"THAT was NOT there before": how family history researchers use public libraries in New Zealand

BY

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ABSTRACT:

PROBLEM

This study examines how family history researchers use libraries in New Zealand. It seeks to understand their relationship with libraries, the information-seeking behaviour and strategies they employ, and how they access resources and retrieve records at libraries. These aspects have not been studied recently and so the amount of current data on them is lacking, leaving many components to be examined.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods design was used to gather data via an anonymous online survey, asking quantitative and qualitative questions. The survey was sent to members of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, and the results were analysed statistically for key themes and patterns.

RESULTS

Family history researchers use libraries to access the physical and electronic materials. Their strategies and behaviours are dictated by their relationship with libraries. Libraries still play a key role in the facilitation and success of family history research, even with the pervasiveness of the internet.

IMPLICATIONS

Libraries need to maintain and develop the current physical and electronic access they provide to key family history materials. The relationship between family history researchers and the libraries they use is integral to their research success.

KEYWORDS: Family history research; public libraries; information-seeking behaviour; search strategies; resource access and use

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1   Introduction

Libraries hold many genealogical resources that are freely accessible. This study is interested in the way New Zealand libraries facilitate and support family history research. Firstly, the relationship between family history researchers and libraries is considered. The study also examines what influences the information-seeking of these researcher's, and the strategies and behaviours they develop. Finally, this study explores how family history researchers use libraries to access the resources they need, and what form this access takes.

1.1   Background and context

Family history researchers, who I refer to hereafter as FHRs, pursue information concerning their ancestry. They trace their heritage and personal history, follow genealogical lines and seek historical information from sources such as birth, death and marriage record indexes, electoral rolls, and newspapers. These records are accessible physically or electronically. Physical access formats include microfiche slides, microfilm reels and books. Electronic records are located on tools such as websites or databases. Libraries offer patrons free access to some subscription-only databases, such as Ancestry.com and Findmypast.com.

Yet, libraries cannot grant access to every family history record. Historical records of official life events, for example, are held by the New Zealand Government's Department of Internal Affairs. Libraries cannot legally provide access to certificates of births, deaths, or marriages. What they do offer are physical microfiche indexes of the record, which contain basic information: names, the year of the event and a record number. The DIA can then be contacted and the official certificate purchased. Another example is the New Zealand Society of Genealogists (NZSG), who hold historical records of ceremonies that took place in churches, such as weddings or baptisms, before official event registration with the government was established (Washbourn, 2016, p.3). Again, some libraries hold searchable indexes of these, but the complete record can only be provided by the NZSG upon paying for membership. The resources offered by libraries play a role in their relationship with researchers; libraries provide materials that are difficult to access for free otherwise.

The information-seeking behaviour and strategies of FHRs are integral to successful record retrieval. This study analyzes the behaviour of some FHRs, such as how they navigate a dead end in their research. FHRs need to develop the skills to work around difficulties if they want

to successfully locate authentic records (Hart, 2018, p.1). Libraries are obligated to enable access to family history material and therefore help preserve the cultural identity of their country (Dancs, 2018, p.14). UNESCO and IFLA have standards on this necessity and encourage libraries to make heritage material accessible to patrons (Dancs, 2018, p.16). Libraries need to provide information that is easy for patrons to locate and access (Turner, 1997, p.9; Latham, 2003, p.13; Savolainen, 2010, p.1786; Banville, 2014, p.61). The circumstances of FHR's successfully seeking and accessing the information they need at libraries will be made clear in this study.

1.2 Topic statement

This study examines how family history researchers use libraries in New Zealand to facilitate their information-seeking and gain access to the records they require.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- o Discover how FHRs use the resources available at libraries in New Zealand.
- o Examine the nature of the relationship between FHRs and libraries.
- o Develop an understanding of what influences the information-seeking behaviour and strategies that FHRs use to locate records at libraries.
- o Analyse the conditions and circumstances surrounding FHR access to library materials on family history.

1.3.1 Delimitations

The delimitations of this study include:

- o I focus on public library use only – this included the National Library of New Zealand but excluded FHR use of organizations and institutions such as academic libraries or any repository that is not a library.
- o The study does not examine the perspectives of library staff.

1.4 Rationale

Skinner explains that there is a "need for research that brings together the user and the resource to examine not only what was accessed, but how well it served the user" (2010, p.29). That is the underlying goal of this study. Previous researchers (Kuglin, 2004; Tamaira, 2007) have examined FHR's use of New Zealand libraries. I intend to build upon their work

and add data that is specific to New Zealand FHRs today. When Kuglin conducted her study, which this research echoes, she was interested in user satisfaction (2004, p.9). My approach is oriented towards understanding how libraries facilitate FHR behaviours and processes. The current relationship between FHRs and libraries is unknown; how do libraries support family history research? What opinions do FHRs have of libraries? What more could libraries offer FHRs? I also question the strategies FHRs adopt when they use library resources. What dictates their methods and how do they research? Access is a factor of behaviour; what does resource access look like at libraries? Which materials and resources do FHRs use?

I want to understand what researchers do at libraries and how libraries support family history research. This study aimed to generate useful data, the particulars of which are unstudied in over a decade. Southwell points out that when repository staff "are provided with clues on which access tools are used most by researchers, [they] may narrow the focus of their energies on them, and users will thereby benefit from improved access" (2002, p.105). Darby and Clough echo the sentiment:

> "Improved understanding of [researcher] activities will allow institutions to more effectively tailor information provision […] more accurately measure user satisfaction, and so develop information systems to fully exploit collection potential with regard to the needs of FHRs" (2013, p.74).

I examine the services and resources FHRs use, so that libraries can question for themselves if they should develop or maintain access to them.

1.5 Definitions

<u>FHRs:</u>
> The terms 'genealogist' and 'family history researcher' have different definitions. Genealogists construct family trees from dates, names, and locations (Darby & Clough, 2013, p.73; Gardiner, 2017, p.22). Family history researchers are interested in the stories and details of their ancestors' lives (Yakel, 2004, pp.1-2). My study collates both as FHRs.

<u>Information-seeking behaviour:</u>
> This term encompasses any strategy used to seek information (Wilson, 2006, p.660). Information-seeking, according to Wilson, "results from the recognition of some need, perceived by the user" (2006, p.659).

Search strategies:

Wang defines search strategy as an "overall plan for, or approach to, a whole search session" (2011, p.34).

Information access:

This term can be defined as the way information is retrieved by a researcher, in relation to its format and usability. Turner defines it as being "based on the perceived cost of attaining the sources of information" (1997, p.4).

Records:

Records are official documents that prove an event occurred: for example, a birth certificate.

Repositories:

This term refers to the storage locations of records, be they physical sites for documents and items, such as libraries, or electronic, such as databases.

2   Literature Review

The literature covered in this review reflects the objectives of my study, which are to understand the relationship between FHRs and libraries; the role libraries play in an FHR's information-seeking behaviour and search strategies; and how FHRs access resources at libraries.

2.1   Relationship between public libraries and FHRs

One of my primary intentions is to build on Kuglin's 2004 research paper, which studied genealogist's information-seeking processes and their use of libraries in New Zealand's North Island, with the goal of making recommendations to libraries for developing their services and enabling user satisfaction (p.6; p.9). Kuglin used quantitative surveys to gather data from around 100 participants (p.33). She examined aspects I repeat, such as how frequently FHRs ask librarians for assistance (p.53). Kuglin's study has proved an invaluable guide for my objectives, but around 15 years have passed since it was conducted and the permeance of the internet today affects current research processes. I intend to build on Kuglin's work to understand the use FHRs now make of libraries in New Zealand.

Duff and Johnson's 2003 study is considered a highly seminal piece on the relationship between FHR and repository. They used semi-structured interviews to examine 10 researchers' use of archives. The small number of participants limits the usefulness of their data, but their findings are notable (p.81; p.82). Genealogists were not receiving much help from archivists and did not consider themselves dependant on archives (p.91; p.94). I am motivated by Duff and Johnson's objectives to examine the stages of genealogical research, analyse how genealogists search for information at a repository, and which access tools they use (p.83). The goal of my study is to investigate these circumstances as they currently stand for researchers of family history using libraries in New Zealand.

Yakel makes a similar claim to Duff and Johnson about the helpfulness of repositories in her 2004 study, where she examined how the research needs of FHRs are met (p.7). She conducted interviews and observed 29 FHRs for their information-seeking process at libraries and archives (p.2; p.3). Her findings concluded that repositories attempted to satisfy the needs of genealogists but were less considerate of the more complex needs of family historians (p.7). She reused her data in a subsequent study in 2007, pointing out that

while her participants recognise that librarians enable access, they do not acknowledge librarians' usefulness any further in their process (Yakel & Torres, 2007, p.111). I wonder at the opinion of FHRs today, as this will affect their use of libraries.

A decade after Yakel's study, Barnwell examined the relationship between FHRs and the National Library of Australia. She notes that libraries have "contributed and responded to changing trends" in family history research (2015, p.105). The 2013 Trove user survey supplied her data, and she had 'conversations' with librarians and researchers, but does not appear to have conducted formal data collection (p.109; p.108; see also Barnwell, 2013). She notes the importance of the relationship between FHRs and libraries "in shaping the culture of family history research" (2015, p.106). She points out the effort libraries make to ensure access to lesser-documented narratives (p.111). I am interested in observing the current relationship between researchers and libraries.

Hart states that all ten of her study participants research at libraries because of the help and access they are afforded (2018, p.12). Skinner notes that libraries must "ensure research needs are addressed" and that most of her participants turned to librarians during their research process (2010, p.27; p.32). Fulton states that "libraries held a central position as a source of information" for her participants (2005, p.6). Libraries are clearly useful; my study aims to uncover how they help current family history researchers in New Zealand.

Over the past two decades libraries have developed the access they offer to family history material. But the specifics of the relationship FHRs in New Zealand have today with libraries is unexamined, and my study aims to fill this gap.

2.2   Information-seeking and search strategies

One of the most vital pieces of literature to my research has been the 2013 study by Darby and Clough, where they examine the information-seeking behaviour of genealogists at repositories (p.76). Darby and Clough wanted to understand the "aims, preconceptions and misconceptions" of FHRs (p.74). Their interviews with participants were supplemented by tailored questionnaires (p.77; p.75). The result was the information-seeking model specific to family history research that has informed my study (p.77; Appendix B). My aims match theirs and they were influential to the development of my study objectives.

Lambert's 1996 survey studied members of the Ontario Genealogical Society (p.118), a method my study echoes 24 years later. Lambert was interested in the incentives behind FHR research (p.120). He found that FHRs were concerned with the past of their families, and with posterity and self-understanding (p.121). An older study, it helped set a benchmark for analysis of FHRs and their practices.

Duff and Johnson were interested in the search methods of FHRs (2003, p.80). They establish that genealogists use different strategies, switching routes if need be (p.94). This was a helpful insight when developing my survey questions on information-seeking behaviour and search strategies. Understanding FHRs strategies is a primary goal of my research.

Gardiner notes that FHRs must validate their findings, and that "Original contemporary sources should form the basis of the search. As more information comes to light it will further validate or sometimes modify existing information about an ancestor's life" (2017, p.23). Authentic proof is vital to successful genealogical research and I am interested in the steps FHRs take to seek valid records.

Yakel and Torres asked the 29 participants of their study how they conducted their genealogical research (2007, p.95; p.96). They found that searches began quite narrow but expand as more information comes to light (p.95; p.99). Friday's 2014 ethnographic study mentions information-seeking strategies used by her participants, such as combining sources, narrowing or widening a search or developing more background knowledge (p.8). These strategies massively impact researcher success.

The literature shows the importance of information-seeking habits and behaviours to the research process. I am interested in learning what influences the information-seeking behaviours of FHRs using libraries in New Zealand, and what strategies they utilise.

2.3   Information access within public libraries
Southwell's 2002 study asked, "How does the average manuscript user discover the primary sources needed to conduct research?" (p.92). Her data collection survey took place in 2000, so while this is an older study, her goal matches mine in its desire to understand access

(p.92). Southwell notes that "The survey of Western History Collection manuscript users educated staff about the identity and needs of the average patron" (p.104). My research intends to emulate this.

Yakel and Torres found that information access was difficult for FRHs (2007, p.98). But the internet has significantly advanced access and current FHRs swarm to online resources (Bishop, 2008, p.393; Friday, 2014, p.2; see also Barnwell, 2013, p.1; Bottero, 2015, p.534). I am interested in the interplay between electronic resources, physical materials, and libraries when it comes to FHR's accessing information.

Friday investigated the use of online resources and local studies collections by FHRs (2014, p.2). She pointed out that "easily accessible online tools may lead family history researchers to neglect rich local resources" (p.2). She gathered data via an ethnographic study, which combined an online survey with diary-keeping and shadowing (p.4). Friday too was interested in resource access in the wake of the rise of the internet.

92% of Fulton's participants cited the internet as helpful to their research (2005, p.5). But they also found their time spent in repositories using physical material equally beneficial (p.9). Fulton's objective was to study the information-seeking behaviour of genealogists as they researched using online resources (p.3). There is benefit to both researching online and with physical records. This is what I think my research proves; that physical materials are still prized, used, and are accessed regularly by researchers, and are therefore worth being maintained by libraries.

Banville discusses record access via physical and online repositories in his 2014 study, noting that the internet allows "access to various databases, virtual libraries and documentation and archives centres that have been digitized" (p.59). He notes that while genealogists once needed physical access to material, they can now access data electronically from home, but some information will always only be accessible in physical formats (p.59; p.61). I hope to uncover the circumstances and needs of FHRs in New Zealand in relation to physical material use.

Latham draws attention to the problem that some genealogical information on the internet "has no documentation, and therefore there is no way to assess its accuracy" (2003, p.16). Meanwhile, visiting repositories that hold records is useful, especially in a locality where an ancestor lived; online tools can pale against the value of viewing material in-person, supplemented by help from on-site staff (Hart, 2018, p.12; Darby & Clough, 2013, p.75). Ignoring physical collections in favour of online material would be a mistake.

Understanding which resources and databases are being used by FHRs in New Zealand will be valuable. Skinner conducted a study in 2010 of US-based FHR's by surveying both library users and library staff (p.30). Skinner wanted insight into researcher behaviour to understand future resource development opportunities (p.29). She put forward the hypothesis that

> "user satisfaction may increase with the ability to access resources that provide a depth of information in addition to raw data. While it is clear that users require depth and breadth of information, it is unclear which resources they determine at being the best at offering this, and whether resources within an institution are the sole criteria for determining preference" (p.30).

She offers data on the specifics of the resources available to researchers in the USA. A decade on, my own study uncovers what resources and materials FHRs in New Zealand use libraries to access, and what form this access takes.

Darby and Clough outline the resources their UK-based participants use (2013, p.78). Easy-to-access materials include birth, death and marriage indexes and databases like Ancestry.com (p.80; p.81). When more significant research effort is needed by FHRs, physical items like maps are used, as well as parish records (p.80; p.81). For the most difficult phase of research, Darby and Clough note "highly purposive behaviour [is] necessary to locate 'difficult' ancestors not found in earlier phases, or to resolve ambiguities"; by this point most online resources have been consulted (p.80; p.81). I intend to find out which resources New Zealand-based FHRs favour.

Barnwell lists online resources which have helped FHRs, like Familysearch.com and Ancestry.com (2013, pp.261-262). Gardiner mentions useful physical items that FHRs may be unaware of, such as maps and postal directories (2017, p.24). Yakel and Torres advocate

the usefulness of maps and diaries (2007, p.99). Uncovering how often these types of materials are used in New Zealand libraries will be useful to understanding whether access to them needs to be retained.

Family history material can be accessed in physical or electronic format and the literature outlines some of the resources available while delineating on the merits of online vs physical item use. But this literature is not focused on New Zealand, so I intend to find out explicitly the preferences of New Zealand based FHRs when they use public libraries.

2.4   Literature summary

My study builds on the works presented above to examine the information-seeking behaviour of FHRs using libraries in New Zealand and what materials they use, after considering their relationships with libraries.

The relationship between researcher and library is important. The literature suggests that FHRs who use library resources do so independently of staff and only turn to librarians for help if need be (Kuglin, 2004; Yakel, 2004; Yakel & Torres, 2007). Historically, the needs of FHRs have not been as well supported by repositories as they could have been (Duff & Johnson, 2003). But in recent years, libraries have shown a dedication to supporting family history research (Barnwell, 2015; Barnwell, 2013; Dancs, 2018). Libraries have always been considered a vital source for information (Fulton, 2005). There now seems to be a predilection for researchers to engage with libraries (Hart, 2018; Skinner, 2010). My study intends to uncover the current relationship between libraries and FHRs in New Zealand.

A clear research process backed by sound strategy is necessary for family history research. Information-seeking behaviour of FHRs was outlined by Darby and Clough in their model (2013, Appendix B). The information located by researchers must be authentic, so their strategies must be sound (Gardiner, 2017). Developing their skills is vital to the research process (Fulton, 2005). Do FHRs still switch their strategies, as Duff and Johnson (2003) found? Do their searches start narrowly but expand as research goes on (Friday, 2014; Yakel & Torres, 2007)? Further, motivations and triggers influence an FHRs process (Lambert, 1996). So, discovering the behaviours and strategies of FHRs will help us understand the role libraries play in their research.

Information can be accessed at libraries either physically or electronically and knowing which tools FHRs use will help develop an understanding of how libraries can further support FHRs. Online resources are a popular method of access (Friday, 2014; Barnwell, 2013; Bottero, 2015; Bishop, 2008). But using exclusively online material may lead researchers to miss information recorded only in physical format (Friday, 2014). FHRs should make use of both formats (Fulton, 2005; Banville, 2014; Hart, 2018). Resource preferences recorded in the literature range from electronic databases to newspapers; BDM indexes to maps (Skinner, 2010; Darby & Clough, 2013; Barnwell, 2013; Gardiner, 2017; Yakel & Torres, 2007). Gaining an understanding of FHRs preferences will be useful; do libraries need to maintain physical materials?

Little of the literature examines the specifics of FHRs using public libraries in New Zealand in recent times, which is why my study intends to contribute data and provide discussion in this area.

3 Methodology

This study mixes quantitative and qualitative research, an approach that is recommended when studying family history researchers, as it lets the weaknesses of both styles be subverted (Clark, Huddleston-Casas, Churchill, Green & Garrett, 2008, p.1544). Mixed method collection allows cross-validation of data (Bergman, 2011, pp.274-275). It leads to a more comprehensive understanding of results (Leavy, 2017, chapter 6, p.164). Quantitative data collection commonly uses surveys and allows for generalisations to be reached (Leavy, 2017, chapter 4, p.100; p.101). The qualitative method give participants control in how they express themselves, while allowing me to ask in-depth questions (Hyers, 2018, pp.7-8).

3.1 Research Design

The data was collected by an online anonymous survey asking quantitative and qualitative questions.

3.2 Research questions

My research goal is:

To examine how family history researchers in New Zealand use libraries to facilitate their information-seeking and access of records.

My research questions are:

1. How can the relationship FHRs have with libraries in New Zealand be improved?
2. What influences the information-seeking behaviours of FHRs?
3. What strategies do New Zealand-based FHRs use to search for information?
4. Is FHR access to data obtained by physical or digital means?
5. What specific resources and databases do FHRs use at libraries?

The survey questions the information-seeking behaviours and strategies of New Zealand-based FHRs, and the nature of their access to the required material. The questions have been influenced by the model of Darby and Clough (2013; Appendix B) and further developed through reading the literature covered in section 2, by my observations as a family history librarian and by the pilot study. The table below (Figure 1) outlines the interrelationships between my research questions and the questions asked in the survey.

Research question	Survey question
1. Relationship between researcher and library	1a
	1b
	2
	3
	21
2. Information-seeking behaviour	4
	12
	13
	14
	15
	18
	19
3. Search strategies at libraries	5
	6
	7
	8
	16
	17
4. Physical or digital access to library resources	9
	16
	17
5. Specific resources favoured	10
	11
	20

Figure 1 - Correlation between Research Questions and Survey Questions

3.3 Theoretical framework

Darby and Clough's model on the information-seeking behaviour of family history researchers has proved helpful (2013, p.76; Appendix B). As Clemens and Cushing note, meaningful and personal research contexts "may not easily fit within existing information seeking behavior framework" (2010, p.1). That is why it is beneficial to have Darby and Clough's model frame my data collection, in terms of providing several of the survey questions, as well as its specific goal of examining exactly my objective – the information-seeking behavior of FHRs.

The model consists of 8 stages:

- o <u>Phase 1</u>, the trigger event which starts research (Darby & Clough, 2013, p.78).
- o <u>Phase 2</u>, the collecting of any information and records the family already holds (p.79).
- o <u>Phase 3</u>, learning the process of searching to satisfy their objective (p.79).
- o <u>Phase 4</u>, 'breaking in' i.e. accessing records and launching the search process (p.80).
- o <u>Phase 5</u>, building the family tree with records that are easy to find (p.80). Those records that are the easily located will begin to flesh out the tree.
- o <u>Phase 6</u>, adding the records that were a little harder to find (p.80).
- o <u>Phase 7</u>, adding the records that were the most difficult to locate (p.80).
- o <u>Phase 8</u>, pushing back selected lines: pursuing the ancestors whose records are the most difficult and elusive to locate (p.81).

3.4 Population sample

Invitation to participate in this study was sent to members of the NZSG with a survey link and an explanation of the study, published in the NZSG's electronic newsletter. This is convenience sampling based on accessibility (Leavy, 2017, chapter 4, p.110). By its date of closure, the study had 56 completed responses, with an additional 1 completed to a certain point, therefore 57 were judged to be usable as far as Q 8, and 56 thereafter.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The study was approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee before it commenced. The online survey was set up to ensure anonymity and participants were not asked any questions that may have allowed any personal identification, negating

any conflict of interest on my part as a professional research librarian of a public library organization (Appendix A). The participants were provided with an information sheet which explained the goal and particulars of the study (Appendix C), as was the NZSG (Appendix D).

3.6   Data collection

The study changed from gathering data via qualitative solicited diaries and shadowing to an online survey, due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced New Zealand into lockdown during the months of March – May 2020. The survey release also met with setbacks due to the pandemic but was eventually opened from May 8th – May 20th, 2020.

3.6.1   Pilot Study

A pilot study with four researchers took place from April 10th, 2020 – April 17th, 2020. These researchers had originally been recruited as part of the initial (pre-Covid 19) data collection method of diary-keeping and in-person shadowing. The first version of the survey was sent to them on April 11th, and an amended version on April 15th.

- o   One commented that the survey in its original form was interesting, easy to understand and that they liked the layout of the questions. Of the amended version they noted that the length was appropriate, and it was well set out.

- o   Another researcher pointed out that one question needed to be altered for clarity and now appears as Q 18 in the final version. They recommended I provide the option to write-in an answer to Q 12; that became Q 13. It was further advised that I query the length of time researchers have been pursuing family history, as that would no doubt affect their behaviour. This recommendation became Q 4.

- o   One researcher recommended to make a distinction between overseas vs national research, so Q 9 was subsequently split into Q 9 and Q 10.

- o   The final pilot tester also recommended a write-in choice for Q 12.

3.7   Data analysis

This study is a convergent design: quantitative and qualitative data have been collected to achieve triangulation – the making of a convincing case for the conclusions led to by both data types (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015 pp.330-331). Applicable data has been visually explained via graphs (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015 p.338). The responses to the quantitative questions have been analysed statistically (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015 p.338). Pie graphs denote percentages

for those questions where the respondents had to choose a single answer, and column graphs denote numbers where the respondents were able to select multiple answers. Qualitative responses were analysed for patterns and ideas (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015 p.338). The qualitative data was colour-coded and organised according to themes, with the answers summarised as needed. These have been considered for key concepts and arranged into bar graphs when possible. I used Darby and Clough's information-behaviour seeking model to create some questions and to identify components of researcher behaviour (Figure 1; Appendix B).

4   Results

4.1   RQ 1 – relationship between libraries and FHRs

My assumption, based on my observations as a librarian at a research centre that specialises in local knowledge and family history research, was to see results of a positive relationship between libraries and FHRs.

4.1.1   Question 1a – relationship with library services

88% of respondents said they had a positive relationship with the services offered at libraries. 9% expressed a neutral view, which could be because they have genuinely experienced a mixture of interactions, or because they do not use services. 3% expressed a negative view.
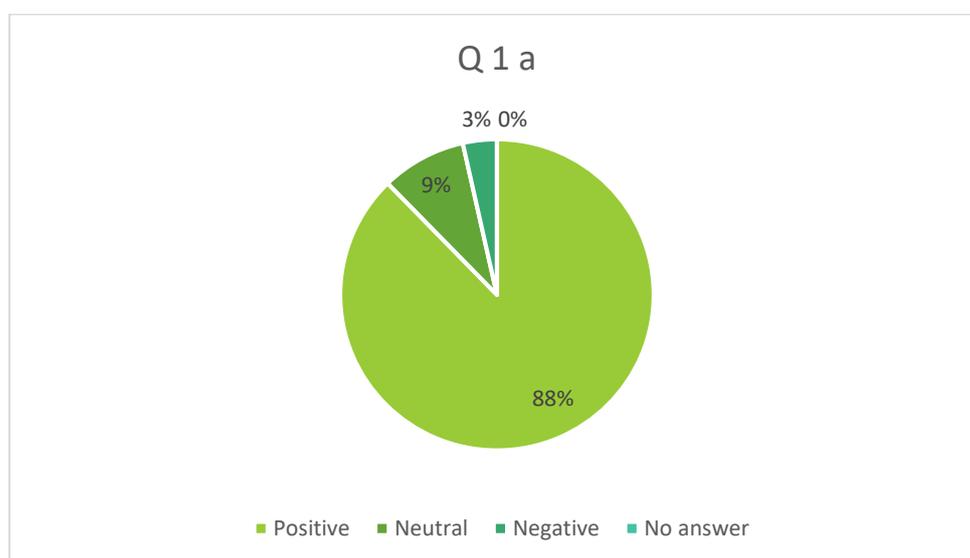
Figure 2 - Q 1 a graph

4.1.2   Question 1b – relationship with library tools

The relationship between FHRs and research tools is mostly good: 74% expressed feeling positive towards library tools. 19% expressed a neutral view; this may be because they have had neutral experiences, or because they do not use tools enough to have an opinion. 5% selected that they felt negatively towards library tools. 2% preferred to not answer. Whether this is because they do not have a strong opinion or they genuinely do not want to supply an answer, it is hard to say.
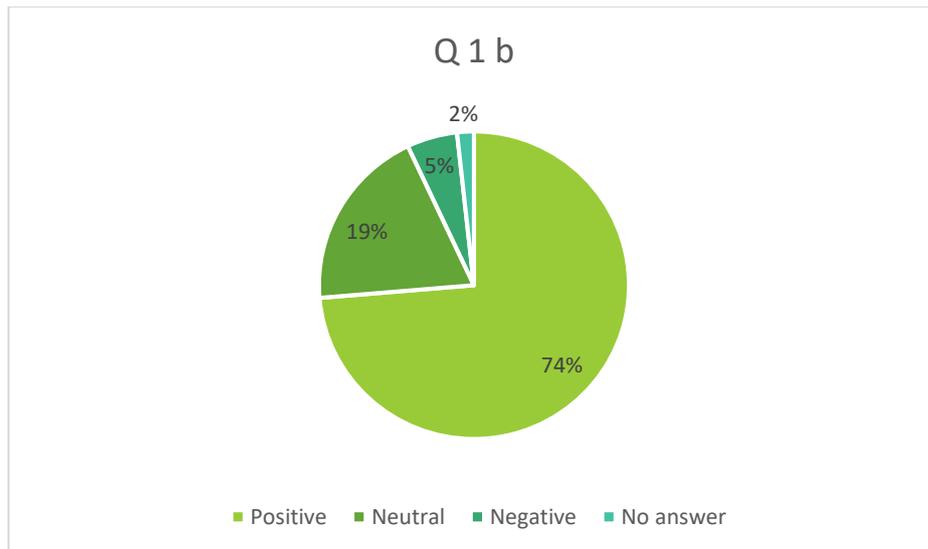
Figure 3 - Q 1 b graph

4.1.3   Question 2 – how frequently is help requested

60% indicated that they ask for help occasionally; possibly they only need help when they run into trouble. 26% ask for help infrequently, perhaps because they are experienced researchers and do not need much help. 14% ask often for help, perhaps because they are new FHRs, or need help using tools or technology.
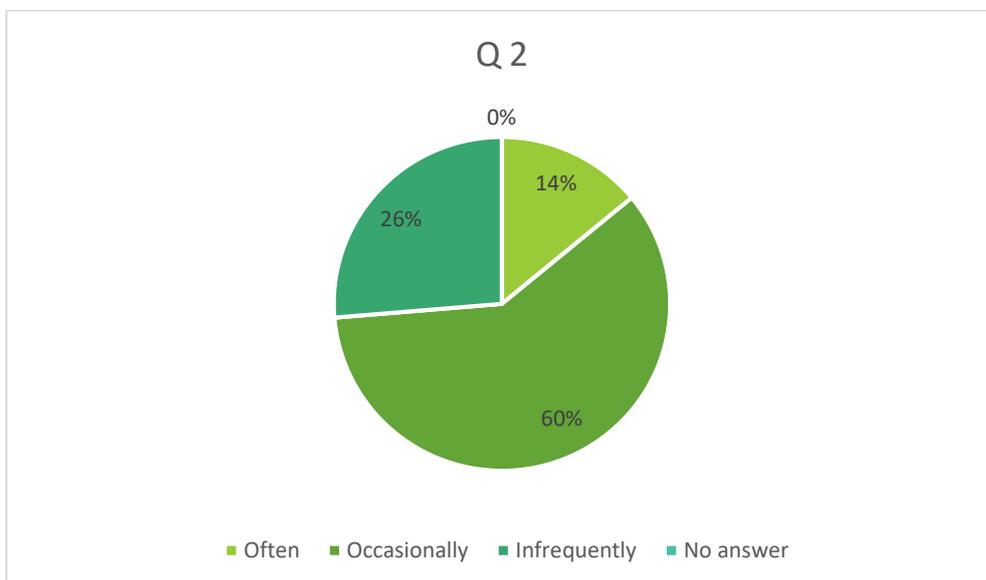
Figure 4 - Q 2 graph

4.1.4   Question 3 – elaboration on above

This question had varied replies from my researchers; the qualitative answers have been categorized according to themes. 27 researchers mentioned that library staff

were helpful and 14 were happy with tools. But some expressed dissatisfaction; 5 researchers were unhappy with library tools and 7 with services. There were mentions that sometimes staff seemed unapproachable or did not specialise enough in the field to be able to help FHRs. Researcher 48 commented that they think staff "are generalists about the library resources. Also, they rarely appear to work out if a genealogist is a newbie, intermediate or very experienced." Another researcher mentioned that their library did not subscribe to family history databases – cost may be an issue here. Others commented that some tools were hard to use or that database subscriptions were limited. Further, 5 researchers indicated that they were librarians or volunteered at libraries, therefore had different experiences with services, tools and access. 5 noted that they did not require any assistance during their research; some mentioned that they feel they know more than librarians. 3 researchers gave no answer for this question; they may have felt the choices they selected for the first three questions spoke for themselves or simply did not wish to elaborate on their reasonings.
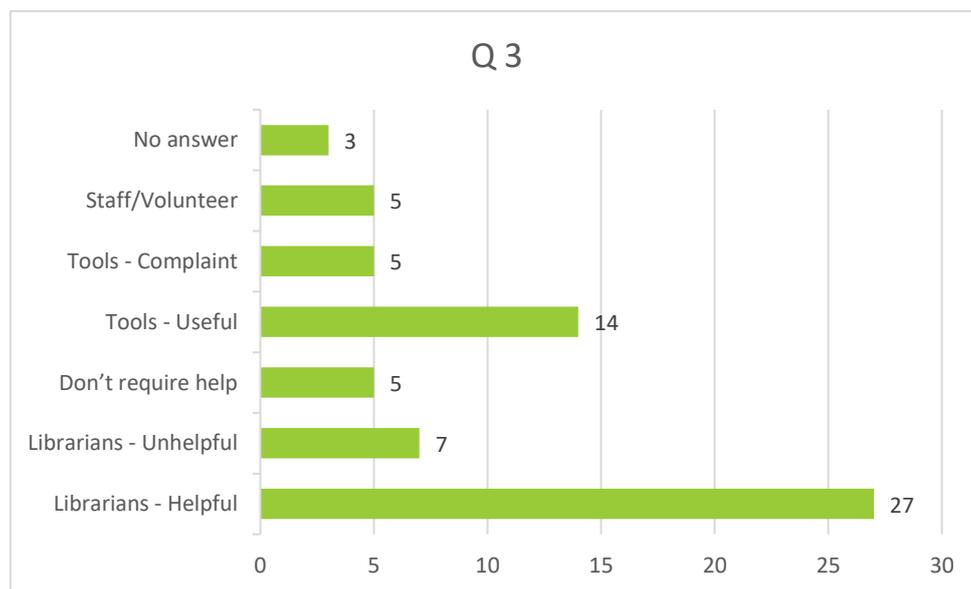
Figure 5 - Q 3 graph

4.1.5   Question 21 – what more could libraries do
12 researchers expressed that they were happy with current services. 10 provided no answer. 13 offered suggestions, such as libraries hosting talks, or Researcher 4's proposal of "An online database showing what historical NZ records are held and

where." Of the responses that expressed discontentment, 8 researchers mentioned a desire for wider access to databases, or for them to be freely accessible from home. 4 researchers expressed a general unhappiness and 5 mentioned a need to upskill librarians in FHR work. Another common request was for a dedicated FHR librarian to be constantly available on site. Loan of library-use-only materials, as FHR resources often are, was requested by one researcher. The idea of libraries offering sessions where they show researchers what tools and materials they have, teaching their use and how to access them, was put forward. Notifying researchers when new or updated tools and databases became available was one mention, as was the idea of digitizing and making freely available all unpublished, local material collections. Some of these ideas have more scope for possibility than others. Several researchers commented that they were aware that budget and resourcing was not always easy for libraries: Researcher 52 said, "If only [libraries] had more funding available to expand their resources!" That would certainly solve a lot of the issues expressed by the FHRs.

4.2   RQ 2 – The information-seeking behaviour of researchers

I categorise 'behaviours' as the habits and processes my researchers have developed for themselves. My expectation was that behaviour would be influenced by a researcher's beginnings; that aspects such as when they first began this type of research and what triggered their interest in it would affect their patterns and practices. Many of the survey questions come from the model by Darby and Clough (2013; Appendix B).

4.2.1   Question 4 – how many years as an FHR

56% of my participants have been researching for 20 years or more; NZSG members are clearly dedicated FHRs. An equal number of researchers, 16% each, have been researching for between 5 to 10 and 16 to 20 years, 9% for 11 to 15, and finally just 3% for under 5. Perhaps not many people new to family history research have joined the NZSG yet. Those FHRs that have been researching for a long time would have begun before the prevalence and saturation of the internet and its digital resources. Those who began as FHRs recently may be predisposed to electronic tools and resources over physical, as so much is available digitally now.
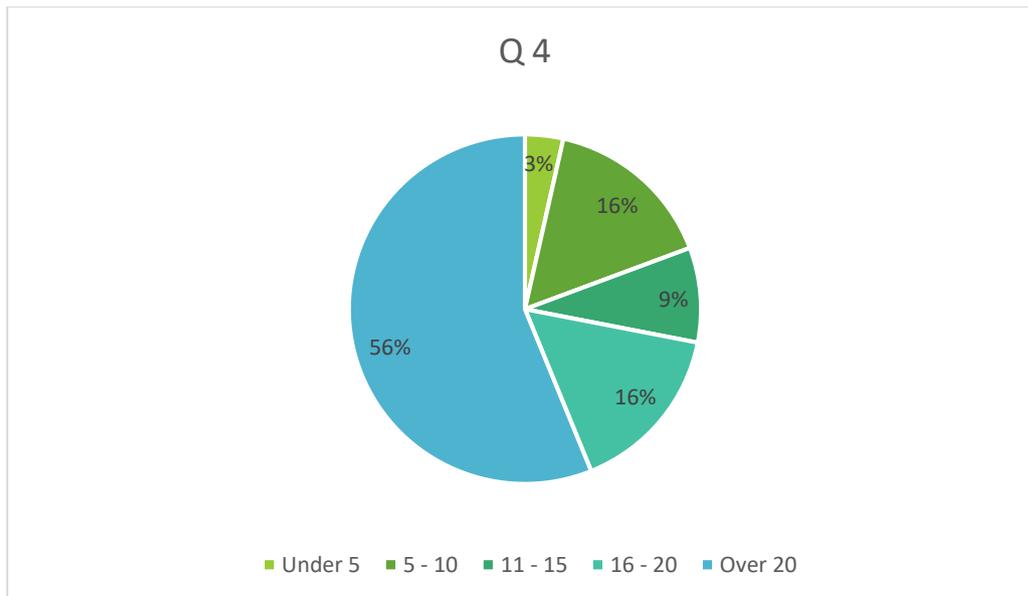
Figure 6 - Q 4 graph

4.2.2   Questions 12 & 13 – triggers of FHRs and 'other'

The triggers that draw people into family history research vary. Some researchers are intrigued by mysterious family members, some have a knowledge gap they want to fill, and some come across documentation or artefacts they want to know more about. Still others find themselves with more time on their hands upon retiring and pursue the research as a hobby; some seek previously unknown familial connections. A point to note is that someone's reason for beginning this research may not be the reason they continue (Lambert, 1996, p.120). Those who began as FHRs many years ago have probably long since resolved the initial question that drew them in, but still pursue other links and stories. In Lambert's 1996 study, there were four main reasons listed by his researchers for why they practiced FHR work: understanding oneself by understanding one's roots; getting to know ancestors as people; posterity for future generations; and restoring forgotten ancestors to family memory (p.121). These were all mentioned by my researchers as triggers too, 24 years later.

Darby and Clough, who designed the original question as part of their model, had the following results from their UK participants: 45% were triggered by an information gap; 42% by practicality; 32% by a family mystery; 32% by an interesting family member and 23% by discovering documentation (2013, p.78). In comparison, being triggered by a family mystery was selected by 68% of my participants; being

intrigued by an interesting family member was the next most popular at 61%; I offered the option to select 'Other' if the listed triggers were not sufficient, which was taken by 54%; 43% of researchers selected having an information gap and/or discovering documentation; 41% selected practical reasons; 16% indicated they were seeking family. This last option was not from Darby and Clough but was recommended during the pilot study. A factor in the differences between the ratios of my respondent's answers when compared to Darby and Clough's may be that the UK participants could have found information easier to access (such as via the census), especially if their family have never emigrated from the country, whereas New Zealand based participants often have to trace ancestors who came from overseas, and their personal knowledge may be weaker due to geographic dislocation.
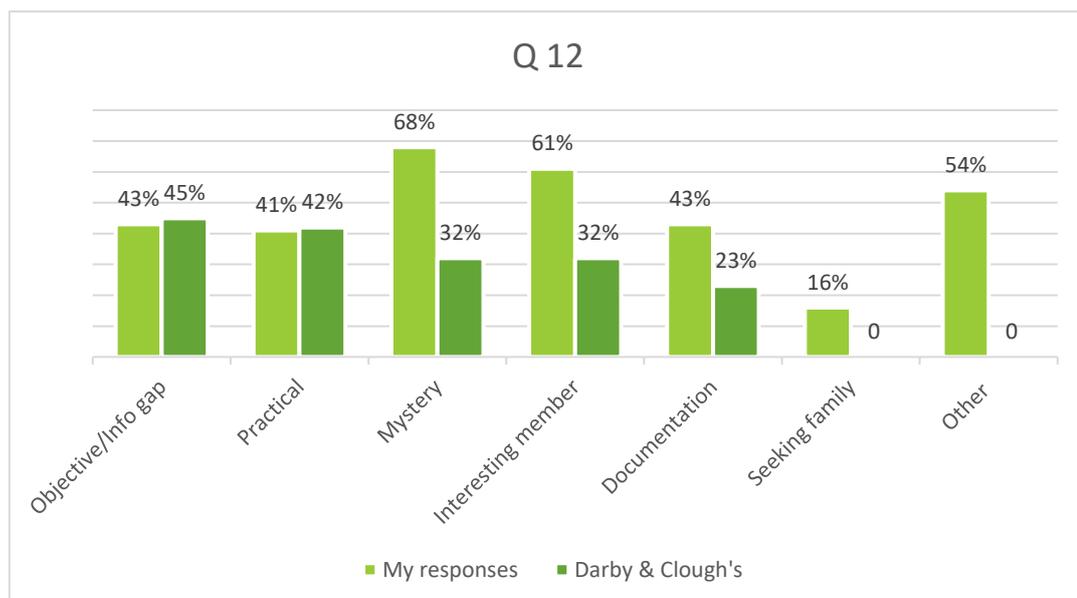
Figure 7 - Q 12 graph

The 54% who selected 'Other' from my study were given room in Question 13 to write their reasons. These largely involve family members of the researcher – typically children or parents – asking questions or needing help regarding their ancestry. There was also general curiosity, the need for family, and the desire to understand one's roots. Some grew up hearing stories they wanted to investigate for themselves and one researcher simply wanted to know *why* an ancestor came to New Zealand. Triggers vary widely.

4.2.3 Question 14 – collecting of existing information

Phase 2 of Darby and Clough's model makes research easier for FHRs and dictates what they need to search for. Darby and Clough's results for this question offer an interesting comparison: 80% of their participants selected verbal; 60% documents; 35% photos; 20% artefacts; and 15% each selected the options of previous research, tried but no luck and having uncooperative family members (2013, p.79). Overall, the most common materials collected by my FHRs are photos, with 93% selecting this. Verbal conversation and documentation each have 88%. The collection of artefacts had 70%, and any previous research conducted by other family had 68%. Just 4% of my researchers had problems with uncooperative family, while 2% each selected that they tried to collect information but were unsuccessful, or do not conduct this process.
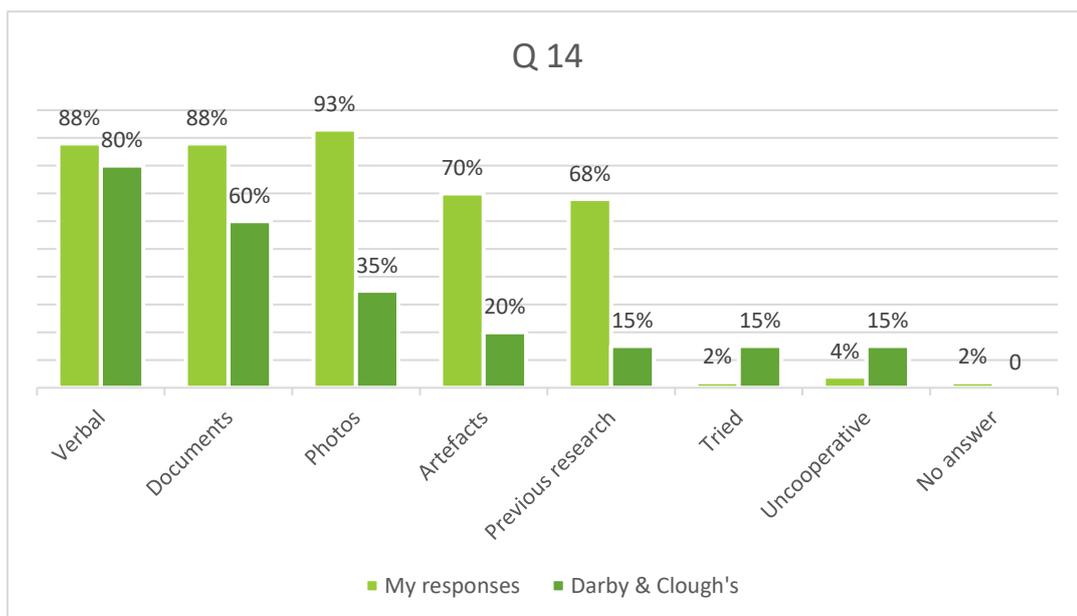
Figure 8 - Q 14 graph

4.2.4 Question 15 – methods of learning

How researchers learn to search is an important aspect of information-seeking behaviour; some may have learnt before the rise of digital resources. Darby and Clough's results for this question were: 45% on-going; 41% learn by doing; 36% group; 32% books; and 27% each for web, none, friends and family, and staff (2013, p.79). From my participants, 95% agree that learning to search is an on-going task,

and 93% that you learn by doing. It is fitting that 86% selected learning from a group/society, since they are all members of the NZSG. Learning from online sources was selected by 77%, and from books by 71%. Several researchers also turn to family and friends with 43%, or librarians with 64% of selections. 21% selected that all the choices are applicable, while 7% had no specific learning process.

Q 15

Categories: Ongoing 95%/45%, Learn by doing 93%/41%, Group 86%/36%, Books 71%/32%, Online 77%/27%, Family/friends 43%/27%, Librarians 64%/27%, None 7%/27%, All 21%/0

■ My responses ■ Darby & Clough's
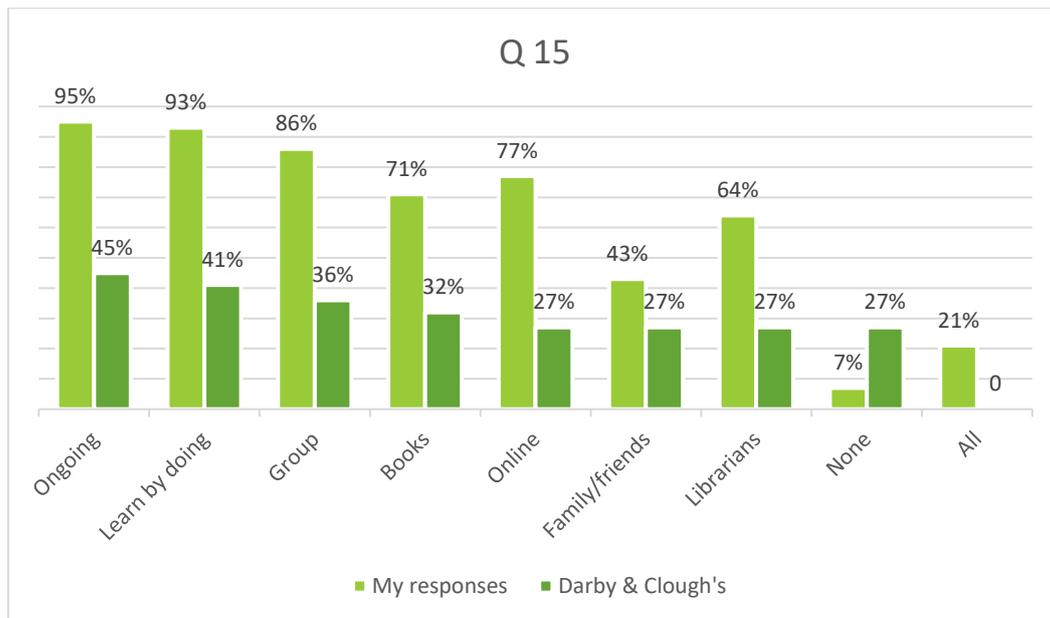
Figure 9 - Q 15 graph

4.2.5 Question 18 – frequency of elusive searches

Elusive searches are not always performed; some researchers do not have trouble locating answers, while some may give up at such a point. Darby and Clough's results for their similar question found that only 35% of their researchers went to this level (2013, p.81). From my participants, 52% said they occasionally pursued elusive research, while 39% conduct it often and 9% rarely. It is worth noting that everyone may have different concepts of the intensity of 'elusive'. The difference between my results and Darby and Clough's is interesting, although our questions were phrased differently. I wonder if UK researcher's, who have easier and wider access to resources and information (i.e. census data), do not need to push their research to the 'elusive' level to get what they need, whereas researchers from New Zealand, especially when they conduct searches for international records, may have a harder time due to geographic distance and the lack of access citizenship might afford.
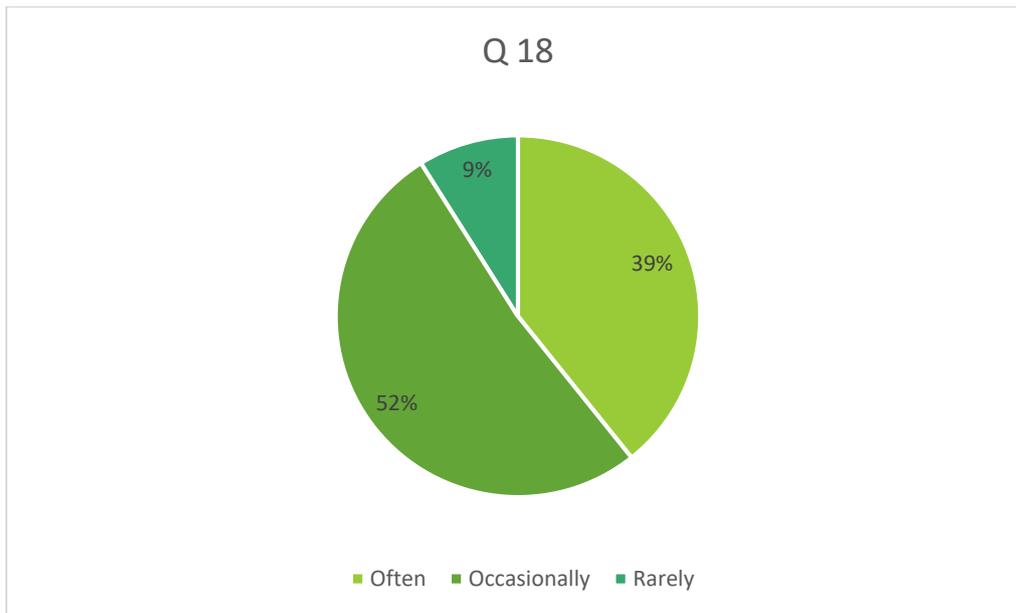
Figure 10 - Q 18 graph

4.2.6   Question 19 – how have FHR practices changed over time

The resounding answer for this question was that research practices certainly have changed. Overall, the impact of the internet is obvious. Resource availability online has eliminated need to travel to physical repositories. Researchers also mentioned needing to correctly cite material and reference resources, which was not common practice until recently. They commented that they have learnt where to look for information and recognise the need to verify any unsourced claims: they have developed methodical research practices. Researcher 50 considers themselves "Better organized. Better documented. Better at using online resources" than in the past. Researcher 17 notes that when they began as an FHR in the late 80s, "research was done using paper records, writing letters to research libraries and archives and waiting for a reply". There are more resources available now and the internet allows more to be done from home, with access being fast and easy. Yet several researchers commented that they prefer to visit a repository in person and physically handle materials.

4.3   RQ 3 – Search strategies of FHRs:

This concept was examined by survey questions relating to the processes and strategies of FHRs. I kept my initial expectations low as I anticipated unpredictable answers.

4.3.1   Questions 5 & 6 – first steps for national and international research
Searches for family history materials at national and international levels are typically
conducted differently, due to format. I asked my researchers about their steps for
these searches, and which resources were used in their processes.

As expected, New Zealand's birth, death and marriage records (which can be
accessed via the internet or by physical fiche indexes) are the most popular resource
for national searches, with 41 researchers mentioning them. Databases that collate
national materials had 20. Electoral rolls (accessed in physical hard copy, fiche
indexes or electronically on databases) were selected by 26 participants. 22
mentioned the use of digitized newspapers on Papers Past. Unsurprisingly, 37 mix
many of these resources as they search. 27 use other methods, and 10 refer to their
existing knowledge about who they are searching for. Generally, researchers follow a
pattern; they start with a basic resource like BDM indexes to establish facts, and
then move to tools such as electoral rolls and Papers Past to gather in-depth
information. They flesh out the fundamentals before focusing on the specifics they
still need.
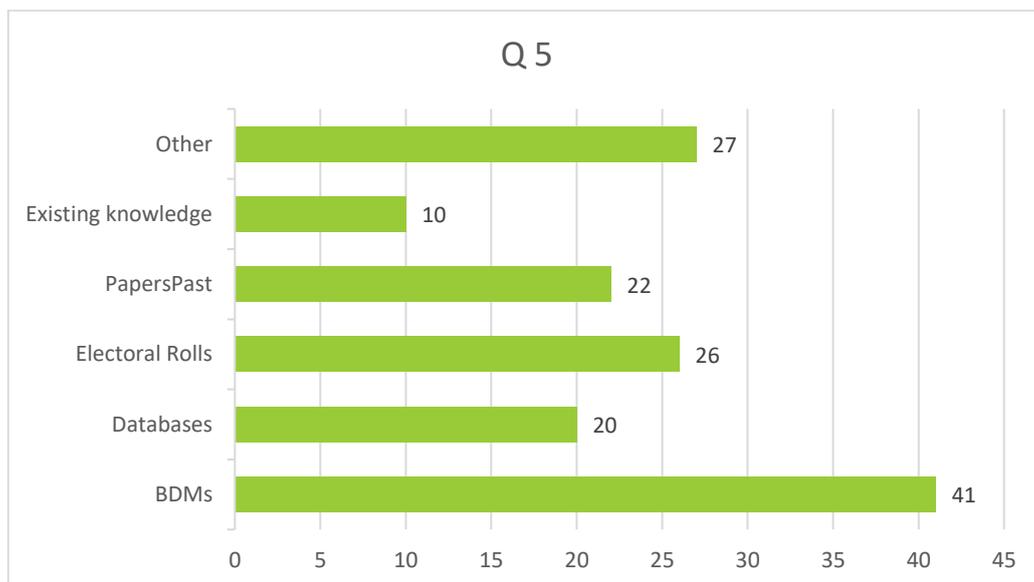
Figure 11 - Q 5 graph

International search strategies were queried in Question 6. Mixing resources proved
common with 26 participants indicating they combine tools. Databases were

mentioned by 17 researchers and census data by 21. 'Other' resources included websites such as Scotland'sPeople or FreeBDM. Researcher 40 points out that they "have built up a knowledge of which records to use depending on the person's origin." Indeed, the resources one might turn to when researching a Scottish ancestor can be different from an Irish ancestor. As we saw with Question 5, many researchers search broadly before narrowing down to use more specialised resources. Several participants noted that they do not alter their process much between national and international researching. The researchers know they need to verify facts displayed by other users on databases such as Ancestry.com, and that transcriptions of original documents are sometimes mistaken.
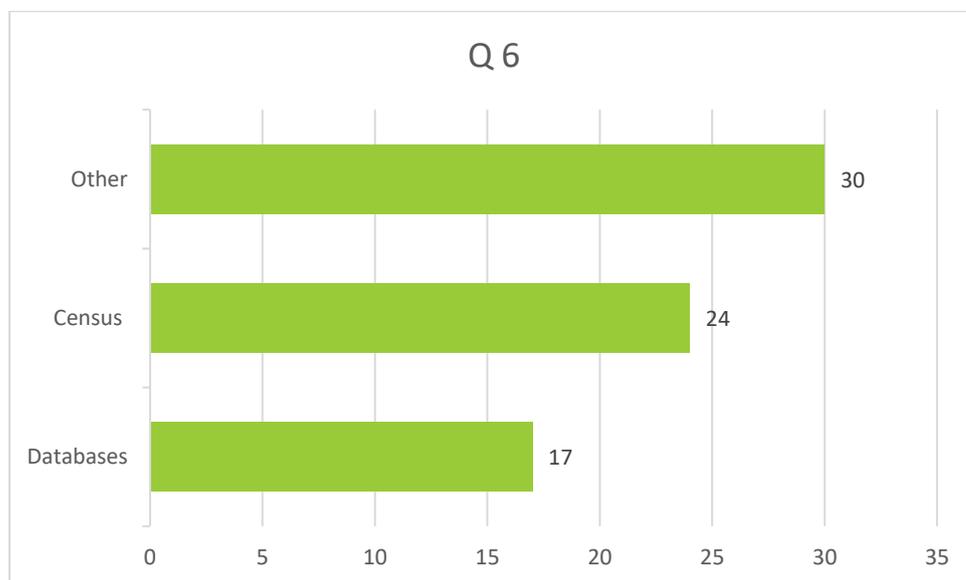
Figure 12 - Q 6 graph

4.3.2   Question 7 – typical search behaviours
Their qualitative responses have been categorised according to key themes. 17 researchers nominated that they choose to chop and change between the people they pursue; 7 get distracted from their initial pursuit by more interesting family members. Others focus on one member or one family – 16 and 18 researchers, respectively. 14 mix their strategies. Researcher 15 notes that they feel like a detective, a common expression amongst FHRs, and tells us that there are "constant leads to follow either because a person led a public and easily researchable life, was involved in a big event etc or because a relative, DNA or online family tree

researcher contacts me". In general, a theme amongst the participants was moving from pursuing one individual to their immediate family, then wider family. Some interesting descriptive words were put forward in terms of strategies and processes. Researcher 2 said they used a 'straight-line' approach, while Researcher 5 referred to their style as 'scattergun'; Researcher 13 referred to family history research as a 'rabbit hole' and Researcher 46 made use of a jigsaw analogy to explain how they fit pieces of their ancestry and family together.
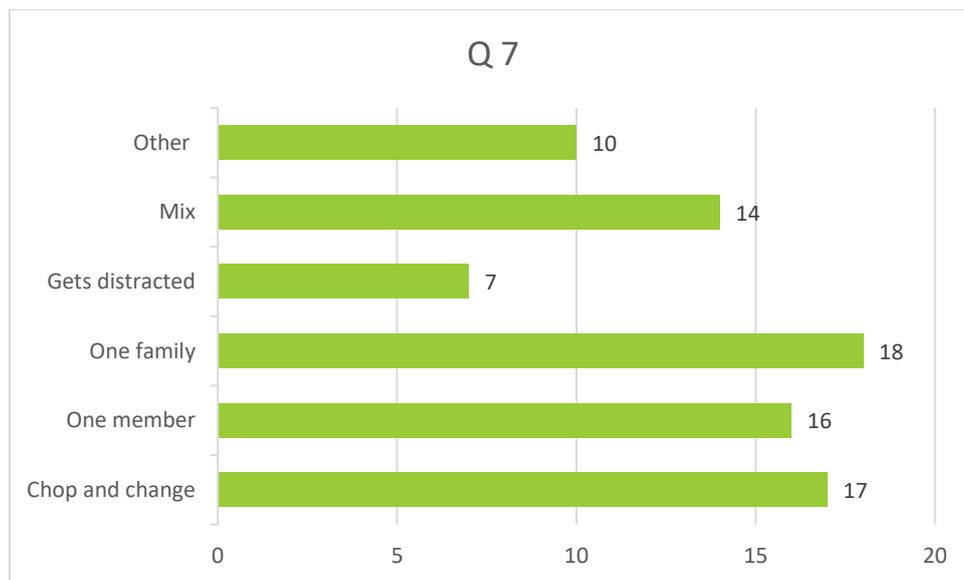
Figure 13 - Q 7 graph

4.3.3 Question 8 – methods for dead-ends

Dead ends are common in historical research. To circumvent them, 21 participants return to the search later, with 15 understanding that more information will become available in time and 18 returning after they have verified their existing information. Researcher 3 is one such 're-visiter'; they go back to the beginning of their search, re-read the information, and inevitably pick up something they previously missed, insisting "THAT was NOT there before!". 10 researchers move on altogether, while 17 switch to another individual or tool. Researcher 13 will return to the problem later to "give it another shake". Researcher 55 is another advocate for revisiting: "when you first receive info you only see what you want, now what is really there." 12 researchers ask others for help, while 6 had other methods for this problem. Most researchers combine strategies; Researcher 35 points out that "you do what

you have to do to make sense of your findings, or non-findings." Researcher 31 notes
the importance of taking time to think about the information. Researcher 33 offers
useful advice, such as being thorough, going back to what you know for certain and
accepting that you may not find the answers. In general, the concept of starting
over, verifying facts and re-reading all information gathered thus far was common.
Modifying and broadening searches as necessary was popular.
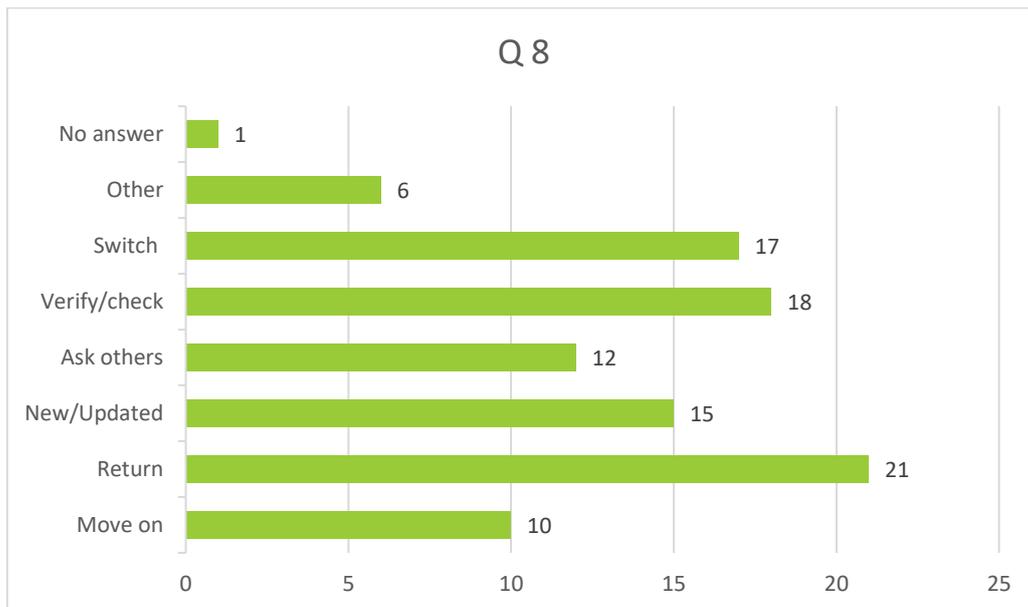
Figure 14 - Q 8 graph

4.3.4   Questions 16 & 17 – difficulty stages of format access and 'other' formats
Search strategies have stages of difficulty, as information can range from being easy
to difficult to locate. These questions were based on Darby and Clough's model, but
my adaptations were partially inspired by Skinner. Skinner tells us that the resources
her participants favoured "tended to focus on a particular format or type of record
rather than a certain website or library" (2010, p.32). This question did not attempt
to list every possible database or specialized website that FHRs *may* use as this
would have been too complicated.

I asked my researchers to categorize the tools so I could understand at which point
in the search process they turned to particular formats. The categories I offered
were:

- Physical documents (e.g. printed electoral rolls, books)
- Electronic subscriptions databases (e.g. Ancestry.com)
- Websites (e.g. Archway, births deaths and marriages online)
- Physical materials/items (e.g. maps)
- Digital materials (e.g. CD-ROMs)
- Microfiche (e.g. BDMs indexes)
- Microfilm (e.g. newspapers, MLC minute books)

Each format has been analysed below according to how the researchers categorised them; are they used for easy, medium or difficult searches?

The usage of physical documents had perhaps the smallest differences between categorisations; 43% of participants use physical documents for easy searches, while 35% use them at the medium stage, and 22% at the hard. Accessibility may be a factor here, as it would require travel to a repository. Searchability is another possible factor; you cannot search a physical document as quickly as an electronic.
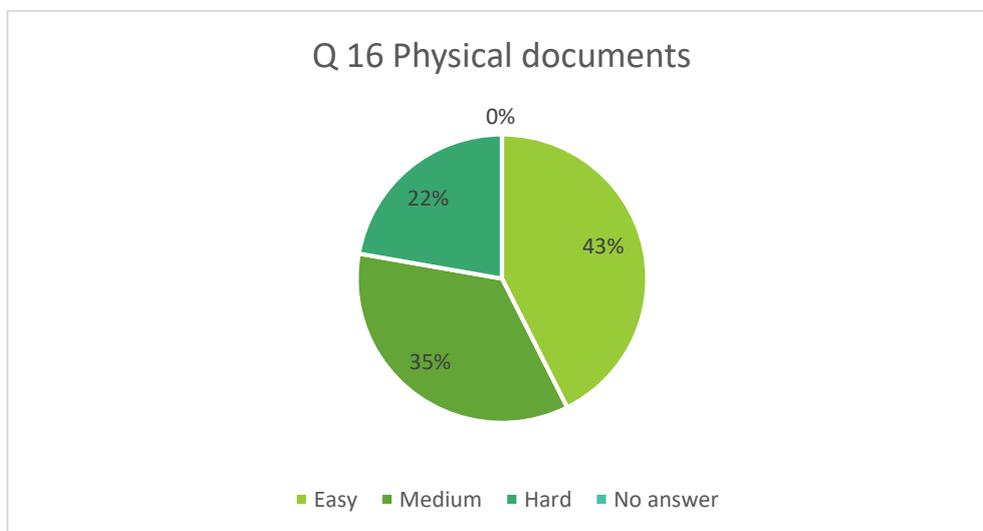
Figure 15 - Q 16 physical documents graph

Electronic databases are used for the easy part of the search process by 78% of participants; this is unsurprising due to ease of access and quick searchability. 9% of participants assigned databases to the medium category, and another 9% to hard. 4% did not assign it anywhere, which may mean they do not use them.
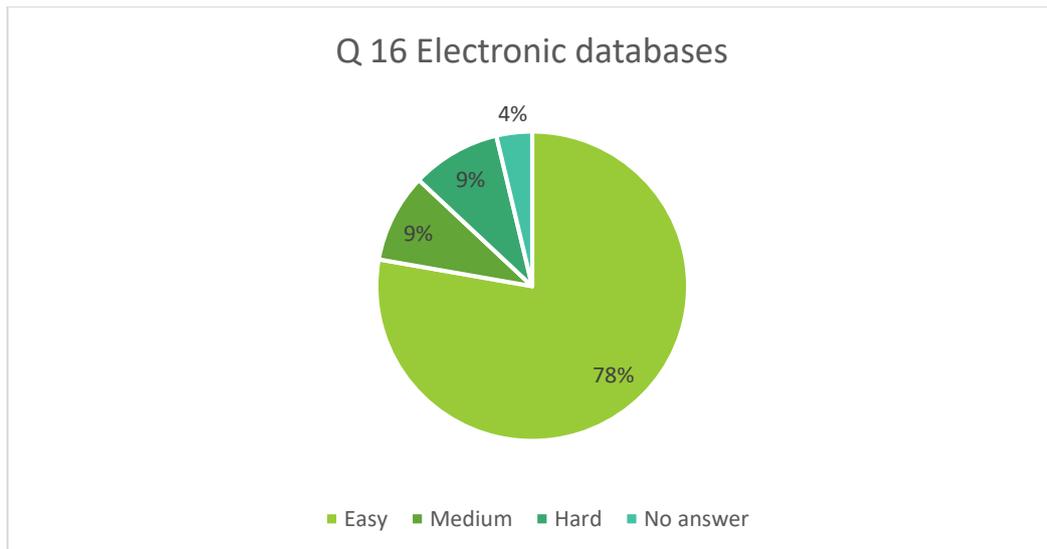
Figure 16 - Q 16 electronic databases graph

Websites largely belong to the easy category, with 72% ascribing them there. 19% of participants nominated them at medium difficulty, and 2% as hard. Again, this is likely due to ease of use. 7% did not assign them anywhere, which may mean they do not use them.
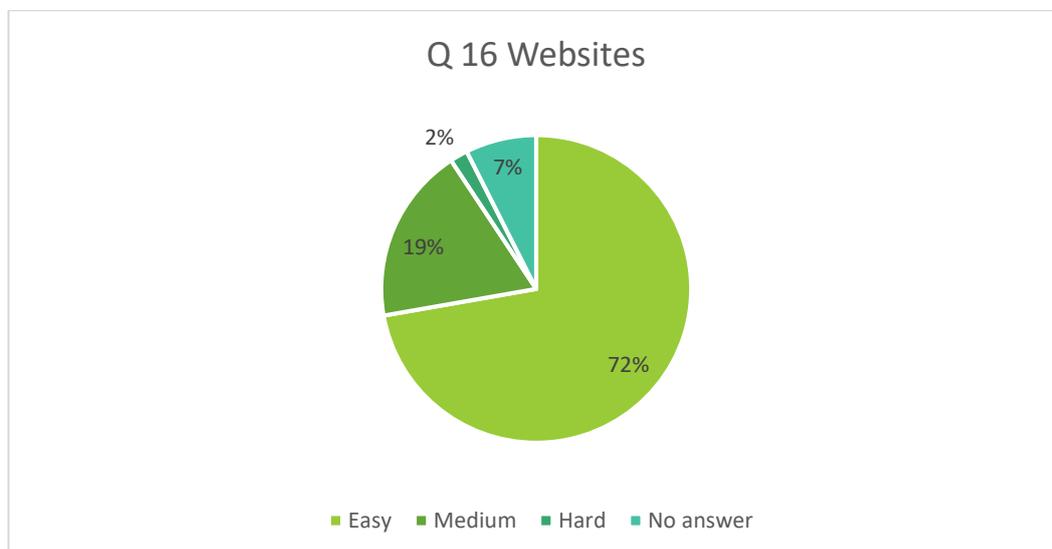
Figure 17 - Q 16 websites graph

With physical materials we see only 17% assigning them to the easy category, whereas 43% think they belong to medium, and 33% hard. Keeping in mind that 7% did not assign it anywhere, it is interesting that the results are broadening.
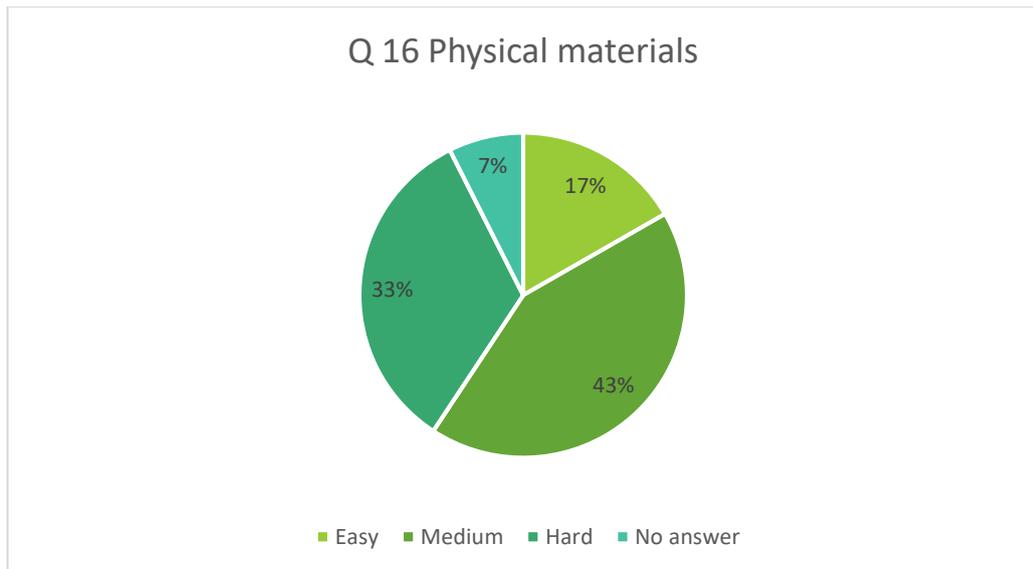
Figure 18 - Q 16 physical materials graph

Digital resources follow a similar trend to physical materials, with 39% using them for easy searches, 46% for medium, 11% for hard. 4% have not ascribed them anywhere. Again, ease of use and accessibility are likely reasons.
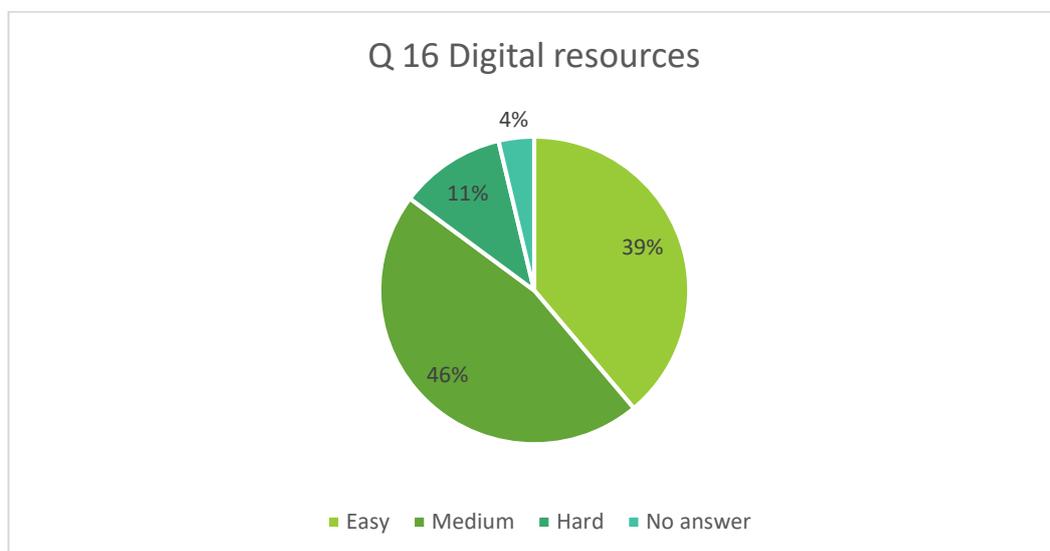
Figure 19 - Q 16 digital resources graph

Microfiche have the smallest difference between easy and medium difficulties, at just 39% and 41% respectively. 13% of participants use them for hard searches. 7% did not put fiche in any category, suggesting they may not use them.
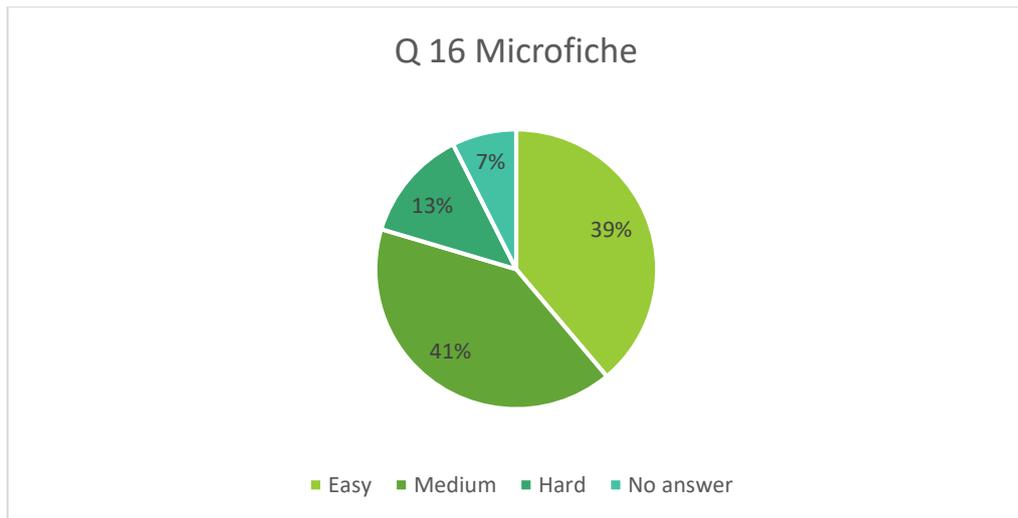
Figure 20 - Q 16 microfiche graph

Microfilm has the smallest easy category, just 4%. This is likely because they can be cumbersome and time-consuming. 4% of researchers did not assign it to any category, possibly because they do not use them.
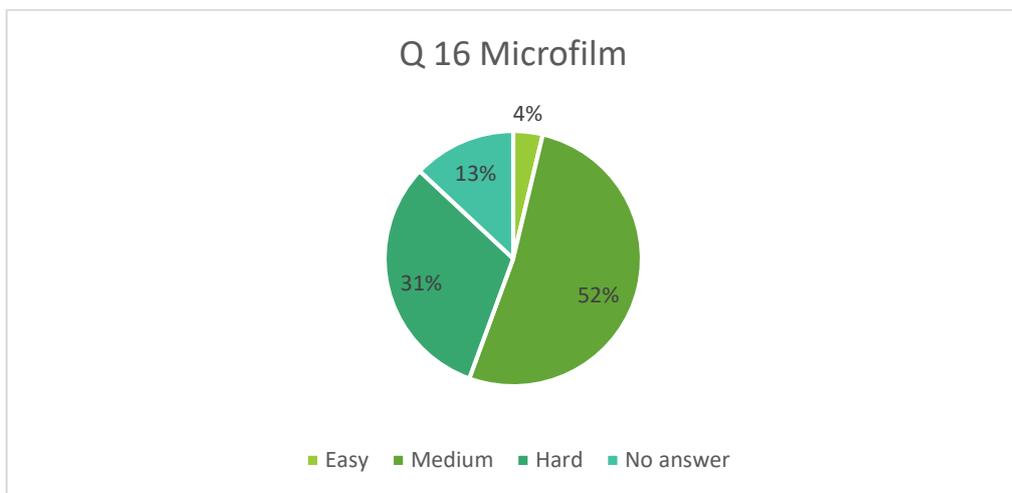
Figure 21 - Q 16 microfilm graph

Overall, electronic formats (databases, website, digital tools), are considered the easiest to use by researchers, whereas physical formats (documents, materials, microfilm or microfiche readers), are usually assigned to the more difficult categories. Darby and Clough explain similar results:

> "As ancestor identification becomes more difficult, the use of online resources declines (70-18%), while the use of physical material increases (48-91%), probably indicative of the lesser online availability of more unusual

records and the initial focus on digitizing records with the widest appeal"
(2013, p.80).

Question 17 asked researchers what other formats they use at libraries. Most
responses were covered by the physical documents or physical materials categories,
i.e. books or magazines. One useful format mentioned that my options did not cover
was collaboration with others, be it attending talks given by professionals FHRs, help
from library staff, or conversations with fellow researchers. Researcher 17 is one
such advocate of collaboration: "its [sic] amazing how a stranger can help solve a
problem by sharing their knowledge of a resource or geographical area".

4.4   RQ 4 – Physical and electronic access

My expectation for the responses about access was that electronic materials would be more
popular than physical due to their ease and availability. In 2002 Southwell reported that
42% of her genealogy patrons preferred the internet over other resources (p.102). I
expected the numbers from my data in favour of electronic resources to be even higher,
due to the internet's prevalence.

4.4.1   Questions 16 & 17 – difficulty stages of format access and 'other' formats

I mention these questions again, from the perspective of physical vs electronic
access. The trend from my data shows that tools like physical documents, physical
materials, microfilm machines and microfiche readers, are more complicated to use.
Alternatively, electronic resources like databases are easier to search on and specific
results can be accessed quickly. Further, physical tools, in most cases, can only be
accessed at libraries or similar repositories, whereas electronic tools can be accessed
instantly at home – cost may be a personal factor.

4.4.2   Question 9 – format preference for national and international research

When searching for national information, 37% of respondents combine physical and
electronic tools. 23% prefer solely physical resources, while 16% use physical and
electronic, but do not have a preference overall. Less popular were the options of
electronic resources (10%), or no preference at all (7%), while 2% each selected
either electronic or physical in conjunction with not having any real preference. 3%
indicated that they did not conduct searches for national records. I offered them the

option to select no preference as it seemed plausible that some researchers might not have any strong opinion on format. Indeed, several researchers took the option; an explanation could be that they use whichever format is most applicable to their needs.
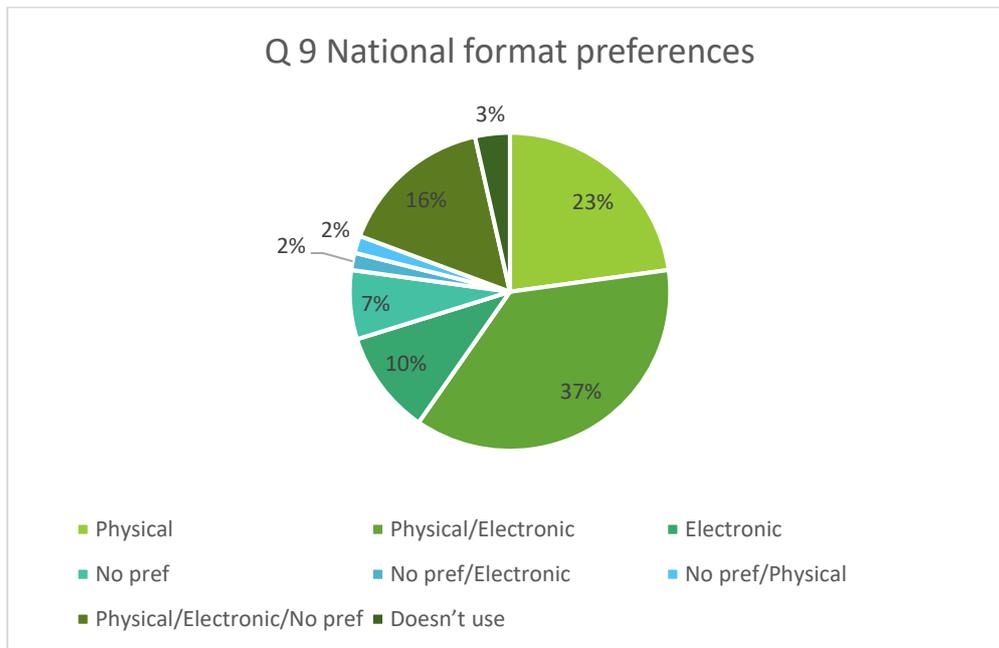
Figure 22- Q 9 national format preferences graph

Electronic sources reign supreme in international research, with 44% of respondents selecting it. 25% combine physical and electronic, which surprised me as not a lot of material for international research is available in physical format. Yet only 2% of my participants selected physical on its own. 11% indicated no preference, while 7% said they used physical and electronic but had no preference. 6% used electronic but had no preference, and 5% did not conduct international searches. Again, selections of no preference could be due to researchers simply using whichever format they know is the best provider of the information they want to obtain. Aspects of ease and immediacy of use and accessibility may also come into play here.
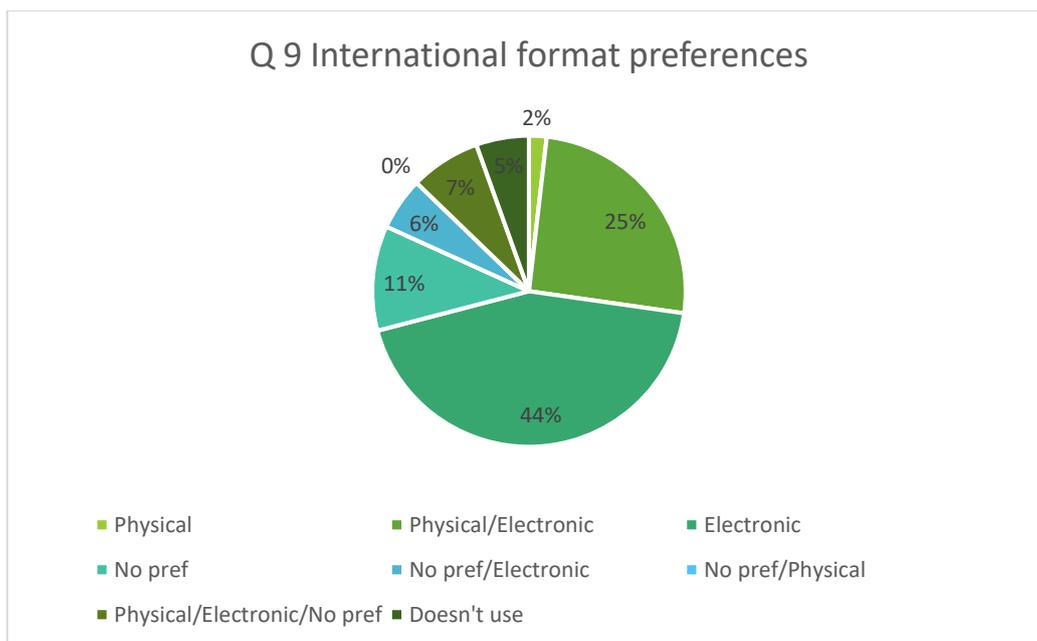
Figure 23 - Q 9 international format preferences graph

4.5   RQ 5 – Specific resources and materials:

I wanted to query the specific tools and resources preferred by FHRs in their research. I expected databases to be popular, as well as specialized FHR websites and microfiche of BDMs indexes. These assumptions were based on my observations as a research librarian.

4.5.1   Question 20 – what do FHRs come to libraries to access

The majority responded that they go to libraries for materials they cannot access at home, be they physical resources such as books, maps and specialised local materials, or digital tools like databases. Microfiche and microfilm machines and their materials were especially mentioned. FHRs come to get help from staff or talk with other researchers. Several commented that they just enjoy the library environment. Yet some researchers admitted they do not go to libraries frequently anymore, as they have their own subscriptions to databases and do not often need other resources.

4.5.2   Question 10 – physical resource preference

Books were mentioned by 17 respondents, electoral rolls by 9 and microfiche by 12. 19 stated that they mix resources. Interestingly, 10 respondents said they prefer digital resources; these researchers favour electronic to the point that they have indicated that they use it almost exclusively. 18 did not give a response specific

enough to categorise and 15 had other materials they preferred which were too specific to be afforded their own categories. Several researchers, such as Researcher 6 who began as an FHR before the development of the internet, commented that they prefer physical materials to electronic. Being able to physically handle an item allowed them more understanding of the context or made it easier to use than an electronic version. Researcher 33 pointed out that "Physical searches of library items can be serendipitous"; Researcher 42 noted that books and local studies collections "may have little gems that are not recorded" anywhere else.
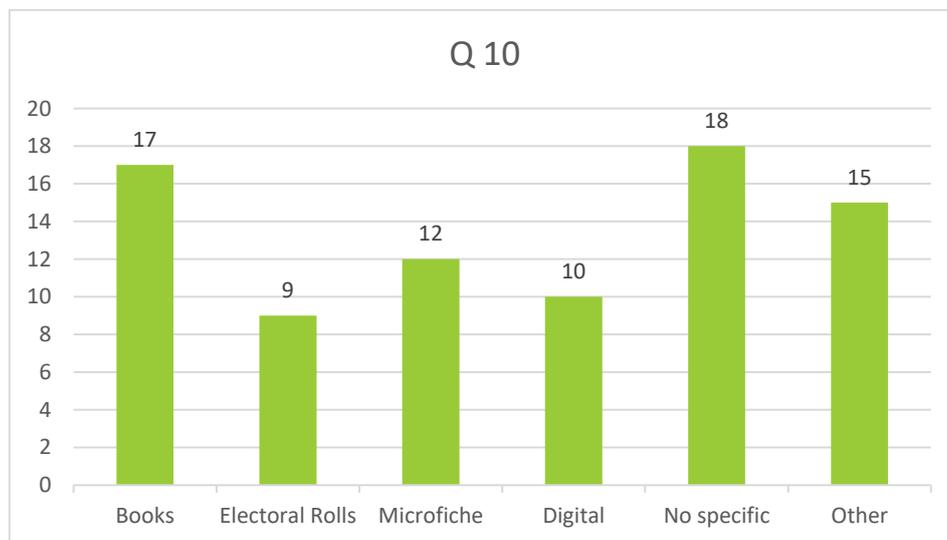
Figure 24 - Q 10 graph

4.5.3 Question 11 – electronic resource preference

Databases were the most preferred, with 27 researchers mentioning them. The NZSG CD-ROM was popular with 18 mentions; the DIA's BDMs website had 16 and Papers Past had 11. 25 FHRs combine resources. 18 researchers talked about other materials too individual to categorise, while 4 liked the census and 9 did not have any specific preferences. Electronic tools are quickly and easily searchable. Ancestry.com was the most mentioned. While some researchers point out that many of its user-generated family trees contain unverified data (one researcher calls it 'tricky'); others, like Researcher 28, prefer Ancestry.com over other databases due to its search engine and the amount of original records it offers. The NZSG Kiwi collection was popular, which searches different databases and resources at once, leading researchers to a wide variety of pathways to follow. Researchers also note

the value of Familysearch.org, as it is free, holds many international records, and is collaborative and easy to use. The Findmypast database is also user-friendly. The National Library's Papers Past site is helpful for fleshing out details and offers information that is not located anywhere else. In general, many researchers like electronic resources that offer original documents and have intuitive search interfaces.
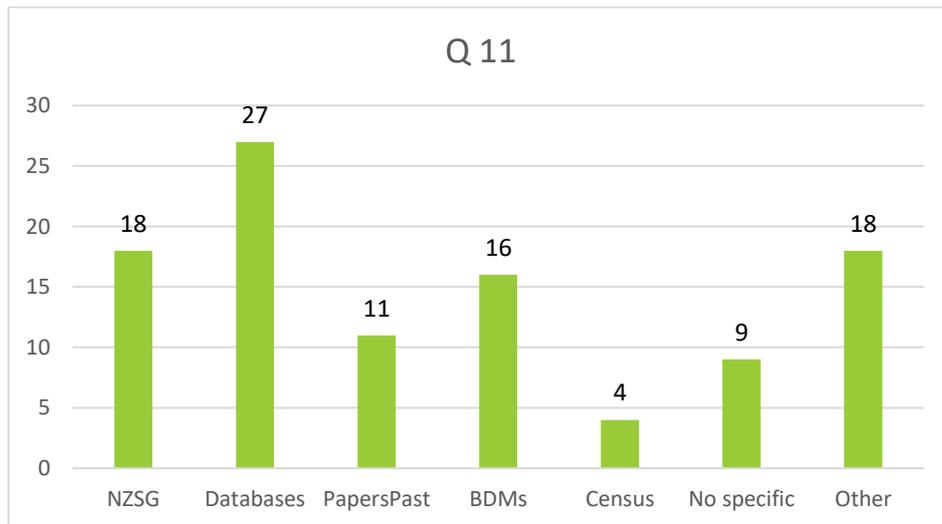
Figure 25 - Q 11 graph

5   Discussion

5.1   RQ 1 – relationship between libraries and FHRs

The first research question was designed to understand the relationship between libraries and FHRs, and how it might be improved.

Overall, most of my respondents are happy with the services, tools and the support shown by libraries. Researcher 35 provided a lovely sentiment when they wondered if librarians: "see themselves, for example, as being one of the key curators in their region's history, and not just providing a service to readers on a day to day basis?" It appears most FHRs will ask for help if they feel they need it. My FHRs also offered ways they hoped libraries can improve services: free access to subscription databases from home or extended opening hours have been put forward, as well as more FHR-specific talks and workshops. Discontentment was largely specific to individuals, meaning solutions to satisfy every researcher would be difficult for this report to suggest.

The results from the data show the relationship between libraries and FHRs is largely positive. While several Researchers expressed how they thought relations could be improved with areas they wished addressed, overall responses from libraries in relation to these issues would have to be individual according to their organization's unique circumstances. Therefore, individual libraries, or their organizations, could examine the use and needs their FHRs make of them, and analyse what specific developments and improvements they may be able to offer.

5.2   RQ 2 – The information-seeking behaviour of researchers

Research question 2 aimed to discover what influences the information-seeking behaviour of FHRs.

Many of the related survey questions came from Darby and Clough's model; phases 1 (trigger events), 2 (collecting information), 3 (learning the process), 4 ('breaking in'), and 8 (elusive searches) were replicated. Overall, Darby and Clough's phases were proven and supported by my research, but there are some points of difference where I needed to expand the options for answers. Many of my participants have been FHRs for over 20 years and have had to adapt their processes as new technologies develop and different practices become standard. My data found Darby and Clough's phase 1 sufficient, (the most popular

trigger according to my participants was wishing to uncover a family mystery) but I added another category - seeking family - as well as an 'other' choice (selected by 54%). The second phase 2 of Darby and Clough's model asked participants about collecting family ephemera before beginning research and many of my participants selected more than one type, though the most popular was photos. Nearly all my respondents agreed that learning was an on-going process and that you learn by doing, which corresponded to third phase of the model. The final Darby and Clough phase queried whether researchers conduct elusive searches. 52% of my participants, the majority, conducted these searches occasionally. The most common response when queried if and how practices had changed was the affirmative, and this was largely due to the internet making more information available to FHRs. Researcher 25 shares that their searching is easy and takes 2 minutes online but insists that there is "Still a place for some physical searching though." Overall, FHRs allow their habits to evolve; they learn to keep records of references, and to make sure the data they obtain is verifiably authentic. They learn the process of research over time and their practices and behaviours develop as a result.

The information-seeking behaviour of FHRs help establish the direction their research takes and is influenced by their motives, habits, and practices. FHRs adapt their methods as needed, and their processes change to allow for new technologies and updated habits. The data shows that Darby and Clough's model is largely accurate, but future research could be conducted to expand or update it.

5.3   RQ 3 – Search strategies of FHRs
The third research question of this study was interested in the search strategies FHRs create.

For research of both New Zealand specific material and international resources and tools, the general process is that FHRs first establish basic facts, then use specialised resources that provide in-depth information. Regarding typical search behaviour, some researchers chop and change between the ancestors they pursue, while some focus determinedly on one individual or family. They employ a mix of strategies to circumvent dead ends, which include starting the search over, verifying data and modifying their strategy. I altered phases 5-7 of Darby and Clough's model to ask my researchers how they would categorise the

formats and tools they use at libraries in terms of difficulty. The generalised response was that electronic and digital tools are used most at the easy stage of research, while physical formats are used at the more difficult stages. Collaboration with others was mentioned as an additional resource at libraries, be it attending talks, discussing research with other FHRs or turning to library staff for help. Overall, a lot of the process of a search strategy depends on how it is influenced by a researcher's information-seeking behaviour, and the accessibility of the information being retrieved.

It is clear from the data that the search strategies of FHRs vary and are adaptable, according to the accessibility of verifiably authentic information.

5.4 RQ 4 – Physical and electronic access

The fourth research question asked whether FHRs obtained access to data by physical or electronic means while at libraries.

Libraries offer both physical and electronic material pertaining to family history research, and both types are accessed by FHRs. Physical tools such as documents, materials, microfiche and microfilm machines typically need to be accessed in-person and using them can be time consuming. Electronic tools are easier and quicker to use and can be accessed from home. Researchers favour different formats for national research than international; most respondents combine physical and electronic tools for national research, whereas when conducting international searches most participants employed electronic tools.

While electronic tools offer faster and easier searches, the data shows that FHRs still come to libraries to access physical materials. Future research could look in-depth at the need to maintain physical collections of family history research material in libraries; some may be digitizable and therefore more easily accessible and searchable, though certainly not all.

5.5 RQ 5 – Specific resources and materials

The final research question was intended to examine the specific resources and tools used by researchers while at libraries.

Researchers were specifically asked what they come to libraries to use. The general answer was to access tools and resources they could not get at home, be they in physical or

electronic format. Another feature was to come for the library environment and its people. That said, some participants commented that they do not got to the library often anymore, due to the pervasiveness and accessibility of electronic research material, some research almost entirely at home. I asked my researchers which physical resources they preferred: books, microfiche, and electoral rolls featured prominently, though some insisted that they preferred electronic resources. They were also asked about preferences in electronic materials and tools; databases were popular, as was the NZSG Kiwi collection, and the Papers Past and DIA's BDMs websites.

FHRs come to libraries to access materials they do not have at home. These resources are largely physical, though some electronic tools feature. Generally, many FHRs (but certainly not all) access electronic resources from home, but come to libraries for physical, specialised tools, and for any electronic materials they still need. Further research could be conducted here; it would be interesting to note the answers of non-NZSG members, who might not have such full access to family history material as membership with the NZSG offers, or access tools from home. There are inevitably many FHRs who are almost wholly dependent on libraries, just as there are likely some who barely need them at all.

5.6   Summary

The relationship between FHRs and libraries, the search strategies employed by FHRs and the information-seeking behaviours which influence them, and the access to various tools and resources offered at libraries all play a role in how FHRs successfully conduct their research. These results provide current data on the aspects covered by my research. The study has uncovered FHRs' methods and processes, and how libraries facilitate and support them.

6   Limitations

The limitations of this study include:

- The outbreak of the Covid-19 virus in New Zealand led to a period of lockdown in the months of March-May 2020. This was the exact time my initial data collection would have taken place, and so forced me to change my method. Initially, the study was qualitative. My participants, gathered from three public libraries across the country, would have spent a month keeping diaries on their research process when at libraries. These were to be supplemented with an observational shadowing session of each participant.

- The altered study was limited to members of New Zealand Society of Genealogists, as the NZSG had the scope to allow my survey to reach their members digitally. Therefore, it does not capture the data from any non-members.

- While I am indebted to the NZSG and its members for their participation, it must be noted that the original study objective was not designed to be limited to them. My goal was to assess the use of libraries by researchers who frequent them, and as my data shows, there are some NZSG members who do not use libraries often, or at all.

- Ideally the survey would have been open for a longer period, but I faced time limitations in the data collection phase. More time would have also let me promote the survey, which may have generated more responses and therefore offered more data.

7 Conclusion and future research

7.1 Conclusion

This study sought to understand the way FHRs in New Zealand use libraries, and how libraries support and facilitate their research. I found that the relationship between libraries and FHRs is positive, thought there is room for improvement, especially relating to aspects of access. Currently, libraries are still key to facilitating FHR access to materials and resources. FHRs use libraries to access that which they cannot get on their own or through the NZSG.

The information-seeking behaviour of researchers varies between individuals. Libraries support and facilitate the information-seeking behaviour and search strategies of FHRs by providing access to the tools and resources they need. FHRs are careful researchers; they develop their abilities over years of practice and adapt to new technologies and tools; they know the importance of verifying information and citing resources. They vary their search strategies as the situation demands.

The internet has made access to tools and resources fast and easy, yet there is still value in physical resources. Therefore, the relationship between an FHR and their library is paramount. Libraries provide both physical and electronic access to tools and resources that are vital to family history research. Some FHRs are dependent on libraries, while others conduct research independently. Ultimately, libraries contain resources and materials difficult or impossible to access elsewhere, be it online or physically. Specialised family history materials, in many cases, can only be accessed for free at libraries; this includes physical materials that cannot be digitised and electronic tools like paid-subscription databases. Therefore, it is feasible for libraries to maintain and continue to offer access to these tools. The internet may make access easier, but there is still a large role for libraries and physical resources in an FHR's process.

7.2 Future research

There are several possibilities for further study from this research:

- o Relationships between libraries and researchers could be examined on a specific basis. Libraries run by different organisations cannot offer the same access, i.e. public libraries affiliated with local councils will all have varying

tools on offer, and the National Library in Wellington will be different again. Due to this, my study has not sought to make any recommendations. Rather, I would urge individual libraries to undertake their own specific research analysis into the exact needs of their FHRs.

- o An in-depth attempt to prove, disprove, update or expand on Darby and Clough's information-seeking behaviour model could be useful to the field.
- o My original data collection plan of FHRs keeping research diaries and being observed could still yield useful data specific to library use.
- o Each of the individual survey questions could be examined at length in relation to FHRs.

More research into the processes of FHRs in New Zealand, and the role libraries play, needs to be conducted, but hopefully this study has built upon existing work, and has added more data to the field.

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9   Appendix A

Survey questions

Q 1a

How would you describe your relationship with the library you primarily use, in terms of the services offered (i.e. help from librarians)?

○ Positive

○ Neutral

○ Negative

○ Prefer not to say

Q 1b

How would you describe your relationship with that library's research tools (i.e. computer access to subscription-only databases)?

○ Positive

○ Neutral

○ Negative

○ Prefer not to say

Q 2

How frequently do you request help/advice from library staff?

○ Often

○ Occasionally

○ Infrequently

○ Prefer not to say

Q 3

Can you elaborate on the reasons for your responses above in Q 1a, Q 1b & Q 2? (Note that you are not required to name the library/libraries you use).

Q 4

For how many years have you been conducting family history research?

5 years or under	5-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Over 20 years
○	○	○	○	○

Q 5

Think about your process when you begin a new family history search using national records and resources from New Zealand. What are your first steps at the beginning of the search process? For example, do you begin by searching for census data, electoral rolls, BDM indexes, or some other resource?

Q 6

In relation to the above question (Q 5), how do your actions differ if you are searching for international records from overseas? For example, do you perhaps turn first to international census data, which is not available nationally in New Zealand?

Q 7

Can you briefly describe your typical search behaviour. For example, do you pursue one family member until you know all you can about them, or do you chop and change between individuals, according to how easy information is to acquire about each person?

Q 8

What is your method when you reach a dead-end in a line of enquiry; do you switch between resources and tools, or do you begin some parts of the search again to check your sources and facts?

Q 9

When you are researching at a library, what formats do you primarily use for national searches of New Zealand material vs international searches for overseas material?

	National searches	International searches
	Format/s used	Format/s used
Physical (books, microfiche indexes, microfilm reels, etc...)	☐	☐
Electronic (databases, CD-ROMs, etc...)	☐	☐
No preference between the formats	☐	☐
I do not conduct these searches	☐	☐

Q 10

Which specific physical resources and materials do you prefer and why? (e.g. books and other printed materials/microfiche of BDM indexes/printed electoral rolls/physical maps etc.)

Q 11

Which specific electronic resources and tools do you prefer and why? (e.g. I prefer X database/tools such as burial locator etc.)

Q 12

Some typical events that trigger people to begin family history research are listed below. Check any that apply to you.

☐ A specific objective or information gap (e.g. a specific event, such as wanting to know about a relation's involvement in WWII)

☐ Practical factors (e.g. retirement allots more time for leisure/hobby pursuits; internet makes research easier)

☐ Pursuing answers to family anecdotes or mysteries

☐ Pursuing information on a particularly interesting family member/s

☐ Discovery of family documents or artefacts

☐ Seeking birth parents or other family

☐ Other

Q 13

If you selected 'Other' above (Q 12), can you elaborate on what triggered your interest in family history research?

Q 14

Some researchers begin their search for family history by collecting up any information and records already held by the family. If you do this, what data do you collect?

☐ Verbal information

☐ Documents, including certificates, records etc

☐ Photographs

☐ Artefacts (e.g., diaries, medals etc)

☐ Previous research conducted by family

☐ Tried but had no success

☐ Family members were uncooperative to this process

☐ N/A I do not conduct this process

Q 15

What is your experience with learning the process of family history research? Check all that apply.

☐ Learning is on-going

☐ Learn-by-doing/trial-and-error

☐ No specific learning phase

☐ Joined a group/society and/or attended events

☐ Used books and magazines to develop my understanding

☐   Made use of online resources and 'How To' websites

☐   Learnt from family members and friends

☐   Learnt from library staff

☐   All of the above

Q 16

When you walk into a library and sit down to conduct research, what resources do you access first? What do you only access once the search has become more difficult?

Drag the options on the left into the boxes on the right to compartmentalise what you consider to be the materials you use at the easy, medium and harder difficulty stages of your personal search process. It may help to think in terms of stages - which do you access first, which later and which last?

Items	Easy		
Electronic subscription databases (e.g. Ancestry.com)			
Microfilm (e.g. newspapers, MLC minute books)			
	Medium		
Microfiche (e.g. BDM indexes)			
Physical documents/texts (e.g. recent electoral rolls/books)			
	Hard		
Physical materials/items (e.g. maps)			
Websites (e.g Archway/Births, deaths, marriages online)			
Digital material (CD-ROMs/Burial search)			

Q 17

Are there any other tools or resources that are not covered by the formats above which you access at libraries?

Q 18

When you are in pursuit of very elusive or undocumented family members, this can often mean turning to resources that are obscure or difficult to access (e.g. wills/transcripts/diaries). How frequently would you say your research extends to this level?

○ Often

○ Occasionally

○ Rarely

Q 19

Do you feel your practices have changed since your first began to research family history? If so, how?

Q 20

Can you summarise what you specifically come to libraries to access, as opposed to what you access at home or from other organizations?

Q 21

Is there anything more that you feel libraries could offer or do for you as a family history researcher?

10 Appendix B

Recreation of Darby & Clough's information-seeking behaviour model (2013, p.77).

1. **Trigger Event**
Reason for starting the research

2. **Collect Family Information**
Anecdotes; documents; photographs; artefacts

3. Learn the Process
Learn how to go about research

4. Break In
Initial step leading to 'breaking into' the records

5. Tree-Build – Easy
Add easy individuals to tree
Census; BMD indices; parish registers; Ancestry.com –
transcribed/indexed; many online but also physical

6. Tree-Build – Medium
Add more difficult individuals

As Phase 5 (more physical, fewer indices and transcriptions);
maps; county archives; TNA; Findmypast – more travel

7. Tree-build – Hard
Fill in hard gaps and sort out ambiguities
Parish material (inc. nonconformist): BMDs; wills; property;
welfare; portal websites; specialist collections – piecemeal

8. Push Back Selected Lines

8a. Occasional … users of 'difficult resources' – others' research;
transcripts; copies (interpret later); serendipity
8b. Regular … users of 'difficult resources' – targeted
seeking; additional tuition e.g. reading old documents

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

11 Appendix C

Information sheet for anonymous survey participants

Investigating the information-seeking behaviour and access to information of family history researchers using public libraries in New Zealand

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS FOR ANONYMOUS SURVEYS

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is Laura Aiken and I am a Masters student in Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project intends to examine how researchers of family history use the services and resources available at public libraries in New Zealand. I intend to investigate how researchers view libraries, their information-seeking behaviour and what they specifically access when at libraries. Your participation will support my research by helping to expand the pool of New Zealand-specific data available on this topic, and by providing answers to questions that have previously been unanswered. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee, application number 0000028344.

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because you conduct family history research at a library in New Zealand. If you agree to take part, you will complete a survey. The survey will ask you questions about your behaviour, methods and preferred resources. The survey will take you approximately half an hour to complete.

What will happen to the information you give?

This research is anonymous. This means that nobody, including the researchers, will be aware of your identity. By answering it, you are giving consent for us to use your responses in this research. Your answers will remain completely anonymous and unidentifiable. Once you submit the survey, it will be impossible to retract your answers. Please do not include any personal identifiable information in your responses.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in a Masters report.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?
If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either me or my supervisor:

Student:

Name: Laura Aiken

University email address:
aikenlaur@myvuw.ac.nz

Supervisor:

Name: Dr Jesse Dinneen

Role: Senior Lecturer

School: School of Information Management

Jesse.Dinneen@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University of Wellington HEC Convenor: Associate Professor Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

12 Appendix D

Information sheet and consent form for the NZSG

Investigating the information-seeking behaviour and access to information of family history researchers using public libraries in New Zealand

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ORGANISATIONS: THE NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read this information before deciding whether or not your organisation will take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to take part, thank you for considering my request.

Who am I?

My name is Laura Aiken and I am a Masters student in Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project intends to examine how researchers of family history use the services and resources available at public libraries in New Zealand. I intend to investigate the information-seeking behaviour of family history researchers and how they access information within libraries. Your organisation's participation will support this research by helping to expand the pool of New Zealand-specific data available to researchers of this field, and by providing answers to questions that have previously been unanswered, which will benefit libraries in allowing a better understanding of the process of family history researchers. I hope this research will also be beneficial to your society in terms of allowing deeper understanding of the specific methods of researchers. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee, application number 0000028344.

How can you help?

If you agree to take part, I will survey your members. I will ask them questions about their behaviour, methods and preferences when they conduct their research at libraries in New Zealand. The surveys will take approximately half an hour. The surveys will take place online. Each individual participant will be asked to provide consent before their involvement in the research. The surveys will be anonymous, so the identities of the participants will be protected. As we have discussed, the survey link will be sent out by you to your members by email.

What will happen to the information the participants give?

Participants will not be named in the final report but your organisation will be named. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the survey data. The survey data will be kept securely and destroyed on 30/09/2020. Be aware that the identities and contributions of participants will be kept confidential from your organisation.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Masters report.

If you accept this invitation, what are the rights of your organisation?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide that your organisation will participate, you have the right to:

•   ask any questions about the study at any time;
•   withdraw your organisation's participation from the study before 20/05/2020, however, individual participants retain the right to decide if their data will be withdrawn;
•   be able to read a report of this research.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:	Supervisor:
Name: Laura Aiken	Name: Dr Jesse Dinneen
University email address: Aikenlaur@myvuw.govt.nz	Role: Senior Lecturer
	School: School of Information Management
	Jesse.Dinneen@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Convenor of the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee: Associate Professor Judith Loveridge, email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

![Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka logo]

Investigating the information-seeking behaviour and access to information of family history researchers using public libraries in New Zealand

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS

This consent form will be held for a minimum of 5 years.

Researcher: Laura Aiken, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I agree that my organisation will take part.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw this organisation from this study at any point before 01/05/2020, and the information provided up to this date by members of the organisation will be used in the project
- Any information the participants provide will be included in a final report, but the surveys will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor.
- The identities of the participants will remain confidential to the researcher(s).
- I understand that the results will be used for a Masters report.
- I consent to information or opinions which are given by the participants being attributed to the organisation in any reports on this research and have the   Yes ☐   No ☐ authority to agree to this on behalf of the organisation.
- I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address   Yes ☐   No ☐ below.

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

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