SCOTINFORM

Civic Digits Industry Research

12 November 2024

Introduction

- Civic Digits is an organisation that uses digital technology, gaming and live performance to create interactive events and experiences with a focus on citizenship and social issues.

- Civic Digits has recently been awarded funding for an 18-month project by Creative Scotland. The funding is being used to deliver monthly 'Light Bulb Sessions' with participants (artists, venues, technologists) that aim to understand and develop responses to data driven theatre and how theatre might respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by the use of data and technology.

- In early 2023 Scotinform worked with Civic Digits to undertake research with the creative sector, testing the extent to which artists and venues were using technology to engage with audiences, and assessing the appetite for doing so in the future.

- Civic Digits was keen to understand the extent to which attitudes and behaviour have changed since 2023, and to create a 'baseline' of attitudes to the use of digital technology that can be monitored as the Light Bulb Sessions progress.

Research Objectives

The purpose of the research was to engage with the creative and cultural sector to determine:

- The extent to which creators are currently engaging with audiences on their own devices during performances
- What creators are currently doing
- Whether they would be interested in engaging in this way in the future, and why/why not
- An understanding of the motivations for, and barriers to, engaging with digital audiences in this way
- The level of interest in a technological solution provided by Civic Digits

Civic Digits was also keen to understand whether attitudes and behaviours had changed since January 2023.

Research Methodology

- Scotinform designed an online survey, approved by Civic Digits and its communication partner, Eragona Communications.

- This was sent to a 'warm' database of contacts created by Eragona Communications and shared on social media channels.

- Respondents were invited to 'snowball' the survey distribution by sharing with their own contacts if they felt this was relevant.

- Scotinform also shared the survey to all those who had consented to being contacted in the 2023 survey, and to its own clients where relevant.

- As an incentive, Civic Digits committed to sharing the results of the research.

- The survey opened on 28 August 2024 and closed on 31 October 2024. During this period 40 responses were received. This compares with 32 responses in 2023.

- The research coincided with a period of great financial uncertainty in the creative sector in Scotland. We are aware of a number of surveys circulating during the research period as campaigners and policy makers attempted to understand the implications of this uncertainty. This may have impacted on the visibility and response rate for the Civic Digits research.

Reporting

- Please note that this is a small sample size and caution should be used in assuming that the findings reflect the whole sector.

- In order to aid comparison with 2023 we have reported most of the data using percentages, but please quote the sample size when referencing the data to avoid misrepresentation. For transparency the 'Respondent Profile' section uses data counts rather than percentage figures.

- Where responses do not total 100% this is due to multiple response, no response or rounding.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Creative Role

Role	2024	2023
Writer	22	14
Performer	20	9
Director	11	16
Producer	9	4
Creative Technologist	5	n/a
Venue programmer	4	3
Academic	3	6
Something else	4	6

- In comparison with 2023, the 2024 sample contained more writers, performers and producers and fewer academics and creators.

- Five respondents described themselves as 'creative technologists', a term not used in the 2023 survey.

- Please note that respondents were able to select more than one option.

Artform

Role	2024	2023
Theatre	31	28
Literature and spoken word	14	8
Visual arts	7	5
Digital art	6	9
Film	6	7
Dance	6	8
Comedy	5	4
Contemporary music	5	7
Classical music	4	5
Craft	1	0
Other	5	0

- As in 2023, the sample contained a wide range of artforms. Theatre and literature/spoken word were the most cited.
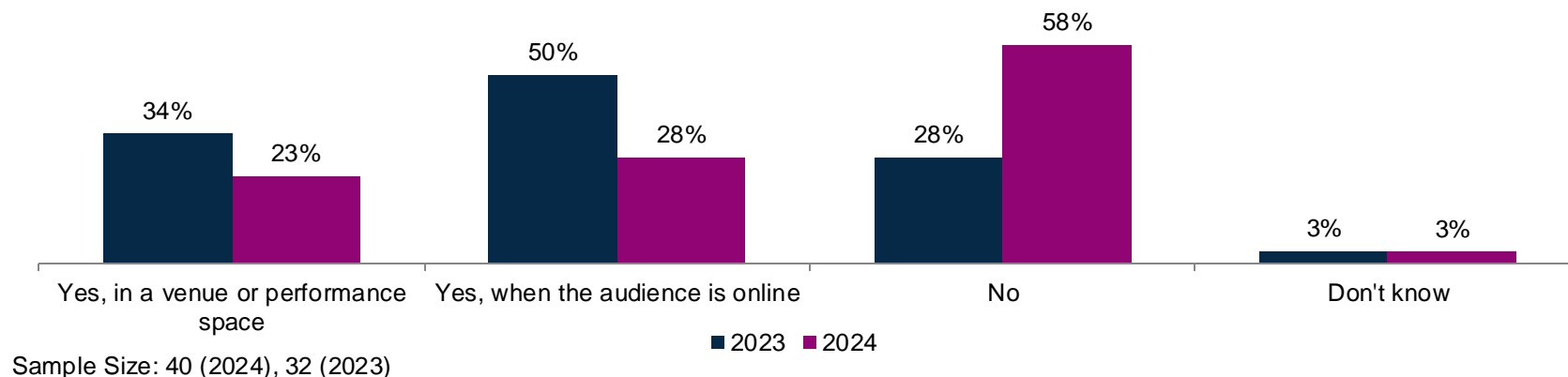
Location

Role	2024	2023
Scotland	38	22
Elsewhere in the UK	1	7
Outside the UK	0	3

- The sample in 2024 was more Scotland-focussed than in 2023.
- Within Scotland, respondents were most likely to be based in Edinburgh (10 respondents) or Glasgow (8 respondents).
- 14 local authorities were covered in total: Edinburgh and Glasgow plus South Lanarkshire, Midlothian, Highland, Fife and East Lothian (all 2 respondents each), and West Lothian, Scottish Borders, North Ayrshire, Falkirk, Dumfries and Galloway, Argyll and Bute and Aberdeenshire.
- The geographic coverage of the sample therefore includes both urban and rural areas.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT WITH AUDIENCES

Previous Engagement

Sample Size: 40 (2024), 32 (2023)

Chart values:
- Yes, in a venue or performance space: 34% (2023), 23% (2024)
- Yes, when the audience is online: 50% (2023), 28% (2024)
- No: 28% (2023), 58% (2024)
- Don't know: 3% (2023), 3% (2024)

Legend: 2023, 2024

- Respondents were asked whether they have ever connected or interacted with audiences digitally on their devices (as part of a performance, not for communications).

- 23% of respondents in 2024 have done so in a venue or performance space and 28% have done so with an online audience. 58% have not done this.

- This is quite a different response to 2023, with more respondents not having engaged digitally in 2024 and a particular drop in the proportion who have engaged online. The difference may reflect a widening of the survey to respondents who are less engaged with Civic Digits, as well perhaps a temporary increase in online cultural experiences during the pandemic, which boosted the 2023 findings.

Nature of Engagement (1)

- 15 respondents provided more information about the type of engagement that they have undertaken.

- 5 out of these 15 respondents had streamed live performances. This compares with 10 out of 16 in 2023.

- The balance have undertaken a wide range of performances and experiences that use the technology in a number of different ways and these are summarised below. Overall, the level of innovation and interaction appears higher in 2024 than in 2023, when the experience was more of a passive experience for audiences.

Nature of Engagement (2)

- I have streamed a lot of experimental performance using green screens and background movies/images. I used commands and channel point redeems through the platform itself to create reaction images/change the experience of the audience. I really love experimenting with ways that the digital audience can impact the content that is being performed.

- Connected a small group of people to a local server allowing them to play music together and control live visuals.

- Theatre piece and local artist showcase. In development for this we had posters asking for text-in responses to prompts which were written into the script.

- Running workshops that the audience create animations which are incorporated into the shows. Live video camera work and early still digital cameras that allows members of the audience to appear in our performances as characters Customising the local area footage and introducing it into the storyline

- Interval option to digitally socialise with audience members.

- In a live performance this year, we had audience members answer questions on their devices that were then written into the show.
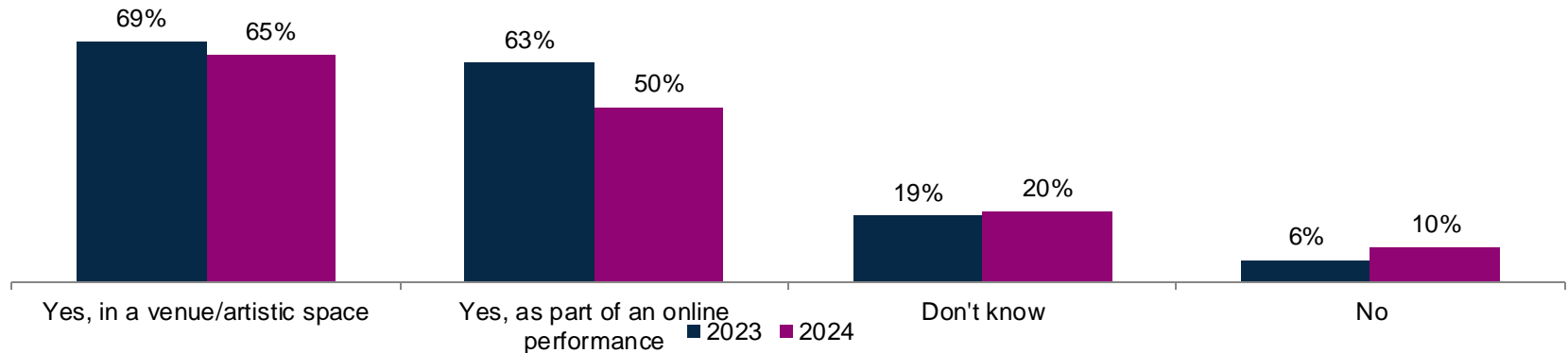
Nature of Engagement (3)

- We used a webpage that the audience could log into and ask questions, live vote, etc

- Our AR experience brought an artwork to life, where the user could pick an element in the artwork such as a flower or a dancer or a child playing, and tapping on them on the AR view would lead them to a website where the user could write their own story about that feature or character.

- Interactive experience with the audience interacting via a webcam and transforming the live webcam feeds with a realtime AI process, which with a simple change of a text prompt could turn them from a Botticelli style painting to a Minecraft character. I also integrated EEG to convert participants' brainwaves into stress and workload levels which could also dynamically change the scene.

- Staged a show that involved digital device interaction with audience participation via Instagram stories

- An immersive storytelling game delivered via an app

Tools Used

14 different tools were mentioned by respondents; other than Zoom and YouTube each was only mentioned by one individual. In comparison with 2023 the list of tools are less focussed on social media and more around creating bespoke content and experiences. The introduction of five creative technologists in the sample this year may account for what appears to be increased specialism in the responses! It is notable that whilst last year respondents were creating their bespoke apps there is a greater use of publicly available software this time around.

- Zoom (4)
- YouTube (2)
- Augmented Reality Software Development Kits (not specified)
- EEG headset
- IMP (Interactive Mobile Participation) prototype mobile app created by the respondent
- Instagram
- Mentimeter
- Meta Quest headset
- Metaio
- MinnitChat
- OBS Studio
- Running ComfyUI
- Twitch
- TouchDesigner
- Wix

Propensity to interact digitally in the future

69%   65%   63%   50%   19%   20%   6%   10%

Yes, in a venue/artistic space   Yes, as part of an online performance   Don't know   No

■ 2023 ■ 2024

Sample Size: 40 (2024), 32 (2023)

- 65% of respondents said that they would be interested in digital interaction with audiences in a venue or artistic space in the future. This is broadly in line with the 69% reported in 2023.

- 50% said that they would like to interact as part of an online performance, a slight drop on the 63% reported in 2023.

- Around a fifth of respondents were unsure and a further 10% said that they would not be interested.

Interest in interacting (1)

The respondents who said that they would be interested in interacting in a venue or artistic space, or online, were asked why. There was so much overlap between the two groups that the comments were very similar for both. The comments focussed on the following themes:

- Creative opportunities (7 respondents)
- Better reflection of the way contemporary audiences live and feel comfortable (5)
- Puts the audience in control/makes them an active player (5)
- Easier access to audiences (3)
- A way to get feedback from audiences (2)

One respondent noted that although they were keen to engage in a performance space they would not do so online because the 'depth of engagement' is not there.

Interest in interacting (2)

- Performance has always experimented with available technology. Lockdown transformed theatre and certainly transformed my views on how theatre can be made.

- I think interaction is essential for engagement and is main distinction between live performance and other art forms. So interacting in digital ways is just a modern extension of how we interact in real life, which should be represented and explored in performance. If not, we are avoiding a key part of today's society and a massive transformational social change going on all around us.

- Engaging, allows accessibility, immersive content, feedback, agency of audience

- A lot more people, especially younger people want to have everything digitally accessible. It makes it easier to find your audiences too (without geographical constraints)

- It's simply a way of potentially attracted a wider audience than demanding everyone turn up at a particularly time and place in advance. In our experience this leads to many last minute cancellations, due to travel disruption. changes of plan etc.

Unsure or not interested

The respondents who were unsure or not interested were asked to explain their answers.

The responses fell into two categories: that they had never considered this before (3 respondents) or that they didn't like screens and devices intruding into performance spaces (2 respondents).

It's never occurred to me to use audiences' devices as part of a performance. I will consider this though.

It simply distracts from the production, pulling attention away from the stage and the essential live interaction that is the whole basis of theatre. We should be watching shows, not watching smart phones and writing and either missing a lot of what is happening on stage or critiquing years of work and artistic input in real time.

MOTIVATIONS FOR DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

'Interacting with audiences on their devices in the venue would improve the quality of the experience'
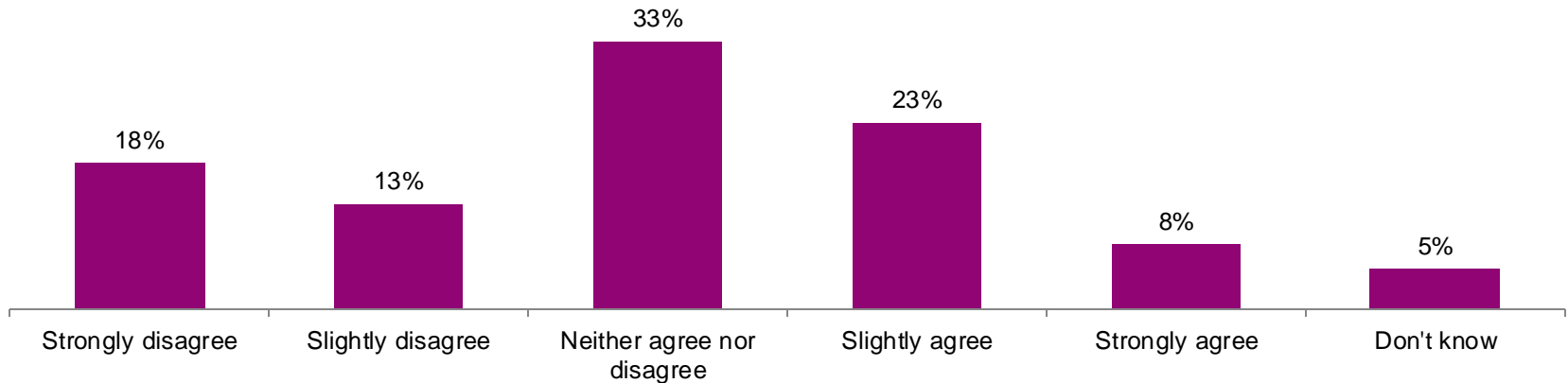
Sample Size: 40

- 8% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 23% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 31%.

- This compares with an overall agreement level of 47% in 2023.

- 18% 'strongly disagree', and 13% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 31%.

- 33% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 5% say that they don't know.

'Interacting with audiences on their devices whilst they are watching an online performance would improve the quality of the experience'
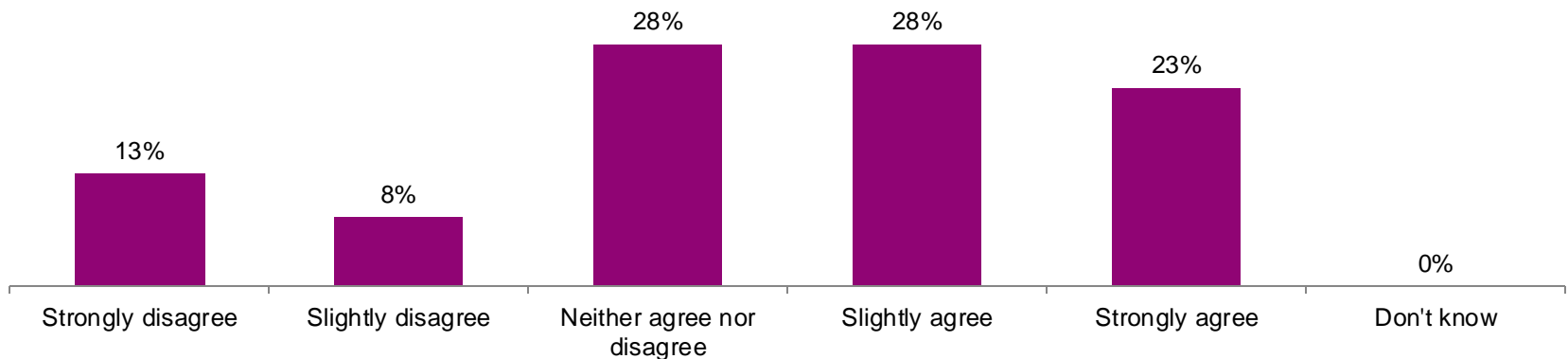
Sample Size: 40

- 23% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 28% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 51%.
- This compares with an overall agreement level of 56% in 2023.
- 13% 'strongly disagree', and 8% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 21%.
- 28% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

'This kind of interaction would appeal to my audiences'
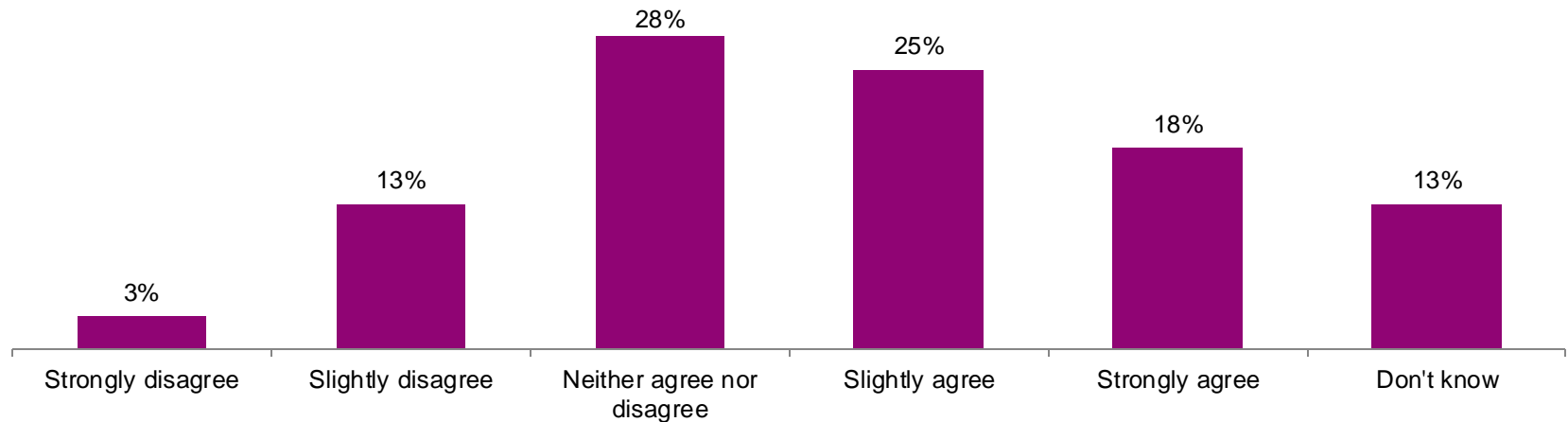
Sample Size: 40

- 18% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 25% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 43%.
- This compares with an overall agreement level of 63% in 2023.
- 3% 'strongly disagree', and 13% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 16%.
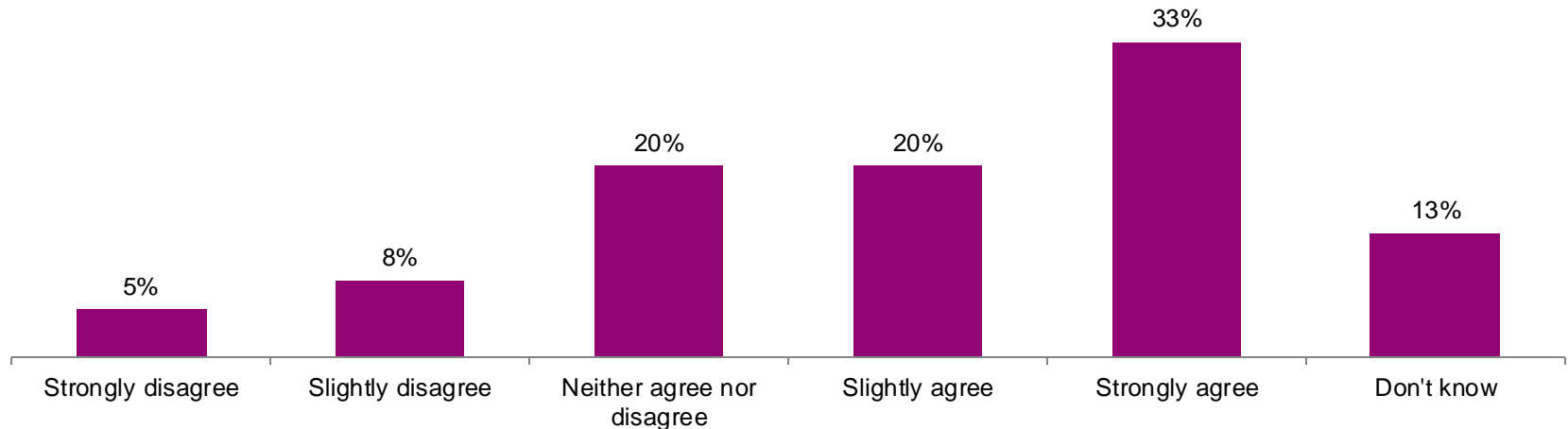- 28% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 13% say that they don't know.

'This kind of interaction would give my audiences a new experience'
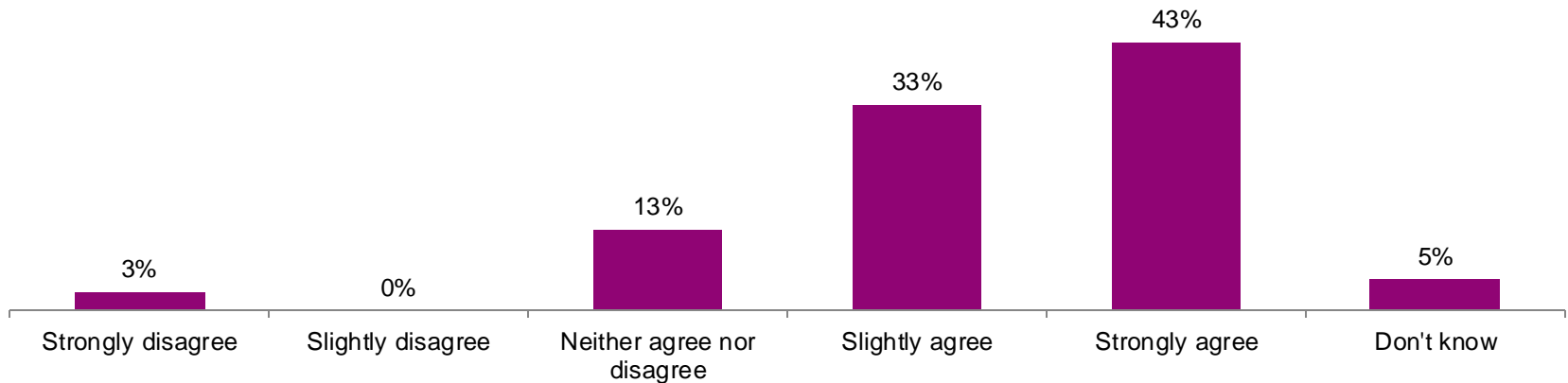
Sample Size: 40

- 43% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 33% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 76%.

- This compares with an overall agreement level of 56% in 2023.

- 3% 'strongly disagree', and 0% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 3%.

- 15% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 5% say that they don't know.
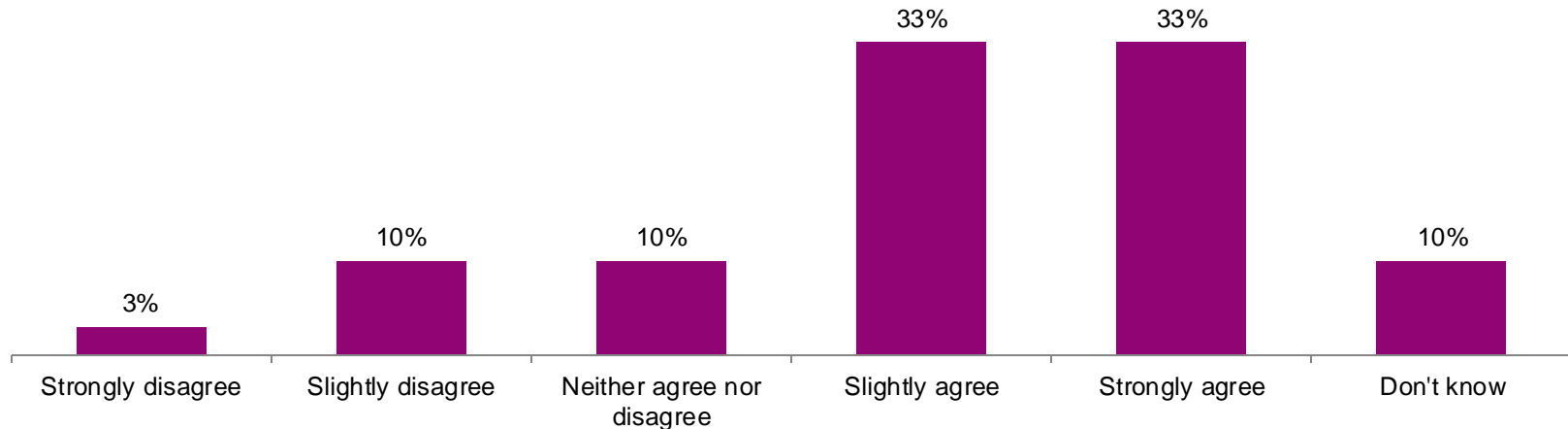
'This kind of interaction would allow me to reach new audiences'

Sample Size: 40

- 33% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 20% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 53%.
- This compares with an overall agreement level of 78% in 2023.
- 5% 'strongly disagree', and 8% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 13%.
- 20% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 13% say that they don't know.
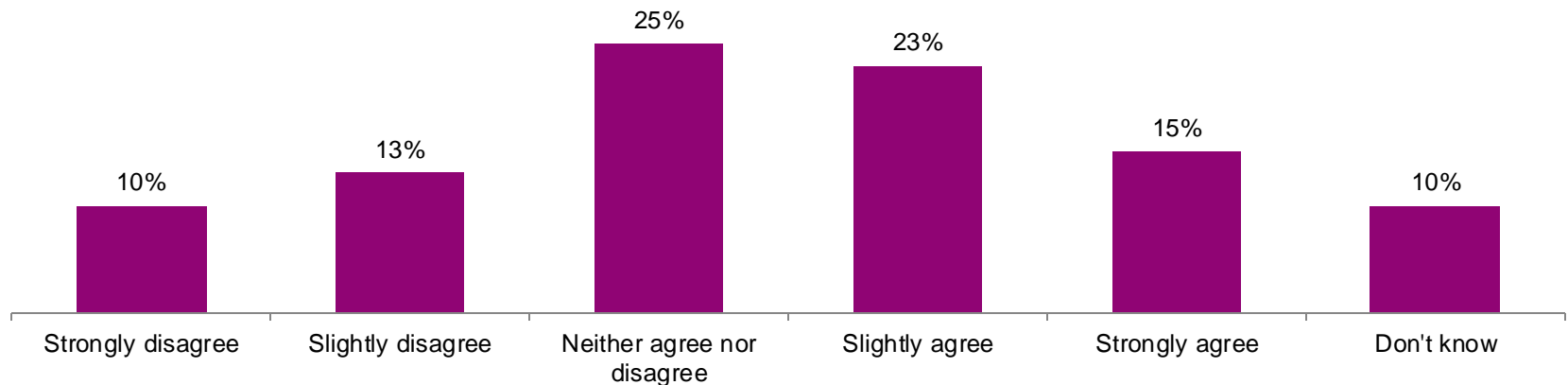
'Audiences are ready for this kind of experience'

Sample Size: 40

- 33% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 33% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 66%.
- This compares with an overall agreement level of 63% in 2023.
- 3% 'strongly disagree', and 10% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 13%.
- 10% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 10% say that they don't know.

'Online interaction is more environmentally friendly than bringing audiences to a venue'

Sample Size: 40

- 15% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 23% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 38%.
- This compares with an overall agreement level of 44% in 2023.
- 10% 'strongly disagree', and 13% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 23%.
- 25% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 10% say that they don't know.

'Online interaction is more affordable for audiences than them travelling to a venue'
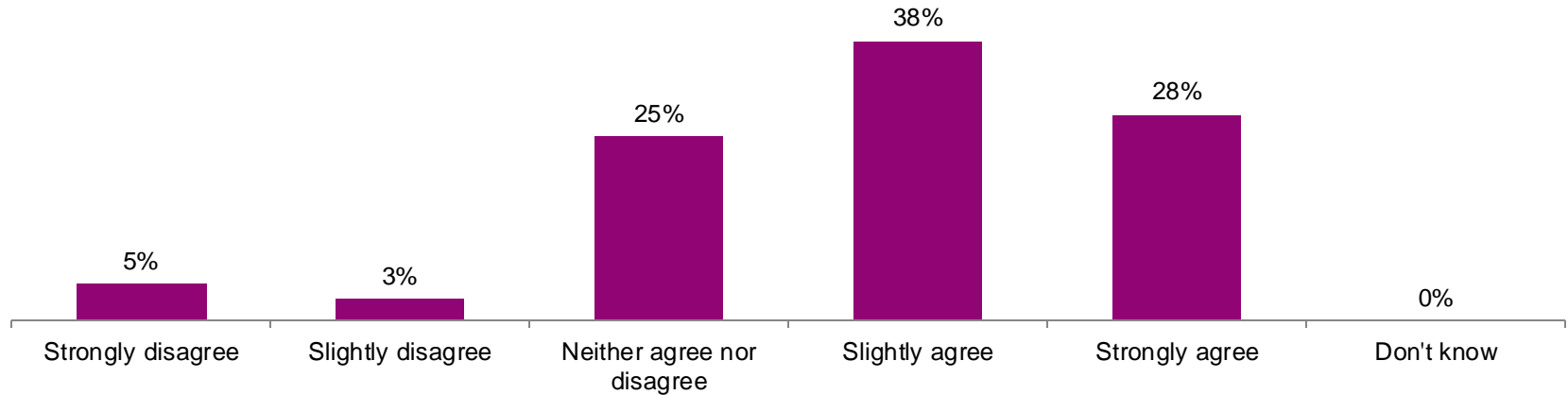
Sample Size: 40

- 28% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 38% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 64%.

- This question was not asked in 2023 so there is no data to compare.

- 5% 'strongly disagree', and 3% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 8%.
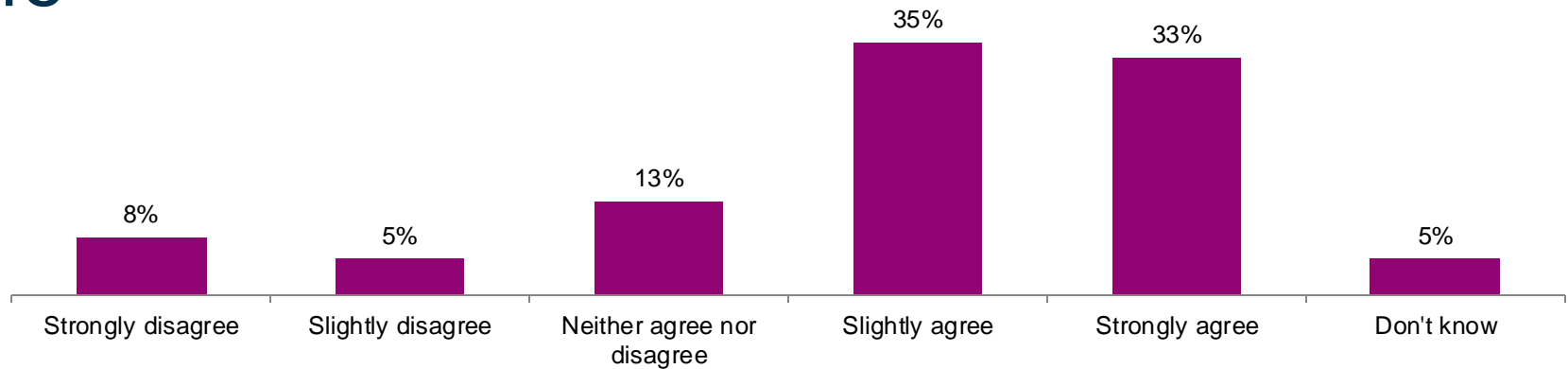
- 25% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

'Online interaction would make the arts more accessible for audiences'
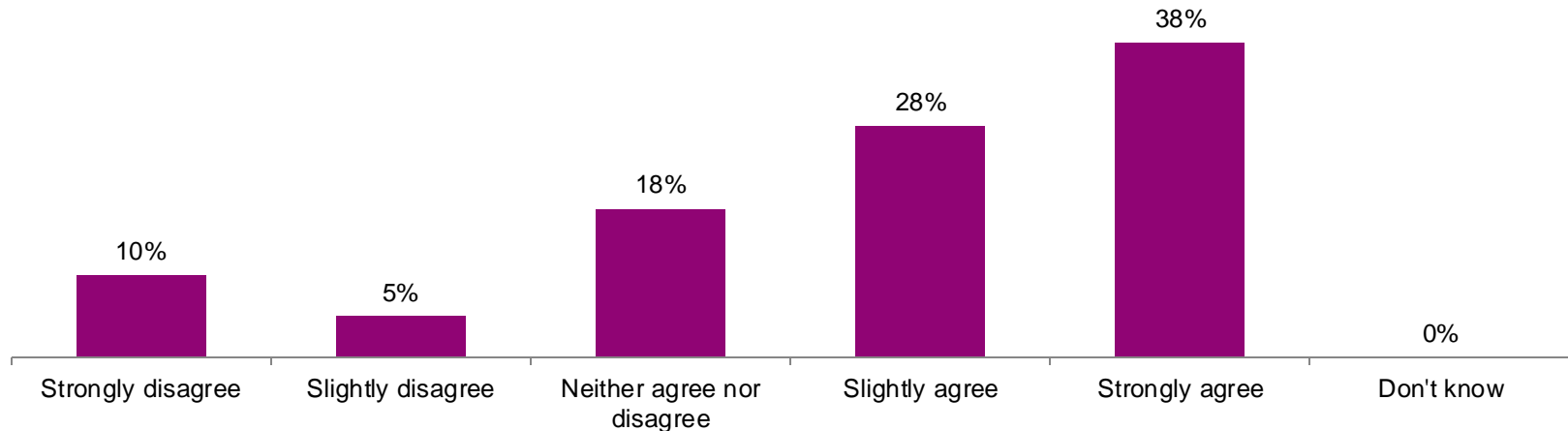
Sample Size: 40

- 38% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 28% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 66%.

- This question was not asked in 2023 so there is no data to compare.

- 10% 'strongly disagree', and 5% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 15%.

- 18% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

'Being able to engage digitally during a performance reflects contemporary day to day life'

8%	5%	13%	35%	33%	5%
Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree	Don't know

Sample Size: 40

- 33% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 35% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 68%.

- This question was not asked in 2023 so there is no data to compare.

- 8% 'strongly disagree', and 5% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 13%.
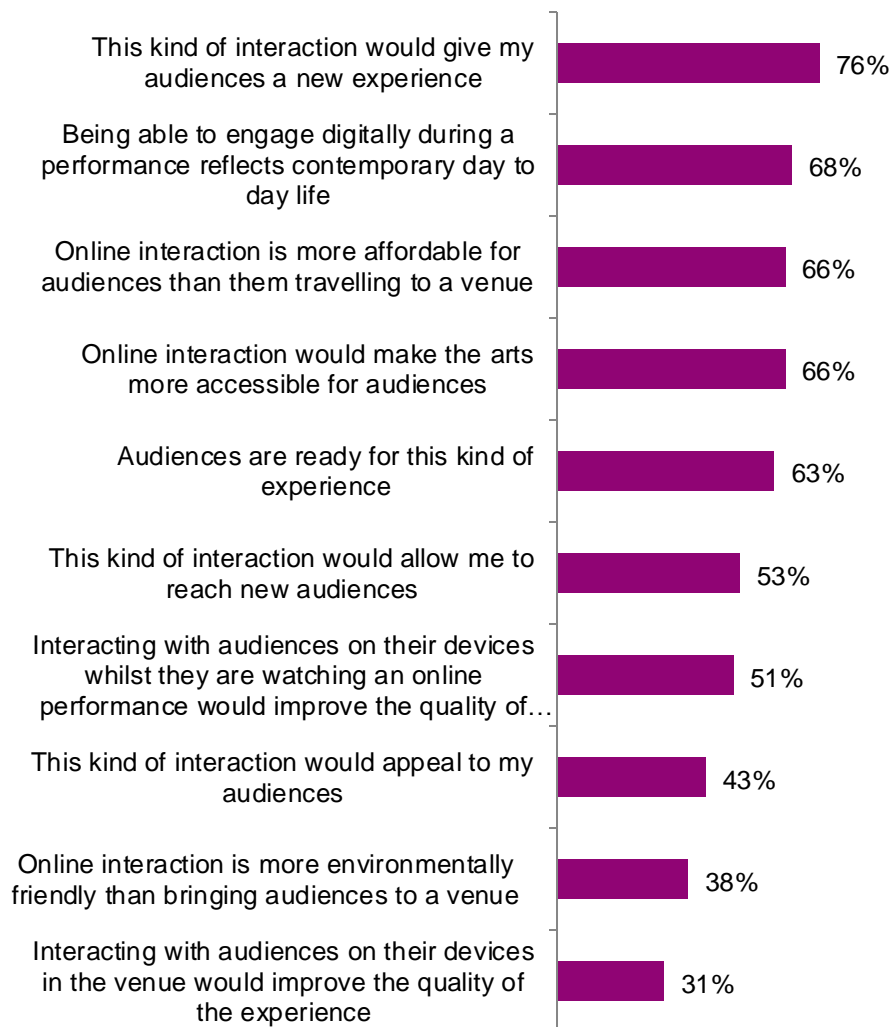
- 13% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 5% don't know.

Summary: Motivations Agreement

This kind of interaction would give my audiences a new experience — **76%**

Being able to engage digitally during a performance reflects contemporary day to day life — **68%**

Online interaction is more affordable for audiences than them travelling to a venue — **66%**

Online interaction would make the arts more accessible for audiences — **66%**

Audiences are ready for this kind of experience — **63%**

This kind of interaction would allow me to reach new audiences — **53%**

Interacting with audiences on their devices whilst they are watching an online performance would improve the quality of… — **51%**

This kind of interaction would appeal to my audiences — **43%**

Online interaction is more environmentally friendly than bringing audiences to a venue — **38%**

Interacting with audiences on their devices in the venue would improve the quality of the experience — **31%**

Sample Size: 40

- Respondents were most likely to agree that: digital interaction would be a new experience; that it would reflect day to day life; that it is more affordable for audiences to engage online; and that online interaction would make the arts more accessible.

- They are least likely to agree that engagement in the venue would improve the quality of the experience; that it is more environmentally friendly to engage online and that digital interaction would appeal to their audiences.

- Overall, the responses appear more cautious than in 2023.

Other Benefits

Respondents were asked to identify any other benefits that they could identify from interacting with audiences in this way. The comments focussed on the following themes; in some cases they responded with more detail or insight to the statements tested in the previous slides.

- Encouraging audience interactivity and engagement and using this to shape the performance, (8 respondents)
- Overcoming access barriers for audiences due to a range of factors (geography, physical access, neurodiversity, people uncomfortable in social spaces (7)
- Encouraging creative innovation and experimentation with new types of experience (5)
- Audiences feeling in control and having agency (3)
- Collecting data to understand more about the audience and its reaction to the work (3)
- The ability to overcome language barriers (2)
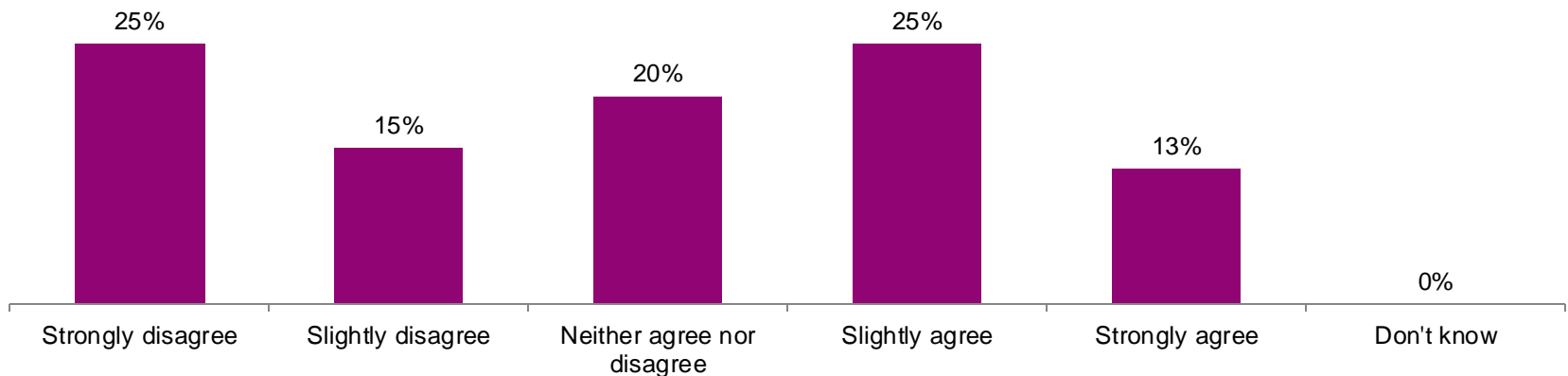- Building on social change triggered by the pandemic (2)

- Four respondents also identified potential drawbacks to engaging in this way; particularly the potential for distraction or chaotic audiences responses.

Other Benefits (2)

- I think a benefit not enough discussed is fun, wonder, exploration. How can you experience something fascinating and amazing all together while in different parts of the world? How can you get new perspectives while not being corralled? With digital interaction, you can feel both individually connected and included as part of 'we' participating in the performance, but at a remove so you're not humiliated or spotlit by performers in that 'comedy' or invasive way. You can say yes or no on your own terms. Audience participation makes some people flee for the hills, introverts in real life may also be introverts online and want different ways of interacting.

- Live in the moment audience responses would be so useful to have when they are appropriate to the performance

- Gaining real time, spontaneous feedback and being able to analyse any trends or patterns with the audience responses. Using this to inform development and future work. Appealing to a non-traditional theatre audience.

- I can see this as a way for audiences to feel as though they are on equal footing with the performers and are equally contributing to the performance. Theoretically, I could see this as a valuable tool to equal the playing field between audience and performer, remove the fourth wall, and create a real investment for audience members in any performance. I can also see this lowering barriers that some may face regarding geographic isolation, mental health difficulties, physical impairments (whether temporary, acute, or chronic).

- The biggest one for me as a multilingual person is to engage with other multilingual audiences rather than a monolingual one

BARRIERS TO DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

'I/we don't know of any tools that would allow us to do this'

Strongly disagree: 25%
Slightly disagree: 15%
Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
Slightly agree: 25%
Strongly agree: 13%
Don't know: 0%

Sample Size: 40

- 13% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 25% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 38%.

- This compares with an overall agreement level of 59% reported in 2023.

- 25% 'strongly disagree', and 15% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 40%.

- 20% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

- The response to this question reflects the findings reported on Slide 14, which saw an increased level of sophistication in the tools being reported compared with 2023.

'I/we do not have the technical skills to do something like this'

18%	25%	18%	15%	20%	3%
Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
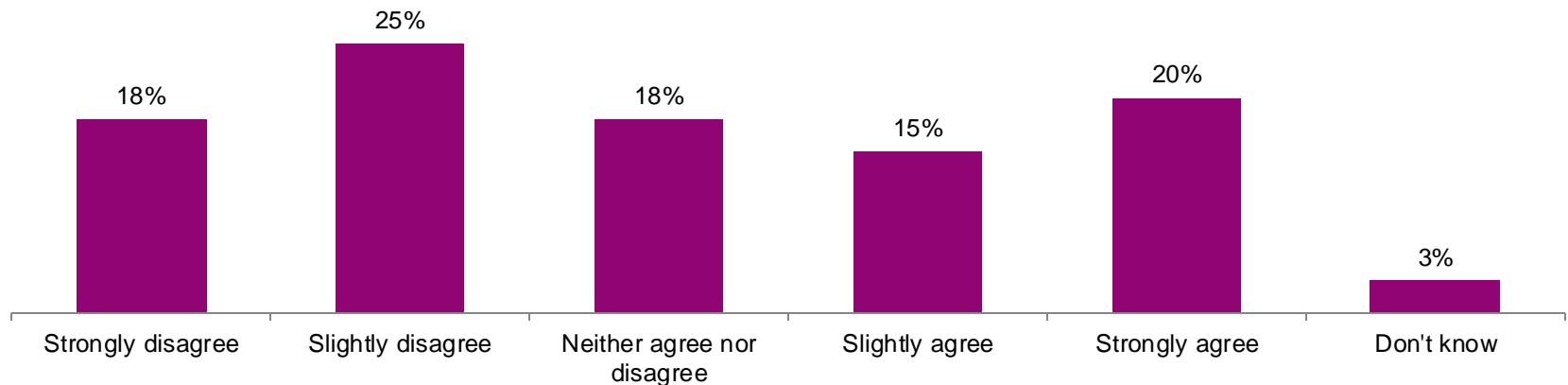
Sample Size: 40

- 20% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 15% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 35%.

- This compares with an overall agreement level of 53% reported in 2023.

- 18% 'strongly disagree', and 25% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 43%.

- 18% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 3% say that they don't know.
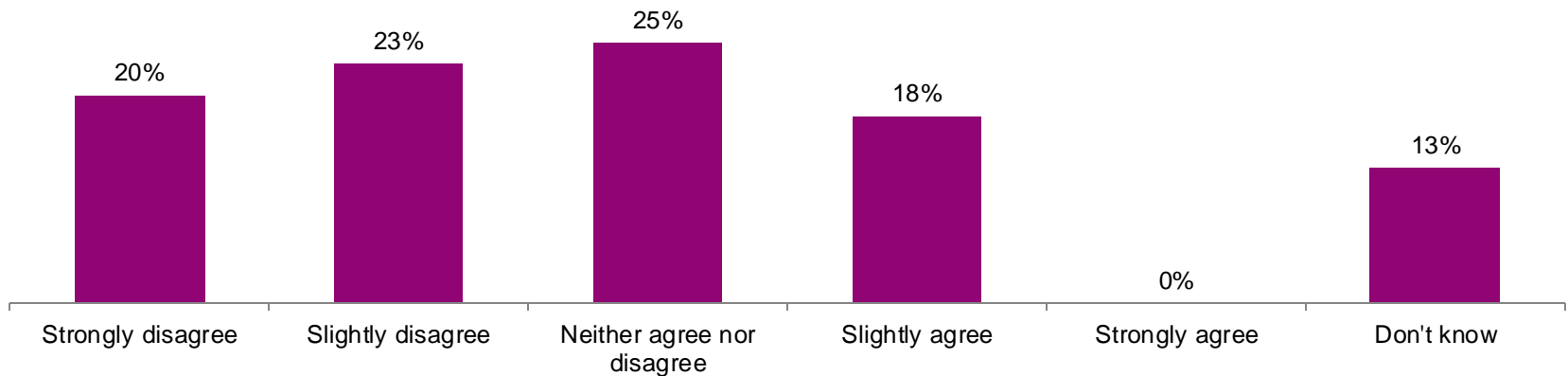
'I don't know that I/we could afford it'
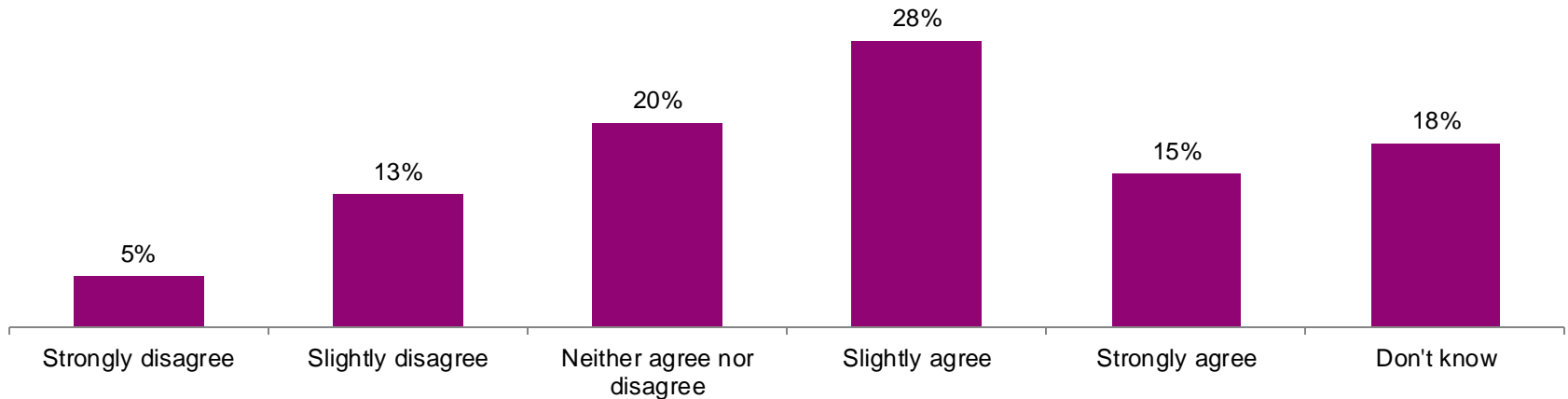
Sample Size: 40

- 15% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 28% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 43%.
- This compares with an overall agreement level of 47% reported in 2023.
- 5% 'strongly disagree', and 13% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 18%.
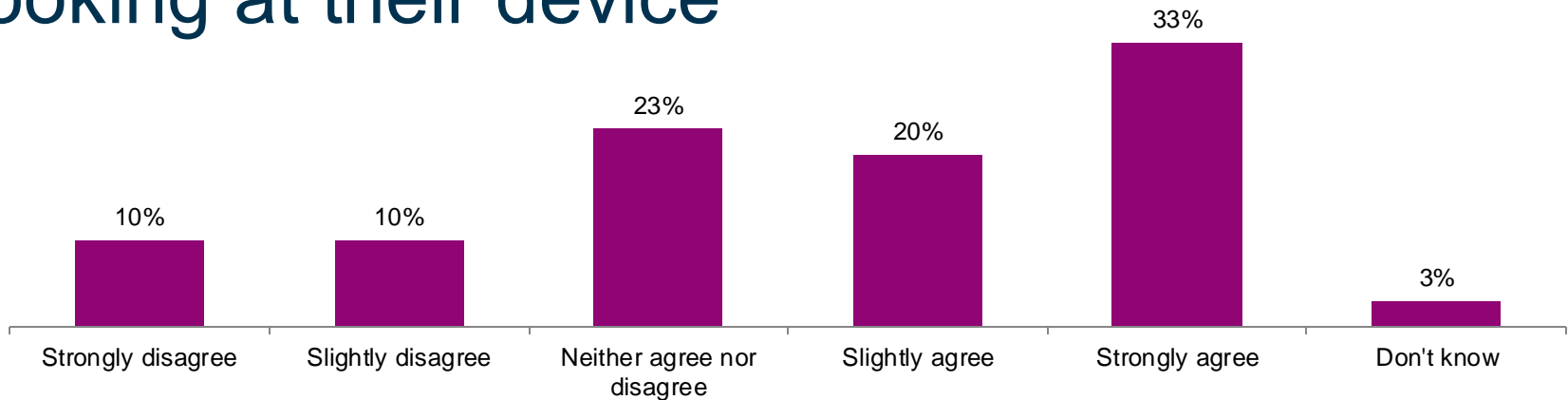- 20% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 18% say that they don't know.

'My audience would not like this kind of experience'

Sample Size: 40

- 0% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement but 18% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 18%.

- This compares with an overall agreement level of 16% reported in 2023.

- 20% 'strongly disagree', and 23% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 43%.

- 25% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 13% say that they don't know.

'I would be concerned that the audience would be distracted from my performance by looking at their device'

Sample Size: 40

- 33% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 20% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 53%.

- This question was not asked in 2023 so there is no data to compare.

- 10% 'strongly disagree', and 10% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 20%.

- 23% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 3% say that they don't know.

'As an artist I would like to keep the experience free from screens and focussed on the live experience'
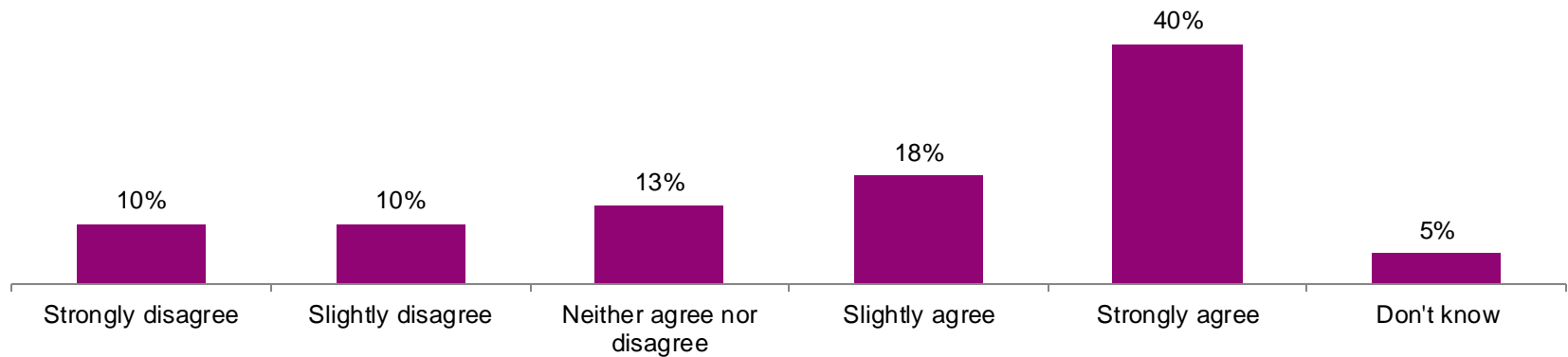
Sample Size: 40

- 40% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 18% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 58%.

- This question was not asked in 2023 so there is no data to compare.

- 10% 'strongly disagree', and 10% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 20%.

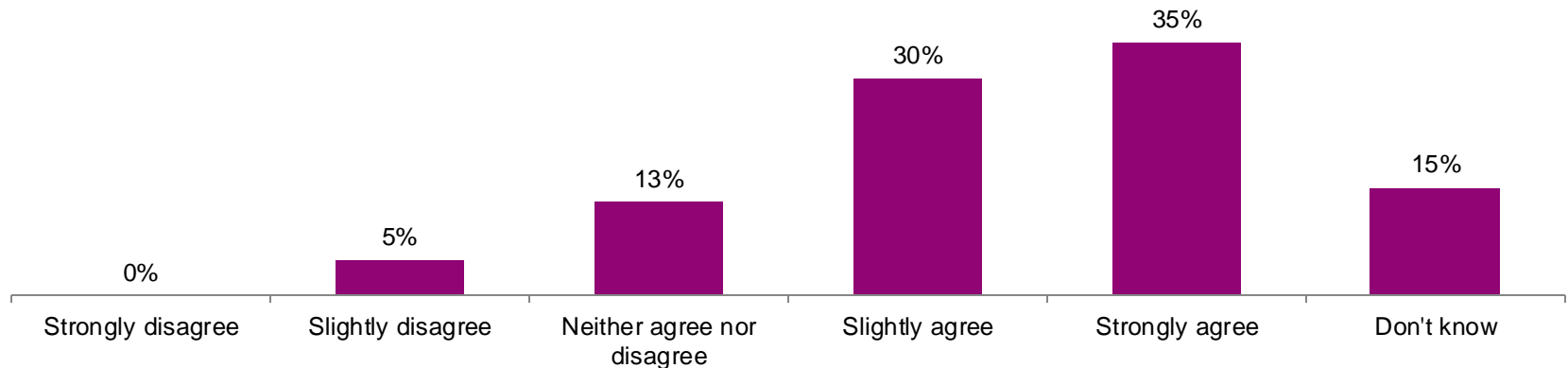- 13% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 5% say that they don't know.
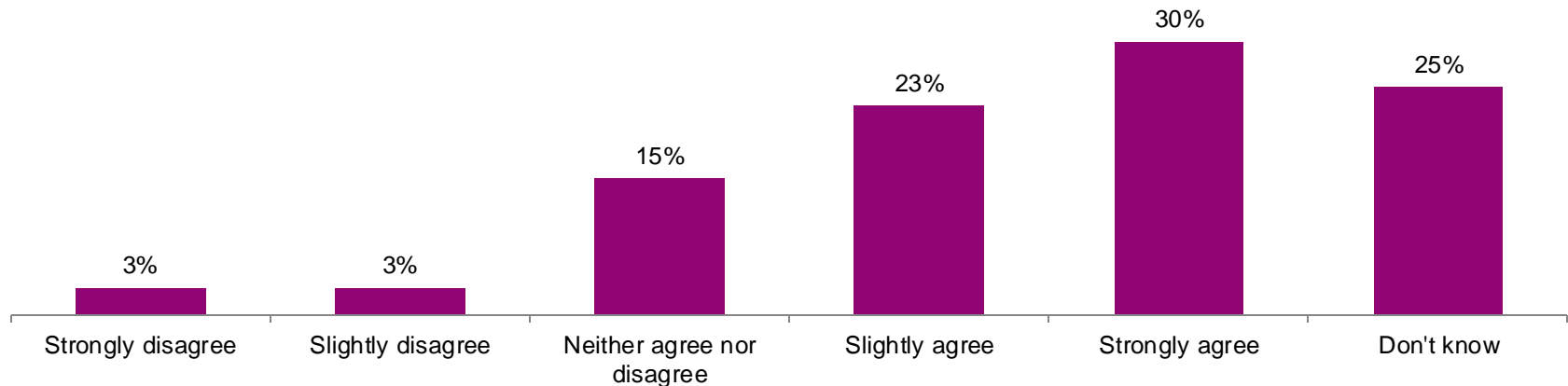
'I/we would be concerned about how to be responsible for people's data'

Sample Size: 40

- 35% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 30% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 65%.

- This question was not asked in 2023 so there is no data to compare.

- 0% 'strongly disagree', and 5% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 5%.

- 13% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 15% say that they don't know.
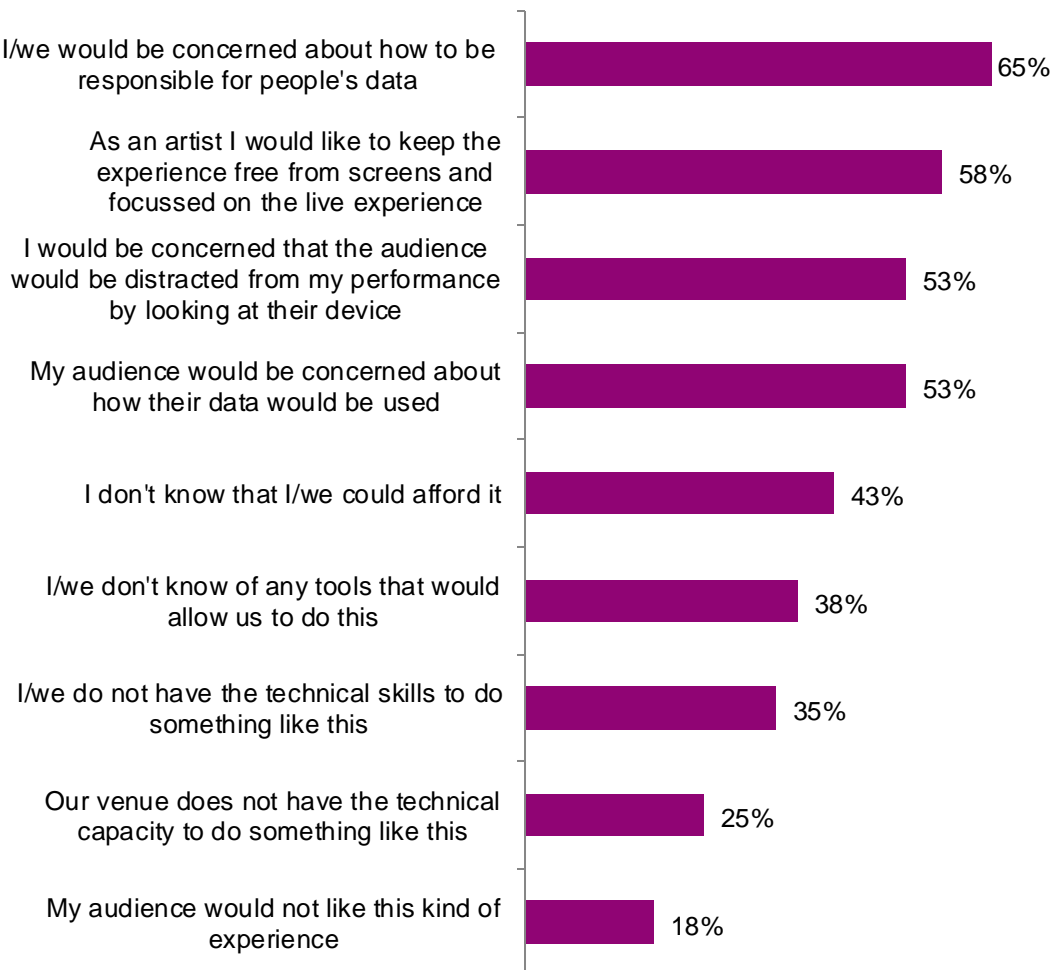
'My audience would be concerned about how their data would be used'

Sample Size: 40

- 30% of respondents 'strongly agree' with this statement and 23% 'slightly agree', an overall agreement level of 53%.

- This question was not asked in 2023 so there is no data to compare.

- 3% 'strongly disagree', and 3% 'slightly disagree', an overall disagreement level of 6%.

- 15% of respondents neither agree nor disagree and 25% say that they don't know.

Summary: Level of Agreement with Barriers

Barrier	%
I/we would be concerned about how to be responsible for people's data	65%
As an artist I would like to keep the experience free from screens and focussed on the live experience	58%
I would be concerned that the audience would be distracted from my performance by looking at their device	53%
My audience would be concerned about how their data would be used	53%
I don't know that I/we could afford it	43%
I/we don't know of any tools that would allow us to do this	38%
I/we do not have the technical skills to do something like this	35%
Our venue does not have the technical capacity to do something like this	25%
My audience would not like this kind of experience	18%

Sample Size: 40

- The most likely barriers to digital engagement cited by respondents were: concerns over data responsibility; a preference for keeping experiences free of screens, and concerns about potential distractions.

- It was interesting to note relatively high levels of 'don't know' to the questions about potential audience barriers; it would be valuable to share the findings of research conducted with audiences on these issues .

- A lack of technical capability or capacity remains a barrier for some organisations, but to a lesser extent than was reported in 2023.

Other Barriers (1)

Respondents were asked to identify any other barriers to interacting with audiences in this way. The main themes that emerged from the comments are shown below:

- Inequality/inconsistency in terms of access to technology within audiences (13 respondents)
- Issues with audience behaviour/distractions/tolerance for other people being on devices (4)
- A physical space not being designed for this type of interaction (3)
- Unethical use of data by the creative sector (eg to train AI) (3)
- Less of a collective experience (2)
- Can only work with some subjects/artforms (1)
- Uncertainty as to who it would appeal to/how to sell it (1)
- Possible threat to the Intellectual Property of the creators (1)

Other Barriers (2)

- Not everyone has a device. Different models. Different skill levels and competencies. Keeping focus on the performance, without notifications, torches, ringing etc

- It is a practice that works against the digitally excluded and those uncomfortable with technology. It could lead to disenfranchising a lot of theatre goers, altering the nature of live performances and their feeling of being part of an event.

- Permissions need to be given about what might be on screen or gathered - not just a global 'come at your peril, it's theatre', or tick the terms which no one reads, but a genuine clarity and empathy. Data gathering can make people very vulnerable and trust is a privilege which needs to be 100% honoured. I think the sector and everyone in it should sign up to a professional code of conduct.

- It would need to be an event fit. Not for the sake of. Also would need to consider risks of audiences having different levels of interactions therefore potentially ruining or distracting from others experiences.

- The experience could become less communal, and community is a huge part of what I love about being in an audience.

ATTIDUDES TO AI

Current usage of AI
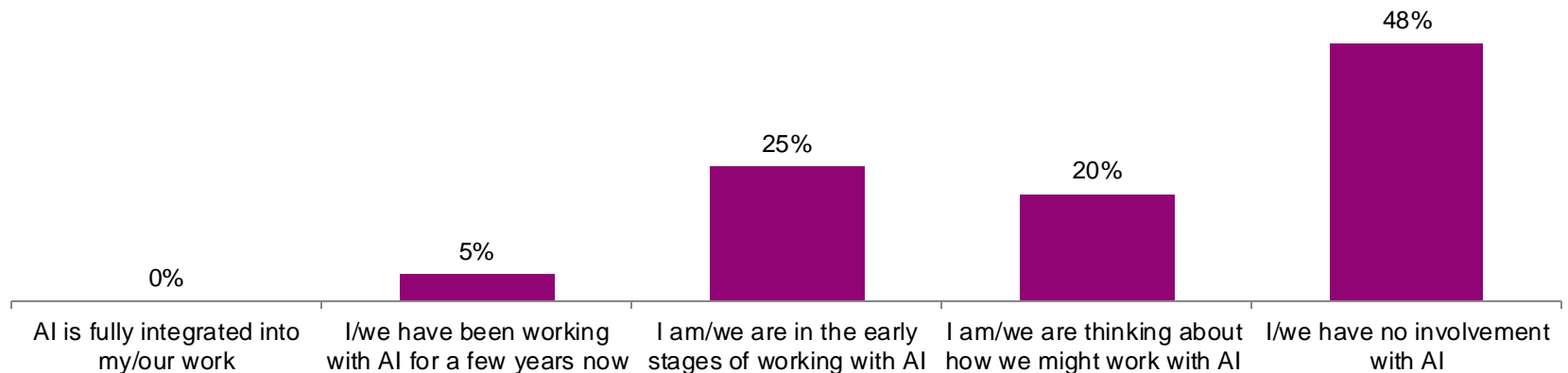
Sample Size: 40

- None of the respondents said that AI was fully integrated into their work, and 48% said that they have no involvement with AI.

- 20% said that they are thinking about how they might work with AI and 25% that they are in the early stages of doing so.

- Only 5% of respondents said that they have been working with AI for a few years now.

- Respondents are clearly in the early stages of their AI journeys.

Response to the term 'AI'

Curiosity — 48%
Uncertainty — 40%
Interest — 38%
Fear — 18%
Anger — 18%
Excitement — 15%
Indifference — 13%
Something else — 10%
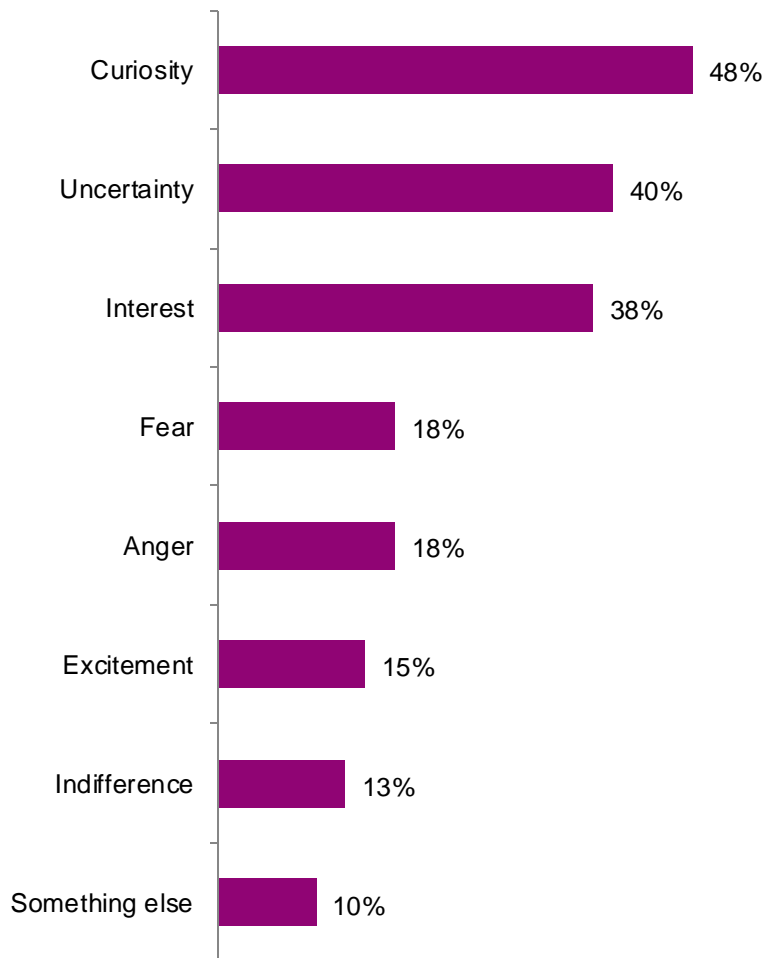
Sample Size: 40

- A range of positive and negative responses were reported to respondents, with the most frequent being *curiosity, uncertainty* and *interest.*

- This reflects the early stages of engagement, within their work and also perhaps in wider society.

- It is notable that 18% of respondents chose *fear* and *anger*.

- The other words used were *confusion, concern for the environment, generative bad, AI as colonialism'*

Sources of Information

My own networks and contacts — 60%
General online search — 58%
Educational or academic institutions, such as Creative Informatics — 38%
Digital organisations like CodeBase — 23%
Creative Scotland — 23%
Bridge AI and the Scottish AI Alliance — 13%
Scottish Enterprise — 3%
Somewhere else — 3%
I don't know — 8%
Not applicable - I would not be interested in looking for this information — 10%
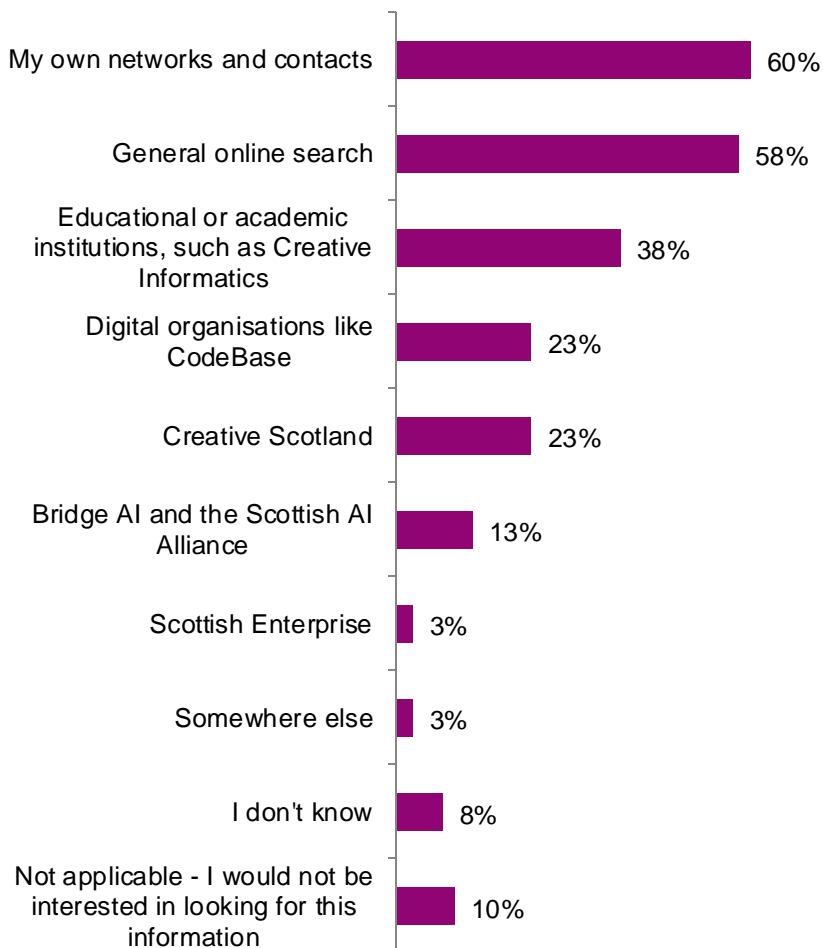
Sample Size: 40

- When asked where they would look for information about how AI could support their work, respondents said that they would be most likely to turn to their own networks and contacts or to do a general online search.

- The most cited dedicated organisations were: educational/academic institutions; digital organisations; Creative Scotland and Bridge AI and the Scottish AI Alliance.

- The strong reliance on networks suggests that any training or information sharing within the sector could be subject to an informal snowball effect through existing networks.
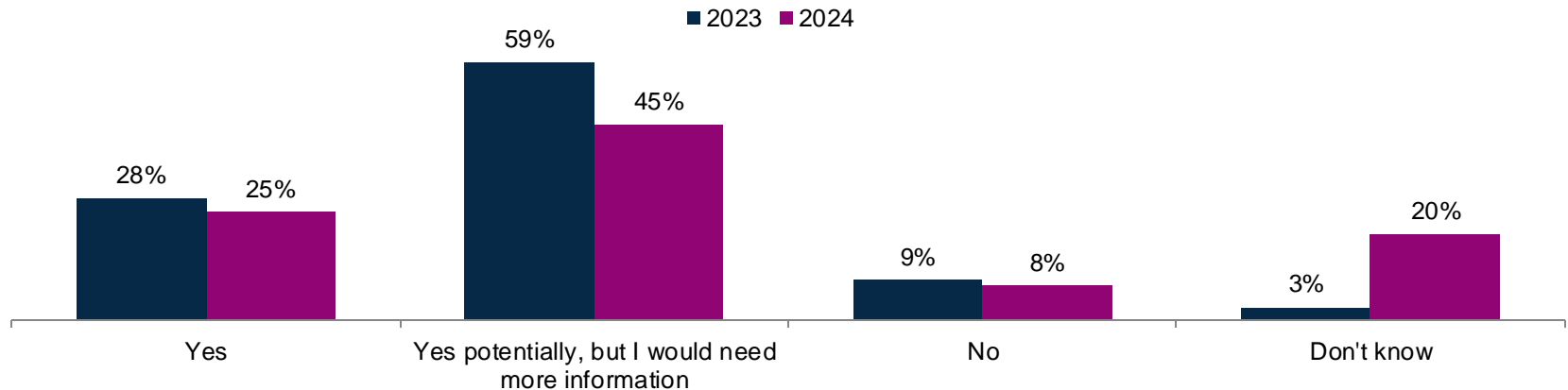
INTEREST IN THE CIVIC DIGITS APP

App Description

We are looking to develop an app that would allow content creators to interact with the audience on their own devices. This interaction could take place in a venue or as part of an online experience (but not on the device on which they are watching the performance).

It would allow the audience to respond to what they are seeing, share opinions and experiences with each other and enable the content creator to respond to this as well. All of the data generated through using the app would be anonymised and not able to be used in any way.

Is this something that you think might be of interest to you?

Would you be interested?

■ 2023 ■ 2024

Response	2023	2024
Yes	28%	25%
Yes potentially, but I would need more information	59%	45%
No	9%	8%
Don't know	3%	20%

Sample Size: 40 (2024), 32 (2023)

- 25% of respondents to the survey say that they would be interested in this app. This compares with 28% in 2023.

- 45% say that they would potentially be interested but would require more information. This is slightly lower than the 59% reported in 2023.

- 8% would not be interested; a similar level to the 9% reported previously.

- 20% say that they don't know, compared with just 3% in 2023. This may reflect high levels of uncertainty generally in the sector at present, as well as specific uncertainties around a project like this.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions (1)

- There is clearly an interest in digital audience interaction, both with an audience in a venue and in an online space. However, compared with 2023 the respondents appear slightly more cautious. This may reflect changes in the composition of the sample as well as shifting in attitudes and priorities.

- Approximately a quarter of the sample has engaged digitally with audiences in the past, either online or in a venue. There has been a decline in online interaction since 2023, suggesting that this may have been a temporary peak due to the pandemic.

- The type of work undertaken in this area is more interactive and innovative than in 2023, and respondents are more likely to be using off-the-shelf technology rather than developing bespoke applications.

- Approximately two thirds of respondents would be interested in engaging with audiences during a performance (online or in-venue) in the future. This is similar to the 2023 findings.

Conclusions (2)

- The perceived benefits of such engagement are: giving audiences new experiences; reflecting day to day life; increased affordability from engaging online; and making the arts more accessible.

- The perceived concerns about/barriers to such engagement are: concerns around the use of audience data; an artistic preference for a screen-free space; and concern about audience distractions in a venue.

- It is notable that there is some uncertainty from respondents about what audiences think about this concept. It would be valuable to undertake research with audiences and to share the findings with the sector.

Conclusions (3)

- Respondents appear to be at an early stage of engaging with AI and the subject provokes an almost equal number of positive and negative reactions. Artists would look to their own networks or general online searchers to try and discover how AI could support their work before looking to educational, digital or cultural organisations.

- There is strong interest in the Civic Digits app, with 25% of respondents showing definite interest and a further 45% potential interest. 20% don't know, which may reflect both concerns about the project and the wider uncertainty in the cultural sector in Scotland at present.