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Social networking and communication tools in archive ethnography: Tools for collecting, displaying and recording material or digital research notebooks?

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Abstract
This essay explores the importance of social networking and communication tools in the field of archival ethnography, putting a special emphasis on the research e-learning program "People coming from Mt Pelion" (Kapaniaris & Varvounis 2019a). The main concern of this paper was whether social networking and communication tools are collection, display and recording tools or just parallel digital notebooks. The use of social networking tools and communication tools in archival ethnography had as their scope the archives of people coming from Mt Pelion who migrated to Egypt from 1860 to 1960 (Konstantinidis 1936). Mt Pelion in the region of Magnesia is a part of the regional unit of Thessaly, Greece. The research was carried out under the scientific supervision of the Laboratory of Folklore and Social Anthropology of the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace.

Keywords: ethnography, archive, ethnography, digital environment, Internet, social network, migration, People coming from Mt Pelion
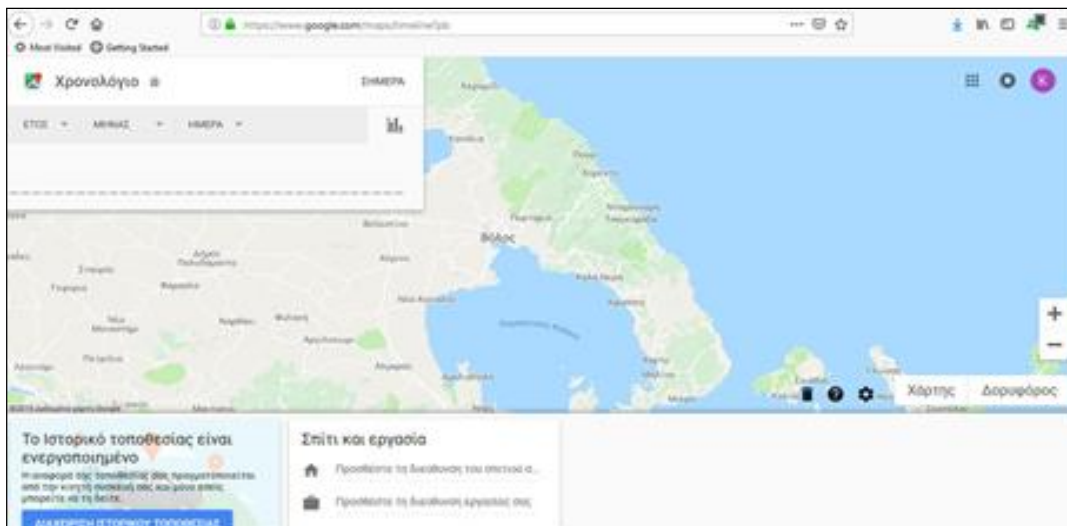
1. Introduction

During the stage of research and more specifically during the drawing up of an ethnography, social networking and communication tools may constitute as tools of recording viewing comparison and distribution of information, testimonies, documents, (manuscripts, photos etc.) and reports which can possibly lead to primary sources. Social networking and communication tools can thus function as digital research, allowing each visitor or member to contribute to their enrichment.

2. From notes in fieldwork research to digital research notebooks

Many generations of researchers have used and continue to use up to this day certain kinds of notes in fieldwork research, such as personal diary, manuscripts, correspondence, draft notes and basic notes (headlines) all written in pencil and paper. However, we have gradually moved to new recording technologies, either with photographic and audio "snapshots", mobile devices (mobile phone and tablet pc), social media (blogs, websites, Facebook groups) and messenger, Skype. At the same time, more complex digital technologies can be used (apps for on-spot notes and mapping apps.) Another web-based technology of the history of routes travelled by the researchers can be recorded through Google's services. In particular, sites visited by researchers, as well as photos taken in the course of time, appear on Google Maps Timeline, also known as location history.

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Image 1: Google Maps timeline, also known as location history.

Therefore, if Google's services are used in the course of our research, the data stored in our account contributes to the provision of more personalized recording experiences.

In particular, we have the ability to check our activity digitally day by day:
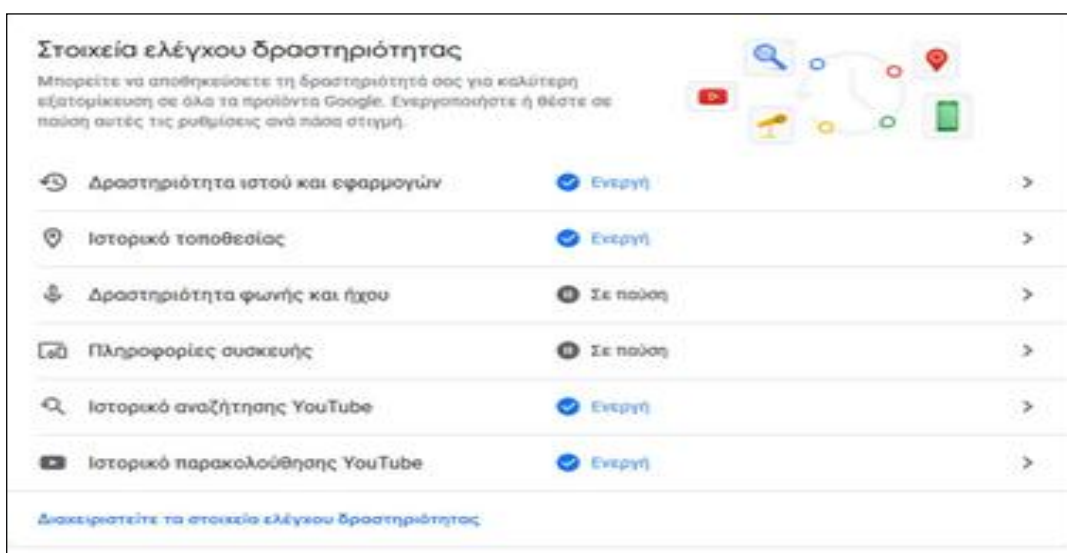
a) web and application activity,
b) location history
c) voice and sound activities
d) device information
e) YouTube searching history
f) YouTube viewing history

Image 2: Activity log data

3. The role of social media networks in research (blogs, Facebook groups)

The term social media network refers to the means of interaction and communication between groups of people through online communities. The key role of social media networks in research during the implementation of archival ethnography is linked to the social interaction between people who create, share or exchange information and ideas within virtual communities and networks. In particular, the use of blogs is useful in collecting, recording, documenting and promoting historical files, as well as in completing the sources and documents that make up a whole file or collection. Moreover, the publication of a survey related to archival evidence of a certain era, an event, a biography of a person or family, may often trigger the social interaction and association relevant people and relatives associated with the research topic, eventually enriching the data possibly at the disposal of the researcher. A typical example is the case of the blog for the Konstantine and Apostolos Konstantinidis' Archive (http://magnisandzagras.blogspot.com/) which aims to inform those who are interested in setting up the A. & K. Konstantinidis archive. In particular, besides the briefing it provides regarding the actions of creation, documentation and promotion of the archive of the brothers Konstantinidis (People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt), the purpose of the blog is to constitute the channel of communication between the researcher and other collectors, relatives and individuals involved in the archive directly or indirectly (eg staff working in the family, inhabitants of the area who hold memories and evidence related to Konstantinidis brothers) (Kapaniaris 2014).

Image 3: The blog of Constantine and Apostolos Constantinidis' Archive (http://magnisandzagras.blogspot.com/)

The archive of Konstantinos Konstantinidis (Petros Magnis) and Apostolos Konstantinidis (Pelion Zagras) consists of two collections. The first collection concerns the donation of Apostolos Konstantinidis at the Public Historical Library of Zagora and especially his literary library consisting of 3,000 books and over 3,500 journals, all rare publications of the Greek community of Egypt. The second collection concerns the archival material of Konstantine and Apostolos Konstantinidis consisting of: a) photographic material of various periods of the Konstantinidis family (photo albums), b) archive of "SERAPION" magazine 1909-1910, c) retail cashbook of the Konstantinidis brothers, d) archives of newspapers, c) the manuscripts of the works of Apostolos Konstantinidis, d) the manuscripts of Konstantine Konstantinidis, e) the personal letters of the Konstantinidis brothers, f) drawings and artworks of Apostolos Konstantinidis, objects (frames, paintings, etc.), h) books, i) personal manuscripts and so on. (Kapaniaris 2014).

Another important role of the blog is to boost initiatives to set up support groups or to set up an informal network entitled "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt" aiming at:

a) to unify any initiative and action relating to the promotion of the work of people coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt,

b) Digitize and document each item (editions, photographs, manuscripts, objects),

c) record any oral testimony or history or narrative about issues of the diaspora of people from Mt Pelion in Egypt,

d) systematize the relevant literature (bibliographic review) for the work of the scholarly people from Mt Pelion in Egypt,

e) to organize conferences and workshops for the scientific promotion of issues of the diaspora of people coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt,

f) to publish relevant researches on the life and work of people coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt,

g) to create audiovisual material, educational material other modern digital - web productions,

h) to highlight the life and work of people coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt in all the social, economic and spiritual manifestations of these community.
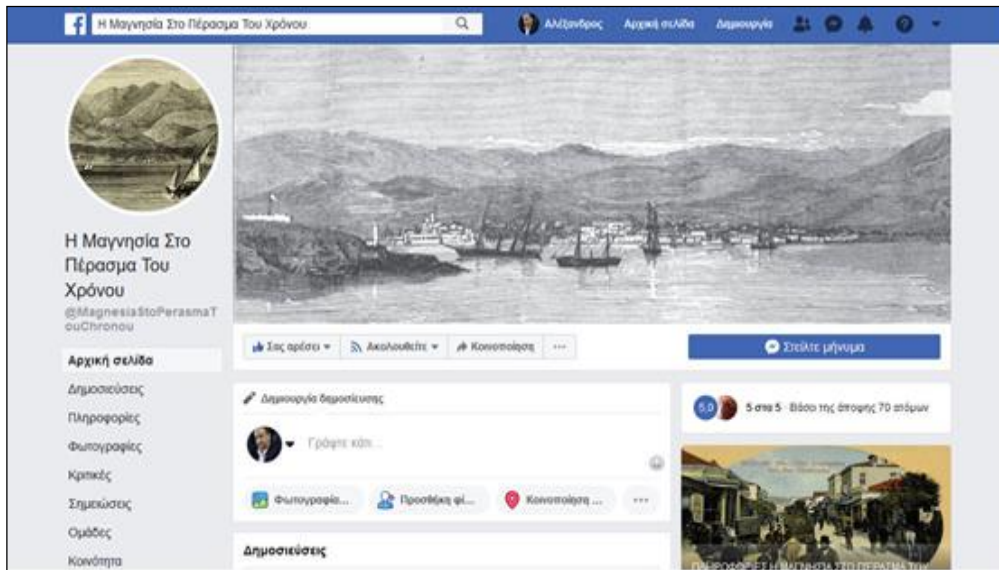
Another instance of a popular blog concerning the history of Magnesia holds the title "Magnesia over time". This blog is another case of a social networking tool that can also contribute to the social interaction between people who create, share or exchange information and ideas within virtual communities and networks. Despite not being merely dedicated to the "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt" but more generally to local history stories about Magnesia, there are many cases of posts contributing to issues related to People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt. The important thing about this blog is that it is linked to the corresponding Facebook team with the same title. Consequently, there are many instance where he contributions of the Facebook team members function as a stimulus giving the ideas or even in many cases the actual material for new posts on the blog related to People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt.

Image 4: The blog "Magnesia over Time"
(https://volosmagnisia.wordpress.com).

In that way, topics previously unknown regarding the life and work of people from Mt Pelion are recorded on the blog, while on their Facebook team there are comments, photographs and documents for each post. Consequently, the Facebook group functions as a public digital notebook that can be accessed by any individual researcher interested in his subject (in this case for issues related to People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt).

Image 5: The Facebook group "Magnesia over Time" » (https://el-gr.facebook.com/MagnesiaStoPerasmaTouChronou/).

Another characteristic instance is the Facebook group "Mt Pelion over Time" which counts more than 5.000 members. This digital community, as its name suggests, focuses on issues related to the local history and is structured in the logic of the aforementioned similar group "Magnesia over Time". In this group as well, there are plenty of posts with contributions and evidence in the comments posted by the members of the group "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt".

Image 6: *The Facebook group "Mt Pelion over time"* (https://www.facebook.com/groups/911890258928598/).

In addition, there is a more specialized group on Facebook regarding People coming from Mt Pelion, which holds the title: "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt" numbering over 300 members. In particular, the initiative of this group aims to coordinate in the first place the unification of initiatives aimed at documenting and promoting the diverse variety of the diaspora of people of Mt Pelion that has been successfully active in Egypt in many sectors of the economy, in literature and arts. The ultimate goal of this cycle of actions and events entitled "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt" is to progressively bring to light all the personalities working in Egypt having ancestry from Mt Pelion. Characteristic of this Facebook group, titled: "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt" is posts and contributions concentrated on a specific theme and not general issues of local history of Pelion or Magnesia that other groups from Magnesia possibly have. (Kapaniaris & Varvounis 2019b).

Image 7: The Facebook group "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt" (https://www.facebook.com/groups/911890258928598/).
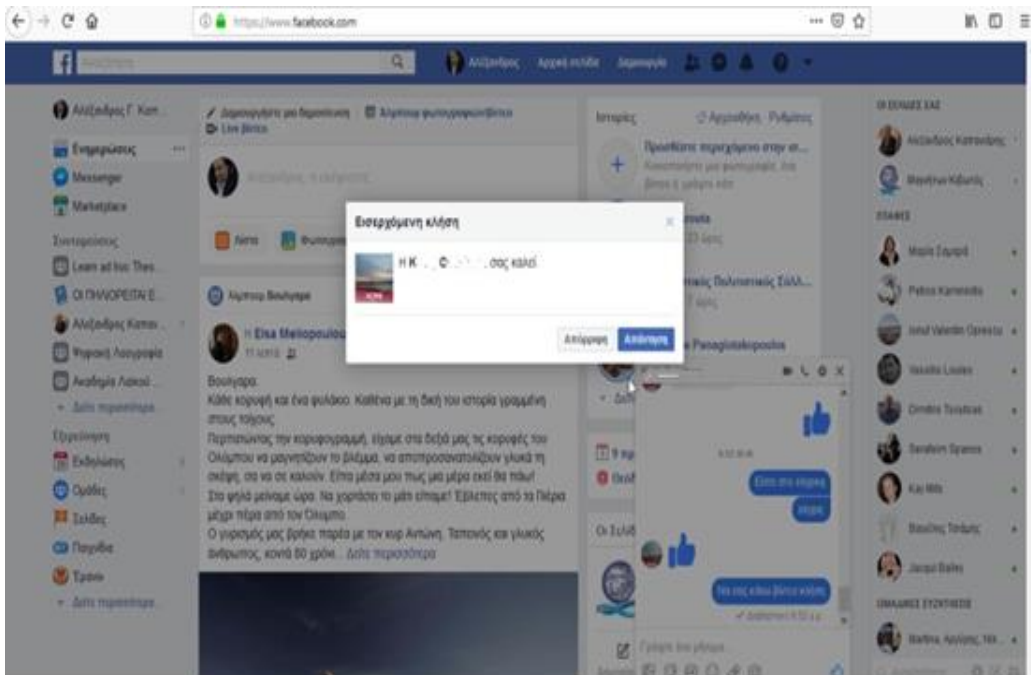
4. The role of social media in the research

The role of social media in the research should not be underestimated as it is equally important since they offer the possibility to record a conversation or even an interview with the consent of the interviewee, and then transcribe it especially in cases where research does not allow a living encounter and communication. Moreover, in cases where cooperation with Facebook groups is possible, we can use the video call or voice call tools offered by Facebook, of course consent of the interviewee.
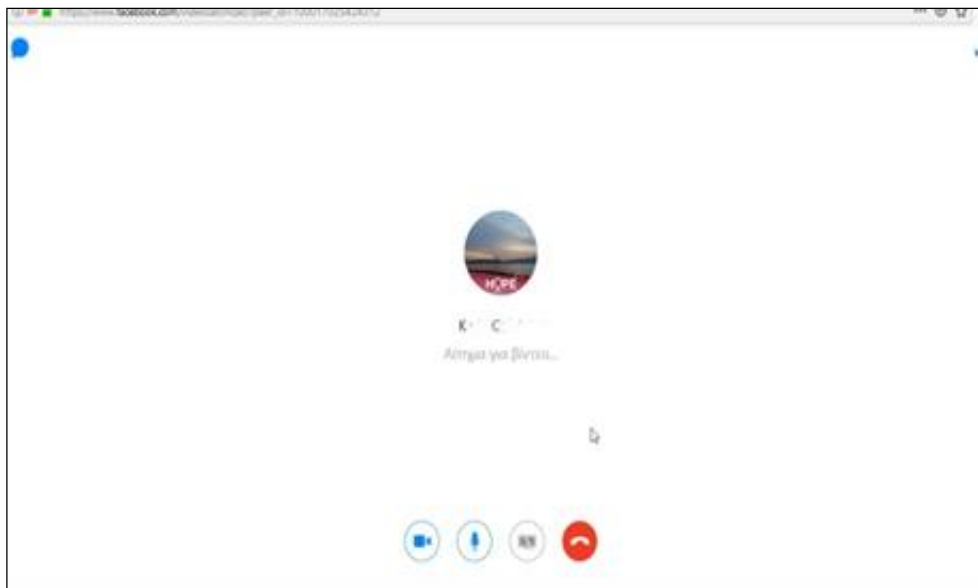

Image 8: The tools for video or voice call on Facebook.

Image 9: Incoming call via Facebook tools.

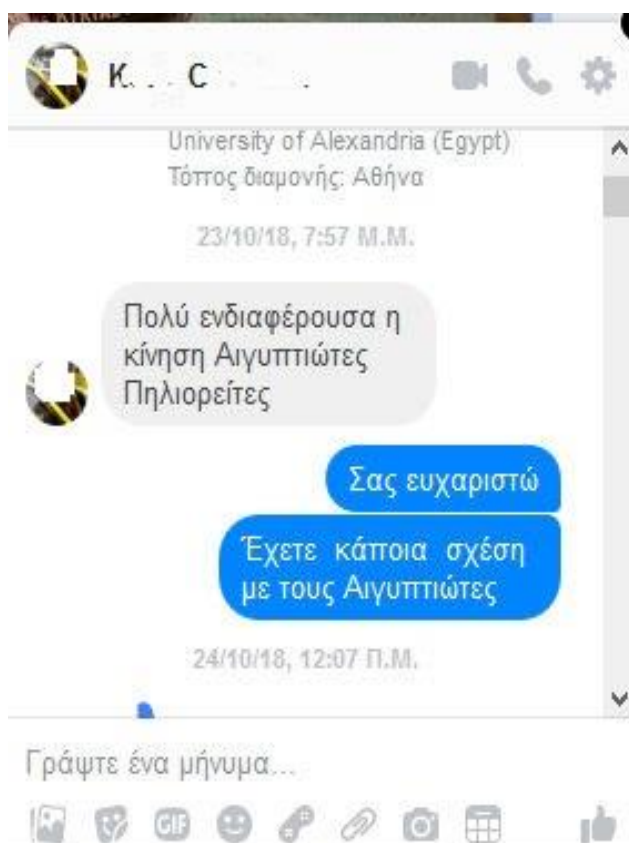In this particular case, an interview was carried out without the use of image (video) but only recording the voice of the interviewee using a software designed to record the screen of the computer.

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Image 10: Call via Facebook tools using only audio (voice call)

Conversation or interview via Facebook messenger among the members of a group or friends can also function as a king of a digital notebook. In particular, such conversations can evolve into lengthy texts that are often spontaneous, and usually not concluded leaving promises to continue in accordance to the collaborating member's pace in the group. Meanwhile, given the fact that the conversation is not deleted it can continue from where it was stopped as if it had been recorded in a notebook as a manuscript.

Image11: The beginning of a conversation on Facebook Messenger

5. YouTube as a research tool

On YouTube, somebody can also trace valuable material searching with the use of key words related videos where testimonies photo albums of memories documentaries and broadcasts are recorded. The traceable videos are divided in two major categories:

a) between documentary and digital narrative (The Story on Youtube ...)
e.g.
Alexandria Egyptian, duration 7:57,
A short tribute to the Greek Community of Alexandria

Image 12: Alexandria Egyptian
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZDQOTMpm48)

a) narrations of real-life stories with archival evidence .... creating digital narratives on the network (digital collective memory).

Image 12: *The Snow White of Keratsini – Egyptians*
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIfiZpe8bIU&fbclid=IwAR3PXV1xI5Dh3MTrC8rGRw77n9jSlEm_DWeEIC14-
96DjkB0azN93P4CI3U).

6. Conclusion

The implementation of social media and communication tools in the field of archival ethnography, and in particular in the research program "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt", revealed that social media and communication tools can function simultaneously as tools for collecting, viewing and recording an also, as digital notebooks. Especially, in the research carried out regarding the life and work of personalities, benefactors, families and ordinary people as well who migrated from Mt Pelion to Egypt from 1860 to 1960 seeking business opportunities, work and commercial transactions, it emerged that social networking and communication tools have played an important role:

a) filling the already existing archives with new information

b) different readings and new evidence,
c) oral testimonies,
d) narratives regarding the same facts coming from different people and different perspectives.

In this way, all of the above tools facilitated and enriched the research so that conversation with each archive would be more effective.

Indeed, there were instances where participants in a closed group on Facebook took part in an informal interview (discussion with various threads) where the evidence recorded that enlightened events that could not be recorded through a regular interview or discussion. Thus, many times through social media the different role of various personalities or benefactors or even the servants who migrated from Zagora or other villages on Mt Pelion to the

wealthy houses of people from Mt Pelion in Egypt were recorded in the above mentioned way.

The fact that the research was promoted through social media in the local community played an important role to the enrichment of the evidence, testimonies and other supplementary information that gradually led to the formation of an archival ethnography.

Finally, communication with relatives of people coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt as well as with owners of rare archives residing in other cities and countries was greatly facilitated both by remote material dispatching and by remote discussions and interviews:

a) chat through Facebook Messenger,
b) through Skype
c) video call through Facebook Messenger
d) continuous comments (mini interviews) under posts in Facebook groups.

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