Bringing Ukraine’s heritage to Wikimedia platforms — insights from 550+ Ukrainian institutions

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Project survey

- A **month-long survey** (mid-February to mid-March) as part of the Open GLAM in Ukraine pilot project

- Promoted widely, including with help of national and regional authorities

Survey goals

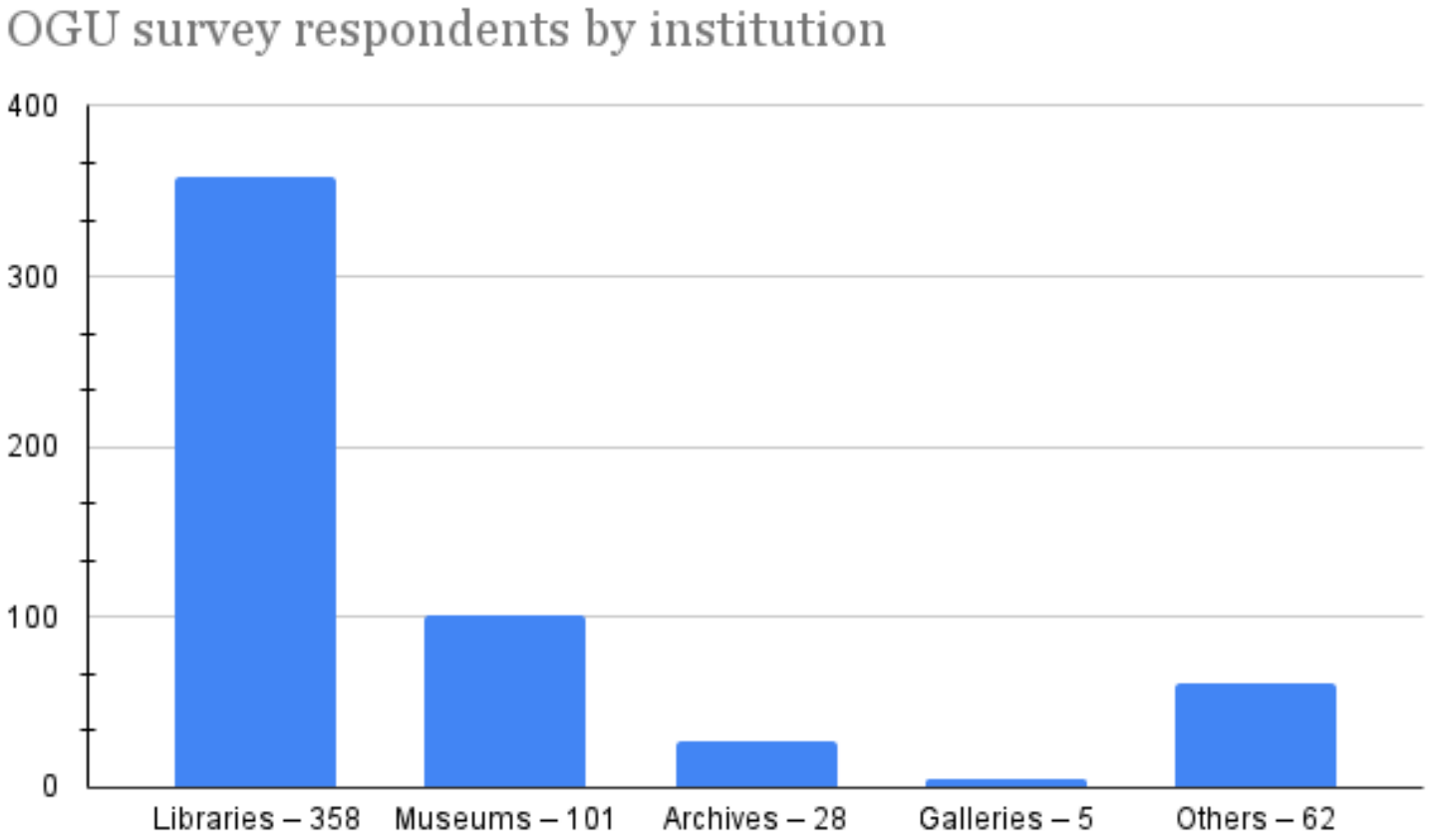
Create a list of GLAM institutions potentially interested in working with Wikipedia & gather:

- **Basic info** (e.g. number of employees)
- Their **awareness of Wikimedia platforms** & cooperation opportunities
- The state of **digitization of their collections**
- Their **openness to free licenses / content sharing on Wikimedia platforms**

Respondents

Respondents

- **554 institutions responded** – much more than we'd originally planned
- Institutions represent **all of Ukraine's regions** except occupied Crimea
  Regions represented most widely:
  - **Kharkiv** (frontline region!) – 94
  - **Odesa** – 71
  - **Rivne** – 65



Others include cultural service centres, scientific institution, culture and leisure centres, houses of culture, reserves, art institutions, and more.

Clockwise:
1) National Museum of Lviv
2) Yaroslav Mudryi National Library of Ukraine
3) Kyiv National Picture Gallery
4) Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv

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Note on respondents

Our sample ranges quite widely – from largest institutions to small village libraries. So, while overall numbers presented today are helpful, they don't tell the whole story.

Awareness of Wikimedia platforms & projects

Awareness of Wikipedia

Q: Do you know about the functioning of Wikipedia?

A:

- **~85%** yes
- **~11%** uncertain (“heard something about Wikipedia”)
- **~4%** no

Awareness of sister projects

By specific projects:

- **Most widely used*:** Wiktionary & Wikisource (~15% each); Wikiquote & Wikidata (~12-13% each)
- 7% use **Wikimedia Commons****

*In many cases respondents likely meant consumption of information, not contributing; the question didn't distinguish between reading & contributing
**Usage of media files in Wikipedia articles likely doesn't count here as many respondents probably don't realize that photos are hosted on Wikimedia Commons

Cooperating w/ Wikimedia Ukraine

- **38 institutions / ~7%** report experience cooperating with Wikimedia Ukraine
- Yet, **~half of them mean individual participation in Wikimedia Ukraine's various contests/campaigns** like Wikimaraton, WLM, #1Lib1Ref & much more
- **Examples of more systemic cooperation:**
  - organizing joint workshops;
  - hosting photo exhibitions;
  - doing content uploads on Wikimedia Commons

Wikimarathon 2025 in the WIKI library (city district library in Lviv inspired by the wiki philosophy)

Photo: MarianaSenkiv, CC BY-SA 4.0

Cooperating w/ Wikimedia Ukraine

- **~30%** are outright interested in establishing cooperation with Wikimedia Ukraine
- The rest ***might*** be interested / need more information
  - only 2% are **not** interested outright

Digitization of collections

Digitization of collections

The state of digitization of collections ranges widely based on the institution:

- **Some are quite active**
  State archive in the Mykolaiv region: *“more than 500,000 scans were digitized and made public in 2024”*
- **Some have less resources but are moving forward**
  National Historic-Ethnographic Reserve “Pereyaslav” (Kyiv region): “The digitization sector started its work in June 2024. As of the end of 2024, the collection includes more than 200,000 items. At the beginning of 2025, ~3341 museum items were digitized”

Оцифрування архівних документів у воєнний час: досвід Державного архіву Миколаївської області

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Ключові слова: оцифрування; цифрове збереження; збройна агресія; війна; Державний архів Миколаївської області.

Анотація

State archive in the Mykolaiv region (close to the frontline) is actively digitizing their collections during wartime. They shared a link to a journal article detailing their experience

Digitization of collections

- **Some are directly affected by the war & digitization is not on the table**
  - *Novoekonomichne, Donetsk oblast: “I'm sorry, unfortunately, all our community libraries are either destroyed or burned down. Part of the collection has been evacuated, but it's not time to do anything now”*
  - *“The library's funds were lost twice during the occupation of Luhansk region, 1 - in 2014, the resources remained in occupied Luhansk, and 2 - in 2022, the resources remained in occupied Starobilsk. Per unconfirmed reports, the Starobilsk collection was destroyed by the Russian occupiers”*
- **Some are not directly affected by the war but struggle from lack of resources**

A town library in the Ivano-Frankivsk region: “Our library needs help in everything... The library is in a state of emergency. The roof is leaking, the walls are crumbling, and the authorities are ignoring it because it is not a priority for them. Therefore, the issue of digitization is something from the distant future”

Church in Novoekonomichne, a rural settlement in Donetsk oblast, after Russian shelling

(photo: National Police of Ukraine, CC BY 4.0)

Digitization of collections: numbers

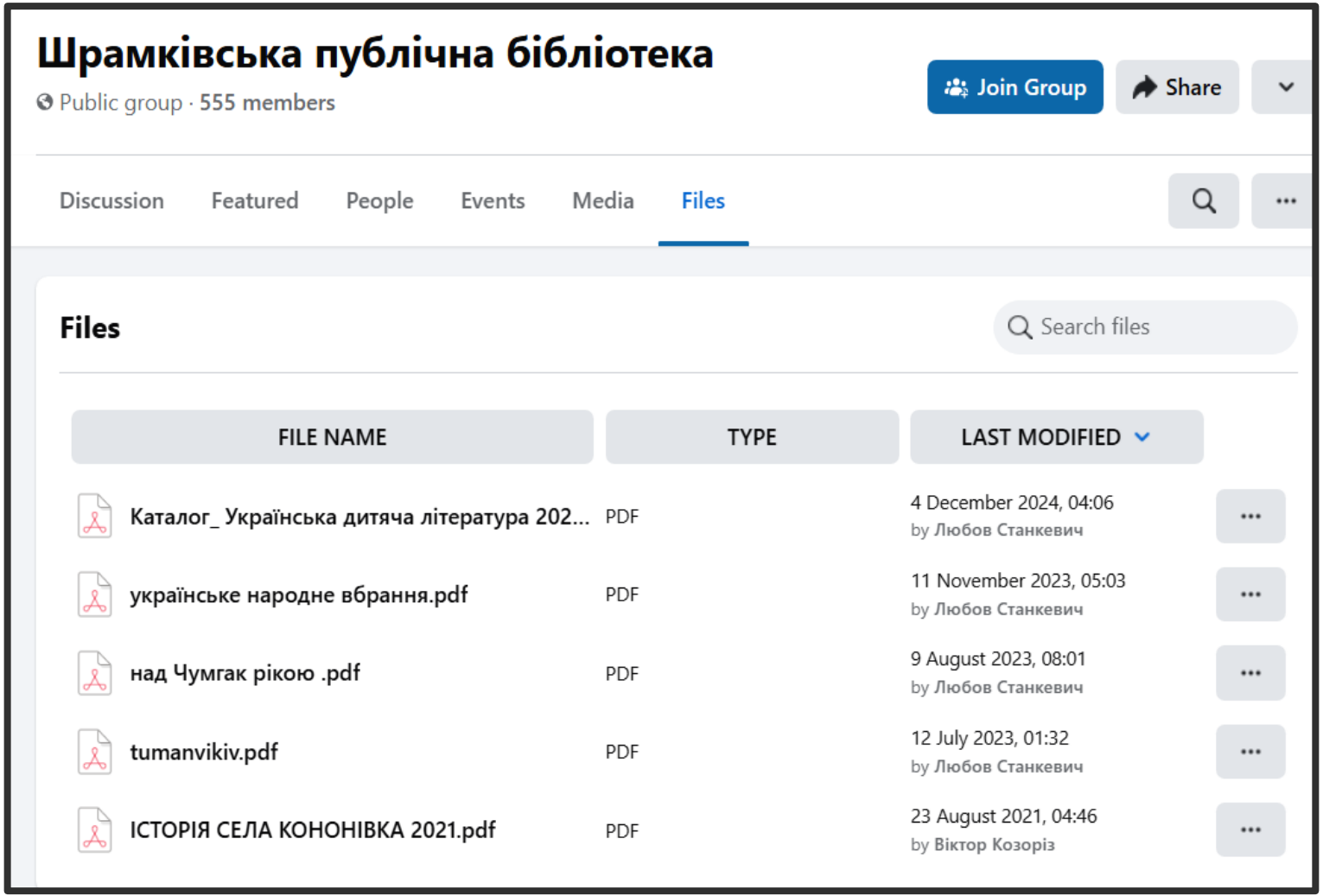
- **~25%** are digitizing their collections
- **~20%** aren't doing it right now but plan to do so
- **~20%** don't even plan it because of the lack of resources
- **Others** have no digitization plans for other reasons (e.g. no collections to digitize)

Making collections available

A lot of different ways:

- **Own websites/portals**
- **Government databases** – most notably Museum Fund of Ukraine Registry
- **External services** e.g. Google Arts and Culture & Museum-digital
- **Social media** – most notably Facebook, sometimes also Instagram & YouTube

Multiple institutions also mentioned **storing data in the cloud** (most notably Google Drive) & **on physical drives**.



Example of a local library storing files in a Facebook group

Making collections available

A few notes:

- Some institutions are digitizing collections with help of international partnerships; US-based FamilySearch was mentioned multiple times
- Some institutions mentioned security concerns – collections are being digitized but not made publicly available under martial law

Support needed for digitization

- Training on digitization was mentioned quite often
  - This mostly means technical training, but a few respondents also mentioned they are unsure about the legal landscape
- Skilled specialists (and funding to pay their salary)
- Technical equipment
  - Mostly (more advanced) scanning equipment
  - Sometimes storage & internet connection were also mentioned

Openness to free licensing / Wikimedia content uploads

Theoretical interest is high...

Q: Would you like for more users to learn about your collections and resources through Wikimedia projects?

A:

- **~30%** yes
- **~58%** maybe / open to discuss
- **~12%** no

...but awareness of CC licenses is low

Q: Are you aware of Creative Commons free licenses?

A:

- **~60%** no
- **~26%** maybe / unsure
- **~9%** aware but not using
- **~4%** well aware & using them *(mostly major national and regional institutions, but also a few small local ones)*

...so there's space to work with

Q: Are you ready to consider the possibility to license part of your collections under a free license compatible with Wikipedia & Wikimedia projects?

A:

- **~71%** need more information to decide
- **~8%** (almost 50 institutions!) yes
- **~1.5%** already doing so
- **~20%** no for different reasons (e.g. legal limitations or just no collections to license)

Thank you for your attention!

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Questions and feedback