



Online Access Usage Among Croatian Students and Professors with the Purpose of Archive

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary modes of communication open up new possibilities of promoting archive material and observing the renewed role of the archive. In this sense, the question is, what kind and amount of information the archive community forms and realizes through the transformation of historical development of archive as a institutional cultural area (Pavelin & Pletikosić, 2013)

The aim of this research was to determine the habits of online access usage among Croatian students and professors with the purpose of searching the archive sources, and to analyze the differences in the proportions between the defined subsamples. The sample of examinees was represented by 129 students and professors of the European and Croatian university city of Zadar, of which 97 were male (48.84%) and 82 female (51.16%). The examinees were public representatives who use the archive material with the purpose of education and information.

The research was conducted during year 2012 via anonymous questionnaire.

The proportion difference analysis determined significant difference between the Croatian students and professors, with the purpose of using the online access to archive sources.

Keywords : European Union, Croatia, computer, archive material

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary modes of communication open up new possibilities of promoting archive material and observing the renewed role of the archive. In this sense, the question is, what kind and amount of information the archive community forms and realizes through the transformation of the historical development of archive as a institutional cultural area (Pavelin & Pletikosić, 2013).

According to Greek archeion (Steedman, 2000) the original term archive was conceptually impersonalized through rule and power. By supporting the administrative apparatus, creating and preserving the material, the authority secures the legal, political and material interests. Greek and Roman archives (MacNeil, 2000) preserved the public legal documents of authority, especially those which arranged and documented the status, rights and obligations of public government and the obligations of an individual towards it. This documentation was trusted by the public and had the power of evidence in the legal system, unlike those that were not stored in the public archive and supervised by the authority. Since the middle 12th century notaries became increasingly popular, those in service of Pope and emperor likewise, as well as those who managed private affairs. The process of determining the authenticity of documents was ascertained by seal and notary's signature. The notaries were educated in Bologna, but they were present on the Eastern coast of Adriatic as well (Split, Trogir, island of Hvar, Brač, Dubrovnik, Zadar). In the 16th and 17th centuries (Bradsher & Pacific, 1991) the archive was doubly related to the authority that created the material and limited it in the service of its own rights, material and political interests. By the end of the 18th century the rights of the archive were limited to secular and ecclesiastical power, the ruler, his family and his administrative apparatus. The production and preservation of material was under its influence. How-

ever, besides the law protection and administration support, the archive material during the 19th century became a value as a historical source. The administrative bodies started to hand over their own excessive documentation to the archives that became important for research. Themes that were not interesting, or on the margin of interest, began to be studied. During the 20th century the accessibility of material became a necessity. The emergence of schools for scientific history and history writing made studying and usage of primary sources, as well as respecting the written evidence, increasingly important. Usage of archive material widened the area of history studying. The emphasis was not only on the famous battles, politicians and certain rulers, but also on the total economic and social surroundings of a certain event. This was especially evident in Zadar State Archives (Vidaković, 2002), visited by numerous scientists from the European universities, who studied its material, from year 1852 until 1945. Since the second half of the 20th century the change of users profile occurred, diminishing the number of scientists. The information potential of the material became, besides cultural, scientific and administrative, social as well. More and more people of different interests and professions started to use archive material, trying to satisfy their needs searching for the necessary information. The eighties and the nineties reflected the important modifications and the alterations of social prospects on the international level, also obvious in the increased interest of public for the archives and archive material. Since the nineties the archive activity in Croatia reflected the globalization trends. With the progress of information-communication technologies the communication of cultural heritage globally changed (Pavelin, 2012a). New technologies diminished the importance of the constants of time, place and media, encouraging the demands of citizens for free access to the information anytime anywhere. The contemporary concept of scientist significantly changed from the image of former patient reader of documents, who spends days, weeks and

months carefully and persistently searching for the object of his interest in the archive reading room (Pavelin, 2012b). The modern researcher wants the archive to give him fast, clear and complete information. He does not have the luxury time, like his predecessor from the former times. The archive, as an institution of social significance, changes, forms some parts of own material and services, adjusted to the global interactive communication. The basis of the information system of every archive demands immediate update through online catalogues and digital copies of the material. The aim of this research was to determine the habits of using online access in Croatian students and professors, with the purpose of searching the archive sources, and to analyze the differences in the proportions between the defined subsamples.

METHOD

The sample of examinees was represented by 129 students and professors of the European and Croatian university city of Zadar, of which 97 were male (48.84%) and 82 female (51.16%).

The examinees were given questionnaires, which were anonymous. The research was conducted once, the answers were close-ended (offered answers), and it was performed during year 2012.

The dependant variables of this research were defined based on three questions-claims, used with the purpose of determining the usage of publicly accessible archive material:

1. Do you use Internet with the purpose of searching archive sources?
2. Are you familiar with the information on the archive material and other sources for searching on the public part of the ARHiNET system?
3. Which of the listed portals do you use the most in accessing the archive sources?

The application of difference analysis between the proportion of coded quantitative answers frequency, will determine the possible significant difference of using the publicly accessible part of the archive material among Croatian students and professors. The quantitative processing will be performed by using the Statistica ver. 11.00 computer software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first offered question was defined as following:

1. Do you use Internet with the purpose of searching archive sources?

The descriptive parameters of frequency and relative values of affirmative and negative answers about Internet usage with the purpose of searching archive sources, and the analysis of the proportion differences between the two subsamples of students and professors is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency and relative values and difference analysis in the proportion of Internet usage_archive sources variable, N= 129

Variable Internet usage_archive sources	Students N=79		Professors N=50		p
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
YES	39	49.36*	34	68.00*	0.019*
NO	40	50.64*	16	32.00*	0.019*
Total	79	100.00	50	100.00	

Legend: Freq-frequency, %-relative frequency values, p-level of statistical significance of proportion difference, *-significant proportion difference

The analysis of results in Table 1 shows that the students of Croatian university city of Zadar (N=79) equally use and do not use Internet with the purpose of searching archive sources,

that is, the affirmative answers were quantified with the relative value of 49,36%, or 39 examinees. On the other hand, professors (N=50) use internet more often, with the purpose of finding archive sources, 34 of them or 68%. The difference analysis in the proportions of *Internet usage_archive sources* variable between the defined subsamples of students and professors, ascertained the significant difference on the level of significance $p=0.019$.

Based on the obtained data, it can be concluded that professors and students are not adequately informed on the information potential of the archive material, possibility of using the digital sources, and that they scarcely recognize the benefits of using that kind of sources in scientific research. The professors' inadequate preparedness for the process of conducting the archive research on Internet influence the quality of students' preparedness.

The second offered question was defined as following:

1. Are you familiar with the information on the archive material and other sources for searching on the public part of the ARHiNET system?

The descriptive parameters of frequency and relative values of affirmative and negative answers about ARHiNET usage with the purpose of searching archive sources, and the analysis of the proportion differences between the two subsamples of students and professors is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Frequency and relative values and difference analysis in the proportion of ARHiNET usage_archive sources variable, N= 129

Variable ARHiNET usage_archive sources	Students N=79		Professors N=50		p
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
YES	12	15.19*	28	56.00*	0.000*
NO	57	84.81*	22	44.00*	0.000*
Total	79	100.00	50	100.00	

Legend: Freq-frequency, %-relative frequency values, p-level of statistical significance of proportion difference, *-significant proportion difference

The analysis of results in Table 2 shows that only 15.19% or 12 students of Croatian university city of Zadar (N=79) was acquainted with the information on the archive material and other sources for searching on the public part of the ARHiNET system, that is, more than 84% of students never searched the specified public release of the archive sources. Half of the professors were informed about the ARHiNET system page, quantitatively determined by the relative value of 56,00%. The difference analysis in the proportions of ARHiNET usage_archive sources variable between the defined subsamples of students and professors, ascertained the significant difference on the level of significance $p=0.000$.

Based on the obtained data, it can be concluded that professors and students are not adequately informed on the ARHiNET Croatian archive information-evidentiary system, and the possibility of accessing the data on the archive material kept in Croatian state and other archives, and in other caretakers of archive material.

The third offered claim was defined as following:

1. Which of the listed portals do you use the most in accessing the archive sources?
a) Croatian cultural heritage; b) Monasterium; c) Archives Portal Europe; d) Europeana; e) Newspaper Archives; f) Genealogical internet sources; g) Gallica; h) I don't use any portals;

The descriptive parameters of frequency and relative values of portals_archive sources variable in complete sample of Croatian students and professors is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Frequency of portals_archive sources variable, N= 129

Varijable portas_archive sources	Students and professors N=129		
	YES		NO
	freq	%	
a) Croatian cultural heritage	28	38.36	
b) Monasterium	3	4.10	
c) Archives Portal Europe	10	13.70	
d) Europeanea	8	10.96	
e) Newspaper Archives	8	10.96	
f) Genealogical internet sources	8	10.96	
g) Gallica	8	10.96	
Total	73	100.00	56
Total %	56.59		43.41

Legend: Freq – frequency, % - frequency relative values

According to Table 3 Croatian students and professors use the Croatian cultural heritage portal the most, what is quantitatively defined with 38.36%, after that the Archives Portal Europe portal with 13.7%, and Europeanea, Newspaper Archives, Genealogical internet sources and Gallica with 10.96%. The least used portal, with the purpose of searching the archive sources, was Monasterium, with a relative value of 4.10%.

The obtained results were expected since the low usage of Internet and ARHiNET usage was already proven among professors and students in searching the archive sources. In searching the information and their possible usage in their own research, the professors and students use the plenty of archive information resources that the mentioned portals offer, very little.

CONCLUSION

The Croatian Archives in Zadar, which is a communal city on the Eastern coast of the Adriatic sea, has a long lasting tradition and holds valuable sources that can be used in different research. The conducted research revealed do the Croatian professors and students in Zadar archive use the web pages, electronic informative tools, digitalized databases and networked scientific systems in their own research. The conclusion is that Croatian professors and student are poorly informed on the value of the archive material in their research. The archive community can, based on the obtained results, start the research of the identities and interests of the mentioned users. It should also recognize the degree of inclusion of its users in general, especially those coming from the scientific community. It is important that archivists understand that professors and students are part of the users' public and that they should directly contact the professors, visit the local university and find out what styles, interests and studying capacities are most common in students. Archivists should plan the program of inclusion for these groups and define the aims of the program, determine the nature and the needs of the mentioned users. Also, the duty of contemporary archives is digitalization of the material, due to new standards. The task of the archive is to educate the existing and new generations of their users, and to create the knowledge on the need.

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