

Emerging Best Practices for Managing Online Exhibits



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Background

- Interest in project after experiencing an online exhibit migration from WordPress to Scalar, where issues of sustaining and managing past exhibits were brought to light
- Lack of guidelines in the profession and literature review made the migration more difficult, thus the authors sought to survey other professionals for their current policies and practices to develop a set of guidelines that would help guide online exhibits for the future

Aims

- Survey professionals about current policies and practices for managing and sustaining online exhibits
- Formulate best practice guidelines for managing and sustaining online exhibits

Methods

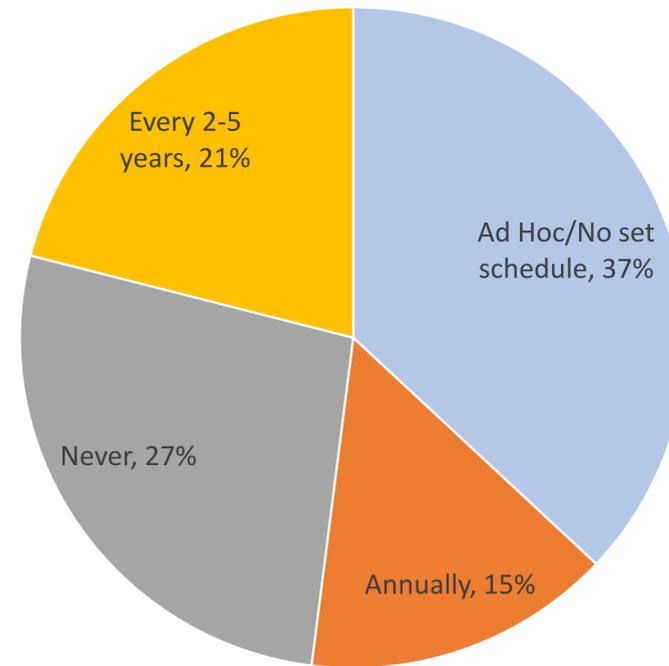
- Online survey was distributed via listservs using Qualtrics in January 2022
- Focused on listservs of national, regional, and local GLAM outlets to distribute the survey
- A total of 154 surveys were completed
- Survey asked about creation of digital exhibits, current practices and policies, and legacy online exhibit management

Findings

Figure 1. Ranked table of online exhibit platforms currently being used

Rank	Platform	Count
1	Omeka	53
2	Platform developed by institution	21
3	Drupal	18
4	CONTENTdm	15
5	WordPress	15
6	Scalar	11
7	StoryMaps	9
8	Springshare/LibGuides	7
9	Google Arts & Culture	6
10	Adobe Creative Cloud Express (formerly Spark)	4
10	Spotlight	4

Figure 2: Pie chart illustrating frequency of online exhibit reviewing by survey respondents (n=33)



References

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Discussion

- Many institutions created online exhibits during the pandemic as a way to connect patrons with materials and provide remote projects for staff
- Many institutions are not preserving digital exhibit files/objects in any type of digital asset management system
- Only twenty-two (16.79%) respondents reported having a formal policy and/or guidelines for managing online exhibits
- Only a third of respondents currently have a take-down policy
- Over half of respondents do not review online exhibits on any set schedule or at all
- The predominant use of a handful of exhibit platforms contrasts with the variety of platforms employed and substantial number of institutions developing their own platforms

Conclusion

- Survey responses suggest that best practices could have a broad impact across varied institutions
- Institutions without documentation, policies, and digital asset management systems will find management of online exhibits more difficult
- As online traffic increases, clear take-down and use policies will become essential
- Best practice guidelines will appear in our forthcoming paper, addressing the entire lifecycle of online exhibits from planning and development to access and preservation