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Title

Community-Centered Digital Collections & Digital Exhibitions: National Survey Results

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2t3396db>

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Publication Date

2024-08-01

Community-Centered Digital Collections & Digital Exhibitions:

National Survey Results

August 2024

The Orange County & Southeast Asian Archive Center
Special Collections & Archives
University of California, Irvine Libraries

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We would like to thank all of the representatives of community organizations, the DPLA Hubs, and the curators who participated in our surveys and interviews. This report would not be possible without their candid, thoughtful responses and their passion for telling and keeping stories that have been excluded, marginalized and misrepresented in dominant histories.

Thanks also to Jolene Beiser of UC Irvine Libraries, Krystal Boehlert of UC Riverside Library, the CCAP TEACH Community Partner VietRISE, the CCAP TEACH students Marissa Casas, Cynthia Fountain, Claire Elizabeth Moylan, and Valentina Belen Toledano, and CDL staff Catherine Mitchell, Chad Nelson, Lisa Schiff, and Adrian Turner who all contributed valuable input and feedback at various stages of the project.

We also owe gratitude to the many archivists, librarians, and museum workers who helped spread the word about the project and connected us to valuable resources.

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This initiative was made possible in part by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, through [Grant 2105-10639](#). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities.



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Report Summary

This report provides the findings of a study conducted as part of the project, [Community-Centered Archives Practice: Transforming Education, Archives, and Community History](#), led by the University of California, Irvine Libraries in collaboration with the California Digital Library. It is intended to answer two main questions:

1. How can regional and national digital collection aggregators (e.g., DPLA, the DPLA Hubs Network, and other regional aggregators) work towards a more representative and inclusive aggregation; and
2. What is a responsible and inclusive digital exhibition framework that may amplify historically marginalized narratives?

To answer these questions, we did an [environmental scan](#) and administered two surveys, one for representatives of the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Hubs, and one for representatives of community-based archives and community-based organizations doing archival projects (henceforth referred to as “community organizations” for efficiency).¹ We also conducted 11 interviews with representatives from community organizations, and 4 interviews with curators who had collaborated with community organizations to create online exhibitions. The results of these interviews are provided in a separate report.

The environmental scan was a review of the DPLA Hubs’ published participation policies and a review of literature about creating online exhibitions for community organizations. The DPLA Hubs survey requested information about the Hubs’ participation policies and services offered, with a focus on efforts to engage with and onboard community organizations. The community organization survey requested information about the ways in which an organization shared materials or content online, and if and how they created online exhibitions.

Details of the responses are reported below, but here are some high-level observations that have emerged across the two surveys.

Understanding aggregation

Aggregation as a concept is not well-defined or understood by a general audience, and information about participating in a Hub is not always easy to find. For the purposes of this survey, and thinking of aggregators that function like the DPLA, we defined aggregation as “websites that bring together content from different sources into a single website.” About

¹ Within the timeframe of this study, the DPLA announced that it was no longer sustainable as an independent organization and was searching for an institutional home. Bracken, J. (2024, March 28). Towards a new fund and home for America’s digital heritage. Digital Public Library of America. <https://dp.la/news/towards-a-new-fund-and-home-for-americas-digital-heritage>. Accessed May 16, 2024.

half of community organizations who were not already contributing to an aggregator said they were not aware of them. Those who said they were already contributing named such a wide variety of “aggregators”—from digital preservation services like Preservica to photo-sharing sites like Flickr and crowd-sourced knowledgebases like Wikipedia—that it was clear the concept as we communicated it was too broad. Conversely, our focus on the DPLA Hubs in this survey was too narrow, as there are many other local and subject-specific aggregators that may or may not feed into a Hub and may be supporting community organizations. Community organizations also said that they did not have the staffing nor time to meet the requirements of aggregators, although they said the thing that would most help them to participate was training, including learning about what an aggregator is. Despite these shortfalls, aggregation was still considered an “appealing” method of sharing by over 50% of community organizations that want to share more widely. (However, it was not the most appealing method, lagging slightly behind online events, social media, and online exhibitions.)

Complicating matters, content created by the Hubs about aggregation and how to participate is often highly technical or hard to find. According to a text analysis of policy documents in the [environmental scan](#), most read at the college or graduate-school level.² What’s more, 40% of the surveyed Hubs cited participation policies that were not found in the environmental scan. One Hub representative remarked that they could not find some of their own policy documents. The most up-to-date and relevant participation information may not be the most public-facing, and finding and understanding Hubs’ participation policies may be difficult even for seasoned information professionals.

It seems that while Hubs and other aggregators may want to make their aggregations more inclusive and representative, there is a communication gap between them and community organizations. This gap includes a lack of clarity about what an aggregator is, participation requirements that may be difficult to find or are written with a lot of professional jargon, as well as challenges in meeting those requirements.

Under-resourcing on both sides

While it might be assumed that Hubs, which are often administered by universities or state-wide organizations, are more well-resourced than community organizations, they often struggle with their own resource shortfalls. While the biggest barriers to community organizations’ ability to share their content online are the lack of staffing, funding, and time, some Hubs also struggle to stay active. Two Hubs have ceased contributing to DPLA in the last 7 years, and others expressed limitations in reaching out to and onboarding community organizations due to lack of time, staffing, funding, and technology.

² Mizota, S. (2023). C-CAP Digital Collections & Digital Exhibitions Environmental Scan. *UC Irvine: Libraries*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3xb9b3tr>

Outreach

While a little more than half of surveyed Hubs do active outreach to solicit contributors, they may not be looking in places where community organizations go for information about digital technologies or solutions. 60% of surveyed Hubs said they do outreach at professional conferences and meetings, but only one community organization named conferences as a place they go for information about digital technologies. 20% of surveyed Hubs indicated that they don't know how to identify or find community organizations.

Online exhibitions

Over 90% of community organizations expressed interest in possibly creating online exhibitions using items available from an aggregator, whether these items came from their own collections or from the collections of others. However, only 20% of the surveyed Hubs offer the ability to create and host exhibitions. Although 100% said their primary role is "Discovery and Access," clearly this does not include providing a platform for curating and hosting online exhibitions. Would filling this gap make Hubs more attractive to community organizations? The answer is unclear and would likely depend on a host of factors, including how easy and affordable it was to contribute to the aggregator, and whether exhibition-making would be contingent on being a contributor.

Between 69-79%* of community organizations have created and hosted online exhibitions, but only 38-51% are currently contributing to an aggregator. (The percentage of organizations contributing to a DPLA Hub is likely significantly lower, as organizations defined "aggregation" quite broadly.) This discrepancy suggests that creating online exhibitions is easier and/or more appealing for community organizations than participating in aggregation, although when asked to rank the appeal of both methods, respondents found them about equally appealing. Of those who had created exhibitions, 86-89% had done so independently, indicating that partnership with larger institutions isn't necessary to create an online exhibition.

"Hosting online stories or exhibitions" was the third most "appealing" form of online sharing among community organizations, just below "Hosting online events and programs" and "Sharing on social media." It's likely that the latter are more appealing simply because they require less effort and expense to execute.

*Note: The range of percentages is the result of inconsistencies in how participants self-identified as a community-centered archives. See "Data Adjustments" in the "Community-Centered Archives Survey Results" section for more details.

Challenges and needs

Hubs respondents reported barriers to community organizations' participation at all stages of the process, from the processing of physical records, to digitization, metadata creation, and hosting and harvesting. When asked why they believe potential contributors choose not to participate, 73% of Hub respondents suggested a lack of staffing. Community organization respondents concurred, with 61-67% saying they don't have enough staff or time to participate in aggregation. Staffing (in particular, prioritizing the commitment of limited staff resources towards aggregation) is a key barrier to community organizations' participation in aggregators. This reason was followed closely for both sets of respondents by shared concerns related to staffing: time and funding.

From there, Hubs and community organizations were also aligned in their lack of knowledge about each other. In their responses to the question about why they believe potential contributors decide not to participate, 60% of them said they weren't sure why potential contributors don't participate. (Respondents were allowed to select more than one answer to this question, so this percentage overlaps with the 73% who mentioned staffing.) 47-52% of community organizations who were not currently participating in aggregators said they were not aware of them. Only 20% of Hubs respondents said they have specific programs for community organizations, and 13% said they work with partner organizations that do.

Control over access

80% of Hubs respondents indicated that they do not provide contributors with the ability to control different levels of access to their materials. Although this kind of control was not a major, prohibitive factor for community organizations who are not participating in aggregation, it is notable that about a quarter of these organizations said that aggregation was not appropriate, or expressed uncertainty about whether it was appropriate for them. It's clear that the Hubs for the most part do not provide the level of control over access that some communities need.

Services

Hubs see themselves overwhelmingly as providers of "discovery and access," with 100% of respondents selecting this as their main role. After this, there is a steep drop off in the percentage of Hubs that see other services as part of their key role. 33% mentioned description and metadata creation and preservation, and 27% mentioned digitization. Coincidentally, barriers to community organizations' participation were similarly low with respondents saying that description (27-30%), hosting (20-22%), or digitization (13-17%) were barriers to their participation.

In general, community organizations who are participating in aggregators have found the process to be relatively easy, with 88-90% rating the experience as “neither easy nor difficult,” “somewhat easy,” or “extremely easy.” For community organizations that are aware of and knowledgeable about aggregators, it seems the Hubs provide adequate support. Hubs seem to be very helpful if an organization is close to being able to contribute—the “last mile” as it were, seems to not be as much of a problem as the first. Also, 93% of Hubs offer one-on-one consultations to potential contributors, which speaks to their interest and ability to work with organizations in multiple ways.

Although about 25% of community organizations said they had concerns about whether sharing with an aggregator was culturally appropriate, most Hubs do not have takedown policies related to cultural reasons. While 47% of Hubs said they respond to takedown requests based on copyright or privacy claims, only 33% address record removal for culturally sensitive reasons.

Fees

Only 4 (26%) of the Hubs require fees for participation. This is an encouraging statistic for community organizations, for whom funding and staffing are the most prohibitive factors to participating in aggregation. Hubs generally provide their services for free as long as contributors are able to meet the minimum requirements for participation.

Hubs Survey Results

There were 15 complete responses to the Hubs Participation Requirements Survey. This represents 51% of the 29 active Hubs that accept contributions from community organizations. We define an “active” Hub as one that is currently accepting contributions from community organizations. (Of the 49 Hubs* listed on the DPLA website, 13 do not accept contributions from community organizations; 3 have contributed to DPLA in the past but have ceased contributions, and 4 have yet to contribute.)

The full text of the survey questions is available in the Appendix.

*Note: TX Hub and Portal to Texas History are listed as one Hub on the DPLA website, but participated in the survey separately. These responses have been kept separate. For the purposes of these survey results, TX Hub and Portal to Texas History are considered separate Hubs, although in the Environmental Scan they were considered as one because of the grouping by DPLA.

Data Adjustments

There were a total of 19 responses to the survey, but the number of complete responses was adjusted to 15 for the following reasons:

- There was one response that declined to participate in the survey.
- One Hub participated twice; these entries have been combined into one.
- Two Hubs did not complete the survey beyond entering the name of the Hub, so their responses have not been counted.

Participating Hubs

1. What is the name of your DPLA Hub?

This question asked Hubs to identify themselves by selecting from a drop down menu. Two Hubs—Digital Library of Tennessee and Michigan Service Hub—which were not included in the list selected “Other” and supplied their names as free text. These Hubs were not included in the drop down list because they were not included in the Environmental Scan. (See note below.*)

The 15 Hubs that contributed full responses to the survey in alphabetical order are:

- California Digital Library
- Connecticut Digital Archive
- Digital Commonwealth
- Digital Library of Georgia
- Digital Library of Tennessee*
- Green Mountain Digital Archive
- Michigan Service Hub*
- Minnesota Digital Library
- Mountain West Digital Library
- NJ/DE Digital Collective
- Northwest Digital Heritage
- OKHub
- PA Digital
- Portal to Texas History
- TX Hub

*Note: The Digital Library of Tennessee was not included in the Environmental Scan because at the time of the scan, it did not appear to accept contributions from community organizations. The Michigan Service Hub was not included in the Environmental Scan because at the time of the scan its website was unavailable. For these two Hubs, the survey therefore includes new information.

Participation Policies

2. What are your participation requirements and policies? Feel free to add any relevant URLs where these policies are posted.

This question asked Hubs to summarize their participation policies and/or provide links to where they were posted online. While 9 Hubs (60%) provided information and links in accord with what was found in the Environmental Scan, 6 (40%) provided links to web pages or online documents that differed either partially or entirely from the ones that were reviewed in the Environmental Scan. This disparity suggests either that Hubs have updated their websites since the Environmental Scan was performed, or that participation information is not always easy to find; it may be that the most up-to-date and/or informative materials are not always public-facing.

One Hub indicated that its currently posted content policy was outdated, but that they were working to make it more inclusive:

We do have a readiness checklist and content policy, but this is currently being updated as [it] is unnecessarily restrictive in terms of content requirements. As of this writing, as long as a record resolves to a useful digitized or digital

resource/object (a full resource, open to the public), that is generally acceptable. Metadata-only formats are not accepted. Also, we have expanded our institutional eligibility since our inception as a hub.

Another admitted that they weren't themselves able to find some of their policy documents: "I recall some documentation indicating that our hub is focused on educational or cultural institutions within our state, but I'm having trouble finding said documentation at present."

Participation Requirements

3. What requirements must potential contributors meet in order to provide content to your Hub? Check all that apply.

This question asked Hubs to select from among multiple choices, and they could select as many as were relevant.

14 Hubs (93%) require that contributors adhere to the following 3 requirements. They must:

- Be based in a specific state or location
- Allow public access to their digital collections
- Provide rights statements in any form

The rest of the requirements are clustered around the following categories:

About the contributor

13 Hubs (86%) required that the contributor be an institution, rather than a family or an individual. Among those, 6 (40%) require that the contributor be an educational or cultural organization, and 3 (20%) require the contributor to be a nonprofit organization. These requirements may be prohibitive to community organizations that do not have official organizational status or structure, or whose missions may be focused on issues outside the educational/cultural sphere, such as labor, politics, hate speech, religion, or mutual aid.

- 10 (67%) require that the contributor notify the Hub about content changes or updates.
- 7 (46%) require the contributor to designate a specific staff member as a contact point.
- 5 (33%) require them to secure their own funding
- 5 (33%) require the contributor to follow certain collections standards
- 2 (13%) require the contributor to allow public access to their physical collection.

Collections and metadata

- 12 (80%) Hubs require adherence to certain metadata standards.
- 11 (73%) require that metadata be in the public domain or licensed Creative Commons 0.

Images and digitization

- 10 (66%) require the contributor to digitize their own materials. This requirement may be prohibitive to organizations that do not have the budget or capacity to digitize their materials.
- 6 (40%) require the contributor to provide thumbnail images.
- Only 1 (7%) requires the contributor to follow certain digitization standards.

Getting started

Responses in this area seemed more flexible. Only 8 Hubs (53%) require that the contributor sign a contract or memorandum of understanding. However, while it does ease barriers to participation, a lack of documentation could also lead to misunderstandings between contributors and the Hub as to each party's responsibilities and commitments to the other.

- Only 4 Hubs (26%) require the contributor to submit an application form. This low response also suggests a more informal process among the majority of Hubs, which might make participation easier.

Technical infrastructure

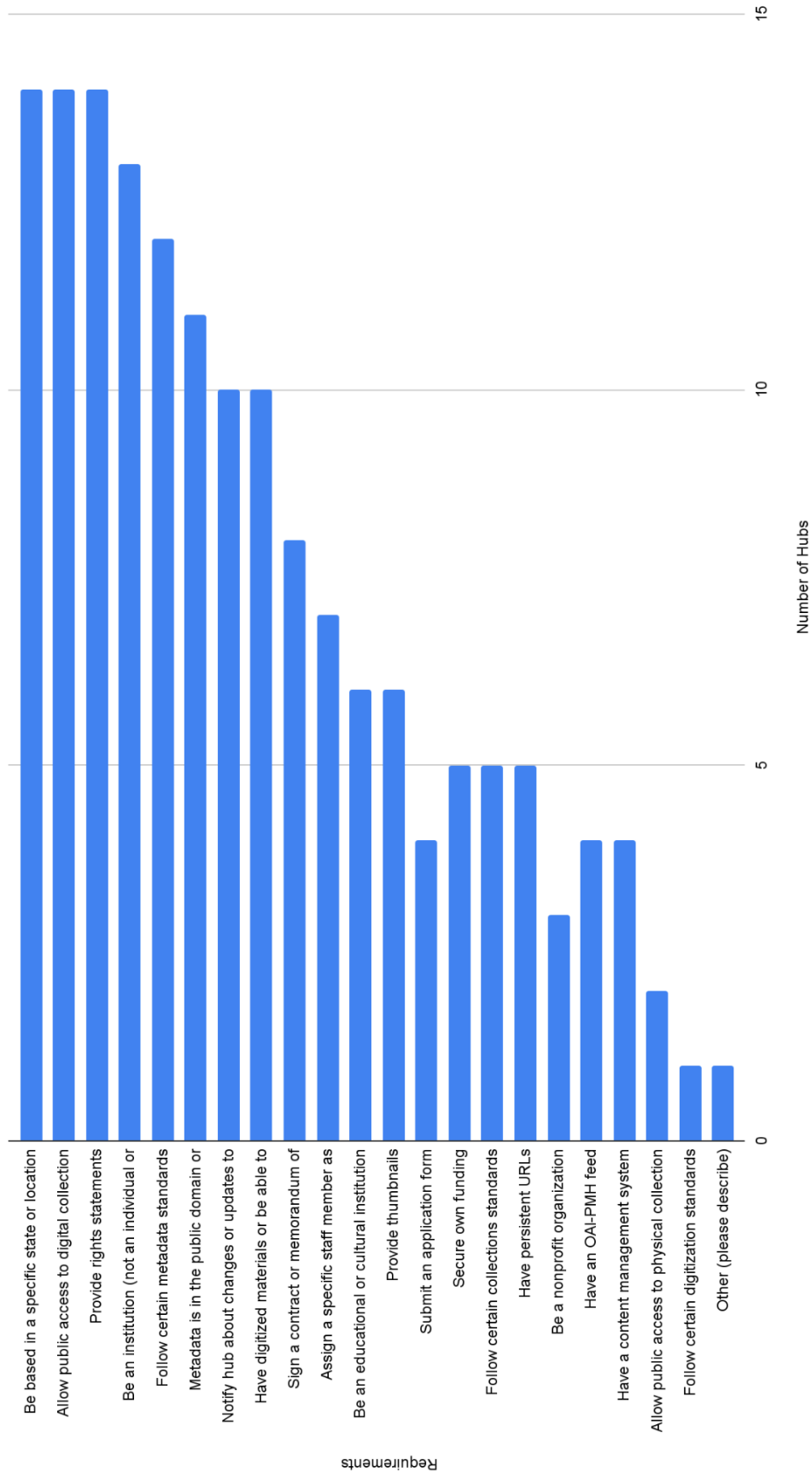
Technical requirements are uncommon and suggest some flexibility on the part of the Hubs in working with less well-resourced organizations:

- 5 (33%) require the contributor to have persistent URLs
- 4 (26%) require an OAI-PMH feed
- 4 (26%) require a content management system

Only one Hub indicated "Other" requirements, but this turned out to be further detail, such as the type of rights statements they accept, or that they also provide support for born-digital materials. These responses, while helpful, did not affect the above tabulations.

Below is a bar graph of the responses to the Requirements question:

Q9 - What requirements must potential contributors meet in order to provide content to your Hub? (Select all that apply.)

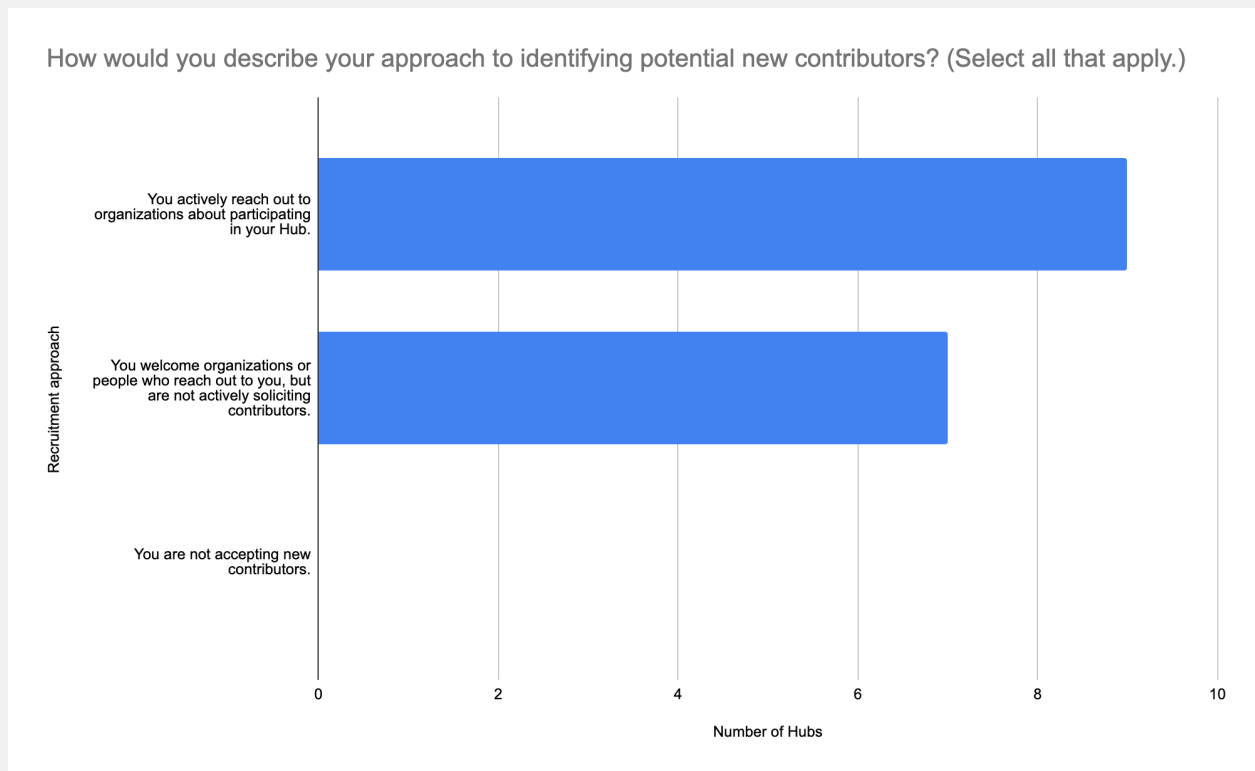


Outreach Approach

4. How would you describe your approach to identifying potential new contributors? (Check all that apply)

We next asked Hubs how they identify potential contributors and allowed them to select from 3 options. Hubs were about evenly split in terms of whether they do active outreach to find new contributors.

- 8 (53%) indicated that they “actively reach out to organizations about participating” in their Hub.
- 7 (46%) indicated that they welcome new contributors but are not actively soliciting them. 3 of these have paused previous outreach activities due to: developing a new harvester, the loss of state grant funding, and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- None of the survey respondents indicated that they are not accepting new contributors.



5. Please describe your outreach and engagement strategy in more detail. How and where do you discuss joining your Hub with potential contributors? What types of organizations do you reach out to?

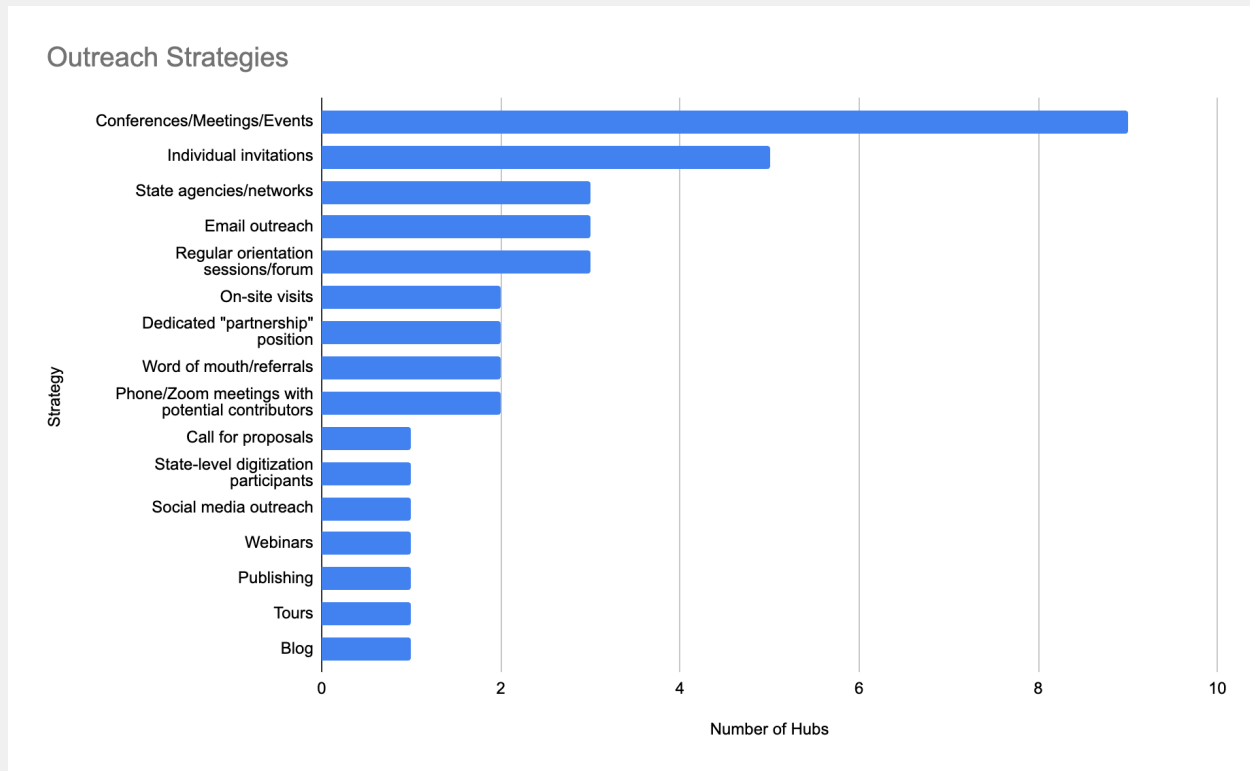
This question was an open text response. Several of the Hubs that indicated they are not currently doing active outreach indicated what kinds of activities they previously did. The following data represents all 15 Hubs.

By far, the most common outreach activity was attending professional conferences, meetings, and events. A distant second was inviting individual organizations to participate. Beyond that, there was little consensus as to outreach activities.

- 9 Hubs (60%) said they do/did outreach at professional conferences, meetings and events.
- 5 (33%) said they send/sent out invitations to particular organizations
- 3 (20%) use/used state-wide agencies and networks to contact contributors
- 3 (20%) use/used email blasts or newsletters
- 3 (20%) hold/held regular orientation sessions or forums
- 2 (13%) do/did on-site visits to potential contributors
- 2 (13%) have a person on staff dedicated to finding contributors and partners
- 2 (13%) rely/relied on word of mouth or referrals from existing contributors
- 2 (13%) set up phone or Zoom meetings with potential contributors

Other outreach strategies (1 Hub each) past and present included:

- Issuing a call for proposals
- Surveying participants in a state-level digitization project
- Social media
- Webinars
- Publishing in industry publications
- Tours
- Blog



Reaching out to community-based organizations

6. Do you actively reach out to community archives to join your Hub? Why or why not?

This question was a free-text response. We asked the Hubs if they have specific initiatives to outreach to community organizations. All 15 Hubs responded to this question with varying levels of detail.

Respondents were largely aware that digitization and hosting posed barriers for community-based organizations. 2 (13%) indicated that they try to help community organizations access digitization and hosting services so they can participate in the aggregation. One respondent wrote, "Where collections are not available online, we try to find opportunities for those institutions to digitize their collections and make them available online so we can share them." One mentioned that they administer a grant-funded project for community-based organizations to participate in their Hub, and another noted that they work with community organizations that are already participating in a state-wide digitization project. Another indicated that although they have not done outreach to community organizations, they have lowered barriers to participation to try to encourage them to participate.

Others take a more passive approach. One respondent said that they partner with intermediate providers who work directly with community organizations. Another said that they “reach out to any archive of which we have an awareness of a digital collection,” while a third said that if the technical requirements to onboard an organization seemed too high, they would not reach out.

Several respondents described the limitations and challenges that kept them from engaging with community organizations. 3 (20%) indicated that they were unsure how to find or identify these organizations. One respondent wrote, “The main barrier for me is finding out who is out there, and I am limited in my efforts by lack of time to devote to it amongst my other responsibilities.” An additional 2 (13%) noted that they also did not have enough staff or time to reach out to community organizations.

Finally, one respondent indicated that the community-based organizations they have worked with are sometimes not interested in aggregation because they are concerned about losing control of their data. They wrote:

While we have good relationships with some of these organizations, and regularly consult on topics related to digitization and digital cultural heritage, there has been less interest on their part in sharing records with DPLA. I think this cautiousness is reasonable given DPLA's requirement that institutions assign a CC0 license to their metadata. Perhaps a carve-out needs to be created for institutions wanting to maximize public discoverability of their content, but not necessarily freely "give away" their data.

Decisions about contributors

7. How do you determine which organizations become a contributor to your Hub?

This question was a free-text response and all 15 Hubs replied. For the most part, Hubs indicated that any contributor that meets their minimum requirements is accepted. (See the “Participation Requirements” section for more detail.) 2 Hubs indicated that potential contributors are also reviewed by a selection committee or Hub staff. However, a couple respondents went into more detail about their selection and on-boarding process, indicating they are making efforts to accommodate smaller and less well-resourced institutions:

Thus far all contributors have been institutions (universities, archives, libraries, museums), with historical societies represented within consortia [sic] or through agreements with universities or the state library. We are currently exploring how best to support smaller institutions in alternative arrangements.

...we do seek to serve smaller institutions as well, such as local historical societies. Some of those have publicly available digital collections. If their leadership seems to recognize the value of DPLA participation enough to follow through on joining the hub, that is sufficient. In other words, contributor interest/enthusiasm is really what ends up being the primary driver in joining the hub.

Known barriers

8. Describe any barriers or issues that make it difficult to contribute digital collections to your Hub.

This question was a free-text response with all 15 Hubs responding. Respondents reported barriers at all stages of the process, from the processing of physical records, to digitization, metadata creation, and hosting and harvesting. They acknowledge that smaller organizations often struggle to create and maintain an online presence and have priorities other than digitizing and sharing their content online. They revealed that smaller organizations often use digital collection systems that do not support OAI-PMH protocols, and while this is not an absolute barrier, it requires workarounds and more time on the part of Hub staff. They also identified a lack of staff, time, and knowledge on the part of contributors to create the minimum metadata required, including rights statements, which are among many Hubs' minimum requirements. A few also indicated that potential contributors have concerns about rights and ownership of digital content, as well as the loss of potential income from providing free access, and that these concerns prevent them from participating. The Hubs are also aware that they do not offer the level of control over access that some smaller organizations need.

Despite these complexities, the Hubs are making efforts to address these shortfalls where they can.

We have worked hard to lower the barriers until there are very few left. The single largest remaining barrier is the processing and preservation of the physical collections. This is a particular problem for the small historical societies with no full-time staff. Even then, we work hard to find collections within their institutions that they have the capacity to manage. Over 90 percent of the organizations that apply to our program ultimately go on to digitize at least one collection.

We've onboarded a few institutions who don't have OAI-PMH, but adding their records is a very manual labor intensive process...

Although I have tried to make it simple, some organizations balk at the application. Others are concerned about their collections being shared via our website. Another

potential barrier is our requirement that they complete their own descriptive metadata. We do give assistance, especially if they are struggling, but do not have enough staff or resources to do everyone's metadata for them.

Some Hubs themselves are struggling to provide services without much support:

The biggest barrier for our members is certainly our Hub's lack of an automated & managed solution for aggregation. The technical requirements of Combine, etc., are beyond the state's means and generally out of scale for the size of our operation. Therefore, our Hub's aggregate records [are] created 100% manually on my personal laptop, using a set of homebrew Python scripts and XSLT stylesheets, with no error checking... It's far from the best solution.*

*"[Combine](#) is an application to facilitate the harvesting, transformation, analysis, and publishing of metadata records by Service Hubs for inclusion in the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)."

Reasons not to participate

9. Why do potential contributors choose not to participate? (Check all that apply)

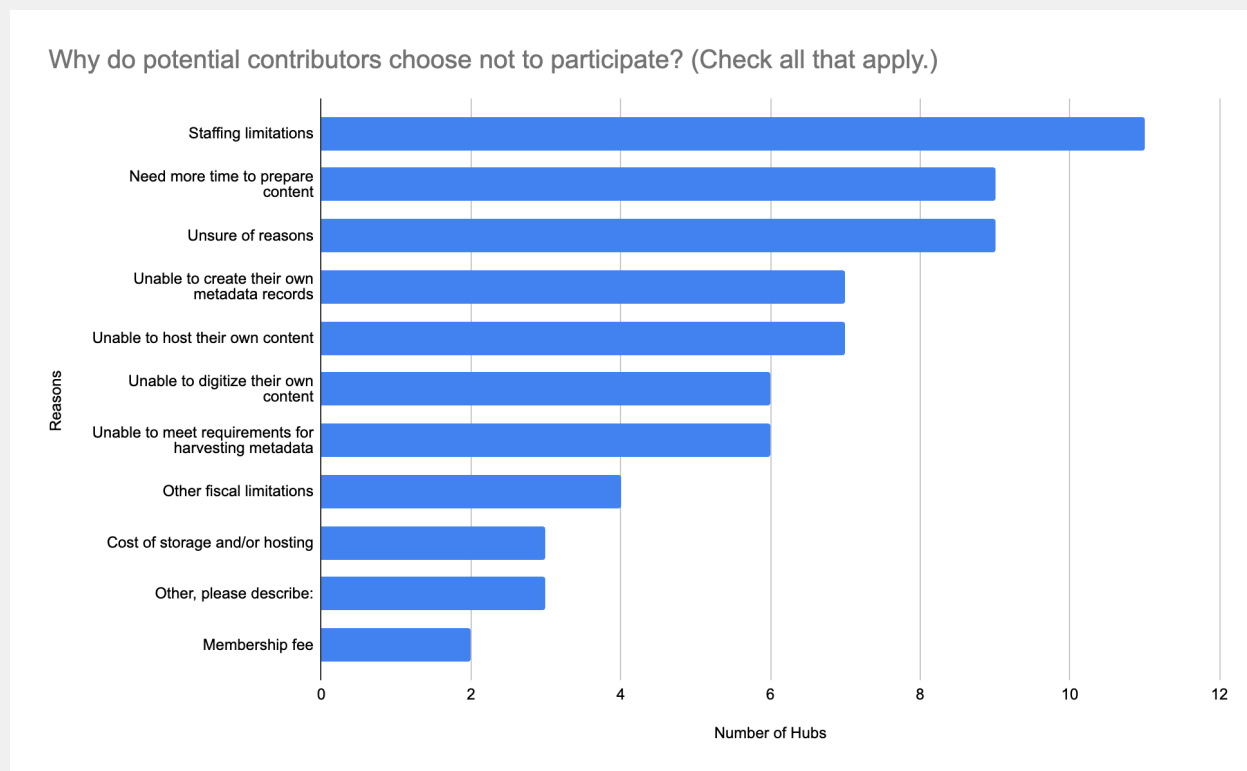
This question was a multiple choice one where Hubs could select more than one answer. All 15 Hubs responded. When asked to quantify specific barriers, respondents reported they believe the most common reason potential contributors decide not to participate is limited staff. 11 of the 15 respondents (73%) indicated they believe staffing limitations are a reason. Related to this, 9 (60%) indicated they believe contributors also need more time to prepare content, i.e., are not yet ready to contribute.

- 9 (60%) also admitted that they weren't sure why potential contributors didn't participate, which, despite their knowledge of the reasons mentioned above, suggests there is still a gap in understanding the challenges faced by these organizations.
- 7 (47%) cited the inability of organizations to create their own metadata or to host their own content.
- 6 (40%) said potential contributors faced challenges digitizing their content or were unable to meet the Hub's requirements for harvesting metadata.
- 4 (27%) cited other fiscal limitations.
- 3 (20%) said that the cost of storage and/or hosting was prohibitive.
- 2 (13%) indicated that the membership fee was a limiting factor.

Other reasons given were a lack of interest and concerns about retaining rights and ownership.

One respondent said that while the reasons stated in this question had delayed digitization projects, none of them had permanently stopped a contributor from participating.

For the most part the Hubs seem engaged and concerned with the needs of smaller contributors, although they often aren't well-resourced enough to address them.

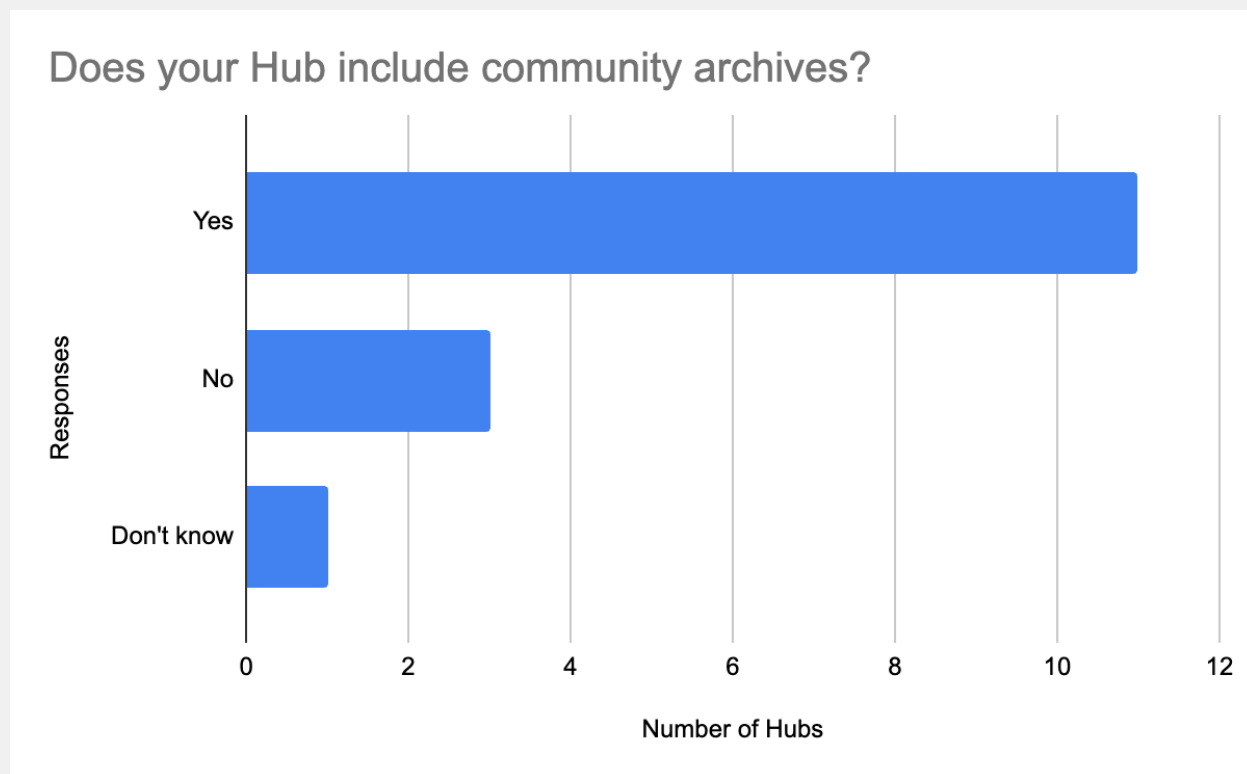


Current community-based contributors

10. Does your Hub include community archives?

This question allowed Hubs to select among 3 multiple choice answers with all Hubs responding.

- 11 (73%) of the 15 respondents said that their Hub includes contributions from community archives.
- 3 (20%) said their Hub does not.
- 1 (7%) said they didn't know.



Specific programs

11. Please describe your Hub's services and efforts to support participation by community archives. Do you offer programs or services specifically for community archives?

This question was a free-text response with all 15 Hubs responding. 7 (47%) respondents said they did not offer programs or services specifically for community-based organizations.

3 (20%) said they did. These took the form of a specific program for community-based organizations and individuals, a mini-grants program, and training and consultation available upon request.

3 (13%) said their partner organizations offer programs for community-based organizations, or were developing programs, such as:

...our state has been developing new funding and consulting services to help community archives take advantage of digitization and hosting services within the network of our heritage institutions.

1 (7%) said they are developing programs themselves, in particular to offer metadata assistance. They are exploring options to provide digitization services without the requirement to share materials publicly.

1 (7%) replied “N/A.”

Non-English-language Content

12. Does your Hub support content in languages other than English and support the display of metadata in non-English and/or non-Roman alphabet languages? Do you actively seek non-English language contributions from community archives?

This question was a free-text response, with all 15 Hubs responding. 12 (80%) respondents indicated that their Hub supports materials that are not in English, but only 3 (20%) said they actively seek out non-English language materials.

3 (20%) said their Hub does not support materials that are not in English and 10 (67%) said they do not actively seek out non-English language materials. The remaining 2 (13%) did not say whether they seek out these materials.

2 (13%) said their metadata is English-only. 1 (7%) said that metadata is “English first” with the addition of non-English titles as necessary.

1 (7%) said that while they do not actively solicit non-English-language materials, a partner program does.

1 (7%) indicated that they provide support for translation into English and another 1 (7%) said they offer a language facet for search.

Access controls

13. Do you provide different levels of access or permissions that enable contributors to determine who can access their materials? For example, can contributors restrict access to materials that have cultural requirements for viewing or use? If yes, please explain what levels or controls you provide.

This question asked Hubs to select from 3 choices. We asked Hubs whether they provide contributors with the ability to control different levels of access to their materials. All 15 Hubs responded.

11 (73%) said that they do not, while 4 (27%) said that they do.

Of the latter, 1 (7%) qualified their response by saying that contributors needed to specify the level of control within their own digital systems. For the purposes of this study, this response is effectively a “no,” bringing the total to 12 (80%).

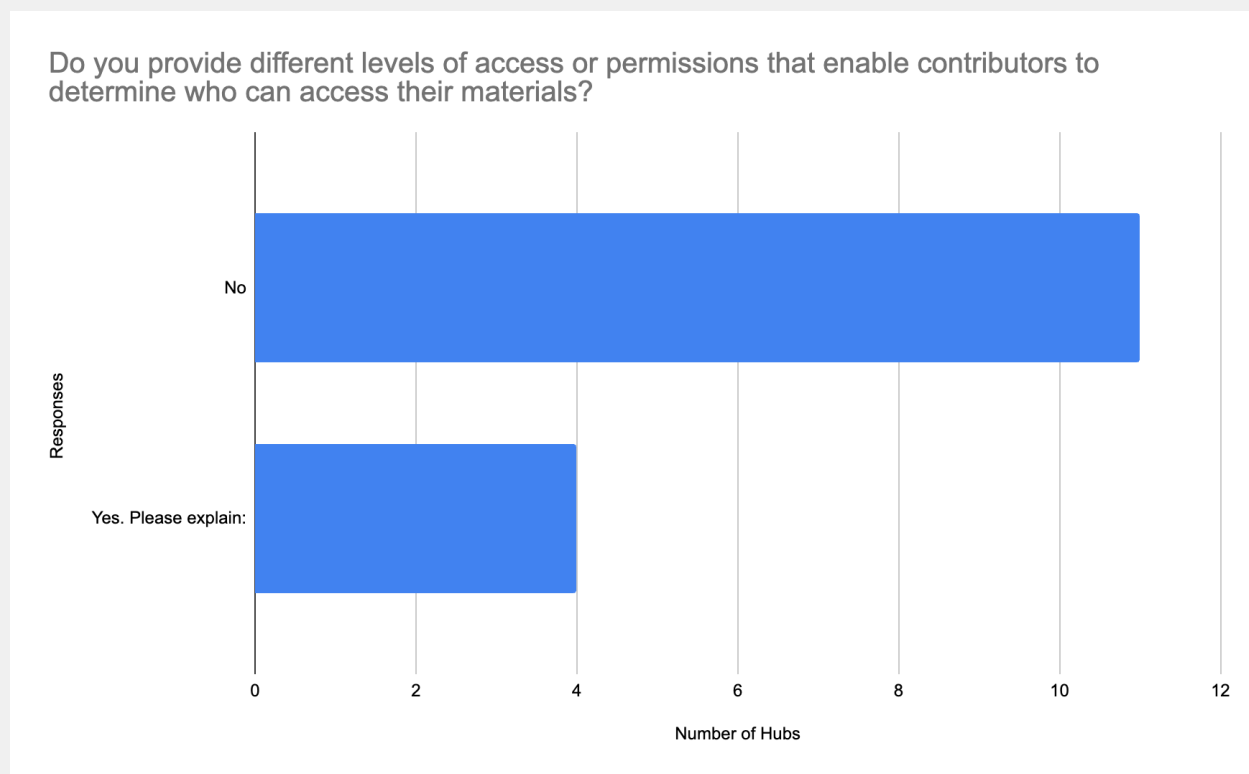
Of the remaining three, 1 (7%) simply replied “rights statements.”

1 (7%) said they restrict the degree of access based on copyright status:

Materials in copyright can be viewed in the web portal, but they cannot be downloaded. We have discussed restricting access to certain collections for cultural sensitivity reasons, but to-date there has been no demand for that kind of work.

1 (7%) said, “We allow restricted access to content which may be based [on] time based embargoes, IP address, and group membership.”

It is possible that given reservations about rights and ownership of materials expressed in the “Known barriers” section above, that community-based organizations are simply not participating in aggregation because most Hubs do not offer the controls they need. Yet, in a bit of a conundrum, Hubs are not incentivized to provide such controls when participating organizations are not asking for them.



Services and costs

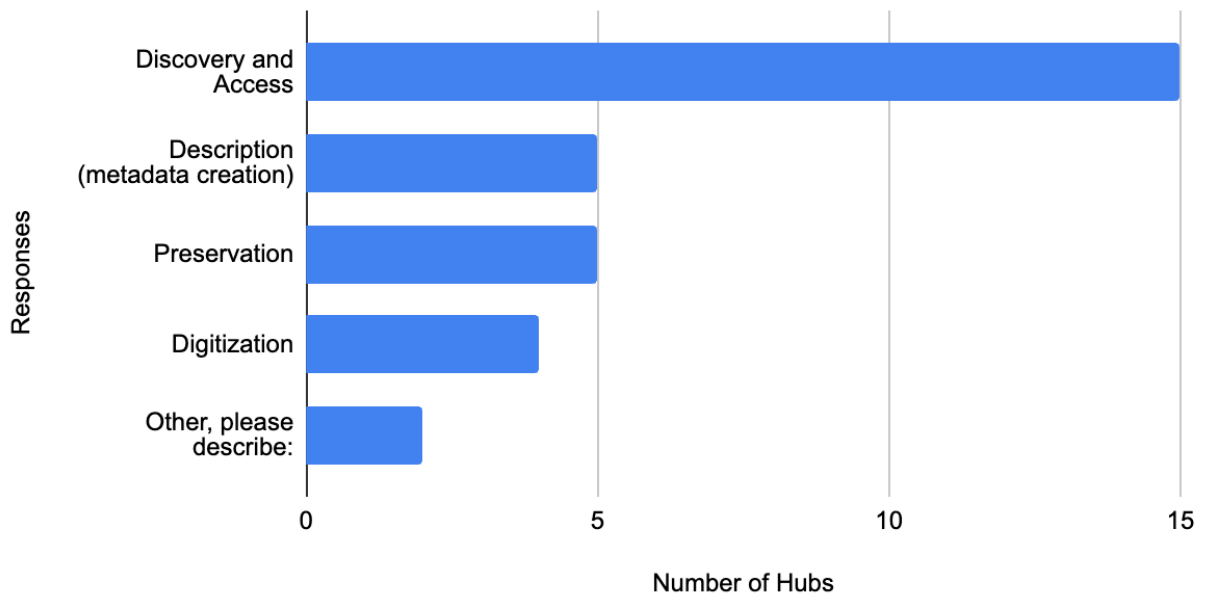
14. As a Hub, which of the following best describes the role you play for your contributors?

This question was a multiple choice response where Hubs could select more than one option. We asked Hubs how they would best describe the role they play for contributors. Unsurprisingly, all of them (100%) selected “Discovery and Access.” There was a steep drop-off between this category and the other options provided, although 2 (13%) respondents also selected “Other.” These write-in responses both indicated training and consultation as key activities.

- 5 (33%) mentioned description and metadata creation and preservation as key roles.
- 4 (27%) mentioned digitization.

This steep contrast suggests that Hubs are not generally providing the support that community organizations need the most to make their collections accessible. (See “Known barriers” section above.)

As a Hub, which of the following best describes the role you play for your contributors? (Select all that apply.)



Services Offered

15. What services does your Hub offer to your contributors?

16. As a follow-up to the previous question, please share any additional details or context that may demonstrate your Hub's services. Examples are welcome.

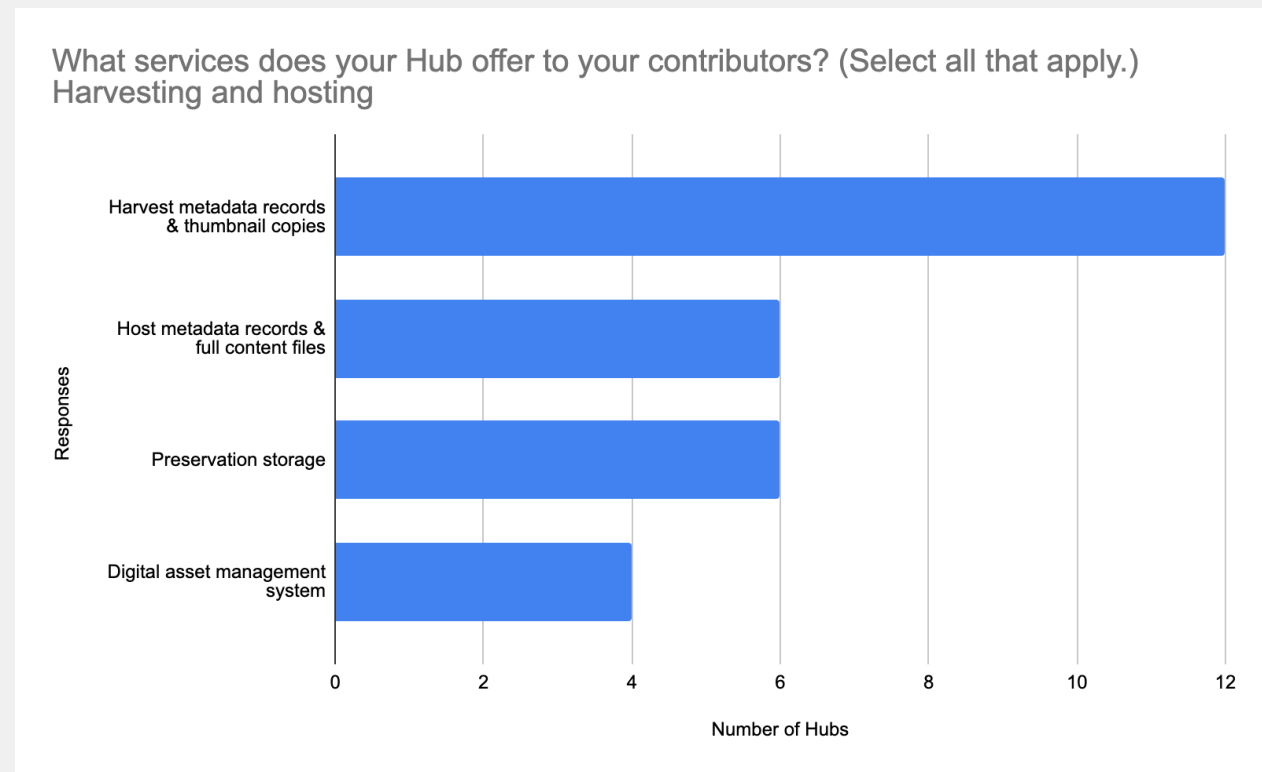
This question was a multiple choice response in which Hubs could select as many options as were applicable. We asked respondents to select the ones their Hub provides across 9 categories:

- Harvesting and hosting
- Metadata
- Digitization
- Training & support
- Outreach & engagement
- Curation & customization
- Grants & funding

- Access options
- Other

Harvesting and hosting

12 (80%) Hubs indicated that they provide harvesting of metadata records and thumbnails, while 6 (40%) provide hosting of metadata records and full content files. 6 (40%) also provide preservation storage, and 4 (27%) provide a digital asset management system for their contributors. There is a high degree of overlap between Hubs that provide full hosting, preservation storage, and digital asset management. 5 of the 6 Hubs that provide full hosting also provide preservation storage, and 4 of these 6 offer digital asset management. Only 1 Hub provides preservation storage and digital asset management without hosting, but this response reflects services that are only provided to a university library system and not to contributors as a whole. Two other Hubs indicated that hosting and preservation storage are available through partner organizations in their state

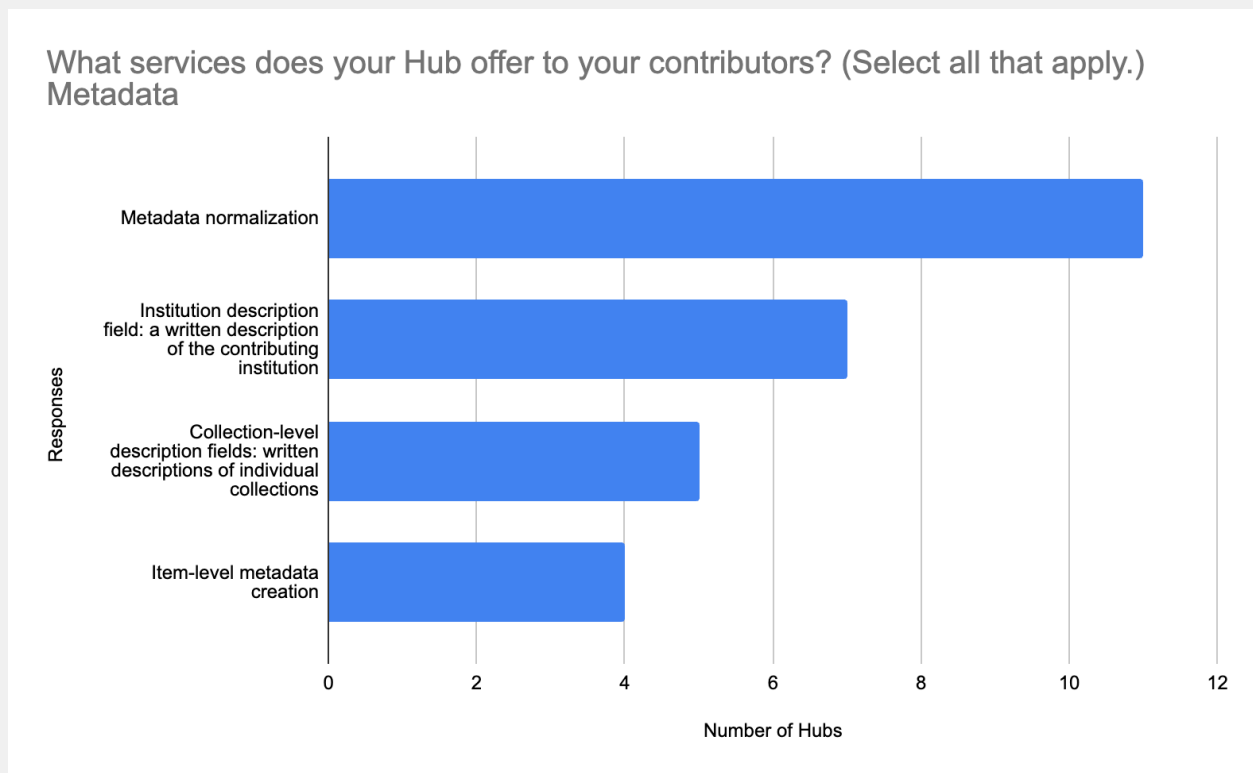


Metadata

Metadata normalization was by far the most common metadata service offered, with 11 (73%) responses. This was followed by 7 (47%) that provide a description field for each contributing institution, 5 (33%) that offer a collection-level description field, and 4 (27%) that provide the actual creation of item-level metadata. There was a fair amount of overlap among these responses as well, with all of the Hubs that offer item-level metadata creation also offering normalization. Only 1 (7%) Hub offers institution-level and collection-level description fields without offering normalization.

Of the 4 (27%) that provide item-level metadata creation, one provides this service through a sub-granting program.

It's clear that Hubs do not see metadata creation as a core part of their offerings, although 7 (47%) said it was a barrier to participation. (See "Known barriers" section above.)

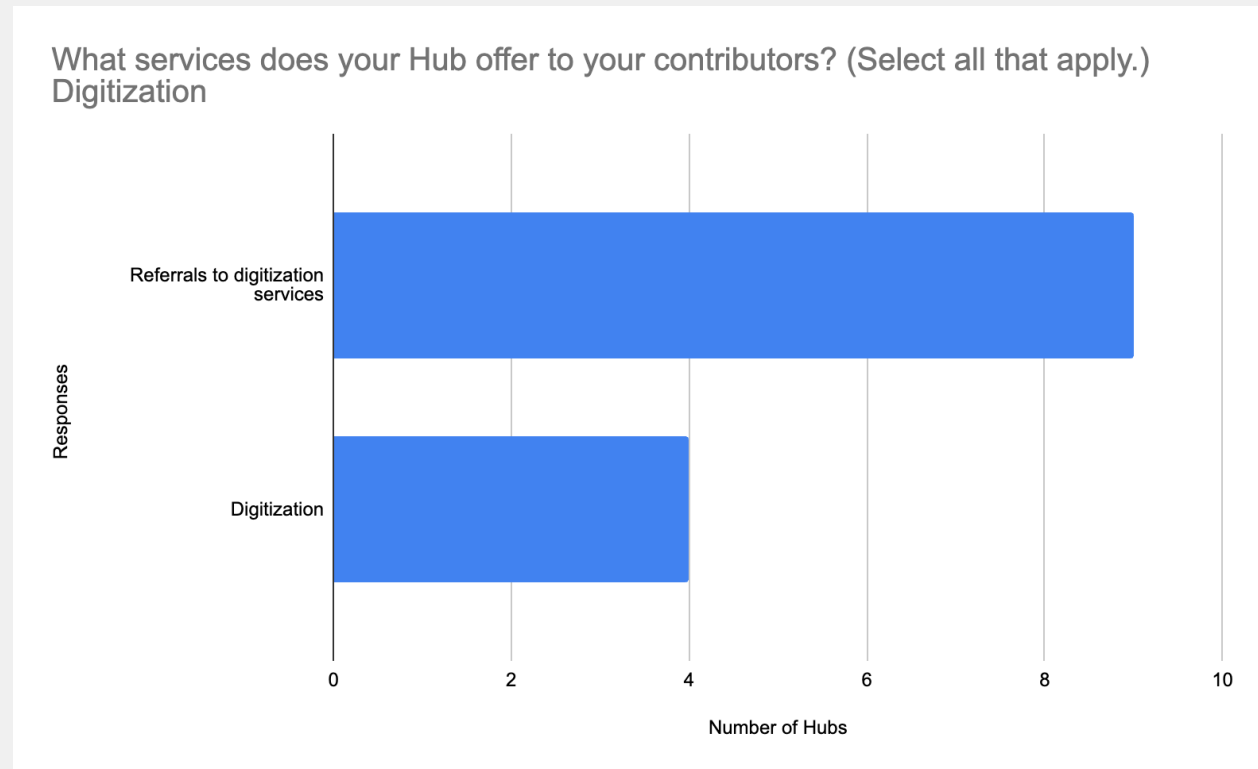


Digitization

9 (60%) Hubs offer referrals to digitization services, while only 4 (27%) offer digitization services themselves. One of these provides digitization through a sub-grant program, and another provided additional information on their digitization services:

For items that will become part of our aggregated collection, we provide digitization at no cost. For organizations that want to do their own digitizing, we loan out free scanning kits that include a scanner, laptop, and everything they need to scan their own items or host community scanning events. The items scanned through this process are not required to become part of the [Hub] collection, although they can be if the organization wishes.

It's clear that Hubs do not see digitization as a core part of their offerings, although 6 (40%) said it was a barrier. (See "Known barriers" section above.)

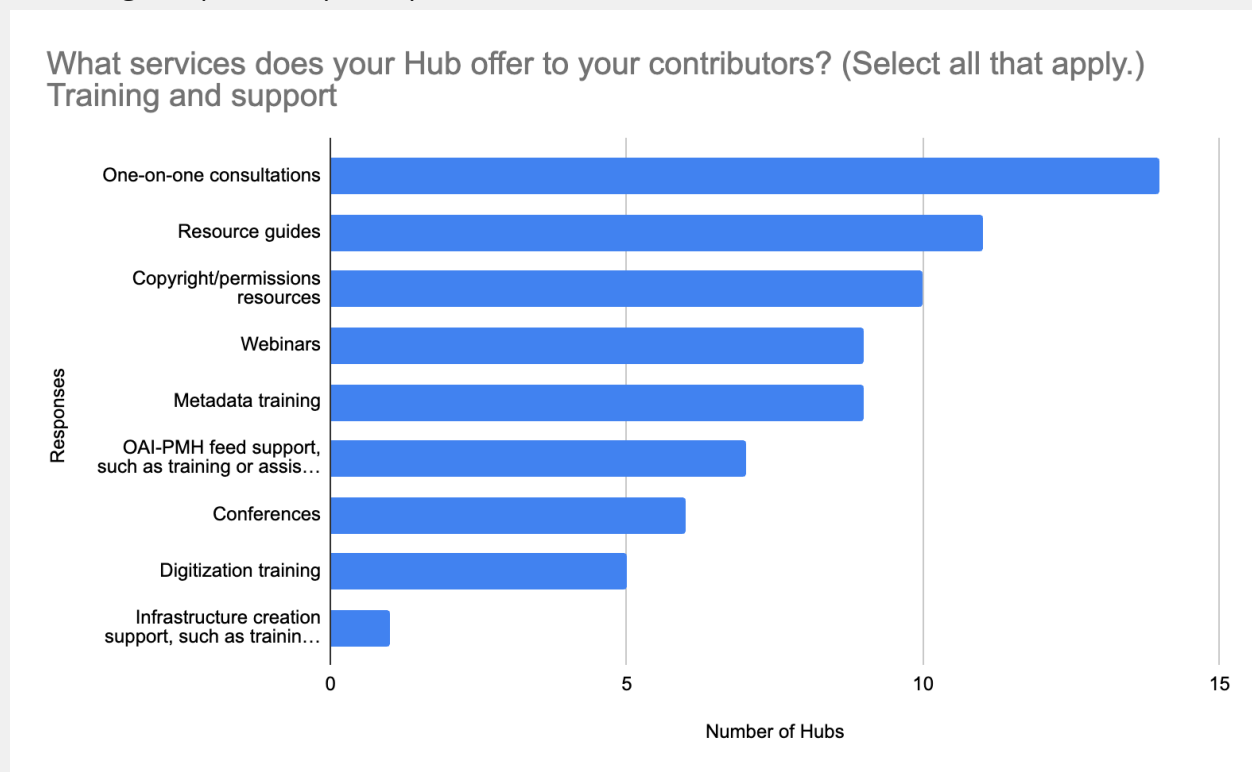


Training and support

One-on-one consultations are offered by 14 (93%) Hubs, reflecting an acknowledgement that contributors may need individualized assistance. Online resources were the second most common form of support, with 11 (73%) providing resource guides, and 10 (67%) providing resources specifically on copyright and permissions issues.

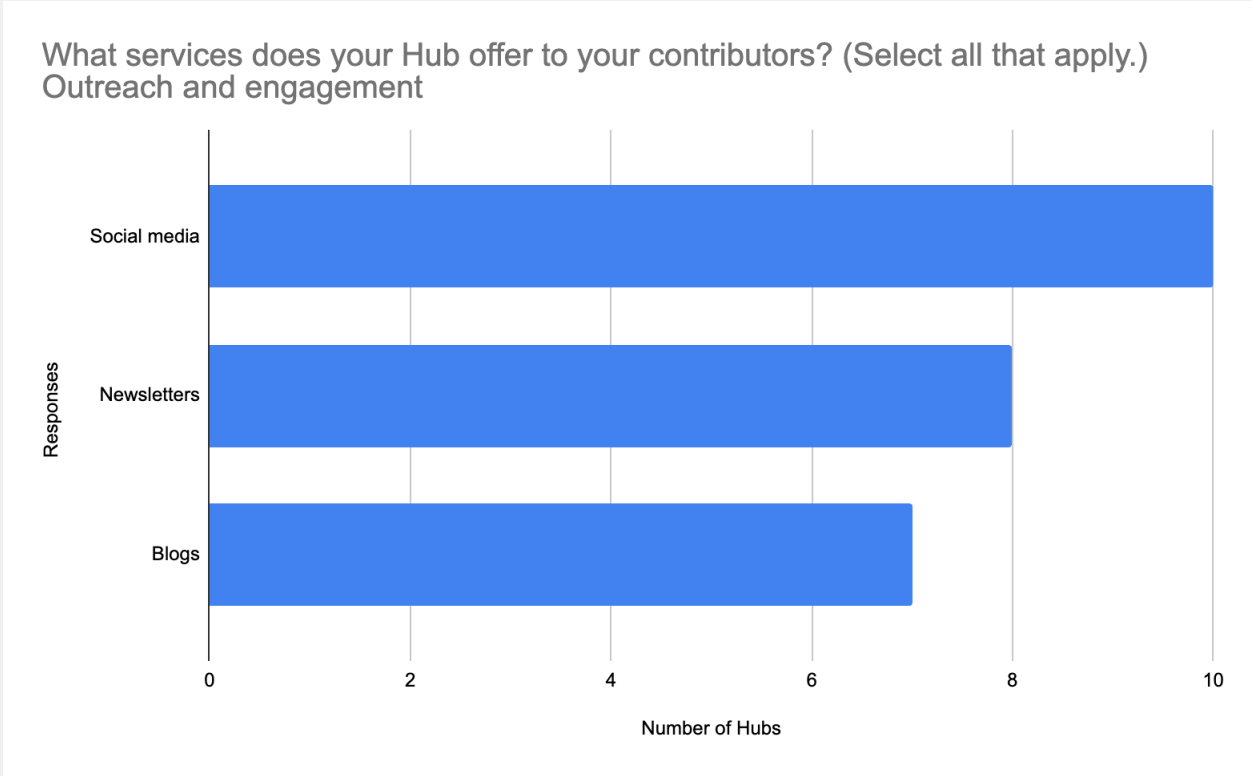
Training in specific areas was the next most common offering, with 9 (60%) providing webinars and/or other forms of metadata training, while 7 (47%) provide OAI-PMH-specific training and assistance. 6 (40%) organize conferences for their contributors, and 5 (33%) offer digitization training. Only 1 (7%) offered specific assistance with infrastructure creation, such as the setting up of a DAMS or hosting environment.

It's perhaps not surprising that support and training offerings taper off as services get further away from the core activities of the Hub around discovery and access. This tapering may leave community-based organizations to look elsewhere for the foundational knowledge required to participate in a Hub.



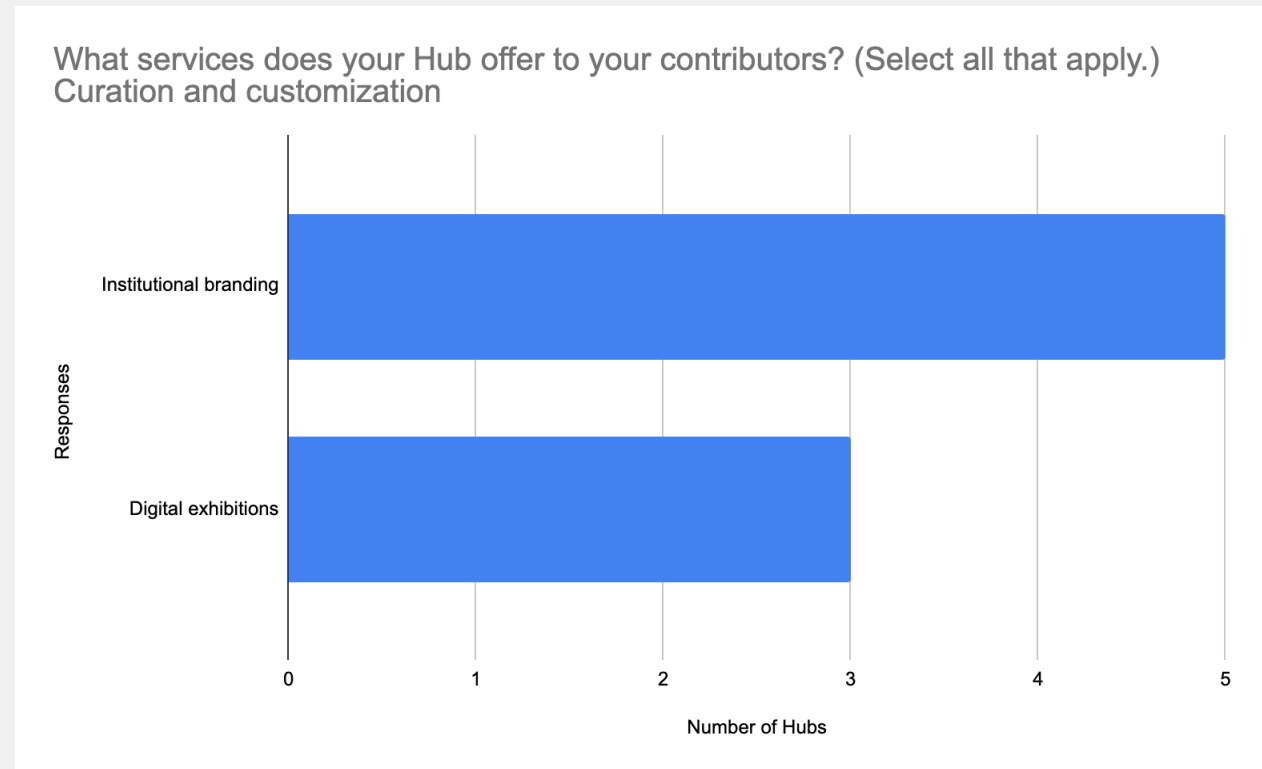
Outreach and engagement

In terms of outreach and engagement with contributors, social media was the most common method, with 10 (67%) responses. 8 (53%) Hubs indicated that they communicated via newsletters, and 7 (47%) used a blog.



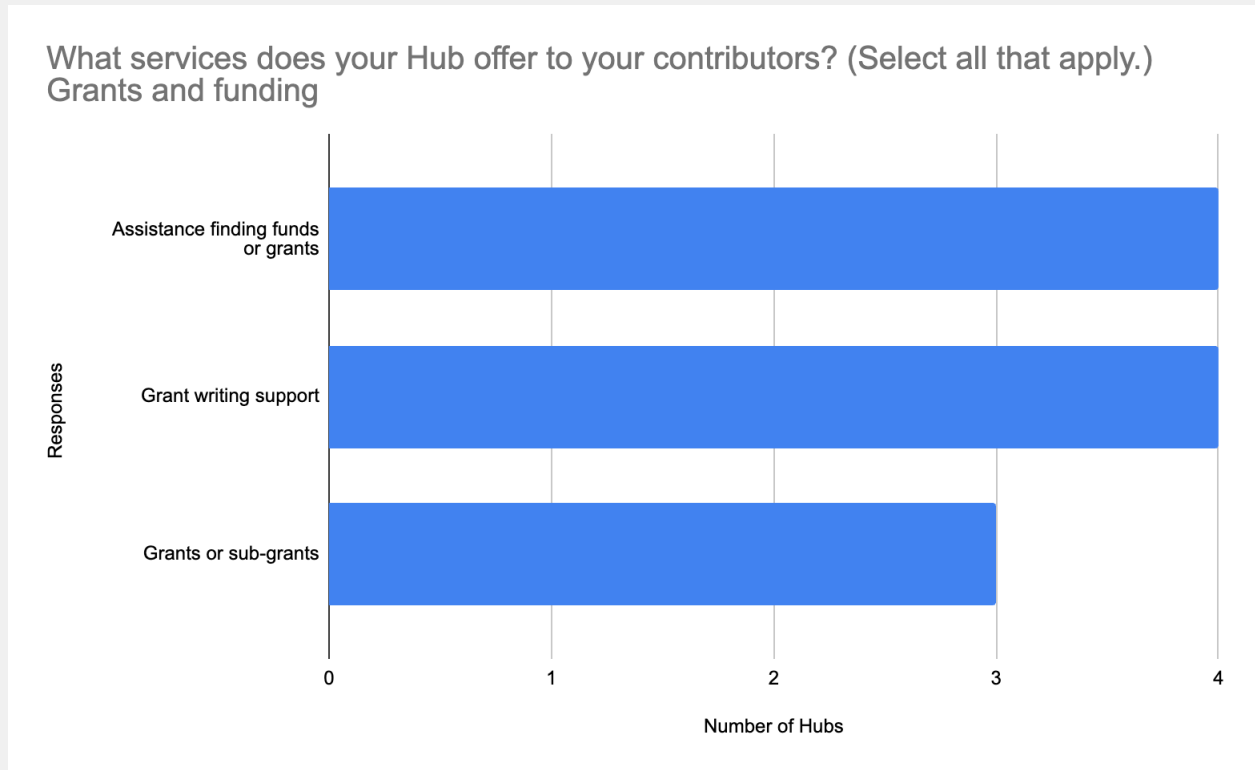
Curation and customization

5 (33%) Hubs said they offer institutional branding on contributor pages, and only 3 (20%) offer the ability to make digital exhibitions. 1 (7%) Hub indicated in additional comments that they have participated in curating online exhibitions in the past but have paused this activity pending the outcome of this study. However, this program appears to be an outlier. The low response rate for this section of the question suggests that most Hubs do not think of themselves as venues for institutional representation or curated experiences.



Grants and funding

In this category as well, Hubs do not offer much support. Only 3 (20%) offer grants or sub-grants to support contributors, and only 4 (27%) offer assistance finding funds/grants or support for grant writing. 1 Hub (7%) provided additional detail in the comments section: they provide letters of support and boilerplate language for grant applications by potential contributors.

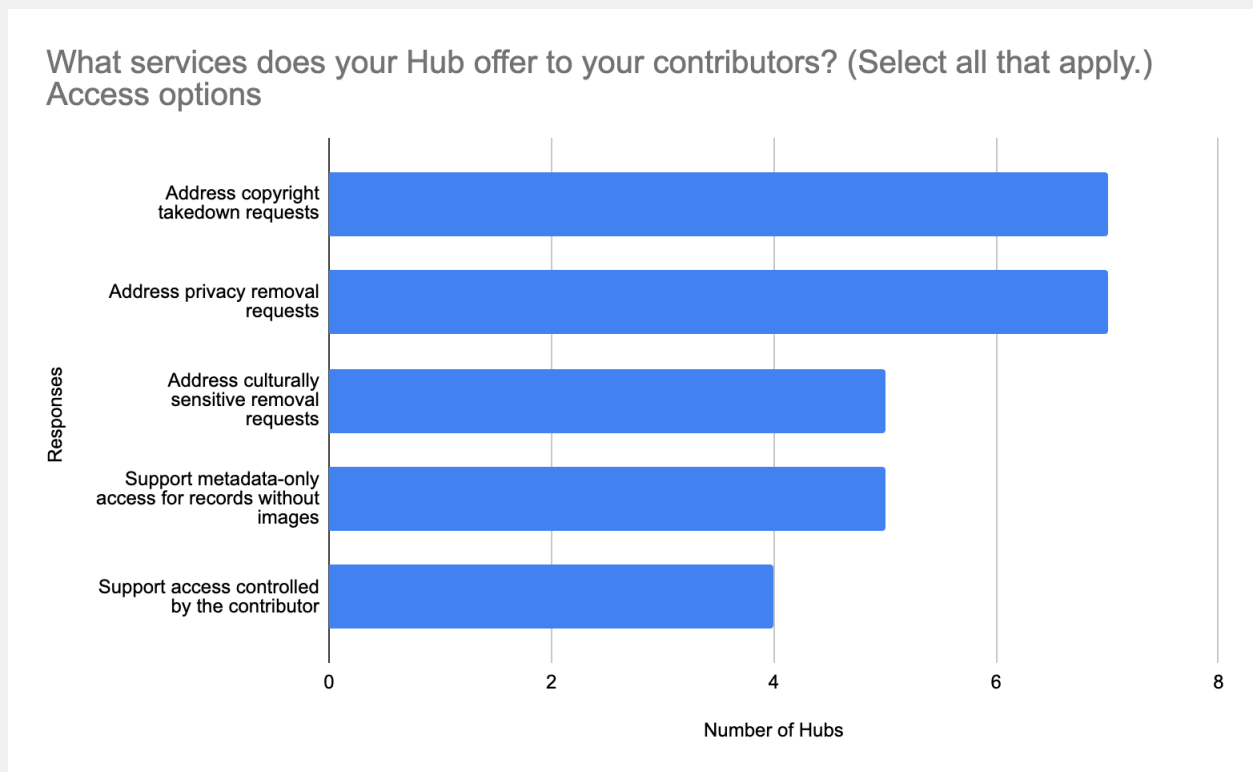


Access options

Responses in this category were also low. 7 (47%) Hubs said they respond to takedown requests based on copyright or privacy claims, but only 5 (33%) address record removal for culturally sensitive reasons. Two of the Hubs provided additional information on this point, saying that takedown requests are referred to the contributing institution.

Most Hubs require images to provide access; only 5 (33%) support metadata-only records.

Only 4 (27%) say they support access that is controlled by the contributor.



Fees

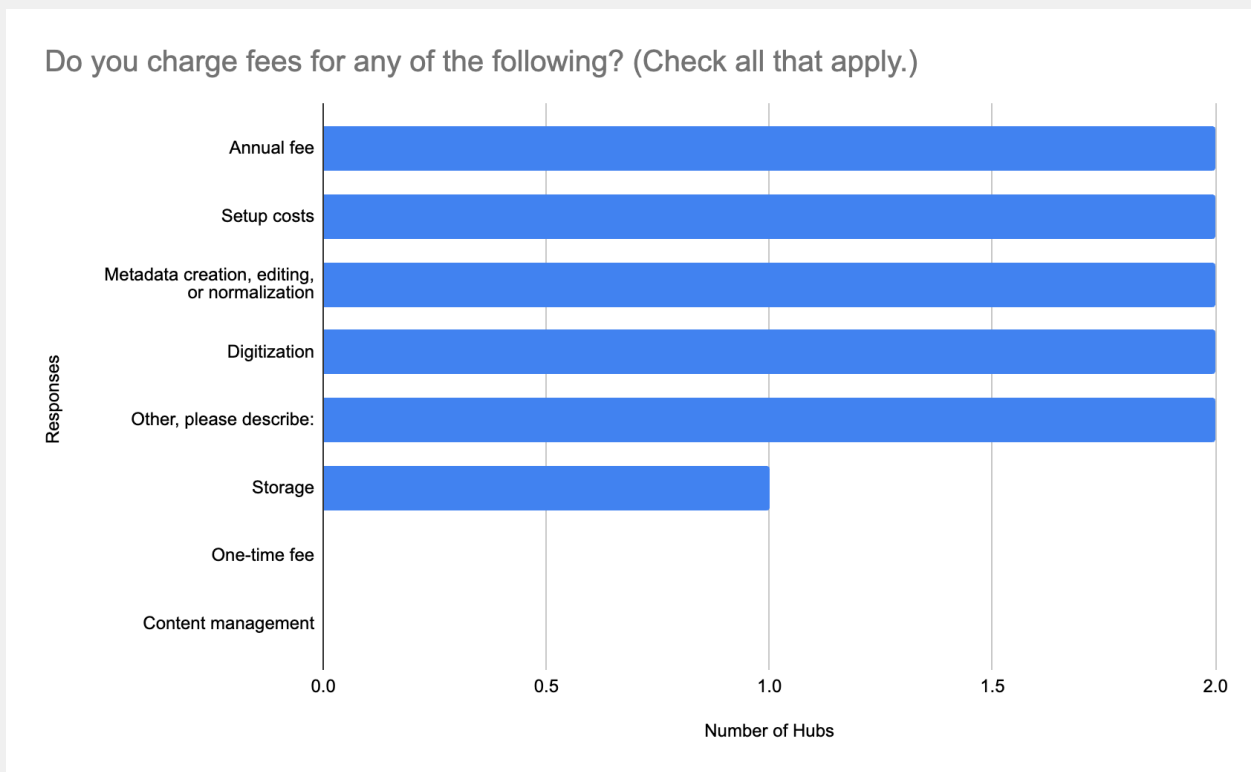
17. Do you charge fees for any of the following?

This question was a multiple choice response where Hubs could select more than one option. We asked Hubs about the fees they charge, and most Hubs left this question blank, suggesting that they provide their core services for free.

Only 2 (13%) Hubs charge an annual fee. These same Hubs also charge a fee for set-up.

2 (13%) Hubs charge fees for metadata creation, editing, or normalization and digitization. One of these also charges fees for storage.

1 (7%) provides 1 TB of storage for free but additional storage can be purchased.



Hub Survey Conclusions

While Hubs seem to be aware of shortcomings in their aggregations and services in support of community-based organizations, they are also often struggling with resources and staffing themselves and do not have the bandwidth to do more than they are already doing to support increased participation by these organizations. In the past 7 years, 2 Hubs have ceased contributing to DPLA because they no longer had the support to do so. And DPLA is itself currently looking for a new institutional home, as it is no longer sustainable as an independent organization.

Hubs seem to be very helpful if an organization is close to being able to contribute—the “last mile” as it were, seems to not be as much of a problem as the first. From the Hubs’ perspective, it is processing and digitization of physical collections and being able to sustain an online presence that represent the biggest barriers to participation by smaller and under-resourced organizations. Most Hubs refer potential contributors to other initiatives and resources for these services, while some have created partnerships and sub-granting programs to address this shortfall. However, many have not, asserting that all contributors are treated the same. This attitude seems to represent an older concept of “equality”—providing the same services to everyone regardless of their individual capacities and resources. In recent years, this notion has begun to give way to the value of “equity”—providing services according to need.

In this vein, several Hubs were eager to share additional information about their efforts to engage and support smaller organizations. Within the basic parameters of their service, they seem quite flexible and open to working with contributors with varying technical and staffing capabilities. These attitudes seem to offer hope that if financial support for the Hubs continues or improves, they will increasingly offer more services that enable broader participation by community-based organizations.

For more information about the Hubs and their relationship to DPLA, please see the DPLA Cultural Heritage Aggregation: Program Assessment [presentation](#) and [slides](#).

Community-Centered Archives Survey Results

This survey sought to understand the participation of community-centered archives in the United States in two online activities:

1. Contributing digital content to aggregation websites, such as the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). Aggregation websites bring together content from different sources into a single website. Other examples are [Umbra Search](#) and [Calisphere](#).
2. Creating online storytelling or exhibitions. Online storytelling and exhibitions present and interpret selections of digital items in a way that provides context and meaning for viewers. Examples include: [More than their Labor](#) and [Black Lives in Alaska](#).

We define community-centered archives as organizations with collections of content or materials documenting the lives of underrepresented, marginalized, or disenfranchised people that typically reside outside of traditional academic and government-run cultural heritage institutions. As the project evolved, we realized that the organizations we wanted to hear from in the survey were not “community-centered” archives (which could include collections housed at mainstream institutions like universities and government archives), so much as *community-based* archives or community-based organizations doing archival projects. These are organizations that are explicitly *not* traditional academic and government-run cultural heritage institutions and our definition of our desired audience should have been more explicit about that.

There were 47 complete responses to the survey. Because our survey dissemination plan was iterative and involved sharing the survey on professional listservs and encouraging people to share it with their networks, there is no way of determining what percentage of community-based archives (CBAs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in the United States this number represents. It is safe to assume that it is a very small percentage, as there are thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of community-based organizations that likely would meet our criteria for study.

We distributed surveys via direct emails to 368 CBAs/CBOs and through multiple rounds of posts to 63 national and regional professional listservs and distribution partners such as community outreach archivists. We used an anonymous survey link for all forms of outreach to ensure confidentiality, and as a result, do not have response rate analytics for each type of outreach.

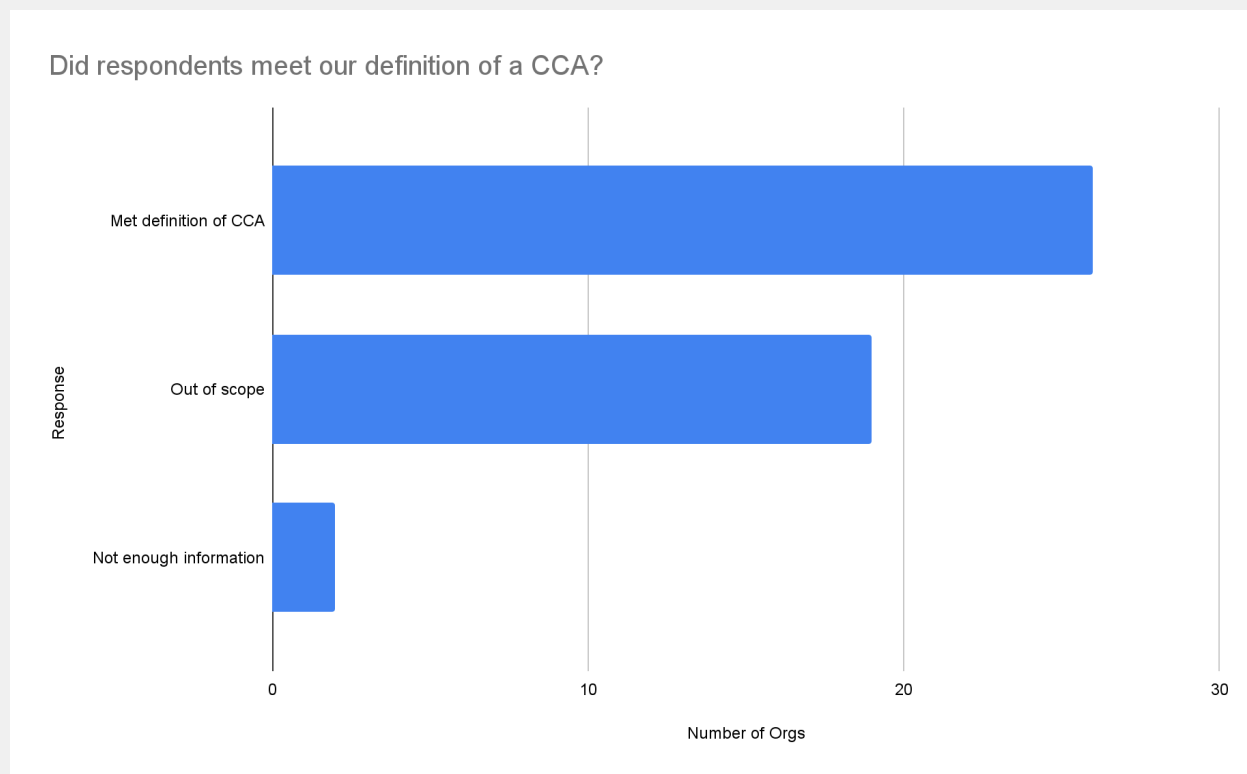
The full text of the survey questions is available in the Appendix.

Data Adjustments

We determined that 21 of the 47 complete responses did not meet our criteria for the study. In order to make the survey as anonymous as possible, we did not ask for the names of respondents nor the names of their organizations. Accordingly, we determined whether an organization met our criteria based on the information they provided about their mission and the audiences they serve. If the answers they provided to questions #2 and #4 did not specifically mention a marginalized community, or indicated they were not a community-based organization (if they were a university or governmental organization, for example), we flagged those responses (19). We also flagged two (2) responses that did not provide any information in these fields.

To be considered a community-based archives or organization under our definition, the organization must have collections of content or materials documenting the lives of underrepresented, marginalized, or disenfranchised people *and* reside outside of traditional academic and government-run cultural heritage institutions. Several of the flagged responses came from university archives with collections focused on marginalized groups; others came from historical societies or regional museums that are based in a geographic community but don't have a specific focus on marginalized people. Because these organizations might still provide learnings that could be valuable for community-based archives and organizations, we decided to run two analyses: one including all 47 responses and a second including only the 26 that met our criteria for inclusion ("Subset responses").

There were also three (3) survey responses that met our criteria for inclusion but were incomplete. We did not include them in the "Subset responses" section because they made our statistical reporting inconsistent. However, because they included pertinent data, we included them where they provided additional insights that the rest of the survey data did not cover. When data from these surveys is included, it is marked as coming from the incomplete responses.



All responses

The data in this section reflects all 47 complete responses to the survey. As noted above, this analysis includes the 21 responses (44%) that were not from CCAs.

Information about the organization

1. What kind of organization do you represent?

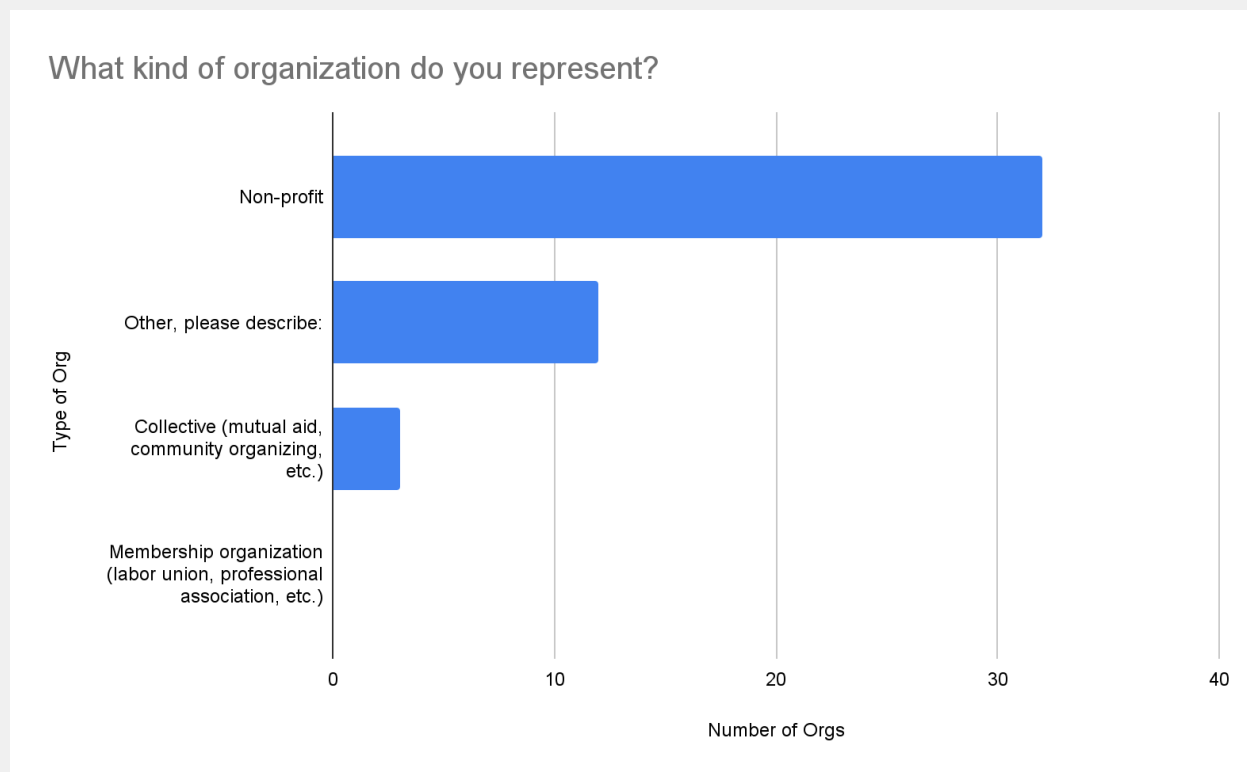
This question was a multiple choice response where respondents could only select one answer. We asked respondents what type of organization they represented across three very broad categories. Respondents could select Non-profit, Collective, Membership Organization or Other. The results were:

- 32 (68%) Non-profit
- 3 (6%) Collective (mutual aid, community organizing, etc.)
- 0 Membership organization (labor union, professional association, etc.)
- 12 (25%) Other

Free-text entry responses in the “Other” category were:

- 3 (6%) Tribes or First Nations
- 2 (4%) universities or university archives

- 1 (2%) “university campus and community partnership”
- 1 (2%) “Nonprofit academic archive started in the community”
- 1 (2%) “City Museum”
- 1 (2%) “A fiscally sponsored program”
- 1 (2%) [U.S. government division]
- 1 (2%) “Educational organization”



This question was initially intended to see if there are differences between organizations with official nonprofit status and other kinds of organizations. However, in retrospect, the choices for this question were too broad, failing to distinguish between different kinds of nonprofits (universities, public libraries, museums, etc.). We assumed that larger non-profit organizations like universities would not participate in the survey and failed to account for them and other organizations, like Tribes and First Nations. Given this oversight, it's not clear how useful this data is. However, the data is a little clearer in the “Subset responses” section of this report.

2. What is your organization’s mission?

This question was a free-text response. We asked respondents to describe their organization’s mission. Nearly every response mentioned preserving, documenting, or collecting, followed by some version of wording about access: promoting, celebrating, sharing, etc. But the most common term by far was “history” with 32 occurrences.

Here is a Voyant word cloud of the 25 most common words in responses for organizational mission:

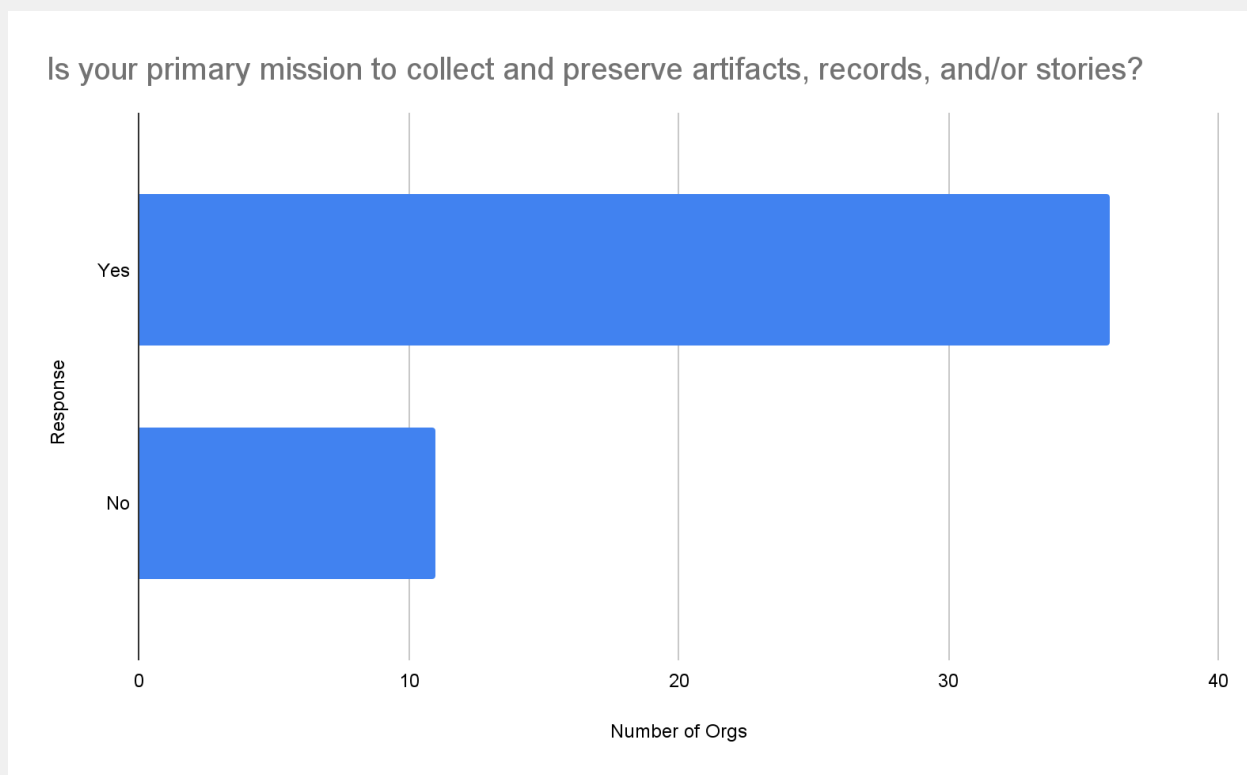


Here is a table with the occurrences of the top 25 words, with common variants or words with similar meanings grouped together. The most common words still have to do with history, preservation, and community, although words associated with “culture” and “collecting” rank higher here than in the word cloud.

Term	Count
history/historical/histories/historic/herstory	52
preserve/preserves/preserving/preservation	44
community/communities	22
culture/cultural/culturally	20
collect/collects/collections/collection/collecting	20
mission	16
archives/archive	14
public	12
access/accessible/accessibility	12
materials	10
local	9
education/educational	9
life/lives	9
social	8
people	8
arts	8
promote/promotes	8
world	7
resources	6
records	6
lgbtq	6
diverse	6
american	6
university	5

3. Is your primary mission to collect and preserve artifacts, records, and/or stories?

This question was a multiple choice question where respondents could only indicate one choice. We asked respondents if their organization’s primary mission was “to collect and preserve artifacts, records, and/or stories.” Again, the majority (36, or 77%) answered “yes,” with 11 (23%) saying “no.”



4. What audiences and communities do you serve?

This question was a free-text response. We asked respondents what communities their organization serves. These responses were incredibly diverse, ranging from the very broad—“everyone, everywhere,” “American people”—to the very local and specific. Here is a sampling:

- “We serve all under resourced people working around Black performance.”
- “Those who are interested in Asian American art or arts of POC [people of color]”

- “We prioritize working with women and trans people in prison, and the larger community of people impacted by women and trans people's incarceration.”
- “[names of three] Counties”
- “The Jewish community of [city region] as well as people seeking resources on local, ethnic history”
- “We serve a rural, ethnically diverse former plantation community in Hawai'i”
- “LGBTQ+ people, especially older adults, and allies.”
- “The [Tribe name] tribal membership and to some extent the greater [Tribe name] Nation”

5. What state or territory is your organization located in?

This question was a dropdown menu selection. In order to gauge the geographic diversity of our respondents, we asked them which U.S. state or territory their organization is located in. Respondents are located in 25 states with representation from all regions of the continental U.S. and Hawai'i.

No doubt due to our own location in California and our team's networks among community organizations here, 13 (28%) of our respondents are located in California.

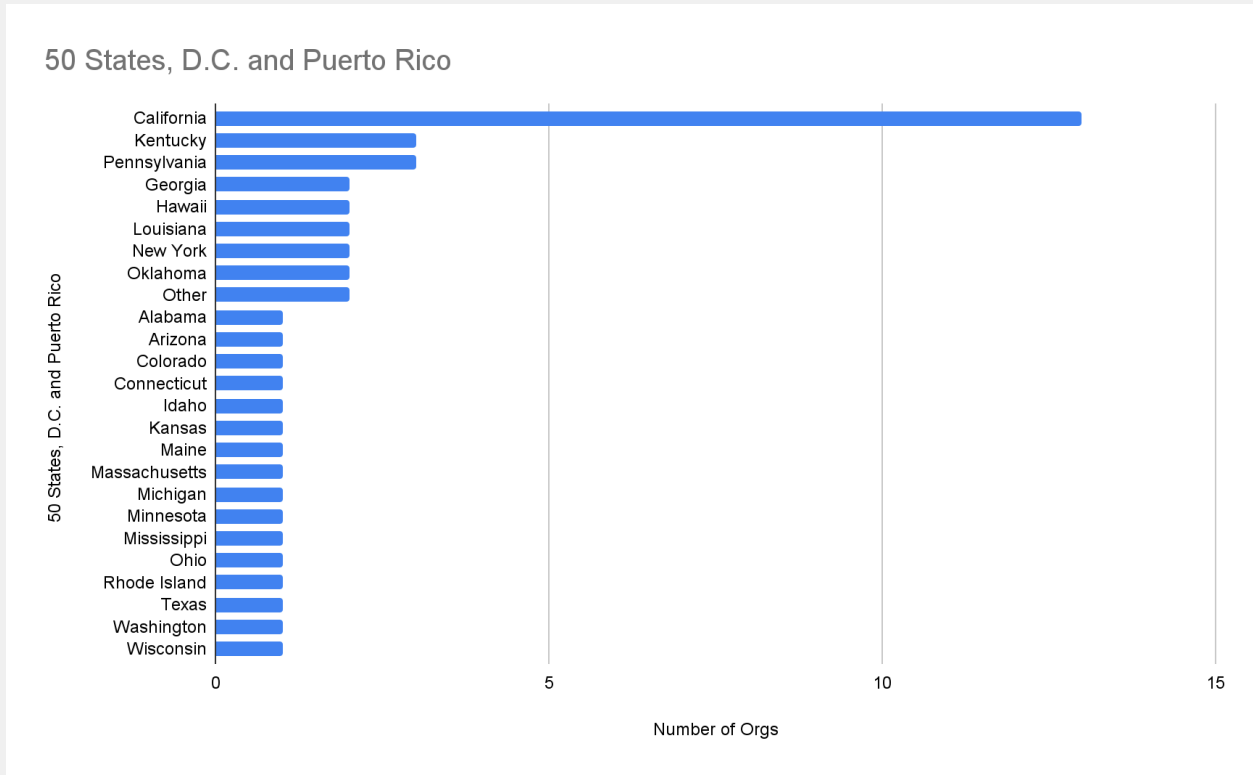
The next most common states are Kentucky, and Pennsylvania, which each have 3 (6%) organizations.

These are followed by 2 (4%) organizations each from Georgia, Hawai'i, Louisiana, New York, and Oklahoma. 2 organizations also selected “Other.” Of these responses, one indicated elsewhere that they are a First Nation. The other is an organization supporting Asian American arts. Because we did not provide a free text option for this question, we don't know if these organizations are located outside the U.S. (for example, as is likely, in Canada) or if they objected to the use of U.S. states and territories as a way to indicate geographic location.

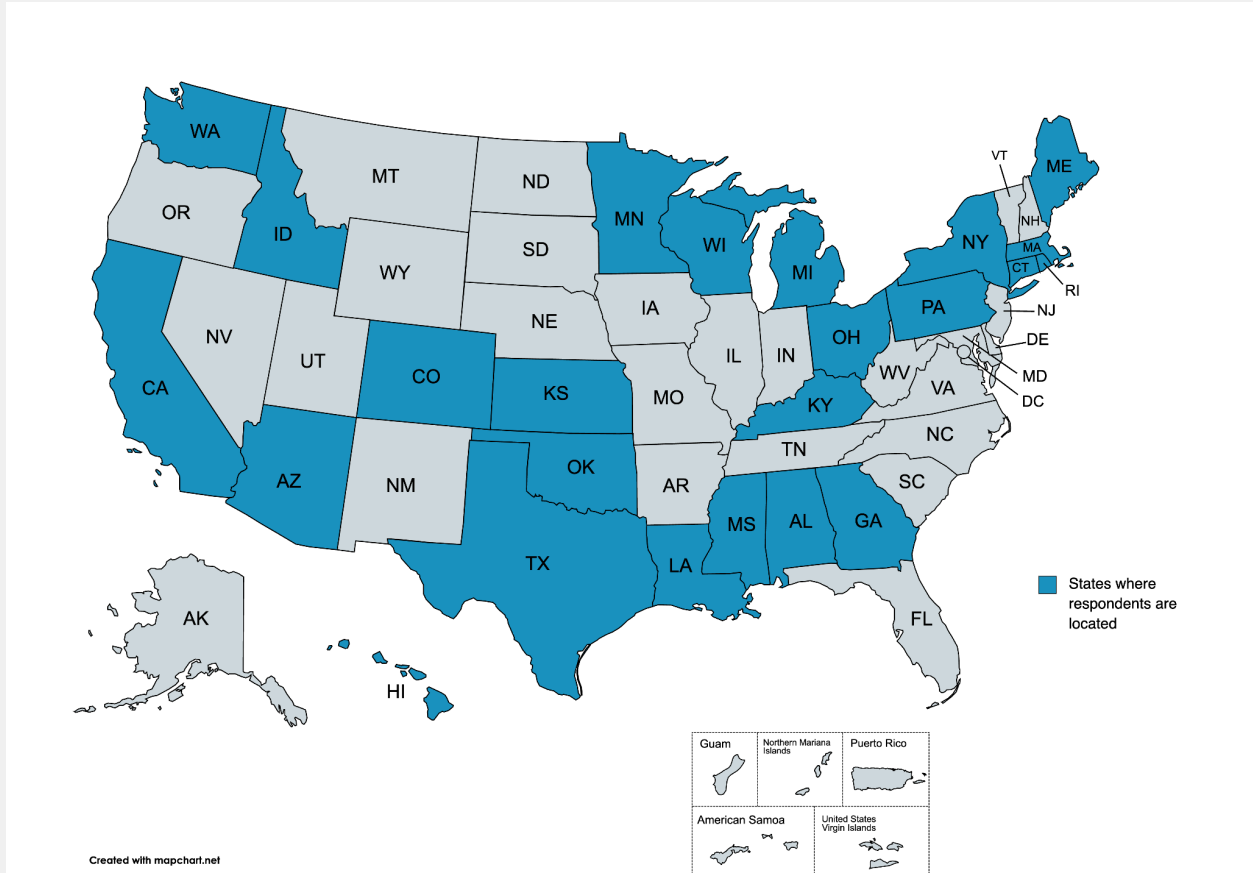
The next group of states are each home to one institution (2%):

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Idaho
- Kansas
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota

- Mississippi
- Ohio
- Rhode Island
- Texas
- Washington
- Wisconsin



Below is the coverage in a map view. Regions in blue represent states or territories where participating organizations are located.



32 states and territories are not represented in our survey data:

- Alaska
- American Samoa
- Arkansas
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Guam
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Maryland
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico

- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Oregon
- Puerto Rico
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- Wyoming

Despite being concentrated in California, respondents represent most regions of the continental U.S.

Sharing content

6. In what ways do you currently share your content?

This multiple choice question allowed respondents to select as many answers as were applicable.

The most common forms of sharing are:

- In-person events and programs (43, or 91%)
- Organization's website (42, or 89%)
- Individual, in-person visits (39, or 83%)
- In-person displays or exhibitions (39, or 83%)
- Social media (39, or 83%)

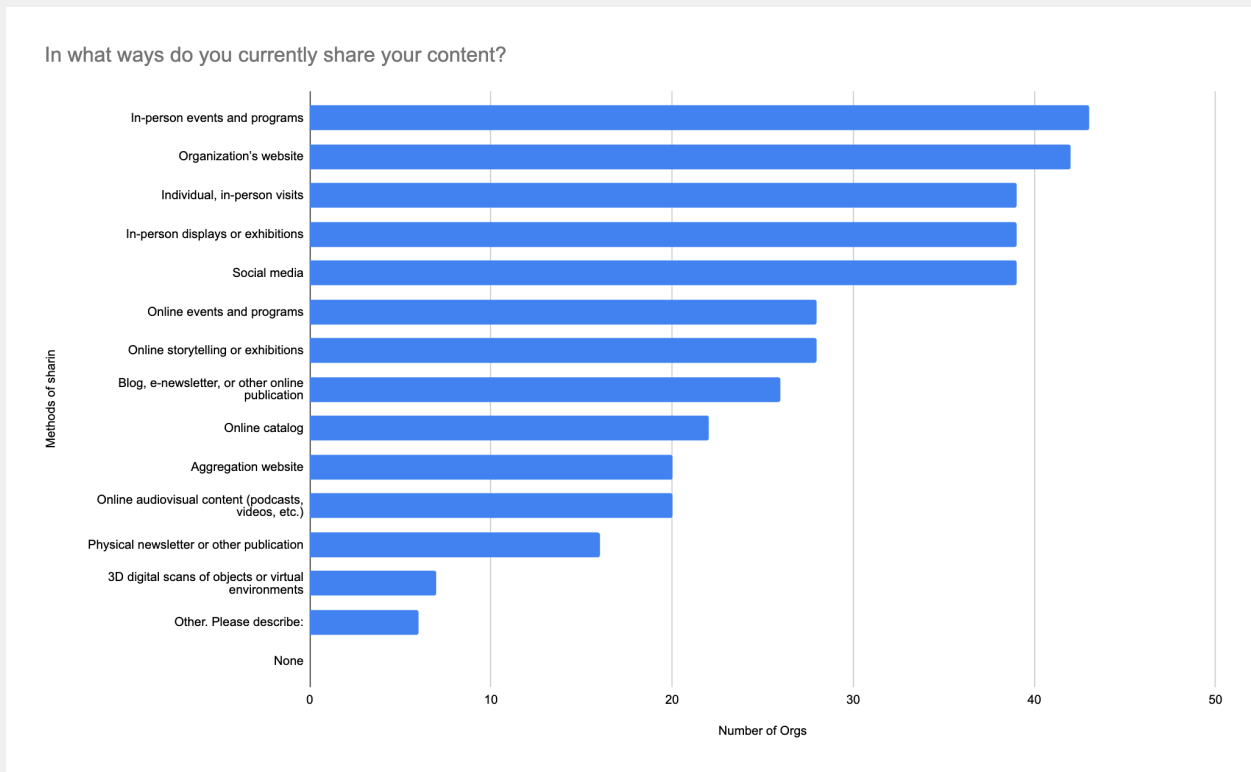
These are followed by:

- Online events and programs (28, or 60%)
- Online storytelling or exhibitions (28, or 60%)
- Blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication (26 or 55%)
- Online catalog (22 or 47%)
- Aggregation website (20 or 43%)*
- Online audiovisual content (podcasts, videos, etc.) (20 or 43%)

*This number may in fact be higher. See "Participation in Aggregation" section below.

And finally, the least common methods of sharing:

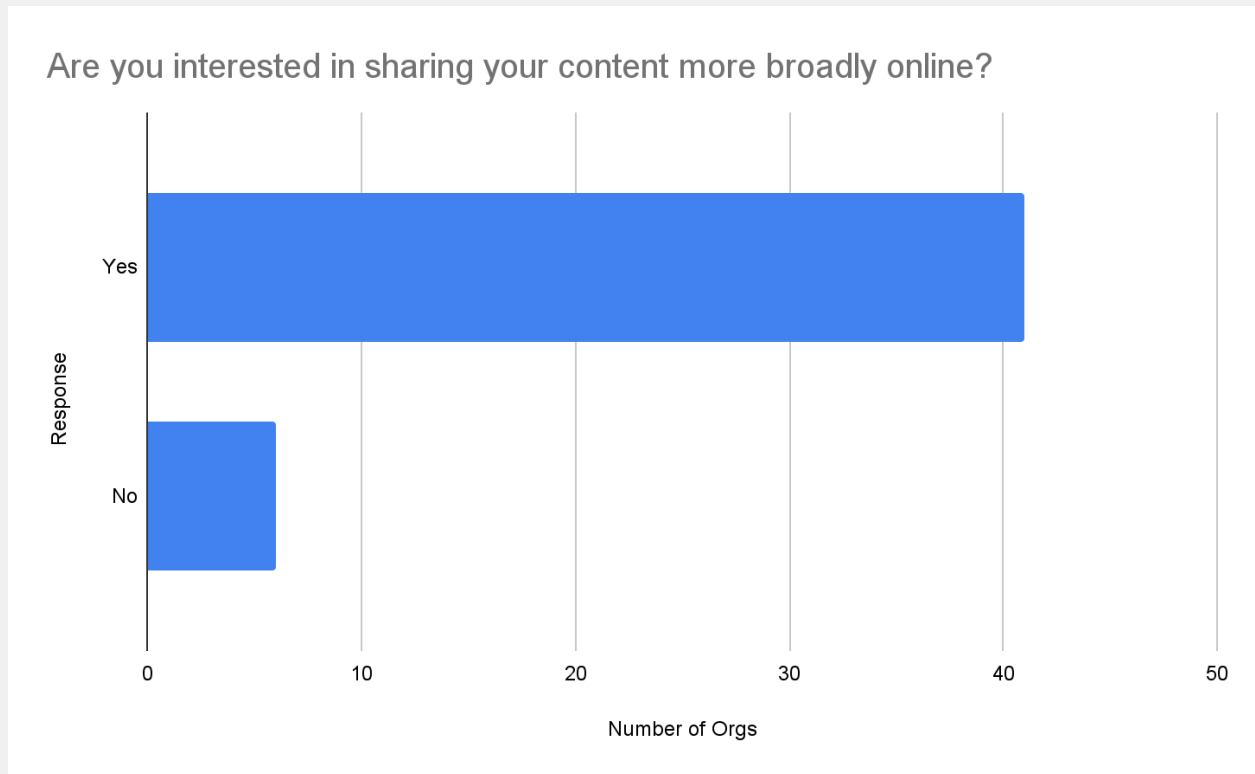
- Physical newsletter or other publication (16 or 34%)
- 3D digital scans of objects or virtual environments (7 or 15%)
- Other. Please describe: (6 or 13%). These answers are:
 - “We don't share with the general public. Although occasionally we receive research requests”
 - “Not sure this counts, but we do [sometimes] digitize materials to send to patrons via email. We also have a weekly column in the local newspaper showcasing historic photographs.”
 - “Costumed Walking Tours”
 - “We are currently in the process of [engaging] our community on the type of archive they would like to see.”
 - “Video slide shows”
 - “submitted content to Ancestry for national commercial”



7. Are you interested in sharing your content more broadly online?

We then asked if organizations were interested in sharing their content more broadly online.

- 41 (87%) said “yes”
- 6 (13%) said “no”



8. Which methods of sharing would be most appropriate and appealing for your organization?

This question was a multiple choice question where respondents could select more than one option. We asked which methods of sharing would be most appropriate and appealing to organizations who want to share their content more broadly online. This question only appeared to the 41 respondents who said they were interested in sharing more broadly. Percentages in this section are calculated out of 41 responses instead of 47.

The most appealing methods are:

- Hosting online events and programs (27, or 66%)

- Sharing on social media (25, or 61%)
- Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions (24, or 59%)
- Creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner (24, or 59%)
- Contributing to an aggregation website (23, or 56%)

In the second tier are:

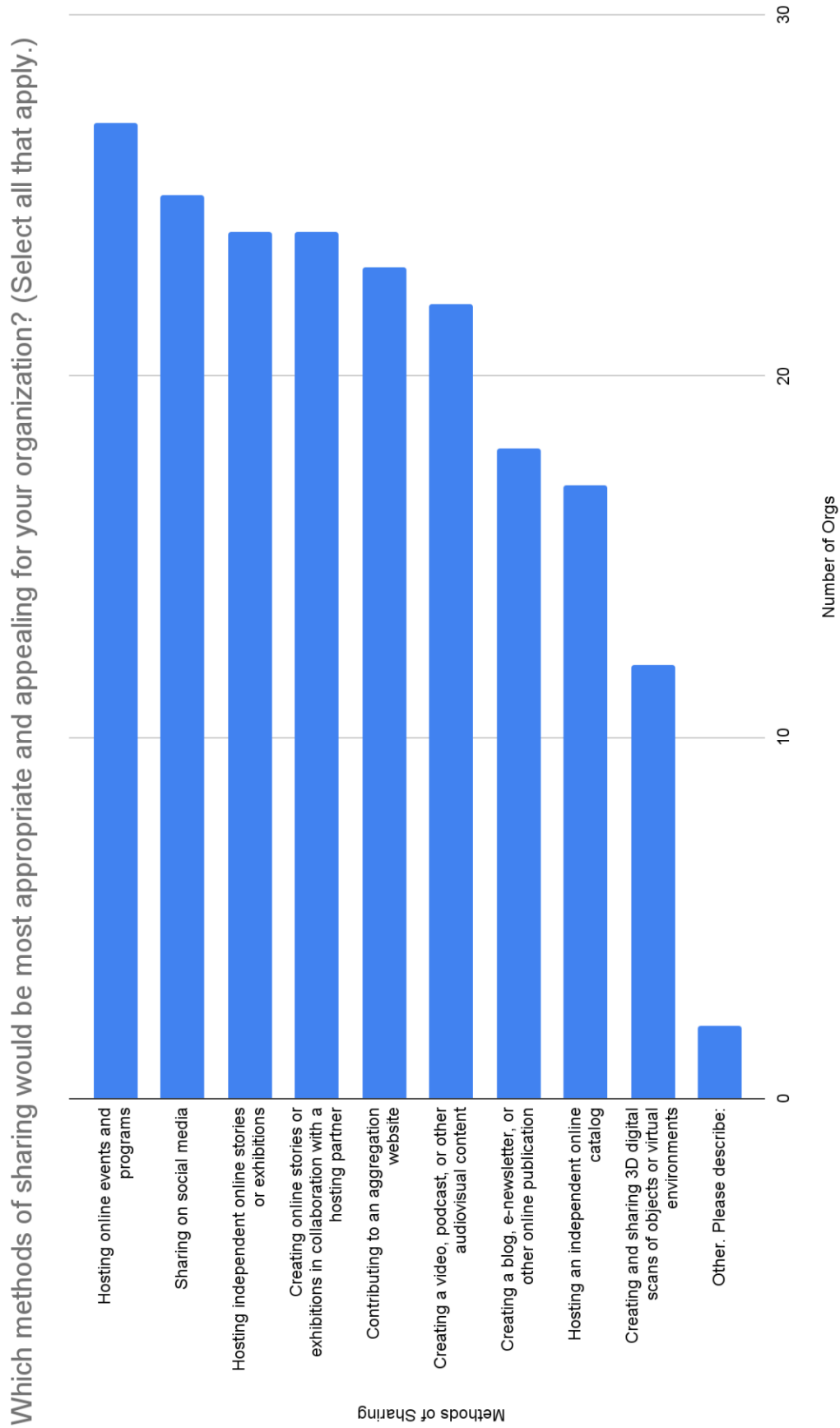
- Creating a video, podcast, or other audiovisual content (22, or 54%)
- Creating a blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication (18, or 44%)
- Hosting an independent online catalog (17, or 41%)

Least popular of the provided options was:

- Creating and sharing 3D digital scans of objects or virtual environments (12, or 29%).
However, given the technical requirements and cost of creating and sharing digital 3D objects, it's significant that nearly a third of respondents who want to share their materials more broadly found this method of sharing appealing.

Two (2) respondents indicated "Other," for which they answered:

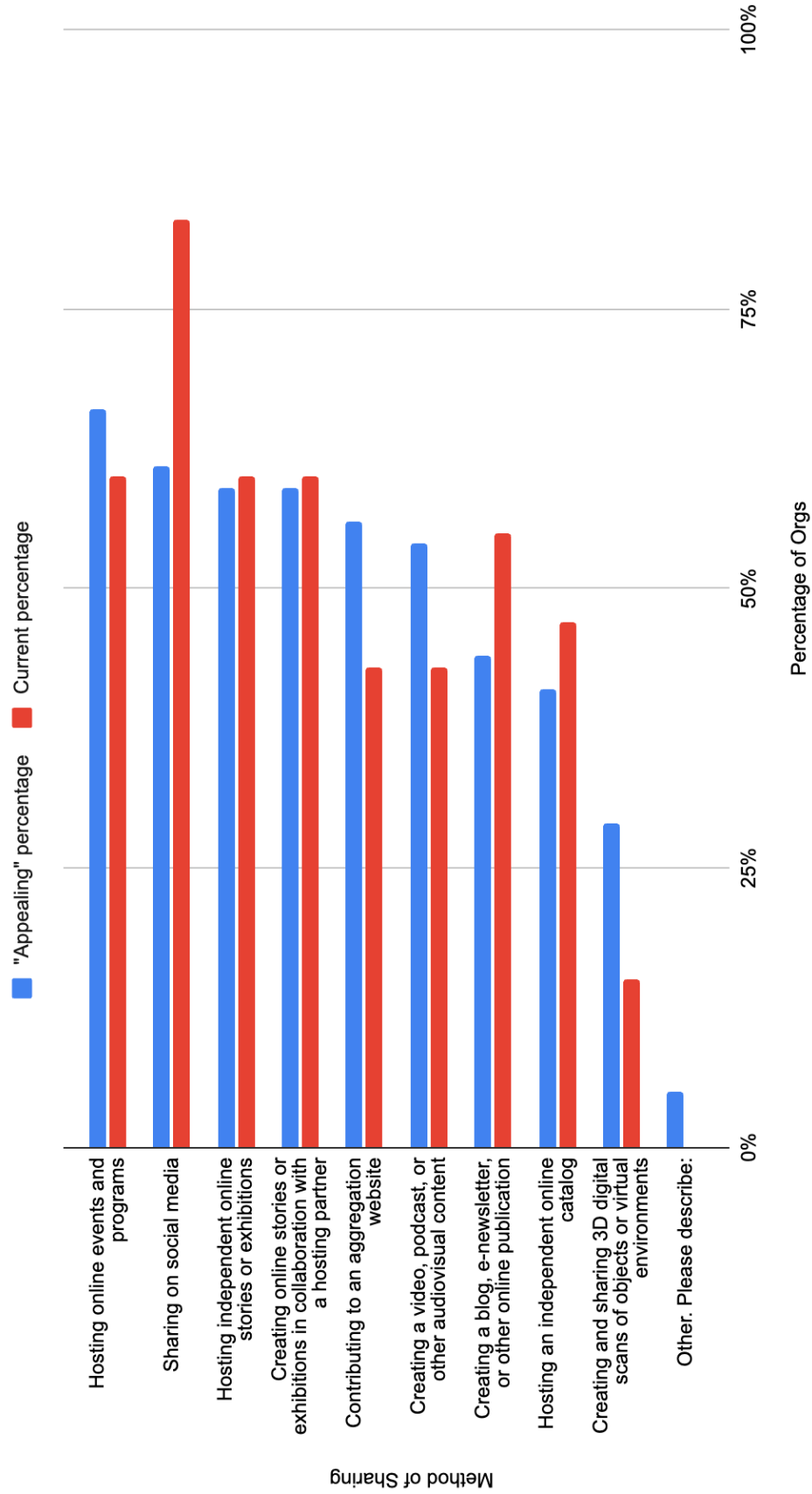
- "Not sure"
- "contributing to consortial catalog and discovery tools" (This response sounds the same as "aggregation website," but this answer may reflect a misunderstanding of what we meant by "aggregation website.")



Below is a comparison between the organizations' current methods of online sharing (question #6) and methods they deemed appropriate and appealing (question #8). This chart compares the percentage of responses rather than the raw number because of the difference in the number of answers to each question (47 for question #6 and 41 for question #8).

Note also that the percentages for "Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions" and "Creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner" are both compared to the same percentage for "Online storytelling or exhibitions" from question #6. In asking about current methods of sharing, we did not differentiate between independently hosted exhibitions and those created in partnership with another entity.

Percentage of "Appealing" methods vs. Current ones



While respondents largely find their current methods of sharing appealing and appropriate, there are a few discrepancies. In some cases, widely used methods of sharing were not as appealing to those who want to share more broadly. Only 61% of respondents who are interested in sharing more broadly found social media “appealing,” even though 83% of all respondents are currently engaged in it. In a similar vein, 44% of respondents found creating a blog or other online publication appealing, although 55% of the larger group already have one. It’s possible that these discrepancies exist because social media and blogs have a lower bar to entry than other forms of sharing and more folks are already using them and don’t find them appealing for sharing more broadly. However, we did not see the same discrepancies among the other methods, suggesting that these two methods in particular are not as appealing for other reasons.

In other cases, some methods of sharing seemed to have a greater appeal compared to the percentage of respondents currently engaged in them. 56% of respondents who want to share more broadly said contributing to an aggregation website is appealing, while only 43% of the larger group are currently doing so. And 54% indicated that creating audiovisual content was appealing, while 43% of the total respondents are already doing so. The method of sharing with the largest discrepancy in this direction was 3D scans. 29% of respondents said this method was appealing, but only 15% of the larger group were already creating them. Nearly two times as many respondents found this method of sharing to be appropriate and appealing as are currently using it. These three methods are more resource- and technology- intensive than the other methods. Although the gaps between those who currently employ these methods and those who would like to are not large (with the exception of 3D scanning), they suggest that community-based archives and organizations are interested in more resource-intensive modes of sharing but have not yet been able to realize them. Aggregation websites, audiovisual content, and 3D scanning may be areas in which community archives and organizations could be better supported in sharing their collections more widely.

Other forms of online sharing are roughly even in terms of current activity and appeal. These are:

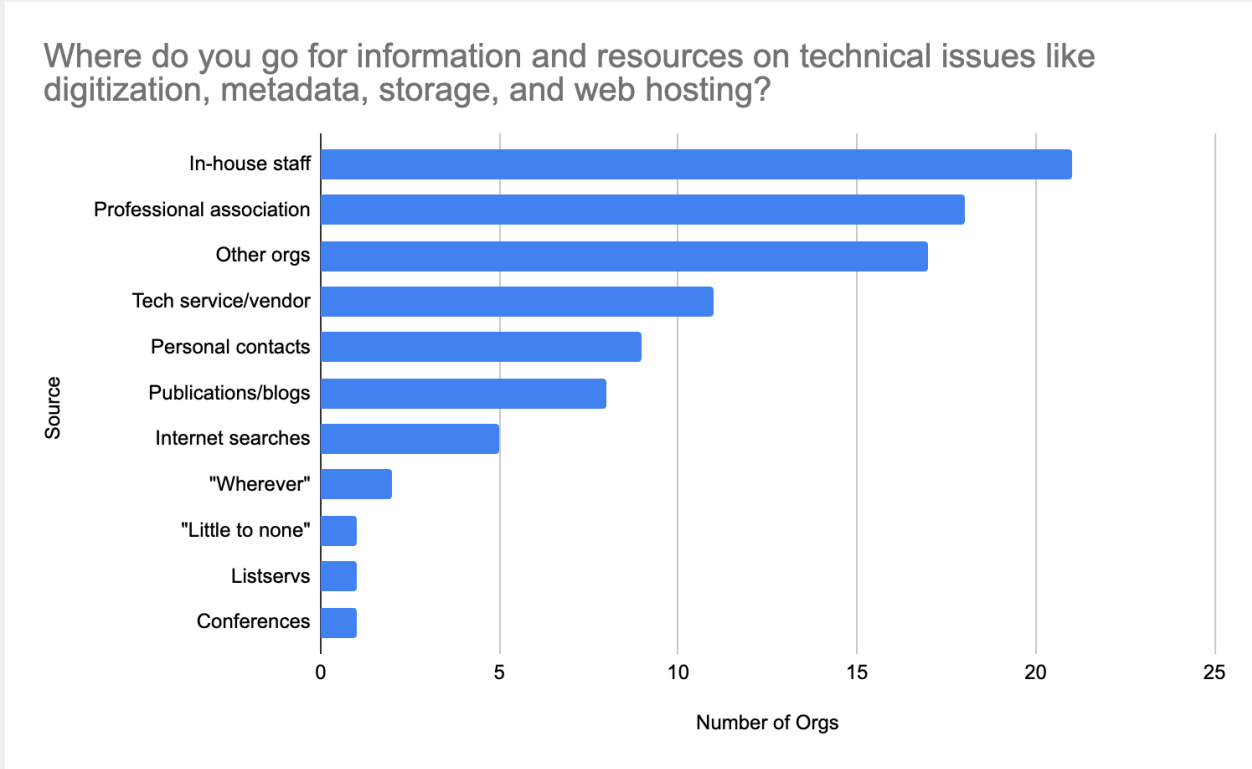
- Hosting online events and programs, which 66% find appealing and 60% are currently doing
- Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions or creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner, which 59% find appealing and 60% are currently engaged in
- Hosting an independent online catalog, which 41% find appealing and 47% are currently engaged in.

Digital technologies

9. Where do you go for information and resources on technical issues like digitization, metadata, storage, and web hosting?

This question was a free-text response. We asked respondents where they go to learn about new digital technologies. The big takeaway is that there is no consensus about where to go for information, training, or news about digital technologies. Respondents' answers varied quite a bit, not only in terms of what they were able to do or learn in-house, but where they looked for new information or training. Although this was a free-text response question, we identified some general trends, which are tabulated below. Note that institutions often mentioned more than one resource in their answers.

- 21 (40%) said they relied on in-house staff or IT teams to keep up to date with new technologies.
- 18 (35%) relied on professional associations, such as the Society of American Archivists or the Digital Library Federation
- 17 (32%) looked to other organizations, either partners or other organizations in their area
- 11 (21%) relied on outside technology service providers or vendors
- 9 (17%) said they asked personal or professional contacts
- 8 (15%) mentioned publications or blogs (but did not mention specific ones)
- 5 (10%) used Internet searching
- 2 (4%) said the equivalent of “wherever they could find it”
- 1 (2%) said their technology capacity was “little to none”
- 1 (2%) said they relied on listservs (but not specific ones)
- 1 (2%) said they learned about new technology at conferences

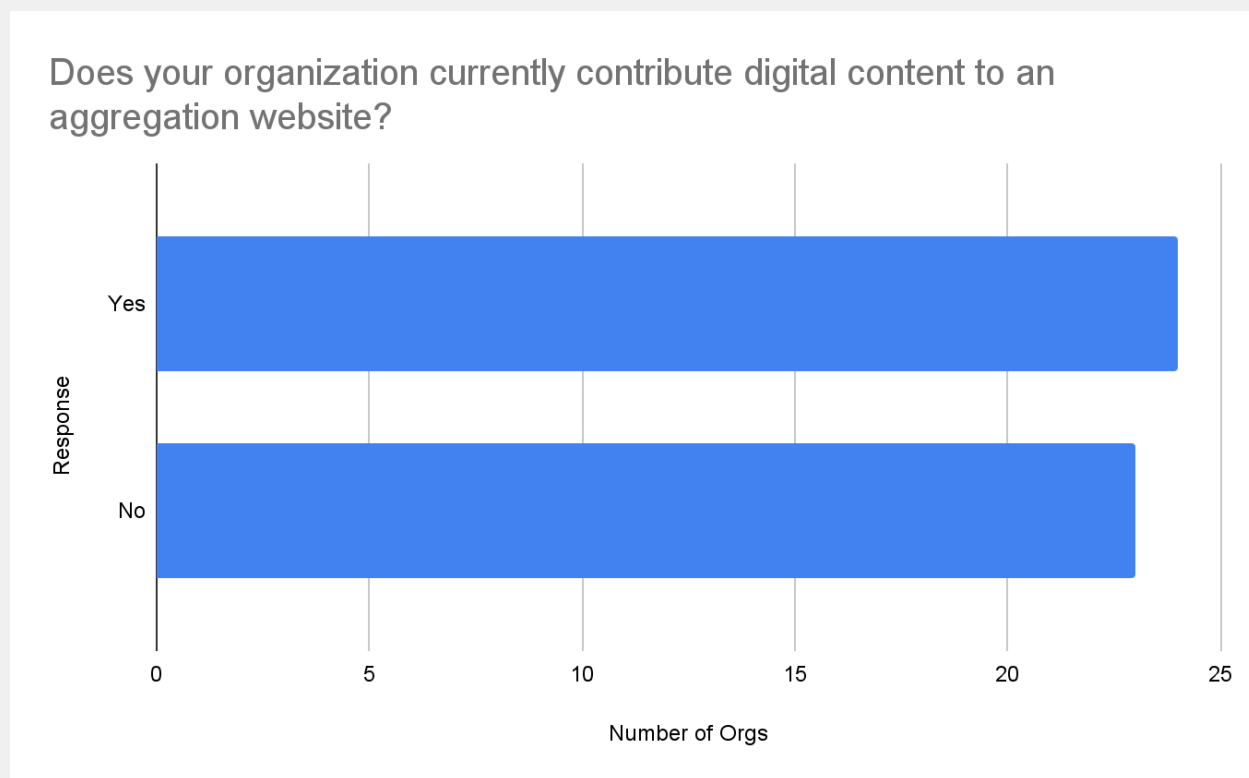


Participation in Aggregation Websites

10. Does your organization currently contribute digital content to an aggregation website?

The answers to this question were roughly evenly split:

- 24 (51%) respondents said their organization is currently contributing to an aggregator
- 23 (49%) said their organization is not.



There are some inconsistencies in responses here in comparison to question #6 about current methods of sharing.

- 7 respondents indicated that they contribute to an aggregator in question #10 but did not select “Aggregation website” as a current method of sharing in question #6.
- 3 respondents indicated that they do not contribute to an aggregator in question #10 even though they selected “Aggregation website” as a current method of sharing in question #6.

It is difficult to know if these inconsistencies are the result of simple omissions (simply forgetting to check “Aggregation website” in question #6, for example) or if they represent a misunderstanding about the definition of an aggregation website. The 7 respondents who said they contribute to an aggregator but did not check “Aggregation website” in question #6 indicated in question #11 that they contribute to the following aggregators:

- “Archive-It & EBSCO”
- “Digital Transgender Archive”
- “Hoover Institute Japanese Diaspora project”
- “Google Arts & Culture”
- “nps.gov”
- “Urban Archive”
- One respondent entered “s” (a non-answer)

With the exception of the one non-answer, these services are all aggregators in the broadest sense of the word, in that they gather content from multiple sources and present it in one searchable interface (although Google Arts & Culture might be considered more of an exhibit platform). Adding the 6 responses above and subtracting the 3 who indicated they do not contribute to an aggregator in this question, it might be advisable to consider the number of respondents who share via an aggregation website in question #6 to be 23 (48%) instead of 20. (See “Sharing Content” section above.) This number is more in line with the 24 who indicated they contribute to an aggregator in this question (#10).

The discrepancies in individual responses may reflect survey fatigue. The survey was designed with separate pages for each section instead of as a long scrolling page, so it could be that respondents had forgotten answers they had entered earlier on. However, it seems unlikely that respondents who are responsible for their organizations’ digital assets would “forget” that they participate in an aggregator(s). These discrepancies may instead reflect the slipperiness of the definition of an “aggregator” and “aggregation website.” In the drafting of this survey, the project team struggled to find language for this concept that would be accessible and understandable to a non-professional audience. Clearly, to some extent, we failed to find terminology that was meaningful to community archives and organizations.

11. Which aggregation websites do you contribute to?

This question was a free-text response. It was only displayed to the 24 respondents who indicated that they share with an aggregation website in question #10. Percentages below are calculated based on a total of 24 responses.

Responses varied quite a bit, with many respondents indicating that they shared with multiple aggregators, and very little overlap between responses. Of the recurring aggregators mentioned:

- 8 (33%) mentioned DPLA
- 3 (13%) mentioned Archive-It or the Internet Archive
- 3 (13%) mentioned Calisphere
- 2 (8%) mentioned Online Archive of California
- 2 (8%) mentioned Umbra Search
- 1 (4%) each mentioned the Hubs Recollection Wisconsin, Minnesota Digital Library, and Digital Library of Georgia

Altogether, 6 (25%) mentioned they contribute to DPLA Hubs.

In addition to the responses listed under question #10, responses include (URLs provided by the respondents):

- Wikimedia
- Wikipedia
- Wikidata
- La Crosse History Unbound
- Digital Culture of Metropolitan New York (DCMNY)
- Louisiana Digital Library
- In Her Own Right (<http://inherownright.org/>)
- Revolutionary City (<https://therevolutionarycity.org/>)
- SHAREOK
- San Diego State Digital Library
- Preservica
- ArchivesSpace
- Connecticut Collections
- Connecticut Archives Online
- Franco American Digital Archives: <https://francoamericandigitalarchives.org/>
- WorldCat
- Home Movie Registry
- PA Photos and Documents
- Archivegrid

While it is true that all of these websites and services aggregate content in some manner, it is hard to see how contributions to the open-knowledge resource Wikipedia, for example, fall into the same category as preservation copies uploaded to Preservica, a subscription-based digital preservation service. From the diversity of organizations and services listed above, it's clear that the concept and definition of aggregation is not universally understood.

These results reflect the biases of the survey designers. As California Digital Library is one of the institutions engaged in this research, we assumed that the definition of aggregation was more widely understood. In retrospect, we should have spent more time defining aggregation.

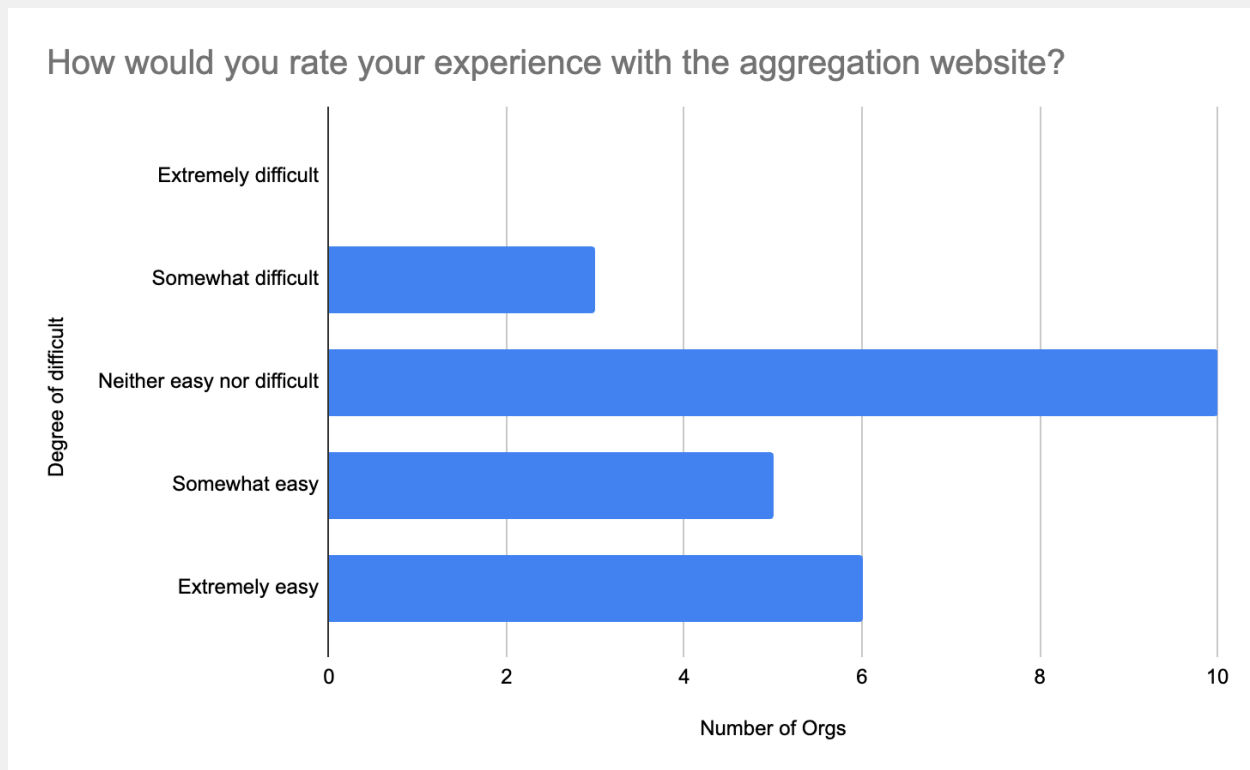
The other point that this diversity of answers reveals is that there are many, many other aggregators beyond the DPLA Hubs, and that participation in DPLA may not be the be-all and end-all for community organizations. Our focus on the DPLA Hubs was a convenient way to scope the boundaries of this study, but may not be the place where most community organizations are interacting with aggregators. Further study of the role of smaller, more local aggregators is needed to more fully understand the options available to community organizations.

12. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most difficult and 5 being the easiest, how would you rate your experience with the aggregation website?

This question was a Likert scale in which respondents could select one numerical value on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most difficult and 5 being the easiest. It was only displayed to the 24 respondents who said they participated in an aggregation website. We asked them to rate the level of difficulty they experienced in working with an aggregation website. Here, percentages are calculated based on the 24 respondents who said they participate in aggregators because the degree of difficulty isn't applicable to respondents who did not participate in aggregation.

- 0 found it to be extremely difficult
- 3 (12%) found it somewhat difficult
- 10 (42%) found it neither easy nor difficult
- 5 (21%) found it somewhat easy
- 6 (25%) found it extremely easy

The average score was 3.58, suggesting that overall, respondents found the experience relatively easy.



13. Did you experience any challenges when contributing your materials? If so, please describe them.

This question was a free-text response. An answer was not required and there were 14 responses to this question.

3 indicated that they experienced no difficulties.

By far, the most common challenges mentioned are related to staffing. 2 respondents indicated that their contributions were entirely managed by the aggregators that host their content. 2 indicated that they were “lucky” to have staffers or former staffers who stepped in to manage the work, and without whom it would not have happened. These responses also gestured toward the precarity of participation should a key staff member leave the organization. An additional 2 said they did not have adequate staff or were limited by staffing in what they could contribute.

The next most common challenge cited was that the process was time-consuming. 3 respondents indicated that it took quite a bit of time to: get buy-in from administrators, to prepare images and/or metadata, to get an API working, and to upload or ingest records.

Relatedly, respondents also mentioned that overall, the setup process was challenging. They also cited metadata challenges such as issues with ontologies and problems with the system flagging duplicates. One respondent indicated that editing records in the aggregator’s system was not intuitive.

14. If you are not contributing to an aggregation website, what is/are the reason(s)? (Select all that apply)

This question was a multiple choice question in which respondents could select more than one option. This question only appeared to the 23 respondents who said they were not currently contributing to an aggregation website. Percentages were calculated based on the 23 respondents who saw this question.

The most common responses had to do with staffing, time, and funding. As these factors are all interrelated, access to resources is the single most important reason that community organizations are not contributing to aggregation websites.

- 14 (61%) said they don’t have enough staff or time
- 13 (57%) said they don’t have adequate financial resources

The next most common answer (12, or 52%) stated they were not participating because they were not aware of aggregation websites.

This was followed by 10 (43%) who cited legal or copyright concerns and 9 (39%) who said they were not participating because of a lack of know-how.

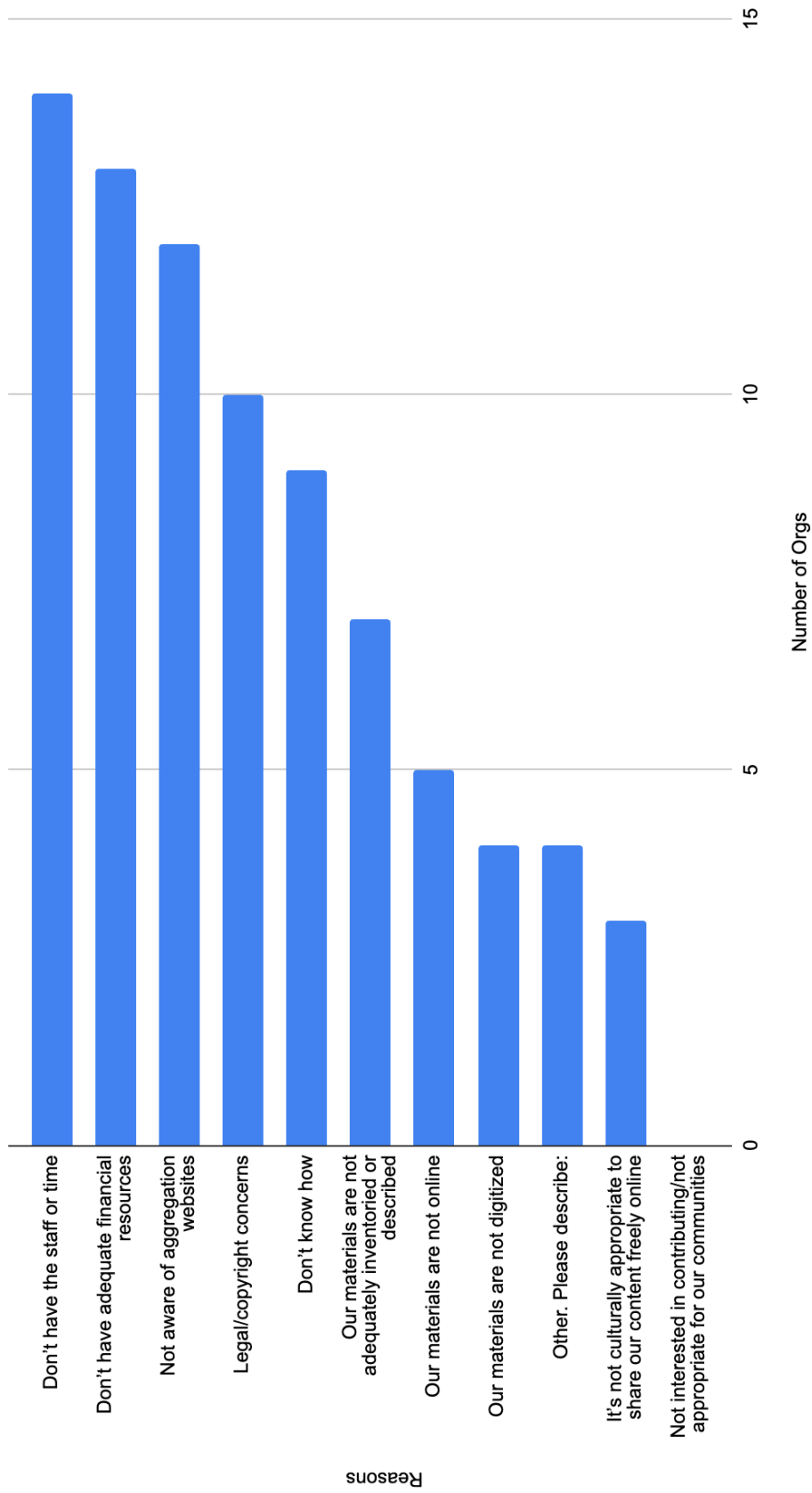
Less common were an inability to process collections, host, or digitize them.

- 7 (30%) said their materials were not adequately inventoried or described
- 5 (22%) said their materials were not online
- 4 (17%) said their materials were not digitized

3 (13%) said they were not participating because it was not culturally appropriate to share their content freely online. While this is a relatively small percentage of respondents, it is significant that this option received responses. Comparatively, no respondents said they were simply not interested in contributing or that it was inappropriate for their communities. (See “Other” responses below.)

4 (17%) respondents selected “Other.” Of these free-text responses, 2 (9%) said they weren’t sure if their community would find it appropriate or that it “might depend on the aggregator.” One said they “never thought it might be appropriate,” which could be interpreted as falling into the “Not interested/not appropriate” category, bringing that total to 1 (4%). The fourth said “it’s available now.” While this could mean various things, it seems to imply either that the aggregation website was not previously available, or that they had made contributions but had since ceased.

If you are not contributing to an aggregation website, what is/are the reason(s)?



15. If you are interested in contributing to an aggregation website, what would most help you to do so?

This was a free-text response question and respondents were not required to answer it. The question was only displayed to the 23 respondents who said they were not currently contributing to an aggregation website. 17 respondents provided answers.

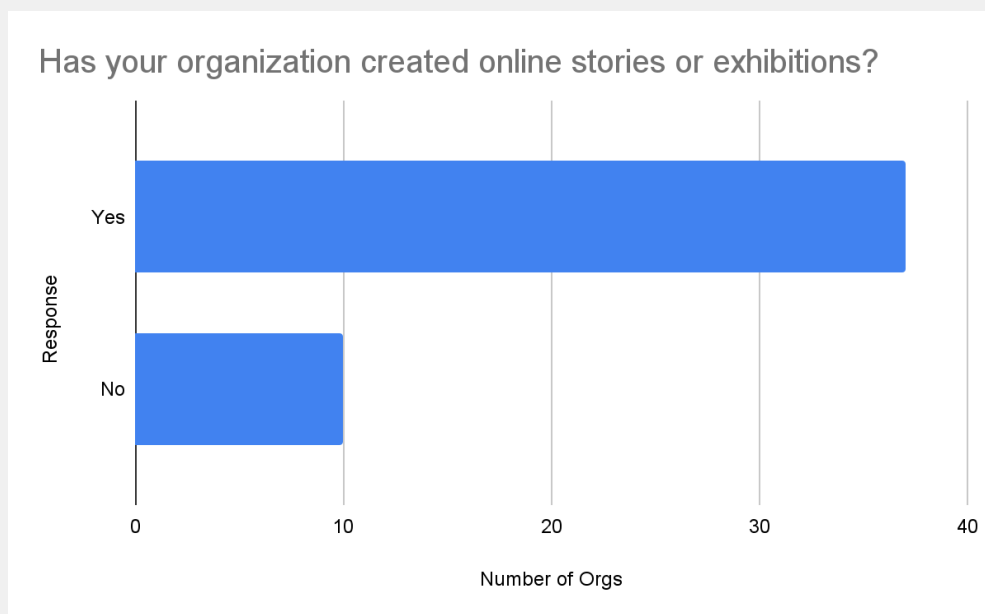
The most commonly cited (6) need was training, including learning more about aggregation websites. This was followed closely (5) by funding. The next most common need (3) was staffing, followed by technical support (2), dedicated time (1), and clearer instruction or templates from aggregators (1). 2 respondents said they were “not sure” or that they didn’t know what would help. One respondent said “Understand how the relationship would be built through reciprocity.”

Online Storytelling and Exhibitions

16. Has your organization created online stories or exhibitions?

This question was a multiple choice question in which respondents indicated “Yes” or “No.” This question appeared for all 47 respondents.

- 37 (79%) said they had created online exhibits
- 10 (21%) said they had not

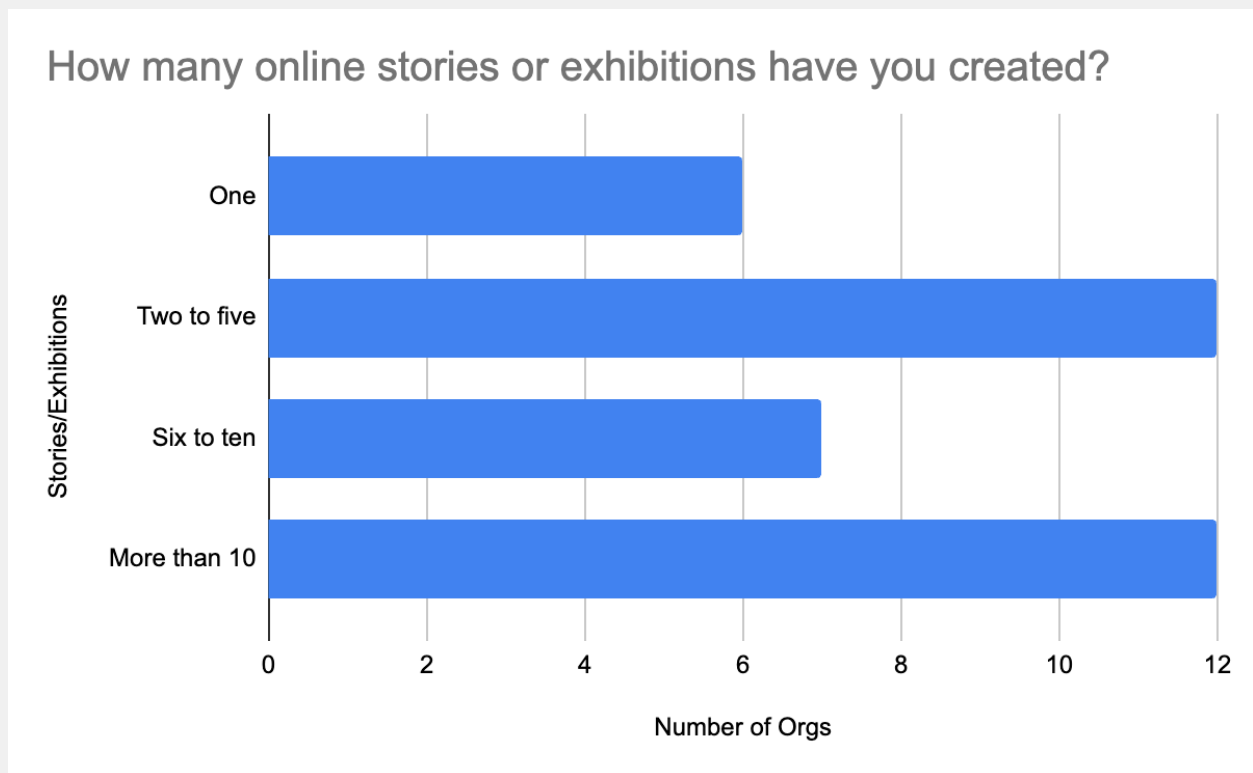


17. How many online stories or exhibitions have you created?

This question was a multiple choice question that was displayed to the 37 respondents who answered “Yes” to question #16.

- 6 (16%) have created one exhibition
- 12 (32%) have created between 2 and 5 exhibitions
- 7 (19%) have created between 6 and 10 exhibitions
- 12 (32%) have created more than 10

The respondents who have created online exhibitions are relatively experienced, with just over half having created more than five.

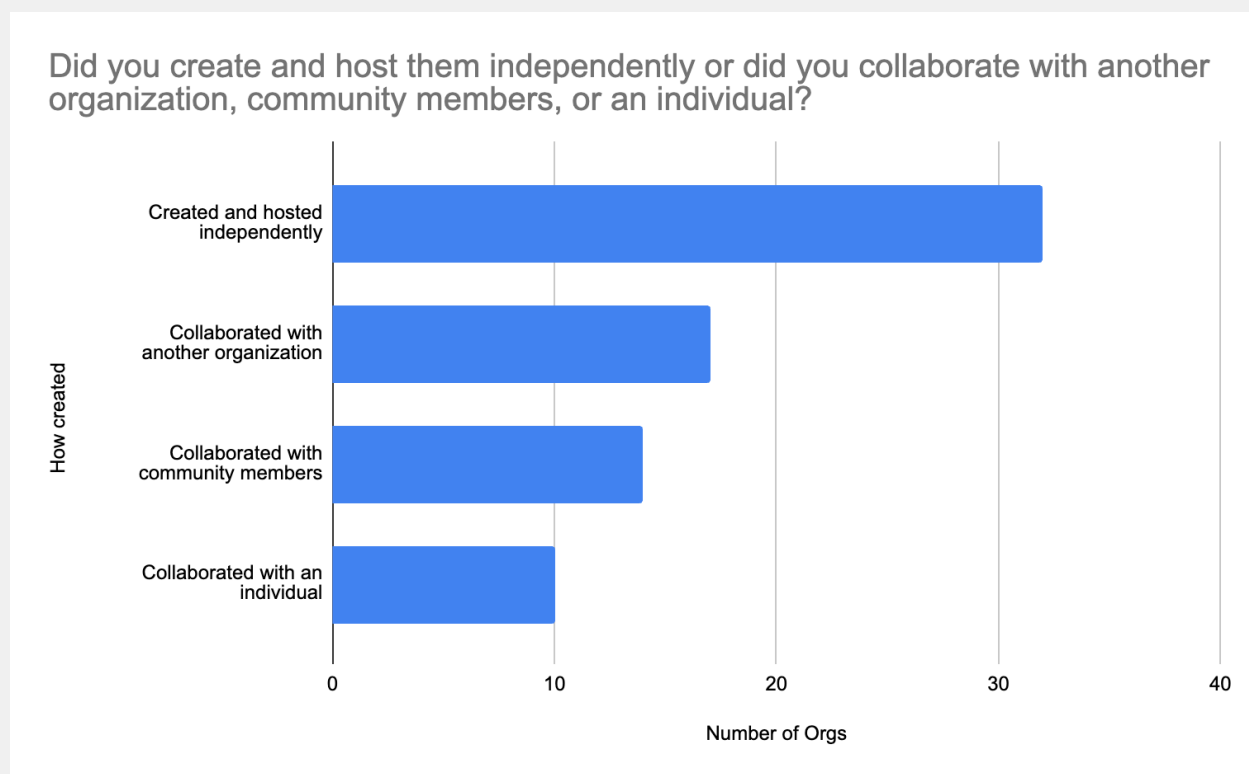


18. Did you create and host them independently or did you collaborate with another organization, community members, or an individual?

This question was a multiple choice question in which respondents could select more than one option. It was displayed to the 37 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions.

- The majority (32, or 86%) have created and hosted their online stories and exhibitions independently.
- 17 (46%) have collaborated with another organization
- 14 (38%) have collaborated with community members
- 10 (27%) have collaborated with an individual

The large number of community organizations that were able to create and host exhibitions independently suggests that these organizations are able to support independent digital storytelling more easily than they can participate in aggregation websites.



19. Please briefly describe the tool(s) and platform(s) you used to present the story or exhibition(s)

This question was a free-text response. It was displayed to the 37 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions and we received 37 responses.

By far, the most common place where respondents created online stories or exhibitions was on their organization’s website and/or employing web publishing software like WordPress, Wix, or Weebly.

- 23 (62%) presented their exhibitions on their website or with webpages created using WordPress, Wix, or Weebly. Of these, WordPress was the only one that received multiple mentions (5).
- 6 (16%) said they used Omeka or Omeka S
- 5 (14%) created videos to share on YouTube
- 5 (14%) use Instagram, Facebook, or other social media
- 3 (8%) use StoryMaps
- The rest of the answers received 1 (2%) mention each:
 - Some were generic:
 - Blog
 - Videos
 - Newspaper
 - 3D captures
 - Others mentioned specific sites or products:
 - Flickr
 - Mukurtu
 - Streamyard
 - PowerPoint
 - Google Arts & Culture
 - HistoryIT
 - TimelineJS
 - Historypin
 - STQRY
 - Knightlab
 - 2 responses did not mention specific tools or platforms
 - “varied through the years”
 - “d”

A few respondents provided additional insights into their process or how they used these technologies and platforms, providing a diverse picture of storytelling practices:

Examples include writing longer pieces that contextualize some aspect of our history/work on our website, blog, and on websites/publications hosted by others; explicit online exhibitions appearing on collaborators' platform(s); composed video narratives/features on youtube, etc., created by us or in collaboration with other organizations/individuals; curated Flickr albums.

We have members of our chorus sign up to tell their stories at a rehearsal. Then we make a video recording and publish it on our YouTube channel.

Wordpress. We have curated multiple online art exhibits by manually creating individual Wordpress pages for artworks, with some basic metadata like artist name, medium, and sometimes poems or other written content by the artists.

We have one digital exhibit created in collaboration with our local public library and the Georgia Public Library Service that utilizes OmekaS. Our other exhibits or collections are hosted on our institution's instance of ArcGIS StoryMaps.

20. If you collaborated with another organization(s), community members, or individual(s), please briefly describe the collaboration(s)

This question was a free-text response. It was displayed to the 37 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions. 20 responses were received.

Responses were incredibly varied, reflecting different definitions of collaboration as well as different approaches and partners. As one respondent noted, "Each collaboration is unique. It would be too difficult to describe them grouped in general terms."

Some respondents merely listed the organizations they had partnered with:

- Chicago Field Museum staff and Oklahoma Historical Society staff
- City University of New York, GLBT Historical Society, Interference Archive, LGBTQ Center (NYC) Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York Historical Society
- Rotary club, Watsonville High School
- Some of our stories and exhibits have been shared with Ancestry, Teaching Central America, Raices Cultural Center, History Made by Us, and lectures at CalStateLA.

Others provided more detailed information, such as a grant project that involved collaboration between a special collections department, a military site, a professor, and public radio. Some mentioned collaborating with individuals who were hired to do research and create content, some of whom were community members with a relationship to the subject of the exhibitions. One respondent described these collaborations as "participatory co-curation," defining it as "direct community involvement, student research, or partnerships with other institutions and organizations." Another called these partners "Community Curators" who "assist with curating the exhibits."

Collaborations took a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Some were as basic as loans—"using materials in other institutions"—or using particular platforms: "We used BetterWorld for our online art auction that accompanied our online exhibits on Wordpress." Others were engaged in multiple forms of collaboration:

Mentor interns from various local institutions, train volunteers on DH tools in return to contribute to living projects, train on-going contracted artists and cultural producers to develop metadata and 3D captures, collaborate with like-minded

nonprofits in in 3D capturing exhibitions and training org representatives to produce the metadata for their exhibition while also give them access to embed on their own website.

We often collaborate with a varied [sic] of organizations depending on what we are exhibiting. We always try to work with organizations that have a connection to what we are going to exhibit. We like to have openings with expert guest speakers with our exhibits.

Typically, we are contacted by one of our community partners or donor organizations about their wish to collaborate/celebrate their history. We invite them to the archives to identify material, digitize on-demand, and either hand the scans to the requestor, but sometimes advise/teach about available tools (like Knightlab). We occasionally print images to donate back to the requestor.

While some of these responses seem to have come from institutional archives who were not the intended respondents for this survey, there was also one who replied “I don't know how to answer these questions.” This response, as well as the variation among the other responses suggests that this question may have been too broad to elicit meaningful information, or that a survey was not the best instrument for capturing what may be highly individual and contingent situations.

21. If you were to collaborate with that organization(s), community members, or person(s) again, what would you do differently?

This question was a free-text response. It was displayed to the 37 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions. There were 16 responses.

Although responses varied in detail, respondents indicated a few things that were important for smooth collaborations. They mentioned the need for better project planning and delegation of tasks, the importance of clear communication and regular check-ins, the need for more funding or more sustainable funding, the need for more capacity to do the work, the desire to share content with all participating organizations, the need for more content, and the need to make sure collections and people are properly cited.

4 respondents said they wouldn't change anything, or had no changes so far on projects that were not yet complete.

One respondent said:

Our collaborations progress organically. We do not start with a blueprint. How it happens is the way it develops and is able to happen.

2 respondents entered “NA” and “I don't know how to answer these questions.”

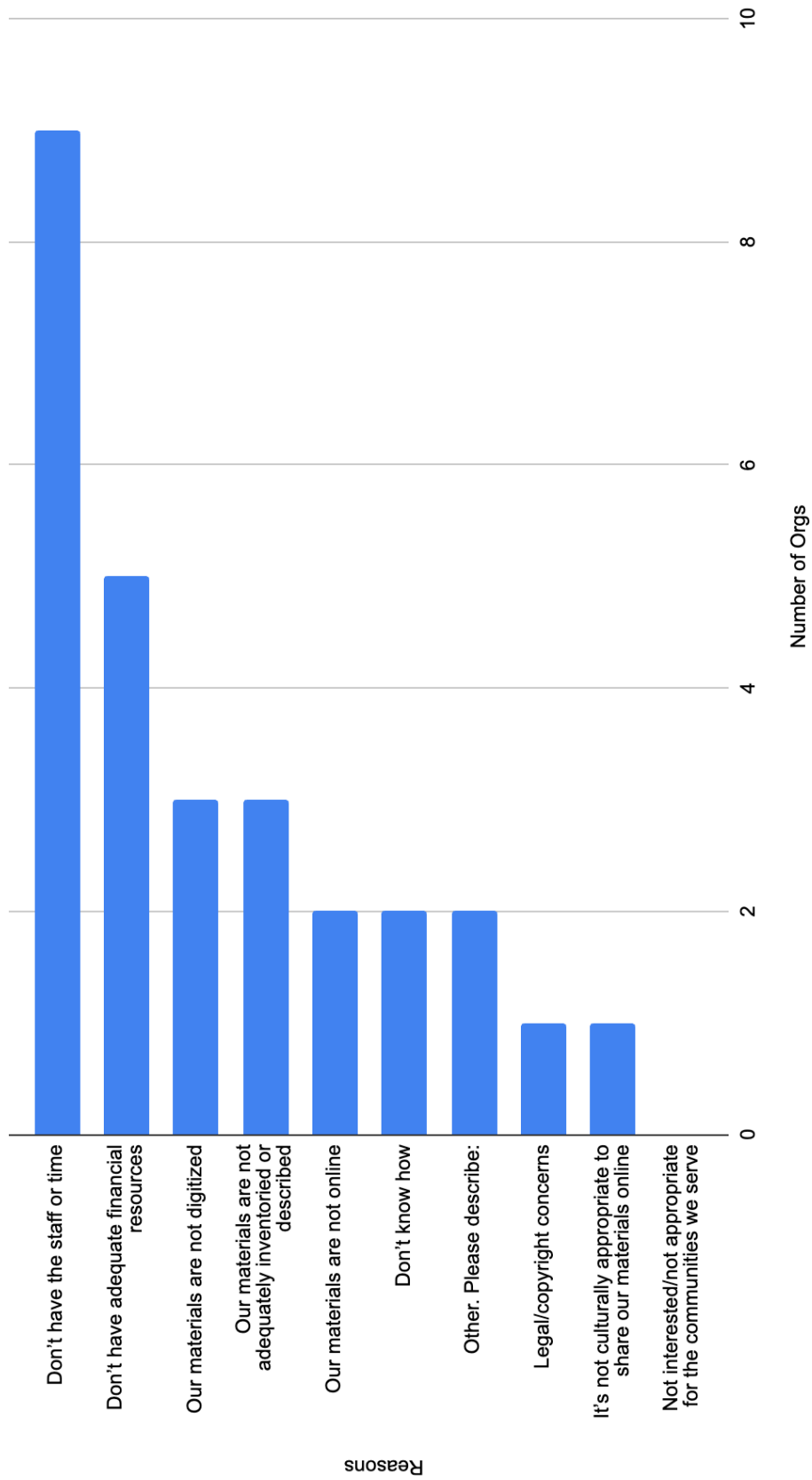
22. If you haven't created online stories or exhibitions, why not?

This question was a multiple choice question where respondents could select as many options as were applicable. This question was displayed to the 10 respondents who indicated they had not yet created online stories or exhibitions.

By far, the top reason organizations haven't created online stories or exhibitions is that they don't have the staff or time.

- 9 (90%) said they don't have the staff or time.
- 5 (50%) said they don't have adequate financial resources
- 3 (30%) said their materials were not digitized
- 3 (30%) said their materials were not adequately inventoried or described
- 2 (20%) said their materials were not online
- 2 (20%) said they don't know how to create online stories or exhibitions
- 1 (10%) indicated there were legal or copyright concerns
- 1 (10%) said it was not culturally appropriate to share their materials online
- 0 said they were not interested or it was not appropriate for the communities they serve
- 2 (20%) indicated other reasons:
 - “We have our materials on our website; we share stories via our instagram feed”
 - “This task is under review. Plan to have online stories in 8 to 10 months”

If you haven't created online stories or exhibitions, why not?



In terms of creating online content, survey respondents indicated that the biggest barriers are staff, time, and funding, with digitization and cataloging being less of a factor.

23. If you are interested in creating an online story or exhibition, what would most help you to do so?

This question was a free-text response. It was displayed to the 10 respondents who indicated they had not yet created online stories or exhibitions but an answer was not required. There were 6 responses.

Although all respondents mentioned more than one factor, the most common among these was funding.

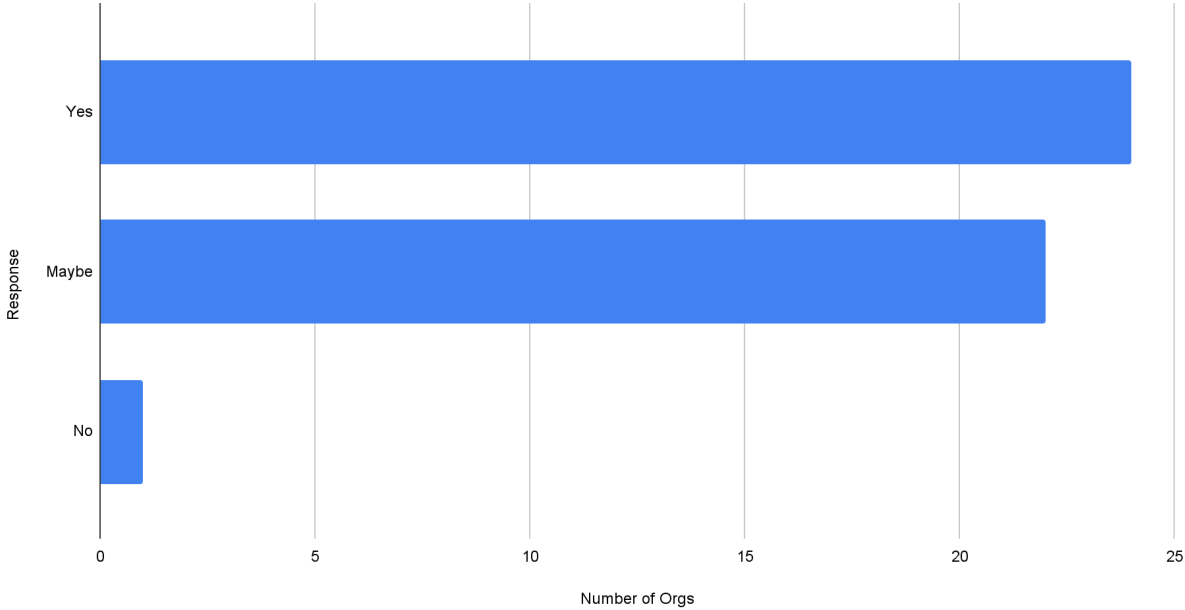
- 3 (30%) indicated more funding would be helpful
- 3 (30%) said they needed more training, online examples, software, and “resources”
- 2 (20%) indicated that more staffing would be helpful
- 2 (20%) indicated that more time would be helpful

24. Would your organization be interested in creating an online story or exhibition with items already available in a digital aggregator or regional hub?

This question was a multiple choice response where respondents could only select one answer. It was displayed to all 47 respondents.

Respondents were asked to select “Yes”, “Maybe”, or “No”. Responses were about evenly split between “Yes” (24, or 51%) and “Maybe” (22, or 47%) with only one “No” (2%).

Would your organization be interested in creating an online story or exhibition with items already available in a digital aggregator?



Final questions

25. Is there anything else that would help you share your collections online?

This question was a free-text response and was not required. It was displayed to all 47 respondents and there were 25 responses.

Although the responses ranged from very brief and general to quite long and detailed, by far the most commonly cited need was for knowledgeable staff. 5 (10%) said staffing was a major need. This was followed by time (2, or 4%), and hosting of content or software (2, or 4%).

One respondent mentioned reciprocal relationships, and another indicated that their community is not well-understood by the mainstream:

Mainstream culture does not have adequate perspective on our community. More culturally specific intermediaries specializing in our community's needs would help, especially ones who come from within our community and work with community stakeholders.

Reinforcing this feeling of disconnect, another respondent emphasized the need for such intermediaries from the perspective of an institution that is not a part of a particular community:

I definitely think having community partners who are expert in the content (whether as historians, or part of the history themselves) is needed in these projects...This would mean future projects that involve marginalized communities need a local partner that has the interest and the skills to work with us, and we need to have the funding to pay them. If we don't have these, I do not believe it is possible to create the exhibit intentionally and wholeheartedly, or safe for members of those marginalized communities to interact [sic] with an online exhibit that someone from their community was not part of creating.

Another respondent noted the gap between the technical knowledge required to participate in online aggregation or sharing and the knowledge base of communities who want to be involved:

We need tools that are intuitive, simple, and mobile-friendly so that the labor of digitizing, describing, and sharing our content can be shared by everyone in our community, not just done by people with tech expertise. Even doing basic

spreadsheet work is often too advanced for some of our community members who are excited to help. Digital skills is [sic] a big barrier to equitable and participatory archival work in our community!

This respondent emphasized the need for more sustainable technology or digital preservation:

We are concerned about the longevity of current platforms. As a small organization, we do not have the capacity to continually update forms of materials, especially audio and video, so if a platform is not sustained in the long term, digital archiving is not practical.

And finally, one respondent indicated that they are ready to share their content, but there is no Hub available in their region:

We are ready to contribute to DPLA, however, [our state] does not yet have a DPLA hub. There is a current effort underway to get that established and once it is ready, our digital collections will be shared.

26. We are also conducting interviews with select community-centered archives. If you are interested in being interviewed, please enter your name and email address below.

This question was a free-text response and was not required. It was displayed to all 47 respondents. We received 22 responses, 20 of which contained email addresses. We ended up conducting interviews with 5 (20%) of these respondents.

Subset responses

The data in this section reflects the 26 complete responses to the survey that we determined were from CBAs or CBOs. As mentioned in the “Data Adjustments” section above, there are also three (3) responses that were not complete but still offer pertinent information. We have included these responses where they provide insights that are not covered by the other data and have indicated where data comes from these incomplete responses.

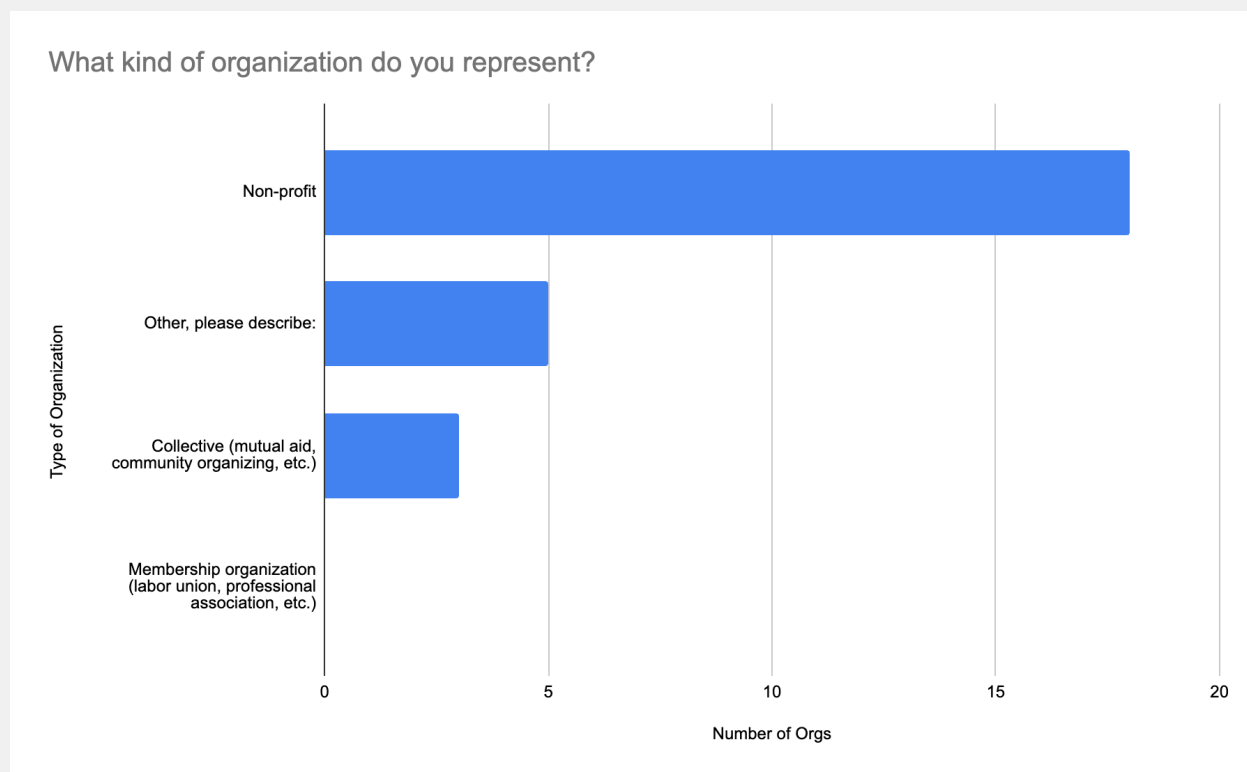
Information about the organization

1. What kind of organization do you represent?

This question was a multiple choice response where respondents could only select one answer. We asked respondents what type of organization they represented across three very broad categories. Respondents could select Non-profit, Collective, Membership Organization, or Other. The results were:

- 18 (69%) Non-profit
- 3 (12%) Collective (mutual aid, community organizing, etc.)
- 0 Membership organization (labor union, professional association, etc.)
- 5 (19%) Other, with free-text responses:
 - First Nation
 - Tribe
 - [Name of Tribe]
 - university campus and community partnership
 - A fiscally sponsored program

Compared with all 47 responses, the percentage of non-profit organizations was about the same (69% vs. 68%) as it was in the “All” analysis, although the same three (3) collectives represented a higher percentage (12% vs. 6%) of this “Subset” group. A slightly lower percentage of “Subset” respondents selected “Other” (19% vs. 25%), and free-text responses in the “Other” category reflected less variety, as three appear to be Indigenous Tribes or Nations. Notably, the various academic institutions that filled out the “Other” responses in the larger batch of responses are absent from this batch.



While responses to this question seemed murky in the analysis of the “All” responses, where it seemed like more granularity was needed, here the responses seem more appropriate, allowing one to differentiate between non-profits, collectives, and Tribal organizations with a few outliers. This difference between the “Subset” and “All” responses perhaps indicates that the way the question was framed was more appropriate for organizations we deemed to be CBAs and CBOs, rather than the more varied contingent that ended up taking the survey. In this light, it seems that most “Subset” respondents are official non-profit organizations.

2. What is your organization’s mission?

This question was a free-text response. We asked respondents to describe their organization’s mission.

Like the responses in the “All” analysis, these answers emphasized preservation and access. However, a comparison of the word clouds made from the top 25 words of all the answers shows a slight difference. Whereas “history” is the most prominent word in the “All responses” group, for the “Subset” group, it is the same size as “community.” These two words appeared with the same frequency (12 times each) in the “Subset” group, whereas in the “All” group, “history” appeared more than twice as often (32 times) as “community” (15 times). The “Subset” word cloud also includes more specific, identity- and geography-related language like “lesbian,” “lgbtq,” and “California,” whereas the “All” word cloud does not.

Here is the “All” word cloud:



And here is the “Subset” one:

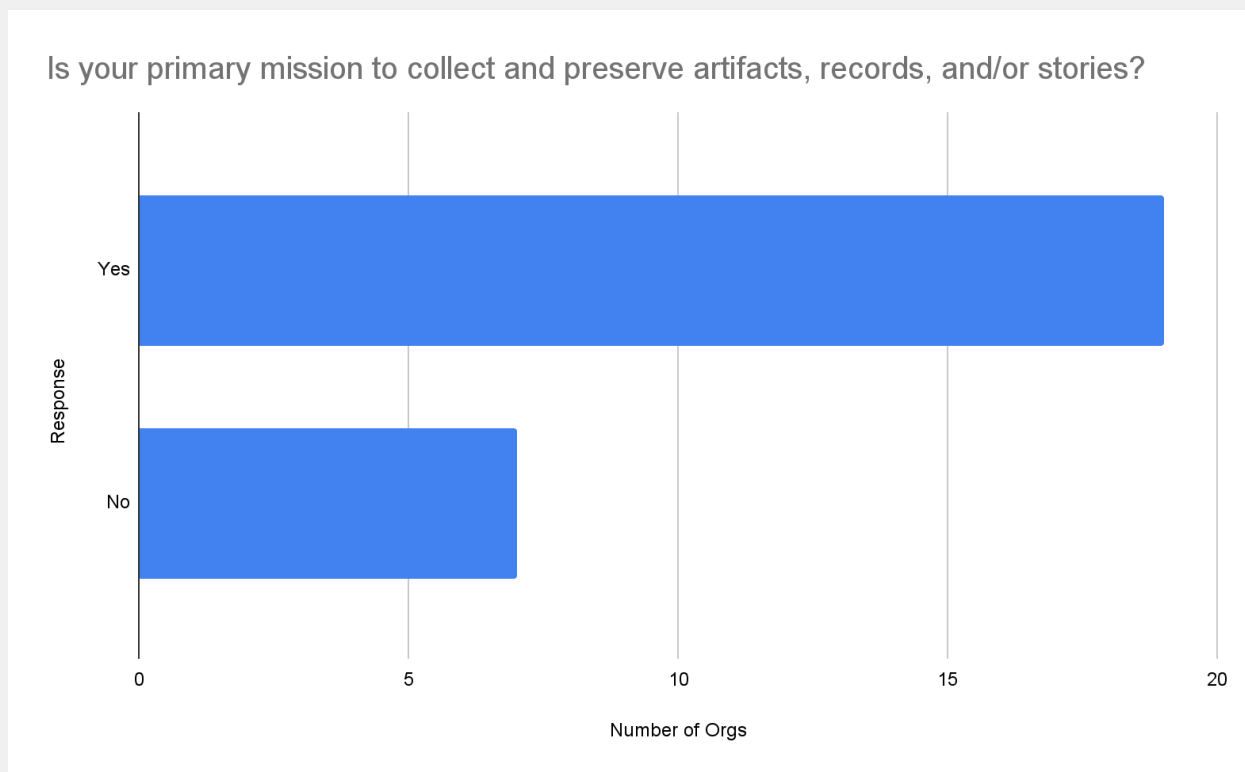


Below is a table with the occurrences of the top 25 words, with common variants or words with similar meaning grouped together, from both groups of responses. By this measure, there is no meaningful difference between the two groups.

Subset Terms	Count	Term	Count
history/histories/historical/historic	23	history/historical/histories/historic/herstory	52
preserve/preserving/preserves/preservation	20	preserve/preserves/preserving/preservation	44
community/communities	17	community/communities	22
culture/culturally/cultural	14	culture/cultural/culturally	20
archives/archive	11	collect/collects/collections/collection/collecting	20
collect/collects/collection/collections	9	mission	16
mission	8	archives/archive	14
local	7	public	12
arts	7	access/accessible/accessibility	12
people	6	materials	10
materials	6	local	9
lgbtq	6	education/educational	9
public	5	life/lives	9
life	5	social	8
lesbian	5	people	8
social	4	arts	8
promote	4	promote/promotes	8
project	4	world	7
california	4	resources	6
based	4	records	6
world	3	lgbtq	6
records	3	diverse	6
oral	3	american	6
neighbors	3	university	5
lmac	3	students	5

3. Is your primary mission to collect and preserve artifacts, records, and/or stories?

This question was a multiple choice question where respondents could only indicate one choice: “Yes” or “No”. The answers here were roughly analogous to the “All responses” group with a majority (19, or 73%) answering “Yes,” and 7 (27%) saying “No.”



4. What audiences and communities do you serve?

This question was a free-text response. As a subset of the “All responses” group, it was easier to see commonalities emerge across these diverse answers. Here are a few of the audiences and communities these organizations document or serve:

- 9 of the 26 responses (34%) mentioned LGBTQ+ communities.
- 3 (11%) organizations mentioned women
- 3 (11%) mentioned Asian American communities
- 2 (7%) serve Indigenous or Tribal communities
- 2 (7%) mentioned Latinx audiences
- Other selected answers included the following descriptions:

- “We serve all under resourced people working around Black performance.”
- “The Jewish community of [city region] as well as people seeking resources on local, ethnic history”
- “We serve a rural, ethnically diverse former plantation community in Hawai‘i”
- “Individuals with [disability] and their families.”
- “Sharing and gathering local histories and stories about contemporary culture from marginalized communities before these stories are lost.”
- “Those who have had limited access to/in the arts and culture ecosystem.”
- “We prioritize working with women and trans people in prison, and the larger community of people impacted by women and trans people's incarceration.”

A response from an incomplete survey:

- “Kanaka `Ōiwi (Native Hawaiians) and local people from Hawai‘i.”

5. What state or territory is your organization located in?

This question was a dropdown menu selection. In order to gauge the geographic diversity of our respondents, we asked them which U.S. state or territory their organization is located in. Respondents are located in 17 states with representation from all regions of the continental U.S. and Hawai‘i. The “Subset” group is a little less geographically diverse than the “All” group, but notably not more concentrated in California. 7 (27%) of the “Subset” respondents are located in California, which was roughly the same percentage (28%) as for the “All” responses.

The next most common states are Hawai‘i and Pennsylvania, which each have 2 (8%) organizations.

These are followed by 2 (8%) respondents that selected “Other.” Of these responses, one indicated elsewhere that they are a First Nation. The other is an organization supporting Asian American arts. Because we did not provide a free text option for this question, we don’t know if these organizations are located outside the U.S. (for example, as is likely, in Canada) or if they objected to the use of U.S. states and territories as a way to indicate geographic location. This statistic is the same as for the “All” responses group.

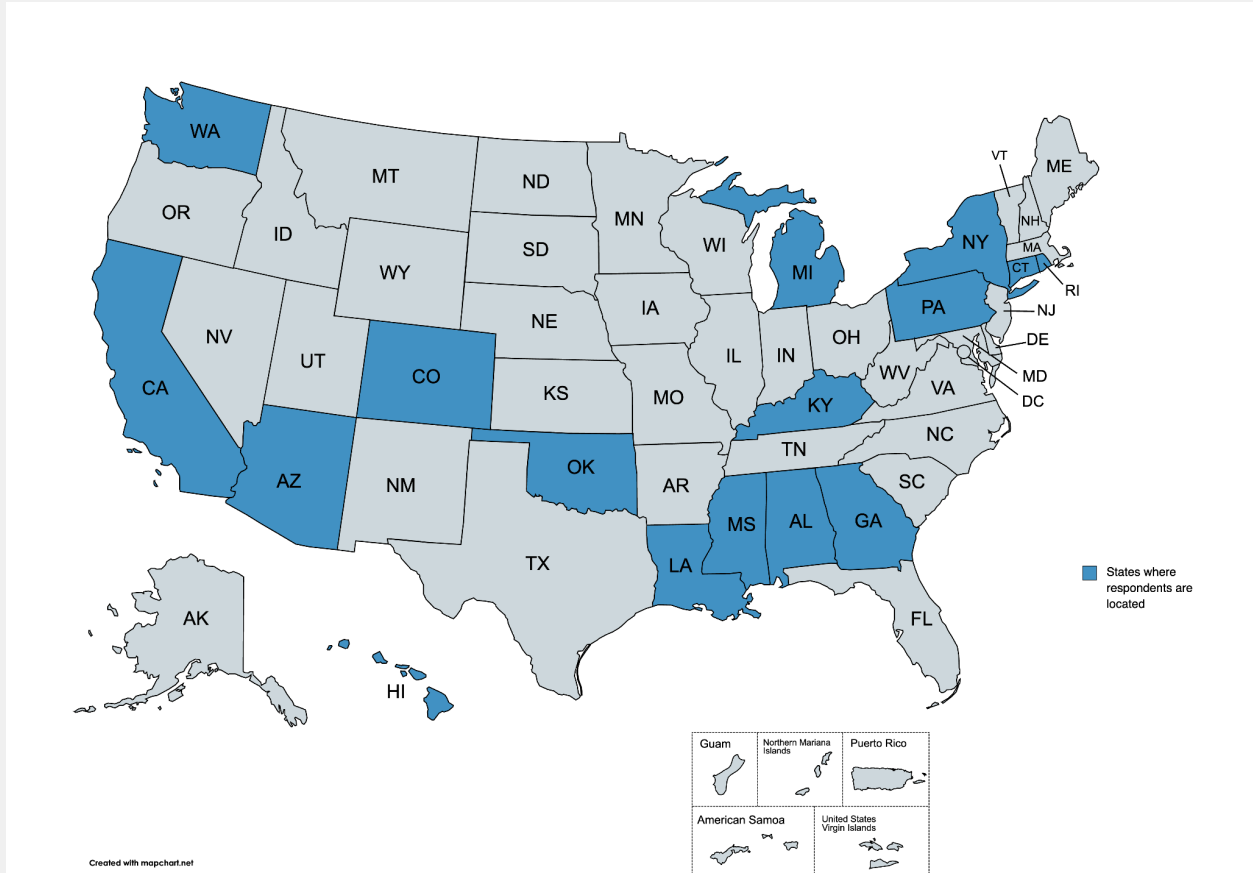
The next group of states are each home to one institution (2%):

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- Louisiana

- Michigan
- Mississippi
- New York
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- Washington



Below is the coverage in a map view. Regions in blue represent states or territories where participating organizations are located.



40 states and territories are not represented in the "Subset" survey data:

- Alaska
- American Samoa
- Arkansas
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Guam
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Montana

- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Puerto Rico
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

Despite being concentrated in California, respondents represent most regions of the continental U.S.

Sharing content

6. In what ways do you currently share your content?

This multiple choice question allowed respondents to select as many answers as were applicable.

The most common forms of sharing for “Subset” respondents are:

- In-person events and programs (23, or 88%)
- Organization’s website (23, or 88%)
- Social media (22, or 85%)

These are followed by:

- Individual, in-person visits (19, or 73%)
- In-person displays or exhibitions (19, or 73%)

The next grouping includes:

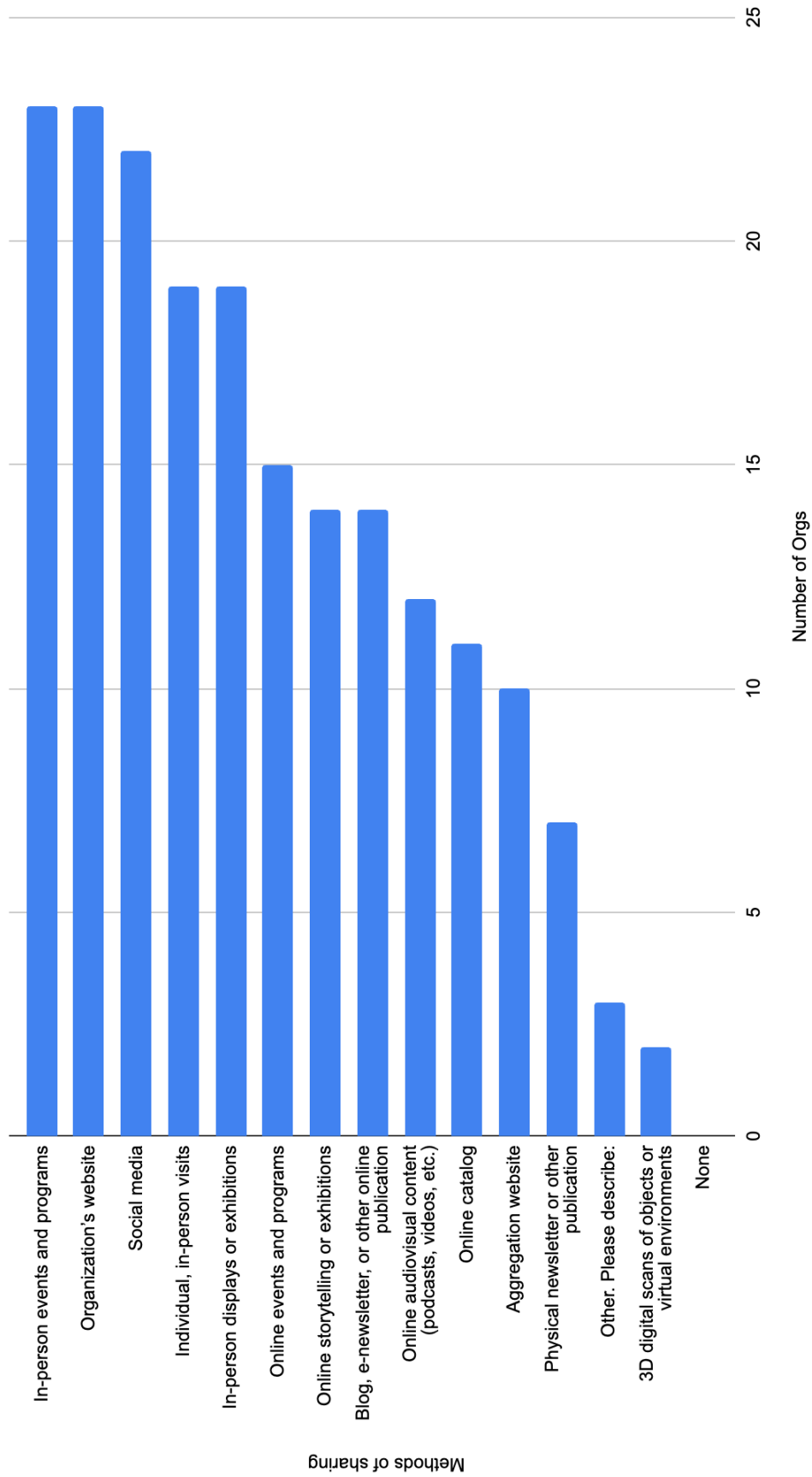
- Online events and programs (15, or 58%)
- Online storytelling or exhibitions (14, or 54%)
- Blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication (14, or 54%)

- Online audiovisual content (podcasts, videos, etc.) (12, or 46%)
- Online catalog (11, or 42%)
- Aggregation website (10, or 38%)

And finally, the least common forms of sharing are:

- Physical newsletter or other publication (7, or 27%)
- Other. Please describe: (3, or 12%)
 - “We don't share with the general public. Although occasionally we receive research requests”
 - “We are currently in the process of [engaging] our community on the type of archive they would like to see.”
 - “submitted content to Ancestry for national commercial”
- 3D digital scans of objects or virtual environments (2, or 8%)

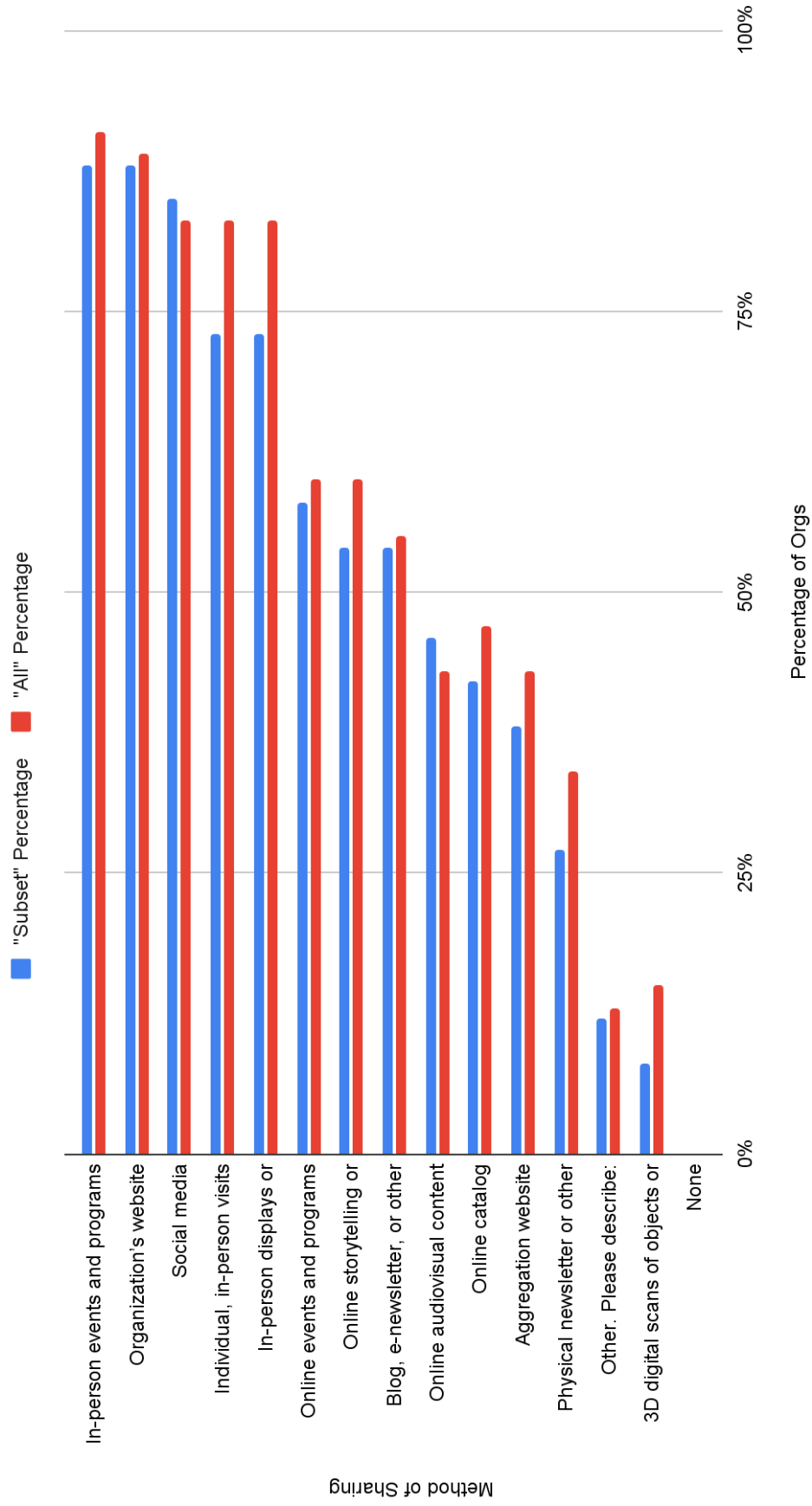
In what ways do you currently share your content?



These responses are roughly the same as those of the “All” responses group, except for a few areas.

Here is a chart comparing the *percentage* (not the raw count) of responses between the “Subset” group and “All” responses.

Comparing current methods of sharing



Percentage-wise, “Subset” respondents were less likely than “All” respondents to share across most methods, but there were some larger discrepancies in a few areas:

- They are less likely to share via individual, in-person visits. 73% of “Subset” respondents selected this method, compared to 83% of “All” respondents.
- They are also less likely, by the same margin, to mount in-person displays or exhibitions.
- Less significant discrepancies were found in online storytelling and exhibitions, with 54% of “Subset” respondents selecting this method, compared to 60% of “All” respondents.
- “Subset” respondents were also less likely to have a physical newsletter or other publication. 27% of them have one, as compared to 34% of “All” respondents.
- “Subset” respondents were also half as likely to share via 3D scans. 8% of them use this method of sharing as compared to 15% of “All” respondents.

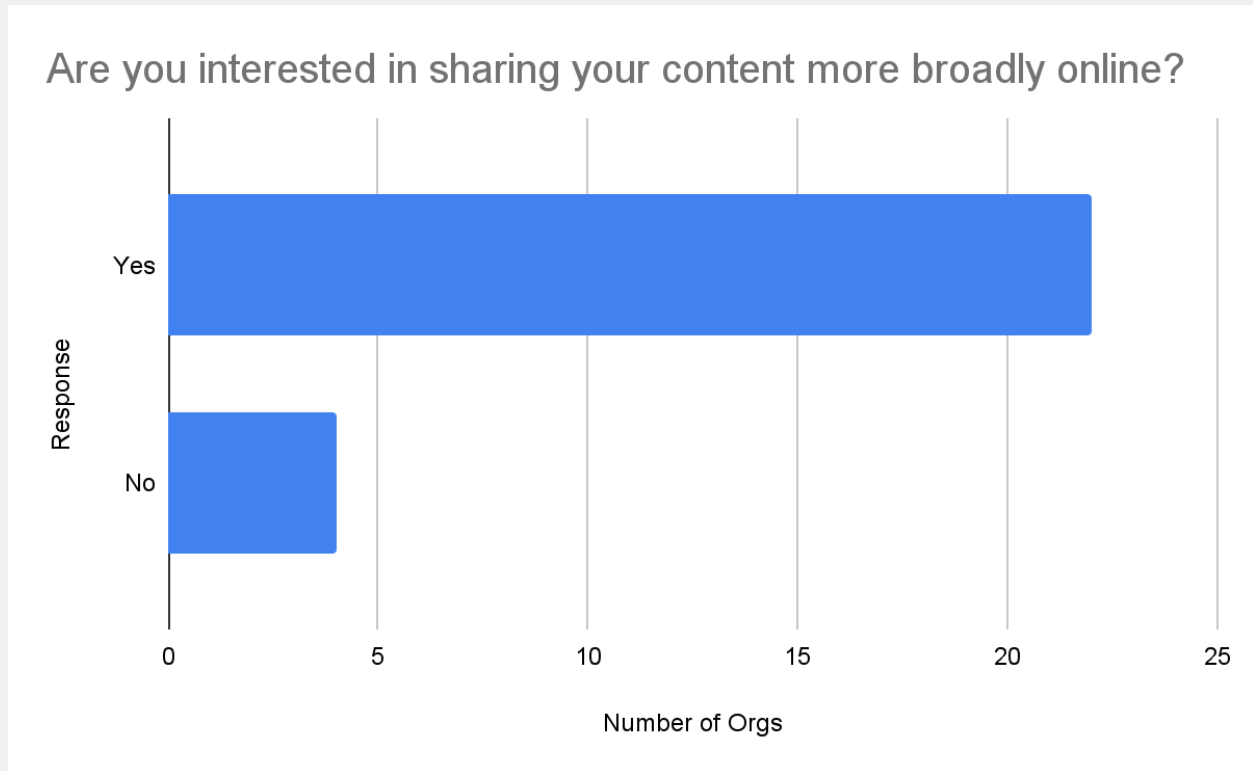
The discrepancy around individual, in-person visits seems to indicate that “Subset” respondents may not have the same physical space or staffing to support traditional “reading room” appointments for patrons, or the space and staffing to mount in-person displays or exhibitions. They may also be less likely to have the budget for creating online exhibitions or creating a printed publication. The largest discrepancy occurred in the area of 3D scanning. The financial, technical, and preservation concerns related to this activity might make it prohibitive for smaller, community-based organizations.

7. Are you interested in sharing your content more broadly online?

We then asked if organizations were interested in sharing their content more broadly online.

- 22 (85%) said “Yes”.
- 4 (15%) said “No”.

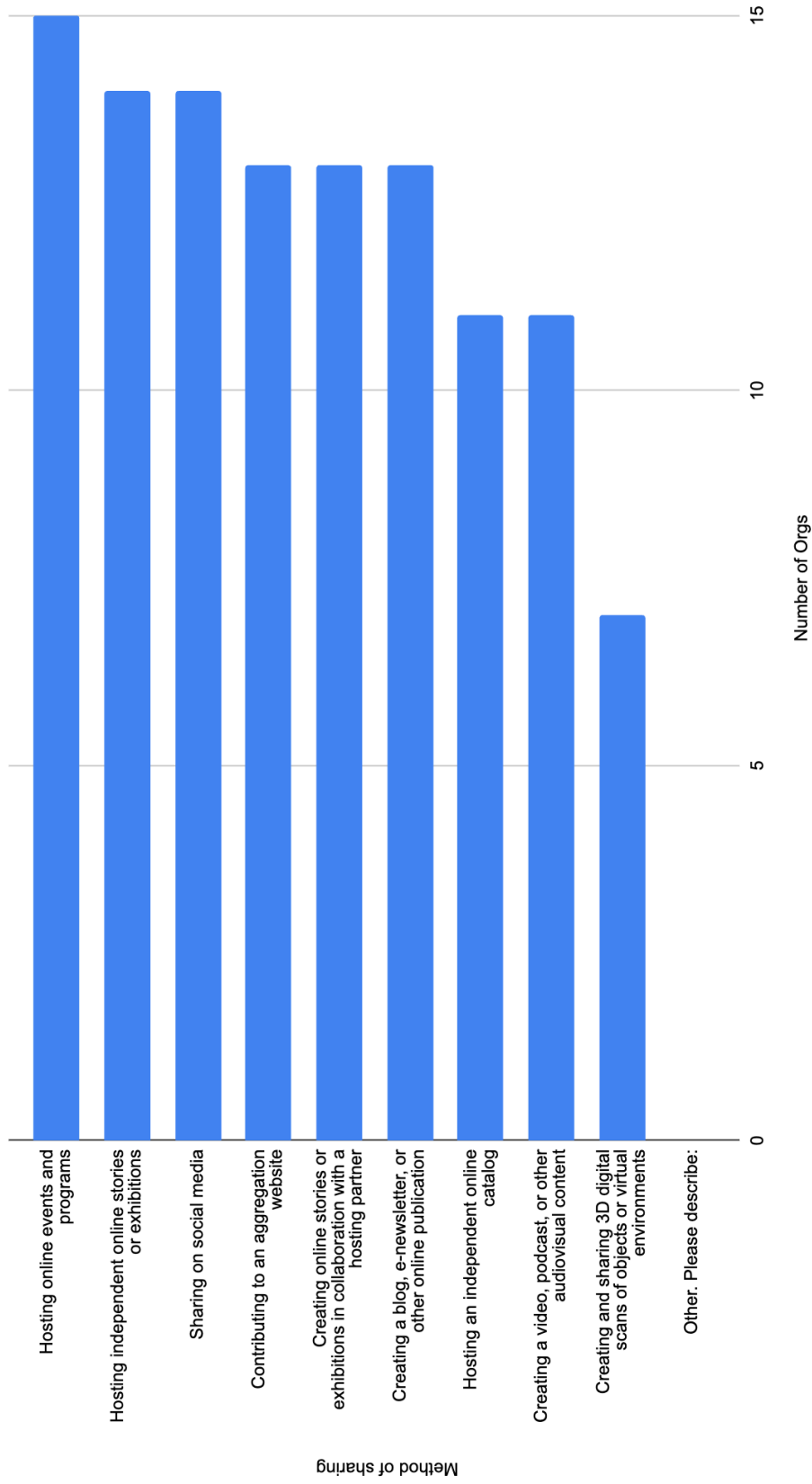
These percentages are roughly the same as for the “All responses” group (87% “Yes”, 13% “No”).



8. Which methods of sharing would be most appropriate and appealing for your organization?

This question was a multiple choice question where respondents could select more than one option. This question only appeared to the 22 respondents who said they were interested in sharing more broadly. Percentages in this section are calculated out of 22 responses instead of 26.

Which methods of sharing would be most appropriate and appealing for your organization?



The most appealing methods are:

- Hosting online events and programs (15, or 68%)
- Sharing on social media (14, or 64%)
- Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions (14, or 64%)
- Creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner (13, or 59%)
- Contributing to an aggregation website (13, or 59%)
- Creating a blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication (13, or 59%)

In the second tier are:

- Creating a video, podcast, or other audiovisual content (11, or 50%)
- Hosting an independent online catalog (11, or 50%)

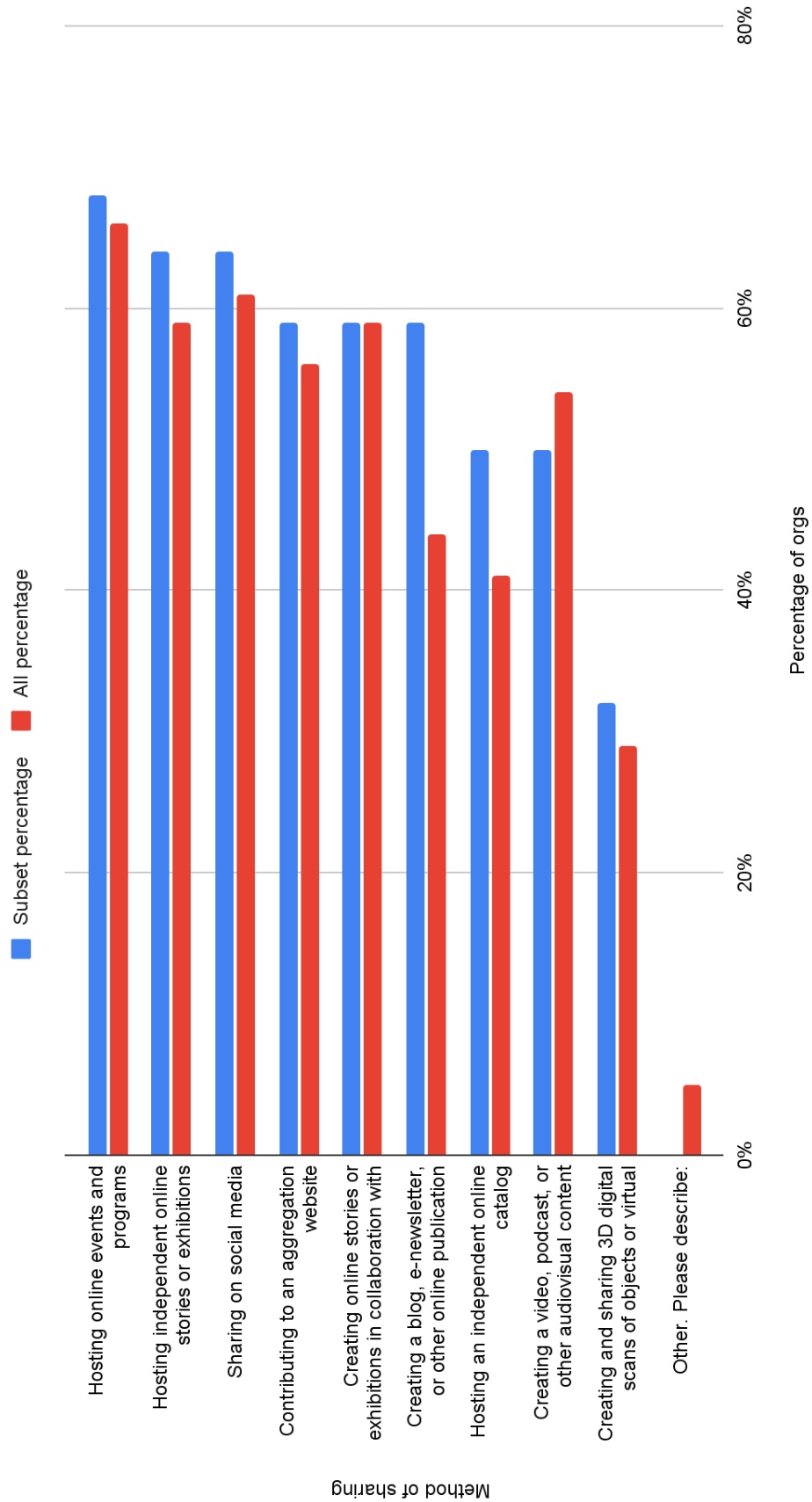
Least popular of the provided options was:

- Creating and sharing 3D digital scans of objects or virtual environments (7, or 32%). However, given the technical requirements and cost of creating and sharing digital 3D objects, it's significant that over a third of respondents who want to share their materials more broadly found this method appealing.

No respondents indicated "Other."

These responses are roughly in line with those from the "All" group, with "Subset" respondents being more interested in a "Blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication" (59%) than "All" respondents (44%). The "Subset" group also expressed a slight preference for hosting independent online stories or exhibitions (64%) over collaborating with a hosting partner (59%), whereas the percentages for these two methods were identical (59%) among the "All" group. They are also more interested in "Hosting an independent online catalog" (50%), compared to "All" respondents (41%). The only method of sharing that "All" respondents found slightly more appealing than "Subset" respondents was "Creating a video, podcast, or other audiovisual content." 54% of "All" respondents found this method appealing compared with 50% of "Subset" respondents.

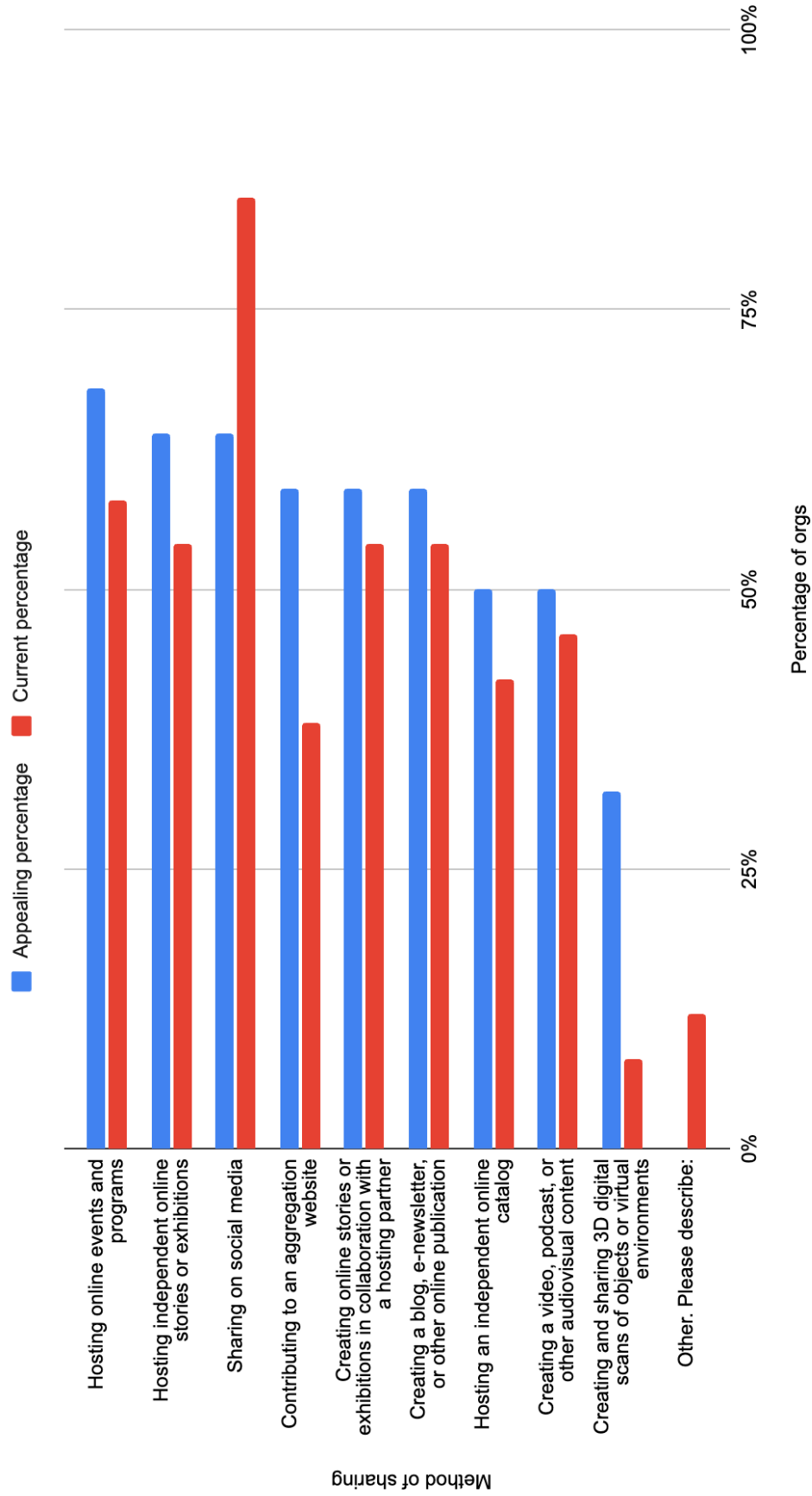
Comparing "appealing" methods of sharing



Below is a comparison between the “Subset” organizations’ current methods of online sharing (question #6) and methods they deemed appropriate and appealing (question #8). This chart compares the percentage of responses rather than the raw number because of the difference in the number of answers to each question (26 for question #6 and 22 for question #8).

Note also that the percentages for “Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions” and “Creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner” are both compared to the same percentage for “Online storytelling or exhibitions” from question #6. In asking about current methods of sharing, we did not differentiate between independently hosted exhibitions and those created in partnership with another entity.

Percentage of "Appealing" methods vs. Current methods



As with the “All” group, “Subset” respondents showed discrepancies between “appealing” forms of sharing and those in which they are currently engaged. Again, there was a substantial gap in the percentages for social media. Although 85% of respondents currently share their content on social media, only 64% of those who want to share more broadly said it was appropriate or appealing to do so. The gap in terms of 3D scanning was even larger, with almost four times as many respondents (32%) finding it appealing as are currently engaged in it (8%).

Other forms of online sharing also showed larger gaps between appeal and current activity in the “Subset” group. These are:

- Contributing to an aggregation website, which 59% found appealing but only 38% currently do
- Hosting online events and programs, which 68% found appealing but only 58% are currently engaged in
- Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions, which 64% of respondents find appealing, but which only 54% currently do.

These larger gaps suggest that these areas are places where community-based organizations that serve marginalized populations could use more help.

The “Subset” group also diverged from the “All” group in the area of blogs and other online publications. While the “All” group found this method of sharing to be less appealing despite being engaged in it, slightly more respondents in the “Subset” group (59%) found it to be appealing than were currently engaged in it (54%).

Appeal and current participation were closer together for the rest of the sharing methods. These are:

- Online audiovisual content, which 50% find appealing and 46% currently create
- Creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner, which 59% find appealing and 54% currently do
- Hosting an independent online catalog, which 50% find appealing and 42% currently have.

Digital technologies

9. Where do you go for information and resources on technical issues like digitization, metadata, storage, and web hosting?

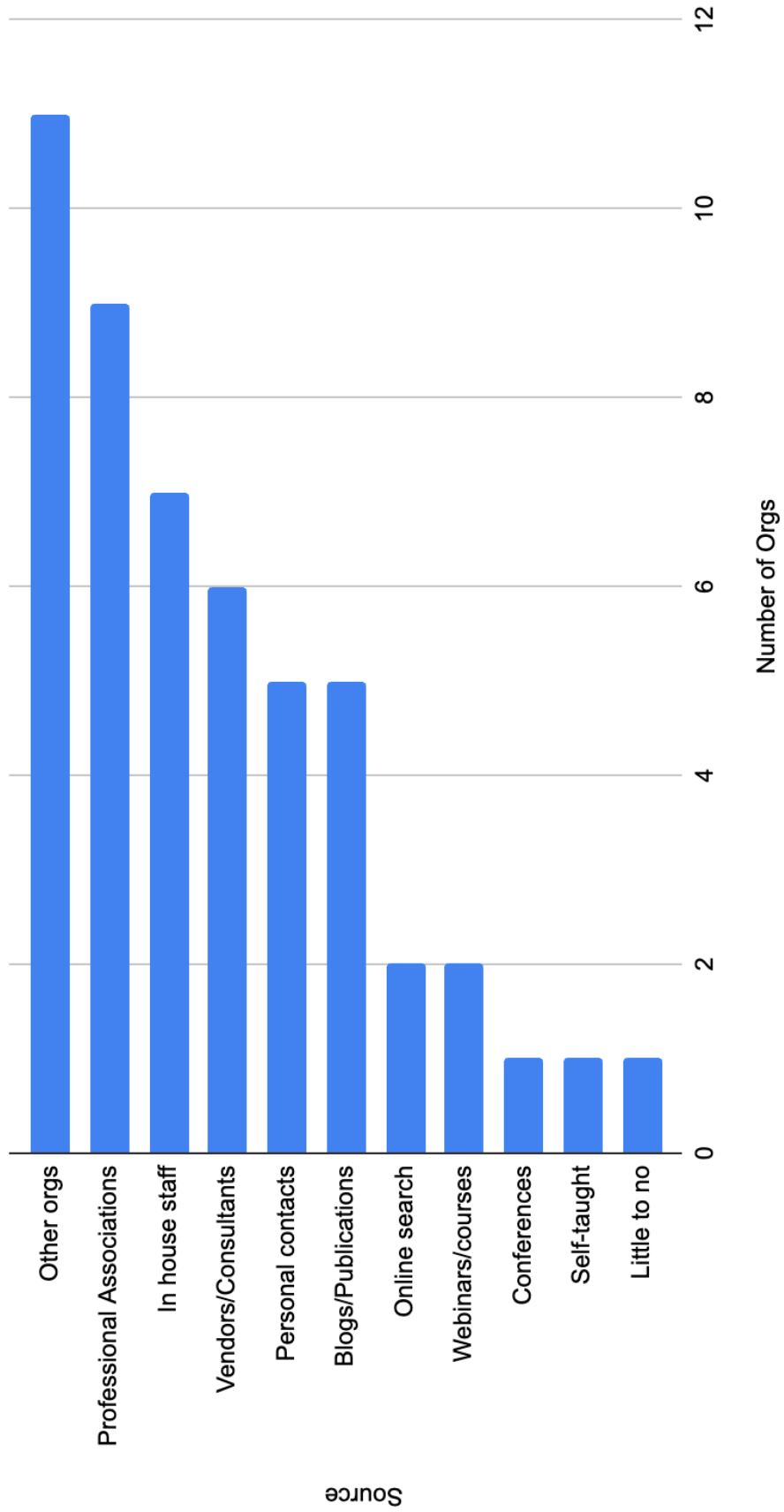
This question was a free-text response and was displayed to all 26 respondents. The big takeaway is that there is no consensus about where to go for information, training, or news about digital technologies. Respondents’ answers varied quite a bit, not only in terms of what they were able to do or learn in-house, but where they looked for new information or training. Although this was a free response question, we identified some general trends,

which are tabulated below. Note that institutions often mentioned more than one resource in their answers.

Percentages were very similar to the “All” group with a few exceptions, noted in bold.

- 11 (42%) said they relied on other organizations for guidance.
 - This is higher than the “All” group (32%).
- 9 (35%) said they looked to professional organizations.
- 7 (27%) said they relied on in-house staff or IT teams.
 - This percentage is much lower than in the “All” group (40%).
- 6 (23%) said they relied on vendors or consultants
- 5 (19%) said they consulted personal or professional contacts
- 5 (19%) said they used publications or blogs.
 - This percentage is slightly higher than in the “All” group (15%).
- 2 (8%) used Internet searching
- 2 (8%) relied on webinars or courses
- 1 (4%) mentioned conferences
- 1 (4%) said they were “self-taught”
- 1 (4%) said “We are a fledgling operation with little to no training or funding.”

Where do you go for information and resources on technical issues like digitization, metadata, storage, and web hosting?



There were two responses to this question from incomplete surveys, which are not tabulated in the stats above:

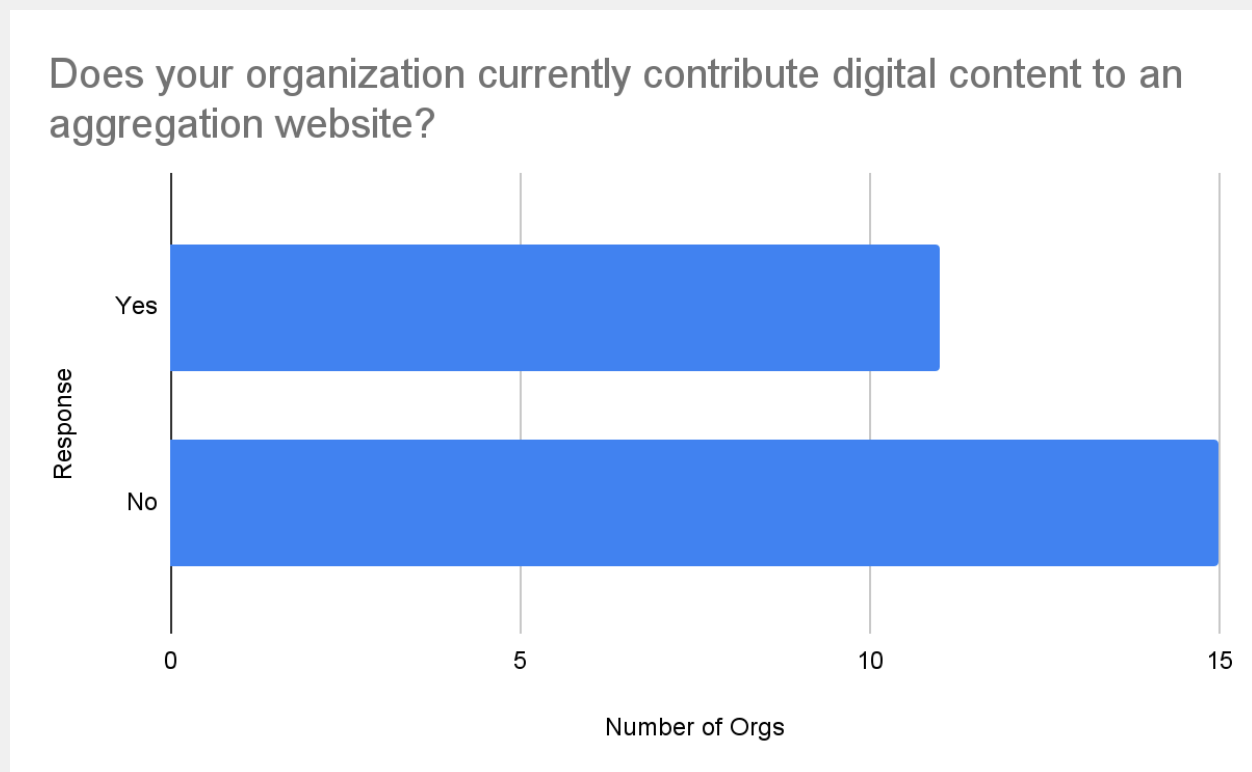
- “Society of American Archivists Resources and Toolkits”
- “Where ever [sic] we can find it.”

Participation in Aggregation Websites

10. Does your organization currently contribute digital content to an aggregation website?

This question was a multiple choice question in which respondents could only select on answer: “Yes” or “No”.

- 15 (58%) respondents said their organization is not currently contributing to an aggregator
- 11 (42%) said their organization currently contributes to an aggregator



Whereas the “All” group was almost evenly split, a lower percentage of the “Subset” group participates in aggregators.

There are some inconsistencies in responses here in comparison to question #6 about current methods of sharing.

- 2 respondents indicated that they contribute to an aggregator in question #6 but answered “No” to question #10.
- 1 respondent indicated that they do not contribute to an aggregator in question #6 but selected “Yes” to question #10.

As with the larger group, it is difficult to know if these inconsistencies are the result of simple omissions (simply forgetting to check “Aggregation website” in question #6, for example) or if they represent a misunderstanding about the definition of an aggregation website. The 1 respondent who said they contribute to an aggregator but did not check “Aggregation website” in question #6 indicated in question #11 that they contribute to “Archive-It & EBSCO”. These services are aggregators in the broadest sense of the word, in that they gather content from multiple sources.

Without additional information, we believe this discrepancy does not significantly impact the overall findings, although it does suggest that there is some confusion as to the definition of an aggregator. As noted above, these discrepancies may reflect the slipperiness of the definition of an “aggregator” and “aggregation website.” In the drafting of this survey, the project team struggled to find language for this concept that would be accessible and understandable to a non-professional audience. Clearly, to some extent, we failed.

11. Which aggregation websites do you contribute to?

This question was a free-text response. It was only displayed to the 11 respondents who indicated that they share with an aggregation website in question #10. Percentages below are calculated based on a total of 11 responses.

Responses varied quite a bit, with many respondents indicating that they shared with multiple aggregators, and very little overlap between responses. Of the recurring aggregators mentioned:

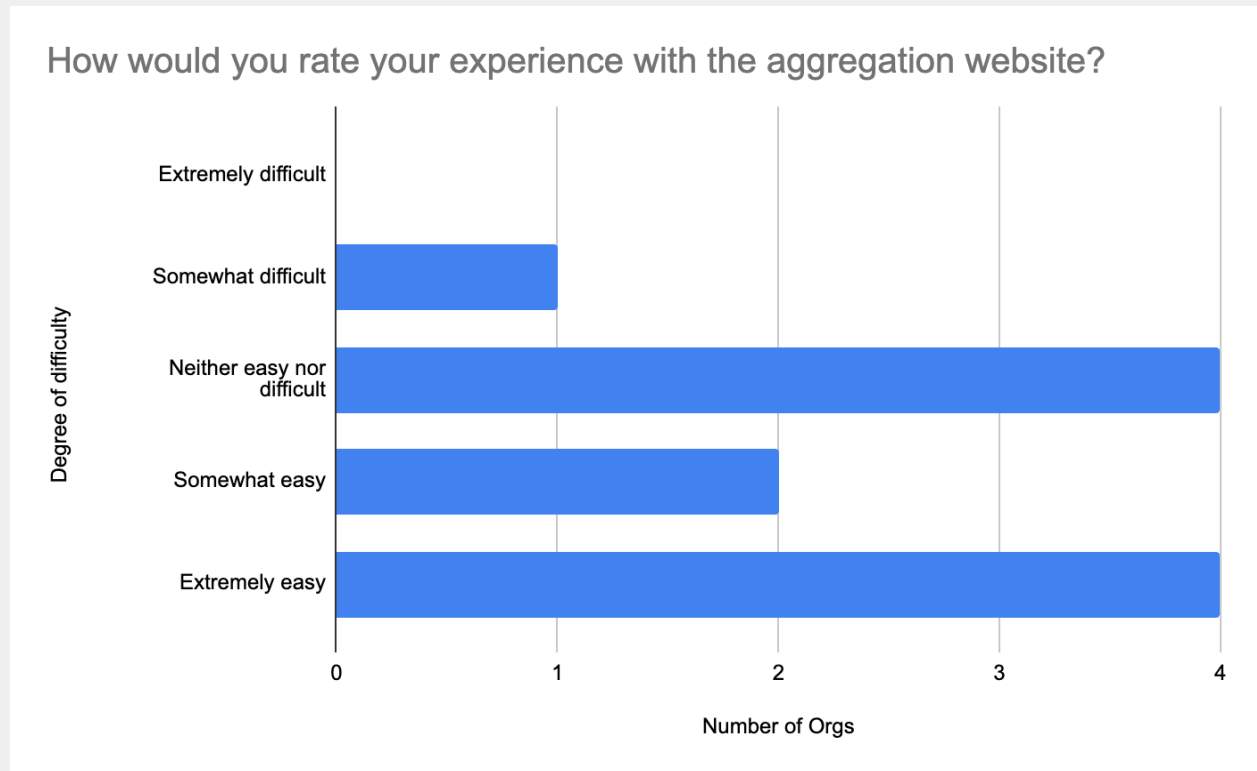
- 5 (45%) mentioned DPLA
- 3 (27%) mentioned Archive-It or the Internet Archive
- 3 (27%) mentioned Calisphere
- 2 (8%) mentioned Online Archive of California
- There was 1 response each for the following:
 - ArchivesSpace
 - Connecticut Archives Online
 - Connecticut Collections
 - Digital Culture of Metropolitan New York (DCMNY)
 - Digital Transgender Archive

- EBSCO
- Flickr
- Home Movie Registry
- Hoover Institute Japanese Diaspora project
- PA Photos and Documents
- Preservica
- San Diego State Digital Library
- Wikidata
- Wikimedia Commons
- Wikipedia
- WorldCat

Percentages here are higher than they were for the “All” group, and the raw number of contributors to Archive-It/Internet Archive, Calisphere, and OAC is exactly the same. Representation of those three aggregators is entirely from “Subset” organizations. However, Calisphere is the only DPLA Hub that appears in the “Subset” results, although “DPLA” is mentioned by 3 additional respondents, one of whom contributes through “PA Photos and Documents.”

12. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most difficult and 5 being the easiest, how would you rate your experience with the aggregation website?

This question was a Likert scale in which respondents could select one numerical value on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most difficult and 5 being the easiest. It was only displayed to the 11 respondents who said they participated in an aggregation website. We asked them to rate the level of difficulty they experienced in working with an aggregation website. Here, percentages are calculated based on the 11 respondents who said they participate in aggregators.



- 0 found it to be extremely difficult
- 1 (9%) found it somewhat difficult
- 4 (36%) found it neither easy nor difficult
- 2 (18%) found it somewhat easy
- 4 (36%) found it extremely easy

The average score (out of 5) was 3.82, suggesting that overall, respondents found the experience relatively easy. These findings are on par with those for “All” respondents.

13. Did you experience any challenges when contributing your materials? If so, please describe them.

This question was a free-text response and it was displayed to the 11 respondents who contributed to aggregators. An answer was not required and there were 7 responses to this question.

2 indicated that they experienced no difficulties. This number represents 60% of the “All” responses that indicated no difficulties.

By far, the most common challenges mentioned are related to staffing. 1 respondent indicated that their contributions were entirely managed by the aggregator that hosts their

content, and another indicated that a former staffer stepped in to manage the work, without whom it would not have happened. These responses also gestured toward the precarity of participation should a key staff member leave the organization. An additional respondent said they were limited by staffing in what they could contribute.

Funding for digitization and “ontological challenges” with metadata were also mentioned.

14. If you are not contributing to an aggregation website, what is/are the reason(s)? (Select all that apply)

This question was a multiple choice question in which respondents could select more than one option. This question only appeared to the 15 respondents who said they were not currently contributing to an aggregation website. Percentages were calculated based on the 15 respondents who saw this question.

As with the “All” responses, the most common “Subset” responses had to do with staffing, time, and funding. As these factors are all interrelated, access to resources is the single most important reason that community organizations are not contributing to aggregation websites.

- 10 (67%) said they don’t have enough staff or time
- 10 (67%) said they don’t have adequate financial resources, compared to 57% of “All” responses.

The next most common answer (7, or 47%) stated they were not participating because they were not aware of aggregation websites.

This was followed by 5 (33%) who cited legal or copyright concerns and 5 (33%) who said they were not participating because of a lack of know-how.

Less common were an inability to process collections, host, or digitize them.

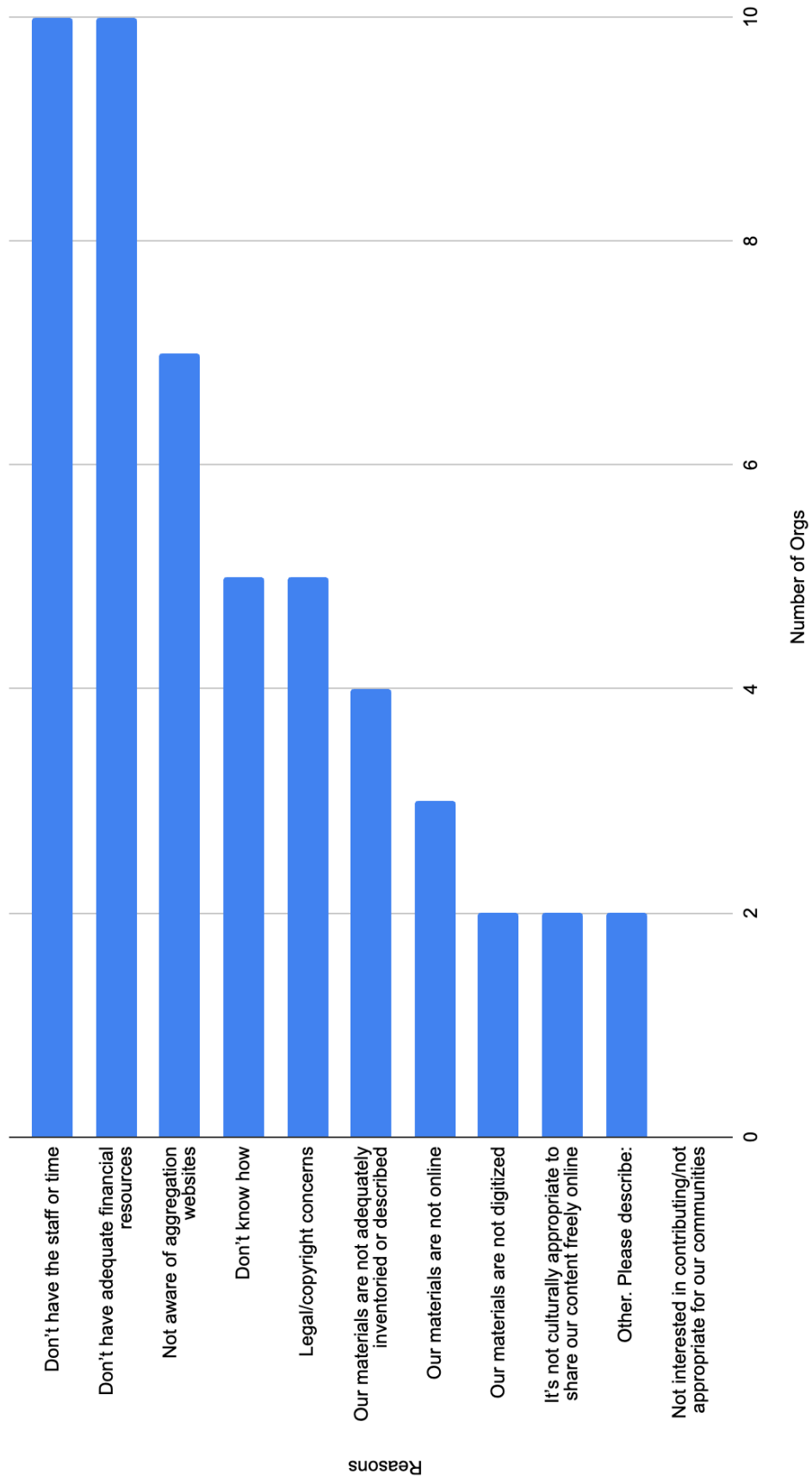
- 4 (27%) said their materials were not adequately inventoried or described
- 3 (20%) said their materials were not online
- 2 (13%) said their materials were not digitized

2 (13%) said they were not participating because it was not culturally appropriate to share their content freely online. While this is a relatively small percentage of respondents, it is significant that this option was selected. This number represents 60% of the “All” responses, indicating that this factor is perhaps more important among “Subset” respondents than among the larger group.

No respondents said they were simply not interested in contributing or that it was inappropriate for their communities. (See “Other” responses below.)

2 (13%) respondents selected “Other.” Both of these free-text responses indicated that it might not be appropriate for the community, and one said it would depend on the aggregator. Again, concerns about whether sharing with an aggregator is appropriate constitute a larger percentage of responses in the “Subset” group.

If you are not contributing to an aggregation website, what is/are the reason(s)?



15. If you are interested in contributing to an aggregation website, what would most help you to do so?

This was a free-text response question and respondents were not required to answer it. The question was only displayed to the 15 respondents who said they were not currently contributing to an aggregation website. 14 respondents provided answers.

The most commonly cited needs (4) were training, including learning more about aggregation websites, and funding. This was followed by staffing (2), and time (2). Respondents said they needed technical support (1), easy-to-use templates (1), and a reciprocal relationship (1). 2 respondents said they were “not sure” or that they didn’t know what would help.

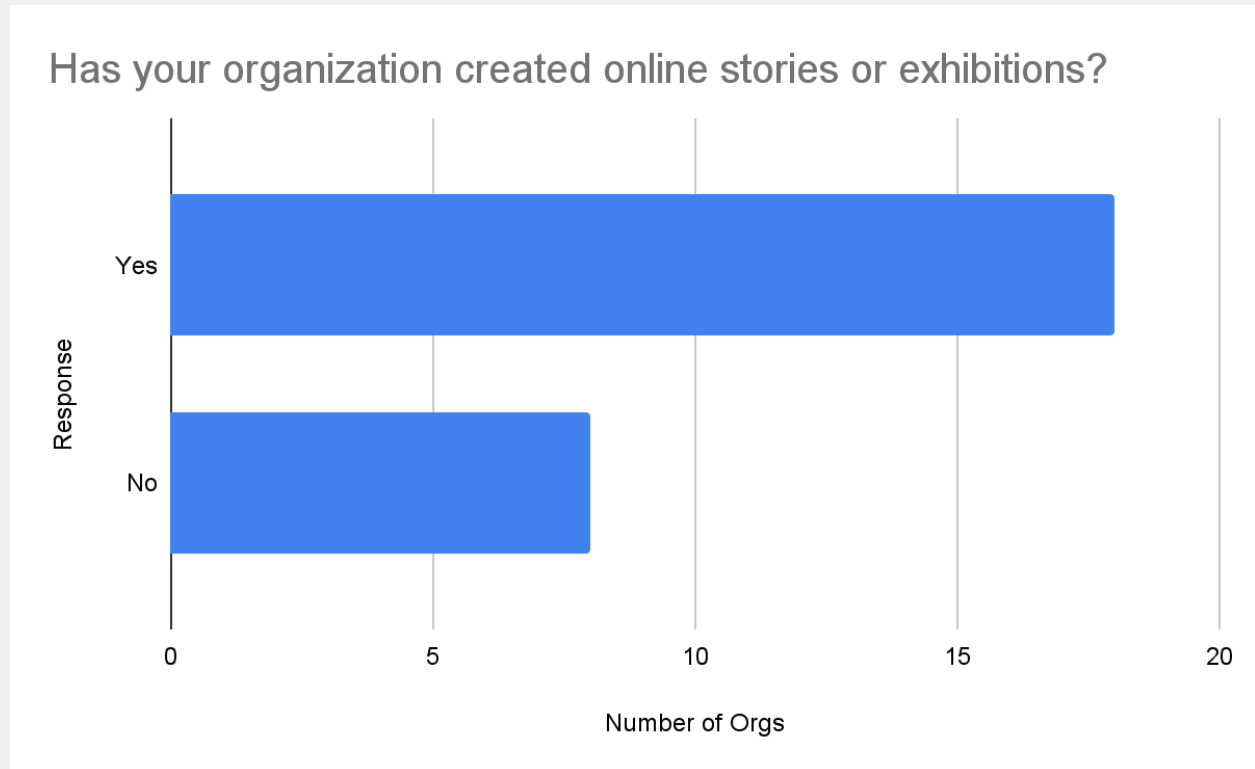
Online Storytelling and Exhibitions

16. Has your organization created online stories or exhibitions?

This question was a multiple choice question in which respondents indicated “Yes” or “No.” This question appeared for all 26 respondents.

- 18 (69%) said they had created online exhibits
- 8 (31%) said they had not

The percentage of “Subset” respondents (31%) who had not created online exhibits is higher than for the “All” group (21%).

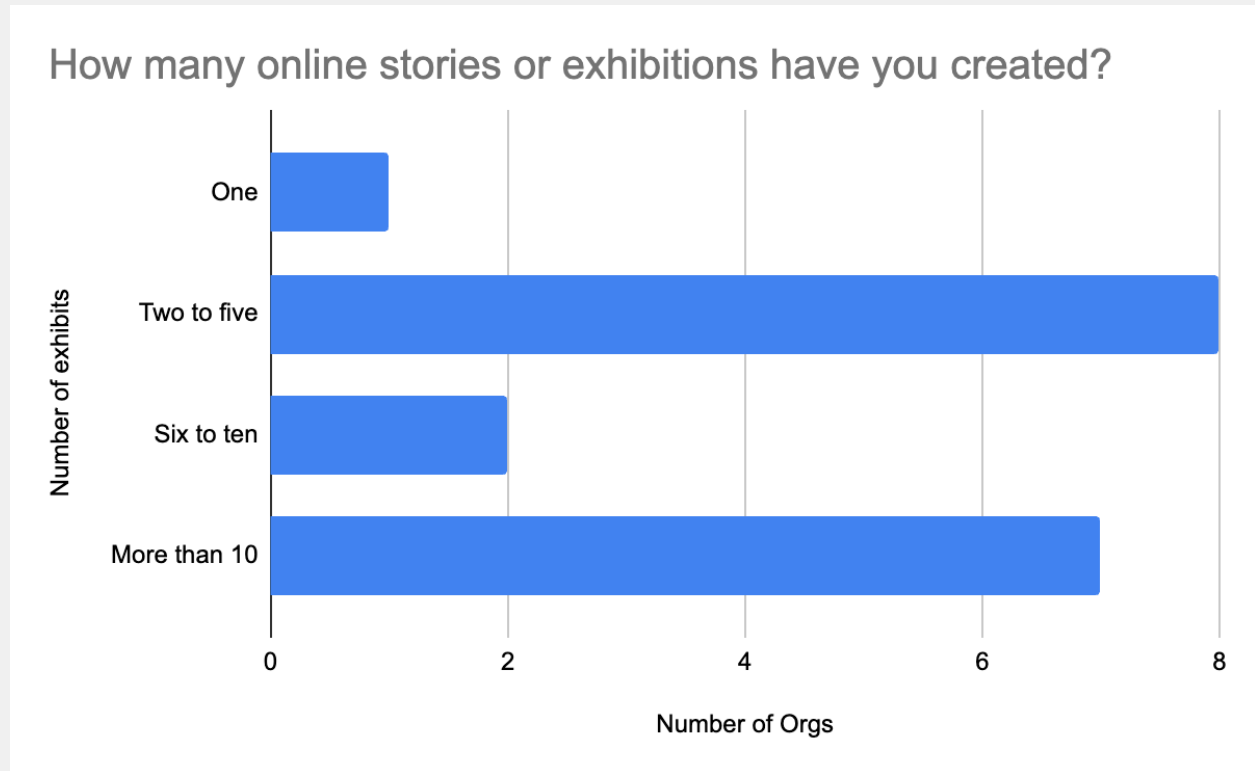


17. How many online stories or exhibitions have you created?

This question was a multiple choice question that was displayed to the 18 respondents who answered “Yes” to question #16.

- 1 (6%) has created one exhibition
- 8 (44%) have created between 2 and 5 exhibitions
- 2 (11%) have created between 6 and 10 exhibitions
- 7 (39%) have created more than 10

The respondents who have created online exhibitions are relatively experienced, with half having created more than five. Percentages are on par with those from the “All” group, except for the percentage of respondents who have created only one exhibition, which is much lower (6% vs. 16%).

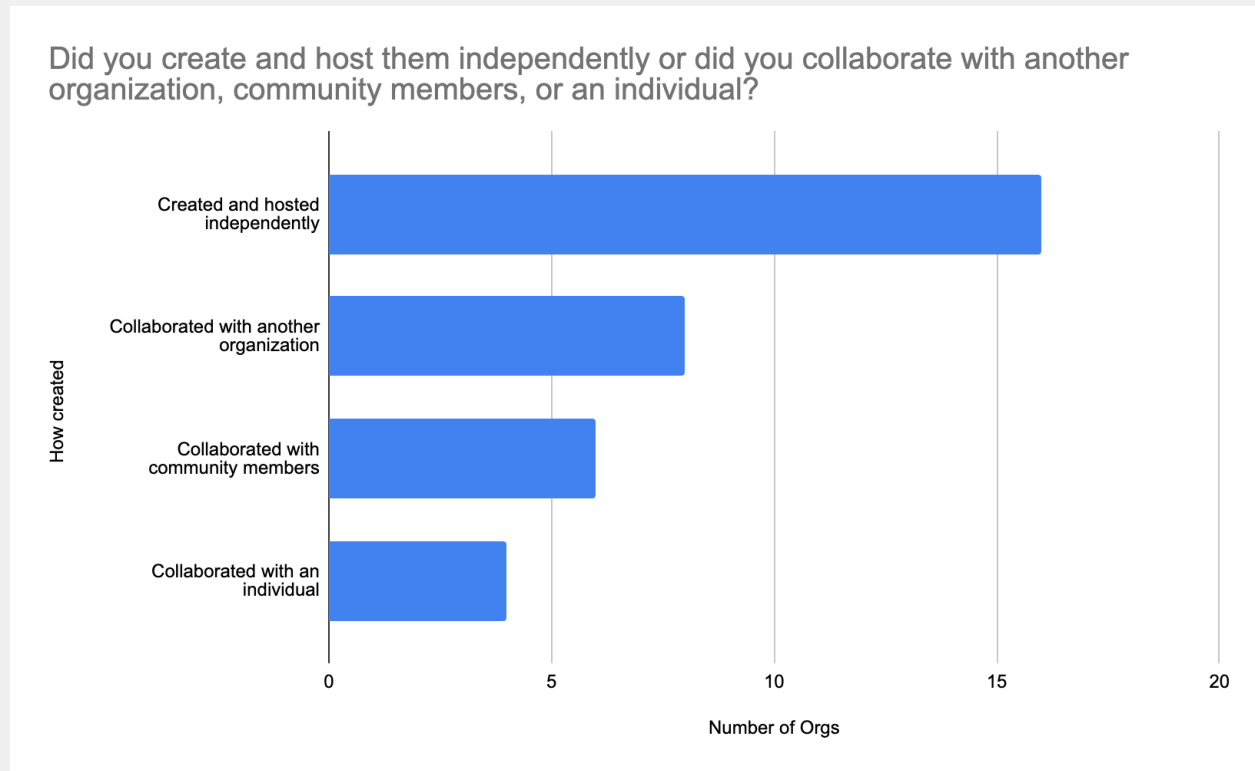


18. Did you create and host them independently or did you collaborate with another organization, community members, or an individual?

This question was a multiple choice question in which respondents could select more than one option. It was displayed to the 18 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions. The percentages were roughly the same as they were for the “All responses” group.

- The majority (16, or 89%) have created and hosted their online stories and exhibitions independently.
- 8 (44%) have collaborated with another organization
- 6 (33%) have collaborated with community members
- 4 (22%) have collaborated with an individual

The large number of community organizations that are able to create and host exhibitions independently suggests they are able to support independent digital storytelling more easily than they can participate in aggregation websites.



19. Please briefly describe the tool(s) and platform(s) you used to present the story or exhibition(s)

This question was a free-text response. It was displayed to the 18 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions and we received 18 responses.

By far, the most common place where respondents created online stories or exhibitions was on their organization's website and/or employing web publishing software like WordPress, or Squarespace.

- 11 (61%) presented their exhibitions on their website or with webpages created using WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. Of these, WordPress was the only one that received multiple mentions (3).
- 4 (22%) created videos to share on YouTube. This is higher than the 14% of "All" respondents.
- 2 (11%) said they used Omeka. This is down from 16% of "All" respondents, who also mentioned Omeka S.
- 2 (11%) use Instagram or Facebook
- 2 (11%) use StoryMaps
- The rest of the answers received 1 (2%) mention each:

- Some were generic:
 - Blog
 - 3D captures
- Others mentioned specific sites or products:
 - Flickr
 - Streamyard
 - HistoryIT
 - TimelineJS
 - Historypin
- These tools, which appeared in the larger dataset, did not appear:
 - Mukurtu
 - Google Arts & Culture
 - PowerPoint
 - STQRY
 - Knightlab

A few respondents provided additional insights into their process or how they used these technologies and platforms, providing a diverse picture of storytelling practices:

Examples include writing longer pieces that contextualize some aspect of our history/work on our website, blog, and on websites/publications hosted by others; explicit online exhibitions appearing on collaborators' platform(s); composed video narratives/features on youtube, etc., created by us or in collaboration with other organizations/individuals; curated Flickr albums.

We have members of our chorus sign up to tell their stories at a rehearsal. Then we make a video recording and publish it on our YouTube channel.

Wordpress. We have curated multiple online art exhibits by manually creating individual Wordpress pages for artworks, with some basic metadata like artist name, medium, and sometimes poems or other written content by the artists.

Our online website and blog is through wix.com and we promote on social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. We also have a YouTube channel.

20. If you collaborated with another organization(s), community members, or individual(s), please briefly describe the collaboration(s)

This question was a free-text response. It was displayed to the 18 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions but was not required. 12 responses were received.

Responses were incredibly varied, reflecting different definitions of collaboration as well as different approaches and partners. As one respondent noted, “Each collaboration is unique. It would be too difficult to describe them grouped in general terms.”

Some respondents merely listed the organizations they had partnered with:

- City University of New York, GLBT Historical Society, Interference Archive, LGBTQ Center (NYC) Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York Historical Society
- Some of our stories and exhibits have been shared with Ancestry, Teaching Central America, Raices Cultural Center, History Made by Us, and lectures at CalStateLA.
- Chicago Field Museum staff and Oklahoma Historical Society staff

Others provided more detailed information, such as collaborating with individuals who were hired to do research and create content. One respondent described such partners as “Community Curators” who “assist with curating the exhibits.” Another described how they have collaborated on grant-funded digitization projects.

Collaborations took a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Some were as basic as loans—“using materials in other institutions”—or using particular platforms: “We used BetterWorld for our online art auction that accompanied our online exhibits on Wordpress.” Others were engaged in multiple forms of collaboration:

Mentor interns from various local institutions, train volunteers on DH [Digital Humanities] tools in return to contribute to living projects, train on-going contracted artists and cultural producers to develop metadata and 3D captures, collaborate with like-minded nonprofits in 3D capturing exhibitions and training org representatives to produce the metadata for their exhibition while also give them access to embed on their own website.

21. If you were to collaborate with that organization(s), community members, or person(s) again, what would you do differently?

This question was a free-text response and was not required. It was displayed to the 18 respondents who indicated they had created online stories or exhibitions. There were 8 responses.

Although responses varied in detail, respondents indicated a few things that were important for smooth collaborations. They mentioned the need for better project planning and delegation of tasks, the need for more funding, the desire to share content with all participating organizations, and the need for more content.

2 respondents said they wouldn't change anything.

One respondent said:

Our collaborations progress organically. We do not start with a blueprint. How it happens is the way it develops and is able to happen.

One respondent entered "NA".

22. If you haven't created online stories or exhibitions, why not?

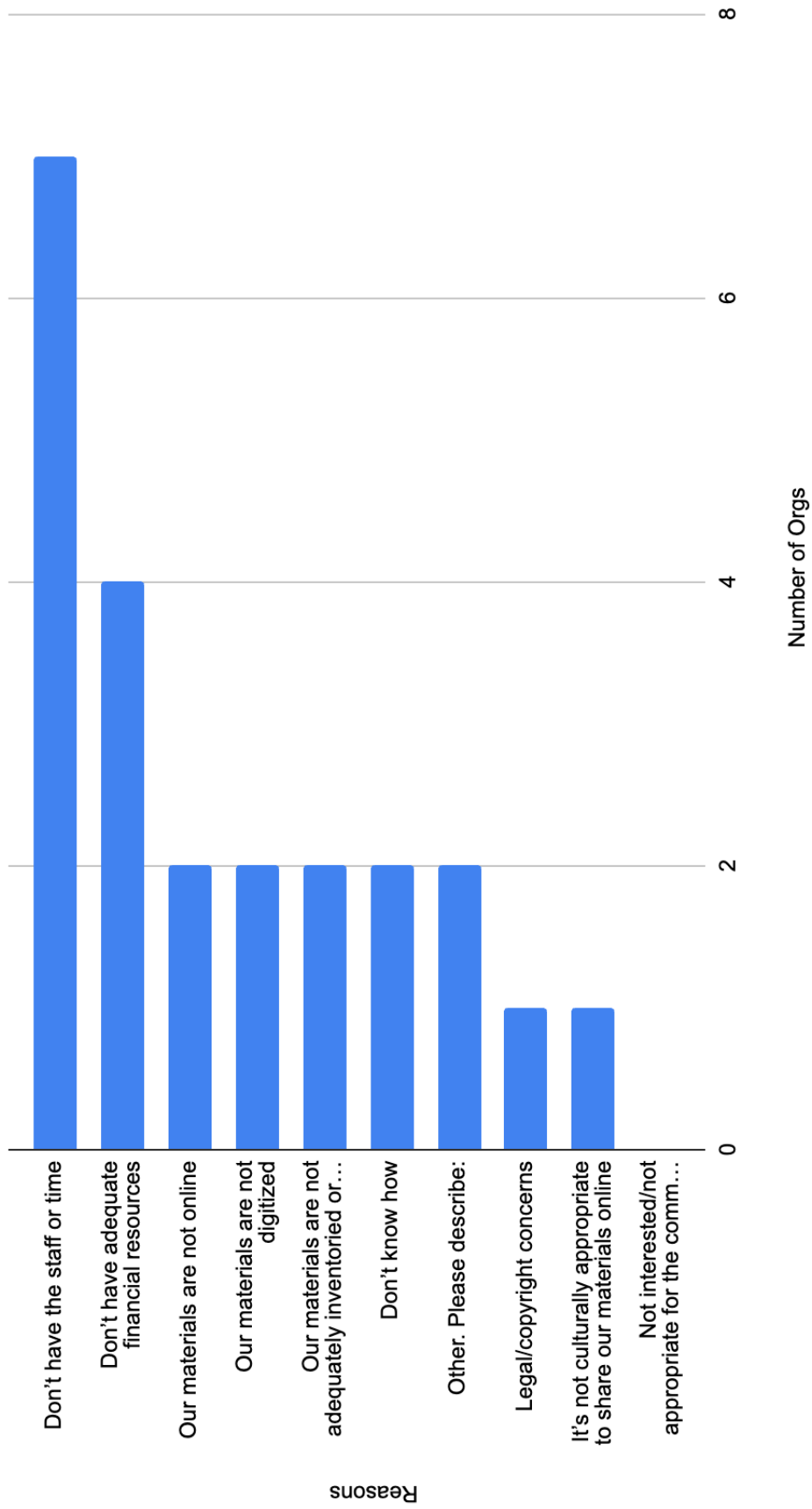
This question was a multiple choice question where respondents could select as many options as were applicable. This question was displayed to the 8 respondents who indicated they had not yet created online stories or exhibitions.

By far, the top reason organizations haven't created online stories or exhibitions is that they don't have the staff or time. These percentages were roughly the same as for the "All" group.

- 7 (88%) said they don't have the staff or time.
- 4 (50%) said they don't have adequate financial resources
- 2 (25%) said their materials were not digitized
- 2 (25%) said their materials were not adequately inventoried or described
- 2 (25%) said their materials were not online
- 2 (25%) said they don't know how to create online stories or exhibitions
- 1 (13%) indicated there were legal or copyright concerns
- 1 (13%) said it was not culturally appropriate to share their materials online
- 0 said they were not interested or it was not appropriate for the communities they serve

- 2 (25%) indicated other reasons:
 - “We have our materials on our website; we share stories via our instagram feed”
 - “This task is under review. Plan to have online stories in 8 to 10 months”

If you haven't created online stories or exhibitions, why not?



In terms of creating online content, survey respondents indicated that the biggest barriers are staff, time, and funding, with digitization, hosting, and cataloging being less of a factor.

23. If you are interested in creating an online story or exhibition, what would most help you to do so?

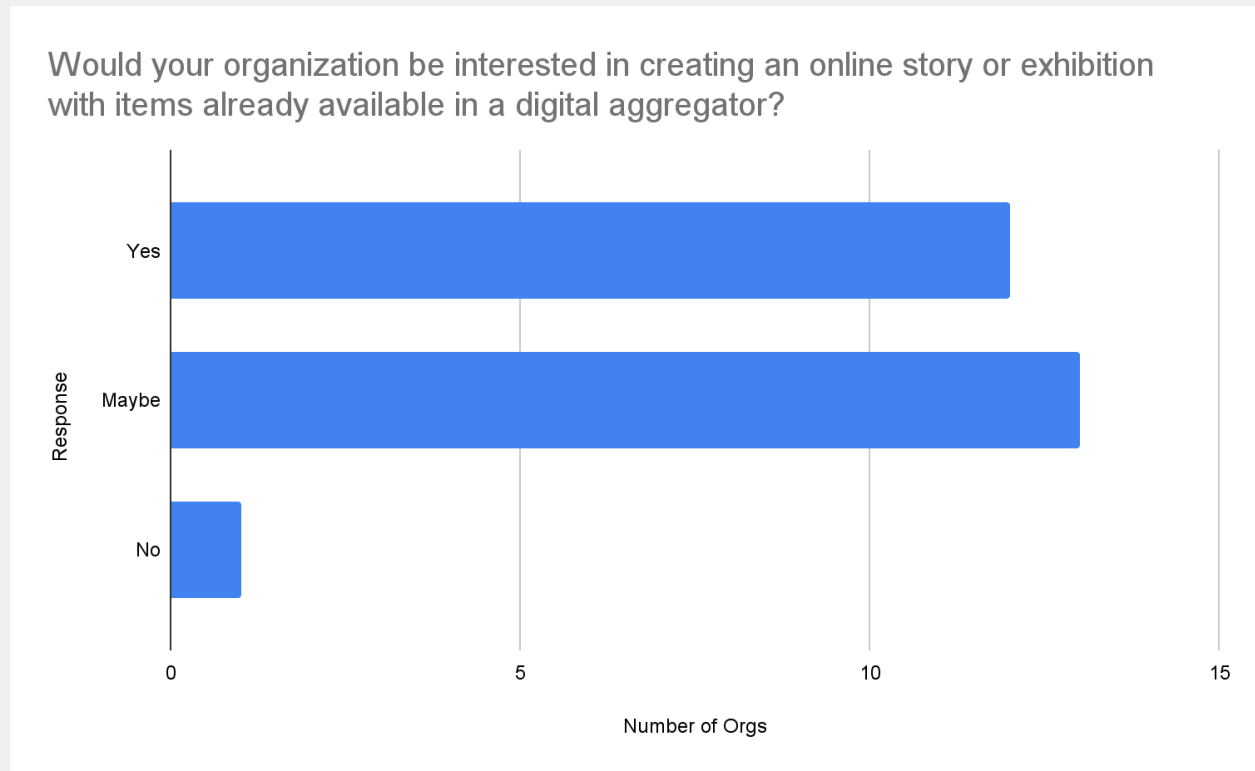
This question was a free-text response. It was displayed to the 8 respondents who indicated they had not yet created online stories or exhibitions but an answer was not required. There were 4 responses.

- 2 were interested in training resources, software, and examples.
- 2 said they needed funding and staffing

24. Would your organization be interested in creating an online story or exhibition with items already available in a digital aggregator or regional hub?

This question was a multiple choice response where respondents could only select one answer. It was displayed to all 26 respondents.

Respondents were asked to select “Yes”, “Maybe”, or “No”. Responses were about evenly split between “Yes” (12, or 46%) and “Maybe” (13, or 50%) with only one “No” (4%). These results were roughly the same as for the “All” group, with slightly more “Maybe’s”.



Final questions

25. Is there anything else that would help you share your collections online?

This question was a free-text response and was not required. It was displayed to all 26 respondents and there were 14 responses.

By far the most commonly cited need was for knowledgeable staff. 3 (21%) said staffing was a major need. This was followed by opportunities to share (2, or 14%). Other needs mentioned were funding, more accessible tools, and hosting. Although funding and staffing are connected, funding was only explicitly mentioned by one respondent here. Otherwise, the results here are very similar to those in the “All” group.

One respondent mentioned reciprocal relationships, and another indicated that their community is not well-understood by the mainstream:

Mainstream culture does not have adequate perspective on our community. More culturally specific intermediaries specializing in our community's needs would help,

especially ones who come from within our community and work with community stakeholders.

Another respondent noted the gap between the technical knowledge required to participate in online aggregation or sharing and the knowledge base of communities who want to be involved:

We need tools that are intuitive, simple, and mobile-friendly so that the labor of digitizing, describing, and sharing our content can be shared by everyone in our community, not just done by people with tech expertise. Even doing basic spreadsheet work is often too advanced for some of our community members who are excited to help. Digital skills is [sic] a big barrier to equitable and participatory archival work in our community!

And finally, one respondent indicated that they are ready to share their content, but there is no Hub available in their region:

We are ready to contribute to DPLA, however, [our state] does not yet have a DPLA hub. There is a current effort underway to get that established and once it is ready, our digital collections will be shared.

26. We are also conducting interviews with select community-centered archives. If you are interested in being interviewed, please enter your name and email address below.

This question was a free-text response and was not required. It was displayed to all 26 respondents. We received 15 responses, 13 of which contained email addresses. We ended up conducting interviews with 5 (33%) of these respondents.

Community-Centered Archives Survey Conclusions

Although the need to analyze two versions of the dataset was a result of a respondent scope that wasn't as well-defined as it could have been, it did allow for some comparison between organizations that are community-centered (which might include larger, well-resourced institutions working with various communities) and those that are based in and represent marginalized communities. Overall, the data from both sets is relatively aligned, but where there are differences between smaller organizations and smaller organizations focused on marginalized communities is an opening for future research.

About the organizations

Most survey respondents come from organizations with non-profit status, with a much smaller group of collectives and Tribal organizations. For about three-quarters of them, collecting and preserving is their primary activity. These activities were reflected in their mission statements, although “Subset” respondents tended to emphasize community more than the group as a whole. Organizations that serve and document LGBTQ+ communities were prominently represented, and responses came from organizations that represented Black, Indigenous, Asian American and Latinx communities, as well as people of short stature, Jewish communities, and incarcerated or formerly incarcerated populations. Although a plurality of responses came from organizations based in California, the respondents overall were geographically diverse, representing 25 states across all regions of the United States.

Methods of sharing

The most common ways in which organizations currently share their content are:

- In-person events and programs
- Organization’s website
- Social media

However, there were some discrepancies between responses of the “All” group and the “Subset” group. “All” respondents were more likely to support “Individual in-person visits” and “In-person displays or exhibitions.” This difference suggests that organizations serving and representing marginalized communities may not have the same physical space or staffing to support traditional “reading room” appointments for patrons, or the space and staffing to mount in-person displays or exhibitions.

“All” respondents were also more likely to have created online exhibitions and printed publications, suggesting that “Subset” respondents may lack the budgets and staffing to support these activities. Finally, the largest discrepancy occurred in the area of 3D scanning. The financial, technical, and preservation concerns related to this activity might make it prohibitive for smaller, community-based organizations.

Respondents in both groups were largely in favor of sharing their content more widely online. When asked what methods were most appealing, these were the top responses:

- Hosting online events and programs
- Sharing on social media
- Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions
- Creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner
- Contributing to an aggregation website
- Creating a blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication

Discrepancies between the two datasets were negligible, although “Subset” respondents were slightly more interested in contributing to an aggregation website and blogs and other online publications than the “All” group, suggesting that they are perhaps less active in this area currently. Both groups showed larger differences between current and desired activity in two areas: social media and 3D scanning. Most respondents are engaged in sharing on social media, but a smaller proportion find it appealing (perhaps because they already do it). Conversely, a small percentage are engaged in 3D scanning, but nearly four times as many find it appealing. Along with aggregation, this may be a technically intensive method of sharing that community-based organizations need more support to explore.

Digital technologies

There were some key discrepancies here between the “All” group and the “Subset” group. Whereas the “All” group relied primarily on in-house IT staff for information on digital technologies, the “Subset” group was more likely to look to other similar organizations in their networks. Both groups relied on professional organizations for guidance, as well as vendors or consultants, and personal or professional contacts, but “Subset” respondents were more likely to resort to publications or blogs for information. These differences suggest that community-based organizations are less likely to have full-time or permanent IT staff, but also suggest the importance of cross-organizational relationships in this area.

Aggregation

Almost 60% of “Subset” respondents are not participating in an aggregation website. (The percentage for “All” respondents was lower, about 50%.) The list of aggregators to which they contribute varied little between the two groups, although the “Subset” respondents were less likely to mention DPLA Hubs. Although some of these responses indicated a murky understanding of what an aggregator is, it is clear that more research is needed into the many different kinds of aggregators that operate below or in parallel to DPLA Hubs and how they serve community-based organizations.

The majority of respondents in both groups who participated in aggregation found it somewhat to extremely easy. When asked about challenges, the main one is staffing. Respondents indicated that in some cases their contributions had to be entirely managed by staff at the aggregator or by a volunteer. They also found the process time-consuming and mentioned difficulties with the initial set-up process and in creating and managing metadata. One respondent expressed frustration that the aggregator they worked with did not provide clear enough instruction or metadata templates to ease the process. Another indicated that more mobile-friendly, intuitive tools are needed for community members to participate in “the labor of digitizing, describing, and sharing our content.” Staffing, time, and adequate resources were also the main reasons that organizations are not contributing to aggregators. After these, not being aware of aggregator websites was the next most common reason. It seems more concrete support is needed to facilitate participation in aggregators, as well as more awareness of what they are. A less common

but important concern was also whether the relationship with the aggregator was reciprocal.

Online exhibitions

Responses to the questions about online exhibitions were largely aligned between the “All” and “Subset” groups, although members of the “All” group were more likely to have created at least one exhibition. Over 80% of both groups had created and hosted their exhibitions independently. This high percentage suggests that creating online exhibitions is easier for community organizations than participating in aggregation, and that they do not require partnerships to do so.

Respondents used a wide variety of digital technologies to create their exhibitions, with the most popular being website editors like WordPress or Wix. Less than 20% mentioned Omeka, which is popular among academic institutions. “Subset” respondents’ use of Omeka was only 11%. This discrepancy suggests a gap in access to Omeka, which is open source but requires installation on a server to use. It also suggests that community organizations may be more exposed to the whims and economic situations of commercial software companies who may change or cease service without warning.

Around 60% of respondents indicated they collaborated with other organization(s) to create online exhibitions, although there was no consensus as to the type or nature of these collaborations. Some collaborations were as basic as loans from another institution; others were more engaged, such as hosting internships or participating in training. When asked how collaborations could be improved, respondents mentioned better project planning and delegation, more funding, and improved sharing of content between partners.

Among those who had not created online exhibitions, the overwhelming reason was a lack of staff or time (88-90%). Half cited a lack of funding, and 25-30% cited inability to digitize, inventory, or host their materials as a factor.

Respondents were generally receptive to the idea of creating an online exhibition using items available in an aggregator, with over 90% saying they were or might be interested. Respondents in the “All” group were slightly more positive than the “Subset” group, where there were more “Maybe” responses.

When asked what they would need to share their collections online, knowledgeable staff topped the list, followed by more opportunities to share, more funding, more accessible and easy-to-use tools, and support for hosting.

Community organizations are interested in sharing their content via online exhibitions and aggregation, although they are currently less active in these areas than they are in online events and social media. This may be the case because the latter methods are more accessible and easier to execute. This finding aligns with what respondents repeatedly named as their biggest challenge to sharing more broadly: knowledgeable staffing, with its attendant concerns of funding and time. Creating online exhibitions and participating in aggregation require more intensive and sustained engagement, both in terms of content creation and technology, and as such often require additional support.

Appendix

DPLA Participation Requirements Research Survey

Introduction

You have been invited to take part in this survey to help identify opportunities to expand and further the representation of community-centered archives (CCA) within digital content aggregators including the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). We define community-centered archives as collections documenting the lives of marginalized people that typically reside outside of traditional academic and government-run cultural heritage institutions.

Purpose

The aim of this survey is to:

- 1) learn how digital repositories and digital repository content aggregators currently collaborate with their contributors and other organizations;
- 2) learn about the role they play in making content from community archives discoverable; and
- 3) provide recommendations to digital repositories and content aggregators on how best to collaborate with community archives.

Expected Outcomes

The findings from this survey will help us understand the factors community-centered archives consider in making their content available on the DPLA, its Hubs, and digital aggregators in general. With these learnings, we intend to create a guide to facilitate conversations and collaboration between CCAs, aggregators, and other partnering organizations.

About This Study

We estimate this survey will take around 20 minutes to complete. All responses will be anonymized in public-facing reports and summaries based on this survey. We greatly appreciate your participation in helping us better understand the challenges faced by community-centered archives in sharing their content online.

This survey is being conducted by consultant Sharon Mizota in collaboration with colleagues at the University of California Irvine and the California Digital Library as part of

[Community-Centered Archives Practice: Transforming Education, Archives, and Community History](#). It is funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Sharon Mizota at sharon@sharonmizota.com on behalf of this project.

Thank you for your participation in this survey!
Sharon Mizota, University of California Irvine, and California Digital Library

I agree to participate in this survey

- Yes
- No, I prefer not to participate

DPLA Hub Overview

1. What is the name of your DPLA Hub?

<choose from drop down list>

ARTstor
Big Sky Country Digital Network
California Digital Library
Connecticut Digital Archive
Digital Commonwealth
Digital Library of Georgia
Digital Maine
Digital Maryland
Digital Virginias
District Digital
Empire State Digital Network
Green Mountain Digital Archive
Heartland Hub
Illinois Digital Heritage Hub
Indiana Memory
Internet Archive (Archive-It)
Internet Archive Community Webs
Jewish Heritage Network Hub
Minnesota Digital Library
Mississippi Digital Library
Mountain West Digital Library
NJ/DE Digital Collective
North Carolina Digital Heritage Center
Northwest Digital Heritage
Ohio Digital Network
OKHub
PA Digital
Plains to Peaks Collective

Portal to Texas History
Recollection Wisconsin
South Carolina Digital Library
Sunshine State Digital Network
Texas Digital Library
TX Hub
Other

2. What are your participation requirements and policies? Feel free to add any relevant URLs where these policies are posted.

<Open text field>

3. What requirements must potential contributors meet in order to provide content to your Hub? Check all that apply.

Getting started

- Submit an application form
- Sign a contract or memorandum of understanding

About the contributor

- Be an institution (not an individual or family)
- Be a nonprofit organization
- Be an educational or cultural institution
- Be based in a specific state or location
- Secure own funding
- Assign a specific staff member as contact point with Hub
- Notify hub about changes or updates to content and/or metadata

Collections and metadata

- Allow public access to physical collection
- Allow public access to digital collection
- Follow certain collections standards
- Follow certain metadata standards
- Provide rights statements
- Metadata is in the public domain or licensed Creative Commons 0

Images and digitization

- Follow certain digitization standards
- Provide thumbnails
- Have digitized materials or be able to digitize own materials

Technical infrastructure

- Have an OAI-PMH feed
- Have a content management system
- Have persistent URLs

Other

- Other <Open text field>

Contributors

4. How would you describe your approach to identifying potential new contributors? (Check all that apply)
- You actively reach out to organizations about participating in your Hub.
 - You welcome organizations or people who reach out to you, but are not actively soliciting contributors.

You are not accepting new contributors. (Skip to #10)

5. Please describe your outreach and engagement strategy in more detail. How and where do you discuss joining your Hub with potential contributors? What types of organizations do you reach out to?

< Open text field >

6. Do you actively reach out to community archives to join your Hub? Why or why not? We define community archives as collections documenting the lives of marginalized people that typically reside outside of traditional academic and government-run cultural heritage institutions.

<Open text field>

7. How do you determine which organizations become a contributor to your Hub?

<Open text field>

8. Describe any barriers or issues that make it difficult to contribute digital collections to your Hub.

<Open text field>

9. Why do potential contributors choose not to participate? (Check all that apply)

- Membership fee
- Unable to create their own metadata records
- Unable to digitize their own content
- Unable to host their own content

- Unable to meet requirements for harvesting metadata
- Need more time to prepare content
- Staffing limitations
- Cost of storage and/or hosting
- Other fiscal limitations
- Unsure of reasons
- Other, please describe <Open text field>

Community Archives and DPLA Hub Content

10. Does your Hub include community archives? We define community archives as collections documenting the lives of marginalized people that typically reside outside of traditional academic and government-run cultural heritage institutions.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

11. Please describe your Hub's services and efforts to support participation by community archives. Do you offer programs or services specifically for community archives?

<Open text field>

12. Does your Hub support content in languages other than English and support the display of metadata in non-English and/or non-Roman alphabet languages? Do you actively seek non-English language contributions from community archives?

<Open text field>

13. Do you provide different levels of access or permissions that enable contributors to determine who can access their materials? For example, can contributors restrict access to materials that have cultural requirements for viewing or use? If yes, please explain what levels or controls you provide.

- No
- Yes
- If yes, please explain: <Open text field>

Services and Costs

14. As a Hub, which of the following best describes the role you play for your contributors? (Check all that apply)

- Discovery and Access
- Description (metadata creation)
- Digitization
- Preservation
- Other, please describe <Open text field>

15. What services does your Hub offer to your contributors? (Please check all that apply)

Harvesting and hosting

- Harvest metadata records & thumbnail copies
- Host metadata records & full content files
- Digital asset management system
- Preservation storage

Metadata

- Item-level metadata creation
- Metadata normalization
- Institution description field: a written description of the contributing institution
- Collection-level description fields: written descriptions of individual collections

Digitization

- Digitization
- Referrals to digitization services

Training & support

- Conferences
- Webinars
- One-on-one consultations
- Resource guides
- Metadata training
- Digitization training

- Copyright/permissions resources
- Infrastructure creation support, such as training or assistance setting up DAMS or hosting
- OAI-PMH feed support, such as training or assistance setting up or maintaining a feed

Outreach & engagement

- Newsletters
- Blogs
- Social media

Curation & customization

- Institutional branding
- Digital exhibitions

Grants & funding

- Grants or sub-grants
- Assistance finding funds or grants
- Grant writing support

Access options

- Address copyright takedown requests
- Address privacy removal requests

- Address culturally sensitive removal requests
- Support access controlled by the contributor
- Support metadata-only access for records without images

Other

- Other, please describe <Open text field>

16. As a follow-up to the previous question, please share any additional details or context that may demonstrate your Hub's services. Examples are welcome.

<Open text field>

17. Do you charge fees for any of the following? (Check all that apply)

- Annual fee
- One-time fee
- Setup costs
- Metadata creation, editing, or normalization
- Digitization
- Storage
- Content management
- Other (please explain) <Open text field>

Thank you for your responses! If you have any questions about this study, please contact Sharon Mizota at sharon@sharonmizota.com.

Community-Centered Archives Survey: Sharing Your Content Online

Introduction

You are invited to participate in this survey as a representative of a community-centered archives (CCA). We define community-centered archives as organizations with collections of content or materials documenting the lives of underrepresented, marginalized, or disenfranchised people that typically reside outside of traditional academic and government-run cultural heritage institutions.

Purpose

This survey seeks to understand the participation of community-centered archives in two online activities:

- 1) Contributing digital content to aggregation websites, such as the [Digital Public Library of America \(DPLA\)](#). Aggregation websites bring together content from different sources into a single website. Other examples are [Umbra Search](#) and [Calisphere](#).
- 2) Creating online storytelling or exhibitions. Online storytelling and exhibitions present and interpret selections of digital items in a way that provides context and meaning for viewers. Examples include: [More than their Labor](#) and [Black Lives in Alaska](#).

Expected Outcomes

We hope to understand the factors CCAs consider in deciding to share their content online, as well as opportunities to increase their participation. This information will be used to create a resource guide to collaboration between CCAs and institutions, including regional aggregators and other organizations. We hope this resource will help CCAs share their content and stories more widely, in the process making aggregation sites and online exhibitions more inclusive.

About this Study

You do not need to provide any identifying information to participate in this survey. If you wish to provide your name and email at the end of survey, it will only be available to the researchers involved in the study. Access to your responses will also be restricted to researchers involved in this study. In the final resource guide, your responses to these questions will be anonymous; neither you nor your organization will be identified in the final report.

This survey is being conducted by consultant Sharon Mizota in collaboration with colleagues at the University of California Irvine and the California Digital Library as part of [Community-Centered Archives Practice: Transforming Education, Archives, and Community History](#). It is funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

We estimate this survey will take around 25 minutes to complete. We greatly appreciate your participation.

Please direct any questions about this survey to Sharon Mizota at sharon@sharonmizota.com. Thank you for your time and insights!

I agree to participate in this survey

- Yes
- No, I prefer not to participate

About Your Organization

1. What kind of organization do you represent?

- Non-profit
- Membership organization (labor union, professional association, etc.)
- Collective (mutual aid, community organizing, etc.)
- Other <free text>

2. What is your organization's mission?

<free text>

3. Is your primary mission to collect and preserve artifacts, records, and/or stories?

- Yes
- No

4. What audiences and communities do you serve?

<free text>

5. What state or territory is your organization located in?

<Dropdown menu of U.S. states and territories>

Sharing Your Content

6. In what ways do you currently share your content?

- Individual, in-person visits
- In-person events and programs
- In-person displays or exhibitions
- Physical newsletter or other publication
- Online catalog
- Aggregation website
- Online events and programs
- Online storytelling or exhibitions
- Organization's website
- Blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication
- Social media
- Online audiovisual content (podcasts, videos, etc.)
- 3D digital scans of objects or virtual environments
- None
- Other <free text>

7. Are you interested in sharing your content more broadly online?

- Yes
- No (please skip to #9)

8. Which methods of sharing would be most appropriate and appealing for your organization?

- Hosting an independent online catalog
- Contributing to an aggregation website
- Hosting independent online stories or exhibitions
- Creating online stories or exhibitions in collaboration with a hosting partner
- Creating a blog, e-newsletter, or other online publication
- Creating a video, podcast, or other audiovisual content
- Hosting online events and programs
- Sharing on social media
- Creating and sharing 3D digital scans of objects or virtual environments
- Other <free text>

9. Where do you go for information and resources on technical issues like digitization, metadata, storage, and web hosting?

<free text>

Aggregation Websites

10. Does your organization currently contribute digital content to an aggregation website? We define aggregation websites as sites that bring together digital content from multiple sources into a single discovery website, like [DPLA](#) or [Umbra Search](#).

- Yes
 No (Please skip to #14)

11. Which aggregation websites do you contribute to?

<free text>

12. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most difficult and 5 being the easiest, how would you rate your experience with the aggregation website?

Most difficult 1 2 3 4 5 Easiest

13. Did you experience any challenges when contributing your materials? If so, please describe them.

<free text>

14. If you are not contributing to an aggregation website, what is/are the reason(s)? (Select all that apply)

- Not aware of aggregation websites
 Our materials are not online
 Our materials are not digitized
 Our materials are not adequately inventoried or described
 Don't have the staff or time
 Don't know how
 Don't have adequate financial resources
 Legal/copyright concerns
 It's not culturally appropriate to share our content freely online

- Not interested in contributing/not appropriate for our communities
- Other <free text>

15. If you are interested in contributing to an aggregation website, what would most help you to do so?

<free text>

Online Storytelling and Exhibitions

16. Has your organization created online stories or exhibitions? We define online storytelling and exhibitions as selections of digital items presented and interpreted in a way that provides context and meaning for viewers. Examples include: [More than their Labor](#) and [Black Lives in Alaska](#).

- Yes
- No (Please skip to #22.)

17. How many online stories or exhibitions have you created?

- 1
- 2-5
- 6-10
- More than 10

18. Did you create and host them independently or did you collaborate with another organization, community members, or an individual? (Select all that apply)

- Created and hosted independently
- Collaborated with another organization
- Collaborated with community members
- Collaborated with an individual

19. Please briefly describe the tool(s) and platform(s) you used to present the story or exhibition(s):

<free text>

20. If you collaborated with another organization(s), community members, or individual(s), please briefly describe the collaboration(s):

<free text>

21. If you were to collaborate with that organization(s), community members, or person(s) again, what would you do differently?

<free text>

22. If you haven't created online stories or exhibitions, why not? (Check all that apply)

- Our materials are not online
- Our materials are not digitized
- ~~Our materials are not adequately inventoried or described~~
- Don't have the staff or time
- Don't know how
- Don't have adequate financial resources
- Legal/copyright concerns
- It's not culturally appropriate to share our materials online
- Not interested/not appropriate for the communities we serve
- Other <free text>

23. If you are interested in creating an online story or exhibition, what would most help you to do so?

<free text>

24. Would your organization be interested in creating an online story or exhibition with items already available in a digital aggregator or regional hub? This might involve creating a narrative around digital images from other organizations' content that is related to your own, or combining them with your materials.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

25. Is there anything else that would help you share your collections online?

26. We are also conducting interviews with select community-centered archives. If you are interested in being interviewed, please enter your name and email address

below. Your answers to the survey questions will still be anonymized in the final report and your name and contact information will only be available to researchers for the purposes of this study.

<free text>

Thank you for your participation. Please direct any questions about this survey to Sharon Mizota at sharon@sharonmizota.com.