

INDIVIDUALS, COLLECTIVES AND SOCIABILITIES IN SOCIAL NETWORKS: promoting new forms of inclusion and active job search

SUJEITOS, COLETIVOS E SOCIABILIDADES NAS REDES SOCIAIS: promover novas formas de inclusão e a procura ativa de emprego

SUJETOS, COLECTIVOS Y SOCIABILIDAD EN LAS REDES SOCIALES: promover nuevas formas de inclusión y demanda activa de empleo

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ABSTRACT:

The digital revolution has instigated the paradigm of the networked society, mediated by technology, with an impact on lifestyles, increasingly more virtual and online, stimulating new forms of sociability between individuals and collectives. In this text, we present a reflection on the relationship between digital social networks, active job search and social inclusion. Moreover, we present the case of the Project "REviver na Rede", which has been enabling us to conclude that social networks, like Facebook, are valid tools for the integration, socialization and active job search, helping to improve the employability and also the economic and social development of local communities.

KEYWORDS: Social Networks; Facebook; Sociability; Employability; "REviver na Rede".

Introduction

We inhabit a globalized society, structured according to networks mediated by technology, in which phenomena such as cyberculture and participatory culture emerge, enhancing the individual's ability to fulfill themselves as a social being and "completely changing the possibilities of communication." (VERMELHO et al., 2014, p. 186). In this scenario, it is essential to guarantee the democratization of access to the latest means of searching, storing, managing and sharing information, so that we can build a more equitable society. Because, when people are in a network, in which they participate, they become active citizens, who contribute to collective intelligence, and they no longer are just mere simple passive consumers of a culture created by others.

Digital social networks empower people who learn to use them, and can pose a danger to those who don't know how to do it. In this case, it is important that they develop skills to transform that information into knowledge and new skills, in a lifelong learning

approach. Thus, digital literacy emerges as a key concept of this networked society, where each citizen is required to have skills to “communicate in a more effective way, but also to face in a critical way” (FURTADO, 2007, p. 109) the social changes of the world around it. There is now a greater focus on the skills of analysis and critical reflection of information, on the production and sharing of knowledge, but also on “the ability to use these social skills, together with others, in an effective way.” (RHEINGOLD, 2012, p. 5).

In this context, we call on the continuum of visitors and digital residents. At one extreme, there are the visitors, who temporarily access specific websites for specific purposes, according to their own needs and without building their profile or valuing their social capital; on the other, there are the residents, who are always online, in social interactions, leaving behind evidence of their presence, which allows them to build a digital profile and increase their social capital. In the center we can find the majority of the users, who move to one end or the other on the continuum, at times assuming the role of visitors, at others that of residents, depending on their motivations. This reality also has implications in the way learning is carried out. The educational processes must therefore consider new directions, strategies and methodologies, so that it can respond to the needs of individuals and institutions that are part of a society in constant change, and where information (its access and use) has become a vital asset for survival and success.

The most recent technologies place in the hands of ordinary users a set of educational resources that allow to boost and increase the practices of Open Education and methodologies centered on the learner. In addition, Open Educational Resources (OER) make it possible for “the main actors in the educational process [to be] [...] away from structured curricula followed by formal educational institutions” (SANTAROSA et al., 2014, p. 16). They also make available powerful resources for sharing, collective construction and socialization of knowledge accessible to everyone, which makes informal learning possible as an engine of lifelong learning.

While these transformations were taking place, Facebook emerged from a set of digital social networks, acquiring ubiquity and worldwide influence, as a “gigantic collaboration network” (KIRKPATRICK, 2011, p. 340), encouraging people to use the internet with more social interactivity. According to Kirkpatrick (2011), Facebook is changing the way hundreds of millions of people interrelate and share information, empowering the individual, enabling them to communicate more effectively.

Today's society brings, as mentioned, new possibilities for social interaction to any citizen, including those who are unemployed. In this case, the main difficulties are related

to the physical withdrawal from their previous relationships arising from work, causing situations of isolation and social exclusion, in addition to those of a financial nature. When a person is unemployed, it is essential to continue to create and manage their sociability networks, because the “mobilization of personal and relational resources” is an important factor for professional reintegration (DUARTE, 1998, p. 302). Thus, digital social networks offer new opportunities for sociability in situations of unemployment, contribute to bridge the physical distance that starts to separate people, and allow to manage and produce new social interactions. Such possibilities can contribute to the social integration of unemployed people, to fight their feeling of isolation and social exclusion, in addition to promoting active job search and improving their employability.

This theoretical framework has scientifically supported the genesis of the project “*REviver na Rede*”, which we also present in this text, as a practical case of using the internet by individuals and collectives, taking into account sociability in social networks, as a way to promote new forms of inclusion and active job search. However, in the following sections, and before describing that project, we deepen our referential frameworks, organized in three topics: the networked society; social networks; unemployment and sociability.

The networked society

The technological revolution brought about a new social paradigm, described by Castells (2011) as a “networked society”, based on the power of information. We inhabit a society and in a time when information circulates intensely, being constantly changing, and where knowledge is a resource that is always under reconstruction and expansion. A globalized society, structured in networks mediated by technology, without geographical nor temporal boundaries, in which everyone can access “relational platforms suitable for co-participation (...) that stimulates relationships, shares and exchanges (...) between whoever is available to engage.” (SANTOS; PETERSEN, 2014, p. 85)

We live in a new era, which offers us multiple possibilities to learn, regardless of space and time, where the school (in the past the place chosen for teaching) loses exclusivity. In fact, we are witnessing the dissemination of learning through new structures of society, offering individuals new ways of learning and developing throughout life.

The human being can be understood as a construction of the social networks that surround him. Throughout his evolution, man realized that social interaction provided him with survival and dominance in the surrounding world. Hence, society is made up of individuals and institutions, operating in various spheres, both at a local and global level,

which has at its core the intention of promoting the coexistence of its interests in convergence with those of its peers, in the search and enhancement of improving the quality of life in its social, political and economic dimensions.

Castells (2011) makes an important contribution to the understanding of our globalized and networked society by addressing the relationship between the flow of existing information and technological advances. According to the author, this technological paradigm is characterized by the constant search for network connections, which are increasingly intrinsic, generating, in turn, new scientific crossings and new objects of study, thus becoming a proactive pillar in the construction of new knowledge.

In this context, we recall, a new type of social organization emerges, the networked society, mediated by technology, "potentiating this tendency [of the individual to realize himself as a social being] and completely changing the possibilities of communication." (VERMELHO et al., 2014, p. 186). We witness, therefore, an enrichment of our interactions, the result of the integration of new technologies by society. Therefore, the emergence of a new technological paradigm organized around new information technologies, more flexible and powerful, allows information to become a product of the production process. In fact, the evolution of technology has implied new productive capacities in society, new standards of living, as well as new social forms of organization. That is,

(...) the emergence of the networked society is the result of the interaction of two relatively autonomous forces: the development of new technologies and the society's attempt to reconcile itself with the use of the power of technology to serve the technology of power. (CASTELLS, 2011, p. 69).

Hence, our (individual and collective) existence is shaped and mediated by technology in a network logic, with information being the raw material for the construction of knowledge. The "network is a set of interconnected nodes" (CASTELLS, 2011, p. 606) that allows to process, strengthen and disseminate the knowledge previously built, based on the shared information. This new knowledge can, in turn, bring new meanings to the knowledge of individuals who will be connected to this network. However, for Braudel (1967, p. 6), "technology does not determine society: it incorporates it. But society also does not determine technological innovation: it uses it". This dialectical interaction between society and technology defines a new social reality, crosses borders and reaches people with diverse social and cultural realities, resulting from a global evolution of society itself. Therefore, it is possible to consider that technology can have

an impact on the individual's lifestyle and behavior in society, as well as on their habits and routines.

Nowadays, we meet with our friends through web-based social networks, which a few years ago happened in physical spaces – like cafes, parties, etc. Cyberspace increasingly assumes itself as a space for socializing in our society and the use of new technologies has, necessarily, an effect on the social dimension of our lives. Because “technology is neither good nor bad and neither is it neutral” (CASTELLS, 2011, p. 94), that is, technology is not a closed system, but it evolves into an adaptive, comprehensive and open network that transforms our relationship with the world. In short, virtualization is therefore a consequence of our experience as members of a globalized, networked society, centered on the use of information and knowledge, implying a continuous process of transformation of the reality of physical relationships. This allows us to “be whatever we want. We can completely redefine ourselves if we wish.” (TURKLE, 1997, p. 26). This idea of virtualizing our social lives is compatible with the daily life of an unemployed person, who is also subject to a new configuration of space and time, where life processes are reconstructed, new forms of communication are recreated, physical barriers are broken, and they implement new opportunities for interaction, namely in social (digital) networks, which we will further explore next.

Social networks

To better understand the importance of living in a network, we consider the principle that “the whole is more than the sum of the parts.” (GISPERT, 1999, p. 95). It is an inspiration in the Gestalt¹ theory, according to which a set of human beings have properties that do not exist individually, and that thus allow them to produce things that previously would not have been possible. The study “The problem of the small world” (MILGRAM, 1967) demonstrated that the expression “the world is small” is not just a cliché, and that each human being is linked to any other human being by a surprising small number of people. This seems to confirm the idea “that it is often the case that when someone meets a new person, they conclude that there is a third person that they both know.” (LOPES; CUNHA, 2011, p. 17).

We have integrated a world dominated by networks and only now are we beginning to understand how they affect us. Our social life and behavior can be influenced by people we don't know, but who are friends of our friends' friends on the digital social networks,

¹ *Gestalt* in German means “form”. In psychology, the term is used to express the whole, within the theory proposed by Max Wertheimer (1880-1943) to study how human beings perceive things.

just as we are influenced by people we know directly. In this scenario Recuero (2009, p. 24) defines social network as “a set of two elements: actors (people, institutions or groups; the nodes of the network) and their connections (interactions or social ties)”. Or, in other words, “it is a set of people and the connections that unite them” (HOFFMAN; CASNOCHA, 2014, p. 10).

The advent of the internet has brought numerous changes to society; one of the most significant is the possibility of expression and socialization through computer-mediated communication tools. These new web tools have brought the possibility for people to be able to (re)build, interact and communicate with others, leaving tracks that allow the recognition of the patterns of their interactions and the visualization of their presence on social networks. In fact, “the human being is, above all, a social being” (VERMELHO et al., 2014, p. 186), and the digital environment, according to these authors, allows “to extend and expand the reach of traditional social networks to make new forms of sociability possible” (RHEINGOLD, 2012, p. 192). This shows us that the social networks, namely the digital ones, are a complex field of study that cannot be analyzed superficially.

Digital technologies play a central role in the profound changes in our social life “and the speed of the process has been staggering.” (RECUERO, 2009, p. 12). Castells (2011) proposes the concept of social network to combine the social and technological aspects of life. So, “what makes current social networks different is precisely the fact that they are supported by a digital technological infrastructure that [...] allows to overcome the constraints of time and space.” (DIAS, 2014, p. 56). From the moment that technology started to mediate social relations and the ordinary citizen became digital, the connections between individuals and collectives were shortened, becoming, each one, a node in a digital network. Some are nodes with few connections and others are “super” nodes, with countless connections, which gives them greater social value. For Lopes & Cunha (2011), each person has their “social value” in the networks in which they participate, which influences the other people with whom they relate. Thus, the presence that each has on the network is a powerful instrument for success, both personally and professionally. Contrary to what common sense may induce, the way social networks are structured is not random. There are many elements and characteristics that we must consider.

In short, people who are present in a network in which they participate, whether commenting on a publication, sharing content, participating in a virtual community or contributing in other ways to online (participatory) culture, see themselves as active citizens, (co)builders of collective intelligence (LATOURET, 2012; LÉVY, 2003). However, and

as mentioned, the digital social networks only empower people who learn to use them, unveiling a weakness for those who do not know how to use them. For example, it is extremely easy to find fake information and profiles, view offensive content, pay attention to redundant content (instead of essential one). These situations represent increased risks for untrained and more unaware users of the dangers of social networks, for people who do not have the fundamental literacies. Many individuals access the internet and use social networks without knowing how to search for relevant information, without knowing how to verify its veracity or share knowledge in a constructive way, thus being able to expose themselves more to the digital traps. Like as in non-digital situations, we learn about the places we should go to, how to behave and what to do; on the internet we must adopt the same attitude, and in circumstances of unemployment and sociability, as discussed below, such behaviors are also valid.

Unemployment and sociability

Unemployment is a current reality, and has become a transversal phenomenon in many countries and economies. Many authors describe it as “an ordeal since it is often a cause of poverty and rupture of social ties, stigmatizes the individual and calls into question his social status.” (LOISON, 2000, p. 1). These situations of unemployment, especially those of long duration, can “cause serious problems both in terms of the subsistence of the individuals and in terms of their status and social ties” (*Bento*, 2011, p. 14), leading to situations of social exclusion and isolation.

Work in our society assumes a central role in the individual's experiences, because it is seen as “the mediated satisfaction of desire and want. It is a process of transformation of the individual” (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p. 967), making him an active member of society. Thus, the fact of having a job corresponds to having a place in society and “is one of the factors that lead to social insertion and recognition” (ARCOVERDE, 1998, p. 4). Not having a job generally means “being without support, without protection and living in a state of dependence that tends to perpetuate itself, especially in populations already in need and with low qualifications” (SANTOS, 2010, p. 31). Although the situation of unemployment is a transition phase, somewhat limited in time, it incorporates some degree of change and uncertainty requiring individuals to adapt, which is not always easy.

The incorporation in the labor market allows the individual to have, in addition to a salary and access to certain social rights, also the configuration of a personal identity, a high self-esteem and the corresponding place in society. This relational dimension leads us to the networks of relationships that allow integration and sociability, for example, with

family, friends, neighbors or colleagues at work. When these networks fail, the individual enters a process of non-identification, which can lead to social self-exclusion because a “loss of relational ties (...) marks the individual's rupture with the social environment that surrounds him.” (SANTOS, 2010, p. 11). Unemployed individuals end up “becoming more fragile and vulnerable to situations of social exclusion” (MARQUES, 2009, p. 112); many of them are left on the margins of society.

It is important to mention that when considering social exclusion, we take into account “all spheres [networks] that society includes, whether it is the family, the network of friends, the local or cultural community, the political or economic systems” (SANTOS, 2010, p. 10). Thus, the greater the number of social spheres (networks) from which the individual moves away, the deeper his state of social exclusion will be, which tends to increase as the time of his unemployment condition increases, in a snowball effect.

With regard to sociability in unemployment, we consider that the meaning of sociability is related to the nature of the human being living in society. As a social being, he always has the desire to be integrated with other human beings, his fellows. Thus, sociability can be defined as the “human capacity to establish networks, through which the units of activities, individual or collective, circulate tastes, passions, opinions, etc.” (BAECHLER, 1996 *apud* ARCOVERDE, 1998, p. 1). We can perceive it exists to connect human beings, through the daily interactions in their lives.

In this context, we also consider the employability of the individual. The concept of employability is not new, although it has only recently become widely used. According to Alberto (2005), its origin dates back to the beginning of the 20th century in Great Britain, being later adopted in the United States and even later in other countries in Europe. But throughout these times, the concept has undergone mutations, determined by the transformations of the economic and social reality.

Although there are still several interpretations for the concept of employability, “they all refer to the ability of individuals to experience transitions in the labor market in which they are inserted, which results from skills, knowledge and adaptability” (DE CUYPER et al., 2008 *apud* BOTO, 2011, p. 66), that is, the ability to get a job or to adapt professionally to a job. To this definition, Cardoso et al. (2012, p. 8) add that employability also designates “the quality or possibility of having a job (...) for others or self-employment”. Researches carried out by Alberto (2005) associate employability with structural unemployment scenarios, which justifies the impossibility of professional insertion of individuals, arguing that “the development of employability would be the passport for entering the job market.” (ALBERTO, 2005, p. 162).

For Boto (2011, p. 6), employability “absorbs a series of constructs centered on the individual (e.g. career identity, personal adaptability, proactivity) that combine synergistically in order to help” individuals to adapt to new realities. The author therefore defends that employability is a “psychosocial construct with an emphasis centered on the individual, which incorporates individual characteristics that favor a cognitive, behavioral and affective adaptation” (BOTO, 2011, p. 6). As such, employability refers to much more than knowledge, skills and competences – it includes characteristics of a higher order that allow individuals to adapt to the demands of the environment, responding proactively to opportunities.

Being employed, besides being important for subsistence (it is a source of income), is also “a guarantor of social status or a promoter of socialization networks” (BENTO, 2010, p. 3), where “the friendships formed in the environment are an important factor in the satisfaction of individuals” (MACEDO, 1996 *apud* ARCOVERDE, 1998, p. 4). In contrast, unemployment “symbolizes a rupture in socio-professional trajectories, with different impacts on the personal and collective life of individuals” and is the cause of a departure from social life, on the border of social rupture (MARQUES, 2009, p. 113).

It is through everyday experience in the work environment that it becomes possible to create bonds of friendship and social relationships that are important for the lives of the individuals. When facing unemployment, one of the main means of maintaining sociability networks is lost. Relationships become more difficult over time, as there is no close and daily coexistence with former colleagues. Thus, unemployed people can experience isolation and certain processes of social exclusion.

In fact, interpersonal relationships and the network of contacts are vital “for the relationship with people and companies, as it makes it possible to prospect for new business or new job opportunities” (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p. 701), which is why they are fundamental for the reintegration / adaptation of individuals to new social settings. Thus, it is important for our professional life to be aware of the dynamics that can be created in new social networks and the source of opportunities that we can find in them; job search is one of them. Lopes & Cunha (2011, p. 8) argue that the way we “integrate into these networks can determine the greater or lesser probability of getting a job”.

It is possible to consider that many people find employment through a friend or through someone they know. This idea, often associated with common sense, is related to the importance of the knowledge networks we have established in our (non-digital) life. It is often not enough to just have the best professional skills to get a job; we also need to have some social skills, that is, connections that put us in touch with job

opportunities. It is, therefore, essential to know people who have the right information about a certain recruitment process and, above all, who have some type of decision-making power. A social network allows us to manage these contacts with close friends and with people who are only slightly known to us, which brings us to the strength of the bonds (strong and weak). According to the studies by Mark Granovetter, analyzed by Lopes & Cunha (2011, p. 62), the people who are only slightly known (the weak ties) play an essential role in the search for a job, more than the closest friends (who we usually associate with strong ties). The mobilization of these relationships becomes a key factor for the active job search, as an activity that can be facilitated through digital social networks.

Nowadays it is very common for a person to belong to a digital social network, thus being connected to countless other people and institutions. In that virtual space, an individual shares states, tastes, interests and achievements, personal and professional, which shows that we live in a global society, where space and time are relative. Faced with this new reality, the job market has also reached a global dimension; the data, which define our identity, are accessible anywhere, anytime. The internet has become a place for people to look for work and companies to hire. In this context, digital social networks, due to their characteristics of interaction and dissemination of information, have become an perfect medium for such dynamics. Thus, companies are able to recruit the best, faster and at a much lower cost, avoiding subcontracting consulting companies to intermediate; they have direct access to potential candidates, and, increasingly, to a set of information from their employees' digital profiles.

For Afonso Carvalho, responsible for a study carried out in Portugal by the company Kelly Services, "it is evident that social networks are changing the way people look for work" (KELLY GLOBAL WORKFORCE INDEX, 2011, p. 2). They are learning that there are positive and negative aspects, and they need to take advantage of the best of what the internet can offer to them at a professional level. For example, the study points out that "16% of the respondents say they fear that the content they make available on social networks may negatively affect their careers". It also evidences that "18% of the respondents say it is essential to remain active on social networks". These numbers confirm the existence of an awareness of the importance of the social networks for employability, namely the quality of the presence of each person in these online spaces.

As for Facebook, the study concludes that it is the "most popular social network to find work" (KELLY GLOBAL WORKFORCE INDEX, 2011) across all generations, which might be related to its great popularity, as it is transversal to all groups using it, as to the

companies that need to hire. In fact, today, it is already common for companies to publish their recruitment ads on Facebook, thus shared and reaching a higher audience than that of traditional media. On the other hand, the aforementioned study also shows that Facebook users are increasingly aware of the possibility of finding job offers on this online social digital network, perceiving it as a valid and practical means for the active job search.

In short, the difficulties encountered in unemployment, in addition to those of a financial nature, like physical distance, can lead to situations of isolation and social exclusion. For an unemployed person, it is essential to continue to create and manage their sociability networks, as indicated by the studies cited by Duarte (1998, p. 302), noting that there are countless cases of professional reintegration that are due, above all, to “the mobilization of personal and relational resources”. The resources available on the internet, such as Facebook, offer new opportunities for sociability in situations of unemployment. Because they reduce the physical distance that separates people from their old networks, they allow to manage and produce new social interactions, and even make it possible to create new networks of sociability. This can contribute to the social integration of unemployed people, fight their feeling of social exclusion and promote active job search, in addition to being a means of increasing their employability. It was also under this assumption that the project “*REviver na Rede*” emerged, as is explained in the following section.

The project “*REviver na Rede*”

The issues previously analyzed have been the subject of our research, mainly inspiring the practices implemented in the project “*REviver na Rede*”, based on which we maintain that social (digital) networks, namely Facebook, are valid tools to promote informal learning throughout life, but also “for [the] integration, socialization and active job search, helping to improve employability” (PINTO, 2017, p. 86).

The project was born in an academic context, within the scope of the master's degree in Pedagogy of E-Learning of the *Universidade Aberta* (Open University Portugal), giving rise to the dissertation entitled “Open and online training, social networks and digital inclusion: the project *REviver na Rede*” (PINTO, 2017); it has been implemented in the Autonomous Region of Madeira since 2015. Madeira is an archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean, composed of two inhabited islands; it belongs to Portugal, but enjoys political and administrative autonomy. The outermost regions of the European continent suffer from a national and international geographical and economic gap, particularly with regard to the European Union, with a strong dependence on tourism. With the global economic and

financial crisis of 2007-2008, the region recorded high rates of long-term unemployment, a situation that lasted for many years, with serious consequences for the social integration of individuals and their collectives.

The main objective of the project is to provide support to unemployed people in using Facebook to socialize, avoiding social isolation and self-exclusion, in addition to promoting new forms of active job search. To this end, we have been seeking to develop new literacies and digital skills, integrating the new tools available, such as those promoted by and using Facebook, in the social daily life of this type of population. The project has a strong pedagogical, social and solidary scope, provided by voluntary work by collectives and communities, in a logic of social entrepreneurship; it aims to be a model of social integration and personal development, possible to be replicated to other (regional or local) realities.

Initially, the target audience of the project was unemployed people living in Madeira, but we noticed a strong interest of other people, namely employees looking for new job opportunities and family/friends of unemployed people. Less expected was the involvement of emigrants, mainly from countries like Venezuela, South Africa and England. It should be noted that emigration has always had a great expression in Madeira, being accentuated by the economic crisis earlier mentioned. We noticed that some of the emigrants used the online spaces of the project as a means of discovering the receptivity of the labor market in the region, considering the possibility of returning back to Madeira, which indicates that the project is also a contribution to the reintegration of emigrants, encouraging the improvement of their skills, mainly in the use of Facebook, to get a job (at a distance) in their communities of origin.

In our literature review, we acknowledge that unemployment has been identified as one of the great scourges of our current society. Increasingly, individuals are involuntarily unemployed. We are increasingly witnessing a large number of individuals with a professionally active life history, who face unemployment for the first time, a situation for which they are not psychologically prepared. Thus, to tackle such problem – “isolation and social exclusion in unemployment as factors that are detrimental to employability” (PINTO, 2017, p. 30) –, we defined the following research question: What to do to combat removal, isolation and the social exclusion of unemployed individuals?

Diagnostic studies, carried out in the preparatory phase of the project, indicated that digital social networks had the potential to integrate a solution, and showed that Facebook would be the best. This social tool, associated with globalization, can respond to such needs and contribute to the development of local communities. In fact, we

highlight the existence of considerable attention to digital social networks, both on the part of society and academic institutions. It was also evident that Facebook was able to bring together several generations, composed of both the so-called analog and digital citizens. Thus, Facebook proved to be the best platform to promote communication and sharing between individuals with different characteristics, namely different ages and maturities, while having in common, as collectives, similar goals and needs. Recently, the project has been advancing with pilot tests on other digital social networks, such as Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

With regard to content production, three online spaces were developed, for different purposes, namely: a website (acting as the institutional space of the project, and catering for learning content); a Facebook page (acting as a marketing hub of the project, and the dissemination of learning content); a Facebook group (providing for interaction between members and content dissemination).

In digital social networks, content is of the utmost importance. For Coutinho (2014, p. 127), "it is a determining factor for someone to like or dislike the page (...); it is a key element in creating a close relationship with your community (...); it will generate greater interaction on the part of the followers (...) and help to fulfill the objectives" of the project. Aware of these advantages, we created several types of content to upload on the project's Facebook page and group. Some contents contain a catalyzing message of learning, others assume a more motivational objective and the construction of an environment conducive to learning. We then summarize the contents and tools that have been revealed to work best.

As the project website is the place where most of the learning content is located, we take advantage of its online existence to share it on Facebook and thus achieve greater visibility with the target audience. In addition to promoting learning outside the website, in a more informal and accessible place, Facebook is also a way to publicize the project itself.

Images, commonly referred to as Memes, were another type of content produced for sharing. The Meme concept, in the context of digital social networks, associates the use of an image (or video) with a small integrated text. The goal is to convey a particular idea and share it quickly, in order to go viral. Although, initially, Memes had messages related to situations of humor and, often, of a derogatory nature, currently we can find Memes about almost any situation and with different types of intention. Thus, we created several Memes, promoting reflections on issues related to social networks, good practices

in their use and, also, of a playful character, contributing to the strengthening of the emotional relationship with the followers of the project.

We also use the Facebook event tools to promote learning moments through which we invite the target audience of the project to perform a specific task. An event allows us to have, on our Facebook page, "a space reserved for a specific event, which will take place on a specific day and date, but which does not always correspond to a physical event." (COUTINHO, 2014, p. 74). Thus, for some, these moments meant becoming aware of the knowledge they already had and alerting them to what they still needed to acquire in order to fulfill the event's objective. For others, it represented the challenge of carrying out the task, being an impetus for learning, namely about the procedures necessary to perform it. Therefore, we use events as an invitation to learn, creating greater dynamics in the project and involvement with some of the people most distant from the online spaces of the project.

The sharing of news and articles published on other sites, usually online newspapers and magazines, has assumed a strategic importance to strengthen information literacy. When we find content, somehow related to Facebook and digital social networks, we share it on our Facebook page. Whenever possible, we add a reflective and guiding text on the subject addressed to help further contextualize it. These publications take on a content curation feature as a way of "distributing the information we collect, after we have perfected and contextualized the implicit knowledge, to improve its credibility and meet the needs" (RHEINGOLD, 2012, p. 249) of the target audience. We emphasize that the concept of content curation is characterized by the process of researching, organizing, collecting and sharing the best contents (texts, photos, videos, tools, posts, etc.), under a given theme. Thus, we had the intention to help in the interpretation of the curated contents, in order to add value and make them more appealing, taking into account the context in which they are shared. In other words, we believe in content curation as a process that "catalyzes and facilitates the learning of other individuals." (TAVARES, 2013, p. 13).

Direct and individual interaction with the followers of the project has been a core aspect from the beginning, becoming over time an asset for achieving the goals of the project. Facebook allows followers of a page to get in direct contact with their administrators through a direct message. We use this functionality to establish a personalized dialogue with the people who contact us, to clarify their doubts and provide them with some guidance. At the end of the messages, we take the opportunity to introduce them to the project and to show how to use it. In specific situations, we use this

private space to eventually correct some aspects detected in the misuse of digital social networks, something that can only be done in a private space and in a direct dialogue.

Another of the Facebook features used on a regular basis is the Question/Survey tool, which allows to ask group members about a particular subject. That is, it makes it possible to ask a certain question, with a closed answer, being accessible to all members, as well as to count the answers. We used this tool to boost the group's activity around the themes of the project, to get to know the members better, in addition to, among other things, listen to their opinion on certain issues, in order to build other content and/or redefine strategies for interaction.

The type of publication that creates the most involvement with the project are job advertisements. We believe that the search for jobs, that is, the search for job advertisements, is what moves the target audience of the project. Hence, we share, on the project's Facebook spaces, job advertisements that we find in the most diverse (physical or digital) locations. We understand that sharing ads helps to seize the attention of the target audience, to increase the visibility of learning content and, so, also to achieve the project's purposes.

We emphasize that the contents and tools mentioned above are representative, according to their use, the results achieved and the easiness of use in the Facebook environment. Although many others have been adopted, throughout our experience in the context of the project, we have found that interaction with followers is the one that achieves the best results. Thus, we highlight the importance of responses to comments on publications and private messages, in which we encourage moderation with a quick, assertive and pedagogical reaction.

Analyzing the involvement of people with the online spaces of the project, in the year of evaluation of the project (2018), the Facebook page had 21,431 followers, the Facebook group 27,697 members and the website registered 44,495 clicks, of which 16,467 were visitors who have returned. To better understand the scale of the number of members of the "*REviver na Rede*" group, we mention that there were approximately 12,200² unemployed people in Madeira (so we can say that the universe of the target population was smaller than the members of the group), and that the population of the

² Estimate of the unemployed population in the 3rd Quarter of 2018 (source: Regional Directorate of Statistics of Madeira, <https://estatistica.madeira.gov.pt>).

region accounted for 254,876³ people. Therefore, taking the group's total members (27,697) for comparison, we note that they represented about 11% of that population.

Characterizing the type of followers of the project, the studies carried out through questionnaires indicate an average age of 31 years, and 55% being female. As for education, the 6th, 9th and 4th grades stand out, that is, most of those involved have low levels of education. We also found that most people were unemployed (54.5%). It should also be noted that 11% of the respondents who answered that they were employed stated that they had Human Resources selection/recruitment responsibilities, suggesting that the project spaces are also followed by professionals in the recruitment area, as confirmed by the many requests sent to us (to run ads with job opportunities).

The evaluation carried out two years after the beginning of the implementation of the project revealed that it reached the intended goals and objectives, confirming itself as a solution to the problem identified within the target audience, through evidence of changes in behaviors in the use of Facebook by project users/followers. The online spaces managed on Facebook have become very dynamic, registering testimonies from people who got jobs (in a total of 529 people by 2018) through the job offers shared by us. But we also received testimonies from people who said that they are more aware of the potential of Facebook and that they are using it better, even on a personal level.

The main objectives that guide the project are related to changing behaviors when using Facebook, which we know is difficult to observe, monitor and document. However, as described, the assessment studies point to some evidence. At the beginning, we observed that in the interactions recorded on the Facebook page and group there were members with very unreasonable and inconvenient participation, especially in their comments. In addition to disturbing other interactions, they were negative for the image of those who did them, which could be very damaging for potential applications for job offers. But, over time, we started to see that they were decreasing, becoming rare when evaluating the project. We think that this evolution is due to our moderation, but also to the learning of some of the contents made available by the project, as many of our followers declared that they gained awareness for the importance of the interactions and publications carried out in the construction of their profile on digital social networks, and, consequently, for their success in the active job search.

Many entrepreneurs and recruiters pay attention to our project and have asked us for collaboration to publicize their job offers; many request support for the preparation

³ Estimated resident population on 31-12-2018 (source: Regional Directorate of Statistics of Madeira, <https://estatistica.madeira.gov.pt>).

of their ads, with the aim of improving the ability to reach their recruitment needs, demonstrating that we are also contributing to bring job demand and supply closer. The attention that the media has dedicated to the project, with the publication of some news and interviews, both in print and on radio and television, is also a proof of the importance of the project and how it can contribute to personal and regional development.

Moreover, the project has been distinguished in several important initiatives, nationally and internationally, for example: Born from Knowledge Ideas⁴ 2016, *Arrisca C*⁵ 2016 (Honorable mention in the Social Award), WSIS Prizes⁶ (nominated in several editions). In addition, it is included in the WSIS Stocktaking report⁷, as a good practice and a valid proposal to be applied in other countries/regions. It should be noted that the WSIS Prizes and the WSIS Stocktaking are initiatives of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a United Nations agency specialized in ICT, aiming to distinguish and share best practices at a global level, and recognize excellence in the implementation of local projects and initiatives, which can be replicated in other national or international contexts.

In a word, the project has proved to be a very important action, creating links between participants with regard to collaboration and common hope in the context of job opportunities, weaving nodes of digital sociability between networks and bonds of individuals and collectives.

Final reflections

Throughout this text we have evoked that technological evolution has brought about a networked society, mediated by technology, enhancing the individuals' ability to fulfill themselves as social beings. Digital social networks have offered us new horizons,

⁴ Born from Knowledge Ideas: competition promoted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, of the Government of Portugal (www.bornfromknowledge.pt/ideas).

⁵ "Arrisca C" is a competition promoted by the University of Coimbra (Portugal), aiming at stimulating the development of business concepts in which the creation of new companies is expected, including social entrepreneurship initiatives ([www.uc.pt/gats / eventos_e_iniciativas / a_decorrer / arrisca_c](http://www.uc.pt/gats/eventos_e_iniciativas/a_decorrer/arrisca_c)).

⁶ The WSIS Prizes is an international competition that aims to recognize projects with strategies oriented to local development that use the power of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a development facilitator. It is promoted by the World Summit on the Information Society, an event that takes place in Switzerland and is promoted by the United Nations (www.itu.int/net/wsis).

⁷ The WSIS Stocktaking is an archive for sharing best practices globally and recognizing excellence in implementing local projects and initiatives. It is led by the United Nations Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (www.itu.int/net4/wsis/stocktaking).

in which we are no longer merely consumers of information, but becoming knowledge producers, which implies the development of new skills.

On the other hand, education plays an important role in implementing strategies and methodologies, so that it can meet the new needs of individuals. Digital social networks offer new opportunities for individuals and groups in situations of unemployment, including sociability, as they contribute to blur physical distances and produce new social interactions. But they can also be tools that promote active job search, contributing to the strengthening of employability.

Within this broader framework, we have presented the "*REviver na Rede*" project; its implementation has made it evident that Facebook has the potential to contribute to the response to the problem we identified (bringing it again to mind: isolation and social exclusion in unemployment as factors that affect employability). We conclude, therefore, that this digital online social network is a valid tool for integration, socialization and active job search, helping to improve employability.

In a glance at the project's implementation, we note that it is developed with tools associated with globalization. In addition to the internet, as a macro technology, we use Facebook (a paradigmatic example of digital online social networks), Blogger (a resource for building blogs) and many other technologies connected with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), not forgetting the use of open educational resources (OER), an example of the production and use of educational content on a global scale. In this context of globalization, the "*REviver na Rede*" project emerged as a response to a local reality, because its main goal is to contribute to the resolution of a problem felt by a specific community. Thus, we can also affirm that by having carried out the project, we have been successfully applying the advantages of globalization to a particular collective group.

Currently, digital online social networks have become ubiquitous in our society, and can serve much more than just personal or even professional contacts. For instance, they can act as a tool for employability and to systematize job search. In this specific context, we proved that Facebook can be a social tool capable of responding to these types of needs, and, when used by individuals, collectives and sociabilities, particularly at a local level, can contribute to the socialization, the social integration and the active search for employment.

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RESUMO:

A revolução digital impulsionou o paradigma da sociedade em rede mediada pela tecnologia com impacto nos estilos de vida, cada vez mais virtuais e online, estimulando novas formas de sociabilidade entre sujeitos e coletivos. Neste texto, apresenta-se uma reflexão sobre a relação entre as redes sociais digitais, a procura ativa de emprego e a inclusão social. Apresenta-se ainda o caso prático do projeto "REviver na Rede", através do qual temos vindo a concluir que as redes sociais, como o Facebook, são ferramentas válidas para a integração, socialização e procura ativa de emprego, ajudando a melhorar a empregabilidade, e também o desenvolvimento económico e social das comunidades locais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Redes Sociais; Facebook; Sociabilidade; Empregabilidade; "REviver na Rede".

RESUMEN:

La revolución digital ha instigado el paradigma de la sociedad en red, mediada por la tecnología, con un impacto en los estilos de vida, cada vez más virtuales y en línea, estimulando nuevas formas de sociabilidad entre individuos y colectivos. En este texto presentamos una reflexión sobre la relación entre las redes sociales digitales, la búsqueda activa de empleo y la inclusión social. Además, presentamos el caso del Proyecto "REviver na Rede", que nos ha permitido concluir que las redes sociales, como el Facebook, son herramientas válidas para la integración, la socialización y la búsqueda activa de empleo, ayudando a mejorar la empleabilidad, y también el desarrollo económico y social de las comunidades locales.

PALABRAS-CLAVES: Redes sociales; Facebook; Sociabilidad; Empleabilidad; "REviver na Rede".