

Wikimedia Survey: Findings on Fundraising Questions



By Celinda Lake, David Mermin, and
Liesl Newton

Washington, DC | Berkeley, CA | New York, NY
LakeResearch.com

Methodology

- Survey conducted from February 12-17, 2015.
- Online survey of 2,300 Wikipedia readers (1,000 in the United States, 400 in Canada, 400 in Australia/New Zealand, and 500 in the United Kingdom).
- The margin of error for the U.S. sample is +/- 3.1.
- The margin of error for the United Kingdom sample is +/- 4.4.
- The margin of error for the Canada sample and for the Australia/New Zealand sample is +/- 4.9.
- The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, region, and race to match the sample to the estimated population of Wikipedia readers.
- This summary reports findings on questions related to fundraising for Wikipedia.

General Impressions of Wikipedia



WIKIPEDIA

Although a majority of Wikipedia users correctly identify the organization that supports it as a non-profit, many are misinformed or uncertain. In most countries surveyed, fewer than half of Wikipedia users correctly identify reader donations as the site's primary funding source.

At least three-fifths of Wikipedia users in all countries surveyed correctly identify the organization that manages Wikipedia as a not-for-profit. Awareness is lowest—and misconceptions most prevalent—in the United States.

Best Describes the Organization that Supports Wikipedia

■ United States ■ Canada ■ Australia/New Zealand ■ United Kingdom



To the best of your knowledge, which of the following best describes the organization that manages Wikipedia?

When asked about Wikipedia’s primary funding source, users are more inclined to point to reader donations than to any alternative. However, the United Kingdom is the only country where a *majority* of users correctly identify reader donations as Wikipedia’s primary funding source.

Primary Funding Source	United States	Canada	Australia/ New Zealand	United Kingdom
Reader Donations	37	49	43	52
Advertising	16	13	18	20
Private Investors	8	6	6	6
Government Funding	1	0	1	1
All of the Above	15	14	12	4
Don’t Know	20	17	19	17
Other	2	1	0	0

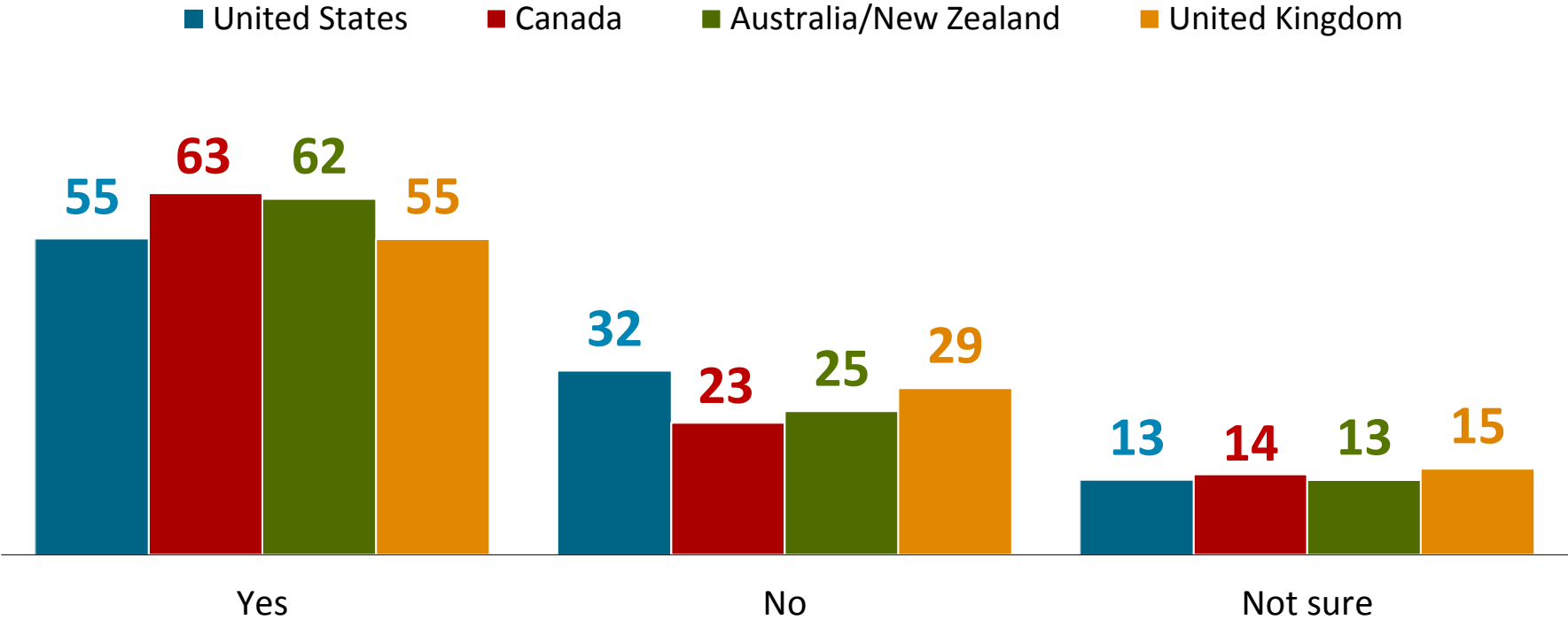
Exposure to Fundraising Messages and Motivations to Donate

Most users have seen a fundraising message on Wikipedia at least once in the past year, though a sizable minority have not. Most users have not personally made a donation. Among those who have, most explain that they donated because they are frequent users of the site and want to support it. A general disinclination to donate, questions about where the donations go, and concerns about online giving are users' top reasons not to donate.

A majority of users in all the countries surveyed remember seeing a fundraising message on Wikipedia in the past year.

- Users in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are particularly likely to recollect seeing a fundraising message, while just over half of U.S. and U.K. users remember seeing a fundraising message on Wikipedia in the past year.

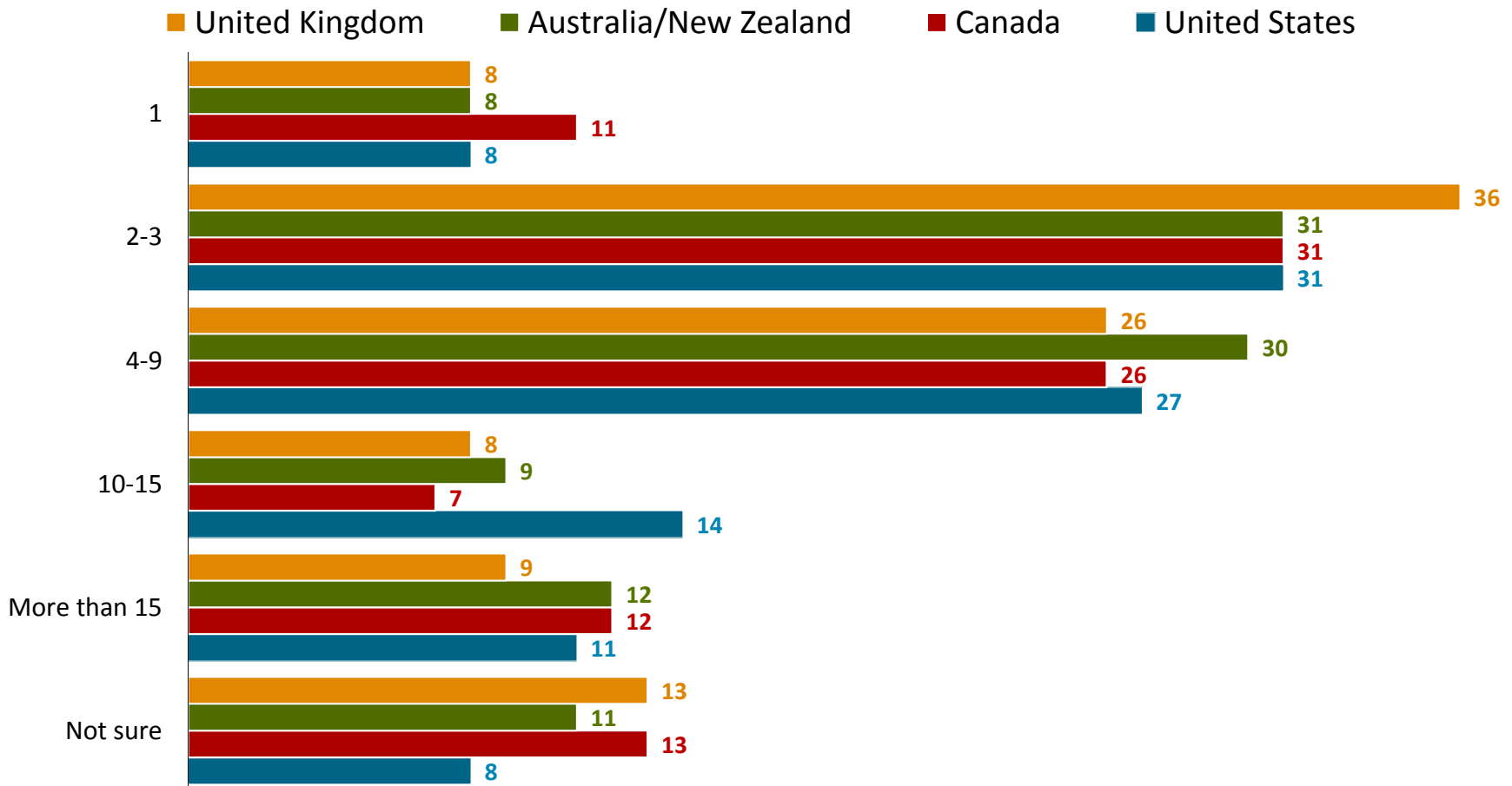
In the past year, have you seen a fundraising message on Wikipedia?



Among those who remember seeing a fundraising message on Wikipedia in the past year, most users remember seeing the message more than once but fewer than ten times.

- In all the countries surveyed, a plurality of those who have seen a fundraising message remember seeing two or three such messages in the past year.

Number of Times Fundraising Message Seen in Past Year*



*Asked only of those who reported having seen a fundraising message on Wikipedia in the past year

About how many times have you seen a fundraising message on Wikipedia in the past year?

Self-reported donors are most likely to cite their frequent use of Wikipedia as the primary reason for their donation. They are less likely to frame their donation in ideological terms (supporting free knowledge for all).

- Australians and New Zealanders are particularly likely to cite the fundraising message itself as the impetus for their decision to donate.

Why Donated to Wikipedia*	United States	Canada	Australia/New Zealand	United Kingdom
I use Wikipedia Often and Want to Support It	73	78	54	75
The Fundraising Message was Sincere and Appropriate	15	7	29	13
I Support Free Knowledge for All	7	7	9	6
I Want Wikipedia to Stay Online	4	7	6	4
To Keep Wikipedia Ad-free	1	0	2	3
None of the Above	0	0	0	0

*Asked only of those who reported having made a financial donation to Wikipedia

Which of the following best explains your decision to make a donation to Wikipedia?

After additional survey questions on Wikipedia and viewing a fundraising banner message, more users cite Wikipedia's dependence on readers as the best reason to make a financial contribution. They also highlight their own use of Wikipedia and want to see it continue.

Reasons to Make Financial Contribution	United States	Canada	Australia/New Zealand	United Kingdom
I Use Wikipedia and Would Like to See It Remain a Source of Information	28	36	34	30
Wikipedia Depends On Its Readers In Order to Survive	24	23	21	27
Wikipedia is a Non-profit	18	12	15	16
It's an Ad-free Site	10	8	7	7
To Protect Wikipedia's Independence	9	9	11	11
To Support the Work of Volunteer Content Contributors	4	2	4	1
Other	1	1	2	0
Don't Know	8	9	6	8

Users' most-often cited reason for electing *not* to donate to Wikipedia is that they don't usually donate, in general. However, discomfort making online donations and uncertainty about where, exactly, the money would go are also important factors for some non-donors.

- Strategic efforts to remedy these last two concerns would be beneficial.

Why Did NOT Donate to Wikipedia*	United States	Canada	Australia/ New Zealand	United Kingdom
Don't Usually Donate	27	33	28	28
Don't Know What My Donation Would be Used For	12	9	12	15
Uncomfortable Making Online Donations	11	14	17	16
Wikipedia Probably Gets Enough Donations, They Don't Need Mine	10	5	7	7
Don't Use Wikipedia That Often	7	8	5	9
Found Wikipedia's Fundraising Appeal Too Intrusive	5	5	4	4
Didn't Know Wikipedia Relied on Donations	4	2	3	3
Other	14	17	18	13
None of the Above	9	7	6	5

*Asked only of those who reported NOT having made a financial donation to Wikipedia

Which of the following best explains your decision NOT to make a donation to Wikipedia?



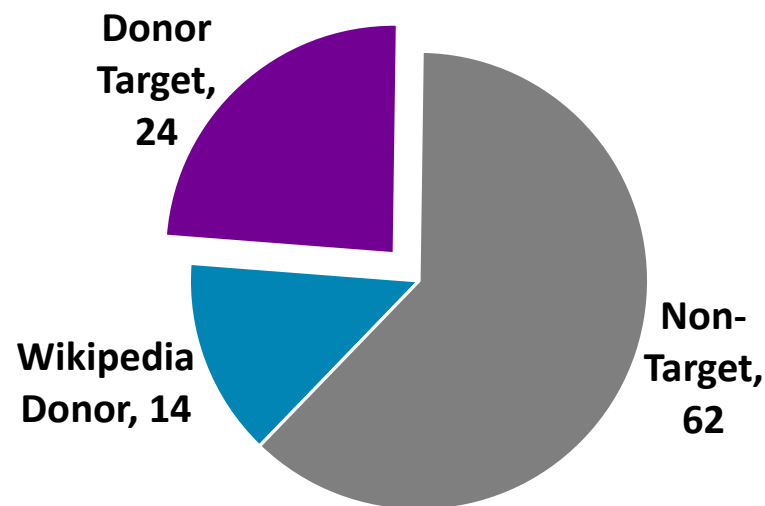
Donor Targeting

Approximately a quarter of users in each country surveyed are **donor targets**: they donate to other non-profits but not to Wikipedia. These targets tend to be more educated and middle-aged, though their exact demographic profiles vary by country.

United States

Major Issues Donated To	Overall	Wikipedia Donors	Non-Wikipedia Donors
Charities That Serve the Poor	48	46	48
Health and Disease	43	42	38
Religious Organizations	32	24	37
Animal Rights	31	31	28
Education	30	42	22
Environmental Protection	21	35	15
Civil Rights	17	31	13
Public Media and Broadcasting	11	20	9
Political Parties and Candidates	9	17	6
International Affairs	8	23	4
Other	7	4	10

In the United States, Wikipedia donors tend to be more prolific donors overall, except that non-Wikipedia donors are more likely to donate to religious organizations.

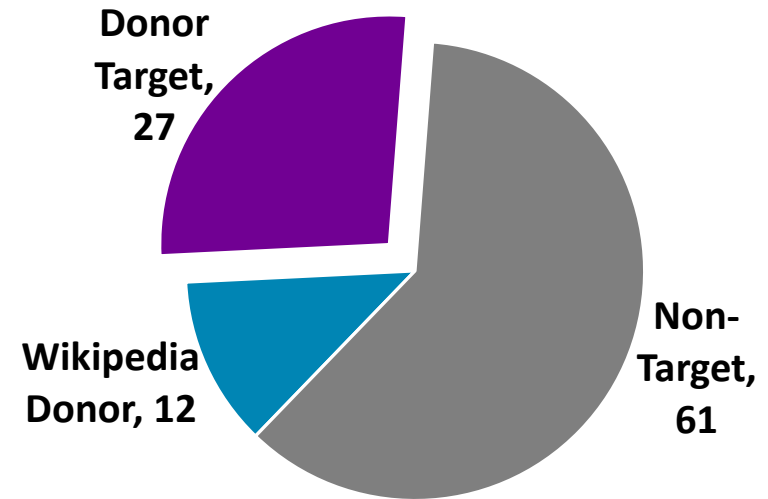


24% of U.S. users are donor targets: they donate to other non-profit organizations and groups, but not to Wikipedia.

Australia/New Zealand

Major Issues Donated To	Overall	Wikipedia Donors	Non-Wikipedia Donors
Charities That Serve the Poor	52	39	56
Health and Disease	50	41	47
Animal Rights	33	49	31
Environmental Protection	18	29	15
Education	16	28	12
Religious Organizations	15	26	18
Civil Rights	9	28	6
Political Parties and Candidates	7	20	3
Public Media and Broadcasting	4	19	0
International Affairs	9	24	5
Other	9	6	9

In Australia and New Zealand, Wikipedia donors tend to be more prolific donors towards most causes, though non-Wikipedia donors are more likely to donate to charities that serve the poor.

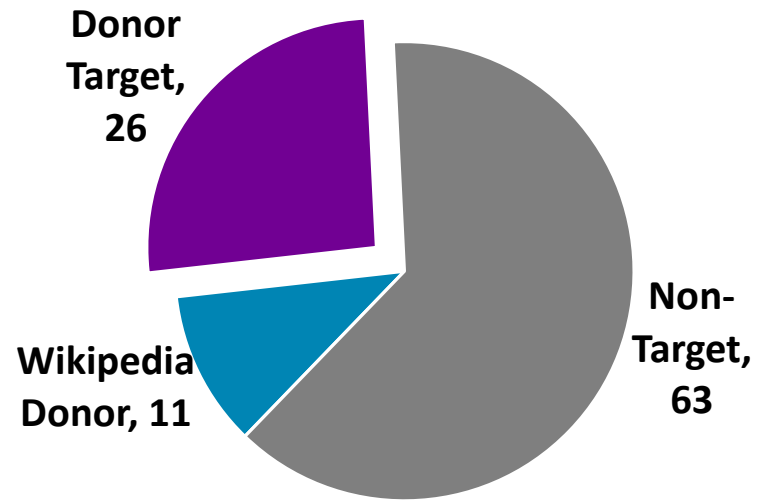


27% of Australia/New Zealand users are donor targets: they donate to other non-profit organizations and groups, but not to Wikipedia.

Canada

Major Issues Donated To	Overall	Non-Wikipedia Donors
Health and Disease	53	56
Charities That Serve the Poor	48	42
Animal Rights	30	25
Environmental Protection	24	21
Education	22	18
Religious Organizations	18	19
Civil Rights	7	4
Political Parties and Candidates	7	7
International Affairs	7	6
Public Media and Broadcasting	5	1
Other	9	7

In Canada, non-Wikipedia donors tend to be less prolific donors than Canadian users overall, though they are especially likely to donate to causes involving health and disease.

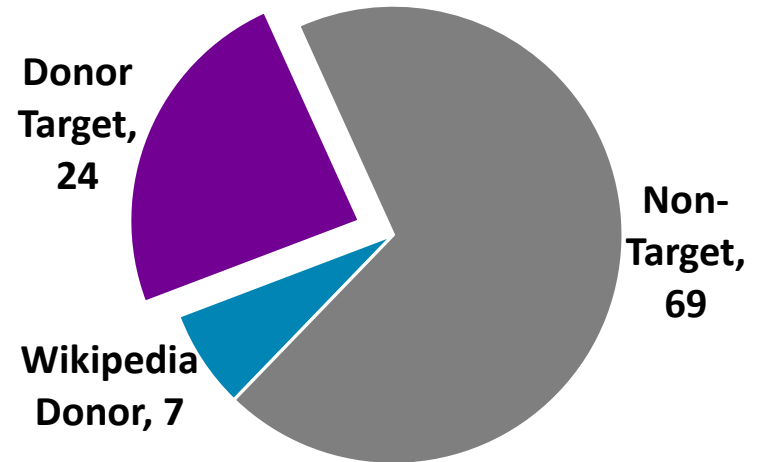


26% of Canadian users are donor targets: they donate to other non-profit organizations and groups, but not to Wikipedia.

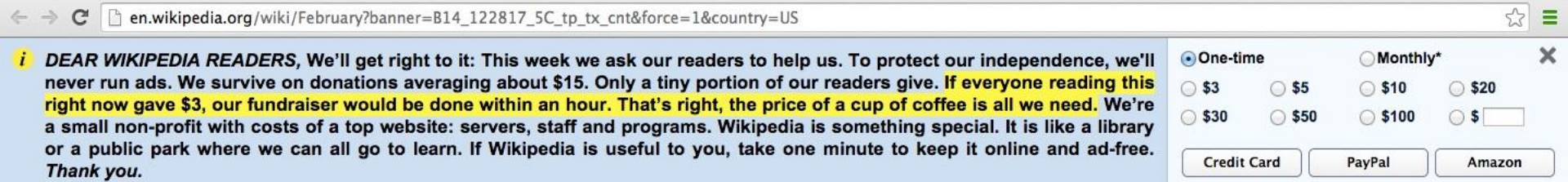
United Kingdom

Major Issues Donated To	Overall	Non-Wikipedia Donors
Health and Disease	62	60
Charities That Serve the Poor	47	49
Animal Rights	30	30
Environmental Protection	18	20
Education	17	9
Religious Organizations	10	12
Civil Rights	10	4
International Affairs	8	10
Political Parties and Candidates	4	5
Public Media and Broadcasting	1	0
Other	5	5

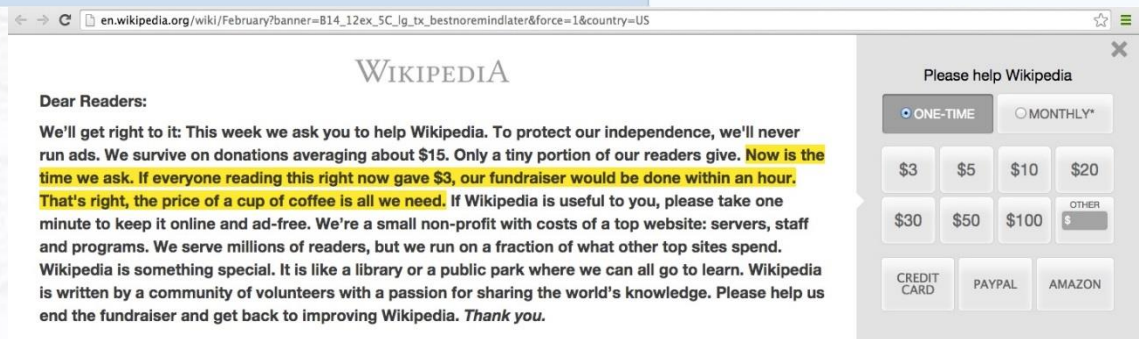
In the United Kingdom, Wikipedia donors and non-donors have similar preferences in terms of the other organizations to which they donate. Non-Wikipedia donors are less inclined to donate to education and civil rights causes, as compared to U.K. users overall.



24% of United Kingdom users are donor targets: they donate to other non-profit organizations and groups, but not to Wikipedia.



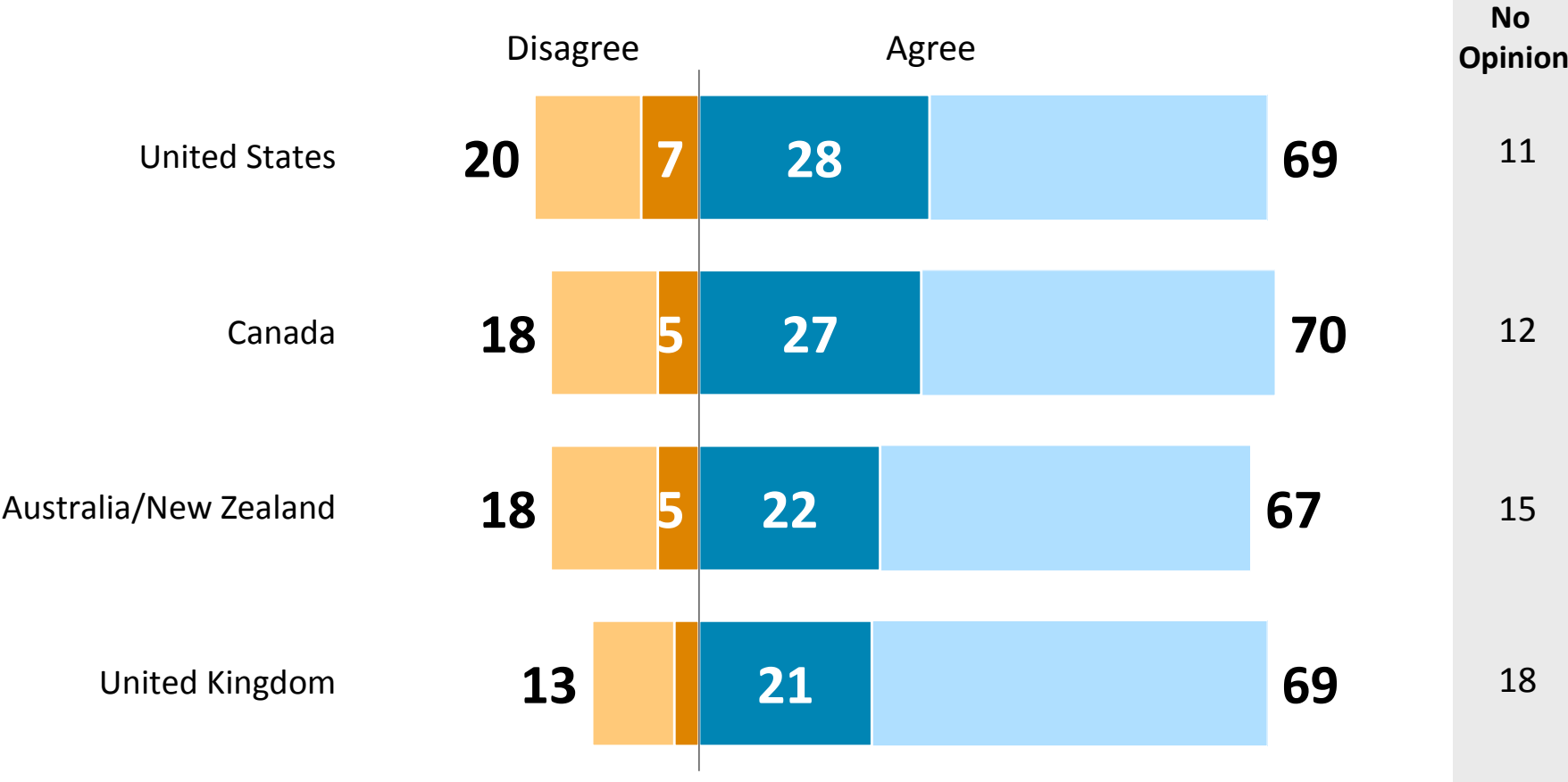
Responses to Fundraising Messages



Users are not turned off by Wikipedia's fundraising messages, but many don't take much notice at all. Users are under the impression that Wikipedia asks for donations less than other non-profits and does not run fundraising messages very often, which contributes to the lack of negative feeling toward the messages. Further, when prompted to assess the messages themselves, users rate these messages as clear and convincing. Still, it appears that many users do not typically pay much attention to these messages in their day-to-day Wikipedia use, which lessens the messages' impact.

Most Wikipedia users agree that they don't mind Wikipedia's fundraising messages because they know the fundraising is necessary. United States users are the most apt to complain, but, even in the U.S., only one in five users say they mind Wikipedia's fundraising messages.

"I don't mind the fundraising messages on Wikipedia because I know the fundraising is necessary."

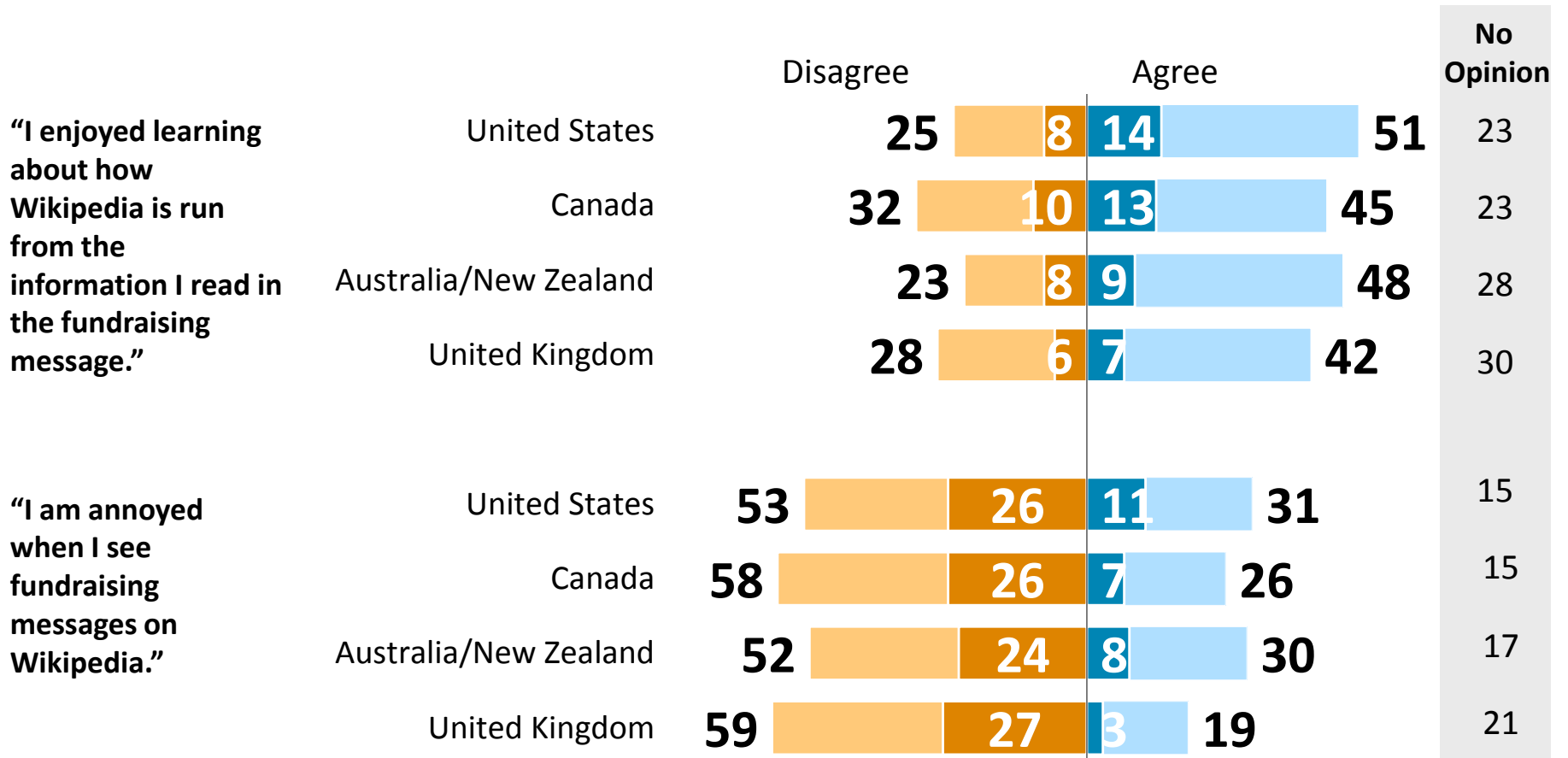


Darker colors indicate intensity.

For each statement, please choose whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement, or have no opinion.

Majorities of users in all countries surveyed say they are not annoyed by Wikipedia’s fundraising messages. A plurality of users in Canada, Australia/New Zealand, and the United Kingdom—and a majority in the U.S.—say they enjoyed learning more about how Wikipedia is run from the fundraising message, but few agree strongly with this assertion.

Feelings Towards Fundraising Messages

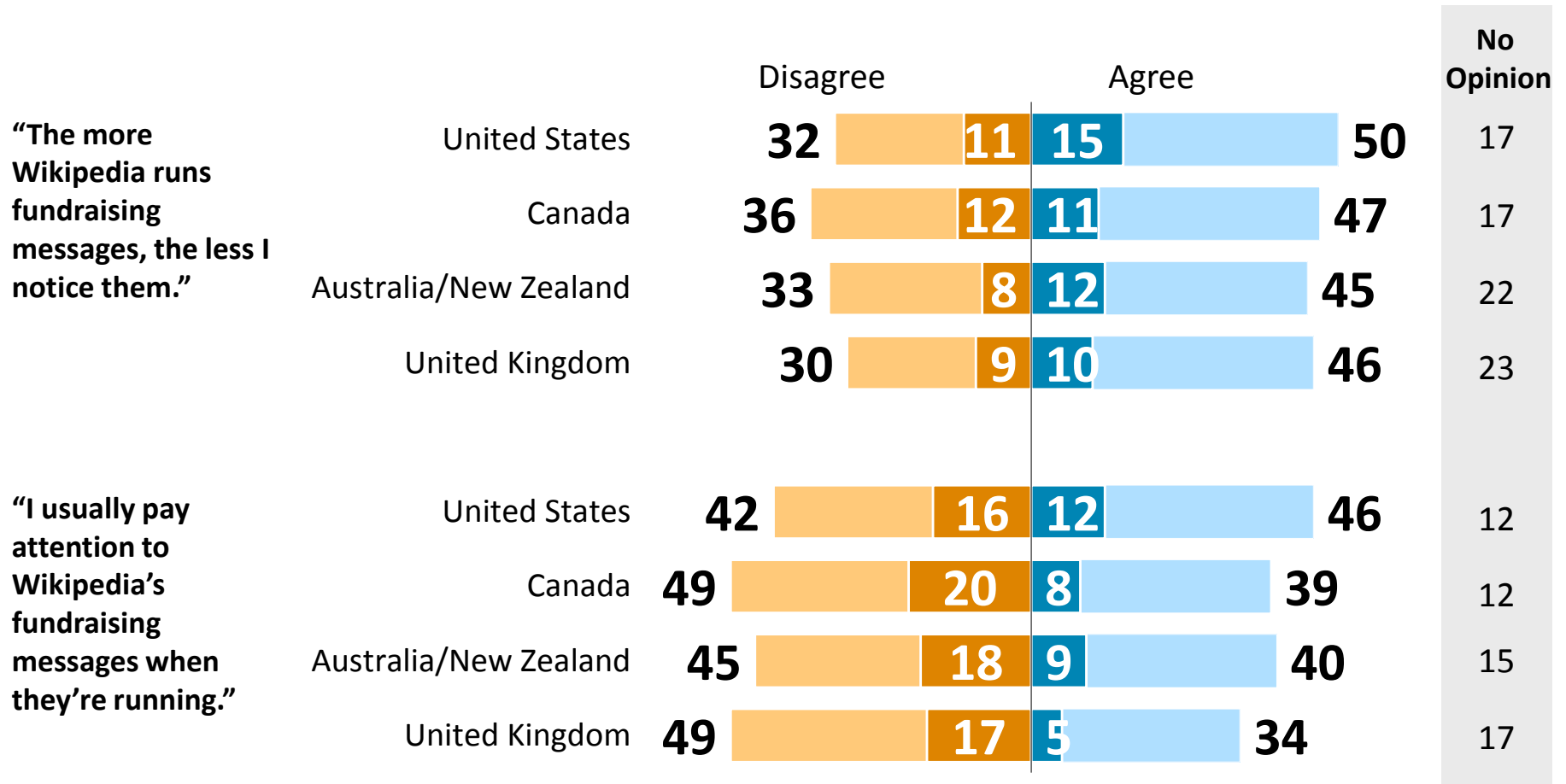


Darker colors indicate intensity.

For each statement, please choose whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement, or have no opinion.

Users split as to whether they pay attention to Wikipedia’s fundraising messages. A plurality in the U.S. say that they do, while pluralities in the other countries surveyed say they don’t usually pay attention to these messages. In all countries surveyed, a plurality of users agree that the more Wikipedia runs fundraising messages, the less they notice them.

Attention to Fundraising Messages

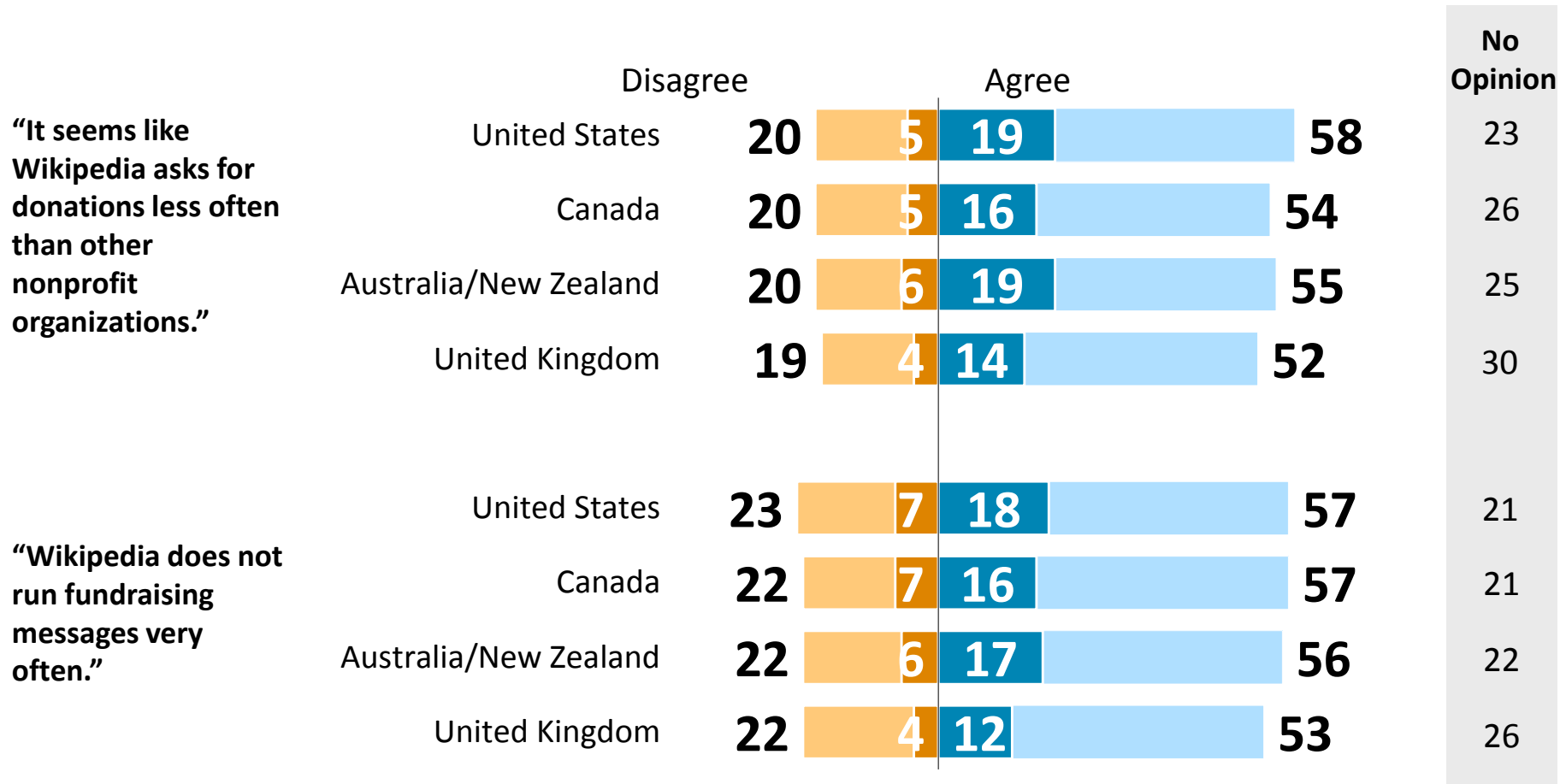


Darker colors indicate intensity.

For each statement, please choose whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement, or have no opinion.

Majorities of users in all countries surveys say Wikipedia does not run fundraising messages very often and are under the impression that Wikipedia asks for donations less than other nonprofit organizations. These are favorable impressions to maintain.

Frequency of Fundraising Messages

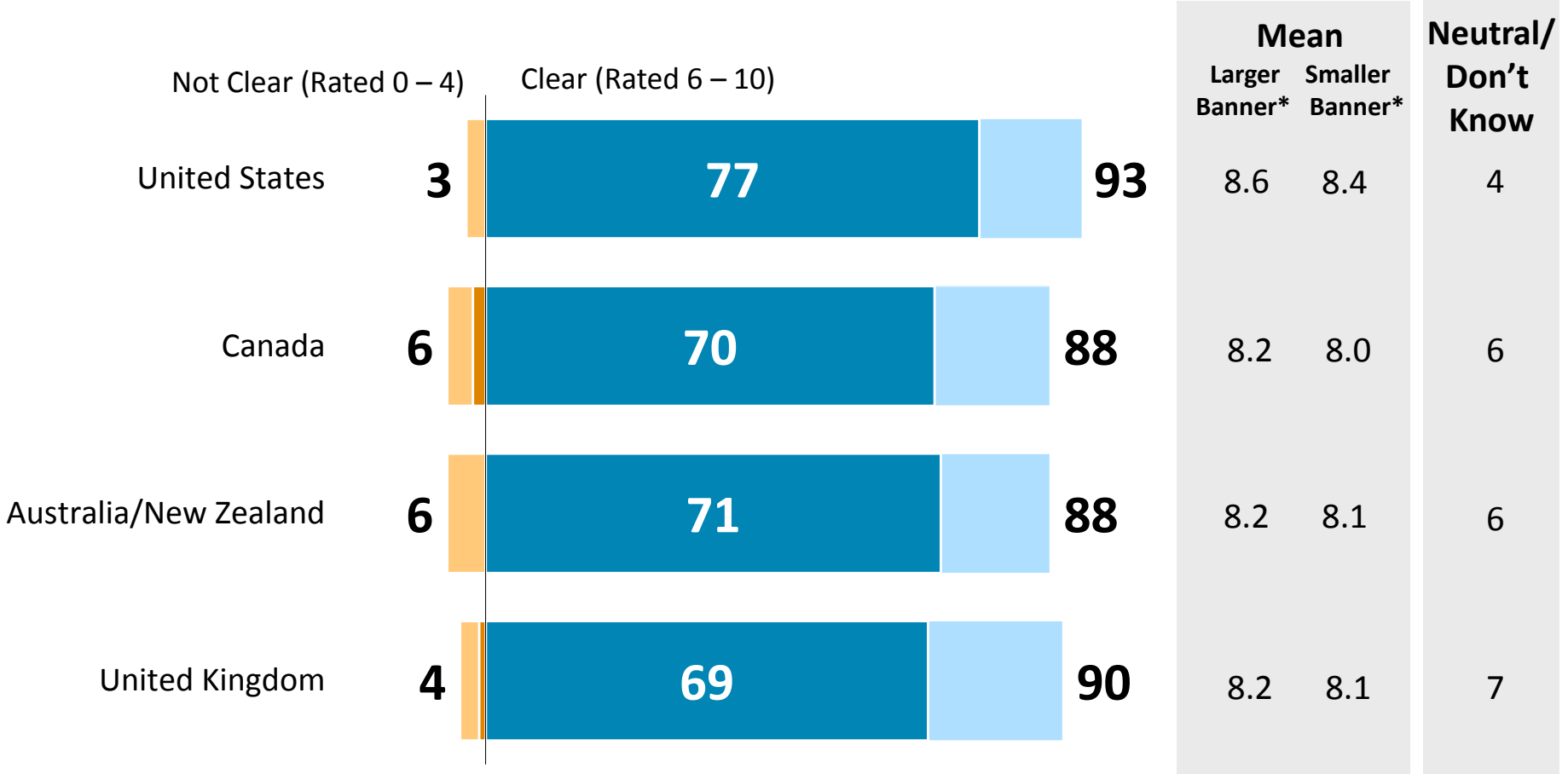


Darker colors indicate intensity.

For each statement, please choose whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement, or have no opinion.

Users in all countries find Wikipedia’s fundraising messages clear. They report the larger banner to be marginally clearer than the smaller one.

Clarity of Fundraising Message



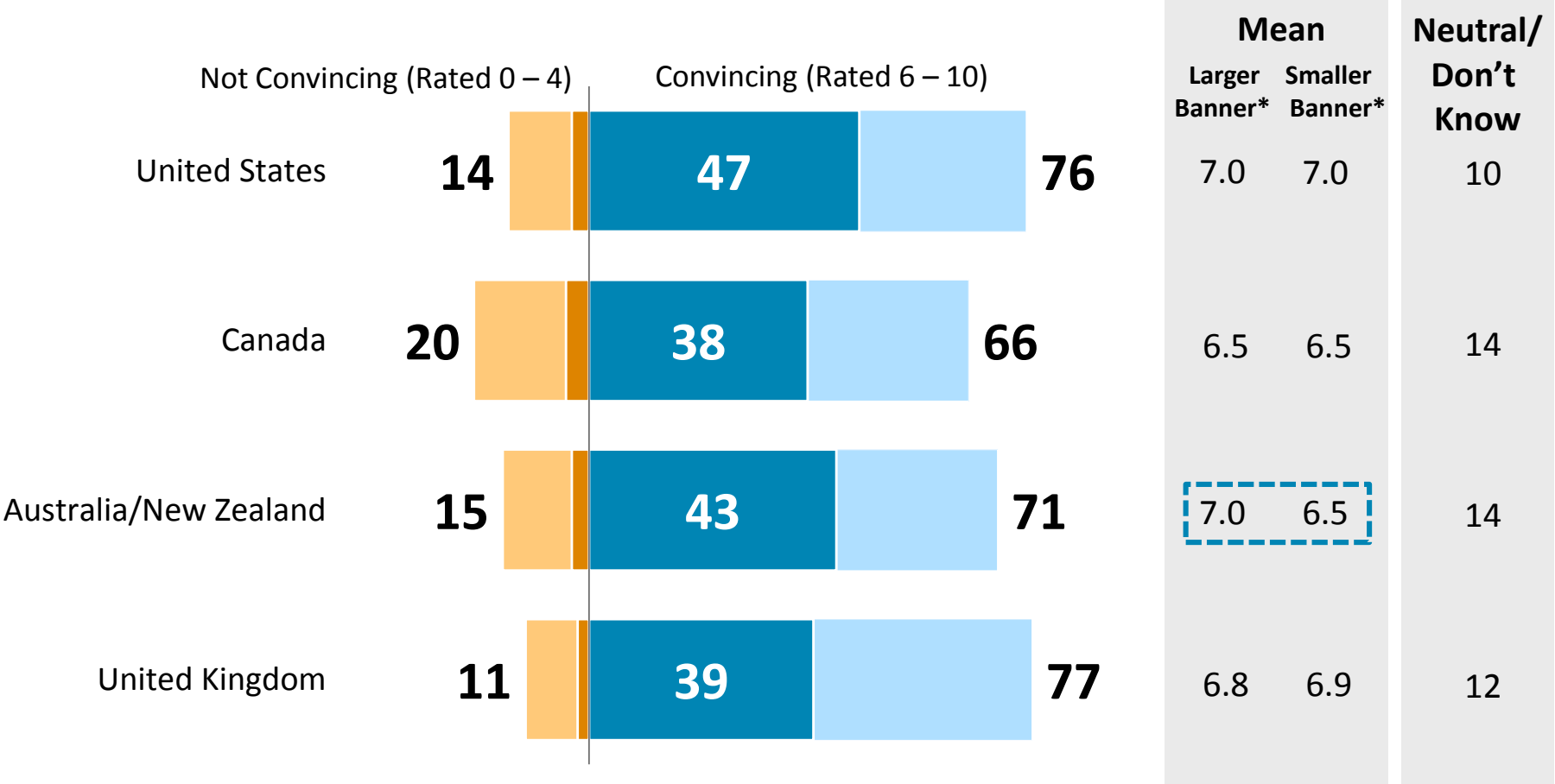
Darker colors indicate intensity (dark blue: rated 8-10).

On a scale of 0-10, where 0 means not at all clear and 10 means very clear, how would you rate the clarity of this fundraising appeal?

*Split-sampled 22

Most users find the fundraising messages convincing, including over three-quarters of users in the US and UK. Users in most countries rate the two messages similarly, but those in Australia/New Zealand give the larger banner higher ratings.

Convincingness of Fundraising Message



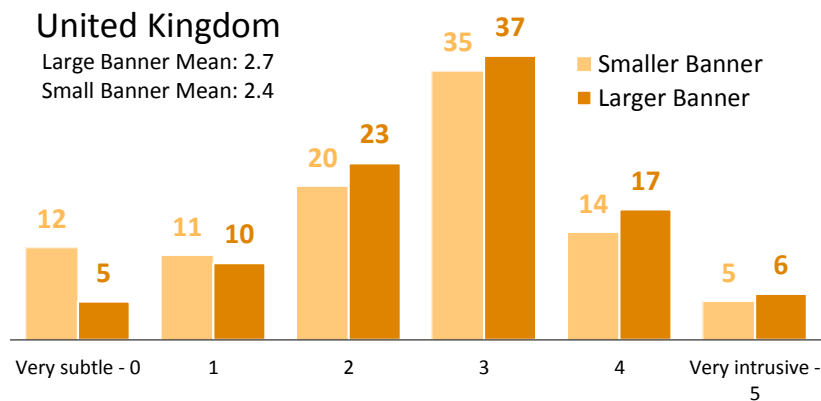
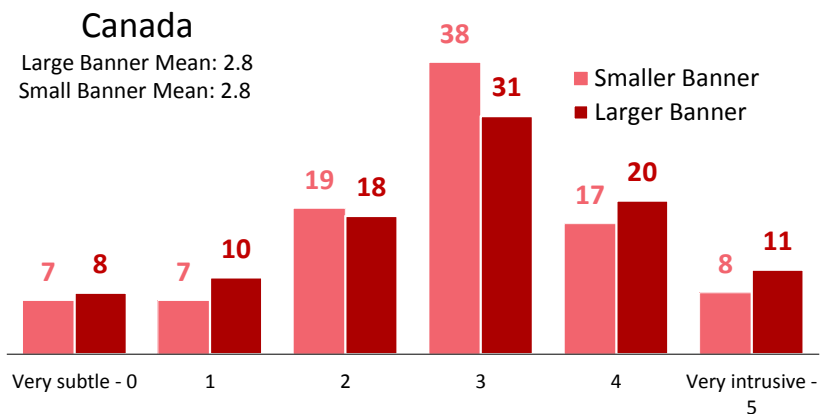
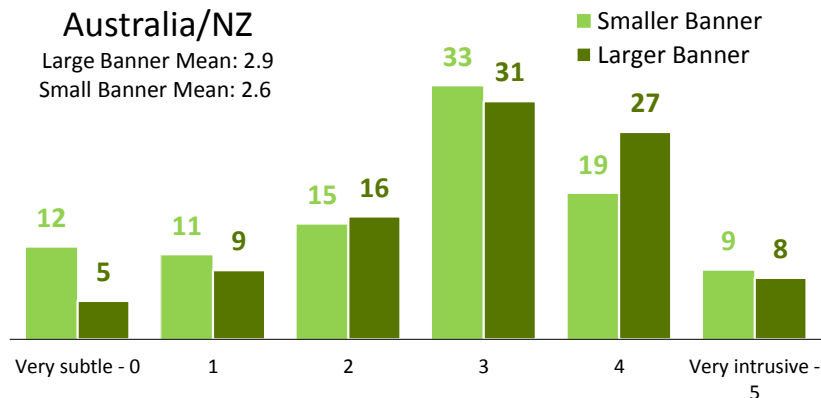
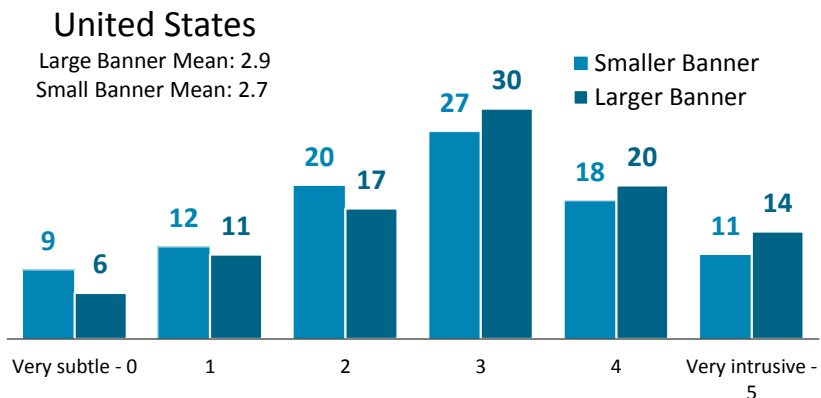
Darker colors indicate intensity (dark blue: rated 8-10).

On a scale of 0-10, where 0 means not at all convincing and 10 means very convincing, how convinced are you by this fundraising appeal?

*Split-sampled

Users tend to rate both the large and small banners towards the middle of the subtle-intrusive scale; few users consider either banner to be either very subtle or very intrusive. On average, users rate the larger banner as slightly more intrusive than the smaller one, but, overall, their ratings vary little based on the size of the fundraising message.

Intrusiveness of Fundraising Message



On a scale of 0-5, where 0 means very subtle and 5 means very intrusive, how would you rate this fundraising appeal?



Washington, DC | Berkeley, CA | New York, NY
LakeResearch.com