

The National Archives' audience profile

Overview

Around 81,000 members of the public visit The National Archives each year; the majority (around 75,000) head for the first and second floors to use our reading rooms, another 2,500 attend our events, and around 4,000 schoolchildren and their teachers take part in classroom sessions with our education team.

The profile for our traditional 'readers' has broadly remained the same for the last few years: most (75%) are aged 45 and over, they are slightly more male than female (58:42), and are mostly white (88%). The majority (81%) live in the UK, with around a third living in our neighbouring postcodes. They mostly use our services to carry out their own research, predominantly family and local history.

With visitor numbers plateauing (and even starting to drop in some areas), we are about to embark on a new approach that will see us engaging new audiences and boosting our visitor numbers. We are in the early stages of positioning ourselves as a cultural destination, as well as a traditional research-based institution. Over the coming years we will physically transform our public spaces and introduce a new programme of events, exhibitions and other activities that will take place within them.

We are currently implementing a new audience engagement strategy that sets out our segmentation model. Produced using a combination of research into existing and potential new audiences, the segmentation provides us with a clearer picture of audience expectations and behaviours, and is already helping us target them more effectively.

A summary of the segments is outlined below, listed in order from existing audiences to new.

Our new segmentation

1. Invested Loyals: *'Archives are who I am' /volunteers /advocates*

This segment views archives as 'part of who they are'. One in six already volunteers for us, and use our services frequently (in last 12 months). They have a high online usage and deep engagement with a range of things that we do. They are not particularly 'cultural', and if they attend anywhere it is likely to be British Library or British Museum. They are not yet heavy users or advocates of our public programme, but have potential to become so. They have an appetite for personal research more than any other segment.

2. Head down Kew Researcher: *Self-directed/onsite not online /not cultural*

This segment makes up a large portion of our current users. They mainly use the reading rooms or self-directed research, with a very specific purpose for their visit. They have the lowest online usage and the lowest interest in the public programme. They are not cultural but will go to cultural events if they are on their radar. Their interaction with the public programme is mainly via daytime events. There are more males in this segment than others. Their main motivation is to learn for academic or professional reasons.

3. Curious Minds: *Multi-platform /debaters /thirst for knowledge*

This segment is intellectually curious, interacting with our brand for a range of services – online and offline. They are the 2nd highest-ranking segment to be introduced to our offer by using online services first. They actively seek out cultural experiences, and regularly attend cultural events, and they visit other archives more than any other segment. There are more females in this segment than others.

4. Online only: *Online not onsite/UK-wide/single-use*

This segment only uses our online facilities. They are less frequent users and are likely to only use one service sporadically. They are most likely to use the site for family history. They are spread throughout the UK, and have a broad demographic. There is a limited knowledge of the site in Kew – but when asked, would want to know more about touring, online learning and family events. They are currently not demonstrating high cultural attendance, although their preference for rock & pop is a trend. They were the biggest segment whose activities were limited due to disability.

5. Cultural Devotee: *Social, enthusiastic for change, event-orientated*

This segment represents a smaller group within our current visitors, but they have used a wide variety of our services. Likely to have attended an event by way of introduction to our brand, they are very likely to attend an event or exhibition in the future. They are very high users of arts and heritage sites, and look for entertainment and socialising from their visit. They were the segment that were most enthusiastic about our new programme plans, indicating that five or more of the options outlined in our research appealed to them. They also indicated the café and shop offer was important to them. They are slightly younger and more female than male.

6. Family for me: *Motivated by family event/family history/learning*

This segment has children or grandchildren, and is motivated by child-orientated events. Over half cite learning as their motivation and high expectation that we will deliver a family learning experience. Their main interaction is family history online, with many in this segment only selecting this option. They are likely to be super-local – but they don't currently visit the Kew site.

7. Community Concept: *Strong community tie, long-time residents, broad demographic*

This segment is new to our brand, not demonstrated in our data, but more in the bigger picture of where we might draw audiences from. They have a strong tie to either their community or area – with many likely to be supporters or members of community clubs, religious institutions or involved in local activity. They are interested in local history and the social connection they get from mixing with other residents or groups. They are diverse in age and ethnicity. They reside in the harder to reach boroughs of London, many of which are quite local to us.