

Results of the Quantitative Survey to Answer Research Question 4

This section reports the responses to the quantitative survey. These results specifically address research question 4 “What are the characteristics of the nature tourism businesses/organizations and how have/do they use the Web?” and all its subsequent topics. The responses to the survey questions are organized in sections that address the nine outlined topics for research question 4.

The following charts (Figures 5.9 – 5.65) provide a closer examination of the responses for each individual item from the online survey. For each question a summary of the general findings is provided, then the results of the responses to the survey question are presented in a bar graph or a pie chart.

Topic 1: What are the Characteristics of the Nature Tourism Business/Organization?

Questions 1 through 11 of the online survey were about the nature tourism businesses that were found on the Internet. These questions gathered a variety of information about these businesses including: type of business, location, size, types of activities provided, etc.

Question 1. Which of the following terms best describes the business that is associated with this Web site (Check only one)?

In general, the participants in this research represent a broad range of businesses (Figure 9). Out of the twelve response categories provided, ten were chosen. The terms most frequently selected were ecotourism business, rafting outfitter, and bed and breakfast. A notable portion of the respondents (27 percent) did not choose a given category, and 35 percent used the other category to add more descriptions (Table 5.9).

Analyzing these “other” responses shows that most could be added to the categories provided if the survey participants understood these terms. Seven of the other responses could be added to the “bed and breakfast/accommodations” category, three responses could be added to the “guest ranch” category, and one could be put in the “tour agency” category. Six of the responses are unique and suggest that another category called outdoor/nature activities be created. Only five of these “other” responses cannot be adapted to the existing or potential categories. This topic was further addressed in the case study portion of this research.

FIGURE 5.9

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 1.

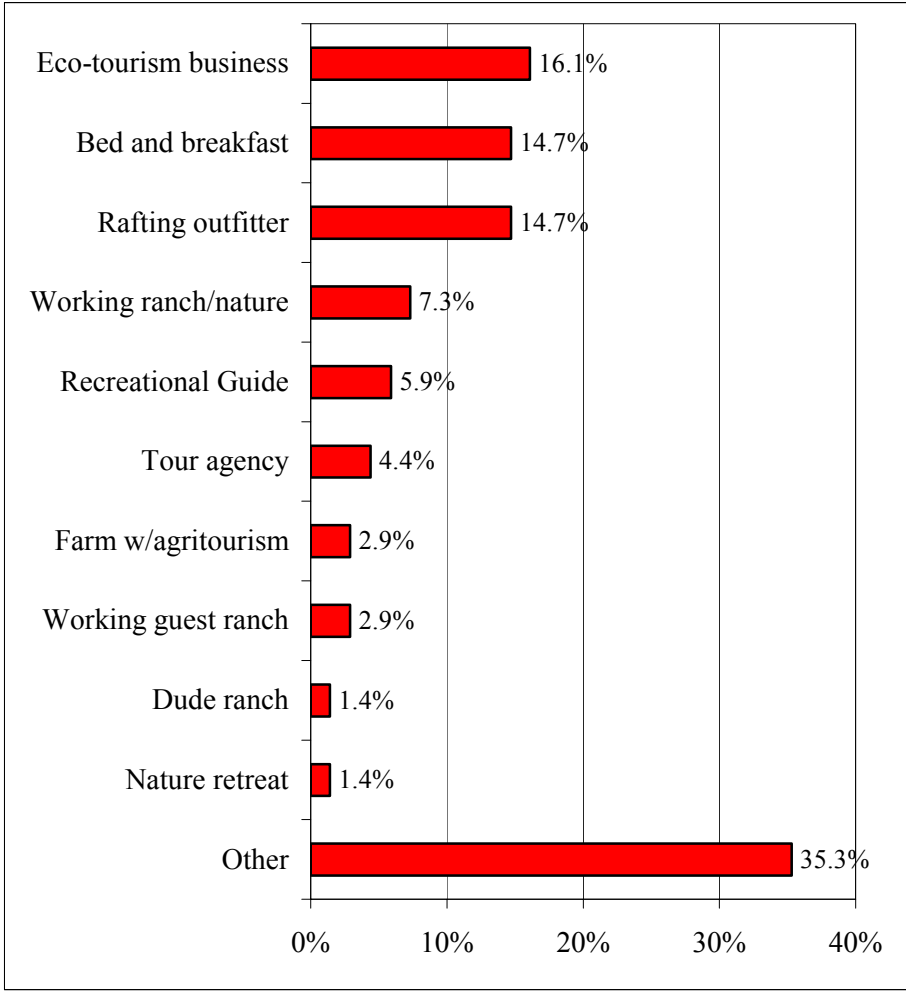


TABLE 5.7

Other terms that were added by the respondents (all responses occurred only once).

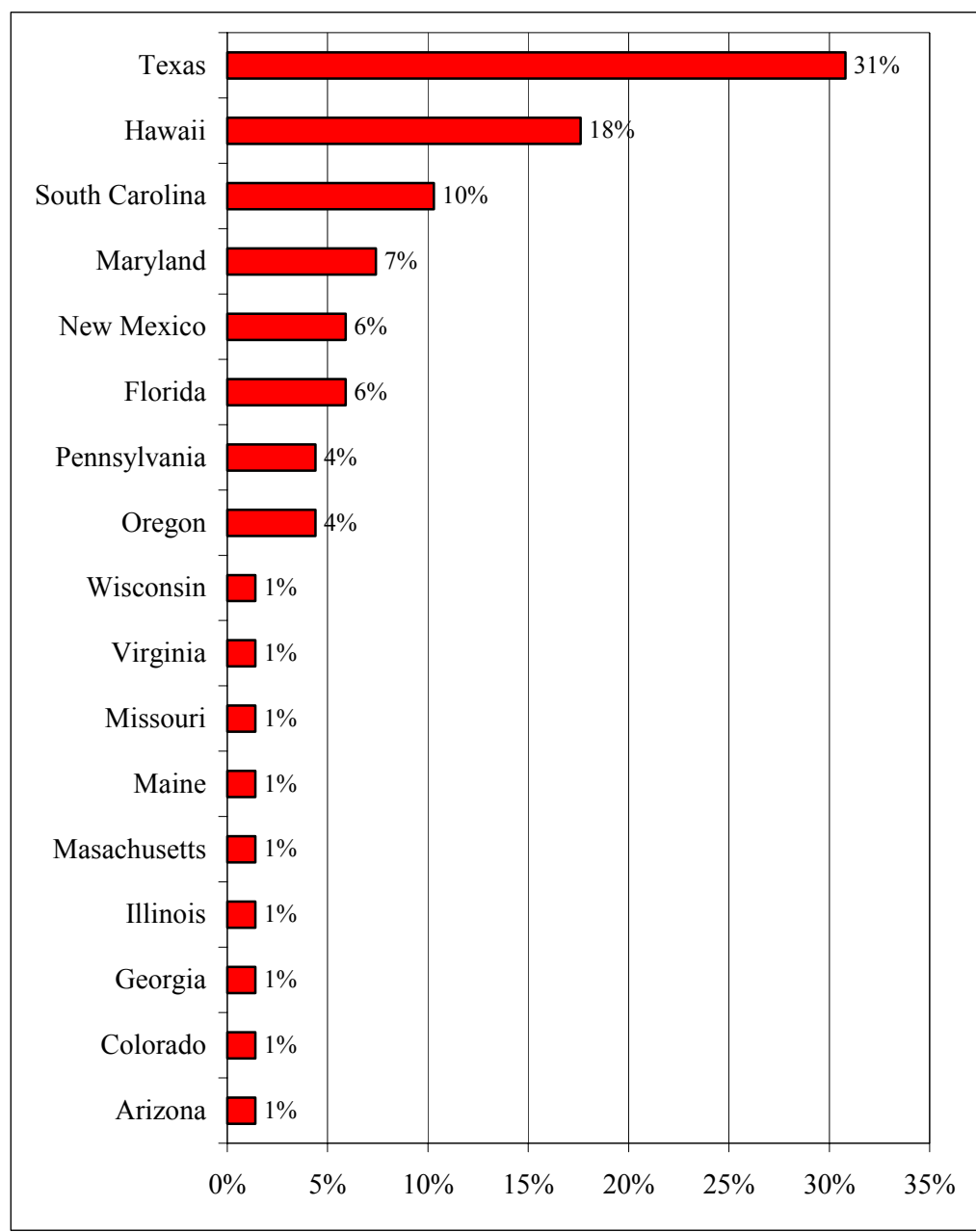
Actual responses
Also tent site camping
Bed and breakfast and nature retreat
Campground and desert survival school
Cottages
County park, self guided nature trails, and boating in a swamp,
Drift Boat fishing , Mountain Biking,4x4 Van tours
Farm vacation
Guest ranch and nature retreat
Historic Site
Horseback riding company
Hotel/Backpacker Hostel with own Eco/adventure tours
Lodge and cabins in the middle of 800 acres of forest
Luxury boutique accommodation - not a typical B&B
Mountain bike touring company
Non-business information web site
Non-profit association of ecotourism interests, including businesses
Personalized travel packages
S Texas birding tours (& until recently a B&B for birders)
Scuba diving tours and charters
South Texas Guest Ranch specializing in outdoor activities and sports and retreats
Vacation Home, Cabin and B&B Rentals
Vacation Rental and Nature Retreat
Website coordinating ecotourism opportunities

Question 2. What is the location of the nature tourism business associated with this Web site?

Seventeen states are represented in the responses to this survey. Thirty-five percent of the respondents were from Texas. Eighteen percent of the respondents were from Hawaii. Eleven percent were from South Carolina. Seven percent were from Maryland. New Mexico and Florida each had 6 percent. Oregon and Pennsylvania each represented 4 percent of the survey responses (See figure 5.10).

FIGURE 5.10

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 2.

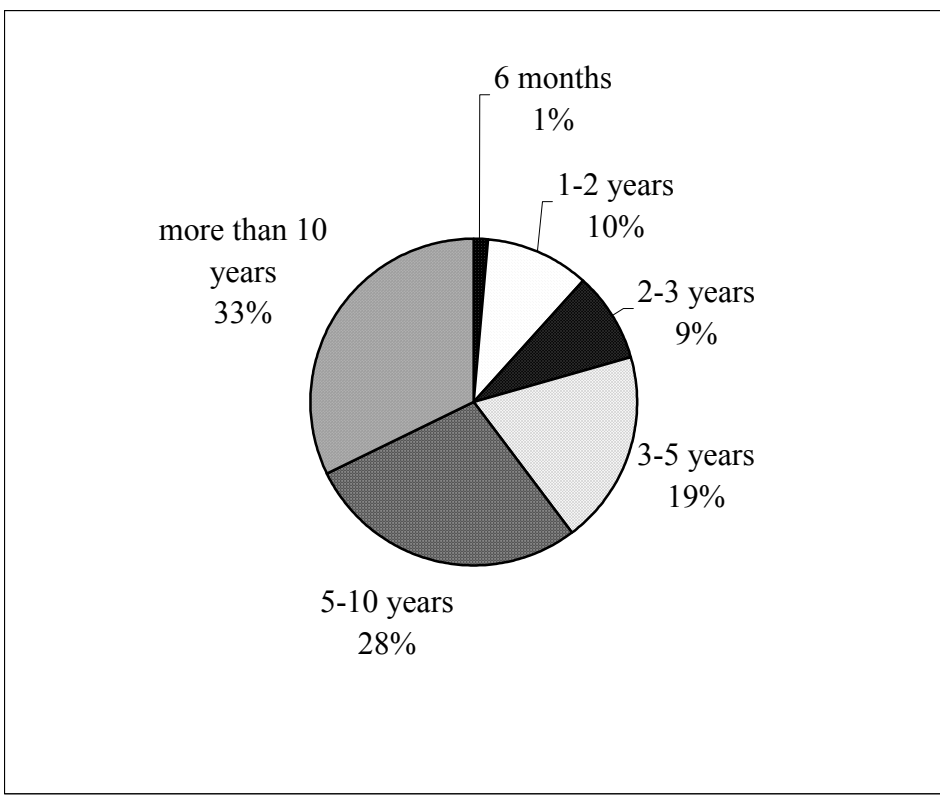


Question 3. How long has the nature tourism business associated with this Web site been in business?

The businesses represented in this survey are relatively mature with over 60 percent being in business 5 years or more. Figure 5.11 reports the responses to this item.

FIGURE 5.11

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 3.

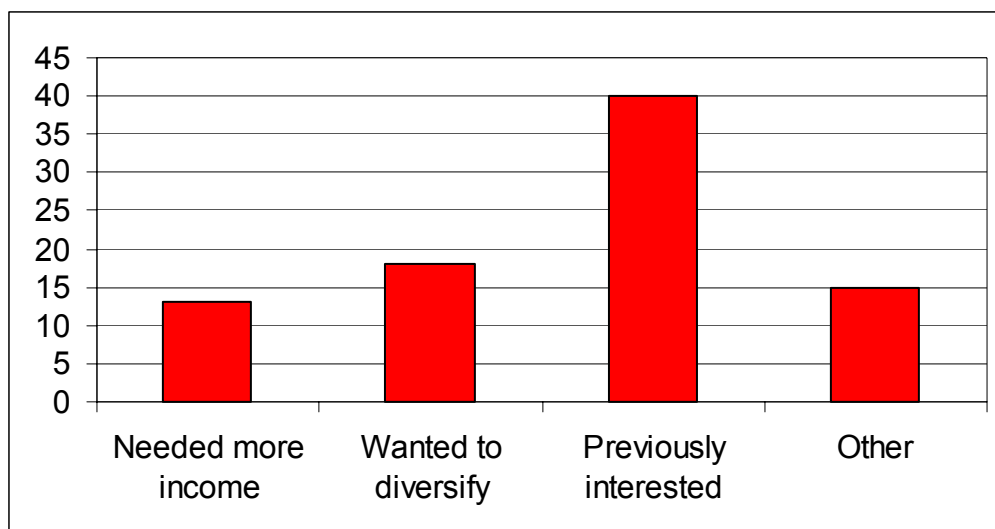


Question 4. Why was this nature tourism business started? (Check all that apply)

Respondents were able to select more than one reason for starting their business. The most frequent selected reason for these respondents to start their business was prior interest (58.8 percent). Figure 5.12 presents a graph of the distribution of responses to this item. Only seven people chose more than one response category. Three people chose two response categories (two chose needed more income/wanted to diversify; one chose wanted to diversify/previously interested). Four people chose three response categories.

FIGURE 5.12

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 4.

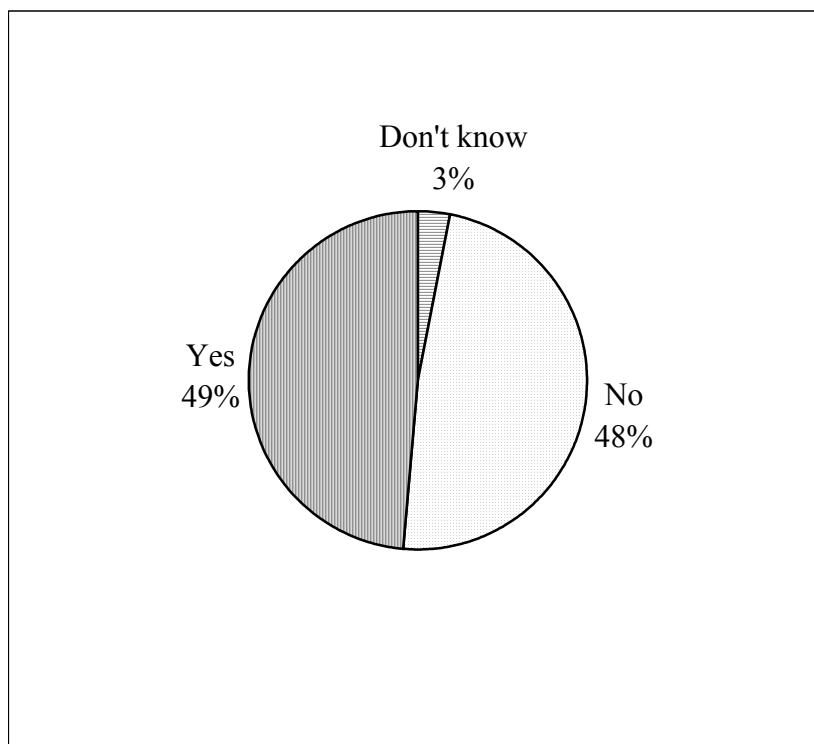


Question 5. Is there a written business plan for your nature tourism business?

Of the businesses represented in this research thirty-three have a written business plan and thirty-three do not (figure 5.13).

FIGURE 5.13

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 5.

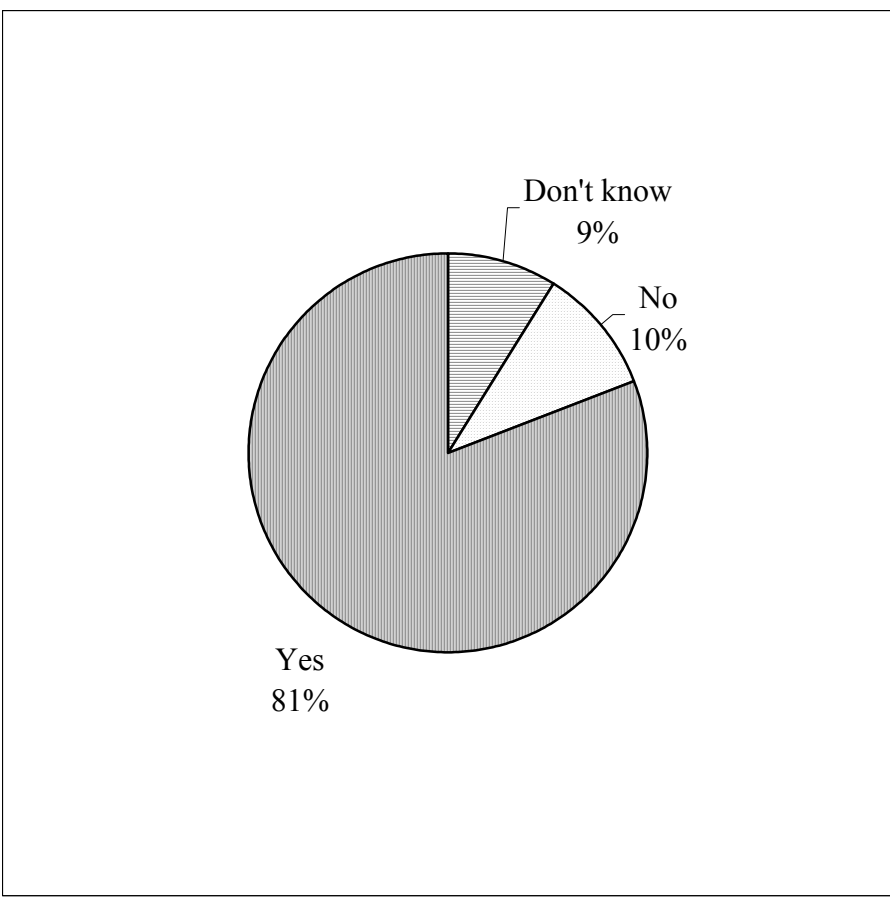


Question 6. Is there a way to determine how customers find out about your nature tourism business?

The majority (81 percent) of these business owners believe they can find out how their customers find out about their business (figure 5.14).

FIGURE 5.14

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 6.

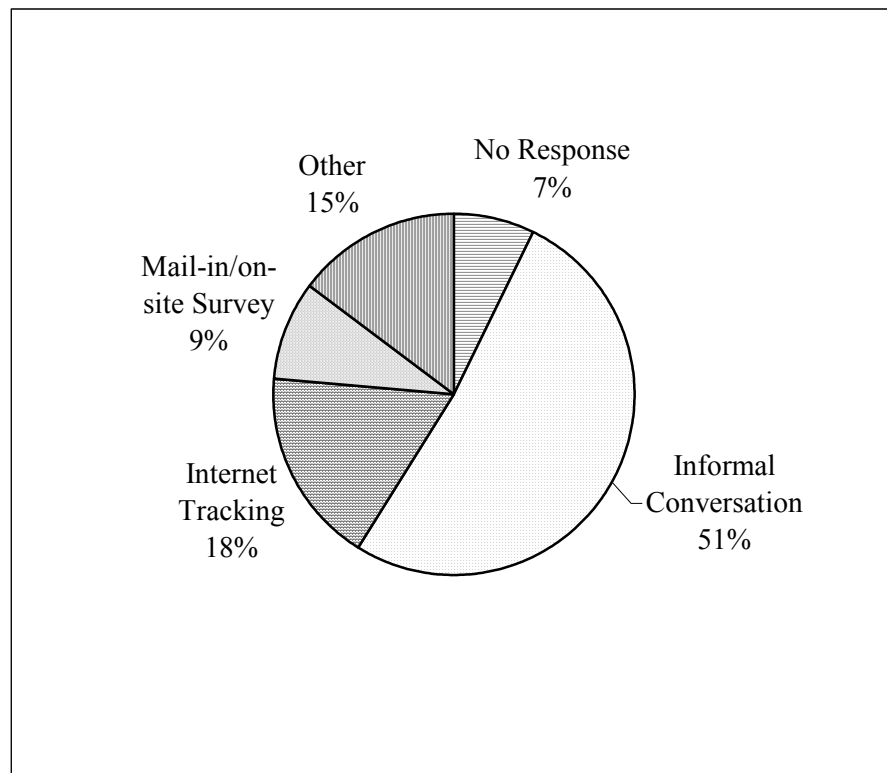


Question 6a. If Yes to question 6, how is this determined?

The majority of the respondents indicated they use informal conversations to determine how their customers find out about their business (figure 5.15).

FIGURE 5.15

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 6a.

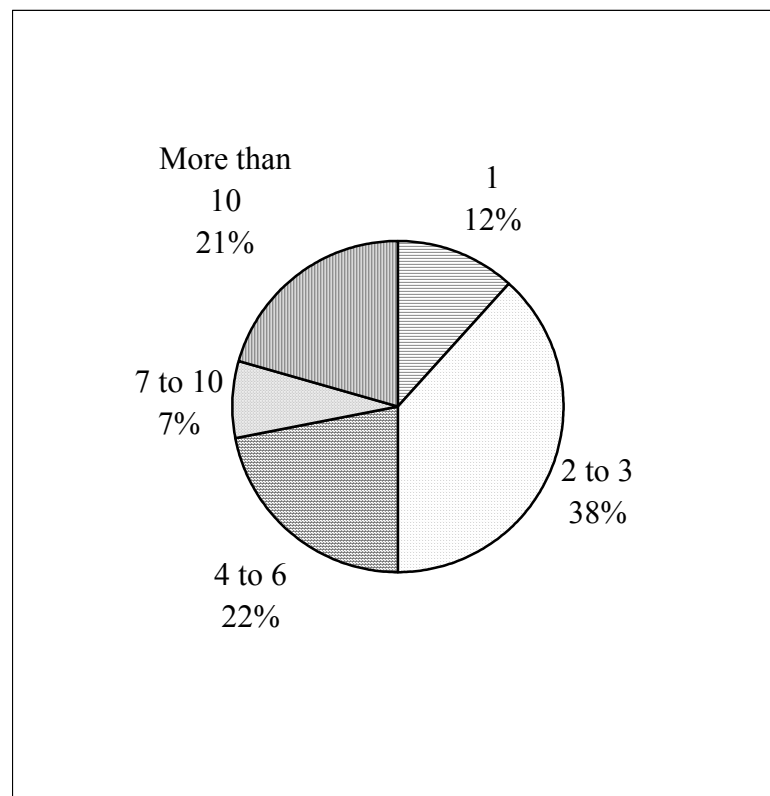


Question 7. How many people are on staff in your nature tourism business (include full-time and part-time)?

Responses to this question revealed that, generally, the businesses represented in this research are small with about 60 percent having between two and six employees, although there is variation as is shown in figure 5.16.

FIGURE 5.16

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 7.

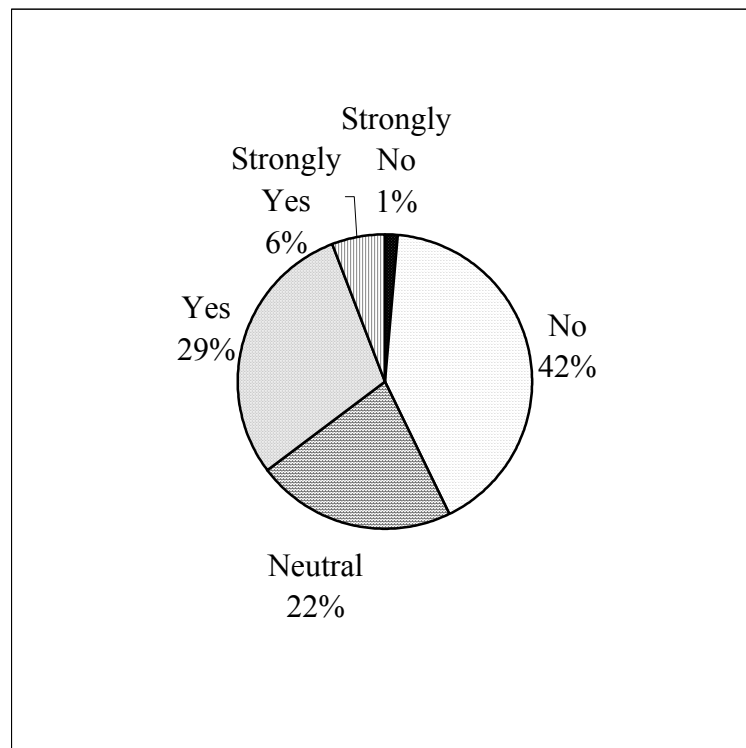


Question 8. Are you satisfied with the size of your nature tourism business?

There were mixed attitudes about whether their businesses were the right size with a tendency towards unsatisfied (figure 5.17).

FIGURE 5.17

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 8.

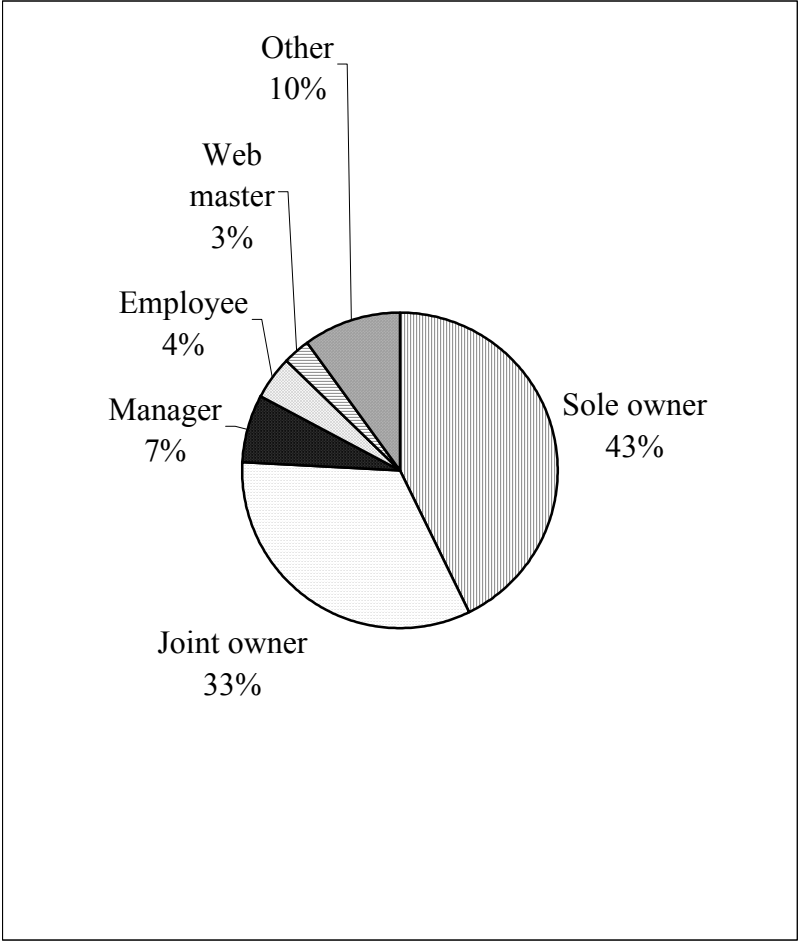


Question 9. What is your role with this nature tourism business?

Most of the participants in this survey were either sole owners (43 percent) or joint owners (33 percent) of their nature tourism businesses (figure 5.18).

FIGURE 5.18

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 9.

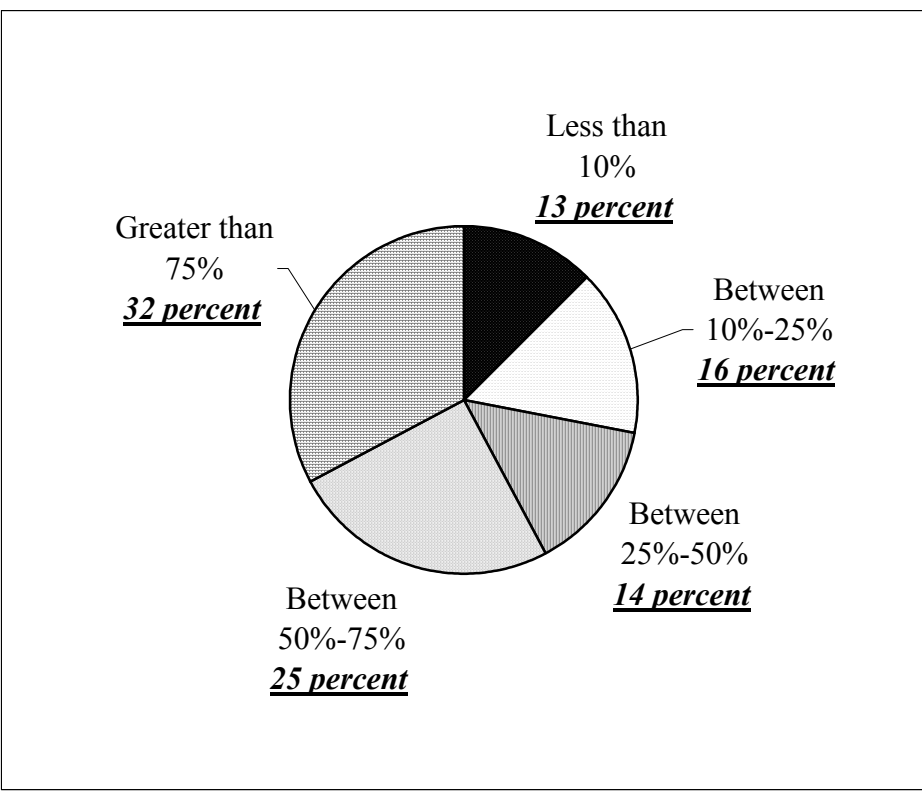


Question 10. Please estimate what portion of the gross income of the total business comes from the nature tourism activities?

Fifty-seven percent of the businesses surveyed indicated that 50 percent, or more, of their gross income is based on nature tourism activities (figure 5.19).

FIGURE 5.19

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 10.



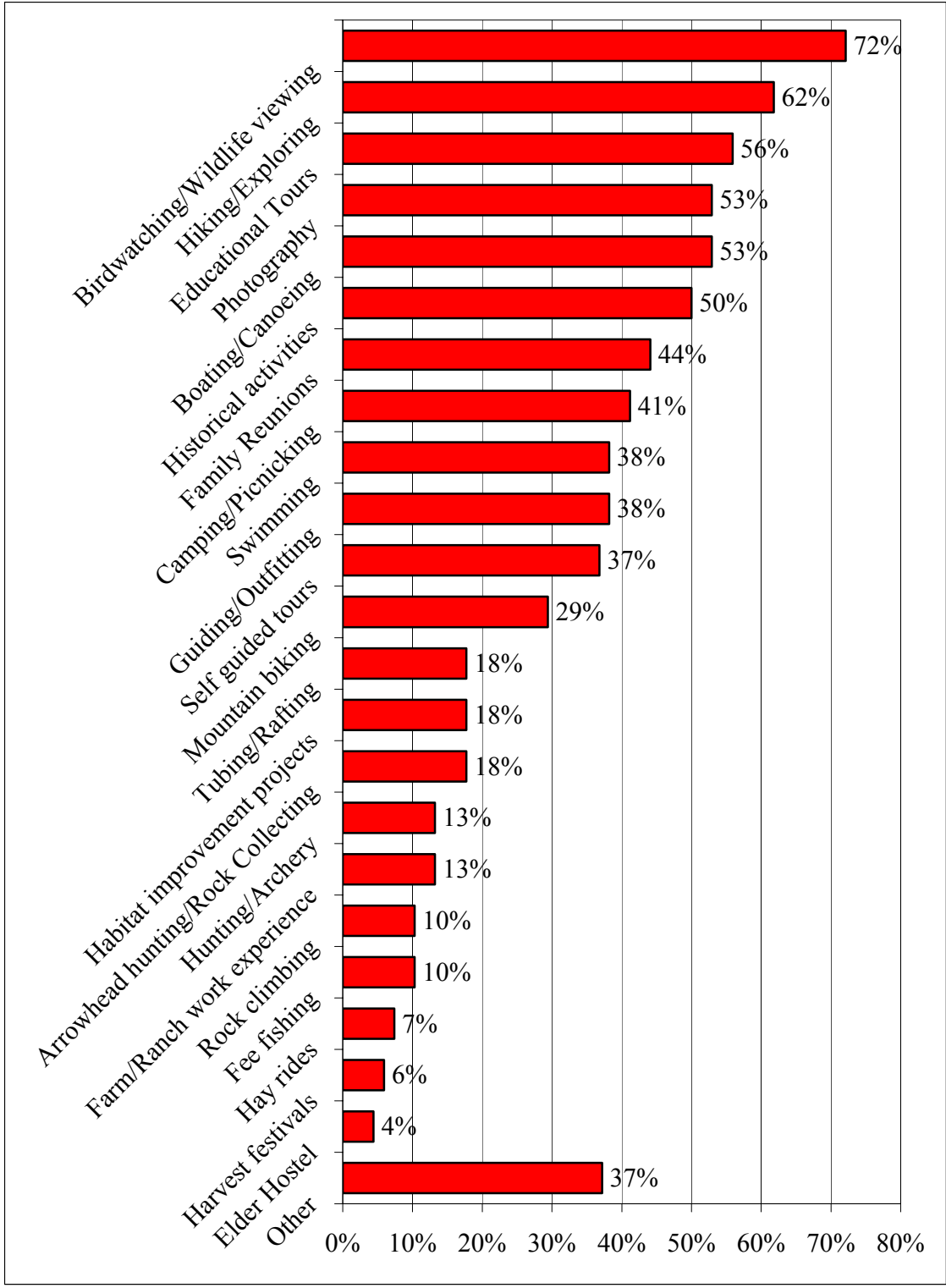
Question 11. What kinds of nature tourism activities are promoted at this Web site?

(check all that apply)

Figure 5.20 shows that these businesses offer a wide variety of outdoor activities. Respondents could select several choices from a list of twenty-two activities. The average number of activities reported per respondent was seven, with a range from one to fourteen. The most common activities chosen were birdwatching/wildlife viewing (72 percent), hiking/exploring (61 percent) educational tours (55 percent), and photography (53 percent).

FIGURE 5.20

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 11.



Topic 2: Descriptive Information About the Businesses/ Organizations' Web Site

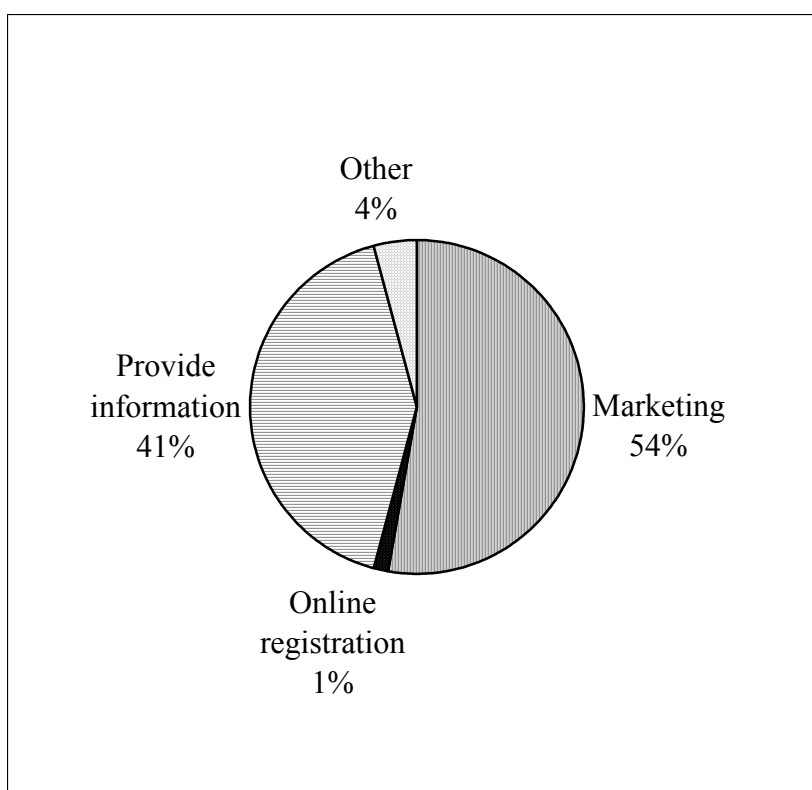
Questions 12 through 16 were about the nature tourism Web sites and whether the business owners conducted visitor surveys. The questions in this section were included to gather information about how the business owners were using their Web site to understand their business customers and markets.

Question 12. What is the primary purpose of your nature tourism Web site?

Nature tourism business owners in this research have their Web sites primarily for two reasons, marketing (54 percent) and providing information to their customers (41 percent) (figure 5.21).

FIGURE 5.21

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 12.

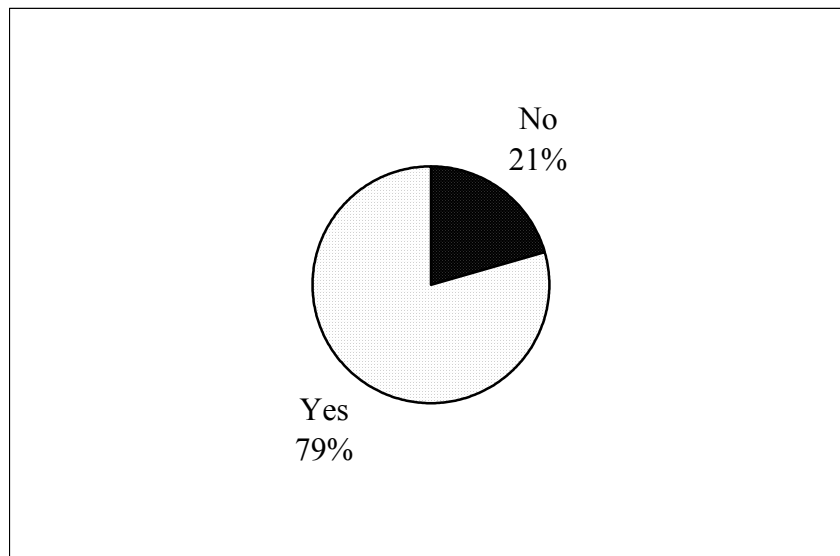


Question 13. Do you know what company is hosting the Web site?

Figure 5.22 shows that almost 80 percent of the survey respondents know where their Web site was being hosted. Detailed information collected for this item was used to answer research question 2 about the distance between the nature tourism businesses (ICSs) and their Web hosting businesses (ICBs).

FIGURE 5.22

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 12.

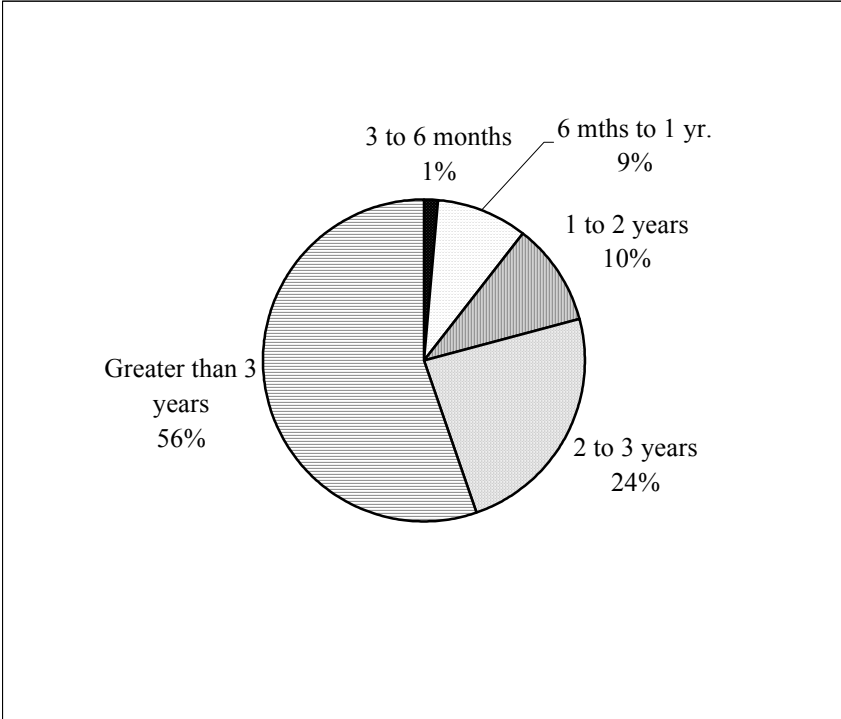


Question 14. How long has this nature tourism business had a Web site?

The majority (80 percent) of these business owners have had their Web sites for two or more years (figure 5.23).

FIGURE 5.23

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 14.

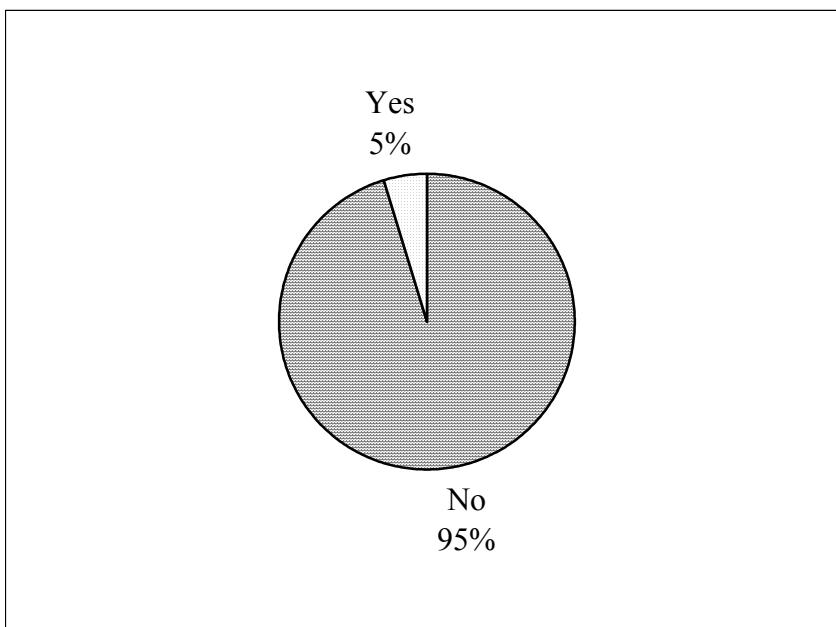


Question 15. Are visitors asked to complete a survey when they visit your Web site?

Questions 15 and 16 aimed to clarify these businesses' use of more formal survey techniques to understand their customers. The results of these questions show that neither Web based surveys (92 percent) nor on-site surveys (77 percent) are used commonly (figures 5.24-5.25).

FIGURE 5.24

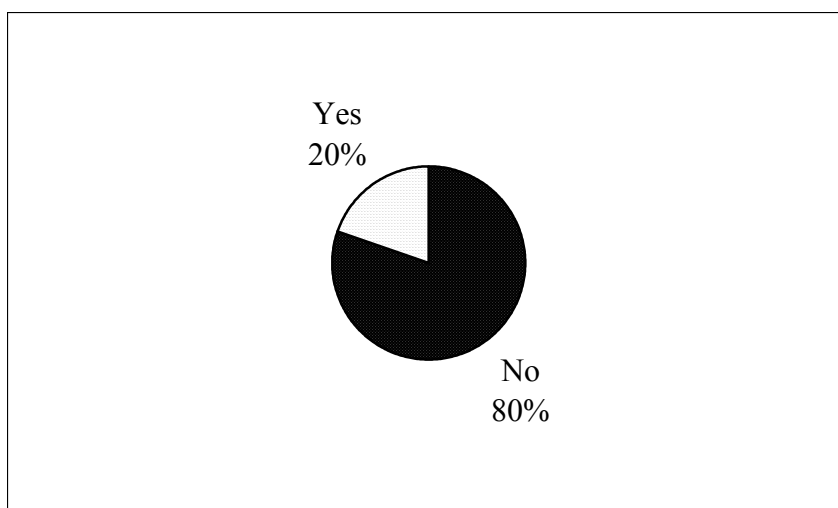
Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 15.



Question 16. Do you have visitors complete a survey after they visit the “actual-physical” nature tourism business?

FIGURE 5.25

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 16.



Topic 3: What was the Process of Developing the Web Site, from Initial Motivations to Ultimate Implementation?

Questions 17 through 21 in the quantitative survey were about these businesses development of their Web sites. These questions gathered specific information about the reasons the Web site was developed, the process of its development and who was involved.

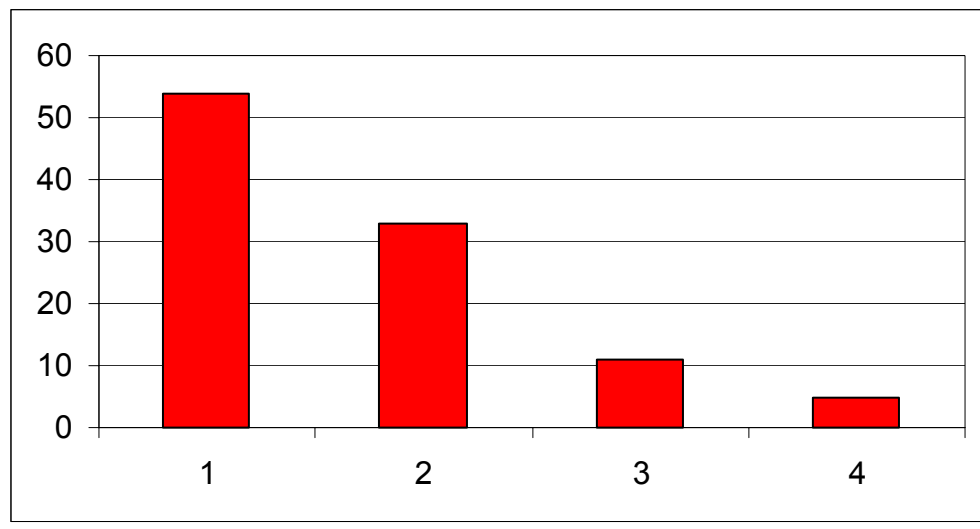
Question 17. What were the reasons for developing the nature tourism Web site? (Check all that apply)

Respondents could provide multiple reasons why they started their Web site.

Figure 5.26 shows that there are two primary reasons: 1) Web sites are a cost effective way to promote the business (52 percent), and 2) The Web site is the best way to promote this business (32 percent). Eighteen respondents chose two response categories (fifteen chose Web sites are a cost effective way to promote the business/The Web site is the best way to promote the business). Eight respondents chose the first three response categories.

FIGURE 5.26

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 17.



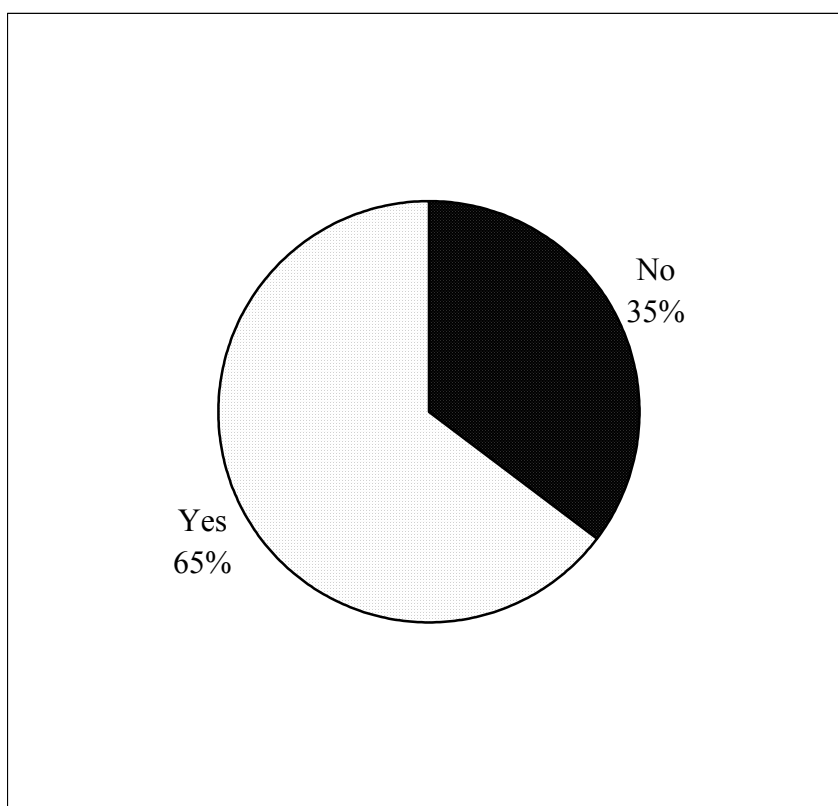
¹ Web sites are a cost effective way to promote the business. ² The Internet is important for employees of this business so it was a natural thing to do for the business. ³ The Web site is the best way to promote this business. ⁴ Other.

Question 18. Are you (or someone employed by the business) knowledgeable about Web site design and development?

When asked about whether or not there was someone with the company who was knowledgeable about Web site design and development (figure 5.27), 65 percent of these respondents said “yes.”

FIGURE 5.27

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 18.

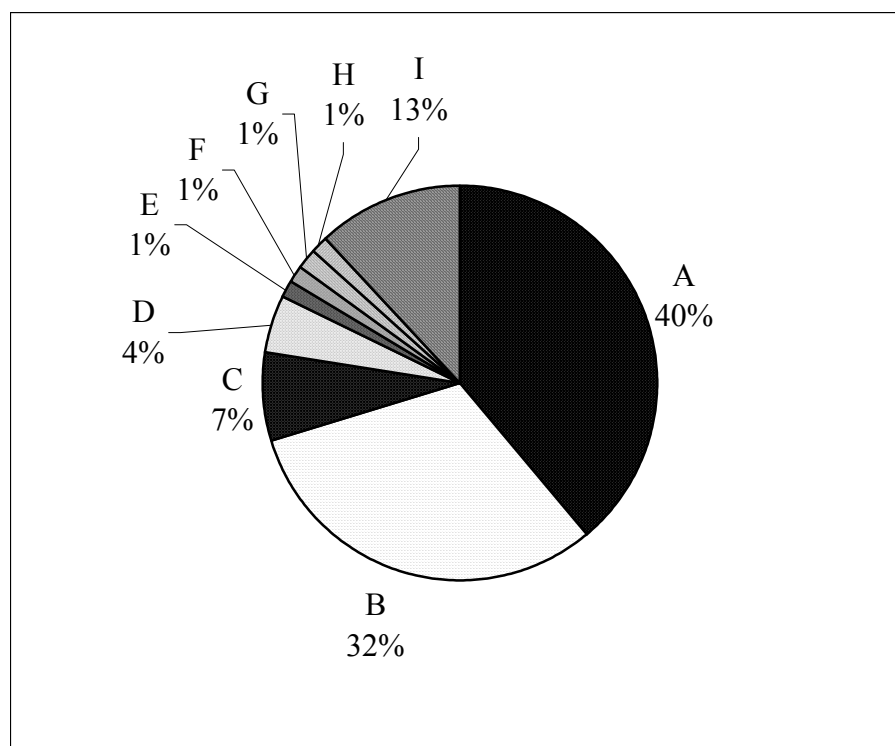


Question 19. Who developed the Web site?

This item investigated who was responsible for developing the Web site. Figure 5.28 shows that the most common responses were “a Web development company” (40 percent), “I did” (32 percent), and “other” (13 percent, see Appendix G).

FIGURE 5.28

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 19.



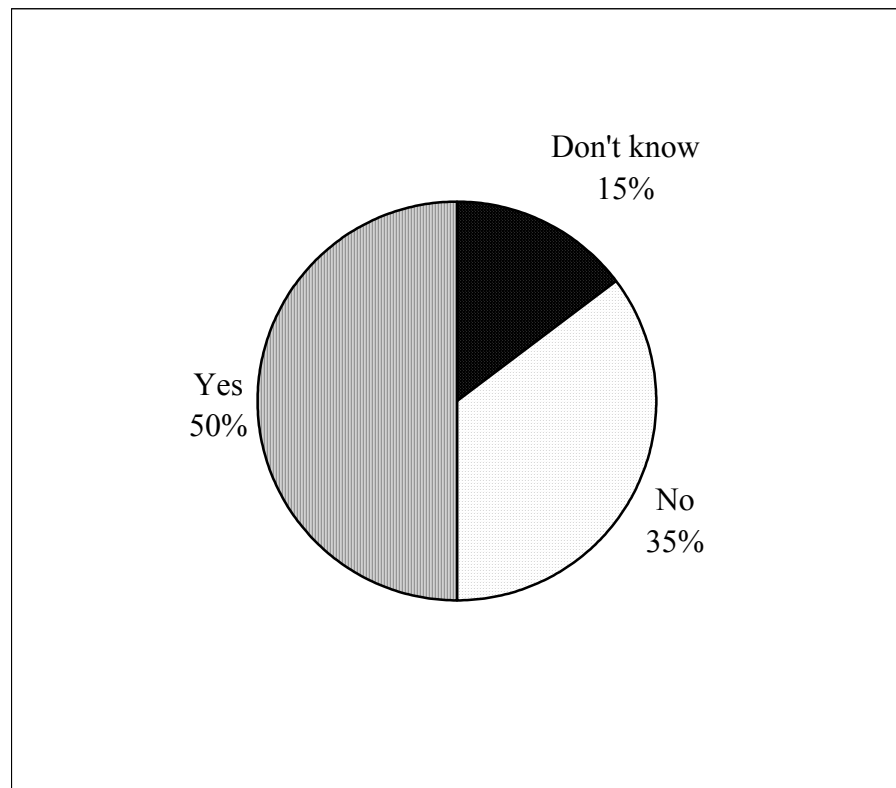
A A Web development company. B I did. C A fellow employee. D A business acquaintance. E A personal friend. F A friend of the business. G A friend recommended a Web development company. H An organization promoting tourism helped develop the Web site. I Other (Appendix E).

Question 20. Did you (or someone in the organization) conduct research using the Internet to design or develop this Web site?

Fifty percent of the research participants responded that they used the Internet to conduct research for design or develop their Web sites (figure 5.29).

FIGURE 5.29

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 20.

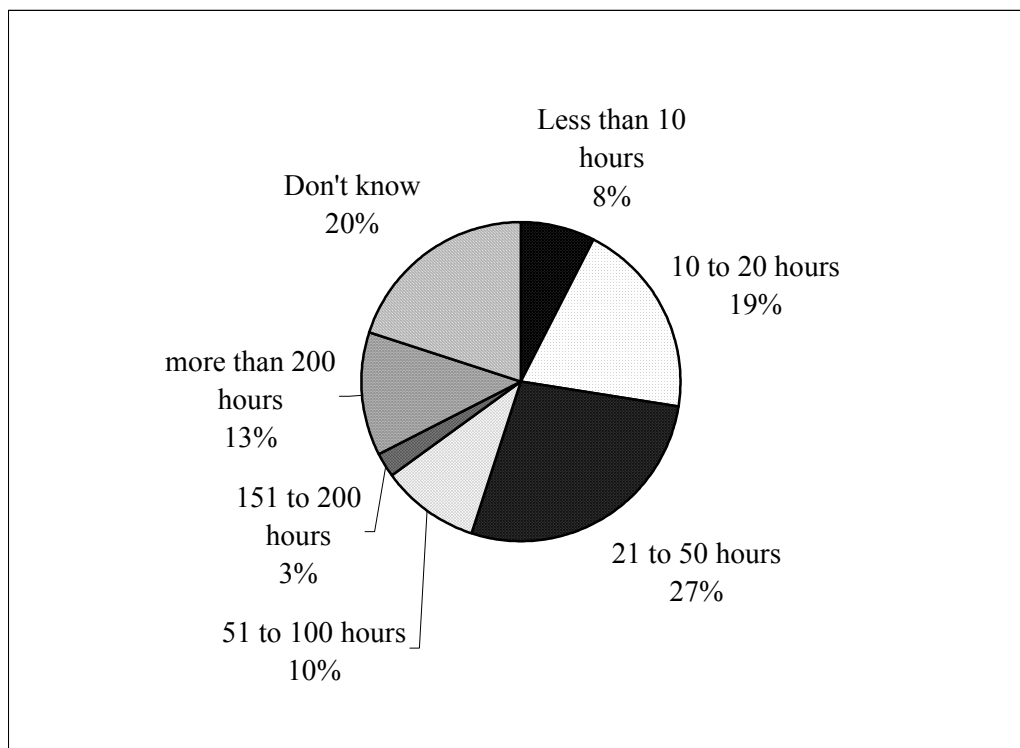


Question 20a. If Yes to question 20, estimate how much time was spent.

Figure 5.30 shows that most people chose not to respond (41 percent) to this question. Of those that did respond there was a wide variation in responses about how much time was spent with the most being “21 to 50 hours” (27 percent), and 10 to 20 hours (19 percent).

FIGURE 5.30

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 20a.



Question 21. If you (or someone in your organization) did not design the Web site, did you tell the Web developer specifically what you wanted on the Web site?

Of the respondents who replied to this item, 93 percent responded “yes” that they told their Web developer specifically what they wanted on their Web site (figure 5.31).

FIGURE 5.31

Distribution of responses for quantitative survey question 21.

