

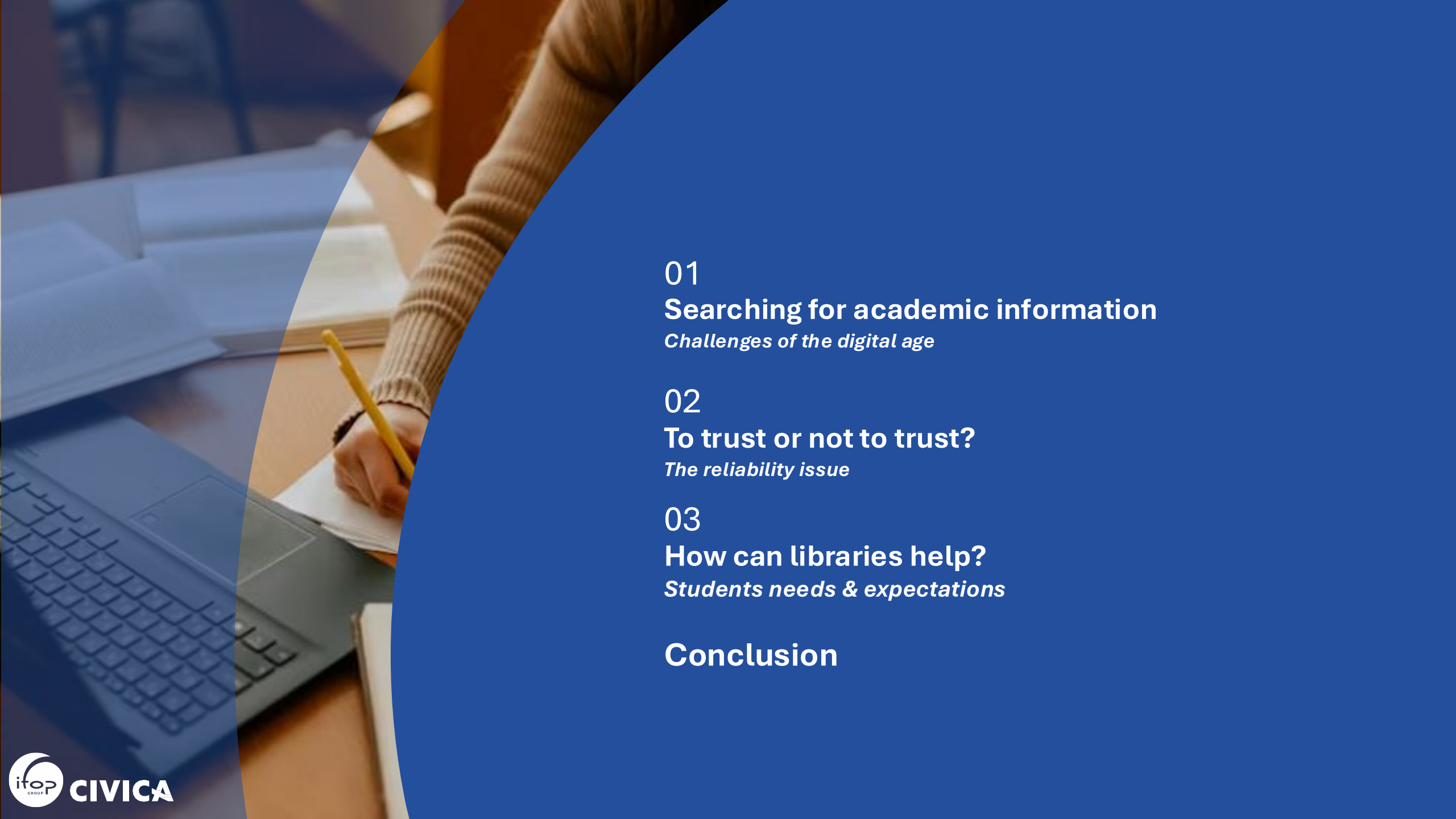
CIVICA

WHAT ROLE FOR LIBRARIES IN THE AGE OF GEN AI?

Key Insights from
Civica Student's Information Literacy Barometer (2025)

Please see the full report for details.

February 2026



01

Searching for academic information

Challenges of the digital age

02

To trust or not to trust?

The reliability issue

03

How can libraries help?

Students needs & expectations

Conclusion

A word on methodology

This presentation is based on key insights from the 1st Civica Student's Information Literacy Barometer

Objectives

- Analyze students' **information practices**
- Identify **challenges** linked to **misinformation** and new digital tools (**Gen AI**)
- Assess the role of **teachers** and **libraries**
- Explore needs to **improve services** for students and faculty



Online Survey

November - December 2025
15-minute (mobile-friendly) questionnaire

- A link to the questionnaire was sent to **all the students** in the CIVICA institutions (≈ 72,000 students)
- **Final sample = 2,294 respondents**
- Data was weighted to reflect the CIVICA student population by institution.
- Answers were analysed by Institution, Level of Study and Field of Study.

Please see sample details next slide



Context shifts

Digitalization

Social Media

Infobesity

Fake News

Time Pressure

Gen AI





01

Searching for academic information.

Challenges of the digital age.

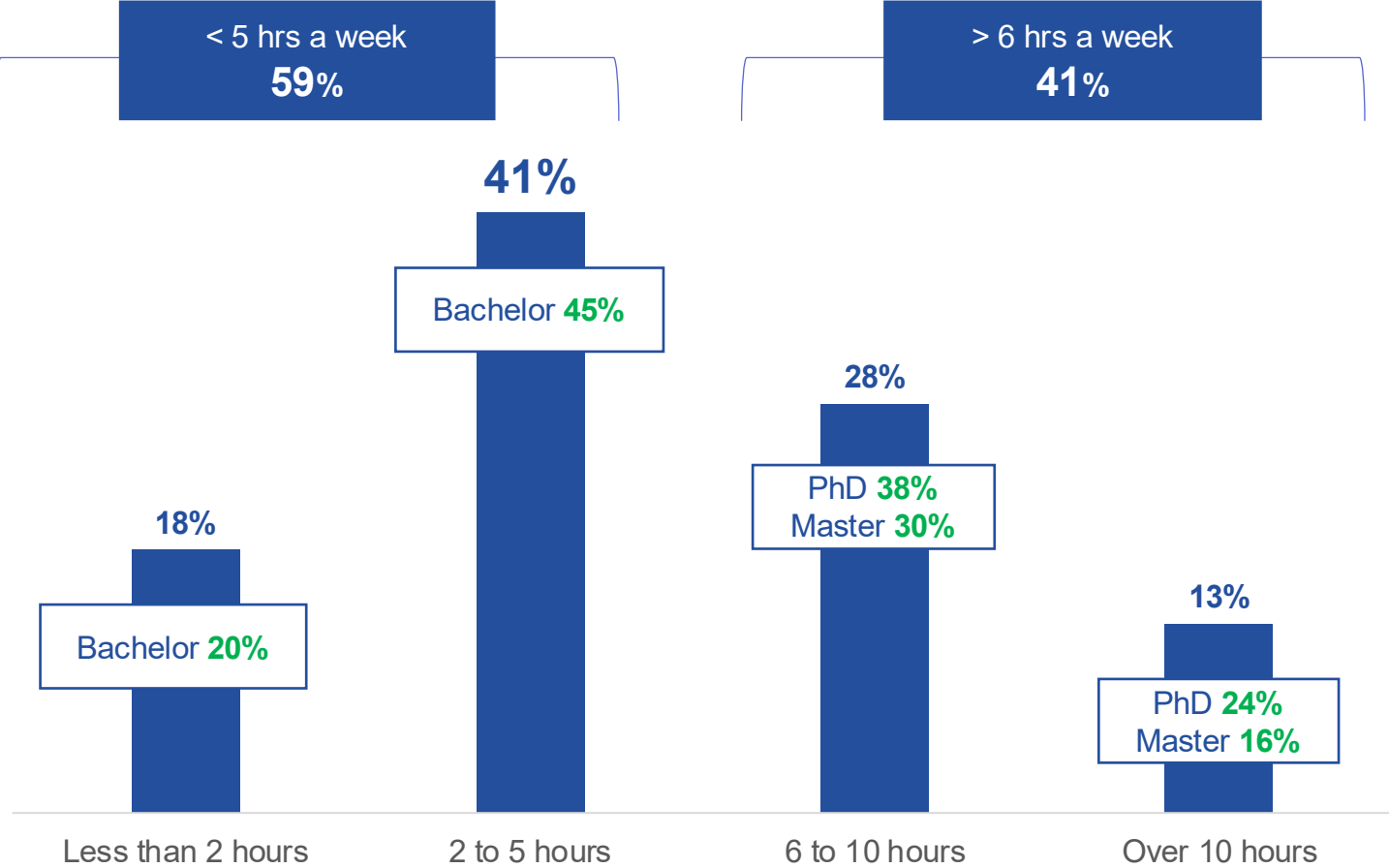


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Students spend a fair amount of time searching for information.

Time dedicated to information search increases with level of study.

Approximately, how many hours per week do you spend searching for information related to your studies?



Time pressure calls for shortcuts.

74%

of students say

‘My academic workload
is so heavy and deadlines
so short that
**I don’t have enough time
for deep and critical
reading’**

(NET agree)

65%

of students say

‘Most of the time, I read
**books/papers
summaries**
rather than whole
books or papers’

Master 68%
PhD 46%

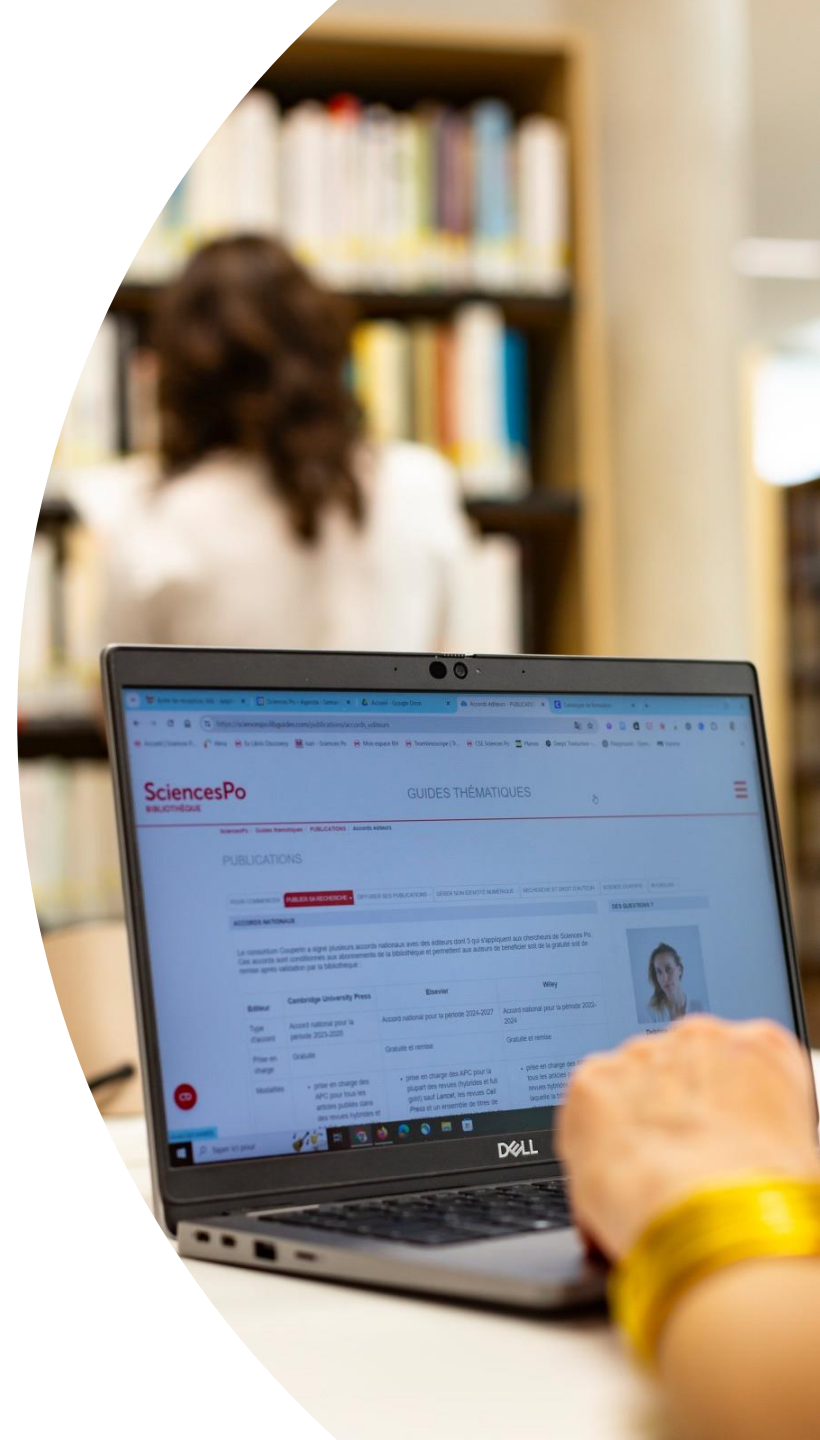


Digital vs physical

‘Whenever I have the choice, I **prefer to use digital** (over physical) **books/papers**’

65%
(NET agree)

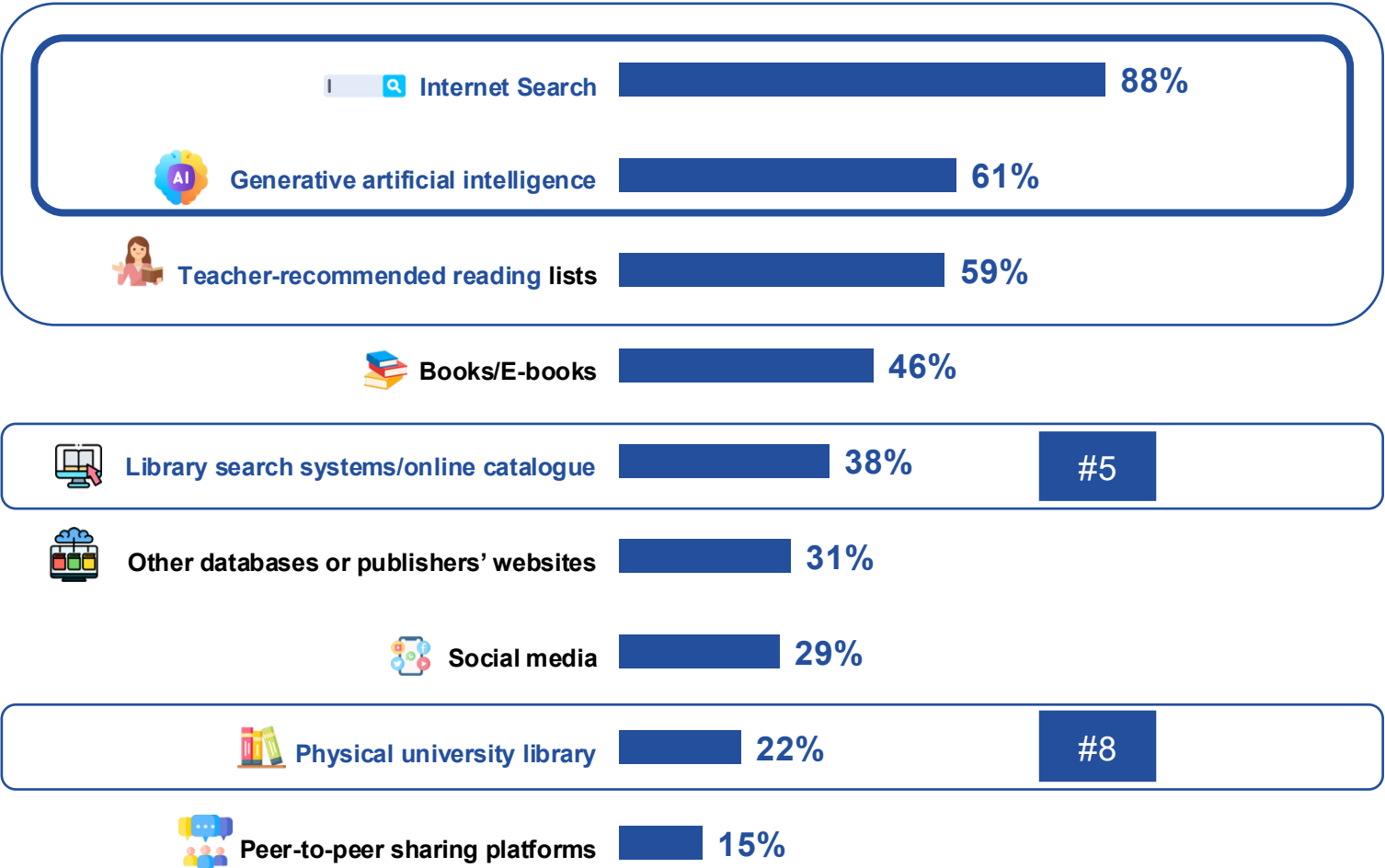
PhD 75%
Master 68%
Bachelor 63%



Search tools & sources.

Gen AI is already #2. Digital tools come before teachers' reading lists.

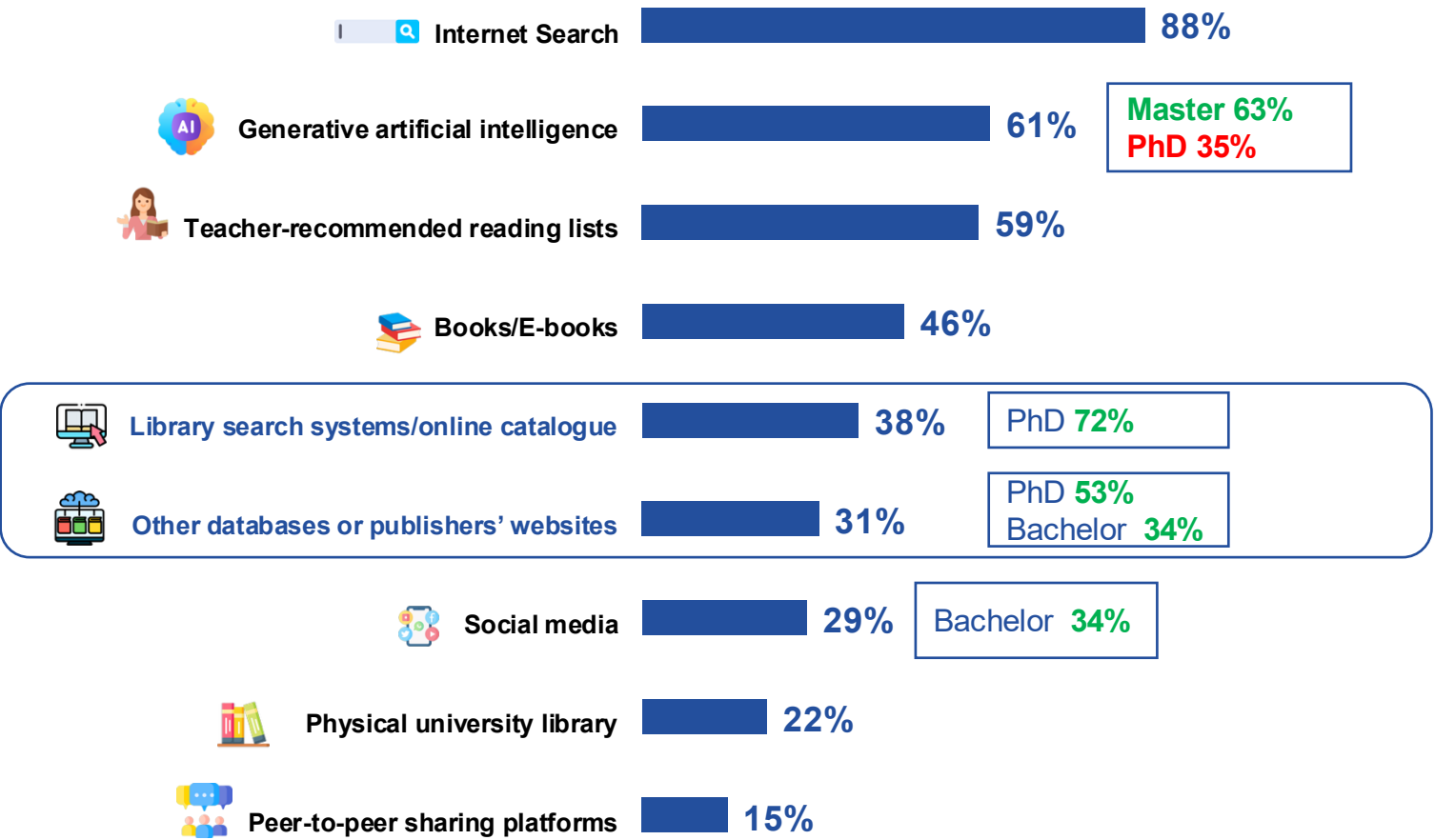
Which of the following tools or sources do you use to find information related to your assignments or research?



Note. 48% of students say they use 4 to 6 sources or search tools, but 35% use only 1 to 3 sources when searching for information. Field of study, rather than Level of study, is the key variable here, with History students using a wider range of sources (58% use over 7 sources).

Academic gateways gain ground as expertise increases.

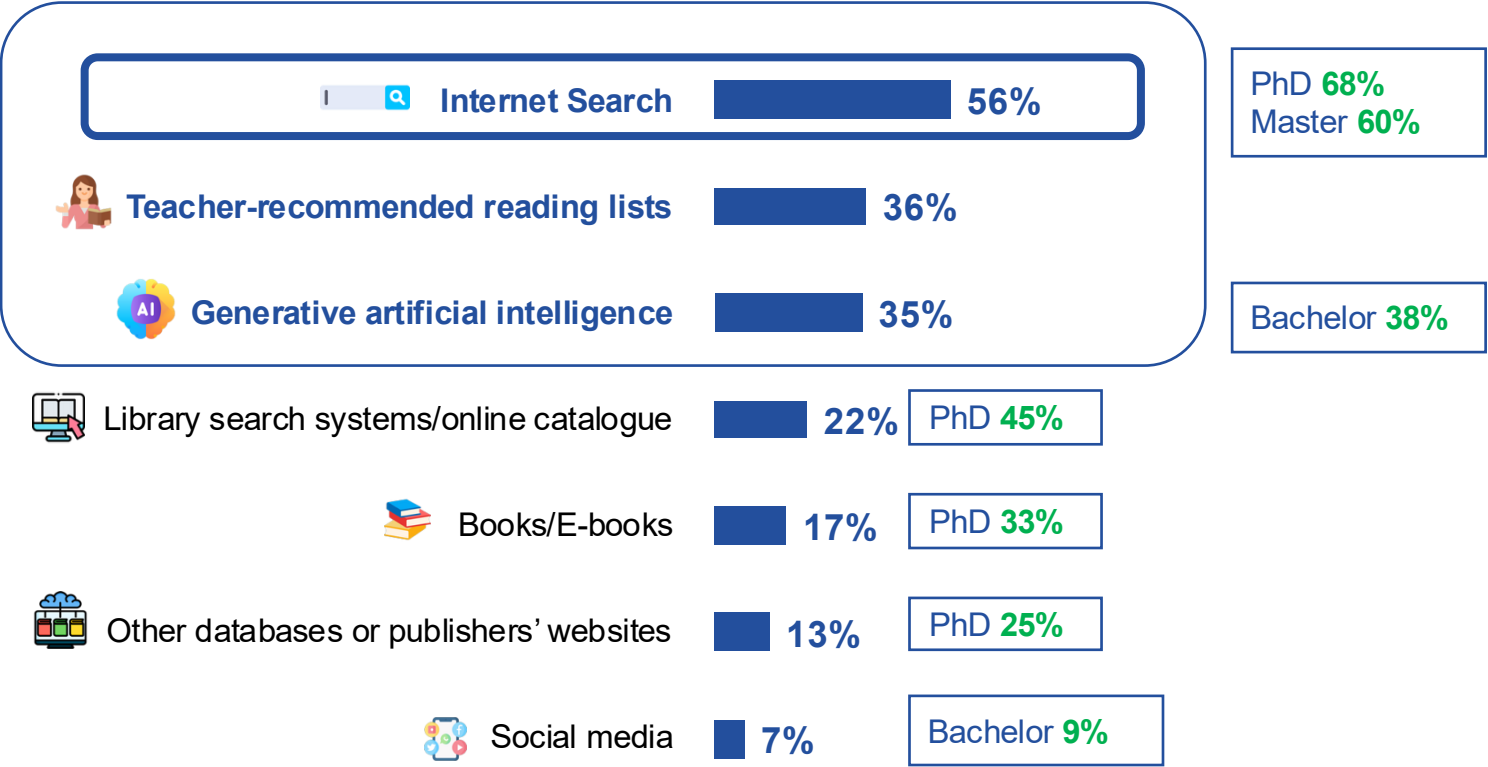
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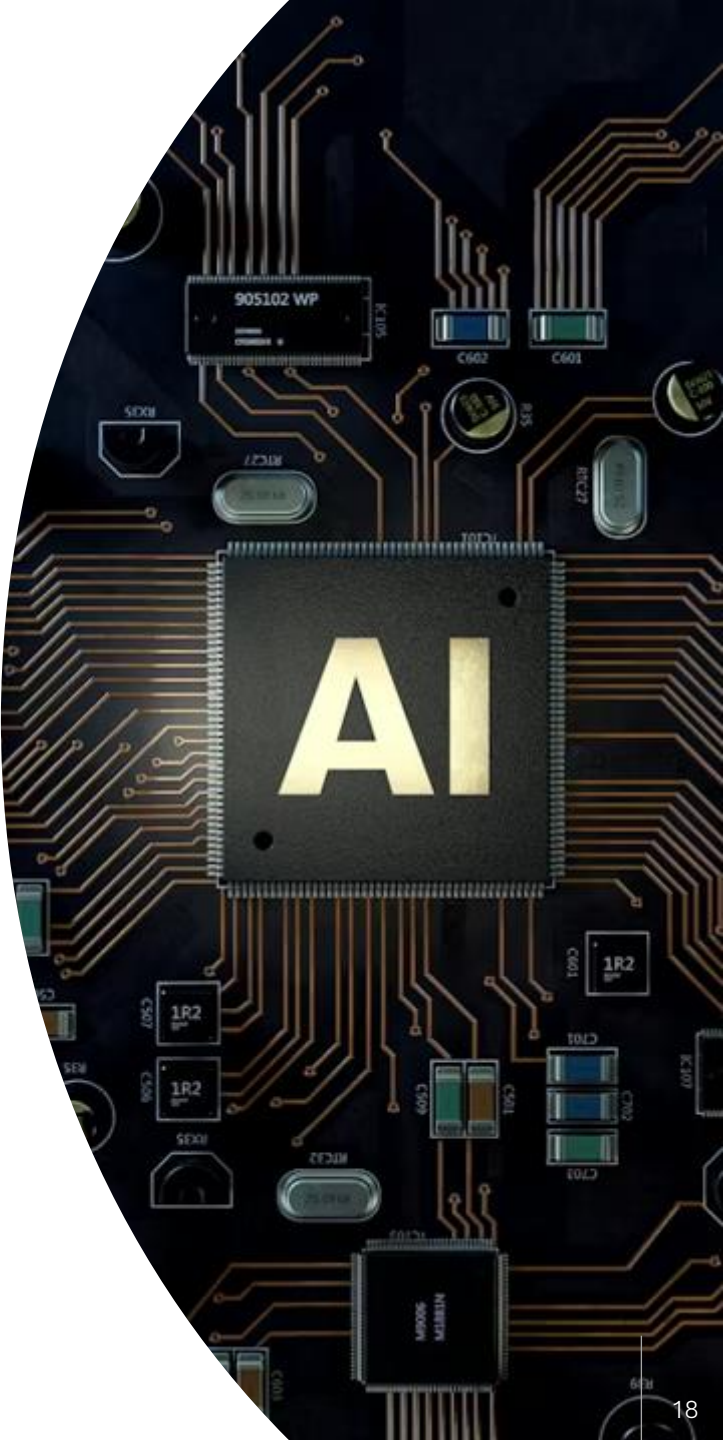
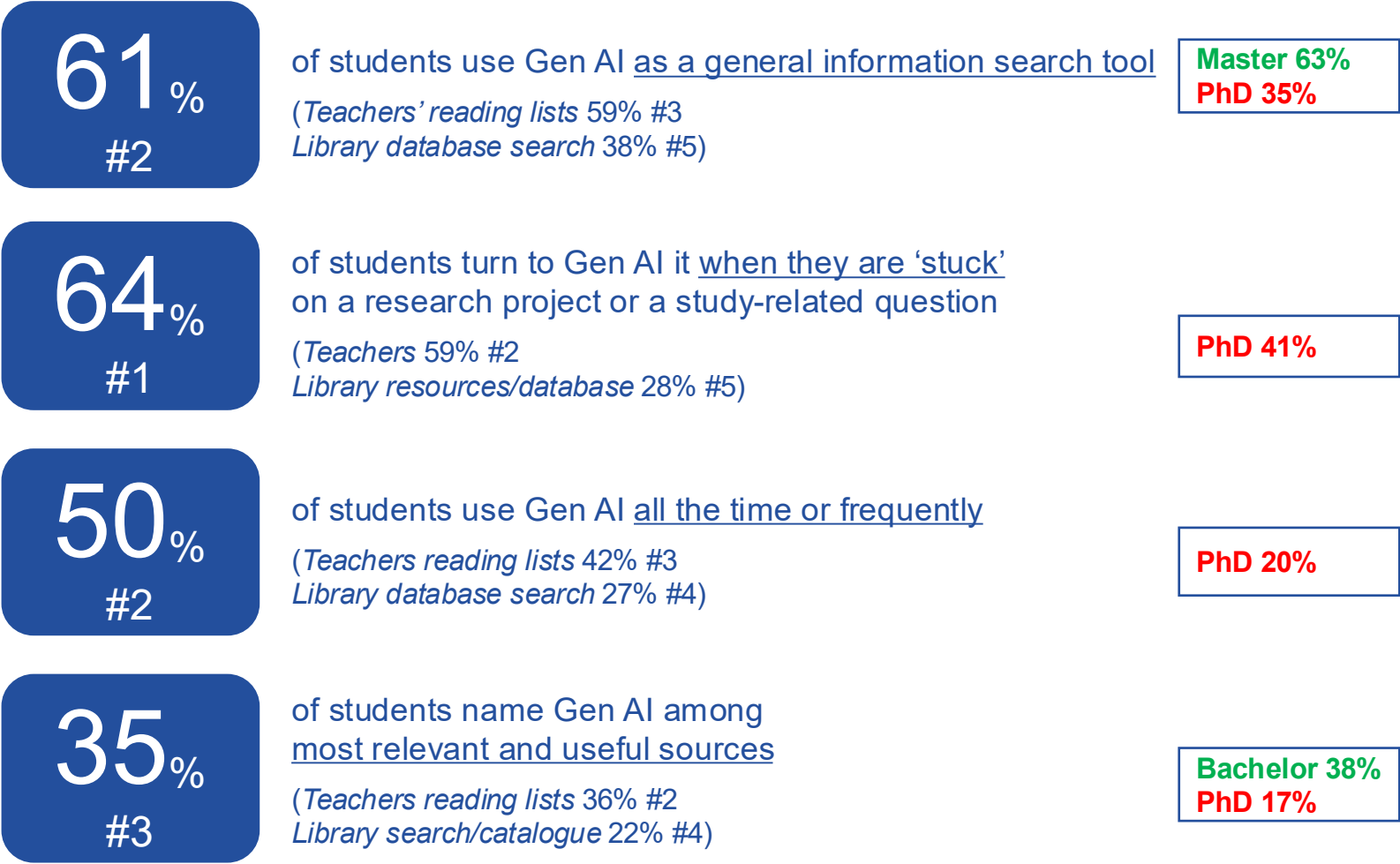
When it comes to usefulness, internet is far ahead.

Teachers' reading lists and gen AI have identical scores. Perceived usefulness moves from convenience to academic infrastructures as expertise and expectations rise.

Which of the following resources do you find most useful or relevant for your academic work (e.g., course papers, essays, reports, final-year or end-of-year dissertation?)



Is gen AI the new teacher/librarian?



Students point out 4 major 'info-search' challenges.

What are the main difficulties you face when searching for information?

1

INFORMATION AVAILABILITY

Difficulty accessing relevant sources **58%** Master **66%**
Lack of relevant sources **29%** Bachelor **32%**
Lack of digital sources **16%** PhD **30%**

At least one
73%

2

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Too many sources /
insufficiently filtered results **55%** PhD **62%**

3

INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY

Difficulty to use databases **26%** Bachelor **29%**
Lack of specific training on how to access databases
24% Bachelor **30%**

At least one
40%

42% of PhD students
(vs 27%) also mention
*uncertainty about
keywords or search terms*

4

INFORMATION RELIABILITY

Doubts about content reliability **32%**
Bachelor **37%**



02

To trust or not to trust?

The reliability issue.



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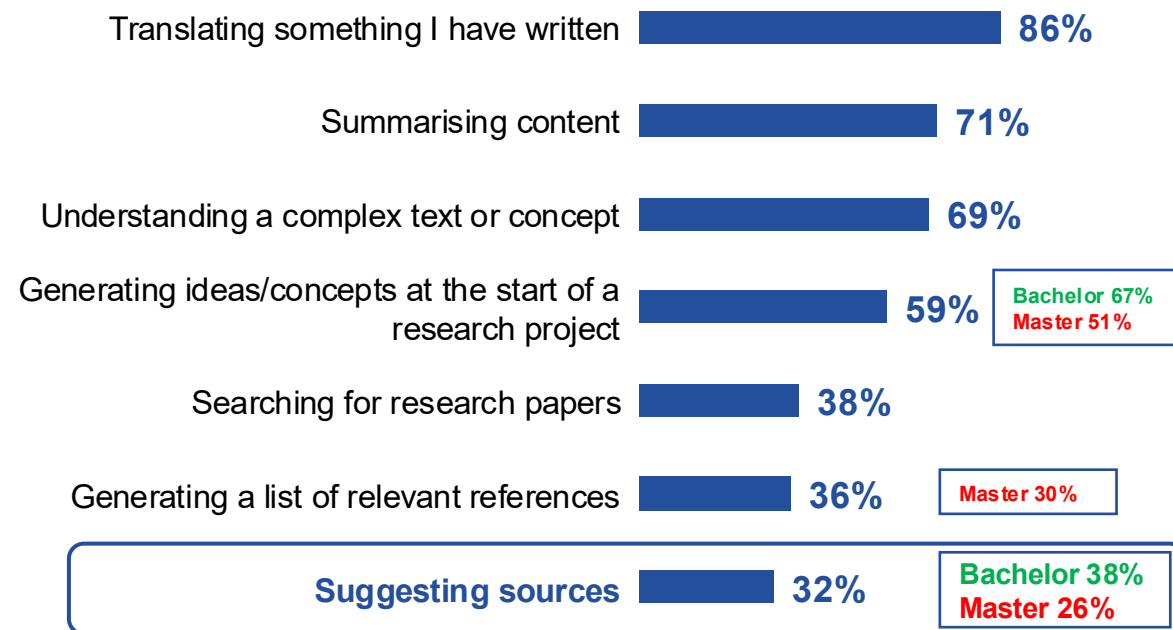
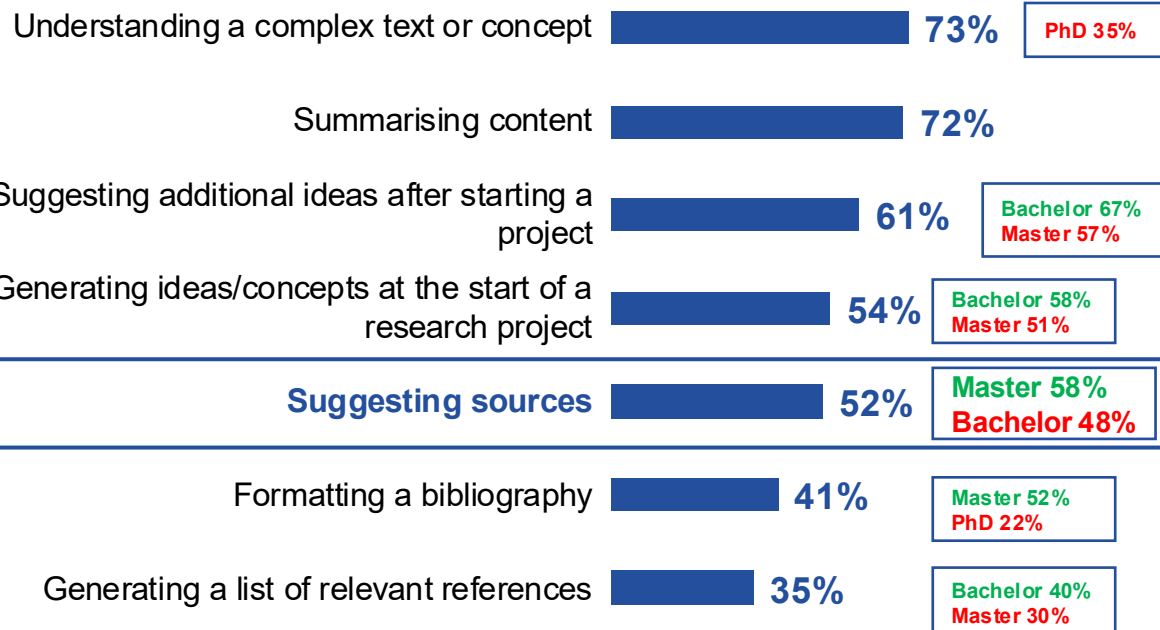
Gen AI can help at every step of a research project

-- but can it suggest reliable sources?

TASKS DONE WITH GEN AI

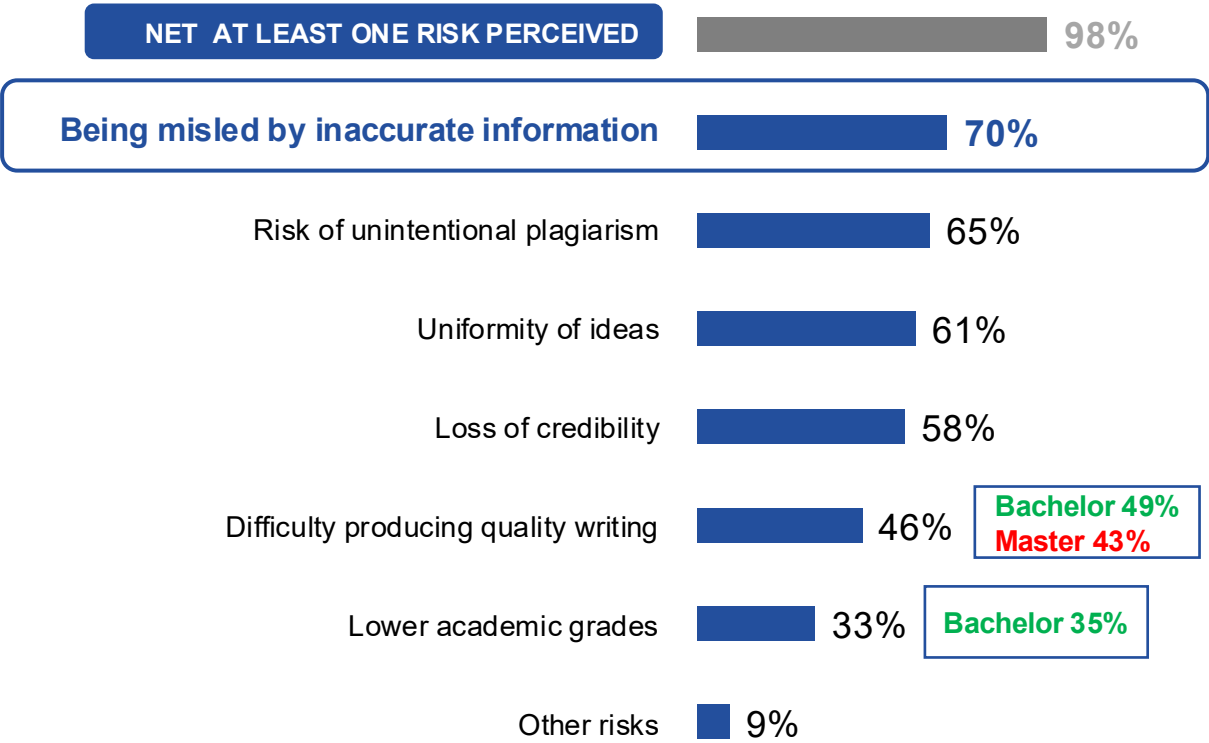


GEN AI PERCEIVED AS RELIABLE FOR --



The first AI-Related risk students identify is using misleading or inaccurate information.

Which of the following risks do you associate with using generative AI to search for information?



What makes a source 'reliable'?

What criteria do you use to judge the quality of a source?

Identified author (author's credentials) 78% PhD 94%

Published in a peer-reviewed journal 69% PhD 92% Master 75%

Recommended by a teacher or librarian 63%

Objectivity / academic tone 60% Master 64%

Publication date 37%

Language of the document 20%

Other 9%

None of the above | 1%

-- AND WHICH ONE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

TOP 3 scores

Published in a peer-reviewed journal

36% PhD 49%

Identified author (author's credentials)

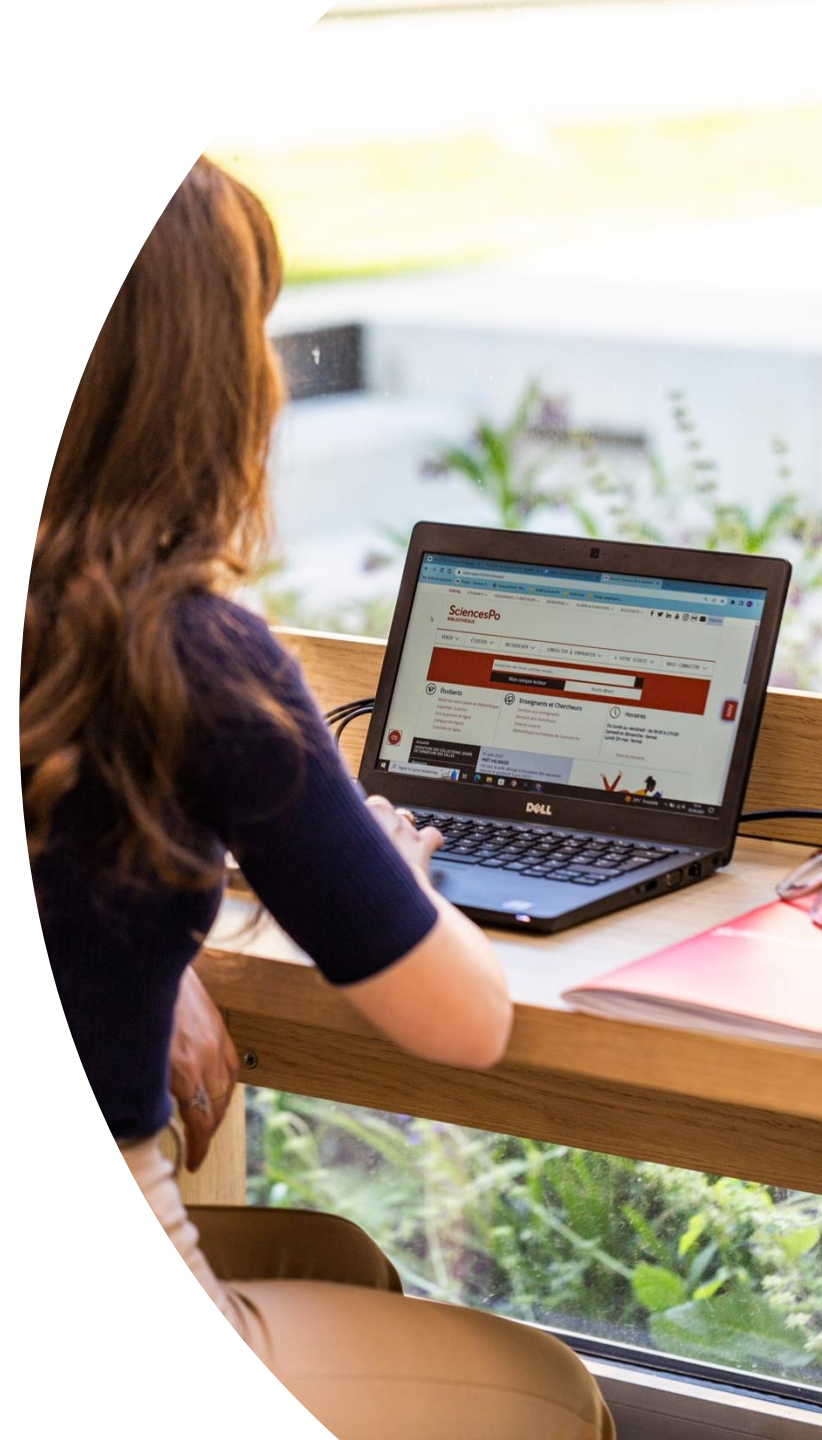
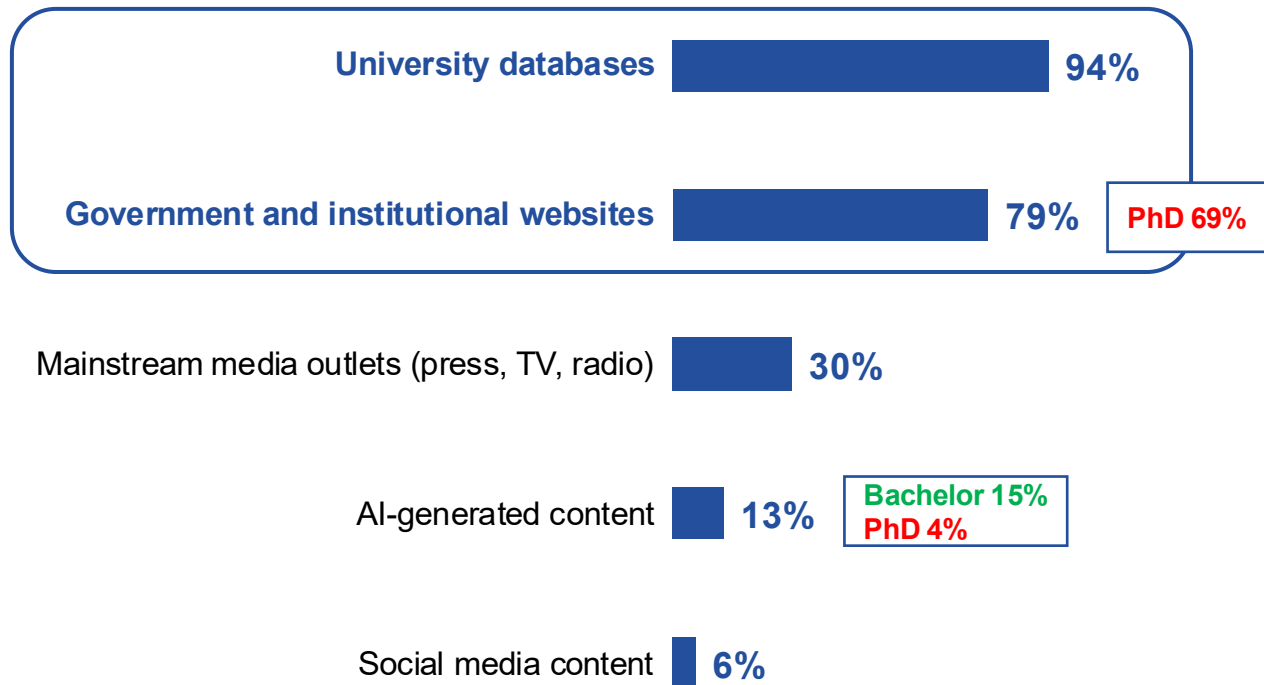
24%

Recommended by a teacher or librarian

19% Bachelor 21%

Academic and official sources are highly trusted.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the following sources of information?
TRUST (scores 4+5)



Yet some social media content is also widely perceived as reliable.

78%

of students
agree with the statement:

Bachelor 82%
Master 76%
PhD 49%

Some of the **content posted
on digital platforms** can be
**as relevant and reliable
as academic sources**

*(e.g., videos on history, politics or social
science by journalists, experts, or
scholars)*

31%
strongly
agree

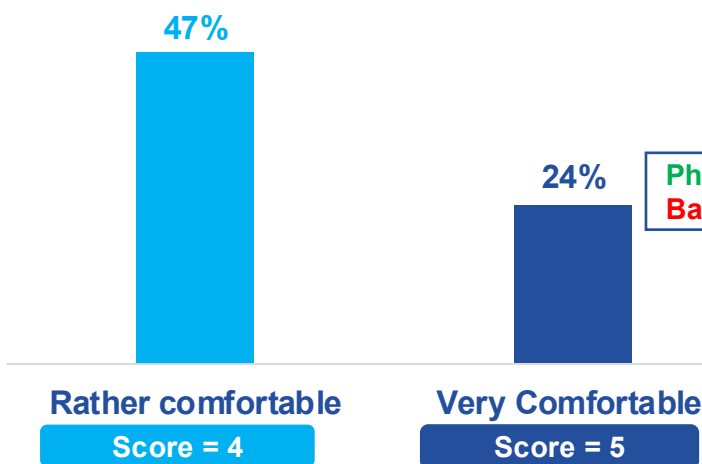
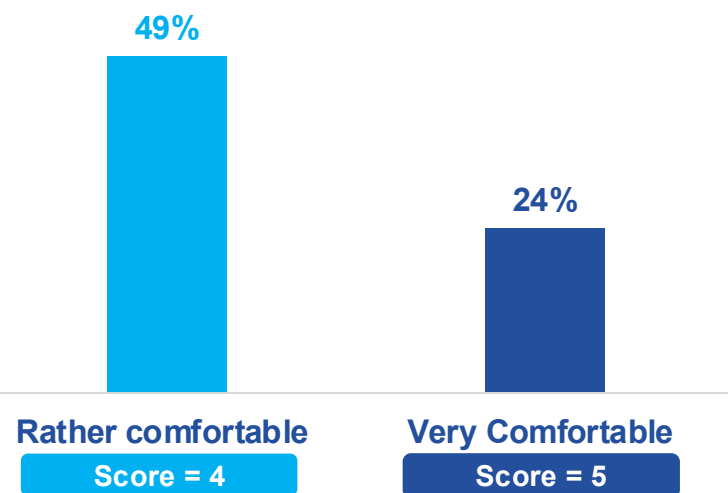


Only around 1 student in 4 feel very comfortable sifting fact from fake.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how comfortable do you feel --

Finding the information you need

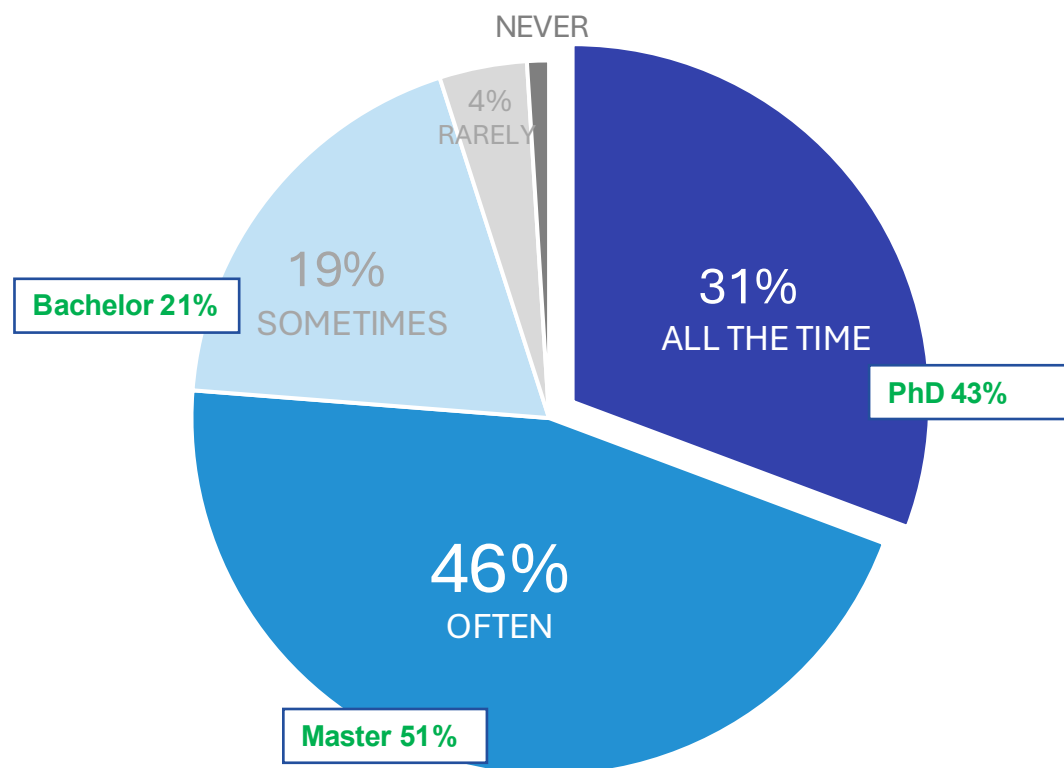
Evaluating information reliability



PhD 42%
Bachelor 22%

Less than 1 in 3 student systematically check information quality!

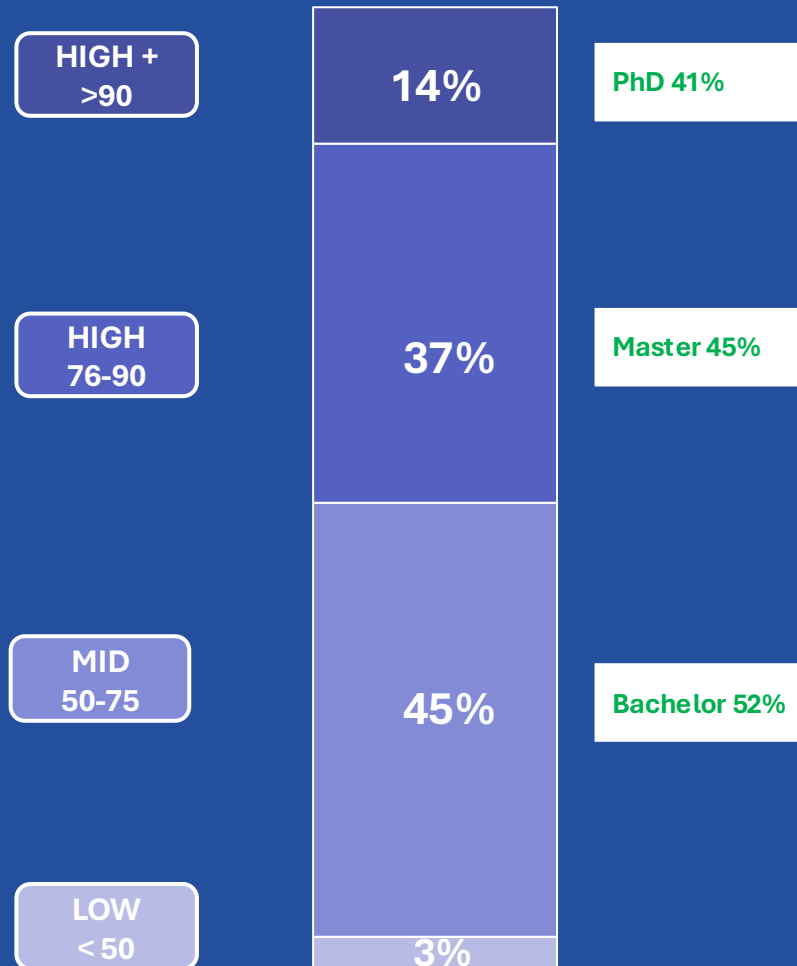
How often do you verify the reliability of the information you find?



Information literacy index*

Ability to search, evaluate and use information in an academically robust way

Overall information literacy is solid, but the distribution shows that a meaningful share of students remain below the “robust” threshold, creating vulnerability when navigating sources and Gen AI content.



*Information Literacy Index (0-100)

Composite indicator summarizing students' self-reported ability to find, evaluate and use academic information, based on 7 skill items:

1. Finding the information you need
2. Evaluating information reliability
3. Identifying relevant academic sources
4. Using academic databases
5. Citing your sources correctly
6. Managing your bibliographic references
7. Understanding plagiarism or how to avoid it

Higher scores indicate stronger information literacy. Please see full data next slide.



Poor information literacy means a high risk of being misled.

Which of the following risks do you associate with insufficient capacity to access and use reliable information?

NET AT LEAST ONE RISK PERCEIVED

99%

Being misled by inaccurate information

71%

Loss of credibility

60%

Difficulty producing quality writing

57%

Lower academic grades

50%

Bachelor 55%

Master 43%

Risk of unintentional plagiarism

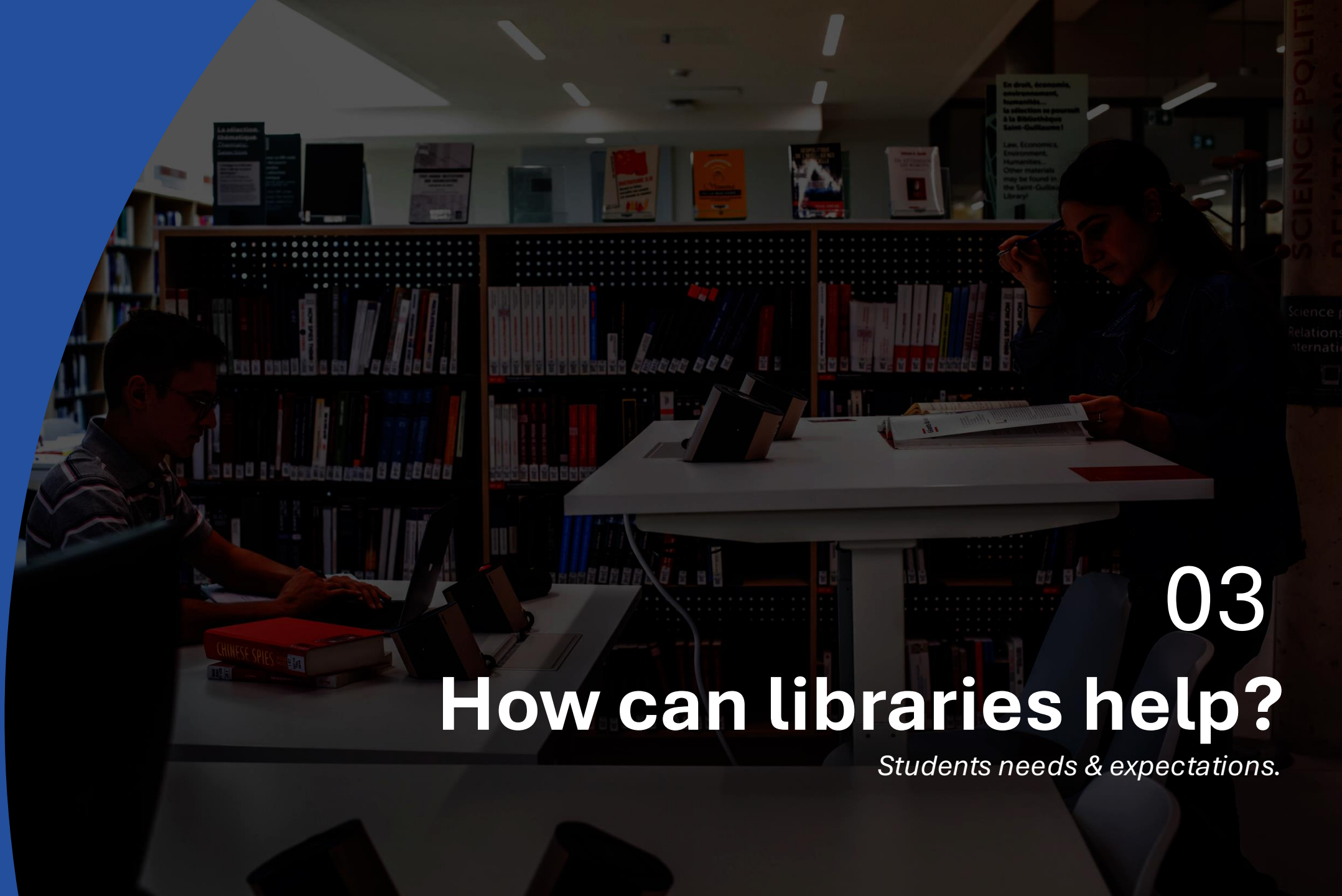
42%

Bachelor 47%

Master 35%

Other | 1%





03

How can libraries help?

Students needs & expectations.

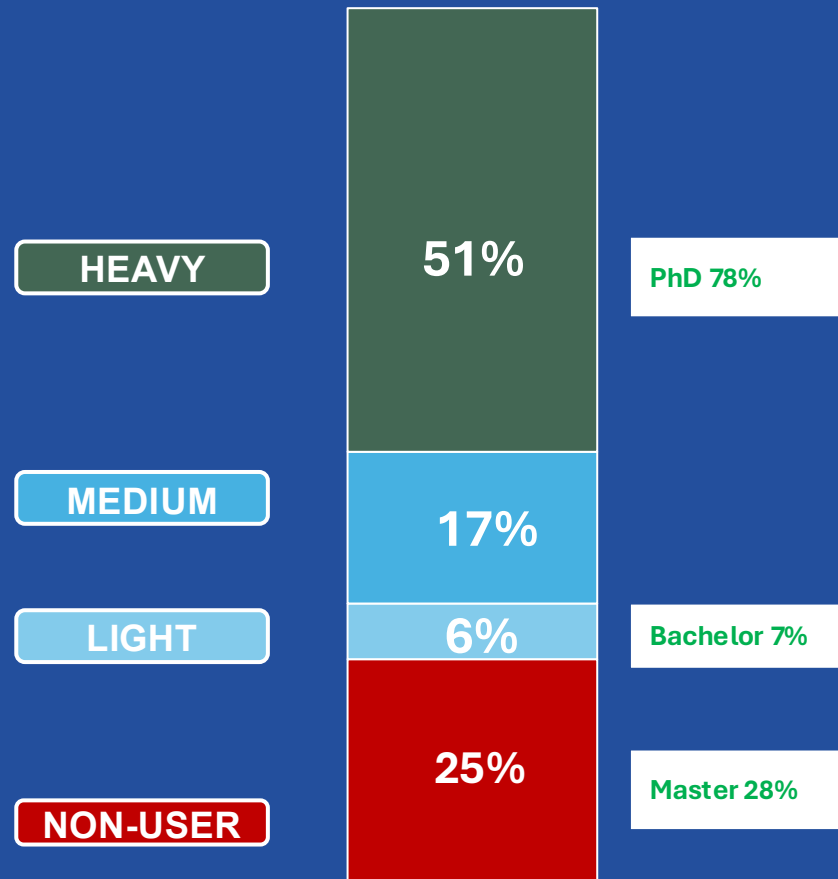


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Intensity of (physical + online) library usage*

Frequency of Visits OR Search Tools Usage

Most students are regular users, but a persistent minority remain outside the library ecosystem.



*Intensity of library usage

HEAVY. Visit physical library several times a week OR often use the library's website or online catalogue/search tools

MEDIUM. Visit physical library once a week OR sometimes use the library's website or online catalogue/search tools

LIGHT. Visit physical library less than once a week OR rarely use the library's website or online catalogue/search tools

NON-USERS. Do not visit physical library NOR the library's website or online catalogue/search tools

Results by institutions (If enough sample base)

HEAVY LIBRARY USE

- Science Po 80%
- LSE 72%
- CEU 67%
- Hertie School 47%
- Bocconi University 41%
- SNSPA 31%
- SGH 30%

Please see details next slide

Libraries are seen as study-friendly spaces and trusted content gateways above all.

MOST USEFUL LIBRARY SERVICES

Of the library services listed below, which do you find most useful?

Base: Frequent or occasional visitors of physical library (n=1333)

Study space / quiet environment **75%**

Access to online resources **48%**

Borrowing books **39%**

Access to print books / materials **32%**

Group study / collaborative work **31%**

One-on-one assistance from librarians **8%**

PhD 56%

Master 51%
Bachelor 42%

PhD 67%

PhD 50%

PhD 8%

PhD 21%



What should libraries do?

Let's listen to some verbatims from the survey!

'I think we need more workspaces. Being in a library is a great incentive to go and look at paper books!' (Master, Sciences Po)

'Longer [opening] hours, especially on weekends!'
(Bachelor, IE University)

'Training on how to filter relevant sources, in a fast, tailored, and targeted way.'
(Master, Bocconi University)

'Training sessions! I would like to learn more about how to improve my research for important classes. And I'd like to have all the university books I'm searching to borrow at the library!'
(Bachelor, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration)

'Resources at the Library are good but more access to journals' back catalogues digitally would be great!' (PhD, The London School of Economics and Political Science)

'It would be great if CIVICA institutions could pool some resources to have an on-demand library chat to support access to publications and data for students at CIVICA institutions, with the chat handing off to the institution's library if it gets more complex.'
(PhD, Hertie School)



Enhanced accessibility to spaces and content is highly expected. Libraries are also expected to contribute to information literacy.

FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR LIBRARIES

In your opinion, which should be the library's top priorities in coming years??

Base: Base: TOTAL (n=2294)

Facilitating access to physical library space 53%

Master 55%

Offering dedicated spaces 46%

Master 52%

Facilitating access to reliable academic content 45%

PhD 62%

Combating misinformation 42%

Supporting AI use in student research 39%

Teaching information and research skills 32%

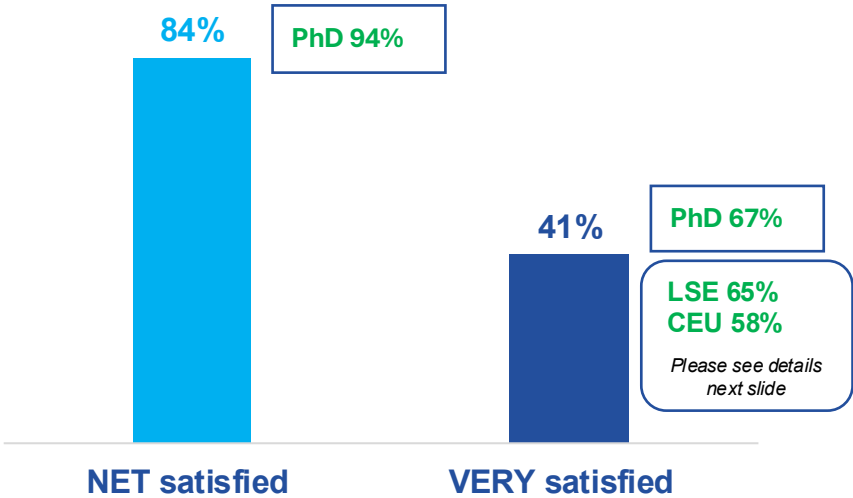
PhD 43%
Bachelor 35%



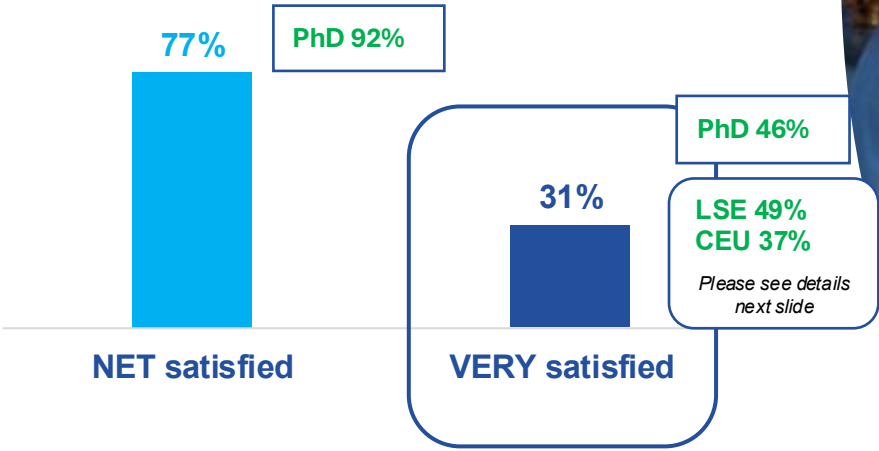
Libraries' services are satisfactory overall, but information skills training scores lower.

How satisfied are you with the services offered by your university/institution's library?

Services in general

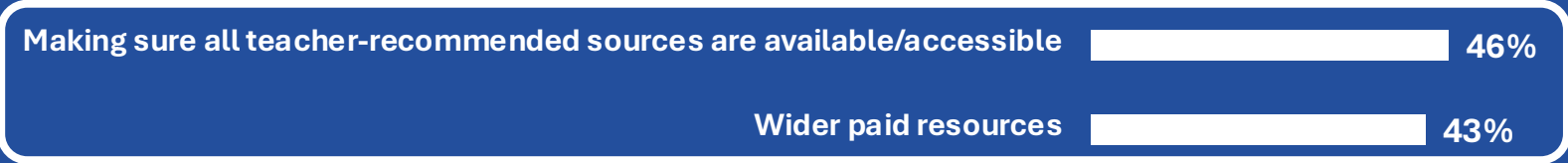


Information Skills Training



Easier access to relevant resources (teachers' reading lists / paid resources) is a priority expectation

Which services would you like your library to offer?
Base: TOTAL (n=2294)



Master 50%



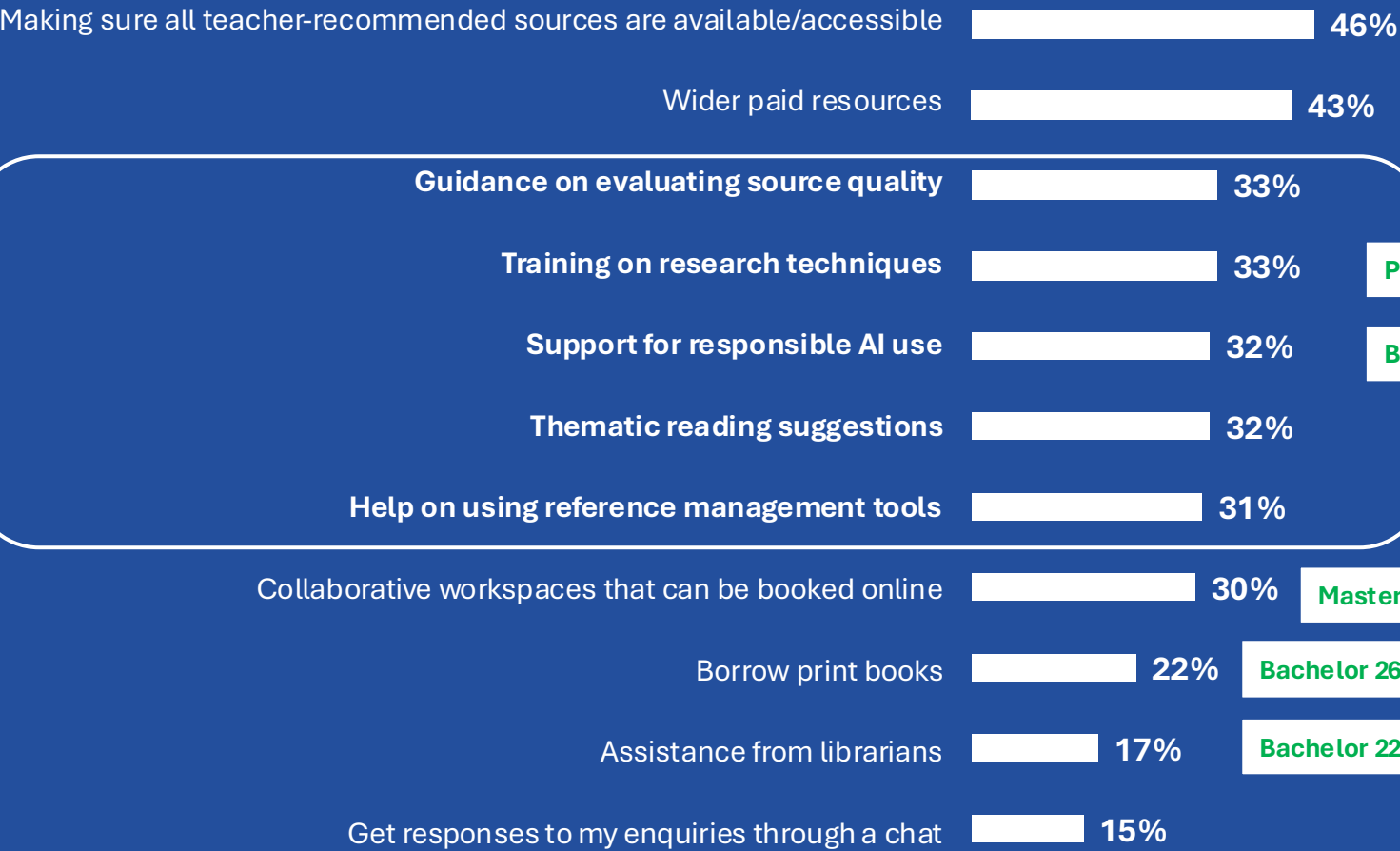
Note. Only 37% of students say that the teacher-recommended sources they need are fully available at their library. (LSE 62%, SGH 19%)
10% say they are not available.

Please see details by institution next slide



Guidance on information search and quality evaluation is also expected.

Which services would you like your library to offer?
Base: TOTAL (n=2294)



Help efficiently navigating academic sources is needed.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how comfortable do you feel --

Identifying Relevant Academic Sources

40%



Rather Comfortable

25%



Very Comfortable

NET Comfortable 64%
PhD 78%
Bachelor 62%

Using Academic Databases

36%



Rather Comfortable

18%



Very Comfortable

NET Comfortable 54%
PhD 72%
Master 62%
Bachelor 46%

Score = 4

Score = 5

46%
of students **already attended**
a course or workshop on how
to **efficiently access/search**
academic content.

PhD 67%

23% attended one
and found it useful

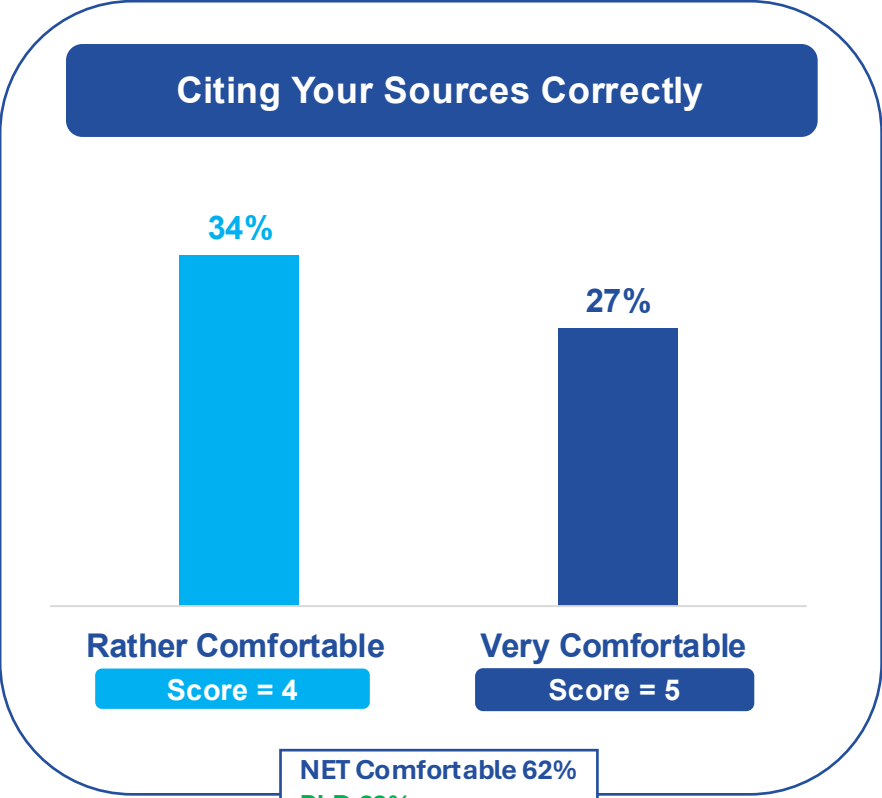
PhD 33%

37%
would like to
attend such a course.

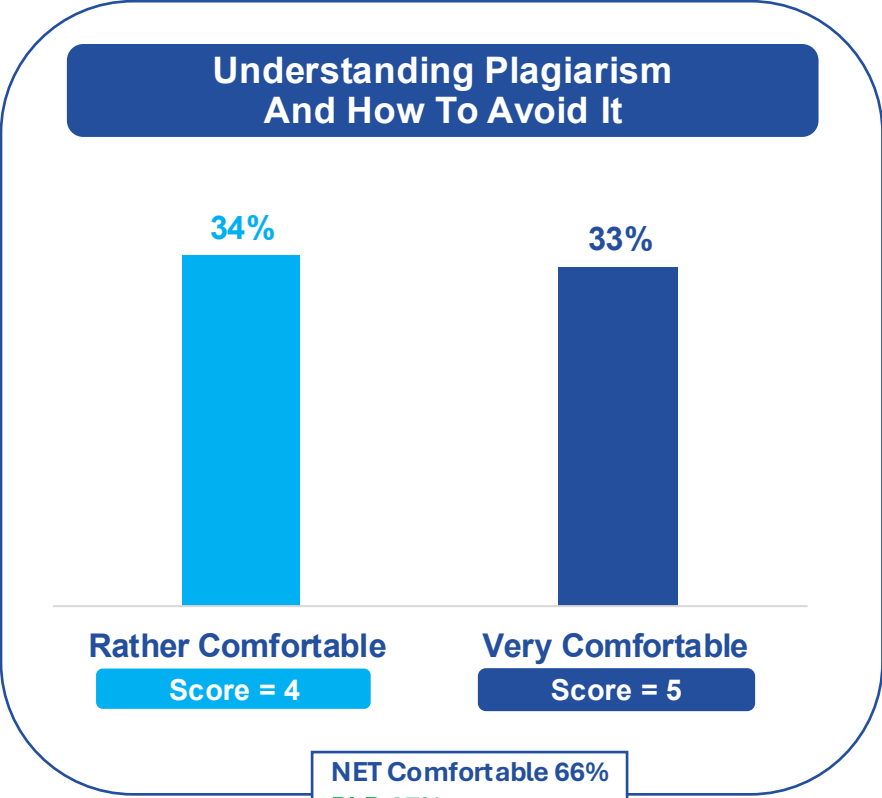


Overall, only 27% of students feel very comfortable citing their sources. Confidence depends on study level.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how comfortable do you feel --



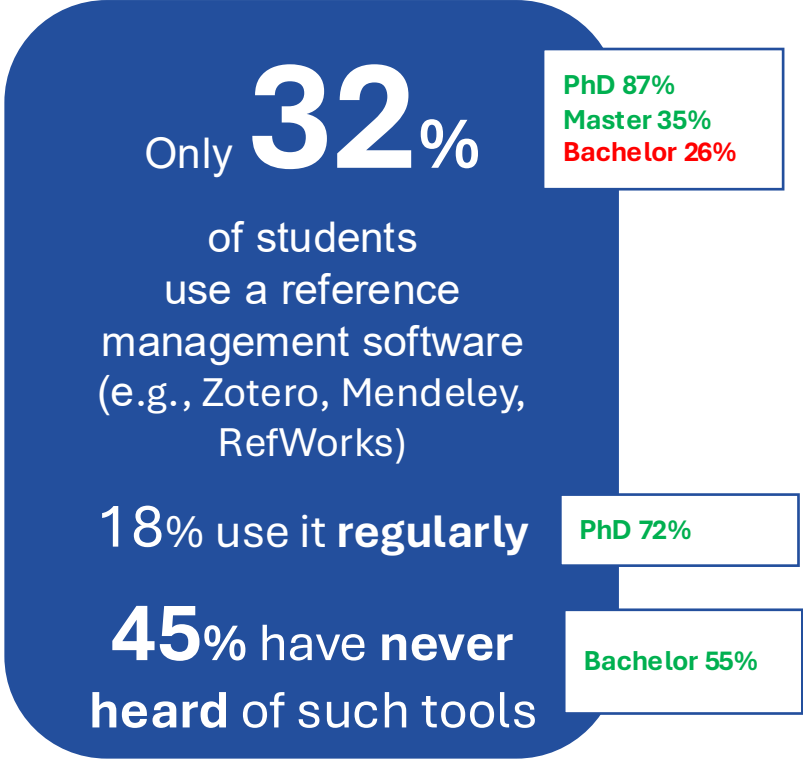
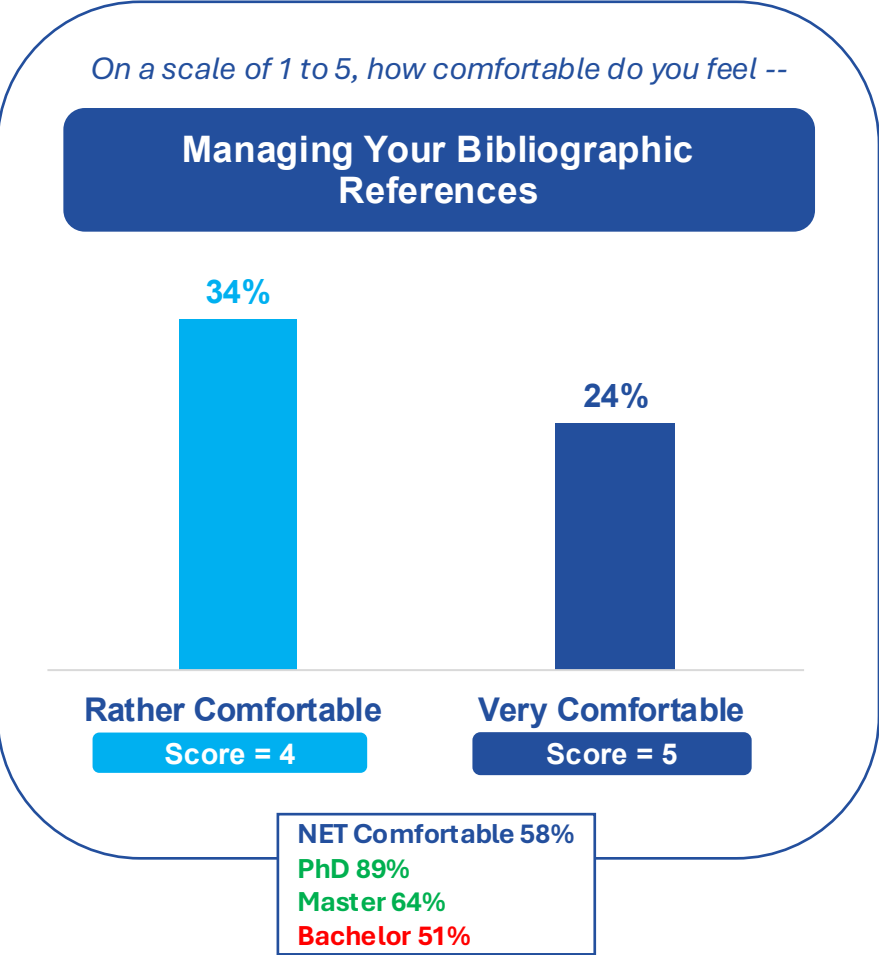
NET Comfortable 62%
PhD 89%
Master 70%
Bachelor 54%



NET Comfortable 66%
PhD 87%
Master 72%
Bachelor 61%



Managing bibliographic references is a skill which needs training.



One student in 2 would like help using ai-generated content responsibly.

My university/ institution provided a clear framework regarding the use of Generative AI tools (e.g., code of conduct, department guidelines, ethical charter)

66%

Bachelor 69%
PhD 48%

- LSE 78%
- CEU 79%
- Hertie School 77%
- Science Po 64%
- Bocconi University 70%
- SGH 53%
- SNSPA 44%

52%
of students
would like training on
**responsible
academic use
of Gen. A.I. tools**

- SNSPA 74%
- SGH 60%
- Hertie School 64%
- CEU 59%
- LSE 48%
- Bocconi University 50%
- Science Po 45%

In 2025, 60% of Civica students say

PhD 75%

“I see my library staff and resources as true partners in my learning process.”

rather + strongly agree

LET’S MAKE THAT NUMBER GROW!



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THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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CEU

European
University
Institute

Hertie
School

IE
University

National
University of
Political Studies
and Public
Administration

Sciences Po

SGH Warsaw
School of
Economics

Stockholm
School of
Economics

LSE