# Implementing and Managing Streaming Media Services in Academic Libraries

Gisèle Tanasse, University of California, Berkeley

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Choice White Paper: Implementing and Managing Streaming Media Services in Academic Libraries

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With this study, "Implementing and Managing Streaming Media Services in Academic Libraries," Choice, a publishing unit at the Association of College and Research Libraries, presents the eighth in a series of research papers designed to provide actionable intelligence around topics of importance to the academic library community. Researched and written by industry experts and published with underwriting from academic publishers and other parties, these papers are part of a continuing effort by Choice to extend its services to a broad cross-section of library-related professions.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# Implementing and Managing Streaming Media Services in Academic Libraries

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Like the use of digital resources in general, streaming media has experienced rapid adoption rates in academic settings, which accelerated even more during the COVID-19 pandemic. But also like any other digital resource, streaming media brings with it a variety of challenges to workflows, pricing, and access. This report documents the opportunities streaming services provide through a review of existing literature, survey data analysis, and limited practitioner interviews. It examines the factors that librarians must consider, including acquisition models, budgeting, content use scenarios, user perspectives, and ongoing management, providing a quantifiable overview of the current streaming landscape in academic libraries.

Key findings:

- Most institutions currently offer streaming media content, nearing total adoption at almost 97%
- Institutions not offering streaming content are likely facing significant economic barriers preventing adoption
- Most library budgets allow for licensing streaming content to support course reserves as well as research and edification
- Despite the majority of survey respondents reporting general budgetary reductions or freezes over 2020—21, most institutions increased spending on streaming media over the course of the pandemic
- Budgetary forecasts for streaming looking forward to 2021—22 are not as dire as might be expected, with most anticipating either maintaining or increasing funding; however, almost all respondents identified cost as one of the biggest challenges with streaming media
- Libraries might consider partnering with campus departments (IT, educational technology, etc.) to better fund streaming collections
- Staffing levels for streaming media management appear to be improving over previous surveys by other authors
- Beyond acquisitions and licensing, libraries provide a range of services to support faculty and students in their use of licensed streaming content

- Libraries face significant challenges in fulfilling requests with the rise of direct-to-consumer platform exclusives (from Amazon, Hulu, Netflix, iTunes, etc.) that are not available for institutional licensing
- Subscription services and direct purchase/firm order are the most popular acquisition models for academic libraries, reflecting a tension between the ease of acquiring subscription services and the need to control spending, while also responding to curricular and research needs.
- Librarians show an ambivalence when it comes to promoting streaming services, hesitant to promote patron driven acquisitions platforms while struggling to find ways to engage users with licensed content
- With few libraries having a formal assessment program in place for media collections, librarians may be missing opportunities to present usage data and impact when advocating for increased funding for streaming media.
- When considering the benefits of streaming, academic librarians are slightly more focused on engagement and representation than on pedagogical benefits.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The benefits of streaming media in higher education are well documented, including flexibility in accessing course content for both students and instructors; allowing for simultaneous usage of high demand titles; supporting distance, remote and flipped instruction; enriching understanding; improving accessibility for users who are deaf or experiencing hearing loss; and improving knowledge transfer and memory through visual engagement (Duncan & Peterson, 2014; Greenberg & Zanetis, 2012; Hartnett, 2019, chapter 1; Wang & Loftis, 2020).

The adoption of streaming in academic libraries has also been driven by format obsolescence. Spicer and Horbal document the growing reliance on digitization to provide for instructional media content in their 2015 survey of 49 classroom audiovisual professionals, where 94% of respondents reported either having a plan in place or anticipating developing a plan to retire physical media playback equipment by 2020. Eighty-three percent of survey respondents identified the availability of playback equipment as a barrier to maintaining classroom playback equipment, with 93% of respondents reporting that they recommend or would recommend digitization as the solutions for instructors seeking to use VHS or DVD (Spicer & Horbal, 2017).

farrelly and Hutchinson track the adoption of streaming video by academic libraries increasing steadily over time. First, citing a 2010 survey by Primary Research Group, measuring adoption of streaming video at 33% in academic libraries; then, through their own surveys, at 70% in 2013 (farrelly & Hutchison, 2014) and at 84.5% in 2015 (farrelly & Hutchison, 2016). In a 2017 *Library Journal* vendor-sponsored survey, 95% of academic library respondents indicated they offer streaming content. The survey also revealed that 70% of collection development for streaming video was driven by instructor requests (Dixon, 2017). From the student perspective, Leonard's 2015 survey of 1,673

students in higher education found that 93% of students report being shown video in their classes, though they do not stipulate what proportion is streaming (Leonard, 2015).

In addition to instructor-initiated requests, usage statistics are often considered in the curatorial decision-making process for streaming collections. However, because these cherry-picking approaches are inefficient and time-consuming, Duncan and Peterson predicted the title-by-title streaming approach was unlikely to remain the default approach for much longer (Duncan & Peterson, 2014). On the other hand, King notes that the annual fees for even a single subscription database can cost tens of thousands of dollars (King, 2014). Since farrelly & Hutchinson found the average spent all streaming licensing (packages and individual titles) to be $22,187 in 2016, subscription pricing may prevent many institutions from pursuing large packages or a variety of packages.

## The Impact of COVID-19 and Remote Instruction

This survey was administered during continued academic disruption in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the continued and evolving impact of the worldwide pandemic on institutional streaming, there is little available in the literature at the time of writing. However, many issues related to increased demand for streaming content in response to remote instruction were captured in communications on the VideoLib listserv. [*Full disclosure: the author is the administrator for VideoLib.*] VideoLib is a listserv cited in the literature as a resource supporting librarians at locating licensing rights for films and documentaries (Duncan & Peterson, 2014; Hartnet, 2019, chapter 4) and VideoLib's "Special Streaming Offers" during COVID-19 outlined special offers made by several streaming platforms in 2020 (Herther, 2020). Additional pandemic related communications on VideoLib center around seeking advice with regard to increased demands and exhausted budgets (Wochna, 2020), the impact of declining enrolments on budgets despite continued increased faculty streaming requests (Threatt, 2020), the access challenges faced by students studying from abroad (Steffen, 2020), and the future of DVD collections and user expectations (Rosen, 2020). These challenges remain unresolved. Possible, but imperfect, solutions include: focusing on communication with users to clarify budgetary, contractual, and copyright limitations; redirecting users to existing licensed content; working with distributors to negotiate discounts; and leaning on Fair Use exemptions and the TEACH Act to support remote instruction.

## Acquisition Workflows and Staffing for Streaming Media

As documented in *Creating a Streaming Video Collection for Your Library*, James Madison University identifies the five core steps in the streaming video life cycle as acquisition, access, administration, support, and evaluation (Duncan & Peterson, 2014, p. xi). Hellman outlines a more granular workflow, from selector/faculty/unit request, to acquisitions review, licensing and purchase, electronic records management and cataloging, access and discoverability, and continuing post-process workflows. He emphasizes the acquisition review stage as a critical opportunity to review streaming packages for accessibility requirements (minimally the American Disabilities Act), as well as technical issues (Hartnett, 2019, Chapter 2).

There can be significant variation across different licensing agreements, which have implications for library users and use cases, including the term (time limit), permissible and restricted uses (such as making clips and public performance rights), and who can access the stream (Duncan & Peterson, 2014, p. 10). Shirts highlights the tension for research libraries between balancing immediate access for in demand titles and providing continuing access to lower-use titles which can suddenly become essential for research use (Hartnett, 2019). Handman describes this dichotomy as "just-in-case" (the very expensive anticipatory collection building, designed to predict a broad range of current and future curricular, research, and institutional needs) versus "just-in-time" (to meet immediate, specific requests) (Handman, 2010).

While patron-driven acquisition (PDA) models can make providing immediate broad research access more affordable for some institutions, there is uncertainty as to how long vendors retain distribution rights with no provisions for preservation (Hartnett, 2019, chapter 1). Wang and Loftis note the extreme costs associated with maintaining the PDA model over time, resulting in a shift to mediation for Portland State University and a loss of access to content (Wang & Loftis, 2020). The *ACRL Guidelines for Media Resources in Academic Libraries* stresses the need for media librarians to build expertise in licensing and copyright issues and to balance fulfilling immediate needs with providing for reliable long-term access. Overall, the Guidelines emphasize the importance of specialized training for both staff and librarians responsible for media programs in libraries (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2018). McGreary also stresses the necessity for specialized expertise to adequately navigate the intricate and complex legal concerns related to the use of media collections (McGeary, 2015). Unfortunately, however, farrelly and Hutchison's surveys reveal that a majority of institutions do not have designated media librarians making curatorial or licensing decisions (farrelly and Hutchison, 2014; 2016).

## Streaming Models

The three primary modes for streaming licensing include purchasing rights to digitize content to host locally, purchasing a file to host locally, and purchasing or subscribing to remotely hosted streaming content (Duncan & Peterson, 2014, p. 5). Ballestro categorizes streaming models into four primary groups:

- Single title purchase model (with perpetual or term licensing)
- Subscription-based models (including serial-like, annual subscriptions, and one-time package subscriptions)
- On-demand models (including patron-driven acquisitions or PDA and demand-driven acquisitions or DDA)
- Evidence-based acquisition models (also known as access-to-own).

While some academic institutions may have tried pay-per-view streaming access, this model is typically reserved for public libraries (Harnett, 2019).

Subscription-based packages offer users access to a much broader swath of content than any institution could physically acquire, process, or manage effectively (Duncan & Peterson, 2014), though Handman and King both warn of the potential in large subscriptions for content of inferior quality that has not undergone critical curatorial review by professional librarians or academics (Handman, 2010; King, 2014). The tension between ease of access and quality of content is reflected in the results of a 2017 *Library Journal* vendor-sponsored survey, where 48% of library respondents report employing vendor-curated collections, but only 20% of respondents prefer to use this model (Dixon, 2017). Kate Pourshariati, Media Librarian, Montgomery County Community College, outlined some of the limitations of subscription services, such as Films on Demand, in an email to the author on May 11, 2021, noting that, unlike patron-driven acquisition platforms, "they do not feature new content, resulting in landing pages looking stale and users not being aware of new releases. There is an annoying tendency to count fragments of titles and clips as titles, making search results longer [and], as with other vendors, selling us stuff that they got for free, such as Ted Talks."

Pricing for the different models can vary greatly depending on provider, subject area, and terms, as well as the size of the institution (Duncan & Peterson, 2014, p. 5). Many librarians advocate for the purchase of perpetual licenses or life of file whenever possible to reduce duplicate licensing efforts and allow for reliable access over time (Duncan & Peterson, 2014, p. 8).

## Streaming Platforms and Availability to Academic Libraries

Streaming platforms marketed to academic libraries highlighted and evaluated throughout the literature include Alexander Street/Academic Video Online, Docuseek, Ambrose Digital, Films on Demand/Feature Films for Education (Infobase), Hoopla, Journal of Visualized Experiments (JoVE), Kanopy, Medici.tv, New Day Films, Psychotherapy.net, and Swank Motion Pictures. There are several others dealing in boutique or specialized collections (farrelly & Hutchinson, 2016; Hobbs et. al, 2019; Spicer, 2012; Wang & Loftis, 2020; Lowe et. al, 2020). Duncan & Peterson provide an annotated list of the larger educational distributors that sell licenses directly to academic libraries, including Bullfrog Films, California Newsreel, Ciné Fête, Davidson Films, Fanlight, First Run Features, Icarus Films, Insight Media, Landmark Media, Media Education Foundation, Milestone Films, National Film Board of Canada, PBS, Video Project, Women Make Movies and Zeitgeist Films (Duncan & Peterson, 2014, Appendix F).

At the time of publication, OverDrive had just recently entered into an agreement to purchase Kanopy. While the long-term pricing, platform and availability implications are unclear, the initial announcement suggests a continued reliance on the Kanopy interface, with OverDrive noting, "The Kanopy apps and streaming viewing experience are excellent services to further benefit our network of public libraries and academic partners" (OverDrive, 2021).

Libraries have long faced barriers in acquiring streaming licenses for major motion picture studio content, and the direct-to-consumer streaming platforms (Hulu, Amazon, Netflix, etc.) have terms of service that may preclude classroom use (Duncan & Peterson, 2014; Handman, 2010). Ballestro notes these direct-to-consumer services are increasingly offering exclusive content on their platforms that are not available for licensing by libraries. Netflix has made a very limited number of exclusive titles available to Netflix account holders for classroom usage (Hartnett, 2019, chapter 4).

## Barriers to the Discovery, Access, and Use of Licensed Content

Wang & Loftis highlight the importance of cataloging and metadata for videos and the inclusion of video in library catalogs and discovery portals (Wang & Loftis, 2020); however, other studies reveal that the majority of instructors are either unaware of library search tools or avoid them because of the difficulty of navigation and search functions (Otto, 2014; Lohman & Frederiksen, 2018). Regardless, farrelly stresses the "essential" need to provide tools to allow users to retrieve video across a wide variety of local and vendor-hosted servers, interfaces, and platforms (Albitz et. al, 2014, Chapter 18). Through interviews of instructors at University of Maryland, Horbal surfaces other search issues, including the overwhelming number of video options when searching, as well as the high number of outdated educational content in databases. Instructors in that study also noted authentication through proxy or virtual private networks as a confusing barrier to access (Horbal, 2018).

Beisler, Bucy, and Medaille document barriers to faculty and student use of streaming video in their 2019 usability study of three popular streaming platforms available to academic libraries. Faculty in the study stressed the need to be able to efficiently locate media, noting that time is a significant barrier in preparing for classes. Faculty's foremost concern, however, was reliability in playback, describing both the distress of trying to troubleshoot streaming video playback issues in front of a class, or trying to resolve issues when contacted by students who cannot play links embedded in the course management system. Additionally, the reliability of technology in classrooms is a significant issue—including internet connection and classroom audiovisual equipment issues (Beisler et al., 2019).

## Communication and Promotion of Streaming Media Collections

While there has been no significant study into the efficacy of library marketing and outreach in promoting streaming media collections, *Library Journal*'s 2017 survey outlines the various ways in which libraries seek to inform users around streaming collections, distinguishing strategies for both student outreach (the library website, reference consultations, and information literacy sessions) and faculty outreach (the library website, liaison relationships, individual meetings, and email), also noting that users may discover content through Libguides, word of mouth, faculty, and the library catalog (Dixon, 2017).

The literature reveals a complex ambivalence surrounding promotion of library streaming platforms to users. Davis directly ties the growing awareness of the Kanopy PDA platform at Towson University between 2015 and 2019 to rising costs the library could no longer sustain. Lowe notes the decision at Frostburg State University, going against their standard practice, to not advertise their Kanopy PDA pilot to keep costs manageable. Reeves notes the challenge of communicating with users when PDA deposit accounts are depleted, resulting in the loss of a service that previously seemed limitless. On the other hand, Steinhoff notes the challenges of encouraging faculty to use Academic Video Online (a prepaid subscription) through instruction and professional development sessions, as well as in departmental meetings (Lowe et al., 2020).

Indeed, across library guides at various institutions, what is often seen is an attempt to communicate the complex reasons academic libraries are shifting away from patron-driven acquisition offerings, and redirecting users to existing subscription platforms, such as San Francisco State University's

recent announcement that their Kanopy platform funded by CARES Act 2 through August 2021 will be sunset (San Francisco State University, 2021). In a telephone interview on May 20, 2021, Michele McKenzie, Media Librarian, City College of San Francisco noted:

*We spent a considerable amount of time doing outreach to faculty around the costs involved with PDA and how this impacted our overall budget allocation for media. We also spent a fair amount of time explaining to users how the PDA licensing model worked. In our experience, most users were unaware of how their casual viewing habits impacted what was licensed in PDA. We find that mediated works best when users request titles through the online form we've created. Request forms provided by the vendor may not include details on intended use, length of time needed, and if the material is required or optional viewing. These details can help us to determine the most cost-effective way to provide streaming access. Using internal request forms also helps us with statistics and fulfillment tracking.*

As for library staff redirecting users to existing content and promoting existing subscription collections, McKenzie noted:

*I feel that it's important to have a deep knowledge of what's available in our streaming platforms and directly purchased digital licenses to effectively redirect users to alternatives. We also continually update available streaming video content in our online subject/research guides. We try to highlight new or notable content that will encourage faculty and students to explore our collections and subscription databases for new or undiscovered content.*

## THE SURVEY

The survey inquired around the challenges and benefits to streaming in academic institutions, including funding, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as related to remote instruction and budgetary forecasts, technical and personnel capacity, and communications and assessment.

### Methodology

The survey was hosted through SurveyMonkey. Choice and the author disseminated the survey to Choice contact lists and to listservs focused on film and media librarianship (VideoLib and the American Library Association Film & Media Roundtable listserv, FMRT-L). Responses were anonymous; however, respondents were given the option to provide contact information for follow-up interviews. The survey was sent to VideoLib and ALA FMRT listservs on March 5, 2021, with reminders sent on March 23, 2021, and April 1, 2021. The survey was sent to Choice contacts on March 5, 2021, with reminders sent on March 25, 2021. The survey closed on April 2, 2021.

### Response Rate and Skipped Questions

The Choice contact list included 6,800 recipients, while VideoLib included 1,310 recipients and FMRT-L includes 659 subscribers. The survey closed with 203 viable responses. It is impossible to

estimate an accurate response rate, as the three lists likely contain a significant number of duplicate entries. The author intentionally erred on the side of reaching the maximum number of respondents over identifying an accurate response rate.

The survey tool diverted away seven respondents whose institutions are not currently offering streaming. Respondents were allowed to skip any questions and to leave the survey at any time. A significant portion of the questions were skipped by 60 respondents. The number of responses therefore dip to approximately 155 for many of the survey questions. Seventy-three respondents agreed to be interviewed; four were interviewed.

## Institutional Demographics

When compared to the 2018 Carnegie Classification, Doctoral Universities (R1, R2, and R3) are significantly overrepresented among respondents at 42.11% (compared to 14.1% in the total population). While the number of Master's College and University and Baccalaureate respondents align with the 2018 Carnegie Classification population, Associate Colleges are significantly underrepresented at 16.75% (compared to 33.6%). The survey failed to receive any responses from Tribal Colleges.

## Technology and Staffing

There is a substantial portion of institutions (37.04%) that self-host, but do not digitize their own files. While there may be multiple factors contributing to why institutions lean on vendor-provided files (including staffing, equipment, and time constraints), this can be a barrier to providing access to independent films sold directly by filmmakers or smaller distributors who cannot provide files.

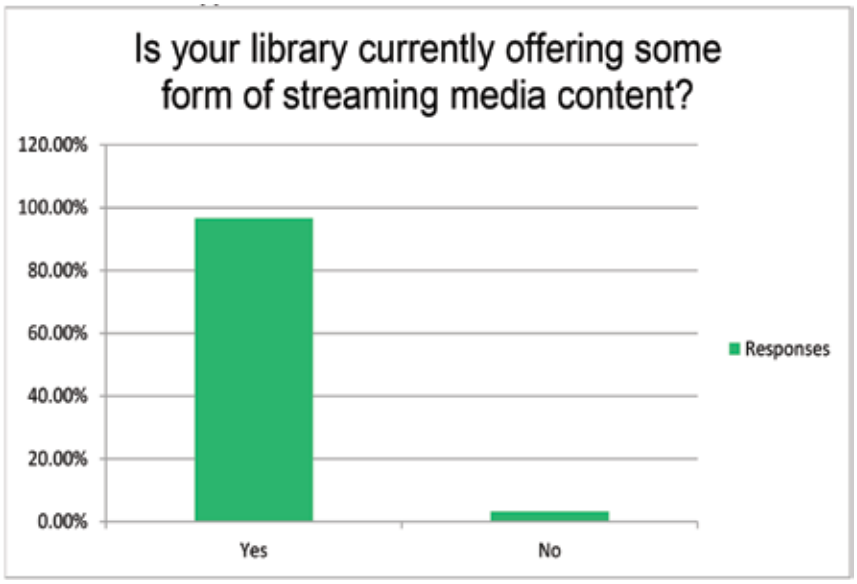
Staffing levels appear to be improving compared to farrelly & Hutchinson's survey findings (farrelly & Hutchinson, 2014; 2016), with 73.11% of institutions now reporting having one or more FTEs dedicated to managing streaming media resources. However, there is no correlation observed between an institution supporting a broader variety of use-cases for media and healthy staffing levels, suggesting some institutions may be leaning more on funding patron-driven acquisition platforms (which allow for the broadest variety of supported use-cases for media) because of a lack of expert staffing, or staff that can serve in a curatorial role for media.

Through the survey, Erin DeWitt-Miller, Head, Media & Discovery Park Libraries, University of North Texas, identified the "amount of staff time involved" as their biggest challenge with streaming media. In email correspondence from May 24, 2021, DeWitt-Miller notes:

*"At UNT, licensing and providing access to one streaming video involves multiple staff in the Media Library who receive, track, and process requests; track down rights; negotiate with distributors; oversee the budget; handle digitization, file storage, and access; and catalog videos…as well as staff in the Collection Management department who process the contracts and invoices. It can take more time to acquire one streaming video than it does to purchase or subscribe to a large database of videos! But I also think one video can have more of an impact on students/learning than many of our databases."*

## Most Institutions Currently Offer Streaming Media

96.70% of respondents currently offer some form of streaming media content. This is a significant increase—suggesting near total adoption—from farrelly & Hutchinson's 2015 survey, where 84.5% of respondents reported offering streaming content (farrelly & Hutchison, 2016). This shift is not unexpected when considering that Spicer & Horbal's survey of classroom audiovisual professionals reveal 94% anticipated retiring physical media playback equipment by 2020 (Spicer & Horbal, 2017).

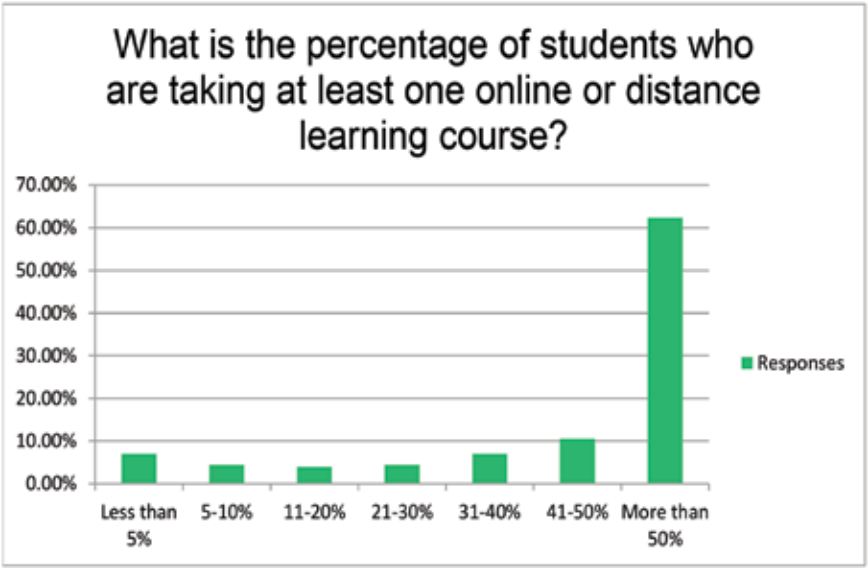



Seven respondents indicated that their institutions do not offer streaming content. These institutions were split between public and private institutions, with two large Doctoral (R3) institutions, as well as one small private baccalaureate institution and another small public master's institution, indicating they plan to offer streaming content in the near future. Three smaller institutions do not plan to offer streaming content in the near future. Three of the institutions not currently offering streaming content indicate more than 50% of students are learning remotely. This poses a significant barrier and equity issue for those students who cannot access a variety of direct-to-consumer streaming services (whether because of financial constraints or because they are studying from abroad during the pandemic), who may not have access to assigned course materials.

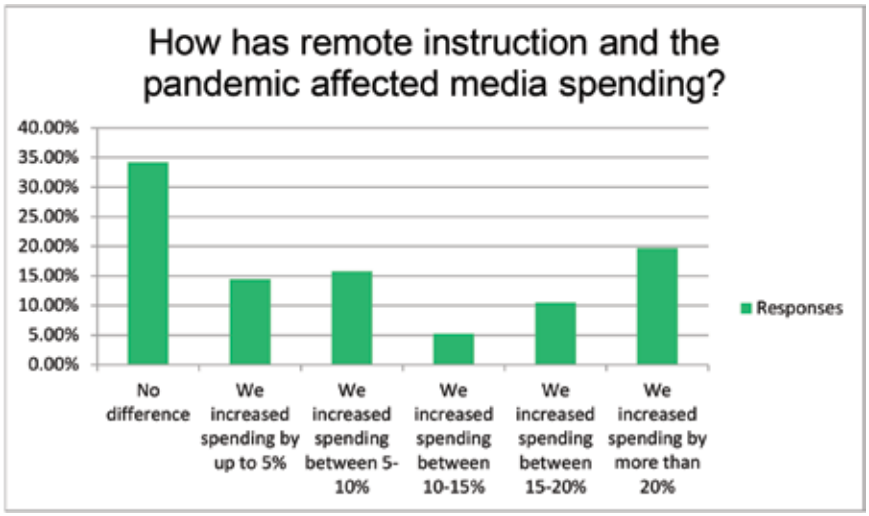
Because the survey failed to reach any Tribal colleges, the author attempted to contact a random sampling of 17 Tribal college libraries listed in the Tribal College Librarians Professional Development Institute. The author failed to solicit any responses by the time of writing. From a scan of the 17 libraries' webpages, research guides, and database listings, it appears most have physical media collections; however, few appear to offer streaming content to their users. The high cost of subscription packages and self-hosting are likely significant barriers to Tribal colleges providing streaming access. Streaming platform providers must consider offering special Tribal college pricing to address this issue.

## Distance Learning and COVID-19

The majority of respondents (62.31%) indicated that more than 50% of students were taking at least one online or distance learning course. This suggests an increase when contrasted to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data from Fall of 2018, indicating that 18.6% of postsecondary students were taking at least one distance education course (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019).



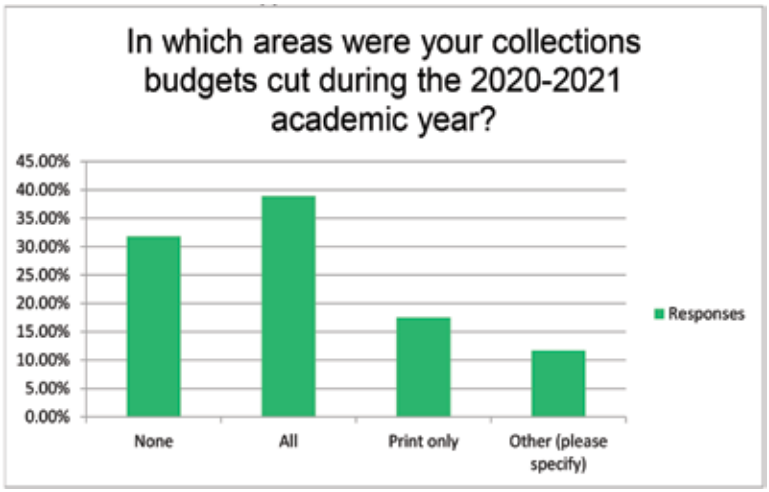

When asked explicitly about the impact of the pandemic and remote instruction on media spending, 34.21% percent of respondents reported no change in media spending. The majority of respondents reported increasing spending on media during the pandemic, with 19.74% of respondents reporting



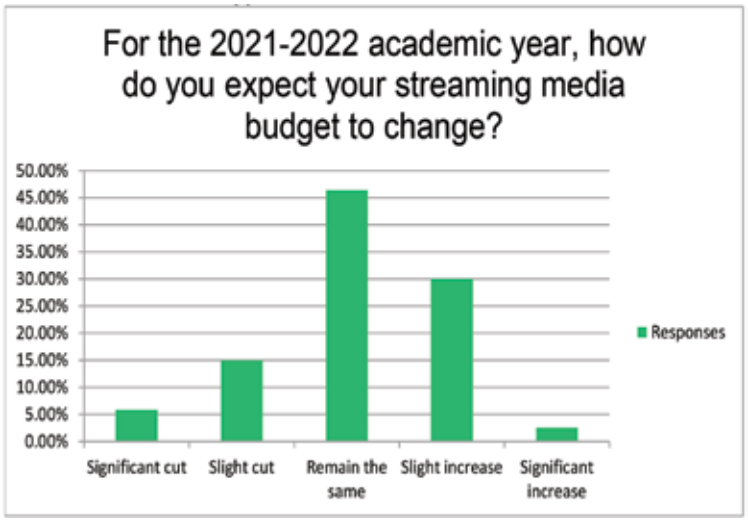
increased spending by more than 20%. Communications on VideoLib suggest significant increases in streaming requests, with several media librarians expressing that they do not have adequate funding to fulfill all requests (Threatt, 2020; Wochna, 2020).

## Budget Considerations

Most institutions reported some budgetary reductions for the current academic year, with only 31.82% of institutions reporting no budget cuts. Some institutions focused reductions to print collections (17.53%), with a small number of institutions reporting other strategic reductions to print and electronic journals, databases, other standing orders, and physical and streaming media, as well as having realized unintended savings through the pandemic's disruption to ordering and receiving.




The outlook seems less dire for streaming allocations than might be expected, with 32.68% of respondents expecting an increase in streaming allocations and another 46.41% of respondents anticipating no change to the streaming media budget for the 2021-22 academic year. However, the



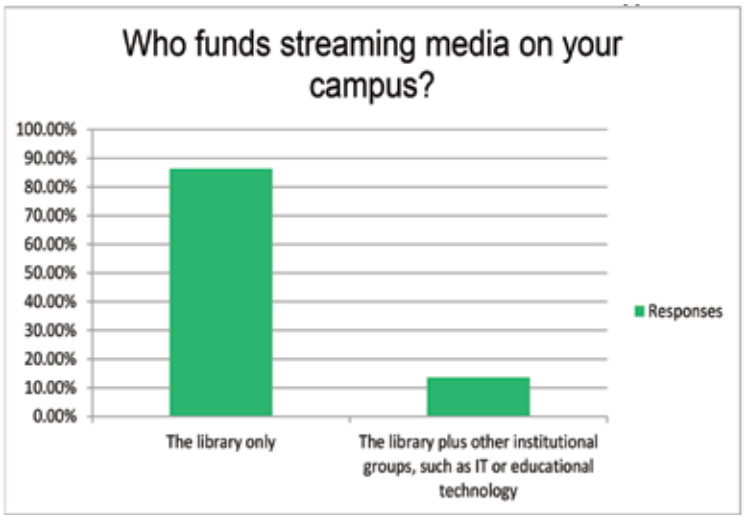
other 20.91% of respondents anticipate reductions to streaming media budgets over 2021-22, with nine institutions (5.88% of respondents) anticipating significant cuts to streaming budgets.

It is important to note, however, that the highest ranked "biggest challenges" currently with streaming media is cost, as identified by 89.80% of respondents, suggesting that current allocations do not suffice in supporting programmatic needs for streaming media.

## How Is Streaming Media Funded?

The majority of respondents (63.4%) do not have a specific defined budget line for streaming media. This aligns with the findings of Dixon's 2017 survey, where only one-third of respondents reported funding for streaming media from a defined media budget, and more than half of respondents reported funding from an electronic resources budget (Dixon, 2017). Similarly, farrelly and Hutchinson's 2015 survey found that only 25% of respondents funded streaming video from a defined media or streaming media budget line (farrelly & Hutchinson, 2015). However, the *ACRL Guidelines for Media Resources* explicitly recommends allocating specific budgetary resources directly to media collections as part of the library planning process. The *Guidelines* stress that "stable and consistent funding for acquisitions [...] is necessary for effective service" (Association for College and Research Libraries, 2018).

One opportunity to bolster funding for streaming media is collaborating with other institutional groups, such as IT or educational technology, to identify streaming funding. The vast majority of survey respondents (86.45%) indicated that the library alone funds streaming media at their institutions, suggesting that cross-campus collaboration is a significant missed opportunity for funding.

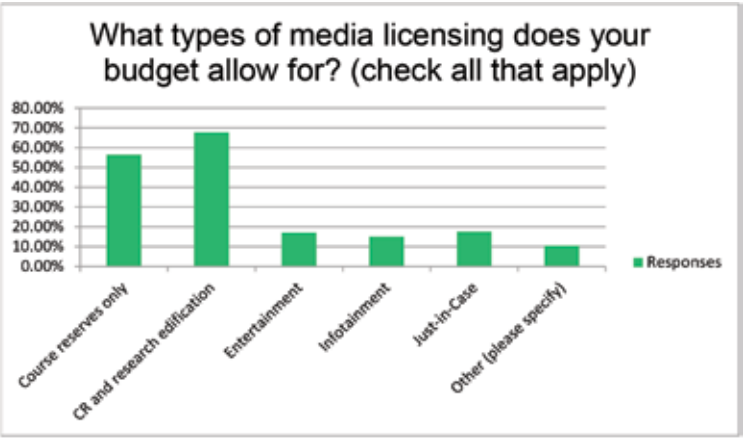



Spicer & Horbal note the barrier classroom audiovisual professionals face in providing and maintaining classroom equipment (Spicer & Horbal, 2017), and such groups may be motivated to support shifting reliance away from physical collections. At larger research institutions, other campus

groups, such as those focused on supporting pedagogical innovation, including flipped or remote instruction, may be eager to collaborate on funding materials that support transforming face-to-face instruction.

### Course Reserves and Research & Edification Licensing

The majority of respondents (67.76%) report that their budgets allow for licensing content to support course reserves as well as research and edification.

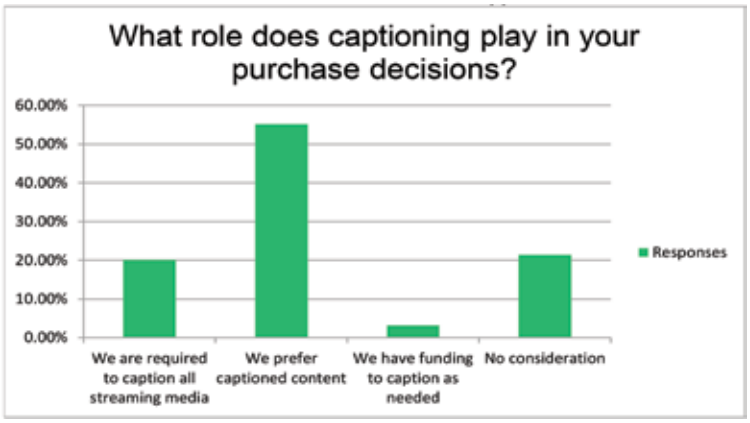



A significant portion of respondents (20.39% or 31 institutions) are only funded to exclusively fulfill course reserve requests or faculty requests that are tied directly to the curriculum *[Ed note: This number was calculated by examining respondent-level data, and identifying the number of respondents who exclusively identified "course reserve only" as the unique use-case they are able to fulfill; this response is not illustrated in the chart, because of a high number of respondents who selected both "Course Reserve Only" and "Course Reserve and Research/Edification" or another use-case]*. This confirms that most libraries are pre-defining approved use-cases for streaming media to meet budgetary constraints. Only one institution reported not inquiring around the purpose or intended usage of requests.

There are a limited number of respondents that indicated providing for some combination of entertainment and infotainment: these responses align closely with the respondents who are offering patron-driven acquisition, demand-driven acquisitions and evidence-based acquisitions platforms. It is unclear whether providing for entertainment and infotainment aligns with the programmatic goals of their institution's streaming services, or if it is simply an inevitable consequence of the platforms not empowering institutions to limit to pre-defined use cases without direct mediation by staff.

## Captions and Accessibility

In addition to complying with the American Disabilities Act, accurate captions improve streaming accessibility for English language learners, as well as those studying in cramped or noisy environments (including student-parents), and serve to enhance comprehension of videos with poor audio quality. Beisler et al. recount the value of captions and their pedagogical applications, describing them as




"essential" from the faculty perspective (Beisler et al., 2019). The *ACRL Guidelines for Media Resources* stresses that the availability of captions should be included in selection criteria, even recommending that institutions share captioned files with filmmakers and distributors to reduce expenses in making media accessible (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2018). However, 21.43% of survey respondents indicated that no consideration is made toward captioning in purchase decisions. This potential inequity in access poses a significant barrier to all users who benefit from captions, especially the deaf and those experiencing partial hearing loss. While a small minority of respondents (six institutions) report having funding to caption to accommodate student needs, such just-in-time captioning poses an othering hurdle that impedes equitable access to library resources.

## Content Availability

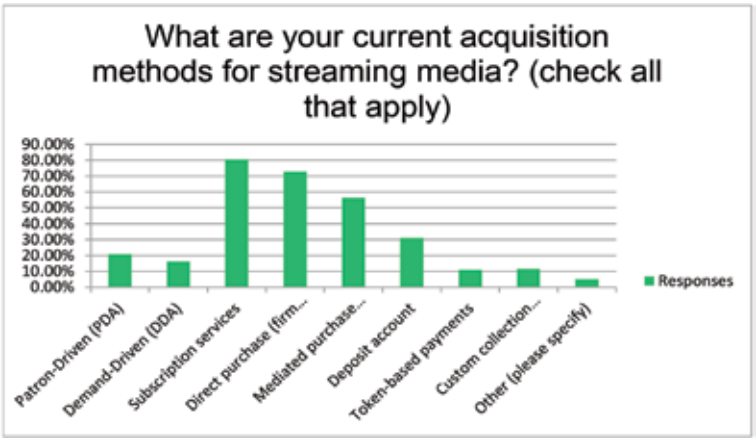
As outlined in the literature, libraries are increasingly feeling the squeeze of direct-to-consumer platform exclusives. 73.47% of respondents identified "availability of content to institutional licensing" as one of the biggest challenges with streaming media. In an email on May 24, 2021, Sarah E. McCleskey, Head of Resource & Collection Services, Hofstra University noted:

*It's becoming commonplace that libraries cannot acquire award-winners for their collections, either in physical or streaming formats. For example, 2019 and 2020 Oscar winners for best documentary are both Netflix exclusives.* My Octopus Teacher *(2020) is only available on Netflix. The Criterion Collection has made an agreement with Netflix to publish a DVD of* American Factory *(2019), but the title is not yet released in physical format. Although Netflix allows "one-time screening" for classroom use, this is no substitute for library provided licensing or ownership. A professor who wants to assign these films for out-of-class viewing must ask students to subscribe to Netflix. Users who cannot afford a subscription, or who do not have access to a reliable internet connection, cannot rely on libraries to provide this important content. And most of the Netflix exclusive content doesn't allow any classroom use at all. I have received numerous requests for the 3-part documentary series* Five Came Back *(2017) where modern filmmakers reflect on the frontline work of 5 U.S. filmmakers during the Second World War.*

It is important to note that when inquiring around availability for institutional licensing, the survey question did not distinguish between direct-to-consumer exclusives and content that has fallen out of educational distribution. Institutional licensing options can be pulled unpredictably for users and institutions, often due to rights to licensed footage contained in documentaries expiring, or distributors dropping titles from offerings because of poor performance. There is generally a lack of transparency and communication from distributors when content is pulled from platforms or subscription packages. While Copyright Law, specifically Title 17 U.S. Code § 108, makes provisions for libraries and archives to preserve out of print physical media through limitations on exclusive rights of copyright holders, there are currently no provisions for streaming files and born-digital media, which tend to be subject to purchase agreements instead of the first-sale doctrine. Barriers to preserving streaming media are likely to pose increasing challenges for libraries and library users going forward.

## Acquisition Methods

The acquisition methods used most broadly among respondents are subscription services (80.52%) and direct purchase/firm order (72.73%); these methods were also ranked highest in order of preference by respondents.




The wide adoption and popularity of these two models reflects the tension between the ease of accessing a high volume of content through subscription services and the need to control spending but also respond to curricular and research needs.

Similarly, mediated purchase (where the library receives patron requests through platforms and makes an active curatorial licensing decision) was the third most commonly used (54.49%) and third ranked method according to preference. Though this approach can be labor-intensive, the rise in adoption of mediation for patron-driven acquisition platforms is directly tied to unsustainable costs, as profiled both in *The New York Times* and *Film Quarterly* (Coleman, 2019; Cagle, 2019). Patron-driven acquisitions and demand-driven acquisitions were less commonly used (at a combined 37.01%), despite the convenience and allure to end users. Additionally, one respondent noted the use of consortial packages, which can provide significant cost savings to institutions.

| What are your preferred acquisition methods for streaming media? | Total | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Subscription services | 142 | 6.88 |
| Direct purchase (firm order) | 138 | 6.36 |
| Mediated purchase (patron request received via the platform) | 131 | 5.24 |
| Demand-Driven (DDA) | 128 | 4.42 |
| Patron-Driven (PDA) | 126 | 4.05 |
| Deposit Account | 122 | 3.98 |
| Custom collection (e.g., 50 titles that can be changed during the year) | 124 | 3.65 |
| Token-based payments | 120 | 2.42 |
| Answered | | 150 |
| Skipped | | 62 |

## Communication and Support

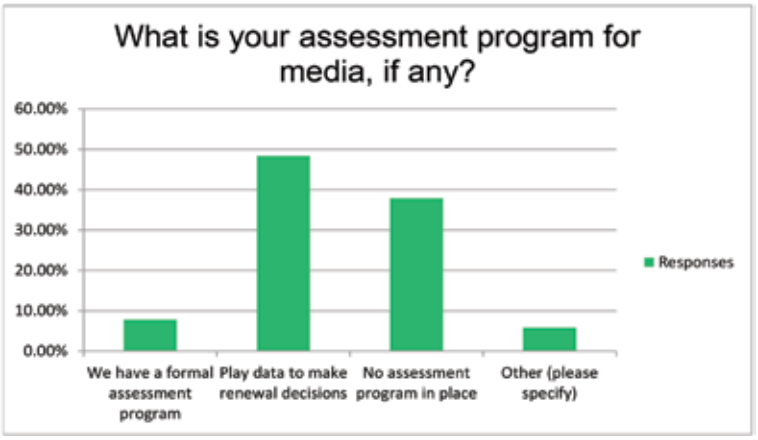
The survey responses around communication with users align with what is outlined in the literature, including librarians' ambivalence towards promotion of streaming content, with one respondent admitting, "you don't really want to advertise a PDA program heavily" and another noting, tongue in cheek, "Huh? Don't they read our minds?"

Nevertheless, respondents do provide a broad range of support to instructors and students in their use of licensed streaming content, much of which is technical, including embedding in the learning management system (66.90% of respondents) and using video in Zoom/remote teaching applications (44.37% of respondents). Here we see an opportunity for streaming platforms to centrally improve support for instructors, as well as for libraries to partner with IT and educational technology, who may control FAQs and support pages for the learning management system and remote conferencing tools.

## Assessment

While few institutions (7.84% of respondents) have a formal assessment program in place for media collections, many (48.37% of respondents) use play data to make renewal decisions for licensing.

A significant number of respondents report having no program in place (37.91%). This would seem like a missed opportunity to advocate for funding, as some licensed content may have significant play data, demonstrating usage that administrators may find compelling when considering allocating funds towards streaming.




### Access and Representation Matter

When asked about the biggest benefits of making streaming resources available, responses were most focused on engagement, with 77.78% of respondents highlighting "more engagement with library resources," and 68.75% of respondents highlighting "more opportunities for inclusive and representational content." The latter most certainly reflects the capacity of audiovisual resources to compellingly communicate the experiences, perspectives, and significant contributions of diverse populations that have been, and continue to be, misrepresented or excluded from the scholarly conversation. This value, however, is very much at odds with the gap we see in libraries' focus on captioning media. Respondents were slightly less focused on pedagogical benefits, with 61.11% selecting "study and review opportunities for students" and 58.25% selecting "reducing synchronous class time." No respondents provided other primary benefits to streaming media.

## CONCLUSIONS

With near total adoption of streaming media across North American institutions, the barriers to institutions not offering streaming currently are likely rooted in significant institutional financial constraints. Content providers must do more to increase affordability for smaller footprint streaming collections, especially for Tribal and Community/Associate's Degree Colleges. For institutions offering streaming content, the primary challenge remains cost. Libraries might consider working with other institutional, campus, and consortial partners to identify centralized funding to support streaming, which is demonstrated to tie directly to curricular needs through an effective assessment program for media. Few institutions have an official assessment program in place for media, highlighting a need for professional development support for librarians in assessment. Content providers can also be a partner in advocating for increased funding by normalizing usage report dashboards and engaging institutions in the metrics and controls needed to maintain sustainable streaming offerings.

Significant barriers remain for users in efficiently locating and accessing content, due to the complexity of siloed systems and platforms that do not integrate well with each other, as well as the focus of subscription collections on sheer quantity over the quality and currency of content. Once users locate media, technical challenges remain a barrier, including authentication, bandwidth, embedding in learning management systems and playing content through remote instruction tools. Librarians clearly see the value of streaming media in engaging users and providing inclusive and representational content. However, the lack of focus on prioritizing making media accessible at the most basic essential level of providing captions does not align with stated values of inclusivity and representation. Distributors, content providers and institutions must work together to ensure all streaming collections are captioned.

The availability of content for licensing by institutions, both due to exclusivity rights and titles falling out of distribution, will increasingly pose the greatest challenges moving forward for institutions in supporting users equitably through streaming media. Institutions and librarians must take steps to advocate for any content that enjoys the protection of U.S. Copyright Law to be available for institutional purchase or licensing to support teaching, research, and other transformative uses by scholars. It is the author's hope that content providers, distributors, and filmmakers will be good faith partners to institutions in advocating for a healthy and sustainable educational streaming media marketplace.

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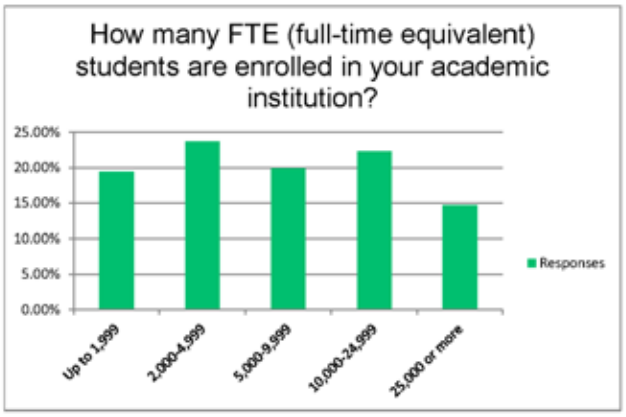
# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

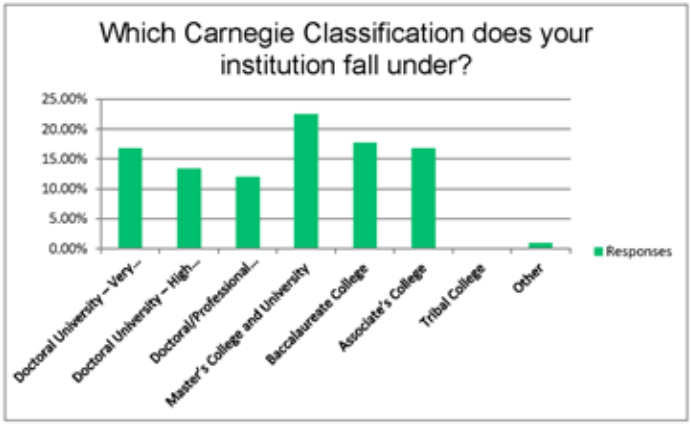
**Question 1:How many FTE (full-time equivalent) students are enrolled in your academic institution?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 1,999 | 19.43% | 41 |
| 2,000-4,999 | 23.70% | 50 |
| 5,000-9,999 | 19.91% | 42 |
| 10,000-24,999 | 22.27% | 47 |
| 25,000 or more | 14.69% | 31 |
| | Answered | 211 |
| | Skipped | 1 |



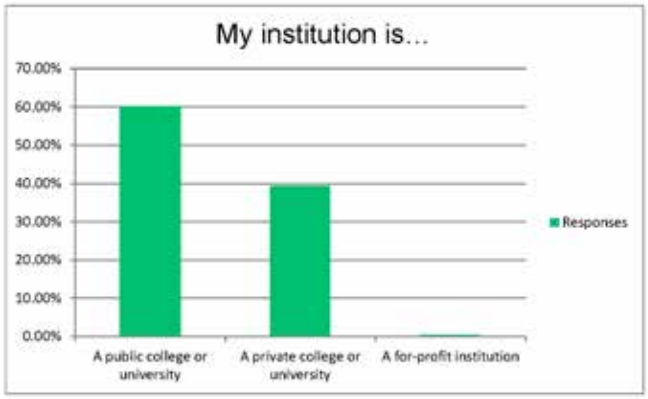

**Question 2: Which Carnegie Classification does your institution fall under?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Doctoral University – Very High Research Activity (R1) | 16.75% | 35 |
| Doctoral University – High Research Activity (R2) | 13.40% | 28 |
| Doctoral/Professional University (R3) | 11.96% | 25 |
| Master's College and University | 22.49% | 47 |
| Baccalaureate College | 17.70% | 37 |
| Associate's College | 16.75% | 35 |
| Tribal College | 0.00% | 0 |
| Other | 0.96% | 2 |
| | Answered | 209 |
| | Skipped | 3 |



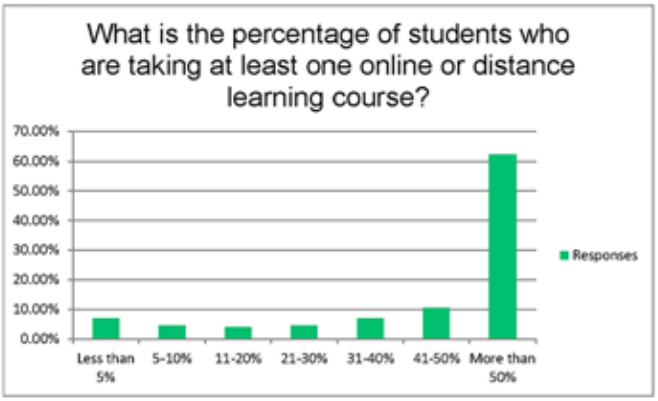

**Question 3: My institution is...**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| A public college or university | 60.19% | 127 |
| A private college or university | 39.34% | 83 |
| A for-profit institution | 0.47% | 1 |
| | Answered | 211 |
| | Skipped | 1 |




**Question 4: What is the percentage of students who are taking at one online or distance learning course?**

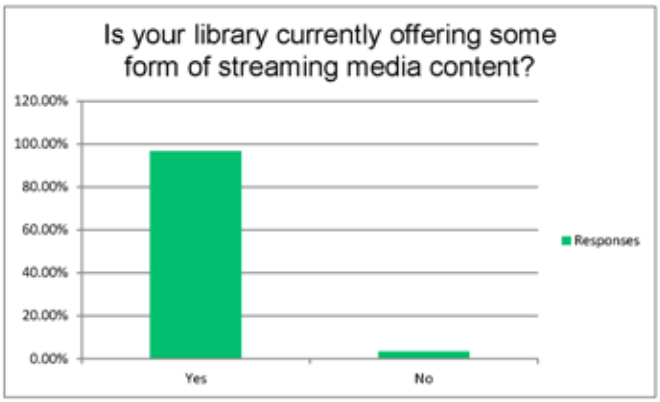
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 5% | 7.04% | 14 |
| 5-10% | 4.52% | 9 |
| 11-20% | 4.02% | 8 |
| 21-30% | 4.52% | 9 |
| 31-40% | 7.04% | 14 |
| 41-50% | 10.55% | 21 |
| More than 50% | 62.31% | 124 |
| | Answered | 199 |
| | Skipped | 13 |



# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

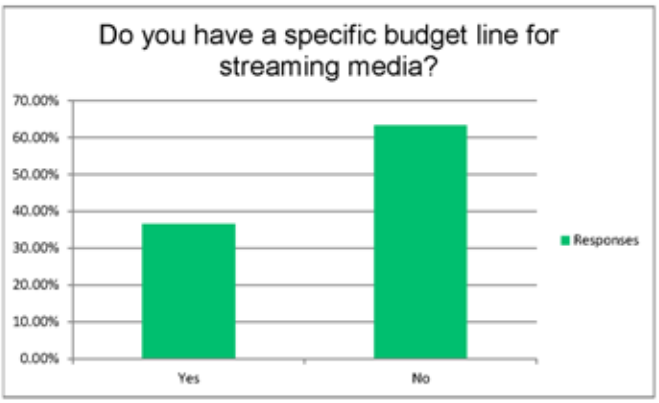
**Question 5: Is your library currently offering some form of streaming media content?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 96.70% | 205 |
| No | 3.30% | 7 |
| | Answered | 212 |
| | Skipped | 0 |



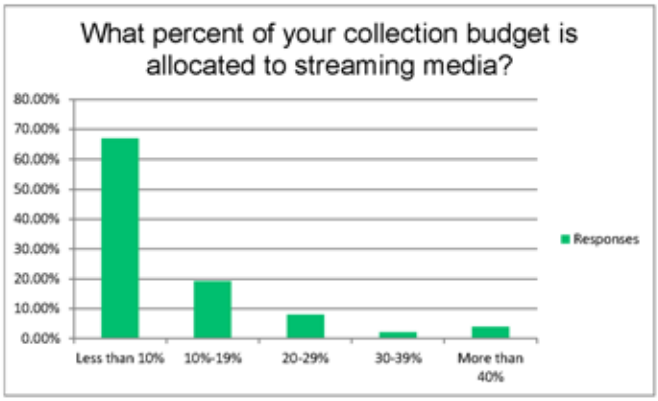

**Question 6: Do you have a specific budget line for streaming media?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 36.60% | 56 |
| No | 63.40% | 97 |
| | Answered | 153 |
| | Skipped | 59 |



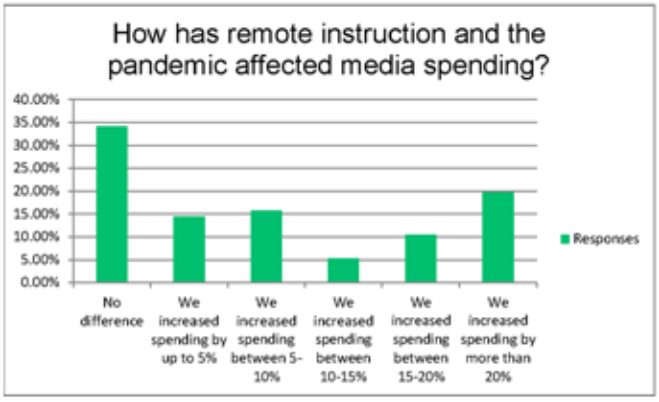

**Question 7: What percent of your collection budget is allocated to streaming media?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 10% | 66.89% | 101 |
| 10%-19% | 19.21% | 29 |
| 20-29% | 7.95% | 12 |
| 30-39% | 1.99% | 3 |
| More than 40% | 3.97% | 6 |
| | Answered | 151 |
| | Skipped | 61 |




**Question 8: How has remote instruction and the pandemic affected media spending?**

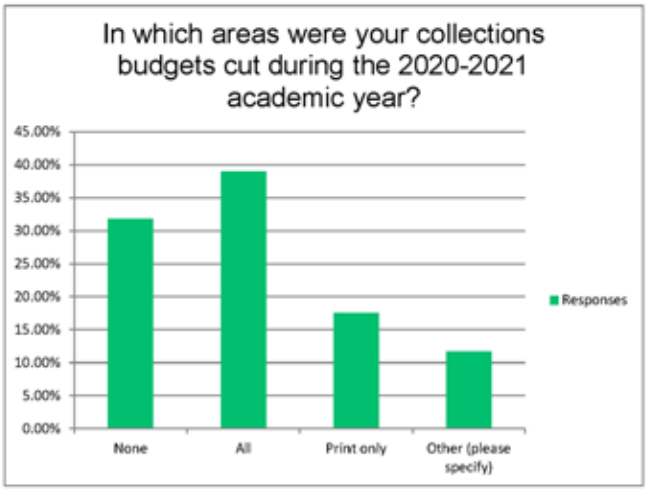
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| No difference | 34.21% | 52 |
| We increased spending by up to 5% | 14.47% | 22 |
| We increased spending between 5-10% | 15.79% | 24 |
| We increased spending between 10-15% | 5.26% | 8 |
| We increased spending between 15-20% | 10.53% | 16 |
| We increased spending by more than 20% | 19.74% | 30 |
| | Answered | 152 |
| | Skipped | 60 |



# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

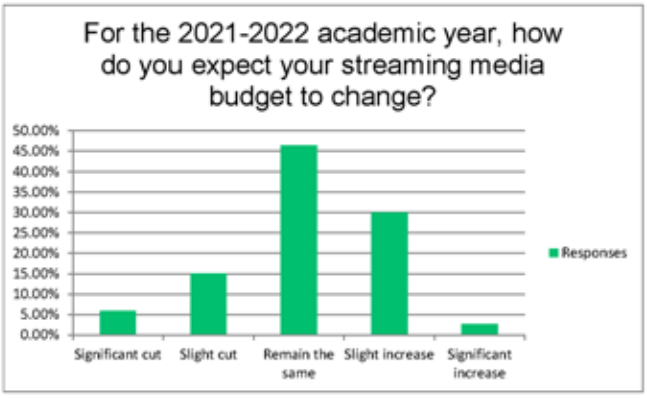
**Question 9: In which areas were your collections budgets cut during the 2020-2021 academic year?**

| Answer Choices | | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| None | 31.82% | 49 |
| All | 38.96% | 60 |
| Print only | 17.53% | 27 |
| Other (please specify) | 11.69% | 18 |
| Answered | | 154 |
| Skipped | | 58 |



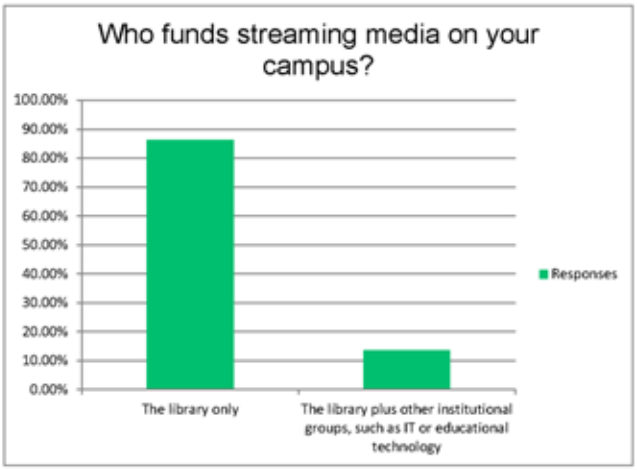

**Question 10: For the 2021-2022 academic year, how do you expect your streaming media budget to change?**

| Answer Choices | | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Significant cut | 5.88% | 9 |
| Slight cut | 15.03% | 23 |
| Remain the same | 46.41% | 71 |
| Slight increase | 30.07% | 46 |
| Significant increase | 2.61% | 4 |
| Answered | | 153 |
| Skipped | | 59 |



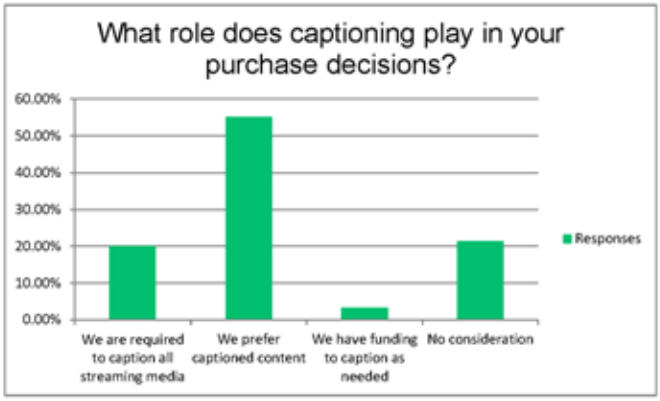

**Question 11: Who funds streaming media on your campus?**

| Answer Choices | | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| The library only | 86.36% | 133 |
| The library plus other institutional groups, such as IT or educational technology | 13.64% | 21 |
| Answered | | 154 |
| Skipped | | 58 |



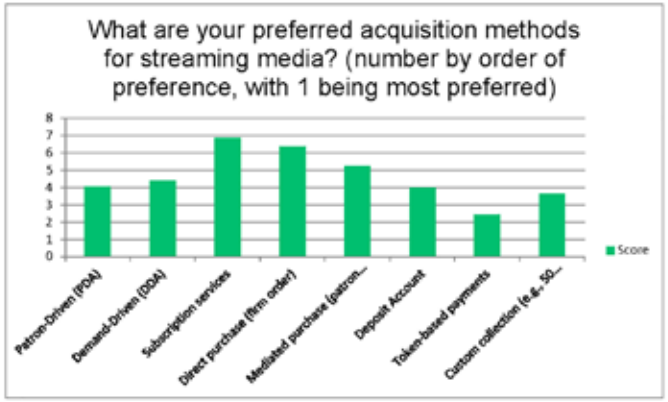

**Question 12: What role does captioning play in your purchase decisions?**

| Answer Choices | | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| We are required to caption all streaming media | 20.13% | 31 |
| We prefer captioned content | 55.19% | 85 |
| We have funding to caption as needed | 3.25% | 5 |
| No consideration | 21.43% | 33 |
| Answered | | 154 |
| Skipped | | 58 |



**Question 13: What are your preferred acquisition methods for streaming media? (number by order of preference, with 1 being most preferred)**

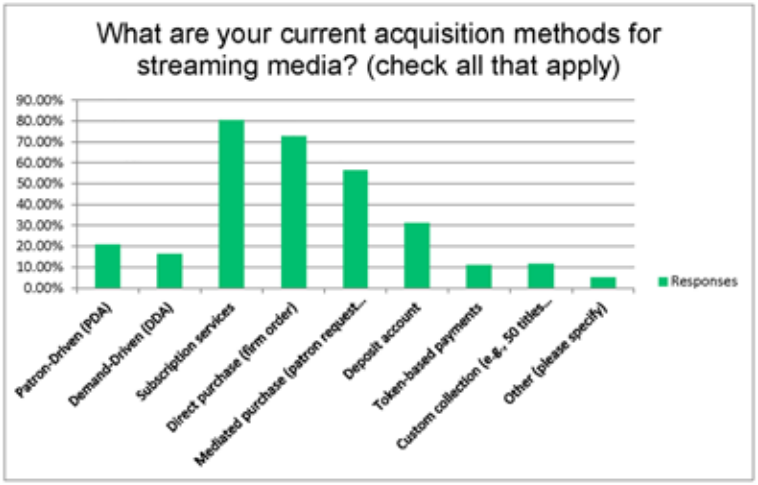
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | | 8 | | Total | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Patron-Driven (PDA) | 8.73% | 11 | 11.11% | 14 | 13.49% | 17 | 10.32% | 13 | 11.90% | 15 | 10.32% | 13 | 11.90% | 15 | 22.22% | 28 | 126 | 4.05 |
| Demand-Driven (DDA) | 3.91% | 5 | 13.28% | 17 | 17.19% | 22 | 12.50% | 16 | 14.84% | 19 | 20.31% | 26 | 14.06% | 18 | 3.91% | 5 | 128 | 4.42 |
| Subscription services | 50.70% | 72 | 20.42% | 29 | 9.15% | 13 | 11.27% | 16 | 4.23% | 6 | 2.82% | 4 | 1.41% | 2 | 0.00% | 0 | 142 | 6.88 |
| Direct purchase (firm order) | 25.36% | 35 | 32.61% | 45 | 14.49% | 20 | 15.94% | 22 | 5.80% | 8 | 4.35% | 6 | 0.72% | 1 | 0.72% | 1 | 138 | 6.36 |
| Mediated purchase (patron request received via the platform) | 11.45% | 15 | 6.87% | 9 | 29.01% | 38 | 16.03% | 21 | 24.43% | 32 | 8.40% | 11 | 3.82% | 5 | 0.00% | 0 | 131 | 5.24 |
| Deposit Account | 4.10% | 5 | 9.02% | 11 | 12.30% | 15 | 14.75% | 18 | 9.02% | 11 | 24.59% | 30 | 18.85% | 23 | 7.38% | 9 | 122 | 3.98 |
| Token-based payments | 0.00% | 0 | 4.17% | 5 | 2.50% | 3 | 5.83% | 7 | 8.33% | 10 | 12.50% | 15 | 31.67% | 38 | 35.00% | 42 | 120 | 2.42 |
| Custom collection (e.g., 50 titles that can be changed during the year) | 4.84% | 6 | 10.48% | 13 | 8.87% | 11 | 10.48% | 13 | 16.13% | 20 | 10.48% | 13 | 12.90% | 16 | 25.81% | 32 | 124 | 3.65 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **Answered** | **150** |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **Skipped** | **62** |



# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

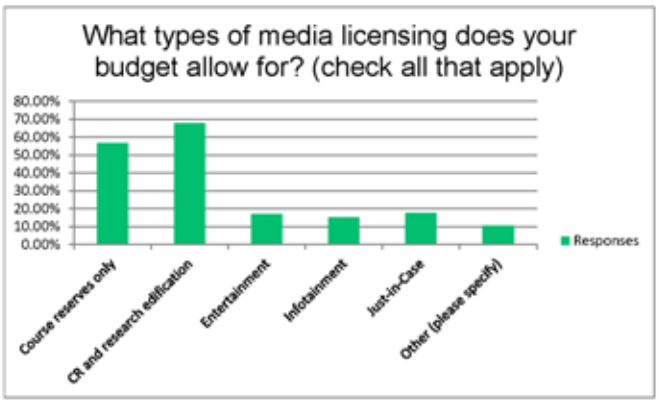
**Question 14: What are your current acquisition methods for streaming media? (check all that apply)**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Patron-Driven (PDA) | 20.78% | 32 |
| Demand-Driven (DDA) | 16.23% | 25 |
| Subscription services | 80.52% | 124 |
| Direct purchase (firm order) | 72.73% | 112 |
| Mediated purchase (patron request received via the platform) | 56.49% | 87 |
| Deposit account | 31.17% | 48 |
| Token-based payments | 11.04% | 17 |
| Custom collection (e.g., 50 titles that can be changed during the year) | 11.69% | 18 |
| Other (please specify) | 5.19% | 8 |
| | **Answered** | **154** |
| | **Skipped** | **58** |



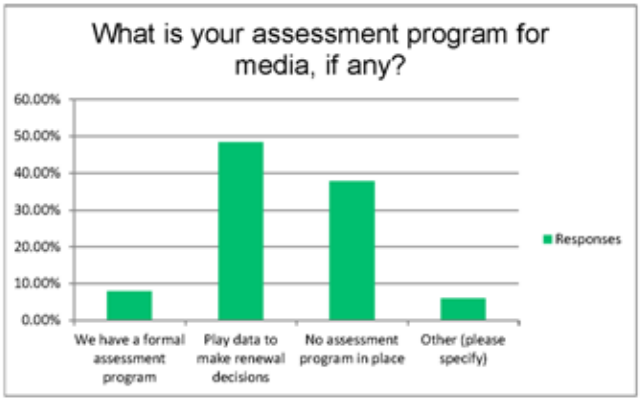

**Question 15: What types of media licensing does your budget allow for? (check all that apply)**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Course reserves only | 56.58% | 86 |
| CR and research edification | 67.76% | 103 |
| Entertainment | 17.11% | 26 |
| Infotainment | 15.13% | 23 |
| Just-in-Case | 17.76% | 27 |
| Other (please specify) | 10.53% | 16 |
| | **Answered** | **152** |
| | **Skipped** | **60** |




**Question 16: What is your assessment program for media, if any?**

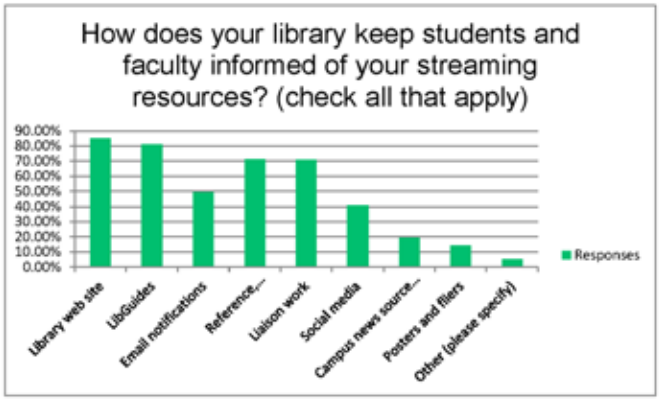
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| We have a formal assessment program | 7.84% | 12 |
| Play data to make renewal decisions | 48.37% | 74 |
| No assessment program in place | 37.91% | 58 |
| Other (please specify) | 5.88% | 9 |
| | **Answered** | **153** |
| | **Skipped** | **59** |



# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

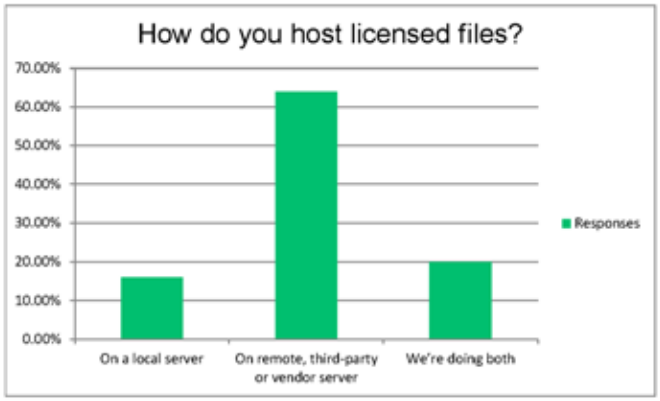
**Question 17: How does your library keep students and faculty informed of your streaming resources? (check all that apply)**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Library web site | 85.06% | 131 |
| LibGuides | 81.17% | 125 |
| Email notifications | 49.35% | 76 |
| Reference, instructional sessions, and presentations | 71.43% | 110 |
| Liaison work | 70.78% | 109 |
| Social media | 40.91% | 63 |
| Campus news source (print, digital, radio, and/or television) | 19.48% | 30 |
| Posters and fliers | 14.29% | 22 |
| Other (please specify) | 5.19% | 8 |
| | Answered | 154 |
| | Skipped | 58 |




**Question 18: How do you host licensed files?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| On a local server | 16.00% | 24 |
| On remote, third-party or vendor server | 64.00% | 96 |
| We're doing both | 20.00% | 30 |
| | Answered | 150 |
| | Skipped | 62 |

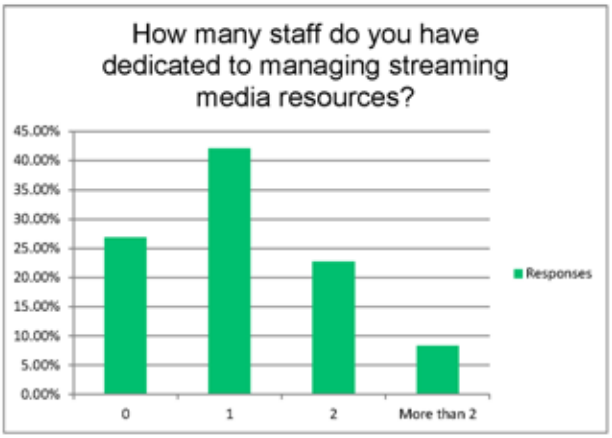



**Question 19: If you answered yes to local hosting, are you also digitizing and hosting your own files?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 62.96% | 34 |
| No | 37.04% | 20 |
| | Answered | 54 |
| | Skipped | 158 |

**Question 20: How many staff do you have dedicated to managing streaming media resources?**

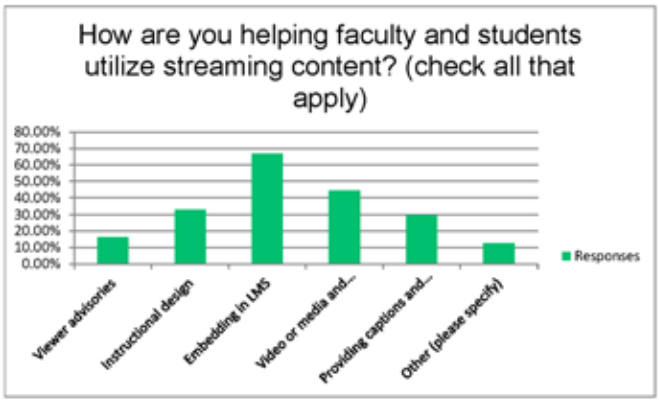
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 26.90% | 39 |
| 1 | 42.07% | 61 |
| 2 | 22.76% | 33 |
| More than 2 | 8.28% | 12 |
| | Answered | 145 |
| | Skipped | 67 |



# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

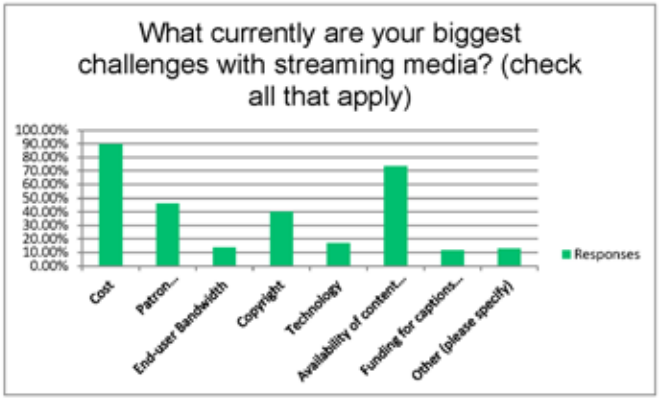
**Question 21: How are you helping faculty and students utilize streaming content? (check all that apply)**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Viewer advisories | 16.20% | 23 |
| Instructional design | 33.10% | 47 |
| Embedding in LMS | 66.90% | 95 |
| Video or media and Zoom/remote teaching | 44.37% | 63 |
| Providing captions and making media accessible | 29.58% | 42 |
| Other (please specify) | 12.68% | 18 |
| | Answered | 142 |
| | Skipped | 70 |



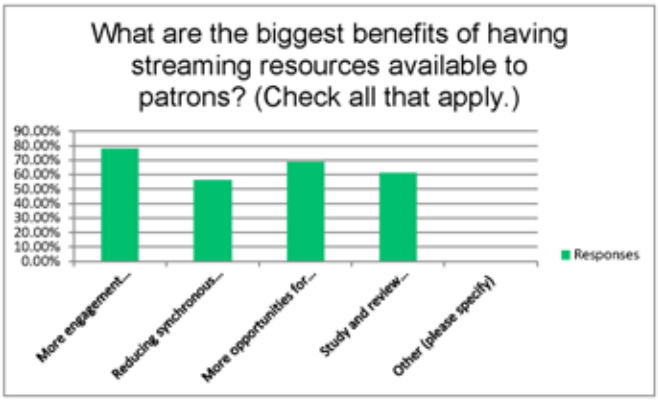

**Question 22: What currently are your biggest challenges with streaming media? (check all that apply)**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Cost | 89.80% | 132 |
| Patron awareness/discovery | 46.26% | 68 |
| End-user Bandwidth | 13.61% | 20 |
| Copyright | 40.14% | 59 |
| Technology | 17.01% | 25 |
| Availability of content to institutional licensing | 73.47% | 108 |
| Funding for captions and accessibility | 11.56% | 17 |
| Other (please specify) | 12.93% | 19 |
| | Answered | 147 |
| | Skipped | 65 |



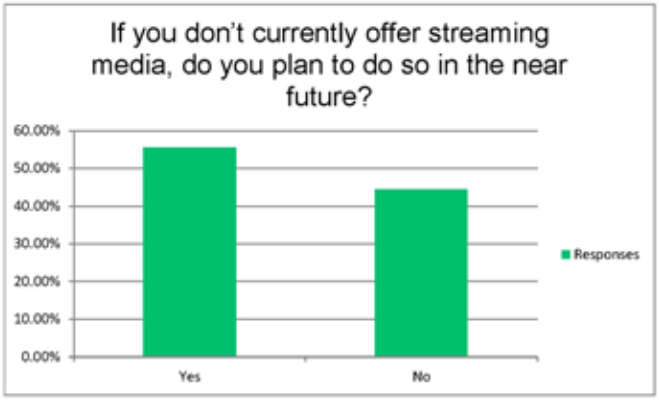

**Question 23: What are the biggest benefits of having streaming resources available to patrons? (check all that apply)**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| More engagement with library resources | 77.78% | 112 |
| Reducing synchronous class time | 56.25% | 81 |
| More opportunities for inclusive and representational content | 68.75% | 99 |
| Study and review opportunities for students | 61.11% | 88 |
| Other (please specify) | 0.00% | 0 |
| | Answered | 144 |
| | Skipped | 68 |




**Question 24: If you don't currently offer streaming media, do you plan to do so in the near future?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 55.56% | 5 |
| No | 44.44% | 4 |
| | Answered | 9 |
| | Skipped | 203 |



# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

**Question 25: Contact information**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Your name: | 100.00% | 90 |
| Your institution: | 100.00% | 90 |
| Address: | 0.00% | 0 |
| Address 2: | 0.00% | 0 |
| City/Town: | 0.00% | 0 |
| State/Province: | 0.00% | 0 |
| ZIP/Postal Code: | 0.00% | 0 |
| Country: | 0.00% | 0 |
| Your email address: | 100.00% | 90 |
| Phone Number: | 0.00% | 0 |
| | Answered | 90 |
| | Skipped | 122 |

**Question 26: May we contact you with any questions we might have regarding your responses?**

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 73.00% | 73 |
| No | 27.00% | 27 |
| | Answered | 100 |
| | Skipped | 112 |

Choice White Paper: Implementing and Managing Streaming Media Services in Academic Libraries