

Print vs. Digital Survey

4-H Curriculum 2024

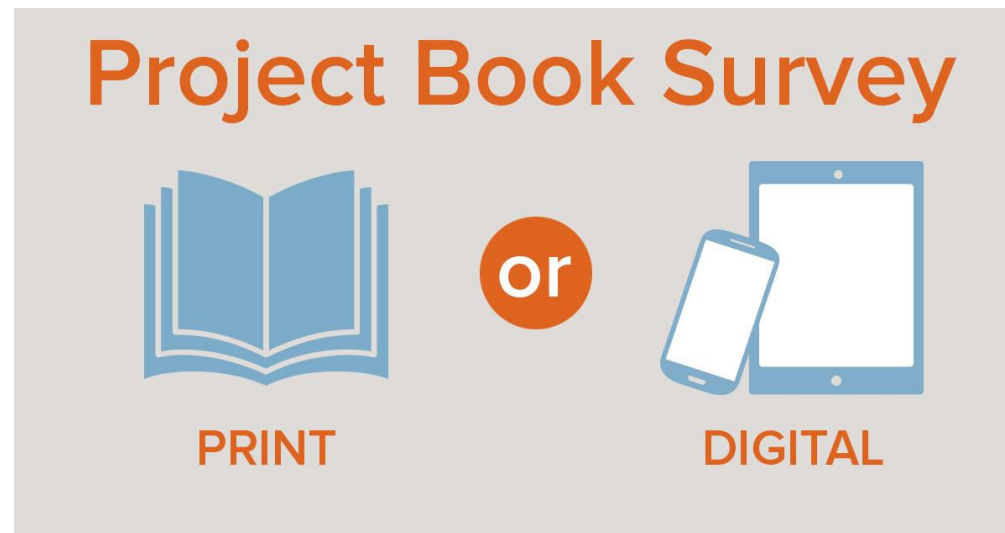
CFAES



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

What Do Our Volunteers and Members Prefer?



BACKGROUND

Ohio 4-H and other Extension professionals serve clientele who come from diverse backgrounds, including many with varying abilities and experiences in the use of technology. As we strive to meet the needs of youth, their families, and volunteers, we must offer up-to-date content but also adapt our delivery channels. These survey results are just one consideration as we move toward thoughtful content delivery that best supports our mission of positive youth development.

OBJECTIVE

Over the last decade, the Ohio 4-H curriculum team has conducted several surveys of Ohio 4-H members and volunteers about preferences for delivery of project book content. With a short series of questions, we elicited feedback about which of these delivery channels our members and volunteers prefer—our current system of print project books, digital delivery, or both.

THE SURVEY

- WHO:** 4-H volunteers and members
- WHAT:** Short questions about attitudes and preferences for print and digital content delivery
- WHEN:** Spring 2024
- WHERE:** At the Ohio 4-H Conferences and throughout counties through mid- April
- WHY:** We want to know which delivery channel our members and volunteers prefer.

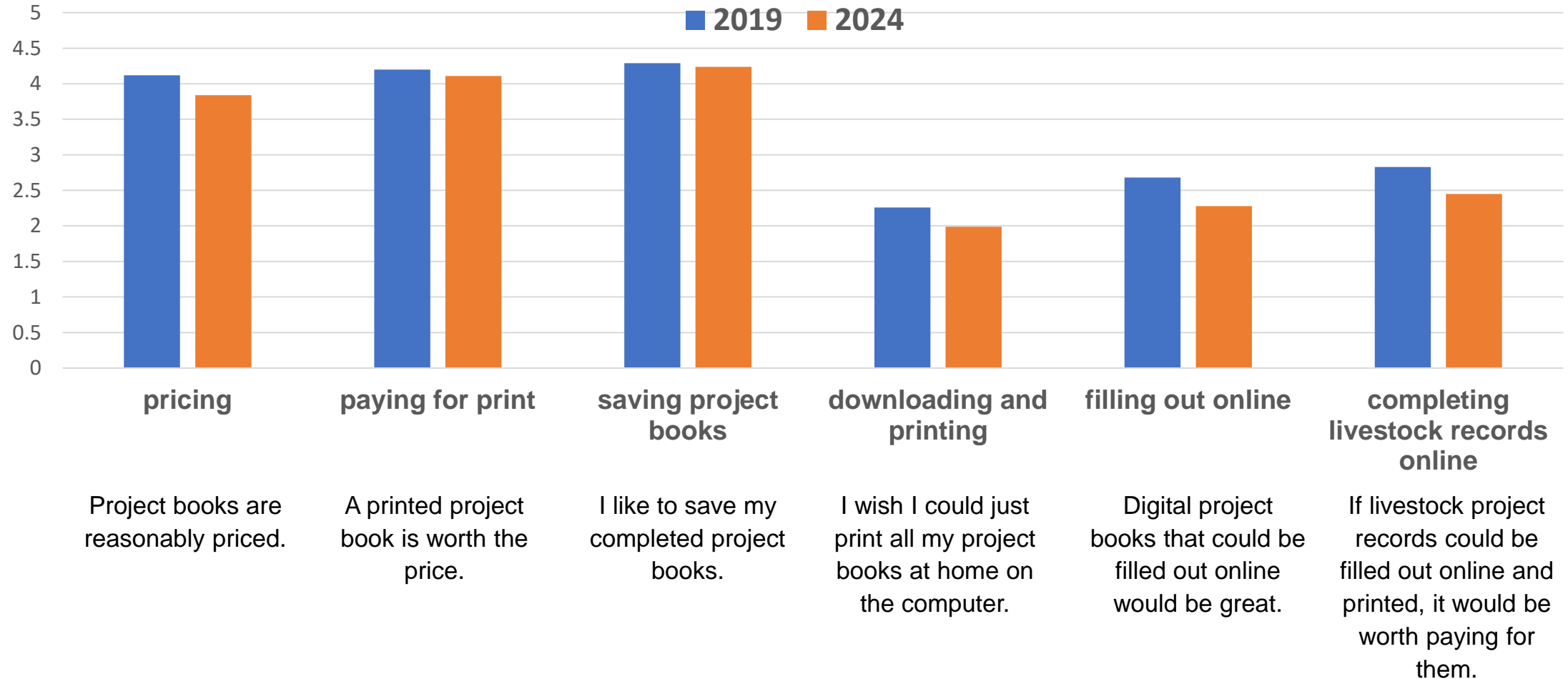
THE RESPONDENTS

Each survey's respondent pool is a different mix of volunteers and members. We strive to increase the number of respondents, especially members!

YEAR	TOTAL	MEMBERS	VOLUNTEERS
2019	707	239 (33.8%)	468 (66.2%)
2024	1,279	582 (46%)	697 (54%)

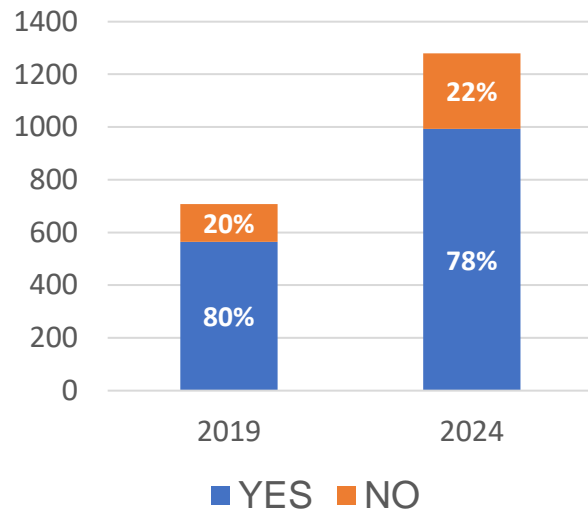
General Attitudes

“Think about the project book(s) you are using now or have used recently. Read the following statements and place a check in the column that indicates your level agreement, from Strongly Disagree (0) to Strongly Agree (5). If you are a 4-H volunteer, think about these statements in relation to youth in your club or county.”



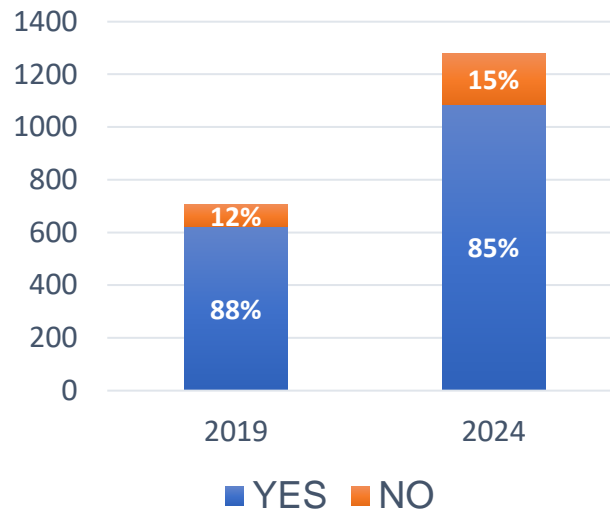
INTERNET ACCESS

Do you have access to a computer with high-speed internet in your home?



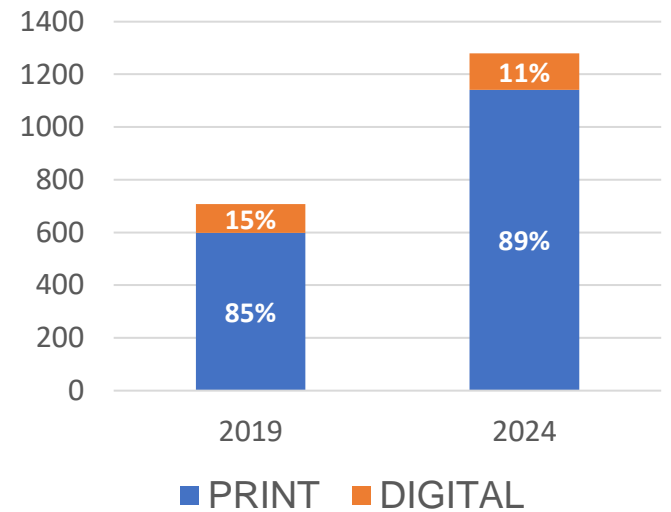
MOBILE ACCESS

Do you have your own smart phone or tablet?



PRINT vs DIGITAL

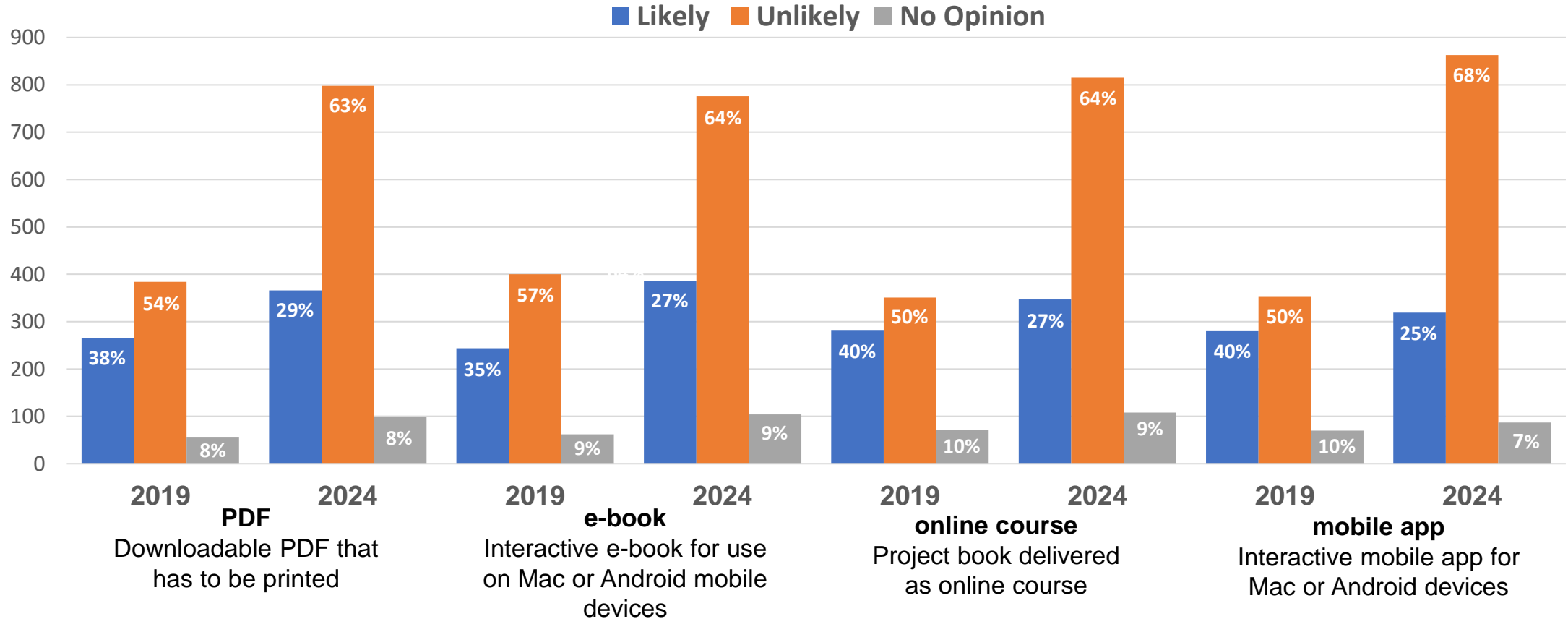
Generally speaking, if the price were the same, would you prefer print or digital project books?



Although access to high-speed internet and mobile devices is prevalent among respondents (4-H members and volunteers), their overwhelming preference for project book format is print.

What Does Digital Mean?

“Last question! ‘Digital’ means many things these days. Please say whether you are LIKELY or UNLIKELY to use each of the following formats. None would be free, but none would cost more than a printed project book.”



Most respondents to the 2024 survey say they are unlikely to use project books delivered in digital formats, whether PDF, e-book, online course, or mobile app. Interestingly, there was an average 11% drop in interest in digital products from 2019 to 2024.

2024 Comments Summary

Of 1,279 survey respondents, 403 left comments.

Digital Delivery Advantages

- An online app could be used for livestock records, and extra forms would be nice to print.
- Nice for older members.
- Easier to access content (without going into Extension office) and easier to link to websites.
- Students who struggle to write, must type their answers, and/or need accessibility options could use a digital book.

Digital Delivery Disadvantages

- Using digital materials at home, camps, barns, and club meetings would limit those with spotty or no internet, one or no computer, and no printer access.
- There are areas in which projects are completed where digital products are unallowed.
- Digital projects at fairs will be difficult to display for members and difficult to evaluate for judges.
- Reviewers, judges, advisors, and fair visitors can more easily flip through printed books.
- For members who struggle to read, a project book is nice, especially at skillathons.
- Cost of internet access, devices, and/or printing digital materials adds up.
- Members are already tired from being on screens in school all day.
- Printed books are easier to work with when you have experiment or recipe directions to follow.
- Printed books make it easier to look at past projects.
- It is difficult for some members (and some adults) to work on smart phones.
- Printed books are better for practicing handwriting skills.

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Additional Comments/Opinions

- Access to both digital and print would be ideal and make project books the most accessible to all youth.
- We use AET for our records for FFA, and I absolutely love it! Something like that would be awesome.
- There should be no cost for digital, or it should be cheaper.
- Digital is ideal if content can be submitted and if printing is not required. Printing is difficult and expensive.
- Filling out a project book online would share our 4H love for helping the world survive.
- Online records are best for self-determined projects and subsequent years of livestock projects.
- A mobile app or fillable PDF would be the preferred digital option.
- Digital opens the door for parents to have too much input in what the member has learned from the project.
- Either digital or print might be the best option for students with learning and/or physical challenges, depending on the challenge.
- Youth learn better when writing things down, with hands-on learning, and a book to refer to.
- Most studies show that reading comprehension is greater using books than screens.
- Since COVID, I feel my children have become digital dependent. Schools did not help by requiring homework online. Kids need to go back to being kids, going outside, and enjoying the day.
- Many families would not be likely to participate in 4H with digital project books. It would be impossible to access the books and help our club members at meetings.
- The nature of the project should influence whether it is print or digital. However, I think I would still prefer print, especially for beginning projects.