SOLSTICE & CLTR Conference 2012

Edge Hill University

The Growth of a Blogging Community for Teaching & Learning at University of the Arts London (UAL).

Presenter: John Jackson (UAL).
Content: John Jackson and Mike Kelly (UAL).

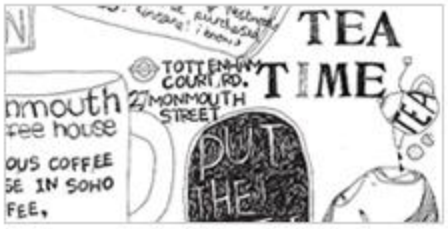
13th & 14th June 2012

Camberwell College of Arts | Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design | Chelsea College of Art and Design | London College of Communication | London College of Fashion | Wimbledon College of Art

Advancing equality

Courses

Commonplace



Website Survey

Motivation

- multimedia-friendly medium for reflection
- best-of-breed software
- web facing
- capitalise on and build a UAL community of users

Featured New set of screenshots with sunset lighting

by Wai Kin Lam from the blog Makonimation

Added a sunset light. Haven't decided whether I should add an orange feel to the final product since it might ruin the dark tone I'm trying to create. But it does give a clearer look at the Caliban's expression. And I do like the idea of a sunset mirroring Caliban's hopeless fight.

All the following screenshots were rendered with Maya Software settings [...]

Recent See all recent...

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Username

Password

Remember Me

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workflow
online portfolios
now available to all ual
students and staff
workflow.arts.ac.uk

Anatomy of a Pilot

- Option analysis
- Platform choice
- Pilot stage - 6 months
- Feedback gathering and analysis
  - focus groups
  - online feedback
- Sharing findings
- Launch across UAL

Building the Platform

What and why?

WordPress is web software you can use to create a beautiful website or blog. We like to say that WordPress is both free and priceless at the same time.

The core software is built by hundreds of community volunteers, and when you're ready for more there are thousands of plugins and themes available to transform your site into almost anything you can imagine. Over 60 million people have chosen WordPress to power the place on the web they call "home" — we'd love you to join the family.

Ready to get started? **Download WordPress 3.3.2**

WordPress Swag

News From Our Blog

WordPress 3.4 Release Candidate 2

The second release candidate for WordPress 3.4 is now available. Since RC1, we've made a few dozen final changes. Our goal is to release WordPress 3.4 early next week, so plugin and theme authors, this is likely your last chance to test your plugins and themes to find any compatibility issues before the final release....

It's Easy As...

1. Find a Web Host and get great hosting while supporting WordPress at the same time.
2. Download & Install WordPress with our famous 5-minute installation. Feel like a rock star.
3. Read the Documentation and become a WordPress expert yourself, impress your friends.

WordPress Users

The New York Times

YAHOO!

WIRED

... and hundreds more

BuddyPress

Home About Blog Codex Showcase Plugins Themes Support Download

Site Activity

BuddyPress

Social networking, in a box.

Everything you need to start your own self-hosted and WordPress-powered social network!

Download BuddyPress 1.5.5

J-Trip

@johnjamesjacoby active 3 seconds ago

Activity Profile Messages 0 Friends 192 Groups 15 Forums Settings

Personal Mentions Favorites Friends Groups

What's new, J-Trip?

J-Trip and Joao are now friends 3 hours, 16 minutes ago

Comment 0 Favorite Delete

Activity Streams

Global, personal, and group activity streams with single-stream view. Included

User Groups

Plugins

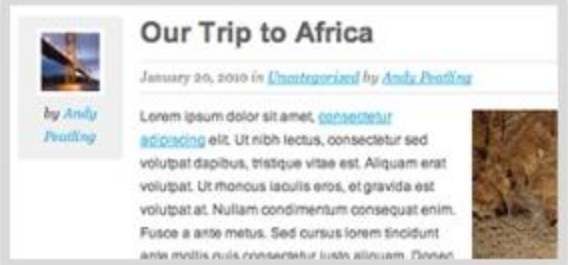
Public Group

A collaboration group to talk about the possib plugins for BuddyPress.

Leave Group

Powerful public, private or hidden groups allow your users to break the discussion

Multisite Blogging



Our Trip to Africa

Start a blog built on the best blogging software in the world. Even allow each of

Blogging Platform

Wordpress + Buddypress

wordpress.org
buddypress.org

Image editing options
Browse recent content
Report inappropriate content
Customisations
Group blogs & individual blogs
LDAP logins and custom urls
e.g. http://mikekelly.myblog.arts.ac.uk
+ profanity filter

How were the Pilot Blogs used?

Uses included:

- Reflection
- Community building
- Archiving
- Overseas Collaborations
- Assessed essays

Feedback

staff

+
Positive peer-to-peer pressure
Curation of work encouraged reflection
Encouraged cross-course and cross-college exchanges

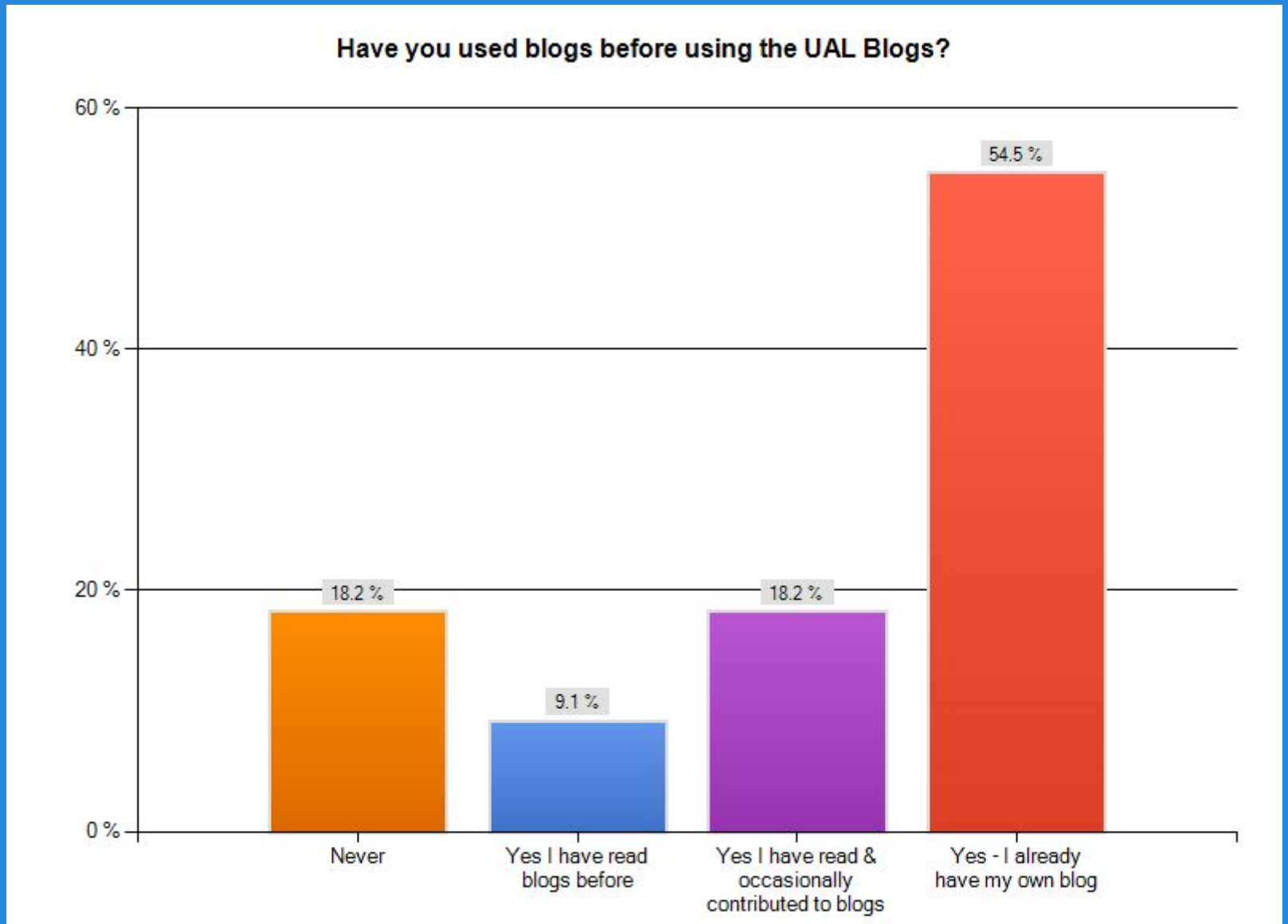
-
Usability could be better in some cases
Time investment required
Flexibility led to confusion

students

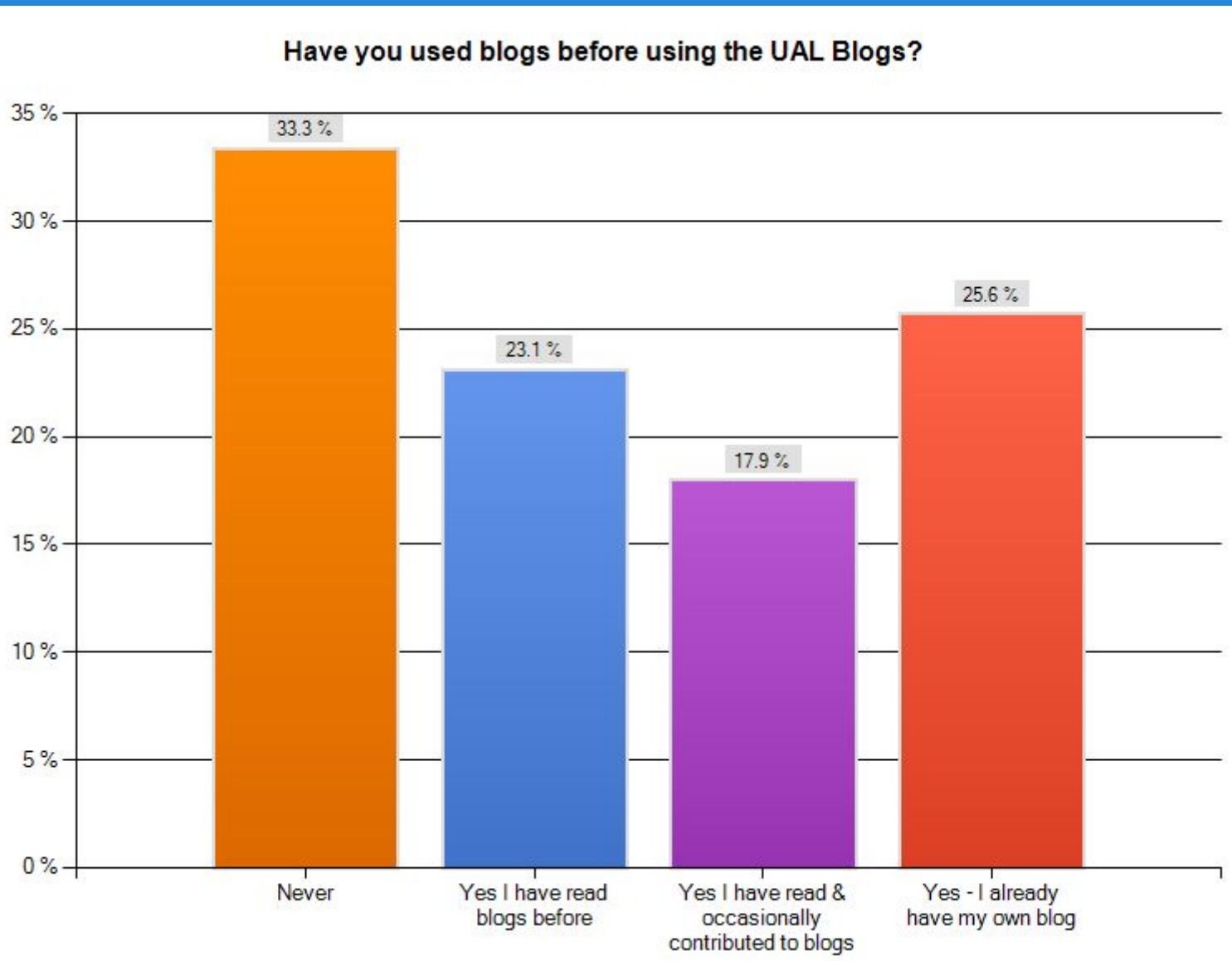
+
Opportunity to communicate and collaborate
Easy to use
Majority would like to keep using service

-
Complexity
Group blogs confusing
Useability
Already have a blog

Other pilot findings ...

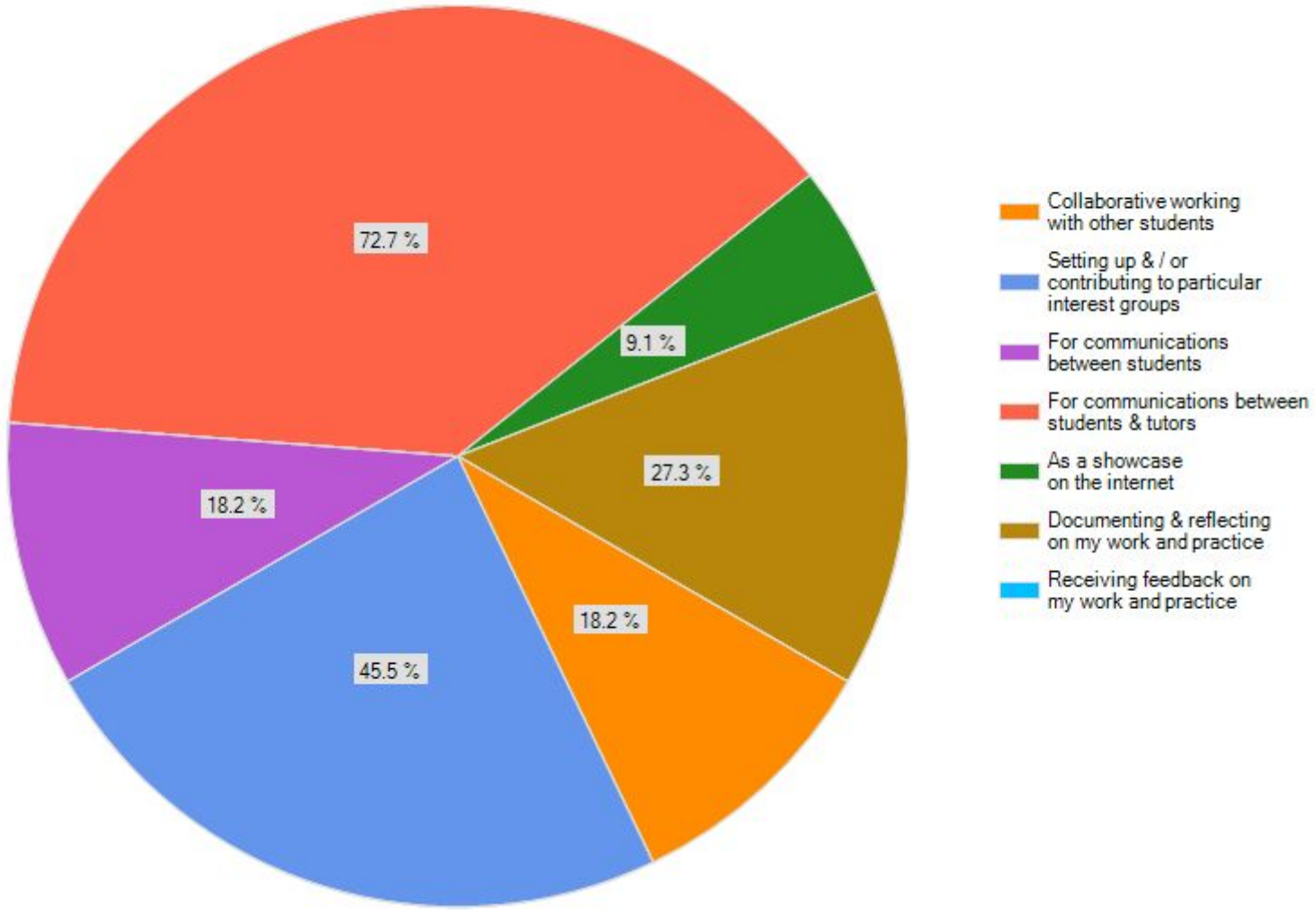

Have you used blogs before using the UAL Blogs?
60 %
40 %
20 %
0 %
18.2 %
9.1 %
18.2 %
54.5 %
Never
Yes I have read blogs before
Yes I have read & occasionally contributed to blogs
Yes - I already have my own blog

Staff

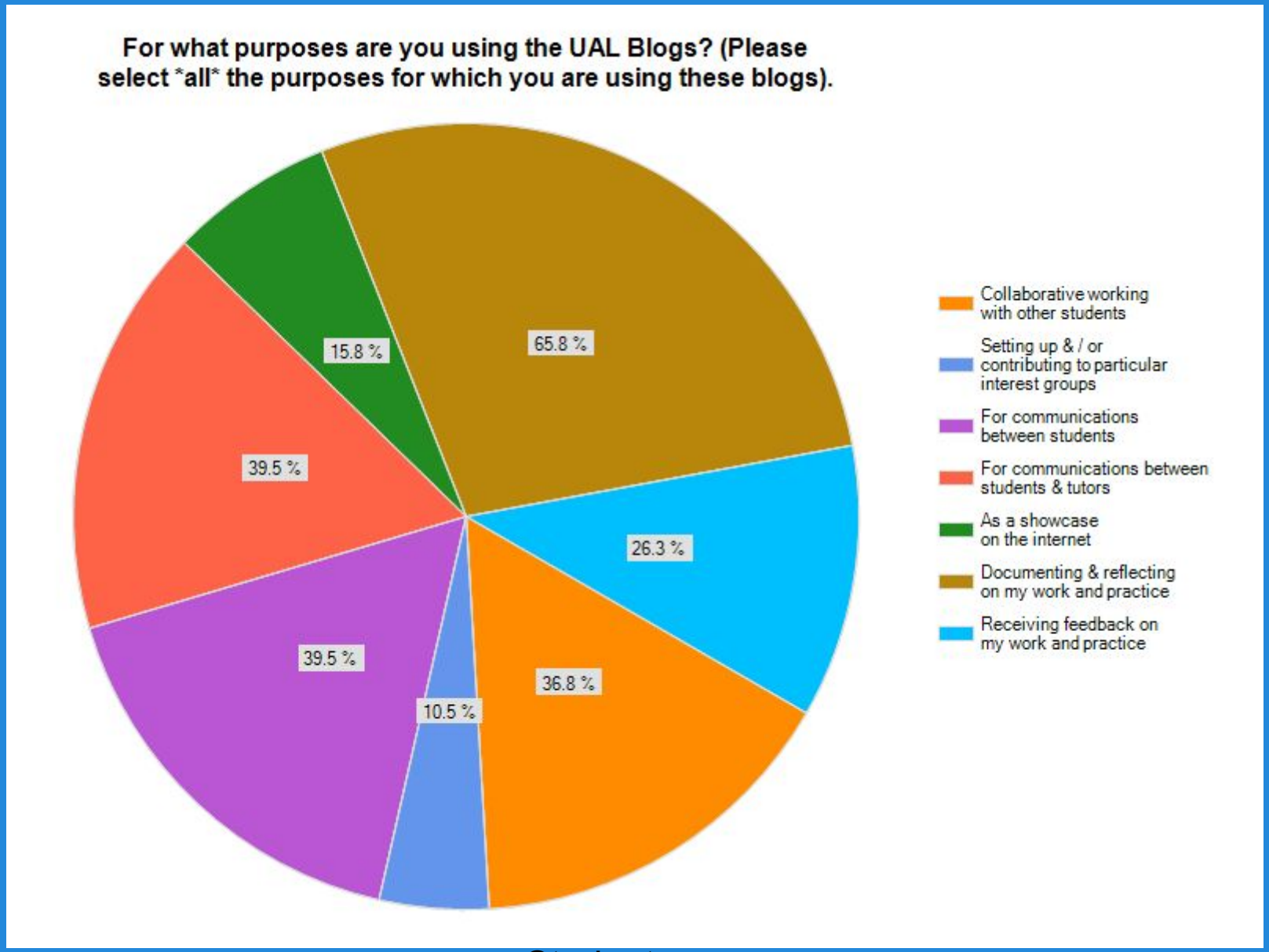

Have you used blogs before using the UAL Blogs?
35 %
30 %
25 %
20 %
15 %
10 %
5 %
0 %
33.3 %
23.1 %
17.9 %
25.6 %
Never
Yes I have read blogs before
Yes I have read & occasionally contributed to blogs
Yes - I already have my own blog

Students

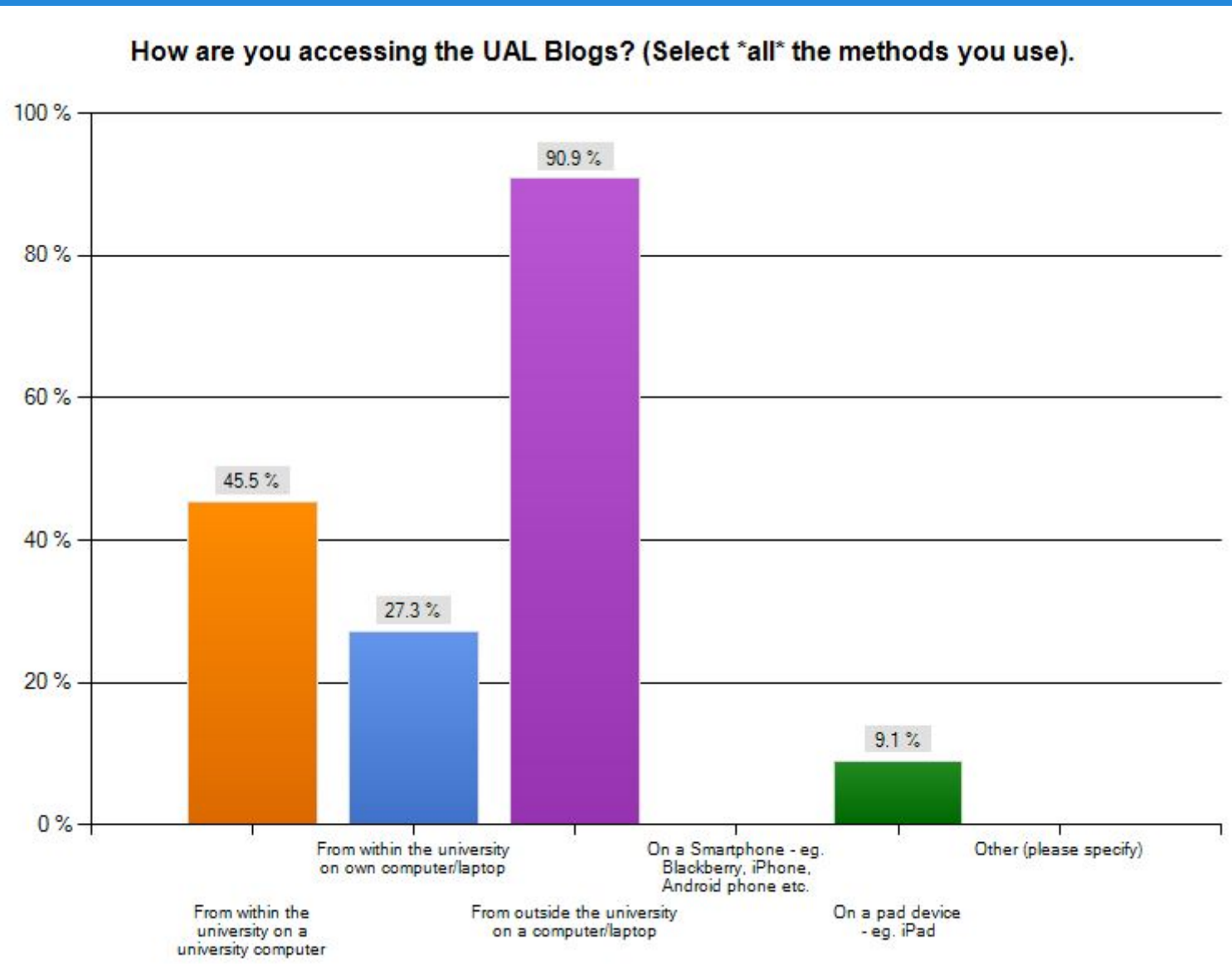
For what purposes are you using the UAL Blogs? (Please select *all* the purposes for which you are using these blogs).



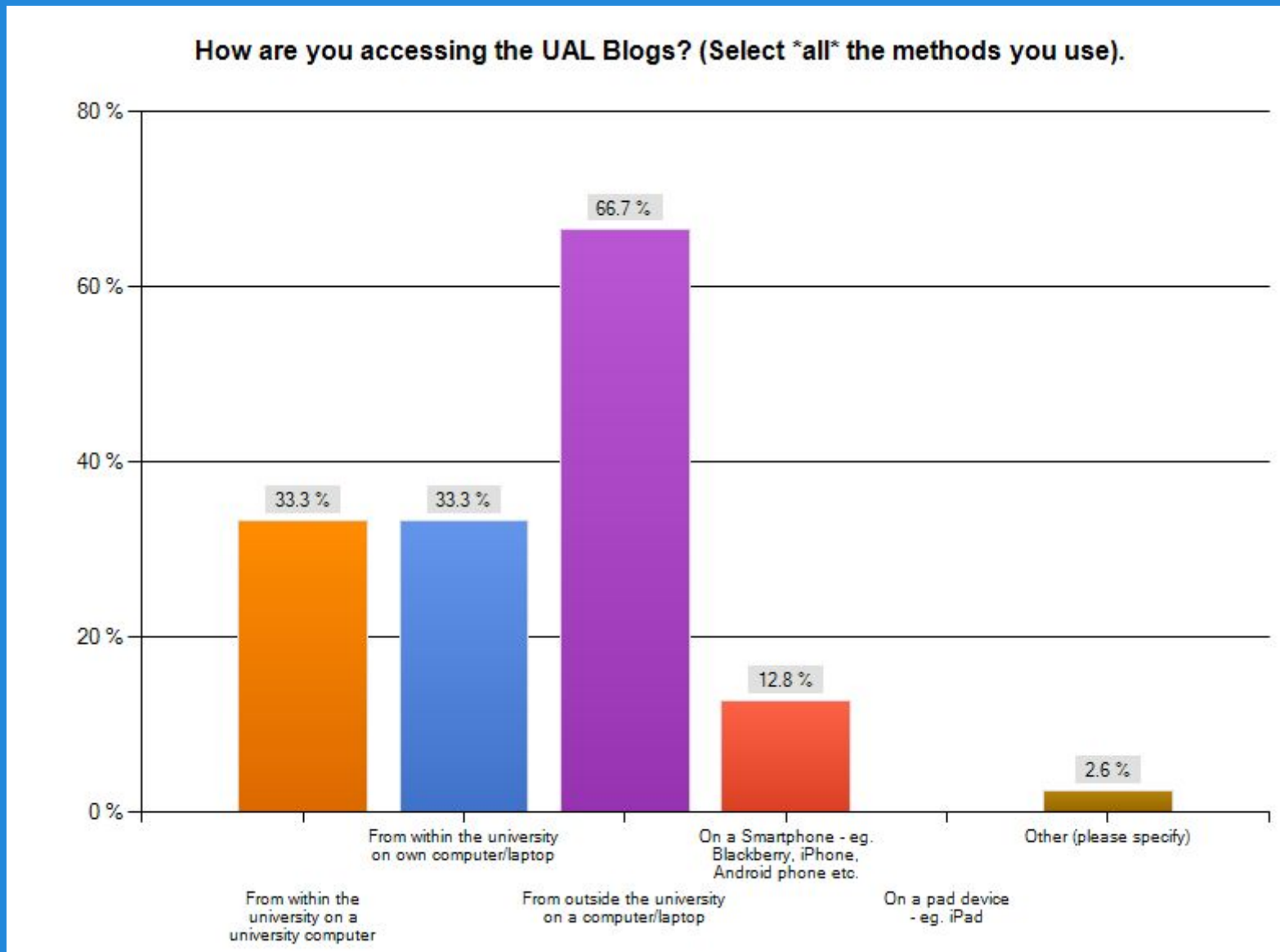
Staff


For what purposes are you using the UAL Blogs? (Please select *all* the purposes for which you are using these blogs).
65.8 %
26.3 %
36.8 %
10.5 %
39.5 %
39.5 %
15.8 %
Collaborative working with other students
Setting up & / or contributing to particular interest groups
For communications between students
For communications between students & tutors
As a showcase on the internet
Documenting & reflecting on my work and practice
Receiving feedback on my work and practice

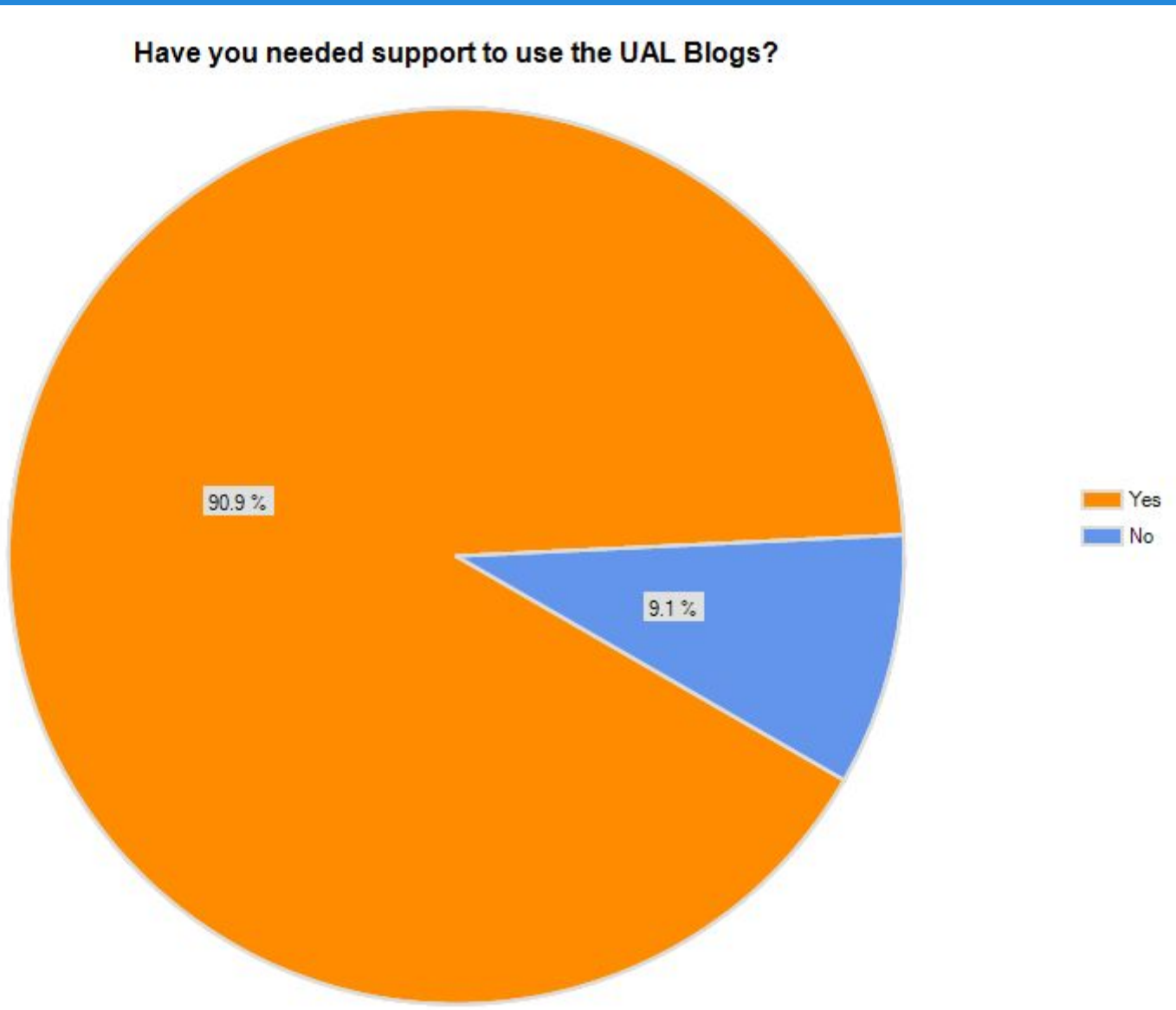
Students


How are you accessing the UAL Blogs? (Select *all* the methods you use).
100 %
80 %
60 %
40 %
20 %
0 %
45.5 %
27.3 %
90.9 %
9.1 %
From within the university on own computer/laptop
On a Smartphone - eg. Blackberry, iPhone, Android phone etc.
Other (please specify)
From within the university on a university computer
From outside the university on a computer/laptop
On a pad device - eg. iPad

Staff


How are you accessing the UAL Blogs? (Select *all* the methods you use).
80 %
60 %
40 %
20 %
0 %
33.3 %
33.3 %
66.7 %
12.8 %
2.6 %
From within the university on a university computer
From within the university on own computer/laptop
From outside the university on a computer/laptop
On a Smartphone - eg. Blackberry, iPhone, Android phone etc.
On a pad device - eg. iPad
Other (please specify)

Students



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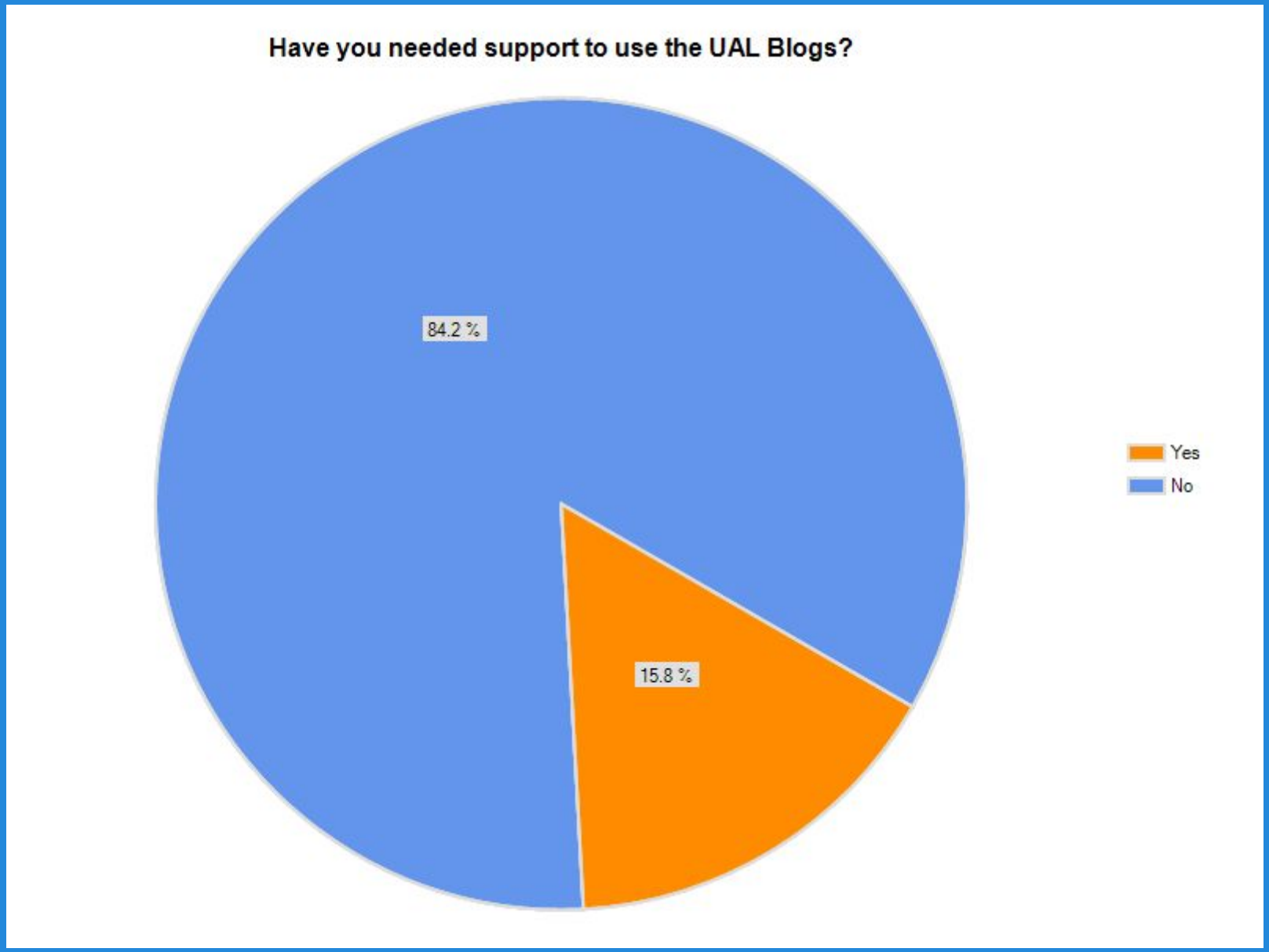
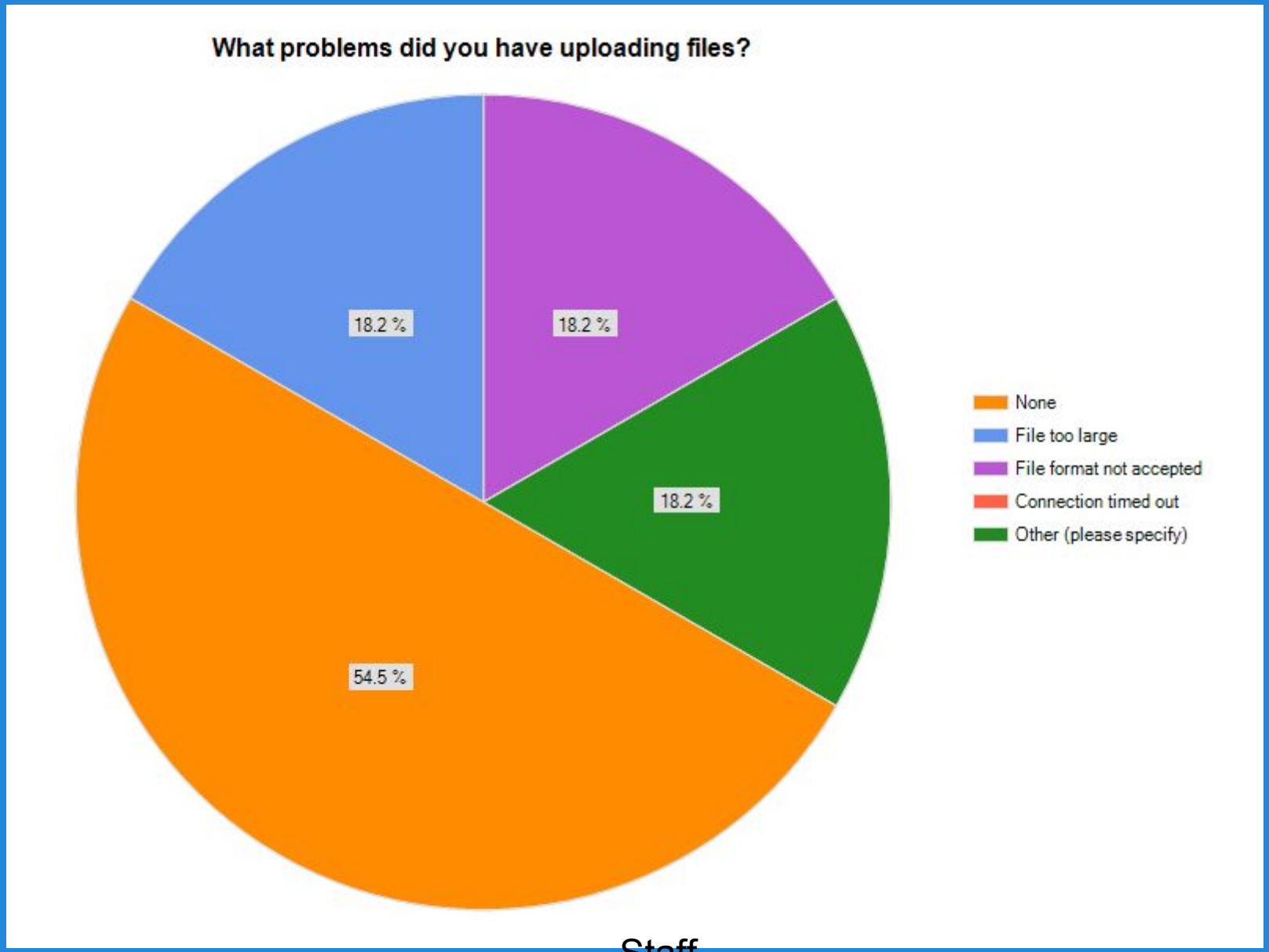
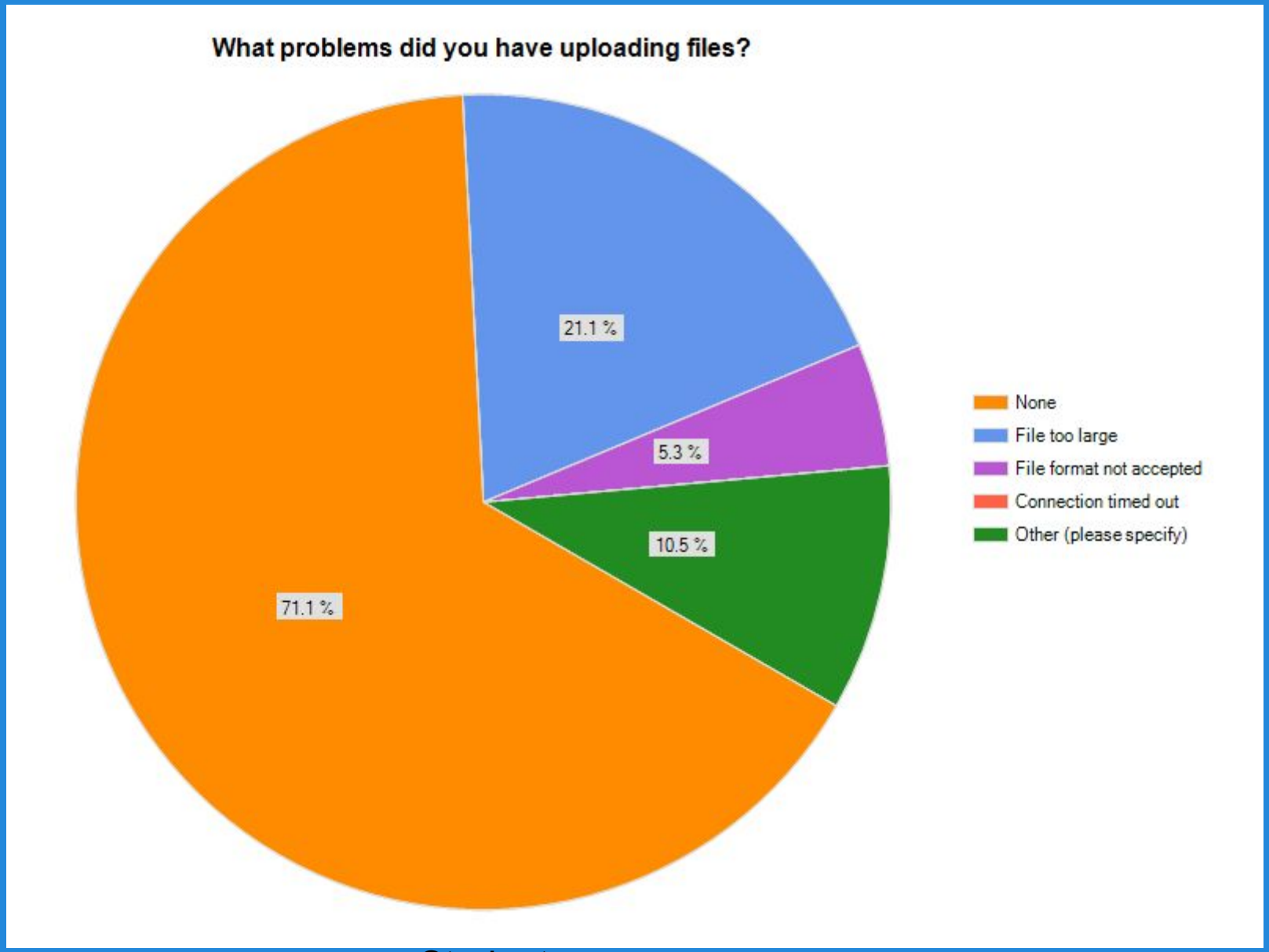


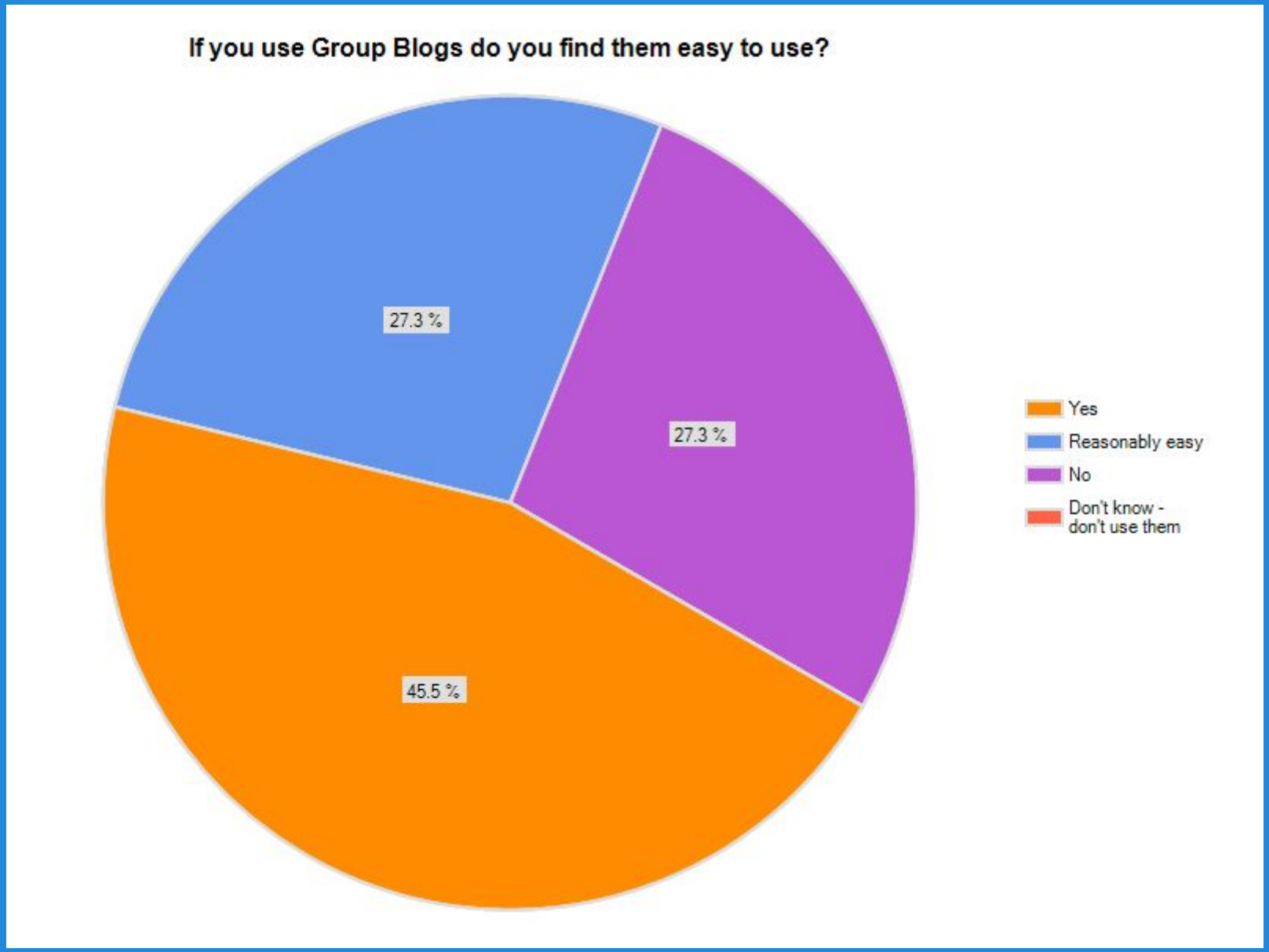
Students


What problems did you have uploading files?
18.2 %
18.2 %
18.2 %
54.5 %
None
File too large
File format not accepted
Connection timed out
Other (please specify)

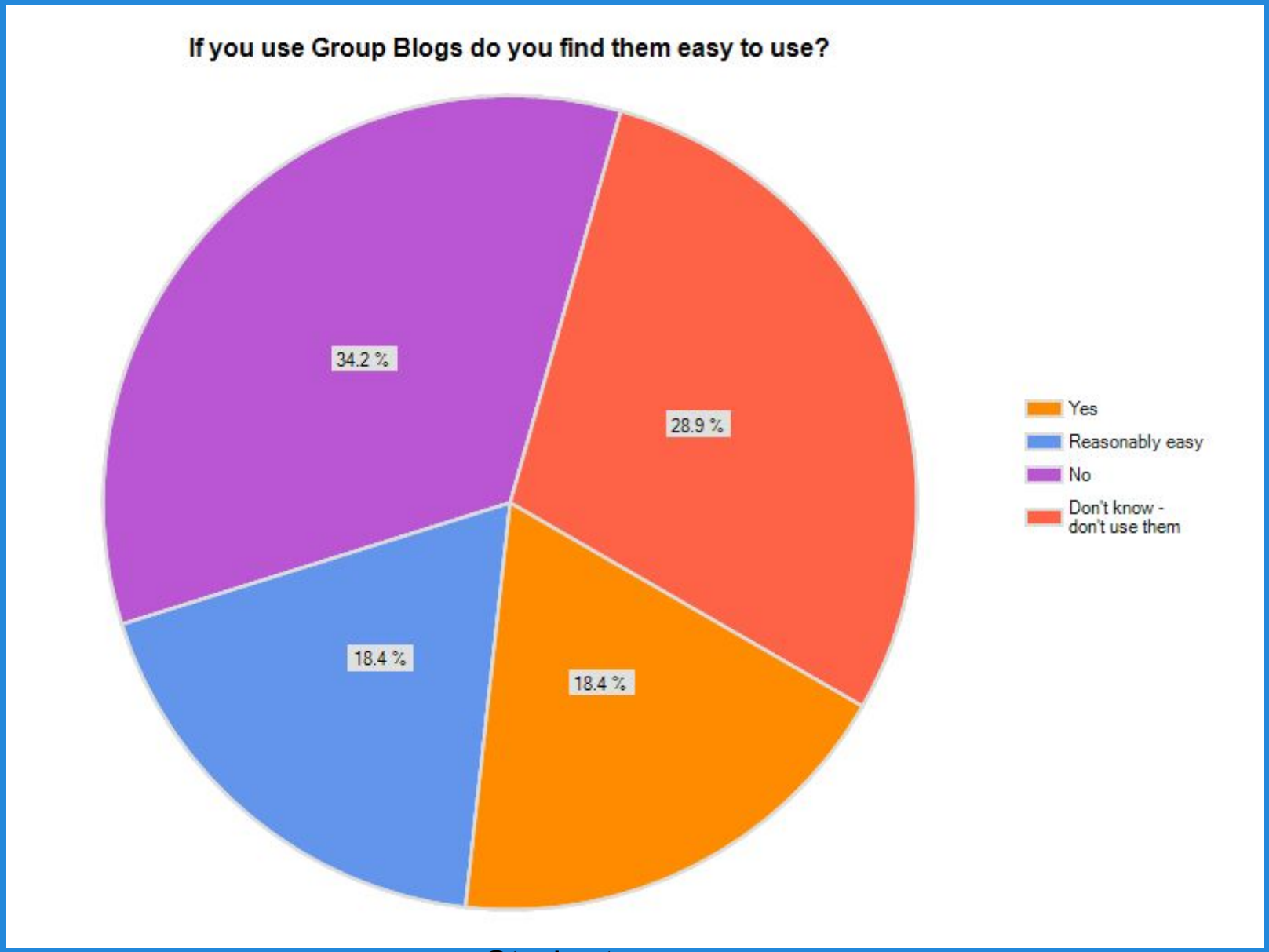
Staff


What problems did you have uploading files?
21.1 %
5.3 %
10.5 %
71.1 %
None
File too large
File format not accepted
Connection timed out
Other (please specify)

Students


If you use Group Blogs do you find them easy to use?
27.3 %
27.3 %
45.5 %
Yes
Reasonably easy
No
Don't know - don't use them

Staff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34.2 %
28.9 %
18.4 %
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No
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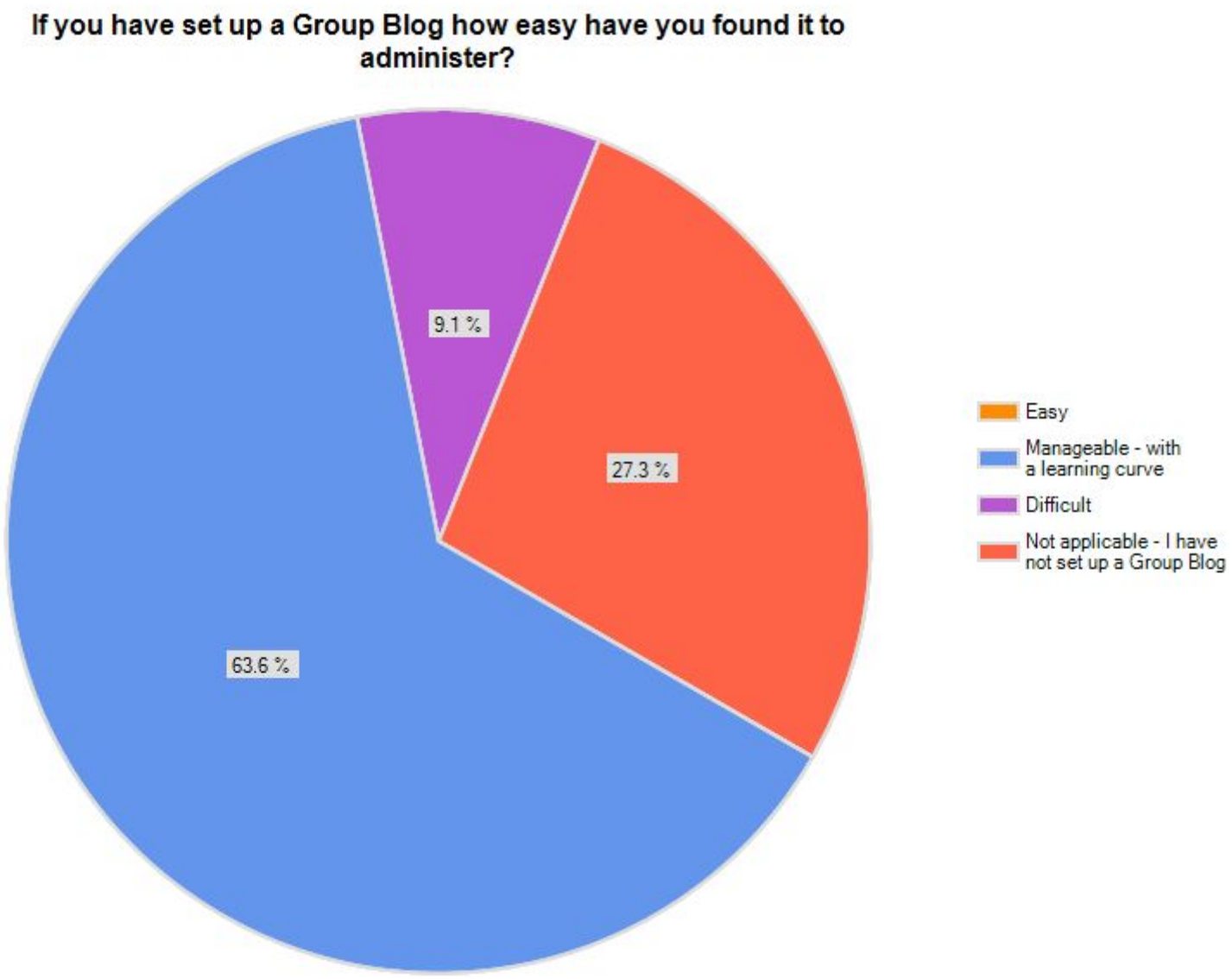
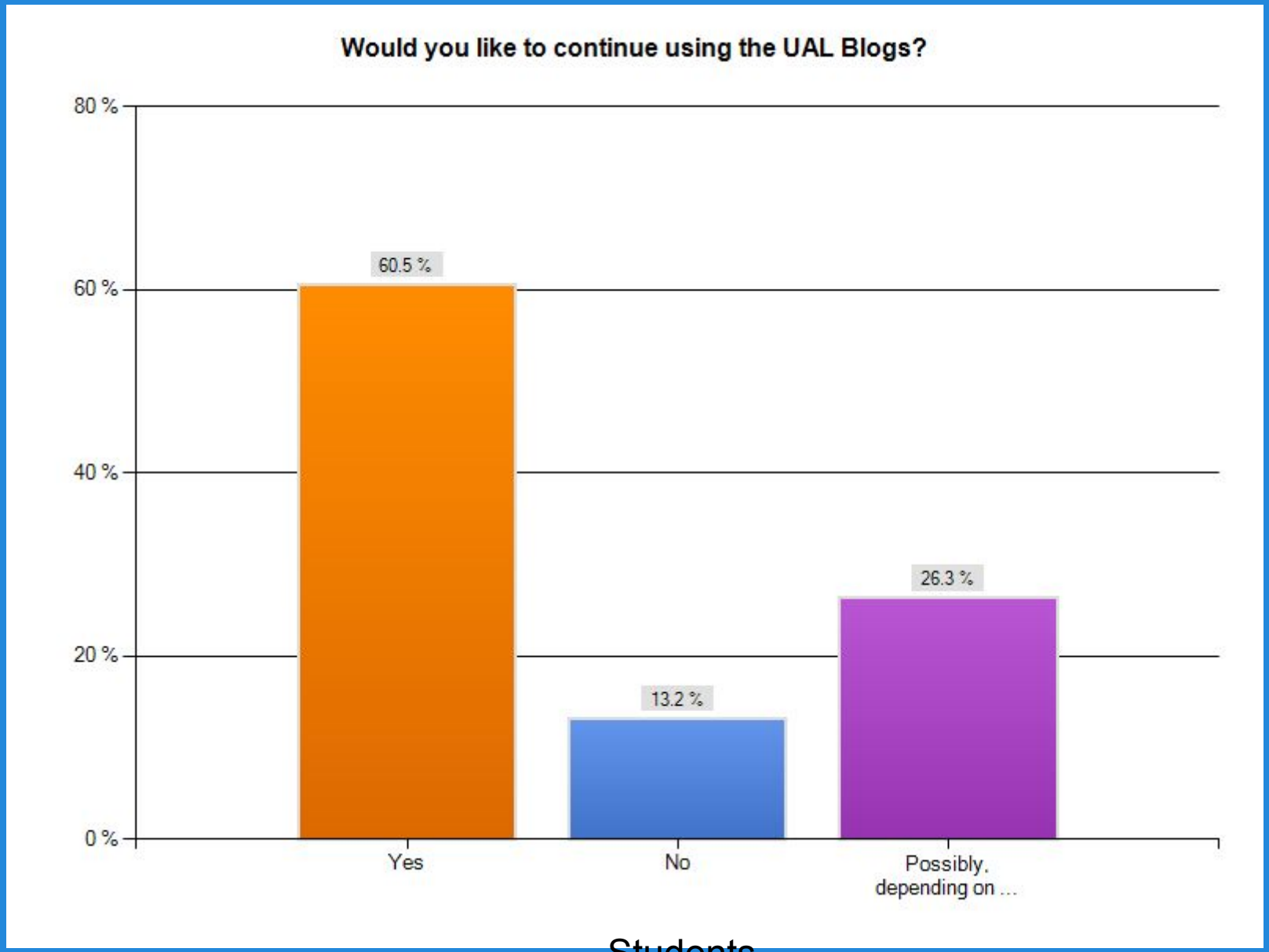
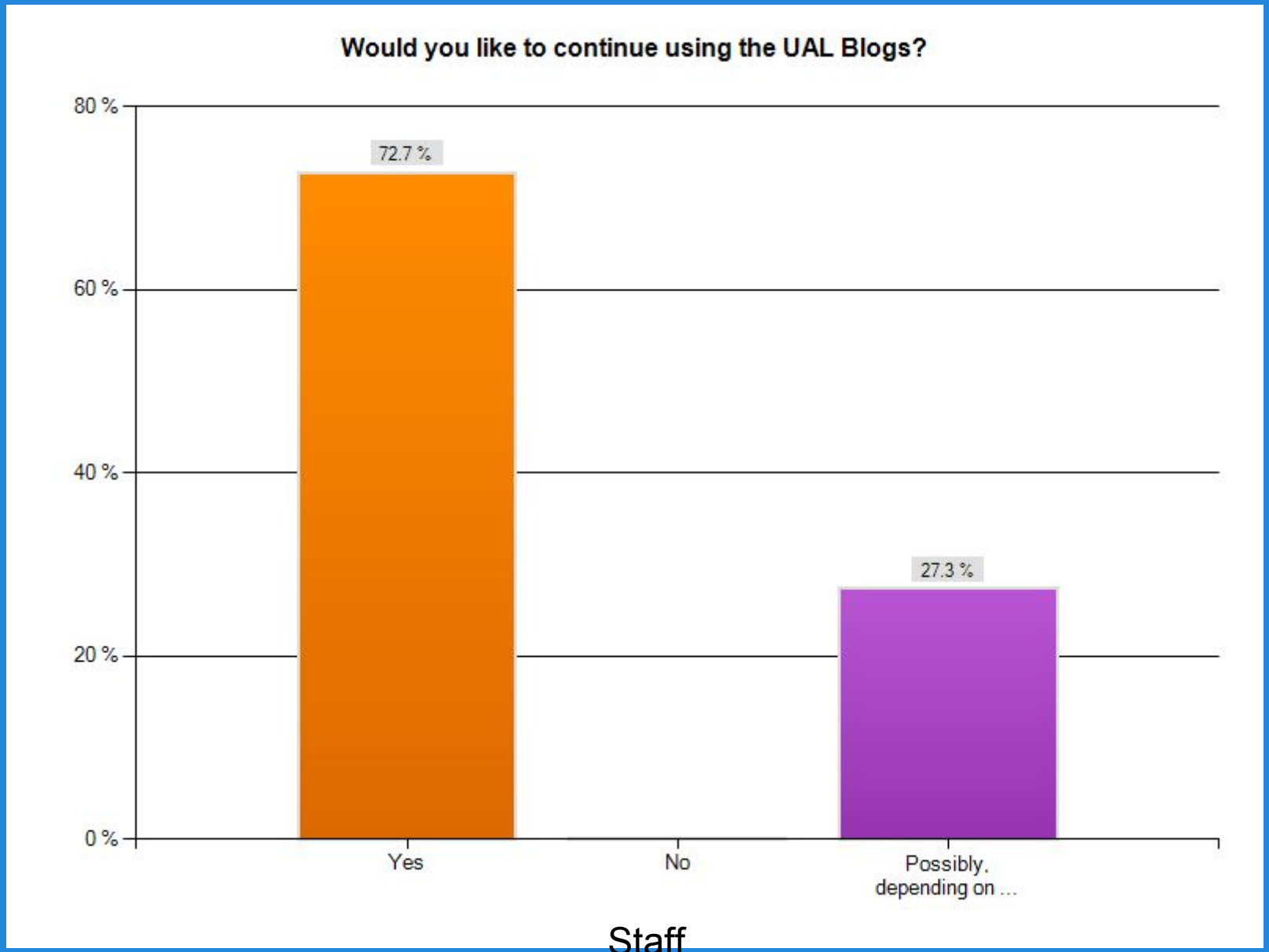

If you have set up a Group Blog how easy have you found it to administer?
9.1 %
27.3 %
63.6 %
Easy
Manageable - with a learning curve
Difficult
Not applicable - I have not set up a Group Blog

Staff


Would you like to continue using the UAL Blogs?
80 %
60 %
40 %
20 %
0 %
60.5 %
13.2 %
26.3 %
Yes
No
Possibly, depending on ...

Students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80 %
60 %
40 %
20 %
0 %
72.7 %
27.3 %
Yes
No
Possibly, depending on ...

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by Wai Kin Lam from the blog Makonimation

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Remember Me

Log In

workflow
online portfolios
now available to all ual
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workflow.arts.ac.uk

Improvements based on feedback

- additional help materials and training - including screencasts
- changes to image upload options
- additional themes and options
- increased individual storage space (1 GB!)
- can now create up to 3 'individual' blogs
- enhanced privacy options

myblog.arts Guide

Let us guide you through the wonderful world of myblog.arts

Getting Started

Introduction

The myblog.arts blogging service allows UAL students and staff to quickly and easily create blogs within an online learning and teaching community specially created for the University of the Arts London.

Any member of myblog.arts can also create a group, with an optional linked group blog and discussion forum. All members of a group can post on a group blog, making groups ideal for project work.

Blogs at myblog.arts are open to the web by default, and searchable by Google, but for each blog there are extensive privacy options, so you can choose who to share your blog content with, and keep it private if you wish.

Search myblog.arts Guide

To search, type and hit enter

Contents

- Getting Started
  - Setting up your Blog
  - The myblog.arts interface
  - The Admin Bar
  - Copyright Issues
- The Dashboard
  - Media
    - Add New Media
  - Links
    - Add New Links
  - Appearance
    - Manage Themes
    - Adding a Widget
    - Adding a Menu
  - Users
  - Settings
    - Privacy

by admin

Optimising your images for the web

April 4, 2012 *in* *Site updates*

Thanks to Peter, who has put together a new screencast on how to optimise your images for the web. This very useful information will help your web pages load quickly to give the best experience for visitors to your web site, whether it's here on myblog.arts or anywhere else on the web. The video is available via the Help tab – or click here to visit it directly: Optimising your images for the web.

Tags: image optimisation, images, screencast, vimeo

No Comments »

by admin

New themes added

March 29, 2012 *in* *Site updates*

There are now 6 new themes to choose from in myblog.arts, including a couple of new ones designed to showcase image-based content. Look in your Dashboard, under Appearance -> Themes, to explore the options. Most of the themes have their own options, also under the Appearance menu, which allow you to tweak them further.

No Comments »

by admin

Update – Image Optimisation

March 6, 2012 *in* Site updates

Now when you upload large images to your blog on myblog.arts, the image file you uploaded is replaced with the 'Large-size' version that WordPress automatically generates. This should save you disk space and help your blog pages to load more quickly.

So, if you upload an image directly from your digital camera, which is for example, 4000 pixels wide, the 'full-size' version on WordPress will only be as big as the 'Large-size' you have set in your blog, which is by default 1024 pixels wide.

1024 pixels is more than enough for viewing on-screen. However, if for example, you want to share an image for print, and you wish to upload the original unchanged, that is still possible!

Go to your Dashboard, then from the menu choose Settings -> Media. You will see an option called 'Replace Uploaded Images', which you can untick to switch this feature off. (Don't forget to save your Media settings at the bottom of the page.)

You can also change the default setting for 'Large-size' images at the top of the Settings -> Media page.

Smaller images should not be affected by this change – only those with large physical dimensions.

report content

Tags: embed media, image optimisation, images, replace uploaded images, update

← More storage space

Adding users to your blog more easily →

by admin

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report content

← myblog.arts updated – 28th March 2012

Optimising your images for the web →

Current Uses

http://tags.myblog.arts.ac.uk/posts/

Statistics

- 1346 visible blogs
- 132 visible groups
- 2535 members
- 121,617 unique visitors
- 249,399 visitors
- 1,200,000 page views

Live Demo

http://myblog.arts.ac.uk

Contact

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@JohnJacksonUAL