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The use of multimedia in promotion of history by public benefit organisations based on Janusz Kurtyka Foundation

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Abstract: *Janusz Kurtyka Foundation is an example of institution that includes the use of multimedia in its promotional activity. The statistics show that the Foundation's accounts and profiles on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are visibly getting new visitors. This proves that posts, tweets and videos on historical matters and issues involving multimedia samples attract many more users.*

Key words: History, Multimedia, Promotion of History, Historical Education, Social Media

Disruptive development of computer technology and the Internet in the last two decades influenced almost every aspect of social life, science as well as promotion of education. Popularisation of history is one visible example of the use of technology. Technological advancement forces pro-history awareness institutions to search for new ways of encouraging the society to discover history. Multimedia is of great help in that, namely, websites, documentaries, interactive exhibitions, mobile apps, historical games and podcasts. Multimedia is open-access and offers a great deal of possibilities. Multimedia is of use for different institutions (both state and public benefit) as well as individuals. The former can disseminate information about Polish history and the latter is able to act according to previously assumed goals which arose from grassroots movement. Public benefit organisations also include multimedia in their doings. This means of popularisation might be limited by author's imagination as well as funds. Some authors create materials promoting the past *pro publico bono* or with limited budget funding. That is the reason why those budget productions, i.e. films have limited number of actors and advertising spots lack complex animations. Such spots sometimes have the form of a clip which consists of archival photographs with the text of dubbing speaker. This stripped-down form does not devalue those materials and

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their potential – just the opposite. Modern visual culture focuses on evoking emotions of the receiver, their subjective experience and desired connotations.

Janusz Kurtyka Foundation was established in 2016 in order to promote and popularise Polish history both in Poland and abroad. Moreover, its aim is to support and commonise national and social tradition as well as patriotism. Annually the Foundation holds a competition in which Janusz Kurtyka Award is given to the author of the best historical book addressing a given issue. The winners receive statuettes and their works are translated and promoted abroad. Furthermore, the organisation is involved in many historical projects focusing on history and its popularisation. One example of the Foundation's activity is a series of debates and publications entitled "History, Truth, the Present. How to conduct foreign affairs in the context of the past" and another one is postgraduate studies „Public diplomacy in terms of historical policy". The Foundation's activity is not only targeted at scientists and experts, but also those passionate about history, thus, making them more interested in Polish history by many different initiatives. Among those initiatives there is an adventure race "Rally in the footsteps of heroes" (Rajd Śladami Bohaterów) which combines tourism and knowledge as well as requiring to create an Escape Room-like historical game.

Janusz Kurtyka Foundation uses different multimedia to promote its activity and reach its goals. Its website is full of information on the actions taken by the Foundation, including promotional materials, such as short videos on various projects initiated by the organisation. They are well-made and full of information about some particular initiatives and, what is more important, certain historical events, processes and issues. In a similar way the Foundation promotes the winners of Janusz Kurtyka Award. Each award-winning book has its own clip presenting the book, the author and his thoughts on a given topic in detail. On the Foundation's website you can find digital version of books and commemorative infographics published by the organisation.

Janusz Kurtyka Foundation is also present in social media. This organisation has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Spotify. Thanks to two independent authors on Facebook and Twitter the activity on those accounts is not just copy-paste one. This type of activity can certainly encourage Internet users to follow latest actions taken by the Foundation.

Posts that are submitted to Facebook inform about current projects and activity as well as its employees and their accomplishments both scientific and social ones. The Facebook account moderator also reminds the users about anniversaries of different historical events, presents biographies of some Polish patriots that lived in 20th century and discusses the activity of the Foundation's patron. Between 2020 and 2022 there were many infographics posted that focused on events from Polish history and freedom fighters wanting Poland to regain independence. They were published in se-

ries entitled: *Pilots of the Independent, Priests of the Independent, Poles in the Resistance, Silesian Insurgents, Sturdy Doomed Soldiers*. In the last few months the Foundation posted infographics on projects counteracting Russian propaganda and misinformation in the field of Polish and Ukrainian history.

In tweets that appear on Twitter, apart from the Foundation's news feed, we can also find information on anniversaries of various historical events, birthdays and deaths of deserving people that fought for the country and everyday life in the period between 1918 to 1939. Another interesting series is the one devoted to children and women fighting in Warsaw Uprising and people linked to democratic opposition during Polish People's Republic. The administrator of this account posts the most important data about life and activity of people important in Polish history, namely, Ryszard Kukliński, rev. Stanisław Suchowolec, rev. Sylwester Zych, rev. Stefan Niedzielak. Among other posts there are also the ones that present quotes of many patriots and statesmen which are thought-provoking and reflective, we can find quotes of the Founder prof. Janusz Kurtyka. It is worth highlighting that the majority of posts includes proper visual stimuli, i.e. photographs and infographics.

The Foundation's YouTube channel is full of debates concerning relations between Poland and other countries, there are hosts and experts in the field, such as scientists and historians. Those debates are part of the project called "History, Truth, the Present. How to conduct foreign affairs on the context of the past". On the channel we can also watch videos of annual Foundation's overhauls entitled „Past-Future”, which involve debates with experts on historical politics and the history in the public realm nowadays, videos from Janusz Kurtyka Award granting as well as distinctions for grassroots movement organisations promoting Polish history.

From July 2023 Janusz Kurtyka Foundation is active on Spotify where it posts podcasts that come from the series called "History, Truth, the Present. People and inspiration". In subsequent episodes historians, scientists and other experts share their beliefs, studies and findings and the Foundation has the opportunity to provide those people with common space to present the acquired data and show it to the society in order to spread historical awareness. The framers of this initiative are also planning to organise chats with representatives of various organisations of experts, science popularisers, journalists and members of public and private establishment as well as witnesses of history.

The efforts of Janusz Kurtyka Foundation's employees are visible in the statistics of the number of Internet users visiting both the website and social media accounts. In May 2013 the Foundation's Twitter account was visited more than 213 700 times. In comparison, their Facebook profile in 2021 had 416 379 visits, and in 2022 it was 257 174 visits, in the period between January 1 and July 24, 2023 it was 119 325 visits. Up to July 24, 2023 Facebook profile was liked by 6792 people and followed by 7034 users. Slightly poorer are statistics on Instagram activity. In 2021 posts were

viewed 8803 times and in 2022 it was 15 622, however, the organisation is working on more satisfying statistics and it resulted in 32 393 users visiting the profile between January 1 and July 24, 2023. Foundation's Instagram account had 671 followers up to July 24, 2023. YouTube channel had 76 981 views in the period from 2016 up to July 24, 2023, 41 percent of those views took place from January 1, 2022 to July 24, 2023, this proves that the materials posted by the Foundation are becoming more and more popular. Now, some statistics concerning the website – the period between January 1 and July 15, 2023 resulted in 36 808 visitors in 56 251 sessions. The majority of those accesses were from Poland (25 385 – 68,34%), but there were visitors from the USA (5 624 – 15,14%), Germany (763 – 2,05%), Ireland (673 – 1,81%), the UK (392 – 1,06%), Sweden (363 – 0,98%), China (260 – 0,70%), France (223 – 0,60%) and the Netherlands (223 – (0,60%). In this case growing interest in the materials that are published is visible. From January 1 to July 15, 2023 the website gained 11 466 new users and it was visited 28 581 times. Thanks to Google Analytics we know that the website was viewed mainly by people aged 25–34 (ca. 23%) and 35-44 (ca. 22%). It is worth noting that the website was visited by men more frequently (53,5%) but the difference is not that great and the materials that are published online attract both sexes almost equally.

Janusz Kurtyka Foundation is an example of institution that includes the use of multimedia in its promotional activity. Most often we can see short videos or infographics created by an employee responsible for it. Those materials appear in the Foundation's social media and other means of communication in order to attract attention of potential receivers and get them interested in the activity of this organisation. Foundation's publications aim to improve promotion and recognition of the institution, but also popularisation of Polish history and its awareness among the society. Thanks to posting data on the Internet and social media the Foundation can reach broader audience, hence, more individuals interested both in history and the Foundation itself. Based on statistics we know that the activity of the institution is becoming more and more popular among people at different ages. The statistics show that the Foundation's accounts and profiles on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are visibly getting new visitors. This proves that posts, tweets and videos on historical matters and issues involving multimedia samples attract many more users.

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