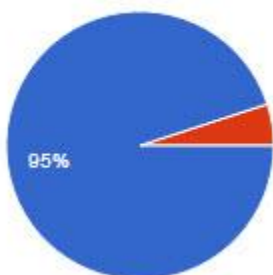


## **40 responses to online merger form:**

1.

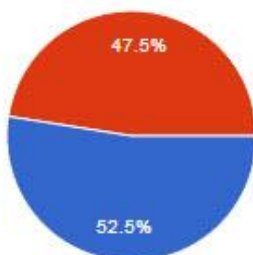
**Are you currently a member of the Philadelphia Regional Chapter of MLA?**



Yes	38	95%
No	2	5%

2.

**Do you think the Philadelphia Regional Chapter of MLA should consider a merger with MAC?**



Yes	21	52.5%
No	19	47.5%

**3. Explain your answer to the question if you think the Philadelphia Chapter of MLA should consider a merger with MAC MLA Chapter?**

4. More opportunities. More colleagues. Better networking.
5. The Philadelphia chapter has a small membership and an even smaller number of active members. I think it is often a struggle to find members to serve on the board. As a larger chapter I would assume that MAC offers more programming and professional development opportunities.
6. We are more likely to be able to offer more valuable member services as part of a larger organization
7. My impression--not sure how accurate--is that have an effective strategy for distributed regional activity and engagement.
8. I have been more impressed with the meeting activities of MAC vs. those of NJ/NY. And since Pittsburgh and Western PA have aligned with MAC (although I don't know why; that seems really strange to me!), it would keep us aligned state-wide. Having come from SC and knowing the RML staff from MAC, I am comfortable with them and feel as if they are neighbors.

9. Having worked on several joint meetings, I find the MAC crowd to be a bit overwhelming. I'd hate to see Phila get lost in the shuffle, or be pushed into doing things all the MAC way.
10. I think that merging with NY/NJ makes more sense because of the geographic proximity.
11. Right now we have the benefit of local education plus the option of attending a MAC conference. There is little benefit to merger in my eyes
12. MAC has a long history of great annual meetings in locations far less expensive than NYC. For many MLA-Phil members, MAC annual meetings are not that distant, especially for those of us who live in Philly or points south. It would be nice - if possible - to merge in co-ordination with the September joint meeting in Philly.
13. I have belonged to MAC rather than Philadelphia for the last 5 years. They hold an annual meeting which offers opportunities for multiple CE classes (at a lower rate than MLA); poster and paper presentations. Because MAC covers a large geographical area, you meet folks from many different types of medical libraries.
14. The information you provided was extremely useful. I'm curious what recruitment strategies the board has tried (both for general and board membership) and what the literature has to say about declining professional association membership. However, I'm a big supporter of considering multiple options simultaneously. The energy that existed at the 2012 quad-chapter suggests that a membership with DC as the center point has serious potential.
15. it would lead to events too far away for many librarians who are more north or central to attend. greater philly is a large area when there is nothing else to serve central PA. this area is situated nearly the same distance from philly and some parts of ny and nj.
16. I think that due to decline in membership and difficulty in getting officers, committee members, etc., it is worth pursuing.
17. I think programming would be too far away to attend. If there was a way to hold separate programming with Philadelphia still being a venue? I realize that is most likely not going to happen.
18. MAC has a larger membership base and can offer more opportunities for engagement.
19. The geographical extent of MCA would make it more difficult for us to do joint activities with them.
20. The geographic area is so large for MAC that I feel the constituents around Philadelphia might feel overshadowed and not have the ability to participate in as many events. Many institutions do not have large, or any, funds for travel and professional development, so keeping events closer is best, especially since the current Philadelphia's chapter's geographic reach is so small. Being incorporated to MAC would be a really, really big difference and could negatively impact our institutional culture.
21. I think NY/NJ would be more appropriate.

22. Makes our chapter much less local.
23. MAC is a chapter with lots of programming, well defined governance.
24. Due to the distance from our region to some of the MAC locations would be a hindrance to members participation.
25. We often participate in MAC events.
26. More opportunities for professional development and a richer environment for networking as mentioned above. Due our consistently dwindling membership numbers the idea of a merger makes sense. Offer greater value to our members.
27. I think a NY/NJ would be more desirable, due to proximity.
28. I think the chapter should carefully consider mergers with both MAC and NYNJ. In a way, MAC makes sense because western PA is already part of that chapter with the merger on the Pittsburgh Chapter. Geographically speaking, NYNJ makes more sense as that merger creates a more cohesive, yet manageable area.
29. I think the geographic area is already so large for MAC and, having worked with MAC on joint meetings, I can say that their "corporate culture" is quite different from ours -- not something that can't be overcome but definitely something to consider.
30. I feel MAC already covers too large an area of the east coast, and this makes it hard for members to attend many events and meetings unless everything goes virtual.
31. We would be on the outer fringes of a very large geographic areas that is quite culturally different from Philadelphia. I have the greatest respect for MAC and for some reason have been on their mailing list for years, They are active and attractive, but I think we might find ourselves somewhat marginalized.
32. MAC is a large, dynamic chapter and already includes the former Pittsburgh chapter of MLA. Philadelphia chapter has successfully worked with MAC to hold joint meetings.
33. N/A
34. They have a large and active membership. This would be extremely helpful for us. We have some wonderful members, but our small size makes it very difficult to recruit members to serve on the board. Too much work is shouldered by too few. They also have a great annual meeting which 1) isn't very expensive and 2) provides a mechanism for networking with other librarians, and 3) has excellent CE opportunities and speakers.
35. It will be harder to make meeting due to distance.
36. The region would be very large, and it would harder to attend physical meetings.
37. I think all the benefits listed will be achieved. It is difficult to keep a chapter vital with dwindling membership. More is merrier and MAC sounds like the best fit. To me the geographical region is more appealing. I have also had colleagues who were members of MAC and went to their conferences and felt they got a lot out of them professionally by being able to take CE and present posters.
38. Since MAC includes Western PA, a plus of adding MLA-Phil would mean the whole state would be represented by one entity. It could also be beneficial to CPHSLA members

(Central PA Health Sci Lib Assn), who range far to the west, and are currently affiliated with MLA-Phil.

39. I have been to 2 of their annual meetings and the programs were fantastic.

40. As stated, membership within MLA-Phil has dwindled in the past decade and all possibilities must be explored to sustain an MLA presence.

41. I think MAC is quite large and tends to take over- at least they did a number of years ago when we collaborated with them on a meeting. There is a large group from the Univ. of Maryland who are kind of overwhelming. Please understand- they are very nice- it's just that I think that the Philadelphia folks might not be that comfortable with this merger.

#### 4. Do you think the Philadelphia Regional Chapter of MLA should consider a merger with NY/NJ MLA chapter?



5. As a Philly-area resident I'd personally be more likely to travel to NJ or NYC than the current MAC regions. From a national perspective it would result in a more balanced map than if we merged with MAC. Not sure what we'd call ourselves, though. I consider NY/NJ/PA/DE to be "mid-atlantic". Now if we could pull off a 3-way merger for a truly "Mid-Atlantic" chapter....

We are more likely to be able to offer more valuable member services as part of a larger organization  
Makes our chapter much less local.

In my experience, the NY/NJ chapter has most of it's meetings in NYC and has a history of an NYC focus. That makes sense considering that so many librarians live and work in the NYC area. It doesn't make as much sense for MLA-Phil members.

I am not completely opposed to merger with this chapter. Benefits will be achieved. I just prefer MAC

The NY/NJ Chapter is geographically close and Phil Chapter has successfully worked together on joint meetings. Main question is if culture of either MAC or NY/NJ is better suited to Phil. Not sure of an answer to the question.

meetings will be easier to get to, (unless MAC - Philadelphia Chapter mostly meets in Pittsburgh or D.C. area).

I acknowledge that many of our members see the NY/NJ chapter as close and familiar, and that for them this will seem a more reasonable alignment. I've never been to any location within either state and don't feel that same kinship.

Seem to me makes the most sense given proximity and similarity of issues.

Not a bad option either, but prefer MAC

I consider NYNJ to be a better fit. It is a similar size, it's centered along the northeast corridor, and has a similar feel to the membership (I've belonged to both for a number of years).

Same as above, but has the additional benefit of proximity advantages for in-person events and meetings.

Yes, this group seems very congenial and great to work with.

The Philadelphia chapter has a small membership and an even smaller number of active members. I think it is often a struggle to find members to serve on the board. Merging with a larger chapter might alleviate these issues.

We already do joint events with them and they appear to me to be successful. Geography plays a good role in this case.

Makes the most sense geographically.

As has been pointed out, the geographic proximity is a factor in favor of such a merger. The talent pool is fairly equal in both potential merger partners. Is NY/NJ eager to have us join them?

I think that due to decline in membership and difficulty in getting offices, committee members, etc., it is worth pursuing.

I agree its easier it get to NY OR NJ than to go to Pittsburgh.

If a merger is to happen, I think joining the NY/NJ chapter makes more sense. Geographically, it is much more concentrated and is much closer than MAC. I think it would be easier for a lot of people to attend events in NY or NJ than in western PA, North Carolina, or West Virginia.

geographically closer than MAC. I am conflicted about a possible merger, but feel NY/NJ would be the more logical choice.

More opportunities. More colleagues. Better networking.

This may be beneficial as well.

I feel this is somewhat closer to our region and I "may" be more apt to attend programming in South Jersey, but not NY.

I think the chapter should carefully consider mergers with both MAC and NYNJ. In a way, MAC makes sense because western PA is already part of that chapter with the merger on the Pittsburgh Chapter. Geographically speaking, NYNJ makes more sense as that merger creates a more cohesive, yet manageable area.

MY/NJ has multiple educational opportunities during the year. I can attend them if I wish to travel to them. As above I see little benefit.

Without more information, NY/NJ also has potential. As noted, proximity is important, here. Both options are worth further investigation. I lean a little more toward MAC, though, partly because of density that wouldn't necessarily have MLA-Phila getting marginalized.

My fear of a merger with NY/NJ chapter is that the librarians from NYC would dominate the agenda of the chapter and that most meetings would be in the NYC area which is very expensive if you need to stay overnight.

A merger with NY/NJ would be more geographically practical and doable, though a merger with MAC MLA could still be considered.

N/A

Travel to meetings in the NY/NJ area would be cheaper than trying to get to places potentially as far away as North Carolina or Virginia. The MAC area coverage seems to large for travel to be as cheap.

NY/NJ makes better sense geographically, but would insist on a deliberative and slow merger process that considers the effects on both chapters, and recognizes the needs and talents of both chapters. A new name for the merged chapter would have to be worked out as well

Proximity to NY/NJ chapter sites would be a plus compared with MAC. However, it could also be a drawback for some who may not be willing to go up to north Jersey or NY. That's the trade-off with a merger such as this. There would be a larger pool of members to draw from for leadership roles.

Potential for an increase in topics for program sessions.

This is the geographically closer chapter.

I think either group would be fine. The NY/NJ chapter is closer. I am not as familiar with their meetings.

To be stronger, we need more members as office-holders, for programming, and educational support.

Personally, I orient more to the northeast than to the south. Granted, we will still be on the perimeter, but the New York/Philadelphia corridor is well traveled, easily accessible for meetings and CE and is culturally more similar.

closer proximity means more people in the greater philadelphoa area (not in philly but an hour pr so away) could attend. i couldnt travel to north carolina or even DC for events as easily as NJ or NYC because i am located in central PA. those of us in this area of the state are not close to philly or pittsburgh yet we are assigned greater philly because there is no central pa chapter.

I personally don't care for the NY/NJ chapter's overall "vibe," although there are many great people involved in the chapter. Too bad we can't merge with HSLANJ.... MANY people in HSLANJ don't participate with or belong to NY/NJ MLA--although lots of South Jersey people belong (belonged?) to MLA-Phil.

## 5.

### MLA-Phil (no merger) [How likely are you to participate if ]



More likely to participate	6	15%
About the same	32	80%
Less likely	2	5%

### Merged with MAC [How likely are you to participate if ]



More likely to participate	11	27.5%
About the same	15	37.5%
Less likely	14	35%

### Merged with NY/NJ [How likely are you to participate if ]



More likely to participate	9	22.5%
About the same	21	52.5%
Less likely	10	25%

## 6. What concerns or comments do you have in moving forward with merging with either MAC or NY/NJ MLA Chapter? Please explain:

That there continue to be events and workshops offered in the Philadelphia area and that any funding or grant programs managed by the chapter to benefit library staff in the Philadelphia area are continued or transferred to a local organization such as TCLC.

I would be concerned that meetings would be held in non-convenient geographic locations, limiting participation by Phila. members.

Thanks for pursuing this! I think it's a great idea to merge, although I don't know much about either chapter. Before making a decision, I'd look forward to hearing from chapter leaders in a teleconference about their vision for the expanded chapter, followed by a wider conversation among the members.

I think there should be some concrete plans to make the new org as inclusive as possible. Possibly even specifying 50/50 of officers and committee appointments from each chapter, and specific ideas of meetings in the NY territory and the PHL territory, so no one feels left out or ignored.

I think we should have done this a long time ago.

I do worry about the difficulties presented by having to travel farther for chapter events, if we were to merge with either of the other two chapters.

Philadelphia is an iconic place to call home for our chapter so it would be sad to see it dissolved but based on your analysis of dwindling membership and participation in leadership roles it makes sense to be future-thinking. My guess is that MAC and NY/NJ had a similar thought process when they merged? As long as Philadelphia or Pennsylvania is part of a merged name or in some way recognized in the merged scenario, I think it would be great to do this. It could only strengthen the collective chapter.

Philly just seems like it should be able to support its own association, however, even NYC doesn't stand on its own without including NJ. On the other had, a membership of 84 seems small. Again the question: What has the chapter done to increase membership? And what information is there about chapter critical masses? What does MLA national know?

Personally, I really don't care what's decided. However, for the younger and more enthusiastic librarians who would be more accepted and embraced by the MLA community, this should be pursued for them if you want to see the librarian profession sustain itself in the coming years. Please see my comments above. The Philadelphia Chapter has such a wonderful and successful history- I would hate to see it simply subsumed into another chapter that might take over to a very large extent.

I don't know which would provide the best and easiest sharing geographically but I think that should be a consideration. Where are current members located and which merger would offer the most reasonable options for shared meetings and attendance at events.

I think the main reason to consider a merger is that apparent lack of interested individuals to volunteer for leadership positions.

I worry that we will lose our rich sense of Philadelphia tradition and history, and likely our unique collegiality and community if we are absorbed by a larger entity. However, it is not worth beating a dead horse. It's just crazy that people serve as President repeatedly, and it is like PULLING TEETH to get people to participate in the most minor capacity... There are so many jobs and assignments that go with maintaining a chapter (yep, know I'm preaching to the choir here). When I was on the Board, Gary coompleted a big analysis of the geographic membership boundaries... that was probably at least 10 years ago, and nothing (participation-wise) seems to have improved in the interim. Not an easy decision :-(.

I am a former member and I just never got around to joining again. I'm sorry I'm one of those who caused a drop in membership. I'll add it to my things to do in 2016. Thank you for all your hard work.

No concerns



The Philadelphia Chapter has been a close and collegial group. The geographic proximity has been beneficial to working relationships and, for me, personal friendships. I would hate to lose that feeling but think the best course is to merge. There will always be a close network within Philadelphia.

Need to do what is best for our chapter and declining membership

A merger is a great idea - let's do it! I think either MAC or NY/NJ would be fine. As a former board member, I know it's a constant struggle to recruit new committee chairs - let alone committee members. We need to be practical and continuing as we are doesn't seem very practical. Plus, I think it would be great to have a larger cohort of librarians to network with and learn from. The time is right.

I worry about losing the uniqueness of our chapter. We are small but not the smallest chapter. I agree that the leadership has devolved into a small group. It is the responsibility of leadership to work on getting more people involved.

No concerns, just regret. I like that we are different than most chapters, we are small, but we all seem to know each other. Our programming is easier to attend and is not so much "conference" oriented as the other chapters seem to be. Merging with another chapter, while it makes sense, would make me less inclined to attend events. Those events would have to be over the weekend and cost more money. I can't take off for an afternoon and travel to Pittsburgh/NYC for a panel discussion. A sad day, but one that has been in the making for decades.

This chapter has a long history, so my concerns are with the archives. I'd really like to see the chapter provide grant funds to a researcher who would develop a written history of the chapter. and to scan the archives before sending them to a permanent location.

While I think merging with either chapter would be a good strategic move for the Philly chapter, I'm concerned about the resulting size of either chapter post merger, not in terms of number of members, but in geographic size. Folks in northern PA will likely not travel to southern or western NC for a meeting; likewise in reverse. I don't know about the dynamics in MAC, but in Philly Chapter, we already have folks that don't want to travel "all the way" to Philadelphia for a meeting. I've also been a member of the NYNJ Chapter for over 20 years, and know that they face the same distance issues. People in NYC and Long Island think that traveling to NJ for a meeting is like traveling to another country. Some people from NJ don't want to go into "the city." Some of their concerns are valid; some are not. Certainly more than just attendance at physical meetings needs to be considered. The introductory text notes things such as increased pool of candidates for leadership positions, improved professional development opportunities, and a greater impact on policy and professional issues. These are all very valid points for consideration, and a membership pool of approximately 200 members certainly provides well for those points. Personally, I would like to see a merger with MAC. The programming opportunities already offered by that chapter are far superior to those that we currently offer, as well as those that NYNJ currently offers. This would be a great benefit to our members. But I don't think that a merger with NYNJ should be discounted. Both Philly and NYNJ have been struggling "chapters that could" for a number of years, and a merger of

the two has the potential to create the energy and programming opportunities of MAC, while still keeping members closer to home.

I don't think my ability to participate will change much. My lack of participation has more to do with the decreased staffing levels at my library. Now with more virtual options it would be easier to participate in CE, professional programs, and networking. I think the merger would be good for both chapters.

Change is good.

Would there be more online meetings if we merge?

It is a shame that it has come to this, but the reasons mentioned in the introduction make a merger almost inevitable. The Philadelphia Chapter will eventually become too small to function effectively, and think it better a merger happen now rather than later.

My concern with merging with MAC would be the geographic boundaries of the chapter. I would be very unlikely to attend meetings/events in more distant regions of the MAC chapter.

Geographically, the NY/NJ chapter makes more sense from a logistics standpoint if a merger was to be pursued.

proximity with MAC

My one concern about merging is whether the education programs in Philadelphia for local chapter members would continue. ( that is why I checked less likely) I would hate to see a decline in education programs in the Philadelphia. I doubt if I would attend workshops outside the Philadelphia area. If I were to choose I would go with the group offering dynamic program. I have met more people in the the MAC chapter since I attended aMAC annual meeting; however, NJ is closer. I would go either way ( merger or no merger) with what the majority decides. I no longer work in a medical library and think the decision should be made by those who are presently working in the medical field.

It would be a shame to lose the Philadelphia identity. Has anyone considered the possibility of having a "Philadelphia SIG" or informal social group as a subset of the MLA chapter? This may be wishful thinking or simply nostalgia, :-) I would also like to have a better idea of how welcoming the other chapters would be. How well run are they? How much do they want us? Will we be respected or simply regarded as step-children?

No concerns. I think it's a good idea to discuss it. I'm a relatively new member of MLA-Phil, and I was surprised that the Philly area had its own section.

I think a merger with a larger area is a good idea, but I see benefits to both potential mergers. A merger with MAC would give us more connections with libraries in western PA, but many NY/NJ libraries are closer geographically than most of MAC.

Ideally, it would be better to stay within the area contiguous to Philadelphia but the reasons outlined before makes it really hard to stay as we are. Unless there is a dramatic shift in either current member involvement or recruiting of new members, I can see how the situation can't go on like this.

### **Email Responses include:**

1. While I don't favor a merger for obvious reasons, I can understand why it may be necessary. Another organization that I belong to is going through some of the same issues. In order for the chapter to continue to exist, they have to meet certain standards set by national. We have been limping along for a number of years while trying different options. There simply are not enough members now who are willing to serve as officers in order to keep the chapter going. I would rather the chapter merge than cease to exist and I feel the same way about the Philadelphia Chapter of MLA.
  
2. I did not renew my MLA membership – Regional or Local – for 2015 and don't expect to for 2016. So I'm assuming you didn't intend to solicit my completion of the survey. My personal opinion is that if by merging the 2 chapters there is greater benefit to members in terms of opportunities for educational programs, more meaningful chapter meetings and the like – then go for it.
  
3. 3. I'm retired, so this doesn't affect my professional future as much as it does currently employed MLA members, but for what it's worth, here are my responses.  
 \*\*\*\*\* Currently a member? Yes (retired)  
 Merge with MAC? No  
 Reason: Geographic proximity is important for face-to-face networking. If I were still working, I would not attend meetings in Washington DC, Baltimore MD, or other distant places, because of extra cost and time for commuting. For that reason, personal networking opportunities would be fewer. I understand that interactive webinars and some other online interactions would be possible, eliminating some travel needs. That is fine for continuing education and maybe some committee work, but not for networking.  
 Merge with NY/NJ? No  
 Reason: same as MAC, but substitute city locations like NY NY.  
 How likely to participate if  
 No merger -- about the same  
 Merger with MAC -- Less likely  
 Merger with NY/NJ --Less likely  
 Concerns not mentioned above  
 None come to mind