



# Back to the Future of Legal Research

Attorney Survey  
2007

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**N: x**  
**(Number of respondents  
for question)**

# Changes in last 5 years

N: 127

- ◆ Increased use of online: 45%
  - Increased use fee-based online: 9%
  - Increased free online availability/use: 18%
    - ◆ Use of Google: 9%
    - ◆ Use of list-serves and/or blogs: 6%
  - Problems related to increased online: 10%
- ◆ Reduction print/libraries: 9%
- ◆ Increased ease online navigation: 9%

# Changes in last 5 years (cont'd)

N : 127

- ◆ Increased online access to case-specific information: 5%
- ◆ Increased in-house: 5%
- ◆ N/A or do not know: 10%
- ◆ Miscellaneous: 13%

# Changes in last 5 years

“More and more reliance on keyword database searching, and less resort to books - not necessarily a good thing because young associates often fail to develop concepts as a result of their myopic use of keywords.”

– Private firm attorney with 11-15 years’ experience in an office with 16-30 attorneys

# Changes in last 5 years

“Everything is trending online. Even things such as Restatements, treatises and other traditionally printed resources are now available on Westlaw and Lexis.”

– Private firm attorney with 6-10 years’ experience in an office with 101-500 attorneys

# Changes in last 5 years

“There are more free resources available and IICLE has become a large research source. And people trust online resources more and use Google type searches on a daily basis. You can gather a lot of information from other law firm webpages and email listserves with other attorneys.”

– Private firm attorney with 0-5 years’ experience in an office with 2-6 attorneys

# Changes in last 5 years

“Associates know more than partners about Lexis and Westlaw; partners know about obscure government agency or organizational websites.”

– Private firm attorney with 0-5 years' experience in an office with 2-6 attorneys



# Anticipated Changes

N: 97

- ◆ More materials online: 26%
- ◆ More free or lower-cost online options: 24%
- ◆ Increase in online research: 20%
- ◆ Less print resources / research: 16%
- ◆ Improved online search tools: 15%
- ◆ Miscellaneous: 30%

# Anticipated Changes

“There will be even more information available online than there already is, and it may become difficult to sift through it all to get at what is important.”

- Sole practitioner with 16 or more years’ experience

# Anticipated Changes

“Availability of more treatises and other print resources online.”

– Private firm attorney with 0-5 years’ experience in an office with 101-500 attorneys

# Anticipated Changes

“Improved user interface, better emulation of print, more efficient platform independent browser services.”

- Private firm attorney with 16 or more years’ experience in an office with 51-100 attorneys

# Anticipated Changes

“More variety. More ‘free’ or lower cost options such as the ISBA's new membership benefit of Fast Case access.”

– Private firm attorney with 0-5 years’ experience in an office with 2-6 attorneys

# Suggestions for Legal Research Training

N: 116

Most frequent answers:

- Continue teaching print: 20%
- Focus more on free online sources: 18%
- Focus on constructing better,  
more targeted searches: 18%

# Suggestions

“While Shepardizing and research in paper is still used in some areas, I have worked for two different government offices now and research is done completely online; there is little reason to spend a lot of time teaching law students how to research in print.”

– Government attorney with 0-5 years’ experience in an office with 16-30 attorneys

# Suggestions

“I think a benefit to printed resources such as digests is that often closely related issues are revealed which would otherwise not be seen in an online query. I would like to see students taught to look beyond the narrowly worded query to uncover similar issues or strategies.”

- Private firm attorney with 16 or more years' experience in an office with 101-500 attorneys



# Suggestions

“Stress the fact that the best research works with a refined search strategy, as opposed to a "shotgun" approach which will yield multiple hits. It is a good idea to sit down and think about what you want and sometimes more importantly, what you don't want.”

– Sole practitioner with  
16 or more years' experience

# Suggestions

“Complete familiarity with how to best utilize Lexis or a similar on-line research tool. I always end up doing things the long way, because I don't seem to know the most effective way to get what I want.”

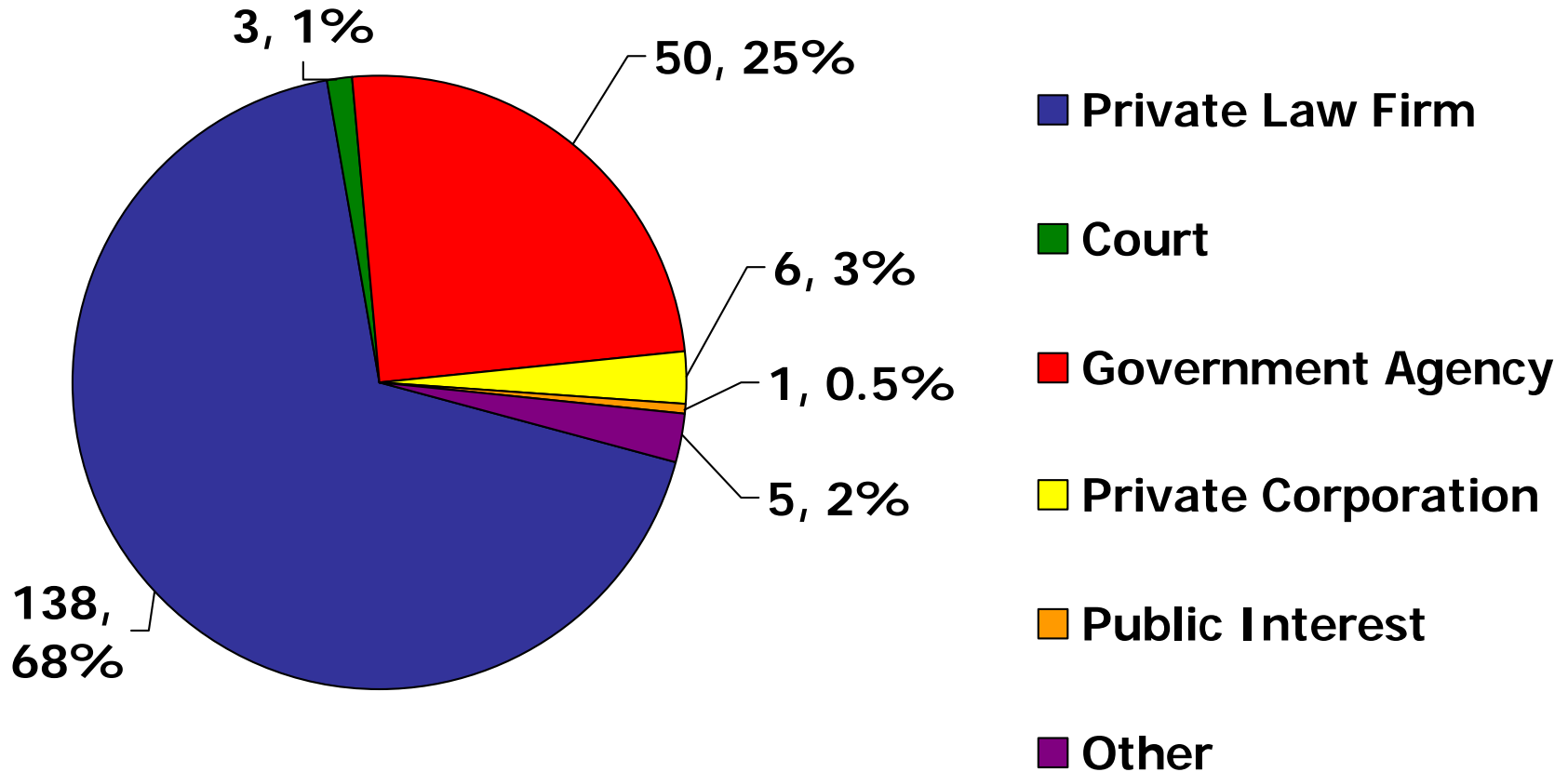
- Government attorney with 16 or more years' experience in an office with 7-15 attorneys

# Suggestions

“I still think there is a place at times for pulling the book and reading a whole case and being able to flip back and forth, not just looking at computer screens one-by-one. There are also times when hornbooks or indexes are still useful, so please don't stop teaching non-computer research. Also, there can be too much information out there, so teaching how to focus computer searches and only deal with the best resources is very important.”

- Government attorney with 16 or more years' experience in an office with 16-30 attorneys

# Type of Organization



N: 203

# Number of Attorneys in Local Office

N: 202

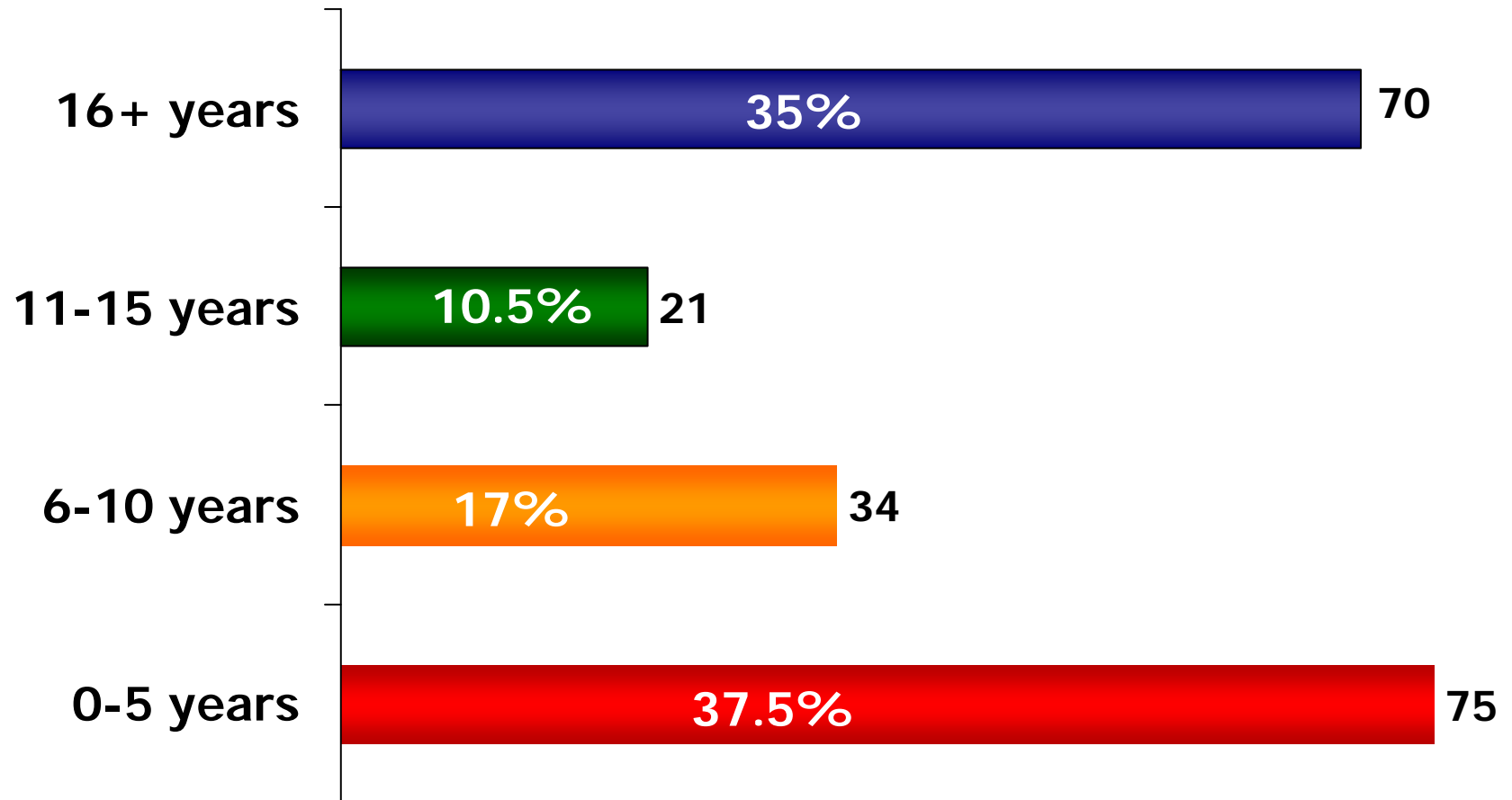
Sole practitioner	17.3 %	51-100	10.4 %
2-6	19.8 %	101-500	25.7 %
7-15	9.4 %	501-1000	1.5 %
16-30	11.4 %	1001 +	0 %
31-50	3 %	N/A	1.5 %

# Number of Attorneys in Organization

N: 194

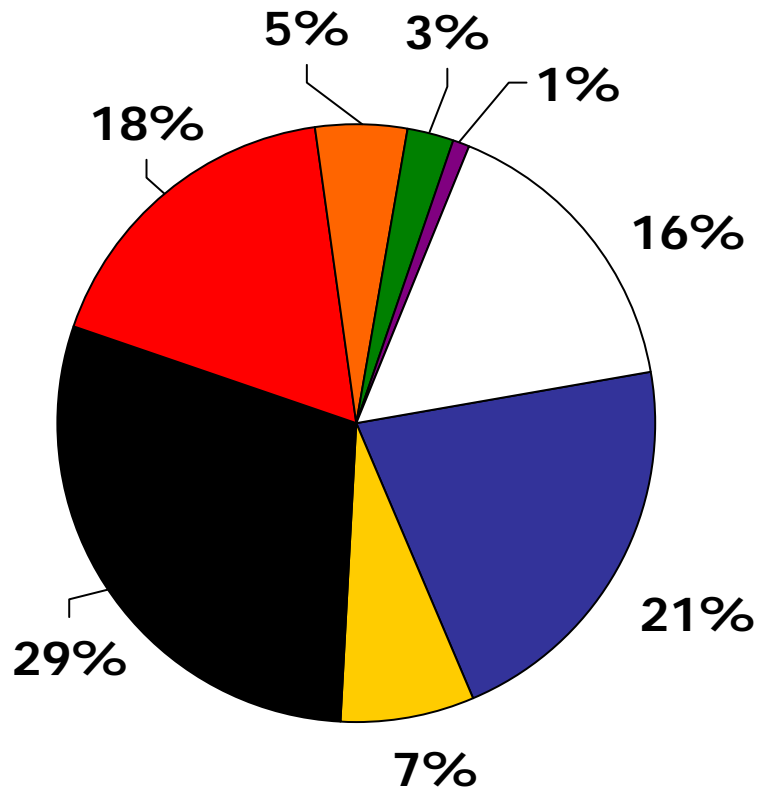
N/A	46.9 %	51-100	2.6 %
2-6	1 %	101-500	30.4 %
7-15	0.5 %	501-1000	8.8 %
16-30	0.5 %	1001 +	8.2 %
31-50	1 %		

# Years in Practice



N: 200

# Nature of Practice



■ Litigation in State Court

■ Litigation in Federal Court

■ Litigation in State and Federal Courts

■ Transactional

■ Administrative/regulatory (federal)

■ Administrative/regulatory (state/local)

■ Not Applicable

■ Other

N: 200



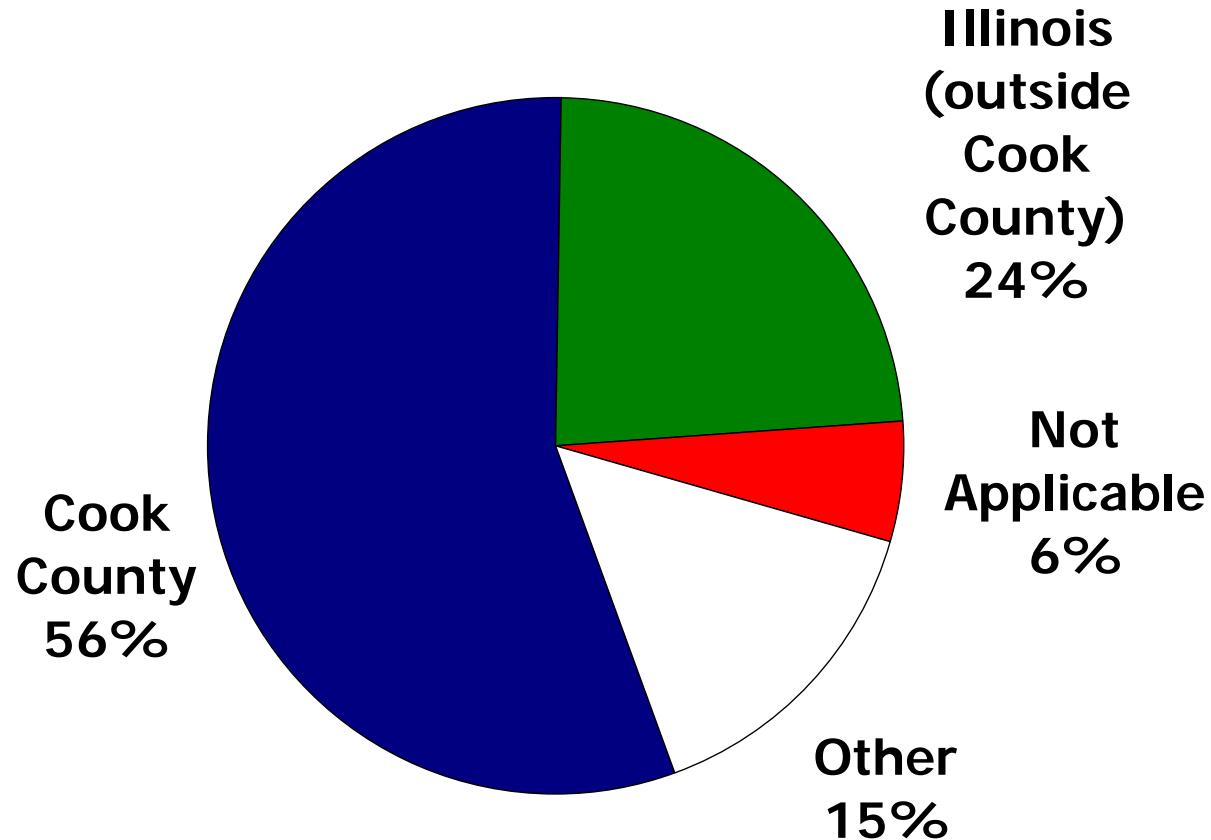
# **“Other” Responses**

**N: 32**

<b>Appellate</b>	<b>38 %</b>
<b>Combined transaction/ litigation</b>	<b>16 %</b>
<b>Combined litigation/ administrative</b>	<b>6 %</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>41 %</b>

# Primary Geographic Practice Area

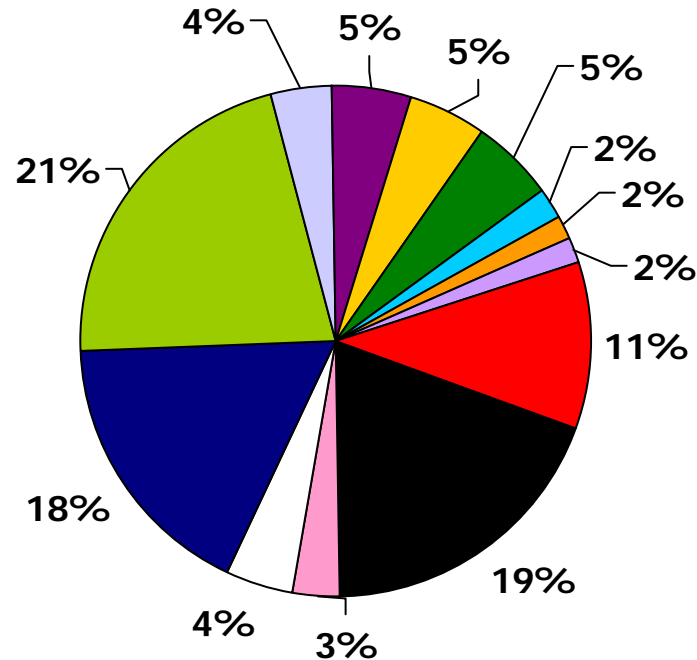
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N: 199

# Primary Practice Area

N: 198



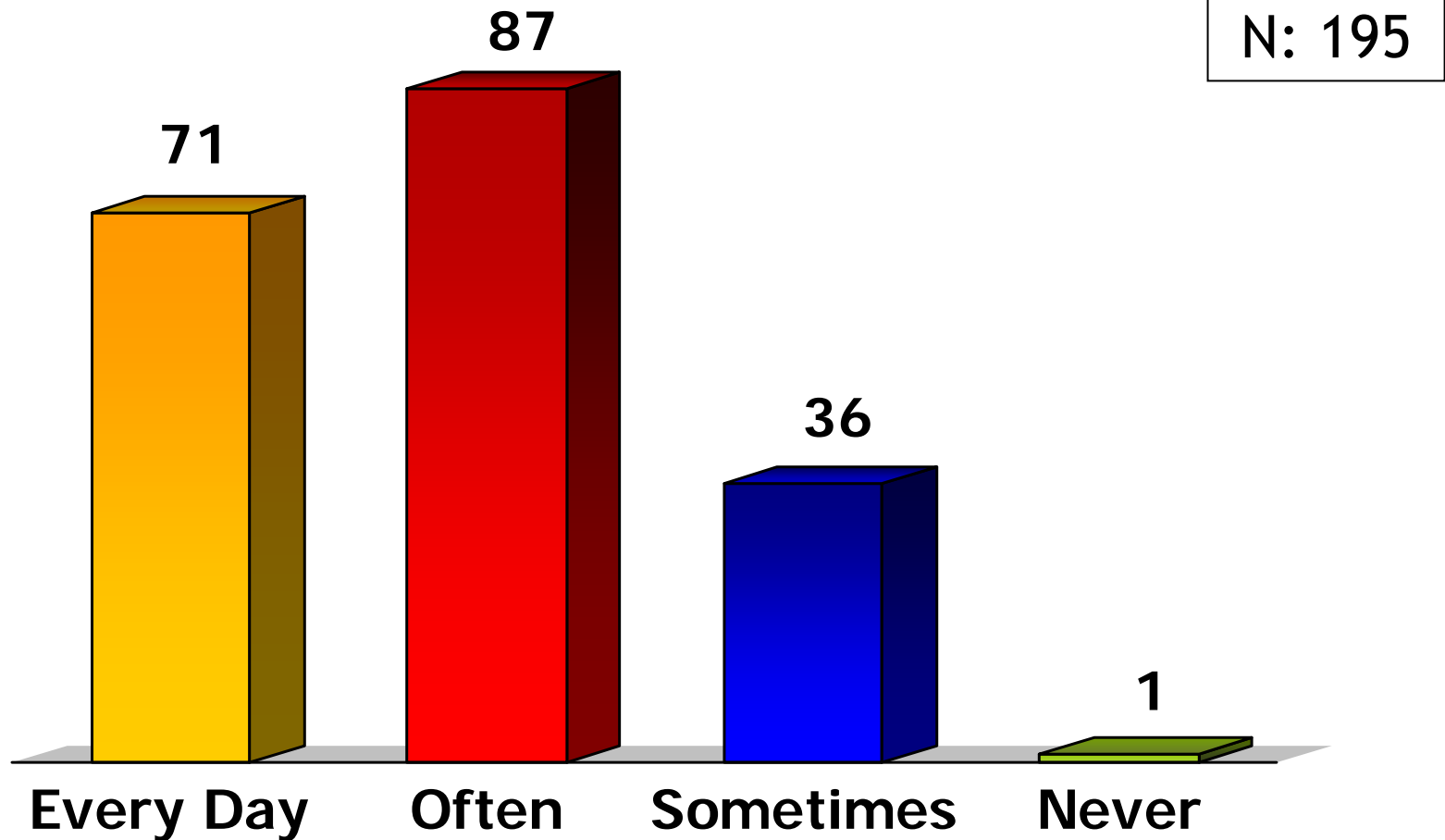
- Criminal
- Commercial
- Labor/Employment/Employee Benefits
- General Practice
- Trusts & Estates
- Insurance
- Other
- Family
- Civil Litigation
- Real Estate
- Corporate/Transactional
- Intellectual Property
- Not Applicable

# **“Other” Responses**

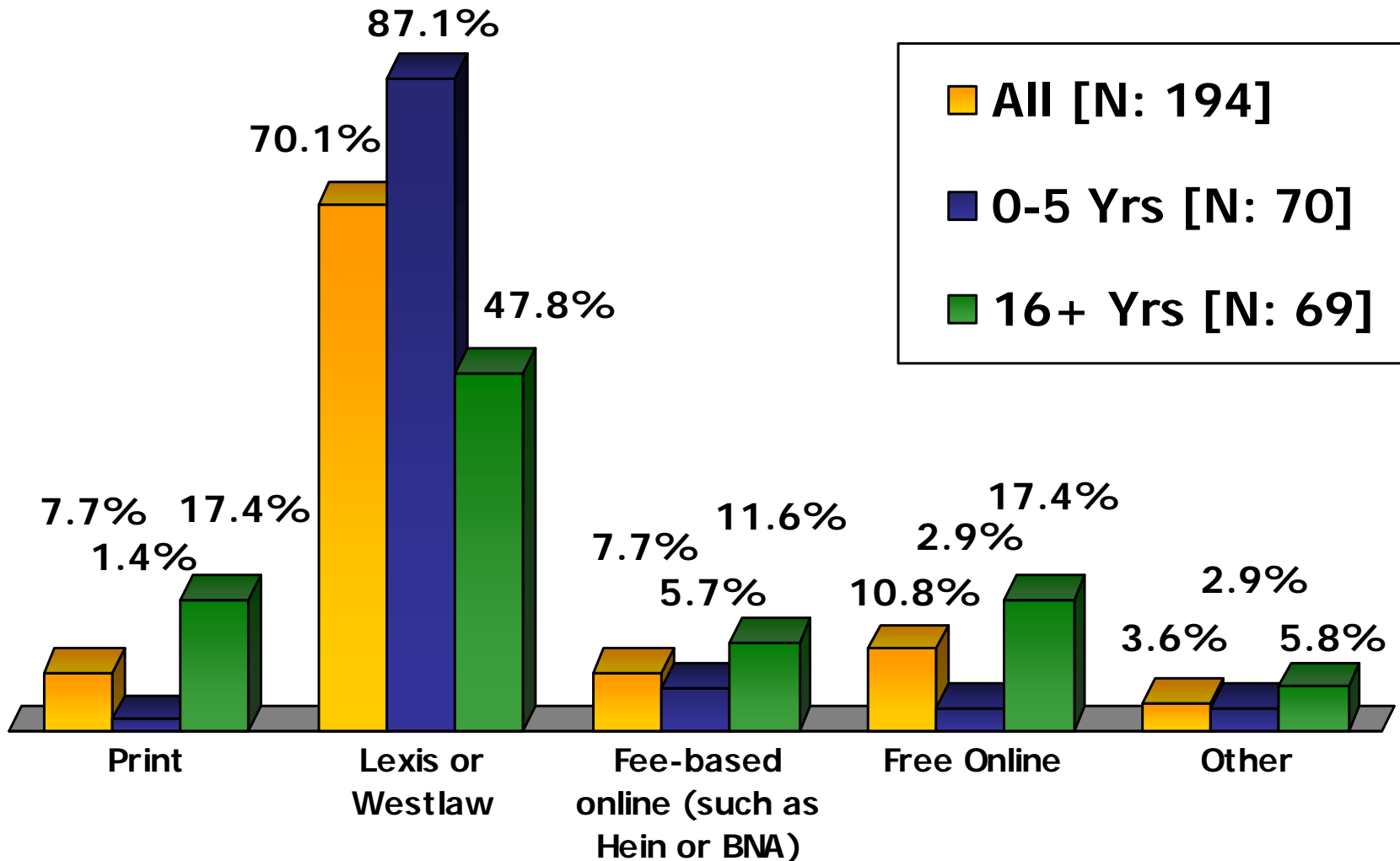
**N: 21**

<b>Individual rights/ social benefits</b>	<b>38 %</b>
<b>Business law</b>	<b>33 %</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>29 %</b>

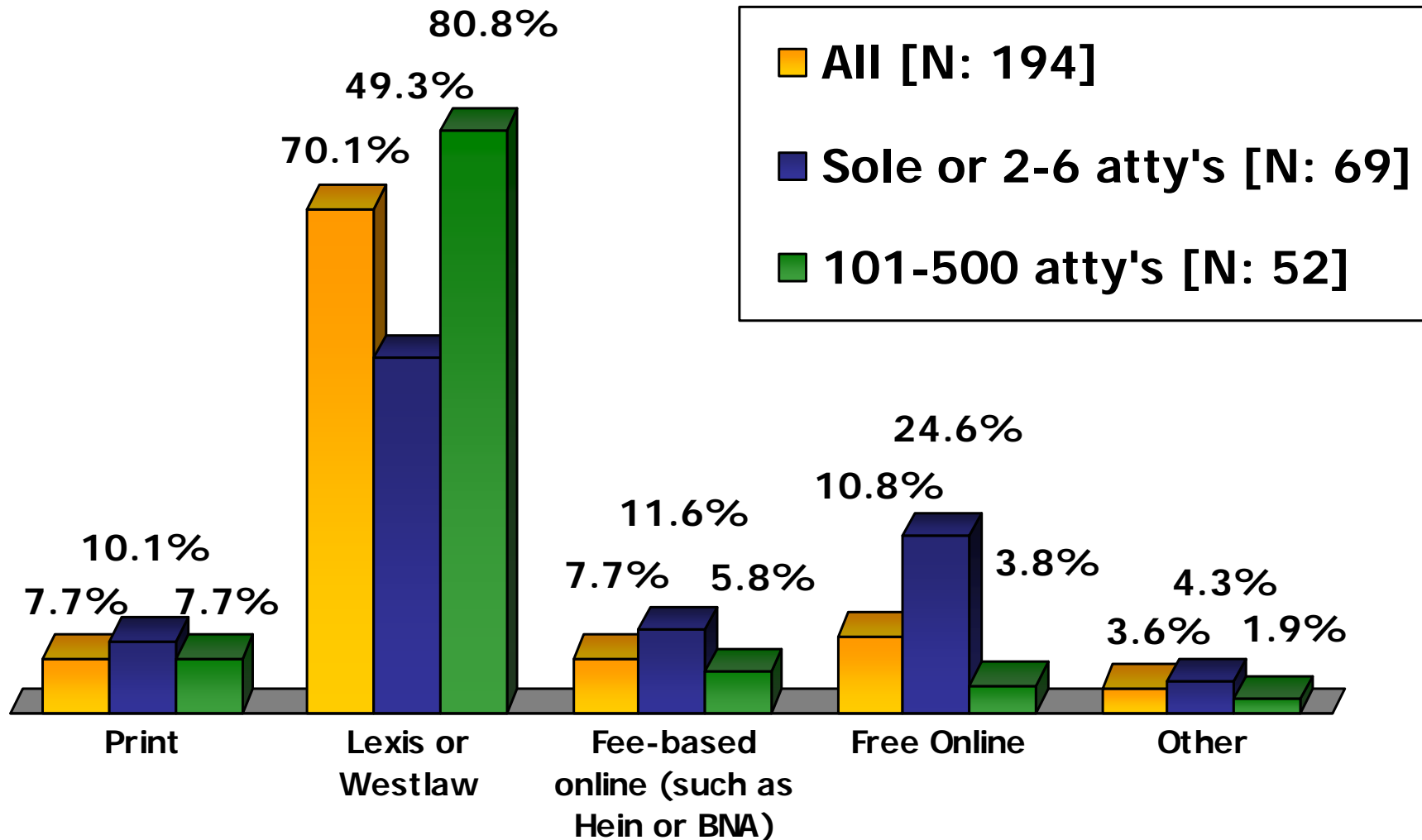
# How Frequently Do You Conduct Legal Research?



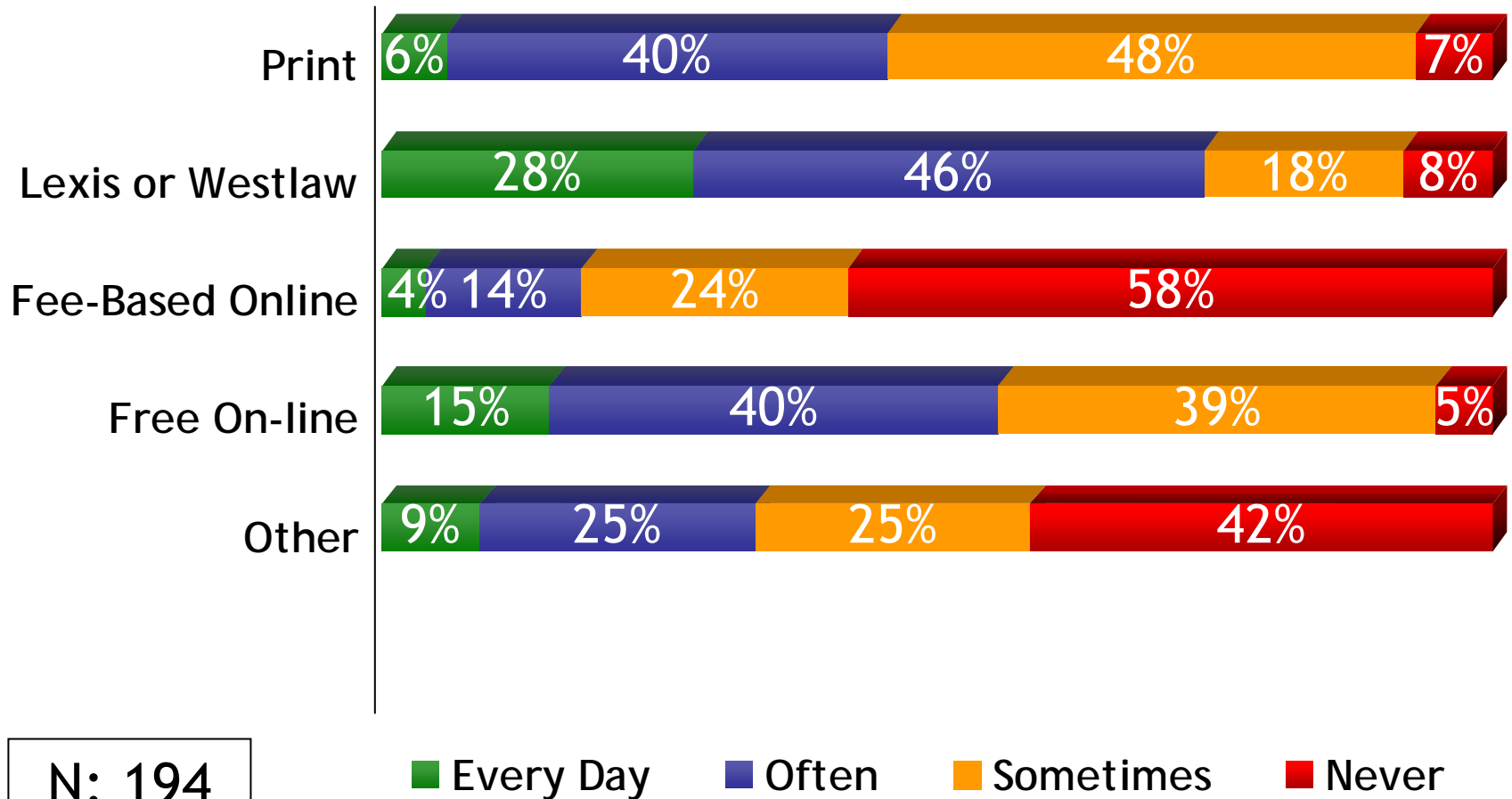
# What Do You Do Most of Your Research In?



# What Do You Do Most of Your Research In?



# Frequency of Use of Resources (All Respondents, in percentages)



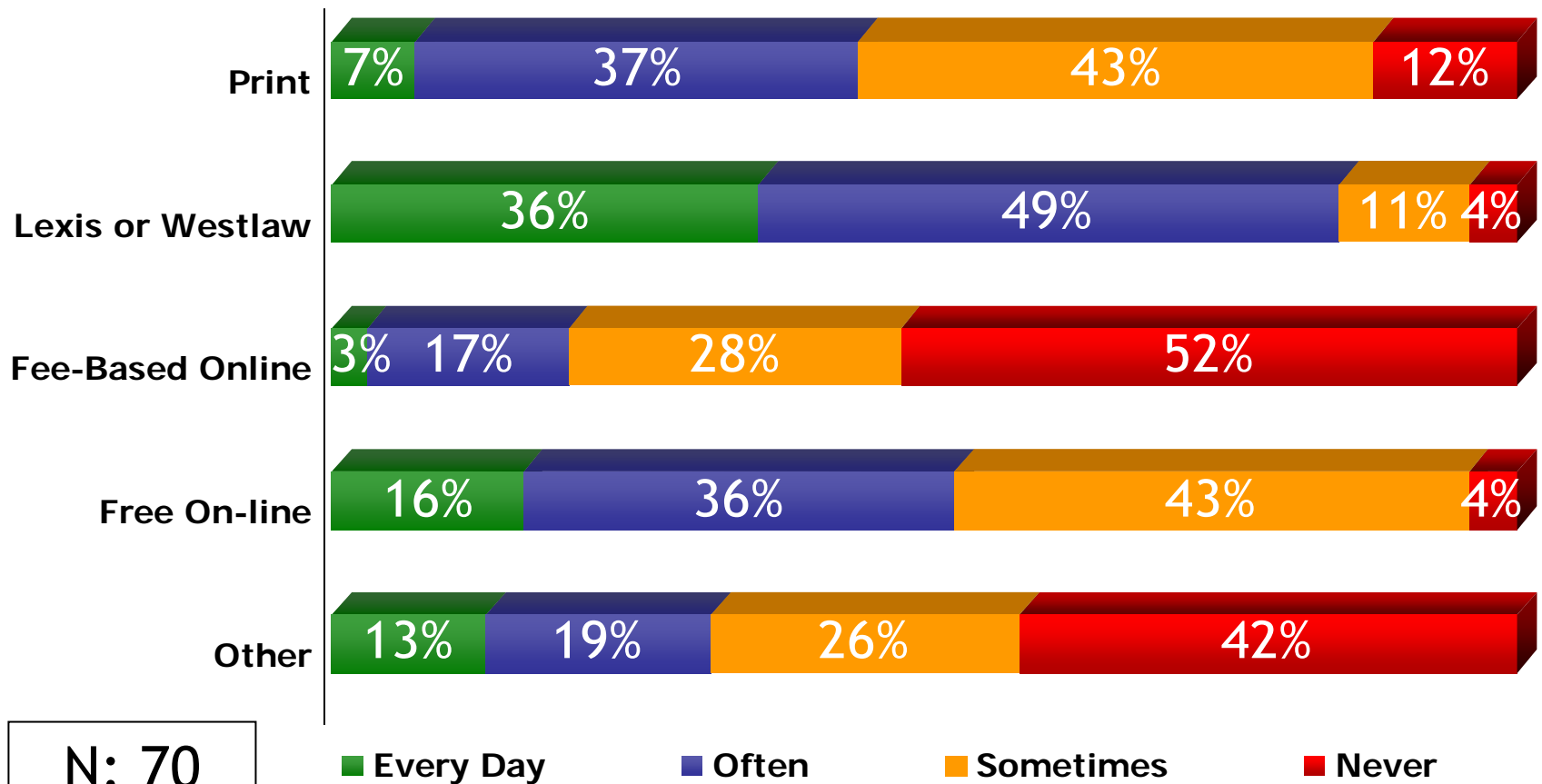


# "Other" Responses

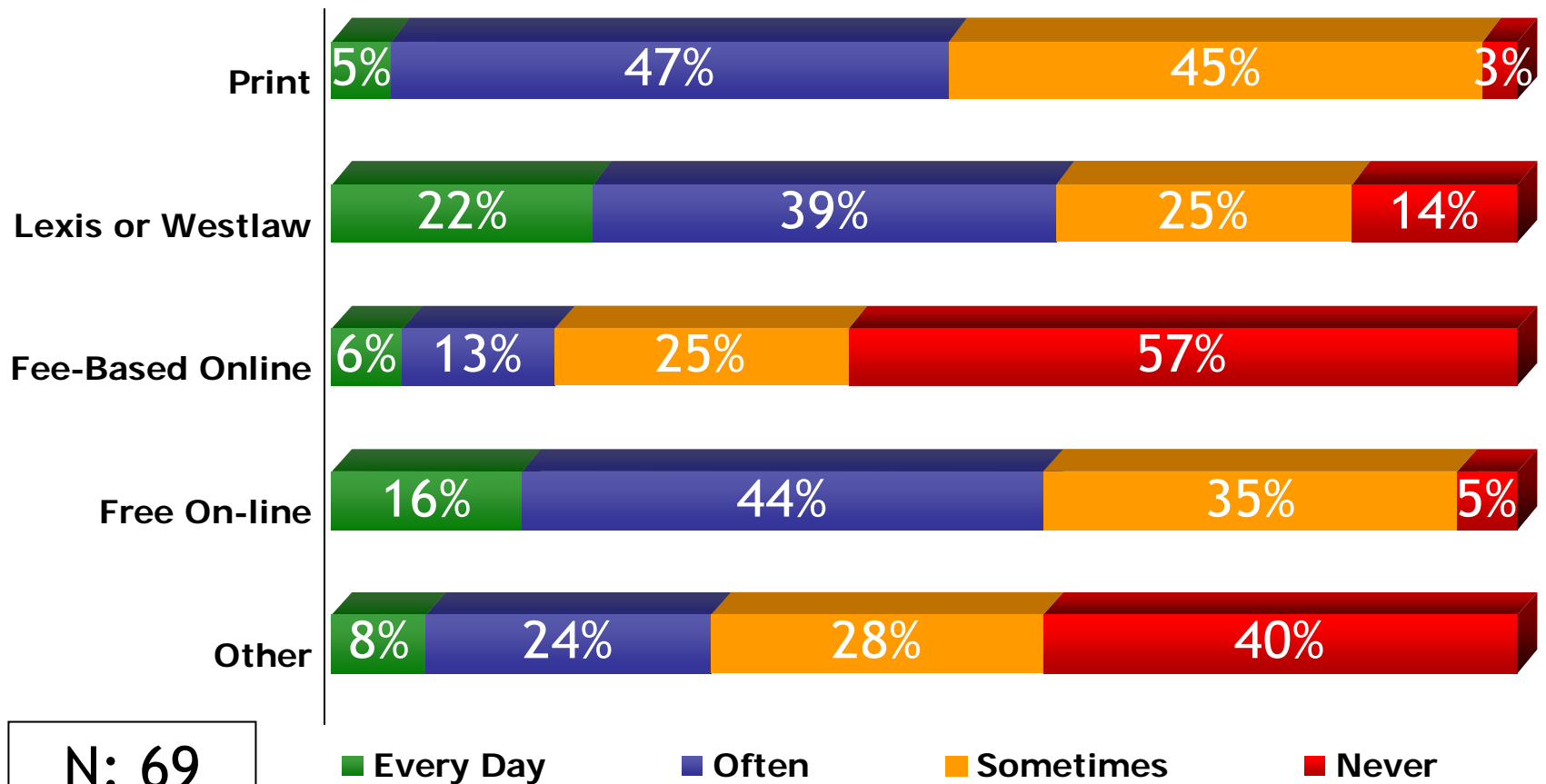
N: 37

Google	14 %
Other free on line	24 %
ISBA Fast Case	16 %
In-house	24 %
IICLE/continuing ed.	14 %
Books/periodicals	19 %
Other attorneys	16 %
Miscellaneous	11 %

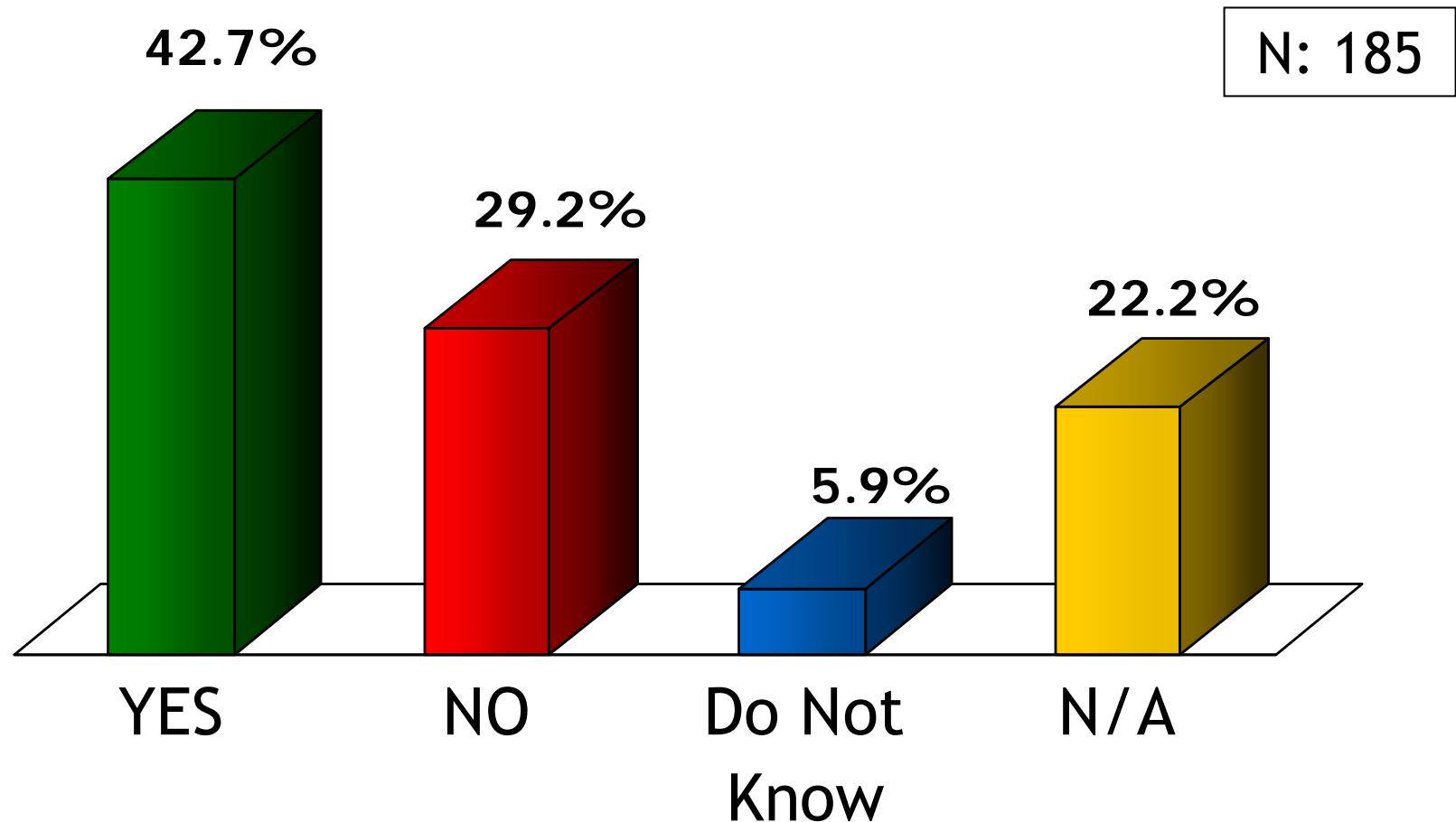
# Frequency of Use of Resources (Attorneys w/0-5 Years' Experience)



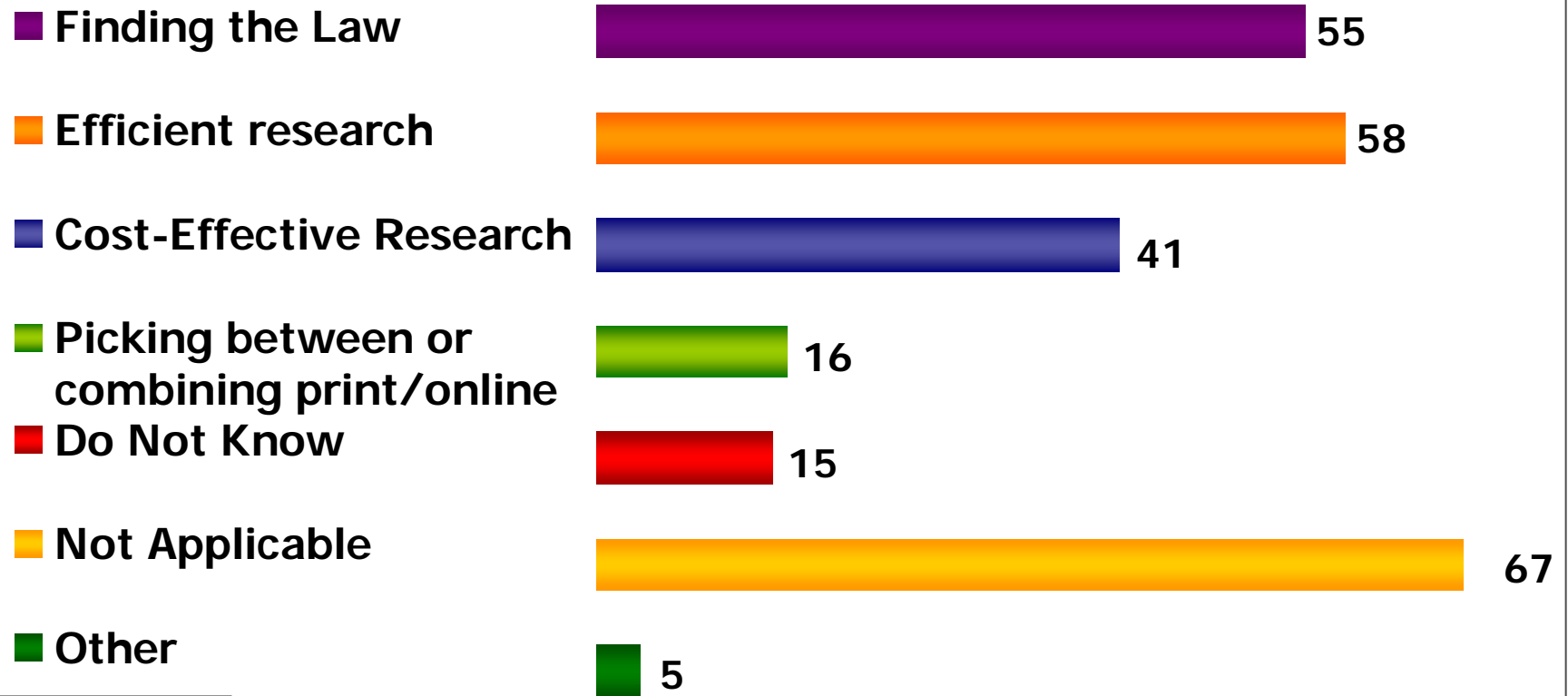
# Frequency of Use of Resources (Attorneys w/ 16+ Years' Experience)



# Are New Attorneys Trained by Your Organization To Do Legal Research?

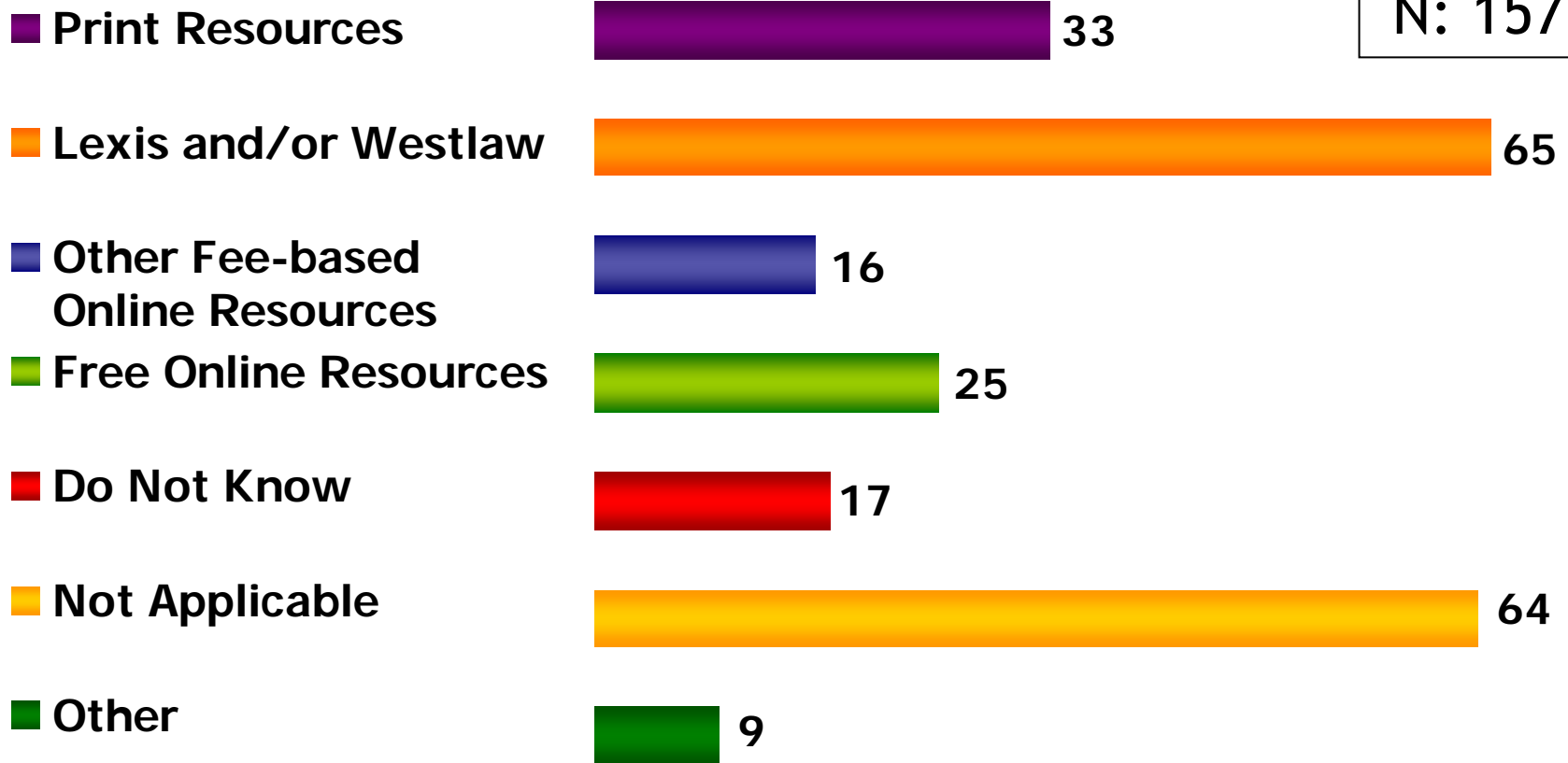


# Skills Emphasized in New Attorney Training



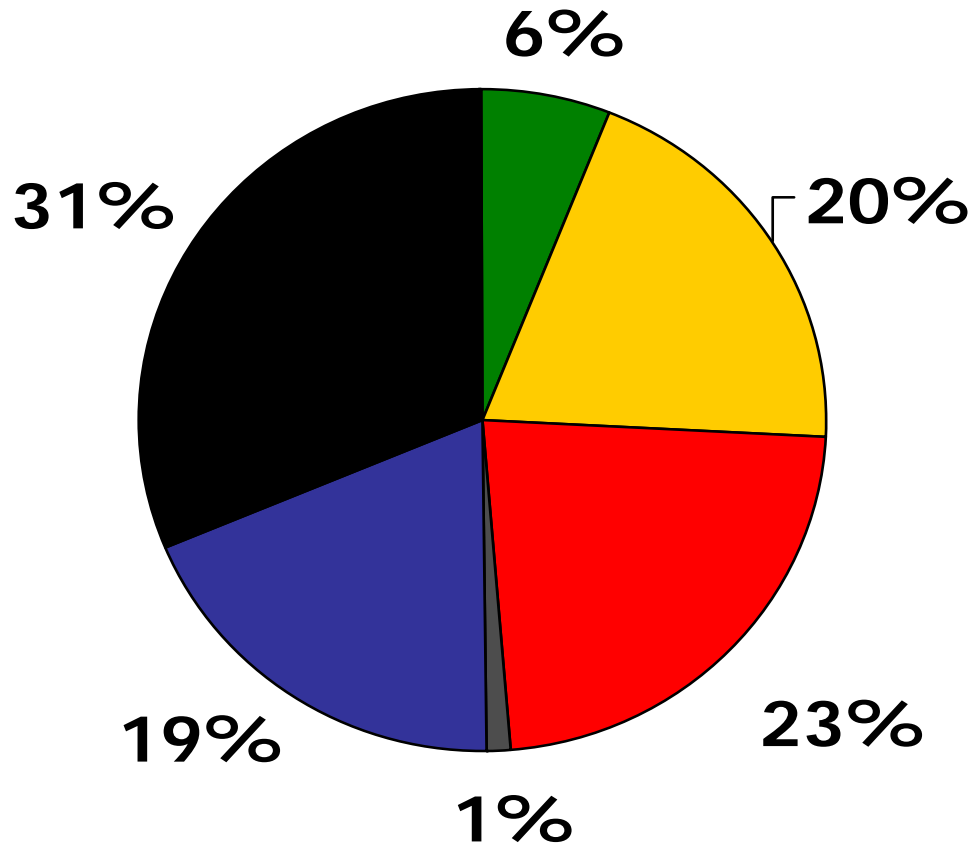
N: 159

# Resources Emphasized in New Attorney Training



# Are New Attorneys Aware of Helpful Print Resources Prior to Any In-House Training?

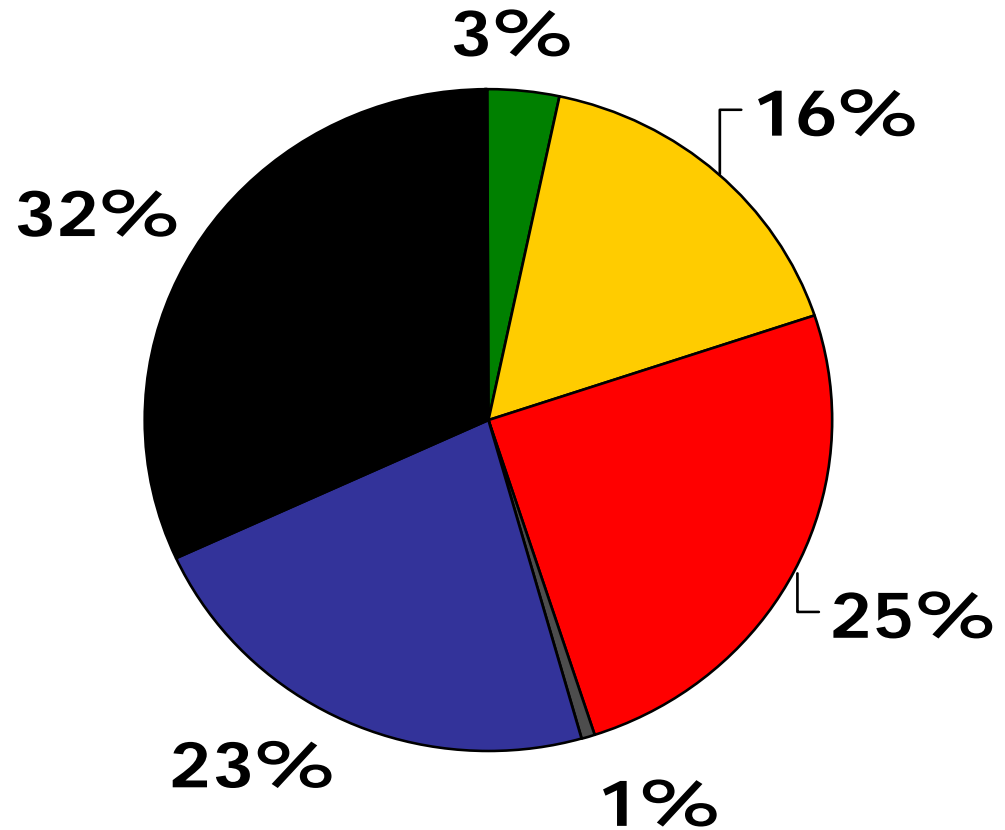
- Always
- Often
- Seldom
- Never
- Do Not Know
- Not Applicable



N: 179

# Are New Attorneys Able to use Print Resources Efficiently Prior to Any In-House Training?

- Always
- Often
- Seldom
- Never
- Do Not Know
- Not Applicable



N: 176



# Are New Attorneys Aware of Helpful Fee-Based Online Resources Prior to Any In-House Training?

■ Always

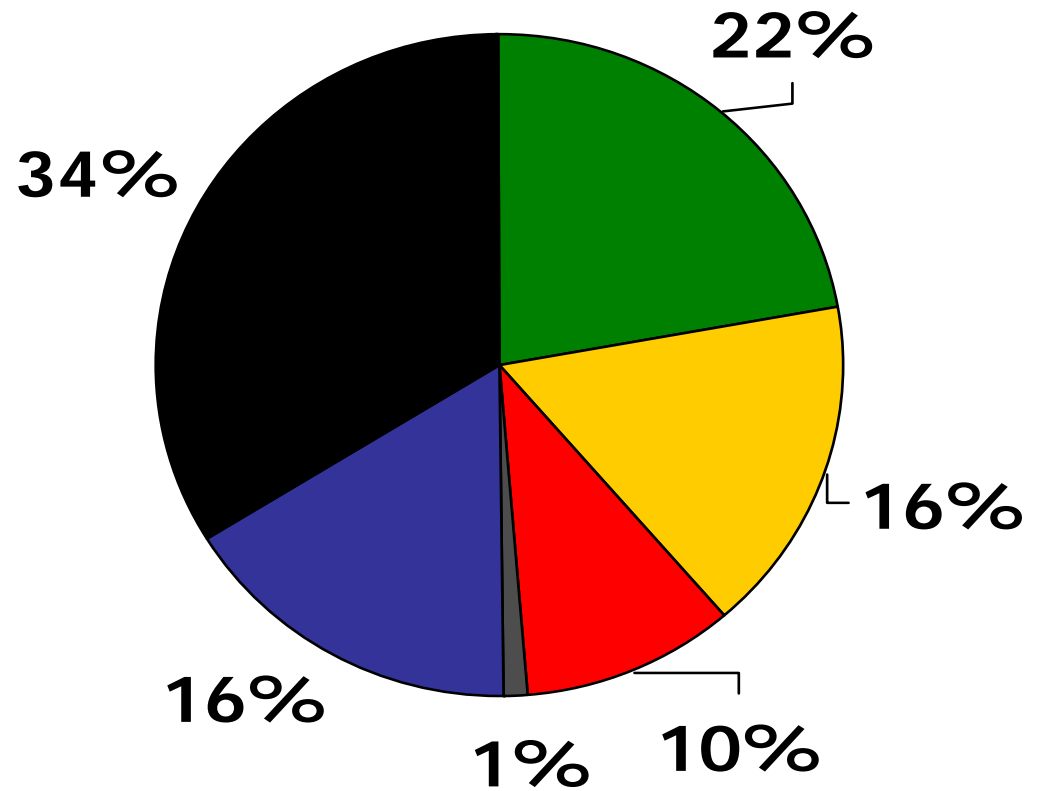
■ Often

■ Seldom

■ Never

■ Do Not Know

■ Not Applicable



N: 171

# Are New Attorneys Able to use Fee-Based Online Resources Efficiently Prior to Any In-House Training?

■ Always

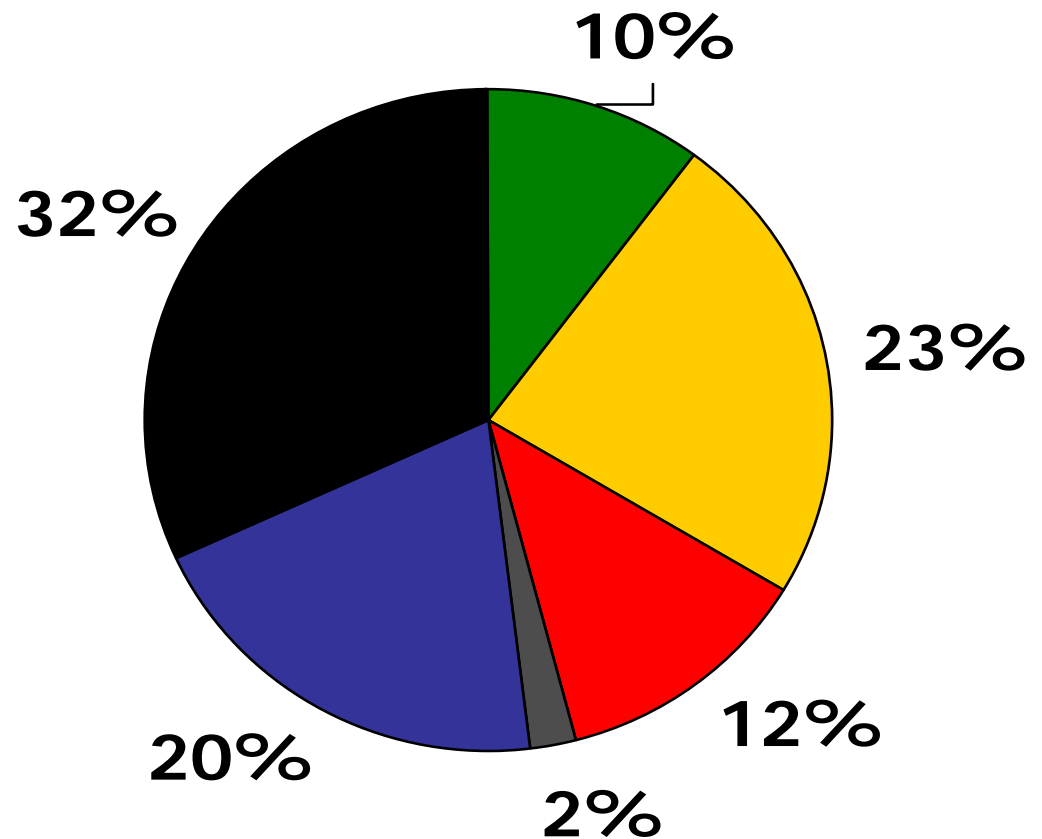
■ Often

■ Seldom

■ Never

■ Do Not Know

■ Not Applicable



N: 175

# Are New Attorneys Aware of Helpful Free Online Resources Prior to Any In-House Training?

■ Always

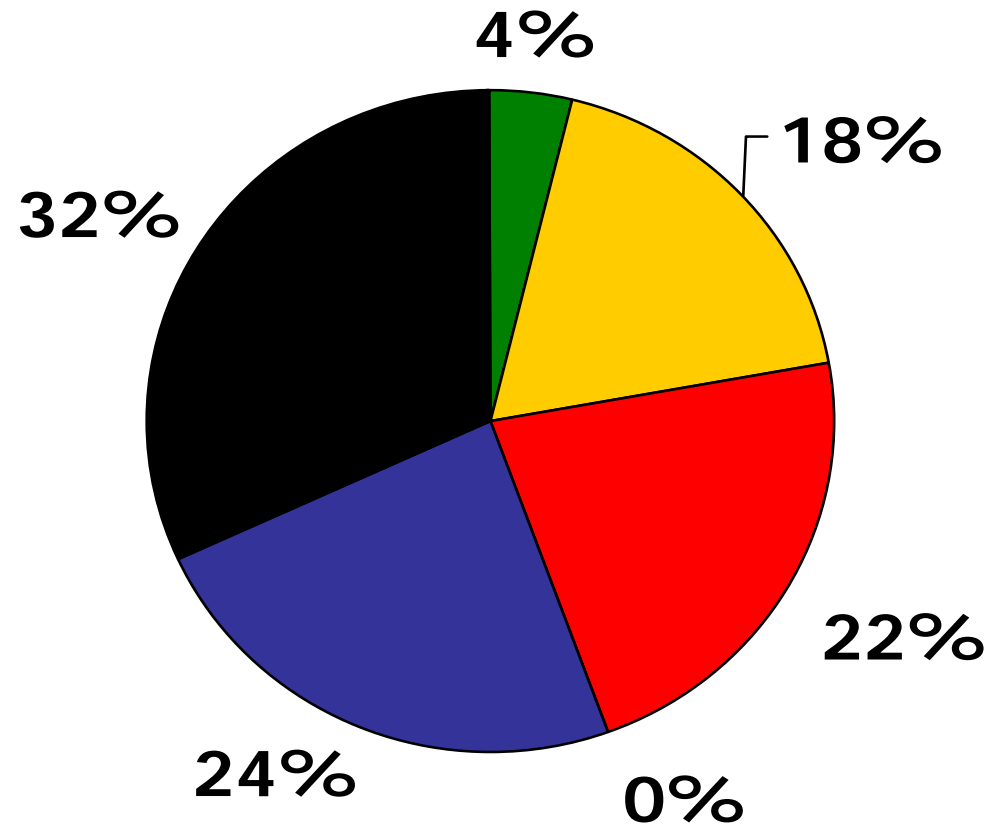
■ Often

■ Seldom

■ Never

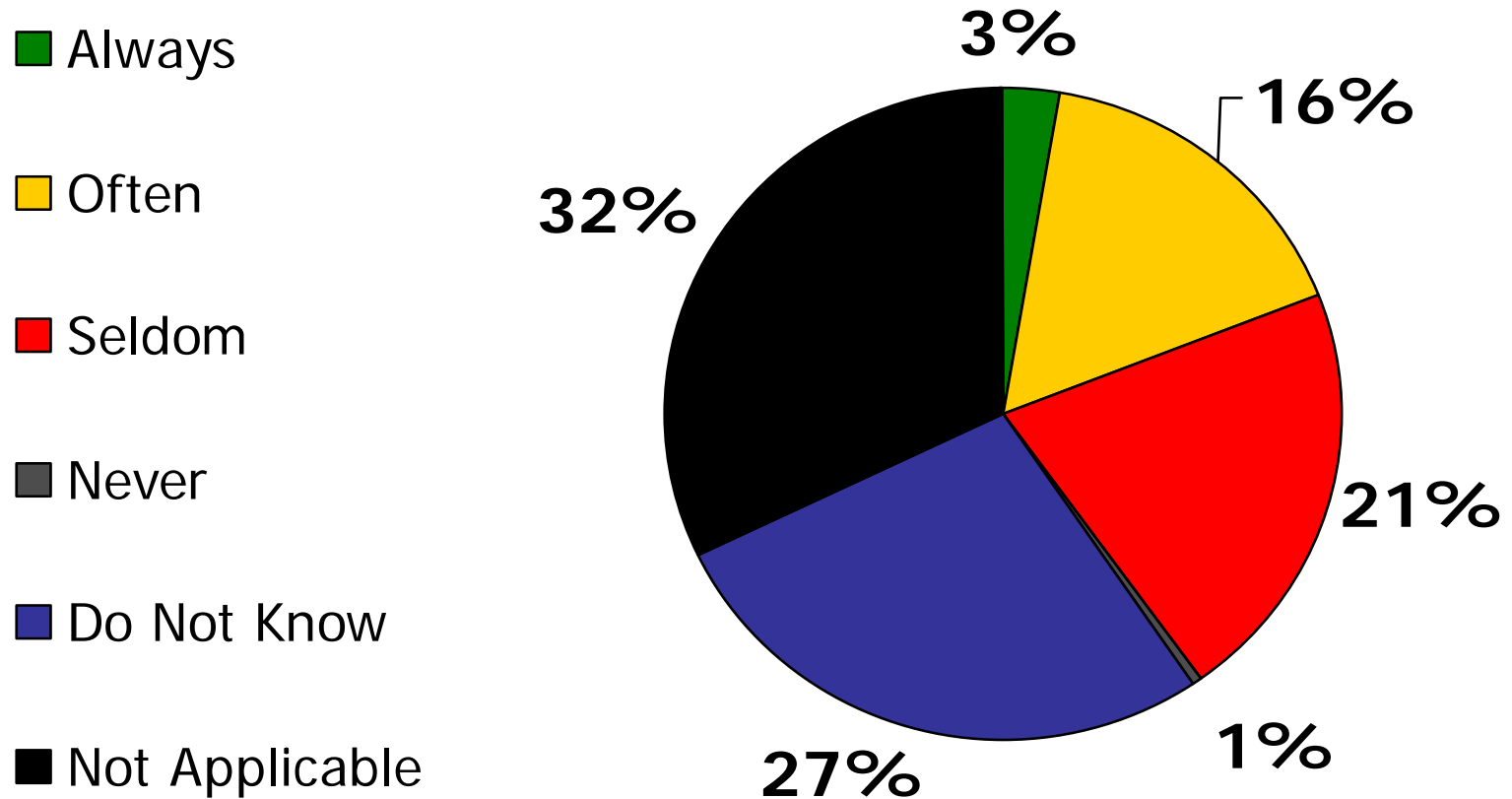
■ Do Not Know

■ Not Applicable



N: 176

# Are New Attorneys Able to use Free Online Resources Efficiently Prior to Any In-House Training?



N: 177

# Observations

“We frequently have to write off fee-based research costs because new lawyers don't know how to use it efficiently.”

- Private firm attorney with 16 or more years' experience in an office with 101-500 attorneys

# Observations

“Even though I am a recent graduate, our focus was Lexis and Westlaw. I would love more training on print resources, but more importantly learning how to navigate various free online resources.”

– Government attorney with 0-5 years’ experience in an office with 101-500 attorneys

# Observations

“Legal research is a part of the larger issue of legal analysis and reasoning...The use of print materials seems to better stress and underscore the need for analysis. In contrast, on-line research is many times more mechanical (i.e., putting together search terms) and many topics are missed... [T]he emphasis needs to be on the analytical approach to a problem and then on where the answers are to be found.”

- Private firm attorney with 16 or more years’ experience in an office with 101-500 attorneys