

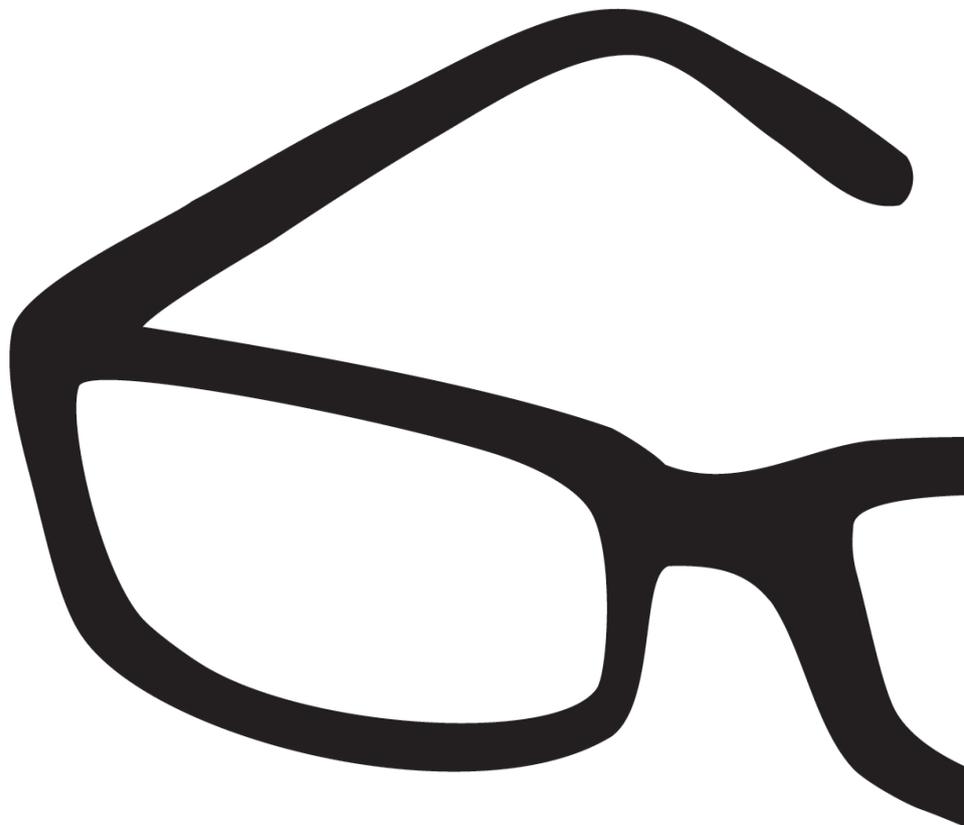


Use of Social Media: Secondary

August 2014

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Executive Summary

Secondary teachers are very wide personal users of Facebook and YouTube and use Twitter slightly less. For school use, while YouTube is unsurprisingly a firm favourite, Facebook is much less widely used than it is for personal reasons.

Social media is clearly a good way for teachers to discover resources: for example by following other teachers or organisations on Twitter. Twitter is also the most-used social medium for keeping up to date with policy changes.

YouTube obviously offers a very specific resource type and the site provides videos in a format which is very well suited to school needs and which support an area of common need: expositional delivery, for example in the introduction to lessons. The main attraction is the scope though, rather than as a social medium: the comments or channels developed by other teachers for example are less useful.

Facebook is mainly used as a networking tool, rather than to find resources, so this does not seem a strong route for organisations to disseminate teaching resources. Facebook would be better used in order to develop community.

Only 20% of teachers use social media to interact with students.

Teachers are ambivalent about organisations' use of social media for marketing and building brand: around a third are clearly resistant, considering it an intrusion, but a similar proportion consider that it would be a useful strategy for publishers, especially if the school was involved in other contexts.

Facebook and Twitter are blocked in around half of schools, though YouTube is now widely accessible, so attempts to reach teachers via Twitter for example, might be best suited to evening activity.

Even if teachers are able to access Facebook and Twitter during the school day, only around 20% tend to do so, mostly via phone or tablet. If they receive messages during the school day they tend to ignore them until after school.

Teachers rarely tweet or update Facebook statuses about school-related issues or resources, so organisations using twitter should not use re-tweeting of their messages as a reliable measure of success.

In general, school blocking of sites is not a complete barrier as teachers can request access or will circumvent it by downloading resources at home or by accessing it via personal mobile connections. In practice, it seems that school blocking does not really act as a barrier to sites which teachers are determined to access during the school day.

Broadband access, while still often complained about by teachers, does not appear to be much of a barrier in practice, with only 10% of secondary teachers saying that it makes watching streamed video unreliable, for example, so links (eg via Twitter) to online resources should not be precluded on this count .

Summary

Organisations which use social media for building brand with teachers should bear the following in mind:

1. Don't expect too much. Your metrics are likely to be too small to be meaningful and activities are best treated as something of a leap of faith
2. Tweet in the evenings, with links to resources which can be used in the classroom
3. Tweets from practising teachers will be most successful
4. Facebook is better for developing communities than it is for sharing resources
5. YouTube is generally accessible in schools so makes a good repository for video, though its size makes resource discovery less likely
6. Recommendations from teachers are the most-trusted messages, but they probably need to come directly from the teacher rather than as quotes or case studies.

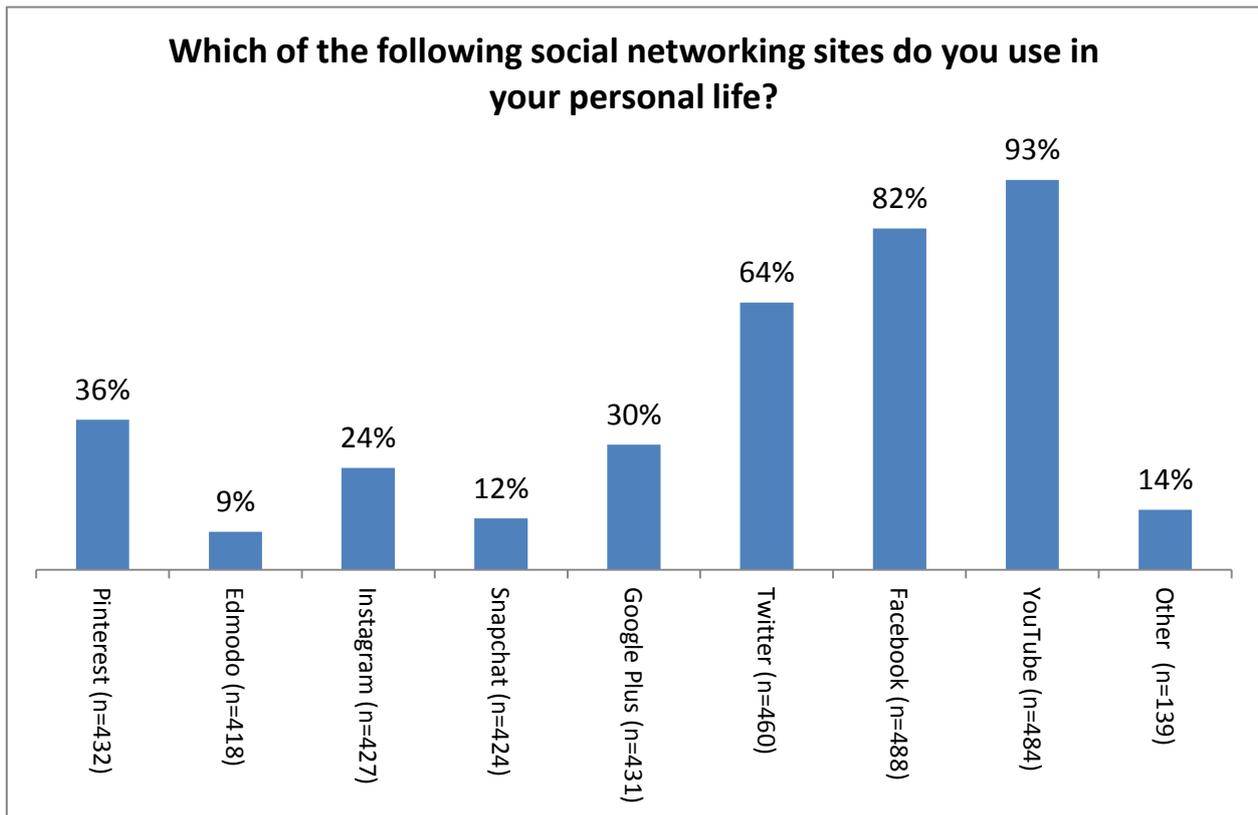
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Survey Findings

Social media for personal use

Sites used



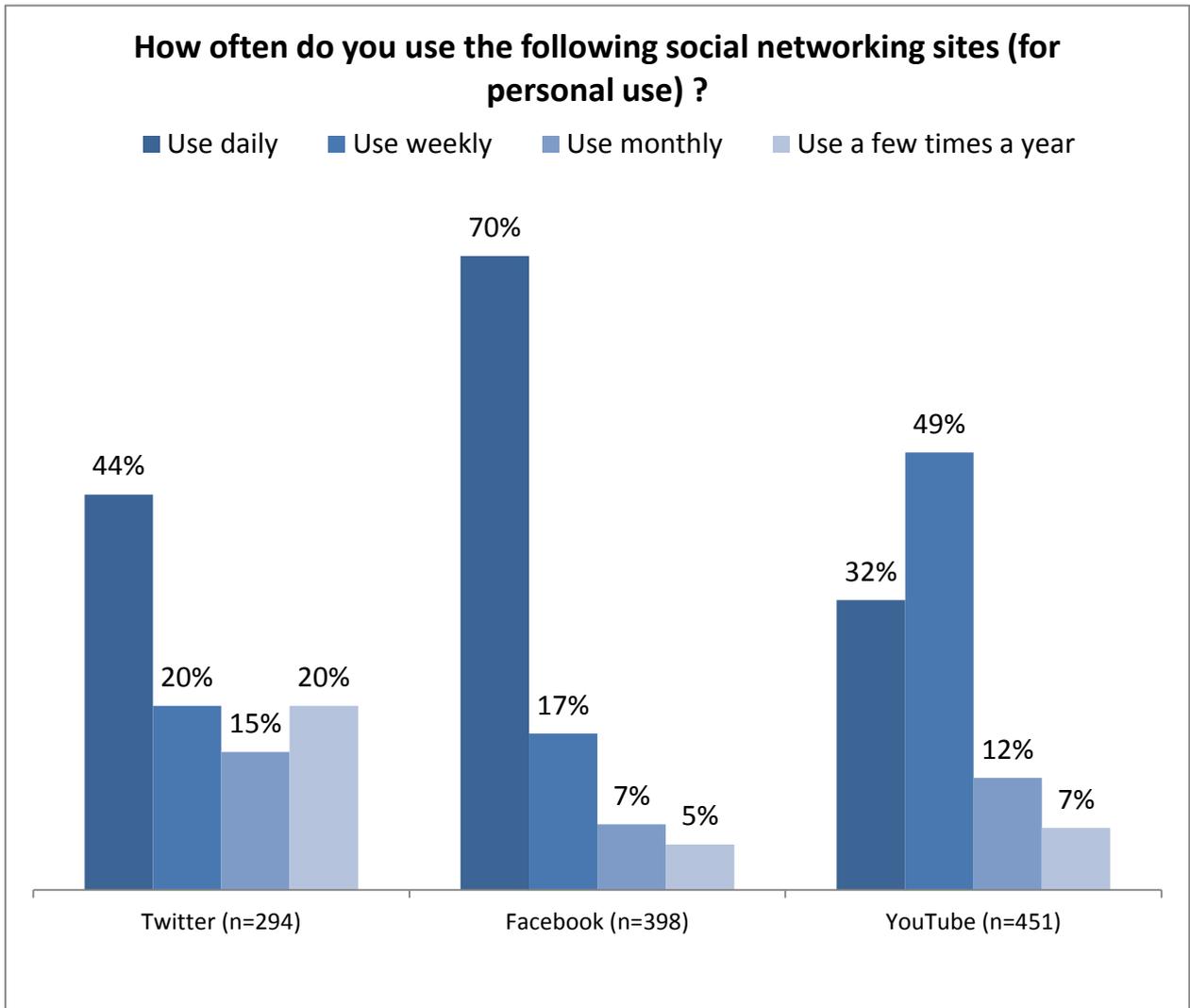
YouTube, Facebook and Twitter are the most popular sites used by teachers in their personal life. Only 6% of respondents who answered this question for YouTube said that they never used it, compared to over 85% who have never used Snapchat or Edmodo.

Pinterest and Google Plus are used by approximately a third of respondents.

Fifteen of the thirty-nine 'Other' responses mentioned using LinkedIn. Other answers included Blogger, Flickr, Kik Messenger, WhatsApp and various other online forums and chatrooms.

Frequency of use

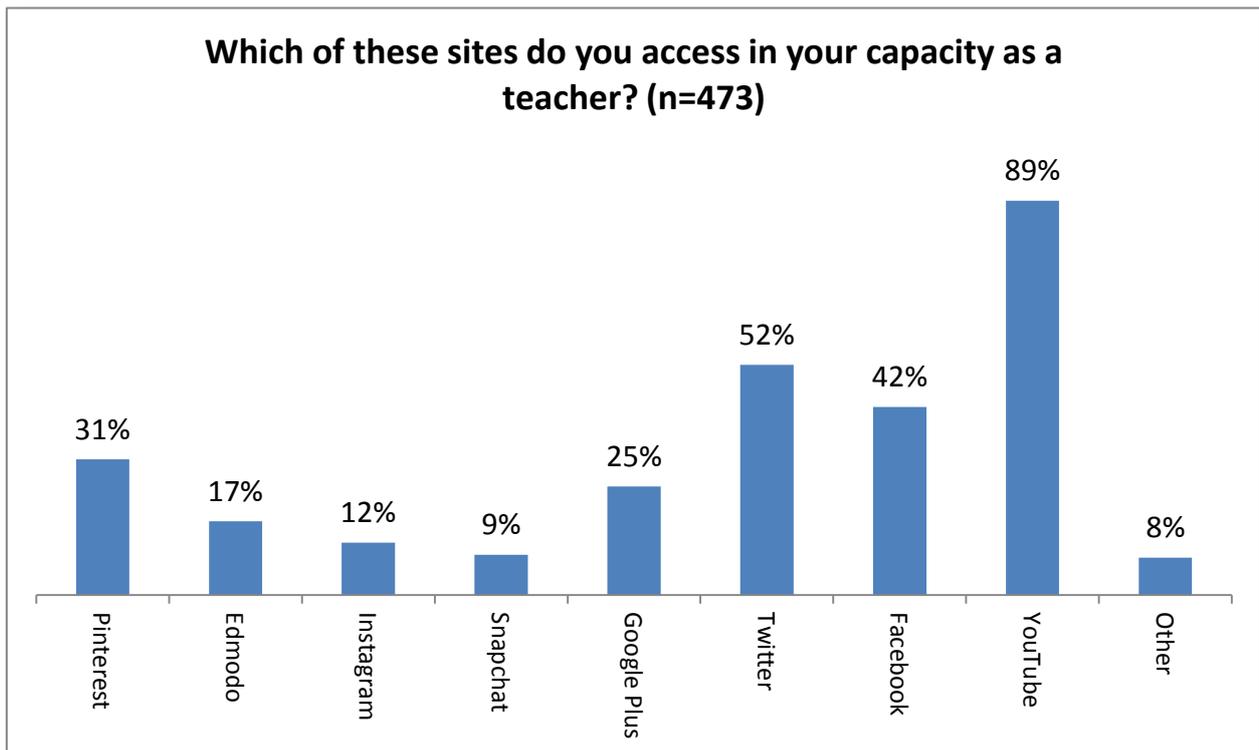
When analysing further how often the three most popular sites are used, it is clear that even though YouTube is the most popular resource, it is not used as frequently as Facebook, which is most commonly used daily by its followers. The majority of those that use YouTube do still use it at least weekly, whereas Twitter users can use it anything from daily down to only a few times a year.



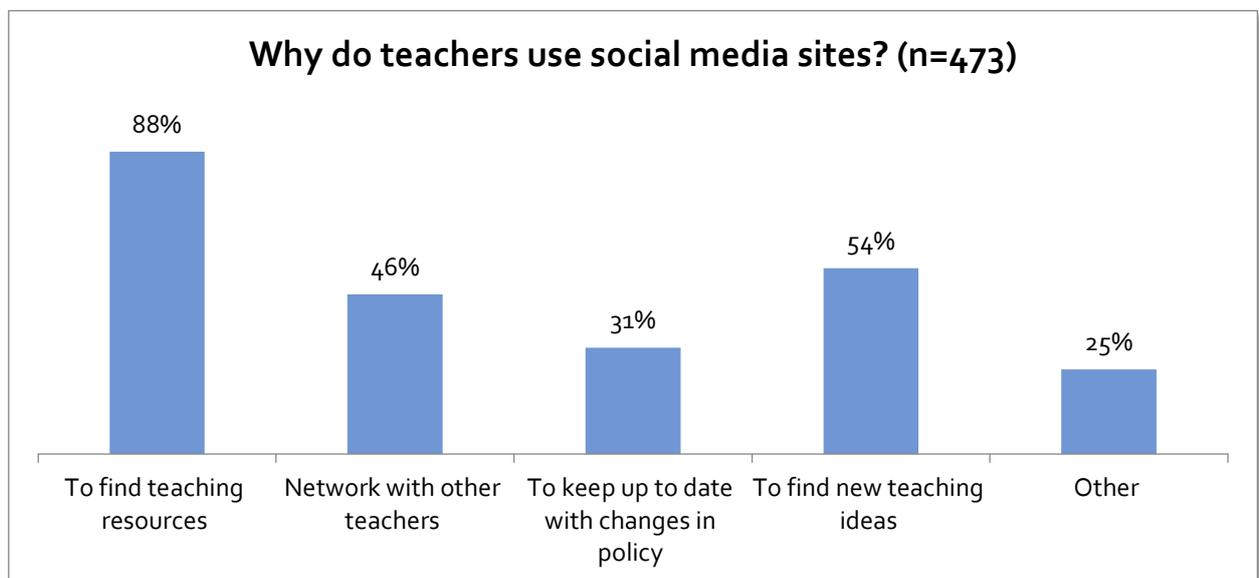
Social media for professional use

Which sites are used?

The picture is fairly similar for professional use of social media to that of personal use, but with some notable differences. Although YouTube still remains the firm favourite, Facebook falls behind Twitter in usage. Instagram use also drops whilst Edmodo use increases.



How are they used?



The most common reason teachers use social media in a professional capacity is to find teaching resources. However, a significant proportion of teachers also use the sites for other reasons, including networking and finding ideas.

SPECIFIC SITES

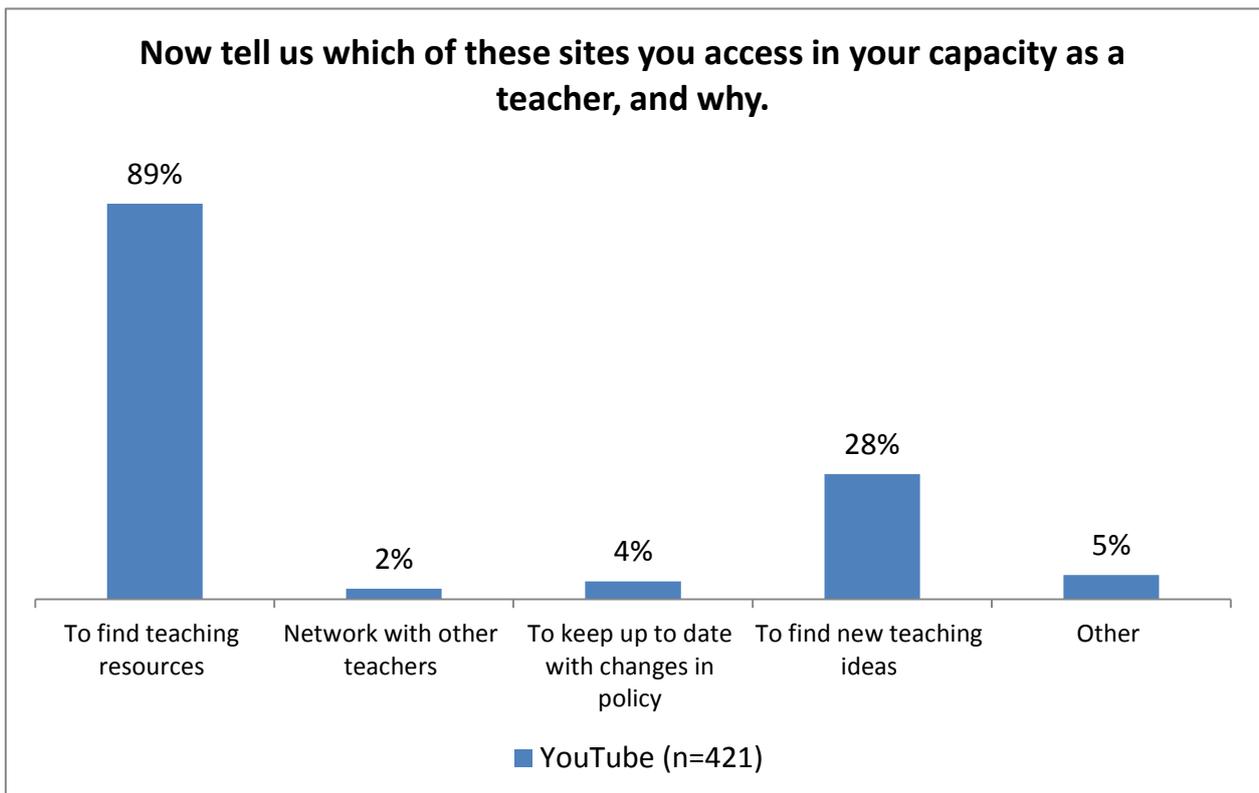
Teachers use different sites, often for quite specific needs.

Almost all those that use YouTube, go to the site to find teaching resources, with a smaller group looking for new teaching ideas. Similarly teachers use Pinterest for resources and ideas. Facebook, on the other hand, is most commonly a networking tool for teachers, although there is still a significant minority using it for teaching resources/ideas or to keep up to date with policy changes.

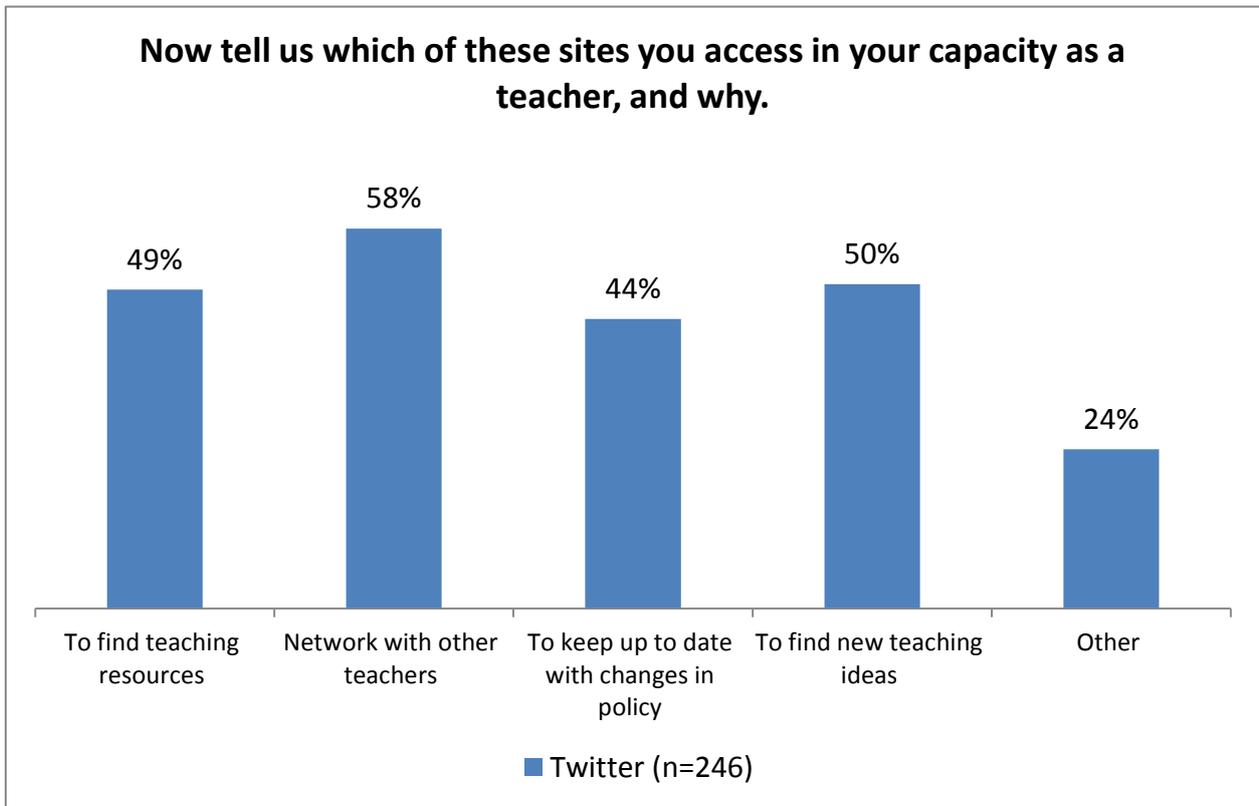
When it comes to Twitter, however, there is no clear single reason for its use – it can be anything from finding new resources to networking or keeping up to date with new policy.

The TES website offers its own forums and fourteen teachers mentioned the site or its forums in response to this part of the survey. TES is hugely popular with teachers, according to wider research that Schoolzone has conducted, and it is perhaps unsurprising that it surfaces again in this survey. The small numbers are perhaps representative of teachers' perception of the TES as a website for resources rather than a social media site.

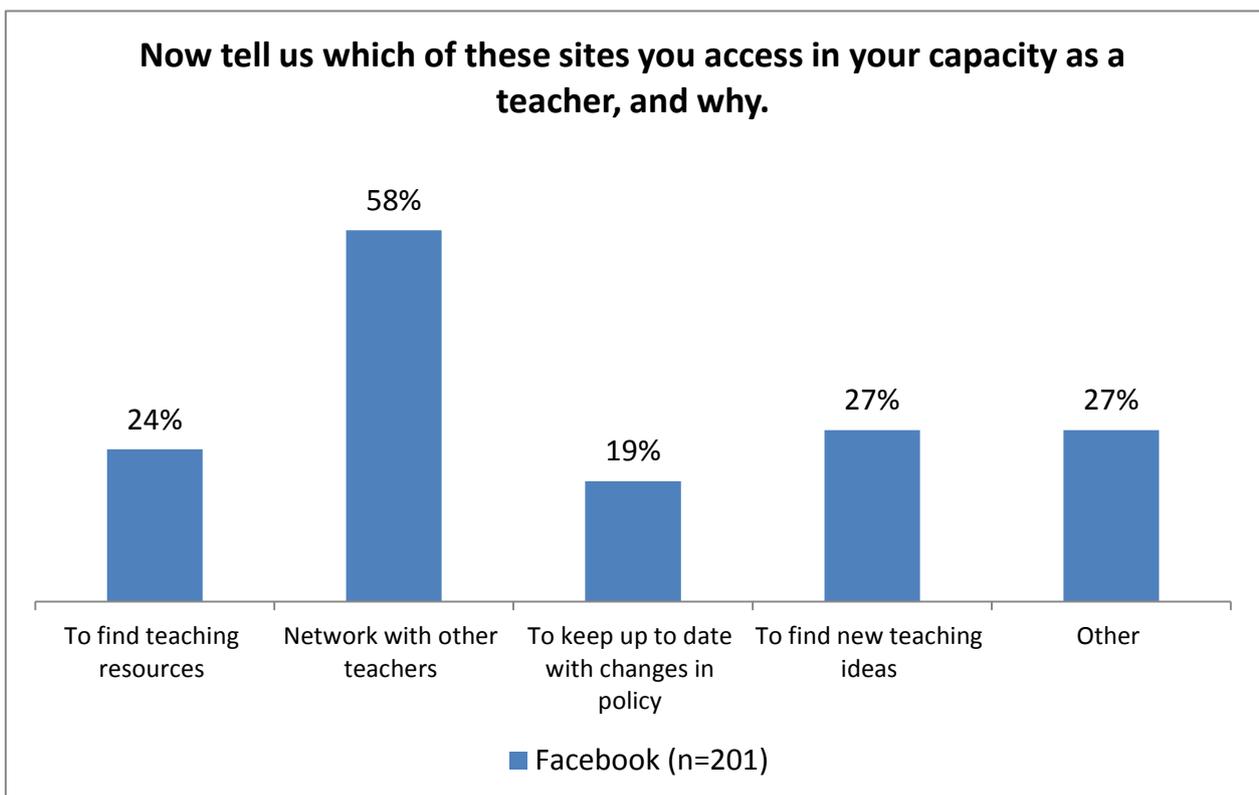
YouTube



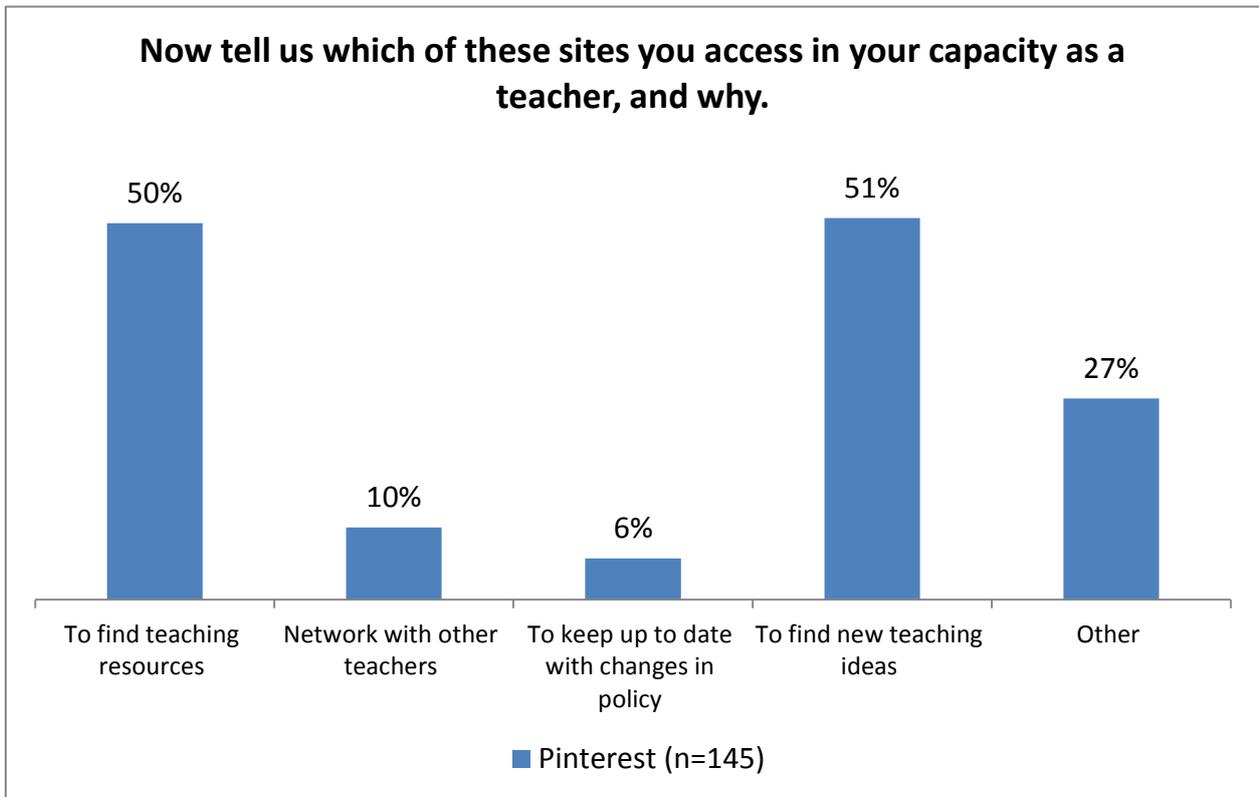
Twitter



Facebook



Pinterest

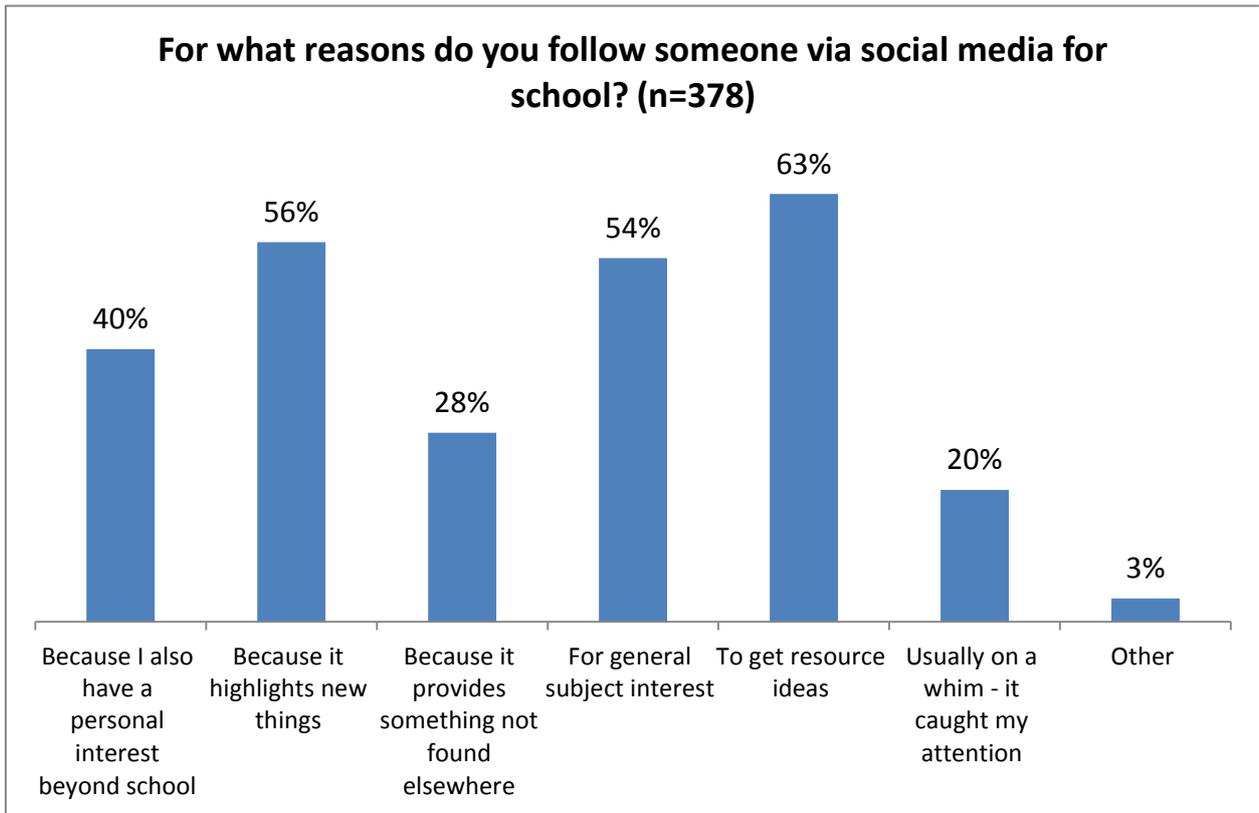


Teachers were also asked if there were any other reasons for accessing these sites. Responses relating to professional use included:

- Use with students - including sharing resources and promoting discussion (16 respondents), communicating and keeping in touch with students (13 respondents), and setting homework or marking it (10 respondents).
- Teaching (15 respondents) – including keeping up to date with news, keeping in touch with former colleagues and sharing resources and ideas within a subject or teacher network.
- Whole school (7 respondents) including disseminating information on events or results and promoting the school
- Keeping parents informed (3 respondents)

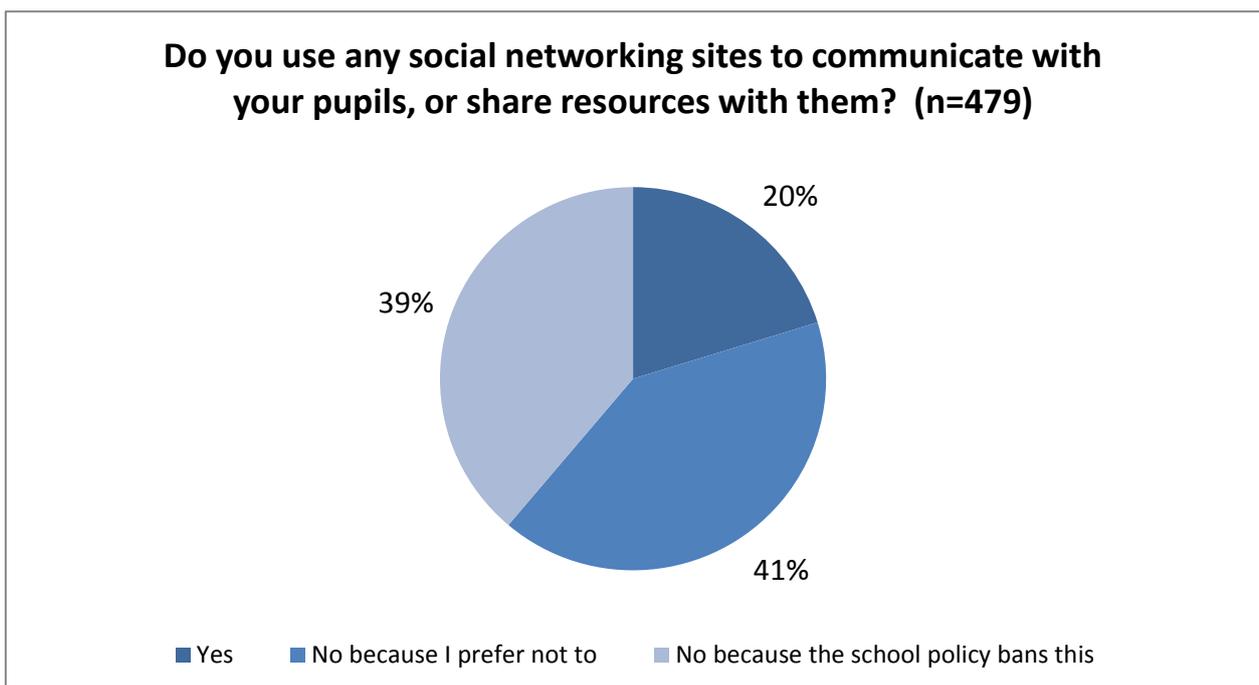
When asked specifically why they follow someone on social media in a professional capacity, a variety of reasons were given, although the three most popular reasons were:

1. To get resource ideas
2. Because it highlights new things
3. For general subject interest



USE WITH STUDENTS

Earlier in the survey, a small minority of teachers (approximately 10%) added, as another reason for using social media sites, that they use them with students. When asked this question explicitly, this number rose to 20%.



For the remainder of respondents, those that do not use social networking sites for communicating with students, this was fairly evenly split between their own personal preference and that dictated by the school policy.

When asked explicitly how they use these sites with students, responses included:

Pinterest

- Creating boards of students' work
- Sharing inspiring images or collecting them together in a topic board
- Lost property!

Edmodo

- Set up classes to then set homework and tasks
- Share resources
- Homework diary

Twitter

- Sharing resources
- Reminders, including deadlines
- School/ departmental accounts
- Students can tweet questions
- Updates on trips

Facebook

- Closed discussion groups, particularly for trips/ expeditions
- School page
- Share resources
- Share news and announcements

YouTube

- Sharing videos on certain topics, or those made by students or staff
- Departmental channels to share resources
- Watch videos in lessons
- Music while students are working

COMMUNICATION FROM PUBLISHERS AND RESOURCE PROVIDERS

Around a third of the teachers surveyed answered that they did not feel that the use of social networking tools by education providers and publishers is an effective strategy in which to engage teachers. The main reasons provided for this include the lack of time in which to engage with such communication, access being blocked at school, the targeted information coming across simply as a 'marketing ploy', with some teachers saying that they discard it as they would do with spam emails, as well as the fact that the companies are missing out on a large volume of the teacher community, who choose not to use social media.

The most common reason for teachers feeling disillusioned with providers using social media to market their offerings is that it begins to blur the line between their professional, school life, and their personal life. One teacher described how this can indeed encroach on their private life:

"I do not approve entirely as I think teachers need down time. These media allow a teacher to be 'on duty' all hours of every day. We already do more hours than we are paid for and this has been increasing in recent years."

On the other hand, a third of the teachers felt that using social media is certainly a useful tool and strategy for publishers and education providers to use in order to target them. Teachers find this to be useful and engaging because it can be opened up to a wide range of teaching professionals, it is a form of CPD, it allows them to communicate and share ideas with colleagues, they are free to access the content in their own time, and it is a popular method of communication that is understood and ingrained within many students' day to day lives.

A quarter of teachers felt that there was certainly some potential to this strategy, but that this potential would need to be realised by the schools themselves, who need to acknowledge the importance and relevance of social media, particularly in regard to the content being professional and 'safe' to use in a school environment. Teachers also generally felt that the success of the strategy could depend on several factors, such as the age of the teacher, how much time they have available and the school policy.

35 teachers said that they had not come across any communication to this effect, and could therefore not comment on how effective the strategy is; whilst 35 teachers replied that they do not use social media at all.

Access in school

FIREWALLS

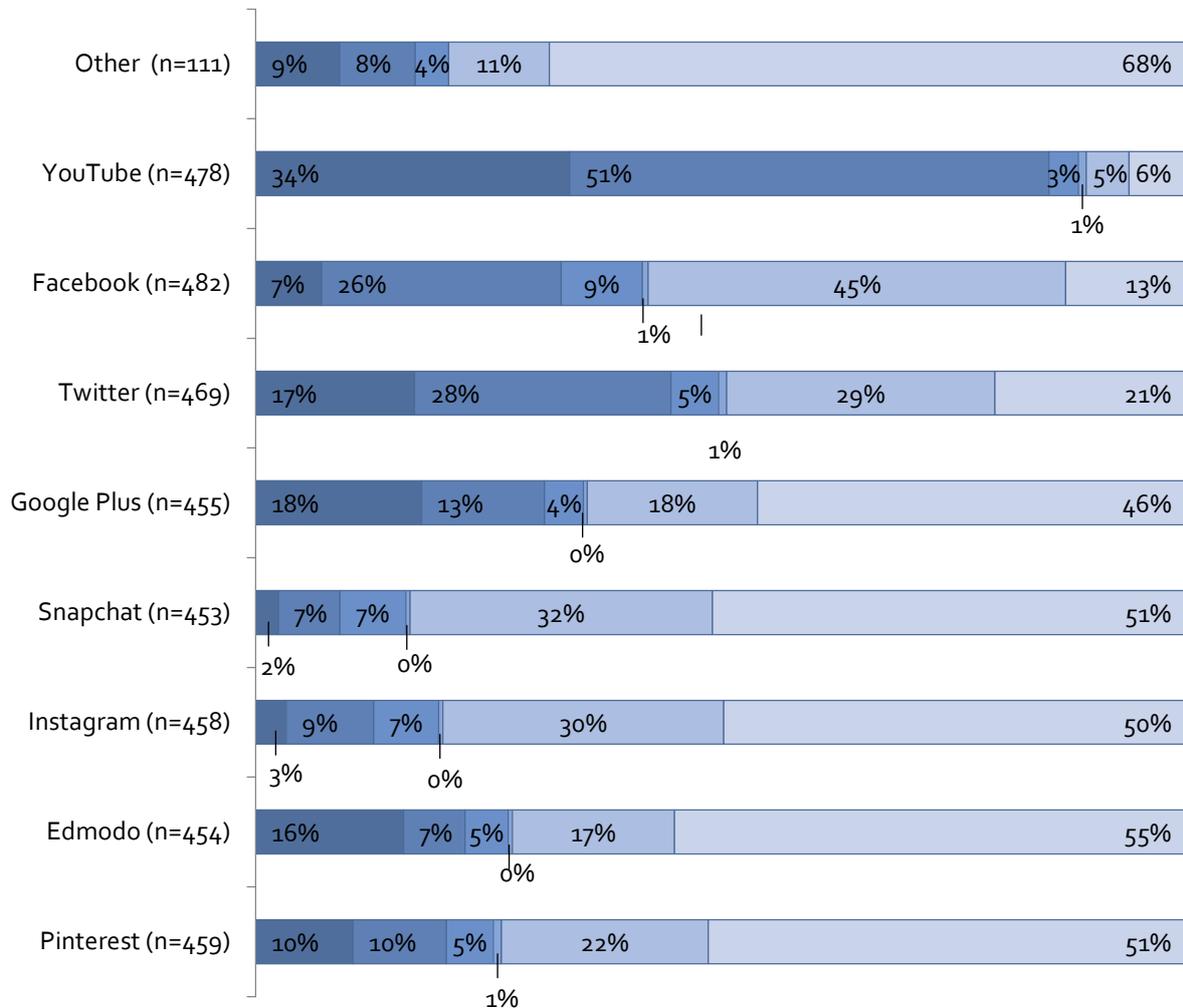
Teachers remain preoccupied with the idea that school access to various sites is limited. However, the majority of teachers who responded to the survey did not know their school's policy on access to Snapchat, Instagram, Edmodo and Pinterest. This is perhaps reflective of the lack of take-up in use of these sites for professional reasons with respondents.

When it came to responding about access to Twitter and Facebook, however, teachers were far more knowledgeable. Access to Facebook is still an issue with over half reporting that it is blocked at their school. There is slightly greater access to Twitter, with 45% of teachers saying that there is at least access for admin staff or teachers.

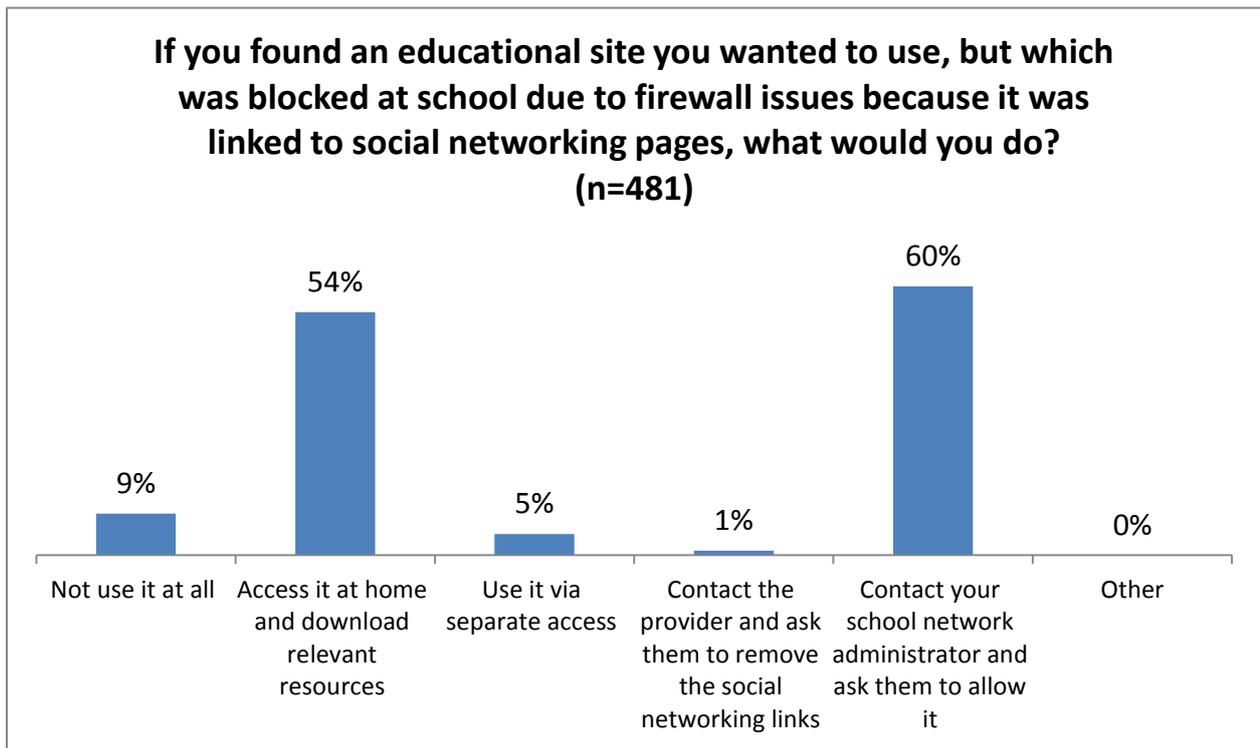
The surprising outlier is YouTube. 85% of respondents report having at least teacher access to the site with less than 10% reporting it as blocked at their school. It is difficult to know whether this is because so many teachers use it, or if the high usage rate is because it is one of the few sites that teachers do have access to at school.

It is also interesting to note that student access to any of these sites is still very limited, with schools being cautious in their approach. Even YouTube is only accessible to students in approximately one third of respondents' schools.

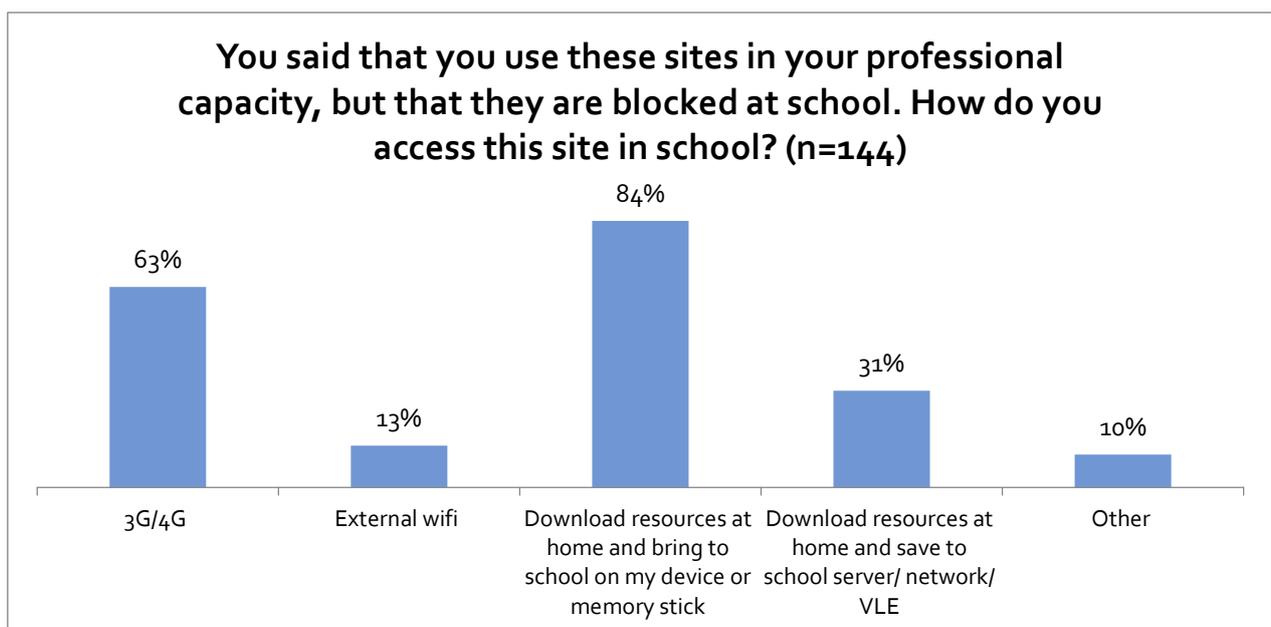
What's your school's policy regarding these same sites? (n=486)



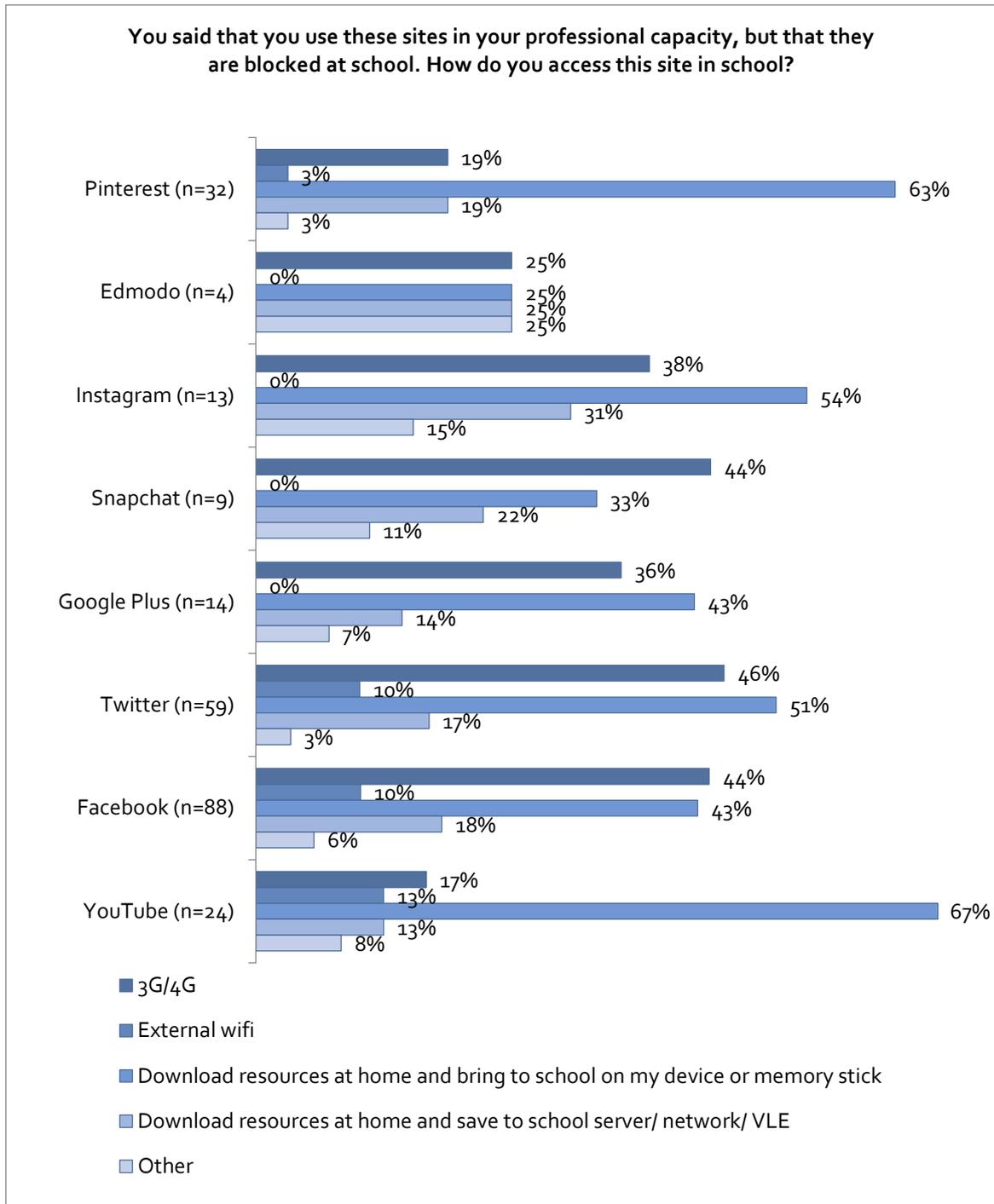
- Open Access to teachers & pupils
- Access for admin or teachers but not pupils
- Currently blocked but school can request access permission from local authority
- School is looking into unlocking this
- Our firewall blocks this for all
- Don't know the policy



Where sites are blocked but teachers wish to access them at school, the majority use either their own data packages on their phones or tablets, or download the resources at home and then bring them in or save them on the network. Teachers are also not afraid to contact their school administrator to ask for access to the site where there are firewall issues.



The following chart shows the responses that were given for each specific site. In interpreting the chart it is important to note the huge variance in the size of the data set across the different sites, for example there were only four responses to this question for Edmodo, compared to eighty eight for Facebook. The percentages are therefore not directly comparable in terms of number of respondents.

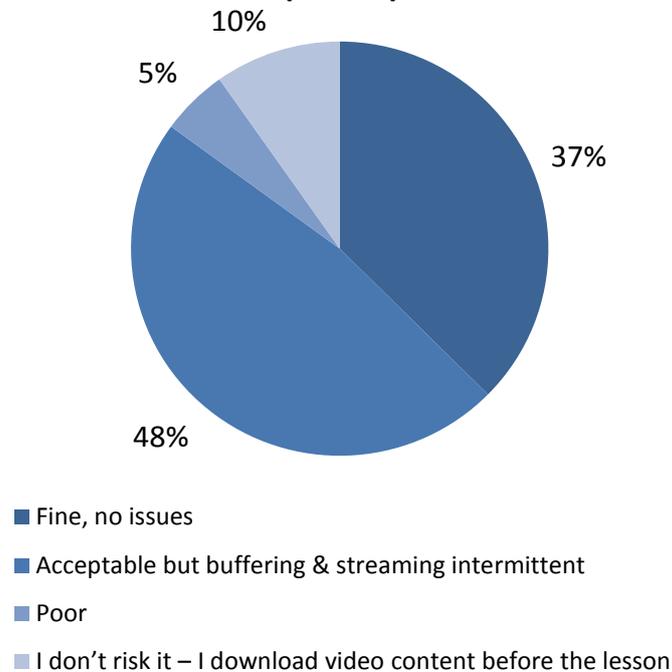


QUALITY/BANDWIDTH

In addition to access, the bandwidth and resultant quality of any content viewed is important. When watching video content online at school, teachers described having no issues or intermittent, but acceptable, buffering problems. Only 10% felt it was so risky, that they download any content they want to use before a lesson.

When you try to watch online video content over the school internet, how would you describe your viewing experience?

(n=481)



Twitter

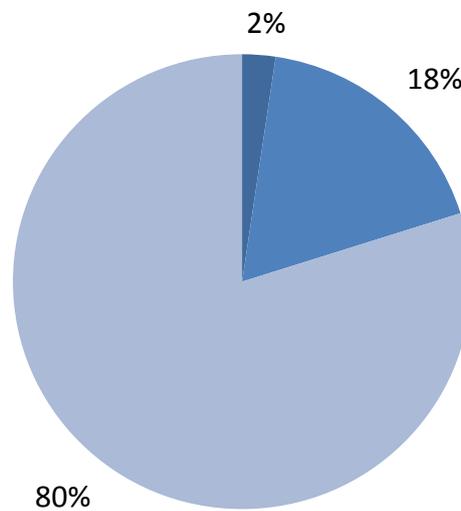
Access during the day

Whether it is for personal or professional use, teachers do not tend to look at Twitter during school hours with only one fifth reporting to the contrary.

Where teachers do access feeds during the school day, it is mostly on a teacher's mobile phone or tablet; unsurprising, given that the majority of schools still block access to the site. This is also consistent with the early findings that, where they have not downloaded something previously, the majority do access Twitter at school using 3G or 4G.

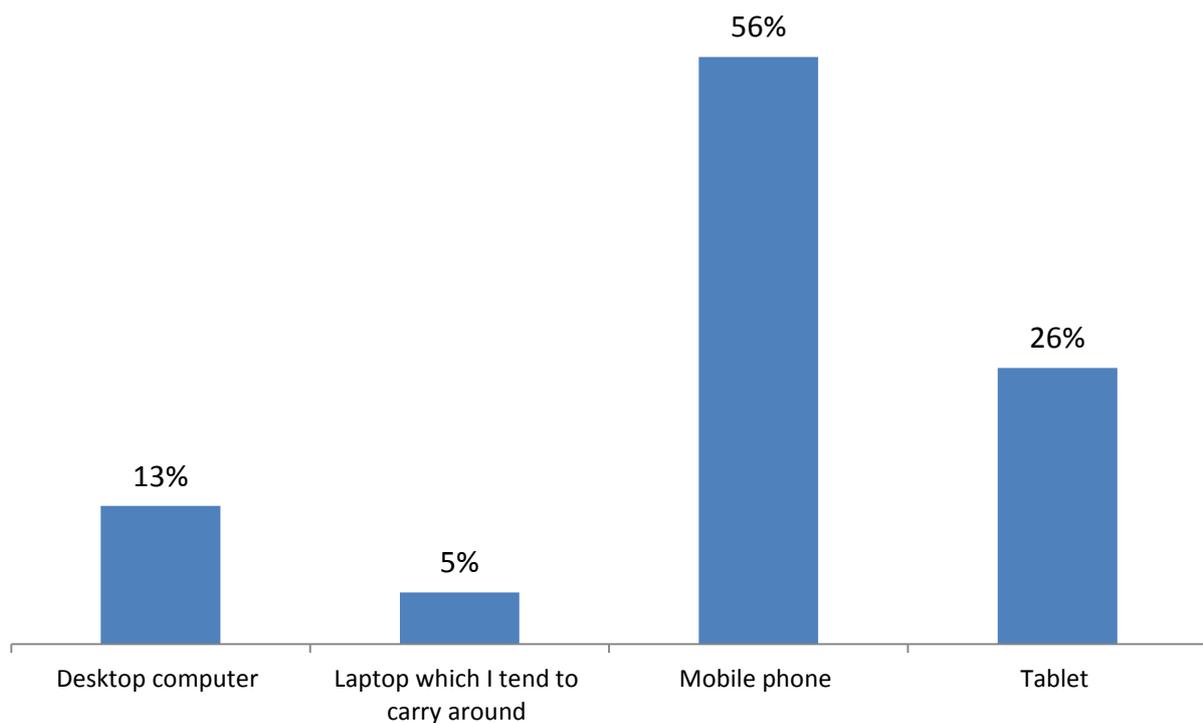
Given that most teachers do not access Twitter at their school, it is to be expected that, if they do get a tweet alert, they would ignore it until they are out of school. In responding to this question, it is also quite possible that many did not want to admit to looking at Twitter within school hours; many answered quite vehemently that they would hope no teachers would.

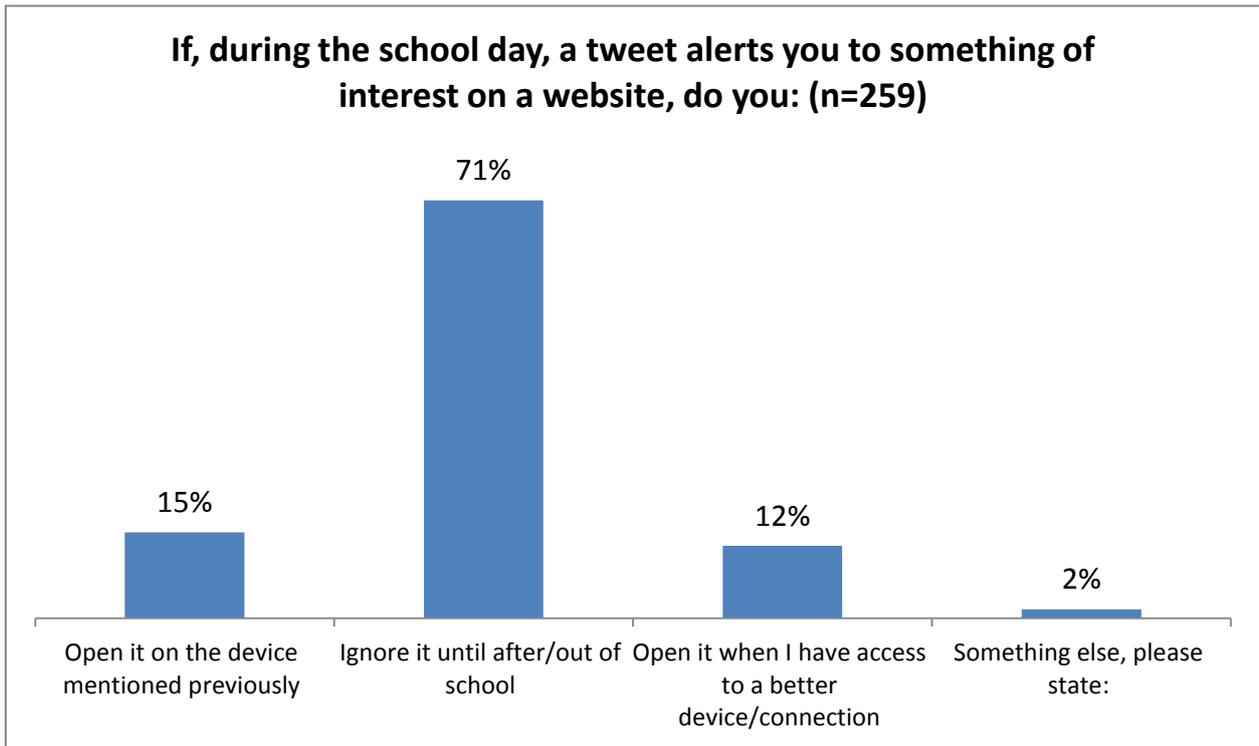
Do you tend to look at Twitter....? (n=298)



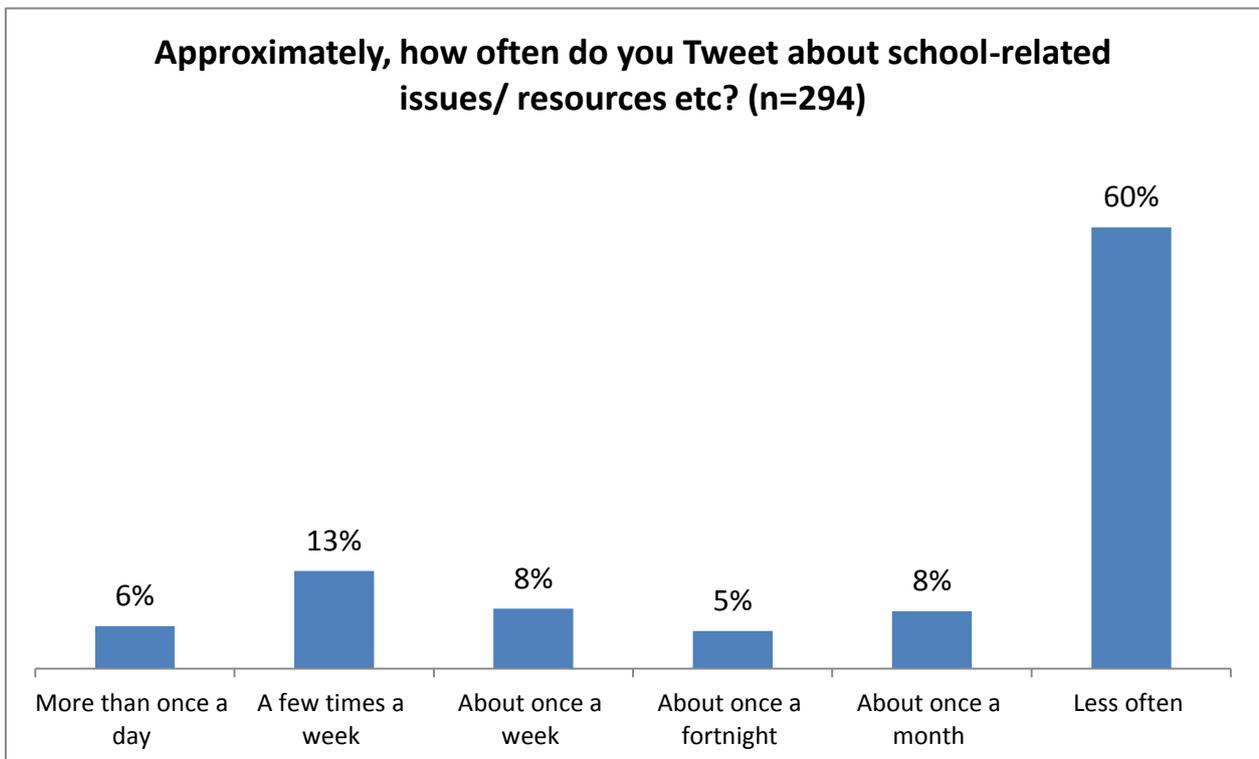
- Generally as and when I notice a Tweet arrive (including during lessons)
- During school but not when I'm actually teaching
- Rarely/never during school hours

How do you most commonly access Twitter (if used) during the school day? (n=61)





Tweeting

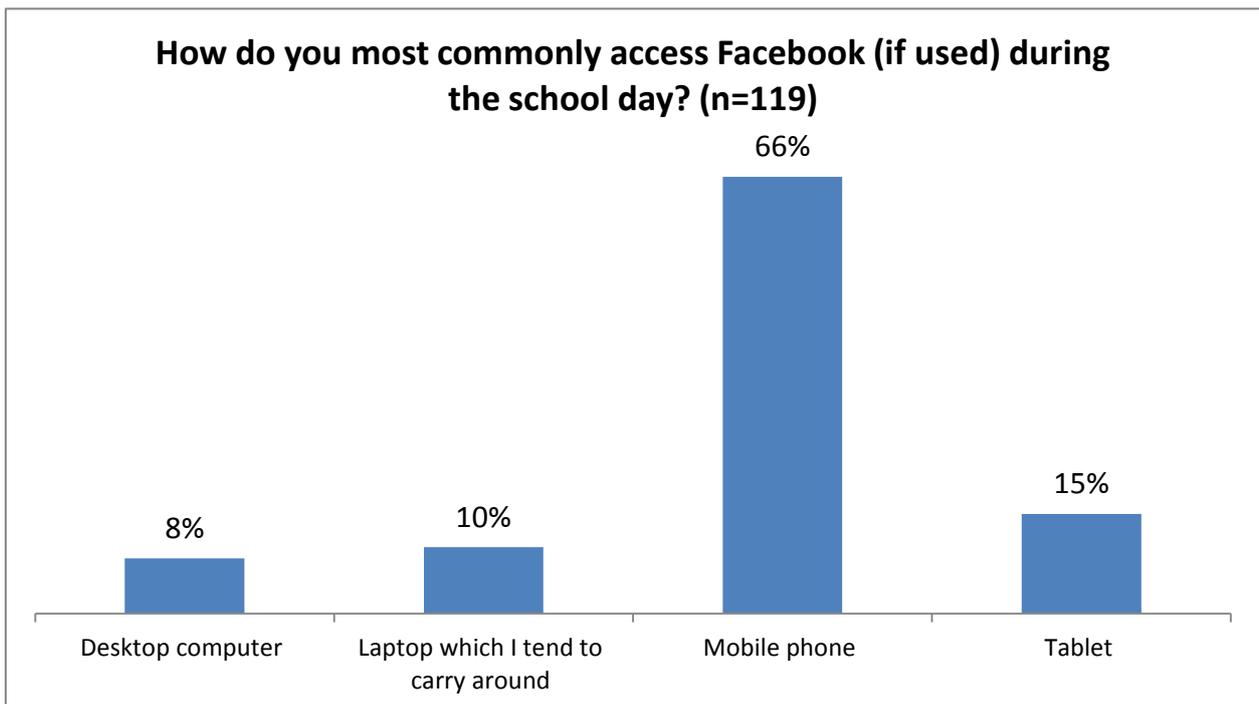
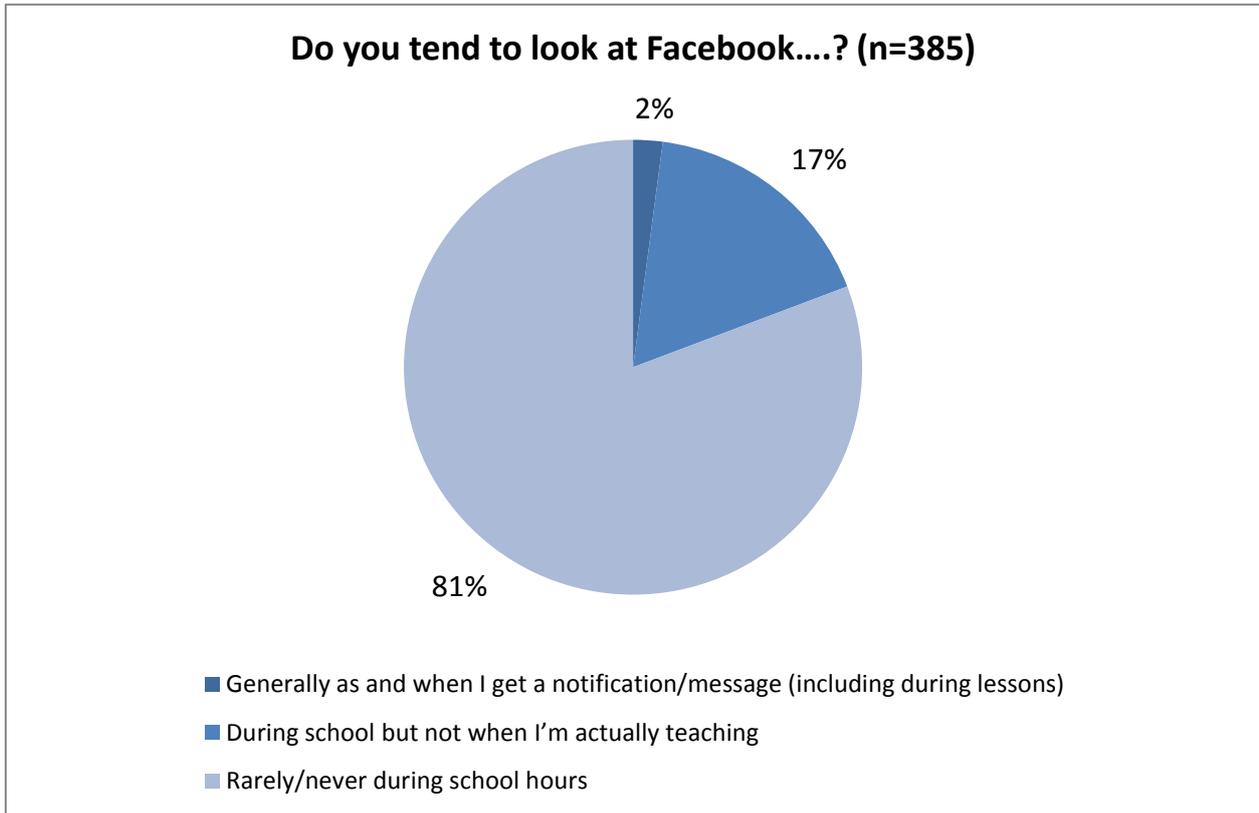


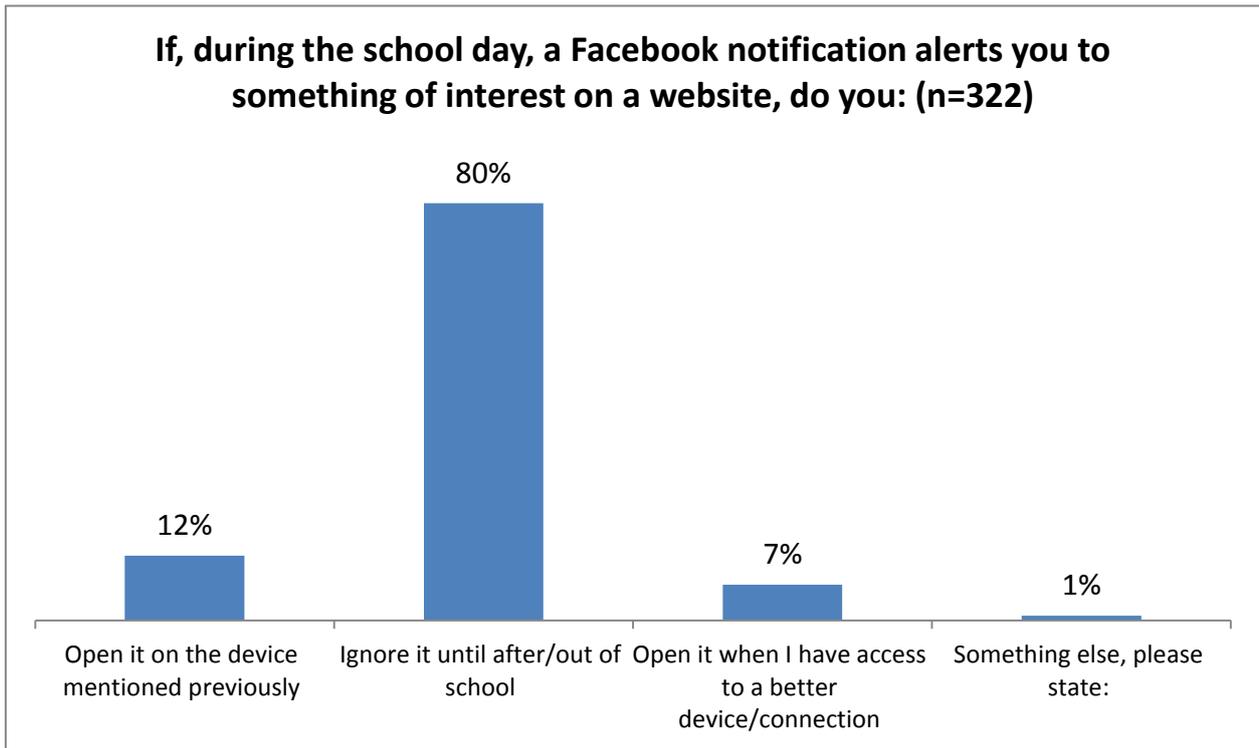
Only two fifths of those that use Twitter for professional reasons, tweet at least once a month about something school-related. Several comments in the survey implied that teachers often use Twitter more passively:

"I don't tweet, I read other peoples tweets"

Facebook

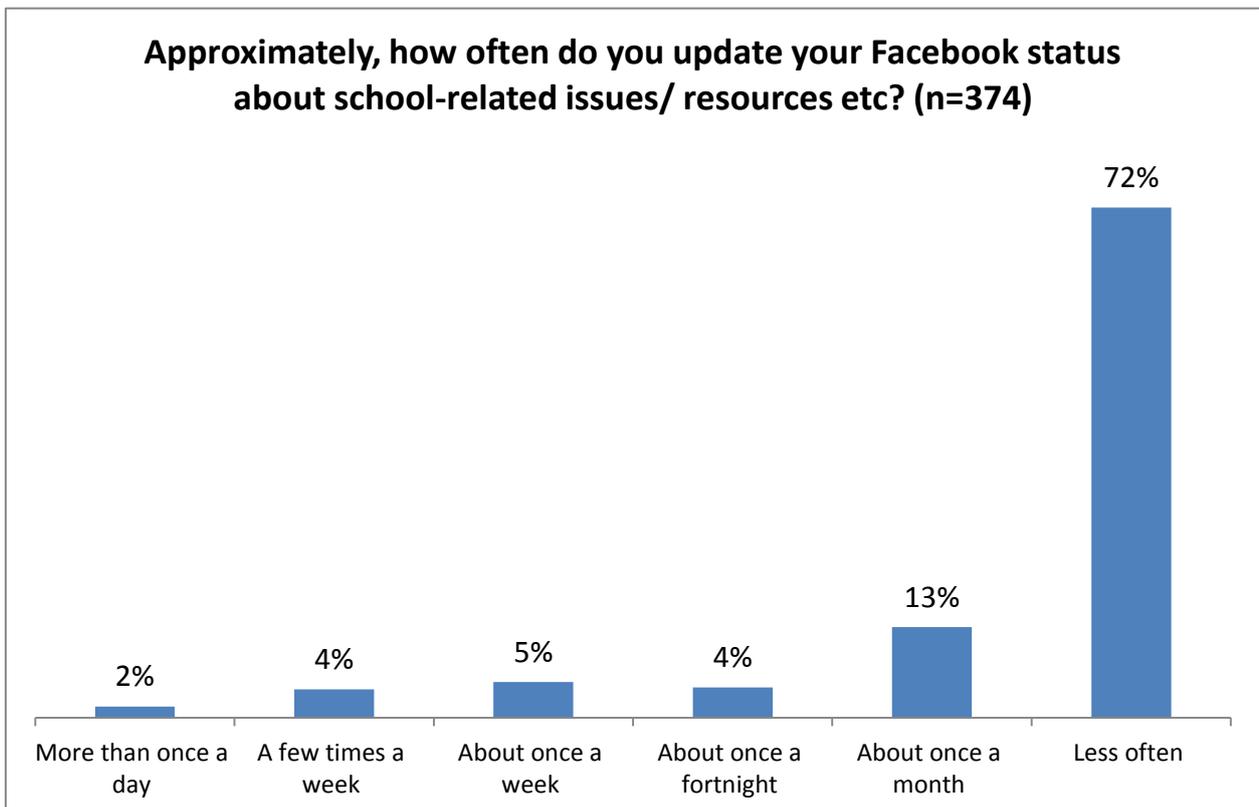
Similar to the responses for Twitter, the overwhelming majority of teachers do not access Facebook during school hours. Those that do, generally use their mobile phones or tablets for access. This is again consistent with the finding that many schools continue to block access to the site.





Where alerts are received, as with Twitter, the vast majority of teachers would choose to ignore it until the end of the school day or when they are at home.

Status updates



When it comes to status updates, passive engagement with Facebook emerges, with less than a third of teachers updating their status with something school-related at least once a month.

Who do teachers follow for education-related issues?

Teachers follow a whole range of organisations and individuals for their work. These include subject associations, awarding bodies, colleagues and news sites. The top five specific names that emerged from responses in this survey were:

1. Teacher Toolkit (34 respondents)
2. TES (34 respondents)
3. Guardian/ Guardian Teach/ Guardian Education (20 respondents)
4. DfE (15 respondents)
5. Learning Spy/ David Didau (15 respondents)

What do they share or tweet about?

The majority of teachers responded that they use social media to share purely personal news, such as birthday celebrations, family occasions, hobbies and interests, with several teachers stating that they considered it wholly inappropriate to mention anything school-related, specifically because this could result in a disciplinary because of their school's policy. For those teachers who do use Facebook or Twitter in their teaching capacity, the most popular activities listed were to share comments on current affairs or education news, policy changes, lesson ideas and resources. Teachers also frequently share news articles, blogs, videos, website links, CPD opportunities and various subject-specific information. Some teachers also become quite actively engaged in communicating with other colleagues, using their social media accounts as a source to ask and answer questions, offer support and share ideas with their peers.

Some of the teachers use social media as a means of communicating with their students, with most doing so via Twitter as opposed to Facebook, which is viewed to be more of a private networking tool, or as a place to convene with other colleagues. Teachers share activities and updates from their own schools, such as school shows, prize giving evenings or trips; celebrations of pupil achievement; as well as providing extra information or guidance that their students may require, such as assignment deadlines, links to useful resources or revision tools.

39 teachers responded that they don't share or tweet at all, with a further 16 teachers saying that whilst they don't actively share or tweet, they enjoy being immersed and exposed to what other people are talking about on these platforms.

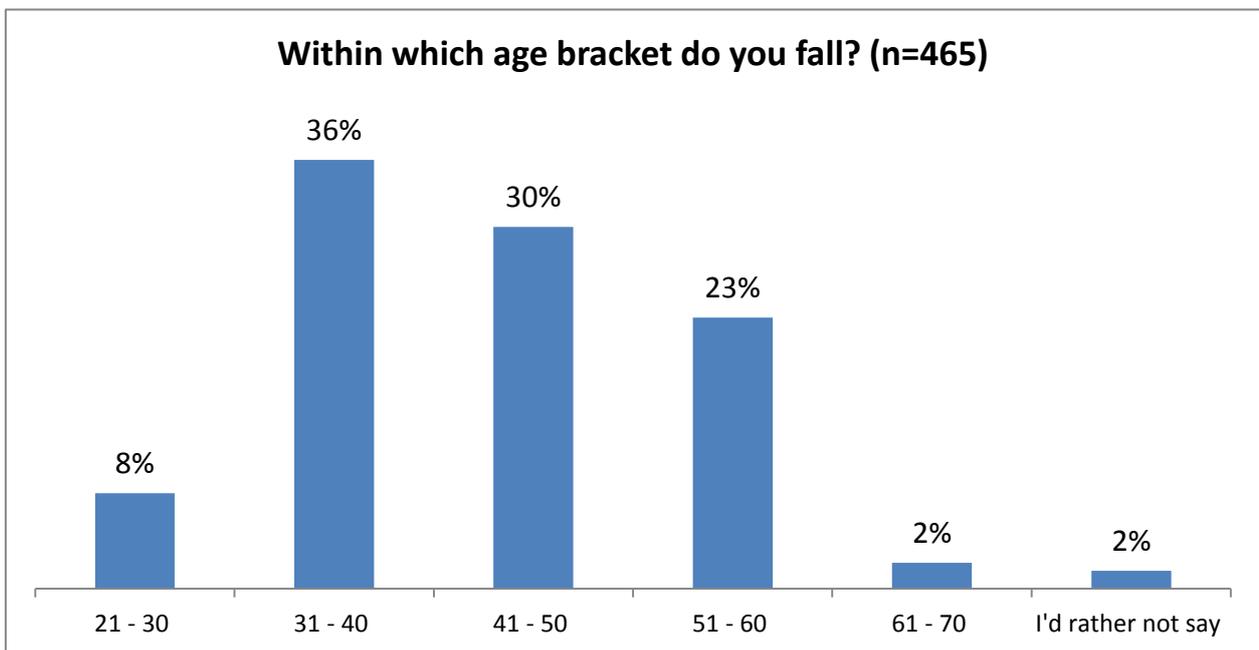
Methodology

Participant profiling

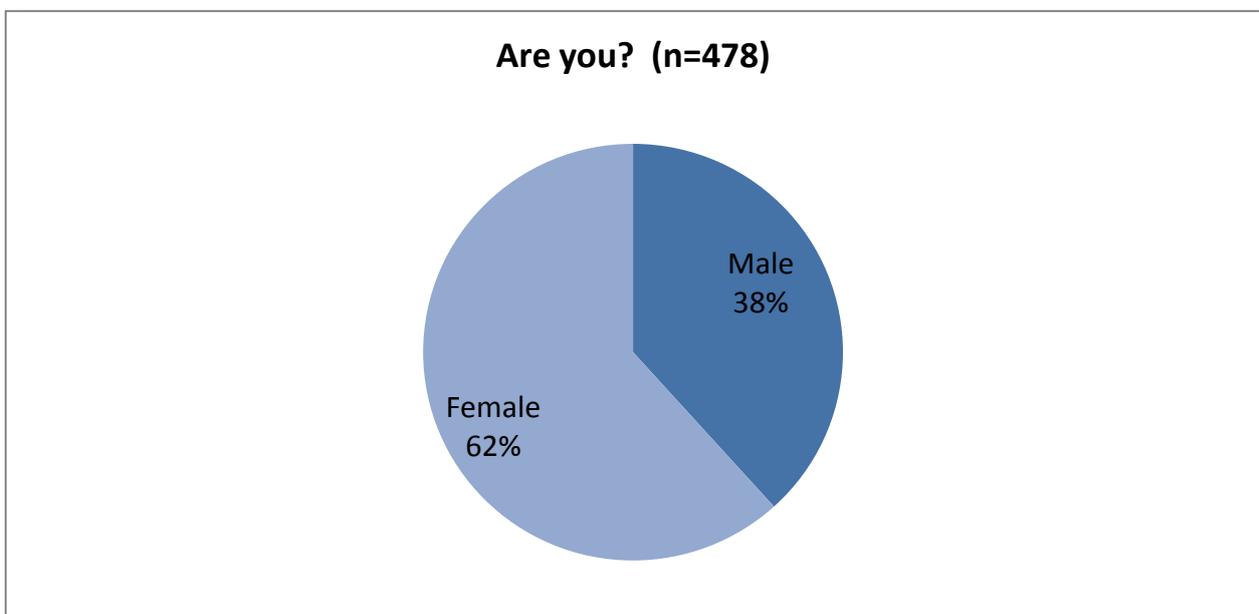
There were 502 valid responses to the survey. The following charts show the profiles of those that responded and provided the relevant data.

Teacher Profiling Data

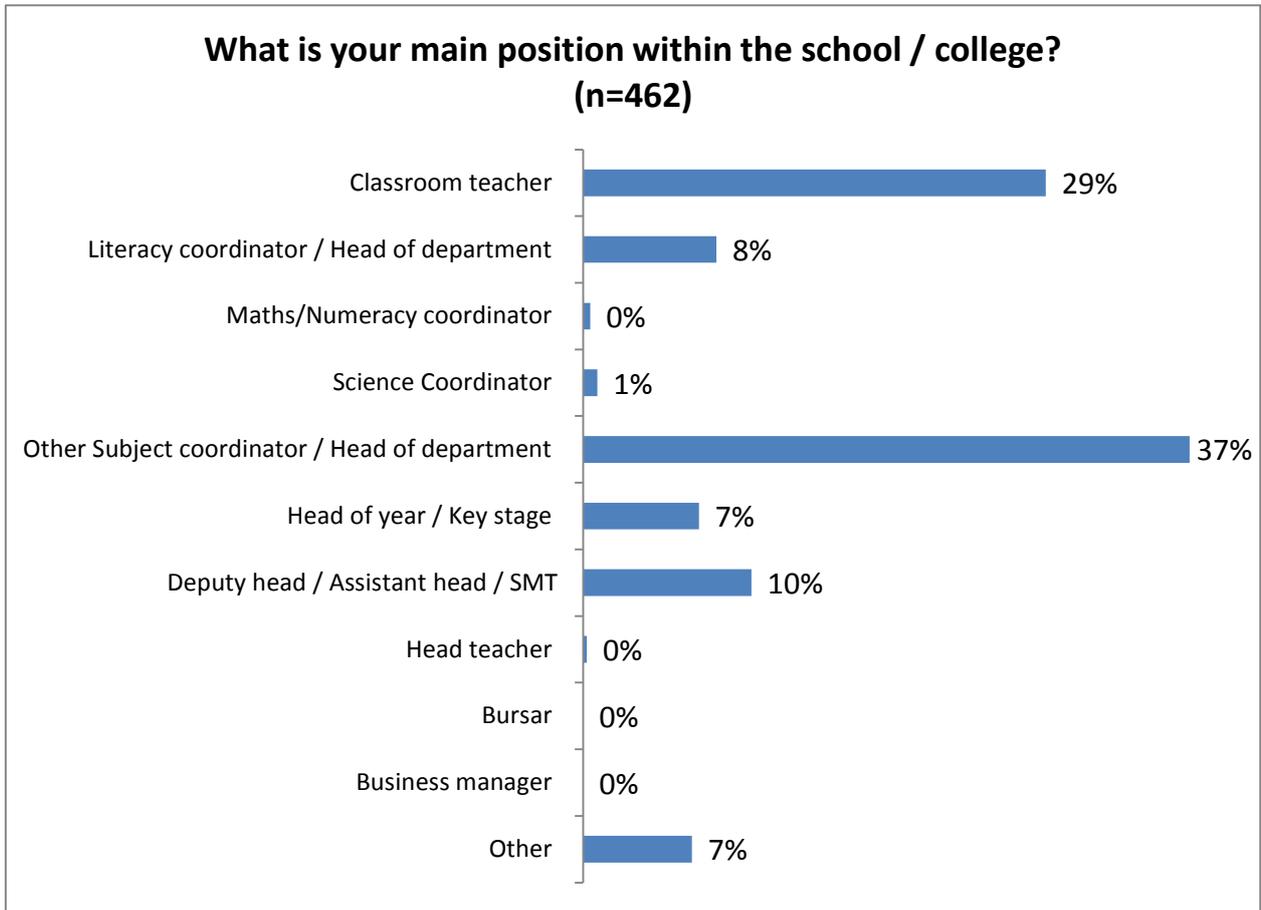
AGE



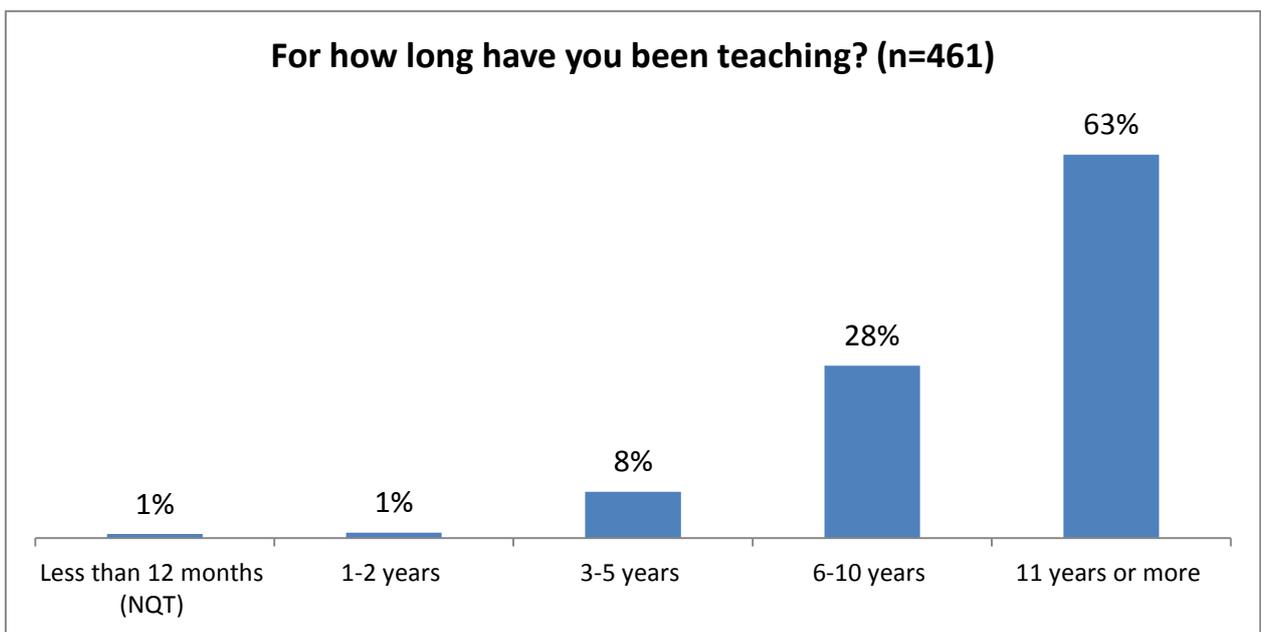
GENDER



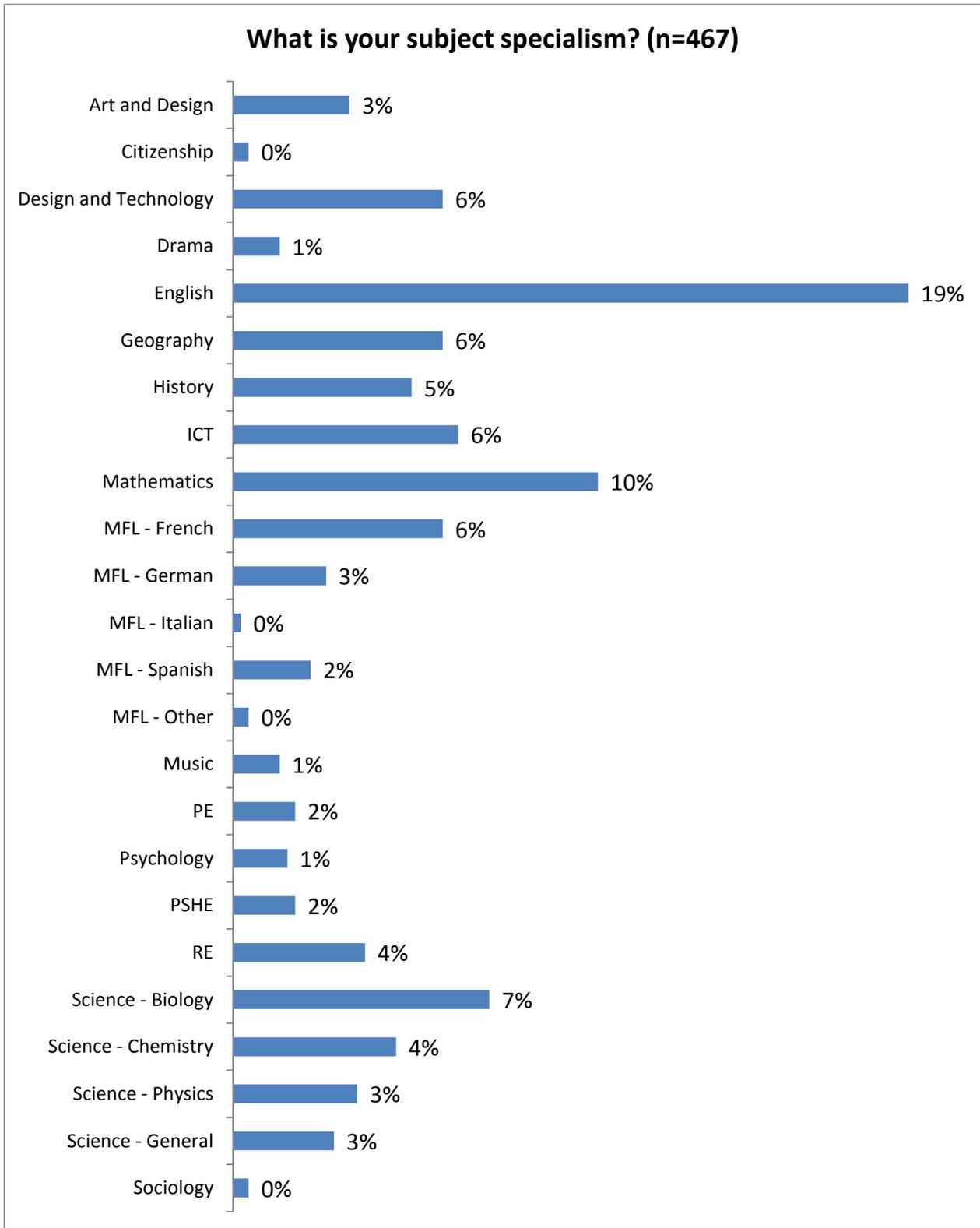
ROLE



TIME IN THE PROFESSION

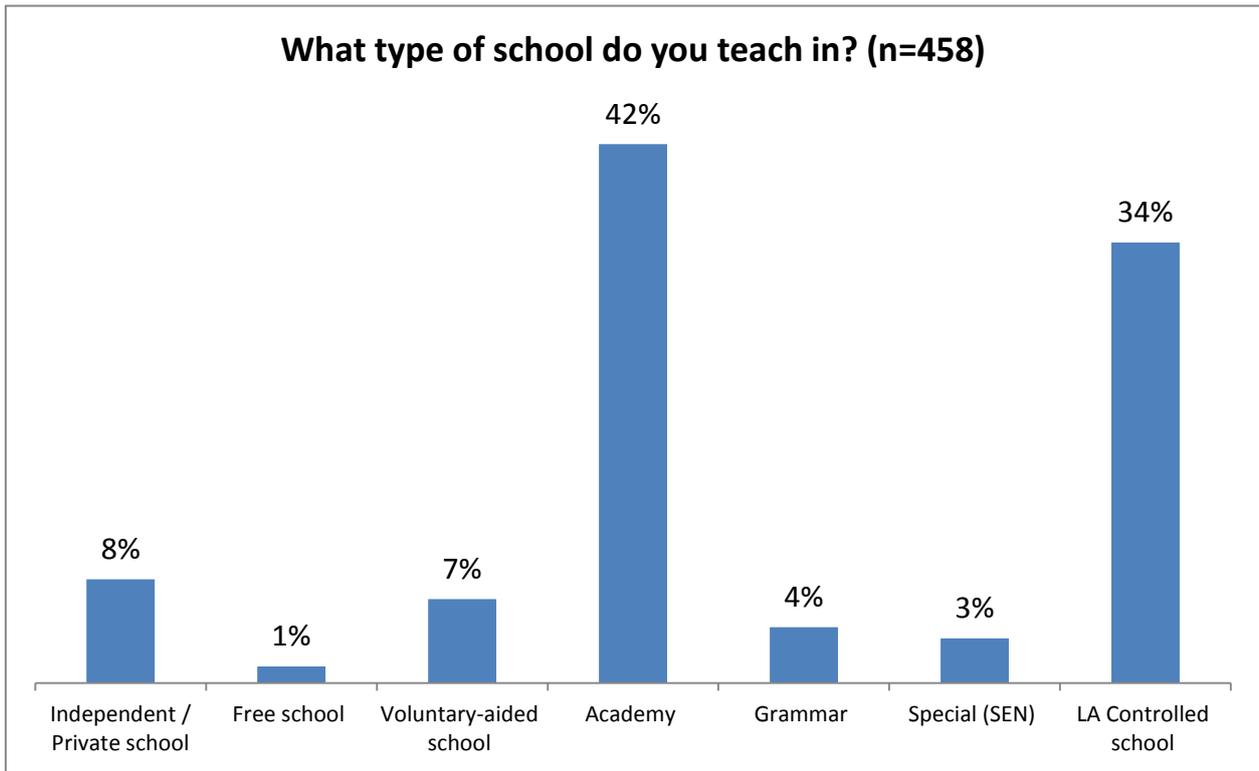


SUBJECT

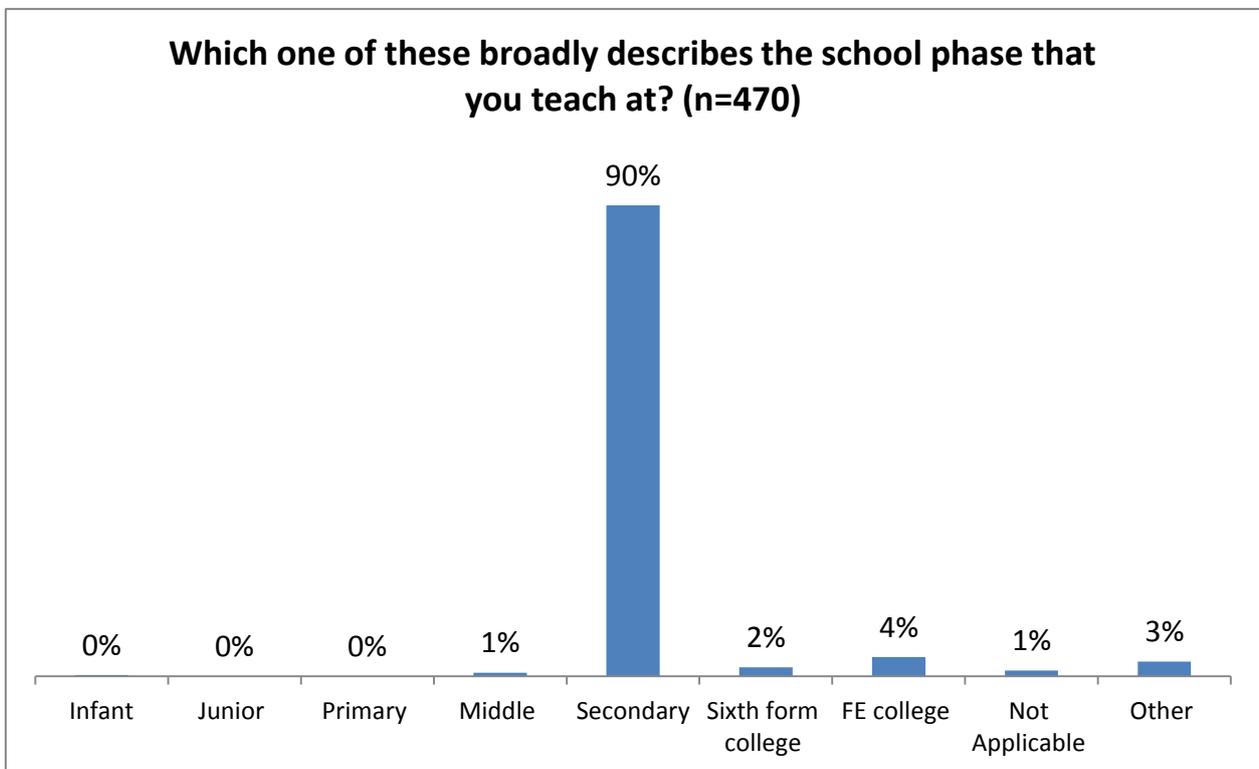


School Profile of Participants

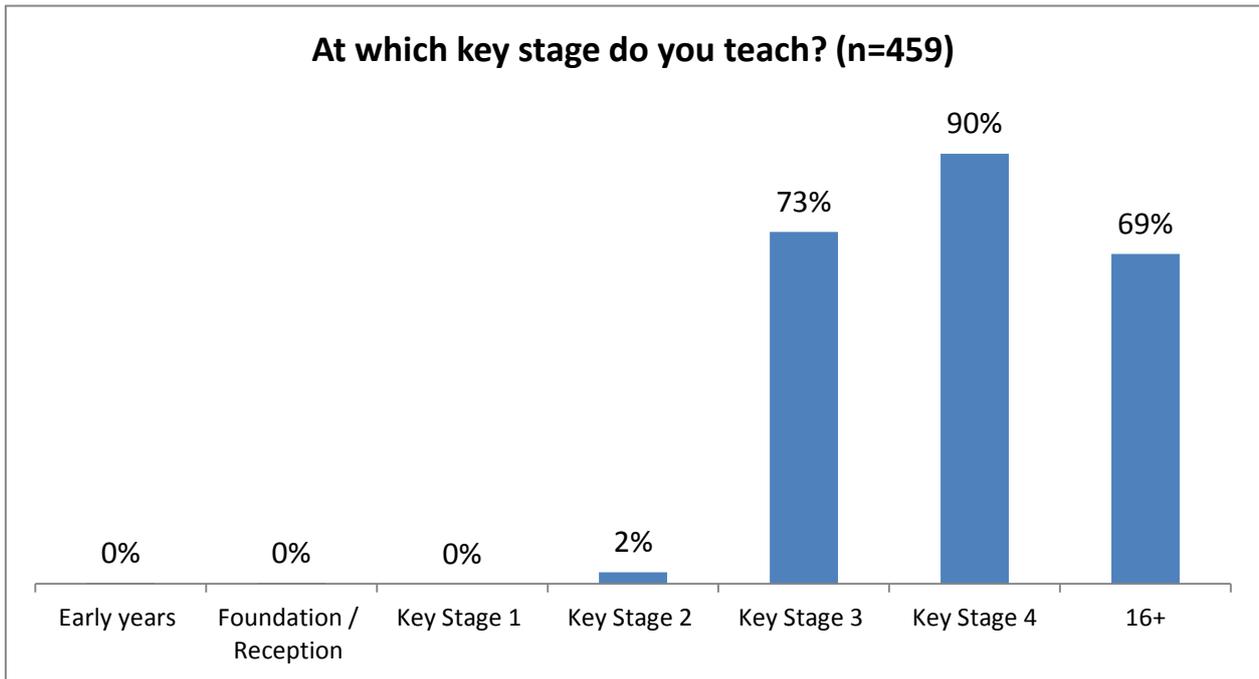
SCHOOL TYPE



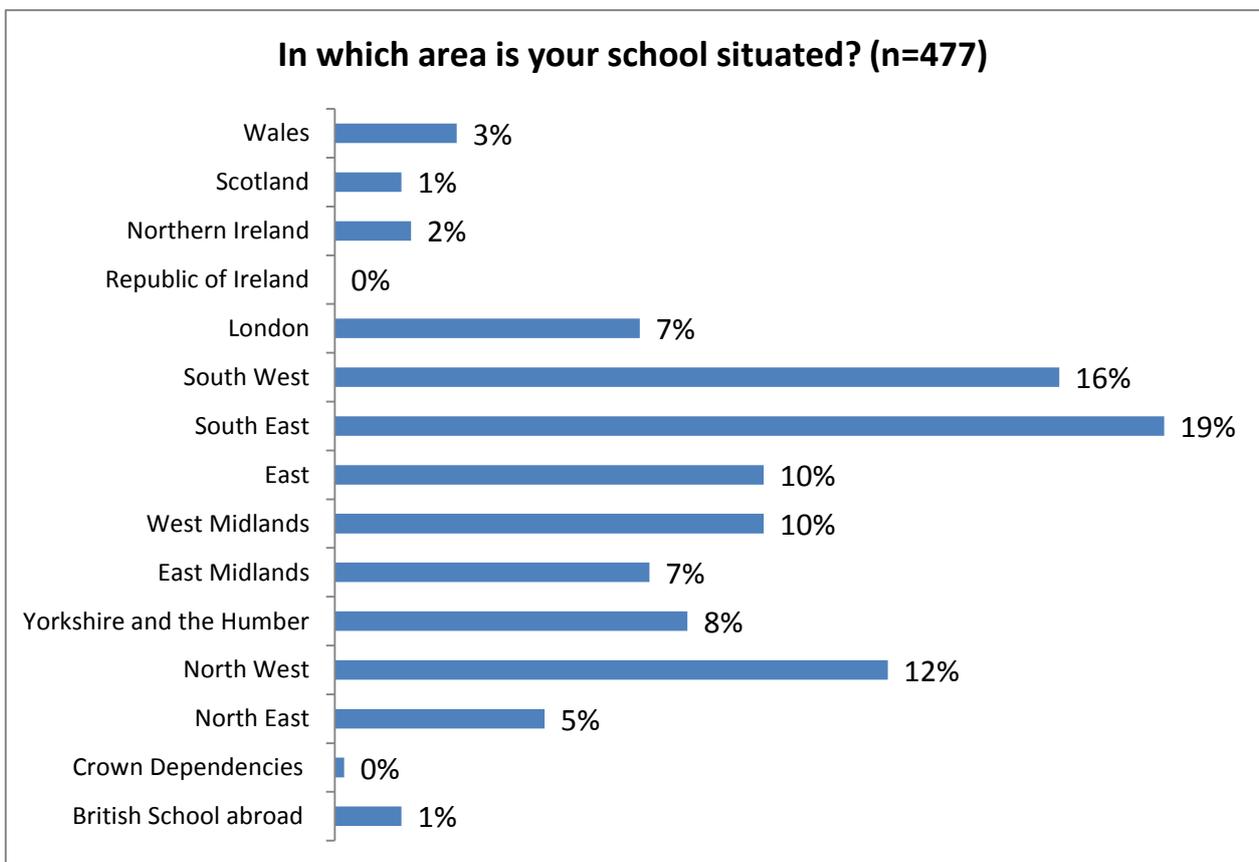
SCHOOL PHASE



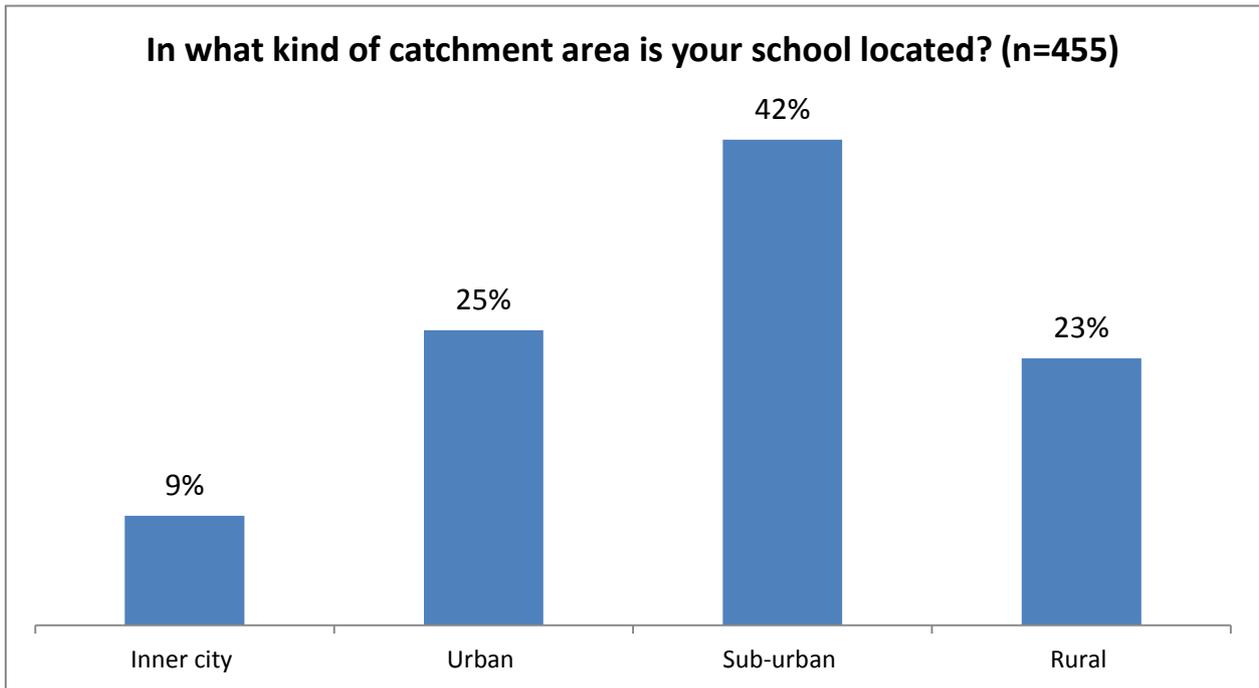
KEY STAGE



LOCATION



CATCHMENT AREA





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