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THE DIGITAL AND THE SOUTH: QUESTIONINGS VOL. 1

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O DIGITAL E O SUL: TENSIONAMENTOS VOL. 1

LO DIGITAL Y EL SUR: QUESTIONAMIENTOS VOL. 1

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COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THE CASE OF ARQUIGRAFIA

PLATAFORMAS COLABORATIVAS NO SUL GLOBAL: O CASO DO ARQUIGRAFIA

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Abstract

Rooted in historical, economic, and technological inequalities between Global North and South, digital inequality affects the born-digital contents and collaborative platforms. This study examines Arquigrafia (www.arquigrafia.org.br), a Brazilian collaborative platform for sharing architectural and urban space images, to explore similar platforms' challenges. The article examines Arquigrafia's technical and collaborative aspects within the Global South digital landscape, highlighting how the platform addresses infrastructural limitations and power imbalances. It demonstrates Arquigrafia's role in countering digital hegemonies while promoting cultural preservation in the South. Using data from Arquigrafia's database, we quantitatively analyzed users' characteristics and image uploads with MySQL and SPSS. Interviews with fifteen experts from various fields involved in the project were qualitatively analyzed, using the Affinity Diagram method to provide insights on the platform's evolution. Results show that the lack of user-provided information impedes personalized content delivery. Collaboration peaked in 2016 but declined afterwards. Interviews emphasize the need for collaboration in both content contribution and platform development. The study concludes that Arquigrafia needs a unified vision, improved collaboration, and sustainable maintenance. Recommendations suggest ways to enhance users' engagement, leveraging educational partnerships and adopting open-source models to ensure long-term success.

Keywords: Digital Inequality, Collaborative Platforms, Global South, Arquigrafia

1 Introduction

Digital inequality and knowledge control between the Global North and the Global South is a universal issue. It is deeply rooted in historical, economic, and technological inequalities. The development of digital infrastructures illustrates what Quijano (2020) describes as the coloniality of power: the persistence of asymmetries between core and peripheral countries, sustained by the perpetuation of Eurocentric knowledge systems and forms of subjectivity inherited from colonization, even after the political independence of former colonies. This article explores these tensions through a counter-hegemonic initiative, the Arquigrafia platform, focusing on how resource and infrastructure gaps hinder the development and preservation of cultural heritage and knowledge about urban environments in digital formats.

There are notable examples of these applications. Lacerda describes a collection of photographs from Rockefeller Foundation archives, which document the foundation's work on public health issues in Brazil from 1920 to 1940 (Lacerda, 2002). Vasconcellos and Rodrigues demonstrated how photographs were used by hygienists in early 20th-century São Paulo to document urban environments and educational settings (Vasconcellos & Rodrigues, 2006). Abrantes used the photographic archive of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics as a historical source to show representations of female labor in Brazil during the 1950s and 1960s (Abrantes, 2013). Silva examined the establishment of the Archive of Projects of the Library of the School of Architecture and Urbanism and Design of the University of São Paulo (FAUUSP), the treatment of the Collection Jacques Pilon, as a documentary source to show the constitution of the architectural field in Brazil (Silva, 2016). Finally, Stewart compared photographic albums to document the architectural and urban changes in Brazil over decades (Stewart, 2019).

Historical images, especially, offer invaluable insights into past events, cultural practices, and architectural developments. Collaborative platforms that enable access and contribution to such image databases are not just beneficial but essential for academic research, public education, and cultural preservation. In Sweden, the DIGARV platform is a collaborative tool for working with cultural heritage and research data, including born-digital content (Åhlfeldt & Matsson, 2024). In Brazil, Arquigrafia, launched in 2010, stands as a prime web-based collaborative environment (Rozestraten, 2020), that plays a crucial role in sharing, preserving, and providing access to the iconographic memory of Brazilian architecture and urban spaces (Lima & Rozestraten, 2018; Lima et al., 2016) (Fig. 1).

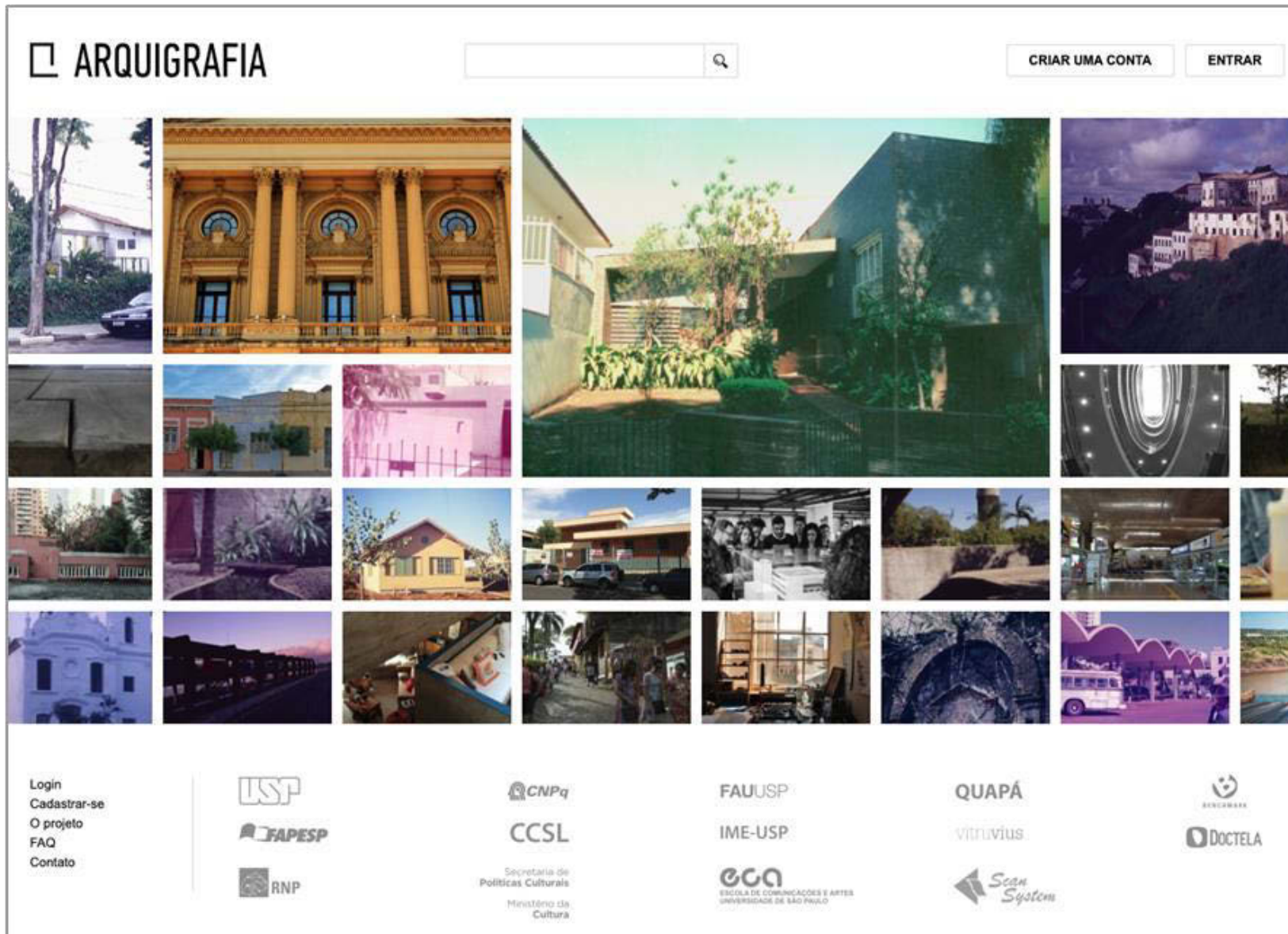


Fig. 1: Arquigrafia's homepage (www.arquigrafia.org.br/home). Source: Authors, 2024.

The spirit of collaboration at the core of the Arquigrafia project distinguishes it from institutional image databases on the Internet, as it involves a heterogeneous network of collaborators (Lima et al., 2020). It serves as a reference for other projects that aim to be instruments for the sharing and collaboration of design information (Pierce, 2011; Rong et al., 2022).

Few initiatives can be fully compared to Arquigrafia as a free and open Web initiative with continuous growth. While Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons offer some similarities, they each have significant limitations. Wikipedia's focus on written content restricts the inclusion of iconographic information, impeding its utility for creating and maintaining collective imaginaries. Wikimedia Commons, although allowing free media sharing, predominantly features content from the Global North, thereby marginalizing other cultural perspectives. Another initiative with similar principles but a different methodology is the *Photographers en Rhône-Alpes* project, which shares historical photographs of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region online. Although local residents submit photos, not all images are publicly available due to a screening process (Rozestraten, 2020).

Despite its initial success, Arquigrafia has experienced a reduction in user collaboration and activity. This research aims to analyze Arquigrafia as a case study to understand the specific challenges that collaborative digital platforms in the Global South encounter. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does Arquigrafia address digital inequalities in the Global South?
- How do users' characteristics affect the success of the platform?
- How can Arquigrafia's development address current challenges and maximize its potential for cultural preservation and education?

By addressing these questions, this paper examines Arquigrafia's role as a collaborative platform in the Global South, highlighting how it fosters a counter-hegemonic model for preserving digital cultural heritage and positions itself as a resistance to digital hegemonies within Quijano's (2020) concept of "coloniality of power".

2 Historical Development of Arquigrafia

Since the 1950s, the educational community has photographed buildings and urban spaces, donating images to enrich public collections and aid the education of generations of architects and urbanists. When the slide projector was replaced by data show, these images were set aside from most formation activities and remained invisible inside drawers and lockers. In the early 21st century, the web lacked diversity and quality in images, with many historical images and maps missing from classrooms and research environments during the transition from analog to digital.

To address this issue, the Arquigrafia project gathered a multidisciplinary team and began by scanning historic photos from the Library of FAUUSP, and uploading them onto an open-access online platform, creating a collaborative environment where users could share images. This initiative has provided an opportunity to study these digital media from different and complementary perspectives. Arquigrafia is a conjecture about the potential of web-based collaborative image environments, envisioned as places where people could share and curate images, exchange opinions, and offer aesthetic judgments, organizing them into continuously growing visual constellations. The historical development of the Arquigrafia project can be divided into four major phases, each characterized by differences in associated research teams, funding received, and user activities on the platform.

Phase 1. Foundation of the Platform (2008 – 2012)

The platform was conceptualized in 2008, with FAUUSP researchers defining the project requirements and interface design. After coding, it was launched in 2010, featuring an infinite image wall, an image cataloging system, and a user-based image evaluation tool (Fig. 2). These functionalities remain central to the platform today. The Brazilian Network for Education and Research (RNP) and the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) were the main supporters of the project during this period.



Fig. 2: Arquigrafia's first homepage and an image catalog record. Source: Authors, 2024.

Phase 2. Partnership with the FAUUSP Library and Support from the PRCEU-USP (2012 – 2016)

2012 marks the beginning of the partnership between Arquigrafia and the FAUUSP's Library. While the library provided part of its iconographic collection of architecture and design (consisting of photographs, posters, and architectural project boards), the Arquigrafia platform served as a digital environment for the storage and preservation of such materials. In addition to providing 7.428 images to the site's collection, this partnership resulted in the production of the Manual of Technical Procedures of the Arquigrafia Project (Rozestraten et al., 2019). A publication documenting the process of cleaning, scanning, and cataloging the iconographic material from the FAUUSP's library.

The University of Sao Paulo's Pro-rectory of Culture and University Extension (PRCEU-USP) supported the project in this phase. This support ensured that the project had a dedicated team of researchers. However, in 2014, the University of São Paulo implemented a new financial management policy aimed at reducing expenses. This policy and the lack of external financial support severely impacted the project in 2017 when the funds were suspended.

Phase 3. Decline of the Platform's Activity (2017 – 2021)

The lack of financial support led to the demobilization of the Arquigrafia's team, which no longer had research grants to compensate its undergraduate and postgraduate researchers and development team. However, occasional events organized by the project, such as workshops, guided tours, and individual research efforts, contributed to maintaining the site's collection during this period. As an example, research conducted by Ferreira added several new images of residences to the collection (Ferreira, 2016, 2017).

This phase of the project is also influenced by two external factors that have altered users' behavior regarding the storage and sharing of images. The first is the popularization of the Instagram social network among Brazilians. The second factor is the increase in the number of smartphones among the population, reaching the mark of one device per inhabitant in 2017 (Meirelles, 2017). Launched in 2010 and with few major changes since then, the Arquigrafia website performs better on desktops than mobile devices. It lacks Instagram features such as a personalized feed and stories, which were introduced in 2016. These external factors, rooted in the Global North, have directly contributed to the decline in the use of the platform.

Phase 4. Project Revitalization (2022 – Now)

Following the pandemic years, the project underwent a restructuring of its objectives. The new focus set up from critical questions on the mainstream Internet and the challenges for the coming of a Web 4.0¹ aiming to promote mutual enrichment in relation to urban ordinary sensitive experience and the construction, organization, representation, and retrieval of knowledge about cities in the present, in memory, and in the design will for tomorrow. These questions thus guide an interdisciplinary investigation of the current conditions for the establishment of autonomous collaborative environments on the Web that require an experimental field (FAPESP, 2022). In 2022, the project received support from FAPESP as a thematic project. This phase is characterized by the presence of a dedicated team of over 30 associated researchers and a full-time computational development team.

3 Materials and Methods

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining literature review, platform database analysis, and expert interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of Arquigrafia's historical development.

The platform's database includes uploaded images, detailed tables on users' account information, and the metadata of uploaded images. MySQL software and Structured Query Language (SQL) were used for queries of data from these datasets in April 2024². From the table related to the metadata of images, we extracted the data related to the identification of the users who uploaded the images and the year that the images were uploaded. Considering the identification of users, we extracted data related to the year of the account's creation, the country of the user, the region (if from Brazil), gender, education level, and age of users. We joined these two tables to connect the information related to images and the users who uploaded them. The newly joined table was then imported to SPSS³ for analysis of frequencies and

¹ Web 4.0 represents the potential for Internet development through interactions between hegemonic (GLAMs) and counter-hegemonic media, involving collective intelligence, social networks, georeferencing, and augmented reality.

² MySQL is an open source relational database management system (RDBMS) that's used to store and manage data. SQL, which stands for Structured Query Language, is a programming language that's used to retrieve, update, delete, and otherwise manipulate data in relational databases.

³ SPSS or Statistical Package for the Social Sciences is a statistical software suite for data management and advanced analytics.

cross-tabulations. The result and discussion section analyzes these tables and shows how the major phases of the historical development of Arquigrafia have influenced the user's collaboration.

To discuss the platform's future and current issues, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 Arquigrafia experts from March to April 2024 (Flick, 2014). All of the interviewees have various educational backgrounds, from bachelor to post-doc, and expertise in project-related disciplines, including architecture, librarianship, computer science, and design. The interviews covered three main topics: a) past experiences with the project, b) current views of the platform, and c) visions for Arquigrafia's future. All interviews were analyzed using the Affinity Diagram method, which groups related ideas into clusters to reveal patterns. (Holtzblatt & Beyer, 2017).

4 Results and Discussion

The platform underwent an update in 2015, which caused the loss of some data related to user accounts' creation and image upload dates. Considering this limitation, the below analysis considers the number of users and images as a whole for the period of 2010 to 2015.

4.1 Users' Profile

There are a total of 5.237 user accounts in Arquigrafia. The creation of an account is necessary for uploading images and collaborating with providing comments, following other accounts, and sharing information. As of 2015, Arquigrafia had 1.625 user accounts. The peak year for new registrations was 2017, with 1.033 accounts (19.8%). This was followed by 2016 and 2018, while new user registrations drastically declined in 2019 and beyond (Table 1). The reason for this decrease can be related to the further popularization of Instagram and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the lockdown.

Year	New users			
	No.	%	Cum. No.	Cum. %
2010-15	1.625	31,1%	1.625	31,1%
2016	710	13,6%	2.335	44,7%
2017	1.033	19,8%	3.368	64,4%
2018	697	13,3%	4.065	77,7%
2019	269	5,1%	4.334	82,9%
2020	247	4,7%	4.581	87,6%
2021	194	3,7%	4.775	91,3%
2022	131	2,5%	4.906	93,8%
2023	314	6,0%	5.220	99,8%
2024	17	0,3%	5.237	100%
Total	5.237	100%		

Table 1: Number of accounts created by users per year. Source: Authors, 2024.

Arquigrafia covers a wide range of users from various regions of the country with different levels of education. However, the majority of users do not provide information on their profiles, resulting in a lack of data about all users. Therefore, the aim is not to generalize the contents of this analysis but to provide information about the existing available data and provide insight. As shown in Table 2, the majority (80.4%) of users who indicated their locations are from the Southeast region of Brazil. There is an almost equal diversity of female and male users. In terms of level of education, the majority of users have a bachelor's or master's. The lack of user data shows that the absolute majority of users prefer not to provide demographic information. These data can be important for suggesting personalized content.

Users characteristics		Users		Charts
		No.	%	
Country (Missing: 4.939)	Angola	1	0,3%	
	Argentina	1	0,3%	
	Brazil	294	98,7%	
	Spain	1	0,3%	
	Israel	1	0,3%	
	Total	298	100%	
Regions of Brazil (Missing: 5.074)	Central-west	7	4,3%	
	Northeast	7	4,3%	
	North	4	2,5%	
	Southeast	131	80,4%	
	South	14	8,6%	
	Total	163	100%	
Gender (Missing: 5.070)	Female	87	52,1%	
	Male	80	47,9%	
	Total	167	100%	
Education level (Missing: 5.101)	Highschool	4	2,9%	
	Bachelor	98	72,1%	
	Master	27	19,9%	
	Ph.D.	7	5,1%	
	Total	136	100%	
Decade of birth (Missing: 5.122)	1970s or before	12	10,4%	
	1980s	21	18,3%	
	1990s	79	68,7%	
	2010s	3	2,6%	
	Total	115	100%	

Table 2: The user's characteristics. Source: Authors, 2024.

4.2 Analysis of Collaborated Images

As shown in Table 3 and Fig. 3, in total, 14.154 images have been uploaded to the platform, 5.237 users registered accounts, and the ratio of images per user is 2,7. From 2010 to 2015, 5.700 images (40.3%) have been uploaded to the platform. The number of image uploads reached its peak in 2016, with 3.622 images (25.6%) uploaded that year. This was followed by 2017 when users added 3.401 images (24.0%) to the platform. The upload of new images drastically decreased in 2018 and continued to decrease for the following years. The ratio of

images per user was at its highest in 2016, with 4.0 images per user. However, it continued to decrease. This decrease shows that users are collaborating less by providing new images but are using the platform as a source for downloading images.

Year	New images				Users	Image/ total User
	No.	%	Cum. No.	Cum. %	Cum. No.	
2010-15	5.700	40,3%	5.700	40,3%	1.625	3,5
2016	3.622	25,6%	9.322	65,9%	2.335	4,0
2017	3.401	24,0%	12.723	89,9%	3.368	3,8
2018	574	4,1%	13.297	93,9%	4.065	3,3
2019	427	3,0%	13.724	97,0%	4.334	3,2
2020	76	0,5%	13.800	97,5%	4.581	3,0
2021	27	0,2%	13.827	97,7%	4.775	2,9
2022	40	0,3%	13.867	98,0%	4.906	2,8
2023	239	1,7%	14.106	99,7%	5.220	2,7
2024	48	0,3%	14.154	100%	5.237	2,7
Total	14.154	100%	-	-	-	-

Table 3: The frequency of upload of new images and image/user ratio. Source: Authors, 2024.

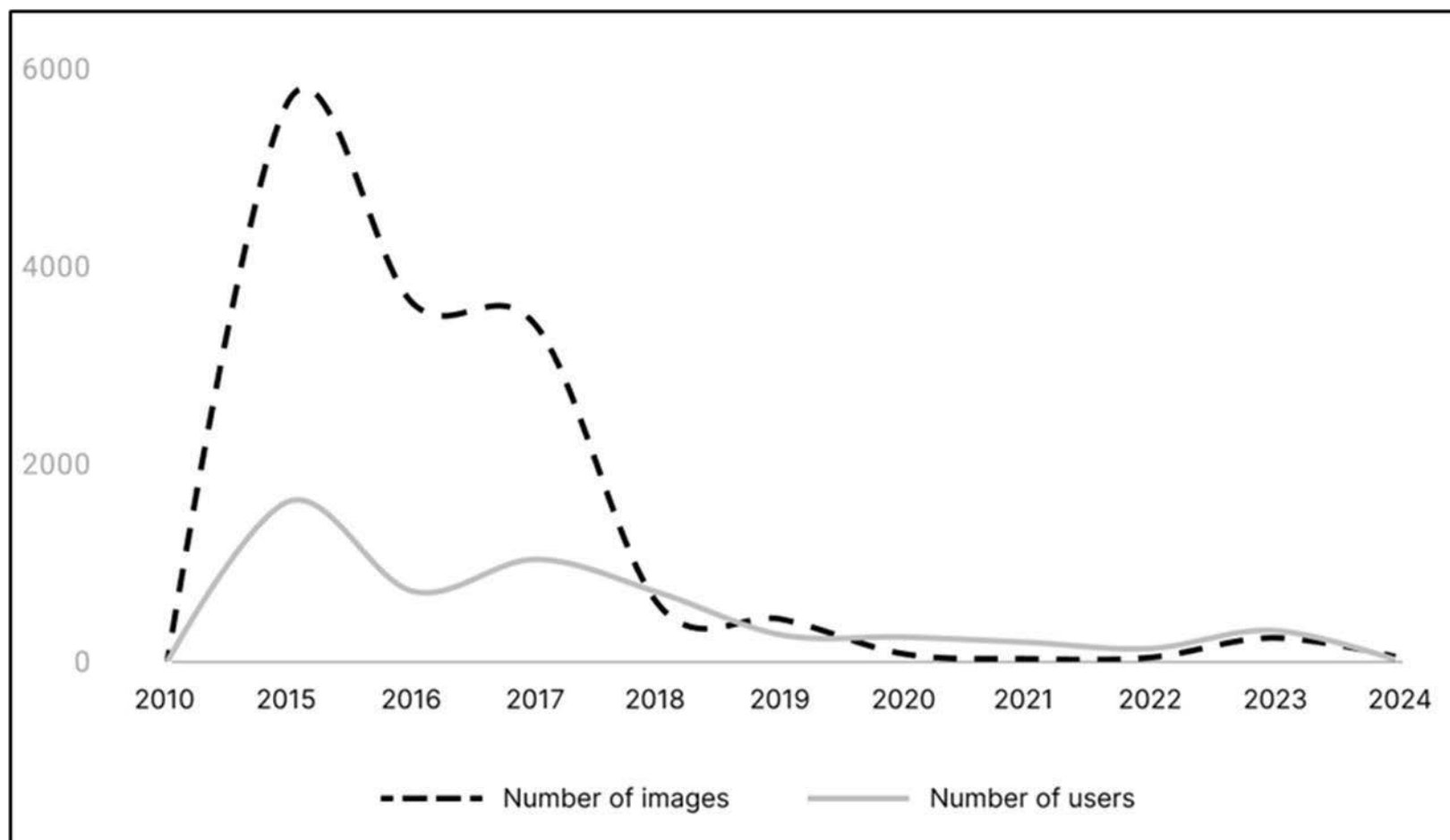


Fig. 3: The frequency of new users and new images for each year. Source: Authors, 2024.

As shown in Table 4 and Fig. 4, of the total 14.154 images, 9.170 (or 64.8%) were uploaded by users who created their accounts in 2015 or before. There are 1.625 users in this category, and their image per-user ratio is 5,6, which is the highest. The 2016 generation of users is also active in terms of collaboration and providing new images for the platform, considering they are responsible for uploading 3.387 images (or 23.9%). These years coincided with phases 1 and 2 of the project when the project received support from RNP, FAPESP, and PRCEU-USP. As mentioned, the number of new account creation was relatively high in 2017; however, this generation of users, by uploading 899 images (6.4%), collaborated relatively less by uploading new images. In this year the project lost the financial support from PRCEU-USP. The collaboration of other generations of users who created their accounts afterward drops. Furthermore, the generation of users who registered in 2016 or earlier continued to collaborate relatively more in recent years. However, the users who registered in 2017 or afterward tend to collaborate punctually, mainly in the year of their account creation. In general, collaboration with the platform by uploading new images has dropped drastically since 2018, and there has been a loss of financial support for maintaining the system updated.

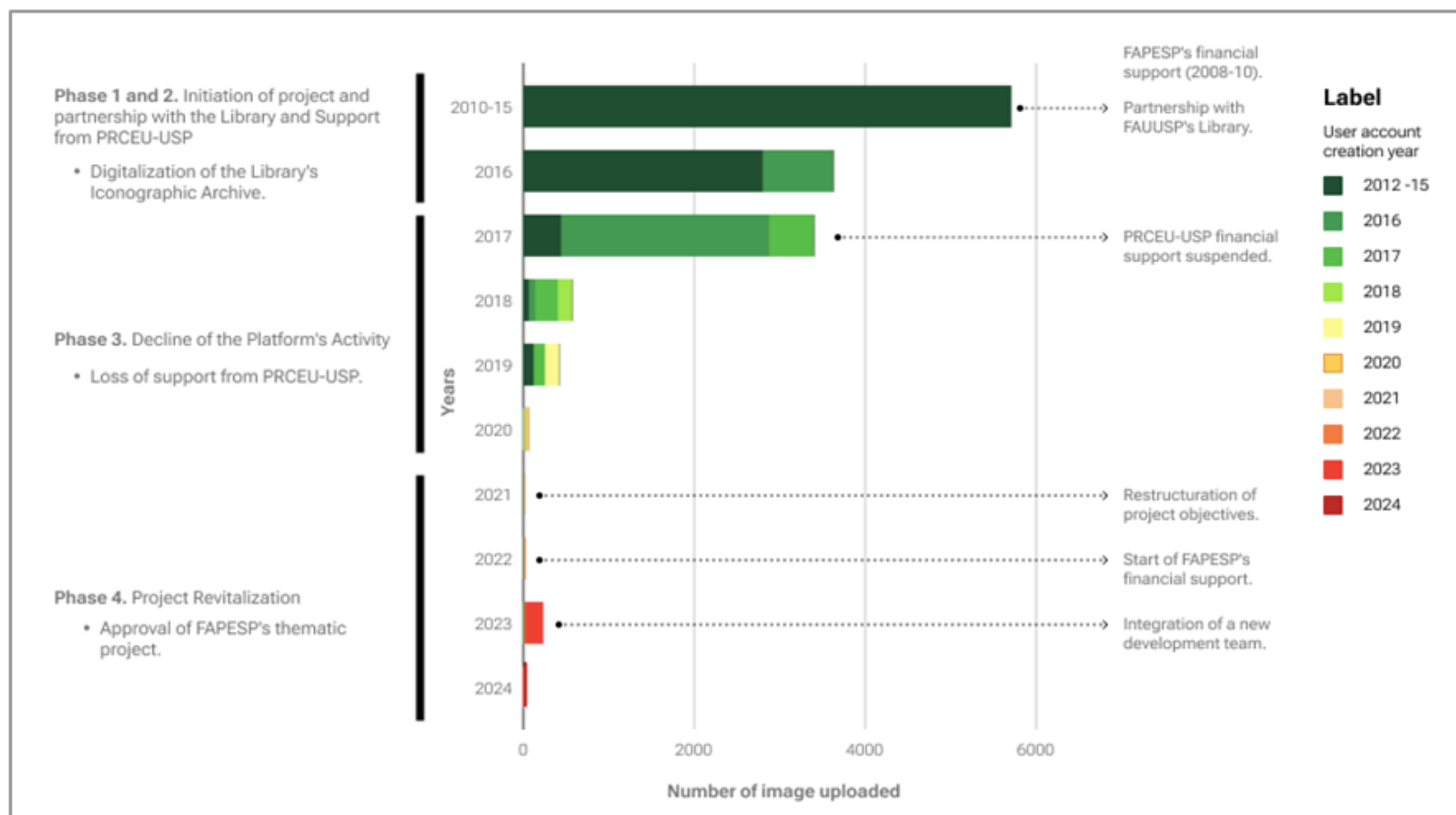


Fig. 4: Number of uploaded images and the major phases of the project. Source: Authors, 2024.

	User's account creation year																				Total																					
	2010-15		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024		No.	%																				
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%																				
Image upload year	2010-15	5.700	62,2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.700	50,1%																				
	2016	2.794	30,5%	828	24,4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.622	31,9%																				
	2017	447	4,9%	2.438	72,0%	516	57,4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.401	29,9%																				
	2018	81	0,9%	74	2,2%	253	28,1%	166	99,4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	574	5,0%																				
	2019	129	1,4%	0	0,0%	130	14,5%	1	0,6%	167	97,1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	427	3,8%																				
	2020	0	0,0%	22	0,6%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	4	2,3%	50	79,4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76	0,7%																				
	2021	12	0,1%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	9	14,3%	6	42,9%	-	-	-	-	-	27	0,2%																				
	2022	4	0,0%	7	0,2%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	0,6%	0	0,0%	8	57,1%	20	57,1%	-	-	-	40	0,4%																				
	2023	3	0,0%	15	0,4%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	3	4,8%	0	0,0%	15	42,9%	203	97,1%	-	-	239	2,1%																			
	2024	0	0,0%	3	0,1%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	1,6%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	6	2,9%	38	100%	48	0,4%																			
Total images	9.170		100%		3.387		100%		899		100%		167		100%		172		100%		63		100%		14		100%		35		100%		209		100%		38		100%		1.4154	100%
	64,8%		23,9%		6,4%		1,2%		1,2%		0,4%		0,1%		0,2%		1,5%		0,3%		100%																					
Total users	1.625		710		1.033		697		269		247		194		131		314		17		5.237																					
Image/user ratio	5,6		4,8		0,9		0,2		0,6		0,3		0,1		0,3		0,7		2,2		2,7																					

Table 4: Cross-tabulation of the year of upload of images and the relevant user's account creation year. Source: Authors, 2024.

As shown in Table 5, from all images, 4.827 (34.1%) were uploaded by female users, and male users uploaded 870 images (6.1%). It shows that collaboratively active female users provide relatively more data related to their profile. From all images, 9.412 (66.5%) were uploaded by those who have bachelor's and master's educational degrees. This shows the popularity of the platform in universities. Considering the available data, the platform's use is diverse among different age groups. With 1.909 uploaded images (12.8%), the platform is more popular among those who were born in the 1990s.

Users characteristics		Frequency of uploaded image		Charts
		No.	%	
Gender of users	Female	4.827	34,1%	
	Male	870	6,1%	
	Missing	8.457	59,7%	
	Total	14.154	100%	
Education level of users	High School	3	0,0%	
	Bachelor	4.886	34,5%	
	Master	4.526	32,0%	
	Ph.D.	4	0,0%	
	Missing	4.735	33,5%	
	Total	14.154	100%	
Users decade of birth	1970s or before	472	3,3%	
	1980s	1.809	12,8%	
	1990s	3.073	21,7%	
	2010s	1	0,0%	
	Missing	8.799	62,2%	
	Total	14.154	100%	

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of users' characteristics and the frequency of uploaded images. Source: Authors, 2024.

4.3 The Future of the Arquigrafia

To discuss the platform's future and current issues, we used data obtained from semi-structured interviews with experts' opinions on the project. For most of the interviewees, being a collaborative platform is what differentiates Arquigrafia from other known initiatives. For this reason, they believe this feature should be nurtured within the project. The success of collaborative digital platforms depends on positive organizational culture and communication, not just the technology (Cardon, 2016). Online interaction and social networking can play a vital

role in cultivating an unspoken cyberculture that may shape users' opinions, sense of belonging, and values. An online collaborative platform can promote this cyberculture (Tan et al., 2010). Following these ideas, collaboration efforts should include both software development and the promotion of a collaborative culture among users.

The interviewees view collaboration from two perspectives: as a strategy for building the site's iconographic collection and as a means for the platform's development, including computational work. From the standpoint of forming the site's collaborative collection, there is an agreement that the system's permission for anyone to upload an image ensures that the platform provides a diverse view of what constitutes architecture. In this regard, there is a desire to expand the project's reach. Examples of such activities include partnerships with Sob Olhares SP⁴, Estudio Ceda el Paso⁵, Digital Collections⁶, and improving Arquigrafia's social media⁷, expanding its outreach to diverse audiences. The platform's plan to develop interactive digital 3D-modeled representations and city routes aligns with this idea, too.

Researchers have conflicting views on the platform's collaborative development. Half believe users can program the system like open-source software, while the other half think it should be associated with a larger academic institution. This is indeed a significant concern for the project, as the existence and intensity of its activities have always been directly related to the availability of financial resources. The presence of research grants has emerged as a significant motivator for researchers to join and remain in the project. Although seeking funding is a concern, the majority believe that the project should not adopt self-financing models based on advertising or charges for using the website. For them, the project should retain its public, open, and counter-hegemonic character.

Even though collaboration is declared as a fundamental principle for the platform, there is no consensus among the project's areas regarding whether this should be the focus during the newly updated version of the platform to be released in 2025. The lack of consensus can be a crucial issue for the project, as a successful collaboration necessitates a shared vision and common goals (Small, 2001). While the Design and Architecture teams believe the site should emphasize functionalities that encourage user collaboration, the Computer Science and Librarianship areas think that working on measures to ensure accurate and reliable information is a fundamental principle for the project's success (Fig. 5). This shows the two main requirements of the platform that need to be balanced, collaboration and reliability.

⁴ <https://sobolharessp.com.br/>

⁵ <https://estudiocedaelpaso.lojavirtualnuvem.com.br/>

⁶ <https://www.acervosdigitais.fau.usp.br/>

⁷ <https://www.instagram.com/arquigrafiafau.oficial/>



Fig. 5: Arquigrafia's future emphasis by experts' areas. Source: Authors, 2024.

From its early stages of existence, Arquigrafia was referred to as a social network (Rozestraten et al., 2010; Ferreira, 2016). Currently, there is consensus among the areas regarding the social aspect of the platform. Considering hegemonic social network models such as Facebook and Instagram, almost all the interviewees declare that the site should not emulate such models. Instead, there is a desire for the platform to continue operating within the academic sphere, following the success of other initiatives such as VERGILIUS, a collaborative platform that provides a valuable training tool for students (Capozzoli, 2021). By maintaining its academic roots, the system's mobilization for educational activities could be significantly enhanced.

5 Conclusion

There is a significant lack of images representing Brazilian architecture in born-digital formats. This lack is common in many countries in the Global South, where nations in the Global North have historically controlled media and knowledge. Arquigrafia aims to address these historical inequalities by providing a collaborative platform for Brazilian architectural and urban space images (Lima et al., 2020).

The project has evolved significantly since its inception, demonstrating the potential of collaborative platforms in preserving and sharing architectural and urban space images. The predominant role of Arquigrafia has shifted from being a digital archive-oriented platform for architectural and urban space images to a primarily collaborative platform. However, in recent years, followed by the popularization of

Instagram, the loss of external support, and the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been used mainly as a source for image downloads. To ensure sustainability, active user collaboration by uploading images is essential.

To address these challenges, the project has developed new partnerships, initiated social media campaigns, enhanced its interface, and implemented usage analytics. For continued success, it is recommended that the culture of collaboration be improved, strategies to attract new users be introduced, and the platform's use as a teaching resource be explored. Furthermore, Arquigrafia faces critical challenges in maintaining diverse development teams and managing costs associated with server maintenance. As the platform currently relies on short-term scholarships for its development team, establishing collaborative processes at the programming level and seeking institutional and governmental support is vital for its ongoing development and sustainability.

As Arquigrafia prepares for its 2025 update, it aims to address digital representation inequalities and enhance collaboration, potentially enriching the understanding of urban history and architecture in Brazil while serving as a model for similar initiatives in the Global South. The platform highlights the tension between the Global South's need for representation and North-centric infrastructures, enabling the South to assert its cultural identity and counter digital exclusion in global discussions on hegemonic cultural frameworks.

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