



Understanding Website Usage in Undergraduate and Graduate School Search

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2007 National Survey of Website Use in Undergraduate and Graduate School Search

- The *2007 National Survey of Website Use* represents the second annual investigation of the use of so-called “portal” websites when searching for educational opportunities at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- Both graduate and undergraduate surveys specifically focused on behaviors and attitudes during ACTIVE search (3+ hours per week).

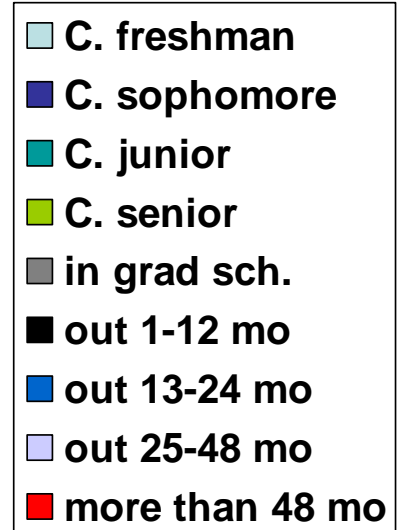
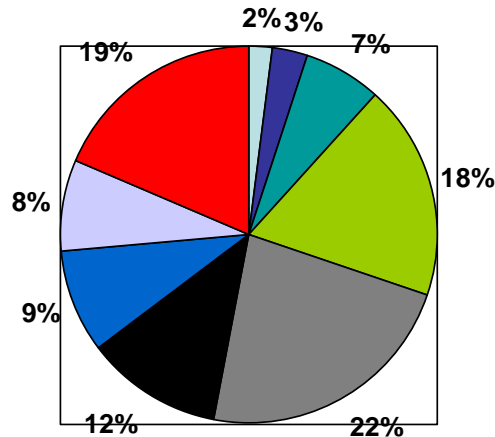


- Online Web survey of 3,390 former, current and anticipatory graduate students with a sister study of 6,885 undergraduate school-bound students
- Results collected from December 5th, 2005 – March 15th, 2006
- Survey distributed through:
 - Multiple email campaigns to various Princeton Review databases with links to the survey
 - Links to the survey were promoted on Princetonreview.com's college and graduate school Web hubs
- This was a survey of convenience and while it contains valuable information does not represent a statistically valid sample

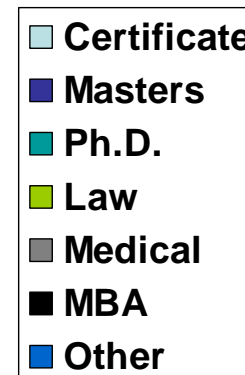
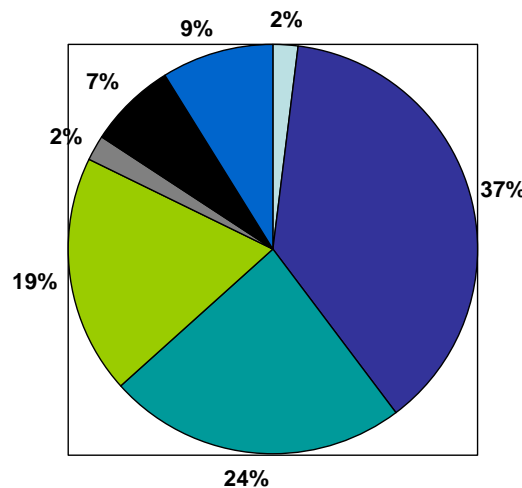


GRAD Survey Educational Plans & Status

Current Educational Status



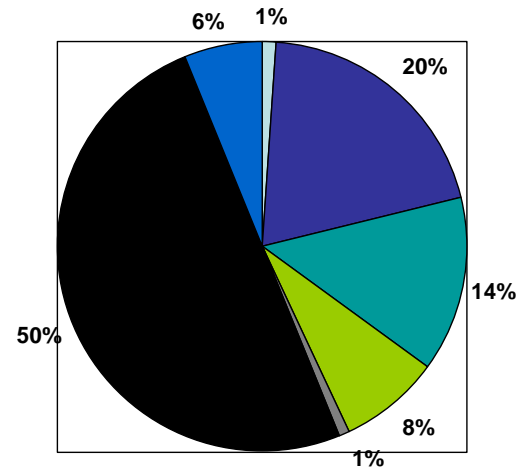
Current Grad Program or Future Educational Plans



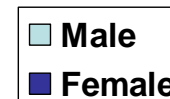
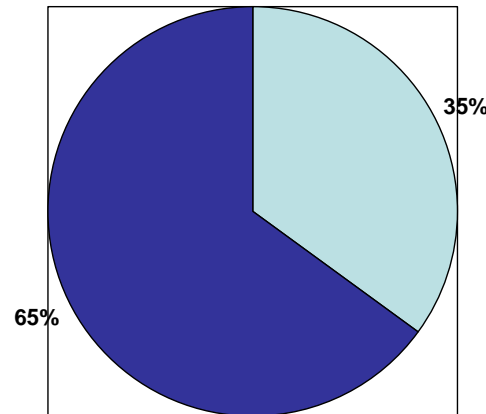


GRAD Survey Gender & Ethnicity

Ethnic Background



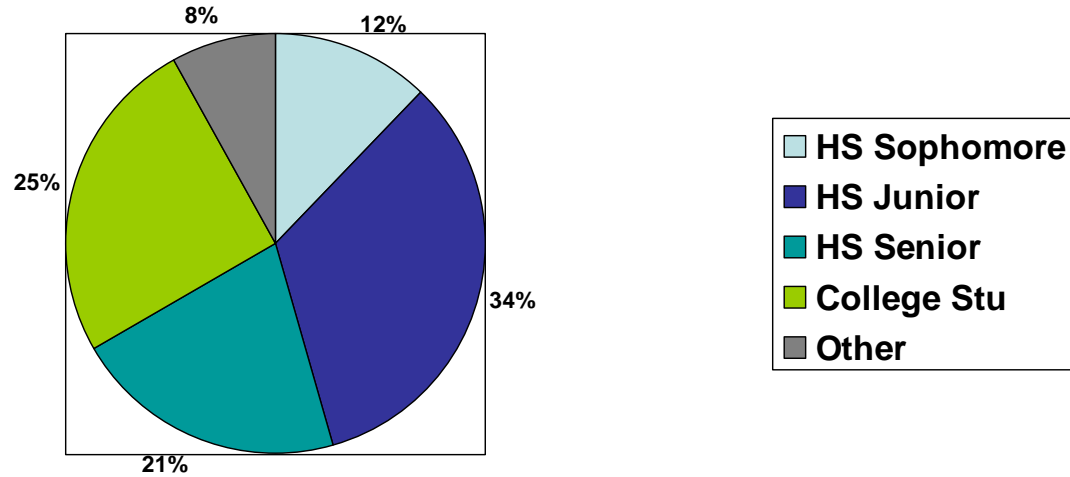
Gender



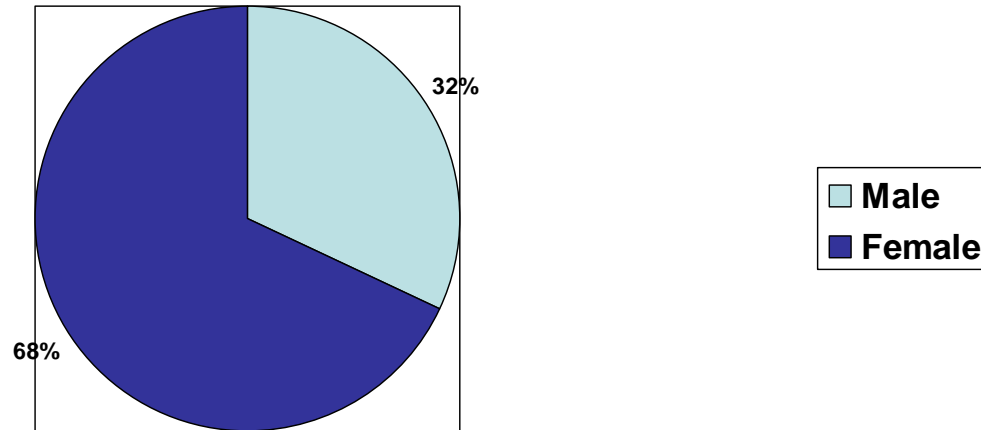


URAD Survey Demographics

Current Educational Status



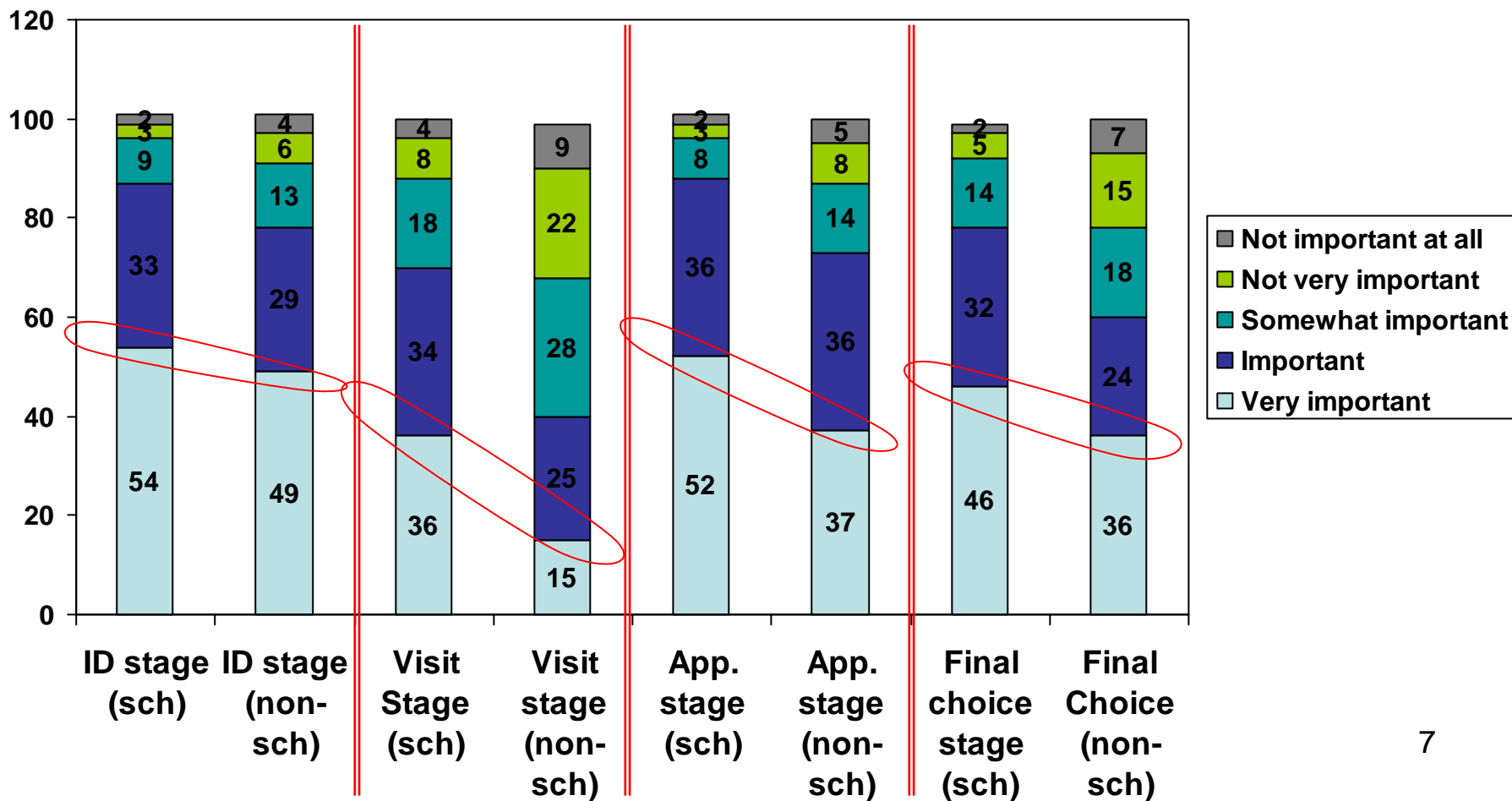
Gender





Importance of School Websites vs. Non-School Websites at Various Stages of Search (**GRAD**)

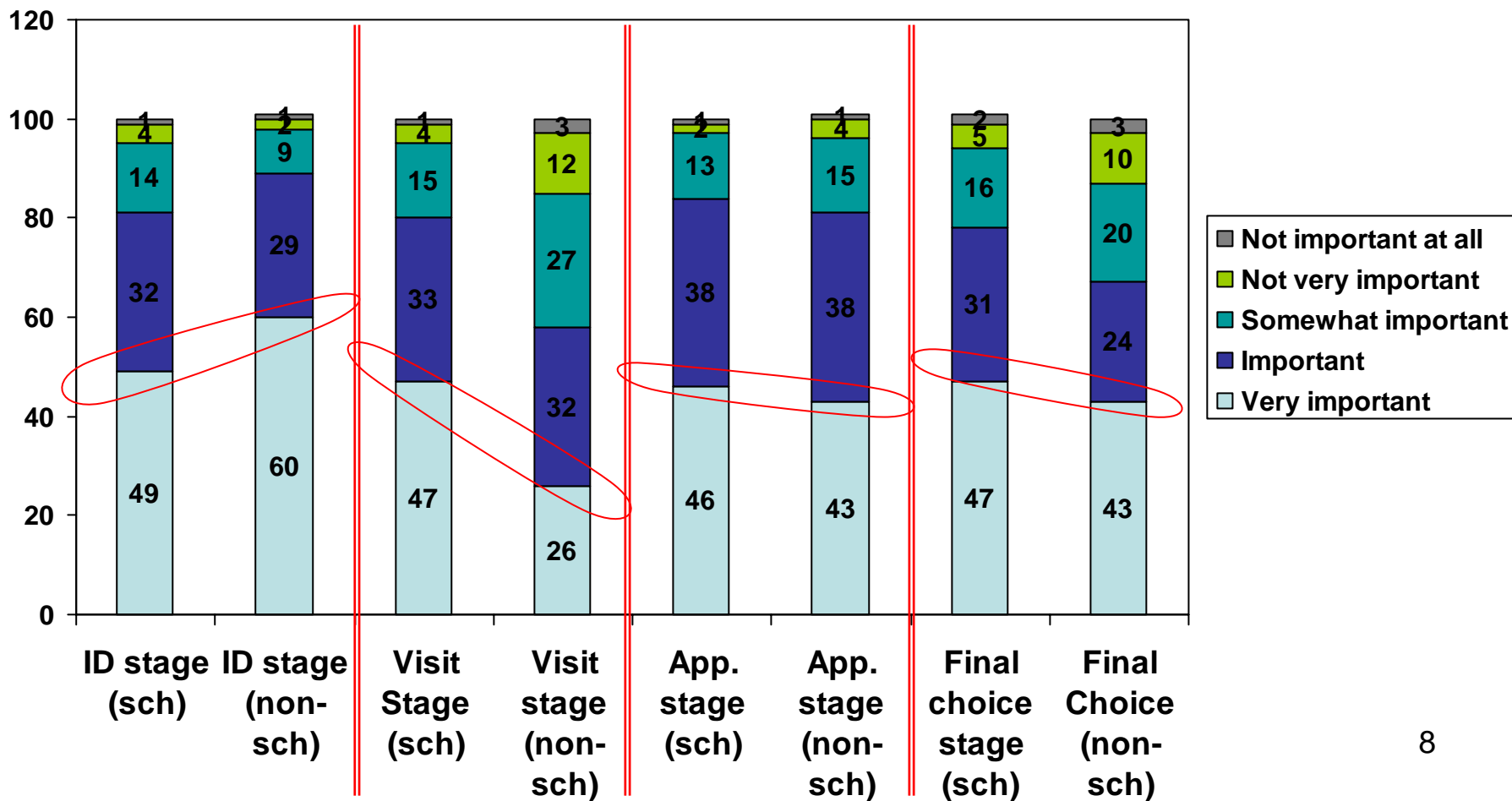
- For Grad-bound, school websites are somewhat more important than non-school sites across all stages of Search





Importance of School Websites vs. Non-School Websites at Various Stages of Search (UGRAD)

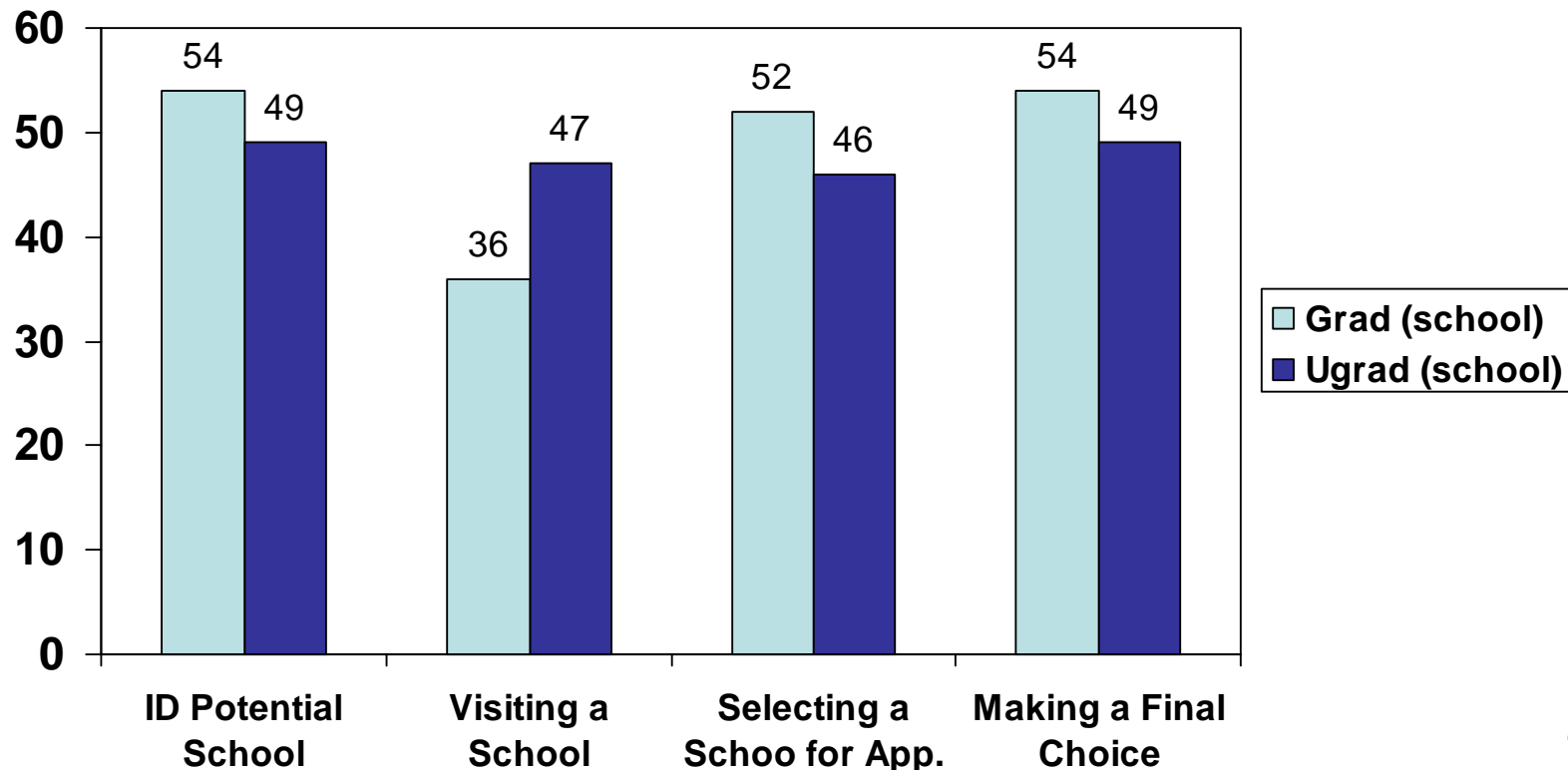
- For Ugrad-bound, non-school sites are more important at ID stage, less at visit and almost equal at the app. & choice stages





Importance of School Websites at Different Stages of Search (% Very Important) **UGRAD** vs. **GRAD**

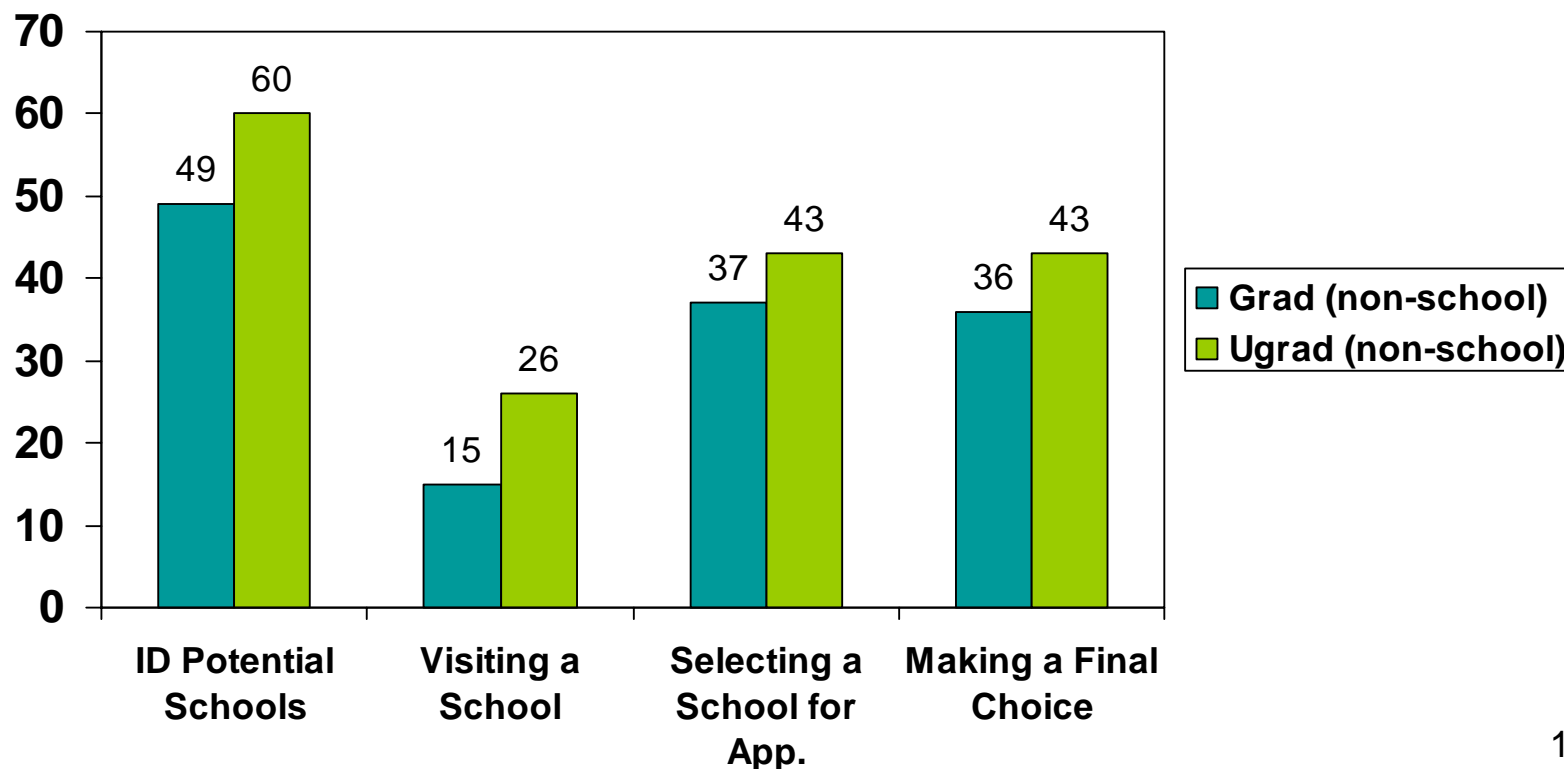
- **Grad-bound students consider school sites more important or as important as Ugrad-bound in every category except the School Visit, which is simply more important to Ugrad-bound students.**





Importance of Non-School Websites at Different Stages of Search (% Very Important) **UGRAD** vs. **GRAD**

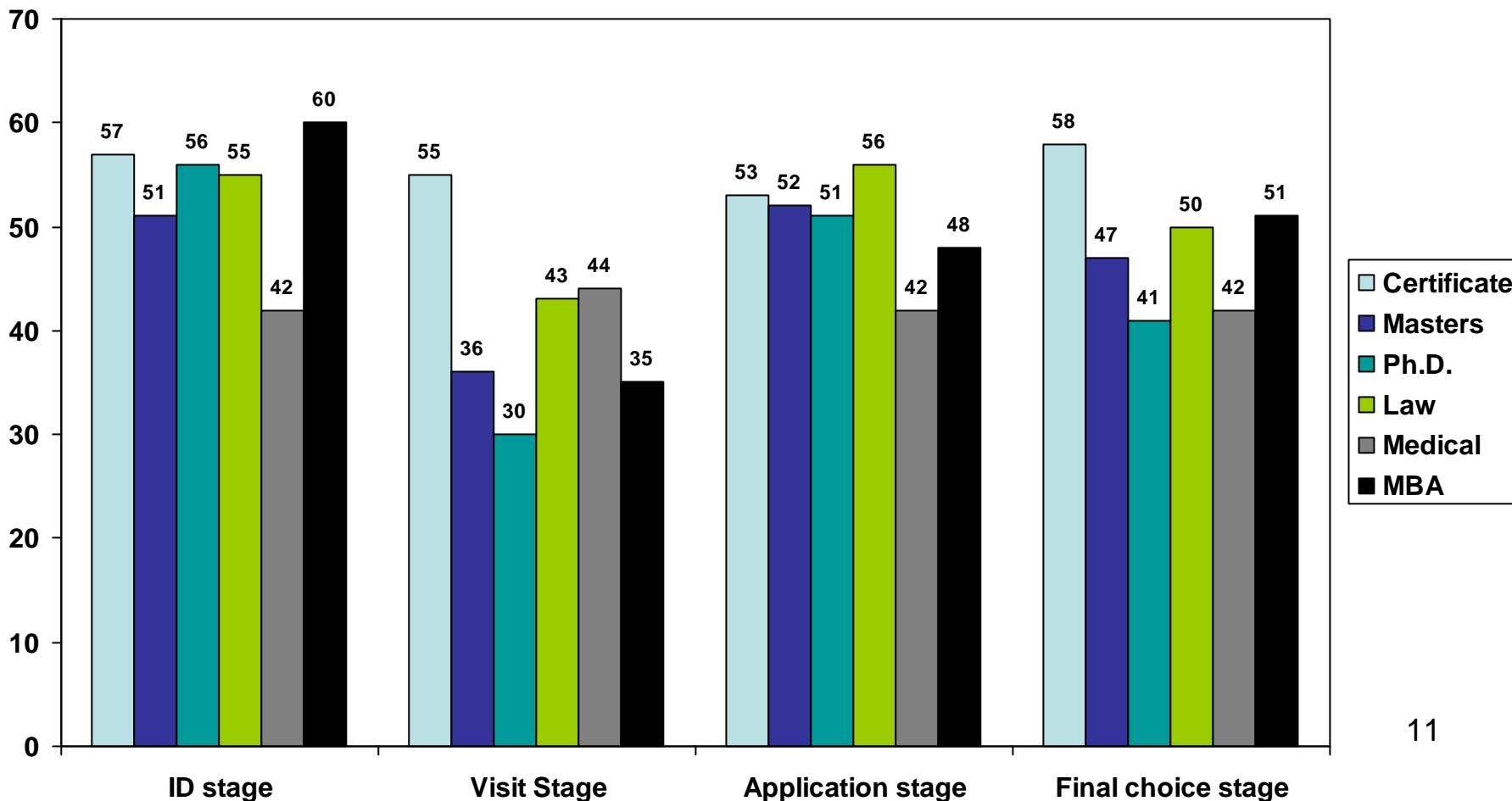
- **Ugrad-bound students consider non-school sites more important than Grad-bound students across all categories**





Importance of School Websites by Current/Future Educational Plans (% Very Important) **GRAD**

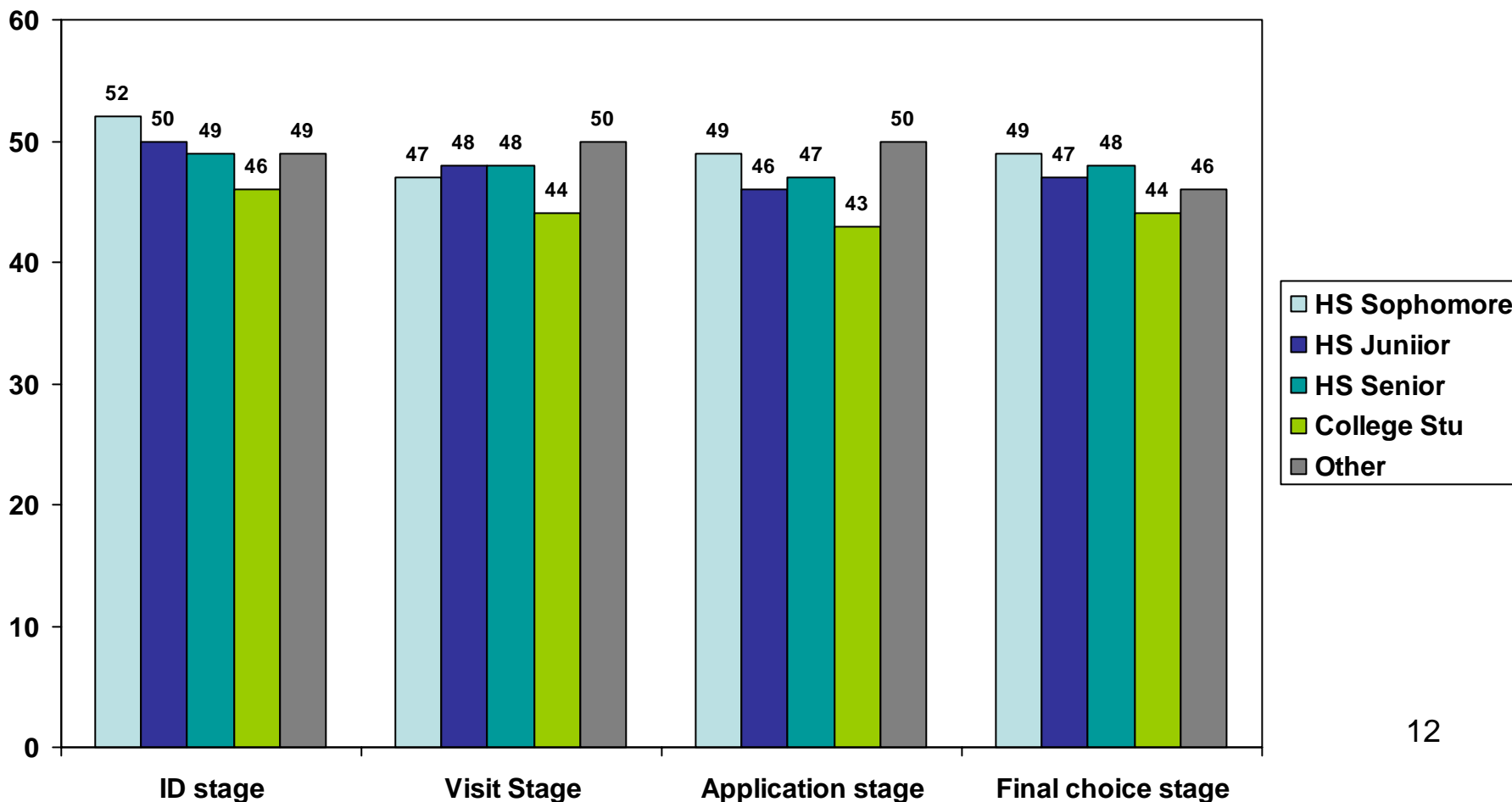
- Highest % is for MBA at ID stage
- Note the high importance for Law at the application stage & the low importance for Medical at the visit stage





Importance of School Websites by Current Educational Status (% Very Important) **UGRAD**

- **Interesting to note that Sophomores consider the Web more important than other classes (younger students are also more inclined to like cool tools and lots of communication)**



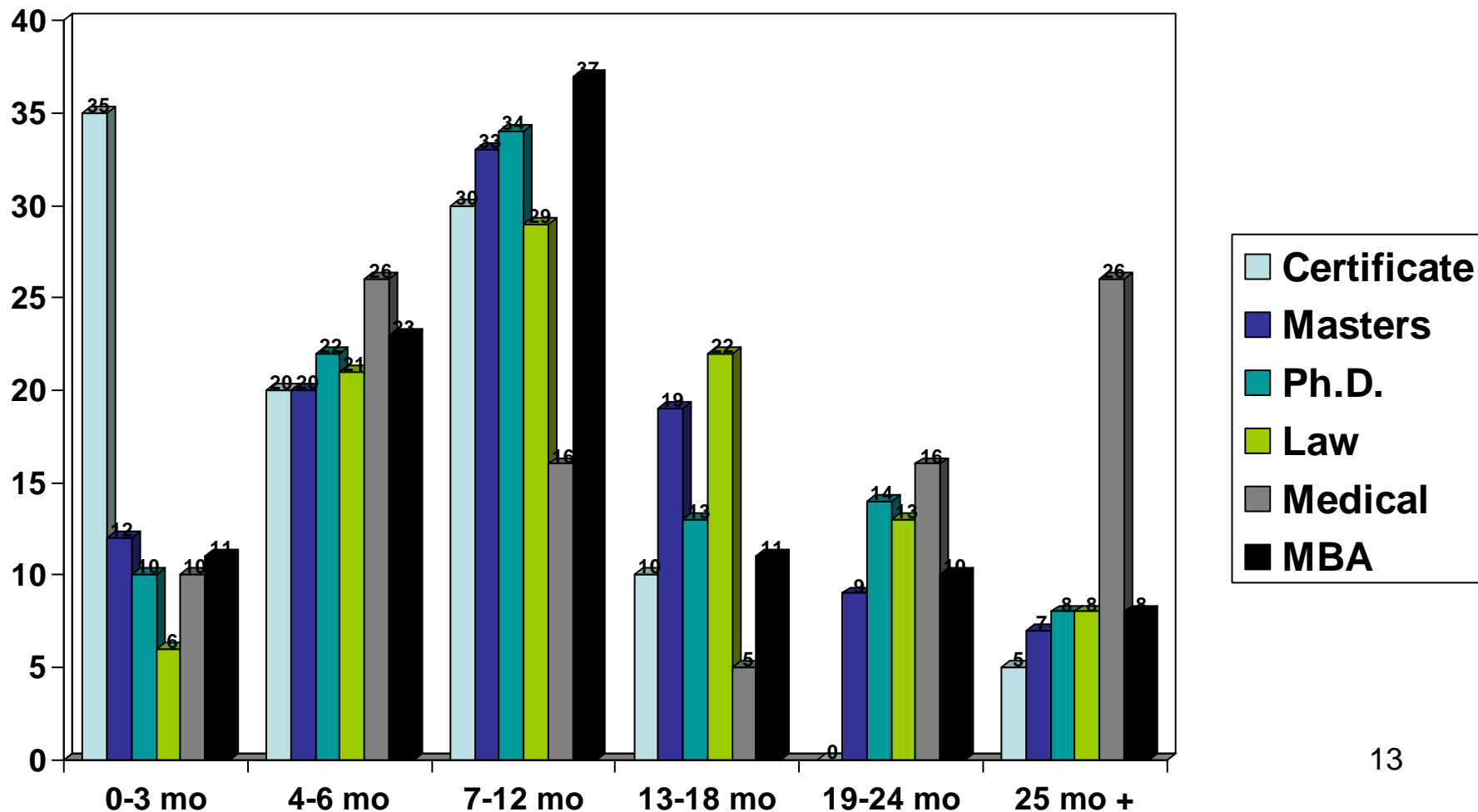


When Did You Begin Active Search (Time Before Applying)

GRAD

- **38% begin active search more than 1 year in advance of applying**

- **High % for Law in the 13-18 range & Med in the 25+ range**

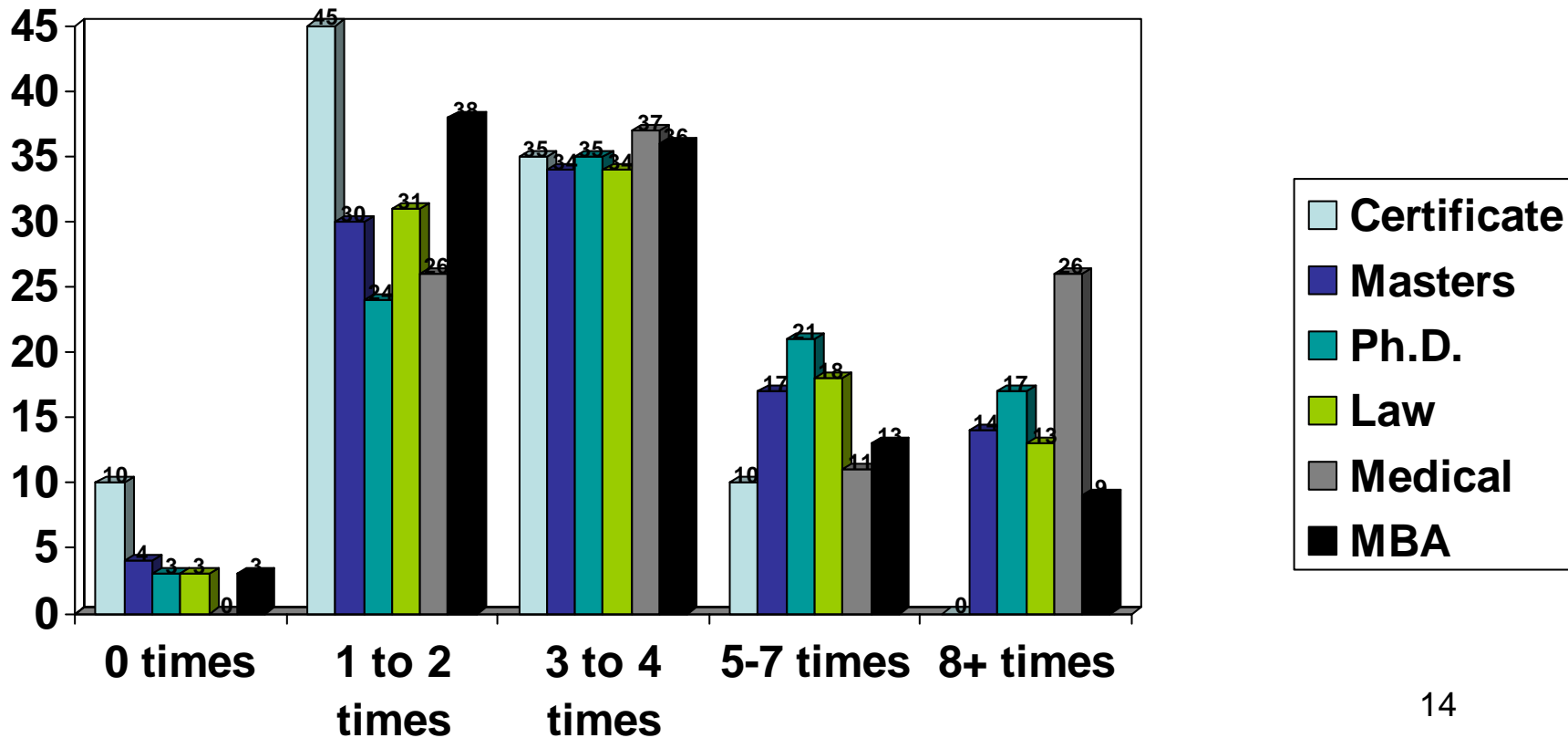




Number of Different School Websites Visited Per Week During Search

GRAD

- **38% of Ph.D.-bound & 37% of Med-bound visit 5+ different school sites per week**

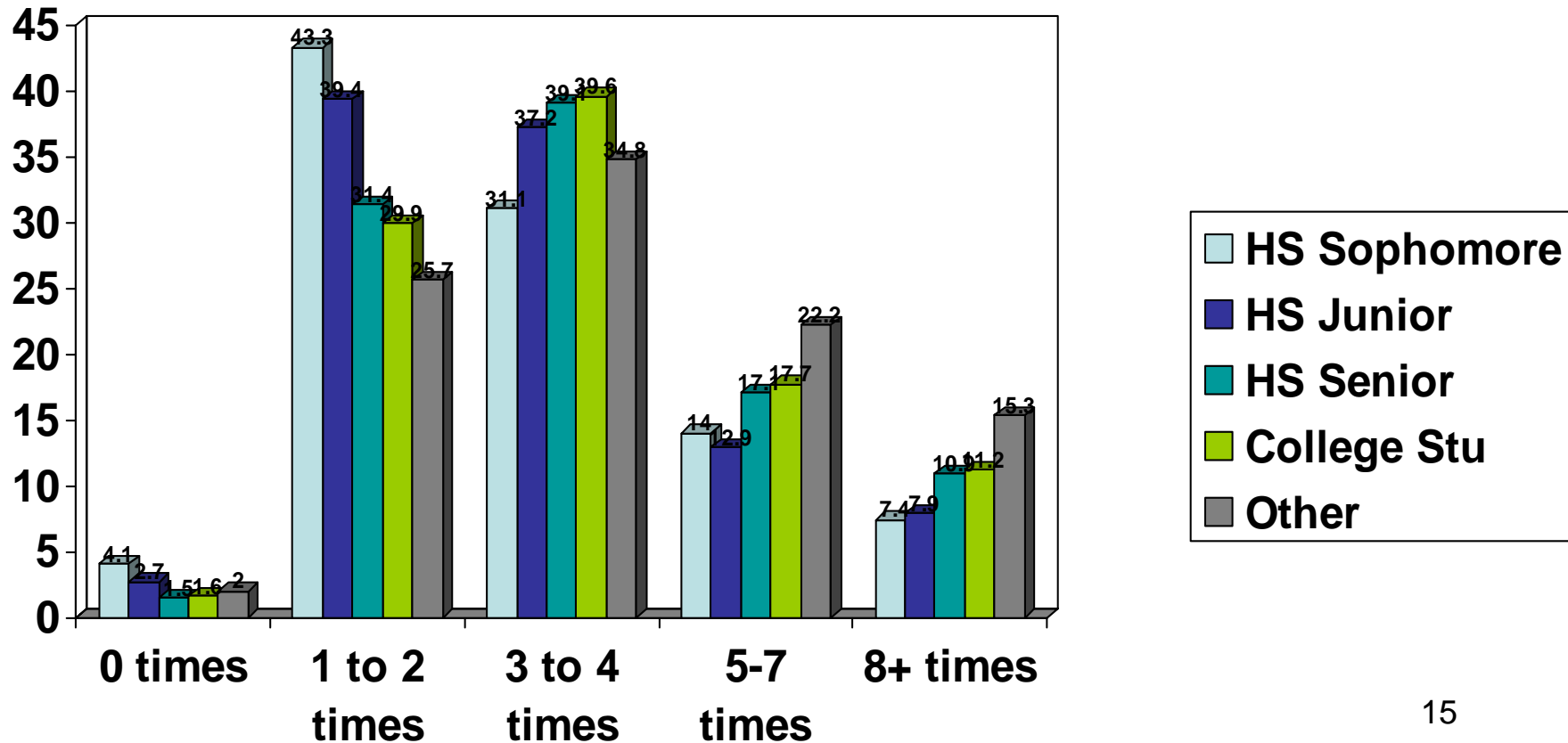




Number of Different School Websites Visited Per Week During Search

UGRAD

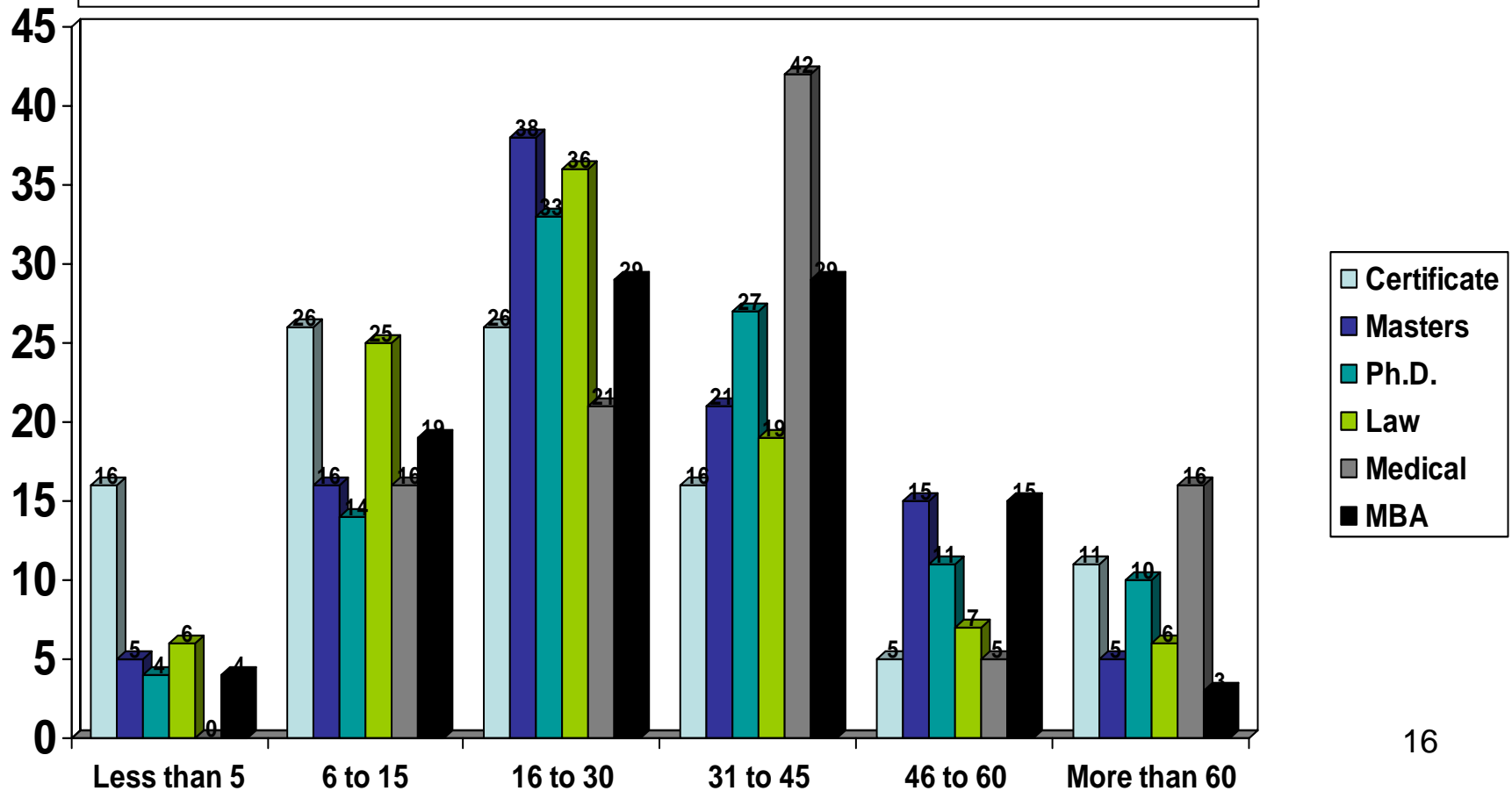
- 63% visiting 3+ different school sites per week





Minutes Per Visit at School Websites During Search GRAD

- High % of Masters-bound in the 16-30 minute range
- Very high % of Medical in the 31-45 range
- 73% of MBA-bound between 16 & 60 minutes

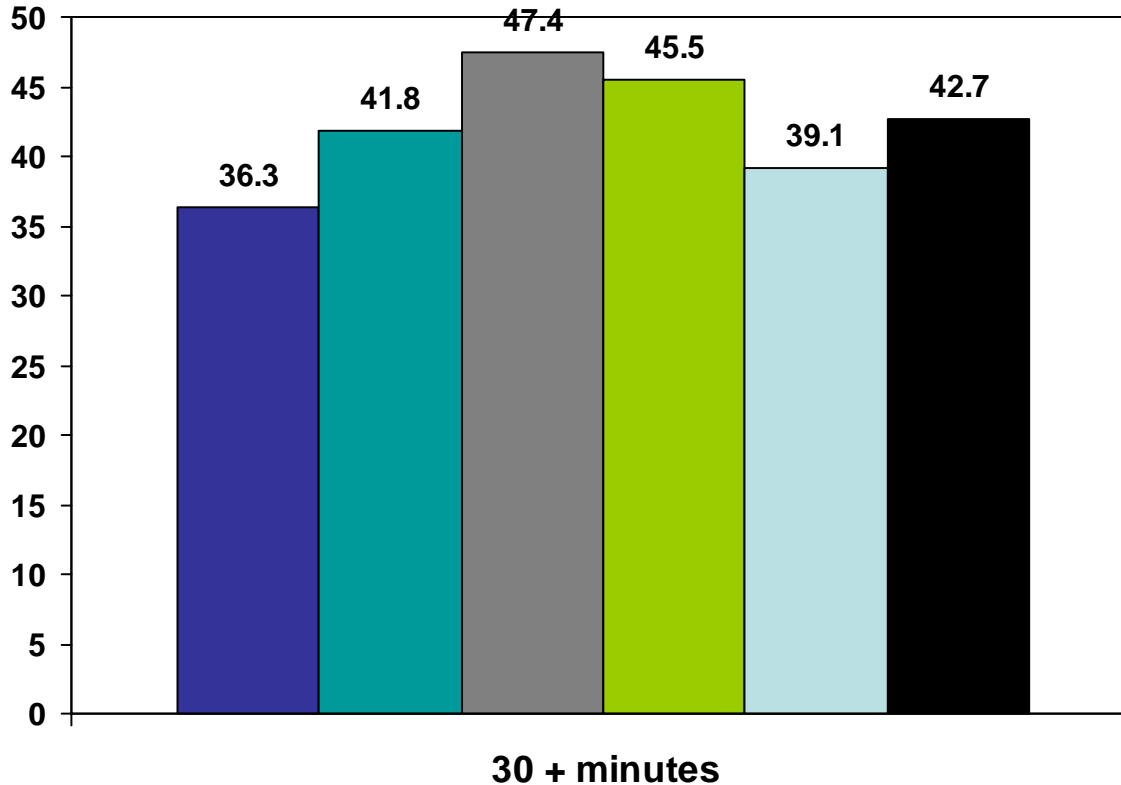




30 + Minutes Per Visit

GRAD

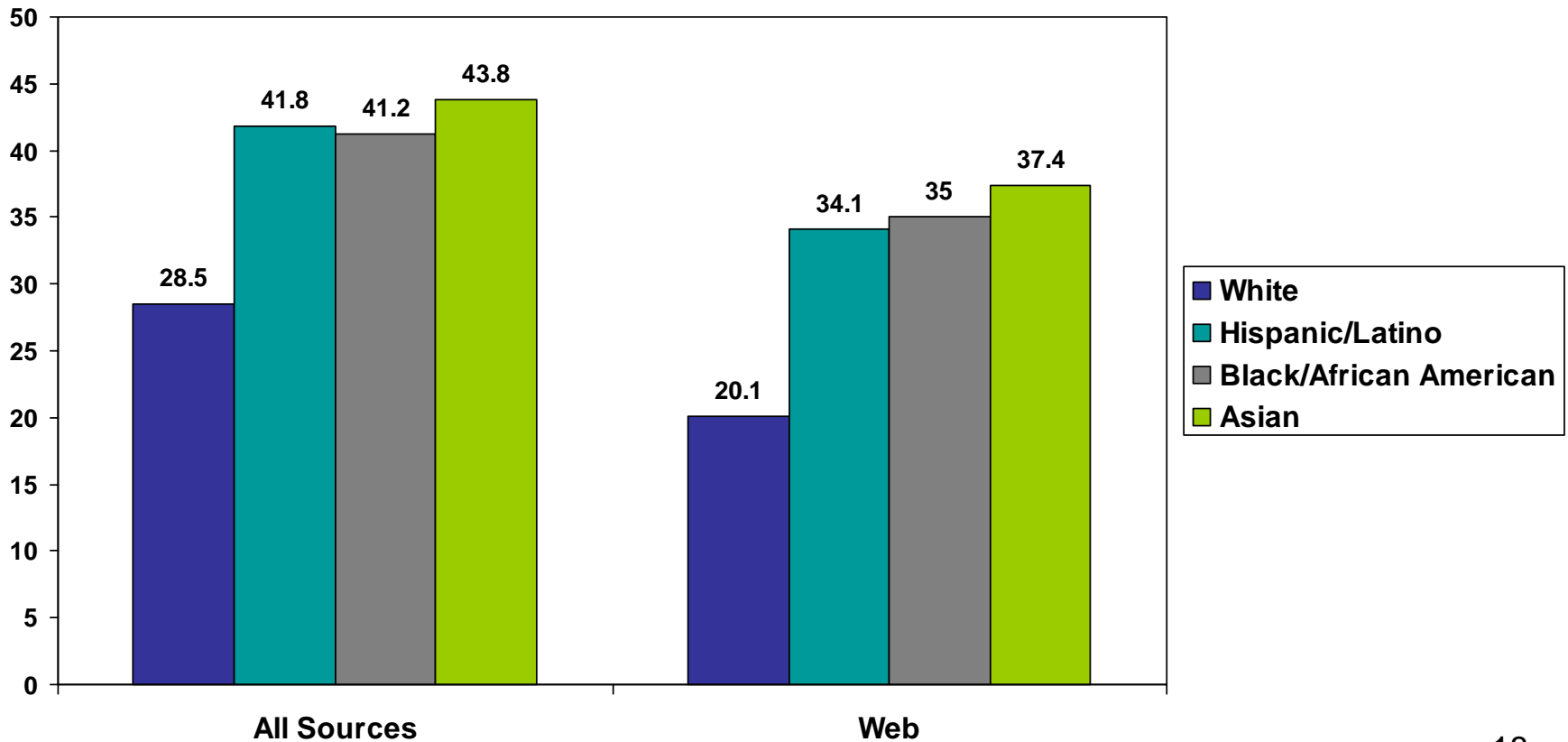
Males and Whites are ranked lowest on virtually every metric of website time, visits, click-through, etc.





5 + Hours Per Week in Search **GRAD**

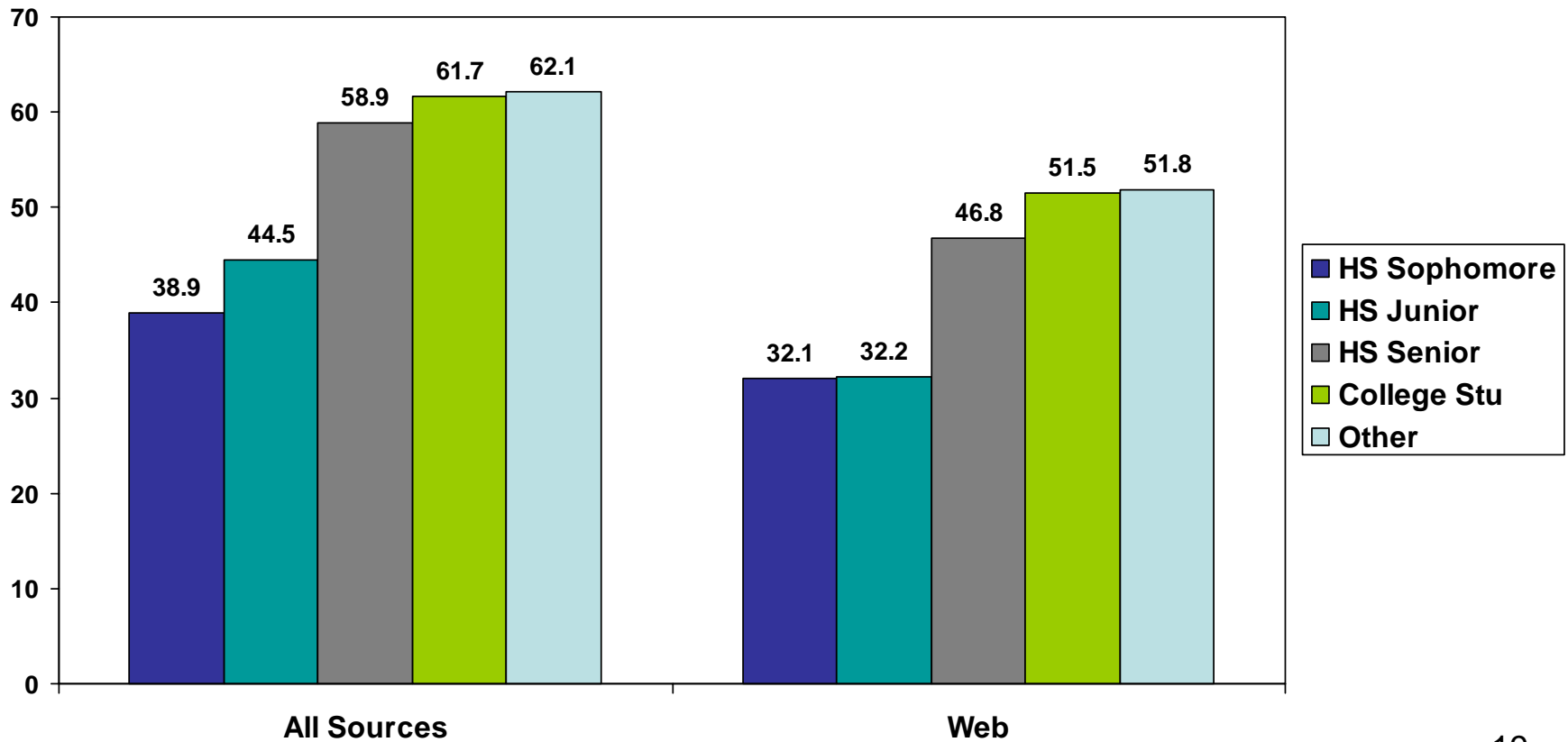
81.7% of total college search/research time is spent on the Web!





4 + Hours Per Week in Search **UGRAD**

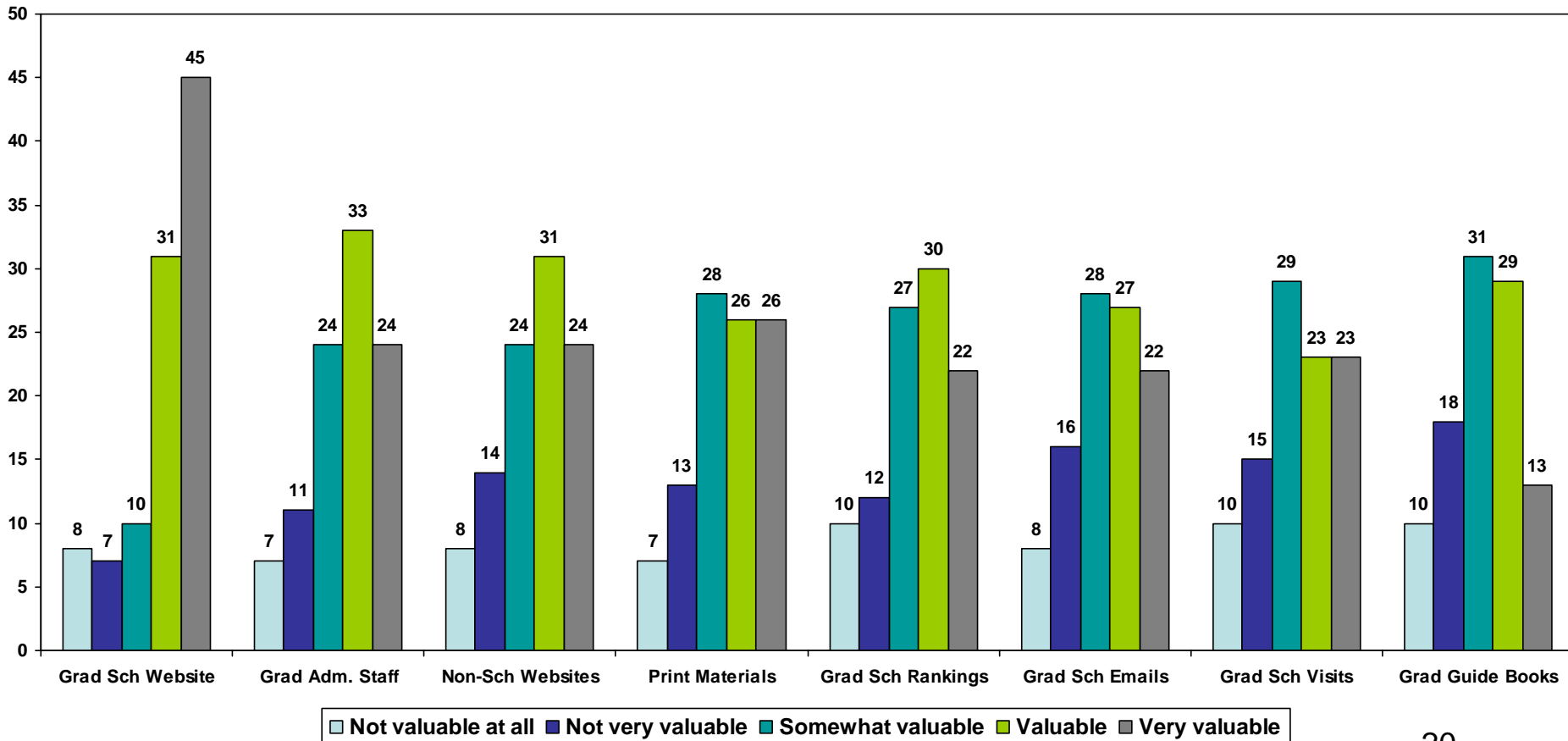
80.5% of total college search/research time is spent on the Web!





The Value of Various Search Aids/Tools (Top 8 in Order Based on % Valuable & Very valuable) **GRAD**

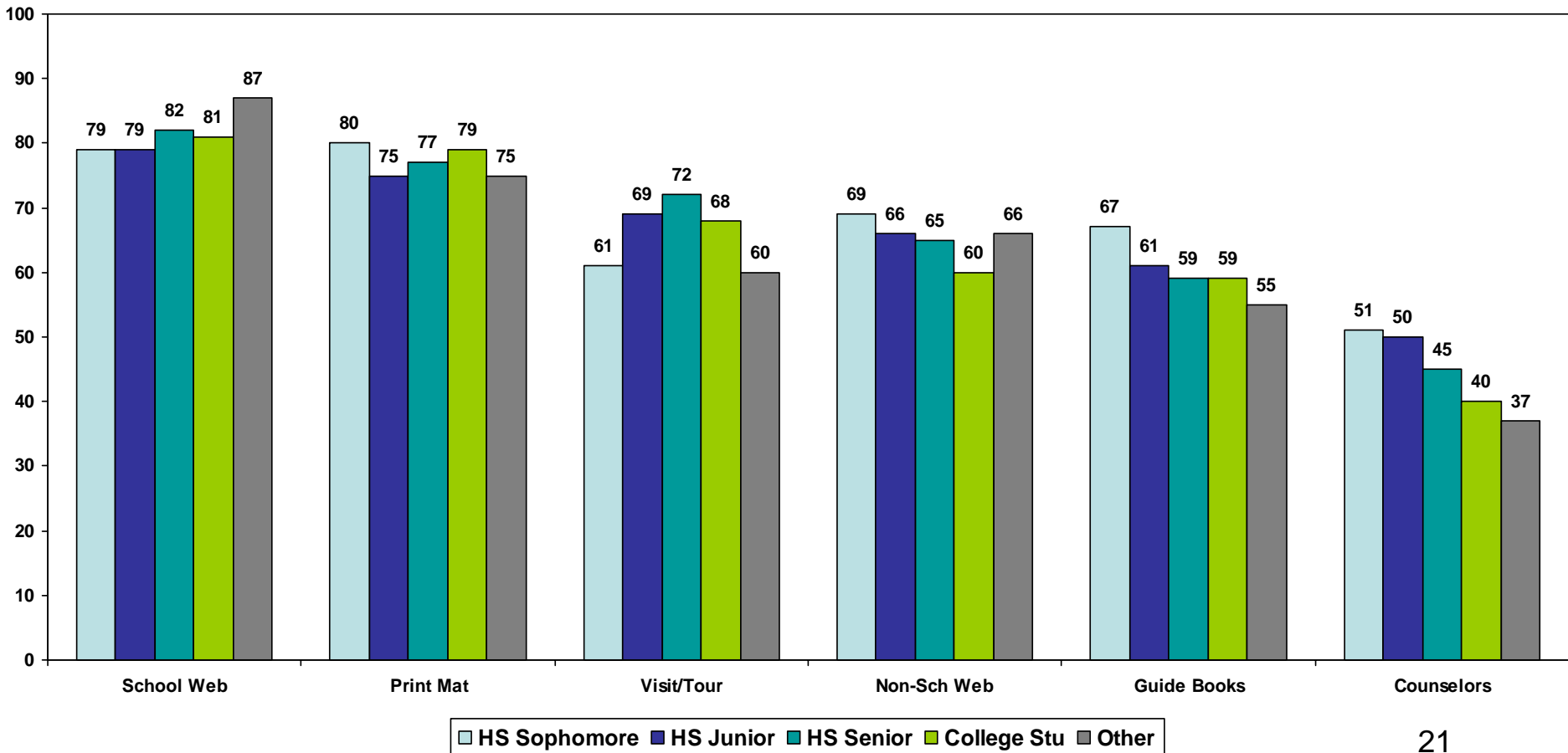
Note the relatively high rankings for Graduate Admissions Staff help and Graduate School Emails





The Value of Various Search Aids/Tools by Education Status (Top 6 Based on % Very valuable) **UGRAD**

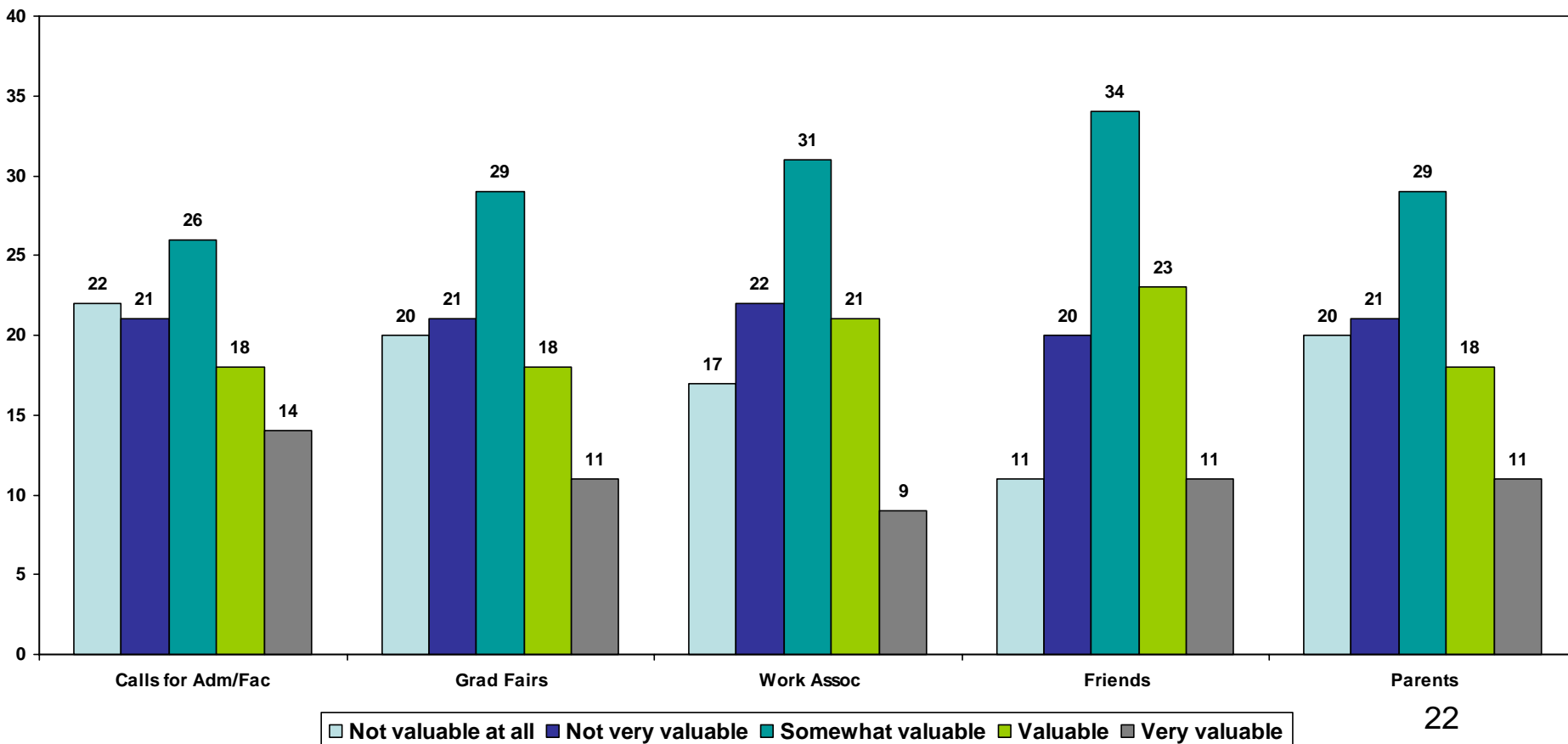
- Note the continued high importance of Print and the Visit relative to Grad
- Sophomores rank everything higher but the visit, since that's not real yet





The Value of Various Search Aids/Tools (Bottom 5 Based on % of Valuable and Very Valuable) **GRAD**

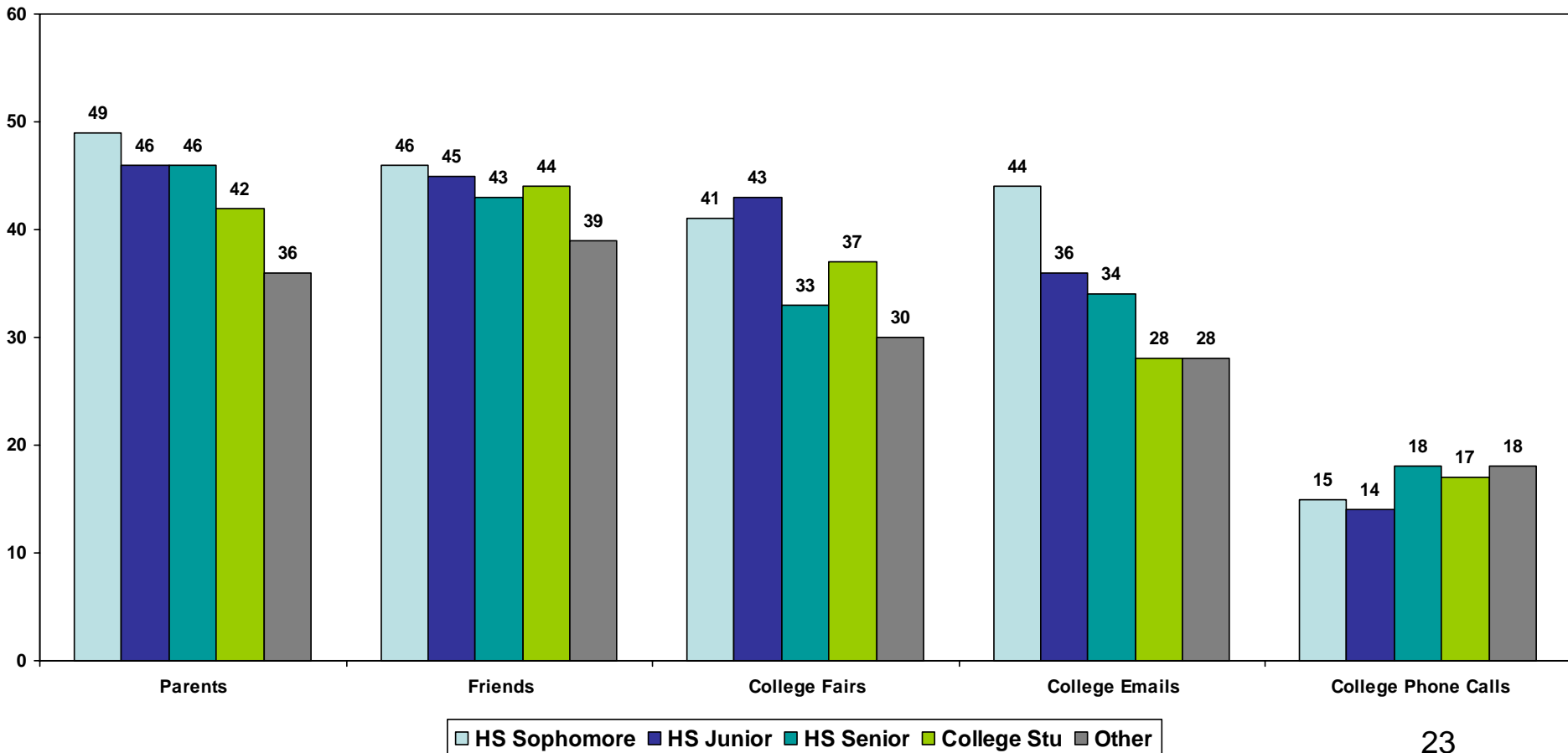
•Contact from Admissions and Faculty more valuable than input from Friends, Family or Work





The Value of Various Search Aids/Tools by Education Status (Low 5 Based on % Very valuable) **UGRAD**

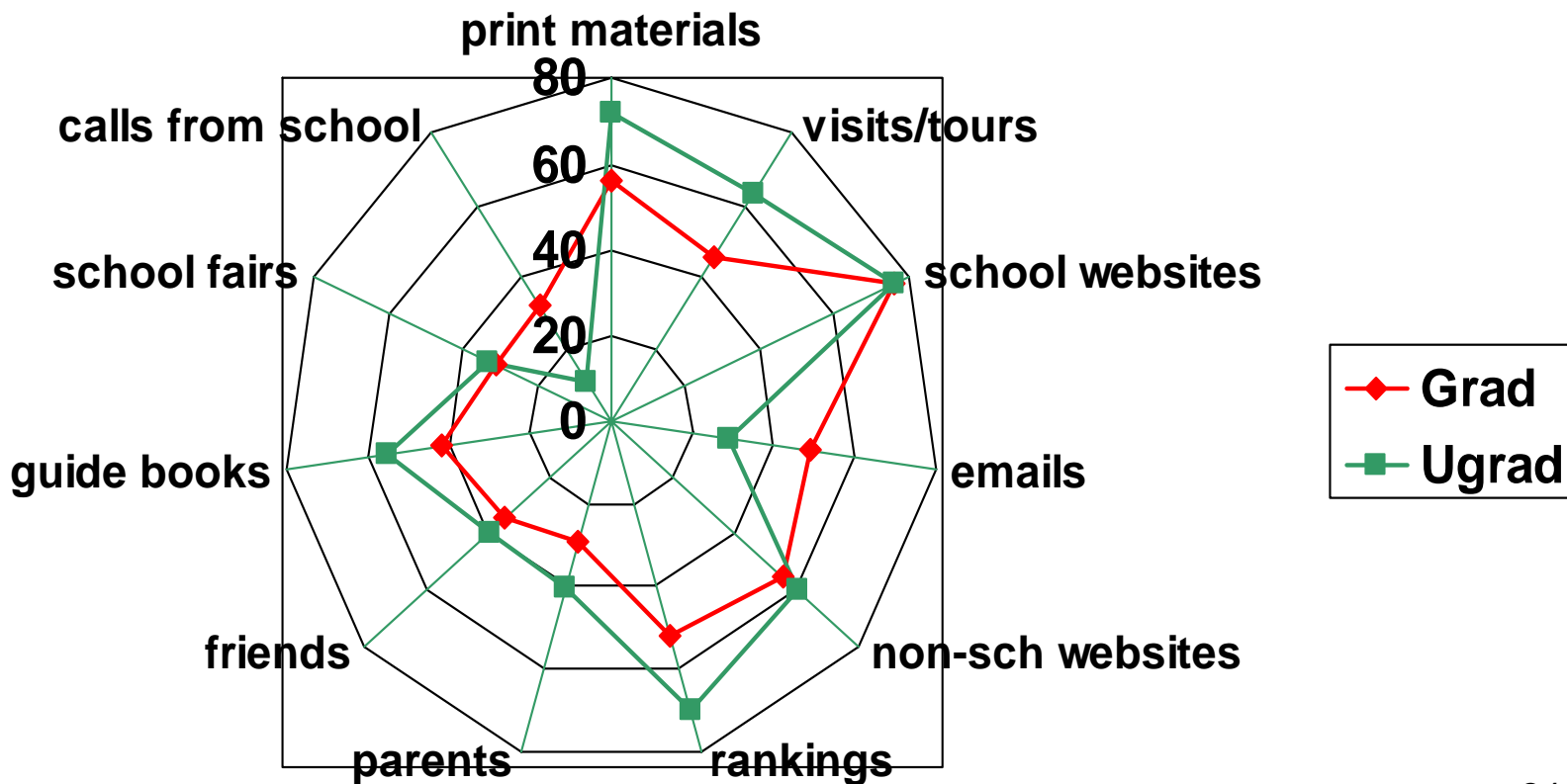
- Ugrad-bound don't like Phone Calls much
- Parents and Friends still important





The Value of Various Search Aids for **GRAD** vs. **UGRAD** (% Valuable & Very Valuable)

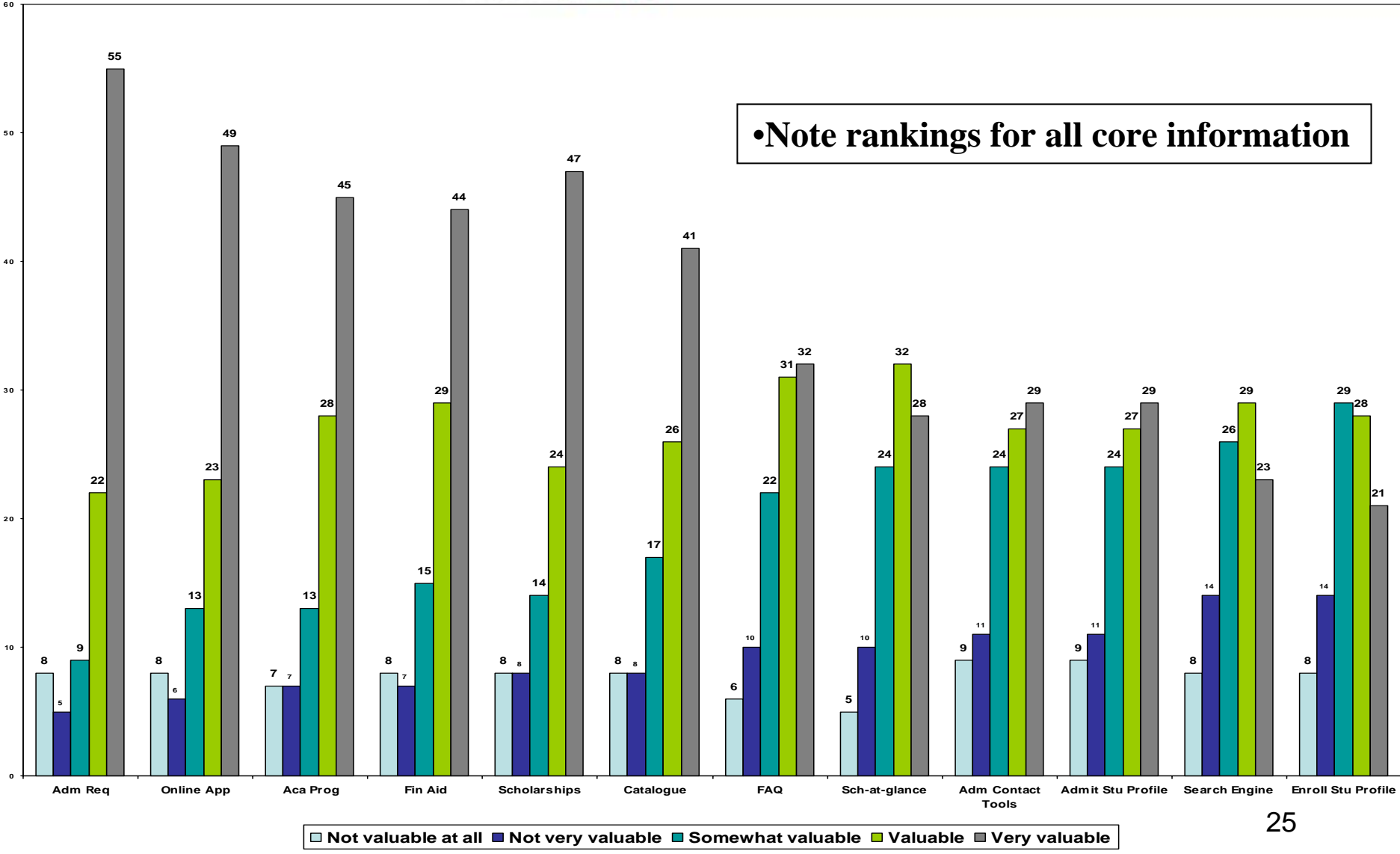
- Note that Grad-bound are more open to direct communications
- Ugrad-bound big on Visits, Rankings, Guidebooks & Print





The Value of Specific Website Tools/Content in Search (Top 12 Based on % Valuable and Very Valuable) **GRAD**

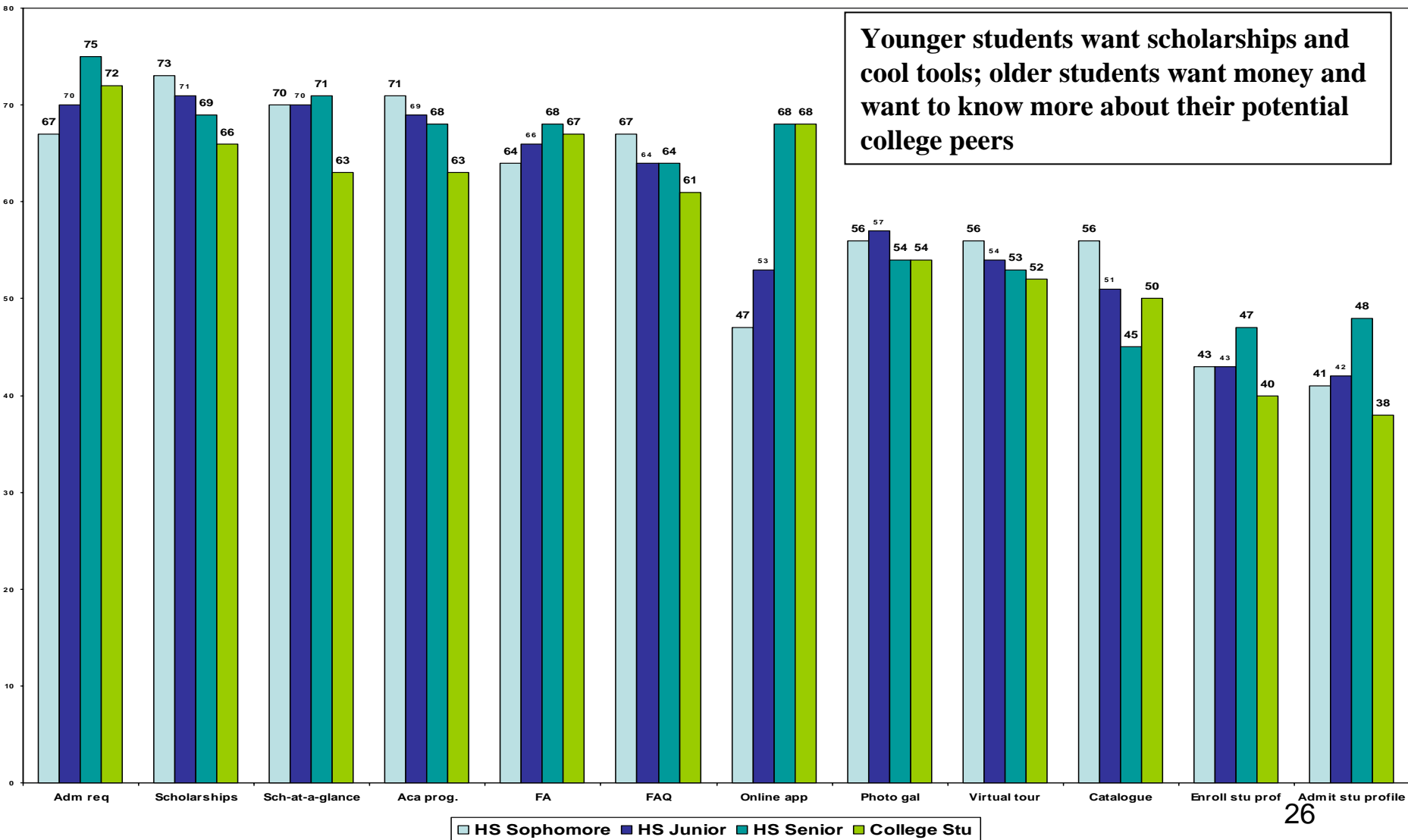
•Note rankings for all core information





The Value of Specific Website Tools/Content in Search (Top 12 Based on % Very Valuable) UGRAD

Younger students want scholarships and cool tools; older students want money and want to know more about their potential college peers

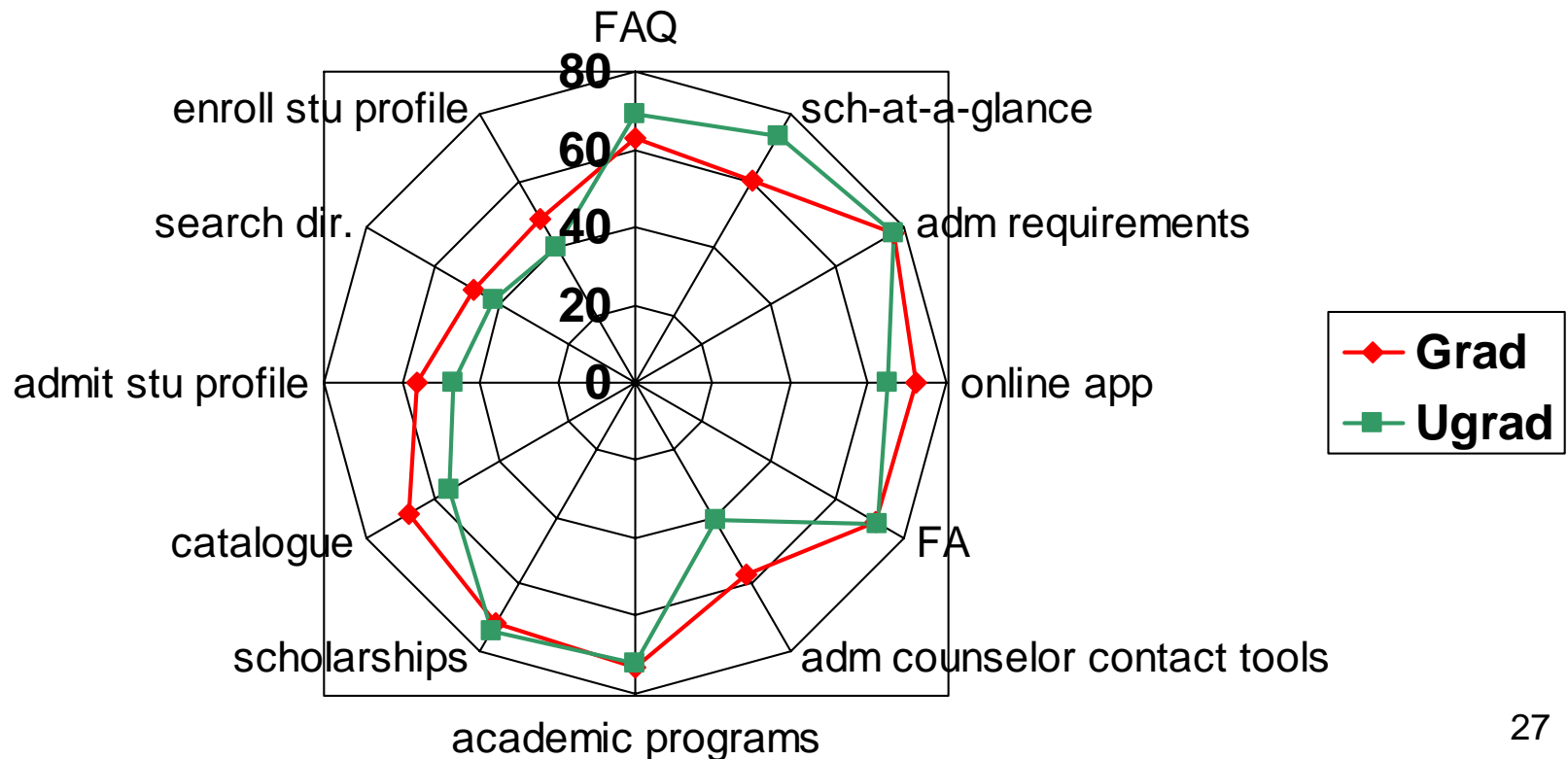




12 Highest Rated Website Tools/content - GRAD vs. UGRAD

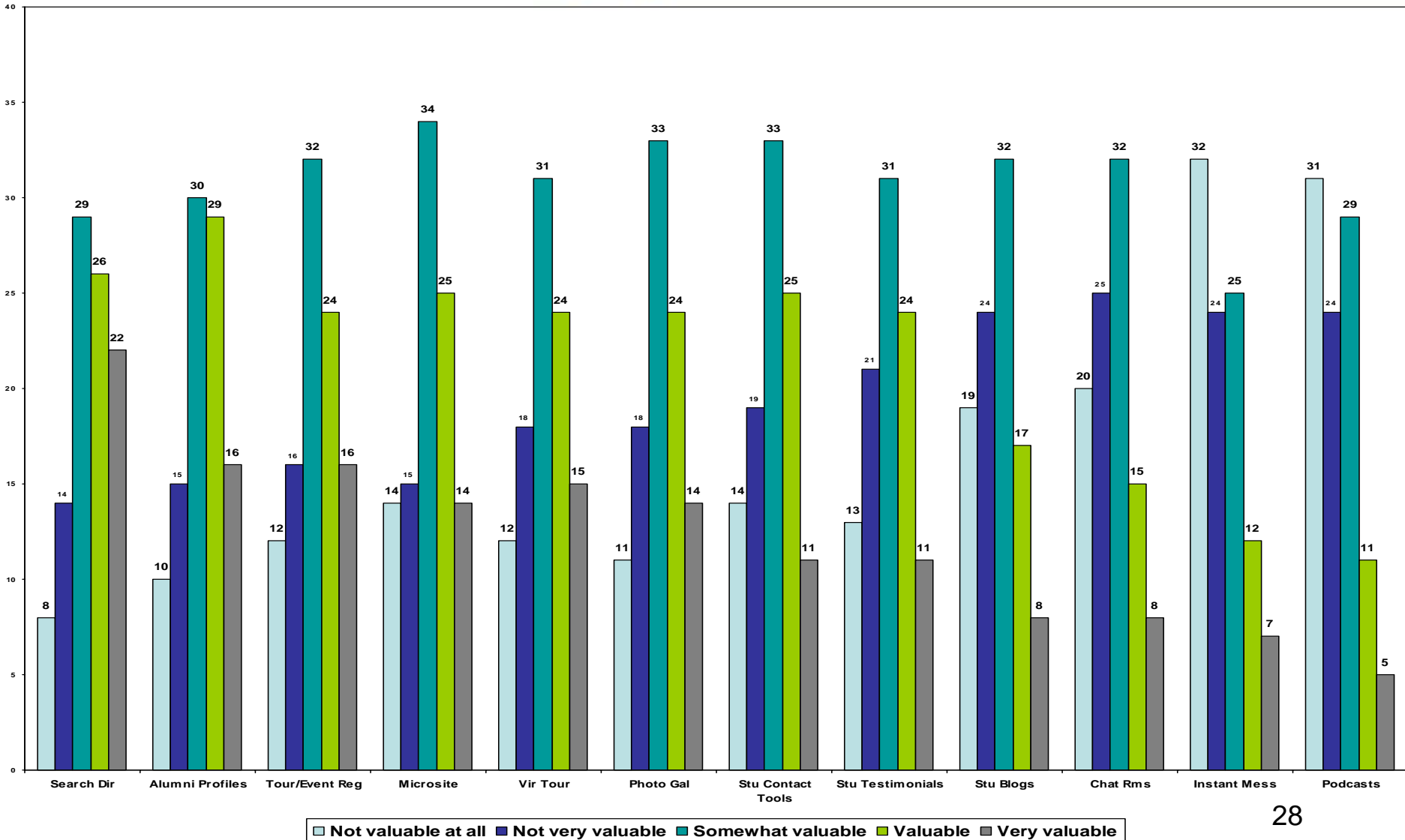
(% Valuable & Very Valuable)

- Note that grad-bound feel the online application, catalogue, admitted student profile and admissions office contact tools are more valuable than the undergrad-bound
- Also note that grad-bound have little interest tours & photos





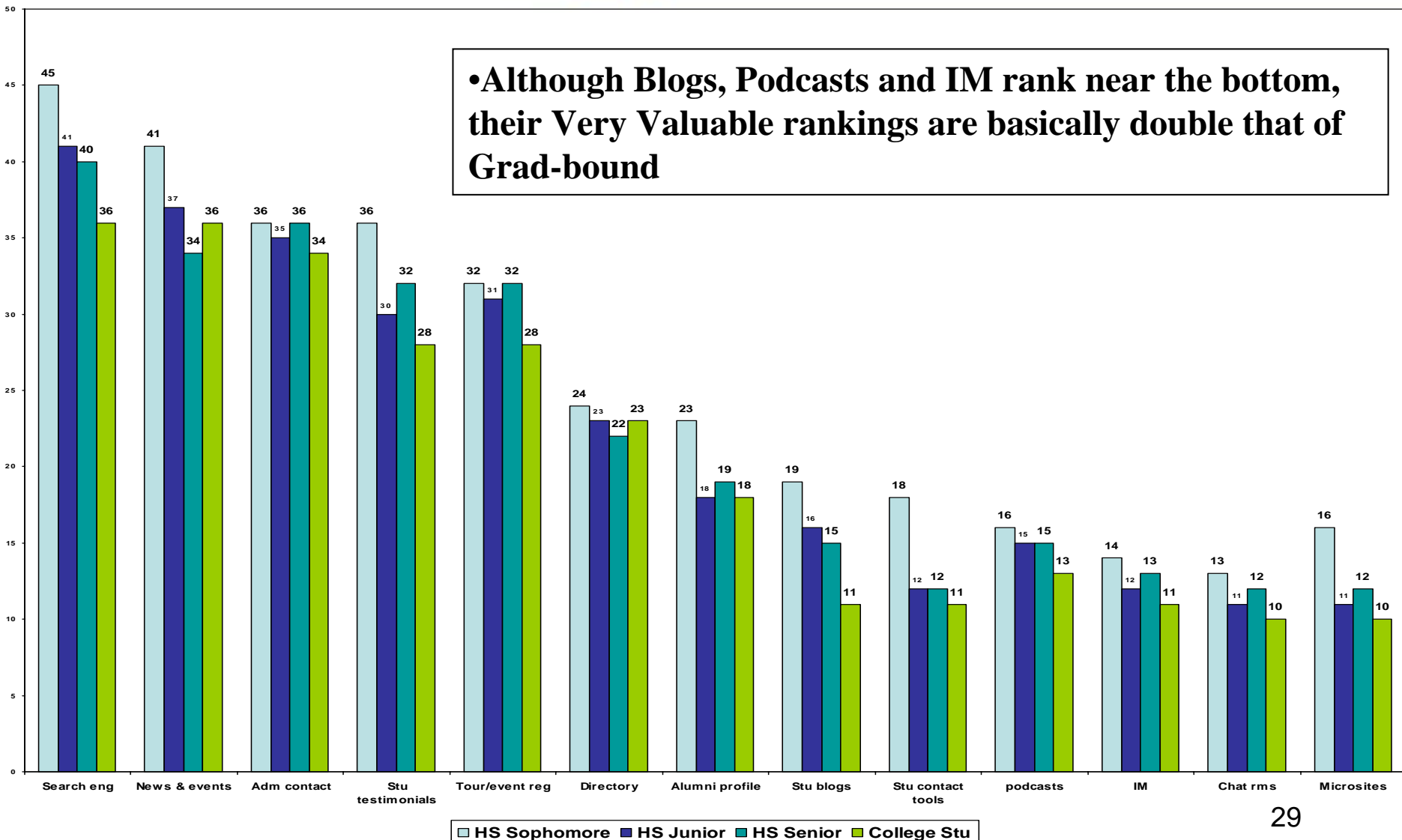
The Value of Specific Website Tools/Content in Search (Bottom 13 Based on % Valuable and Very Valuable) **GRAD**





The Value of Specific Website Tools/Content in Search (Low 11 Based on % Very Valuable) **UGRAD**

• Although Blogs, Podcasts and IM rank near the bottom, their Very Valuable rankings are basically double that of Grad-bound

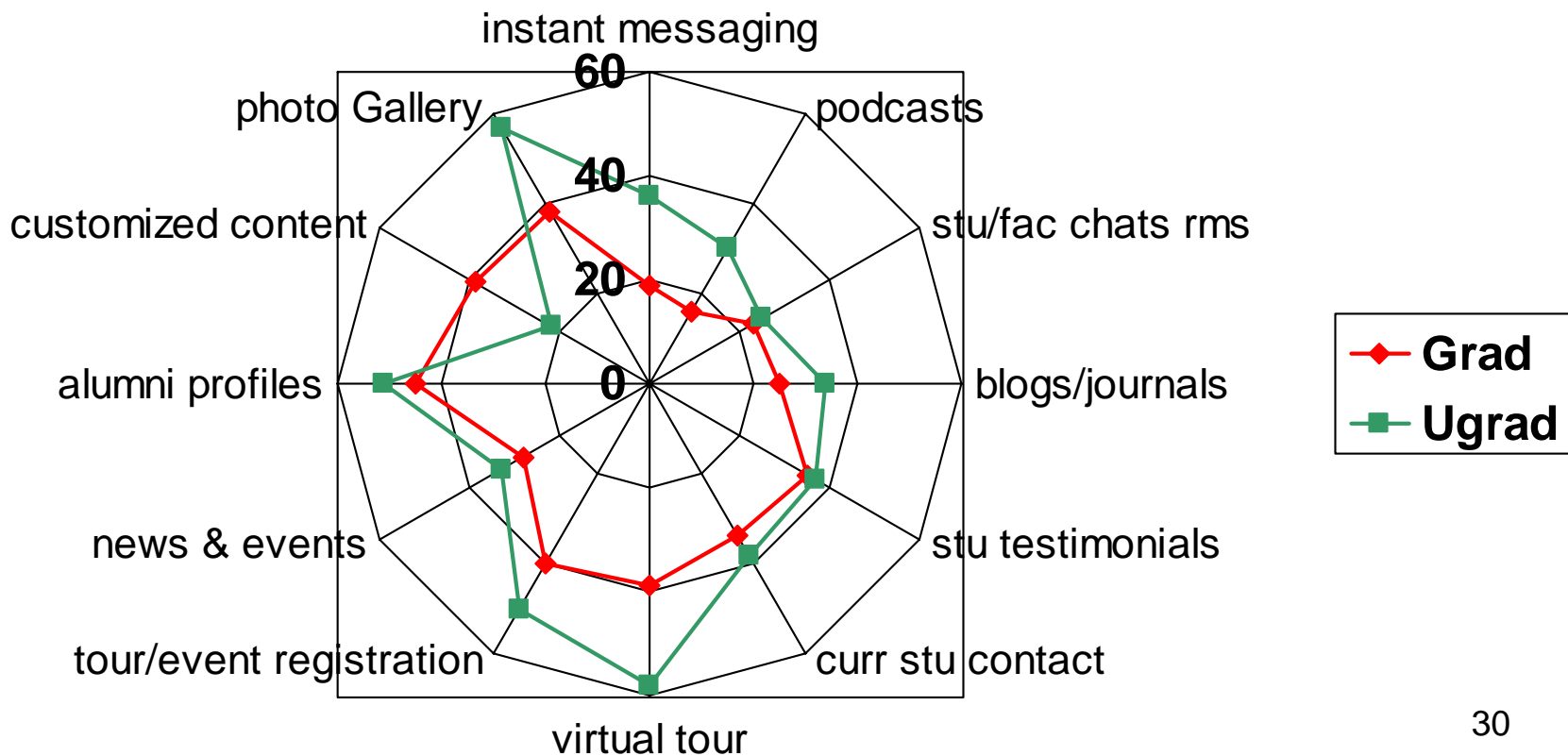




12 Lowest Rated Website Tools/content - GRAD vs. UGRAD

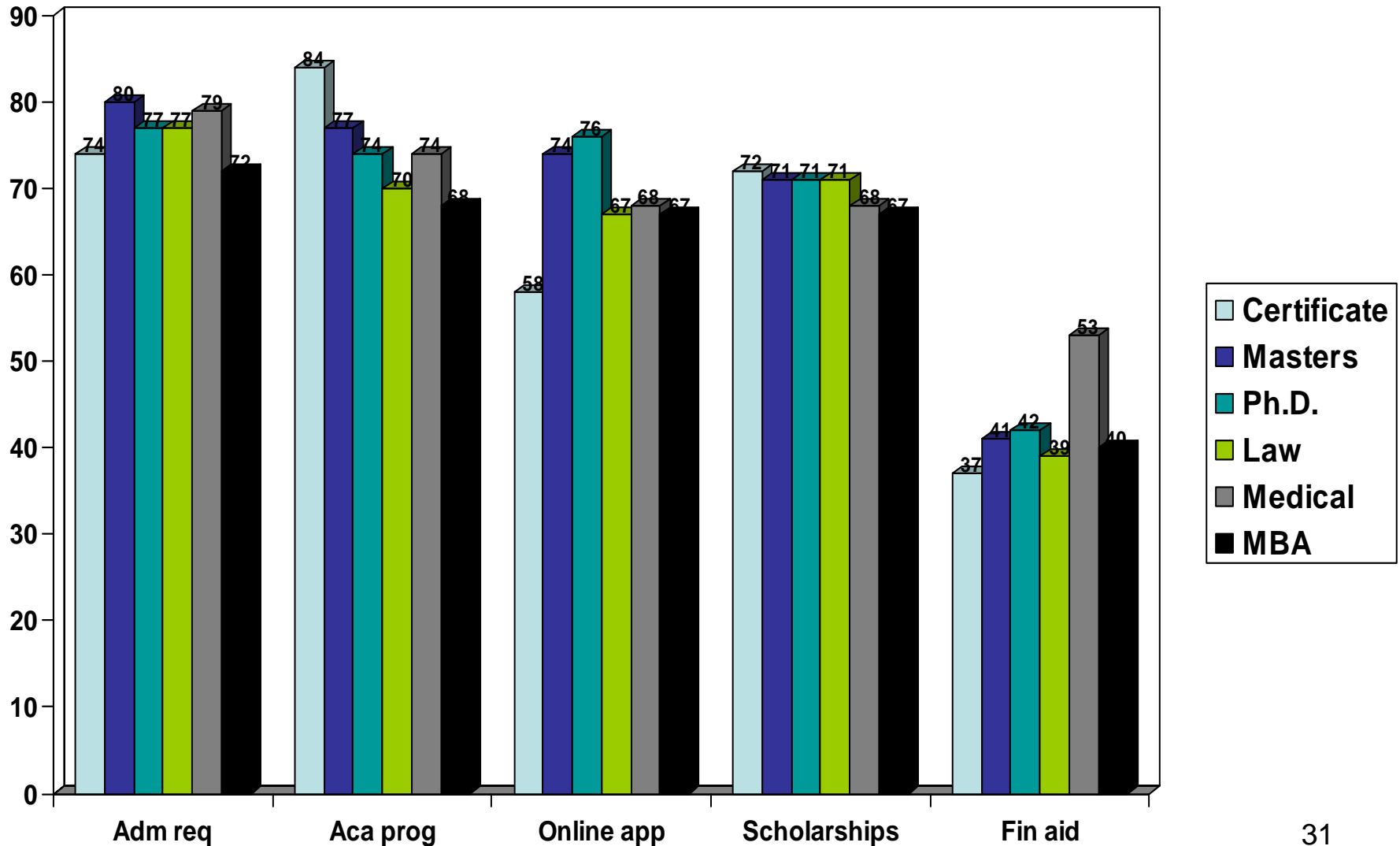
(% Valuable & Very Valuable)

- Note that grad-bound are not interested in a lot of “cool” tools but do like more customized content
- Note the huge Grad value placed on Microsites (customized content)





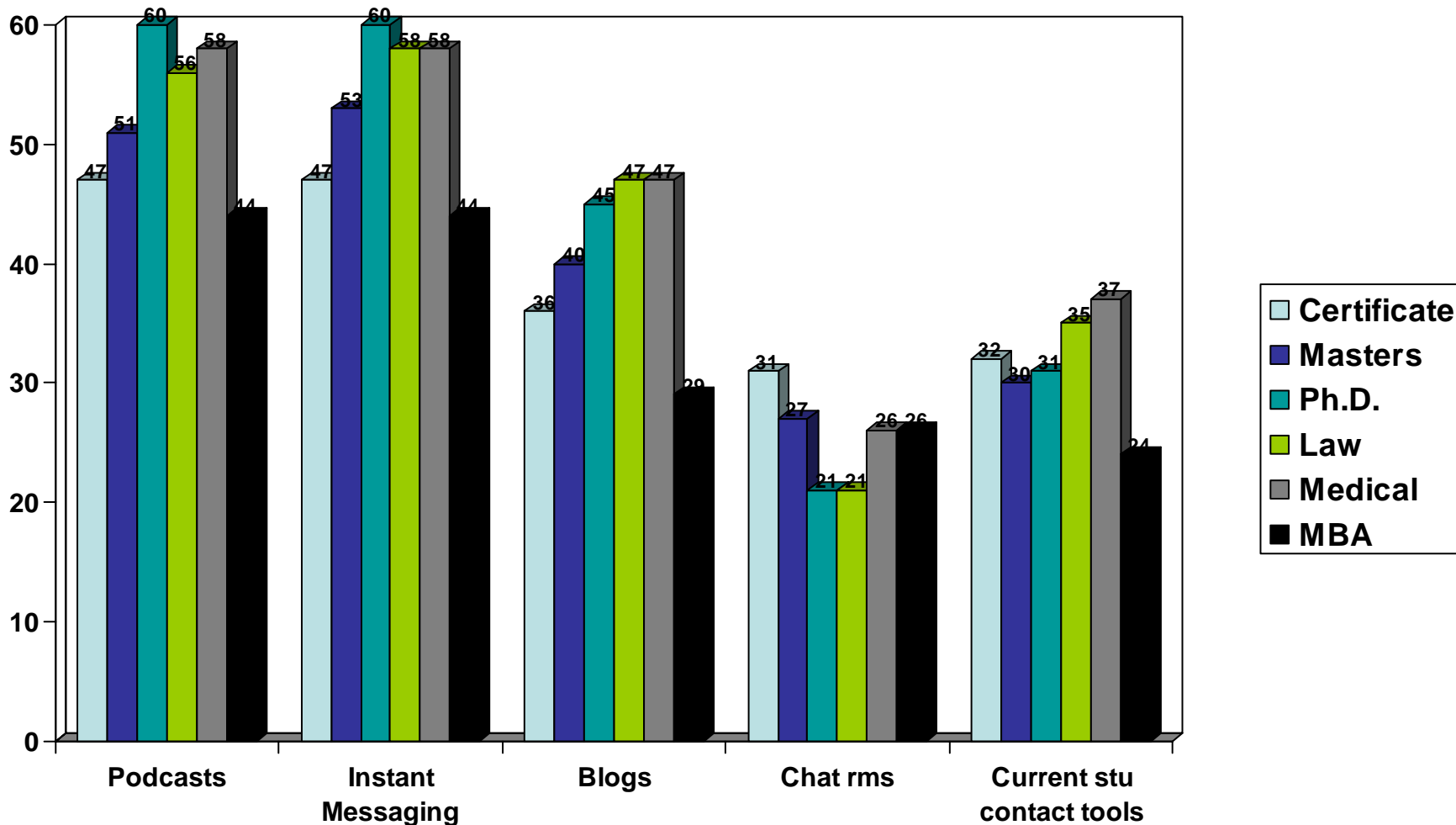
5 HIGHEST Valued Web Tools/Content Educational Plan or Status (% Val. & V. Val.) **GRAD**





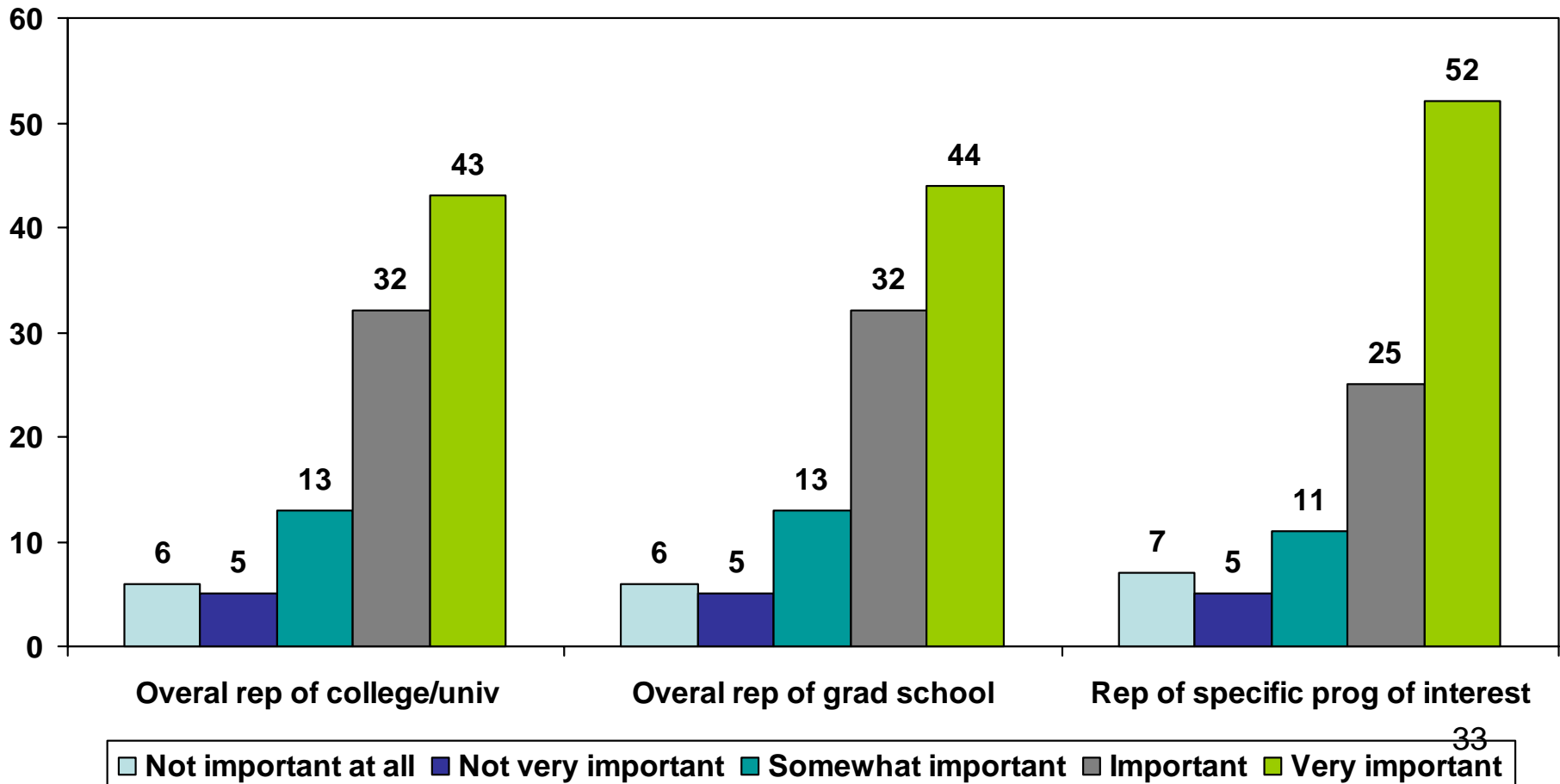
5 LOWEST Valued Web Tools/Content by Educational Status or Plan (% Not Very Val. & Not Val. At All)

GRAD





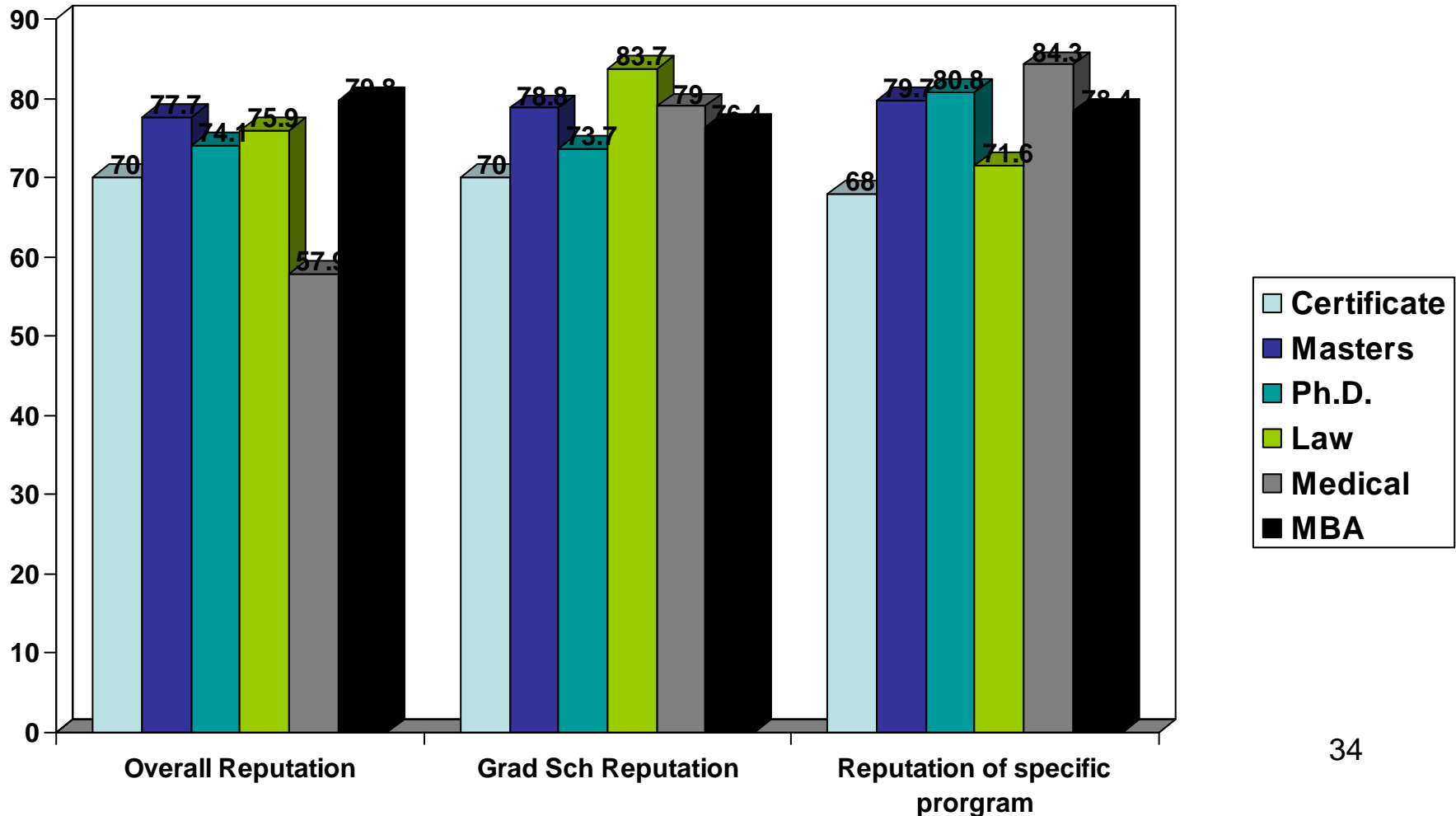
- Overall, program specificity is 5-15% more important than overall school or Graduate School reputation.





Reputation by Educational Aspiration (% Important & Very Important)

- **MBA care about school reputation; Law more about Grad reputation; Med more about specific program reputation**





- **Don't** bury your primary website content under layers of “cool” tools. You need to make the basics easy and obvious
- **Over 80%** of all school search/research is being done on the Web. Are your dollars being spent accordingly?
- **Print is still important.** It's the synergistic integration of multiple channels of communication that get the best results
- **For Ph.D. , Masters and Medical School, focus your message on the features and benefits of your specific program rather than your overall school and grad school brand**
- **The grad-bound WANT direct contact from admissions (e.g., calls, emails, custom content) much more than do the undergraduate-bound**
- **Black, Hispanic, Masters, Ph.D and Medical bound are highly concerned with financial aid throughout the entire search process**



Lessons Learned for **UGRAD** Bound

- Ugrad-bound much more interested in “cool” communication tools than Grad-bound but still want “core & process” information
- Over 80% of all their school search/research is being done on the Web. Are your dollars being spent accordingly?
- Younger Ugrad-bound are more open to direct communication and “cool” tools; and want to know about scholarships and alumni
- Ugrad-bound closer to application time want core and process information; and want to know more about financial aid and their future peers
- Ugrad-bound are more reliant on non-school sites than Grad-bound because they’re unsure of their future course of study and have more choices, so they need to “surf” more for basic profile information
- You need great, easily digestible profile information on your site as well as on non-school sites to help with their choice sets



- **For more information contact:**

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