# BEHAVIOURAL UNDERPINNINGS OF VIOLENT ONLINE POLITICAL EXTREMISM

Vox-Pol Workshop
Ellington Hotel, Berlin
Tuesday 2nd December 2014

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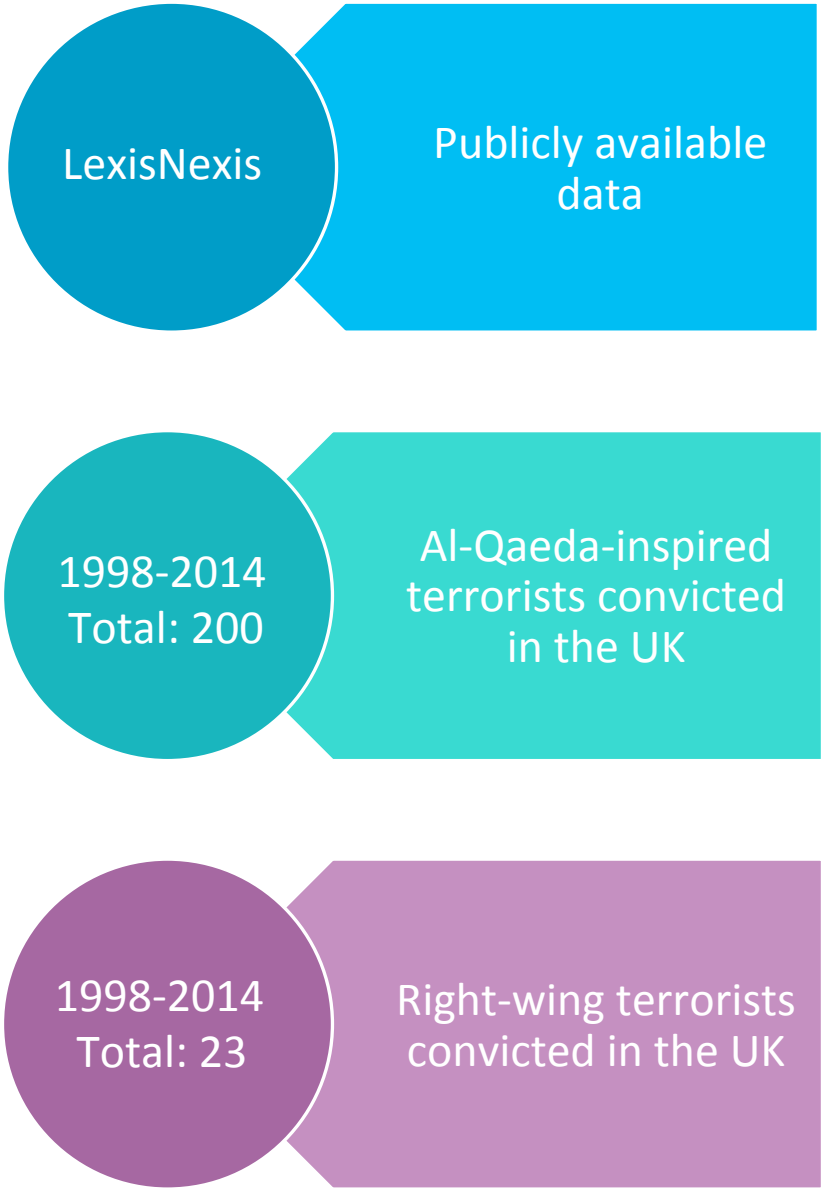
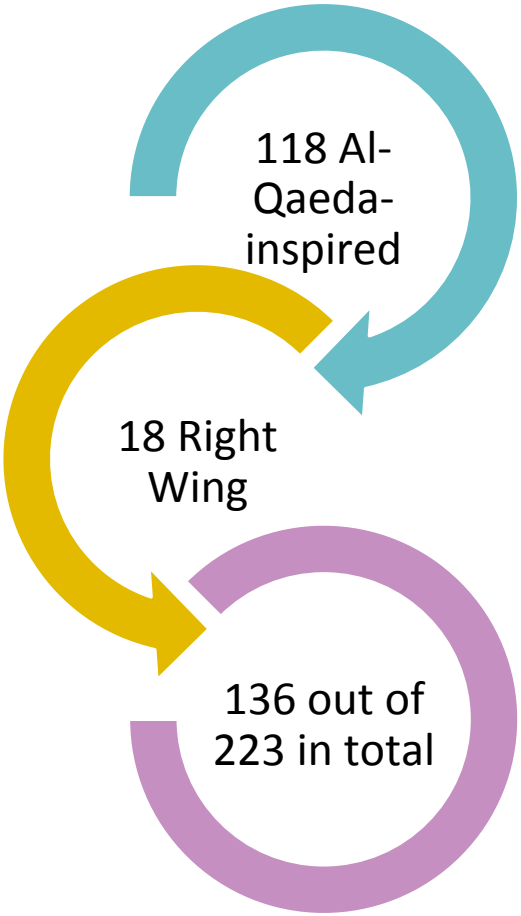
How many individuals have conducted activity online?
How are they using the internet to overcome difficulties?
What kind of activities are they?
Online activity
Are there differences between attack types?
Are there differences between ideologies?
Are there differences between loners and cells?

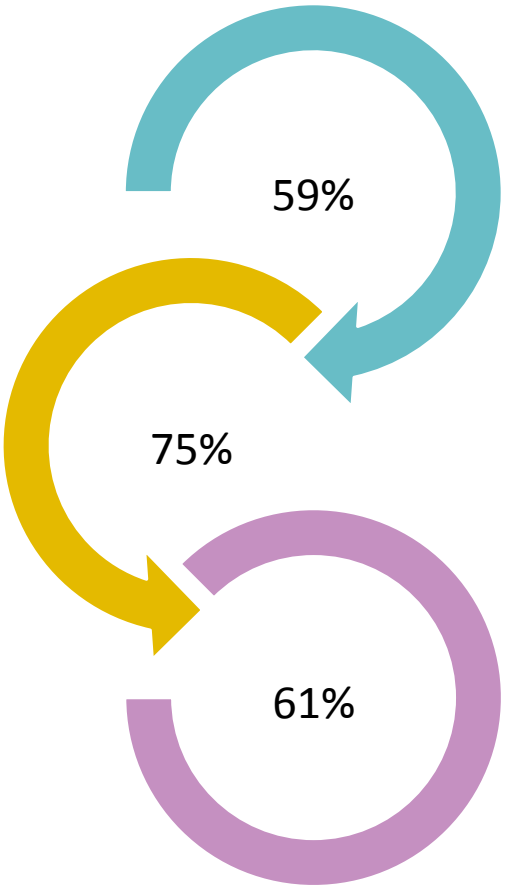
# Questions

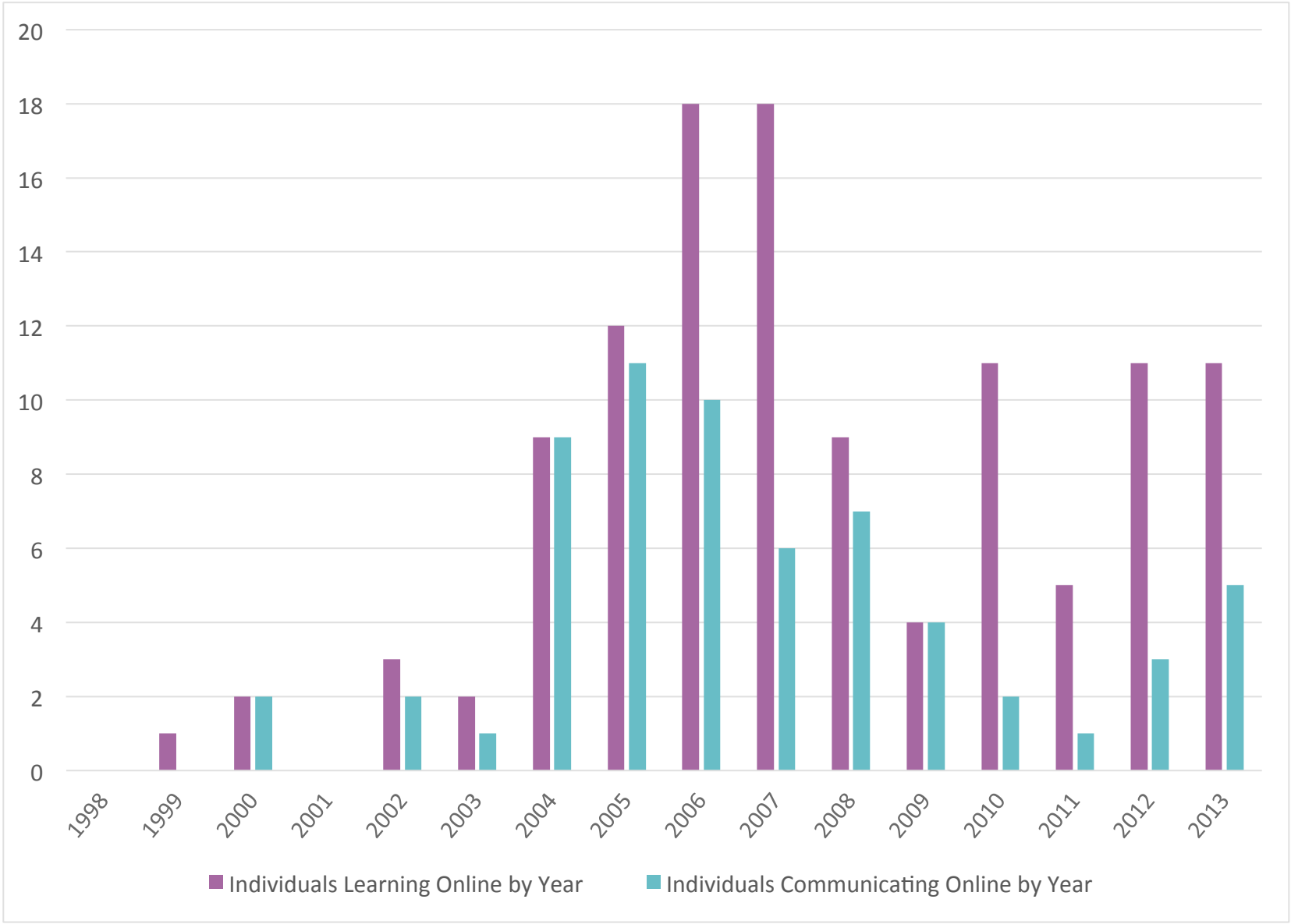
# Dataset


LexisNexis
Publicly available data
1998-2014
Total: 200
Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorists convicted in the UK
1998-2014
Total: 23
Right-wing terrorists convicted in the UK

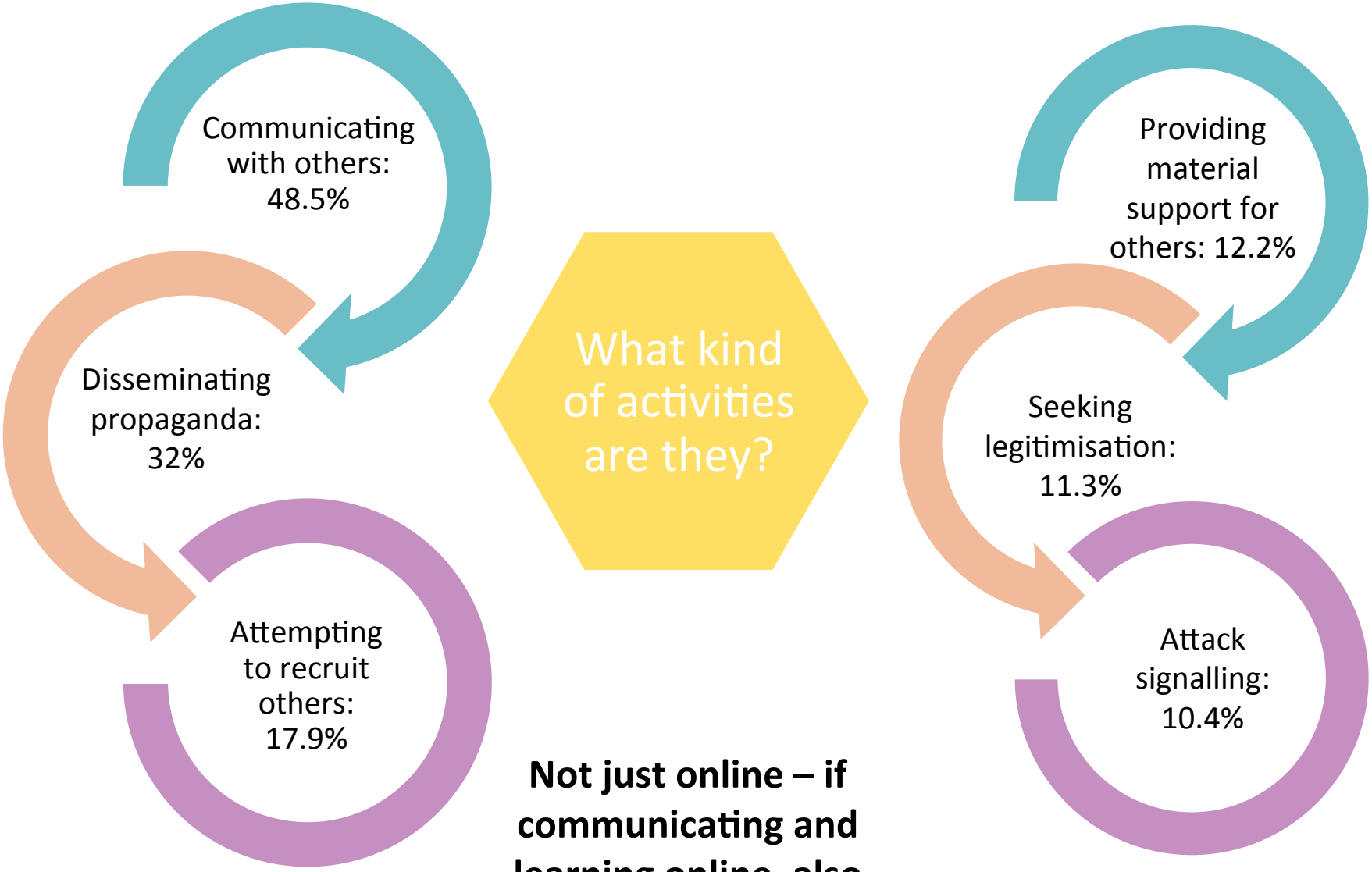



How many individuals have conducted activity online?



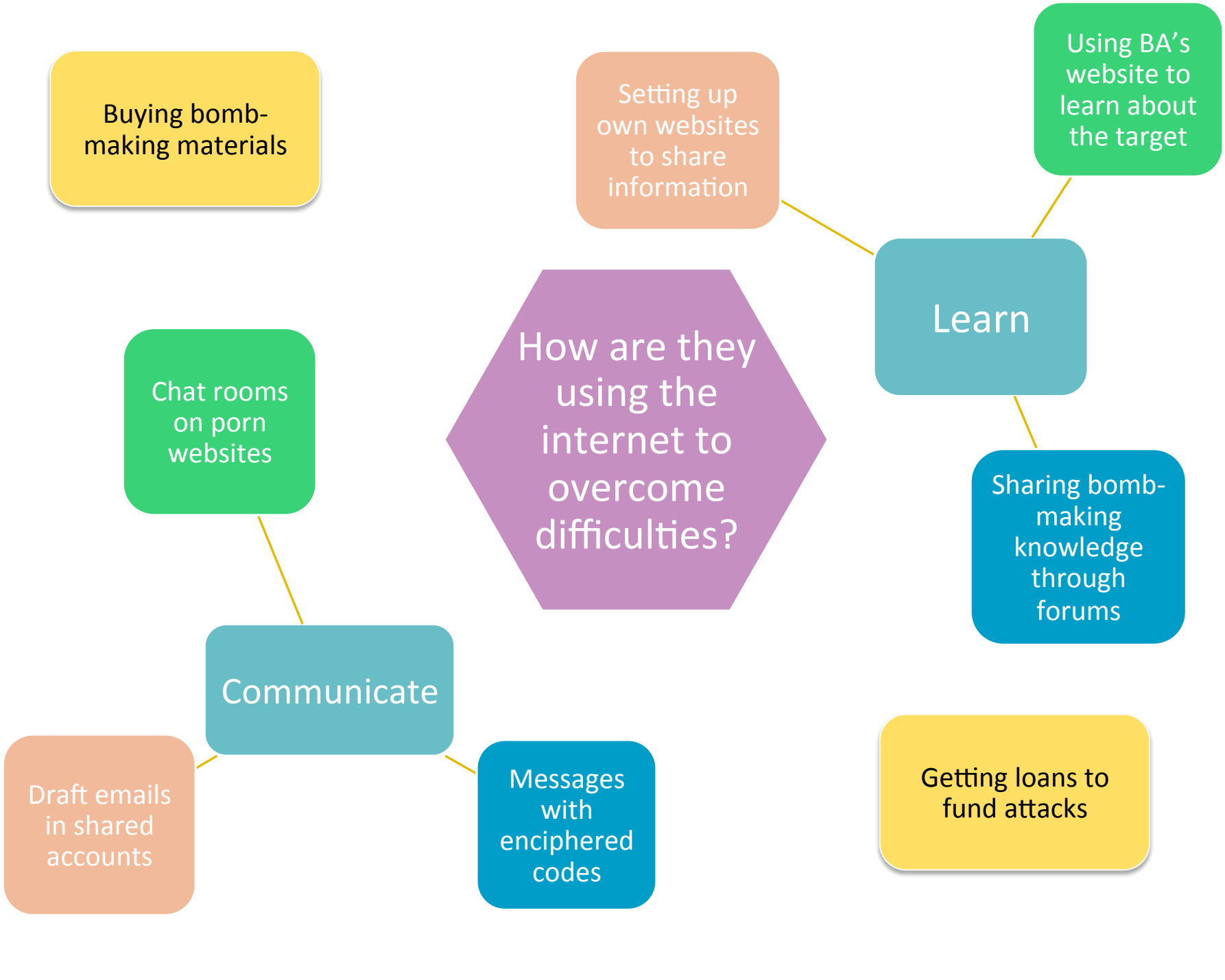

20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
Individuals Learning Online by Year
Individuals Communicating Online by Year

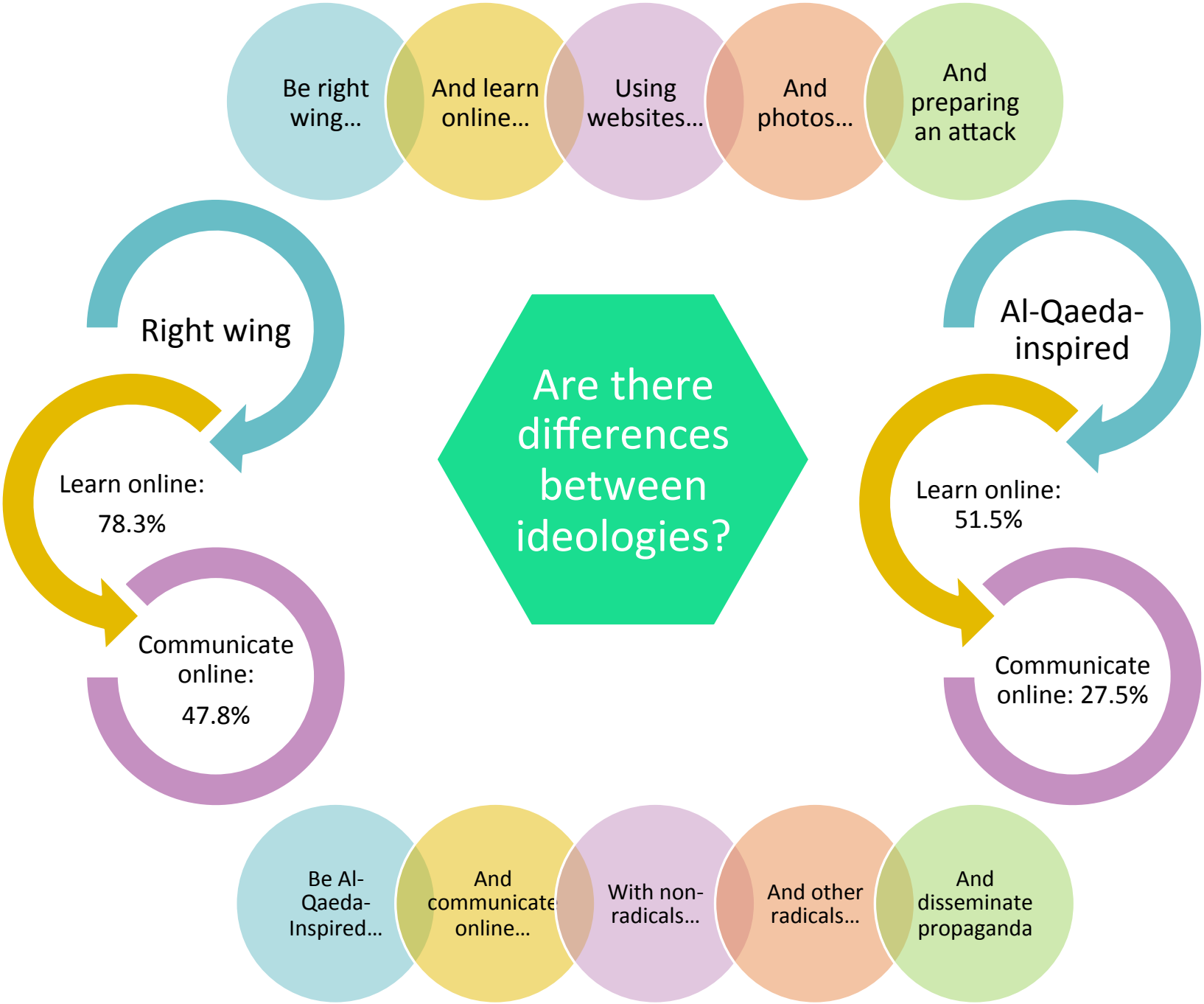
**Rank Order:**
**What do you see more?**
**What do you think is more important?**



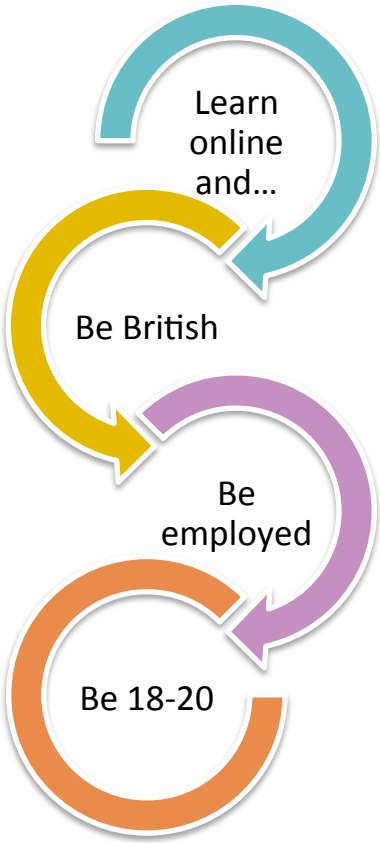

**Not just online – if communicating and learning online, also acting offline**

Preparing an attack
Accessing ideological content
Opting for violence
Overcoming hurdles
Choosing a target
What kind of activities are they?
60.5%
55.5%
26.1%
18.5%
16%


How are they using the internet to overcome difficulties?
Learn
Using BA's website to learn about the target
Setting up own websites to share information
Sharing bomb-making knowledge through forums
Buying bomb-making materials
Getting loans to fund attacks
Communicate
Chat rooms on porn websites
Draft emails in shared accounts
Messages with enciphered codes


Be right wing…
And learn online…
Using websites…
And photos…
And preparing an attack
Right wing
Learn online: 78.3%
Communicate online: 47.8%
Are there differences between ideologies?
Al-Qaeda-inspired
Learn online: 51.5%
Communicate online: 27.5%
Be Al-Qaeda-Inspired…
And communicate online…
With non-radicals…
And other radicals…
And disseminate propaganda

If they are part of a cell they are more likely to:



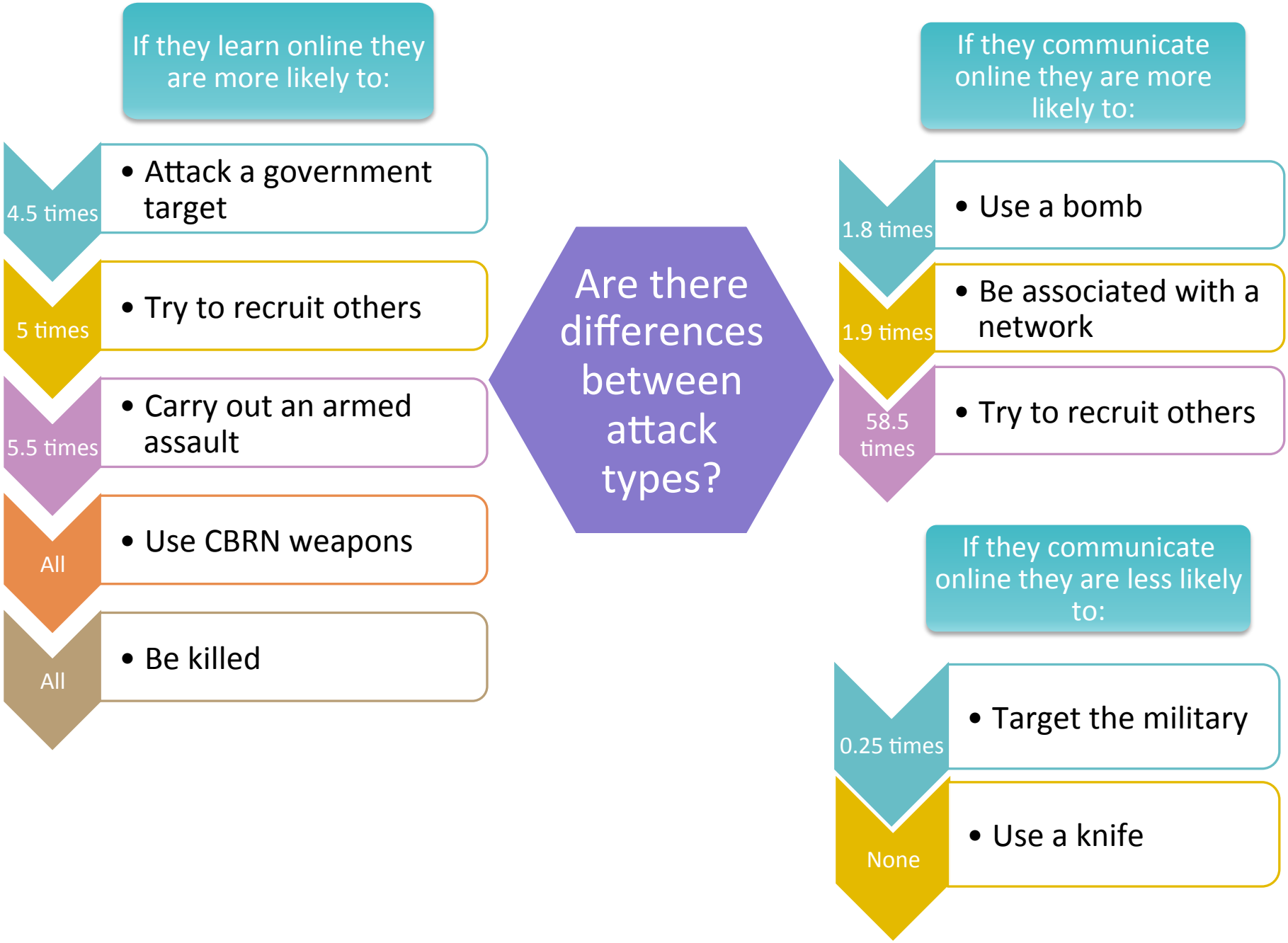

Are there differences between loners and cells?

If they are part of a cell they are more likely to:

If they are part of a network they are more likely to:

Are there differences between being part of a network?

If they are part of a network they are more likely to:


Are there differences between attack types?
If they learn online they are more likely to:
4.5 times
• Attack a government target
5 times
• Try to recruit others
5.5 times
• Carry out an armed assault
All
• Use CBRN weapons
All
• Be killed
If they communicate online they are more likely to:
1.8 times
• Use a bomb
1.9 times
• Be associated with a network
58.5 times
• Try to recruit others
If they communicate online they are less likely to:
0.25 times
• Target the military
None
• Use a knife

# Fertiliser bomb plot

**Communication**

- Internet chat rooms including chatting on porn websites
- Emailing associates, discussing how to make detonators
- Used internet café in Slough

**Learning**

- Downloading instruction manual on how to make fertiliser bomb
- Purchasing clothes and camping equipment for training camps in Pakistan

# Dirty bomb plot

**Communication**

- Only ringleader had online information
- AQ contact in Pakistan had info about potential attacks

**Learning**

- Hotel websites for target info
- Building surveillance of targets on computers, as well as attack methods and plans

## July 7th bombings

**Communication**

- Created farewell video regarding impending attack
- Wanted to produce a website disseminating propaganda and radicalising materials

**Learning**

- Downloaded information about explosives and how to build bombs
- Listened to 'sermons of hatred'
- Watched videos of crimes against Muslims in Chechnya, Afganistan, and Iraq

# July 21st bomb plot

**Communication**

- Much less reported activity – only 2 cell members had details

**Learning**

- Watched bomb making video
- Downloaded Bin laden speech
- Read a letter on an Islamic website about an Iraqi woman who said she had been mistreated by her captors at the Abu Ghraib jail in Baghdad; it had further concentrated his mind on the need to take "positive action"

# Transatlantic liquid bomb plot

**Communication**

- Sent coded messages between cell members
- Wanted to make a documentary to post on YouTube about injustices against Muslims in Middle East also using their martyrdom videos

**Learning**

- BAA Heathrow website, used internet café to research flight timetables
- Researched how to make explosive devices using drinks bottles
- Got bomb making recipes online, looked up suppliers of hydrogen peroxide
- Researched how to dig a hole before burying chemical stash

# Glasgow Airport bombing

**Communication**

- Used jihadi forums and chatrooms as well as popular websites such as YouTube
- Hours of internet messenger transcripts
- Saved email in his drafts folder, giving his brother instructions on how to access it
- Skype chats for bomb-making skills

**Learning**

- Researched bomb making techniques, including how to set off a bomb with a mobile phone
- Circuits ordered online
- Name began to appear on blogs and websites which promoted violence against the West
- Speeches of Osama Bin Laden
- Jihadi literature
- 15,000 files of ideologically inflammatory materials

Learning

- Computer, phone and USB stick contained material on jihad and martyrdom,
- Watched speeches by Awlaki,
- Downloaded copy of inspire magazine

**Lee Rigby killers**

## Ian and Nicky Davison

**Communication**

- Founders of the Aryan Strike Force, an online far right group
- Attempted to publish manuals about firearms and explosives on the internet to incite others to commit terrorism

**Learning**

- Copies of The Poor Man's James Bond and The Anarchist's Cookbook on computers at the home

## Ian Forman

**Communication**

- Labelled two Liverpool mosques as 'targets' before making a string of YouTube posts threatening to blow them up

**Learning**

- Downloaded pictures of mosques near his home
- Drew up a shopping list of bomb components after months of internet research

**What do you know that I don't?**

**The limitations of open source data**

**Let's change it up:**

**From the convicted terrorist to the school playground**

**Some case studies**

# Radicalisation in the UK Right-Wing

## Online/ offline?

- Never been to a meeting – totally immersed in the far-right through online activity
- Communication, learning and sharing all done online

## Physical spaces

- Can't publicly recruit for these organisations – all done online
- Few actual meeting places for far-right activity

## Social networks

- Never met anyone face to face – all through relationships built in chatrooms

# Radicalisation in the UK Al-Qaeda-inspired

- First contact with the ideology is not necessarily on the internet, but can be
- Maintaining interest and ideology on the internet
- FOSIS – where would you go if you had a question? The internet
- Internet allows interaction between males and females that wouldn't be allowed face-to-face
- Mutual radicalisation on online media – Facebook, Twitter, AskFM
- Talking to friends online as well as face-to-face – 'doubling effect'
- From the computer to the playground – watch at home, discuss at school
- Awlaki YouTube clips played on the bus to school
- Internet programmes specifically for conspiracy theories – children come into class and discuss them
- Individuals from abroad radicalising juveniles in the UK – Australia to London playground, then on to Syria
- Brother in Yemen teaching him over Skype

**Is this what you are seeing?**

**Is the UK a comparable example?**

**Are there differences between ideologies?**