A KNOWLEDGE AUDIT AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

DO WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW?

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Reasons for the project

Librarians excel at organizing others' information and knowledge, but what about the one they produce?

- This project should be seen as an attempt to understand knowledge workers' activities and needs in an effort to identify areas in which managerial support is most needed.

- By analyzing job requirements and mapping out the knowledge flow, we hoped to get a clear idea of what kinds of explicit and tacit knowledge is used and needed.

- This is the first attempt so far to focus on tacit knowledge; previous activities only focused on availability of explicit knowledge.

Overview

- 12 week practicum project involving a group of professional librarians, one practicum student and the site supervisor.

  Goals:

- identifying key knowledge sources
- evaluating information repositories
- identifying knowledge gaps or duplication
- mapping out the knowledge flow
- creating an inventory of knowledge assets
- identifying potential valuable external resources

  Our focus - the delivery of web services, therefore only librarians involved in related activities were invited to participate.

Methodology

- Main data collection instrument – 21 item questionnaire, divided into 3 sections – Knowledge Sources, Knowledge Transfer and Gap Analysis

- Face to face interviews

- Evaluation of knowledge repositories

- Job and core processes analysis

- Benchmarking

- Mapping knowledge flow

- Gap analysis

Knowledge inventory analysis – explicit knowledge

- **INTRANET** – contains reusable information; navigation and interface need significant improvement; information is not up to date;

- **WEBSITE** – good source for keeping up to date with news and events

- **WIKIS & BLOGS** – efficient means of exchanging information, but in some cases access is restricted;

- **DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM** – no unified system, with clear file hierarchy; committees keep own documents, therefore no consistency across the organization; documents related to past projects exist, but there is no direct access to them;

- **EXTERNAL RESOURCES** – very diverse, majority accessible online;

Knowledge inventory analysis – tacit knowledge

- CORPORATE EXPERTS DIRECTORY – there is no internal comprehensive inventory of staff's academic / professional qualifications and background, skills and competencies.

- Some information is available externally, from the Human Resources office (especially academic and professional qualifications).

- TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORY - Concordia University Libraries does offer employees learning opportunities, but presently this information is not organized in one inventory.
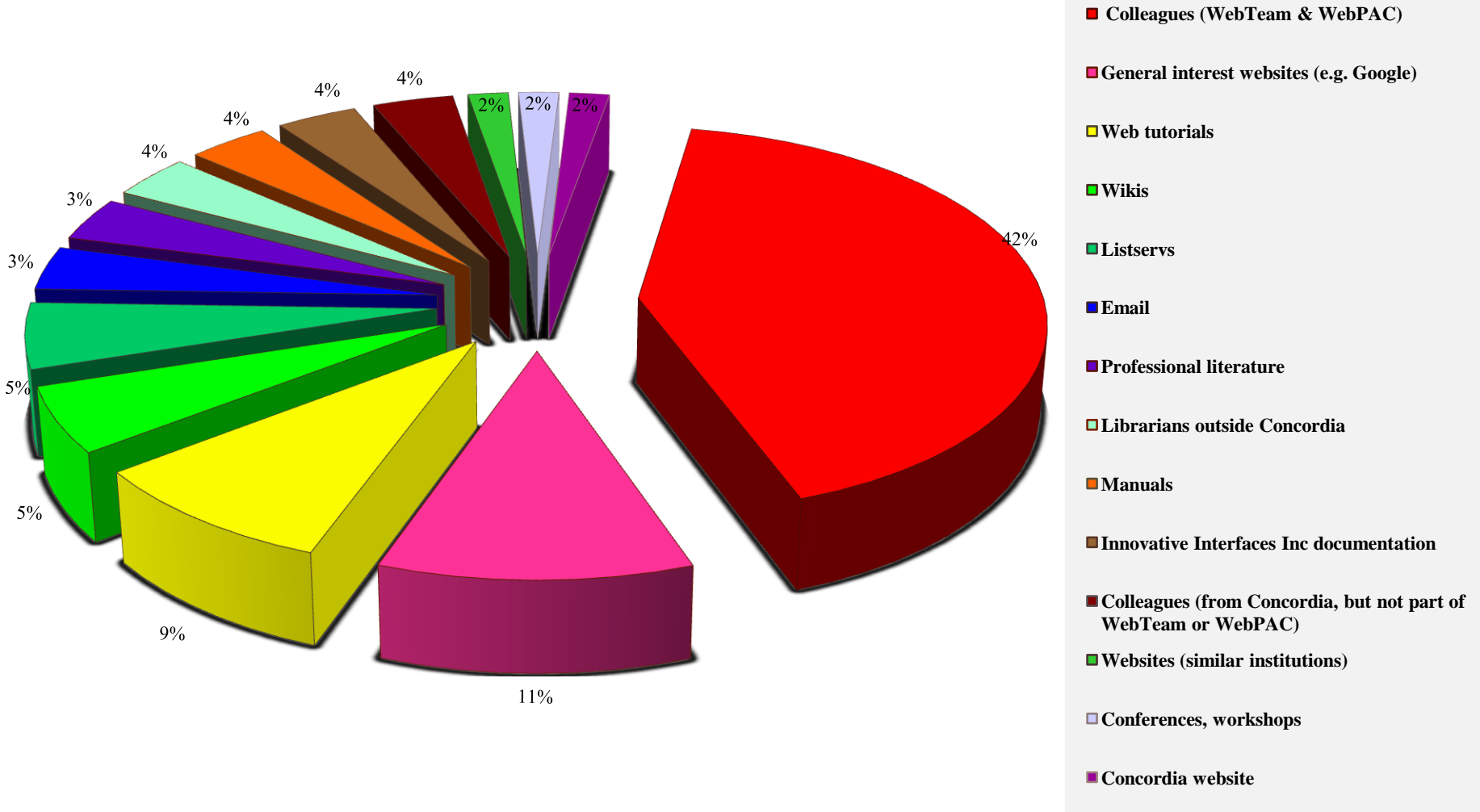
Needs analysis

- Job descriptions were analyzed (Duties and responsibilities and Qualifications) to extract skills and knowledge perceived as relevant to positions

- Requirements were listed under a broad category, e.g. ability to train, ability to give presentations, group instruction skills and teaching skills were listed under teaching skills

- Divided into general skills and specific/technical skills

- Tops skills asked for - communication, teaching and work prioritizing skills

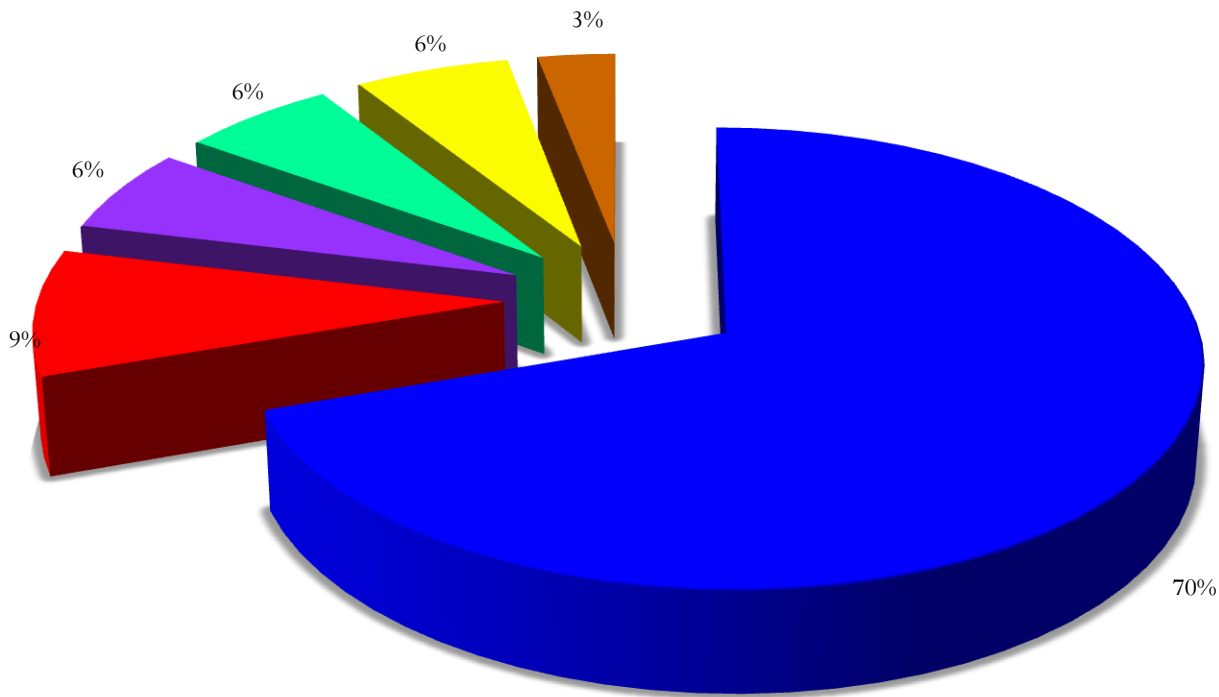- Skills less in demand – initiative, multitasking, web usability and writing/editing

Benchmarking

- Same analysis - job descriptions for similar positions at other academic libraries in North America

- Top skills asked for - communication, teamwork, designing/editing software

- Skills less in demand – detail oriented, accessibility, institutional repositories, cataloguing

- See graph for visual representation of comparison between skills at Concordia and other institutions
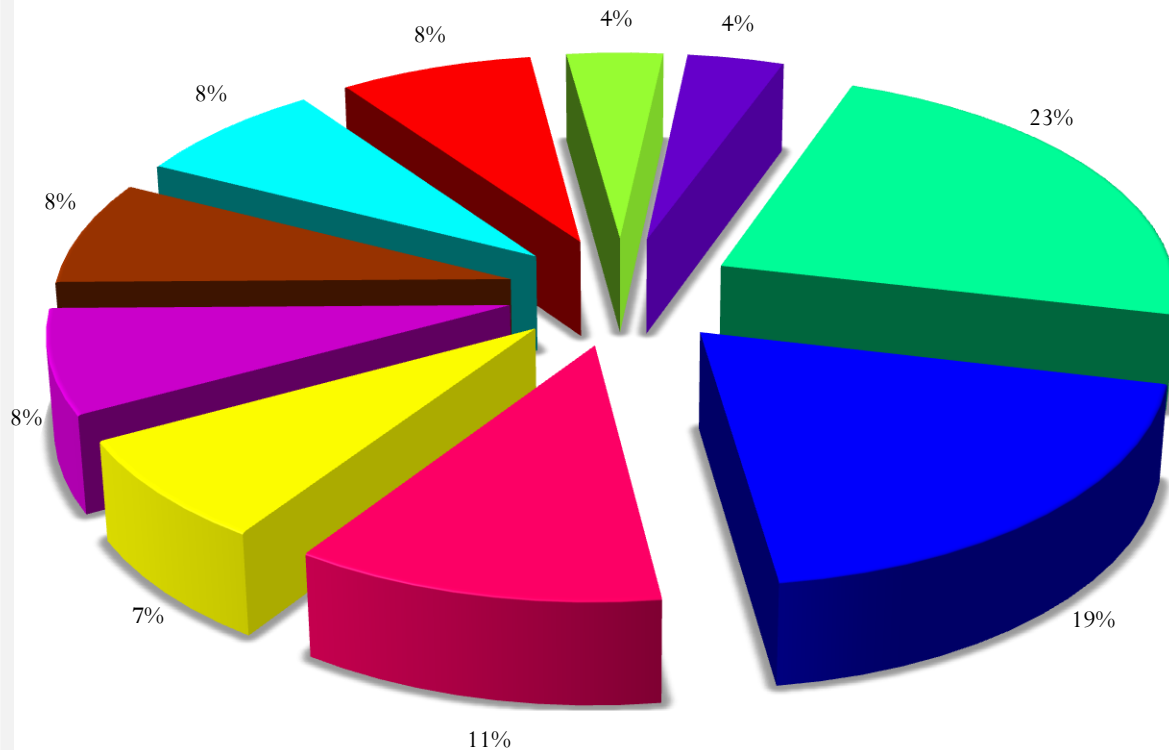
All knowledge sources

Legend:
- Colleagues (WebTeam & WebPAC)
- General interest websites (e.g. Google)
- Web tutorials
- Wikis
- Listservs
- Email
- Professional literature
- Librarians outside Concordia
- Manuals
- Innovative Interfaces Inc documentation
- Colleagues (from Concordia, but not part of WebTeam or WebPAC)
- Websites (similar institutions)
- Conferences, workshops
- Concordia website

Percentages shown: 42%, 11%, 9%, 5%, 5%, 3%, 3%, 4%, 4%, 4%, 4%, 2%, 2%, 2%

Internal sources

Pie chart legend:
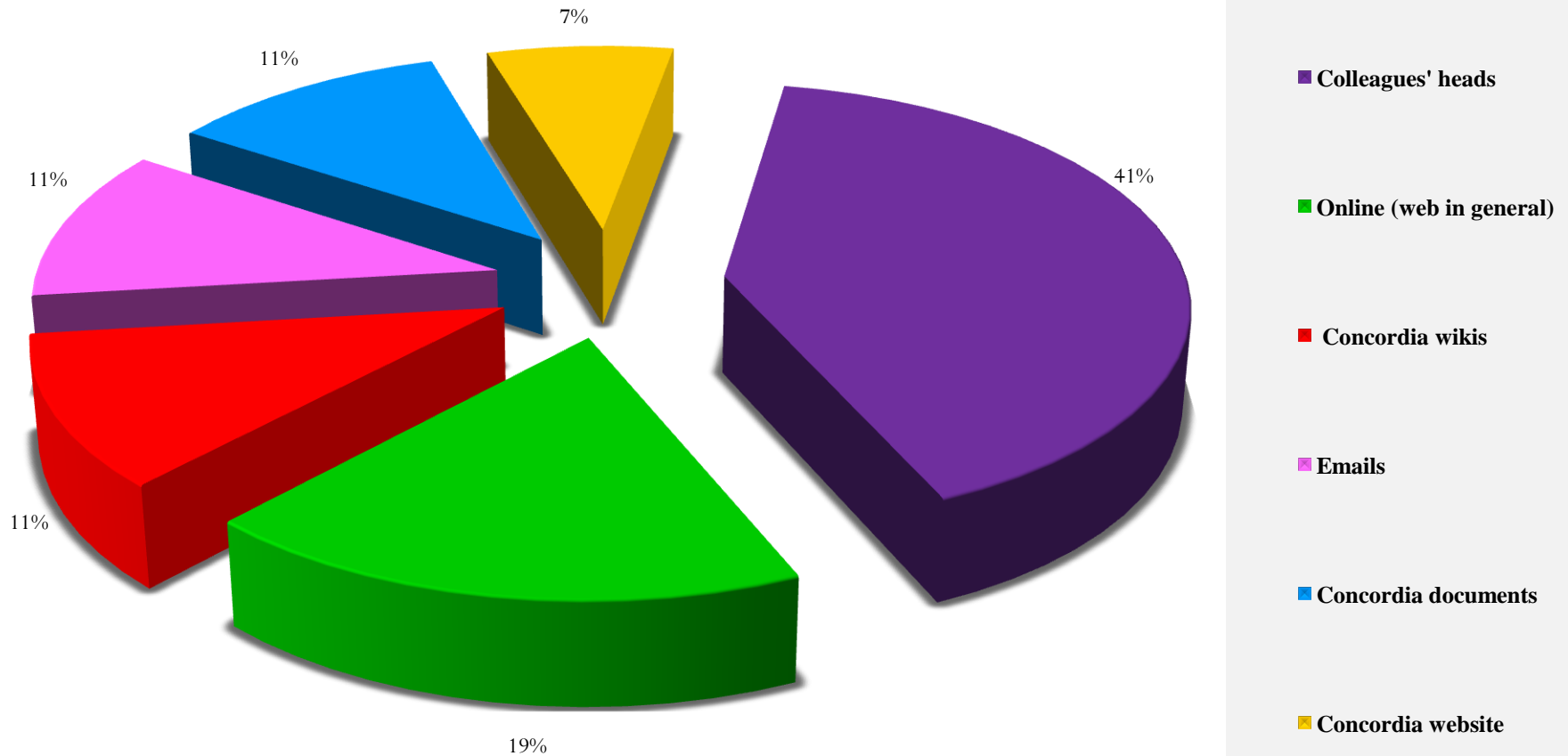- Colleagues (WebTeam & WebPAC)
- Wikis
- Colleagues (from Concordia, but not part of WebTeam or WebPAC)
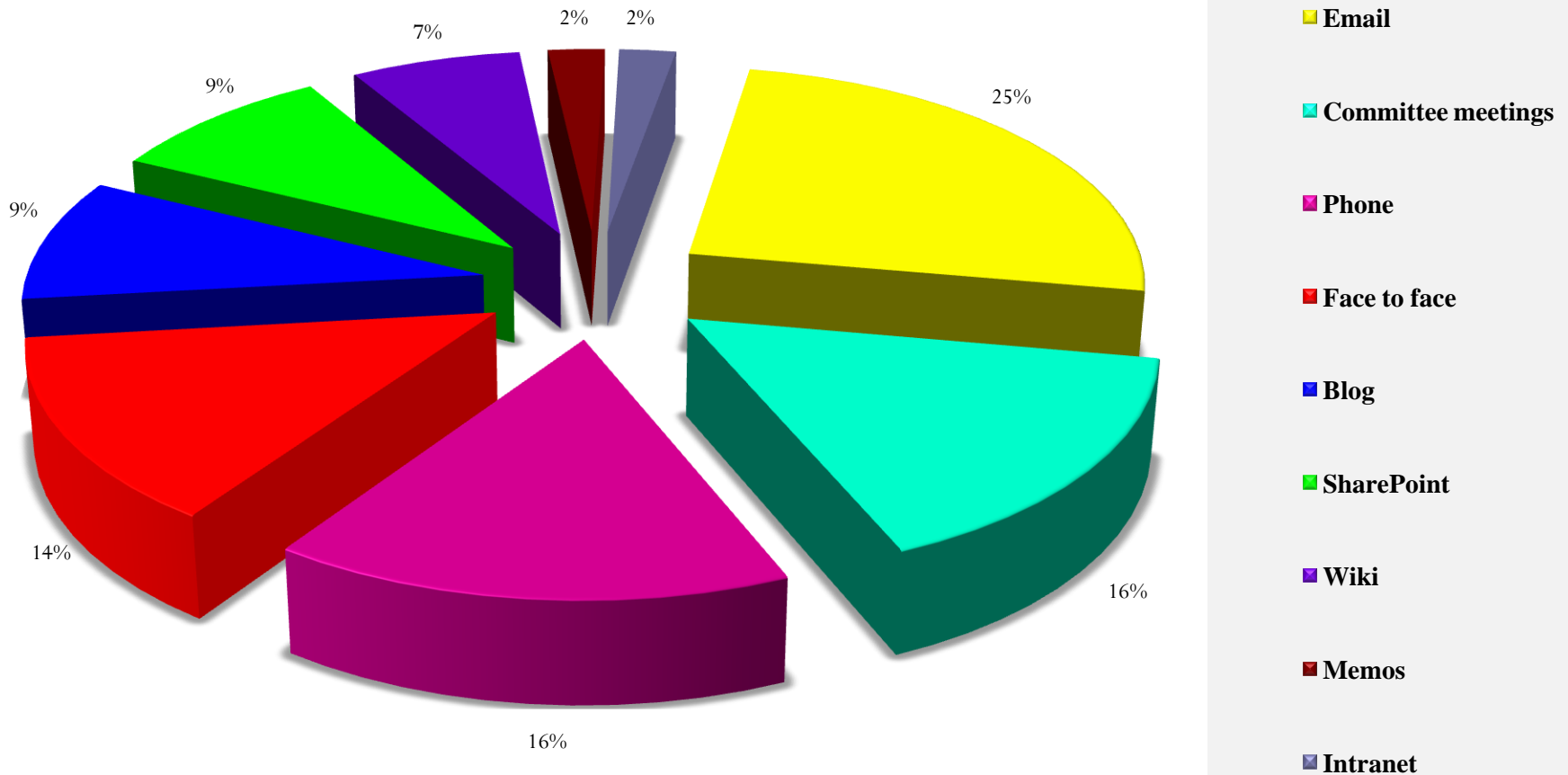- Email
- Manuals
- Concordia website

Chart values: 70%, 9%, 6%, 6%, 6%, 3%

External sources

Pie chart legend:
- **General interest websites (e.g. Google)** — 23%
- **Web tutorials** — 19%
- **Listservs** — 11%
- **Professional literature** — 7%
- **Librarians outside Concordia** — 8%
- **Innovative Interfaces Inc documentation** — 8%
- **Email** — 8%
- **Manuals** — 8%
- **Websites (similar institutions)** — 4%
- **Conferences, workshops** — 4%

Knowledge location

Legend:
- Colleagues' heads
- Online (web in general)
- Concordia wikis
- Emails
- Concordia documents
- Concordia website

41% — Colleagues' heads
19% — Online (web in general)
11% — Concordia wikis
11% — Emails
11% — Concordia documents
7% — Concordia website

Knowledge transfer

Legend:
- Email
- Committee meetings
- Phone
- Face to face
- Blog
- SharePoint
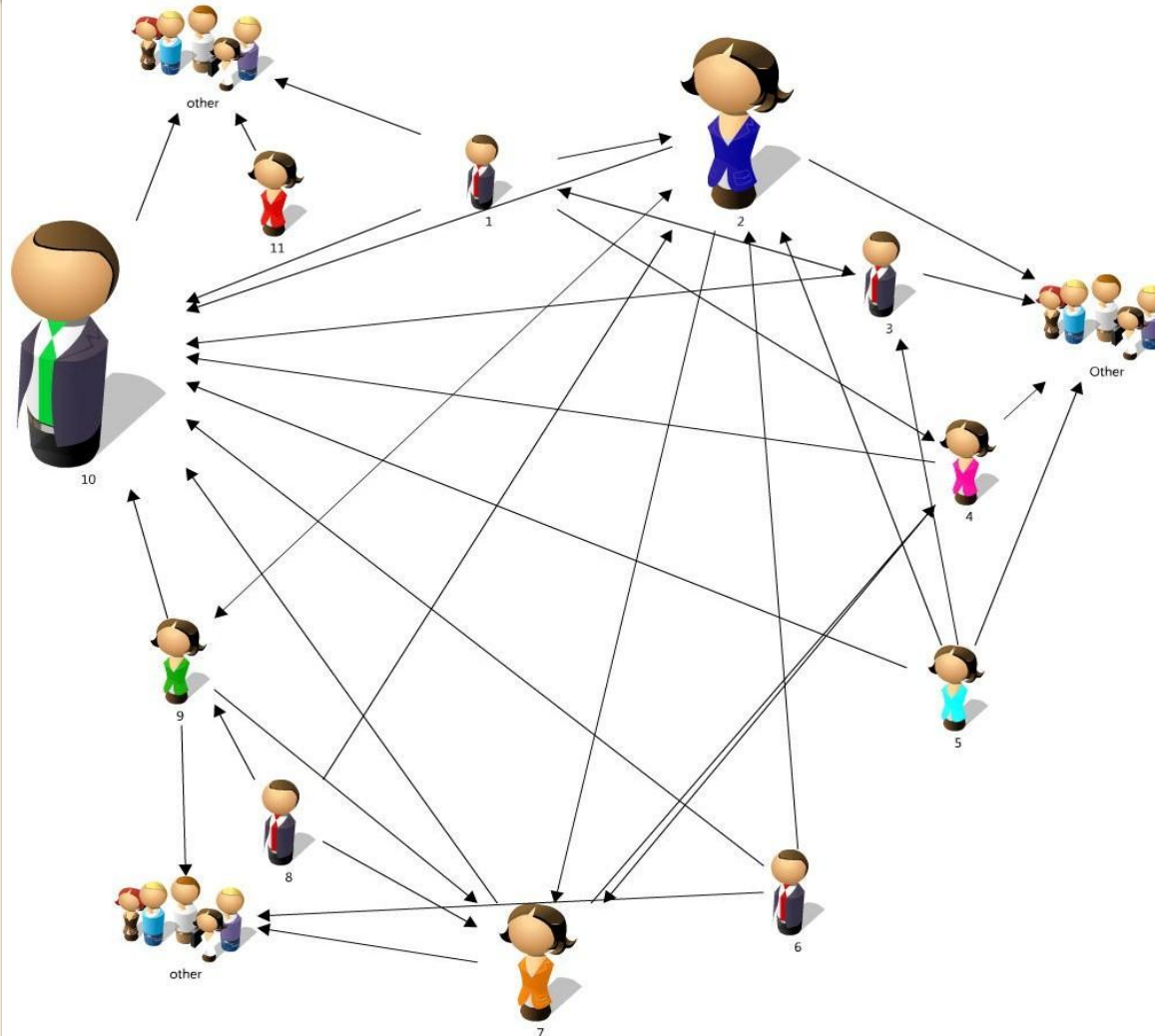- Wiki
- Memos
- Intranet

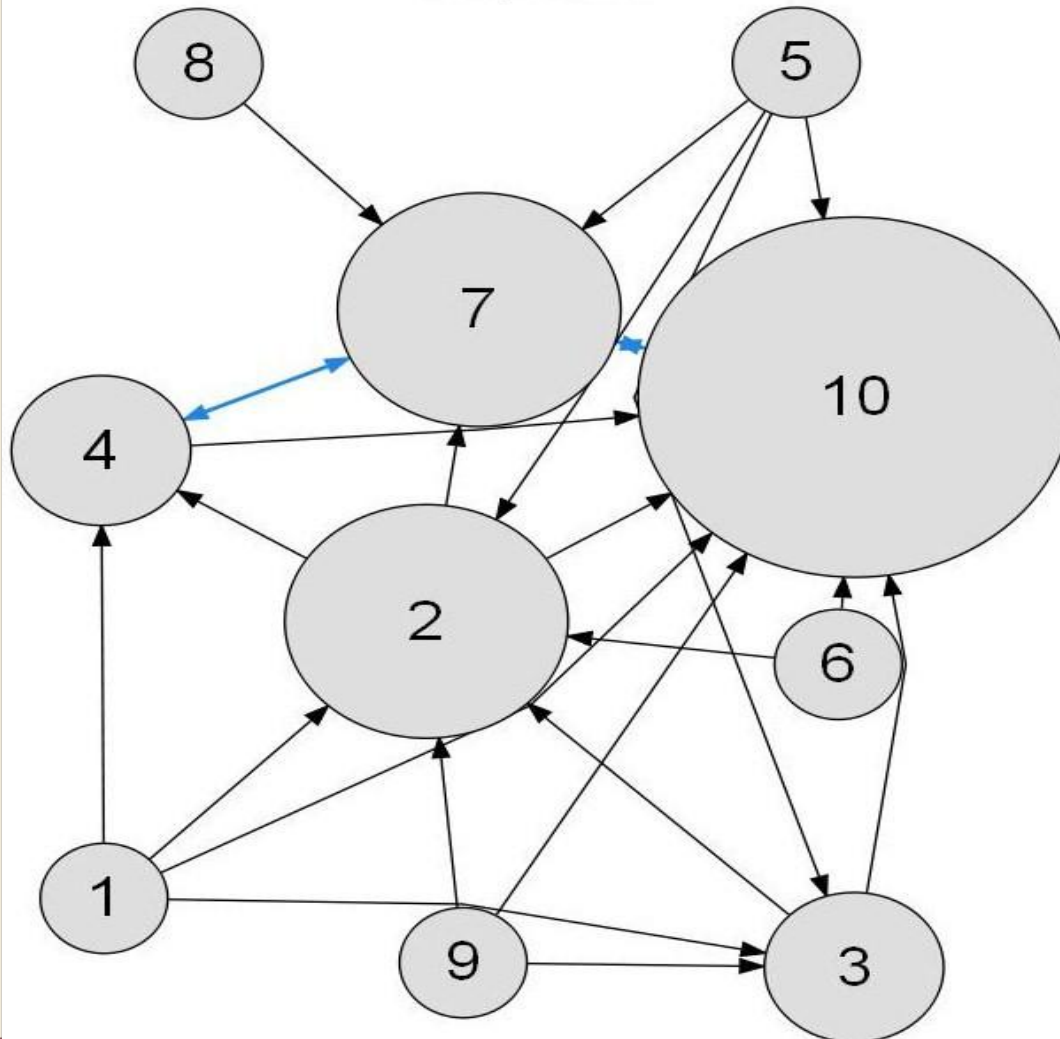Values: 25%, 16%, 16%, 14%, 9%, 9%, 7%, 2%, 2%

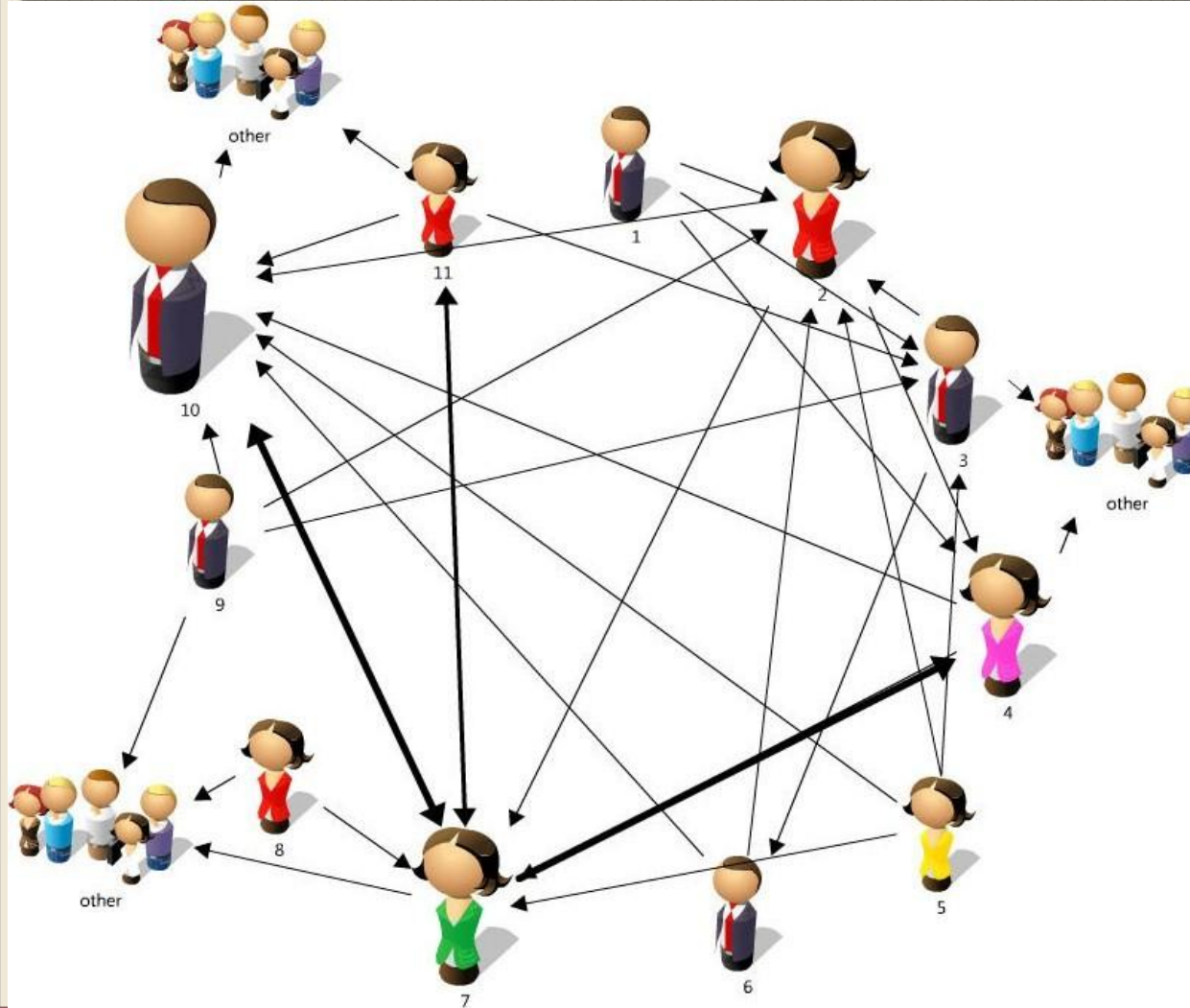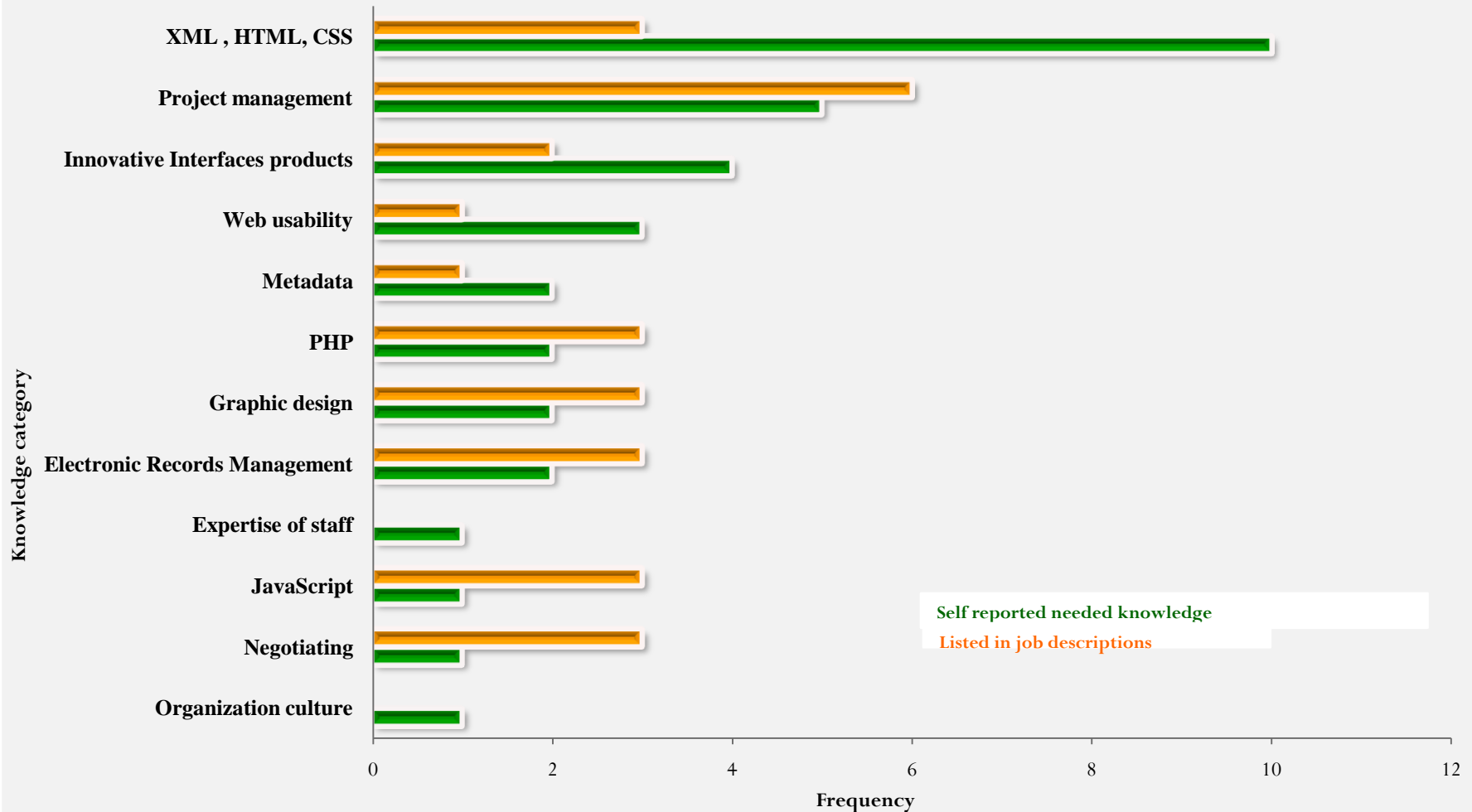# Knowledge flow – internal sources only
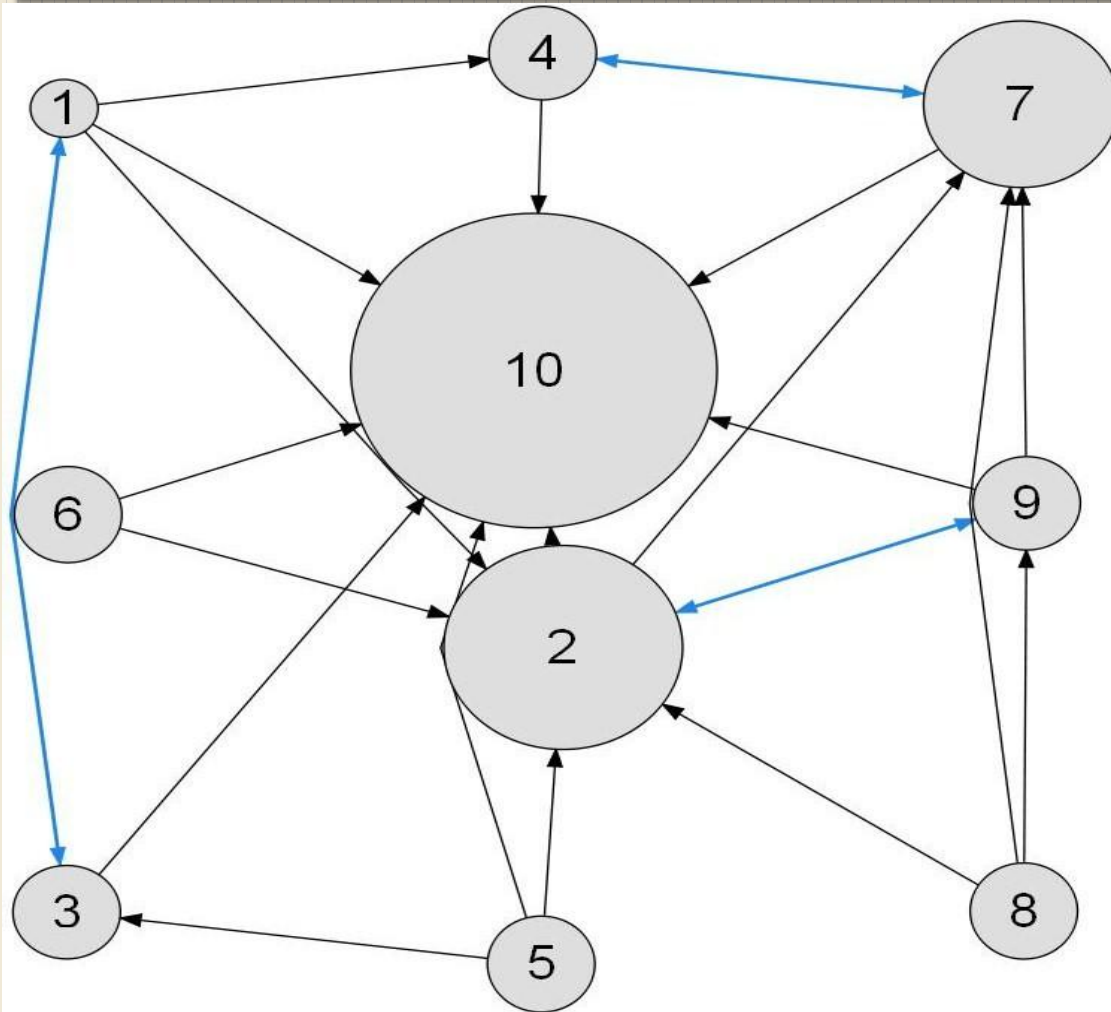
Knowledge flow – external sources included

Expertise nodes and flow – internal sources only

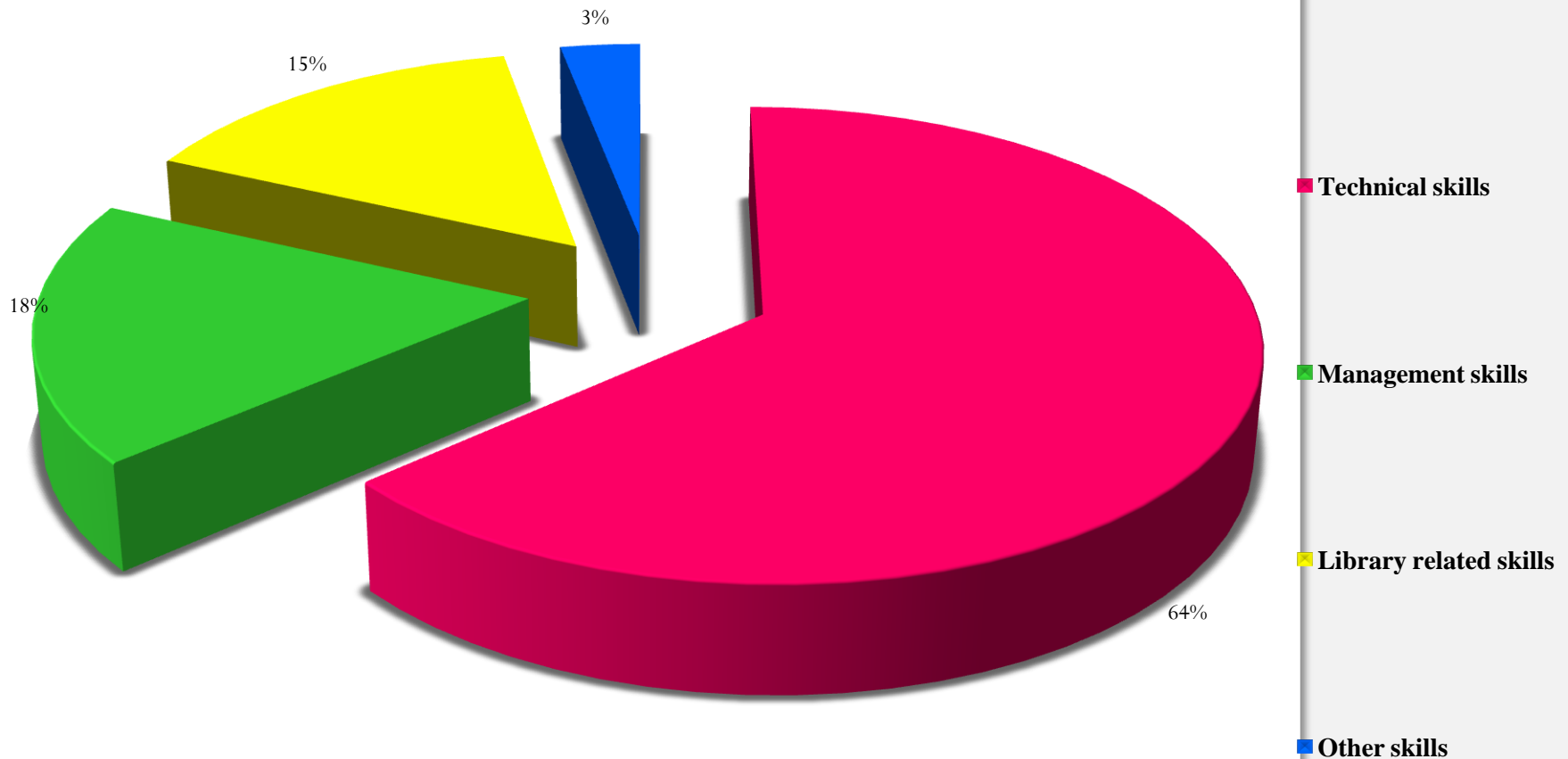# Expertise nodes and flow – external sources included

Gap analysis

Chart — Knowledge category (y-axis) vs Frequency (x-axis, 0 to 12)

Legend:
- Self reported needed knowledge (green)
- Listed in job descriptions (orange)

Knowledge category	Self reported needed knowledge	Listed in job descriptions
XML , HTML, CSS	10	3
Project management	5	6
Innovative Interfaces products	4	2
Web usability	3	1
Metadata	2	1
PHP	2	3
Graphic design	2	3
Electronic Records Management	2	3
Expertise of staff	1	
JavaScript	1	3
Negotiating	1	3
Organization culture	1	

Self reported needed skills

- Technical skills
- Management skills
- Library related skills
- Other skills

3%

15%

18%

64%

Hard to find information

Finding answers can be challenging in the following areas:

- ERM (especially about, but not limited to, background and development) – 3 participants
- Documentation of past decisions (e.g. previous calls made to Innovative, why certain changes were made, ordering history of certain products, etc) – 3 participants
- WebBridge – 2 participants
- Human Resources Management – 2 participants
- Organization of activities (which are the priorities and which are not)
- In progress projects (who is working on what)
- Usernames and passwords (needed to access certain modules, e.g. Admin, Usage statistics)
- Troubleshooting
- Graphic design
- Coding

Potential sources for hard to find information/knowledge

- Workshops & conferences – 4 participants

- Innovative Interfaces Inc advanced manuals – 2 participants

- Additional expertise (staff with understanding of web technologies and coding skills) – 2 participants

- Workflow and organizational charts from similar institutions – 2 participants

- Improved process documentation (within Concordia)

- Access to files & minutes

- Freedom to download applications

- Combined WebPAC/WebTeam/New Developments wiki or Sharepoint.

Conclusion

- Precious tacit knowledge is brought in or produced in the organization and the implementation of knowledge management strategies is likely to improve its availability for staff members.

- Concordia University Libraries, as an organization, excels at managing external explicit knowledge and information, therefore we think that the skills to manage internal tacit knowledge are already available; they just have to be used to fulfil this objective in a more organized manner.

Questions?

- ????

- ????

- ????

- Thank you.