

Unveiling Archive Users: Understanding Their Characteristics and Motivations

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Abstract. An institution must understand its users to provide quality services, and archives are no exception. Over the years, archives have adapted to the technological world, and their users have also changed. To understand archive users' characteristics and motivations, we conducted a study in the context of the Portuguese Archives. For this purpose, we analysed a survey and complemented this analysis with information gathered in interviews with archivists. Based on the most frequent reasons for visiting the archives, we defined six main archival profiles (genealogical research, historical research, legal purposes, academic work, institutional purposes and publication purposes), later characterised using the results of the previous analysis. For each profile, we created a persona for a more visual and realistic representation of users.

Keywords: Archives · Archive users · User profiles · Personas

1 Introduction

Archival institutions have experienced changes over the years taking advantage of new technologies. Digital archives are also an example of archives evolution. They promote easy access to archival materials via the Internet. However, since not all archival users have technological skills, it becomes crucial to know their motivations, their challenges when visiting the archives, and how they behave when searching for information.

Users tend to be diverse, having different characteristics, motivations, and skills. To ensure their information needs are met, it is necessary to consider their different profiles. This study aims to understand the users of archives and identify their characteristics, motivations and difficulties in the search process. We focus on the case of the Portuguese archives. To collect user views on this matter, we have analyzed the data of a survey run at an institutional level. We have also interviewed professionals from several Portuguese archives to complement user views with professional ones. In the end, we create personas based on the most frequent reasons for visiting the archive.

2 Archives and Their Users

Public archives are repositories of national history housing materials from the public and private sectors [1]. Archives aim to gather, organise, and preserve national historical interest available to society.

Archive users cover various profiles, from general users to teachers, students, genealogists, or even historians [10]. In other words, users seek information from archival materials [3]. Since the 1980s, user studies have collected information about users and their use of archival materials [9]. The focus of user studies has changed over time, with the development of technologies and the changing research trends being factors that have influenced these changes. The research topics of archival user studies can be divided into three categories, which may or not be related — information needs, information seeking, and information use [9].

To study archival users, researchers have used various methods. Several user studies have continuously used reference question analysis. This method analyses the questions asked through correspondence collected by letter, fax, or email to identify user needs. Duff and Johnson [4] analysed reference questions posed by email to archivists to understand how archival users seek information. Conway created a method that focuses on understanding the researchers who visit the archives. His main goal was to show how archivists can benefit from comprehensive user studies programs and how they can build one [3]. Burke et al. [2] studied the needs of end-users of language archives by having a team of linguists and information scientists interview language archive managers and end-users.

More recently, Web analytics has become a research method in user studies. This method has also started to be used in archives, as it allows “measuring users’ actions, understanding some aspects of users’ behaviour and initiating a continuous programme of improvement of online services” in archival environments. Repositories can dramatically improve access, increase usage, and heighten user satisfaction by interpreting Web analytics data in light of repository goals and other information concerning use (such as usability studies) [8,9].

When studying users, it is convenient to communicate profiles efficiently in various contexts. Personas are helpful for this purpose. Tu et al. [11] created personas from the definition of user profiles. Personas are fictional characters representing similar users’ user characteristics [5,11]. Personas combine different aspects of real people, such as name, occupation, age, gender, or level of education.

3 Methodology

The Portuguese Archive Network comprises two national archives, the National Archives of the Torre Tombo (ANTT) and the Portuguese Centre of Photography (CPF), sixteen district archives, and the Overseas Historical Archive. This network is managed by the General Directorate of Books, Archives and Libraries (DGLAB), which is responsible for protecting, conserving, and ensuring access to

significant documentary heritage [7]. DGLAB has been adopting systems that allow users to carry out online activities that would be done in a presential environment. Archives provide services such as information requests, searches, consultation in person, reproduction, certification, and registration. These services are available online via the electronic counter, through the CRAV¹ (Real Consultation in a Virtual Environment), or in person at any DGLAB archive [7]. In addition, users can also search for information online. DigitArq² is a system that allows the user to access online a set of services only available in person at the Archives. It is possible to consult the institution's catalogue, view scanned documents, request digital reproductions, reserve documents for on-site reading, request certificates or obtain information.

To better understand archive users, we conducted a study in the context of Portuguese Archives, organised in four steps, as shown in Fig. 1.

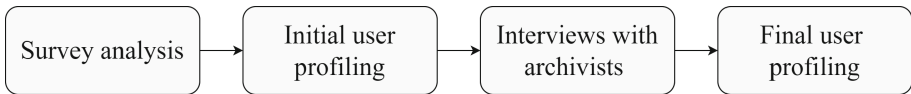


Fig. 1. Stages followed for the definition of DGLAB's archive user profiles

3.1 Survey Analysis

In the first stage, we analysed the DGLAB satisfaction survey³, which aims to assess the performance of DGLAB services and determine the priority interventions the institution should make to improve its services. The survey is available on the ANTT website⁴ throughout the year. For our analysis, we considered the answers from 2015 to 2022, focusing on the questions potentially useful for our goals: inquiries related to demographic characteristics and users' educational backgrounds. After analysing the survey, we began cross-referencing the data between the reasons for visiting the archive — genealogical research, historical research, legal purposes, academic work, institutional purposes and publication purposes — with the demographic data.

3.2 Initial User Profiling

We defined the initial profiles with the findings derived from the crossed-data analysis. To make the visualisation of the profiles more appealing and realistic, we transformed them into personas and gave each one a name and an image taken from a stock image website.

¹ Website CRAV—Available at: <https://crav.arquivos.pt/login>.

² Website DigitArq—Available at: <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/>.

³ Available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X8MMNBJ>.

⁴ <https://antt.dglab.gov.pt/sondagem-aos-clientes/>.

3.3 Interviews with Archivists

Next, based on these profiles, we interviewed National and District Archives archivists to complement the users' information with the professionals' viewpoint. Besides allowing the contraposition of users' and archivists' perspectives, interviews also allowed us to gather information about users' motivations for accessing archives and their difficulties while searching for information. The archivists' answers are based on users visiting the archives personally. We conducted these interviews online to allow reaching more archivists from many regions. The archivists who were not available for the interviews could answer the interview questions offline through an online form.

3.4 Final User Profiling

Finally, the final profiles were defined based on the results of the DGLAB satisfaction survey and the answers given during the interviews by the archivists.

Since the interviews revealed significant information and archivists expressed themselves differently, it became imperative to develop a method for standardising and summarising the responses. Standardisation was applied to gender, frequency (visit or help), motivations or difficulties in finding information.

Regarding gender, users were assumed to be "*male*" or "*female*" based on expressions said by archivists, such as "*more men*" or "*more women*". In the absence of gender predominance, it would be considered "*no distinction*".

Regarding the frequency of visits and help requests, we created a scale with the options "*Very infrequent*", "*Infrequent*", "*Frequent*" and "*Very frequent*". To standardise each response it was considered the synonyms of these expressions and the quantifiers added to the casual expressions mentioned by the archivists, such as "*very*", "*a lot*", "*some*", "*rare*", among others.

Mainly for motivations, synonymous expressions were taken into account, such as "*college work*" was equivalent to "*academic work*", so it is only necessary to use one expression.

When the archivists referred to providing guidance to the user on how, where, and what to search for, this was taken as "*guidance*" representing the initial assistance that many users need. Responses mentioning the difficulty of reading older documents were defined as "*palaeography*", suggesting a lack of palaeographic knowledge among users. Difficulties in using and accessing DigitArq and CRAV were defined as "*DigitArq*" and "*CRAV*" respectively. Less common responses such as "*form filling*" were maintained and not standardised. Some answers were not standardised, as they varied more between archives. They have only been summarised to express what the archivist mentioned briefly.

In assigning the characteristics to each persona, the most frequent response corresponding to each file is assigned, as in the surveys. However, as the demographic data is crossed in both sources of information, it is normal that ambiguity arises when the most frequent values are different in both sources. Figure 2 presents the decisions made to attribute demographic characteristics when ambiguity arises. When the mode of response is identical in the surveys and the interviews, the data are attributed. When the mode is not identical, it is checked if

the second most frequent answer in the interviews is equivalent to the mode in the surveys. Otherwise, it may be necessary to analyse the data annually to check the most frequent answers each year and assign the most frequent value that appears more often.

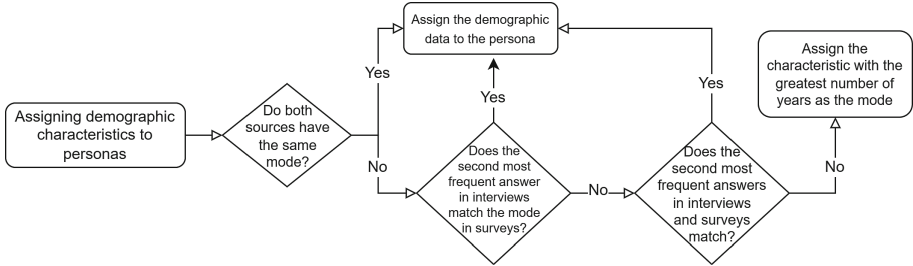


Fig. 2. Demographic data assignment flowchart

Research data from this study is available in the INESC TEC research data repository [6].

4 Survey Analysis and Initial Profiling

We gathered 4661 responses from the satisfaction survey between 2015 and 2022. Each answer refers to the last interaction the respondent had with the archive. Among the respondents, 2692 (57.8%) are male and 1969 (42.2%) are female.

The users' age ranges frequency is the **Total** column of Table 2. The age ranges shown in the table were defined by DGLAB. The age with the highest number of users is between 48–52, the mode in three reasons for visiting the archive.

The majority of the respondents, that is, 1539 (33.6%), have a Bachelor's degree, followed by high school education with 855 (18.7%) users, postgraduate with 828 (17.9%) users, 796 (17.4%) users with Master's degree, 515 (11.2%) users with a PhD and 53 (1.2%) users with elementary education.

The vast majority of users, 3324 (71.3%), visited the archive online, while only 1337 (28.7%) users visited it in person.

Most users (2668 users, 57.2%) responding to the survey have visited the archive for the first time. The distribution of users per frequency of visits is shown in Table 1. Of those who did not visit the archive for the first time, 517 (11.1%) users often visit the archive at least once every six months.

Regarding the users' motivations, the survey includes six predefined options. The most frequent reason for visiting is Genealogical research, with 2234 users (47.9%), followed by Historical research, with 914 users (19.6%), Legal purposes, with 845 users (18.1%), Academic work, with 242 users (5.21%), Institutional purposes, with 79 users (1.7%) and, finally, Publication purposes, with 62 users (1.3%).

Table 1. Frequency of visits to the archive

Frequency of visits to the archive	Frequency
First time visiting the archive	2668 (57.2%)
At least once every 15 days	249 (5.3%)
At least once every 6 months	517 (11.1%)
At least once a year	409 (8.8%)
At least once a month	405 (8.7%)
Almost every day or at least once a week	413 (8.9%)

There is also an option for users to mention “other” reasons. Only 285 users (6.1%) selected this option, answering mainly that they intended to obtain birth or baptismal certificates. We excluded this reason from Table 2 for its low expressiveness. However, it will be counted and included in the total percentages.

Table 2. User’s characteristics frequency by reason for visiting the archive

	Genealogical	Historical	Legal	Academic	Institutional	Publication	Total
Male	60.3%	63.8%	52.8%	44.6%	51.9%	53.2%	57.8%
Female	39.7%	36.2%	47.2%	55.4%	48.1%	46.8%	42.2%
18-22	2.2%	1.9%	0.4%	9.9%	1.3%	1.6%	2.1%
23-27	4.2%	6.0%	3.3%	12.0%	1.3%	1.6%	4.6%
28-32	7.0%	8.8%	7.2%	15.3%	6.3%	3.2%	7.6%
33-37	9.3%	9.6%	8.3%	13.6%	7.6%	11.3%	9.3%
38-42	10.2%	12.0%	11.4%	13.6%	17.7%	11.3%	11.0%
43-47	11.2%	10.1%	14.0%	7.4%	12.7%	21.0%	11.5%
48-52	12.8%	12.3%	15.5%	9.5%	10.1%	6.5%	12.6%
53-57	12.1%	10.9%	10.4%	7.9%	15.2%	11.3%	11.6%
58-62	12.4%	10.2%	11.4%	5.0%	15.2%	12.9%	11.6%
63-67	8.5%	7.3%	8.5%	3.7%	5.1%	12.9%	8.0%
68-72	6.2%	6.5%	6.5%	1.7%	2.5%	4.8%	6.2%
73-77	2.9%	3.1%	1.8%	0.0%	5.1%	1.6%	2.7%
78-82	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
over 83	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Primary	1.2%	0.7%	1.7%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
High school	20.2%	11.4%	23.2%	5.0%	23.4%	8.1%	18.7%
Bachelor	34.7%	23.8%	43.6%	20.5%	41.6%	27.4%	33.6%
Postgrad	22.8%	10.8%	15.9%	7.1%	15.6%	17.7%	17.9%
Master	15.0%	26.0%	12.0%	35.1%	16.9%	21.0%	17.4%
PhD	6.1%	27.4%	3.5%	31.8%	2.6%	25.8%	11.2%

We also analysed the characteristics of the users accessing the archives for each main reason. Table 2 presents gender, age-range and educational background frequency by reason. As seen in the table, the male gender is the most common, the ages are mostly between 40 and 60, and the most common academic qualification is a university degree.

Table 2 shows the cross-referencing of the reasons for visiting as defined by DGLAB and the demographic characteristics — gender, age, and education. The values in bold per column are the most frequent for each dimension. The initial profiles were defined based on the mode of each of these dimensions, e.g., the persona of the Genealogical research motive is characterised by a male (60.3%), aged between 48 and 52 years old (12.8%) and has a Bachelor’s degree (34.7%).

5 Interviews with the Archivists and Final Profiling

For this study, we contacted all National and District Archives of Portugal and the Overseas Historical Archive. The interviews were conducted with DGLAB archivists selected by the corresponding archive. We obtained in total 12 answers out of 18 — 10 interviews and two answers on the form. The 12 archives included in the study are: ANTT, CPF, and the District Archives of Beja (ADB), Bragança (ADBR), Évora (ADE), Faro (ADF), Guarda (ADG), Leiria (ADL), Porto (ADP), Santarém (ADS), Viana do Castelo (ADVC) and Vila Real (ADVR). The interviews were semi-structured and guided by a script available in our research dataset. These interviews were conducted during April and June 2023. All the questions in the script were asked for all the reasons for the visit, i.e. six times.

During the interviews, a particular situation arose about one of the archives, the Portuguese Centre of Photography (CPF). This is due to the fact that the CPF is an archive that gathers mainly photographic documents, meaning it differs from the other district and national archives, comprising a greater diversity of document types. According to the CPF archivist, there are only four main reasons for visiting: Exhibition Purposes, Publication Purposes, Research (although it was not mentioned, it is implied that it is Historical Research) and Academic Work. Given the nature of this archive, it was expected that the reasons for visiting it would differ. Thus, only the first reason pointed out by the archivist will not feature in the data analysis of this study, given its specificity.

Table 3. User’s characteristics frequency by reason for visiting the archive – Interviews

	Genealogical	Historical	Legal	Academic	Institutional	Publication
Male	67%	33%	17%	25%	8%	33%
Female	0%	17%	17%	8%	25%	8%
No distinction	25%	50%	58%	67%	0%	33%
Very infrequent	17%	33%	0%	33%	33%	33%
Infrequent	58%	8%	25%	8%	33%	33%
Frequent	17%	33%	25%	42%	8%	8%
Very frequent	0%	17%	25%	0%	0%	0%

The results of the interviews will be presented below by reason of visit. For each reason, the most frequent answers of the archivists are presented, starting with their characteristics and moving on to their motivations and doubts when interacting with the archive.

Table 3 presents, in percentage, the results obtained in the interviews alluding to the gender and frequency of visit of each profile. Table 4 presents the most frequent motivations mentioned during the interviews, by archive and by profile. The data are distributed by profile and by the archives that mention the respective motivations. The column “% by profile” represents the number of archives, in percentage, that said the motivation presented in the column “motivations” by profile. The column “% by motivation” represents, in rate, the number of archives that mentioned the motivation regardless of the profile.

Table 4. Main motivations for visiting archives

Motivation	Profiles	Archives	% by profile	% by motivation
Academic activities	Historical research	ANTT; ADG; ADVR; ADB; ADBR	42%	67%
	Academic work	ADG; ADVR; ADB; CPF; ADBR; ADVC	50%	
	Publication purposes	ADG; ADB; ADP	25%	
Acquisition of nationality	Legal purposes	ADP; ADVC; ADG; ADVR; ADBR	42%	58%
	Genealogical research	ANTT	8%	
	Institutional purposes	ADE	8%	
Certificates	Legal purposes	ADP; ADBR	17%	25%
	Institutional purposes	ADP; ADB; ADBR	25%	
Dissertation/Thesis writing	Historical research	ADP; ADVC; ADBR; CPF	33%	42%
	Academic work	ADP; ADE; ADVC	25%	
	Publication Purposes	ADE	8%	
Family tree	Genealogical research	ADP; ANTT; ADVC; ADG; ADVR; ADE; ADBR; ADF	67%	67%
Habilitation of heirs	Legal purposes	ADVC; ADB; ADE; ADBR	33%	33%
	Institutional purposes	ADVC; ADB	17%	
Personal research	Historical research	ADB; CPF	17%	25%
	Publication purposes	ADG	8%	
Property registration	Legal purposes	ADVR; ADBR	17%	17%
Research activities	Historical research	ANTT; ADG; ADE	25%	33%
	Academic work	ANTT; ADB	17%	
Scientific publications	Historical research	ADP; ADVR; ADBR	25%	42%
	Academic work	ADP	8%	
	Publication purposes	ADE; ADB; ADVR; ADBR	33%	

5.1 Genealogical Research

This profile (Fig. 3) is mainly represented by male individuals (8 statements). A single age, rather than an age range, was assigned for the final profiling to make the personas more realistic. So the age assigned to the persona in this profile was 50 years old. The most frequent age range mentioned is between 40 and 50 years (3 statements). Four archivists said they have many visits from retired users over 60. This profile’s most common academic qualification is a *Bachelor’s degree* (4 statements) and *higher education* (4 statements).

It is rare for this profile to visit the physical archive (7 responses) since much documentation is digitised and accessible online through DigitArq.

The motivations are based on constructing the family tree (8 statements). Some users do genealogy services for others (2 statements) — professional genealogists.

Users often ask archivists for help (7 mentions as “frequent”), mainly based on research guidance (9 mentions), for instance, how to start the family tree, what, how, and where to search. The way documents are written can also become a constraint. The need for knowledge of palaeography makes it easier for users to read the oldest manuscripts (7 statements).

Archivists considered that age and education were the most significant factors influencing the ISB of this profile. Older users are better at reading older documents but find it more difficult to access CRAV and DigitArq; retired researchers and professors have more advanced research habits than other users, and professional genealogists are more demanding.

The unique characteristic of these users is their curiosity (2 responses), and they have an affective connection with their motivations (1 mention).

5.2 Historical Research

This profile (Fig. 3) has no predominance of gender (6 statements) based on the interview responses. The most frequent exact age range is 30 to 40 (mentioned 3 times). The academic qualification most often cited is a *Bachelor’s degree* (7 mentions).

The most common answers regarding the frequency of archive visits are “*very infrequent*” (4 mentions) and “*frequent*” (4 mentions). Since they are considered seasonal users, the archivists can interpret their frequency of visits differently.

All archivists stated that the primary motivations for this profile are gathering information for academic and research purposes, such as writing theses or publishing scientific articles.

It is rare for this user to ask for help (4 statements as “*very infrequent*” and 4 statements as “*infrequent*”). Their doubts and difficulties are mainly related to the need for guidance (6 mentions) and the use of DigitArq (2 mentions). Two archivists also mentioned a lack of palaeography knowledge, which makes it difficult for users to read older documents.

Four archivists mentioned that educational background and age could influence these users’ behaviour. Archivists stated that although some users have higher academic qualifications, they still need help or know how to read older documents. Regarding age, archivists mentioned that older users define their search better than younger ones. Other archives revealed that younger users are more autonomous and demanding. They are also considered specialised and knowledgeable about the documentation present in the archive.

5.3 Legal Purposes

This is also a profile (Fig. 3) with no gender majority (7 statements). The age range that stands out is between 40 and 50 years old (4 mentions). However, archivists mentioned that this profile is very diverse. Most users have only a *high school education* (5 statements) and *Bachelor’s degree* (6 mentions).

The frequency of visits is ambiguous. The exact number of archives mentioned that it is infrequent, frequent, or very frequent (3 mentions for each answer) for users to visit the physical archive. According to the interviewees, these users

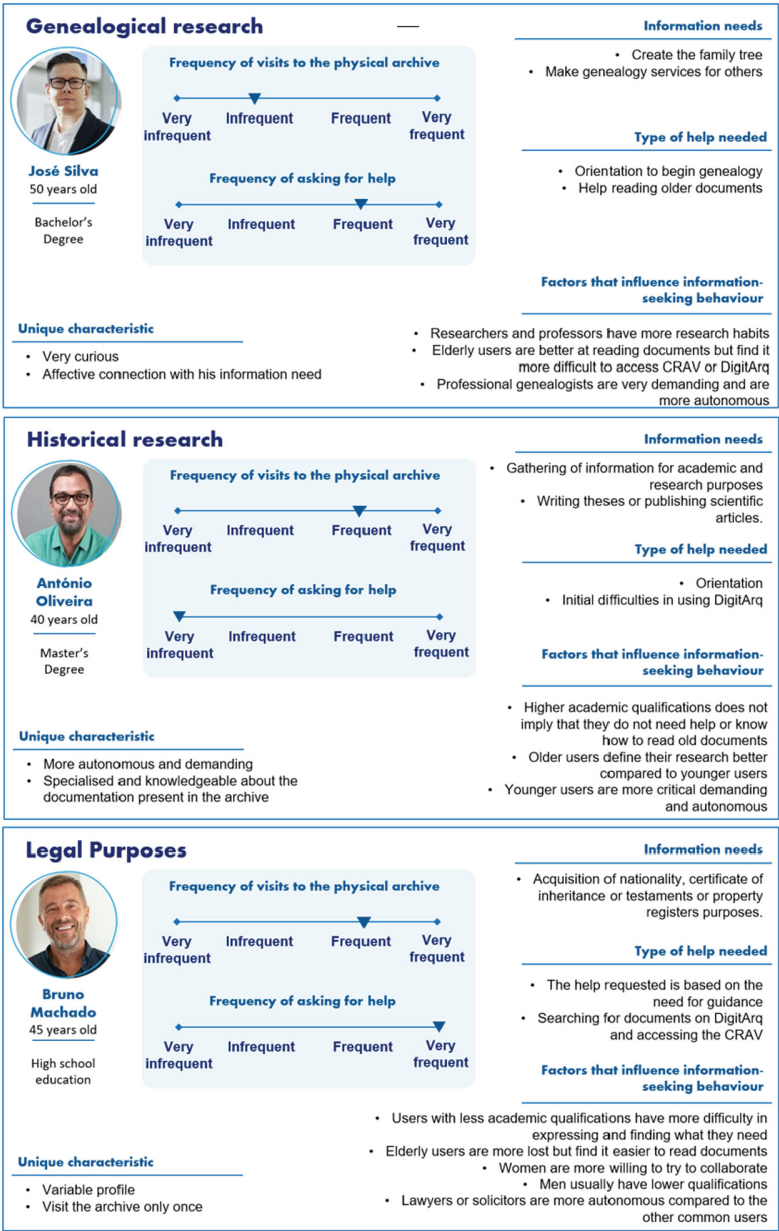


Fig. 3. Genealogical research, Historical research, and Legal Purposes Personas

often visit the archive once to resolve their legal issues and do not return. For the archivists, this could be a situation that is assumed to be either frequent, in the sense that different people show up regularly, or infrequent because users do not return.

Their motivations concern the acquisition of nationality (5 statements), habilitation of heirs (4 statements), or property registers purposes (2 statements).

It is a profile that frequently or very frequently asks for help (each answer with four statements). Archivists reported this profile to be highly dependent. Users request support for guidance (6 statements), such as what type of documents to search for, how to obtain certificates, and what data to fill in to request a certificate. Some doubts are also related to searching for documents on DigitArq (3 statements) and accessing CRAV (3 mentions).

The factors influencing the behaviour of these users are education (3 mentions), age (3 statements), gender (1 statement), and job occupation (1 statement). Users with less academic qualifications need help to express and find what they need in the archive. Regarding age, elderly users are, on the one hand, more lost, but on the other hand, find it easier to read documents. Regarding gender, archivists mentioned that women are more willing to try collaborating in the sense of accepting the help provided than men. One archive said that men usually have lower qualifications compared to women. Regarding profession, users who are lawyers or solicitors are more autonomous compared to the other users.

A unique characteristic of this profile is that it is very variable, and they are not everyday users. Often, they visit the archives and do not return.

5.4 Academic Work

This profile (Fig. 4) has no gender predominance (8 mentions). The most frequently mentioned age range is 20 to 30 (5 mentions). The most common academic qualification is a *Bachelor's degree* (8 statements), and the second most frequent is *Master's degree* (5 answers).

This profile visits the archive frequently (5 mentions as “*frequent*”). However, some archivists reported that this frequency of visits might only be regular while users are doing some academic work or research (seasonal users).

Most archivists revealed that users' motivations involve gathering information for writing dissertations, academic work, or writing articles.

Help requests in this profile are “*infrequent*” (5 mentions). Users need assistance with their initial search orientation (7 statements), including where to start the search and how to locate the fonds. In this profile, two archivists mentioned that users of academic work need help with reading older documents, i.e., palaeographic knowledge.

The factors influencing information-seeking behaviour are work purpose, gender, and age. The work purpose affects the user's motivation to perform the search. Regarding gender, one archive mentioned that female users conduct more well-defined searches when compared to men, which leads the latter to need more guidance. Finally, regarding age, younger users are more critical, demanding, and autonomous compared to older ones.

Their unique characteristics are that they can easily consult DigitArq fonds and are comfortable with information technology. They are also more confident in their research, autonomous, and demanding.

5.5 Institutional Purposes

Seven archives mentioned that the main users of this profile (Fig. 4) are institutions, such as conservatories, consulates, city halls, universities, and cultural and local associations. There is no gender, age, or academic qualification assigned. It is a profile that very infrequently (4 answers out of 9) visits the physical archives, as most users make their requests through the CRAV system, email, or phone.

As stated by the archivists, motivations vary according to the type of institution. Courts use archives to request records when a legal case has been reopened, and consequently, they may require files or other types of documents and information. Notarial offices use archives to obtain information for deeds, probate proceedings, or to authenticate documents. Institutions such as law firms request statutes and visit the archive for citizenship certificates for other individuals. Other institutions visit the archive for recreational activities or exhibitions.

These users rarely ask for help (7 “*infrequent*” answers). They seek help filling out forms, searching DigitArq, and requesting services through the CRAV. Archivists mentioned that this profile has clear ideas of what they want. They often request the information search service, i.e. users ask the archive to search for a certain document.

There is no record of factors influencing the behaviour of these users. They usually represent a service and have very specific needs, close to the motivations for legal purposes.

5.6 Publication Purposes

This is a motive (Fig. 4) more frequent in male users (5 mentions) with a *Bachelor’s degree* (4 statements) between 40 and 50 years old (3 mentions).

This profile visits the archive infrequently (4 statements as “*infrequent*”). The motivations of these users can be both academic and non-academic. Users seek information in the archive for their articles, dissertations, or other publications.

It is “*very infrequent*” (7 mentions) for these users to ask for help. Four archivists did not point out any doubt that is considered standard among these users. One of the archives mentioned that their doubts refer to obtaining authorisation to use documents from the archive for their publications. There is no record of responses regarding factors that may influence the behaviour of these users in the archive. Concerning the unique characteristics of these profiles, archivists mentioned that these users are very strict with the information they seek and are also very autonomous, as they have their search and need for information well defined.



Fig. 4. Academic Work, Institutional Purposes and Publication Purposes Personas

6 Conclusions

This work allowed us to define the users of DGLAB’s archives by collecting information through two different methods — surveys and interviews with the

archivists, which provided information about users' characteristics and research motivations, as well as the help they often request.

The two stages of data collection were essential, not only to confirm the validity of the users' characteristics but also to obtain new information not present in the survey regarding their motivation to visit the archive and what are their difficulties.

The profiles, except for academic work and institutional purposes, have aspects in common. They are represented by male gender, aged between 40 and 50. With the exception of legal purposes, all profiles have a degree. The academic work profile is the youngest and the only one with female representation. The institutional purposes profile is the most peculiar one since the users of this profile are institutions.

Research motivations vary by profile, yet historical research and academic work profiles are quite similar. The most common questions among the profiles are the need for guidance, i.e. how to start and do research, and also help in reading old documents (palaeography). Access to CRAV and DigitArq are also some common challenges among the profiles.

The next step of this study will be carried out in the in-person archives. The aim is to observe and analyse the behaviour of the different profiles in the archival environment. Through the Think Aloud method, it will be possible to observe how users seek information in the archive by verbalising their actions. This way, it will be possible to validate the users' motivations and challenges directly.

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