

History of Spanish University Archives

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ABSTRACT

In the last 20 years, the archives of the Spanish universities have experienced an exponential growth. In the 1980s there were eight universities with archives; now there are 53. This article analyses this increase and also attempts to explain the reasons that have made this possible. Every two years, the Conference on Archives of Universities conducts a survey to analyse the situation: general information about names and origins, record management and organization of the archives, treatment of records, management and record processing of electronic records, human resources and infrastructure, services offered, computing, external technical assistance and cooperation, etc. This article describes the current situation on archives in the Spanish universities and outlines their strengths and weaknesses.

Storia degli archivi universitari spagnoli

SINTESI

Negli ultimi venti anni gli archivi delle università spagnole hanno avuto una crescita esponenziale. Negli anni '80 c'erano otto università con un archivio; oggi ce ne sono 53. Il presente articolo analizza questa crescita e cerca anche di spiegare le ragioni che l'hanno resa possibile. Ogni due anni la Conferenza sugli archivi universitari redige uno studio per analizzare la situazione: informazioni generali su nomi ed origini, gestione documentale ed organizzazione degli archivi, trattamento dei dati, gestione e trattamento dei documenti elettronici, risorse umane ed infrastrutture, servizi offerti, informatizzazione, assistenza tecnica esterna e cooperazione, ecc. Il presente articolo descrive la situazione corrente degli archivi nelle università spagnole ed evidenzia i loro punti forti ed i loro punti deboli.

Zgodovina španskih univerzitetnih arhivov

IZVLEČEK

V zadnjih 20 letih so arhivi španskih univerz doživeli velik porast. Leta 1980 je bilo osem univerz, ki so imele svoj arhiv, medtem ko jih je danes že 53. Prispevek analizira omenjeno povečanje ter poskuša pojasniti razloge,

ki so privedli do tega. Vsaki dve leti se izvaja raziskava, ki omogoča analizo stanja glede splošnih informacij o imenu in začetkih, upravljanja z zapisi in organizacijo arhivov, obdelavo zapisov, upravljanja in obdelave elektronskih zapisov, človeških virov in infrastrukture, ponujenih storitev, računalništva, zunanje tehnične pomoči in sodelovanja itd. Prispevek opisuje trenutno stanje v arhivih španskih univerz in izpostavlja njihove prednosti in slabosti.

Historia de los archivos universitarios españoles

EXTRACTO

En los últimos 20 años, los archivos de las universidades españolas han experimentado un crecimiento exponencial. En la década de 1980 había ocho universidades con archivos, ahora hay 53. En este artículo se analiza este aumento, y también trata de explicar las razones que lo han hecho posible. Cada dos años, la Conferencia de Archivos de Universidades lleva a cabo un estudio para analizar la situación, recaba de datos acerca de la información general sobre los nombres y orígenes, gestión y organización de los archivos, el tratamiento de la documentación, la gestión de los documentos electrónicos de archivo, los recursos humanos y la infraestructura, los servicios ofrecidos, la informatización, la asistencia técnica externa y la cooperación, etc. Este artículo describe la situación actual en los archivos de las universidades españolas y esboza sus fortalezas y debilidades.

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES IN SPAIN

The first Spanish university archive was the Archive of Salamanca (1218), followed by others from these universities: Valladolid (1250), Santiago de Compostela (1495), Granada (1532), Oviedo (1608) and Valencia (1779). In the twentieth century, a number of similar archives were established: Universidad Complutense de Madrid (1964), Cádiz (1979) and Zaragoza (1986). Prior to 1987, only eight university archives existed in Spain. At the present time there are 53. In the last 25 years, 45 archives have been created. The table below shows the evolution of universities which established an archive¹ between 1994 and 2012.

	Number of Universities	<i>Universities with archive</i>
1994	41	24
1997	59	29
1999	66	36
2001	68	41
2003	70	45
2006	71	49
2008	74	50
2010	75	53
2012	75	53

The progress has been undoubtedly positive, as the percentage of universities establishing an archive has increased significantly from 58% in 1994 to 70% in the year 2012. However, a remaining 30% of universities still don't possess an archive; a negative factor in terms of university record management and preservation.

To put this development in context, at least three factors need to be taken into account. Firstly, the proliferation of universities: in 1960 there were just eleven universities in Spain², whereas nowadays there are 75. A second factor that partially explains this increase in the number of universities is the development of the "state of the autonomies" in Spain. Finally, and this is the most important point in this article, is the founding of the Archivists Conference of Spanish Universities (Conferencia de Archiveros de Universidades Españolas - CAU).

1. For practical reasons mainly text uses the term Archive. Archive can include archives and records management functions, or only one of them.

2. Universidad de Salamanca (1218), Universidad Central de Madrid (1293), Universidad de Valladolid (1295), Universitat de Barcelona (1430), Universidad de Zaragoza (1474), Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (1495), Universitat de València (1500), Universidad de Sevilla (1505), Universidad de Granada (1531), Universidad de Oviedo (1608), Universidad de Navarra (1960)

The CAU is composed of archivists and records managers from Spanish universities and aims to promote cooperation amongst university archivists and records managers in all those technical fields related to university records management and archives so as to achieve greater efficacy for these services and disseminate their knowledge among university community members and society in general³.

Since 1994, the CAU has produced reports on the situation relating to university archives based on surveys in which data and activity indicators are provided by its members.

The objective of this article is to offer an overall view on the current situation of the Spanish university archives and their evolution throughout time, using the previously mentioned reports as a main source⁴.

In January 2013, a survey was sent to those members in charge of the 53 university archives, and was responded to by 42 of them. In March 2013, the CAU executive Committee - all the authors of this article - compiled a status report from the gathered data. It is important to acknowledge that the results do not include the whole of the Spanish university archives, but only 79,2%, a number considered sufficiently representative for these purposes. It should also be taken into account that the response rate has not been so high every year (and therefore not equally representative); on some occasions, the requests have been complemented and updated, resulting in questions that do not contain all the necessary data to see a uniform evolution.

LIFE CYCLE OF RECORDS

Currently, 76% of Spanish university archives are involved with the whole life cycle whilst 24% take part in only the semi-active and inactive aspects of records. Comparing these data with prior data corresponding to previous years, an increase in the number of archives completing the entire records life cycle is noticeable. This manifests a positive trend orientated towards the integral record management model though much work remains to be done.

ARCHIVE AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

This work is predominated by the general archive or university archive denomination (48%); those archives that are exclusively historical are receding in the university realm (5%).

Data comparison amongst years 2003 and 2012 is significant, as during these years the percentage of university archives holding a service category, has increased from 29,2% to 45,2%⁵. To an extent it is a positive indicator, meaning that gradually, there are more archives enhancing their position within the university administrative structure, a need repeatedly expressed since the CAU was founded, which obviously contributes to greater initiative and action capacity. It may be also considered as an institutional recognition of a positive demonstration of the archive and record management function at the university.

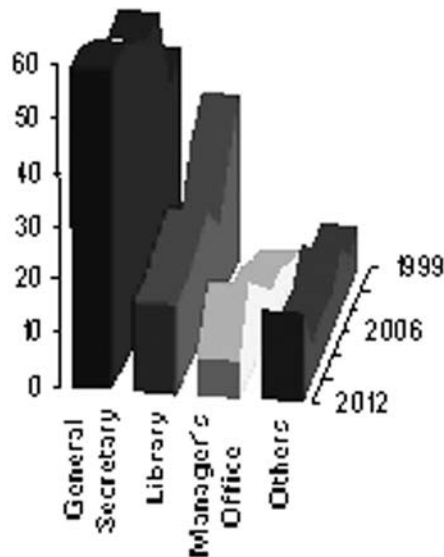
Analyzing the functional dependence, a factor with notable incidence on the archive services running/functioning remains the predominant trend of dependence on the Secretary General or General Secretary's office, whilst dependence on the library's services demonstrates a clear reduction in

3. Within the CAU, the activity of the diverse taskforces must be highlighted; their goal is to analyze previous and current issues, especially relevant to the collective of university archivists and records managers. Their work outcomes are annually presented at the university archives working days. Currently, seven taskforces exist and the high implication demonstrated (70%) by the university archives within the common work of the CAU should be highlighted. Another aspect of great importance is the university archive and records management working day celebration, organized by the CAU annually since 1994. On its website - <http://cau.crue.org> [last consultation made on the 07/06/13] - the regulations can be consulted, as well as a comprehensive directory with all the university archives, taskforces the working days and all records produced.

4. The results for the surveys conducted in 1999, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012 can be consulted at <http://cau.crue.org/Quehacemos/encuestas/> [last consultation made on the 07/06/13]. For prior surveys, previous CAU archives were consulted.

5. The archive, as a service, was devised in the university to support, assist and advise academic authorities for research purposes and technology transfer and to support any other administrative management processes considered necessary for the university to fulfill their aims.

trend. This reality is supported by the need the universities to inform of their management and guarantee the conservation of records for this purpose. In addition, between 2007 and 2010, in conjunction with policy changes affecting electronic administration, an impact change in terms of records management has occurred, a change that universities have to observe as a legal imperative.



With regard to regulations and norms, the evolution of this indicator has also been positive. On the one hand, during the last decade a notable advance has been registered in the proportion of University Statutes mentioning the archive at some point, moving from 25 % in the beginning to 81% today.

On the other hand, 74% of the archives possess at least some regulation related to the archival and records management system, with the regulation appearing in the usual formula. The evolution in this case is again noticeable, due to the fact that in 2003 only 27% of the archives included a regulation. Nonetheless, and still striking, is the lack of regulations in 26% of the archives.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURES

Staff

Human resources, an organization's principal activity, have always been one of the most limited resources in university archives. In their reports, the CAU has constantly denounced the slow pace of staff growth, generally under competence, activity and service levels supplied by the archives.

The 2008 report showed an average number of 3,3 people working in the archive. The 2013 report presented an increase, reaching an average number of 4,6 persons. It appears evident that the needs related to staff are very different according to the size and the history of a university (and associated functions and projects), with the data stating that 52,3% of the archives in 2012 had just one to three members of staff, denoting the fact that a number of archives lack the minimum necessary number of staff.

The basis on which staff works in public university archives, is mainly determined by the university staff scale, under direct supervision of the University.

Within the section of human resources, other categories were similarly analyzed, such as archive

Directors, whose distribution in 2012 confirms their clear tendency as being university personnel to whom direction and management belongs. The comparison with 2003 data shows the trend towards the increase in the number of these management groups.

Facilities

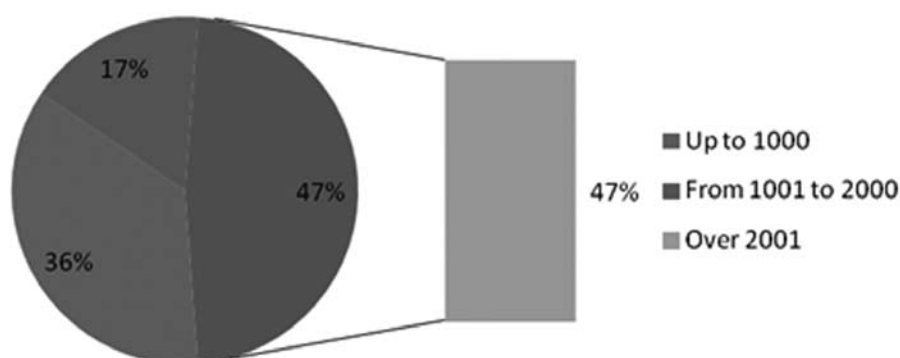
Data provided about dimensions are disparate. The majority of archives (57,2%) rely on one or two storage even though there are some archives containing eight. Nevertheless, the number of storages is not as significant as it appears on the surface as it varies from a minimum of 32 m² to a maximum of 2.850 m².

In general, space destined for technical services is quite limited and very disparate, with a minimum of 6 m² and a maximum of 240 m² recorded/registered.

One noticeable aspect is the mean low value of the surface allocated to users of consultation rooms, being even non-existent in a number of university archives. Perhaps due again to a lack of historical files, the majority of consultations have been internal; at the same time, on many occasions borrowings are sent via postal internal courier or electronically.

In terms of shelves, lineal meters can be illustrative so as to appreciate the records volume. The data have been collected in batches in order to make it easier to process and present.

Lineal metres occupied

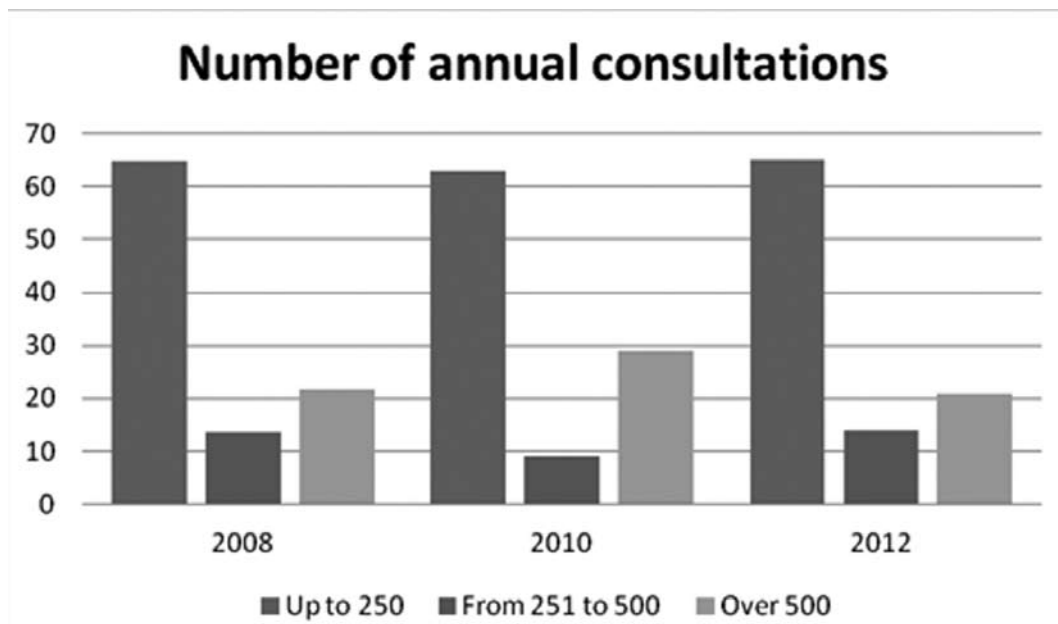


The percentage of archives surpassing the 2001 lineal meters of occupied shelves tends to grow progressively, from 38,7% in 2008, 42,8% in 2010 to 47,6% in 2012.

SERVICES

Enquiries and records borrowing

The major number of archives (65%) has a maximum number of consultations annually of 250. This is directly related to the mean archive and university size. Generally, evolution turns out to be positive if we contrast/cross-check the results with those from 2008 and 2010. A trend of progressive increase in enquiries among the university archives is registered.

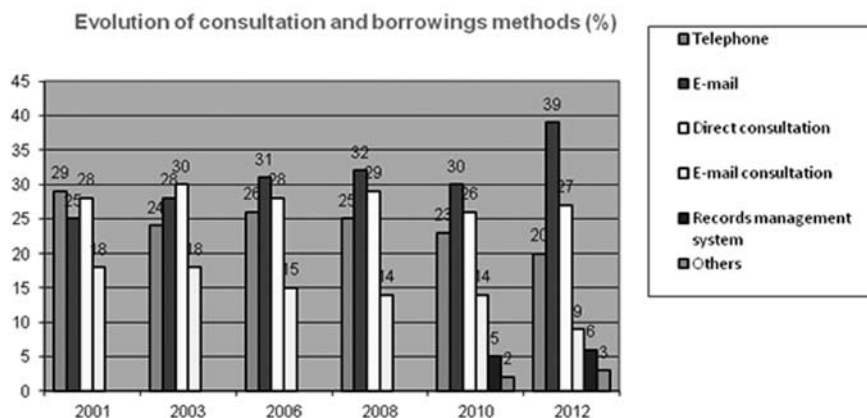


In reference to the number of annual enquiries, in 2012 41% achieved a maximum of 100, 33% between 101 and 500 and 26% achieved over 500. The average percentages in 2008 were: 29,7%, 35,1% and 32,4% respectively; and in 2010: 40%, 40% and 20% respectively. This trend of reducing the volume of enquiries is maintained over these respective years.

Methods for consultation and completion of borrowing

Enquiries and borrowing management via e-mail continues to be the most popular system utilized, though followed closely by the traditional way “in situ”. The advantages for both users and staff are evident: cutbacks in management times, increased user satisfaction, and greater flexibility for the archivist, etcetera.

Making a comparison with prior data, it can be appreciated that apart from an increase in both services, there is a gradual rise in e-mail use becoming a routine tool in university management; in contrast, the use of postal mail is reduced (8,6%). The management via telephone or within the archive remains at similar percentages. The use of the university electronic application of records management system commenced in 2010 (2%) and has increased to 6% by 2012.

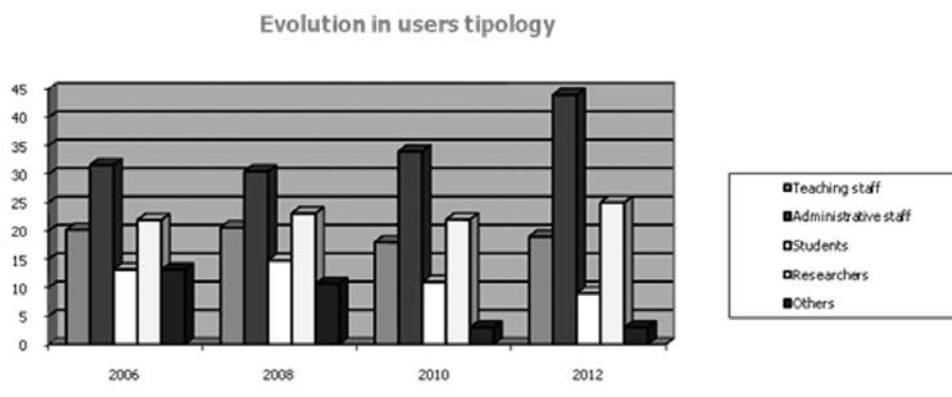


Archive users

The average profile of users according to corresponding typology presents similar values in recent years. In 2012, the greatest percentages of university archive users are members of the university community. Amongst them, administrative and service staff are the most common users (44%).

In second position are researchers (25%). This is a reflection of the inherent function of the archive in the sense of it managing the records integrally: active and semi-active records are consulted most by administrative and service staff whereas researchers show greater interest in historical files.

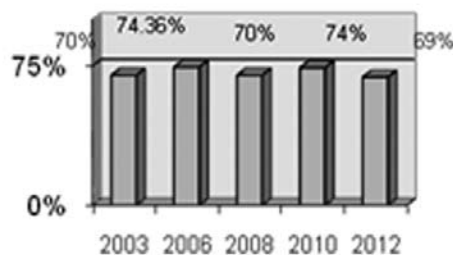
As the volume of records available for public access increases and varies, the number of external users will vary accordingly.



User instruction/training

69% of the archives run training activities that are mostly directed at the administrative and service staff, the main users.

Evolution of the number of archives with training activities (%)

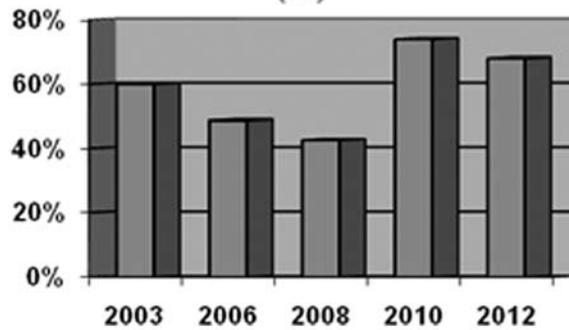


The percentage has decreased in comparison with previous years, possibly due to lack of resources; but this small decrease provides a good demonstration of the effort being made by university archives to improve this service.

Dissemination activities

The number of archives carrying out dissemination activities represents 68% in 2012. This is encouraging data, given that dissemination is a fundamental activity in any archive. The following graphic shows the evolution of this indicator throughout the last eight years:

Evolution of the number of archives with dissemination activities (%)



There are a wide variety of dissemination activities, according to the user typology: publications about the archive, exhibitions -either physically or virtually-, articles and communications in congresses, web publications of the description tools, and presence in social media; these activities are disparate with the number ranging from between one to 15 per year.

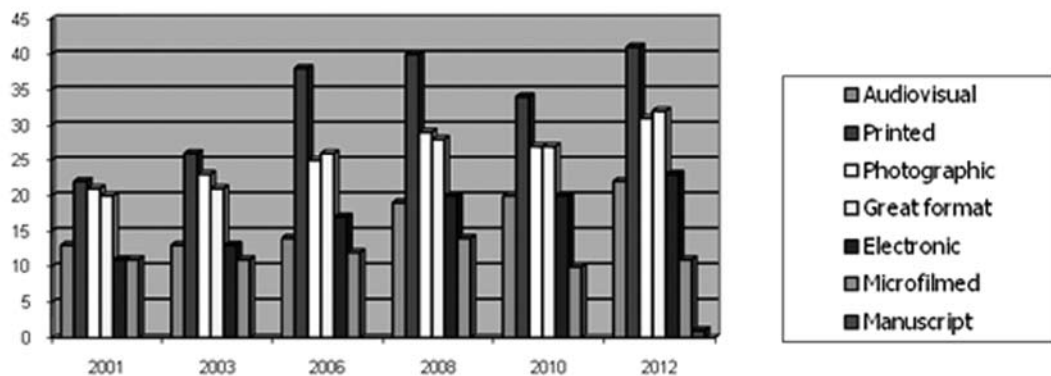
RECORDS AND SPECIALCOLLECTIONS

The main characteristics of the records and special collections kept in university archives determine to an extent the activities and tasks relating to completion, and the reason why it is interesting to understand the nature, typology and management of archives.

It is regarded that 81% recorded keep in their storages of archives records with administrative value as historical records. They are usually general archives, which have the capacity to incorporate records of any period, in a standardized records management framework and treatment along all stages of the records life cycle. 12% of the archives state they only guard administrative records and 2% only historical records. However, 55% of archives are process donations and legacies.

Data related to formats and support of these records guarded within the university archives are detailed next. The archives in their entirety maintain textual records, but it can be noticed the increase in archives that possess another type of support. The following figure shows the evolution in terms of number and variety of formats and support of the records processed in the university archives.

Formats and supports evolution



Compared with previous years, there is a clear rise in the number of archives possessing electronic records. At this point, it must be highlighted that the Spanish law 11/2007 on electronic access for citizens to public services recognizes the citizens right to deal with the administration electronically, which explains universities offering a greater number of electronic procedures (partial or total). As a direct consequence, there has been a downward trend in records transfer on a traditional support (mainly paper) at the same time as the volume of electronic records increases.

When it comes to “basic dates” on the records that are kept, the data are as diverse as the universities founding dates. It is relevant that relatively young universities guard special collections. This is due to the incorporation of donations and purchases.

An interesting point is the end date of the records, which for the most part is very recent, denoting the fact that many administrative units transfer their records once the administrative or academic procedures have already been finalized.

Important information on the annual rise of records has been difficult to record as not all the archives have provided these data, and in some cases the measure has not been proportionate in lineal meters, and therefore does not allow comparison. Of those archives proportioning data in lineal meters, we observe 11 archives experiencing an annual increase of less than 100 lineal meters, 21 increasing in a range from 100 to 200, and finally, only four surpassing the 200 lineal meter mark. We can conclude that the majority of the archives have an annual growth of between 100 and 300 lineal meters.

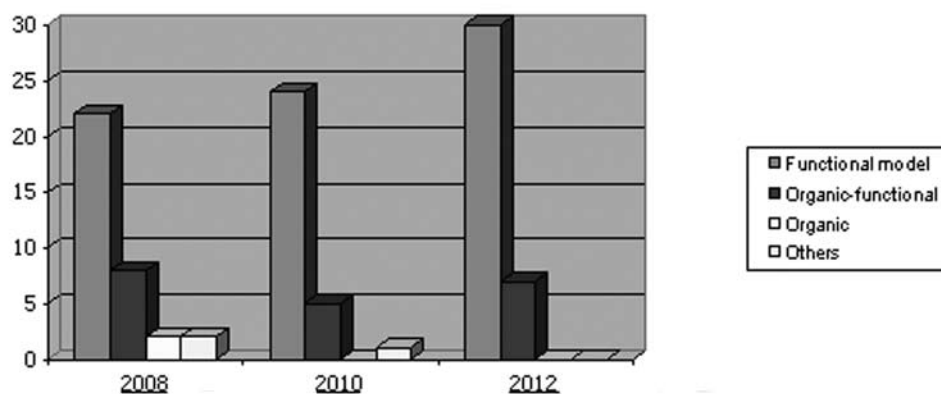
RECORDS MANAGEMENT

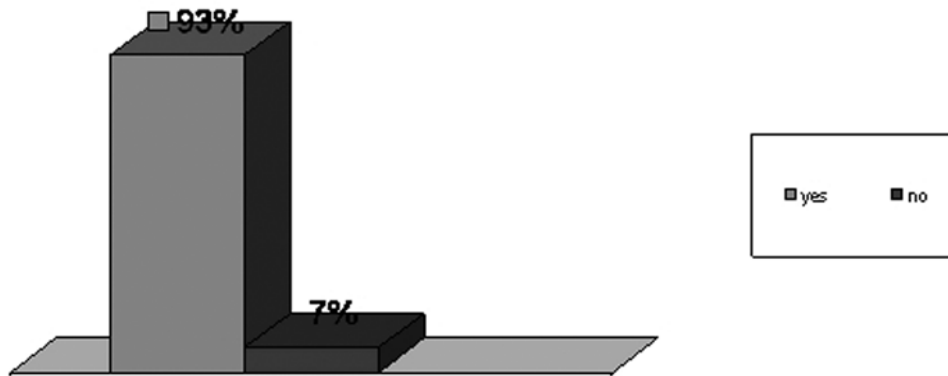
Records management and processing are a set of operations and techniques related to design, development, application and assessment of the processes required for future identification, organization, appraisal and disposition of the records since they are produced until they enter the archive. This means that indicators at this stage are essential to assess the archives efficacy and quality grade.

Classification of business activities

93% of the archives have a classification framework, clearly indicating university archives advocate it as the principal tool in records and archive management.

The classification criteria chosen is the “functional model” in 71,4% of the archives, followed by the “organic-functional” model in 16,6%. Just one archive applies an organic classification system.





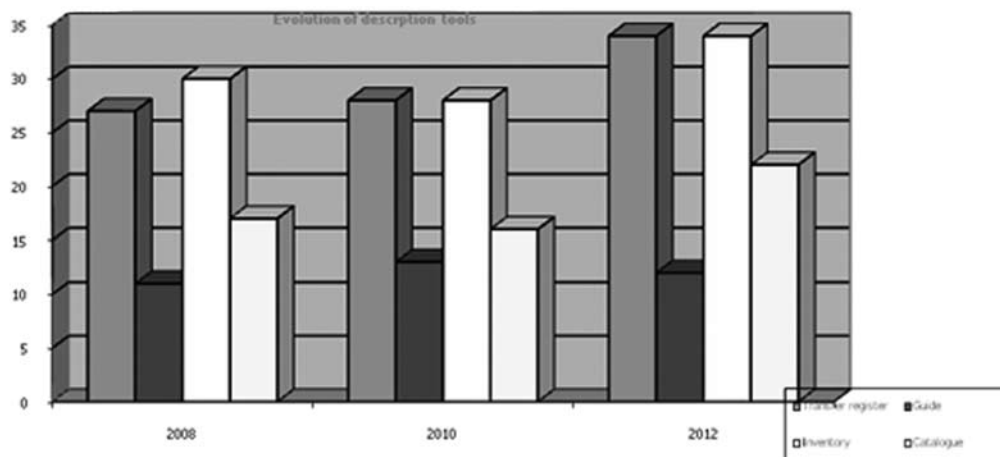
Description

Within records management and processing, description aims to retrieve information and facilitate access to records. This involves the archivist and records manager working on the records from the first stages (production and design), until its appraisal and disposition.

A transfer register is available in 81% of the cases.

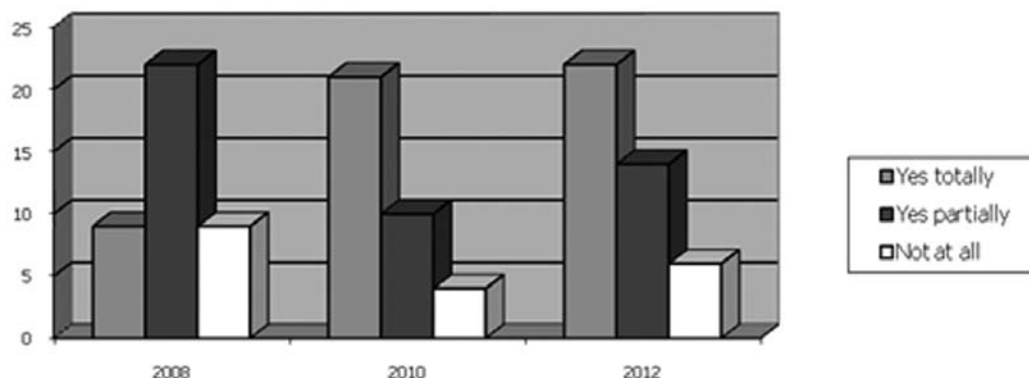
The inventory is the description tool used on most occasions with availability in 81% of the archives. It describes “records units” of the diverse series respecting its structure, and the reason why it is considered fundamental.

Despite the difficulty involved in detailed description (at catalogue levels), 52% of the archives positively state that they carry out such descriptions.



In reference to the use of international norms on description, there exists remarkable difference compared to the year 2008; in 58% of the archives international norms are used for all the records, in 33% of the cases they are only used on a partial basis, and in 14% are not used at all.

Evolution of International norms on description



The most utilized norms are the ISAD, ISAAR, ISDIAH and MOREQ

In terms of archive responsibility in the creation and design, removal and conservation of university records, in 2012 86% of the archives worked on identification and organization, 52% addressed assessment and selection tasks, and 31% took part in production and design of records. In the last couple of years a positive growth is reported in contrast with the 2008 and 2010 surveys.

It is evident that identification and assessment functions are part of the records management and archiving process. To assess any institutional records is mainly to judge the value it has on any organism and on the constitution of a collective patrimony or memory. The appraisal has gained a strategic and quality dimension. Identification provides the exact knowledge of the records series produced by an organism and their characteristics, and the appraisal analyzes the historical, administrative, legal, fiscal and informative features of the records. The results shown in the 2012 survey prove that 82% conduct assessment studies, demonstrating the importance the archives place on appraisal as a priority in records management and archiving.

Appraisal and disposition plan determine the records that must be incorporated into the record management system and the duration of their disposition. It is the vehicle that comprises and drives conservation rules. It is also the tool by which transfer conservation and series to be removed deadlines are materialized according to records appraisal. In 2012, 67% of the archives state having this tool - a considerable positive evolution with regard to the 2008 and 2010 data.

In 2012, 62% of the archives ensure having an appraisal committee at the university⁶.

However, from the 38% not having their own commission, 62% state that such a Commission does not even exist in their respective autonomous communities⁷.

Only 36% of the archives have a plan available to protect essential records, from which only 73% include electronic records.

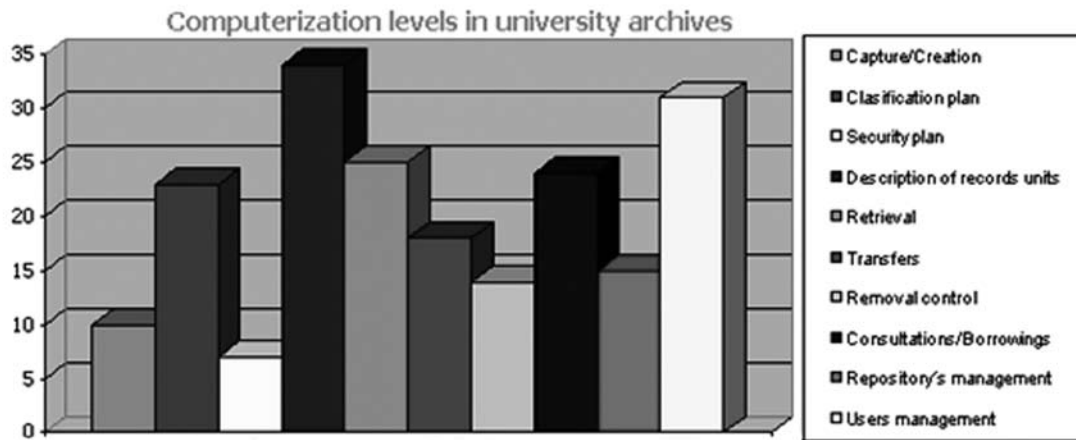
COMPUTERIZATION AND ELECTRONIC ADMINISTRATION

The information technology application in the archive task process is key data to assess the current situation of university archives. In this sense, it must be emphasized that although 82% have some sort of computerized process, the remaining 18% do not have any at all.

6, The Appraisal Commissions within the universities have the functions of identifying and completing the assessment processes in their own university, and sending to the autonomous commission where the archive has its main headquarters, disposition proposals, or given the case, the permanent conservation proposal, applying the procedures established by the current regulations for those records which have not yet received archival treatment.

7, The autonomous Appraisal Commissions are technical bodies, assigned to the autonomous competent organs in records management and archival issues. Their functions are precisely to establish the disposition proposals of the records received and in some cases, the accessibility proposals, in application of established procedures by the current regulations of the autonomous community where the archive has its headquarter.

An enormous disparity exists, as only 18% of the archives have all processes computerized (in consonance with their University record management system), and 64% have very different grades. This can be seen in the graphic below:



Electronic administration

As could be expected, in the application of Spanish law 11/2007 previously mentioned, there is an appreciable increase of the number of universities having a commission or taskforce on electronic administration. In these terms, we notice an increase occurring from 53% of universities in 2008 to 83% in 2012.

The most relevant data might be the percentage of archives taking part in these commissions; the result obtained is 80% participating in the commission or taskforce of their university, or at least working as an internal adviser. The comparison of this data with previous results (56% for 2008 and 66% for 2010) shows an optimistic trend.

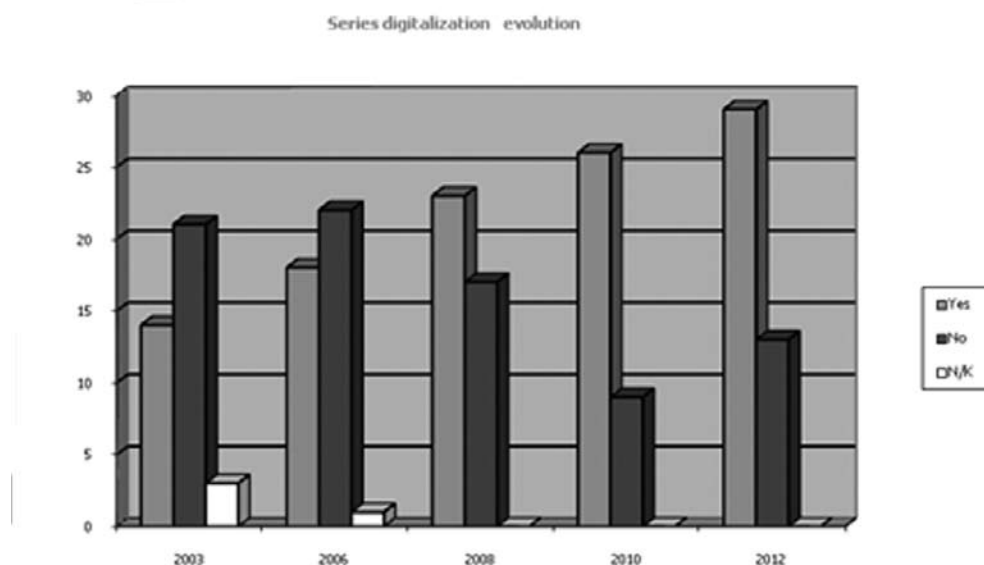
In relation to the existence of a system that allows for electronic records management, there is increased growth from 2010 (43%) to 2012 (60%).

Storage systems

In relation to the storage systems for permanent conservation electronic records, we observe that in the last two years, the integration of digital repositories and secured external storage tools have considerably increased, resulting in a fall of generalized use of servers (2010=62%, 2012=31%) and portable supports (2010=43%, 2012=23%).

Records series digitalization

74% of archives are digitalizing records. There has been a progressive and continued growth as can be appreciated in the following graphic.



The majority of the university archives carry out digitalization tasks as a complement to the original record in paper, and as part of a program of record management or in order to spread their archival heritage. Currently, just 19% conduct records digitalization in order to substitute the original record in paper.

EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

54,7% of the archives respond affirmatively to the question related to service externalization. The following table shows the typology:

External Assistance type	2006	2008	2010	2012
Reprography	6	2	4	3
Digitalization	8	8	6	10
Records treatment	1	1	3	3
Vigilance	2	5	2	2
Exhibitions/organization	1	1	0	0
School visits	1	0	0	0
Restoration	2	3	4	3
Consultation room management	1	0	0	0
Records storage or on externalized companies premises	2	2	1	2
Others	-	-	2	6

The main reason for service externalization is the necessity of having sporadic professional services, the most habitual of these being digitalization, reprography and restoration. There is an increase in the externalization of records treatment and the certified destruction services.

CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the evolution of Spanish university archives during the last two decades, a positive trend is appreciated in terms of conception of the archive and records management service within the university and in acknowledgement of the service as a separate entity, reflecting the university statutes and the archive regulations. It is registered in advance in the consideration of archives as university services, with dependency arising on transversal organs, particularly from the Secretary General or General Secretary's office.

Likewise, there is an improvement in the records management and archival function of carrying out integral record management for the university and the traditional dichotomy among administrative and historical records appears to be vanishing.

In records management and archival system, a positive evolution is detected, basically, thanks to the implementation in using international norms for archival description, functional classification plan and records series appraisal studies. These last two issues work in favor of a progressive application of disposition plans in a bigger number of archives.

In relation to user services, particularly in user training and dissemination activities, a positive trend is also noticeable.

The data referring to computerization levels in university archives are very varied and disparate and there are very few archives with their entire work processes computerized.

Archival participation in setting up electronic administration within the universities has followed a remarkable positive trend, as currently 80% of the university archives take part in the electronic administrations commission or are related experts.

In the context of the implementation of electronic administration in the universities and the development of new functions and competences, specifically in the management of electronic records, the activities organized by the CAU are a great opportunity for collaborative learning and experience exchange.

One negative aspect identified, or at least potentially identified, is the number of human resources. Despite certain improvements registered, the identification of an insufficient number of workers is reported, resulting in difficulties in terms of service development and new assignments among archive staff.

Infrastructure improvements are also barely appreciated overall in regard to economic resources and facilities. These aspects negatively affect the running of archives and directly impact on the quality of the services offered to users. Furthermore, the institution's image may be damaged.

Finally, it must be stressed that 70% of the archives belong to some Taskforce within the CAU; this provides evidence of the high importance of Spanish university archives in the common interest.

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Results of surveys conducted in the years: 1999, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, cfr <http://cau.crue.org/Quehacemos/encuestas/> [last consultation 20/06/2013]

SUMMARY

The archives of the Spanish universities have experienced an exponential growth. If we analyze their evolution during the last two or three decades, a positive trend is appreciated in terms of conception of the archive and records management service within the university and in acknowledgement of the service as a separate entity, reflecting the university statutes and the archive regulations. It is registered in advance in the consideration of archives as university services, with dependency arising on transversal organs. Likewise, there is an improvement in the records management and archival function of carrying out integral record management for the university and the traditional dichotomy among administrative and historical records appears to be vanishing. In records management and archival system, a positive evolution is detected, basically, thanks to the implementation in using international norms for archival description, functional classification plan, disposition plan that included appraisal studies of records units and progressive evolution about electronic records management system where archival participation in setting up electronic administration within the universities has followed a remarkable positive trend. One negative aspect identified is the number of human resources in the archives of the Spanish universities. Despite certain improvements registered, the identification of an insufficient number of archivists and records managers and other specialized workers is reported, resulting in difficulties in terms of service development and new assignments among archive staff. Infrastructure improvements are also barely appreciated overall in regard to economic resources and facilities.

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