

## **Analysis of 2009 Congressional Papers Roundtable Electronic Records Survey Results**

### **Demographics** (respondents number 46 at beginning and drop to 42 in this section)

63% (or 29) are a state-funded university or college

13% (or 6) private college or university

13% (or 6) federal repository

4.3% (or 2) state archives

2.2% (or 1) private archives

43.5% (or 20) have less than five congressional collections

26.1% (or 12) have 5-15

21.7% (or 10) have more than 25

8.7% (or 4) have 16-25

68.9% (or 31) have one or more full-time employees whose responsibility is to oversee political collections (*this statistic is probably skewed upwards assuming most political papers archivists will be members of the CPR -- the only group polled*)

62.2% (or 28) do not have one or more full-time employees whose job description includes electronic records management for archival collections

55.8% (or 24) have IT support outside the repository to manage issues related to preservation and storage of archival records

83.7% (or 36) do not have a written policy on collecting archival electronic records

76.7% (or 33) do not have written standards for managing archival electronic records

78.6% (or 33) possess one or more congressional collections with e-records

### **Questions on e-records** (respondents drop to 27-30 as survey automatically sends those without e-records to later questions in the survey):

44.8% (or 13) have one congressional collection with electronic records

41.4% (or 12) have 2-5 congressional collections with electronic records

10.3% (or 3) have more than 10 congressional collections with electronic records

Over half of 30 respondents on types of e-records in their collections marked both emails and databases; other listed categories were also selected (born-digital photographs, film, audio; pdf files, web sites, and formats migrated to digital) with added comments including word processing files, correspondence on floppy discs, Microsoft Word documents, Powerpoint presentations, electronic appointment book, CDs and DVDs with text and/or photos, and primarily born-digital text documents. Only one respondent

checked portable electronic devices as a category. 16.7% (or 5) respondents did not know what types of electronic records were in their collections.

55.3% (or 16) could not guess an approximate file size for e-records in their repository collections; 23.3% (or 7) estimated total file size in megabytes; 13.3% (or 4) estimated in gigabytes

82.8% (or 24) stated that their institution received e-records only immediately before or immediately after the member of Congress left office; 34.5% (or 10) received the e-records serially over the years as the member added to his or her papers

Over half of respondents reported e-records arriving in either CD or DVD formats with floppy diskettes and printed versions also significantly represented. Other formats received included hard drives, zip discs, computer tape, and flash/thumb/jump drive.

Percentage of e-records in congressional collections that the repository can access:

36.7% (or 11) do not know

23.3% (or 7) 100%

13.3% (or 4) 75%-50%

10% (or 3) 99%-75%

10% (or 3) 25%-1%

3.3% (or 1) 50%-25%

3.3% (or 1) none

*Thus, approximately 16 respondents answered less than 50% of e-records are accessible or "do not know" while 14 answered more than 50% are accessible*

No clear majority on any particular effort to preserve or manage e-records: the largest percentage was 32.1% (or 9) which printed out hard copies, 28.6% have done nothing. Other options chosen were researching e-records management, storing on a hard drive with appropriate software, e-records management training, developing an e-records management policy, storage on preservation quality CDs, preservation of obsolete hardware to insure access, and conversion to open file format.

70.4% (or 19 of 27 respondents) do not have any e-records currently open to researchers.

**Questions on e-records open to researchers** (respondents drop to 5-8 as the survey automatically shifts those with no open e-records to later questions in the survey)

Types of available e-records: pdf files (60% or 3), born-digital photographs, born-digital film, born-digital audio, databases, content migrated to digital by scanning, email, paper copies

How e-records are described in finding aids: 100% (or 8) in scope and content notes, basic acknowledgement of e-records existence and format (62.5%), list of restrictions if any (62.5%), inclusive dates of content (50%), organization/arrangement (50%), file

types (37.5%), mode of access (25%), detailed description of each file or group of files (25%).

Method of access to e-records: 87.5% permit on-site access to user copy CDs; on-site access to repository server or hard drive (50%), on-site access to user copy DVDs (37.5%), online access (25%).

Use of e-records by researchers: 37.5% (or 3) state that no researchers have used e-records; 37.5% estimate 1-5 users; 12.5% (or 1) estimate 6-10 users; 12.5% (or 1) estimate 11-20 users. No respondents placed the number of users as higher than 20. *(should not assume from these answers that few researchers are interested in using e-records, because survey indicates only a few e-records are currently open)*

### **Questions on inaccessible e-records** (respondents rise to 17-26)

21 out of 26 respondents (80.8%) have e-records in congressional collections not currently open to researchers: 50% because collection not yet open; 50% because collection is unprocessed; 40% repository does not have access to compatible software/hardware; 35% because of donor restrictions; 10% due to data corruption; 10% commented on archival restriction policies

64.7% (or 11) could not identify the original software used in creation for inaccessible e-records

89.5% (or 17) do not have plans to outsource records for data conversion: 44.4% (or 8) because of lack of funding; 38.9% (or 7) because plans to make accessible in the future; 38.9% (or 7) due to lack of institutional interest; 38.9% (or 7) due to lack of knowledge about vendors

### **Questions on recent donations** (respondents rise to 36 then drop down to 21-27 as the survey automatically transfers those who responded “no” on recent donations to later questions in the survey)

80.6% (or 29) of repositories have made arrangements for the transfer of a congressional collection in the last ten years; 77.8% (or 21) discussed the inclusion of e-records during negotiations; 70.4% (or 19) of members of Congress decided to include e-records with their collection.

61.9% (or 13) of donors physically transferred electronic files; no clear answer for repository’s preferred method – highest at 21.7% (or 5) was by CD.

### **Questions on appraisal decisions to discard e-records** (respondents rise to 36 for initial question then drop to 6 for those who have actually discarded)

83.3% (or 30) of repositories have not made any appraisal decisions to discard selected e-records. Of the six who responded “yes”: 83.3% (or 5) stated that a review of content indicated little historical significance, 50% (or 3) gave obsolete format as a reason

### **Rating concern about e-records** (32 respondents)

On a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 as “completely terrified” and 10 as “supremely confident”: the average rating with regards to personal concerns about the institution’s ability to preserve e-records was 3.84; the average rating for access was slightly better at 3.91

### **Training** (35 respondents)

60% (or 21) would send personnel to workshops on e-records in congressional collections; 37.1% (or 13) might send staff to a workshop

### **Analysis by specific demographic cohorts:**

20 respondents have less than five congressional collections:

- 10 have a collection with e-records
- 10 have had donations in the last ten years (with just over half not discussing e-records with donors and same percentage of donors not including e-records in their collection)

12 respondents have 5-15 congressional collections:

- significantly higher percentage in this group have both a full-time political papers archivist and a staff position with e-records responsibilities
- 100% of this group has no e-records collecting policy or set of written standards
- 100% have collections with e-records
- as to specific efforts adopted for management and preservation of e-records the largest percentage at 41.7% was “nothing”
- 100% of e-records currently accessible are born-digital photographs with no other formats open
- 100% have made no decisions to discard e-records.

15 respondents have more than 15 congressional collections:

- of this group, 57.1% are state-funded universities or colleges, but 35.7% are a federal repository
- 61.5% have at least one full-time employee with e-records management responsibilities (as opposed to 37.8% of total survey respondents)
- 100% have congressional collections with e-records
- 60% have chosen to print out hard copies
- only 2 respondents in this group have e-records accessible by researchers
- has lowest rating with regards to personal concerns about preservation and access abilities of their institution

31 respondents have a full-time archivist to oversee political collections:

- no appreciable difference in trend of results except that respondents provided a more middle-of-the-road rating with regards to personal concerns about preservation and access abilities

14 respondents from repositories with no political papers archivist:

- only one respondent in this section answered questions about researchers accessing e-records, no other appreciable difference in trend of results

41 respondents who do not work for a federal repository:

- no appreciable difference in trend of results

17 respondents with full-time e-records staff:

- although state-funded university or college are still the largest group, the statistic dips from 63% to 35.3% and the percentage of federal repository respondents rises from 13% to 29.4%
- number of congressional collections differs with 41.2% having more than 25 collections (in survey, 43.5% have less than 5).
- Respondents are more likely to have written policies on collecting and managing e-records (“yes” up to 43.8% and 50% respectively with total survey at 16.3% and 23.3%)
- More likely to have larger numbers of collections with e-records
- Estimates on ability to access e-records not strikingly different – still 40% “do not know”
- Methods for preserving and managing access are not appreciably different
- 4 of 8 respondents stated that e-records were currently available to researchers, but formats available are not appreciably different nor are the methods of access (only 8 respondents for the survey as a whole addressed questions of researcher accessible e-records, so half of these have a full-time e-records staff member)
- The reasons why e-records are not accessible change primarily from “collection not yet open to researchers” and “collection unprocessed” to mainly “donor restrictions” and “incompatible hardware/software.”
- Percentage of identifiable original software is essentially the same.
- Of 6 respondents on recent donations, 100% of donors included e-records in collection
- Very clear preference for transferring e-records by either FTP or DVD
- 6 of total survey respondents answered questions about discarding e-records, three of these came from repositories with e-records staff who seemed less likely to discard because of obsolete format
- Personal rating about repositories’ ability to preserve and especially access are probably the highest of any cohort

29 respondents without full-time e-records staff:

- 100% do not have a written collecting policy on e-records
- 92.9% do not have written standards on e-records management

- None of respondents have more than 5 congressional collections with e-records, 57.1% have just one
- Estimates of accessibility and methods of management are not appreciably different
- E-records available to researchers jump from 70.4% to 80%
- Only 2 responded to questions about formats available to researchers and they only marked databases, pdf files, and content migrated to digital.
- Of 21 who answered question about recent donations, only 61.9% of new collections included e-records (*as opposed to 100% of respondents with e-records personnel*)
- Of 3 respondents on the question about discarding e-records, more likely to discard due to “obsolete format” (66.7% as opposed to 33.3% of respondents at repositories with e-records staff)
- Personal rating of repository’s ability to preserve and access e-records is low