

# Report on the Scholarly Use of Web Archives Across Ireland: The Past, Present & Future(s)

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## Purpose of WARCnet Special Report:

- examine the causes for the loss of digital heritage and how this relates to Ireland,
- offer an overview of the landscape of web archives based across Ireland, and their availability, and accessibility as resources for Irish based research,
- provide some insight into the awareness of, and engagement with web archives in Irish third-level academic institutions.

## Loss of Irish Digital Heritage to Posterity

The loss of Irish Digital Heritage is due to the lack of a “comprehensive formal records, management policy for State” and the loss of electronic records and access to them due to technical/media obsolescence (Director of the National Archives of Ireland, 2020); and the failure of successive ROI governments to negotiate copyright and legal deposit legislation in line with advances in publishing and communications technologies, including the current deficiencies of ROI copyright and legal deposit legislation to include the routine web archiving of the Irish national web estate.



## Availability & Accessibility of Web Archives for Irish Based Research

The NLI Web Archive and the PRONI Web Archive began a selective web archiving programme in 2011, which is accessible online. The UK Web Archive began a selective web archiving programme from 2003 and commenced the annual crawling of the UK web estate in 2013 including the web estate of Northern Ireland, which is accessible through the Library of Trinity College Dublin.



Leabharlann  
Náisiúnta  
na hÉireann  
National Library  
of Ireland

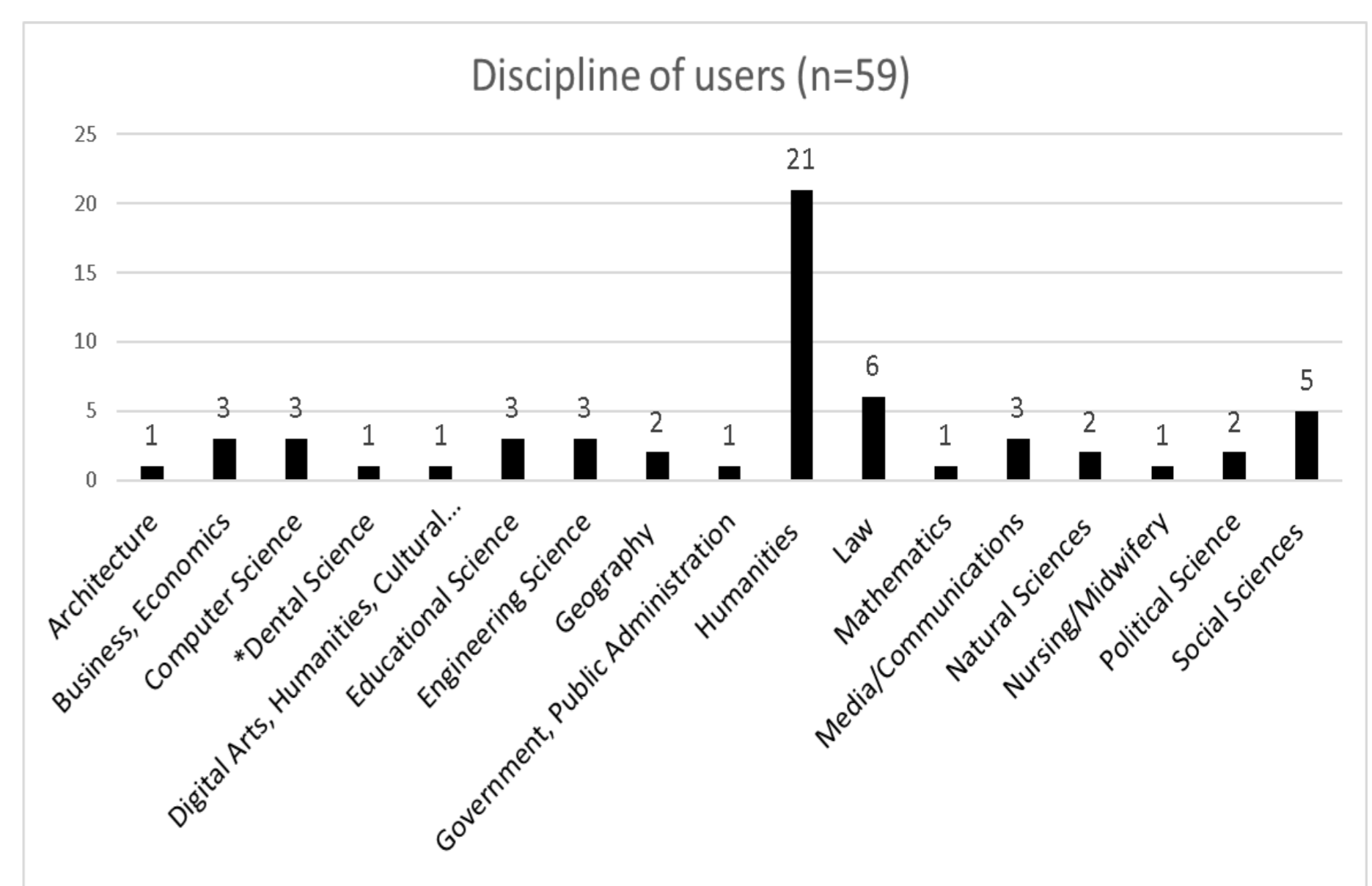


Trinity College Dublin  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

## Awareness & Engagement with Web Archives in Irish Academic Institutions

The findings highlight a limited awareness of the existence of web archives in Irish academic institutions, and, for an unfamiliar audience, more effort is needed to demonstrate the importance of archiving the web and to promote the value of web archives as resources for research.

The findings also reveal that there is a small community of web archive users in Irish academic institutions, at different levels of education and academia from a broad range of research disciplines. So, there is already a starting base of scholarly users/potential users which could be built upon to promulgate discourse for developing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research networks with web archivists and information professionals to address potential solutions for developing research models/paradigms for the use of web archives for Irish based research that are fit for purpose across a spectrum of research fields. WARCnet offers a good model to follow!



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