

Adjusting to Remote Volunteer  
Management:

Topline Report of the  
**Technology Evolution in  
Volunteer Administration**  
Survey

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**ASU**<sup>®</sup> School of  
**Community Resources  
and Development**

**Arizona State University**

The **Technology Evolution in Volunteer Administration (TEVA)** research project is a partnership between **Arizona State University (ASU)** and the **Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration (CCVA)**. **Faiza Venzant** facilitated our contact with CVAs, urged them to participate, and provided thoughtful guidance during data collection.



Two ASU graduate research assistants provided invaluable research support for the TEVA survey. **Veera Morrison** scoured the UTAUT literature and sculpted the survey questions to reflect UTAUT. **Rachel Nova** helped shape and designed the content in this brief.

Hager and Nova conducted all data analysis, writing, and design for this brief while embedded at **Free Arts** in Phoenix, Arizona. Special thanks to Free Arts for the work space while we report the TEVA project.

**Kevin Ulrich** and **Martha Van Haitsma** provided excellent technical support and data collection from **The University of Chicago Survey Lab**.

**Gwendolyn McKay** and **Jean-Pierre Maitta** spearheaded organization and facilitation of focus groups for 181 of the survey respondents. Look for focus group results in later project reports.

The TEVA project was sponsored by **AmeriCorps**, a U.S. federal agency formerly known as the Corporation for National and Community Service. The mission of AmeriCorps is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

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# The TEVA Survey: Context and Introduction

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In the spring of 2020, worklife changed across the world as workplaces reeled from the spread of COVID-19. I had just received word from AmeriCorps that they were funding my proposed study of technology use by volunteer administrators, but the pandemic threw two wrenches into the project cogs. One, spring 2020 was suddenly a bad time to survey the field. “Lots of potential respondents are out of jobs, or indefinitely out of their workplaces,” said Kevin at the University of Chicago Survey Lab. “And,” said Faiza at the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration, “many of our CVAs are women who are playing an outsized role in caring for children and parents right now.” So, we shelved the project and waited.

The second wrench was more positive, though: The longer we waited, the more relevant the project became. The pandemic reshaped TEVA’s focus around the reaction to the pandemic. Technology use was a relevant question in 2019, since desktop applications and social media had become common features of our work. However, disruptions from the pandemic forced most volunteer administrators to use new technology or to use it in new ways. For many organizations, daily face-to-face work with volunteers, the bread and butter of community engagement, simply vanished. If they were going to continue to work with volunteers, nonprofits had to embrace virtual or remote technology tools. Doing it fast and on-the-fly would have inevitable bumps and warts.

In the spring of 2021, Kevin, Faiza and I decided that CVA lives had settled to a point where we could conduct the online survey. This research report provides high-level results on those survey questions and an indication of where I am headed in a more detailed analysis. The plan is to produce a book from the survey data, supplemented by focus groups conducted in the summer of 2021. This report is just the appetizer. That said, in the following pages, you will see summary topline results and six central themes:

*Volunteer administration has not converged on a specific technology tool*

*Remote work became the norm in the pandemic*

*Volunteer administrators do not always get to pick their own tools*

*Anxiety in use of primary technology tools is generally low*

*CVAs are generally positively disposed toward use of their primary tool*

*Topline survey results leave many questions unanswered*

# CVAs and the Pandemic

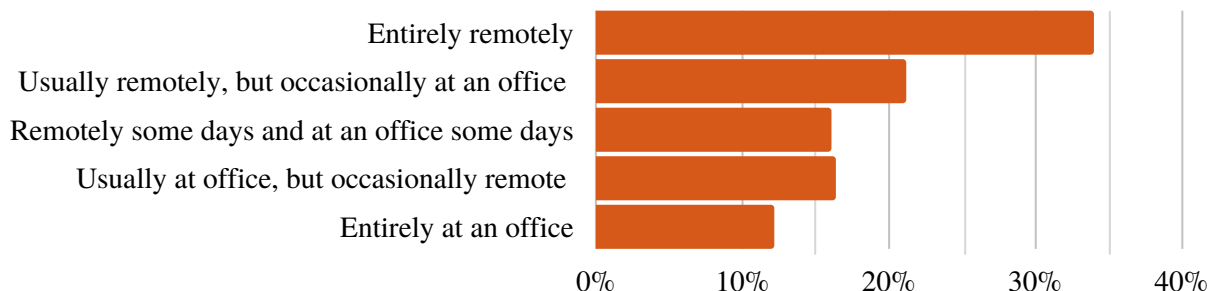
“CVA” is jargon for an individual in the United States or Canada with a formal certification from the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration (CCVA). CVAs are “Certified in Volunteer Administration.” In partnership with CCVA, we solicited information from the 899 CVAs who actively worked in volunteer administration over the previous year. Of these, 546 completed an online survey (60.7%). For more information on survey methodology, see page 11.

Most CVAs (at least the 60 percent responded to the survey) are fairly new to their credential. One respondent told us that she has held her CVA for more than 25 years, but two-thirds of the respondents have been credentialed for 5 years or less. Our average survey respondent has held the CVA for 4.9 years. However, many CVAs have been volunteer administrators longer than they have held the CVA. Eight respondents told us they have been working with their current organization for over 30 years. The average number of years with their employer was 9.1 years.

We asked the 546 CVAs for their job title, and they gave us more than 300 different responses. The most common (at 7.5 percent of responses) was volunteer coordinator. The three next-most-common titles garnered almost 3 percent of responses: executive director, volunteer manager, and volunteer services manager. This diversity highlights both a lack of convergence of language and variety in how work gets done in the field of volunteer administration.

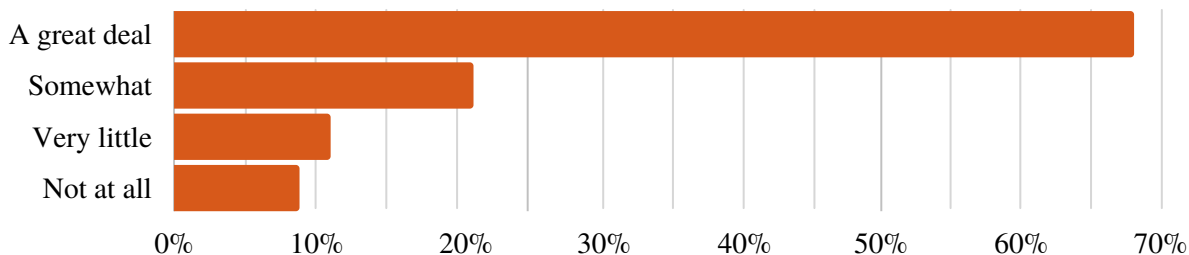
As shown in Table 1, almost one in eight CVAs said they were working entirely at their office in the spring of 2021. That is more than I would have guessed. More common is the one-third who were working entirely remotely and another one-third where remote work was at least common.

**Table 1:** *Where do you currently (spring 2021) do your volunteer administration work?*



You might ask yourself how different that was before the pandemic. So, we asked survey respondents how much the pandemic had influenced where they worked. As you can see in Table 2, two-thirds found their worksite substantially influenced by the pandemic.

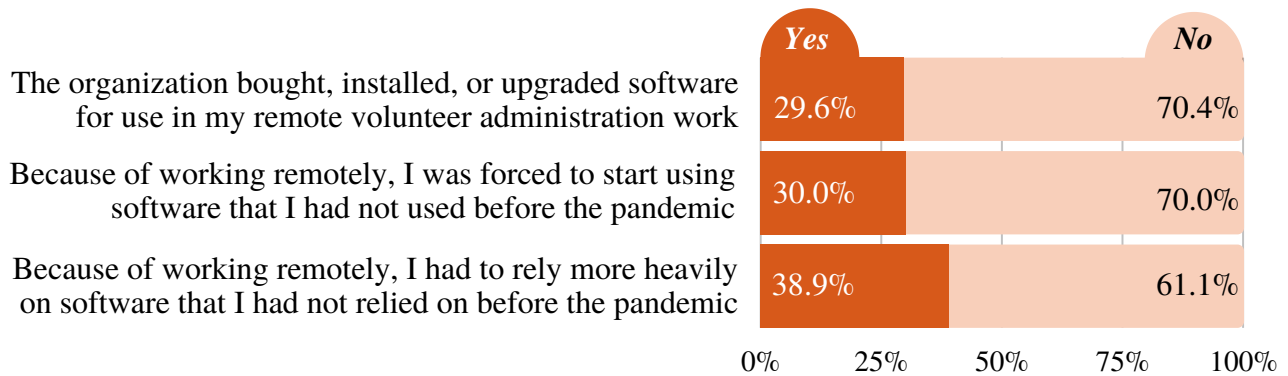
**Table 2:** *To what degree has the pandemic influenced the degree to which you work remotely?*



# The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

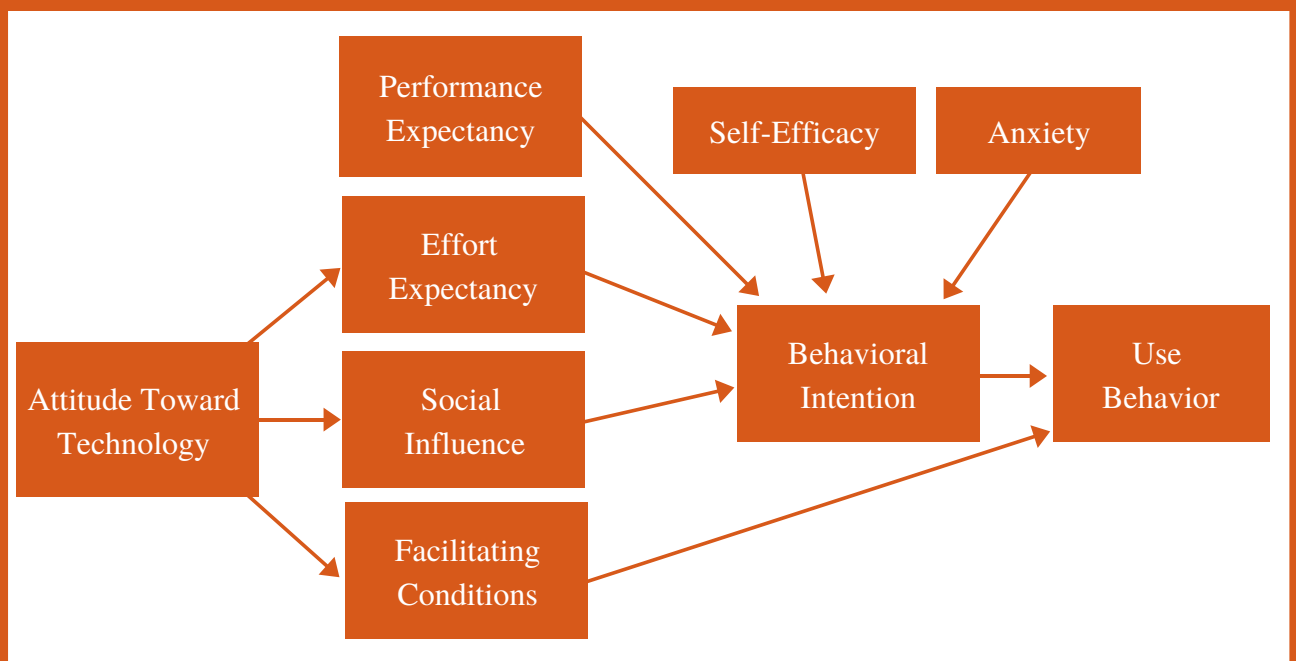
CVAs were working remotely and confronted a need to work with remote volunteers. We asked CVAs how the pandemic influenced their technology use. Table 3 reports that approximately one-third of survey respondents experienced major changes to technology in their daily work.

**Table 3:** *Did you experience any of the following with your volunteer administration work due to working remotely?*



Were CVAs prepared to integrate these technology solutions into their work? Did they see them as solutions? Did they like the options provided to them? Back in 2003, Viswanath Venkatesh and his colleagues published a theory of technology adoption that had a big influence on how researchers have studied technology use and aversion. According to Google Scholar, this 2003 article has been cited almost 35,000 times. Figure 1 is not exactly what Venkatesh and colleagues originally theorized, but it is a similar model that I will be considering carefully in the TEVA study. In the next five pages, I say a little about each concept and what CVAs reported for them.

**Figure 1:** TEVA conceptualization of the UTAUT model



# UTAUT Measures

Following Venkatesh\* and his colleagues, researchers exploring the UTAUT model ask a series of questions for each concept. In the model, attitude toward technology is a possible precursor of effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Rather than ask generally about technology use, we asked CVAs to focus on the computer program or system used most prominently in their volunteer administration work over the past year. Two programs aimed specifically at volunteer administration, Volgistics and Better Impact, were the most common, selected by 3 out of 10 respondents. However, Excel came in third as the most common tool for 7.3 percent of CVAs.

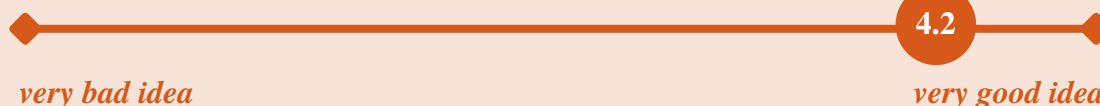


## Attitude Toward Technology

With their primary [program] used for volunteer administration in mind, we asked survey participants four questions regarding their attitude about using it. We presented them with a five-point scale, which we assign values of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Figure 2 illustrates the average (mean) value on the attitude toward technology questions.

Figure 2: Measures of attitude toward technology

*I believe using [program] for my volunteer administration work is a...*



*Using [program] makes my work with volunteer administration...*



*Working with [program] is...*



*Working with [program] is something I...*



\* V. Venkatesh, M. Morris, G. Davis & F. Davis (2003). "User Acceptance of Information Technology: Toward a Unified View." *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, 27(3), 425-478.



## Performance Expectancy:

The degree to which users believe that the system will help them to attain gains in job performance

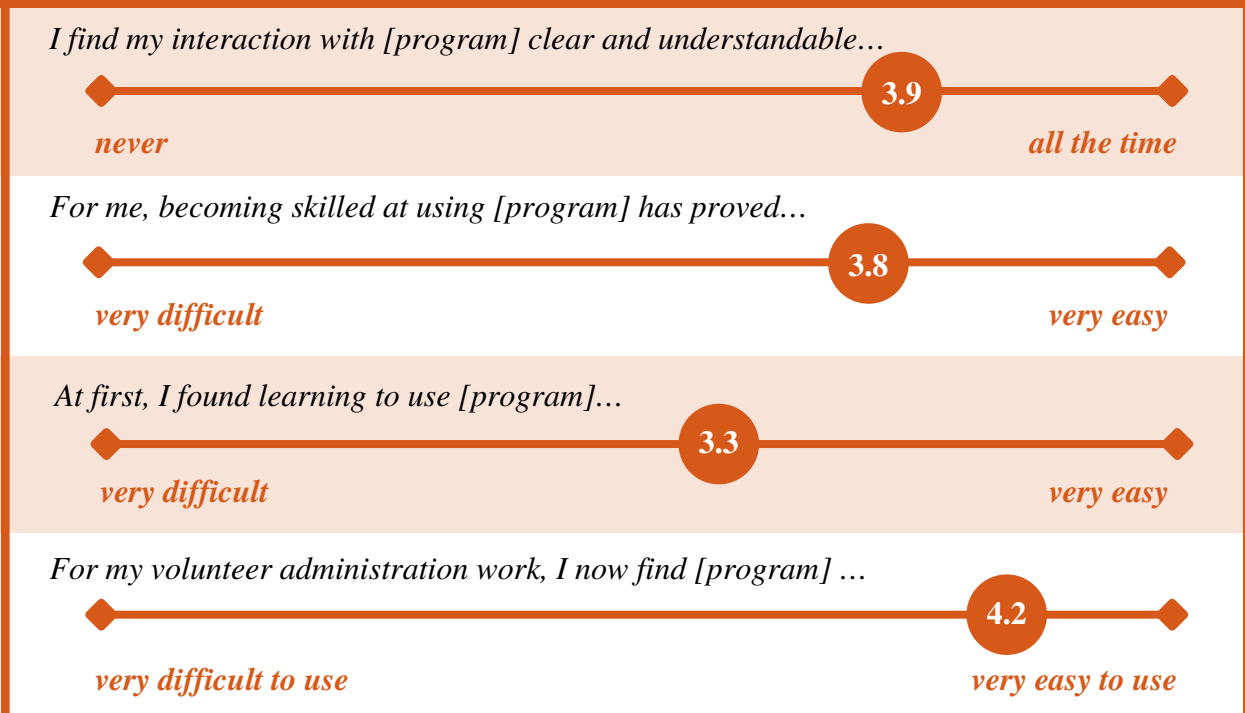
Figure 3: Measures of performance expectancy



## Effort Expectancy:

The degree of ease associated with the use of the system

Figure 4: Measures of effort expectancy





## Social Influence:

The degree to which users perceive that important others believe they should use the system

Figure 5: Measures of social influence

People who influence my behavior \_\_\_\_\_ that I should use [program] for my volunteer administration work



People who are important to me \_\_\_\_\_ that I should use [program] for my volunteer administration work



Senior management of [employer] has been \_\_\_\_\_ in my use of [program]



In general, the organization has supported my use of [program]



## Facilitating Conditions:

The degree to which users believe that an organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support use of the system

Figure 6: Measures of facilitating conditions

To make the best use of [program], I have...



Regarding the knowledge necessary to make best use of [program], I have...



[Program] is \_\_\_\_\_ compatible with other programs or systems I use



A specific person (or group) is available to help with [program] difficulties...







## Self-Efficacy:

The degree to which users feel they can learn systems or solve problems on their own

Figure 7: Measures of self-efficacy

If nobody were around to tell me what to do as I go, I could complete a job or task using [program]...



If I could call somebody for help if I got stuck, I could complete a job or task using [program]...



If I had a lot of time, I could complete a job or task using [program]...



If I had access to a built-in help facility as part of the program, I could complete a job or task using [program]...

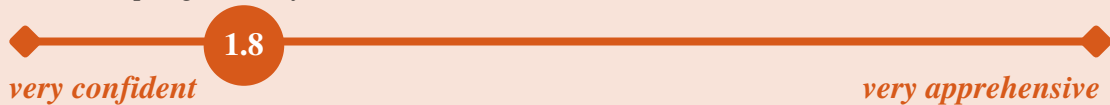


## Anxiety:

The degree of user apprehension when faced with the prospect of working with the system

Figure 8: Measures of anxiety

When I use [program], I feel...



Using [program], the possibility of losing a lot of information by hitting the wrong key scares me...



For fear of making mistakes I cannot correct, I hesitate to use [program]...



I find [program]...



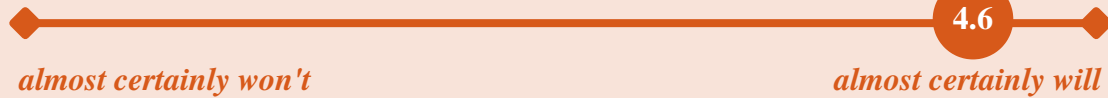


## Behavioral Intention:

The degree to which users expect to use the system in coming days

Figure 9: Measures of behavioral intention

This week, I \_\_\_\_\_ use [program].



Next week, I \_\_\_\_\_ use [program].



Within the next month or two, I \_\_\_\_\_ use [program].



## Major Observations from the Survey Topline

1. **Remote work became the norm in the pandemic.** You likely knew that already. CVAs were asked to engage their volunteers in new ways. Some were more prepared than others.
2. **Volunteer administration has not converged on a specific technology tool.** We asked CVAs what their main system or tool (outside of social media) is. Some use proprietary tools built specifically for volunteer administration, but many make do with common, general software like Microsoft Excel.
3. **CVAs are generally positively disposed toward use of their primary technology tool.** Experiences vary, but most expect their technology tools to help their work. Most say they are effective users and can solve problems when they arise.
4. **Volunteer administrators do not always get to pick their own tools.** Most CVAs feel a fairly high level of encouragement (if not pressure) to use particular technology tools. That said, most feel supported in their use of these programs.
5. **Anxiety in use of primary technology tools is generally low.** This corresponds to high levels of intention to use these tools in coming days, weeks, and months.
6. **Topline survey results leave many questions unanswered.** Are CVA attitudes about technology related to effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions? Does performance expectancy help us understand intention to use technology tools? More detailed analysis of the survey will shed light on these questions. What challenges do CVAs face in working with technology tools? Do these tools meet their needs? Analysis of themes in the focus groups will provide guidance on those questions. Stay tuned!

# Methodology

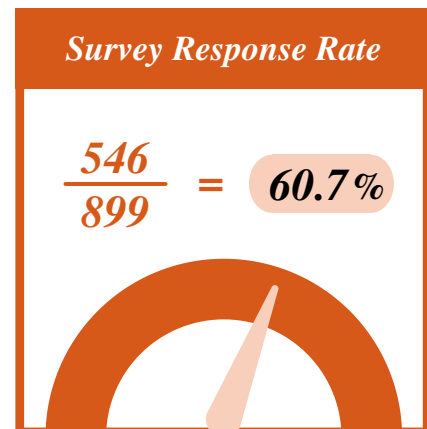
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Arizona State University partnered with the Council for Certification on Volunteer Administration (CCVA) and contracted with the University of Chicago Survey Lab (UCSL) for design and execution of the Technology Evolution in Volunteer Administration survey.

The study population is (1) active Certification in Volunteer Administration (CVA) holders in the United States and Canada when CCVA drew and delivered their list on February 2, 2021, who (2) conducted professional volunteer administration work over the preceding 12 months. The initial CCVA file included 978 cases, but we removed 20 that had no email address or phone number. UCSL called another 15 cases that lacked email addresses and were able to recover 4 of those cases. Our final working file totaled 947 cases.

Data collection commenced in four waves in the spring of 2021. UCSL mailed a hardcopy “advance letter” to postal addresses. The letter included a \$5 bill, explained the study and its value to the field, and asked the readers to look out for an email with a link to the online survey in coming days. UCSL sent three reminder emails over the following three weeks. After that, UCSL called 539 individuals who had not completed a survey, leaving messages in a majority of the calls. Calls resulted in improved email addresses for 20 cases and identification of 9 individuals who had not worked in volunteer administration over the preceding year.

In sum, 30 cases fell out of the sample because respondents verified that they did not meet this work requirement. An additional 18 fell out because emails bounced and UCSL could not acquire working addresses. So, the final eligible sample numbered 899 cases. The survey included a large section on social media use that is not described in this brief. Partially complete surveys were considered as nonresponse when cases skipped the social media section and a nontrivial portion of the section on desktop applications or systems. The final tally of respondents was 546 cases.



In addition to the \$5 incentive included in the advance letter, CCVA offered one Professional Development Unit (PDU) toward re-certification for survey completion. When data collection closed, UCSL sent a list of respondents to CCVA, but not to ASU. UCSL delivered a final datafile to ASU, where all data analysis was conducted.

The survey concluded by asking respondents to indicate their interest in follow-up virtual focus groups. Focus groups were conducted by ASU graduate students in spring and summer 2021. To satisfy confidentiality of survey responses, focus group narratives cannot be connected with survey responses.

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