Information Seeking: Taking A Closer Look at Archival User Studies

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Abstract

The archival profession has, in some scholars' opinions, been experiencing a shift of thought towards a user-centered approach within archival practice. This has ultimately led to an alteration regarding how users are targeted and specific ways that technology has changed accessibility to archival documents. Through the study of users, archival scholars have been able to make advancements towards improving the information seeking processes of users. The research will outline a short history of user studies and the ways access has been developed within archival repositories. The investigation will then reflect on a small case study that can determine if information seeking user studies have a place within the archival literature and how this can lead to better facilitation between users and archivists.

List of Abbreviations

CCA- Canadian Council of Archives

CCSDS- Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems

EAC- Expatriate Archive Centre

LAC- Library and Archives Canada

NA- Nationaal Archief

OAIS- Open Archival Information System

SAA – Society of American Archivists

Introduction and Background: Access and Archival User Studies

"The pendulum of thought swings back and forth, as one generation solves its predecessors problems, but thereby creates new problems for the next generation to address, with ideas having their day, being discarded, and then even being revitalized in modified form in later work. And so it should be."
Terry Cook [1]

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Background and Context

The article 'Redefining Archival Identity: Meeting User Needs in the Information Society" written in 1989 by Randall C. Jimerson looked toward the future of the archival profession and made several different recommendations for the improvement of the archival occupation. Most interesting are his suggestions towards users and the way archivists need to rethink the exploration of understanding their needs. The article reflects the shifting notion of archivists and repositories from material-centered towards a user-oriented approach. He suggests, "we know a lot about the basic properties of our products- records, exhibitions, public products- but very little about the psychological and informational needs that motivate users."[2] Jimerson's article exemplifies one of the many areas of archival research that has only just begun since the publication of his article: archival user studies. One of the main priorities within institutional archives for decades has been the preservation of documents that in turn has limited user access to an elite group. However, through technological advancements, there has been a large shift occurring in the profession within the 21st century from material-centered to user-

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[1] Terry Cook,"What is past is prologue: a history of archival ideas since 1898, and the future paradigm shift." *Archivaria* 43 (1997), 47.
[2] Randall, Jimerson, "Redefining archival identity: meeting user needs in the information society," *The American Archivist* 52, no. 3 (1989), 339.

oriented initiatives providing access to several differing groups and the democratization among the use of archival collections to a broader audience.

In the past three decades, archival scholarship has begun to produce examinations into who archival users are and how to best target audiences. Through archival user studies, both archival academics and practitioners have developed new ways for archivists to provide the most access and best experience to all different types of users. Many studies make claim that by opening up archival repositories to new users that archives will, as Terry Cook states, "as concept, as practice, as institution, and as profession may be transformed to flourish in our digital era, especially one where citizens have a new agency and a new voice."[3] By showing how archival user studies have begun to operate within the 21st century a reflection of the importance of additional research into this specific type of analyses as well as how it has changed the archival approach to user access can be made.

1.2: Purpose

The examination into archival user studies has increased very slowly in the past thirty years and increased more recently due to investigations conducted by academic scholars and archival practitioners. There is still a large amount of untapped research to be done within this field and by providing a clear picture of the changes this field of research has undergone will hopefully influence the promotion of additional user studies to be conducted. The relationship between archivists and users has also been changing especially due to the rise of technology. Whereas in the past many archivists viewed scholars and academic researchers as the few and many times only suitable candidates to handle precious documents, the outreach to additional audiences has been seen as an effect of increased global interconnectivity. It was prior understood that documents could be trusted in the care of 'experts' therefore limiting contact of unpublished materials to the public. Yet with the influx of technology and digitization as well as the high prices of preserving analogue documents, a shift has occurred towards a more user-inclusive

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[3] Terry Cook, "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, no. 2-3 (2013), 97.

approach. There has also been an increased amount of interest in heritage documents through the use of social media and Web 2.0 that use previously unknown records as storylines or news pieces. Archives are seen as a part of national cultural heritage in many cases, creating more inclusivity and creating more conversation about additional narratives that have previously been excluded.

The purpose of this research aims to highlight the areas that scholars are embracing when considering archival user studies. Past research has been made on the generalization of archival user studies however this thesis will reflect on the specific information seeking branch of archival user studies. The emphasis will be to show what relationship users have had with access, both in context of the past and highlight accessibility when considering the future of archival repositories. Additionally, current user studies will be examined to give idea towards the way archivists can integrate these investigations into providing access to various users in the future. Through providing a summary of information seeking studies that have occurred, this research can potentially document an important area of research that has been just catching up to the main stream archival research.

1.3: Thesis Statement

Archival user studies have been a limited resource when it comes to archival literature yet has impacted the information that archivists understand about various types of users. It has helped develop many different ways to approach digital and analogue archiving as well as better ways to educate and facilitate information to users. Therefore, the question explored will be: What impact can information seeking archival user studies have on indicating user accessibility needs? Additional questions explored will be:
- How has the scholarly research into archival user studies developed?
- How has scholarly research into archival user studies led to changes towards viewing archival access and the user?
- Through a specific case study in the Netherlands, how have archival repositories explored users?

These subsidiary questions will help to facilitate the conversation of the thesis by showing various aspects regarding information seeking archival user studies. This research will be heavily involved with understanding both the user and access tools while also demonstrating the importance of user studies in the context of archival institutions.

1.4: Definitions

As many archivist professionals have theorized, the best way to indicate common ground is by first defining terms used throughout the research.[4] The indication comes from developing an understanding of key terms used throughout this thesis.

- **Archival User Study**

As one can assume, there are several differing opinions on what entails an archival user study. First, many user studies have been conducted by library and heritage professionals but the focus that will be maintained throughout this thesis will be of specifically studies conducted within an archival repository for archival purposes. A cross-discipline approach to user studies would be an important area of research but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Second, there needs to be reference to the difference between user studies and usability studies. As Hea Lim Rhee suggests, usability studies are based on the functionality of how archival content is used through digital means such as websites and catalogues, which will not be focused upon within this study. User Studies are investigation done through qualitative and quantitative measures that interprets data on users.

Therefore, the definition of an archival user study that will be used will be the investigation of user activities conducted by either archival practitioners or scholars that interprets information by using specific research methods.[5] These investigations will have been published in reputable academic scholarship allowing for archival professionals to use in their own archival repositories.

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[4] Rob Fisher. "In Search of a theory of private archives: The foundational writings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg revisited," *Archivaria* 67, no. 67 (2009), 4.

[5] Hea Lim Rhee,"Reflections on archival user studies," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2015): 30.

- **User**

Users of archives have been becoming increasingly diverse since the invention and use of digital means such as the Internet and social media. Users are broad and diversified in what information they are hoping to acquire. The definition of user will be defined as vocational: i.e. academics, scholars, researchers and non-vocational: i.e. genealogists, authors, non-academic researchers, family historians. By making two groups of users will help to show the diversification as well as show how archivists perceive potential users.

- **Access**

The term 'access' has very broad connotation, as there are several ways a user could access archival repositories as well as documents they contain. Therefore, within this thesis access will indicate all methods by which an audience can receive archival documentation. This would include catalogues, indexes, online resources, and most importantly the archivist. The area of targeting users through access tools, such as social media sites, is beyond the scope of this research.

1.5: Scope

This thesis will primarily focus on publications and practices of archival research from Europe, Canada and the United States, taking into consideration authors from other various countries. Archival user studies have been shown to be most prevalent within Canada and the United States. However within this thesis, due to the location of case study in Europe, archival access within the Netherlands will be taken into consideration. Additionally, the research will only be looking at the branch of information- seeking user studies as this branch of user studies mainly deals with information related to access and the user. It will explore both past theories as well as user studies that have been presented in the last five years, specifically between the years 2010-2016 to indicate the most current information. By doing this, the hope is to give an indication towards the direction of future

archival user study research and allow for a more fully developed view of information seeking studies to be presented.

The case study conducted will be focus on collecting data about information seeking habits of both researchers and archival professionals. The study will take place specifically in The Hague, NL due to the vicinity of the researcher. The scope of this research will be to give an example of how an institution contributes to accessibility of users. Its purpose will also be to understand information seeking needs of the researcher, specifically in the context of accessibility. Interviews will include those working from the Nationaal Archief and the Expatriate Archive Centre, as well as two researchers who have used various repositories worldwide. By exploring the issues of access of both a small community archive and a large repository can give example of how repositories can conduct their own user investigations and interpret the results.

1.6: Theoretical Framework

Within the archival scholarship, the indication of archivists understanding the importance of user studies and how this can lead to creating additional innovations when concerning access has been shown. Through the research of Hea Lim Rhee, the notion of the archival community being at odds with user studies has led to the additional research within this thesis. As she states," the archival community stands to gain much from user studies, but it must first understand why archival institutions ignore or underutilize this potentially powerful tool and what can be done about it."[6] Focus on additional research within archival user studies could potentially change the way archivists respond to user access and transform the organization of access tools. By taking a closer look into one area of archival user studies, the aim will be to describe the positive outcomes that user studies have had and will have on information seeking user needs. This area of research can be rich in the information required to progress towards additional user-oriented archival repositories.

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[6] Hea Lim Rhee,"Reflections on archival user studies," 37.

One of the main challenges within the archival community has been how to give audiences access but at the same time preserve materials for future use. This answer has come in the form of digitization but often cannot be a total solution as users of archives frequently need original material to further their research or there are countless items to digitize. Therefore, by understanding the problems users face when on-site or online would only increase the amount of access archivists are able to provide. Cristian Ciurea and Florin Filip state within their article, "one of the biggest challenges here is to ensure adequate representation and long-term access to the created digital information considering the standards and the user habits that are under permanent change."[7] The constantly changing environment of both users and technology has impacted how archivists understand and co-operate with users. Archival user studies have been a recent phenomenon, becoming a topic of archival scholarly research since the mid-1980s. There have been very few large-scale studies conducted, but those that have been published have had a large impact on archival processes. The users within archives are one of the main reasons that archival professionals practice archival science therefore studying habits and needs should be a top priority.

1.7: Research Methods

The current study will be a desk-based investigation of the situation from a top-down approach using secondary research and published materials. By tracing the beginnings of archival user studies along with the research of present scholars, the aim will be to show how these studies have been useful towards archival practice today. It will also point towards the importance of conducting user studies especially looking into the future. The secondary research by archival scholars highlight the changes that user studies have gone through and what archivists hope to achieve within this area of research.

The case study that will be included will target two repositories, giving the view of both archivist and researcher on user access needs. This will more clearly

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[7] Cristian Ciurea and Florin Gheorghe Filip. "Validation of a Business Model for Cultural Heritage Institutions." *Informatica Economica* 19, no. 2 (2015): 48.

define either the positive, negative or unknown influences of the user research studies that have been published prior and give example of how a small scale project can provide a large amount of data.

1.8: Thesis Overview

Following the introductory chapter, chapter 2 will contain an overview of the progression of archival user studies since the mid-80s. It will highlight the framework of Paul Conway as well as provide an overview of the differing branches of archival studies. It will conclude with the differing conflicts and issues that arise for archivists when considering conducting archival user studies.

Chapter 3 will consider the effect that access has had on the archival field especially when considering technology. A thorough examination of the history of user access, current access standards and current types of access that repositories are working with today will all be explored.

Chapter 4 will look at information seeking studies that concern the behavior of user. It will examine specific cases of how user behavior has been studied in the past, showing the importance of understanding specific types of users and how this can create more accessibility. This chapter will then show the current research that has been based on looking into the behavior of all users of an archive and how this can better lead to facilitation.

Chapter 5 will examine information seeking user studies that concern accessibility. This chapter will include an outline of user studies based on the research tools that users most heavily rely: access tools, research knowledge, and archivists. This information will give example to the differing factors when considering user access and user needs. As one of the most popular areas of archival user studies, it will investigate what recommendations these studies are giving presently.

Chapter 6 will examine a specific case study containing original results of two institutions, providing an example of the differing ways institutions deliver access to users. By interviewing archivists from the Expatriate Archive Centre and the Nationaal Archief, both located in The Hague, will help to emphasize what current professionals understand about user needs, accessibility and the challenges these create. An analysis will also be presented as a way to show how this research aligns with additional scholarly publications.

Chapter 7 will conclude with an answer to the research question and how the research has helped to improve the investigation of archival user studies. There will also be a summation of future archival user studies and recommended further research by the author.

1.9: Conclusion

The research that will be explored shows an important look into an area of archival study that has a vast amount of potential. By looking in-depth at information seeking user studies, a statement can be made on how conducting research studies of users can impact accessibility. The hypotheses will be that much of the information found by user studies have contributed to the way archivists not only interact with users but also how archival networks and technologies are formed. Archivists are no longer solely focus on internal matters, concerned only with the protection of documents but are now looking externally at those that can keep their institutions sustainable through large amounts of access.

Chapter 2: Development of Archival User Studies

2.1: Introduction

Before the use of computers, archives were a place catering mostly to academics conducting research, most often historians, and kept full access limited on the basis of better preservation. However, with the institution of computer technology and social media, the availability of documents to a vast number of users has begun and does not seem to be slowing. The increased desire for users to instantly attain the information they need has put large expectations on archives and on archivists to increase accessibility. The literature that surrounds archival user studies has been minor in comparison to other topics explored by archivists in the past such as digitization and appraisal. Nevertheless, by looking at how archival user studies has developed within the past thirty years will aim to give background towards themes that many archival scholars and practitioners are now pursuing. Additionally a fuller scope of how these studies have emerged within the archival literature can be made.

2.2: Beginnings of Archival User Studies

The beginnings of the concept of user studies initially began with scholars researching users within the library field. Due to the general audience that libraries cater, it is no doubt that these studies had their beginnings in the 1940s and thus are an increasingly important part of the library scholarship. The concept of understanding users within an archive was initially not an area of interest due to the limitation of access that several repositories preferred. However, new ideas in the field began to emerge within the 1980s, "before then, only one user study, a 1977 investigation of historians' use of historical finding aids, had been conducted in the archival context."[8] Hea Lim Rhee describes two fundamental reasons as to the lack of archival user studies compared to libraries. She mentions foremost that an archival repository has one primary goal: preservation and that user studies have been missing from the archival literature due to the fact that archivists have been "long focused on preservation." The second reason she gives has been the lack of

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[8] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 31.

resources many institutions have to give to user studies and instead focus on description and administrative duties.[9] The idea of many that the archivist had the role of custodian only makes sense as to why there was little scholarship on users. Archivists, seen as the protector of documents, would have little thought towards seeking out users let alone understanding their needs. As one of the original fathers of archives Hilary Jenkinson noted, preservation of the document was the primary function of an archive with the availability of documents coming secondary. Yet this ideology began to shift near the end of the 20th century with more concern towards users.[10] As a subject area, the archives were more than a place for a specific type of users. By turning the ideology around to a user-oriented understanding of the responsibilities of archives this opened up a new area of research.

The focus among user study archivists has been constantly varying based on popular subjects important to professionals at the time. The amount of user studies that have been conducted throughout the past forty years has been documented within the 2015 article by Hea Lim Rhee as well as an overview that contains one of the most fully encompassed understandings about the topic of archival user studies to date. Her research documents the number of user studies based on years from 1977-2011 and gives background information to the development of this field of research. This information has become critical in understanding the dilemma that user studies have faced in the past and gives recommendations as to where user studies should be concentrating. Her study indicates that archival user studies have not been consistent throughout but instead has increased and decreased in popularity within the archival literature. Her study provides information of who are conducting user studies whether that is an archivist practitioner or academic scholars reflecting on the reasons why.

As her research reflects, more studies are typically done by academic researchers, as this group has more time and funding to support a user study.[11] Archival studies initially began with a small surge in the late 1980's with various

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[9] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 31.
[10] Terry Cook, "What is past is prologue: a history of archival ideas since 1898, and the future paradigm shift," 23.
[11] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 32.

articles published throughout the nineties. Much of the research comes from a large amount of research beginning in the early 2000's based on an increased interest in understanding user needs because of the with the development of technology at the beginning of the 21st century.
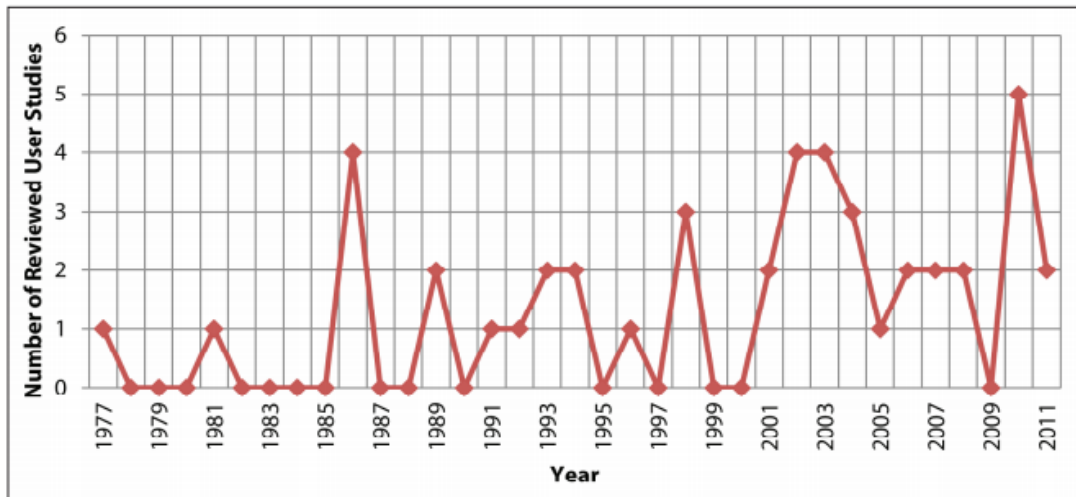
Figure 1: Rhee's research of user studies conducted per year

This research reflects that user studies are continually going through stages of popularity as well as changeability in interests. The fluidity of such research indicates that the field has a large amount of topics to be covered by innovative archivists and can constantly be built upon. Rhee's study signifies that although there has not been a consistent flow of archival user studies there seems to be no decline towards conducting such research. By considering the impact of the first call towards user studies, there can be more understanding made about the impact of this area of research.

2.3: Archival Study Framework: Paul Conway

The history of archival user studies really begins with the American archivist Paul Conway and his framework that was presented in his 1986 article "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives." To date, his reflections on archival user studies have been one of the only frameworks to implement a system for archivists to ascertain the opinions of users. His article points out that archival professionals are willing to conduct studies on users but do

not have a proper method to do so.[12] The article presents an idea for three main goals that an archive can use to evaluate the needs of users: quality, integrity, and value. The five stages he presents link to different research methods: registration forms of participants, orientation, follow-up, survey, and experiments.[13] Figure 1 shows the original framework from the article and indicates that by using a cross-sectional chart, the archivist can find the information they wish to receive. The theory behind using this technique was to help open up communication between archivists and users and has been implemented in many studies since the article was presented in 1986.

METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES		Stage 1 **Registration** (all users/always)	Stage 2 **Orientation** (all users at selected times)	Stage 3 **Follow Up** (sample users/selected times)	Stage 4 **Survey** (random sample)	Stage 5 **Experiments** (special groups)
	Quality	Nature of Task • definition in terms of subject, format, scope	Preparation of Researcher • experience • stage of defined problem • basic/applied Anticipated Service	Search Strategies and Mechanics • search order • pos/neg search • who recommended • time spent searching • time spent talking	Expectations and Satisfaction • styles of research • approaches to searching • levels of service	Access and Non-use • frustration indexes • perceptions of use
	Integrity	Identification • name • address • telephone Agree to Rules	Knowledge of Holdings and Services • written sources • verbal sources	Intensity and Frequency of Use • collections used • time spent with files	Alternative to Physical Use • value and use of microforms • value and use of databases	Format Independence • linkages with information creation • technology and information
	Value	Membership in Networks • group affiliation Can We Contact You? Can We Tell Others?	Intended Use • purpose in terms of function and product	Significant Use Significant Info • importance of archives • other sources • valuable information • gaps in information	Impact of Use • increased use • citation patterns • decision-making	Role of Historical Information in Society • total potential demand • community network analysis

Figure 2: Conway's Framework of user studies on Archives

Conway had hoped that the framework would allow for archivists to develop their own skills and methods through the use of his research and work towards more understanding of the user. He understood that all people using archives are users including archivists as stated, "it is unlikely that there are many non-users of archives"[14] indicating that the importance of studying the wants and needs of users in an archive is detrimental to producing effective repositories. This framework indicates that archival thought during the 1980s was shifting towards a user-centric

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[12] Paul Conway, "Facts and frameworks: an approach to studying the users of archives." *The American Archivist* 49, no. 4 (1986): 395.
[13] Ibid, 398.
[14] Ibid, 396.

approach with less emphasis on archivist as custodian. When reading the framework today, there are very clear signs that this method pre-dates prevalent computer technology and starts at a level of communication directly between the archivist and user. There has been a call for an updated framework that could hopefully use the influx of technology provided today which could potentially indicate a better grasp of user needs.

2.4: Branches of Archival User Studies

As previously suggested, the amount of users taking-part within repositories has been increasing along with the influx of users gathering information by digital means. Therefore, several differing themes of user studies have been conducted and they all fall within a three branches of user studies. These branches include: information needs, information seeking, and information use. All three have been considered as essential to the basis of archival user studies. [15] The foundation of each of these areas contains different aspects of data that the research hopes to attain to better understand user needs. Figure 3 gives example to the different topics that have been seen under differing areas of study. All three of these areas require special attention as they have all developed from original studies that have made contributions towards understanding of archival audiences. They also help to break up one overarching ideology of user studies into more defined roles, allowing for more discussion in innovative areas as well as consider the user within the technological sphere of archives.

By embracing a user-oriented approach, there have been a number of studies conducted in order to find the elements that could create innovative ideas leading to better accessibility of documents. Within the scope of this research, only information seeking will be explored as this branch considers access and in part user needs based on these themes. A number of sources within the topic of information seeking also contribute to the study of user behaviors in association with information seeking. The information-seeking branch hopes to develop the way that users are both understood and how their needs can be dealt with when finding

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[15] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 33.

information. Therefore this branch has been one of the more popular areas of explorations allowing for a large quantity of differing articles.
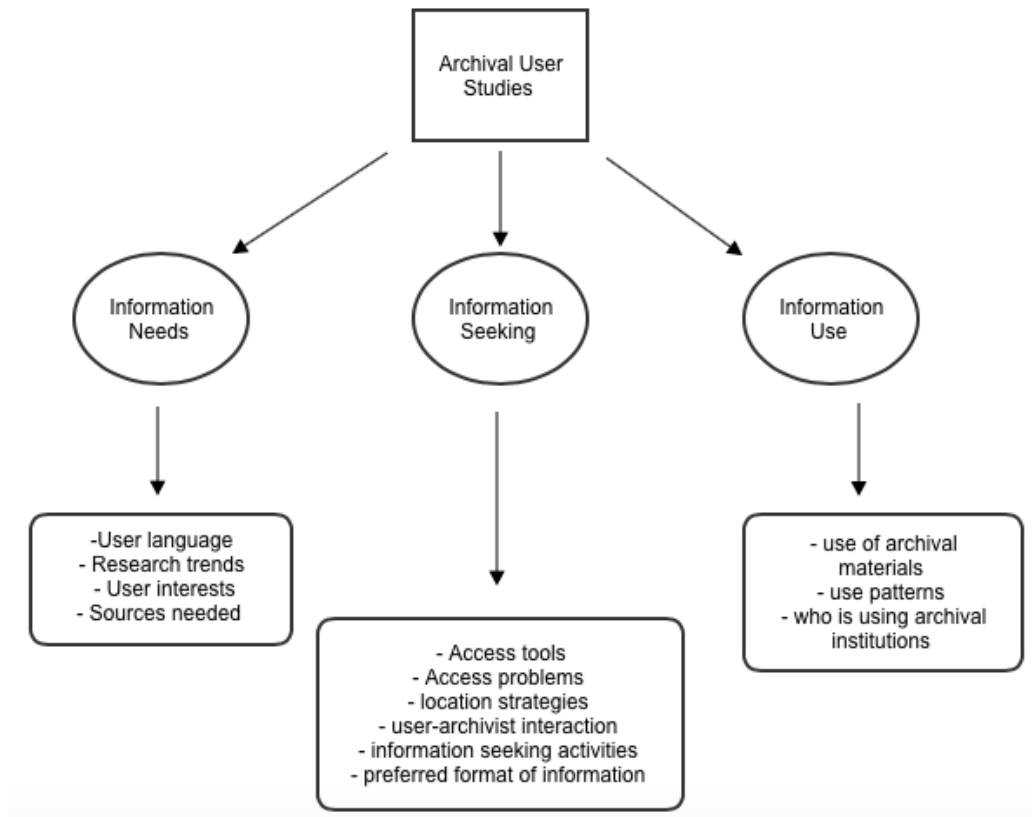
Figure 3. Diagram of Archival User Study research topics [16]

2.5: Considering Conflicts

Archival user studies have been able to provide a large amount of information recommending how to improve user needs and experience. This area of research has a vast amount of promise when trying to resolve the conflict between preservation and access, but can come with problems through beginning such studies. Several areas need to be taken into account when an institution or archival scholar intends to research users. Thus for this reason, conflicts must be mentioned to provide background of the research topic.

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[16] Based on the data collected by Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 32-34.

The literature at the beginning of the 1980s showed a transformation towards a much more open, user-centered approach. One can reflect that archival user studies began so late due to the changing shift in ideology from analogue to digital and the evolution of the archivist. One of the ideas of why this subject has been lacking in research has been the limited funding for these types of projects within institutions. With funding going towards several other areas of research, user studies have frequently been studied by academics. The reasons for this are typically due to better funding at a university level as well as those with a larger amount of time to dedicate. Many archival practitioners have limited time to dedicate to the study of users unless studying immediate needs within their own repositories. As previously mentioned, there was a call to archival practitioners to start publishing their own user study results in order for those in the archival community to learn from other institutions. As of her 2002 article, Helen Tibbs states that many in the archival world know that understanding users to be important but "very little implementation of this recognition within repositories is evident."[17] She goes on to question why archivists would be lacking within conducting a study to know users better and she finds that there seems to be a myth that it would be time consuming, a waste of time that could be better spent and involve a large number of statistics. She continues by positing that by knowing more about users would "yield significant improvements and benefits on many fronts."[18] These conflicts show an important aspect of archival user studies that there seems to be a misconception as to the benefits that could eventually be made through studying users.

Another major blockade towards fulfilling large-scale studies of users has been the tendency of archivists to focus on preservation instead of use. This reason has been fading in recent years as many archivists are beginning to understand the importance of both use and preservation, as users are the major reason why archivists have a profession. As Helen Tibbo states, "no matter how precious

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[17] Helen R. Tibbo, "Learning to love our users: A challenge to the profession and a model for practice." *Archival Issues*,7.
[18] Ibid, 8.

archivists believe their unique holdings to be, if no one were to ever use them they would be worthless."[19] The acknowledgement of such conflicts leads to a better-developed understanding of the pressures of archivists as well as the practical elements as to why user studies are often left behind. This research will show that despite the issues that may arise user studies are necessary steps towards supportive interactions with users, especially within the context of access.

2.6: Conclusion

Throughout the end of the 20th century and now leading into the 21st there have been many changes when taking user studies into consideration. User studies are a constantly fluid element within the archival literature, dependent on trends and the building upon prior studies. In this way, this sector of research not only shows innovative ideas but also leads to dynamic research within the archival literature. As this chapter has shown, fundamental aspects within archival user studies are important when considering not only access but also the dimension of users. Information needs, information seeking and information use are criteria needed to further the knowledge archivists have of users as well as additional archival practices. By continuing to investigate user studies through the specific theories behind the research, one can see the purpose of these studies and how they have led to the development of access tools catering to a vast array of users.

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[19] Helen R. Tibbo, "Learning to love our users: A challenge to the profession and a model for practice," 3.

Chapter 3: Progression of Archival User Access

3.1: Introduction

      The facilitation of access within an archival repository has been an ever-changing relationship between archivists and users. Access has changed dramatically since Paul Conway presented his framework in 1986 and has been made even more complex since the published works of user study scholars such as Elizabeth Yakel and Wendy Duff. Compiled with the popularity of both the Internet and social media outlets, access to one another and institutions has been on a dramatic rise. Scholarship of this subject along with topics of digitization and Archive 2.0 has made the importance of access within archival repositories heightened. When considering access in the context of archival user studies, much of the information as found has been limited or increasingly outdated. Many of the past archival user studies mention access but do not primarily focus on this area or have not been carried out in relation to the progression of technology. Changes to accessibility, whether physical or digital, can only be supported when archivists understand how access to documents has developed from the past as well as gain an understanding of user needs. This chapter will explore the background of user access through historical means, the implementation of access standards, and popular access methods around the world that have been applied. By showing these areas the aim is to give a summary understanding of how current archivists are engaging with access and how these techniques could eventually lead to a better user oriented approach by archival professionals in the future.

3.2: Users and Access: A History

      Throughout the history of archival science, the establishment of archival repositories began a tradition of government-run institutions limiting access to users on the basis of power. Records within Britain, according to M.T. Clanchy, were much disorganized resulting in archival documents being held by powerful individuals or by the church for protection, especially items with great significance. Throughout history there are several examples of this occurring yet this ideology shifted dramatically in the 18ʰ century with the impact of the French Revolution. As

Judith Panitch suggests, public access to records became a staple point to the revolution as the public wanted to take back control of documents from the state and provide access of national property to all members of the nation.[20] Contrary to this, England sought to become more regulated when dealing with records by the implementation of the 1838 *Public Record Office Act* mandating that all public records be brought under the control of the state.[21] This was one of the first acts giving the government sole control over a large amount of public documents as well as bringing a large amount of documents together in one area. Yet this act did not provide a stipulation for public access to documents nor did it provide provisions for the protection of documents not selected for preservation. It was not until the 1950s that standards of access were dealt with public access within Britain, giving standards for public access to government records. Prior to this it was solely based on archivist under governmental issue granting access to a limited number of individuals.

By the mid 1950's, archivists such as Hillary Jenkinson and T.R. Schellenberg presented archival ideology that indicated archivists were foremost custodians of records yet ideas of appraisal differed. Hillary Jenkinson, a British archivist, believed that archivists should maintain a passive role when looking at custodianship and have very little role in the maintenance of which records are kept. Schellenberg, an American archivist, believed the role of an archivist was to 'keep' archival material preserved but with a larger role in the selection of records. Both of these archivists had large consideration when thinking about appraisal yet when considering access there was limited thought. The attention made towards access, as Jeannette Bastian states, was that "although both Jenkinson and Schellenberg considered provisions of public access an important archival function, the custodial responsibility spoke primarily to the protection of records themselves, and only secondarily to use. When it did so, that use was part of the custodian's regulating and controlling

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[20] Judith Panitch,"Liberty, equality, posterity?: Some archival lessons from the case of the French Revolution," *The American Archivist* 59, no. 1 (1996): 31.
[21] Michael T Clanchy, *From memory to written record: England 1066-1307*. John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

responsibilities."[22] The notions of archivist as sole custodian has begun to shift, as contemporary scholars have been looking towards the addition of large amounts of access towards the user without the necessary step of the archivists controlling documents in such a direct way. Appraisal rather than access was a large part of the conversation of these two archival forefathers but their ideas of how much information a user should be given has been important to the discussion of access especially since the availability of documents has become so prevalent.

The progression of technology has had a large impact on the way that users have been able to access collections especially due to the establishment of the World Wide Web in the 1990s and 2000s that "enabled archivists to make information about their collections accessible to virtually everyone."[23] This was when the influx of user studies began as the needs of the public began to have a role in how finding aids, catalogues and additional access tools were created. The Internet continues to play a large part in how archivists and users influence each other presently. Thus archivists have seen the beginning of a new type of archive system introduced. Archive 2.0. Kate Theimer's 2011 article of has had a large impact on the archival literature that shows the new type of access and the current user model. The definition of Archives 2.0 "is an approach to archival practice that promotes openness and flexibility. It argues that archivists must be user centered and embrace opportunities to use technology to share collections, interact with users, and improve internal efficiency."[24] The summation of this term shows that the user and access has become an important part of the dialogue within archival literature and has begun to shift from material-centered to user-oriented practices.

One thing to consider when looking at past user accessibility was the prevalence of grasping history locally, whereas today an individual can access documents from around the world by the press of a button. With so much information at a user's fingertips there are very few user studies showing changing research trends or the amount of information needed based on vicinity of

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[22] Jeannette Bastian, "Taking custody, giving access: a post-custodial role for a new century," *Archivaria* 1, no. 53 (2002), 87.
[23] Kate Theimer, "What is the Meaning of Archives 2.0." *The American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (2011):66.
[24] Kate Theimer, "What is the Meaning of Archives 2.0," 60.

documents. As Paul Dagleish states, "archives and libraries in making their collections accessible online are redefining the notions of 'access', 'accessibility', and 'disclosure.'"[25] With increased technological access, the way that users are provided tools and the choices archivists make to deliver access becomes increasingly important. These processes can be made easier and more specific when conducting archival user studies, with archivists taking a dynamic role in how they wish to interact with users. With the global community becoming extremely interconnected, examining users more closely can only improve archival professionals understanding of user needs around the world.

3.3: Archival Access Standards

The establishment of technological means has given audiences of archives unlimited amounts of resources when finding documents and has increased the struggle of archivists of how best to go forward with innovative tools to assess user needs. An additional issue occurs as access differs from institution to institution creating the question of how to best maintain accessibility based on the type of archive and the presentation of materials to the public. Whereas the Internet has helped to create fewer barriers to cultural heritage items, archivists continue to have additional hurdles to overcome when going forward with access such as time and funding. Yet the overall assumption of repositories remains that, "processes that democratize access to knowledge and enable the user to become a participant within that process do have multiple benefits, both for the user and for the archival profession going forward-the profession cannot operate from behind gates that lock users out."[26] The benefits of large amounts of access have been creating the call of archivists to maintain the best possible system, in most cases through archival access standards.

Archival standards have been a way for archival repositories to manage the many facets of accessibility while still being concerned with preservation. Although

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[25] Paul Dalgleish, "The thorniest area: Making collections accessible online while respecting individual and community sensitivities." *Archives and Manuscripts* 39, no. 1 (2011): 81.
[26] Craig Gauld, "Democratizing or privileging: the democratization of knowledge and the role of the archivist." *Archival Science*, (2015),15. doi:10.1007/s10502-015-9262-4

many of these guidelines are little enforced, it gives both community and institutional archival repositories direction when understanding archival practices. The global standard of access, and the one most often used in the European context, is the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) also known as the International Standard of Organization (ISO). It began in 1990 by the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS) as a system for long term-preservation. OAIS was then seen as a standard that could be used for other contexts within cultural heritage institutions. Its focus has been mainly on digital preservation as well as the improvement of digitally maintained access.[27] The OAIS has been an important area to consider as it has changed standards for the use of digital information and has made access a pivotal aspect of the documentary heritage field. Archival repositories look towards the OAIS to understand the responsibilities of an archival repository such as understanding scope of the collection, property rights, and considering the primary community of the institution. When reviewing access the standard is very clear as "an OAIS should be committed to the making the contents of its archival store available to its intended user community, through the implementation of access mechanisms and services which support, to the extent possible, users' needs and requirements."[28] Needs of the user are a primary contingency that archival professionals should continually be aware when making decision of documentary accessibility. The OAIS standard not only protects accessibility of the user but also allows a guideline that archivists are able to follow within any type of institution.

Both the United States and Canada use OAIS in combination with their own standards to maintain the availability of access to the user. Many of these standards must be met in order to give archival institutions legitimacy as a repository and a requirement for all archivists and repositories to implement. The Society of American Archivists has been an organization that several countries have based their policies because of the solid guidelines that are provided within their mandate. The SAA can be credited as being one of the oldest professional associations to

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[27] Julie Allinson, "OAIS as a reference model for repositories: An evaluation." UKOLN, University of Bath (2006), 4.

[28] Brian F. Lavoie, "The open archival information system reference model: Introductory guide." *Microform & imaging review* 33, no. 2 (2004): 71.

represent the interests of archival associations in America since its beginnings in 1936. Within the association's number of policies and guidelines, the strategies on accessibility have been a standard to which many repositories are held. One of the core values of the SAA include:

> Although access may be limited in some instances, archivists seek to promote open access and use when possible. Access to records is essential in personal, academic, business, and government settings and use of records should be both welcomed and actively promoted. Even individuals who do not directly use archival materials benefit indirectly from research, public programs, and other forms of archival use, including the symbolic value of knowing that such records exist and can be accessed when needed.[29]

The SAA has been a pivotal influence in the United States for bringing archival associations together within a formulated group and giving accessibility standards that are intended to give users more access than previously seen. The SAA also helps to influence education towards archivists and funding to repositories to use for access.

The Canadian standard for access does not seem to exist as a regulatory practice because of the total archival system that Canada has adopted. Thus the indication has been to try and bring together several repositories under the same format. This has been done under the scope of the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA). The CCA is a combined initiative along with Provincial and Territorial Archival Networks and the Library and Archives of Canada (LAC) that has the objective of facilitating better access to Canadian heritage information through "improving the administration, proficiency, capacity, and efficiency of archives through initiating and supporting national priorities, polices, and programs for the development and operation of a Canadian Archival System."[30] The council helps to facilitate information between the several archival repositories within Canada and has helped to improve accessibility to users as well as between institutions. The CCA has been limited with what it has been able to do with funding but has been

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[29] "SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics." SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics | Society of American Archivists. Accessed December 07, 2016. http://archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics.
[30] "About Us." ArchivesCanada.ca. Accessed December 06, 2016. http://archivescanada.ca/AboutUs.

able to increase the information of archival standards to repositories and respond to needs of archival institutions throughout Canada. They conduct surveys, produce guidelines, as well as give support and funding where possible towards better technology. As Lara Wilson suggests, "there is an ever-growing demand for access to unique local materials, for "open access" and "open data"- and the technology is available to support these initiatives."[31] Many Canadian archivists have pled the case that a uniform standard will inevitably shape the way that access will be implemented in the future and are trying to work towards a way to best implement these ideas.

Standards are a helpful tool for archivists to put into practice to make sure that they are making information appropriately accessible. However, due to little enforcement of these guidelines, especially among community archival repositories, the amount of funding and the amount of importance put on access can be limited. Going forward, understanding the behavior and needs of users will help determine where institutions need to improve as well as highlight the amount of accessibility needs their audiences require.

3.4: Models of Access: Canada, USA, Europe

There has been a consistent debate within the archival sphere focusing on the best way to manage documents specifically with whether an archivist should be material-centered versus user-oriented.[32] The dynamics between the two has been a struggle for repositories as less access means more preservation whereas limited access will not allow for the spread of knowledge, which is the point of archival repositories. Therefore, the question of which users 'should' and 'will' access these documents has been a constant discussion but needs to start at 'how' users access documentary heritage. Through the increase of digital means there have been a number of ways that users are accessing materials in the 21st century including Web

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[31] Lara Wilson, "The Canadian Archival System Today: An Analysis." *The Canadian Archives Summit,* University of Toronto, Toronto, January 17, 2014, 3. http ://www.archivists.ca/sites/default/files/Attachments/Advovacy_attachments/larawilsonsum mit.pdf.

[32] Shadrack Katuu,"User studies and user education programmes in archival institutions," *Aslib Journal of Information Management* 67, no. 4 (2015):442.

2.0, Open Access Systems, crowdsourcing, and even searching on the 'Internet Archive.' These resources have been one of the largest areas of archival user studies to see the best way to not only give a user access to documents but also for marketing purposes of institutions. Users are still accessing documents through analogue when necessary but needs have changed as most are using digital means to initially find documents.

Models of access vary when looking at the contexts of differing countries, specifically Canada, the United States and Europe. Within a Canadian context, as a European colony, the ideas of Hillary Jenkinson were adopted and ultimately have shifted in a dramatic way. The 'total archive' approach has been an integral system within Canadian archives. This system has linked custody and access together making records available locally, spreading archival materials to maintain less decentralization of records to the federal government.[33] Within this way, access has been done on a varied level; even though many documents are digitally available many remain only available on-premises due to limited funding. Ian Wilson, the former chief Librarian and Archivist of Canada, stated in 1990, "archival services were originally structured to respond to the needs of academic researchers. By continuing this approach, and for the comfort of our traditional clients as much as ourselves, we have erected systematic barriers to limit demand."[34] This idea has changed drastically in the Canadian archival landscape as larger accessibility continues to be a primary concern for Canadian archivists. With a large part of the archival literature on access coming from Canadian archival scholars, the issue of access continues to shape how archivists around the world facilitate with users.

The United States adopted the theories of Schellenberg into their current system of accessibility. As "the Schellenberg model of physical and legal custody continues to be strongly championed by the National Archives of the United States."[35] Thus, the United States very much depends on a state basis of keeping custody within the originating area yet has embraced the digitization of archival

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[33] Jeannette Bastian, "Taking custody, giving access: a post-custodial role for a new century," 87.
[34] Wilson, Ian E. "Towards a vision of archival services." *Archivaria* 1, no. 31 (1990), 97.
[35] Jeannette Bastian, "Taking custody, giving access: a post-custodial role for a new century," 90.

documentation with fervor. The history of archives within the United States has a long scholarship yet the United States has developed with the continuing technology and allows for a large amount of accessibility. The USA shows a combination of access depending on the type of documents that are held by certain repositories. When looking at the National Archives within the US, the strategic plan provides a large amount of information as to the goals of archival repositories of the United States. The plan presented in 2014 indicates that the top priority of the National Archive in the future will be to provide public access by "digitizing all holdings online to make them easy to use and provide archival context, digitize all analogue archival records to make them available online, accelerate processing of analogue and digital records to quickly make our records available to the public."[36] Clearly, the indication of these goals is to make the archive as transparent as possible to the public and many other repositories are showing the same solidarity towards open access. Confidentiality concerns will always be a factor, especially within government documents but when looking at cultural heritage records the United States shows a plan for a large open access system to improve user needs when conducting research, especially online.

The European approach has had a large influence on the North American abilities of providing access to users. Most institutions across Europe view access as one of the primary goals of their institution with many embracing open access portals. The Berlin Declaration of Open Access highlights the change that many cultural institutions, including archival repositories, are undertaking to allow for large amount of access to all types of users worldwide. The Declaration was designed in 2003 and has gained over 300 signatures from institutions around the world, including many from the United States and Canada. The mission of the organization is to "urge research organizations to work together internationally and intensively to formulate a viable, coordinated and transparent strategy to enable a

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[36] U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Fiscal Year 2014-2018: Strategic Plan" Washington DC: (2014), 1-26. https://www.archives.gov/files/about/plans-reports/strategic-plan/2014/nara-strategic-plan-2014-2018.pdf

transition to a system where Open Access publishing is the norm."[37] The declaration hopes to provide unlimited access to scholarly journals and research that would enhance the availability of information to academics and the general public as well as use the Internet to the advantage of heritage institutions by allowing for improved relationships between organizations. One must remember that open access means that the creator has given permission, therefore "free access to information is not the same as uninhibited freedom to a user a particular form of the information without the consent of the owner, who would normally not be the owner of the asset through which it was acquired."[38] The element of open access are being put into place within the European context which the expected hope will be to improve user needs and provide better research within repositories.

3.5: Conclusion

The history of users wanting access to documentary cultural heritage shows that this area has a large amount of importance within the archival context. Users have integrated into the archival system and are seen as a necessary entity as archivists continue to shape the discourse of access today. Accessibility and preservation have continually been at odds within the archival profession yet with the onslaught of new technology there has been an amplified demand by users to access information that has never before existed. By understanding users there can be a better effort made by archivists to be inclusive and give their repository more innovation towards sustainability. Understanding what access means to users, especially in the digital age, has a large impact on the way that users are being targeted and studied by archival repositories as well will determine accessibility of documents in the future. The next chapter will explore the information-seeking branch of archival user studies, specifically behavioral and accessibility studies.

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[37] "Mission Statement." Mission Statement | Max Planck Open Access. Accessed December 09, 2016. https://openaccess.mpg.de/mission-statement_en.

[38] Wendy Evans and David Baker. 2011. *Libraries and Society : Role, Responsibility and Future in an Age of Change*. Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2011. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 16, 2016)

Information Seeking: Accessibility and User Behavior

"Exploring user information needs and information seeking behaviors and closing the gap of understanding between users and archivists concerning archival purpose and practice are inextricably linked to both the provision of access and long-term preservation in the digital world."

Helen R. Tibbo[39]

The previous chapters explored background information of archival user studies and access. The next section will combine the two showing several different archival user studies that have taken place under the information-seeking branch of archival user studies. 'Information Seeking' has been a phrase coined by several user study archivists that indicate studies based on the best ways to give users access to information as well as understanding specific user needs. Although all forms of user studies are important to the understanding of user studies as a whole, this research will solely focus on the branch of 'Information Seeking' as it combines consideration of the behavior of a user as well as the ways that access can be improved. The summarization of these concepts will inevitably shape the case study conducted as well as support the idea of a combined process to not only provide access but also for archivists to recognize needs through the behavior of different types of users.

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[39] Helen R. Tibbo, "Learning to love our users: A challenge to the profession and a model for practice," 2.

Chapter 4: Information Seeking: User Behavior

4.1: Introduction

The behavior of users has not previously been a widely explored topic within archival user studies but recently there has been a surge of interest from a select few scholars worldwide. With the growth of education globally and the increased interest in heritage, the amount of users accessing archival institutions has been on a steady rise. With the amount of users that could potentially access a repository, information about the background of those that access different archival repositories could provide data on what improvements could be made. Behavioral studies have become an important aspect archivists should consider within their own research when wishing to appropriately respond to user needs across a variety of disciplines. By looking at secondary research, the different types of users and their individual needs are becoming clearer to archivists. This can only be a positive outcome for archivists to provide innovative ideas when facilitating a better user-archivist relationship as well as considering access.

4.2: Understanding the User

The educational background of a user has a large impact when considering behavior as well as the different types of research and accessibility tools required. Technology has changed the way that individuals are grouped within the archival spectrum based on whether they are able to access the appropriate material. Archival scholars are now considering this to be a factor towards changing access tools and the methods of facilitation. As Carolyn Harris describes, "the importance of being user-centered in their services and tools is motivating archivists to engage in applied research to better understand the population they serve, an aim that holds great challenges, opportunities and importance in the digital era."[40] The traditional users of an archive have been those that have dealt with scholarly research, the academic elite that look towards archives to fulfill the gap in research that has come before. Yet with the impact of digital knowledge, users are becoming much more

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[40] Harris, Carolyn. "Archives users in the digital era: a review of current research trends." *Dalhousie Journal of Interdisciplinary Management* 1, no. 1 (2005). 5.

varied as well as targeting more unpublished documentary data. The user centered suggestion by Harris relates not only to the findings of user studies but what archival repositories are finding as a reaction to digitization. In the early 2000's, there was a large shift in archival thought from focus on preservation to understanding user needs. This has been a large part of why studies on user behavior have become an important area of research, especially as an archive tries to market itself to others. As suggested, "archives have had to shift from responding to the needs of a small elite group of academics to a mass market of users with widely different backgrounds and information literacy skills"[41] This has become an increasingly popular idea among current archivists that are not targeting specific users but looking towards a user-inclusive ideology. Mary Jane Pugh in her 2005 article suggests that there are two differing users, vocational and avocational. Vocational are those whom have been highlighted as researchers as they are seen as professional users that include teachers, students, and scholars.[42] Because of the diversity of users, the behavior of users becomes influential to how they seek information, the subjects they are researching and their knowledge of research tools. The diversity of users comes with many positives and negatives and by taking a closer look into the two groups individually gives better indication to how certain users behave.

4.2.1: Vocational User Behavior

Vocational users are those that have experience with research tools and typically have a strong academic background. Historians have been the main group within archival vocational users as they tend to use archival documents the most to support their research. Many studies of this group have been conducted on a larger scale because of the significance of historians to archival repositories.

An example of this type of user study can be found within the published 2004 investigation led by Wendy Duff. In collaboration with other archival scholars, 'Historian's Use of Archival Sources: Promises and Pitfalls of the Digital Age' allowed

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[41] Oliver, Gillian. " The Digital Archive." in *Evaluating and measuring the value, use and impact of digital collections,* ed. Lorna M. Hughes, (London: Facet, 2012), 49.
[42] Mary Jo Pugh, "Identifying uses and users of archives," *Providing Reference Services for Archives And Manuscripts.* Chicago, Ill.: Society of American Archivists, (1992): 37.

for those in the archival community to expand their knowledge about research habits as well as provide a commentary of academic user behavior of over 600 historians across Canada. The research indicated that finding aids were necessary for historians, whether it be digital or through the help of an archivist. It also highlights the hope of historians for digital means of finding information in the future. As the study suggests, "providing web access to complete and full finding aids and preparing digital reproductions carefully will materially assist the process of historical research." [43] This has significance when considering the development that archival access has had on the operations within archival repositories that currently exist especially with the influx of web accessibility. The data found by Duff and her colleagues helped to shape not only archivists understanding of this particular group but also future finding aids and catalogues based on a historians research behavior. By familiarizing themselves with habits of historians, archivists were able to not only improve the functionality of their repositories but also understand their main source of users better.

Vocational users are still examined due to their importance as a user group to archival studies. Not only their research needs but also the subjects they are looking towards as well as how they interact with archivists. The way that researchers interact with archival repositories has been changing as Wendy Duff explains, "archives have traditionally been places of scholarship and serious study for researchers, but social media, crowdsourcing, and applications of game elements can challenge traditional ways of thinking about archival materials."[44] She shows that archival documents are more accessible to different facets of a community and individuals are beginning to use these documents in new and innovative ways, including researchers. Archivists are beginning to understand fundamental changes towards how to study users by looking at behavioral tendencies. Helen Tibbo references that there needs to be further understanding of user behavior stating, "if scholarship and discovery and use of primary resources are to flourish in the digital

[43] Wendy Duff, Barbara Craig, and Joan Cherry. "Historians' use of archival sources: Promises and pitfalls of the digital age." *The Public Historian* 26, no. 2 (2004): 22.
[44] Wendy M. Duff and Jessica Haskwell, "New Uses for Old Records: A Rhizomatic Approach to Archival Access," *The American Archivist* 78, no. 1 (2015), 44.

environment, archivists and curators must embrace their users – learning more about their information needs and seeking behaviors and incorporate this knowledge into the design of their websites and digital products, especially user instruction materials."[45] Thus the more knowledge archivists have about the behavior of users can indicate what access tools to provide by archival repositories.

4.2.2: Avocational User Behavior

Mary Jo Pugh referred avocational users as those whom did not use an archive for professional or research purposes. She grouped these individuals into two categories: genealogists and local historians or hobbyists. This group has been understudied by the archival academic research until recently yet more groups are continually being added to the description including novelists and journalists. Reflecting on various user groups has helped to indicate behavior of research needs as well as accessibility issues that has not be considered prior. For example, the study by Wendy Duff reflects the first user study that targeted a non-traditional group. The article published in 2003 was based on a number of interviews between Duff and genealogists. Her study indicated that this group makes up one of the largest user groups of archival repositories aside from academics. The research showed that the archival systems in place did not fit the needs of genealogists who had to continually ask for expert advice. Duff suggested a new way to organize dates, names and other needs of one of the largest groups using archives.[46] The publication of this article coincides with the beginnings of the website *ancestry.com* which provides genealogical information internationally through contributions from many archival repositories worldwide. This site began in 1997 but did not fully develop until 2000 when it launched its first census images. In 2002 it developed the integral part of its site, by allowing for a finding aid of personal records and providing DNA testing that allowed for even further genealogical knowledge to be given. The site provides information to an individual's background and heritage without the need

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[45] Helen Tibbo, "Learning to love our users: A challenge to the profession and a model for practice," 6.
[46] Duff, Wendy, and Catherine Johnson, "Where is the list with all the names? Information-seeking behavior of genealogists." *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (2003): 95

to go to specific archival repositories to get material.[47] By contributing to the archival user study literature, Wendy Duff was able to explore these individuals that had specific requirements of archival repositories that had never been explored prior. Today, genealogists are still one of the largest groups to use archival repositories and archivists are able to specialize within this area to help these specific users.

'Avocational' users are an important area for archival study as they are less knowledgeable about research skills and allow for a large amount of data about the user-friendliness of finding aids as well as ease of access. These users, which are often times overlooked within archival literature, are one of the best indicators of the level of accessibility of an institution. Through catering to a number of different specializations, "the aim of developing a taxonomy of users is not to create a monolithic perspective to viewing users but rather to use this as a window that facilitates a nuanced assessment of users that already or could, in future, patronize an archival institution."[48] User behavior can provide a way for archival professionals to understand current users and foster ideas for the continuation of new users in the future.

4.3: Behavioral User Studies: Cognition

User cognition, the mental process of a user to gain information based on the knowledge through thought and experience, can reflect a large amount of information about the behavior of a user. As "most user studies on information seeking focus on users' information-seeking behavior while few deal with user cognition,"[49] there becomes an even further need to consider within behavioral user studies. User needs can be shaped because of user cognition, because of the way users understand the information they are given. The most well-known cognitive study conducted by Barbara C. Orbach in her 1991 article helped to provide additional understanding about the different ways a user can research within the

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[47] Ancestry Corporation, "We're a Science and Technology Company with a Very Human Mission." Our Story. Accessed November 29, 2016. http://www.ancestry.com/corporate/about-ancestry/our-story.
[48] Shadrack Katuu,"User studies and user education programmes in archival institutions," 444.
[49] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 34.

archive. By analyzing the different research methods of historians, Orbach found additional training of research tools would provide better understanding between the archivist and user, which would ultimately lead to more accessibility. She also suggested that there needed to be continuing education of the archivist to improve research tools and create a relationship with users.[50] Many of her findings have been further explored and have helped to create additional knowledge about user needs, specifically of researchers.

In 1994, Elizabeth Yakel wrote an article showing that a problem has occurred with using reference statistics to understand users and how institutions need to promote archival activities.[51] She references that there has been an increased dependence on those considered 'expert' and what has been deemed expertise in the scope of archives. Her article shows the increasing interest in cognitive behavior of users and how archivists could intentionally use this information. She reflects the need to go from an expert-driven relationship to a user-oriented relationship suggesting that there cannot be facilitation unless users feel supported within an institution. Archivists, with further information about the cognitive nature of users, need to go further with their customer service orientation, as "the intention is to have an enlightened public that better understands an archival institution's legal, physical and intellectual access policies, why they are justified and how they are administered within the institution."[52]By not relying so heavily on expertise within an archive, there can be better facilitation between archival users and archivists. Cognition can influence accessibility thus by providing information tools to all those that use an archive, individuals can thrive within an institution.

These cases of cognitive user studies are largely dated examples of how to study cognitive thought when studying archival users. Additional funding put into understanding the cognitive thought of users especially within the digital age could lead to larger area of study, especially when considering new research trends. Many

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[50] Barbara Orbach, "The view from the researcher's desk: historians' perceptions of research and repositories." *The American Archivist* 54, no. 1 (1991): 28-43.

[51] Elizabeth Yakel and Laura Bost, "Understanding administrative use and users in university archives." *The American Archivist* 57, no. 4 (1994): 597.

[52] Shadrack Katuu,"User studies and user education programmes in archival institutions," 448.

scholars speak towards understanding user behavior but there are very few cases of published research studies providing qualitative analysis of user behavior. Many of the forms of cognitive representation have been presented in the form of suggestions of archives through practical experience instead of research data. Perhaps through combining the two, a current study of the cognition of users will be helpful for archivists when recommending access tools and archival guidelines.

4.4: Behavior Archival User Studies: Looking Ahead

In many cases, conducting user studies that try to find information on other various aspects such as how a user conducts research or how they wish to receive access from an institution can come apparent through user behavior. The ways that users react towards using archival access has changed since initial behavioral studies, as the digital era of records management has been a pivotal change within archival sciences. Much of the literature seems to suggest that current repositories are consistently trying to keep up with changing technological trends. There has been the suggestion that "we are currently witnessing a paradox: major institutions from the cultural heritage sector clearly emphasize the place of user evaluation and feedback in digitization-related policies. But in reality, decisions about aspects of digitization that impact users are frequently taken without direct user involvement."[53] Although much of the archival research has recommended the participation of archival users, many repositories maintain their own ways of how to handle archival documentation. Archivists are seeing a shift that by understanding users this can increase how repositories are able to keep up with the expectations of accessibility. Reflection of user needs through user behavior studies should become a substantial area of consideration by both archival academics and practitioners to increase levels of facilitation and accessibility.

The satisfaction of users has been seen as a smaller area within behavioral user studies but one that should be nonetheless studied. As Hea Lim Rhee states, "User satisfaction (and its factors) with archives' reference services, information

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[53] Pierluigi Feliciati, Andy O'Dwyer, and Milena Dobreva. "Introduction: User Studies for Digital Library Development," *User Studies for Digital Library Development*, (London: Facet Publishing, 2012), 1-2.

systems, and websites is another rarely studied topic."[54] One recommendation would be to more fully incorporate user satisfaction into the regular practice of an archivist. This would mean following up with users, giving surveys, and actively getting involved with user recommendations in the context of accessibility. This will also be conducive to the way that archivists consider access in the future by taking user assessment into consideration for upcoming audiences. The way that users have been split in the past typically comes down to expertise, whether they are professional academics, societies elite, or powerful. The shift that we have seen from material-centered to user centered with the influx of technology has changed the way that repositories are examining users towards more understanding based on user needs. If an archivist can understand how their users find information based on cognition the better access tools they will be able to provide in the future.

4.5: Conclusion

The behavior of users has changed even since the early 1990's with technology changing so rapidly. Not only has it transformed how users are accessing material but also the way that they receive information. The behavior behind users can indicate a large amount of evidence towards how they research, how well they consider their research skills, and the type of material they are searching. Behavior and cognition of users has been shown as a relatively new area of archival research yet has an important role to play within the information-seeking branch of archival user studies. The contribution to this literature, although limited, has made an impact on both access tools as well as the archivist-user relationship. Archivists have begun to further understand what users need from archival repositories and begin to implement these ideas. This area of research could have a large impact on better accessibility needs as through the procurement of information on research developments, topic trends and the relationship between archivist and user as Rhee suggests they "could improve user services and information systems by identifying users' information needs, information use, and satisfaction."[55] All of these areas result in altering accessibility eventually leading to better appraisal abilities of an

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[54] Hea Lim Rhee "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 34.
[55] Hea Lim Rhee "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 34.

archivist and increased reliability of an institution. The behavior of a user has been shown to improve archive-user relations and by continuing this research more facilitation can ultimately be made.

Chapter 5: Information Seeking: Access

5.1: Introduction

Throughout history, custody of important documents has remained under the control of those that were highly educated and held societal power and access was typically only granted to those chosen by the custodians of documents.[56] However, in the past century this ideology has begun to drastically change with access to documents opening up to a vast number of people. The interconnectedness of the global community has begun to shift how access is approached, especially within the archival profession. Through physical and digital access there continues to be the notion that caretakers of precious items can provide rich cultural history to the public. As the way access changes so does the amount of responsibility and transparency an archive gives to the public. Digital access has changed how archivists respond to user needs and the overall form of the archival profession. By exploring the various types of accessibility shown from conducting user studies within an archival context will give a better understanding made towards the needs of both users and archivists within this form of communication

Information seeking research has been a predominant area of study, especially since the year 2000 and has given ideas towards better accessibility in the face of technological advancements. The behavior of users has been explored in the previous chapter but the other part of information seeking comes when trying to understand how access tools and research skills relate to the capacity of the user to find information. The three user needs that are important to discuss within this chapter are access tools, research knowledge and archivists. All three of these elements guide users to find information and are areas which users have expressed additional needs through user studies. To go through every archival study that has been written on user needs within the user study scholarship would be extensive therefore each section will outline various past research as well as current investigations. By examining a few examples, the hope will be to verify changes suggested in the literature and specify current user access needs.

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[56] Judith Panitch,"Liberty, equality, posterity?: Some archival lessons from the case of the French Revolution," 35.

5.2: Access Tools

The concept of digital tools within user studies has primarily been focused on different methods that researchers are able to use to find information. User needs often reflect how technology has been changing requiring more knowledge about accessibility tools and the ways they can affect the needs of users. As Wendy Duff states, "archive users face three challenges: knowing where to look, knowing how to express a need and contextualizing what they find."[1]The information provided by Wendy Duff allows archivists to see the transformation in how studies have been conducted. In her 2003 article, she aims to show that because of the studies by previous scholars the way that users find information varied, with no set system of discovering material. She gives the example of the 1990-1991 study of Paul Conway that showed archivists were consulted more so than finding aids as well as a study by Ann D. Gordon that showed by surveying genealogists they 'preferred to rely on their past experiences, archivists and leads from secondary sources.'[57]Even when technology was in the limited stages of the early 2000s, to get the most information researchers could not rely on one specific tool. This has become even truer today with the technological age society finds itself. With the use of the Internet and online catalogues, researchers have even more ways of receiving information. Therefore, it is important to keep user studies relevant because of the changed in technology to continually outline user needs of access tools.

The findings of Helen Tibbo within the 2003 project 'Primarily History,' collaboration between the University of North Carolina and the University of Glasgow provide insight about the information-seeking habits of historians at the beginning of the 21st century. The study was the first international comparative research of information-seeking behavior of historical researchers in terms of using the World Wide Web and thus provides insight to where archivists and researchers have come in terms of technology and the understanding of users. The 'Primarily History' project surveyed 700 historians from the United States and 800 historians from United Kingdom universities about information seeking habits as well as how

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[57] Wendy Duff and Catherine Johnson, "Where is the list with all the names? Information-seeking behavior of genealogists," *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (2003): 80.

historians are preparing the next generation of scholars.[58] The findings indicate that a large amount of historians still used traditional analogue means when finding information, "ninety-eight percent of the historians indicated that they found materials by following leads and citations in printed sources" yet most of this was found through digital means using a libraries open public access catalogue. The study indicates that even in 2003, the importance of digital finding aids made a large impact to increased research. Although at this point catalogues and online means were available, the findings showed that there was limited use of historians using the World Wide Web to find primary sources and instead referred to individual collections. When this article was written, Google had only been established for eight years and digitization projects among archival repositories were limited. The types of access tools that historians use today has surpassed the technology of this study but do not make this study any less significant. It has lead findings that suggested that technology could be a large part of the future of archiving, and so it has.

Today, users have various catalogues and technical measures that are being used in conjunction with traditional finding-aids. The tools themselves are meaningless unless archivists provide a way to engage and provide knowledge about how the technology can be used to their benefit. As seen by Hea Lim Rhee, "user studies of access tools show that researchers use both traditional tools (e.g. indexes, abstracts, and paper finding aids) and electronic tools (e.g. online finding aids, OPACs, and bibliographic utility databases)."[59] Therefore, when examining the research habits of users, an archivists understanding of the relevant ways that information can be accessed becomes pivotal to defining user needs. With the technological climate of today, no archive can function fully analogue or fully digital. The combination of both will always make problems towards accessibility tools and thus it is the archivists' job to facilitate between access and user needs to garner the best experience of those using the archive.

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[58] Helen Tibbo, "Primarily history in America: How US historians search for primary materials at the dawn of the digital age." *The American Archivist* 66.1 (2003): 9-50.
[59] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies,"33.

A study about changing user research means could provide a large amount of information when discovering needs of users in the context of access tools. One such study took place in 2013 with a collaborative effort between Wendy Duff, Helen Tibbo and Elizabeth Yakel, all of whom are experts within archival user studies. They investigated the opinions of historical scholars as well as professional archivists of how information seeking behavior has changed due to the influx of technology. The findings were conclusive that historical researchers have changed the way they search for information due to technology but also that they are still using both traditional and digital methods. As stated, "most of the historians surveyed could not identify just one method they found to be the most useful in their searches. Rather, a combination of approaches helps historians get to materials of interest. Many respondents noted the importance of online tools to the search process."[60] The findings provided information that most respondents initially used information found in books leading to more digital means for further research. There was then the indication that different mediums of information were accessed differently, manuscripts, diaries and other written sources were located in person whereas film, photographs and art were found digitally. Therefore, this information can aid archivists when appraising which items to digitize as well as provide better access tools to display this type of media. This one example shows that user studies provide an important element when archivists decide practical elements within an archive.

With the suggestion that users combine access tools to gather the most amount of research, the suggestion by Wendy Duff and Jessica Haskell in their 2015 article "New Uses for Old Records: A Rhizomatic Approach to Archival Access" explains a new approach to user accessibility. Their approach uses the concept of the rhizome, which would heighten user engagement through a nonhierarchical approach of access. Through more action by the user, "we are suggesting that concomitant with the traditional systems, archivists need to develop collaborative frames supported by nonhierarchical, acentric systems that foster open, dynamic,

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[60] Wendy Duff, Elizabeth Yakel, and Helen Tibbo. "Archival reference knowledge." *The American Archivist* 76.1 (2013): 87.

radical, political, and subjective access."[61] The combination of traditional and radical approaches seems to be contradictory yet when applied to the combination of access tools a new version of access can be developed. With the onset of Web 2.0, some suggestions made within the article are to use social media crowdsourcing, gamification, GIS interactives, and mobile Apps to increase the accessibility of repositories. The article indicates that countless variances of research could be done through this new type of accessibility as, "these users could seek out the archives for amusement rather than scholarship, accountability, memory, or social justice. The rhizome embodies a concept of breaking with hierarchical traditions to access to provoke serendipitous discovery through new connections and the coupling of past and present in innovative modes." [62] The theory should be taken into consideration when investigating innovative approaches towards improving access tools, especially when user studies have shown that using a combination of research tools leads to increased access.

5.3: Research Knowledge

Research knowledge has also been influential as a tool for access but this starts with the knowledge of the archivist as they have the most research expertise within a particular archive. The importance of the amount of expertise a researcher has in order to find information has been a large topic when trying to gauge user information seeking needs. Much of this examination began due to Elizabeth Yakels 2002 article 'Listening to Users,' which investigated the importance of archivists better understanding of user research habits. Her research provides insight to two main themes: that archivists need to stop depending on user expertise and for archivists to engage further with the user in order to provide user education on research techniques. She suggests that in order to improve the archivist-user relationship the spread of knowledge needs to occur as "the onus is on archivists to establish themselves (ourselves) as *primary* primary-source professionals and to

[61] Wendy M. Duff and Jessica Haskwell, "New Uses for Old Records: A Rhizomatic Approach to Archival Access," *The American Archivist* 78, no. 1 (2015), 55.
[62] Wendy M. Duff and Jessica Haskwell, "New Uses for Old Records: A Rhizomatic Approach to Archival Access," 42.

define archives more broadly within the extended research community."[63]Through interviews of users and archivists, this research showed an instance where there was a lack of understanding between archivists and users within information seeking. This article led to the collaboration of Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah A. Torres within the 2003 publication of 'AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise' that provided research of what makes an individual an 'expert' especially within an archive. The article interviewed several researchers indicating the differences between users of libraries and archives, the abilities researchers understood of their own abilities and that of reference archivists to find information, and the language that was used by the interviewees indicating the level of 'expert.' Her findings indicated that archival user education needs to be furthered and the way archivists can help is to "more fully envision archival user education to include all aspects of archival intelligence."[64] The article also suggested that archivists should stop relying on 'expertise' and instead develop more dynamic skills to spread knowledge to improve the relationship between users and archivists. This study has been referenced in countless user studies since the article was published as it indicates a 'more conceptual understanding'[65] of researchers by understanding specific search strategies.

As previously mentioned, the ways of conducting research within an archive has changed due to technological advances which also means the skills of a researcher has been changing. Research knowledge was highlighted within the 2013 article of Helen Tibbo, Elizabeth Yakel, and Wendy Duff mentioned previously. Their findings showed that knowledge of an archive, its procedures and methods, becomes an important factor when users are finding information. Additionally, archival intelligence and the more informed users were more equipped to use an archive.[66] Much of the recent research within this area of user studies suggests that the more comfortable the user feels with using items the more success a researcher

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[63] Elizabeth Yakel,"Listening to users." *Archival Issues* (2002): 122.
[64] Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah Torres,"AI: archival intelligence and user expertise." *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (2003): 78.
[65] Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah Torres,"AI: archival intelligence and user expertise,"54.
[66] Wendy Duff, Elizabeth Yakel, Helen Tibbo, "Archival reference knowledge," 75-79.

will have and the more use will be made out of the archive. As "information professionals have too long focused on information as object and now need to revisit information as cultural practice in a collaborative environment. Digital information management depends as much on user input and responsibility as on professional expertise and guidance."[67] Therefore the education of research tools becomes pivotal within the context of information seeking. Not only does the archive need to provide proper access tools but also provide a framework of education to non-expert, and in some cases expert, researchers.

Access has been now provided the availability to properly understand the user and many innovative archivists are trying to create systems to make this a reality. One specific method that has been suggested has been the concept of the combination of access, user behavior and user education. The article by Pierluigi Feliciati and Alessandro Alfier written in 2014 provides a model that suggests that there needs to be a way to observe user behavior and go further to understand their level of need based on the type of user. As they state, "the effects of the lack of quality reference models for archives online are increasingly evident. When quality is evaluated, users' satisfaction is normally a minor goal. Accessibility to descriptions is often considered the ultimate goal, and there are few published studies based on user involvement to test archives online."[68] The study gives example that if archivists act as better mediators users will be able find materials, but at this point within their findings the language offered by archival repositories is limiting the amount of access. Their model named the Archives Online Quality Assessment Model would combine "cognitive science, human-computer interaction, web design, other application models and above all should be based on the 'users voice, heard after appropriate user studies." The resulting model would help to "ensure quality to archives online in terms of user needs, experience and

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[67] Nicole Convery, "Information management, records management, knowledge management: the place of archives in a digital age," in Jennie Hill (ed.) *The future of archives and recordkeeping: a reader.* (London: Facet, 2011), 193.
[68] Pierluigi Feliciati, Andy O'Dwyer, and Milena Dobreva, "User Studies for Digital Library Development," 1.

satisfaction"[69] and ultimately go towards the development of the effectiveness of archives. Improved technology can now help with the research set out by archival user studies and create methods of combining several factors to provide insight of the user.

5.4: Archivists

Users have been inundated with new forms of technological tools of access, from new catalogue systems to the use of social media within the archival sphere yet many user studies still suggest that archivists play an essential role through for researchers to find material. With the establishment of new technology there has been the need for archivists to educate users on how to use these resources to get the best results. Archivists have become a primary access tool creating new needs for users when seeking information. As Elizabeth Yakel pointed out in 2000, "the role of the reference archivist then, must not only be liked to data and information (although knowing which specific data, information and knowledge exist elsewhere is also valuable), but it must also expand to include the reference archivist as an equal and active participant with users in the knowledge creation process."[70] By providing as well as giving context to the information makes archivists essential as a tool for accessibility. She continues as she states, "Archivists need to be better equipped to be able to identify and predict instances where archival information can make a difference"[71] Therefore, the idea of how archivists consider themselves, as a resource, has been changing as not only a keeper and finder of material but now also a collaborator. It is clear through the research that archival thinking about taking on multiple roles within an archive has been popularized. Many of the user studies have made clear that archivists are an essential tool within the information seeking habits of users and archivists in the past have taken it upon themselves to interpret

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[69] Sam Habibi Minelli, Maria Teresa Natale, Barbara Dierickx, Paolo Ongaro, Daniele Ugoletti, Rubino Saccoccio, and Marc Aguilar Santiago. "MOVIO: A semantic content management and valorization approach for archives and cultural institutions." In *Arxius i Indústries Culturals. Girona, de l'11 al 15 d'octubre de 2014. 2a Conferencia Anual d'Arxius· 9a Conferencia Europea d'Arxius*. 2014,1.

[70] Elizabeth Yakel, "Thinking inside and outside the boxes: archival reference services at the turn of the century." *Archivaria* (2000):153.

[71] Elizabeth Yakel, "Thinking Inside and Outside the Boxes: archival reference services at the turn of the century," 144.

what they believe users need. As has been stated in past research, "unlike many portions of the museum and library worlds that have embraced evaluation and user studies, archival collection management systems, Web sites, and similar tools have been built largely based on the perceptions that archival professionals have about user needs."[72] Archivists can no longer make assumptions about what users need, but need to listen and study users to more fully grasp what they need instead of pressing upon assumptions. With many responsibilities, archivists are called to anticipate needs of users yet without information about their behaviors and needs this cannot be possible. User studies can facilitate the information that archivists need in order to develop a better understanding of users and create advanced outlets for access.

A positive effect of the newly established user-oriented school of thought has been the replacement of archivists as custodians and rather as the role of facilitators. [73] The collaborative study of Helen Tibbo, Elizabeth Yakel and Wendy Duff in 2013 suggests that users, students, scholars and non-academics alike, rely on archivists to find information even with new digital access measures. Their findings indicate that through the knowledge of the archival collection, many researchers were provided more information by archivists about their research than they expected. As stated, "participants indicated that talking to archivists is very important when the finding aids and websites are not up to date; archivists can sometimes identify relevant materials that they had not yet catalogued."[74] Most users reflected that reference archivists were a helpful resource whereas some found that they 'had too much guidance at times.'[75] 'Their findings have been represented within the Archival Reference Knowledge, a chart developed to indicate the types of knowledge that are specifically important for reference archivists. They conclude that through speaking to both users and archivists a more thorough insight was provided into what was needed of a reference archivist but also suggested more

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[72] Jodi Allison-Bunnell, Elizabeth Yakel, and Janet Hauck. "Researchers at Work: Assessing Needs for Content and Presentation of Archival Materials." *Journal of Archival Organization* 9, no. 2 (2011): 68.
[73] Kate Theimer, "What is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?," 61-62.
[74] Wendy Duff, Elizabeth Yakel, and Helen Tibbo, "Archival reference knowledge," 80.
[75] Wendy Duff, Elizabeth Yakel, and Helen Tibbo. "Archival reference knowledge," 80.

research was needed on the ARK model, especially with conflicting views by users. The development of new models based on archival user studies can be shown to be helpful to assess the shortcoming of archival processes and hold professionals to a higher standard. By the research of information seeking user studies, the archivist role can become clearly defined considering the expectations that users have when using the archivist as a tool for access.

The education of an archivist has been shown to be an important element to the area of information seeking user studies access. It has become one of the more recently developed areas of research and has been seen in the study of the 2015 article by Shadrack Katuu. His research suggests that user education programs can be pivotal within the types of access provided at an archival repository. As he suggests, "the lessons that offer immediate applicability for archival institutions are limited to explaining the differences between the types of users, the kind and the way information is sought and how that information is used."[76] Archivists need to understand users in order to be an acceptable archival tool within the context of finding research information. Although it is impossible to understand every individual user, an archivist needs to remember that within the area of the archive they are the experts, and many users have a rudimentary understanding of how to properly research for what they need within every specific archival repository. This also remains true when considering the many different ways that archival repositories store and present their materials. Katuu suggests that "the archivist bears responsibility for ensuring that the user understands how to use the archives, and they include discussions about the issues that have an impact on understanding"[77] Therefore considering user studies, a bottom-up tactic will allow archivists to gain primary information about what users need from archival access tools. Archivists need to consider themselves as a necessary tool for the facilitation of access as they are the primary user of the archives and this experience makes them an exceptionally useful resource. By understanding the predicaments of the

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[76] Shadrack Katuu,"User studies and user education programmes in archival institutions,"446.
[77] Caryn Radick, "Romance Writers' Use of Archives". *Archivaria*, 81. (2016), Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.7282/T32809QM, 54.

user can help to resolve this as Craig Gaul states within his 2015 article, that there is a shrinking distance now between the user and the archivist. His article does not indicate a specific study but rather reflects on how democratization of the archive has led to an increase of knowledge between user and archivist. By providing the right framework, "the user may have knowledge at their fingertips but they may be unable to engage with it in a productive, contextual fashion." In this case, the archivist must go one step further by inquiring about the research, understanding the subject matter and contextualizing the information for the user.

5.5: Conclusion

It has been suggested that the reason for so many user studies can be because of the mass amount of documents available to users. Thus the importance of highly developed access tools for users has been shown as an essential requirement within an archival repository. The influx of information makes it critical for both archivists and users to understand research processes and the workings of a repository to achieve the best results. User access needs are a fundamental aspect when it comes to the information-seeking branch of archival user studies. As shown, many recent archivists are showing innovative ideas as to how to improve access through understanding user behavior and needs. By exploring these areas of research user accessibility has been shown to be improving to archival users of all types of expertise. By understanding access needs in the form of access tools, archivists, and research expertise can more fully express the importance of information seeking user studies as they have led and will continue to lead to a large amount of information to be known about users and access.

Case Study and Conclusions

"archives as a concept, as practice, as institution, and as profession may be transformed to flourish in our digital era, especially one where citizens have a new agency and a new voice, and where they leave through digital social media all kinds of new and potentially exciting, and potentially archival, traces of human life, of what it means to be human, to which trace we as archivists, historians, researchers of all kinds, have rarely had such sustained access before."

Terry Cook [78]

Chapter 6: Case Study: An Examination into Archival Information Seeking Needs in the Netherlands

6.1: Introduction

The best way to understand how archives are achieving successful access based on user relations would be to conduct a personal user study that questions both archivists and users and what they each think about archival access. Within the research, very few studies focused on both archivists and researchers when specifically mentioning access. The way that an archive provides access depends on the collections they maintain and how much privacy is needed for the documents that are held. There are two ends of the spectrum: an institutional archive that looks towards a large amount of access and a smaller community archive that require more understanding of discretion especially when researchers are looking to publish their works. By first interviewing archival staff, this has been shown to be the best way to go understand what access means to a particular institution and provide background information towards the consideration of access. By interviewing researchers, a different aspect of access could be taken on how the implementations of access tools effect users and inquire about the additional needs they may still require. The interview process chosen was an open-ended conversation that had standardized questions to guide the interview process. The

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[78] Terry Cook, "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms," 97.

full interviews can be seen within the Appendixes to give a fuller description of the conversations that took place. The interviews provide additional information towards the ways repositories indicate user needs and additionally give a voice to the researcher. The opinions made were solely expressed on behalf of the interviewee based on questions helpful to understanding how individual institutions could consider information seeking user studies that could lead to increased archivist-user relations. By looking within the archive, the processes of access and privacy are given a practical element and users can be examined on a more personal scale.

6.2: Limitations

The research was limited to a short interview process with only a handful of archivists and archive user participants. The researcher emailed several institutions within the Netherlands such as the Amsterdam City Archives and the International Institution of Social History but received no reply from these repositories. Due to time constraints, the expanse of this case study is limited to two repositories, two archivists, one PR manager and two researchers. The researchers have been kept anonymous due to privacy but employees of the two repositories have been made available. The limitations make reflections on a generalized level difficult but reveal an important notion that through the interaction of a small amount of users and archivists there can be a significant amount of information indicated about user needs and accessibility.

6.3: The Nationaal Archief

The Nationaal Archief in The Hague has a reputation that encourages transparency and accessibility towards all members of the community. It has been one of the leading archival institutions within the Netherlands, holding 125 kilometers of documents, collected since its beginnings in 1802.[79] Currently the archive has been involved with many projects but the main goal consists of digitizing many of the documents within their care. They have also gone on to state

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[79] "Organisation." Organisation | National Archives of the Netherlands. Accessed January 15, 2017. http://en.nationaalarchief.nl/organisation.

their objectives within their vision document online entitled "The Nationaal Archief today and in five years' time, By tomorrow, today will be history.'" The archive lays out a five year plan between the years of 2008-2010 which included the maintenance of a physical and digital presence and highlights their plan during this transition. When reflecting specifically on users the main focus clearly outlines the importance of digitization as "the range of activities and services offered by the Nationaal Archief will make full use of the unique selling point of the archives: archives do not exist to be looked at, but to be worked with. Archives enable us literally to 'touch' ancient and modern history."[80] The institution considers access on two levels, digital and within the reading room. No further manual has been presented recently to show their progress but through interviewing there has been a continuation of the goals that the Nationaal Archief hopes to accomplish.

The interviewees chosen for this portion of the case study include two academic researchers and one archivist, Ceciel Huitema. Ms. Huitema works at the Nationaal Archief appointed to help users in the study room, online and through email. She is an historian and does research on privacy restrictions on the use of archives. Both researchers interviewed are highly trained working with archival documents, both of whom have worked with archives for long periods of time. Researcher A has a doctorate and has been doing research on Dutch Maritime History. They have been using the Nationaal Archief for over ten years and have traveled to several archival repositories around the world. Researcher B has a background in anthropology and currently doing research on the Japanese occupation of the Dutch Indies. Both researchers have used archives across Europe, the UK and North America. The following shows the findings that came from the interview process. It has been separated into subgroups that detail the findings of user behavior, access tools, research knowledge, and the significance of archivists as a resource tool. Each of these sections helps to define information seeking data that can apply to better accessibility and the understanding of user needs.

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[80] Nationaal Archief, "The Nationaal Archief Today and in Five Years' Time: By tomorrow, today will be history," Vision Document, The Hague, September 2008.
http://en.nationaalarchief.nl/sites/default/files/docs/Visiondocument.pdf

6.3.1: User Behavior

The background of these individuals becomes important especially when considering their user behavior. As previously seen, user behavior has a large amount to do with understanding user cognition and needs based on subject matter, as user needs will differ as opposed to the level of expertise. Examples of user behavior can also be shown through different research techniques of users and additionally with the type of research that a user studies. The background of the researchers educational background and research habits can be used to better indicate access needs. One important aspect to note about these individuals should be that they both provided a large amount of data on why they choose to physically research at the Nationaal Archief. They both mentioned how the NA felt like a community of peers. Researcher B stated

> it is sometimes easier here [Nationaal Archief] because you are in a certain network, there is a community and I know how it is organized. It is also much more face to face, so if you are having a problem you are able to discuss it with colleagues and they can give advice of others to contact.[81]

In turn, Researcher A also highlighted that

> So archivists should perhaps be interested in what people are doing and sort of create their own community. For example if they know two people are researching maritime history or military history they can make connections between users. I heard it used to be 10-20 years ago that the head of the reading room knew the research everyone was involved with, and so say someone comes from another country have them introduce each other. Maybe they can work together and make it mean something for each other.[82]

The findings provide indication that an archive as a community positively influenced both researchers to continue researching at the NA as well as impact the quality of their research through networking. Both researchers chose to come back to the NA based on an emotional connection they have with the institution based on habit and community. Therefore, by indicating a need for a face-to-face community shows individual user behavior which could ultimately differ according to age, expertise and research knowledge. An additional aspect to this investigation would be to

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[81] Researcher B. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 7, 2016. Appendix 4.
[82] Researcher A. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 1, 2016. Appendix 3.

conduct research of user behavior of non-academic researchers in comparison to find how their behavior differs when researching at an archival repository. Both researchers were highly skilled with complex research that required experience which also reflects the behavior of a user, especially if they habitually use the same institution or system finding information. User behavior can be extrapolated through the development of research knowledge and the usability of access tools, both of which will be more fully developed in the following two sections.

6.3.2: Access Tools

Access tools are an important part of accessibility within any archival repository and can determine the future needs of users based on how a repository implements these systems. An important aspect to consider has been the type of digital access that the Nationaal Archief provides both online and on premise. As explained by archivist Ceciel Huitema,

> On our website we have inventories and indexes on a database. For example with names in specific files. There are many indexes but it does not cover all of the archives. We have information pages on our website about a lot of themes/ subjects: http://www.gahetna.nl/vraagbaak/onderzoeksgids (in Dutch). Most of the access is done digitally as the inventories are not on paper anymore. So the first step is to find it digitally, some have scans but a big part of it is so you would then have to go to the study room. [83]

The system becomes more complex when searching for specific files within the Verbaalarchief system that the NA has set up, which lists the files individually and by location. Only various numbers of these documents have been scanned and are digitally available. Many still have a large amount of privacy measures meaning much of the access for materials happens within the reading rooms. As she explains,

> You need to do research in three steps. First you have a list of subjects, very specific, often a name. In the list you will find the subject and page number. You then go to the second access tool to find the subject and page number and then you will find the date. You can then go to the third access tool. To try to explain this to users that do research on the website can be very difficult. [84]

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[83] Ceciel Huitema. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 13, 2016. Appendix 2.

[84] Ceciel Huitema. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 13, 2016. Appendix 2.

The digital access tools are highly complex which could lead to a large amount of confusion by many users, especially those unfamiliar with the NA. When speaking to the researchers interviewed, this method of online access was never mentioned. This most likely comes down to the amount of expertise and number of years spent within the Nationaal Archief by both researchers. The basis of this depends on the expertise of the user which seems to be what the NA depends on with the users of their archive. Because not every user can be provided individual lessons on how to use this system, the problem, as Ceciel suggests, comes when trying to explain this to users online. She states that users need to come to the reading rooms otherwise a large amount of information could be missed. She continues stating that "Users need to know the system and where it comes from but how to show it as there are many different departments as well as different periods."[85] The understanding of access tools becomes just as important here as the method implemented by repositories. Users need to be able to understand how to access materials in order for them to be affective as well as useful towards research.

The researchers interviewed observed access tools as predominantly more about the restructuring of how access was provided by the Nationaal Archief than the system itself. Researcher A indicated that through the renovation of the reading room by the NA in 2013 there was a positive renewal of access. As stated

> "they {Nationaal Archief} relocated most of the paper catalogues to the back stairs and it's all been digital since then. So in hindsight it's been a good thing for me because you can find all sorts of things on the internet through the catalogue which is wonderful."[86]

By allowing for an online catalogue to be accessible, the change in how users are able to conduct research at the NA changed and thus improved the needs of the users. Yet even with these improvements some needs are still not met in terms of accessibility. This comes in the form of accessing classified documents as Researcher B points out

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[85] Ceciel Huitema. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 13, 2016. Appendix 2.

[86] Researcher A. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 1, 2016. Appendix 3.

Well very often I've experienced that my needs are not met in relation to access especially with classified documents. For example, in the case that I am working on, there are fully accessible archives and classified archives. So what I learned over the years is that if I am working on a broader case that I need to first go through everything first because in the beginning I would start with the classified items and copy everything. I would then find out a few weeks later that it was in the non-classified files at a different archive as well and I could simply take a picture of it. And you cannot know that from the inventory because it's not on such a detailed level.

In this case, Researcher B has experienced that accessing classified items can be difficult and are often at other repositories where access has been granted. The inconsistencies show that perhaps repositories should be working together in order to make it easier for researchers to access documents, whether classified or not. It also shows that updating an inventory would help users to find information quickly and improve the information that they are provided.

6.3.3: Research Knowledge

User expertise, which has previously been shown as a cognitive process, comes into question when indicating how much access the researchers are able to attain. The level of research knowledge a user has indicates the ability of a researcher to find what they are looking for and improve the quality of research. Ceciel Huitema acknowledges that there could potentially be some problems by researchers to find what they need because of the level of research knowledge they acquire. She considers that users are impacted by the amount of experience they have with researching within an archive, specifically the Nationaal Archief, stating

I think that a lot of users here on the website or in the study room don't find all of the information they want. Academics will do more research to find information. Many users start with the website and they don't come here to the study room. Many people think 'I have a keyword' and think it will come up, many are thinking in terms of Google but this isn't possible within a large archives. A lot of users will use this tool this way and when there is no result they often give up.[87]

With this as one of the larger problems that the NA deals with on a daily basis, further research of less experienced users would be helpful to indicate any further research needs that are needed by avocational users. However, some of the

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[87] Ceciel Huitema. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 13, 2016. Appendix 2.

problems of access seen by the experiences interviewed researchers was the inability to acquire photographs within the institution, whether it be due to limited classification, inability to use based on privacy issues or other reasons. This shows that there needs to be a larger amount of importance placed on the attainment of photographs and accessibility standards. These needs address a core problem with access, especially within archiving photographs, and have been questioned in additional user studies. There has been a proliferation between inability of the user to acquire material based on high privacy concerns or, in the case of many archives, the low grade of technology that the repository maintains.

In this case study, both researchers were highly knowledgeable within this context and indicated that they preferred finding documents through a combination of the archivist and digital tools. As Researcher A proposed

> It's a combination because as you progress in your research you want to find out things that even the archivist knows nothing about. So you really have to help yourself, and as I was saying, internet and the fact that the national library is right next door is a major benefit. You can always find something. [88]

In comparison, Researcher B also stated "I think that you need both. You start out with using the digital tools and it depends on what you find. I like to also discuss with people what I have found. Also in some archives there are still non-digital aids and in those cases you really need the archivists."[89] The level of expertise both researchers have had with archival repositories indicated that two systematic approaches are needed to find material. It also indicates that every researcher chooses to conduct their studies differently and use various tools to find what they are looking for within an archival repository. One interesting observation of Researcher A was that even with high levels expertise some repositories are very difficult to access, in this case the SCAP archive in Washington DC. It was mentioned that by networking eventually will put one in contact with archivists. Local access was indicated as a positive and that expertise helps within these situations as stated

> At some point you get more experience so you know how and where to look. In The Hague you can easily go back again to find information whereas if you are abroad

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[88] Researcher A. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 1, 2016. Appendix 3.
[89] Researcher B. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 7, 2016. Appendix 4.

you have to do all relevant research in a shorter amount of time. So the added experience helps you to find documents more easily.

By relying on expertise and networking provides expert researchers with a better arsenal of research tools. Knowledge of archival practices and how to find materials are one of the key instruments that will provide better access and archivists must be there to facilitate these actions.

6.3.4: Archivists

One of the predominant areas of the interview with the researchers was the impact that archivists had in terms of access. Both researchers responded that archivists were very willing to help, but often because of subject matter or other various reasons they were unable to fulfill every question. As researcher A mentioned,

> Sometimes I ask the archivist and sometimes they'll go to the librarian at the National Library [Koninklijke Bibliotheek] and they will know something or be able to help with something. And sometimes you go from one person to the other and eventually you get to the information you want. There is no one path that I follow to get information

Researcher A also stated that their experience with archivists have ultimately been positive even when sometimes access has been limited. As stated, "I found that the wonderful thing in The Hague is that I know most of the archivists so they know I am working with it [original copies], they can rely on me not to harm the stuff so I get original material to study, photograph. That's really very nice."[90] This experience with having a large amount of facilitation between archivists and users provide insight into how access can improve when a user feels supported. It also shows that researchers are not having archivists do the research but use the archivists as a research tool. They use the knowledge that an archivist would have about their repository to their advantage by finding documents that would otherwise go unnoticed. Therefore this shows that archivists need to be engaging with researchers on a personal level, understanding research topics to give the best possible results to a user. As Researcher B indicated

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[90] Researcher A. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 1, 2016. Appendix 3.

Discussing your case study with archivists can be helpful because they can come up with places or archives to search that you didn't think of in the first place. Because I am working with personal stories I really need additional information from the archivists here to locate it because very often it's the average person so that means you need to dig a bit more.[91]

One question asked of the researchers was how they thought archivists could improve in order to better fulfill their needs as researchers. Each researcher came up with different examples of what needs they believed would help to improve their experience. Researcher A indicated that archivists could fulfill a role of creating a community, by creating a network among regular researchers. Researcher A thought archivists could ask themselves the question of 'how can you make it living and move and present it.'[92] . Making personal connections would allow for a personal experience as well as allow for conversation about research. Researcher B had less input but indicated on overall happiness with approachability and helpfulness of the staff at the NA. When reading the interviews of the researchers, the expertise of their own research skills can oftentimes be better than archivists on site. Perhaps an area of research that could be done would be the level of research knowledge of reference archivists. By having exemplary research skills can improve access of users as well as improve the archival repositories effectiveness.

The amount of experience within the archive each researcher has gained has led to knowing how to facilitate questions to get the most out of using archivists as a relevant research tool. One of the indication by Ms. Huitema were the duties of archivists within understanding needs, as it will ultimately help the archival repository reach its goals of accessibility. As she states,

It is our responsibility to help them find information. We also need to understand the ways that they find information because you can use this information to make a website, a catalogue and to make access tools. I think that users also need to have information about what an archive is.[93]

These sentiments have been seen previously within the archival literature highlighting a need to understand user research techniques. Ms. Huitema explains

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[91] Researcher B. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 7, 2016. Appendix 4.
[92] Researcher A. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 1, 2016. Appendix 3.
[93] Ceciel Huitema. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 13, 2016. Appendix 2.

that one of the challenges of archivists will be to facilitate information to users when many think in terms of 'google' searching. Archivists today need to make users understand that research techniques can be more complex than a search engine if they want to find the best documentary sources. Thus within the context of access, archival professionals are a useful tool to even the most experienced users to find information.

6.4: The Expatriate Archive Centre

The Expatriate Archive Centre (EAC) located in The Hague has been a source of information about expatriates since its establishment in the early 1990s when it was then known as the Outpost Family Archive. It collects and conserves documents that contain information about those living abroad and began as a project by the wives of Shell employees who wished to preserve of the experiences of Shell families from around the world. This information led to two books being published in the 1990s by the Shell Ladies Project with the archive eventually became independent in 2008. It continues to preserve stories of expats from around the world as well as is "to collect and preserve the life stories of expatriates worldwide for future research"[94] to the large expatriate community within the Netherlands. Much of the material that has been retained by the archive contains experiences by families and individual experiences abroad therefore the archive contains extremely personal and sensitive subject matter. Whereas the Nationaal Archief hopes for increased user access, the EAC cannot provide the same level of access making the way the repository interacts with users very different. The level of security of documents is higher and the importance of maintaining excellent relationships with the donors has been a priority. Therefore, when interviewing the archivist, it must be kept in mind that institutions are very different when looking into users and how to best understand their needs based on differing policies and missions of institutions. This part of the study highlights how, through understanding user behavior, a smaller archive can thrive when considering access.

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[94] "About Us." About Us - Expatriate Archive Centre - A Home For Expat Life Stories. Accessed January 15, 2017. http://www.xpatarchive.com/about/.

The interview was conducted with the dual participation of head archivist Eva Barbisch and PR Manager Sarah Bringhurst Familia. It aimed to provide a perspective of how smaller institutions consider users, both how users retrieve materials as well as how staff members facilitate access with users. When asked the types of users that mainly make use of the archive the answer was "mostly researchers, so PHD researchers, master's students"[95] as well as occasionally those looking for genealogists. The interviewees maintained that there seemed to be more access before privacy guidelines and laws and this has changed the type of users that are targeted by the Expatriate Archive Centre. There was nothing spoken of why researchers were mostly targeted but there seems to be a notion that researchers, when granted access, are welcome to use original copies when approved. As Ms. Barbisch states

> if it is already digitized (and its accessible), they want to get a copy of the digital document and only if it's not digitized then I would prepare the box and that would mean they would have access to its physical materials as well.[96]

Both interviewees indicated the limited digital accessibility to users as the archival material can only be retrieved on-site. The reasoning behind this is the need for privacy to the donor. The interview showed that the Expatriate Archive Centre has specific hindrances to its materials based on the sensitive nature of the documents.

When asked if the archive used any studies or communicated with users to ask about their needs both interviewees showed great optimism about doing such studies in the future. As Ms. Barbisch states "we keep talking about that, we want to do that" with Ms. Bringhurst Familia stating "I mean we talk to them, and we ask them what we can improve"[97] This shows that even in smaller community archives there can be seen that conversation between users and archivists, and PR managers, has an important effect to understanding the audience of the archive. When asked about future implementation to the accessibility of their institution the response

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[95]Sarah Bringhurst Familia. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. November 29, 2016. Appendix 1.

[96] Eva Barbisch. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. November 29, 2016. Appendix 1.

[97] Eva Barbisch. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. November 29, 2016. Appendix 1.

was positive. Ms. Bringhurst Familia mentioned "our material is very personal but we would like to at some point make it available online and also perhaps other material via a username and password. So if they sign out documents, our privacy and confidentiality agreement then we would give them access remotely, but only after signing."[98] Thus there innovation to include more users by limited means of access has already been indicated for the future of the Expatriate Archive Centre. The need to reach out to users was a priority as Ms. Bringhurst Familia continually goes to more academic conferences and reach out to professors and academics interested in expatriate studies. With this case, the PR manager must deal with users on a predominant level for outreach, yet Ms. Barbisch as the archivist deals with researchers one-on-one making the point of access land on a dual effort to understand the users they are targeting.

6.5: Discussion

When examining the Nationaal Archief more closely, one element of access needs of both the archivist and researchers was the practicality of specific issues. For example better access to photographs was indicated whereas the archivist from the Nationaal Archief believed that the Verbaalarchief system was hindering accessibility. This was interesting as both researchers were seasoned on how to use the index system, yet the archivist mentioned issues with using the index system. Expertise has a large part to do with the amount of accessibility, especially digitally, and information that a user will acquire based on the techniques used. Both researchers have been using the NA for a large amount of time demonstrating that experience has a large amount of influence when working within an archive. Better research skills could be a useful element when looking at accessibility as well as forging relationships with archivists and other researchers to gain more outlets of finding the best quality documents. The sense of community was a prevalent theme with both researchers that had not been an aspect of research within user studies. Perhaps because of the expertise of both researchers and the community element of

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[98] Sarah Bringhurst Familia. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. November 29, 2016. Appendix 1.

the Nationaal Archief has made an impact on the amount of accessibility a researcher can achieve.

The issue of the hierarchical structure of the Verbaalarchief system harkens back to the findings of Pierluigi Feliciati and Alessandro Alfier who suggested that "it is widely noticed a sensible difficulty for users to browse multilevel hierarchy of archival descriptions, even if in some cases the most inexperienced of those users have shown an unexpected ability to learn the structured nature of archival information."[99] Structures need to be constantly re-evaluated for better accessibility even when the system proves useful. However as Ceciel Huitema suggested, many large archives take a top-down approach to teach users how to use the hierarchal system "we want to show the collection of the Verbaalarchief because many people will research in the 'Google' search level and you won't find anything about certain subjects even though the information is in the archive."[100] Thus in this case there seems to be a disconnection between wanting to provide access to large amounts of information and the quality of information provided. Additional feedback of how users actively search for materials could be beneficial to finding an appropriate way for the Nationaal Archief to achieve better access results.

The interview of Ceciel Huitema provided data on the processes that an institutional archivist can provide about the interactions between the two groups. Her suggestion of the user needing to understand the archive harkens to Carolyn Harris's suggestion that "archivists need to educate their users if users are going to be informed and interested enough to participate in formal studies. If users appreciate and understand archival practices then they will be more receptive to providing feedback"[101] The way to get feedback should be the presentation of both parties understanding what is involved within an archive, through studying the behavior of a user. As Ms. Huitema suggests, there has been a study conducted and

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[99] Pierluigi Feliciati, Andy O'Dwyer, and Milena Dobreva, "User Studies for Digital Library Development," 3.

[100] Ceciel Huitema. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. December 13, 2016. Appendix 2.

[101] Carolyn Harris, "Archives Users in the Digital Era: a review of current research trends," 5.

the results will be published February 2017 that will highlight user experiences and the satisfaction of NA users. (Appendix 2)

One of the interesting points that were made by EAC PR manager was the point that the Expatriate Archive Centre has a very different conflict of access compared to a large institution like the Nationaal Archief. The issue was not whether to target more users or be concerned about maintaining the preservation of materials, both of which are actively sought at all times, but about how to use outreach when privacy becomes such a large issue. As stated, the conflict lies in "preserving the anonymity of the donor and the user."[102] This gives the EAC an entirely different perspective when considering users as both creators and users as both need to be protected, allowing for limited access. The Expatriate Archive Centre shows a contrasting view to the Nationaal Archief as limited information can be accessed digitally because the main access point becomes the small staff, specifically the archivist. Although research knowledge of a user can be helpful on-site, the archivist has better knowledge with what is maintained within the archive and how to use the access tools. User behavior also would be examined on a face-to-face level because of the personal level of the research taking place at a specific archive. Archivists within these institutions have a larger responsibility to understand the behavior of their users, user research abilities, and the access tools that are needed to best highlight collections of the repository.

Through this interview process, there were several issues of users that were brought to light by both the researchers and archivists alike. This suggests that archival professionals are in tune with user needs as they continually work with users on a day to day basis. However, a third party interview shows some problems that users typically have with repositories in general. With additional studies similar to this conducted, more data could be collected about further issues that archival users anticipate when visiting an archive. By interviewing those at the Expatriate Archive Centre and the Nationaal Archief, a practical example has been presented

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[102] Sarah Bringhurst Familia. Interview by author. Personal Interview. The Hague. November 29, 2016. Appendix 1.

showing the comparison of a smaller repository and a national institution when looking into the information seeking behavior of users.

6.6: Further Research

This specific case study had a large amount of limitations due to time and because of this there are several more directions that could be taken in the future for further assessment of information seeking between these two repositories. The first improvement would be to interview the users of the Expatriate Archive Centre to give a well-rounded presentation of users from both repositories. Through anonymous interviews, users could freely give feedback to how their experiences differ within a smaller archive and what they would suggest to potentially improve accessibility when working with sensitive material. Another improvement that could be made would be to include users that had less expertise with using archival repositories. This would give a broader scope to the problems that are incurred by less experiences audiences and would most likely provide additional issues that are not necessarily an issue for experienced users. The case study would also improve if it could include more archival suggestions from professionals, especially hands-on research archivists that work with users on a daily basis. Because this was a user study on a minor scale, these areas of improvement and expansion could potentially provide a great amount of untapped data.

6.7: Conclusion

Although this case study was limited due to time constrains and a small number of participants, it aimed to show that even through a small study user behavioral information could be useful to an institution. One of the main reasons hindering repositories from undertaking user studies, as previously mentioned, was the indication that it takes a large amount of time and resources which would be better spent on other tasks. However through this small case study one can see that a large amount of information can be suggested about archival access and the user through a few face-to-face conversations. User studies have a place within all institutions because that they can make sure that archivists are giving users what

they need and provide information on user satisfaction. One of the conclusions of this study was that the idea of community still holds a place with an archival repository. Through on-site communication, the amount of information that a researcher can be provided with largely improves through a network. The study also showed that researchers can achieve an emotional connection to an archive which improves their experience and maintains their loyalty to a repository. User behavior was shown that a combination of tools and experience have a large role in accessibility to documents. The indication was also that archivists play the largest role in providing access and producing the overall experience of attending an archive for the user. Archivists have the chance to curate better relationships with their users through more engagement which will additionally provide improved accessibility.

Chapter 7: Closing Remarks: The Future of Archival User Studies

7.1: Introduction

As the case study has shown, different repositories have different problems when providing access and considering user needs. Throughout the case study it became clear that users were at the center of the archivist responsibility but whether they conducted further research into understanding user needs was unclear. User studies is an ongoing process that many archivists hope to provide but in many cases these 'studies' are done through one-on –one interactions that change how archivists understand what users need from their repository. The suggestion here is that archival practitioners should be more involved in creating a conversation about different user needs to the wider academic community. By looking ahead to future archival user studies, recommendation of what could be added to the literature, and providing preliminary conclusions an answer to the research question can be made.

7.2: The Impact of Information Seeking Studies: A Summary

Through highlighting the background of access, the history of user studies, and looking into the information-seeking branch of user studies, the research presents a well-formed analysis on how this area of research has furthered understanding of archival users. The case study sought to show a practical understanding of how to conduct a study and what an interview process could reflect about the feelings of users and archivists when questioned about access and user needs. In addition to the initial question which considers what the impact of information seeking user studies had on indicating accessibility needs there were three auxiliary questions. These questions were meant to facilitate the discussion and were as follows:

- How has the scholarly research into archival user studies developed?
- How has scholarly research into archival user studies led to changes towards viewing archival access and the user?

- Through a specific case study in the Netherlands, how have archival repositories explored users?

By considering these questions, a summarization of the principle conclusions can be made as a result of the research.

Archival user studies have developed out of the shift that has been seen from material-centered to user oriented practices within repositories. With the influx of technology, the relationship between archivist and user has changed to create discussion about the best way to facilitate access. Repositories are examining users with the assumption of finding additional methods of creating a cooperative archival community and this has developed through the frameworks of Paul Conway, Elizabeth Yakel and additional archival user study scholars. These archival scholars have developed a way to garner information from a previously unused source, the user.

The scholarly research that has come out of these studies have referenced three branches of user studies, the focus of this research being information seeking. User behavior and access are the two main components of this branch and have had a considerable amount of information attained through various studies. Through behavior, access tools have seen to improve through research on user cognition as well as the attainment of new innovations about how to use an audience's knowledge to find additional user needs. Access tools have been indicated as one of the most important resources towards user access, as the discussion has centered on how users are able to put these tools to use to acquire the best information. The conclusion that has been made has been to combine tools for better access and to continually re-evaluate these systems due to changes in technology.

Research knowledge also has been shown to make an impact on information seeking according to the level of experience users have within a repository. However, much of the research concludes that archivists should not rely on expertise but instead help users reach expert levels by engaging with users off all levels of proficiency. As archivists, information seeking relies on the input of users and it requires a level of responsibility on both parts. Archivists have been seen to

be the number one resource when considering user accessibility according to various user studies. Archivists, therefore, cannot assume what users need but must take the initiative to develop studies that will facilitate this understanding. Archivists have a notion of responsibility to users, their institutions and themselves to constantly keep up with new theories and models and better ways to facilitate with audiences. Conclusions have been made that archivists are also users of an archive therefore makes them an invaluable resource towards user accessibility.

The minor case study taking place in the Netherlands gives example to how developing a small user study can give a large amount of insight into the needs of a user. It also provides evidence to the perspective of archival repositories on a national and community level. Accessibility has been shown to be very different based on the type of repository and the needs archivists cater. With the Expatriate Archive Centre, privacy of the donor has the utmost importance so the challenge has been to develop a system where access can still be possible. The Nationaal Archief has conflicts but on a larger scale with the issue of digitization to a broad audience. Yet both repositories seem more than willing to listen to users to increase accessibility even when faced with issues of confidentiality.

Therefore, the impact of information seeking archival user studies on user accessibility needs has been shown to be the increased level of cooperation with users by archival professionals. Through the combination of information seeking resources such as access tools, research knowledge, and archivists, user studies have been able to give users a voice and facilitate a needed opinion within the archival community. Archival user studies give insight to the audience of not only individual repositories but also developing trends of what users need based on behavior. By creating a community of archivists that care about user needs not only has been seen to increase the functionality of repositories but also produce innovation that will be needed for the future of the archival profession especially within today's technological climate. Although archival user studies have only been occurring within the last 30 years, they have given archivists an immense amount of data to consider how to best transmit information to the user. Archival users have various needs and through the exploration of information seeking user studies,

repositories are able to make a more concise estimate when targeting future audiences

7.3: Archival User Study Innovations: Looking Towards the Future

As seen within chapters 4 and 5, there have been many innovative models, guidelines and studies that have shown how archivists are hoping to connect with users on a different level. Archival user studies, although not always published, do happen at an institution level and face-to-face. Everyday archivists collect information about users through interacting users without approaching the level of an archival user study. The issue arises when compiling these interactions into a systematic way to understand user needs and behavior. Thus the call for a new framework has been suggested as an updated version from Paul Conway's model presented thirty years ago. As Hea Lim Rhee explains, "this new framework should be developed by investigating user studies, published and unpublished, and involving researchers who have conducted them."[103] She continues to suggest that through the formation of archival relationships a transformation could occur to improve the level of information archivists receive from user studies. She also calls for additional research to be done on the methods that researchers use to find information and using this data to improve finding aids. Her research suggests that continual re-evaluation of user study methods are important so that this area of research stays relevant.

User study archivists have been innovative when researching user needs and behaviors as some have "identified access problems in archival institutions, such as geographical limits, political or governmental restrictions, lack of finding aids, copyright issues, and problems with difficult to use formats"[104] These research elements highlight a range of important topics when considering accessibility to repositories. With more examination into additional subjects that affect users could yield a large amount of data to help increase access and the archivist-user facilitation. Investigations on appraisal and the user, research patterns of users and

[103] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 36.
[104] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 33.

many more are increasingly important to archival study scholarship showing that by looking into different branches of archival user studies will have a large impact on the archival repository. Users and preservation are dual reasons for why archivists pursue their profession therefore by researching users will only improve the way that preservation can be attained in the future.

Finally, the research by Wendy Duff and Jessica Haskwell as well as the research presented by Sam Habibi Minelli and his colleagues represent the significance scholars are putting on the combination of user studies with technology. The Rhizomatic approach of Duff, more theoretically, suggests the combination of radical and traditional means of access within a framework of user studies. This could ultimately allow for more understanding of users and access.[105] Within the approach of Minelli, by using technology to combine user studies and cognition would lead to a quality assessment of online archives to improve user needs.[106] User needs differ based on the reasons they use the archives and by finding a way to give users more specific attention within a repository could ultimately impact the way both of these areas are researched in the future. Additional studies of both users and archivists need to be conducted to finalize results and allow for further facilitation between these two groups.

7.4: Recommendations for Further Studies

Throughout this research, there have been many ideas of differing user studies that could be conducted to improve information seeking. One study that would be most interesting would be user needs within Europe as compared to North America. As this research shows, much of the research has come from the United States and Canada as very little research in English could be found on the way that archivists examine user needs in Europe. The difference between the ways different countries provide access as well as view users would be a very compelling piece of research that could provide others insight into the differing trends of research

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[105] Wendy M. Duff and Jessica Haskwell, "New Uses for Old Records: A Rhizomatic Approach to Archival Access," 43.
[106] Sam Habibi Minelli et al. "MOVIO: A semantic content management and valorization approach for archives and cultural institutions,"1.

worldwide. It would also be interesting to develop a user study that showed preference towards which differentiating system in which countries that users preferred. In this way, there could be conclusions made upon taking the best processes from the developments of archival processes and making improvements to archives worldwide.

An additional study that could reflect a large amount of information would be how user behavior affects the ability to access documents. By first understanding the user then effectively increasing how they are accessing archival tools could show increased usability of documentary heritage. It has been apparent that not leaning on expertise also needs to be addressed within repositories. When this is done it takes away from the overall dynamic of a growing area of research tools. Experience has a place within the archive and archivists need to be involved in facilitating towards creating experienced users by creating an environment that users will find conducive to their research. Investigating user behavior of non-academic researchers or beginners using an archive and how they prefer to access documents could create a focus group that would allow for a large amount of data to be gathered on the differentiating needs of this user group, as they have been less studied throughout the archival academic literature. Auxiliary to this would be to create a user study that would investigate the user-user relationship within an archival repository. As have been shown through the case study, both of the researchers felt the archive was a community. By using this idea as a starting point one could investigate the ways that users could benefit each other as a resource to facilitating access.

Finally, supplementary studies on the cognition of users would greatly help to improve archival knowledge, especially studies based on research skills and user satisfaction. Hea Lim Rhee made the same suggestion within her research but no current cognitive studies have been published to date.[107] This untapped area of study could create a large amount of data concerning updates on access tools. By examining interdisciplinary research, an approach can be made towards innovation

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[107] Hea Lim Rhee, "Reflections on Archival User Studies," 36.

by archivists to consider different forms of outreach and the behaviors of different targeted users. Research such as that in library and museum academic literature could help to anticipate changes within cultural heritage institutions.[108] In this way there may in the future be a system devises that could personalize the user experience on a mass level. Additionally, the study of user satisfaction could create a discussion about changes to access policies and the improvement of finding aids. Information seeking processes are fluid just as user needs are ever changing due to the continual advancements of technology. Based on this, user studies need to be done regularly as no one study will answer all issues of finding and accessing information.

7.5: Conclusion

Helen Tibbs keynote from the 1999 National Preservation Office Conference remains relevant as it perfectly defines the reason behind this thesis. She addresses the conflict of archivists not participating with user studies based on the conclusion that they are unnecessary. She states "the digital revolution and unmediated access to finding guides and materials, however, makes user information essential and a centerpiece of repository knowledge if archivists are to effectively optimized discovery, retrieval, evaluation, and use of archival materials."[109] In this way, to improve and further the importance of archival repositories, users need to be studied by archivists. Further, these studies need to be published into the archival literature to spread this knowledge to the community of archivists worldwide. An archivist, through various roles, has abundant of meanings but at its core has been seen as facilitating users towards the most relevant documents. Through the participation of users, archivists have the ability to better-equip researchers through understanding needs more clearly.

The research within this paper has sought to display the importance of user studies within the field of archival scholarship and how it can change the way

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[108] Jodi Allison-Bunnell,, Elizabeth Yakel, and Janet Hauck. "Researchers at Work: Assessing Needs for Content and Presentation of Archival Materials," 68.
[109] Helen R. Tibbo, "Learning to love our users: A challenge to the profession and a model for practice," 14.

archivists approach access and users. The view of accessibility to users within archival repositories has shifted as archivists embrace open access options and head towards user-oriented systems. However, archival user studies are still limited and underfunded which will become an issue as more access occurs. The only way to cater to an audience is to understand their needs which can only be done through understanding users.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Interview with Expatriate Archive Centre

<u>Interview with the Expatriate Archive Centre</u>
November 29, 2016
> Eva Barbisch – Archivist
> Sarah Bringhurst Familia – PR Manager

Which type of users does the Expatriate Archive Centre predominantly interact with?
Sarah: Our users are mostly researchers, so PHD researchers, master's students, students.

So more academic?
Sarah: Yes, academic, absolutely.

So you wouldn't say genealogists or anyone that comes into write books or anything like that?
Sarah: No, I mean we have that occasionally but it's almost all academic researchers.

Have you ever done any research on what your users predominantly need from your institution for access?
Eva: We keep talking about that, we want to do that
Sarah: On an ad hoc basis, I mean we talk to them and we ask them what we can improve but we haven't done a survey.
Eva: But it's something we have thought about for a while, of course we want to improve our facilities for researchers.
Sarah: it's on the list, our intentions are good.

What does the Expatriate Archive Centre provide access to users, is it mainly online or on site?
Sarah: Currently yes it's only on premises and it's about privacy concerns. Our material is very personal but we would like to at some point make it available online, at least some material that is ok to be online, and also perhaps other material via a user name and password. So if they sign our documents, our privacy and confidentiality agreement then we would give them access remotely, but only after signing that. That's something we have thought about but currently it's only on premises.

Which methods are the most popular, do researchers most often ask archivists, are they allowed to access materials themselves, do they do it digitally by catalogue on premise?
Eva: So normally the procedures would be that they [the researchers] have access to our web interface. The web interface is directly connected to our database, to Adlib and that would be the first tool for researchers. What they have to do is based on their findings; I will have a look and check if their material is accessible, yes or no. If it is already digitized (and its accessible), they want to get a copy of the digital

document and only if it's not digitized then I would prepare the box and that would mean they would have access to it physical materials as well.

So have you ever had anyone that wanted to see the original copy even if it is digitized?
Eva: Yes and if that happens then of course we say its fine to see the original copy as well.
Sarah: or artists.
Eva: Yeah exactly.
Sarah: Artists that are being inspired by archives by an archival piece, artists are very much a part of our users
Eva: We try to kind of limit it [the physical access] because when people take the material, there is always a chance that something gets changed. But of course, if researchers or artists or other clients specifically ask for the physical material then they are available.

Would you prefer more access or are you more focused on preservation?
Eva: I think we try to manage both and we have the tendency that we want to become more user oriented. But we are still a bit struggling because of our privacy regulation, because we are dealing with mostly very recent material. So we still try to find a way to become more user-oriented in the future, in the best way, but still keep our privacy regulations, or the material itself, protected.
Sarah: Yes, and so for us I think we have that third kind of problem if you will which is the privacy of the donor.

Do you think because your institution is smaller and community oriented that that has a something to do with how you need to protect your materials more?
Eva: I think we are depending on both; we are depending on users and then the donors
Sarah: Yes and for us the conflict is not so much between preserving the material and making it available to the user as between preserving the anonymity of the donor and the use. We don't even think so much about the material because it gets protected anyways because it's so restricted who can access it.

Yes totally understandable. So has dealing with different types of users changed how you implement access?
Eva: We have been through different stages as an archive. For example at the beginning there were way more genealogists coming in and in the past it was easier to access our materials. But with all those updated new guidelines and laws we also increased our privacy regulations. And in addition to that, we are now more focused on academic researchers.
Sarah: Yeah you can view it as almost like a pendulum where we were very user focused before, and then we became much more material focused, mainly focused on putting our structures in place and making sure we were complying with everything, and now we are, I think, I hope, figuring out a way we can become more user friendly once again.

Perfect, so how important do you think it is to understand users' needs as an archivist?
Eva: I think it's very important because of course the researchers, I think, are personally one of the reasons why we are here and why we keep and preserve the material. So I think for me it's very important

I know you're not an archivist but do you have any comments about user needs?
Sarah: Right, it's my job to be interested in the users, but I think it's very helpful that Eva also is because I can picture that if you had an archivist who really was just focused on the material that it would make it a lot more difficult

Have you ever done any of your own research about how you can target more users and have you implemented any of that into the archive?
Sarah: Yeah, I think that in the past we've reached out a lot to donors and we've reached out to volunteers to work at the archive and not as much to researchers, so that's kind of starting to be my focus and I'm trying to go to more academic conferences and events like that and also try to reach out individually to professors and program directors who have a specific interest in expat studies. So that's kind of the direction that we are going into.

Do **you both have any other additional comments at all about users or access?**
Eva: Of course we try to do our best to provide as much information as possible related to every document but of course we cannot become google or things of that nature. Sometimes I wonder how much the researchers really are willing to work for themselves, or how they are already used to being provided everything online. So that would be something I'm interested in.

Appendix 2. Interview with Ceciel Huitema from the Nationaal Archief

Interview with Ceciel Huitema
December 13, 2016
Nationaal Archief, The Hague, Netherlands

Please tell me your name, title and academic background
CH: My name is Ceciel Huitema and I am an historian. One of my specialties is to help users in the study room, also on the internet and email. I also do research in archives in which users can't do research because of restrictions because of privacy. They get only the documents in this archive where they have permission.

What types of users do you predominantly interact with?
CH: All types of researchers, persons who want to know about their family, the military state and genealogy. Also citizens of the Netherlands who need a document for evidence of rights, for example if they need to get money from an ex-husband who has been retired. Also those who are interested in history. A great part of our researchers are not academic

Do you find that regular citizens and academics find documents differently at the archive?
CH: Yes. I think that a lot of users here on the website or in the study room don't find all of the information they want. Academics will do more research to find information. Historians (academics) for example do have more research skills for research in archives. Other academics have not. Many users start with the website and they don't come here to the study room. Many people think 'I have a keyword' and think it will come up, many are thinking in terms of Google but this isn't possible within a large archives. A lot of users will use this tool this way and when there is no result they often give up.

Does the Nationaal Archief play a role in training users research skills?
CH: We have a little room to facilitate colleagues but for us we are not invited to give seminars on research tools. Lecturers come here to train their students on research skills but it is not the responsibility of the Nationaal Archief. We only 'train' our users when they have specific questions about how to find something. We hardly have workshops.

Do you know if the Nationaal Archief has ever done any research into the needs of users?
CH: I don't know. We are building a new website at the moment and we have defined some groups of users and made user stories. I think so but I am not sure. We now have done research on our services that will be presented in February. To develop a new website we have done some research (interviews with users) and research after customer satisfaction.

What standards of access does the archive use?

CH: Open Standards. It's the information of the government so it is online and it is free to download.

What ways does the Nationaal Archief provide access to the different collections?
CH: On our website we have inventories and indexes like a database. For example with names in specific files. There are many indexes but it does not cover all of the archives. We have information pages on our website about a lot of themes/ subjects: http://www.gahetna.nl/vraagbaak/onderzoeksgids (in Dutch). Most of the access is done digitally as the inventories are not on paper anymore. So the first step is to find it digitally, some have scans but a big part of it is not so you would then have to go to the study room. We also have made a special collection about photos so you can search for many collections as well as old cards.

So some of the documents that are restricted would not be on this database?
CH: Not the documents themselves but the inventory would give information about how to get access to the archive and files with restrictions.

How has dealing with different types of users changed how the Nationaal Archief provides access?
CH: We have processes that we inform the users how to get access. If someone is not familiar, we will explain how to use it but every user is different.

How important do you think understanding users is to providing access to users?
CH: It's very important because we will find information that users need. It is our responsibility to help them find information. We also need to understand the ways that they find information because you can use this information to make a website, a catalogue and to make access tools. I think that users also need to have information about what an archive is. An archive is a product of a work process from the past, and those that created the documents did not think about ordering an archive for future users. Today, we also create documents without thinking ahead to future users of an archive. As users you need information about that work process in the past and you have to know what they did, why and how. And what they did not. That's the context of the archive and files. It is our duty as archivists to explain this, that an archive is a product of work in the past. We also have the duty to explain what was their ways of organization in historical terms.

Have you done any of your own research of users?
CH: Yes, many departments of the ministries are ordered in the way of Verbaalarchief, for example colonial. The documents that researchers want to see are for example correspondence (in files per subject). It is a long list of data and only data. One date contains a number of subjects. See the inventory of the colonial files: http://www.gahetna.nl/collectie/archief/ead/index/eadid/2.10.36.04/aantal/20#c01:0. If the user was to search for something they can't find the information unless they search properly. You need to do research in three steps. First you have a list of

subjects, very specific, often a name. In the list you will find the subject and page number. You then go to the second access tool to find the subject and page number and then you will find the date. You can then go to the third access tool. To try to explain this to users that do research on the website can be very difficult. We want to scan the second step, but it is all handwritten so you can't use OCR. There are techniques of HTR, handwritten text transmission, but it's not very good yet. But we are experimenting with HTR to give access on the second step. I do research on this but it's still in the future.

The idea behind it is to make it possible for users who don't know something about an archive and especially for Verbaalarchief it can be very difficult. For historians to be able to do research here in the study rooms Verbaalarchief is very difficult and we want to show the collection of the Verbaalarchief because many people will to research in the google search level and you won't find anything about certain subjects even though the information is in the archive. We want to let them know the information is here.

Do archivists show users how to use the Verbaalarchief process when they come in?
CH: Yes, but there are no ways to show how to use it on the website. Users need to be here to do research, if they do not they are missing out on quite a bit of information but the problem is how do we show that. Users need to know the system and where it comes from but how to show it as there are many different departments as well as different periods. It's also difficult for users to transfer their questions to an archivist and if users are thinking in terms of google it is difficult to facilitate to translate their question into a manner of research, which organization was responsible for that subject, for that process, how did it work? Another problem is the transition of words, if you search for a new word there are no records because the old word is used in documents.

Do you think it would be helpful for an archive to have a place for users to learn research tools?
CH: I think it depends on one-on one conversation between archivist and user, because many have different skills. Also there is a question of how to manage that when the archive is only open for so many hours. Users need to know about the context of the archive, what is and isn't in it, and if you only search on the website you as a user are only getting limited information. Yes, I think it would be helpful for researchers to find tools on our website.

Appendix 3. Interview with Researcher A

Researcher A Interview
December 1, 2016
Nationaal Archief, The Hague, Netherlands

Please tell me your academic background and your current research
R: I'm from the Netherlands, I have a PHD in History on a different subject and right now I've been doing research at the National Archives in The Hague on Dutch Maritime History in the Napoleonic period. And we have a huge archive with lots of personal documents; letters from people and it's just a wonderful treasure trove. Something I've been working in this field since 2010, almost on a daily basis and I hope to be continuing for quite a while.

So you have interacted with a fair amount of archivists, different researchers, genealogists?
R: Oh yes, I like to come to the archives because I know quite a few people, and people know what I'm busy with, what I'm working at. So they help me sometimes, they give me tips on where to find things.

So it's like a community?
R: It is. Very much so.

So what methods have you been using to locate your information, whether it be online, utilizing archivists?
R: I find that it's sort of broadening right now. I started being very much interested in finding out materials in the Dutch National Archive paper wise but I'm working on the internet much more because I want to know more about the individuals. There's thousands of people that I know something about, so you use the word community, like a maritime community, people lived in certain cities and knew and interacted with other people and you always want to know a little more about that. So its broadening from just research paper archives to using internet and different archives, and before I started I'd already done work that sort of enabled me to do this research.

What methods have you thought have been most successful to locate the information?
R: well a couple years ago they redid the reading room in 2013 and for a year it was almost impossible to use the archives. They also relocated most of the paper catalogues to the back stairs and it's all been digital since then. So in hindsight it's

been a good thing for me because you can find all sorts of things on the internet through the catalogue which is wonderful.

Do you still like to look at the original copies?
 R: Oh yes, I work with original copies. As a matter of fact I was in France in de Seine in the maritime archives there or the armament archives and they had very bad copies available on these reading machines. I found that the wonderful thing in The Hague is that I know most of the archivists so they know I'm working with it, they can rely on me not to harm the stuff so I get original material to study, photograph. That's really very nice.

Would you say you find material more when working with an archivist or more digitally?
R: It's a combination because as you progress in your research you want to find out things that even the archivist knows nothing about. So you really have to help yourself, and as I was saying, internet and the fact that the national library is right next door is a major benefit. You can always find something. Sometimes I ask the archivist and sometimes they'll go to the librarian at the national library and they will know something or be able to help with something. And sometimes you go from one person to the other and eventually you get to the information you want. There is no one path that I follow to get information.

At how many archival institutions have you done your research?
R: I haven't counted them, but at least 20.

All across Europe?
R: Yes but not for this subject but I've been to Norway, Scotland, Britain, in the United States. In various places in Holland. All over Europe, all over really.

And do you find that they differ in how you can access primary documents or relatively the same going towards digitization?
R: I found that in Holland and Scandinavian countries it was similar access, I mean its 200 years old so there's no sacred acts. In Germany and in France it was a bit more restricted. As I was explaining in de Seine it was very different to get a hold of the original material, they were very wary with that. They would give it once and awhile and in Germany it's impossible to take photographs so you can only make copies and of course its very bad for the original material. But on the whole people, especially if you're from abroad and you've announced your arrival in advance they are very helpful.

Have you ever had any training in using access tools? I know as a researcher you receive training while going through your education but have you ever learned more proficient ways whether from archivists or others?
R: I have and I have not. Sometimes I ask people where I can find things but most archivists are generalists. I was working with very special field so they usually weren't able to help me so I had to help myself and in an amazing way you eventually find what you're looking for if you keep going. So sometimes all of a sudden in an unexpected location there's a reference. On the whole archivists have always been very helpful if they can but most of the stuff I find is through perseverance.

Have you ever found that your needs have not been met as a researcher when looking for primary documents?
R: One thing is there's very few people with any pictures or photographs, photographs of course didn't exist, but you would like to know what did people look like. When you go to a military museum in these days you will see crews of ships or people who have worked on airplanes photographed as a group and I would love to see that in those days because they must have congregated as a group. So you can only mimic it in some ways. So photographs or pictures of certain things are very rare. And of course film, things about WWII you can find so much material but it's sort of static to a degree.

So there's less information out there because you have such a niche topic?
R: Yes but of course in Britain and in France there are magazines that are much more specialized in military history but you can't read everything. And of course some archives will steal that material but I haven't been able to locate it yet. And I hope to find something still in museums, but I just don't have the time.

So did you know about the documents you were hoping to find at other institutions or did you just have to find them on premise?
R: I had to go. And it always helps to go there in person and explain what you're doing, and people will remember you and you can keep in touch with them through email or other means.

And do you think that process is more enriching than if you had found it online?
R: Oh yes, I very much favour the first. I love talking to people and telling them about the research. Of course being online makes it easier but there's nothing like face to face contact because they will remember you usually and particular things you have told them.

Do you think there is anything more that could be done by archivists to help improve user needs?

R: In my case, I've lately been wondering how I could make the results of the research visible and comprehensible to people who have no interest. So it has to move and be visible. One thing is I would like to make a database where people can look up whether any of their ancestors served on said ship and left any letters, but I would also like to make a Geographical Information System (GIS) where you can ask what happened to this ship and where did it go. That is something that maybe archivists could do if you approach them and ask them how to make the research more interesting, because of course it's the fact that I've spent nearly 10 years in this archive and they have as much interest in helping me make it available to other people. So archivists should perhaps be interested in what people are doing and sort of create their own community. For example if they know two people are researching maritime history or military history they can make connections between users. I heard it used to be 10-20 years ago that the head of the reading room knew the research everyone was involved with, and so say someone comes from another country have them introduce each other. Maybe they can work together and make it mean something for each other.

So two things I think archivists could do: create a community, and people love to meet others, and secondly think of how they can make, I mean it's only damp paper and people don't like to read a letter anymore, so how can you make it living and move and present it. Which is something England and the States are very good at, people learn to present and talk about things in front of a group.

Appendix 4. Interview with Researcher B

<u>**Researcher B Interview**</u>
December 7, 2016
Nationaal Archief, The Hague, Netherlands

Please tell me your academic background and your current research
R: I am trained as an anthropologist. I use the archive quite a lot for my research; I'm working on the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies. I use this archive, the Nationaal Archief, but also other archives in the Netherlands. Also the NIOD archives [NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies] and also more local archives like the city archives in Amsterdam and The Hague.

What methods have you used to locate your information and what have you found to be the most successful?
R: Mostly I have tried to look at the archive guides, inventories and also tend to use the expertise of the archivists because that can be extremely helpful locating material that you don't know exists or would have access to. Discussing your case study with archivists can be helpful because they can come up with places or archives to search that you didn't think of in the first place. Because I am working with personal stories I really need additional information from the archivists here to locate it because very often its the average person so that means you need to dig a bit more. It's also the reason you go to more regional and local archives.

Do you prefer finding and accessing information digitally or through an archivist?
 R:I think that you need both. You start out with using the digital tools and it depends on what you find. I like to also discuss with people what I have found. Also in some archives there are still non-digital aids and in those cases you really need the archivists. Because I am working with documents from the last century, often information still exists on older storage systems such as handwritten index cards.

Have you worked at additional archival institutions outside of Europe?
R: Yes, I also use archives abroad. I spent some time in Washington DC at the Library of Congress archive but also the National Archive at College Park. I went to Kew in London.

And have you found that they differ in how you can interact with archivists or access the documents?
R: It is sometimes easier here [Nationaal Archief] because you are in a certain network, there is a community and I know how it is organized. It is also much more face to face, so if you are having a problem you are able to discuss it with colleagues and they can give advice of others to contact. It is often very helpful and you lack that more abroad. Although even abroad you have colleagues that can help you, for example AT the SCAP archive at the National Archive in Washington. That is an

archive that is so difficult to access, it's a large archive and notoriously difficult to access so then you need to rely on people who know people that gets you to the archivists who generally then answer your email. It can be tedious. At some point you get more experience so you know how and where to look. In the Hague you can easily go back again to find information whereas if you are abroad you have to do all relevant research in a shorter amount of time. So the added experience helps you to find documents more easily.

Have you ever had training in using archive tools?
R: I had some basic training as a student but I think you really learn it as you go.

Do you think it would be helpful if archive repositories had seminars to learn additional ways to access archival documents?
R: I think when looking back it would have been a great resource. At the moment I have an intern that wants to help use the archive and it would be great if there were even an online training. It would be very suitable to do some webinars that would help you but generally this is the type of work you learn by doing. You also see the difference, if you work in the same archive you know where to look and it's just a matter of experience.

Have you ever found your needs have not been met when looking for primary documents?
R: Well very often I've experienced that my needs are not met in relation to access especially with classified documents. For example, in the case that I am working on, there are fully accessible archives and classified archives. So what I learned over the years is that if I am working on a broader case that I need to first go through everything first because in the beginning I would start with the classified items and copy everything. I would then find out a few weeks later that it was in the non-classified files at a different archive as well and I could simply take a picture of it. And you cannot know that from the inventory because it's not on such a detailed level.

So there are still access problems in larger archives?
R: Yes. And another problem has to do with the archival law. For example, in one of the limited archives I found photos and it's impossible to get reproductions of those pictures. And I don't see, other than bureaucratic rules, why you cannot copy a simple picture of someone that you can later find in newspapers. The quality is lower. And in this case it's of a person born in the 19th century with no children. I would say the privacy issue has been becoming stricter and it shouldn't matter as much in certain cases. This is really an issue because I see that this archive is highly concerned with privacy but in some cases it's becoming over the top, hindering the research. In a way its best that I manually copy the information for myself as you engage with the information in a more intensive way that can benefit your research process but when trying to go back through countless items to find something can be time consuming. Also if you need to use the original quotes, you need the exact wording, which you then need to go back and find the original copies again.

Have you ever been asked by an archive or individual archivists about your needs?
R: No. Everyone is very helpful but the rules are so strict. There is a way to give feedback on the website but not in person. I see why the rules are there but I can also see the problems from the side of a researcher.

Do you think there is anything more that can be done to improve user needs?
R: I think the archivists are quite helpful. Of course they can make mistakes but that goes with everyone. Generally the basic attitude of the staff is that they are willing to help.