

# Documentary Management on Labor Histories

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## Abstract

The following article addresses the Work History's characteristics, composition and general aspects. From its conceptualization, which includes a short etymological description and modern vision, to its integration into the electronic document management models. These visions will expose the importance of the records within public and private entities to find the key points that unite the document, the users and the officials. Finally, some examples of the current use of work histories will be given, exposing their probative value to foresee the documents' future and their relationship in the archival environment.

**Keywords:** Labor History; Archivistics; Evidentiary Value; Electronic Document; Archives and Records.

## Resumen

El siguiente artículo aborda las características, composición y aspectos generales de las Historias Laborales. Desde su conceptualización, que incluye una corta descripción etimológica y visión moderna, hasta su integración en los modelos de administración del documento electrónico. Junto con estas visiones, se tratará de exponer la importancia de los expedientes dentro de las entidades públicas y privadas para encontrar los puntos clave que unen al documento, a los usuarios y a los funcionarios. Finalmente se dan algunos ejemplos del uso actual de las Historias Laborales exponiendo su valor probatorio con el objetivo de prever el futuro de los documentos y su relación en el medio archivístico.

**Palabras Clave:** Historia Laboral; Archivística; Valor Probatorio; Documento Electrónico; Archivos y Expedientes.

## Introduction

The literature associated with work histories is generally related to specific case studies demonstrating document management's practical functions within both public and private entities. This article will address the general conceptualization and the applied visions of work histories and their future scope.

The methodology associated with this text has a quantitative approach based on analyzing real data presented by public and private organizations. Three major themes will be addressed within the document. Firstly, the generalized vision of Labor

Histories, their present conflict with homonymous terms, and their latent importance in today's societies, including a current archival definition and the general components. Does this first part address the questions What are labor histories? What are Labor Histories for? Secondly, the evidentiary value of the Labor Histories will be defined by understanding, as Ruperto Pinochet Olave mentions:

Everything that man does can be the object of proof in a judicial process as it proves the existence of facts relevant to the process, such as

crimes, obligations, and the fulfillment of the same. On the other hand, if the human act is not spontaneously recognized by its author or observed, in some way, by other men, it cannot be proved either by confession or by the evidence of witnesses. Then, it will be necessary to look for traces or manifestations that evidence an expressed human will or an executed human act. This last reflection opens the way to documentary notions in the juridical sense.

(Pinochet, 2002, p. 380)

Finally, a current view of electronic document management is addressed with real examples that have occurred in recent years of how the files have leaped digital media to have a much more direct relationship with the user, which generates a clear contrast with the current definitions that mention the Work Histories as a private document of the entity and its officials. All this is to discuss the documents and evidence of the changes in the management models with the entry of new technologies and social conditions.

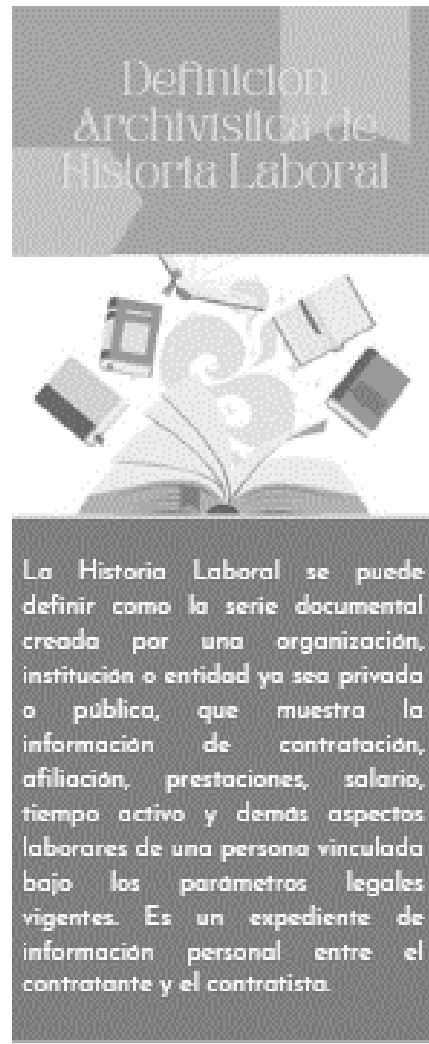
### **What are Work Histories?**

The definitions associated with the term are linked to the internal management that the organization or entity gives to these documents. Although it is clear that the Labor History is the set of documentation related to all administrative aspects of individuals within the system, the ramification of these components is not entirely clear when assuming a generalist position.

This argument is not only focused on the lack of a detailed description in the AGN Archival Dictionary or any other dictionary specialized in management terms. It also focuses on the lack of accurate documentation of the Labor Histories related, not to document management, but to historiography.

### *Two Fields of Labor Histories*

This dichotomy of the term begins due to its polysemy originating from the sciences that study it. On the one hand, the documentary management treats Labor Histories as mechanisms of social security that work for the welfare of both companies and individuals. On the other hand, and even more recognized in social media, there is Labor History associated with historiography. This second concept has a greater presence in specialized bibliographies with the term since it has been the subject of direct analysis with the classical and modern historical currents. In this sense, labor history comprises the historical facts that give rise, precisely, to labor action. That is to say, the history of the different jobs and their performance in societies throughout the different civilizations or historical moments. For this reason, in academic terms, the historiographic definition of Labor Histories has taken a greater focus of attention within current research. This particularity does not reduce the importance of the conceptualization of labor histories within document management, but, curiously, one of the most used documentary components of institutions is not defined within the technical documents of archival administration.



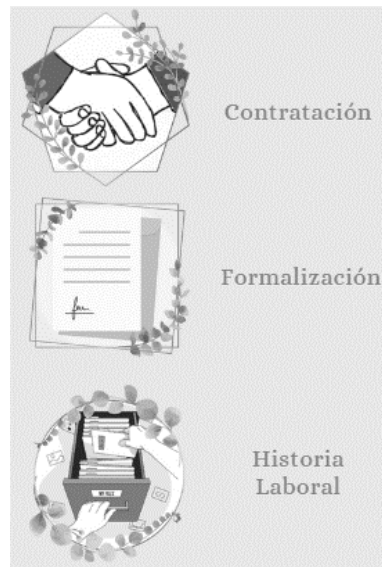
This suggests that, although labor histories are general knowledge within the archival field, their familiarity has displaced a conceptualization of the term, leaving historiographic issues as a priority within academic definitions. On the other hand, the lack of a precise definition indicates that records management has taken these documents from a purely pragmatic point of view or that its studies have been too current. This is not a decisive shortcoming for the archival branch. It seems more an omission attributable to the

proximity of the term to management work. This phenomenon makes sense if we analyze the proximity of the management of Labor Histories that was legislated with LAW 100 of 1993, which created the comprehensive social security system and issued other provisions. In this regulation, the Labor History is directly associated with social welfare and although it does not have a precise definition either, it directs the management systems of the organizations to deal with the general issues of the Labor Histories<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to recognize that, although the two terms are part of a polysemy, the components of each should be reevaluated so that their analysis and research, especially for those who are part of the archival tangent, can understand them. Historiographic Labor History focuses on union

mobilizations and historical aspects of labor. On the other hand, archival labor histories are part of the internal management of institutions and their workers.



In the regulations, the Labor Histories, although not mentioned as such, is evidenced as a series of intrinsic commitments of the contractors to their employees. In addition, these regulations indicate the general contributable characteristics and specific characteristics such as cases of illness, maternity and other circumstances. In other words, labor records guarantee the application of the benefits and rights to which workers are entitled by law.

#### *Work History Functions*

The functions associated with Labor Histories can be divided into two points of view. On the one hand, there are the functions of the organization that must, by law, determine the pertinent information of the workers for the correct management of their files and compliance with legality. On the other hand, Labor Histories are also associated with the guarantee of a pension system for the worker, so the contributor has the advantage of measuring his pension and health systems payments.

For the first of these cases, the functions associated with the labor file include, among many others: The contractor's legal personal information; Social Security contributions; Length of service with the entity; Salary paid; Bonus, bonuses or any other monetary incentive by law; Contracts and other types of management documents. In this field, the document

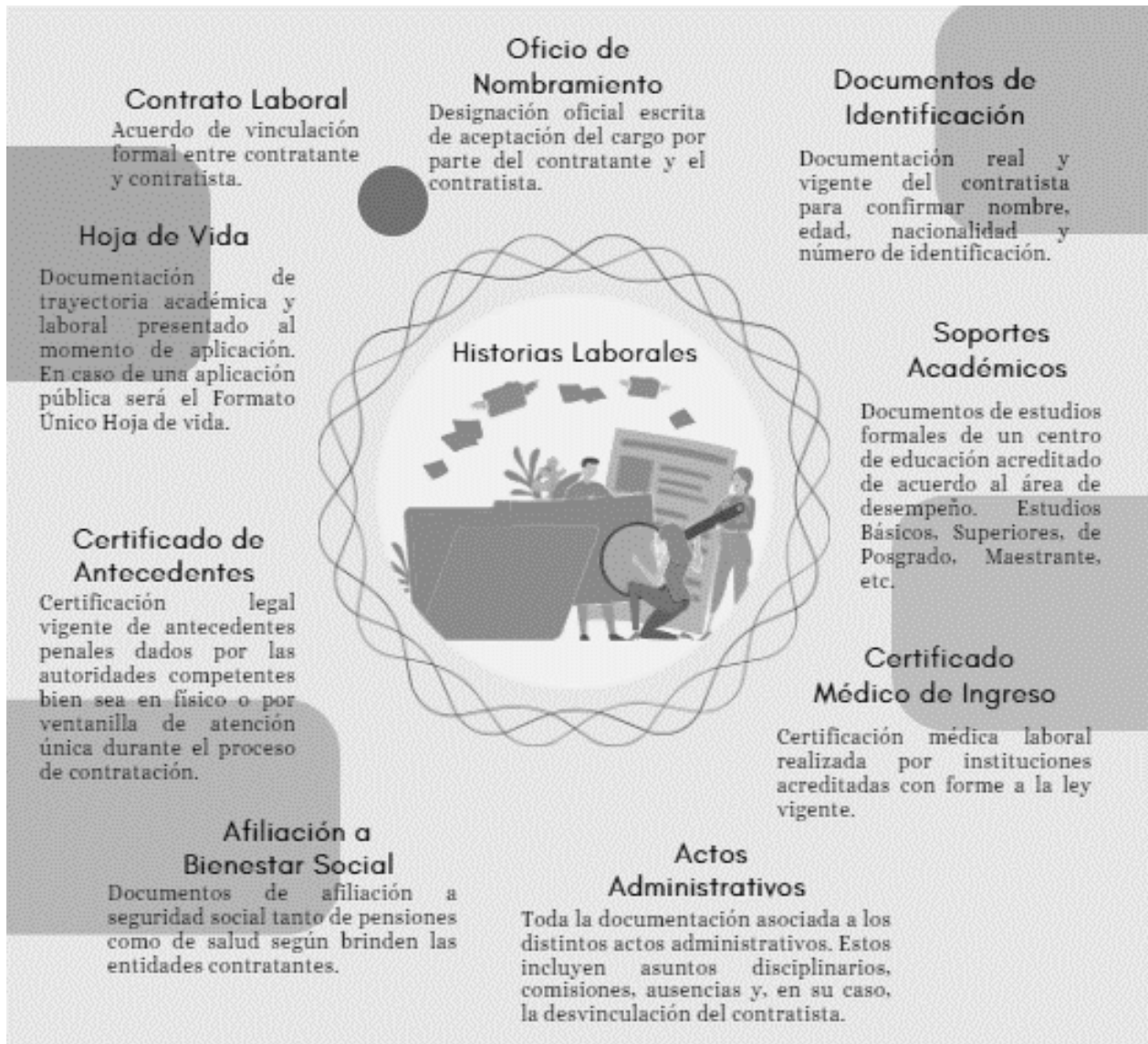
management of the Labor Histories is done from the human resources center of the entity, as well defined by Carolina Diaz Salazar in her degree work, as "the only unit to guarantee the protection of the document series of the labor history are the units known as Human Resources (...)" (2009, p. 65). Therefore, document management is essential to guarantee the functions of the work history in organizations.

On the other hand, some functions serve the entity's contractor. These benefits include the correct follow-up of pension contributions. The guarantee of social security in case of illness, maternity or any other extraordinary situation related to their functions and, finally, the legality of their labor activity within national and international parameters. These functions improve the labor quality of the employees and the legality of the entities.

#### *Composition of Work Histories*

Work Histories are formed by the unification of specific documents determined in the specific interest of the institutions, as well as the regulations in force regarding the rules of Personal Data Processing. Even so, a general pattern of typification can be noted in these files, and the documents of the Labor Histories could be broken down in the following way.

- ✓ Labor Contract
- ✓ Appointment
- ✓ Identification Documents
- ✓ Resume
- ✓ Academic Support
- ✓ Certificate of Background
- ✓ Medical Certificate of Admission
- ✓ Social Welfare Affiliation
- ✓ Administrative Acts



Source: Own elaboration, based on Salazar (2020).

*Current Terminology and Management*

Earlier, there was a certain lack of conceptualizing work histories within archival science. While it is

true that the concept can be lost in the studies of other sciences or in practical applications, the new archival revisions of the concept have proposed a

much more specialized view of its definition and scope in recent years.

The SIGEPRE, or Integrated Information Management System of the Presidency of the Republic, can be proposed as one of the main examples, which in 2020 made the Guidelines for the Organization of Work Histories. In this publication, they not only mentioned the specific management aspects in public procurement specific to the Presidency of the Republic but also gave new definitions of the concept of Labor History. The document defines this as a “Documentary Series that contains all the information produced on the linkage and labor trajectory of people” (SIGEPRE, 2020, p. 2). Although it is not far from the first definition, the fact that it appears within an official document denotes the current importance of these files and the need to manage them with the highest standards, especially within public institutions.

It is possible to denote the processes through which documents pass within the management framework. These would be the classification or identification of the documentary series within the entity; the arrangement of the documents exposed in the following order: Resume, Identity Documents, Study Certificates, Labor Certificates; and Act of Possession; Physical Preparation of the Documents in case of being analogous documents as requested by the entity in charge; Foliation of the documents, according to the current regulations; Documentary Description in the control sheets authorized for the procedure; Audit and Verification of the Information of labels and packaging; Custody of the Labor Histories to the entities in charge and in the spaces established according to the specific requirements of control and security of the documents within the central archive.

Beyond these rules and management processes, the Labor Records can go through some aspects of the current management. The first of these should be the digitization of the archival document, making the records to be managed not only within

their analog media but also within digital media. The advantages associated with this process include the effectiveness and efficiency of access to information and the security and preservation of documents when an integrated management system backs them.

This approach is relevant not only because of the maintenance and preservation needs of the archives but also because of the current measures for public documents, which increasingly facilitate their access to personnel or natural persons interested in them.

### **The probative value of work histories**

Within the social context of information management, the ramification associated with analyzing documents’ veracity, legality and traceability is known as the evidential value. This concept, long used by administrative and investigative apparatuses, has much of its importance rooted in the moments of valuation of the document, whether electronic or analogous.

Specifically, evidential value is the backbone of documentary appraisal in any activity associated with archiving. This is because, as Valentín Carrascosa mentions, “the means of proof are the instruments used by the parties to bring to the process and more specifically to the judge’s mind the veracity of their allegation” (1994, p. 137). In archival science, associated with document management, such parameters are fundamental to achieving the objectives of document appraisal since they determine the burden of truthfulness associated not only with the processes but also with the results inside and outside the institution. It is not unusual for organizations, corporations and entities to constantly present evidentiary appraisals of internal documents, such as work histories. The constant review of these documents, like many others, allows access to the interests of macro institutions and individuals.

## Los Metadatos

Los metadatos son la información desglosada de una o más fuentes de información.



En este sentido los metadatos asociados a las HHLL podrían ser las fechas de anexión, las firmas del contratista, los documentos de soporte, los correos y números de contacto, las certificaciones y referencias entre múltiples datos asociados a las respectivas cargas de documentos del expediente.

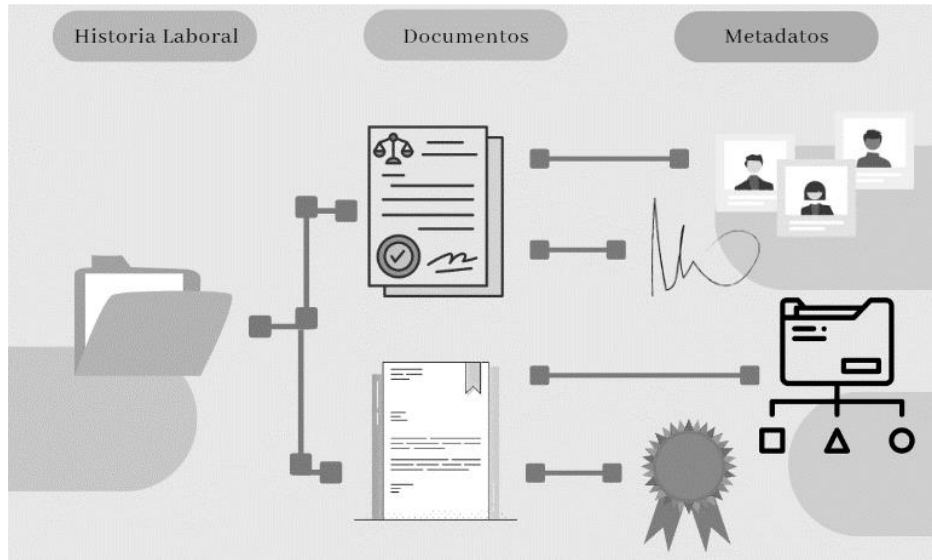


In the Labor Histories case, the evidential value definition is very special since, as they are centralized files, they are not analyzed as independent documents. On the contrary, each file is part of an integration process that must be treated as a whole as a support and complement to the previous one. For example, within the work history, the résumé corresponding to the selection process of the professional profile is intertwined with the supports and certifications of academic training and previous work processes. Similarly, the contract is directly related to the previous exams and processes during the selection process. This documentary reciprocity, which may have a greater load of importance within the relations carried out in the Labor Histories, determines that

its treatment should have a particular priority in the institutions that use it. In this case, for example, the work history gains greater significance in terms of evidentiary value since, as a file, it contains the actual documentation of an individual that can be used later for whatever purposes are required both within and outside the institution.

In simple terms, the appraisal of documents through the probative value of work histories determines the documentary stability of an individual linked to the organization at some point in his or her institutional life. In this sense, it is up to the archivist to recognize the importance of these documents and the members of the

organization to assert their rights to the correct treatment of their information.



### *Importance of Probative Value*

Work Histories have many advantages within the institutions that make good use of them. Among

the many examples of this competitive and administrative advantage, one can trace the increase in the segmentation of their profit visions.



Thanks to the correct use of the evidentiary value of the documents in the Work History, for example, they allow institutions to have control over the current and past payroll of the organization. This control component joins the fundamental metadata required for institutions to, for example, generate an annualized budget; initiate hiring processes; institutional project growth; establish competency goals, among many

others. However, the advantages of the evidential value do not stop at the institutional administrative components. As mentioned, work histories are part of the organization and the individual who requires them. A person's clarity in the hiring process determines his existence in different labor aspects that continue to permeate his professional life.





For this reason, it is considered the worker's right to demand organized, under the standards of quality and legality, documents of his Labor History. It is necessary to clarify that, although these documents are the private information of the members of the organization, the truth is that once the organization administers them, they become hermetic information according to the rules of the AGN, as mentioned by E. Padilla, when he says that the Labor Histories is private information of

the members of the organization. Padilla, when he says that the Labor Histories "belong to the restricted information, which can only be consulted by authorized personnel, and those responsible for the archives must guarantee that the spaces destined for each of these must be of restricted access (...)" (2021, p. 20). In this sense, individuals cannot claim their work histories as their own, but they can guarantee that their professional and sensitive information is safe.



### The electronic document in the Labor Records

The concept of the electronic document is often taken for granted as a document within a digital space, either by production or transfer. This would simplify the concept and leave it at the mercy of a subjective interpretation since at what point does a digital data, file or process become an electronic document? To solve this question, it is necessary to adopt the definition of a document as evidence of a human fact; a photograph, a will, an invoice or a simple letter could then be considered documents. This, applied to the conceptions of digital media, does not vary too much, and the electronic document, like the physical document, is evidence of facts of human production (Pinochet, 2002). But it has been articulated to an electronic medium through digitalization,

production or digital transformation processes. In this sense, the validity of the electronic document is the same, but its format changes to the existing and pre-existing hardware or software conditions. In this way, a video, a recording, a CD-ROM or other, among others, denote a human fact and can be considered electronic documents.

The concept of the electronic document as a medium distinct from the analog document has been disappearing in recent years. Although the differences are obvious in terms of format, the reality is that, in practice, electronic documents have the same value as physical documents.

This reality is evident when observing public and private companies' administrative and documentary development. The documentary composition of the entities has been nourished by

hardware and software machinery at a dizzying pace. Furthermore, it is not surprising that the archives of a company or institution are, in equal measure, both physical and digital. What was once considered a form of document protection is increasingly being discarded. Hard disk memories, data management, and control programs have replaced the burden of storage and warehousing. The aim is not to suggest that the physical document should disappear in the face of the electronic one since, as María Redondo Herranz mentions, “all documents, both traditional and electronic, present sufficiently similar forms so that it is possible to conceive an ideal-typical documentary form, as regular and complete as possible for examining all its elements” (2010, p. 393-394), indicating that, although it is not possible to do away with traditional documentation or replace it completely with electronic documentation, the latter has had a greater presence in archival models in recent years. This remarkable change shows the importance of electronic documents in the daily administrative activities of archivists and the general public. From electronic receipts, used to reduce production values and increase efficiency in transactions, to e-mails that communicate the entity’s central operations, electronic documents replace many of the functions that physical documents used to have, which applies to Work Histories.

In the case of these records, the conditions of their integration to digital channels and the evidentiary value given during the contracting processes in public or private entities were accelerated with the social conditions left by COVID-19. As a result of this new normality, the electronic document was crucial to keep a record of personnel within companies that continued with their activities from spaces other than the central entity (Pulido & Mata *et al.*, 2021). In the case of private entities, mainly in administrative positions, employers initiated direct hiring processes through digital channels, which means that the composition of the file of the Labor Histories, most of the time, was done exclusively by electronic means. In this way, the documents associated with the Labor Histories were gathered with exclusively electronic cases such as Resumes in PDFs; scans of Academic Certifications such as Diplomas or digital Degree

Certificates; Bank Certifications; Virtual Signatures; Electronic Contracts; and Medical Supports, among others. Although this new normality did not prevent the labor recession, it did help to contain it within the expected limits for a worldwide event such as the pandemic, and the loading of files fulfilled the same role within the entities in charge.

On the other hand, the impact on public institutions can be better measured and, although there had been delays and inconveniences in articulating a digital contracting system, health conditions forced government teams to present direct contracting means using electronic channels. The SIMO platform (Support System for Equality, Merit and Opportunity) in charge of the CNSC (National Civil Service Commission) is analyzed for this case. During the public hiring processes as of 2020, a general increase in the use of the platform was seen until reaching its maximum peak during the Teacher selection process last September 26, in this one, “A total of 378,212 applicants attended the application of written tests of the selection process for Teacher Managers and Teachers (majority population) for Rural and Non-Rural Areas, which is equivalent to 94% of the citizens cited” (MEN, 2022). Beyond the figure, which is important, this means that the platform uploaded, reviewed and approved around 400 thousand files for the formation of possible Work Histories, among which were identity documents, academic certifications, own publications, and resumes, among other documents. All of the above taking into account that, within the CNSC regulations, “The User accepts that the contents generated and uploaded by him/her to the system will remain in the custody of the CNSC and may be used for the purposes corresponding to each service provided by the CNSC, with the User retaining the rights over such content.” (CNSC, 2022, p. 6), making it clear that, at least within public contracting relations, the pre-existing documents to the Labor Histories are the user’s property.

Let’s ignore, for a moment, the figures related to the management of Electronic Work Histories (which will be called electronic since they are part of a digital environment only), and instead, let’s focus on the specifications provided by the

platform and the user's freedom to include, delete or modify the related information within the public records. This is perhaps one of the most significant advantages offered by the digital step within work environments, and that solves the time-consuming bureaucracy associated with the rectification and updating of data that virtually all organizations have. It is curious that a file that at the beginning was seen as one of the best-guarded private assets of an organization is now so accessible to the user of whom the documents are part. This, of course, while maintaining the aspects of legality and information security. It is not surprising that these changes are becoming more noticeable since, as Georgina Flores and Gustavo Villabuena mention, "if we look at our computer, (...), we will see a huge amount of document management, in e-mails, in internal electronic management systems, in the documents that we produce every day to manage our daily work and even personal activities" (Pulido *et al.* 2021, p. 49). Finally, the work histories, even if they are entrusted to the Human Resources areas of each entity, are part of the personal and living information of the members of the organization.

## Conclusion

Work histories have had a very active development course, especially during the last few decades. The composition of files with documents containing sensitive information has always been a job that requires the expertise of archivists and, lately, the use of new information technologies. For this reason, its study, not only within archival administration but also in other information sciences, is a particular priority in the run-up to the fifth revolution.

Although the management of labor records must be reviewed while maintaining the components of efficiency and quality, it is also necessary that the entities, whether public or private, understand the necessary transformation that the management models must have with these files, which, although they are of *reserved access*, as mentioned by the General Archive of the Nation, do not cease to be living files, which change along with the people and mark a component in the evidential value of the document. Therefore, it is the job of

the officials and personnel in charge to take care of these documents and ensure that, if necessary, they can have secure access to them under current management regulations.

Finally, work histories have undergone a singular transformation within the documentary series and therefore, research must pay attention to these files as electronic documents, increasingly accessible to the user and increasingly vulnerable. However, the conditions of the current work histories present many advantages to fully meet the objectives of efficiency, security and quality of information.

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