



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE 2015 SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY RESULTS

In fall 2015 the IACP conducted its sixth annual survey about law enforcement's use of social media. The survey addressed the current state of practice and the issues agencies are facing in regards to social media. The survey was sent electronically to law enforcement executives across the United States. A total of 553 law enforcement agencies, representing 44 states, participated in the survey.

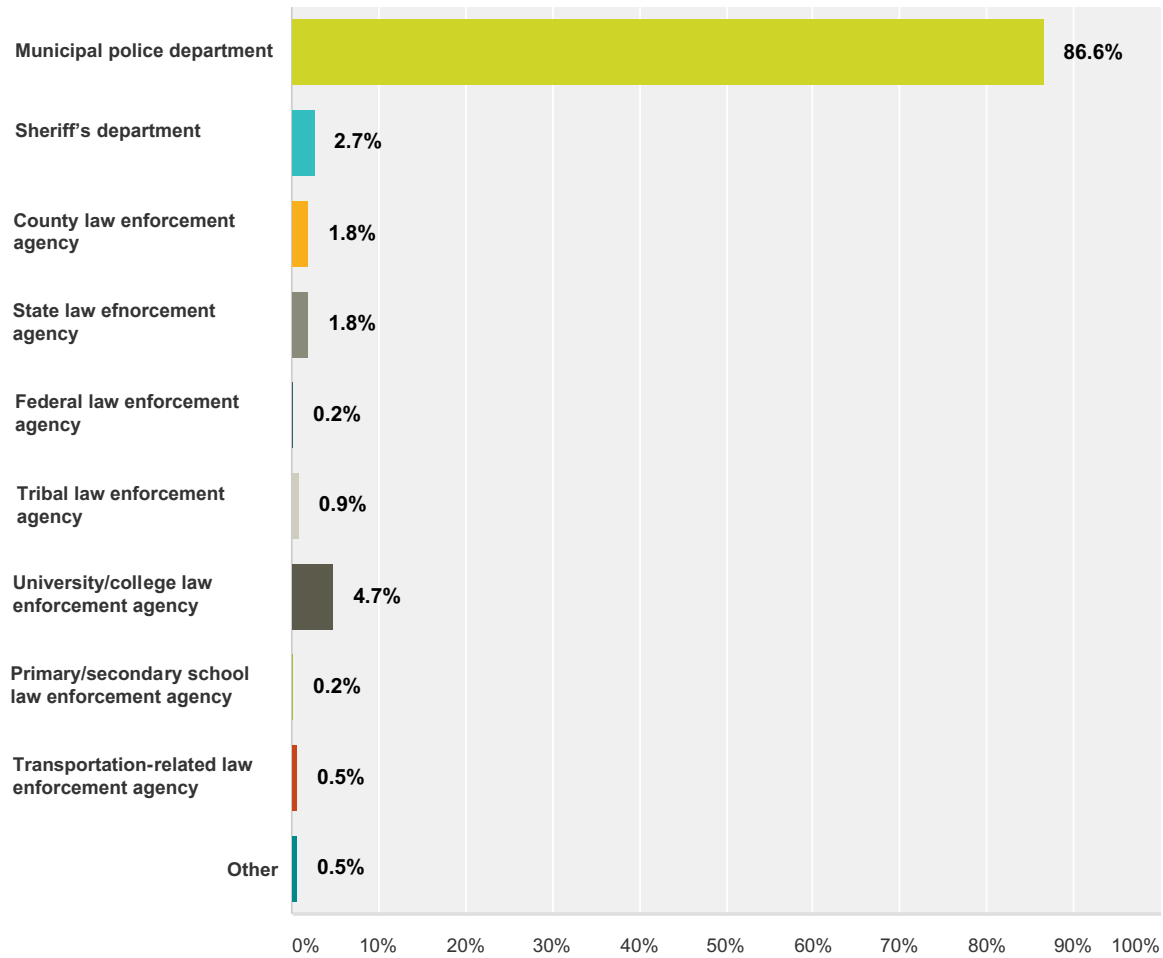
For more information about the survey or IACP, visit [www.theIACP.org](http://www.theIACP.org) or e-mail us at [socialmedia@theiacp.org](mailto:socialmedia@theiacp.org).

### SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- 96.4% of agencies surveyed use social media in some capacity.
- The most common use of social media is for criminal investigations at 88.7%.
- The most frequently used social media platforms are Facebook (94.2%), Twitter (71.2%), and YouTube (40.0%).
- 73.9% of responding agencies not currently using social media are considering its adoption.
- 77.8% of agencies surveyed have a social media policy and an additional 11.7% are in the process of crafting a policy.
- 85.5% of agencies report that social media has helped solve crimes in their jurisdiction.
- 83.5% of agencies state that social media has improved police-community relations in their jurisdiction.

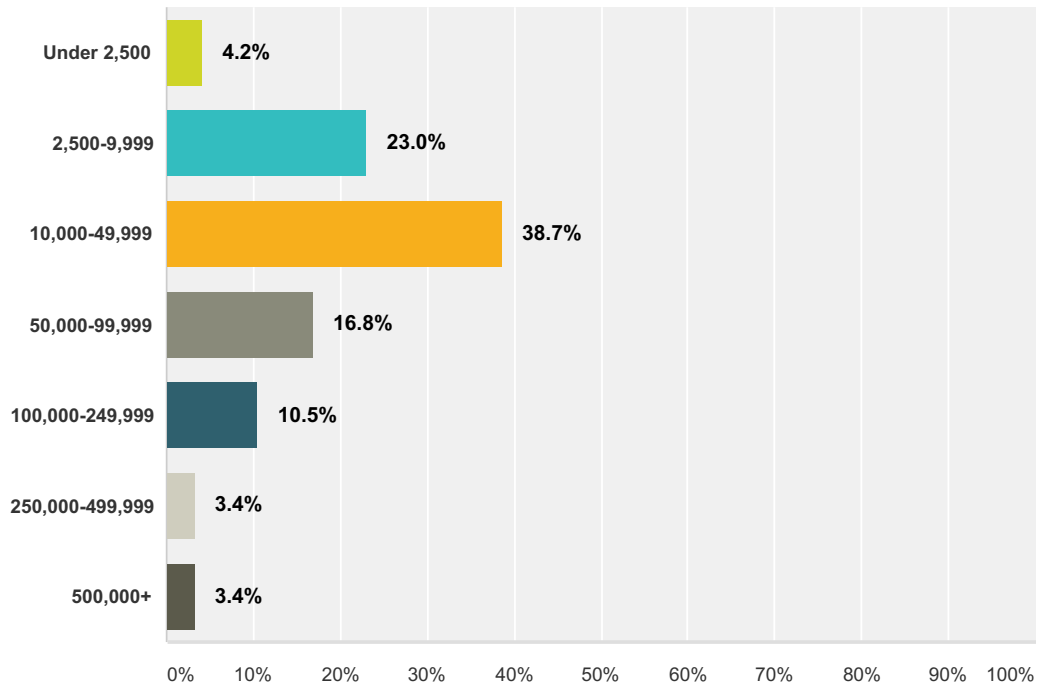
## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

### Which of the following best describes your agency?



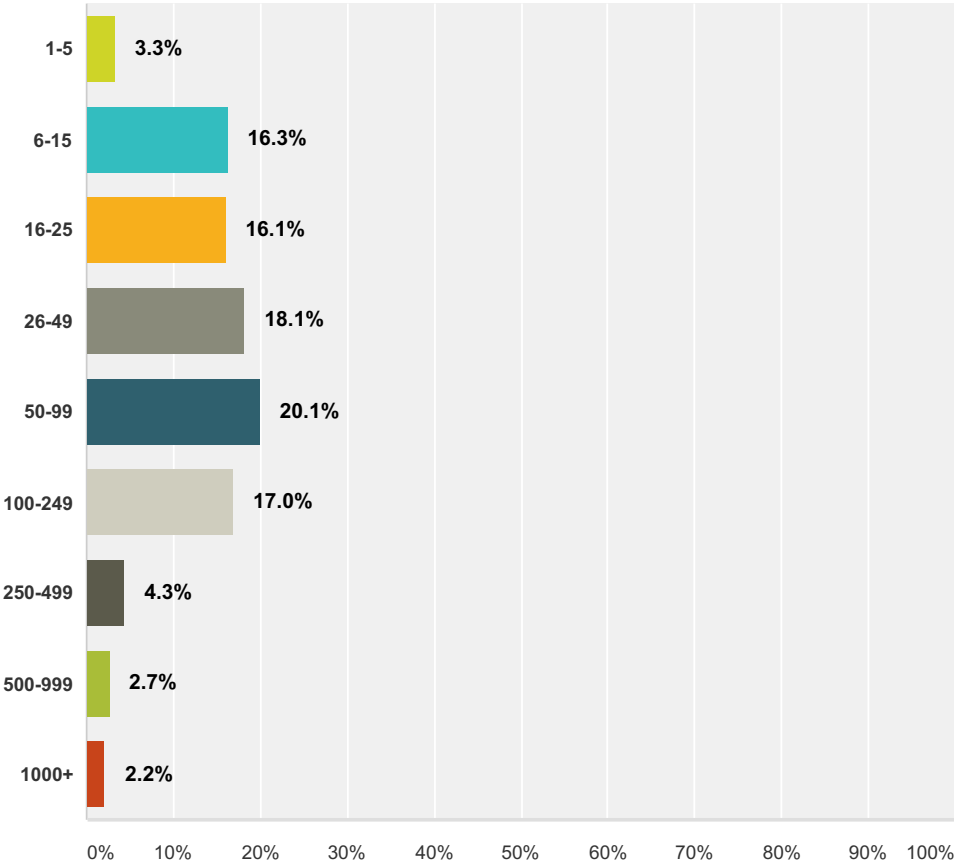
Answer Choices	Responses	
Municipal police department	86.6%	479
Sheriff's department	2.7%	15
County law enforcement agency	1.8%	10
State law enforcement agency	1.8%	10
Federal law enforcement agency	0.2%	1
Tribal law enforcement agency	0.9%	5
University/college law enforcement agency	4.7%	26
Primary/secondary school law enforcement agency	0.2%	1
Transportation-related law enforcement agency	0.5%	3
Other	0.5%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>553</b>

Please indicate the population served by your agency.



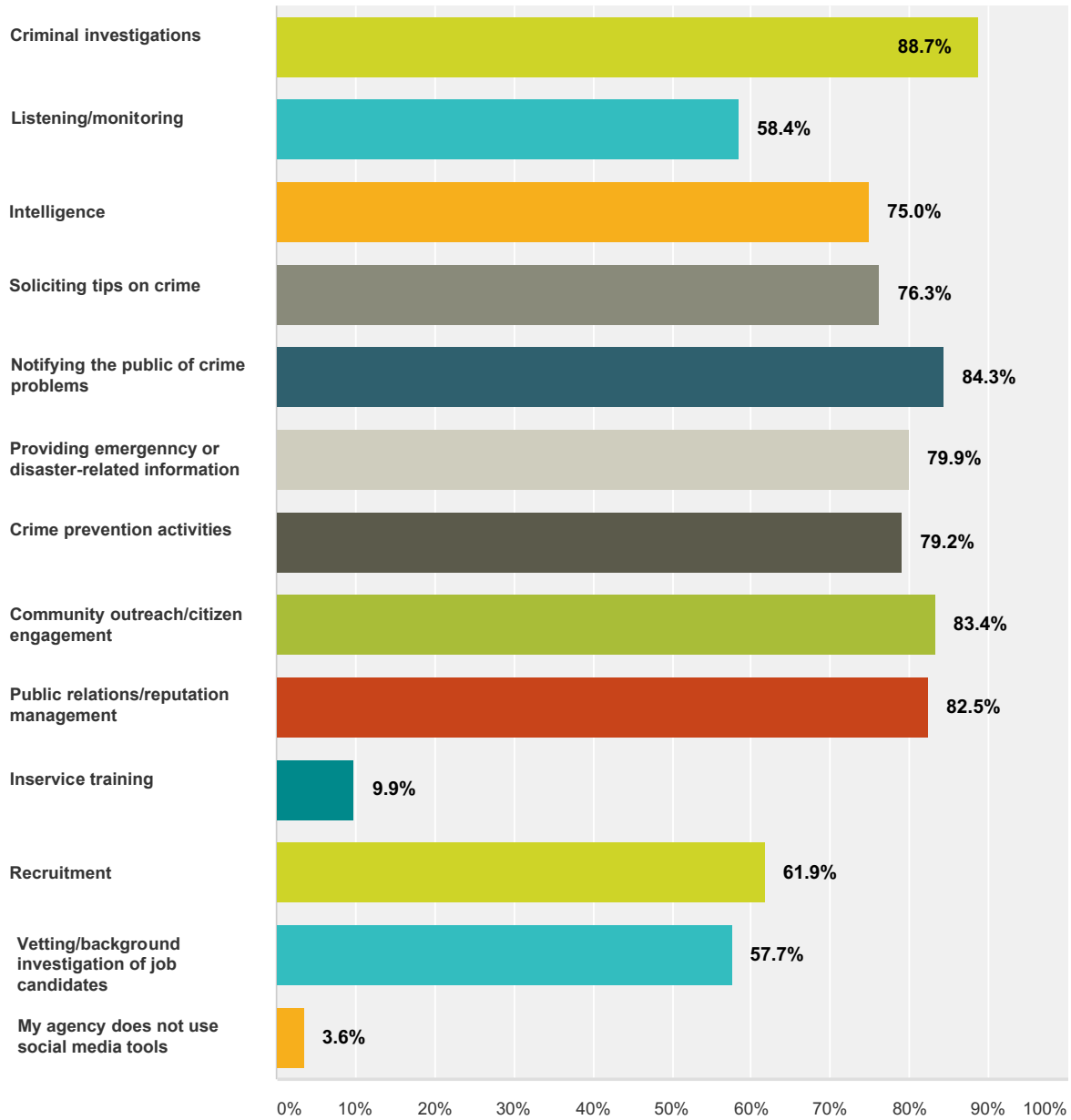
Answer Choices	Responses
Under 2,500	4.2% 23
2,500-9,999	23.0% 127
10,000-49,999	38.7% 214
50,000-99,999	16.8% 93
100,000-249,999	10.5% 58
250,000-499,999	3.4% 19
500,000+	3.4% 19
<b>Total</b>	<b>553</b>

Please indicate the number of full-time sworn personnel in your agency.



Answer Choices	Responses	
1-5	3.3%	18
6-15	16.3%	90
16-25	16.1%	89
26-49	18.1%	100
50-99	20.1%	111
100-249	17.0%	94
250-499	4.3%	24
500-999	2.7%	15
1000+	2.2%	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>553</b>

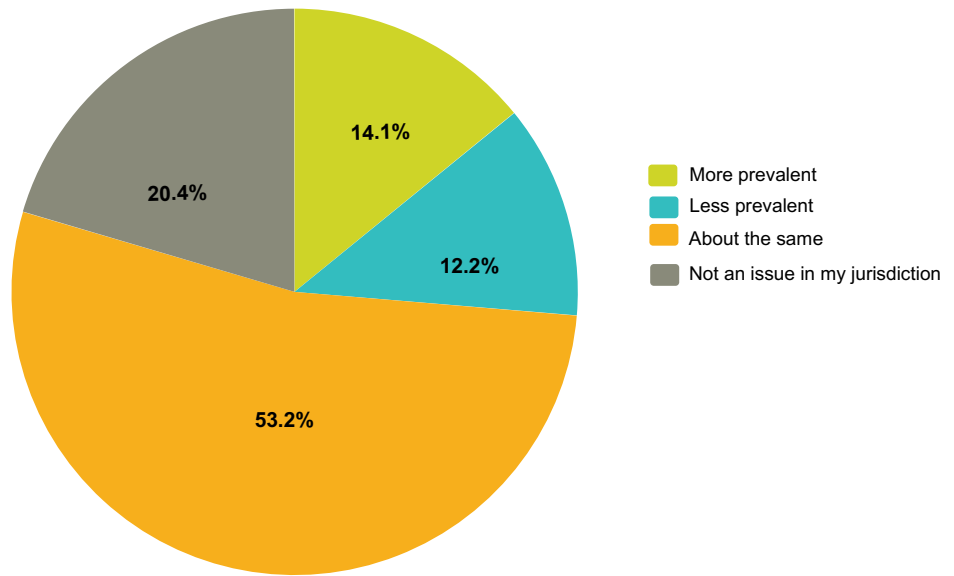
Which of the following activities does your agency use social media tools for? (Select all that apply)



Answer Choices	Responses	
Criminal investigations	88.7%	486
Listening/monitoring	58.4%	320
Intelligence	75.0%	411
Soliciting tips on crime	76.3%	418
Notifying the public of crime problems	84.3%	462
Providing emergency or disaster-related information	79.9%	438
Crime prevention activities	79.2%	434
Community outreach/citizen engagement	83.4%	457
Public relations/reputation management	82.5%	452
Inservice training	9.9%	54
Recruitment	61.9%	339
Vetting/background investigations of job candidates	57.7%	316
My agency does not use social media tools	3.6%	20
<b>Total Respondents: 548</b>		

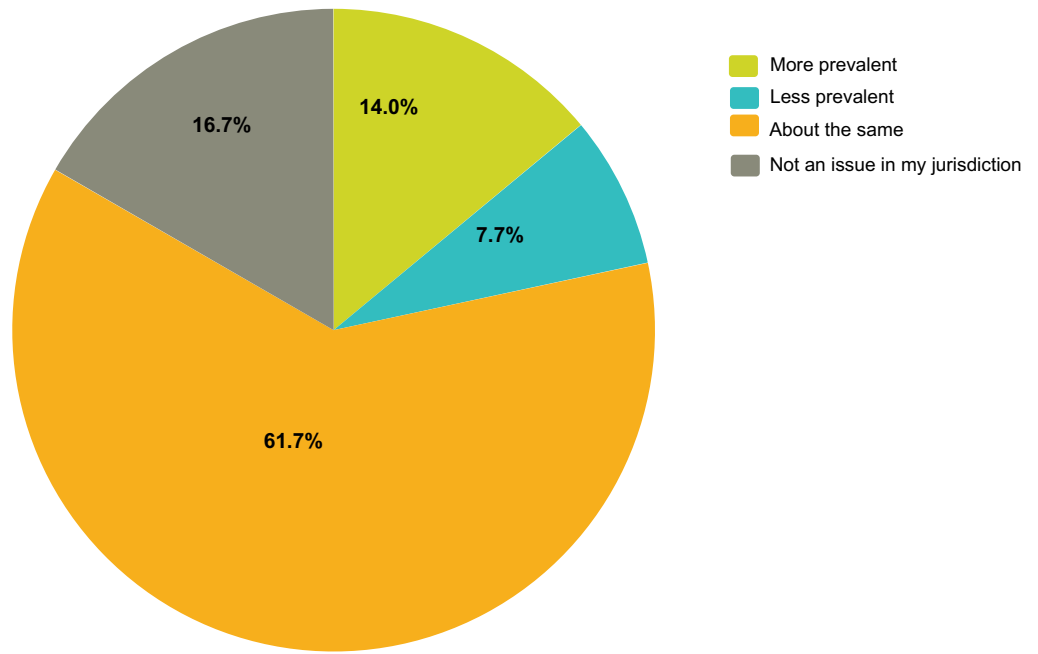
## CYBER CRIME

Compared to one year ago, complaints to my agency about “sexting” (the sharing of sexually explicit photos, primarily via a mobile device) are:



Answer Choices	Responses	
More prevalent	14.1%	74
Less prevalent	12.2%	64
About the same	53.2%	279
Not an issue in my jurisdiction	20.4%	107
<b>Total</b>		<b>524</b>

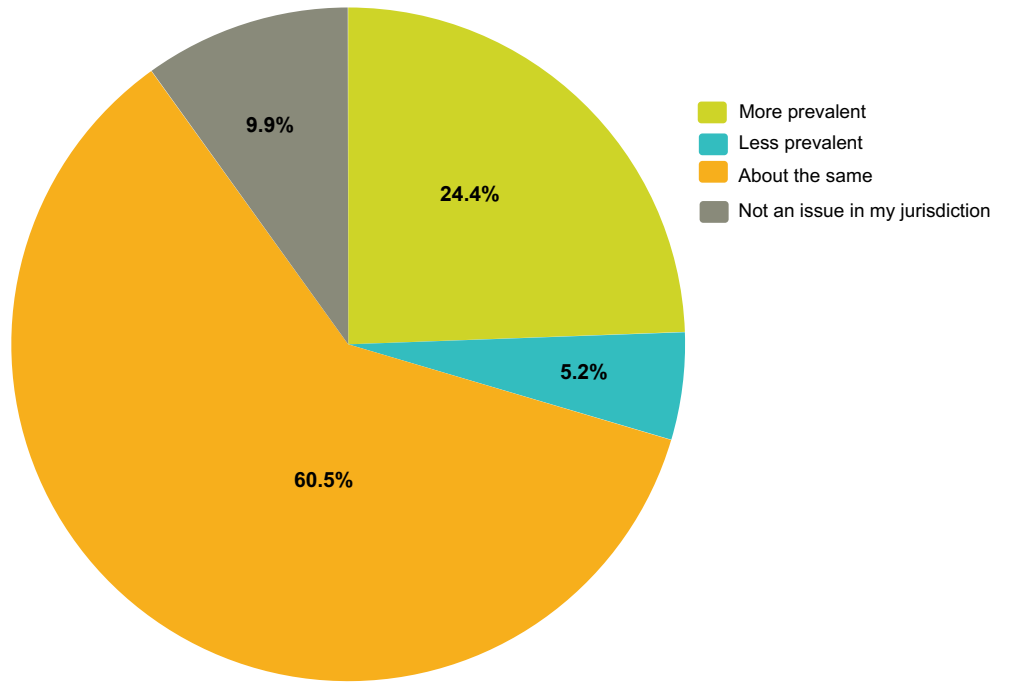
Compared to one year ago, complaints to my agency about online stalking are:



Answer Choices	Responses	
More prevalent	14.0%	73
Less prevalent	7.7%	40
About the same	61.7%	322
Not an issue in my jurisdiction	16.7%	87
<b>Total</b>		<b>522</b>

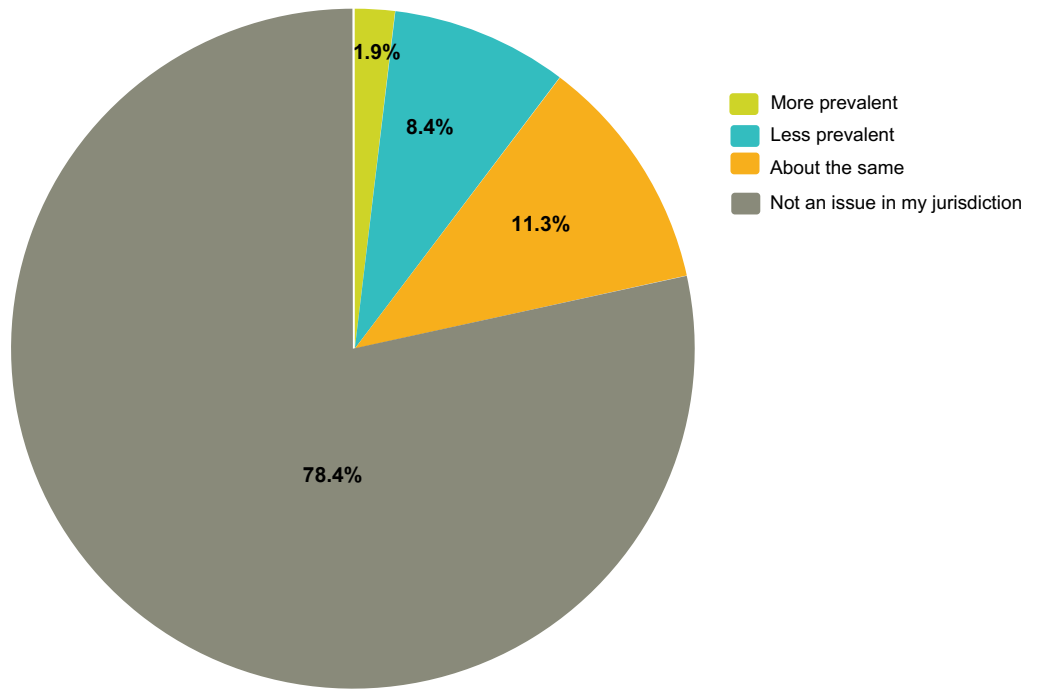


Compared to one year ago, complaints to my agency about online bullying/harassment are:



Answer Choices	Responses	
More prevalent	24.4%	128
Less prevalent	5.2%	27
About the same	60.5%	317
Not an issue in my jurisdiction	9.9%	52
<b>Total</b>		<b>524</b>

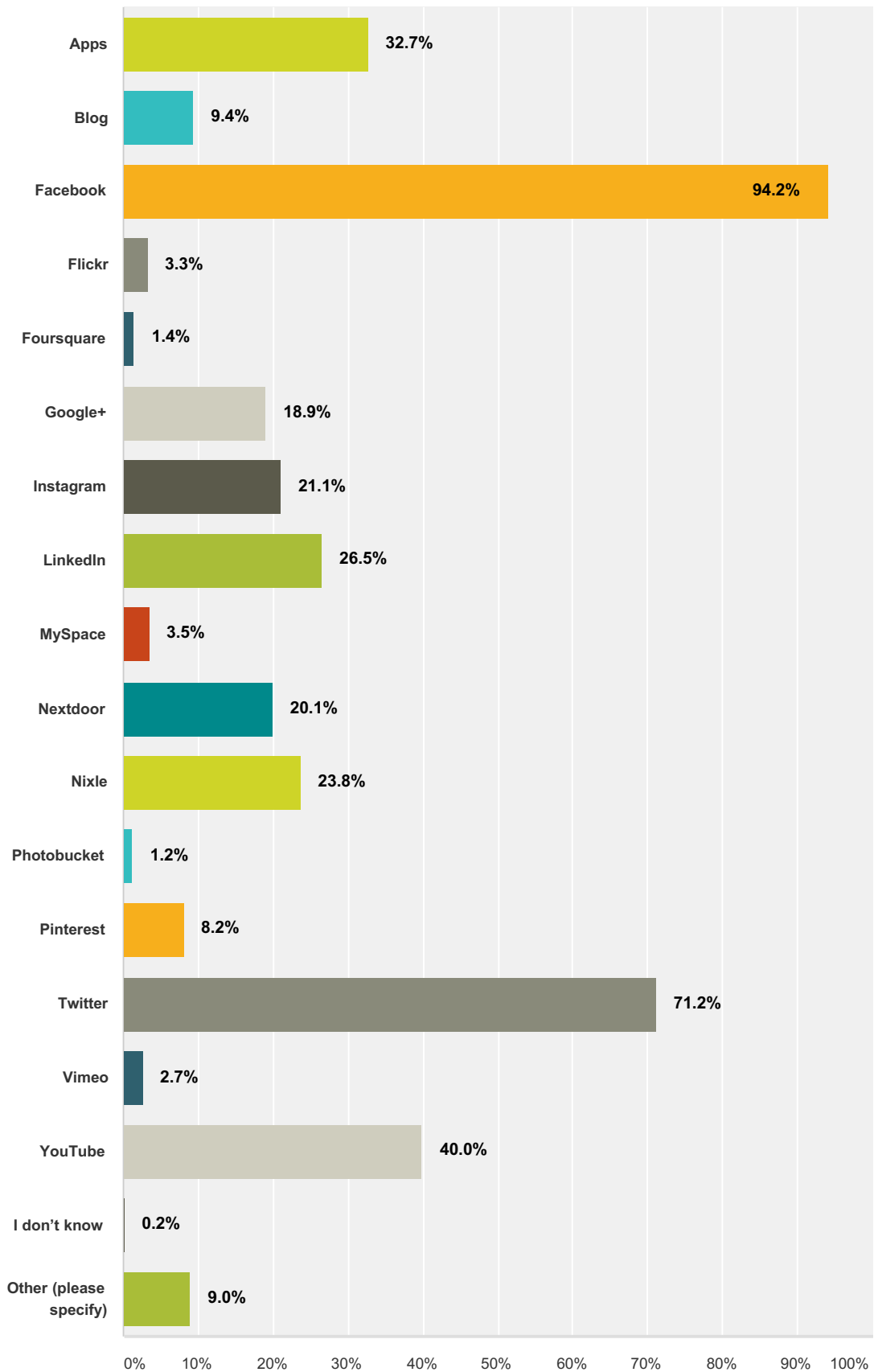
Compared to one year ago, complaints to my agency about flashmobs (large groups of individuals quickly mobilizing in a specific location) are:



Answer Choices	Responses	
More prevalent	1.9%	10
Less prevalent	8.4%	44
About the same	11.3%	59
Not an issue in my jurisdiction	78.4%	411
<b>Total</b>		<b>524</b>

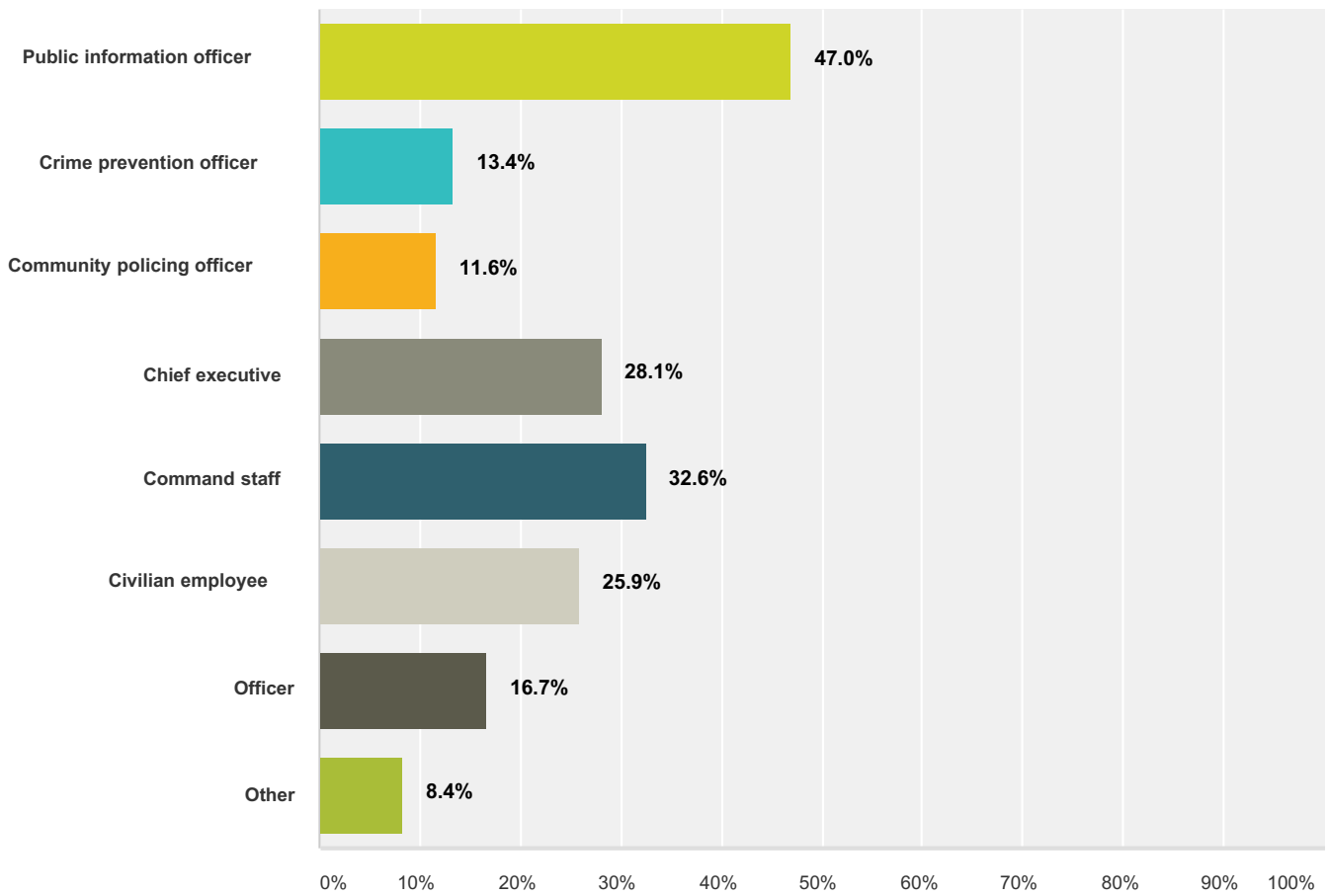
## AGENCIES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

What social media tools does your agency currently use? (Select all that apply)



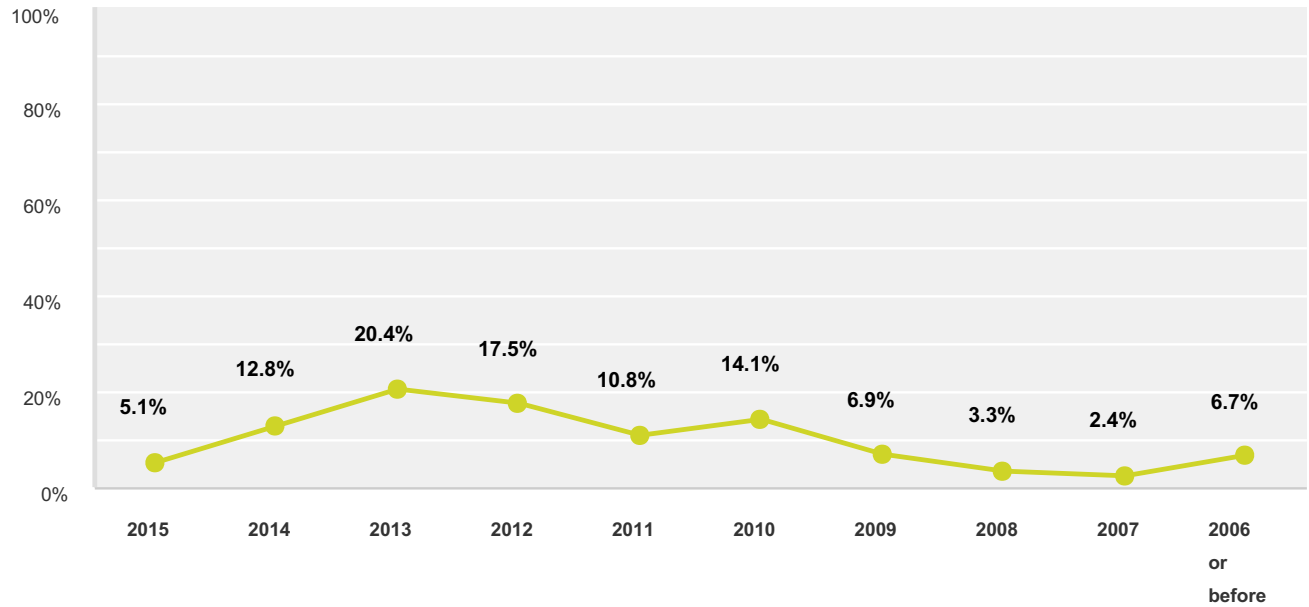
Answer Choices	Responses	
Apps	32.7%	168
Blog	9.4%	48
Facebook	94.2%	483
Flickr	3.3%	17
Foursquare	1.4%	7
Google+	18.9%	97
Instagram	21.1%	108
LinkedIn	26.5%	136
MySpace	3.5%	18
Nextdoor	20.1%	103
Nixle	23.8%	122
Photobucket	1.2%	6
Pinterest	8.2%	42
Twitter	71.2%	365
Vimeo	2.7%	14
YouTube	40.0%	205
I don't know	0.2%	1
Other (please specify)	9.0%	46
<b>Total Respondents: 513</b>		

**Who manages your agency's publicly-facing social media accounts on a day to day basis? (Select all that apply)**



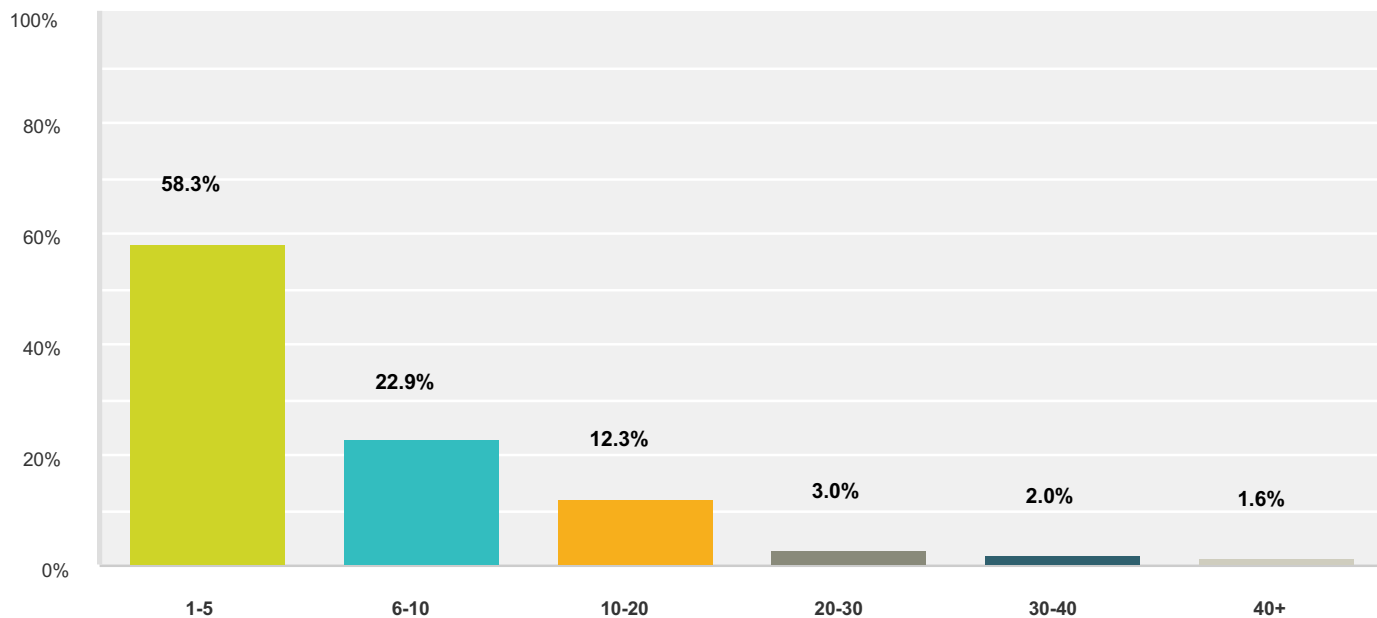
Answer Choices	Responses	
Public information officer	47.0%	239
Crime prevention officer	13.4%	68
Community policing officer	11.6%	59
Chief executive	28.1%	143
Command staff	32.6%	166
Civilian employee	25.9%	132
Officer	16.7%	85
Other	8.4%	43
<b>Total Respondents: 509</b>		

### When did your agency start using social media?



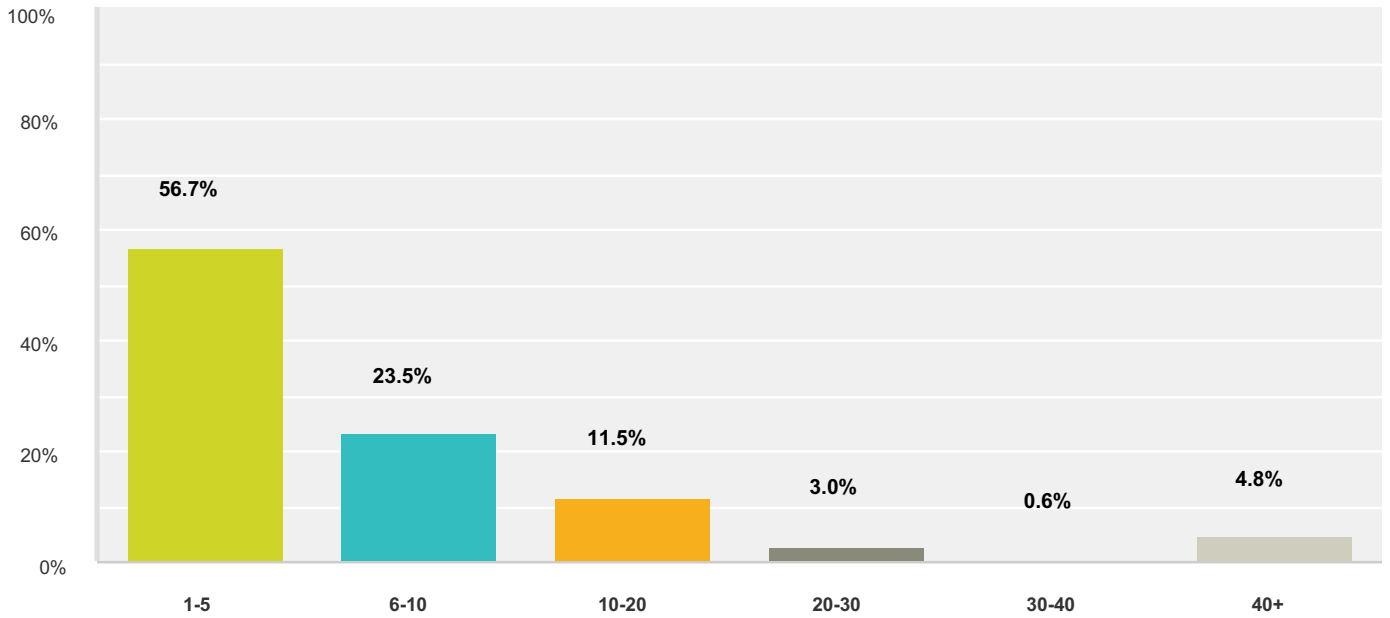
Answer Choices	Responses	
2015	5.1%	26
2014	12.8%	65
2013	20.4%	104
2012	17.5%	89
2011	10.8%	55
2010	14.1%	72
2009	6.9%	35
2008	3.3%	17
2007	2.4%	12
2006 or before	6.7%	34
<b>Total</b>		<b>509</b>

**How many hours are spent maintaining (developing and posting content, responding to comments, etc.) your agency’s public social media presence on a weekly basis?**



Answer Choices	Responses	
1-5	58.3%	295
6-10	22.9%	116
10-20	12.3%	62
20-30	3.0%	15
30-40	2.0%	10
40+	1.6%	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>506</b>

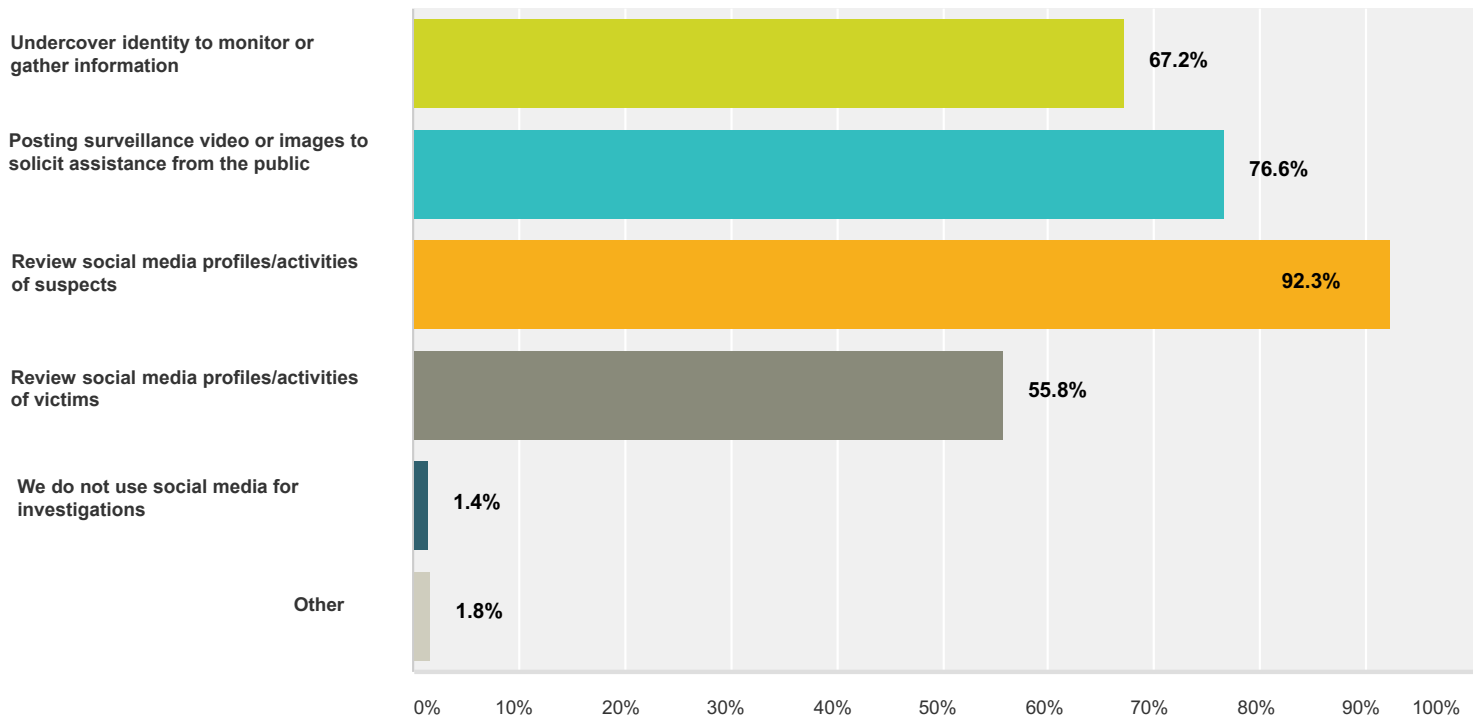
**How many hours are spent using social media tools for intelligence or investigative purposes on a weekly basis?**



Answer Choices	Responses	
1-5	56.7%	285
6-10	23.5%	118
10-20	11.5%	58
20-30	3.0%	15
30-40	0.6%	3
40+	4.8%	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>503</b>

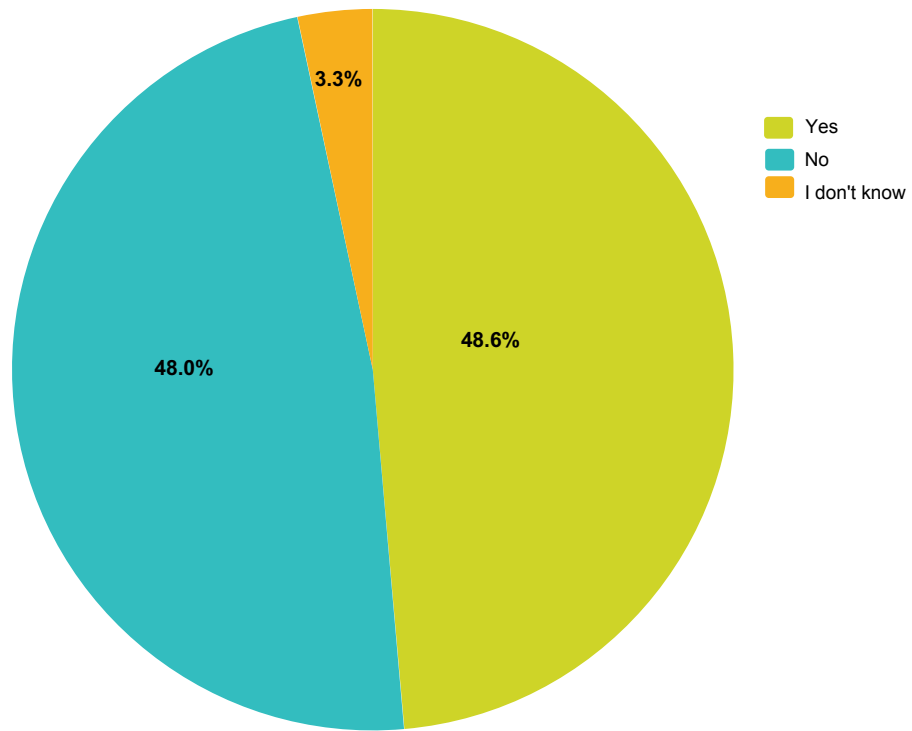


### How does your agency use social media in investigations? (Select all that apply)



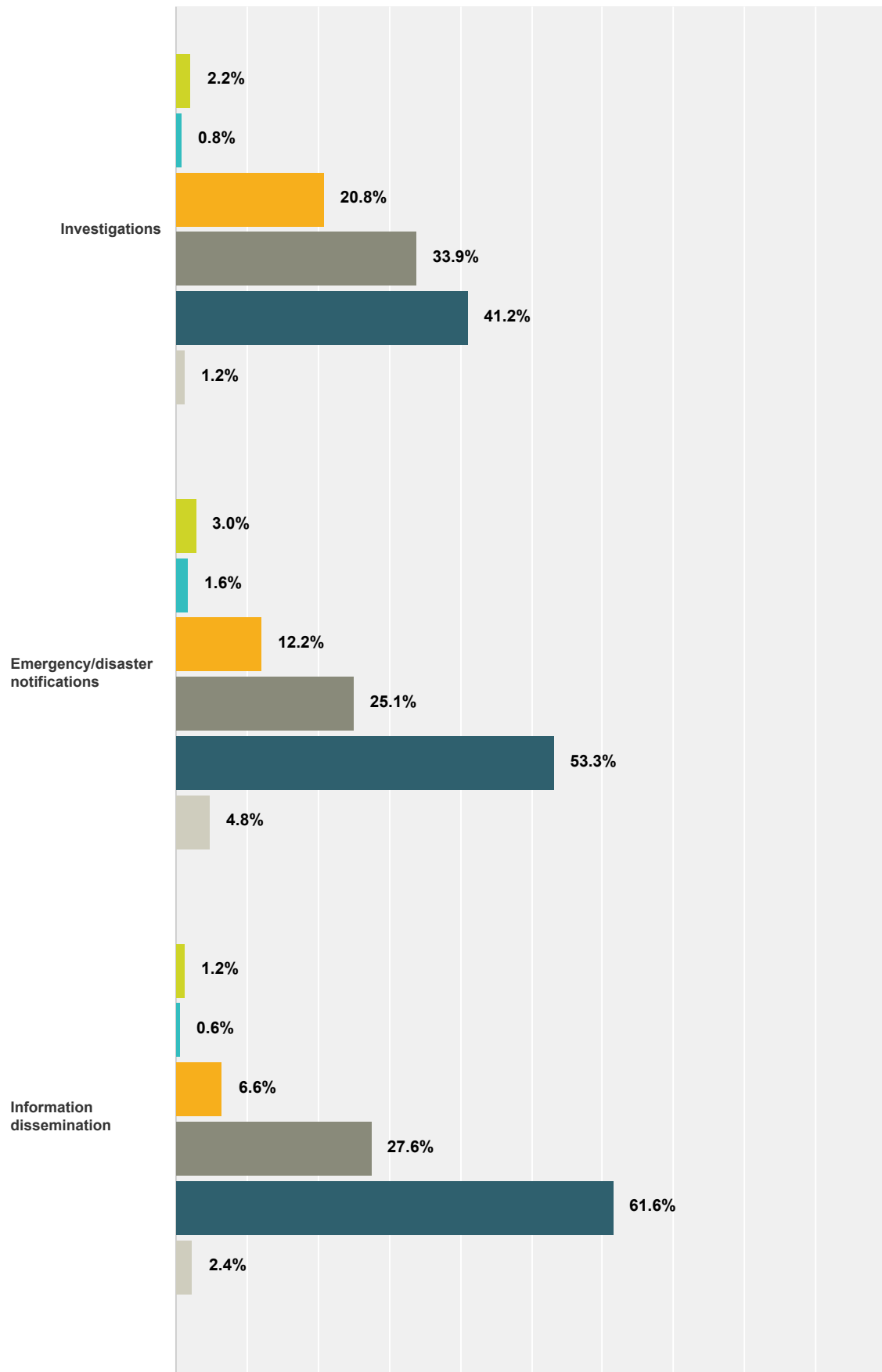
Answer Choices	Responses	
Undercover identity to monitor or gather information	67.2%	342
Posting surveillance video or images to solicit assistance from the public	76.6%	390
Review social media profiles/activities of suspects	92.3%	470
Review social media profiles/activities of victims	55.8%	284
We do not use social media for investigations	1.4%	7
Other (please specify)	1.8%	9
<b>Total Respondents: 509</b>		

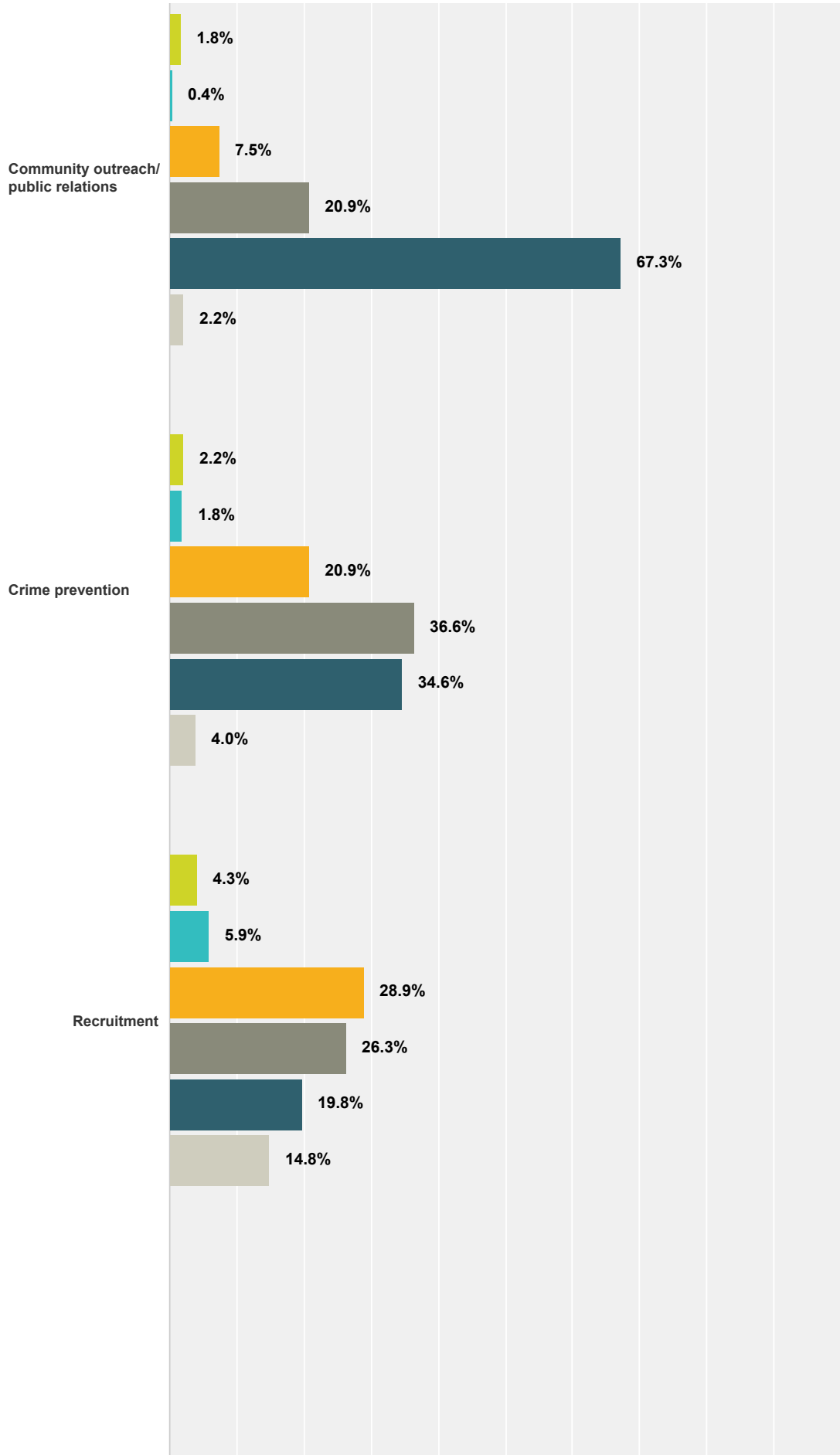
Has your agency identified goals and/or outcomes related to the use of social media?

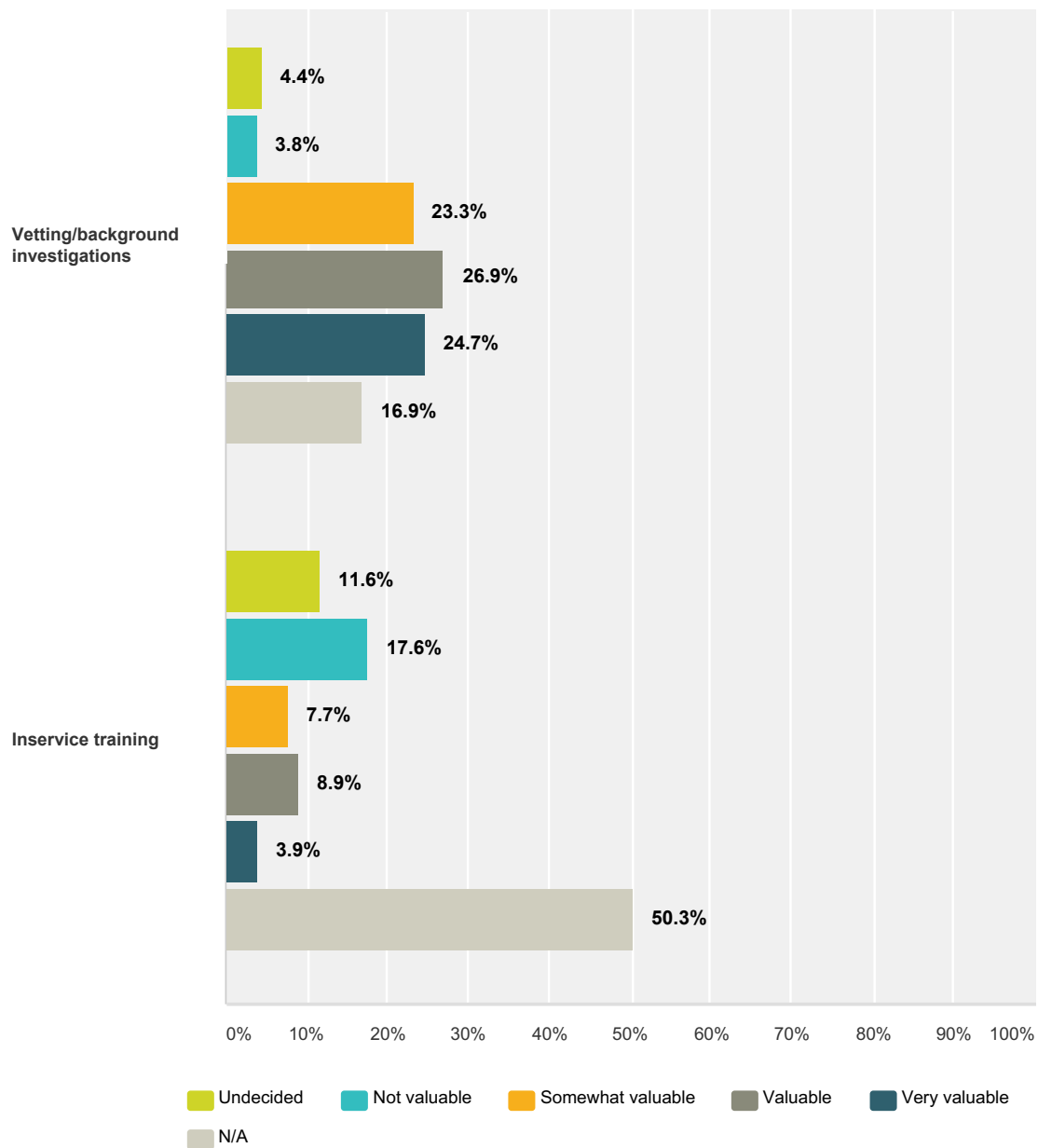


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	48.6%	247
No	48.0%	244
I don't know	3.3%	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>508</b>

## How valuable a tool is social media for your agency?

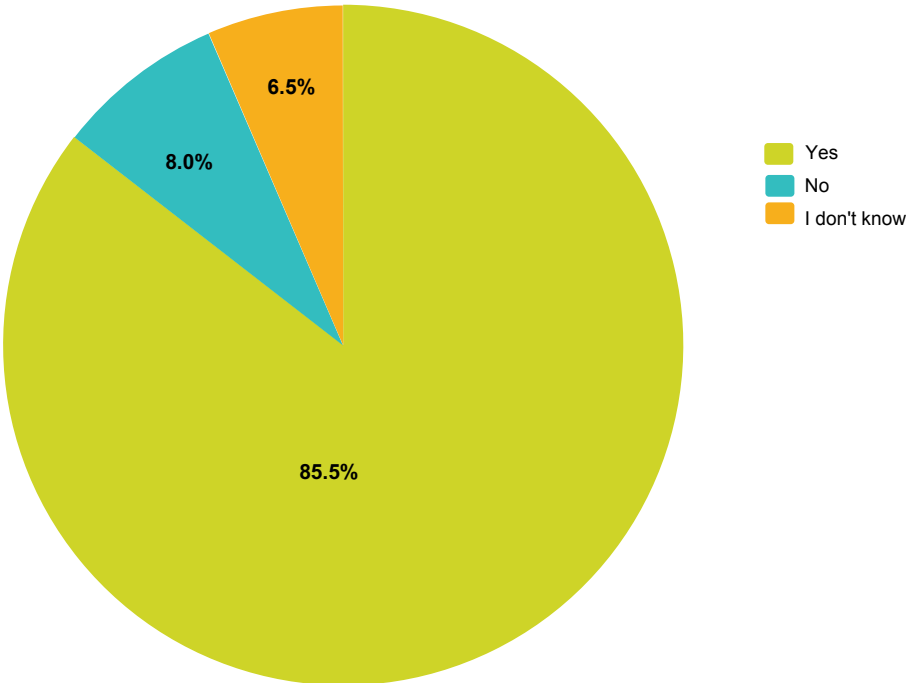






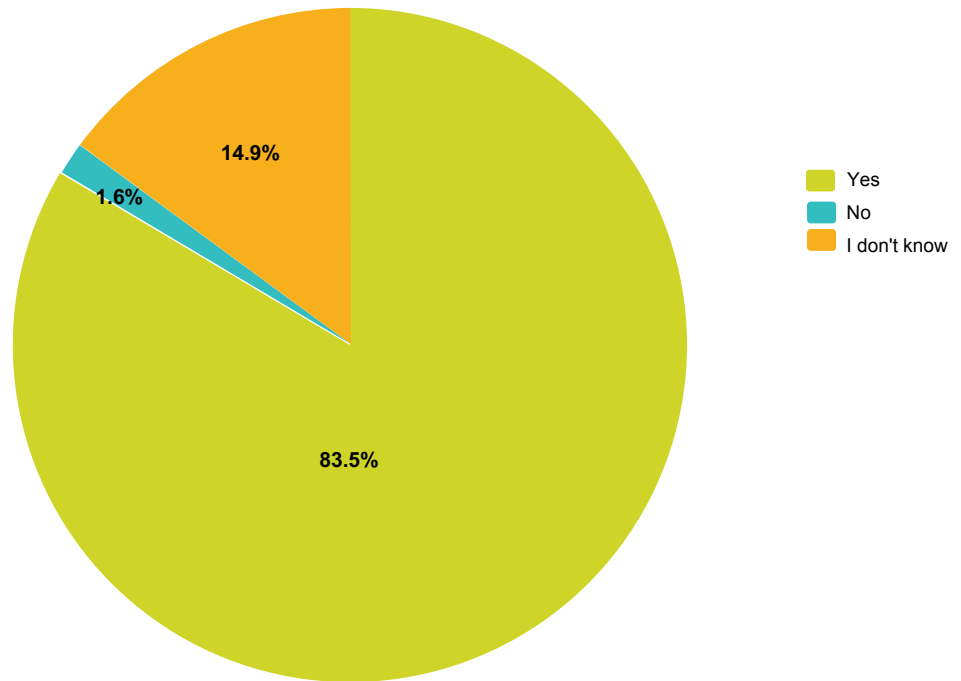
	Undecided	Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Valuable	Very valuable	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
Investigations	2.2% 11	0.8% 4	20.8% 106	33.9% 173	41.2% 210	1.2% 6	510	4.13
Emergency/disaster notifications	3.0% 15	1.6% 8	12.2% 61	25.1% 126	53.3% 267	4.8% 24	501	4.30
Information dissemination	1.2% 6	0.6% 3	6.6% 33	27.6% 139	61.6% 310	2.4% 12	503	4.52
Community outreach/public relations	1.8% 9	0.4% 2	7.5% 38	20.9% 106	67.3% 342	2.2% 11	508	4.55
Crime prevention	2.2% 11	1.8% 9	20.9% 106	36.6% 185	34.6% 175	4.0% 20	506	4.04
Recruitment	4.3% 21	5.9% 29	28.9% 143	26.3% 130	19.8% 98	14.8% 73	494	3.61
Vetting/background investigations	4.4% 22	3.8% 19	23.3% 116	26.9% 134	24.7% 123	16.9% 84	498	3.77
Inservice training	11.6% 56	17.6% 85	7.7% 37	8.9% 43	3.9% 19	50.3% 243	483	2.52

Has social media helped your agency solve crimes in your jurisdiction?



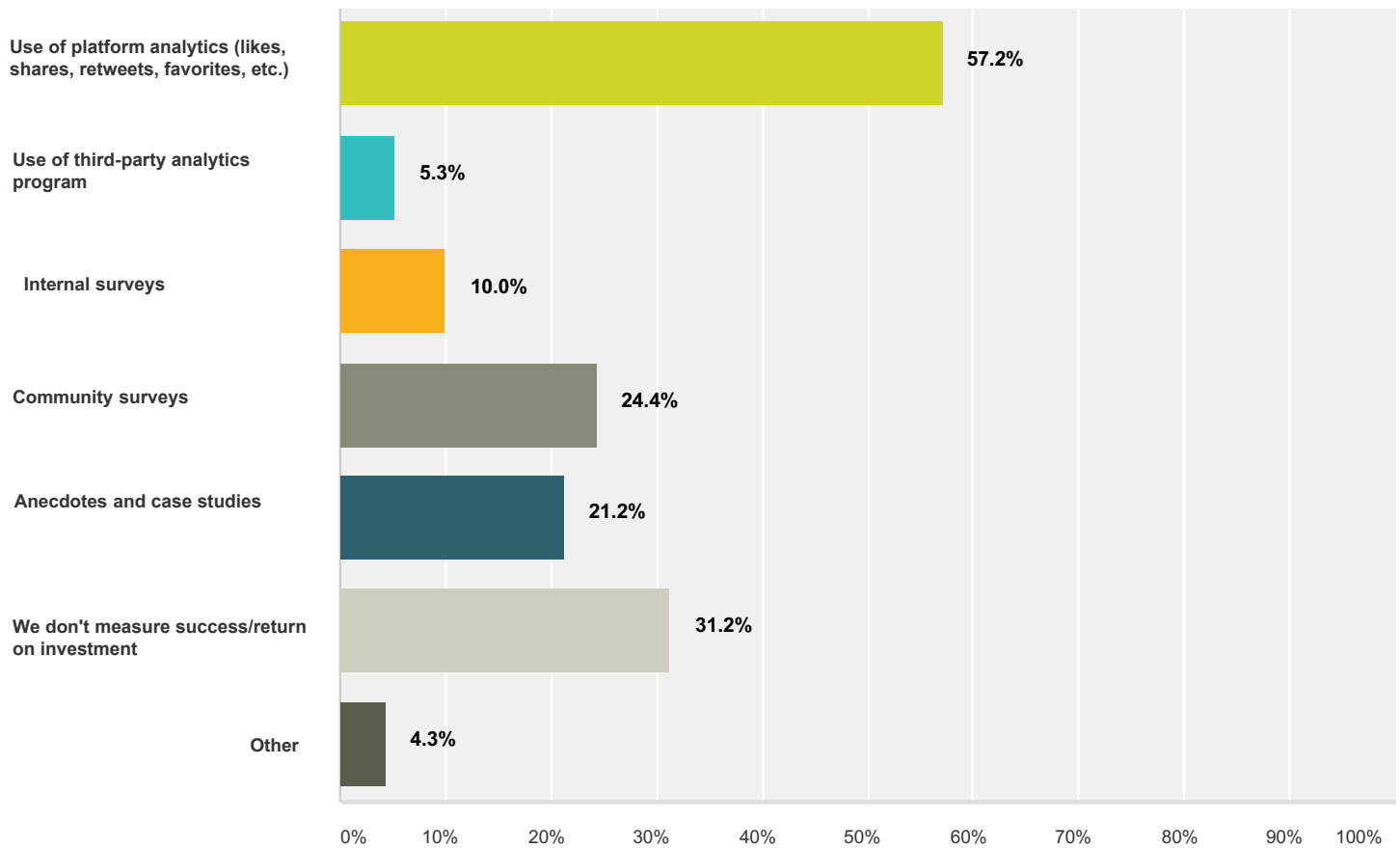
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	85.5%	436
No	8.0%	41
I don't know	6.5%	33
<b>Total</b>		<b>510</b>

### Has social media improved police/community relations in your jurisdiction?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	83.5%	426
No	1.6%	8
I don't know	14.9%	76
<b>Total</b>		<b>510</b>

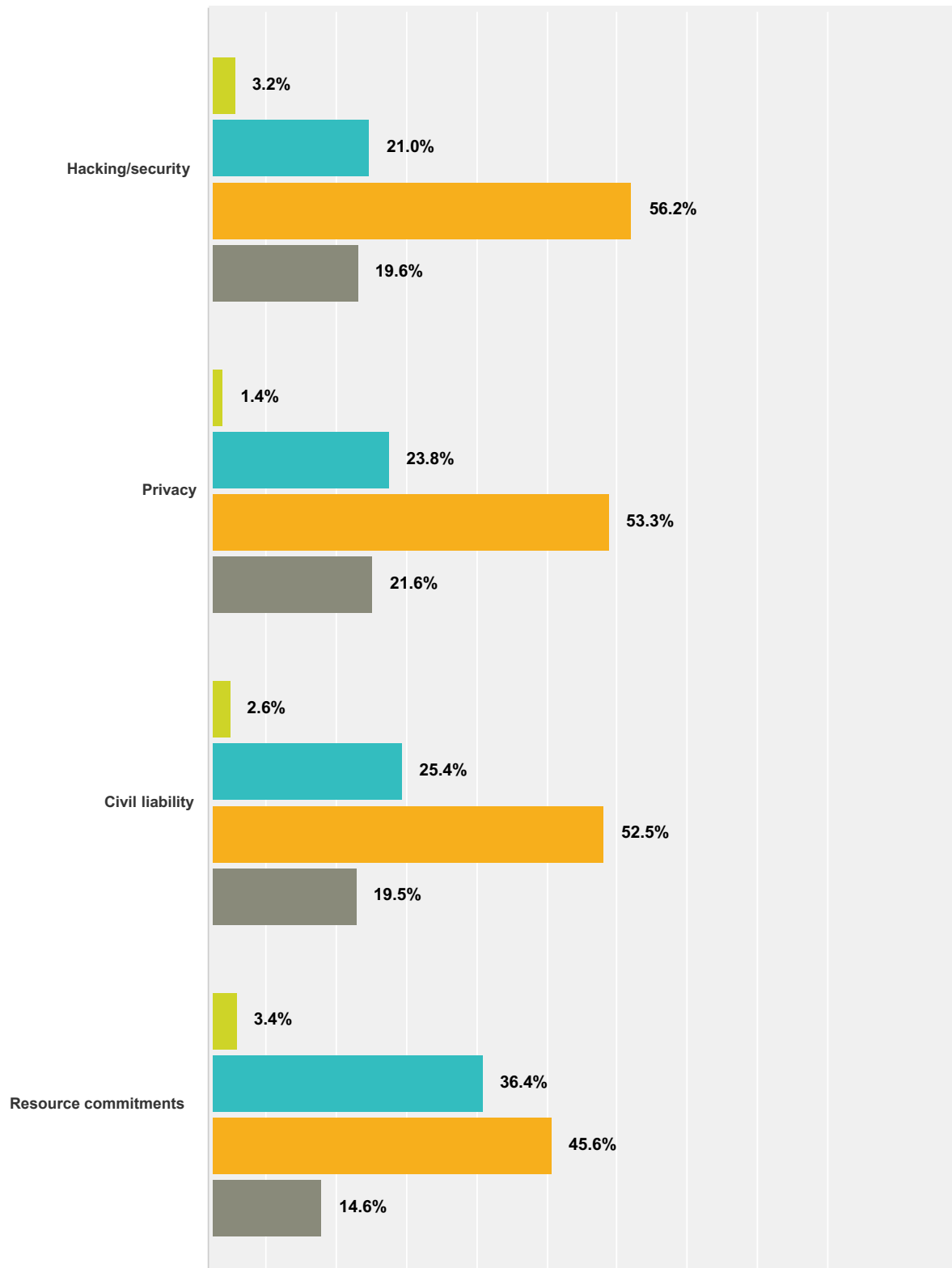
### How does your agency measure social media success/return on investment (select all that apply)?

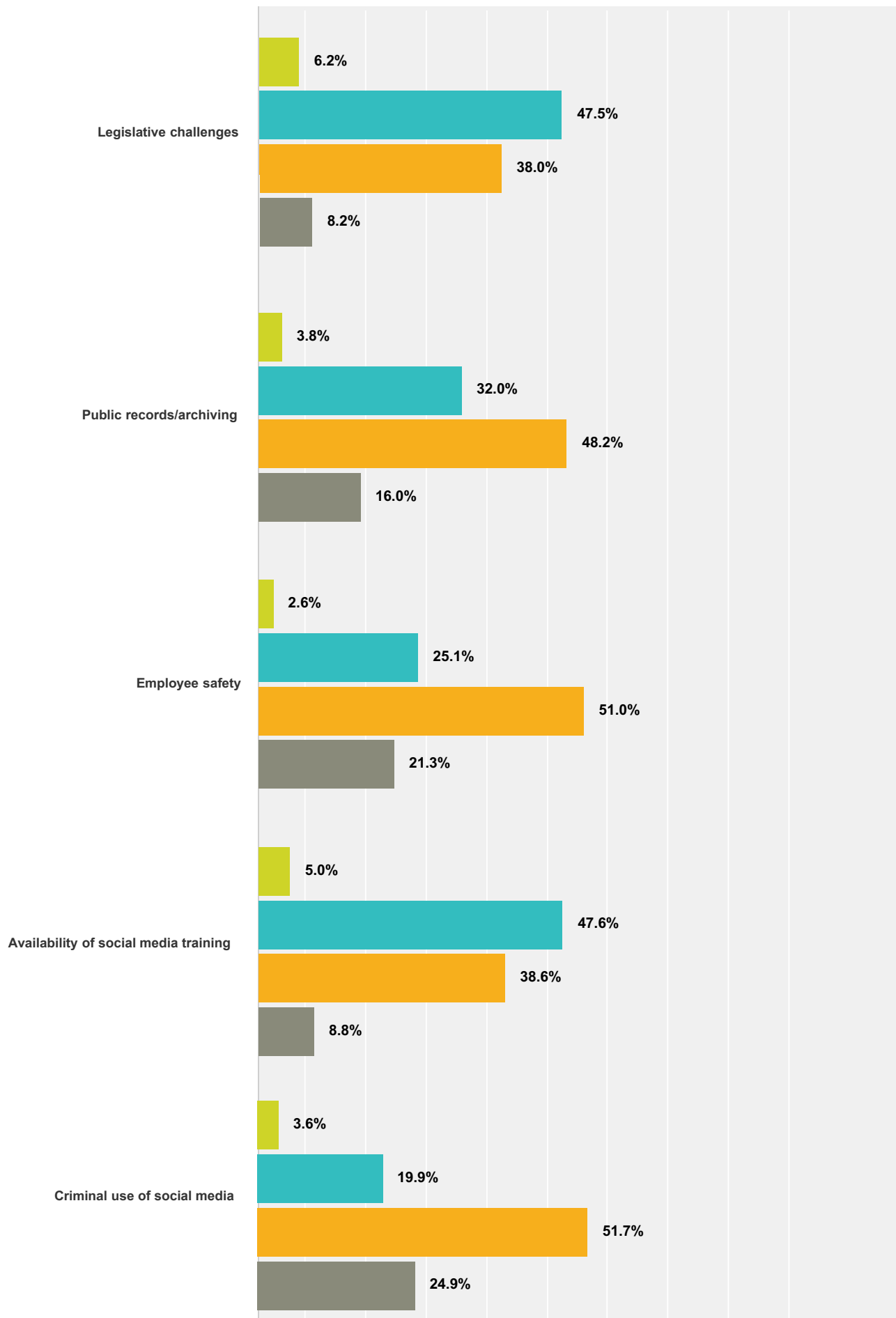


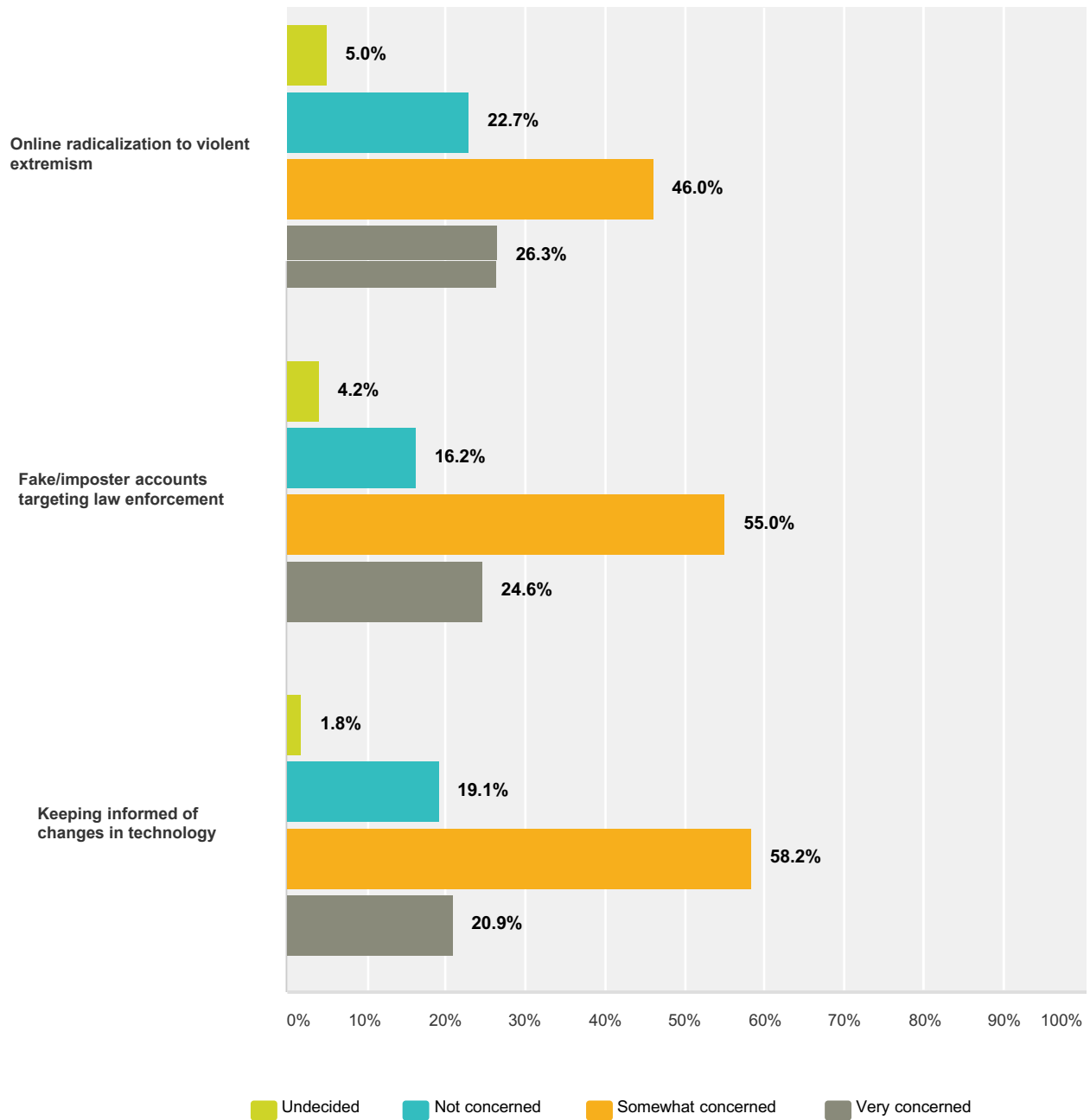
Answer Choices	Responses	
Use of platform analytics (likes, shares, retweets, favorites, etc.)	57.2%	291
Use of third-party analytics program	5.3%	27
Internal surveys	10.0%	51
Community surveys	24.4%	124
Anecdotes and case studies	21.2%	108
We don't measure success/return on investment	31.2%	159
Other (please specify)	4.3%	22
<b>Total Respondents: 509</b>		



Please identify any concerns your agency has about social media.



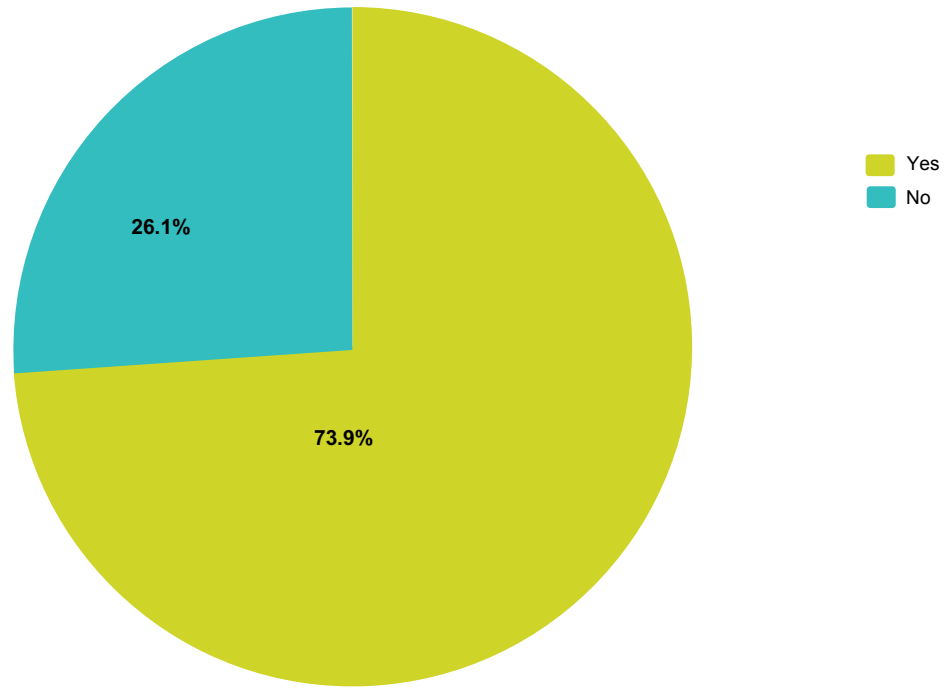




	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Not concerned</b>	<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	<b>Very concerned</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Weighted Average</b>
Hacking/security	<b>3.2%</b> 16	<b>21.0%</b> 106	<b>56.2%</b> 283	<b>19.6%</b> 99	504	2.92
Privacy	<b>1.4%</b> 7	<b>23.8%</b> 119	<b>53.3%</b> 267	<b>21.6%</b> 108	501	2.95
Civil liability	<b>2.6%</b> 13	<b>25.4%</b> 128	<b>52.5%</b> 264	<b>19.5%</b> 98	503	2.89
Resource commitments	<b>3.4%</b> 17	<b>36.4%</b> 182	<b>45.6%</b> 228	<b>14.6%</b> 73	500	2.71
Legislative challenges	<b>6.2%</b> 31	<b>47.5%</b> 236	<b>38.0%</b> 189	<b>8.2%</b> 41	497	2.48
Public records/archiving	<b>3.8%</b> 19	<b>32.0%</b> 160	<b>48.2%</b> 241	<b>16.0%</b> 80	500	2.76
Employee safety	<b>2.6%</b> 13	<b>25.1%</b> 126	<b>51.0%</b> 256	<b>21.3%</b> 107	502	2.91
Availability of social media training	<b>5.0%</b> 25	<b>47.6%</b> 238	<b>38.6%</b> 193	<b>8.8%</b> 44	500	2.51
Criminal use of social media	<b>3.6%</b> 18	<b>19.9%</b> 100	<b>51.7%</b> 260	<b>24.9%</b> 125	503	2.98
Online radicalization and violent extremism	<b>5.0%</b> 25	<b>22.7%</b> 113	<b>46.0%</b> 229	<b>26.3%</b> 131	498	2.94
Fake/imposter accounts targeting law enforcement	<b>4.2%</b> 21	<b>16.2%</b> 81	<b>55.0%</b> 275	<b>24.6%</b> 123	500	3.00
Keeping informed of changes in technology	<b>1.8%</b> 9	<b>19.1%</b> 96	<b>58.2%</b> 292	<b>20.9%</b> 105	502	2.98

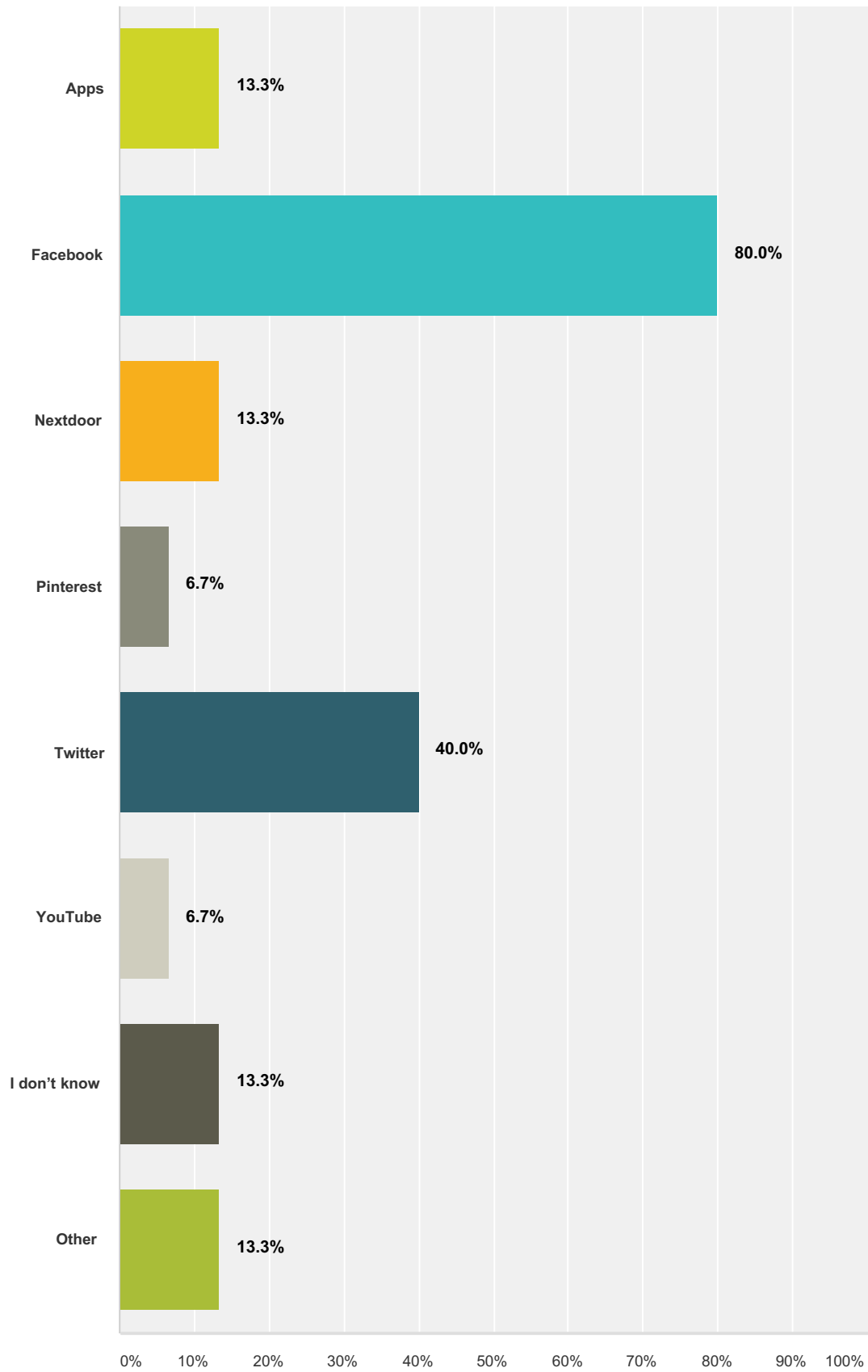
# AGENCIES NOT USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Is your agency considering the adoption of social media?



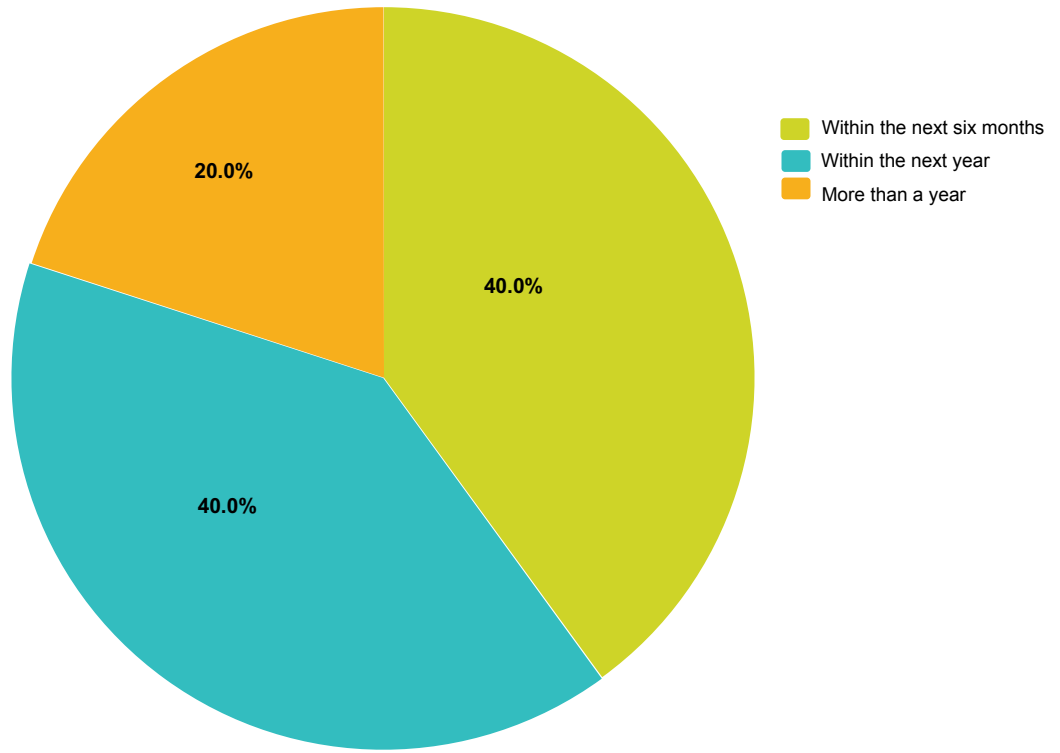
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	73.9%	17
No	26.1%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>

Which tools is your agency considering for adoption? (Select all that apply)



Answer Choices	Responses	
Apps	13.3%	2
Facebook	80.0%	12
Nextdoor	13.3%	2
Pinterest	6.7%	1
Twitter	40.0%	6
YouTube	6.7%	1
I don't know	13.3%	2
Other (please specify)	13.3%	2
<b>Total Respondents: 15</b>		

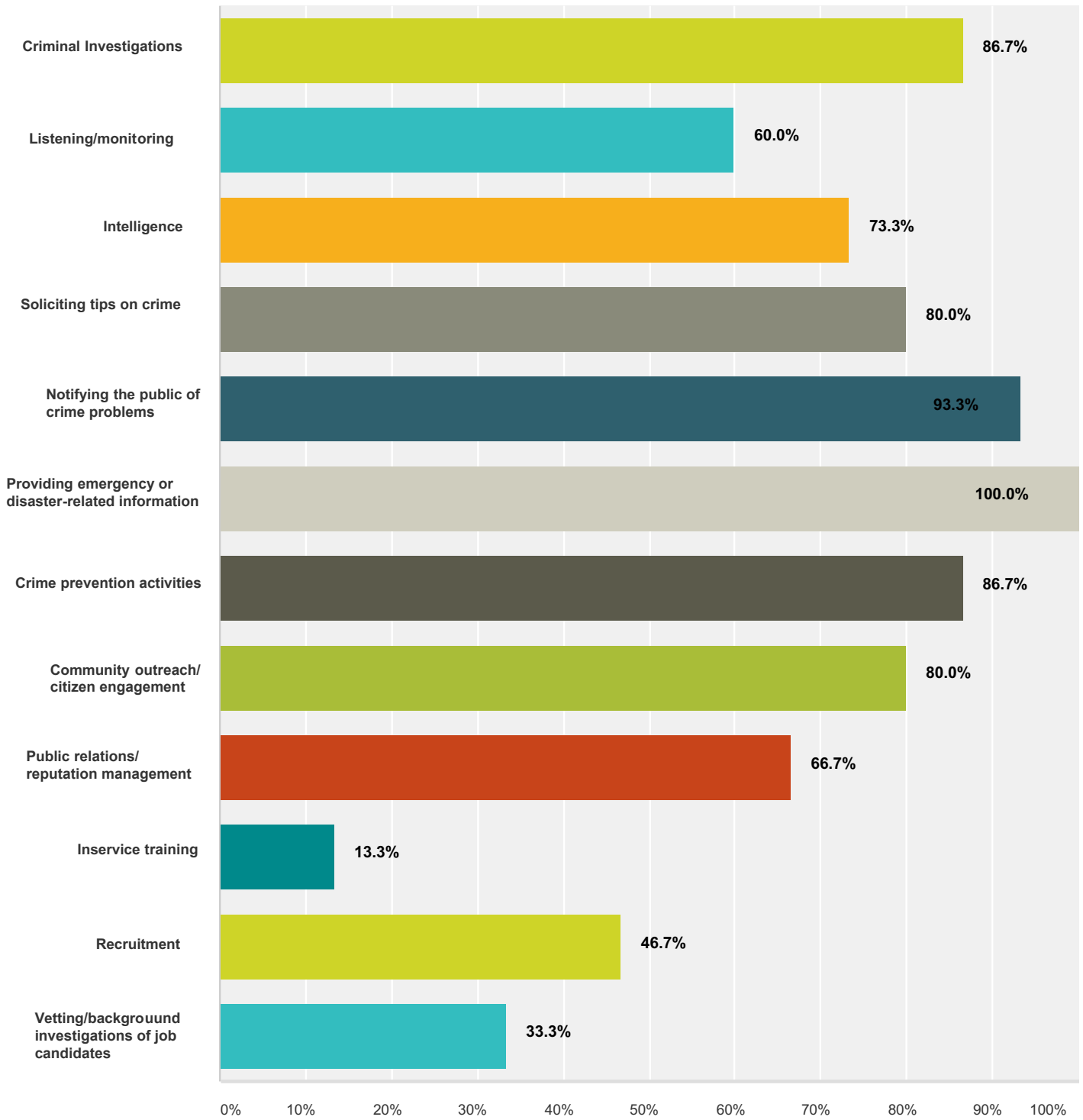
What is your agency's anticipated time frame for establishing a social media presence?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Within the next six months	40.0%	6
Within the next year	40.0%	6
More than a year	20.0%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>

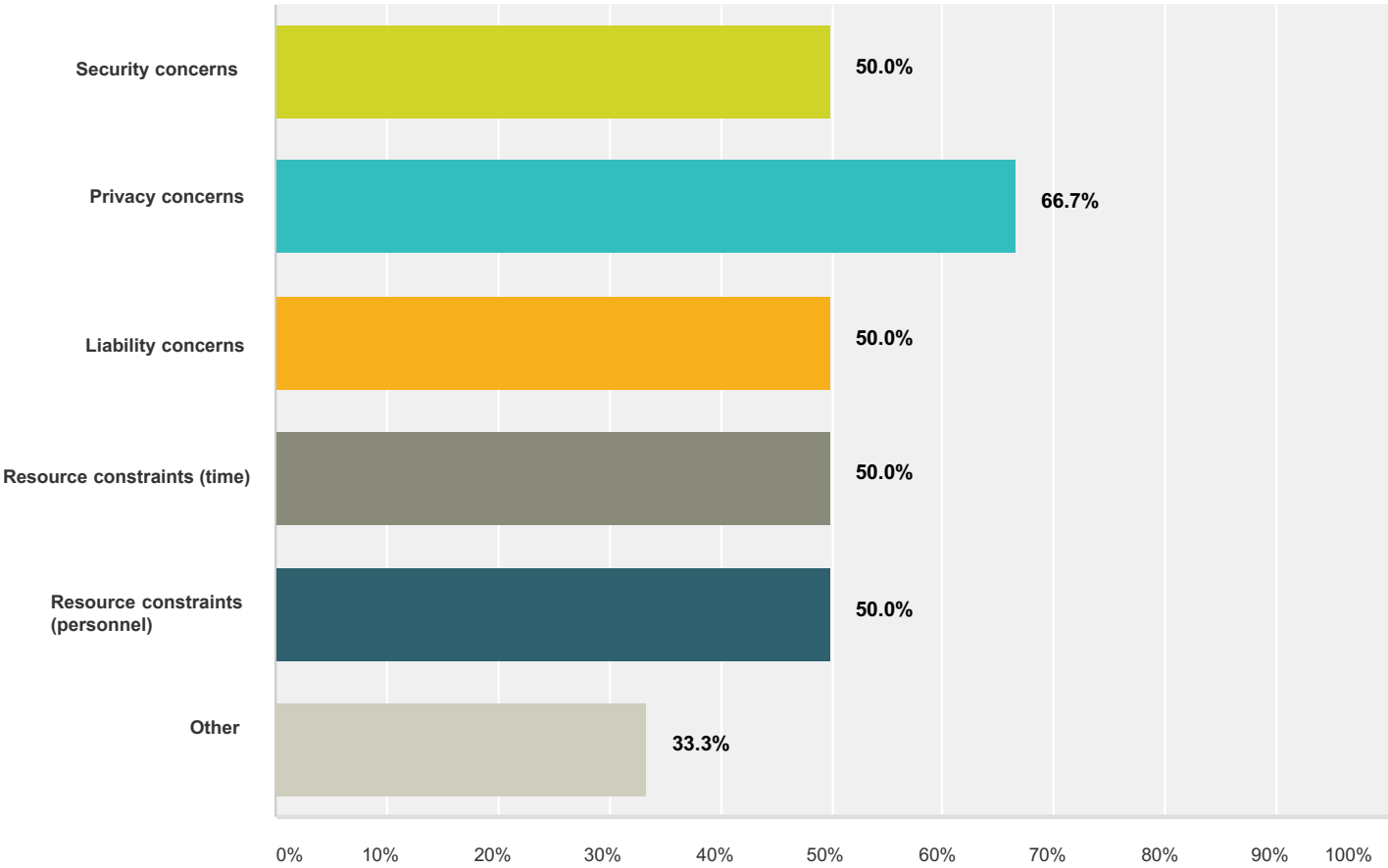


Which of the following activities does your agency anticipate using social media for? (Select all that apply)



Answer Choices	Responses	
Criminal investigations	86.7%	13
Listening/monitoring	60.0%	9
Intelligence	73.3%	11
Soliciting tips on crime	80.0%	12
Notifying the public of crime problems	93.3%	14
Providing emergency or disaster-related information	100.0%	15
Crime prevention activities	86.7%	13
Community outreach/citizen engagement	80.0%	12
Public relations/reputation management	66.7%	10
Inservice training	13.3%	2
Recruitment	46.7%	7
Vetting/background investigations of job candidates	33.3%	5
<b>Total Respondents: 15</b>		

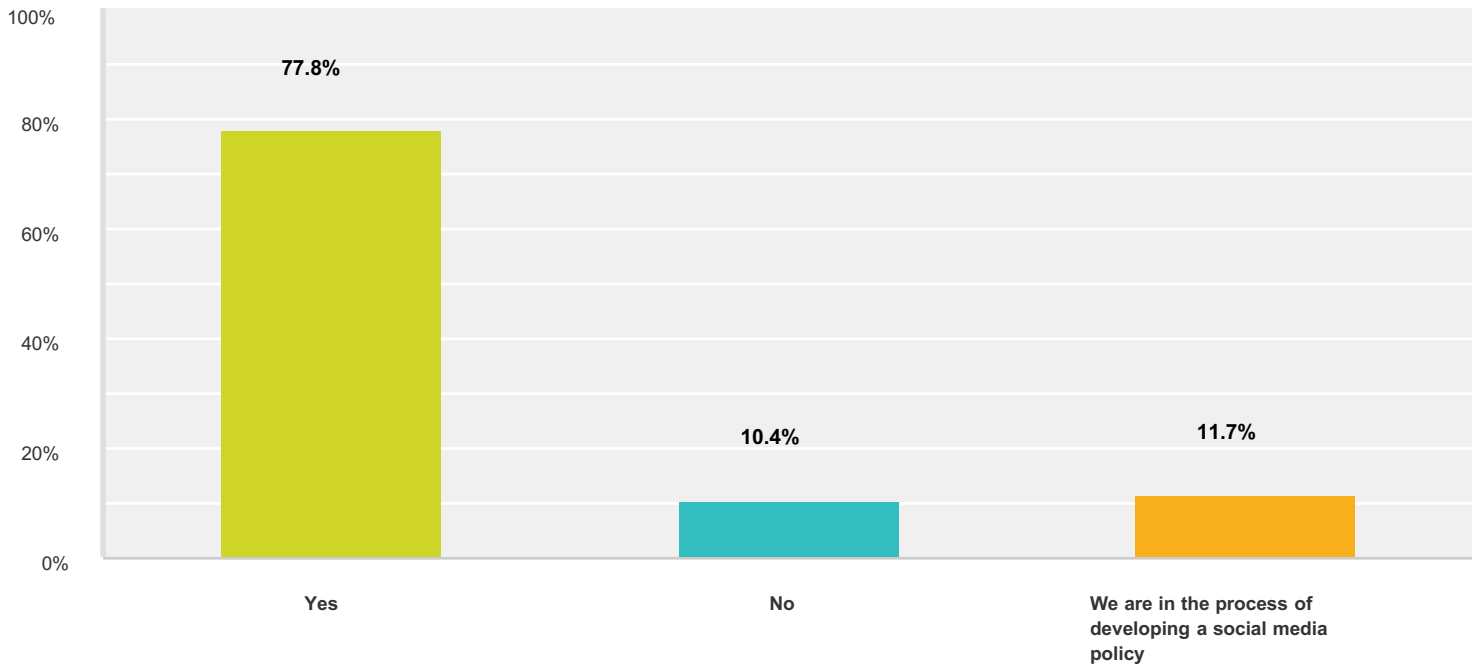
**What are the barriers to using social media in your agency? (Select all that apply)**



Answer Choices	Responses
Security concerns	50.0% 3
Privacy concerns	66.7% 4
Liability concerns	50.0% 3
Resource constraints (time)	50.0% 3
Resource constraints (personnel)	50.0% 3
Other (please specify)	33.3% 2
<b>Total Respondents: 6</b>	

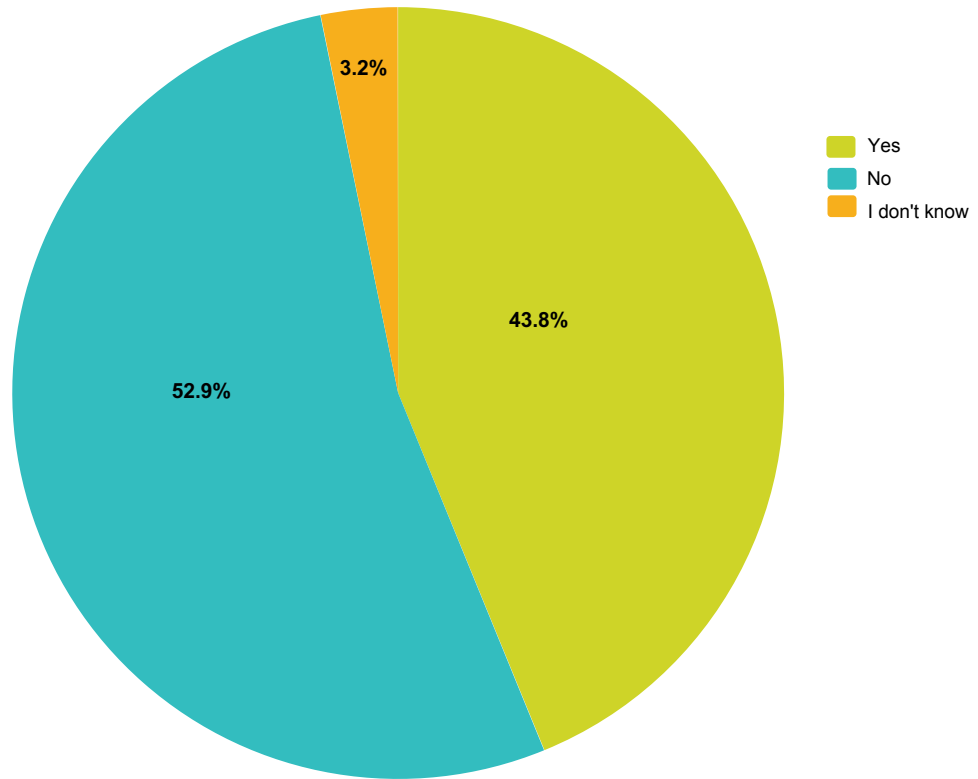
## GENERAL QUESTIONS

Does your agency have a written social media policy?



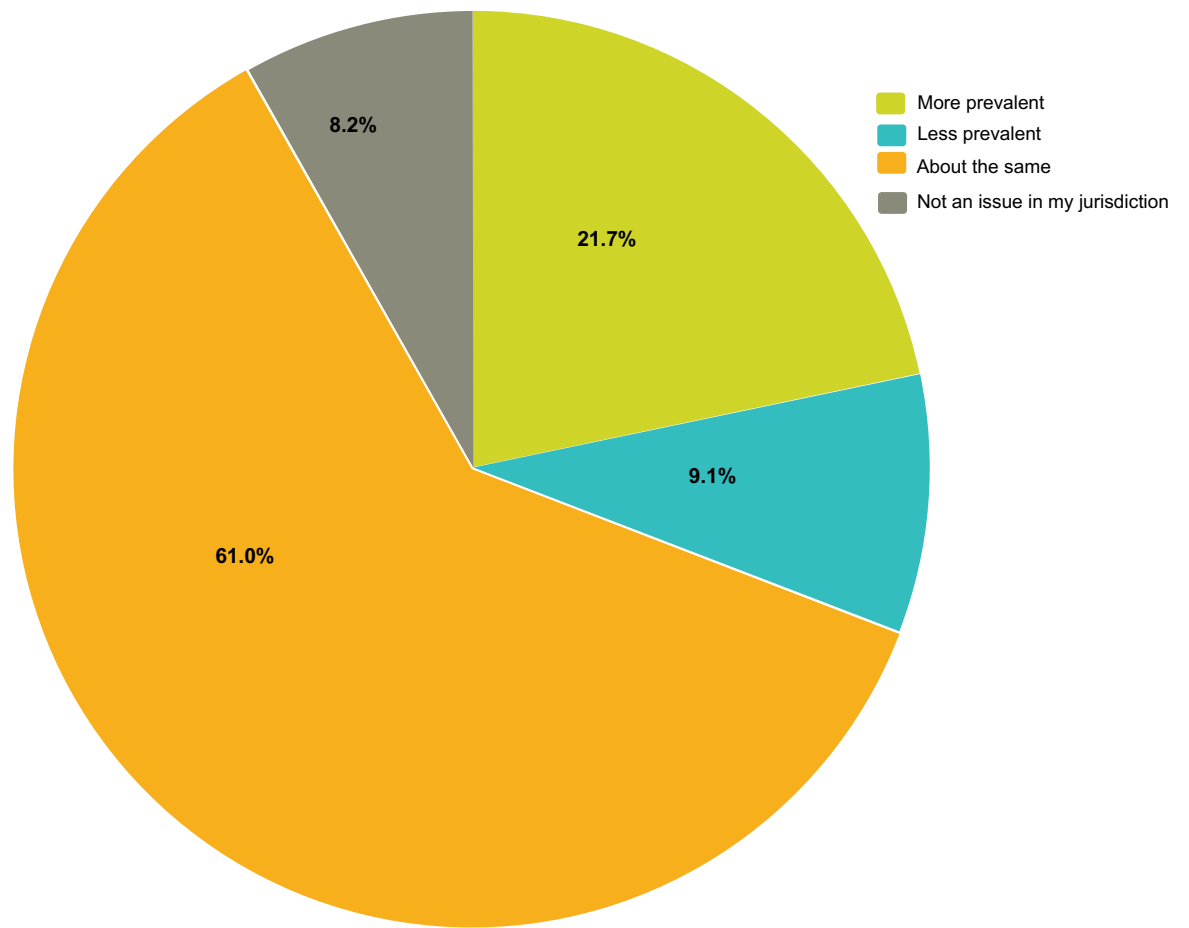
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	77.8%	411
No	10.4%	55
We are in the process of developing a social media policy	11.7%	62
<b>Total</b>		<b>528</b>

Has your agency dealt with negative attention related to the use of social media by agency employees on-duty or off-duty?



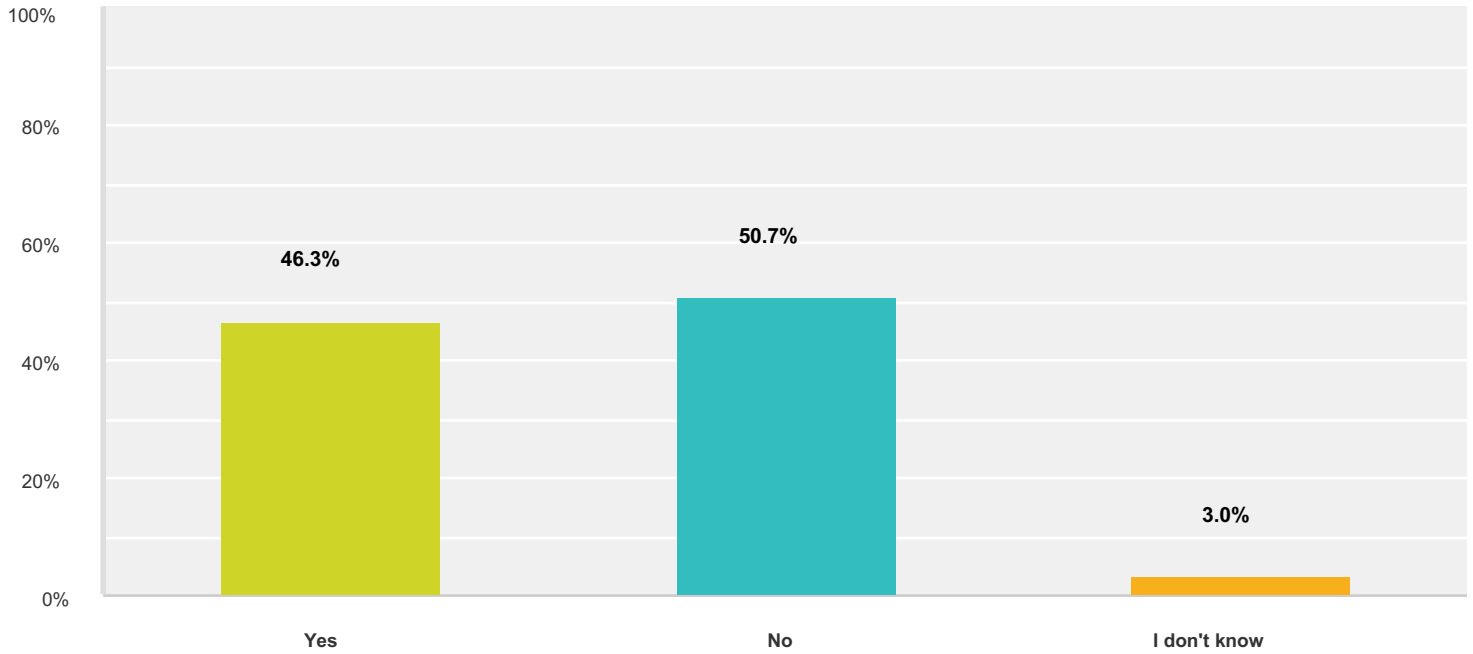
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	43.8%	231
No	52.9%	279
I don't know	3.2%	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>527</b>

Compared to one year ago, concerns about employees' personal use of social media are:



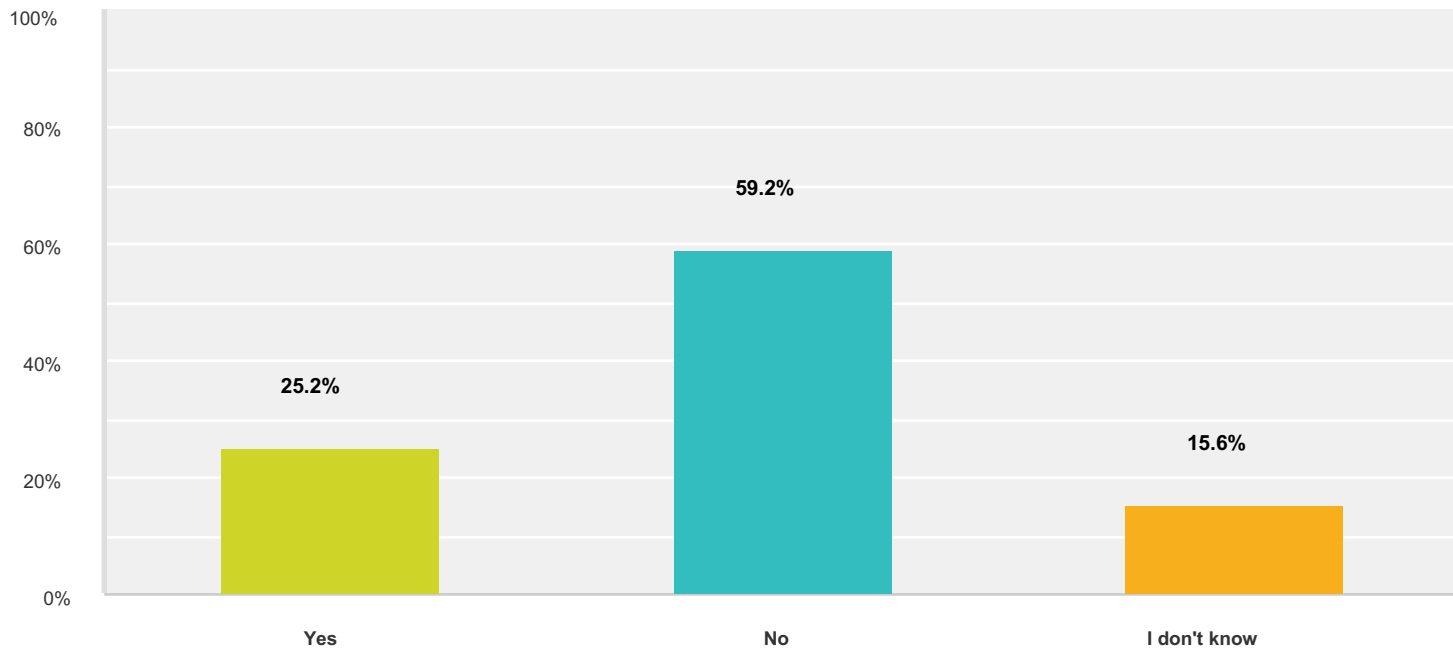
Answer Choices	Responses	
More prevalent	21.7%	114
Less prevalent	9.1%	48
About the same	61.0%	320
Not an issue in my jurisdiction	8.2%	43
<b>Total</b>		<b>525</b>

Does your agency provide inservice training on on-duty or off-duty use of social media?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	46.3%	244
No	50.7%	267
I don't know	3.0%	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>527</b>

**Does your agency provide academy training on on-duty or off-duty use of social media?**



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	25.2%	133
No	59.2%	312
I don't know	15.6%	82
<b>Total</b>		<b>527</b>