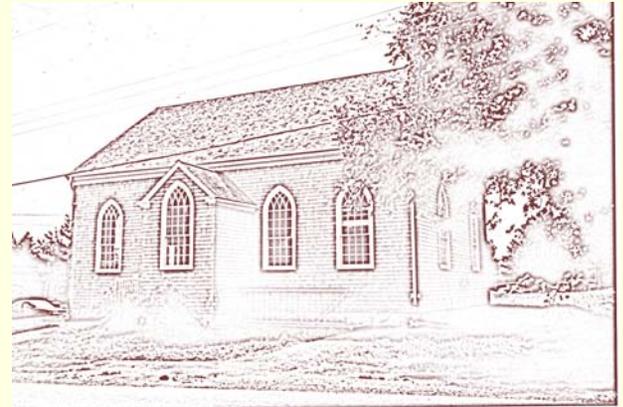


Guysborough Historical Society



Research & Genealogy Survey

Background

- Guysborough Historical Society partnered with STFX Service Learning Program to develop a business/marketing plan
- Business students recommended expanded research and genealogy services as potential sources of revenue, membership and visitors
- There appeared to be wide variations in services offered in the province

Proposal Development

- SDI Initiative
- Partnership with N.S. Archives
- Time frame
- Technology requirements
- Work plan
- Evaluation Criteria

Project Implementation

- Survey design and development
- On-line technology design
- Data Collection
- Analysis
 - Volunteers analyzed data
 - Results to be reviewed by policy and planning committee
 - Recommendations to be presented to executive for action planning

Summary of Results

Profile of organizations participating in the survey

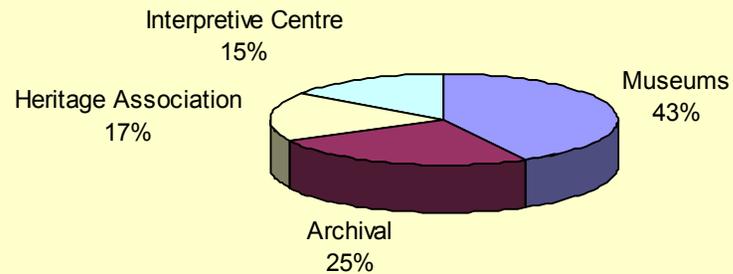
- 64% of the organizations operate all year; 36% are seasonal
- Two thirds of the seasonal operations are open more than 90 days per year

Staffing

- Most of the participating organizations have 1-3 full time staff (78%)
- Only 22% have more than 4 full time staff
- Of the organizations who use part time staff, 45% have between 1-3; 23% have 4 or more and 32% don't use any part time staff.

Participating Organizations

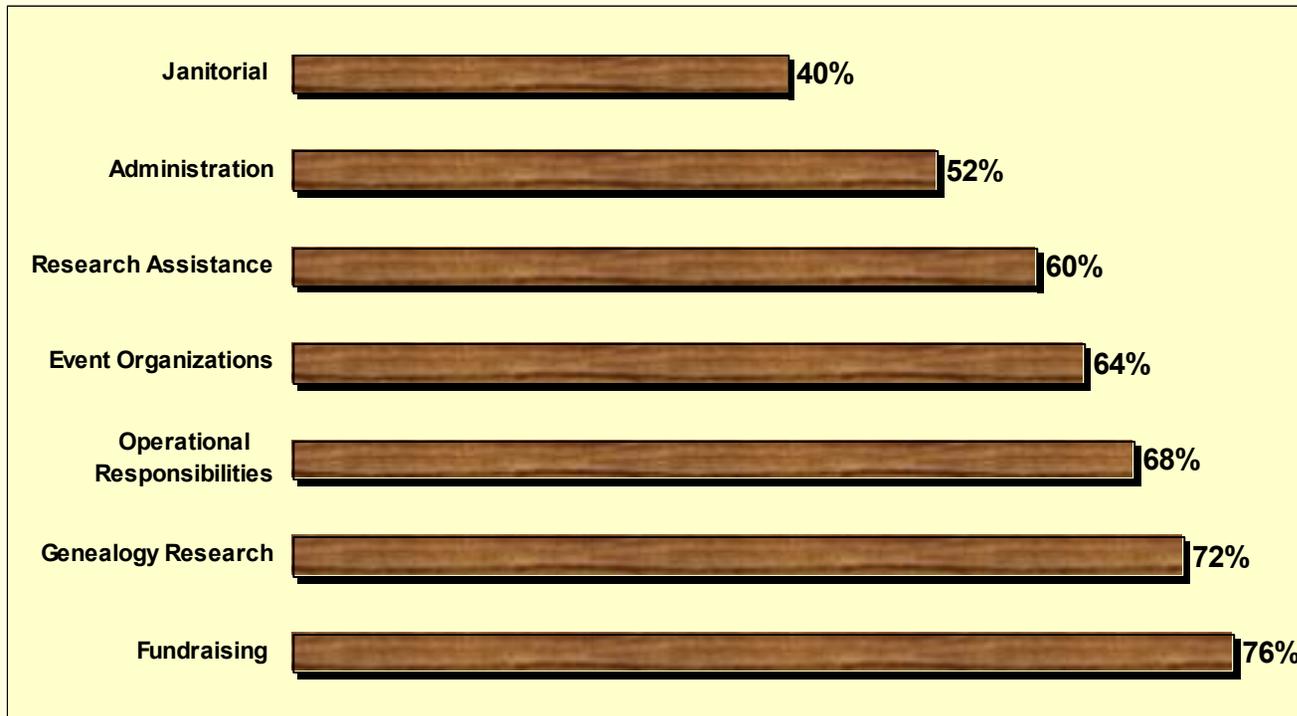
Description of Organizations Surveyed



Volunteer Participation

- Most volunteers in heritage organizations (64%) dedicate 50 or more hours per month to the organization.
- Volunteers in heritage organizations carry out tasks and activities that go far beyond the governance roles that volunteers play in most non-profit organizations.
- They are involved in direct provision of a variety of services to visitors and members.

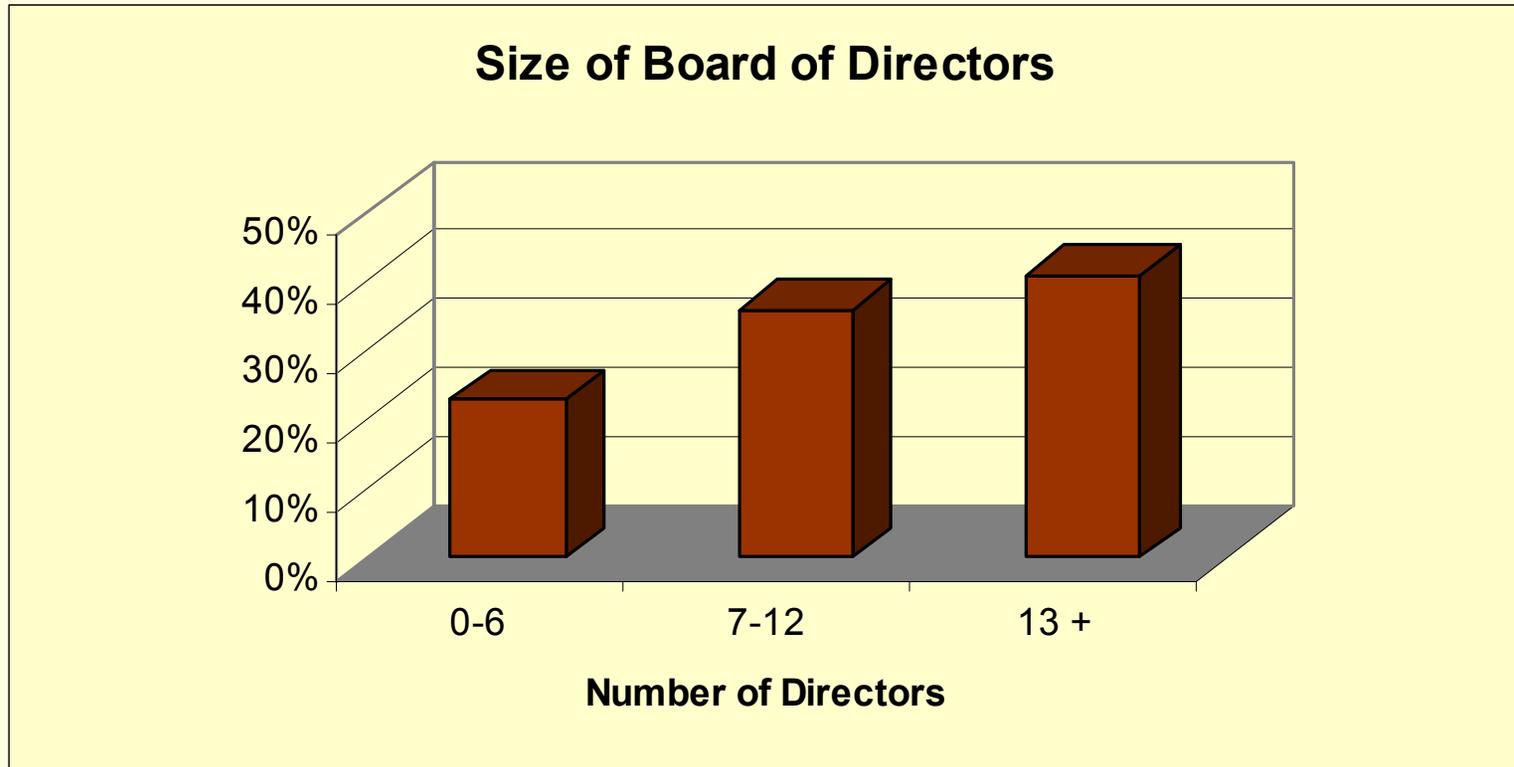
Volunteer Roles in Heritage Organizations



Governance

- Almost all of the organizations are governed by a Board of Directors (96%)
- Board size varies widely, but most are large boards
- 71% of the boards meet monthly
- Most of Boards of Directors have between 4-8 committees

Board of Directors Size



Membership

- 71% of the organizations charge a membership fee
- Of those, most charge between \$5 and \$10 for membership
- The majority of organizations have less than 75 members
- Members receive a variety of benefits including voting, a newsletter, services, free admission and other.

Amount of membership fee	Percentage of groups
\$5 - \$10	59%
\$11 - \$20	35%
\$21 or more	6%

Genealogy

- Only 58% of organizations are guided by a written genealogy policy
- Half of those that are, said they would be willing to share this policy with others
- Only 28% of the organizations surveyed offer genealogy workshops
- Those that do, mostly hold 2 or less per year
- Only 8% of the organizations have moved into providing online genealogical services while the majority offer in-house services paid for by donations or a very modest hourly rate
- Less than half of the heritage organizations expect visitors to pre-pay for genealogical research

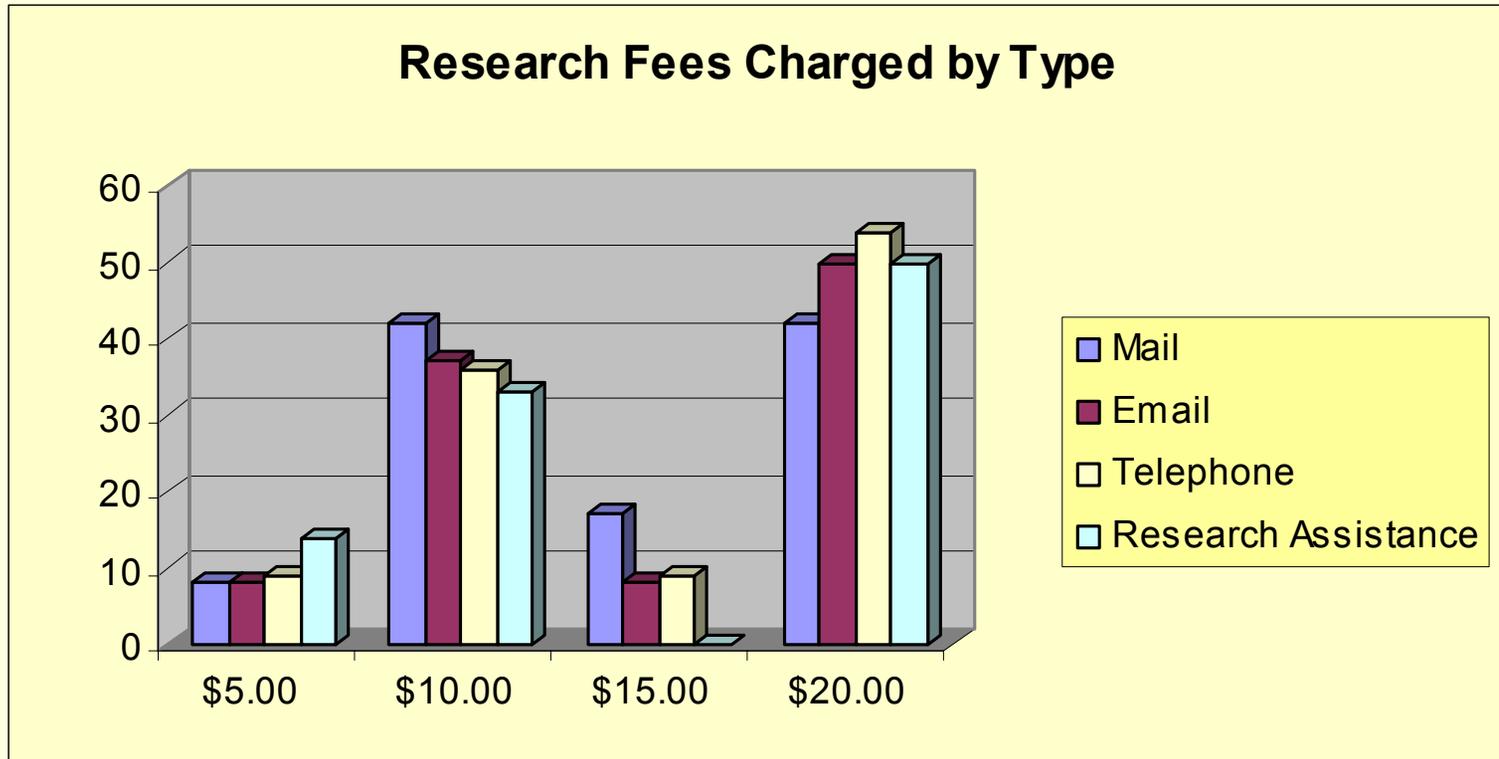
Guest Speakers

- of the organizations 60% in the study have guest speakers
- Of those, about half of the groups utilize guest speakers 3 or less times per year
- The majority of groups (83%) do not charge admission for these events
- Slightly more than half of the groups who bring in speakers average more than 20 people attending these events
- Most guest speakers receive honorariums, travel, meals and accommodations
- One-third of the organizations don't offer any financial assistance to speakers

Research

- The majority of organizations offer research services by mail, email or telephone. Only 28% offer the services of a research assistant
- Most charge by the hour for research services, but 36% of groups accept donations and 27% charge per request
- The hourly rate charged for this service varies as per chart below, but most groups seem to be moving to a \$20 per hour rate for research services.

Research Fees

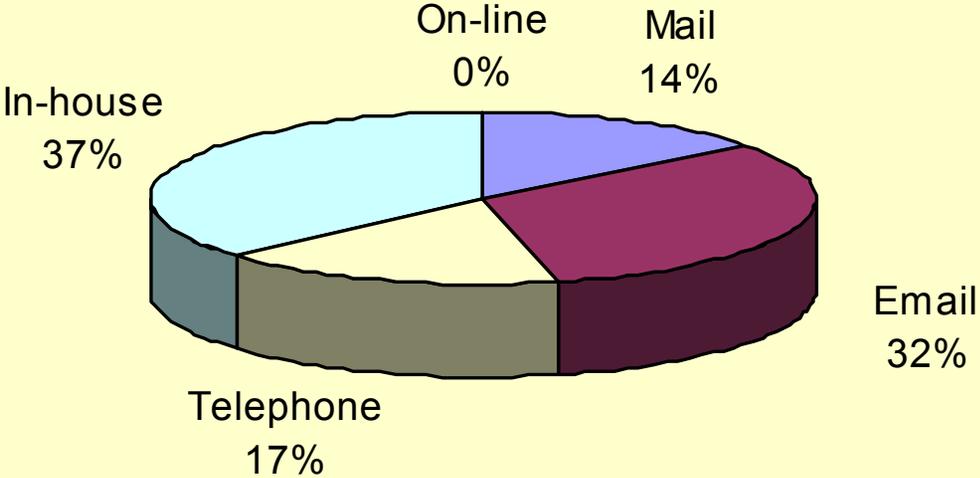


Services Requested

- As technology increases, more heritage organizations are doing business through email
- The low rate of online requests can be explained by the low number of organizations who offer on-line or web-based services
- The following chart shows how organizations receive their requests for services

Service Requests

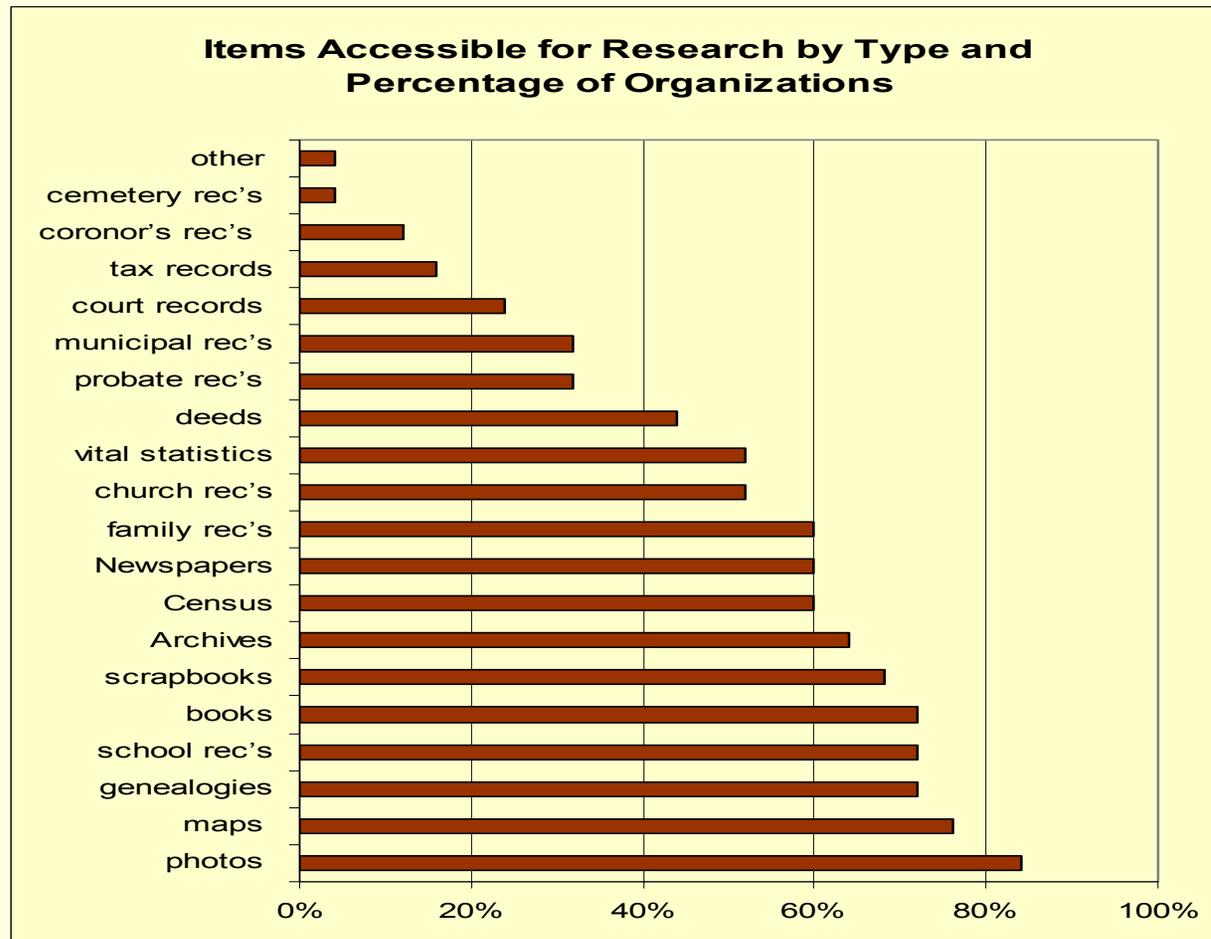
How services are requested



Other Services

- 80% of heritage organizations in the survey provide photocopying
- The average cost being charged is 25 cents per page
- 48% offer photo duplication at a cost of between \$5 and \$10
- 48% offer scanning services with 67% charging \$5.00 or less and 33% charging more than \$6.00 per scan
- Most organizations (80%) do not allow people to bring their own equipment into the museum for use

Research Available



Accessible Databases

- Again, technology is creating improvements in access to information. Some organizations have begun to make their collections available in a database format.
- Photographs have been the most widely put into this format through digitizing, but books, census records, vital statistics, personal records, church records and newspapers are also being made part of digital collections accessible through a database
- Only half of the groups that do have databases, allow this information to be retrieved in a “self-serve” manner by visitors and researchers and not all types of information are accessible (i.e.. Genealogies)

Research facilities and services

- Only half of the heritage organizations provide a reading room for research
- Most all facilities accept cash, 78% accept cheque, and 43% have credit card and debit services

Revenue from Research

- The majority of organizations receive less than \$500 per year for providing research services to members and visitors
- 63% of heritage organizations publish a newsletter, most of them several per year
- 96% of facilities sell items other than genealogy

Percentage	Items being sold
100%	Books
77%	Souvenirs
64%	Gifts
23%	Music
13%	Crafts
6%	Maps

Revenue from Retail Sales

- The potential for revenue derived from the sale of items is substantially higher than the current annual research revenue as shown in the table below

Range of Revenue	Percentage of Organizations
\$0-\$1,000	50%
\$1,001 - \$5,000	23%
\$5,001 or more	27%

Questions for Discussion

- Are there opportunities for heritage organizations to increase their revenues through the provision of research and genealogical services?
- Are heritage organizations keeping stride with technological innovations in making collections and services more accessible?
- Would standardizing the costs of services on a province-wide basis be of benefit?
- Is there adequate training, governance and policies in place to support volunteers carrying out the current wide range of responsibilities?
- Are there opportunities for heritage product development and retail sales to be explored?