

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
May 15 – 17, 2013  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Report: *I Found It In The Archives!*  
(Prepared by Teresa Brinati)**

**BACKGROUND**

October is American Archives Month. Since 2006, American Archives Month has given SAA members an opportunity to tell (or remind) people that items important to them are being preserved, cataloged, cared for, and made accessible by archivists.

Based on a decision reached at a Council strategic planning session, three years ago SAA launched the *I Found It In The Archives!* campaign in conjunction with American Archives Month, and encouraged the profession to collectively reach out to individuals who have found important records, family heritage, and other treasures through archival collections. The idea is to involve people who have sought out archives by engaging them in a contest about what they found and how it made a difference in their lives, then use social media to spread the word about their discoveries, and ask the public to vote for the best one.

The competition involves archivists setting up contests at their own institutions in the fall and winter, and forwarding their winning entry to SAA by March 1. Those local winners then became part of a national contest administered on the SAA website. The 2012/2013 contest is currently in progress and runs April 1 through May 15.

**PROMOTIONS**

SAA again worked with Next Year's News, a graphic design and marketing communications firm based in Toledo, Ohio, to refresh the concept and update the press kit. The 12-page press kit was posted online in July 2012 in a special area of the website devoted to this initiative. Also featured was a letter of invitation from SAA President Jackie Dooley. Additional resources were made available online, including customizable forms, a promotional flyer, and "evergreen" practical advice and tips:

- *I Found It In The Archives!* button added to SAA website home page.
- *I Found It In The Archives!* destination on SAA website:  
<http://www2.archivists.org/initiatives/i-found-it-in-the-archives>.
- Press Kit: [http://files.archivists.org/advocacy/2012-13\\_IFIITA-PR-Kit.pdf](http://files.archivists.org/advocacy/2012-13_IFIITA-PR-Kit.pdf).
- Additional Resources: <http://www2.archivists.org/initiatives/american-archives-month>.

- Twitter feed: #foundarch; messages tweeted on a regular basis.
- *Archival Outlook: I Found It In The Archives!* full-page ad (July/August 2012); “Fabulous Finds” article by Anne Hartman (Sept/Oct 2012); “Participate in *I Found It In The Archives!*” in *Around SAA* (Jan/Feb 2013); and “*I Found It In The Archives!* National Contest to Kick Off in April” in *Around SAA* (Mar/Apr 2013).
- *In the Loop*: Steady stream of pieces with links to website running from July 2012 until June 2013 announcement of winner of the national contest.
- Promos posted to various listservs, including A&A and CoSA.
- Facebook: Messages posted on a regular basis.
- A letter encouraging participation was mailed to every state archivist.
- Press releases were prepared and disseminated for each of the five national contestants.
- The sponsoring institutions for each of the national contestants distributed the respective press release to their media contacts.
- Contestants offered to distribute the press release to local outlets (e.g., hometown newspaper, alma mater, etc.).
- *Off the Record* guest blog post by Teresa Brinati (April 18).

## **PRESS LINKS**

We are aware of the following links to coverage of the contest:

- <https://swem.wm.edu/news/2013/04/connecting-across-centuries>
- <http://uharchives.wordpress.com/2013/04/01/i-found-it-in-the-archives-national-competition/>
- <http://library.sfasu.edu/etrc/found-it/>
- <http://sassyjanegenealogy.blogspot.com/2013/04/saas-annual-i-found-it-in-archives.html>
- <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/news/ifounditinthearchives/index.html>

## **PARTICIPATION**

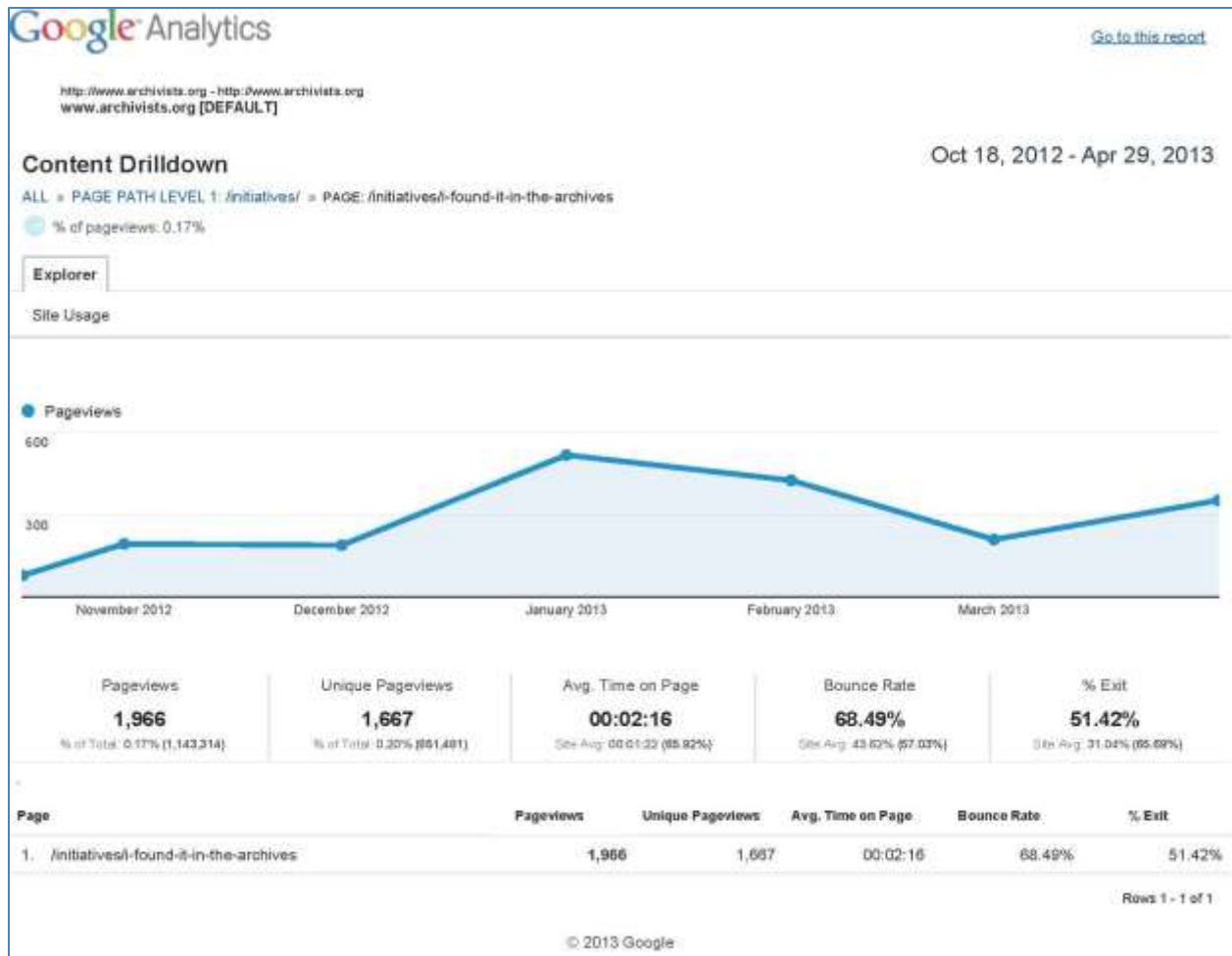
Participation in the national contest is still evolving. Fifteen different institutions have submitted entries to the national competition in the past three years (several institutions have been repeat participants). In 2013, there are five entries, all essays. In 2012, there were eight entries (seven essays and one video) and in 2011 there were six (five essays and one video). Participation by the public saw a much more impressive increase: from 1,153 votes cast in 2011 to 8,414 votes cast in 2012! The jury is still out on the 2013 contest which closes May 15.

## **METRICS**

Please see the figures on pages 3-5.

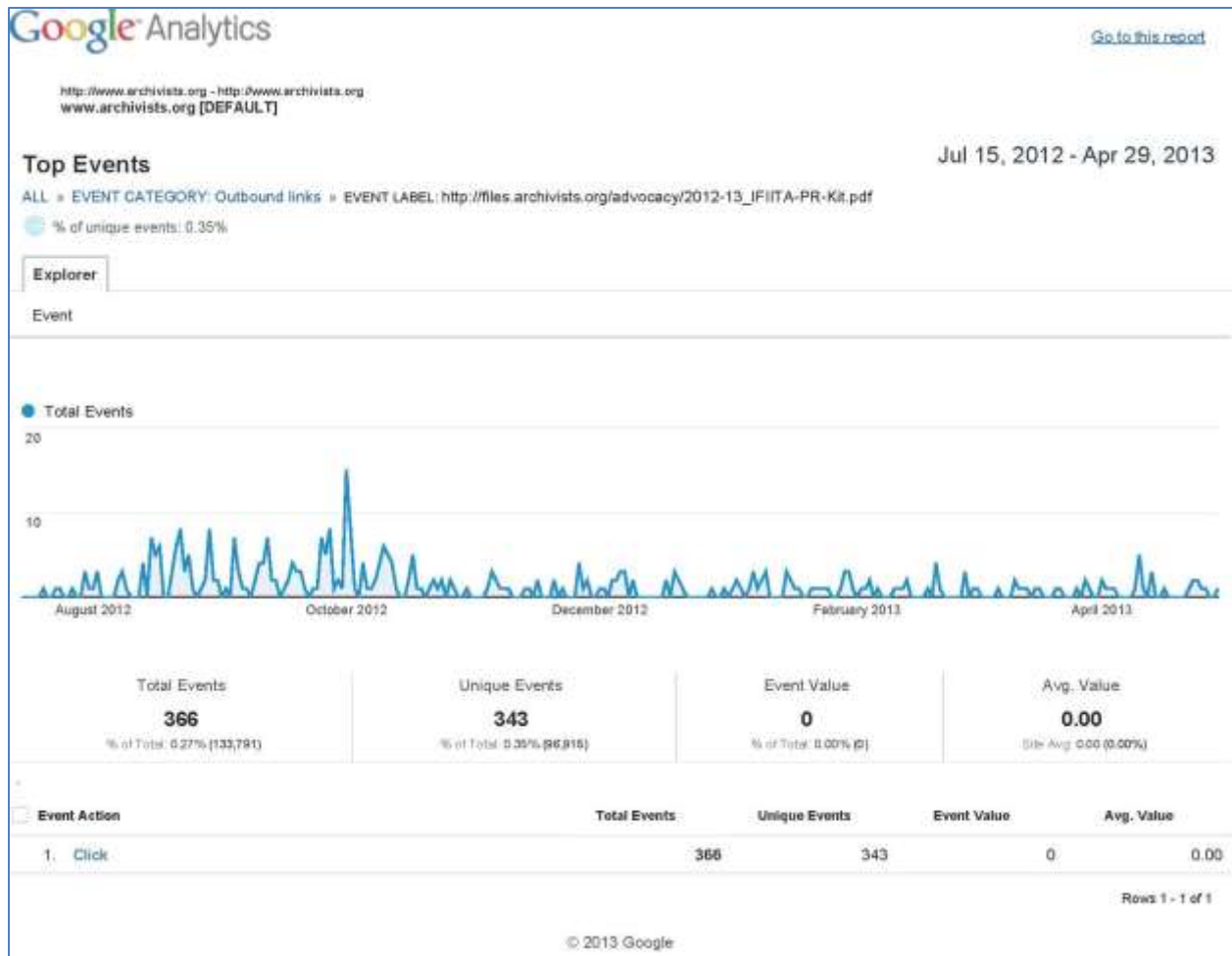
## **FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

Last fall we fielded two queries regarding a “Junior Edition” of *I Found It In The Archives!* that could be used by junior high and high school students. We went ahead and put together such an edition with the idea of rolling it out in 2013-2014. The focus of this initiative might shift to a younger demographic and provide an opportunity to introduce archives to school-age audiences.



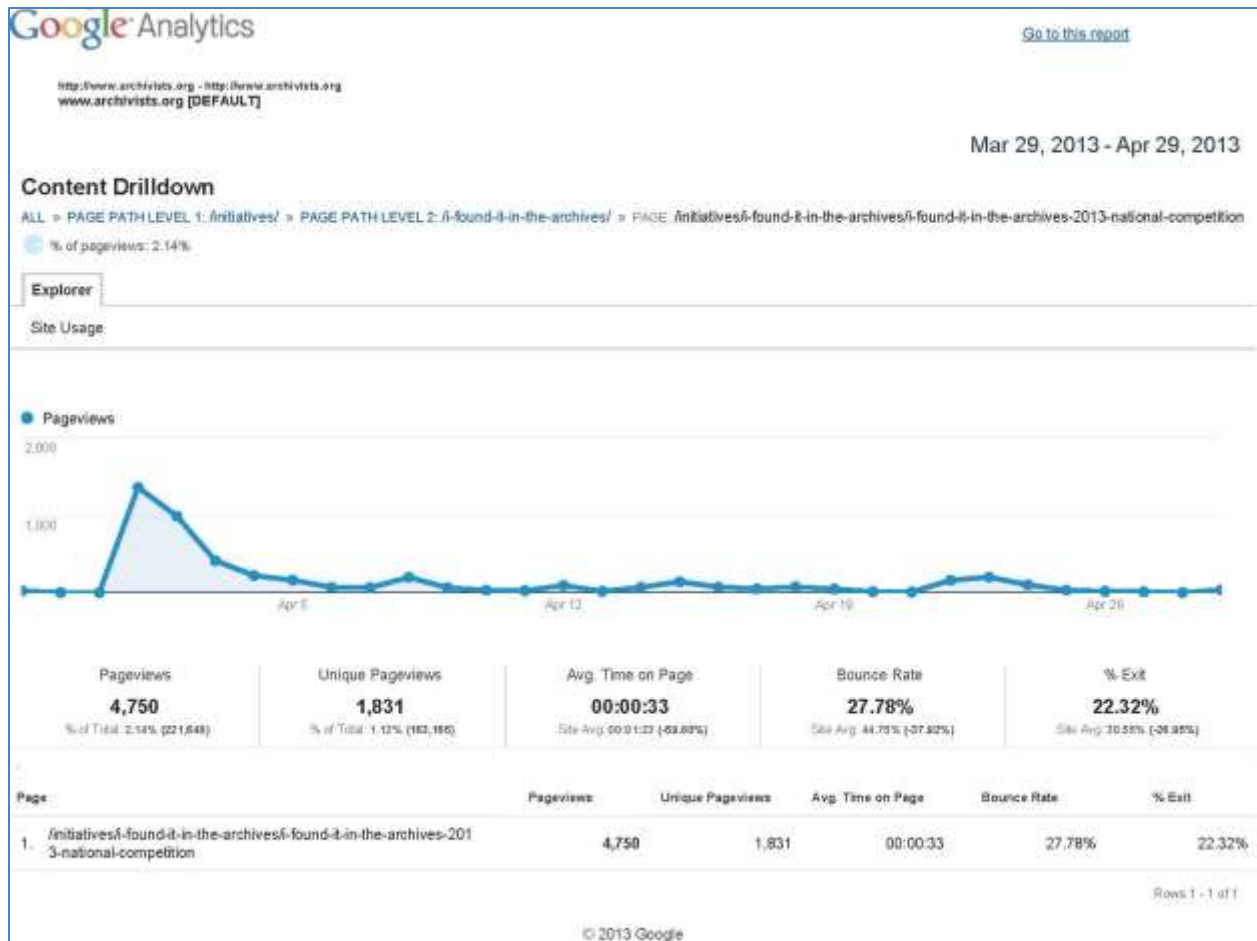
**Figure 1. *I Found It In The Archives!* Destination Page Pageviews, October 2012 –April 2013.**

More than 1,600 unique pageviews. A “stickiness” factor of 2 minutes and 16 seconds. Peak engagement in January and February.



**Figure 2. *I Found It In The Archives!* P.R. Kit Downloads.**

More than 340 visitors downloaded the P.R. Kit. Peak engagement during October (American Archives Month).



**Figure 3. *I Found It In The Archives!* National Competition Pageviews.**

More than 1,800 unique pageviews since voting opened on April 1. Consistent participation over time with the biggest bump occurring so far on the first day.