

**IAMCR Cairo Conference Report**  
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**September 2006**



On 23-28 July 2006, the department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the American University in Cairo hosted the 25th General Assembly and Conference for the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). Nearly 1,000 participants from all over the world came to join this important academic event. The conference, held under the auspices of the Egyptian Minister of Information, H.E. Mr. Enas Al-Fiki, addressed a very timely theme: Knowledge Societies for All: Media and Communication Strategies.

IAMCR 2006 was attended by delegations from 90 countries, including ministers, academics, professionals and media experts in different fields of communication, alongside many representatives from the United Nations and other international organizations, embassies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholder groups. The conference program included approximately 130 sessions and roundtable discussions, an exhibition in the main campus of AUC, and a series of parallel events including the meetings of different sections and working groups in addition to the conference general assembly.

The conference included five main plenary sessions that were held in AUC's Ewart Memorial Hall, with simultaneous translation into Arabic, Spanish and French. In addition, eight Arabic-language plenary sessions, with simultaneous translation into English, were held in AUC's Oriental Hall to provide an opportunity for our non-English-speaking Arab colleagues to present their research. The conference included 28 sections and working groups in different fields of communications ranging from media economics to public opinion to the digital divide and more.

The opening ceremony of the conference was chaired by Professor Hussein Amin, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, American University in Cairo, and included remarks by Professor Robin Mansell, IAMCR President, as well as Ambassador Nasser Kamel, who delivered a speech on behalf of the Minister for Information. The conference plenary sessions were very successful and were attended by many participants, as were most of the sections and working groups organized around five themes. More information about the plenary sessions is available in the [IAMCR president's conference report](#). This year, the conference provided for the first time a call for papers in Arabic to enable scholars present their academic work in Arabic. This explains the participation of more than 140 academics, professionals, and media policy-makers from the most prominent public and private universities and media organizations in Egypt and the Arab world.

Moreover, the conference provided scholars from developing countries a special subsidized registration fee that was 20% of the original sum in order to make possible their participation.

The closing ceremony was a beautiful night that ended with a video that summed up the feelings of all the participants of the Cairo conference. We hope to soon have the video available on the IAMCR website.

Egyptian government and private media organizations as well as international publishers responded generously to calls for support of the conference. The list of sponsors included Egyptian Radio and Television Union, Egypt's NileSat, *the International Herald Tribune-Daily Star Egypt* newspaper, the International Academy for Engineering and Media Sciences (IAMES), the Modern Sciences and Arts University (MSA), Al-Mehwar satellite channel, *Al-Akhbar* newspaper, the Middle East News Agency (MENA), *Al-Masry Al-Youm* news paper, Video Cairo, Emeco Travel, *Al-Gamaheer* newspaper, Moody Graphics, EgyptAir, the International Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA), Holiday Tours, SAGE Publications, Routledge, and Blackwell publishing houses also participated in sponsoring the event and held a special reception. The diversity of these organizations, representing both public and private sector organizations; their local, regional, and international nature; and the array of their activities emphasize the amount of widespread recognition and excitement that news of the conference's choice of Egypt as a location generated.

In addition to the academic activities of the conference, participants were provided with nightly entertainment to help the busy attendees become acquainted with some of the culture of the country, including folk music and dancing from different parts of the country and a modern blend of jazz and traditional Arabic music. Participants were also provided with twice-daily coffee breaks as well as daily lunch and dinner on campus – the inclusiveness of these arrangements helped create a wonderful environment for the participants.

The conference organized an Egyptian media event to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Arab academics and professionals. Dr. Gihan Rashti from Cairo University and Mr. Saad Labib from the Egyptian Radio and Television Union received awards for outstanding achievement. Additionally, the results of Herbert Schiller Prize and the Smith prize competitions were announced.

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication published two newsletters to keep participants informed of the many events scheduled for the conference: a special daily conference issue of the university's student newspaper, *the Caravan*, was distributed each morning and a special conference newsletter, *Papyrus*, was distributed each evening. In addition, the AUC's Adham Center for Electronic Journalism produced video documentaries of the conference for the opening and closing ceremonies to highlight the event.

The conference organizers published two versions of the conference papers, English and Arabic, as well as the conference program, CD, an online newsletter, and the conference website. The volumes contain extracts of the papers, while the full-length version of the papers is available on CD and on the conference website. The CD also contains the conference program, all available speeches and presentations, as well as a list of participants. In addition, the CD included several photos in printable format for appropriate use by participants. The department will provide a photo gallery of all pictures taken during the conference, newsletters in pdf format,

and the two documentaries produced for the conference on the IAMCR website.

Preparations for the conference were coordinated by the Conference Secretariat, which was organized into an executive committee, the organizing committee and various subcommittees. The local committee included Dr. Hussein Amin as chair of the local organizing committee, Dr. Ibrahim Saleh as co-chair for for logistics and organization, Dr. Ralph Berenger as English editor, Dr. Bassiouni Hamada as Arabic editor, and Dr. Mona Zaki as a member of the committee. The local organizing committee was also responsible for managing the event and coordinating with different subcommittees of translation, research units, food and beverage, cultural activities, technical coordination, ushering, support team, printing material, design and art work, media and publicity, production, etc.

Egyptian media and international media provided good coverage of the event, including coverage on the Egyptian television channel one, Egypt's Nile TV International, Nile News, Egyptian radio, the Daily Star, MENA, and Al-Gamaheer Newspaper as well as many other newspapers

Following this report are the results of a survey of participants at the closing of the conference. The response of the participants was overwhelmingly positive to most aspects of the conference, from organizing, to website and registration procedures, hotel accommodations, conference organization, satisfaction with the conference and its value-for-money, and overall satisfaction. A surprising number of respondents did not attend the roundtable discussions, and a number also responded that some of the conference activities and arrangements needed to be communicated somewhat better – many did not know that medical service was provided to participants and some did not have enough prior notice of the cultural activities at night.

Policy recommendations for each section and working group are an exemplary menu of strategies for decision-makers in public and private institutions. Thanks are due to all of the conference participants who came to Cairo and contributed to the success of the conference. This conference was truly an historic event for the IAMCR and for media and communications research, in that it provided a venue for academics from the region and from other developing countries to meet, network, and debate colleagues from the West and, at the same time, it provided those from the West with the opportunity to discuss first-hand their research and conclusions with fellow researchers from the Middle East. The IAMCR 2006 conference allowed researchers from this part of the world the opportunity to present their research in an international setting, to some of the field's most distinguished researchers. I am confident that IAMCR 2006 will continue to impact media and communications research both here and in the West for years to come. IAMCR 2006 is a model for academic collaboration and research: the search for improved understanding, for new insights, for shifts of perspective, for debate and discussion, and for the promise of joint research and work to inform and shape media and communication strategies around the world.

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at American University in Cairo hosted this international conference to support the strengthening of human and institutional capacities for media and communication strategies, to contribute to

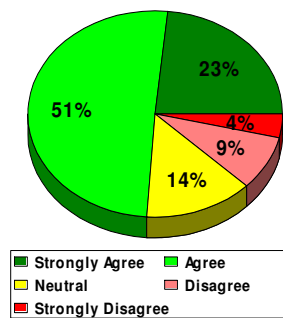
the building of capacity for policy analysis and technology assessment and strengthening educational efforts, to strengthen regional and international collaboration, and to facilitate access to, and sharing of, relevant information and best practices. It is our hope that IAMCR 2006 is the first of many international conferences to reach out to the developing world.

### IAMCR Conference Research

This survey was conducted in order to evaluate the different aspects of the IAMCR conference. A sample of 320 IAMCR attendees participated in this survey.

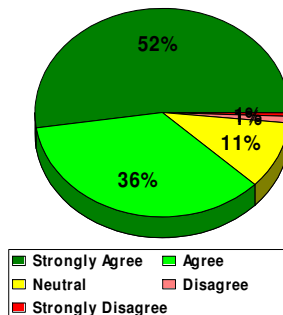
#### Conference Logistics

1. The pre-conference registration process was easy.



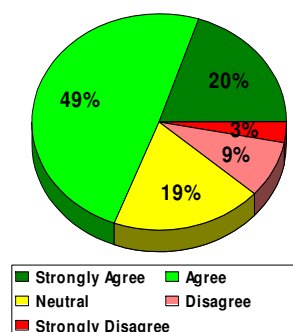
Logistics - 1

2. The students at the registration desk were helpful.



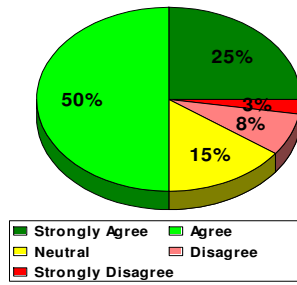
Logistics - 2

3. The Registration Desk procedures were efficient.



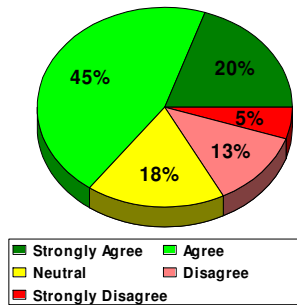
Logistics - 3

4. The promotional materials I received about the conference met all my needs.



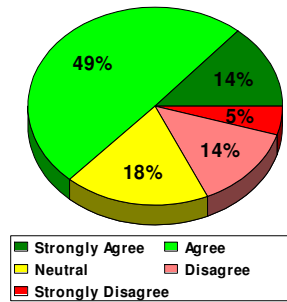
Logistics - 4

5. The registration materials I received about the conference met all my needs.



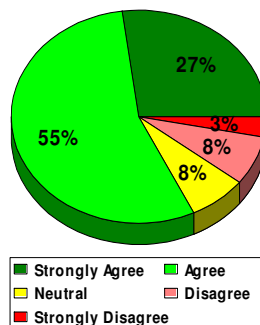
Logistics - 5

6. During the conference, it was easy to get the information I needed.



Logistics - 6

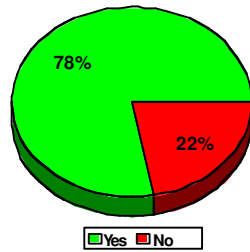
7. Overall, the conference was well organized.



Logistics - 7

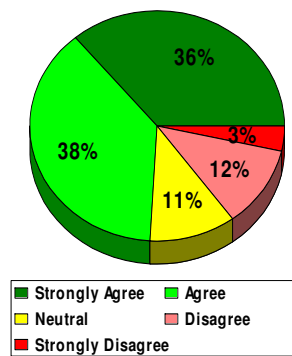
## Conference Website

1. I registered online (If you answer no, please skip the next two questions).

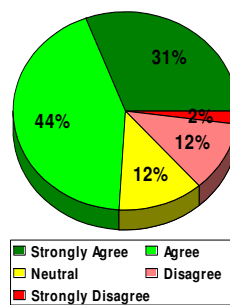


Website - 1

2. I had no or little technical difficulties registering online.

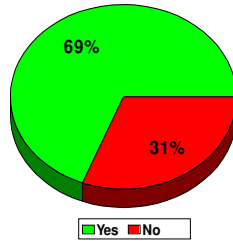


3. The online registration process was user friendly.

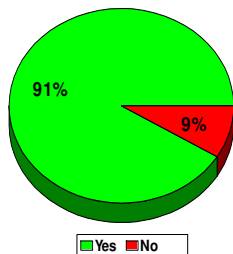


## Program Format

1. Was the organization of the program effective?

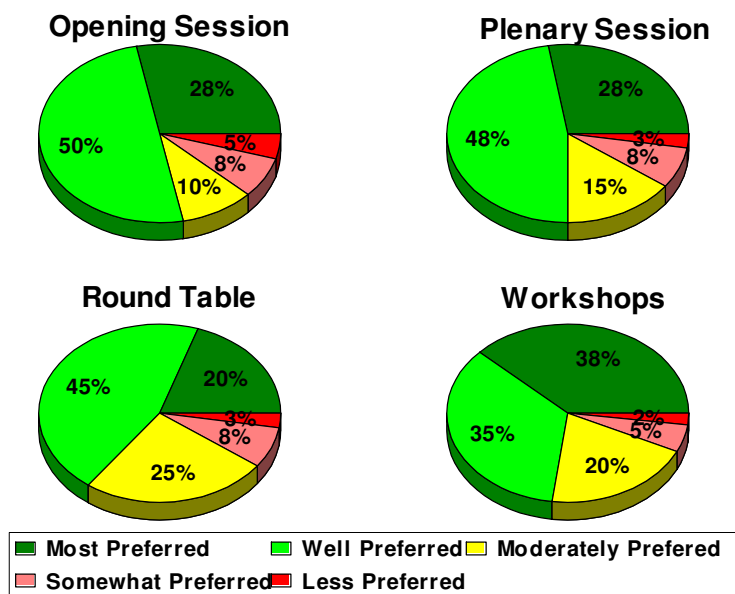


2. Was the audiovisual effective and useful?



Program Format - 2

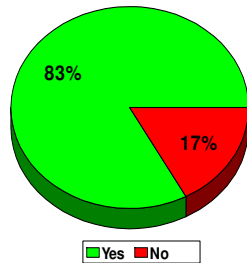
3. Please rate session types in order according to your own preference



Program Format - 3

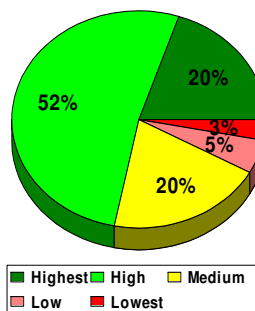
## Plenary Sessions

1. Did you attend any of the plenary sessions?



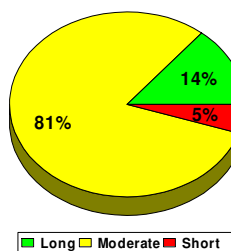
Plenary Sessions - 1

2. If Yes, on a 5-point scale, how do you rate the efficiency of the plenary sessions?



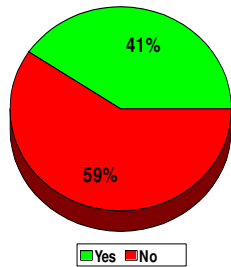
Plenary Sessions - 2

3. What do you think of the sessions' length?



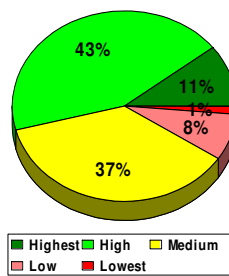
## Roundtables

1. Did you attend any of the roundtables?



Roundtables - 1

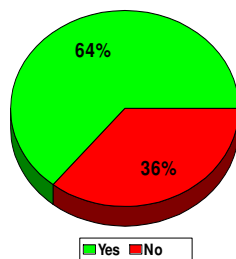
2. If yes, on a 5-point scale, how do you rate the efficiency of the roundtables?



Roundtables - 2

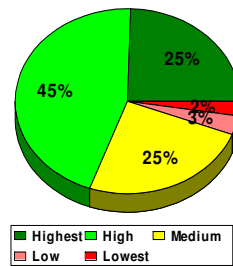
## Workshops

1. Did you attend any of the workshops?



Workshops - 1

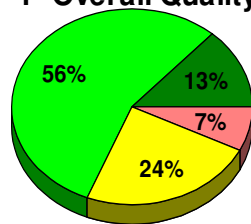
2. If yes, on a 5-point scale, how do you rate the efficiency of the workshops?



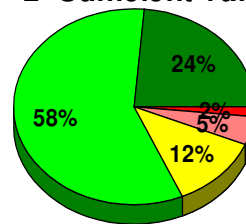
### Conference Content

1. The overall quality of the session content met my expectations.
2. There is sufficient variety offered in this conference.
3. Conference networking activities provided an opportunity to learn from my peers.
4. I gained new ideas and insights from my conference experience.

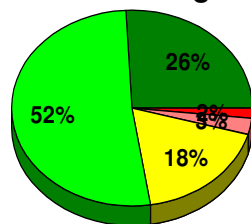
1- Overall Quality



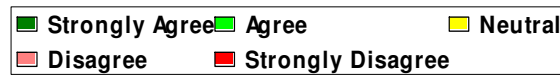
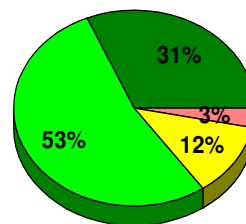
2- Sufficient Variety



3- Networking Activities



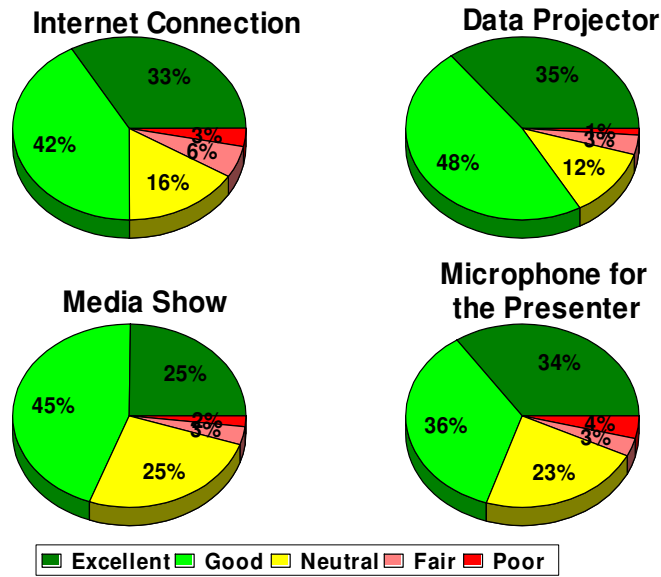
4- New Ideas



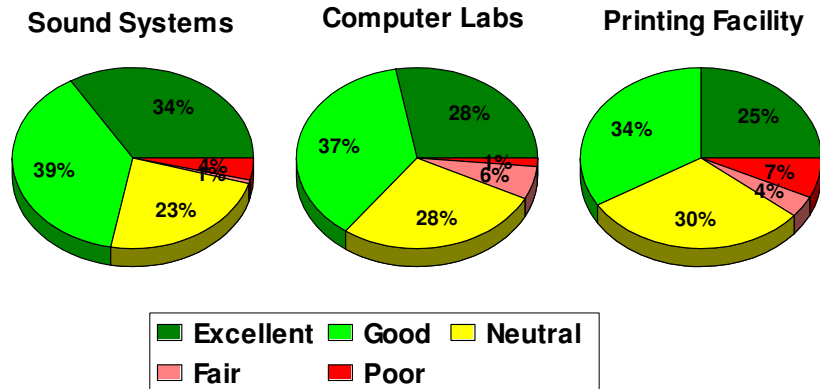
Conference Content - 1-4

## Conference Activities

How would you rate the resources available at the AUC during the conference in terms of quality:



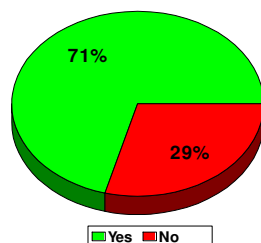
Conference Activities - 1a-d



Conference Activities - 1e-g

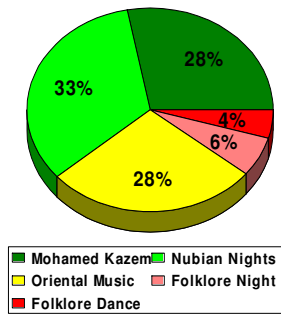
## Social Events

1. Did you attend any of the social events?

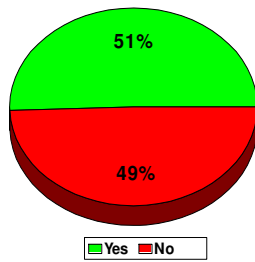


Social Events - 1

2. Please indicate the social events you attended:

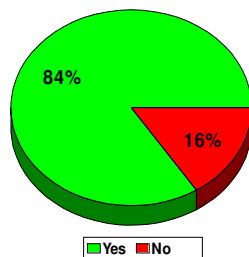


3. Did you receive enough information about these initiatives prior to the start of the conference?



Social Events - 3

4. Were you happy with the level of networking opportunities at conference?

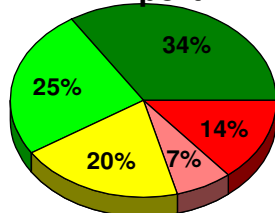


Social Events - 4

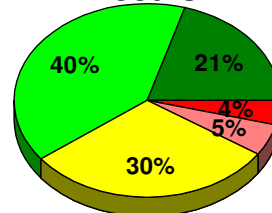
## Conference Organization:

1. Please rate the following services that were provided during the conference:

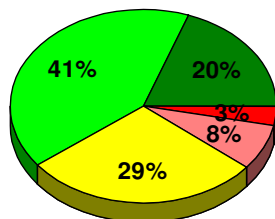
**Meet & Assist in the Airport**



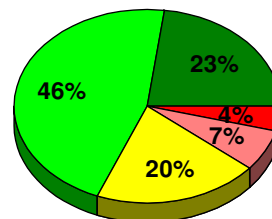
**Student Information Booths**



**Quality of Food**



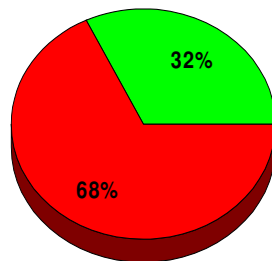
**Food Services**



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Fair ■ Poor

Conference Organization - 1

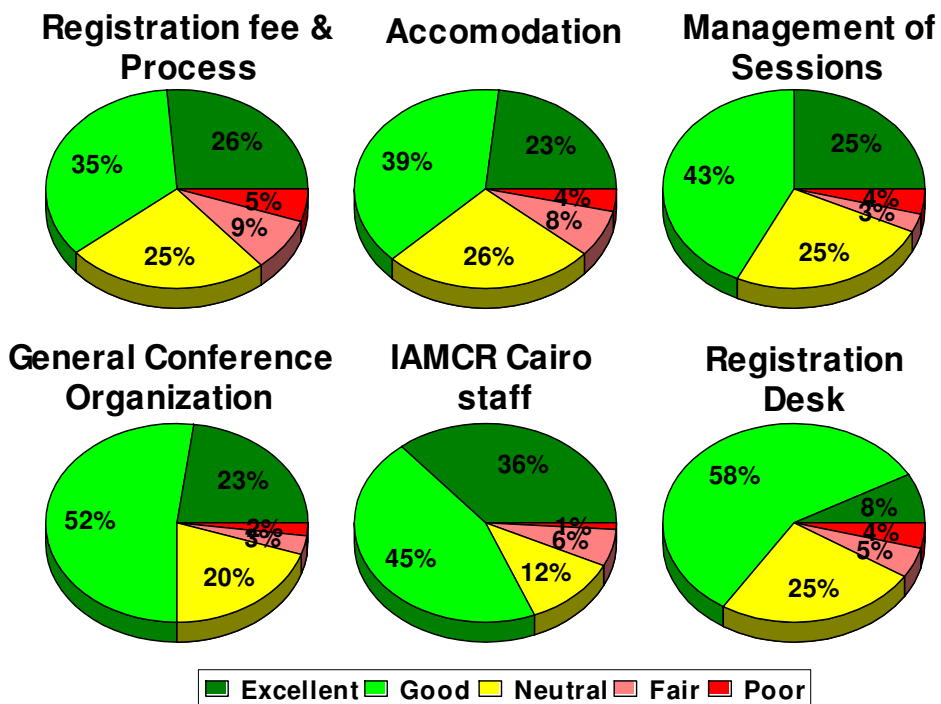
2. Are you aware that medical assistance was provided?



■ Yes ■ No

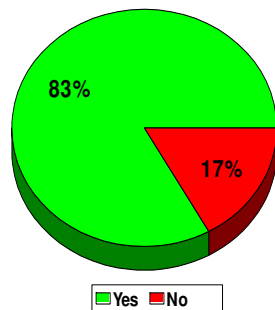
Conference Organization - 2

3. How do you rate the following items:



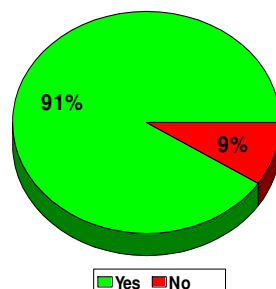
Conference Organization - 3

4. Were your expectations fulfilled?



Conference Organization - 4

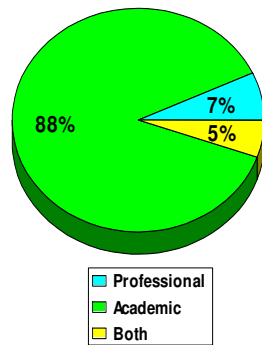
5. Do you think conference was good value?



Conference Organization - 5

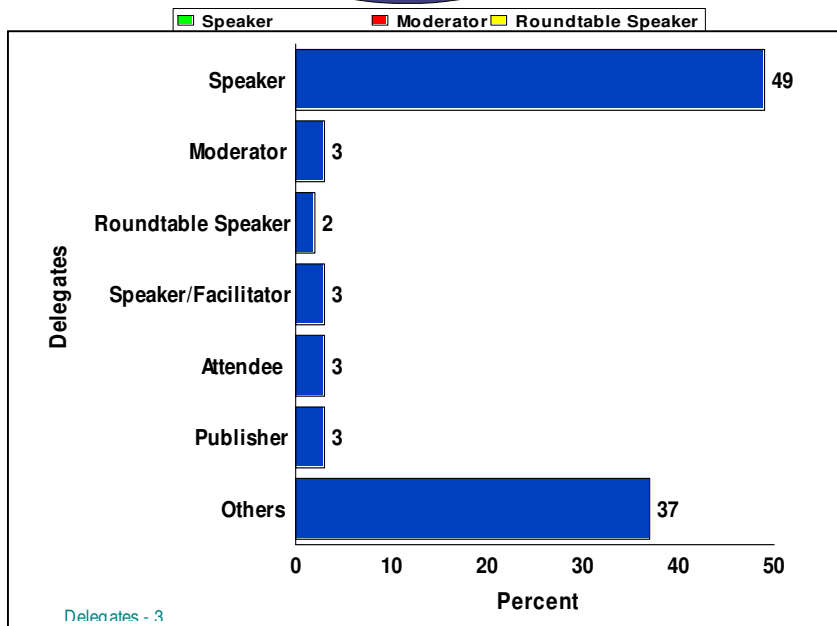
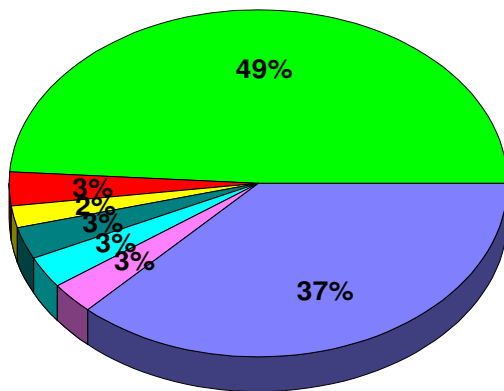
**Delegates:**

1. Are you:



Delegates - 2

2. Were you a:



Delegates - 3