



Bar Journal Readership Survey

April 2014

Michigan Bar Journal Readership Survey

Summary

The survey was sent via two e-blasts to 40,501 members of the State Bar of Michigan in April and May 2013. For the first e-blast, 12,775 members opened the e-mail and 4,289 clicked on the link to open the survey. In response to a second, reminder e-blast, 12,274 opened the e-mail and 1,270 clicked on the survey link. A total of 4,322 members responded to the survey.

I. Respondent demographics

- A. Approximately one-quarter of respondents have been State Bar members for 10 years or less, 40 percent have been practicing between 11 and 30 years, and just over 34 percent have been in practice for more than 30 years.
- B. Sixty-one percent of respondents are in private practice, 21 percent work for the government, 13 percent work as in-house counsel, and just over 4 percent are in academia.
- C. Among respondents in private practice, 30 percent are solo practitioners, 20 percent are in small firms (2–10 lawyers), 8 percent are in mid-size firms (11–50 lawyers), and another 8 percent are in large firms (50 or more attorneys).
- D. In terms of section membership, the greatest response to the survey came from the following 10 sections:
 - (1) Probate and Estate Planning (17.42%)
 - (2) Real Property Law (16.83%)
 - (3) Family Law (14.45%)
 - (4) Business Law (14.31%)
 - (5) Criminal Law (12.72%)
 - (6) Young Lawyers (10.92%)
 - (7) Litigation (10.61%)
 - (8) Labor and Employment Law (9.68%)
 - (9) Negligence Law (8.02%)
 - (10) General Practice (7.43%)

II. Respondents' reading habits

- A. Nearly 54 percent of respondents said they either read or browsed all 11 issues of the *Journal* over the past year, 13.5 percent said they read or browsed 8–10 issues, 16 percent read or browsed 4–7 issues, nearly 14 percent read or browsed 1–3 issues, and 2.5 percent said they neither read nor browsed a single issue over the past year.
- B. A little more than 84 percent of respondents said they read the print version of the *Journal*, 14.25 percent said they read the online version, and 8.25 percent said they read the new digital version. Nearly 83 percent of respondents also said they do not expect to change from their current format preference (e.g., from print to digital) during the next three years.
- C. Excluding advertising, nearly 50 percent of respondents said they typically read less than one-half of an issue's total content, 35.85 percent said they typically read one-half or more of an issue's total content, 10 percent said they typically read almost all of an issue's total content, and 4.5 percent said they weren't sure how much of an issue's total content they typically read.
- D. With respect to advertising, 56.25 percent of respondents said they never used the *Journal's* advertisements when looking for information on products, services, or employment; 41.64 percent said they occasionally used the advertisements for those purposes, and only 2.11 percent of respondents said they frequently did so.
- E. Concerning respondents' reading habits, the Orders of Discipline are the most frequently read, followed by In Memoriam, the Plain Language column, and the Michigan Supreme Court pages.
- F. In excess of 90 percent of respondents said the current typeface used in the *Journal* was readable and should be retained.

III. Respondents' preferences regarding article/issue content

- A. More than 78 percent of respondents said the *Journal* publishes articles in their practice area or area(s) of interest that are helpful to their practice.
- B. In terms of article content, 47.5 percent of respondents said they typically browsed *Journal* articles, 42.76 percent said they both read and browsed article content, and nearly 10 percent said they typically read (as opposed to browsed) article content.
- C. More than 36 percent of respondents said they were more likely to read a theme article than a general-interest article, and 12.5 percent said the converse; 51.15 percent said that whether an article was a theme or general-interest article made no difference in their decision as to whether to read the article.

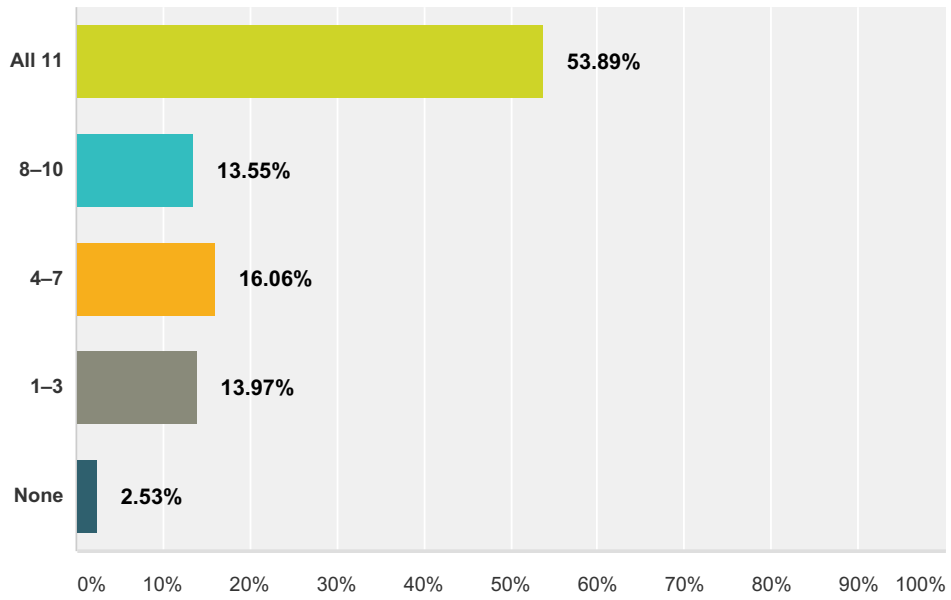
- D. Nearly 70 percent of respondents said they read both theme and general-interest articles, 14.16 percent said they read mostly theme articles, and 6.26 percent said they read mostly general-interest articles. Very few respondents said they read only theme or only general-interest articles. Nearly 74 percent of respondents said that the cooperation (peer review) of the sponsoring SBM sections did not influence their decision to read theme articles.
- E. Nearly three-quarters of respondents said that mixing theme issue content with general content over the year would not make a difference in their decision whether to read a theme article, 18.54 percent said they would be more likely to read theme issue content if it were mixed with general content throughout the year, and 6.5 percent said that such a change would not make it more likely they would read these articles.
- F. Focusing on theme issues over the past 1–2 years, 41.66 percent of respondents said they browsed all issues, 29.18 percent said they read a few issues thoroughly, and 21.69 percent said they browsed only a few issues. More than 5 percent said they read thoroughly all theme issues over the past 1–2 years and 2.18 percent of said they did not read or browse any theme issues.
- G. Focusing on general issues over the past 1–2 years, nearly 45 percent of respondents said they browsed all issues, nearly one-quarter read a few issues thoroughly, and 22.29 percent browsed only a few issues. Six percent of respondents said they read thoroughly all general issues over the last 1–2 years and 2 percent said they did not read or browse any general issues.
- H. Nearly 67 percent of respondents said they infrequently read theme issues unrelated to their practice areas, 21 percent said they almost always read theme issues unrelated to their practice areas, 8.81 percent said they never read theme issues unrelated to their practice areas, and 3.41 percent said they always do so.
- I. A little more than 68 percent of respondents said they infrequently read general articles unrelated to their practice areas, 22.4 percent said they almost always read general articles unrelated to their practice areas, 6.86 percent said they never read general articles unrelated to their practices areas, and 2.6 percent said they always do so.
- J. Focusing on a typical theme issue, 76.34 percent of respondents said they usually read 1–2 major articles, 15 percent said they read all major articles, and 8.5 percent said they don't usually read any major articles. Focusing on a typical general issue, 81.46 percent of respondents said they usually read 1–2 major articles, 11.45 percent said they read all major articles, and 7.09 percent said they did not usually read a single major article.

- K. More than 65 percent of respondents said their preference was to continue the current ratio of theme to general-interest issues, 18.5 percent said they would prefer to increase the number of general-interest issues, and 11.74 percent said they would prefer to increase the number of theme issues. Only 4 percent of respondents said their preference was to discontinue theme issues altogether.
- L. Focusing on practice-related articles, 55.15 percent of respondents said they preferred extremely detailed articles over broader articles.
- M. Nearly 53 percent of respondents said they almost always read the “fast facts” sidebars that accompany most articles, 27 percent said they only infrequently read them, 15.38 percent said they always read the fast facts, and only 4.7 percent said they never do so.

Michigan Bar Journal Readership Survey

Q1 Over the past year, how many issues of the Bar Journal did you read or browse?

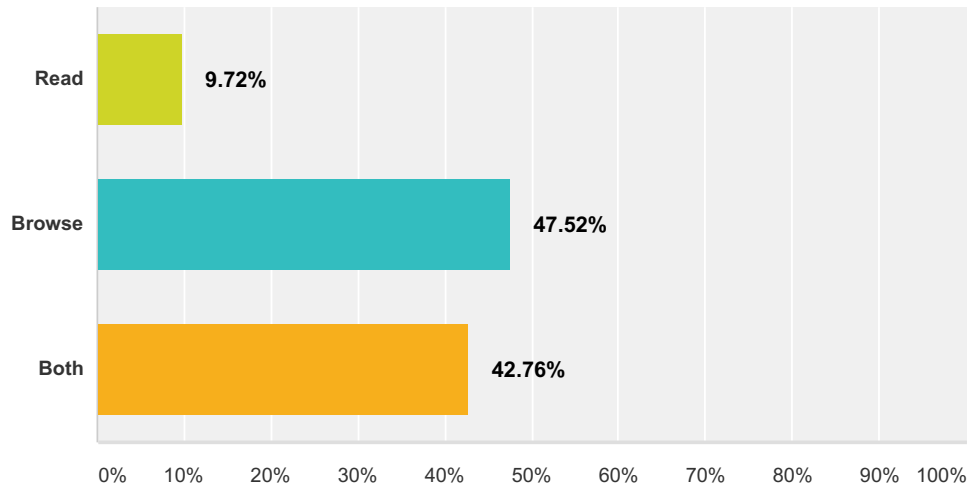
Answered: 4,303 Skipped: 19



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
All 11	53.89%	2,319
8-10	13.55%	583
4-7	16.06%	691
1-3	13.97%	601
None	2.53%	109
Total		4,303

Q2 Do you typically read or browse the article content?

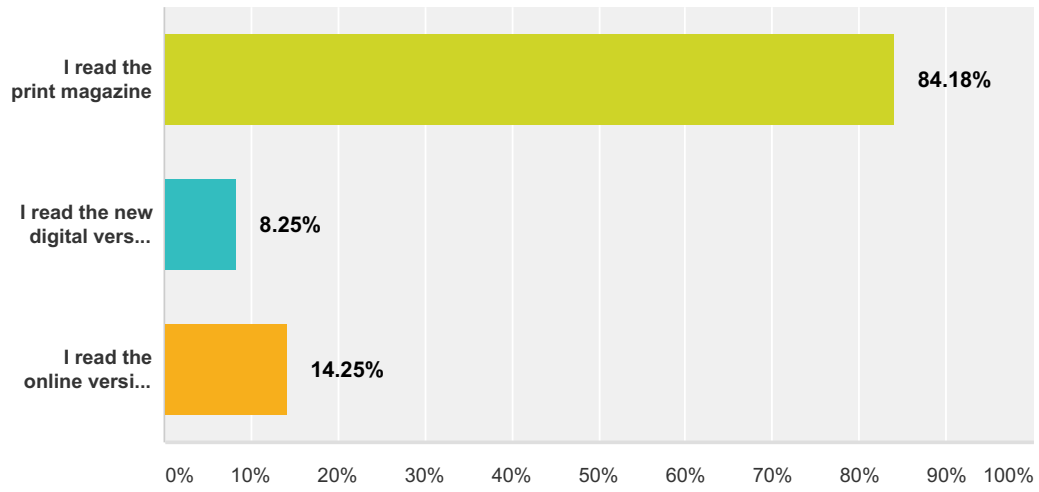
Answered: 4,249 Skipped: 73



Answer Choices	Responses
Read	9.72% 413
Browse	47.52% 2,019
Both	42.76% 1,817
Total	4,249

Q3 In what format do you read the Bar Journal? (Check all that apply.)

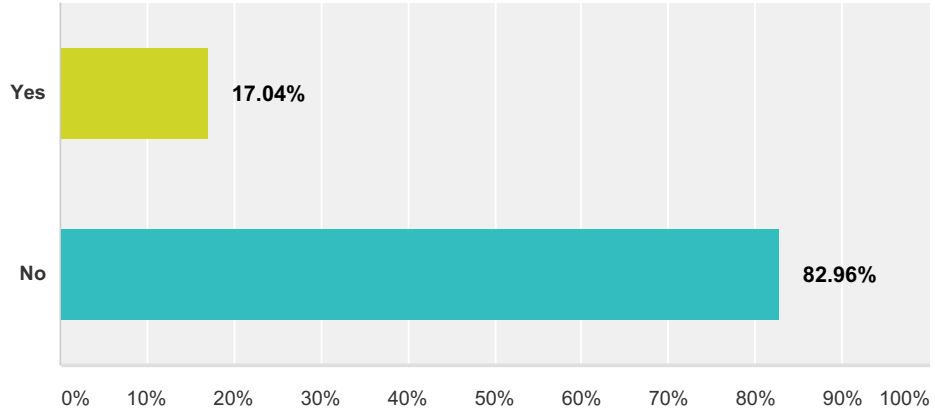
Answered: 4,253 Skipped: 69



Answer Choices	Responses
I read the print magazine	84.18% 3,580
I read the new digital version (zmag)	8.25% 351
I read the online version from the SBM website (http://www.michbar.org/journal/)	14.25% 606
Total Respondents: 4,253	

Q4 Do you expect to change from your current format(s) to a new one in the next three years? (e.g., print to digital version)

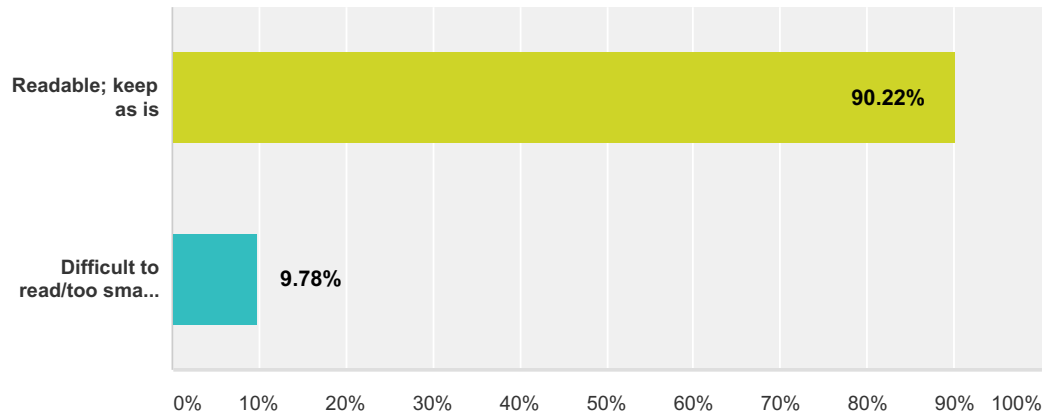
Answered: 4,238 Skipped: 84



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	17.04% 722
No	82.96% 3,516
Total	4,238

Q5 How would you describe the typeface used in the print Bar Journal?

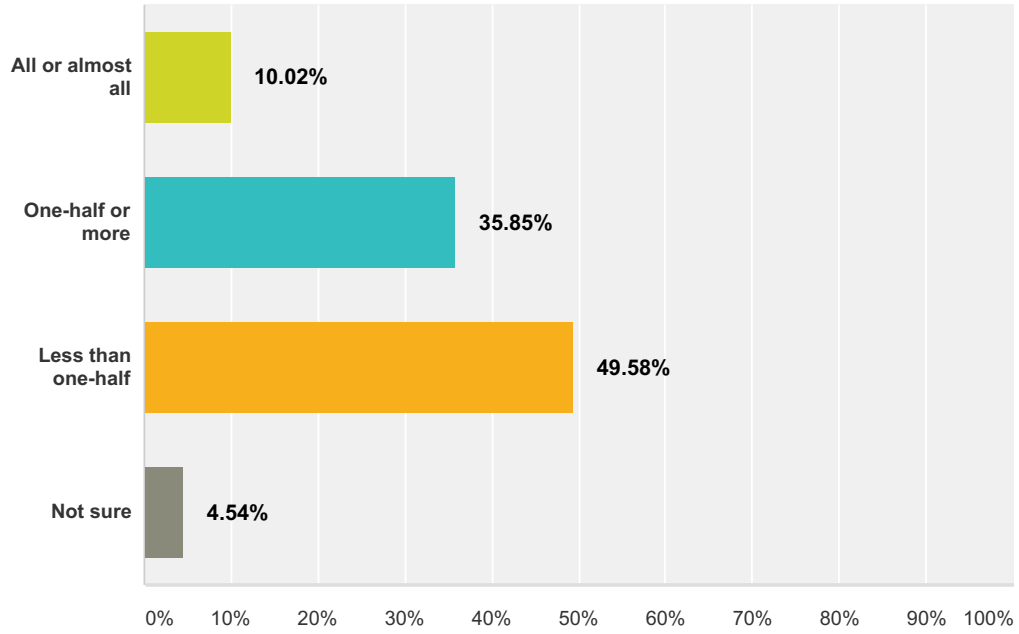
Answered: 4,214 Skipped: 108



Answer Choices	Responses
Readable; keep as is	90.22% 3,802
Difficult to read/too small; enlarge the font size	9.78% 412
Total	4,214

Q6 How much of an issue's total content, excluding advertising, do you typically read?

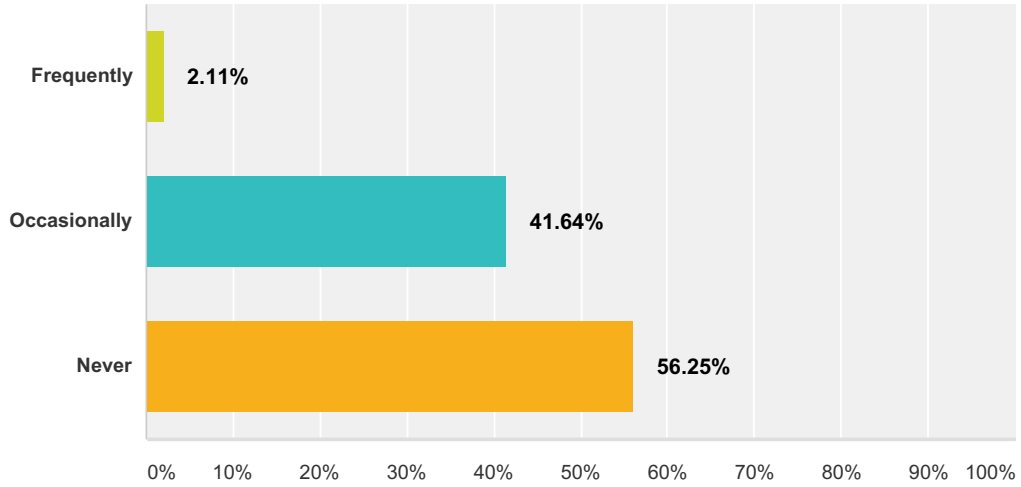
Answered: 4,270 Skipped: 52



Answer Choices	Responses
All or almost all	10.02% 428
One-half or more	35.85% 1,531
Less than one-half	49.58% 2,117
Not sure	4.54% 194
Total	4,270

Q7 How often do you use the Bar Journal’s advertisements as a resource when looking for information on products, services, or employment?

Answered: 4,258 Skipped: 64



Answer Choices	Responses
Frequently	2.11% 90
Occasionally	41.64% 1,773
Never	56.25% 2,395
Total	4,258

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Q8 Does the Bar Journal publish articles in your practice area or area(s) of interest that are useful to your practice?

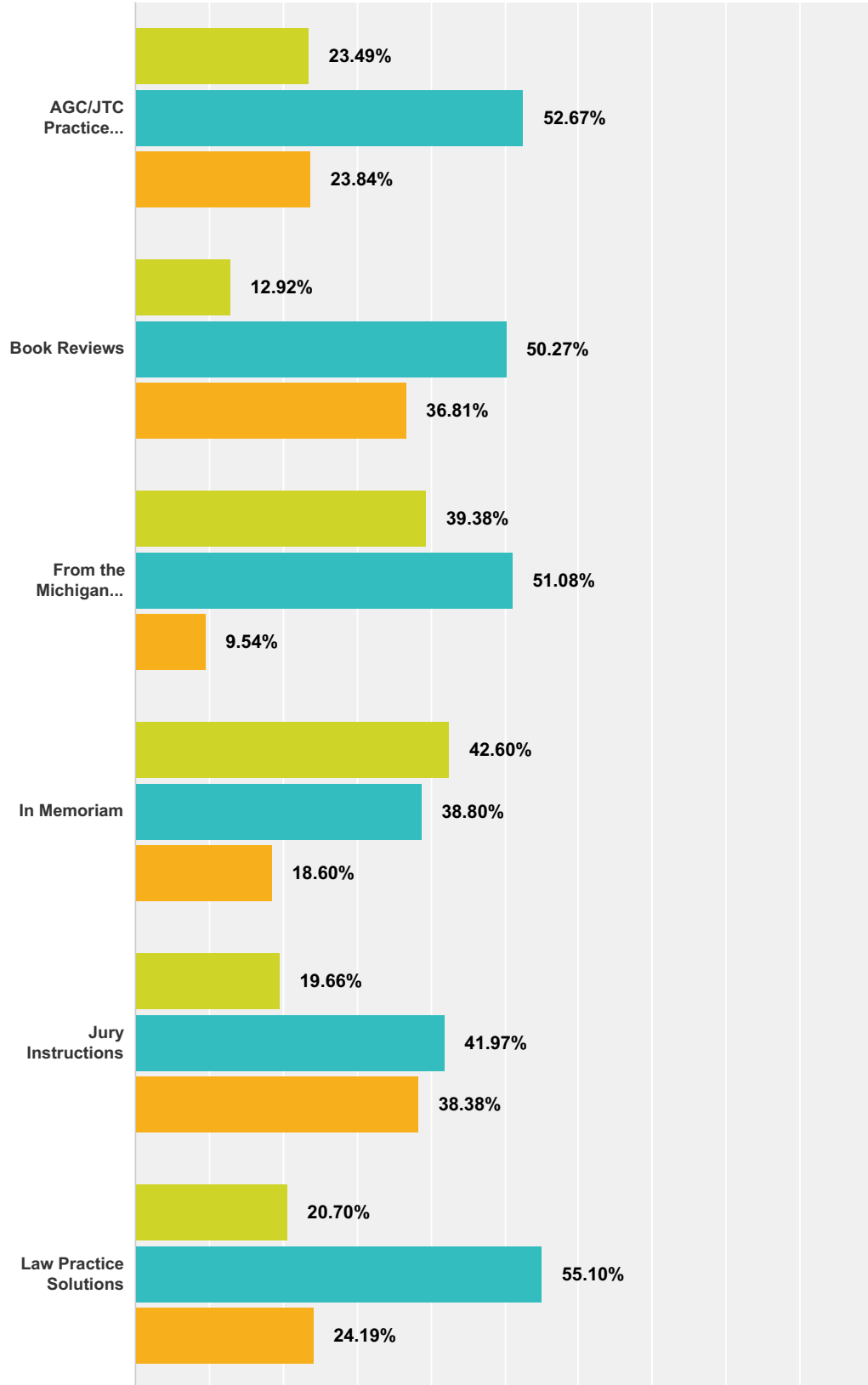
Answered: 3,339 Skipped: 983

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes. If so, indicate which areas.	78.44%	2,619
No. What areas get missed? Are any overemphasized?	28.66%	957

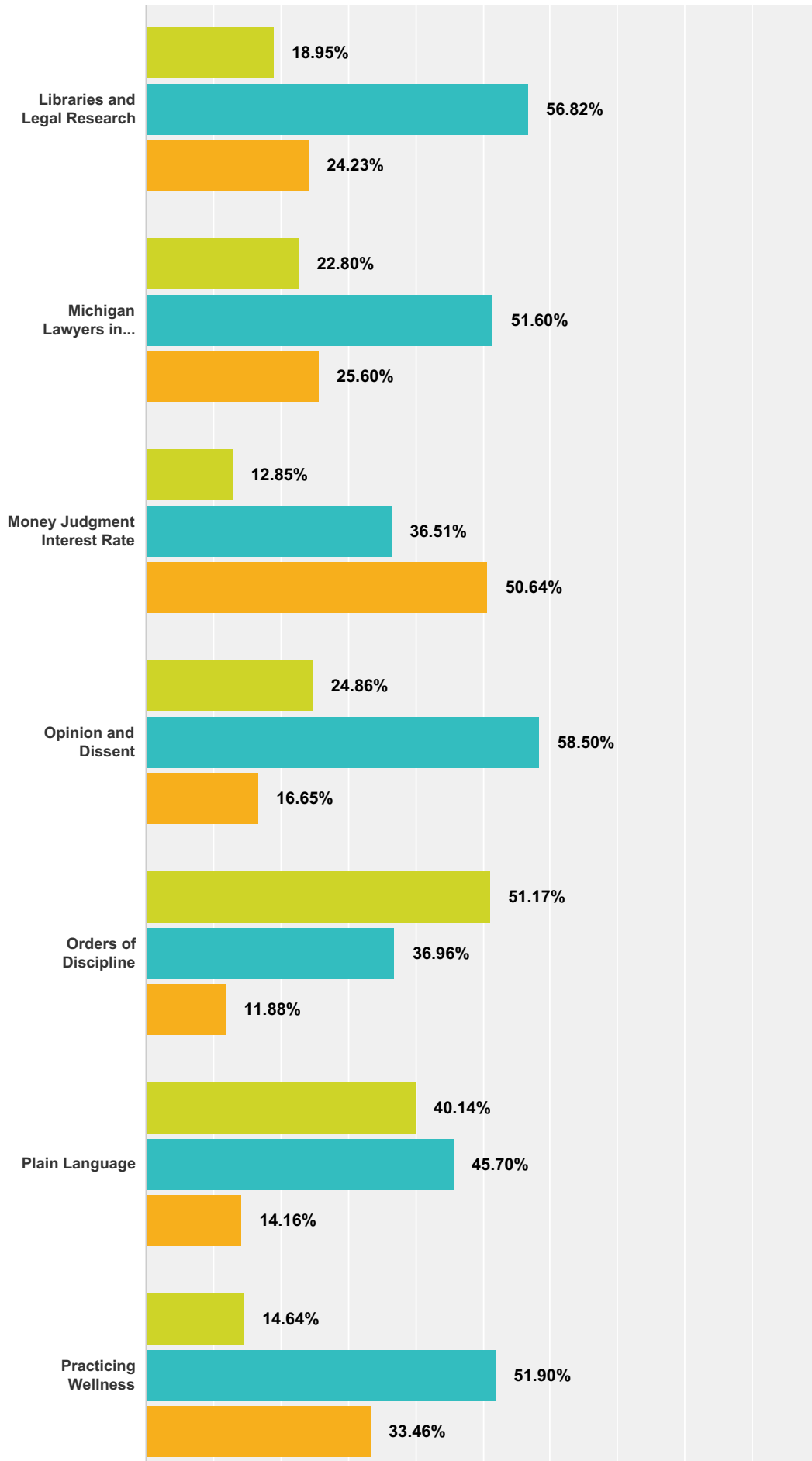
Individual responses available on request to Inovak@mail.michbar.org.

Q9 Indicate how often you read each of the following regular or monthly features in the Bar Journal:

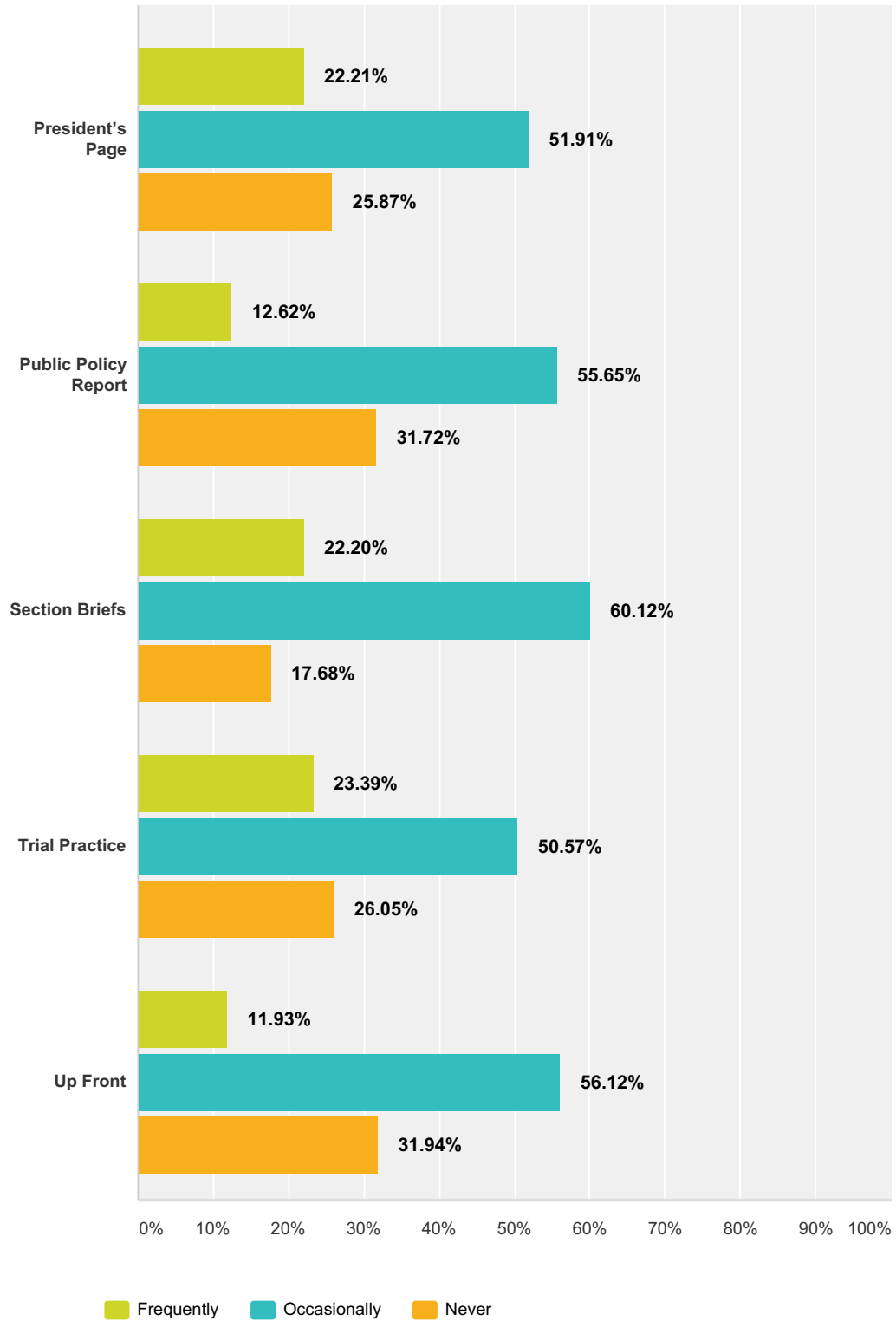
Answered: 4,251 Skipped: 71



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	Frequently	Occasionally	Never	Total
AGC/JTC Practice Pointers	23.49% 944	52.67% 2,117	23.84% 958	4,019
Book Reviews	12.92% 522	50.27% 2,031	36.81% 1,487	4,040
From the Michigan Supreme Court	39.38% 1,618	51.08% 2,099	9.54% 392	4,109

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In Memoriam	42.60% 1,768	38.80% 1,610	18.60% 772	4,150
Jury Instructions	19.66% 799	41.97% 1,706	38.38% 1,560	4,065
Law Practice Solutions	20.70% 842	55.10% 2,241	24.19% 984	4,067
Libraries and Legal Research	18.95% 760	56.82% 2,279	24.23% 972	4,011
Michigan Lawyers in History	22.80% 934	51.60% 2,114	25.60% 1,049	4,097
Money Judgment Interest Rate	12.85% 520	36.51% 1,477	50.64% 2,049	4,046
Opinion and Dissent	24.86% 1,011	58.50% 2,379	16.65% 677	4,067
Orders of Discipline	51.17% 2,128	36.96% 1,537	11.88% 494	4,159
Plain Language	40.14% 1,653	45.70% 1,882	14.16% 583	4,118
Practicing Wellness	14.64% 590	51.90% 2,091	33.46% 1,348	4,029
President's Page	22.21% 911	51.91% 2,129	25.87% 1,061	4,101
Public Policy Report	12.62% 507	55.65% 2,235	31.72% 1,274	4,016
Section Briefs	22.20% 908	60.12% 2,459	17.68% 723	4,090
Trial Practice	23.39% 951	50.57% 2,056	26.05% 1,059	4,066
Up Front	11.93% 467	56.12% 2,196	31.94% 1,250	3,913

Q10 What is your primary reason for reading the Bar Journal?

Answered: 3,271 Skipped: 1,051

Individual responses available on request to Inovak@mail.michbar.org.

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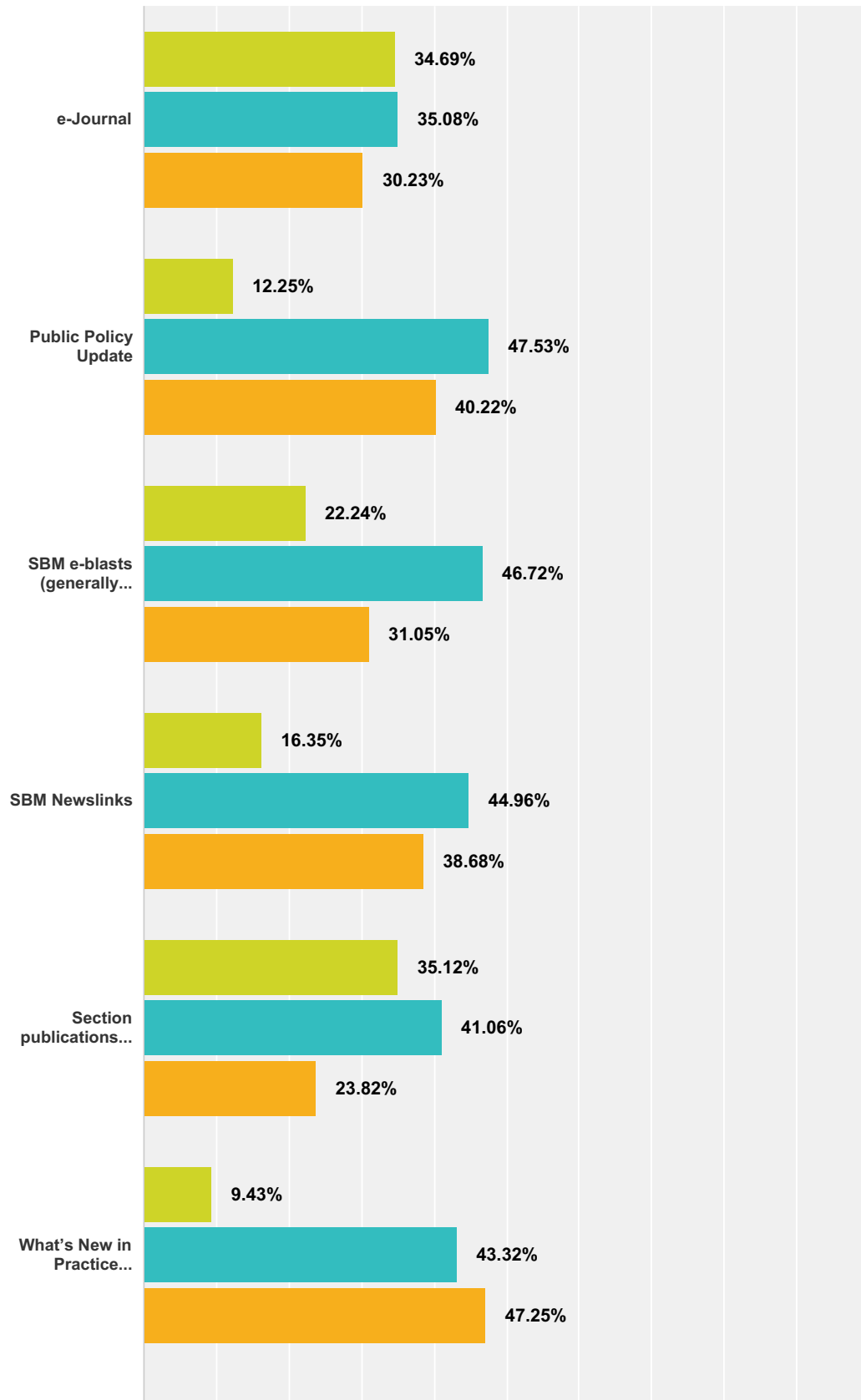
**Q11 How could we improve the Bar Journal
to encourage you to read it more often or
more thoroughly?**

Answered: 2,185 Skipped: 2,137

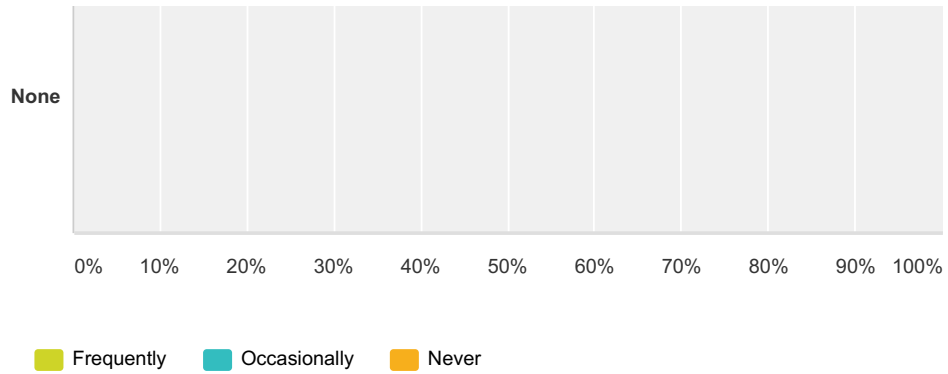
Individual responses available on request to Inovak@mail.michbar.org.

Q12 Please indicate how often you read the following State Bar publications?

Answered: 4,205 Skipped: 117



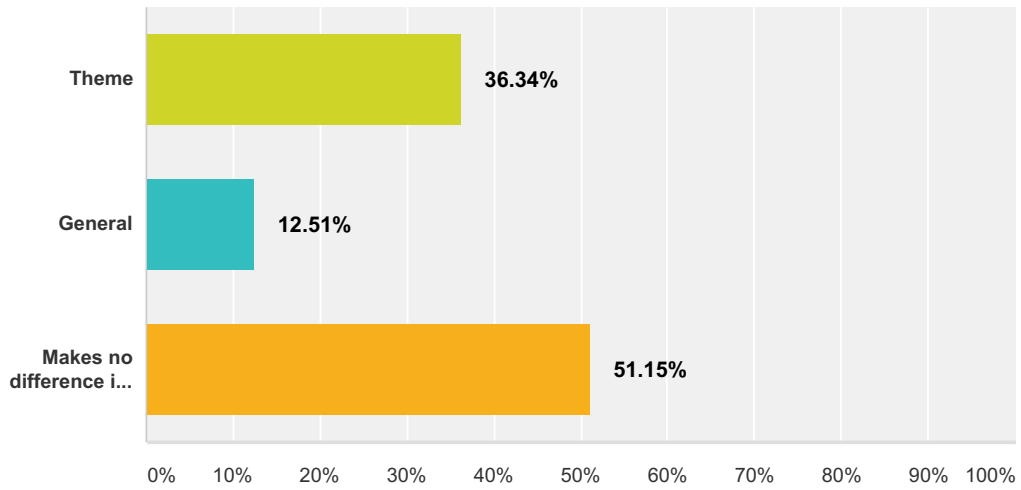
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	Frequently	Occasionally	Never	Total
e-Journal	34.69% 1,437	35.08% 1,453	30.23% 1,252	4,142
Public Policy Update	12.25% 499	47.53% 1,937	40.22% 1,639	4,075
SBM e-blasts (generally monthly)	22.24% 911	46.72% 1,914	31.05% 1,272	4,097
SBM Newslinks	16.35% 659	44.96% 1,812	38.68% 1,559	4,030
Section publications (newsletters, journals, seminar materials)	35.12% 1,448	41.06% 1,693	23.82% 982	4,123
What's New in Practice Management	9.43% 379	43.32% 1,741	47.25% 1,899	4,019
None	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0

Q13 Are you more likely to read a theme article or a general article?

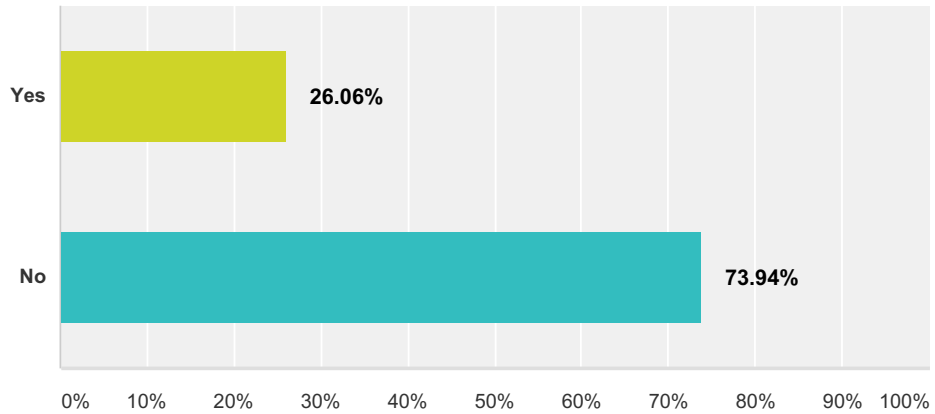
Answered: 4,235 Skipped: 87



Answer Choices	Responses
Theme	36.34% 1,539
General	12.51% 530
Makes no difference in my decision	51.15% 2,166
Total	4,235

Q14 Does the cooperation/peer review of the sponsoring SBM section (most theme-issue articles are reviewed by a section member) influence your decision to read theme articles?

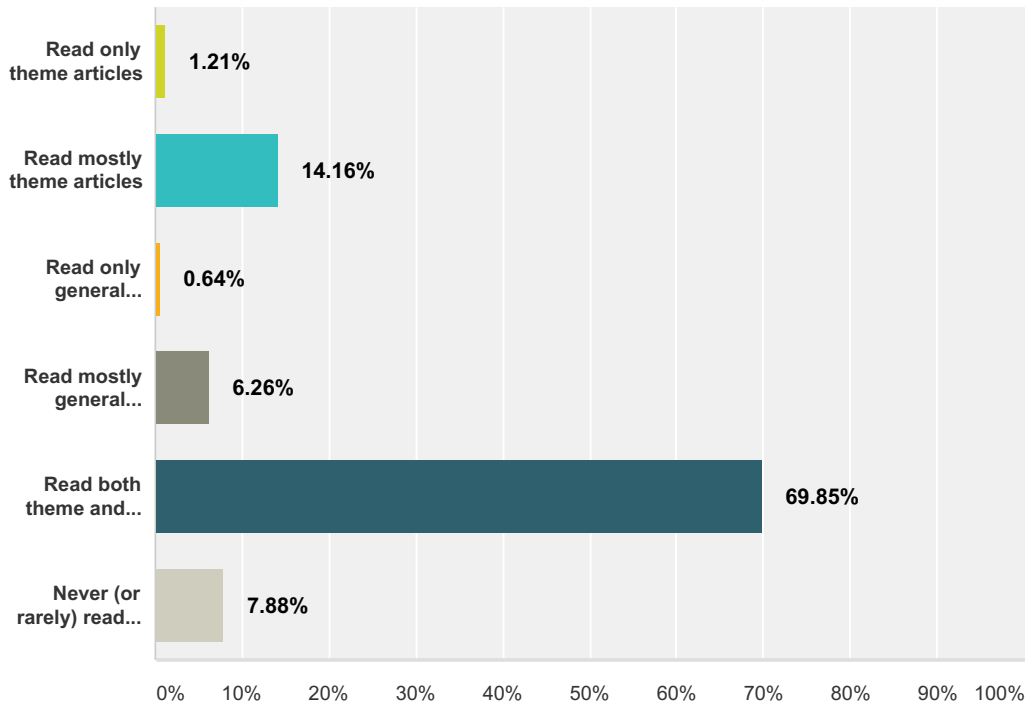
Answered: 4,155 Skipped: 167



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	26.06%	1,083
No	73.94%	3,072
Total		4,155

Q15 Indicate your typical reading habits of articles:

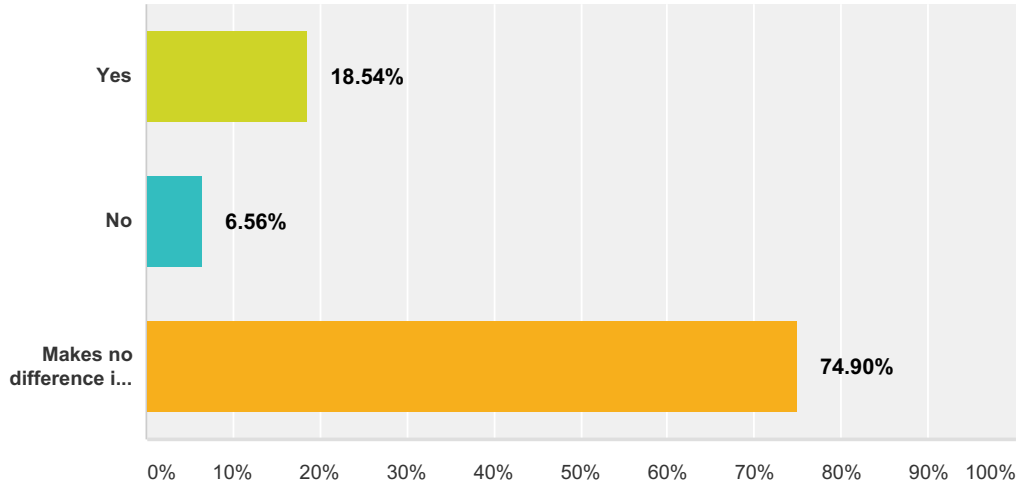
Answered: 4,203 Skipped: 119



Answer Choices	Responses
Read only theme articles	1.21% 51
Read mostly theme articles	14.16% 595
Read only general articles	0.64% 27
Read mostly general articles	6.26% 263
Read both theme and general articles	69.85% 2,936
Never (or rarely) read articles	7.88% 331
Total	4,203

Q16 If you rarely read theme articles, would you be more likely to read theme-issue content if it were mixed with general content throughout the year?

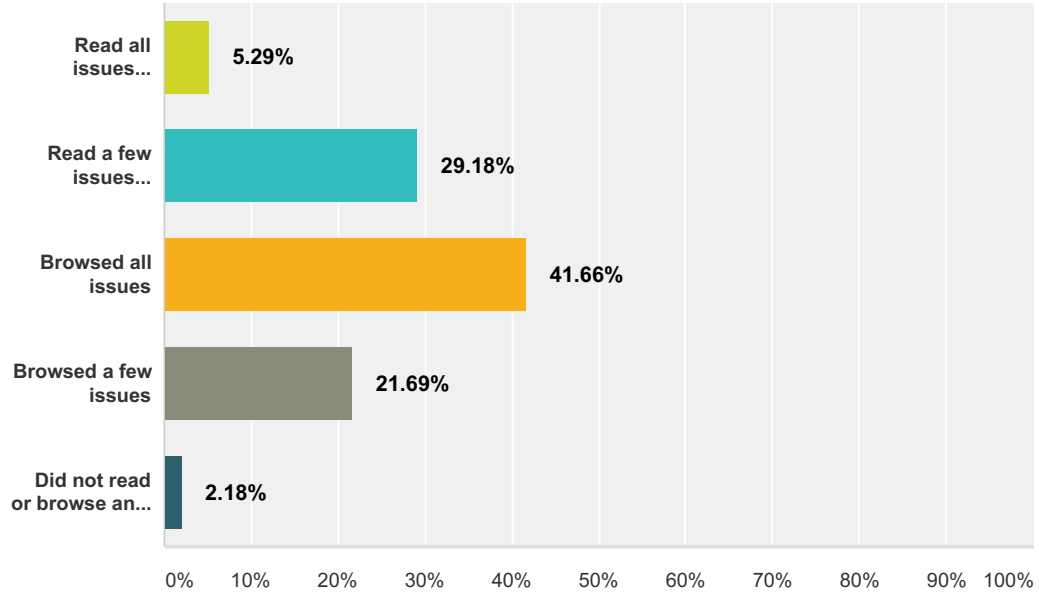
Answered: 3,630 Skipped: 692



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	18.54%	673
No	6.56%	238
Makes no difference in my decision	74.90%	2,719
Total		3,630

Q17 Thinking about theme issues over the past 1–2 years, please choose the response that best describes your reading behavior:

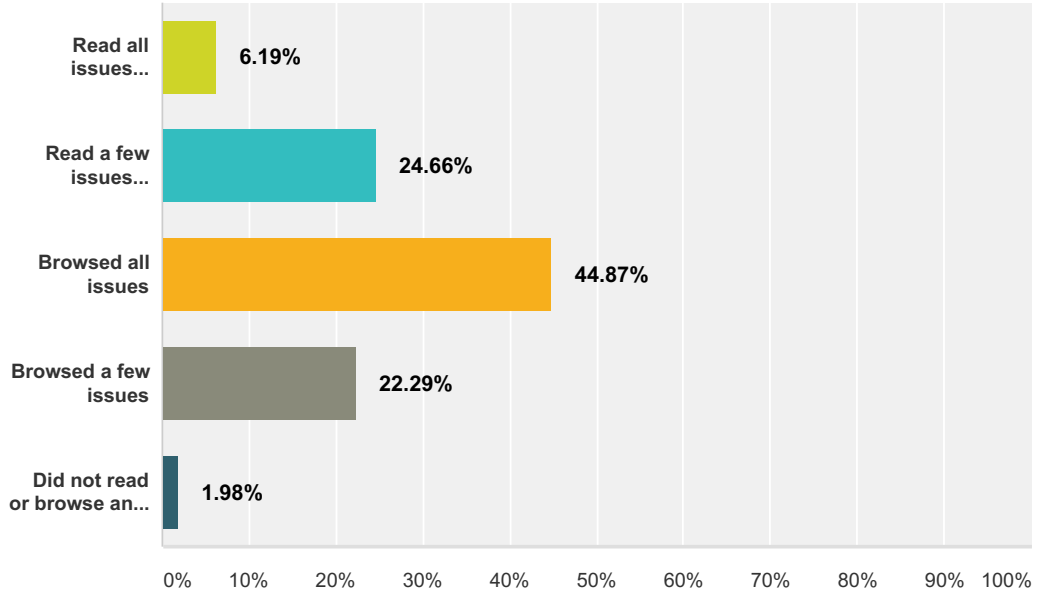
Answered: 4,181 Skipped: 141



Answer Choices	Responses	
Read all issues thoroughly	5.29%	221
Read a few issues thoroughly	29.18%	1,220
Browsed all issues	41.66%	1,742
Browsed a few issues	21.69%	907
Did not read or browse any issues	2.18%	91
Total		4,181

Q18 Thinking about general issues over the past 1–2 years, please choose the response that best describes your reading behavior:

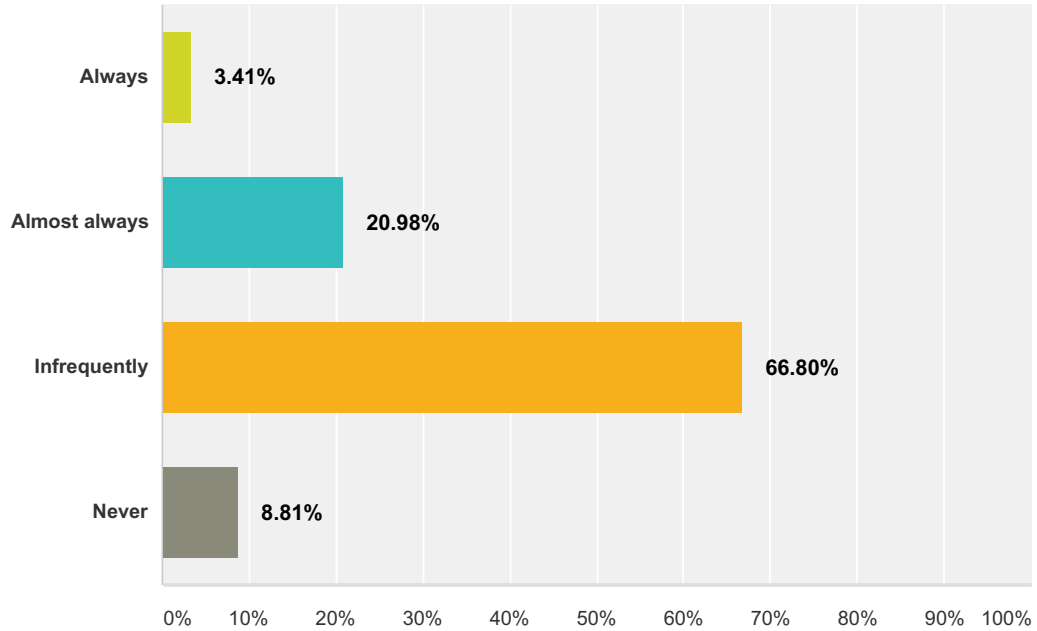
Answered: 4,185 Skipped: 137



Answer Choices	Responses	
Read all issues thoroughly	6.19%	259
Read a few issues thoroughly	24.66%	1,032
Browsed all issues	44.87%	1,878
Browsed a few issues	22.29%	933
Did not read or browse any issues	1.98%	83
Total		4,185

Q19 How often do you read theme issues not related to your practice area or area(s) of interest?

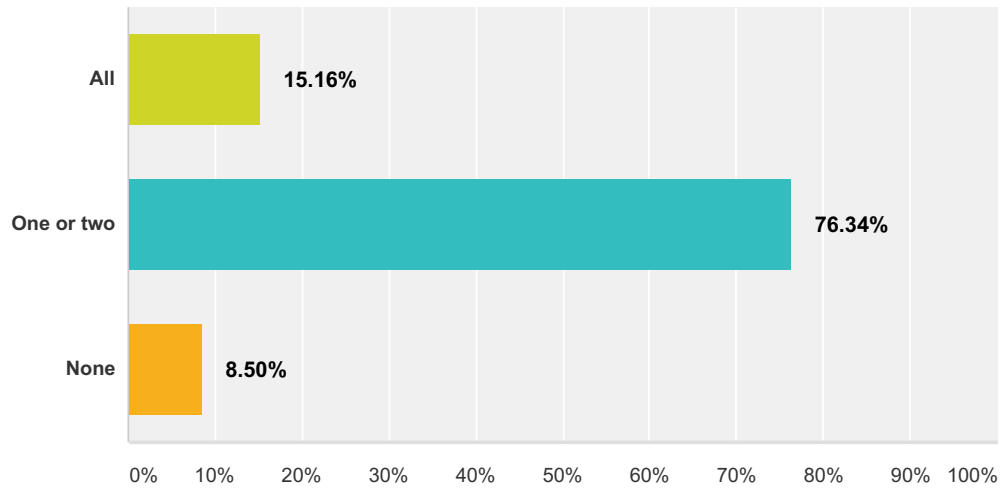
Answered: 4,190 Skipped: 132



Answer Choices	Responses
Always	3.41% 143
Almost always	20.98% 879
Infrequently	66.80% 2,799
Never	8.81% 369
Total	4,190

Q20 In a typical theme issue, how many major articles do you read?

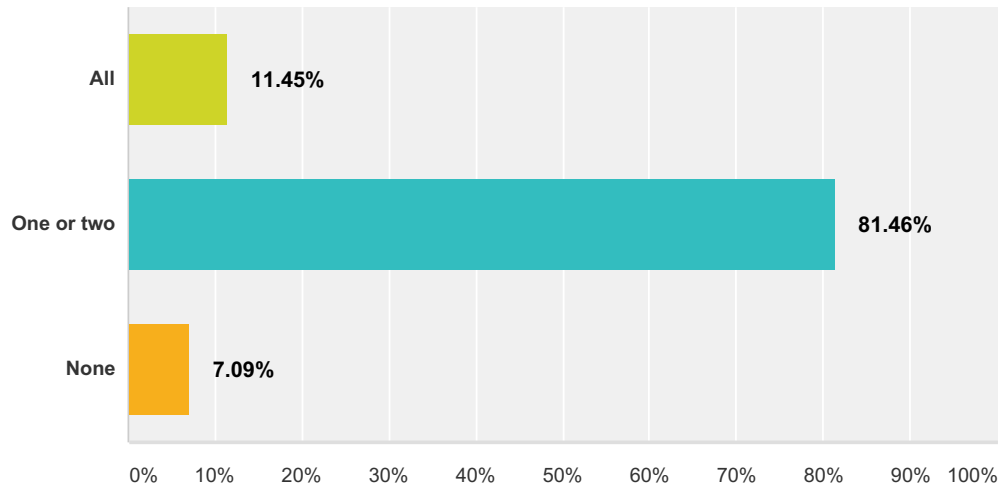
Answered: 4,129 Skipped: 193



Answer Choices	Responses
All	15.16% 626
One or two	76.34% 3,152
None	8.50% 351
Total	4,129

Q21 In a typical general issue, how many major articles do you read?

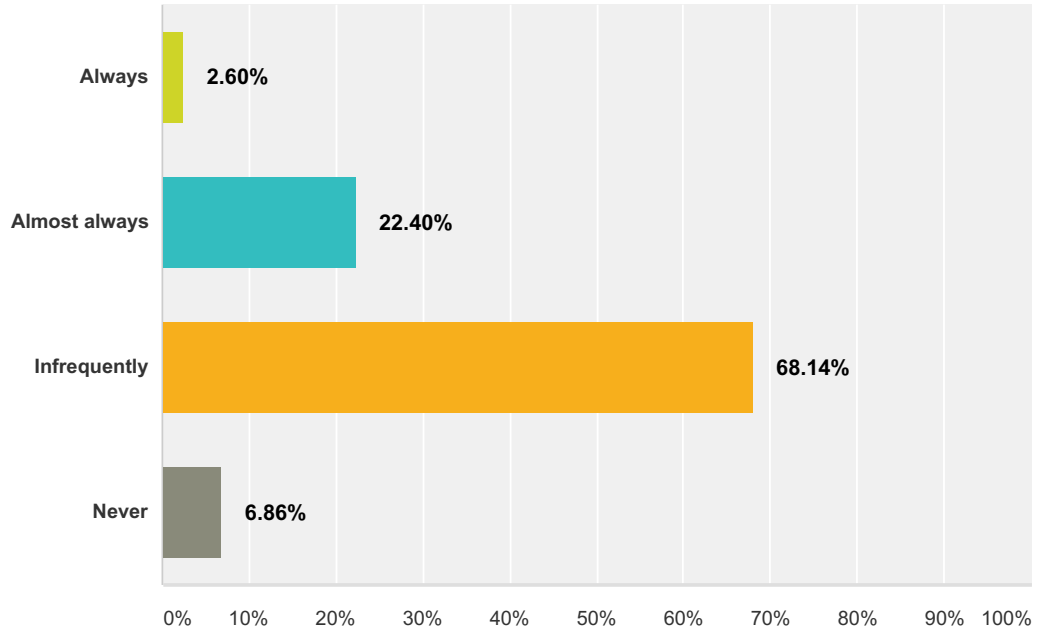
Answered: 4,159 Skipped: 163



Answer Choices	Responses
All	11.45% 476
One or two	81.46% 3,388
None	7.09% 295
Total	4,159

Q22 How often do you read general articles not related to your practice area or area(s) of interest?

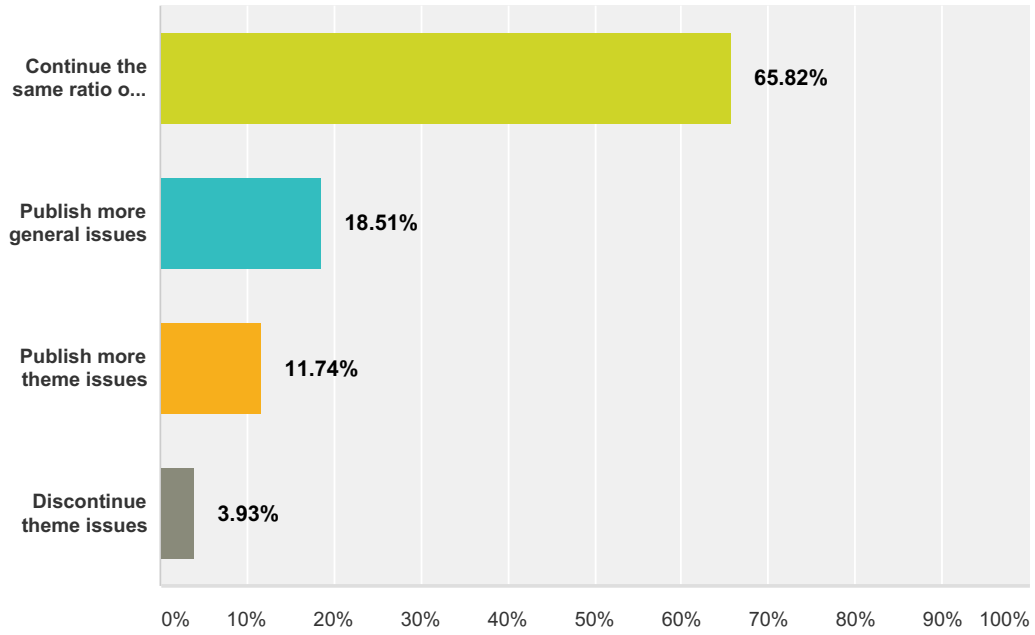
Answered: 4,197 Skipped: 125



Answer Choices	Responses
Always	2.60% 109
Almost always	22.40% 940
Infrequently	68.14% 2,860
Never	6.86% 288
Total	4,197

Q23 Would you prefer to:

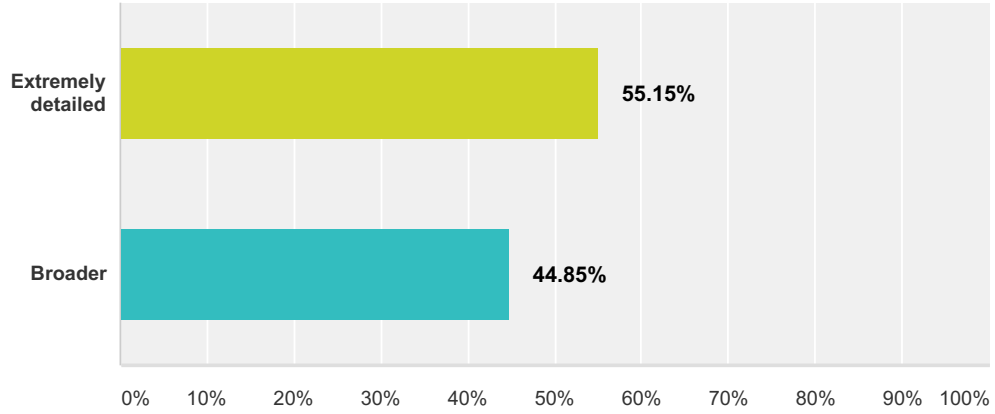
Answered: 4,046 Skipped: 276



Answer Choices	Responses
Continue the same ratio of theme to general issues	65.82% 2,663
Publish more general issues	18.51% 749
Publish more theme issues	11.74% 475
Discontinue theme issues	3.93% 159
Total	4,046

Q24 For practice-related articles, do you prefer extremely detailed or broader articles?

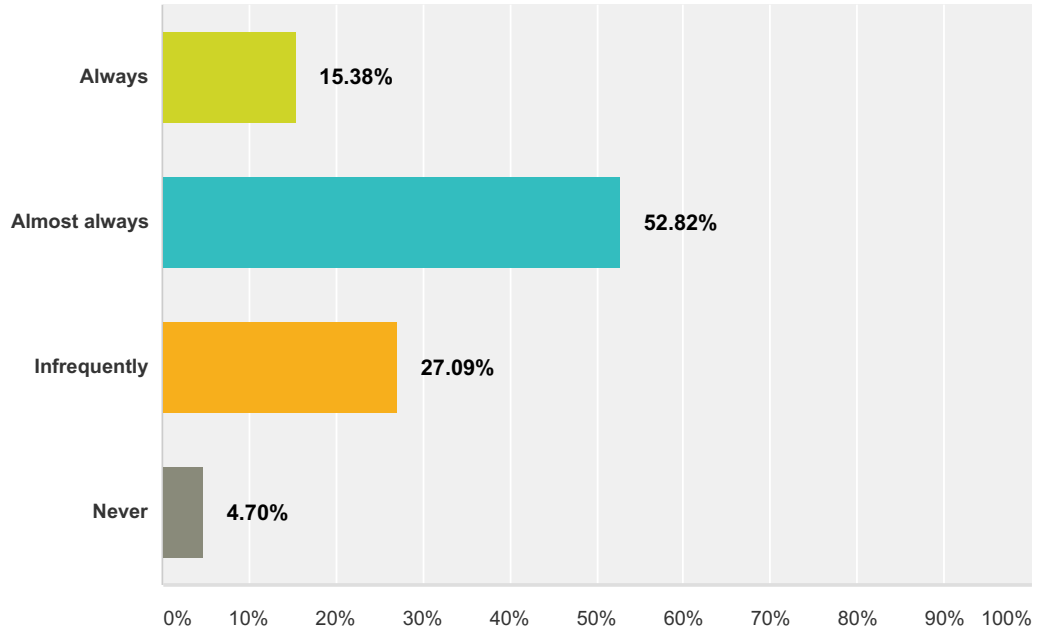
Answered: 4,018 Skipped: 304



Answer Choices	Responses	
Extremely detailed	55.15%	2,216
Broader	44.85%	1,802
Total		4,018

Q25 How often do you read the sidebars with “fast facts” that accompany most articles?

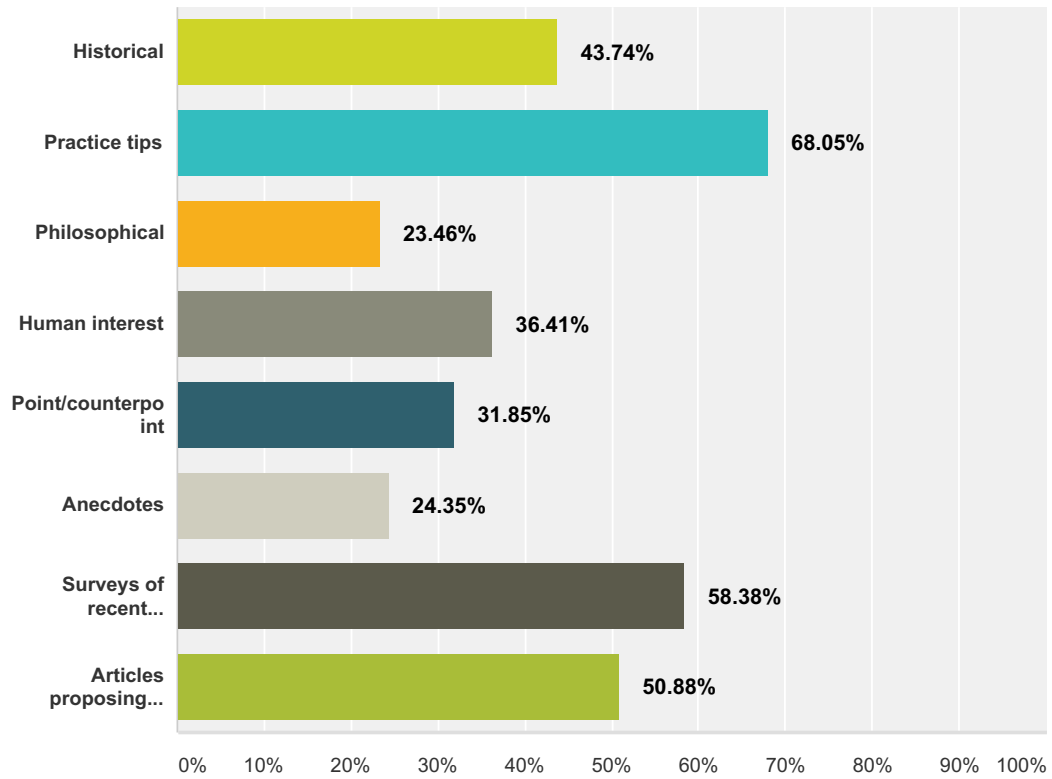
Answered: 4,167 Skipped: 155



Answer Choices	Responses
Always	15.38% 641
Almost always	52.82% 2,201
Infrequently	27.09% 1,129
Never	4.70% 196
Total	4,167

Q26 What types of general articles most interest you? (Check all that apply.)

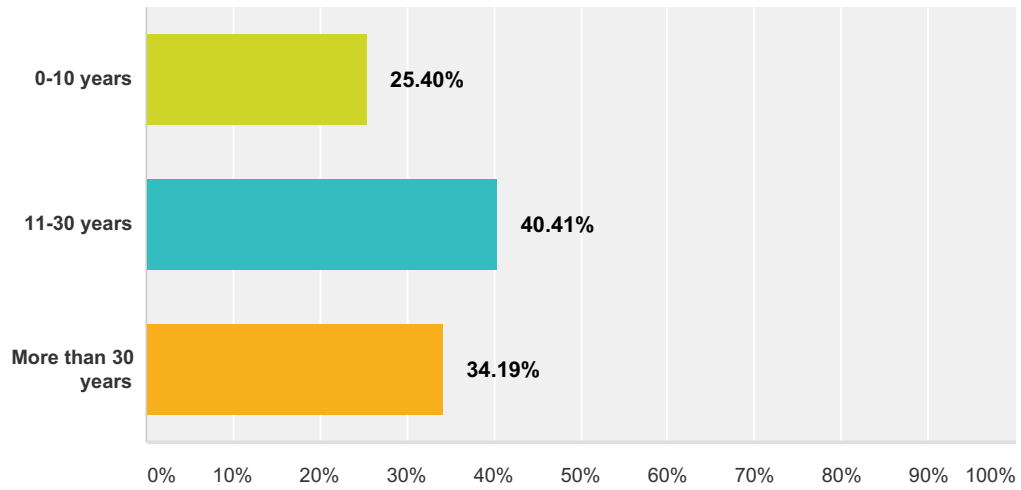
Answered: 4,147 Skipped: 175



Answer Choices	Responses	
Historical	43.74%	1,814
Practice tips	68.05%	2,822
Philosophical	23.46%	973
Human interest	36.41%	1,510
Point/counterpoint	31.85%	1,321
Anecdotes	24.35%	1,010
Surveys of recent developments	58.38%	2,421
Articles proposing legislation, new policies, changes to practice requirements	50.88%	2,110
Total Respondents: 4,147		

Q27 How long have you been a member of the State Bar of Michigan?

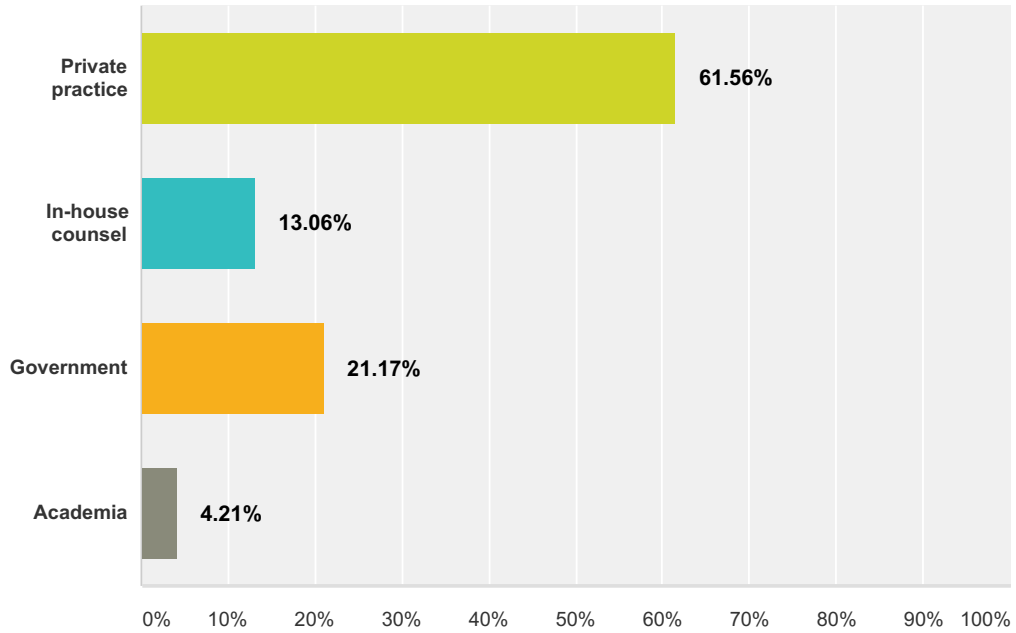
Answered: 4,224 Skipped: 98



Answer Choices	Responses	
0-10 years	25.40%	1,073
11-30 years	40.41%	1,707
More than 30 years	34.19%	1,444
Total		4,224

Q28 What is the primary nature of your job?

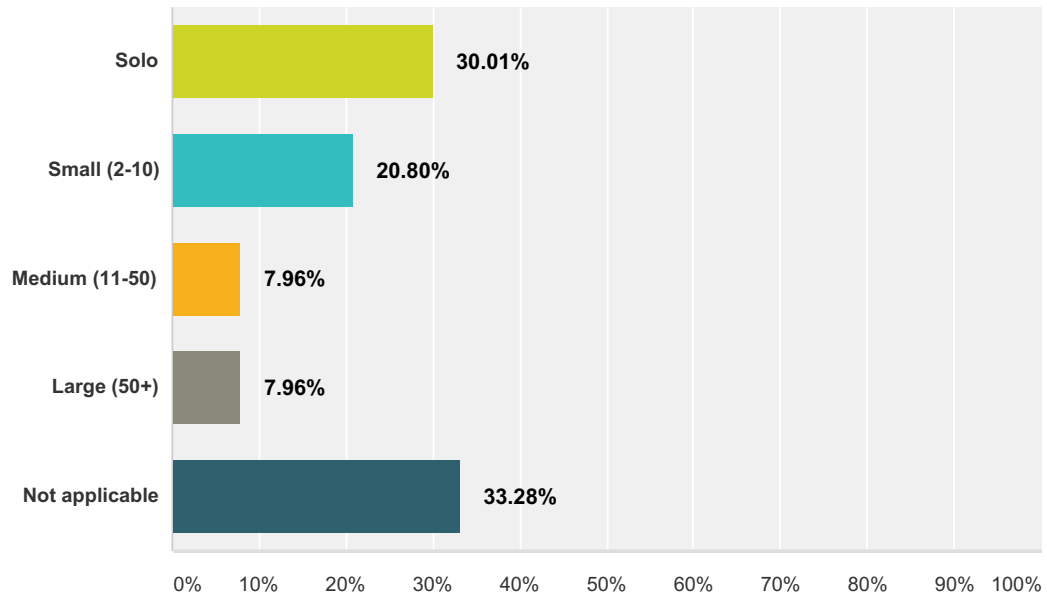
Answered: 3,660 Skipped: 662



Answer Choices	Responses	
Private practice	61.56%	2,253
In-house counsel	13.06%	478
Government	21.17%	775
Academia	4.21%	154
Total		3,660

Q29 If you are in private practice, indicate the size of your practice:

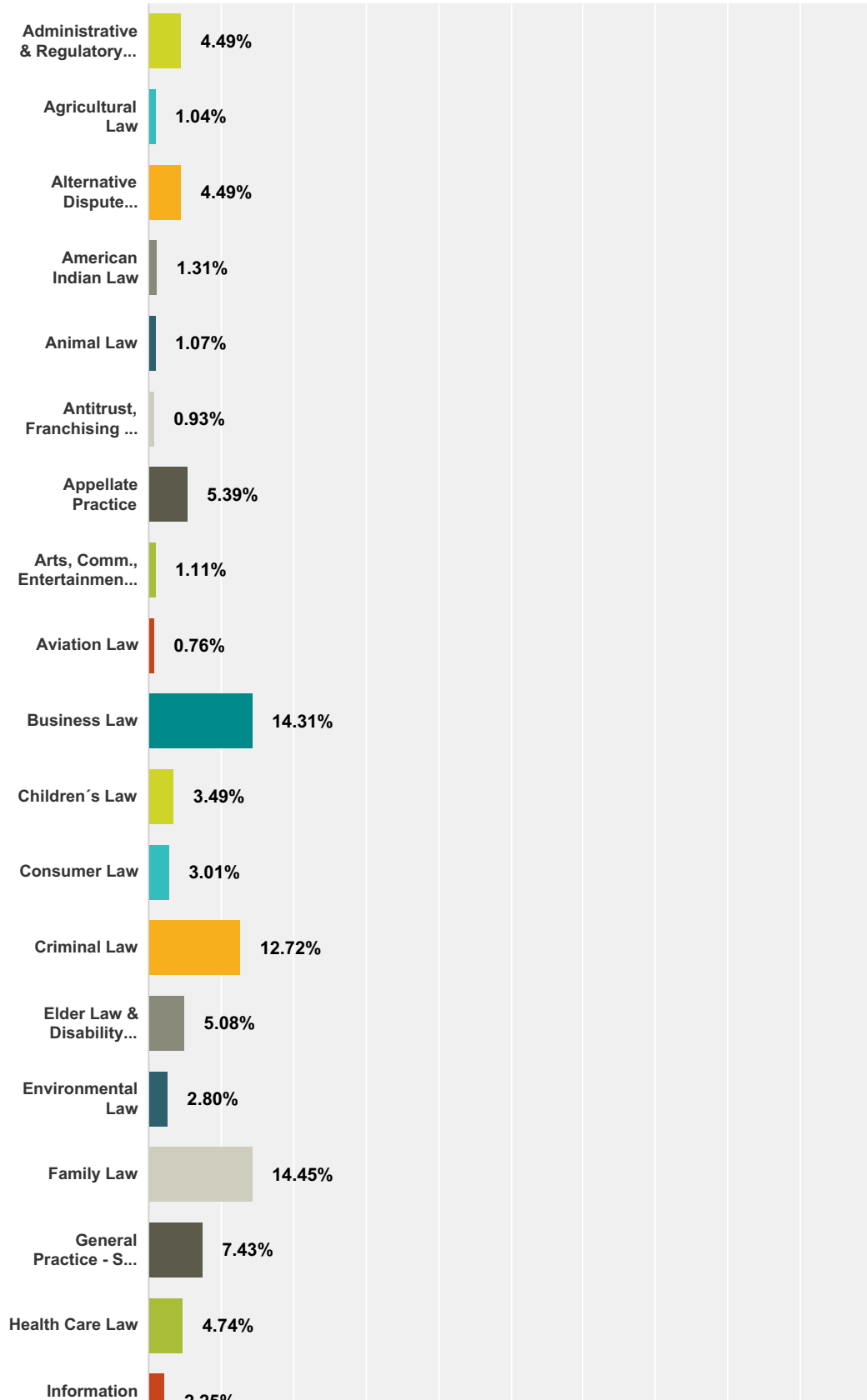
Answered: 3,606 Skipped: 716



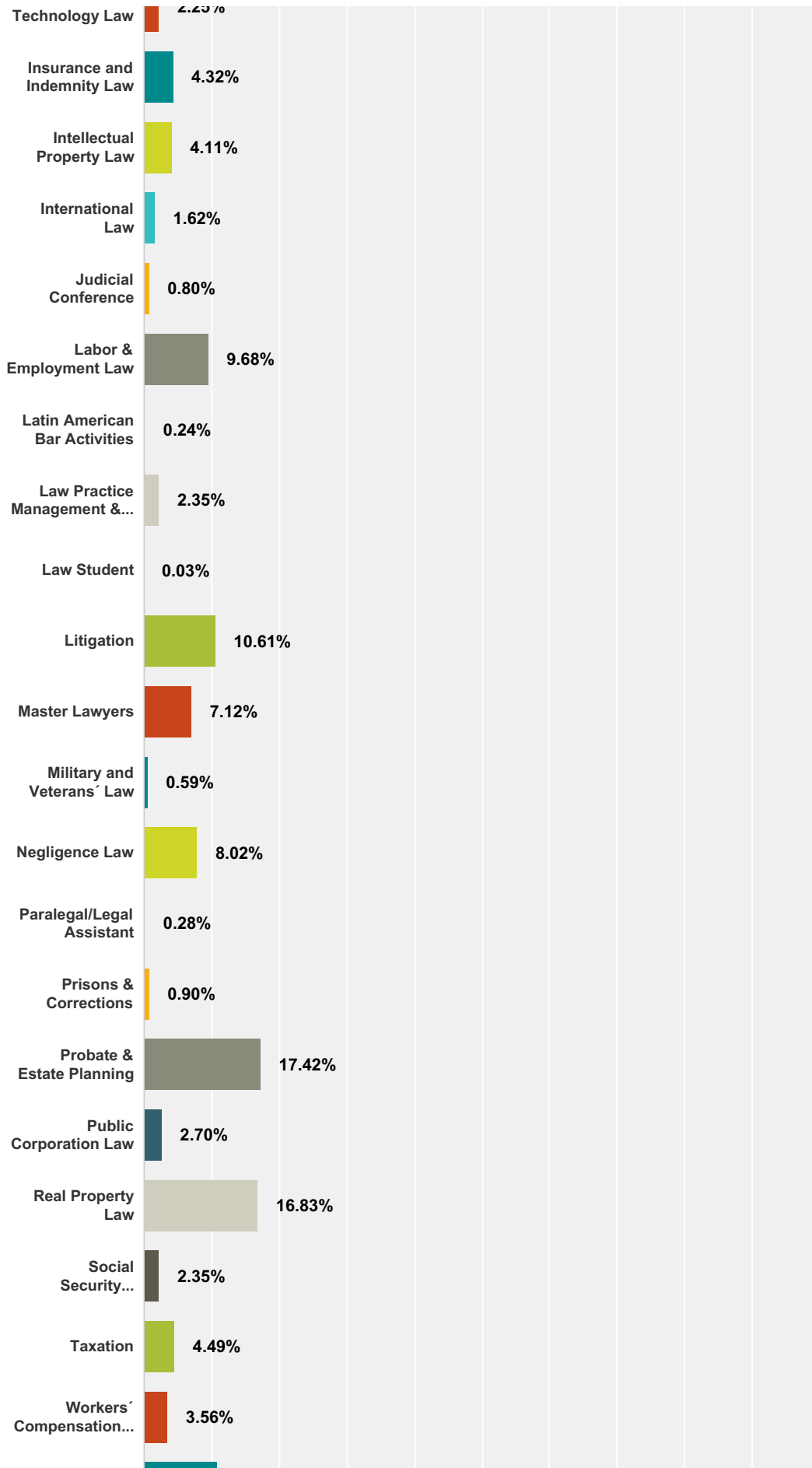
Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Solo	30.01%	1,082
Small (2-10)	20.80%	750
Medium (11-50)	7.96%	287
Large (50+)	7.96%	287
Not applicable	33.28%	1,200
Total		3,606

**Q30 Indicate your SBM section membership
(Check all that apply.)**

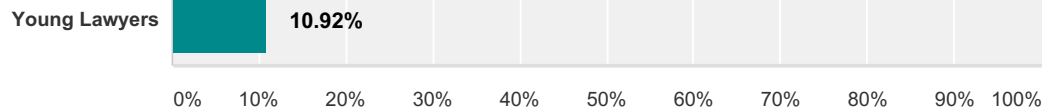
Answered: 2,893 Skipped: 1,429



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Answer Choices	Responses	
Administrative & Regulatory Law	4.49%	130
Agricultural Law	1.04%	30
Alternative Dispute Resolution	4.49%	130
American Indian Law	1.31%	38
Animal Law	1.07%	31
Antitrust, Franchising & Trade Regulation	0.93%	27
Appellate Practice	5.39%	156
Arts, Comm., Entertainment & Sports	1.11%	32
Aviation Law	0.76%	22
Business Law	14.31%	414
Children's Law	3.49%	101
Consumer Law	3.01%	87
Criminal Law	12.72%	368
Elder Law & Disability Rights	5.08%	147
Environmental Law	2.80%	81
Family Law	14.45%	418
General Practice - Solo & Small Firm	7.43%	215
Health Care Law	4.74%	137
Information Technology Law	2.25%	65
Insurance and Indemnity Law	4.32%	125
Intellectual Property Law	4.11%	119
International Law	1.62%	47
Judicial Conference	0.80%	23
Labor & Employment Law	9.68%	280
Latin American Bar Activities	0.24%	7
Law Practice Management & Legal Administrators	2.35%	68
Law Student	0.03%	1
Litigation	10.61%	307

Michigan Bar Journal Readership Survey

Master Lawyers	7.12%	206
Military and Veterans' Law	0.59%	17
Negligence Law	8.02%	232
Paralegal/Legal Assistant	0.28%	8
Prisons & Corrections	0.90%	26
Probate & Estate Planning	17.42%	504
Public Corporation Law	2.70%	78
Real Property Law	16.83%	487
Social Security Lawyers	2.35%	68
Taxation	4.49%	130
Workers' Compensation Law	3.56%	103
Young Lawyers	10.92%	316
Total Respondents: 2,893		

Q31 Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding the Bar Journal that you would like the Publications and Website Advisory Committee to consider.

Answered: 488 Skipped: 3,834

Individual responses available on request to Inovak@mail.michbar.org.