



2012 Survey of K-12 Educators on Social Networking, Online Communities, and Web 2.0 Tools

Research conducted by MMS Education

Co-sponsored by:



2012 Survey of K-12 Educators on Social Networking, Online Communities, and Web 2.0 Tools

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Background: Growing Support for “Connected Educators” since 2009



The U.S. Department of Education declared August 2012 “Connected Educator Month”

Since our original study in 2009, there's been a growing movement, supported at the highest levels of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), to encourage the use of social networks and online communities to help educators expand their professional learning opportunities.

The National Education Technology Plan 2010 states, “Social networks can be used to provide educators with career-long personal learning tools and resources that make professional learning timely and relevant as well as an ongoing activity that continually improves practice and evolves their skills over time.”

The DOE declared August 2012 “Connected Educator Month” and devoted significant resources to helping organizations and educators come together for a month of exceptional online professional learning events.

With this current focus on “Connected Educators,” we felt it was time to revisit our original study and discover the latest and newest implications from schools throughout the country.



Survey Goals for 2012



Goals included:

- Update the 2009 Study, *A Survey of K-12 Educators on Social Networking and Content-Sharing Tools*
- Track membership and usage of general social networking sites vs. education-focused sites
- Assess participation for principals, teachers, and school librarians
- Understand perceived value and concerns
- Track usage of other online communities and Web 2.0 tool

NEW
for 2012

- Educators' opinions about school/district policies and Web 2.0 tools
- The quality of Internet access in schools
- The types of devices educators are using to access online information
- School policies regarding BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)



Survey Methodology

In 2012,
the survey
deployed to
200,000
educators in
the U.S.

	2009	2012
Total Completed Responses	1,284	694
Response Rate	1.5%	.35%

- Online blind survey conducted by MMS Education with the MCH K-12 Educator Database.
- The survey was deployed in September 2012, to 200,000 randomly selected educators, including principals, teachers, and librarians.
- Some inherent technology bias since study was conducted only with educators with email addresses.
- Variance in response rates between 2009 and 2012 could be attributed to several factors -- an incentive was offered in 2009, and the survey was fielded for a longer period of time.

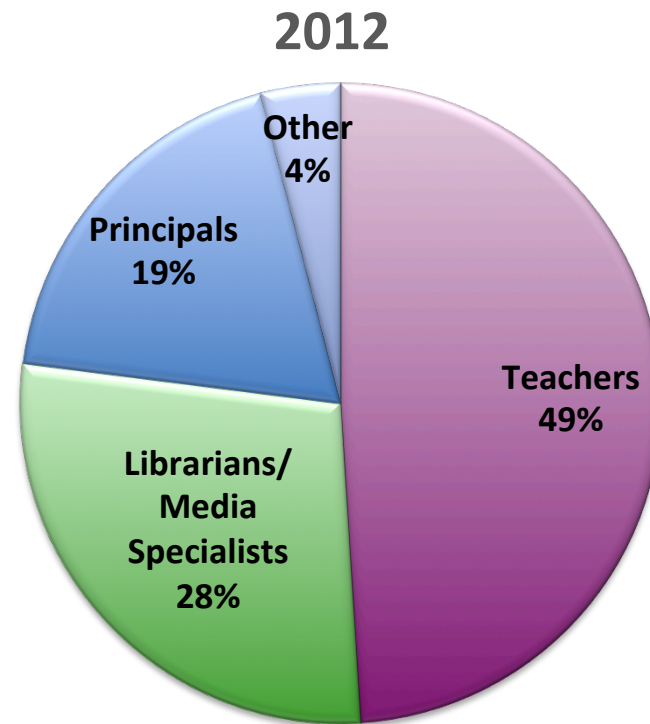
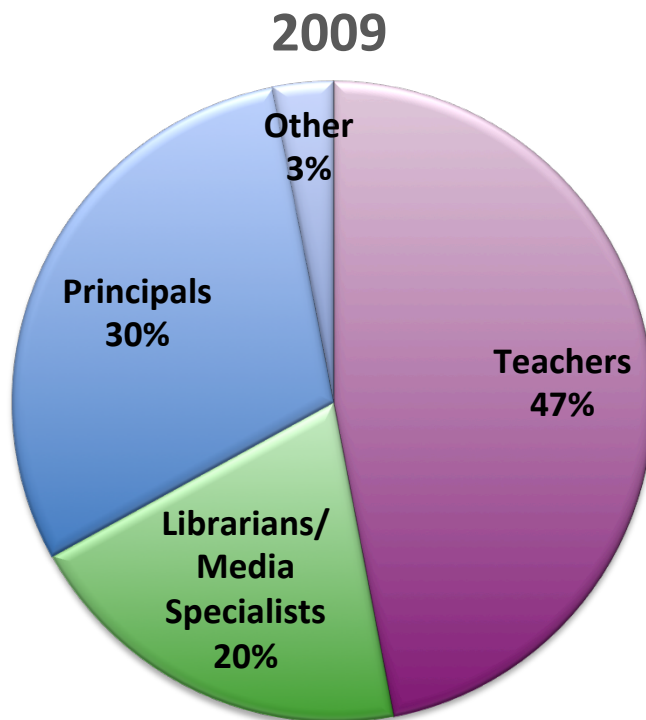


Survey Participants



Who participated in the survey? Principals, Teachers, Librarians

Similar and consistent participation across job titles in both surveys.



Summary of Findings



**Educator
membership in
social networks
has grown
by 34%
since 2009**

Educator Participation in Social Networks

- More educators have joined social networks since 2009 – membership by educators in social networks has increased from 61% to 82% – 34% growth.
- Participation has grown in all job categories – teachers, principals, and librarians; librarians have the highest participation at 89%.
- Educators are joining general social networks and education-focused sites, but continue to have concerns about privacy and professionalism for the general social sites.



Summary of Findings



Sites with growth
since 2009
include
LinkedIn,
edWeb.net, and
Classroom 2.0

General vs. Education Social Networking Sites

- 85% of educators who are members of at least one social network have joined Facebook – the same percentage as in 2009. 68% of all educators surveyed are members of Facebook.
- Facebook remains the #1 social network educators join, but other sites show an increase in membership during the same three-year period, specifically LinkedIn, edWeb.net, and Classroom 2.0. Twitter, Google+, and Edmodo also show significant memberships among educators, but they were not included in the 2009 survey, so comparative usage is not indicated here.
- 80% of educators who are members of social networks keep their personal and professional accounts separate most of the time, and this holds true for both younger and older educators.
- Educators continue to have very serious concerns about privacy and professionalism with regard to social networks, and many are concerned that an inappropriate posting could jeopardize their job.
- In spite of concerns, educators report that they find value in social networks for connecting with family and friends, collaborating with colleagues, finding resources, and extending their personal learning networks.



Summary of Findings



Discovery
Education
Network
has the highest
membership of
those surveyed

Proprietary Online Communities

- Educators are joining a wide range of online communities, sponsored by education product or service providers and non-profits. These proprietary communities add to the many opportunities that exist for educators to connect with other educators to expand their knowledge and access to resources.
- 52% of educators who are members of at least one of the online communities listed reported that they are members of the Discovery Education Network. This is more than the number of educators who say they have joined LinkedIn or any of the education-focused social networks.
- It appears that membership in online communities is highest in companies and organizations with a well-known and well-established national brand.



Summary of Findings



Webinars are the
#1 tool used by
educators for
professional
purposes

Educators' Use of Web 2.0 Tools

- Social networks are just one of the Web 2.0 tools educators are using to connect with each other and in the classroom. These tools include blogs; wikis; webinars; document, photo and video sharing; and more.
- Webinars rank #1 as the tool most used by educators for professional purposes, while document sharing is the tool most used in the classroom.
- There are significant differences in the way Web 2.0 tools are being used for personal, professional, and classroom purpose.
- Overall, educators report that Web 2.0 tools are used more for professional collaboration than for instructional purposes in the classroom.





New data for 2012

Devices, Connectivity, Access Policies, BYOD

- 38% of educators who are members of social networks report that they use smart phones on a frequent basis to access social networking sites.
- In terms of access to Web 2.0 tools, 23% of respondents said their school/district's policy was restrictive for teachers, and 47% reported that it was restrictive for students.
- 30% of educators described their Internet access as excellent, 45% said it was good, and 4% said it was poor. Many comments expressed frustration about Internet limitations.
- 54% of all respondents reported that their districts allow students to bring their own devices to school, but most of these (49%) have restrictions.



General vs. Education Social Networking Sites

- The first set of questions explored educator participation in general social networking sites and in a growing number of education-focused social networks.
- Facebook is the #1 social networking site educators join, consistent with 2009. Other sites that have shown significant growth and also were surveyed in 2009 include LinkedIn, edWeb.net, and Classroom 2.0. Twitter, Google+ , Edmodo, and ASCD Edge also report high membership by educators, but they were not listed on the 2009 survey, so growth cannot be reported.
- Educators report that their concerns about joining a social network are much higher for general social sites than for education-focused sites.
- Educators who are members of social networks indicate a strong desire to keep their personal and professional networking separate.
- Education-focused sites show a much higher frequency of use than the general social sites.



Educator Participation in Social Networks

Are you currently a member of, or have you ever joined, a social networking website for personal, educational, or professional reasons?

% who indicated that they are a member of or have ever joined a social networking site



Educator Participation in Social Networks – Key Findings



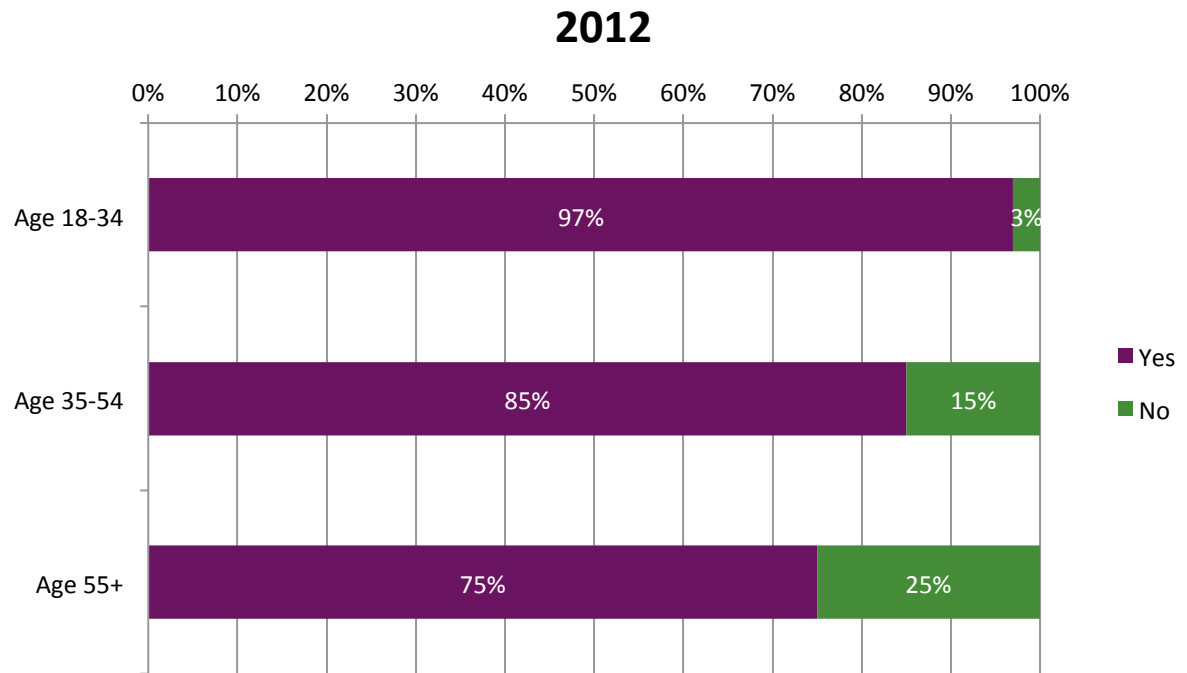
Educator
membership in
social networks
has grown
among
principals,
librarians and
teachers

- Educator membership in social networks has increased from 61% to 82% — 34% growth from 2009 to 2012
- 82% of educators who responded say they are a member of a social networking website.
- Membership has grown significantly for all job categories – principals, teachers, and librarians.
- Librarians show the highest level of participation, as in 2009, with 89% reporting they have joined a social network.



Educator Participation in Social Networks – Key Findings

Age and years in the profession appear to be the biggest differentiators in social networking

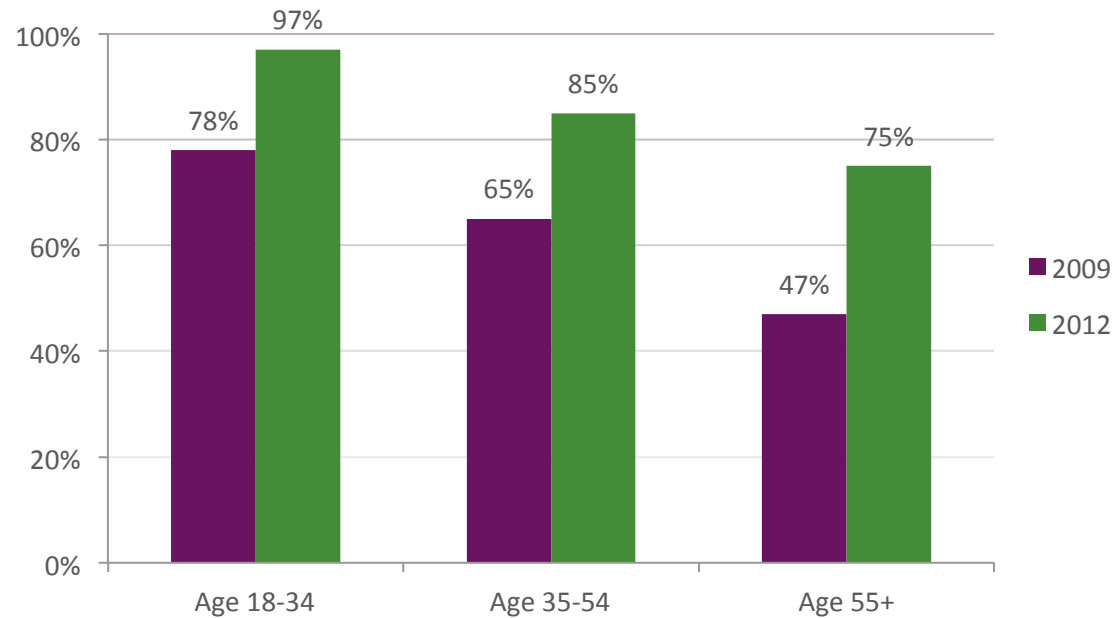


- Membership in social networks is clearly influenced by age. Membership is highest for younger educators and drops systematically from 97% for 18-34 year olds to 75% for those over 55 years.
- Not surprising, the data shows the same trend line for membership when compared to number of years in teaching; membership in social networks for first-year teachers is at 100% compared to 69% for educators with 31 or more years of teaching.



Educator Participation in Social Networks – Key Findings

There has been a significant increase in the number of older educators who have joined social networks since 2009 – jumping from 47% to 75% for those over the age of 55

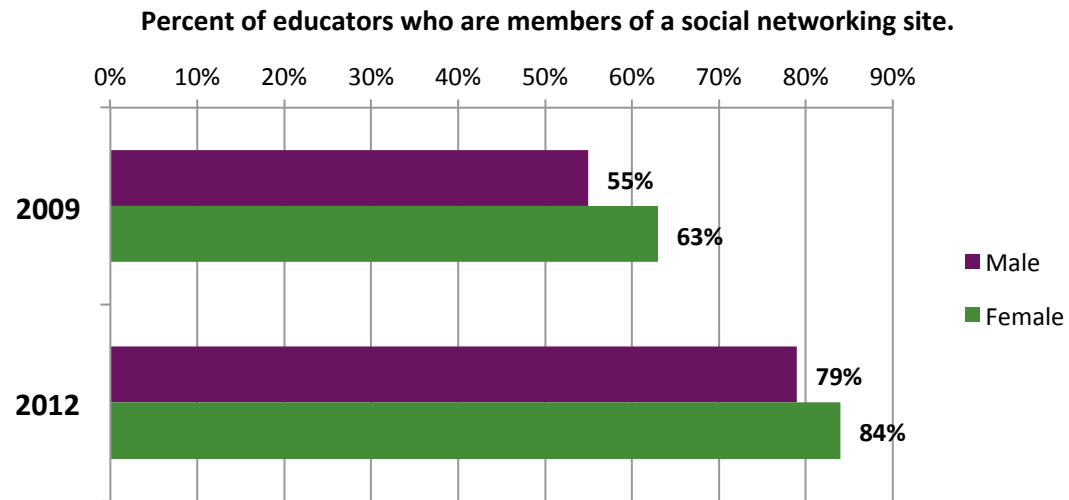


- Although age appears to influence membership in social networks, educators over the age of 55 are definitely on board with this new technology.
- This is positive news for champions of social networks in education since veteran educators tend to have more authority in decision making and overall influence in educational institutions.



Educator Participation in Social Networks – Key Findings

Female educators are slightly more likely to be members of a social network — membership has increased across both genders since 2009



- 84% of women are members of a social network vs. 79% of men. This shows significant growth from 2009 when 63% of women and 55% of men were members of social networks.
- There was no significant difference in participation in social networking by grade level.
- There is very little difference in participation in social networking by metro status (urban, rural, suburban). Suburban districts were further ahead in 2009.



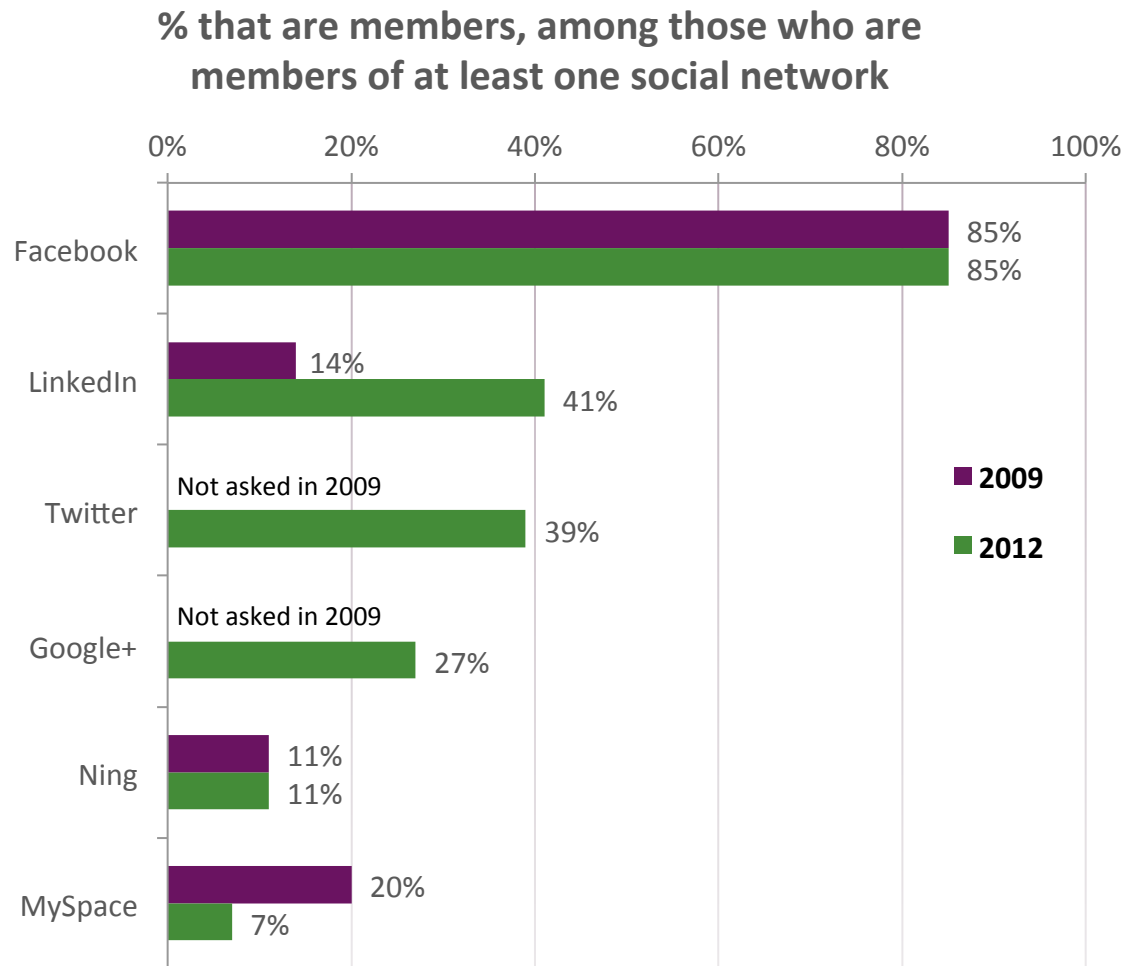
General Social Networking Websites

*Are you a member of any of the following **general social networking websites**?*

Compared to
2009,
Facebook
remains the
dominant site,
with significant
growth
reported for
LinkedIn

Educators very
active in
Twitter and
Google+

*Pinterest was
written in by many
respondents*



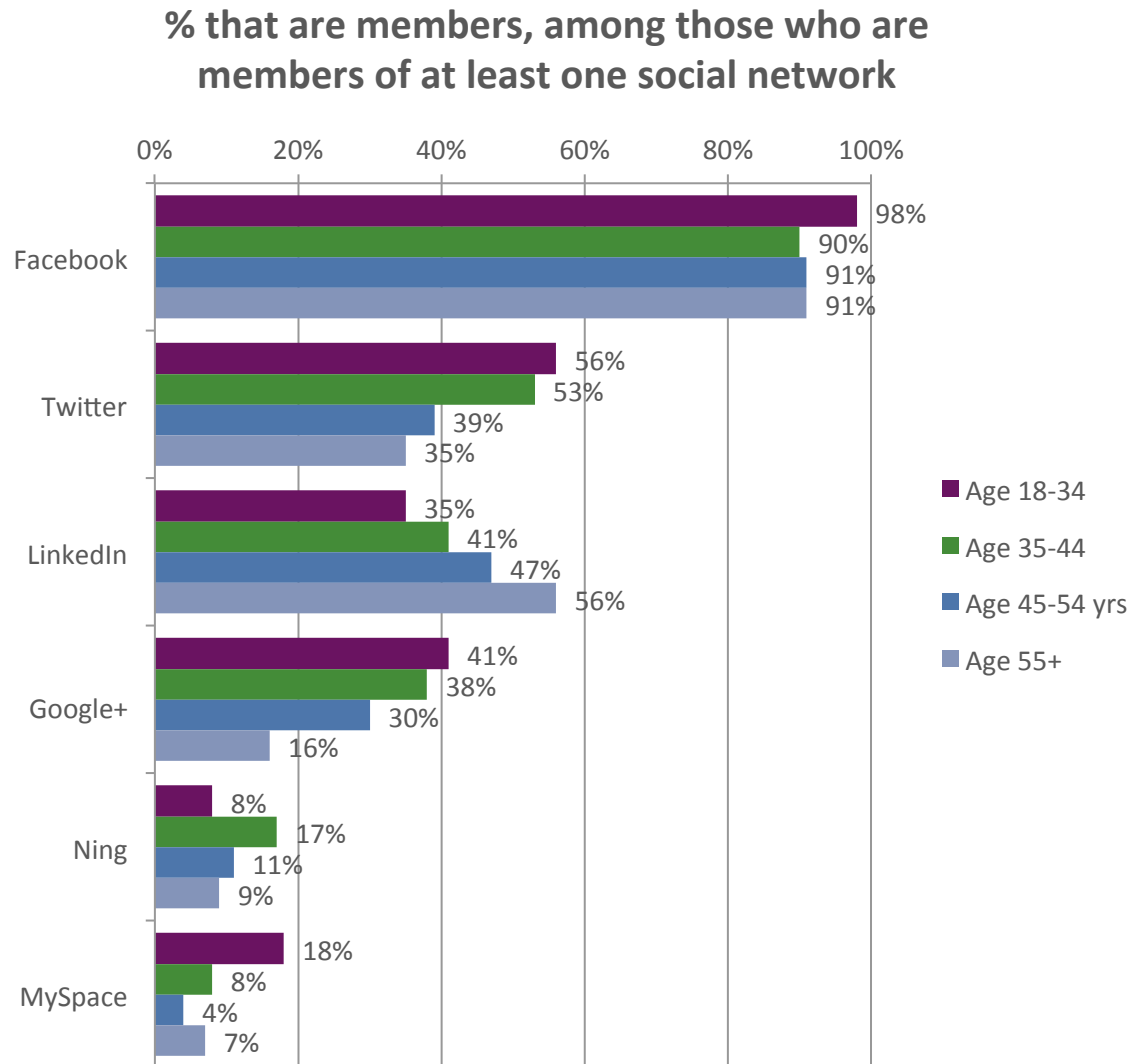
Among those who indicated that they have joined a social networking site, the % who indicated that they are a member of these social networking sites. The communities listed above are those that received a 5% or greater mention from the survey respondents.



General Social Networking Websites – Differences by Age

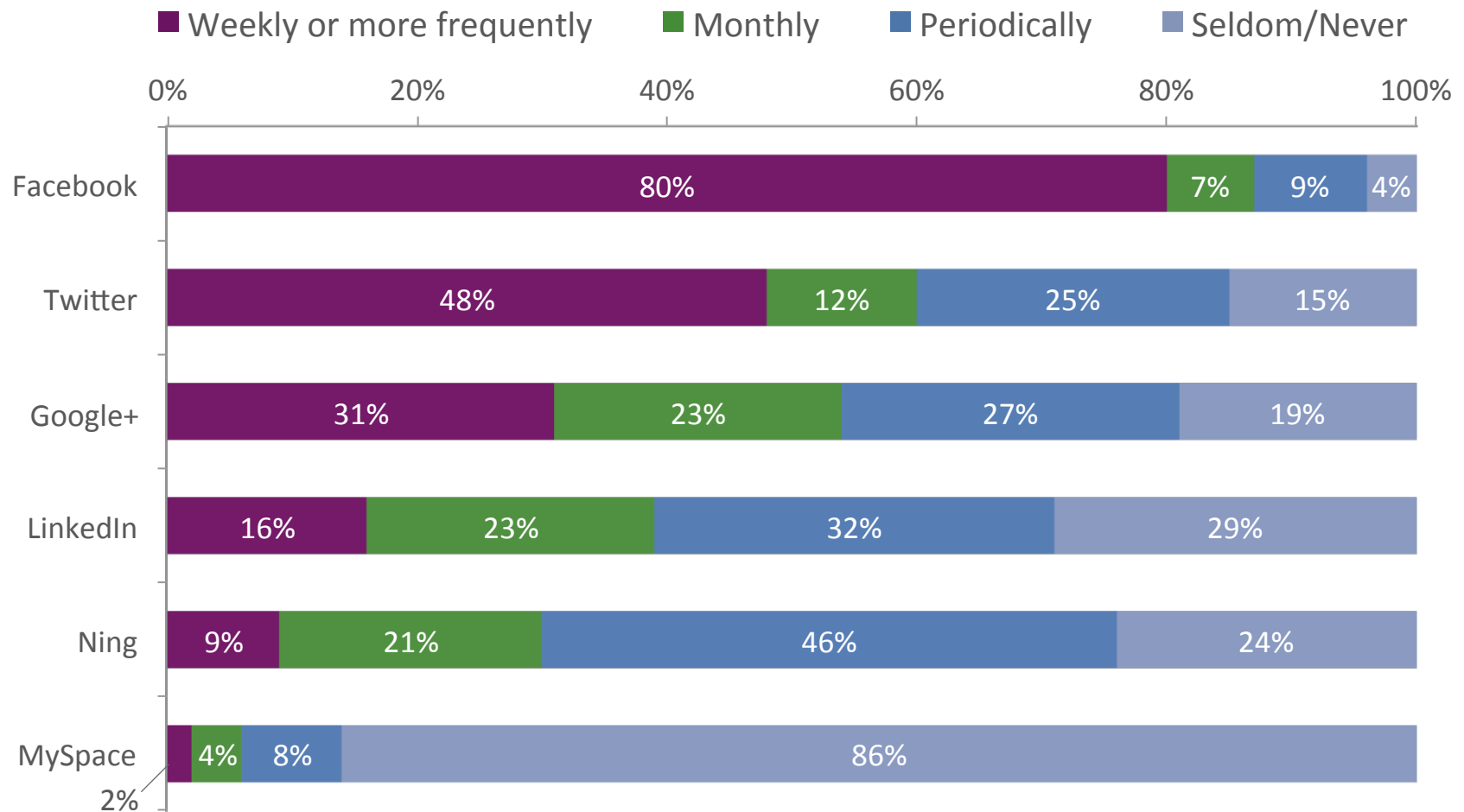
Younger educators are more likely to be members of Twitter and Google+; older educators members of Linked In

Age does **not** appear to be a significant differentiating factor for Facebook



General Social Networking Websites – Frequency of Use

Please indicate how frequently you visit the sites of which you are a member.

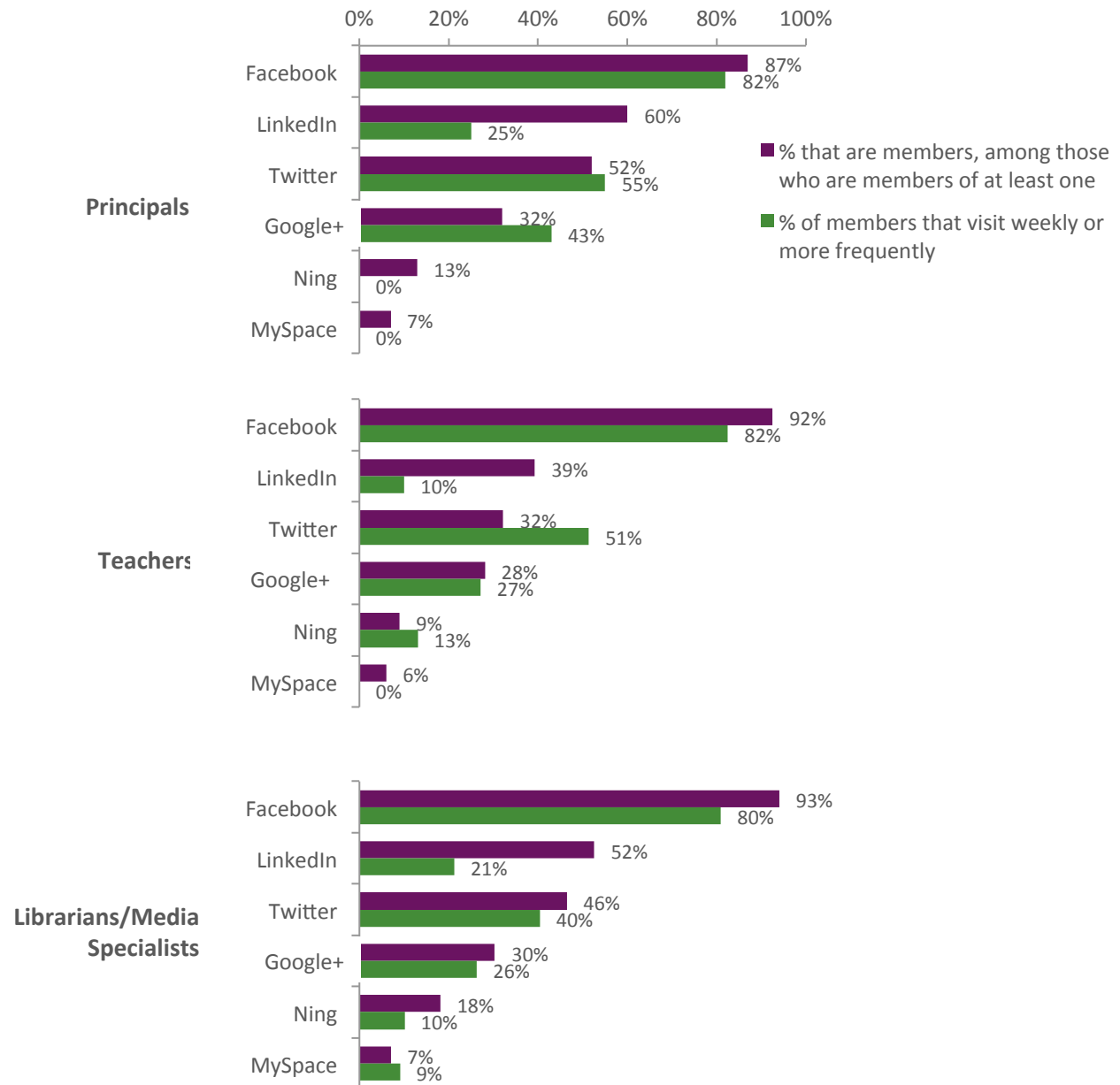


Note: Small sample sizes for Ning and MySpace



General Social Networking Websites – Frequency of Use by Job Function

Facebook has the highest level of frequency use by all job categories, followed by Twitter and Google+

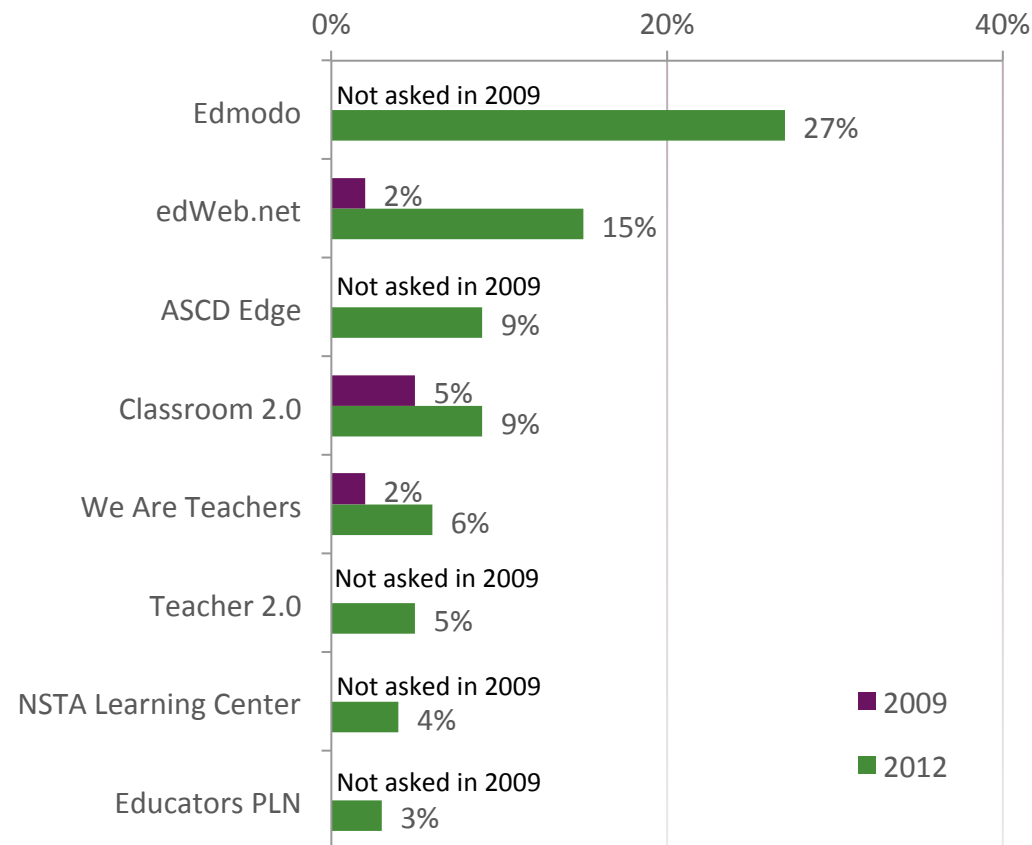


Education-Focused Social Networks

Are you currently a member of any of the following social networking sites that focus specifically on education?

Several education-focused social networks show significant growth compared to 2009 – and several new sites added to the list since then

% that are members, among those who are members of at least one social network

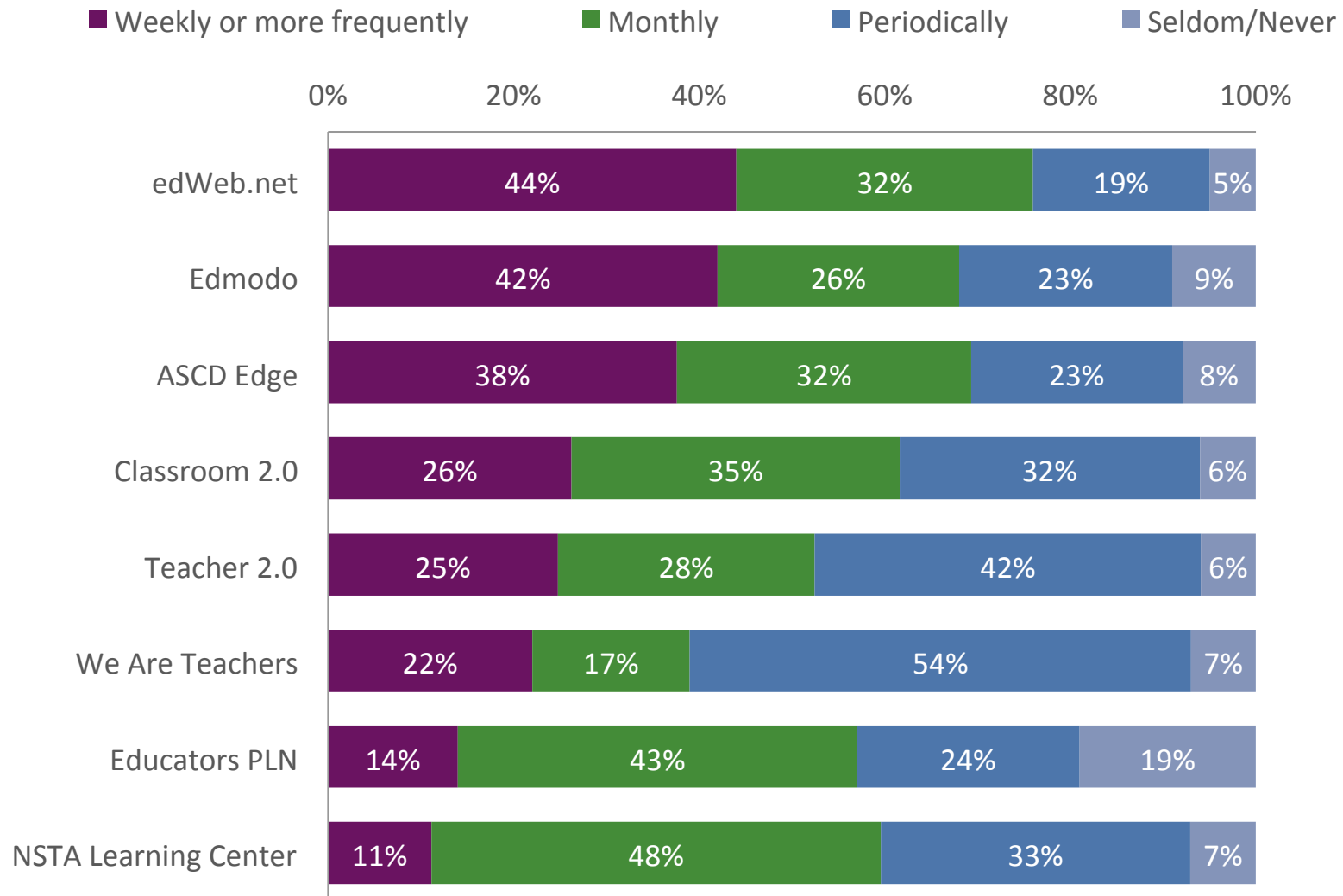


The communities listed above are those that received a 2% or greater mention from the survey respondents.



Education-Focused Social Networks – Frequency of Use

Please indicate how frequently you visit the sites of which you are a member.

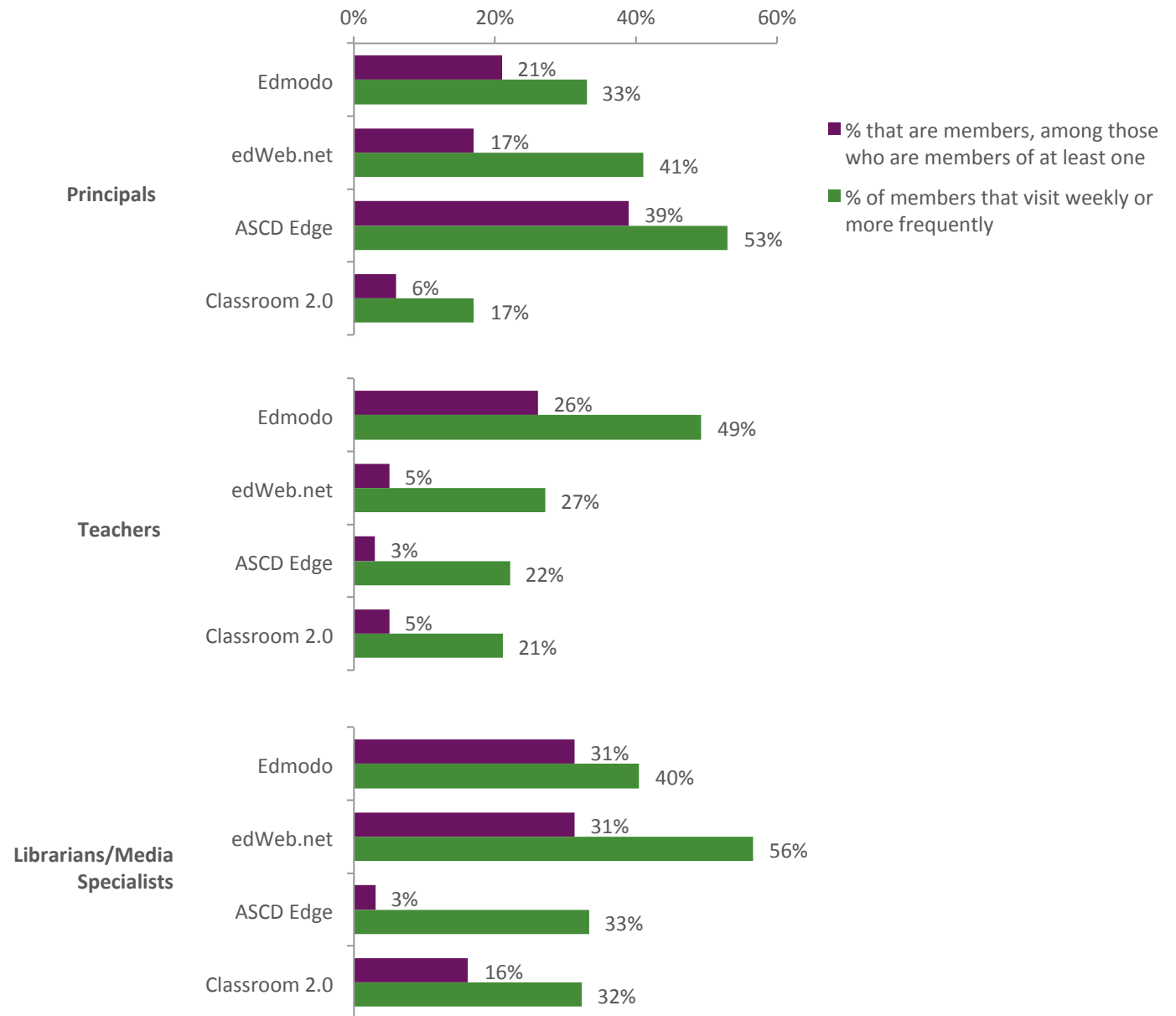


Note: Small sample size for ASCD, Classroom 2.0, Teacher 2.0, We Are Teachers, Educators PLN and NSTA Learning Center.



Education-Focused Social Networks – Frequency of Use by Job Function

Members of education-focused sites report high frequency of use across all job functions

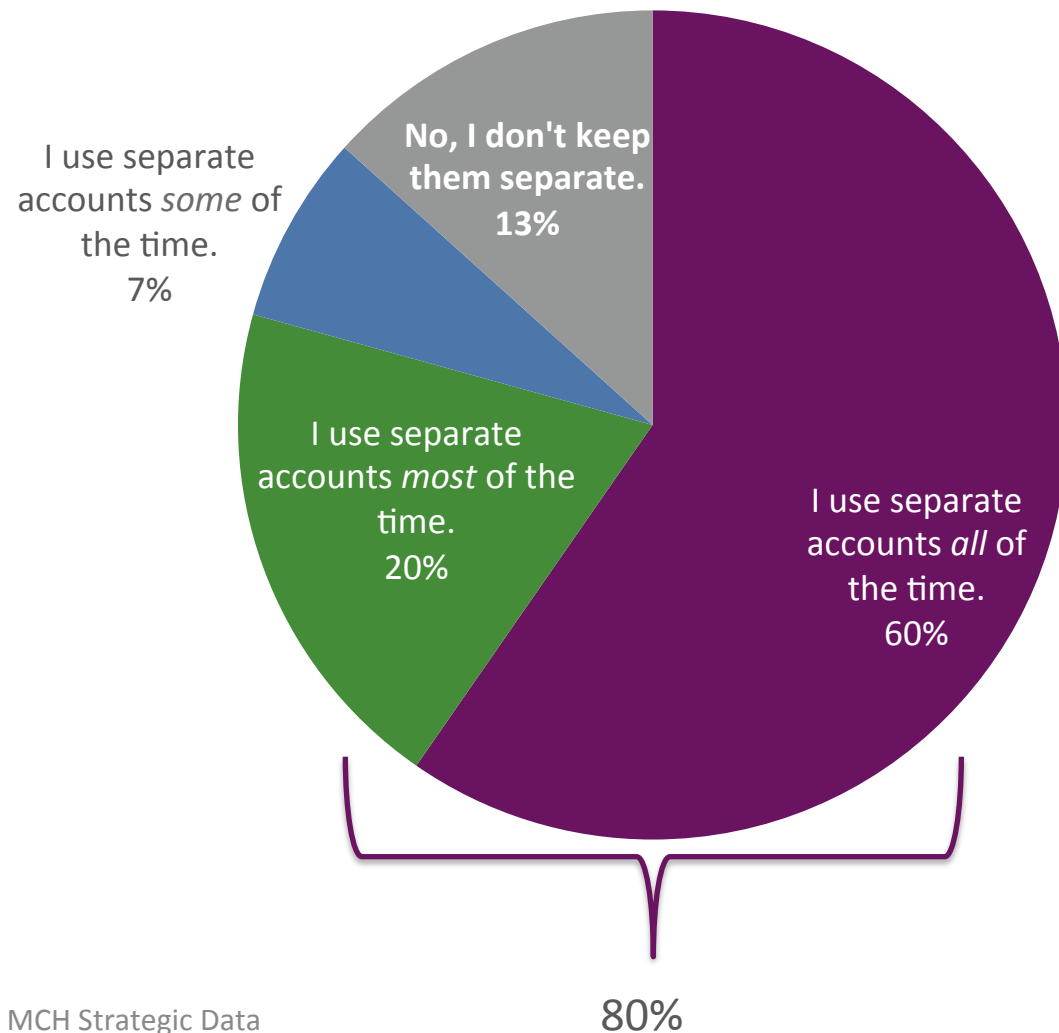


Separating Personal and Professional Accounts

Do you use separate social networking accounts for your personal vs. professional activities?

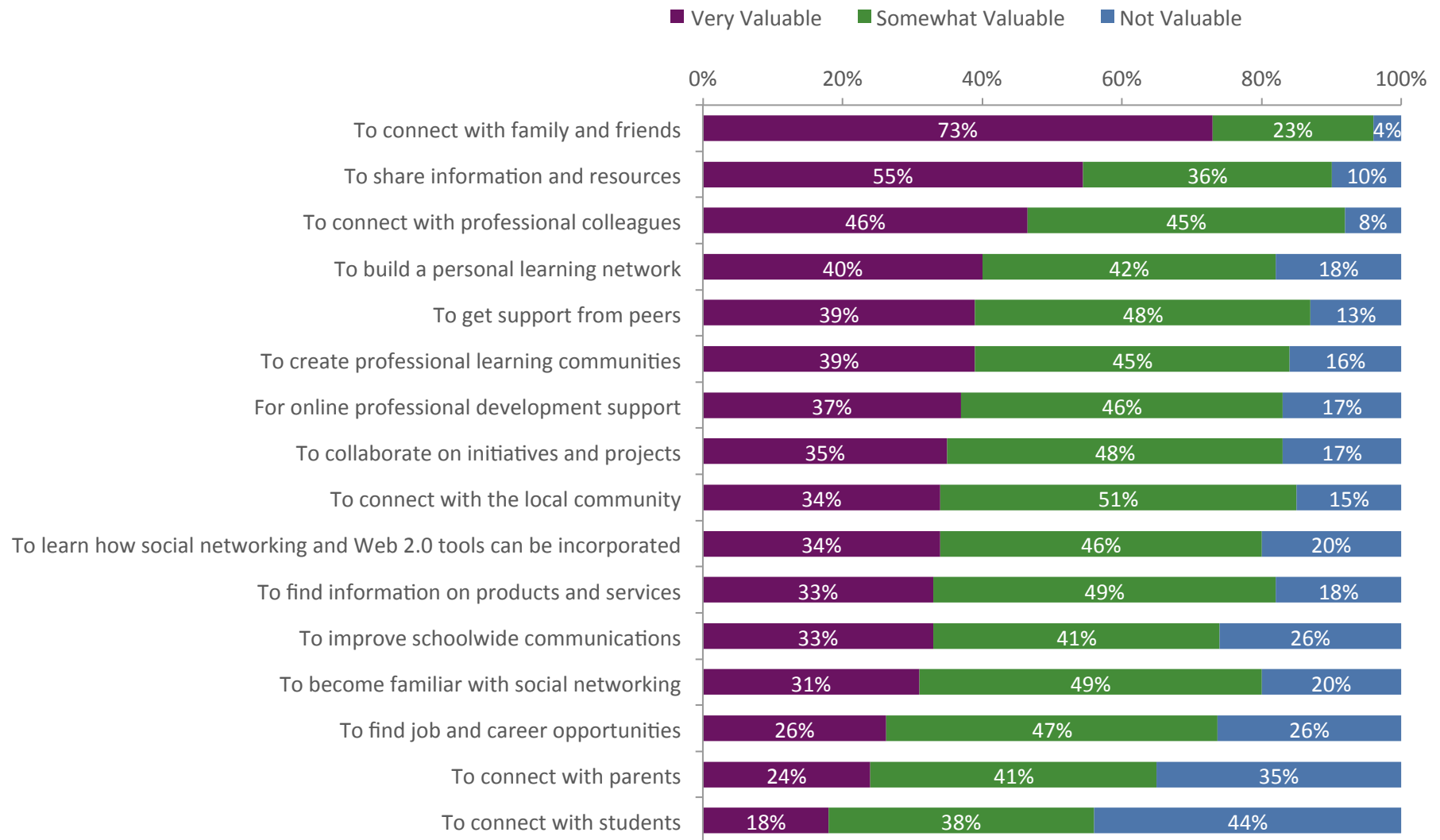
80% of educators who are members of at least one social network keep separate accounts all or most of the time

Very little difference by age, gender, or job title

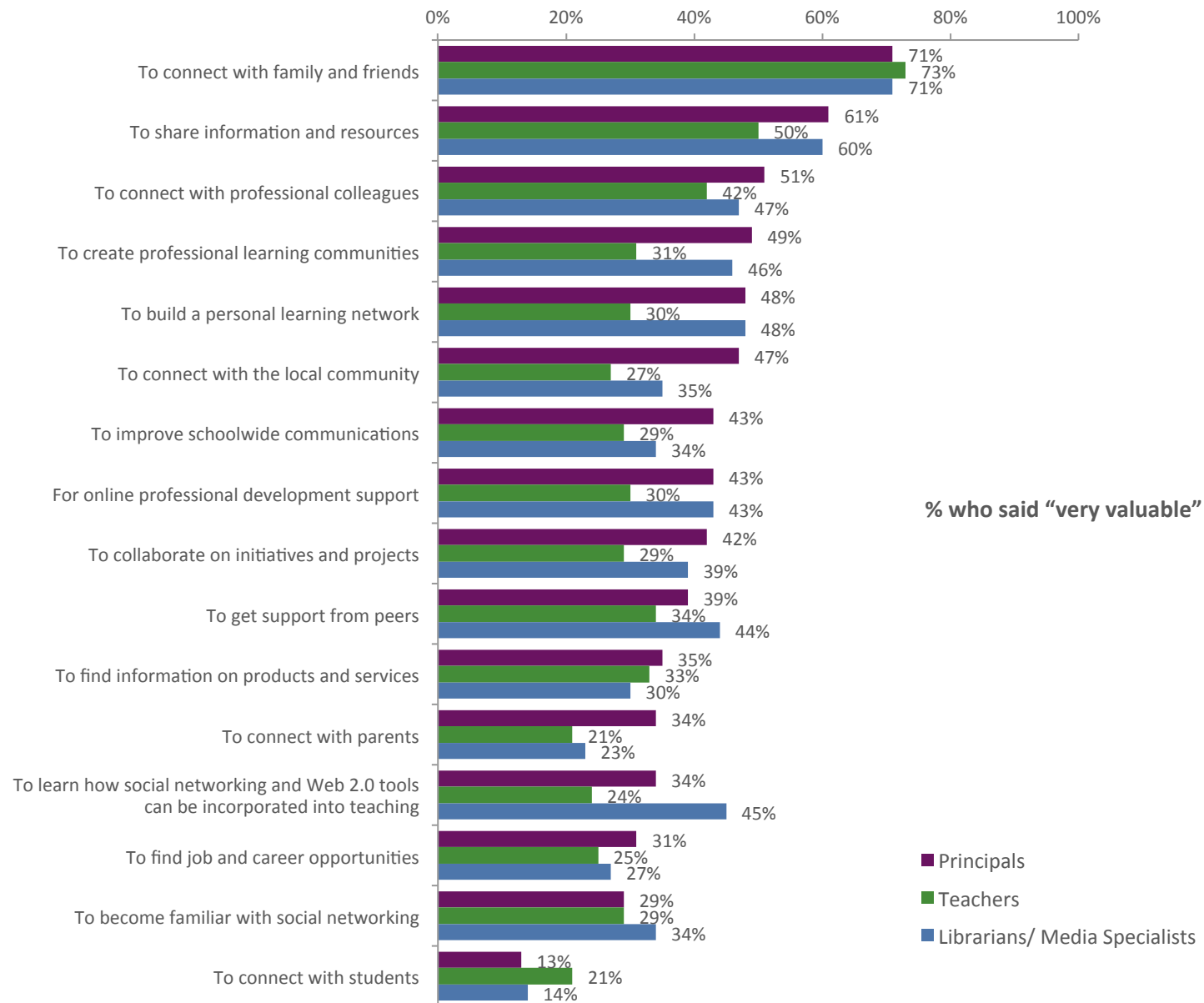


The Value of Using Social Networks

Please indicate the value in using social networks for the following purposes:



The Value of Using Social Networks – By Job Function



The Value of Using Social Networks

Beyond friends
and family...
educators believe
social networks are
good for sharing
information and
resources,
connecting with
colleagues, and
building a personal
learning network



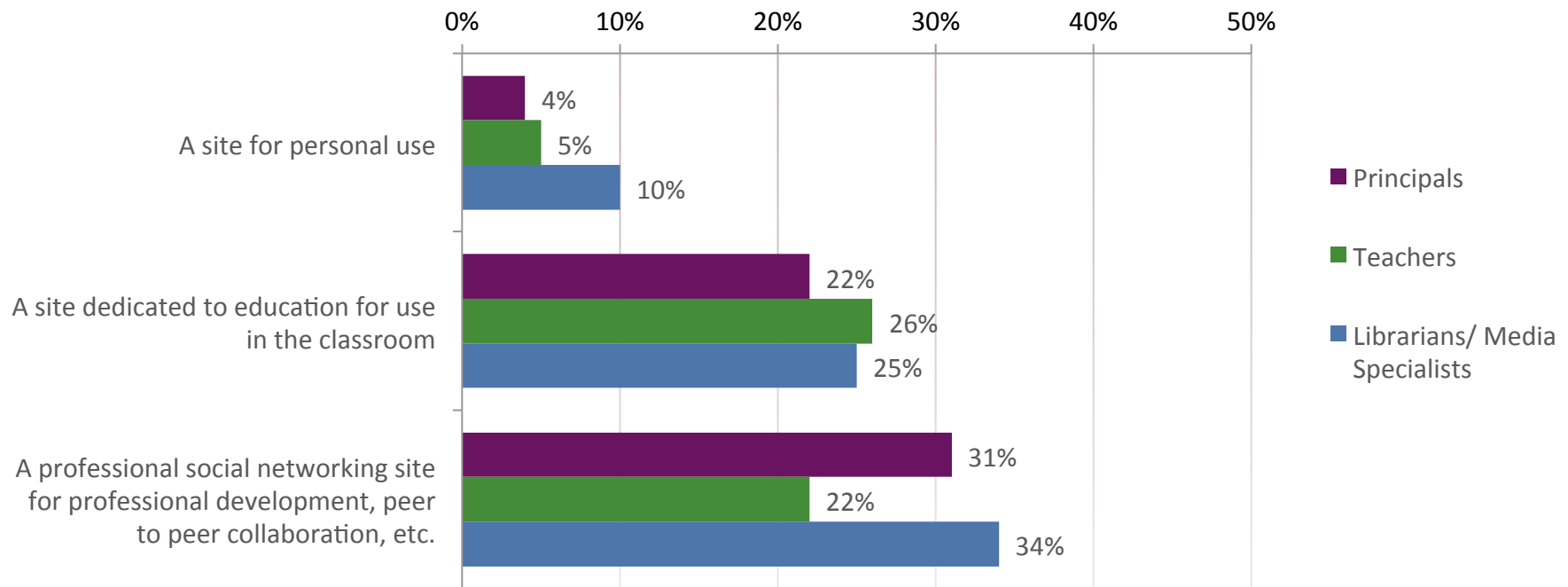
- While many believe that social networks are great for connecting with family and friends, the results show that educators value the many ways they can use social networks in education.
- Principals and librarians/media specialists had similar responses, and they find social networks to be more valuable than do teachers for several purposes, including:
 - Online professional development support
 - Building a personal learning network
 - Creating professional learning communities
 - Collaborating on initiatives and projects
 - Improving school-wide communications
 - Connecting with the local community
- Teachers, on the other hand, find social networks more valuable for connecting with students than do principals and librarians/media specialists, but reported that one of their concerns about social networking was the possibility of inappropriate relationships with students online that could jeopardize their jobs.



Joining an Additional Social Network

How likely are you to join a new or additional social networking site in the next 12 months?

% who said they were very likely to join a new or additional social networking site in the next 12 months

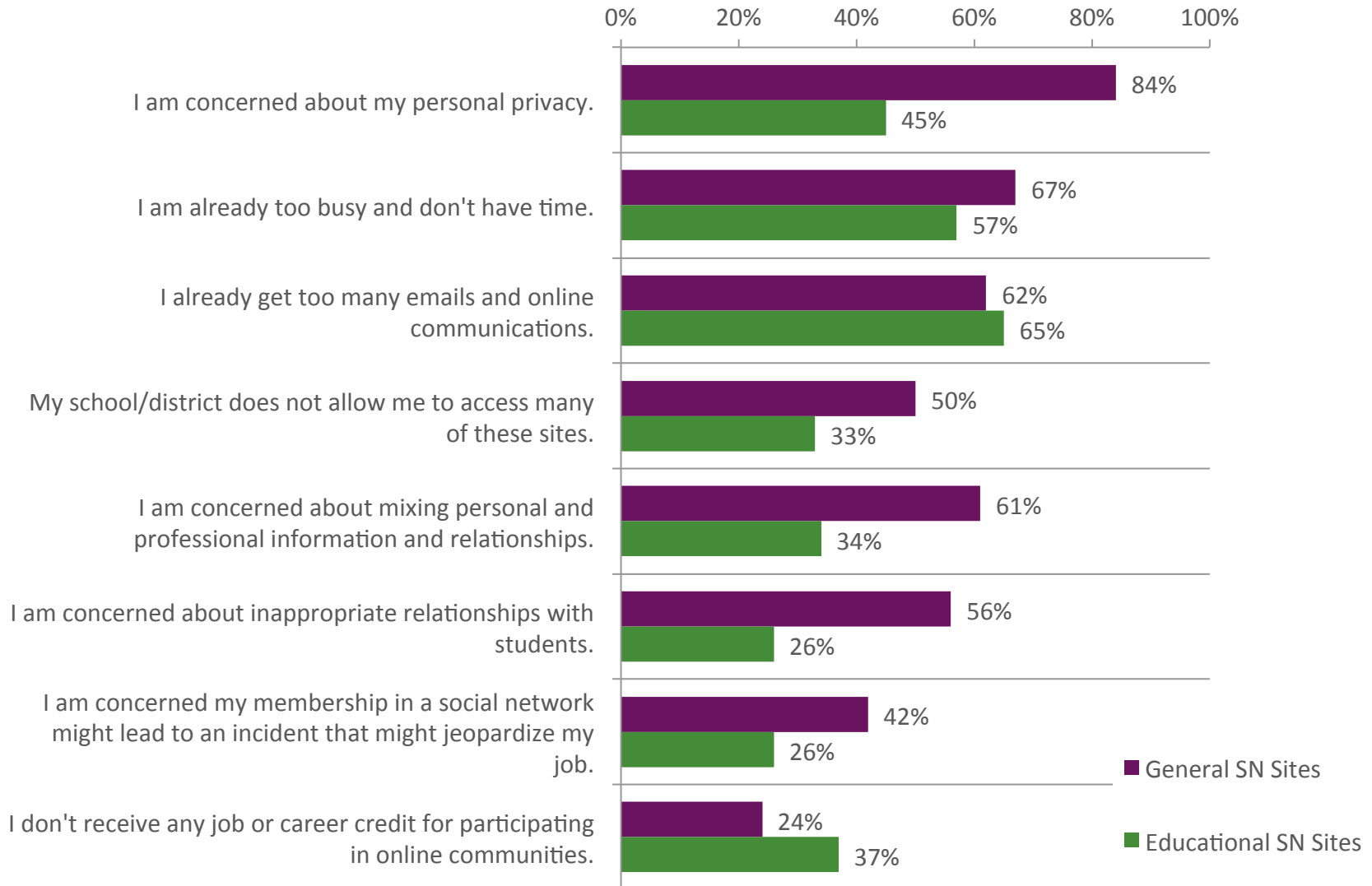


- It appears that the greatest opportunity for future growth among educators in all three job categories is likely to be in educational and professional sites rather than sites for personal use.

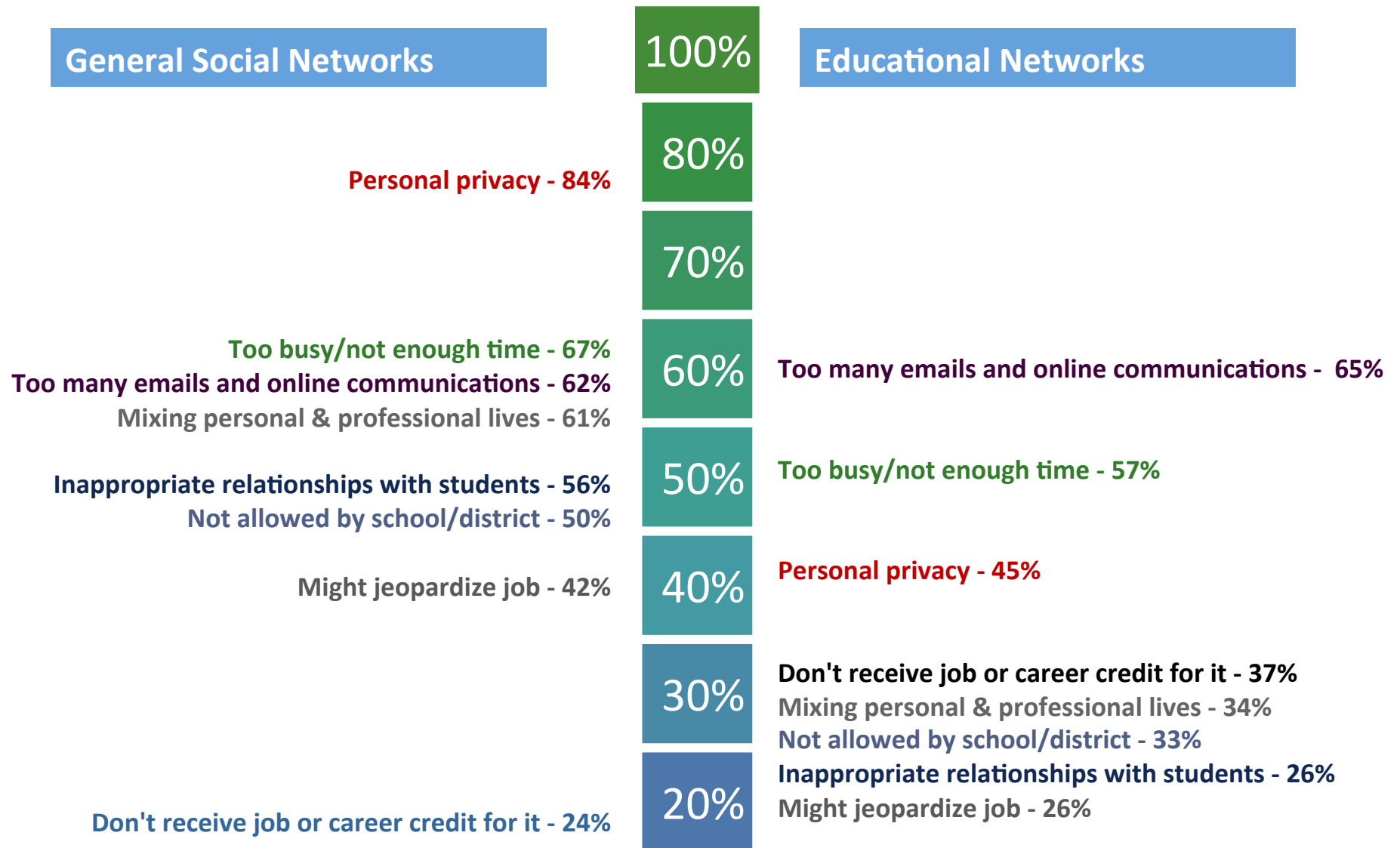


Concerns about Social Networking

Please indicate any concerns you have about joining a social networking site.



Top Concerns – General Sites vs. Educational Sites



Proprietary Online Communities

Many educators
are joining
proprietary
communities
formed by
companies and
organizations



Many companies and organizations are creating their own proprietary “branded” communities for their customers, prospects, and constituents. These may have many social and collaborative features, but are not defined as a social networking site.

Through these communities, companies and organizations provide forums, discussion groups, articles, information, and news about topics of interest to their members and/or professional development.

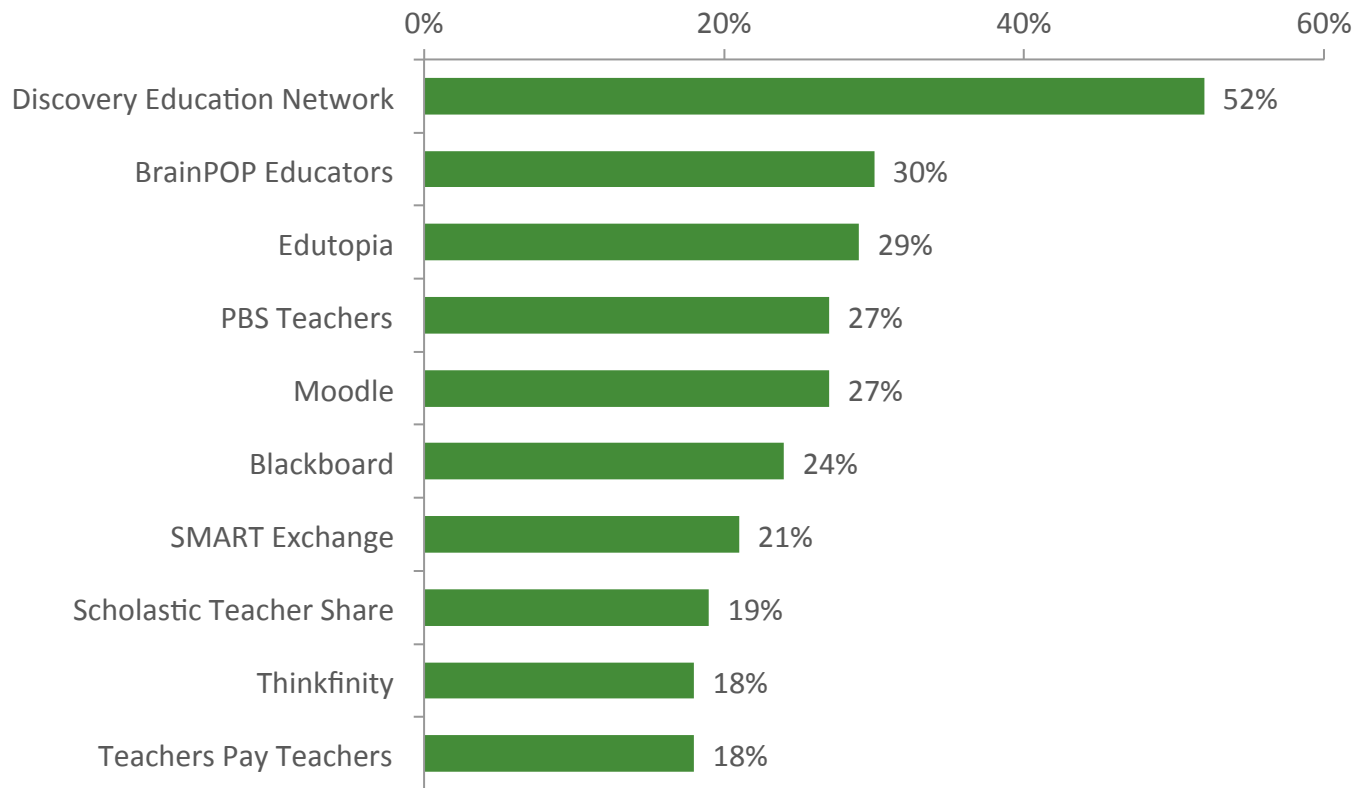
We added a question this year to see how many educators are joining these proprietary communities. Results imply that membership in online communities is highest in companies and organizations with a well-known and well-established brand.



Proprietary Online Communities

Are you currently a member of any of the following online communities or platforms that focus on education?

% that are members among those that selected at least one of the communities listed



The communities listed above are those that received a 15% or greater mention from the survey respondents.



Top 5 Communities by Job Function

Rank	Principals	Teachers	Librarians
1	Discovery Education Network – 25%	Discovery Education Network – 37%	Discovery Education Network – 49%
2	Edutopia – 25%	BrainPOP Educators – 17%	Edutopia – 31%
3	Moodle – 24%	SMART Exchange – 19%	PBS Teachers – 30%
4	Blackboard – 22%	Moodle – 19%	Thinkfinity – 25%
5	BrainPOP Educators – 17%	Teachers Pay Teachers – 18%	BrainPOP Educators – 24%

Discovery Education Network and BrainPOP Educators
are in the top 5 for all job categories



Educators' Use of Web 2.0 Tools

Popularity of
Web 2.0 Tools
varies depending
on the context



We asked educators about a wide range of Web 2.0 tools to understand how they are using them personally, professionally, and in the classroom. The popularity of these tools varies a great deal depending on the context.

Social networks and photo/video sharing are most popular for personal use. Other than social networks and photo/video sharing, all of the other tools are used primarily for professional use.

From those educators who indicated they are using Web 2.0 tools, the top 4 tools they use are for professional use include:

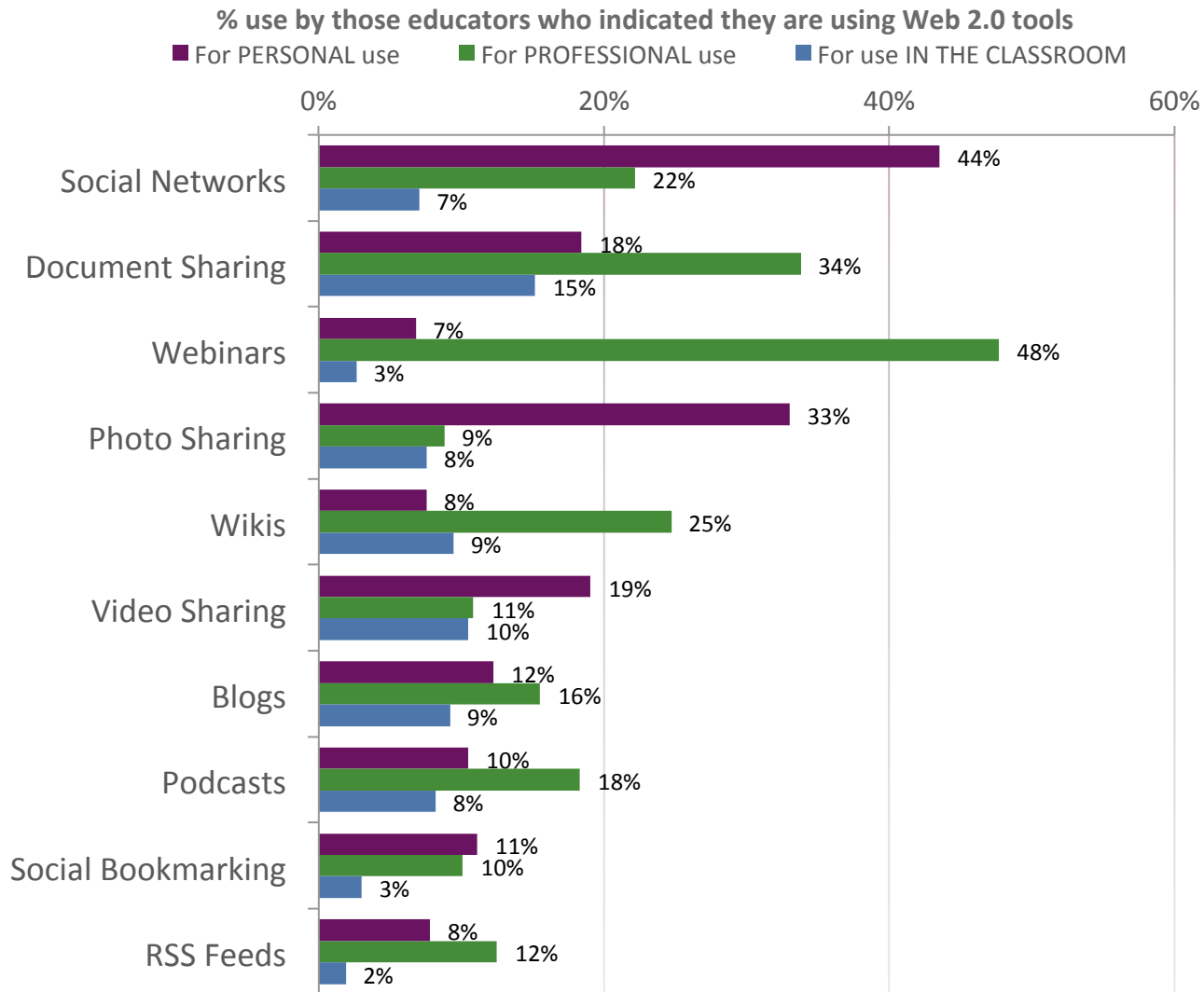
- Webinars (48%)
- Document sharing (34%)
- Wikis (25%)
- Social networks (22%)

It's ironic that Web 2.0 tools are used the least in the classroom with students, who use social media more than any other segment of the population. This led into the next set of questions on access to these tools in school.



Educators' Use of Web 2.0 Tools

Are you currently using any of the following Web 2.0 tools for personal use, professional use, or in the classroom?

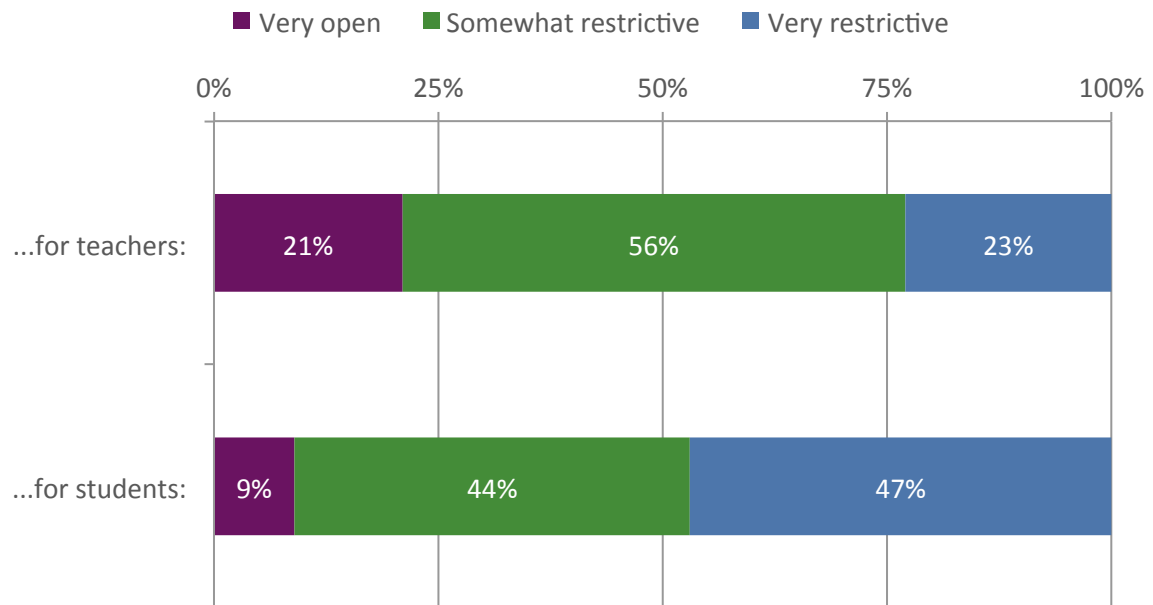


School/District Policies on Access to Web 2.0 Tools

Please characterize your school/district's policy for access to Web 2.0 tools for both teachers and students.

47% of educators say the policy for access to Web 2.0 tools for students is very restrictive

Only 9% say the policy for access is very open for students

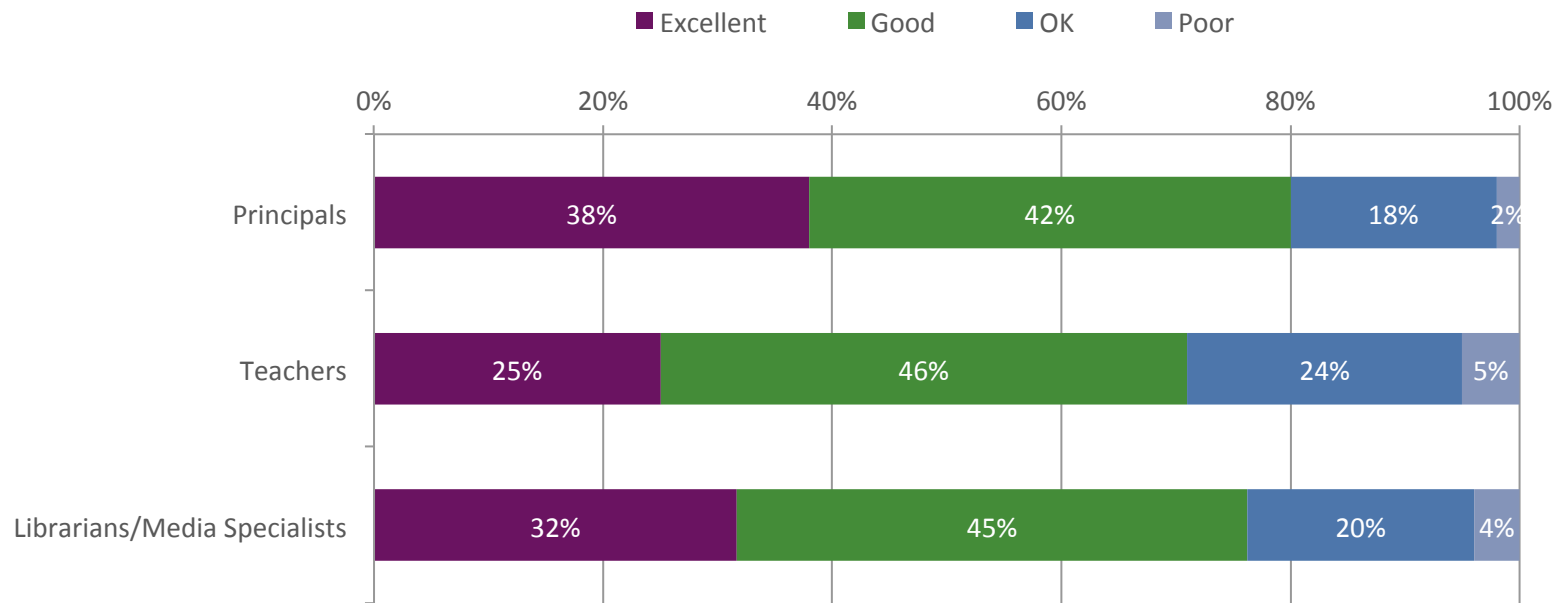


- Policies for teachers are less restrictive than policies for students.
- Teachers view the policies as more restrictive than principals.
- 18-34 year-old educators are less likely than their older peers to describe their school/district's policy for teachers as “very open.”



Quality of Internet Access

How good is the Internet service in your school/district?



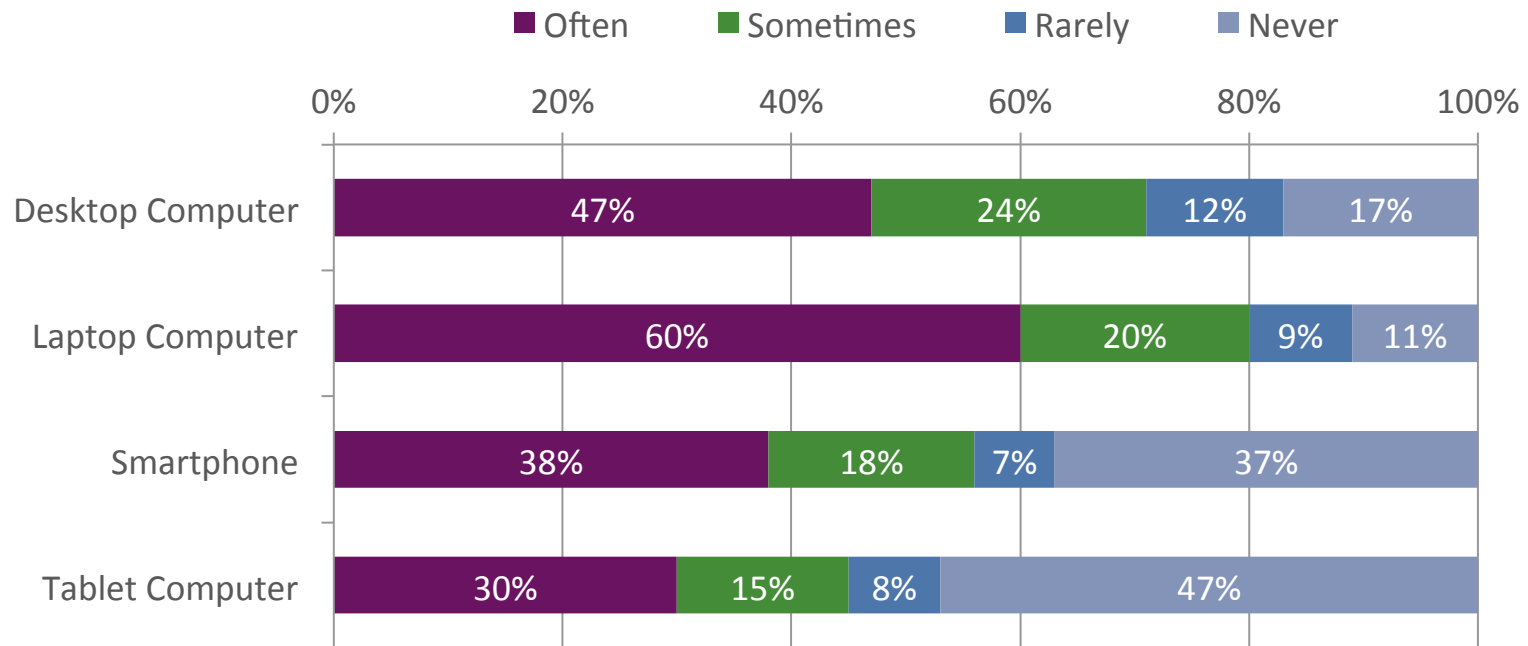
- High percentage of educators rate their Internet service as either excellent or good, with less than 5% rating it as poor.
- These responses are, of course, a measurement of the individual's perception and cannot be construed as referring to the same school or district. It is an overall indicator, and a surprising one, that the majority of educators surveyed feel the quality of their Internet service is good to excellent.
- No significant differences in this data occurred when analyzed by job title, grade level, district size, or even locale.



Devices Used to Access Social Networks

What devices do you use to access the social networking sites you belong to?

(Among those who indicated that they are currently a member of or have ever joined a social networking site.)



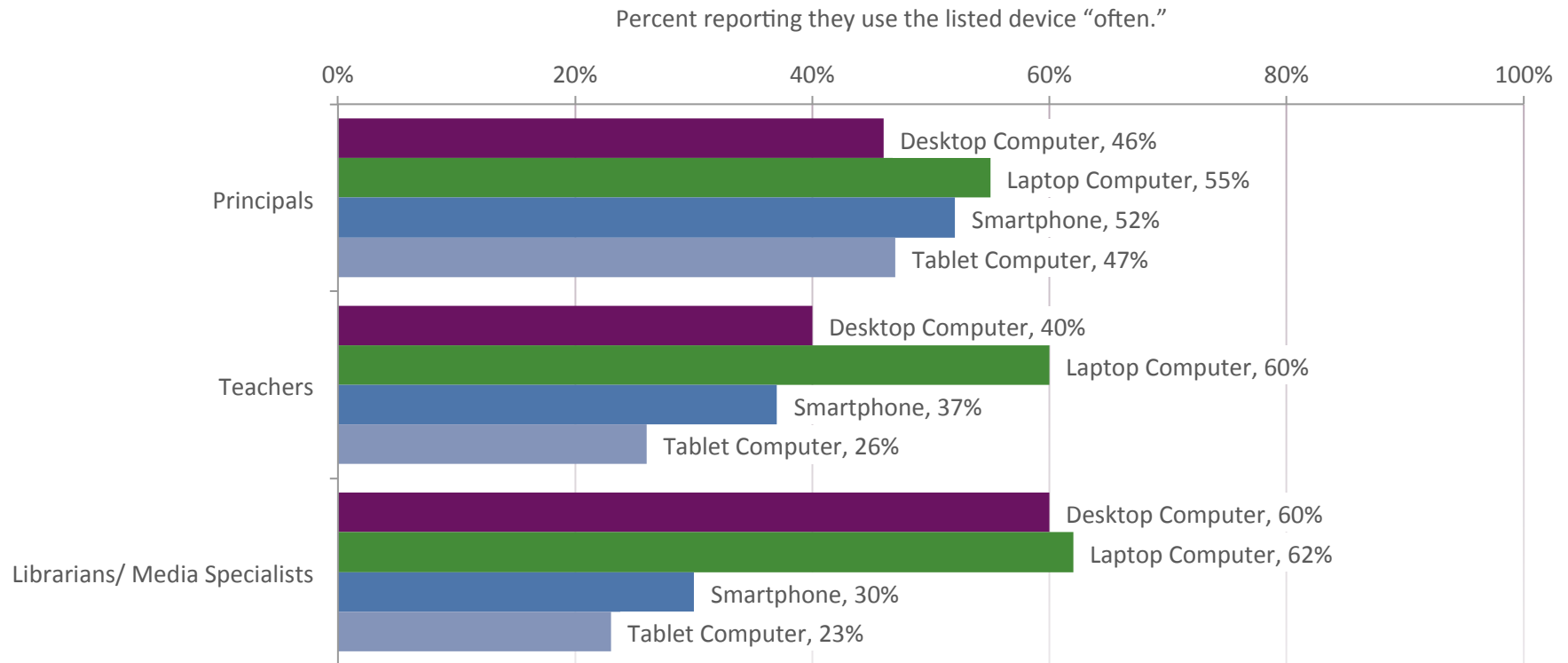
- Educators who are members of social networks report that they most often use a laptop computer to access their social networking sites, followed by their desktop computer.



Devices Used to Access Social Networks – By Job Function

What devices do you use to access the social networking sites you belong to?

(Among those who indicated that they are currently a member of or have ever joined a social networking site.)



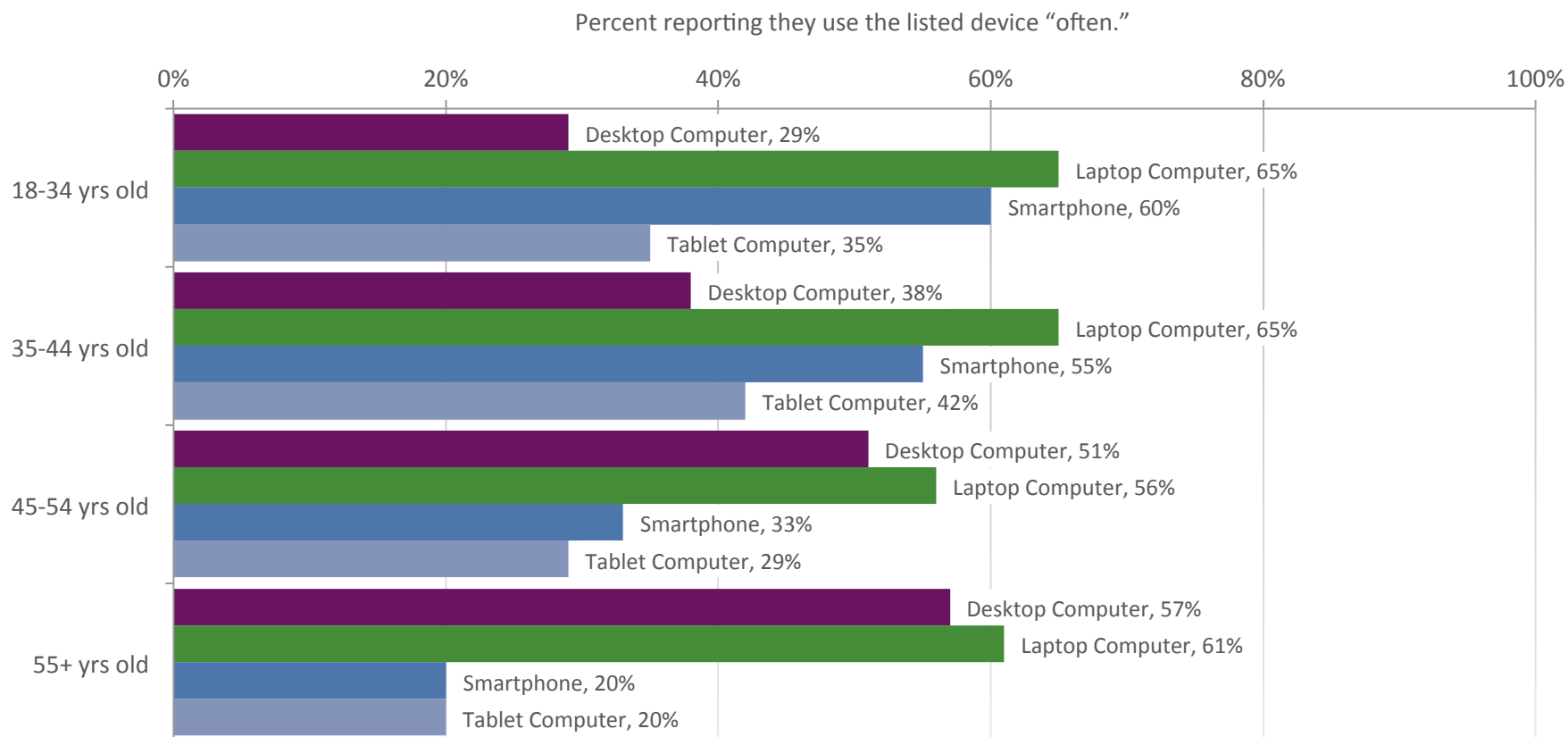
- Librarians report using desktop computers more often than principals and teachers.
- Principals report using smartphones and tablets more often than teachers and librarians.
- Laptops are used at similar rates (55-62% say “often”) among all three groups.
- Principals appear to use all four device types roughly equally, while teachers use laptops more often than other devices, and librarians use desktops and laptops more than smart phones and tablets.



Devices Used to Access Social Networks – By Age

What devices do you use to access the social networking sites you belong to?

(Among those who indicated that they are currently a member of or have ever joined a social networking site.)



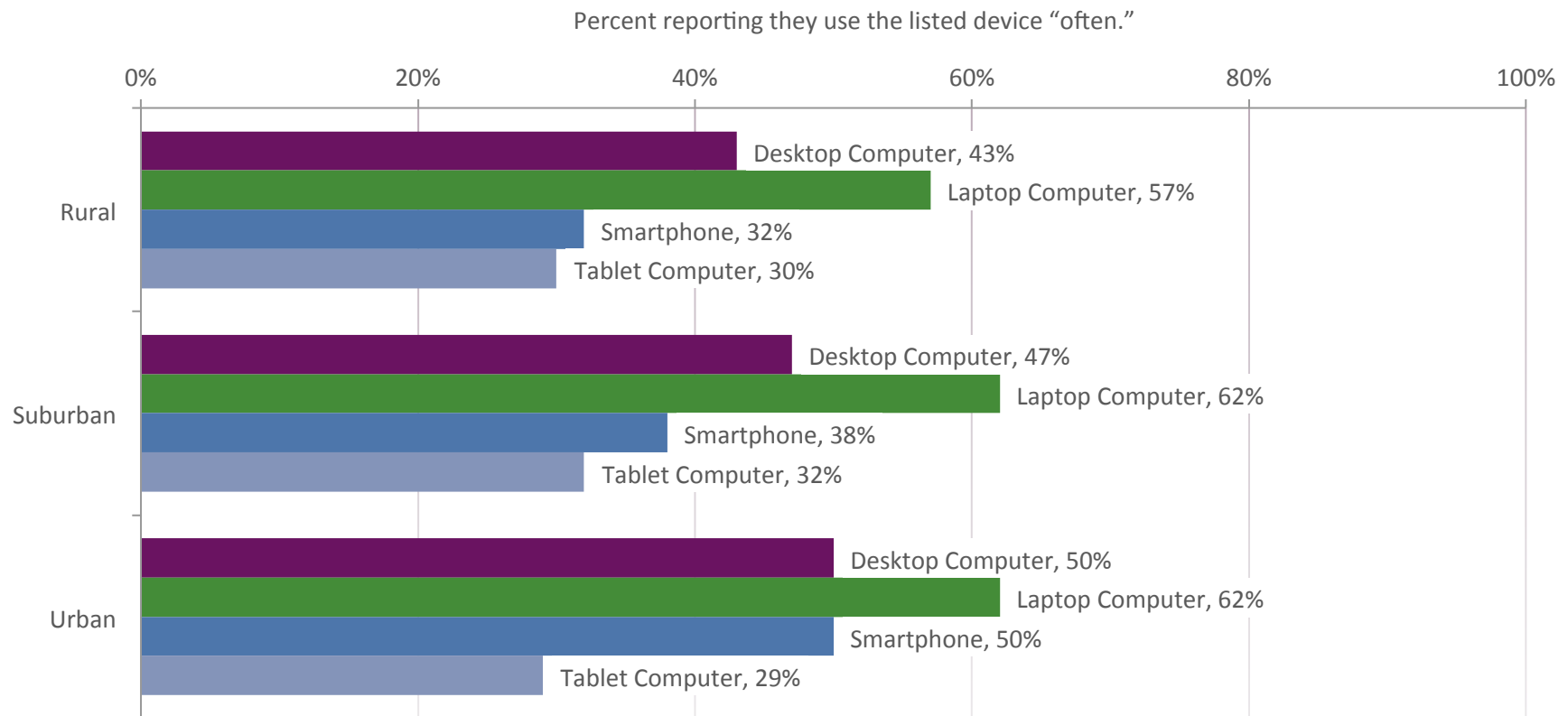
- Older educators are more likely to use desktop computers, while younger educators are more likely to use smartphones and tablets. (The exception to this trend is that 35-44 year-olds appear more likely to use tablets than 18-34 year-olds.)
- Laptops are used at similar rates (56-65% say “often”) among all age groups.



Devices Used to Access Social Networks – By Metro Status

What devices do you use to access the social networking sites you belong to?

(Among those who indicated that they are currently a member of or have ever joined a social networking site.)



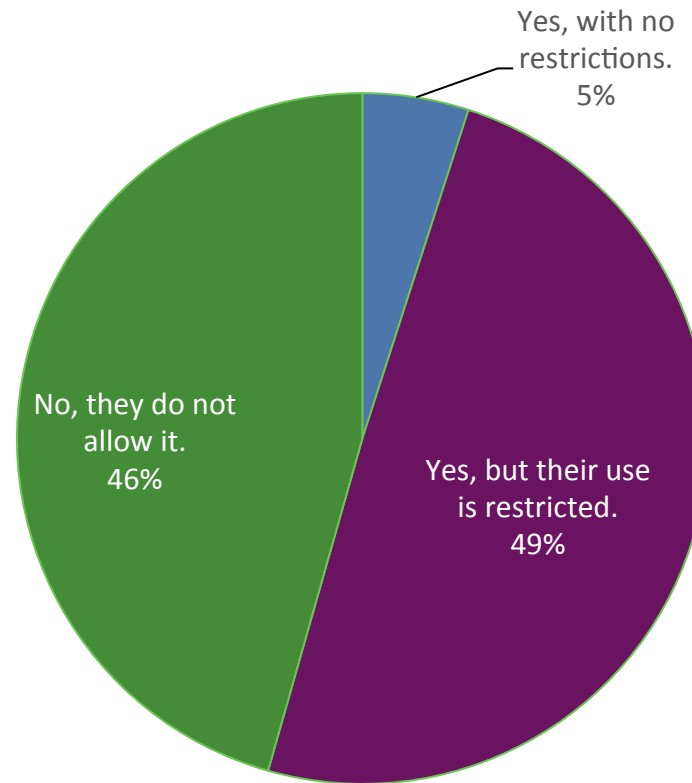
- Smartphone usage appears to be higher in urban communities than in rural or suburban.
- Usage rates of the other devices appears to be similar across all three community types.



Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) Policies

Does your district allow students to bring their own laptops tablets and/or mobile phones for use in the classroom?

It's fairly evenly split between districts that do and don't allow students to bring their own mobile devices for classroom use



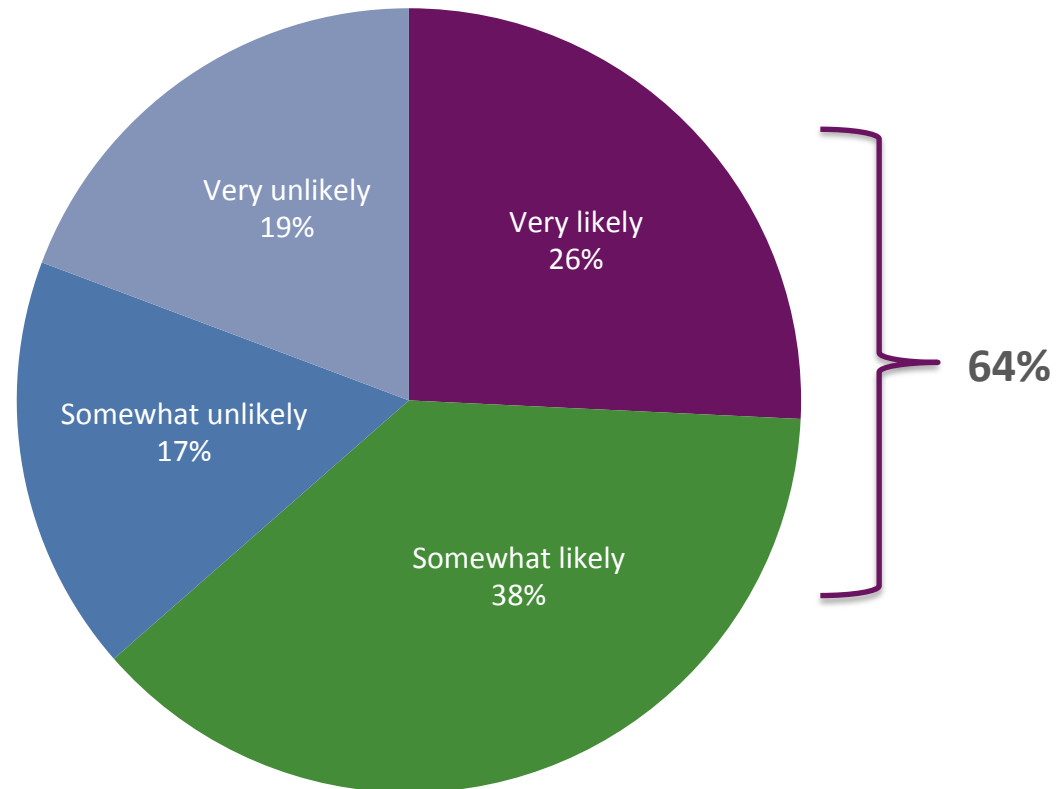
- 54% allow students to bring devices, but 49% do so with restrictions.
- There was no significant difference by district size or locale.



Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) Policies

What is the likelihood that your district will allow students to bring their own laptops, tablets, and/or mobile phones?

A majority of educators believe it is likely that districts will open up their policies on BYOD in the future – 64% indicate they are either somewhat or very likely to move to BYOD



Comments: Educators Voice Their Opinions

Concerns:
Some educators
raised concerns
about using social
networking and
Web 2.0 tools



I do not feel comfortable with social networking; too many things can go wrong. Students can get really mean and destructive with some of their comments, and once it's out there, it can do a great deal of harm to a person's reputation.

— Librarian/Media Specialist

I find social networking too open a vehicle. There are so many traps into which one could fall, and it is misused to the point where I see it as a true risk for an educator to engage in. I for one will not as long as I am still teaching.

— Teacher

I think social networking sites can be beneficial, but I've never known of any students and very few adults who use them appropriately. Big time-waster as an administrator dealing with social networking issues with students, parents, etc.

— Principal

Too many educators in my district are “friending” students, not “teaching” students. They are crossing the professional boundaries.

— Teacher

We are given no time and no help in incorporating social networking and Web 2.0 tools into our curricula.

— Librarian/Media Specialist



Comments: Educators Voice Their Opinions

Primary concerns are related to legal concerns and time to monitor



It can be good, but the laws do not in any way protect the educators from frivolous litigation; therefore, I choose to not use any social media site not directly maintained by the district in which I work.

— Teacher

The administration at the district level is quite averse to the use of social networks, as we have had bullying and a teacher/student sex scandal.

— Librarian/Media Specialist

These are all “the future,” but our district, because of CIPA, we are told, makes it too hard to embrace. Our teachers are too busy to fight the battle with what technology is and isn't allowed.

— Librarian/Media Specialist

They need to be policed at all times in an educational setting. Today's teachers are so burdened with preparing for high-stakes testing, assessment, committees, and lack of planning time that many in my school can't spare any brain power for new professional learning.

— Principal



Comments: Educators Voice Their Opinions

The Advocates:
Many educators
were positive
about social
networking,
reflecting the
growing use of
these tools



It is SO very important that we as teachers begin to use technology, as students are already “equipped” with the mindset for technology. Change has come and is changing even more. Students need education in the means that is pertinent to them and engaging as well. They love computers, smart phones, etc., and this is the 21st century, where letters and cards rarely exist. We must compete with other countries and therefore need to prepare our students for the 21st century.

— Teacher

I believe we need to teach our students the proper way to use these tools in school versus outside of school. By blocking all of these tools with a filter, we are not encouraging their growth personally, intellectually, or globally with other world citizens. I believe our school, and many in our country, are far behind on our Internet policies and using social media in education.

— Librarian/Media Specialist

We stare into the past while the future occurs at our backs -- by refusing to embrace these technologies, we are crippling our students and rendering our profession obsolete.

— Librarian/Media Specialist



Comments: Educators Voice Their Opinions

“Today's students are digital natives and need to be educated and guided by appropriate use of all available technological resources.”



We need to embrace the 21st century and all the tools that are available that are school-appropriate and especially the social networking tools available that are school-appropriate.

— Librarian/Media Specialist

I think utilizing the available tools should be mandatory for teachers. Today's students are digital natives and need to be educated and guided by appropriate use of all available technological resources.

— Librarian/Media Specialist

I find these sites to be very beneficial. I have learned so much from other teachers through Pinterest posts about what works in their classroom, lessons from Mimio Connect and Mastery Connect, and even from viewing the personal blogs of other teachers. I feel like the sharing of information is going to take on a whole different meaning with Common Core. The Internet is going to be our most valuable resource when it comes to curriculum and supplementing what our district purchases and provides.

— Teacher



Conclusions

The Future:
Educator use of social networks and Web 2.0 tools will most likely continue to grow, but could grow faster with better access, more training and support, and credit for participation

- The use of social networks and Web 2.0 tools will most likely continue to expand, especially among educators who use them for professional collaboration. This is the area that is most likely to grow, especially with the continued support of the U.S. DOE.
- It appears that the use of Web 2.0 tools in the classroom will continue to be hampered by restrictive policies regarding access for students. This is also a realm where some educators have concerns about the value and appropriateness of using these tools in school. More intervention will be needed to make these tools more accessible to students.
- More and more K-12 educators across all job categories are exploring the use of social networks and Web 2.0 tools, but many comment that more training and support is needed.



Contact us directly to learn more



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