



# African Digital Library Support Network

*...facilitating access to African digital content*



## Increasing Visibility of African Research and Cultural Heritage Content: The 2013 Survey Outcome of the ADLSN CVP Project

The [African Digital Library Support Network \(ADLSN\)](#) created an online survey that was disseminated by ADLSN country coordinators between April and July 2013. The goal of the survey was twofold: (1) to study the current situation of African digital repositories in eight ADLSN countries (Nigeria, Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mauritius, and Zimbabwe); and (2) to gather data for determining the interest in participating in [ADLSN's Collection Visibility Project \(CVP\)](#) and the relevant implementation issues. CVP's goal is to establish a centralised hosting solution for institutions that have digital collections, but that don't have the adequate infrastructure to make their collections accessible globally.

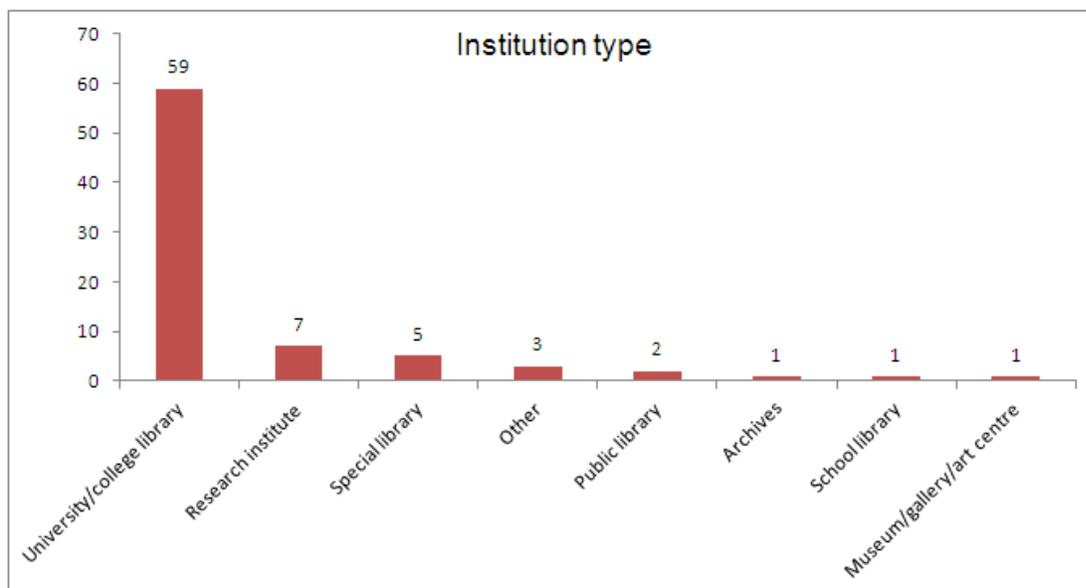
Of the 79 institutions that responded to the survey, 38 expressed interest in the ADLSN's Collection Visibility Project (CVP) and have collections ready to be included and the technical capacity to successfully participate. The first phase of the project has started with the selection of Amazon Web Services as the infrastructure platform. In addition, the selection of pilot institutions and preparation for implementation in the fourth quarter of 2013 has begun.

### Survey Summary

Below is a summary of the survey responses. For many of the survey questions, respondents could select more than one response and/or they were answering questions with regards to each of their collections; therefore, in some cases the total responses is larger than the total number of respondents.

### Respondents

There were 79 respondents from eight countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The majority of the respondents (59) were from university/college libraries



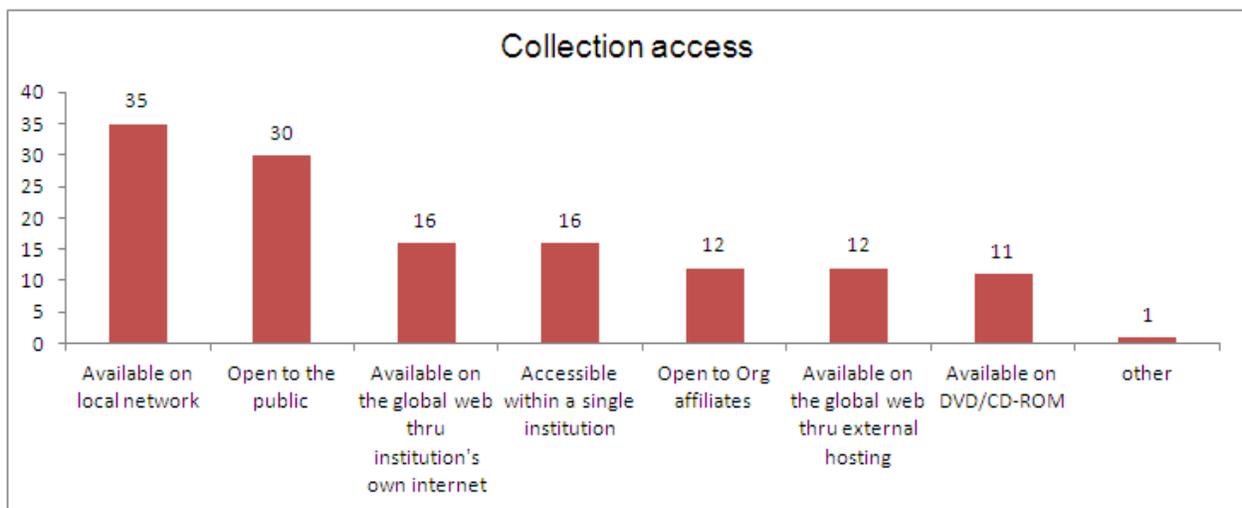
Kenya (15) and Nigeria (16) had the most respondents, followed closely by Zimbabwe with eleven respondents. There were nine institutions each from Ethiopia and Tanzania and seven from Senegal. Mauritius and Malawi had six each.

### Digital Collections

From the data, it is evident that most institutions recognise the need to have digital collections. Most institutions described their collections as either ‘under development’ (27) or that they were ‘updating an already existing one’ (27). A fair number also said they were in the planning phase (18) of building digital collections.

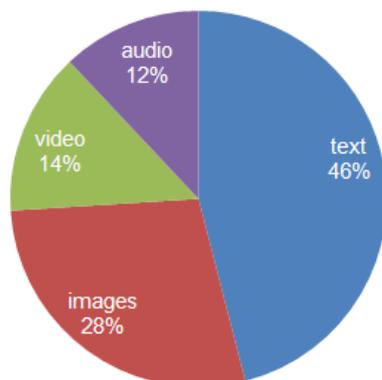
Most institutions connect to the internet via DSL/broadband (53).

Regarding access to digital collections, the data demonstrates that there still remains great variability in terms of access from institution to institution, with collections mostly ‘available on local network’ (35) or ‘open to the public’ (30).



In keeping with the composition of most digital collections, nearly all collections (46%) consisted mostly of text documents; 28% also had images, and some contain video (14%) and audio (12%).

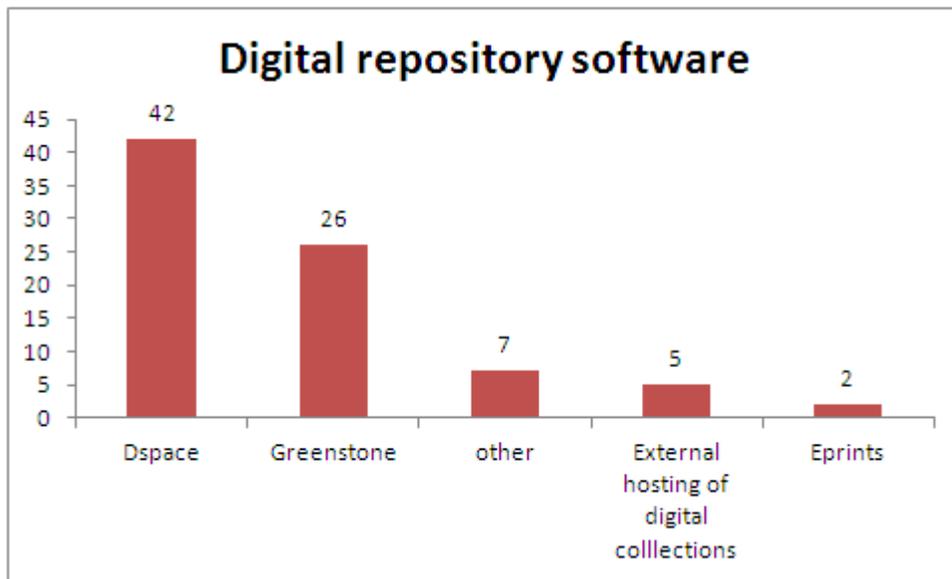
Format type in collections



For the question ‘what digital collections are being or have been developed,’ respondents interpreted it in two ways. Most responded with a list of format types, but some responded with the subject matter of their collections. Since there was no controlled vocabulary used for identifying the format types, counting the actual numbers may not accurately represent the collections; however, we can see that the most mentioned format types were theses and dissertations, journal articles, and conference proceedings.

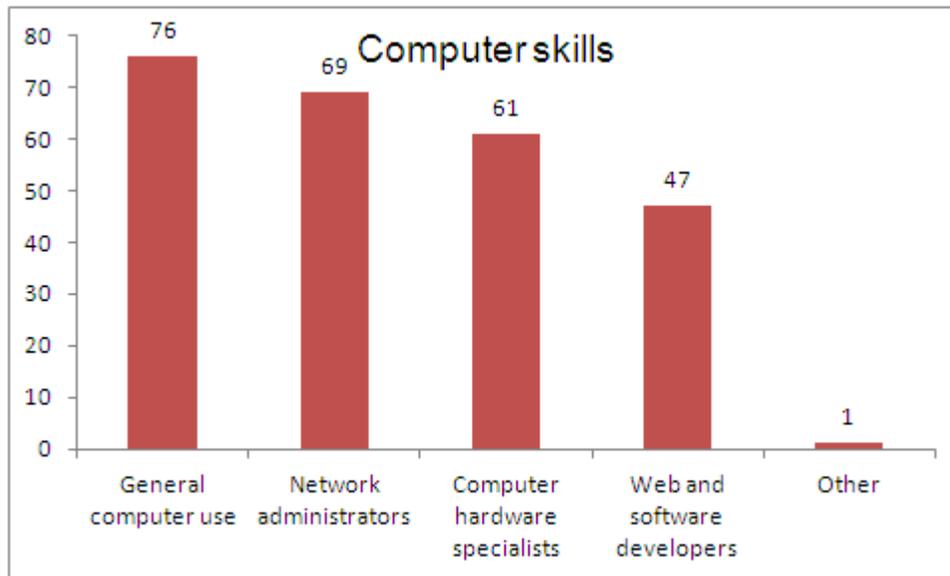
## Technology

The survey confirms the widespread use of FOSS in Africa. Many libraries use a combination of tools. The most widely-used tool by far was DSpace (42), followed by Greenstone (26). A very few institutions were using other solutions, including external hosting or ePrints.



## Skills and Training

The survey clearly demonstrates that there is a general level of computer literacy and technical proficiency. Nearly all institutions (76) report that their staff has knowledge of 'general computer use (capable of using email, Internet and Office Suites).' A large number also have network administrators (69) and hardware specialists (61). On the other hand, institutions reported that more specialized skills remain less common. For instance, those reporting web and software developers on staff was 47.



Capacity building in FOSS has clearly been a focus for libraries, as shown by the survey data that more institutions had received training than had not (with the exception of Mauritius). Most of the training was in DSpace and Greenstone.

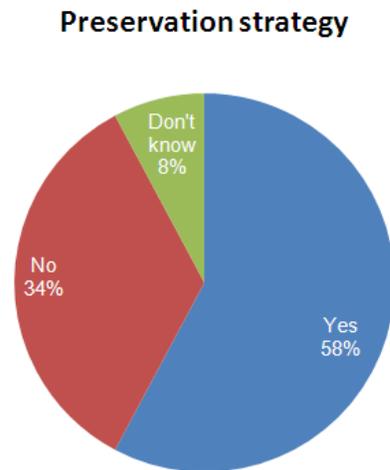
## Organizational Integration

When asked about the integration of the digital repository into the organisation's IT infrastructure and higher management decision making (and what the challenges are), institutions answered the question in a variety of ways. Some institutions gave a project update. Others explicitly stated whether or not there was integration. And some discussed the challenges. Despite the disparate data, the following themes emerged:

- Only a small number responded directly that the digital repository was integrated (27% of the institutions have not yet started or are in the planning stages).
- The main challenges faced include: the lack of a qualified staff, technical resources, reliable and affordable connectivity, and copyright issues.

## Preservation

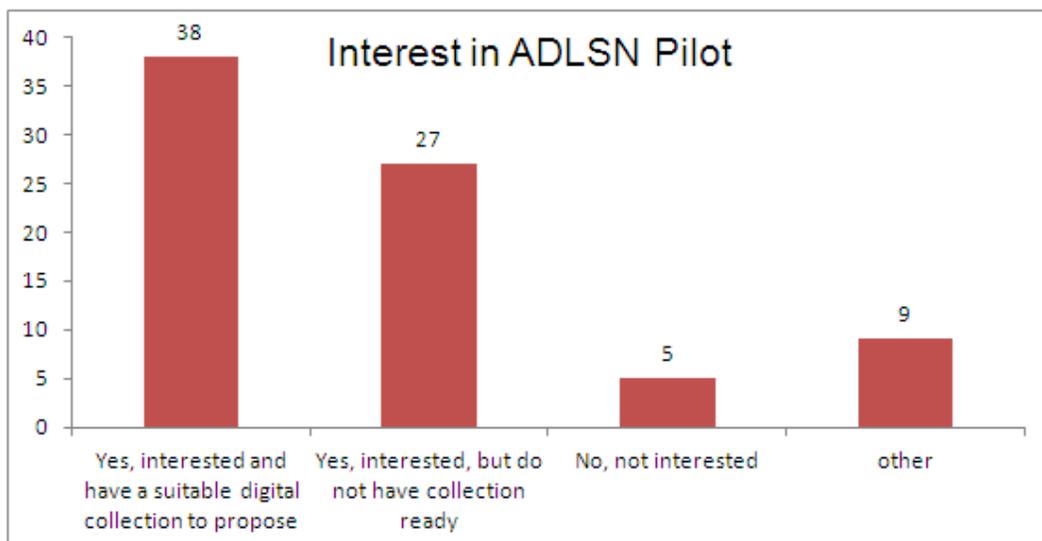
Long-term preservation is starting to be addressed. 43 institutions reported having a long-term preservation strategy. 31 reported not having one, and five did not know.



## Central Hosting Pilot

The goal of the ADLSN central collection hosting pilot is to implement a centralized hosting platform to help institutions with limited IT resources make their digital collections globally visible and accessible. The platform provides seamless integration between the local institution's website and the centrally-hosted content, which in turn allows local institution to retain their branding and identity.

38 institutions expressed interest and have collections ready for inclusion. 27 were interested but didn't have suitable collections. Only five expressed no interest, and these institutions already had solutions for making their collections available publicly. Nine institutions either needed to consult with others to respond or wanted more information before responding.



## About ADLSN

The African Digital Libraries Support Network (ADLSN) is a community of African practitioners and other interested actors with a common goal of supporting the preservation and dissemination of African content in digital form. The network includes National Centres in the following countries: Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

Thanks to funding from the KOHA foundation and ongoing partnership with [EIFL](#), ADLSN has embarked on the central hosting pilot project to increase the visibility of content from African institutions.

## Learn more

If you are interested in learning more about this project or in getting involved, please contact us at: [info@adlsn.org](mailto:info@adlsn.org) or visit the project's web page at: <http://adlsn.org/cvp>