TXETDA WEBINAR 2021

ACCESSIBILITY OF ETDS: RAISING THE BAR

Presented by:
Liz Johnson (Montana State University)
Colleen Lyon (University of Texas)
Laura Waugh (Texas State University)

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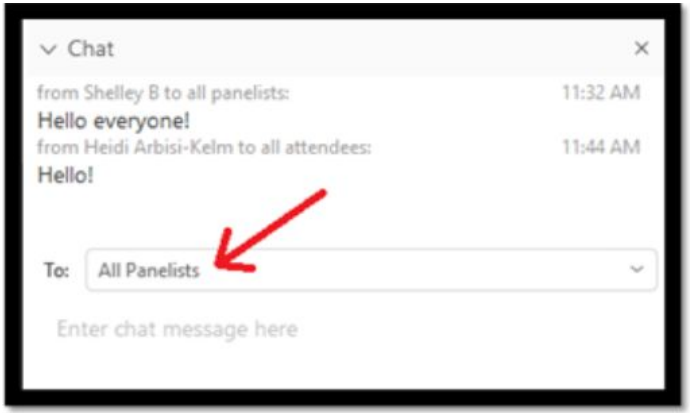
About WebEX

To type a question

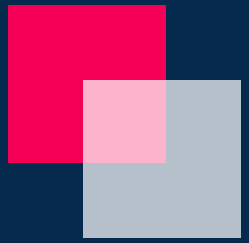
- Click on the “Chat” button on the lower right corner

- Make sure to select “Everyone” in the Chat window



About TxETDA

- Founded in 2009
- Free and open for all to join our low-volume list-serv
- Our website with more information: www.txetda.org
- Current board members: Billie Peterson-Lugo, Colleen Lyon, Shelley Barba, Yumi Ohira, and Leanna Martin
- Our mission is to provide a network of support for ETD professionals in the state of Texas, and to connect them with organizations and resources that enrich the work they do.



Accessibility of ETDs: Raising the Bar

TxETDA Webinar
April 15, 2021

Presenters

Elizabeth Johnson

- Formatting & Degree Software Specialist
- Montana State University

Colleen Lyon

- Head of Scholarly Communications
- University of Texas at Austin

Laura Waugh

- Digital Collections Librarian
- Texas State University

Accessibility in IRs Project

Collaborators

- Laura Waugh, Texas State University
- Colleen Lyon, University of Texas at Austin
- Abigail Shelton, University of Notre Dame
- Kristi Park, Texas Digital Library
- William Hicks, University of North Texas
- Nerissa Lindsey, San Diego State University

Survey: Fall 2019

Goals of this Study

1. Understand the **current landscape** of accessibility practices in institutional repositories in academic libraries
2. Identify the **average level of content accessibility** implemented in institutional repositories in academic libraries

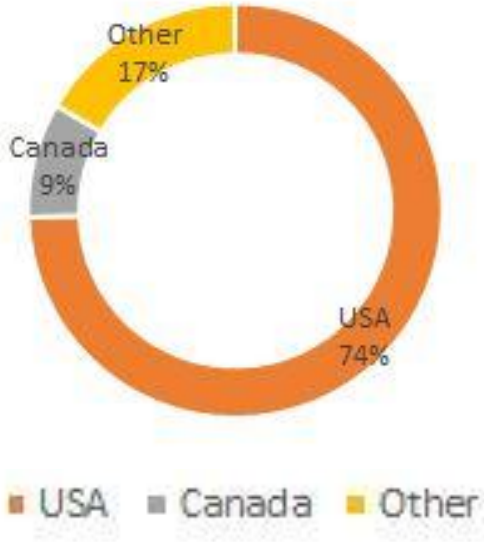
Focus on digital content and workflows

Report: https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/12389

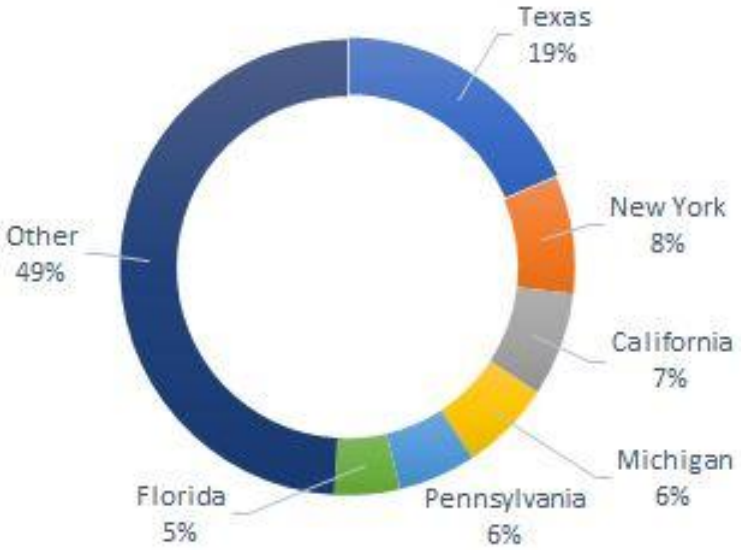
Data: https://doi.org/10.18738/T8/LUGYPO

Total Responses: 145

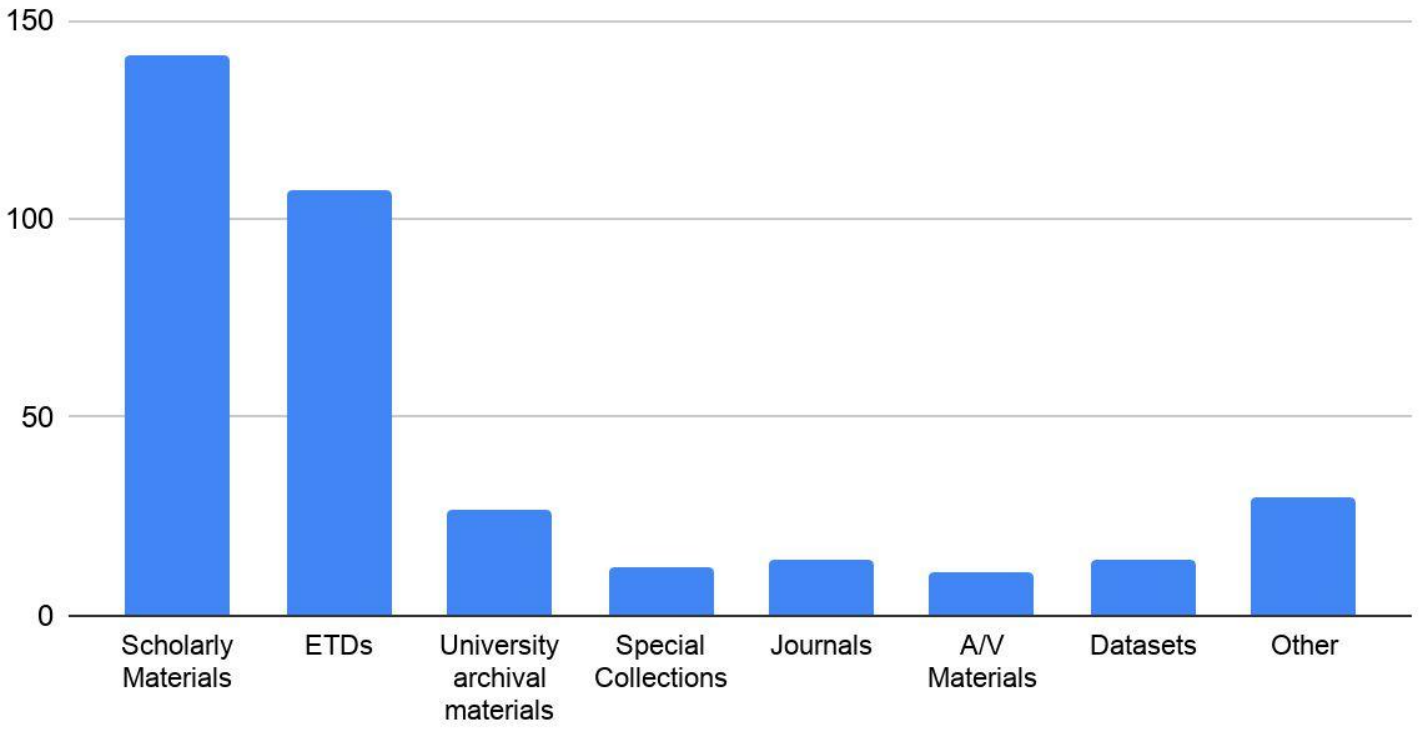
Country of Institution



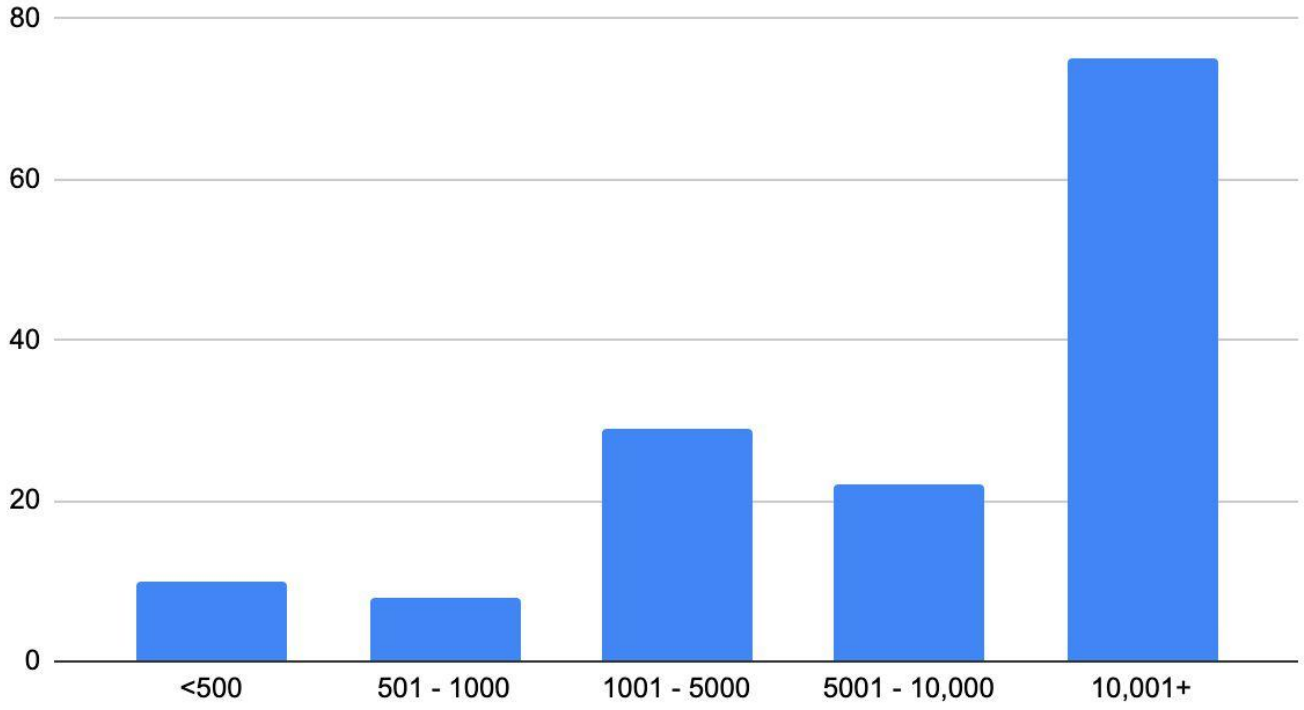
US States



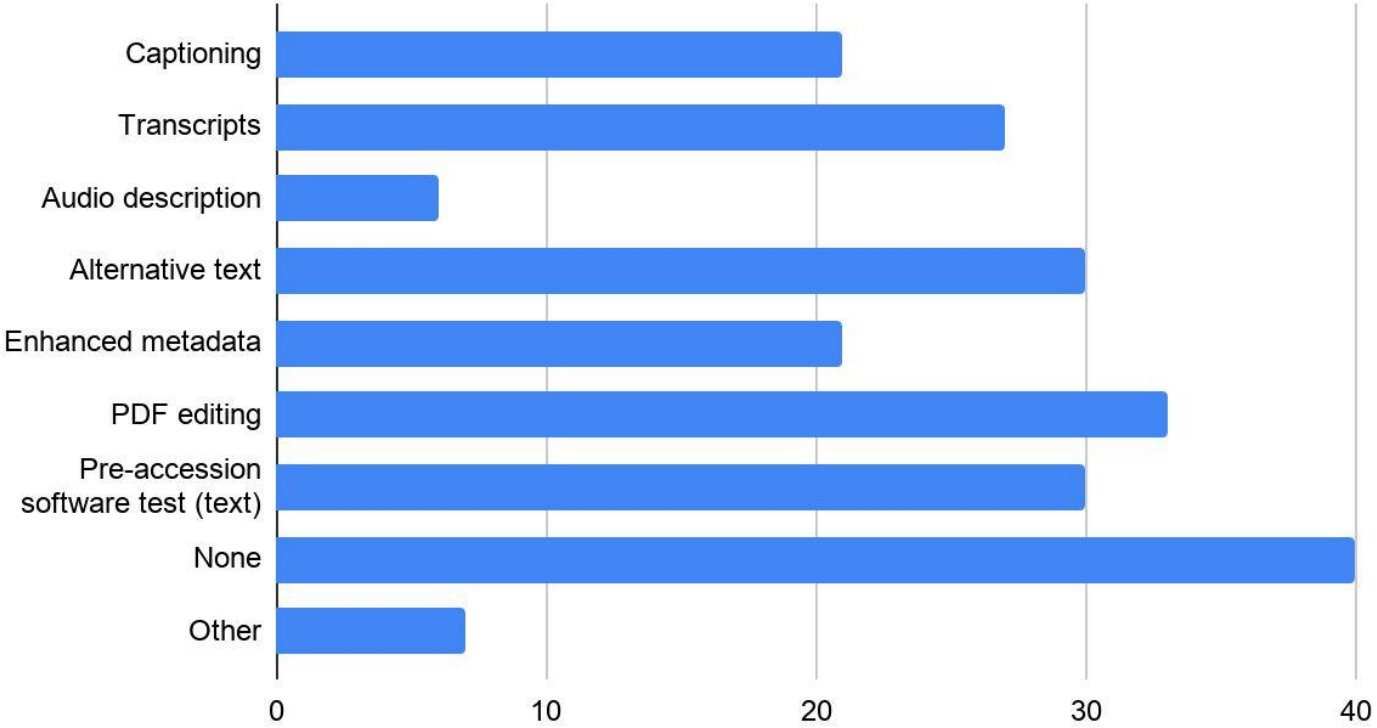
Types of Collections in the IR



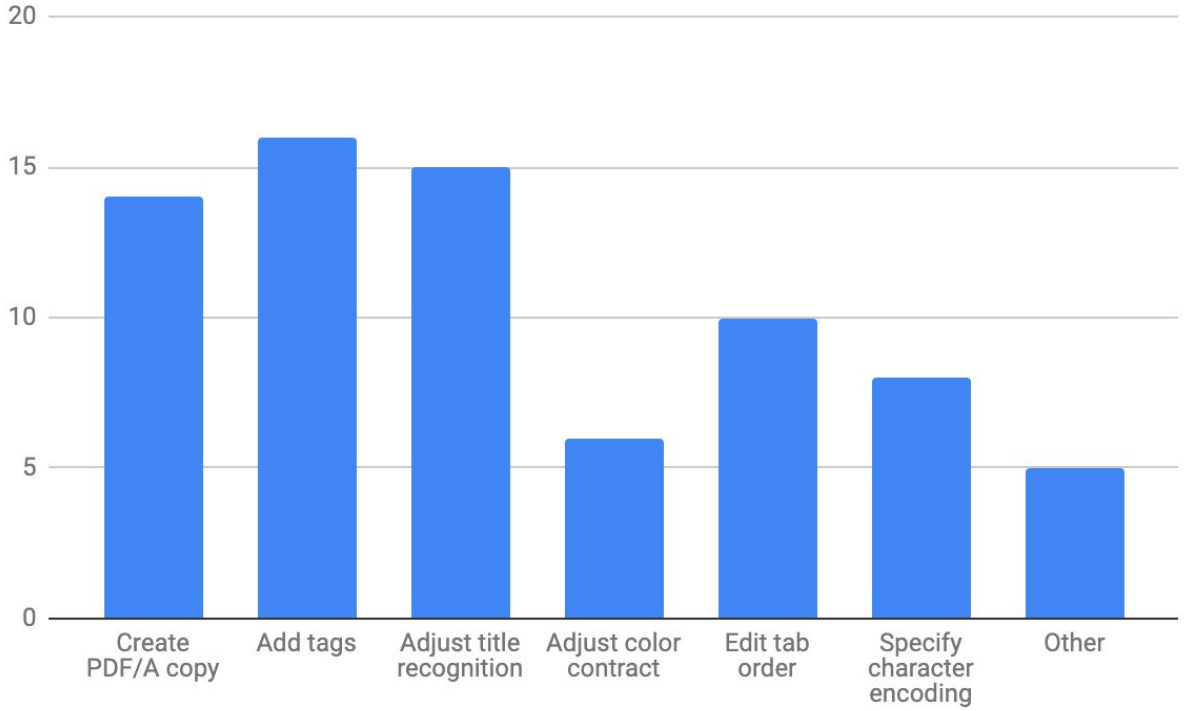
Total Number of Items in the IR



Current Accessibility Practices



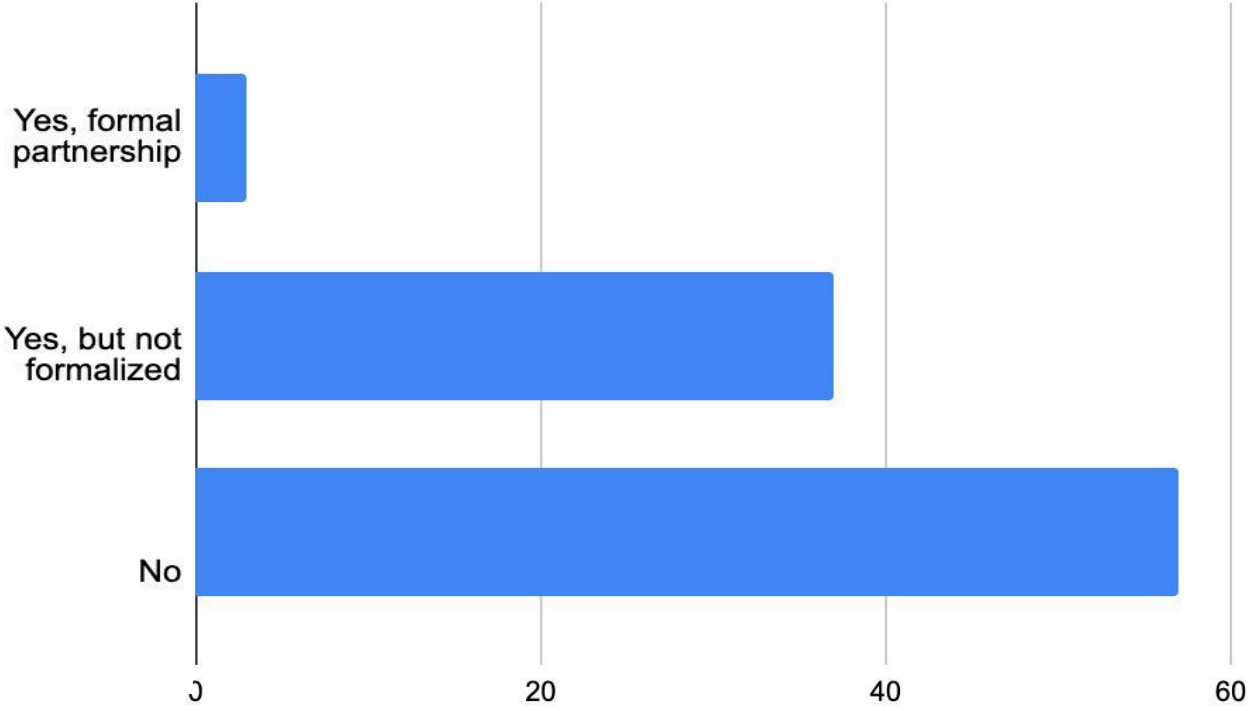
PDF Editing Methods



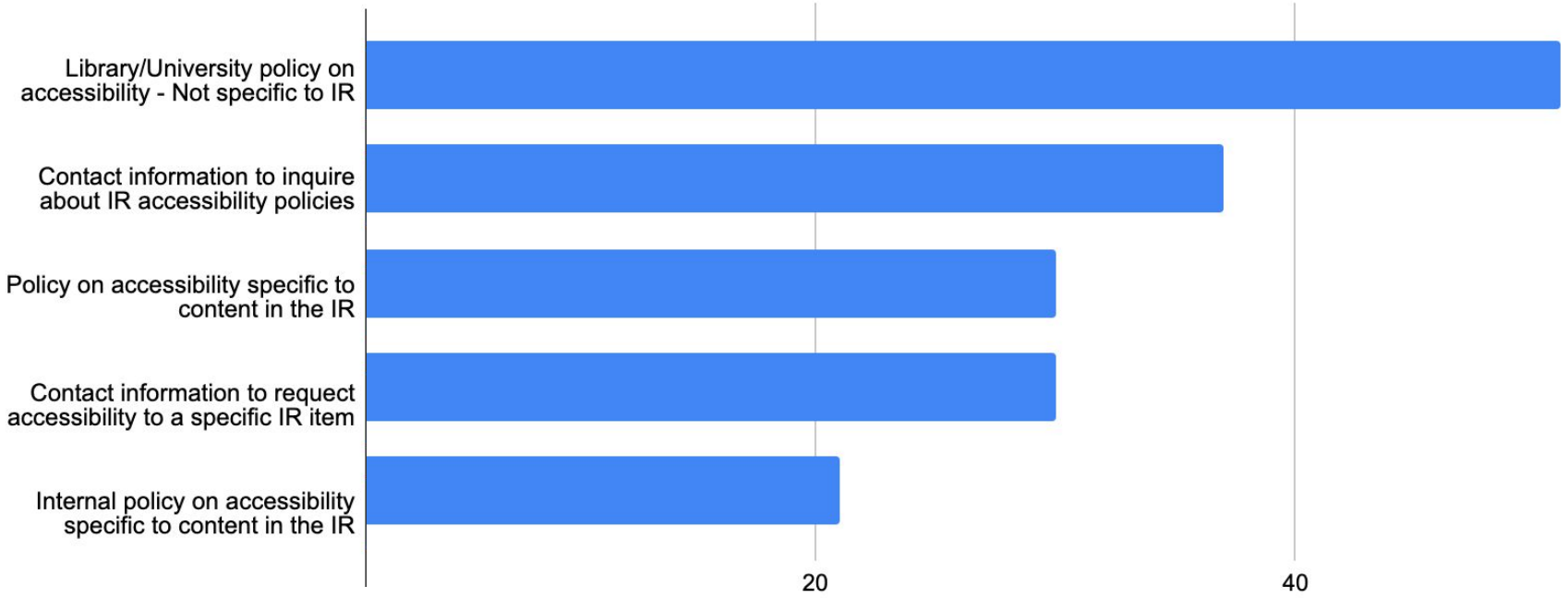
Levels of Accessibility for IR Materials

- Most confident in text and image files
- Not confident in audio and video files
- Vast majority do not restrict access to certain materials if they do not meet accessibility standards

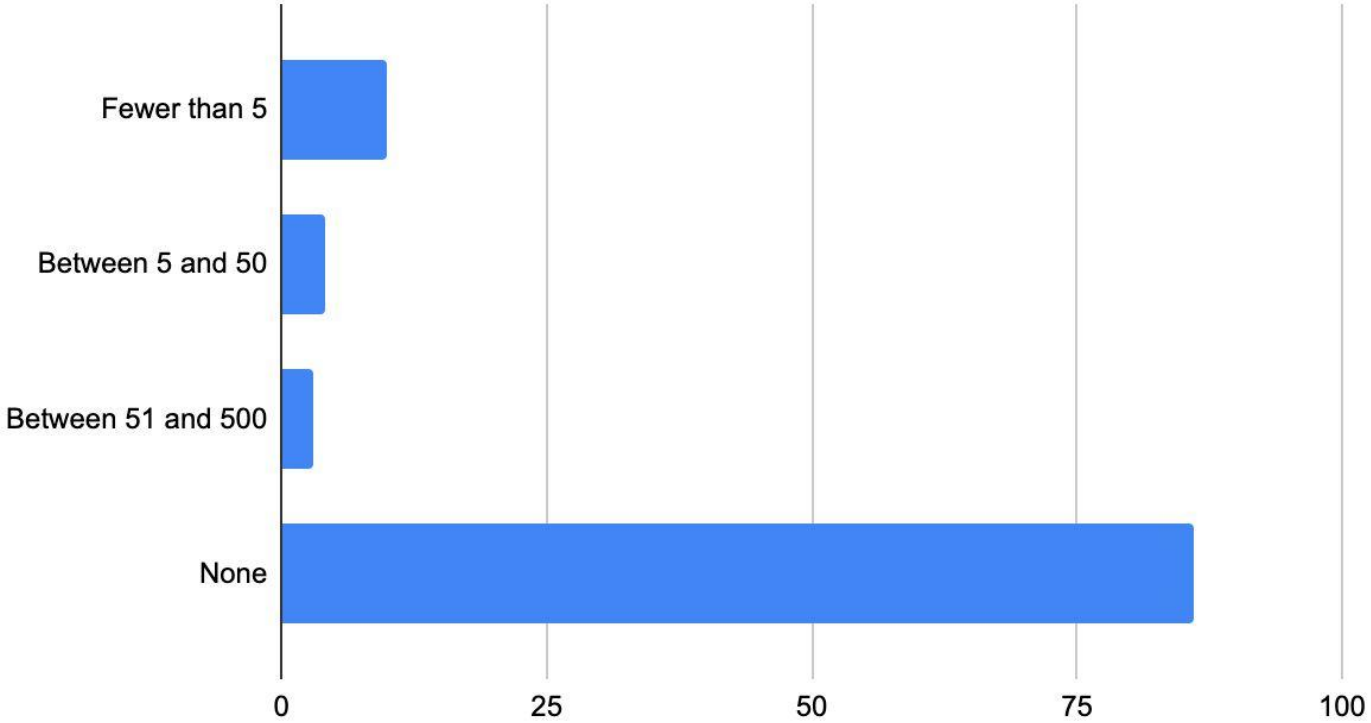
Partnerships with Campus Disability Services



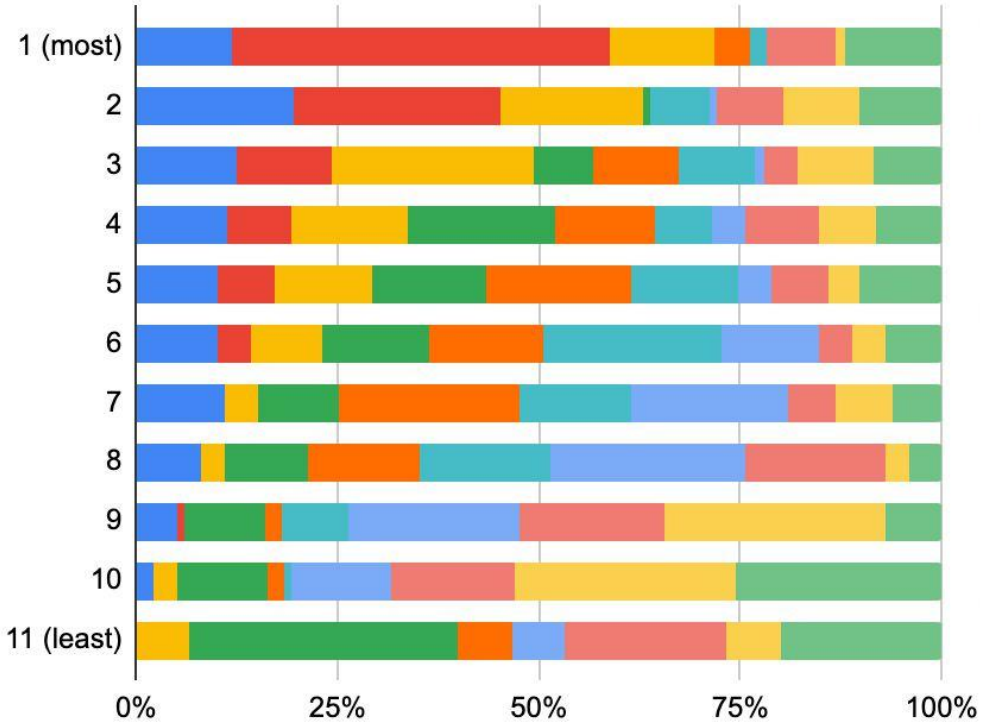
Information and Policies



Accessible Content Requests (2018 - 2019)



Ranking Challenges to Accessibility in the IR



- Limited staffing
- Finances
- Lack of expertise
- Difficult to address for existing content
- Not high on the priority list
- Lack of guidance from institutional administration
- Lack of guidance from library administration
- Scaling up
- Lack of guidance from library community
- Lack of available tools (e.g., JAWS, WAVE, Adobe Acrobat, etc.)

Prioritizing Accessibility

Factors Impacting Current Accessibility Practices

1. Personal commitment to accessibility
2. Institutional or library pressures for legal compliance
3. User requests
4. Library administration emphasis

Accessibility in IRs Project

Discussion and Key Findings

Gaps Identified in the Study

Most often a personal commitment

> *“At my mid-sized institution, limited staffing and resources means that it’s up to me alone to educate myself and others about accessibility. I do what I can as I have to juggle other non-IR responsibilities (e.g., collection management, instruction, research, committee service, reference)”*

Gaps Identified in the Study

Establishing Uniform Policies and Standards

> *“One of the biggest challenges has been to establish [a] threshold for accessibility that is consistent with our institutional standards, because at this time there is no institutional standard. In that regard, we have been the driving force for an accessibility standard that addresses content produced by the university.”*

Gaps Identified in the Study

Self-deposit Models

> *“It’s up to the faculty [or graduate students] who submit to make their work accessible when they publish it. It’s hard enough to get them to submit without having to require them to do a lot of work to the file(s). We don’t edit the files afterwards because of trust. We want faculty [or graduate students] to trust we won’t edit their work.”*

Gaps Identified in the Study

Limitations and challenges

- Limited staffing with multiple priorities
- Amount of content often exceeds 5,000 items (upwards of 10,000)
- Scalability, limited partnerships and resources
- Lack of resources and standardized policies
- Self-deposit models common for IRs

Areas to Improve

Sharing and Establishing Policies (both public and internal)

- Some respondents indicated existing accessibility policies
- Useful to review and compare to identify commonalities
- Create example policies that institutions could customize
- Community best practices for IRs, with particular attention to content accessibility

Areas to Improve

Accessibility Standards for ETDs

- ETDs were identified as a major content type in IRs
- Sharing ETD style guides that incorporate accessibility standards
- Potential for a maturity matrix for IR accessibility to help institutions understand where they are and how to incrementally scale up

Montana State University

Graduate School

MSU’s Accessibility Goals

- Improve accessibility in documents
- Make formatting easier for students
- Improve our resources for students
- Not add to workload
- Integrate accessibility as part of ETD conversation

Accessibility tasks for students

- Styles/Headings
- Saving as a PDF with bookmarks
- Adding Alt Text
- Updating Document Properties

Our resources for students

- Accessible templates
- Website information on accessibility
- Tutorials (written, video)
- Workshops with Formatting Advisor, Writing Center, Library

Questions?

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