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Report Archivists and Collection Holding Institutions as Users

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Abstract (for dissemination)	EHRI conducted an international web survey to better understand how professional users such as archivists, librarians, curators, and information specialists use EHRI services. These professions are key users and stakeholders of EHRI, and therefore it is important to understand how they use the services EHRI provide.
Management Summary	<p>This deliverable consists of an analysis of an international survey that was sent to a variety of archivists, librarians, curators, information specialists, and researchers.</p> <p>The purpose of conducting this survey was to focus on the specific user requirements of archivists, librarians, curators and information specialists given their significant role in providing content for EHRI and their knowledge of the Holocaust related materials available at their institutions. The analysis of the survey data has provided greater insights into how better to engage with professional users in the future.</p>

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1 Introduction

EHRI conducted a web survey to better understand how professional users such as archivists, librarians, curators, and information specialists use EHRI services. These professions are key users and stakeholders of EHRI, and therefore it is important to understand how they use the services EHRI provide. The following deliverable consists of an analysis of an international survey that was sent to a variety of archivists, librarians, curators, information specialists, and researchers.

The purpose of conducting this survey is to focus on the specific user requirements of archivists, librarians, curators and information specialists given their significant role in providing content for EHRI and their knowledge of the Holocaust related materials available at their institutions. By analyzing the results of this web survey, EHRI will better understand how to engage with these professional users.

The increasing digitization of archival materials and data protection laws have presented new challenges and opportunities with regards to collection management, preservation, archival description systems and access mechanisms. The analysis of this survey will give EHRI a better understanding of how these issues are influencing archivists et al. and their institutions.

This deliverable consists of an explanation of the methodology used in this survey, analysis of the survey results, and in the final section conclusions will be drawn from the data analysis.

2 Methodology

This deliverable gathered information about the impact of digitization on the practices of archivists, librarians and museum professionals. Some of the key themes we wished to explore were:

- The opportunities and barriers for cooperation with EHRI;
- Benefits of cooperating with EHRI;
- Which services professional users are interested in using and/or developing further;
- The impact of working with research infrastructures for archivists.

As a way of exploring these themes, we decided to undertake a web-survey as a practical way of reaching a large number of respondents with the greatest ease. SurveyMonkey was chosen as the means of running the web-survey because of its functionality when creating multilingual surveys and its capability for basic data analytics. It was essential to make the web-survey multilingual in order to gain the most representative sample possible.

The survey was designed in four sections, which focused on:

- Information about institutions;
- Their relationship to external online portals/aggregators;
- Their relationship to EHRI services;
- The general impact of digital approaches on the work practices of respondents.

Using information gathered by EHRI regarding Collection Holding Institutions that contain Holocaust-related archival materials,¹ contact information was obtained for 1441 organizations, and emails containing links to the web-survey, the rationale behind the survey, and an explanation of the purpose of EHRI were sent out (see Appendix). Email invitations were sent to 1557² recipients and 161 responses were received, a response rate of 10%.

The survey and emails were available in English, French, German, Polish and Russian translations. Where it was clear an institution used a particular language, the relevant translation was sent, and in all other cases an English email was sent, with the option to switch to another language.

3 Survey

The online survey was divided in four sections:

1. Information about your institution
2. Relationship to online portals/aggregators outside your institution
3. EHRI Services
4. General impact of digital approaches on own work practices

3.1 Information about your institution

Section 1 consisted of 8 questions to find out information about the institutions who participated in the survey. Participants were asked to give information about their institution including their job role, the type and size of institution, the level of Holocaust-related material in their collections, the type of digital services provided, and the different user groups of the institution.

¹ <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions>

² EHRI collected contact information for 1441 institutions, but some institutions had multiple contact information.

3.1.1 Response rate

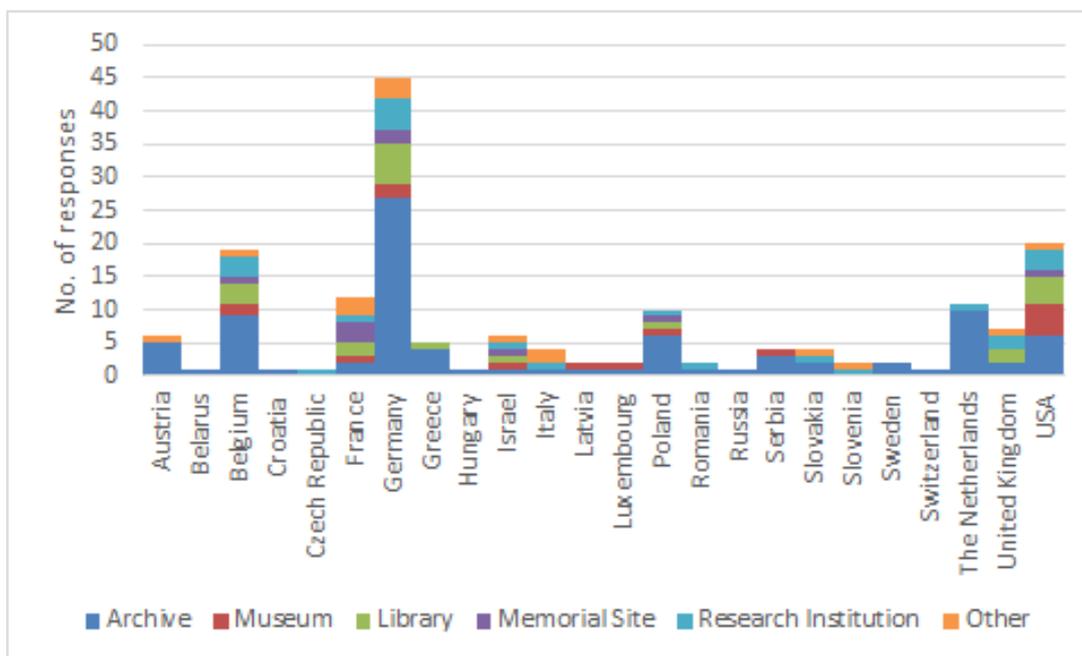


Figure 1 Number of responses per country and type of institution

3.1.2 Type of Institution

77% of institutions that responded identified themselves as Archives, with the smallest number of responses coming from those who identified as Memorial Sites. Many of these institutions identified themselves in multiple categories, with Archives being present in the most institutions. Outside of these categories, 'Other' institutions included a university, a television broadcaster, a freelance researcher, a compensation service, a tracing service, services to research Jewish history, and human rights and refugee organizations.

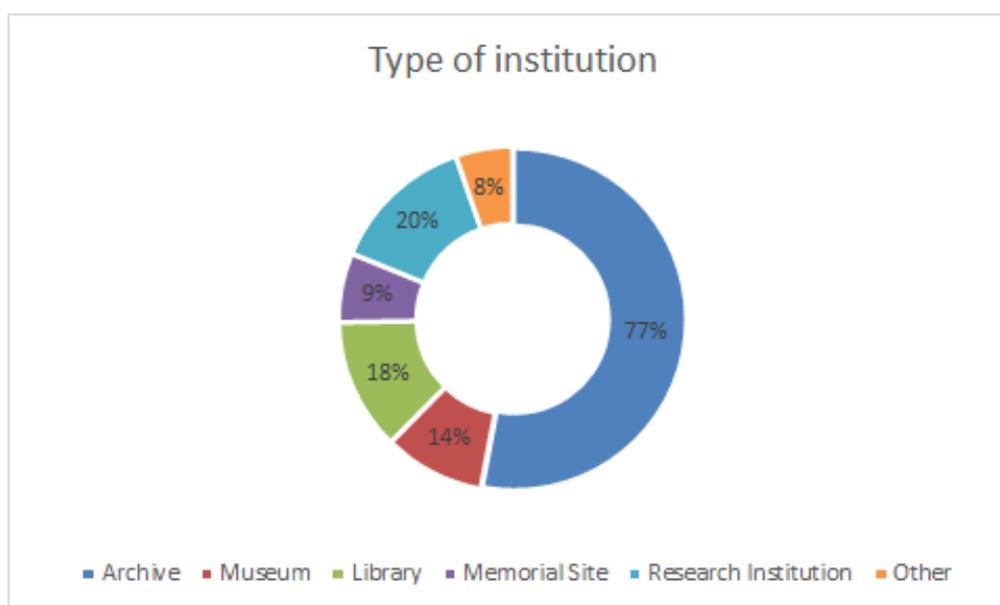


Figure 2 Type of Institution

3.1.3 Type of institution by geographical region

The types of institution when divided by geographical region, show that the vast majority of responses originated in Western Europe. Under the United Nations geoscheme³, Israel is classified as Western Asia.

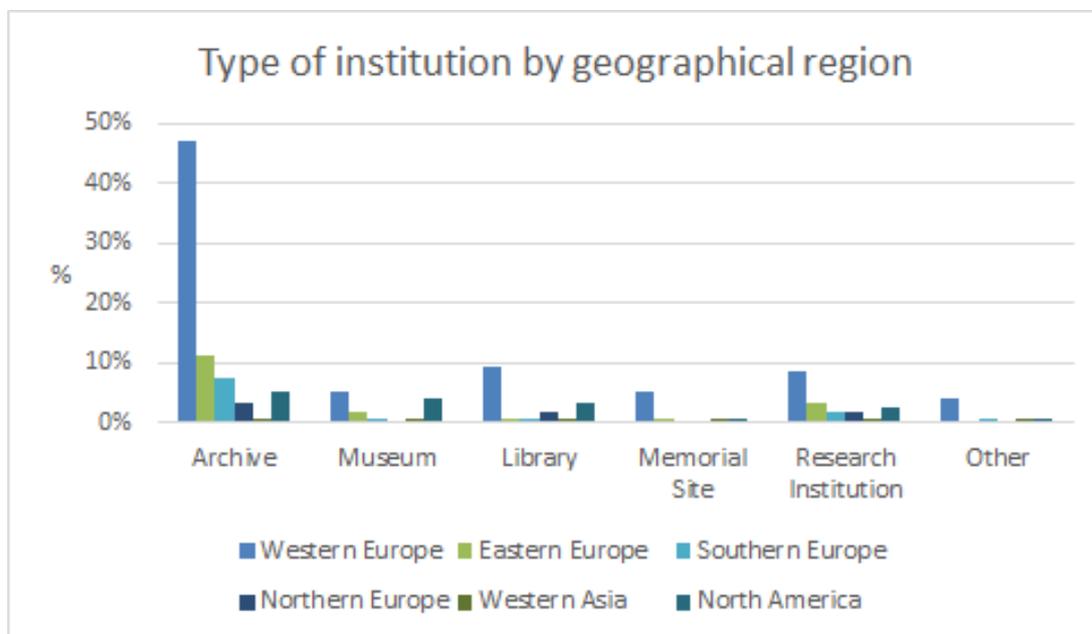


Figure 3 Type of institution by geographical region

3.1.4 Size of institution by region

Just under half of those who responded came from small institutions with between 1 and 10 employees, and a further third of respondents were from institutions with between 11 and 50 employees. 79% of the respondents work in small to medium institutions, with 21% working in large organizations. No larger institutions from Northern or Southern Europe participated in this survey. The largest institutions tend to be national, state or dedicated Holocaust organizations, while the small to medium sized institutions are much more varied in their type.

³ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>

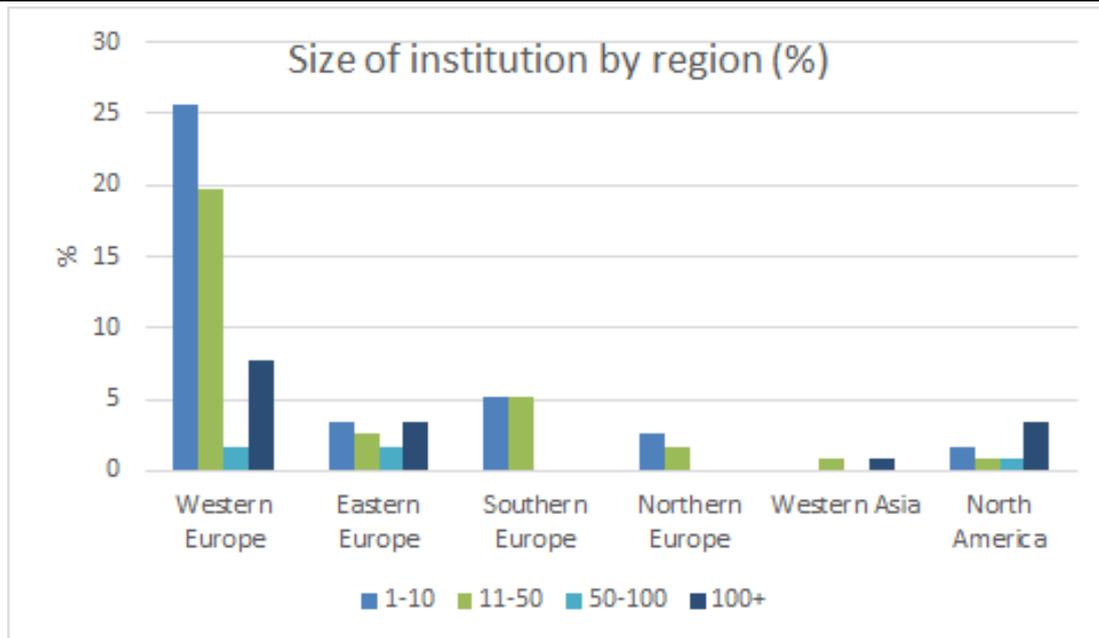


Figure 4 Size of institution by region

3.1.5 Role within institution

Over half the respondents (53.85%) identified themselves as Archivists, and Managers were also well represented (34.19%). The number of Librarians (3.42%) is very low, as are Curators (6.84%), and Information Specialists (7.69%). A possible explanation for this is that many of the survey respondents identify their roles in multiple categories, and have identified more with either being an Archivist or as a Manager than the other categories. Of those who identified as Other, there was an intern, a university lecturer, general staff, and some specialists and consultants. Also two functions that are specific created for digital namely Digital Asset and Web Manager and Advisor Digital Developments

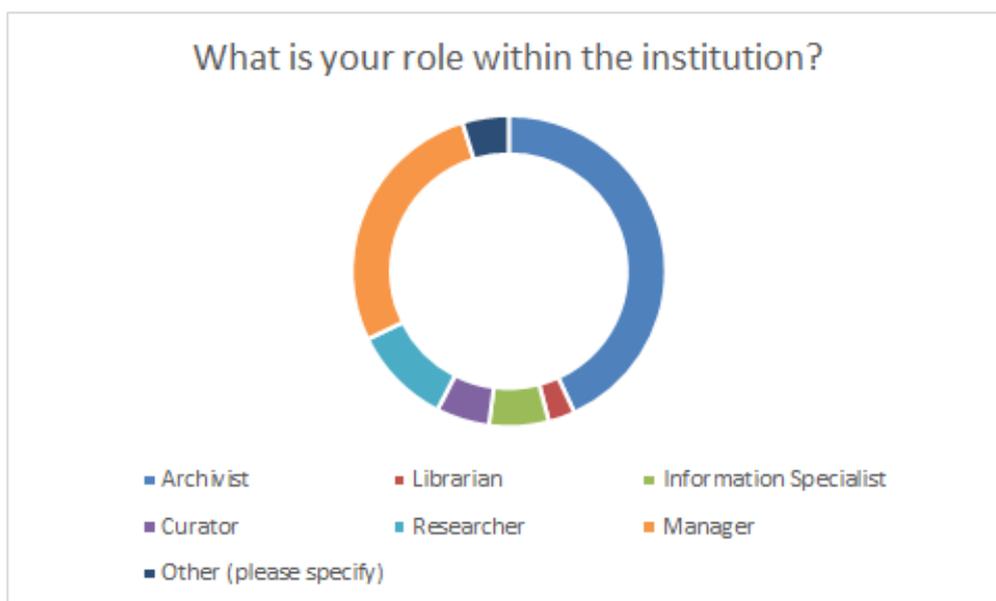


Figure 5 Role of respondent within the institution

3.1.6 Holocaust-related collections held at the institution

The largest proportion of respondents said that Holocaust related collections are a small part (0-25%) of their overall collections. These respondents are mainly municipal or regional archives that hold collections about their geographic region. The largest collections tend to be found in institutions that are dedicated to Holocaust research and remembrance, which include Research Institutions, Memorial Sites, Libraries and Museums.

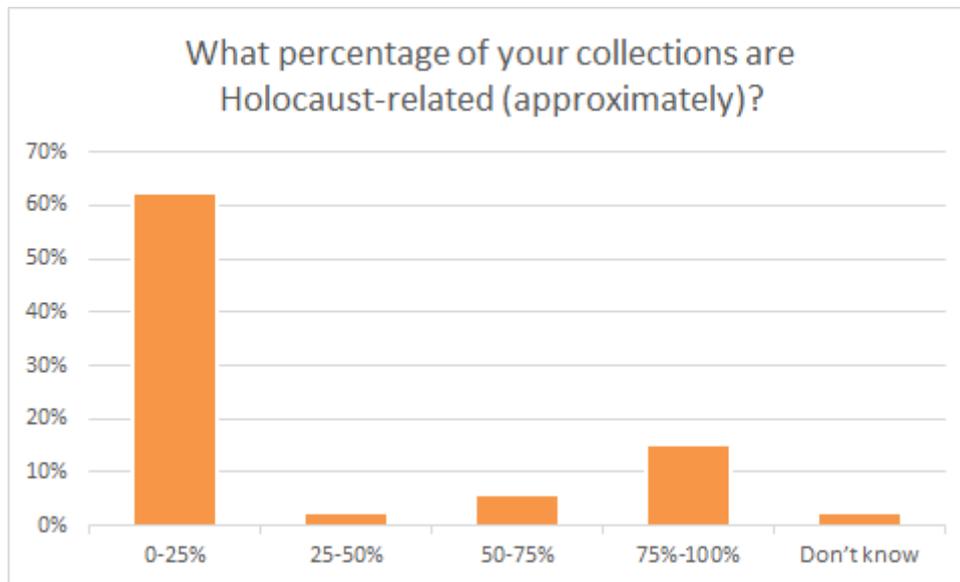


Figure 6 Percentage of collections that are Holocaust-related

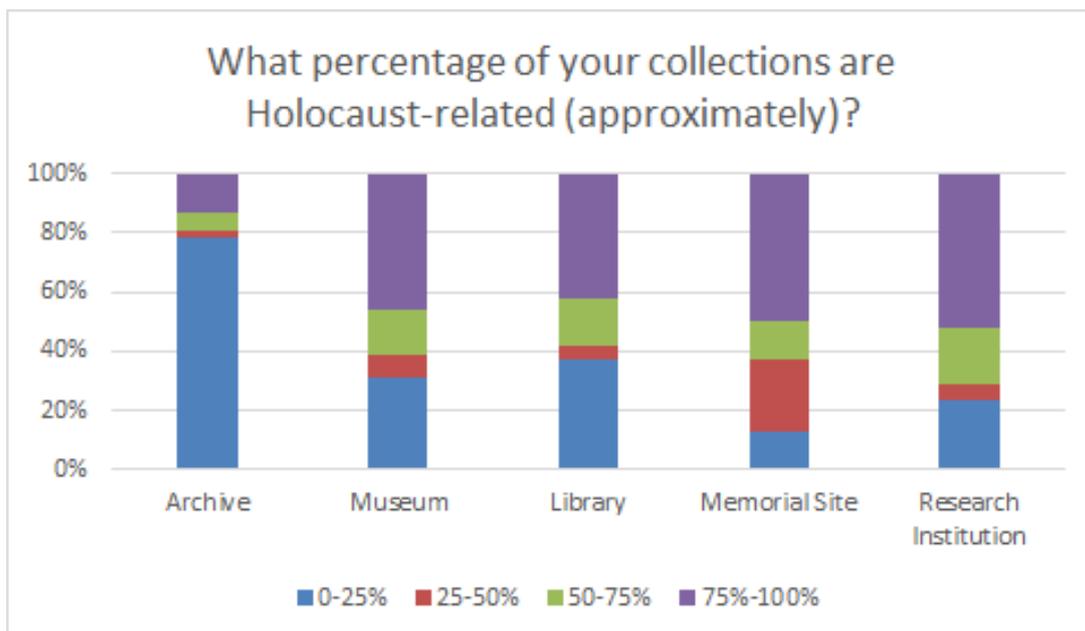


Figure 7 Percentage of Holocaust-related collections per type of institution

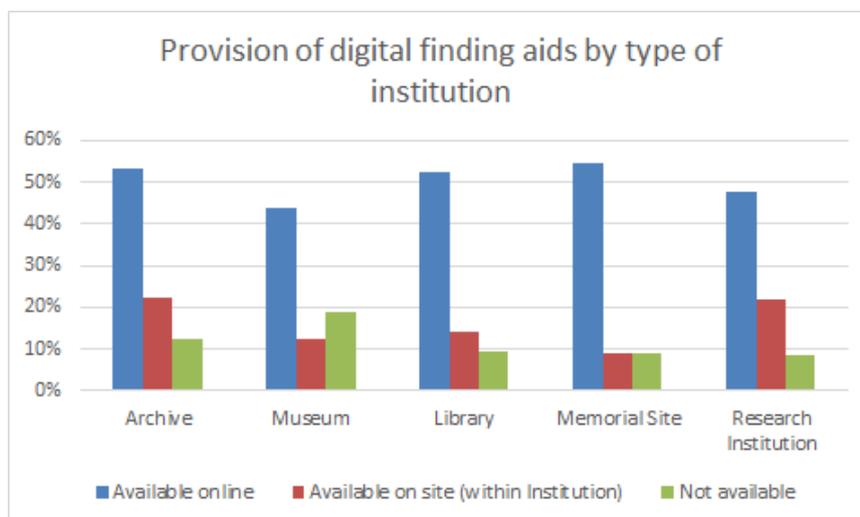
3.1.7 Digital services provided by type of institution

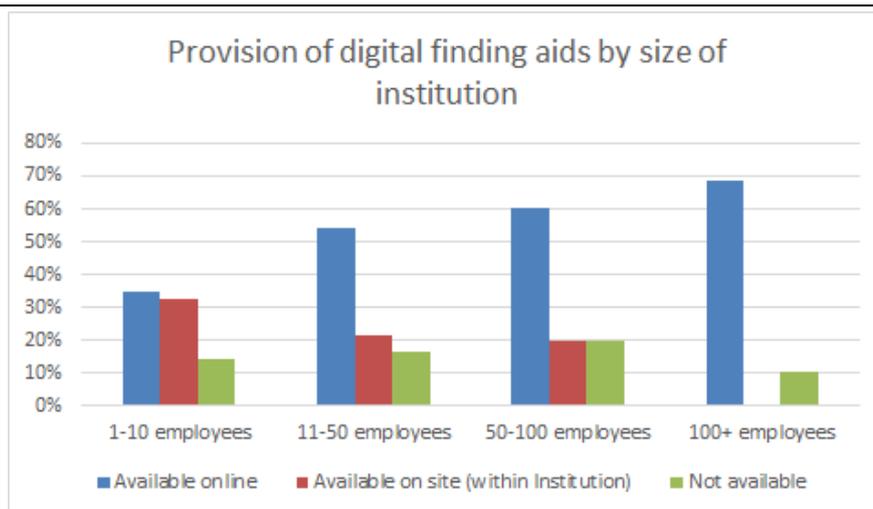
When considering the provision of digital services, we have looked at whether provision varies depending on the type or size of institution.

Finding aids

The provision of digital finding aids across all types of institution was broadly consistent, with around half of all respondents saying that digital finding aids were provided online, and only small proportions of each type of institution saying that their digital finding aids were available on site or not available at all.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the number of digital finding aids made available through the institutions surveyed, increases correlates with the size of the institution, larger institutions have more finding aids online. The largest organizations tend to make their digital finding aids generally available on the internet and do not keep access only available on site. Access of digital finding aids only on site tends to be for smaller institutions. Possible reasons for this will be explored later.





Figures 8 & 9 Provision of digital finding aids by type and size of institution

Digital catalogues

Memorial Sites are much more likely to provide access to their digital catalogues on site, which may be because of the sensitive nature of their material. Libraries and Research Institutions also provide a large amount of material on site. Catalogues of Archives, Museums, and Libraries are most likely to provide digital catalogues online.

The larger the institution, the more likely it is to have digital catalogues available, and this is because the more employees an institution has, the more likely they are to have the resources available to make catalogues available. Interestingly though, there is a tendency for a lot of catalogues to be available only on site, and this could be because of concerns over the type of items in the catalogue and privacy issues.



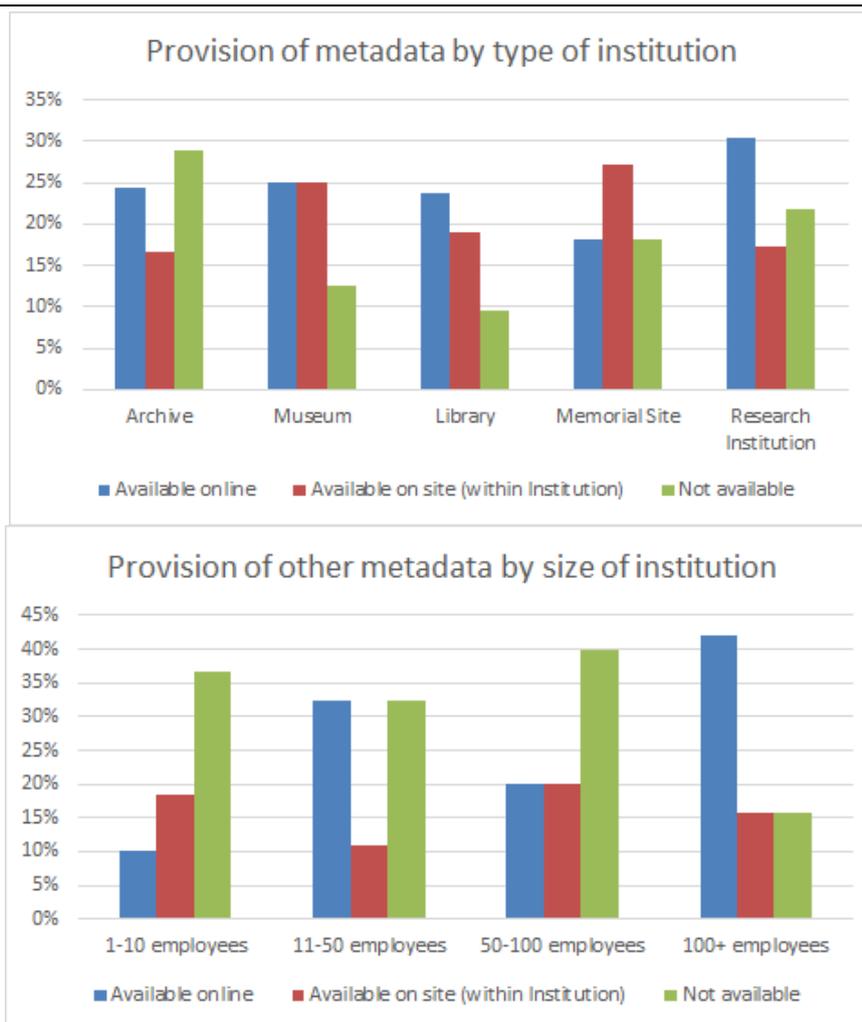
Figures 10 & 11 Provision of digital catalogues by type and size of institution

Other metadata

Besides the digital finding aids and digital catalogues, institutions sometimes have additional metadata that guide users to information such as photo collections or oral history collections. The availability of this type of metadata at institutions is the least digitally available resource of those surveyed, with even the highest responses not getting much above 30%.

Overall, only a quarter of institutions surveyed have this type of metadata available online, with a similar number having additional metadata available on site. Institutions are just as likely not to have any additional metadata available, which suggests that it is a human resource issue - if there are skilled staffs then there will be a greater amount of metadata.

This conclusion is backed up by the analysis of metadata availability by size of institution, which suggests it is more of an issue of having staff capacity to work on metadata, rather than a lack of desire to provide additional metadata.

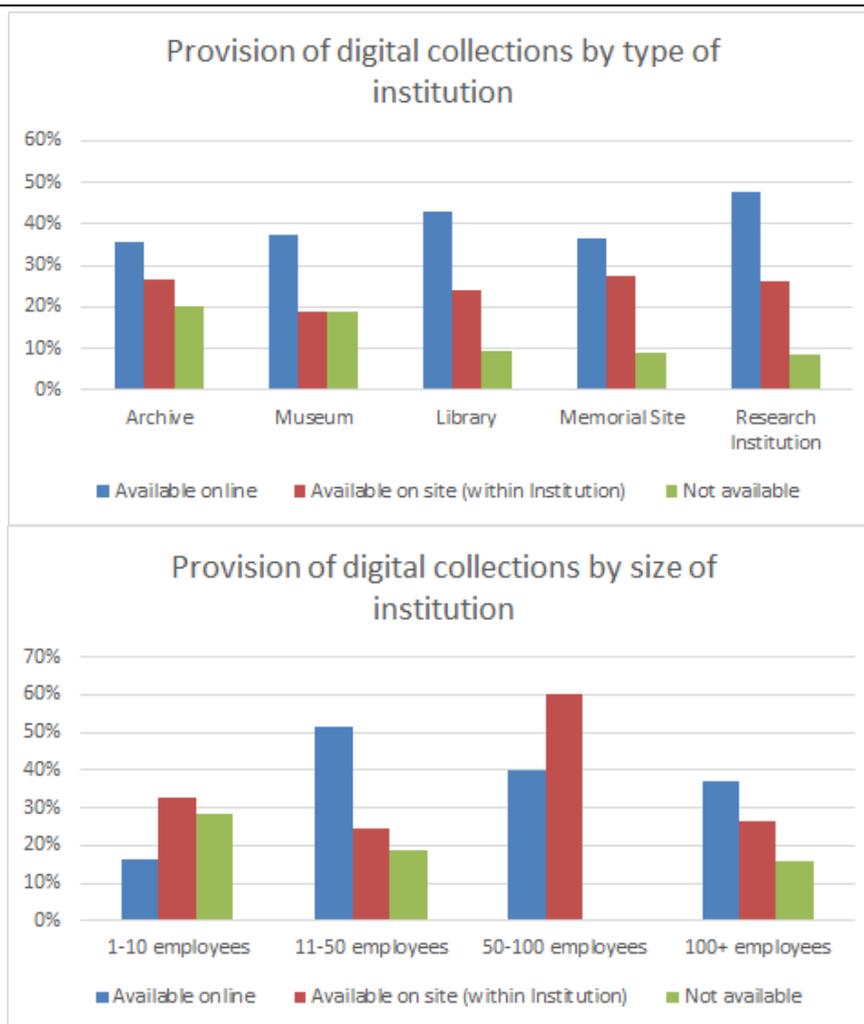


Figures 12 & 13 Provision of other metadata by type and size of institution

Digital collections

With the provision of digital collections, all types of institution are as likely as each other to provide the majority online, some on site and only a very small proportion do not have digital collections available at all.

From the graph below it would appear that very small institutions (i.e. 1-10 employees) are significantly less likely to have any digital collections than their larger counterparts. This suggests that the provision of digital collections is dependent on factors such as funding to digitize collections, having skilled staff to carry out the work, and data protection laws specific to each country.



Figures 14 & 15 Provision of digital collection information by type and size of institution

Other digital information available in the institutions, but not always available online or on site in those who responded to the survey include databases, videos and oral testimonies, computer games, and online exhibitions.

There is clearly a desire for institutions to provide digital services, but institutions need to have the funding and human resources available to create these services. Institutions also have to be aware of the sensitive materials they hold in their collections, which may mean that digital services can be created, but that access has to be limited to on site only.

3.1.8 User groups by type of institution

Academic users are important users for all types of institutions, though they are not considered as important as other Educational users at Memorial Sites. Educational users rank highly in their significance across all institutions. The General Public as the third most important group in most institutions, with the exception of Archives, where they rank second. Other users, as reported by respondents, include journalists, the press, lawyers, Holocaust survivors and family members of those who died in the Holocaust, civil servants, family historians, and community employed archaeologists.

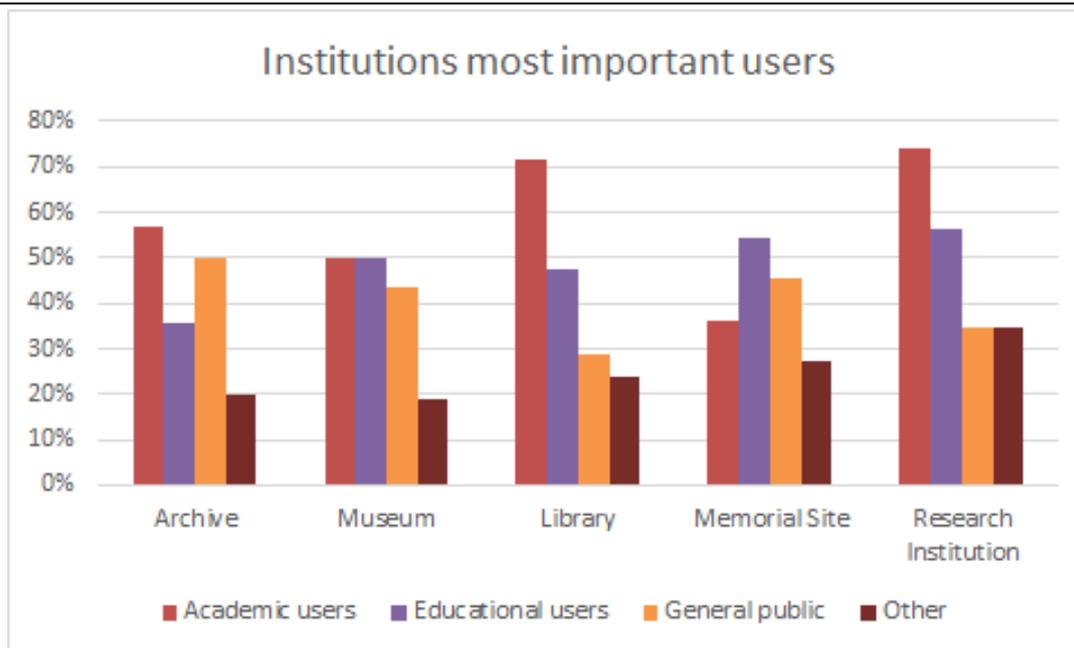


Figure 16 User group by type of institution

3.2 Relationship to online portals/aggregators outside your institution

Section 2 of the survey focused on the relationship between institutions and EHRI/other online portals/aggregators, and consisted of 4 questions. These questions asked the respondents which are the external portals/aggregators with which they share information, perceived benefits of sharing information, and problems experienced when sharing information outside their institution.

3.2.1 Institution Information and Collections available on external online portals

Out of the online portals/aggregators available, it is clear that EHRI is the most consistent in terms of receiving content from all types of institution. The other portal/aggregator that receives information from all types of institution is European, though this sample suggests it is not used as much as EHRI. Other online portals/aggregators are more likely to receive information from only a few types of institution, such as Yad Vashem, which is used mainly by Archives, Museums, and Research Institutions. Memorial Sites seem to use their information in a unique way to other institutions, with a particular tendency to provide information to national, regional, and thematic portals/aggregators, and/or Wikipedia.

Overall, the three most used online portals/aggregators identified in this survey were national/regional portal/aggregator (29.59%), EHRI (26.53%), and Wikipedia (23.47%). Given that the category 'National/Regional portal/aggregator' covers a variety of online portals; it is significant to note that the top two portals most used by the institutions which participated in this survey are, therefore, EHRI and Wikipedia.

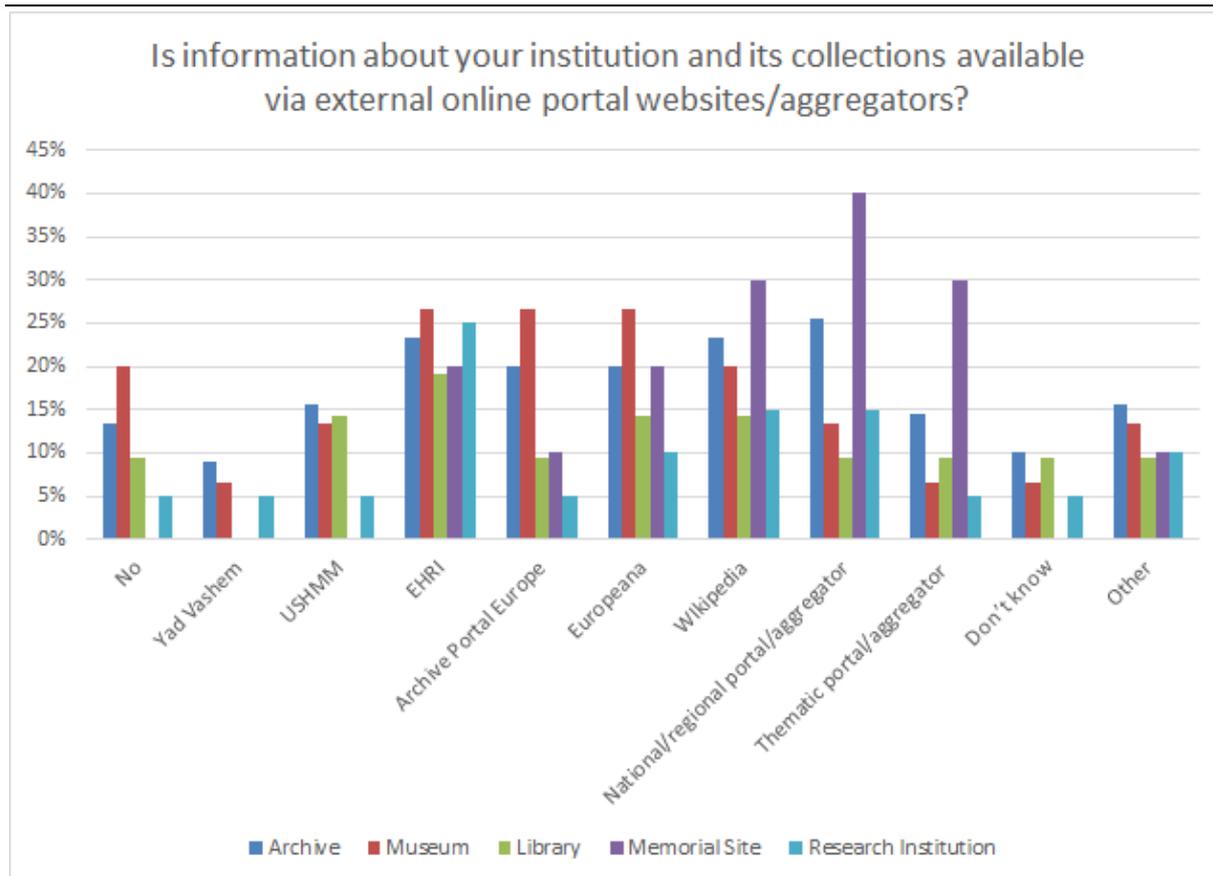


Figure 17 Information and/or collections available on external portals

3.2.2 Benefits of sharing information and collections with external portals

The three biggest benefits to institutions which made their information to external online portals/aggregators are an increase in visibility of their collections, an increase in the findability of their collections, and an increased usage of their collections. These results were consistent across all types of institution. Only Memorial Sites did not perceive having their collections placed in a bigger picture as a benefit. Becoming part of a larger network and having collections placed in a bigger picture were seen as significant benefits by all other types of institution.

For those who responded that they had not yet made collection information available, one respondent was sure that his/her institution would benefit in all areas once they made information available. Another respondent identified a further benefit as being less damage being made to original documents when they were available online.

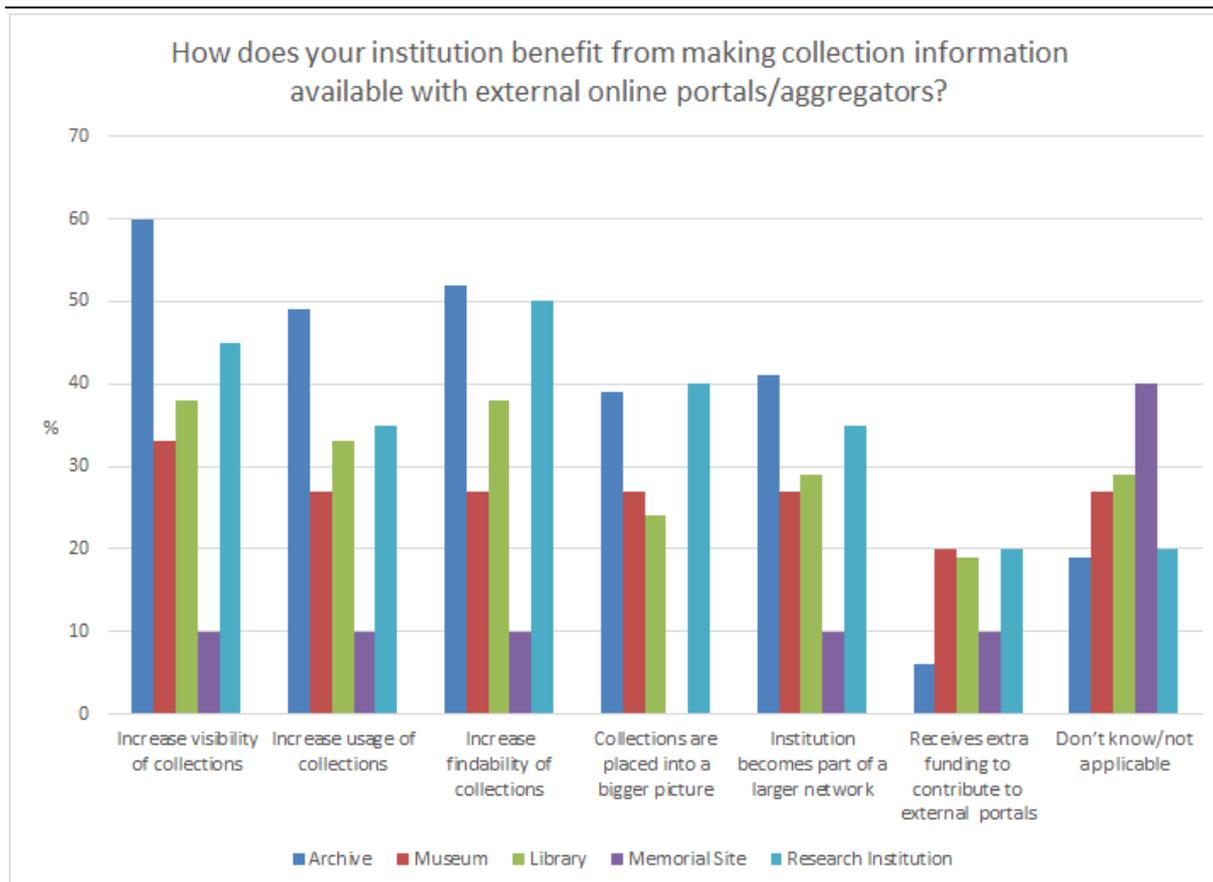


Figure 18 Benefits of sharing collection information with external partners

3.2.3 Barriers to sharing data with external portals

The most significant barriers preventing institutions from providing data to external portals/aggregators are technical barriers, legal barriers, financial barriers, and a lack of skilled staff. Loss of on-site access was not considered to be a barrier, and only in the case of Memorial Sites was loss of control considered a problem, which may be due to the sensitive nature of their data, e.g. information about survivors and victims which are protected by data protection laws.

Where other responses were given, they mentioned lack of staff, backlog of existing work, and ethical considerations regarding names of Holocaust survivors.

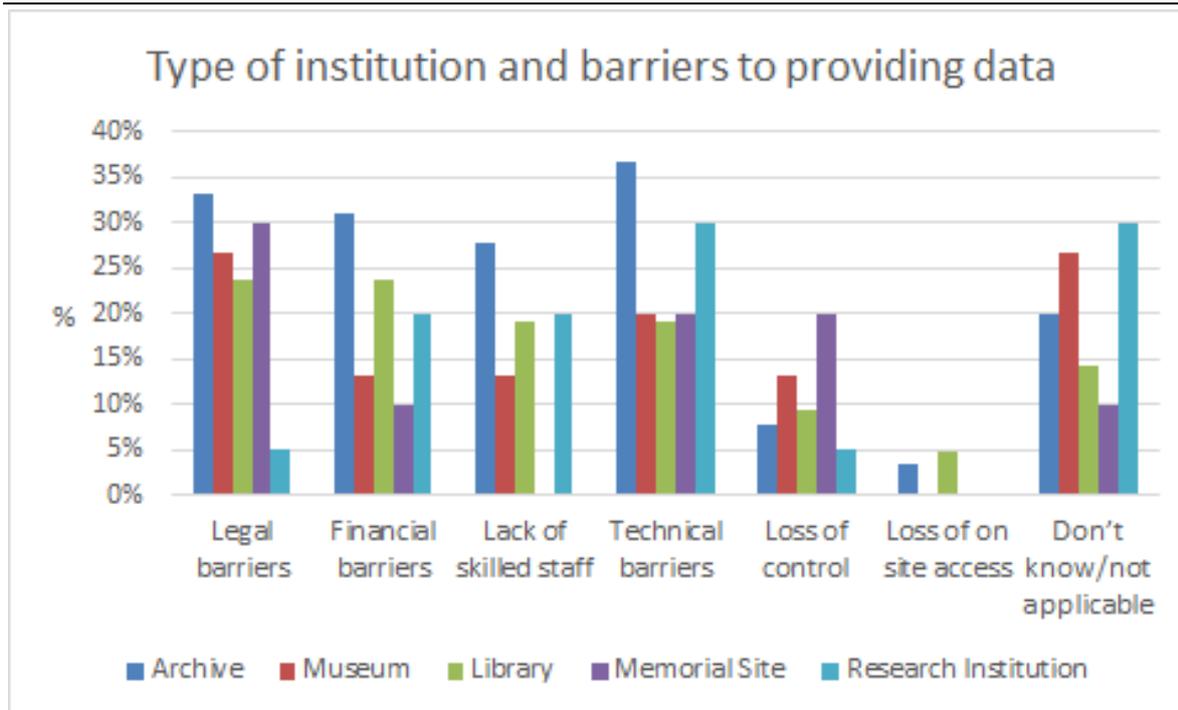


Figure 19 Barriers to providing data by type of institution

For institutions that do not currently give online access to information about holdings either through their own website or an external portal/aggregator, the majority of responses talked about problems with catalogues that were either due to lack of staff, lack of catalogues, or out of date catalogues. A lack of funding was also identified as a major problem for institutions making collections available. Some institutions indicated that they used their own websites to give information about their collections, or that they did not have any digitized documents, which demonstrates a lack of understanding as to the purpose of EHRI and other external portals/aggregators.

3.3 EHRI services

Section 3 consisted of 4 questions about interest in services provided by EHRI. Questions included asking about interest in EHRI events, use of EHRI resources, whether institutions would recommend EHRI to their users, and suggestions for new services.

3.3.1 Interest in EHRI events

Overall, most interest was registered in EHRI Conferences, Workshops, and Training Seminars, with the least interest shown in Fellowships. This is likely to be because archivists assume Fellowships are only for researchers, whereas in EHRI Fellowships are available for archivists and other information specialists. Archivists are also not always able to get permission from their institutions to take time to participate in Fellowship schemes. In terms of other responses, one individual raised the point that with a very low percentage of Holocaust-related collections, they did not feel it worth engaging in EHRI events.

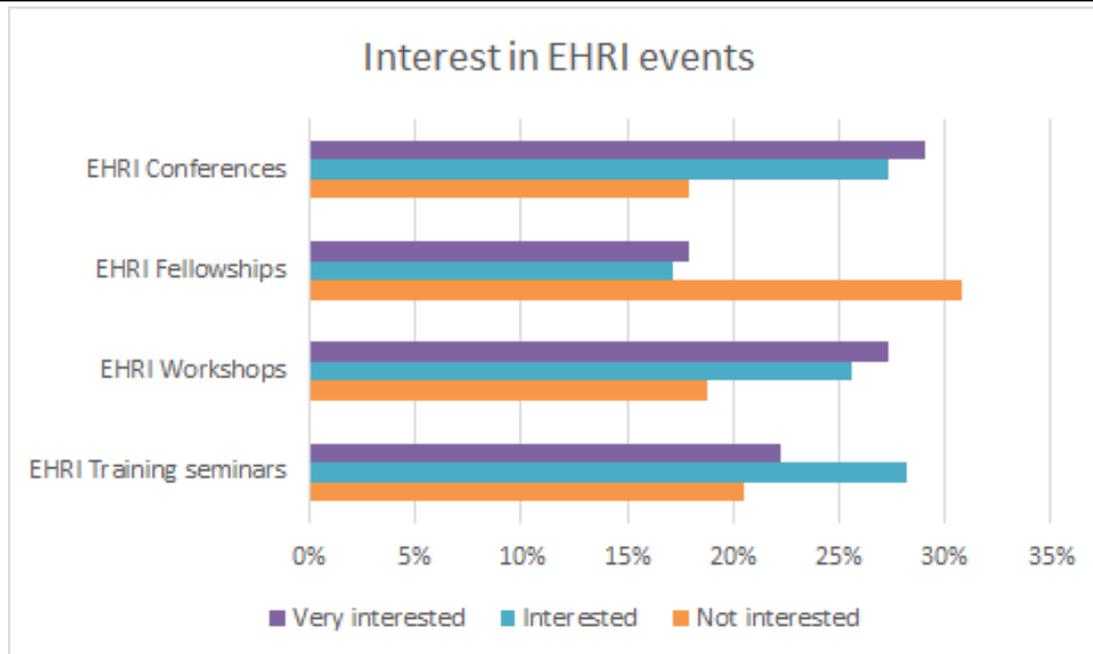


Figure 20 Interest in EHRI events

As a result of the comment above, we analyzed whether the amount of Holocaust-related materials held at an institution influences involvement with EHRI services. There is a high level of interest in EHRI Seminars, and proportionately the most interest was shown by individuals who worked at institutions with medium or large collections of Holocaust-related materials. Looking at responses that were 'Interested' or 'Very Interested', the least interested group are consistently those institutions with the smallest amount of Holocaust-related materials. There was significant interest from institutions with small to medium-sized collections (25-50%) for all types of events. Institutions with the largest collections are interested in all events, with medium-large collections (50-75%) significantly less interested in Fellowships than other services.

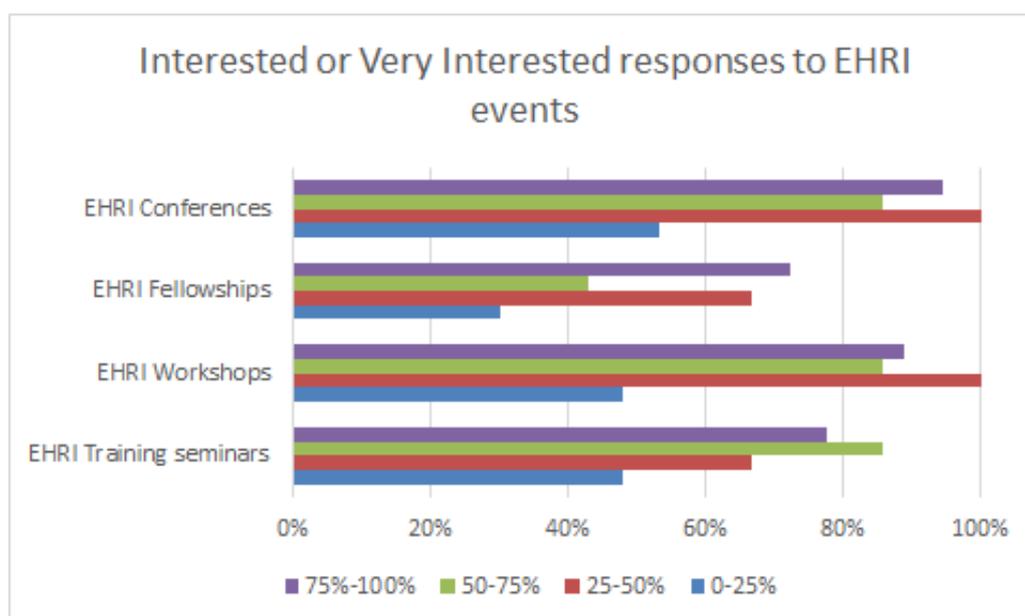


Figure 21 Respondents who were 'very interested' in EHRI events

The results also showed that Archivists seem to be the least engaged of all the groups with EHRI events. EHRI Fellowships seem to be of most interest to Researchers and Librarians, with Researchers and Curators most interested in Training Seminars. Regardless of job title, there appears to be a high level of interest in Conferences and Workshops.

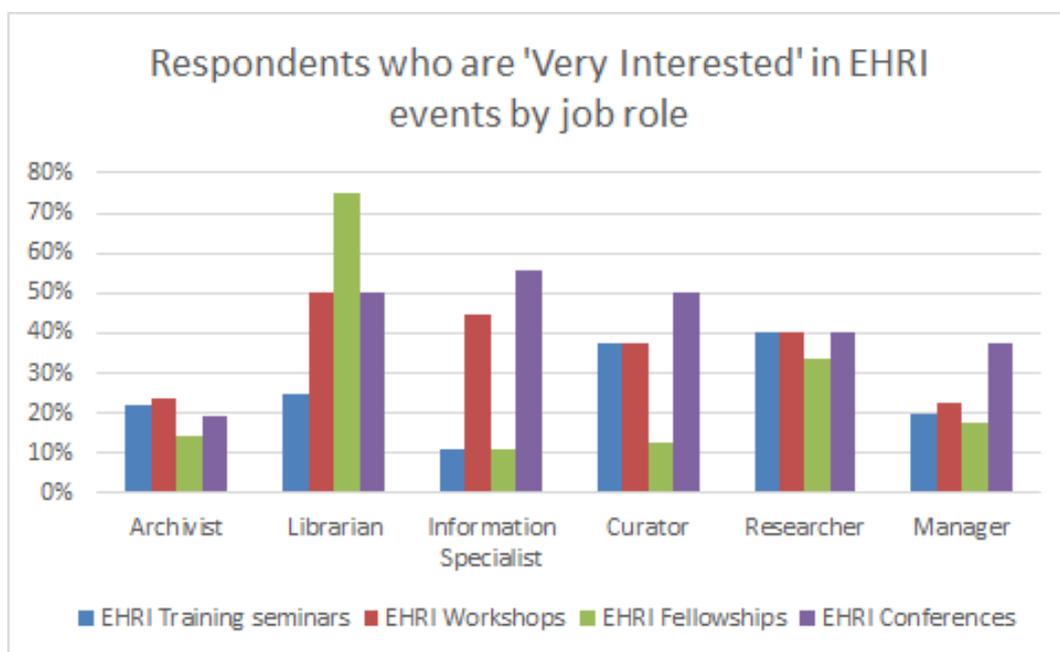


Figure 22 Interest in EHRI events by job role

3.3.2 Use of EHRI services

As a proportion of the responses to questions on usage of EHRI services, it is clear that the EHRI Portal is the most used of all the services, which is to be expected. The second most used service is the Document Blog, which has seen a large increase in popularity. We would not expect the APIs to be used frequently, so the fact that they are being used sometimes by a proportion of survey respondents is very positive. Again, EHRI Online Courses we would not expect to be used frequently, so the response of sometimes is a positive indication that the courses are another valuable resource.

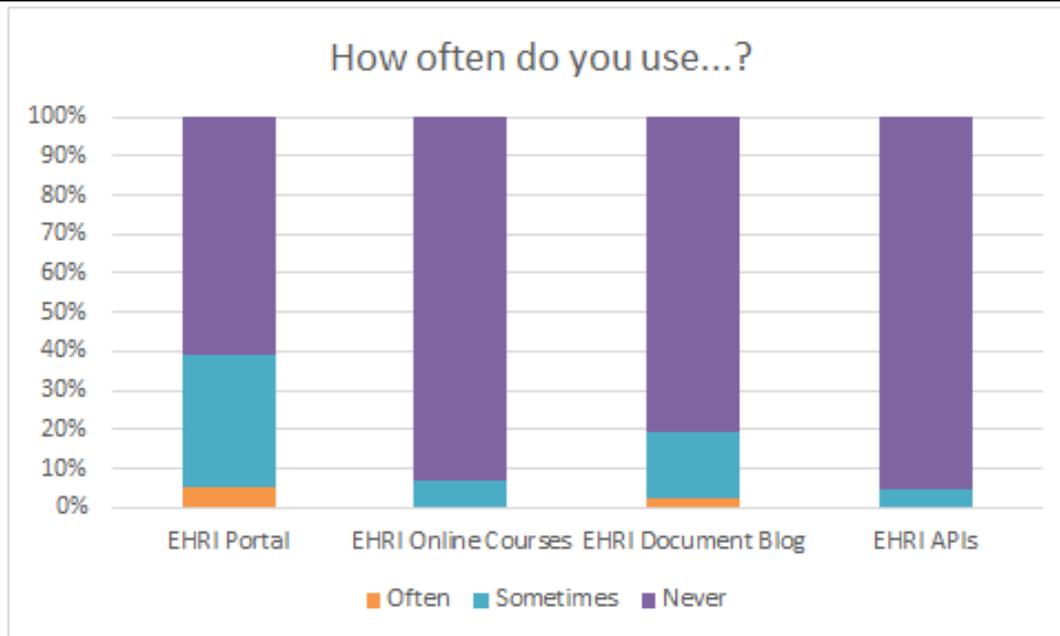


Figure 23 Use of EHRI services

From respondents who said they did not use anything directly, there were examples of cooperation with EHRI institutions, and also that the EHRI newsletters were read and of interest.

3.3.3 Recommendation of EHRI services

Despite the lack of engagement in some areas with EHRI services and events, when asked whether or not respondents would recommend EHRI services to their users, the answers were overwhelmingly positive. Almost 100% of those surveyed would be likely to recommend EHRI services, with the highest level of recommendations for the Portal, which is the service of which we would expect the most people to be aware.

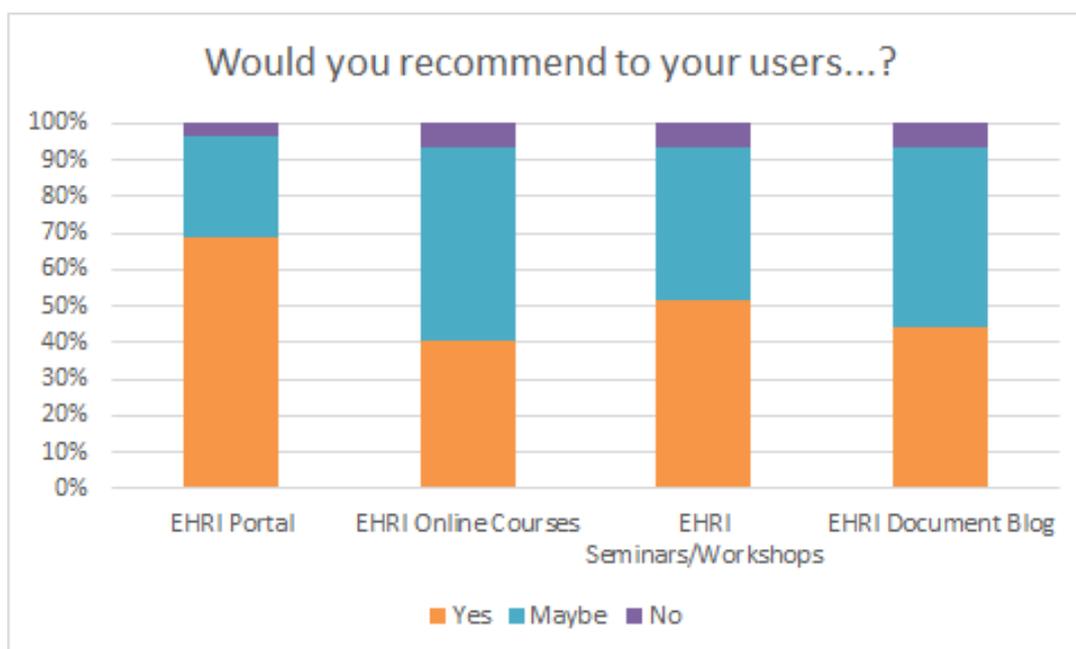


Figure 24 Percentage of respondents that recommend EHRI services to their users

When asked whether there were additional services users would like EHRI to develop in addition to services currently available, the majority of respondents said no, which suggests they think EHRI are covering a wide range of useful services. For those who wanted more services developed, there were requests to make collections more accessible, for more information on other genocides, and support from EHRI to open up specific archival collections. The accessibility issue is an issue for institutions to address individually, as it relates to how much of their collections are available online and how much access they grant the EHRI Portal. Overall the comments are positive and suggest that EHRI is meeting the needs of its users, although it would be good to find a way of engaging more archive professionals so that they become more actively involved.

3.4 General impact of digital approaches on own work practices

The final section of the survey comprised two open questions asking about opportunities and challenges digital practices offered institutions and individuals.

Opportunities

Regarding the opportunities digital practices offered institutions and individuals, one of the main themes was increasing the number of people aware of the work and collections available at their institutions.

Comments from the respondents mentioned it was *'An opportunity to get to know a wider audience about the history of the memorial and the museum's activities', 'Opportunities to make our collections more visible, findable and usable. Things that we always strive to achieve as an institution', 'to share our heritage with a wider audience', and 'larger and international user group 24/7'.*

A number of respondents noted the benefit of learning new skills at both a personal as well as an institutional level. As several respondents noted, *'Personally to learn more about possibilities and techniques of facilitating, co-developing finding aids. Acquiring knowledge and skills. For my institution to stay in pace with developments', and 'This is opportunity for our Archive to become more visible and for archivists to learn new skills.'*

Another common theme was improving and creating networking opportunities, including comments such as *'Greater visibility of stocks, international networking', and 'institution: attracts users, becomes more visible, part of a network, better standing in dialogue with financiers; personally: networks, skill enhancement, more knowledge about other archives, collections'.*

This was also demonstrated by the many comments talking about the growth of international collaboration, such as *'Greater involvement in an international network, better publicity of our collections and collections', and 'more international use of the archives'.*

The preservation of documents as a result of digitization was also considered a benefit. One particularly noteworthy comment was that *'It pushes us to expand the visibility of our collections and to advance in producing finding aids. Also, it teaches us how to deal with different types of users and questions. We went through a steep learning curve while trying to present collections to EHRI and via our own portal website.'*

Involvement in EHRI has created many opportunities to change the way that archivists and others work in institutions, and encouraged them to learn new skills and approaches to the use of material.

A bonus of involvement in EHRI has been recognition by higher authorities and institutions, demonstrated by comments such as *'Our archives are better received and the archive thus more firmly anchored in the Scientific Society'*, *'This makes our collection known'*, and *'Extension of the circle of users, image gain, recognition also by superior authorities'*.

Overall, these benefits are summed up by one of the responses that digitization *'Opens exciting opportunities to find and explore sources in new ways. Ease access to historical documents.'*

Challenges

In terms of personal and institutional challenges to digitization, although a few institutions responded with *'No difficulty'* or *'None'*, most respondents identified several key themes.

One of the most common of these related to personnel issues, i.e. *'we do not have enough employees'*, *'Lack of resources in terms of staff time and other priorities'*, and *'Insufficient qualified staff (financial obstacles) and lack of time'*.

In addition to lack of staff, comments were also made that even if staff were available, they might be lacking necessary skills, as demonstrated in the comments *'Our institution does not have enough archivists to do even regular archival tasks so there isn't any time to do anything extra. Also knowledge about digitalization is low'*, and *'Technical capabilities (lack of equipment, money, copying staff) do not allow our archive to proceed to this in full.'*

Linked to the challenges mentioned above, many respondents said that the cost of digitization was often prohibitive, preventing them from fully engaging in digitization. This was reflected in comments such as *'I am very keen to digitize our collection and make it available online as well as connect our collection with similar archives elsewhere. But this requires funding which is difficult to get these days'*, and *'As an honorary working association with a currently minimal state support (earmarked) we have no possibility to develop further concepts for the digitization of our holdings.'*

Furthermore, without suitable software it can be very challenging for institutions to make their data available, as in the case of one institution where *'The software we are using for our Digital Archive online is proprietary and can't be searched by search engines, for example. This should really be addressed, as we are paying every year for hosting and maintenance of the online database, but we are not getting it out where users can find it. This will be an issue of cost, as we will have to migrate to a different software package or company, and staffing to oversee and make the change.'*

Even if the challenges of adequate staffing, finances, and technology can be met, there still remains the challenge of ethics. Comments from respondents included *'Concern about the dissemination of sensitive data (filmed testimonies)'*, *'Legal problems (archive law, copyright law)'*, and *'Consideration of scientific interest versus victim protection'*.

The responses to the two questions in this section demonstrate a willingness and interest to engage with digital collections and services, but also some serious practical issues which can hamper the amount of material that can be made available to aggregators such as EHRI. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of excitement evident in terms of potential opportunities of getting involved with EHRI, and individuals and institutions are still keen to learn more about the possibilities of technology in curation and research.

4 Conclusions

The survey has had a good response. The outcome of the survey gave insight in the current practice of archivist and information professionals of institutions that hold Holocaust collections.

Holocaust collections are found in many local and regional archives especially in Germany and the countries that were occupied in the World War Two. Holocaust collections form a small proportion of their overall collections in general. The large Holocaust collections are to be found in institutions that are dedicated to the Holocaust as Yad Vashem, USHMM and Holocaust museums, memorials and research institutions.

For most institutions it is important to connect to their users via digital methods. The survey clearly shows that the larger the institution the more digital services they have developed. Reasons that are mentioned is that there is more money, trained and qualified staff and possibilities for the larger institutions. Institutions invest a lot in digital finding aids and catalogues for users to search the collections. The generic overview is that putting digital collections online is wanted by many institutions, but has to overcome a lot of practical barriers.

The major problems identified by institutions to contributing to online portals/aggregators are technical barriers, legal barriers, financial barriers, and a lack of skilled staff. Some institutions felt they could not contribute material to an online portal/aggregator because material had not yet been digitized, so perhaps more communication can be given to make clear that the EHRI portal will take institution and catalogue information regardless of whether the records have already been digitized.

In terms of online portals and/or aggregators that institutions share their Holocaust collection information with, the EHRI portal was identified as one of the used and known portals, along with national/regional aggregators and Wikipedia. This shows that the EHRI portal is recognized as a trusted portal with which to share institution and collection information. The results also showed that the EHRI portal is also used by all types of institutions, bringing together a wide variety of information to be used for Holocaust related research.

Institutions identified that there were many benefits to contributing to online portals, such as increasing the visibility of collections, increasing findability of collections, and an increased use of collections, along with being part of a bigger network. Institutions would clearly like to be more involved with online portals, but need help overcoming the technical, financial, and skill barriers. One potential way of assisting institutions with the skill barrier may be to offer more training opportunities for archival staff.

There is a large amount of interest in conferences, training seminars, and workshops. EHRI is unusual in that it provides fellowships for archivists, though these are not always applied for because archivists have noted they very rarely are allowed to take the time off to attend a fellowship, for example highlighted in comments on the survey such as "*Our institution does not have enough archivists to do even regular archival tasks so there isn't any time to do anything extra*", and "*lack of time*". There needs to be a cultural change in institutions to allow archivists more opportunities to apply for fellowship schemes as this will also help in terms of addressing some of the skill barriers that prevent institutions from contributing to online portals.

There is also more engagement from professionals at institutions that contain larger collections of Holocaust related material, so it would be good to find new ways to encourage some more of the smaller institutions to attend training events in order to better understand how to utilize these collections.

There are high levels of interest in the EHRI portal and document blog. Even when individuals were not using the services themselves, they were still recommending EHRI services to their users. The pace of development and use of digital services is visible in the fact that APIs are being used, but by a small number of specialists.

There were no suggestions for the provision of additional services, which shows that EHRI is meeting the needs of its professional users.

Overall, the EHRI portal and other services are being well used, though there are still many barriers that prevent institutions from being more involved with the portal. More EHRI events can help institutions understand how to make the most of the services EHRI offers.

Appendix

Letters to respondents

Invitation Email

This email is also available in German/French/Polish/Russian

Dear Sir/Madam,

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI - <https://ehri-project.eu>) invites you to participate in a web survey aimed at institutions that hold Holocaust-related archival collections. The survey is for collection and information specialists, archivists, librarians and other heritage professionals. It will take around 15 minutes to complete.

This survey has been sent out to representatives of all those institutions that hold Holocaust-related collections which are listed in the EHRI Portal. You can access your institution's profile on the EHRI Portal by clicking on the following link: (You can access your institution's profile by performing a search at <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions>).

Through this survey, we are striving to enhance our understanding of the impact that digital approaches have on research and archiving. In particular, we want to understand the effects that transnational infrastructures such as EHRI have on collection holding institutions and archival work practices. The outcome of this survey will enable us to further develop and refine our services.

Please click the following link to start the survey:

We hope that you will be able to participate. We would also like to take this opportunity to provide you with more background information on EHRI, and to outline how you can become more closely involved with the project. Please click on the following link to view a letter with further particulars:

If you have any questions about this survey, or about EHRI, please contact Annelies van Nispen (a.van.nispen@niod.knaw.nl).

With all best wishes,

Annelies van Nispen

Accompanying letter

Dear Sir/Madam

You have just received an invitation to fill in a web survey from the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI). This letter will give you additional background information about EHRI, and provide you with an outline of how you can get more closely involved with our activities. We hope that you will find the services we provide useful, and we are looking forward to hearing from you.

With all best wishes,

Conny Kristel, Project Director, European Holocaust Research Infrastructure

What is the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI)?

EHRI is a research infrastructure initiative funded by the European Union and has been active since 2010. EHRI supports Holocaust research and archival communities in a variety of ways:

- The EHRI Online Portal offers remote access to information about dispersed Holocaust-related archival institutions and collections (<https://portal.ehri-project.eu>)
- The EHRI Document Blog offers an innovative way to present, contextualize, discuss and interpret Holocaust-related sources (<https://blog.ehri-project.eu>)
- The EHRI Fellowship program offers Holocaust researchers, archivists, librarians, information specialists and other heritage professionals the opportunity to physically access the sources and expertise available at 15 EHRI Partner institutions (<https://ehri-project.eu/ehri-fellowship-call-2016-2018>)
- The EHRI Online Courses (<https://training.ehri-project.eu>) are a series of seminars that provide wide-ranging training and education opportunities
- EHRI supports the development of digital tools and methods to innovate Holocaust historiography and archiving via workshops and software development

For further information about EHRI, please consult <https://ehri-project.eu>

Four ways to get involved in EHRI

1. Publish further information about your institution and collections on the EHRI Online Portal

The EHRI Online Portal (<https://portal.ehri-project.eu>) provides online access to information about dispersed Holocaust-related archival institutions and collections. The EHRI Portal is widely used by the research community, offering a unique transnational perspective on Holocaust sources across Europe and beyond.

Your institution is already listed on the EHRI Portal, and you can access the information we have made available about you by following the link provided in the invitation email

accompanying this letter, or by performing a search for your institution at <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions>. To further increase the quality and quantity of the information that researchers can access about your institution you can:

- Notify us if any of the details we provide about your institution are incorrect.
- Provide more detailed information about your institution. The description of your institution we provide on the Portal may be limited in scope, and you are kindly invited to provide us with further details about you and your holdings. For a fully fleshed out institutional description on the Portal, please consult the example of NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam (<https://portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions/nl-002896>).
- Apart from information about Holocaust-related institutions, the Portal also provides a growing number of descriptions of archival collections (see <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/units>). We offer a variety of methods for data integration ranging from manual data entry to fully automated ingest procedures, and we would be happy to start working with you on how to integrate your data.
- Notify us In case you feel your institution should not be listed in the Portal because you do not hold any Holocaust-related archival material.

Please contact Charlotte Hauwaert (charlotte.hauwaert@cegesoma.be) for all enquiries regarding the presentation of your institution and its collections on the EHRI Portal.

2. Author a post on the EHRI Document Blog

The EHRI Document Blog (<https://blog.ehri-project.eu>) provides an online space to share ideas about Holocaust-related archival documents, and their presentation and interpretation using digital tools. The blog is edited by EHRI, but we welcome contributions from the archival and research communities. Please fill in the following online form (https://drive.google.com/open?id=16sHcCJUjvueSzeX73YpNqlpMTHauVSwi5_wucAGRxSo) or get in touch with Wolfgang Schellenbacher (wolfgang.schellenbacher@jewishmuseum.cz), if you would like to highlight, visualize or explain a document or series of documents on the EHRI Document Blog.

3. Participate at EHRI events and take advantage of EHRI training and fellowship opportunities

EHRI runs a comprehensive programme of workshops on topics related to Holocaust research and documentation as well as a series of training seminars aimed at Holocaust researchers, archivists, librarians and collection specialists (<https://ehri-project.eu/ehri-getting-involved>). We also offer online training opportunities both as self-study modules and as tutored courses (<https://training.ehri-project.eu> and <https://ehri-project.eu/interactive-ehri-online-course-holocaust-studies>). Finally, EHRI offers Fellowship opportunities at 15 EHRI partner institutions which are open to Holocaust researchers, archivists and collection specialists. Details of forthcoming opportunities and deadlines for applications are advertised on the EHRI website, and you can ensure that you receive up-to-date information about our activities by signing up to our regular newsletter (<https://ehri-project.eu/newsletter-signup>).

4. Become a co-operating partner

EHRI's activities are undertaken by a consortium of 24 partner institutions located in 17 countries (see <https://ehri-project.eu/ehri-partners>). In addition, we facilitate a wider network of co-operating institutions and project that share our core missions of providing online access to dispersed Holocaust sources and facilitating collaborative research (see <https://ehri-project.eu/cooperating-ehri>). If you are interested in joining our co-operating partners programme, please contact Petra Drenth (p.drenth@niod.knaw.nl).

Questionnaire

Introduction

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) invites you to participate in a web survey aimed at archivists, librarians, collection and information specialists and other heritage professionals working in institutions that hold Holocaust-related archival collections. The web survey will take about 15 minutes to complete.

EHRI is a European-funded research infrastructure initiative and has been active since 2009. EHRI supports the Holocaust research and archival communities in a variety of ways:

- The EHRI Online Portal offers online access to information about dispersed Holocaust-related archival institutions and collections (<https://portal.ehri-project.eu>),
- The EHRI Document Blog offers an innovative way to present, contextualise and interpret Holocaust-related sources (<https://blog.ehri-project.eu>)
- The EHRI Fellowship programme offers Holocaust researchers, archivists, librarians, information specialists and other heritage professionals the opportunity to physically access the sources and expertise available at 15 EHRI Partner institution (<https://ehri-project.eu/ehri-fellowship-call-2016-2018>).
- The EHRI Online Courses (<https://training.ehri-project.eu>) and a series of seminars provide wide-ranging training and education opportunities
- EHRI supports the development of (digital) tools and methods to innovate Holocaust historiography and archiving via workshops and software development.
- For further information about EHRI, please consult <https://ehri-project.eu>

This web survey is sent out to representatives from all those institutions that hold Holocaust-related collections and that are listed in the EHRI Portal. To guarantee the continued success of EHRI it is crucial that we work closely with heritage professionals such as archivists, librarians, museum curators and other content specialists. With this survey we seek to enhance our understanding of the impact of digital approaches to research and archiving and transnational infrastructures such as EHRI upon your institution and professional work practices. The outcomes of the survey will enable us to further develop and refine our services.

We very much hope that you will be able to participate. If you have any questions about this survey or about EHRI, please contact Annelies van Nispen (a.van.nispen@niod.knaw.nl).
With all best wishes,

Questionnaire

Section 1 Information about your institution

1. Name of your institution
 1. own language
 2. in English

2. Country (if possible, give country list)

3. My institution is a:
 - a. archive,
 - b. library,
 - c. museum,
 - d. research institution,
 - e. memorial institution,
 - f. other,

4. How many employees does your institution have
 - a. 1-10,
 - b. 11-50,
 - c. 50-100
 - d. 100-250
 - e. Memo: where people can give exact number

5. What is your role within your institution
 1. archivist,
 2. librarian,
 3. information specialist,
 4. curator
 5. management,
 6. researcher,
 7. other(room to fill in)

6. What approx. % of your total archival holdings are Holocaust-related?
(large part of collection, whole collection, small part of collection, medium part of collection)
 1. 0-25%,
 2. 25-50%,
 3. 50-75%,
 4. 75%-100%

7. Which of the following digital services does your institution provide (please try to give as exact numbers as possible)

	Available on site (within Institution)	Available online	
Digital finding aids			
Digital catalogues (e.g. library)			
Other digital metadata			
Digital collections (digitised or born digital)			
other.....			

8. Who is the main user group of your institution?

	Very important	Important	Average	Not important
Academic users				
Educational users				
General public				
Other				

Can you specify other:

Section 2 Relationship to online portals/aggregators outside your institution

1. Is information about your institution and its collections available via external online portals/aggregators?
 1. no
 2. Wikipedia
 3. Archives Portal Europe
 4. Europeana
 5. Yad Vashem
 6. USHMM
 7. EHRI

8. National/regional portal/aggregator,
9. Thematic portal/aggregator
10. Other

2. What benefits does your Institution derive from making information available via external online portals/aggregators?

1. Increase visibility
2. Increase usage of collections
3. Increase findability of collections
4. Collections become part of larger contexts / are placed into a bigger picture
5. Funding via external partners
6. Other, please specify.....

3. Does your organisation actively participate in online portal/aggregation initiatives?

- a.yes
- b.no

If no, go to 4

If yes,

3.a Which initiative(s) does your institution participate in?

Name initiative(s)

3.b Describe how your institution participates in those initiatives:

4. Does your institution experience the following barriers when it comes to providing data to external portals/aggregators?:

1. Legal barriers
2. Financial barriers
3. Lack of skilled staff
4. Technical barriers
5. Loss of control
6. Loss of on-site access
7. Other, please specify.....

5. If your institution currently does not give online access to information about its holdings, either via its own website or external portals/aggregators, we would be very interested in understanding the reasons why. Could you please elaborate

Section 3 EHRI services

1. EHRI organizes many events to connect Holocaust scholars, archivists and information specialist and create a network of Holocaust professionals. Would you be potentially interested in the following:

	Very interested	interested	Not interested
EHRI Training seminars			
Workshops			
Fellowships			
EHRI conferences			

2. Have you used the

	often	sometimes	never
EHRI Portal			
EHRI Online Courses			
Document blog			
EHRI APIs			
Other			

3. Would you recommend the following EHRI services to your users with an interest in the Holocaust?

	Yes	Maybe	No
EHRI Portal			
Online Courses			
Seminars/Workshops			
Document Blog			
Other			

You can specify other:

4. Are there additional services that you would like EHRI to develop?

Section 4 General impact of digital approaches on own work practices

Many archives, libraries, museums and memory institutions increasingly offer digital services to their users, and the day-to-day work of staff at such institutions are equally increasingly shaped by digital technologies.

1. What opportunities does this digital transformation offer to your institution and to you personally?

Please elaborate

2. What challenges does this digital transformation pose to your institution and to you personally?

Please elaborate

Summary

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. Your response is highly appreciated and will enable EHRI to develop opportunities and services for archivists, librarians, museum curators, information specialists and other heritage professionals

If you have any further remarks or comments, please let them be known

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If you would like to receive the final results of the Web survey, please leave your email address: