On August 15, 2016 and for three weeks, the Support and Safety team surveyed four different key audiences: functionaries, non-functionaries, academics and industry professionals.

The topic of the surveys was training modules, Support and Safety's key project for 2016-2017. This report presents the academics survey results.

It attracted 37 responses from academics from various educational institutions.

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Existing training

Q. Are you aware of training that has mitigated online harassment in any online community or improved the preparedness of volunteers to assist others in dealing with online harassment?

Of the 37 academics who responded to this survey, the vast majority of them (91.9%) said they were not aware of any training that actually mitigated online harassment in any online community or improved the preparedness of volunteers to assist others in dealing with online harassment. [Chart 1]

Regarding those that were successful, the academics suggested that peer pressure and active leadership within the communities were key factors: "active leadership from the top".
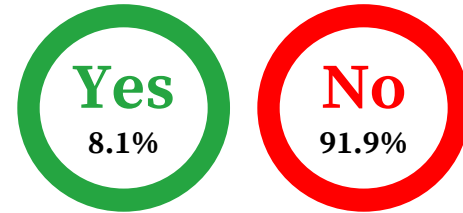
Yes
8.1%

No
91.9%

Chart 1

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Measure of success

Q. How would you measure success of an online training project focusing on mitigating online harassment and/or assisting victims of online harassment?

This question received 18 responses comprising open text answers, which were roughly categorised based on their content in the following categories:

- No answer / not sure
- More inclusion
- Improving recognition of harassment
- More space & methods to counter harassment
- Reducing incidents of harassment
- Surveys of victims and/or functionaries
- More victims reporting harassment

Seven of these responses (38.9%) cited a reduction in incidences of harassment as a major factor in measuring success of an online training project about this. Other popular measures of success included bettering the community's recognition of harassment (22.2%) and regular surveys of harassment victims and/or the functionaries dealing with this harassment (22.2%). 22.2% of the respondents stated that they had no answer to this question, or that there were no effective methods of measuring success. Others suggested a training project would be successful if it led to more inclusion, more space and methods to counter harassment, or more victims reporting harassment. [Chart 2]

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Measure of success

Response breakdown

% of Academics mentioning themes

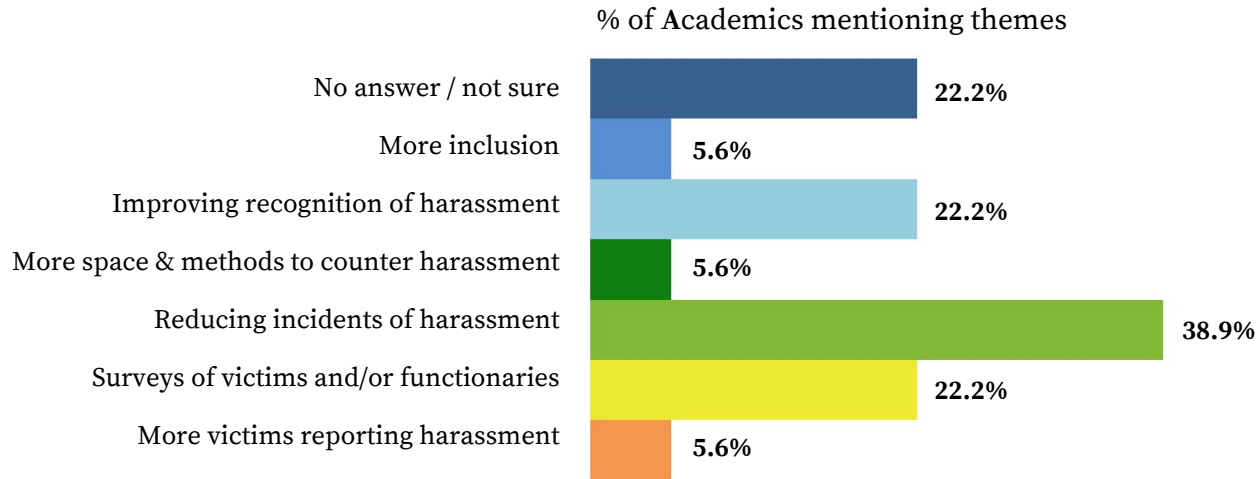| Theme	%
No answer / not sure	22.2%
More inclusion	5.6%
Improving recognition of harassment	22.2%
More space & methods to counter harassment	5.6%
Reducing incidents of harassment	38.9%
Surveys of victims and/or functionaries	22.2%
More victims reporting harassment	5.6%

Chart 2

*Note: Responses may fall into more than one category

Teaching factors

Q. What factors do you feel we should keep in mind in teaching people how to differentiate between harassment and legitimate debate, particularly on controversial topics?

This question received 18 responses comprising open text answers, which were also roughly categorised based on their content, in the following categories:

- Speaking to those who have experienced harassment
- Power of individuals involved
- Offensiveness/ad hominem attacks
- Mistaking disagreements with harassment
- Vocabulary/choice of words
- "Emotional trigger warnings"
- Importance of free speech
- Showing examples of both sides
- Bias

The most popular response was learning to recognise ad hominem attacks, which several respondents said do not form part of rational debate (38.9%). Another popular sentiment was that not confusing disagreements with actual harassment was the most important factor here (33.3%). 16.7% of those responding explicitly said that maintaining participants' rights to free speech was important for healthy debate, and should not be stifled. Other responses included: Bearing in mind the power of individuals involved (11.1%); vocabulary/choice of words (11.1%); speaking to those who have experienced harassment (5.6%); "emotional trigger warnings" (5.6%); showing examples of both harassment and rational debate for comparison (5.6%); avoiding systemic, racial and gender biases (5.6%). [Chart 3]

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Teaching factors

Factor breakdown

% of Academics mentioning themes

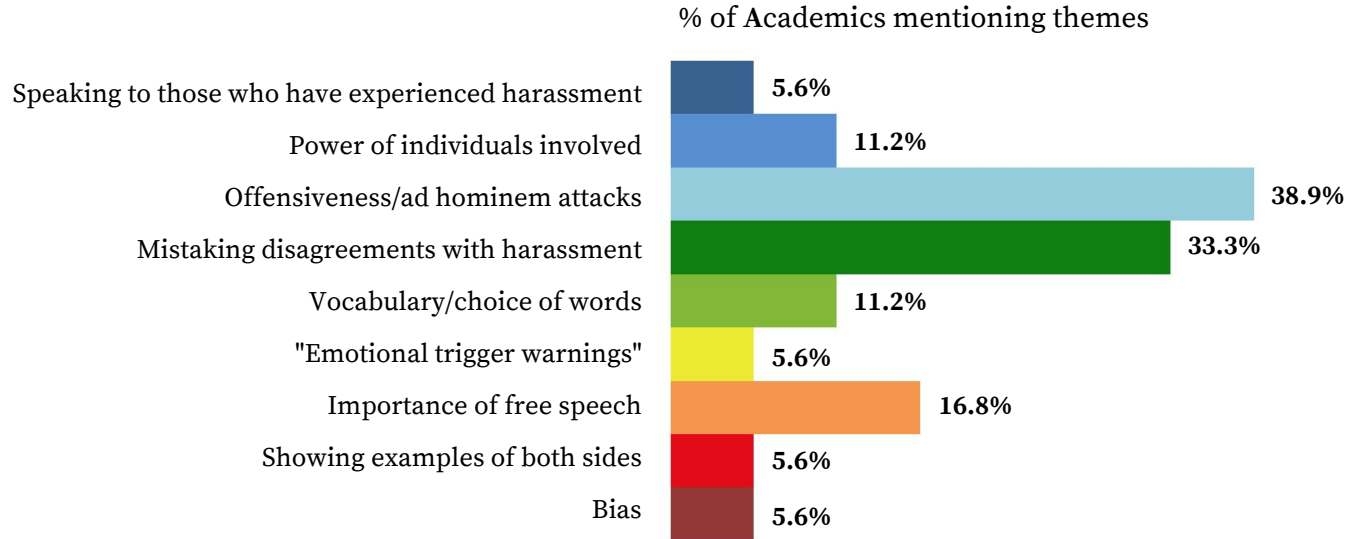| Category	Value
Speaking to those who have experienced harassment	5.6%
Power of individuals involved	11.2%
Offensiveness/ad hominem attacks	38.9%
Mistaking disagreements with harassment	33.3%
Vocabulary/choice of words	11.2%
"Emotional trigger warnings"	5.6%
Importance of free speech	16.8%
Showing examples of both sides	5.6%
Bias	5.6%

Chart 3

*Note: Responses may fall into more than one category

Topic area research

Q. Are you aware of research on the best ways for online communities to:
(Please select all that apply and share paper titles or links, if possible.)

Respondents were asked to indicate if they were aware of research in the following topic areas, listed here by the number of respondents replying "yes" [Chart 4]:

- Create and deploy policies that prevent harassment within communities (5)
- Raise awareness and understanding of the realities of harassment, in relation to cultural values or differences (3)
- Recognise and reach consensus on an operative definition of "harassment" (3)
- Handle, to the satisfaction of the largest number of involved parties, individual types of harassment or individual harassment cases (2)
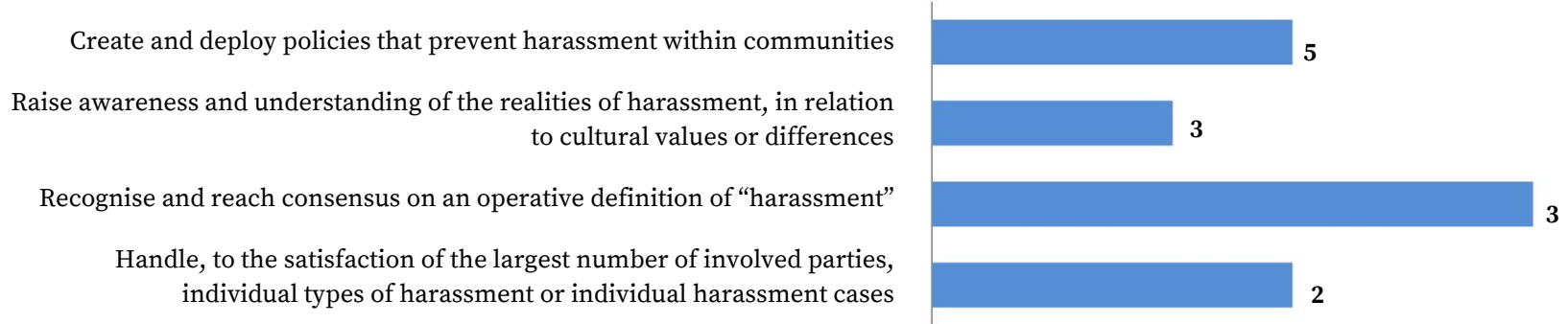
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Topic area research

Suggestion breakdown

Create and deploy policies that prevent harassment within communities
5

Raise awareness and understanding of the realities of harassment, in relation to cultural values or differences
3

Recognise and reach consensus on an operative definition of "harassment"
3

Handle, to the satisfaction of the largest number of involved parties, individual types of harassment or individual harassment cases
2

Chart 4

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Events guidance

Q. Are there any efforts at your institution or related entities, addressing conduct at in-person events and/or providing guidance on handling issues?

Of the 18 academics responding to this question, seven (36.4%) said they were aware of efforts at their institution addressing conduct at events or providing guidance on handling issues. [Chart 5]
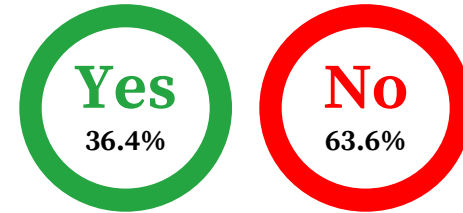
Four of the six (66.7%) who provided descriptions for these materials stated they were hosted by their university or other similar institution. Others said their efforts were either hosted online (16.7%) or didn't provide a link because they weren't effective (16.7%). [Chart 6]
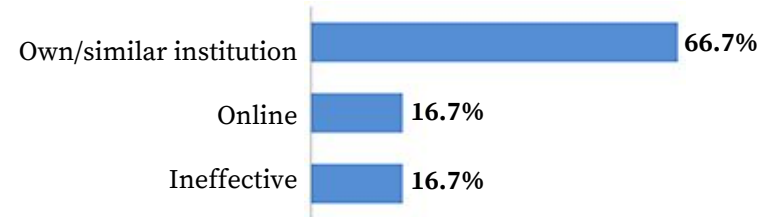
Yes
36.4%

No
63.6%

Chart 5

Own/similar institution	66.7%
Online	16.7%
Ineffective	16.7%

Chart 6

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Scholarly research

Q. Do you know of any scholarly research on the topic of preventing/educating about conduct issues at conventions, conferences or events?

Only two respondents (10.5%) were aware of any scholarly research on the topic of preventing/educating about conduct issues at conventions, conferences or events. [Chart 7]

Resources linked included:
- the British Philosophical Association
- the Feminist Philosophers blog
- an article from Briarpatch Magazine on the harms of call-out culture.
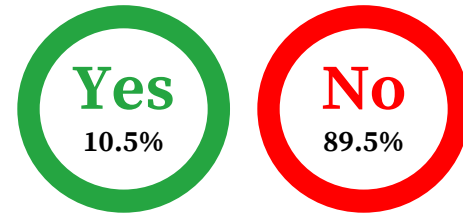

Yes
10.5%

No
89.5%

Chart 7

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Module format

Q. What formats of optional training, regardless of topic, do you believe to be effective in volunteer-led or crowd-sourced environments?

19 of the academics gave their opinions about the most appropriate format for optional training in an environment like the Wikimedia communities, by selecting one or more of the following options [Chart 8]:

- Video
- Audio
- Single page of text
- "Tutorial" or "how-to" style
- Interactive, with activities or quizzes
- "Gamified" training, possibly with incentives
- Longform articles
- Other

The one "other" believed that debating cases deemed problematic in public was a more effective strategy in this situation.

Module format

Preferred format breakdown

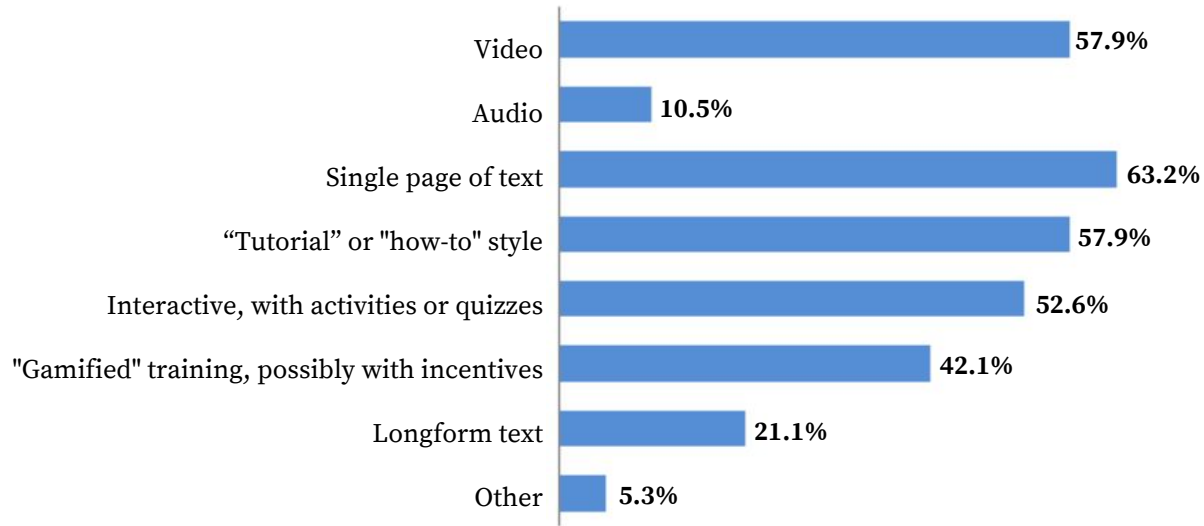| Format	Percentage
Video	57.9%
Audio	10.5%
Single page of text	63.2%
"Tutorial" or "how-to" style	57.9%
Interactive, with activities or quizzes	52.6%
"Gamified" training, possibly with incentives	42.1%
Longform text	21.1%
Other	5.3%

Chart 8

*Note: Responses may fall into more than one category

THANK YOU

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