Partners in Research
Improving Access to the Nation’s Archive
User Studies at the National Archives and Records Administration

PAUL CONWAY

archives & museum informatics
Pittsburgh, 1994
Table of Contents

Preface / i

Chapter 1: Origins and Outcomes / 1

Chapter 2: Methodological Considerations / 15

Chapter 3: The July 1991 Draft Report / 43

* Introduction /49
* Understanding Users and Use /50
* The National Archives Context /54
* Summary of Research Methodology /59
* Major Findings / 62
  Who Uses the National Archives / 62
    Purpose of Research Visit / 64
    Discovering the National Archives / 66
    Advance Contact and Previous Experience / 68
    Research Questions / 70
  The Research Process / 73
    Orientation / 73
    Search and Retrieval / 75
    Application / 79

* Toward Enhanced Access to the Nation’s Archives / 82
List of Figures

Figure 1: Research Purposes / 51
Figure 2: Gatekeeper Approach / 53
Figure 3: Partnership Approach / 83

List of Tables

Table 1: Research Visits During Study Weeks / 63
Table 2: Purpose of Research Visit / 64
Table 3: Discovering the National Archives / 67
Table 4: Advance Contact and Previous Experience / 70
Table 5: Research Question Elements / 72
Table 6: Intended Use of Resources by Media / 74
Table 7: Use of Photocopying Services / 76
Table 8: Familiarity with Computers / 78
Table 9: Success in Finding Relevant Information / 81

Chapter 4: Appendices to the Draft Report / 89

Appendix 1: Initial Consultation and Referral / 91
Appendix 2: Using the Microfilm Research Room / 103
Appendix 3: Using Textual Records in the National Archives / 111
Appendix 4: Special Archives Research Rooms / 122
Appendix 5: Telephone Inquiry Log / 132
Appendix 6: Reference Correspondence Analysis / 137
Appendix 7: Reference Interviews / 146

Bibliography / 151