

Spanish publications that provide a theoretical framework for research relating to studies of information users

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ABSTRACT

Monographs, papers and articles published in Spain since 1993 are examined in order to shed theoretical light on the studies of information users, as a strategy for meeting user needs and measuring the degree of user satisfaction. This paper describes the most commonly cited sources and discusses the approach to the topic, whether general or specific. Particular aspects concerning authorship of these writings, as well as their chronological development are also examined.

Keywords: Studies of Information Users; Theory of Studies of Information Users.

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RESUMEN

Publicaciones españolas para la fundamentación de un marco teórico sobre los estudios de usuarios de información*Isabel Villaseñor Rodríguez*

En el presente trabajo se identifican y analizan los documentos publicados en España desde el año 1993, en forma de monografía, ponencia o artículo, que pueden arrojar luz sobre la teoría de los estudios de usuarios de información entendidos como la actividad que se desarrolla con el fin de conocer las necesidades, usos y grado de satisfacción de los usuarios de información. Se describen las fuentes más utilizadas y se analiza el tipo de acercamiento al tema, si general o específico. Se estudian, también, rasgos característicos de la autoría de esos trabajos así como el desarrollo cronológico de los mismos.

Palabras clave: Estudios de Usuarios de Información; Teoría de los Estudios de Usuarios de Información.

INTRODUCTION

Studies of information users are part of what Calva¹ has termed “the phenomenon of information needs”. This refers to an activity that, by applying one or more methods (with corresponding techniques and tools), seeks knowledge (identification and description) of all matters relating to the information needs of the human being; that is the emergence of the need for information, the manifestation of this need through user behavior searching for that information and the satisfying or failure to satisfy that need. It is an activity that therefore brings new knowledge using a scientific method for this, both defining aspects of an investigation. Delgado López-Cózar says research consists of “those projects that applying a more or less accurate methodology describe the scientific methods used and present original results that provide knowledge.”²

Experience in the context of Librarianship and Documentation regarding this matter essentially lies in the scope of professional practice. This is

1 Refer to Juan José Calva González, *Las necesidades de información. Fundamentos teóricos y métodos*, México: UNAM/CUIB, 2004.

2 Emilio Delgado López-Cózar, *La investigación en Biblioteconomía y Documentación*, p. 167.

research that takes either an experimental or applied form; in as far as it reveals empirical studies based on field work, directed towards solving specific problems in real situations. These may not provide the necessary elements for establishing a theoretical framework to serve as reference. These contributions do not usually establish general causal relationships that generate theoretical knowledge applicable to the phenomenon of information needs, that would be applicable in terms of information units fulfilling the information requirements of its users. From here we intend to influence the theoretical outlook by laying a sound foundation for further concrete developments.

The literature on the subject is controversial in terms of its validity and universality of results, and does not show much consistency in terms of terminology. Lack of a theoretical basis explains the limitations of this research, which has focused on tangible issues such as demand and use of information and not on more abstract issues, such as the needs for information. In recent years (late twentieth century), an effort has been made in this context, with the creation of different models based on empirical research, which aim to provide a framework for studying the information user. This includes the NEIN model developed by Juan José Calva González.

From the analysis of a Mexican database, Patricia Hernández Salazar concludes that work on studies of users are either descriptions of specific experiences or bibliographic analyses of the work of Anglo-Saxon authors; most studies do not apply concepts such as methodology, method, technique or work strategy; and that there is no consistency concerning concepts for key terms such as information, user, studies or training of users.³ This author argues for the need to develop conceptual frameworks in this discipline since user studies present, among others, the following deficiencies:

- Confusion between function and objectives.
- Lack of knowledge concerning techniques to be employed or employed, which are not well implemented.
- Required data has not been captured.
- Lack of rigor in statistical aspects, such as defining samples and analyzing results.

Aurora González Teruel discusses the criticism of research directed towards information needs and uses since the 1960s.⁴ Criticisms which stand out refer to

3 Refer to "El fenómeno de los usuarios de la información", in Filiberto Felipe Martínez Arellano & Juan José Calva González (compilers), *La investigación bibliotecológica en la era de la información. Memoria del XXI Coloquio de Investigación Bibliotecológica y de la Información. September 24-26, 2003*, México: UNAM/CUIB, 2004, pp.165-176.

4 Refer to *Los estudios de necesidades y usos de la información: fundamentos y perspectivas actuales*, Gijón: Trea, 2005.

the limited applicability of results and the use of inappropriate methodologies. Most studies direct the investigation to the need for a specific document, or use of a particular information resource, instead of telling us about what users need to solve concrete problems. Nor do they tell us anything about those users, who even when they require information have preferred to opt for another strategy or have decided not to search for this. By confusing the terms, they have preferred to study needs as defined by demands and even information use (use is a partial indicator of demand and this in turn, a partial indicator of needs). As for inadequate methodologies, the technique employed more often gathers information using a questionnaire, from which quantitative data but little qualitative information is obtained.

Juan José Calva González also denounces the limited literature on the theoretical aspects of the phenomenon of information needs, and states that what has been produced are studies describing the search for information on the part of certain groups, the sources and resources they use.⁵ According to the author, in order to meet information needs that impact core aspects of an information center, first it is necessary to become familiar with these: we must detect and identify them, while analyzing and developing the necessary mechanisms required to meet them (inside or outside the center). Among the mistakes made in studies of information users, he finds the following criticisms: no representative selection is made of subjects to be studied, these are applied to real users, neglecting any potential cases; do not discuss how the user obtains information or how this is used; and behavior is studied above all, rather than information needs.

Thus, we are interested to know what items have been published in Spain in relation to this issue, their applications and use, as well as the methodology to be applied to their development, because we consider it vital to create a theoretical framework to systematize information on this matter. Therefore, this paper considers as its essential objective to analyze those Spanish publications that have approximated a theoretical treatment of studies of information users or any of the issues implicated in these studies. The sample offered here is only part of the research process to be completed,⁶ as the study will be amplified to

5 Calva González, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

6 Here we present some research advances within the framework of the project for the *Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas y de la Información* (Institute of Library Science and Information Research), known as "Analysis of the research on the phenomenon of information needs in Spain and Mexico: in several social and academic communities", directed by Juan José Calva González. On the other hand, we are hoping this study will complete that provided in a previous publication ("Los estudios de usuarios publicados en España en el siglo XXI", in *III Seminario de Usuarios de la Información. La investigación sobre las necesidades de información de diferentes comunidades*, México: UNAM/CUIB 2009, pp. 3-78), where we proposed to discover not only the level of diffusion of articles aimed towards the study of information users, but also aspects related to these such as authorship, sources where these are published, defined objectives, or methodology used.

include a larger number of examples found in the sources presented here and other possibilities such as doctoral theses. Our interest is to discover the kind of approach that has been applied to the issue at hand; whether this is general, including different aspects, or specific, focusing on a certain aspect or proposing a particular methodology. Moreover, we want to identify the type of source where this work is most often found: whether as a monograph, in conference proceedings or in journals, as well as the year when most of these were published, together with data related to the authors including their nationality, profession and way of working, whether individually or collectively. All this aimed to determine the interest provoked by this type of research, because we consider it necessary and important that the results of an investigation are made public (they may be useful for information professionals and academics), and because unfortunately it appears this is unusual.

We can say that, at least in Spain, there are no studies with features identical to this one; hence one of our main objectives is to lay the foundations for its development and proliferation, as we consider this to be essential for indicating research trends related to the theory of studies of information users.

METHODOLOGY USED

Our approach to the theme defined in this work has been to apply the method of documentary investigation, based on a search and analysis of written sources; information amassed is used to better understand and define the current state of a specific aspect. This involves a review of the literature from various sources, chosen for its interest.

The first step was to identify and select written sources and publications to provide the necessary information. In this case, we accessed monographs, congress or conference proceedings involving information professionals and journals specializing in Librarianship and Documentation, considering that all of these represent an essential channel of communication, not only for the sharing of professional experiences, but also for presenting lines of research, while providing up-to-date information. Concerning selection of samples, we applied criteria of prestige and continuity, as well as that sources were published in any format.

Regarding monographs, we have taken into account all those published so far. As for the proceedings from congresses or conferences, we selected the six that have most resonance out of all existing events, both in the professional and academic context, because of the quality of their organizers and because they represent variety, based on three criteria: meetings of general

type in national contexts, meetings of general type but of regional scope, and meetings related to a type of information center such as libraries and regional level centers.

Referring to Spanish specialized journals in Librarianship and Documentation, we have focused on the study of 12 that are included in major national and international databases of this field.

Finally, with regard to chronological time limits concerning the search of information from sources, we started from a certain date that has a particular significance for the present case. This is 1993, when Elías Sanz published an article entitled “*La realización de estudios de usuarios: una necesidad urgente*”⁷ (Undertaking studies of users: an urgent need), which resulted in the systematic and mindful inclusion of this issue in the context of Spanish Librarianship and Documentation. The search for information has been undertaken with reference to this date ending in June 2013, comprising a 21 year publication period in Spain.

Once the sources had been identified and selected we proceeded to locate studies that display the characteristics mentioned and which can be considered to constitute theoretical works on the subject. Subsequently we read these and undertook an analysis of their content, evaluating the data provided.

PRESENTATION OF RESOURCES USED

We have directly consulted sources in order to obtain the required information. These are now described in order to define the context where these publications appear.

Professional gatherings

By this we refer to all kinds of periodic events, where members of an association of professionals meet to discuss issues related to a work activity in previously organized events. We focus on communications or essays that are submitted but sometimes difficult to access because either they were not published or their publication has not been through the usual distribution channels, so the edition or delivery is limited to participants at the meeting. At times they may appear as a separate document, forming part of a collection or a special issue of a journal. If published as a result of this activity, they are usually termed “Proceedings”. These meetings can be held at a local, national

or international level and go by the names of conference, meeting, roundtables, etc. Their interest for scientific and professional contexts is as communication channels, because through these the latest trends and achievements are disclosed, serving not only to reveal ongoing investigations but also for keeping abreast of the profession and exchanging experiences and views. These are held frequently and at different locations, making it difficult to systematize this information. In the case of Spain, there is a publication⁸ which has collected those events aimed at professionals in Documentation held at regular intervals. From all these, for this study we selected those with greater representation as they received the highest rating both by Spanish professionals in Librarianship and Documentation, as well as by academics. Most of these enjoy continuity and all of them publish their proceedings:

1. *Jornadas Españolas de Documentación* (Spanish Conferences on Documentation)
2. *Jornadas sobre Gestión de la Información y del Conocimiento* (Conferences on Management of Information and Knowledge)
3. *Jornadas Andaluzas de Documentación* (Andalusian Conferences on Documentation)
4. *Jornades Catalanes d'Informació i Documentació* (Catalan Conferences on Information and Documentation)
5. *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de Andalucía* (Andalusian Librarian Conferences)
6. *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de la Comunidad de Madrid* (Librarian Conferences for the Madrid Community)

Except for the last, all are conferences organized by professional associations: FESABID (*Federación Española de Sociedades de Archivística, Biblioteconomía, Documentación y Museística*) (Spanish Federation of Archivistics, Librarianship, Documentation and Museology Associations), SEDIC (*Sociedad Española de Documentación e Información Científica*) (Spanish Society of Scientific Information and Documentation), AAD (*Asociación Andaluza de Documentalistas*) (Andalusian Association of Documentarists), COBDC (*Col·legi Oficial de Bibliotecaris-Documentalistes de Catalunya*) (Official College of Catalan Librarians and Documentarists) and AAB (*Asociación Andaluza de Bibliotecarios*) (Andalusian Association of Librarians), given that the first of these, FESABID, represents a broad and diverse group of professional

8 C. Tejada Artigas & L. Rodríguez Yunta, "Recursos de Internet sobre desarrollo profesional en Documentación 4. Reuniones científicas, congresos, jornadas, simposios y seminarios en España", in *Revista Española de Documentación Científica*, vol. 29 (1), 2006, pp.153-173.

associations. The *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de la Comunidad de Madrid* are the responsibility of a public body (the General Sub-Department for Libraries of the Madrid Community) and only they restrict participation of professionals from libraries in that organization. Although some carry in their name a determining feature (either geographical, or informational institution), the rest is open in terms of participation and subject. We selected the *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de la Comunidad de Madrid* due to the important role they played in the consolidation of the library system of this Autonomous Community, establishing agreed common criteria for all libraries dependent on this library system (decisive for the rest of the country).

The *Jornadas Españolas de Documentación* are held every two years and we have analyzed those from the IV (1994) to the XIII (May 2013).

The *Jornadas sobre Gestión de la Información y del Conocimiento* are held annually. We analyzed the papers published since the first edition (1999) up to the XV (2013).

The *Jornadas Andaluzas de Documentación* were held with this name for three editions (1997, 1999, 2003), to be renamed from 2005 as the *Foro de especialistas en Información y Documentación en Andalucía* (Information and Documentation Specialist Forum in Andalucía). They have been held eight times annually with this new name. For our study we analyzed the papers presented at this event from 1997-2012, as there is still no information on the latest, held in June 2013.

The *Jornades Catalanes d'Informació i Documentació* are held biannually, providing us with nine editions in the proposed timeframe: 5th (1995), 6th (1997), 7th (1999), 8th (2001), 9th (2004), 10th (2006), 11th (2008), 12th (2010) and 13th (2012).

The *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de Andalucía* are held every one or two years. We have analyzed editions from the VIII, held in 1994, until the XVI held in 2011. The XVII was held in October 2013.

Finally, the *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de la Comunidad de Madrid* have only published the proceedings from the 3rd (2002) and 4th edition (2004). However, we had access to the (unpublished) contents of these editions, the 1st (1991) and the 2nd (2000).

Specialized journals

For the identification of Spanish journals specializing in Librarianship and Documentation we have consulted DICE⁹ (*Difusión y Calidad Editorial de*

las Revistas Españolas de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas) (Distribution and Publishing Quality of Spanish Journals in Humanities, and Social and Judicial Sciences), a database product of a collaborative agreement between the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (CSIC) (Higher Council for Scientific Research) and the *Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación* (ANECA) (National Agency for Evaluation of Quality and Accreditation).¹⁰ This database aims to facilitate knowledge and consultation concerning some of the editorial characteristics more related to quality of the Spanish journals in Humanities and Social Sciences. Such characteristics relate to qualitative aspects as the evaluation mechanisms of originals to be published, the openness of management organs, the presence of various institutions unrelated to the publisher among the published contributions, dissemination of journals in multidisciplinary and specialized databases of international prestige, or the type of presence in the internet. The consultation of this resource has been contrasted with that of RESH (*Revistas Españolas de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades: Valoración integrada e índice de citas*) (Spanish Journals for Social Sciences and Humanities: Integrated Evaluation and Citation Index),¹¹ which particularly provides data relative to the use and influence of journals, by the elaboration of citation indexes that calculate the impact of each on the nearest discipline environment. The fact that DICE provides information on Latindex criteria (Online Regional Information System for Scientific Journals of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal) fulfilled by the journals included, has made us consider this resource as having great fundamental validity, when selecting specialized journals for Librarianship and Documentation. We will focus on studying 12 of these, which are included in the main national and international specialized databases. The selected journals, among the 39 analyzed by DICE and the 33 collected in RESH, are as follows:

- 10 The entity that finances its maintenance and was created by the Research Group "*Evaluación de publicaciones científicas en Ciencias Sociales y Humanas*" (Assessment of scientific publications in Social and Human Sciences) from the *Centro de Información y Documentación Científica* (CINDOC) (Center of Scientific Information and Documentation), CSIC. ANECA uses DICE as a quality reference for Spanish publications in their teacher evaluation processes.
- 11 "This gives the results of the analysis of Spanish Journals of Social Science and Humanities from the point of view of their quality. First it presents the Citation Indexes from the years 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 from which the use and influence of each of the cited journals can be evaluated. From the cited journals, with a simple click, you can access basic bibliographic data of the journals, as well as compliance levels in terms of other key quality parameters, including editorial and international visibility, thus facilitating an overview on the different quality aspects of each journal, the basis of an integrated assessment" (Information obtained from the web page: <http://epuc.cchs.csic.es/resh/#>).

1. *Anales de Documentación* (Annals of Documentation)
2. *BiD: textos universitaris de biblioteconomia i documentació* (BiD: university texts on Librarianship and Documentation)
3. *Boletín de ANABAD* (ANABAD bulletin)
4. *Boletín de la Asociación Andaluza de Bibliotecarios* (Bulletin for the Andalusian Association of Librarians)
5. *Cuadernos de Documentación Multimedia* (Notebooks of Multimedia Documentation)
6. *Documentación de las Ciencias de la Información* (Documentation of Information Sciences)
7. *Forinf@. Revista Iberoamericana sobre Usuarios de Información* (Forinf@. Iberoamerican Journal on Information Users)
8. *Ítem. Revista de biblioteconomía i documentació*. (Ítem. Journal of Librarianship and Documentation)
9. *El Profesional de la Información*. (The Information Professional)
10. *Revista Española de Documentación Científica*. (Spanish Journal of Scientific Documentation)
11. *Revista General de Información y Documentación*. (General Journal of Information and Documentation)
12. *Scire: Representación y Organización del Conocimiento*. (Scire: Representation and Organization of Knowledge)

All these represent three sectors of activity in Librarianship and Documentation: academic, research and professional. We have to say that publication number 7 has been included omitting certain criteria used in the selection of sources: this comprises an electronic (not printed) journal that falls below others regarding the fulfillment of Latindex criteria; however, notably this is the only Spanish journal devoted exclusively to issues related to information users. All of these welcome contributions from both academic and professional sectors.

Los Anales de Documentación is a journal published by the Faculty of Communication and Documentation at the University of Murcia. This has been published annually up until 2010 and biannually since 2011. It has two complementary editions: the printed version, which was published until 2010, and the electronic version, available on the website of the University of Murcia.¹² This journal specializes in any branch of the Sciences for Documentary Information and its first issue was in the year 1998, so that, given the established time limits, we have consulted works published for 16 years, from

1998 to 2013. This publication meets 33 Latindex criteria in its traditional version and 36 in its website version.

The *BiD: textos universitaris de biblioteconomia i documentació* is the work of the Faculty of Librarianship and Documentation at the University of Barcelona. It has been published biannually since 1998. It meets 30 Latindex criteria. For our study, we have taken into account issues published from 1998 to June 2013.

The *Boletín de ANABAD* is published by the *Federación Española de Sociedades de Archivística, Biblioteconomía, Documentación y Museística*, which collects information relating to each of the matters associated with the activity of the various professionals who make up the association. It is published quarterly and has been published since 1950, making it the oldest specialized journal in Spain. For this work, we have been able to cover the entire period from 1993 to January 2013. This publication meets 19 Latindex criteria.

For its part, the *Boletín de la Asociación Andaluza de Bibliotecarios* is a quarterly journal (biannual in the last two years), edited by the same association, focusing on articles, reviews and news related to Librarianship and Documentation. The first issue appeared in 1984 and the last in 2011. Given the chronological limits, we have analyzed articles published over 19 years, from 1993 to 2011. This bulletin meets 27 Latindex criteria.

The *Cuadernos de Documentación Multimedia* is a publication from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid that aims to treat documents from a standpoint primarily related to new technologies. It is published annually with its first issue in 1992, named *Cuadernos de documentación audiovisual* (Notebooks of Audiovisual Documentation). From the 2nd issue, corresponding to 1993, the current name came into use. The last issue (23) was published in 2012. This journal meets 32 Latindex criteria.

The journal *Documentación de las Ciencias de la Información* is the responsibility of the Department of Librarianship and Documentation, School of Information Sciences at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. It has been published annually since 1976 and meets 33 Latindex criteria. For this work, we have analyzed 20 volumes (from 1993-2012).

Referring to Forinf@. *Revista Iberoamericana sobre Usuarios de Información*, notably this is the electronic journal for the International Forum of Work with Users (FITCU). It has been published since 1998 and is the responsibility of the Laboratory of Metric Studies for Information at the Department of Librarianship and Documentation at the Universidad Carlos III. It is published quarterly but has not been published since 2007. It meets 27 Latindex criteria. Besides articles, other sections were taken into account,

such as the “Editorial” or “Communications” as this is the only Spanish journal specializing on the subject of information user studies.

The Official College of Librarians and Documentarists of Catalonia publishes *Ítem, Revista de biblioteconomía i documentació* since 1987, which collects together publications on all fields of activity of associated professionals. It meets 31 Latindex criteria, was published every four months until 2007 and biannually since 2008. For this project, we have taken into account the issues published from 1993 to January-June 2012, as this is the last one that appeared.

El *Profesional de la Información*, published bimonthly and biannually, is about information, libraries and new information technologies. The first issue appeared in 1992 with the title *Information World en español* (IWE) (Information World in Spanish) changing to the current title in 1998. Given the chronological limits of our research, we have analyzed the papers published from 1993 to January-June 2013. This publication meets 33 Latindex criteria and is the only privately printed journal which we deal with.

The *Instituto de Estudios Documentales sobre Ciencia y Tecnología* (IEDCYT) (Institute for Documentary Studies on Science and Technology) of the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (CSIC) publishes the *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* (REDC) since 1977 on a quarterly basis. It meets 35 Latindex criteria. We have analyzed the articles published from 1993 until June 2013.

The *Revista General de Información y Documentación* is published by the Faculty of Documentation Science at the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*. It was created in 1992, on a biannual basis until 2008, and published annually since 2009. It collects work generated by the institution's own research and from outside the institution, as well as that related to all aspects of its academic field. It meets 32 Latindex criteria. Analyzed volumes range from 1993 to 2013.

Finally, the journal *Scire: Representación y Organización del Conocimiento* is edited by the Ibersid Network¹³ and has been published since 1995. It is biannual and discusses representation, normalization, treatment, retrieval and communication of information and knowledge. We have analyzed the articles presented from its creation until the first issue in 2013. It meets 33 Latindex criteria.

13 International annual forum, which aims to facilitate the communication between professionals, researchers, professors and students of Documentation Science and related disciplines.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS

Publication of monographs

Evidently among other advantages, the monograph provides a deeper development of the subject being studied with greater dissemination. If the monograph is also created with the aim of disseminating a little-known subject within a context such as the academic, with the intention of serving as support material for the classroom, its value is still greater. In this respect in Spain, we only have three monographs covering the theme of this study published by university professors who specialize on the subject. The first to appear was *Manual de estudios de usuarios* (Manual of User Studies) of Elías Sanz Casado; the second, 11 years later, the work of Aurora González Teruel entitled *Los estudios de necesidades y usos de la información: fundamentos y perspectivas actuales* (Studies of Information Needs and Uses: basis and current perspectives). This same author, along with Maite Barrios Cerrejón, in 2012 published the manual, *Métodos y técnicas para la investigación del comportamiento informacional. Fundamentos y nuevos desarrollos* (Methods and Techniques for the Investigation of Informational Behavior. Basic aspects and new developments). In the first two publications, we find a historical-conceptual approach to the topic with a pronounced introductory character, whose purpose is to support teaching, as it consists of two manuals. The last is an excellent work of practical application with the same purpose as the previous ones. The *Manual de estudios de usuarios* marked the first complete work to appear in Spain on information user studies and is one of the most cited in this context.¹⁴ It is a descriptive introduction to the history, concept and methodology to be applied in studies of information users. The second work completed the mentioned approaches in detail, emphasizing the use of qualitative methodologies applicable to user studies, infrequent in our country, besides focusing its interest on one of the components of these studies: informational behavior. The text by González Teruel and Barrios Cerrejón, although it does not go into conceptual digressions, focuses on methodological techniques applicable in the study of this same topic.

Apparently, there is no uniform criteria in these for the concept and term used to refer to this line of research of Librarianship and Documentation. What they all have in common is a strong interest in describing methods and techniques adopted from other Social Sciences, which are applicable to stud-

14 According to Javier Salvador Bruna, this is the second most cited book in Spain for the period from 1996 to 2006 ("Top ten. Diez años de investigación española en Biblioteconomía y Documentación (1996-2006)", in *Revista General de Información y Documentación*, no. 2, 2007, p.163.

ies of information users, perhaps because of limited experience in this area. Delgado López Cózar,¹⁵ anxious to define the extent to which Librarianship and Documentation are scientific in nature stated that research in these disciplines in our country is at an embryonic stage. From the study of the literature (scientific literature generated), he concludes that the most commonly used methods include surveys, historical and theoretical methods, but from the 1980s bibliometric methods become important. These disciplines are dominated by purely descriptive methods (what and how), aimed at resolving the problems of library practice (applied research), and methods are applied by authors who are markedly deficient in terms of methodological training.

Publication of lectures

Of the six meetings analyzed in their various editions, we have only found in four of these some lectures of our interest.

The VI edition of the *Jornadas Españolas de Documentación*, held in 1998, offers three articles dealing with issues related to the theory of studies of information users. These lectures are:

- “*Los estudios de usuarios en los programas de gestión de calidad. Propuesta de un marco teórico integrador para el estudio del usuario de información*” (User studies in programs for quality management. Proposal of a theoretical integration framework for the study of the information user) (1998)
- “*El cuestionario estructurado como herramienta básica para la evaluación de las instituciones documentales*” (The structured questionnaire as a basic tool for the evaluation of documentary institutions) (1998)
- “*La representación del usuario en la recuperación de la información*” (User representation in information retrieval) (1998)

The first two lectures are the work of the same authors, all of whom are related to academia and research and who have collaborated on other oc-

15 Refer to works “Los métodos de investigación empleados en la literatura científica producida en Biblioteconomía y Documentación”, in *I Congreso Universitario de Ciencias de la Documentación. Teoría, Historia y Metodología de la Documentación en España (1975-2000)*, Madrid: Departamento de Biblioteconomía y Documentación, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2000, pp.625-641; *La investigación en biblioteconomía y documentación*, Gijón: Trea, 2002; “La investigación por encuesta en Biblioteconomía y Documentación española: análisis de las encuestas publicadas en revistas y congresos de la especialidad entre 1976 y 1997”, in *Metodologías de investigación en Información y Documentación*, Salamanca: Universidad, 2004.

casions in relation to the subject of studies of information users: Mónica Izquierdo Alonso, Joaquín Ruiz Abellán and José Tomás Piñera Lucas. In the first lecture, the user is taken as the central axis for the model of total quality management, viewed from the perspective of quality applied to the reality of the informational documentary process, in all its phases (creation, processing, distribution, use and influence of information). Authors emphasize the importance of user studies for the successful implementation of a quality management program. They indicate the world of users as a multidimensional phenomenon with the existence of a significant number of determinants for evaluation, when conducting a user study. Thus they consider it necessary to define an interdisciplinary framework with the integration and complementarity of approaches; especially when there is no clear conceptual framework for the systematic study of the information user. The authors propose a methodological model for the study of the user from the perspective of the documentary communication process, based on authors' analyses, types of documents, types of users and the relationships between these three aspects. They also emphasize the importance of qualitative methodology based on the perception of the human being for studying the processes that determine the activation of a need, the factors that induce the transformation of this need into demand, individual or collective behaviors on the part of information users, processes creating informational habits, aspects of information use, etc.

The second lecture distances itself from this theoretical and conceptual approach, to present a very concrete methodology which refers to the elaboration of questionnaires. Stating that this tool is frequently (and poorly) used as a methodological tool for assessing documentary institutions, the authors provide a detailed examination of all the stages involved in its preparation, offering guidelines for compiling a rigorous and scientific design.

The third lecture provides a comprehensive study of the theoretical approaches that most influenced the outlook of the user of information retrieval systems. The author, María José López-Huertas Pérez endorses the conviction that there is a need to incorporate the user in the design and development of information retrieval systems, and analyzes developments in the theory of information retrieval, which has changed from an interest in the object, to an interest in the subject (user). She also presents a comprehensive description of information retrieval systems based on the user (some thesauri and classifications).

Meanwhile, regarding the *Jornades Catalanes d'Informació i Documentació* in terms of editions which could be included in the proposed time frame, only the 6th and 9th offered two works that we could consider:

- “*L'auditoria de la informació com a eina per millorar l'input d'informació dels usuaris en un entorn corporatiu*” (An audit of information as a tool to improve the information input of users in a business context) (1997)
- “*L'auditoria del coneixement com a pas previ per definir un projecte*”
- “*de gestió del coneixement: metodologia*” (An audit of knowledge as a preliminary step to define a project for knowledge management: methodology) (2004)

Both lectures have in common the use of a new terminology and a partial approach to the subject being considered, because they face the analysis of a specific application for studies on information users in the business environment.

The first lecture, the documentary work of Núria Casaldàliga Rojas and Cristina Soy i Aumatell, presents a study on what is understood by an audit of information,¹⁶ what can it be used for, in what cases should it be used, its status and analysis of some case studies. The work finishes by providing some methodological indications concerning its use, indicating some of the tools used (interviews and questionnaires).

Likewise, the second lecture proposes a methodology for auditing knowledge from an organization, destined to design a management project. The author, Montserrat García Alsina, a documentarist from a private company, describes in detail the aspects to consider before, during and after the audit and reflects on the benefits this can offer, as well as the risks involved. She also provides an example questionnaire for amassing data, differentiates between audit of information and audit of knowledge¹⁷ and notes that either of these contemplate the needs of information users.

The *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de Andalucía* offered one example of the works searched for:

- “*Nuevas demandas del usuario*” (New user demands) (2002)

The author, Roser Lozano, librarian, offers a reflection on the changes experienced in the public library-user relationship. She analyzes the phenomenon that explains the transformation of the public library focused on

16 A term that refers to the process/tool that makes it possible to determine the use that organizations make of this information, who their clients are, what information resources are available, how the information is distributed, why is it used and who manages and controls it, in order to establish an information policy for the company.

17 This deals with processed information and focuses on people and corporate culture that foster the creation of knowledge.

offering services to the public library focused on user demand. She indicates the new role played by this institution and stresses the importance of conducting studies on users and their environment, but mainly studies on non-users.

Finally, of all the lectures analyzed from the *Jornadas Bibliotecarias de la Comunidad de Madrid*, we highlight one that has to do with the issue we are interested, it is entitled:

- “*Evaluación y calidad de los servicios*” (Evaluation and quality of services) (2002)

This is an article presented by a team of librarians from public libraries. The authors, convinced of the need for quality, based on orienting services towards satisfying the needs and expectations of users, propose a series of tools that enable to evaluate the library as a whole, by assessing the needs of the community. Two models for evaluation are offered (qualitative and quantitative) as well as two types of tools (data logging and questionnaire), described in great detail. The aim of the proposal is to standardize actions in this respect and in all public libraries in this Autonomous Community.

As is apparent, in the various editions of the conferences analyzed, we only found seven articles that could be considered as theoretical studies on the phenomenon of information needs; among all the meetings, the *Jornadas Españolas de Documentación* represent those which offer the greatest number of records (three). This can be observed in Table 1.

Table1

Conferences	Period	Publications
<i>Jornadas Españolas de Documentación (biannual)</i>	From the IV edition (1994) until the XIII (May, 2013)	3
<i>Jornadas sobre Gestión de la Información y del Conocimiento (annual)</i>	From the 1st edition (1999) until the XV (2013)	0
<i>Jornadas Andaluzas de Documentación (irregular) / Foro de especialistas en Información y Documentación en Andalucía (annual)</i>	From the 1st edition (1997) until the VIII (2012)	0
<i>Jornades Catalanes d'Informació i Documentació (biannual)</i>	From the 5th edition (1995) until the 13th (2012)	2
<i>Jornadas Bibliotecarias de Andalucía (annual/biannual)</i>	From the VIII edition (1994) until the XVI (2011)	1
<i>Jornadas Bibliotecarias de la Comunidad de Madrid (irregular)</i>	From the 1st edition (1991) until the 4th (2004)	1

On the other hand, there seems to be no correlation between the number of published studies and the year when each event is celebrated (*Table 2*). The first does not necessarily increase with the passage of time, even taking all the conferences together. Thus we find an example in 1997, three in 1998, two in 2002 and one in 2004; that is to say, for most of the years analyzed, we did not find any example.

Table 2

Year	Publications
1997	1
1998	3
2002	2
2004	1

As for the approach to the subject, we can say that only one study was undertaken taking a generalist perspective, while others offer the analysis of some particular aspect (the new user demands in the public library, contemplating the user in information retrieval systems or what an audit of information means) or methodological proposals (how a questionnaire is done, a data recording sheet or an audit of knowledge) (*Table 3*).

Table 3

Approach	Publications
Generalist	1
Specific	6

Regarding authorship (*Table 4*), we see that all the authors are Spanish and professionals of information predominate (four articles) on university professors teaching our subjects (three papers). Projects undertaken by co-authors (four) also predominate over those written individually (three).

Table 4

Author characteristics	Publications
Spanish nationality	7
Other nationalities	0
Information professionals	4
University professors/researchers	3
Work by coauthors	4
Individual work	3

Publication of articles

Most journals analyzed offer us articles that relate to the subject of our interest, as out of the 12 publications selected, only three do not. These are: *Cuadernos Multimedia*, *El Profesional de la Información* and *Scire*.

The journal *Anales de Documentación* offers the following articles:

- “*El modelado orientado al usuario: una perspectiva global*” (User-oriented Modeling: a Global Perspective) (1999)
- “*La satisfacción del usuario: un concepto en alza*” (User satisfaction: a concept on the rise) (2000)
- “*El análisis de citas en trabajos de investigadores como método para el estudio del uso de información en bibliotecas*” (The citation analysis in research work as a method for the study of information use in libraries) (2001)

The first work is the translation of a text by Professor Tom Wilson, at the Department of Information Studies at Sheffield University (UK). It is a reflection on the study of information system users, based on computer systems. The author states that the design of these systems is more than just a technical or technological problem. Although computer manufacturers have been interested in the ergonomics of computer equipment and have designed tools equipped with appropriate characteristics to meet the psychological needs of the human being, the author proposes understanding the cognitive processes of the user to develop more appropriate systems. Thus, his work focuses on the effect of the cognitive style in the search for information, which reveals different behavior among people with different learning styles. The article continues with the analysis of the concept of information to locate and analyze the information user in different contexts: social, work, family, and ends up focusing on the study of the user while at work..

The second article was written by Carina Rey Martín, professor at the Faculty of Librarianship and Documentation at the University of Barcelona, concerned with studies of information users as evidenced by various publications on this topic. On this occasion, she presents certain conclusions on the concept of “user satisfaction” and proposes Rachel Applegate’s model for user satisfaction. Starting from the premise that studies on user satisfaction are really, studies of users, she upholds the effectiveness of these as reasonable criteria for assessing an information system in an operational environment and believes the most appropriate way is with a survey. At the same time, she states the lack of a conceptual framework in the field of documentation that

facilitates the realization of this type of research, as evidence shows that there are few user satisfaction studies either in Spain or in Europe, and those that do exist do not focus on libraries but rather on service companies. She refers to some studies that focus on assessing user satisfaction, that have been carried out in some European countries and presents some doctrinal contributions from different authors, concerning the concept of studies of user satisfaction.

Finally, Cristóbal Urbano Salido, professor at the Faculty of Documentation at the University of Barcelona, in the third article offers us an analysis of citations as an effective indirect method for studies of users and information needs, which does not interfere on the behavior of the studied group: researchers as library users. This is a literature review and a theoretical approach that offers recommendations concerning the application of this technique.

The journal *BiD. Textos universitaris de biblioteconomia i documentació* provides two articles that are in some ways similar:

- *Màrqueting i biblioteques: buscant la satisfacció dels usuaris* (Marketing and libraries: seeking user satisfaction) (2009)
- *“Les enquestes als usuaris de les biblioteques públiques de Catalunya: comentaris metodològics”* (Surveys on public libraries in Cataluña: methodological comments) (2009)

Both articles are short and conclusions reached are derived from practical experience. The first one, work by the university professor Manuel Cuadrado García collects brief concepts about marketing and the need to gather information about users. It is true that he does not explicitly discuss user studies, but perceives marketing as a discipline oriented to satisfy desires and needs of information “consumers”. The second article by Antoni Laporte Roselló, an information professional, offers a series of recommendations for good practices in questionnaires and another type of “studies of the public” derived from descriptions of the main user surveys applied in Catalan public libraries in the 21st century.

The *Boletín de ANABAD* presents us with two works that mainly focus on the methodology to be used in studies of information users:

- *“Metodología de cuestionarios: principios y aplicaciones”* (Methodology of Questionnaires: Principles and Applications) (1993)
- *“Integración de cuestionarios en el OPAC: reflexiones sobre su viabilidad”* (Integration of Questionnaires in the OPAC: Reflections on their Viability) (2004)

In the first, María Amérigo Cuervo-Arango, from the Department of Social Psychology at the Universidad Complutense, offers what are considered essential aspects when developing a questionnaire, analyzing some definitions of this concept. She identifies four stages in the development of this tool consisting of presentation, questions to be asked and their types, organizing topics and codification or presentation of data obtained.

On their part, Miguel Ángel Sánchez Herrador and Mariano Boza Puerta, consultants at the public libraries of Cordoba and Granada respectively, present a theoretical study in the second article, which proposes the inclusion of user questionnaires in OPAC (online catalogue), with the aim of increasing communication between the user and the library, by establishing a quick and constant flow of information to improve library management. As recommendations, the authors present a standard questionnaire, as well as the kind of information this would provide, and they also study its feasibility from different points of view: quality of information, relative aspects in terms of computer implementation, issues related to data privacy and impact on decision-making at the library.

The *Boletín de la Asociación Andaluza de Bibliotecarios* only has one article of interest to us:

- “*Los usuarios de la biblioteca universitaria*” (Users at the University Library) (1995)

Sonsoles Celestino, director of the University Library at Seville, having noted the changes produced in the context that affects libraries, reflects on what it is that users really expect from these, what can be considered as a good library and whether it is really possible to provide a library that responds to user and librarian expectations. She offers a concept of user, reflects on the information needs of the university community as a whole, and presents the basic principles in which, in her opinion, a university library should be based, obviously including user studies.

The journal *Documentación de las Ciencias de la Información* offers us three articles with very separate publication dates:

- “*Aportaciones en torno a los usuarios en Documentación*” (Contributions related to Documentation Users) (1998)
- “*La evaluación de colecciones: métodos y modelos*” (Evaluation of collections: methods and models) (2002)
- “*La importancia de la satisfacción del usuario*” (The importance of user satisfaction) (2011)

The first is written by the same authors who presented two lectures at the VI *Jornadas Españolas de Documentación*: Mónica Izquierdo Alonso, Joaquín Ruiz Abellán and José Tomás Piñera Lucas. Here they offer an extensive work, divided into two parts,¹⁸ which reiterates that expressed in the mentioned lectures, referring to studies of information users in general and the survey technique in particular.

The second article, by university professor Ana Pérez López, provides an extensive work on the different methods and models used to evaluate collections. Among them are “those that focus on users”, mainly detailing the way the user accesses a collection from an information center. She discusses quantitative techniques (record of library loans) as well as qualitative methods (interview, survey, observation), in detail.

The third and final article is written by Patricia Hernández Salazar, researcher at the *Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas y de la Información* at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The author focuses on the conceptual study of one of the elements of what Calva¹⁹ termed “the phenomenon of information needs”: user satisfaction; she emphasizes the need of its study and describes possible methods and techniques for this.

Forinf@. Revista Iberoamericana sobre Usuarios de Información is the publication which evidently has most articles related to the topic at hand. These are:

- “*Los métodos cualitativos en los estudios de usuarios: una revisión bibliográfica*” (Qualitative methods in user studies: a literature review) (1998)
- “*Propuesta metodológica en los estudios de usuarios y su aplicación al caso de la industria farmacéutica*” (Methodological proposal for user studies and their application in the case of the pharmaceutical industry) (1998)
- “*Usuarios y necesidades de información*” (Users and information needs) (2000)
- “*Sistema de factores de la conducta del usuario*” (System of factors of user behavior) (2000)
- “*Las investigaciones cuantitativas y cualitativas en Ciencia de la Información: algunas consideraciones*” (Quantitative and Qualitative Research in Information Sciences: some considerations) (2001)

18 In the heading of the inside pages of the article we find as the title “Dos aportaciones en torno a los usuarios en Documentación”.

19 Refer to Calva González, *op. cit.*

- “*El usuario de la información: unidad de observación mensurable y convergente en los Estudios Métricos de la Información*” (The information user: measurable and converging unit of observation in Metric Information Studies) (2001)
- “*Los estudios de usuarios: asignatura pendiente para la Archivística*” (User studies: pending assignment for the Archivist) (2002)
- “*El usuario de la información y la biblioteca escolar*” (Information user and the school library) (2003)
- “*El diseño centrado en el usuario para la creación de productos y servicios de información digital*” (Design focused on the user for the creation of products and digital information services) (2003/2004)
- “*Estudios de usuarios y archivística: una alianza lógica*” (Studies of users and the archivist: a logical alliance) (2004)
- “*Perspectiva sistémica de los estudios de usuarios de información*” (Systemic perspective of studies of information users) (2005)

The first article is written by a Costa Rican Professor, Saray Córdoba. She presents a list of some literature contributions on unconventional methods and techniques applied to studies of information users.

The second article, written by the university Professor María José Ordóñez Vergara, states the development of a study of information users. It focuses on the description and detailed reasoning process employed by the author in the research carried out on a specific user community.²⁰

The third is not really an article, but the translation of a conference given by the Indian Professor H.N. Prasad. It provides a broad conceptual overview on the phenomenon of information needs: emergence of the need, information behavior, use and satisfaction, etc. The speaker stresses that this subject, as a discipline is underdeveloped, thus work on its conceptual framework needs to continue.

The fourth article, work of the Cuban researcher Enrique González Suárez offers a possible methodological model for addressing the studies of information users called “factor system of user behavior,” which includes the “productive and informational scientific environment of the user in the social environment,” information needs, “awareness of information needs,” “informational motivation,” “decision to implement informational activi-

20 Results obtained were disclosed in two articles: “La entrevista personal: método para el estudio de usuarios de información”, in *Forinf@ Revista Iberoamericana sobre Usuarios de Información*, no. 14, October-December, 2001, pp. 6-23 and “El consumo de información en la industria farmacéutica. II. Resultados de una encuesta”, in *Revista Española de Documentación Científica*, vol. 23 (2), 2000, pp.179-196.

ty,” “informational preparedness” and “informational activity of the user, where informational preparedness is performed through actions and informational operations.” The author describes the characteristics of each of these concepts.

The fifth work is similar to the third in the sense that it is the text from a conference. It is the work of Cuban professor Ramadés Linares Columbié. It provides a brief reflection on the use of qualitative research in what he refers to as “Information Science,” that is, research alternatively focused on the user.

In the sixth work, the Mexican researcher Salvador Gorbea offers us an approximation to metric information studies (Library Metrics, Bibliometrics, Infometrics, Archivalmetrics), showing different possibilities for user studies at different levels.

Regarding the seventh work by Professor M. Paz Martín Pozuelo, we find an editorial note claiming the need of user studies for theoretical and practical Archivistics. Although she does not go deeply into any topic, it is interesting that this issue is addressed in the context of Archivistics, since at least in Spain there are few conceptual or practical experiences.

In the eighth study, the Professor and Mexican investigator Juan José Calva González offers us a comprehensive reflection on an unusual type of information user such as children and adolescents. He raises certain subjects related to this context and types of research that can be carried out regarding this sector.

The ninth article by Professor Jesús Tramullas Saz studies the basic concepts in system and interfaces design for user-centered computer applications, addressing the different approaches discussed and techniques employed. He emphasizes the importance of the user to develop this design.

The penultimate article continues with a theme discussed earlier in this journal: the need to consider user studies in an area where they are not usually found, such as the Archivistics. The Professor and archivist Alfonso Ruiz Cagigal presents a short essay in which he attempts to point out the need for studies of information users for the Spanish archivists, as there is little experience in this area. He lists some of the possible applications of great value, a center assessment, identification of user groups and content production, among others.

Finally, the documentary producer Rita Santaella offers an article that presents user studies as a subcomponent of the documentary system. She points out the need to systematize the process of a user study so it can be extrapolated in investigations of similar characteristics. She puts forward a theory, based on a common model, which includes a set of rules of engage-

ment to operate independently from the concrete example applied, that in this case is three archives of a Spanish city.

The journal *Ítem* presents two articles of interest:

- “*Els serveis als usuaris en les biblioteques universitàries*” (Services for users in university libraries) (2009)
- “*Els usuaris: algunes reflexions al seu voltant*” (Users: some comments about them) (2009)

In the first, librarians Cristina Güells and Judit Casals approach the study of the services that current university libraries should provide for their users, primarily considering their information needs and the changes occurred in the external environment. They offer a very interesting classification of these services, according to needs and user types.

Professor Carina Rey Martín states in the second article that not only there is no consensus concerning the definition of “user” but also with reference to its typology, while reviewing the comments of different authors. She analyzes the terms employed and others which have not been accepted (“consumer”, “client”). After a brief historical review of her practice, she emphasizes the need to undertake user studies. The article is found in one of the issues of the journal, whose content is devoted to information users in celebration of the publication’s 50th volume.

The *Revista Española de Documentación Científica* offers only one article among all the volumes analyzed:

- “*La investigación cualitativa y sus aplicaciones en Biblioteconomía y Documentación*” (Qualitative research and its applications in Librarianship and Documentation) (1999)

From the study and analysis of the themes and techniques used in research articles in two American journals and one British, the university Professor Ángel Borrego Huerta concluded that most of those using qualitative techniques, study user behavior in information retrieval. Subsequently, he presents the main features of the research that uses qualitative methodology. In truth, he does not expressly mention studies of information users, but he discusses the research methodology employed in them.

As for the *Revista General de Información y Documentación*, we can say this is one of the journals that gathers more articles related to the topic at hand. These are:

- “*La realización de estudios de usuarios: una necesidad urgente*” (Undertaking user studies: an urgent need) (1993)
- “*Técnicas bibliométricas aplicadas a los estudios de usuarios*” (Bibliometric techniques applied to user studies) (1997)
- “*Porqué requerimos una metodología para el estudio de las necesidades de formación e información en las organizaciones y comunidades*” (Why we need a methodology for the study of training and information needs in organizations and communities) (2001)
- “*Los estudios de usuarios en los planes de estudio de Biblioteconomía y Documentación*” (User studies in the study plans for Librarianship and Documentation) (2007)
- “*Metodología de investigación en estudios de usuarios*” (Methodology for research in user studies) (2007)
- “*Análisis de la Investigación Cualitativa en el área de Biblioteconomía y Documentación (1981-2010)*” (Analysis of Qualitative Investigation in the area of Librarianship and Documentation) (2013)

The first article is the one we considered as a reference to delimit our search chronologically since it can be considered as the first article to be published in Spain that deals theoretically with these topics. After a brief description of the evolution of user studies, it considers what is meant by this term and lists various methodologies to be applied.

In the second article, Elías Sanz Casado and Carmen Martín Moreno, both academics, speak of the interest in applying bibliometric techniques to scientific consumption and production, as a way of undergoing studies of information users. Throughout the work what is meant by Bibliometrics is defined, resulting in a history of the application of these techniques to user studies, it also discusses types and applications of bibliometric indicators, in particular in terms of published documents.

As for the third article, this is an extensive work by the Cuban Professor Israel A. Núñez Paula, the result of his bibliographic investigation on research trends in the field of Information Sciences. From the results obtained, two factors emerge on which he focuses his interest; first, the constant need to undergo user studies, dealing with the training and information needs and expectations to design and develop new services and products; secondly and contradictorily, the poor conceptual, methodological and practical treatment that has been given to studies of information users.

The fourth and fifth articles are the work of two university professors, presented as lectures at the *XVI Jornadas EUBD/FADOC: Los estudios de usuarios de información* (XVI EUBD/FADOC Conferences: Studies of information

users).²¹ In the first of these María Luisa Lascurain Sánchez provides a brief introduction to the subjects related to the studies of information users, found in the study plans of Librarianship and Documentation Bachelor's Degree in the academic year 2006-2007. The rest of the article is devoted to present a brief history of user studies and to expose what the author considers should be their objectives and contents in the curriculum. She devotes a section to briefly discuss the role of this issue for the proposals for graduation in European Higher Education. As to the second article, the work of Professor Carmen Martín Moreno, this provides a brief theoretical compendium on user studies that closely follows the outline of the book by Elías Sanz that we have taken as a reference: brief history, definition, applications, methods and data collection techniques... She dedicates a brief final section to scientific methodology in general and its application to studies of information users.

The last article, written by Beatriz Morena de Diago, Ph.D. in Documentation Sciences from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, offers a literature review of some works dealing with qualitative methodology. Although not specifically addressed to the theory of studies of information users, it describes some techniques applicable to this type of research.

As seen in *Table 5*, among the various volumes of journals analyzed, 31 works are considered in our study; out of these, *Forinf @* offers the greatest number of texts (11).

Table 5

Publication	Period	Articles found
<i>Anales de Documentación</i> (annually until 2010, biannually from 2011). 33 and 36 criteria	1998-2013	3
<i>BID. Textos universitarios de biblioteconomía y documentación</i> (biannual). 30 criteria	1998-2013	2
<i>Boletín de ANABAD</i> (Quarterly). 19 criteria	1993-2013	2
<i>Boletín de la Asociación Andaluza de Bibliotecarios</i> (Quarterly until 2009, biannually from 2010). 27 criteria	1993-2011	1
<i>Cuadernos de Documentación Multimedia</i> (annual). 32 criteria	1993-2012	0
<i>Documentación de las Ciencias de la Información</i> (annual). 33 criteria	1993-2012	3
<i>Forinf@. Revista Iberoamericana sobre Usuarios de Información</i> (quarterly). 27 criteria	1998-2007	11

21 XVI Jornadas EUBD/FADOC: *Los estudios de usuarios de información* (March 15 and 16, 2007. Faculty of Documentation Sciences, UCM). Notably the academic session for these was celebrated together with the IV Seminario hispano-mexicano de investigación en Bibliotecología y Documentación.

► <i>Ítem. Revista de biblioteconomía i documentació</i> (three times a year until 2007, biannual from 2008). 31 criteria	1993-2012	2
<i>El Profesional de la Información</i> (bi-monthly and biannually). 33 criteria	1993-2013	0
<i>Revista Española de Documentación Científica</i> (quarterly). 35 criteria	1993-2013	1
<i>Revista General de Información y Documentación</i> (biannual until 2008, annual since 2009). 32 criteria	1993-2013	6
<i>Scire: Representación y Organización del Conocimiento</i> (biannual). 33 criteria	1995-2013	0

Moreover, there seems to be no correlation between the number of articles published and the year in which the different volumes analyzed are published. The first does not necessarily increase with the passage of time, even when considering all the journals together. It is true that publications were issued during a greater number of years than those when conferences were held, so that of the 21 years analyzed, only in the case of six (1994, 1996, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012) no examples were found. The years in which more articles related to the topic were published have been 2001 and 2009, with four articles; in second place were the years 1998, 2000 and 2004, with three articles; and then, 1993, 1999, 2002 and 2007 with two, and the rest with only one (*Table 6*).

Table 6

Year	Publications	Year	Publications	Year	Publications
1993	2	2000	3	2007	2
1994	0	2001	4	2008	0
1995	1	2002	2	2009	4
1996	0	2003	1	2010	0
1997	1	2004	3	2011	1
1998	3	2005	1	2012	0
1999	2	2006	0	2013	1

As for the type of approach to the subject, we could say 14 articles include a general view, addressing issues such as the need for studies of information users in different contexts, or dealing with what is studied in courses devoted to the training of future information professionals. Seventeen articles are specific, eight of these discuss data collection methodology (fundamentally qualitative), two are about types of users, three about techniques and data collection tools and four about applications for user studies, including the evaluation of the collection, marketing, user-centered design, study of satisfaction or Archivistics (*Table 7*).

Table 7

Type of approach	Publications
Generalist approach	14
Specific approach	17

Regarding authorship, we discovered greater variety in terms of nationality of the authors, as there are nine articles by nationalities other than Spanish (one British, another Hindu, three Cubans, one Costa Rican and three Mexicans). Most of the authors are university professors or researchers in Librarianship and Documentation, resulting in only five articles signed by information professionals and one written for a Ph.D. This proportion is also seen in the way work is accomplished, as most of the articles (27) are signed by a single author and only four by more than one author, so that individual work predominates over group work (*Table 8*).

Table 8

Parameters	Publications
Spanish nationality	22
Other nationalities	9
Information professionals	5
University professors/Researchers	25
Doctorate students	1
Coauthored article	27
Individual works	4

Finally, two papers are translations of lectures given by their authors, but we considered these in the calculations since they have been published as articles in Spanish journals, indicating the interest of those responsible for publicizing these issues.

CONCLUSIONS

After completing this study we are able to reach the following conclusions:

1. Publication of work in Spain on aspects related to the theory of studies of information users is scarce, as for the 21 years analyzed only three monographs, seven lectures and 31 articles have been found.

2. Monographs published during the selected period are introductory in character and serve a didactic interest, to support the authors teaching in the university training of future information professionals.
3. The most used periodical source for publicizing works with these characteristics is the journal, through the article. Only seven of the identified studies have been reported from conferences, while 31 have been from specialized journals. It is true that conferences are celebrated less frequently than the periodicity in which the different volumes of the analyzed journals are published, but it is significant that we found examples of what is sought in nine out of 12 journals, and only in four out of 6 conferences. This suggests that the article is the most appropriate vehicle for the theoretical approach to a topic.
4. Most of the lectures belong to the *Jornadas Españolas de Documentación*, a gathering which enjoys great diffusion in Spain, as it is organized by the FESABID (*Federación Española de Sociedades de Archivística, Biblioteconomía, Documentación y Museística*). However, the greatest number of articles does not correspond to the journal which meets most Latindex criteria and is supposed to be the most prestigious (*Revista Española de Documentación Científica*), but to one of the journals that has less (*Forinf@*). The reason is this is the only Spanish journal that specializes on the subject of studies of information users.
5. Regarding the year of publication, we can say that four years pass since the article by Elías Sanz appears, article that we have taken as an initial time reference, and three years since the publication of the first monograph on the subject (in 1997 and by the same author), until the first works appear both in conferences and journals. Since that time (1993) until today, we have examples of work, except in the years 1996, 2006, 2008 and 2010. Notably, the passage of time does not imply an increase in publications among any of the sources studied, as the greatest number of works corresponds to the year 1998 (six);²² it is also true that they have not stopped being published, even in the last year. This brings us to the conclusion that this issue still continues to be of interest in our area.
6. Regarding the type of approach to the subject at hand, the specific

22 Considering that the article published in the journal *Documentación de las Ciencias de la Información* during that year holds the same text as the authors presented in two lectures during the VI *Jornadas españolas de Documentación*, then it appears that in 1998 we only have four works of interest, as occurred in 2002.

approach predominates, 24 works (a monograph, six lectures and 17 articles) over the 41 identified. Of all the aspects dealt with, the analysis of methodologies and data collection techniques predominates (a monograph, three lectures and eight articles). Other discussed issues are, in order of interest, the user, various applications for user studies and methodological proposals. The rest deal with the issue in a generalized way: two monographs, a lecture and 14 articles.

7. With regard to authorship, out of the works analyzed we can say that Spanish authors predominate (32), university professors or researchers of Librarianship and Documentation (32), and those working individually (32). Either way, if we consider data obtained in terms of the source where they appear, we see there are differences between them, as in the case of lectures, where there is a majority of authors who are information professionals (four out of seven), while for articles, most authors are university professors or researchers (26 of 31). The same applies to monographs, whose authors are university professors. There are also differences in the way they work, as in the case of lectures, it is more usual to find co-authors (four to three), while in the case of articles, these are usually the work of an individual (27 of 31). In the case of the three monographs only one is written by two authors. This suggests that the theoretical approach to a topic turns out to be an activity of individual conception.
8. Apparently the theoretical framework for studies of information users in Spain is primarily located in the university context, not only because most of the authors of the identified works are university professors or researchers, but also because the sources where most articles on the subject have been published are two journals which are the responsibility of a university department (*Forinf@*) and one faculty (*Revista General de Información y Documentación Científica*).

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