

Digital Humanities

Librarian Survey Results – December 2015

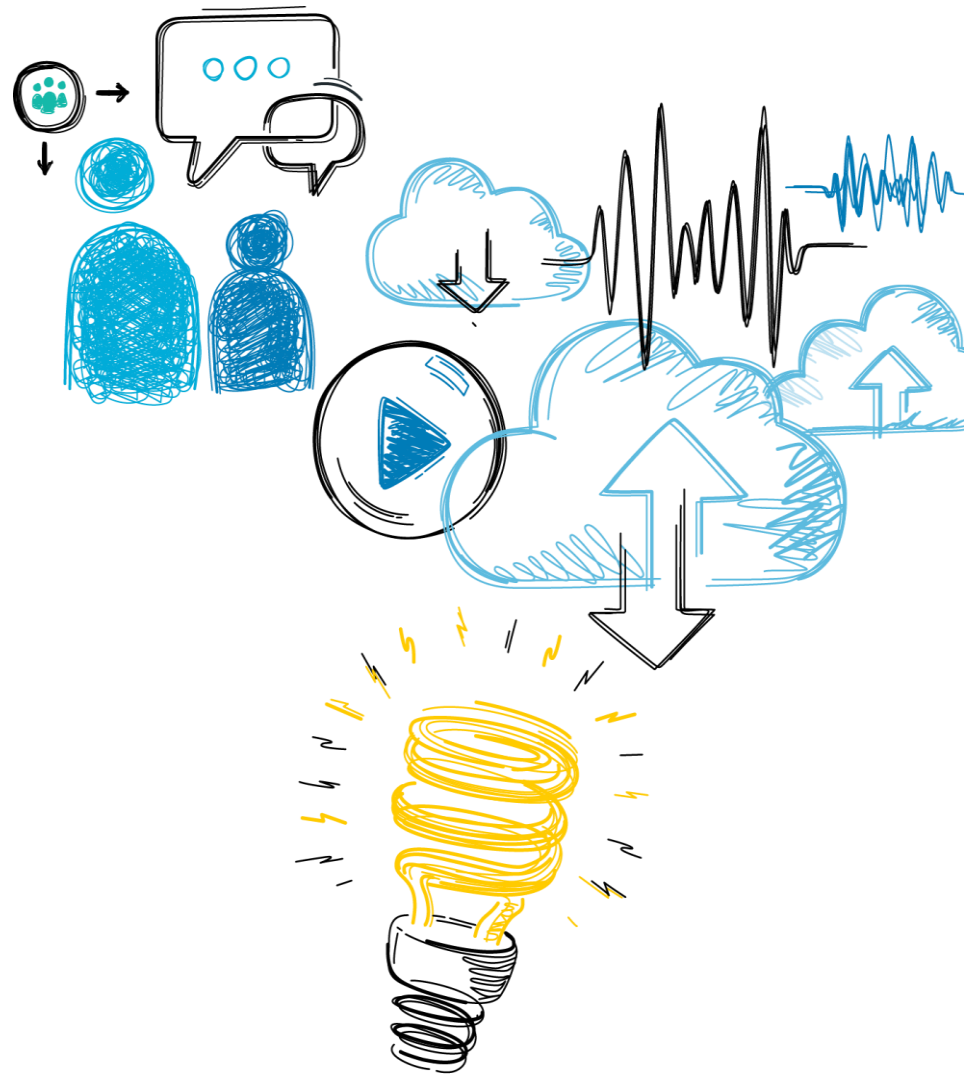


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Executive Summary



Librarians recognize the importance of libraries in digital humanities.

- Almost all indicated that digital humanities materials and outcomes should be included in the library collection.
- Seven out of ten indicated that acquiring, transcribing, and encoding should be shared by the library and the digital humanist faculty.
- Six out of ten librarians felt that a digital humanities librarian should be a “full-fledged project collaborator and participant”.

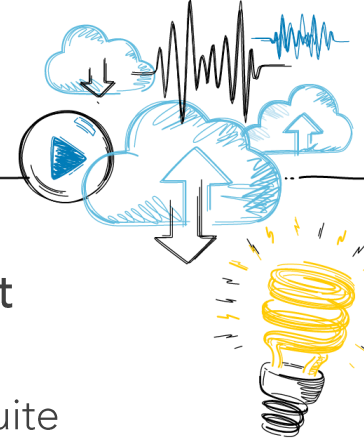
However, the current role of the library in digital humanities appears unclear.

- Four out of ten librarians described their services as “ad hoc” and almost one of five said they were not offered.
- One in five librarians did not know what was the best model for digital humanities.
- One in five librarians indicated that they provided no services to users who are engaged in digital humanities projects.
- Nine out of ten librarians indicated their library does not have a written statement describing support for digital humanities.

Executive Summary (continued)

The overall assessment of current services provided is quite low and there appears to be a number of different needs required to support digital humanities.

- The overall assessment of their library's services for digital humanities is quite low with an average of 5 on a 0-to-10 scale.
- The most common challenges included difficulty connecting with faculty and lack of institutional commitment.
- Half of librarians indicated they do not know what their administration wants their library's role to be in the future.
- The most common need mentioned by librarians was related to staff (either more needed or more knowledgeable).
- The most common competencies a digital librarian needs were related to specific technical skills.



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.
- The objective of this research is to determine key characteristics of librarians involved in digital humanities projects and their current and future needs.



1. Digital Humanities in the Library: Challenges and Opportunities for Subject Specialists. ©2015 by The Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association.

Librarian Perspectives on Digital Humanities

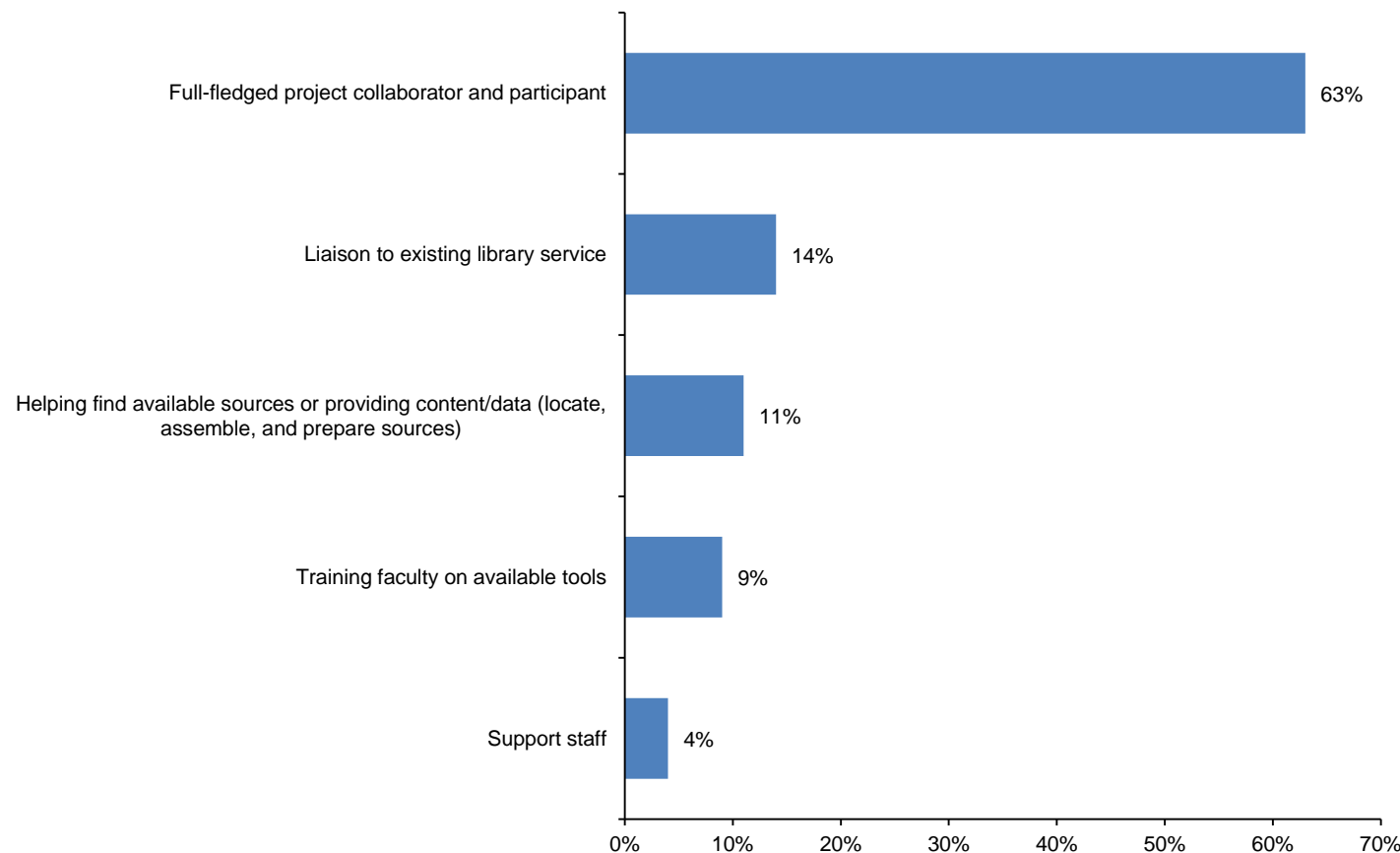




Six out of ten librarians felt that a digital humanities librarian should be a “full-fledged project collaborator and participant”



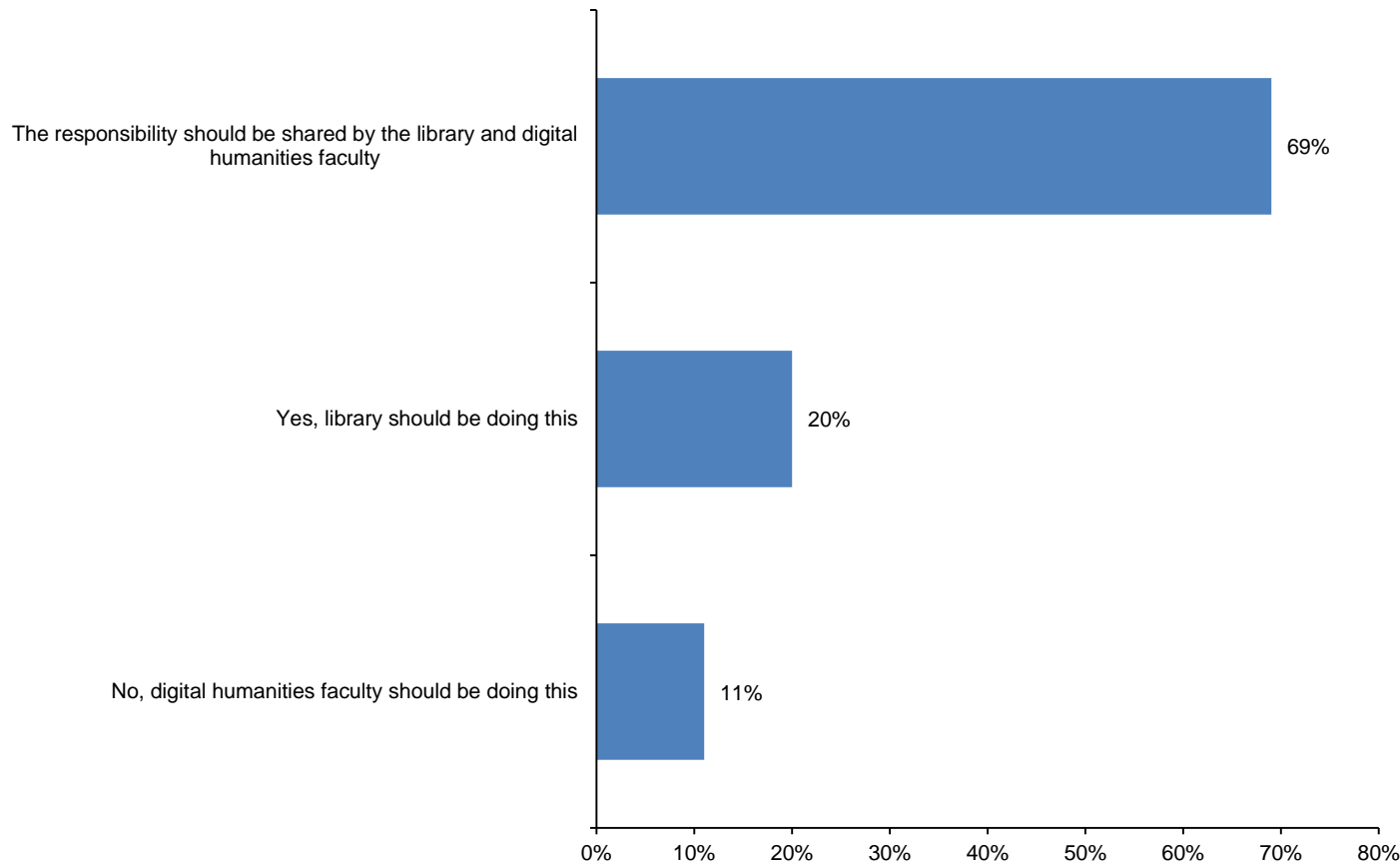
- Some feel that the primary role should be as a liaison to existing library services or helping to find available sources.
- Few librarians feel the primary role should be a support staff.



Seven out of ten indicated that acquiring, transcribing, and encoding should be shared by the library and the digital humanities faculty.

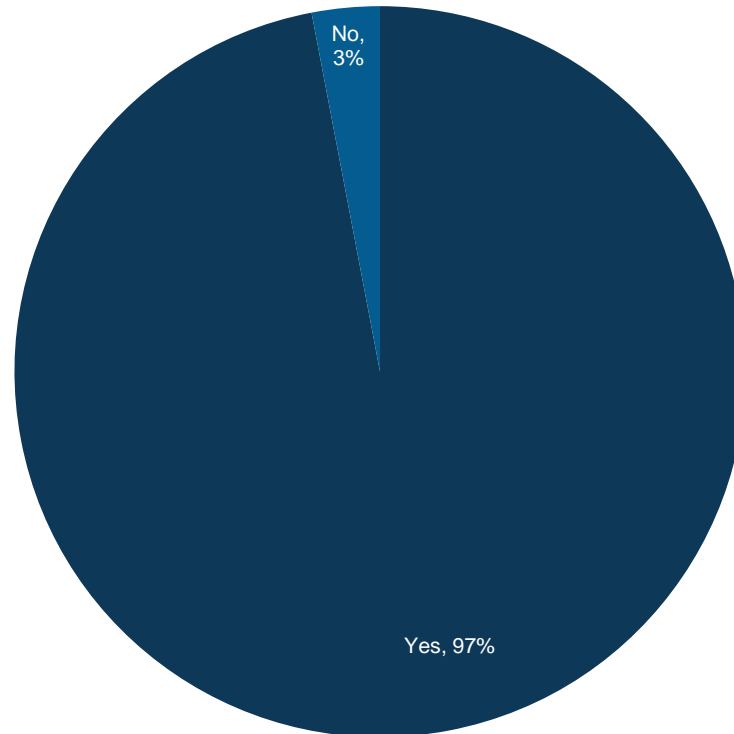


One out of five librarians believe this should be done by the library and one out of ten believe this should be done by the digital humanities faculty.



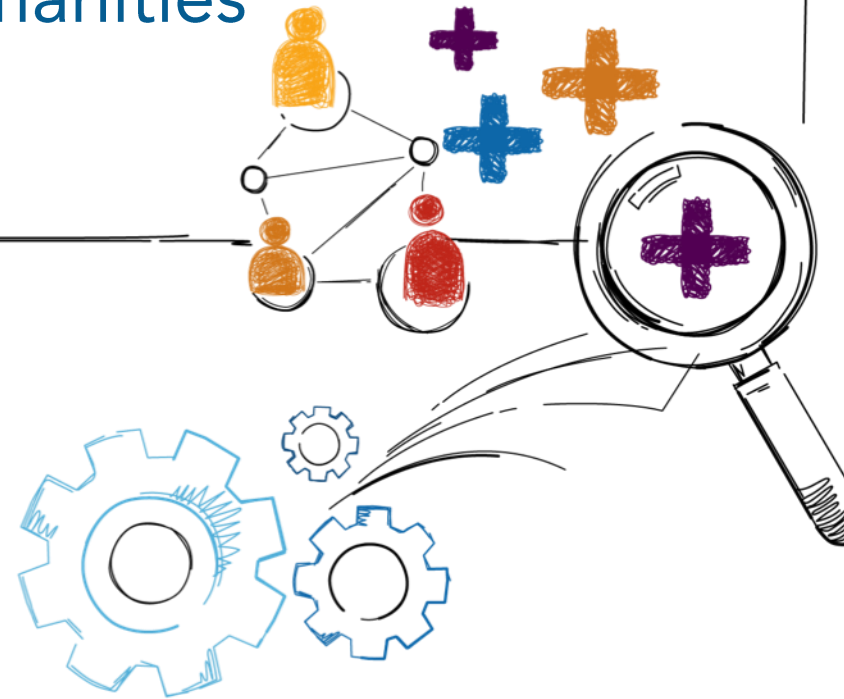
B5: Should the library be acquiring, transcribing, and encoding the source materials, or is that something that digital humanities faculty should do? (n=339)

Almost all indicated that digital humanities materials and outcomes should be included in the library collection.



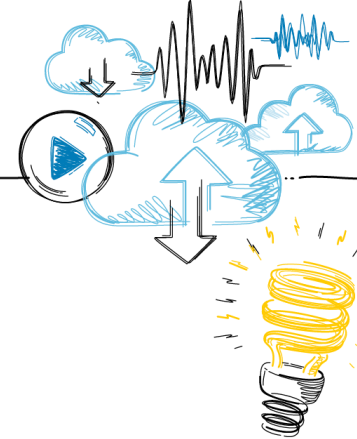
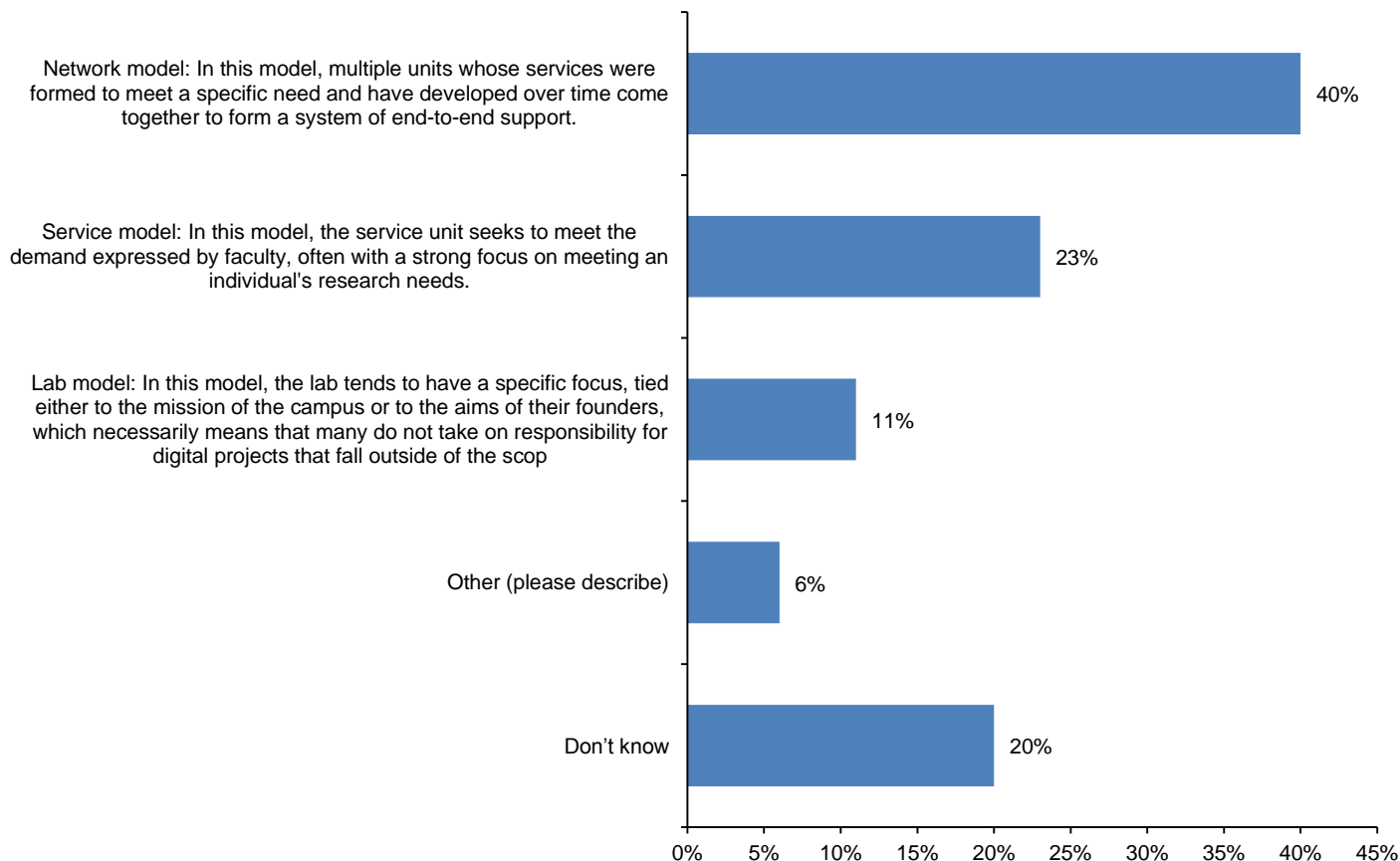
B6: Should digital humanities materials and project outcomes be included in the library collection? (n=339)

Library Support of Digital Humanities

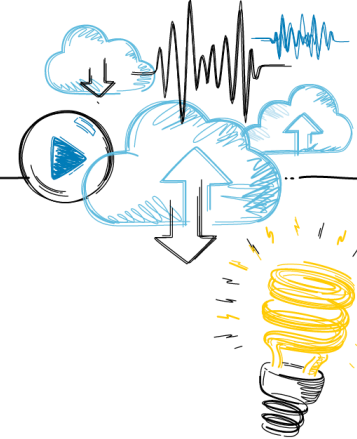


Two out of five librarians indicated that a network model was the best for digital humanities.

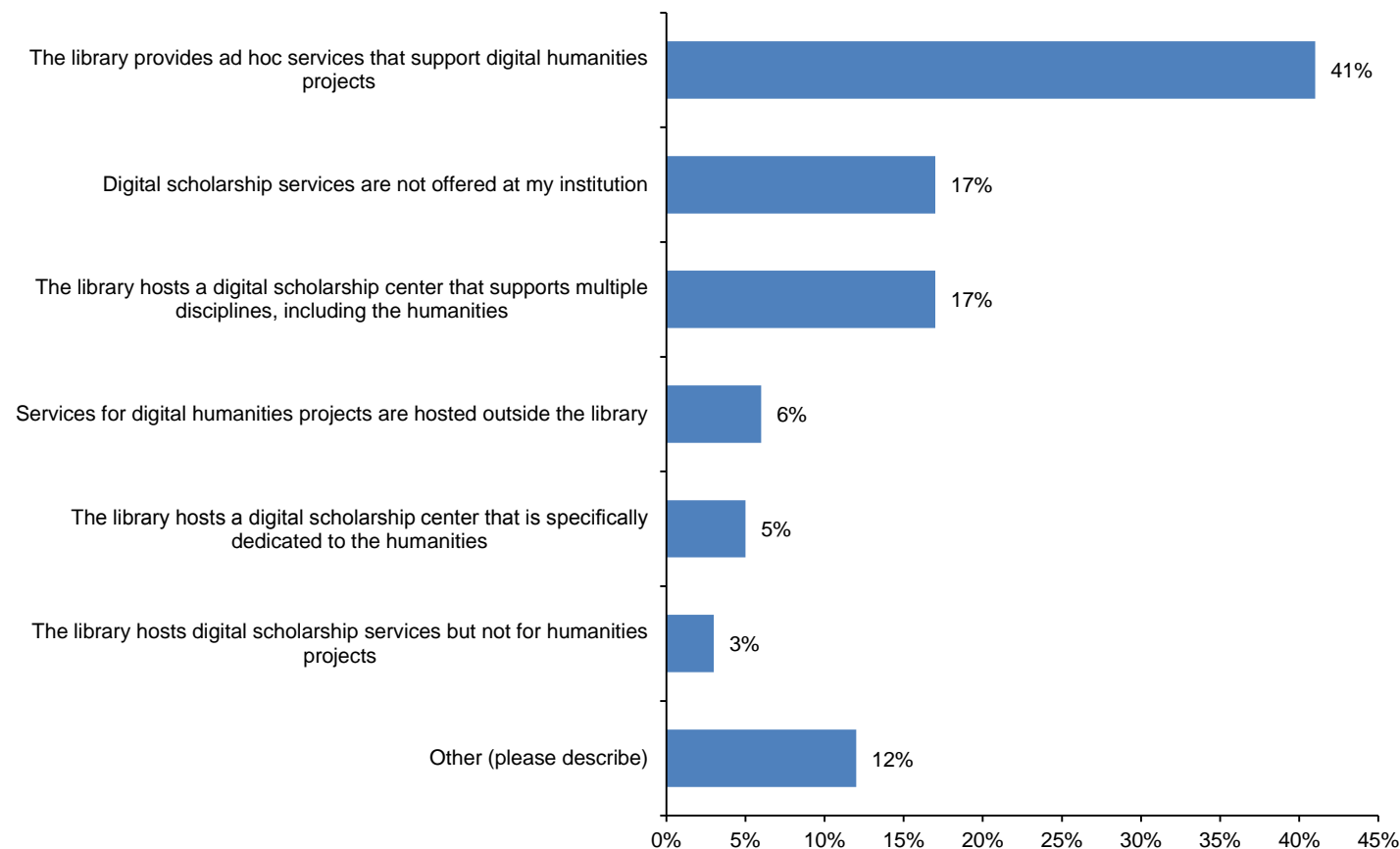
One in five librarians did not know what was the best model for digital humanities.



The most common way to describe services that support digital humanities projects was “ad hoc”.



Four out of ten librarians described their services as “ad hoc”, almost one of five said they were not offered, and almost one out of five said they support multiple disciplines.

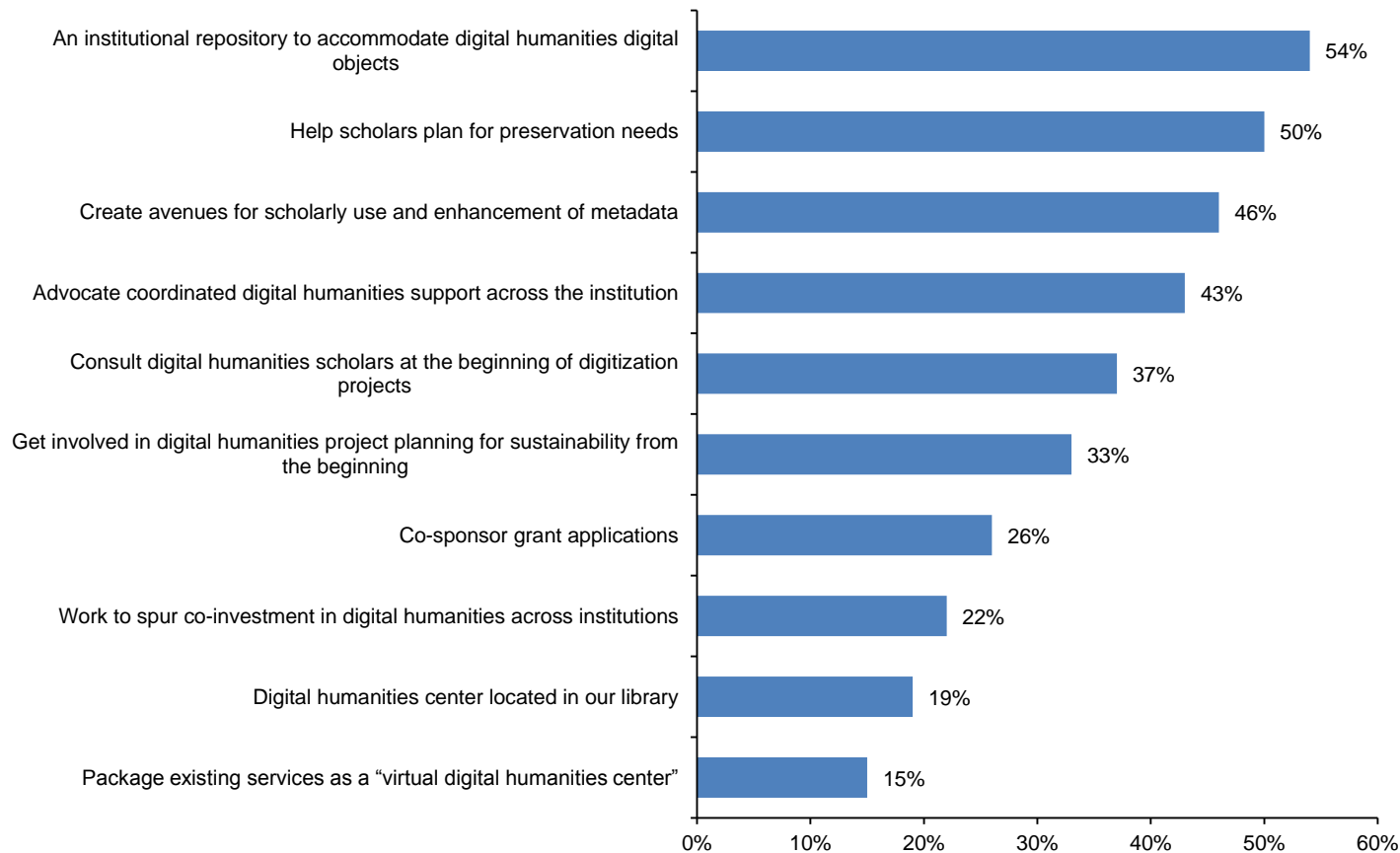


S1: Which of the following statements best describes services that support digital humanities projects at your institution? (n=339)

There was a number of different roles for the library in digital humanities but the most common was as a institutional repository.



Other common roles for the library included helping plan for preservation needs, creating avenues for scholarly use of metadata, and advocating for coordinated support across the institution.

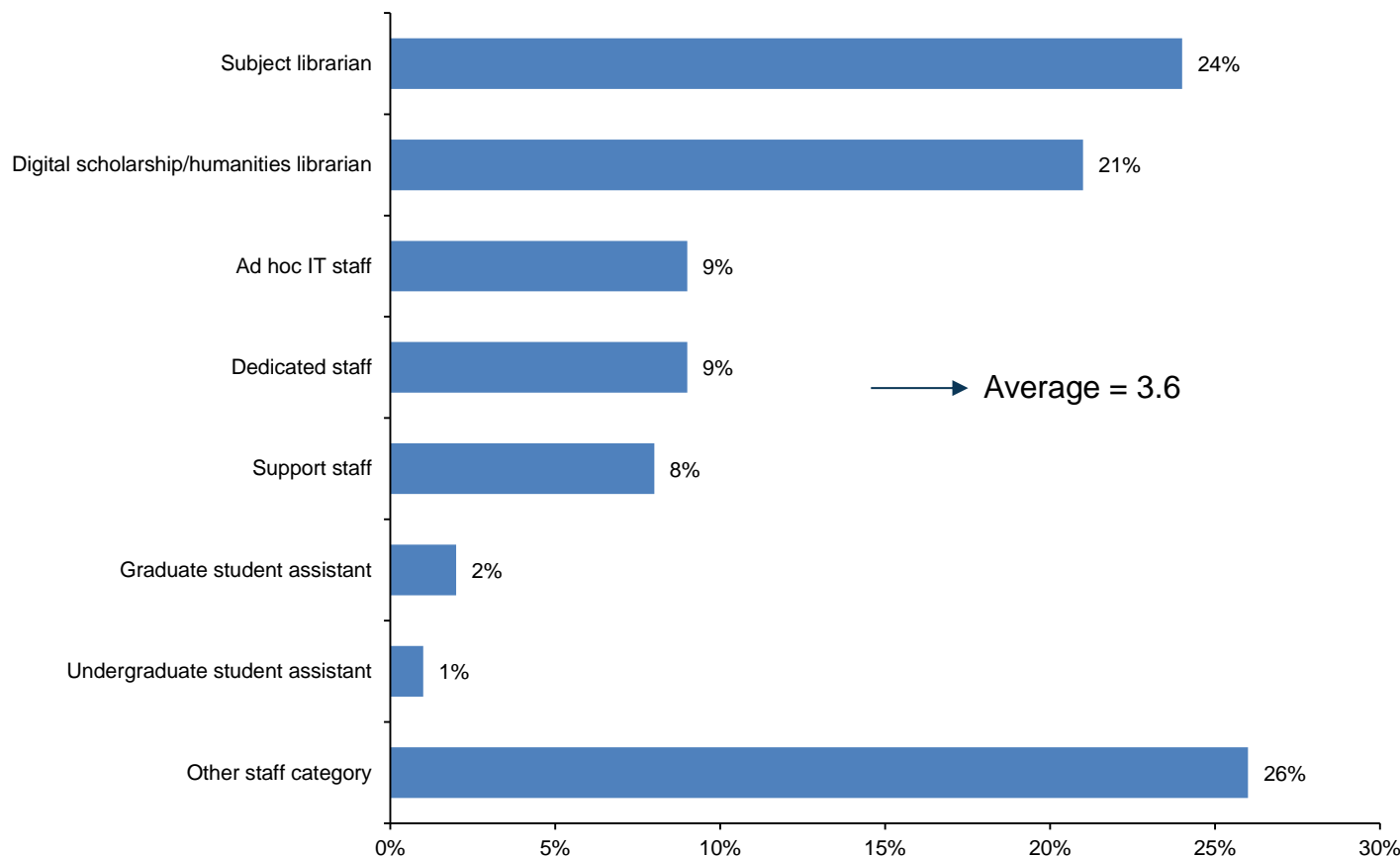


A2. What is your library's current role in digital humanities at your institution?
(Multiple response, n=339)

A quarter indicated that it is subject librarian that provides support for digital humanities projects.



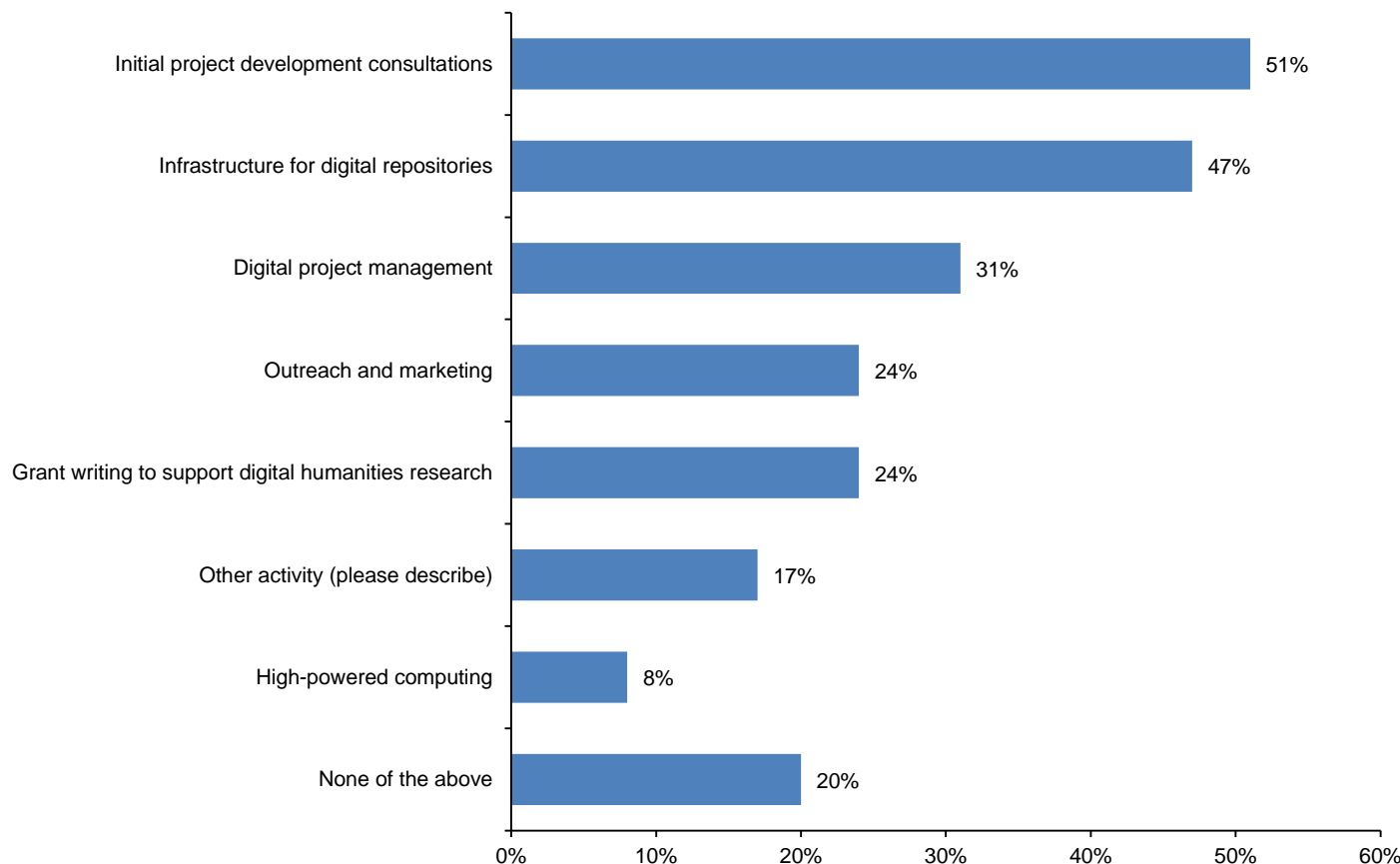
A “digital scholarship/humanities librarian” was mentioned by about one in five librarians as another common category of library staff that provides services for digital humanities.



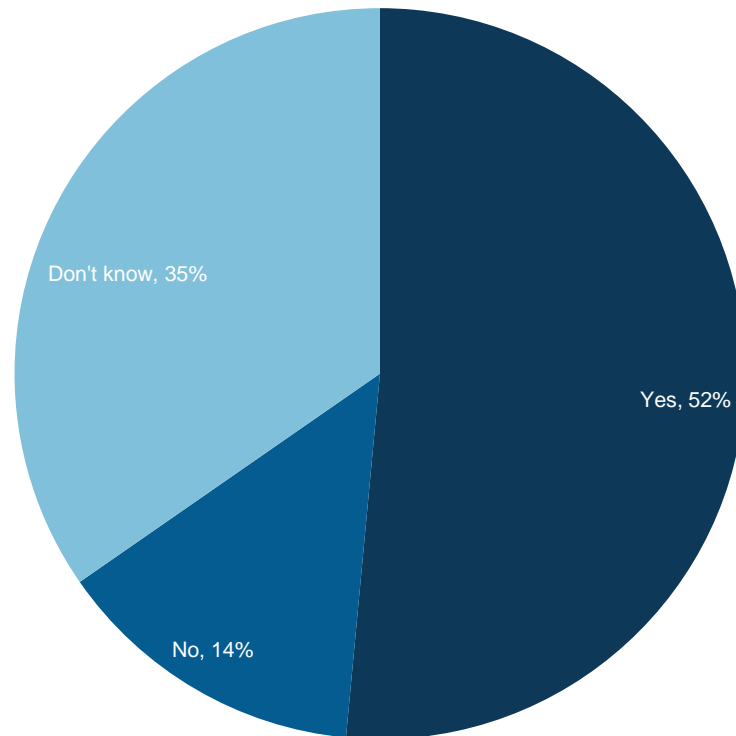
A3: Please indicate which categories of library staff provide services that support digital humanities projects and whether these staff are dedicated to such services or are called on an ad hoc basis to meet demand. (n=339)

The two most common services offered by libraries included initial project development and infrastructure for repositories.

One in five librarians indicated that they provided no services to users who are engaged in digital humanities projects.

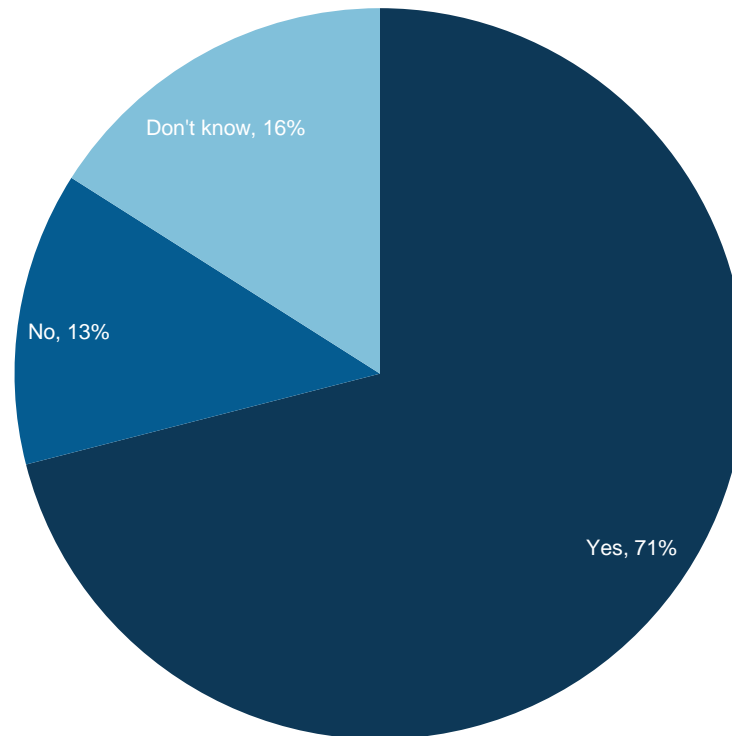


Over half of librarians indicated that students are using digital humanities resources and services.



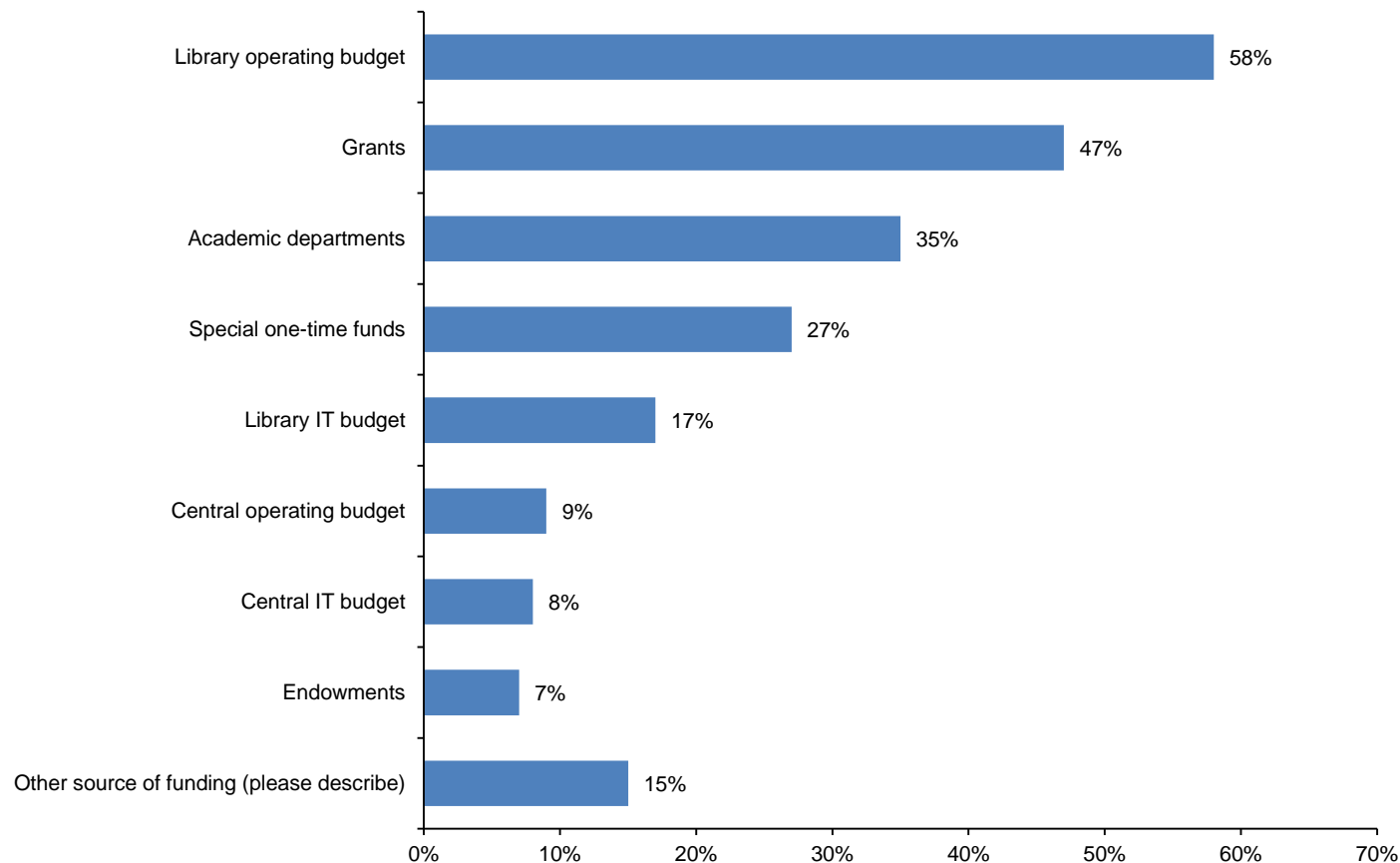
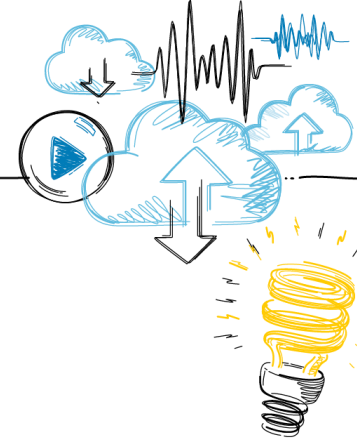
A7: Are students using the digital humanities resources and services? (n=339)

Seven out of ten librarians indicated that their library encourages cross, trans, or inter-disciplinary projects.

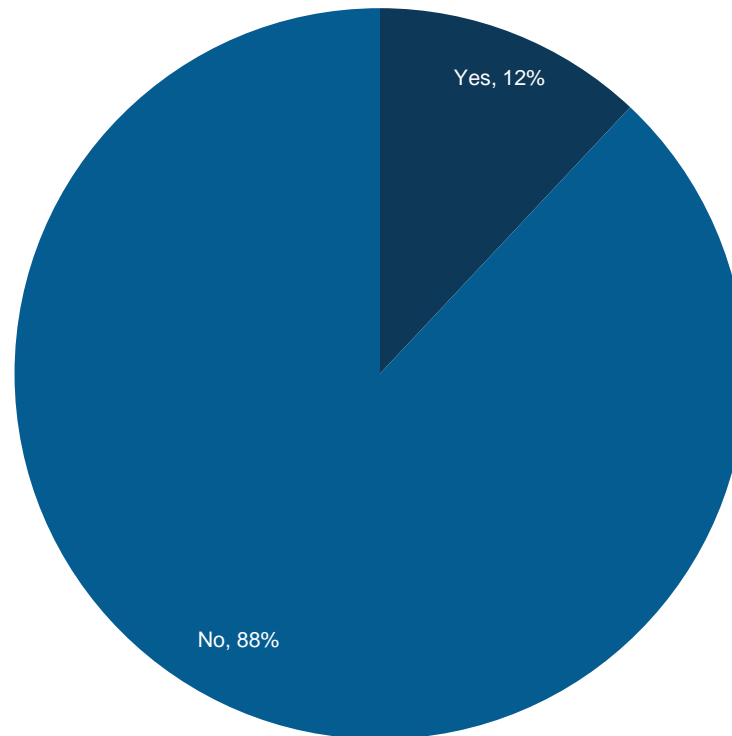


The most common source of funding for digital humanities projects was the library operating budget.

Other common sources of funding included grants, academic departments, or special one-time funds.

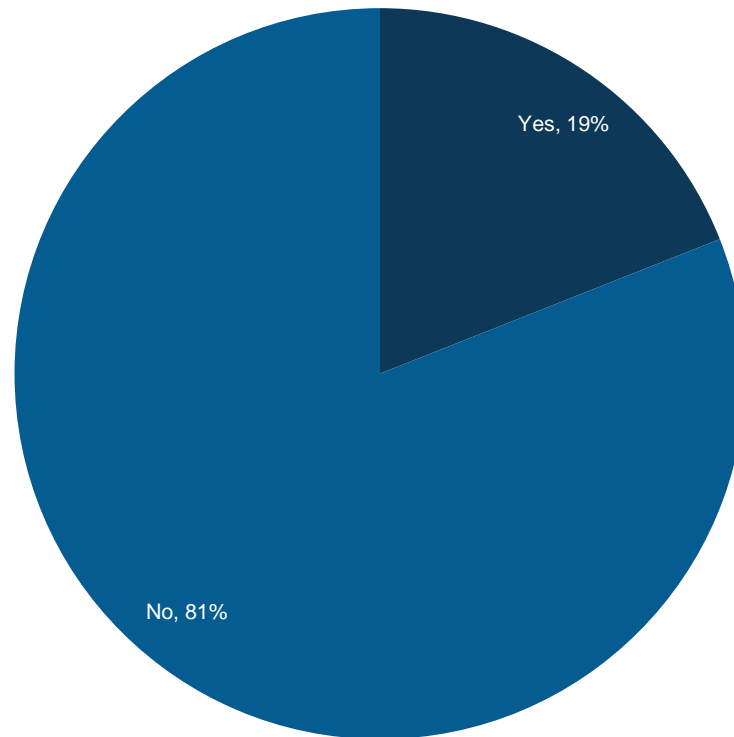
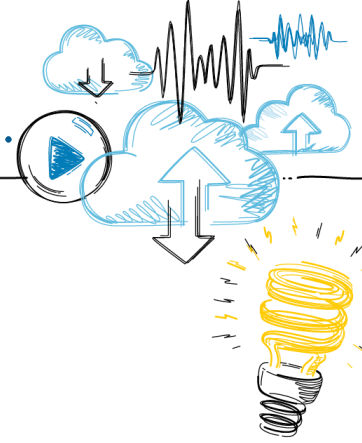


Nine out of ten librarians indicated their library does not have a written statement describing support for digital humanities.



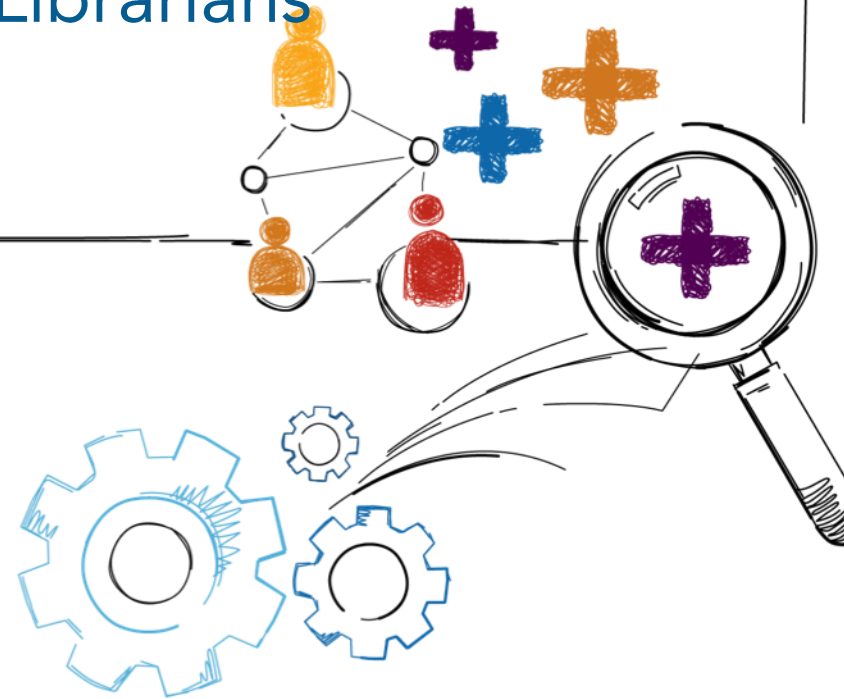
A10: Does your library have a policy or written statement describing the ways in which it supports digital humanities projects? (n=339)

Eight out of ten librarians indicated that there is not a formal process for reviewing proposals for digital humanities projects.



A11: Is there a formal process for reviewing or developing proposals and allocating resources for digital humanities projects? (n=339)

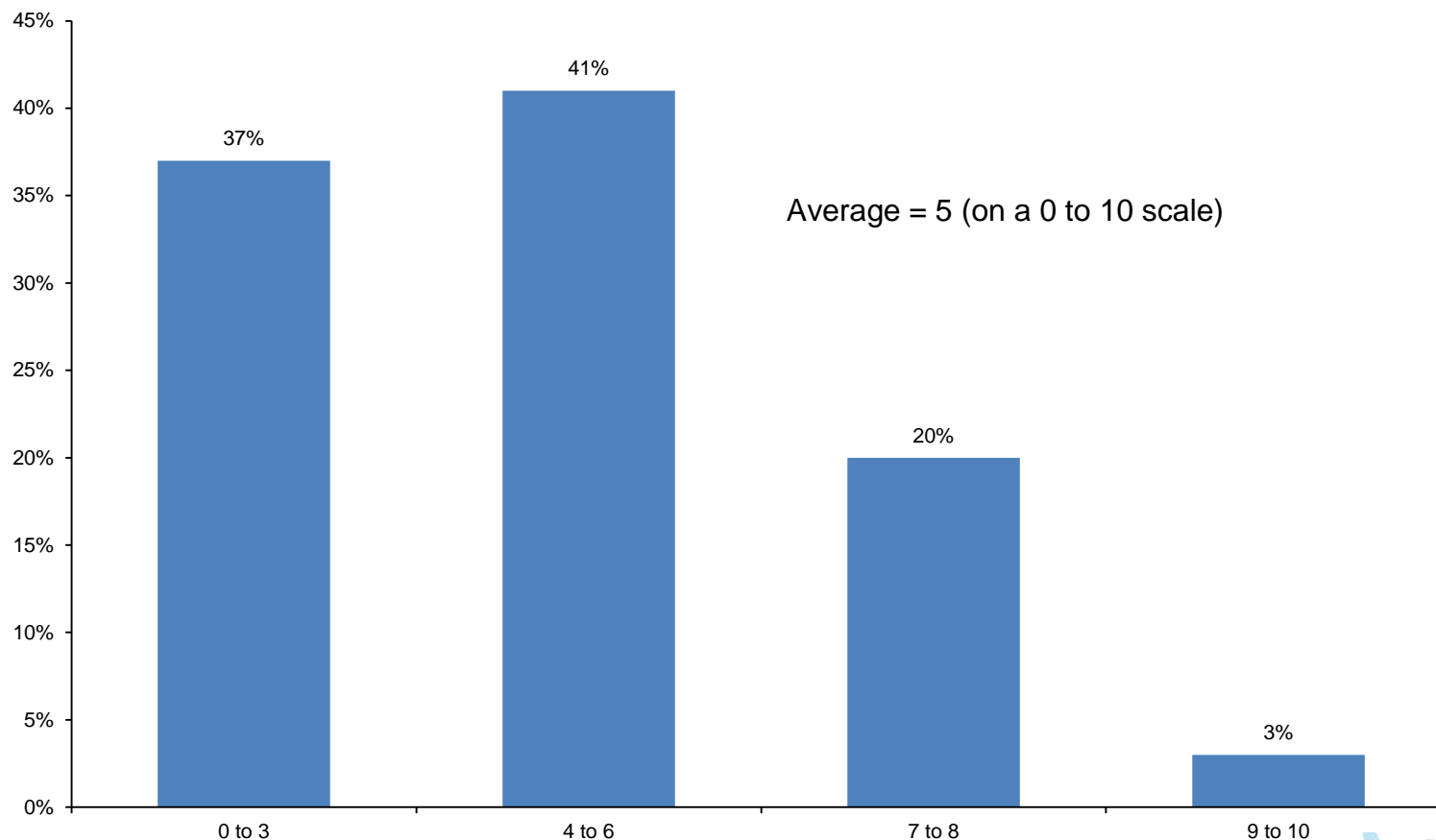
Current and Future Needs of Librarians



The overall assessment of their library's services for digital humanities is quite low with an average of 5 on a 0-to-10 scale.



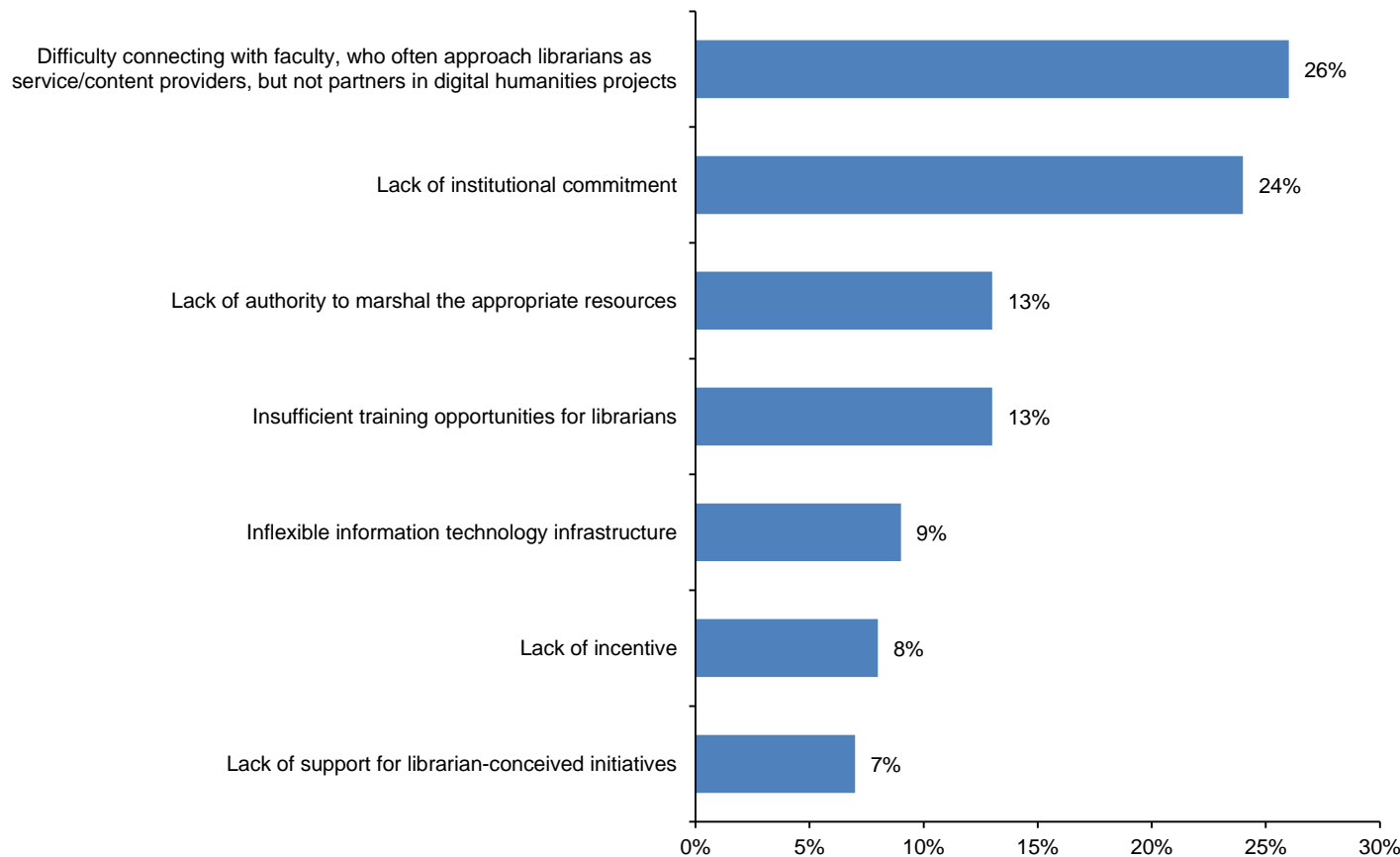
Less than a quarter assessed their library's effectiveness at a 7 or higher on a 0-to-10 point scale.



The most common challenges included difficulty connecting with faculty and lack of institutional commitment.



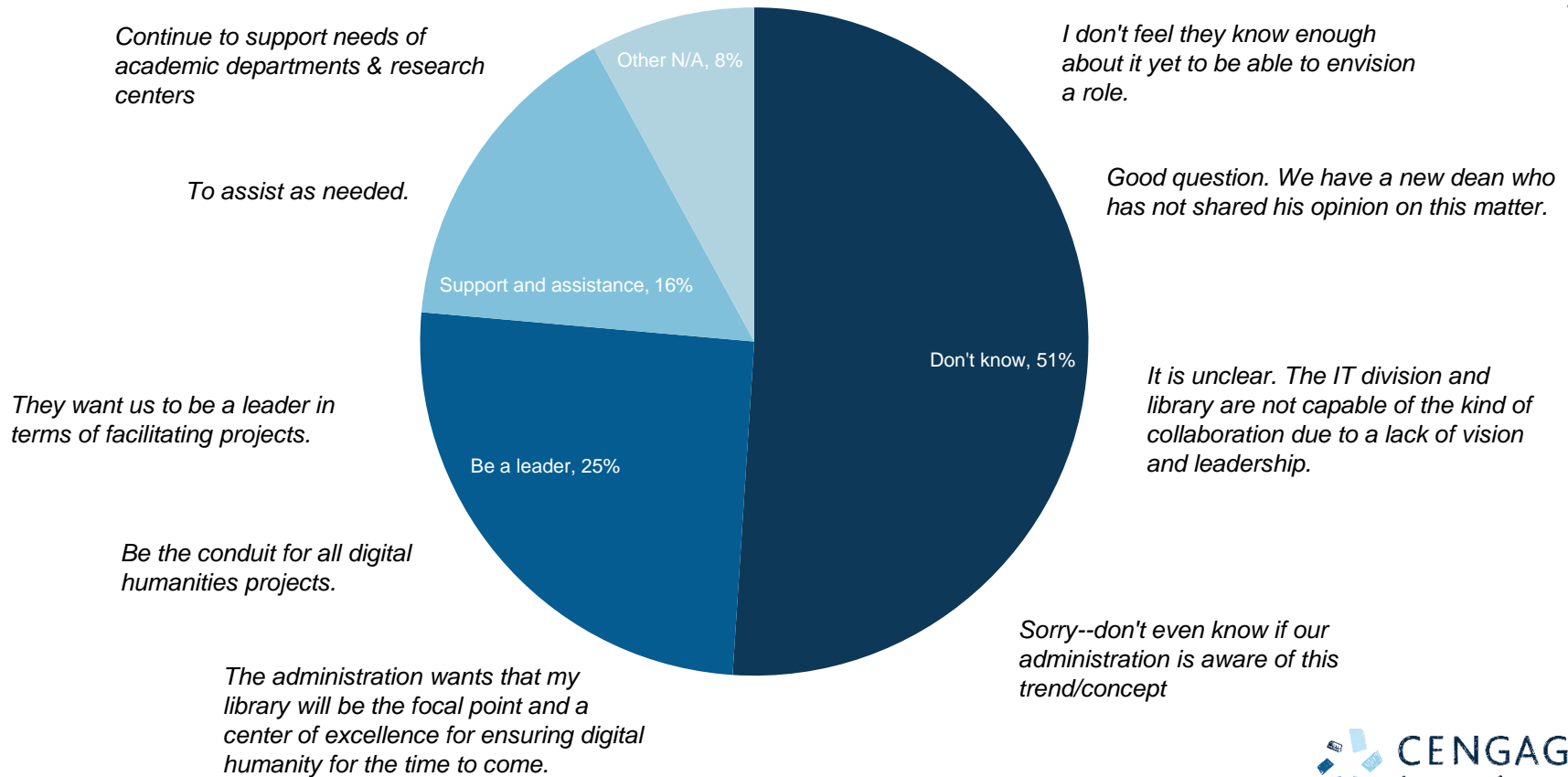
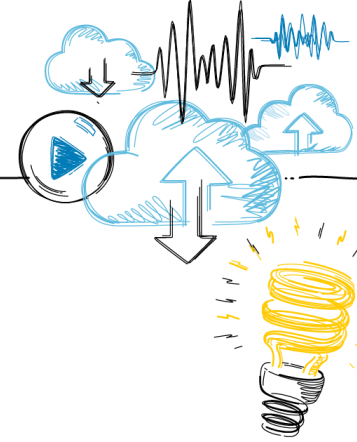
Other challenges included a lack of authority to marshal appropriate resources, insufficient training, and inflexible infrastructure.



A12: What are the most common challenges you face regarding supporting digital humanities initiatives at your institution? (n=339)

Half of librarians indicated they do not know what their administration wants their library's role to be in the future.

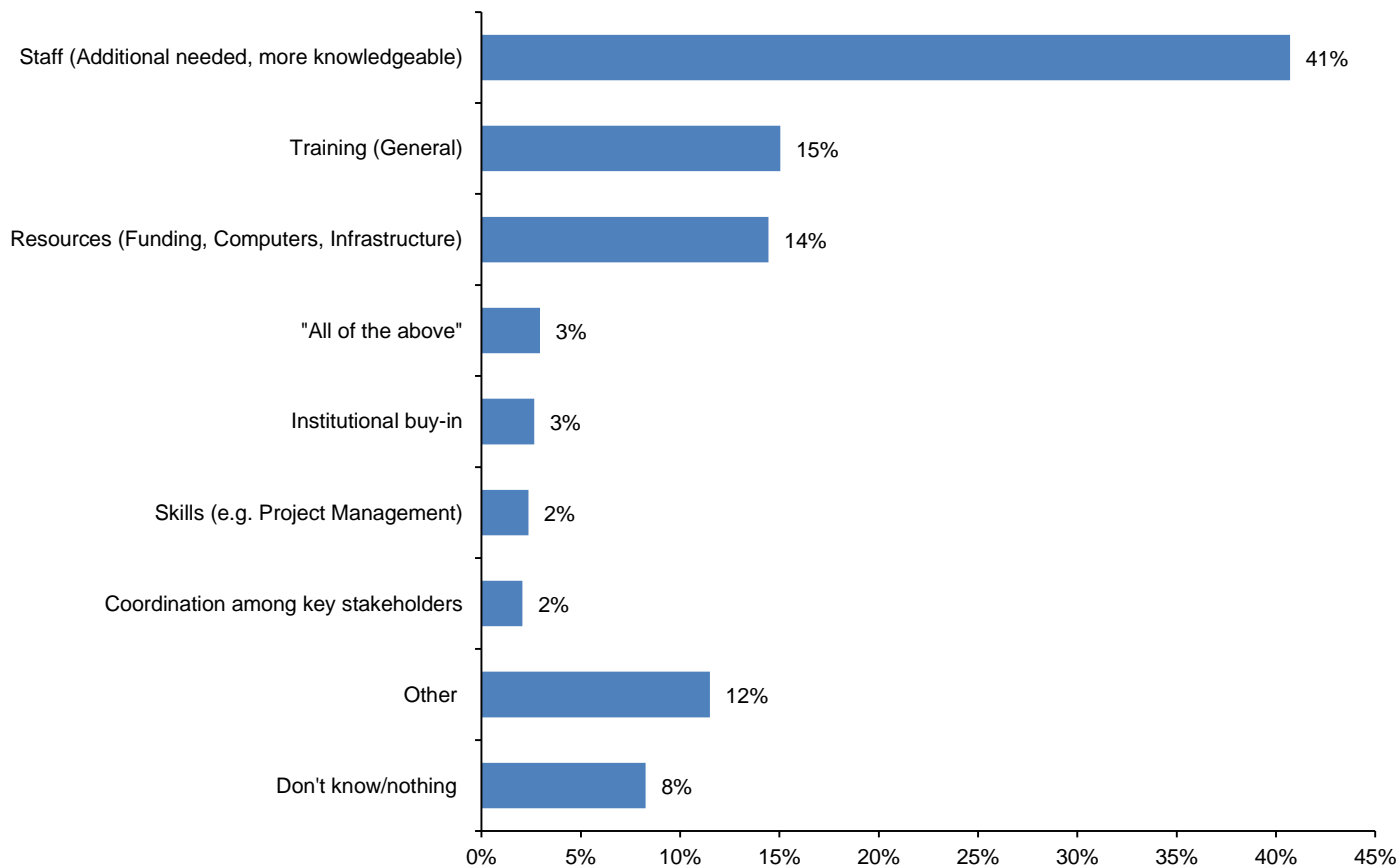
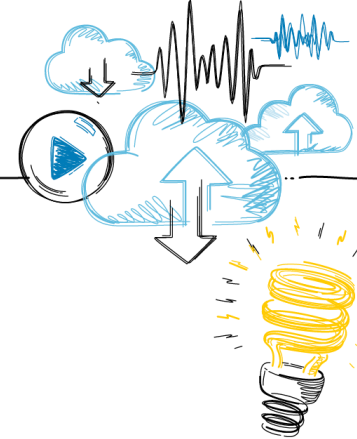
A quarter of librarians said that their administration wants them to be the leader for digital humanities in the future.



B1. What does your university/college administration want your library's role to be in digital humanities in the future? (Open-ended Response, n=339)

The most common need mentioned by librarians was related to staff (either more needed or more knowledgeable).

Other common needs were related to general training, resources such as computers, infrastructure or general funding.

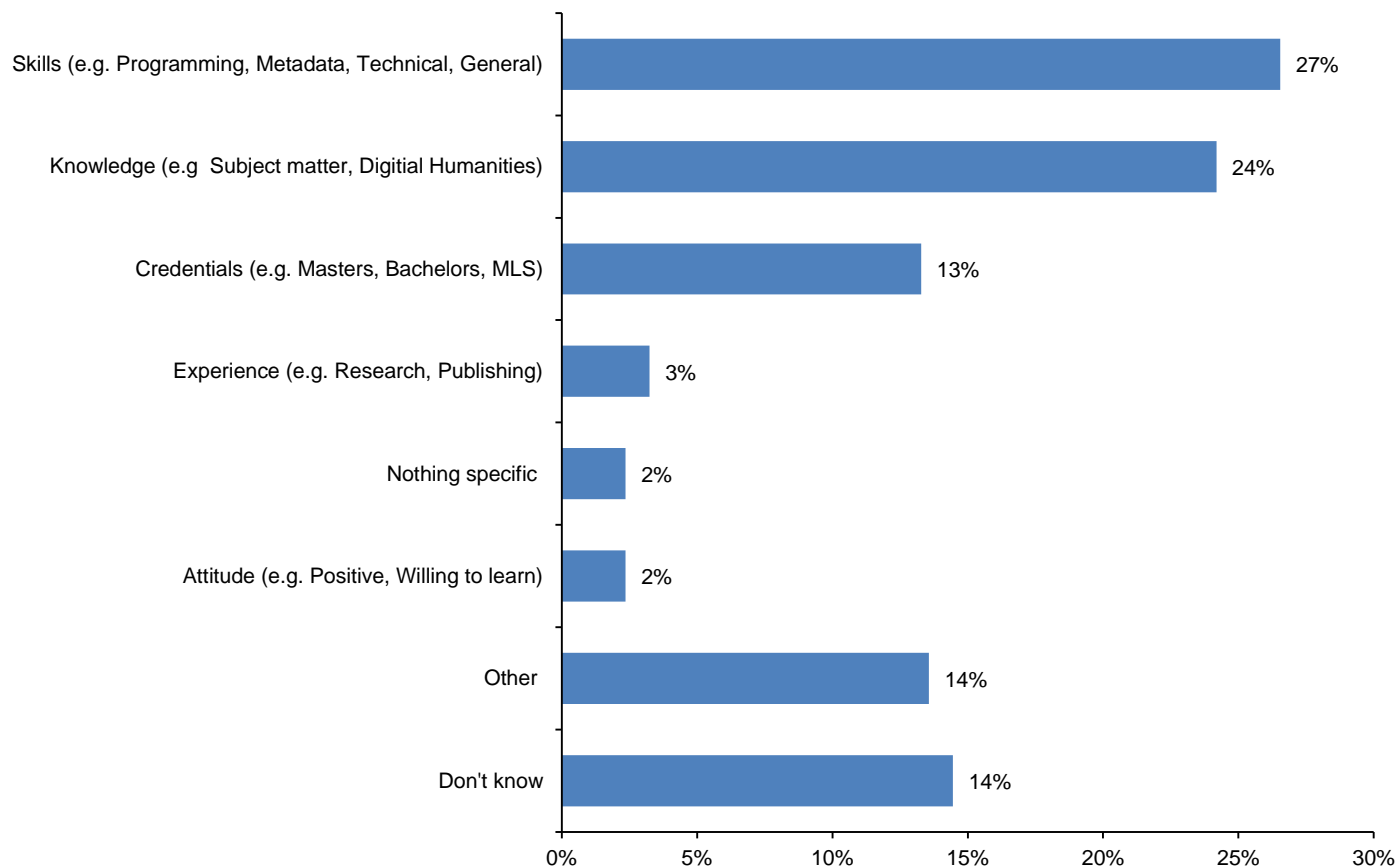


B2. What staff, resources, or training does a library need to support digital humanities? (Coded open-ended response, n=339)

The most common competencies a digital librarian needs were related to specific technical skills.

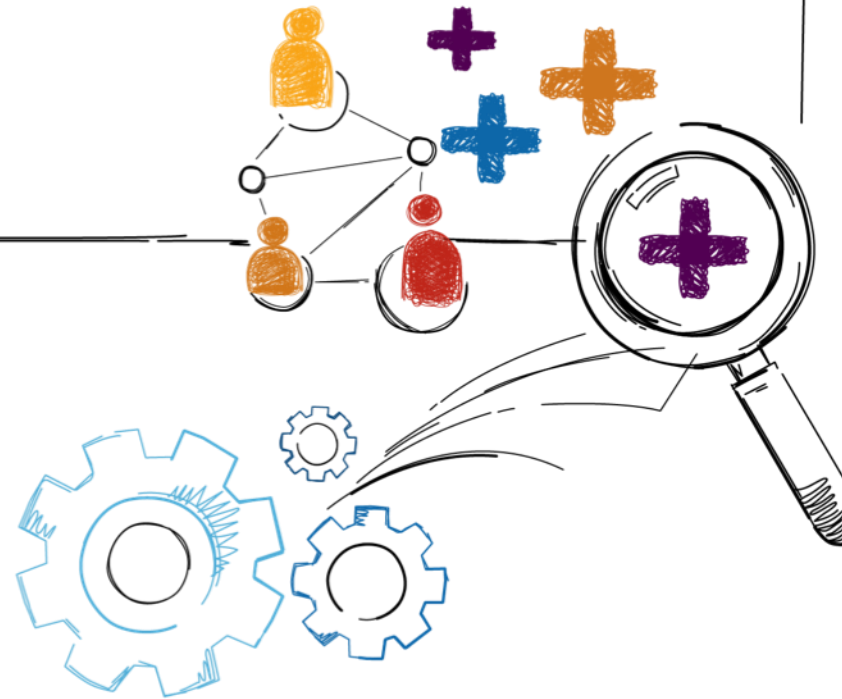


Other common competencies required were related to the knowledge required or some specific credentials.

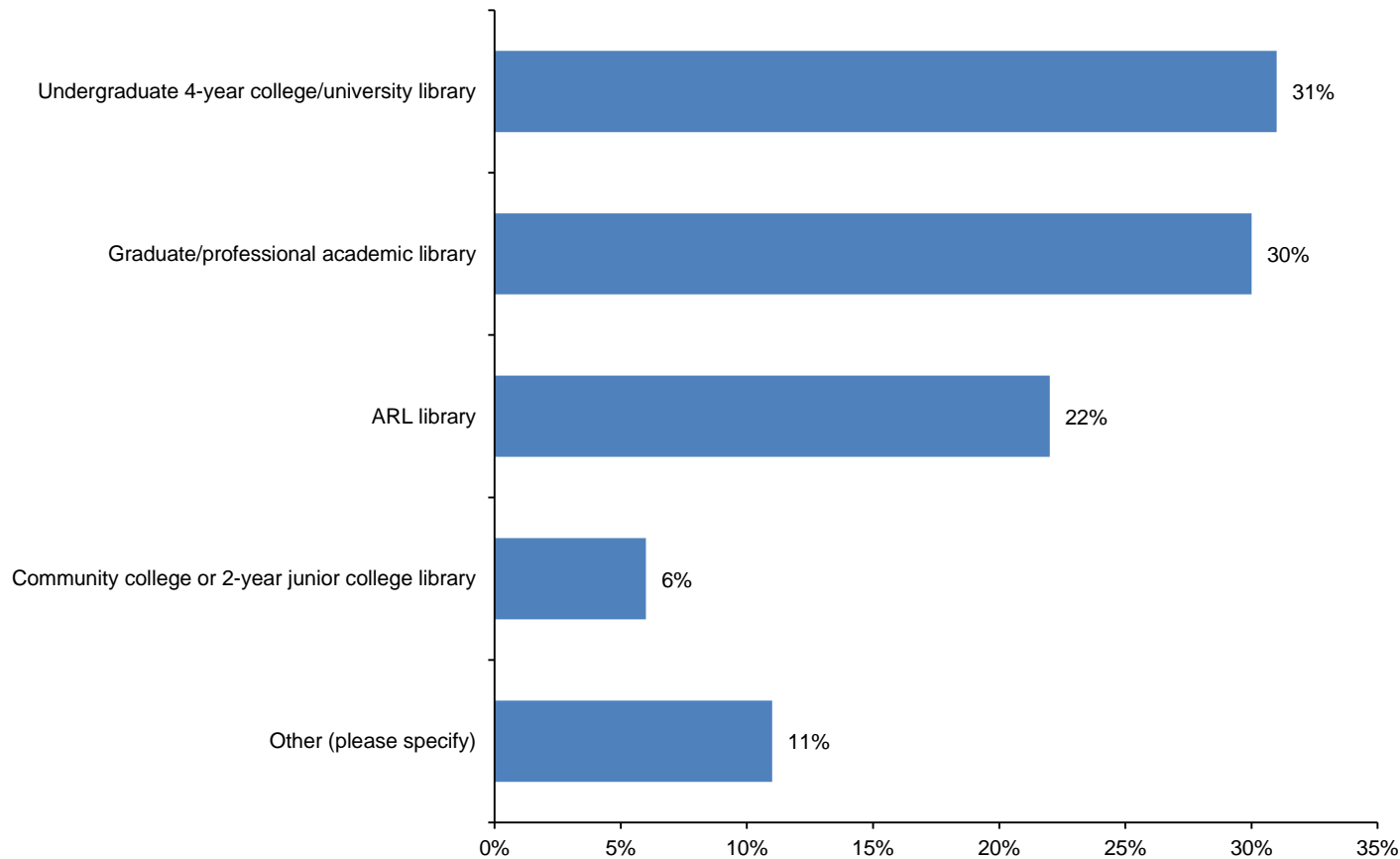
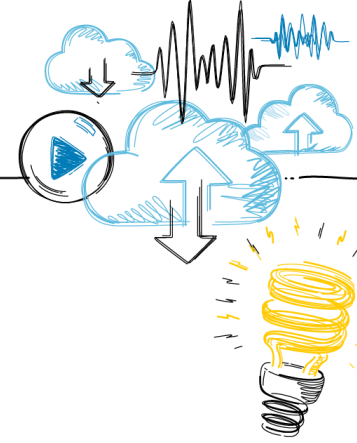


B3. What competencies/credentials does a digital humanities librarian need?
(Open-ended response, n=339)

Respondent Profile

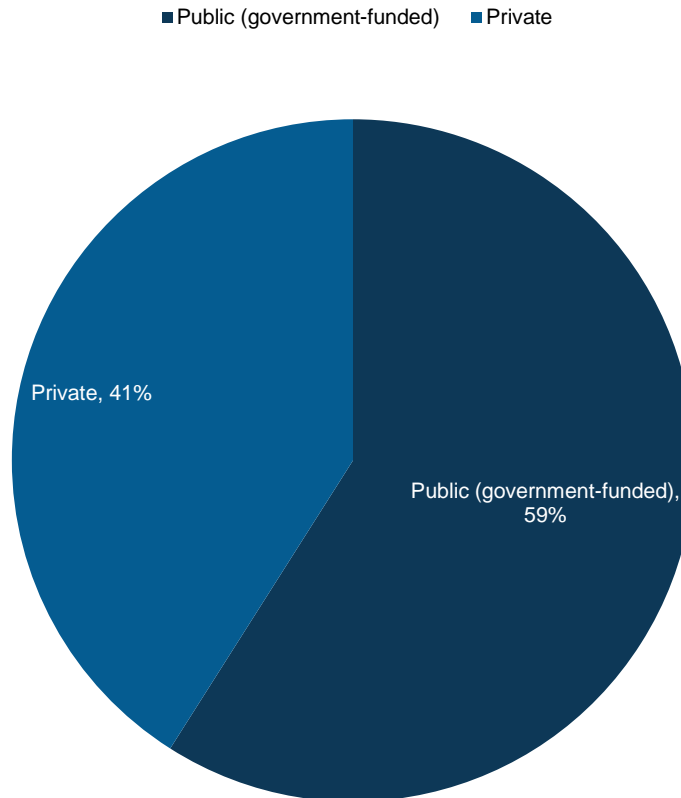


There was a mix of different types of libraries included such as undergraduate 4-year, graduate, and ARL.



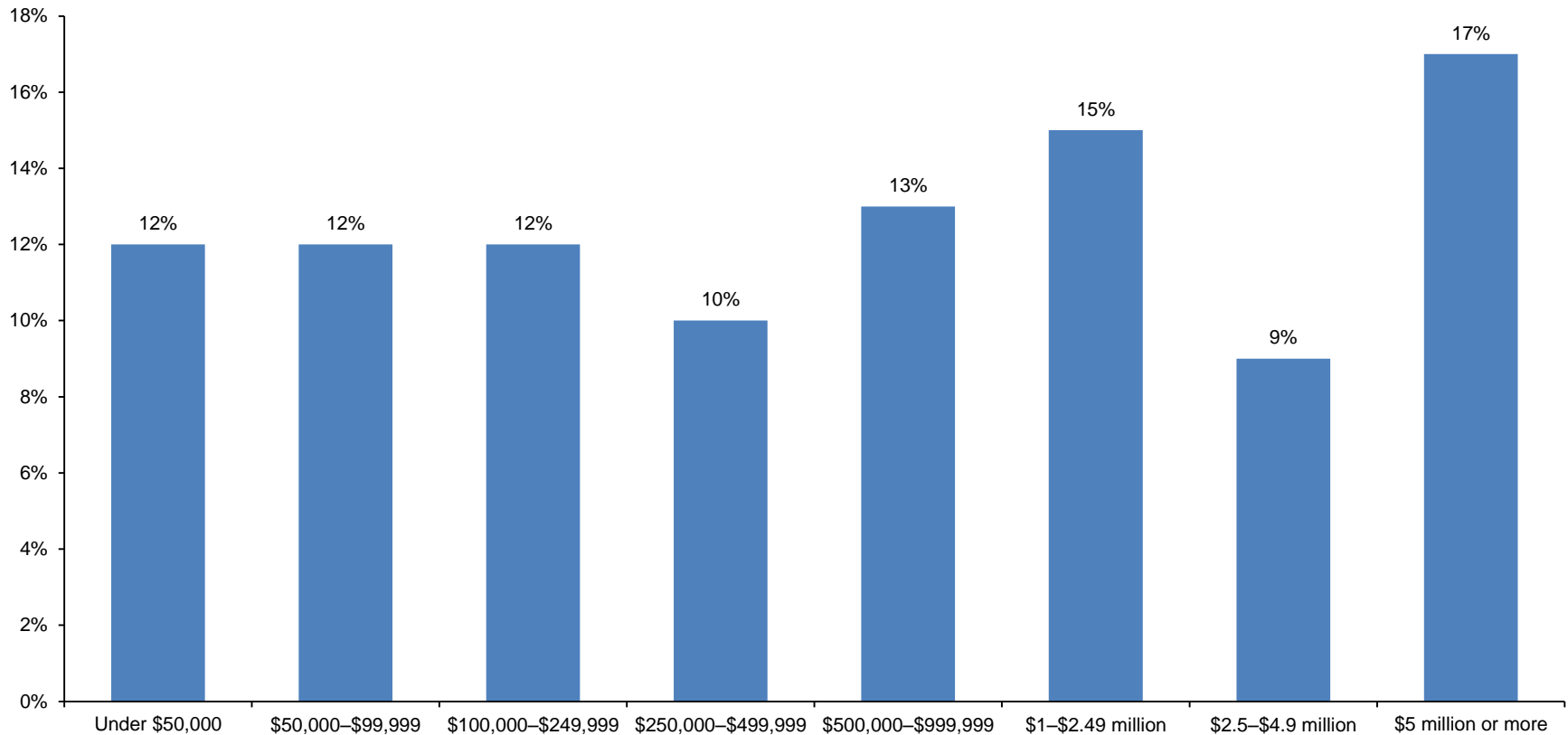
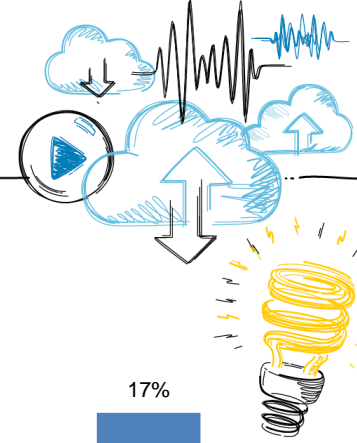
C4: Which of the following best describes your library? (n=339)

Six out of ten librarians indicated their institution was public (government-funded).

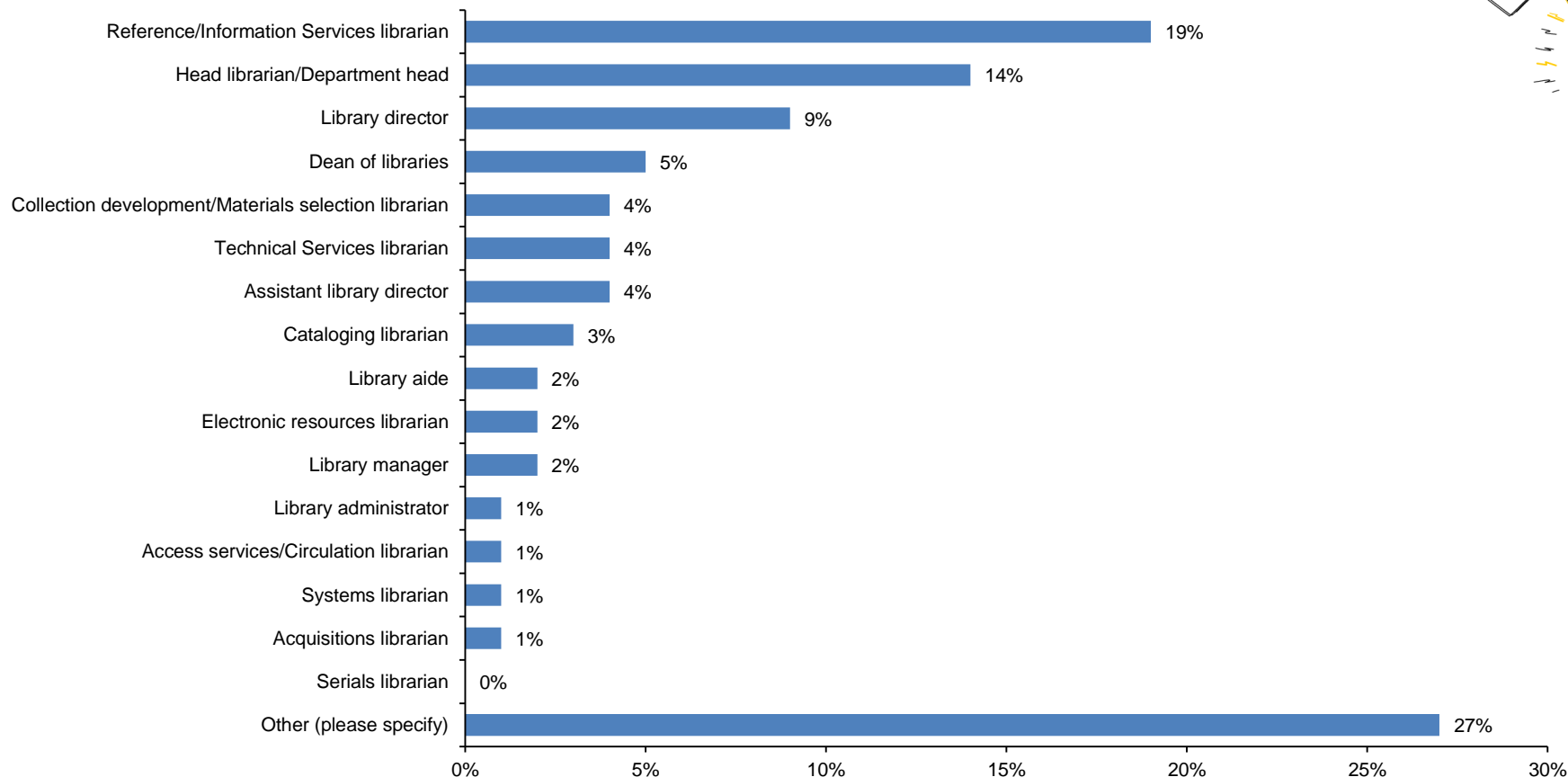
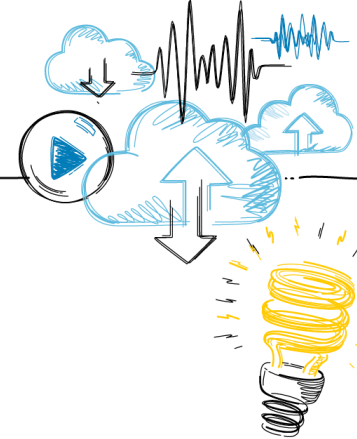


C6: Is your institution public or private? (n=333)

The acquisition budget varied significantly – ranging from under \$50,000 to \$6 million or more.

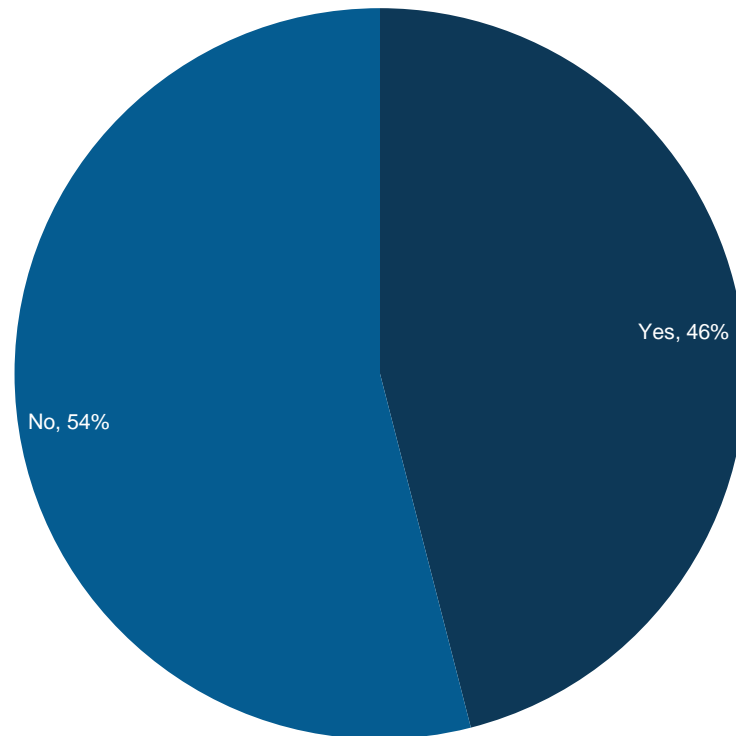


Survey respondents had a wide range of job titles.



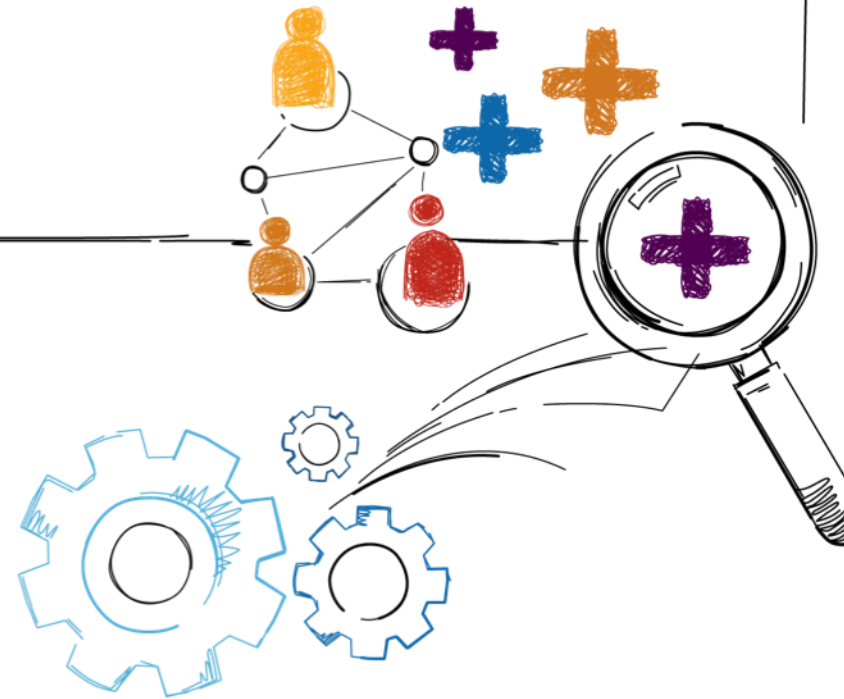
C1: Which of the following comes closest to your job title? (n=339)

Slightly less than half of librarians indicated that their institution offers tenure to librarians.



C2: Does your institution offer tenure to librarians? (n=339)

Appendix A: Approach



Approach

- An email invitation was sent to *American Libraries* librarian contacts.
- 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 during two time periods from October 2 to October 13, 2015 and from December 8 to December 13, 2015.
- The average length of the survey was 18 minutes and the median length was 15 minutes.
- The margin of error with 339 completes is approximately +/-5.3%, nineteen times out of twenty.

