



City Research Online

City St George's, University of London

Citation: Berube, L., Makri, S., Cooke, I., Priego, E. & Wisdom, S. (2023). "Webcomics Archive? Now I'm Interested": Comics Readers Seeking Information in Web Archives (Poster). Poster presented at the CHIIR '23: ACM SIGIR Conference on Human Information Interaction and Retrieval, 19-23 Mar 2023, Austin, USA.

This is the published version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version. To cite this item please consult the publisher's version.

Permanent repository link: <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/30102/>

Copyright and Reuse: Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, unless otherwise indicated, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way. For full details of reuse please refer to [City Research Online policy](#).

"Webcomics Archive? Now I'm Interested": Comics Readers Seeking Information in Web Archives

Linda Berube City, University of London; Dr. Stephann Makri City, University of London; Ian Cooke British Library; Dr. Ernesto Priego City, University of London; Stella Wisdom, British Library

Overview

This exploratory study of digital comics readers interacting with the UK Web Comic Archive (<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/>) was designed to understand what digital comics readers need from information and technology that support them in **finding** and **interacting** with **web-based comics**. The approach involved naturalistic observations and semi-structured interviews of digital web comics readers **searching** and **browsing** the archive remotely. Through these methods, we answered the following questions:

How Do Readers Discover and Share New Digital Comics?



Through **friends**, on **social media**, viewing **recommendations** on **comics apps**:

"Usually my friend will give me a link, or I will follow a link from Instagram".(DCR3)

"I would be more likely to encounter new webcomics through other media".(DCR2)

"I have a look at what's new, the new releases of comics on the app, and then will download previews if I'm interested".(DCR1)

What Attracts Readers to Search and Browse a Comics Site or App?

Lots of **visuals**, including **splash pages**, **featured comics**, **thumbnails**, **recommendations**:

"I would have expected some sort of splash feature, or pages which showed comics in some format whether it's modern day webcomics or traditional comics". (DCR3)



Key Lessons Learned

Web archives are traditionally designed to be **'search-first'** (and perhaps **even find-focused**). According to research participants, web archives are for looking for older or historical comics, or for research. Based on the findings from this exploratory research, web-based comics archives may need to be **'browse-first'** and **discover/encounter-focused**.



Archive capture of Discord Comics by Tab Kimpton. Retrieved from <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/waybackarchive/20171001081918/> <http://www.discordcomics.com/>

This approach to heritage organization finding tools can be more broadly instructive of how readers and users in general engage with emerging types of visual and text-based information.