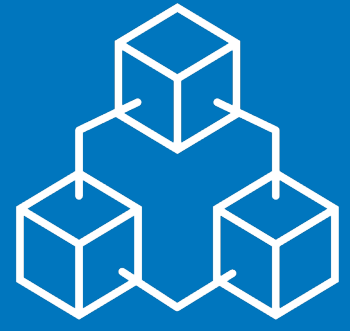# From Theory to Practice:
The First Steps in Social Media Archiving

Social media archiving faces technical challenges and requires understanding of organizational context. Therefore, a typology-based approach is proposed, selecting tools and methods based on context of creation and use. This approach may not only enhance the effectiveness of social media archiving initiatives but, through its reflective and goal-oriented steps, may also contribute to rethinking and enhancing an organization's digital preservation program as a whole.
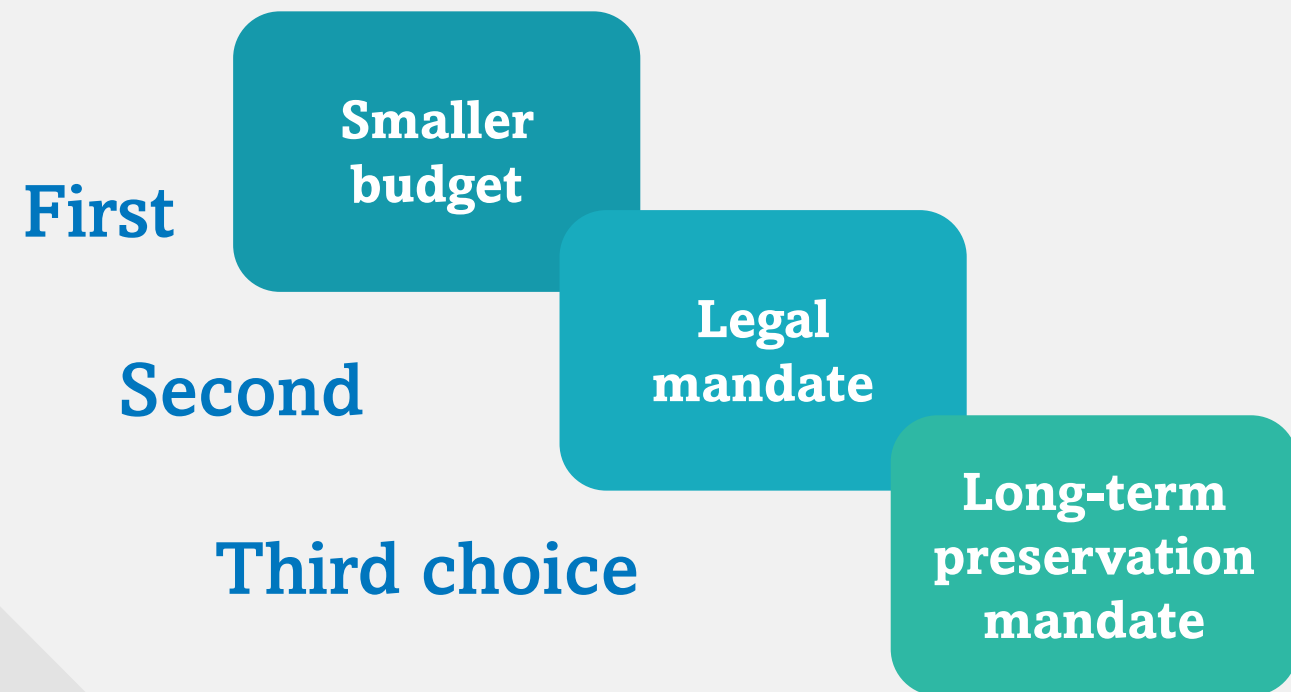
Typology-based approach

This poster reflects on the results of the typology-based approach, that was used during two workshops on social media archiving. A total of 35 participants filled out this typology 51 times.
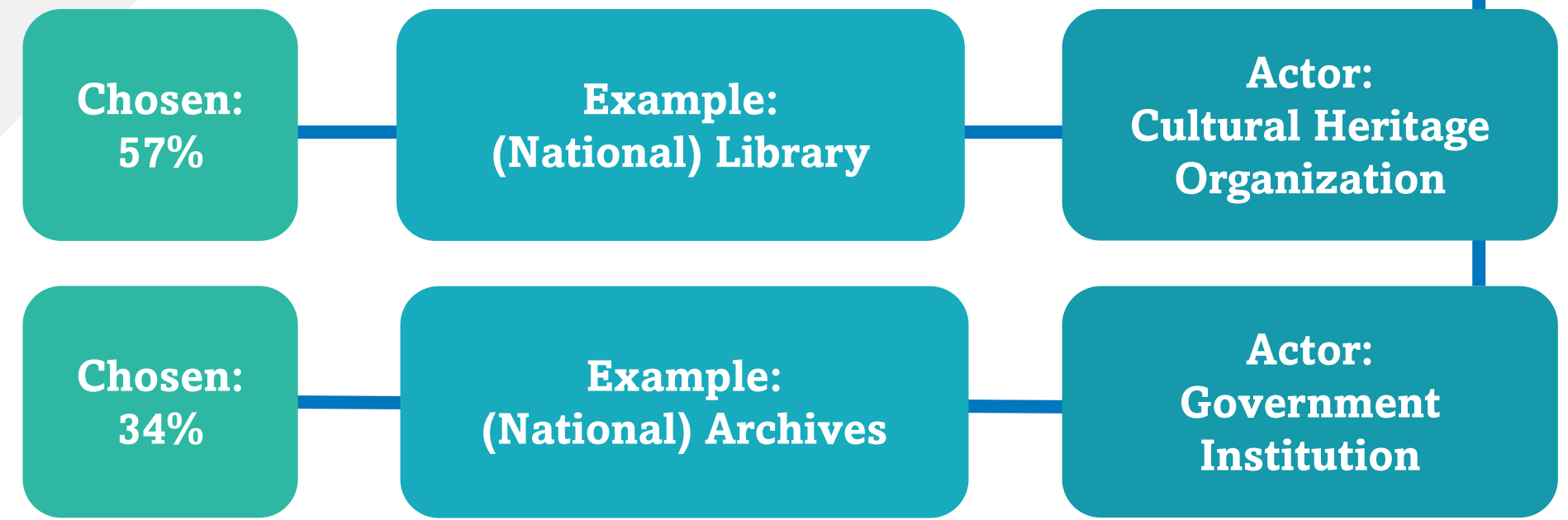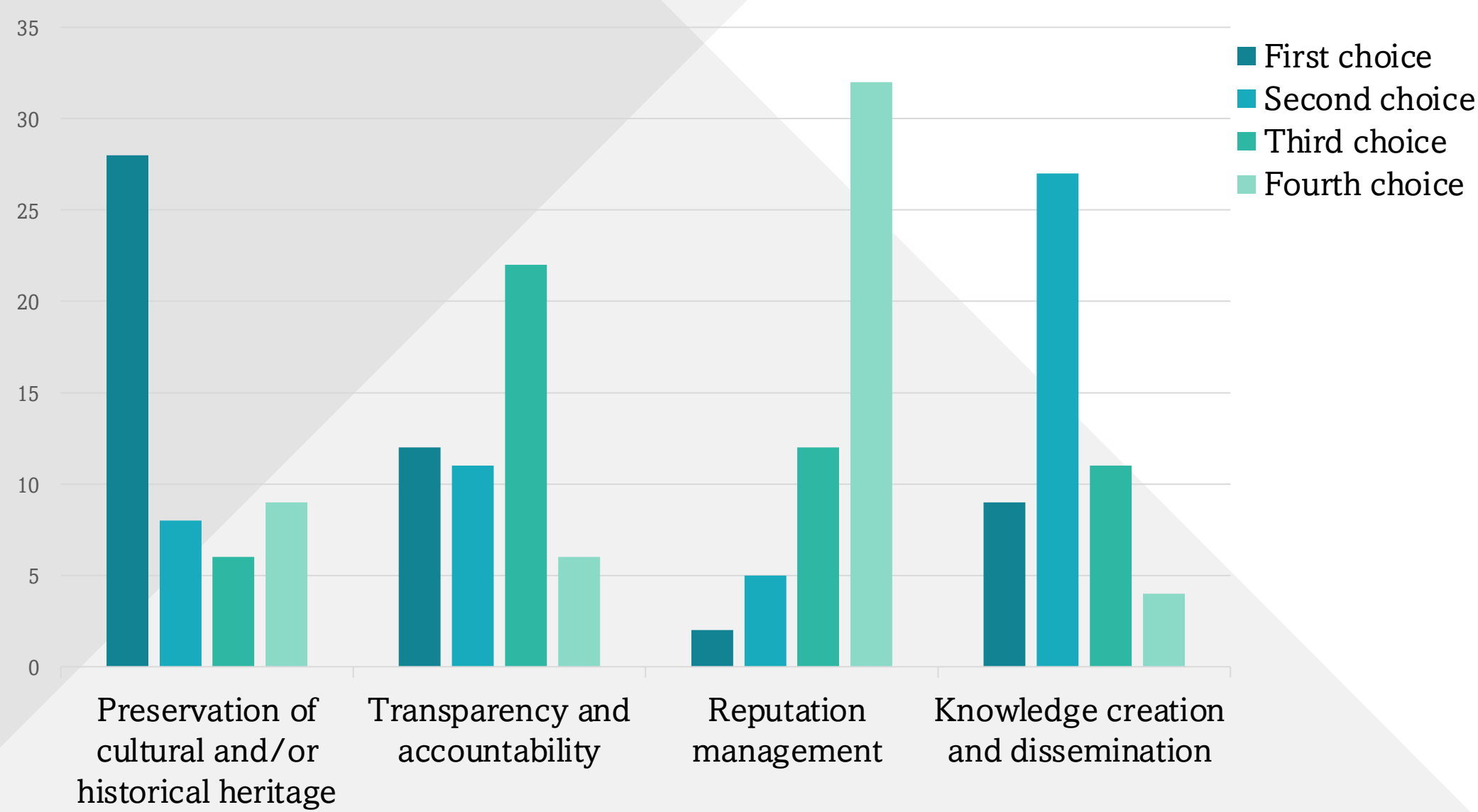
1. Identify Actor

Actors: those that have an active stake in creating or using social media archives. Participants selected these as the start of their typology.
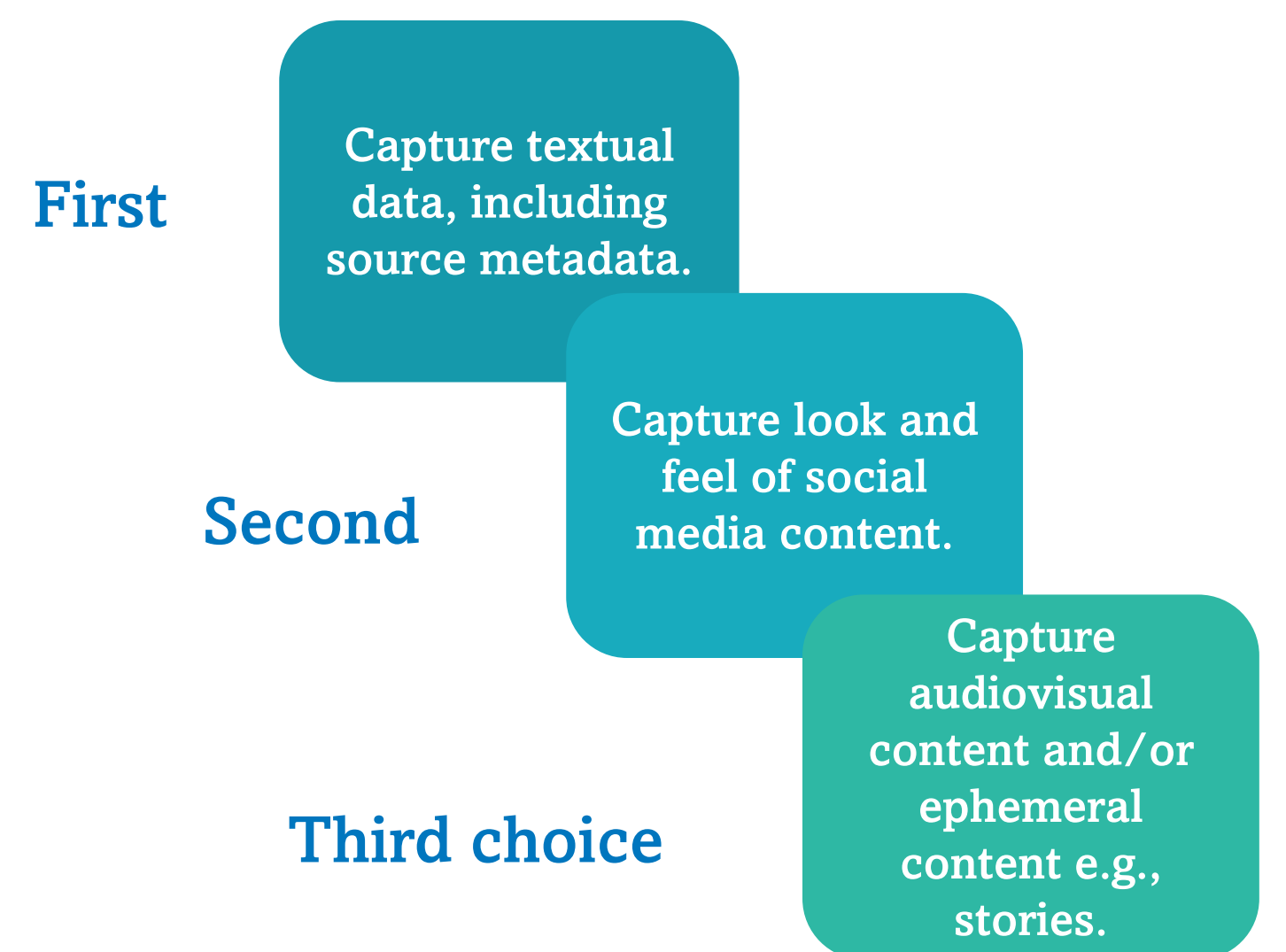
| Chosen: 57% | Example: (National) Library | Actor: Cultural Heritage Organization |
| Chosen: 34% | Example: (National) Archives | Actor: Government Institution |

2. Identify Characteristics

Participants selected the three most fitting characteristics to their actor.

First — Smaller budget

Second — Legal mandate

Third choice — Long-term preservation mandate

3. Define High-Level Purpose

High-level purpose of using or archiving social media for the previously chosen actor. There were four purposes provided that participants had to order from most to least relevant.
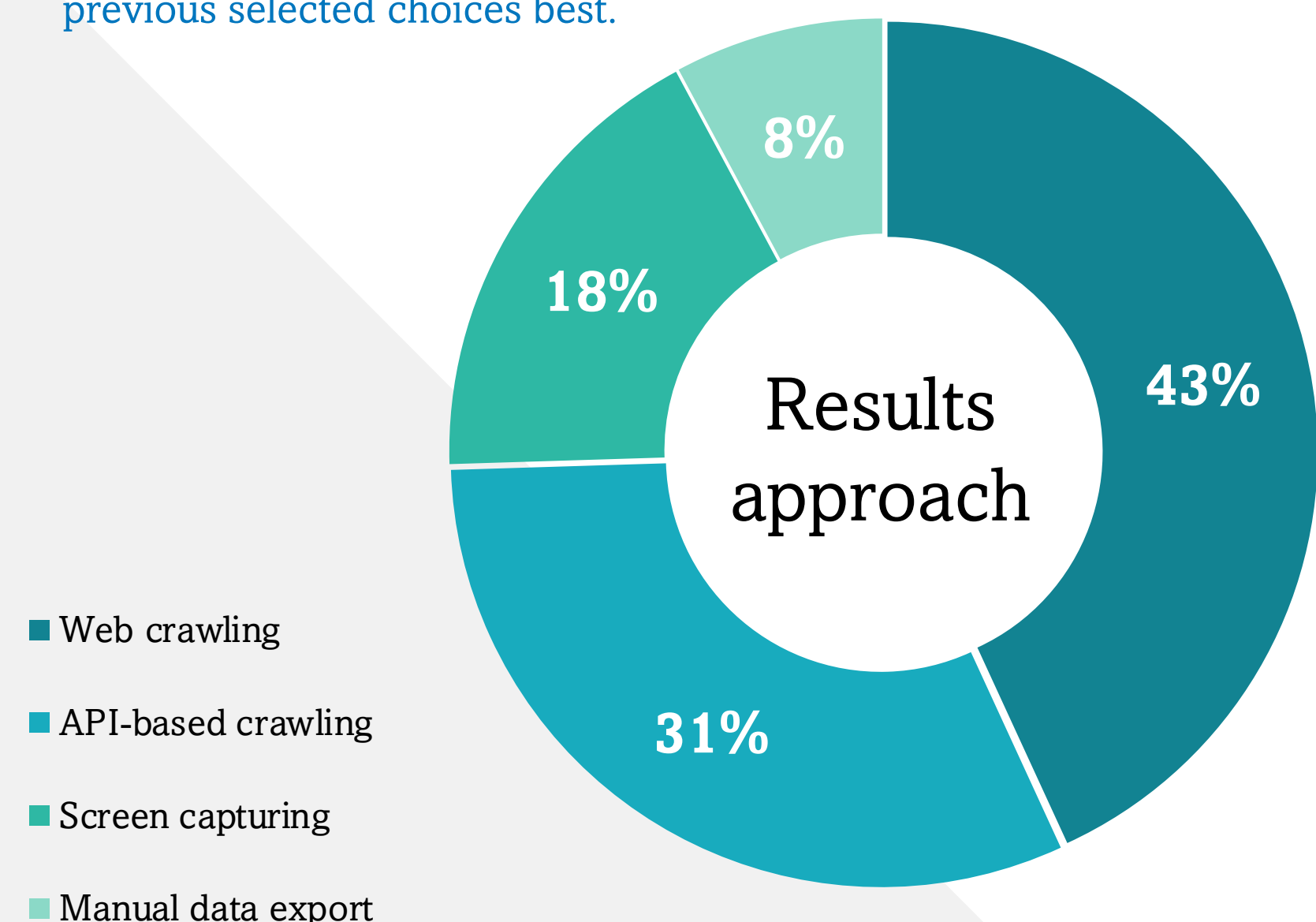

Legend: First choice, Second choice, Third choice, Fourth choice

Categories: Preservation of cultural and/or historical heritage; Transparency and accountability; Reputation management; Knowledge creation and dissemination

4. Establish Goals and Requirements

Top three most important goals and/or requirements when archiving social media (also taking the designated community into consideration).

First — Capture textual data, including source metadata.

Second — Capture look and feel of social media content.

Third choice — Capture audiovisual content and/or ephemeral content e.g., stories.

5. Select Fitting Approach

In the last step, all previous choices come together. Now it is possible to decide which technical approach fits all the previous selected choices best.

Results approach: 43%, 31%, 18%, 8%

- Web crawling
- API-based crawling
- Screen capturing
- Manual data export

Conclusions

A combination of approaches to tackle multiple goals and requirements seems to be preferred.

Using typologies serves as an initial step in archiving social media. Different actors can choose distinct approaches, that lead to new insights. For this reason, we had included out-of-the-box typologies as catalysts for discussion.

Most of the participants were working in larger institutions. Does that mean that smaller, local archives are not considering social media archiving (yet)?

Open-source tools were not listed as a primary requirement, this was unexpected.

Susanne van den Eijkel — National Archives of the Netherlands

Zefi Kavvadia — International Institute for Social History

Lotte Wijsman — National Archives of the Netherlands

Curious to try out this typology-based approach? Scan the QR code to read the hand-out and fill in a typology for your own organization.