Digital humanities: use of digital tools for knowledge production in the Law course of a Higher Education Institution in Feira de Santana, Brazil.

Aline Fonseca Gomes

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Baiano – IF Baiano

Anna Paula Oliveira Silva

Faculdade Estácio

Ellianjose Marifranhcis Silva Junqueira Ayres

Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana - UEFS

Jucinara Reis Nunes dos Anjos

Centro Universitário de Ciências e Empreendedorismo - UNIFACEMP

Raphael Fonseca Gomes

Faculdade Anísio Teixeira - FAT

Abstract

This work deals with the use of digital tools for the production of knowledge, based on the central theme of Digital Humanities, having been outlined based on experiences lived in the Law course of a Higher Education Institution in Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil. The focus is to identify how the use of digital tools can contribute to the production of knowledge. For this, descriptive, exploratory, bibliographic and documentary research of a qualitative nature was carried out, based on the report of experiences lived in the period from 2019 to 2022, in a higher course offered in a hybrid format. With the research, it was possible to demonstrate the importance of using digital tools as strategies for the production of knowledge.

Keywords: knowledge; teaching; strategies.

1. Introduction

This research dealt with the Digital Humanities, seeking to study on the subject with a Higher Education Institution in Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil, which was chosen as the unit of analysis because it was the first private institution to offer the course of Law in the city. It is noteworthy that this course is offered in a hybrid modality, that is, part of the classes is in person and the other part online. Regarding Digital Humanities, it is worth mentioning that during this study the concept presented in 2004 by John Undsworth was adopted, with

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the publication of the work "A companion to digital humanities", according to Schreibman *et al.* (2015), which led to the dissemination of the perspective of a specific field of studies, using computational methods for the production of knowledge in the areas of human and social sciences.

In this sense, Digital Humanities can be understood as an area of study whose academic activity is precisely at the intersection of computer science and, more recently, digital technologies, with the applicability of studies to content from numerous disciplines, in an interdisciplinary way, including. Hence the interest in researching the Digital Humanities, in order to understand the applicability of such an intersection in a Law course of a Higher Education Institution, especially due to the amount of legislation that must be studied and learned during that course.

Thus, we sought to research on the digital tools that have been used for the production of knowledge during the chosen Law course, focusing on the period between August 2019 (when the course began to be offered in the hybrid modality) and August 2022 (current semester of study), in order to also obtain the most up-to-date data possible on the unit of analysis of the research, from the data that were made available, this being the space and time cut chosen, in order to delimit the research that will be developed. In this context, the following research problem was adopted: how the use of digital tools made it possible to expand the production of knowledge during the course of law at a Higher Education Institution in Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil, among the years from 2019 to 2022? The investigation of this problem has social relevance because it is the dissemination of a topic that can benefit studies on the Digital Humanities, and on methodologies and strategies that have been implemented to boost the production of scientific knowledge, especially in higher education.

As a general objective, we sought to understand the intersections of digital technologies and the knowledge produced with the studies during the researched course, whose focus was precisely the Digital Humanities. For specific objectives, we sought to: present the challenges of using digital resources in the teaching and learning process, identifying the digital tools and platforms used; explore the concepts of Digital Humanities, knowledge production and learning strategies using digital technologies, based on a literature review; to develop an analysis with a focus on Digital Humanities, taking into account the experience report of the analyzed research unit, in addition to the object of study itself.

1.1 Methodology

As methodological procedures, descriptive research was carried out, in which it was intended to present the tools and digital platforms used for the production of knowledge, during studies in the Law course of a Higher Education Institution in Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil. Exploratory research was also carried out in order to familiarize oneself with the subject of study. In addition, research was also carried out, according to the sources of data collection: bibliographic, documentary and experience reports. The nature of the data was qualitative, as documents were researched on the objectives and curricular guidelines Lof the course in question, through consultation of the educational institution's documentary files, focusing on the object of study and the unit of analysis.

Regarding the bibliographic research, works were selected based on the keywords: Digital Humanities,

knowledge production, teaching and learning, using the Research Gate and Scielo platform, in addition to works in physical media available. Regarding the documentary Research, a search was carried out on the website of the Educational Institution researched about the course offered, being possible to have access to administrative and pedagogical data. Therefore, from the available database, it was possible to carry out analyzes and obtain the results of this study, as presented right after the bibliographic review. It is noteworthy that data from August 2019 to August 2022 were considered in order to obtain the most up-to-date data possible for this research.

2. Digital Humanities

In particular, the area of Digital Humanities has several elements interconnected with computational social science itself. Baltar & Baltar (2021, p. 6) state that the research motivations where the Digital Humanities are formed are located: "[...] in the field of knowledge that could be called, just to demarcate a space of academic performance, as sociocultural, historical, bibliographic, literary and linguistic". It is worth describing that the term "Digital Humanities", as a field of study, was presented in 2004 by John Undsworth, focusing on the digital, that is, the use of computing as a facilitating instrument for conducting research. Later, the use of technologies, and the intersection between them, and the production of scientific knowledge were called the field of study of Digital Humanities.

Oliveira & Martins (2017, p. 11) state that digital can be understood as a means that helps to intensify human capabilities for the representation of reality, thus: "Bringing the two concepts together again and returning to the main term: Digital Humanities, several researchers, in their publications, expose their conceptual vision of the term, all around the main core that concerns the relationship between the digital/technological and the humanities".

In this sense, it is shown that the increasing integration of technology in everyday life has created volumes of data on the behavior of society, because, according to Conte *et al.* (2012), such data even provide a quantitative understanding of social systems. After all, with the use of technology, science could be taken to a level where the analyzes carried out make it possible to understand new challenges, such as those involved in the broad impact on science, technology and society, with a view to the production of knowledge.

For Castilho *et al.* (2015, p. 86) "[...] the production of knowledge must be carried out, in all its stages, with full awareness of the objectives and purposes: both the research process and the elaboration of scientific narratives must be conducted in order to achieve a defined objective". According to Otto (2013, p. 30): "Scientific knowledge has characteristics that guarantee its validity and determine its method". Such characteristics, when treated together, characterize and redefine it in relation to other types of knowledge. In agreement, Lucion & Lui (2013) present that the use of different techniques can only add to social research. Thus, technology and/or computational methods are an ally in the use of research techniques, for example, using filtering, databases, in addition the connection between academic communities.

Baltar & Baltar (2021) state that computational methods allow the understanding of a phenomenon from the demonstrable explanation of its manifestation. Thus, it is clear that the computational analysis seeks to identify and present the interconnections between facts or events, for the manifestation of the phenomenon. In this

context, science as a field of transformation has used computational methods to expand studies, discussions, analyzes and favor the dissemination of knowledge. Therefore, considering science as a field of transformations, Castilho *et al.* (2015) believe that rebuilding itself in the face of this new social context would be inevitable, as the academic universe has been looking for possibilities that make use of digital, for example, for the production of scientific knowledge, in an interdisciplinary way, because integration can be carried out. from the views of researchers from different areas.

And regarding the interdisciplinary dialogue, Baltar & Baltar (2021, p. 41) claim that it was provided by the computational methods applied to the studies of social issues, especially with the increasing transformation of qualitative or quantitative research sources and data into digital records , because with knowledge it is possible to advance in the understanding of social phenomena, using data, evidence, theories, models, methods and means of research, in addition to forms of dissemination and collaborative verification of the results, because: "In this way, the computational resources can be added to studies on social issues at all these stages, contributing greatly to the results of scientific research". It is understood, then, that with the study of digital humanities, one can reflect on how the knowledge of the Humanities and Social Sciences dialogue with digital technology, or even, how they use digital technology for new productions of meaning. For example, by collecting and processing data, using numerical and statistical data, or even textual data, which can benefit research in general.

3. Data Analysis and experience reporting

This research on Digital Humanities was about the use of digital tools for the production of knowledge, based on an experience report in the Law course of a Higher Education Institution in Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil. According to institutional data, the main objective of the Law course is to offer students a differentiated training so that they perceive themselves as participants in the process of building Law and society and that, based on ethical, social and humanistic values, they are better trained to a professional performance with the private sector, social movements and Non-Governmental Organizations, as well as with the Public Administration.

Thus, some of the curricular guidelines in force in the researched course are presented: reading, understanding and elaboration of texts, acts and legal or normative documents, with the proper use of technical-legal norms; research and use of legislation, jurisprudence, doctrine and other sources of law; and mastery of technologies and methods for permanent understanding and application of Law. These guidelines are related to the theme of this research and even form the basis for the analysis of the experience report, as shown below.

Regarding the use of digital tools and platforms during the researched course, it appears that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for distancing arose and classes began to be taught remotely or, in the day to day of the course with disciplines, normally the most theoretical and basic, previously taught through the institution's portal. In addition, the student's own interaction with the institution takes place with a lot of support from digital platforms. Finally, the academic portal of the institution stands out, used to resolve financial and academic pending issues or to provide information to the student about their course, subjects, grades, absences, class schedules, rescheduling of evaluation activities, delivery of documentation, among others. issues that can be resolved by the digital platform, without the need to travel to the institution, in order to facilitate and

provide speed.

Regarding the challenges of using digital resources in the teaching process, it is presented that the main challenge was the difficulty, on the part of some students and even teachers, in using the tools. It is understood that technology has a rapid evolution and it is necessary to be in constant learning to use it, many of the teachers already have some experience and age and have difficulties in dealing with digital tools, and these difficulties were intensified as a result of the pandemic, which accelerated the process of implementing virtual learning environments. So, it is clear that the biggest challenge was the adaptation, instruction and learning of the students to the use of the tools. Once the person already has the domain and the understanding of how to use it, it becomes easier, faster and more agile.

It is also noteworthy that the use of digital technology provides opportunities for the learning process. Today, for example, it is easy to have online access to an up-to-date book or magazine, in addition to the ease of searching and searching for a specific topic needed for a particular study. Tools such as Google and YouTube can be used for the production of knowledge.

Regarding the importance of reading articles in the area of the course on scientific journal sites, it is believed to be fundamental, since the basis of the formation of law are the laws, which are defined by the legislators, and also by the Jurisprudence, which are the decisions of courts and legal practitioners, which can base and reflect on other cases and decisions, and the legal doctrine, which is the set of principles and understanding of legal scholars, which can change a decision. There are many cases of judgments in which the judge cites the legal doctrine, from a scholar in the area, as the basis for the decision he made, so scientific articles and books are taken into consideration when formulating the thought for a decision in a case. Therefore, articles are of fundamental importance, as they are part of the legal system, can be taken into account in a decision and also serve as a basis for the study of a particular topic or legislation. And technologies have provided easy and quick access to databases on legal norms and laws.

Thus, in relation to the methodology implemented in the researched course, it is believed that the use of digital research platforms is at least 50% of the study base, the other 50% being distributed in books and face-to-face classes. Therefore, the use of digital tools is important, in the study stage, to maximize the time and amount of content. It is noteworthy that the study of the science of law has a wide range of laws, doctrines, jurisprudence.

In the course of law and, even in the course of the work activity itself, the use of digital tools is quite relevant. For example, when writing a petition, it is necessary to research a law, research a legal doctrine, a jurisprudence and the agility that digital research provides is what makes having more time to solve more problems and even find solutions that a book in hand might not contain. Another common practice is the use of course platforms, which have a large library of contest questions, and classes aimed at those who have this interest, providing, in addition to the theoretical part, the practical part of learning.

It is worth mentioning the digital tools that are used more specifically in the course, such as: the online Vademecum, audience simulators and petition development. In addition to the online audience's website, which is a purely academic audience portal, created by the Judge of Law Andrade Neto, where the student has the possibility of learning in the practical part and even certified for that. In addition to the Brazilian Government

website, containing all current and updated legislation, as well as the launch of new decrees, precedents and amendments. PDF materials, which are: books, petition templates, Vade Mecum, and all academic course material. The Law course has a peculiarity, as some course books have a very short shelf life and many of the physical materials acquired in the first semester of the course are already out of date with 3 or 4 semesters, due to changes in legislation. Hence the need to always have new purchases of books, which makes the updated material in PDF less expensive.

Regarding the behavioral changes perceived during the course, it is said that digital tools have become more used, as they migrated from a profile that sought knowledge, mostly in books, to a profile that seeks knowledge in PDFs, as the possibility of having a broader, more up-to-date and easily accessible material with search engines, through filtering data available on journal websites, for example. It is also worth mentioning the use of a digital tool, which is the Podcast, because, for example, before the car stereo was used to listen to music, today it is also used to listen to legal podcasts with news and current events in the area. Before, the cell phone was just for calling and exchanging messages, but, in a break from everyday life, it is now also used for research, a quick read, or to watch a video lesson. In short, a more connected student, and, consequently, with more potential and resources to produce content and have access to it in a broader and easier way.

4. Conclusion

This scientific article sought to answer the research problem on how the use of digital tools made it possible to expand the production of knowledge during the Law course of a Higher Education Institution in Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil, in the last years of 2019 to 2022, resulting in the fact that the use of digital tools favors the production of knowledge, as it allows the reading, understanding and elaboration of texts, acts and legal or normative documents and the use of legislation, jurisprudence, doctrine and from other sources of law, in an easy and connected way with the necessary updates.

Still on the aspect of digital humanities, it was possible to perceive that the use of digital tools for the production of knowledge ended up motivating and generating learning in a more practical way, for example, enabling participation in audience simulators, in the specific case that was researched, as shown in the analysis of the experience report. It is also recommended that new researchers can study specific groups from other courses and areas, as well as about other learning strategies using digital technologies to further understand the process of knowledge production using digital tools.

In view of the above, it is believed that the use of technology will be constantly expanded, in order to facilitate the teaching and learning process, and may even provide a better understanding of the contents covered in the various areas. With this research, it was possible to demonstrate the importance of using digital tools as strategies for the production of knowledge.

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