

Focus Group Interview Protocol: Archive Participants in Aggregation

This represents an example of a focus group interview protocol for the project. These questions serve only as an example and will be refined, pre-tested, and edited prior to use in the field.

They are guided by our overarching research questions related to Cultural Heritage Institutions:

- 1. What are the enabling and constraining factors that influence whether organizations describe the archival collections in their care?*
- 2. What are the enabling or constraining factors that influence whether organizations contribute to an aggregation of archival description?*
- 3. What value does participation in an archival aggregation service bring to organizations?*

Participants:

Interviewer:

Notetaker:

Date of interview:

Interview start time:

Interview end time:

Instructions for Interviewer

Please follow the script as closely as possible.

Turn on recorder

Script for Introduction

Let me tell you just a little bit about who I am, who I work for and what we're doing with this research project. I work as **[provide brief description of your title or job role]** at OCLC. OCLC is a non-profit cooperative that works with libraries around the world.

This focus group interview will provide an opportunity for you to discuss your current work practices and processes related to creating archival description and sharing that description with a finding aid aggregator.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. We really appreciate your help. Our focus group won't take much longer than one hour. There are no right or wrong answers. It is not a test. I just want you to be as honest as you can to find out what you think.

We have our notetaker here, **[Name]**, who will be typing notes as you speak. I also will be jotting down notes, so please don't think I'm not listening to you if you see me **[writing/typing]**. We also are recording the interview. We will be using the notes and recording transcripts later so that we are able to document what you have said. Everything you say is private and will not be discussed with anyone outside of the team. We will not identify you in any presentations, reports, or external communications about this project. We want you to be aware that any of you can stop participating at any time. Is this all okay? Does anyone have any questions before we start?



Example Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Please tell us about your role in working with archival collections at your institution.
2. Is your institution involved in any finding aid aggregations? If so, what are they?
3. Please tell us about how archival description gets done in your institution. (Probes: Who does it? What tools do you use? What policies do you have? What standards do you follow?)
4. What are the things that make archival description work easy or difficult in your institution? What are the things that support this work and make it easier, either that you have now or would like to have? (Probes: This could be about staffing, policy, equipment, technology, administration. When thinking about this range of types of resources, can you think of anything else?)
5. Think about your current process for sharing archival description with an aggregator, or the potential process if you aren't involved with an aggregation. What about the process is easy? What about the process is difficult? (Probes: This could be about staffing, policy, equipment, technology, administration. When thinking about this range of types of resources, can you think of anything else? What do you think is the most important thing a finding aid aggregator can do to enable archives to contribute to it?)
6. What value do you think a finding aid aggregation can offer for your institution? What value do you think a finding aid aggregation can offer for your researchers? (Probes: Values could include eliminating local work, providing better visibility to collections, helping researchers find what they need, etc. Can you tell us more specifically what would be valuable? Why would this be valuable?)
7. Please describe how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your institution's work sharing archival description with the aggregator, and the impact it has had on the use of your finding aids. What changes have you made that you believe will continue? Why do you believe they will continue?
8. If you had a magic wand and could create your ideal finding aid aggregation system, how would it work and what would it do? (Probes: How would your institution interact with it? What would it do for your researchers?)