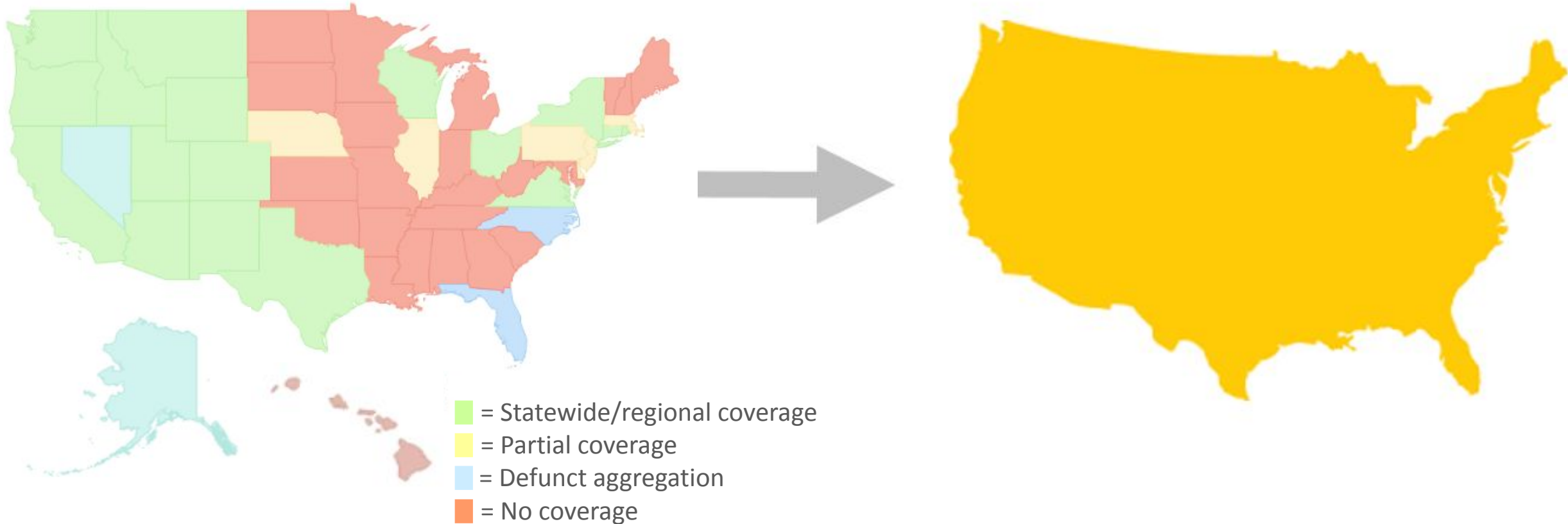# Building a National Finding Aid Network: End User Research Findings

Chela Scott Weber (she/her/hers)

Senior Program Officer, OCLC Research Library Partnership

INSTITUTE of **Museum** and **Library** SERVICES

OCLC

NAFAN

"*A national finding aid network that is community-driven, -sustained, and -governed.*"

= Statewide/regional coverage
= Partial coverage
= Defunct aggregation
= No coverage

*not to scale

OCLC Research Team

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Research Advisory Group

- Bill Stingone, New York Public Library
- Derek Mosley, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library
- Hillel Arnold, Rockefeller Archives Center
- Holly Mengel, University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center (PACSCL)
- Lydia Tang, Lyrasis
- Molly Bruce Patterson, Rhode Island College (RIAMCO)
- Rachel Walton, Rollins College
- Ricky Punzalan, University of Michigan, School of Information

NAFAN Research Findings – Five Reports

- **Summary of Research**

- **Pop-up Survey of Users**

- **User Interviews**

- **Focus Group Interviews**

- **EAD Analysis**

https://oc.lc/nafan-research

RESEARCH METHODS

Developing Research Questions

Understand the Landscape

- Previous NAFAN project outputs

- Archival literature review

- Persona work

Identify Gaps and Needs – User Research

- No existing work on users of aggregation

- Previous user research primarily focused on scholars

User Research Questions

Who are the current users of aggegated archival description?

Do current user types align with the persona types and needs identified in recent archival persona work?

Why are the current users trying to discover and access archival collections via aggregation of archival description?

How are current users discovering and accessing aggregations of archival description?

What are the benefits and challenges users face when searching archival description in aggregation?
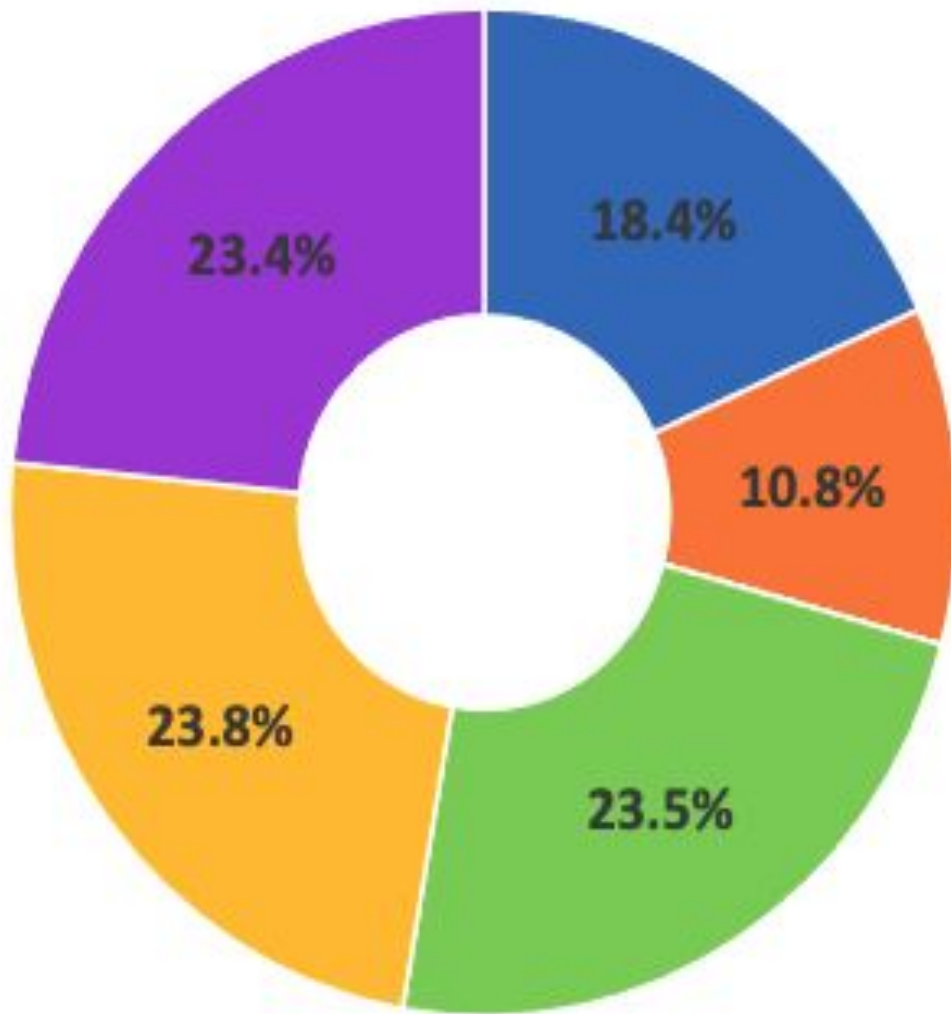
Mixed Methods Research Design

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Two-Step Cluster Analysis of Researchers

Legend:
- Archivists/Librarians & Other Professionals
- Faculty & Academic Researchers
- Undergraduate & Postgraduate Students
- Family History Researchers
- Personal Interest Researchers

Chart values: 18.4%, 10.8%, 23.5%, 23.8%, 23.4%

Emotional Motivations

"It's the excitement of finding something that no one else has found before."   -Participant C2-4

"holding that record in my hand was just so emotional to see that connection to this ancestor of mine and to see this historical figure, to see his handwriting, his signature, and to actually touch all of that."
– Participant C4-2

Awareness of Resource Limitations

"I don't know that I would speak with [the archivist] about other collections they would have, only because I don't want to take up too much of their time. I would generally keep it to the collection that I'm interested in." –*Participant C3-3*

Networks & Relationships

> **But having an archivist who doesn't just bury your letter at the bottom of a pile and never get back to it, that's. . . . Somebody's letter must be at the bottom of the pile, but it's not usually mine.** *-- Participant C2-4*

Learn More

- Read the reports!

- Subscribe to the NAFAN mailing list for updates

- Join us at SAA for Session *302 - Searching for the Commons: Reflecting on Access Realities Surfaced through User Research*

- Questions? Reach out! weberc@oclc.org