

Archival Policies

Policy, decision making and action

Big P policy vs little p policy. In some organizations, policy is a big scary word that involves government ministers, or trustees. We aren't necessarily only concerned with those policies. In some cases, all we need are local policies, or guiding practices.

POLICY vs policy

- Big “P” vs “p”
- Don't be intimidated.

policy & technology

- technology-neutral
- vendor-neutral
- ...as good as possible
- “why” decoupled from “how”

Definition

Digital Preservation Policy

“A guideline that describes the essential setting, principles, structures and objectives of a digital archive”

Definition

Digital Preservation Policy

- Can be aimed at both internal and external parties and furthers understanding (partly its own understanding) of the mission, methods and credibility of the institution.
- Intended to be binding for practice over a long period of time and offers a fixed point of reference for daily work as well as for further strategic developments.
- Documents of the digital archive that cover related topics (tech-specs, strategy papers, etc.) should be in line with the preservation policy.

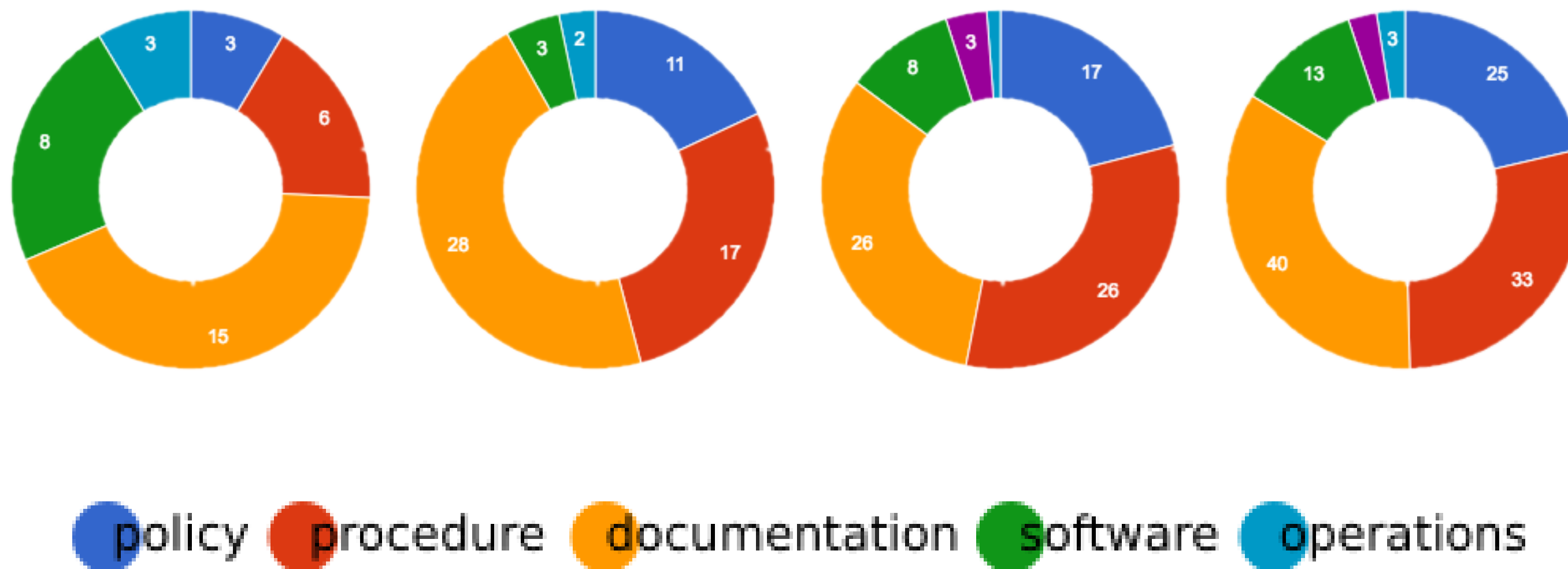
Everyone's Got one! Right?

Of 148 institutions worldwide:

- Over 90% of respondents said that they had undertaken efforts to preserve digital materials
- Only about 25% of the institutions surveyed had a written digital preservation policy

Source: [Bergen's Report \(2014\)](#)

Gap Areas



Source: [AVPreserve](#)

Objectives and Status

- What are the aims of the policy within the organisation?
- To which higher and lower-ranking documents can the policy refer?
- Are future objectives distinguished from the situation as it stands?

User Orientation

- Which user groups are significant for the institution?
- How is the digital archive set up to meet the needs of its user groups and how does it ensure that user needs can be met over the long term?
- How does the digital archive ensure that it is possible to use the archived data?
- How, ideally, are scenarios for future use made possible?

Organisations and Resources

- What organisational structures are needed for digital preservation and how do they relate to the organisational structure of the institution?
- Is the long-term funding of the digital archive secure and has it been ensured that available and required resources will be checked on an ongoing basis?
- Is the necessary expertise on hand in the areas of object formats, IT, management and organisation?
- Is there a central preservation management? How big is the team?
- Are tasks, responsibilities, aims and processes clearly defined and known to all?

Aims of Digital Preservation

- What are the core aims of the digital archive?
- What steps have been taken to achieve these aims?
- Are these steps made transparent, and to whom are they made transparent?

Preservation Strategies and Monitoring

- Which overall preservation strategy has been chosen for the archive? (migration? emulation? a hybrid form?)
- What measures are planned to preserve the significant properties of the archived information?
- What preservation strategies and processes follow the archived information through the various archival phases?
- How is preservation planning organized?

Technical infrastructure

- What aspects of the technical infrastructure have long-term significance, and are they formulated in accordance with the strategic aims of the institution?
- In what form can technical aspects be included in the policy (difference versus other documentation)? What cross-references would be helpful?
- Is the technical infrastructure in line with the professional, legal and economic requirements of the institution as well as with its technical possibilities?

Contact and general data

- Who has responsibility for the current document and who for the further development of the policy? Who can be given as the contact person?
- What other general data are needed? Where can these best be included?

Updating and quality control

- Policy should form basis for the work.
- Not be changed too frequently.
- Should not be static either.
- Must be able to adjust to (future) changes.

Should vs IS

Don't confuse policy-"should" with real-"is"!

- Some aspects already fixed.
- Others still in development.

Should vs IS

To avoid this, a dedicated section outlining medium-term plans or a separate document such as a strategy paper, can be used.

Relationships

Comparison of institutional policies

- Guidelines for the Digital Film Collection
(Austrian Filmmuseum, 2018)
- Digital Preservation & Access Strategy
(Irish Film Archive, 2016)
- Digital Preservation: Policy, Standards and Procedures
(Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, 2016)

Comments?
Questions?

Links

- Guidelines for the creation of an institutional policy on digital preservation (Nestor, 2014)