

Assessment and Evaluation of Public Library Websites in Australia, Canada, and the U.S.

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University of
South Australia



Agenda

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Findings – Australia
- Findings – Canada
- Findings – Australia and Canada Comparison
- Findings – Preliminary U.S.
- Comparison of Australia, Canada, and U.S.
- Conclusion



Introduction

- Public Library (PL) websites are the e-branch
- PL web assessment evaluations are a gap in library literature
- PL web assessment and evaluation in literature is anecdotal
- Web sites equal presence and marketing



Marketing of Public Libraries

- Convenience for patrons
- Provide excellent customer service via web page
- Evaluating the web page for usability
- What makes a good public library web site?
 - Ease of use
 - Good information
 - Well designed

Library Usability

- According to Poll (2007):
 - Content
 - Language
 - Structure
 - Design
 - Navigation
 - Accessibility



Usability of Websites

- Jakob Nielsen (2012) discusses five usability components:
 - Avoidance
 - Learnability
 - Efficiency
 - Memorability
 - Satisfaction

Group Project



- 39 Students in the eight phases
- Initially 25 public library web sites each
- Given the methodology
- Asked to do a short literature review
- Worked individually in the majority of phases



Methodology

- Powers, 2011
 - Pennsylvania project replicated
 - Had 20 basic questions
 - One question was not asked in our protocol
 - Added two regarding joint use
- Included branch libraries
- Some consistency issues were apparent



Methodology

- Answered each category as a Yes/No question
- Used Excel to process results
- The rest of the data qualitative
- Qualitative data has not been processed
- Australia was done 2013-14
- Canada was done in 2014-15
- U.S. was done 2015-16
- Last project data turned in on 13 June 2016



Information Gathered

- Physical & Mailing Address
- Telephone Number
- Email
- Hours of Operation
- Library Manager/Director
- Joint Use Facility – Yes/No
 - If yes, what type?



Information Gathered (cont'd)

- Catalogue Link
- State Databases or other links (i.e. Trove, etc.)
- Date web page last updated
- Mixture of text and images
- Promotion of events and programs on the pages
- Search box available
- Place to provide feedback about the site



Information Gathered (cont'd)

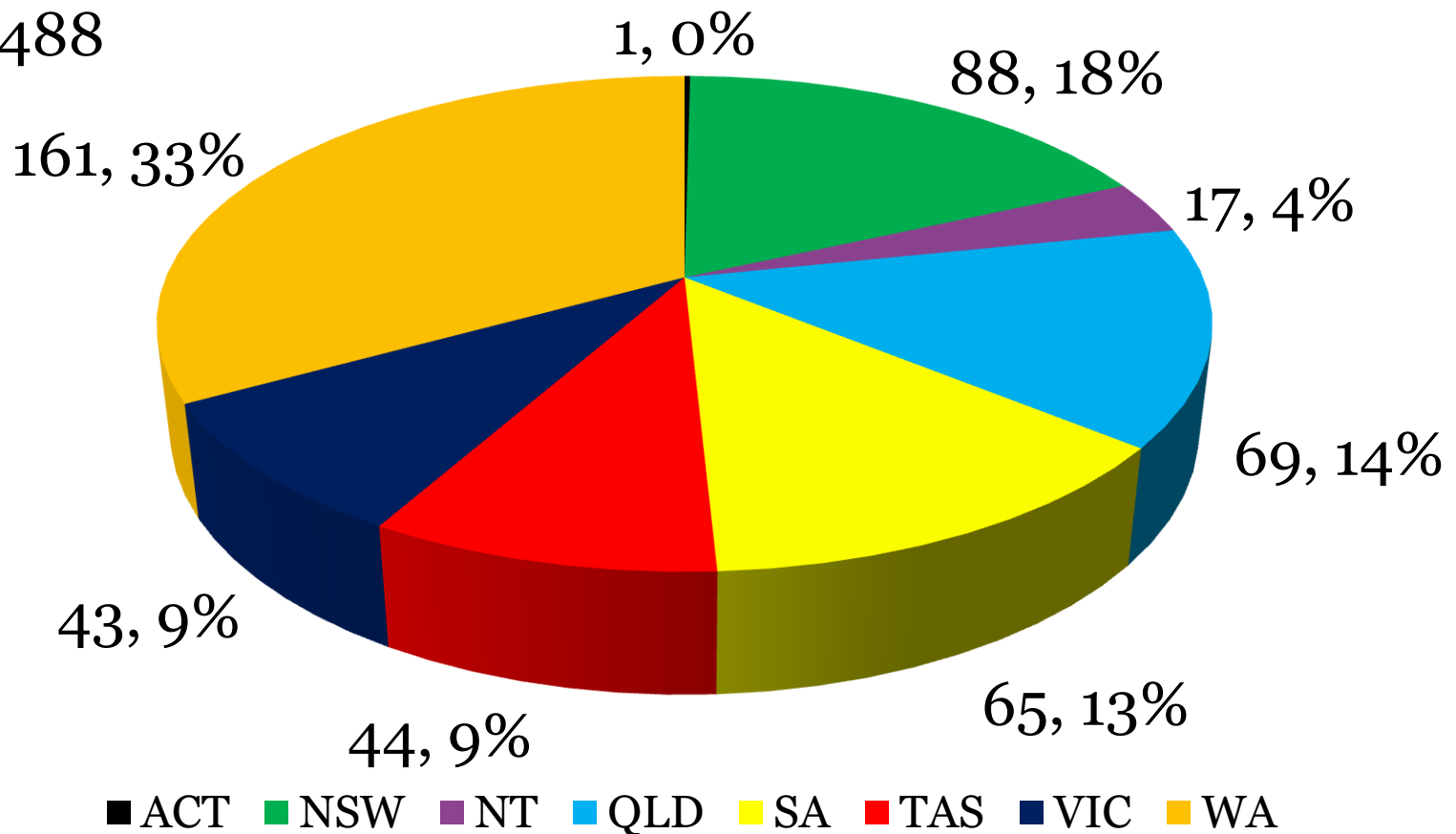
- Free from spelling and grammatical errors
- A place to ask for help or assistance from the library
- Consistent logo, branding, or picture that is library specific (not council specific)
- Use of Web 2.0 tools (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Historypin, Yammer, etc.)

Australia



States Represented by PLs

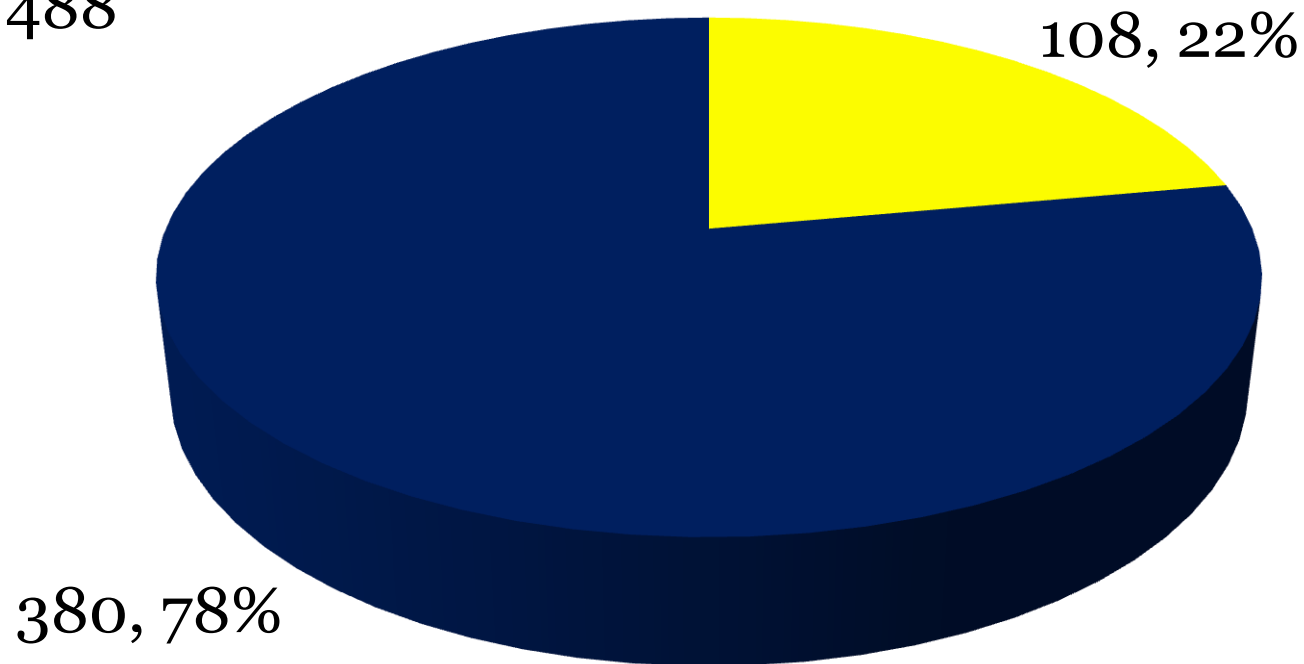
n = 488





Joint Use Facilities

n = 488

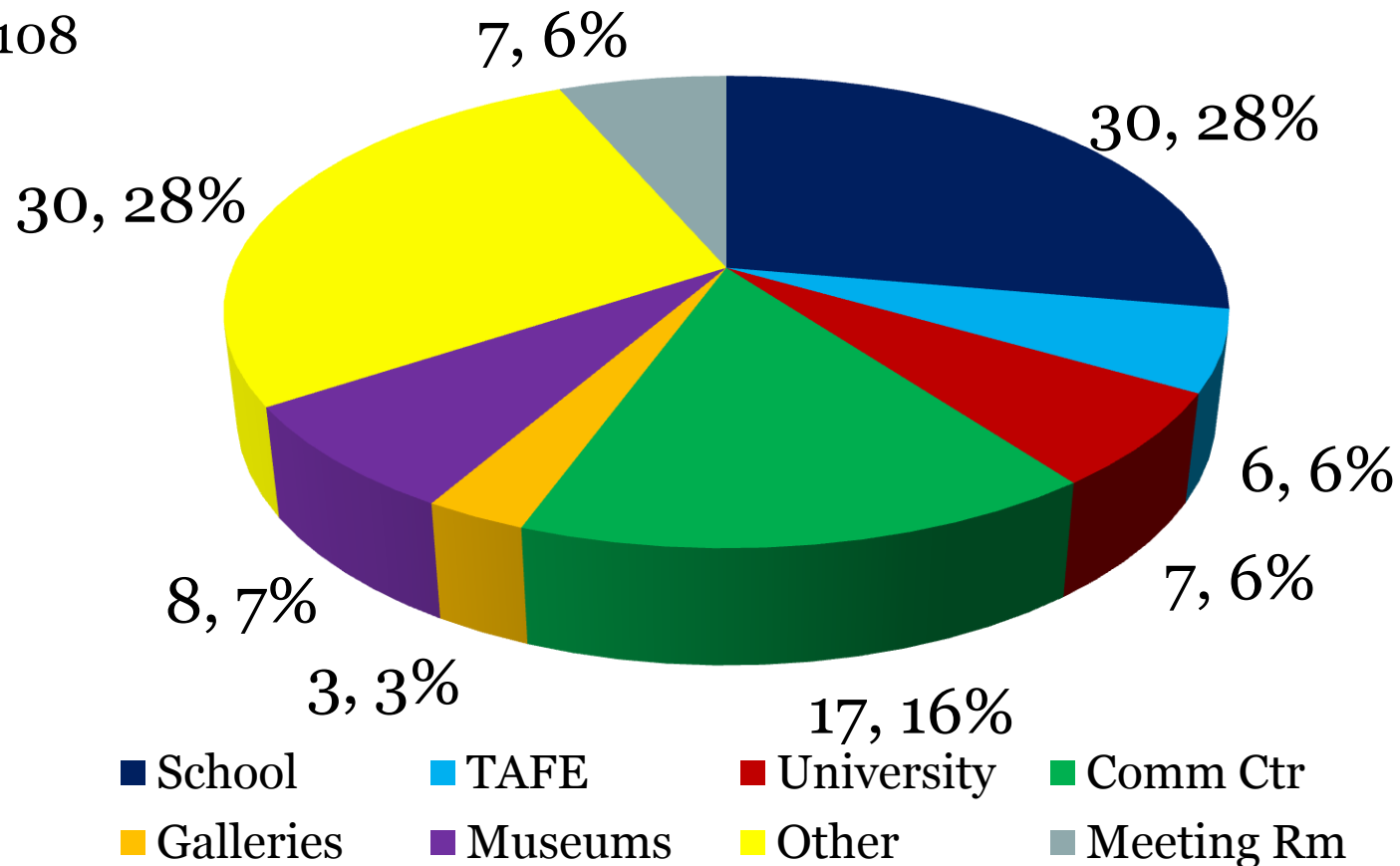


■ Yes ■ No



Joint Use Facility Type

n = 108





Top/Bottom 5 Categories

Top 5

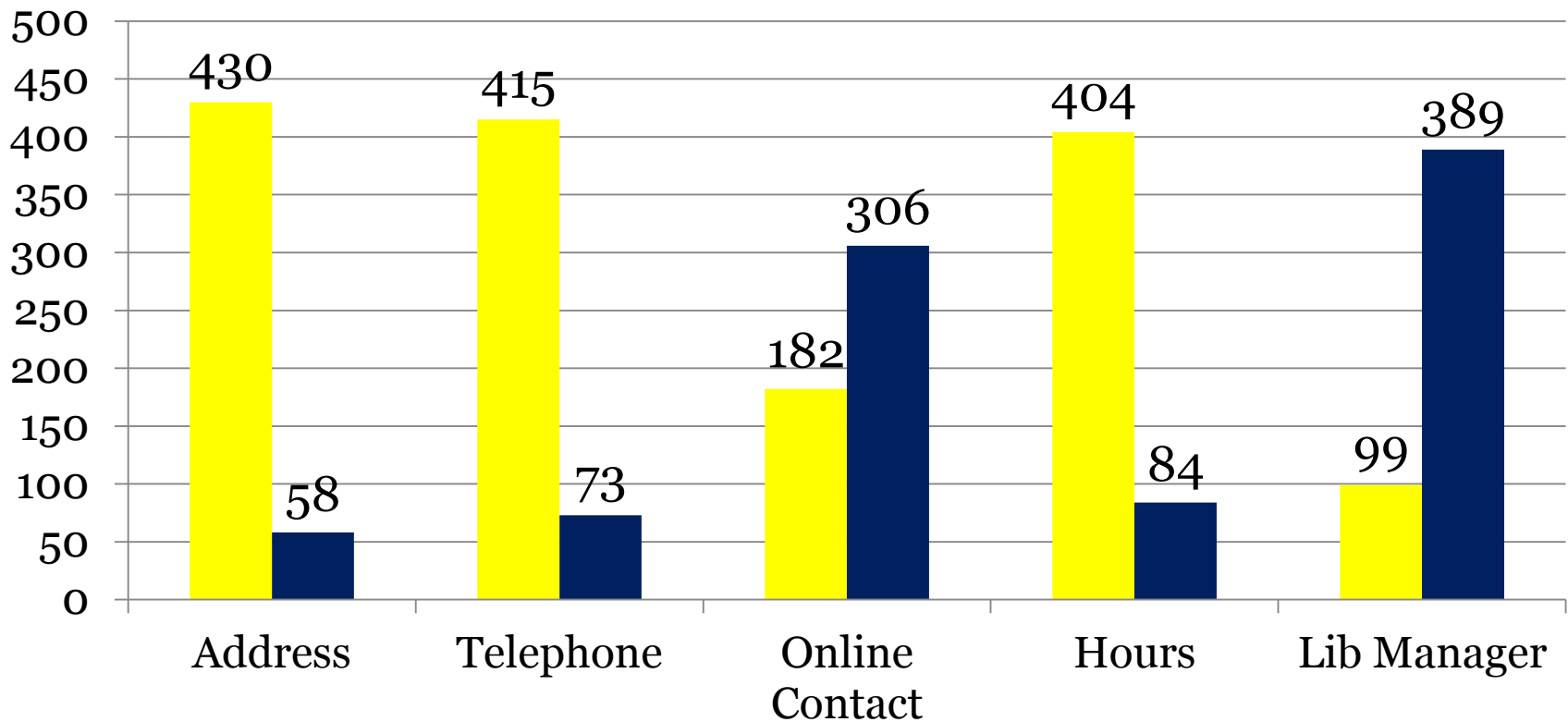
- Address – 88%
- Telephone – 85%
- Hours of Operation – 83%
- Spelling & Grammar – 82%
- Catalogue – 67%

Bottom 5

- Help – 18%
- Library Manager – 20%
- Feedback – 27%
- Date Site Updated – 30%
- Image/Icon (library) – 35%



Yes/No Questions

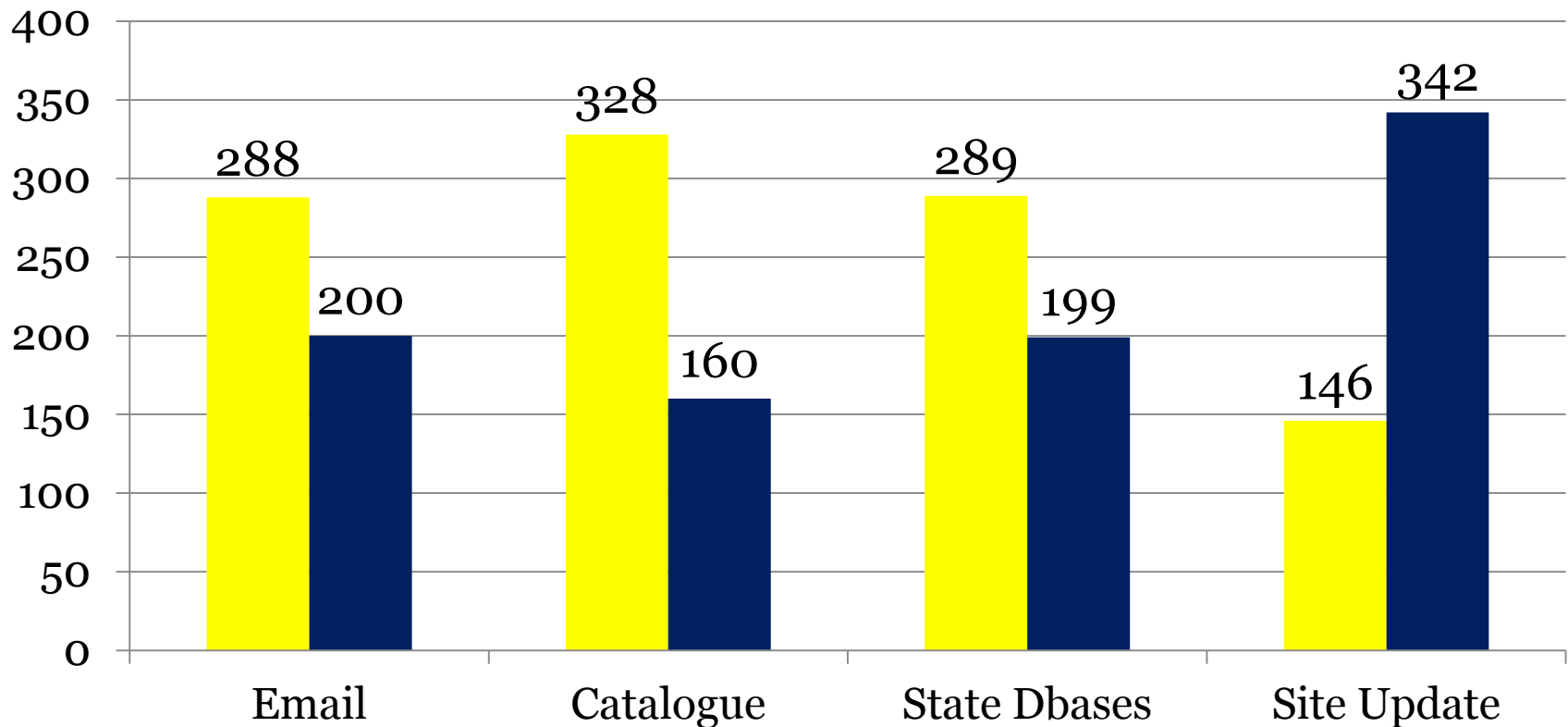


n = 488

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions

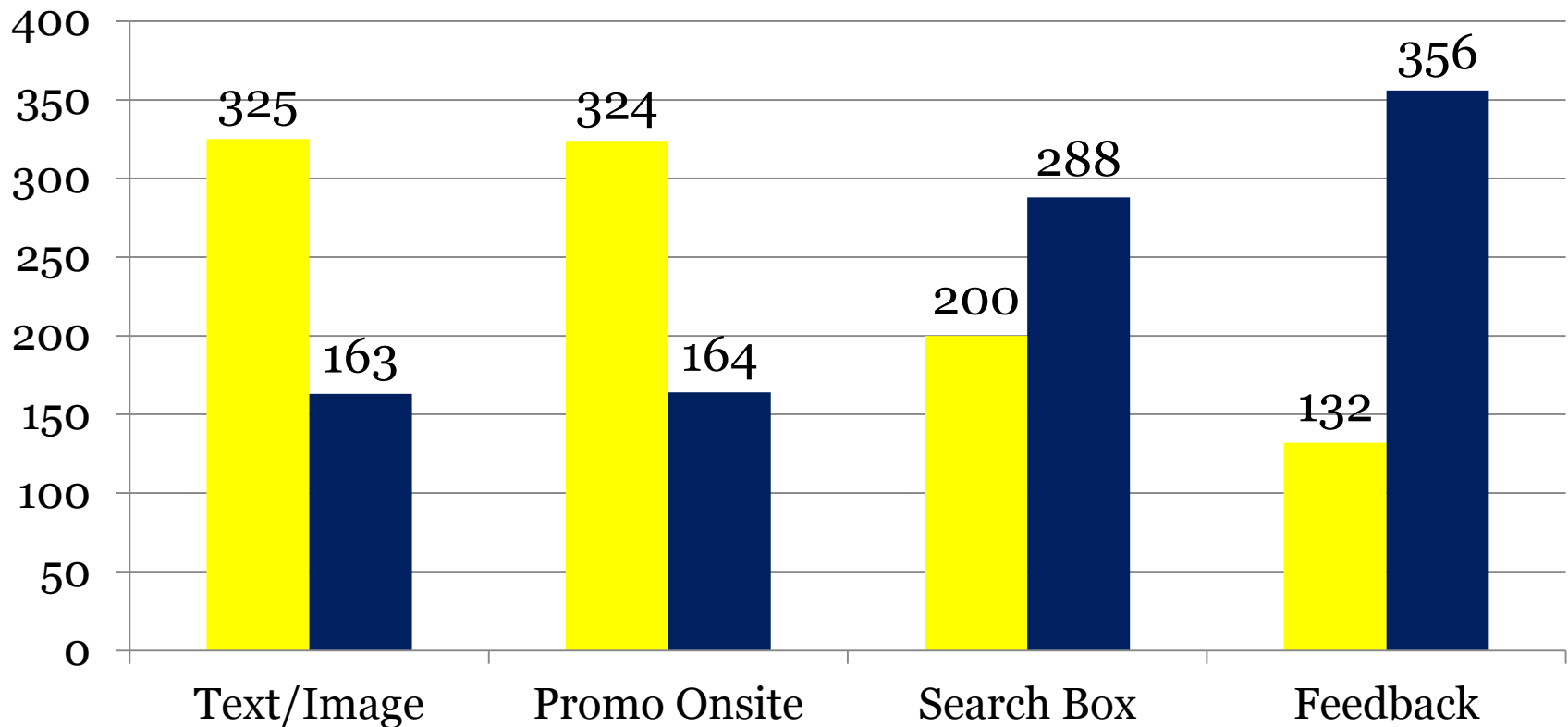


n = 488

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions

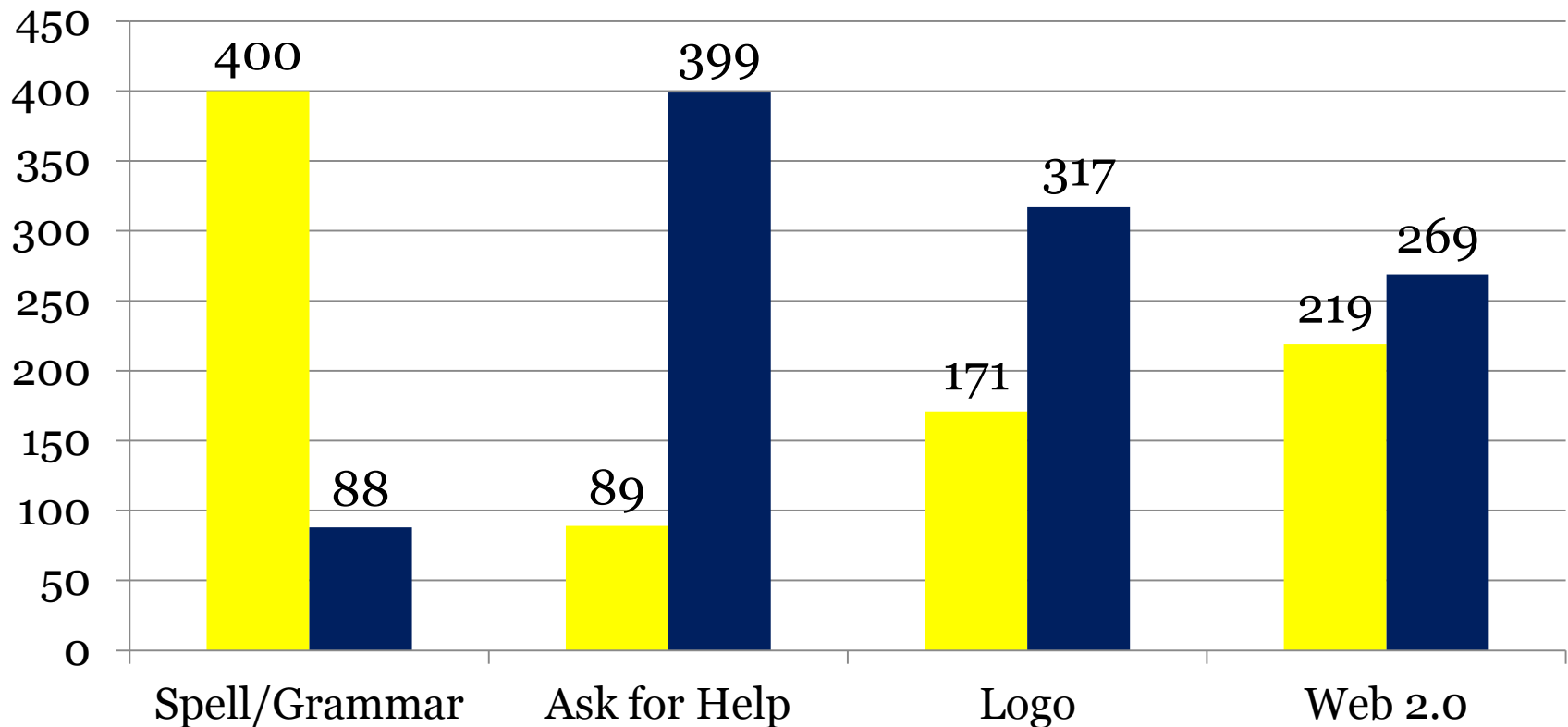


n = 488

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions (cont'd)



n = 488

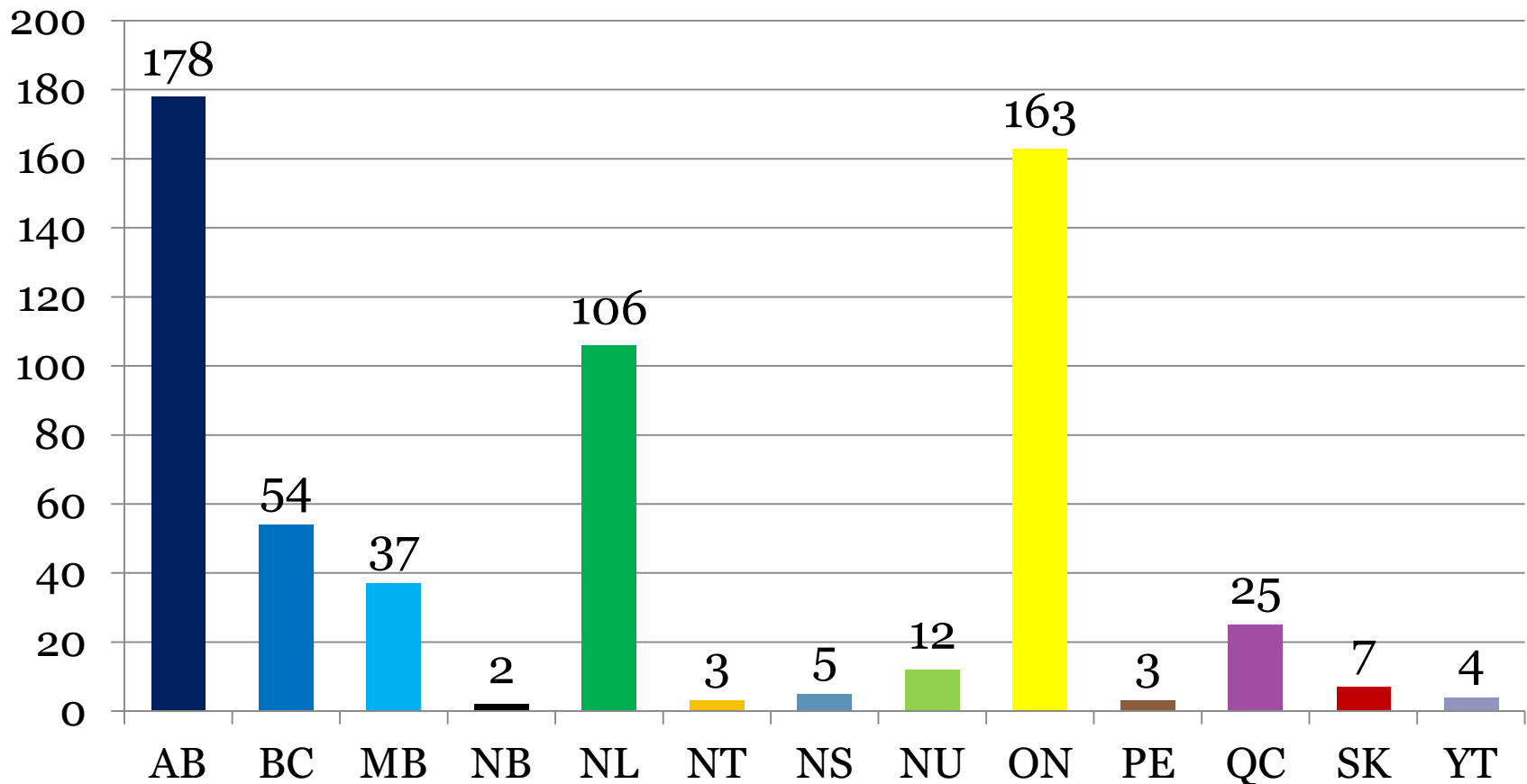
■ Yes ■ No

Canada



Provinces Represented by PLs

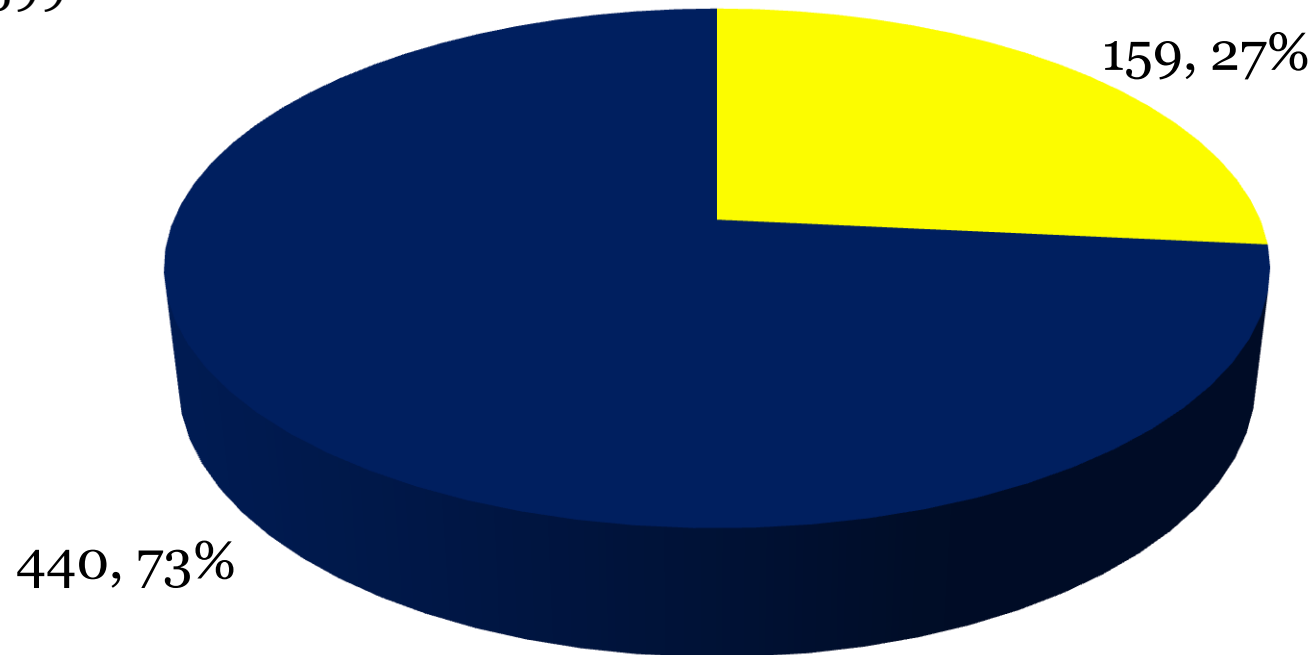
n = 599





Joint Use Facilities

n = 599

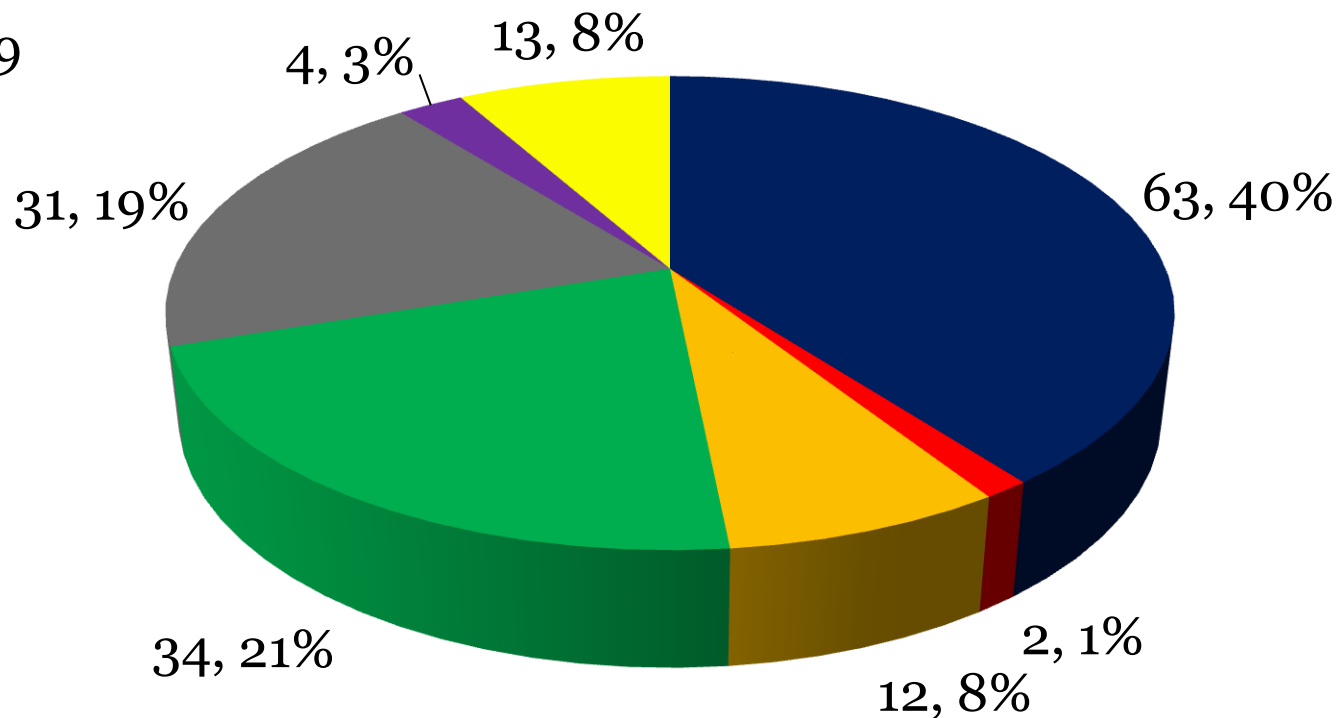


■ Yes ■ No



Joint Use Facility Type

n = 159



■ School ■ Universities ■ Galleries ■ Comm Ctr
■ Meeting Rms ■ Museums ■ Other



Top/Bottom 5 Categories

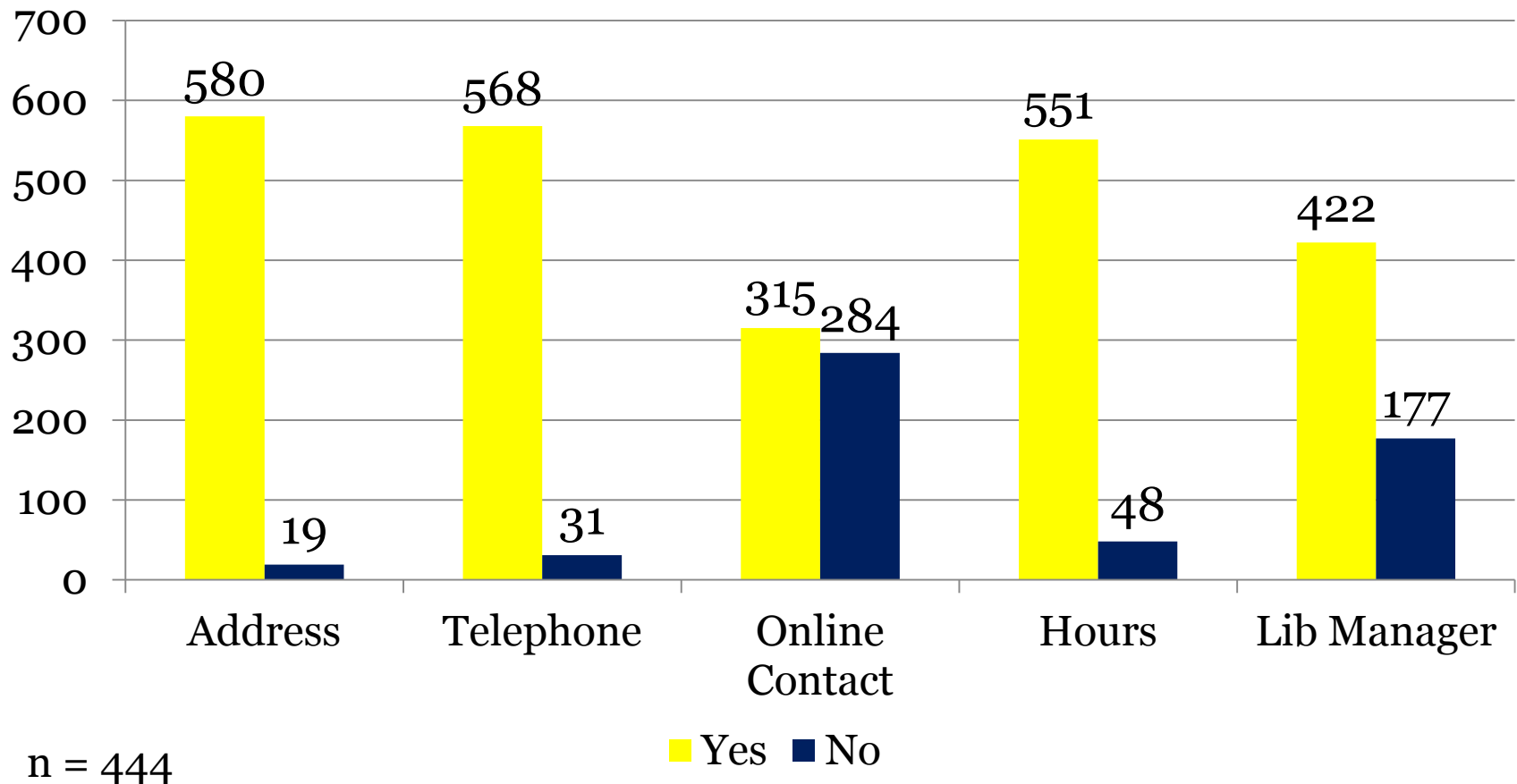
Top 5

- Address – 97%
- Telephone – 95%
- Hours of Operation – 92%
- Spelling & Grammar - 90%
- Text & Images – 88%

Bottom 5

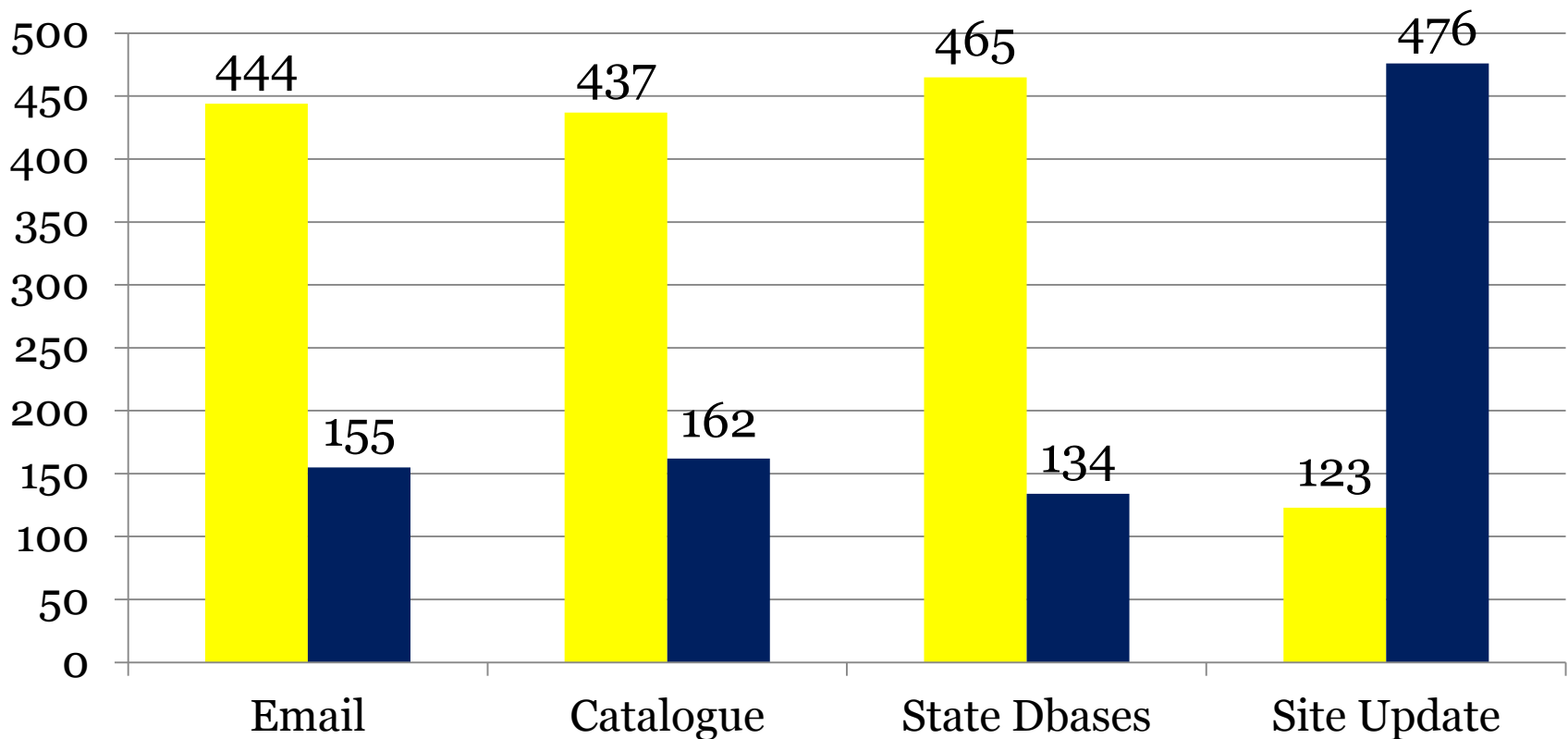
- Date Site Updated – 21%
- Feedback – 32%
- Help – 46%
- Online Contact - 53%
- Search Box – 55%

Yes/No Questions





Yes/No Questions

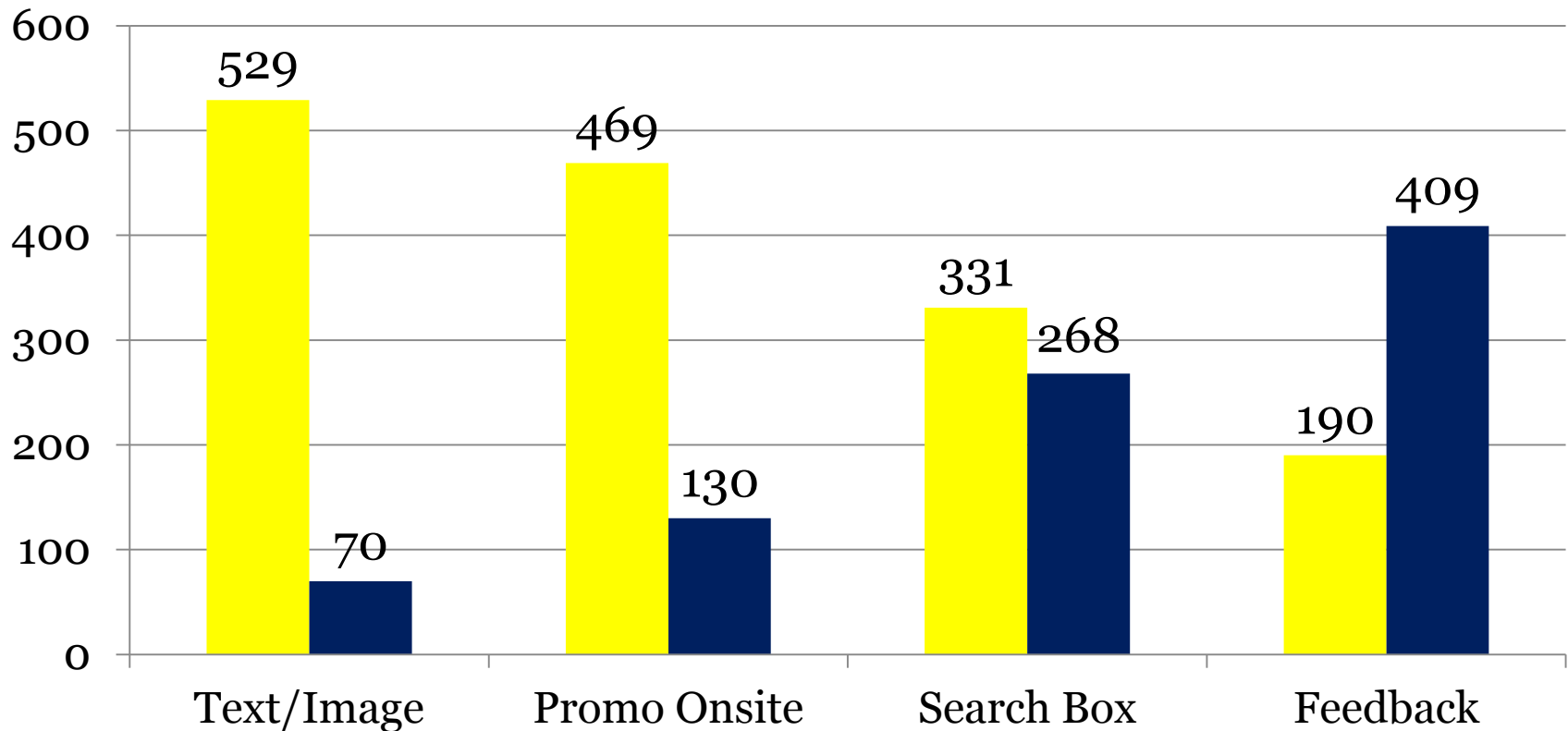


n = 599

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions

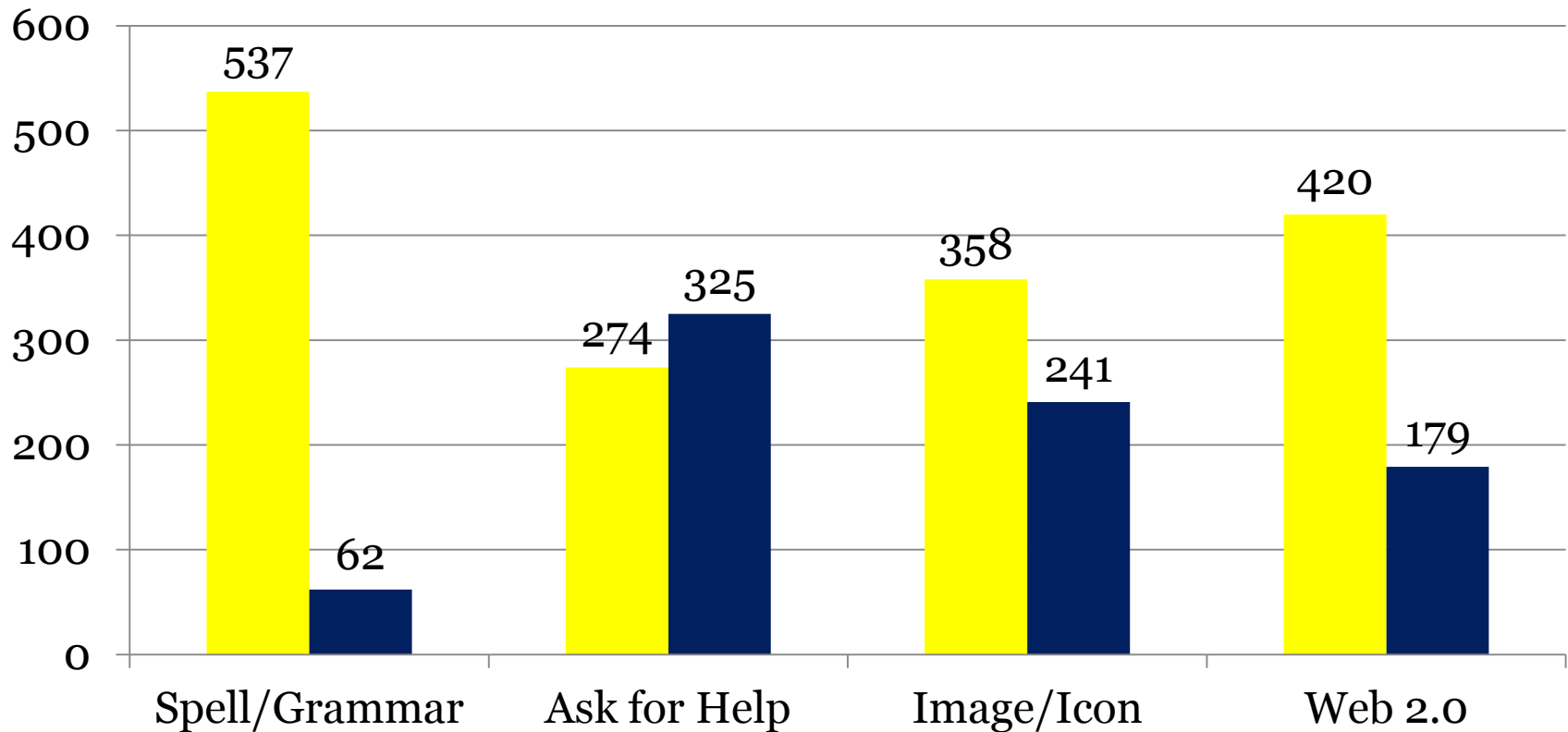


n = 599

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions (cont'd)



n = 599

■ Yes ■ No

Australia & Canada



Bottom 5 Categories

Australia

- Help – 18%
- Library Manager – 20%
- Feedback – 27%
- Date Site Updated – 30%
- Image/Icon – 35%

Canada

- Date Site Updated – 11%
- Feedback – 38%
- Online Contact 52%
- Search Box - 54%
- Help - 54%



Top 5 Categories

Australia

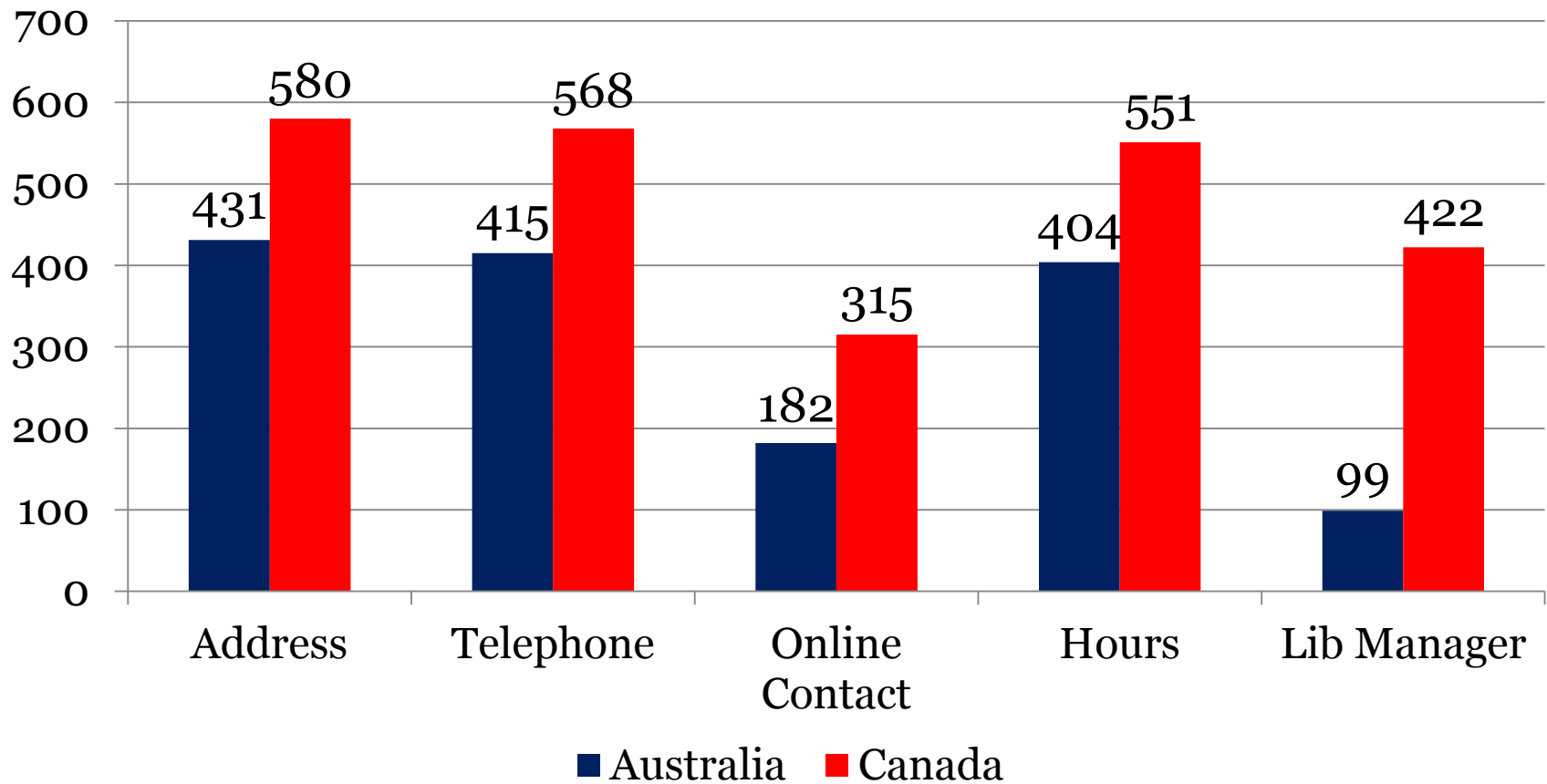
- Address – 88%
- Telephone – 85%
- Spelling & Grammar – 82%
- Hours of Operation – 78%
- Catalogue – 70%

Canada

- Address – 97%
- Telephone – 95%
- Hours of Operation – 92%
- Spelling & Grammar – 90%
- Text & Images - 88%

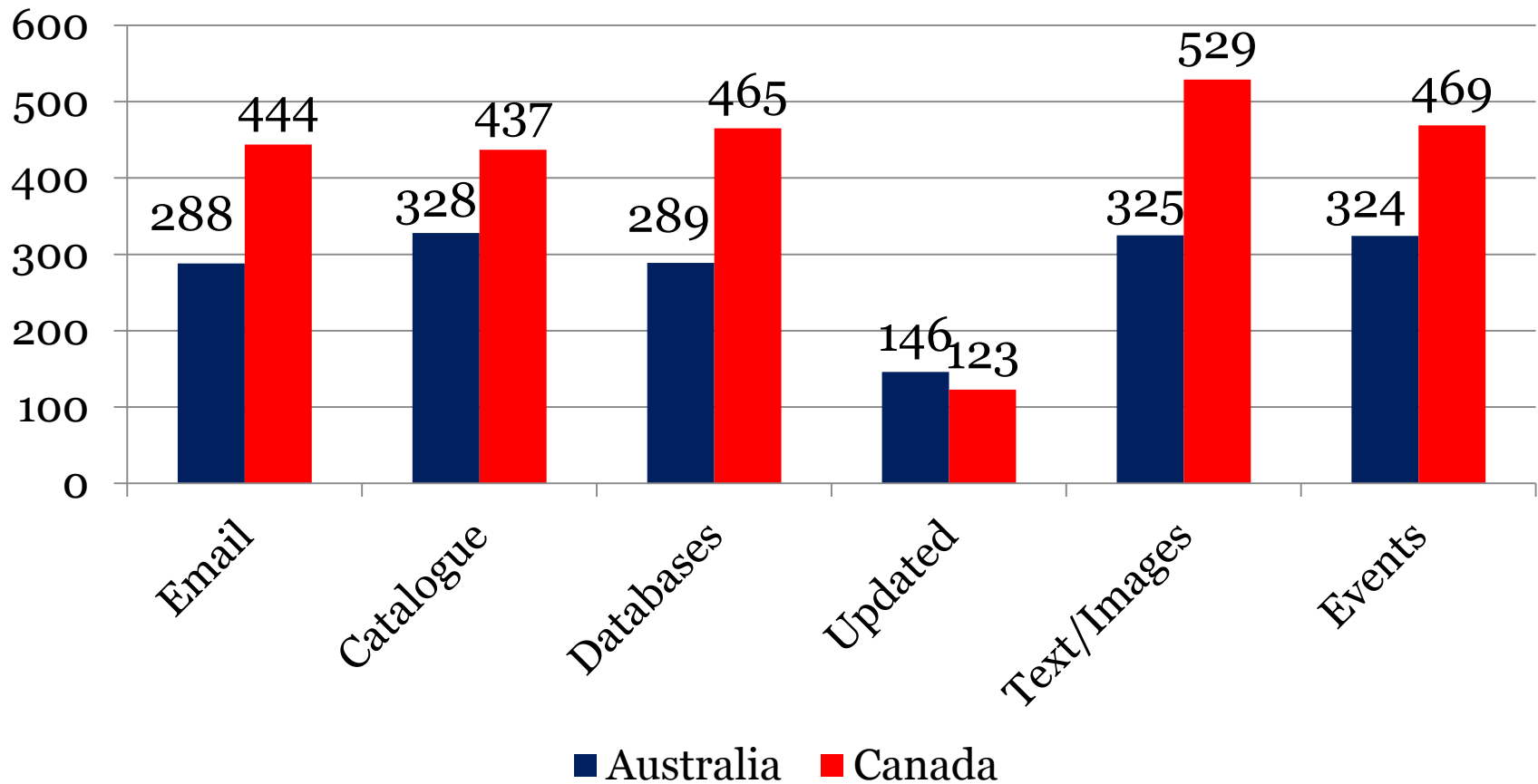


Yes Answers



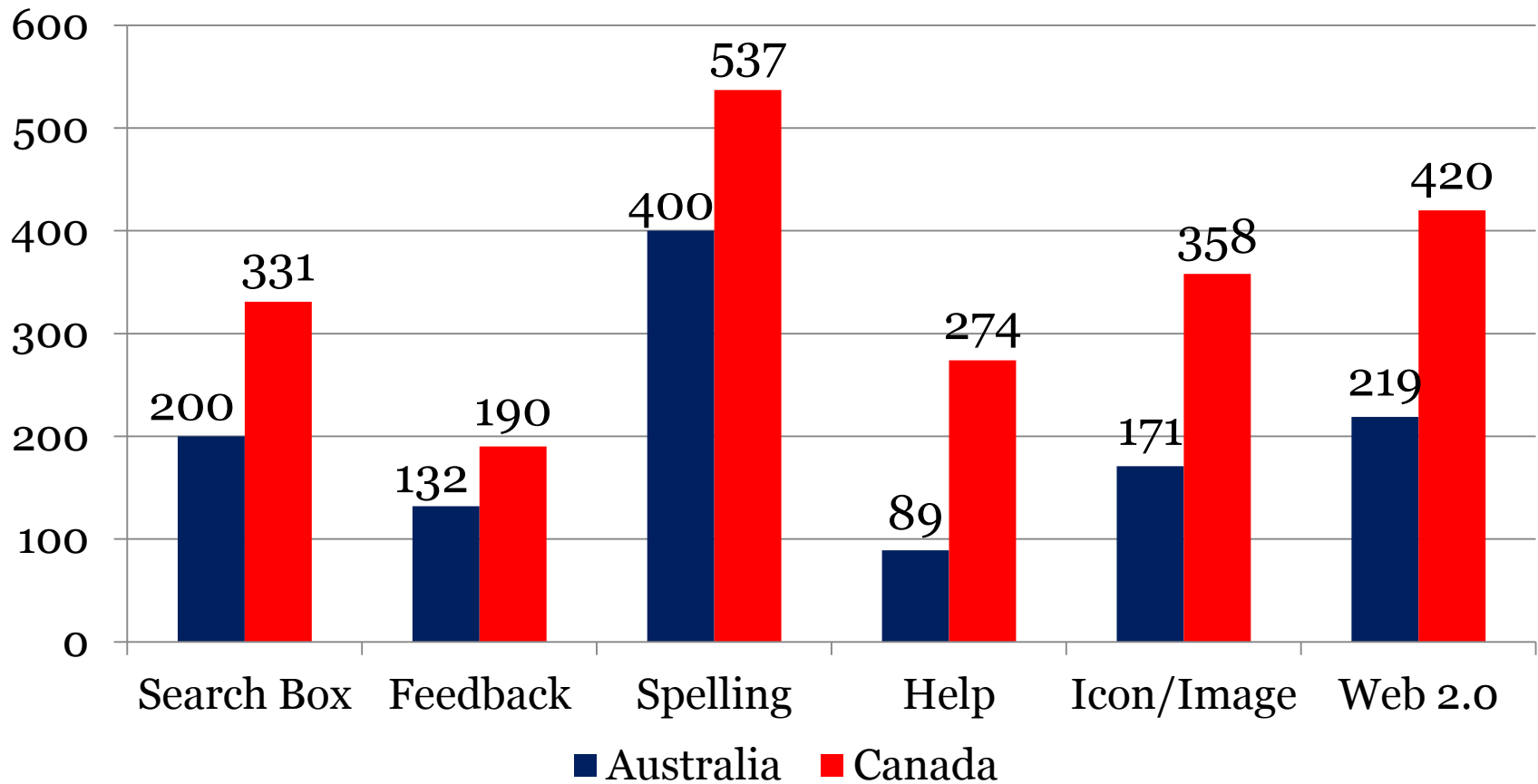


Yes Answers





Yes Answers



Preliminary U.S. Findings



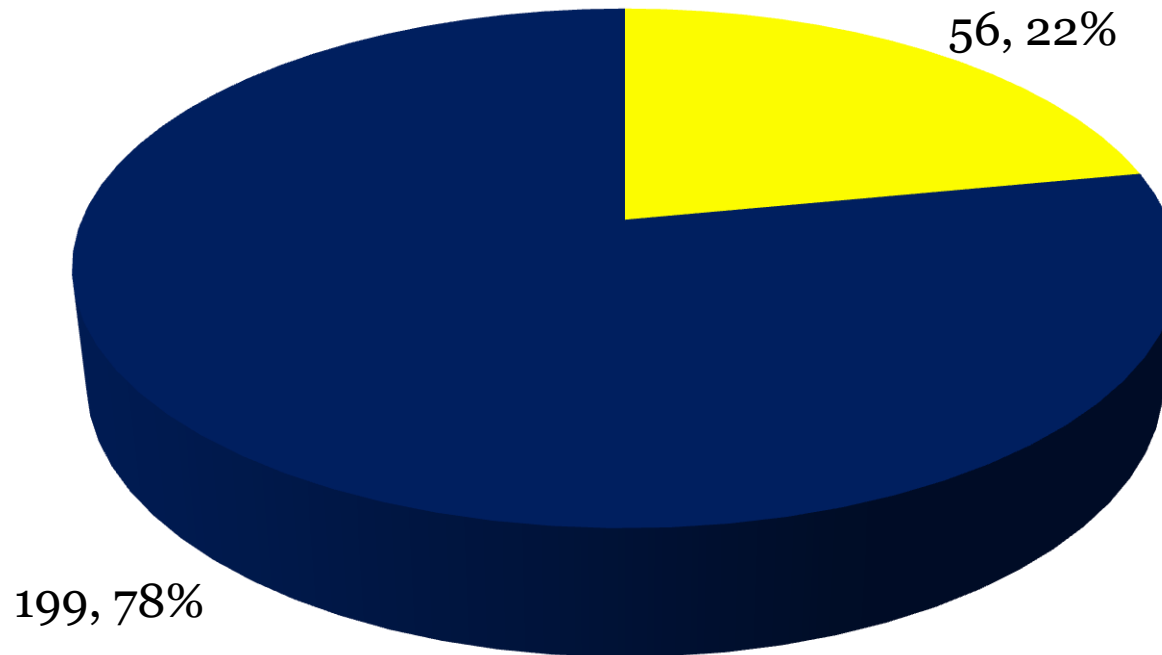
Preliminary U.S. Data

- Two phases completed
- 255 libraries
- Random sample of 500 libraries chosen of a particular size



Joint Use Facilities

n = 255

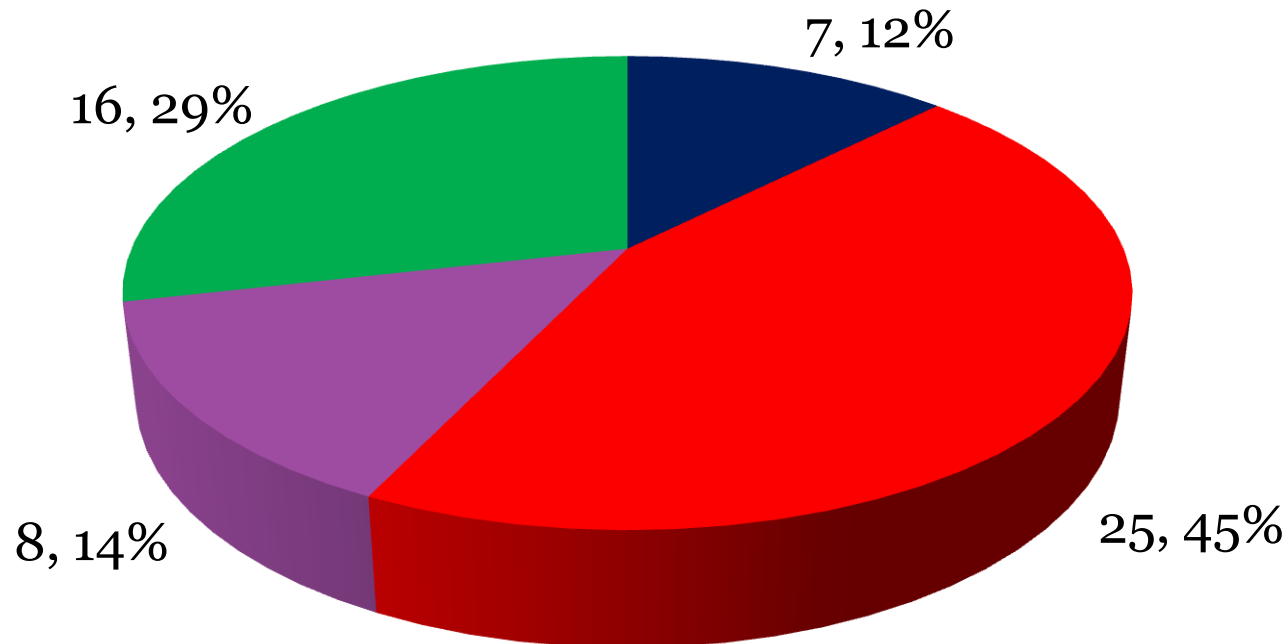


■ Yes ■ No



Joint Use Facility Type

n = 255



■ School ■ Comm Ctr ■ Council Ctr ■ Other



Top/Bottom 5 Categories

Top 5

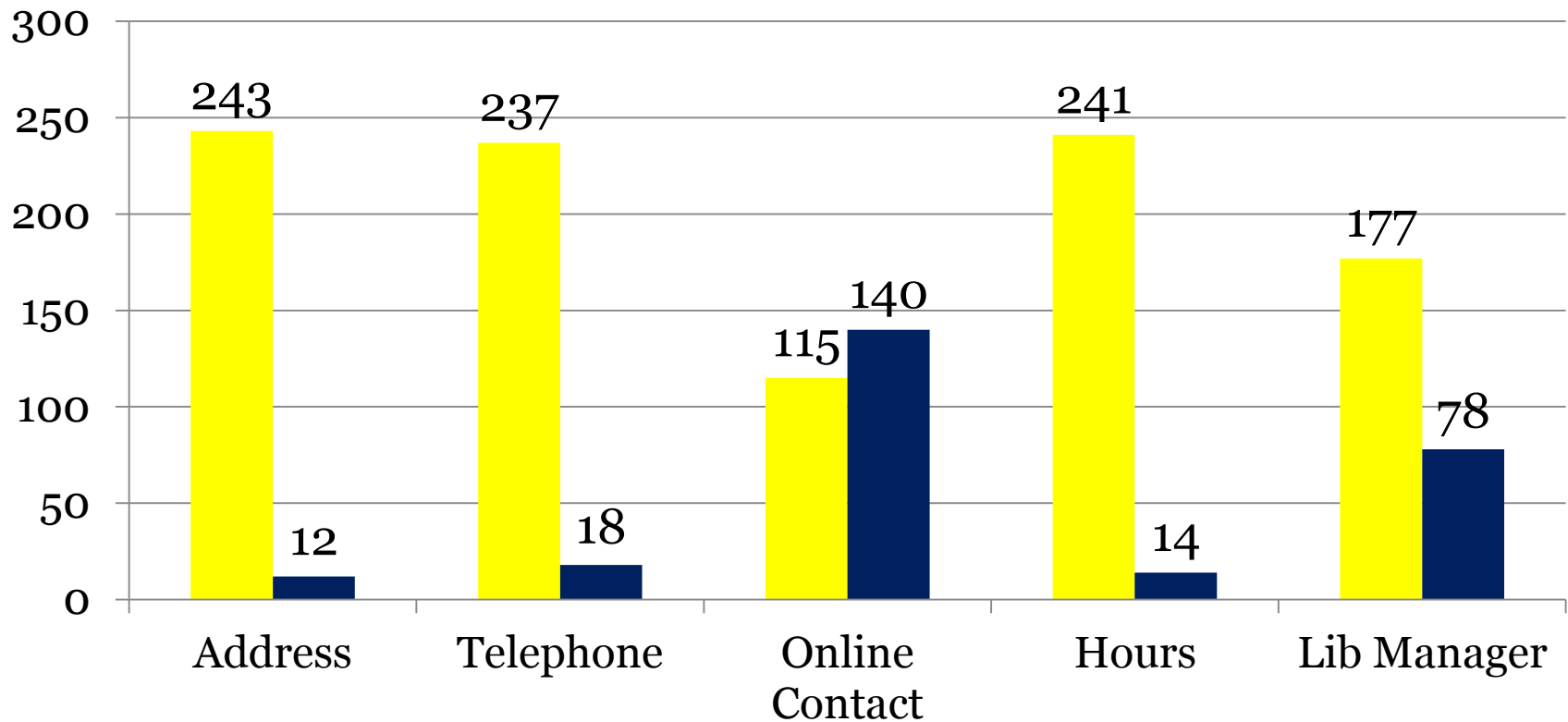
- Address – 95%
- Hours of Operation – 95%
- Telephone – 93%
- Catalogue – 92%
- Text & Images - 88%

Bottom 5

- Date Site Updated – 31%
- Feedback – 35%
- Online Contact – 45%
- Help – 51%
- Email – 56%



Yes/No Questions

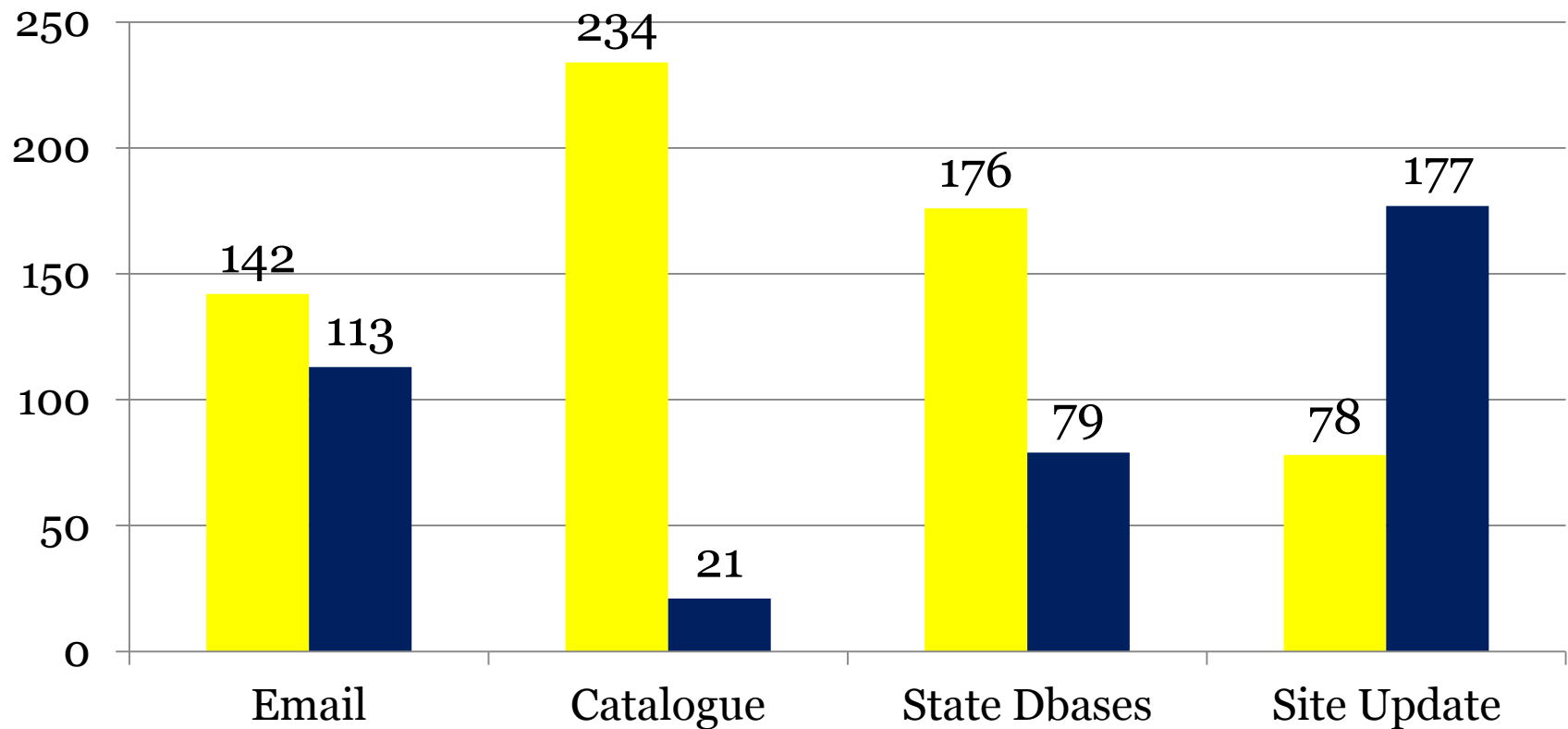


n = 255

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions

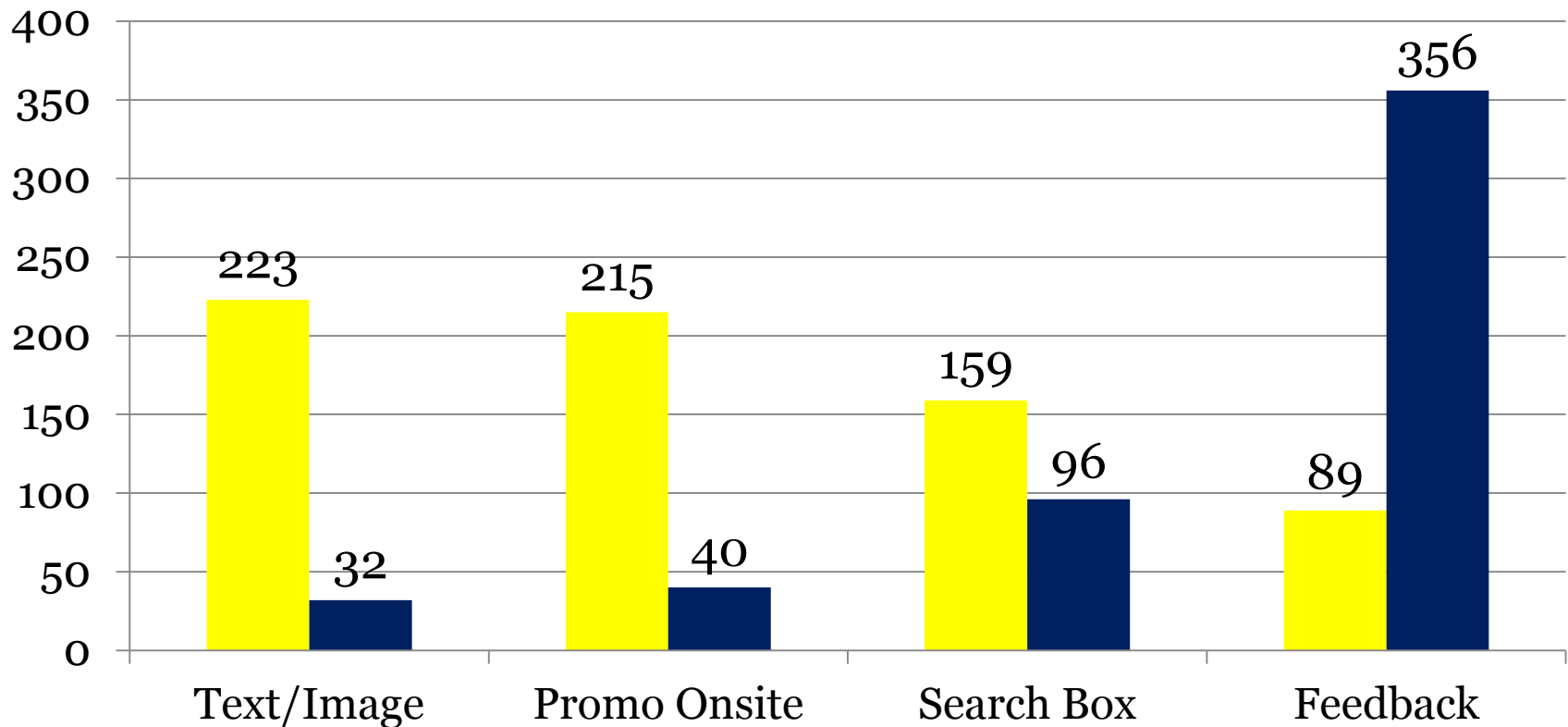


n = 255

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions

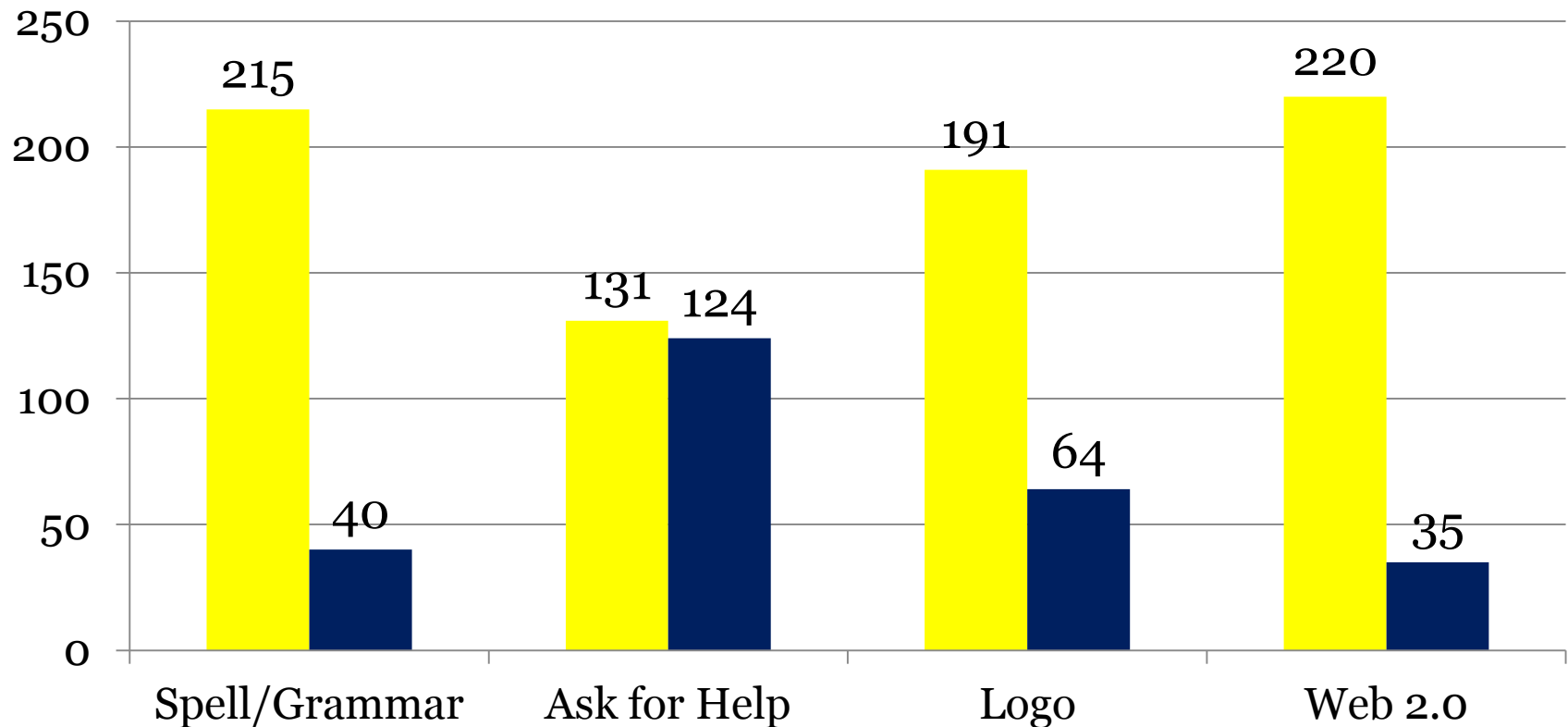


n = 255

■ Yes ■ No



Yes/No Questions (cont'd)



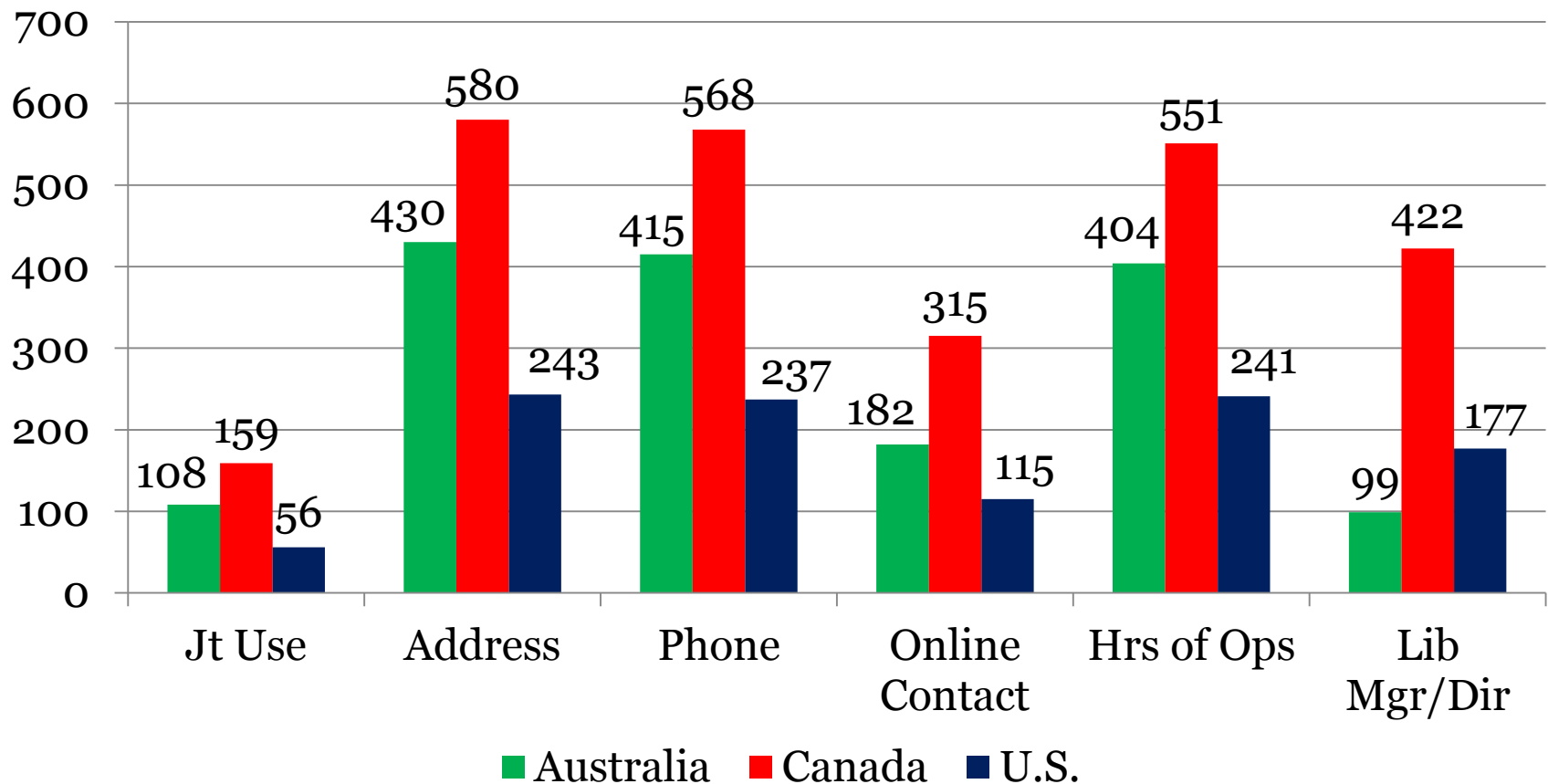
n = 255

■ Yes ■ No

More Comparisons

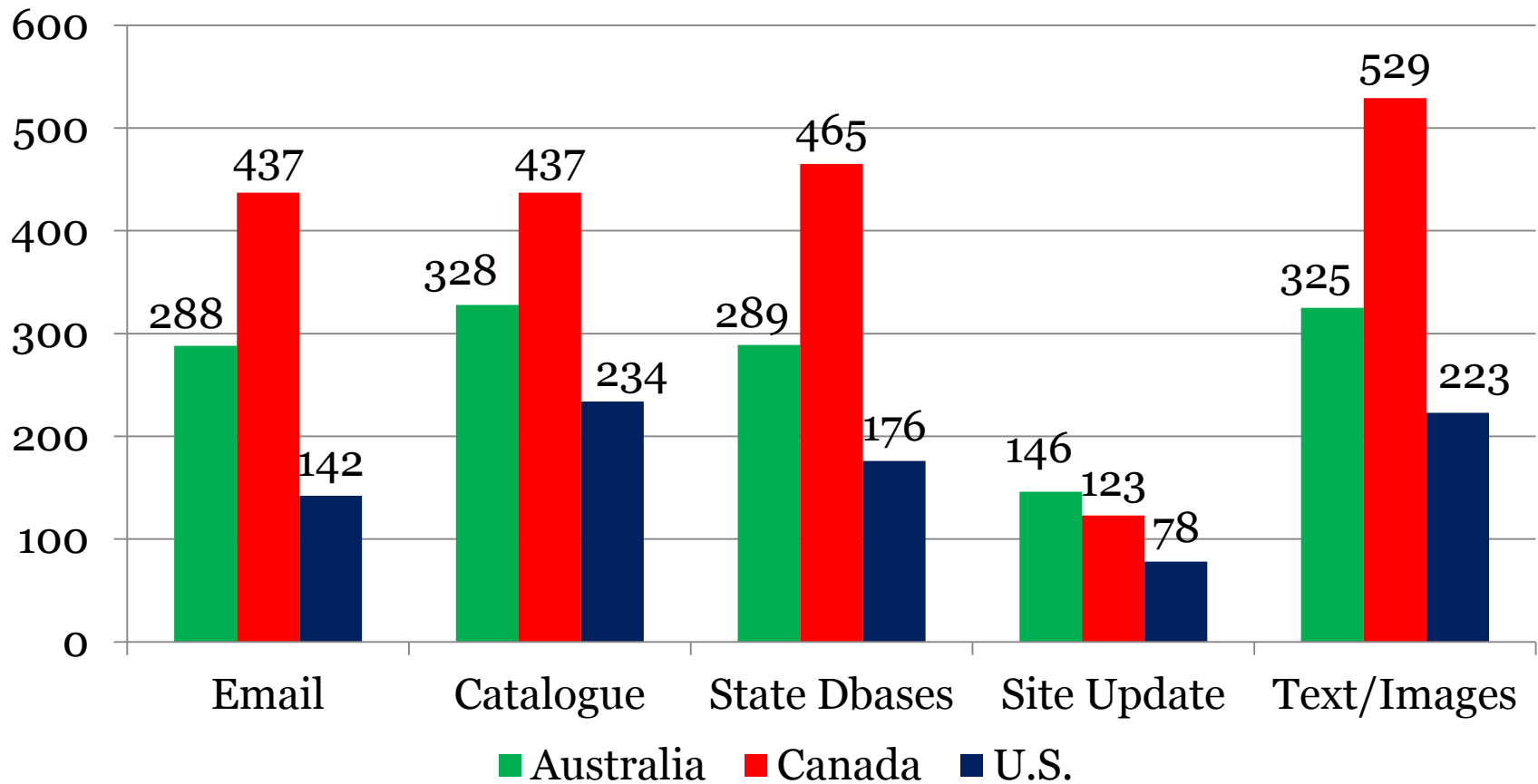


Yes Comparisons



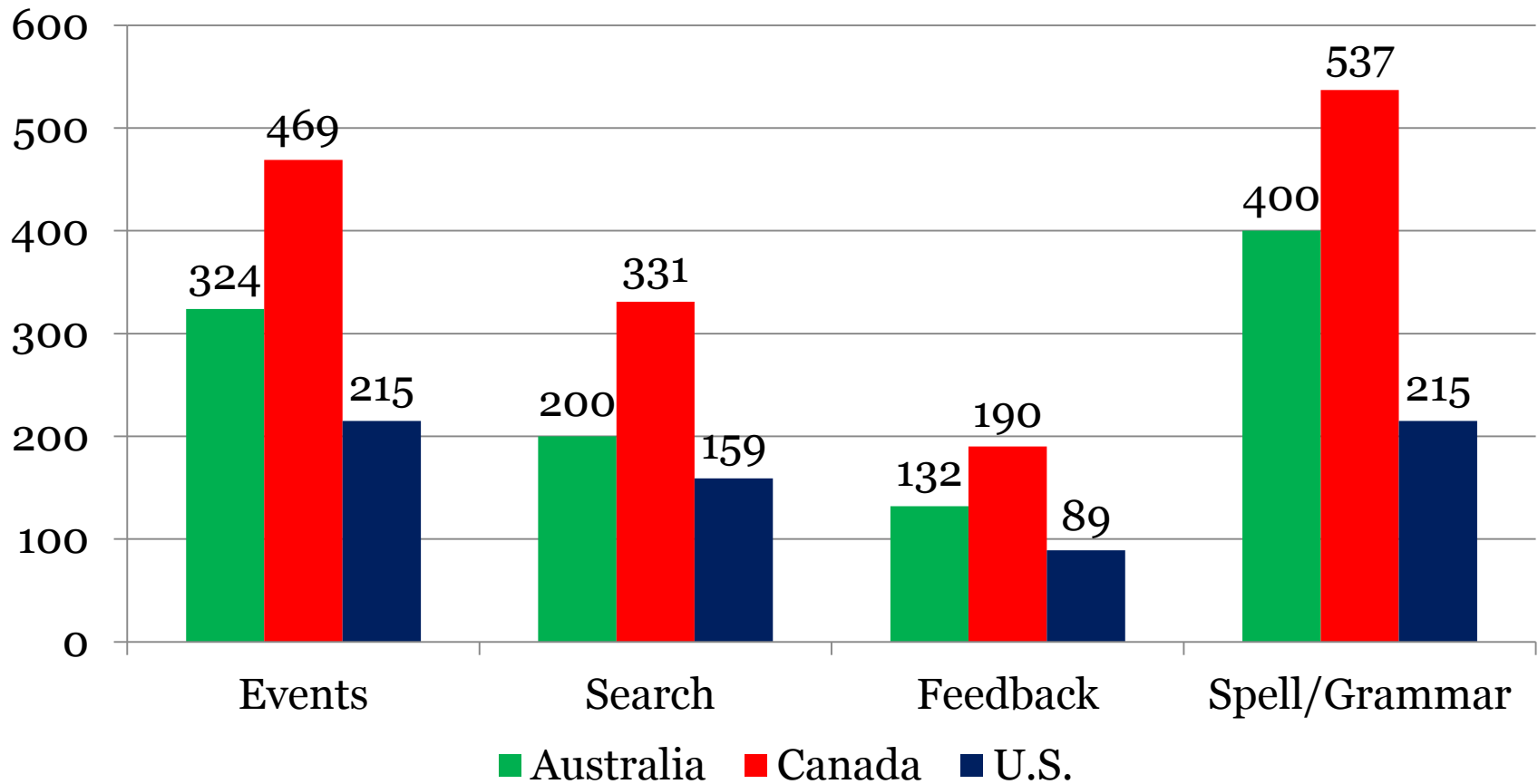


Yes Comparisons



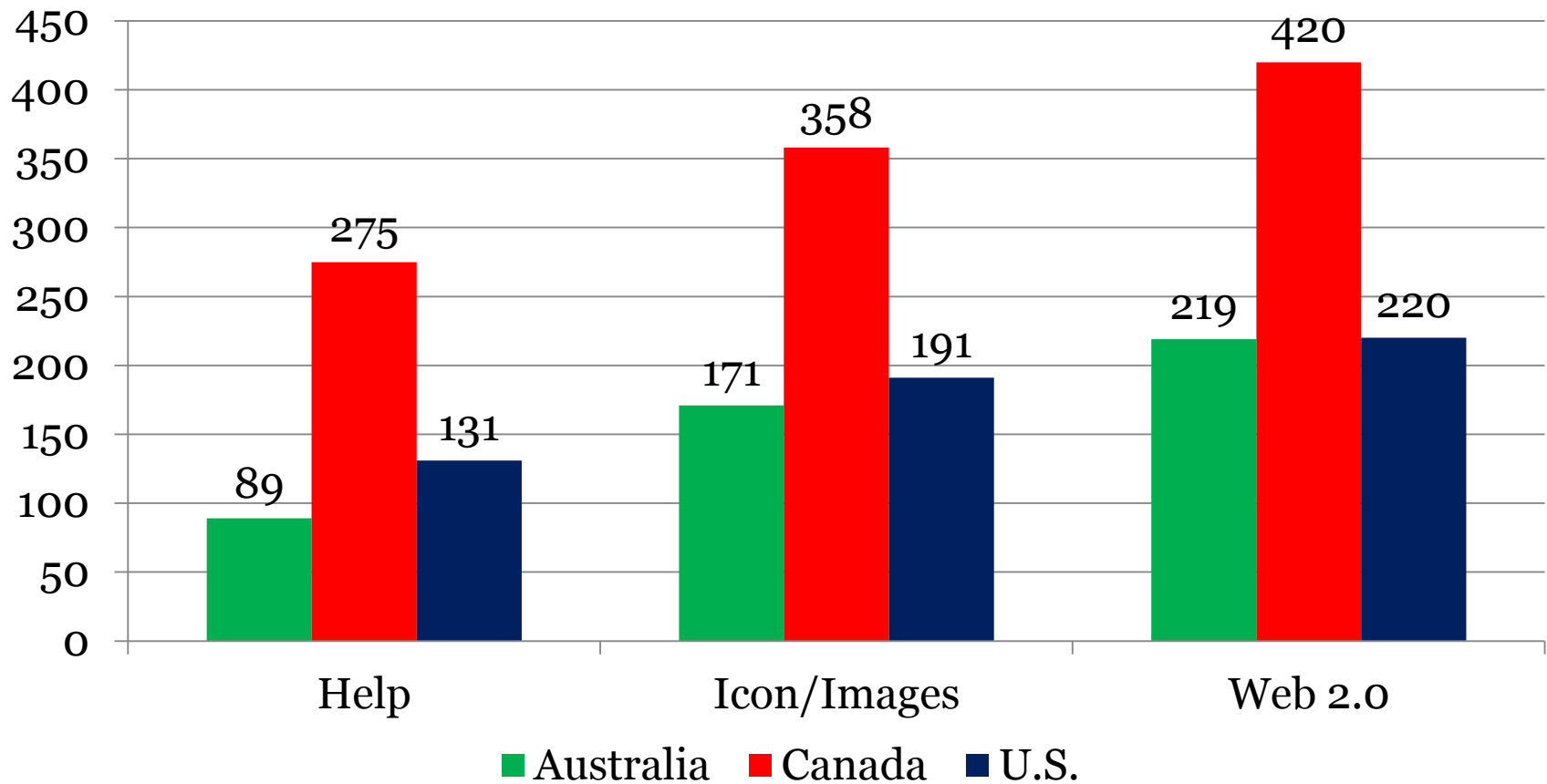


Yes Comparisons





Yes Comparisons



Conclusions



Conclusions

- Websites need to be updated
- Could learn from other websites like the better Canadian, Australian, and American websites
- Up-to-date marketing tools
- Web 2.0 Tools – more than Facebook and Twitter
- More user centric
- Usability training needed



Conclusions

- Need to **ask** what the User needs and wants
- Not be concerned with what the library staff or library manager/director “thinks” the user needs and wants

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References

Nielsen, J. (2012). *Usability 101: Introduction to usability*. Retrieved from <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/usability-101-introduction-to-usability/>

Poll, R. (2007). Evaluating the library website: Statistics and quality measures. Paper presented at the *World Library and Information Conference: 73rd IFLA General Conference and Council*, Durbin, South Africa, August 2007. Retrieved from <http://archive.ifla.org/IV/ifla73/papers/074-Poll-en.pdf>

Powers, B. S. (2011). Oh, what a tangled web we weave! An evaluation of Pennsylvania's public library websites for a basic level of web presence and beyond. *Current Studies in Librarianship*, 31(1), 21-35.