

The State of Reappraisal & Deaccessioning in Archives

How does the archival field use reappraisal and deaccessioning (R&D) as collections management tools? Marcella Huggard (mdwiget@gmail.com) and Laura Jackson (laura.uglean@gmail.com) conducted a survey to find out.

Purpose

- To obtain aggregated, comprehensive data
- Which institution types R&D? Which don't?
- Is R&D accepted practice?
- Do archivists use the SAA Guidelines?
- How do institutions R&D?

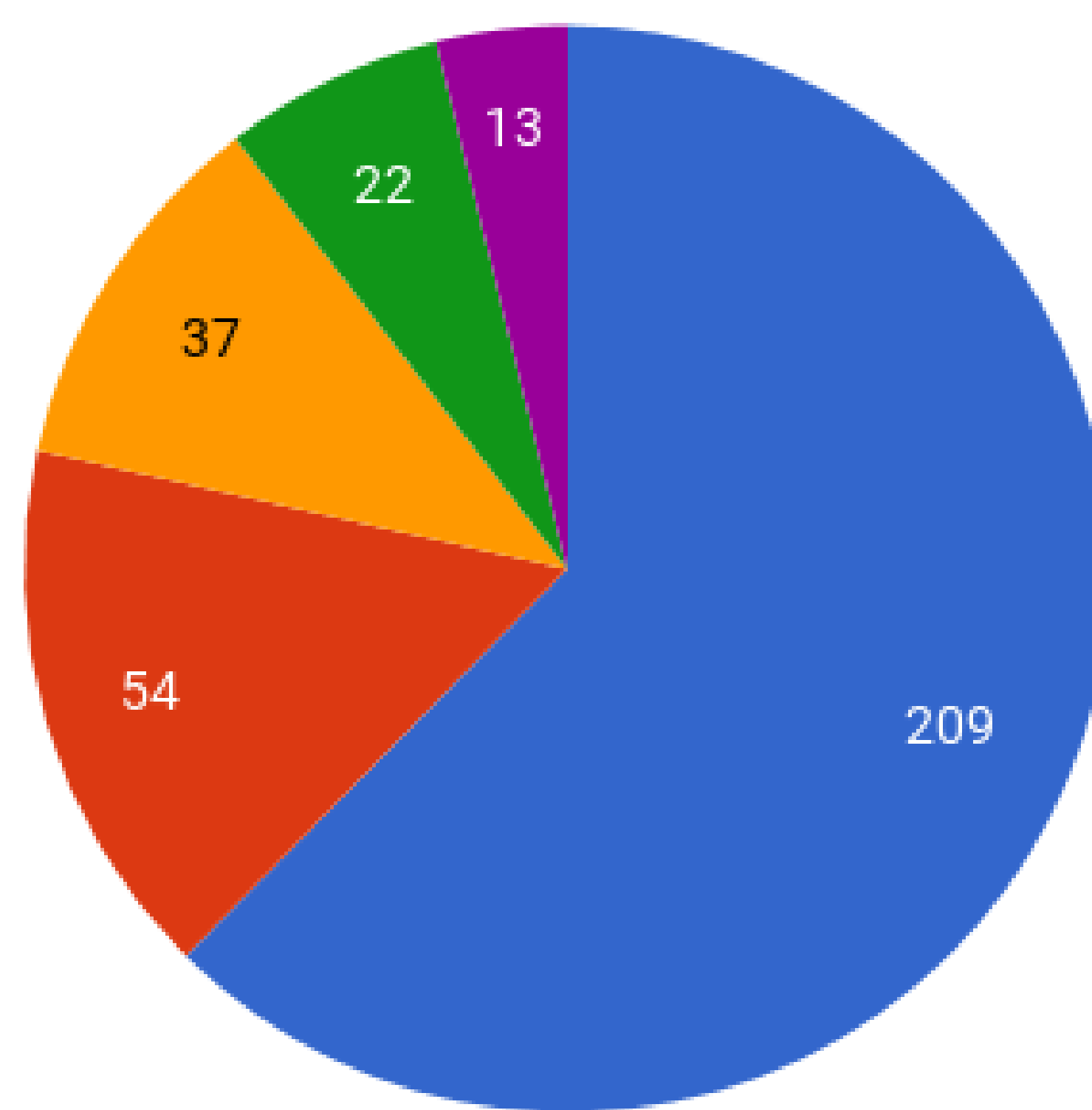
Methods

- Survey ran March 10-April 22, 2017
- Qualtrics platform: skip logic and branching used, allowing participants to answer only relevant questions & reduce survey fatigue
- 489 responses recorded by Qualtrics--329 completed responses (67% completion rate)

Top Reasons to R&D

1. Found out-of-scope materials: 87%
2. Create collections storage space: 60%
3. Changes in collecting policies/focuses: 52%
4. Assess/prioritize backlogs: 27%
5. Preservation issues: 15%

Does Your Institution R&D?



● Yes ● No ● Reappraised only ● Deaccessioned only ● Yes but not at current inst.

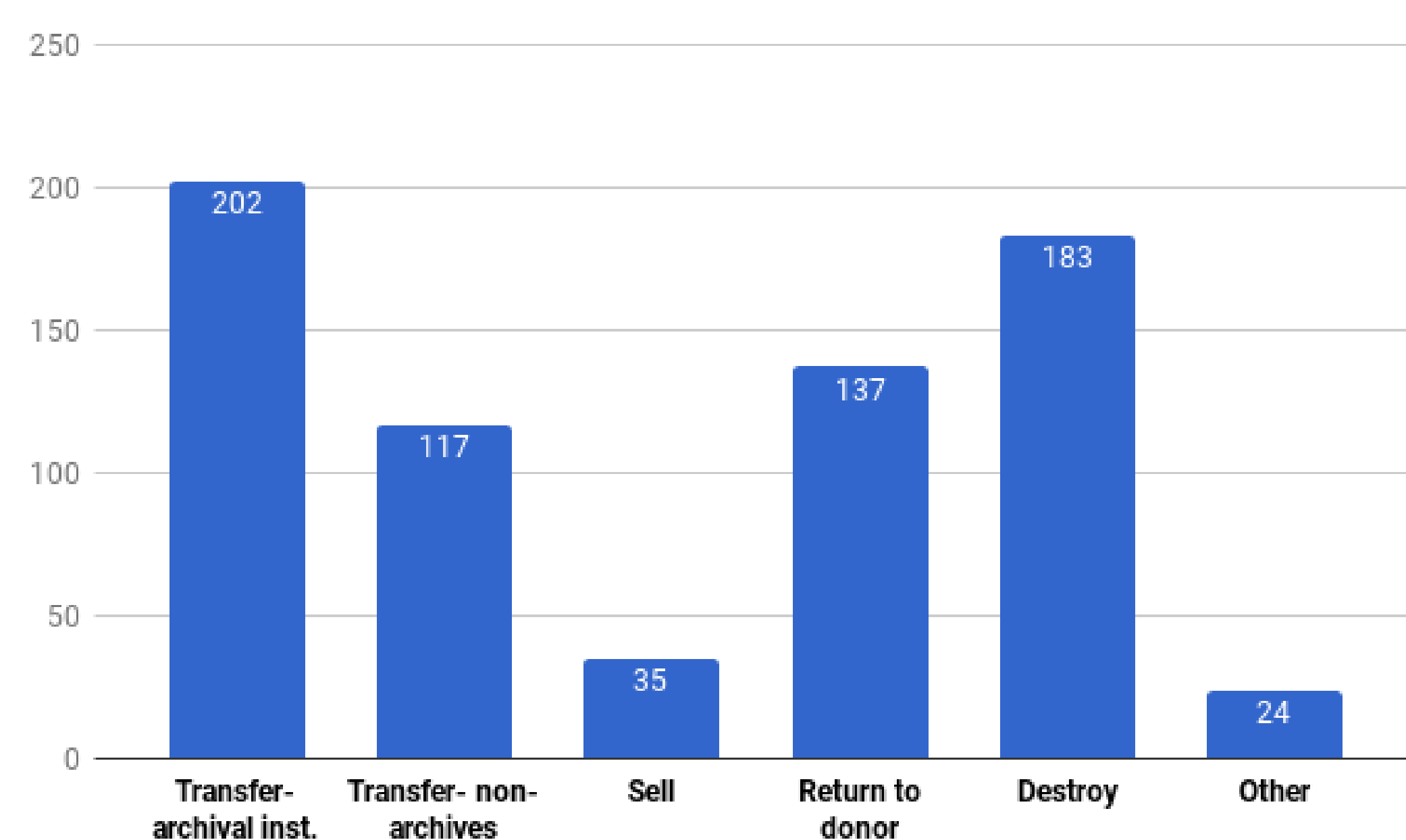
Top Reasons Not to R&D

1. No need to do so: 47%
2. Not enough time: 42%
3. No policy or authority: 27%
4. Other: 21%
5. Fear of bad PR/donor relations: 17%

43% of respondents do NOT use the SAA guidelines

89% of respondents do NOT publicize that they deaccession

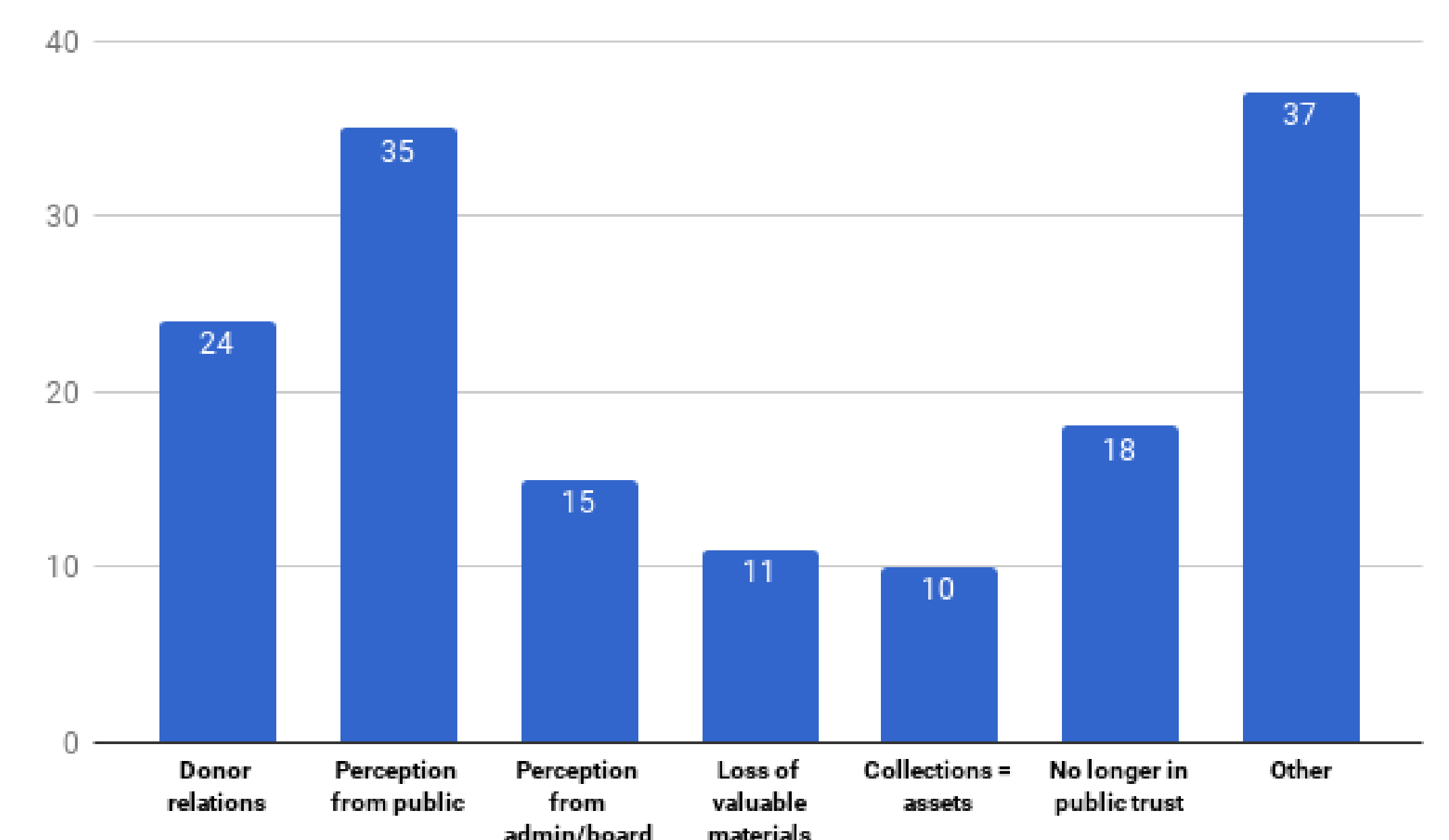
What Happens to Deaccessioned Material?



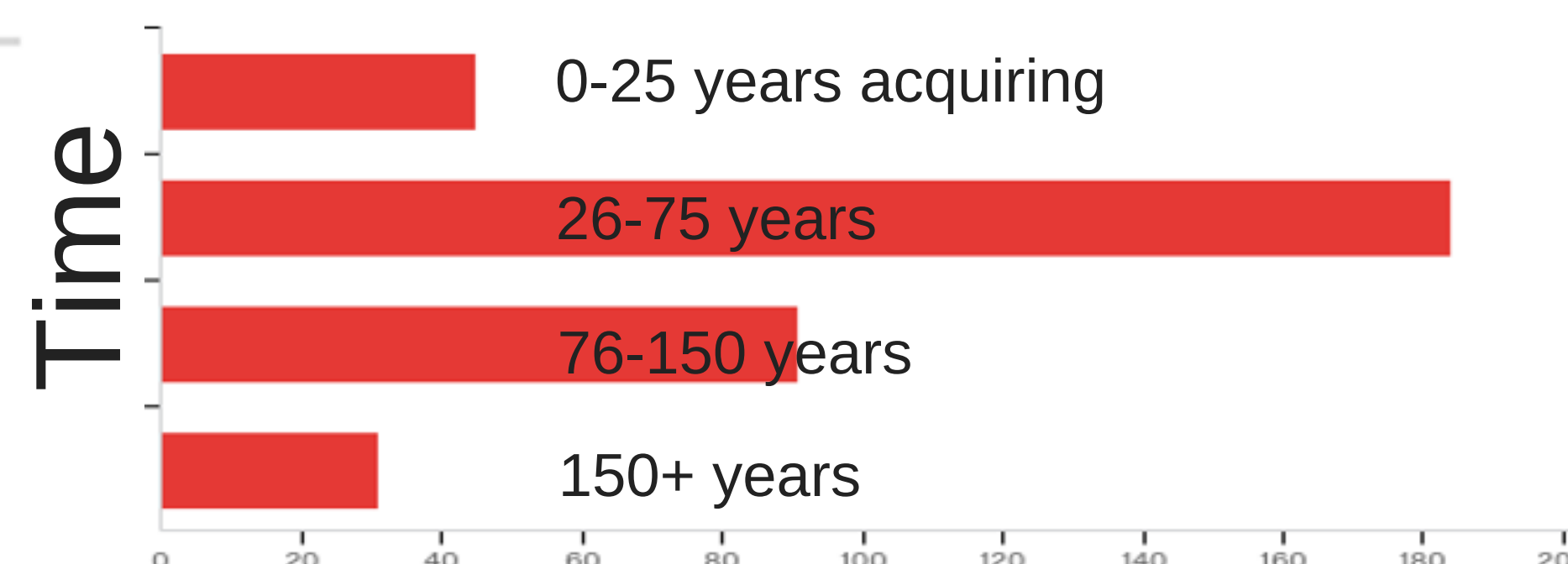
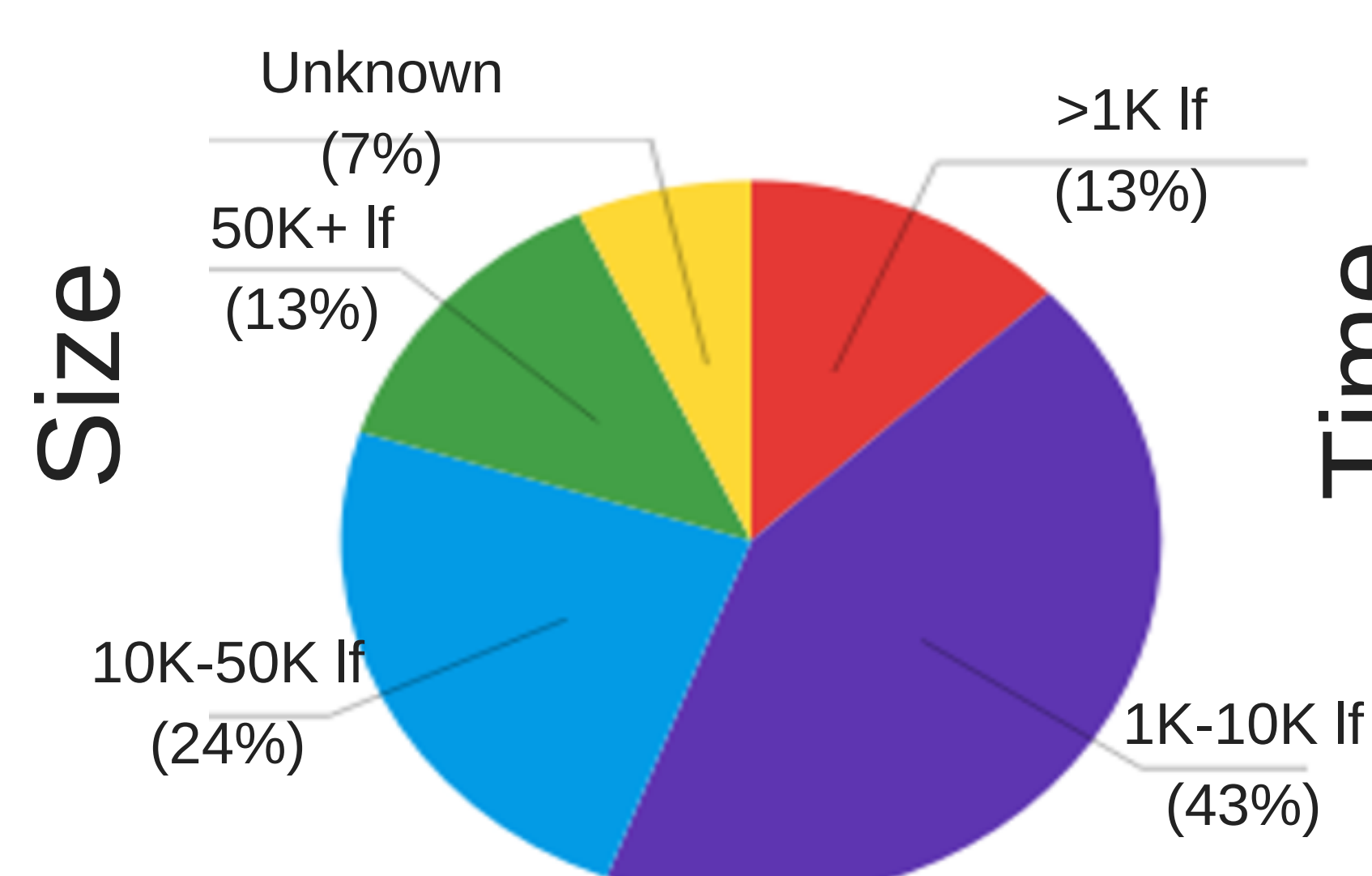
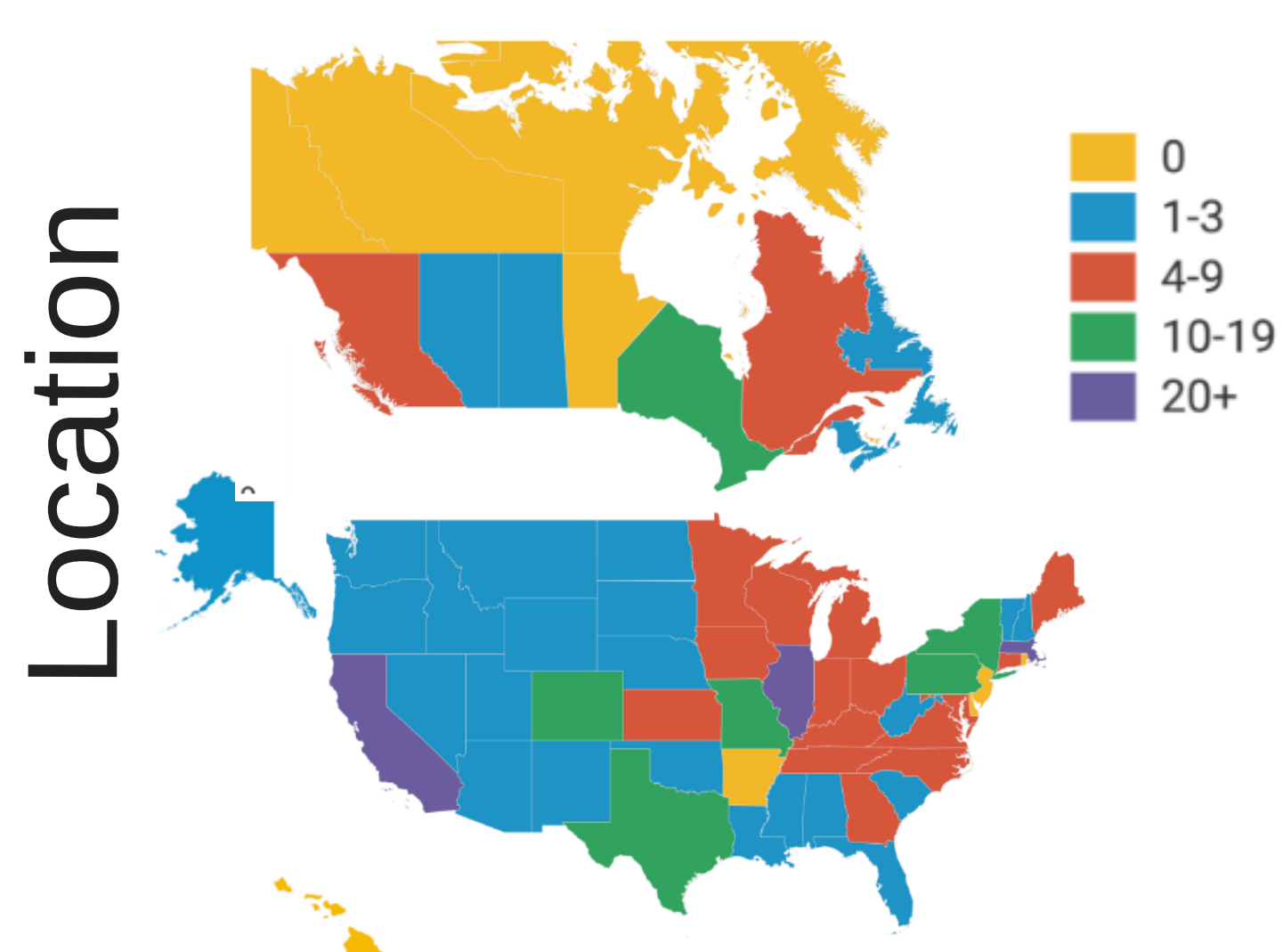
Further Research:

- Lack of transparency
- Making decisions individually
- Ad hoc vs. systematic reappraisal
- Lack of follow-up
- R&D of born-digital materials
- Weeding vs. deaccessioning
- SAA guidelines not being used

Negative Effects



Response Demographics



- 42% academic
- 15% government
- 11.5% museum or local historical society
- 8% public library
- 7.5% religious
- 4% corporate
- 8% misc./other