



# Membership Survey 2009

(Results collected and analysed at 02 November 2009)

Data prepared by Tim Feest, Operations Director

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The survey of COPE Members was carried out online using the services of Survey Monkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>). The survey questionnaire, containing 23 questions (primary and secondary – subsequent – questions) went live on the Survey Monkey website on 14 October 2009 and Members were advised of this by e-mail on 17 October 2009. No formal closing date was announced: it was anticipated that most of those intending to respond would do so within two to three weeks of the announcement.

The questions were divided into five main areas of interest:

- 1 The COPE website
- 2 Ethical Editing, the COPE Newsletter
- 3 COPE's products and services
- 4 COPE and the future
- 5 Personal details of participants

## 2 The data

- 2.1 Within 4 days of the announcement being sent to Members, 120 responses had been received. At the time of writing this report, 02 November 2009, 151 responses were recorded, although, it appears that this 151 includes the initial batch of six from Council officers trialling the questionnaire.
- 2.2 Not everyone who responded answered all the questions. The tabulated results presented indicate the number of responses for each question.
- 2.3 The results presented here are therefore current at mid-day on 02 November 2009. They are provided as:
- 1 **Charts** (pie-chart and bar-charts) showing the proportions for each response
  - 2 **Tabulated data** showing numbers of responses (Response Count) and the numerical values relating to the accompanying chart (Response %).

## 3 Interpretation

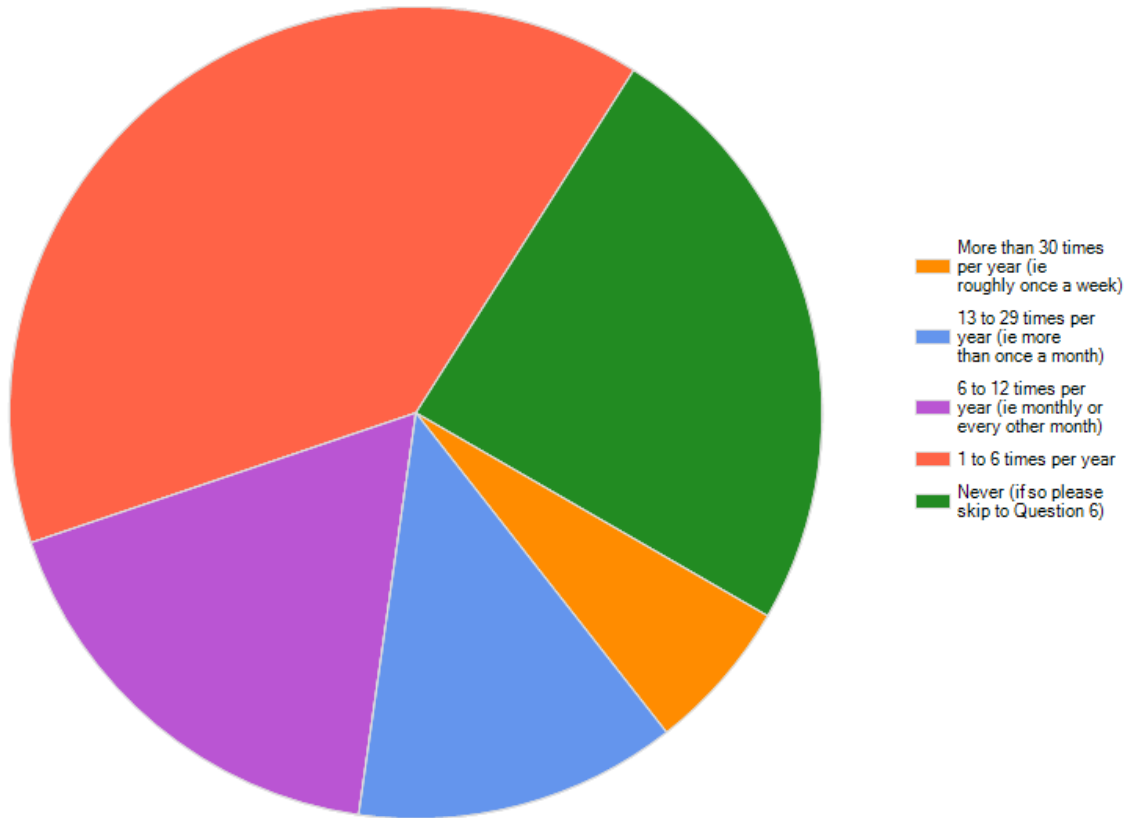
- 3.1 There is much of interest, and some surprises, in the data. For example:
- (i) More than 80% of those responding visit the website no more than once per month; and nearly 24% of respondents have never visited the website.
  - (ii) Nearly 71% of those responding had either not read the Council blog or were unaware of its existence.

- (iii) 63% of those responding read Ethical Editing (but 20% claim not to be aware that there is a Newsletter).
- (iv) Alerts about publications in publishing ethics or misconduct was a popular choice for topics Members would like to see covered in the Newsletter (nearly 83% of those responding chose this subject).
- (v) Members expressed a strong preference for the Newsletter to continue to be produced quarterly (79% in favour).
- (vi) Whilst the Flowcharts seem to be helpful for those who view them, with some 36% indicating that the charts are 'very helpful', nearly 41% of those responding said they had 'never looked at them' [the charts].
- (vii) A significant majority of those responding, over 83%, expressed the view that there were no other subjects that they would like to see covered in a (new) Flowchart.
- (ix) The COPE Code of Conduct and Best Practice guidelines were regarded by nearly 80% of those responding as very (55%) or slightly (24%) helpful; and no-one found them 'not helpful at all'. However, nearly 21% of those responding had not read the Code or guidelines.
- (x) Attendance at Forum meetings in person was, as anticipated from experience, not good: over 90% of those responding had either never attended or had done so 'less than once per year on average'.
- (xi) The enthusiasm for attending Forum meetings by audio or video link is muted: only 42% of respondents said they would like to have this opportunity to participate; although a large percentage, over 25%, said they did not know.
- (xii) Always or regularly reading the summary of cases posted on the COPE website is not a majority activity: only 38% of respondents indicated this to be the case, with 62% therefore indicated that they read cases 'sometimes' (41.1%) or 'never' (20.9%).
- (xiii) Of those who do read the case summaries, some 38.4% find them either 'always helpful and relevant' (8.5%) or 'usually helpful and relevant' (29.9%). The residue find the case 'mostly of interest only' (39.3%) or 'not very interesting or relevant' (3.4%); or they do not read the summaries (18.8%).
- (xiv) In the list of top priority subjects, developing more materials for non-biomedical journals scored best in Priority 1 (59% of responses) followed by 'expand membership' (50%); for Priority 2, the top two subjects were 'run more seminars and face-to-face meetings' and 'run face-to-face training courses for editors'; and for Priority 3 the top two were 'provide a professional audit service for journals' and, equally, 'develop more rapid responses to cases' and fund more research into publication ethics'.
- (xv) When asked to choose and prioritise other services Members would like to see developed, the top three responses were 'guidance for authors on publication ethics' (Level 4 interest, 50.5%); 'guidance for reviewers on publication ethics' (Level 4, 46.5%); and 'publication ethics handbook' (Level 4, 45.5%).

- (xvi) Academic part-time editors represented by far the single biggest proportion of those Members responding, some 75% of 130 responses received, with more than 74% having edited a journal for 4 or more years (of which 35% were for more than 10 years).
- (xvii) Europe and North America not unexpectedly dominated the geographic locations for workplace, accounting for nearly 81% of the 128 who responded. There were no responses recorded from Africa, Latin America or the Middle East.
- (xviii) Biomedicine, life sciences and healthcare, although the single biggest area, is not the majority subject (48.4% of members' journals represent these disciplines). The next biggest subject area is social science, economics and politics (19.7%) and then physics, chemistry, engineering and materials science (8.2%).
- (xix) The invitation to submit 'other comments and suggestions' elicited interesting responses, amongst them:
- How does Cope measure its success?
  - Always delete e-mails. Never looks worth [sic] reading.
  - COPE is a very valuable organisation - if my answers to this questionnaire tend to suggest otherwise, it is only because I have not yet had to deal with a misconduct case on my own journal.
  - I got three copies of this survey emailed to me - please check and clean your database.
  - I am a relatively new member, working as the Editor of a knowledge transfer journal in a branch of the social sciences. I am not very familiar with COPE activities and resources. My overwhelming impression is that COPE is very heavily oriented to issues in the medical sciences.
  - I think COPE is fundamentally good, but it is just one more thing to read and I haven't found the time.
  - Your website needs serious revamping. I assume good resources are there but seem REALLY HARD to find.

# Q1

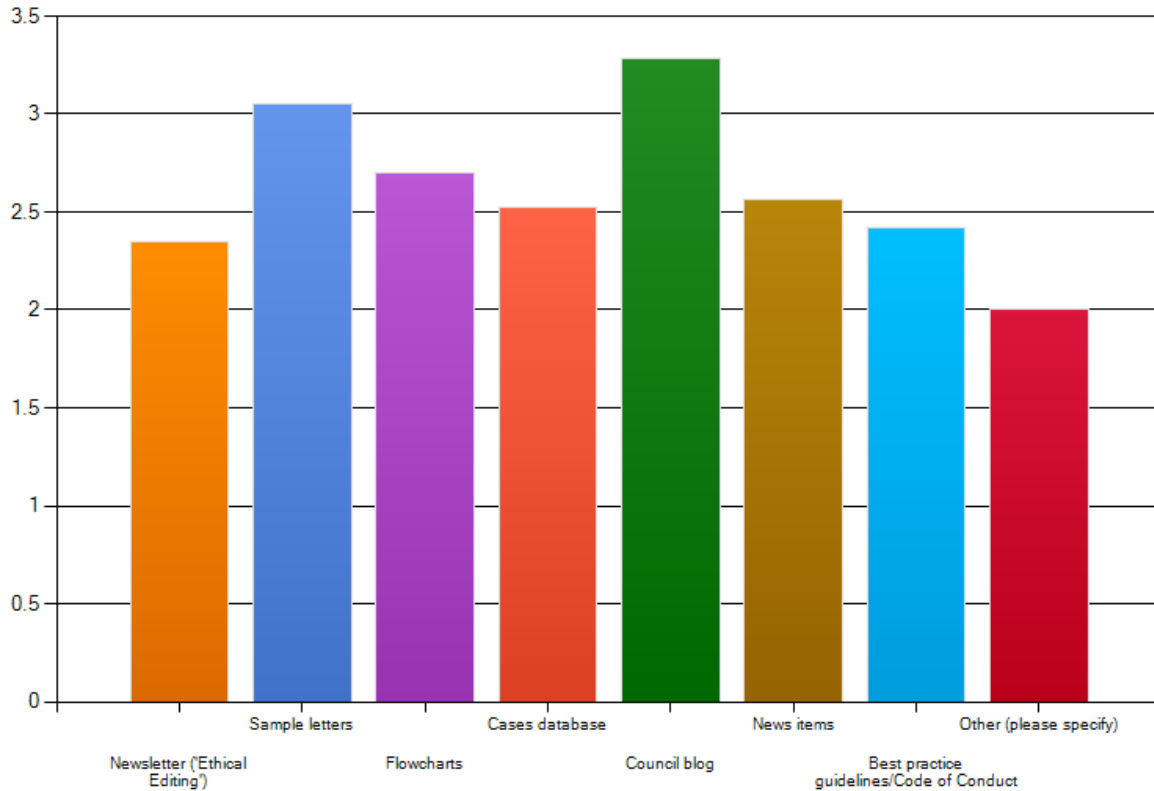
## How often do you visit the COPE website



	Response %	Response count	
More than 30 times per year (ie roughly once a week)	6.0%	9	
13 to 29 times per year (ie more than once a month)	13.2%	20	
06 to 12 times per year (ie monthly or every other month)	17.2%	26	
1 to 6 times per year	39.7%	60	
Never (if so please skip to Question 6)	23.8%	36	
<b>Number answering Q1 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>151</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Q2

What subjects or areas do you visit on the COPE website? (please rank them according to the frequency with which you visit and indicate N/A for items you never look at)



	Always look at	Generally look at	Occasionally look at	Seldom look at	N/A	Rating average	Number of responses
Newsletter ('Ethical Editing')	20.0% (20)	41.0% (41)	18.0% (18)	18.0% (18)	3.0% (3)	2.35	100
Sample letters	3.3% (3)	15.2% (14)	40.2% (37)	26.1% (24)	15.2% (14)	3.05	92
Flowcharts	8.6% (8)	26.9% (25)	31.2% (29)	17.2% (16)	16.1% (15)	2.68	93
Cases database	13.0% (12)	33.7% (31)	29.3% (27)	15.2% (14)	8.7% (8)	2.51	92
Council blog	1.1% (1)	13.6% (12)	18.2% (16)	35.2% (31)	31.8% (28)	3.28	88
News items	11.2% (10)	33.7% (30)	36.0% (32)	14.6% (13)	4.5% (4)	2.56	89
Best practice guidelines/Code of Conduct	12.2% (12)	40.8% (40)	35.7% (35)	9.2% (9)	2.0% (2)	2.43	98
Other (please specify)	3.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	93.5% (29)	2	31
Number answering Q2 and as % of total participants	<b>108</b>	<b>71.5%</b>					

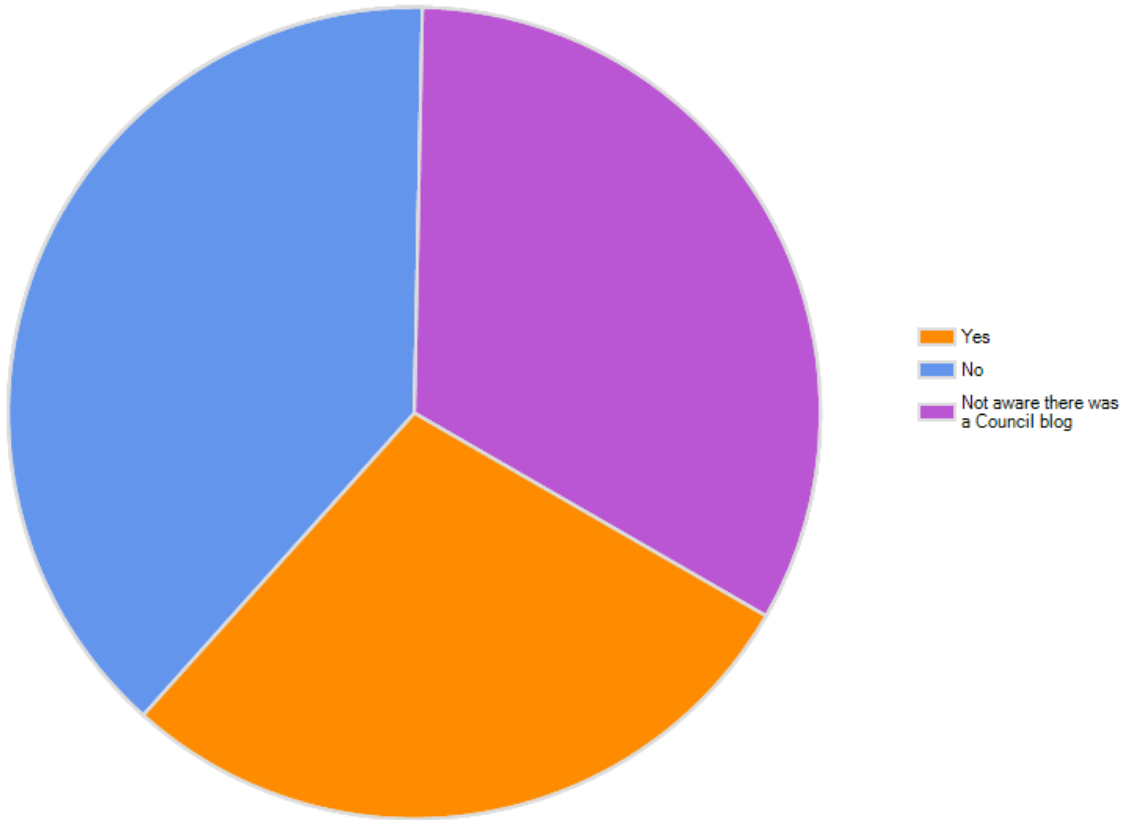
### Q3

#### Suggested topics for COPE Website (verbatim)

Discussion forum		
n/a		
Nothing so far		
More developed discussions of code items -- e.g. conflict of interest		
Comments from Editors of International Journals		
Discussion section		
NA		
Cannot think of anything really.		
easier search facilities		
none		
none		
Interactive Discussion Forum based on vbulletin or IPB if not phpBB		
More guidelines on procedures and practices		
I do not have any suggestions		
its not actually very informative or interactive. Information is sent out and statements are promulgated with no sense of how this happens		
Access for all Editors of the Journal		
n/a		
advanced search of relevant cases		
educational training programmes		
BETTER access to resources. Your website is confusing and difficult to navigate		
would like to see editorials		
polls		
<b>Number of participants for Q3 and as % of total participants</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14.6%</b>

# Q4

Have you read the COPE Council blog?



	Response %	Response count	
Yes	29.4%	32	
No	37.6%	41	
Not aware there was a Council blog	33.0%	36	
<b>Number of participants for Q4 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>109</b>	<b>72.2%</b>



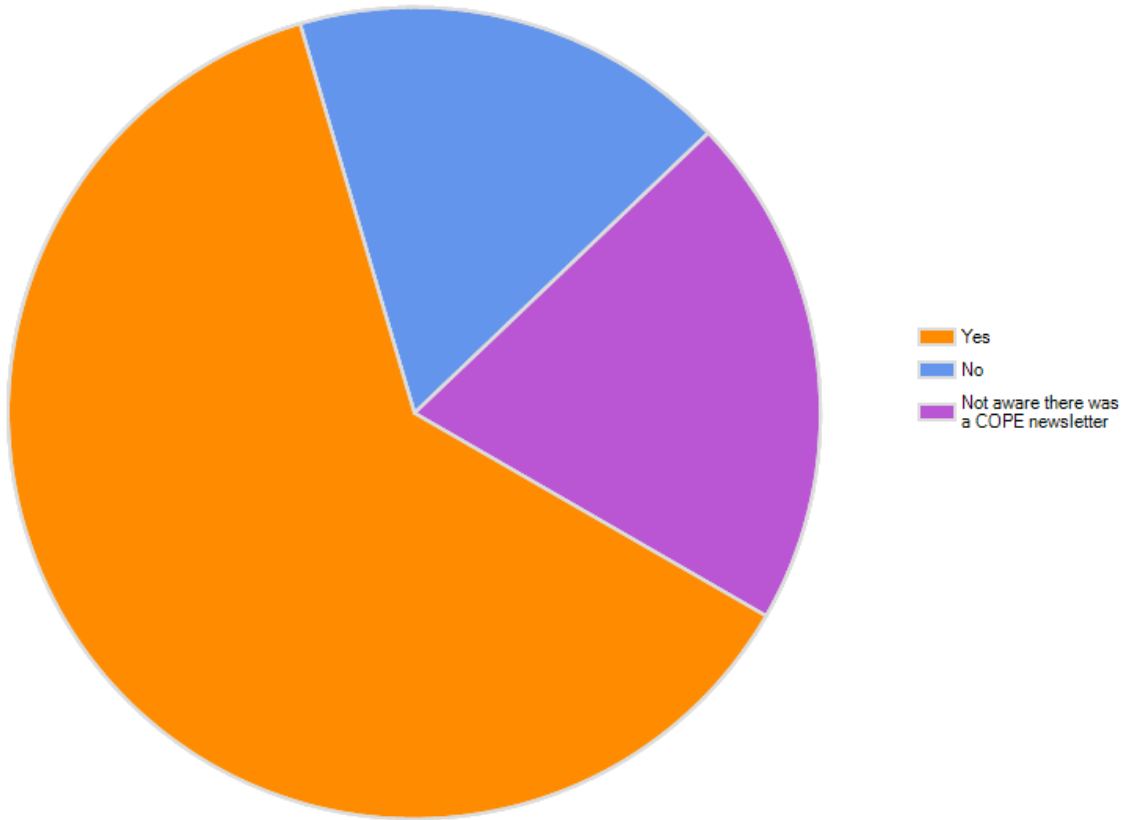
## Q5

Topics for COPE Blog or news service to cover

	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response count</b>	
Recent publications on journal publishing ethics	73.8%	79	
Recent publications on research misconduct	67.3%	72	
Recent cases of research or publication misconduct	73.8%	79	
Recent publications on peer review research	56.1%	60	
Reports from meetings and conferences	26.2%	28	
Links to related websites and blogs	28.0%	30	
Other (please specify: see below)	4.7%	5	
Nothing: I'm not interested in reading a blog or news alert	13.1%	14	
Number of participants for Q5 and as % of total participants		<b>107</b>	<b>70.9%</b>

# Q6

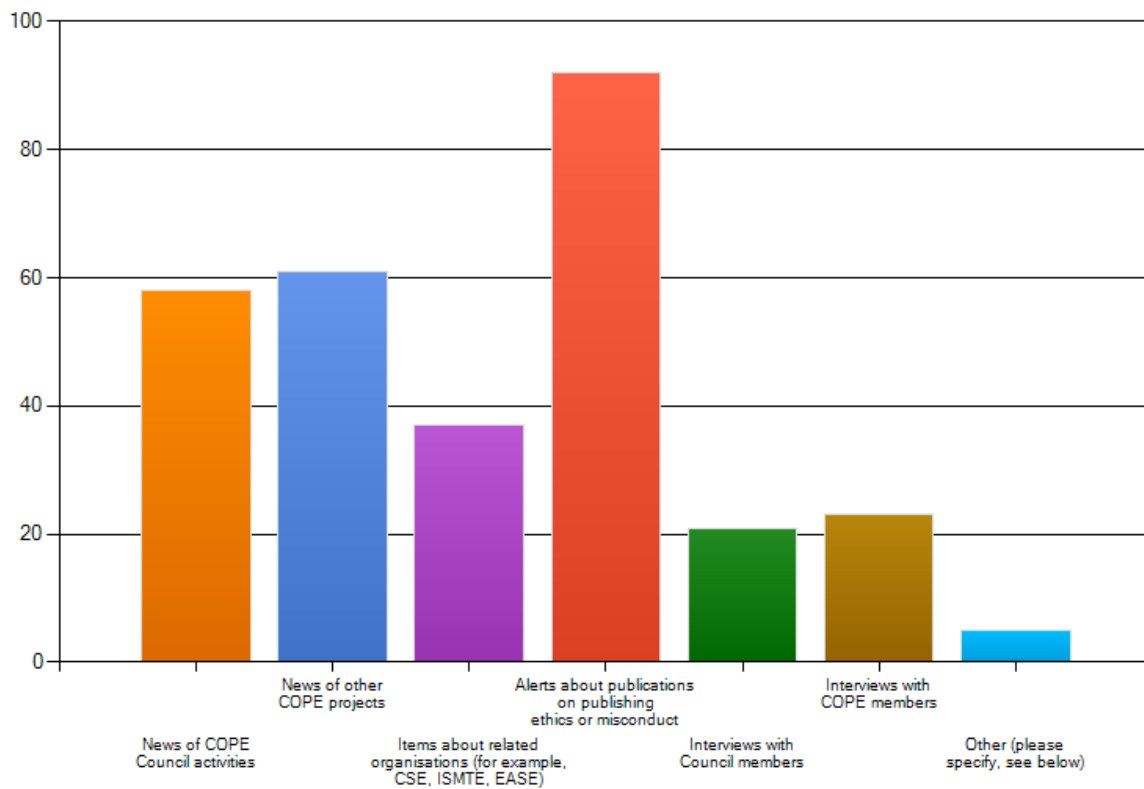
Do you read the COPE newsletter 'Ethical Editing'?



	Response %	Response %	
Yes	63.0%	63.0%	
No	17.0%	17.0%	
Not aware there was a COPE Newsletter	20.0%	20.0%	
<b>Number of participants for Q6 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>135</b>	<b>89.4%</b>

# Q7

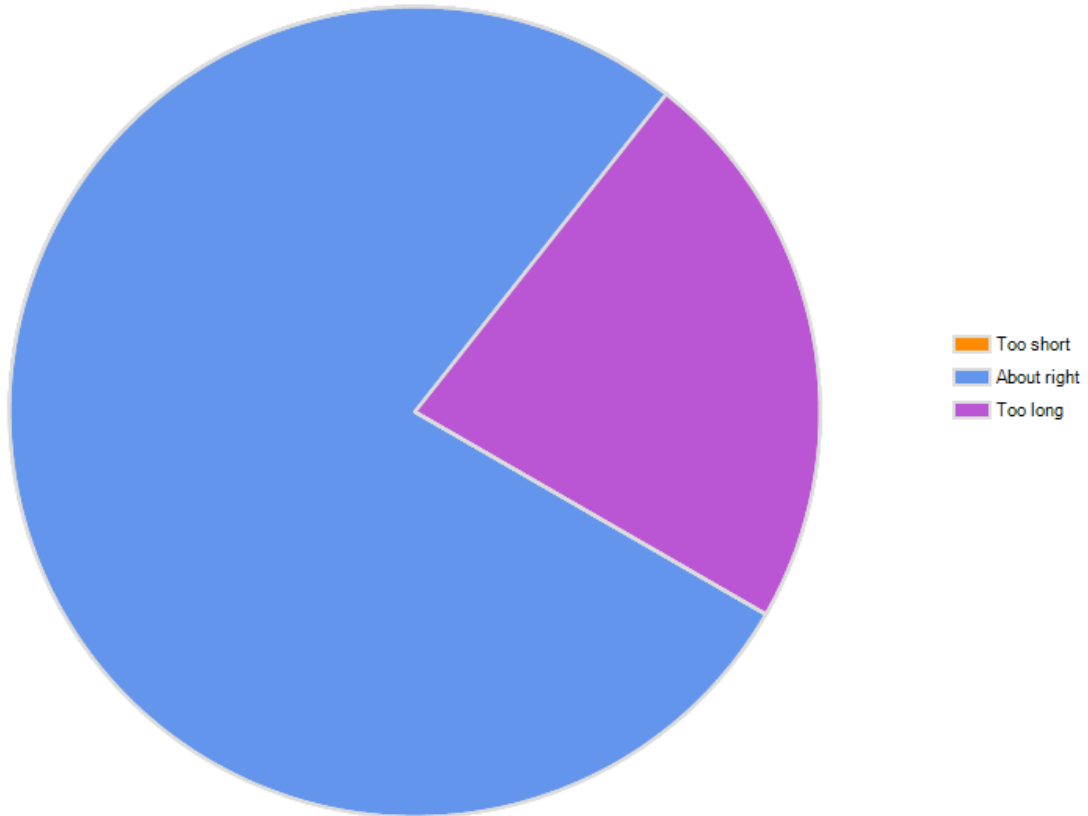
What topics would you like to see covered in the COPE newsletter? (please tick all that apply)



	Response %	Response count	
News of COPE Council activities	52.2%	60	
News of other COPE projects	53.9%	62	
Items about related organisations (for example, CSE, ISMTE, EASE)	33.0%	38	
Alerts about publications on publishing ethics or misconduct	82.6%	95	
Interviews with Council members	18.3%	21	
Interviews with COPE members	20.0%	23	
Other (please specify, see below)	4.3%	5	
<b>Number of response to Q7 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>115</b>	<b>76.2%</b>

# Q8

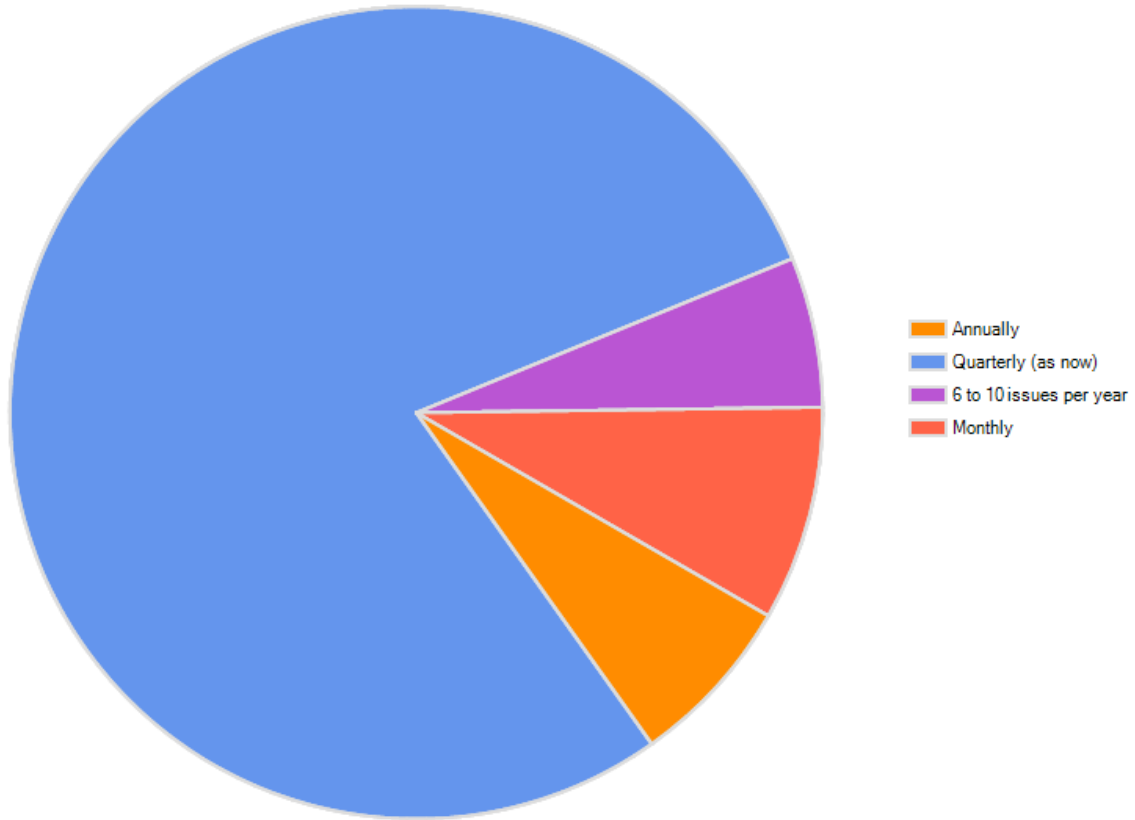
Is the newsletter's current length (8 pages of A4)



	Response %	Response count	
Too short	0.0%	0	
About right	75.8%	75	
Too long	24.2%	22	
<b>Number of participants for Q8 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>99</b>	<b>65.6%</b>

# Q9

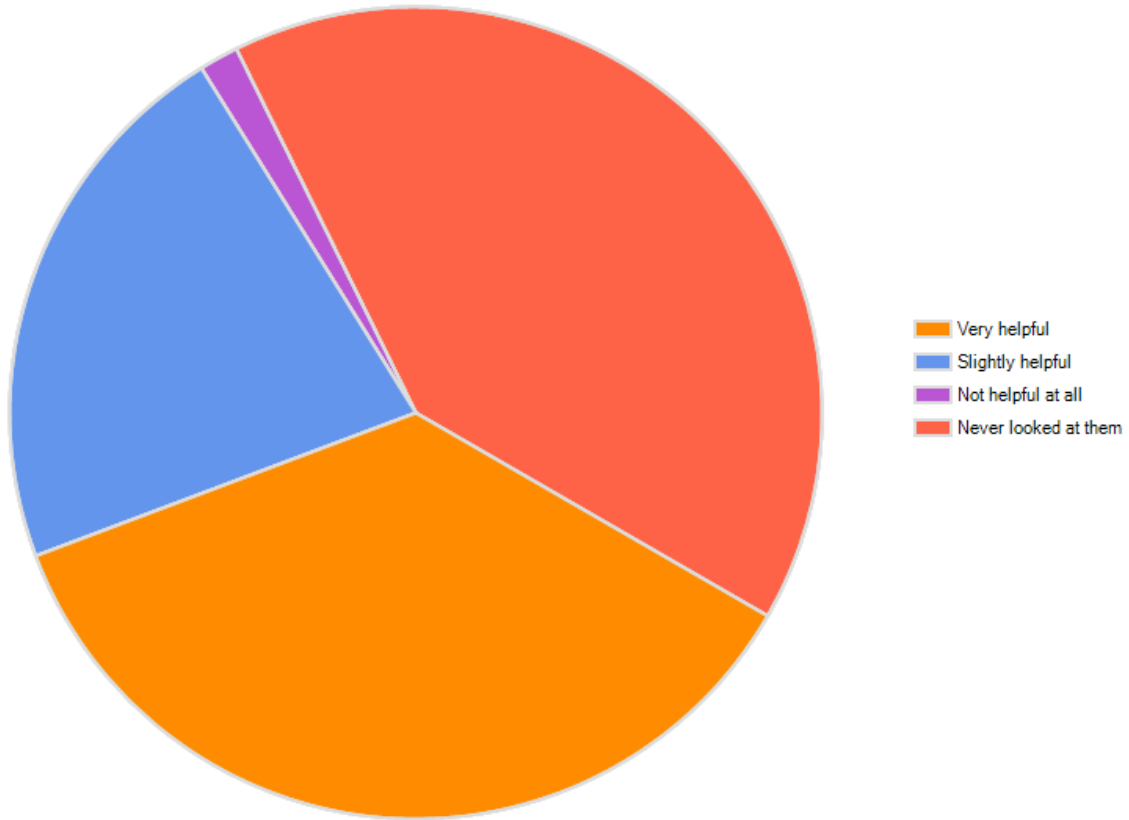
How often would you like to receive the newsletter?



	Response %	Response count	
Annually	6.7%	8	
Quarterly (as now)	79.2%	95	
6 to 10 issues per year	5.8%	7	
Monthly	8.3%	10	
<b>Number of participants for Q9 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>79.5%</b>

# Q10

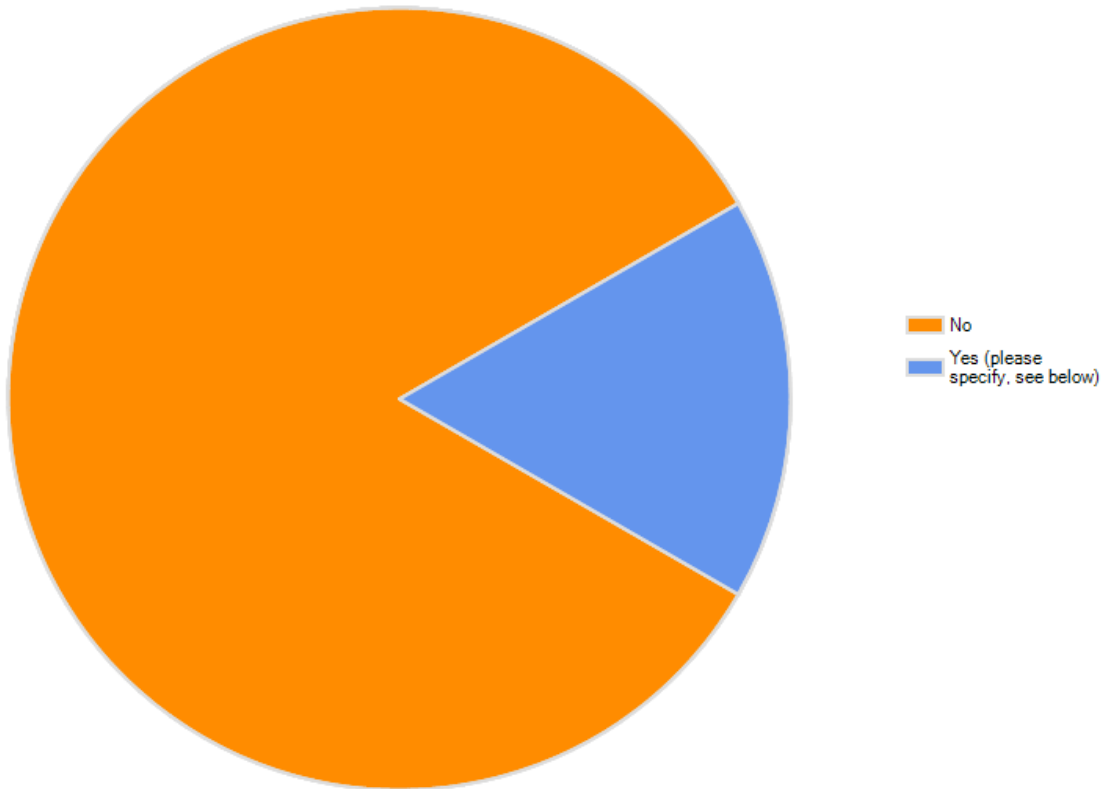
Do you find the COPE flowcharts helpful?



	Response %	Response count	
Very helpful	35.9%	47	
Slightly helpful	22.1%	29	
Not helpful at all	1.5%	2	
Never looked at them	40.5%	53	
<b>Number of participants for Q10 and as % of total participants</b>		131	<b>86.8%</b>

# Q11

Are there any other subjects you would like to see covered in new flowcharts?



	Response %	Response count	
No	83.5%	71	
Yes (please specify, see below)	16.5%	14	
<b>Number of participants for Q11 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>56.3%</b>

# Q11 (continued)

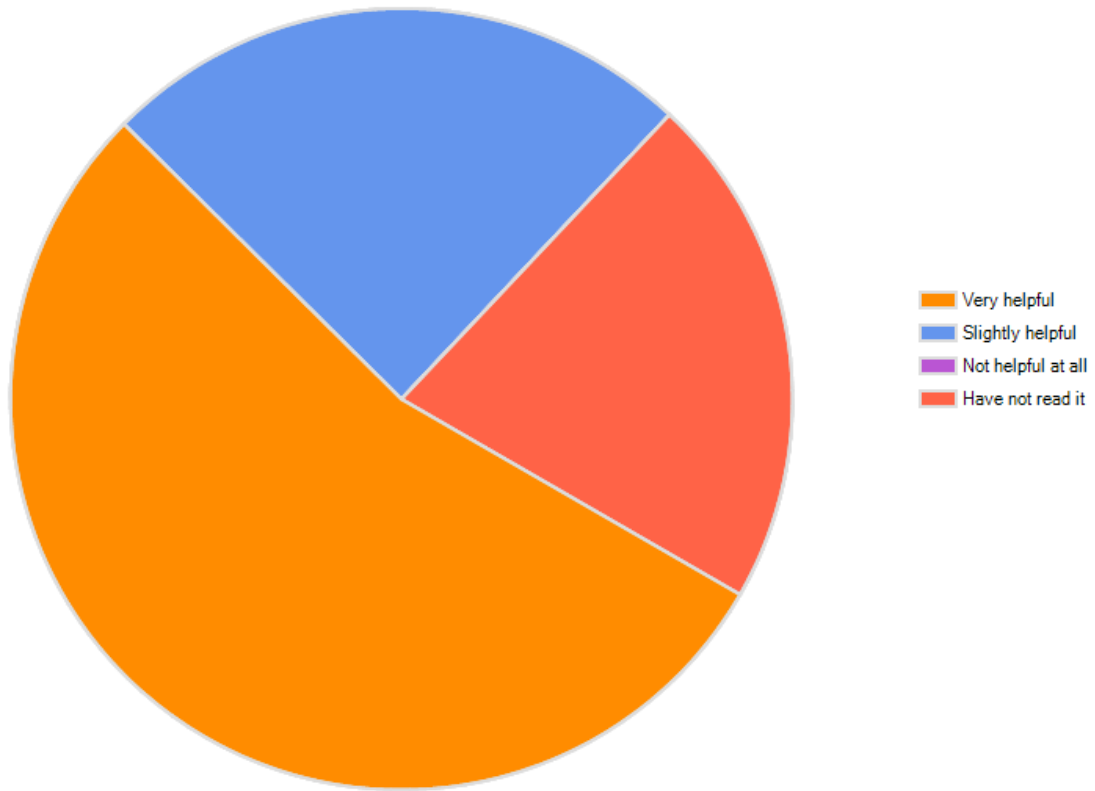
## Other topics for Flowcharts

<b>Free-text responses to Q11 'Yes' (verbatim)</b>
tutorials for doctoral students and early career researchers
Duplicate submissions
Survey of Comments from Editors from all around the world
Disciplinary actions!
More on dealing with gross research misconduct where study participants are not treated ethically, or are put at risk. What can we, as editors do?
Image manipulation
Might be interesting to have advice on post-retraction issues. How much further to go in informing others of the retraction, what to do when future authors cite retracted works.
According to the categorization from submission to the commission.
Salami publication
Handling apparent plagiarism when discovered by the journal from which the material was plagiarized.
how to identify and judge misconduct
conflict between advisor and student for authorship
I shall review to see what items may be helpful
Publishing manuscripts by editors or editorial board members in their journals
How to deal with unethical (peer) reviewing or "bad" behaviour of reviewers??
self-plagiarism
editor misconduct



# Q12

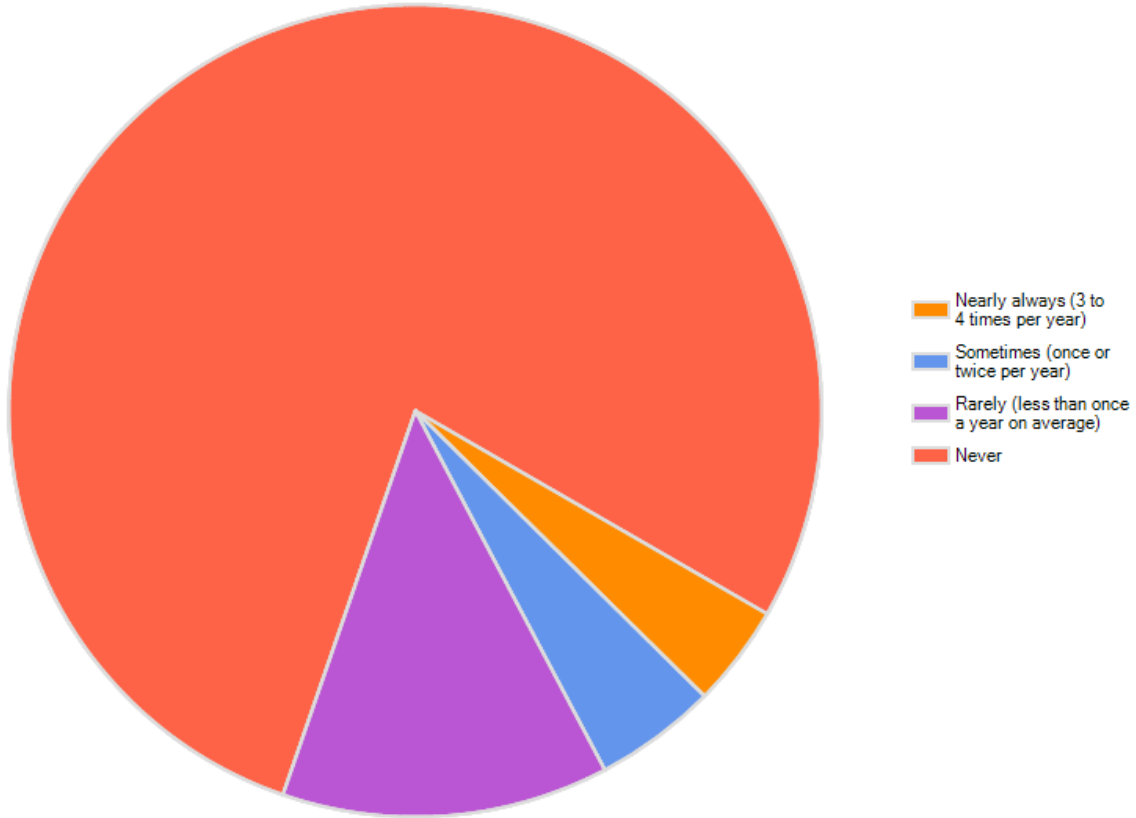
Do you find the COPE Code of Conduct and Best Practice document helpful?



	Response %	Response count	
Very helpful	55.2%	69	
Slightly helpful	24.0%	30	
Not helpful at all	0.0%	0	
Have not read it	20.8%	26	
<b>Number of participants for Q12 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>82.8%</b>

# Q13

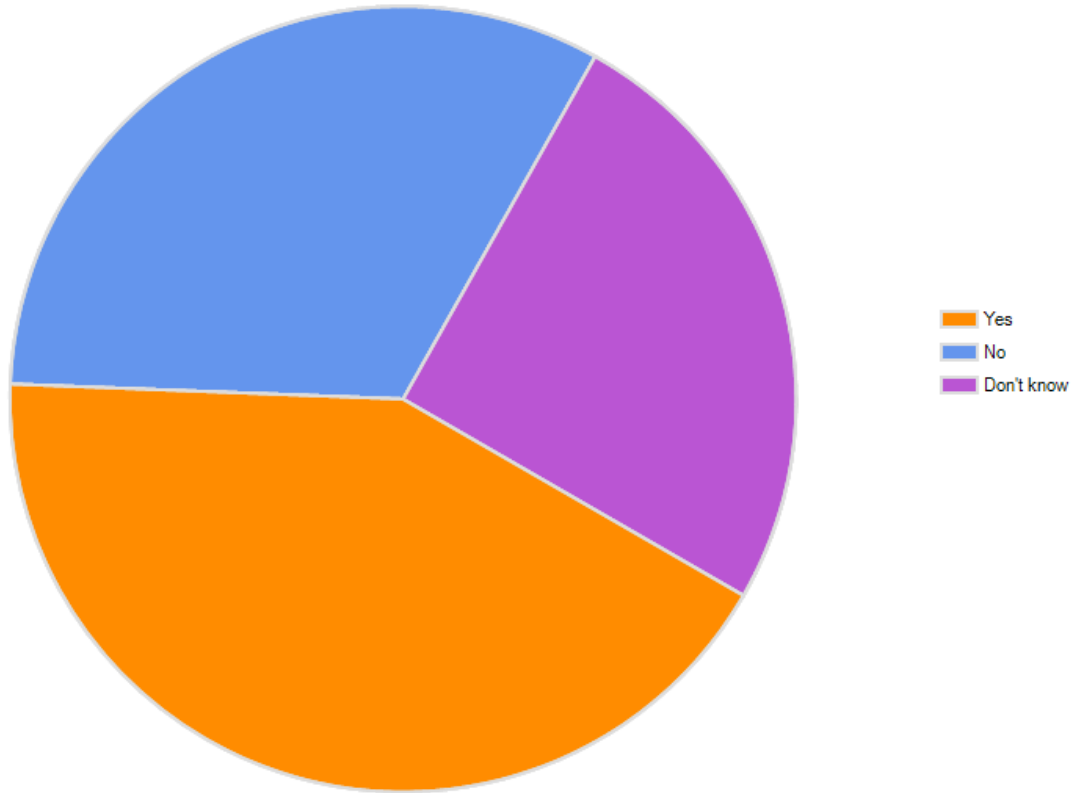
Do you attend the COPE Forum meetings in person?



	Response %	Response count	
Nearly always (3 to 4 times per year)	4.0%	5	
Sometimes (once or twice per year)	4.8%	6	
Rarely (less than once a year on average)	12.7%	16	
Never	78.6%	99	
<b>Number of participants for Q13 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>126</b>	<b>83.4%</b>

# Q14

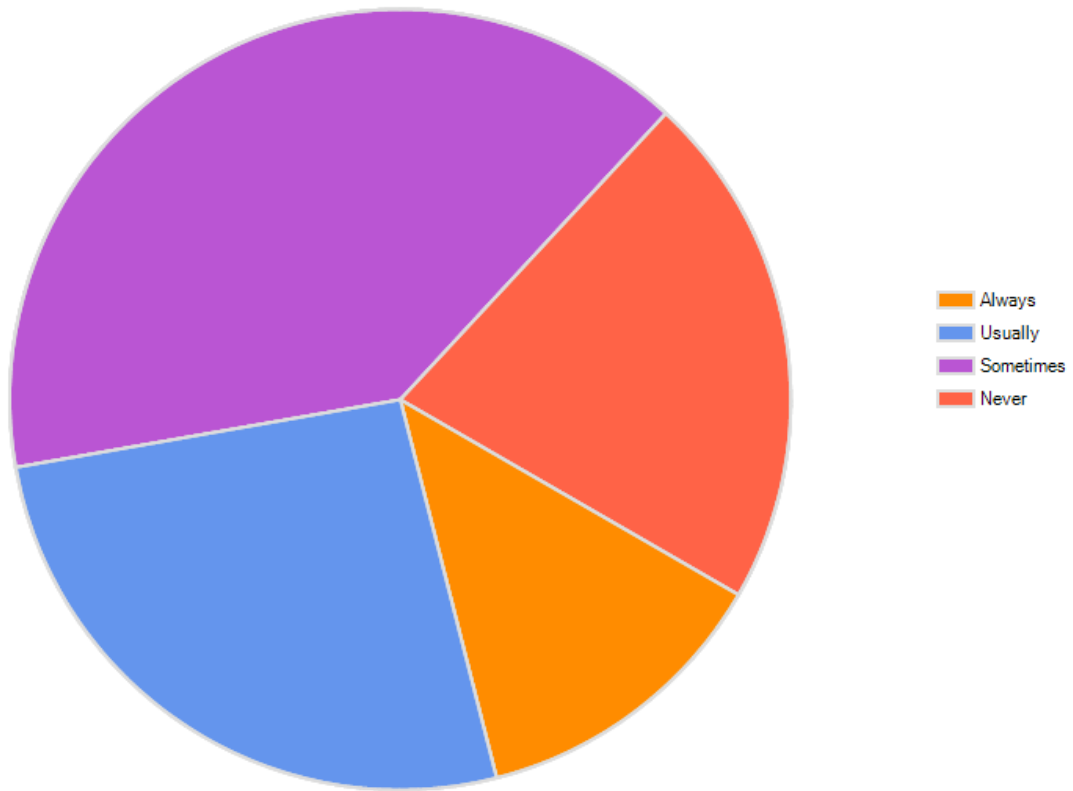
Would you like to have the opportunity to join the COPE Forum meetings by means of an audio or video link (for example, a webcast)?



	Response %	Response count	
Yes	42.10%	53	
No	32.50%	41	
Don't know	25.40%	32	
<b>Number of participants for Q14 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>126</b>	<b>83.4%</b>

# Q15

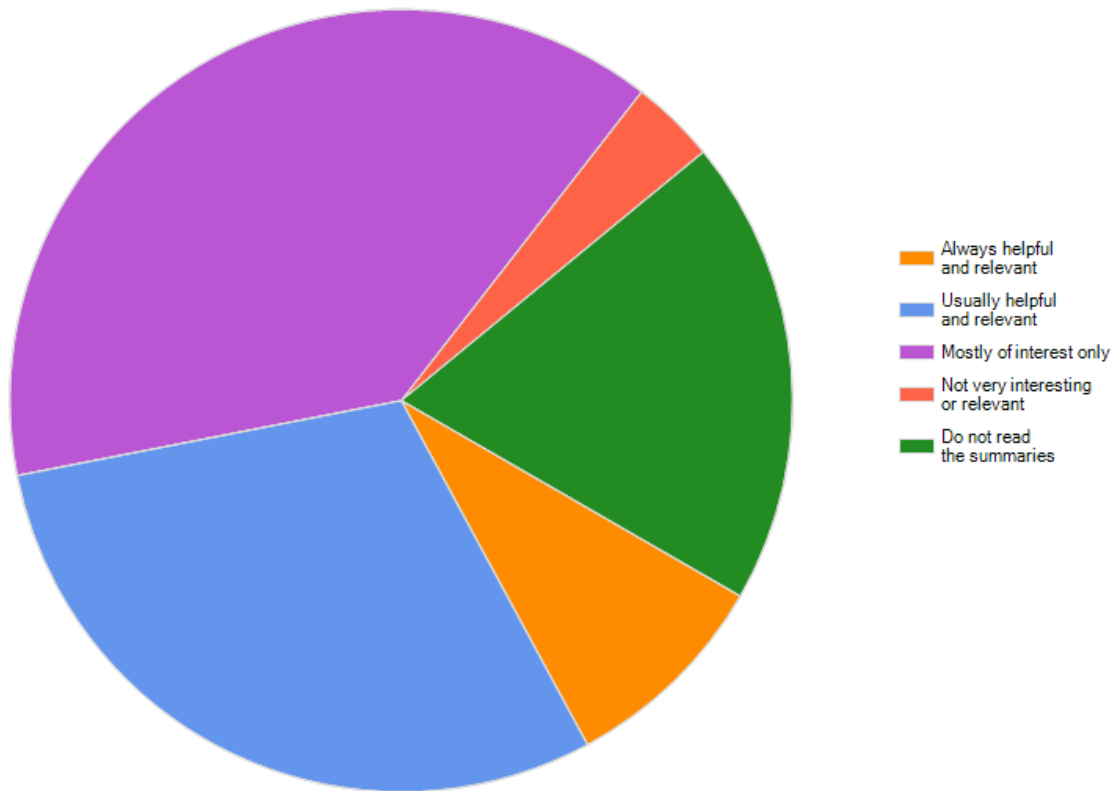
Do you read the summary of cases presented at COPE Forum meetings?  
(Summaries are posted on the COPE website)



	Response %	Response count	
Always	12.4%	16	
Usually	25.6%	33	
Sometimes	41.1%	53	
Never	20.9%	27	
<b>Number of participants for Q15 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>129</b>	<b>85.4%</b>

# Q16

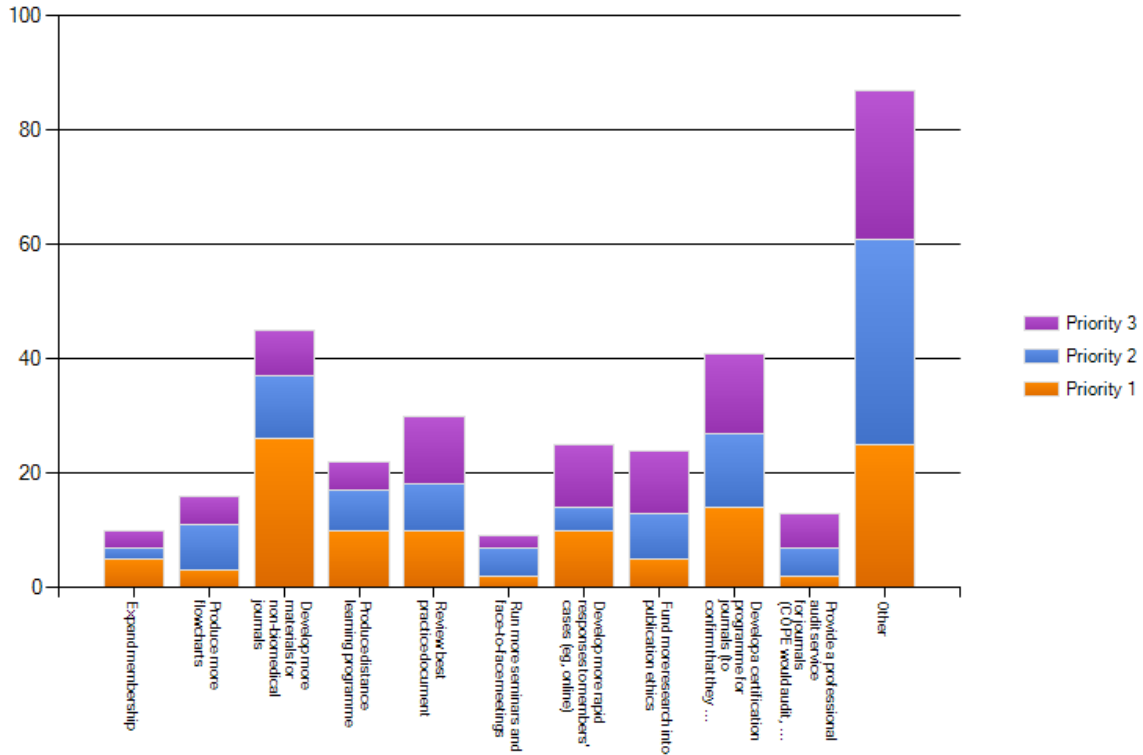
If you do read the summaries of cases presented at the COPE Forum, what value are they to you?



	Response %	Response count	
Always helpful and relevant	8.5%	10	
Usually helpful and relevant	29.9%	35	
Mostly of interest only	39.3%	46	
Not very interesting or relevant	3.4%	4	
Do not read the summaries	18.8%	22	
<b>Number of participants for Q16 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>117</b>	<b>77.5%</b>

# Q17

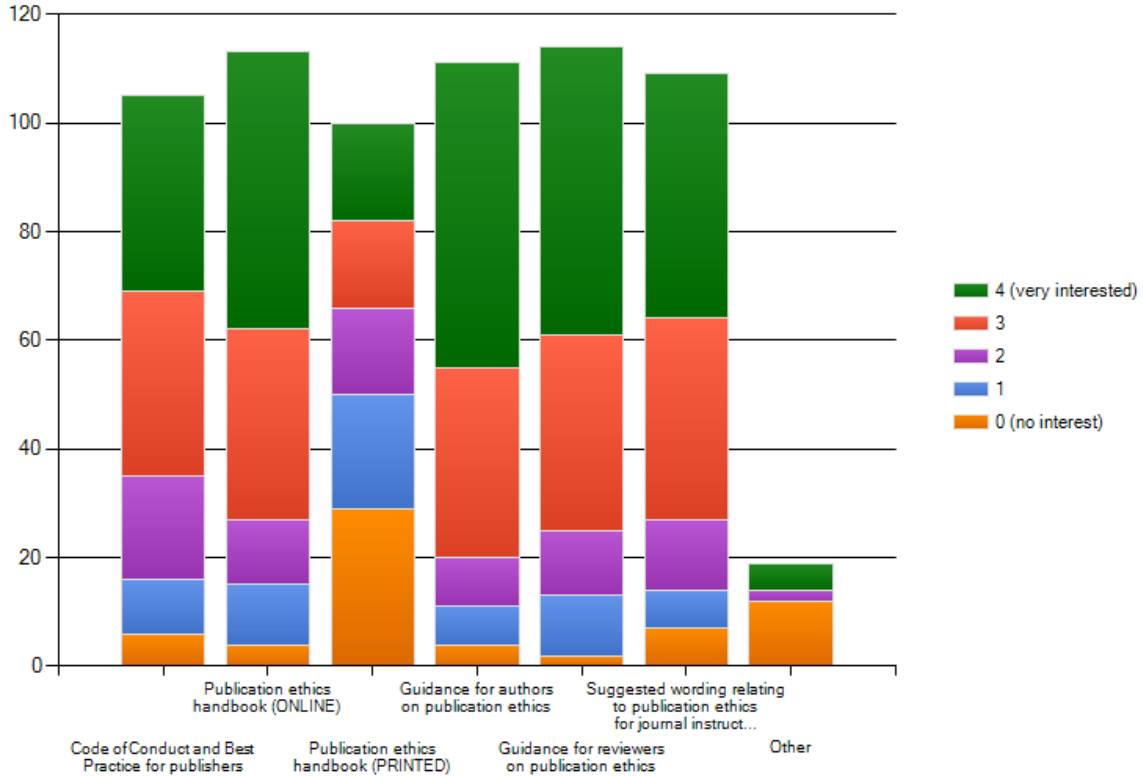
In your view, what should COPE's top three priorities be over the next three years? (please choose one subject only, for Priority 1, 2 and 3)



	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Response count	
Expand membership	50.0% (5)	20.0% (2)	30.0% (3)	10	
Produce more flowcharts	17.6% (3)	47.1% (8)	35.3% (6)	17	
Develop more materials for non-biomedical journals	58.7% (27)	23.9% (11)	17.4% (8)	46	
Produce distance learning programme	45.5% (10)	31.8% (7)	22.7% (5)	22	
Review best practice document	32.3% (10)	29.0% (9)	38.7% (12)	31	
Run more seminars and face-to-face meetings	22.2% (2)	55.6% (5)	22.2% (2)	9	
Develop more rapid responses to members' cases (eg, online)	40.0% (10)	16.0% (4)	44.0% (11)	25	
Fund more research into publication ethics	24.0% (6)	32.0% (8)	44.0% (11)	25	
Develop a certification programme for journals (to confirm that they follow accepted ethical practices)	34.1% (14)	31.7% (13)	34.1% (14)	41	
Provide a professional audit service for journals (COPE would audit, for a fee)	14.3% (2)	35.7% (5)	50.0% (7)	14	
Run face-to-face training courses for editors	25.8% (8)	58.1% (18)	16.1% (5)	31	
Develop training for authors and researchers	29.6% (16)	35.2% (19)	35.2% (19)	54	
Other	40.0% (2)	20.0% (1)	40.0% (2)	5	
<b>Number of participants for Q17 and as % of total participants</b>				<b>117</b>	<b>77.5%</b>

# Q18

What other services would you like COPE to provide for its members?  
(please rank them where 0 = no interest and 4 = very interested)



	0 (no interest)	1	2	3	4 (very interested)	Response count
Code of Conduct and Best Practice for publishers	5.7% (6)	9.5% (10)	18.1% (19)	32.4% (34)	34.3% (36)	105
Publication ethics handbook (ONLINE)	2.7% (3)	9.8% (11)	10.7% (12)	31.3% (35)	45.5% (51)	112
Publication ethics handbook (PRINTED)	29.0% (29)	21.0% (21)	16.0% (16)	16.0% (16)	18.0% (18)	100
Guidance for authors on publication ethics	3.6% (4)	6.3% (7)	8.1% (9)	31.5% (35)	50.5% (56)	111
Guidance for reviewers on publication ethics	1.8% (2)	9.6% (11)	10.5% (12)	31.6% (36)	46.5% (53)	114
Suggested wording relating to publication ethics for journal instructions to authors	6.4% (7)	6.4% (7)	11.9% (13)	33.9% (37)	41.3% (45)	109
Other	63.2% (12)	0.0% (0)	10.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	26.3% (5)	19
<b>Number of participants for Q18 and as % of total participants</b>						

(figures in parentheses are number of responses for each choice)

## Q18 (continued)

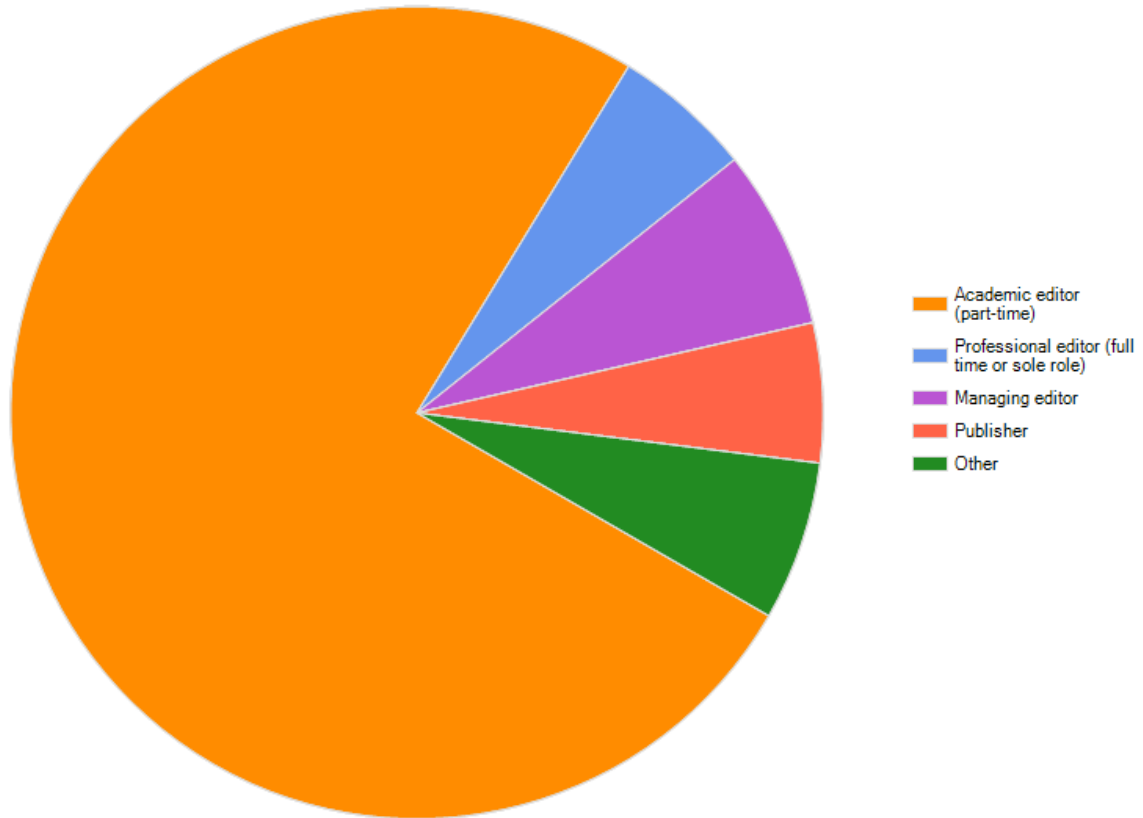
### Other services for COPE to develop (free text, answers verbatim)

much of this covers my previous 'other' comment
Develop monitoring of duplicate submissions across different journals.
No real point in reinventing the wheel. There are already plenty of codes of conduct for research and publication ethics; the problem is not the writing and publication of them so much as making sure people have read them and abide by them.
Working as editor I don't have time to read anything in addition to manuscripts and write letters about reviewing. If you want to do something useful, find a way to reward scientists who answer questions concerning reviewing. This is now such a problem that I am afraid the whole system of reviewing is falling apart
Guidance to editors on detecting problems in publication ethics
As stated previously, COPE is an excellent forum in which to promote publication guidelines and ethical conduct to all individuals undertaking publication. It is important to get the information to students, junior researchers and more experienced authors. This is similar to best practices utilized by Institutional Review Boards that must be reviewed for permission to conduct clinical trials.
NB With regard to Handbook (paper or online) , the recent book by Hames covers most things in concert with the COPE flowcharts



# Q19

How would you describe your editorial role?



	Response %	Response count	
Academic editor (part-time)	75.4%	98	
Professional editor (full time or sole role)	6.9%	9	
Managing editor	5.4%	7	
Publisher	6.9%	9	
Other (see below)	5.4%	7	
<b>Number of participants for Q19 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>130</b>	<b>86.1%</b>

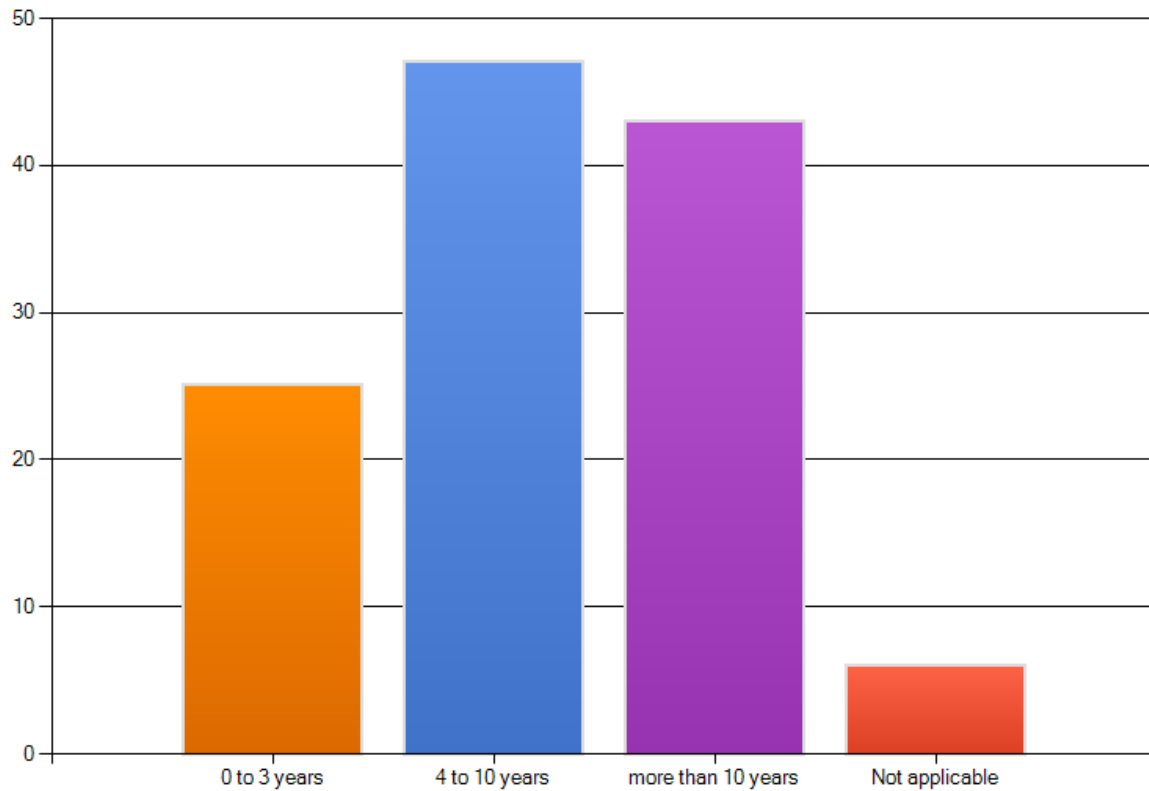
## Q19 (continued)

### Other job titles/roles

Publication Planning – Biotech
I hold two roles as academic editor (part-time) and as managing editor (part-time) for two journals
Consultant
Secretary
Publications Manager
research fellow
Former managing editor. Currently a consultant on academic writing and publication ethics
I am the only expert in the field as I have devoted my entire time after my graduation.
Author,Reviewer
academic EIC almost full-time

## Q20

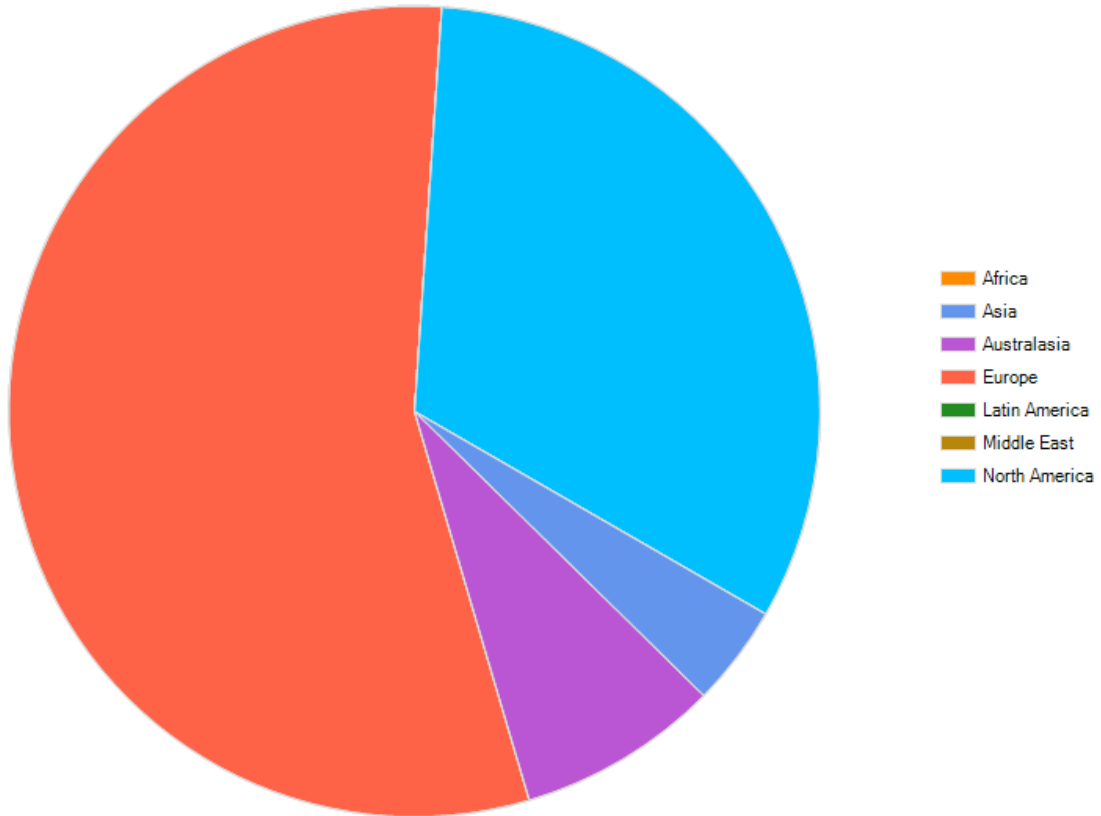
If you edit a journal, how long have you been doing this? (include time with journals other than your present one, where applicable)



	Response %	Response count	
0 to 3 years	20.8%	26	
4 to 10 years	39.2%	49	
more than 10 years	35.2%	44	
Not applicable	4.8%	6	
<b>Number of participants for Q20 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>82.8%</b>

# Q21

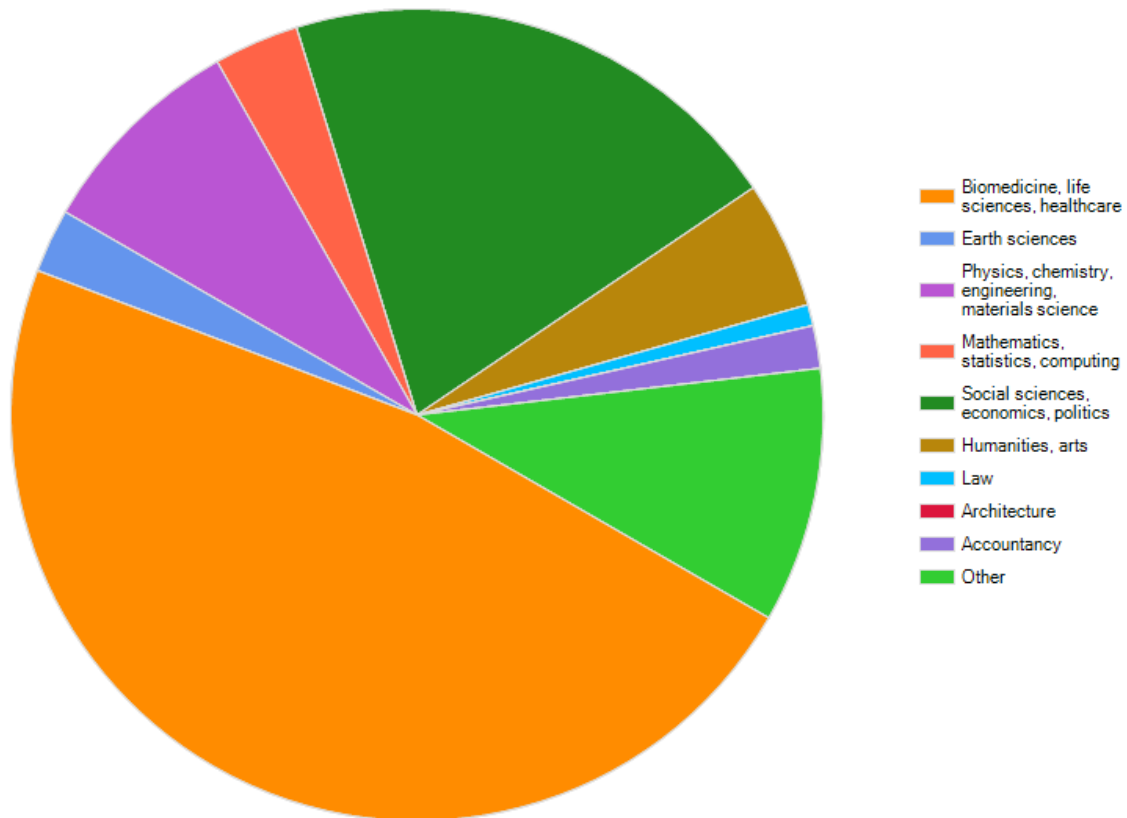
Where do you work? (where you are normally located for your work)



	Response %	Response count	
Africa	0.0%	0	
Asia	3.9%	5	
Australasia	8.6%	11	
Europe	54.7%	70	
Latin America	0.0%	0	
Middle East	0.0%	0	
North America	32.8%	42	
<b>Number of participants for Q21 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>128</b>	<b>84.8%</b>

## Q22

What subjects are covered in your journal?



	Response %	Response count	
Biomedicine, life sciences, healthcare	48.4%	59	
Earth sciences	2.5%	3	
Physics, chemistry, engineering, materials science	8.2%	10	
Mathematics, statistics, computing	3.3%	4	
Social sciences, economics, politics	19.7%	24	
Humanities, arts	4.9%	6	
Law	0.8%	1	
Architecture	0.0%	0	
Accountancy	1.6%	2	
Other	10.7%	13	
<b>Number of participants for Q22 and as % of total participants</b>		<b>122</b>	<b>80.8%</b>

Q22 (continued)

Other topics covered by Members' journals

information systems, computing, management
Fuel and Power Technology
social work management
Philosophy:Ethics/Law/Criminal Justice
Agriculture, Sugar industry, Sugar engineering, Sugar Crops
Theology
Optical Engineering
microbiology, environmental science
psychology and psychiatry
Transport – interdisciplinary

## Q23

### Other comments about COPE (free text answers, reported verbatim)

As everyone I work with is busy and I share any COPE alerts with colleagues on the journals and any cases that I think may be relevant. However, most of your case examples are from biomed and not always relevant to the journals I work on.
I hope to attend future meetings in the US or UK
How does Cope measure its success?
Always delete e-mails. Never looks worgh reading.
Cannot think of anything useful to say.
COPE is a very valuable organisation - if my answers to this questionnaire tend to suggest otherwise, it is only because I have not yet had to deal with a misconduct case on my own journal.
I got three copies of this survey emailed to me - please check and clean your database.
I am a relatively new member, working as the Editor of a knowledge tranfer journal in a branch of the social sciences. I am not very familiar with COPE activities and resources. My overwhelming impression is that COPE is very heavily oriented to issues in the medical sciences.
I have never heard of you before - promte COPE more widely.
I think COPE is fundamenteally good, but it is just one more thing to read and I haven't found the time.
Your website needs serious revamping. I assume good resources are there but seem REALLY HARD to find.