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# THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: CHANGING ROLES OF LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY TECHNICIANS

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# OUTLINE

Purpose of our Research  
Methodology  
Preliminary Findings  
Group Exercise & Discussion  
Future Research



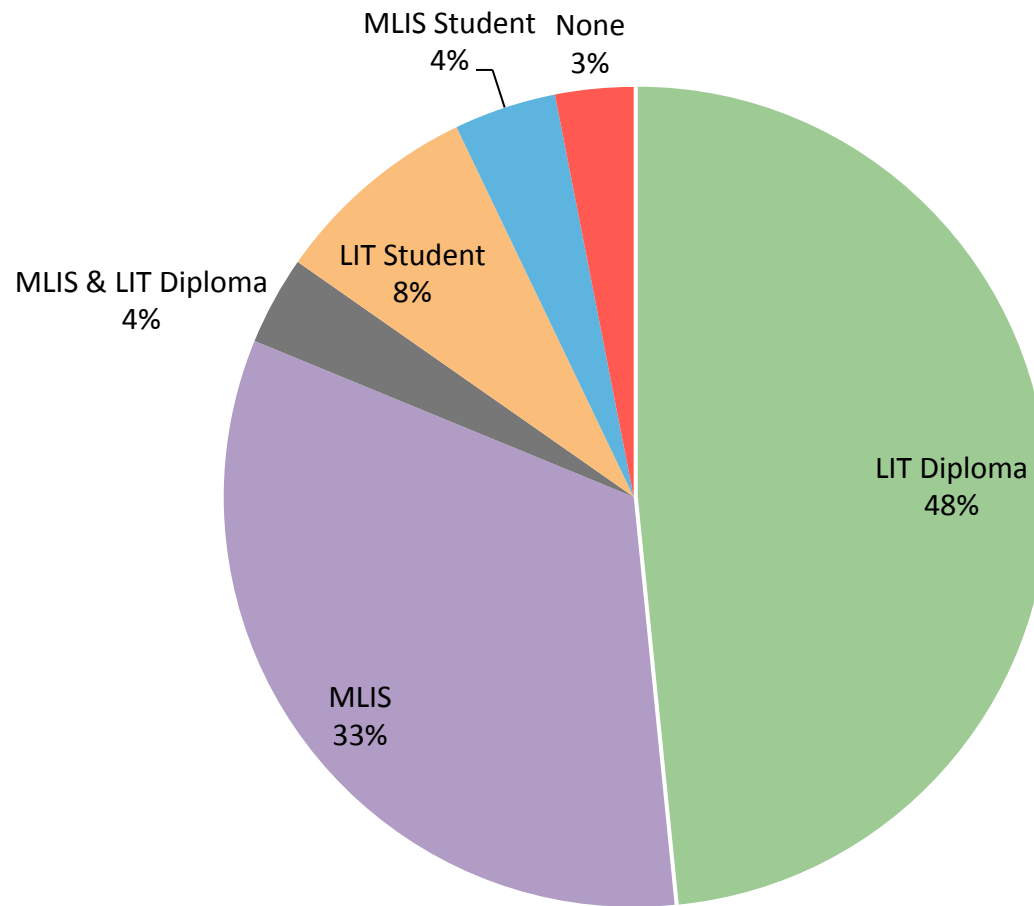
# PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

- We wanted to:
  - Examine the changing roles of librarians and library technicians
  - Obtain updated evidence from the front lines about new and changing roles in order to:
    - Design appropriate curriculum
    - Develop best change management practices
    - Encourage effective leadership in our organizations

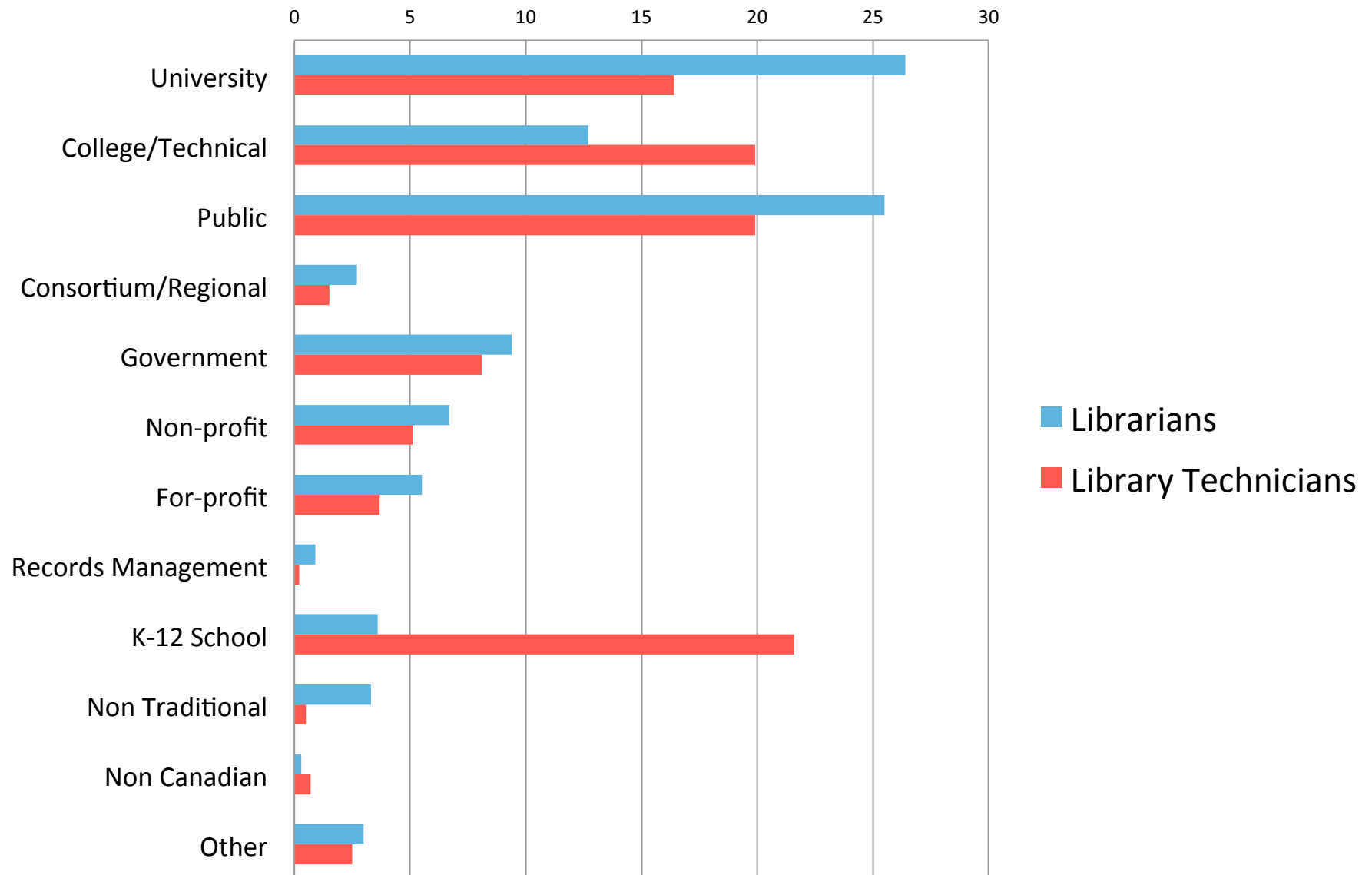


# FINDINGS: WHO RESPONDED?

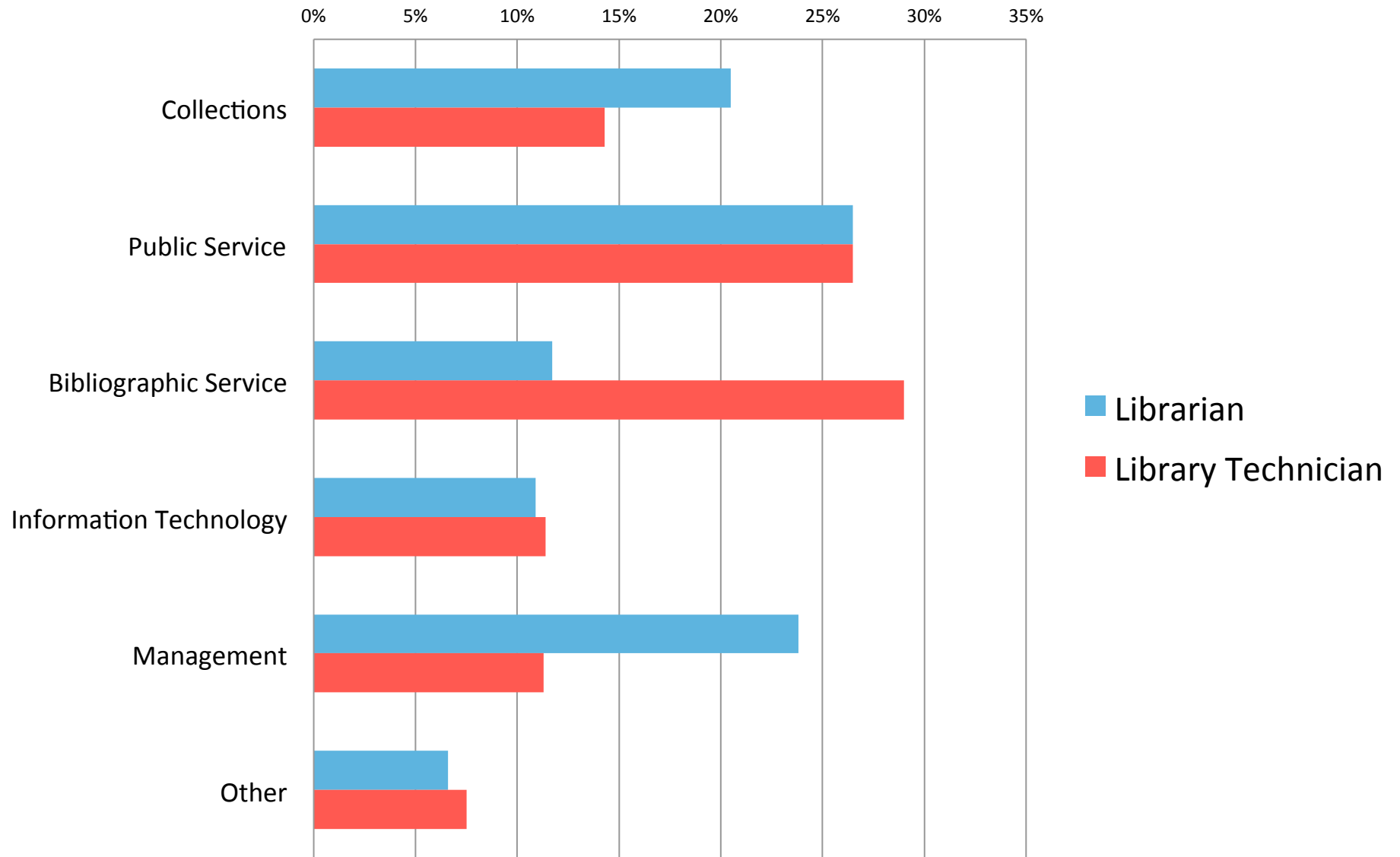
**Participant Qualifications**



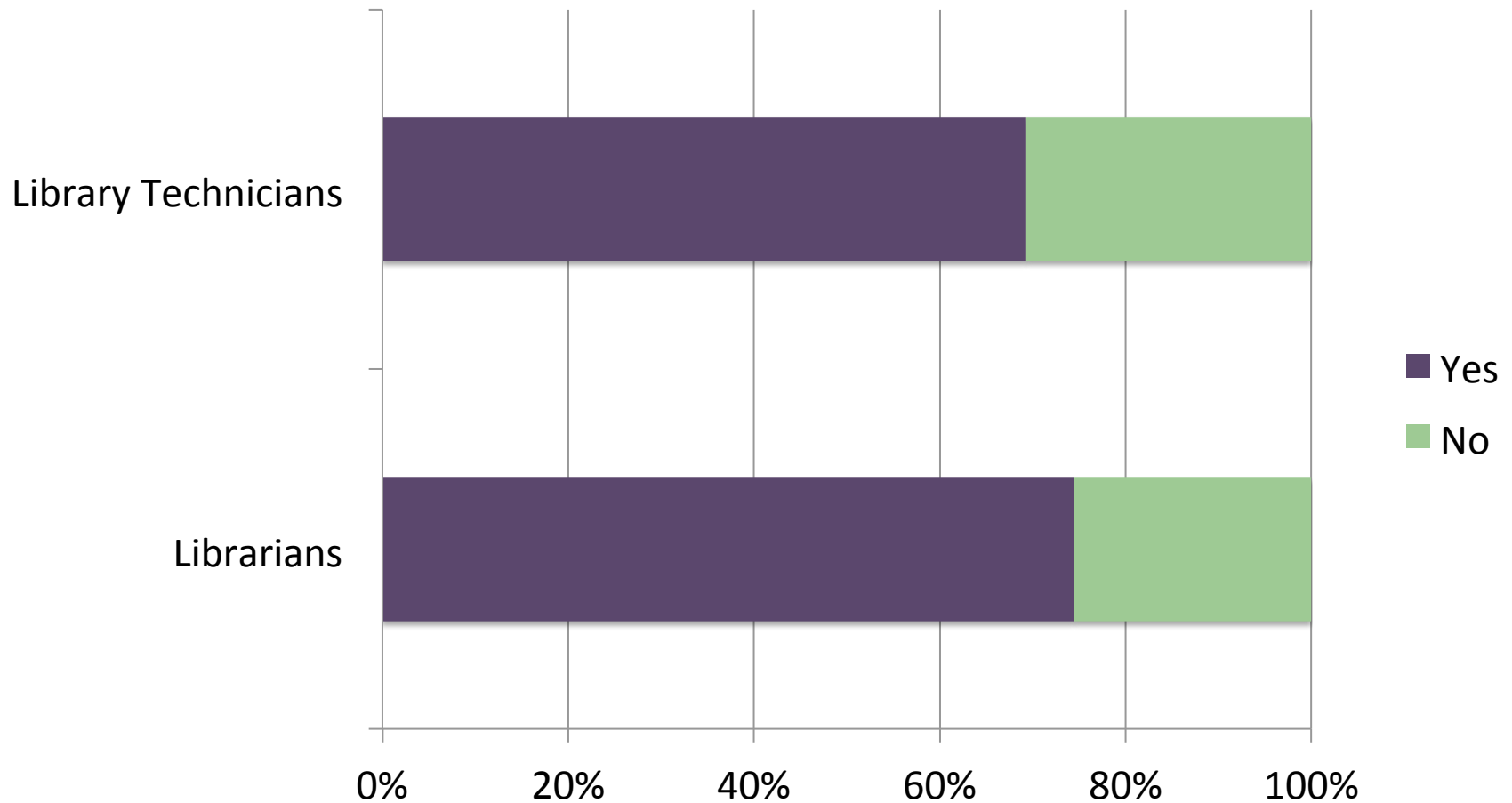
# What Type of Library Do You Currently Work In? (%)



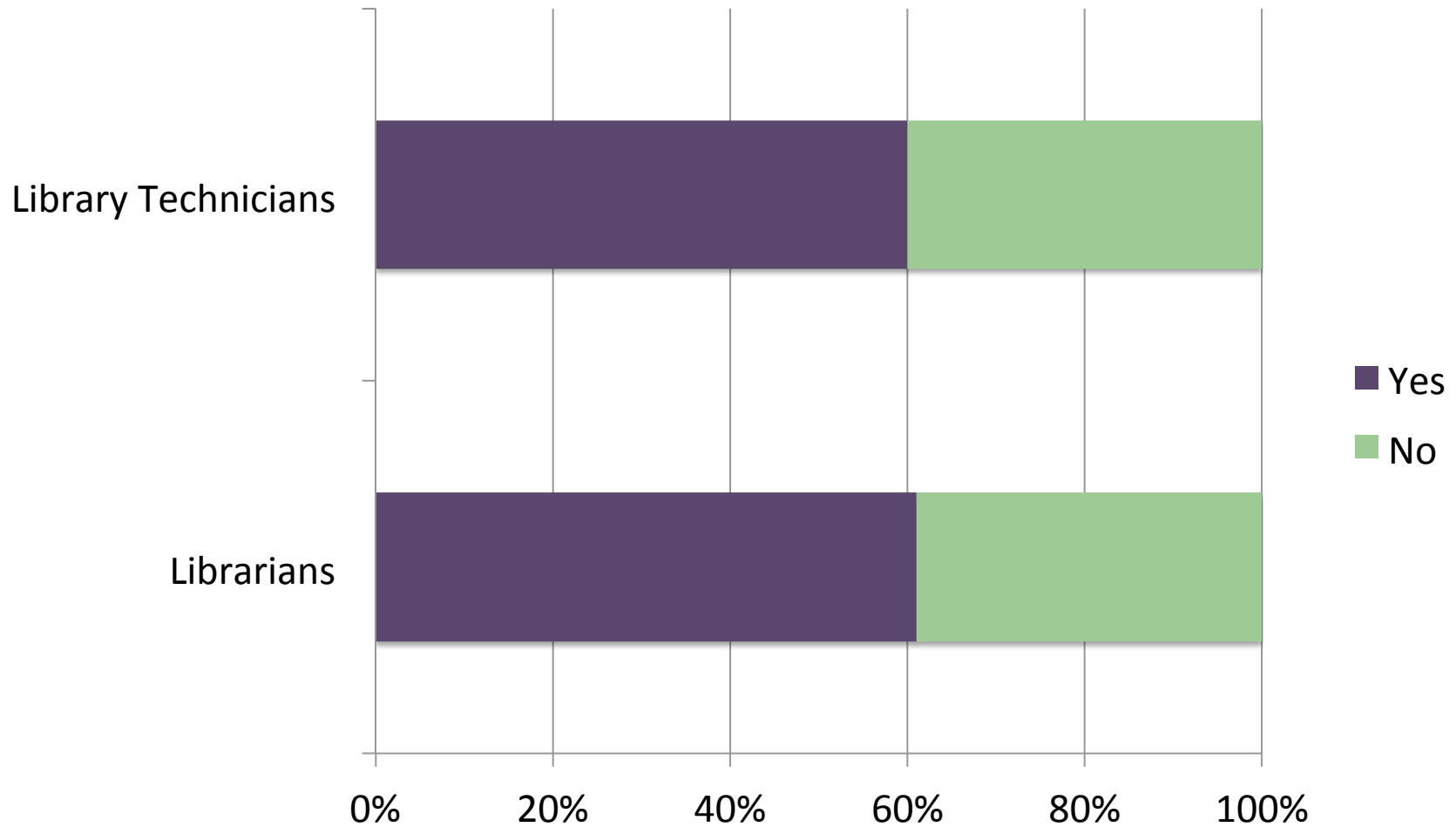
## Major Work Responsibilities (%)



## Is your job description an accurate reflection of your current responsibilities? (%)



## Has your role changed over the past 1-5 years? (%)





# LIBRARIANS ARE DOING MORE:



# LIBRARY TECHNICIANS ARE DOING MORE:



# LIBRARIANS ARE DOING LESS:



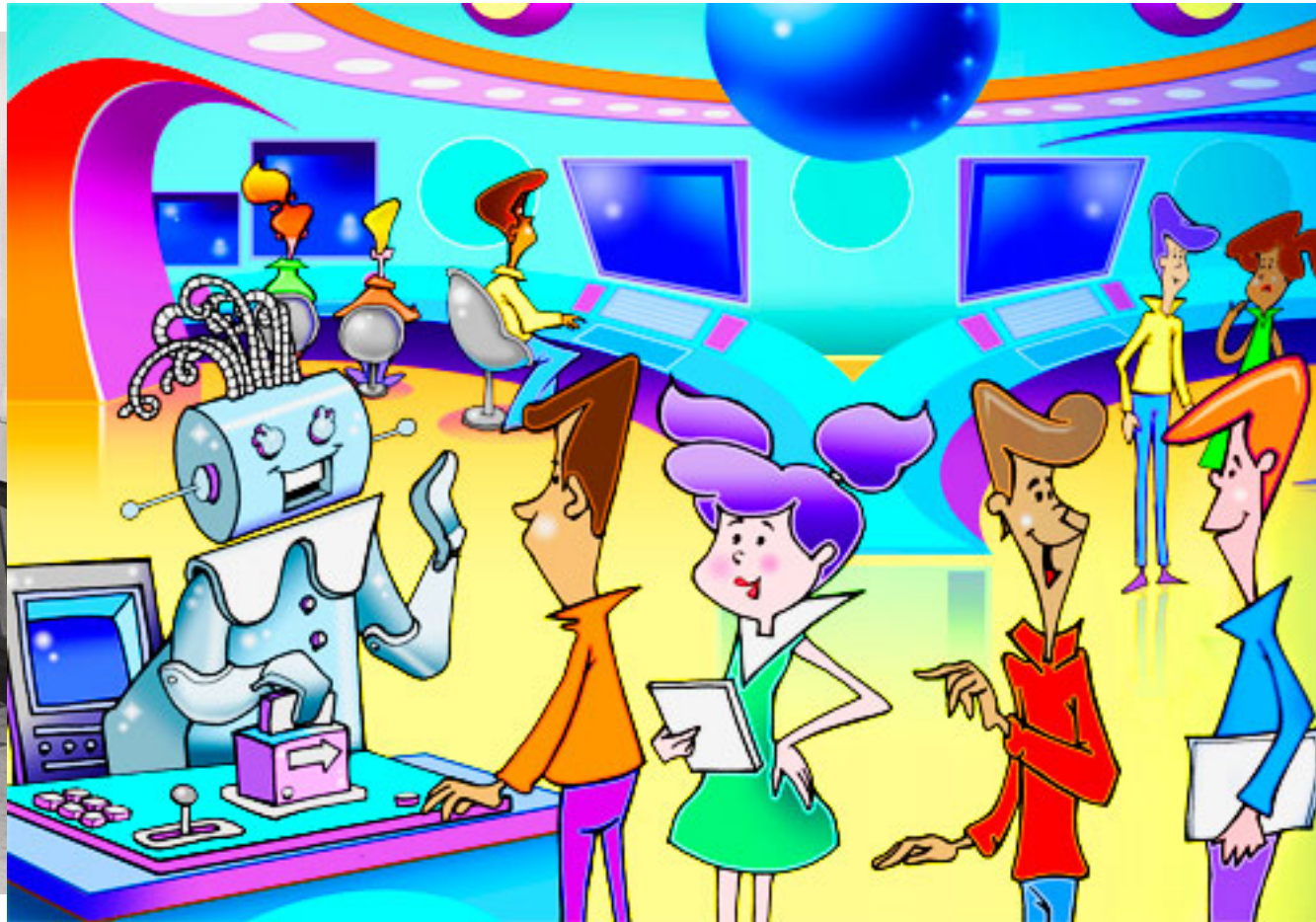
A word cloud on a dark background showing various library tasks. The words are arranged in a way that suggests a hierarchy of importance, with 'reference desk' being the largest and most prominent. Other tasks include 'hands on work with patrons', 'collections work', 'supervision', 'information literacy instruction', 'programming', 'patron connect', and 'public service'.

collections work  
supervision  
reference desk  
hands on work with patrons  
information literacy instruction  
programming patron connect  
public service

# LIBRARY TECHNICIANS ARE DOING LESS:



# THE FUTURE OF ROLES IN LIBRARIES?



## DISCUSSION – CASE STUDIES

- Find 4-5 other people with the same animal card.
- Discuss the case study you are given.
  - Be prepared to share your solutions with the larger group.
  - You have 10 minutes.

## CASE STUDY 1: RECOGNITION FOR COMPETENCIES

- Joan is a recently hired Library Technician at a large law firm. The firm has previously not retained staff in their library outside of clerical positions. During her interview, Joan explained her competencies in online searching and knowledge management, having worked for several years at the Provincial Court Library in a large city.
- Despite their enthusiasm in the interview, Joan finds herself doing clerical work.
- What can Joan do to ensure her competencies are recognized and utilized for the benefit of the firm?



## CASE STUDY 2: CHANGING JOB DUTIES

(In this scenario, Paul may be a Librarian or Library Technician)

- Paul works at a large public library branch. His role has gradually shifted in the past few years to encompass more project work, supervisory duties, and much less hands on work with patrons. However, his work with patrons is the part of the job he finds the most satisfying and the reason he chose his career.
- What can Paul do to remedy what he feels is an unsatisfying and demotivating shift in his duties?

## CASE STUDY 3: SHIFTING ROLES

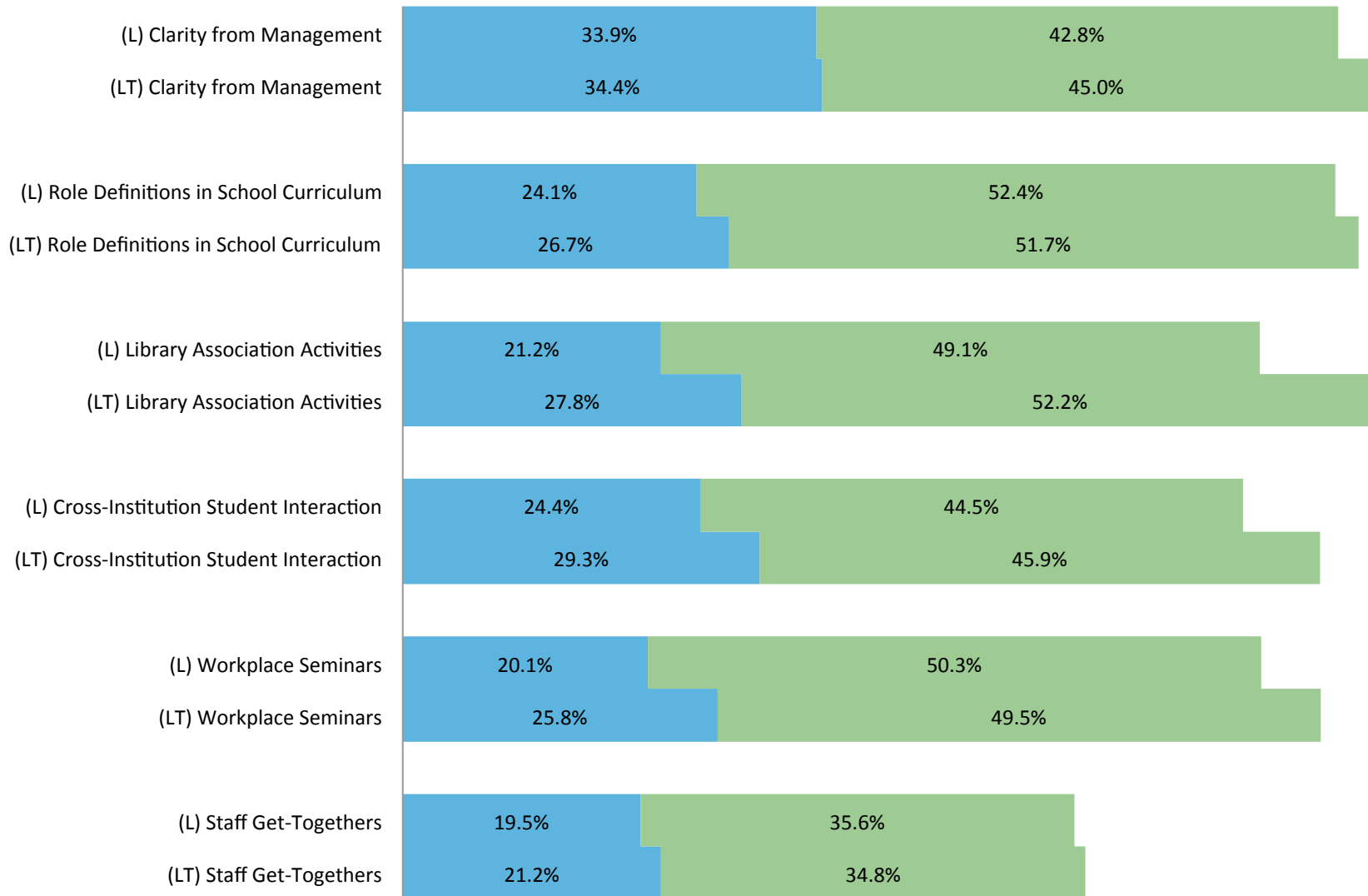
- Jana is in a management position and is struggling to meet the library's goals with too few Librarians. She has assigned selected duties that fall under Librarian position responsibilities to a Library Technician. This has created tension for the Library Technician and the Librarians.
- What should Jana do to resolve this situation?

## CASE STUDY 4: UNDERSTANDING ROLES

- Jonathon is the new Manager at an academic library. He notices very quickly that tension and a lack of teamwork exists between the Librarians and Library Technicians. It is apparent that this has been developing for years. The Librarians say that the Library Technicians do not value their work, and Library Technicians say the same thing about the Librarians!
- What should Jonathon do to create a collegial work environment?

## What efforts would help librarians and library technicians better understand each other's roles? (%)

Strongly Agree Agree



# FUTURE RESEARCH

- How do we best educate students and develop ongoing training for existing staff to respond to changes? How do we foster cultures of ongoing learning?
- How may we develop better ways to provide work expectations, role clarification and foster collaborative and flexible ways of working in our current environment of change and increasing complexity?
- What is the impact of roles and relationships in a unionized environment?
- How may we understand the increasing complexity and skill range required for both Librarians and Library Technicians in terms of organizational justice?
- How should we communicate our value to stakeholders and funders?

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# QUESTIONS?

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