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CustomerInsights

# TRUST IN RESEARCH

Researcher survey results

June 2019



# Background and approach

**Research objective is to:** Examine the drivers and influences on the communication of scholarly research.

## About the survey

### Trust in research survey

- 3133 researchers responded to a survey of 98160 individuals randomly selected from database of 3.6 million researchers (3.2 % response rate).
- Survey tool: Co-branded (Elsevier and Sense About Science) online survey available in English only. Survey took 15 minutes to complete (median average). Fieldwork took place in May 2019.

### Search and discovery activities

- 1450 researchers responded to a survey of 105418 individuals randomly selected from database of 3.6 million researchers (1.4% response rate).
- Survey tool: Unbranded online survey available in English only. Survey took 17 minutes to complete (median average). Fieldwork took place in Jan-Feb 2019.
- Results: Responses have been weighted to be representative of the global researcher population by country (UNESCO 2014 data). Base sizes shown in this report are unweighted unless otherwise stated



## About Sense About Science

Sense about Science is an independent charity that challenges misrepresentation of science and evidence in public life.

## About Elsevier

A global information analytics business specializing in science and health helping institutions and professionals progress science, advance healthcare and improve performance for the benefit of humanity.



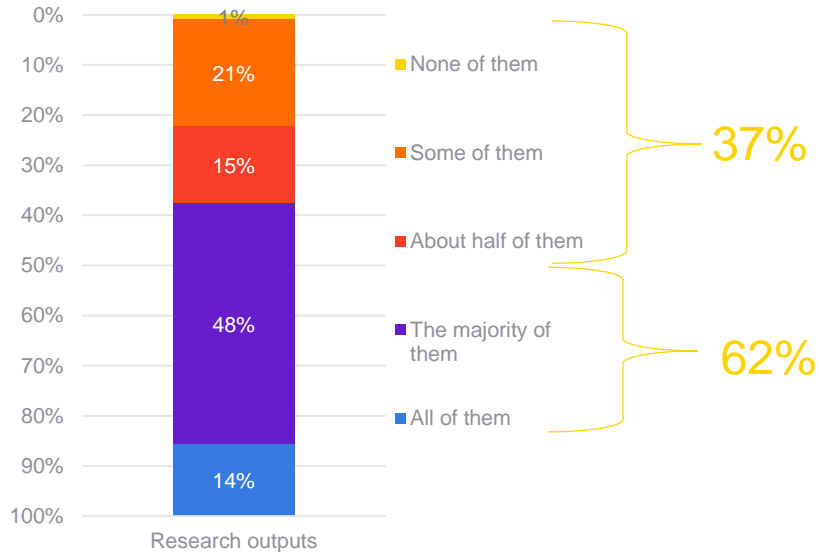
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# TRUST IN RESEARCH OVERVIEW OF RESULTS



**TRUSTWORTHINESS OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS:** Although 62% of researchers trust the majority of research outputs, a proportion doubt the quality of some of the research outputs they encounter. To compensate they check supplementary material/data carefully, read only information associated with peer reviewed journals or seek corroboration from other trusted sources.

Thinking about the various research outputs that you interacted with (or encountered) last week what proportion of the outputs would you consider trustworthy?



Base: All respondents (n=3133)

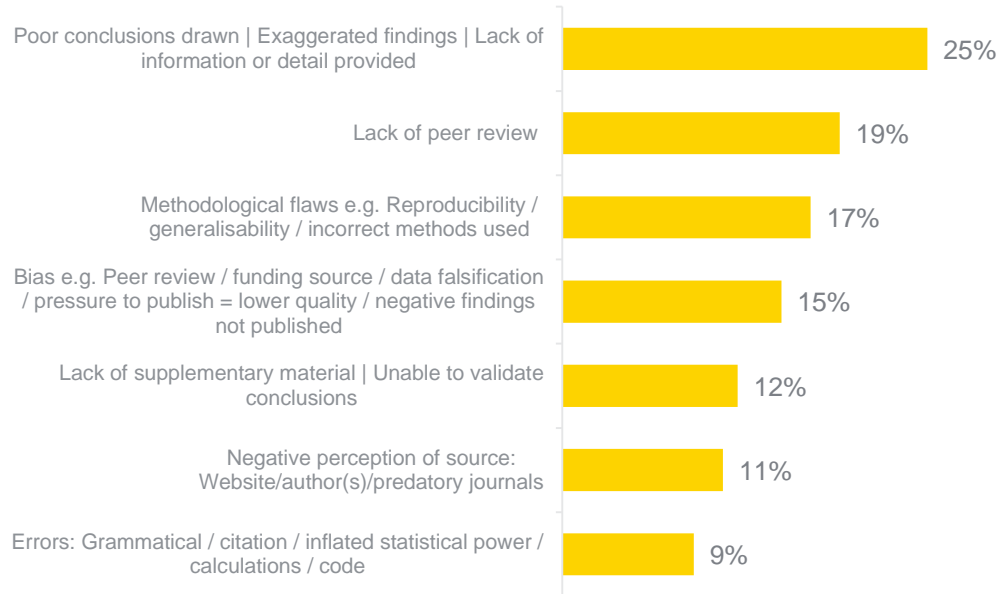
Which of the following mechanisms do you employ to compensate for any lack of confidence you have in the content you are considering reading/accessing?



Base: All respondents that do not think all research outputs are trustworthy (n=2715)

## Reasons research outputs are regarded as untrustworthy: 86% of researchers rate at least some outputs as untrustworthy; the main reasons are poor interpretation, lack of clarity of the peer review process and flaws in the methodology

You indicated that some/all of the research outputs are trustworthy. Why do you think all/some of the content you encounter is not trustworthy?



"There's always someone trying to pull the wool over your eyes. Within your own field this can be easier to detect but it's less easy to determine when scouting subjects that you are less familiar with." (Materials Science, United Kingdom, 46 to 55)

"Not familiar with the journals or media/not sure what the peer review process might be, or how reviewers are selected" (Psychology, United States of America, 26 to 35)

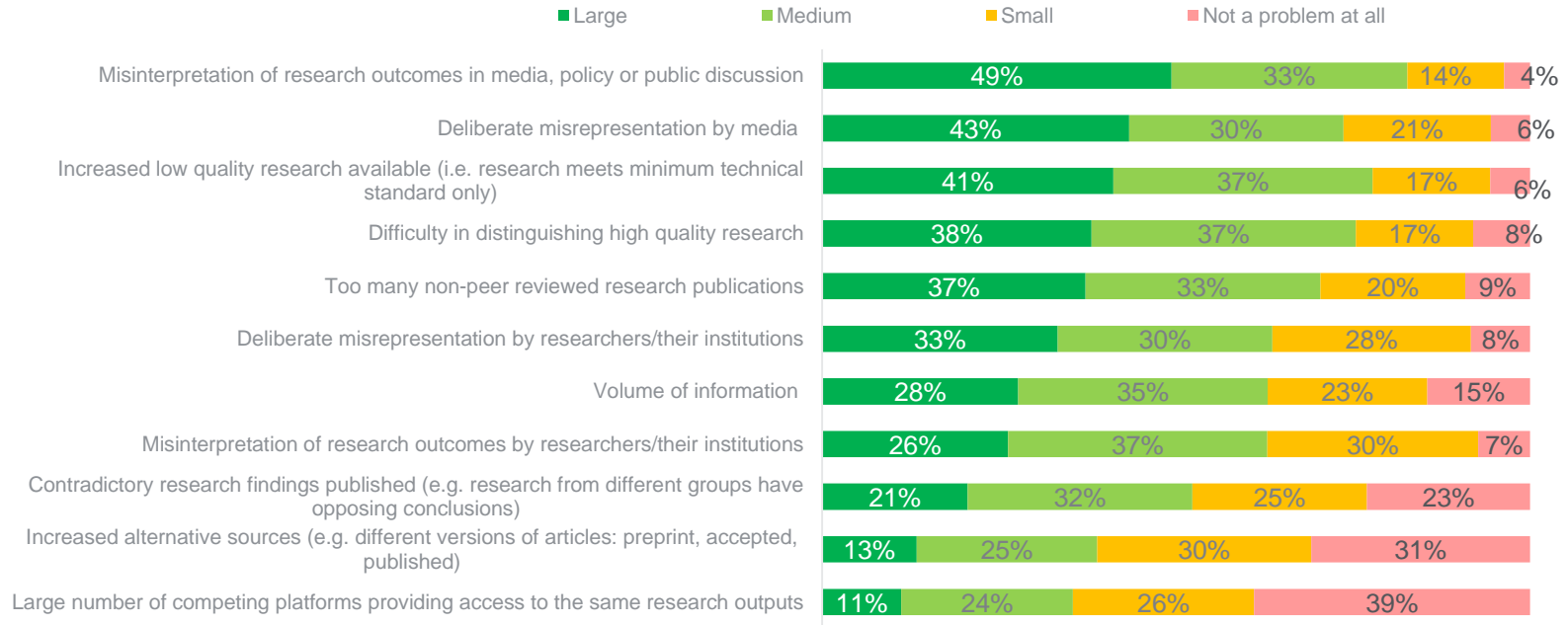
"Experiments poorly designed, some analyses seemed suspect, areas that I know well improperly characterized" (Environmental Sciences, Canada, Over 65)

"There is published Research biased by financial or other Support to the authors and not properly declared." (Medicine and Allied Health, Switzerland, 56 to 65)

"Authors often do not provide data/code/tools/proper description of the scenarios used for the evaluation contained in their papers. In particular, the correctness of code used for simulations reported in papers is often unverifiable." (Computer Sciences / IT, Brazil, 26 to 35)

# PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN RESEARCH EVIDENCE: biggest problem seen to be misinterpretation or deliberate misrepresentation by the media as well as difficulty identifying high quality research.

Thinking about public confidence in research evidence, how much, if at all, do you believe any of the following are a problem?



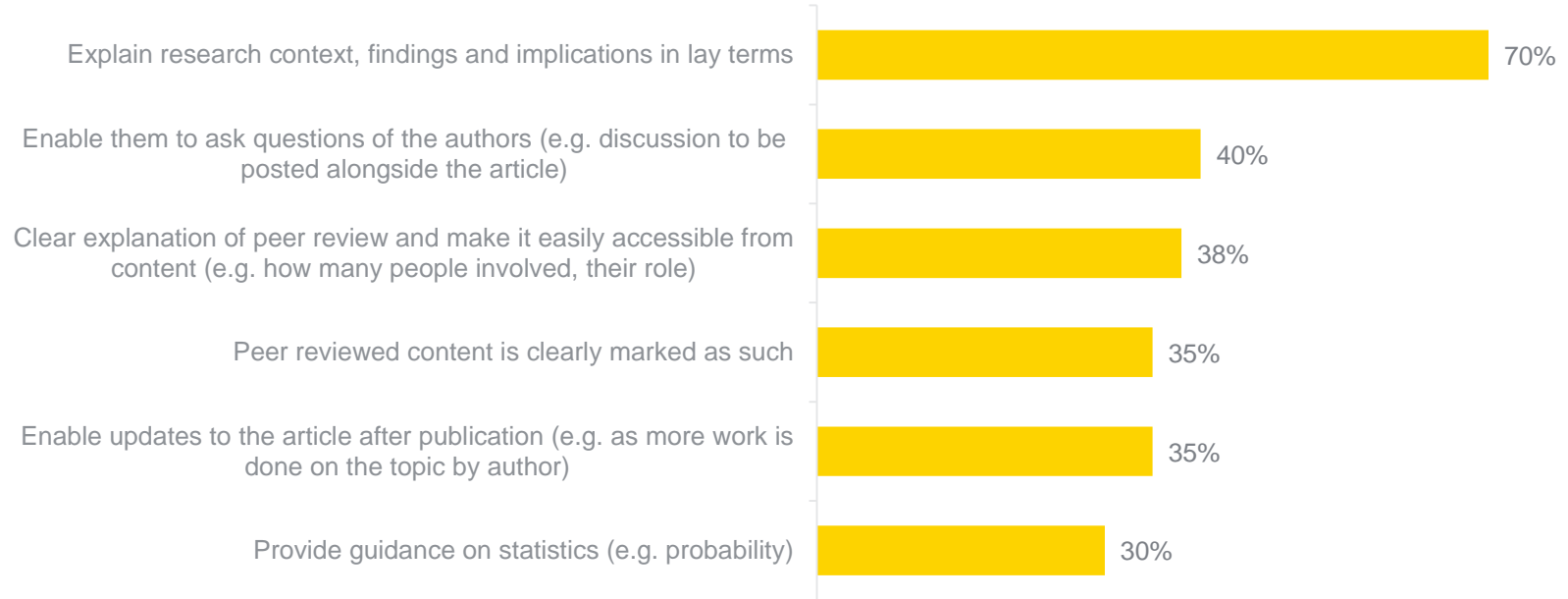
Base: All respondents (n=3133)

21.08.2019

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# COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC: Explaining research in lay terms is seen as the best way to help people outside the research community judge the quality of research

To help people outside the research community judge the quality of research articles they view, which of the following would be most helpful



Base: All respondents (n=3133)

# TRUST IN RESEARCH

## Demographics

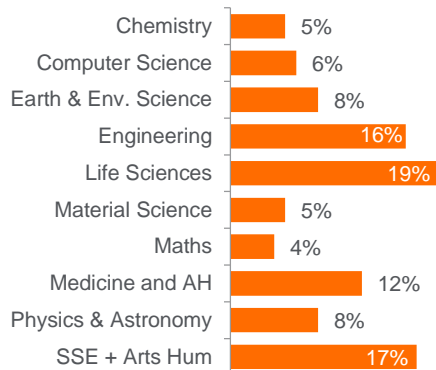




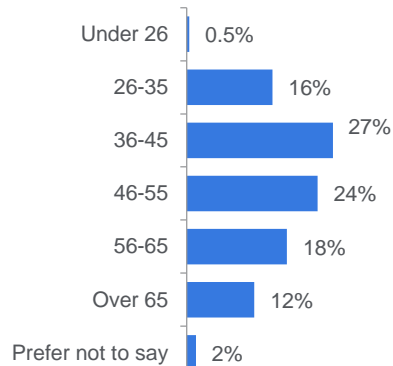
# Demographics

N=3133

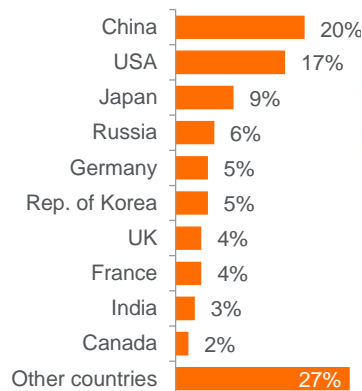
## Subject



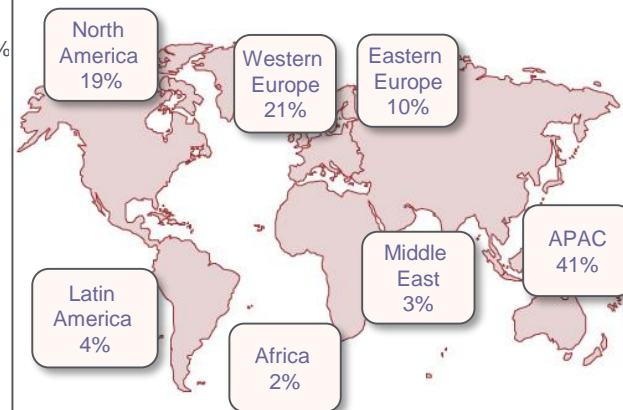
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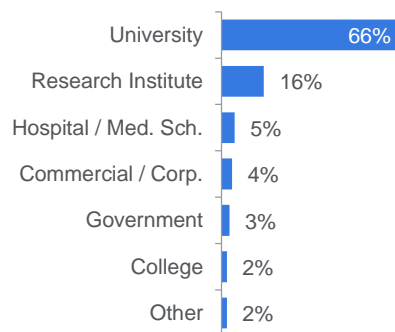
## Country



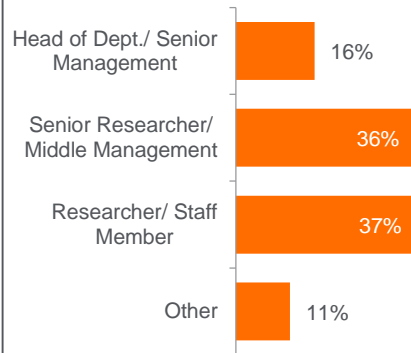
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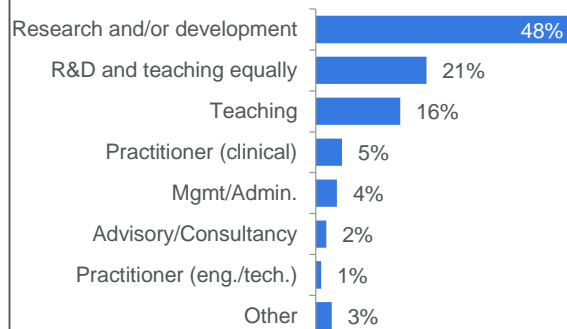
## Organization



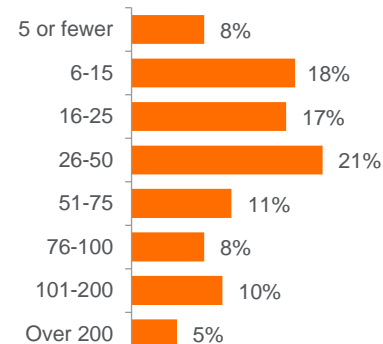
## Position



## Role



## Number of articles published



# SEARCH AND DISCOVERY ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW OF RESULTS



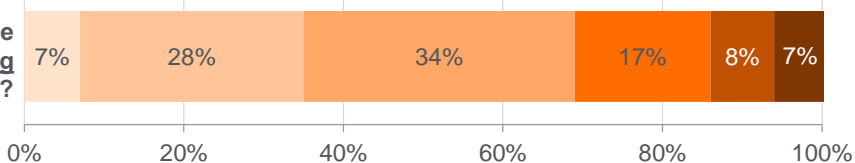
# SEARCH AND DISCOVERY OVERVIEW: On average, researchers spend just over four hours searching for research articles a week and more than 5 hours reading them. They read 5-6 articles per week and half are considered useful

■ Less than an hour 
 ■ 1 to 2 hours 
 ■ 3 to 5 hours 
 ■ 6 to 10 hours 
 ■ 11 to 15 hours 
 ■ More than 15 hours

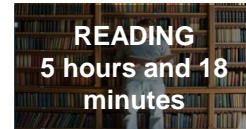
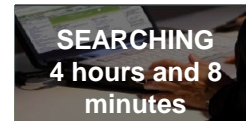
On average how much time do you spend searching for research articles per week?



On average how much time do you spend reading research articles per week?



**2019 Average (mean)**



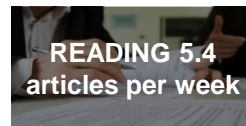
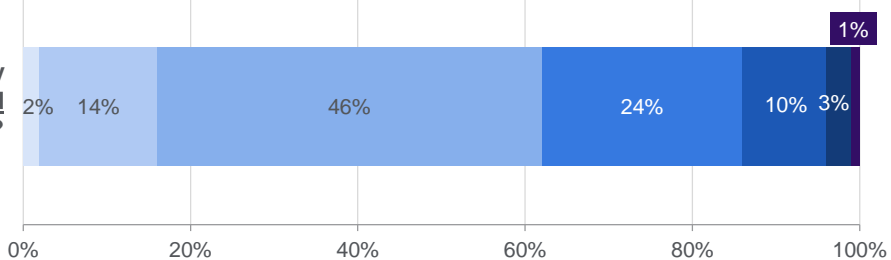
**2011 Average (mean)**

**SEARCHING**  
3 hours and 42 minutes

**Reading**  
5 hours and 36 minutes

■ None 
 ■ 1 article 
 ■ 2 to 4 articles 
 ■ 5 to 9 articles 
 ■ 10 to 15 articles 
 ■ 16 to 30 articles 
 ■ More than 30 articles

On average how many articles do you read per week?



**READING 6**  
articles per week

Approximately what percentage of the research articles you read per week do you find useful?

**51%**

50% in 2016

56% in 2013

\* 'Articles downloaded' in 2013 and 2014

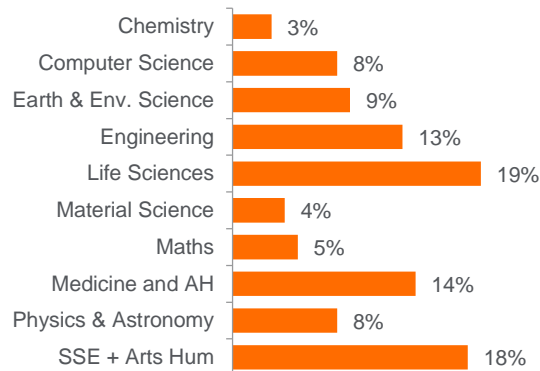
Base: 2016 n= 1691; 2014 n=2344; 2013 n=3001

# SEARCH AND DISCOVERY

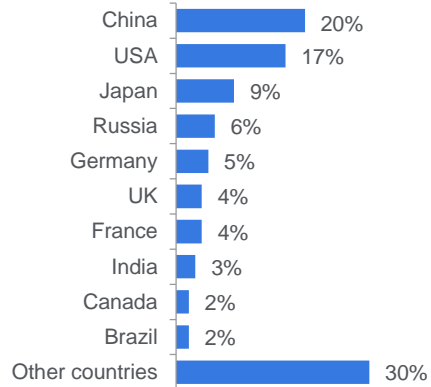
## Demographics



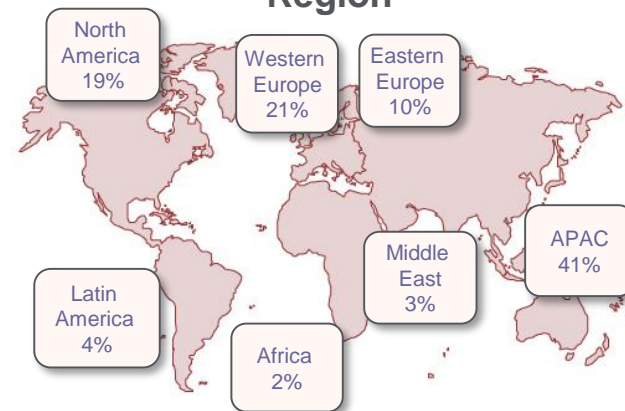
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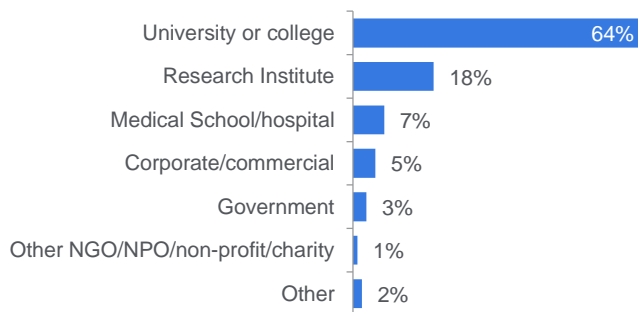
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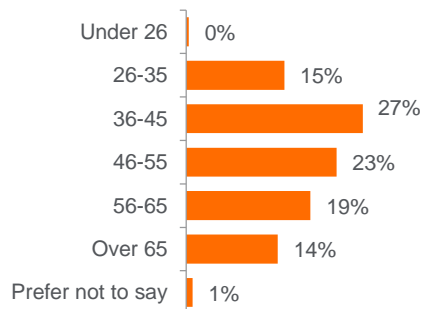
## Region



## Organization



## Age



## Position

