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Human Dimensions Research and the Karst Information Portal

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Cave Conservation and Management Session

Tuesday, July 24
Room 168

Conservancies and Show Caves in Partnership: A Case Study of the Evolution of a Relationship

1:30 P.M. – 1:50 P.M.

Emily Davis
Northeastern Cave Conservancy

John Sagendorf
Howe Caverns, Inc.

In the late 1980s the staff of the National Speleological Society Fiftieth Anniversary Convention approached Howe Caverns to see if the convention Howdy Party could be held on the property. Upon visiting the cave we found that the staff did not see the cave as the cavers did. The local cavers and volunteers who were working on the NSS Convention visited Howe several nights between that first visit and the very successful Howdy Party on July 1, 1991. This activity initiated a relationship that has developed and flourished to this day. The partnership between the management of Howe Caverns and the cavers of the Northeastern U.S. has benefited both groups.

Human Dimensions Research and the Karst Information Portal

1:50 P.M. – 2:15 P.M.

Patricia E. Seiser
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In the natural resources disciplines, human dimensions research aims to understand the role of human interactions in the various biological, physical, and social components of ecosystems. Successfully applying this knowledge to decisions affecting environmental processes and their societal outcomes depends on collaborations among interrelated disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences, humanities, communication sciences, and related interdisciplinary studies. Success is also based on access to reliable sources of scientific and technical information. Some of the difficulties in stewardship of karst and cave ecosystems arise from the

limited availability of information concerning human-karst relationships.

The Karst Information Portal (KIP) is an evolving international community of scientists, information specialists, and other researchers seeking to promote information sharing and access to published and unpublished research in order to advance karst, cave, and aquifer research and stewardship via the Internet and information-related technologies.

Researchers at University of South Florida conducted a study to map the domain of karst literature. The data has been used to design strategies to aggregate and evaluate the representation of information within KIP. One finding was that a large amount of cave and karst scientific and technical information resides in gray literature, much of which is currently not readily available to researchers, decision makers, and the public.

KIP has the potential to facilitate communication of scientific and technical research and findings between cave and karst land stewards, policy makers, community planners, social scientists, and funding agencies. The resulting collaborations have the potential for generating innovative solutions to the critical challenges of karst and cave ecosystem stewardship.

Cave and Karst Protection Initiatives for Moderate and Low Income Landowners

2:15 P.M. – 2:40 P.M.

Joey Fagan and Wil Orndorff

*Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
6245 University Park Dr Ste B, Radford, Virginia 24141
Joseph.fagan@dcr.virginia.gov
wil.orndorff@dcr.virginia.gov*

Numerous private, state, and federal programs can assist landowners to protect karst features and caves. Programs such as EQIP, CREP, and Agricultural Best Management Practices help fund projects on a cost-share basis. Sinkhole cleanouts, livestock exclusion, and establishing vegetative buffers around karst features are eligible projects. These programs require some level of financial commitment by the landowner. Landowners typically bear the initial cost of constructing conservation practices; government programs reimburse a portion, usually 50% to 75% upon installation. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Karst Program has negotiated with Division of Soil and Water Conservation staff to count donated volunteer labor value toward landowner share of project cost. The Karst Program is working with nonprofit land trusts and cave conservancies to establish a revolving loan fund to defer upfront landowner expenses. Many otherwise enthusiastic owners forego government sponsored conservation programs due to a lack of personal financial resources.

Private and government grants occasionally fund cave gating projects and cave management initiatives on private lands at little or no cost to the landowner. Landowners in Virginia may elect to protect biologically significant cave and karst resources through voluntary Natural Area Dedication, Natural Area Management Agreements, or Natural Area Registration through the Department of Conservation and Recreation Natural Heritage Program.

Landowner donations of conservation easements can serve to protect cave and karst resources. Conservation easement donations may generate significant federal tax deductions. In Virginia, conservation easement donors may realize substantial cash income through the sale of the resulting Virginia State Income Tax Credit.

Human Dimensions Research and the Karst Information Portal

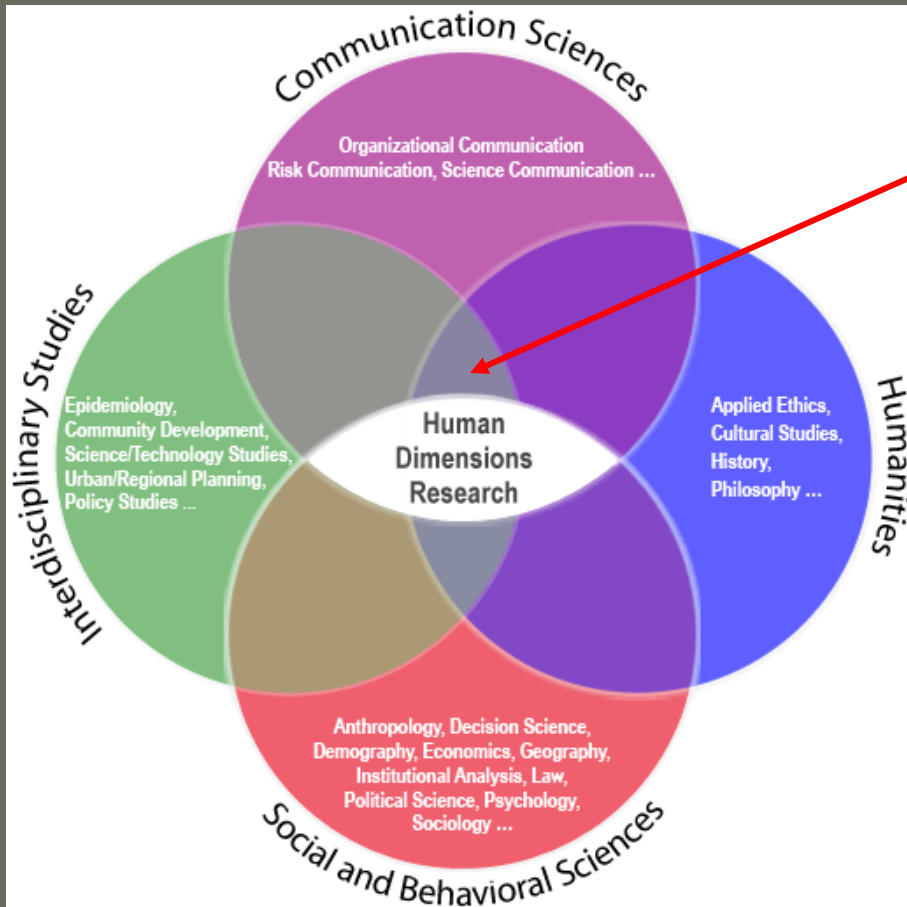


KARST
INFORMATION
PORTAL

The growing footprint of humans worldwide has serious adverse effects on karst, an understudied natural environment that is crucial to the health and well-being of one out of every four people on Earth.

www.karstportal.org

Todd Chavez, University of South Florida Libraries
Patricia Seiser, National Cave & Karst Research Institute
2007 National Speleological Society Convention, Marengo, Indiana, July 23-27



Portal Design Grey Information Repositories

Human Dimensions Research

The scientific investigation of the physical, biological, sociological, psychological, cultural and economic aspects of natural resource utilization at the individual and community levels.

-- Alan Ewert

*Natural Resource Management:
The Human Dimension, 1996*



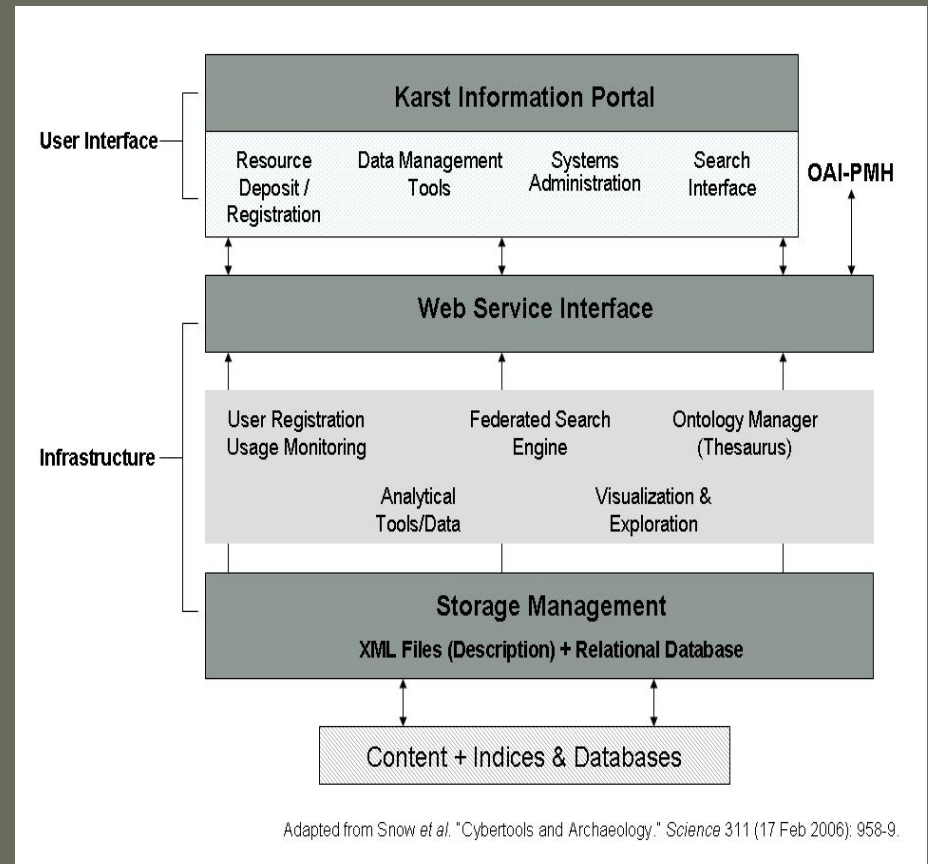
The Challenge

The karst research community and its knowledge base are fragmented, globally distributed, and highly interdisciplinary.

The Solution

The Karst Information Portal (KIP) is a growing international community seeking to create an open system for karst-related information.

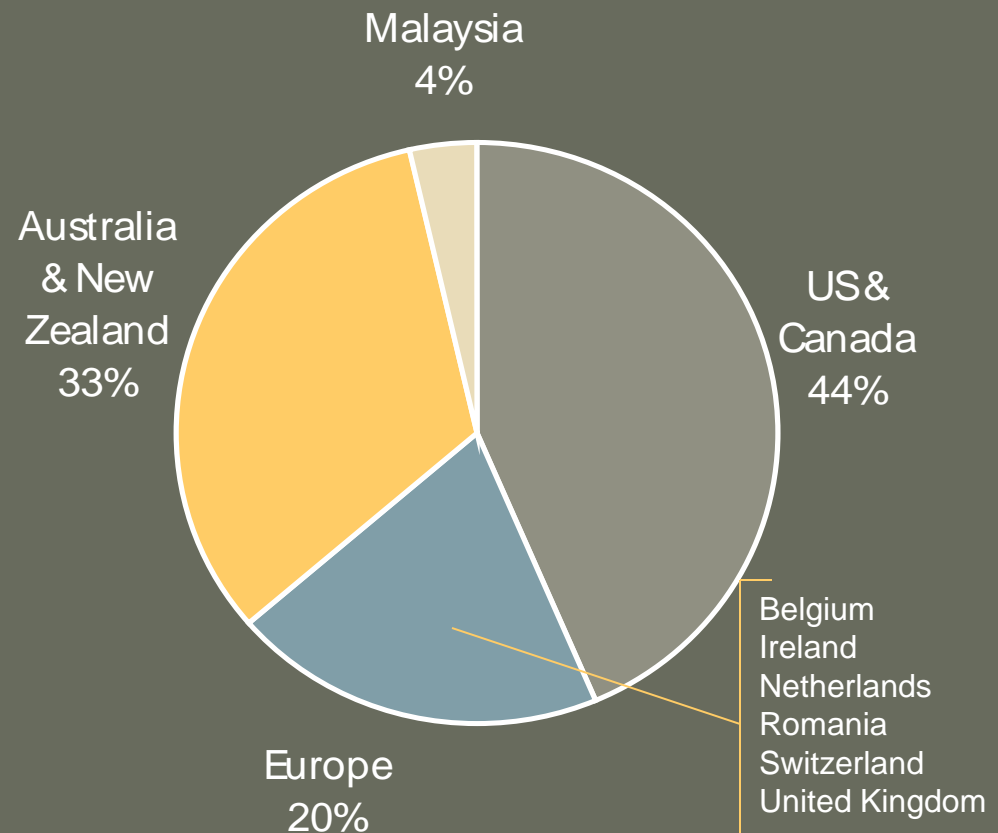
The goal is a freely accessible web-based information network to inform research, to enhance collaboration, and to address policy decisions in karst environments.





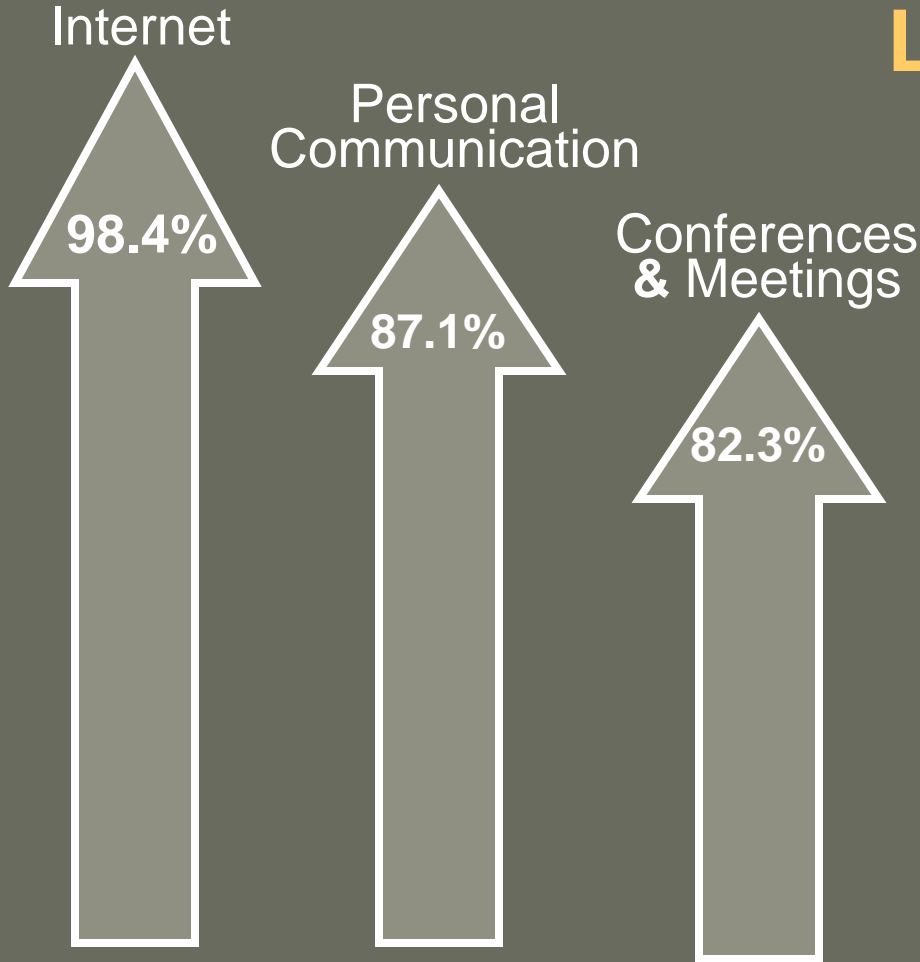
Respondents	No.
Researcher	29
Caver	13
Resource Manager	6
College Student	6
Government Agency	4
Industry Researcher / Consultant	3
Museum / Institute	2
Librarian / Information Professional	2
Activist	1
TOTAL	66

Grey Literature & Karst Research



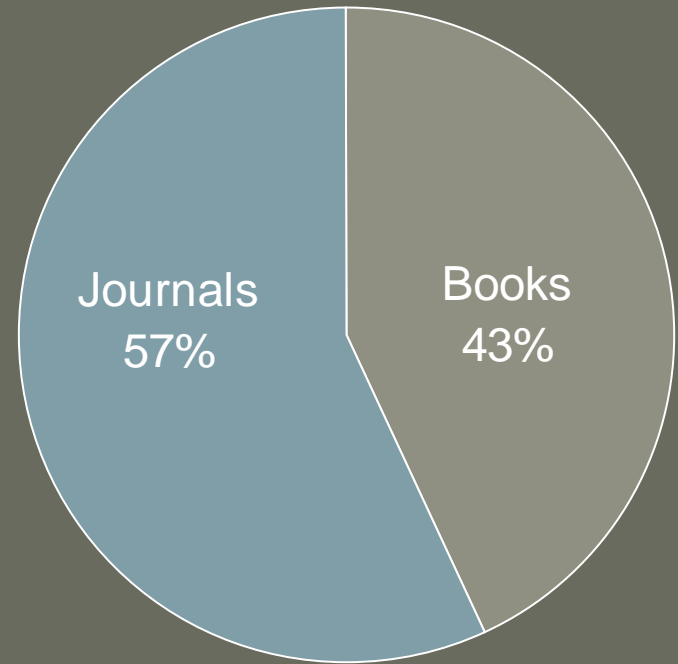


Locating Information



“Grey Channels”

Traditional Channels

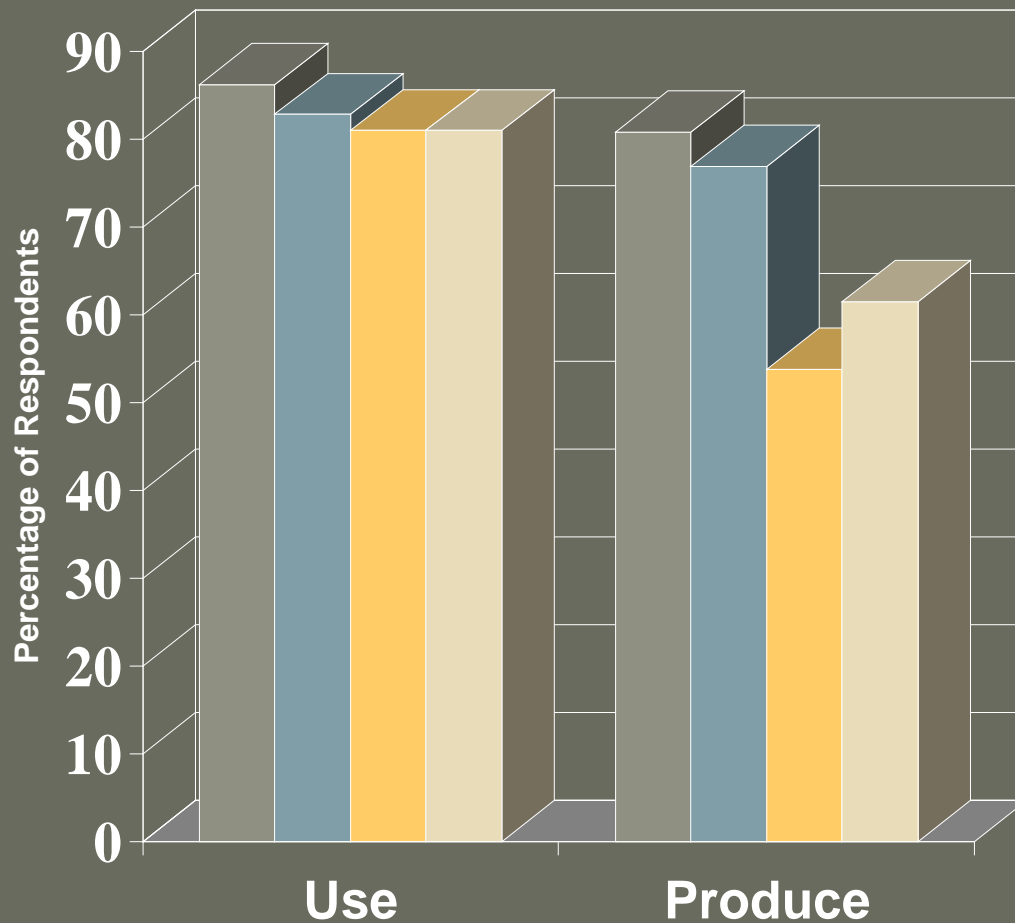


KARST

INFORMATION
PORTAL



www.karstportal.org



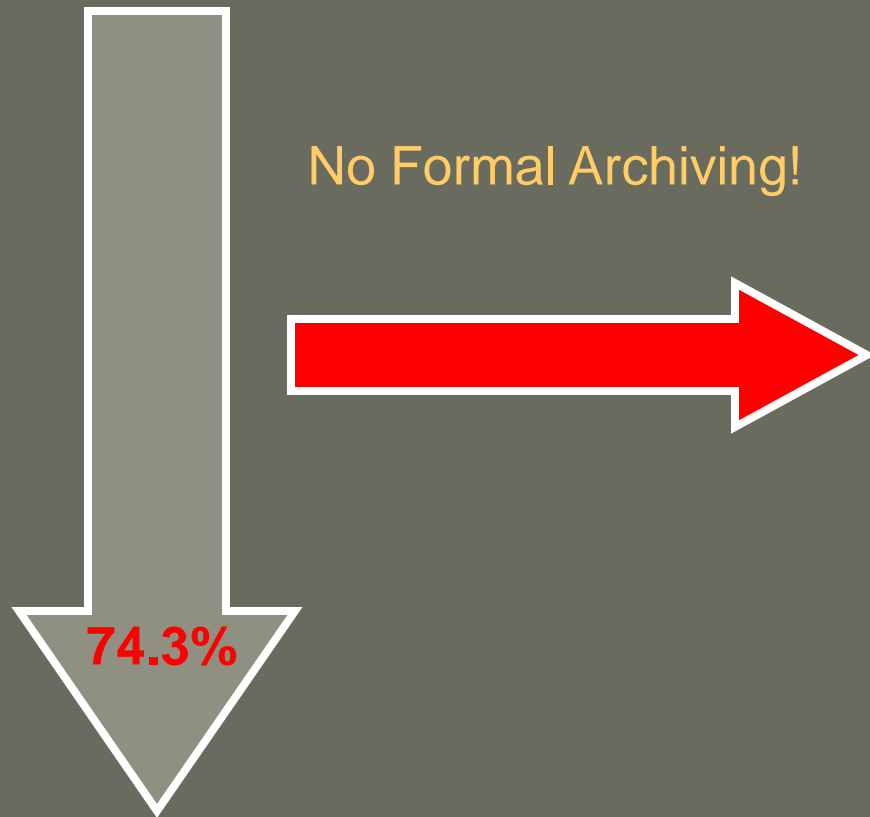
**96.6% Use
Grey Information**

**89.3% Produce
Grey Information**

- Proceedings
- Trip/Cave Reports
- Theses/Dissertations
- Maps



Where do you archive the grey information that you produce?



Most Difficult Grey Information Types to Access

Information Type	%
Theses/Dissertations	51.0
Conference Proceedings/Papers	46.9
Governmental Reports	42.9
Non-Governmental Reports	40.8
Cave Entrance Databases	36.7
Trip & Cave Reports	32.7
Foreign-Language Translations	28.6
Association/Organization Publications	28.6
Maps	26.5
Pre-1923 Karst Papers	26.5

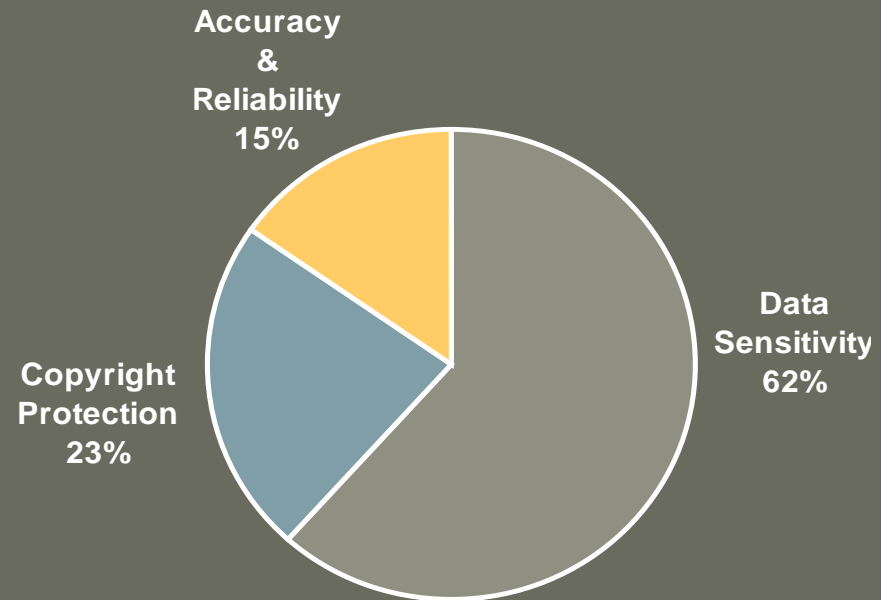


Would you use the KIP as a personal digital repository?

Yes 47.3 %

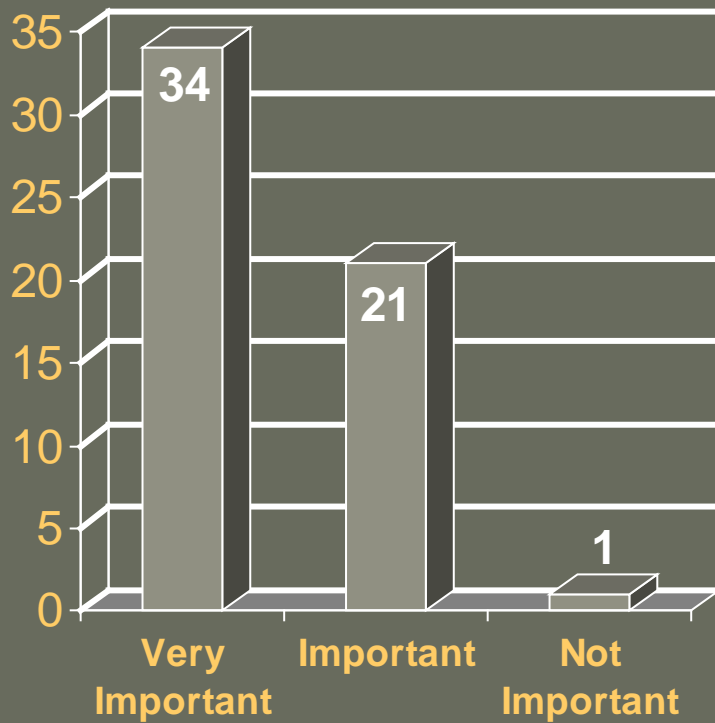
No 20.0%

Maybe

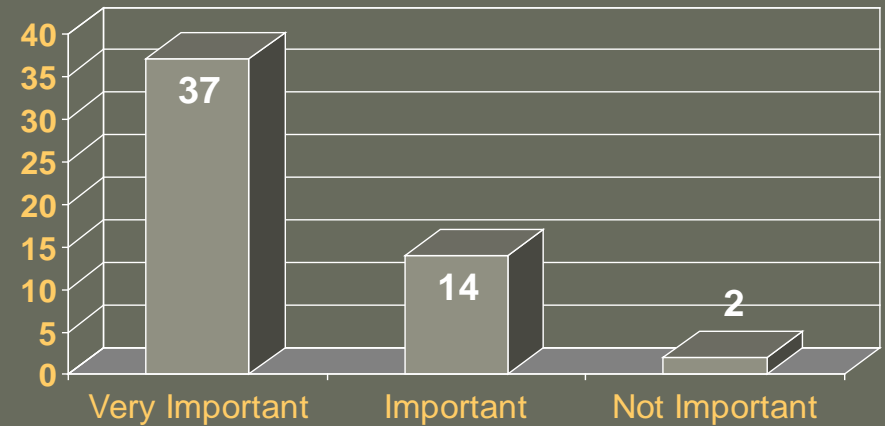


Respondents expressing conditions ... 32.7%

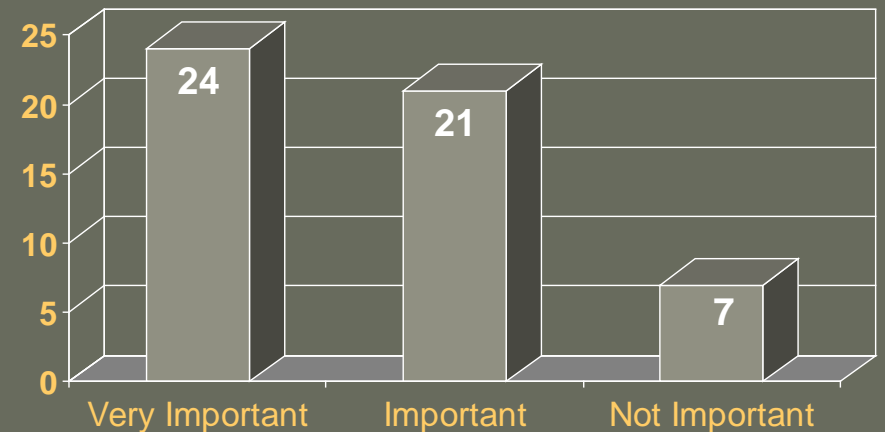
Include Grey Content?



Digitize Key Grey Resources?



Evaluate Grey Resources?





Register

Anyone may visit KIP but registered users ...

- Contribute data and information
- Communicate about important karst issues
- Stay current on events, new research and publications and more
- Join the community meeting this information challenge

KIP's success depends on contributions of data and information from the karst community from recreational cavers to professional scientists.

Contributors can upload content that will be shared globally and archived for the future. Contributors have input regarding access to their content.



Site Overview

The Karst Information Portal (KIP) includes four main content areas ...

Home

Quick access to ...

- Current news & events
- Research updates
- Important announcements

Resources

The “information core”

- Topics
- Research tools
 - Publications
 - Reports
 - More ...
- Links

Community

Connect with issues & people ...

- Organizations
- Contacts (directory)
- Discussion forums

News

Stay current on karst developments ...

- Announcements
- Events
- New publications
- Research updates



KARST INFORMATION PORTAL



SEARCH

SIGN IN / REGISTER

Type

Karst Information Portal

Keywords

Search

HOME

RESOURCES

COMMUNITY

ABOUT

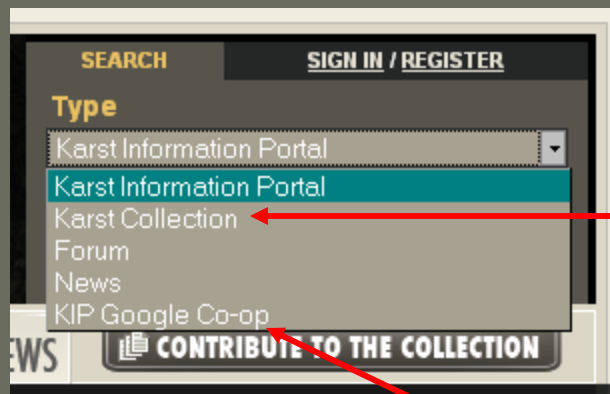
NEWS

CONTRIBUTE TO THE COLLECTION

Search

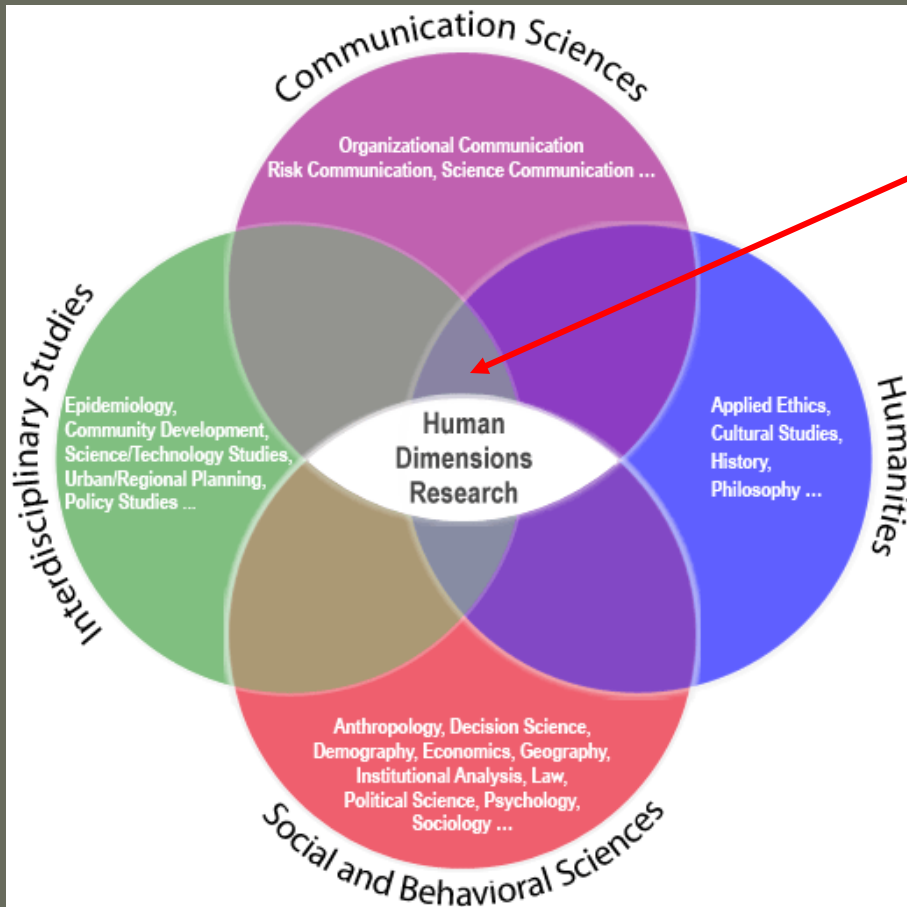
Five options tailor search targets ...

- Karst Information Portal (comprehensive)
- Karst Collection
- Forums
 - Posts/comments
- News
 - Announcements
 - Events
 - New publications
 - Research updates
- KIP Google Co-op



Nearly 4,000 bibliographic references for karst-related data and information sources forms the core of the collection.

Queries a Google-powered customized search engine leveraging participant expertise with Google's search technologies.



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The KIP Project Partners Thank You

NATIONAL CAVE & KARST RESEARCH INSTITUTE

<http://www.nckri.org/>

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<http://www.lib.usf.edu/>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

<http://elibrary.unm.edu/>

UNION INTERNATIONALE de SPÉLÉOLOGIE (UIS)

<http://www.uis-speleo.org/>