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Where is Government Information? The complex Relationship Between Libraries & Federal Repositories

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Where is Government Information?

The Complex Relationship between Libraries & Federal Repositories

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Purpose

Through data analysis and a survey, this research identifies the location of government documents departments/units in academic libraries – including their institutional orientation, current practices, & future plans.

This preliminary data analysis presents trends amongst the community of academic library participants in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), of which they comprise 55% of the total. We identify common practices and priorities that might foster collaboration.

Survey & Participant Description

This survey sought volunteer participants from a pool of federal depository coordinators (staff members at academic libraries). A publicly searchable database of information about institutions that participate in the FDLP is available on the FDLP website. The directory categorizes academic libraries based on the size of their collections. This survey sought responses from up to 490 institutions listed as "Medium" or "Large."

Participants

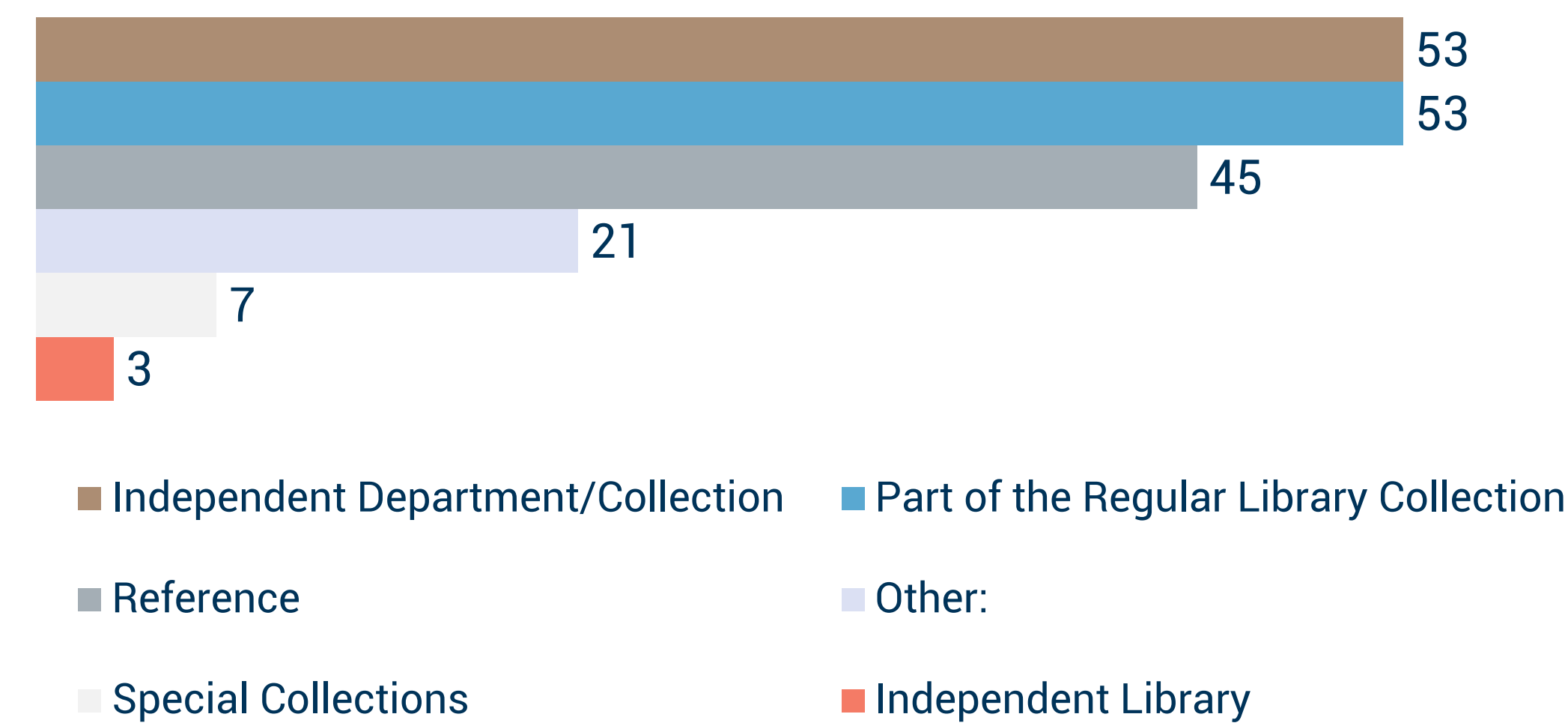
The survey sample size allowed researchers to obtain a significant number of complete responses, 175, a 36% response rate after survey distribution. 157 Selectives and 18 Regionals fully responded. Responses were received from every state and the District of Columbia, except Arizona, Delaware, and New Hampshire. 102 libraries indicated they were "Large" size, 70 were "Medium," and 5 were "Small." Some responses did not match the listed size in the FDLP directory.

Survey Design

The survey presented up to 25 multiple choice questions, some of which allowed for multiple selections. Respondents were able to provide open-ended responses on some questions. The survey collected information related to institutional operations, collection access, program priorities, digitization approaches, collaboration, and outreach.

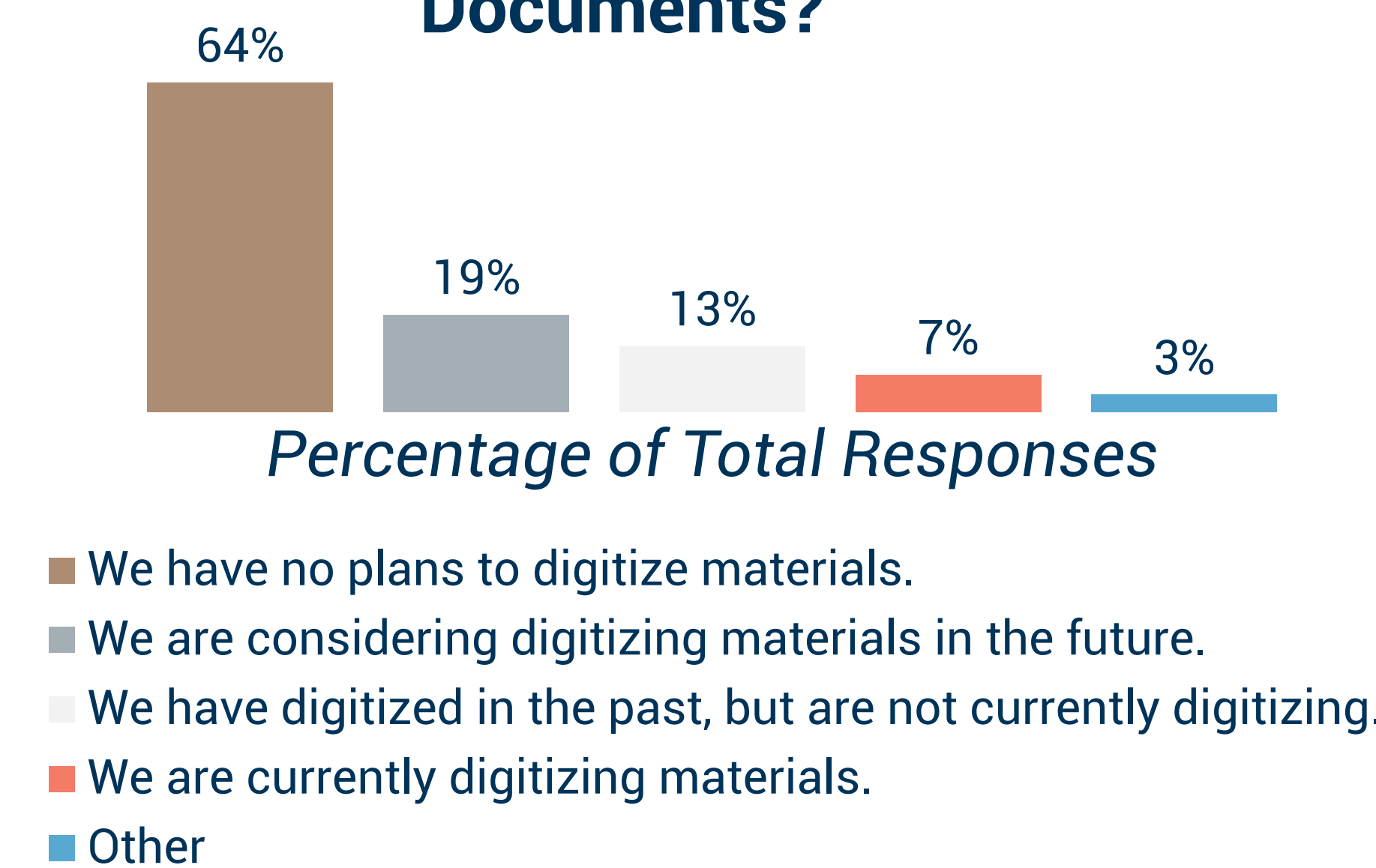
Preliminary Results

Where are Government Documents Housed?



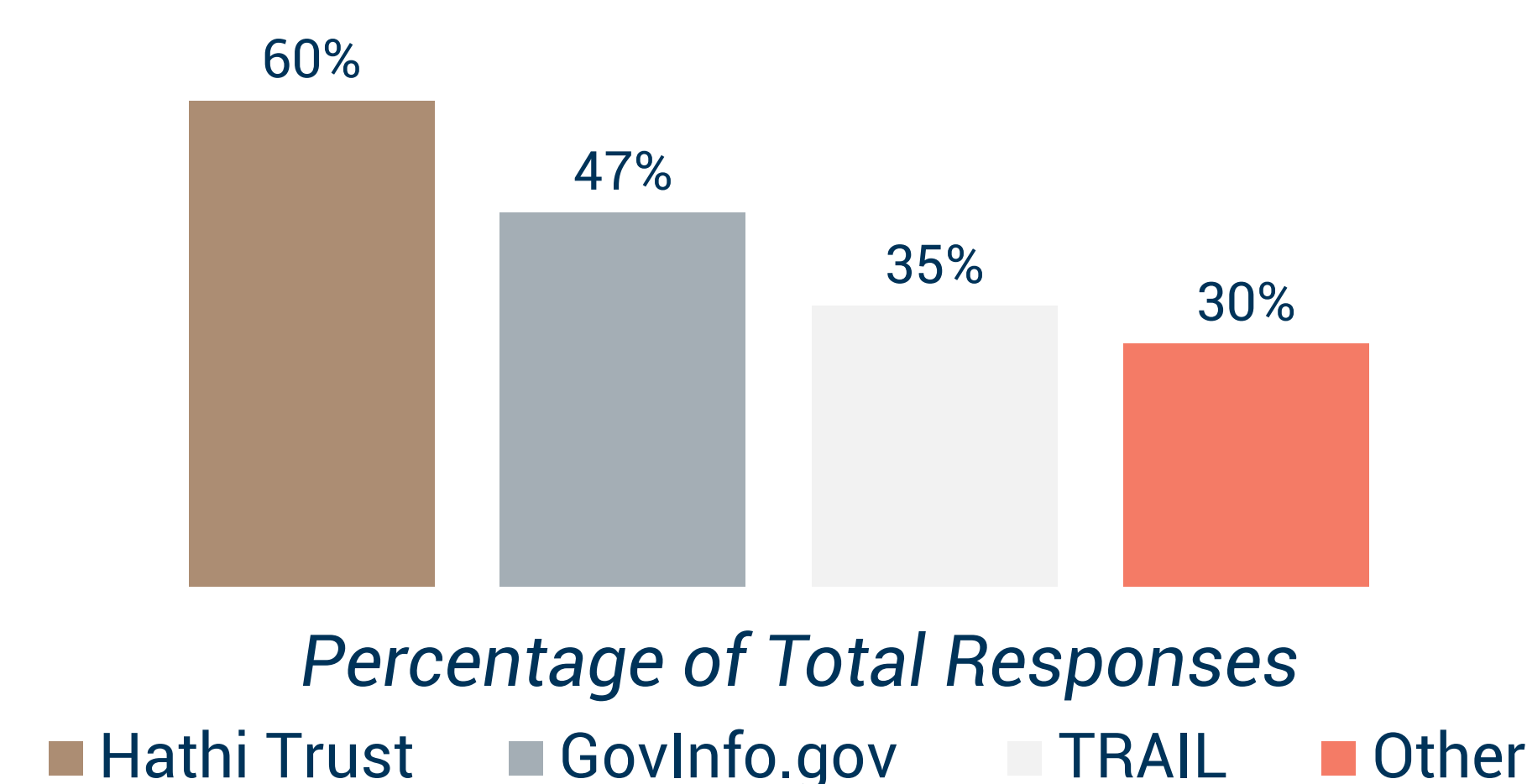
"Other" responses included a mix of departments or indicated current or imminent changes in structure.

Are you Digitizing Government Documents?

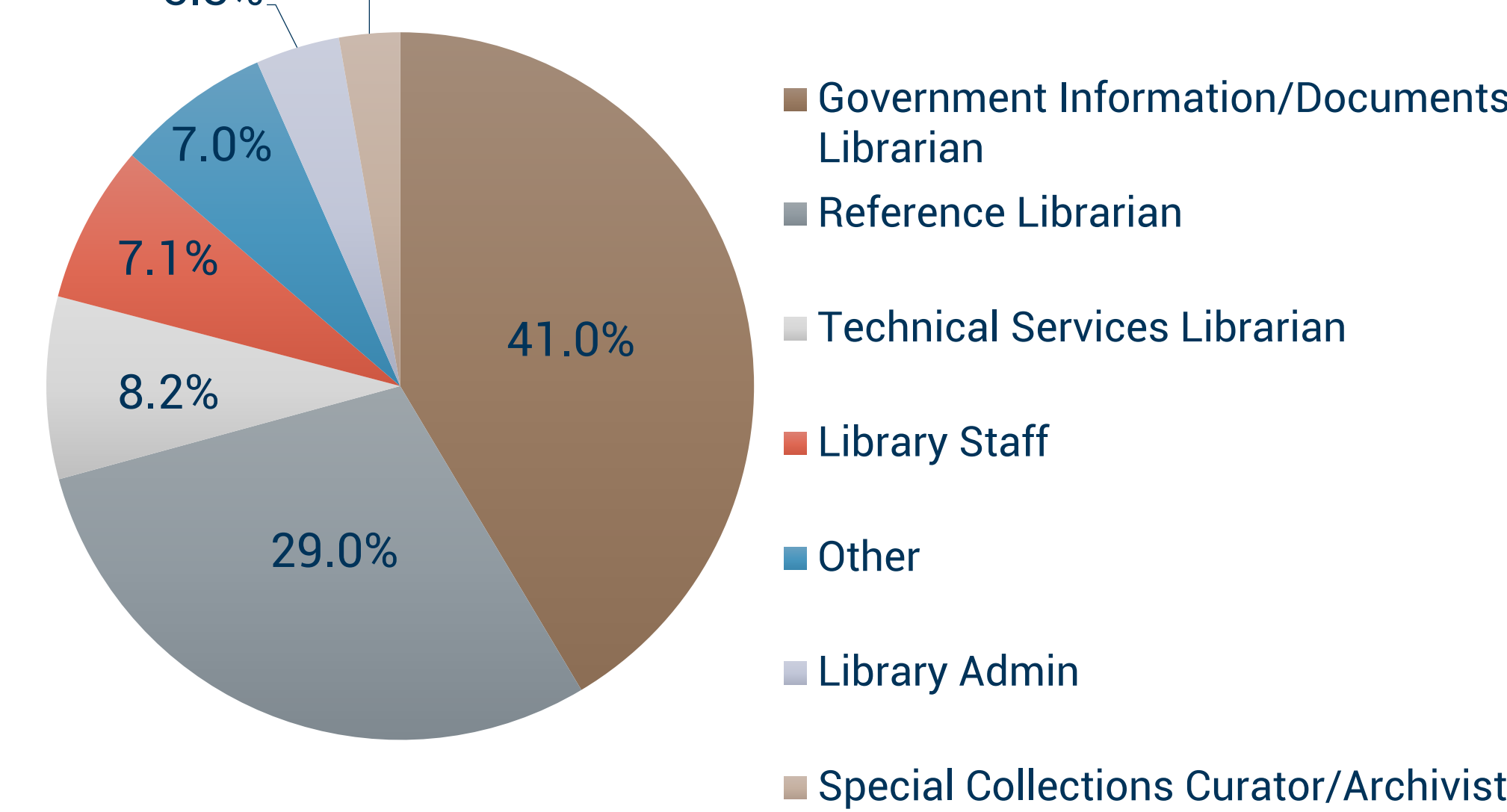


Respondents were able to select multiple choices. If respondents answered anything other than "no plans," they were prompted to answer a question about sharing. 43 respondents then indicated where they shared/would share materials. They were able to select multiple options. "Other" responses included ASERL Center of Excellence Program, EAST, JSTOR, FRASER, statewide projects, and Digital Commons.

Where are Digitized Government Documents Shared?



Who Oversees Your Government Documents?

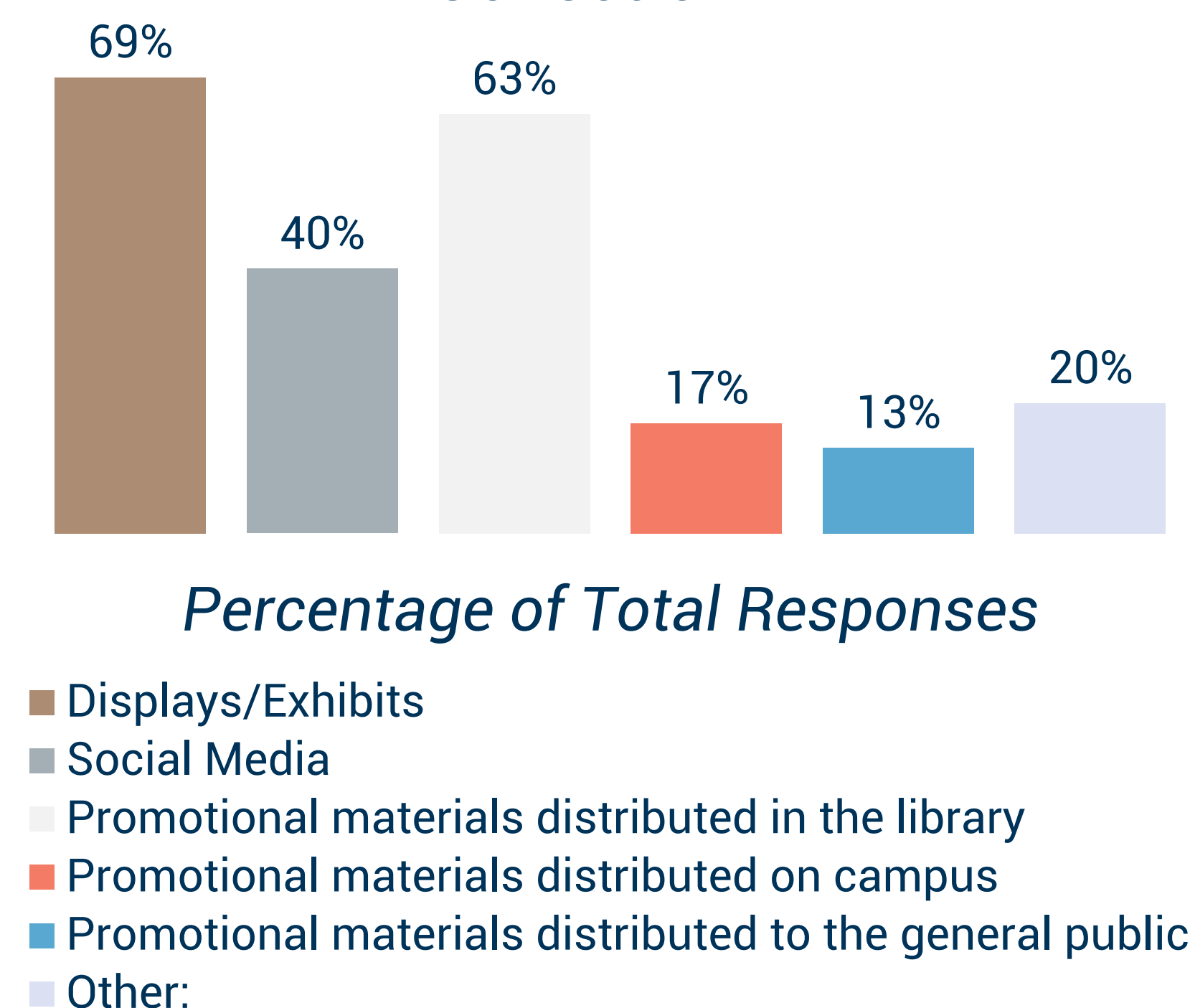


What are your Current Practices & Priorities?

The survey asked respondents to rank priorities. **Processing** was consistently ranked first, followed by **Weeding** and **Identifying Digital Items**, then **Preservation**, **Digitization**, and then "Other" categories. "Other" responses included *Retro Cataloging*, *Promotion*, *Reference*, and *Collection Development*.

156 respondents described their collaboration partners. 80% collaborate with FDLP libraries in their state while 50% collaborate regionally. 32.5% collaborate with their State Data Center and 27% collaborate with local public libraries. "Other" responses included collaboration with state depositories or libraries, other regionals, or indicated that they did not collaborate.

How Do you Promote your Collection?



Key Takeaways

Survey results illustrate the **dynamic** makeup of academic library FDLP participants. There is no one type of "collection" and no single type of coordinator. This survey helps identify that there are **common alignments** where coordinators can find individuals & collections in similar scenarios. Roughly a third of coordinators are Gov. Info/Documents librarians, a third are reference, and a third have other responsibilities. Responses indicate that the type of coordinator does not necessarily indicate where docs are housed, and there is no universal approach to storage or digitization.

There are commonalities. Academic libraries have mostly similar priorities for their collections, and collaboration is strong within the FDLP community. However, while other collaborators are identified, this survey does not document consistent non-FDLP collaboration.

Comparisons to the FDLP Biennial Survey

We purposefully included questions to obtain supplemental data from the Biennial Survey. Some results presented here were derived from the preliminary release of 2017 Biennial Survey data in March 2018. Note that this survey expanded on operations, program priorities, and specifically identified and emphasized the institutional position of the coordinator and materials. These topics are difficult to identify in the current biennial survey.

Limitations

By design the survey was opt-in. This resulted in selective participation. Since we have a response rate of 36%, this survey is a snap shot of the larger population of academic libraries in the FDLP.

Want to Contribute?

The survey will remain open until November 30th. We appreciate your contributions. Email jen.kirk@usu.edu for an invite.

Thank you to all of our participants!

