

DIGITAL NAVIGATORS OF THE HUDSON VALLEY

Summary of Data Findings (2022–2024)

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INTRODUCTION

About the Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley

The Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley (DNHV) program is a regional initiative led by Southeastern New York Library Resources Council (Southeastern).

The program provides training to staff from libraries and other community organizations in becoming trusted digital navigators: trusted guides who assist community members with ongoing, individualized support for accessing affordable and appropriate connectivity, devices, and digital skills.¹ Since it began in 2022, the program has trained more than 125 digital navigators in partnership with the Mid-Hudson Library System, Ramapo Catskill Library System, and Westchester Library System, supporting more than 1,000 residents.



Hudson Valley Connected

This report synthesizes data gathered about the program and its impact between 2022-2024. The insights about the program's reach, community needs, and data collection efforts will support its advocates in continuing and expanding this essential service throughout the region.

Support for the project, titled Hudson Valley Connected, was provided by New York State's ConnectALL Digital Equity Program Capacity Grant and funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program.

¹ <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/digitalnavigatormodel/>

Key Takeaways

Over 2,800 digital support interactions were provided between 2022–2024

- 980+ clients served, predominantly English speaking and residing in urban areas across all counties of the Hudson Valley
- 70+ library & non-profit partners collaborated
- 170+ digital navigators engaged

“Digital skills” was the primary reason for visits across 2022 - 2024

- Common requests included email setup, online forms, and using apps

Digital navigators achieved a high issue resolution rate (2022-23) and client satisfaction (2024)

- 90%+ issue resolution rate in 2022–2023
- Nearly 76% clients were completely satisfied in 2024

Clients received hands-on, device-based support

- Most sessions lasted over 30 minutes
- Help was provided across a variety of devices— especially laptops/desktops and smartphones

Navigator engagement was strong

- 91% plan to continue, and 90%+ gained confidence and practical skills

Data collection practices should be standardized to support reliable evaluation and informed decision making

- Survey instruments should be aligned with a program logic model to ensure data collected directly measures progress toward intended outcomes
- Digital navigators need additional training in data collection procedures emphasizing the importance of complete and accurate data

WHO WE SERVED

CLIENT'S PREFERRED LANGUAGE, 2022-2024

Preferred Language	2022 (n=460)	2023 (n=253)	2024 (n=514)
English	95%	90%	87%
Spanish	3%	4%	7%
Other*	1%	2%	3%
Missing	1%	5%	11%

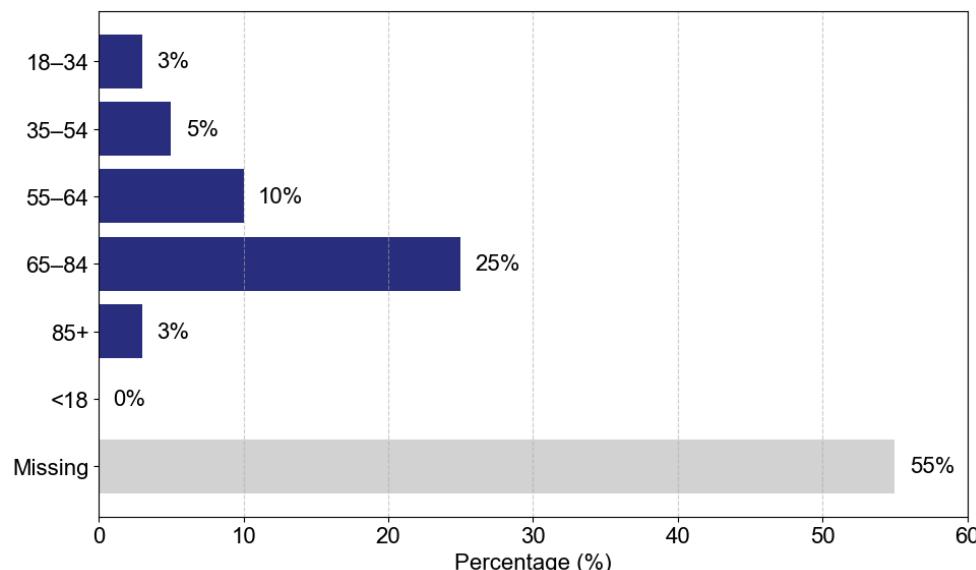
Predominantly English Speakers:

Clients' preferred language was English across all years, yet this preference steadily decreased

- 95% in 2022
- 90% in 2023
- 88% in 2024

Note: Other languages represented included French, Yiddish, Portuguese, Italian, Hebrew, Russian, Mandarin, American Sign Language, Filipino, and Dutch. This was based on open-text entries across intake forms

CLIENT'S AGE DISTRIBUTION, 2024 (N = 514)



Majority Aged 55 and Up:

- 38% of clients who reported their age were 55 years of age or older
- 8% of clients were age 35 or younger
- Age was missing for 55% of clients on the intake forms

QUOTES FROM DIGITAL NAVIGATORS

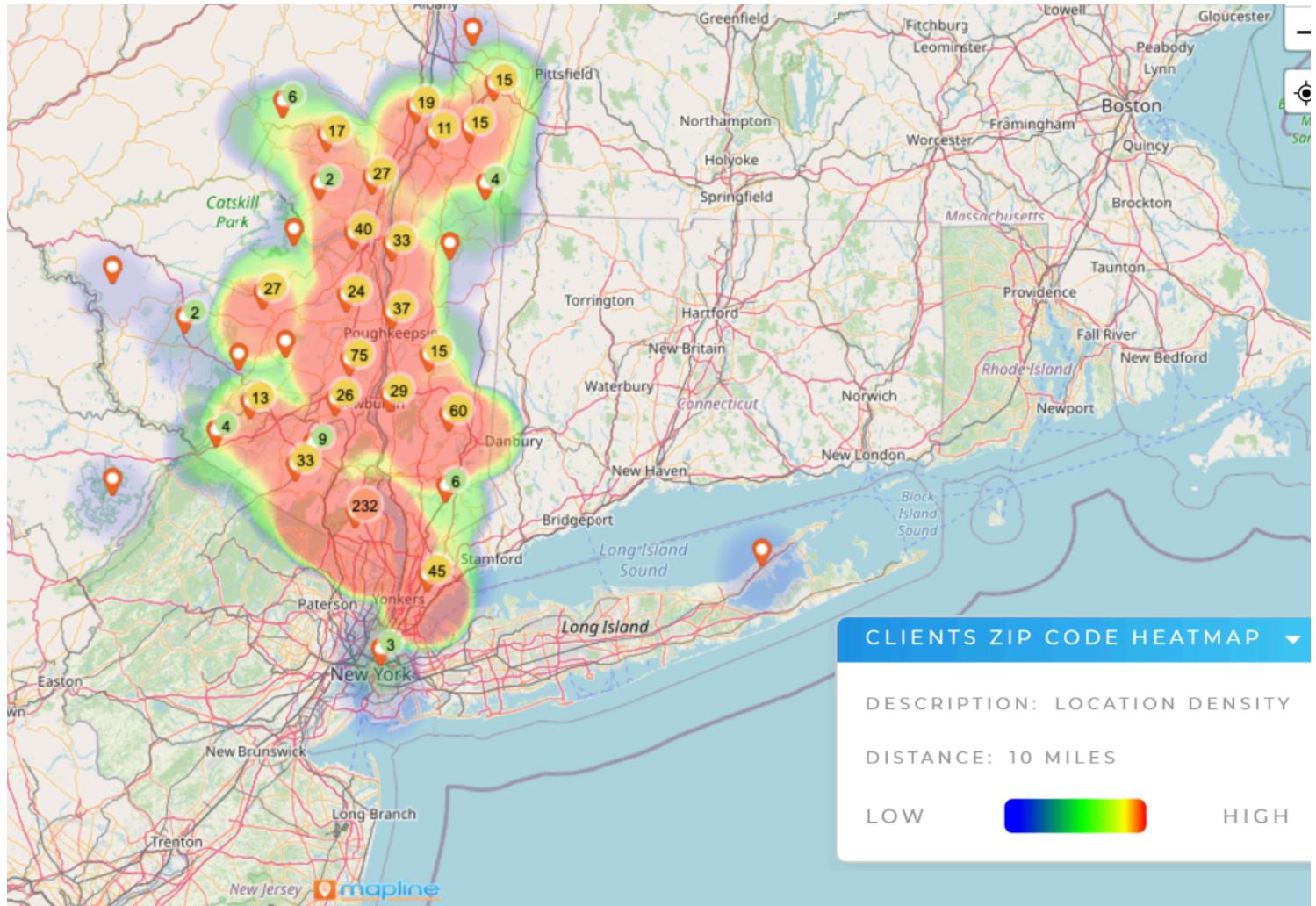
 “*Maria is a Spanish-speaking patron... I installed Google Translate... so we could use Universal Class.*”

“*We are working on understanding the meaning of some language that is used in emails*”

“*This program needs to remain as it is to the advantage of all communities.*” 

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF CLIENTS

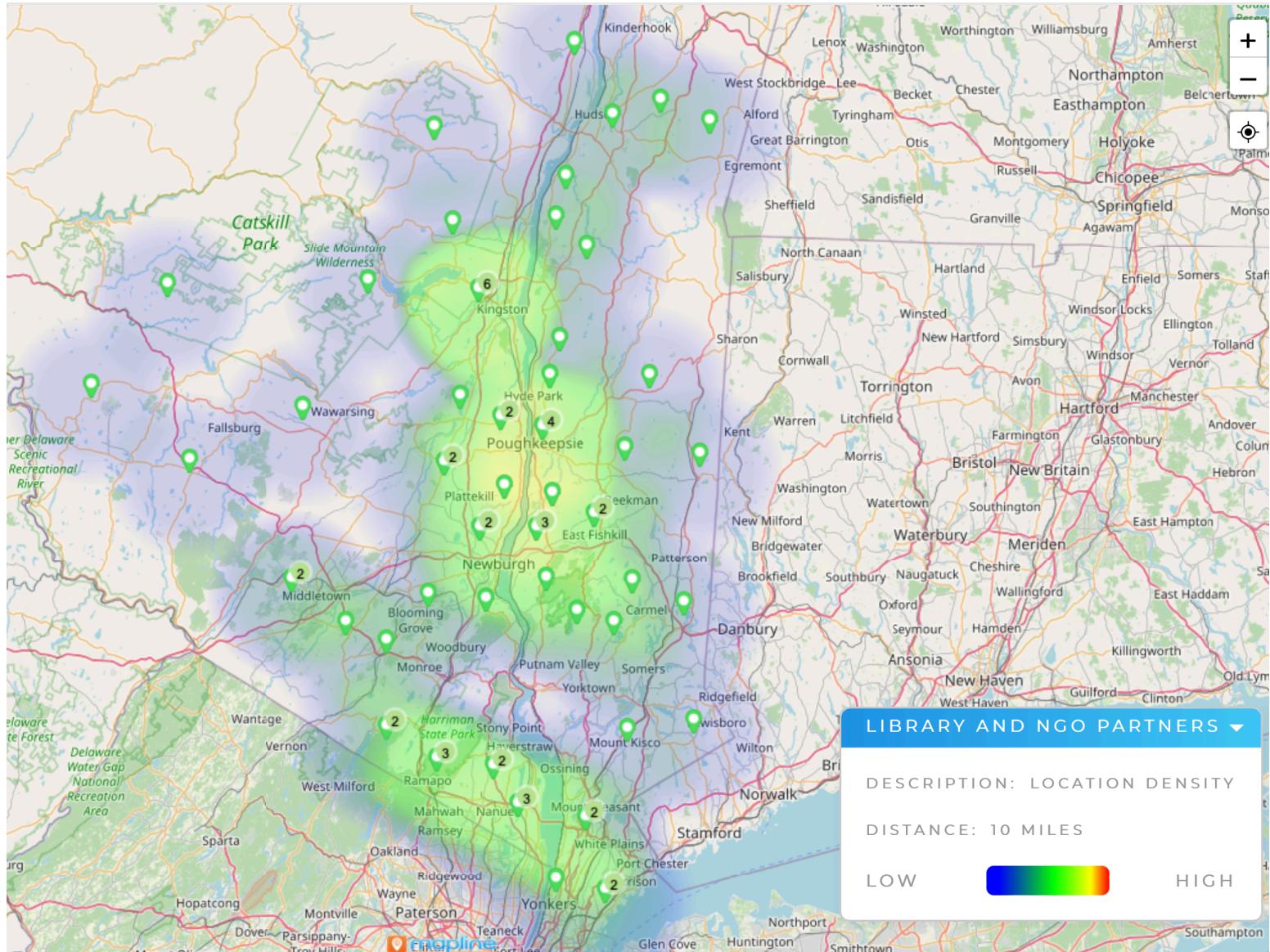
Map of ZIP Code Density of Digital Navigation Clients, 2022–2024



- The majority of clients were concentrated in the Hudson Valley region, with a few individuals residing outside of the region
- All counties in the region were represented in 2022 - 2024 (Note: In 2024, 71% of client ZIP Codes were missing)

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION DIGITAL NAVIGATION SITES

Map of the ZIP Code Density of Library and Non-Profit Partners, 2022 - 2024



At least 1 library or non-profit partner was located in each county of the Hudson Valley Region from 2022-2024



SPOTLIGHT: STRUGGLES OF THE COMMUNITY

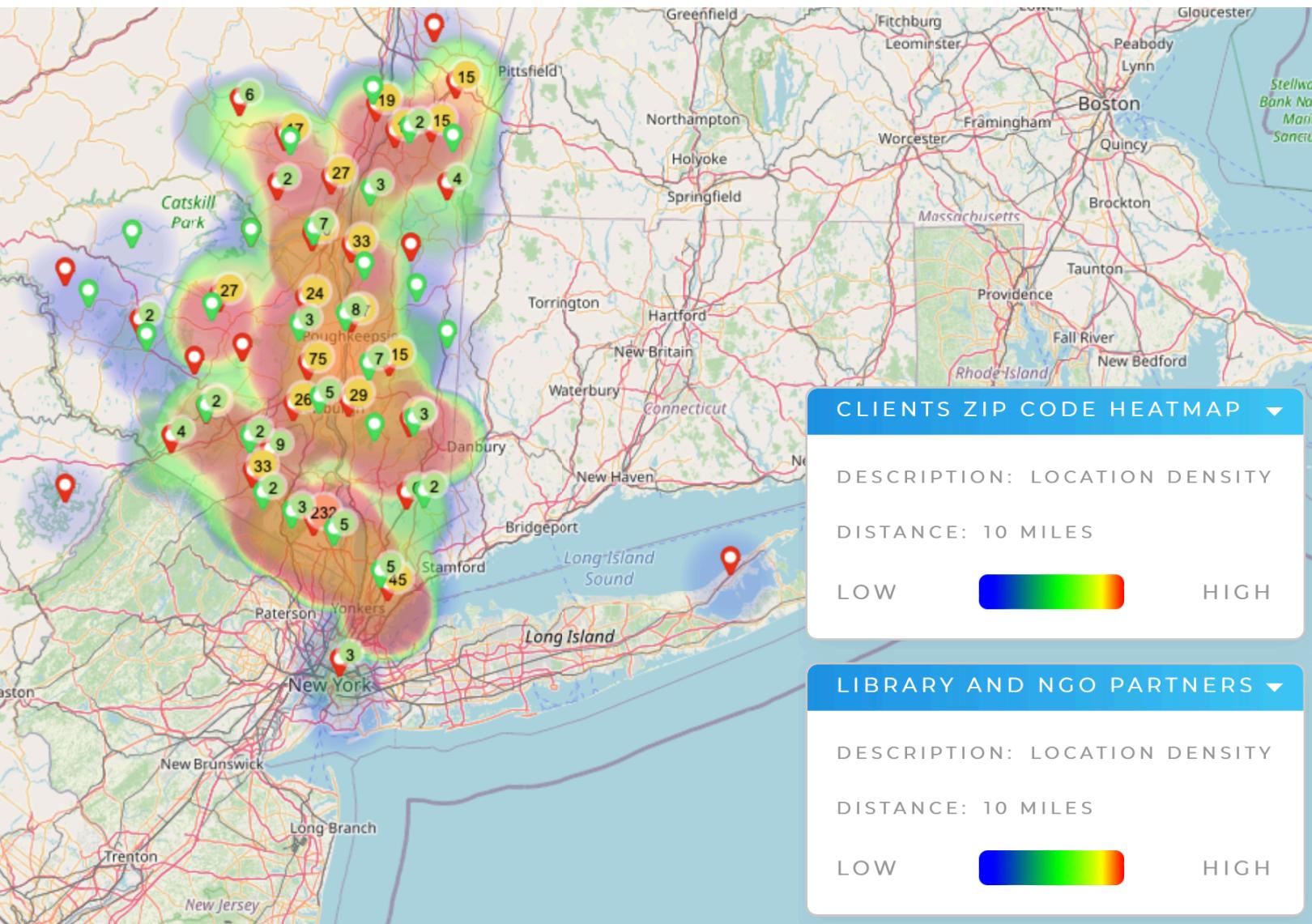
"Client is very very nervous around technology. Not being able to do something stresses her out greatly and she escalates into nervously frantic pretty quickly."

"Client expressed lack of confidence in her technology skills."

"This client desperately needs basic computer skills to do his daily tasks."



Combined View: Client Zip Codes and Location of Libraries/Non-Profit Partners, 2022-2024

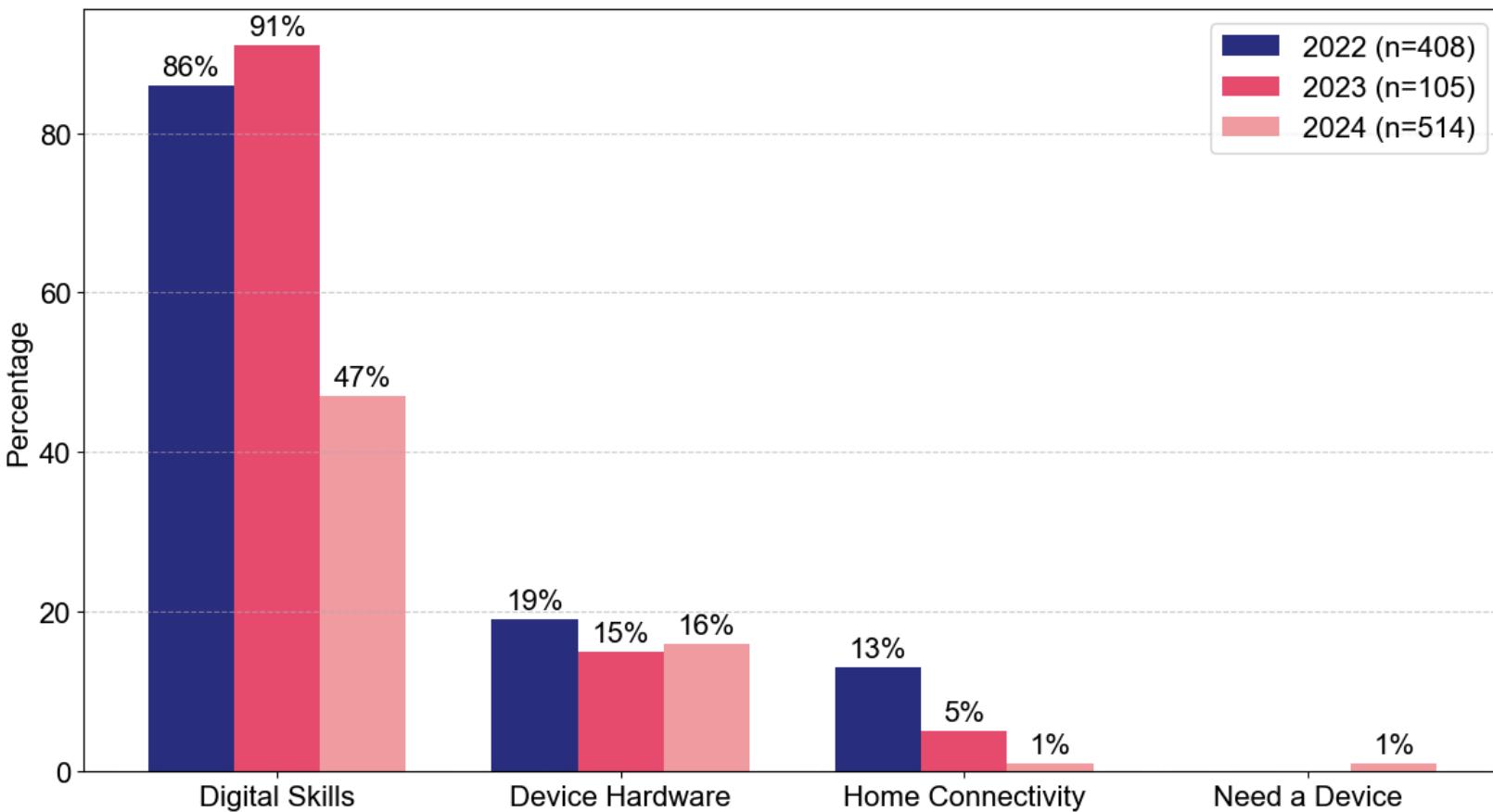


● **Red** dots show the Zip Codes where digital navigation clients resided and **Green** dots map where libraries and nonprofit partners were located between 2022 and 2024

III Overall, all libraries and non-profit partners were located in close proximity to the clients served in all counties of the Lower Hudson Valley Region

CLIENT NEEDS & ISSUES

TYPES OF CLIENT ISSUES, 2022-2024



Note: 2022 - 0.2% missing responses, 2024 - 34% missing responses

“Digital Skills” was the Most Common Issue Across All Years

- “Digital skills” was the issue selected in 86%–90% of responses in 2022 and 2023
- In 2024, this number dropped to 47%, mainly due to 34% of sessions with no recorded responses

QUOTES FROM DIGITAL NAVIGATORS



“The client did not have adequate computer skills. He did not know how to use a scroll bar, or drop down menu. I felt that he was also visually impaired and needed reading glasses, because he was struggling to read small print.”

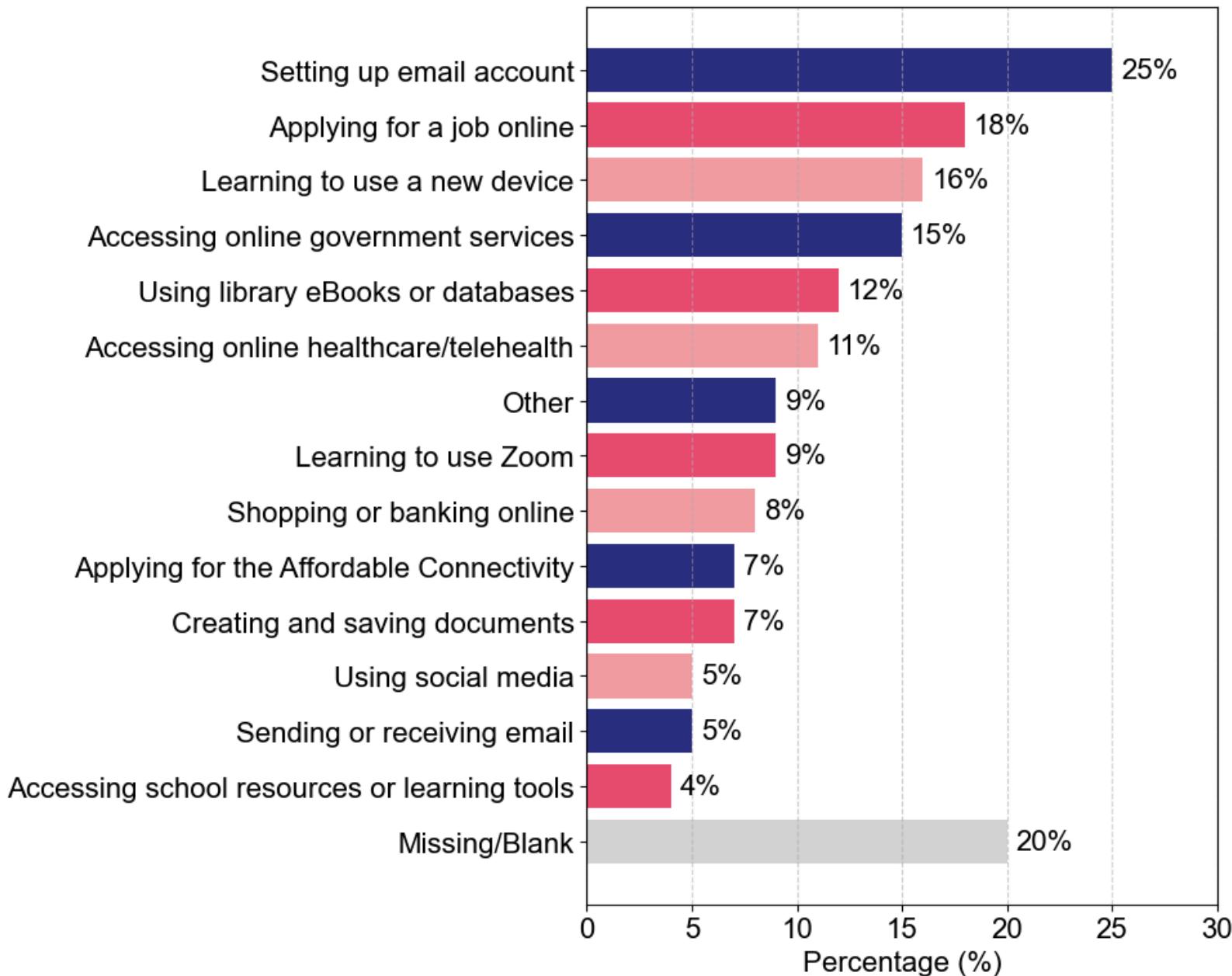
“Client is “older”, but not elderly (late 50s), and is realizing the need/efficacy of owning a personal computer, but is intimidated by technology, overwhelmed, and doesn’t quite know where to start.”

“This is the second client I’ve encountered who has recently been released from incarceration, is attempting to return to the workforce, and needs assistance with basic device use.”



CLIENT NEEDS & ISSUES

SPECIFIC NEEDS OR OUTCOMES AMONG CLIENTS, 2024 (N=514)



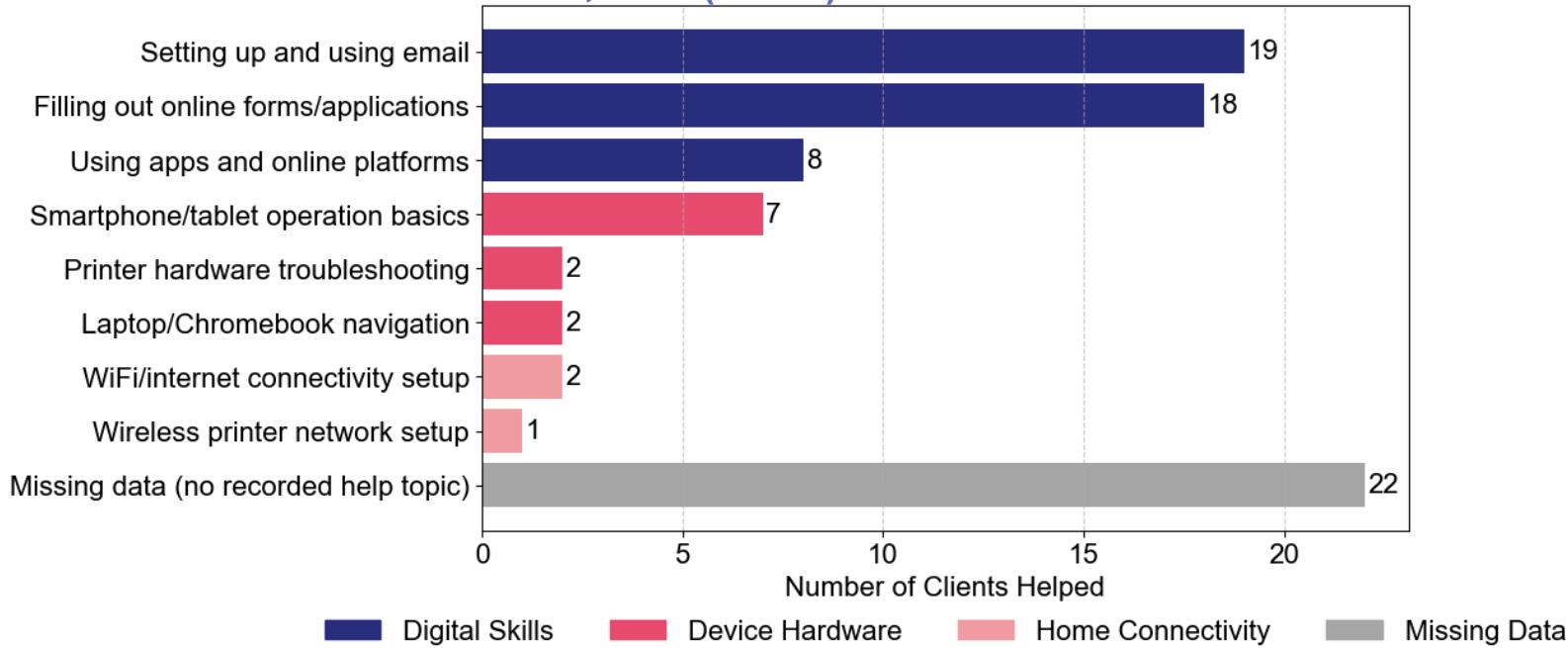
Based on responses of the 2024 exit survey question, “Specific Need or Outcome”, clients most often needed help with:

- Setting up email accounts (25%)
- Applying for jobs online (18%)
- Learning to use a new device (16%)

Note: 20% of responses were left blank or unclear

CLIENT NEEDS & ISSUES

TOP 3 THEMES FROM EXIT INTERVIEW OPEN-ENDED QUESTION “WHAT WAS THE RESOLUTION?”, 2023 (N=105)



Content analysis of the 2023 open-ended exit survey question, “What was the resolution?” revealed that digital navigation interactions resulted in the following:

- Email setup & access
- Filling out online forms
- Using apps and smartphones
- 21% of entries had no recorded resolution (missing data)

Note: 2022 data did not include this survey question

QUOTES FROM DIGITAL NAVIGATORS

“Client needs help retrieving pictures from an SD card and emailing them to his daughter in Florida.”

“Client wanted to set-up online bill pay and paperless statements for several bank cards and other accounts that she commonly uses.”

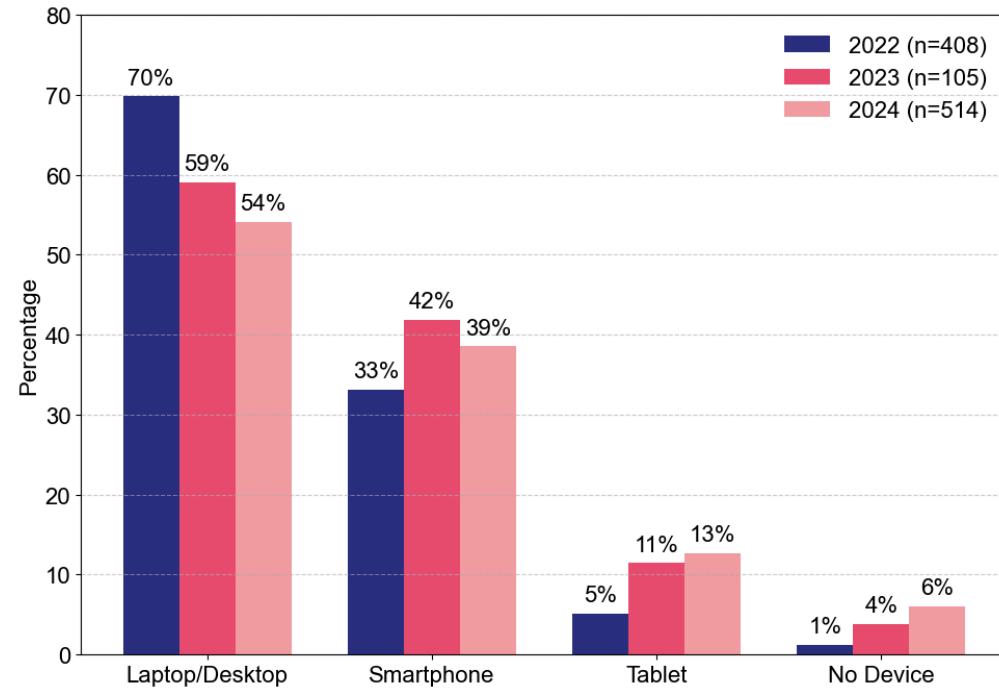
“Client needed help navigating a college website in order to examine available classes and times.”

“Client needs help setting up an ID me account so she can apply for government services.”



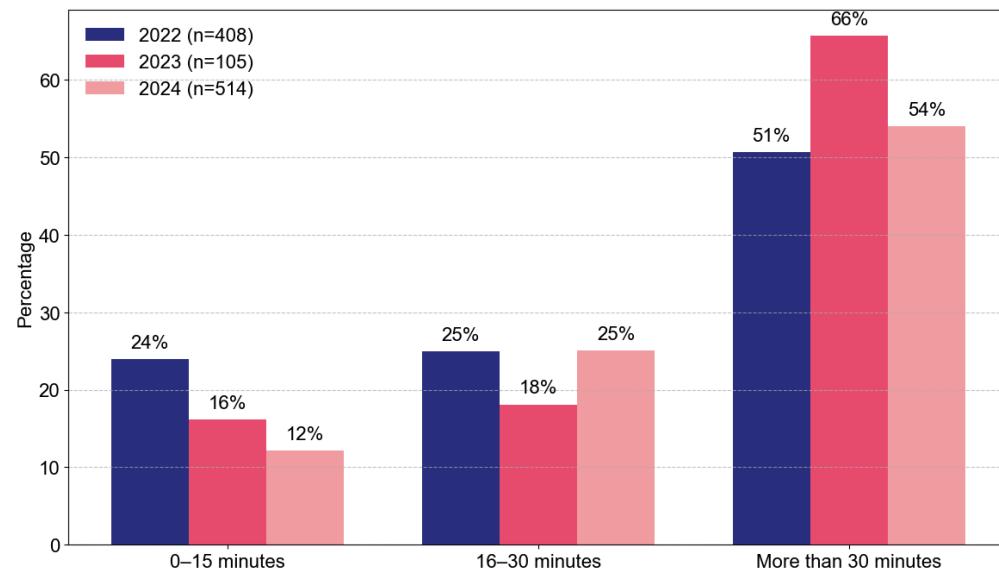
TYPES OF SUPPORT PROVIDED

TYPES OF DEVICES USED BY CLIENTS, 2022-2024



- Across all three years, clients needed support **with laptops and desktops** during sessions with digital navigators
- Assistance with **smartphones** became more common in 2023 (42%) and remained steady in 2024 (39%)

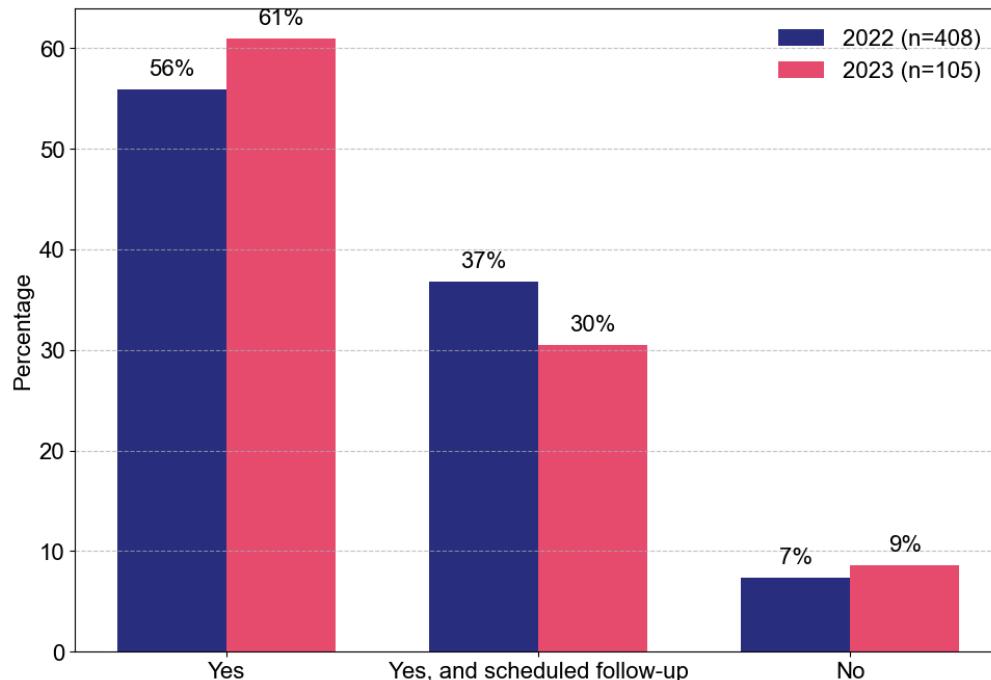
DURATION OF DIGITAL NAVIGATION SESSIONS, 2022-2024



- **Across** all years at least 51% of the digital navigation interactions lasted over **30 minutes**
- Quick sessions (0-15 minutes) dropped over time, making up just 12% in 2024

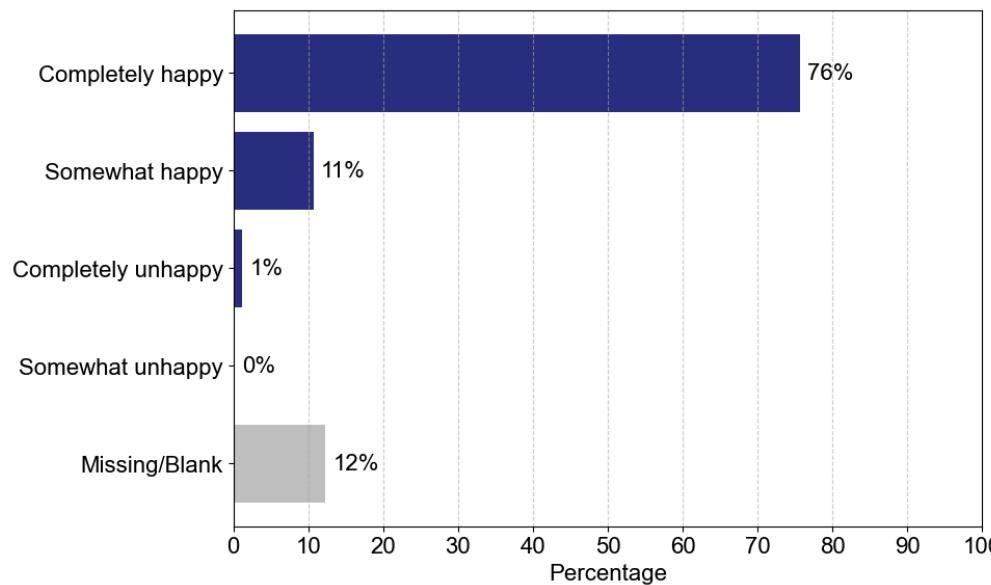
PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORT

OUTCOMES OF ISSUE RESOLUTIONS, 2022-2023



- In both 2022 and 2023, over 50% of tech issues were fully resolved during a session
- However, only one-third (37% in 2022 and 30% in 2023) scheduled a follow-up session

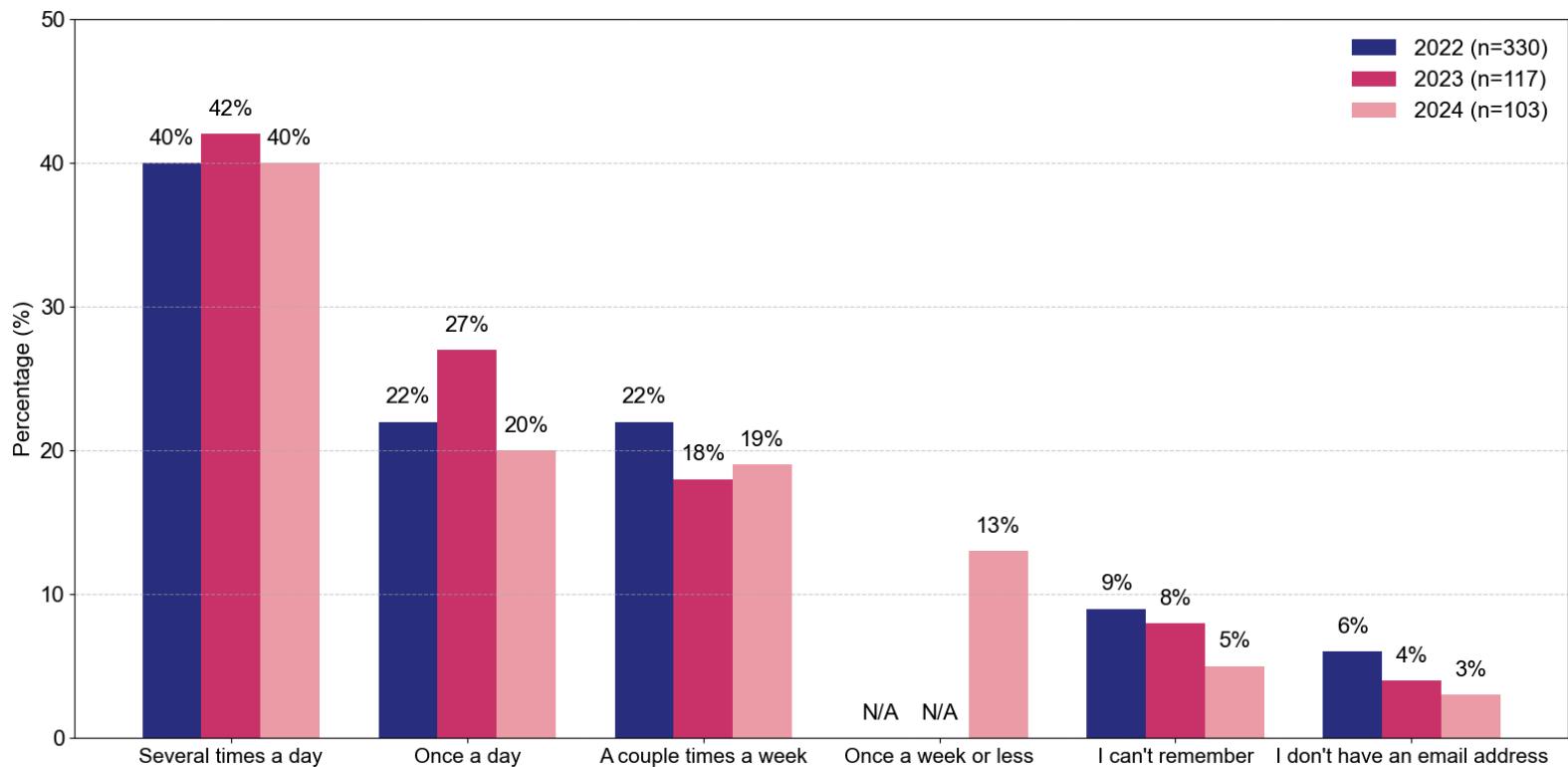
CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH DIGITAL NAVIGATION SUPPORT, 2024 (N = 514)



- 87% of clients in 2024 said they were “completely happy” or “somewhat happy” with the help they received 😊

EMAIL USAGE

EMAIL USAGE AMONG DIGITAL NAVIGATION CLIENTS, 2022-2024



The majority of clients (~40%) reported checking their email several times a day across all years (2022–2024)



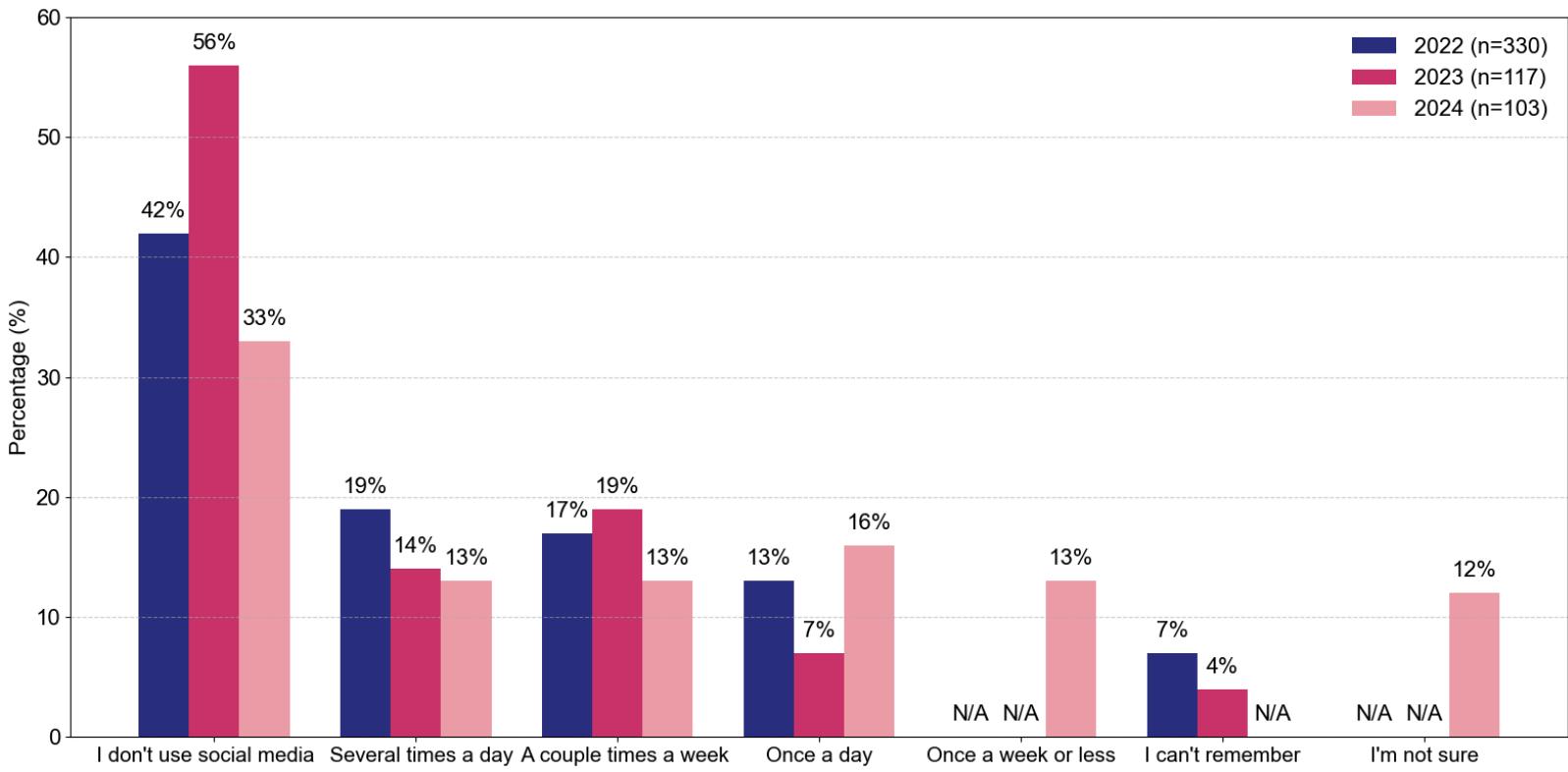
Once a day or a couple times a week was the next common reported frequency of email usage (18-27%) across years



Only 3% to 6% reported not having an email address

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

SOCIAL MEDIA USEAGE AMONG DIGITAL NAVIGATION CLIENTS, 2022-2024



Note: Survey response options varied slightly across years. Categories were grouped by closest meaning for comparison, and "N/A" is shown when a response option wasn't collected in a given year

- Daily social media usage was **not common**
 - Across all three years, only 13–19% of clients said they use social media several times a day.
 - Another 13–17% reported usage only once a week
- A significant portion of clients reported **not using social media at all**: 42% in 2022, 56% in 2023, and 33% in 2024

QUOTES FROM DIGITAL NAVIGATORS

"Client was unsure of their ability to post on social media, but after assuring them it would be a pretty painless process and walking them through each post they were able to build the confidence to post the pictures and text that advertised his upcoming film screening."

"Client needed help building confidence in how to post advertisement for her small businesses on her facebook story and various facebook groups. Walked the client through each process. They seemed to be nervous and self-conscious of their lack of skills but by the end of our session they seemed to not view it as such a big deal."

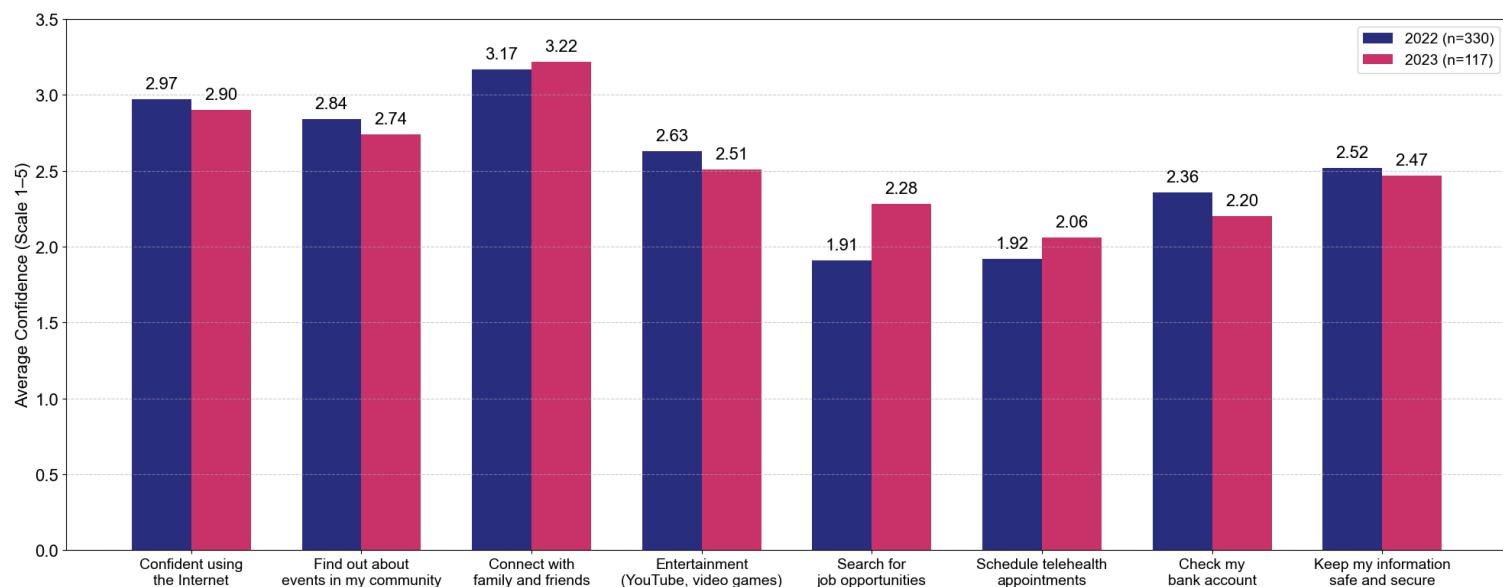


CLIENT CONFIDENCE IN DIGITAL SKILLS

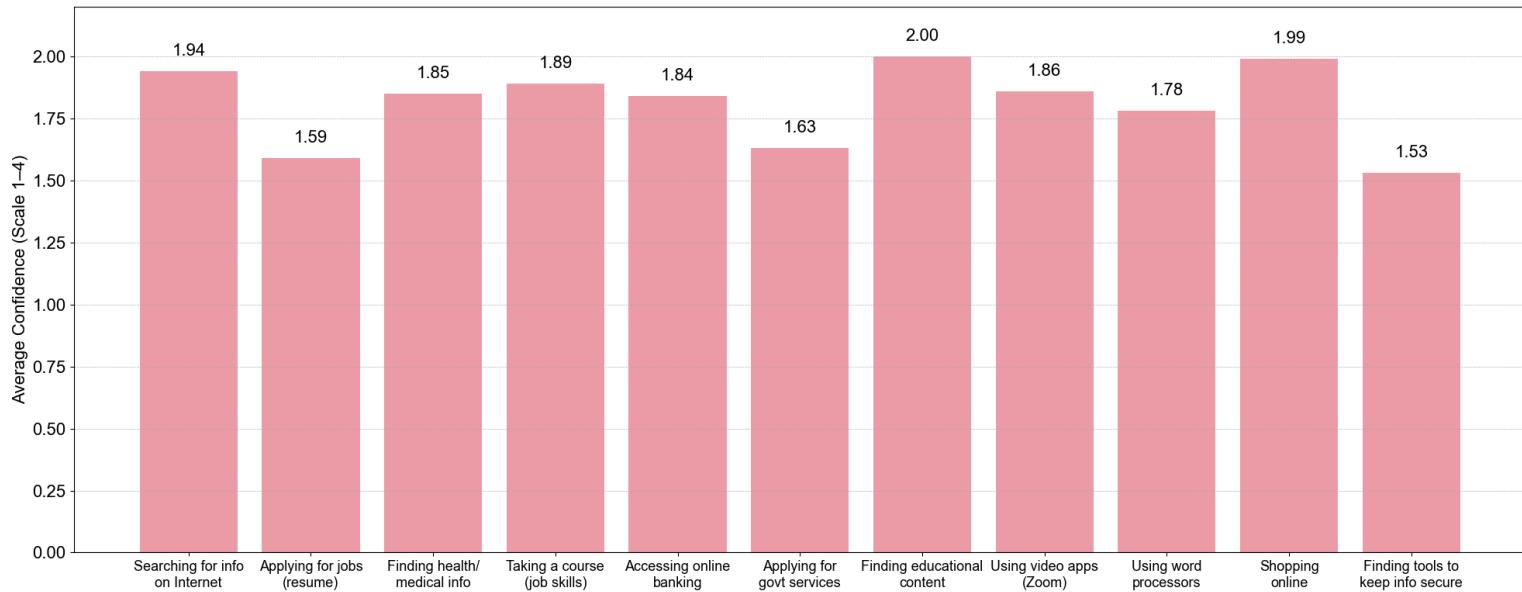
Overall clients reported modest to low confidence in their digital skills cross all three years (2022-2024)

- Social internet use showed higher confidence compared to other domains
- Confidence was consistently lower in areas like: applying for jobs; using online banking or healthcare services; and protecting personal information online

SKILL ASSESSMENT, 2022-2023



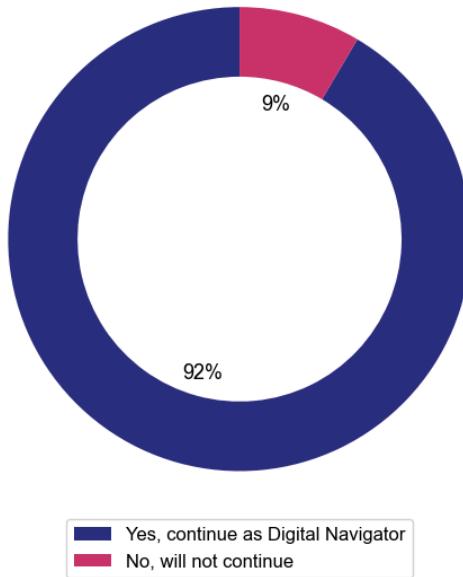
SKILL ASSESSMENT, 2024 (N =103)



Please Note: Some skills, like cybersecurity or job-seeking, were rated by only 1 or 2 clients and were given lower scores. This may have skewed the average scores for those skills.

NAVIGATOR REFLECTIONS

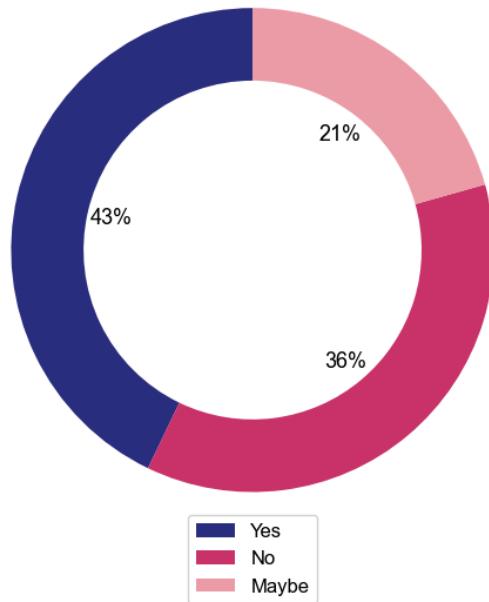
WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE, 2024 (N=82)



Strong Learning Gains & Commitment

- 91% plan to continue in their role as digital navigator after their current contract expires
- Over 90% of navigators said they gained new skills and confidence — and planned to apply what they learned

NEW COMMUNITY CONNECTION MADE, 2024



Building Community Connections

43% of the navigators formed new partnerships with local groups, including faith organizations, senior centers and more — expanding the program's local impact



QUOTES FROM DIGITAL NAVIGATORS

“This is such an important program, and I feel lucky to be a part of it.”

“We connected with two community centers in nearby towns (one town has no library)...”

“I wish there was training on how to successfully help the aging population retain information from a professional who deals with senior abilities/disabilities.”

“I agree that the empathetic types are the best DN's, but I also think we need tech training. It felt horrible and stressful when I didn't know what I was doing.”



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Strengthen Survey Design & Data Quality

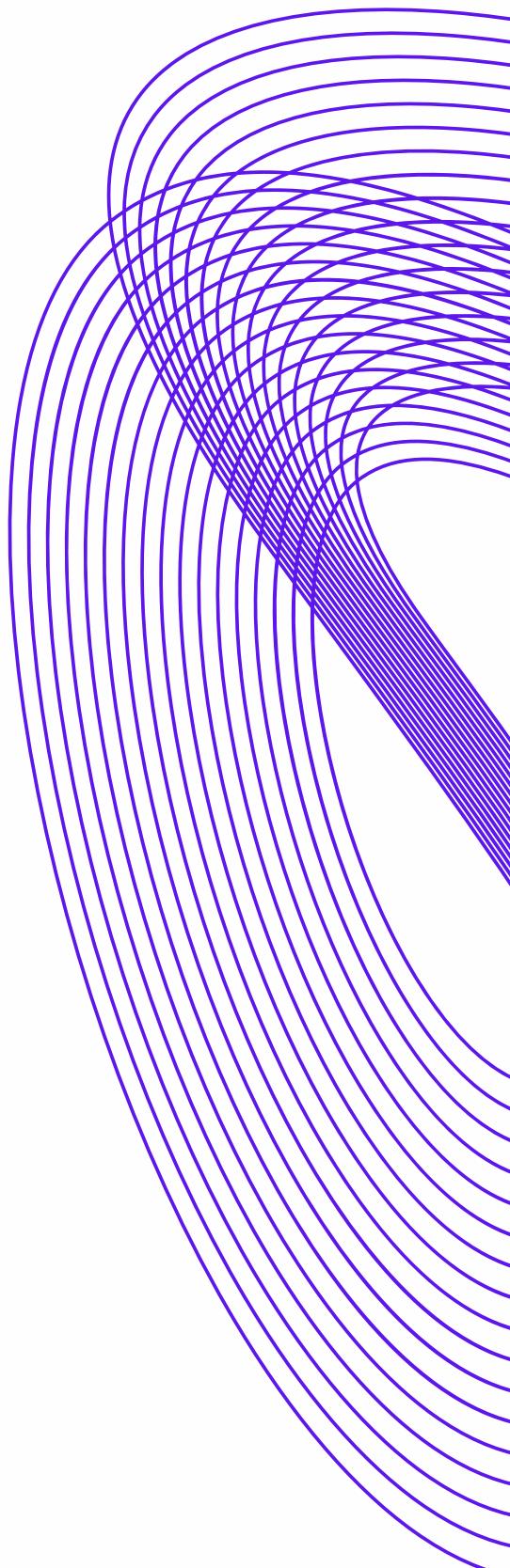
- Reword questions to avoid leading language
- Ensure balanced, clearly defined response options
- Develop a program logic model that carefully outlines the short-term and long-term outcomes of the program
- Strategically select/design survey items to capture outcomes
- Collect consistent data over multiple time points to allow for pre/post and other data comparisons
- Reduce missing data by streamlining forms and training staff on best data collection practices
- Provide private areas for data collection to occur to reduce the risk of clients not providing responses to sensitive survey items
- Consider incorporating post-program follow-up interviews with clients to capture delayed or reflective feedback



Enhance Support for Older Adults & Digital Navigators

- Offer targeted tech training for Digital Navigators working with seniors
- Use exit interviews to capture navigator insights and identify areas for future training and professional development

Thank You !



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