Independent Investigations Group (IIG), Colorado

Survey of

Paranormal Research and Ghost Hunting Groups

Conducted June – August 2012

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Version **1.1**

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1.Overview

In August of 2012, IIG Colorado completed a survey of 113 paranormal research and ghost hunting groups. This survey differed from many other paranormal surveys in that it was focused on the entire team itself, rather than on individuals. The motivation for the survey was to learn such things as how and when teams formed; team make-up; general procedures and activities; tools used; and services offered.

Responses to the survey came from 32 different US states, as well as a few from Canada, Italy, the UK, and Germany.

This report contains the results of that survey.

Version	Date	Change
1.1	Sep 9, 2012	Fixed minor typos
1.0	Sep 1, 2012	Initial Release
0.1	Aug 21, 2012	Draft Version

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2.Methodology

The survey was constructed with LimeSurvey[1], a free and open-source survey tool. The survey consisted of approximately 50 questions, and all were optional (except one asking if the group wanted to remain anonymous). The survey was divided into six sections: Background, Membership, Investigations, Tools and Services, General Group Questions, and Privacy and Contact Options (this last section is not included here.) The raw data from the survey can be found in the companion spreadsheet IIGSurvey2012.xls.

A total of 531 email addresses were collected from all over the web, with each being advertised as a contact address for a paranormal research or ghost hunting team. Links to the survey were emailed to all addresses, requesting that only the group leader or owner fill out the survey. Each link was unique and specific to a team, and could only be used once to fill out the survey.

Invitations emailed	531
Undeliverable emails	101
Delivered but chose not to participate	51
Unknown email status	266
Responses (Began Survey)	113
Responses (Completed Survey)	89

Once the survey period was ended, the survey was closed to new responses. A data cleanup phase was conducted, to fix or remove any obviously erroneous entries (such as a response of "2008" when asked how many *years* the group had existed, or a response from a group that was more a forum for those interested in the paranormal than an actual ghost hunting team, or completely empty response sets.)

Question types varied from numbers, multiple selection from a list, single selection from a list, yes/no answers, and text entry. For the text entry fields, we made a best effort to categorize the free-form text responses, but sometimes these responses were unclear or subjective. Again, all responses are available in the companion spreadsheet for further examination or interpretation. However, even if the category counts change slightly, relative category proportions are usually not effected.

Respondents would complete one section before moving to the next. Not all respondents completed all sections, and since questions were optional, not all respondents completed all questions within any given section. Each section in this report indicates the number of respondents that viewed a given section as "Teams Surveyed", and where relevant, each question indicates the number of respondents answering or not answering that question. This data may help in understanding the results, since they are in percentages of respondents or values entered.

Some questions (like one asking how many years a group has existed) are presented as a median response, to minimize outliers. However, some number responses had rather large standard deviations, so it may be valuable to examine the spreadsheet for details of the actual responses.

[1] LimeSurvey, http://www.limesurvey.org/, Retrieved 20 August 2012

Paranormal Research and Ghost Hunting Groups
Methodology

An effort was made to present the results in as clear a manner as possible. Due to rounding of the yes/no responses, some of those results may not add up to exactly 100%. Questions that allowed a single choice from a list are presented as pie charts. Simple multiple-choice questions are generally presented as either a vertical bar chart or a horizontal bar chart; whichever fits best in the space available. More complex multiple-choice answers are presented as a stacked bar chart.

Some questions allowed the responder to enter an "Other" answer. These answers were categorized and included in the results if they were relevant, did not duplicate the original options, and the new category represented at least 5% of that question's respondents. Details on these answers are noted with each relevant graph. Questions that only allowed a text response did not need an "Other" category.

3.General Observations

Responses sometimes varied quite a bit, and the actual questions and breakout of responses fill out most of the rest of this report. Below are some generalizations of those responses.

Most group names include a local city or area identifier, along with the words Paranormal, Research, Ghost, Investigations, or Society. The most common group was founded 5-6 years ago with 4 people, and has since doubled in size. Their primary goal is to help people reporting strange occurrences, along with conducting investigations and research, and educating others and themselves. Some also have the goal of helping ghosts. Roles include a founder, investigators, technical specialists, and case managers. Many also have psychics or sensitives. While most groups have no specific new goals for the future, they hope to continue what they are doing now, and feel they get better at what they do over time.

Most groups do not consider themselves a business, have not registered a trade name, are not insured, and are not registered as a non-profit organization. The average group spends $1000 a year, and does not charge for their services, or collect membership fees. They have no overall group religious identity, though 41% of the groups indicated their members have been blessed or prayed over during an investigation, and about half have encountered activity they felt was evil. Few have ever encountered anyone they would consider possessed, but those who have often then seek aid from Catholic clergy.

Most members are 20 to 40 years old, though there are older members, but few under 20, and few retirees. Occupations are roughly similar to the US population, with heavier concentrations in photography, writing, and the media industry, and life, physical, and social sciences, and lighter participation in office support, food preparation, and installer/maintainers. Potential new members contact groups out of the blue, often due to information about the group on the web. While groups value any education or training their members may bring, there are not generally any specific educational requirements to becoming a member. Most training occurs in-house by other team members.

Groups rarely investigate in cemeteries. The most common locations are private residences. When a client contacts the group with concerns about possible paranormal activity, the group begins to collect more information and to determine the next step. Often an investigation is recommended. Occasionally a group will also recommend the client keep a journal to document any unusual disturbances.

The typical group has performed at least 70 total investigations, and now performs about 2 per month. Investigating with another group is uncommon. Investigations usually occur in the evening into the morning hours, since that is when the client requests, or the activity is reported, and since that is the time that conflicts least with the investigators outside work schedules. Nighttime (with the lights off) also is said to be beneficial because of less environmental noise (sounds, light, and so on), and because some of the equipment used works best in the dark. The most common equipment used is audio/video, EMF detectors, thermometers, and IR or night vision technology. Very few groups use things like dowsing rods, religious items, or Ouija boards,

Actually finding something a group would consider paranormal does not happen every time, but it does occur at least half the time. About half the groups have encountered clients they felt should seek psychological help.

It is also interesting to look at just a couple correlations based on the length of time a group has existed, since many groups indicated they felt they improved in various ways over time.

- The groups answering YES to whether they have registered a trade name were older (median age of 6.5 years) than groups that answered NO (median age 4).

- The groups answering YES to whether their members are ever blessed or prayed over during an investigation were younger (median age of 4.5 years) than groups that answered NO (median age 6).

- The groups answering YES to whether they used any tools or methods to increase paranormal activity were younger (median age of 4 years) than groups that answered NO (median age 5.5).

- The groups answering YES to whether they ever felt it was necessary to refer someone to seek psychological help were older (median age of 6 years) than groups that answered NO (median age 4).

Other works using the data from this survey may wish to explore further correlations, or conduct similar surveys to explore how groups change over time.

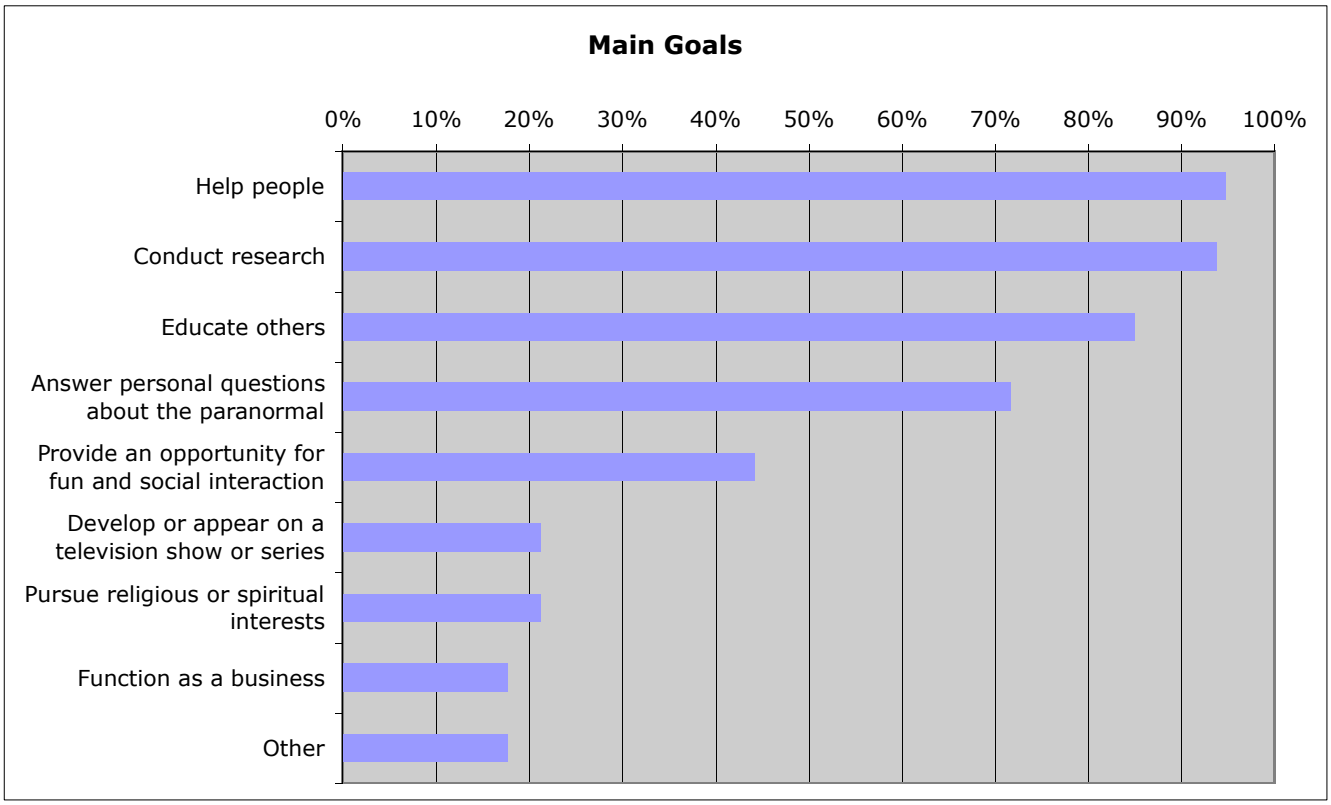
4.Group Background Questions

Teams Surveyed: 113

Question	Median Response	No Answer
How many years has the group existed?	5 years	n/a
How many members did the group start with?	4 members	n/a
In US dollars, how much money does the group, as a whole, spend on its goals in a given year?	$1000	15%

Question	Yes	No	No Answer
Has the group registered a trade name?	35%	54%	11%
Is the group registered as a non-profit organization?	25%	65%	11%
Is the group registered as a business?	23%	68%	9%
Does the group have insurance? (other than any insurance its individual members may have)	14%	68%	18%

Does the group consider any of the following part of their main goals?
Question type: multiple selections



No **Other** answers represented a unique category at least 5% of the responses, and so are not included.

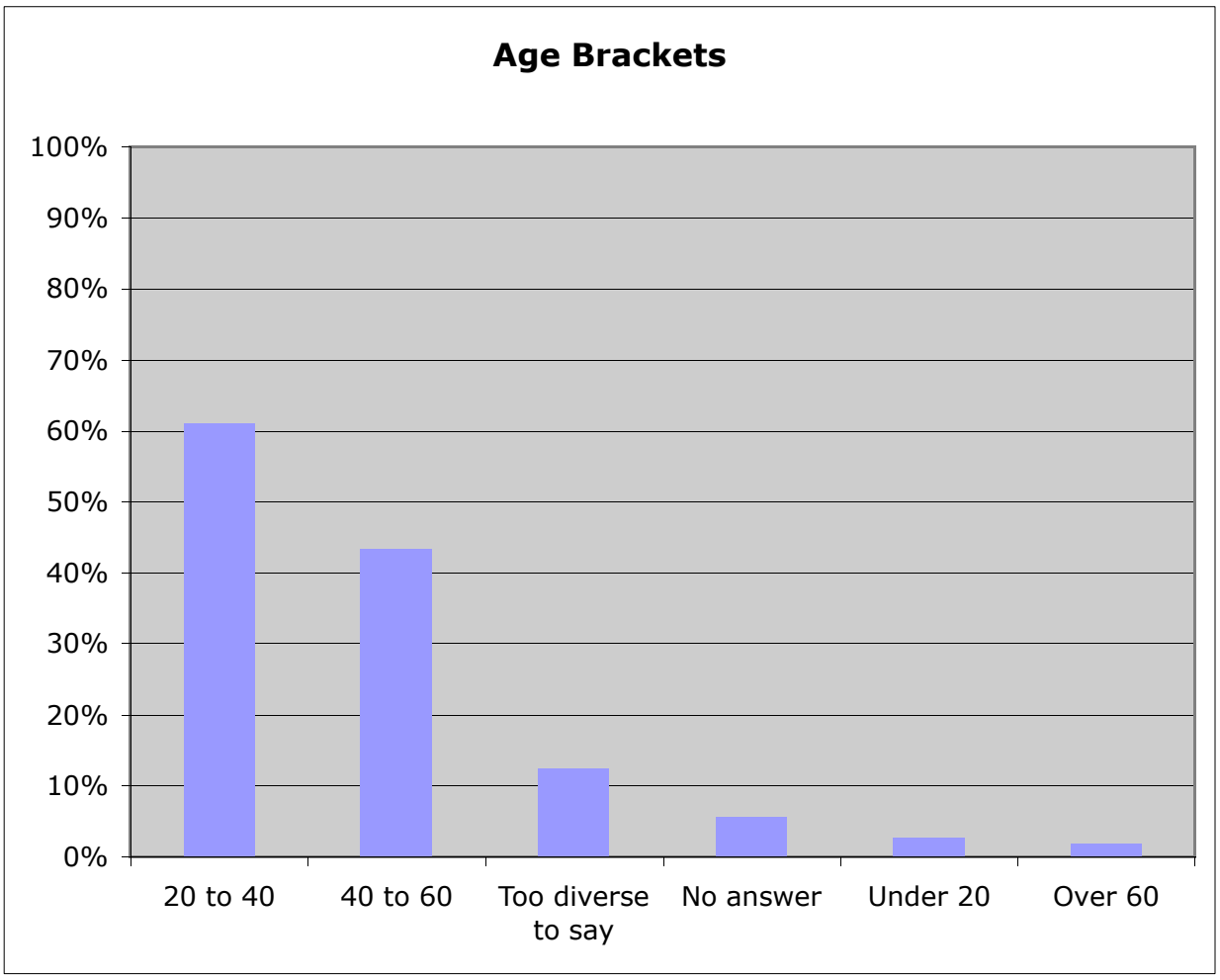
5.Membership

Teams Surveyed: 107

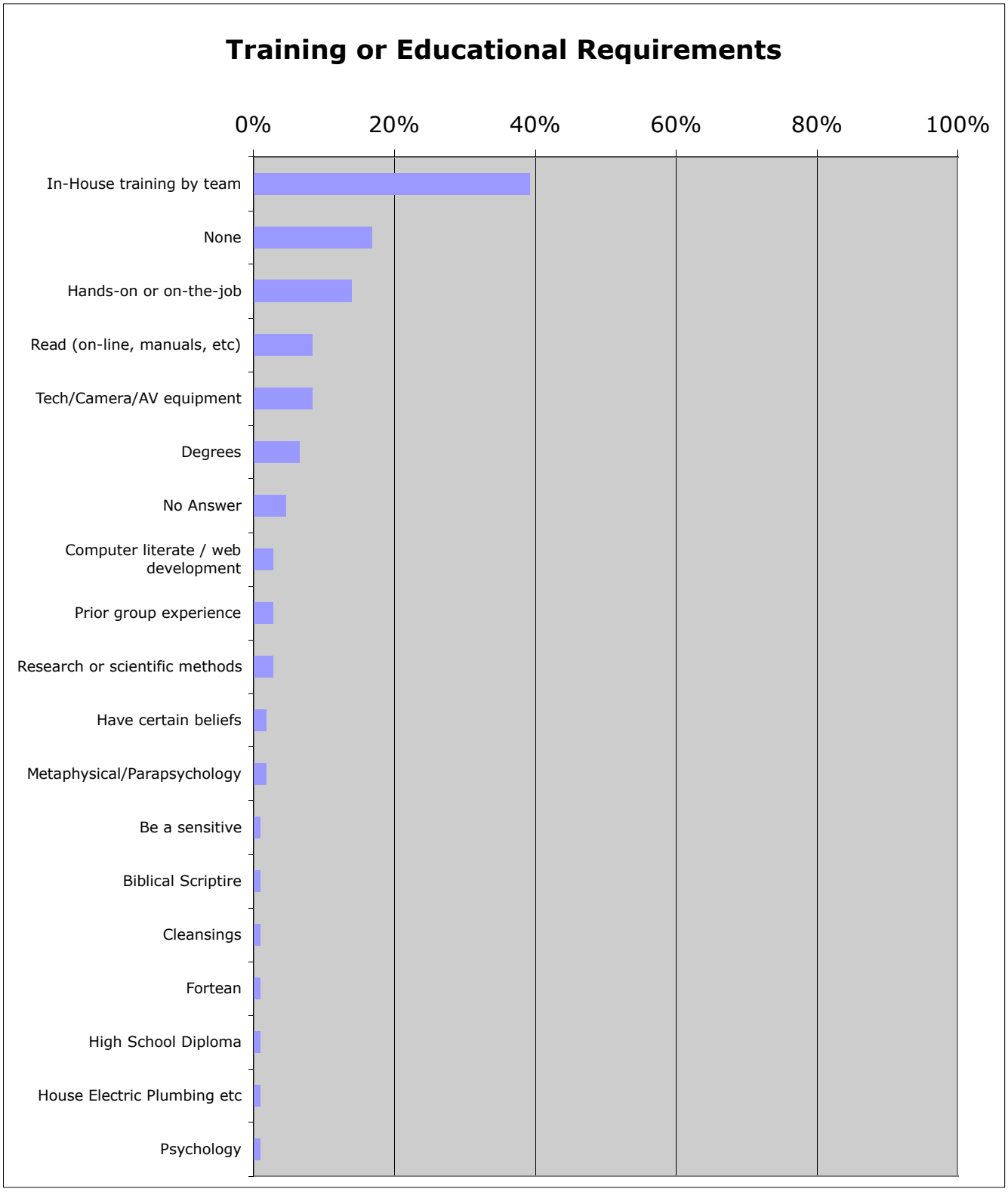
Question	Median Response	No Answer
How many active members does the group have today?	8 members	6%

Question	Yes	No	No Answer
Is anyone in the group ordained in any religious tradition?	32%	60%	8%
Does the group collect membership dues or fees?	24%	69%	7%

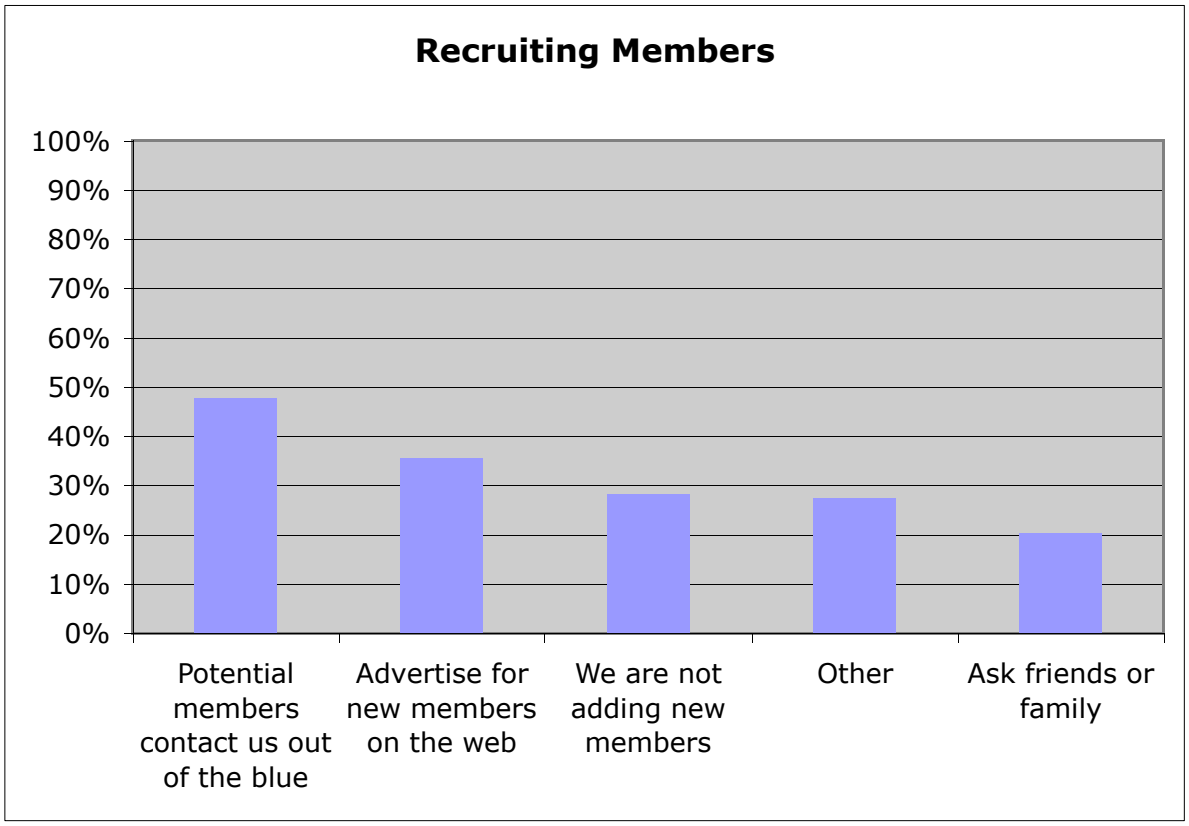
Into what age brackets do most members fall?
Question type: multiple selections



What specific training or education does the group require of its members?
Question type: text entry



How does the group recruit new members?
Question type: multiple selections



Of the **Other** answers, Internship/Trial Process was given by 5% of the groups.

What fields do your members work in outside the group?
Question type: text entry

The surveyed teams were asked to enter this as text, from which we compiled a count per occupation, and then categorized groups of occupations under the main occupation segments as defined by the US Department of Labor.[2] The graph below compares the employment statistics of the occupation segments reported by this survey to the employment statistics of the US labor force. The chart is scaled for a maximum value of 20%, since there are no results greater than that, and since the goal of this chart is to explore the relative differences between the categories.

Some occupations are not covered by the labor statistics, and are listed as their own category, which includes students, homemakers, retirees, and military. These are shown in the second graph, "Survey non-Labor Force versus US Population".

This is a very rough comparison, since we had a relatively small sample of people compared to the 128 million in the census labor force. However, for the most part, their relative distributions seemed similar, suggesting that paranormal research teams do not attract or repel members much differently than in the general population. Perhaps some exceptions are:

1) Fields in the categories of office support, food preparation, and installer/maintainers whose salaries together average 37K or less on the 2011 census seemed relatively underrepresented on paranormal research teams. Perhaps due to less free time and discretionary income.

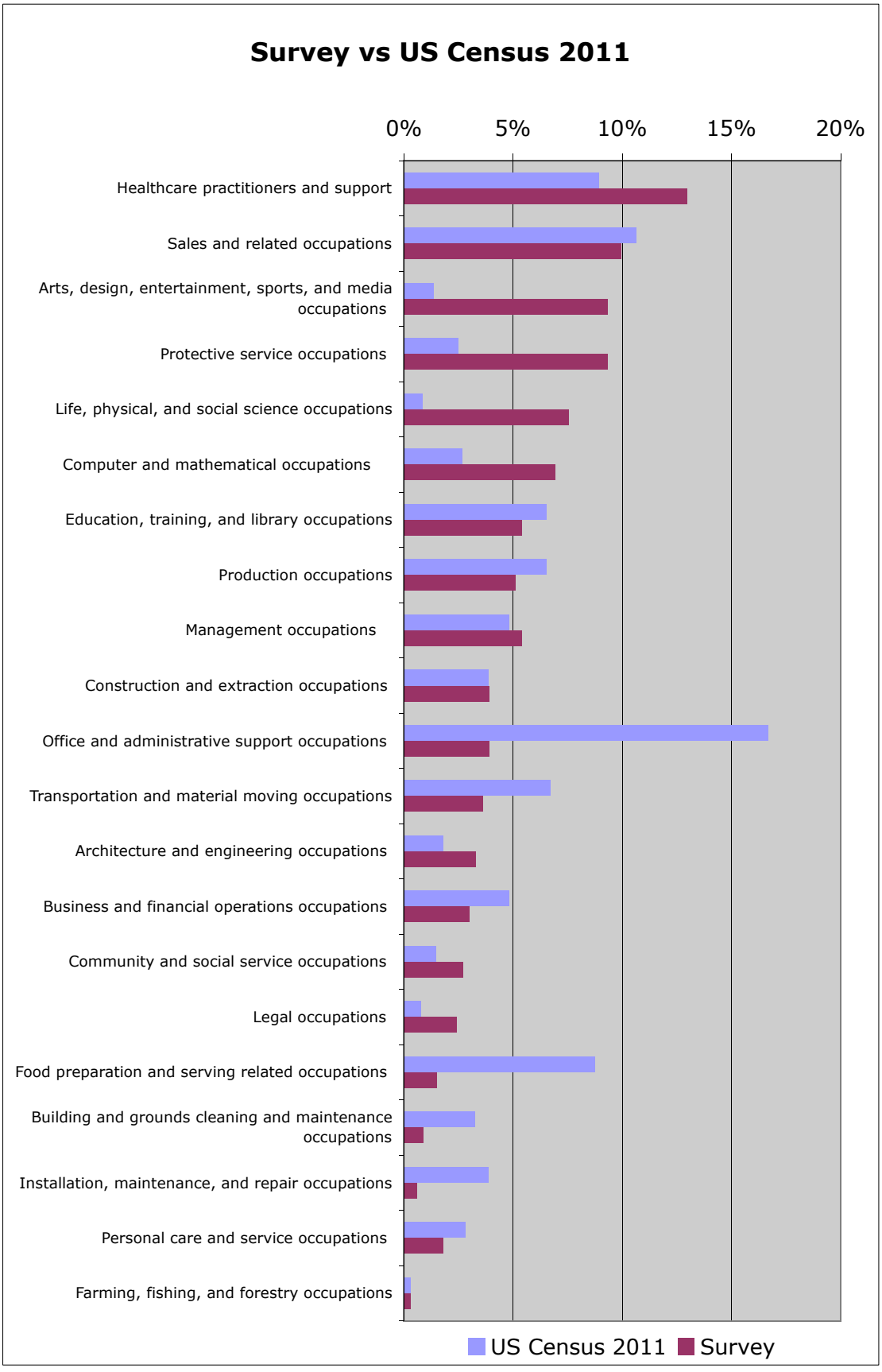
2) Arts and Entertainment represented a heavily concentrated field in paranormal groups compared to the general population. This includes the fields of photographers, writers, and the media industry (such as television and film).

3) Life, Physical, and Social Science were also much higher than normal in paranormal groups, due mostly to careers classified as a counselor of some sort, but also to fields such as historians, or other life sciences (zoologist, biologist, etc).

4) Protective Service careers were made a strong showing within paranormal groups, due to the number of paranormal careers attributed to Law Enforcement.

[2] "Table 1. National employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey by occupation, May 2011". US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.t01.htm. Retrieved 20 August 2012.

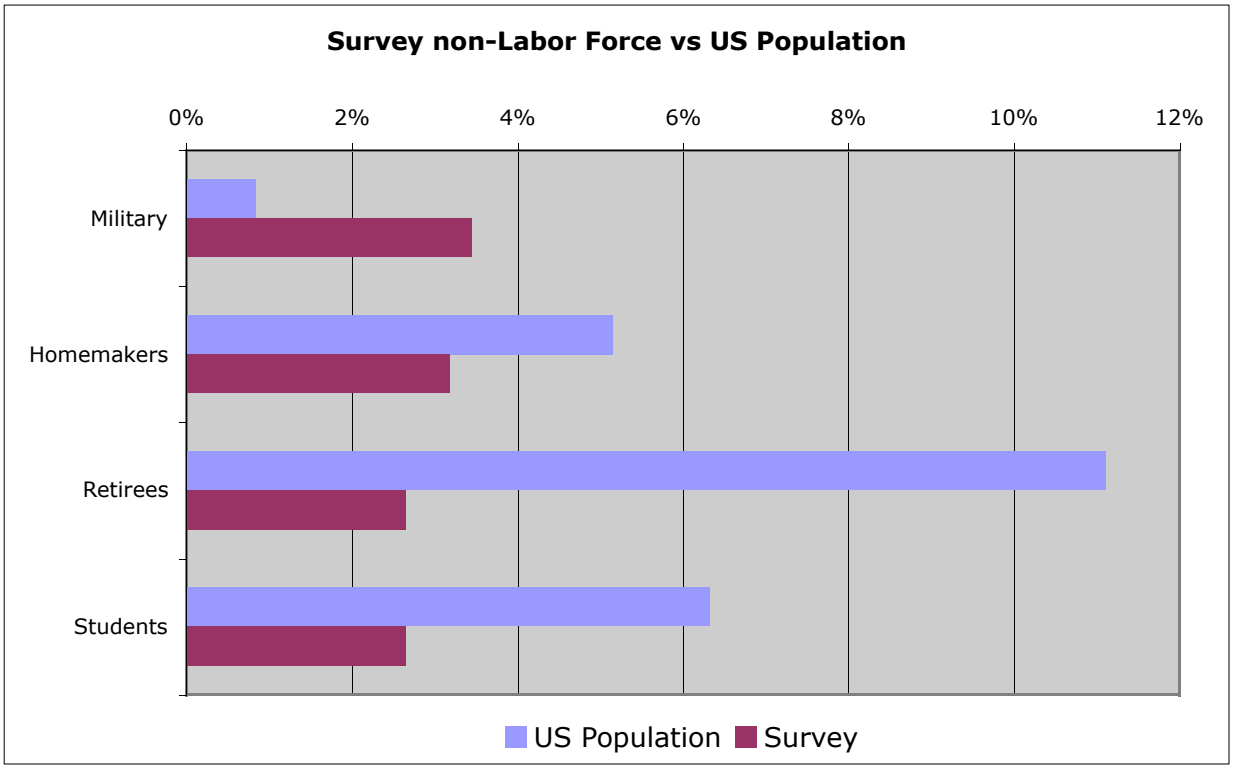
Paranormal Research and Ghost Hunting Groups
Membership



Paranormal Research and Ghost Hunting Groups
Membership

As in the previous table, we compiled a count per occupation for homemakers[3], students[4], retirees[5], and military[6], which are not counted in the US Labor force. The graph is scaled for a maximum value of 12%, since there are no results greater than that, and since the goal of this chart is to explore the relative differences between the categories.

This is a very rough comparison, since we had a relatively small sample of people compared to the US population of 312 million. However, for the most part, their relative distributions again seemed similar. Perhaps the exception is that retirees made up a very small percentage of paranormal group membership. This seems to match the answer to the earlier question about AGE groups, which reported only 2% of members were over 60.



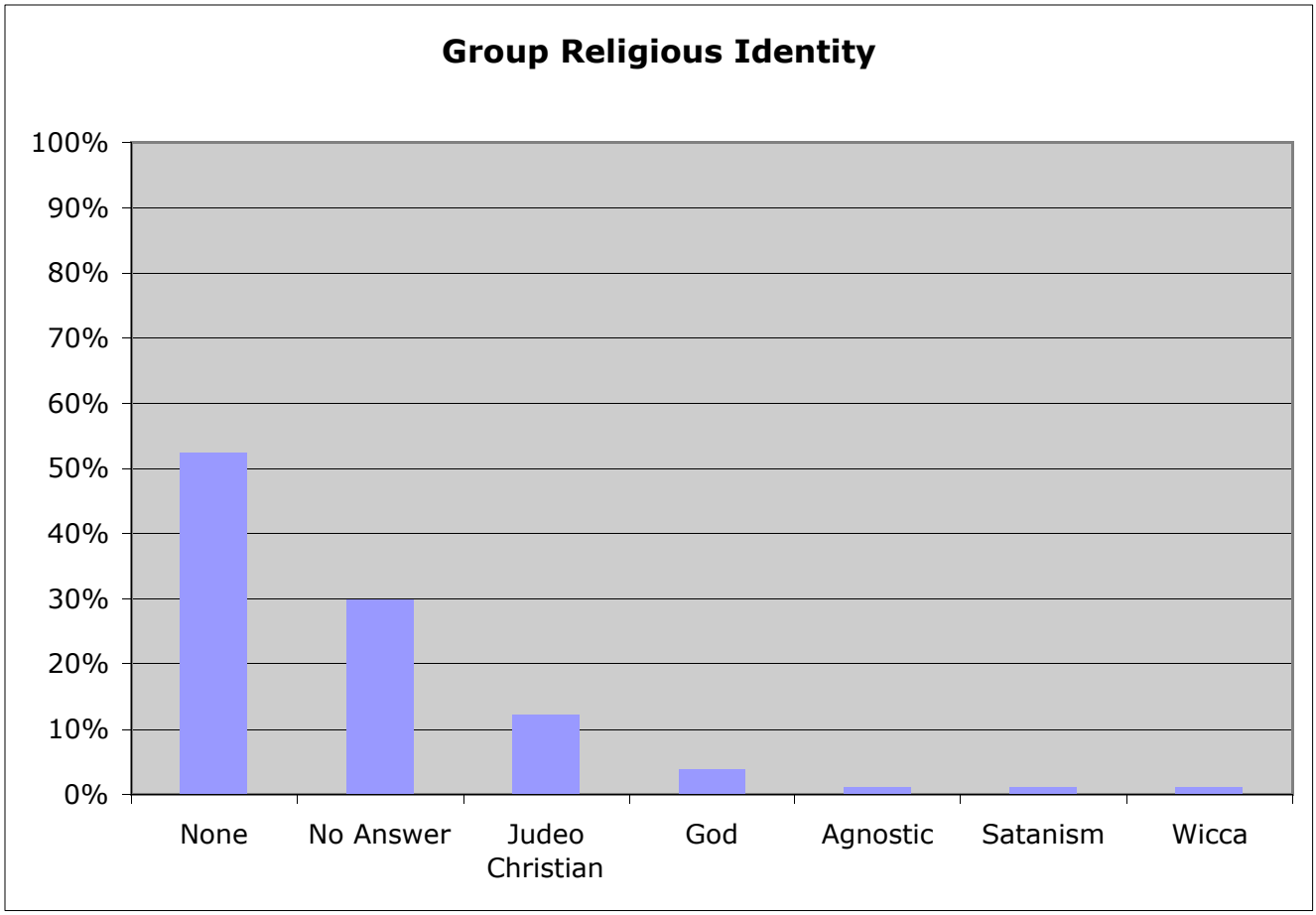
[3] "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey - Not in the Labor Force data". Bureau of Labor Statistics. http://bls.gov/cps/lfcharacteristics.htm#nlf. Retrieved 20 August 2012.

[4] "Projected Education Statistics to 2019", National Center for Education Statistics. http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2019/tables/table_20.asp. Retrieved 20 August 2012.

[5] "Annual Statistical Supplement 2011", Social Security Administration. http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2011/highlights.html. Retrieved 20 August 2012.

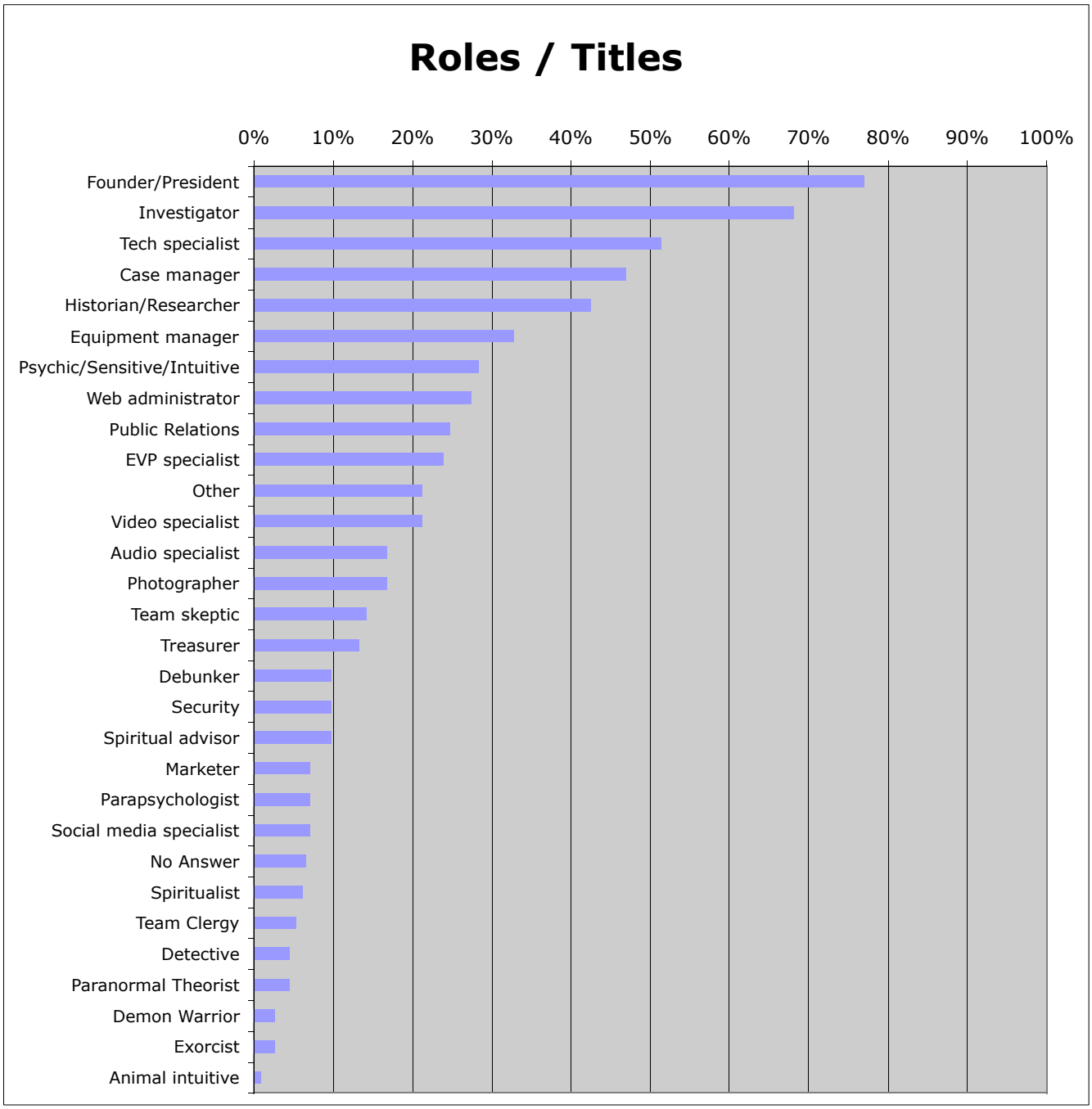
[6] "Atlas/Data Abstract for the United States and Selected Areas", Department of Defense Personnel & Procurement Statistics. http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/L03/fy09/09top.htm. Retrieved 20 August 2012.

If the group as a whole identifies with any specific religious or spiritual philosophy or tradition, please explain.
Question type: text entry



Paranormal Research and Ghost Hunting Groups
Membership

Groups often have members performing multiple roles. But does your group officially title specific members with any of the following or similarly named roles?
Question type: multiple selections



Of the **Other** answers, Director was given by 7% of the groups, and No Titles was given by 5% of the groups.

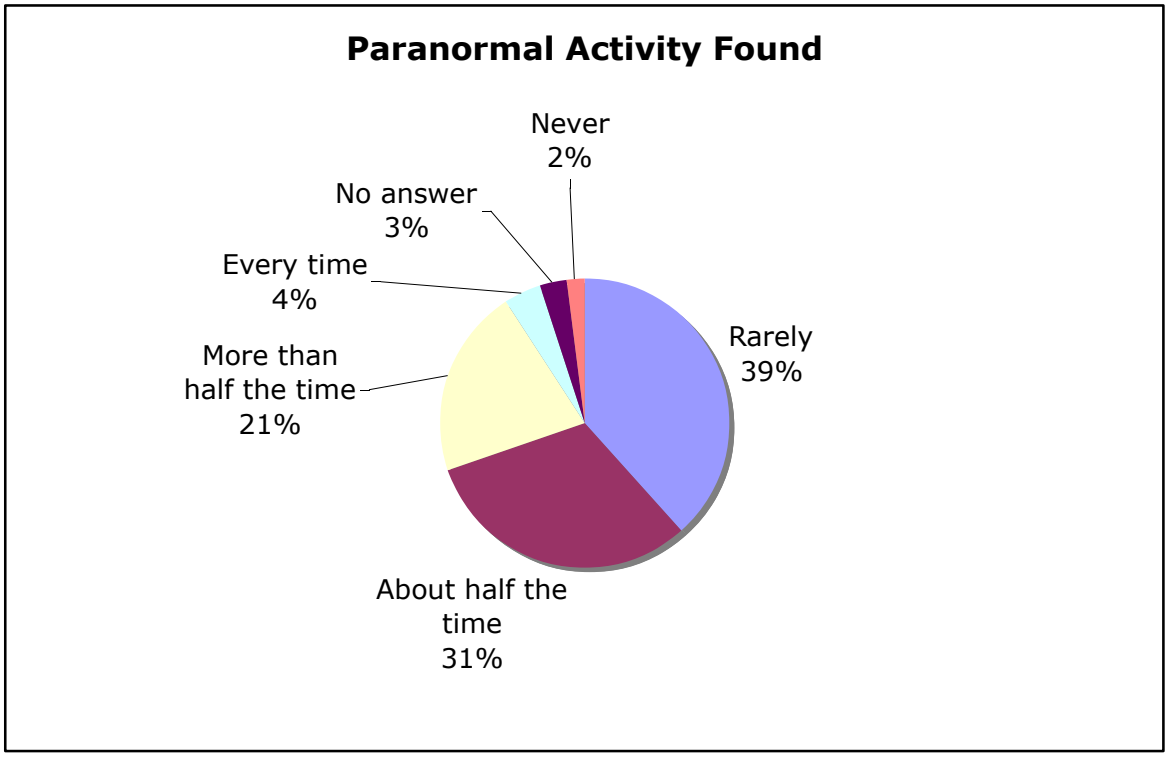
6.Investigations

Teams Surveyed: 99

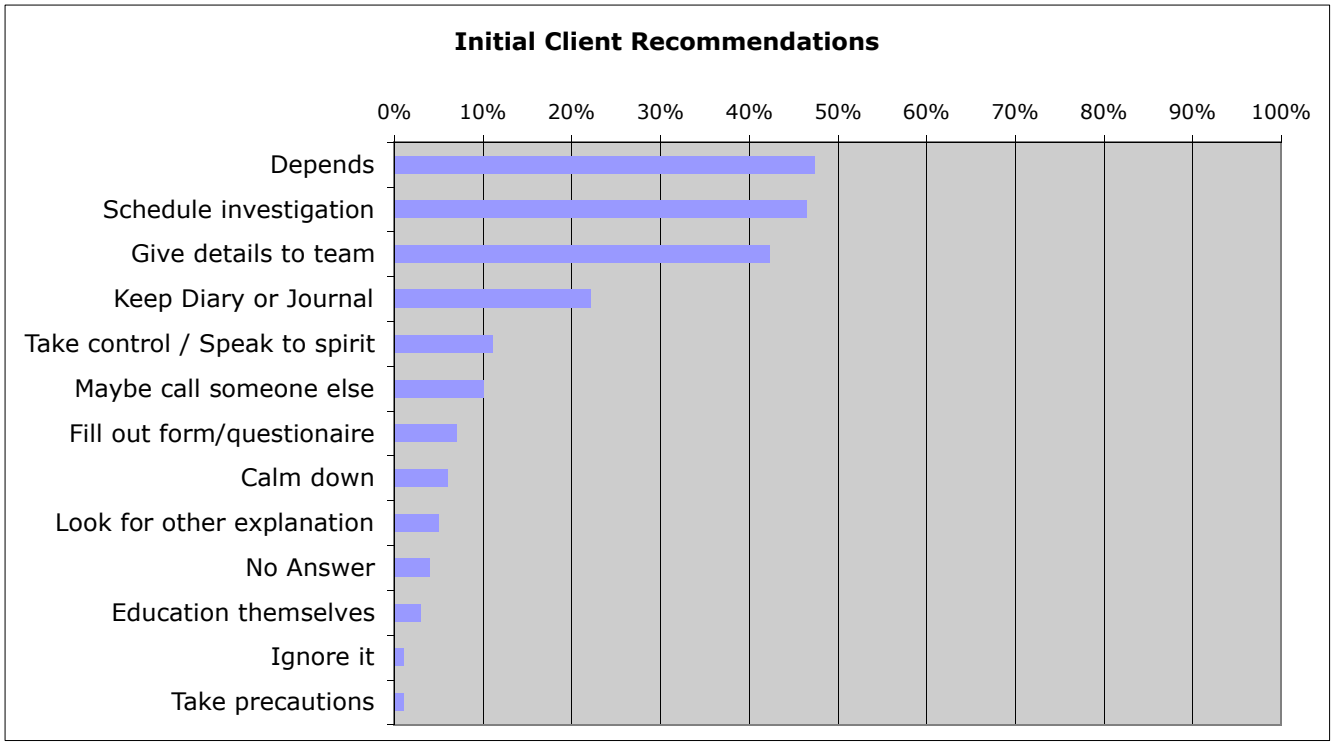
Question	Median Response	No Answer
Since the group was formed, approximately how many investigations has the group conducted?	70 investigations	3%
On average, how many investigations each month does the group perform?	2 investigations	11%
How many hours does an average investigation last (not counting the after-investigation data analysis)?	6 hours	12%

Question	Yes	No	No Answer
Has the group ever felt it was necessary to refer someone to seek psychological help?	56%	33%	11%
For the paranormal activity the group has encountered, has the group ever encountered any it felt was evil?	49%	43%	7%
Does the group use psychics, sensitives, or intuitives?	44%	42%	13%
Are the group's members ever blessed or prayed over during an investigation?	41%	47%	11%
Has the group ever encountered a person they considered was possessed?	11%	81%	8%

Roughly, as the group has investigated different locations, how often has the group found paranormal activity?
Question type: single selection



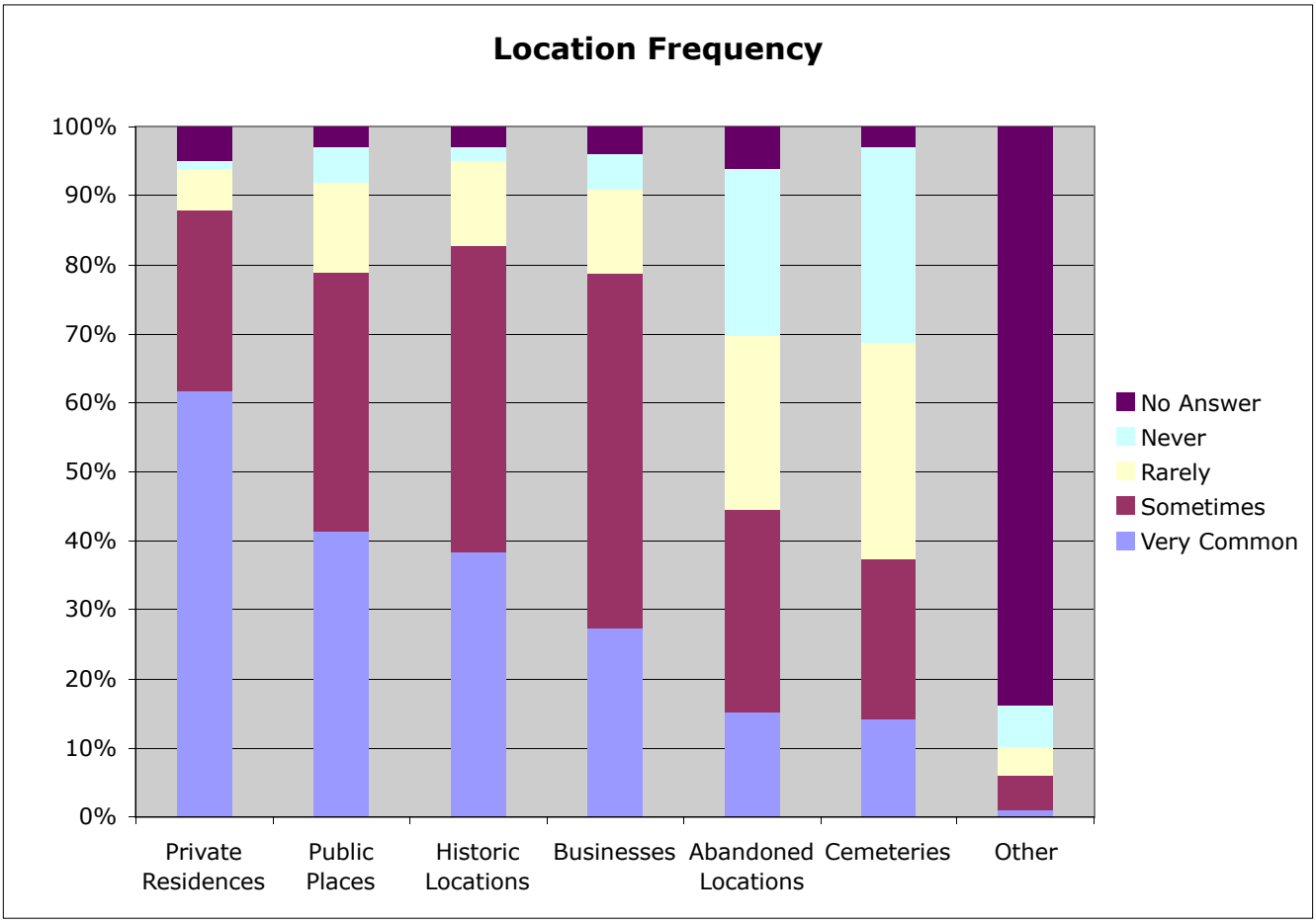
If someone contacts the group complaining about paranormal activity in their home, what does the group suggest they do about it?
Question type: text entry



When conducting an investigation, what are the group's goals?
Question type: multiple selections

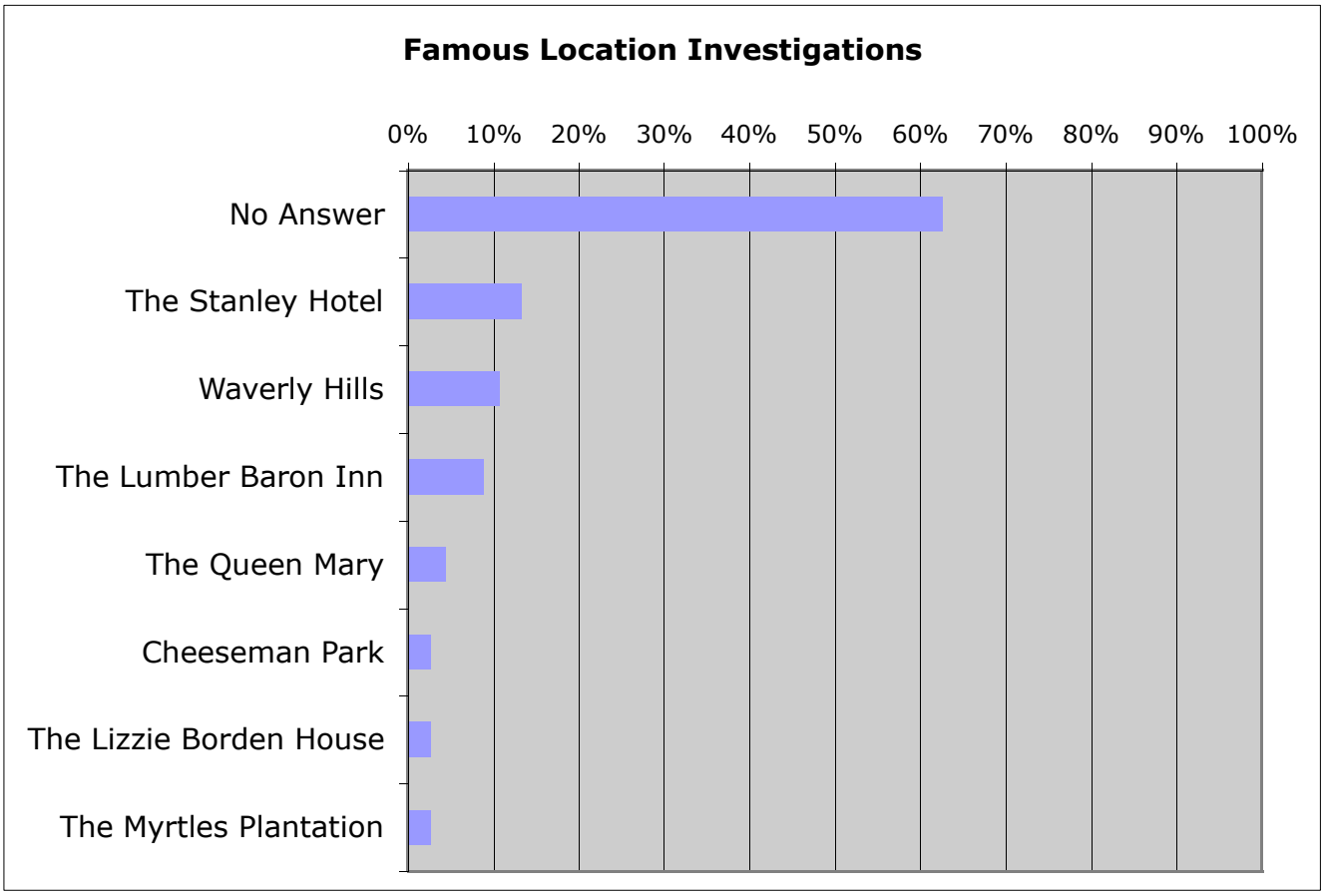
Of the **Other** answers, Educate was given by 7% of the groups.

What locations does the group investigate, and how frequently?
Question type: multiple selections

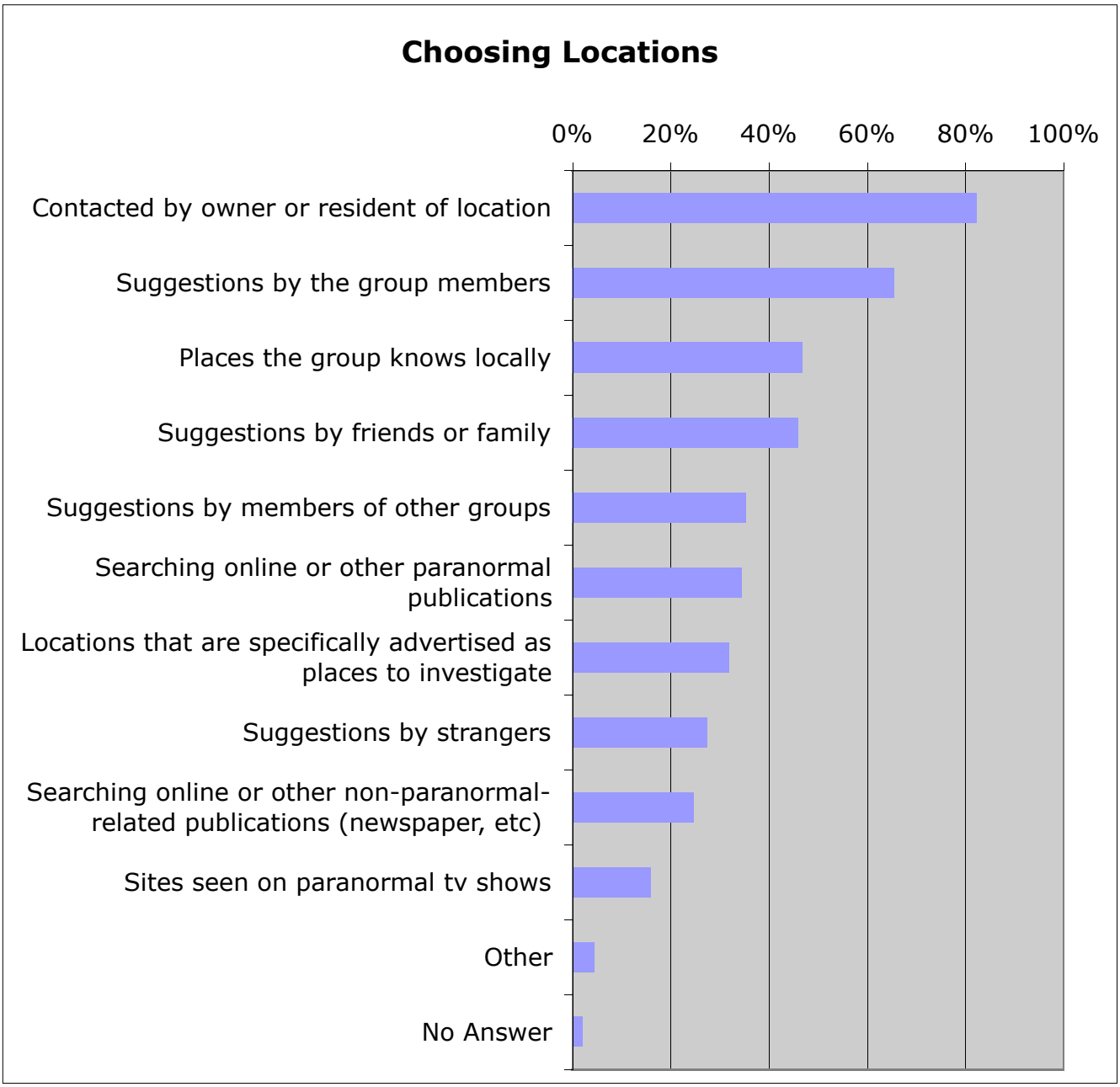


No **Other** answers represented a unique category at least 5% of the responses, and so are not included.

Has the group ever performed an investigation at any of the following locations?
Question type: multiple selections

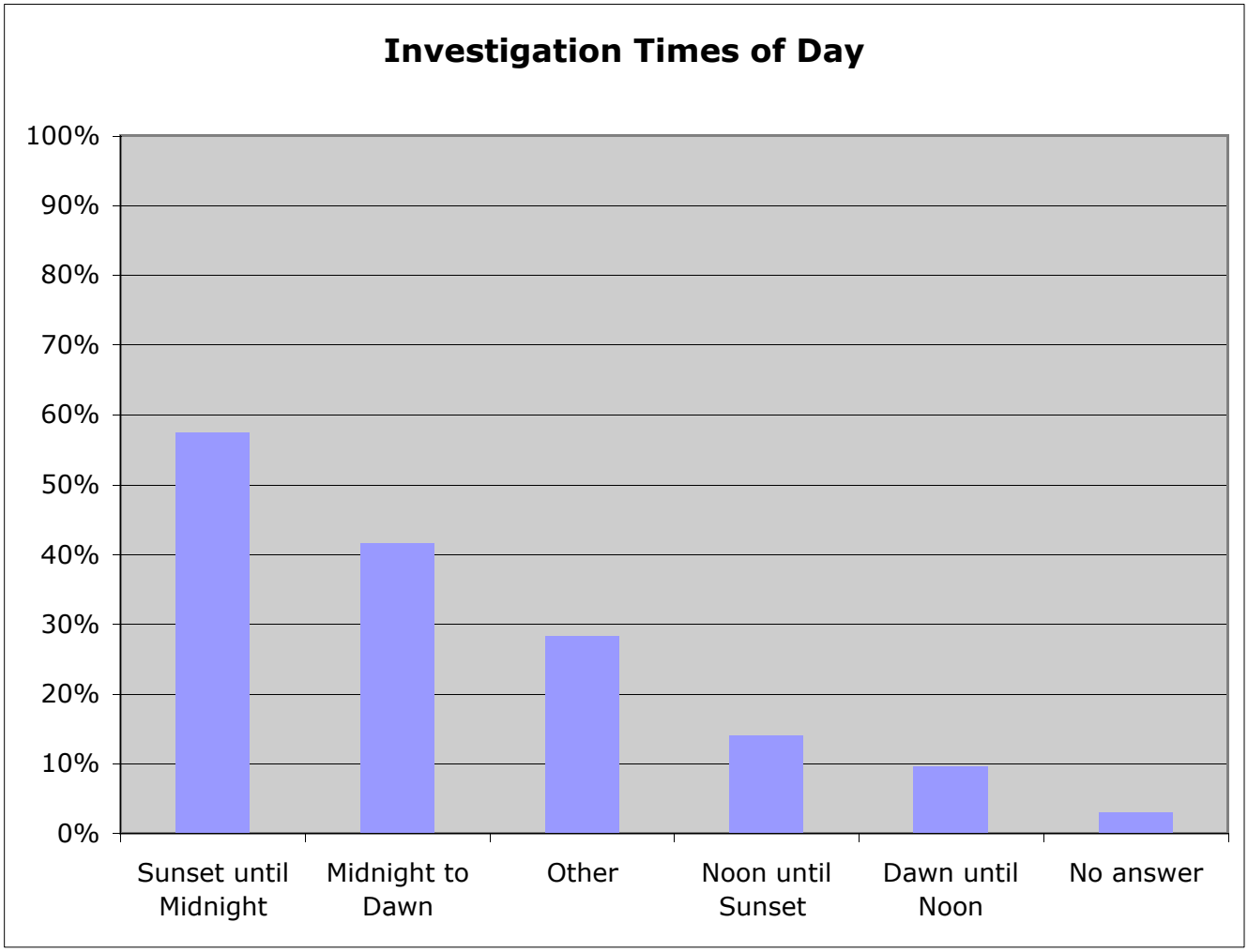


How does the group choose locations to investigate?
Question type: multiple selections



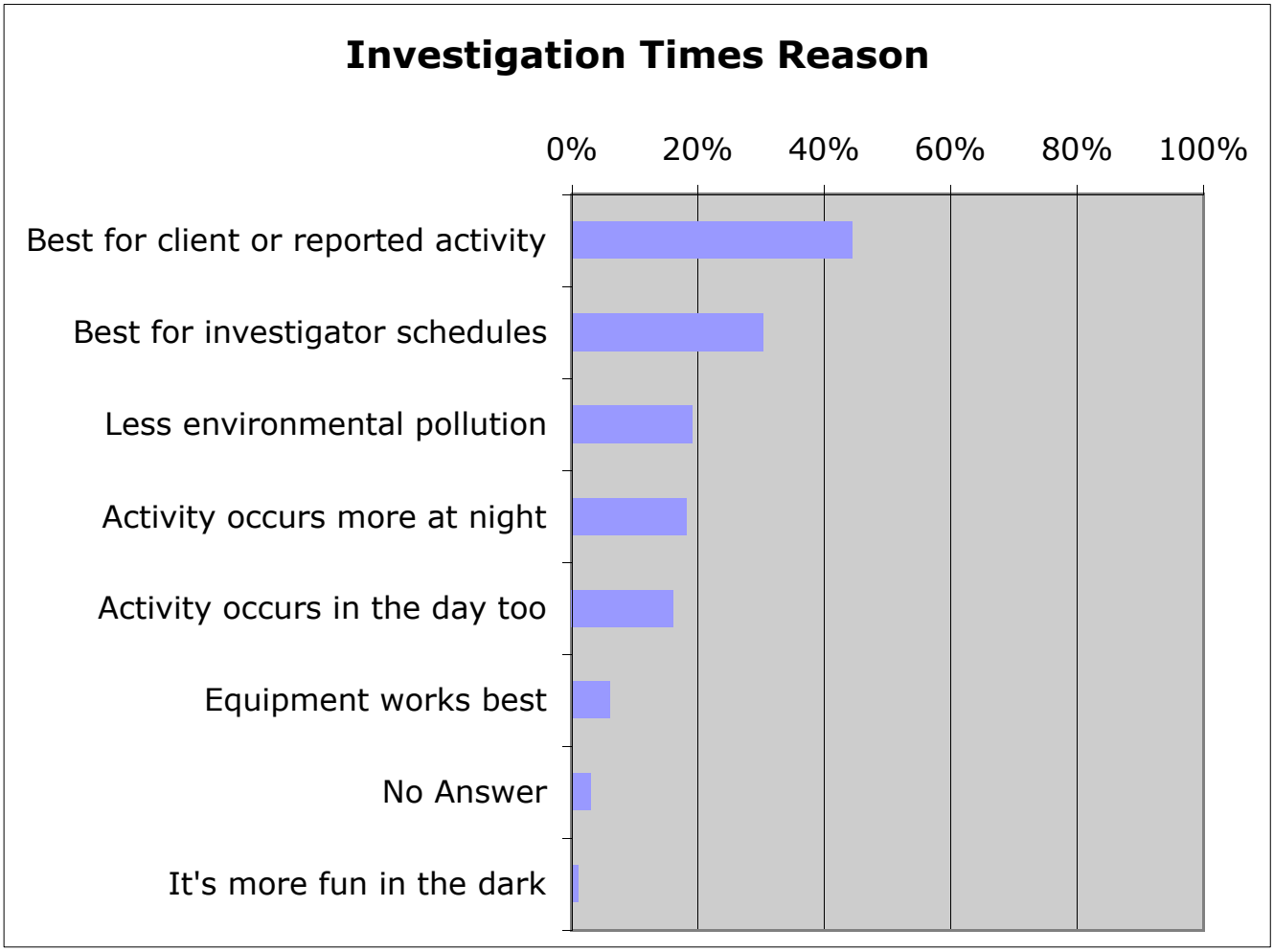
No **Other** answers represented a unique category at least 5% of the responses, and so are not included.

What times of day does the group usually perform an investigation?
Question type: multiple selections

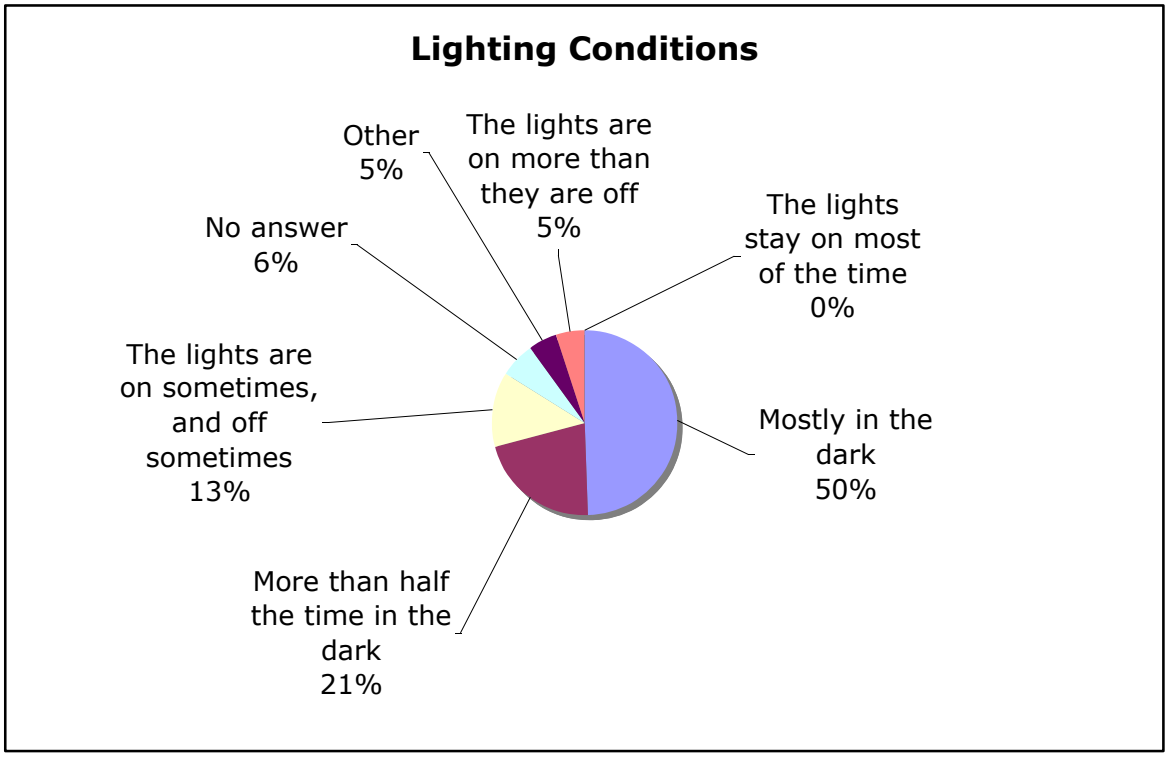


Of the **Other** answers, Evening until 1-4AM was given by 19% of the groups, and Depends On Client Request given by 8% of the groups.

Why does the group choose those time periods?
Question type: text entry

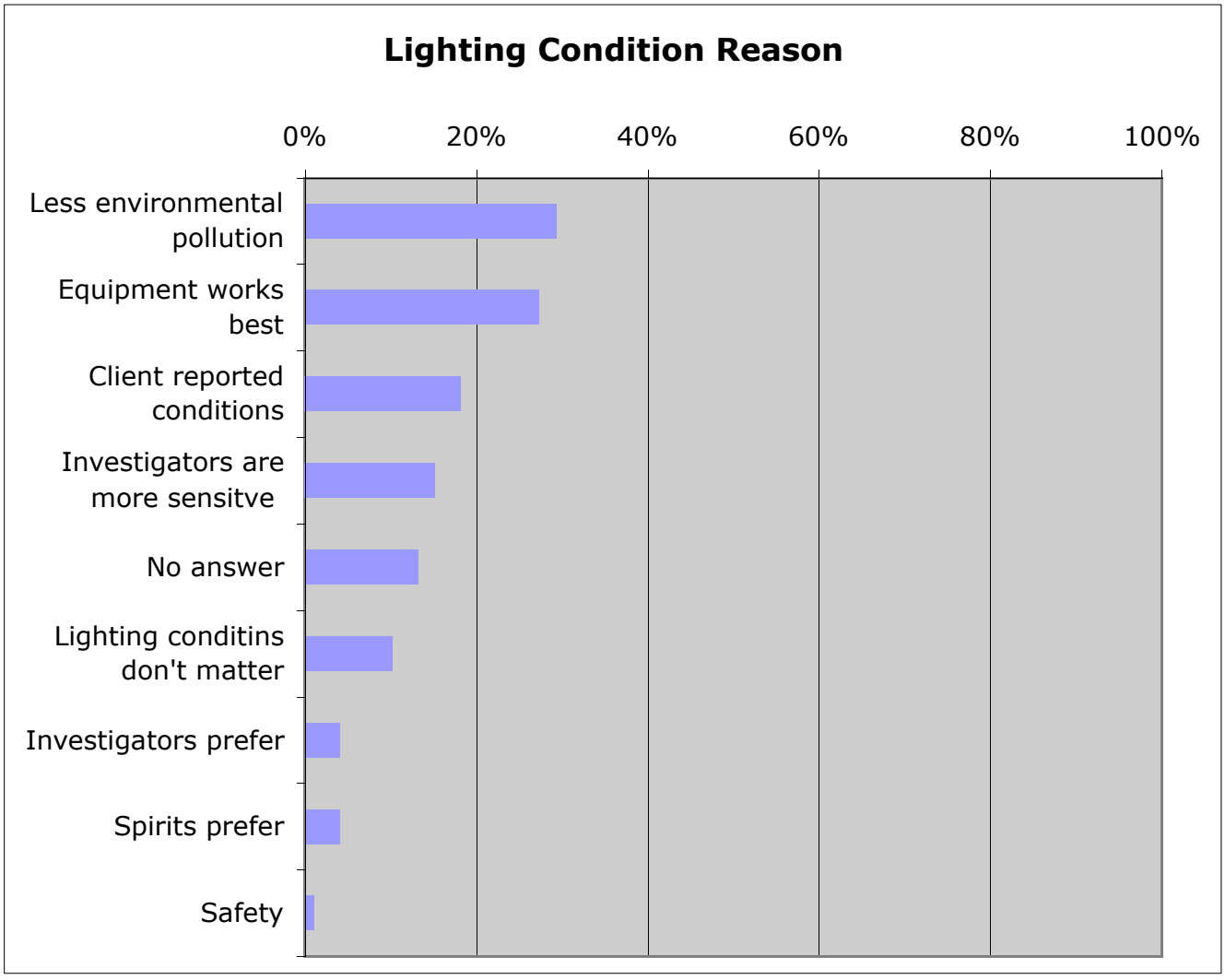


Under what lighting conditions does the group conduct its investigations (not counting flashlights, or IR or night vision)?
Question type: single selection

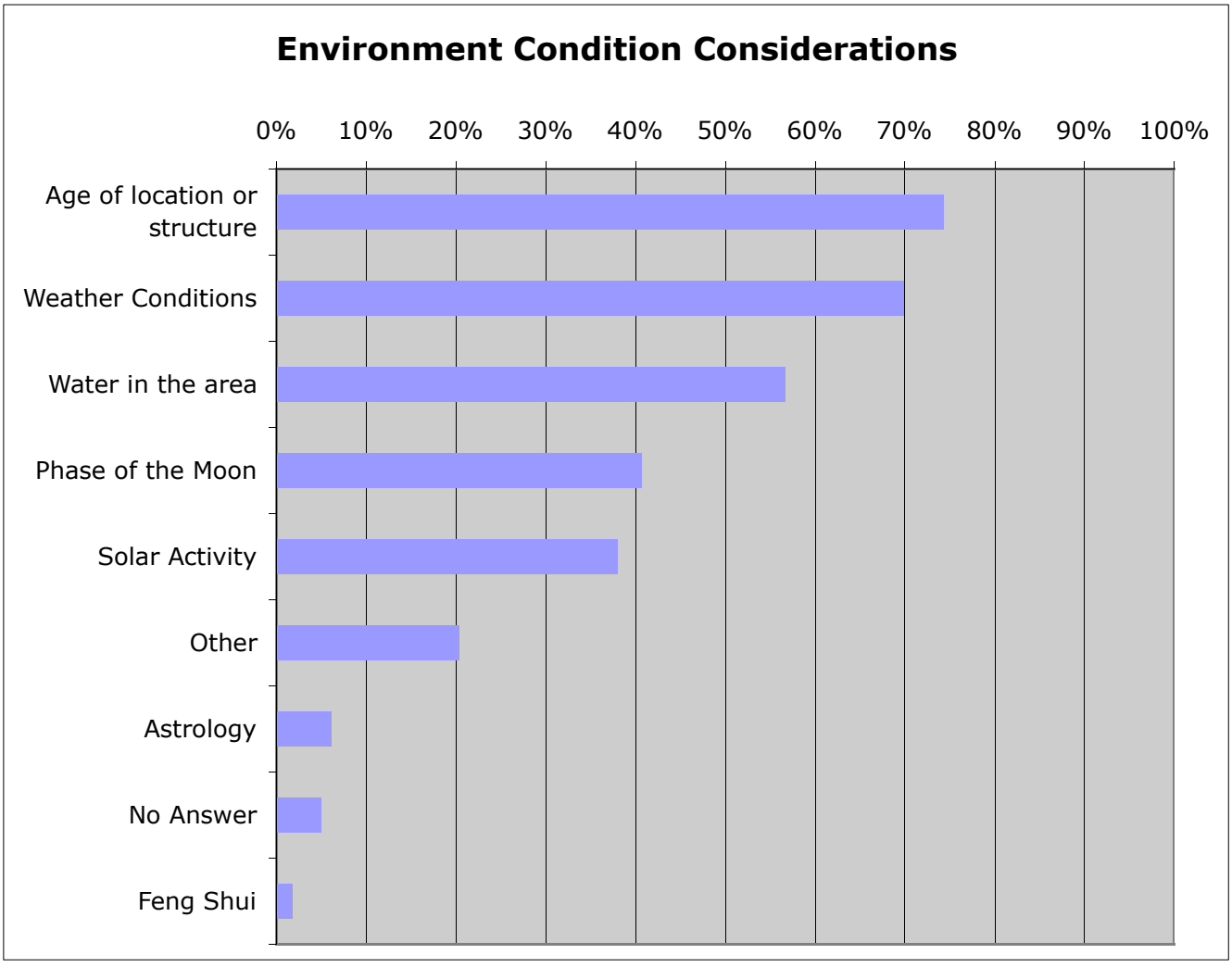


No team selected "The lights stay on most of the time".

Why does the group prefer those lighting conditions?
Question type: text entry

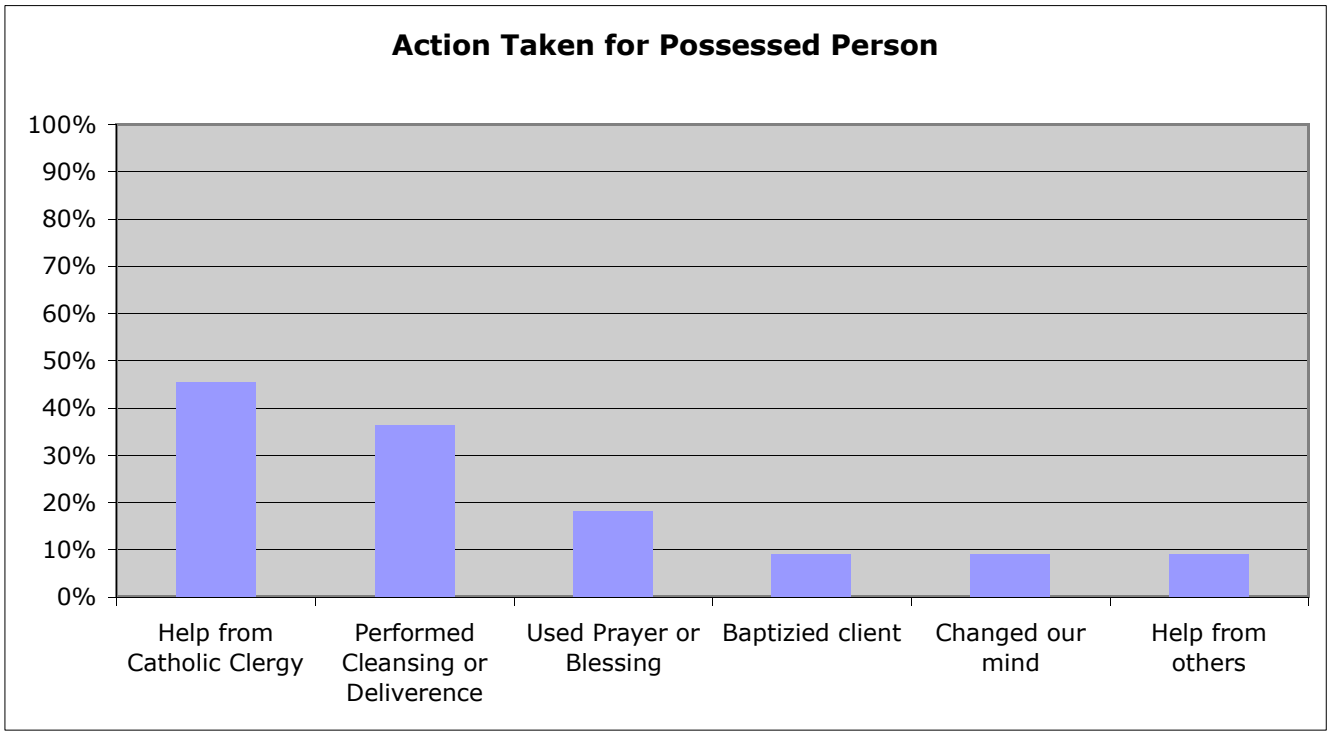


Are there any other environmental conditions the group considers when conducting an investigation?
Question type: multiple selections



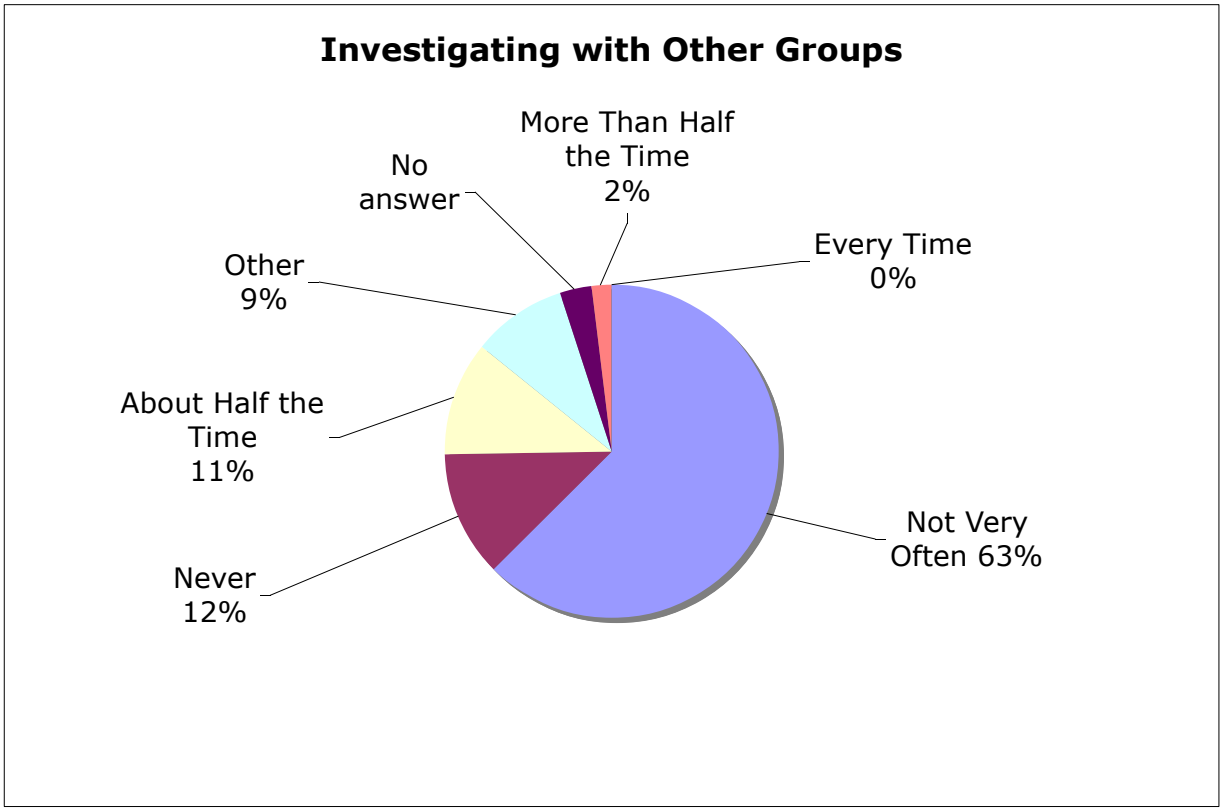
Of the **Other** answers, those including Chemicals or other Toxins such as Mold, Sewer Gas. Carbon Monoxide, Asbestos, and Radon were given by 7% of the groups, and Minerals and Geology by 5%.

If the group ever encountered a person they considered was possessed, what did the group do about it?
Question type: text entry



Note from an earlier question, 11% of respondents indicated they had encountered a person they believed was possessed. This chart only represents the percentage of answers from those who entered YES to that question.

How often does the group perform an investigation along with other paranormal groups?
Question type: single selection



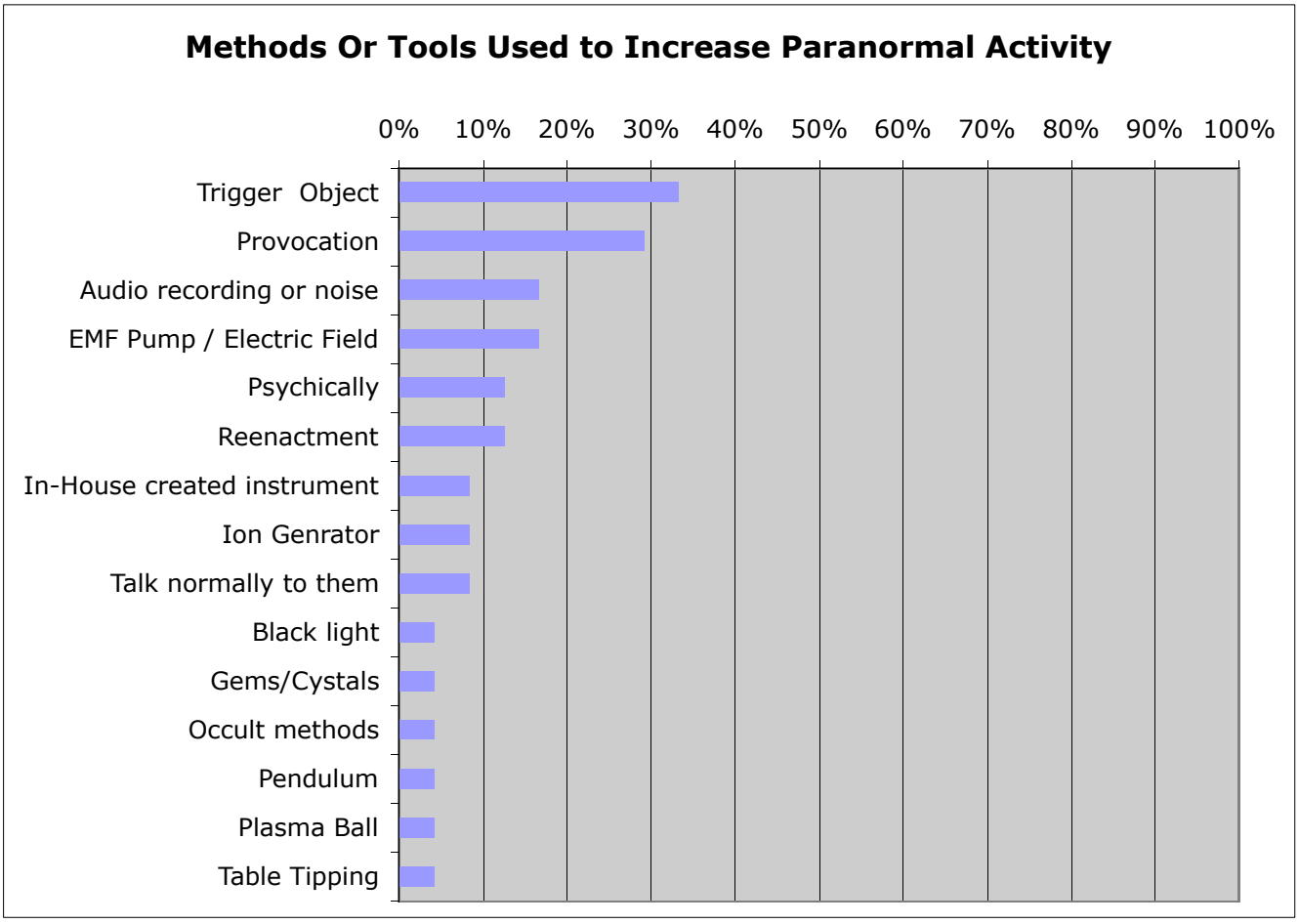
No **Other** answers represented a unique category at least 5% of the responses, and so are not included.

7.Tools and Services

Teams Surveyed: 96

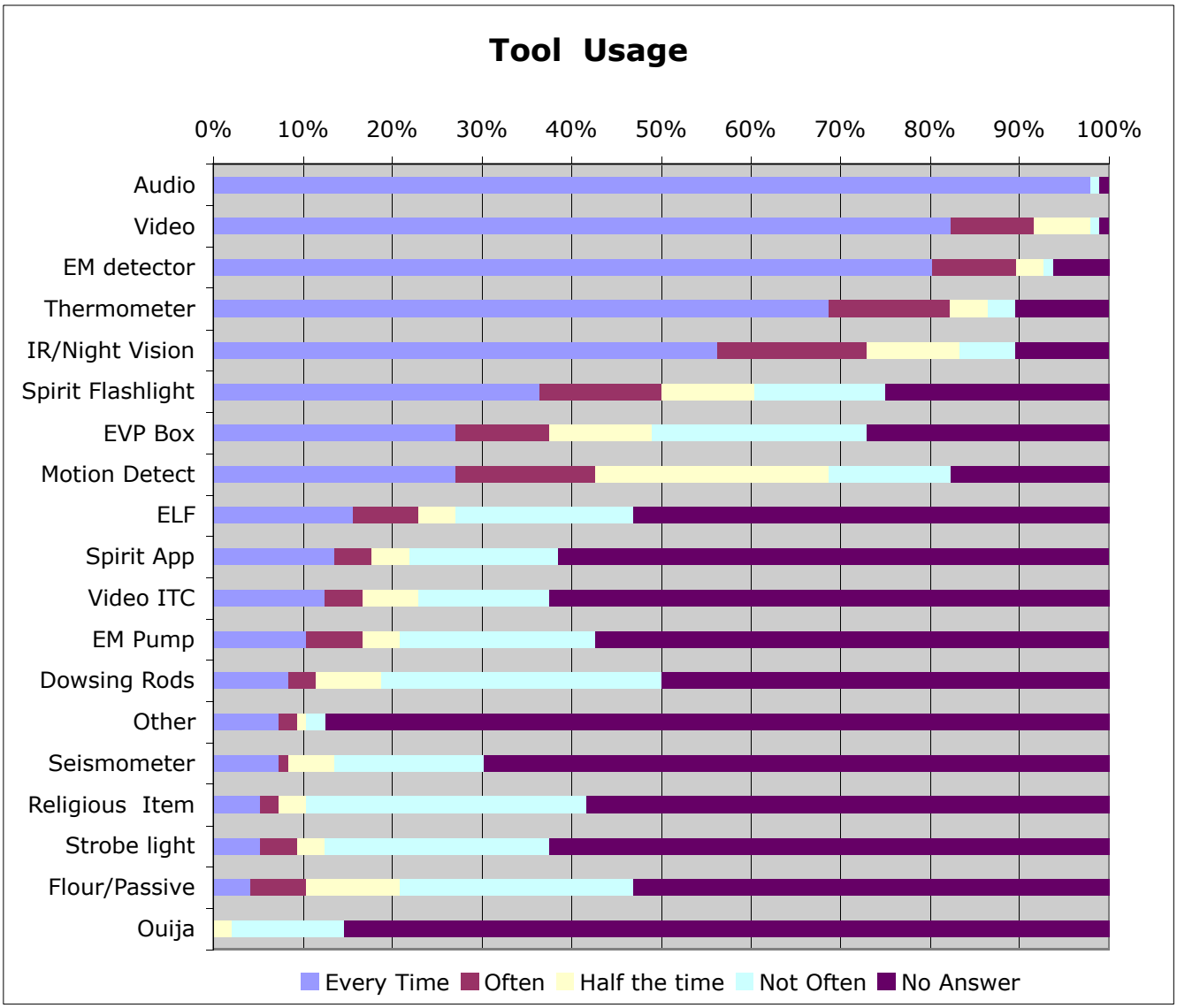
Question	Yes	No	No Answer
Does the group use any tools or methods to increase paranormal activity?	26%	63%	11%
Does the group charge a fee for anything, other than merchandise?	8%	78%	14%

If the group uses use any tools or methods to increase paranormal activity, please specify:
Question type: text entry



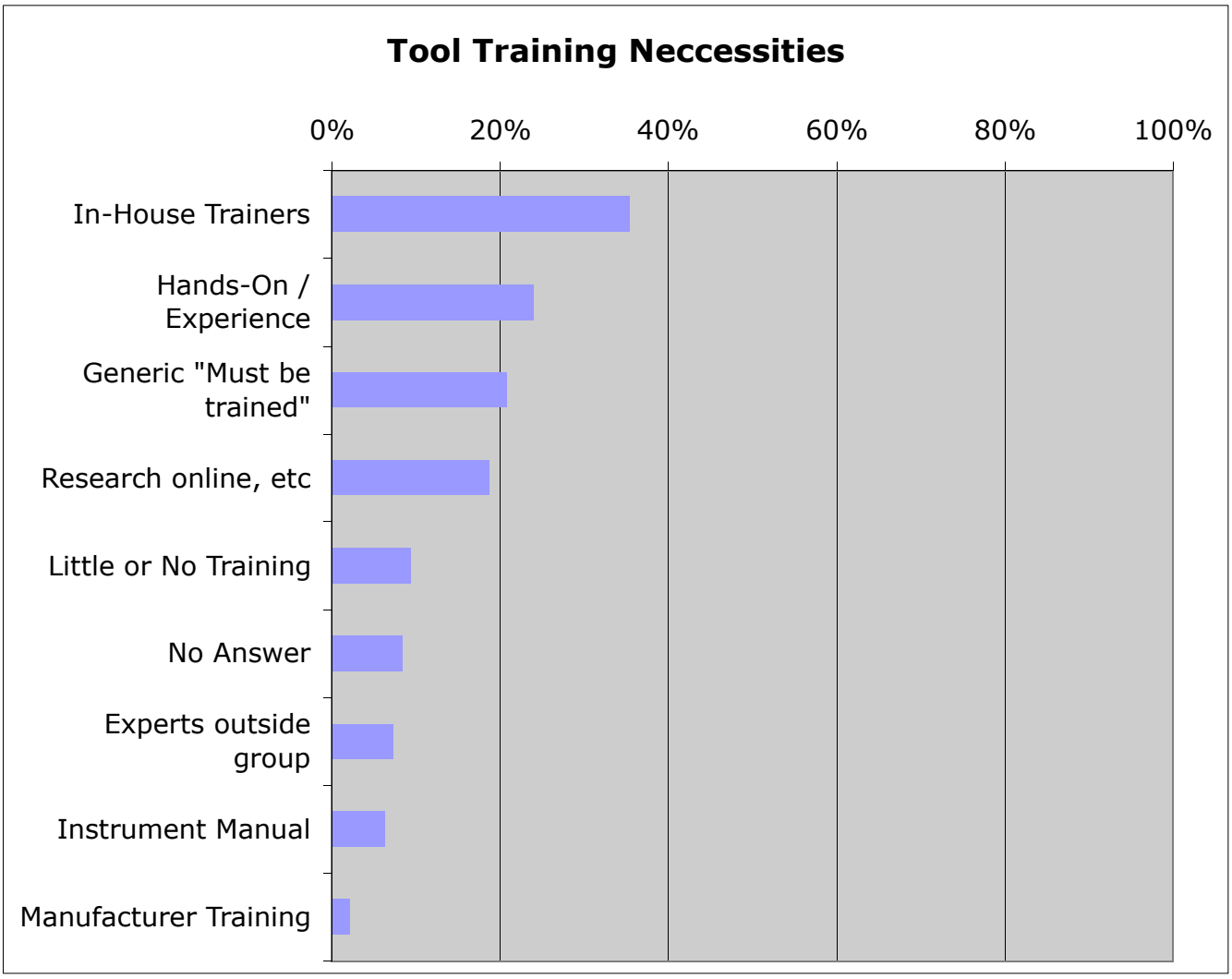
Note from an earlier question, 26% of respondents indicated they use tools or methods to increase paranormal activity. This chart only represents the percentages of answers from those who entered YES to that question.

What tools does this group use during an investigation?
Question type: multiple selections



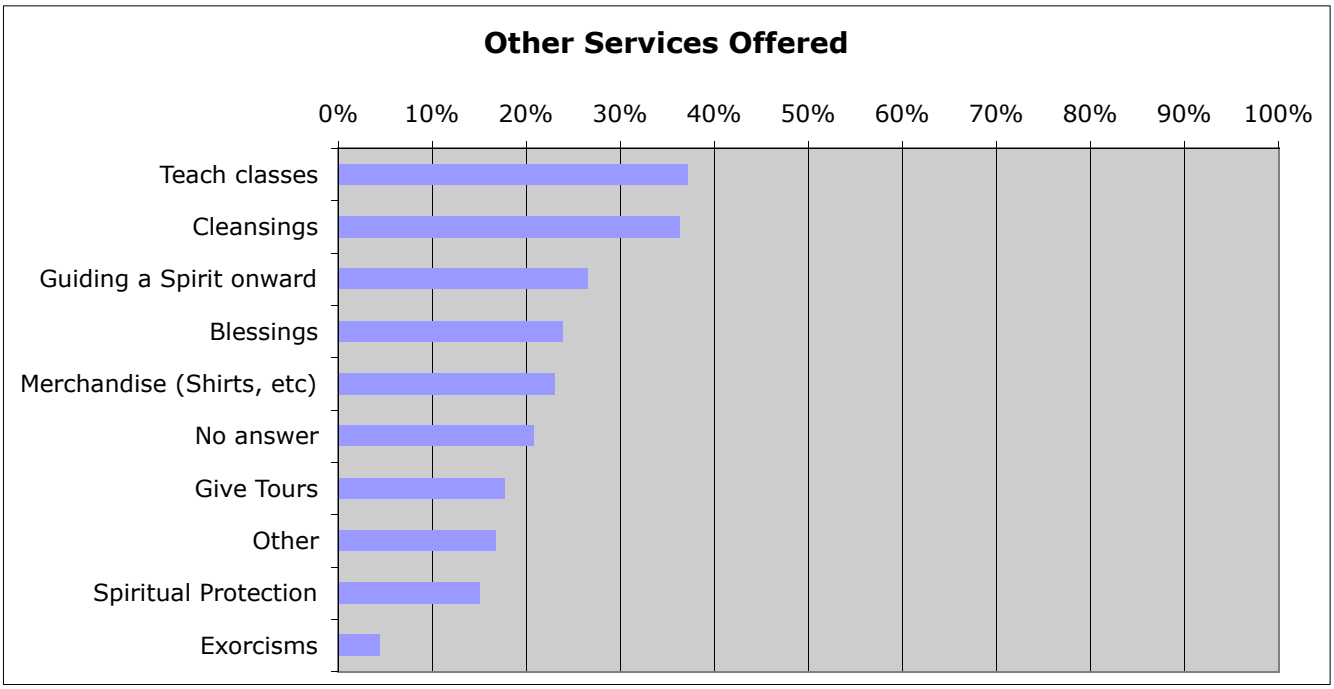
No **Other** answers represented a unique category at least 5% of the responses, and so are not included.

What training has the group received or feels is necessary in these tools?
Question type: text entry



Paranormal Research and Ghost Hunting Groups
Tools and Services

Does the group offer any of the following?
Question type: multiple selections

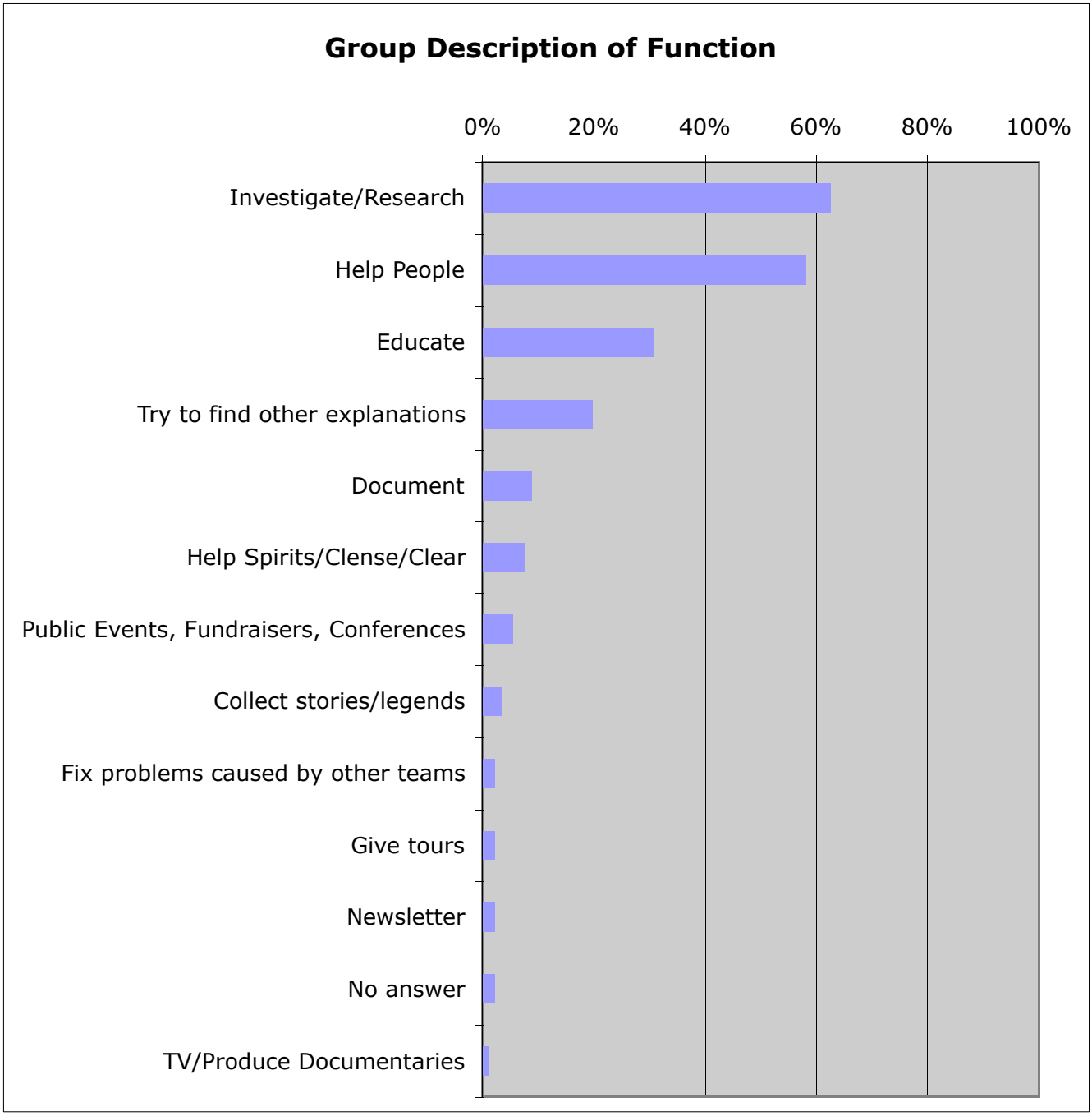


No **Other** answers represented a unique category at least 5% of the responses, and so are not included.

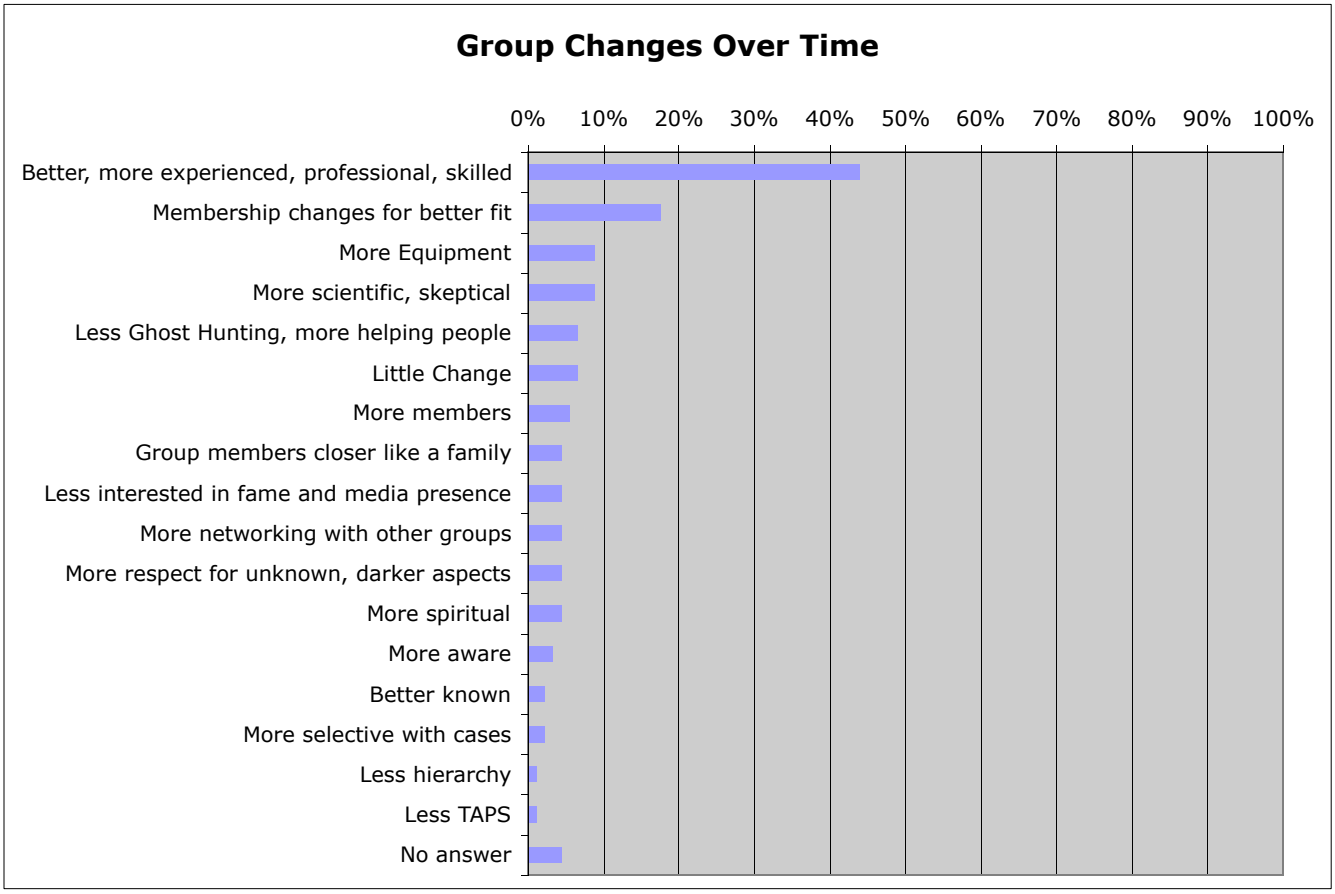
8.General Group and Future Questions

Teams Surveyed: 91

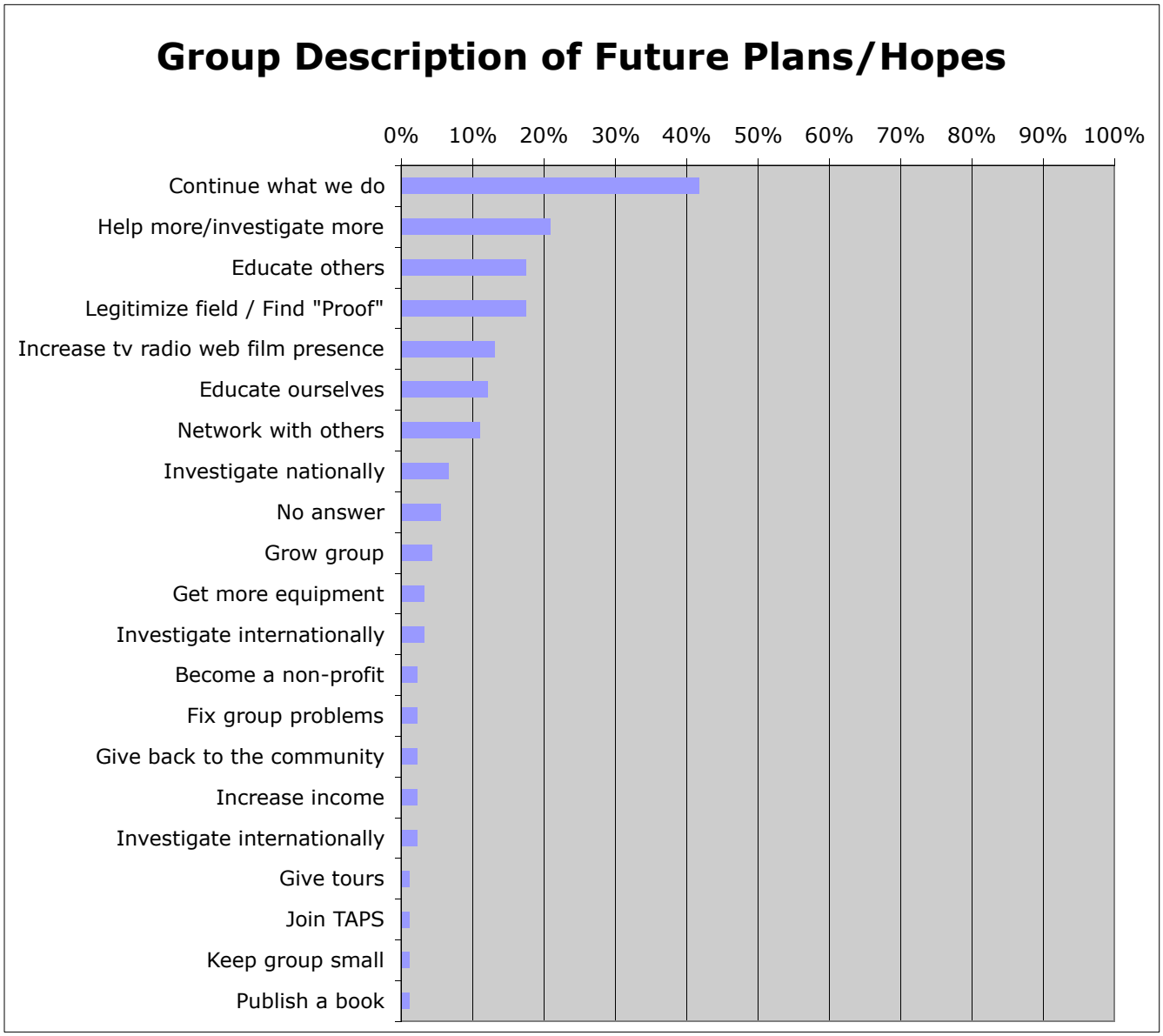
In general, how would you describe what your group does?
Question type: text entry



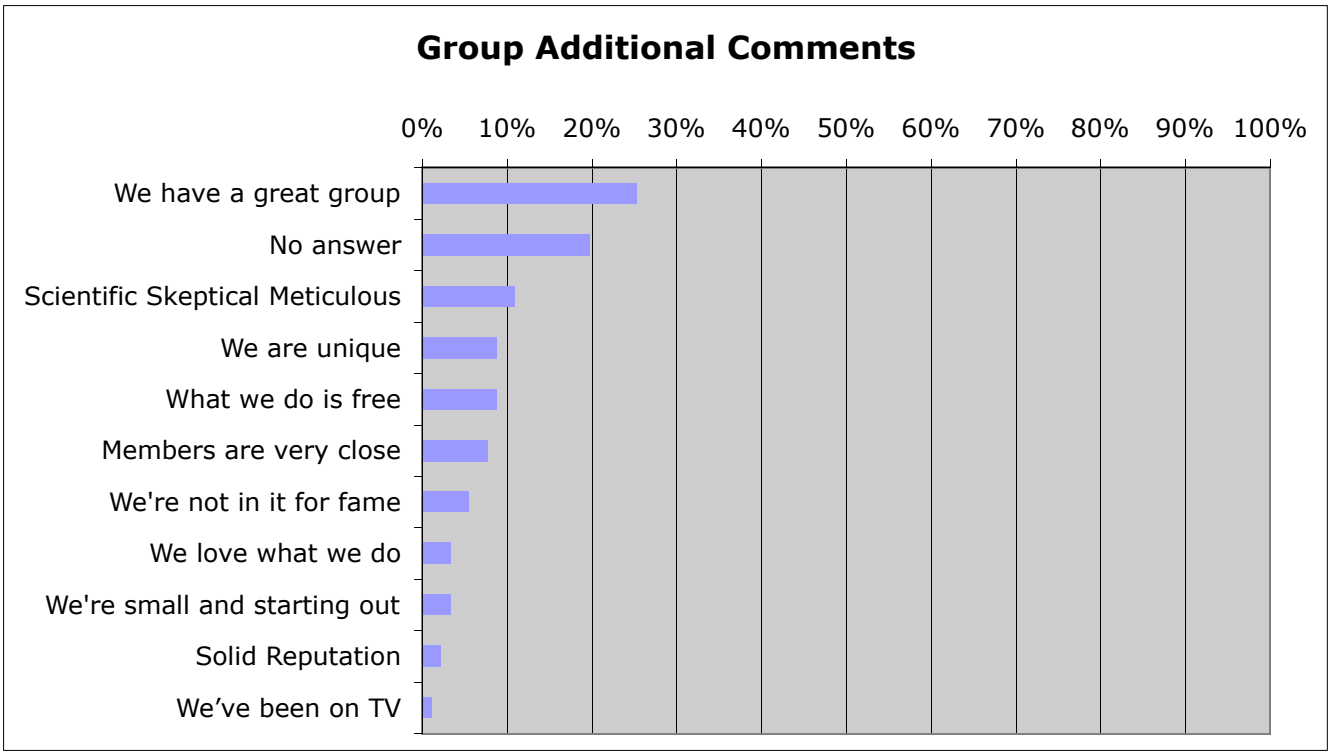
How has your group changed over time?
Question type: text entry



What plans or hopes does your group have for its future?
Question type: text entry



What else would you like to say about your group?
Question type: text entry



9.Contributors

A special thank you to Bryan Hineser and Bryan Bonner who were instrumental in bringing this survey to fruition.

And of course thank you to all the groups for their time in participating in this survey. At the end of the survey, groups were asked if they wished to keep their name anonymous. The following participating groups are therefore acknowledged, with permission.

(NYX) New York X Paranormal Research Team
Aliens Spirits And Paranormal A.S.A.P.
Allied Paranormal Studies and Investigative Research
Altamont Paranormal Research Society (APRS)
Archangel Paranormal Investigations and Intercession (being merged into Spiritual Warriors Network)
Association of Paranormal Study
Bad VOoDoO LLC
BnB G.H.O.S.T.S.
California Ghost Chasers - CGC
California Society for Paranormal Assistance & Research
Camel City Spirit Seekers
Cat Eyes Paranormal Investigations
Center for Paranormal Investigation Association
Central CA Paranormal Investigators
Central Georgia Paranormal Society
Central Ohio paranormal research group
Clitheroe Paranormal
Colorado Springs Ghost Hunters
Credible Paranormal
Dark Cliff, LLC
Darklands Paranormal
East Bay Paranormal
East Coast Hauntings Organization (ECHO Paranormal)
East Valley Paranormal Society
El Dorado Paranormal Investigations
EPIC - Extreme Paranormal Investigators Consortium, Incorporated
Flatland Investigations
Flying Monkey Paranormal Investigation
G.A.L.S. Paranormal
G.H.O.U.L. - Ghost Hunters of Uncommon Leagues
Ghost Haunts of Oklahoma & Urban Legend Investigations GHOULI
Ghost Help, formerly known as Ohio Paranormal Investigation Network
Ghosts of Louisiana Paranormal Society
GoDark! MPR Missouri Paranormal Research
Haunted North Carolina, Inc.
HPI Haunted and Paranormal Investigations International
Illinois Paranormal Research Group
In the Shadows Paranormal Project

Indiana Paranormal Research and Investigation Society.
Kansas Paranormal Investigators
Las Vegas Society of Supernatural Investigations
Living Proof Paranormal
Long Island Paranormal Investigators
Louisiana Paranormal Investigators
Marter Paranormal Research Team
Mon Valley Paranormal Research Society
MOPI- Mobile Order of Paranormal Investigators
National Society of Paranormal Investigation and Research, Inc.
Nearly Everywhere Ohio Ghost Society
New Grounds Paranormal
Ohio Organization of Paranormal Studies
Oxford Paranormal Society
Pandorica Parapsychology
Paranormal and Supernatural Seekers
Paranormal Investigations of Wichita
Paranormal Investigators of Central Arizona (P.I.C.A.)
Paranormal Nord
Paranormal Ohio Research Team
Para-Scientific Discovery
Past Life Investigations
PCT and GHRI
Port City Paranormal¬©
Quabbin Valley Paranormal
REAPER Team
Rocky Mountain Paranormal Research Society
SAGAPS
Santa Cruz Ghost Hunters
Set Me Free Paranormal
Southwest Florida Paranormal Researchers
Spirit Paranormal Investigations Inc. or SpiritPI
SpiritBear Paranormal
Spiriteam Tampa
Springfield Ghost Society
Supernatural Anomaly Investigations (SAI)
The Foundation for Paranormal Research
The Ghost Hunters Guild
The Old West Paranormal Society
Tug Valley Paranormal Investigations