. This decentralizes heritage education and enables outreach to smaller audiences in the regions. Alongside traditional activities, the Centre also produces documentary-style videos about restoration processes, which are shared via social media and museum platforms. According to visitor surveys [16], these efforts increase public trust in staff competence and foster interest in cultural heritage.

To achieve social inclusion, the Centre works with schools and social service centers, offering tailored educational programs. This ensures that restoration knowledge reaches various societal groups. It is essential that information dissemination occurs at the right time. When informa-

tion is received promptly, visitors can respond appropriately to news and updates [14]. It is also important to respond quickly to questions raised by visitors.

To communicate effectively with museum visitors, it is crucial to understand that communication is a two-way process [15]. This means that the museum must not only provide information but also listen to visitor feedback and questions in order to better understand their needs and reactions. For this reason, the Centre collects both quantitative and qualitative data on participant experiences to continuously improve its educational offerings [17].

Recommendations

Considering current trends, it is recommended to:

- Integrate VR and XR solutions into educational programs;
- Develop consistent social media communication strategies;
- Involve communities in content creation;
- Ensure the dissemination of ethical restoration principles;

- Create multilingual and accessible forms of education;
- Develop educational programs introducing traditional techniques or allowing participation in basic conservation/restoration practices;
- Implement activities that allow visitors to feel like part of the restoration process;
- Integrating heritage education in school curricula;
- Promoting behind-the-scenes restoration processes;
- Encouraging collaboration between professionals and communities.

Conclusions

Restoration centres have become inseparable from cultural communication policy. They not only preserve but actively create new forms of knowledge by applying the latest technologies and participatory methods. The Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre is a successful example of integrating education, social media communication, and restoration ethics to support sustainable heritage preservation.



Fig. 2 Educational gilding program – participants applying gold leaf to frame decorations.
Source: Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre.

Visitor survey results at the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre confirm that an integrated approach to education and communication — based on modern technologies and participatory practices — is essential for achieving long-term impact in heritage protection. Future research should focus on qualitative indicators that assess how communication tools shape cultural awareness and societal values. It is likely that restoration centres will become increasingly active knowledge platforms, integrating physical, digital, and emotional heritage into cohesive educational systems. This transformation requires institutional flexibility, the capacity to experiment with new formats, and continuous dialogue with audiences. Contemporary heritage protection is more than preservation — it is active cultural participation, with restoration centres playing a key role. ■

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