

Implementation of a New Date/Time Standard in Digital Library Metadata

Analysis of Dates

The University of North Texas Libraries' digital collections switched to the Extended Date/Time Format for dates associated with digital objects. We analyzed the dates already in the system at that time:

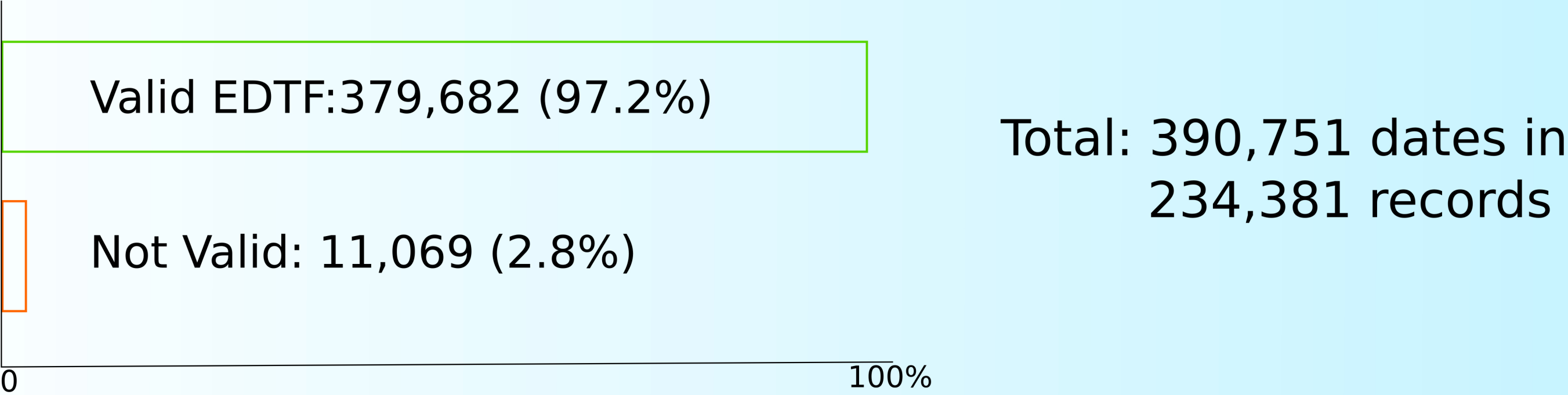


Figure 1: Number of valid vs. not-EDTF valid dates in the collections

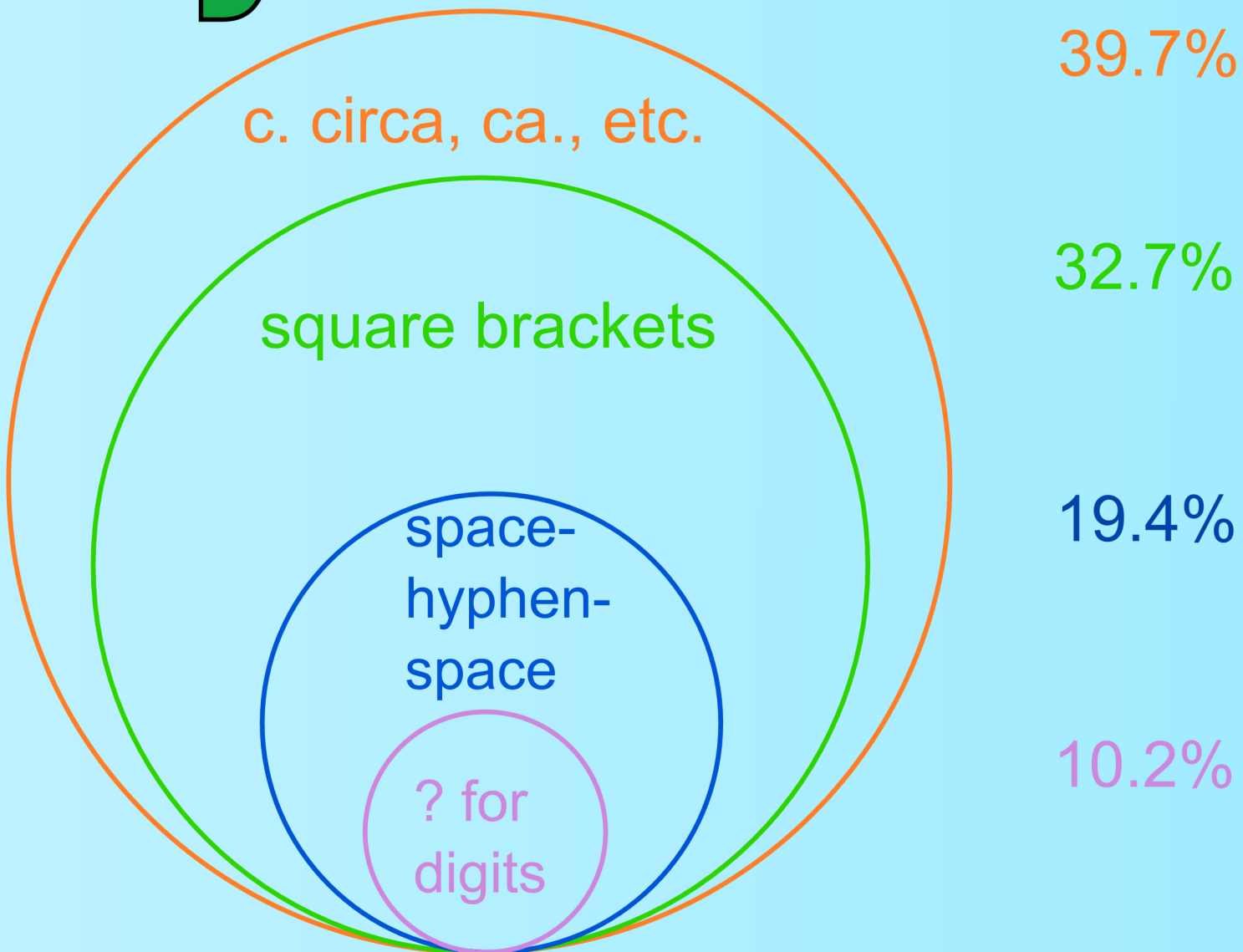


Figure 2: Most common problems in non-EDTF valid dates

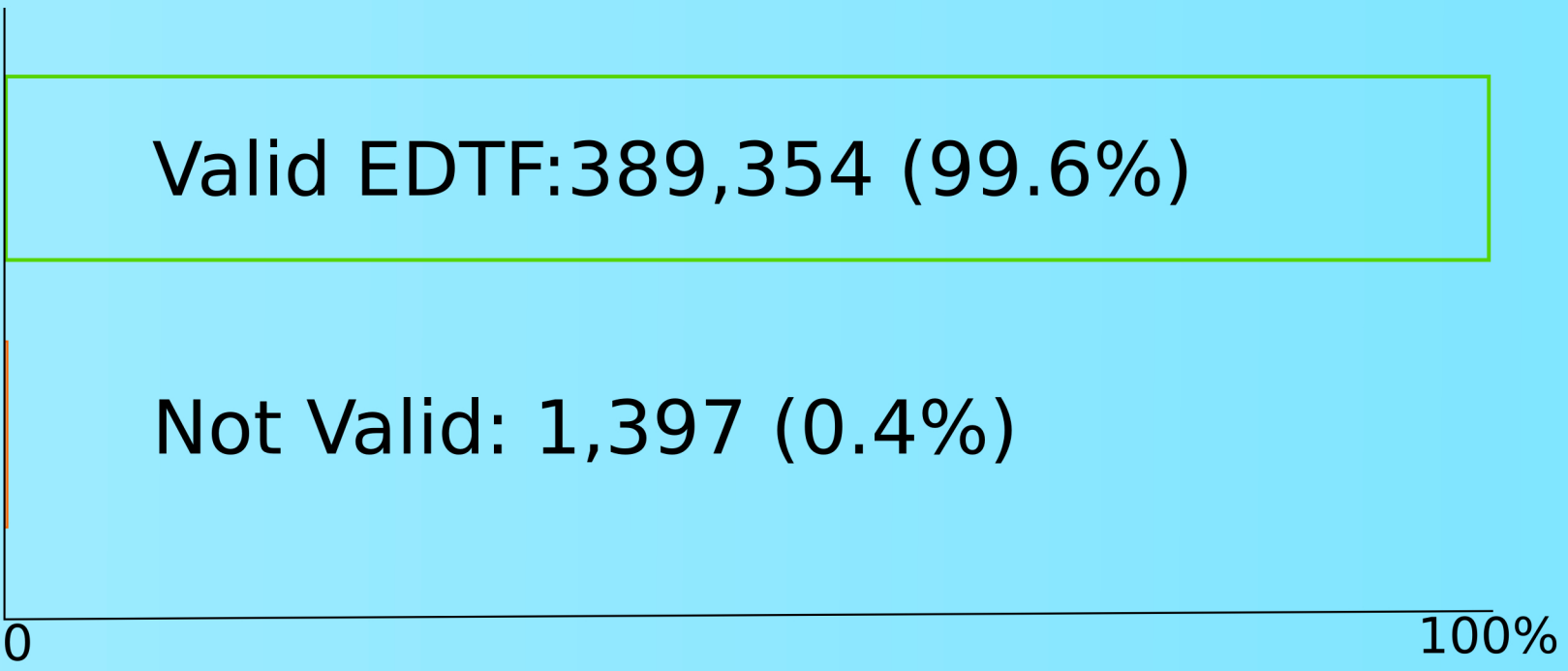


Figure 3: Valid vs. not-EDTF valid dates after automated conversions

Metadata Creators

How Should the Date be Filled in?		
General Date Rules		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">If no date can be found, leave the field blankFor each date, be sure to choose the appropriate date type from the controlled vocabularyAlways format dates appropriately:		
Guideline	Form(s)	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Basic Format<ul style="list-style-type: none">Write dates Year-Month-Day, separating the sections with a single hyphenInclude partial dates only if the year or only the month and year are known	YYYY-MM-DD	1985-03-27
	YYYY	1865-05
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Date Ranges<ul style="list-style-type: none">Date ranges are inclusive (e.g., a scrapbook or collection of items compiled over a period of time)Follow the same basic format but separate the dates with a slash markIf part of the date range is unknown, use the word 'unknown' in place of one date	YYYY-MM-DD/YYYY-MM-DD	1941-12/1945-08
	YYYY-MM-DD/unknown	1889-05-13/unknown
	unknown/YYYY-MM-DD	unknown/1914-06-02

Figure 4: Metadata guidelines clarify date formats for creators

Figure 5: Date validation assists metadata creators through color coding and reminders

Conclusions & Challenges

- * Date validation can improve accuracy
- * Not all formatting is straightforward for unfamiliar metadata creators, particularly if it does not match their local practices

Users

Figure 6: Dates are normalized in the public interface for users

Figure 7: An icon is displayed for dates that cannot be normalized, leading to a glossary

- * For any format, using a written display can make dates less ambiguous
- * Some dates are difficult to normalize for display, e.g.: 1852-uu-09 > ?? 9, 1852