

Library Resource Needs Assessment

Findings from a State-wide assessment of database and resource needs conducted with Library Professionals and Utah's residents.

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Executive Summary

Utah's library professionals are assessing future investments in online information databases and resources made available through libraries across the state. The intended result is recommendations for information resources based on key categories—which must serve a diverse user base in the broader community, from city and county libraries, to K-12- and university-based organizations.

A needs assessment was commissioned to document current and projected use of information resources and supports. Results should inform deliberations and recommendations based on data—which, together, contribute to decisions that maximize the state's return on database and resource investments and serve patrons.

Two population-specific surveys provided the required data:

- Survey of Library Professionals, with a total of 317 individual responses, representing 26 of 29 counties across the state.
- General Public Survey, with 461 respondents, representing 22 of 29 counties across the state.

Five Key Findings

- 1** Speaking broadly, the currently provided databases and resources are confirmed by library professionals and responding members of the general public as the kinds people want and need.
- 2** On average, library professionals projected the future need for each type of database/resource as being slightly higher than the current level of use.
- 3** The current usage levels and future needs differ between City and County libraries, and those indicated by K-12 and University respondents. Yet, the differences between current and a slightly higher future need typically varied similarly.
- 4** While over 70% of the general public survey respondents possessed a post-secondary degree, the level of need for resources rarely differed based on education level.
- 5** Access to the digital library was by and far the most used and expressed as necessary resource, with consensus from library professionals and general public respondents.

Needs Assessment Overview.

The state of Utah is engaged in the exciting process of assessing its future investments in online information databases and resources made available through libraries across the state. A representative team of library stakeholders is pursuing a process that leads to recommendations for database subscriptions. This includes both individual resources and packaged solutions that must serve a diverse user base in the broader community, alongside K-12- and university-based personnel.

To complement the already present perspectives, the team sought to give voice to the larger community regarding their use of and need for library-provided resources. Responsive to that intent, this needs assessment documented current and projected use of information resources and supports. The insights can inform deliberations and data-based recommendations, which, together, contribute to decisions that maximize the state's return on database and resource investments, and best serve patrons statewide.

Survey Demographics.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Two needs assessment survey tools were used to collect data: The first was targeted to library professionals statewide, and the second was targeted to Utahns who use the resources (patrons, general public). In this section, we describe the individuals who responded to the survey invitation.

An opportunistic sampling strategy was used to collect survey data from both audiences. While the recorded responses may, or may not, fully reflect each audience's full population, actions were taken to increase the representation of populations across the state.

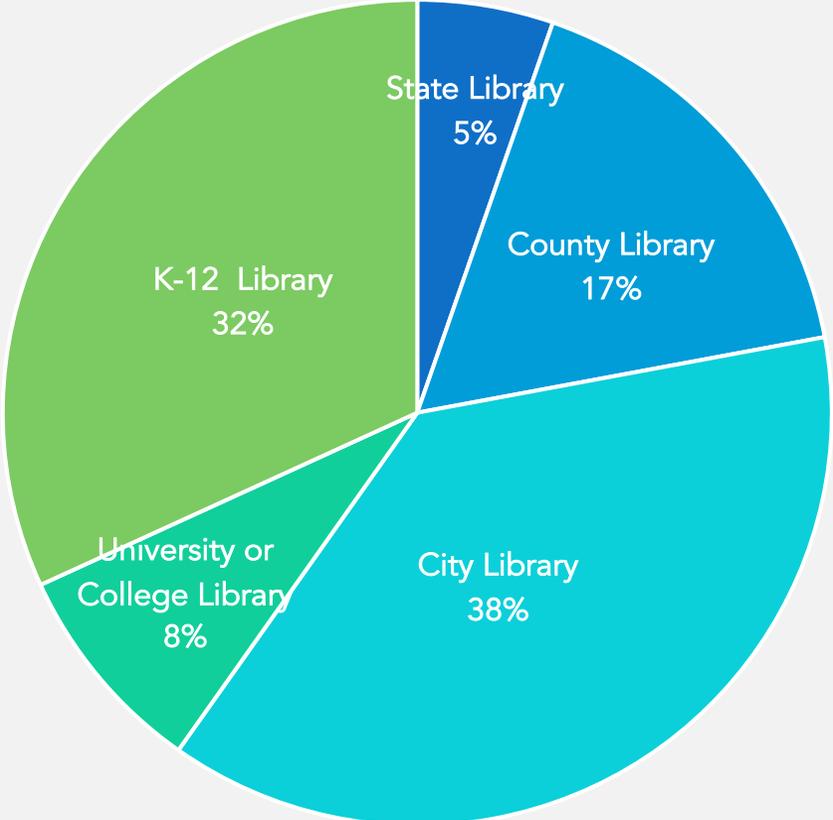
This included surveying two unique populations for their unique perspectives. Additional strategies involved stratifying respondents based on job, age, gender, and other key demographics. In addition, the final sample largely represents the state's boundaries with library professional responses from 26 of 29 (90%) counties and general public responses from 22 of 29 (76%) counties.



Library Professionals.

People working in libraries throughout the state served as the first audience for the needs assessment effort.

A total of 317 individuals, representing 26 of 29 counties, provided usable data. These respondents represented five different library types and across the distribution in the adjacent figure. The data analysis includes investigation of needs based on library type, to uncover differences where they exist.



Library Type

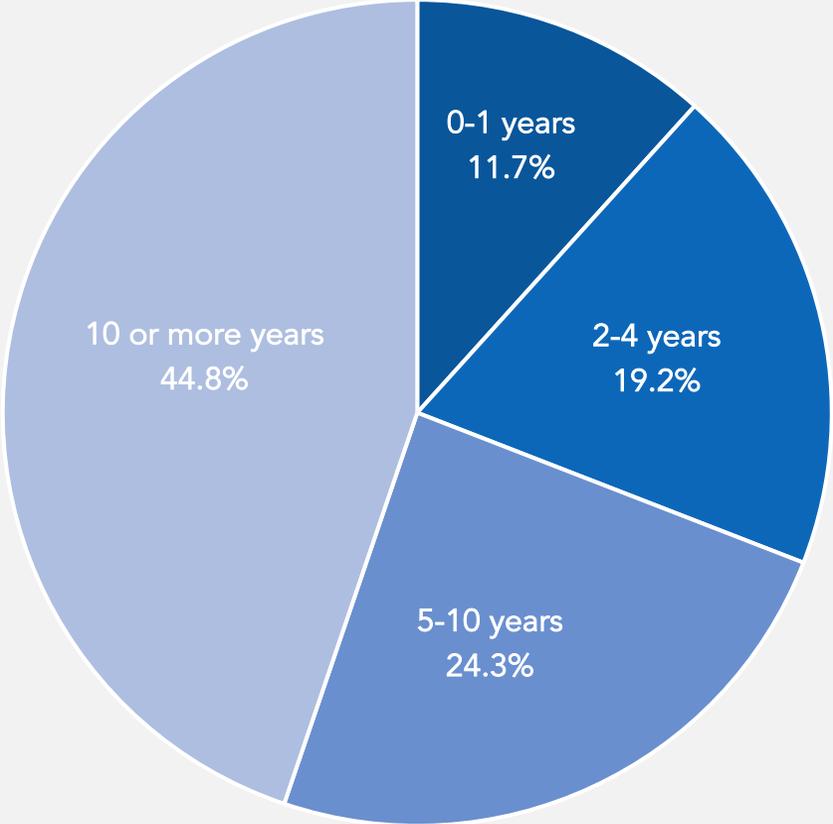
Library Professionals.

The 317 library professionals, from 26 of 29 counties, also represented a diverse range of library positions. Public Librarians were just under one-half of the final sample. Various types of K-12 School Librarians were also strongly represented in the sample.

Title	Percentage of Sample
Public Librarian	42.9%
Public Library Manager	15.0%
University Librarian	5.6%
University Library Manager	1.7%
Database Manager	0.6%
Information Systems Manager/Analyst	2.2%
K-12 School Librarian Elementary Level	11.4%
K-12 School Librarian Middle School Level	6.7%
K-12 School Librarian High School Level	8.9%
K-12 School Librarian All Levels	1.7%
K-12 District Library Supervisor/Director	3.3%

Library Professionals.

The responding Library Professionals were, on average, an experienced group. Almost one-half of respondents possessed 10+ years in their field, and 69.1% of respondents indicated 5 or more years of experience.



Tenure in the Field

General Public.

Utahns from across the state also responded to a targeted survey. Reached through in-library, online, and on-air calls to action, a total of 461 people responded to the survey. Together, they represented 22 of 29 counties across the state.

With regard to race, just under 90% of respondents identified as White. The second most selected answer, at 7.4%, was “Choose not to answer.”

Race	Percentage of Sample
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.3%
Asian	1.9%
Black or African American	.4%
White	89.0%
Choose not to answer	7.4%

General Public.

Many respondents, 80.1% indicated being married or in a domestic partnership. The second most frequently occurring marital status was single, which represented 14.0% of respondents.

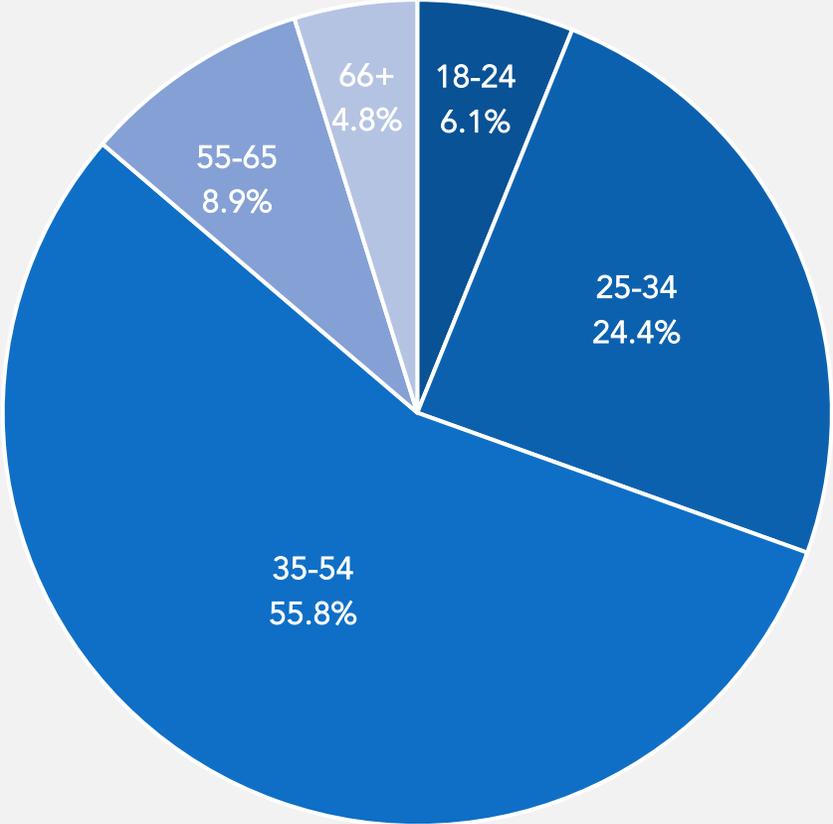
Marital Status	Percentage of Sample
Single (never married)	14.0%
Married, or in a domestic partnership	80.1%
Living with partner	1.7%
Widowed	.4%
Divorced	1.5%
Separated	.6%
Choose not to answer	1.5%

General Public.

Responding Utahns tended to be middle age with more than half of survey participants (55.8%) being between the ages of 35 and 54.

Older participants comprised 13.7% of the final sample, while younger participants (between 18 and 34) accounted for 30.5% of the final sample.

The data analysis includes investigation of needs, for resources and for supports in using resources, based on age to uncover differences where they exist.



Respondents by Age

General Public.

The analyzed sample varied in terms of education level. Speaking broadly, the responding sample could be considered highly educated. All but 21.2% of respondents possessed at least a Bachelor's degree; 86.8% of the final sample possessed an Associate degree or higher.

Like participant age, the data analysis includes investigation of needs—for resources and for supports in using resources—based on educational level, to uncover differences where they exist.

Education Level	Percentage of Sample
Less than a high school diploma	.2%
High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)	3.5%
Some college, no degree	9.5%
Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)	8.0%
Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)	38.2%
Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)	26.8%
Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM)	1.5%
Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)	11.4%
Choose not to answer	.9%

Survey Queries.

Database/Resource Categories

Eleven (11) categories of library databases and resources were used to frame the needs assessment inquiry. Respondents—both professional and general public—used these categories to answer a range of questions that included current need, current use, and future anticipated use.



Database/Resource Categories and Definitions

#	Category	Definition
1	Business	Investment research, small business reference databases, marketing resources, etc.
2	Careers/Test Prep	Courses to prepare users to take college entrance exams, career licensure certification exams, create resumes, write cover letters, find job postings, etc.
3	Digital Library	Ebooks, audiobooks, electronic magazines, domestic and international newspapers
4	Early Learning	Pre-K resources for basic numbers, alphabet, early reading
5	Foreign Language Learning	Foreign Language Learning: Resources to help users learn a new language
6	Genealogy/Family History Resources	Family tree type platforms for storing family history data and doing genealogical research
7	Health Resources and Databases	Medical journals/databases, Medline, prescription drug information, health insurance resources
8	History, Biographies, Cultures, Current Events	Resources to help users study history, culture, and current events
9	Homework Help	K-12 courses in history, math, science, and language arts courses, tutoring
10	Online Learning How-To	Databases and video tutorials to help individuals gain a new skill like auto repair, arts and crafts, playing an instrument, computer skills, etc.
11	Science and Technology	Databases and resources related to advances and research in mathematics, computer and information sciences, physical and chemical sciences, etc.

Survey Results.

Early Insights

An analysis of both survey datasets—library professionals and the general public—offers insights into needs.

The following pages highlight key findings from the preliminary analysis. They are intended to inform near-term discussions regarding additional analyses and enhancements to this initial reporting.



Guidance: Interpreting Results on Scales— Mean

Before viewing the results, here is some helpful guidance for understanding the ratings that follow.

Most survey items were rated on five-point scales. The **average response** (the mean) for a given item was calculated, based on values assigned to each point on the scale.

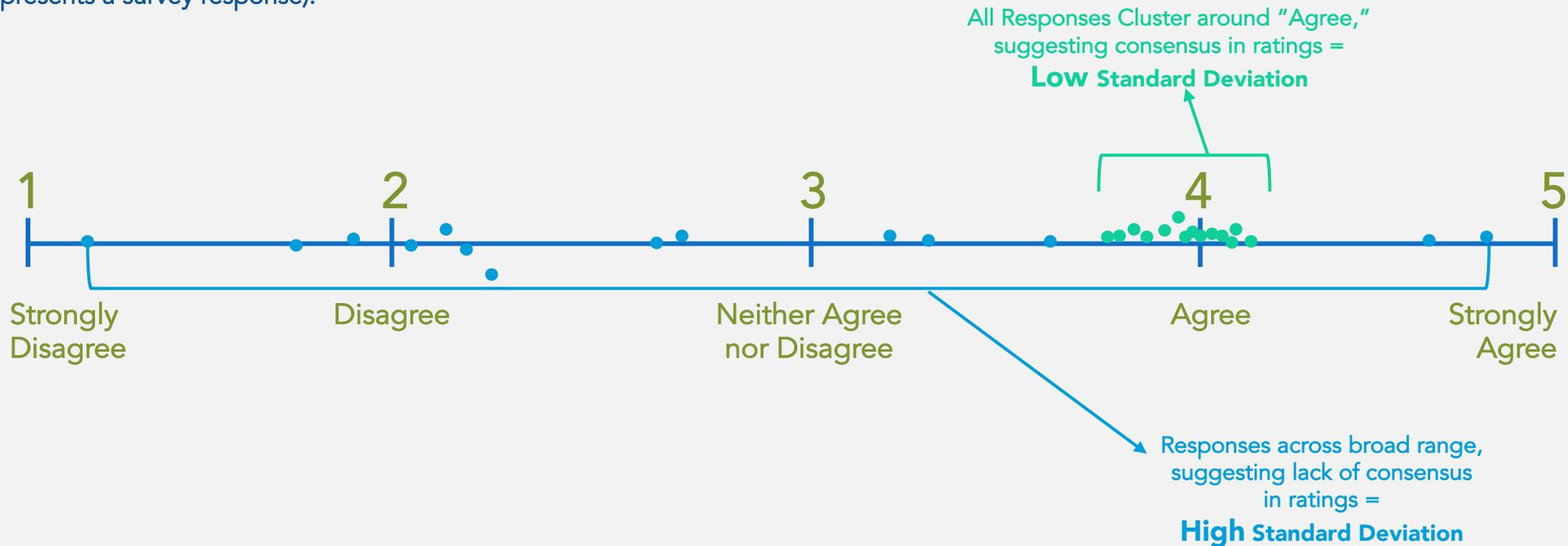
Consider the following scale that might be used to rate level of agreement. An average of 4.2 would suggest the respondents, on average, rated the given statement just above Agree.



Guidance: Interpreting Results on Scales— Standard Deviation

In addition to a mean or average, the standard deviation was calculated. Standard deviation helps describe how much agreement there is across ratings.

Consider the following two examples that use standard deviation to describe the distribution of results (each dot represents a survey response).

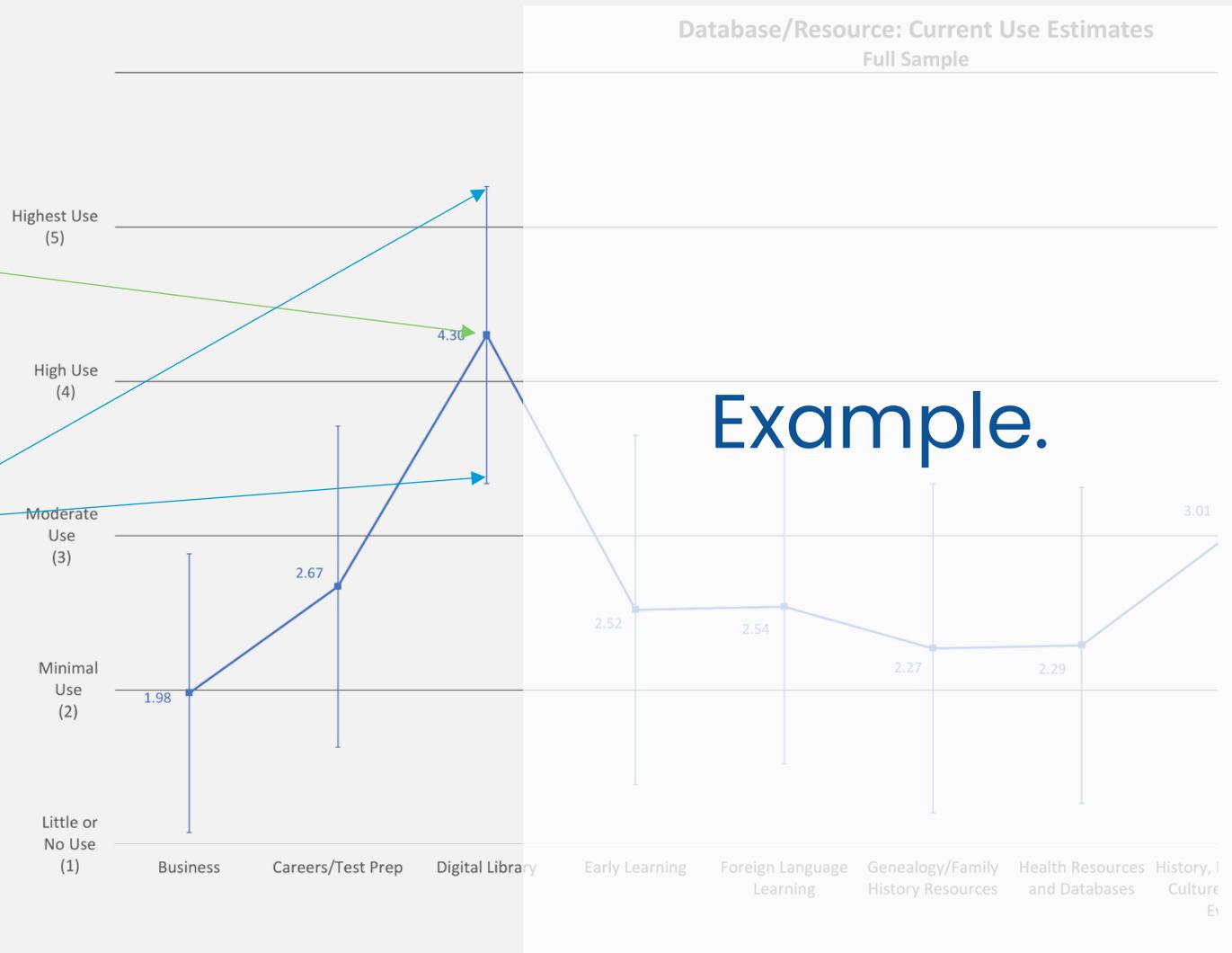


Guidance: Interpreting Results on Scales—Applying Mean and Standard Deviation

The results that follow make use of both mean and standard deviation to describe survey responses.

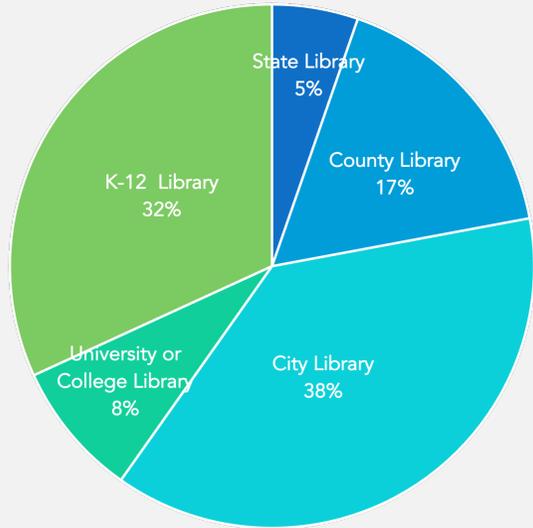
Mean, or average, ratings are depicted as points on the y-axis-represented five-point scale—here from a low of 1=*Little or No Use*, to a high of 5=*Highest Use*.

Standard deviation estimates are shown as error bars. Longer lines indicate greater standard deviation and therefore, more widely spread ratings (less consensus). Shorter lines indicate the opposite.

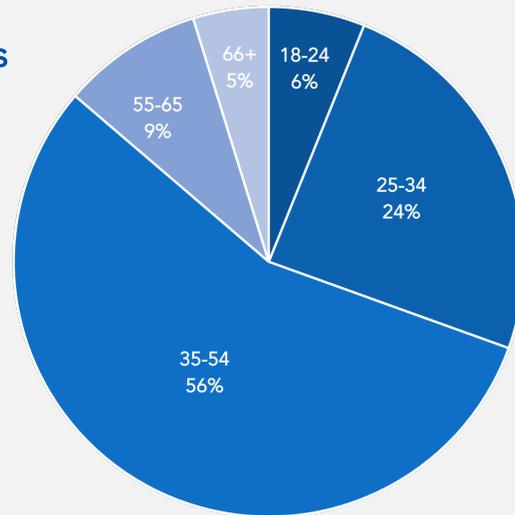


Example.

Guidance: Interpreting Results—Weighting



Library Professional Respondents by Library Type



General Public Respondents by Age

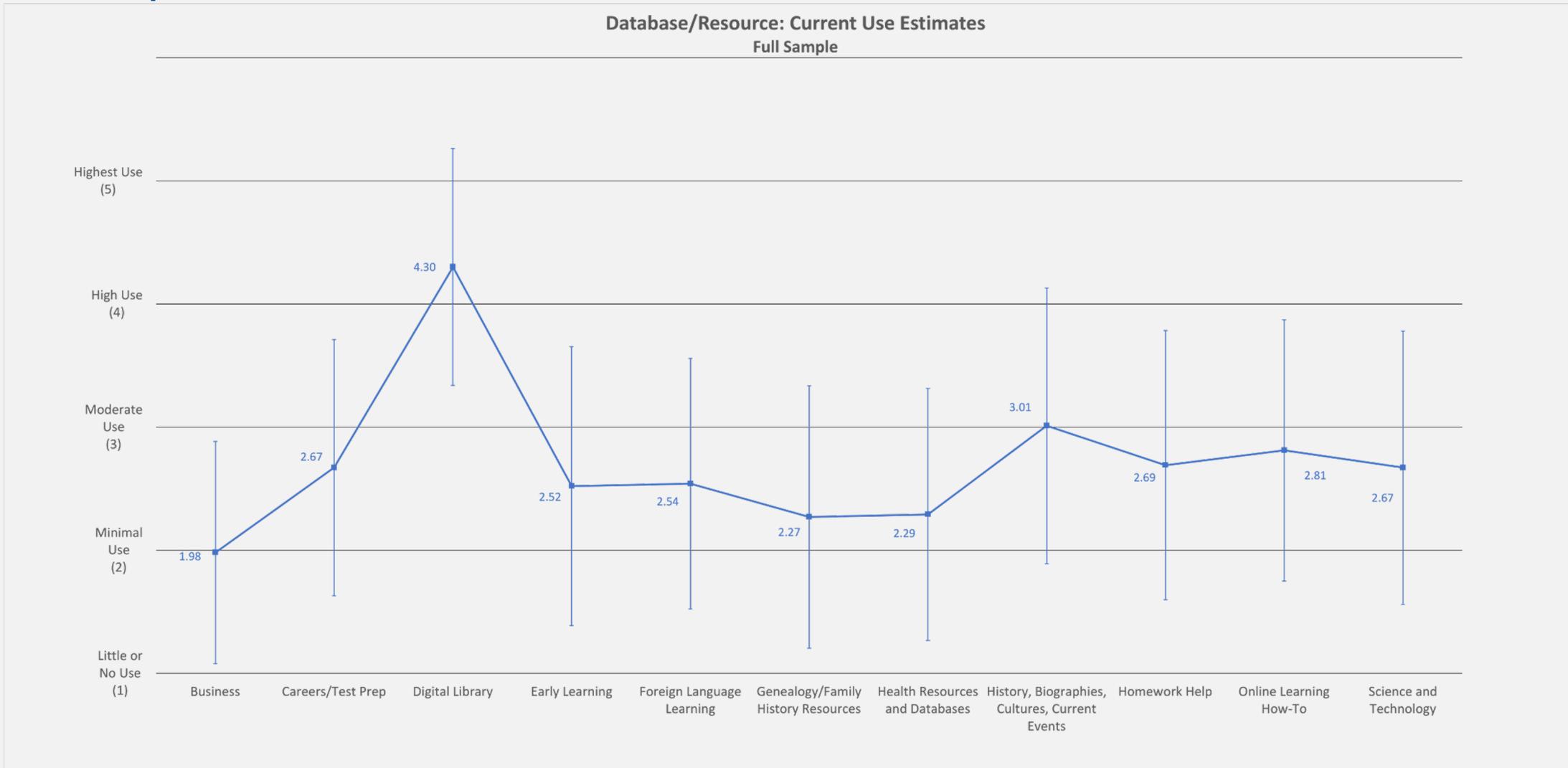
Weighting was used to address varying sample sizes across key demographics. When applied, a weighted, sample has been adjusted to equally represent the demographic variable of interest—regardless of the number of survey responses received.

For example, when Library Type is unweighted, the full sample more heavily represents City (38%) and K-12 (32%) libraries. When results are weighted for Library Type, the depicted results use available responses to equally represent the five types of libraries. A similar weighting scheme was employed for General Public responses based on age.

Current Database and Resource Use.

Library Professionals Current Use Estimates

Full Sample

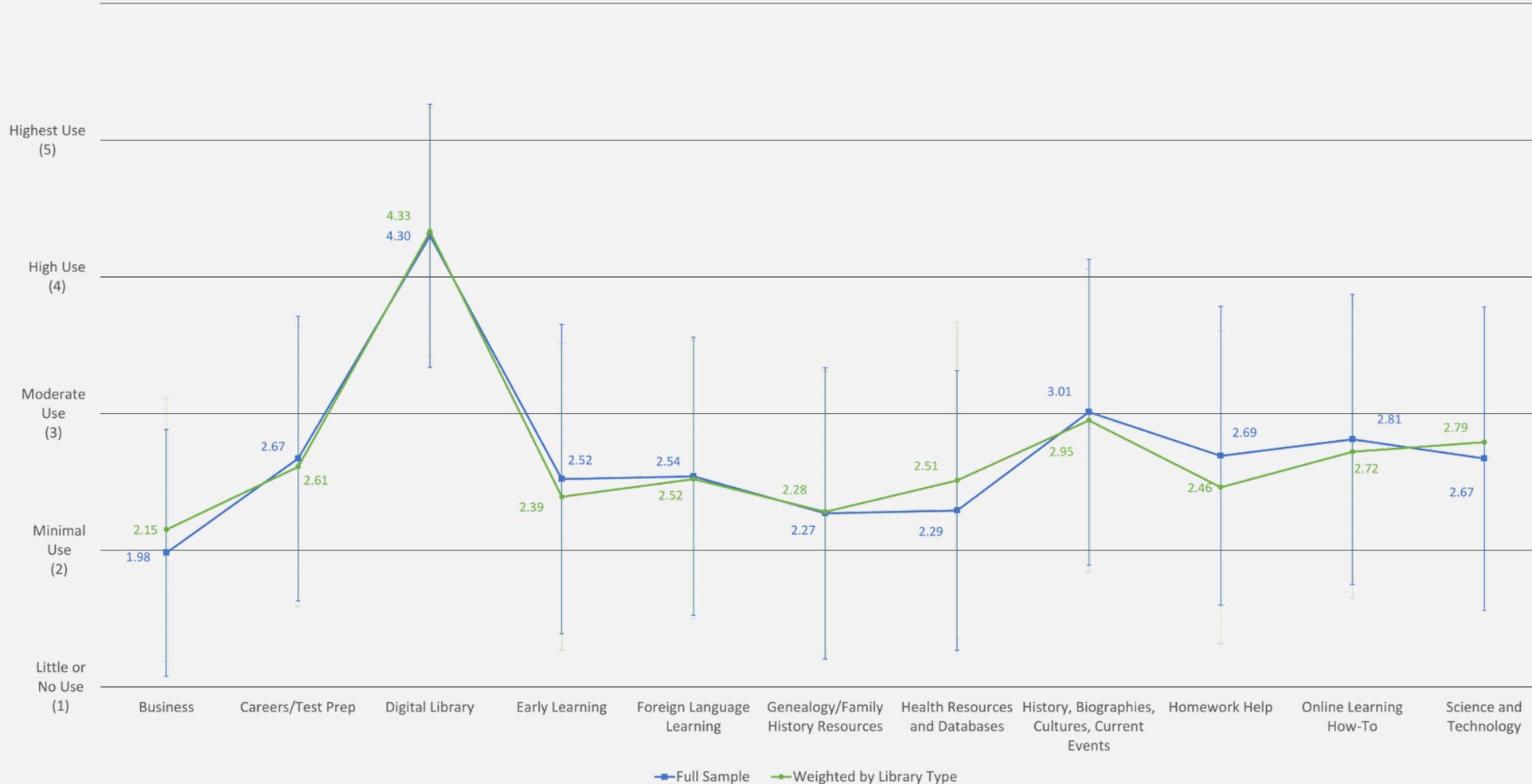


Question: Thinking about your experiences with each database/resource area use across your workplace, what would you estimate the amount of use each of the following types of resources receives in your organization?

Library Professional Current Use Estimates

Full Sample vs. Weighted by Library Type

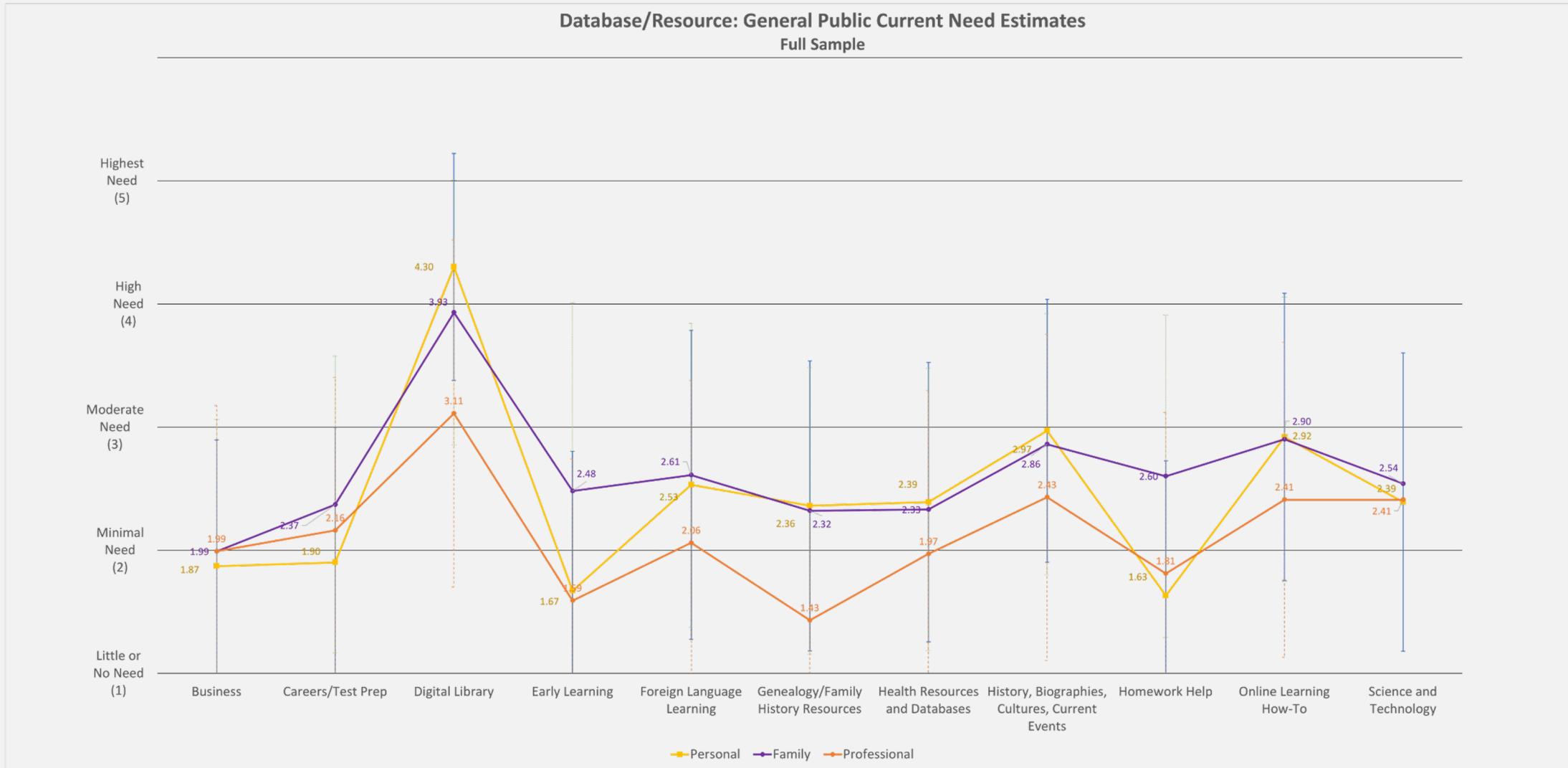
Database/Resource: Current Use Estimates
Full Sample vs. Weighted by Library Type



Question: Thinking about your experiences with each database/resource area use across your workplace, what would you estimate the amount of use each of the following types of resources receives in your organization?

Current Database and Resource Need.

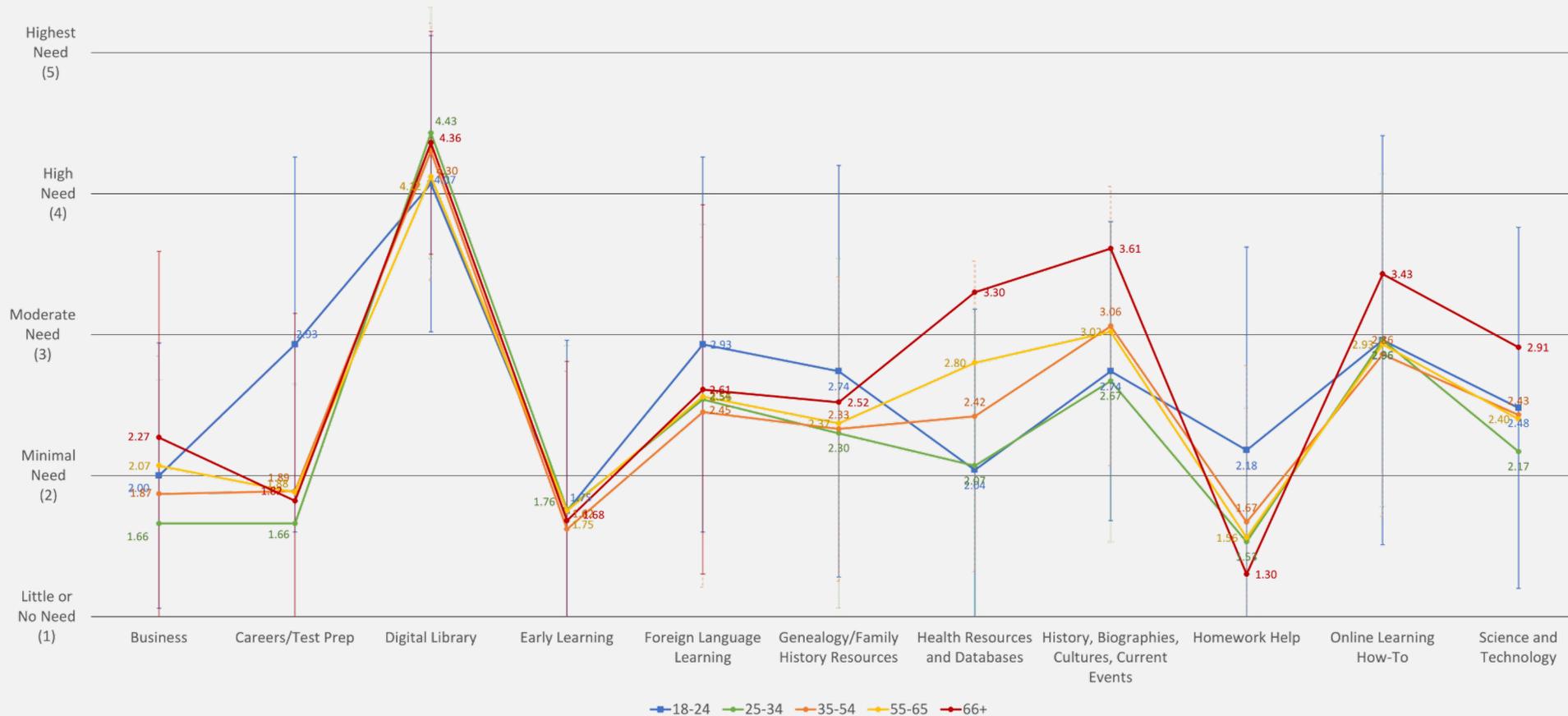
General Public Personal Need Estimates by Type of Use



Question: Please indicate your need for the described information by indicating: (1) your personal need—to be used outside of your employment (if employed), (2) your family need—select by answering for your entire family (skip if single), (3) your professional need—select based on employment-based needs (skip if retired or not seeking work).

General Public Personal Need Estimates by Age

Database/Resource: General Public Current Personal Need Estimates by Age



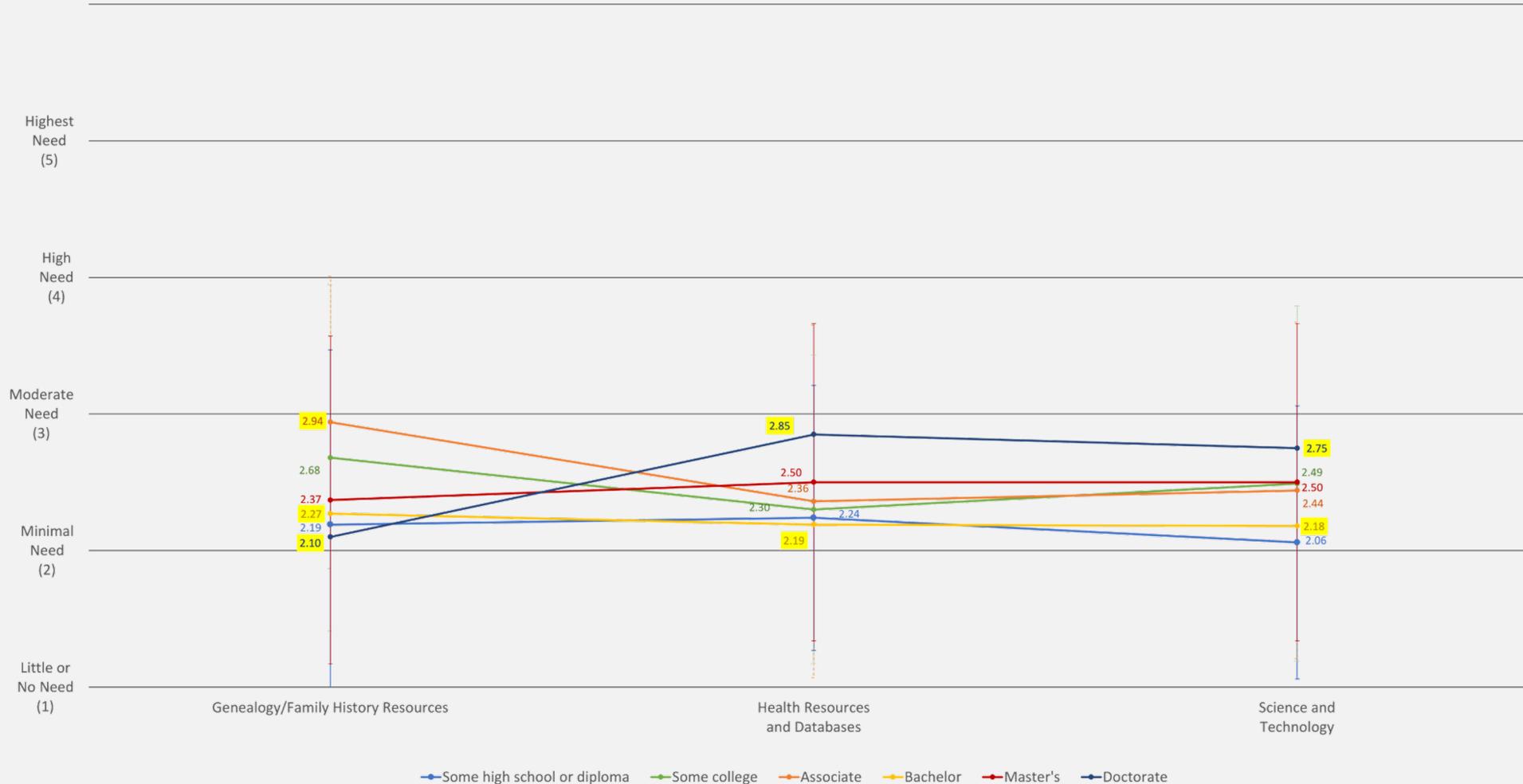
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Question: Please indicate your need for the described information by indicating: your personal need—to be used outside of your employment (if employed).

General Public Personal Need Estimates

Content with Significant Differences by Educational Level

Database/Resource: General Public Current Personal Need Estimates
by Education Level—Database/Resource with Significant Differences Only (yellow highlight)



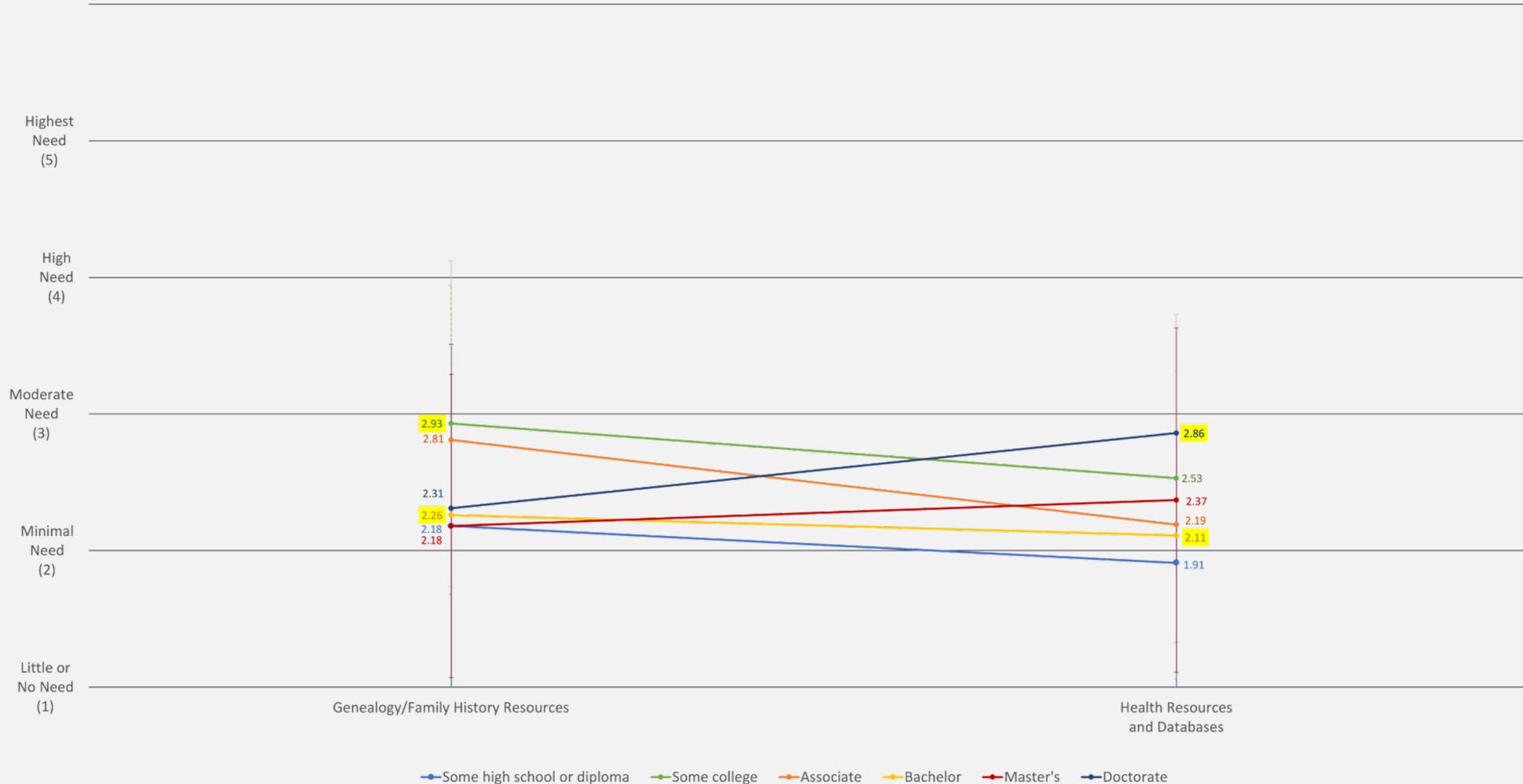
Question: Please indicate your need for the described information by indicating your personal need—to be used outside of your employment (if employed).

Personal Need ratings did not significantly differ based on education level. Three exceptions are depicted, where **yellow highlighted means** differ significantly between high and low(est).

General Public Family Need Estimates

Content with Significant Differences by Educational Level

Database/Resource: General Public Current Family Need Estimates
by Education Level—Database/Resource with Significant Differences Only (yellow highlight)

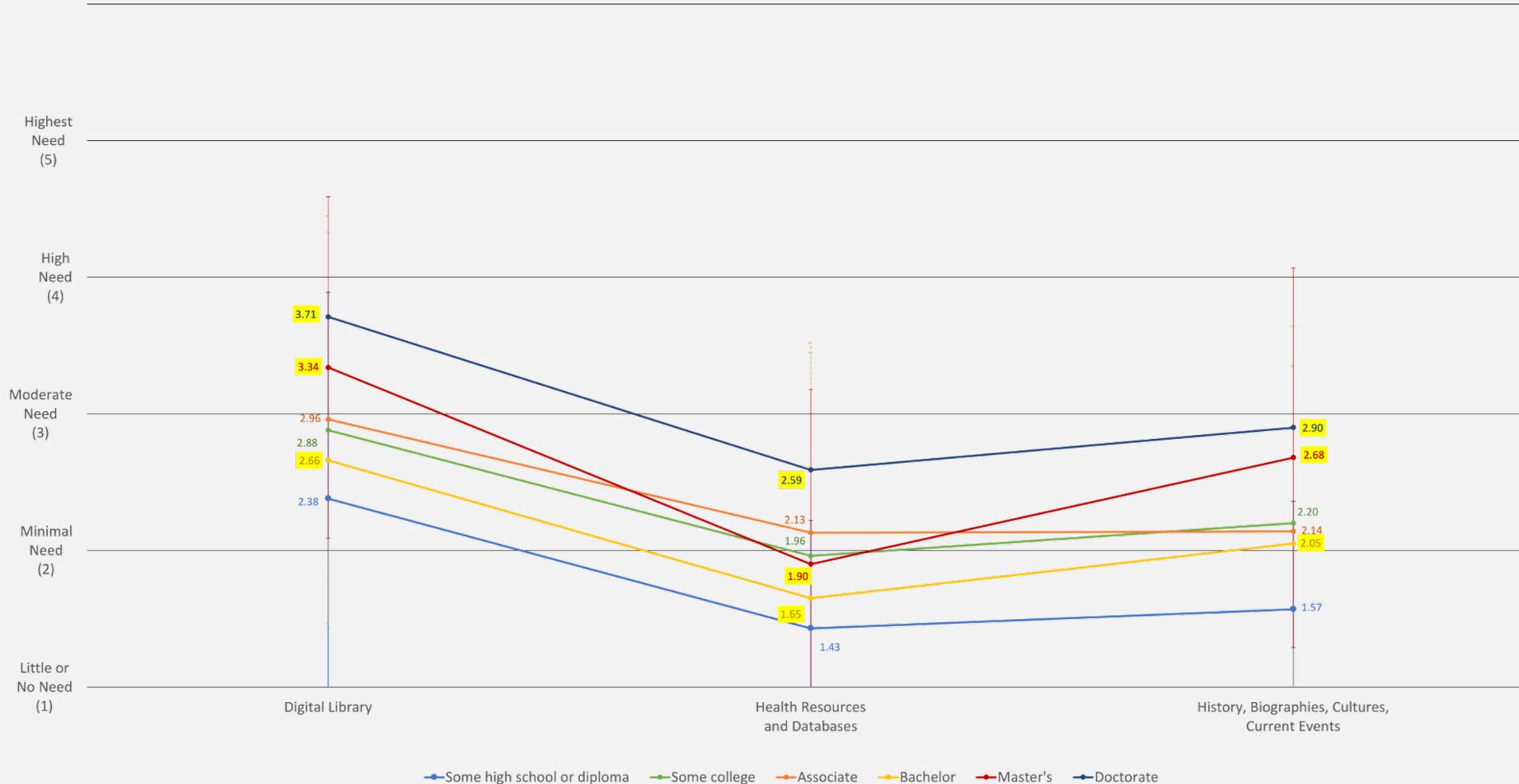


Question: Please indicate your need for the described information by indicating: your personal need—to be used outside of your employment (if employed).
Family Need ratings did not significantly differ based on education level. Two exceptions are depicted, where **yellow highlighted means** differ significantly from one another.

General Public Professional Need Estimates

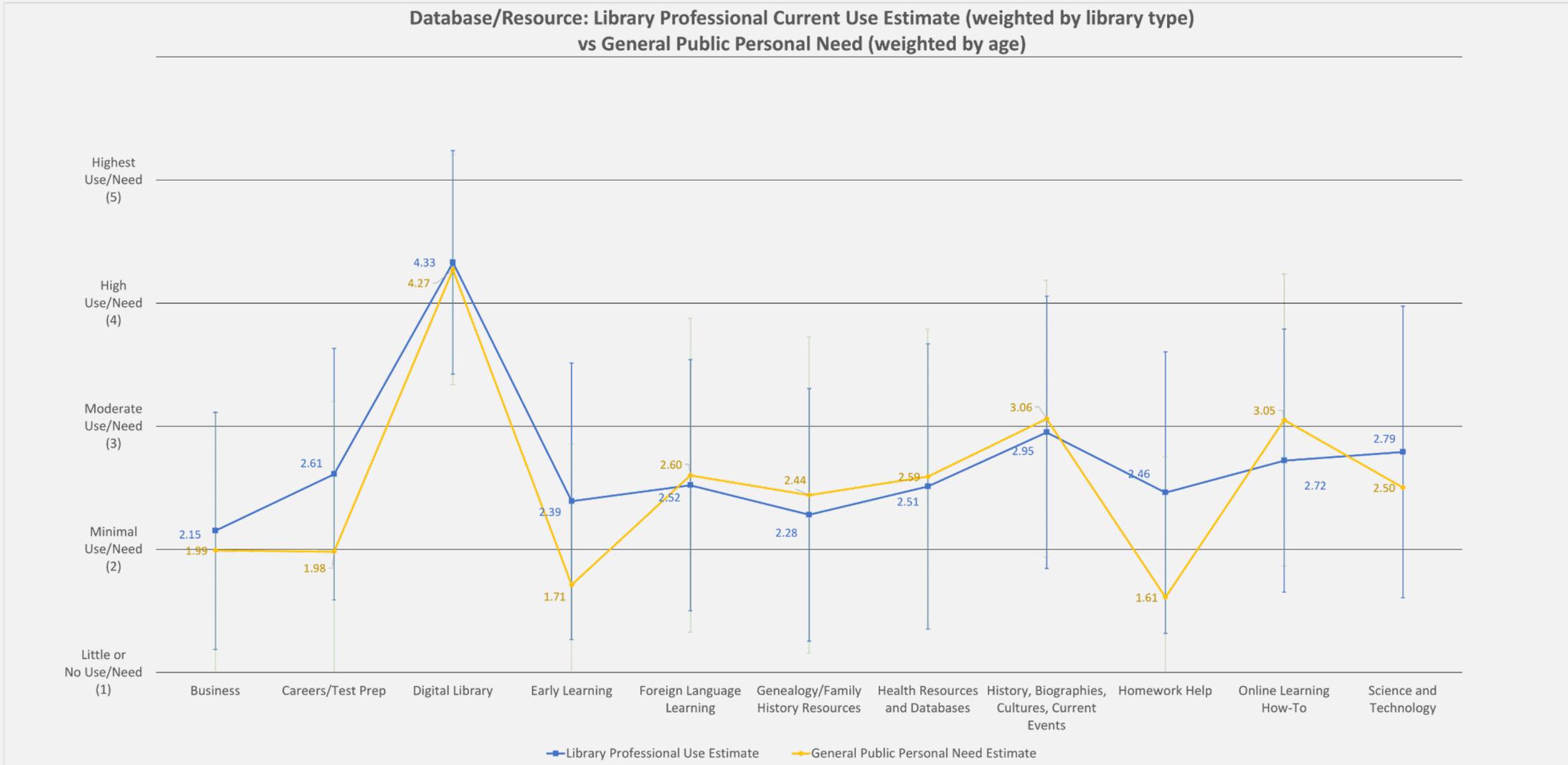
Content with Significant Differences by Educational Level

Database/Resource: General Public Current Professional Need Estimates
by Education Level—Database/Resource with Significant Differences Only (yellow highlight)



Question: Please indicate your need for the described information by indicating: your professional need—to be used outside of your employment (if employed).
Professional Need ratings did not significantly differ. Three exceptions are depicted, where **yellow highlighted means** differ significantly between Doctorate (high) and all others.

Library Professional Use vs. General Public Personal Need Weighted

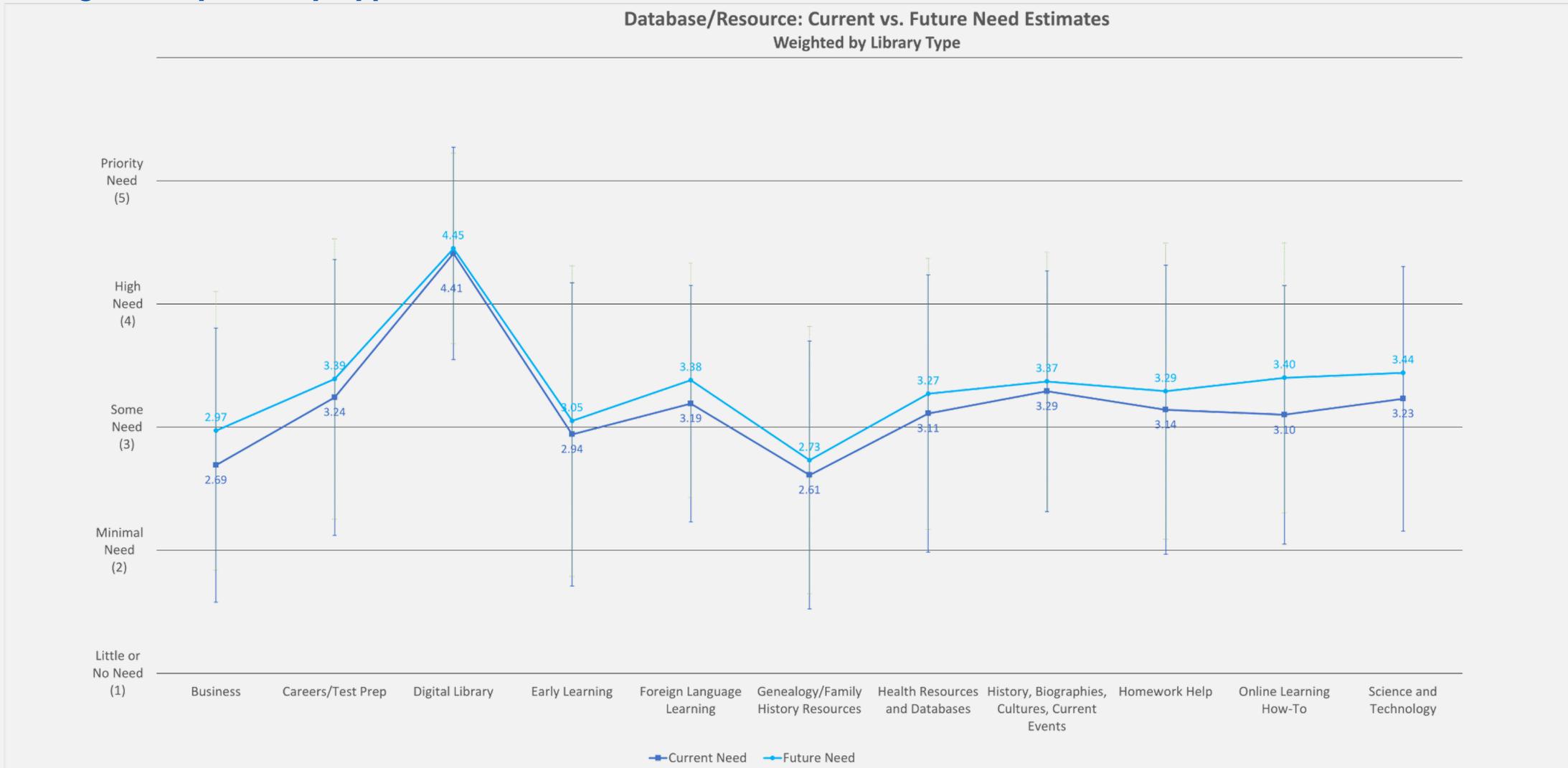


Question: Thinking about your experiences with each database/resource area use across your workplace, what would you estimate the amount of use each of the following types of resources receives in your organization? vs. Question: Please indicate your need for the described information by indicating: your personal need—to be used outside of your employment

Current vs. Future Need Comparisons.

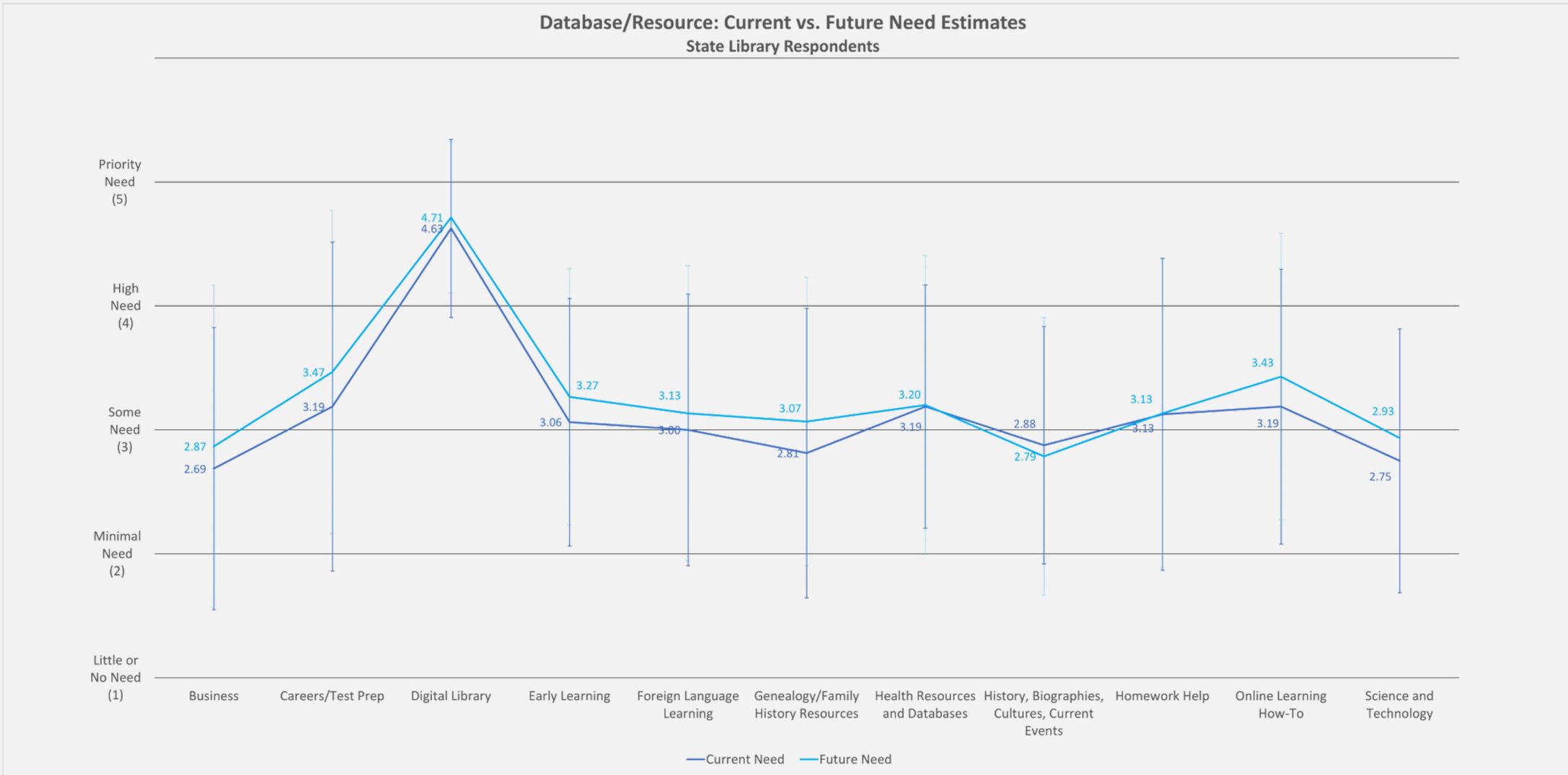
Library Professionals Current vs. Future Need Estimates

Weighted by Library Type



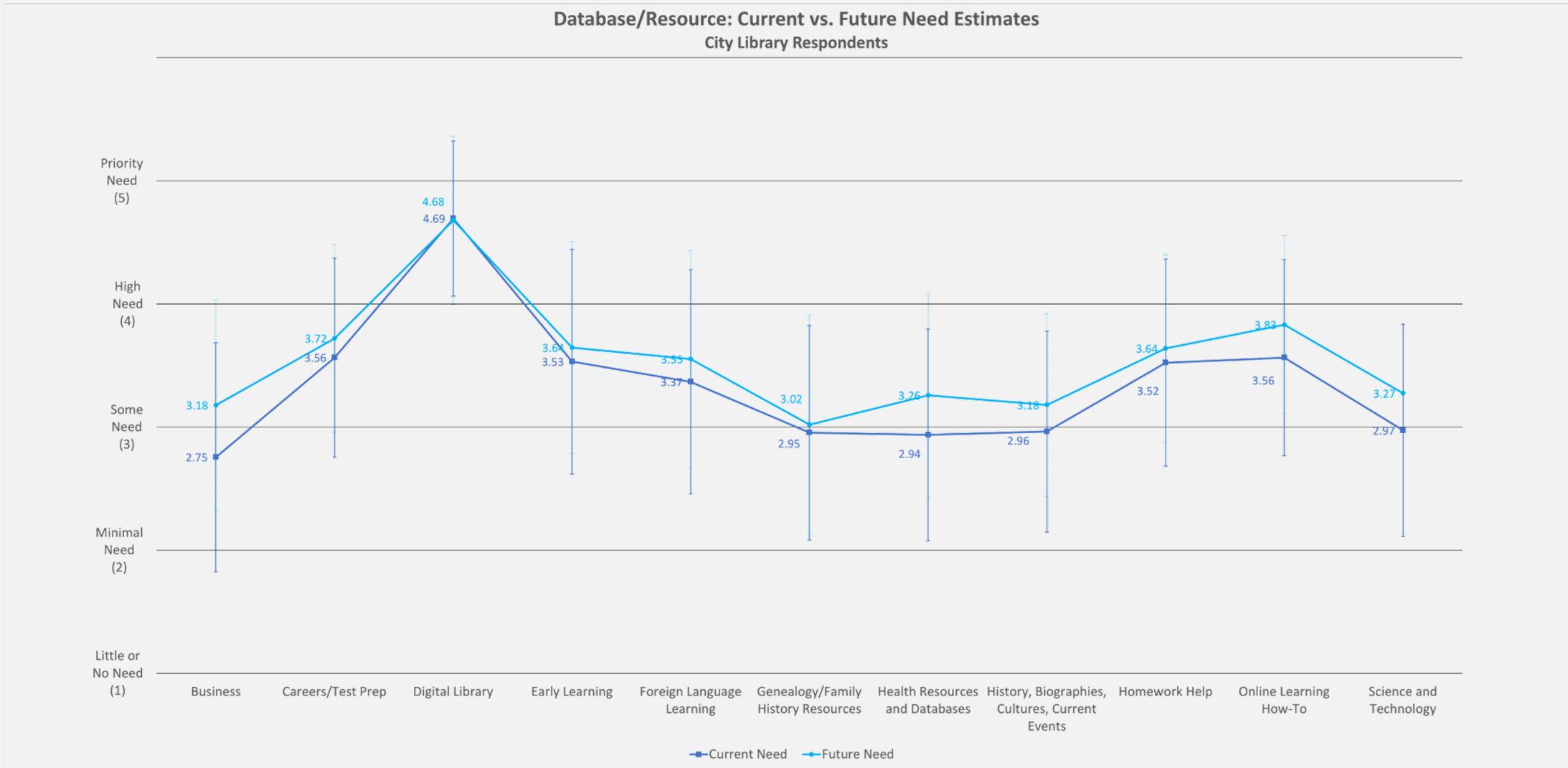
Question: How would you describe the current need for each of the following types of resources based on the people your organization serves? Question: Thinking ahead 3-5 years, what will be the future need for each of the following database/resources based on the people your organization serves—or is seeking to change its capacity to serve in the future?

State Library: Current vs. Future Need Estimates



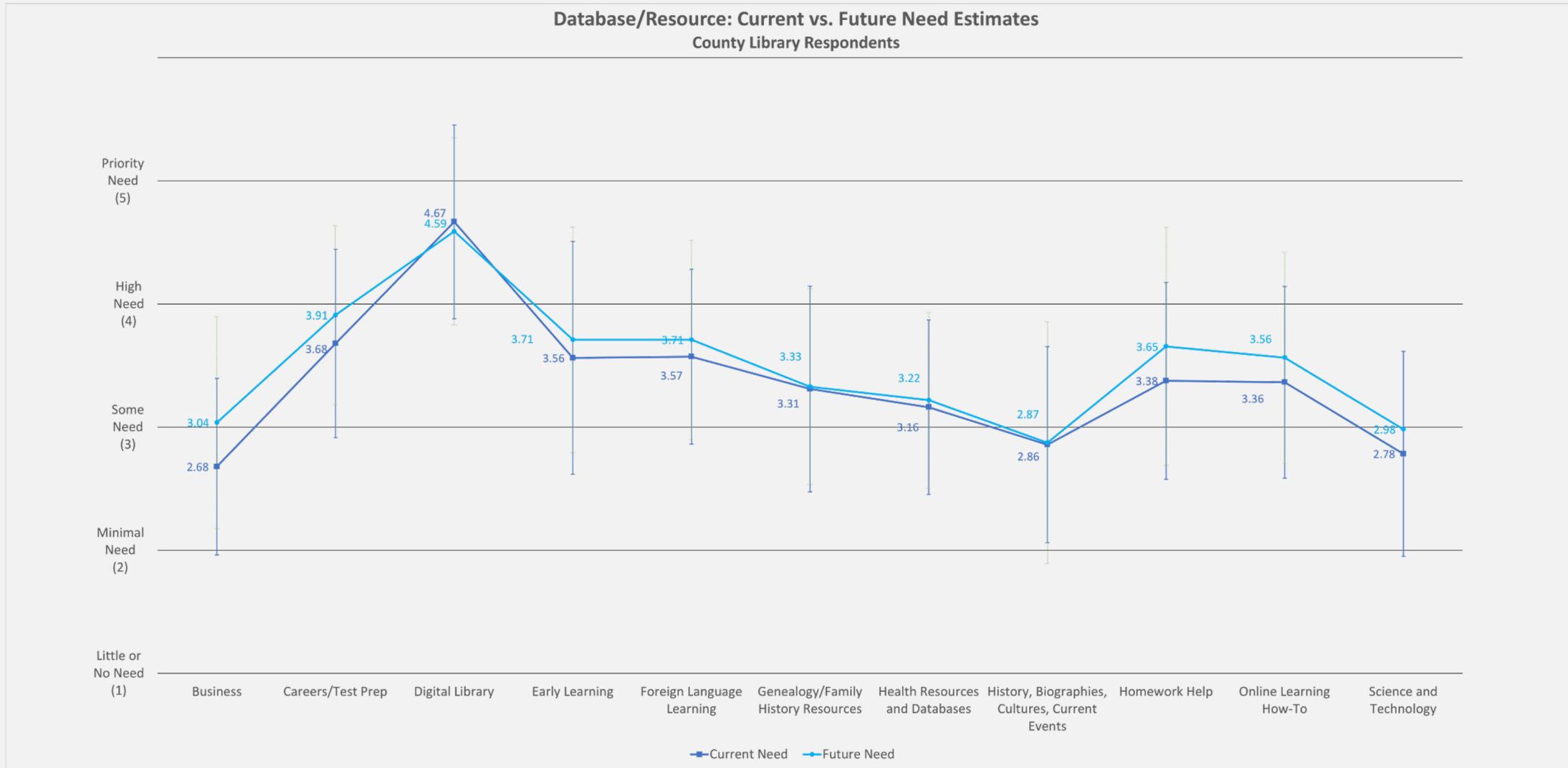
Question: How would you describe the current need for each of the following types of resources based on the people your organization serves? Question: Thinking ahead 3-5 years, what will be the future need for each of the following database/resources based on the people your organization serves—or is seeking to change its capacity to serve in the future?

City Library: Current vs. Future Need Estimates



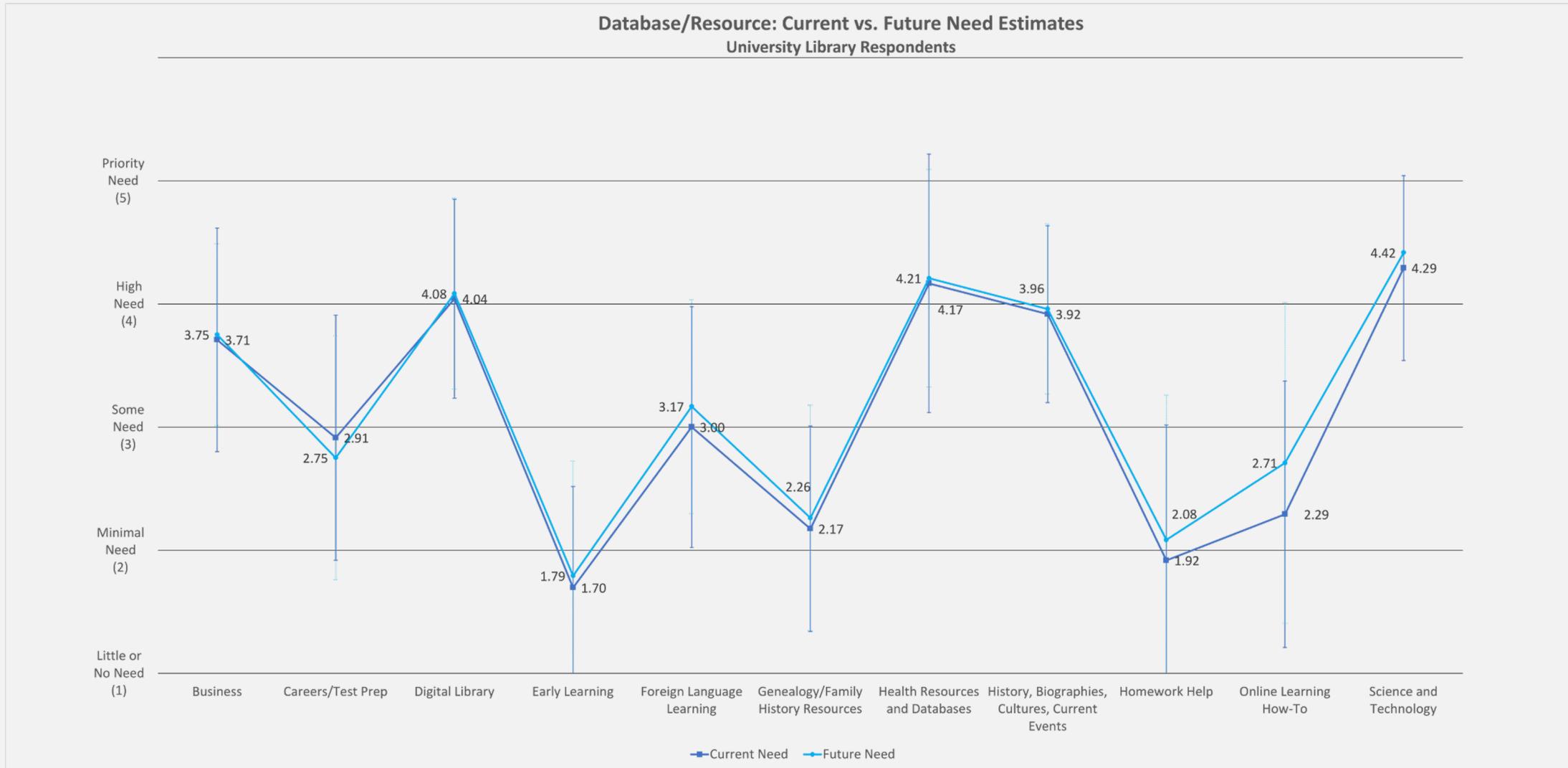
Question: How would you describe the current need for each of the following types of resources based on the people your organization serves? Question: Thinking ahead 3-5 years, what will be the future need for each of the following database/resources based on the people your organization serves—or is seeking to change its capacity to serve in the future?

County Library: Current vs. Future Need Estimates



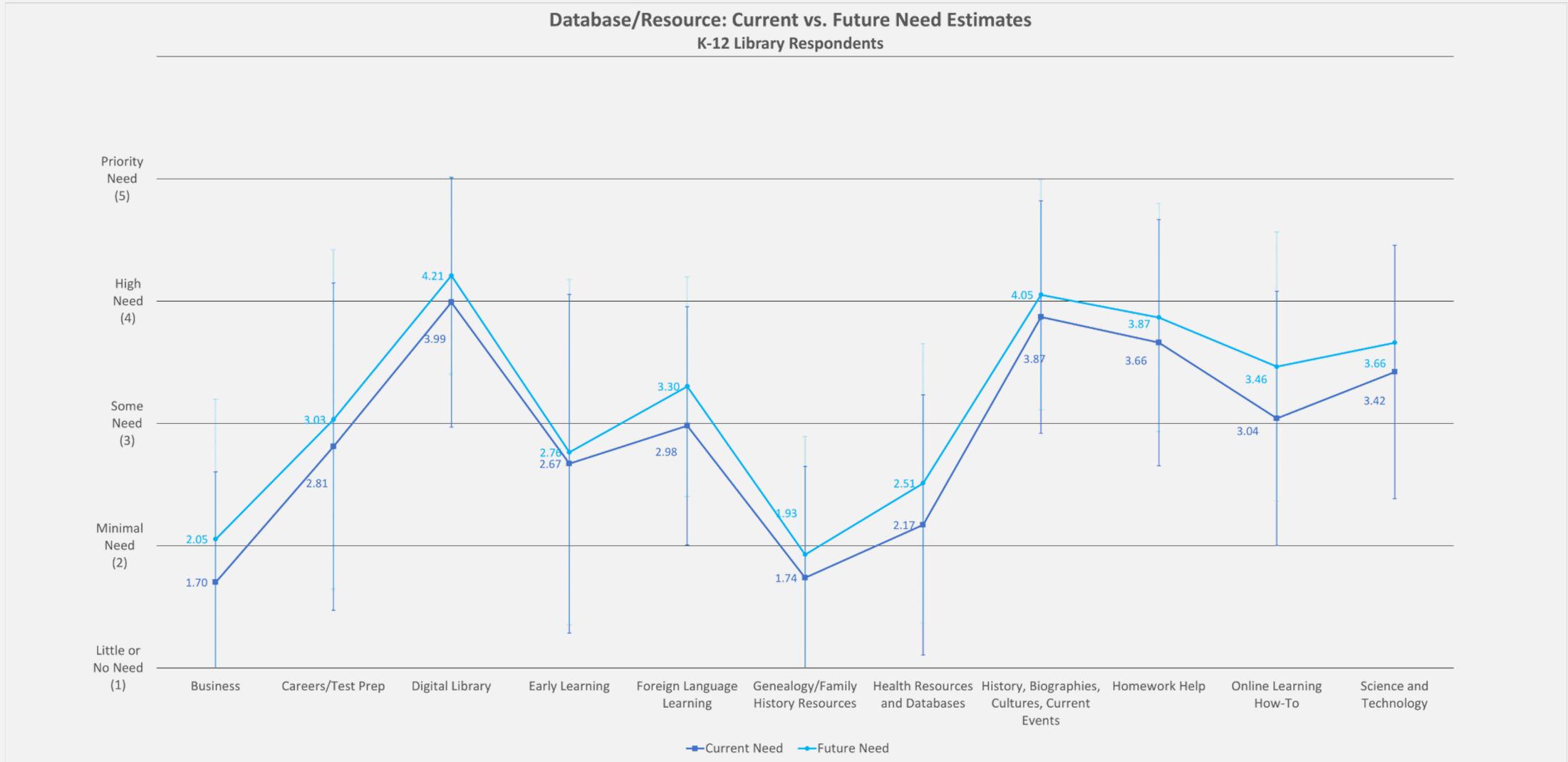
Question: How would you describe the current need for each of the following types of resources based on the people your organization serves? Question: Thinking ahead 3-5 years, what will be the future need for each of the following database/resources based on the people your organization serves—or is seeking to change its capacity to serve in the future?

University Library: Current vs. Future Need Estimates



Question: How would you describe the current need for each of the following types of resources based on the people your organization serves? Question: Thinking ahead 3-5 years, what will be the future need for each of the following database/resources based on the people your organization serves—or is seeking to change its capacity to serve in the future?

K-12 Library: Current vs. Future Need Estimates



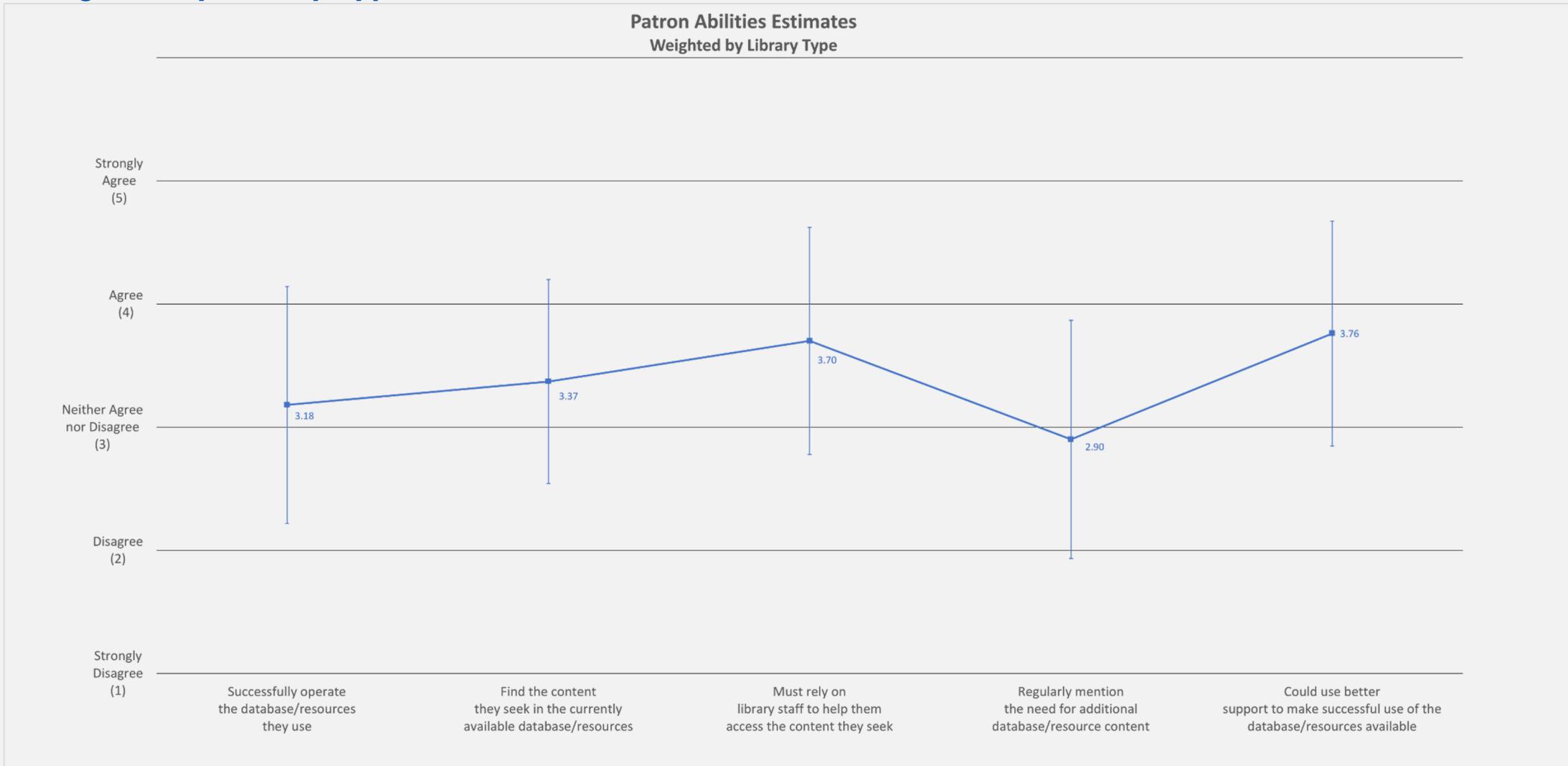
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Question: How would you describe the current need for each of the following types of resources based on the people your organization serves? Question: Thinking ahead 3-5 years, what will be the future need for each of the following database/resources based on the people your organization serves—or is seeking to change its capacity to serve in the future?

Patron Abilities and Need for Support.

Library Professional Estimates of Patron Abilities

Weighted by Library Type

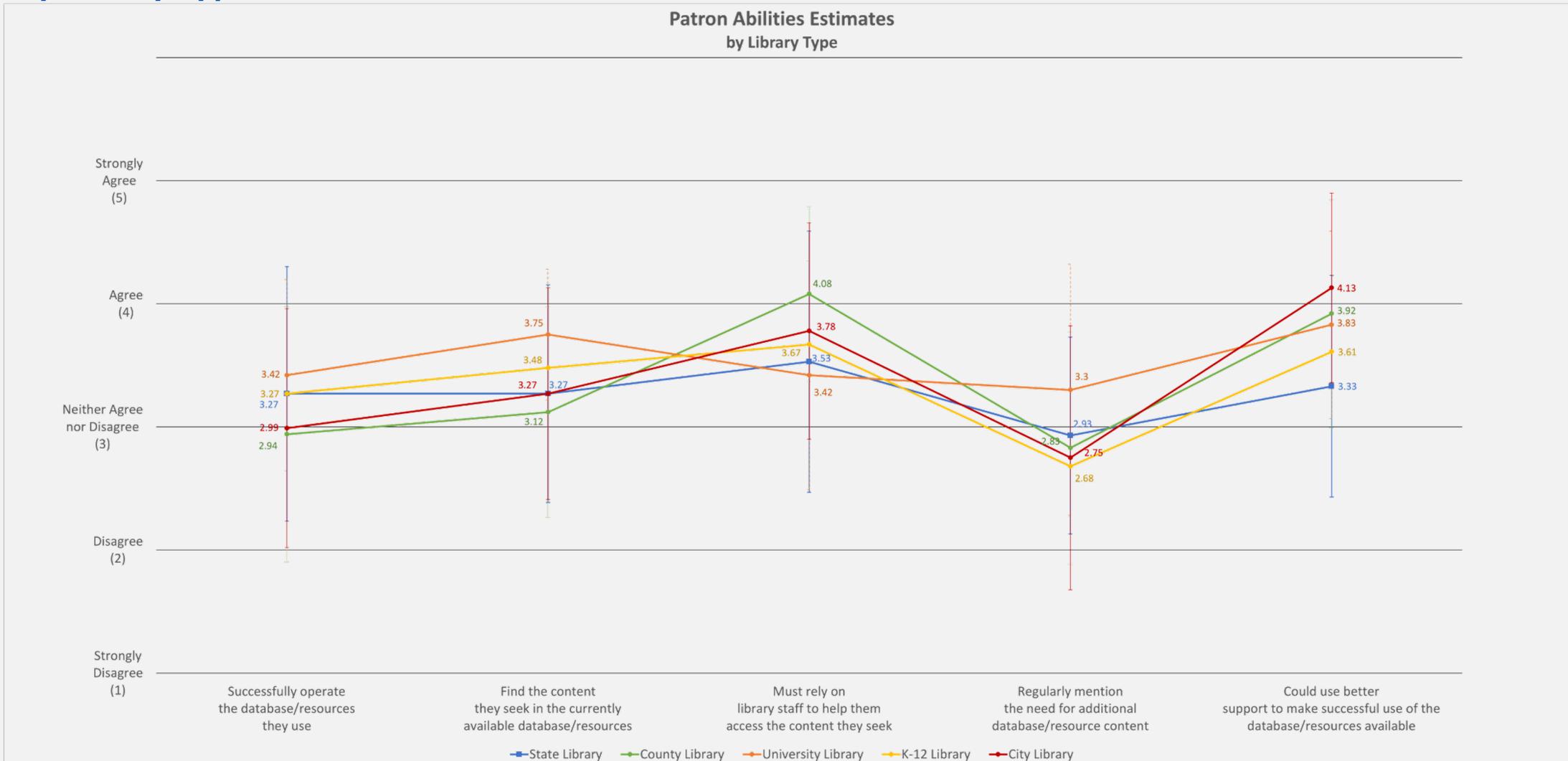


Question: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

"Speaking broadly, the people who use our library:

Library Professional Estimates of Patron Abilities

by Library Type



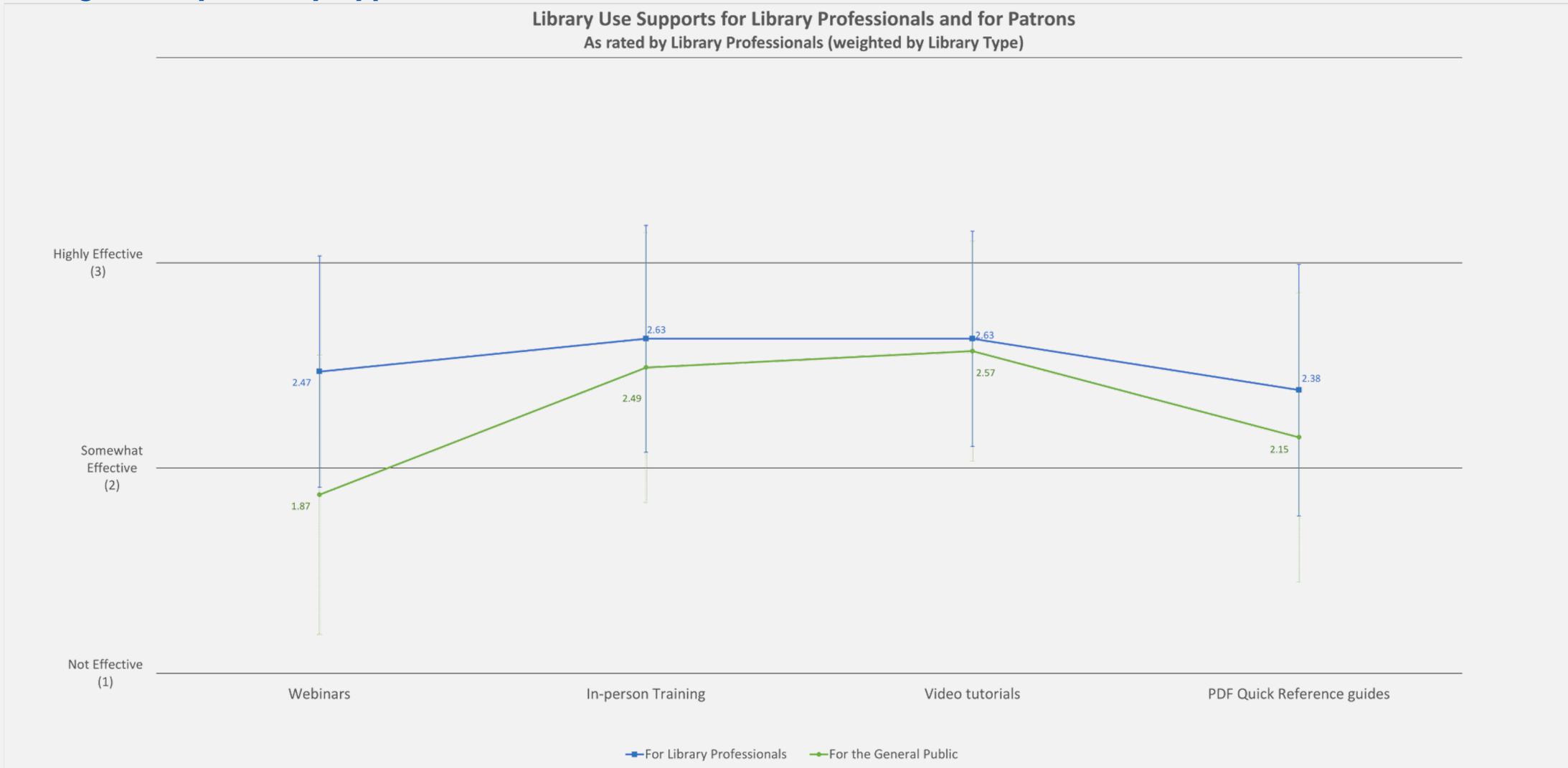
Question: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

"Speaking broadly, the people who use our library:

Preference for Supports.

Support Preferences as rated by Library Professionals

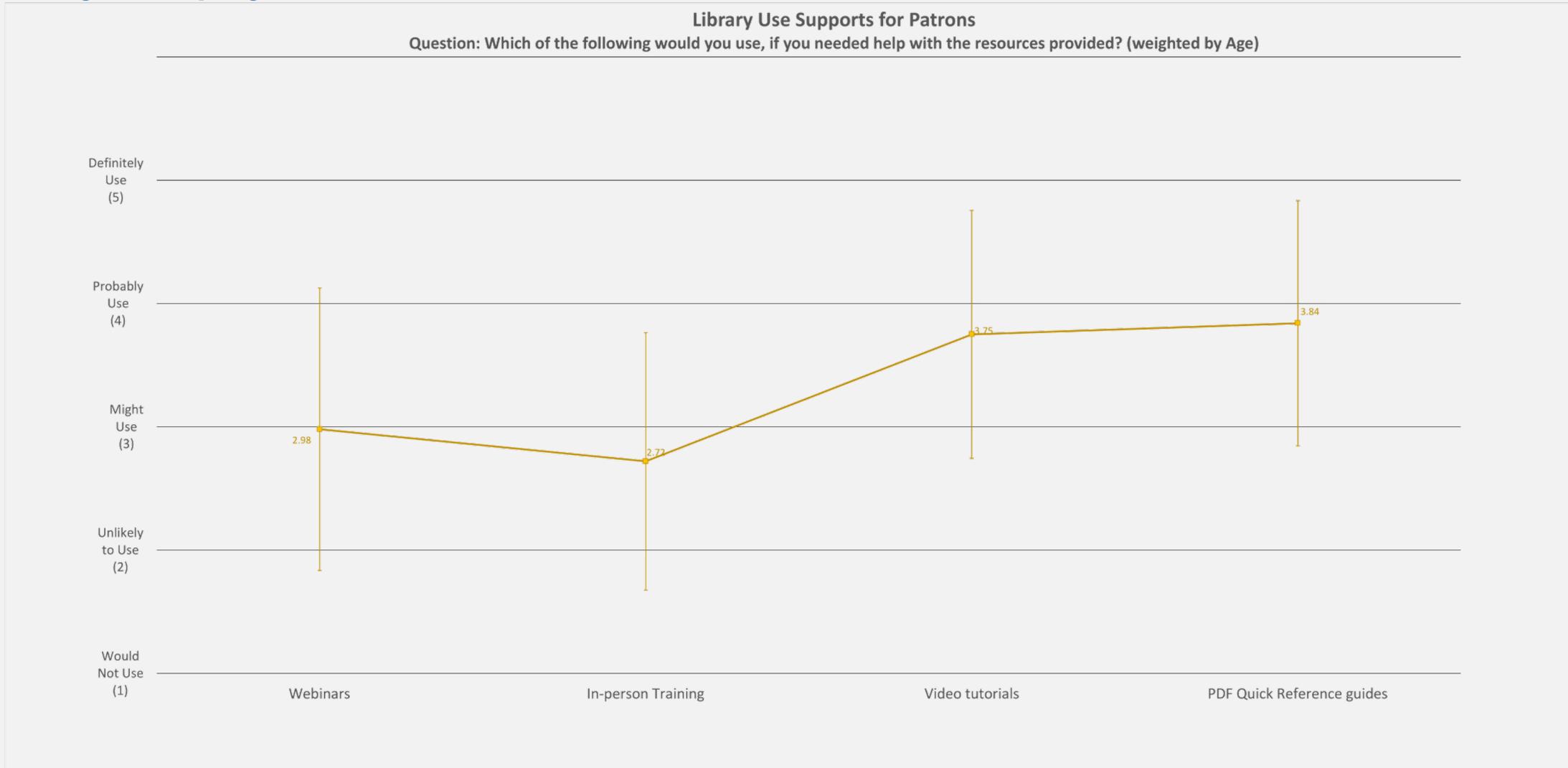
Weighted by Library Type



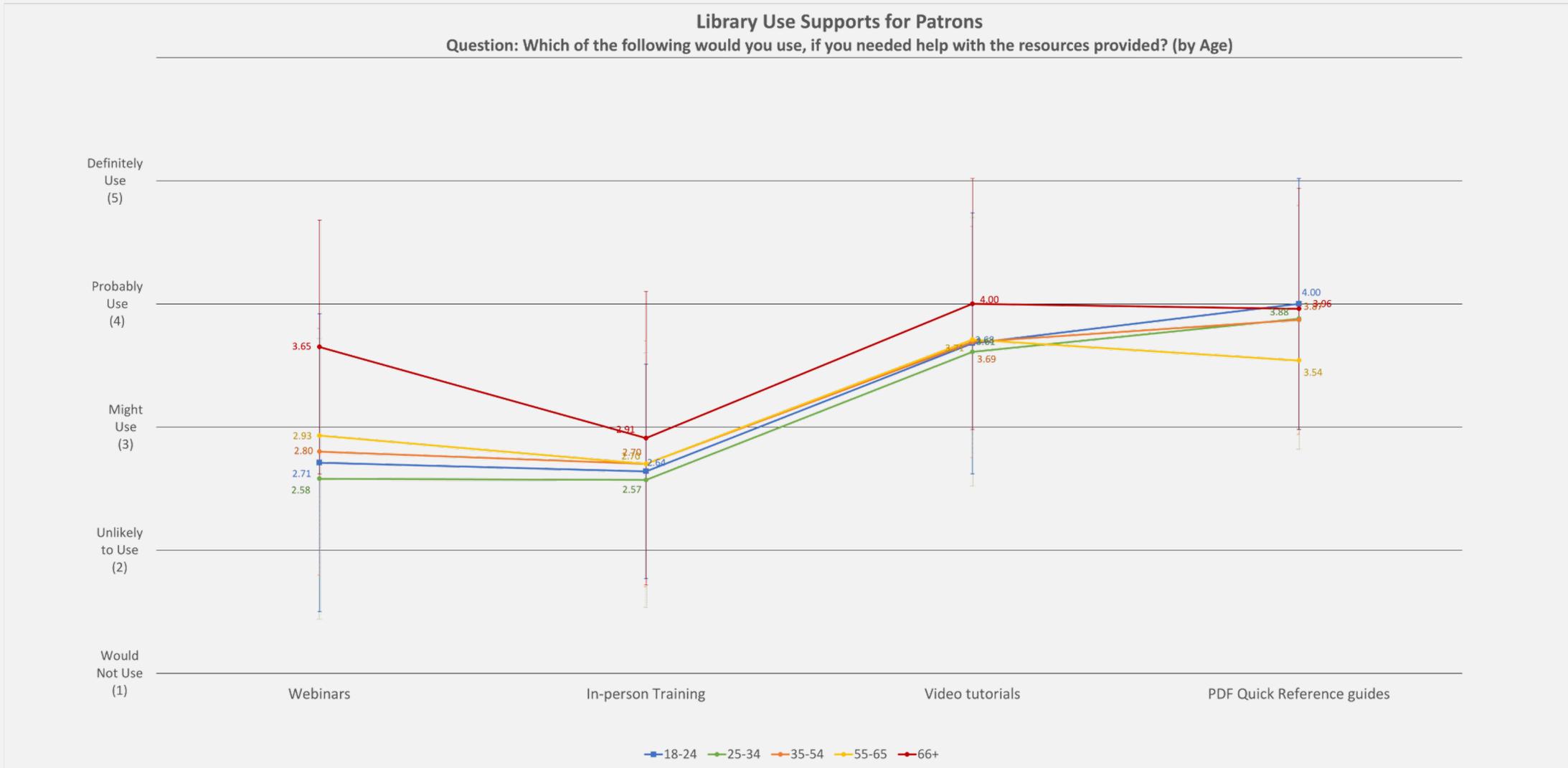
Question: How effective do you believe each of the following delivery strategies would be in getting necessary support to the people who need it? (Ratings by Library Professionals for their own needs and for the General Public.)

General Public Support Preferences

Weighted by Age



General Public Support Preferences, by Age

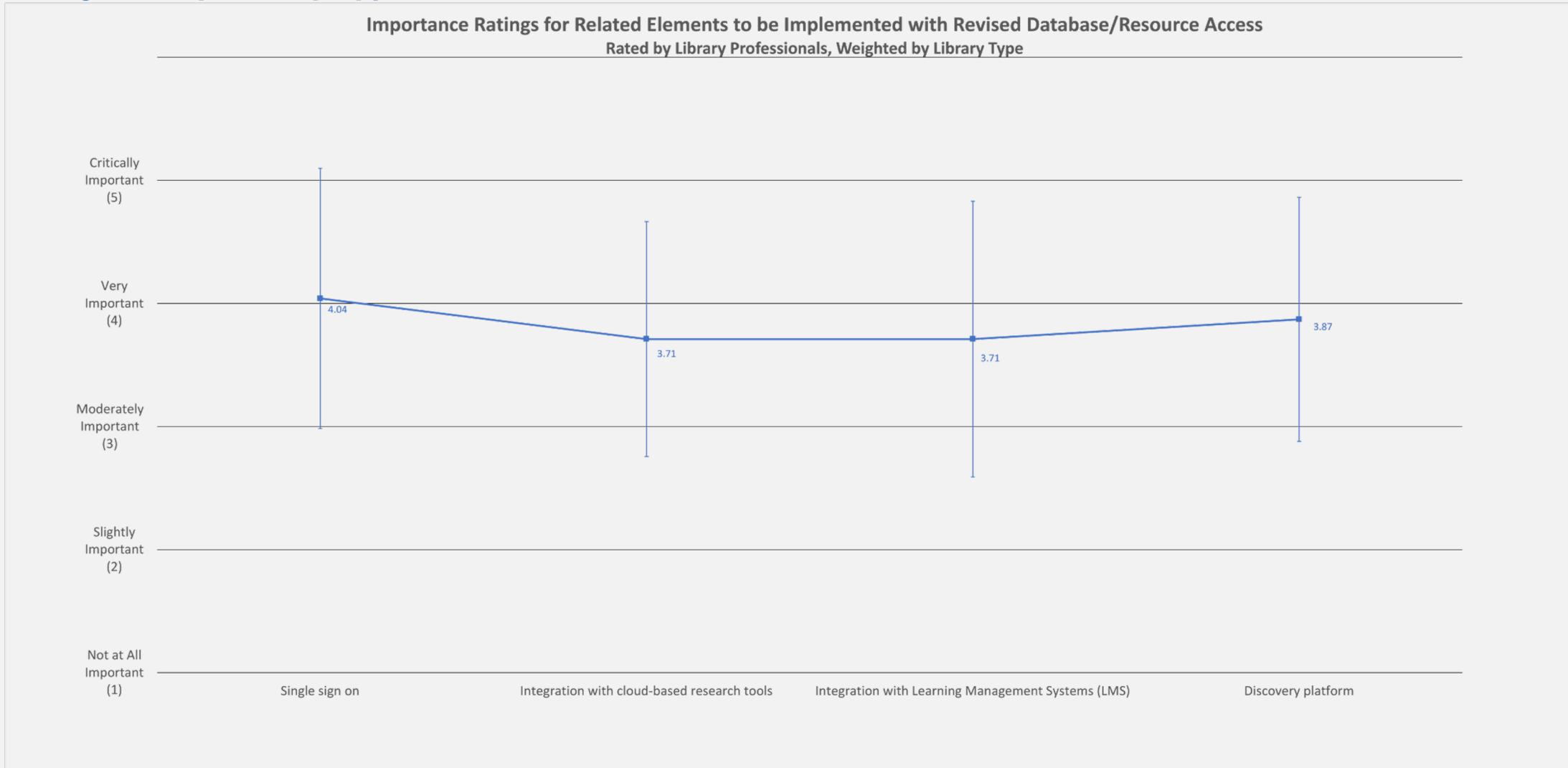


Question: Which of the following would you use, if you needed help with the resources provided?

Related Elements to Facilitate Resource Use.

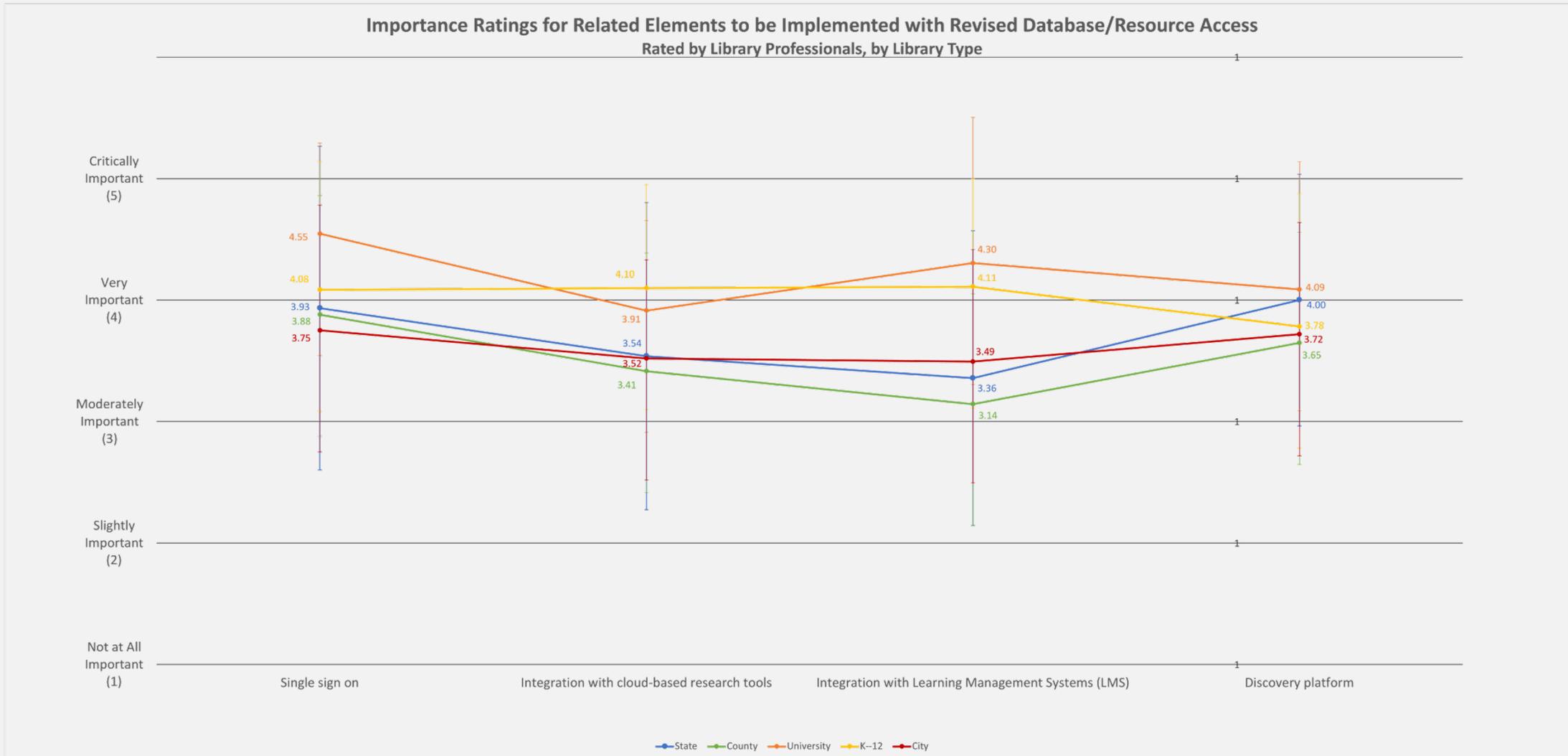
Importance of Related Elements for Use

Weighted by Library Type



Question: There are a range of related elements on which we can rely to make good use of the database/resources that are available. Below are three of these elements. How important you believe each one to be, in terms of being implemented with the revised database/resource access?

Importance of Related Elements for Use by Library Type



Question: There are a range of related elements on which we can rely to make good use of the database/resources that are available. Below are three of these elements. How important you believe each one to be, in terms of being implemented with the revised database/resource access?

Utah's Online Library

Utah's Online Library is a virtual library created by the Utah State Library in cooperation with Utah's public libraries, the Utah Academic Library Consortium, the Utah State Board of Education and Utah Education Network. The service is available at no charge to Utah residents. Access to resources varies by library and includes Utah's Online Public Library serving patrons of public libraries, Utah's Academic Online Library, designed for higher education students and faculty, Utah's Online School Library for primary and secondary school students and teachers and Preschool Path, for early learners, their parents, and caregivers.

This collaborative approach to online library services has been successful since the Pioneer Online Library was founded in 1995. By combining resources for licensing, marketing, and outreach, Utah can realize cost savings and efficiency. In 2016 the name was changed to Utah's Online Library and in 2019 the partners renamed their services to distinguish each partner's service area.

About the Analyst.

James Marshall, Ph.D.

James Marshall Consulting, Inc.

Dr. James Marshall's life-long work lies at the intersection of people and the organizations in which they work—and optimizing the synergy that fertile convergence holds. A Professor of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University, his scholarship, teaching, and consulting combine our understanding of human performance and organization development to assess strengths, devise strategy, and improve even the most vexing of challenges.

With over 200 publications to his credit, Marshall's scholarship encompasses a diverse range of works that include empirical research, program evaluation efforts, and policy development. His evaluation endeavors are particularly significant and include more than 250 individual studies of funded projects and program investments totaling over \$120 million dollars.

Marshall serves as a thought partner to leaders seeking to hasten the collective impact of their organization's investments. From assessing strengths and needs, to conceptualizing strategy and program initiatives, and then measuring return on investment, Marshall's unique approach relies on a proven mix of assessment and evaluation, appreciative inquiry, and empathic understanding that predictably yields quantifiable results. His book, *Right from the Start: The Essential Guide to Implementing School Initiatives*, summarizes lessons learned through evaluation of hundreds of programs in both the public and private sectors.

He holds a Master of Arts, with an emphasis in Education Technology from San Diego State University and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education from Claremont Graduate University.

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