

Open Content Study 2019



OCLC Global Council (in conjunction with OCLC Research) surveyed libraries around the world on their open content (OC) efforts, investments, and opinions. The key takeaways from 705 libraries in 82 countries were: libraries’ interest in open content is growing, they want to move forward quickly, and they believe that OCLC can play a role in supporting their open content efforts.

Globally, libraries (91%) are engaged in open content activities, and most (72%) plan to get involved in even more.

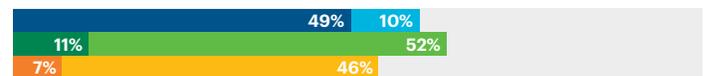
This open content survey described 14 different types of open content activities. The graphs below show, for total respondents, current and planned activities, levels of success (“very” or “somewhat” successful), and whether OCLC currently supports an activity or is seen to have a potential role.

- **Currently engaged** in OC activities
- **Very successful** OC activities
- **My library’s OC activities are supported** by OCLC
- **Planning** OC activities
- **Somewhat successful** OC activities
- **I see a role for OCLC** in OC activities

Supporting users/instructing/digital literacy programs



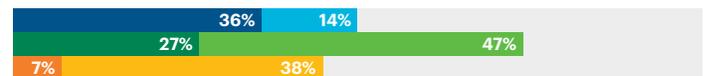
Advocacy and policies



Promoting the discovery of open content



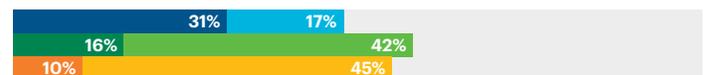
Publishing



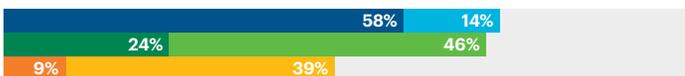
Institutional repository



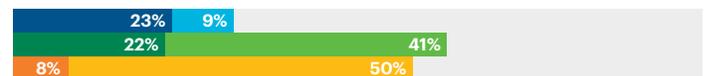
Data services



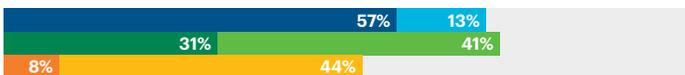
Supporting authors/researchers/teachers



Bibliometrics



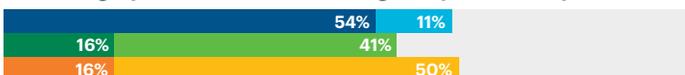
Digitizing collections



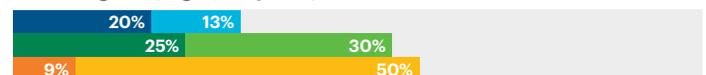
Assessment



Selecting open content not managed by the library



Born-digital (legal) deposit/web archive



Digital collections library



Deep interactions with open content



Key Findings

Interest in open content is growing. Overall, research and university libraries are generally more likely than other library types to currently be involved in most open content activities. However, involvement in open content activities is growing and subject to shifts: 75% report planning new activities. Compared to the Americas, respondents from other countries are more likely to engage in new and a wider range of activities and to want to accelerate the impact.

Libraries want to move forward more quickly. Three-quarters would like to accelerate the pace of results for data services, 63% want the same for advocacy and policies, and more than half of total respondents feel similarly for many of the other open content activities.

OCLC can play a role in supporting open content. More than half of respondents indicate that OCLC currently supports their open content activities or that they see a role for OCLC to support a variety of their activities, in particular for those related to making open content discoverable and usable.

Local is the preferred scale for impact. Respondents were asked what the “right scale to achieve impact” is for each of the open content activities studied: institutional, local (campus or local community), consortial, national/regional, transnational, or global. In every case, “institutional” was the most preferred scale, with “local” usually being second. Taken together, the scale preference of “institutional + local” accounted for between 75% and 41% of each activity.

OCLC would like to thank the 705 library professionals who completed the survey: 49% from 11 countries in the Americas, 36% from 56 countries in EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa), and 15% from 15 countries in Asia Pacific. The majority (72%) of respondents were from university/higher education (66%) and research (6%) libraries. Other categories include vocation and other educational (8%), public (9%), special (8%), national (2%), and other (1%) libraries.

Additional thanks to the OCLC Global Council Program Committee members who led this effort: Debbie Schachter, University Librarian, Capilano University (ARC); Kuang-hua Chen, University Librarian and Full Professor, National Taiwan University (APRC); Tuba Akbaytürk, Library Director, Koç University (EMEA); and Rupert Schaab, Deputy Director, University of Göttingen (EMEA).

Conclusions

Support for open content is strong across all regions. Overall, respondents report that they are well-invested in open content and support its use across the full range of service categories. Many open content activities are covered by budget line items and/or FTE staff time allocations in libraries’ planning and budgeting. The most stable activities seem to be operational activities, which are said to be both most mature and very successful.

Research on discoverability and standardization is top of mind. Respondents were asked, “Which of the following OCLC Research areas are most relevant to your open content activities?” Across all respondents, the top OCLC Research areas most relevant to library’s open content activities are discoverability of open content (63%) and standardization of metadata (49%).

Need for assessment, advocacy, and data policies ... at scale. Only 20% of respondents report doing current open content assessment work, with 15% more saying that they plan to do some. A tenth of respondents say that OCLC supports this work, with another 55% seeing a role for the organization. Assessment is work that OCLC is uniquely able to do at scale. And librarians agree that certain other activities are appropriate at scales larger than local; approximately a fifth feel national/regional would be the right scale to achieve impact for advocacy and policies (23%) and data services (18%).

To learn more about OCLC open content initiatives, visit oclc.org/open.

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