

Workshop Evaluation

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Introduction

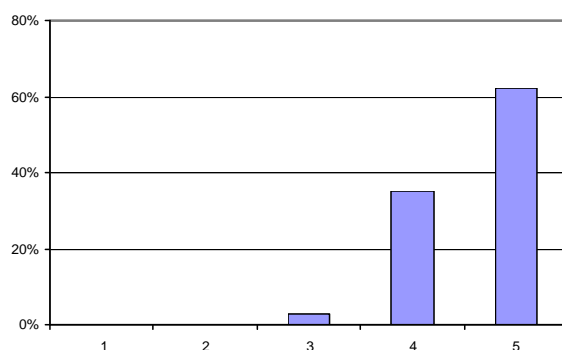
On the evening of the second day, participants were given a feedback form and asked to complete it until the end of the workshop. Of the 65 participants (all included), 37 delivered their form, which amounts to a response rate of 57%. Most forms were not only completely and correctly filled in, but also bore additional remarks and specifications.

The feedback form, reproduced in the annexe to this evaluation report, was split up into two parts. First of all, eleven questions addressed the workshop itself. A second set of six questions focused on participants' background and their reasons for attending.

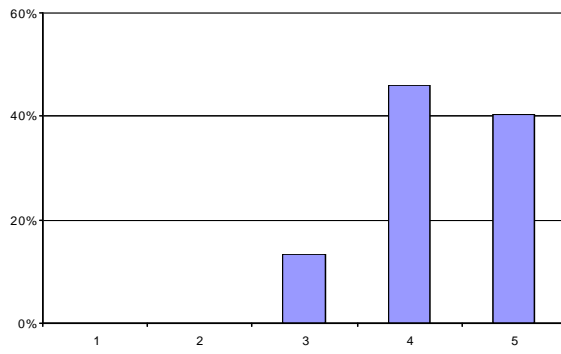
About the Workshop

Questions one to five allowed for multiple choice, where 1 stands for "poor" and 5 for "excellent", while six and seven were yes/no questions. Questions eight to eleven had to be answered in writing. The answers to the multiple-choice questions are presented below in the form of diagrams.

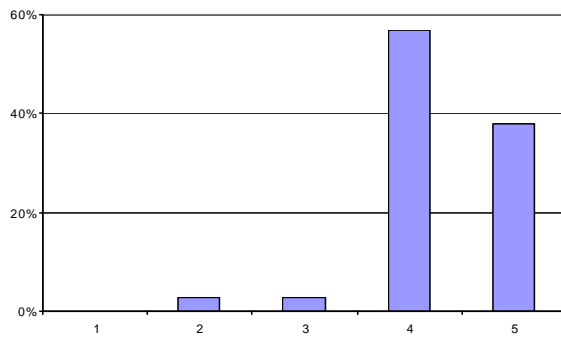
1. How would you rate the organisation of the event?



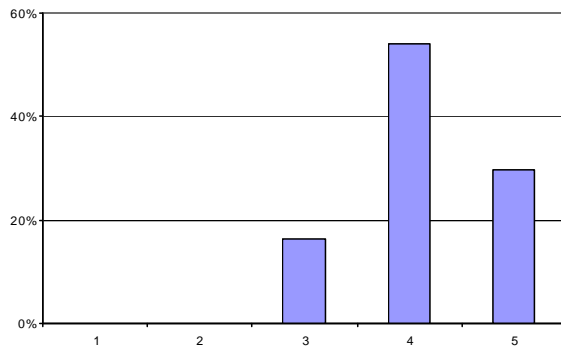
2. How would you rate the structure of the workshop?



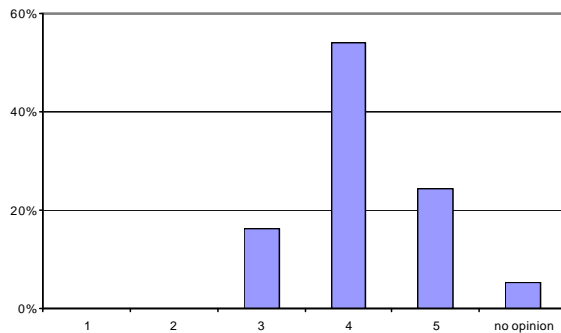
3. How well did you feel that the workshop addressed the main topic?



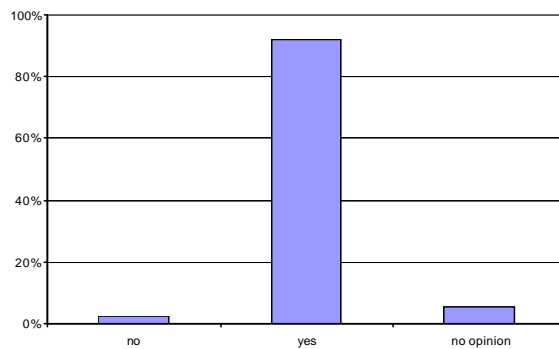
4. How useful was the workshop documentation?



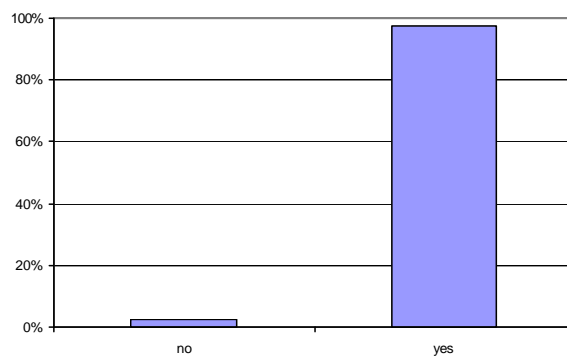
5. How effective were the speakers?



6. Was the cost acceptable?



7. Did this workshop meet your expectations?



Two participants stated that the workshop even surpassed their expectations, while one participant criticised that there was too much focus on government data.

8. What will you be able to take back to your own organisation?

Participants listed various benefits they will take with them after the workshop. The answers range between "a great deal, every presentation was useful" to "very little":

- More than half of the participants mentioned the practical experience, best practices, and inspiration of the projects presented or a clearer picture of how other organisations are tackling the issue, given the common problems they share. Others underlined their sense that despite differences, most archives have common strategies and tools to preserve databases, and were relieved to see that they are on the right track and got ideas to improve.
- Three participants more globally declared having adopted a general idea regarding the future preservation of databases.
- Four answers highlighted the conclusion that archival methods like Appraisal remain at the centre of the problem, and that database preservation is not only a technology problem.
- Sporadic answers were: "network and contacts", "more relevant arguments for my discussion with my IT specialists", and "PR for our solution".

9. What else would you like to have seen covered at this workshop?

About half of the participants didn't make any suggestions, sometimes stating that the programme was already very broad. The others' suggestions covered different aspects of the subject:

- Additions to and deepening of what has been presented: more practical demonstrations of the proposed and exposed solutions, more discussion about the communication with record creators and about the use and accession of the archival data, as well as a "real" summary.
- A stronger focus on the archival science background: idea of what the record is – what do we need to preserve; relationship issues between db preservation and archival principles; appraisal decisions; more descriptive practices and contextual description; and more on metadata.
- A broader scope of the workshop: more weight on databases in other sectors (commercial companies, preservation of live databases, scientific databases), costing issues, case studies, interoperability of archives, GIS databases, technical problems (like obsolescence and data loss protection).

10. What did you like best about this workshop?

From the answers it becomes clear that many participants were very pleased with the concrete experience of a wide range of practitioners reported in the presentations. Explicit mention was given to the Norwegian and Swiss projects. The focus on one subject (databases) and on the practical approach was particularly appreciated, as was the fact that archivists and IT specialists are ready to communicate with each other. Some participants liked the break-out sessions best.

Other participants stressed the value of the informal networking, discussions, and meetings. On a more organisational aspect, the workshop dinner and the friendly organisers have been mentioned as highlights.

11. What did you like least?

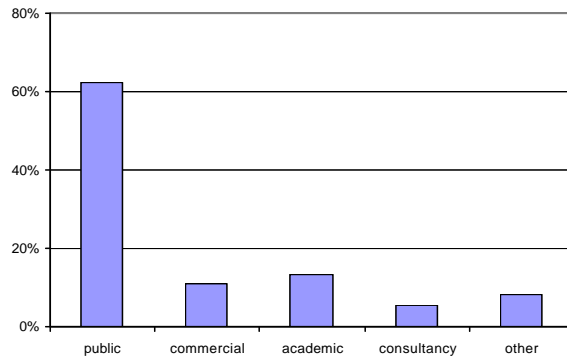
About half of the respondents left this question blank. Of the remaining, only 5 criticised content issues, mostly focusing on the paper on description they found too theoretical. One speaker would have liked better explications of the reimbursement processes. All other responses concerned organisational issues: the early morning start, the lack of sufficient air conditioning, the food logistics (not enough space), no coffee break on the first morning, no cookies in the afternoon, the food in general, and the lack of sufficient internet facilities. One participant found the lunch and tea breaks too long, while one criticised the weather on the first days.

Participants' Background

Questions 12 and 14 to 16 allowed for multiple-choice, while 13 and 17 needed to be filled in by writing.

12. What kind of organisation do you work for?

As a rule, participants of ERPANET events still come mainly from the public and academic sectors, but we were happy to have a small but important number of participants from the private sector (commercial companies, consultancy, and others).

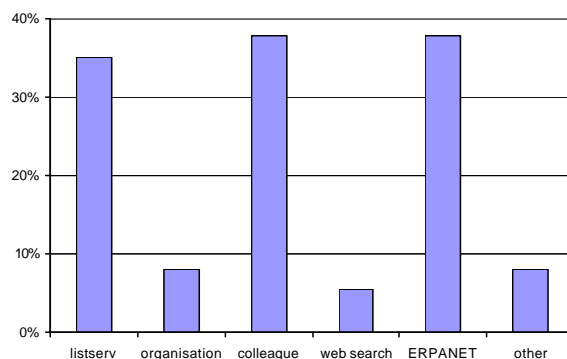


13. What is your function?

19 respondents work as an archivist or records manager. Four more work in archival IT development and three are project directors in the field of digital preservation. Four participants are IT specialists (database developers and managers). There were six consultants, and one content provider, service provider, and professor each. (Some respondents indicated more than one function.)

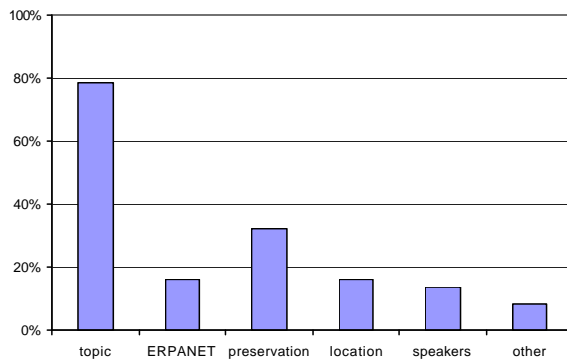
14. How did you hear about this workshop?

Participants could choose between different answers: they heard about the workshop through a listserv, an organisation or institution, through colleagues, a web search, or the ERPANET website. Multiple answers were possible. It is evident that the listserv messages, the mouth-to-mouth advertising, and the ERPANET website were responsible for most of the participants to come.

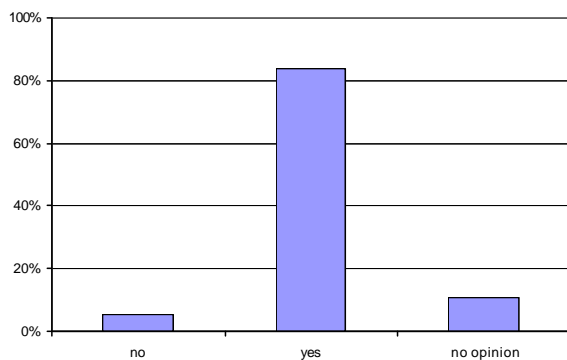


15. What motivated you to attend?

Reasons provided were the interest in the topic, in ERPANET, or in general preservation activities, as well as the location and the speakers. Multiple answers were possible. Hardly surprisingly, most participants were attracted by the topic first of all.



16. Are you likely to attend other ERPANET events in the future?



17. Are there any topics that you would like to see ERPANET provide events in?

25 respondents left this field blank. Among the topics the others mentioned, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) were named more than once, as was the proposition of a follow-up on the database workshop, possibly a review of the subject in two years. Further suggestions are:

- Ensuring authenticity and evidentiality of information of archived database systems
- Description of electronic systems
- Appraisal techniques and methods for electronic records
- Inclusion in information system's design phase of archival requirements
- The legal framework
- Archiving under the restrictions and liabilities commercial companies face
- Preservation problems in audiovisual archiving
- IT applications used in the creation of finding aids
- Documents preservation
- Electronic Records Management Systems
- Web preservation
- Metadata

Note that the two last topics are already scheduled for upcoming ERPANET events.

Further comments

Three participants complemented their feedback form with some additional comments. Here is what they proposed:

"It would have been useful to see examples of preserved databases:

Analyse and critic: Is this database a success? Why? Why not?

What's right about it? What can be improved?"

"I think there should be more collaboration and integration between the different projects that are dealing with the same topics, like ERPANET, CEDARS, or DLM-Forum. Also, I think that it will be necessary to publish the proposals and the results of this event in a range of printed or digital publications, because there are a lot of new ideas not published. Why not the ERPANET digital journal?"

"ERPANET provides an opportunity – *the* opportunity – for networking, working, learning, discussing vital topics in changing environments/focuses → *be* an info platform."

Annex: Feedback Form

This form is intended to gather information about the workshop from the participants. It will only take a couple of minutes to fill in, and will provide us with valuable information about the usefulness and benefits of the workshop.

Please fill in your answers or circle the appropriate number (where 1 = poor and 5 = excellent).

About the Workshop

1. How would you rate the organisation of the event?
1 2 3 4 5
2. How would you rate the structure of the workshop?
1 2 3 4 5
3. How well did you feel that the workshop addressed the main topic?
1 2 3 4 5
4. How useful was the workshop documentation?
1 2 3 4 5
5. How effective were the speakers?
1 2 3 4 5
6. Was the cost acceptable?
No Yes
7. Did this workshop meet your expectations?
No Yes
If not, why not?
8. What will you be able to take from this workshop back to your own organisations?
9. What else would you like to have seen covered at this workshop?
10. What did you like best about this workshop?
11. What did you like least?

please turn over!

About you

12. Do you work for a
- Public Sector Organisation
 - Commercial company
 - Academic Institution
 - Consultancy
 - Other (Please specify)
13. What is your function?
(Please specify; e.g. Archivist, Content Provider, Consultant, etc.)
14. How did you hear about this workshop?
- Listserv (Please specify)
 - An Organisation or Institution (Please specify)
 - Colleague
 - Web search
 - ERPANET Website
 - Other (Please specify)
15. What motivated you to attend? (Please tick as appropriate)
- Interest in the topic
 - Interest in the ERPANET Project
 - General interest in preservation activities
 - Location
 - Speakers
 - Other (Please specify)

The Future

16. Are you likely to attend other ERPANET events in the future?
- No Yes
17. Are there any topics that you would like to see ERPANET provide events in?

Please feel free to make any additional comments. We also welcome any additional feedback to coordinator@erpanet.org or swiss.editor@erpanet.org.
Many thanks for giving us your opinion!