



# *Mapping social media archiving initiatives: current trends and future perspectives*

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# Research Background

## Phd research:

“Archiving social media: A comparative Study of the Practices, Obstacles and Opportunities related to the development of social media archives”

# Research Background

## PhD research:

- focus on memory institutions that are currently or are planning to archive social media
- first-hand experience of web archivists and curators to understand state-of-the-art and identify new challenges posed by the increasing complexity social media platforms

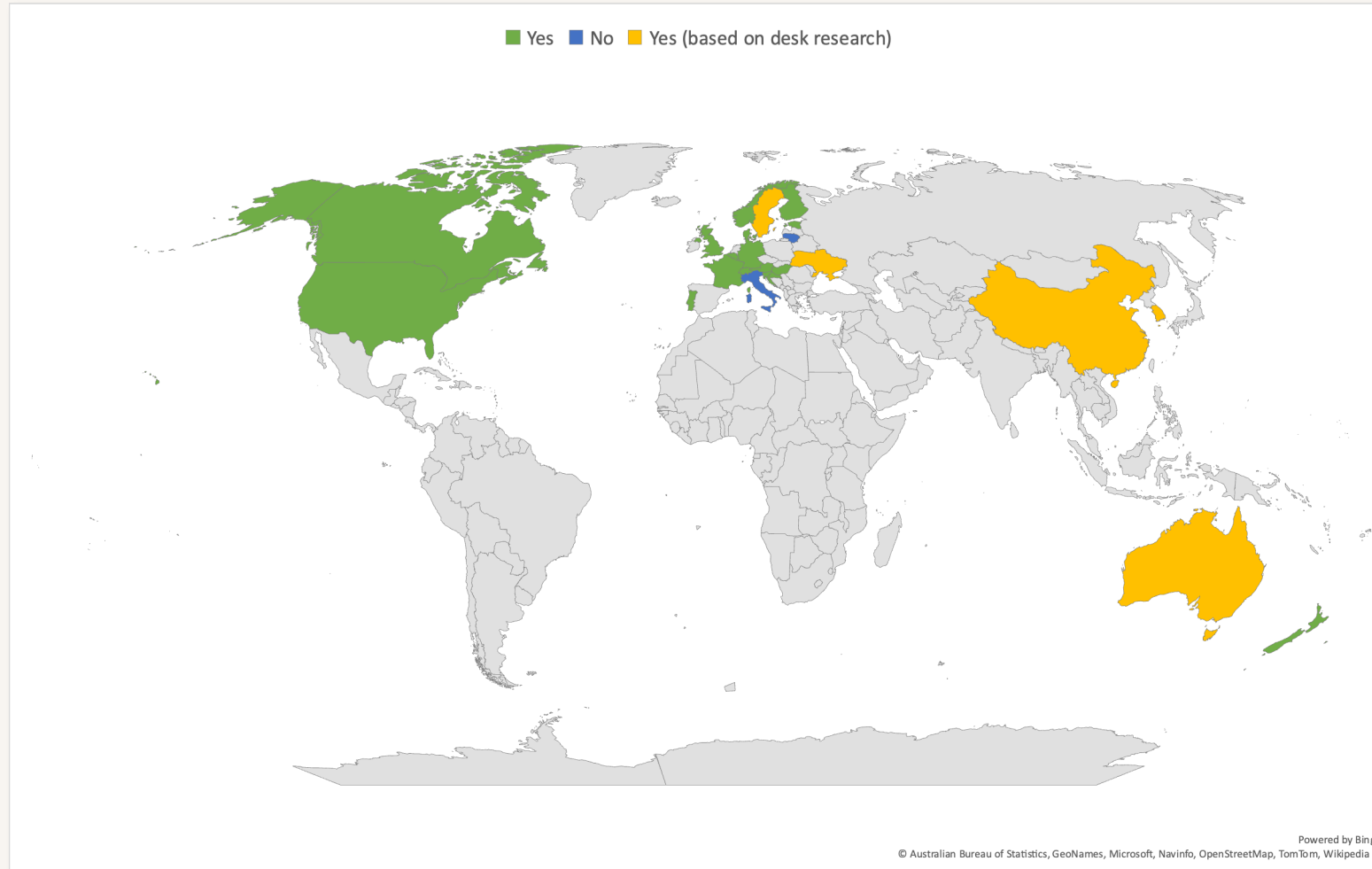
# Overview

- Review of the latest social media archiving initiatives worldwide (See *Vlassenroot, 2021*)
- Some reflections on the imbalances and gaps
- Trends emerged and what these may entail for the future of the preservation of social media at an institutional level

### Online Survey

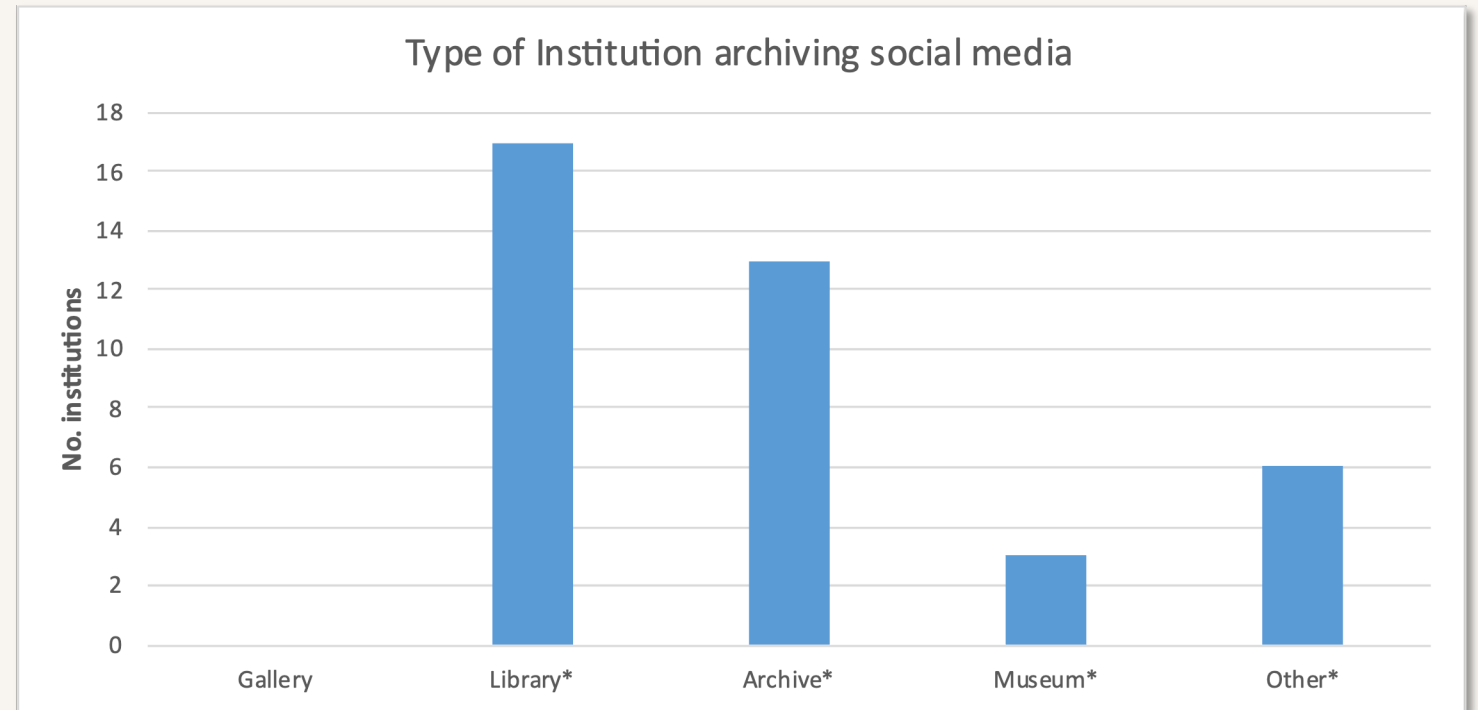
- Data collection conducted between October 2021 and February 2022
- Dissemination via Web Curators mailing lists (e.g. IIPC), Twitter and direct emails to memory institutions that mentioned social media archiving activities on website or collection development policies
- Total responses: 33

# Location of social media archiving initiatives



### Type of Institution

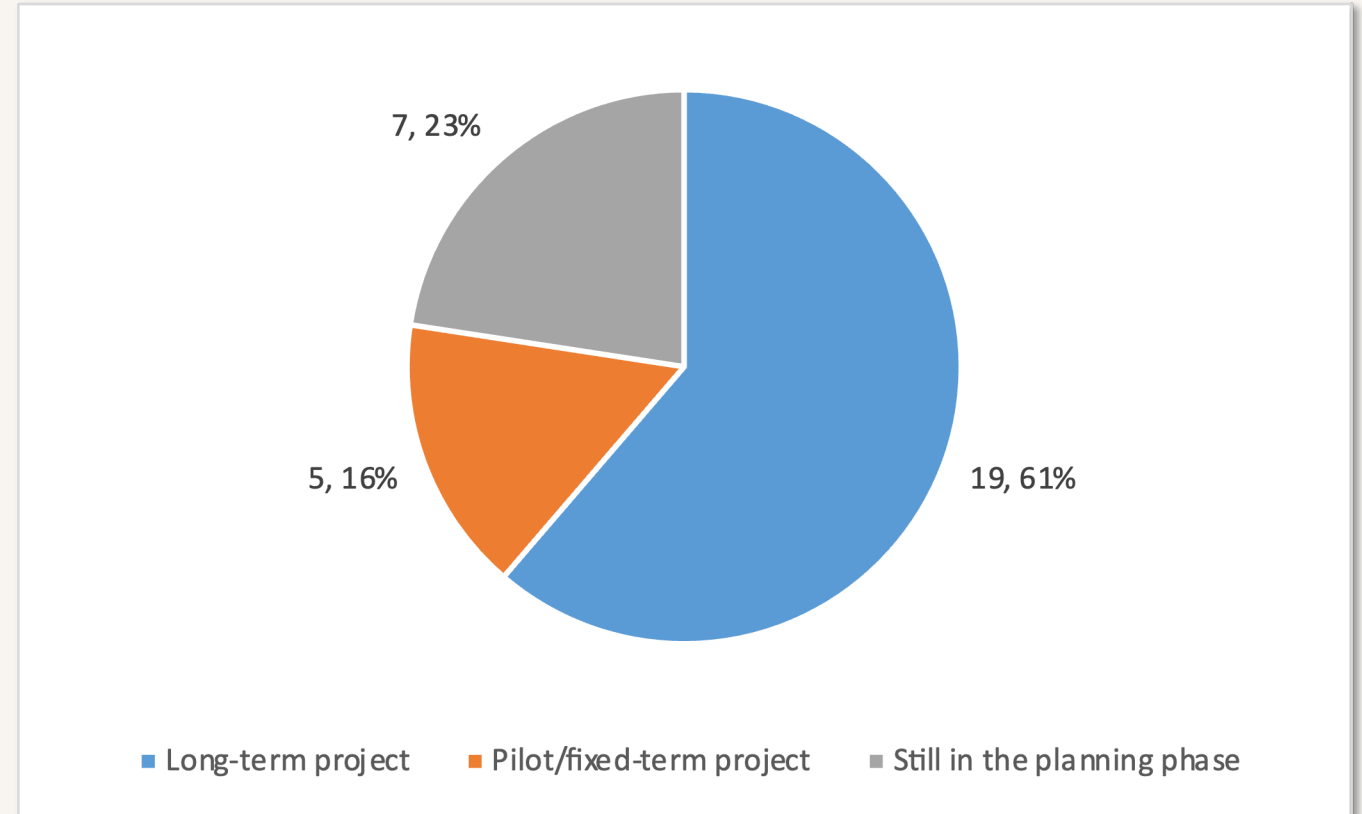
- Majority of the initiatives originate in national libraries and archives.
- A fair number of responses came from different areas of the GLAM sector and other institutions such as Universities, government agencies and archives related to political parties.



\*includes data based on desk research

## Type and stage of projects

- more than half of the respondents are institutions that are running *long-term projects*
- The remainder is distributed between *pilot* and *planning* phase.

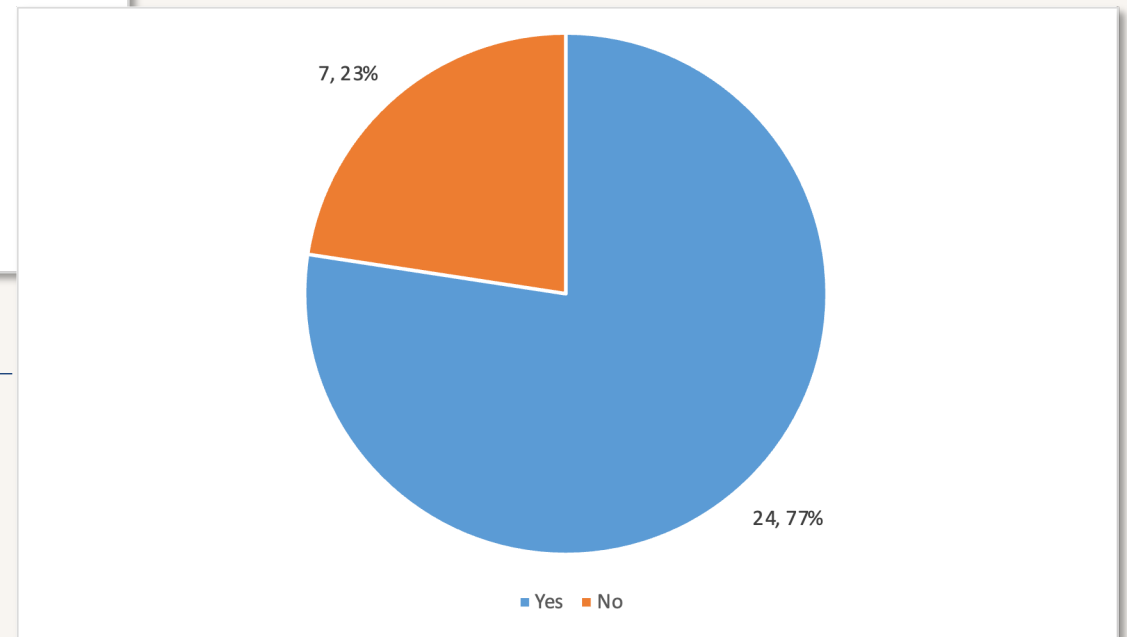




## Mapping social media archiving initiatives

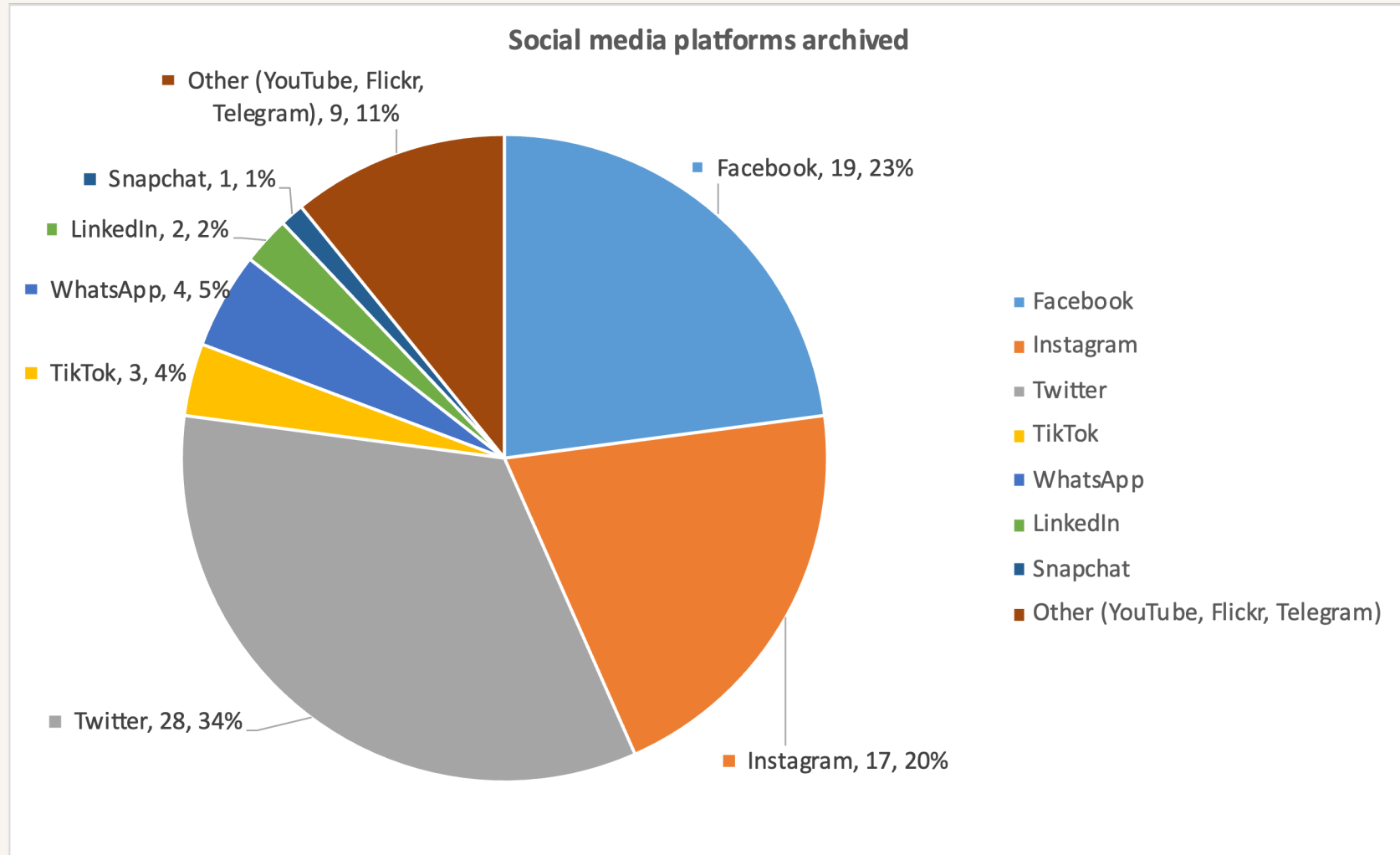


## Year in which institutions have started archiving social media or are planning to



**Social media archiving initiatives that are part of a pre-existing web archiving project**

## Mapping social media archiving initiatives



## Further Considerations

- The geographical distribution of social media archiving initiatives reflects those imbalances that are mainly related to economic, political and ICT divide. (N.B. limitations related to the language used for the survey)
- The challenges related to the collection of certain platforms (e.g. Facebook), the maturity of born-digital archiving in the US and Europe and the national focus of most collections affect the type of social media platforms archived, leading to the formation of inevitable gaps in the material archived.

## Further Considerations

- Questions concerning the completeness and representativeness of the collective memory shared on social media preserved so far, as not all social platforms are popular in the same way in all countries, while others are only used in specific areas of the globe that are currently not archiving social media.
- The emerging of social media archiving initiatives outside legal deposit institutions could represent an opportunity for these ‘outsiders’ to shape collections that could target and keep record of silences and marginalised histories on social media, especially on non-mainstream platforms.

## Conclusions and Future Directions

- The importance of knowing the extent of the gaps and the incompleteness of the corpora historians are and will work with, and of the importance of documenting the criteria on which selection is based.
- The importance of thinking critically about the content archived, what we can expect to find in these important collections and what still needs to be done in order to try to bridge those (geo-political) gaps and find solutions that may mitigate challenges

## Conclusions and Future Directions

- The number of social media archiving initiatives are steadily growing in number, especially in response to historically significant events.
- Emerging trend: social media archiving initiatives are starting to flourish *independently* from archiving institutions already involved with web archiving.

You can find references and bibliography here:



Thank you!

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