

Explore Your Archive 2014 Evaluation

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Evaluation

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Foreword

We're delighted to publish two documents about the Explore Your Archive campaign 2014. The first is a summary of more than 120 responses filled in by those who had, and those who hadn't, taken part in the second year of the sector's public awareness campaign. This summary has been compiled by Dr Tom White of The National Archives.

The second is a report by Laura Cowdrey of The National Archives about the impact of social media during the campaign week. Laura did not just write the report: she planned the social media strategy for the sector, delivered much of it herself and helped and advised many people in the sector to play a full 'digital' part in the week.

A year ago, we sat with the feedback from year one of Explore Your Archive. The feedback was good, but there were two very clear areas where we knew we needed to improve: we had achieved very little national media coverage in year one (though local and regional coverage was excellent); and we had seen lots of hashtags out there, but had we REALLY got to the public through social media? These were our clear challenges for November 2014.

On the morning of Monday 10 November 2014, archives took a long-awaited place on the BBC Breakfast Sofa. There was an outside live broadcast from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, with archivist Penny Hutchins, the CEO and Keeper of The National Archives Jeff James and the campaign's wonderful ambassador, Call the Midwife's Stephen McGann. Jessamy Carlson, who works at The National Archives, but is also an ARA board member, was also live on the sofa to talk family and military history.

The work of Jessamy, along with Shona Lowe and Andrew Harrison from The National Archives' Media team, in getting this magnificent start to the week is sincerely appreciated. It was clear from the sector feedback that it gave the week huge momentum. On top of this, other well-known ambassadors lent their support to the campaign, whether through supportive statements, such as Kate Adie, or through re-tweeting campaign messages such as Rory Bremner and Larry Lamb.

Ultimately, however, the greatest thanks must go to all of the thousands of professionals, volunteers, and members of the public who made this year's campaign so special.

Please take a few minutes to read the evaluation of that special week. We're indebted to everyone who filled in the evaluation. We're doubly indebted to everyone in the sector who made something happen under the Explore Your Archive colours in November.

Here's to 2015.

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Background

This briefing is an evaluation of survey data collected for the Explore Your Archive (EYA) 2014 campaign coordinated by The National Archives and the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland). The main campaign week ran from 10-16 November 2014 and archives from across the country took part. This briefing assesses the impact of the campaign and draws comparisons where possible with data from EYA 2013. Feedback was collected from archive sector professionals from institutions across the UK and Ireland using an online survey. Where the data is available, this evaluation briefing for 2014 will use responses gathered from the EYA Evaluation 2013 to highlight changes and trends.

Key findings

- More archives took part in 2014
- The vast majority felt EYA 2014 was a success for their service and for the sector
- Over one third of archives learned new skills
- EYA website rated very highly and used by most archives
- High level of engagement with digital campaigns via social media

1. Archive sector participation and engagement

Improved survey response rate

121 archive professionals responded to the 2014 survey. This is an increase of 20% over the sector response to the 2013 EYA survey. 105 archives who took part in EYA 2014 responded to the survey in total. Case study submissions and direct contact put total number of archives participating in EYA 2014 at 210.

More archives took part in EYA 2014

80% of all archives who responded to the survey participated in EYA 2014 (See Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). This is up from 75% in 2013:

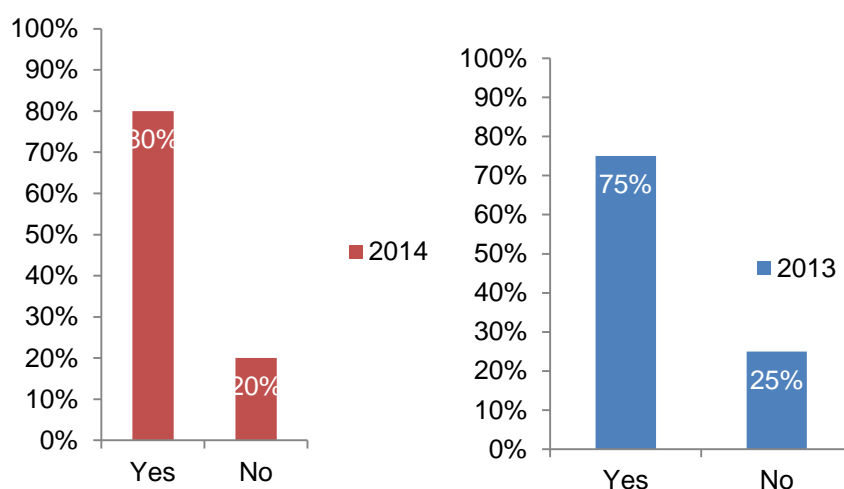


Fig. 1 and Fig. 2: Archives running EYA campaigns in the UK in 2014 and 2013

Archives who did not participate in EYA 2014

Five archives commented on why they were unable to participate this year:

- Limited time and resources
- Staffing issues during period of change for the organisation
- Not the right time
- Setting up a new service

EYA Start date slightly less popular in 2014 than in 2013

93% of responses agreed it was helpful to have a fixed start date and a set period for the Explore campaign (see Fig. 3). However, the 10 November start date in 2014 was right for 60% of respondents, down from 71% in 2013 when EYA started on 16 November.

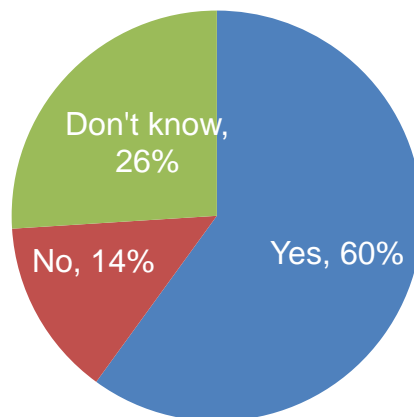


Fig. 3: The right start date for EYA in 2014

Suggested alternative start dates for EYA 2015

19 archives suggested alternative dates for the campaign in 2015:

- Early in the school year
- Autumn half term
- Two weeks earlier to avoid university essay deadlines

2. Campaign Performance

Attendance at archive EYA events

The number of people attending individual archive service events averaged at 73 per archive. The chart below (Fig. 4) demonstrates there was just one outlier, with the remaining archives attaining figures somewhat below or somewhat above the average as the trend line shows. Regrettably, only a few services provided analytics of online engagement with their EYA 2014 campaign. Any analysis would be partial and would be based on a very small sample size with differing metrics.

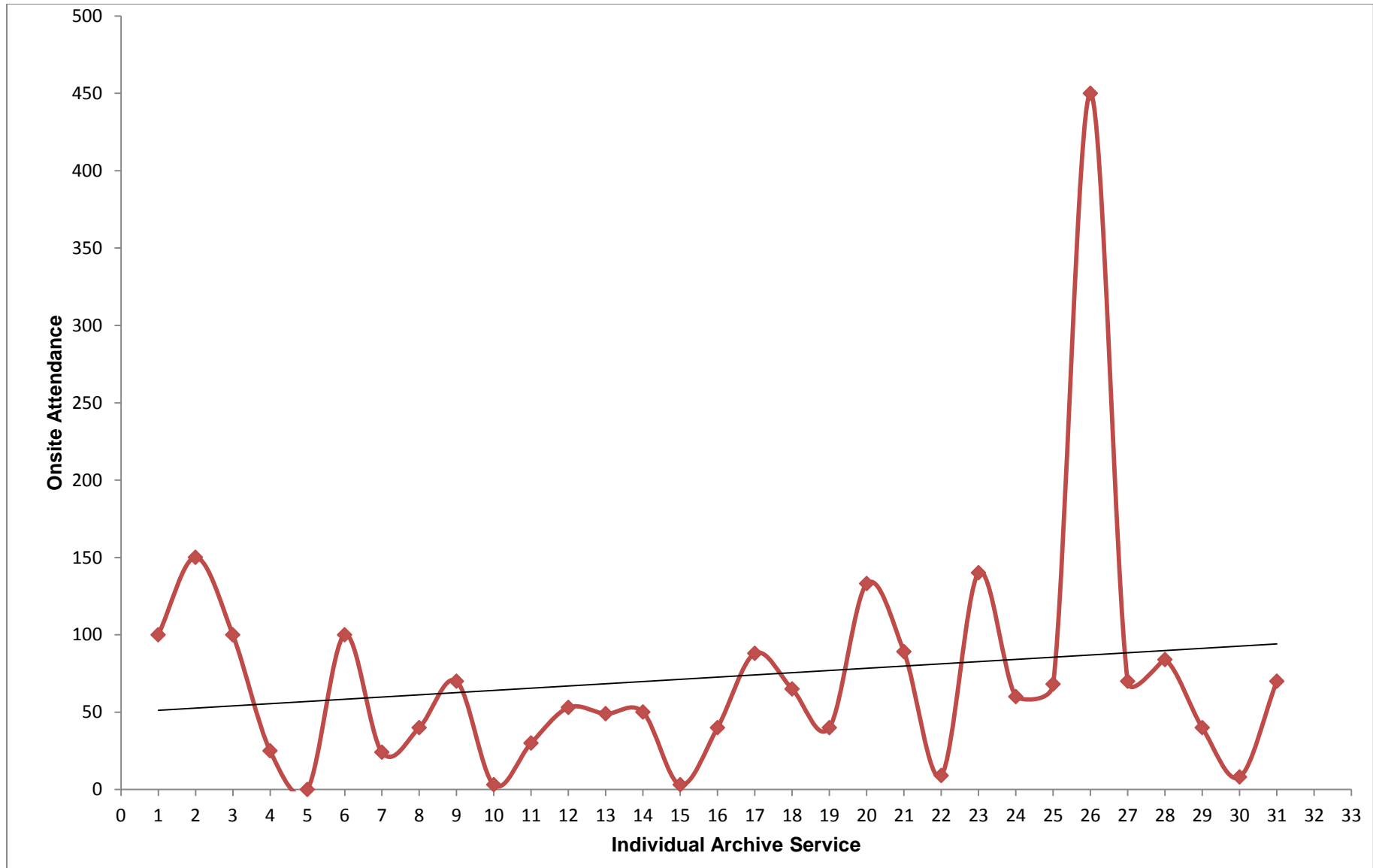


Fig. 4: Onsite attendance for individual archive services (numbered 1-33 for anonymity) against number of onsite attendees during EYA 2014

Archives delivered a range of onsite and online campaigns

Participating services embraced the EYA 2014 via a variety of engagement and communications activity:

- Demonstrating collection care
- Story Box exhibitions
- Online exhibitions and blogs
- Open days
- Social media campaigns and posters
- Talks including First World War theme

3. Branding and Resources

Explore Your Archive look and branding remains popular and easy to use

84% of archives used the EYA branding for their campaign in 2014 and 67% found it easy to use (see Fig. 5 and 6). There is no exact corresponding question from last year. In 2013, 92% responded positively to whether they liked the branding. In the comments, several archives found the PowerPoint template not particularly user-friendly, and others suggested having more formats such as Word would be helpful. The premium font costing £30 was also an issue for a few archives.

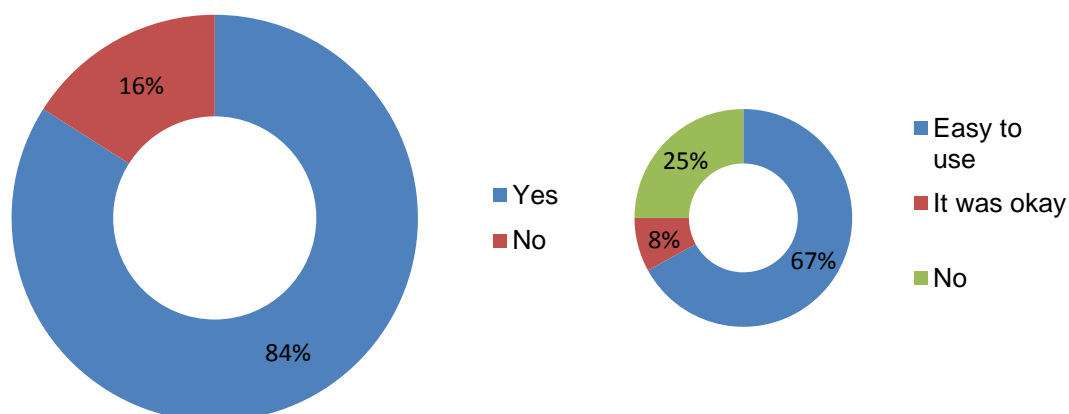


Fig. 5 and Fig. 6: Archives used the EYA look/branding in 2014 and most found it easy to use

Archives and the EYA toolkit

Of the branding elements provided in the toolkit, the most used were general guidance (74%), button badges (67%), pencils (57%), artworked posters (50%). See Fig. 7. When compared with 2013, there was a drop in the number of archives who used the introductory material, such as the general guidance (-7%), the 'how to use the branding' guide (-9%), and the draft press release (-18%). Familiarity with the previous year may explain this reduced level of usage (see Fig. 8).

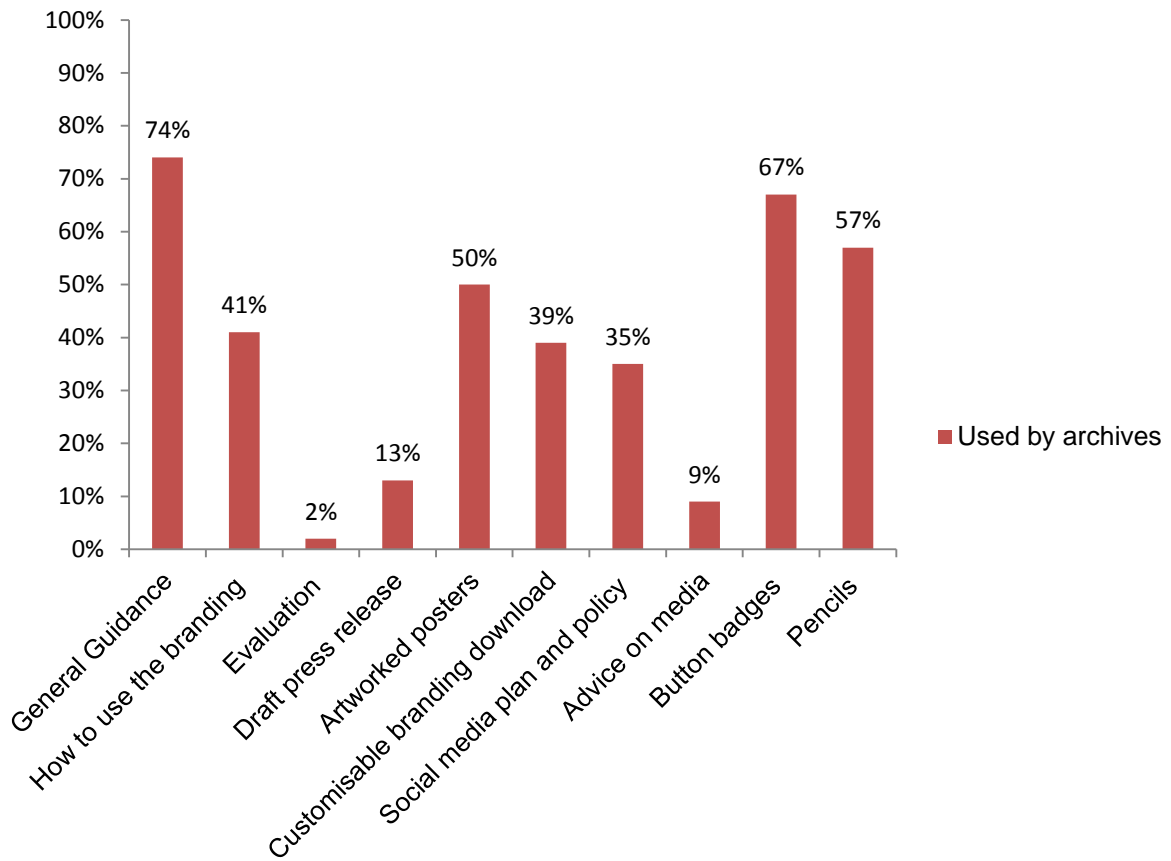


Fig. 7: EYA toolkit elements used by archives in 2014

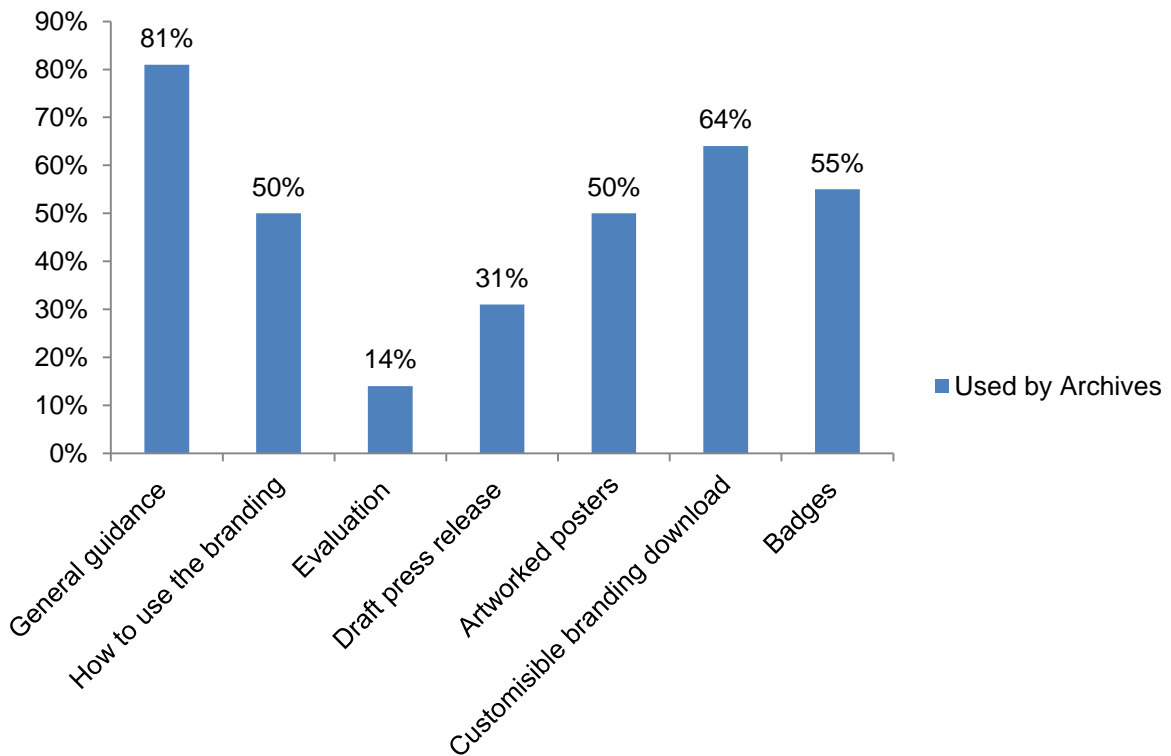


Fig. 8: EYA toolkit elements used by archives in 2013

4. Explore Your Archive and the sector

EYA 2014 was a success for archive services and the sector

The majority (89%) of archives thought EYA was successful for their service. Almost all archive services (95%) felt EYA was a success for the archives sector. 25 archives added overall comments:

- Having freedom to choose a theme was welcome
- One of the main vehicles for celebrating the archive service
- Felt really involved and engaged in the campaign
- Grateful for all the hard work to make EYA happen
- Issues with finding resource and planning sufficiently for the campaign

The EYA campaign engendered pride in archives

The 2014 EYA survey revealed almost all (93%) participants felt proud about the work they do as archivists as a result of the EYA campaign. There was no equivalent question for 2013.

Freedom to choose theme welcomed

Of those who responded, 83% felt The National Archives and ARA made the right decision not to prescribe a single theme. This correlates well with the results in 2013, where 92% of archives wanted control over theme of their campaign.

EYA helped archives to learn new skills

Over a third of archives (35%) claimed participation in the EYA campaign allowed colleagues the opportunity to learn new skills. The majority (56%) thought they did not learn any new skills; with 8% responding don't know.

Magna Carta toolkit

Two fifths of archives (40%) would welcome a toolkit based on the theme of Magna Carta. 28% would not be interested in a themed toolkit with the remaining 32% responding 'don't know'.

5. Digital Communications

EYA website used and valued by most services

In 2014, 88% of respondents looked at www.exploreyourarchive.org. Though there was not a corresponding question in 2013, 93% of respondents felt the website was important to the EYA campaign. The overall quality of the website is perceived to be high. 78% of respondents in 2014 felt the quality of the website was excellent, good, or very good, with only 4% suggesting the site needs improvement (see Fig. 9).

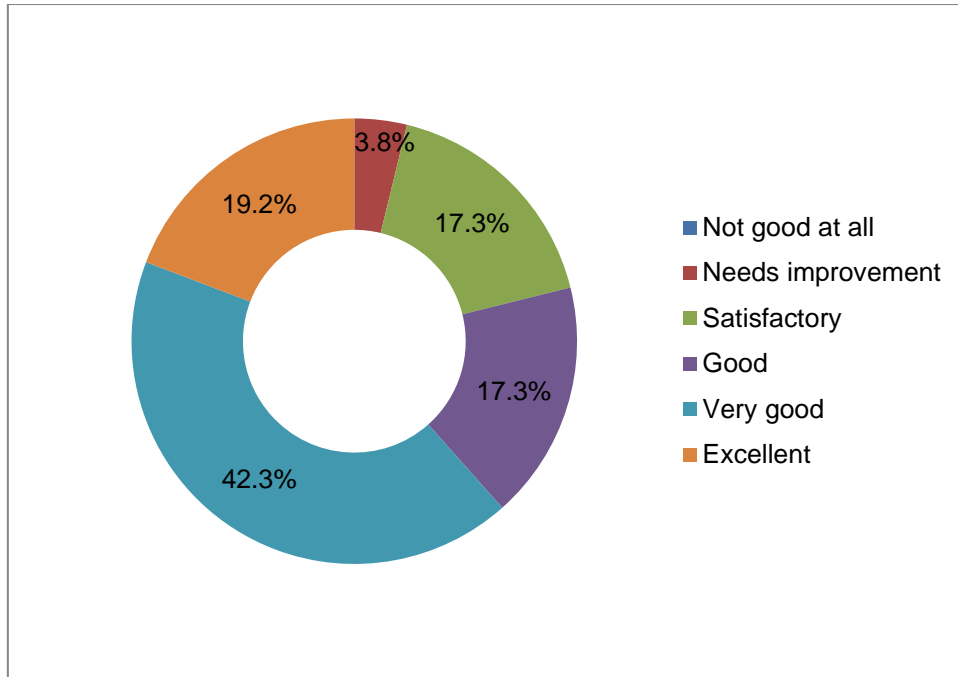


Fig. 9: Overall rating of EYA 2014 public website

Website feedback

19 archives commented on the EYA website:

- Liked live social media updates
- Would be helpful to search and filter the events as long scrolling page not ideal
- 'How to get involved' section could have been easier to find
- Ian introduction on the front page to explain what the campaign was about

Social media: over two thirds of archives took part

In the area of social media, there was less engagement than with the EYA website, though the level was still high. 71% of archives in 2014 used social media as part of their campaign. In 2013, 75% of archives thought social media and the public website were important to EYA.

Social media feedback

30 archives commented on the social media provision:

- Themed daily hashtags brought focus and cohesion to campaign
- Images could be added to the Tweets
- Thunderclap easy to use and quick to implement
- Unable to access social media due to corporate control of channels

List of Explore Your Archive 2014 participants

Alfred Gillett Trust
Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service
Bishopsgate Institute
Bootham School
British Postal Museum Archive
Brent Museum and Archives
Cambridge Assessment
Ceredigion Archives
Cheshire Archives and Local Studies
City of Edinburgh Council
Cornwall Record Office
Cumbria Archive Service
Cumbria Archive Service - four archive centres in Barrow, Carlisle, Kendal and Whitehaven
Denbighshire Archives
Dorset History Centre
Dudley Archives and Local History Service
East Dunbartonshire Archives
Edinburgh City Archives
Falkirk Archives
Flintshire Record Office
Glamorgan Archives
Glasgow City Archives
Gloucestershire Archives
Goldsmiths, University of London
Greene County Archives, Ohio, USA
Heriot-Watt University
Hillingdon Local Studies, Archives and Museum Service
Institution of Civil Engineers
Khizra Foundation-Everyday Muslim project
King's College, Taunton
Kingston University
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Archives Service
Lothian Health Services Archive
Louth County Archives Service (Ireland)
Manchester Central Library / Archives+
Manx National Heritage
National Museum of Wales
National Records of Scotland
Oxfordshire History Centre
Perth and Kinross Council Archive
Princethorpe College
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
Queen Square Archives (UCL/UCLH)
Rambert

Royal Air Force Museum
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
Royal Holloway, University of London
School of Scottish Studies Archives
South West Heritage Trust: Devon Archives and Local Studies Service via Exeter
Cathedral Archive
The Network - tackling social exclusion
The Rothschild Archive London
The Theatres Trust
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
University of Edinburgh Special Collections/ Centre for Research Collections
University of Glasgow Archive Service
University of Greenwich Archive
University of Leeds Special Collections
University of Stirling - projects
University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections
Vestry House Museum, Waltham Forest Archives and Local Studies Library
Warwickshire County Record Office
West Glamorgan Archive Service
West Yorkshire Archive Service
Wilts and Swindon Archives
Wirral Archives Service
Wolverhampton City Archives

Explore Your Archive social media activity findings

The social media strategy for the 2014 Explore Your Archive (EYA) campaign aimed to build on the previous year's activity and provide a framework for archive services to take part in coordinated activity. We aimed to amplify the archive sector's voice to gain maximum reach on social media.

Aims

1. To increase the amount of social media activity – accounts and content – from archives, by providing the tools, skills and support for services to use social media effectively
2. To amplify the voice and reach of the archives sector to raise awareness of EYA and increase engagement with the public and new audiences
3. Widen the target audience of the EYA campaign to increase the number of social media followers, engage with the wider public and drive traffic to the EYA website and Facebook page to support activity and events being held around the country

Outline of activity

We created a [Thunderclap](#) for social media users to sign up to, to show their support for archives. This automatically posted out our message – a world without records is a world without memory, on their twitter and facebook accounts.

We created a week-long programme of daily themed hashtags that provided a framework for archives to coordinate their activity. These included: #dayinthelife, #WW1archives, #askarchivists, #archiveselfie and #archiveanimals

We promoted the consistent use of the #explorearchives hashtag both before, during and after the campaign week.

We set up a new EYA-branded twitter account: @explorearchives

Evaluation of activity

An infographic visualising media stats is available online:

<http://www.exploreyourarchive.org/images/explore-your-archive-infographic-2014.jpg>

Participation

50 people/accounts registered their participation in #explorearchives week on twitter

3,446 people/accounts tweeted using #explorearchives

There was a very wide variety of participating Twitter accounts including well known individuals and organisations – especially within the cultural and heritage sector, archives, museums, libraries, universities and councils.

User growth

@explorearhives now has 500+ followers. 400 of these were gained during the campaign week

7 social media evaluation forms were returned – all accounts increased their follower numbers during the campaign week.

@UKNatArchives saw accelerated twitter follower growth. 523 new followers were gained during the campaign week – an 18% increase on the usual number of followers gained during a week.

Engagement

9,954 tweets were sent using #explorearhives

The number of tweets sent using #explorearhives and a daily hashtag:

#archiveanimals	1,560
#dayinthelife	1,077
#WW1archives	1,002
#archiveselfie	642
#askarchivists	421

Engagement rate of Twitter posts ranged from 1.5% to 11.6%

The National Archives' facebook posts reached 3,563 non-fans thanks to likes, comments and shares

Amplification

The Thunderclap went live after receiving 410 supporters. The campaign needed 250 supporters in order for the message to be broadcast. Earning us an organic social reach of 751,963

#explorearhives trended on Monday 10 November 2014 in the morning in the UK and again in London in the afternoon

#archiveanimals trended in the UK on Friday 15 November 2014

#explorearhives hashtag: reach 6,529,129 and 21,369,475 timeline deliveries

60% of tweets sent using #explorearhives used another hashtag, including the daily themed tags and also other topics such as: #callthemidwife, #movember2014, #WW1 and #otd

Response

2% of EYA website traffic came from Facebook

4% of EYA website traffic came from Twitter

The Thunderclap generated 1,122 click throughs to the EYA website

Comments from participating archives

‘The hashtags did kind of assume you had someone around for six days. Fortunately the final three days didn’t really apply to us anyway, as we don’t have staff on those days so couldn’t tweet them (haven’t worked out how to schedule tweets)’

‘This was a great way to get involved with the campaign as we often don’t have anything ‘physical’ that coincides with the launch dates. We contacted our Marketing and our Careers Department in advance to explain the campaign and to ask for their support, which worked really well and they were really keen to get involved. Marketing also gave us advice on how to tailor the hashtags to provide what they thought the University’s Twitter audience would like to see. We felt that it really helped to raise our profile within the University and it was a great opportunity for putting more images from our collections ‘out there’. Our #archiveselfie of a skeleton pretending to be the medical librarian went down really well and got lots of great feedback.’

‘I really liked both the daily hashtags and the thunderclap – they provide a solid structure for social media strategy during the week. I would love to use them again next year!’

‘I thought it was a brilliant campaign. I would have liked to contribute more but unfortunately I was away the week of the campaign and could only schedule a few tweets.’

‘Great engagement from other organisations’

Conclusions and recommendations

The Thunderclap and daily hashtags were very successful in providing the framework for archives to build their social media activity around. The coordinated activity definitely helped to amplify the voice of the sector improving the reach and generating enthusiasm and social conversations.

Next year we should consider doing more activity on Facebook.

An earlier announcement of the social media strategy in 2015 could allow us to build relationships between the social media managers, share ideas and also provide training on some elements, such as evaluation and reporting.