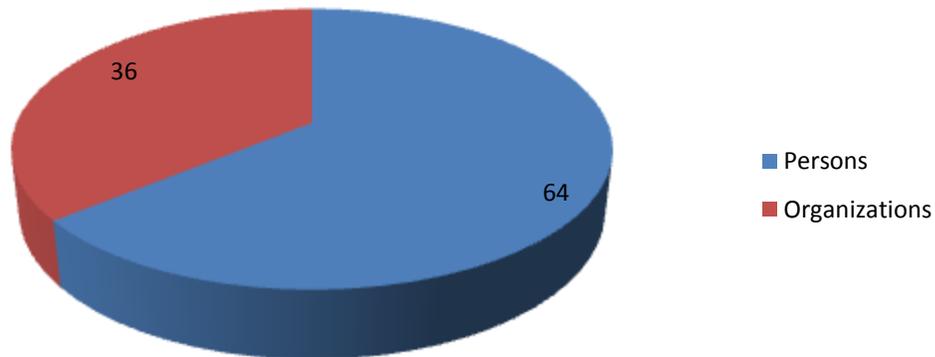


Access to audiovisual material in Lithuanian Central State Archive: user versus archivist

We all know that any archival document remains alive only when it is used in some way. The same can be said about audiovisual documents – films, photos, sound recordings. Audiovisual documents in Lithuanian Central State Archive are used quite intensively, especially nowadays. It can be explained by several reasons. First, more and more of audiovisual documents are digitised and can be accessed by user now and here. About 60 percent of archival audiovisual documents already have digital copies. Beside that, we have enough technical equipment which allows to digitize documents and give an access to them quite quickly. Second, for several years the archive participates in different projects (both national and international) and popularize audiovisual documents through them quite intensively. Third, audiovisual documents are quite attractive because of their nature and format, so users are interested in them. Fourth, audiovisual documents reflects quite new history, and a lot of users participated in this history directly. We can agree that it is very nice to see your parents or grandparents in films or photos, and sometimes you can even see yourself. There can be more reasons of popularity of audiovisual documents. But not only the fact that audiovisual documents are used intensively should be important for the archive/archivist. It is also important who uses audiovisual documents and what is the aim of using them.

So who is the user of audiovisual documents? If somebody asked this question ten or more years ago, the answer would differ from nowadays answer quite a lot. Ten or more years ago the main users of audiovisual documents were different organizations, especially televisions (used films) and publishing companies (used photos). Nowadays almost two thirds of users are private persons. This can be illustrated by diagram:

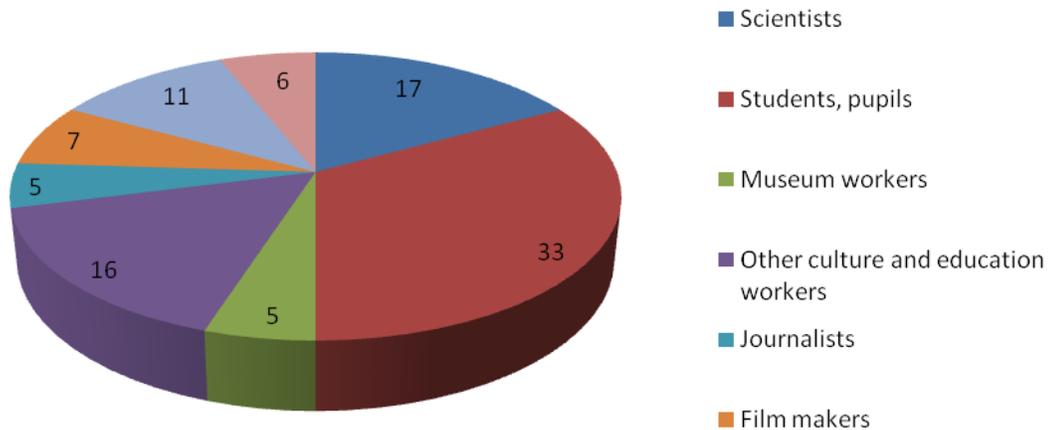
Used audiovisual documents in 2012-2013 (percent)



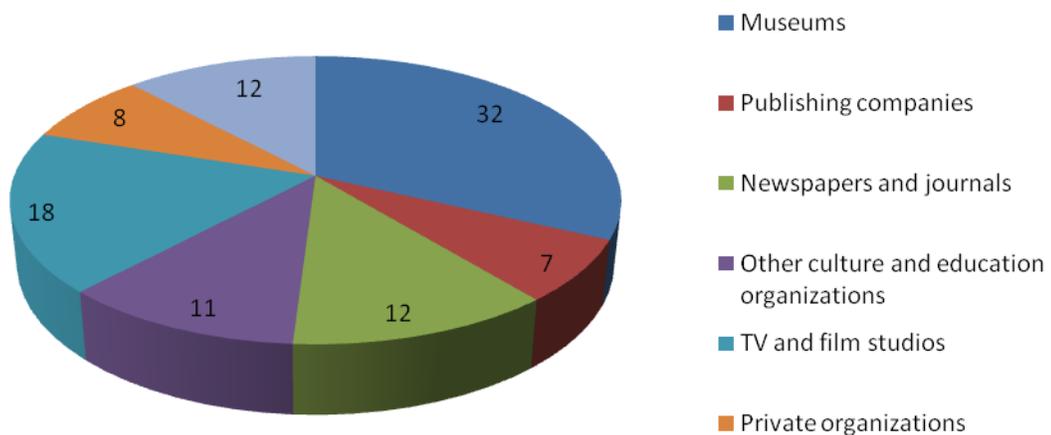
The changes in user's profile are influenced by several reasons. Organizations usually use audiovisual documents having the aim of re-use (for example, in TV programs, new films, books, newspapers, etc.) and their order copies of documents. At the same time they perform some kind of hidden advertisement of audiovisual documents. The name of archive should be always mentioned in new works, so individual users know out about the archive and its documents. The archive organizes educational excursions for students and introduce audiovisual documents as well. Later some of these students return to the archive and use audiovisual documents for their project and diploma papers. Some of people from different organizations who use audiovisual documents often also return to the archive as private persons. I've already mentioned that audiovisual documents reflect quite new history, and people just want to see, remember and think about this history.

What groups of private persons and organizations as the users of audiovisual documents can be marked out? About one third of private persons are students and pupils, and one third of organizations are museums:

Used audiovisual documents in 2012-2013 (percent)



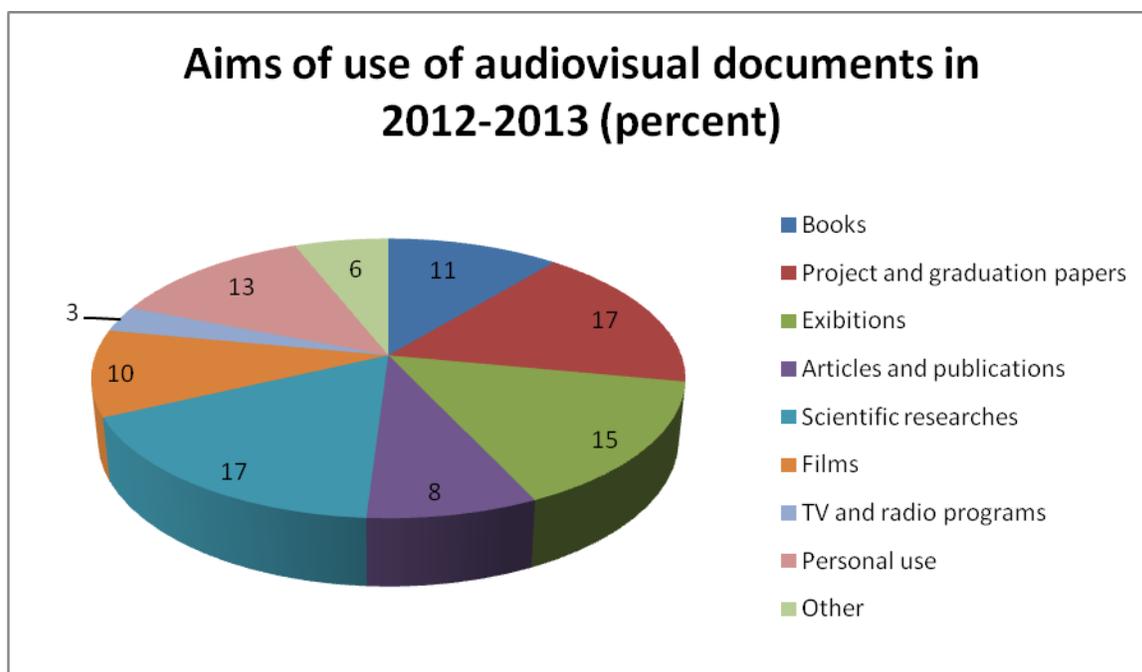
Used audiovisual documents in 2012-2013 (percent)



The fact that students dominates among private persons can be quite good sign for the archive, as we can forecast that they will use audiovisual documents in the future for their professional activity as well. The domination of museums among organization can be explained by the fact that photos are used intensively for different exhibitions. But we are also very glad that more and more museums try to rise an interest in their expositions and make them more attractive. So they

begin to use „moving images“ – extracts from films. The use of films begins to overstep traditional margins of using them only for TV programs and new films.

Audiovisual documents are used for very different aims – the diagram shows this:



Of course project and graduation papers as well as scientific researches dominate, but not few people use audiovisual documents for personal reasons. Nevertheless the percent of personal use was much more some years ago. Inevitably the question is why? Of course, graduation papers and scientific researches can also be interpreted as personal reasons. But we usually think about personal reasons as self-education, learning, leisure and so on. Maybe user not always get what he wants? Maybe not any audiovisual material is accessible for user now or a little bit later? Maybe that's why users are disappointed and don't use audiovisual documents anymore? Or maybe the reason is very simple - nowadays user wants to see audiovisual material in the Internet and to access it sitting at home or at office, and get the copies by e-mail? The archive tries to satisfy the expectations of users. Especially this can be said about photos. The user writes to the archive by e-mail and gets low resolutions copies by e-mail, so there is no need to come to the archive and spend a lot of time. Some of archival films can be accessed easily in the website www.e-kinas.lt which was created during the EU-funding project „Lithuanian documentaries on the Internet (e-cinema)“. By now there are 1400 titles of Lithuanian documentaries from 1919-1963 with metadata in Lithuanian and English. The website is continually filled with new films

and their descriptions. In the future we plan to give access not only to old Lithuanian documentaries, but also to old Lithuanian feature films which begin to be interesting to users now. The website is used quite intensively – there were almost 300.000 users since the end of the project in May 2013. By now there are 136 registered users, some of them watch films quite often. Since the end of the project about 90 percent of users rank the website positively. At the beginning of 2014 the website and the project got the reward „Sails of Europe 2013“. Lithuanian people could vote for the best project in each of 9 categories. The project and the portal were nominated in the category „Sails of Europe. For provided electronic possibilities“. This category was dedicated to the Internet and electronic solutions which save time and give new possibilities. The project has received most votes (1.300) in its category.

But there is one but – more and more often we receive one question: why I can't watch more new or even nowadays films in the website? The answer is – new films protected by copyright laws, so we can't publish them in the Internet. According to our laws films become public domain and can be published in the Internet after 50 years from their production. Newer films can be watched free in the archive, but some part of users don't want to come. Sometimes we even receive some kind of mockery – you can't publish but the Internet is full of different older and newer documentaries. On the other hand, even if more films are public domain, the archive doesn't have so many financial, human and technological resources to publish them in a short period of time. You can't apply the principle „Here and now“ for archival documents, and it is pity that some users don't understand it. While publishing films in the website we have noticed one more aspect of users' disappointment. We are often asked why we preserve and make Internet access to the Soviet times documentaries which is full of propaganda and lies? And even are proud that it is an unique heritage of Lithuanian culture. I understand, that for people who suffer from Soviet repression directly or indirectly it is painful and not understandable how someone could be proud of for example newsreels „Soviet Lithuania“. Before starting the project we thought about this situation. Still we think that it is worth to preserve and give Internet access to films created during Soviet time. This is still a part of our history. I think we will still receive some mockeries and blames in the future. On the other hand, we have noticed that after the positive or negative comments or articles about the website the use of it rises. So even a negative critics helps in the website advertising. One more aspect concerning access of audiovisual documents via Internet - even having the possibility to use audiovisual material through Internet

user can dislike it's quality, format or even the design of Internet website. Users of the website www.e-kinas.lt ask us, why the resolution of films is so low, why they can't download films, why the design of the website is not so nice and so on. Before creating the website we discussed these questions. The answers are quite simple. The resolution of films is low because we want to avoid the piracy. There is no possibility to download films because we want users to come to the website for films viewing. We have chosen such design, but we are open for changes. In the future we plan to slightly change the design of website as well as add new content and functionalities. We will try to get money for a new project from EU structural funds' 2014-2020 program. In the case of success there will be new content (video recordings about 1988-1990 events); applications for mobile phones and Ipads; possibility to create virtual thematic exhibitions; more opportunities for people with hearing and vision disabilities (subtitles, sound recordings of descriptions, sign recordings, etc.) I think that all these things will encourage the use of the website. We hope that more users will not only watch films, but also be more interested in other archival audiovisual documents.

So archival films are used intensively through the website. Photos, as I've mentioned, reach users by e-mail or various virtual exhibitions. But the situation with sound recordings is more worse, as they are used quite rarely. The reason could be quite simple – users don't know about this kind of audiovisual material. And the sphere of use of sound recordings is quite narrow or more narrow than that of films or photos. Seeking to popularize sound recordings and to make them accessible to more users, since March 2013 the archive participates in EUScreenXL (European TV and radio archives on the Internet) project, financed by European Commission. EUScreenXL – the follow-up of the international EUScreen project, joining together archives, TV companies, audiovisual institutes and other organisations which create, preserve and popularise audiovisual documents. Lithuanian Central State Archive is one of the new partners. During the project the archive plans to give the access via Euscreen portal to 600 titles of sound recordings of USA Lithuanian radio station „Margutis“. In the future we plan to make accessible via Internet even more archival sound recordings, maybe even to create a separate Internet website similar to www.e-kinas.lt

If somebody would ask me how much the archivist can and want to popularize audiovisual material, I answer – of course can and want. We have limits of financial and human resources, but we try to stay optimistic.