



**PROJECT REPORT
& SURVEY RESULTS**

FEBRUARY 2010

Team Members

- **Leadership Team:**

- Stacy Jackson, Project Director
- Ann Cairns, AGU Director for Strategic Communications & Outreach
- Jennifer Harden, AGU Biosciences President-Elect

- **Project Team:**

- Sam Borgeson & Emily Chueh - technology
- Danielle Svehla Christianson – website & media training
- Suzie Shin – data management
- Cathy Kunkel, Anna Sommer, Adam B. Smith, Zoe Chafe, Sam B., Danielle S.C. – volunteer coordination
- Anna Kantenbacher – PR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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AGU piloted a Q&A service for the media during the 2009 Copenhagen negotiations



AGU Climate Science
Q&A for Copenhagen

Search this site

Welcome!

Our **project mission** is to enable high-quality climate science reporting during the Copenhagen negotiations (December 7-18, 2009) by providing an email service staffed by climate scientists with quick turnaround and peer collaboration.

[AGU Statement](#)

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Project Results:

New! Full Results (ppt)

New! EoS article (pdf)

Seasonal Landcover and Arctic Sea Ice



- 12 days: Dec. 7-18, 2009
- Shared in-box for scientists to reply to questions submitted by journalists
- Six scientists staffed on each two-hour shift
- Questions limited to climate science to maintain non-advocacy, non-partisan perspective

The project touched over 1,000 individuals

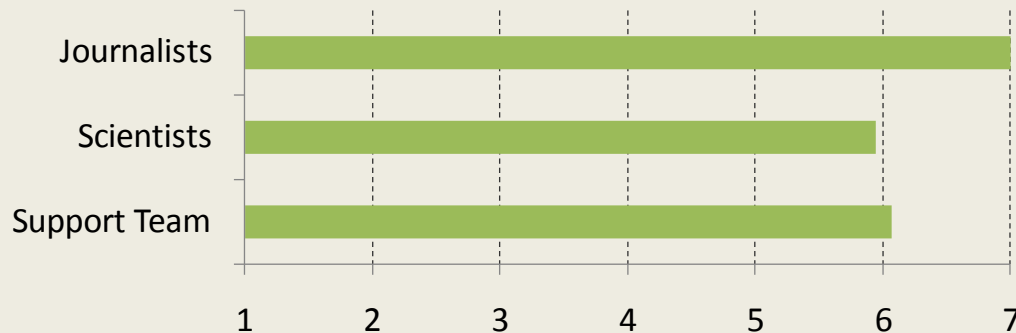
- 708 scientist volunteers, 62 support team volunteers, 12 organizers behind the scenes
- 54 media inquiries from 27 journalists
- 1,094 unique visitors to the project homepage
- 580 unique visitors to journalist homepage

Media inquiries were lower than expected, so not all volunteers were able to participate

- A mid-course correction was made on day five to bring coverage in line with demand:
 - First five days: 24/7 coverage, 12 two-hour shifts per day
 - Last seven days: 3 two-hour shifts per day
- Of 782 volunteers, about half (387) logged into the email system during the project

After the event, we surveyed participants; the response was very encouraging

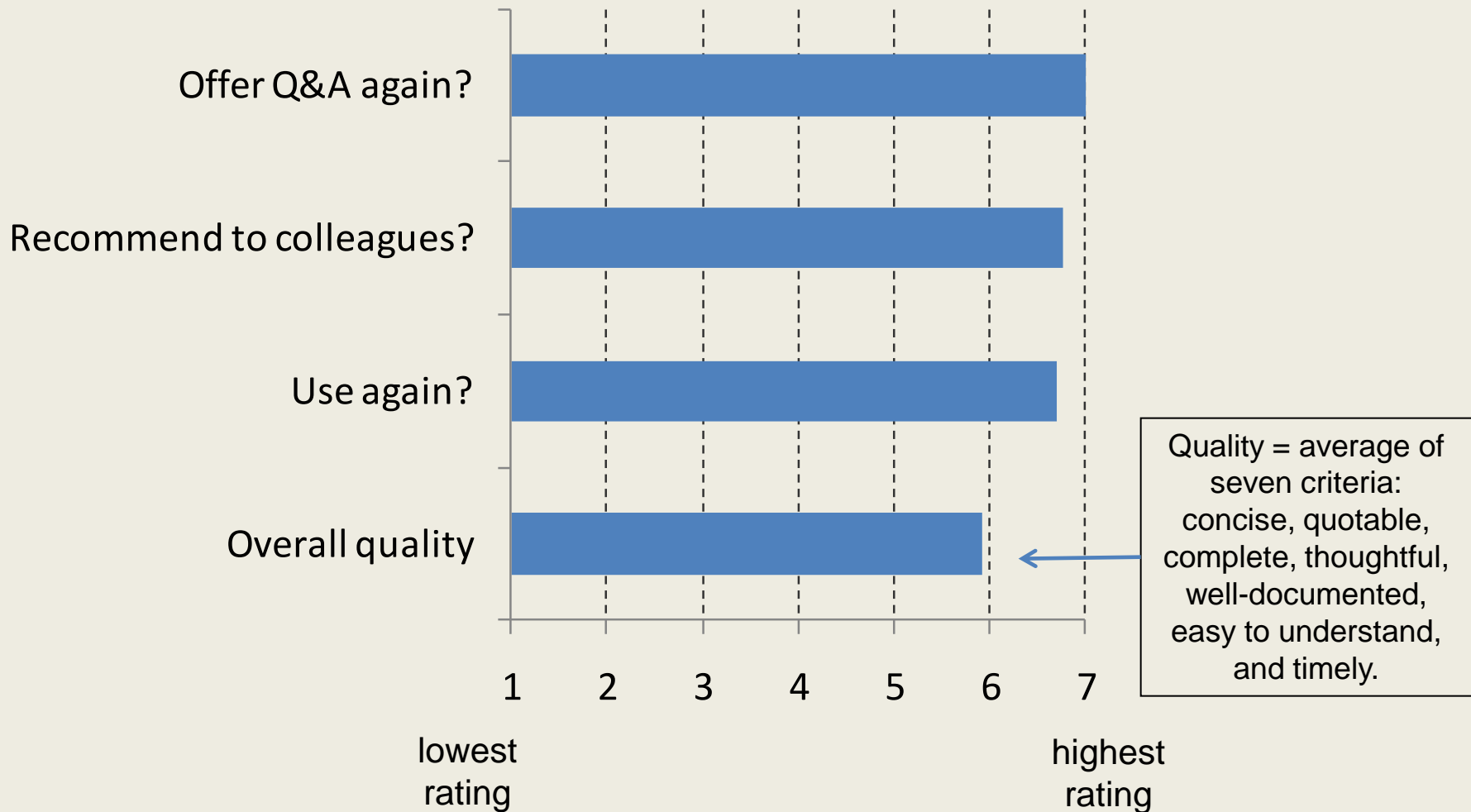
- Survey to all participants (Dec. 20-Jan.25)
- Should we offer the service again?



7 = yes, absolutely
1 = no, absolutely not

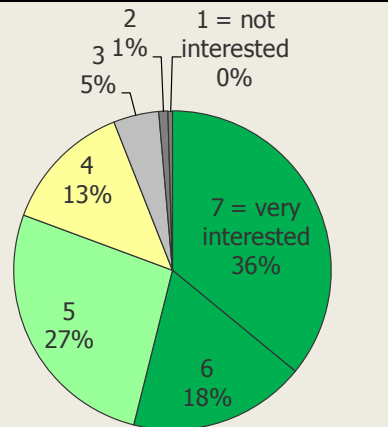
- Survey response rate:
 - Journalists: 52% (14/27)
 - Scientists: 33% (237/708)
 - Support team: 24% (15/62)

Journalists were overwhelmingly positive

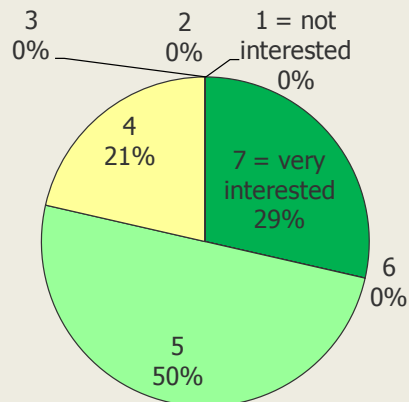


Scientists and support team members are energized and willing to do more

Level of Interest in future outreach efforts

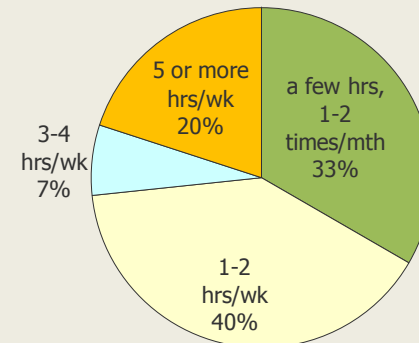
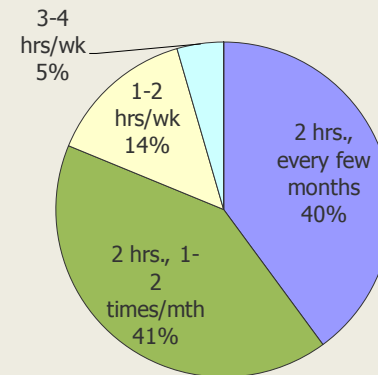


Scientists



Support Team Members

Time Willing to Invest in Outreach Efforts



Participants suggested many next steps, and AGU is considering some of the following...

- Continued Q&A service
- Referral service
- Response network to correct errors
- Educational workshops for members of the media
- Science communication interest group
- Additional communications training

Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved throughout the spring and beyond.

Q&A volunteers are on the e-mail list. If you did not participate and would like to get involved, sign up at: www.agu.org/comminfo/.

- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

SURVEY RESULTS: JOURNALISTS

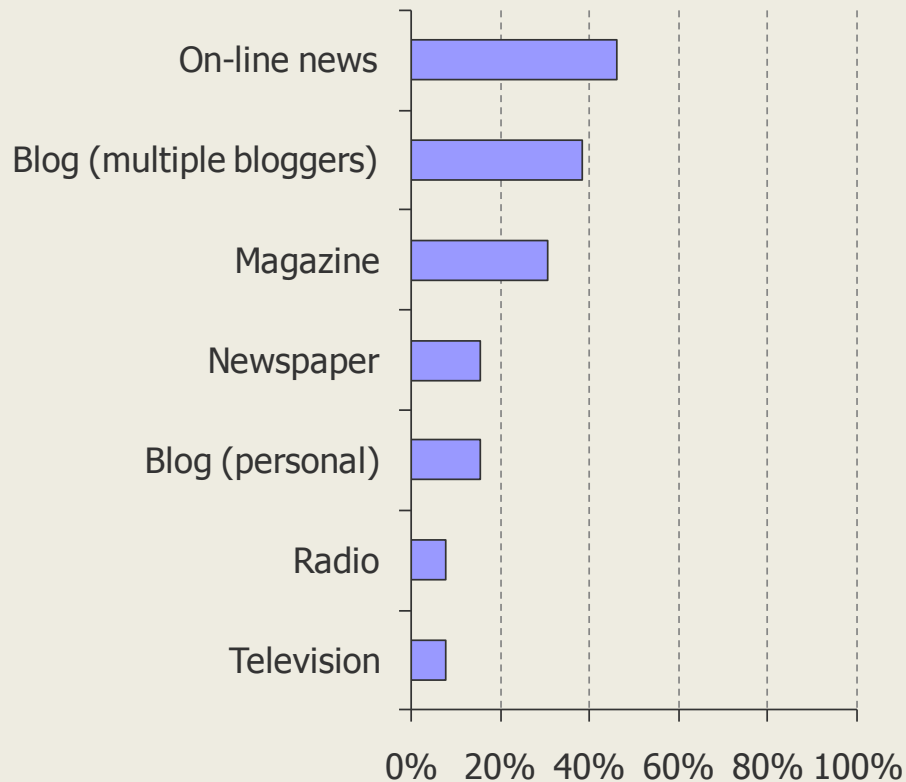
- **SURVEY RESULTS: SCIENTISTS**
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Journalist Statistics

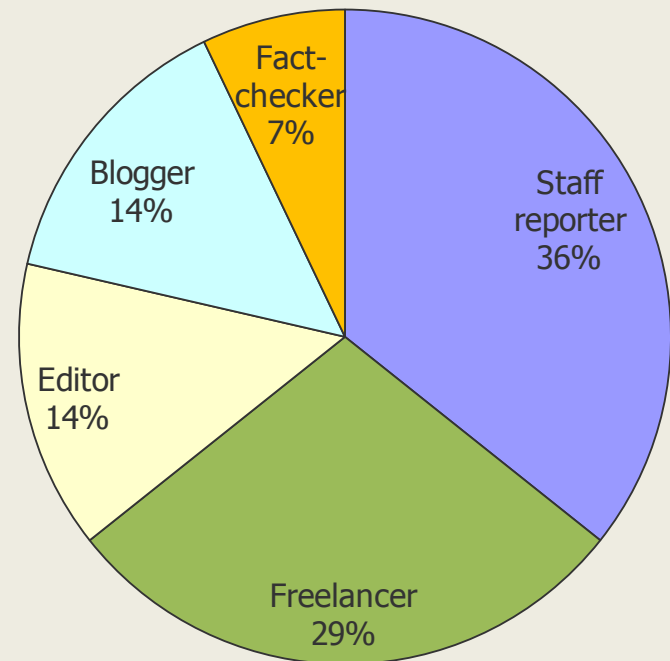
- 27 media outlets
 - 17 U.S., 10 international
 - 16 print or broadcast (10 national, 6 local), 9 on-line, 2 freelance destination tbd
- 54 questions submitted
- 52% participation in survey (14 of 27)
- 578 unique visitors to journalist webpage (12/1 – 12/18)

The Q&A service attracted a broad set of journalists

With what type of media outlet are you affiliated? (choose as many as apply) (n=13)

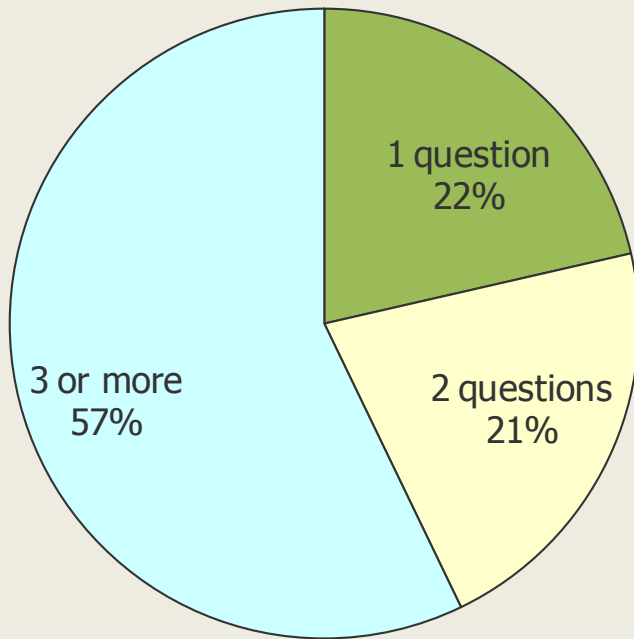


What is your primary role? (n=14)

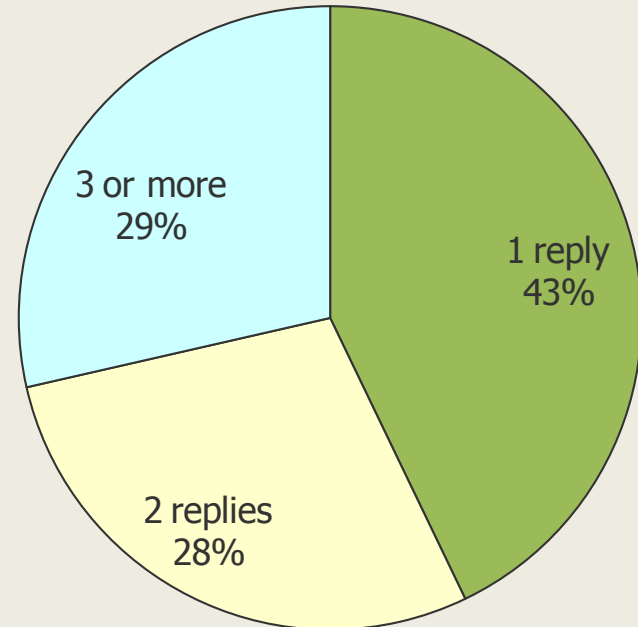


Journalists who submitted multiple questions were most likely to reply to the survey

How many questions did you submit to the AGU Q&A service? (n=14)

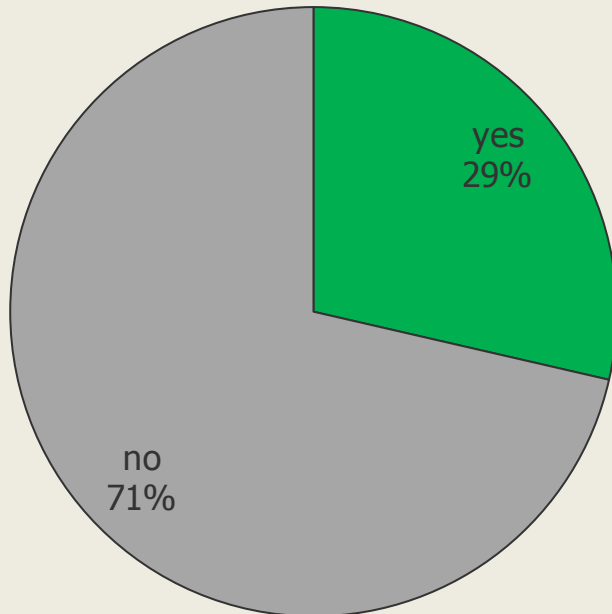


How many replies did you receive per question? (n=14)

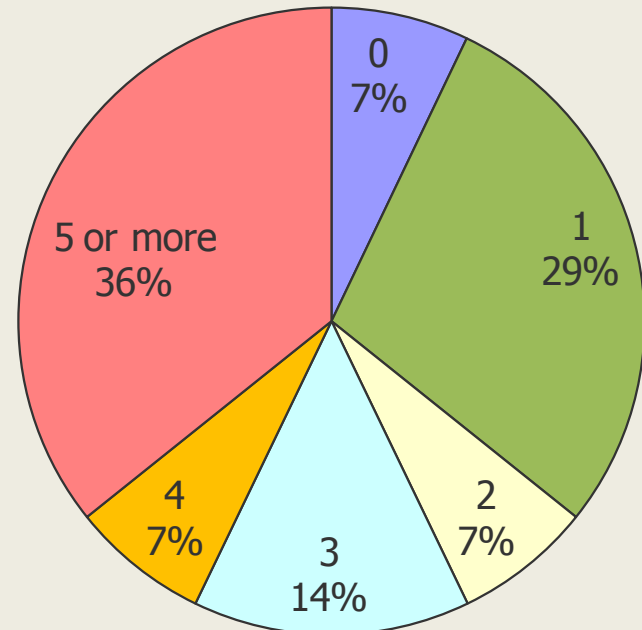


Most participating journalists did not attend COP-15 and wrote 3 or fewer climate stories

Did you attend the Copenhagen negotiations?
(n=14)

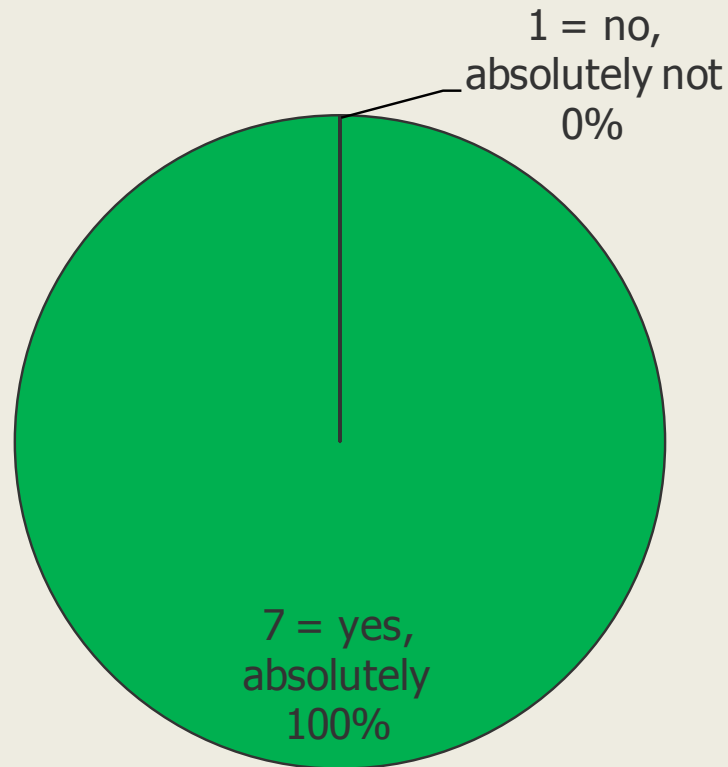


How many stories re. climate did you file over the two weeks of the Copenhagen negotiations? (n=14)



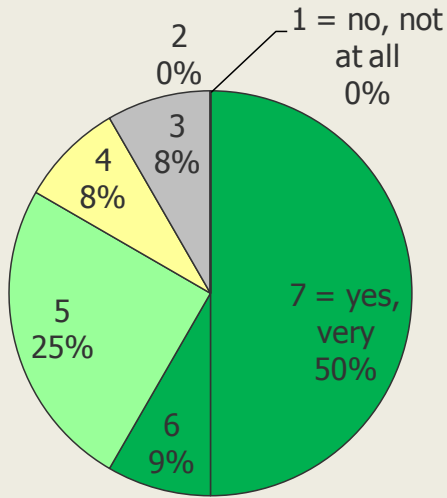
All journalists said the Q&A service should be offered again (rated 7 on scale of 7)

Do you think we should offer the Q&A service again at a future date? (n=14)

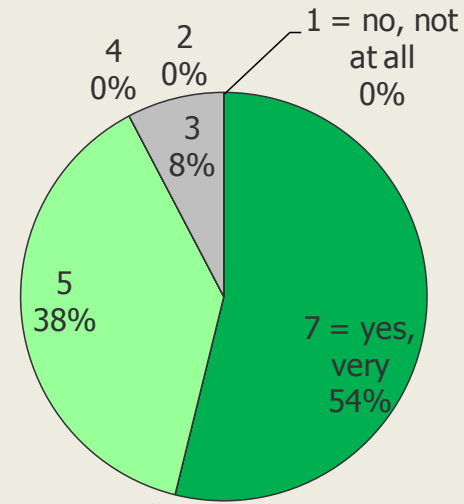


Journalists rated the answers as high-quality on all dimensions

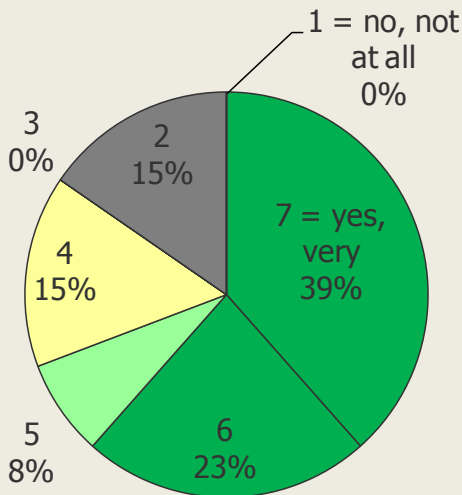
Concise



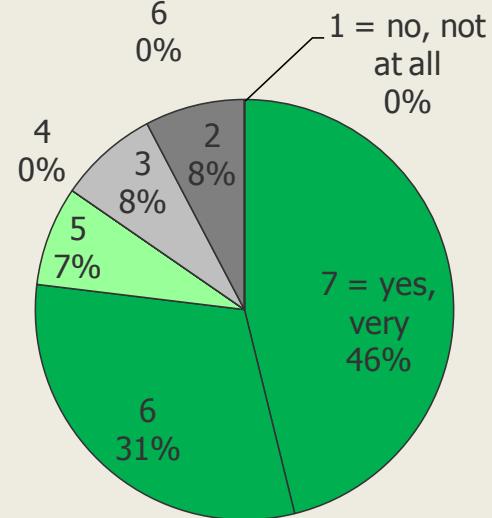
Complete



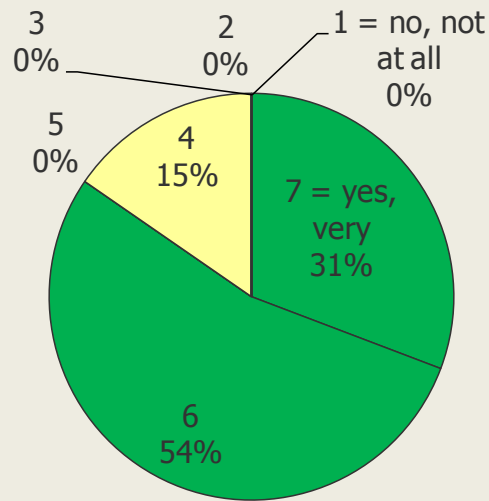
Quotable



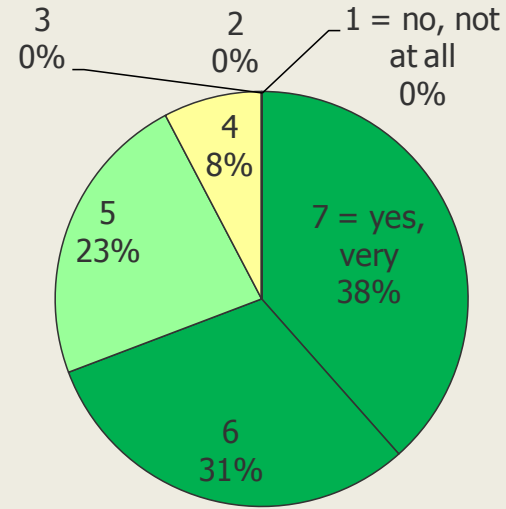
Thoughtful



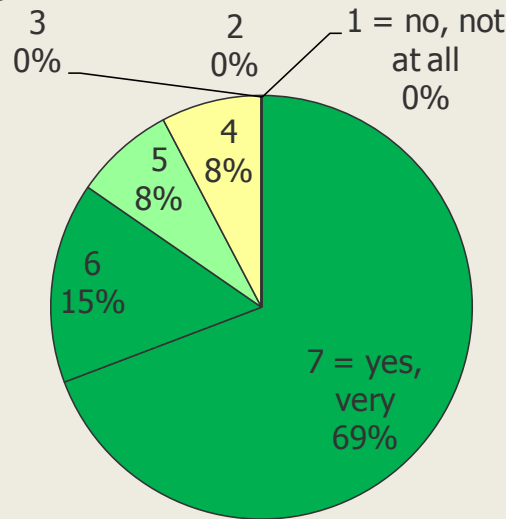
Journalists rated the answers as high-quality on all dimensions (cont.)



Well documented



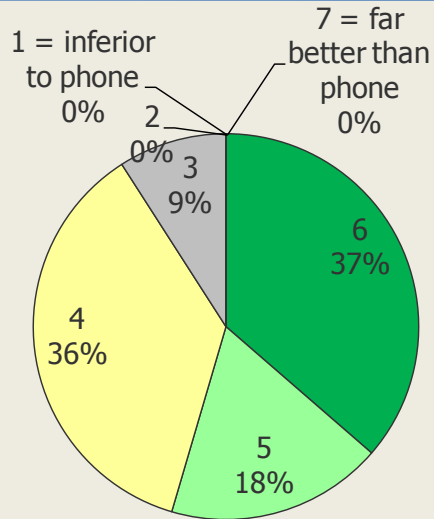
Easy to understand



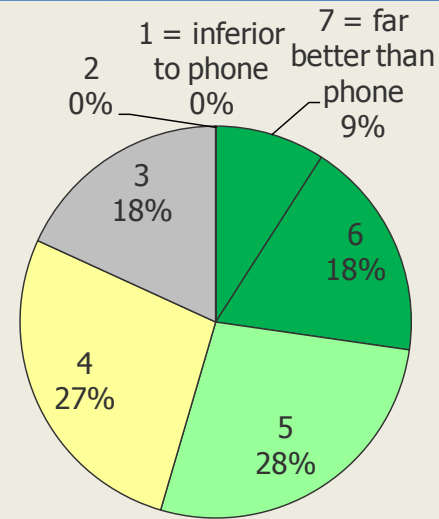
Timely

Journalists rated the Q&A service superior or equal to phone calls on all dimensions

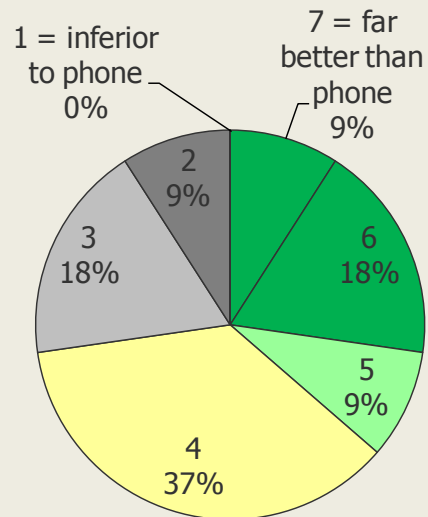
Concise



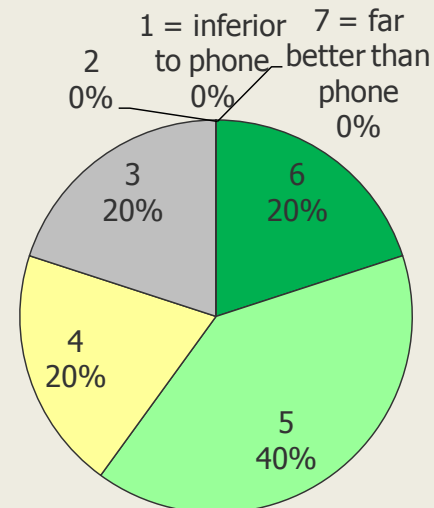
Complete



Quotable

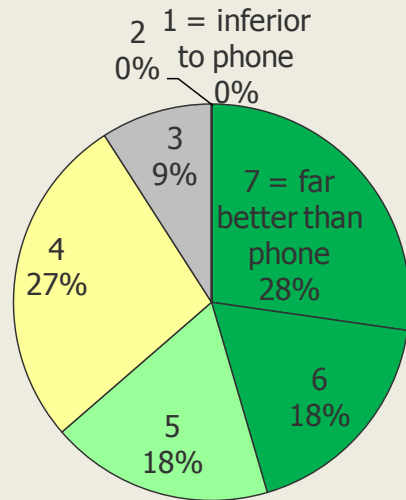


Thoughtful

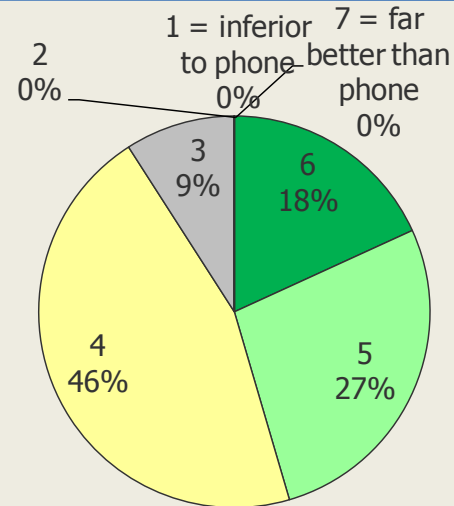


Journalists rated the Q&A service superior or equal to phone calls on all dimensions (cont.)

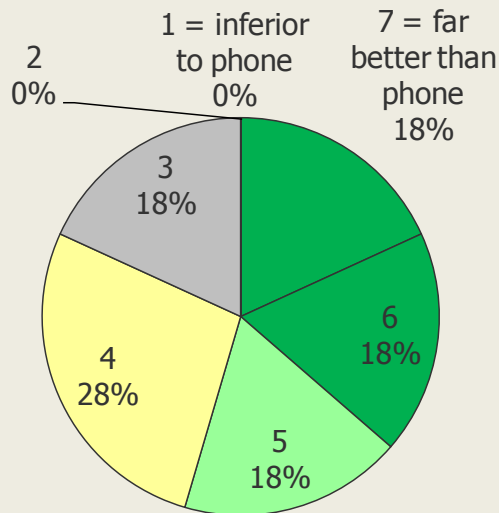
Well documented



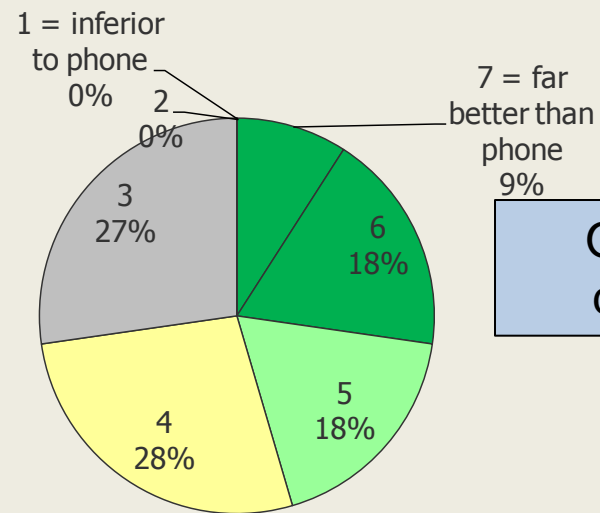
Easy to understand



Timely



Overall quality

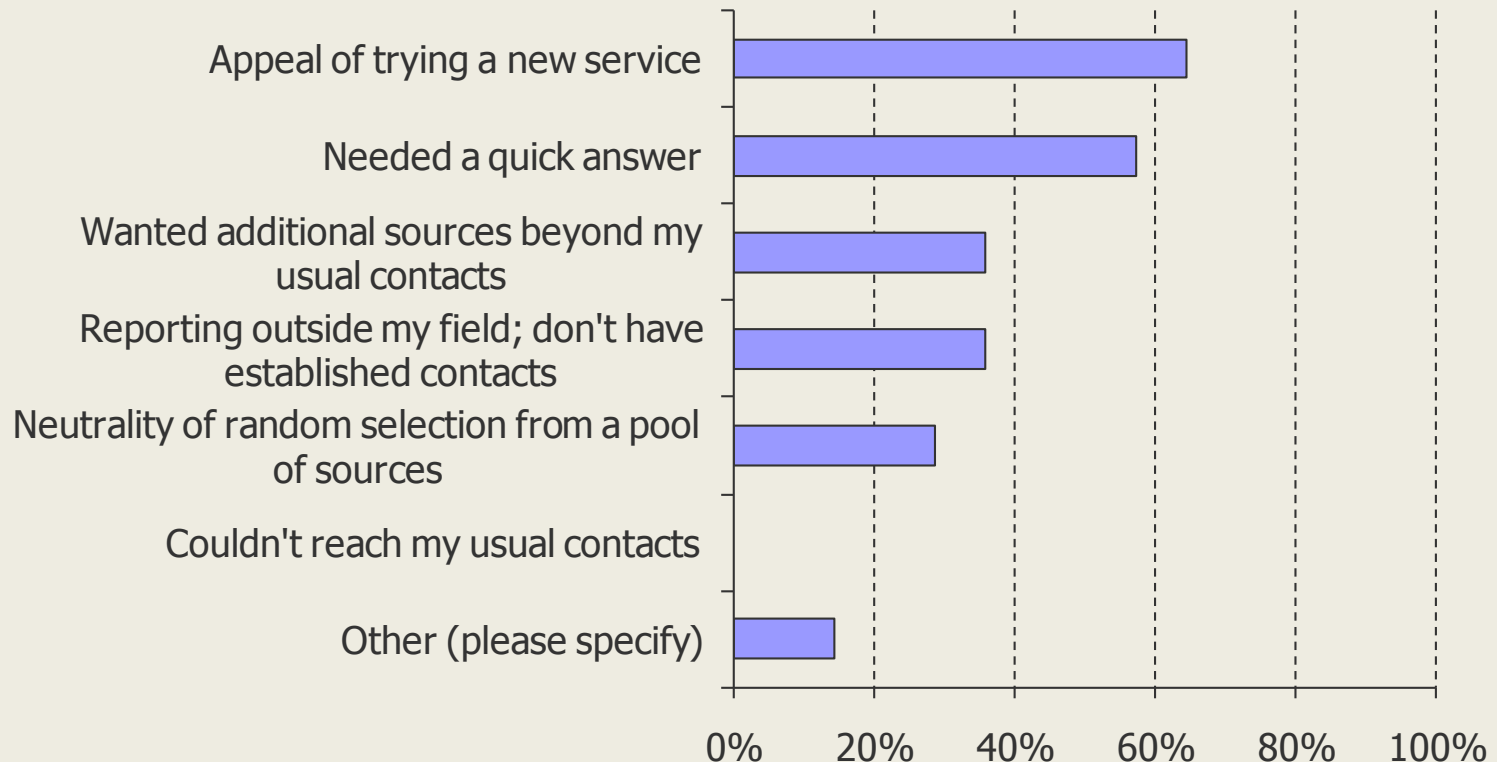


Journalists have varying preferences for email and phone interviews... (direct quotes)

- **Prefer email in general:**
 - Each has unique advantages. Overall, I would likely prefer email.
 - Emails are just as useful as phone calls - sometimes better.
 - I have hearing loss and almost never do phone interviews.
 - I think this is a far better way to interact with scientists, because you are unlikely to misquote anyone.
- **Prefer phone in general:**
 - For me, phone is always better.
 - This is a great service for filling gaps in knowledge when several opinions are needed. I would always prefer to speak to someone directly if I could, since interviewees tend to give better quotes when they are spoken, but it is great to get a quick response - especially at times ...when a lot of people are already busy.
 - Email interviews are always a second choice, in my opinion... Email quotes in my experience are usually more clinical and less lively -- not good for a science story!
- **Prefer email and phone for different purposes:**
 - You still need traditional interviews. The thing is, this is a useful supplement when you don't have a lot of time and you want some answers.
 - It's more useful for background information.....still, very helpful! If I want a quote--I'll call.
- **Prefer Q&A service:**
 - One of the best things about the service was that the replies came from such a variety of scientists from around the world. I thought it was great that I didn't pre-select the respondents.

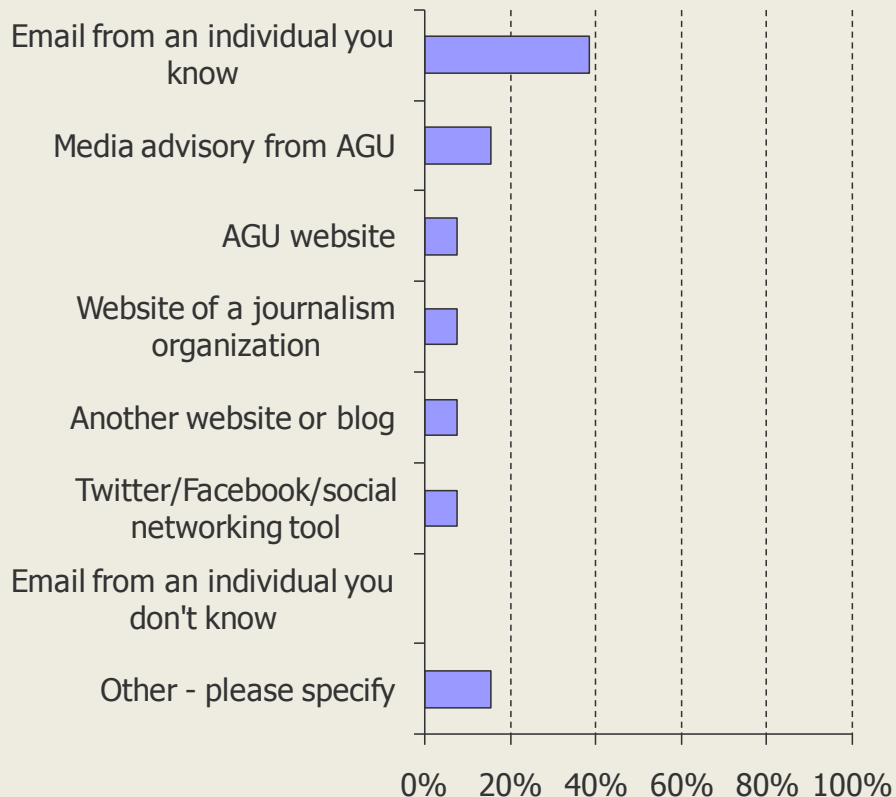
Journalists participated to try a new service, get a quick answer, or find more sources

**What motivated you to submit a question to AGU Climate Science Q&A for Copenhagen? (choose as many as apply)
(n=14)**



They learned about the service primarily via email and the media advisory

How did you learn about the Q&A service?
(choose as many as apply) (n=13)

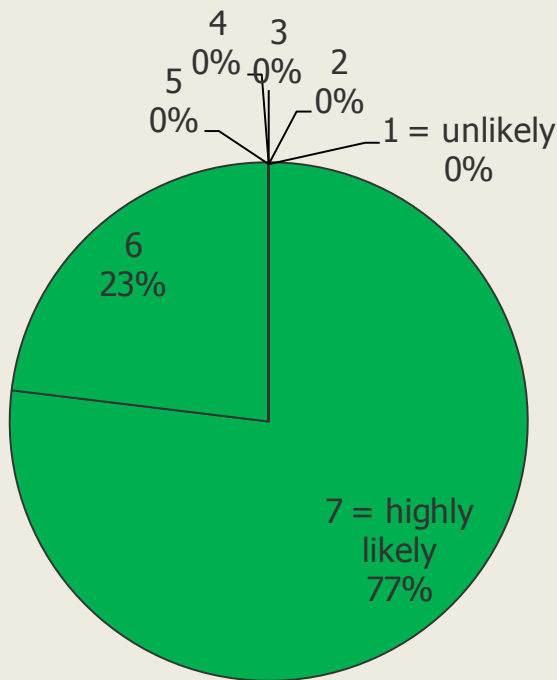


- PR for the event included:
 - media advisory
 - web announcements on: Metcalf Institute, SEJ, SPJ, ABSW, AAN
 - article in Wired
 - emails to the informal & formal COP-15 press organizations, state press associations, journalism schools, ~15 climate/ environmental journalism organizations, individual journalists
- Suggestions from journalists for future PR:
 - Word of mouth, Twitter, individual emails, Eurekalert, emails to media organizations, scienceblogs.com, on-line news organizations

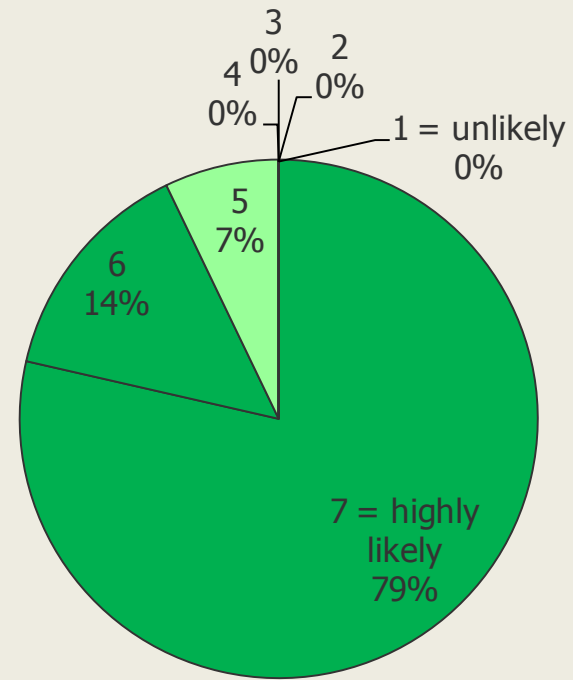
All would recommend the Q&A service to colleagues and would use it again

If a similar service were offered in the future, how likely would you be to...

Recommend it to colleagues



Use it again



Journalists suggest a few improvements to the Q&A service... (direct quotes)

- **Speak in lay language**
 - Describe the science in a more lively/energetic way, as [you] would to a person on the street.
 - [Provide] interesting, quotable material, not just links to general, basic research [journalists] could find themselves.
- **Improve processes:**
 - Offer chat?
 - When someone asks a question, a message of acknowledgment should be sent.
 - Some guidance on how to phrase the questions might be useful.
 - There is of course a challenge with follow-up.
 - The only problem was keeping a conversation going with the same individuals, because of the high turnover rate. I would write back with a follow-up question and get someone else who had taken the original person's place.
- **Broaden the service?:**
 - I think it would be more useful if scientists were allowed to comment on how the science fits into policy, what the socioeconomic implications are, etc...
 - It would be interesting if the pool of scientists could include ecological economists and the like, though it may be better to keep the focus.
- **Ensure multiple respondents / review:**
 - I'm concerned about what happens when some of the respondents who have no expertise in the relevant topic jump into respond to climate science questions... I don't know what to do about this other than to make sure that all questions get multiple respondents, but even that would not guarantee high quality responses.

Journalists would find the Q&A service useful at these times... (direct quotes)

- Around specific events:
 - Major markups of climate change legislation in Congress.
 - Lead up to Congressional votes, during relevant Congressional hearings, during the AGU fall meeting, perhaps in conjunction with major global events, such as October 24.
 - Certainly any major climate negotiations.
 - Major conferences such as AAAS and AAS
 - [K]ey moments would be the next major COP meetings (Bonn, Mexico), and if/when the Senate takes up climate legislation for debate.
- Year-round:
 - The COP is a great start. The service could be useful at all times.
 - It will be useful throughout
 - I believe whenever there is a story on climate change to be done.
 - It would be great if the service existed all the time; the assault on science is ongoing and relentless, and the need for better knowledge is never-ending.
 - Year round

Other useful services would be...

(direct quotes)

- **Correcting misinformation:**
 - Actively countering the misinformation that pervades much of the discussion - at least in the US.
 - Be much more vocal re fact checking the media. We (the media) need to be much better at getting stuff right, and when we do get stuff wrong, we need to be held accountable. Correct us when we get stuff wrong!
- **Suggesting stories:**
 - Press releases for interested journalists on climate news and notable research.
 - Suggest story ideas to journalists, for instance whenever a new study is released.
- **Referrals to scientists:**
 - Give journalists an option to simply ask for the info of a relevant scientist for their story. Then AGU could instead provide the journalist with the relevant scientist's contact info so the journalist can then set up a phone interview.
- **Just being available:**
 - If you're out of the office, set up an out of office message. And if you don't want to do an interview, say so ... We need to know so we can chase someone else!

Journalists were complimentary... (direct quotes)

- Thoughtful and concise. Was just detailed and technical enough to provide thorough understanding.
- The approach was fantastic
- Great - very helpful
- I thought this service was FANTASTIC and used it for every science story I wrote.
- Fantastic turnaround time for some very tricky questions
- Easy, speedy - very helpful - thank you!
- Since climate change has become such an important subject, expert opinion is needed to help understand it. I believe that the AGU team can offer this information in a comprehensive manner.
- It was a brilliant service, and the responses were timely and varied.
- Many many thanks!!!

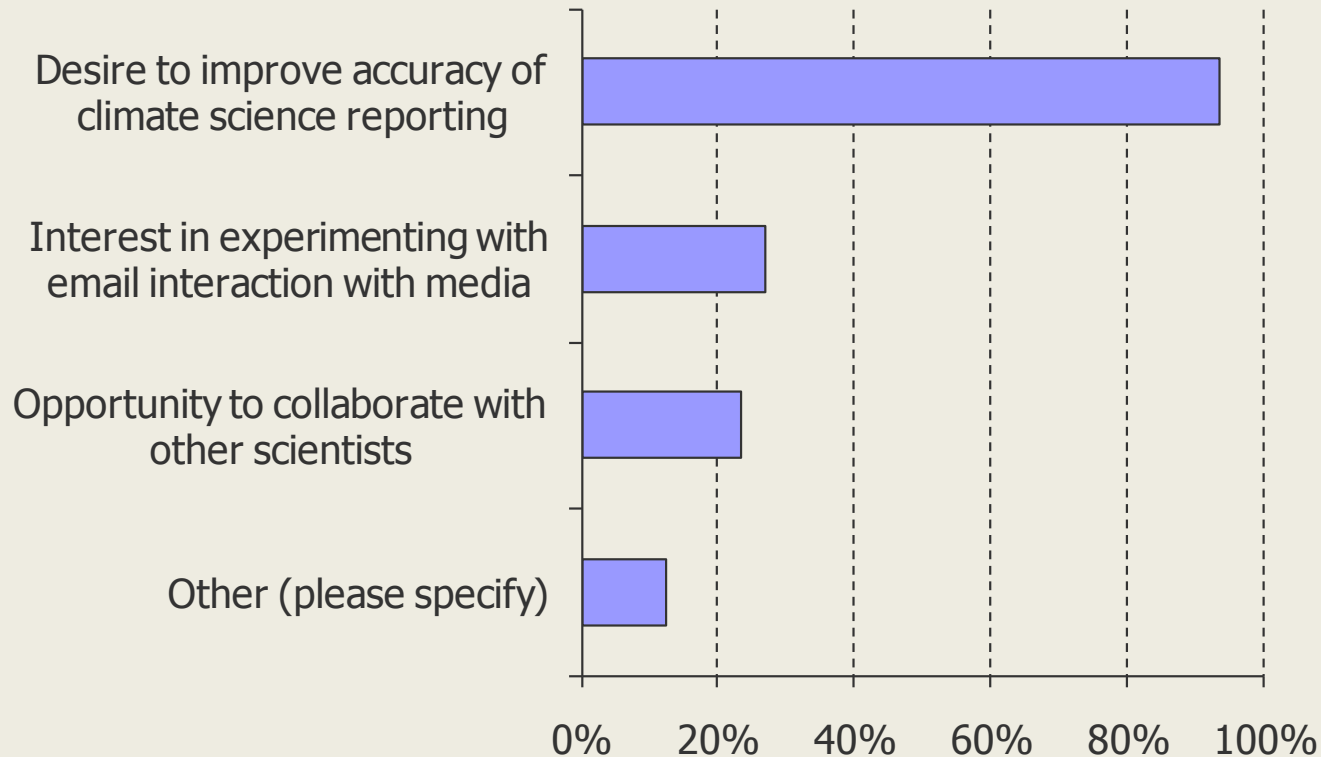
- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
- **SURVEY RESULTS: JOURNALISTS**
- **SURVEY RESULTS: SCIENTISTS**
- **SURVEY RESULTS: SUPPORT TEAM**
- **APPENDICES**

Scientist Statistics

- 708 scientists volunteered to participate
- 486 time slots (81 shifts, 6 people each)
- ~335 logged in to the EmailCenterPro shared in-box;); some covered multiple shifts
- 54 questions answered
- 33% participation in the survey (237 of 708)
- 669 unique visitors to the project webpage for scientists (12/1-12/18)

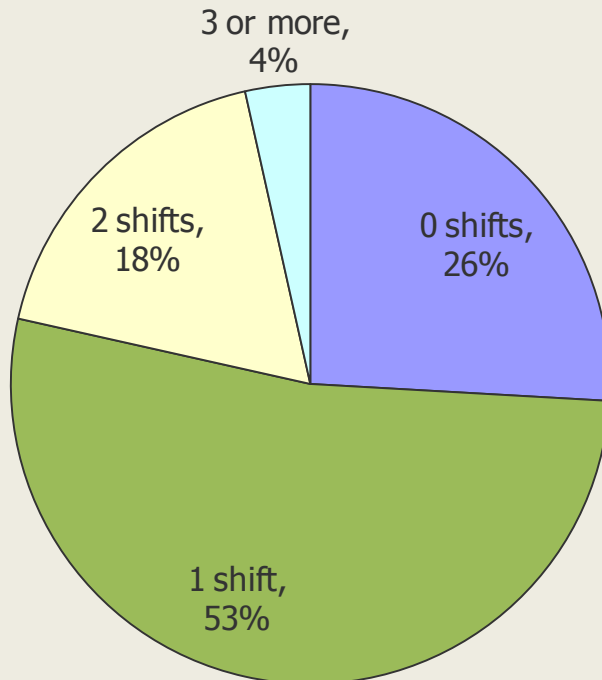
Most scientists volunteered with the goal to improve accuracy of climate science reporting

**What motivated you to sign up to participate?
(choose as many as apply) (n=235)**

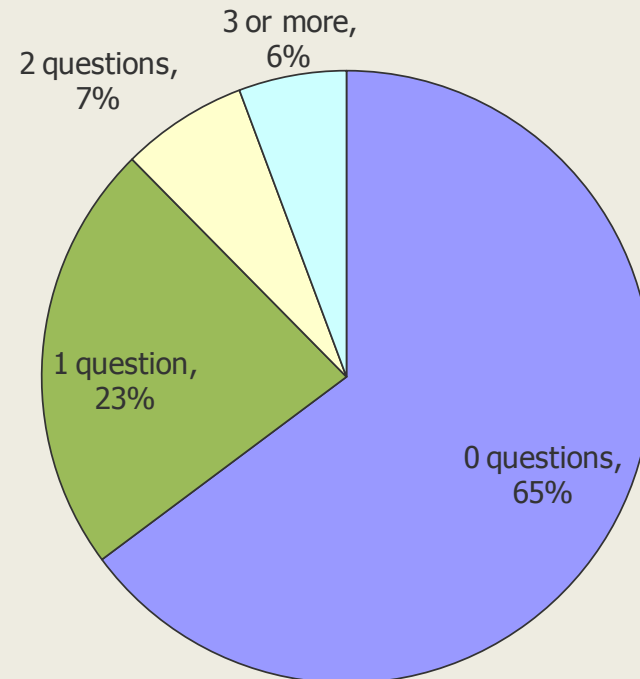


Most scientists participated in 1 shift and answered 0 or 1 question

How many shifts did you participate in? (n=228)

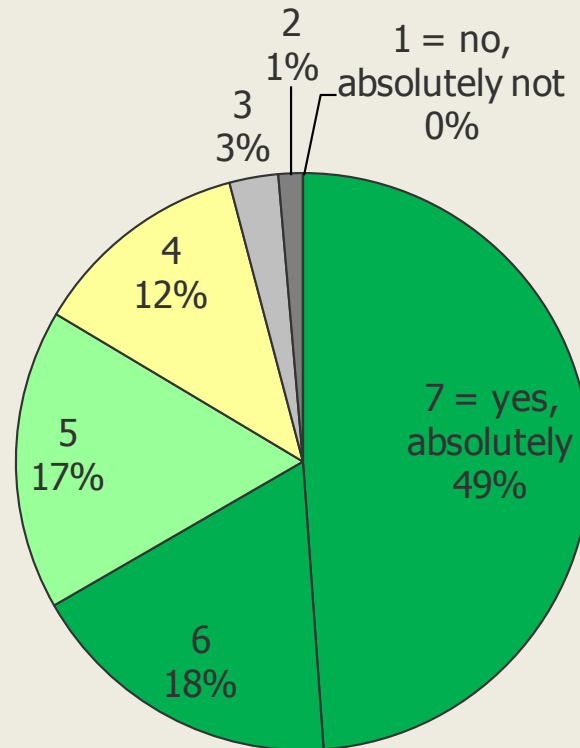


How many journalist questions did you answer? (n=193)



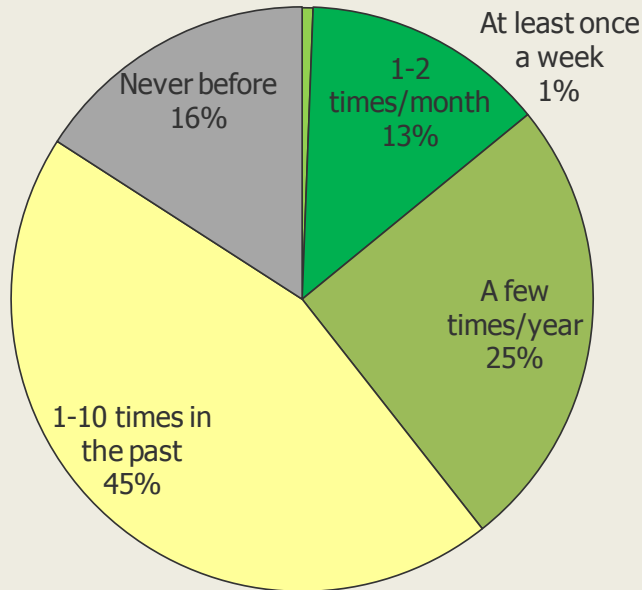
Like journalists, most scientists think the Q&A service should be offered again

Do you think we should offer the Q&A service again at a future date? (n=219)

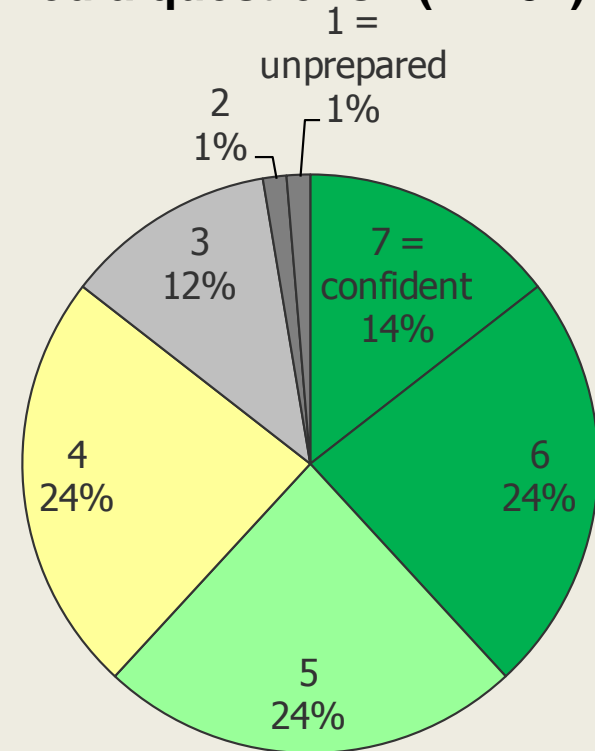


Most scientists had limited media experience, but felt prepared for written questions

What was your level of previous experience interacting with the media? (n=170)

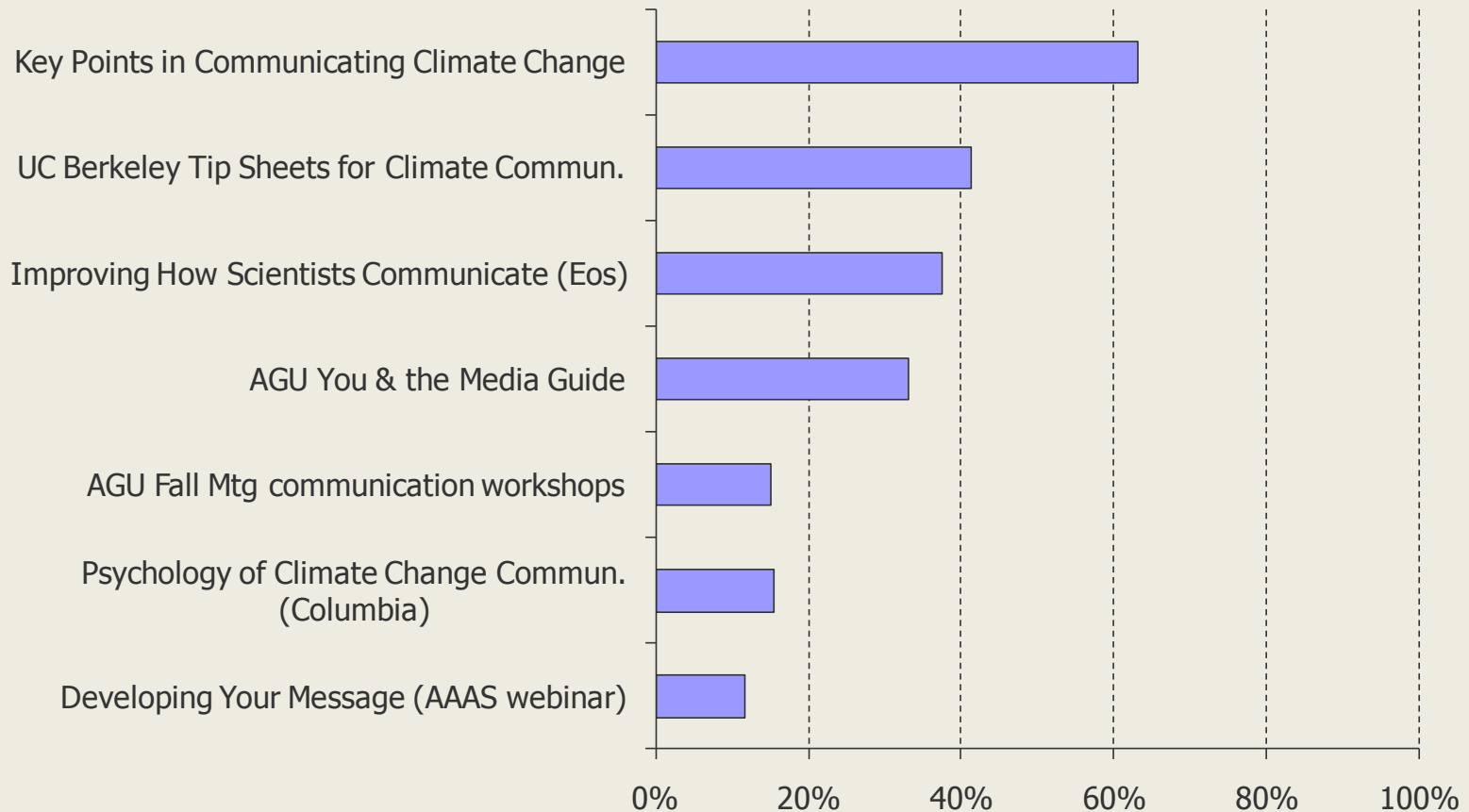


How well-prepared did you feel to respond to written media questions? (n=152)

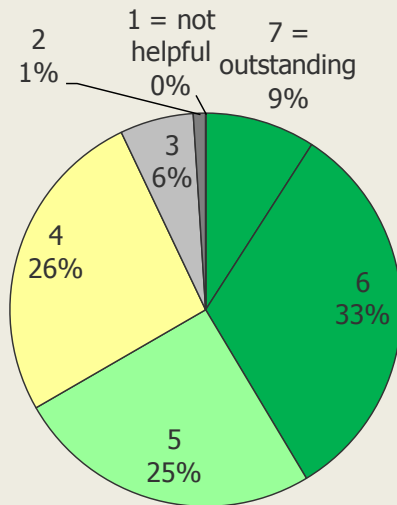


Media training resources commonly used were: “key points” on project website, UC Berkeley tip sheets, and the Eos article

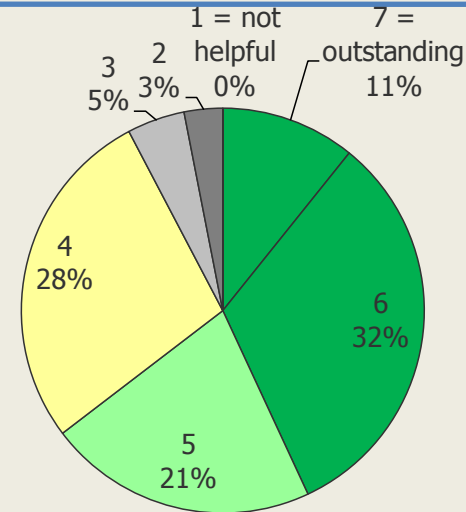
Did you use the media training resources that were provided on the project website? (inferred) (n=159)



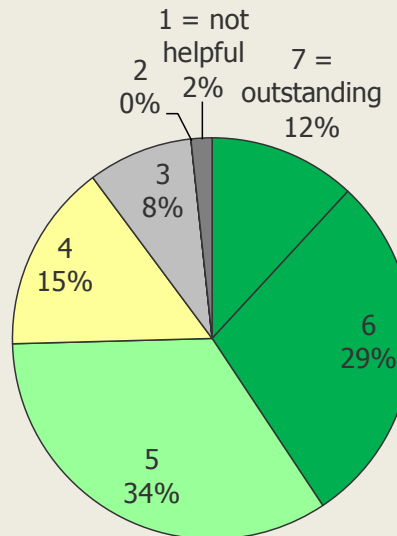
Scientists rated the media training resources very positively



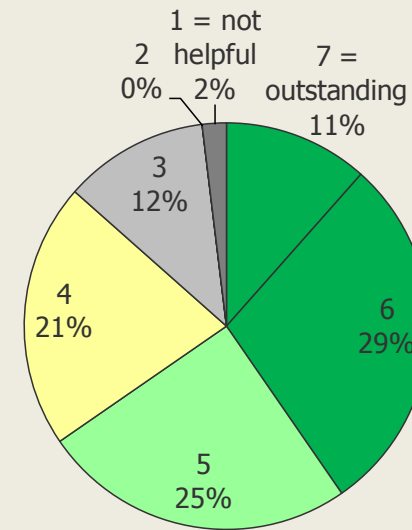
“Key Points”
(project site)



UC Berkeley
tip sheets



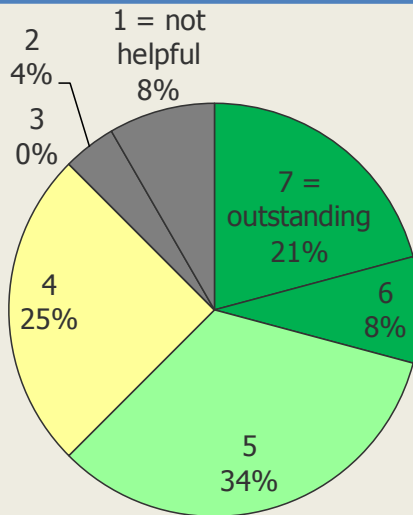
Eos
article



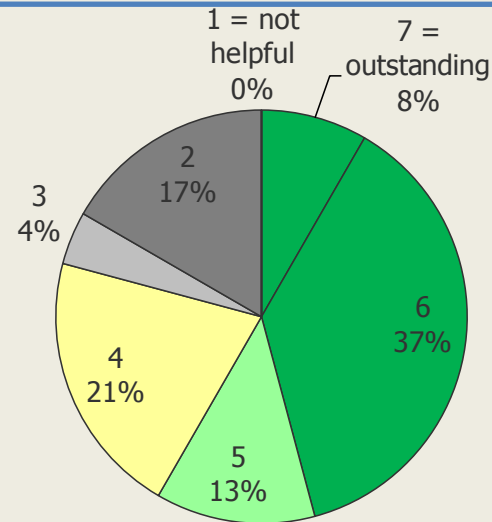
AGU You &
the Media

Scientists rated the media training resources very positively (cont.)

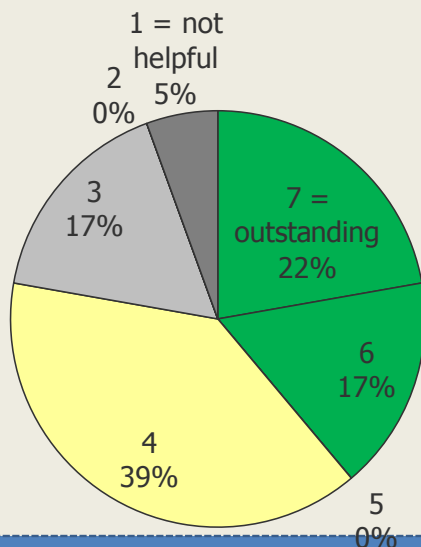
Fall Meeting workshops



Columbia report

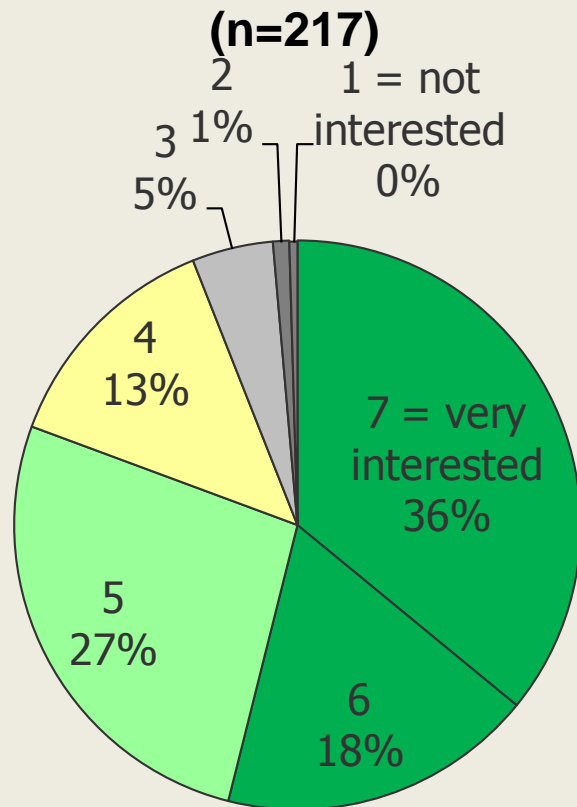


AAAS Webinar

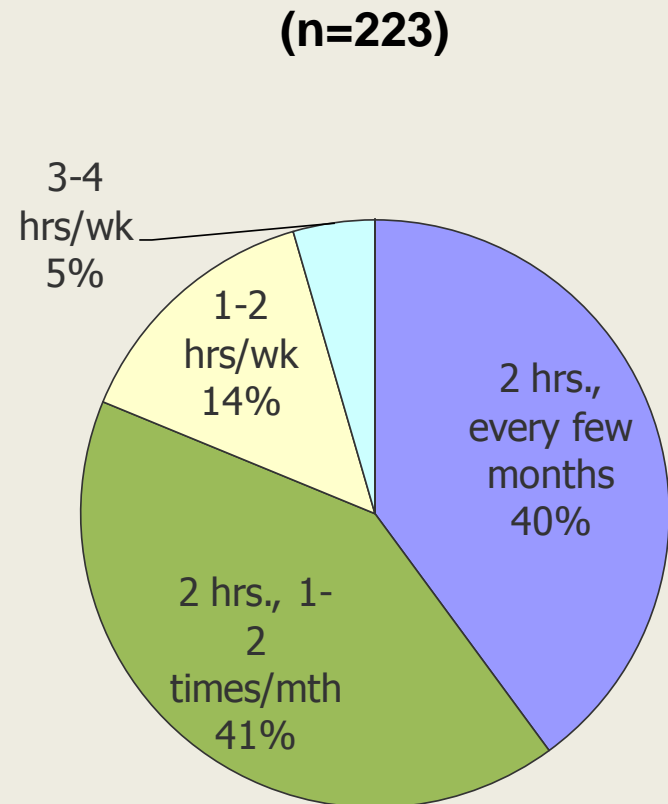


Most scientists would like to do climate media outreach on a periodic basis

What is your level of interest in participating in science/media outreach on an on-going basis?



How much time would you be willing to dedicate to a future science/media outreach project?

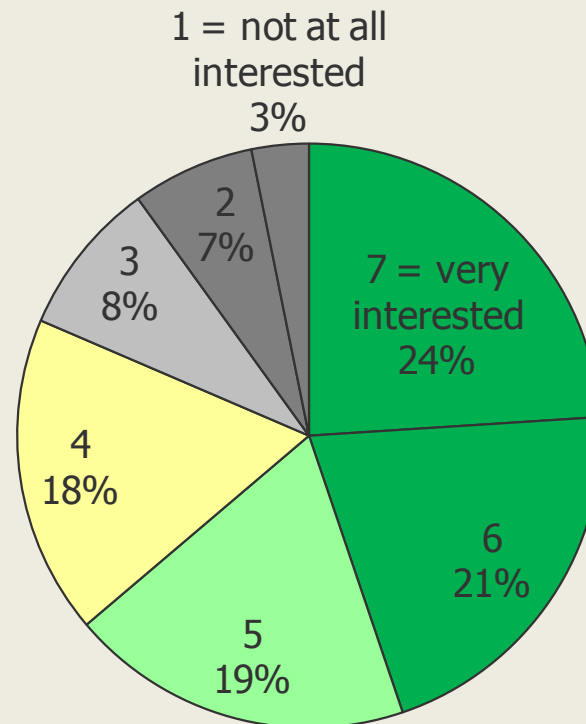


Other useful services would be...

- Correcting misinformation
- Writing/suggesting/producing stories
- Referrals to scientists
- Web resource development
- In-person gatherings with media
- Local presentations
- Ads & public service announcements
- Targeted outreach to key media & teachers

Most are interested in joining an interest group for science communication

**If AGU were to form an interest group for Science Communication (communication training, updates on activities, etc.), would you be interested in joining?
(n=221)**



Possible roles for an interest group include...

- Communication training for scientists
- Networking among scientists & creation of shared resources
- Monitoring of trends in public/media understanding
- Referrals to scientists
- Other climate science outreach projects

Like the journalists, scientists were complimentary... (direct quotes)

- This was a worthwhile experience. Thanks for your efforts and for inviting me to participate!
- A great start which needs to be followed up in earnest
- I would like to congratulate the UC Berkeley team and other collaborators on a completion of a wonderful and novel exercise.
- I enjoyed the opportunity and learned some interesting facts along the way through interactions and reading other responses. Thanks.
- The fact that we were asked to stick with only scientific questions (not policy, economics, etc.) made this a strong, well-defined activity. It was also very well organized - kudos to the organizers!
- I would have been happy to participate but due to the fantastic response was not able to find an open slot. This is a fabulous reflection of climate scientists commitment and a terrific idea from AGU.
- Thank you for developing and executing such a positive and productive event.
- Thanks for putting this together, it was fun, interesting, and hopefully, useful!
- Congratulations for a superb effort and success. I believe the media will take up such offers more in the future. Please don't give up! Well done!!
- Great job & Kudos to AGU and all the people behind the electronic curtain.
- I commend AGU for taking this on, it is an important resource that can help straighten out the media-science-public divide.
- This was a really good offer to provide scientific support where it is necessary and an overall very positive and meaningful experience.
- I think that this operation was very well run. Communications were very clear throughout; the on-line tutorials were quite helpful; the mid-course correction was appropriate.
- Great start!

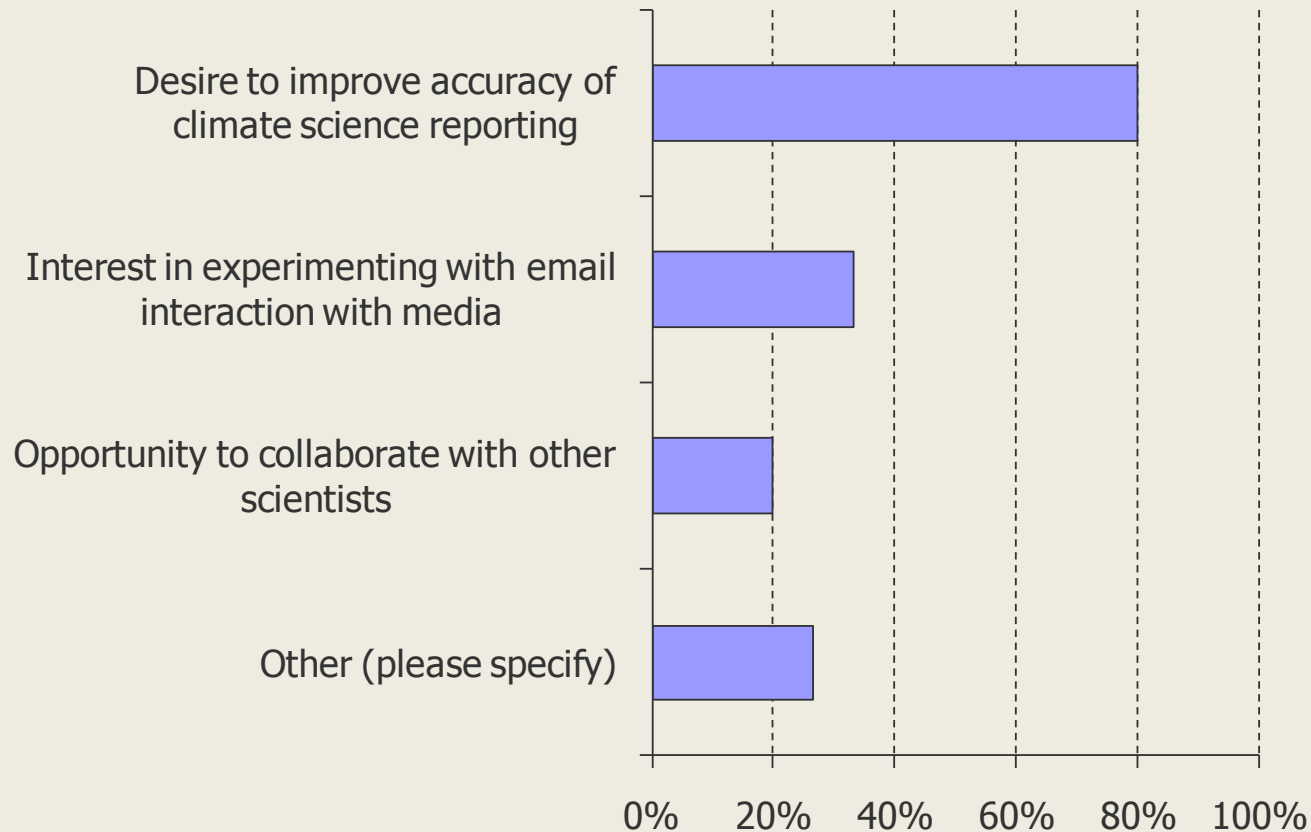
- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
- **SURVEY RESULTS: JOURNALISTS**
- **SURVEY RESULTS: SCIENTISTS**
- **SURVEY RESULTS: SUPPORT TEAM**
- **APPENDICES**

Support Team (ST) Statistics

- 62 support team members, mostly graduate students, volunteered to participate
- Tasks included research assistance and queue management
- 35 served at least one shift (because shifts were cancelled in the second week, not everyone was able to participate)
- 24% participation in the survey (15 of 62)
- 198 unique visitors to the project webpage for support team members (12/1-12/18)

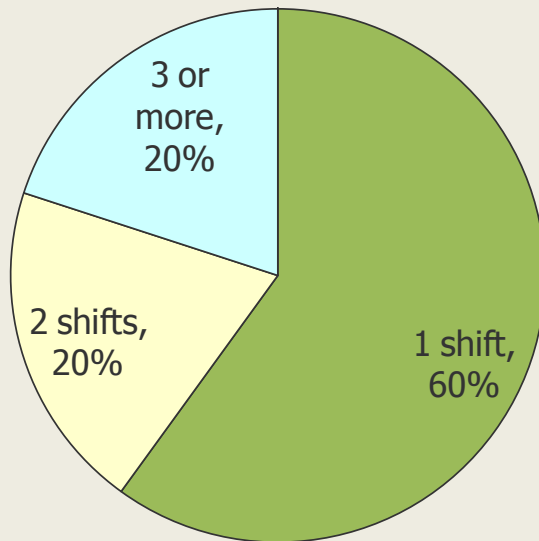
Like scientists, most ST members volunteered to improve accuracy of climate science reporting

**What motivated you to sign up to participate?
(choose as many as apply) (n=15)**

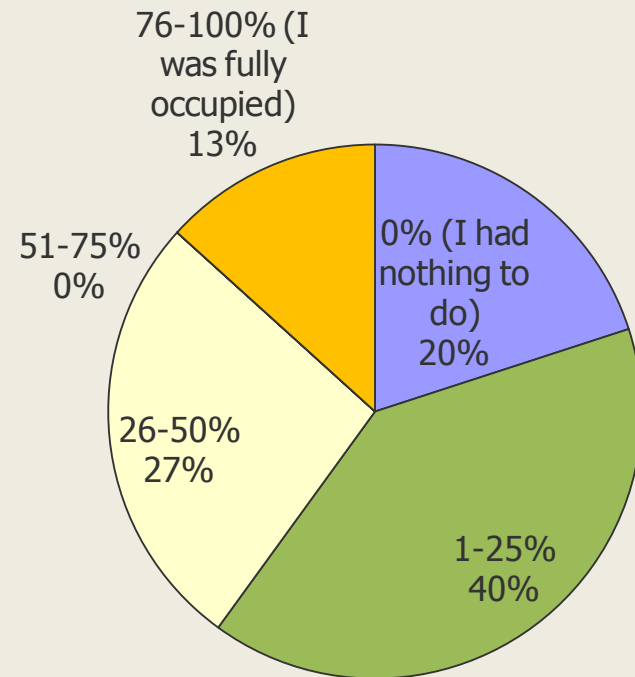


Most ST members participated in 1 shift and were busy less than 25% of the time

How many shifts did you participate in? (n=15)

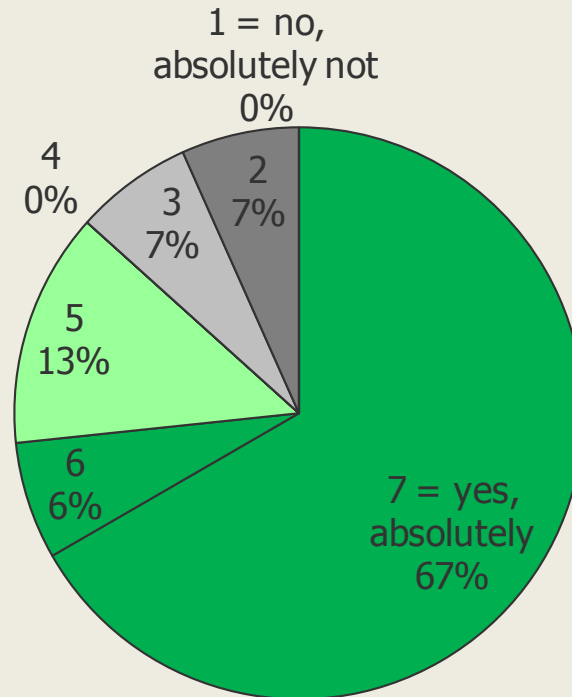


During what percentage of your shift were you busy with either queue manager or research assistant tasks? (n=14)



Like journalists & scientists, most ST members think the Q&A service should be offered again

Do you think we should offer the Q&A service again at a future date? (n=15)

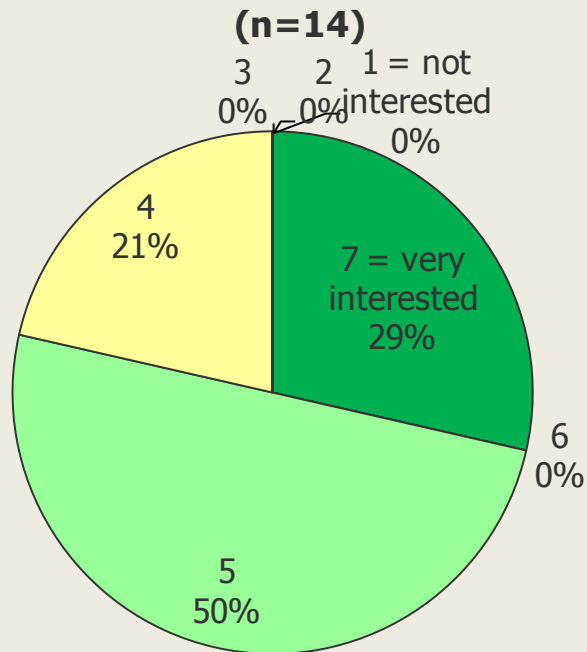


Other useful services would be...

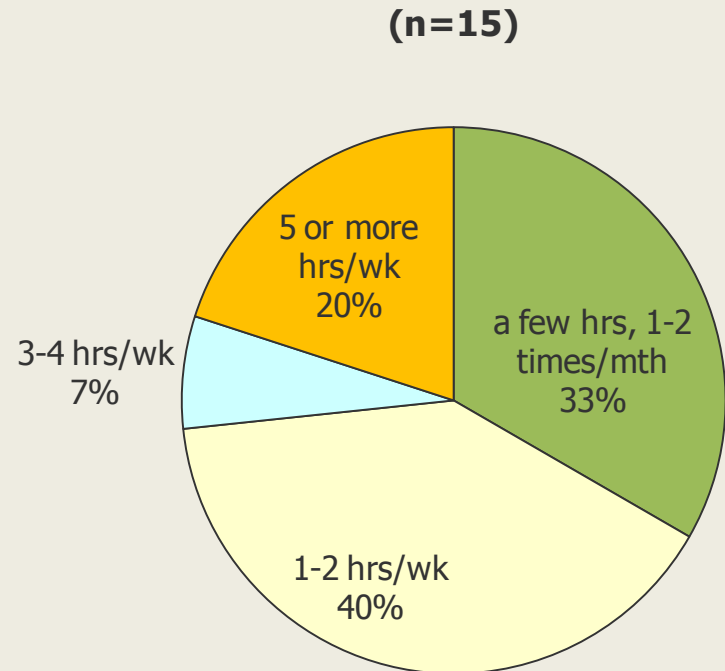
- More maps
- Statement to newspaper editors
- On-going Q&A service
- Individual tutoring of local journalists
- More relationship development with journalists
- Expansion of effort to other professional societies
- Dedicated 1-2 day workshops for journalists

Most ST members would like to do climate media outreach on a regular basis

What is your level of interest in participating in science/media outreach on an on-going basis?

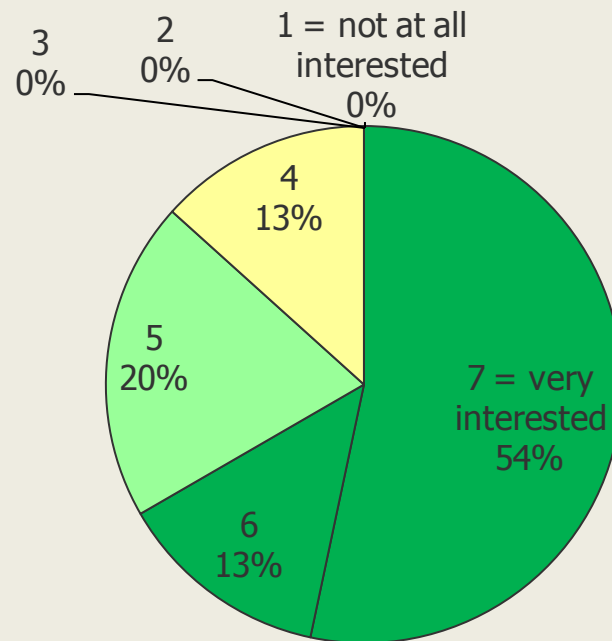


How much time would you be willing to dedicate to a future science/media outreach project?



Most are interested in joining an interest group for science communication

If AGU were to form an interest group for Science Communication (communication training, updates on activities, etc.), would you be interested in joining? (n=15)



Possible roles for an interest group include...

- More communications training for scientists
- Engagement with the media about the sociology of scientific knowledge/activity
- Communications training that includes personal contact with local media

Appendix

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JOURNALIST SURVEY
SCIENTIST SURVEY

List of Media Outlets

US Media

International Media

Print & Broadcast

National:

- Associated Press
- Chemistry World
- EnergyBiz Insider
- National Geographic News
- Newsweek
- NPR

Local:

- KQED Public Radio (San Francisco)
- North Country Public Radio (NY state)
- Platte County Landmark (Missouri)
- WBZ-TV Boston

National:

- ABC Australia environmental portal
- Nature (Germany)
- The Sunday Times (UK)
- Time Asia

Local:

- Aajtak (New Delhi TV)
- The Leveller (Ottawa)

Internet & Other

- Freelancers (2)
- Blog of Center for American Progress
- GlobalWarmingisReal.com
- OnEarth Magazine; Oxfam America
- Climate Central Blog
- PoliFact.com
- ZDNet News

- Climate Change Media Partnership
- crikey.com.au (Australian news)
- Effets de Terre news
- IslamOnline.net

Journalists fact-check and fill knowledge gaps by... (direct quotes)

- Internet research
 - Internet research based on trusted sources.
 - We go by the reputed websites and scientists
 - The internet is a good source of information for me
 - Most of the time reading publicly available papers (e.g. IPCC reports); if there is a paper that is not freely available, I'll send an email to the contact author. I will sometimes call institutions or government agencies for more information on their reports or for information that I can't find by searching.
- Reading published papers
 - I'm usually writing on something I have a scientific paper for or if not, I will be speaking directly to a scientist who is involved in research in that field. I won't write anything if I'm not 100% sure it's correct!
 - Referring to published papers, double-checking with sources
- Consulting with experts
 - Personal contacts with scientists and other "expert" sources (such as policy advisors or NGO's and established writers in the field)
 - Talking to as many academics as possible
 - Contacting specialists by phone or email
 - Emailing authors, emailing RC [realclimate.org]
 - Finding a scientist or two in the field, trying desperately to get them to answer my question in a timely fashion
- Having work reviewed by experts
 - I run the story by experts to get them to fact check it.
 - We usually ask the source to read over our drafts for accuracy.

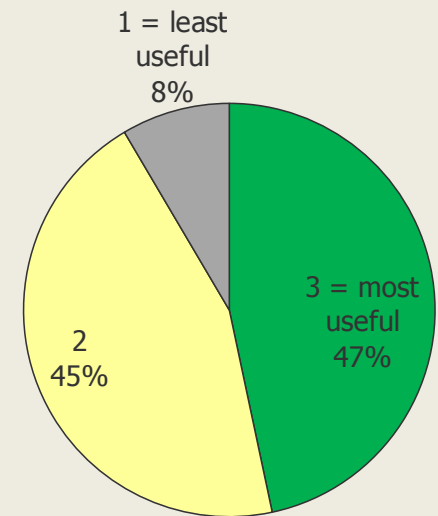
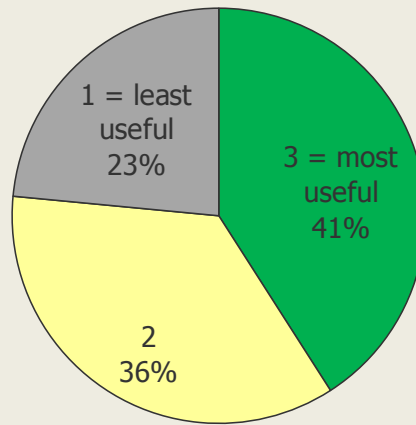
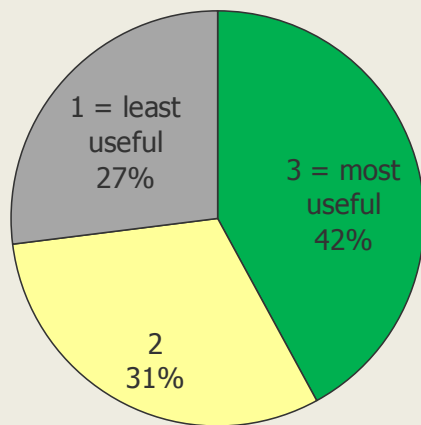
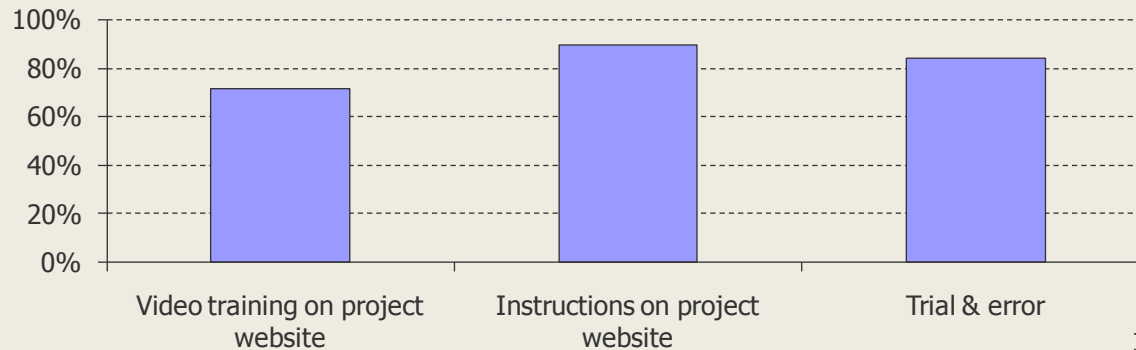
Appendix

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JOURNALIST SURVEY
SCIENTIST SURVEY

Video training, written instructions, and trial & error were equally valued for learning ECP

Which resources did you use to get up-to-speed on EmailCenterPro? (inferred) (n=191)



Video training

Written instructions

Trial & error

Scientists were split on the value of Notes and Drafts for collaboration

Did you find the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues via Notes & Drafts to be useful?
(n=144)

