

Survey of NZAA members on the future of the Site Recording Scheme

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Introduction

The intent of the survey was to gather members views on a possible electronic future for the Site Recording Scheme. The survey gathered some information on the responders, their internet access and their current use of the scheme.

The survey went out in paper form with *Archaeology in New Zealand*.

There was an alternative to the paper form of an on-line survey on a internet survey site. It was identical to the paper survey.

A reminder was sent in the eNews – but deliberately did not include the web address because this group has non-member subscribers.

There was a parallel survey of consulting archaeologists – but they were encouraged to complete this as well as members of the Association.

A reminder with the web address on the professional interests email group.

A reminder went to the filekeepers web email web group.

Responses were 24 by post and 46 through web site – 70 all up. The web responses appeared to have avoided any nuisance visitors. Only one person reported difficulty accessing the web site survey.

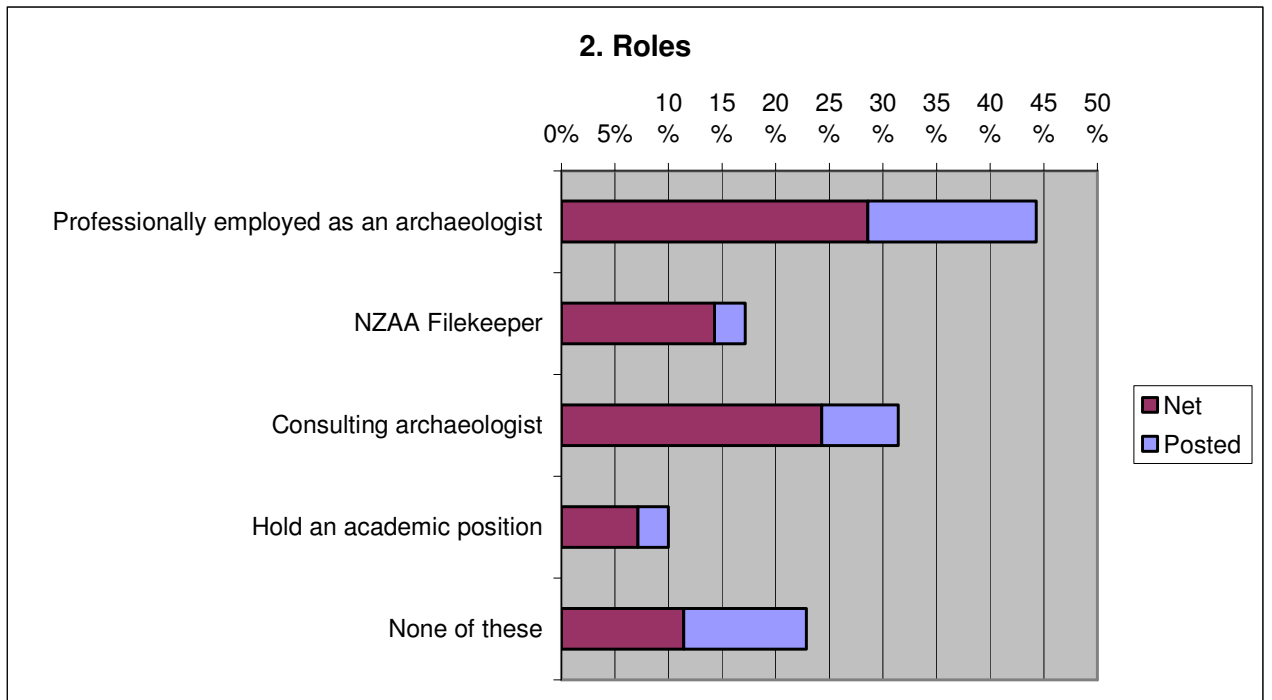
There were returns from 12 of 17 filekeepers.

The professionals and consultants in the membership seem to be over-represented in the survey returns – but they have a greater interest in the outcome.

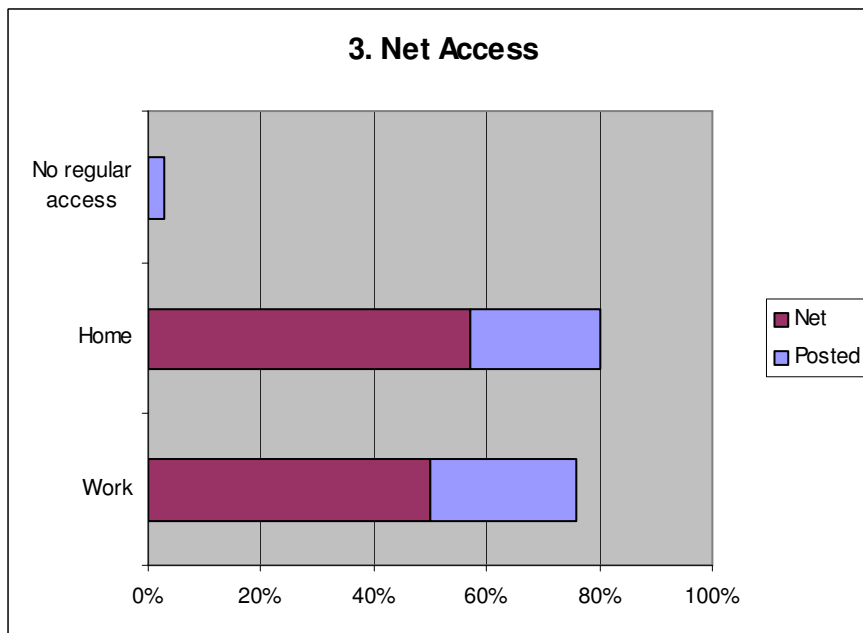
There have been some minor edits to the comments below – particularly to maintain anonymity of the responders. Deletions are marked.

The charts below differentiate the paper and the net responses. There do not appear to be any marked differences between the groups.

2. Roles of responders



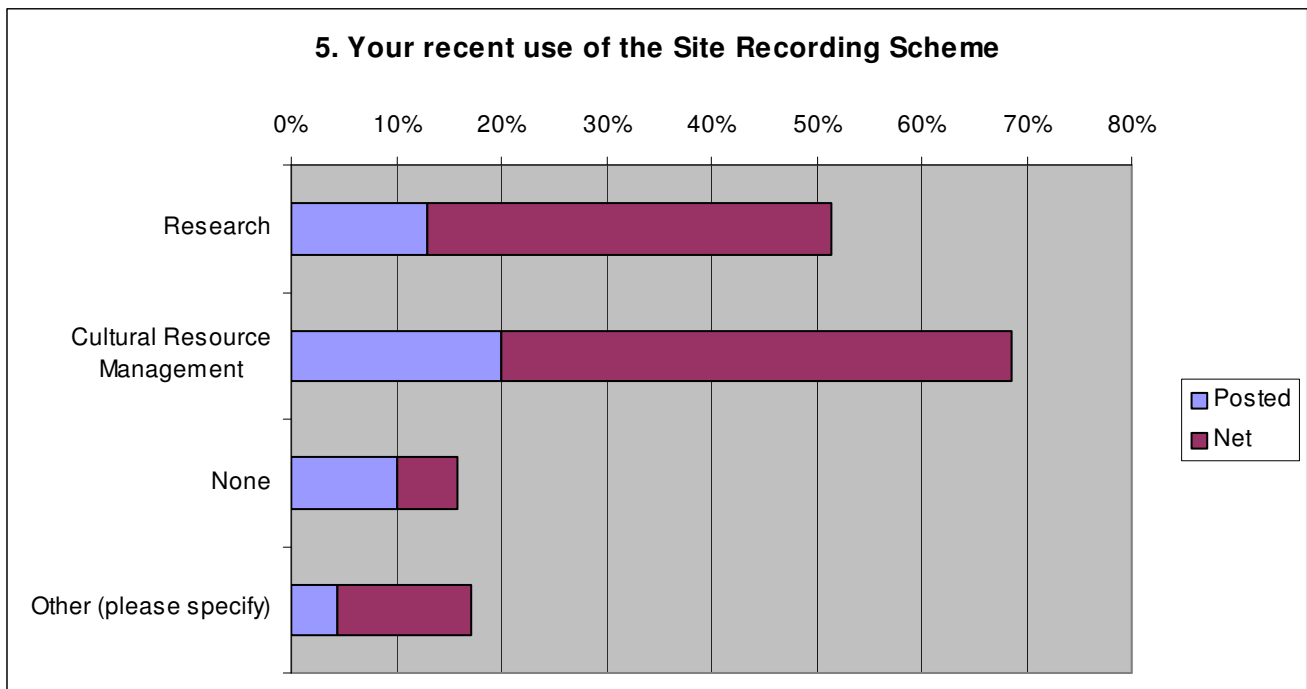
3. Net access



4: Broadband Access

80% had broadband access either at work home or both.

5: Use of the SRS



'Other' responses

As filekeeper

Filekeeper

I continue to do site recording keep records for **** which are available for site protection

Filekeeping duties

Filekeeper tasks - file searches, updates, maintenance

Upgrade data entry, public enquiries

Upgrade project

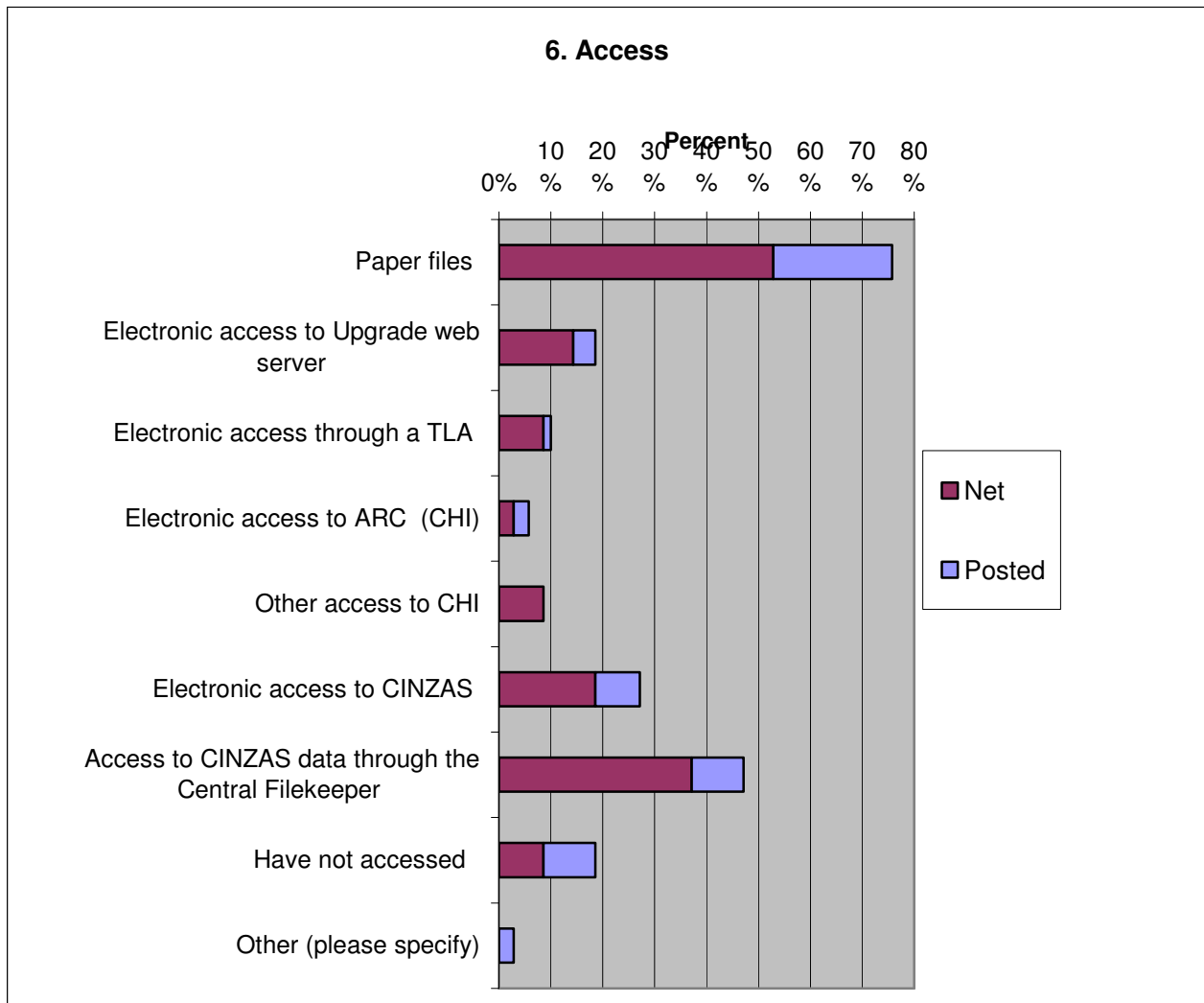
Filekeeper

Upgrade Project input

Database development and monitoring

I locate remote sites & record them

6: Current Access Use



'Other' responses

GIS printouts other consultancies

Copied/scanned SRI's for upgrade contractors

Scan of SRF sent by central filekeeper

Office GIS with custom archaeological layers

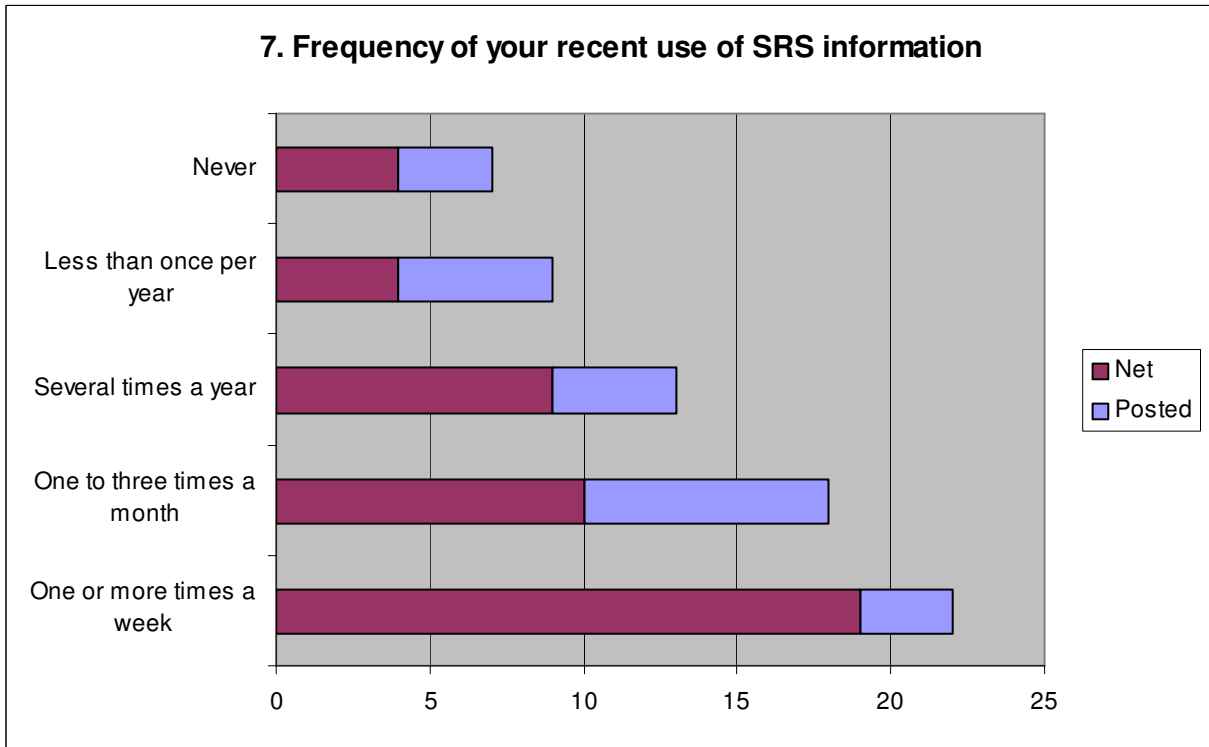
Colin Smart collection part of the Whanganui Museum collection, includes copies of original site records with ancillary information, latter e.g. excavation reports not transferred to SRS

Have had my own limited electronic SRS database for over 15 years (*****) but find it invaluable for both research and consulting.

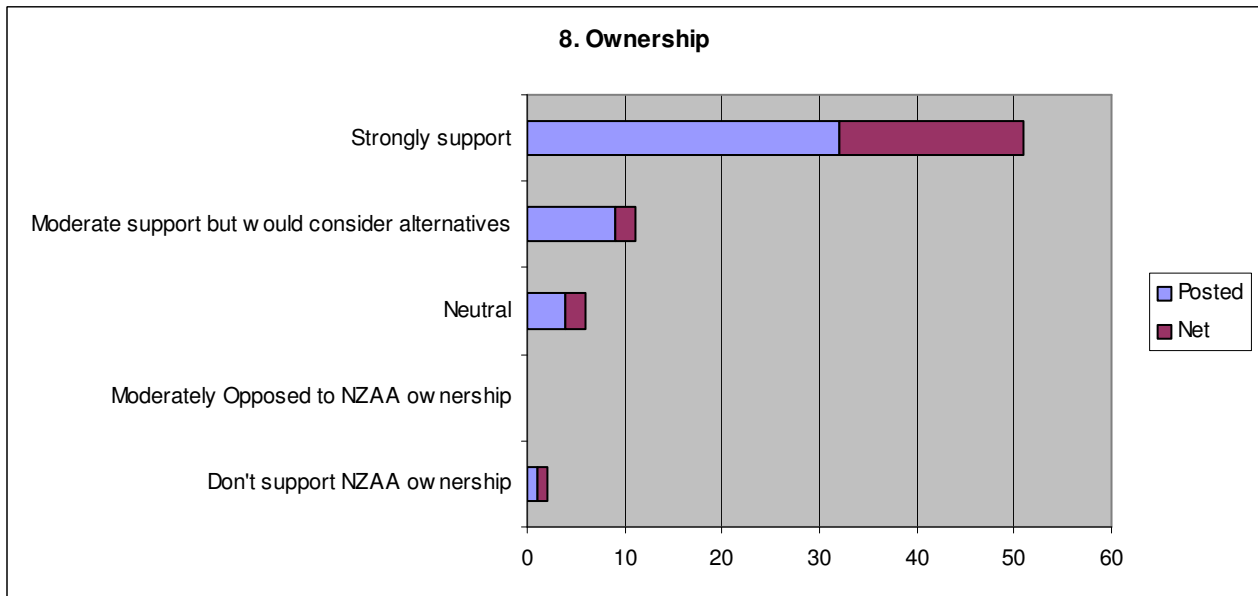
Site recorders who had not yet filed records!

Own electronic files

7. Frequency of use



8. Views on the SRS ownership by NZAA (number)



9. Views on ownership

For CRM management there needs to be greater recognition of the "academic" nature of the SRS, or perhaps greater emphasis on separating out the academic part of the SRS from the CRM (i.e. site update scheme). Greater input/relationships needed with TLA - filekeeper boundaries matching TLA boundaries, custodianship of data by TLA?.

Those who conceived it, built in its early stages, and those who later have worked so hard to enhance it should continue to own it. NZAA ownership should not be for sale, unless the NZAA is dissolved, in which case it should go to the NZ Historic Places Trust. The rest can pay to use it, but if the central government gives us grants the NZHPT should have free access, and those local bodies contributing to upgrades should have access at discount rates.

Not held by the NZHPT.

Too much NZAA data has been given out to iwi organisations who are not reciprocating by improving and returning data. One wonders about how effective iwi are in using the data.

I am less concerned about ownership, although I support the idea of it remaining with archaeologists through NZAA, than with governance. SRS is an important public asset and governance and funding should reflect that. The idea of a trust or other arrangements to run SRS should be explored.

NZAA is directly answerable to the archaeological community and the SRS is their baby.

Support NZAA ownership as long as access to information is freely (in the sense of liberally) available. No problem with cost recovery administrative charges

Strongly support NZAA ownership, however am open to other models for ownership - but cannot currently envisage what they might be. At the very least I believe that some ownership must be with the NZAA so that amateur members of the association are still guaranteed access without fees (other than maybe photocopy costs etc). In this way retired people, interested parties and students will still be encouraged to add information (and take) to the files.

At this time NZAA seems the most appropriate owner. However other options may be available now or in the future. But NZAA should always have a major say in the future of the system and information availability/distribution.

I'd support a proper state owned info system that got proper and regular resourcing, and was kept up to date with the advances in recording unrelated technology.

It is not Council's to give away.

NZAA's ownership would probably mean more flexibility of access & adaptability (useful to archaeologists) if it remains with NZAA rather than becoming government controlled & subject to whims of policy analysts.

Yes. My views are the same as Garry Law Archaeology in NZ Vol 50 No.1 March 2007

NZAA are the hands where it should remain.

Needs to be held by a national organisation because it's a national database.

Heritage is now a matter of national importance according to the RMA Amendment 2003. The NZAA SRS should either be owned or resourced by Councils or by the NZ HPT not by an independent association for archaeologists. There is duplication in the protection and management of archaeological sites which is confusing and problematic to people who have heritage assets on their land and also the people who manage them - Planners, Councils and cultural heritage consultants. Archaeological sites are not owned by the archaeological community. They have a range of values to people from diverse backgrounds including archaeologists, historians, cultural heritage managers, iwi, Councils, land owners, and developers etc. Archaeologists as a community have a specific relationship and values associated with the archaeological resource, but those are no more or less important than the way other community value the archaeological resource. It is not the role of either the NZAA or the Trust to assess and balance these values in relation to the preservation, management or development of heritage. Rather it is the role of Councils according to Local Government Act and the RMA Amendment. Under these two Acts they are responsible for the sustainable management of heritage and responsibility for the archaeological resource should primarily rest with them.

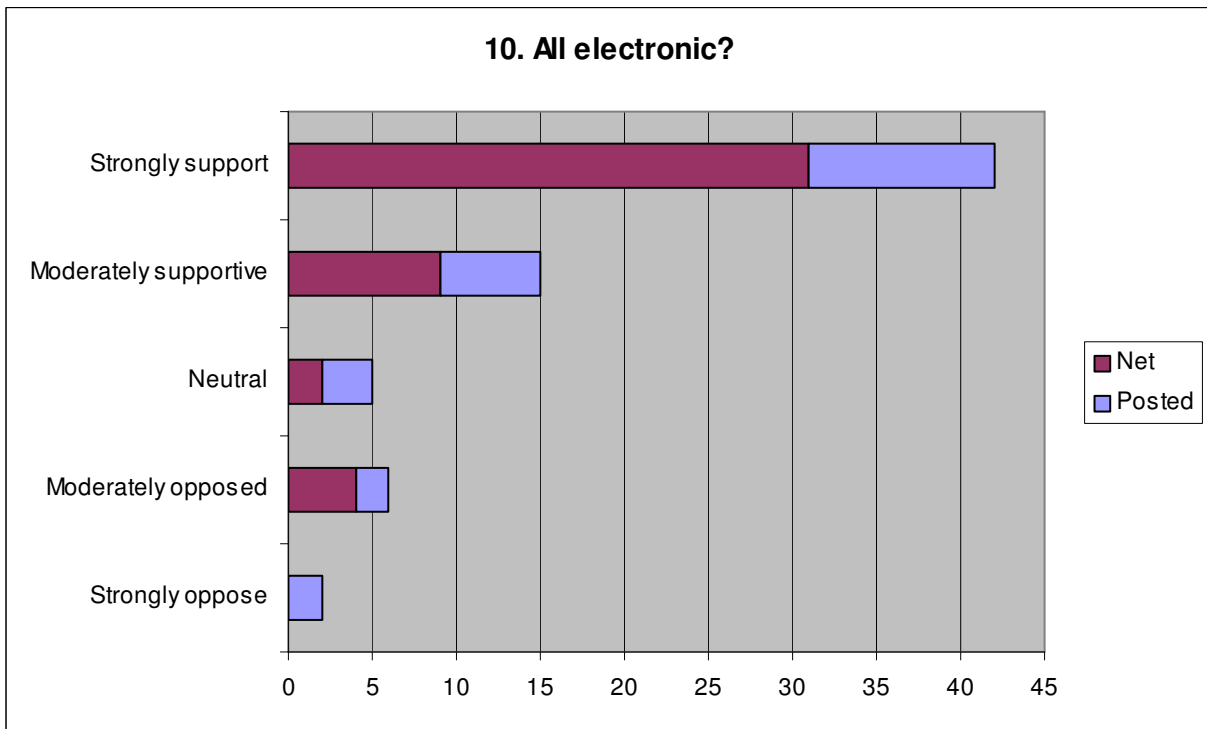
The argument that NZAA is in the best position to ensure equitable management of the SRS, ensuring that it continues to fulfil all its functions, is a strong one. Management by another agency could result in one aspect (e.g. CRM) being emphasised to the exclusion of others (though I believe that the example of the CHI does not support this).

As a former professional archaeologist ***** I think it is extremely important for NZAA to retain both ownership and control, while working to ensure that the SRS becomes a fully recognised and adequately funded national database

'Private' ownership of an information resource ensures control of standards.

I think it is essential for NZAA to maintain sole ownership and management of the SRS, providing access to clients as revenue. It will mean a far higher degree of professionalism than has been the case in the past though.

10: Support for an all- electronic future (number).



11. Other views on an electronic future:

Available online for nzaa members? a good idea

Electronic access will make the file much more accessible to members and presumably eventually the public. However data will have to be considerably tightened and corrected before being let loose on the general public without filekeeper as intermediary.

Scanned all the old files and all their oddments of data not required by the forms in the early days should be done before the paper files are destroyed or archived. This will take time and cost heaps. Therefore it should be done incrementally.

There is no option. All electronic is the only way forward

Will still need an archive of paper records and conservation of the existing paper originals (e.g., mounting on acid free paper, etc.). Do the proponents of digitisation know the cost of effective transfer of large format documents such as plans?

Ideally everything would be converted to electronic access as soon as possible and the paper files archived. This requires a process which is as much political, as technical and funding related.

Risk of all-Electronic SRS is same as risk to moving completely to digital image capture and not making archive prints of images. We are heritage professionals and should be picking up on International concerns in this regard. Risk of some users not being able to make the switch - GIS ability is still not mainstreamed Broadband availability is patchy across the country, particularly in provinces/rural areas with concomitant issues of accessing

image-heavy/large files. People still prefer to work with paper for anything more than a 10-minute read. Risk to the long-term curation of the physical files (including grey lit and other associated records) if they are seen as secondary/inactive. My office would gladly take the opportunity to give the heave to the contents of the file office if the E-version was seen as primary.

Back up is obviously critical, and the archiving of paper records, but electronic is the way to go. Maintaining the paper file as an archive only isn't an option in 12 (below), but is my preference .

But... questions about what would be digitised if funding an issue; paper records will last for 1000s of years if appropriately stored, we do not know about other formats; paper records are also a backup for system failure; unwillingness of some iwi to make info public about some sites/wahi tapu, secret files issue; if regional council boundaries used to delimit FK area, could impact on effectiveness of local knowledge and iwi relationships

My experience with regional filekeepers is that they often have knowledge that is not on the paper files. They may also have maps etc, sometimes of a large size, that are stashed away from any given record and can add invaluable knowledge to any given record. If things were to be made electronic it would be important that all supporting and related material is linked to any given site record form. Yes i believe in an electronic future but feel it needs to coexist with the current system. File keepers often also add other information not readily available from electronic records, such as has an area been surveyed, has it been surveyed well, what reports are held that may relate to any given area etc. These are all things that my experience with the NZHPT, ARC CHI, CINZAS etc often has only a partial knowledge of.

Electronic format is obviously the way of the future, but as an important archival source a hard copy of the file will also be a valuable tool for the future. This obviously includes all of the original photographic prints held in the file, all of which have archival value.

Sounds a good idea but would like to see how well this operates first before canning the paper file (hence the response in Q.12).

My strong support for this presumes that in each case the relevant iwi endorses the uploading of information that relates to their heritage.

Some members of public will not have access to internet and will need filekeepers to access and print off SRFs for them. Though I imagine a lot of enquiries for copies of SRFs will reduce in number if people can print them off the web themselves. Still imagine people will be confused and need explanations from Filekeepers and HPT staff!

The files are a work in progress and access should encourage contact with the local filekeeper. Scanning of colour and of old maps is still not as good quality as good photocopies. We need to avoid the horrible versions of old maps that LINZ provide electronically when putting stuff into the file. Customers will probably cope most of the time.

Security of the information must be ensured in case of natural or other disasters.

Electronic technology is both fragile and as yet unproven on a long term (decades/centuries) basis. Paper archives, particularly when duplicated, are known to work, over periods of centuries at least (clay tablets are good too,

but probably not appropriate in the present case). I believe the paper files should be both retained and updated, in parallel with the electronic file (this simply entails printout and distribution of new electronically-entered data). There is information available in site record forms which may not be available in electronic format (e.g. detail in photos and maps, faint pencil, faded ballpoint).

Go for electronic but maintain paper files until the electronic SRS has been fully tested for accuracy, access and backup files.

I think there should always be a full paper back-up, to ensure archival survival, even if day-to-day use is largely or entirely electronic

Development pressures have exceeded paper file management processes and archaeological sites are being destroyed as a result. (I have proof of this fact if required.) Consultants are not completing SRF in a timely fashion. Archaeological excavation reports are not being complete resulting in poor resource management decisions being made; this has the potential to result in modification and destruction of sites.

Probably not realistic to convert all existing records to electronic - "go electronic" with effect from some date to be decided & maintain old records on paper, with an electronic index (e.g. CINZAS). Gradually phase out the paper as records are updated. Also suggest some sort of Blog or email point-of-contact be established so amateurs (e.g. hunters, trampers) who find remote sites can notify someone about them in an informal manner.

Despite what many think about the advantages of e-form, there are other benefits of analogue records which are difficult to capture in e-form. This is evident in Museum cataloguing systems too. Shift to e-form is a good thing and inevitable with modern demands on information retrieval. However, in my view, modest provision for some analogue records should also be made in this transition and beyond.

There is some stuff on the SRS forms that will not scan that well

Has to come sometime.

Yes but massive multiple back-up.

All sorts of information can't or won't be in electronic form.

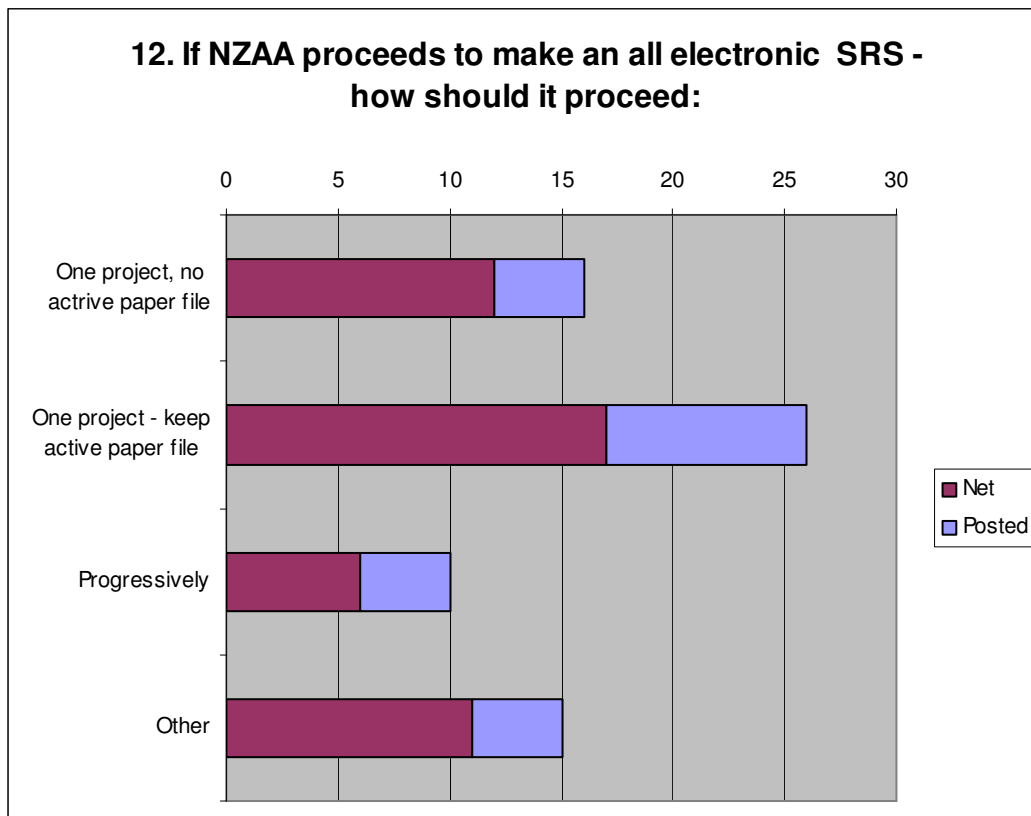
I fully support the views of Gary Law

A necessary move.

Much easier to access - some filekeepers currently don't provide good access (Auckland, Northland). But need to keep a paper copy as security & archival reasons.

I suggest two electronic versions 1) permanent digital archive 2) a 'moving' record of records from past few years to-be-entered

12. How



'Other' Comments

Use the moving front notion, a work back in 7 year progressive leaps, as soon as each can be funded.

Start capturing new and upgrades and progressively move material into the upgrade

Also has to be coupled to a map-based front end that enables easy searching and plotting of site distribution up to 1:10 000 scale

keep paper copies as backup not just archive for at least a transition period

Combination of options 2 and 3.

Convert progressively, but also maintain paper file as an active resource.

iwi consultation requires it be progressive.

it will have to be done bit by bit, but the quality of the colour and finer detail must be maintained.

Can't comment

b. above but gradually phase out the paper as records are updated.

As funds are available.

No. 2 probably most const effective. Depends upon costs & outside financial support. Best for trial of data base used.

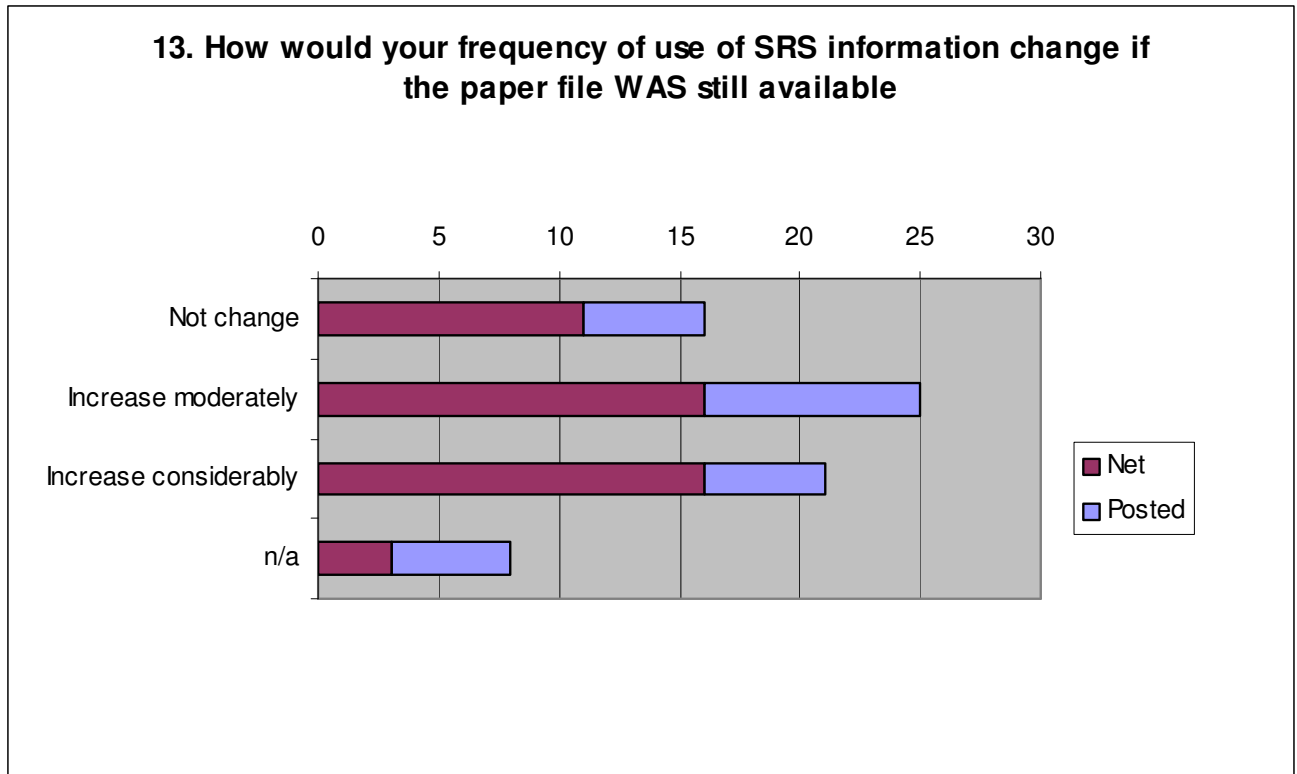
NZAA experts to advise NZAA Council & NZAA Council to decide.

Filekeepers should have priority to electronic access. Anticipate there would have to be gradual transition.

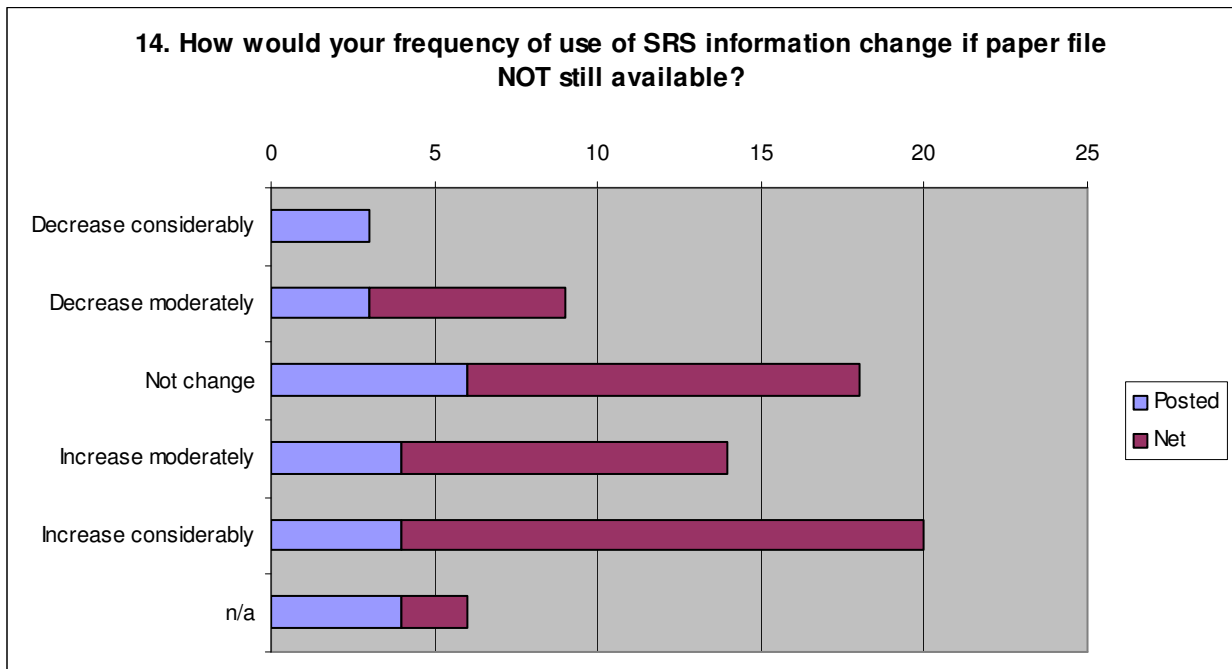
Never

With top priority for the Far North
Convert to electronic; maintain paper archive at district level.

13. Use of web-based access.



14. Use of web-based access - continued.



15. Last opportunity to comment

Basic use - not for public access of all information.

I like the idea of digitising info on SRS (making it more accessible). Do have issues with decent/quick Internet access here where I live. I do have an inherent mistrust of total dismissal of the paper file - electronic technology is relatively unproven as an archival repository vs paper...As long as the info with each file is digitised too, I guess I can cast off my Luddite inclinations & accept the change!

Yes. Not only do we have archaeological sites exposed to damage & destruction: we have a major information transfer problem - in dealing with checks on all consents, building consents, land use consent (Regional) and earthworks permits!

Access - how much & by whom must be debated & agreements set.

Paper of all records should still be kept. A)because they are a historic resource (b) for security (back-up) reasons.

As electronic database evolves, two other types of information will be useful
1)online/downloadable GTS maps and 2) artefact collections (location of collections, photos etc).

At year 100 [2054] it will be one of the monuments that is not a site remembered and valued by all New Zealander's who appreciate heritage and visited electronically as often as any one site, probably many times over.

A focus on providing users tools that save them time and effort while encouraging them to provide current data. Accessibility to paper based files should not be restricted by other institutions with consultation.

We seem to have led ourselves into a data compatibility problem with the shift from grid reference to grid point determined by GPS. There has to be an integrated solution. There is no clear GPS use standard and I would not rely on many GPS determinations. Upgrade data is too bureaucratic/resource management oriented and is giving only marginal improvements in data other than existence, type and precision (apparent precision) of position. e tie v

At moment we have two schemes operating. We need to get beyond the necessarily limited stated aims of the Upgrade Project and produce a unified SRS to a new recipe.

One local LA (*****) has said it has been required to sign an undertaking in respect of the Upgrade project that it would NOT put the resultant data on its GIS website. That seems to be contrary to the principle of free (liberal) access to information, which would be free (\$) because they would meet the admin costs. I may have misunderstood, but that seems disturbing.

No just a comment. Archival quality of some current site records I receive is not great, i.e. poor colour printing of digital photographs. Need to capture digital material now as these paper records will deteriorate.

my answers to 13 and 14 are absolute guesses, the proof would be in the pudding.

I do not think it is appropriate, for a variety of reasons, for the NZAA database to ever be fully available to anyone. Access to the database should be restricted to professional archaeologists, CRM consultants and planners by subscription - say \$150 pa.

I'm surprised the survey doesn't explore membership views on the relationship with iwi regarding the SRS - I'd have thought that understanding that would quite important before engaging in discussions on ownership and electronic dissemination of information.

use of electronic media would be easier for research purposes - i.e. how many of particular sites exist in an area. it would be very useful to link this with the data on excavations and radiocarbon dating

Until scanners are as good as photocopiers, filekeepers need to be able to ask for good photocopies from those depositing SRFs and either hold a paper file or scan them in on good equipment.

Question 12 excludes some options e.g convert on a filing district basis and maintain/not maintain the paper files. (Conversion to electronic in one project would effectively be done on a filing district by filing district basis anyway, simply as a practical matter.)

Current access to paper files is slow, inconvenient and sometimes frustrating, especially to someone not living close to where the file is held.

Note: A Web-based SRF should be certified and read/write accessible; the questions above do not make this point clear. Users should be able to search, sort, report (hardcopy and digital) and also enter new information with SRF numbers being allocated only when the necessary information has been entered. Such a system would remove many of the present administration problems and forestall archaeological sites being destroyed as is the present case!

Need to maintain independence of other organisations whose needs are different to NZAA. Need to raise Government funding for establishing and maintenance of professional staff for a re-shaped SRS database in the national interest.

Cross analyses by role

(Remember respondents could identify several roles)

