

August 2022

DPLA Survey Report

Executive Summary

This report details the findings of the Rhode Island DPLA (Digital Public Library of America) survey delivered through the month of May, 2022. The goals of the survey were to assess the digital collections landscape across the state and better understand the various institutions' workflows around digitization and metadata.

The survey included 28 questions and received 118 submissions, of which 69 had a completion rate of 80% or higher. In cases in which institutions provided multiple responses, the data was aggregated, and when applicable, the largest quantity was selected to represent numeric responses.

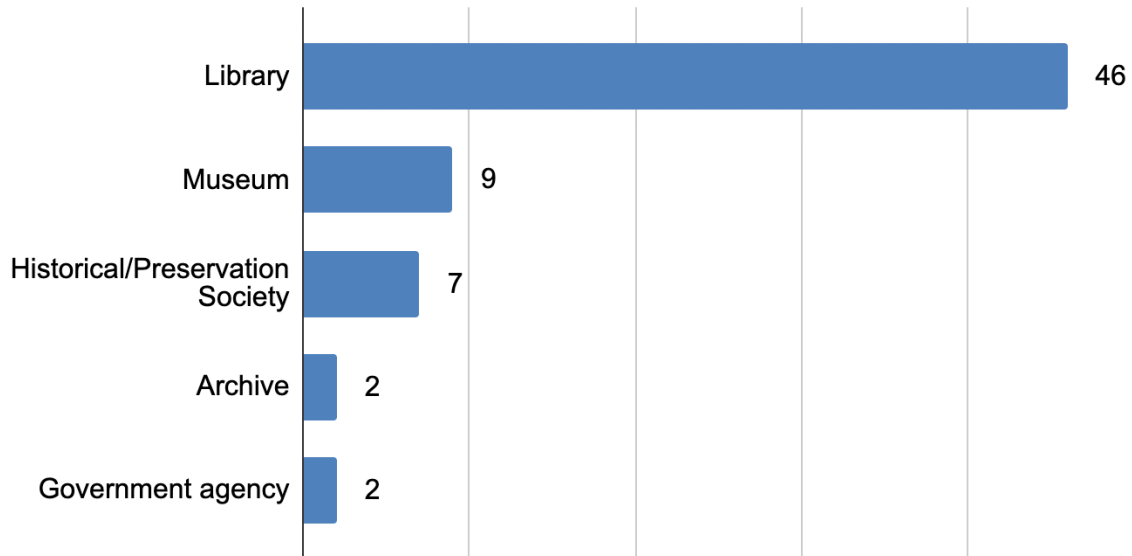
The survey was shared via email to 170 different cultural heritage institutions statewide on May 5, 2022, and was open for submission until May 27, 2022. In addition, two participants shared their responses via video call.

The survey revealed that a majority of respondents have digital collections of some form. Those collections vary in size, content, formats, and hosting platforms. Their digitization programs are described at all stages of maturity—from newly-developed to well-established—and most institutions would welcome additional resources. Small digitization staff are common, often supported by student workers, volunteers, or others who may not have formal training: "We have no paid staff, but that doesn't mean we don't get work done," was a common response. There is a wide range in how many hours an organization can devote to digitization per week. Often the time dedicated to digitization and description varies since few have staff dedicated solely to these tasks. Digitization and description work are frequently rolled into one role and only as a portion of wider job duties: "Our digitization and metadata work occurs in tandem, so the hours per week vary depending on the projects."

Survey Data

This section includes the questions as presented in the survey with either graphs generated using the data gathered, a summary of responses shared as free text, or the actual free text responses in table form for the 69 institutions that reached a completion rate of 80% or higher.

Q1 - Which of the following most closely describes your organization's primary function or service? (select one)

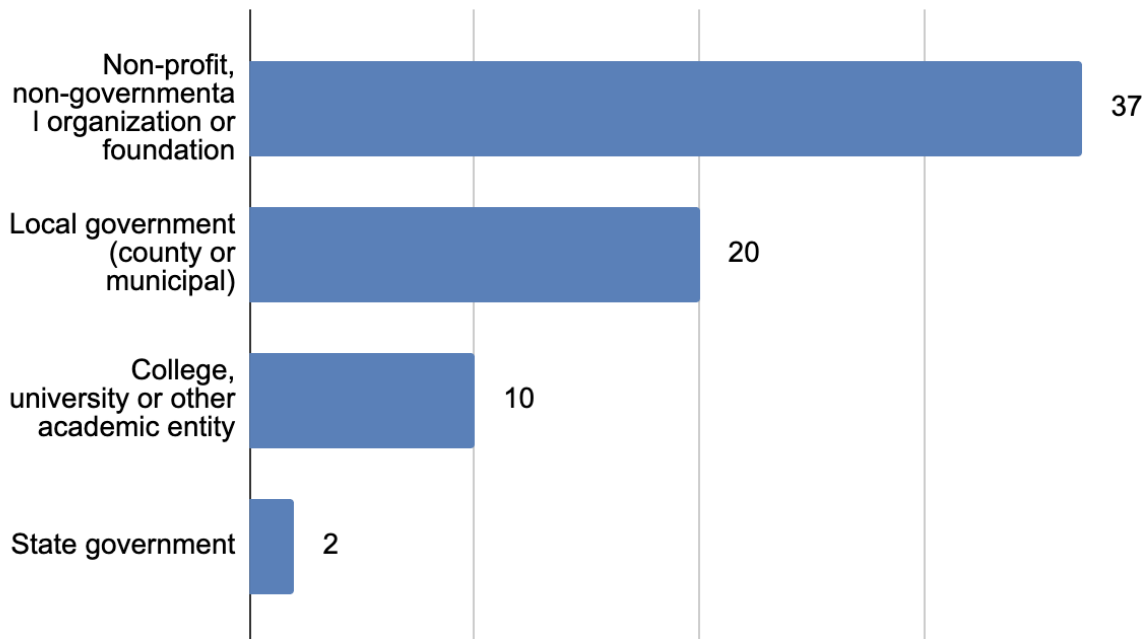


Q2 - Specify discipline

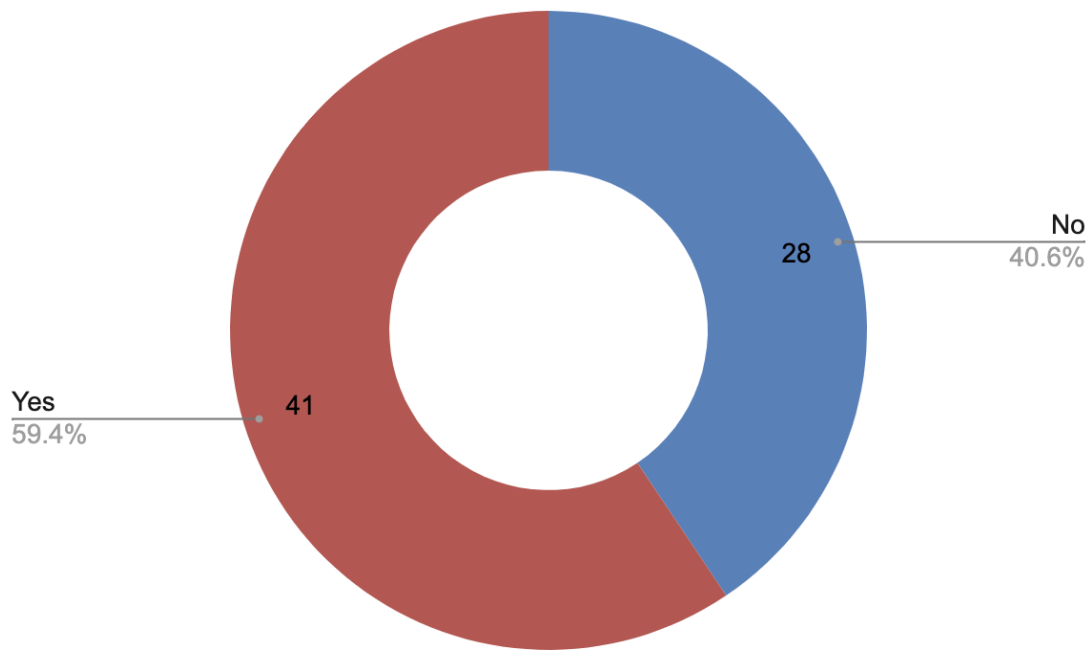
| | |
|---|---|
| Academic Library | 3 |
| Academic Institution Archives; Rare Books; Manuscript Collections | 1 |
| American History | 1 |
| Art and Design | 1 |
| Cape Verdean American/History/Library | 1 |
| Citizen science organization, Marine Archaeology | 1 |
| Collection Information & Digital Resources | 1 |
| Community and General Interest | 1 |
| Community and Military Memorabilia | 1 |
| General & Special Collections | 1 |
| Historical Artifacts and Education | 1 |
| History | 1 |
| Industrial History | 1 |
| Leadership | 1 |
| Liberal Arts | 1 |
| Maritime History | 1 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Natural History, Environmental Science | 1 |
| Parade, Community Celebration | 1 |
| Popular Materials Library | 1 |
| Portraiture | 1 |
| Public Library | 29 |
| Public Library, Special Collections, Digital Library, Education | 1 |
| Reference and Education Material | 1 |
| Rhode Island State Government Records | 1 |
| Small Rural Library | 1 |
| Special Collections/Higher Education | 1 |
| Special/Government | 1 |
| Synagogue/National Historic Site | 1 |
| Town Clerk, Vitals, Land Evidence, Historical Records, Probate, Town Council, Municipal Court, Licensing | 1 |
| Washington County, Rhode Island | 1 |
| Yachting | 1 |

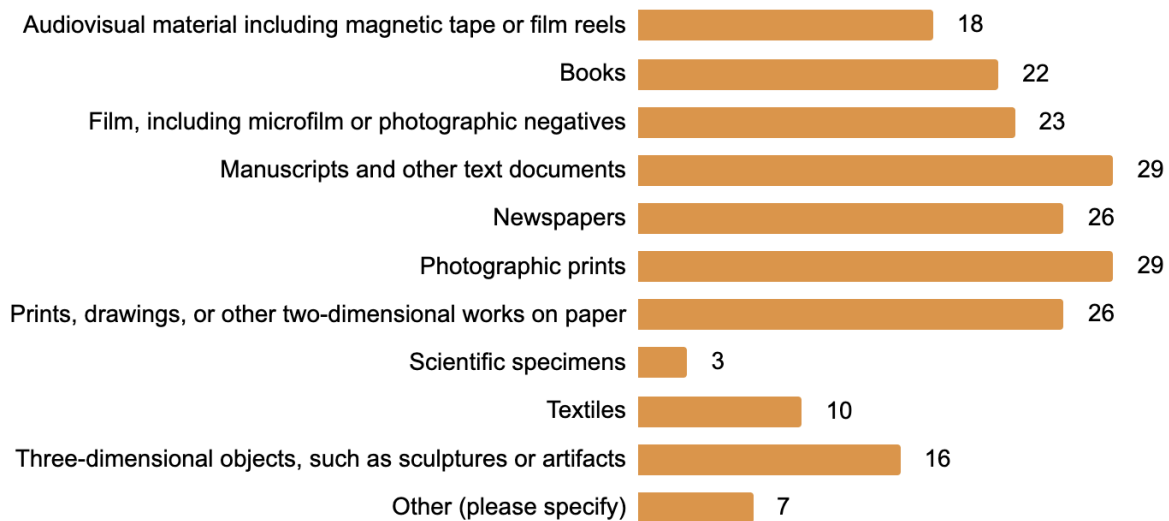
Q3 - Which of the following most closely describes your organization's governance? (select one)



Q4 - Does your organization have digital collections?



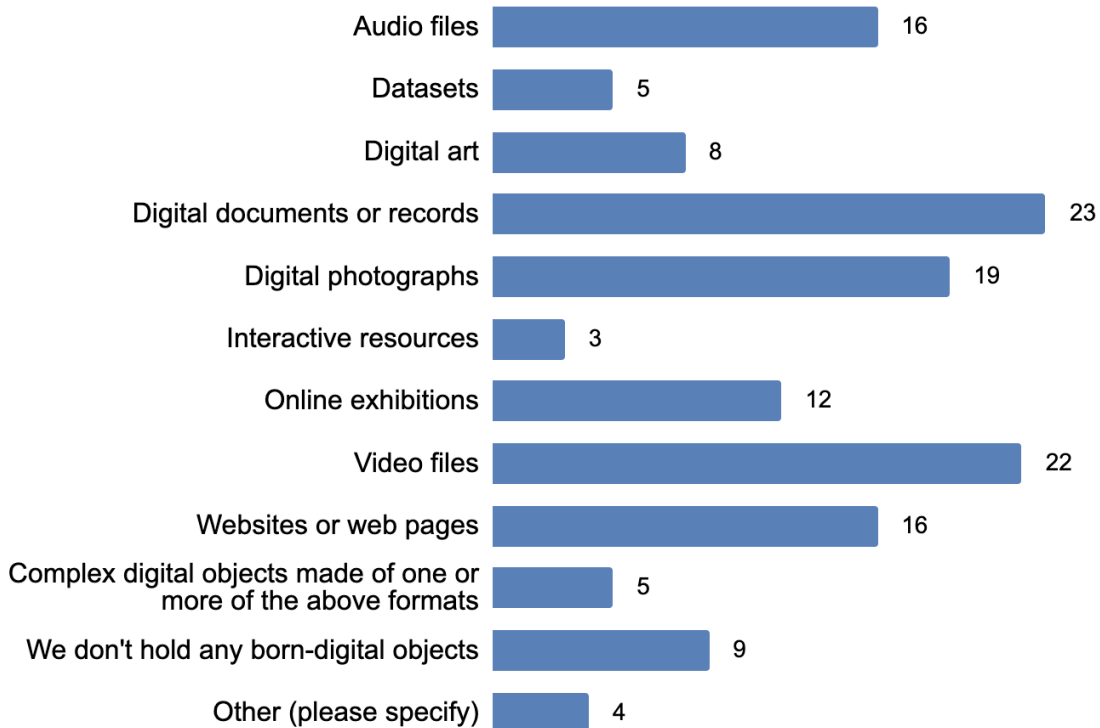
Q5 - What kinds of objects does your organization hold that it has digitized, or plans to digitize? (select any that you have available or intend to make available online).



Q5 - Other (please specify)

- Books: online catalog only
- While we offer access to digital collections we have not digitized any of these ourselves
- Minutes of Town Council meetings
- Organizational archives, original archaeological field data, etc., Primary Scientific Data Sets
- Oil on canvas paintings
- Land Evidence, Town Council Minutes, recordings of meetings, maps. probate records
- We utilize digitized ebooks and audiobooks through the RI library system

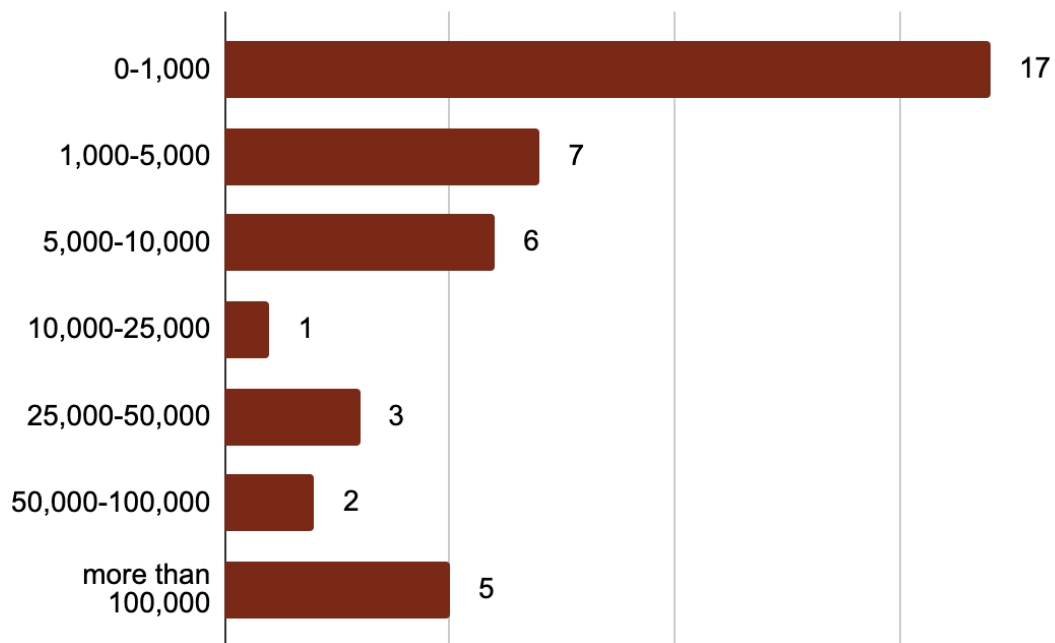
Q6 - What formats of born-digital content, if any, are included in your organization's digital collections? (select any that you have available or intend to make available online).



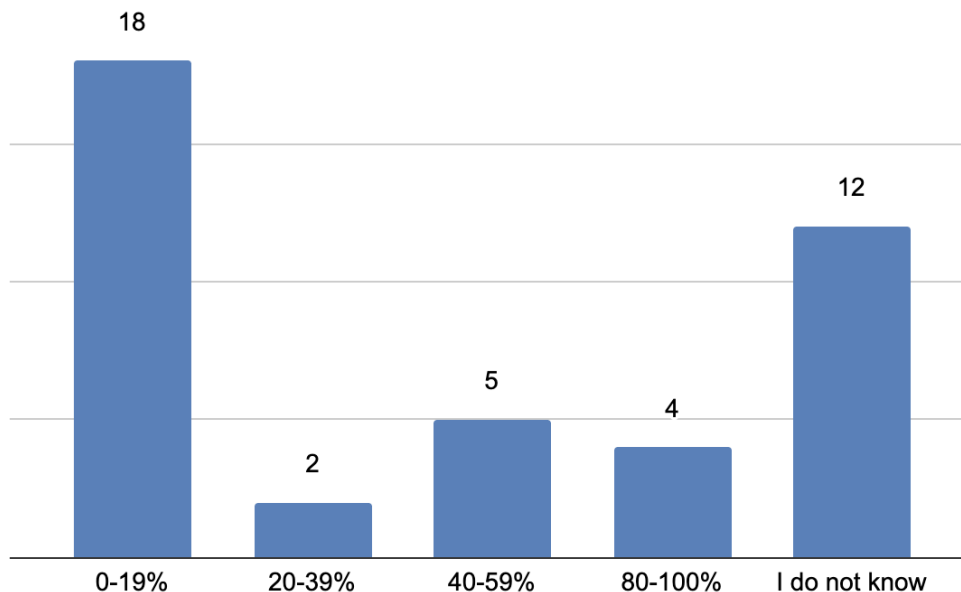
Q6 - Other (please specify)

- Artifacts, we are beginning to digitize
- What is made publicly available through our website is carefully controlled. Access to legitimate scholars to other materials may be allowed on a case by case basis. The only materials that are available at present are on our website
- Virtual tours of our properties
- Same as previous- ebooks & audiobooks through the RI Library System only at the moment

Q7 - Approximately how many digital objects or records does your organization have that are currently discoverable and publicly accessible through your online repository? (select one)



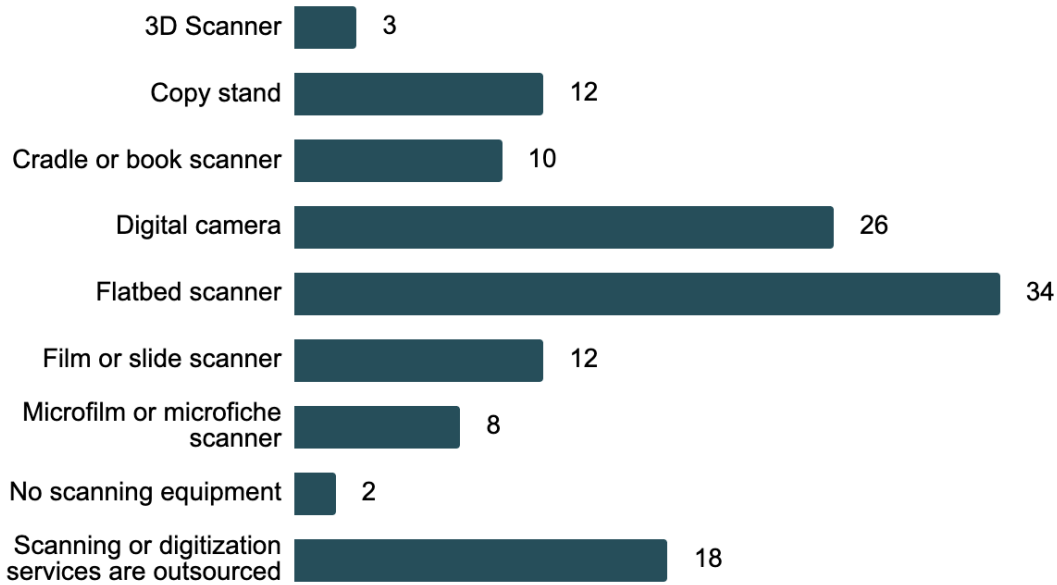
Q8 - What is the estimated percentage that the above number of publicly accessible digital objects represents of your total digital collections, whether complete, in-progress, or planned over the next five years? (select one)



Q9 - Please provide any comments or context about the extent of your collections that are online and publicly available.

Making digital collections publicly available is clearly valued among respondents. Many have digitization efforts under way to some extent, even if it is an early stage, and list a number of barriers to making collections available online, especially the upkeep of digital collections: "Very little of our scanned content is available online. We are considering the costs of hosting online materials, and if the demand would justify it." Organizations typically prioritize digitizing collections that see a lot of use: "Collections online are mostly those that our patrons frequently request. Currently, we are focused on creating good records to make materials discoverable." Institutions often identify newspapers as their most valuable resources, followed by photographs and other images. Attention may also be given to materials whose physical access is under threat or uncertain: "There is a small local history collection [...] slated to be moved to a newly acquired town building. Their plans for digitization are undetermined." Some expressed concerns about the relevance of their holdings to a Rhode Island DPLA hub: "[our] collection is diverse in scope and most of our collection is not connected specifically with Rhode Island."

Q10 - Please indicate the types of scanning or digital capture equipment the organization currently has. (select all that apply)



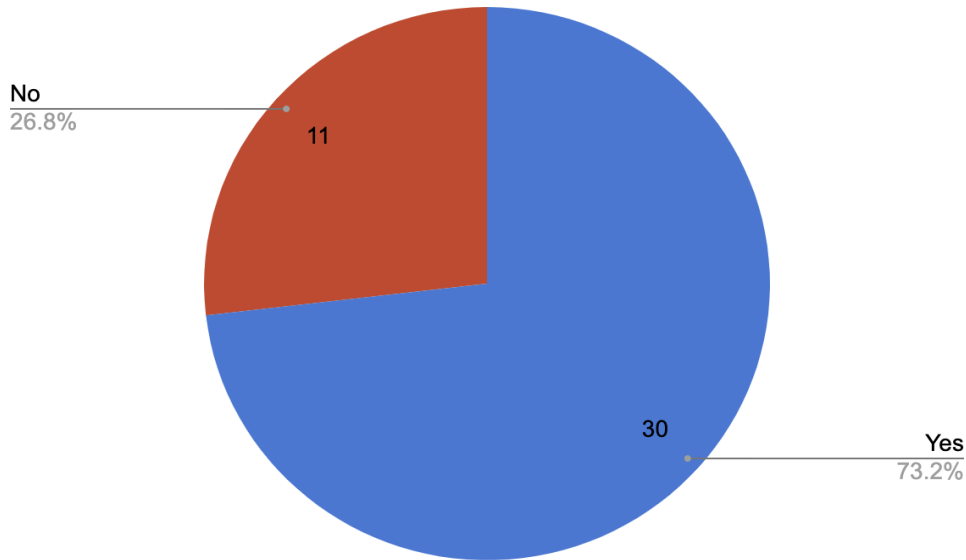
Q11 - List vendors used in scanning outsourcing.

There is a variety of the vendors and contractors used in outsourced scanning, from individuals to larger companies (see table below). Advantage Preservation is a popular service for both digitization and online hosting. Additional investigation into Advantage Preservation's (now called Advantage Archives) digitization standards and potential for harvesting collections will be needed. One summary of working with Advantage Preservation: "we work with a company that digitizes content we select and they host the data on-line."

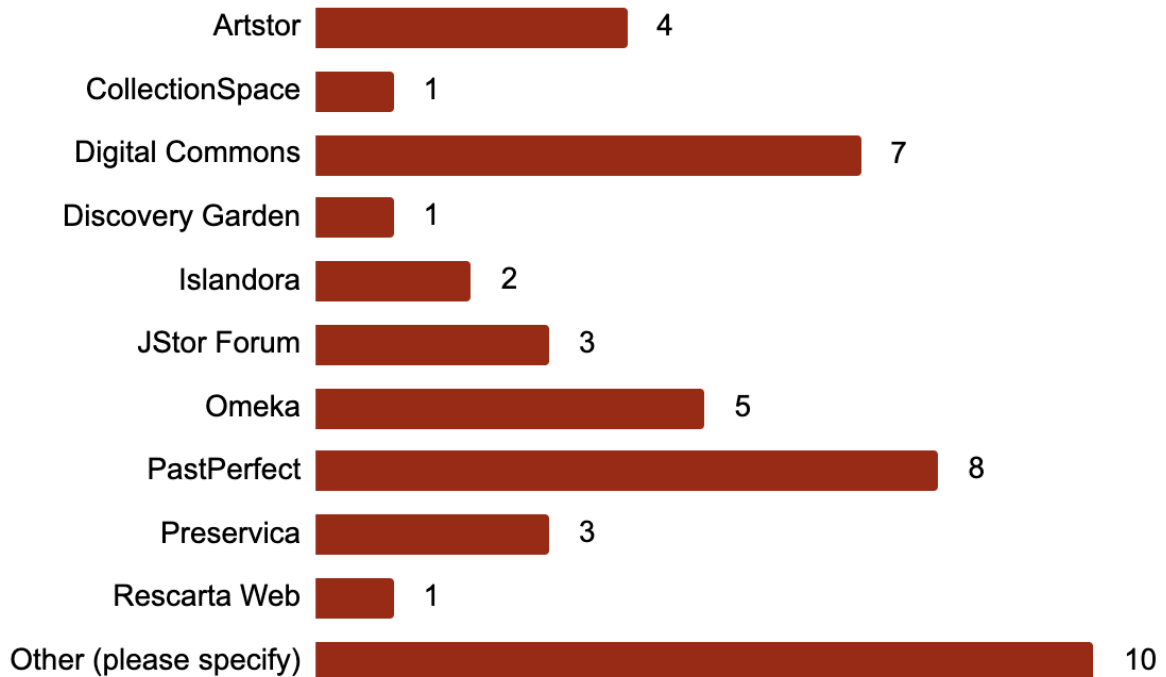
| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Advantage Archives | 1 |
| Advantage Preservation | 5 |
| Avenu Insights & Analytics | 1 |
| Civic Plus | 1 |
| Contract photographer | 1 |
| Digital Ark | 3 |
| George Blood LP | 1 |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Mass Productions | 1 |
| NEDCC | 2 |
| Photography by Erik Gould | 1 |
| Roger Williams University | 1 |
| Scene Savors | 1 |
| The Media Preserve | 1 |

Q12 - Do you use a content management system to provide online access or store your digital collections?



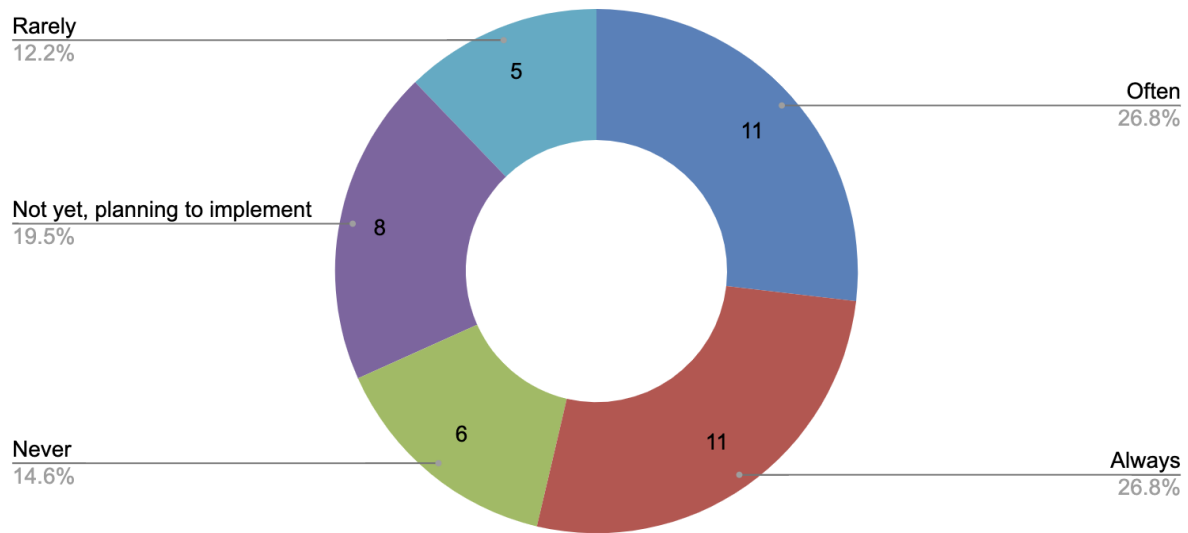
Q13 - What content management systems/digital repositories are used in your organization to store and provide access to digital content? (select all that apply)



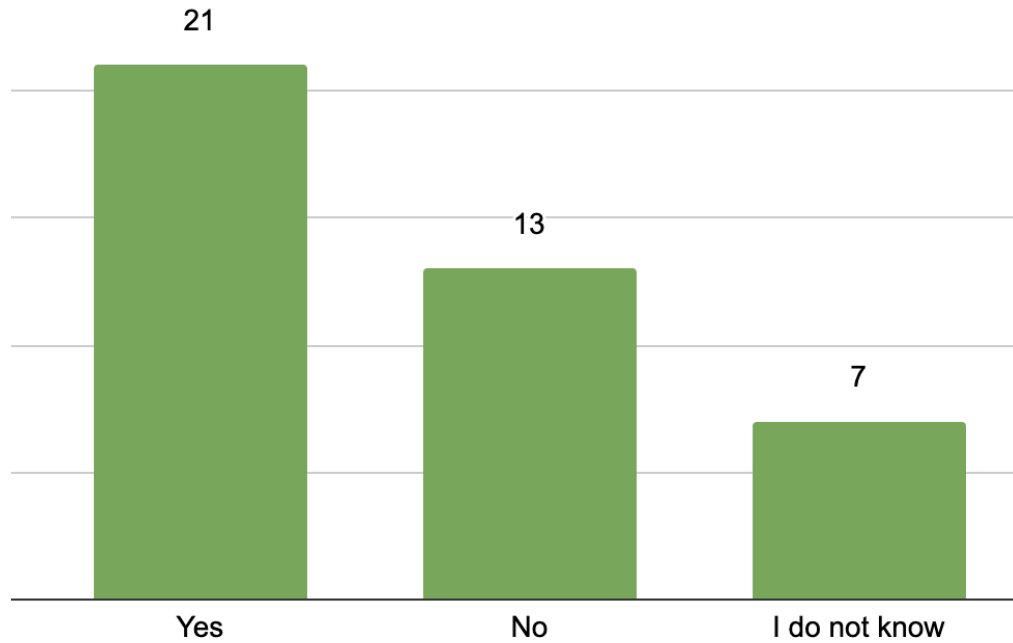
Q13 - Other (please specify)

- Advantage Archives
- BUL: Oxford Common File Layout (OCFL) ; BU: Widen
- Catalogued cd's are discoverable on the library's integrated library system
- Department of Vital Records, State Archives
- MIMSY
- Minisis
- Museum Plus
- Private company
- We use a simple chronological/alphabetical sorting system that is adequate for our internal use

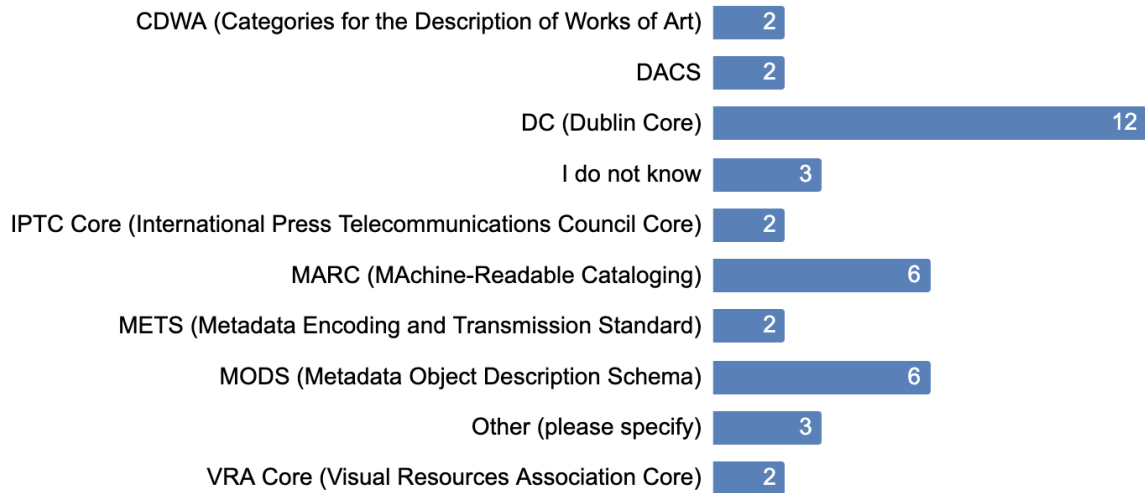
Q14 - Is your organization following the Federal Agency Digitization Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) for digitization?



Q15 - Is your organization creating descriptive metadata and associating it with your digitized items?



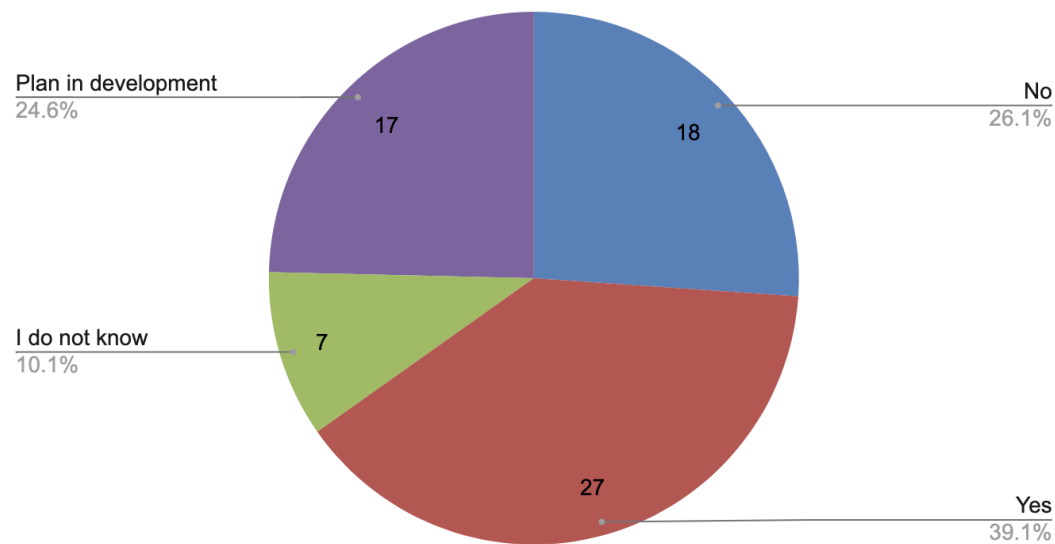
Q16 - Please indicate which descriptive metadata standard(s)/schema(s) you currently use. (select all that apply)



Q16 - Other (please specify)

One participant indicated that their institution follows a local practice while another one noted: "We have no need of these systems to manage our collections for internal use".

Q17 - Does your organization have a plan to digitize collections/items and make them publicly discoverable online?

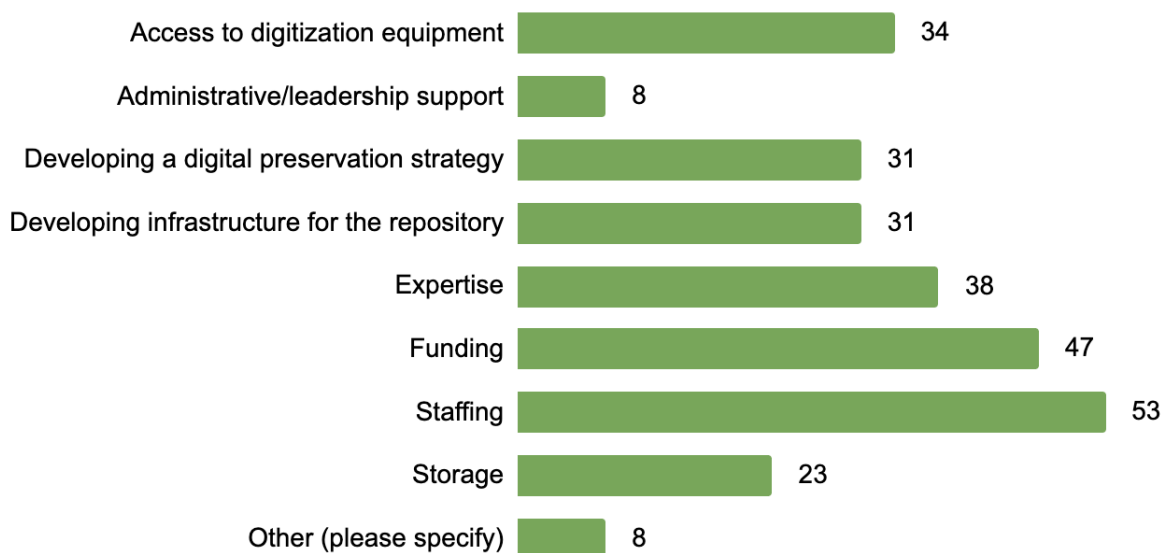


Q18 - Describe what plans your organization has or what stage it is at for digitizing collections.

The responses showed organizations at all stages of developing and implementing a digitization program. Some have well-established digitization approaches: "We are currently in the fifth year of our digitization initiative. We have collections and archives hosted online and accessible to the public"; "We have been using direct capture equipment and recognized standards since 2003." Many are at earlier stages, having just begun planning or scanning: "Very early stage of discussion. [...] I would like to build on this further with some of our less accessible collection items and archival materials." "We are in the [planning] stages of digitizing many of our documents mostly kept in our in house library. We hope to apply for funds to help with this." Others are held up waiting on resources like staffing or funding: "we digitize primarily archival materials in house and outsource when funds are available." Even if institutions' digital collections do not always conform to broader digital collections standards—such as collections commonly hosted on

Flickr—they are set up in ways that meet the needs of their staff and patrons. Collecting the URLs for each institution's online repository would be a good way to get a clearer picture of these collections' statuses, and their current suitability for ingesting to DPLA.

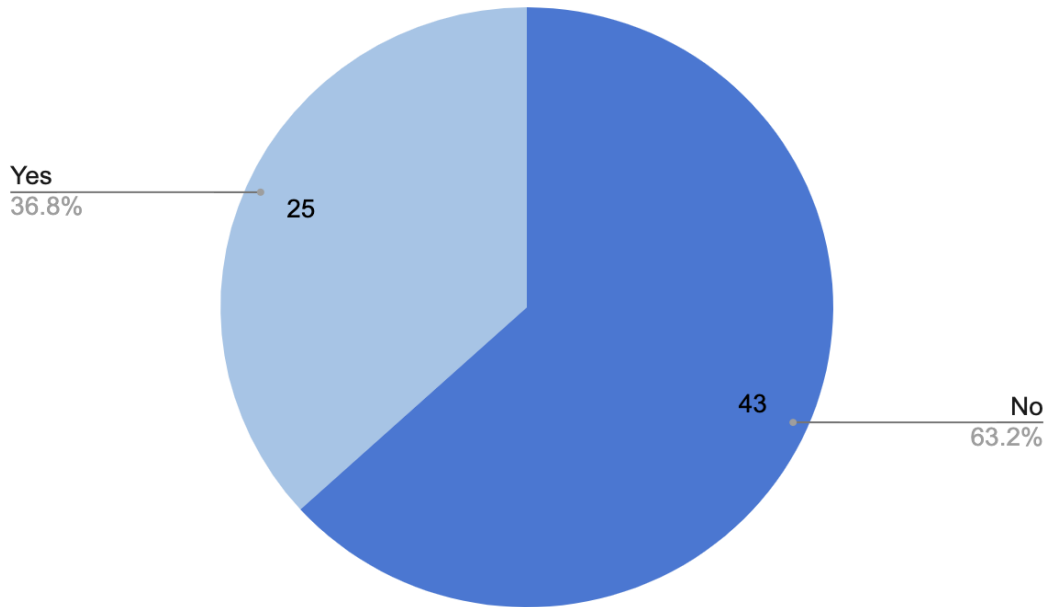
Q19 - What challenges does your organization have in providing access to digital collections? (select all that apply)



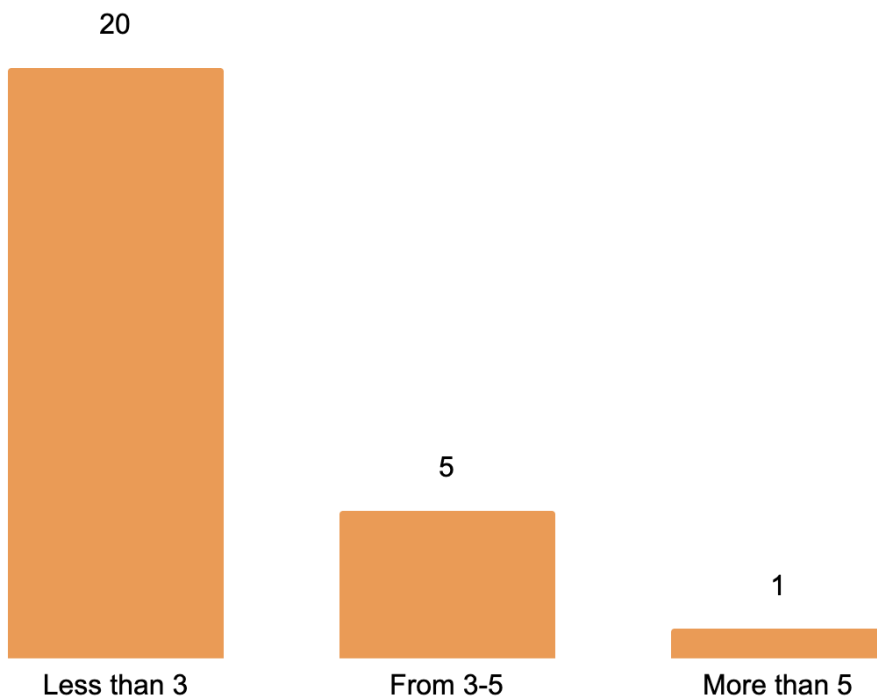
Q19 - Other (please specify)

Whether an institution has an established digitization program or is just beginning to research such a program, challenges to digitization and access can occur at any level. Difficulty digitizing specific formats ("audio"), "long-term sustainability and preservation", "publicity", lack of time, "creating metadata for the volume of digitized materials", and keeping up with "maintenance issues with older systems" are cited as current challenges. Institutions also run up against larger issues in building digital collections: "The local history collection would be the most likely material for digitization but it is not under our jurisdiction."

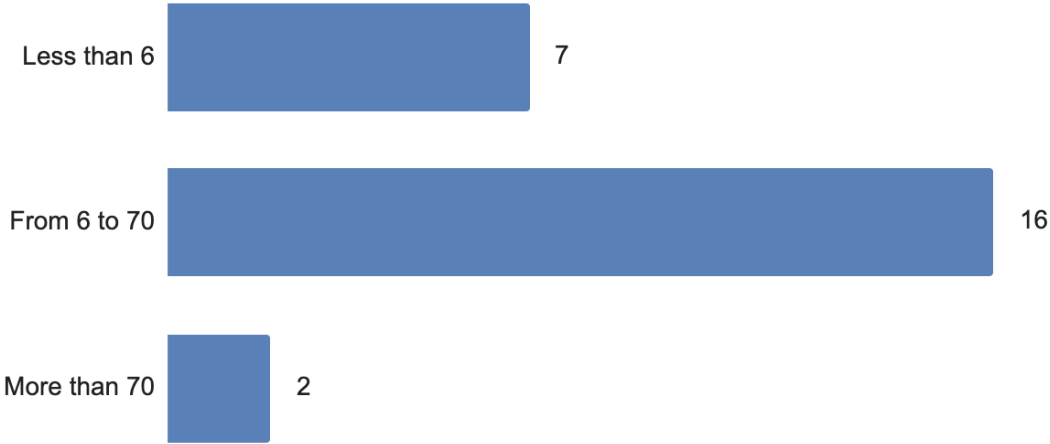
Q20 - Does the organization have staff whose duties include digitization of materials for inclusion in an online repository?



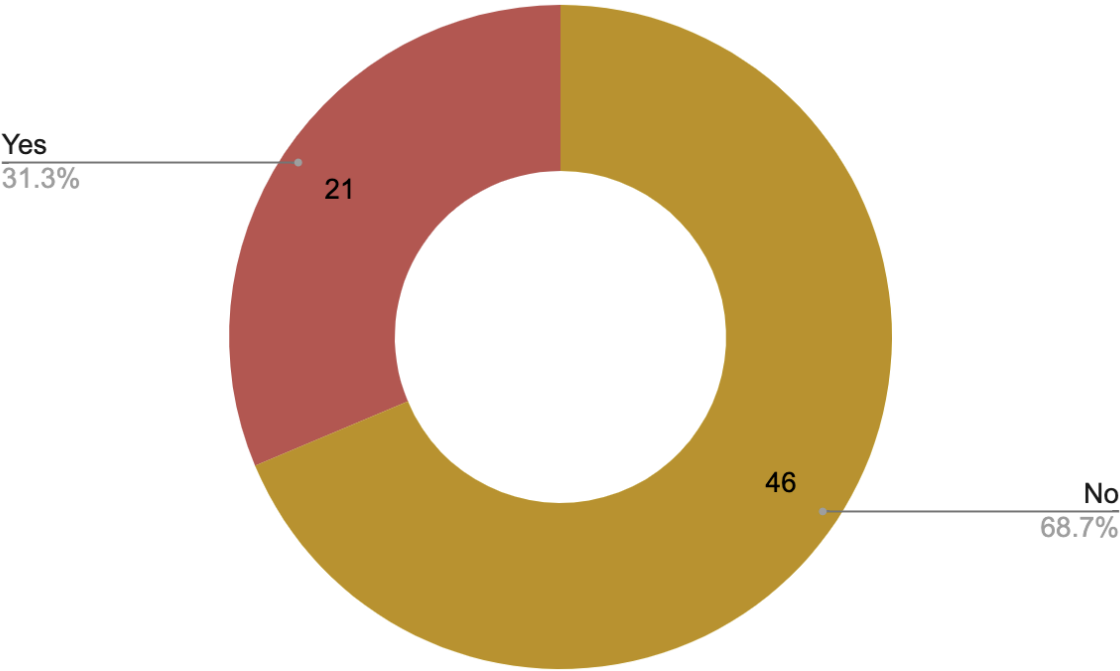
Q21 - How many staff members have duties that include digitization?



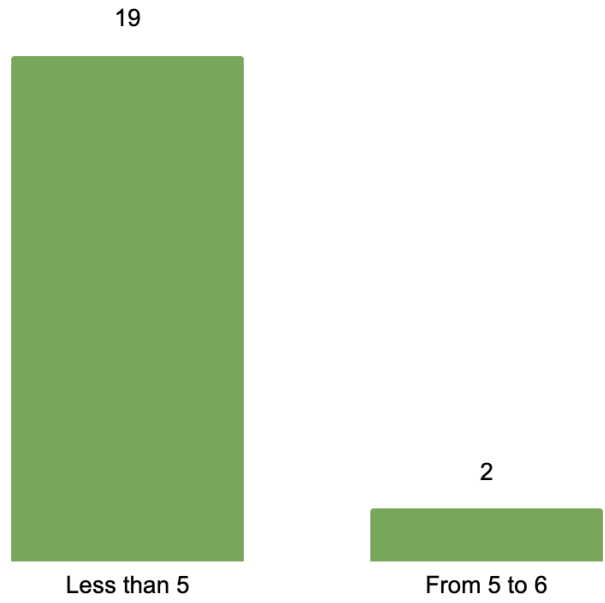
Q22 - How many hours per week are spent on this task?



Q23 - Does the organization have staff whose duties include descriptive metadata work for materials to be included in an online repository?



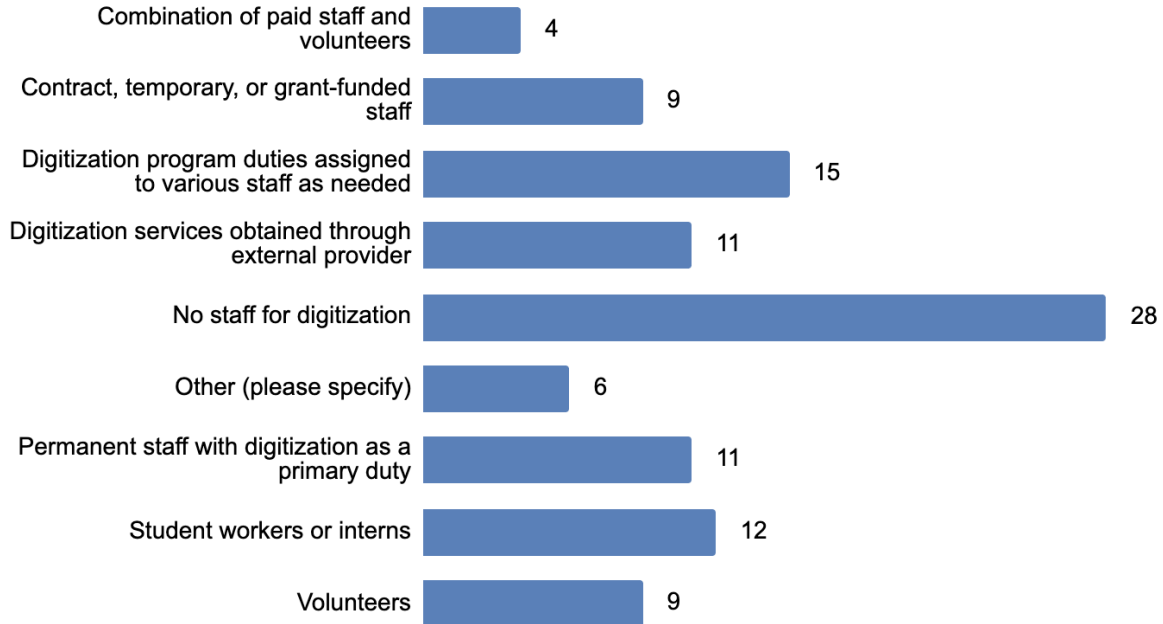
Q24 - How many staff members have duties that include metadata work for digital objects?



Q25 - How many hours per week are spent on this task?



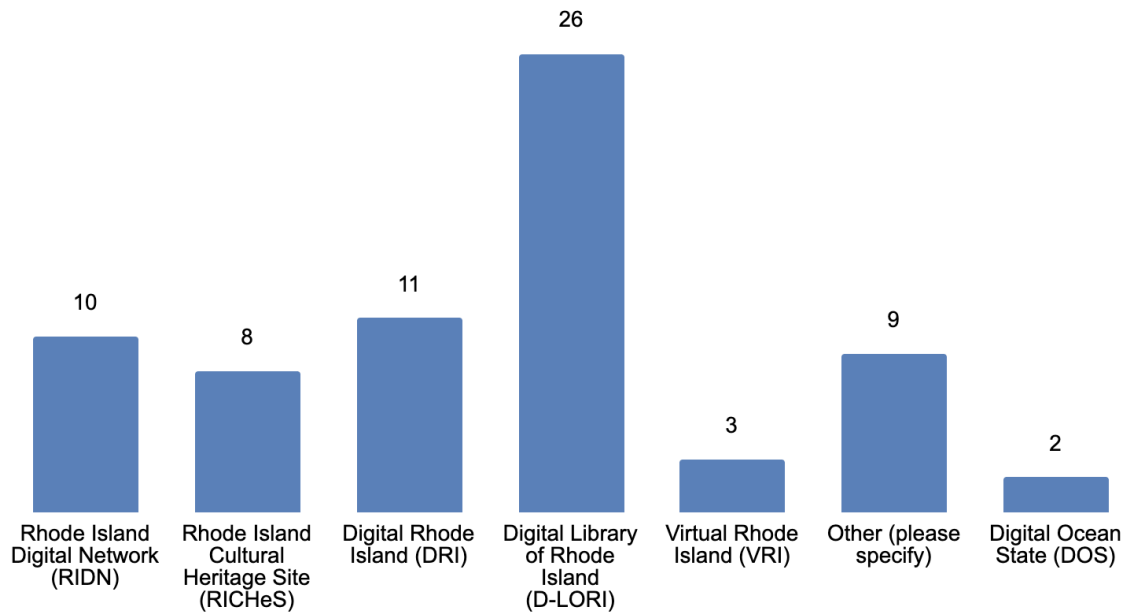
Q26 - Which of the following most closely describes current staffing for your digitization program. (select all that apply)



Q26 - Other (please specify)

The commitment to support digitization varies per institution, with some having staff members who are assigned digitization duties (with one doing so when time permits), and another one where the digitization support comes from volunteers. One noted they were currently working on staffing their digitization program.

Q27 - Help us choose a name for the hub (select one)



Q27 - Other (please specify)

| |
|--|
| Digital Library of Rhode Island And Neighbors (D-LORIAN) |
| Ocean State Digital Libraries |
| Digital Rhode Island Virtual Experience (DRIVE) |
| DPLRI |
| Rhode Island Digital Library |
| Digital Library of Rhode Island (D-LORI) |
| The Anchor |

Q28 - Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

There is a lot of enthusiasm for the Rhode Island DPLA hub. A significant portion responded well to the idea of a centralized hub and how that can improve access to digital collections in Rhode Island: "It would be great if we were all able to do the same thing under one umbrella for consistency for the public." Many other organizations hope to find support from the DPLA initiative in implementing their digitization efforts: "We would love help in funding to digitize our library and other collections."