The OCLC Research Survey of Special Collections and Archives

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The balance sheet

- *Collections* are growing dramatically

- *Use* is increasing

- Many materials remain *uncataloged*

- *Backlogs* are continuing to grow

- *Staffing* is being added only in technology

- 75% of library *budgets* have been cut

The three most challenging issues

1. Space

1. Born-digital materials

2. Digitization

Key to percentages:

Red = % of respondents
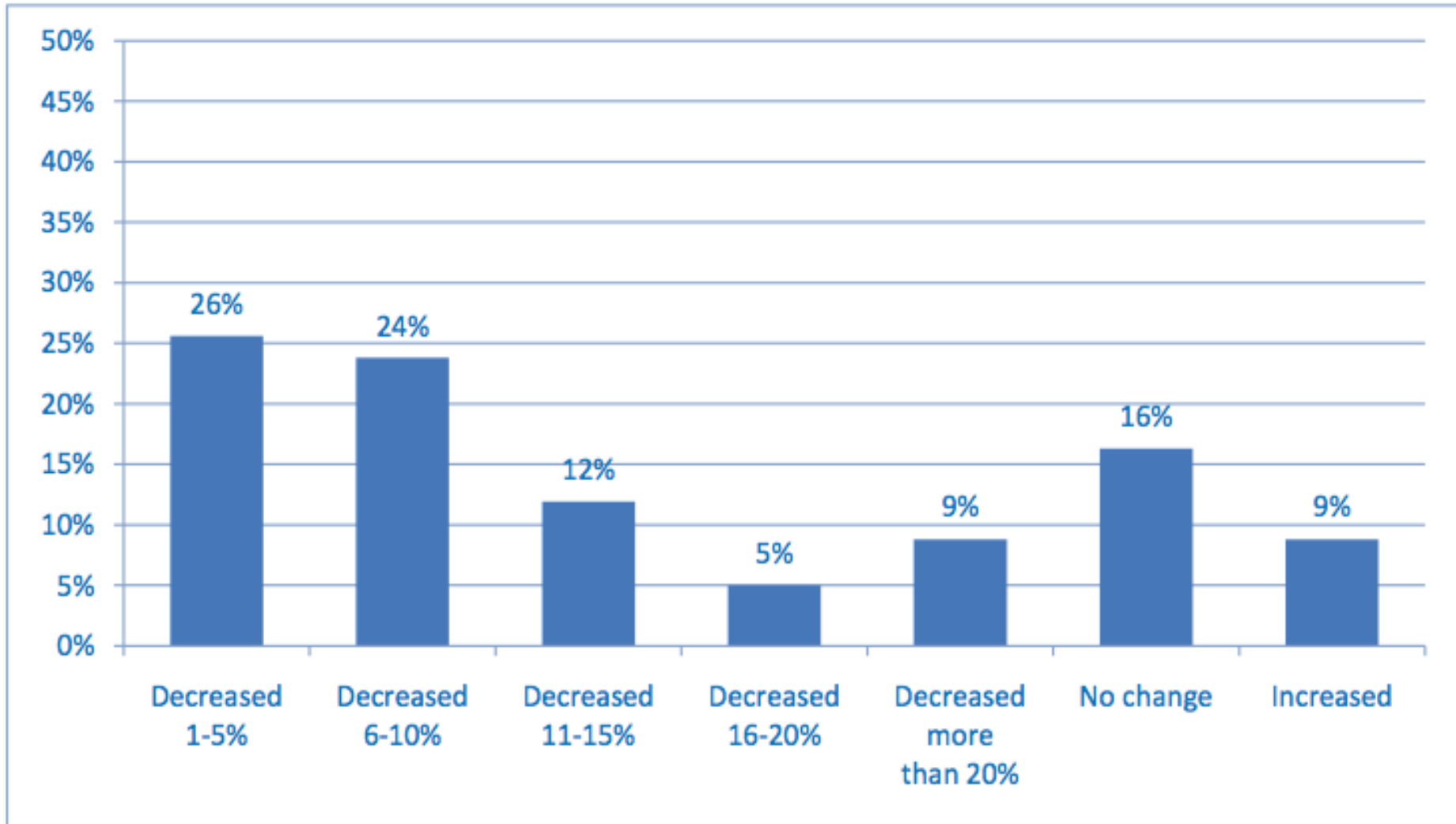Black = numerical data

Survey population

Libraries surveyed: 275

Rate of response: 61% (n=169)

Population: five library organizations in the U.S. and Canada

- Universities: 59%
- Colleges: 19%
- Independent libraries, museums, national institutions, public libraries, others: 22%

Reductions in overall library funding

Lack of metrics

Examples of data that is incomplete or potentially inconsistent due to lack of metrics:

- Collection counts by format
- Type and number of users
- Quantity of materials used
- Catalog records
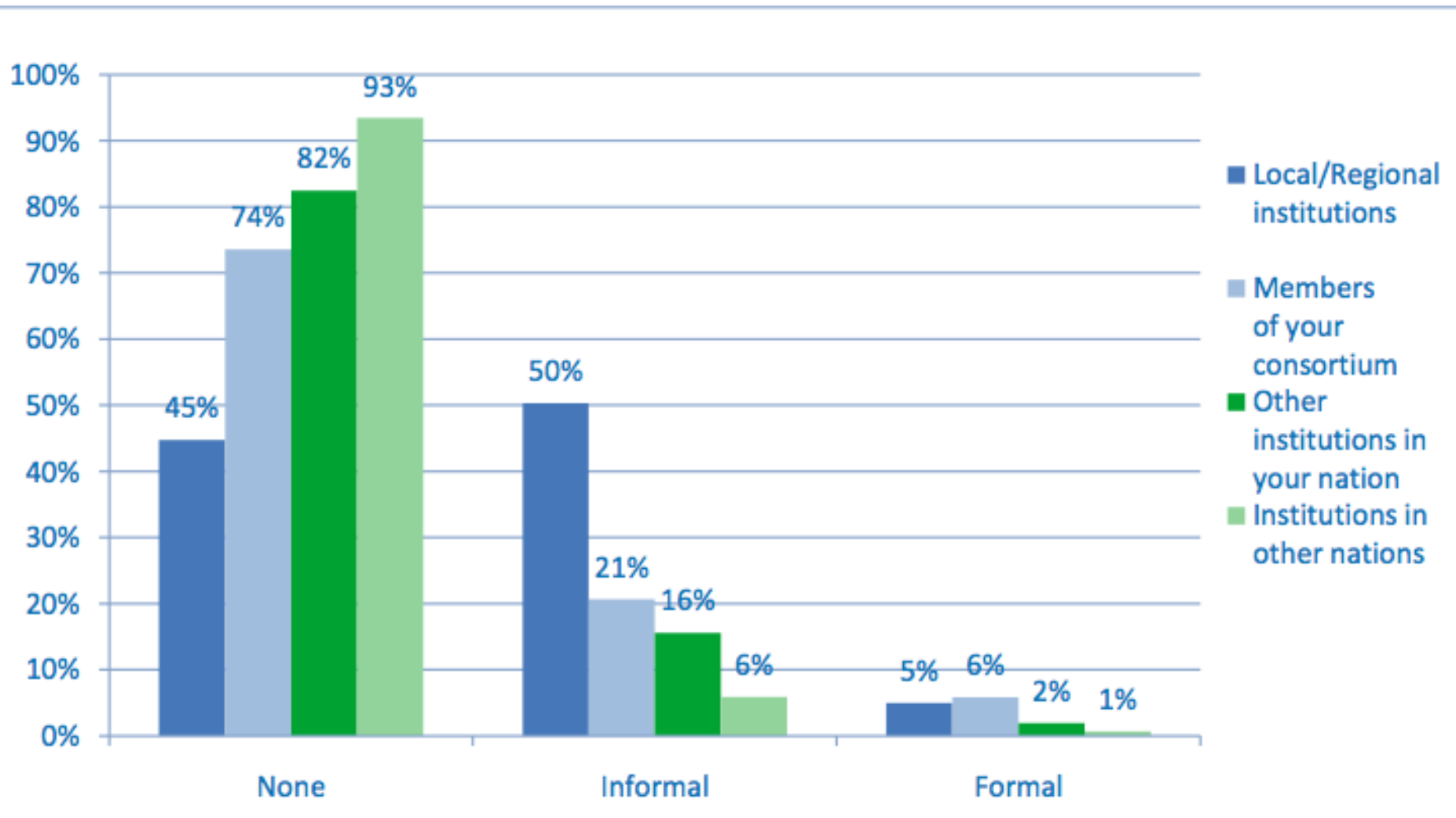
Collections growth

Mean collections growth since 1998 *

- Books: 50%
- Archives/manuscripts: 50%
- Audio: 240%
- Visual and moving image: 300%

Special collections in remote storage: 67%

* Our data vs. Association of Research Libraries (U.S.) in 1998.
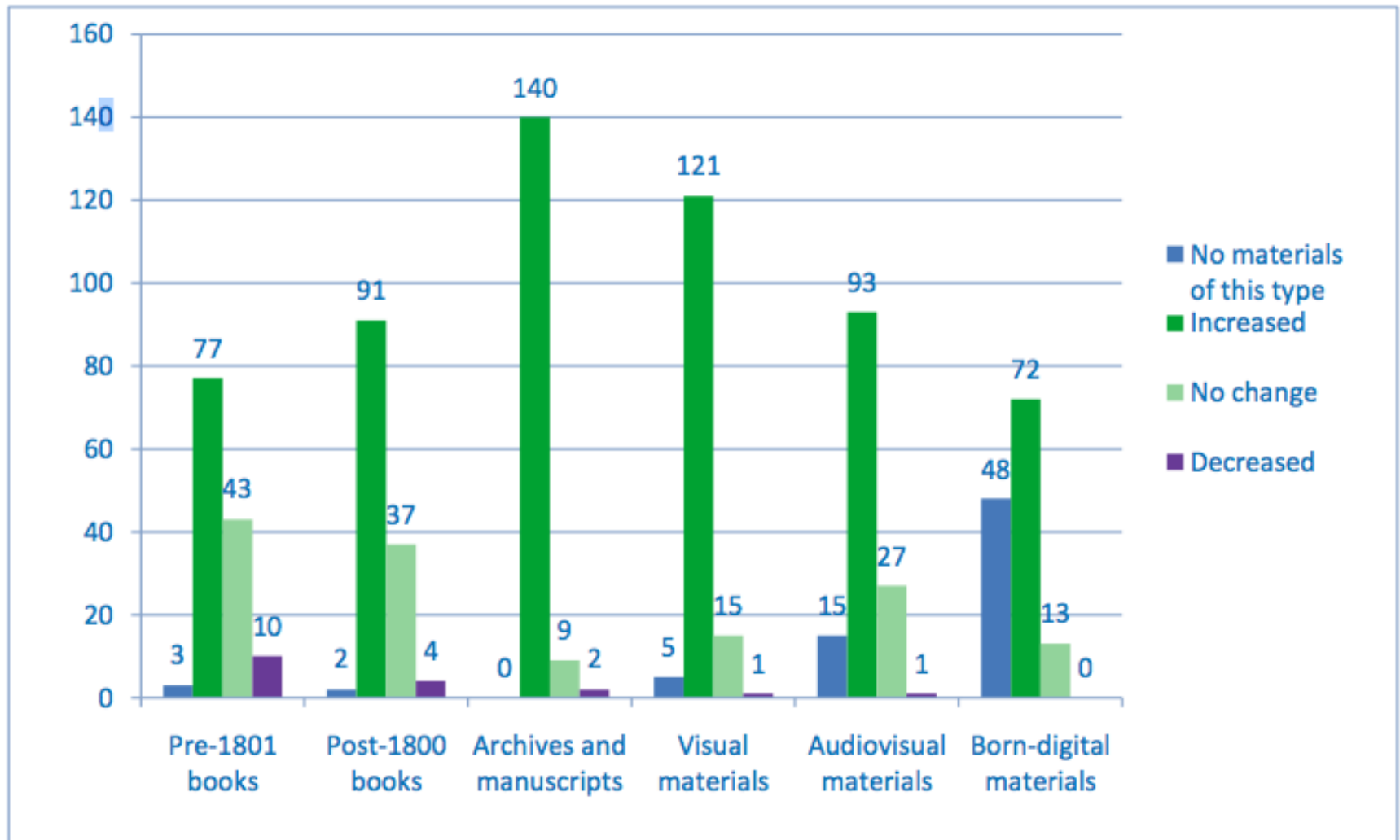
Collaborative collection development

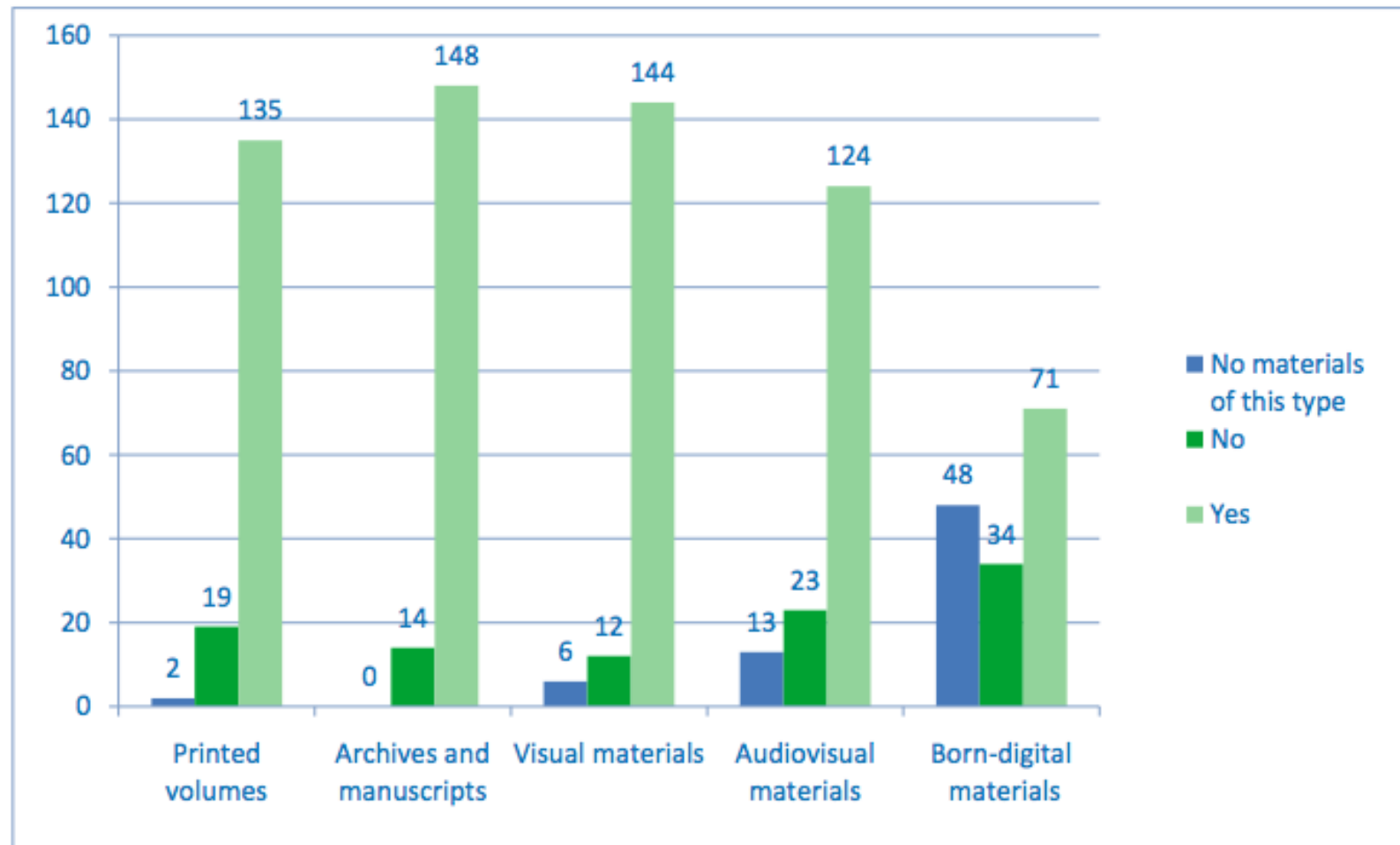# User services: Onsite visits

Percent of each type of user

- Faculty/staff: 9%
- Graduate students: 5%
- Undergraduates: 12%
- Visiting scholars/researchers: 24%
- Local community: 7%
- "Other": 43% (i.e., type of user not specified)

Changes in use by format

Note: Numbers of respondents.

Access to uncataloged/unprocessed materials

Note: Numbers of respondents.

Reasons to disallow use of unprocessed materials

- Difficulty in using materials received in serious disorder
- Potential for endangering fragile materials not yet properly protected
- Must identify materials that should be restricted for reasons of privacy or confidentiality.
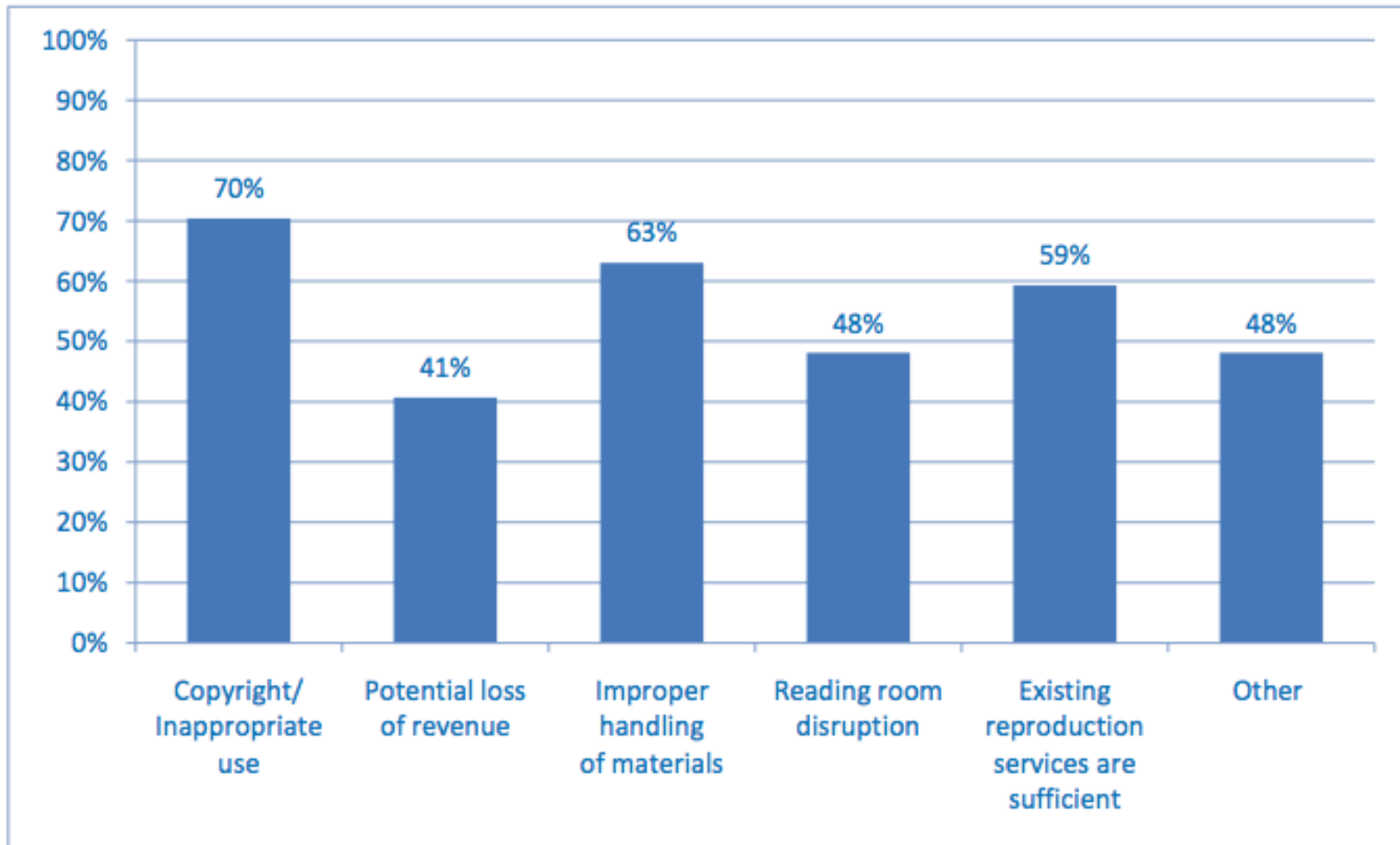
Use of digital cameras

Users may employ personal digital cameras in the special collections reading room: 87%

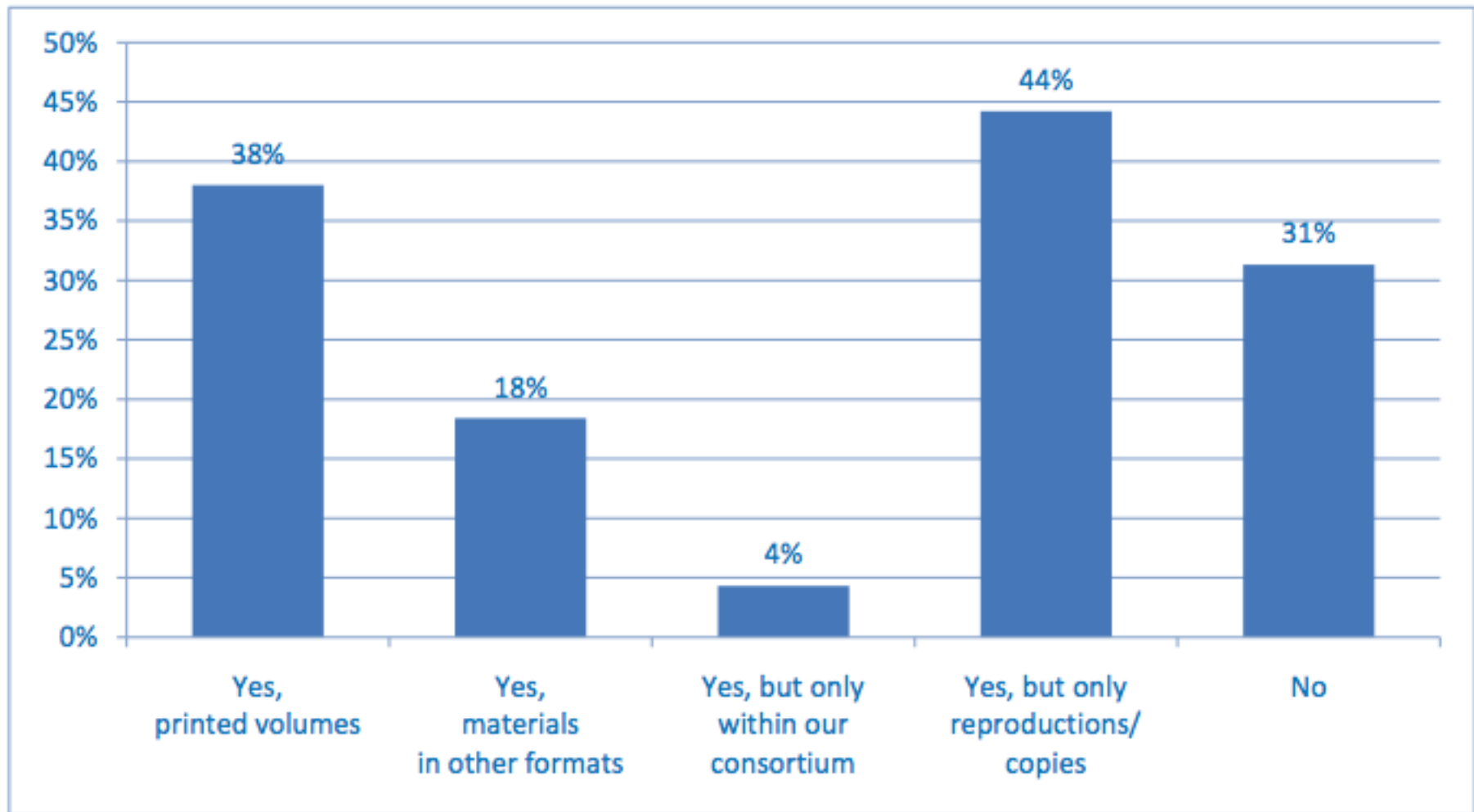C.f. Lisa Miller, et al. *"Capture and Release": Digital Cameras in the Reading Room*. OCLC Research, 2010.
http://www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2010/2010-05.pdf

Reasons to disallow digital camera use

Note: n=27

Interlibrary loan

Catalog records

Format	n	Online	Offline	No Records	Described within Archival Collections
Printed volumes	154	85%	7%	8%	n/a
Archival collections	153	56%	14%	30%	n/a
Manuscripts (items)	96	51%	23%	26%	n/a
Cartographic materials	129	42%	16%	23%	24%
Visual materials	136	21%	13%	35%	35%
Audiovisual materials	128	25%	7%	36%	36%
Born-digital materials	89	29%	1%	34%	40%

Change in size of backlogs
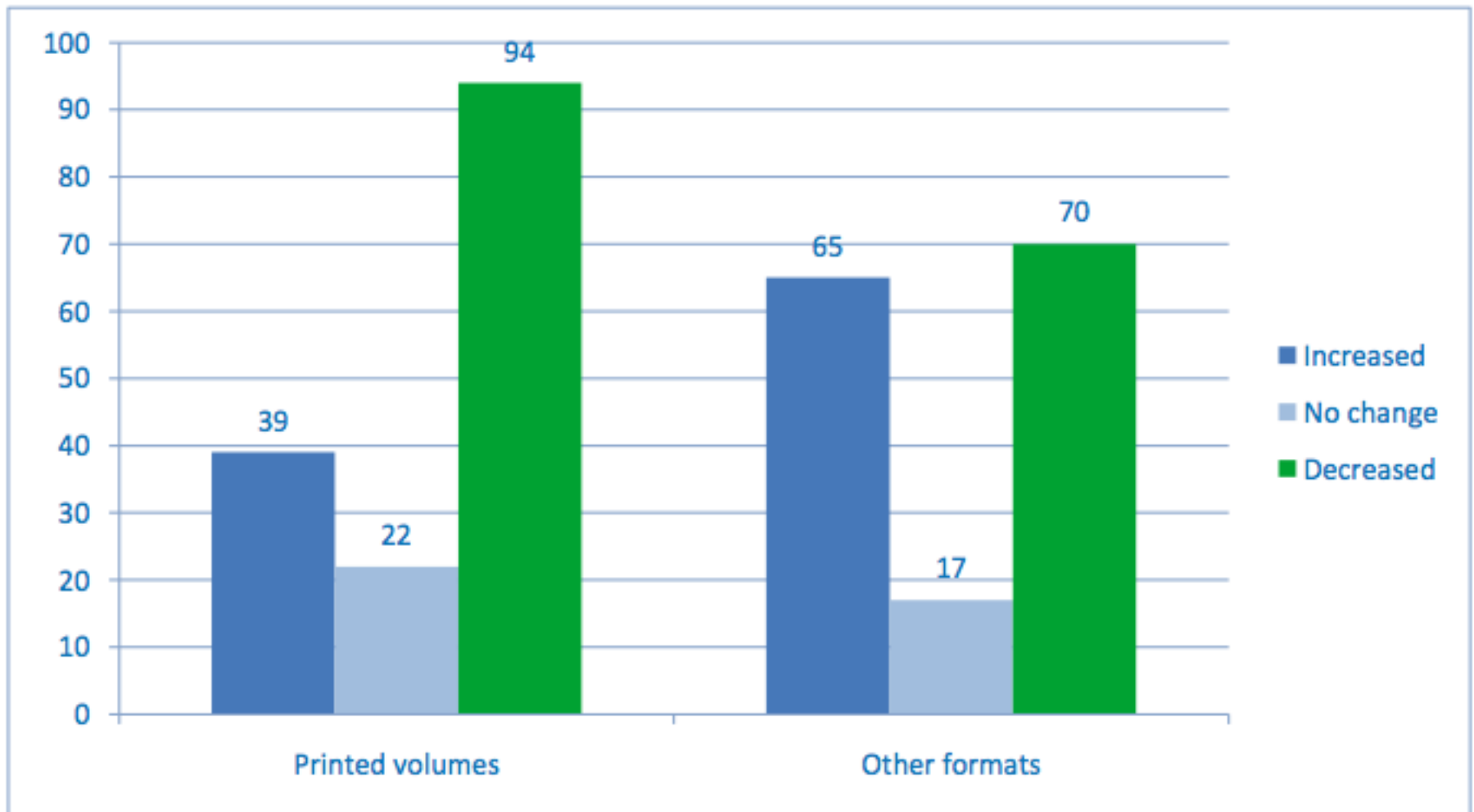
Note: Numbers of respondents.

Archival management

Archival finding aids

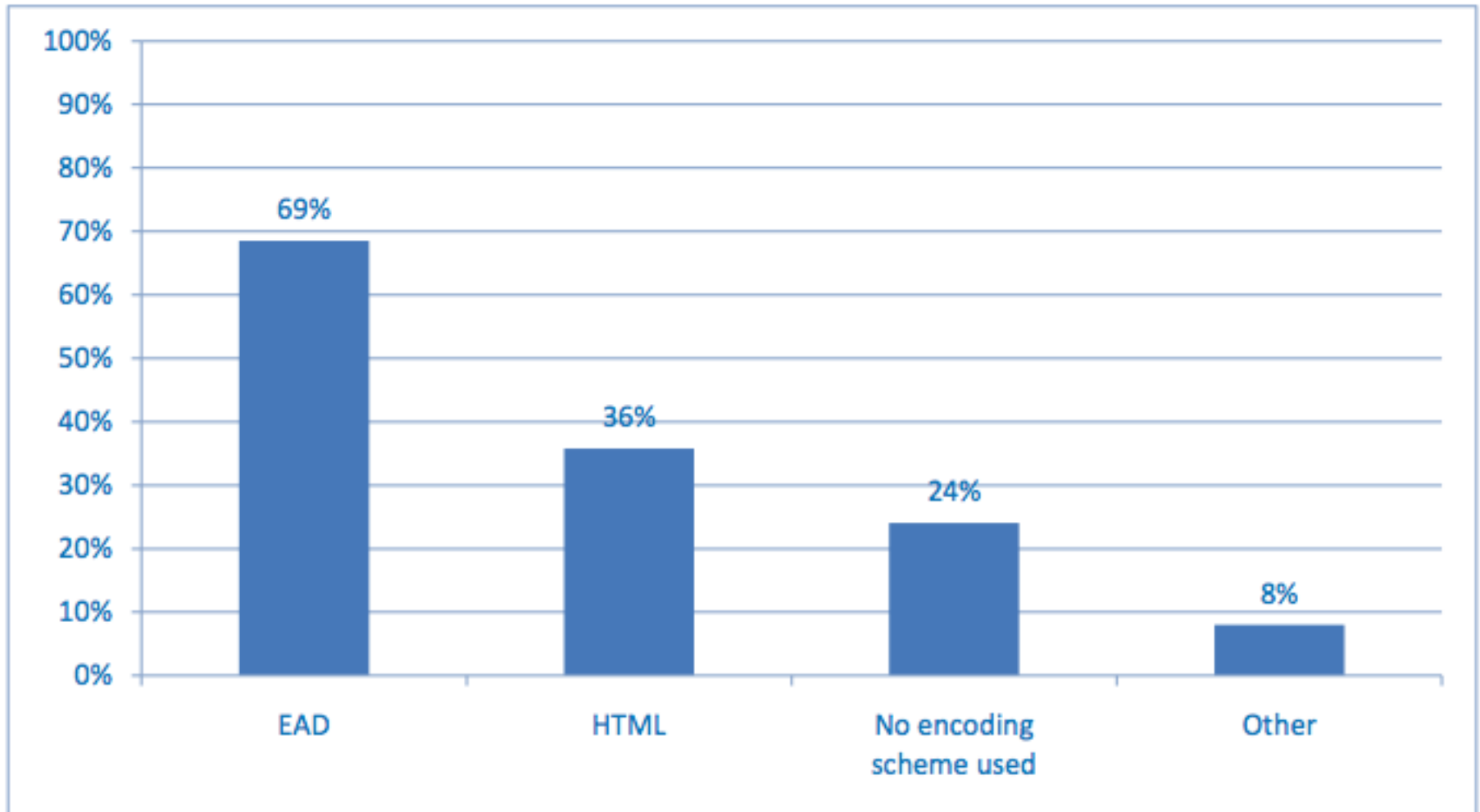- Online: 44%
- Print-only or in local silos: 30%

Simplified processing techniques

- Always: 18%
- Sometimes: 57%

Finding aids tools are not standardized

- Most commonly used: word processing, databases
- Archivists Toolkit: 34%
- Archon: 11%

Encoding of archival finding aids
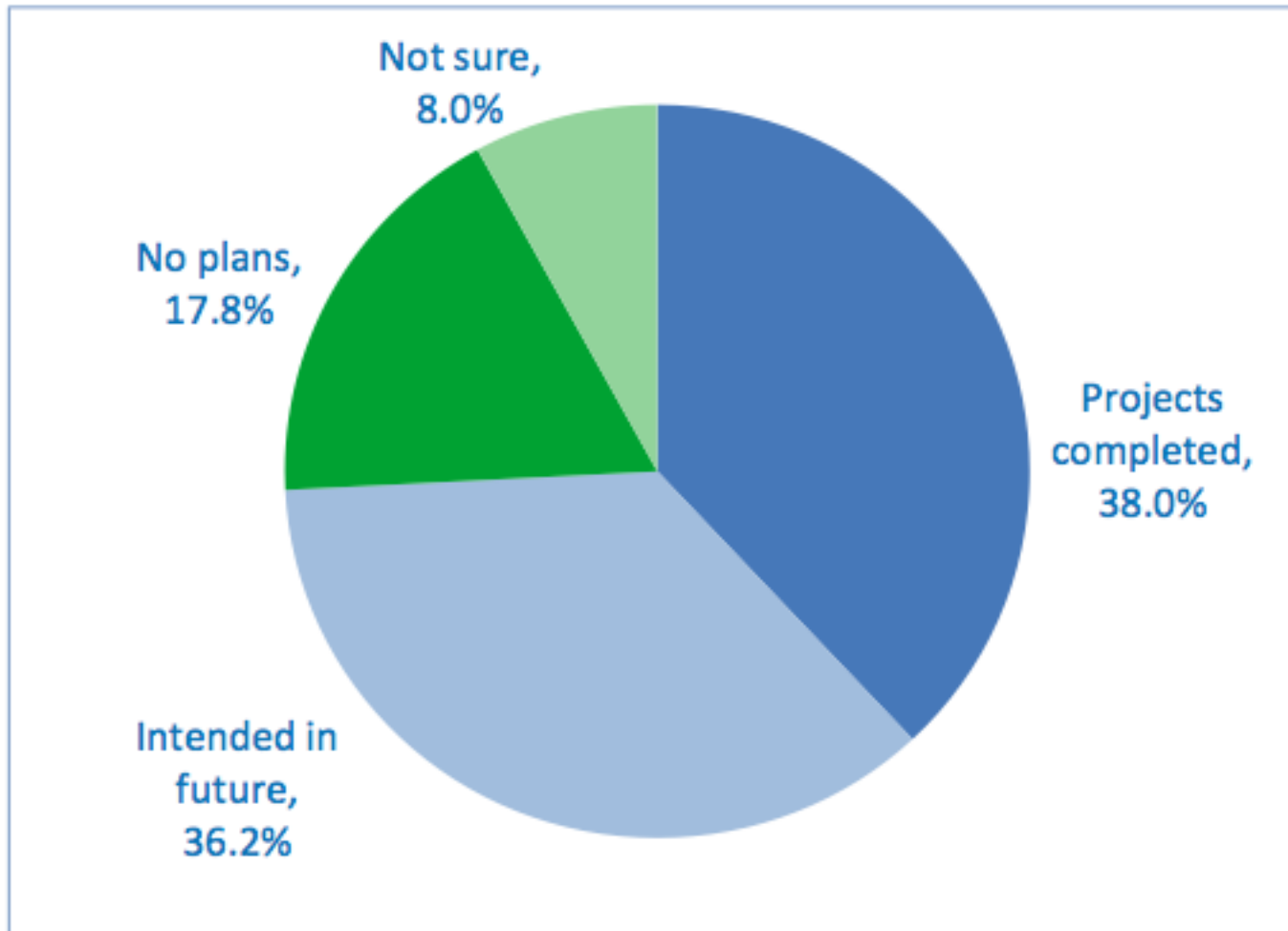

Note: Percentages of respondents.

Digitization

Projects completed and/or active program: 97%

Special collections contributions
- Collections content: 99%
- Project management: 87%
- Cataloging/metadata: 84%
- Digital image production: 71%

Large-scale project completed: 38% (??)

Large-scale digitization of special collections

Definition: Systematic reproduction of entire collections using streamlined production methods that account for special needs.

Licensing digitized special collections

Content licensed to commercial firms for digitization: 26%

C.f. *Principles to Guide Vendor/Publisher Relations in Large- Scale Digitization Projects of Special Collections Materials.* ARL policy, approved July 2010.

http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/principles_large_scale_digitization.pdf
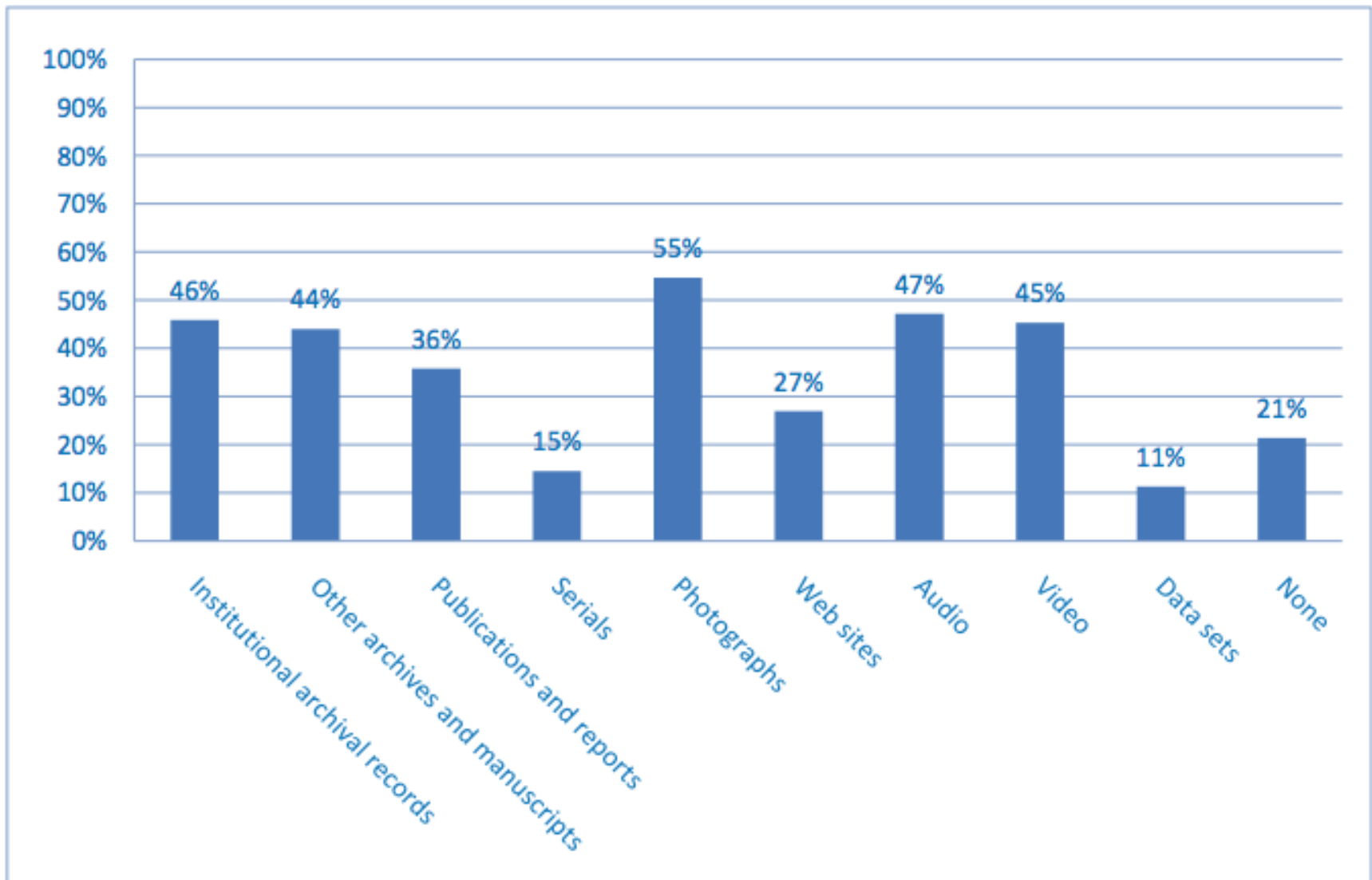
Born-digital archival materials

Simply stated ...

- Undercollected
- Undercounted
- Undermanaged
- Unpreserved
- Inaccessible

Born-digital archival materials

- Holdings reported by: 35%
  - Percent held by top two libraries: 51%
  - Percent held by top 13 libraries: 93%

- Digital materials currently held by: 79%

- Assignment of responsibility for born-digital management made by: 55%

- Education/training needed by: 83%

- *We surmise that collecting is generally passive, sporadic, limited.*

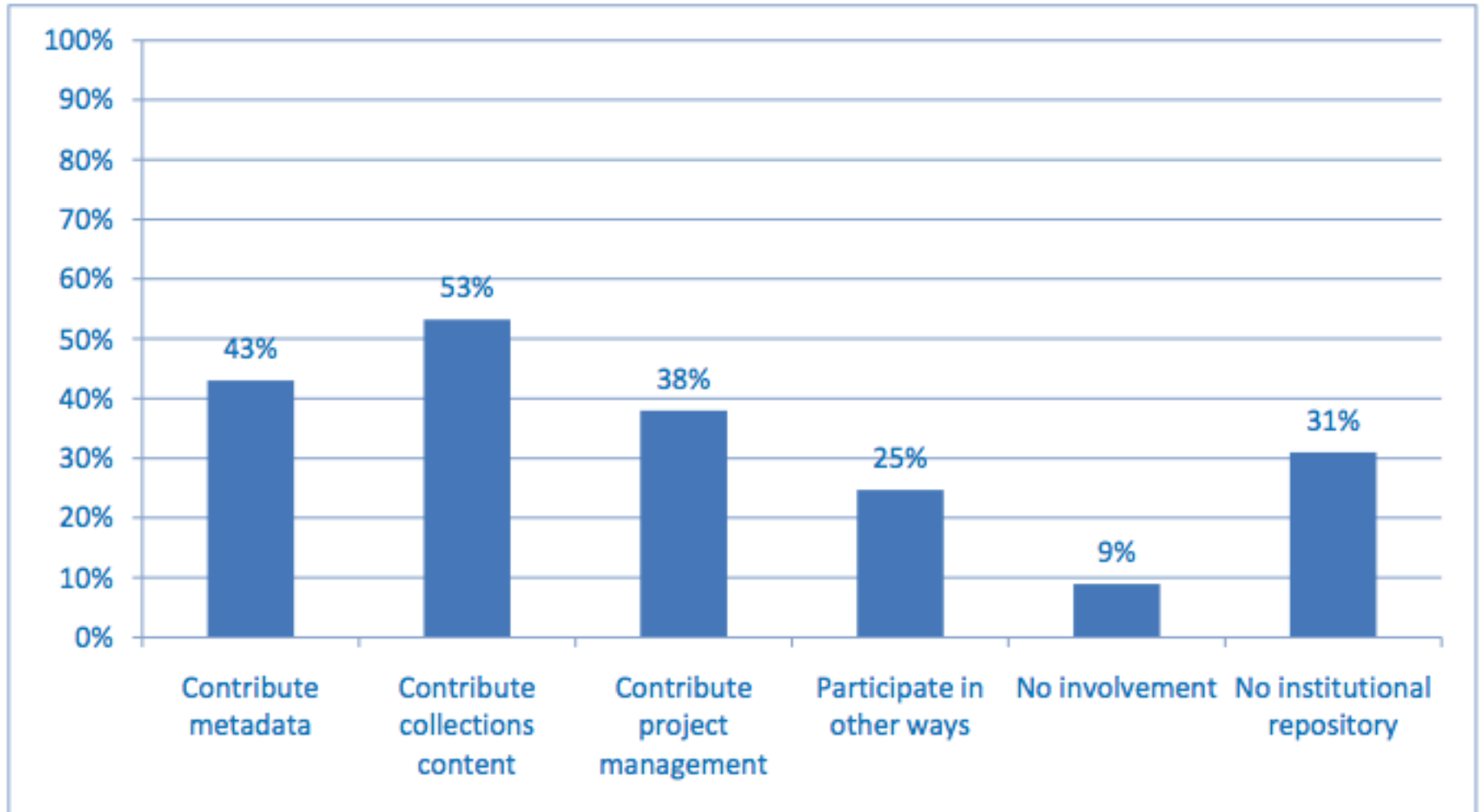# Born-digital materials already held

Impediments to born-digital management
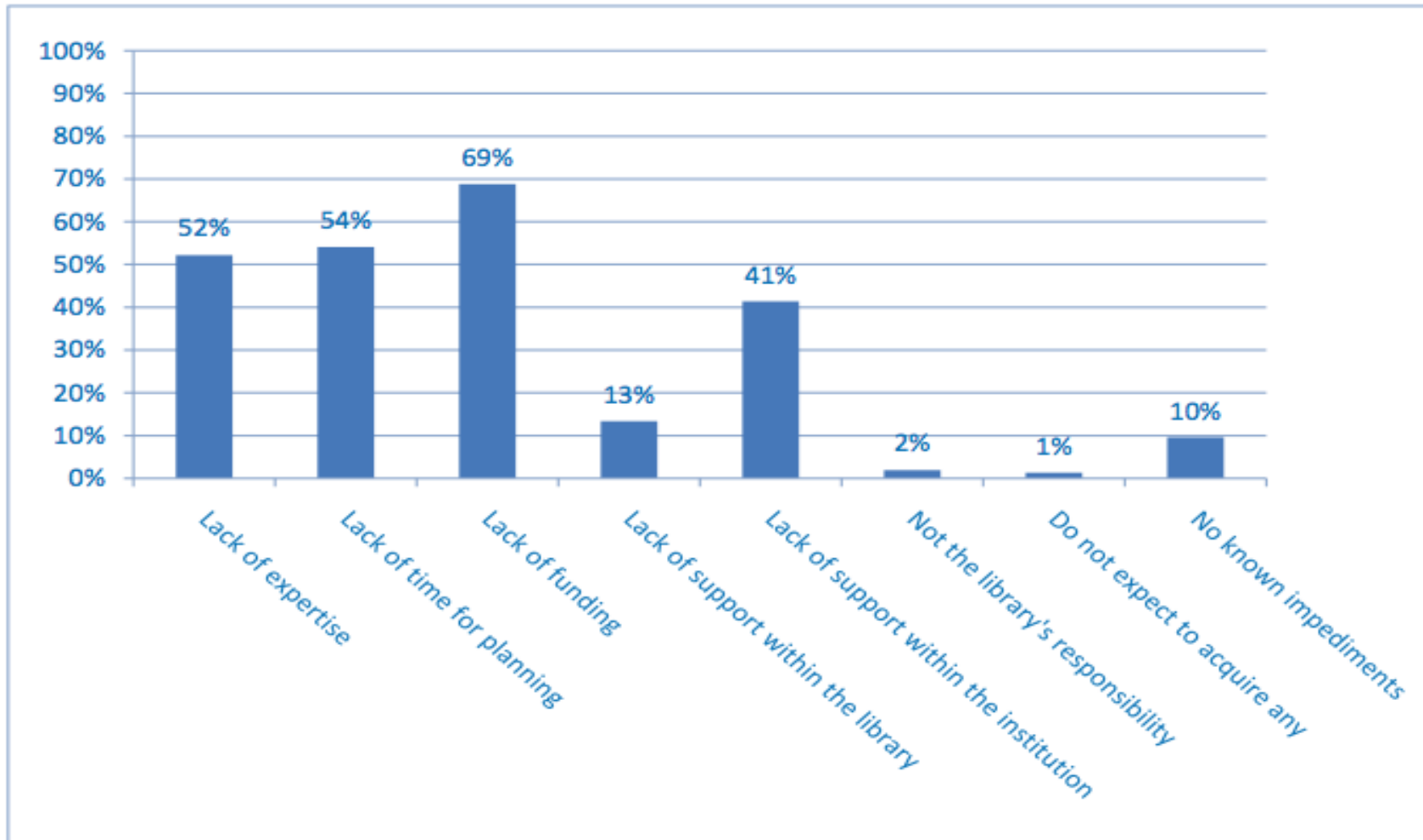
Note: Respondents could check all that apply.

Special collections contributions to institutional repositories

Top education and training needs

1. Born-digital materials: 83%

1. Information technology: 65%

2. Intellectual property: 56%

3. Cataloging and metadata: 51%

Action items

1. Establish *metrics* for standardized measurement of key measures.
2. Identify barriers to and goals of *collaborative collection development*.
3. Take collective action to preserve at-risk *audiovisual materials*.
4. Liberally implement *access and interlibrary loan* approvals.
5. Adopt *sustainable methodologies* to stop the growth of backlogs.
6. Develop *shared metadata capacities* for maps and printed graphics.
7. Convert *legacy finding aids* without revising or upgrading.
8. Develop models for *large-scale digitization* of special collections.
9. Identify the scope of and gaps in the corpus of *digitized rare books*.
10. Identify the relationship between *born-digital materials* and special collections.
11. Determine *basic steps* for jump-starting management of *born-digital* materials.
12. Develop *use cases and cost studies* for *born-digital* materials.
13. Confirm high-priority areas for *education and training* and fill the gaps.

Red = OCLC Research project underway

What's next?

Now

Survey of special collections in research libraries in the UK and Ireland is in planning stages

- All RLUK members
- All UK members of OCLC Research Library Partnership
- Possibly others …

Future?

Survey(s) of LIBER members in continental Europe?

- By country or region?
- By type of library?
- … ???

Taking our Pulse

The OCLC Research Survey of Special Collections and Archives

http://www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2010/2010-11.pdf

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