

A photograph of a man and a woman standing in front of a large wooden bookshelf filled with books. The man, on the left, is wearing glasses and a brown tweed jacket over a dark sweater and a striped shirt. The woman, on the right, has long blonde hair and is wearing a dark jacket. They are both looking towards the camera with serious expressions. The background is a warm-toned library with many books on the shelves.

Fans as gatekeepers: The role of cult media fans in collecting, preserving and sharing fanworks

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Objectives

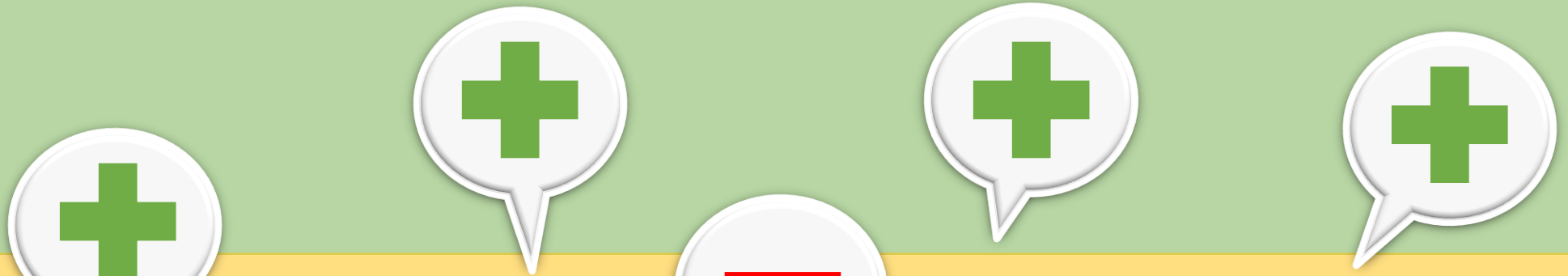
1. To better understand the information behaviour of a unique group of people (fans) and therefore better plan information services and/or architectures.
2. To investigate fanwork collections, their place as cultural products, and how fans create, disseminate, promote, access and preserve them.
3. To explore whether fan information behaviour can be generalised to, and whether it can inform other domains, such as the publishing and media industries, education, and copyright law.

Literature review

- Fans tend to favour informal information sources over official ones (Adams, 2009; Nyman, 2010).
- Fan information is created, managed and distributed by fans themselves, bypassing traditional avenues, authorities and controls (Hart et al., 1999).
- Fans develop their own sophisticated bibliographical standards and classification systems (Dalton, 2012; Bullard, 2014).
- Genre is an important aspect of fanwork classification and community-building (Driscoll, 2006).
- Information behaviour is a significant and inherent component of fandom and fan activities, but it has rarely been investigated in an LIS context.

The Delphi study

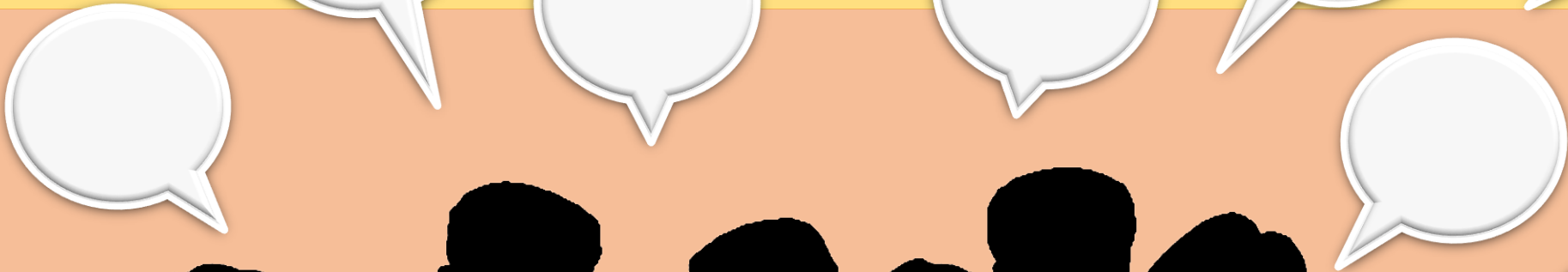
Round 3



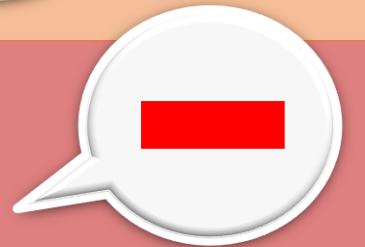
Round 2



Round 1

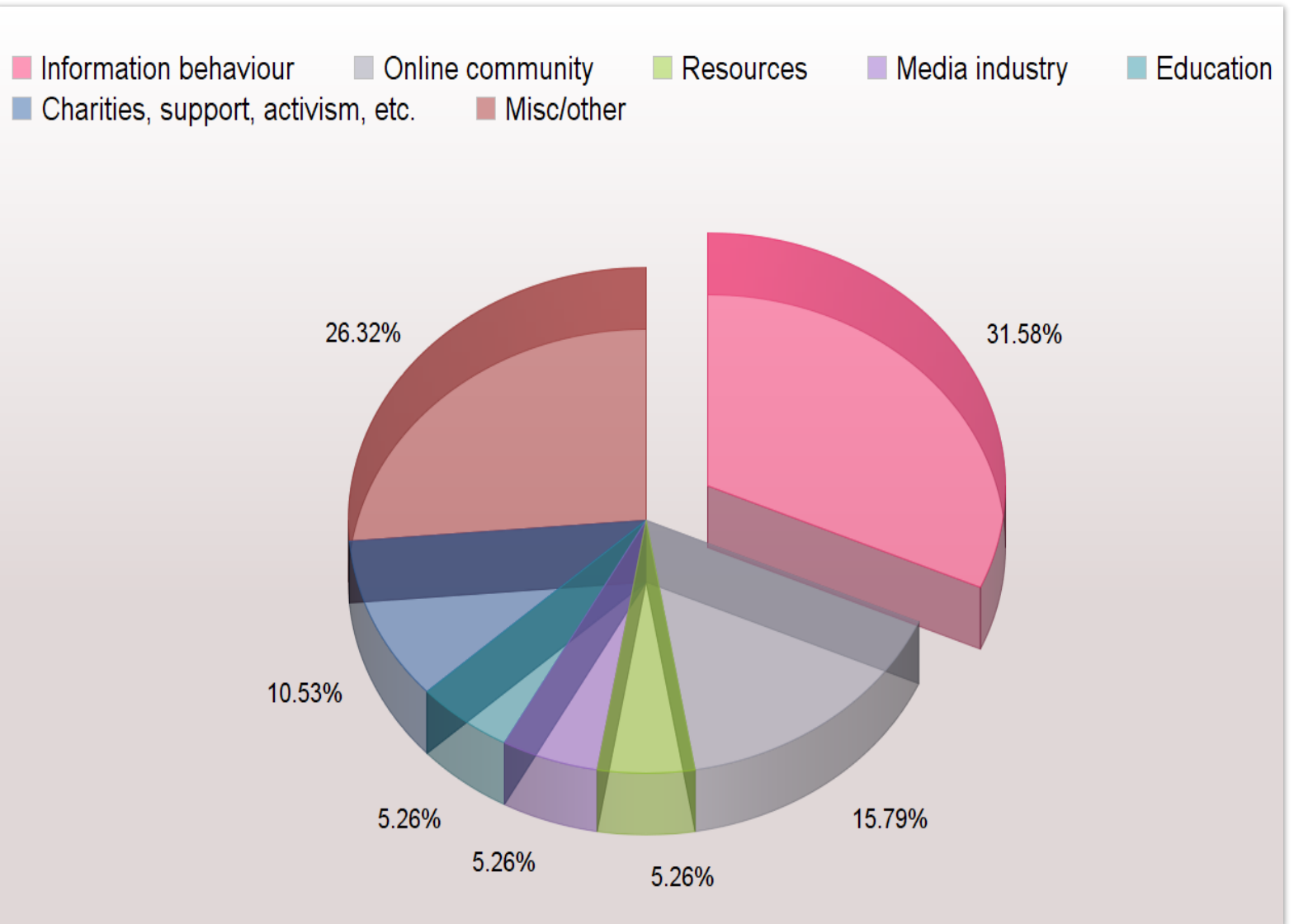


Experts



Results


- Total 96 statements
- 32 panel members or experts – 1 dropped out
- 92/96 reached consensus. 7 of these were borderline statements, i.e. not high confidence.
- 19 of these statements were in the upper quartile, i.e. were of very high confidence.



Statements

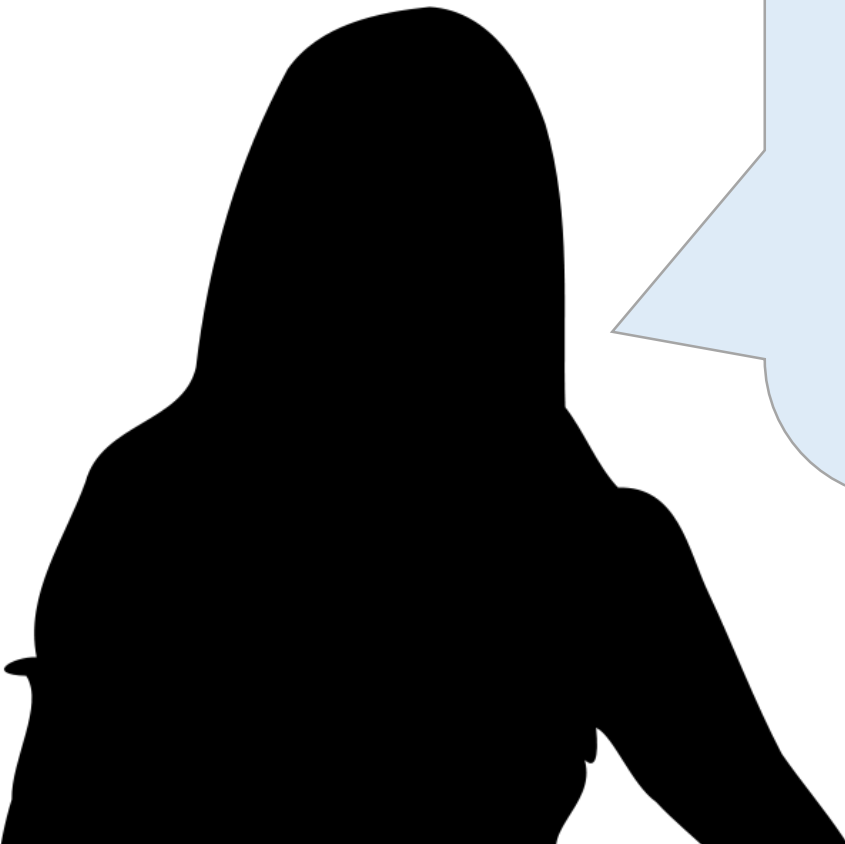
%	Quartile	Statement
100	4	Fans are collectors of information and news about their fandom.
100	4	Fans can create and contribute to amateur information resources (e.g. wikis).
96	4	Fans collect information for other fans in the form of creating rec lists, link lists, wikis, tutorials, guides, etc.
94	4	Certain fans act as information sources or gatekeepers for the wider fan community.
94	4	Fans collaborate in large-scale projects as well as small-scale ones.
94	4	Other fans are an important discovery tool and source of information.

Quotes



“I think dominant fan voices do also emerge and become sources of information. Such as in Cardiff when Doctor Who is filming there are certain ‘key’ fans who are sources of information on this.”

Participant 15

A black silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, facing right, positioned on the left side of the image. A light blue speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the silhouette is located to its right.

“...the most important source of information... I feel its twitter these days. Especially for cons. People who are attending cons can and do share information immediately... People at home will see the same news and dissect it...”

Participant 9

“...There are usually a few key people or resources that a fan will use... For example for one of the manga fandoms I follow there are two people that tweet/blog translations and updates... and most of the fans follow them and treat them as the main source for updates.”

Participant 20





“...being in fandom means being in a knowledge space... There are always tutorials that you can rely on, other fans that maintain Wikis, other gamers that help you on forums when you are stuck.”

Participant 11

“I think the biggest source for fans are tumblr, AO3 and various wikis that are fan run. The first step...for me is to check out the tumblr tag and then dive into some fic... Wikis are great crowd-sourced resources that I think are unappreciated.”

Participant 24



Conclusions

- Highest confidence was in statements regarding fan information behaviour.
- Fans are collectors – not only of fanworks, but of news and information.
- Fans are disseminators – of fanworks, news and information.
- Fans are contributors of information – via rec lists, wikis, Tumblrs, Twitter feeds, etc.
- Some fans are information gatekeepers – ‘go-to’ people with particular skills, knowledge or access.
- Everyone has the *potential* to be a gatekeeper.
- “Fandom is an information hub just by existing.”

Thank you!!! 😊

