



Louisiana Connecting to Collections Survey Report

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Executive Summary

Louisiana's Connecting to Collections Statewide Preservation Planning Project, which began in 2010, is a two-part initiative to identify preservation needs across the state, and to help individual institutions determine the preservation conditions within their own facilities.

Part of the national Connecting to Collections preservation planning grant program from the federal Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS), Louisiana's program includes a statewide web-based survey questionnaire on preservation topics. The second part of the program is a series of workshops to be held in May 2011 to help cultural heritage institutions (libraries, museums, historical societies, and archives) learn how to survey their buildings and collections, evaluate existing preservation policies in order to be able to determine areas for action, and identify possible sources of funding for conservation/preservation work.

The Louisiana Connecting to Collections Project Task Force, composed of professionals from across the cultural heritage spectrum, set the cornerstone for the statewide project by first working to identify as many cultural institutions across the state as possible, and then recruiting those institutions to take part in the project. From the Task Force's efforts, 348 institutions were identified, and 83 responded to the survey, for a response rate of nearly 24%.

Institutions were asked about collection material formats in Louisiana. A majority of the responding institutions did not know the quantity of the materials they held, which spotlights the need for further processing, inventory, and assessment work in the state.

Institutions participating in the survey exhibited wide variance in their overall annual operating budget levels. The survey also looked at the sources of preservation/conservation funding at responding organizations. Money from institutions' own budgets was far and away the leading preservation funding source. Other preservation financial resources included donor funding, foundation or corporate grants, state and federal grants and institutional use or license fees. Nine institutions indicated no source of preservation/conservation funding. A large number of organizations had applied for grants; this shows a much higher willingness among Louisiana institutions than those in other states to apply for supplemental preservation funding.

A variety of scenarios are being used to accomplish preservation work in Louisiana institutions. In most organizations, various staff members are assigned conservation/preservation duties as needed. However, a large group said no staff person has preservation and conservation responsibilities.

Participants were asked to rate the usefulness of several methods for obtaining preservation information for staff. Only one category, "short-term training workshops (one or two-day sessions)" was rated by a majority of respondents as being very useful. In planning for future training, several topics received a large number of "urgent need" votes, including collections conservation, advocacy, digitization/imaging, and preservation of born digital files.

Although many institutions stated that they had completed a variety of preservation actions to prolong the life of their collections, a majority of organizations have not developed long-range preservation plans, and have not completed preservation surveys of their collections.

Many institutions had control of potentially-damaging environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, and light, and most organizations felt their storage spaces were adequate as well. Fire protection, security systems, and disaster planning practices were implemented in many institutions, which is good because of the high number of recent hurricane, water, and other types of disasters which have struck Louisiana cultural heritage institutions.

Organizations showed a good deal of interest and experience in digitization, but there is a great need for more digital preservation policy development and practice at institutions within the state. Finally, Louisiana institutions are already quite active in collaborative preservation activities, but survey results and comments indicated an even greater interest in further cooperative preservation initiatives.

The primary recommendations from the Louisiana Connecting to Collections survey are that there is strong need to pursue funding at the state level to support collections inventories, establish a preservation program, provide professional development training, create disaster and continuity of operations plans, support digital preservation planning and evaluate the needs of historic buildings.

Project Narrative

Background

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The Louisiana Connecting to Collections Project Task Force, composed of professionals from across the cultural heritage spectrum, set the cornerstone for the statewide project by first working to identify as many cultural institutions across the state as possible, and then recruiting those institutions to take part in the project. From the Task Force's efforts, 348 institutions were identified, and 83 responded to the survey, for a response rate of nearly 24%. In the market research sector, a response rate over 5% is considered to be excellent. During Connecting to Collections research surveys on which this consultant has worked, response rates have ranged from below 20% to 45% or more.

Once the survey is completed, the Task Force will also be responsible for recruiting the participants for the Spring 2011 workshop series.

Institutional Information

In looking at the response to the Louisiana survey, a very positive result is that the survey reached a wide variety of institution types.

Academic libraries made up 23%, history museums 14%, public libraries 11%, and government archives 10% were the top institution types responding to the survey. However, other types of collecting institutions also responded, including independent non-profit archives, special libraries, historical societies, historic houses/sites, art museums, science and technology museums, general museums representing two or more disciplines, archaeological repositories or research collections, and cultural centers. Other organization types included religious, corporate, and hospital archives, a newspaper, and a public television station.

Government archives	8	10%
Independent non-profit archives	2	2%
Public library	9	11%
Special library	4	5%
Academic library / archives	19	23%
Historical society	4	5%
Historical house/site	4	5%
Art museum	2	2%
History museum	12	14%
Children's museum	0	0%
Natural history museum	0	0%
Science technology museum	1	1%
General museum (2 or more disciplines)	1	1%
Archaeological repository or research collection	2	2%
Arboretum, botanical garden, nature center, zoo, or aquarium	0	0%
Cultural center	4	5%
Other	11	12%

The affiliations of these institutions varied widely, as well. The majority of respondents were from the state government sector (36%), but private, non-profit (non-government) institutions, represented 29%, and local, municipal, or parish government-affiliated organizations (27%) were also well-represented.

An interesting finding which was much higher than in many other states which have held Connecting to Collections surveys was that nearly half of the respondents (39 or 47%) were housed in, or responsible for, one or more historical buildings.

Collections Inventory

As many states have been going through the "Connecting to Collections" planning process, they have realized the need to have a firm grasp on the volume of materials within their states which need to be preserved. Having this type of inventory is a foundation which must be in place before statewide disaster planning, mutual aid agreements, and other important preservation programs can be successfully implemented.

In order to do this, the individual institutions within the state must each have completed their own inventory of materials held. Louisiana's cultural heritage institutions were asked to indicate the estimated number of units of a wide variety of material types in their collections. Organizations could claim that they had no holdings in a particular format, had holdings and did not know the quantity, or that they had a known quantity of holdings, which they were asked to list.

For many formats in Louisiana, a majority of the responding institutions ***did not know the quantity of the materials they held***. This spotlights the need for further processing, inventory, and assessment work in the state. The formats where a majority of institutions did not know the quantity of materials held included:

- Unbound sheets – archival records, manuscripts, maps, oversized items, ephemera, broadsides, and paper artifacts
- Photographic collections – microfilm/fiche, photographic prints, negatives, slides, transparencies, daguerreotypes
- Recorded sound collections – cylinders, phonodiscs, cassettes, open reel tape, DAT, CDs, MP3s
- Digital materials collections – floppy discs, CD-R, DVD-R, data tape, online collections
- Art objects – paintings, prints, drawings, sculpture, decorative arts such as fine metalwork, jewelry, timepieces, enamels
- Historic and ethnographic objects – textiles, costumes and accessories, glass, ethnographic artifacts, metalwork, furniture, domestic artifacts, technological and agricultural artifacts, medical/scientific artifacts, transportation vehicles

In a few cases, a majority of Louisiana holding institutions had solid information on numbers of holdings of specific formats:

- Books and bound volumes – monographs, serials, newspapers, scrapbooks, albums, pamphlets
- Moving image collections – motion picture film, videotape, laser disks, DVD, minidisks

Finally, there were two formats where a large majority of surveyed institutions had no holdings:

- Archaeological collections – organic or inorganic materials including textile fiber, wood, bone, shell, feather, ceramic, glass, metal, plastic
- Natural science specimens – zoological, botanical, geological, paleontological, paleobotany specimens

Preservation Planning and Funding

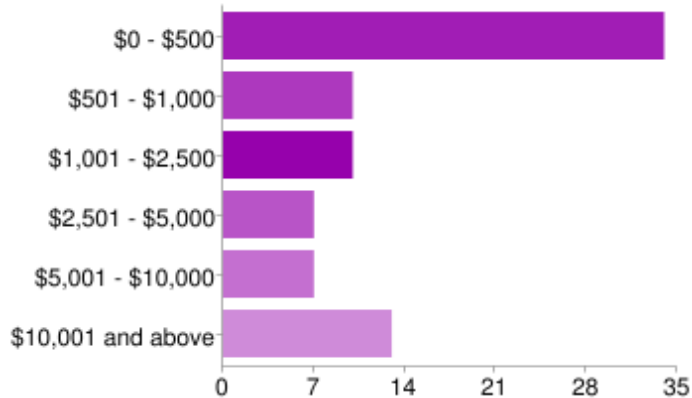
A series of survey questions looked at cultural heritage institutions' overall budgets, budgets for preservation, and pursuit of preservation funding. A majority of institutions (93%) indicated 2009 as their most recently completed fiscal year, so the data is quite current.

When asked about the level of total annual operating budget, by far the largest group (37%) said \$0-\$250,000. The next largest groups had budgets of \$1,000,001-5,000,000 per year (17%), and \$5,000,001 and above (16%). Two budget ranges, \$250,001-500,000 and \$500,000-\$1,000,000 garnered 11 respondents or (13%) each.

In specifically focusing on preservation/conservation budgets, organizations were asked to estimate their institution's annual budget for these activities. Even if the organization did not have a specific line item in the budget, but used other funds for conservation and preservation, they were asked to consider funding used for staff, supplies and equipment, surveys, treatment, reformatting, consultants/contractors, or other preservation costs related to their collections. The figures included grant funds and temporary budget amounts, but utilities, security, overhead, and capital projects were not included.

As in many other states, annual preservation and conservation budget amounts were at both the bottom and the top of the scale. Thirty-four institutions (41%) had preservation budgets from \$0-\$500. However, the next largest group (13 or 16%) had annual preservation budgets of \$10,001 and above. Ten organizations (12% of respondents) each showed annual preservation budgets of \$501-1000 or \$1,001-\$2,500. Another relatively large segment had preservation budgets of \$2,501-5,000 or \$5,001-10,000 (8% each).

Annual budget for conservation/preservation



The survey then looked at the sources of preservation/conservation funding at responding organizations. Money from institutions' own budgets was far and away the leading preservation funding source, at 67% of respondents. This can be a double-edged sword, as it means that institutions are budgeting some of their own funds for preservation (a positive) but those funds can increase or decrease based on changes in the institutions' overall budget planning (a potential negative).

Other financial resources for preservation included:

- Donor funding (29%)
- Foundation or corporate grants (17%)
- State grants (13%)
- Federal grants (12%)

Nine institutions (11%) indicated no source of preservation/conservation funding, and five institutions (6%) utilize institutional use or license fees.

Institution's own budget	55	67%
Federal grants	10	12%
State grants	11	13%
Foundation or corporate grants	14	17%
Donor funding	32	39%
Institution use or license fee	5	6%
None	9	11%
Don't know	0	0%
Other	2	2%

A number of follow-up questions explored the pursuit of preservation grants by Louisiana's cultural heritage institutions. On most of these questions, institutions could select all answers that applied, so the percentages may total over 100%.

Repositories were asked if they had made a grant application (whether successful or unsuccessful) for conservation or preservation funding from any public or private source in the past five years; 42% of

organizations had done so and 52% had not. These results show a much higher willingness among Louisiana institutions than those in other states to apply for supplemental preservation funding.

When institutions did not apply, it was mainly because they lacked staff time or expertise to complete a grant application (58% answering this question), didn't know enough about funding sources (37%), or needed additional project planning or preparation before applying for the grant (33%). All of these concerns could be addressed by offering training on preservation grant identification, writing, and management.

Much smaller groups of respondents said that conservation/preservation was not an institutional priority (6 respondents), they have sufficient funding (4), or they were unsuccessful applying for grants in the past (3).

The survey also looked at the sources from which institutions had received money in the past five years to implement conservation and preservation projects. While 30 institutions (38% of respondents) indicated "none," Louisiana organizations actually indicated a wide variety of sources that they have tapped for funding. These include individual contributions dedicated to conservation and preservation projects (22%), private foundations (19%), a line item in the institution's operating budget (14%) or general state funding programs (13%)

In addition to these sources, however, one or more Louisiana institutions had also utilized each organization on this lengthy list of preservation funding resources:

- State library-sponsored funding
- State Archives-sponsored funding
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) grant
- Institute of Museum and Library Services direct grant to recipient
- Heritage Preservation/IMLS "Conservation Assessment Program" (CAP) grant
- National Endowment for the Humanities "Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions"
- National Endowment for the Arts (Museum: Access to Artistic Excellence category)
- Save America's Treasures grants for collections
- National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grants
- Other Federal funding programs
- Corporate or business contributions dedicated to conservation/preservation projects
- Interest from in-house endowments

Seeing this expansive list should lead state preservation planners to make more institutions more aware and knowledgeable about the wide variety of preservation funding sources available to them.

Two additional questions in this section looked at preservation staffing. A variety of scenarios are being used to accomplish preservation work in Louisiana institutions. In 34% organizations, various staff is assigned conservation/preservation duties as needed. However, a similarly large group (29%) said no staff person has preservation and conservation responsibilities.

Other scenarios included 14 institutions (17%) with paid staff whose job duties are predominantly preservation and conservation on a full-time or part-time basis; eleven sites where an external provider supplies some conservation/preservation services, and ten organizations where volunteers provide some of these services. At five locations, external providers provide all preservation/conservation services, and at five others, volunteers provide all of the services. Other written answers noted numerous cases where preservation is just part of a staff person's many responsibilities.

Organizations were also asked if their institutions had any collections care staff members with formal training, such as a graduate degree in conservation from a recognized training program, equivalent experience and training, or Professional Associate or Fellow Status in AIC – the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. Only seven institutions out of 83 reported this level of training among staff; however, this is not a negative point as it is similar to findings in many states that have taken part in Connecting to Collections projects.

Preservation Information

Survey participants were asked to rate the usefulness of various methods for obtaining preservation information for staff from their institutions. Only one category, “short-term training workshops (one or two-day sessions)” was rated by a majority of respondents as being very useful. Information methods which were seen as “useful” by a majority of respondents included:

- Print materials
- Electronic materials (journals, reports)
- Listservs
- Communication with resource people by telephone or e-mail (staff at other institutions, consultants, vendors)
- Onsite visits at institutions
- Online tutorials
- Videos/DVDs
- Web sites
- Webinars
- Conferences

Methods seen as not being useful by a majority of Louisiana cultural organizations included distance learning courses, college or university courses, and long-term workshops of one week or more.

Preservation Training

Almost half of the institutions responding to the survey (43%) had someone from their staff attend a preservation training program of one-half day or more in the past five years (48% had not). Training providers included LYRASIS, the Society of Southwest Archivists, Society of American Archivists, Louisiana Archival Training Collaborative, the Williamstown Art Conservation Center and the American Library Association.

Looking at future preservation training needs, the survey first asked about collection types on which institutions need preservation training. A majority of the respondents saw a general level of need for training on a variety of formats. The list below contains the “major label” for the formats; please refer back to the full listings of materials types in the “Collections Inventory” section for detailed information on the types of materials included in each format.

- Books and bound volumes
- Unbound sheets
- Photographic collections
- Moving image collections
- Recorded sound collections
- Digital material collections
- Art objects
- Historic and ethnographic objects

Institutions most often expressed an “urgent need” for training on Moving Image and Historical and Ethnographic Collections. A majority of respondents had no need, or said training was not applicable for Archaeological Collections and Natural Science Specimens.

Another angle on training needs which the survey examined was the preservation topics on which institutions need training. Almost all of the proposed topics received high “need ratings.” Included in these training topics were:

- Disaster preparedness and recovery
- Care and handling of collections

- Preservation reformatting (including preservation photocopying, microfilming)
- Preservation management (including administration, planning, and assessment)
- Collections conservation/physical treatment
- Contracting for conservation/preservation services
- Environmental monitoring
- Advocacy/fundraising/grant writing
- Building design/construction/renovation
- Digitization/imaging
- Preservation of born digital files (including databases, websites, image files)
- Exhibits
- Pest management and mold

Several topics received 15 or more “urgent need” votes, including collections conservation, advocacy, digitization/imaging, and preservation of born digital files. On the obverse, while they received more “need” than “no need” votes, rehousing, storage furniture, and training about moving collections were ranked “no need” by almost half of the respondents to the questions.

With all of the training topics in mind, the favored length of training was one day (39%), no length preference was second (19%), and one-half day also received multiple votes (18%).

Top cities for training host sites were Baton Rouge (20 votes), Shreveport (19), Lafayette (13), New Orleans (12) and Alexandria (9).

Survey participants were also asked what barriers might prevent them from sending a staff member to a conservation/preservation training course. 82% mentioned travel costs and 72% mentioned registration costs the biggest problems. Unavailability of workshops in the region, (52%), distance (47%), and inability to spare staff time (43%) were also seen as concerns.

Even in light of these findings, a majority of respondents suggested that the maximum amount they or their employer would be willing to pay to attend a training event on conservation/preservation, including both travel costs and tuition, was \$100-199 (19 respondents or 23%). Fifty to ninety-nine dollars, \$200-299, and \$0 also received over one dozen votes.

Preservation Activities and Policies

More than two-thirds of the survey participants (67%) have not developed a written long-range preservation plan for the care of their collection. Only four institutions had such a plan in current form; nine had a plan which was not up-to-date, and seven didn’t have a long-range preservation plan yet, but were developing one.

Yes	4	5%
Yes, but it is not up to date	9	11%
No, but one is being developed	7	8%
No	56	67%
Don't Know	7	8%

The findings were very similar when institutions were asked if they had received a conservation/preservation survey of their collection, done by a professional to determine the extent of conservation problems at their institutions including environmental concerns, collection management, security, disaster planning, special collections, and the needs of special formats of materials. Fifty-nine or 71% of respondents had not received such a survey; ten had, and eight said they had previously undergone a survey but it was not up-to-date

because significant institutional changes have occurred since the survey was done. A positive finding was that the surveys had resulted in preservation/conservation actions at the institutions which had gone through this process.

Many institutions stated that they had completed a variety of preservation actions to prolong the life of their collections, including:

- Rehousing (refoldering, rebinding)
- Moving collections
- Disaster preparedness and recovery
- Care and handling of collections (establishing rules for staff and users)
- Environmental monitoring
- Exhibits
- Pest management/mold

However, there were a number of preservation activities which the majority of institutions had not undertaken, which, if completed, could help to prolong collection life:

- Preservation reformatting (including preservation photocopying and microfilming)
- Preservation management, including administration, planning, and assessment
- Collections conservation, such as physical treatment
- Contracting for conservation and preservation services
- Advocacy/fundraising/grant writing
- Building design/construction/renovation
- Preservation of digital files, such as databases, web sites, and image files

Finally in this section, institutions were asked to name their three most serious preservation or conservation problems. From a wide variety of open-ended responses, content analysis of the answers uncovered trends that illustrated leading concerns which were echoed throughout responses to the overall survey. The preservation concerns earning the highest number of mentions included:

- Lack of storage space and shelving
- High humidity/mold
- Lack of budget or funding for preservation/conservation
- Lack of environmental control
- Lack of staff to complete preservation activities
- Obsolescence and deterioration of audiovisual formats

Preservation Environment, Security, and Disaster Preparedness

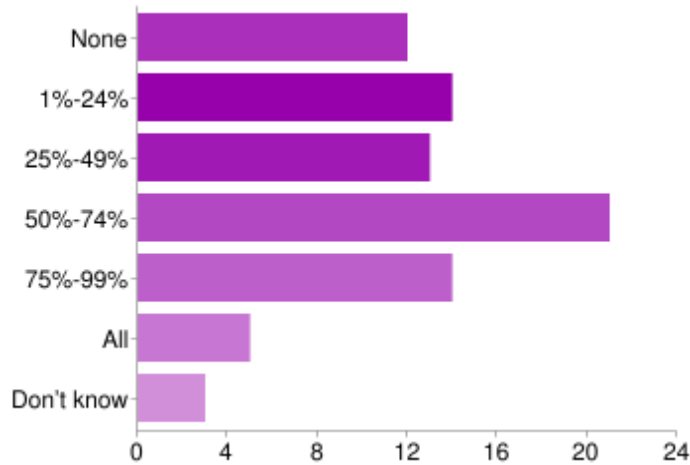
Institutions were queried on their ability to control some major environmental concerns at their repositories. A majority were able to control temperature (53%), relative humidity (47%), and light (54%). The number of institutions controlling humidity in Louisiana is better than many states. However, like much of the country most said they were unable to control air quality (through particulate and/or gaseous filtration) in any areas of their facility (54%).

Additional positive results were seen when Louisiana institutions were asked, from a preservation perspective, how much of their collection they feel is adequately stored—meaning in an environmentally-controlled space, on appropriate storage furniture, and with enough space to accommodate non-damaging access.

One-quarter of the respondents (21) felt that 50-74% was stored well; 14 felt 75-99% was adequately stored; and five institutions felt all material was well-stored. In opposition, though, 12 or 14% of respondents felt none of their collection was well-stored, 14 said only 1-24% was stored adequately, and 13 organizations said that

25-49% were in good storage condition. While these statistics show the need for some additional education, consultation, and assistance on collection storage, the findings for Louisiana are much better than some states where the lack of good collection storage space is reaching crisis proportions.

Percentage of Collection that is adequately stored



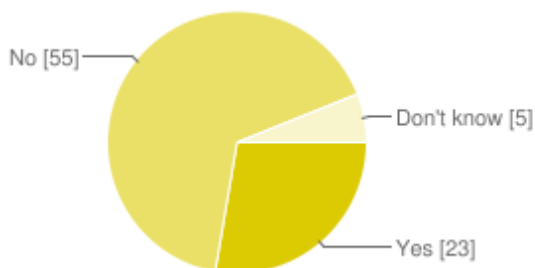
The survey also looked at intellectual control of collections in much the same method. In this measure, Louisiana institutions were also doing very well, as 33 organizations, or said 75-99% of their collections had been cataloged or processed. Twenty-two repositories said 50-74% had undergone processing and cataloging. Altogether, only 23 institutions said that 49% or less of their collection was cataloged. And, four institutions stated that their complete collection had undergone cataloging or processing.

In the area of fire protection, a majority of institutions have smoke detectors (49%), fire alarms (67%), and fire extinguishers (72%) in all areas of their institution. A majority are not using wet-pipe sprinklers, dry-pipe sprinklers, or non-aqueous fire suppression systems such as Halon or FM-200.

An excellent finding in Louisiana – among the highest percentages in the country of the surveys this consultant is familiar with – is that fire extinguishers at 96% of the sites having them are inspected regularly.

Having disaster systems and plans is important in light of the fact that 28% of Louisiana cultural heritage organizations have experienced disasters in the past five years. In almost all of those cases, 1-24% of the collection was damaged. However, in one case, 25-49% was damaged, and in the worst case, 75-99% of the collection received damage.

Institution experienced disasters that damaged materials in past five years



The causes of the disasters included water leakage (from pipe or roof damage) at twelve institutions, and hurricane damage at eleven organizations. Other disaster causes included mold outbreaks (seven sites), flooding (four locations), and pests (three institutions).

Hurricane	11 48%
Fire—including arson, electrical, wildfire	0 0%
Flood	4 17%
Mold outbreak	7 30%
Pests	3 13%
Water leakages (e.g., pipe damage, roof damage)	12 52%
Don't know	0 0%
Other	2 9%

In 15 of the disasters, internal staff took care of cleaning and repairing damaged materials, but commercial disaster recovery vendors were called onsite at five locations. Volunteers, external consultants, and local or community resources helped at a few sites, as well. These “external resources” were especially utilized when the scope of the disaster was too large for internal staff to deal with it by themselves.

A high number of responses on facility disposition following disasters was expected due to the level of damage caused by hurricanes and flooding in Louisiana in the recent past. Two institutions closed permanently after disasters, ten closed temporarily, and ten had a disaster but did not close.

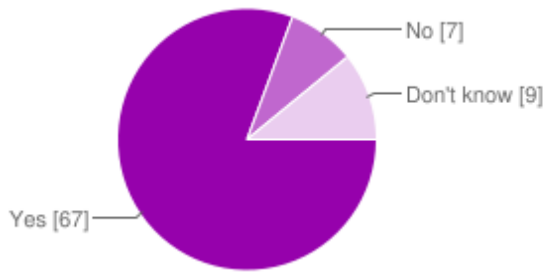
With all of the disaster experience in Louisiana, one positive outcome is that a majority of institutions either have disaster plans (32 or 39%) or are developing them (19%). However, 28 institutions or (34%, more than one-third of respondents) do not have a plan, and (8%) do not know, so there is still room for training and coaching in disaster plan development, completion, and implementation.

Yes	32 39%
No, but one is being prepared	16 19%
No	28 34%
Don't know	7 8%

As a followup question, institutions were asked if they had a Continuity of Operations Plan which would allow them to quickly resume their regular business. Twenty-six institutions (31%) did, and eleven (13%) are preparing one, but (43%) do not have such a plan and ten did not know.

Another positive finding was that 81% of the responding institutions have a working relationship with local emergency responders such as fire and police.

Institution has working relationship with local emergency responders



In a related question, organizations were asked which security systems they used. Types of security policies, practices, and systems used in all areas of the repositories at most responding institutions include:

- Employee and volunteer screening
- Alarm systems
- Written policies and procedures
- Control of items brought into collections
- Control of access to collections

Only security guards were not used in a majority of institutions.

Digital Collections

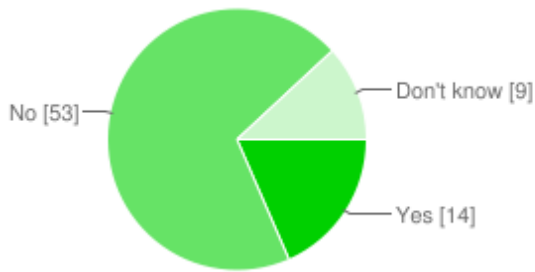
Institutions participating in the survey were asked to characterize the types of materials in their digital collections. It is interesting to note the similar levels of institutions collecting materials in born-digital formats and digitizing their collections.

<u>Format</u>	<u>Insts. Collecting Digital Materials</u>	<u>Insts. Digitizing Materials</u>
Photographs	55	48
Documents	49	40
Video/audio	39	27
Books	37	15
Sound recordings	29	22
Newspapers	25	12

Another finding showing a growing level of digital activity in Louisiana was that twenty-five Louisiana institutions operate a digital repository while 45 do not, and eleven did not know.

Even with the digital collection creation and repository work going on, however, a vast majority of respondents did not have a digital preservation plan in place for managing these assets for ten years or more. In fact, only fourteen institutions had such a plan, and nine did not know.

Have a Digital Preservation Plan



Backup files are created for digital collections at 50 institutions, on a daily basis at many organizations (which is good), and on a monthly basis at an almost even number (back up on a more regular basis is suggested). However, 18 institutions do not create backup files, and 12 didn't know. These findings further illustrate the need for digital preservation policy and practice development.

The other big concern in this line of questioning centered on where backups are stored. Twelve institutions are storing collections onsite, ten offsite but within five miles, and nine offsite more than five miles away, but in Louisiana. In addition, three respondents did not know. With the multi-state/regional extent of damage from Hurricane Katrina, more institutions should consider storing offsite in a different state, as four of their peer institutions are already doing, or in multiple sites as twelve institutions have done.

Statewide Planning and Partnering

Two relatively complex questions dealt with inter-institutional collaboration and partnering on preservation activities and projects.

Many institutions were interested, if a statewide approach was available, in using a variety of preservation services. The service and number of "votes" it received are listed here:

- State-sponsored preservation workshops – 59
- On-site visits by preservation professionals – 55
- Place to contact for preservation information – 54
- Ongoing state support for preservation grants to individual institutions – 47
- Disaster recovery (vacuum freeze-drying and onsite cleanup) – 46
- Help with general preservation/conservation surveys – 45
- Preservation/disaster response supplies – 43
- Assistance with disaster planning and recovery – 42
- Collection storage, including print materials, photographic collections, moving image collections, recorded sound collections, art objects, historic and ethnographic objects, archaeological collections, natural science specimens – 38
- Electronic data storage – 34
- Loan of environmental monitoring equipment – 24
- Collection transportation – 22
- Microfilm reformatting – 22

On a number of preservation partnering activities, cultural heritage organizations in Louisiana expressed some interest; however, only two specific activities garnered ratings of "great deal of interest" that were almost as high.

- Collaborative grant projects – 32 with some interest, 29 with a great deal of interest
- Mutual assistance for disaster response – 29 with some interest, 28 with a great deal of interest
- Collaborative exhibitions – 42 some interest
- Setting up a regional special interest group for preservation – 34 some interest
- Train-the-trainers programs – 33 some interest
- Monitoring – 33 some interest
- Collaborative digital collection building – 32 some interest
- Shared technical equipment – 31 some interest

The only category receiving more votes of no interest than “some” or “great deal” was for shared storage facilities.

As a followup to these partnering questions, survey respondents were asked to provide more information if their institution already participates in collaborative preservation activity. What emerged from the responses to this question is that many institutions are already active in cooperative preservation activity, and a collaborative infrastructure for preservation is already beginning to emerge in Louisiana. Here are examples of such activities which are underway within the state and region, along with ideas for future collaborative preservation activities:

- Participation in Louisiana’s Archival Training Collaborative, other train-the-trainer initiatives, or mentoring on preservation activities
- Membership in the ArkLaTex Archivists’ group, which is developing mutual aid activities for disaster recovery
- Part of the LOUIS (Louisiana Library Network) collaborative digital project
- Sharing artifacts for exhibition

The following collaborative activities and suggestions were listed by only one survey respondent:

- Collaboration with other dioceses in the state
- Loaning materials and digital images
- State Archives offers technical advice and disaster assistance to parish Clerks of Court and Registrars of Voters
- Shared storage facilities at LSU
- Purchasing microfilms of local newspapers from LSU
- Agreement exists between three museums for help with disaster situations
- (One institution) wants to be a storage facility for digital audiovisual files from other agencies in the state. (They) have already participated in an IMLS planning grant project with the multimedia division of the Louisiana State Archives for preserving audiovisual formats

Comments on Preservation Needs

At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were asked for additional comments about preservation and conservation needs. What were surprising were the very concrete and specific needs that were suggested by a number of institutions. Certainly, some organizations suggested needs that were very specific to their own institution, and others had strong concerns about preservation budget issues, but many of the ideas had wide applicability to cultural heritage organizations across the state.

- We would like to have a statewide policy or plan of action for pre-contracting with disaster relief companies such as MUTERS. Our physical plant/facilities director says that this is impossible under current state bidding procedures. I would like to see this change through a group effort

- We need guidance in how to communicate the preservation needs of our historical collections to members of our larger organization (which is a public library system that has different goals for its library collections)
- We would like the State Library to be funded at an adequate level which would allow them to resume staff training such as book repair workshops
- Would like to see a statewide consortium/cooperative lab for digitizing video and possibly audio records
- We especially need assistance in developing a long-range preservation plan
- With budget cuts and cuts to staffing, preservation becomes increasingly more challenging; however, we are aware of what our needs are
- We need funds to complete projects which are in place, but not completed due to lack of funds
- There is one problem regarding state-curated collections that must be addressed. There must be adequate funding for all the multiple needs and solutions. That will require legislative assistance, and without that, these needs will just stand!
- Need funding for small, in-house conservation projects
- Our institution is seeking grants for indexing, cataloging, and digitization
- We need funding for a storage unit and a full-time employee
- Our institution is having problems with the theft of local books, and would like to have microfilm copies produced
- Our institution is preparing to accept a large donation, much of which is in dire need of preservation and conservation
- We need information on the conservation and preservation of artifacts and exhibits we currently have
- This survey was an eye-opener that certainly makes me aware of all that we lack. Our collection is in need of an item-by-item appraisal

Recommendations

The Louisiana Connecting to Collections Statewide Preservation Needs Assessment Survey found many positive results overall. It showed that cultural heritage institutions within the state already have a good level of “preservation infrastructure” in place on an individual-institution and collaborative level, and need to continue to build the momentum for preservation by strengthening current good practices and addressing identified preservation concerns.

Inventorying of collection materials, particularly in archival and non-paper formats, is needed as a foundation on which other preservation practices can be built. It has been said many times that an organization cannot plan for the preservation of its collection if it doesn’t know what it has, and this is true for Louisiana institutions. Implementing some basic and inexpensive inventorying methods, as has been done in other states such as Delaware as part of their Connecting to Collections project, could be very helpful to Louisiana institutions. The sharing of information between institutions on methods to complete inventories is also suggested.

Another basic activity in establishing institutional preservation programs is to build preservation budgets. While some organizations in the state had a reasonable level of funding directed toward preservation activities, there is a need for many institutions to further build these budgets. It is good to see the pursuit of preservation grants in Louisiana at a level higher than in many other states, but even further work in this area can be done through offering workshops and assistance in writing preservation grants. And, to further consider workshops, while there is a good record of preservation training in Louisiana, institutions responding to this survey showed a strong interest in even further preservation training opportunities.

Training in preservation management and other areas could help to eradicate the lack of comprehensive preservation plans in Louisiana’s cultural heritage institutions. Another method to assist in development of these long-range preservation plans is to make preservation surveys more widely available. These reviews of

building condition, collection condition, and preservation policies can be the foundation of an institution's long-range preservation program.

There is a proven need for disaster planning in the state of Louisiana due to the recent high level of collection-damaging disasters. Many organizations have these plans, but others are still in need of basic disaster preparedness and recovery policies. While there were many disaster planning workshops held in the state after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and sample disaster plans were posted online, it may be time to schedule additional workshops and update posted planning documents. A basis for this plan is the excellent level of implementation of fire safety equipment and training, and the good existing relationships with emergency first responders. Further development of Continuity of Operations Plans among cultural heritage institutions can help organizations regain the ability to serve their diverse audiences more quickly after a disaster occurs.

Storage conditions for cultural heritage collections are ranked better by Louisiana institutions than those in many states; a way to "blanket" the state with helpful information on adequate preservation storage is to hold regional or statewide presentations or workshops at organizations which have good storage conditions so others can see storage best practices in action.

The "storage" and maintenance of digital collections once they are acquired or created is a cause for concern as well in Louisiana. The level of digital collection creation in the state is relatively high, but there needs to be more of a concentration on regular backups of digital collections, and going beyond backups to establishment of actual digital preservation policies, procedures, and practices.

An area of need that is not widely addressed in the results of this survey but still warrants attention is the condition and maintenance of historic buildings within the state. The survey identified quite a large number of collecting repositories with responsibility for historic buildings; while not a specific focus of this survey, this is a potential topic for further research, followup, and action.

The positive results and useful information generated by the Louisiana Connecting to Collections Survey even extends to the comments at the end of the survey instrument. There are a number of participant's suggestions which should be considered for inclusion as part of further statewide preservation planning and information. Most important to address:

- We would like to have a statewide policy or plan of action for pre-contracting with disaster relief companies
- We would like the State Library to be funded at an adequate level which would allow them to resume staff training such as book repair workshops
- Would like to see a statewide consortium/cooperative lab for digitizing video and possibly audio records

Addressing the need for knowledge on how to preserve currently-held and soon-to-be-donated collections is an important activity which can be addressed in part by making preservation surveys more widely available, and by sharing further information about preservation practices among institutions.

And, finally, with the large number of comments at the end of the survey, in addition to the responses to questions throughout the instrument, the need for continued and expanded preservation funding in the state looms large. Simply making institutions more aware of local (through foundations, corporations, etc.), state, regional, and national preservation funding resources, and working with institutions to write fundable grants can help organizations address many of the basic preservation needs expressed throughout this report.