

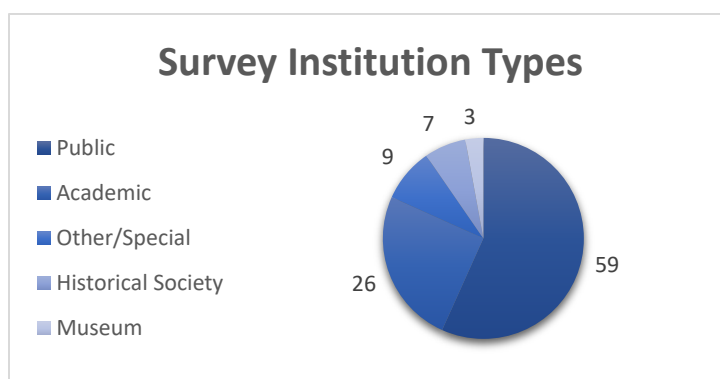
# State Library of Ohio

## 2020 Digital Collections Survey Report

### Introduction

The State Library of Ohio conducted a voluntary digital survey of all cultural heritage institutions in the state to ascertain the level of institutional involvement and interest in digitization, digital collections, and digital preservation work. The survey was built in Microsoft Forms and shared through email listservs. It was open for responses from November 5, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Identifying information such as institution and contact names was recorded but the data shared publicly has been anonymized.

104 institutions responded to the survey, the majority of which were public libraries of varying size. We were happy to see a range of other institutions too, including museums, archives, historical societies, and academic and special libraries.



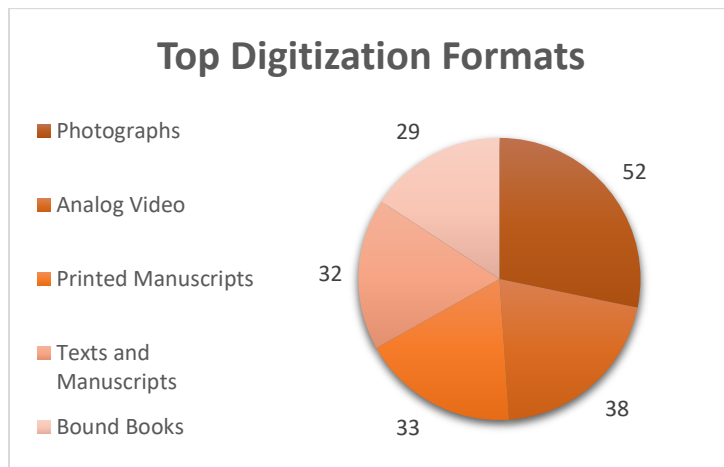
We plan to use this data to shape the State Library's Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five Year Plan, build supportive relationships with other Ohio organizations supporting this work, and to direct the work of the digitization consultant program at the State Library itself.

### Digitization

Of these 104 institutions, **63%** are currently in the process of digitizing items and creating digital collections. **25%** of these are working under an organizationally-approved digitization plan, and **23%** have permanent positions related to digitization work. There is a wide range of departments in which these positions are placed, ranging from the general (Adult Services) to the specific (Digital Collections, Services, and Production Unit).

And while those 65 institutions are doing digitization work, only **18%** of them have dedicated budget space to the work. Another **18%** of them do not expect the budget to change significantly in the next five years, but **27%** are unsure. In contrast, **58%** of these organizations expect the number of items they have digitized to grow in the next five years.

The widest range of responses, as expected, is digitization formats. The top five categories are photographs; analog video; printed newspapers; texts, manuscripts, and other multipage items; and bound books



By far, the most popular digitization equipment is from Epson, but a wide range of software products is used in the digitization process. The majority of these are in the Adobe Creative Suite, with ABBYY FineReader another popular option.

When asked, the **39** institutions who are not digitizing indicated that it's mostly due to lack of available staff to do the work, or a lack of funding and focusing on other projects.

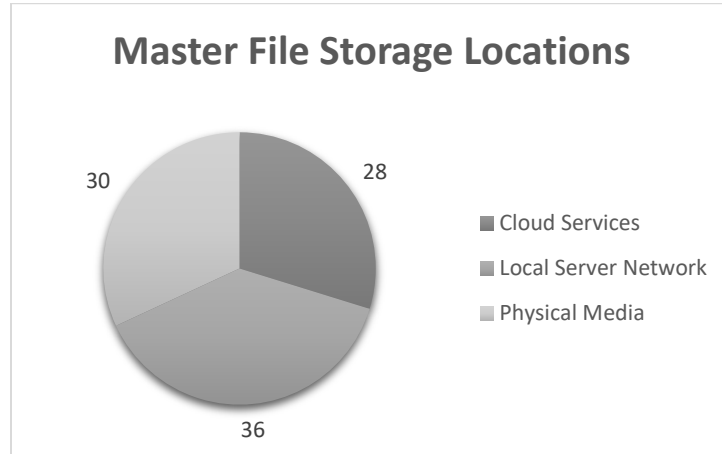
However, **33%** of these institutions do have plans to begin in the next five years, and **49%** are unsure if they will or not. More funding and training for these projects were given as factors that would help achieve this goal.

### **Digital Collections**

Closely in line with the number of institutions reporting current digitization work, 67 of the 104 survey respondents report that their institutions currently maintain digital collections. **78%** of that group expect them to grow in size in the next five years.

The most popular Digital Asset Management systems are CONTENTdm, Digital Commons/bepress, and Islandora-based solutions, although some institutions use more than one platform to display and manage their digital collections.

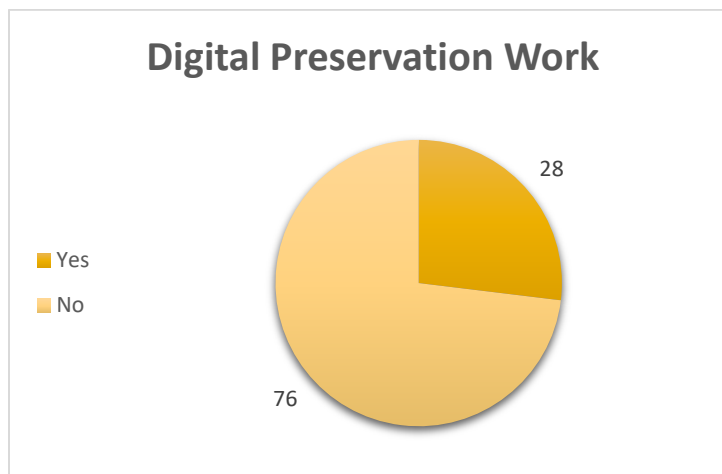
Long understood to be a best practice in collection management, the master and archival files for these collections are stored in multiple locations, including with vendors like AWS and DuraCloud. Files are split between cloud storage services, local storage server networks, and physical storage media.



**35%** of the 37 institutions with no digital collections at this time plan to create one in the next five years and **38%** are unsure if they will. Stronger organizational interest and more funding are listed as supports that would enable this change.

### Digital Preservation

A minority of survey respondents identified their institutions as doing some sort of digital preservation work, at 28 out of 104 total. **43%** of these institutions have a formal digital preservation plan, and **18%** of them have permanent positions dedicated to digital preservation work.



With a smaller departmental range than for digitization work, **68%** do not have a set budget allotment for digital preservation but **96%** expect the volume of their content to increase in the next five years.

The most-used digital preservation practices (with many institutions using multiple solutions) are format migration and metadata creation, each used by **79%** of respondents doing digital preservation work, with storage and bit preservation close behind at **54%** of institutions.

14 vendors platforms and services were listed as currently in use, the highest being CONTENTdm/OCLC and Ohio Memory (also a CONTENTdm platform). Institutions are using Openrefine, ExifTool, and JHOVE2 more than any other software products.

Of the 76 institutions who responded that they were not currently working in digital preservation, **50%** of them plan to begin in the next five years, and **71%** are unsure if they will. Stronger interest and support from leadership, more funding, and more staff were all listed as way this work would be made easier.

### **What the State Library can do to support this work**

The last section of the survey was an open-ended question asking what the State Library could do to support the beginning of digital collections work and its ongoing nature. Over half of the survey respondents provided extremely helpful insight and suggestions, with few trends and categories leading the way:

- Financial support including grant funds for equipment, services, and professional development, and consortia-style discount pricing on software and digital asset management software
- Statewide/centralized collaborative platforms such as Ohio Memory but for dedicated digital preservation use
- Training, training, and more training! Ranging from digitization workflows and best practices, project management, specific equipment and vendor trainings, and copyright assessment

### **Conclusion**

Based on the responses to this survey, it's clear that digitization, digital collections, and digital preservation work continue to grow in size and importance to the overall work that cultural heritage organizations in Ohio are doing today. Many are expanding to more work with less institutional support and see that ratio gap widening in the future. The cross-institution feedback provided demonstrates that there are many opportunities for the State Library of Ohio to support and grow this work, both through collaboration with other statewide organizations and through their own strategic planning and grant funding programs.

Questions? Contact State Library of Ohio Digitization Consultant Jen Johnson at [jjohnson@library.ohio.gov](mailto:jjohnson@library.ohio.gov)