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**Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future**

**THE PROFESSIONAL CULTURE OF A RUSSIAN HISTORIAN  
IN THE FUTURE**

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***Abstract***

The article is devoted to the analysis of the influence of scientific and technical progress on the professional qualities and culture of the Russian historian in the near future, as well as analysis of the current situation. In this article the author outlines the main aspects that, in his opinion, will predetermine the qualities of the professional historian of the future: the skill of rational selection of the most important information and identification of historical regularities, a good mastery of the latest computer technology and software, a thorough knowledge of foreign languages (primarily English), unobstructed orientation in numerous scholarly networks on the Internet, and familiarity with the basics of scientometrics and altmetrics. The author regretfully points out in his article the relatively low level of the modern professional culture of the majority of Russian historian specialists (specific examples are given) and calls for it to be upgraded in all available ways to meet the high scientific standards of the 21st century.

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**Keywords:** Historian, internet, professional culture, scientific and technical progress, scientific networks.



## 1. Introduction

The problem of the formation of the specialist of the future and his culture has repeatedly attracted the attention of scholars of the most varied specializations. This is attested by scholarly articles that appear from time to time (Saksonova, 2005; Egorova, 2015), the defense of several dissertations (Artamonov, 2009; Korzhuyeva, 2010), and the organization of conferences, including international ones. This topic has most often been analyzed within the framework of education in connection with the training of future specialists. At this, the authors of works have been focused, as a rule, on narrow professional problems (for example, biomedical) (Olevskaya, Skopovets, Pukhnavtseva, & Novik, 2017; Belova, 2018). Similarly, in the present article some aspects of the professional culture of Russian historians of the nearest two or three decades will be examined. Expanding the temporal horizons to a longer period is hardly expedient given the rapid development of scientific and technological progress, as well as the quick changes in the economic, social, political, and spiritual realms of modern global society, which does not permit making a long-term prognosis without going beyond scientific validity.

It is quite evident that scientific-technological progress, with all its inconsistency (Aladyshkin, Kulik, Michurin, & Anosova, 2017) cannot help but have an increasing influence on the professional culture of specialists in the most varied fields. This culture is a complex system that embraces professional knowledge and activity and the values and norms adopted in a specific scholarly area. Professional culture includes a level of mastery and competence attained in work activity, including a creative attitude toward work and scholarly creativity (Lymar', 2006).

## 2. Problem Statement

The stormy development of scientific-technological progress in recent years dictates new requirements for Russian scholars in the humanities and, in particular, historians, at the same time presenting them with new, unprecedented possibilities (Steding, 2004). New outlines of professional action for the specialist of the future, and consequently for his culture, gradually begin to appear. The problem consists of selecting features of the forming culture of the future specialist, as well as its comparison with the present level of professional competence of most Russian historians.

## 3. Research Questions

The questions that automatically arise with the first interpretation of the subject are connected with competence-based characteristics of the specialist historian in the future and include such aspects as:

- 1) the influence of large masses of information, which the future professional must learn to filter;
- 2) what will be the significance of his linguistic preparation;
- 3) what will mastery of the most recent computer technology and its methods of use for scholarly research give him;
- 4) what advantages can the scientific information network of the Internet provide to the specialist historian;
- 5) what can knowledge of scientometrics and altmetrics give the future historian;
- 6) how do modern Russian historians correspond to the modeled image of the historian of the future?

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The goal of this research consists of identifying the outlines of the primary competence-based characteristics of the specialist historian in the future, which will form the basis of his professional culture in the 21st century, and then compare the resulting model with the modern professional culture of most Russian historians.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In preparing this article such standard theoretical and practical methods of science were used as induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, systematic approach, comparative-typological and comparative-analytical method, the method of social modeling, and analysis of printed and electronic sources of information.

#### **6. Findings**

Here it is possible to distinguish several aspects. The huge flow of information that is daily bombarded into society (and in the future its intensity will only grow) places before the scholar the problem of self identification and the search for his place in the sphere of scholarly knowledge (Gashkova, Berezovskaya, & Shipunova, 2017). He can only attain this through tireless scholarly research, new discoveries, and the introduction into scholarly circulation of previously unknown facts and data. Under these conditions, especially relevant for the historian will be such skills as the ability to select the most important, significant facts from all the mass of information and sifting out data of little significance and the various pseudo-scientific informational rubbish. An especially important role is taken on here by competence, accumulated experience, and fundamental knowledge. Without these the historian risks not simply “drowning” in the abundance of facts, but also involuntarily becoming an accomplice to reproduction of false historical information. No less important for him is working out the capability to detect and analyze the basic and particular patterns and tendencies inherent in society at all stages of its historical development (Grinëv, 2017). The historian of the future will simply be forced to have both skills (rational selection of the most important information and identification of historical patterns) for the creation of meaningful scholarly work. At this, he must be a specialist of broad scope, and not just an expert in history, possessing general knowledge in the realm of ethnography, demography, economics, sociology, geography, and other disciplines.

Another essential aspect of forming the professional culture of a historian of the future must be his mastery of foreign languages, in particular English, which appears presently (and in the future) as a kind of “modern Latin.” In general, knowledge of foreign languages not only sharply expand the possibility of obtaining new facts and knowledge, but also deepens the overall culture of the professional in the humanities (Chernyavskaya, 2016). Here to help him now come various technical means, including the automatic Internet translator Google, which is capable of providing a translation (though not always correct) in several dozen(!) languages of peoples of the world, including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and others.

Of course, the historian in the future must thoroughly know computer technology, without which it will simply be impossible for him to realize his potential as a scholar. Today communication and the technical attainments of scientific-technical progress significantly ease the work of the historian. Before

the appearance of computers and the Internet most of his time was occupied with work in archives and libraries with documents, monographs, scholarly articles, and other hand-written and printed materials, and copying information important from the point of view of the researcher took place in the form of writing out extracts or with a copy machine like Xerox. Now, in connection with the widespread use of computer technology, free access to the Internet, digitization of many documents and scholarly literature, the whole process of obtaining and copying information is reduced by many times. Due to the Internet, almost instantaneous acquaintance with scholarly information stored sometimes tens or even thousands of kilometers from the place of residence and work of the scholar became possible. An example is the Russian-language site “Vostochnaya literatura. Srednevekovye istoricheskie istochniki Vostoka i Zapada” [Eastern Literature. Medieval Historical Sources of the East and West], where hundreds of historical sources are posted in electronic form, predominantly as books and articles (see Eastern Literature). Serving as another example is the joint Russian-American site “Vstrecha na granitsakh” [Meeting of Frontiers], which was opened in December 1999. About 70,000 documents and images from collections of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, films, and sound recordings belonging to the Library of Congress of the United States are entered there (see Meeting of Frontiers). However, along with this there is the risk of obtaining unreliable information through the Internet, which is sometimes even contained in the world-known electronic encyclopedia Wikipedia.

The introduction of computers and corresponding computer programs permit not just quick copying, but also freely rearranging, adding, combining, and editing any parts of a text of a historical work in minimal time. All this has contributed to a sharp growth in the productivity of the scholar. If before the coming of the era of computers and the Internet the historian usually wrote from one to three or four scholarly articles a year, now, due to new technical possibilities, his productive capacity has increased at least two to three times. It is evident that in the future, with further perfecting of computer systems and access to electronic sources, this index will increase even more. On the other hand, the danger will be in the fact that ultimately the need for the historian himself will disappear, since all research from posing a historical problem and search for documents and selection of literature to writing the scholarly work itself will be carried out by computers. But meanwhile this is only a prospect, though probably not so remote as might seem at first glance.

Of course, as the Internet, and communication of various kinds in general, are developed and refined in the future, various social and scholarly connections will have ever increasing significance (Bylieva, Lobatyuk, & Rubtsova, 2018). For the historian, a vital necessity will become free orientation in numerous social networks for more effective promotion and advertising of his intellectual product in the market of scholarly information, and acquaintance with recent attainments of other researchers will become a vital necessity. One already existing successful example of such networks on the Internet is the international network Academia.edu. It was opened in September 2008, and by 8 June 2018 the number of users registered on it exceeded 63 million (see Academia.edu). Academia.edu is intended for exchange of scholarly articles (in the network archive there are over 8.5 million works, including of historical orientation); in addition, it permits keeping track of citations of them, and learning about new scholarly directions and projects by names and key words. As shown by a specially designed study, articles placed in Academia.edu have on average 49% more citations over a five-year period than those that are uploaded

to personal pages of authors or on departmental websites on the Internet, though, of course, significant variable fluctuations are experienced, depending on the scholarly area where the specific scholar is engaged (Niyazov et al., 2016).

Development and refinement of international scholarly networks, as well as the ever increasing attention of Russian state agencies and university administrations to the scholarly sphere will require inclusion of basic knowledge and skills in scientometrics and altmetrics (it records the number of downloads of works on the Internet, statistics of views, mentions on social networks, and so on) in the professional culture of the future historian. Though scientometrics and its methods and indices are subjected to serious criticism both in Russia and in other countries (Lawrence, 2011; Gingras, 2018), no one intends to give up on them. While universities, journals, and scholars are rated, scientometric data will be in demand. In the conditions of increasing global competition, knowledge of scientometrics will be useful to the specialist historian for monitoring and increasing his scholarly status and orientation in the most prospective directions of historical research.

Enumerating all these aspects of culture of the specialist of the future and comparing them with the modern situation in Russia, it is possible to state with regret that the picture is relatively bleak. We begin with the fact that many of the most experienced representatives of older generation of Russian historians usually do not keep up with technological progress and use modern computer technology and programs poorly. In addition, few of them fluently possess the English language, which absolutely dominates the vast “Worldwide Web” and in which a substantial part of the scholarly literature is published, as well as most international scholarly conferences are conducted. Moreover, English is now required for submission and registration of scholarly articles in most prestigious non-Russian journals. At present an even larger number of the latter are moving to a standardized electronic registration of works arriving at the editorial offices. As an example, it is possible to cite such scholarly journal as *Sibirica* (ISSN 1361-7362), published in the United States and dedicated, as appears by its name, to problems of history, culture, and ethnography of Siberia and adjacent northern regions. Some Russian periodical publishers have also begun to adopt such practice of submitting articles for editorial review as, for example, the relatively recently appearing, but quickly gaining considerable popularity among scholars, journal *Sibirskie istoricheskie issledovaniya* (ISSN 2312-461X) (Site of the journal *Siberian Historical Research*).

Further, it is possible to add that many Russian historians, and not only of the old but also of the middle generation, have rather vague ideas about modern scholarly social networks that have received significant development in the West, such as ResearchGate, Mendeley, Academia.edu, and others. At approximately the same level is their knowledge in the realm of scientometrics, and only a few have heard about altmetrics (webmetrics). Although in the future, altmetrics will undoubtedly acquire substantially more significance due to further development of the Internet. Thus, the above-mentioned international network Academia.edu publishes statistics daily in the author’s profile, where the number of views of the author’s works over the last 30 days is reflected, where new visitors to an author’s profile are indicated, where the countries and cities (on a geographic map and in a special table) are displayed, where the search queries came from, and so on. At the same time, a number of scholarly periodical publications, as for example, the British historical journal *Mariner’s Mirror* and *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, are now applying such parameters as Views, CrossRef citations, and Altmetric to every published article.

The low overall professional culture of many modern Russian historians is often reflected in their works, which are frequently written using a too limited circle of sources and literature (though numerous data are now attainable on the Internet) and characterized by the sin of descriptiveness to the detriment of historical analysis. In addition, the culture of citing numerous domestic specialists leaves much to be desired when the citations to this or that source of information is frequently “forgotten” (Grinëv, 2014). In order not to be unfounded I will give a couple of specific examples. We will take two articles, written by rather well-known (in their fields) Russian historians that were recently published in scholarly periodicals, from the list of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation (that is, these two works theoretically can be taken into consideration for defense of doctoral dissertations). The first article belongs to an honored Novosibirsk scholar Professor Shilovskii (2017) and was published in 2017 in *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* [Bulletin of Tomsk State University]. It is devoted to the examination of the primary reasons for the sale of Russian America to the United States in connection with the 150th anniversary of this event. The second article, *Gavaiskie ostrova mogli byt' russkimi* [The Hawaiian Islands Could Have Been Russian], was written with the support of a grant from the *Rossiiskii nauchnyi fond* [Russian Science Foundation] (Project No 17-18-01567) by the chief science staff member of the Institute of Universal History of the Russian Academy of Sciences Professor A.Yu. Petrov and published in the journal *Rodina* [Homeland] at the beginning of 2018 (Petrov, 2018).

Without going into a detailed analysis of these works, and not distracting ourselves with small inaccuracies and mistakes, it is possible to note the following. Characteristic for the article of Professor Shilovskii is the complete absence of a rather broad foreign historiography on his chosen topic, the sale of Alaska (Anan'yev, 2017). What is more, far from all the reasons why Russia yielded its transoceanic possessions to the United States in 1867 are named in the article. In addition, the author did not take into account a work having the most direct relationship to his topic, where 18 such reasons were listed, with each being characterized in detail (Grinëv, 2006). This last work has been on the Internet in open access for many years, so that becoming acquainted with it would not amount to great difficulty. Concerning the article of Professor Petrov: there are whole paragraphs in it dealing with events of 200 years ago that are given without any citations to sources, as if the author was himself a witness to the attempts of the Russians to seize the Hawaiian Islands in 1816–1817. At the same time, important sources and literature are ignored in Petrov's article (including, English-language ones), which lay out this curious historical episode in much more detail (Vishnyakov, 1905; Okun, 1936; Pierce, 1965).

## **7. Conclusion**

The examples cited above clearly demonstrate how serious historical works should not be written. Therefore, it is not surprising that due to the low professional culture of modern Russian historians, their works (with rare exceptions) are not very popular in foreign scientific journals and the share of articles and monographs of Russian authors in the world of publication is very small. It is obvious that a lot of effort is to be made, first of all by Russian historians themselves, in order to meet the best standards of professional culture in the coming decades of the 21st century.

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