



A Survey of Irish Archives Collections

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THE
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COUNCIL

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*Published by
the Heritage Council
Kilkenny, Ireland.
2005*

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www.heritagecouncil.ie

*Designed and Produced by
B. Magee Design*

ISBN: 1901137805

The Heritage Council of Ireland Series

ISSN 1393 — 68 08

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INTRODUCTION

As we review the treasures of the Celtic past, the ruins of medieval castles, later great houses and works of fine art it is all too easy to forget that sometimes scattered bits of paper are an integral part of our heritage landscape. The written records of lives and the sometimes-mundane day-to-day matters of existence provide as rewarding and as colourful a picture of our pasts as any of the instantly recognisable works of great art. Indeed the justification for great works of art being recognised and valued generally relies on the detailed records provided in archives. As the Society of Archives, Ireland, has recognised:

Archives are a national resource. They constitute a valuable source of information that can be used and enjoyed for generations to come. They document the evolution and identity of communities, while protecting the interest of people, and institutions. They are a key to understanding who and what we are as individuals, as a society, as a nation.

(Information Pack, 2000)

Given the fundamental importance of archives to our cultural, political and social heritage, as well as their key role in compliance with legislation, the well being of the archive sector should concern us all. The Heritage Council's survey of the archive sector was intended to gather information which would provide an indication of the health or otherwise of that sector.

Specifically, the aim of the survey has been to capture significant data on the structure, scale and activity of the archives sector in Ireland to support the Council formulation of policy for the sector and in keeping with its role under the Heritage Act, 1995. The Museum and Archives Committee of the Heritage Council developed the questionnaire, with assistance from the Society of Archivists, Ireland, and the collection methodology involved a postal self-completion approach.

The data collection was undertaken between September and November 2002. There have been obvious changes in the intervening time periods, perhaps most obviously the opening of new archives facilities such as the Dublin City Library and Archives building on Pearse Street, the new Irish Architectural Archive building on Merrion Square, and the soon to open new home of the Cork Archives Institute. Nevertheless, it is considered that the archival landscape in Ireland has not radically altered, and so the results remain pertinent. For example the number of professional archivists employed by L A Archives Services as of May 2005 is seventeen.

A listing of approximately 212 Archives in Ireland was used and 130 Archives responded. While the level of non-response for certain individual questions means that some of the percentages should not be taken as an indication of the true position, the overall high level of participation adds authenticity to the survey findings.

The report which follows presents the data provided by the responses in a fully comprehensive manner. However, there are a number of general conclusions that might be drawn from the data as a whole. On the plus side, the archives sector in Ireland is, institutionally at any rate, young, dynamic and growing. It engages with and is open to the public. There is a clear correlation between successful archives services and those employing trained archivists.

Against these positives, the data brings into sharp focus certain fundamental limitations constraining the sector. Three findings in particular are worth highlighting:

- 50% of archive services operate on budgets of under €10,000 per annum.
- 54% of archive services operate with a staff of one or none.
- 71% of archive services operate with no professionally qualified archivists.

These figures underline starkly the realities of the Irish archive sector – under-funded, under-staffed and disproportionately lacking in professional posts. Taken together, they are

symptomatic not only of the underdeveloped state of Irish archives and records management services, but also of the structural and sectoral weaknesses which must be overcome if Ireland's rich archival inheritance is to be preserved, utilised, and of benefit to the wider public and generations to come.

Reinforcing these three data samples are other indications about the inadequate support for archives. For example only 43% of services maintain an accessions register; only 32% have a mandate statement; only 21% have a written policy on acquisitions; only 21% have disaster plans; only 18% have strategies of electronic records; only 13% have outreach policies and only 10% try to raise money from external sources.

What these figures indicate is that while there is an apparently high number of archives services in the country, or rather institutions that call themselves archives, comparatively few of these are resourced sufficiently to meeting even basic criteria for archival competency, never mind the level of operation set out in, for example, the Society of Archivists, Ireland's Standards for the Development of Archives Services in Ireland (Dublin, 1997).

The data highlights other sectoral issues. A high proportion of replies (38%) came from religious archives, indicating perhaps a need for a national response to the preservation of these records. Almost half (47%) of services are located in Dublin, a reflection of the general national imbalance towards the capital and as such understandable if not excusable. Over a quarter of replies came from archives that described themselves as local authority service (a figure which included not only local authority archives services in the strictest sense but also some local libraries and the archives of agencies such as port authorities), and yet, despite legislative mandate, only 20 counties can boast an archive service of any description, never mind a fully fledged local authority archives and records management service. Given the levels of funding available in the sector, it is perhaps not surprising, but nonetheless alarming, that only just over a third of archive services are able to employ the occasional services of professional conservators, while only 6% have conservators on staff.

What emerges therefore from the survey is a picture of an archive sector in flux, dynamic and growing certainly but also undermined by fundamental weaknesses while facing new and specific challenges. What this report cannot do is suggest how this situation should be addressed. What policy or policies are required to redress the infrastructural weaknesses and meet the growing challenges? How are such policies to be developed and how are they to be implemented? The archives sector – as is testified not least in the high response to this survey – is engaged with its own future. But the debate must expand beyond the sector itself. Archives are important to us all and the development of archives policy should be a matter of national concern. It is to be hoped that these survey results can assist in the process, not by delineating the archives sector completely, but rather by providing an informational context in which the debate on archives policy can go forward.

(I) BACKGROUND

The Heritage Council was established as a statutory body under the Heritage Act 1995. Its role is to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation, and enhancement of the national heritage.

National heritage is defined as including monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects such as art and industrial works, documents and genealogical records, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens, parks, and inland waterways. The Heritage Council has a particular responsibility to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in the national heritage.

A key element in this is the protection and enhancement of archival records, which fall under the definition 'heritage objects' under the terms of the Heritage Act 1995.

In 2001, the Museums and Archives Committee embarked on a consultation process with the Irish archives sector. It was decided to obtain substantive supporting data profiling the sector to facilitate the Museums and Archives Committee's initiatives and policy creation in the area.

Following a tender process, Wilton Research & Marketing were commissioned to undertake a survey of the sector.

In carrying out this survey, we have been supported throughout by Dr Hugh Maguire and would like to thank him for his input and assistance.

(II) AIM OF THE SURVEY

The aim of the survey has been to gather essential data on the structure, scale and activity of the archives sector. It is intended that the information gained will be used by the Museums and Archives Committee to develop proactive strategies to support the sector and to direct its future development.

(III) METHODOLOGY

a) Overview of methodology

It was decided to collect the necessary information by means of a postal survey of archives in Ireland using a structured questionnaire.

The Museums and Archives Committee of the Heritage Council designed the questionnaire. An online version was made available, and those offered the questionnaire received both telephone and postal reminders. On receipt of completed questionnaire, Wilton Research computerised the data and prepared a written report.

b) Starting list of participants

The first stage of the project was to develop a list of archives for survey participation. It was agreed that the listing in the Directory of Irish Archives by Seamus Helferty and Raymond Refausse would provide the basis for this. Wilton Research attempted to contact each of the archives in the directory by telephone. The purpose of this was to confirm the address and phone number and, more importantly, to ascertain the person currently responsible for the listed archives.

c) Actual listing of participants

Based on this information, mailings were made to 212 archives in the Republic of Ireland.

We were unable to make contact with eight archives by telephone. Seven organisations opted out of the survey saying they do not have an archive, or that the archive had been subsumed or amalgamated with another body or archive, for example into local libraries or

universities. Five other organisations did not wish to participate in the survey.

d) Survey documentation and procedures

The questionnaire for this survey was drawn up and tested by the Museum and Archives Committee with input from a Committee of the Society of Archivists, Ireland and CHL Consulting Co. Ltd.

Letters to potential respondents, from the Heritage Council and Wilton Research, plus the questionnaire, were posted to respondents. In as far as was possible this correspondence went to a named person. The questionnaire was also set up for online usage and the Wilton Research letter provided a link for those interested in completing the survey in this way.

Reminders, by both telephone and mail, were given to those not known to have responded.

e) Response

Wilton Research received 130 completed questionnaires by the cut-off date of 3rd November 2002.

Some of the smaller or less structured archives considered parts of the questionnaire were not directly relevant to their situation because of their operation and size. It was suggested to these archives that they should complete as much of the questionnaire as possible.

Furthermore, a small number of archives encountered difficulty in answering parts of the questionnaire, if their particular archive was not a separate entity. Some in this group, for instance, are an integral part of a museum, library, or other organisation.

These issues resulted in a notable lack of response to many of the individual questions. This should be borne in mind when reading the report.

The high response rate does suggest that the findings in this survey are applicable to archives in general. However, the level of non-response to some questions does mean that the resulting percentages should be taken as strong indicators of the true position, rather than as relating factually to all archives.

(IV) TIMING OF SURVEY

The data collection for this survey took place between September and November 2002.

(V) PLAN OF REPORT

Following on this Introduction is the main body of the report with a commentary on the findings. Next is a summary of key points. The tabular data, with analyses by a number of variables follows.

1 PROFILE OF ARCHIVES

1.1 YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT

Archives in Ireland were asked to indicate the year that they were first established. Figure 1 shows the grouped findings for the establishment date of archives (detailed analyses in Tabular Data, p 1).

- 24% of archives were established since 1990
- 22% were set up between 1970 and 1989
- 28% of archives were established before 1900
- 10% gave no answer for establishment date
- The oldest archive was set up in 1609
- Three others were formed during the 1600s
- Nine date from the eighteenth century

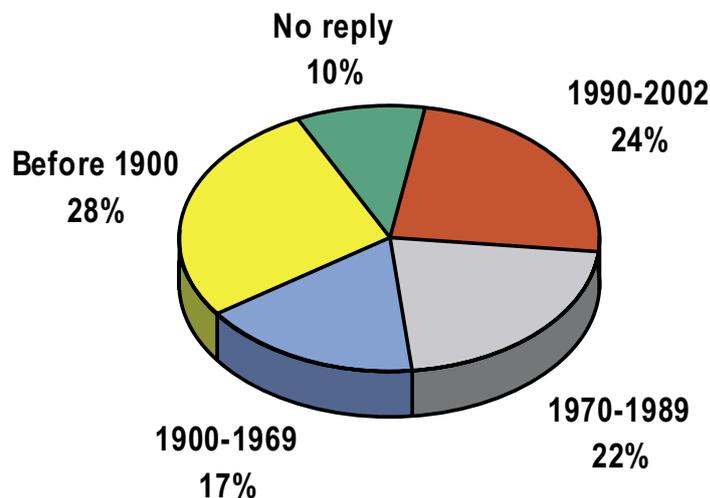


Figure 1 – Year of establishment
Base: total sample (130)

1.2 LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

With regard to location it is not surprising to find that 47% of all Irish archives are located in Dublin (Tabular Data, pp 2-3). The remaining archives are spread across 20 other counties in the Republic. Four archives did not provide this information.

1.3 CATEGORY OF ARCHIVE

Respondents were asked to indicate which of six categories best describes their archive (Tabular Data, p 4). They also had the option to select an additional or 'other' category. The findings are shown in Figure 2. All responded to this question.

The two dominant categories are 'religious institutions' and 'local authority' accounting for 32% and 26% of the total, respectively. 'Educational institutions' at 16% is also a sizeable category, while 15% of archives consider themselves 'national' in character.

Those in the local authority category, which includes county councils, libraries, and local port authorities, are slightly more likely than archives in general to have been established

since 1990; 32% of archives in the local authority category have been established since then. The reverse is true of educational institutions; only 19% have been set up since 1990, but 57% existed before 1900.

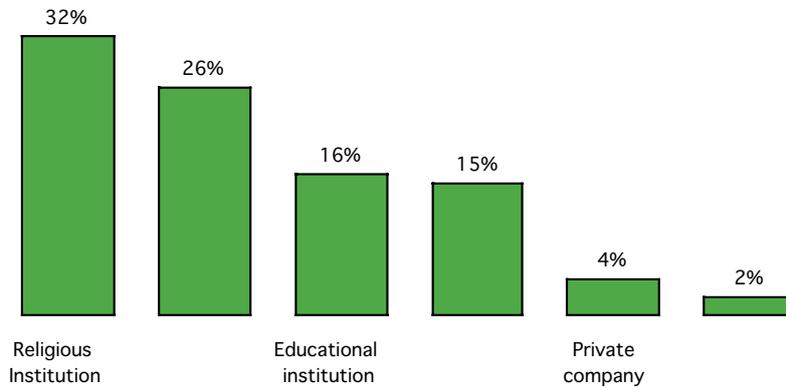


Figure 2 – Category of archive
Base: total sample (130)

1.4 TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT

Figure 3 illustrates the finding that 70% of archives are part of a larger organisation, with just a quarter (24%) describing themselves as independent agencies (Tabular Data, p 5).

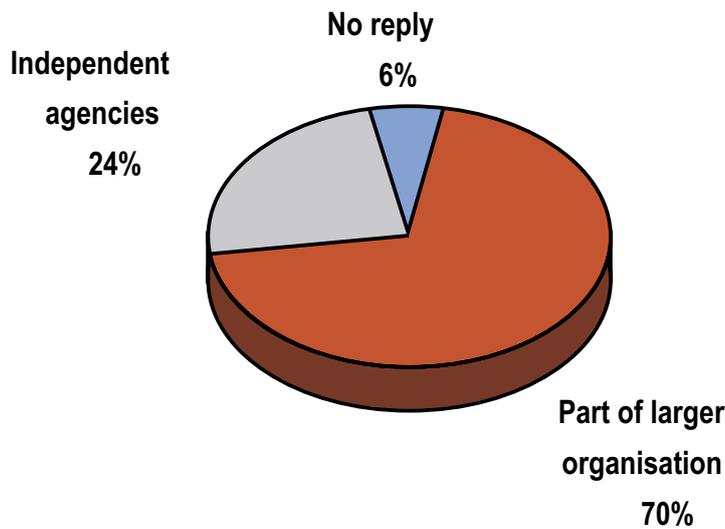


Figure 3 – Type of establishment
Base: total sample (130)

1.5 ORIGIN OF ARCHIVE CONTENT

Approaching half (47%) of archives only store material pertaining to their own organisation, institution, or company (Figure 4 and Tabular Data, p 6). A similar number (48%) describe the content of their archive as including material relating to both their own organisation and also to that of other parties. For 4% of archives, the material is concerned only with ‘other parties’.

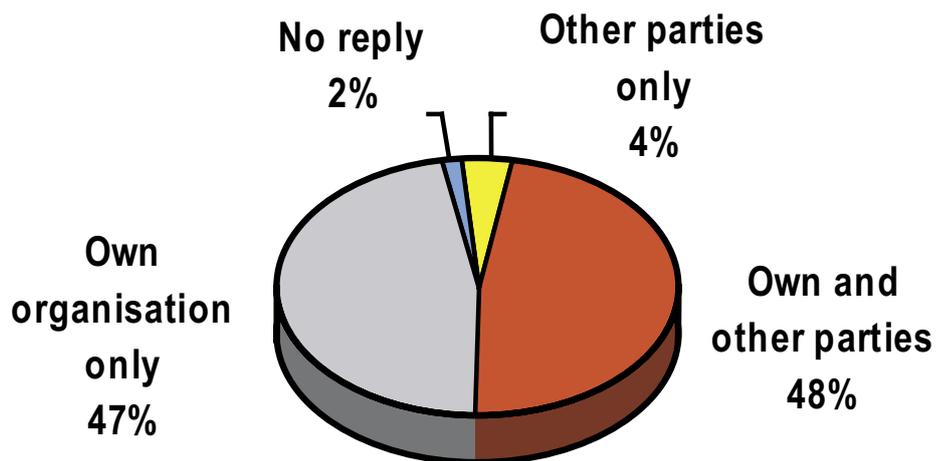


Figure 4 – Origin of archive content
Base: Total Sample (130)

1.6 WRITTEN MANDATE OR MISSION STATEMENT

Less than half (32%) of archives has a written mandate or mission statement (Figure 5 and Tabular Data, p 7). Archives in the local authority category exceed this average, but the figures are still below half. Of archives in the national category, 50% have a written statement. Educational institutions have the lowest level (19%).

In terms of establishment date, it emerges that the longer established archives are less likely than others to have a written mandate or mission statement. It is notable, however, that less than half of those set up since 1970 are operating to a formalised statement.

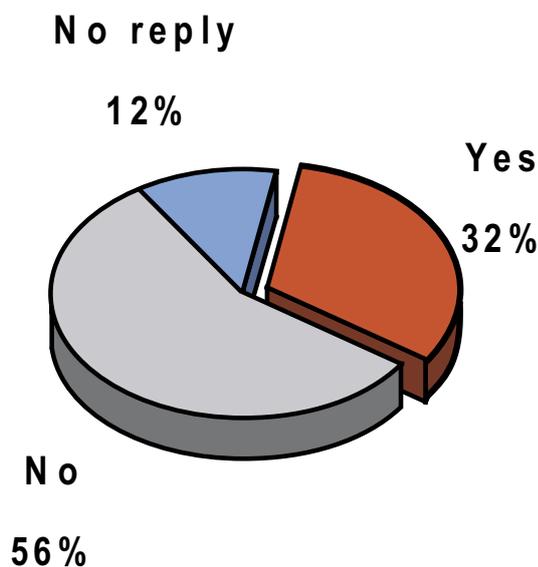


Figure 5 – Written mandate or mission statement
Base: total sample (130)

2 BUDGET ASPECTS

2.1 OVERVIEW

It is to be expected that archives in Ireland vary greatly in size, scope, and level of operation. The findings in relation to budget emphasise these variations.

In the introduction to this report, we refer to many archives being operated on what might be described as an informal basis. This modus operandi is particularly obvious in relation to the findings on running cost, budgets and employment criteria.

Some archives felt unable to answer questions relating to these topics.

2.2 ANNUAL RUNNING COSTS

Firstly, it should be noted that 25% gave no answer to this question (Figure 6 and Tabular Data, p 8). We do not know the reasons for this. It is possible that some do not know their current running costs. Others may have not answered this question because they do not have any financial outlay, or at least any identifiable direct costs relating to the operation of their archive.

Of further particular note is the fact that 28% gave their current annual running costs as less than €5,000. An additional 10% are operating on a current budget of between €5,000 and €10,000.

At the other end of the scale, 22% indicated annual running costs of over €100,000 with archives in the national category featuring strongly.

This breakdown of current spending is a striking finding – 98 of the 130 participating archives gave a current annual running cost figure, and for more than half of them the figure was less than €10,000.

When considering this figure, it should be taken into account that 70% of archives are part of a larger organisation and so it is likely there can be some sharing of resources, blurring of identifiable running costs, and uncertainty about responsibility for premises charges.

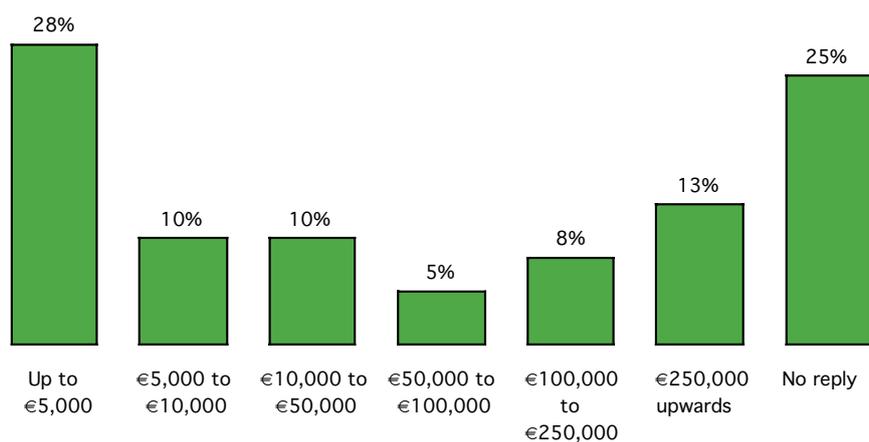


Figure 6 – Annual running costs

Base: total sample (130)

Figure 7 below illustrates the current annual running cost data again, but in a different way. This time the percentages are calculated only for those archives that responded to the question. Thus the percentages in Figure 7 are of all archives that provided an answer to this question and exclude those that gave no response.

This shows that for those providing information on current running costs, 38% spend less

than €5,000. This, again, can be contrasted to the 17% of these archives having a budget in excess of €250,000.



Figure 7 – Annual running costs excluding no replies
Base: those giving a reply (98)

2.3 PROPORTION OF BUDGET ACCOUNTED FOR BY SALARIES AND WAGES

Asked about the proportion of the budget taken by salaries and wages, 38% of archives did not give an answer. None of the annual budget of 22% of archives is directed towards salaries or wages. At the other end of the scale, 2% replied that salaries and wages account for 100% of their budget (Table 1).

A mean score is given for the percentage of the budget taken by salaries and wages for all archives, and secondly for the different sub-groups (Tabular Data, p 9). This average is calculated from only those archives that responded to the question but does include those that indicated 0%. The average percentage of budget taken by salaries and wages for all archives is 38%.

From the sub-groups shown in the Tabular Data, the following sub-groups declared that salaries and wages take more than half of their budget:

- Archives in the national category
- Archives with a written mandate or mission statement
- Archives open to the public
- Archives with a budget in excess of €10,000

Proportion of budget	
	(130)
	%
0%	22
1% to 10%	2
11% to 20%	2
21% to 30%	2
31% to 40%	3
41% to 50%	7
51% to 60%	5
61% to 70%	8
71% to 80%	7
81% to 90%	2
91% to 99%	2
100%	2
No reply	38

Table 1 – Proportion of budget accounted for by salaries and wages
Base: total sample (130)

2.4 CONTROL OF BUDGET

Just under half (47%) of archives consider they have control of their annual budget, while 38% say they do not have budget control; 15% did not reply to the question (Figure 8 and Tabular Data, p 11).

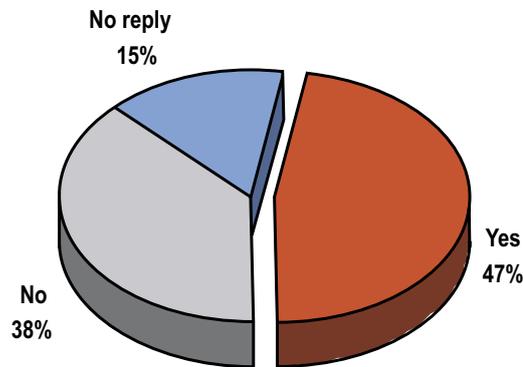


Figure 8 – Control of budget
Base: Total sample (130)

2.5 FUNDING OF ARCHIVE BUDGET

Regarding the funding of archive budgets, 38% did not indicate how their budget is funded; half of these also did not give any figure for their current annual running costs (Table 2 and Tabular Data, pp 12-16).

- i) Most funding of archives comes from parent organisations. As shown in Table 2, 41% of archives receive all their funding from their parent. A further 8% received between 51% and 99% of their budget from a parent organisation. Only 13% receive no funding from this source.
- ii) The number of archives generating revenue is small. 38% gave no answer and 52% replied that none of their revenue was self-generated. Only 10% of archives use their own income and for almost half of these, the total budget requirement comes from this source.
- iii) Only a small proportion of archives (6%) indicated that some of their budget is met by fundraising from external sources.
- iv) Only 8% cited grants as a source of income. Just over half of these had current annual running costs of over €100,000.

Table 2 – Source of archive funding as percentage of budget
Base: total sample (130)

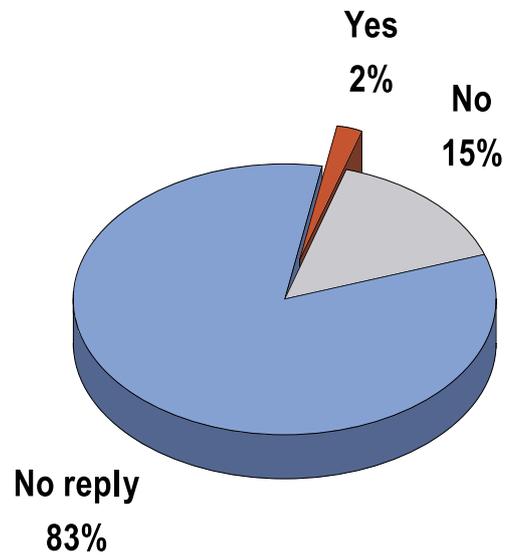
Percentage of budget	Source				
	Parent organisation	Own income	External source	Grants	Other
	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)
	%	%	%	%	%
0%	13	52	55	53	58
1% to 50%	-	5	3	5	2
51% to 99%	8	-	2	2	-
100%	41	5	1	1	2
No reply	38	38	38	38	38

2.6 PRIVATE FUNDRAISING

A separate question asked about private fundraising; 83% gave no reply and only 2% replied that they engaged in this activity (Figure 9 and Tabular Data, p 17).

Figure 9 – Private fundraising

Base: total sample (130)



3 STAFFING

3.1 OVERVIEW

We have seen in Chapter 2 that at least 22% of archives do not direct any of their current running costs to salaries/wages. The average percentage of budget directed to salaries by archives that disclosed this information is 38%.

Examination of the figures relating to staffing reveals some inconsistencies, which may have arisen from confusion derived from different interpretations of words such as ‘staff’, ‘permanent full time staff’, etc. This is likely when staffing is related to such small running cost budgets.

For instance, 7% of archives indicated they have current annual running costs of €10,000 or less and have one or two permanent full time staff. Obviously, such staff members are unlikely to be receiving remuneration out of the annual running costs. There are a number of possible explanations: the parent organisation may be funding staff costs, the staff costs may be met by some other outside agency, some staff may be perceived as permanent full or part time staff (rather than voluntary workers) but are not in receipt of a salary, or some staff may be funded by FAS.

In this chapter, we look at the number, type, and skills or qualifications of those staffing the archives.

3.2 STAFF NUMBERS

We look first at the information supplied by 118 of the 130 participating archives; 12 did not respond to this question.

- 7% of archives have 10 or more staff
- 8% have no staff
- 46% employ only one person
- 76% of archives categorising themselves as religious institutions have one or no staff
- 20% of archives in the national category have one or no staff

We set down the top-line information on staff levels in Table 3 and Tabular Data pp 18-19.

Table 3 – Number of staff employed by archives

Base: total sample (130)

Number of staff	
	(130)
	%
None	8
One	46
Two	9
Three	8
Four	5
Five	2
Six to ten	7
Eleven to twenty	3
Twenty-one to twenty-five	1
More than twenty-five	2
No reply	9

3.3 TYPE OF STAFF

Given the wide variance in terms of size, scope and level of operation, it is not surprising that there are different interpretations with regard to the type and category of staff employed (Tabular Data, pp 20-25).

- 43% of archives employ full time permanent staff
- 25% of archives employ part time permanent staff
- 14% of archives employ contract full time staff
- 12% of archives employ contract part time staff
- 4% of archives employ voluntary full time staff
- 24% employ voluntary part time staff

Table 4 sets out the findings for all archives.

Table 4 – Percentage of archives employing different categories of staff

Base: total sample (130)

Number of staff	Permanent		Contract		Voluntary	
	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time
	(130) %	(130) %	(130) %	(130) %	(130) %	(130) %
None	47	65	76	78	86	66
One	20	21	8	7	3	18
Two	10	2	2	2	-	2
Three	2	1	2	-	-	1
Four	2	1	1	-	1	2
Five	3	-	-	1	-	-
Six to ten	3	1	-	1	-	2
Eleven to twenty	2	1	-	1	-	-
No reply	10	10	10	10	10	10

3.4 STAFF FUNCTION

In this survey, there was some uncertainty regarding the assigning of staff to the specific functions set down in the questionnaire. Not all staff specified is accounted for in terms of function. It may be that some workers carry out more than one function (Table 5 and Tabular Data, pp 26-29).

Table 5 – Number of staff employed for different functions

Base: total sample (130)

Number of staff	Archivists	Conservators	Administration	Other
	(130) %	(130) %	(130) %	(130) %
None	23	65	45	51
One	35	5	16	6
Two	9	1	6	5
Three	4	1	2	1
Four	2	-	1	4
Five	-	-	-	1
Six to ten	-	-	-	2
Eleven to twenty	-	-	-	1
Twenty-one to twenty-five	-	-	-	-
More than twenty-five	-	-	2	-
No reply	27	28	28	29

3.5 PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED ARCHIVISTS AND CONSERVATORS

Just 35 archives indicated that they have one or more professionally qualified archivists on their staff. Irish archives thus employ a total of 53 professionally qualified archivists (Tabular Data, p 30).

Only eight archives answered that they have one or more professionally qualified conservators and, in total, there are there are ten conservators working in these archives (Tabular Data, p 31).

Table 6 shows the number of professionally qualified archivists and conservators for the different categories of archive.

Table 6 – Number of qualified archivists and conservators

Category of archives	Qualified archivists	Qualified conservators
	N	N
Religious institutions	8	1
Local authorities	14	2
Educational institutions	12	4
National	13	1
Other	6	2
Total number qualified	53	10

3.6 MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF ARCHIVISTS, IRELAND

Participants were asked how many staff, if any, are members of the Society of Archivists, Ireland; 35 archives indicated that at least one of their staff is a member, accounting for a total of 47 staff members (Tabular Data, p 32).

4 CONTENT OF ARCHIVES

4.1 OVERVIEW

In this section of the report, we report on the findings from questions on the content of archives.

4.2 TYPE OF HOLDINGS

As can be seen from Table 7, archive holdings are heavily biased towards paper records including drawings, maps, and plans. Archives, on average, reported that 81% of their holding are in this category.

In comparison, the average proportions of other types of holdings are very much less. Archives falling into the national category have the lowest average percentage of paper records, more mixed holdings, and the highest average for all other types of holdings (Tabular Data, pp 33-40).

Table 7 – Different categories of holding held by archives

Base: total sample (130)

Categories of holding	Paper	Photographs	Film and video	Sound	Arte-facts	Electronic
	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
0%	2	18	51	57	45	65
1% to 50%	12	65	28	23	34	12
51% to 99%	59	-	-	-	2	-
100%	11	1	1	-	-	-
No reply	16	17	21	20	20	23

4.3 ACQUISITIONS

4.3.1 WRITTEN ACQUISITIONS POLICY

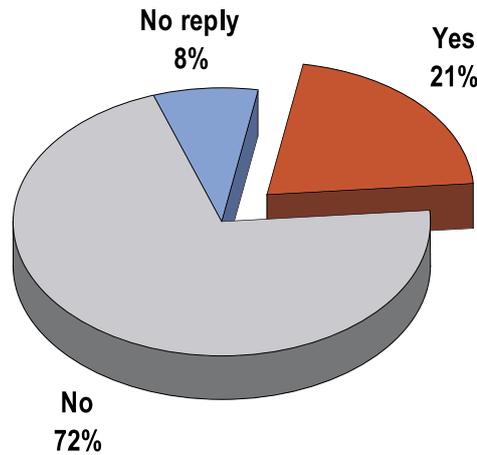
Although archives established since 1970 are more likely to have a written policy on acquisitions than those established before this date, in total only 21% of archives have such a policy.

Local authority category archives are more likely to have a written policy on acquisitions than other categories of archives.

Not surprisingly, those archives with a written mandate or mission statement accounted for almost all the archives with a written policy on acquisitions (Figure 10 and Tabular Data, p 41).

Figure 10 – Written acquisitions policy

Base: total sample (130)



4.3.2 FREQUENCY OF REVIEW OF ACQUISITIONS POLICY

For the 27 archives with a written acquisitions policy, the frequency of review of the policy varied. The most common interval between reviews is three to five years. A third of archives with a written policy did not indicate the frequency of review (Table 8 and Tabular Data, p 42).

Table 8 – Frequency of review of written acquisitions policy

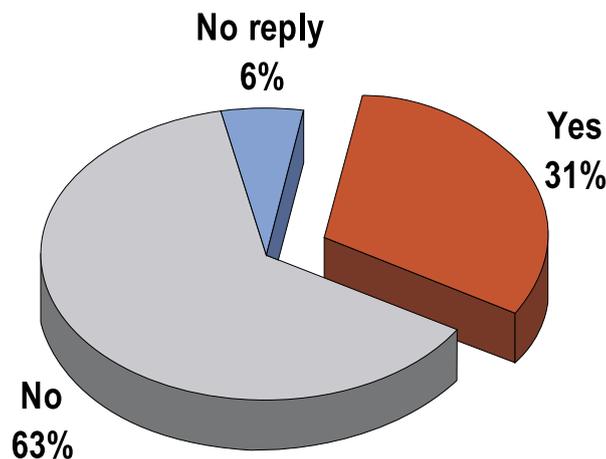
Frequency	Archives
	N
Yearly	1
Two years	1
Three years	7
Four years	-
Five years	6
More than five years	3
No reply	9
Total number with policy	27

4.3.3 PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Only 31% of archives purchase material to add to their collections (Figure 11 and Tabular Data, p 43).

Figure 11 – Purchase of additional material

Base: total sample (130)



4.3.4 BUDGET FOR ACQUISITIONS

Archives that purchase additional material were asked to indicate the annual budget for this activity (Table 9 and Tabular Data, p 44).

A third of this small sub-group of 40 archives have an annual budget of more than €5,000 to spend on acquisitions and 15 gave no reply

Table 9 – Annual budget for acquisitions

Budget	
	N
No set amount	1
Up to €5000	11
€5000 or more	13
No reply	15
Total number	40

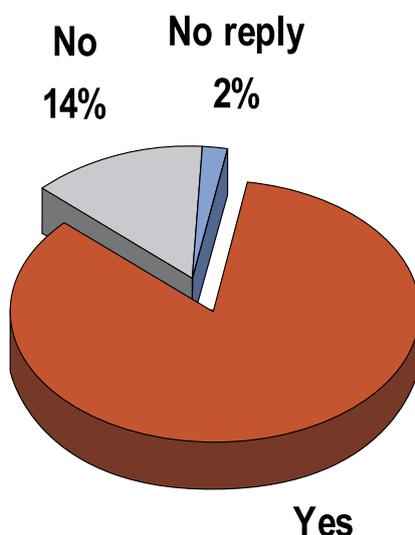
5 STORAGE

5.1 SECURE STORAGE AREA

As many as 85% of archives have a secure storage area (Figure 12 and Tabular Data, pp 45-46), while almost two-thirds of the small number that replied they do not have a secure storage area have a plan to obtain sufficient storage space.

Figure 12 – Secure storage space

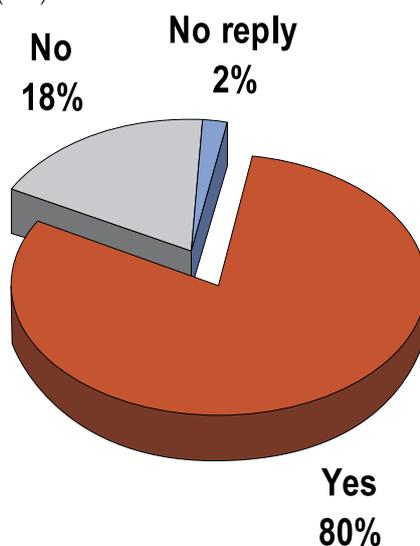
Base: total sample (130)



Those with a secure storage area were asked if the area is used exclusively for archives (see Figure 13 and Tabular Data, p 47). Of the 110 archives with a secure storage area, 80% use the area exclusively for the archive. It is of interest that this figure rose to 95% for archives established between 1900 and 1969, but dropped down to 68% for archives founded before 1900.

Figure 13 – Secure storage space used exclusively by archive

Base: those with secure storage space (110)



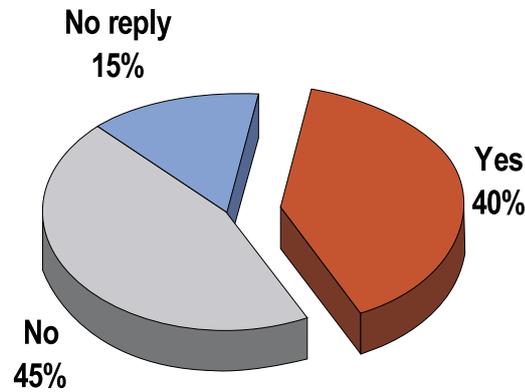
Only 40% of archives with a secure area answered in the affirmative when asked if the storage area is sufficient to accommodate anticipated expansion over the next ten years; 45% did not think so, while 15% gave no reply (Figure 14 and Tabular Data, p 48).

Those in the local authority category are notable in that as many as 72% of them consider they do not have sufficient storage area for anticipated expansion over the next ten years.

In addition, 69% of archives with secure storage space in the higher budget group also expressed concern about lack of storage space for expansion.

Figure 14 – Secure storage space sufficient for anticipated expansion over next ten years

Base: those with secure storage space (110)



5.2 ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS IN ARCHIVE.

The archives with secure storage space were asked two questions about the atmospheric conditions in the archive area (Table 10 and Tabular Data, p 49-50). Firstly, whether are conditions monitored, and secondly, whether they can be controlled.

Table 10 – Atmospheric conditions in archive

Base: those with secure storage space (110)

	Are conditions monitored?	Can conditions be controlled?
	(110)	(110)
	%	%
Yes	54	45
No	36	26
No reply	10	28

The 29 archives (26% of the 110 with secure storage space) that are unable to control relative humidity and temperature were asked if they had plans to provide this facility; 10 replied they do have plans, 14 have no plan, and five did not reply (Tabular Data, p 51).

6 COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

6.1 OVERVIEW

This section deals with the management of the archive: the levels of staff time assigned to different tasks, the degree of cataloguing and other administration activities such as maintaining an accessions register, a locations index, having an appraisal strategy, and dealing with electronic records.

6.2 DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF TIME

Respondents were asked to indicate the distribution of staff time across four areas:

- Basic collection management
- Detailed cataloguing and listing
- Administration
- Providing and enabling access

Table 11 gives the answers for distribution of staff time across these four areas.

It should be noted that a number of those giving no response to this series of questions are archives with two or more staff (Tabular Data, pp 52-59). For some, it may have been difficult to distribute staff time in such a detailed way.

Table 11 – Distribution of staff time

Base: total sample (130)

	Collection management	Cataloguing	Admin.	Enabling Access
	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)
	%	%	%	%
0%	8	12	9	12
1% to 50%	38	35	41	34
51% to 99%	5	4	2	5
100%	2	2	2	2
No reply	46	47	46	47

6.3 LISTING AND CATALOGUING

6.3.1 LEVEL OF LISTING AND CATALOGUING

Only 12% of archives say that all their holdings are listed, while 3% have none of their holdings listed. Fully catalogued holdings are more likely amongst archives established prior to 1900, those in the educational institutes and national categories, and those with higher running costs.

The average level of holdings catalogued for all archives answering this question is 59% (Tabular Data, pp 60-61)

- 35% of archives have over 70% of their holdings listed
- 22% have less than 30% of their holdings fully listed

It should be noted that these percentages are not adjusted for non-response and a greater number of archives could fall into each of these two groups.

Table 12 shows the grouped data for this question.

Table 12 – Level of fully listed holdings

Base: total sample (130)

Level of fully catalogued holdings	
	(130)
	%
0%	3
1% to 10%	11
11% to 30%	8
31% to 50%	10
51% to 70%	8
71% to 90%	18
91% to 99%	5
100%	12
No reply	25

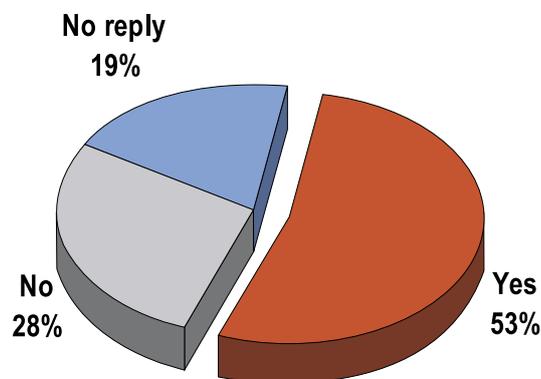
6.3.2 STRATEGY FOR LISTING UNLISTED MATERIAL

Those having less than 100% level of listing (115 archives) were asked about a strategy for listing unlisted material in their holdings.

As can be seen in Figure 15, 53% of this group has a strategy in place (Tabular Data, p 62).

Figure 15 – Strategy for describing unlisted material

Base: those with less than 100% level of cataloguing (115)



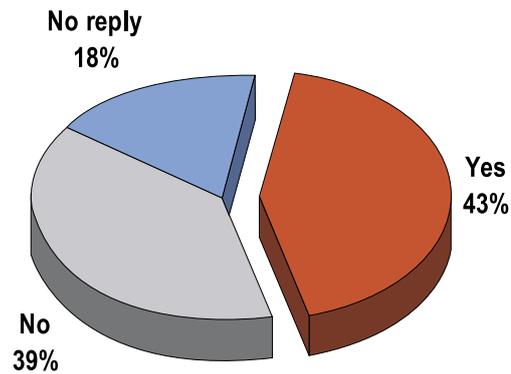
6.3.3 ACCESSIONS REGISTER.

Figure 16 shows the position regarding the maintenance of an up-to-date accessions register; 43% of archives maintain such a register, while 39% do not.

As in other results, the national category of archives and those with higher running costs are more likely than average to have an up-to-date accessions register (Tabular Data, p 63).

Figure 16 – Up-to-date accessions register

Base: total sample (130)



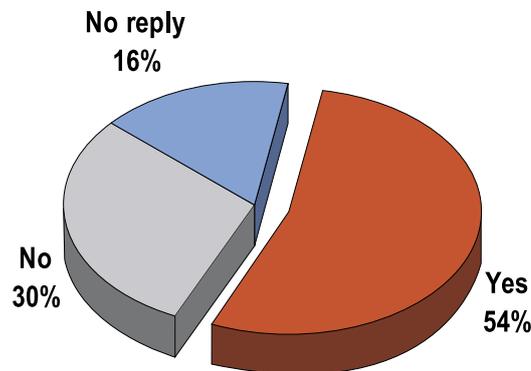
6.3.4 LOCATIONS INDEX

Just over half of all archives maintain an up-to-date locations index.

Older archives are less likely than others to maintain an up-to-date locations index. Archives that are open to public are more likely to maintain an up-to-date locations index (64%), as are those with higher running costs (see Figure 17 and Tabular Data, p 64).

Figure 17 – Up-to-date locations index

Base: total sample (130)



6.3.5 ELECTRONIC RECORDS

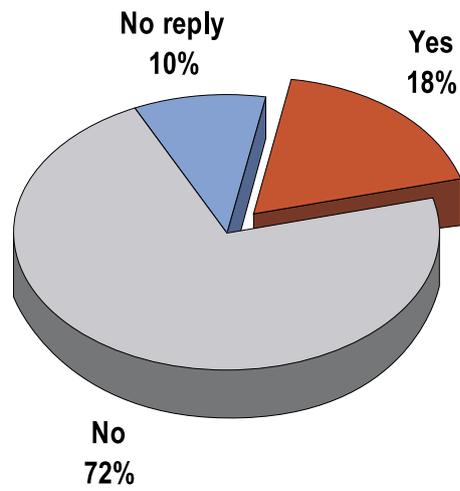
Very few archives (18%) have a policy for dealing with electronic records (Tabular Data, p 66).

A follow-up question asked those that do not have a policy for electronic records if they intend to develop one. Just over half the archives that do not have a policy for electronic records intend to develop one.

Figure 18 shows the answers for having a policy in place at this time; details of the follow-up question are in Tabular Data, p 67.

Figure 18 – Policy for dealing with electronic records

Base: total sample (130)

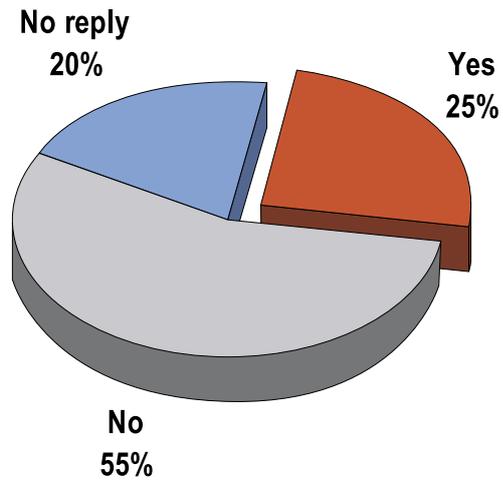


6.4 APPRAISAL STRATEGY

The proportion of archives with an appraisal strategy in place is low at only 25% (Figure 19 and Tabular Data, p 65).

Figure 19 – Appraisal strategy

Base: total sample (130)



7. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

7.1 OVERVIEW

This section of the report deals with a series of questions on conservation and preservation.

7.2 STRATEGY AND BUDGET

Respondents were asked whether or not they have a conservation strategy and if they have a conservation budget. (Table 13 and Tabular Data, pp 68-69).

For all archives, the proportion having a conservation strategy is 50% but only 28% have a conservation budget.

Those with written mandate or mission statement, those employing more than two people, those with budgets over €10,000, and those in the national category are more likely to have a conservation strategy in place.

Archives founded since 1970 are more likely than others to have a conservation budget as are those with higher running cost and those with a written mandate or mission statement.

Table 13 - Conservation

Base: total sample (130)

	Conservation strategy	Conservation budget
	(130)	(130)
	%	%
Yes	50	28
No	43	63
No reply	7	9

For the small number with a conservation budget, the allocation represents a small proportion of the total annual budget. Table 14 sets down the answers given by the 36 archives that indicated they have a conservation budget; 15 (42% of the 36 archives) declared that the percentage of their total annual budget allocated to conservation was under 10%, and 13 archives did not give a percentage.

Table 14 - Conservation budget as a percentage of total annual budget

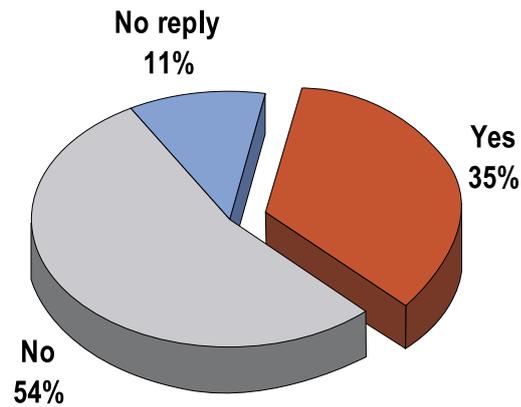
Base: archives with a conservation budget (36)

Percentage of budget	
	N
1% to 10%	15
11% to 50%	7
100%	1
No reply	13
Total number	36

Asked if they engage the services of external professional conservators 35% of archives replied they do. This proportion rose to 52% for archives established since 1990, and to 60% for those with a written mandate (Figure 20 and Tabular Data, p 71).

Figure 20 – Employing services of external conservators

Base: total sample (130)



7.3 REVIEW OF HOLDINGS

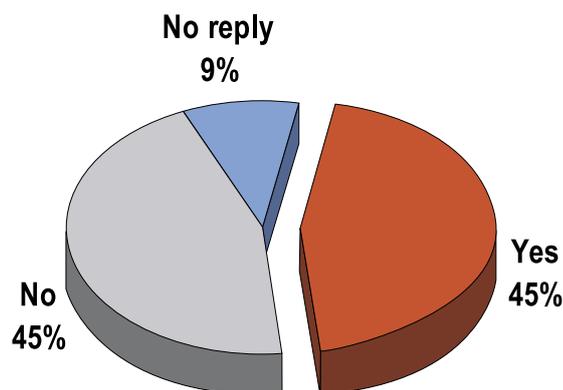
Less than half (45%) of archives indicated they had conducted a review of their holdings (Figure 21 and Tabular Data, p 72).

The level of archives that have conducted a review at some time rose over 50% for the following key sub-groups:

- Established before 1900
- Educational institutions and national categories
- Open to the public
- Employing two or more people
- Current annual running costs over €10,000
- With a written mandate or mission statement

Figure 21 – Review of holdings

Base: total sample (130)



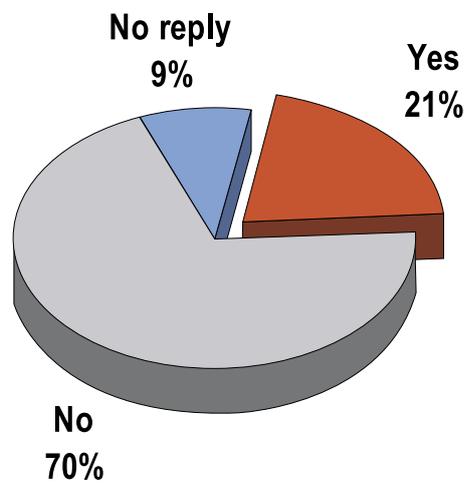
7.4 DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

Only 21% of archives have a disaster recovery plan (Figure 22 and Tabular Data, p73).

Higher percentages are declared by archives in the national category (45%), those with budgets over €100,000 (43%), and those open to the public (31%).

Figure 22 – Disaster recovery plan

Base: total sample (130)



The final question in this section was addressed to the 27 archives that stated they have a disaster recovery plan; 14 of these 27 archives affirmed their staff is regularly trained in the implementation of the disaster recovery plan.

8 ACCESS

8.1 PUBLIC ACCESS

Figure 23 shows the percentage of archives open to the public. Overall, 59% of archives have public access. Not surprisingly, those with larger running costs are relatively more likely to be open to the public. At the same time, 38% of archives declaring running costs of under €10,000 are open to the public.

National archives and educational institutions have higher levels than other categories, 95% and 71% respectively. On the other hand, religious institutions are less likely to have public access (only 37% of them do).

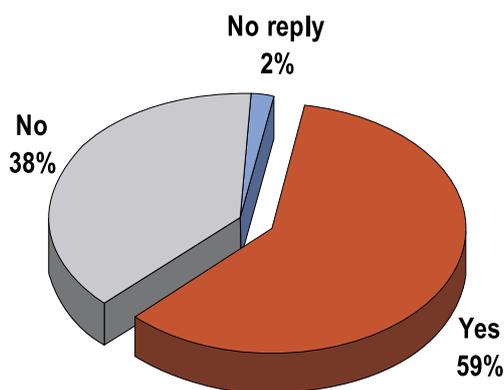
Archives formed post-1970 have a higher level of public opening than those established before that date.

Some archives without public access do allow researchers and others access to their archives with specific permission.

Further information is available in Tabular Data p 75

Figure 23 – Archives open to the public

Base: total sample (130)



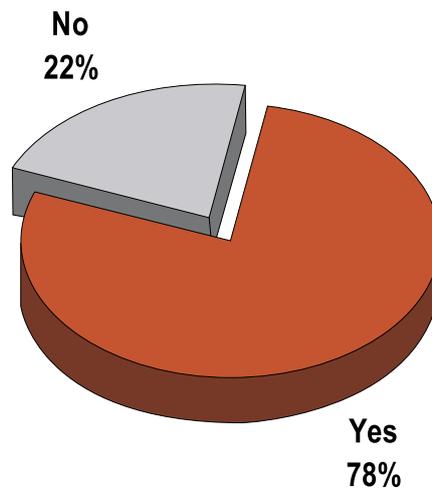
8.2 DESIGNATED READING ROOM

Just over three-quarters (78%) of the archives open to the public have a designated reading room (Figure 24 and Tabular Data, p 76). Categories such as national, educational institutions, and religious institutions are more likely to provide this facility if they are open to the public.

These figures indicate that a number of archives open to the public do not have a designated reading room. As local authority category archives had a higher number than the average without a designated reading room, it is possible that at least some archives do have a suitable reading area but not a designated reading room as such.

Figure 24 – Archives with a designated reading room

Base: archives open to the public (77)



Archives open to the public with a designated reading room can accommodate an average of nine researchers (Tabular Data, pp 77-78).

The table below shows the number of researchers accommodated in designated reading rooms.

Table 15 – Number of researchers that a reading room can accommodate

Base: archives with a reading room (60)

Number of researchers	
	(60)
	%
One	12
Two	10
Three	12
Four	13
Five	5
Six to ten	27
Eleven to twenty	8
Twenty-one to twenty-five	2
More than twenty-five	7
No reply	5

8.3 FACILITIES

Archives open to the public were asked to indicate which of a number of public facilities are provided (Table 16 and Tabular Data, p 79).

- i) The levels of archives providing toilets is highest of the given list of facilities – 91% of all archives open to the public, 93% of those with a designated reading room. The provision of toilet facilities falls short of 100%, even for those with designated reading rooms. This may be because toilet facilities, while not being directly provided by the archive, are made available by a parent or linked organisation.
- ii) The provision of parking is highest in the category of religious institutions at 80%.
- iii) The average level of disabled access is 49% but is higher for archives in the national category, those that have 2 or more staff, and those with higher budgets.
- iv) The sub-groups of educational institutions and those founded between 1900 and 1969 have the highest provision of exhibition space with 60% of them having this facility.

Table 16 – Public facilities

Facilities	Archives open to public	With designated reading room
	(77)	(60)
	%	%
Toilets	91	93
Parking	53	53
Disabled access	49	52
Exhibition space	39	37
Restaurant/tea/coffee	23	23

8.4 LEVEL OF HOLDINGS OPEN TO PUBLIC

For archives open to the public, an average of 74% of their holdings are accessible (Table 17).

All holdings are open to the public in 26% of archives open to the public. For 10% of archives open to the public the level is 30% or less, while 16% gave no reply to this question.

Amongst archives open to the public, the group set up before 1900 are the most likely to open all holdings to public access – 43%.

Table 17 – Percentage of archive holdings open to the public

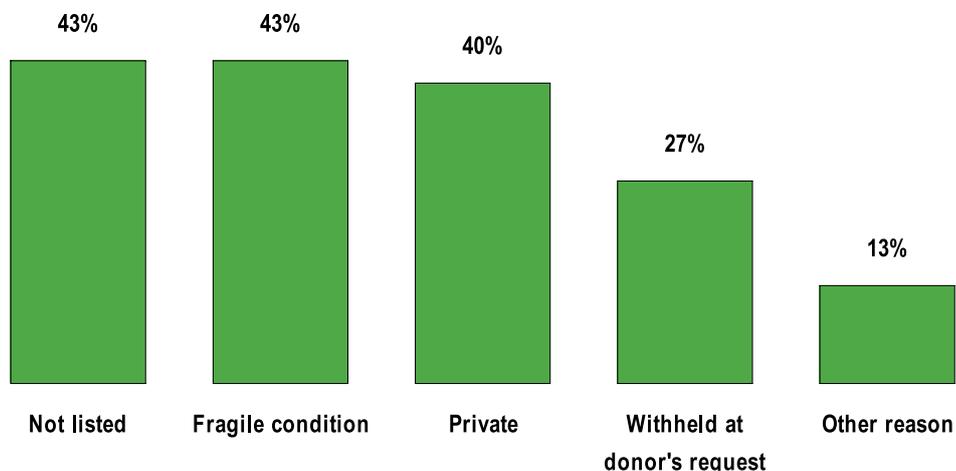
Base: archives open to public (77)

Percentage open to public	
	(77)
	%
1% to 50%	25
51% to 99%	34
100%	26
No reply	16

The survey also asked for reasons that require material to be withheld from public access. The findings are shown in Figure 25 and Tabular Data, p 82).

Figure 25 – Reasons for withholding material from public access

Base: archives open to the public (77)



8.5 OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED TO VISITORS

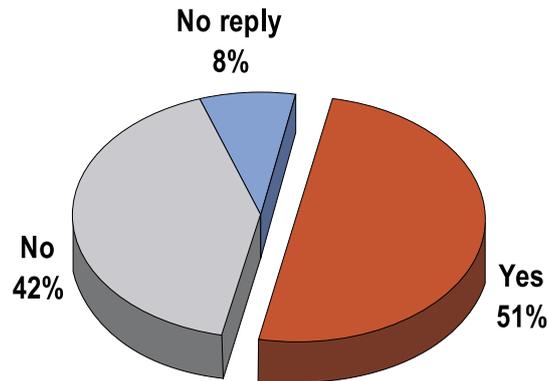
8.5.1 PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLY FINDING AIDS

Just over half (51%) of archives open to the public provide publicly accessible finding aids, 42% do not provide this service, and with 8% gave no answer (Figure 26 and Tabular Data, p 83).

Archives founded since 1990, those with a written mandate or mission statement, those with budgets of €100,000 or more, and those with two or more staff, are more likely than others to have publicly accessible finding aids.

Figure 26 – Archives providing publicly accessible finding aids

Base: archives open to the public (77)



8.5.2 FORMAT OF PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE FINDING AIDS

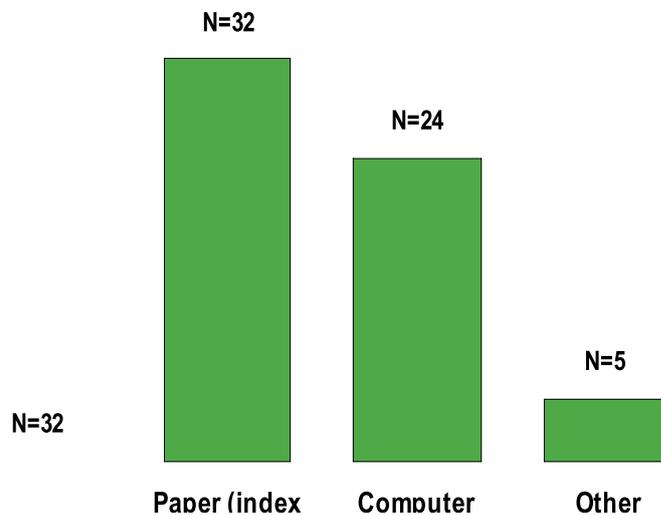
The 39 archives that have publicly accessible finding aids were asked about the format of these aids (Figure 27 and Tabular Data p 84).

Paper (index, card/book) is the most popular, with 32 of the 39 archives with publicly accessible finding aids citing this format. The next most popular finding aid is computer, mentioned by 24 of this group.

Figure 27 – Format of finding aids employed

Base: Archives open to the public & have publicly accessible finding aids (39)

Caution: note small base



8.6 ACCESS TO ORIGINALS

48% of archives open to the public say that when microfilm or other copies are available, access is also provided to originals; 30% of archives open to the public gave no answer, and 22% replied in the negative (Tabular Data, p 85).

8.7 OTHER SERVICES

The survey asked about two services – outreach programmes and education programmes (Table 18 and Tabular Data, pp 86-87).

Table 18 Further services

Base: total sample (130)

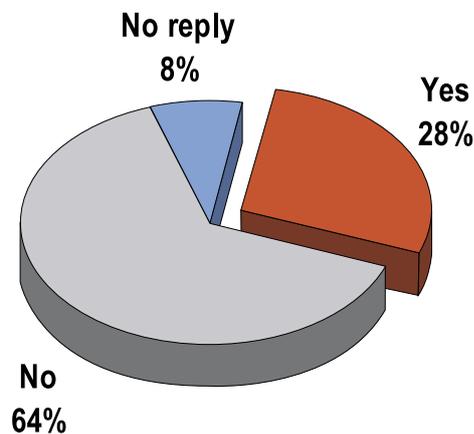
	Outreach programmes	Education programmes
	(130)	(130)
	%	%
Yes	13	12
No	78	79
No reply	9	8

8.8 WEBSITES

Finally, the archives were asked if they have a website. Only 28% of archives have a website (Figure 28 and Tabular Data, p 88). Relatively, more of the archives founded since 1970 have a website. The same is true for those archives in the national category (55%) and those with a written mandate or mission statement (57%).

Figure 28 – Website

Base: total sample (130)



SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- i) The aim of the survey has been to gather essential data on the structure, scale and activity of the archives sector. The questionnaire was developed by the Museum and Archives Committee and the collection methodology involved a postal self-completion approach. A listing of approximately 212 archives in Ireland was used and 130 archives responded.
- ii) The data collection was undertaken between September and November 2002.
- iii) The high level of non-response for some questions means that many of the percentages should be taken as an indication of the true position.
- iv) Just over a quarter (28%) of archives were established before 1900, 24% were set up since 1990, and 47% are located in Dublin.
- v) A large proportion (70%) of archives are part of a larger organisation; 47% store material on their own organisation, institution or company only, and 48% are concerned with their own and third party material.
- vi) Under half (38%) of archives have current running costs of less than €10,000, 15% have current running costs of between €10,000 and €100,000, and 22% have current running costs of over €100,000. A quarter (25%) gave no figure.
- vii) On average 38% of the annual budget of archives is accounted for by salaries and wages, although 38% of respondents did not reply to this question. 47% have control of their own budget, and most funding comes from a parent organisation.
- viii) Only 7% of archives have ten or more staff, 8% have none and 46% employ one person.
- ix) Only 35 archives have one or more professionally qualified archivist on their staff, representing a total of 53 employees in this category. Eight archives employ, between them, ten professionally qualified conservators. Of the Society of Archivists, Ireland, 47 members participated in the survey.
- x) A large percentage (85%) of archives report having a secure storage area; of these 80% of the areas are used exclusively by the archive. 40% of those with a secure storage area consider the area is sufficient for anticipated expansion over the next ten years. 54% of this group monitor, and 45% of them can control, atmospheric conditions.
- xi) Just 12% of archives have all their holdings fully catalogued, 35% of archives have over 70% of holdings catalogued, and 22% of archives have less than 30% catalogued
- xii) Over half (59%) of archives are open to the public while others allow access to researchers; 78% of those open to the public have a designated reading room, and 51% provide publicly accessible finding aids.
- xiii) A small number (13%) of archives have an outreach programme, 12% have an education programme, and 28% have a website.
- xiv) Additionally:
 - 32% have a written mandate or mission statement
 - 21% have a written policy on acquisitions
 - 31% purchase additional material
 - 43% maintain an up-to-date accessions register
 - 54% maintain an up-to-date locations index
 - 18% have a policy for dealing with electronic records
 - 25% have an appraisal strategy in place
 - 50% have a conservation strategy
 - 28% have a conservation budget
 - 35% employ the services of external conservators
 - 45% have conducted a review of holdings
 - 21% have a disaster recovery plan