

Digital Humanities

Faculty Survey Results – December 2015

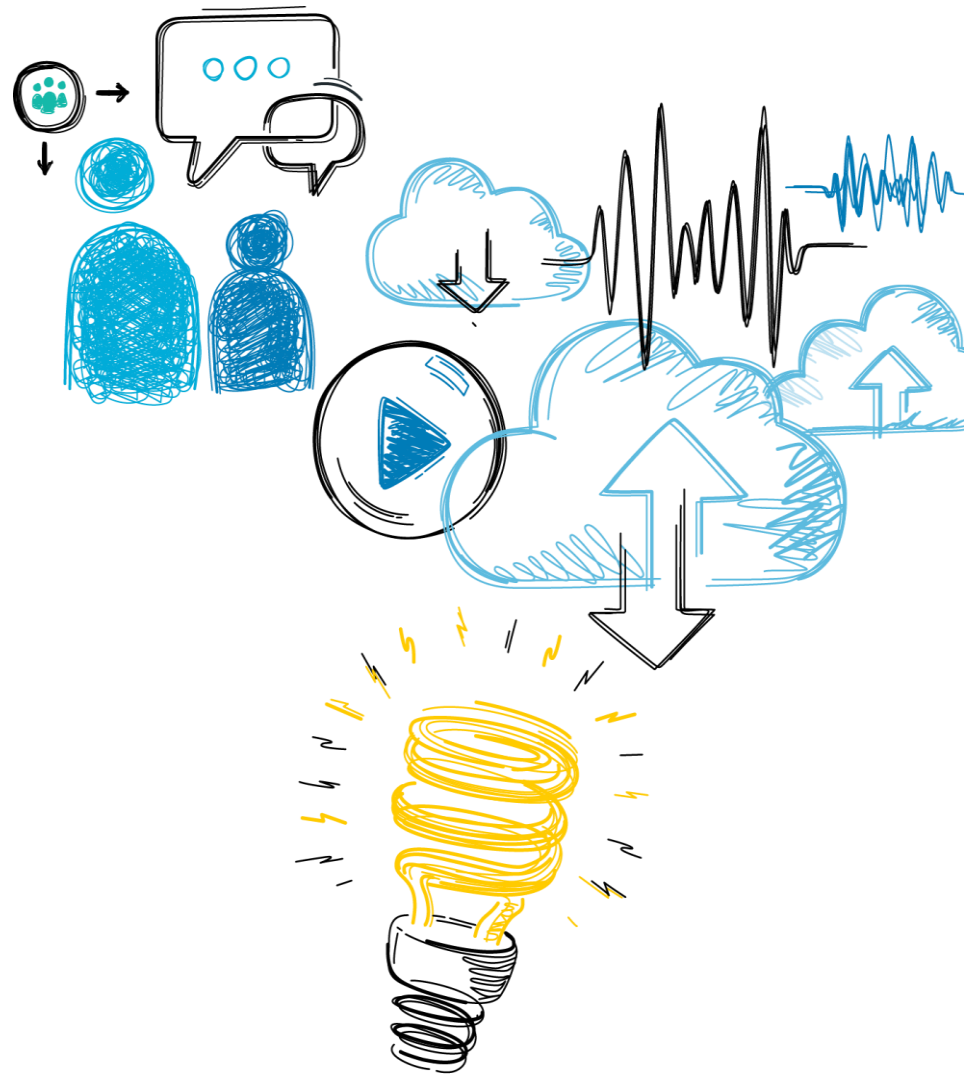


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Executive Summary

- Almost all faculty think that support in digital humanities elevates the importance of academic libraries.
 - Six out of ten faculty feel that a digital humanities center belongs in the library digital collections center.
 - In addition to having an institutional repository, over half of faculty also saw the role of the library to include advocating for coordinated digital support, packaging existing services together, or creating avenues for scholarly use of metadata.
 - Further, in their own work, over half also saw the role of the library to include general support, being a liaison for existing library services, providing training on tools, or helping find available sources.
 - The main reasons faculty felt that it elevates the importance included seeing the library as more of a digital center, renewing the library as a central place for research, and demonstrating the value of the skills of the librarian.



Executive Summary (continued)



- Almost nine out of ten faculty use digital humanities tools in their research or teaching.
 - For a recent piece of work, almost eight out of ten faculty used a collection of secondary or primary source digital content.
 - However, there is approximately four out of ten faculty that do not feel the library is equipped to assist them in their digital humanities work.
- There's a wide variety of skills faculty wish they had such as software or tool creation, programming, digital resource planning, content creation, or basic technical upkeep.
 - The most common service faculty mentioned they would want their library to provide is digital project management followed by initial project development, grant writing support, or outreach and marketing.
 - The most common resource faculty mentioned they would want their library to provide is a collection of primary source content followed by secondary source content, digital tools or software, or data produced using computational methods.

Background and Objectives



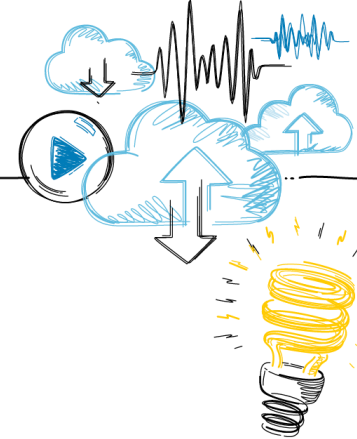
- Digital Humanities products and methods have around for decades. However, in recent years there has been a new set of constituencies for Librarians who have some expertise in digital humanities such as faculty and graduate students¹.
- As a result, libraries are recognizing that they may need to invest more resources such as staff expertise and time, technology, and physical spaces to make a more formal commitment by the library to this type of scholarship.
- In most cases, it is the faculty who initiate large-scale multi-year digital projects so there is a need to better understand how faculty view digital humanities.
- The objective of this research is to determine key characteristics of faculty involved in digital humanities projects and their current and future needs.

Faculty Perspectives on Digital Humanities



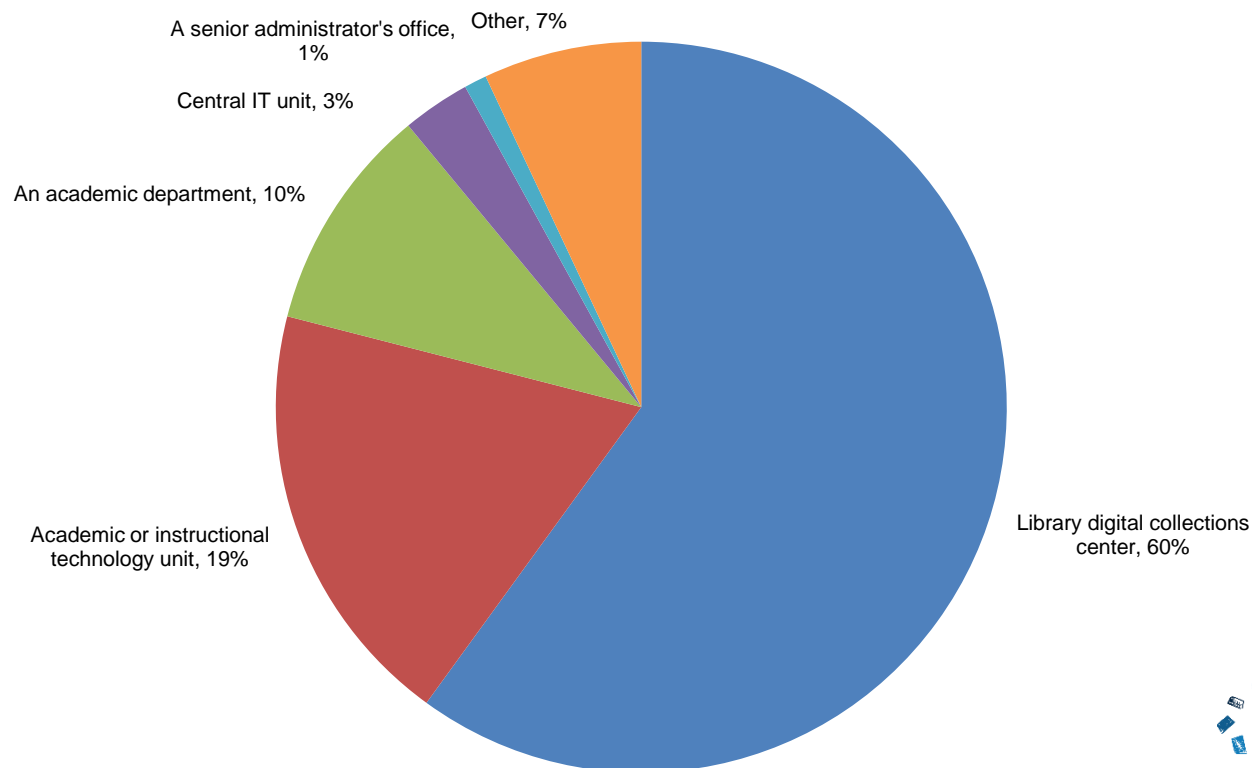
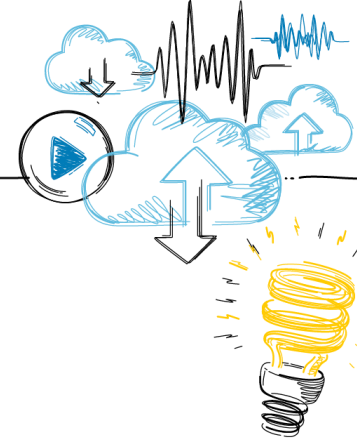
When asked to define “digital humanities” faculty mentioned a wide range of characteristics.

Common themes included online access to electronic tools such as databases or texts in the disciplines of humanities and could include research.



Six out of ten faculty feel that a digital humanities center belongs in the library digital collections center.

- Other locations mentioned include an academic or instructional technology unit or a specific academic department.
- Few mentioned a central IT unit.

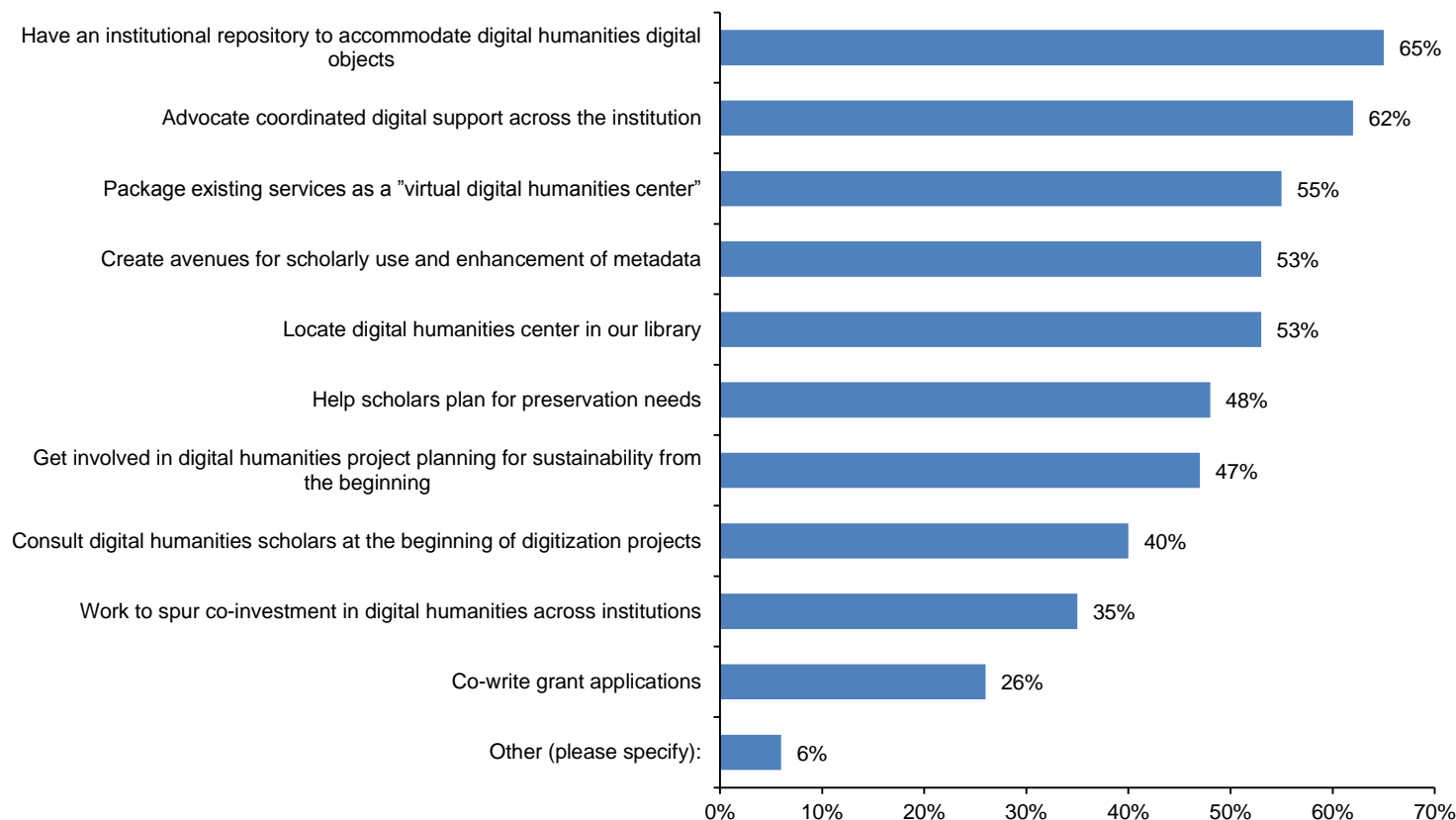


A2: Where do you feel a digital humanities center belongs at your institution? (n=409)

The most common role mentioned by faculty for the library at the institution is to have an institutional repository.



Over half also saw the role of the library to include advocating for coordinated digital support, packaging existing services together, creating avenues for scholarly use of metadata, or locating a digital humanities center in the library.

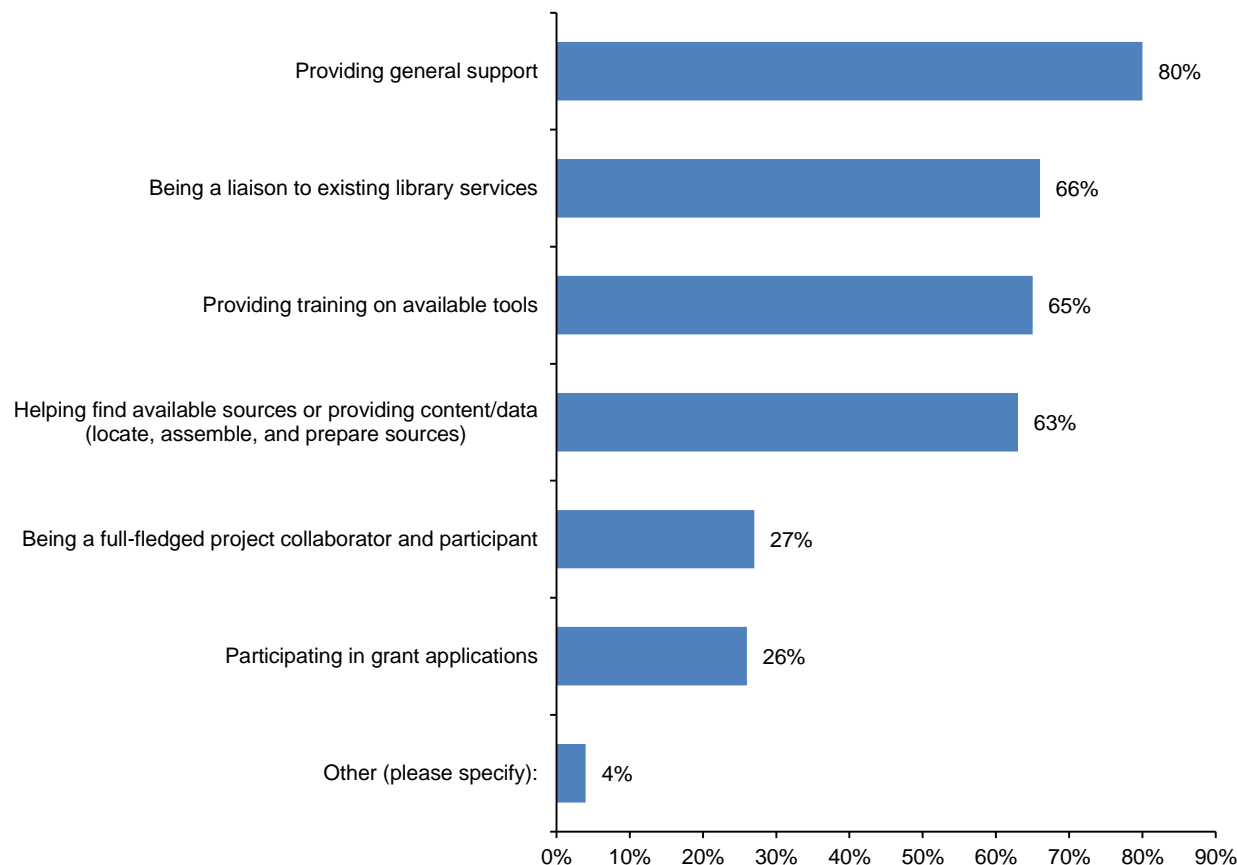


A11. What do you feel is the library's role in supporting digital humanities research at your institution?
(Multiple response, n=409)

The most common role mentioned by faculty for supporting their work is providing general support.



Over half also saw the role of the library to include being a liaison for existing library services, providing training on tools, or helping find available sources.



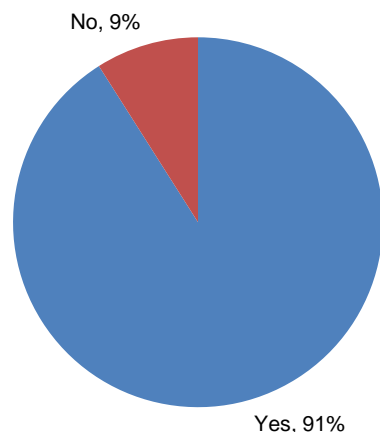
A12. What do you feel is the library's role in supporting your personal digital humanities work?
(Multiple response, n=409)

Over nine out of ten faculty think that support in digital humanities elevates the importance of academic libraries.



Some of the reasons why faculty felt this way included seeing the library as more of a digital center, renewing the library as a central place for research, and demonstrating the value of the skills of the librarian.

“Digital is the new form of research, replacing microfilm and paper--or complementing it, at least.”



“Digital humanities support can help faculty see libraries as not just repositories of information but also as partners in academic pursuits.”

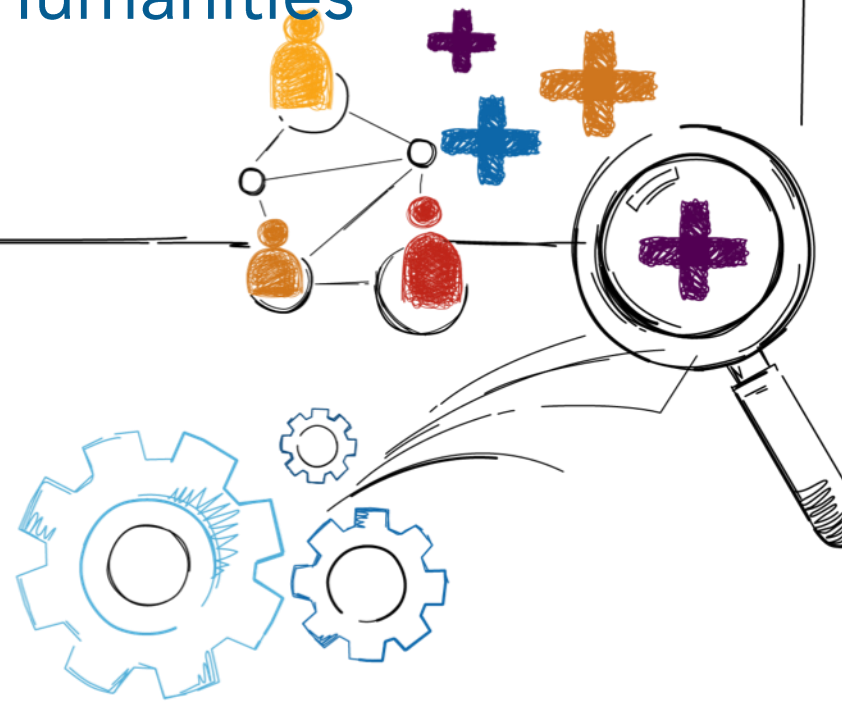
“Shows that the library is not just an institutional repository but a site of active research and a hub for connecting people with research.”

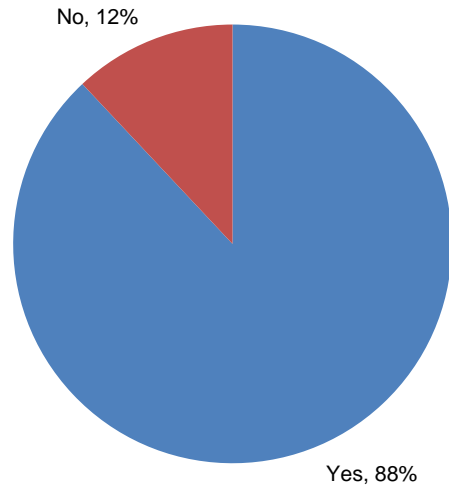
“Librarians have better and broader training in this regard than most faculty, and know how to address creation, curation, and student learning goals and outcomes for information fluency.”

A17: Do you think digital humanities support elevates the importance of academic libraries/gives libraries an opportunity to be seen in a new light? (n=409)

A18: What are some of the reasons why you feel that way? (Open-ended question)

Past Faculty Usage of Digital Humanities





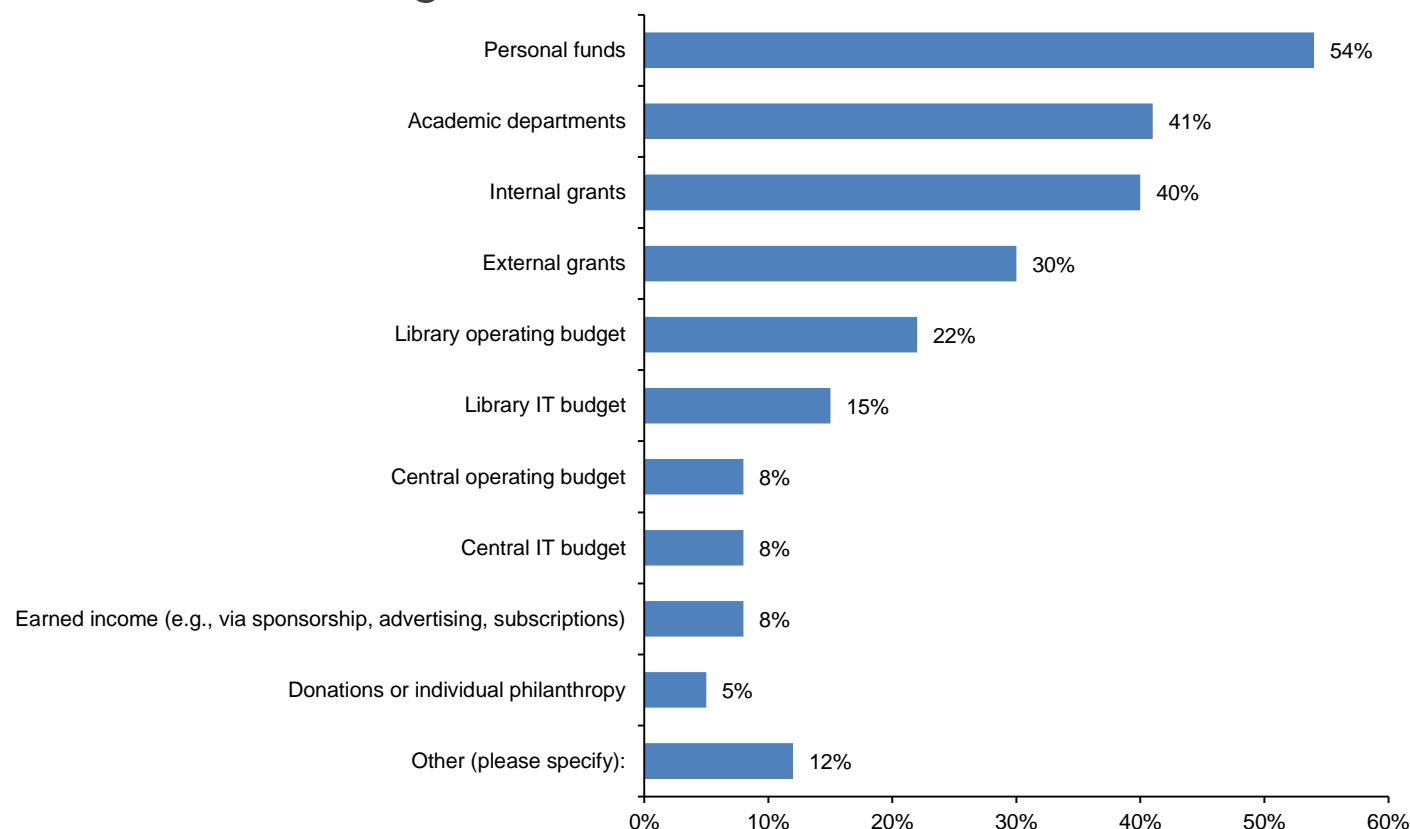
S1: Do you use digital humanities tools or techniques in your research or teaching? (n=409)

A10. What tools are required to accomplish your research? (Open-ended response, n=409)

Over half of faculty mentioned that they use personal funds for their digital humanities research.



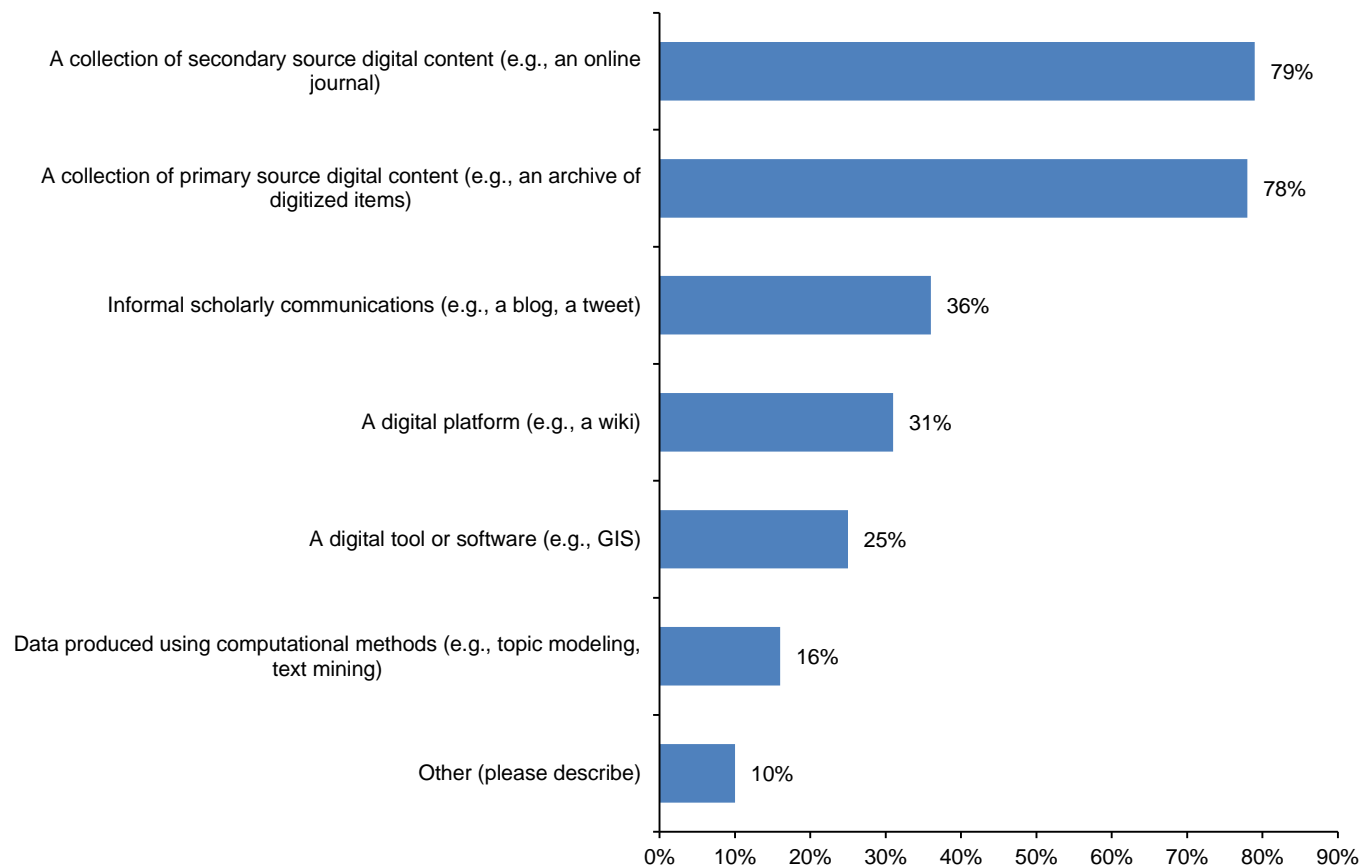
- Other popular sources for funding included academic departments, internal, and external grants.
- Only a small percentage receive funding from donations, earned income, or central IT budget.



For a recent piece of work, almost eight out of ten faculty used a collection of secondary or primary source digital content.



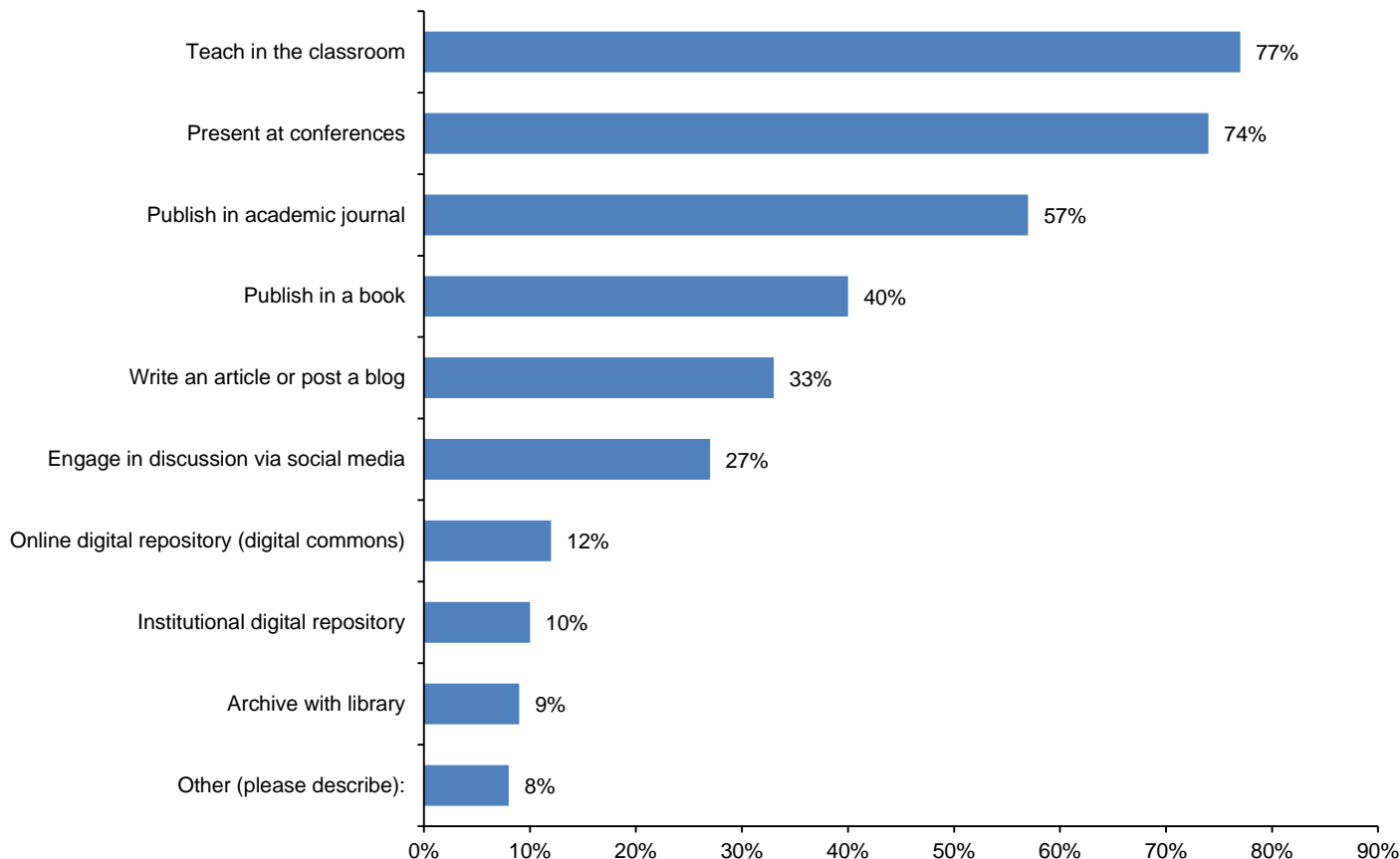
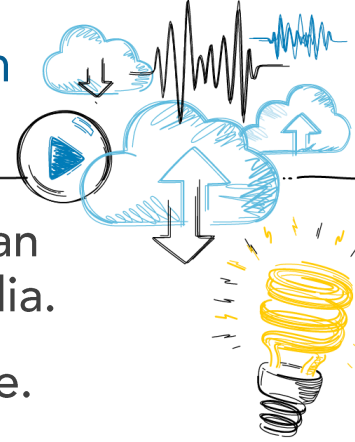
Some faculty remember using informal scholarly communications such as a blog or a tweet, a digital platform (e.g. a wiki), or a digital tool or software (e.g. GIS).



A3. Remembering a recent piece of work you did, what kinds of sources did you use?
(Multiple response, n=409)

About three quarters either share the outcomes of their research by teaching it in the classroom or by presenting at a conference.

- Other popular ways to share include publishing in a book, writing an article or posting a blog, or engaging in a discussion on social media.
- About one in ten said they typically share with the library to archive.

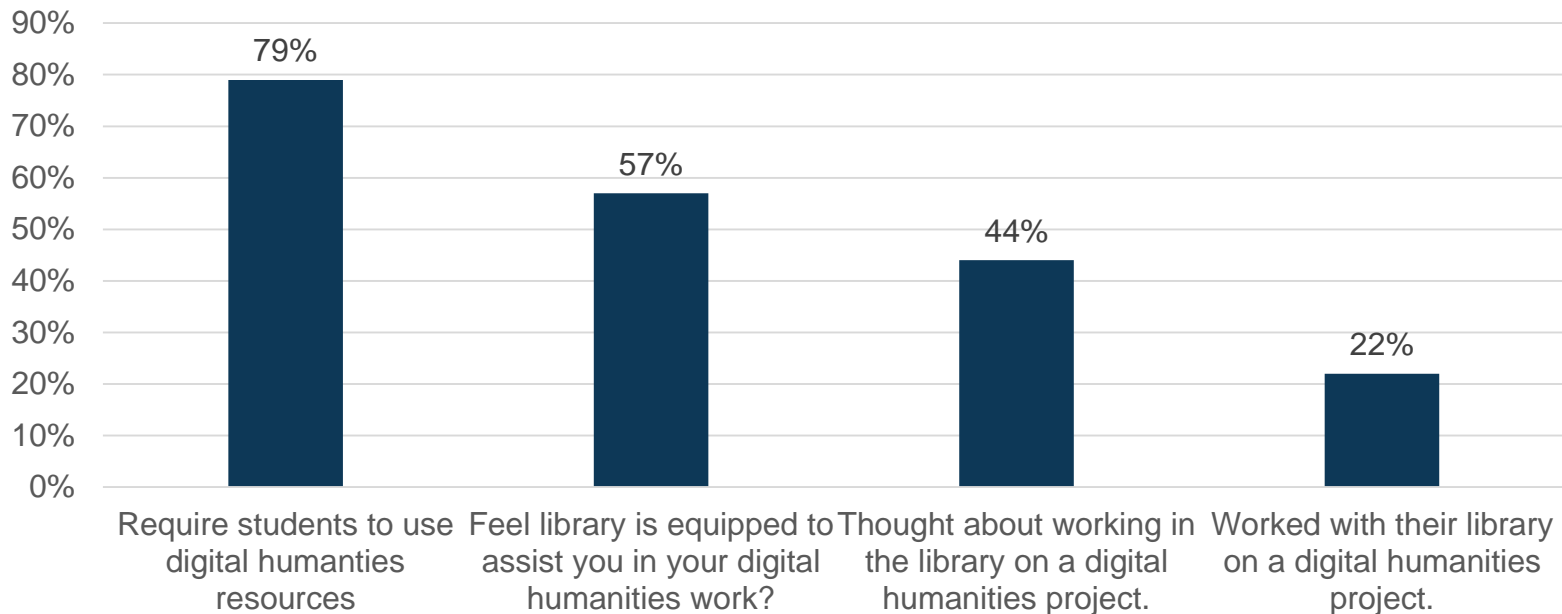


A5. How do you typically publish or share the outcomes of your research? (Multiple response, n=409)

Of those that use it in their teaching eight out of ten require their students to use resources in completing assignments.



- Slightly less than six out of ten feel the library is equipped to assist them in their digital humanities work.
- Slightly less thought about working in the library and approximately 22% of faculty indicated they actually did work in their library.



S2: Do you require students to use digital humanities resources in completing assignments? (n=361)

A20: Do you feel your library is equipped to assist you in your digital humanities work? (n=409)

A16: Have you thought about working with the library on a digital humanities project? (n=319)

A14: Have you worked with your library on a digital humanities project? (n=409)

Over half of faculty indicate they do not work with content providers or vendors to accomplish their research.

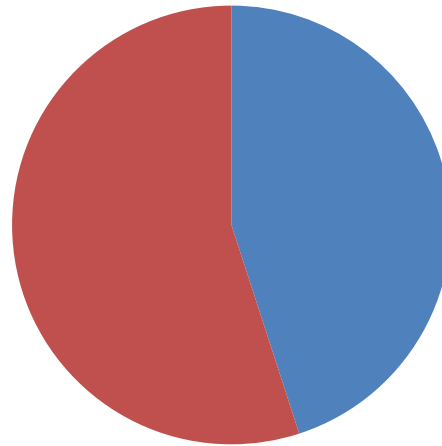
- The majority of those that do work with them say they primarily limited contact usually through email.
- However, there are a few that communicate extensively with those identified by the library.



"Don't usually do this, and I'm not sure what occasion would prompt me to work with a content provider to accomplish the research."

No, do not work with them, 55%

"I tend to work with others I already know who are doing related research or are skilled in areas I need."



Yes, do work with them, 45%

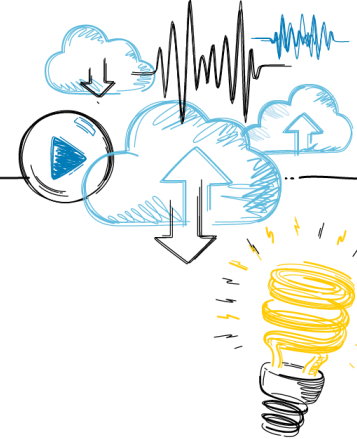
Looking what titles they offer and the quality of that information

"I am in constant communication with them."

I work with those identified by our library or with in-house experts.

A8. How do you work with content providers/vendors to accomplish your research?
(Open-ended response, n=409)

About half were able to mention some interesting research conclusions they've drawn from humanities research.



There is a wide variety of different conclusions being drawn from humanities research.

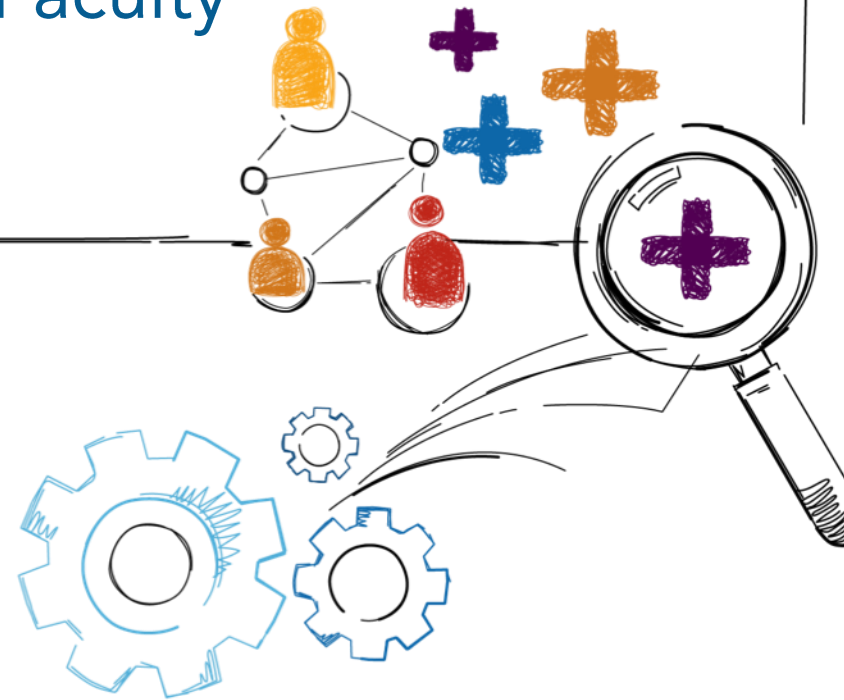
- "1) The ways in which feminist scholarship, while well-suited to the digital humanities, is still struggling to find acceptance.*
- 2) Work on how movements such as Occupy Wall Street use social media to promote their ideas.*
- 3) How members of the graphic novel/comics community post electronic works; how that community uses social media not only to discuss ideas but also to maintain the status quo."*

"Perhaps the most interesting is the gender and racial bias that has been uncovered in seemingly objective platforms, datasets, etc. - this is where I see the most productive intersection between the study of humanities and the digital."

"This is a tough one. I have not been blown away by any of it. Like finding out that the Beatles weren't as revolutionary as people think, in terms of musical variety. That's not exactly world-changing. I suppose the discovery of the signs of emergent dementia in Agatha Christie's novels is a memorable one."

A19. What are some of the most interesting research conclusions you've seen drawn from digital humanities research? (Open-ended response, n=409)

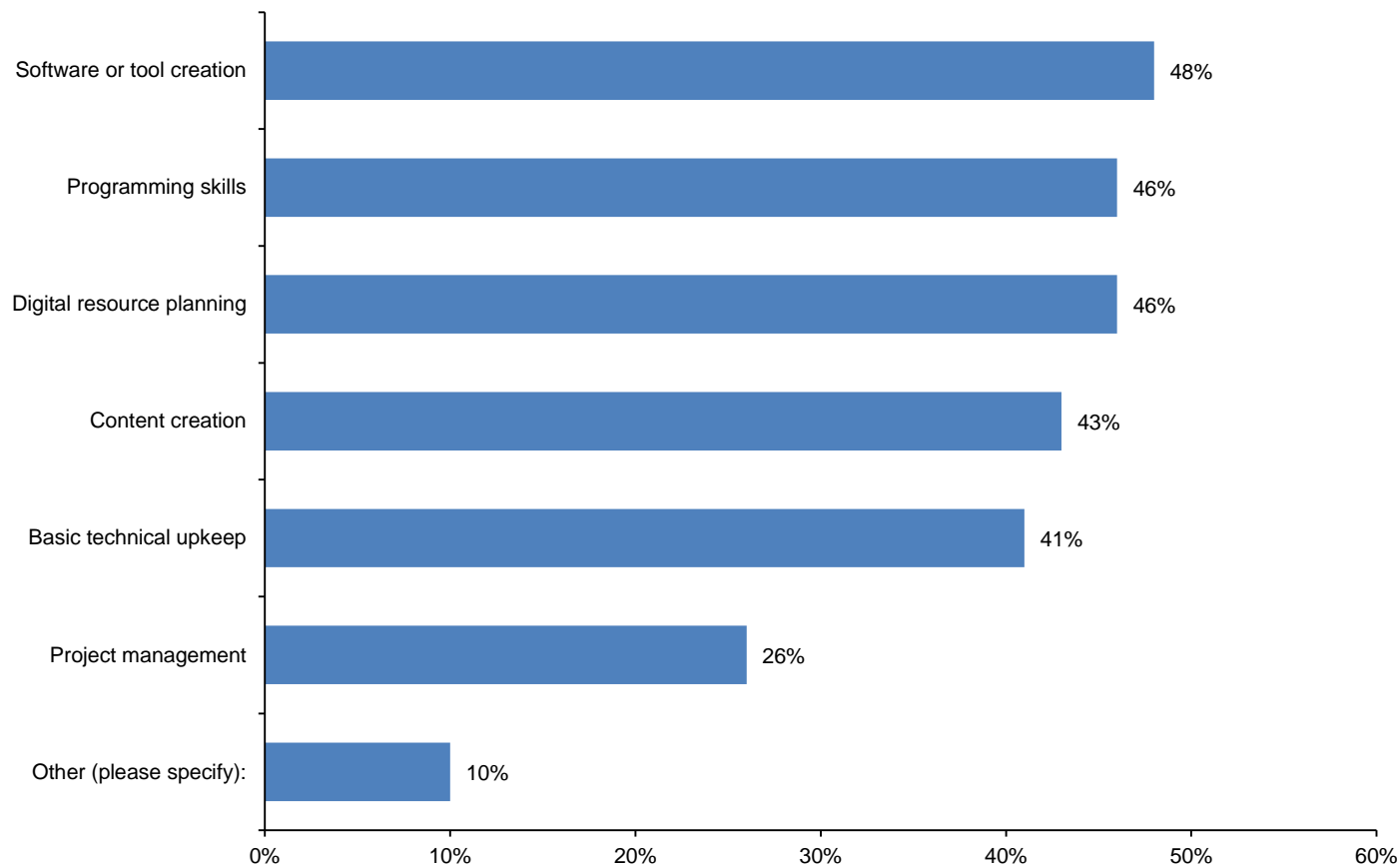
Current and Future Needs of Faculty



The most common skill faculty mentioned they wish they had was software or tool creation.



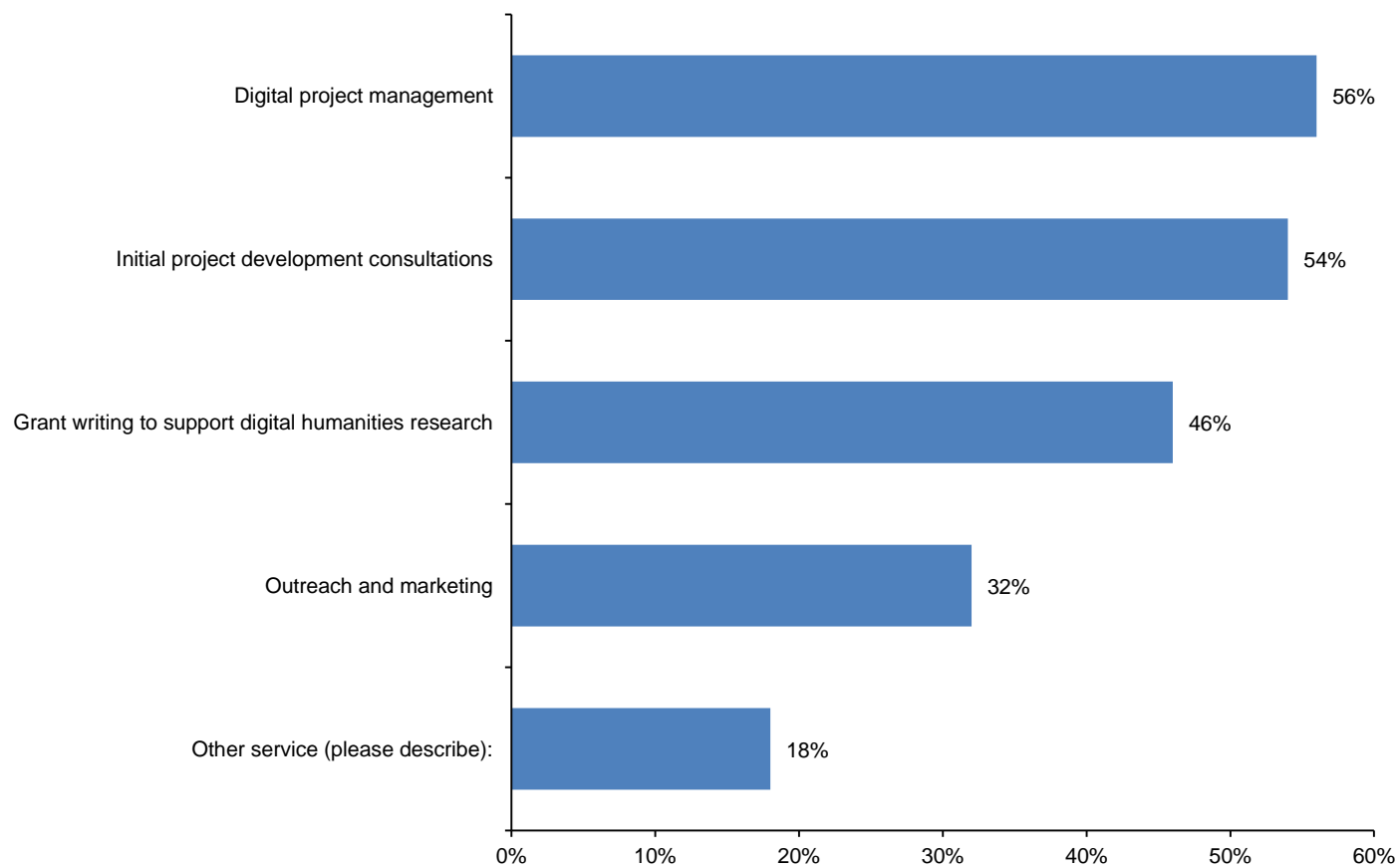
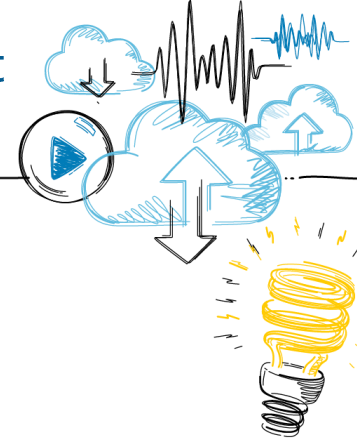
Over four out of ten faculty mentioned that they wish they had a variety of skills such as programming, digital resource planning, content creation, or basic technical upkeep.



A7. What skills do you wish you had on your research team or that you had personally?
(Multiple Response, n=409)

The most common service faculty mentioned they would want their library to provide is digital project management.

- Other services they want libraries to provide include initial project development, grant writing support, or outreach and marketing.

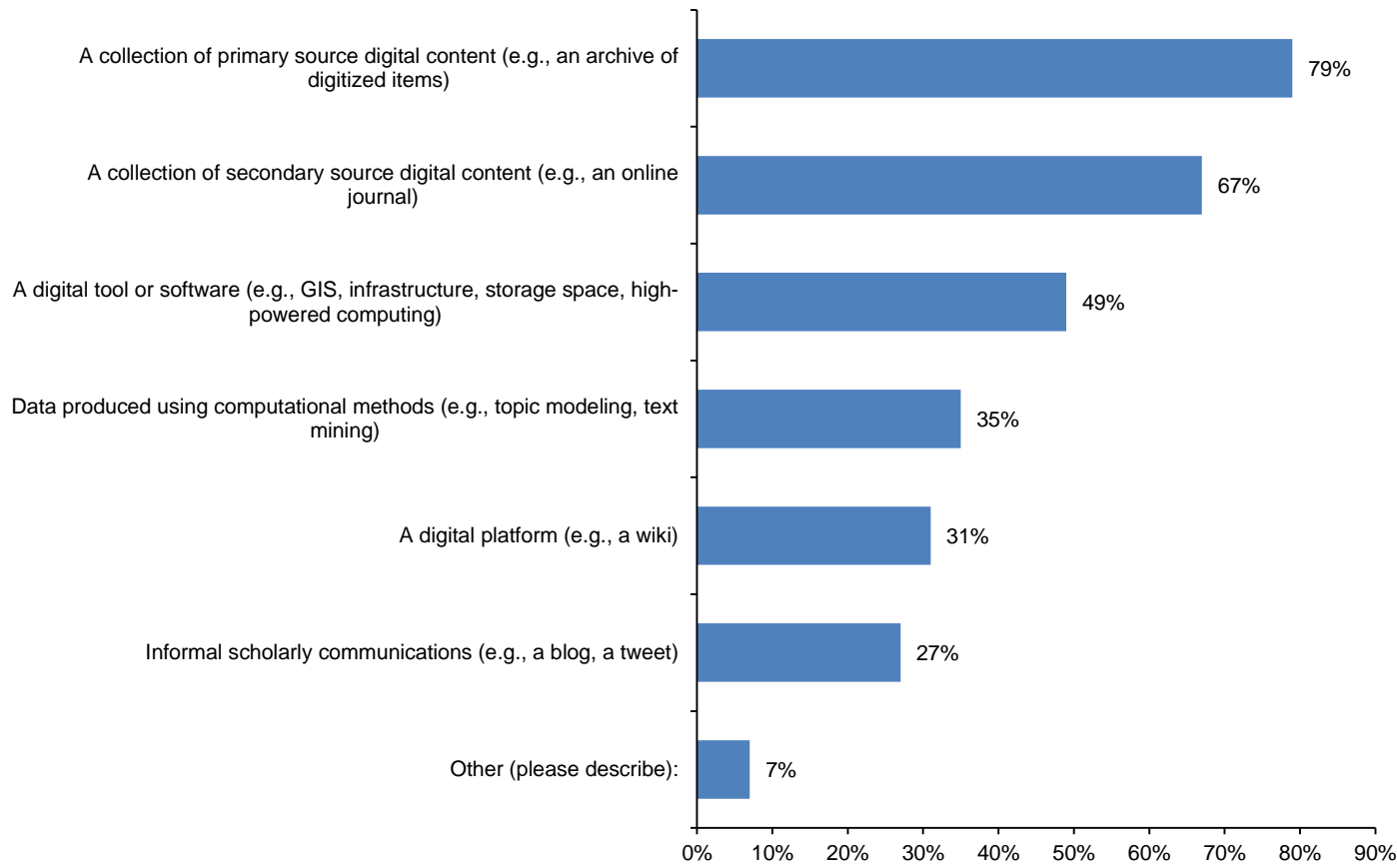


A21. What digital humanities services would your library need to provide in order to assist your work?
(Multiple Response, n=409)

The most common resource faculty mentioned they would want their library to provide is a collection of primary source content.

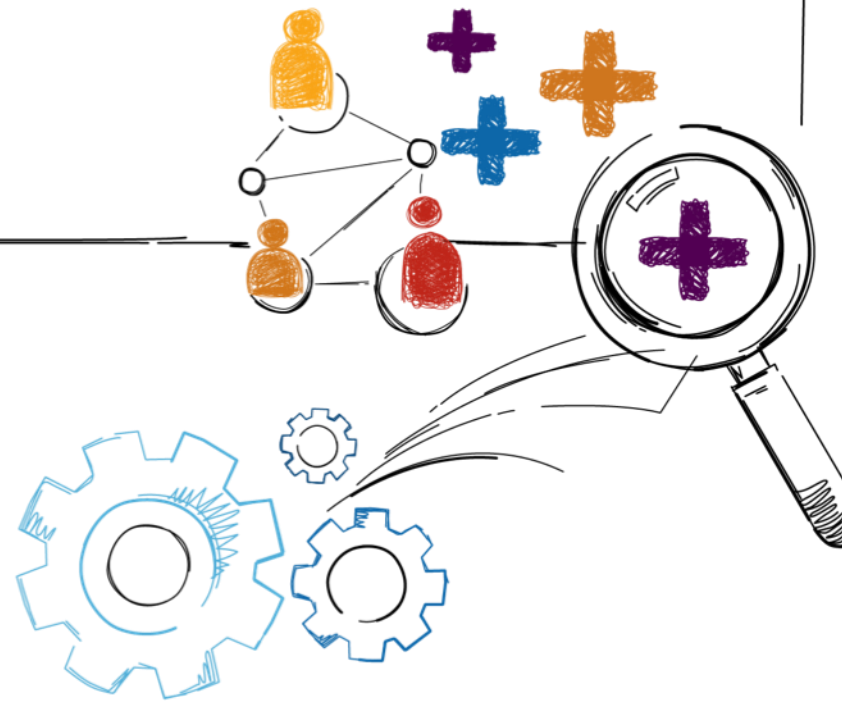


Other resources they would like include a collection of secondary digital content, a specific digital tool or software, or data produced using computational methods.

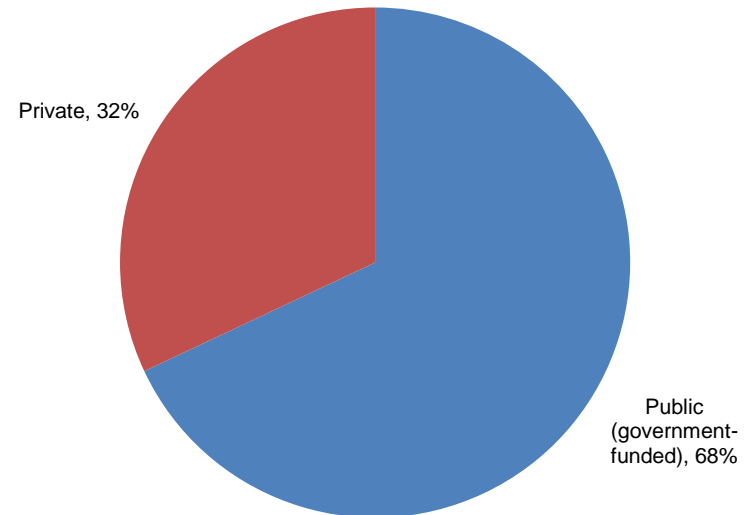
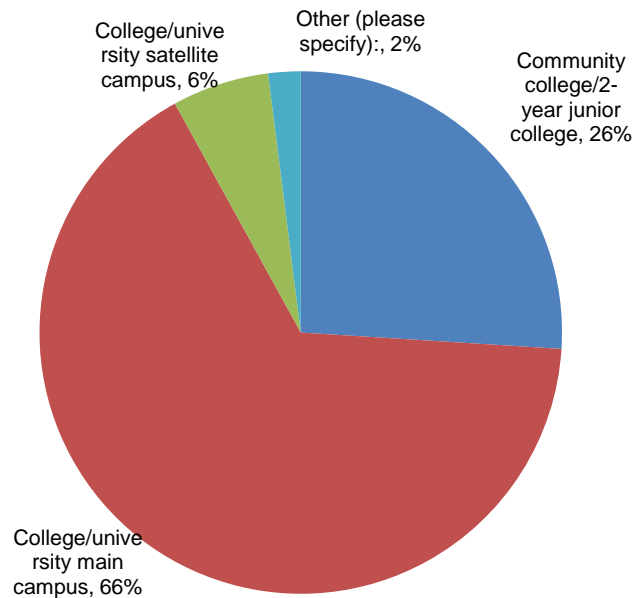
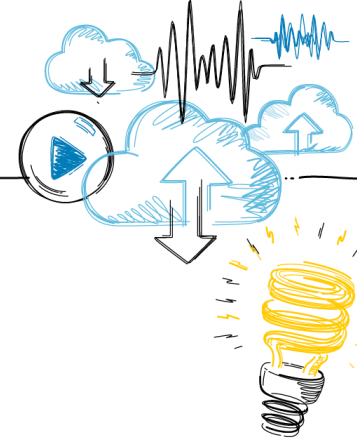


A22. What digital humanities resources would your library need to provide in order to assist your work?
(Multiple response, n=409)

Respondent Profile



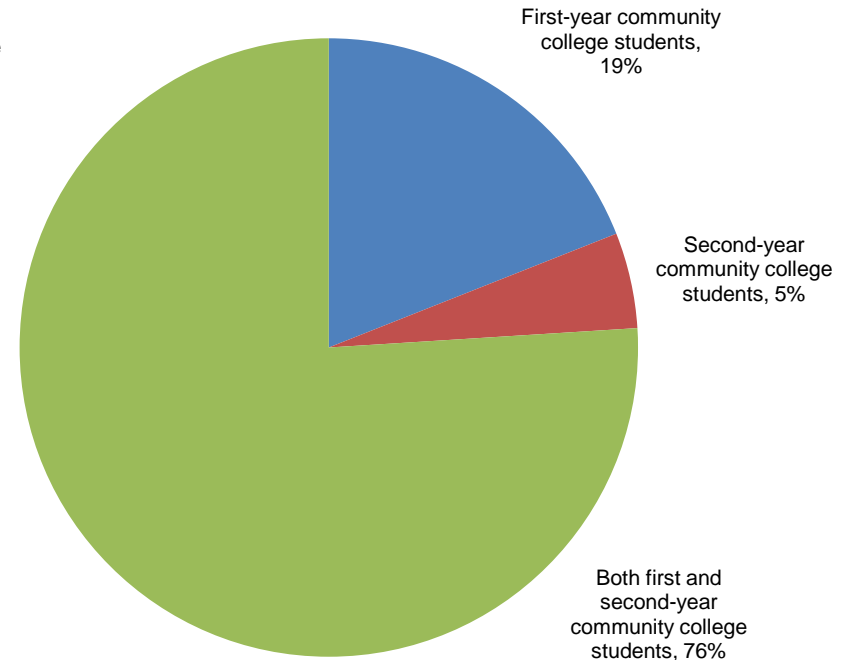
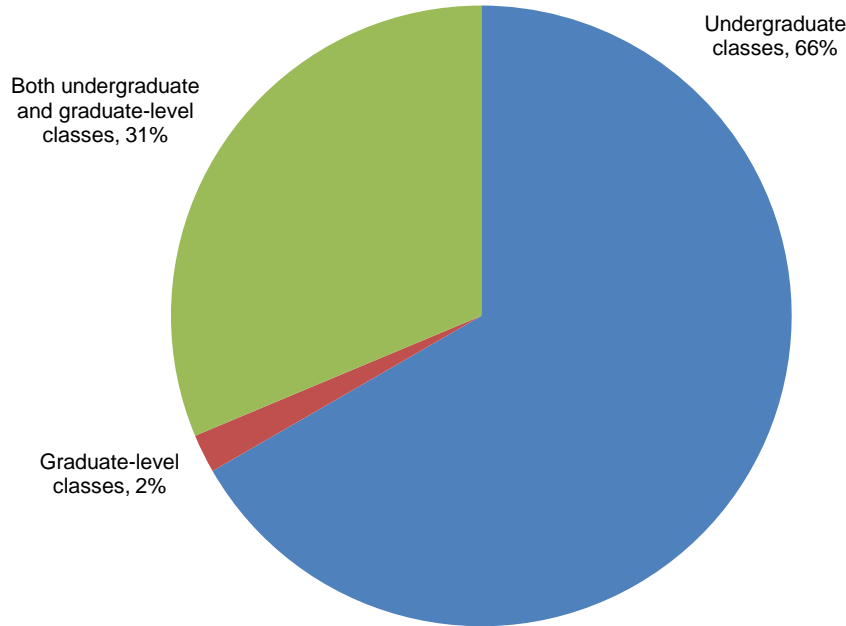
The most common type of institution of faculty in this survey was a college/university main campus.



C2: Please describe your institution. (n=409)

C3: Is your institution public or private? (n=409)

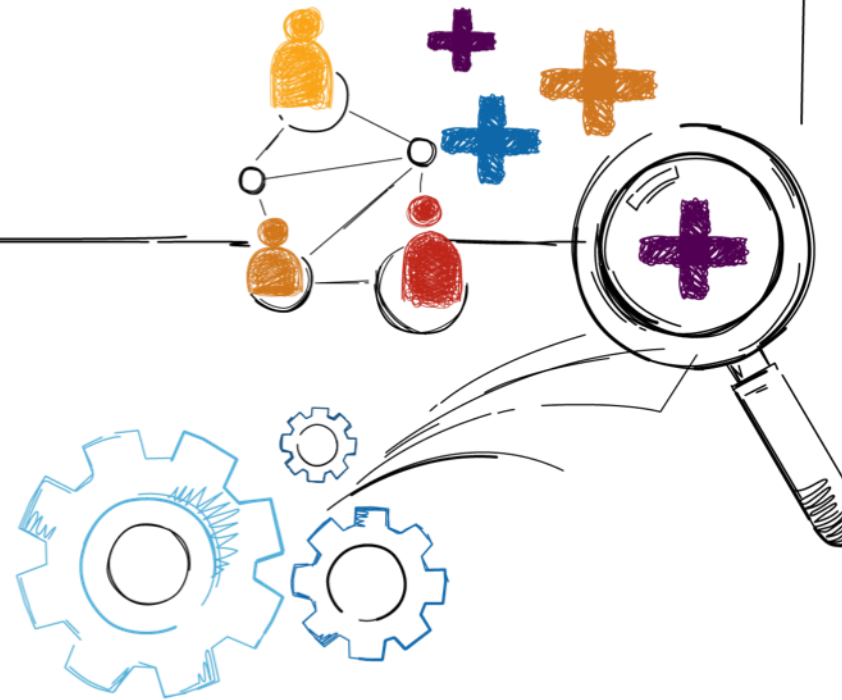
At a main college campus most faculty are responsible for undergraduate classes only. At Community Colleges most faculty are responsible for both first and second year students.



C5: Not asked of community colleges: Which of the following best describes the level of instruction you are responsible for this year? (n=303)

C6: Asked of community colleges only: Which of the following best describes the level of instruction you are responsible for this year? (n=104)

Appendix A: Approach



Approach

- An email invitation was sent to Cengage Learning contacts in relevant disciplines.
- The invitation included a description of the study, an incentive of a drawing for one of ten \$100 Tango Gift Cards, and the link to the online survey.
- The survey was in field from October 2 to December 17, 2015.
- Approximately 551 faculty members started the survey with 409 completing it.
- The average length of the survey was 14 minutes and the median length was 11.5 minutes.
- The margin of error with 409 completes is approximately $\pm 4.8\%$, nineteen times out of twenty.

