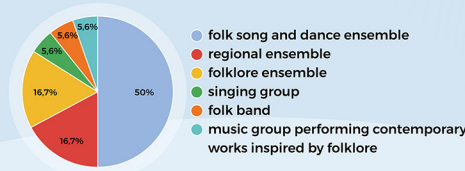# Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage: Can Digital Resources of Folk Music and Dance Groups be FAIR?

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Source Project for FAIR Analysis

FolkArtiNet: Folk music groups, their artistic practice and infrastructural needs in the COVID-19 era and beyond
Funding: DARIAH-ERIC Theme 2020: Arts Exchanges
Duration: 1 year
Goal: establishing cooperation with the community of Polish folk music artists and identifying their needs in regard to ICT
Methodology: online interviews, survey and workshop
Motivation: digital preservation of intangible cultural heritage created by Polish folk music groups (551 groups active worldwide)
Results: qualitative data characterizing infrastructural requirements of folk groups

Study Participants

- folk song and dance ensemble — 50%
- regional ensemble — 16,7%
- folklore ensemble — 16,7%
- singing group — 5,6%
- folk band — 5,6%
- music group performing contemporary works inspired by folklore — 5,6%
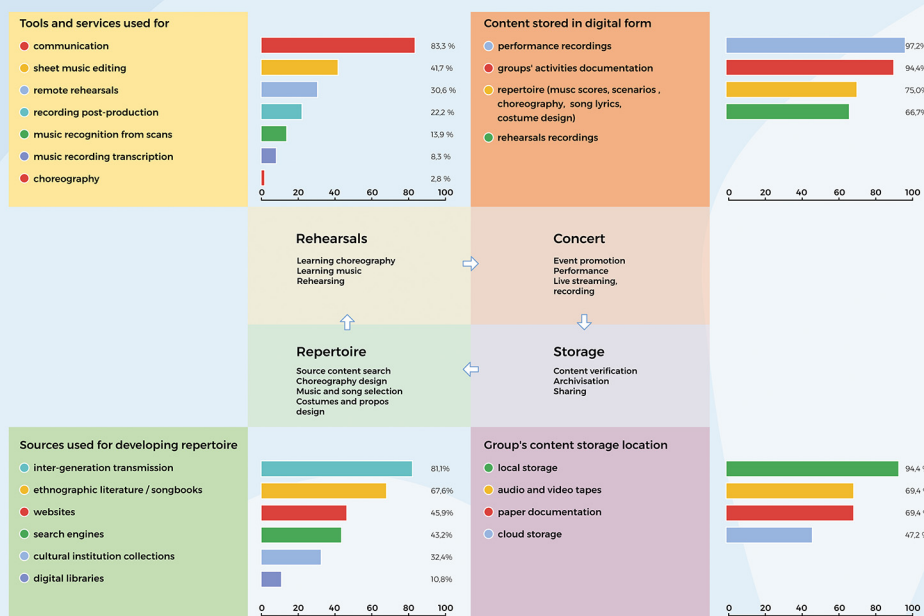
36 survey respondents from Poland and abroad by folk group type

Voice of Folk Artist

...folklore must be an open form made available to everyone for free ... authorization of the content which would be published somewhere is very important. I refer to it in the context of folklore and folkloric truth, ethnographic truth, which for me is extremely important...

"Szamotuły" Folk Group Artistic Director

Investigation Areas and Survey Results

Tools and services used for
- communication — 83,3 %
- sheet music editing — 41,7 %
- remote rehearsals — 30,6 %
- recording post-production — 22,2 %
- music recognition from scans — 13,9 %
- music recording transcription — 8,3 %
- choreography — 2,8 %

Content stored in digital form
- performance recordings — 97,2%
- groups' activities documentation — 94,4%
- repertoire (music scores, scenarios, choreography, song lyrics, costume design) — 75,0%
- rehearsals recordings — 66,7%

Rehearsals
Learning choreography
Learning music
Rehearsing

Concert
Event promotion
Performance
Live streaming, recording

Repertoire
Source content search
Choreography design
Music and song selection
Costumes and propos design

Storage
Content verification
Archivisation
Sharing

Sources used for developing repertoire
- inter-generation transmission — 81,1%
- ethnographic literature / songbooks — 67,6%
- websites — 45,9%
- search engines — 43,2%
- cultural institution collections — 32,4%
- digital libraries — 10,8%

Group's content storage location
- local storage — 94,4 %
- audio and video tapes — 69,4 %
- paper documentation — 69,4 %
- cloud storage — 47,2 %

Key Findings

	Facts	Description	Prioritization
Repertoire	73% ensembles use online resources	Online sources of ethnographic content are used by some ensembles for repertoire creation, however, such sources should be further promoted.	**Must** have reliable data repositories for finding source materials **Could** have easy-to-use project management platform
Rehearsals	Only 30% ensembles rehears remotely	Few ensembles rehearsed remotely and if they did it was only because the pandemic made traditional rehearsals impossible.	**Must** have tools for remote rehearsals during social distancing as a replacement of rehearsals *in situ* **Could** have tools for remote rehearsals as a supplement to live rehearsals
Concert	Only 52% ensembles had concerts recorded professionally	The ensembles record performances by themselves, however, few of these recordings are publicly available due to quality issues.	**Should** have video and sound editing software **Could** have professional AV equipment
Storage	Only 47% ensembles use cloud based repositories	The ensembles' resources are seldom stored in trustworthy repositories, even though most folk artists recognize the need to document their activities as a part of intangible cultural heritage.	**Must** have secure and trustworthy storage space for keeping digital assets **Could** have public access to stored data

The ensembles widely use social media for organizing activities, promoting events and publishing content that documents their work.

Conclusions and FAIRification Perspectives

- **Data related to folk groups' artistic practice,** i.e. fieldwork and artistic event documentation, should be *Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable* by humans and machines.
- Such content is **rarely stored in trustworthy repositories and published online for rediscovery** due to:
  - lack of awareness of the existing technical solutions that could facilitate more structured online storing and sharing
  - available applications and services not meeting expectations (lack some crucial features, immature, unaffordable)
  - lack of long term strategy for preserving accumulated digital assets
  - insufficient manpower and technical skillset available to manage digital resources (voluntary membership)
- There is a clear **need for**
  - **ICT systems that would implement FAIR principles** starting with *Findable*
  - **socio-cultural change in folk practitioners attitudes** towards technical standards and best practices in managing digital assets (GO CHANGE ⟳ GO BUILD)

More information
mir-wg.dariah.pl/en/folkartinet