

# Federal Libraries Digital Preservation Census

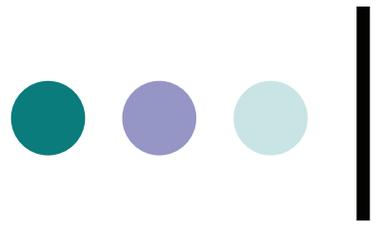
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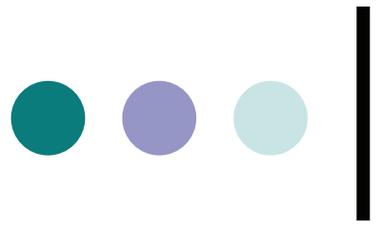
# Background

The Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC) is a department of the Library of Congress which seeks to foster excellence in federal library and information services through interagency cooperation. It also provides guidance to the Federal Library and Information Center Network (FEDLINK), the FLICC business subsidiary, which serves as the federal libraries with purchasing, training and resource-sharing consortium.

The direction and priorities of FLICC are set by its member community through elected representatives and through its working groups. The Preservation and Digitization Working Group is an ad hoc group of federal librarians that has formed to develop strategies for long-term preservation and

access to federal library resources. The committee works to assess the preservation and digitization needs of federal libraries and their users, to develop policies and procedures for digitization programs, to recommend standards and best practices for digitization projects and programs, and to provide information about physical preservation and disaster preparedness to federal libraries. Sub-committees have been established in order to accomplish this wide-reaching mission.

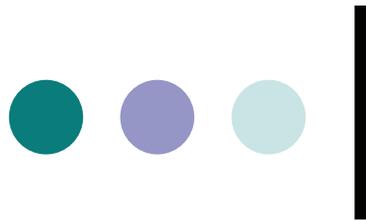
The Survey Subcommittee focuses on the information gathering efforts of the working group. It has adopted the mission of assessing the federal library community to determine what digital projects are currently being undertaken, what infrastructure is being used to support these projects, and what needs the libraries have to pursue ongoing digital initiatives.



# Purpose

The goal of this subcommittee is to determine what digital projects are going on within the federal library community.

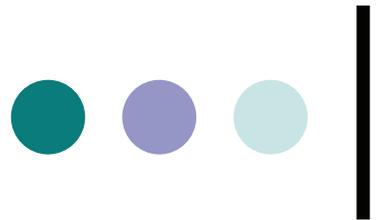
At this time, there is no comprehensive list of federal libraries. In order to complete its digital projects survey, the subcommittee must also conduct a census of federal libraries.



# Method

Although this project attempts to collect two discrete sets of data, common principles underlie both projects:

- Surveying will be done iteratively, in small, well-defined groups of libraries
- Questions will be sent directly to a single, authoritative contact to prevent duplicate responses from institutions
- Non-responders will receive follow-up phone calls to maximize response rate
- Data collected will be made available to FLICC/ FEDLINK. Summary data will be available to all federal libraries.



# Digitization Survey

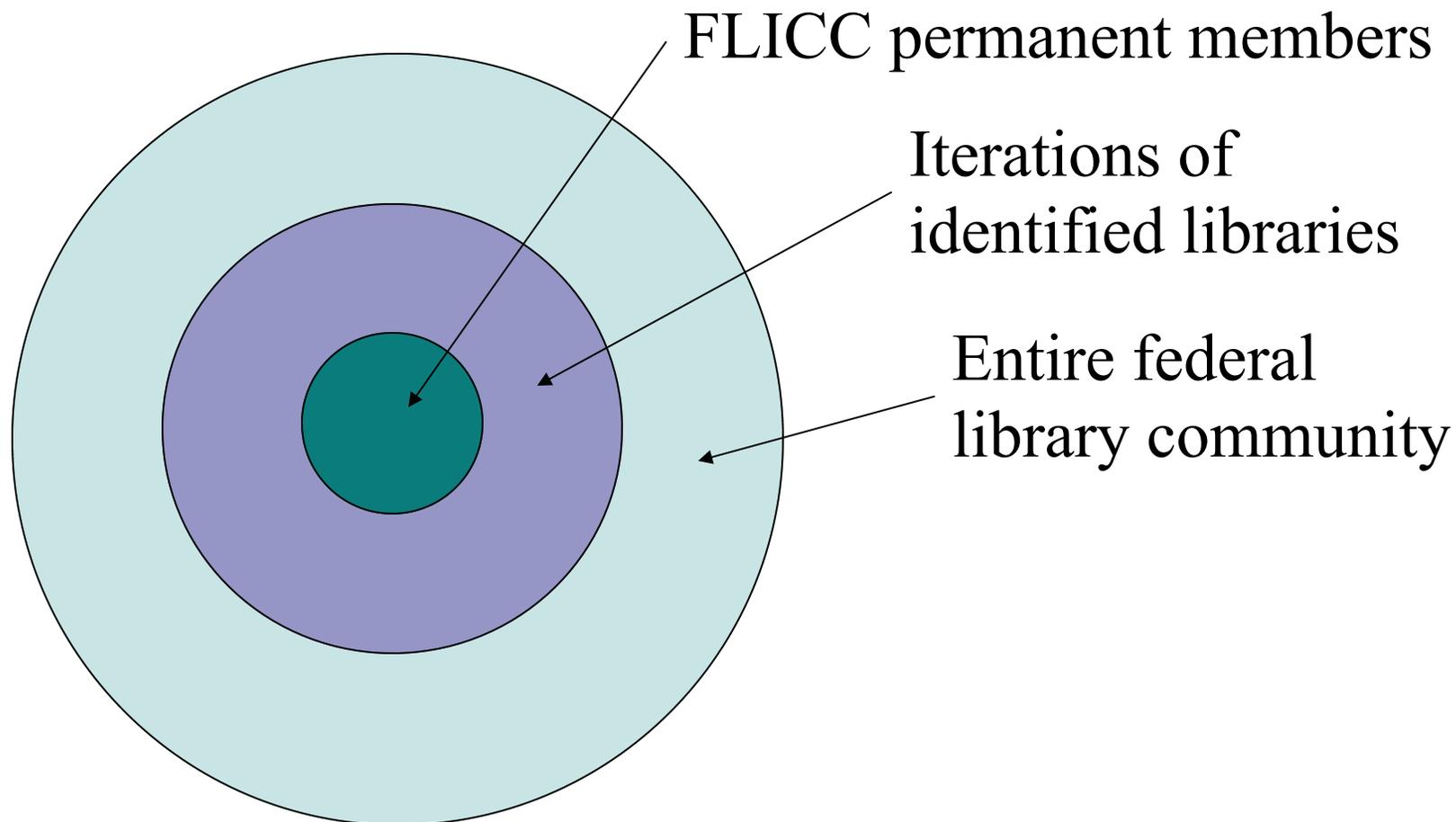
Our team is interested in not only what is being digitized, but also what infrastructure and methods are being employed to undertake these projects. Survey questions were developed to collect information in each of the following interest areas:

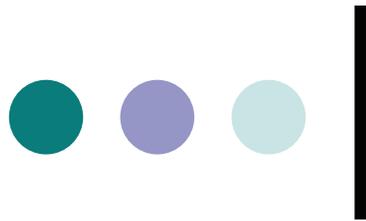
- Identification
- What is being digitized?
- Why are you digitizing?
- How—people and finances
- How—technology
- How—workflows
- What challenges do you face?
- How can FLICC/FEDLINK help?

As the survey questions were in development, the team began communicating with the federal library community through its FLICC representatives. At a quarterly meeting of FLICC members in December 2008, the survey project was introduced. At that time, support for the project was solicited from the membership, both in order to obtain their responses, but also to raise awareness among the federal library community as a whole about the survey initiative.

The team collected contact information for the permanent and rotating members of FLICC to use them as the first group to be surveyed. The representation to FLICC includes a cross-section of federal libraries, including representatives from libraries within every cabinet-level agency and branch of the U.S. government, including independent agencies. This choice fulfilled the team's goal of targeting the questions to individuals, but also established contacts in each

chain of command that could help identify additional libraries to be surveyed.





# Data

Survey sent to 50 individuals, 14 responses to date (28%)

## Prevalence of digitization

- 4 have no digitization programs
- 4 have been digitizing for more than 10 years

## Why digitize?

- 70% preservation purposes
- 90% to increase or provide access

## What is being digitized?

- Technical reports
- Archival materials
- Journal articles
- Manuscripts
- Monographs (whole and parts)
- Photographs
- Rare books
- 90% are capturing born-digital materials

## How-people and finances

- 70% view digital projects as part of regular operations
- 50% have digital projects that are both special projects and regular operations

## How-technology

- TIFF and PDF are primary formats for master files
- Dublin Core and MARC are most common metadata structures
- 40% have more than one repository

## How-workflows

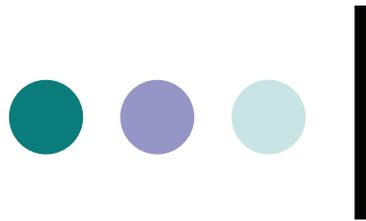
- Most libraries are using existing staff for all functions
- 70% have trained staff
- 70% use off-site vendors for some aspect, 100% outsource at least some scanning
- 70% have written policies and procedures, primarily concerning standards, best practices, metadata, priorities for digitization and quality control
- 90% store files outside of their repositories

## Challenges

- Lack of time
- Lack of skills and expertise
- Lack of funds (90%)
- IT security concerns
- Insufficient IT support

## Roles for FLICC/FEDLINK

- Identify and promote best practices
- Provide procurement vehicles
- Offer educational opportunities
- Host a conference on digitization

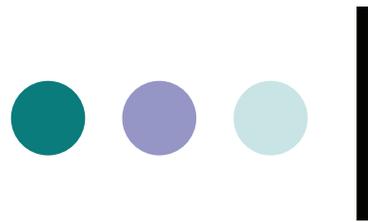


# Discussion

We are excited by the preliminary results of the digitization survey. A clear majority of libraries are digitizing at least some materials. The use of existing staff, emphasis on training, and belief that digitization is a regular activity of the library point toward the establishment of digitization and a long-term strategy to accomplish most library's preservation and access goals.

However, we caution that these preliminary results may not indicate trends prevalent within the overall federal library community. This first survey target population was selected for their involvement in FLICC/FEDLINK, an indication of the leadership of these libraries and individuals within their organizations, and suggests that they may also be leading the way for the federal library community as a whole. This first

iteration of the survey only queried 50 libraries, a small fraction of the entire federal library community, of which only 14 responded. At this time we are unable to estimate how large the entire community may be since a comprehensive census of federal libraries has never been conducted. Much more data must be collected and analyzed before we can be confident that we are observing trends, even those within a branch of government or particular size of library.



# Libraries Census

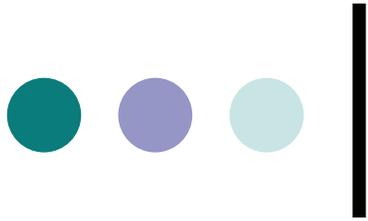
Moving forward with future iterations of the digitization survey requires us to identify additional groups of libraries. We are pursuing this portion of the project genealogically.

In most cases, the FLICC representative from each cabinet-level agency or branch is from the largest library or library program management element. As part of our initial introduction of this project, we solicited their assistance to identify other libraries within their chain of command. While a few have sent this list to us with their responses to the digitization survey, most will be asked for this information separately.

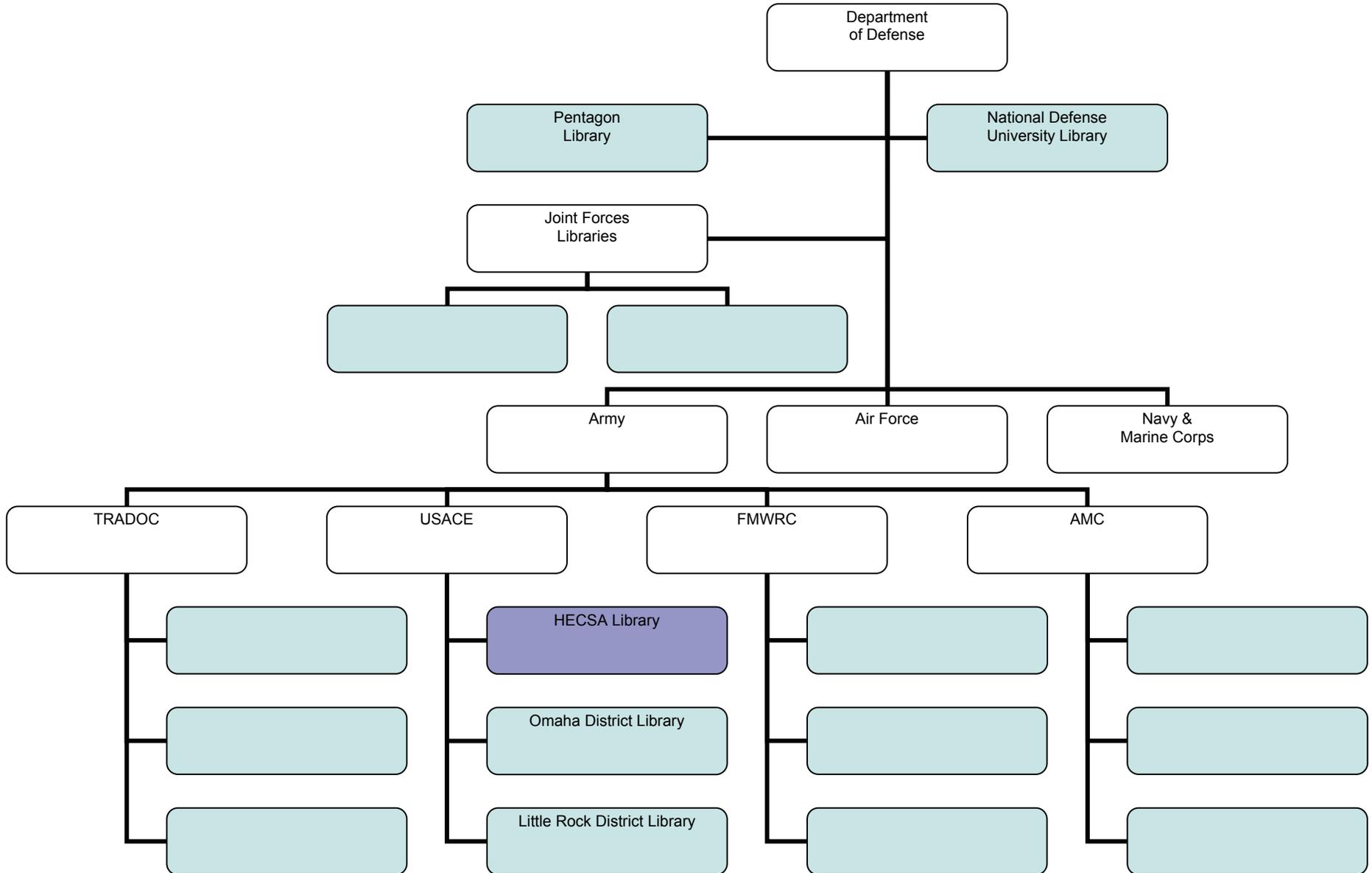
Known libraries will be presented with a “family tree”-structured template. Our library contact will be asked to fill in this template, illustrating the structure of the libraries

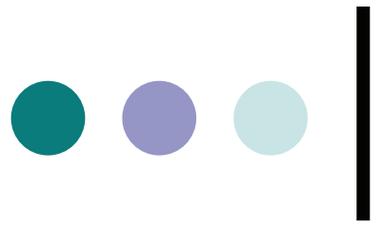
within that agency or branch. At that time, an individual contact for each library will be identified.

The committee is beginning its census with the Department of Defense and the Library of Congress. We hope that number of representatives to FLICC from these two agencies will easily allow us to construct accurate “family trees.” We also believe that these organizations are sufficiently complex to illustrate a variety of hierarchical and organizational relationships which will serve as examples for other agencies to follow.



# Family Tree

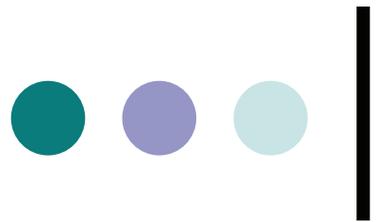




# Way Ahead

- Follow-up on the current iteration of digitization survey. Enlist the assistance of federal librarian retirees who are interested in getting involved with FLICC projects.
- Compile the first branches of federal library family tree. Use Department of Defense and Library of Congress to determine what visualizations of this information will be understandable across the library community.
- Communicate with FLICC/FEDLINK and other Working Groups to begin filling the needs of libraries identified through the digitization survey.
- Communicate to the federal library community and beyond to elicit their support for this data collection effort and to identify additional information needs of the community involving digitization.

- Create a portal of digital projects to provide a single point of access to federal library repositories.
- Establish a library of best practices and procedures that can be used by libraries pursuing digitization projects.



# Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the Federal Library and Information Center Committee for facilitating cooperation and information sharing between federal libraries, and for encouraging outreach beyond the federal library community.

Thank you to our survey team members for all of their hard work!

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