

Setapp Mac Developer Survey 2024

by  MacPaw



Intro

Meet 2024 Mac Developer Survey, brought to you by Setapp, a proud member of the MacPaw family! For eight years now, we have asked Mac developers about their common practices and challenges, preferred distribution channels, and what they anticipate to be the biggest trends in the industry going forward.

From developing for visionOS to the gradual shift from apps to more integrated experiences, discover what 2024 has been like so far in the eyes of Mac developers worldwide.

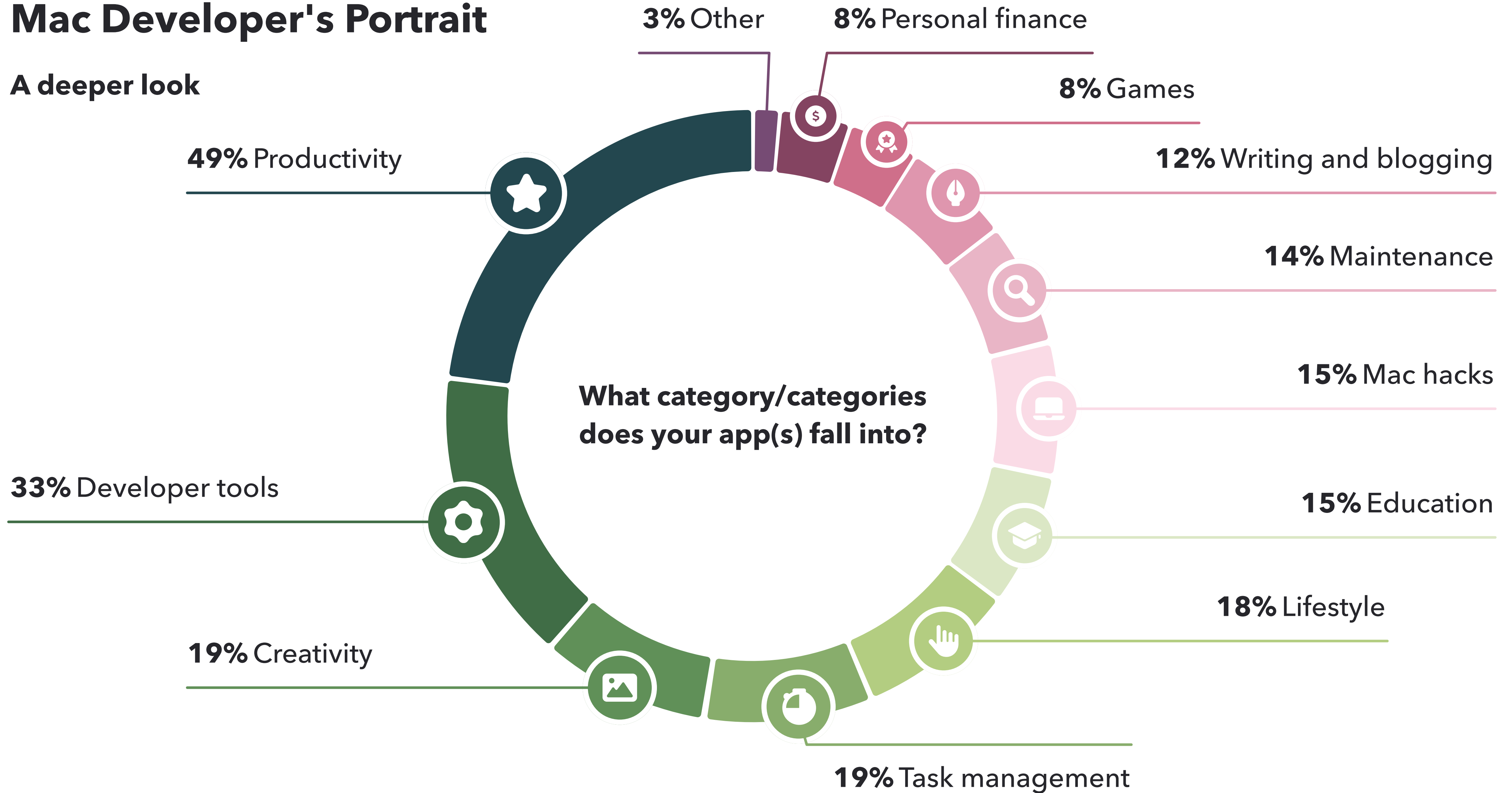


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Mac Developer's Portrait

A deeper look



Mac Developer's Portrait

A deeper look

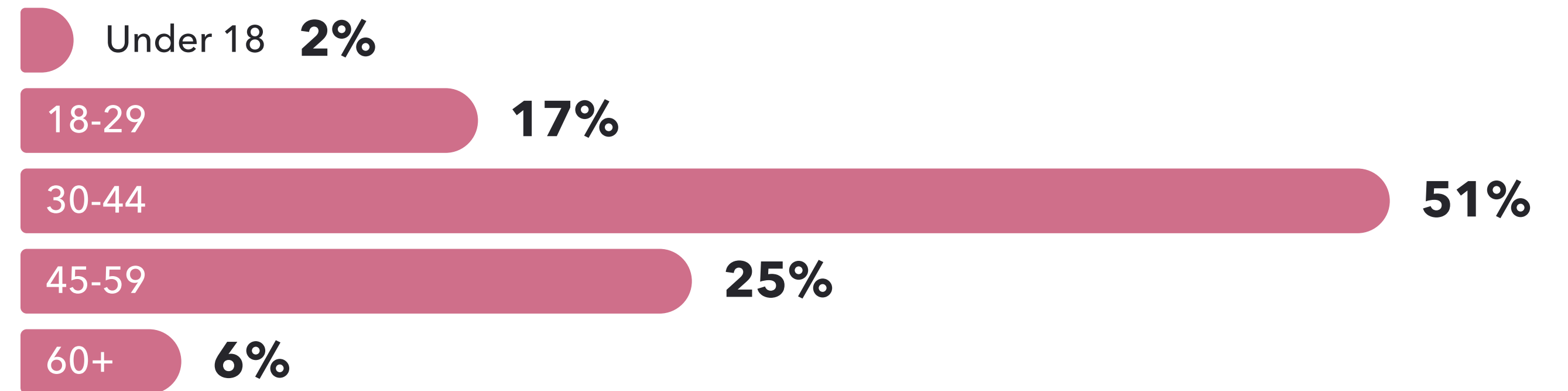
Gender

86% Male

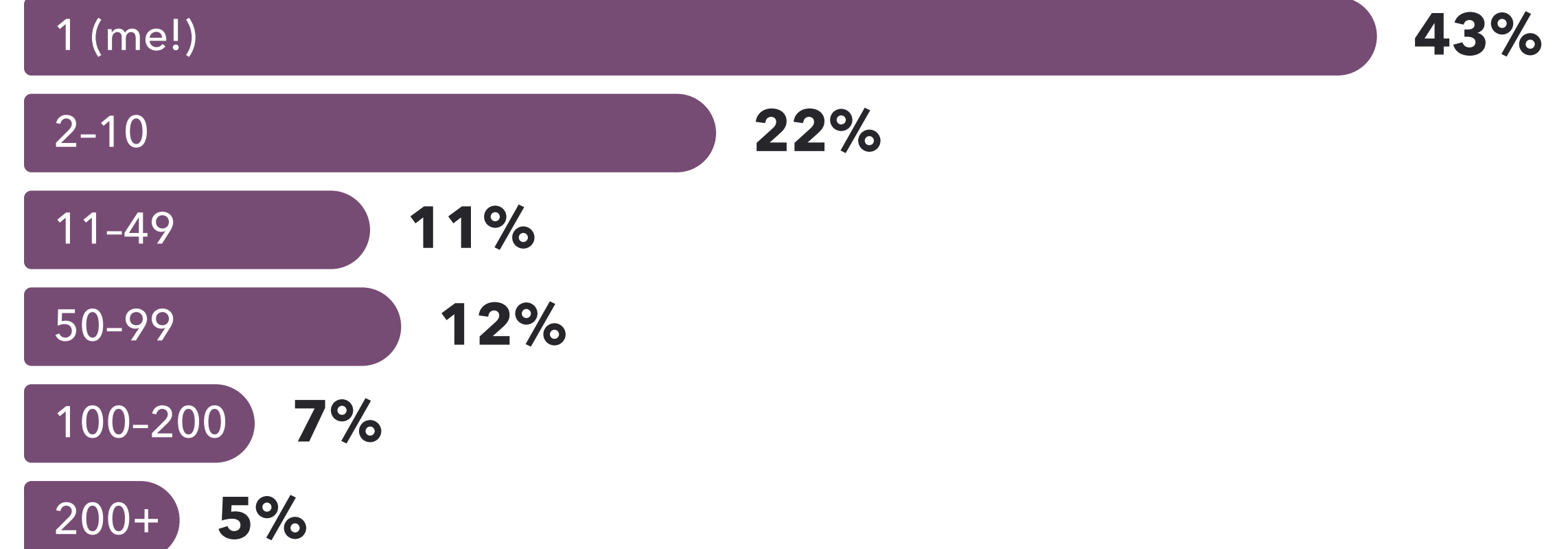
12% Female

2% Other

Age



How many people are on your team?



Key Highlights

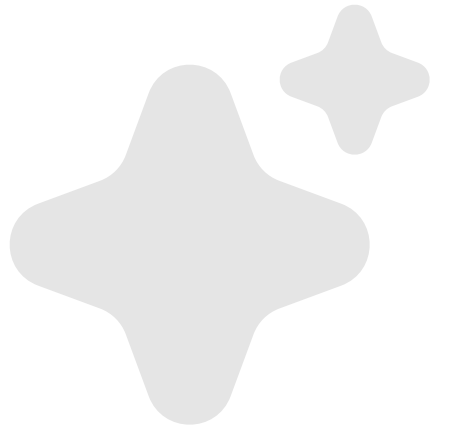
20%

of developers plan to or already are developing for visionOS.



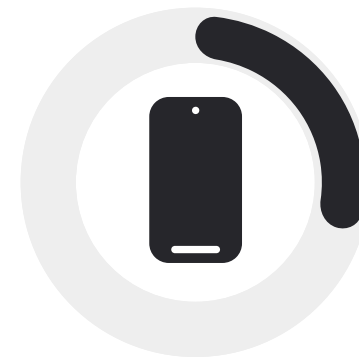
Apple Vision Pro is new to the market - almost half of Mac developers haven't decided yet if they will start working on apps for this device.

Large language models are being actively adopted by developers - the majority of developers already have or are planning to implement them in their workflow.



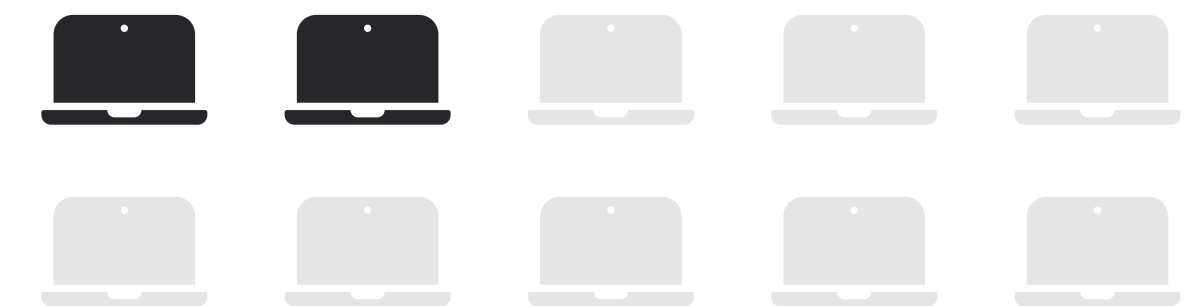
1/3

are ready to use third-party app stores for distribution of their iOS apps.



Only 20%

of Mac developers distribute their apps exclusively via the Mac App Store.



App Distribution

Only 20% of Mac developers distribute their apps exclusively via the Mac App Store. Developers mainly rely on their websites to distribute apps outside the Mac App Store.

More than half of the respondents use third-party distribution channels.

How do you distribute your apps?

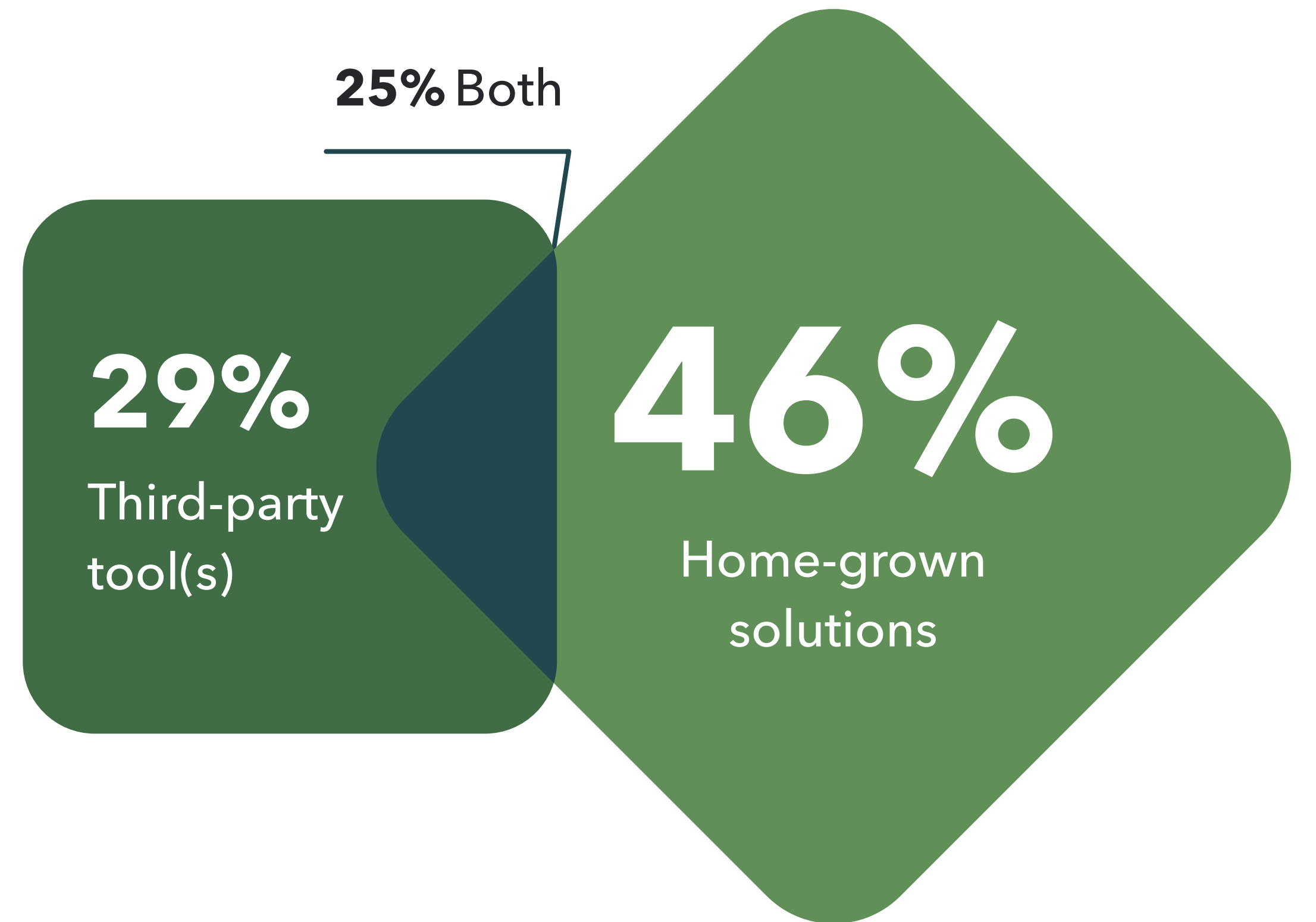


App Distribution

Which channels outside the Mac App Store do you use for app distribution?



How do you distribute your app(s) outside the Mac App Store?



App Distribution

* Significantly different compared to the previous year

The main challenges Mac developers face with app distribution are app discovery, marketing, and user acquisition. The share of marketing has become less prominent compared to other years.

What are the main challenges you are facing with current distribution channels, if any?

	2024	2023	2022
App discovery	52%	54%	57%
Marketing	42%*	51%	51%
User acquisition	41%	47%	52%
Monetization	29%	35%*	22%
No recurring revenue model	26%	30%	27%
Other	4%	2%	2%
I don't have any challenges	11%*	3%	7%

App Distribution

Revenue is almost equally divided between the Mac App Store and other channels for developers who distribute their apps through both.

* Only respondents who distribute both through the Mac App Store and outside of it

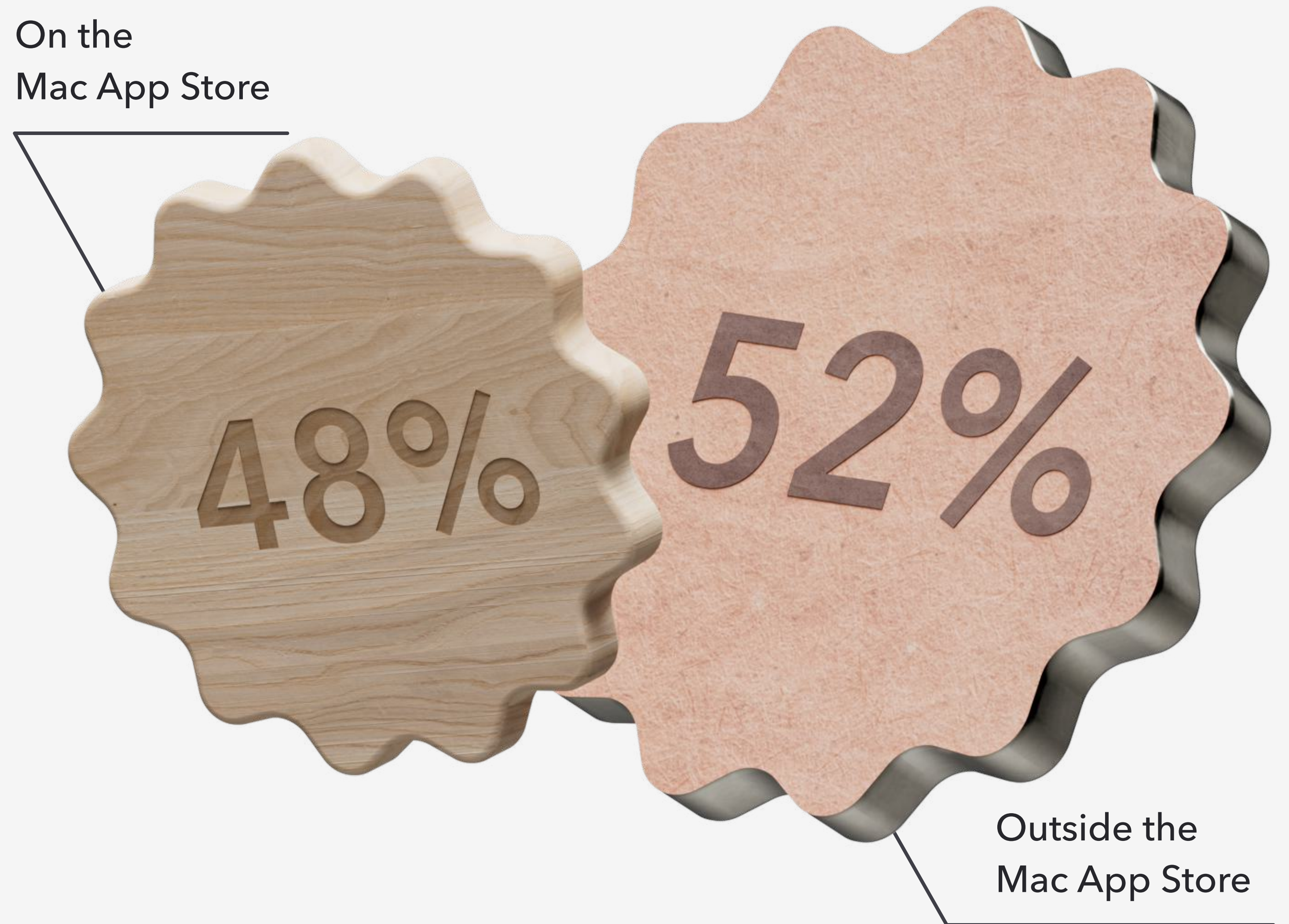
How is your revenue divided between different app distribution channels?*

On the
Mac App Store

48%

52%

Outside the
Mac App Store



The Mac App Store

13% less developers YoY consider sharing revenue is worth the advantages of distribution through the Mac App Store.

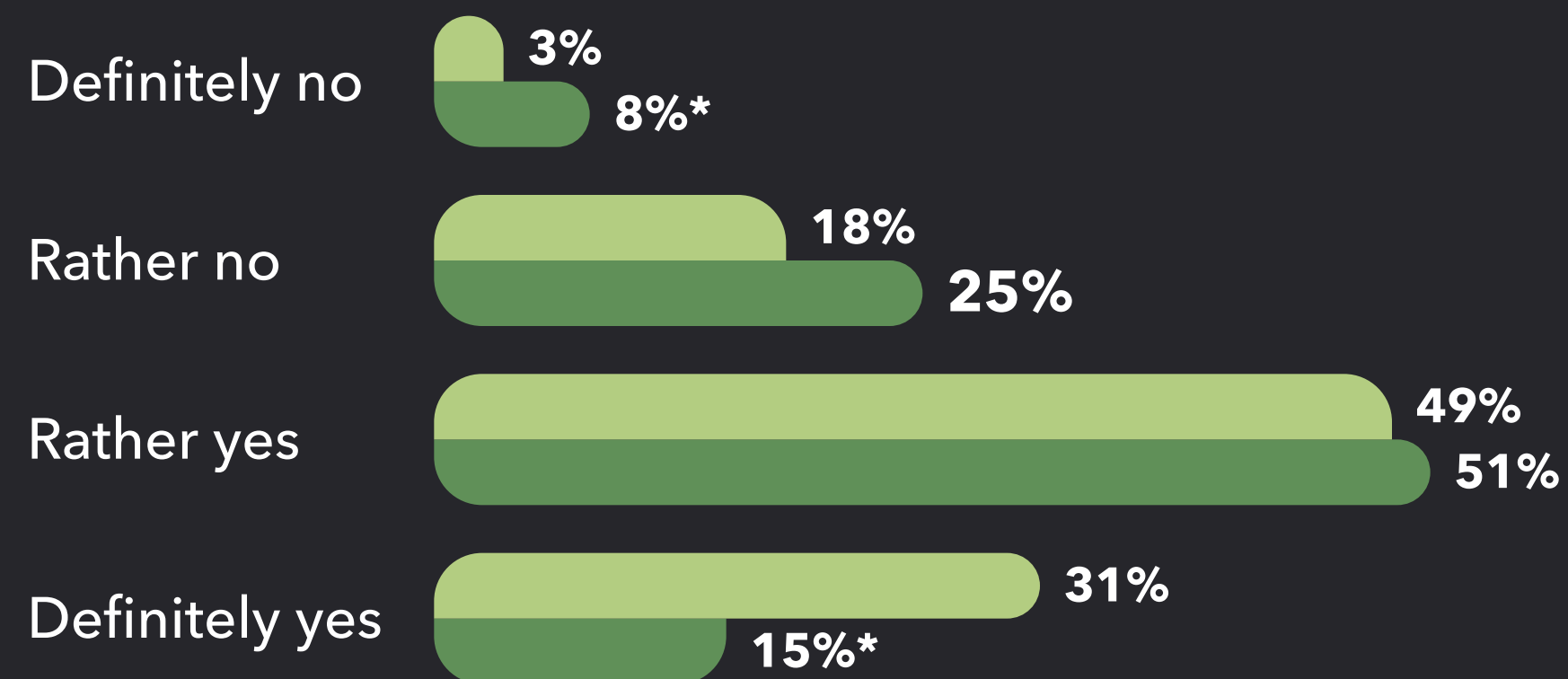
*Significantly different compared to the previous year

Setapp

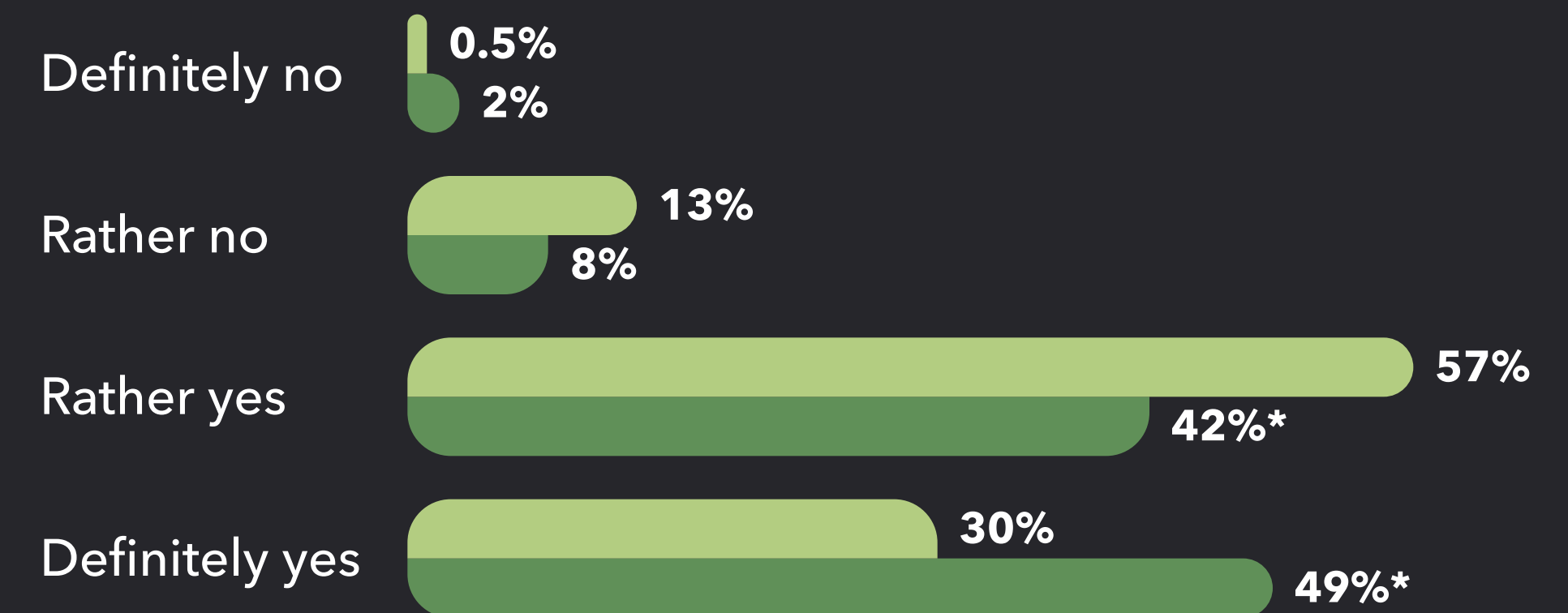
Just as last year, almost 90% of the surveyed Mac developers think sharing revenue is worth the advantages of distribution through Setapp.



Do you think sharing revenue is worth what the Mac App Store gives you?



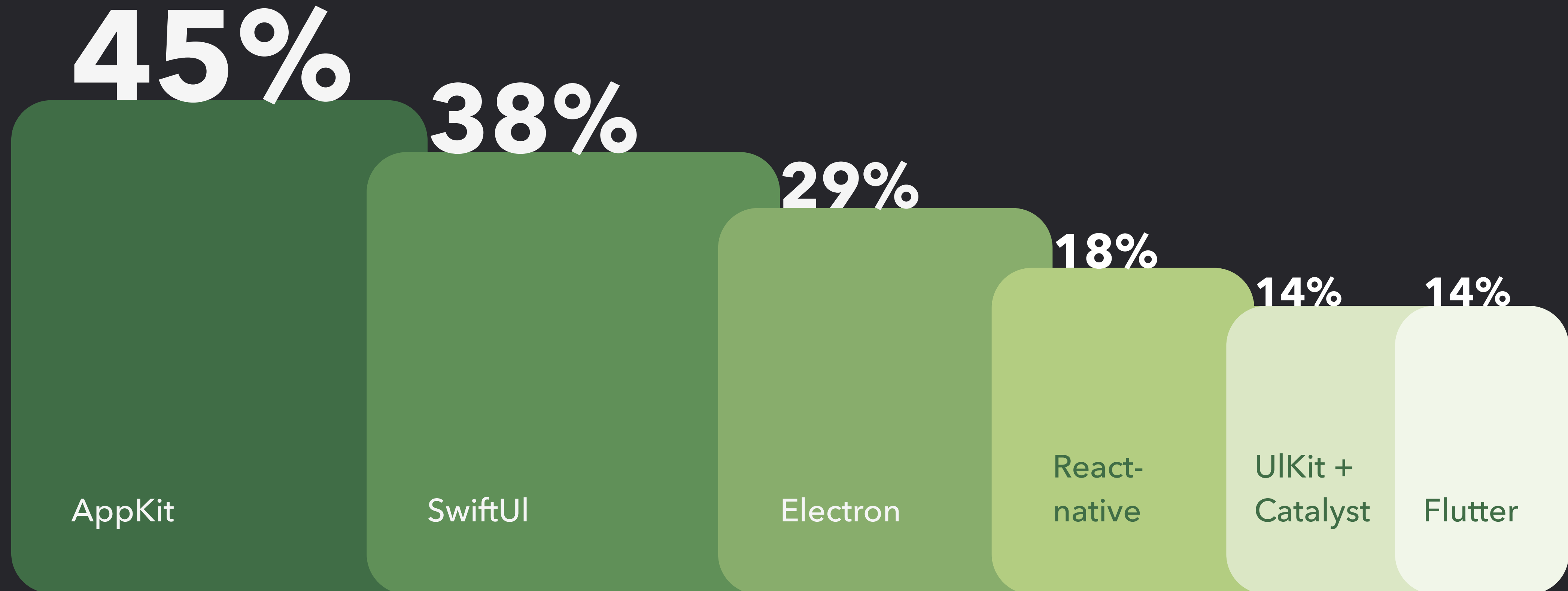
Do you think sharing revenue is worth what Setapp gives you?



App Development

AppKit and SwiftUI are the most frequently used frameworks for macOS apps development.

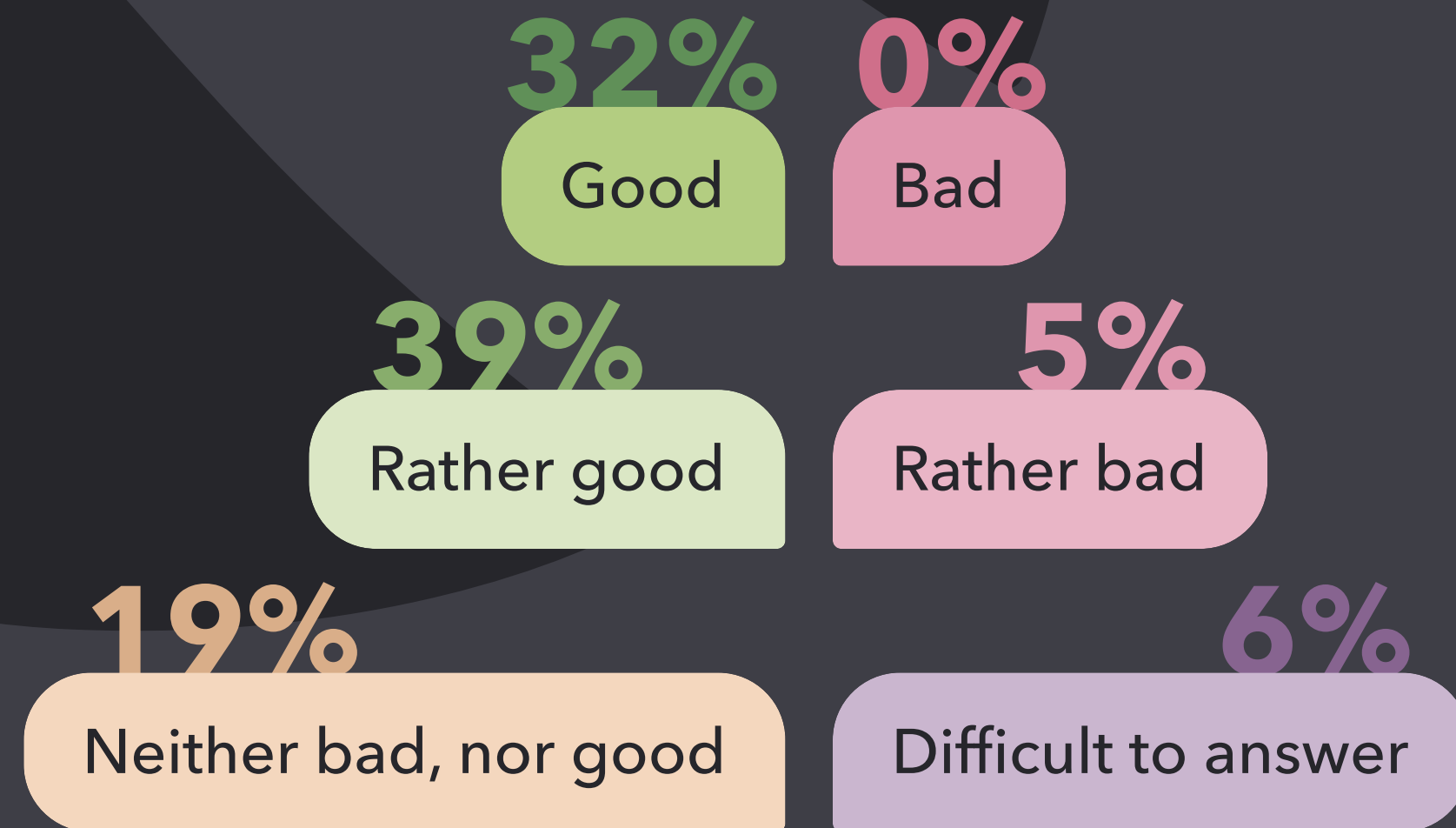
What frameworks do you use for the development of your macOS app?



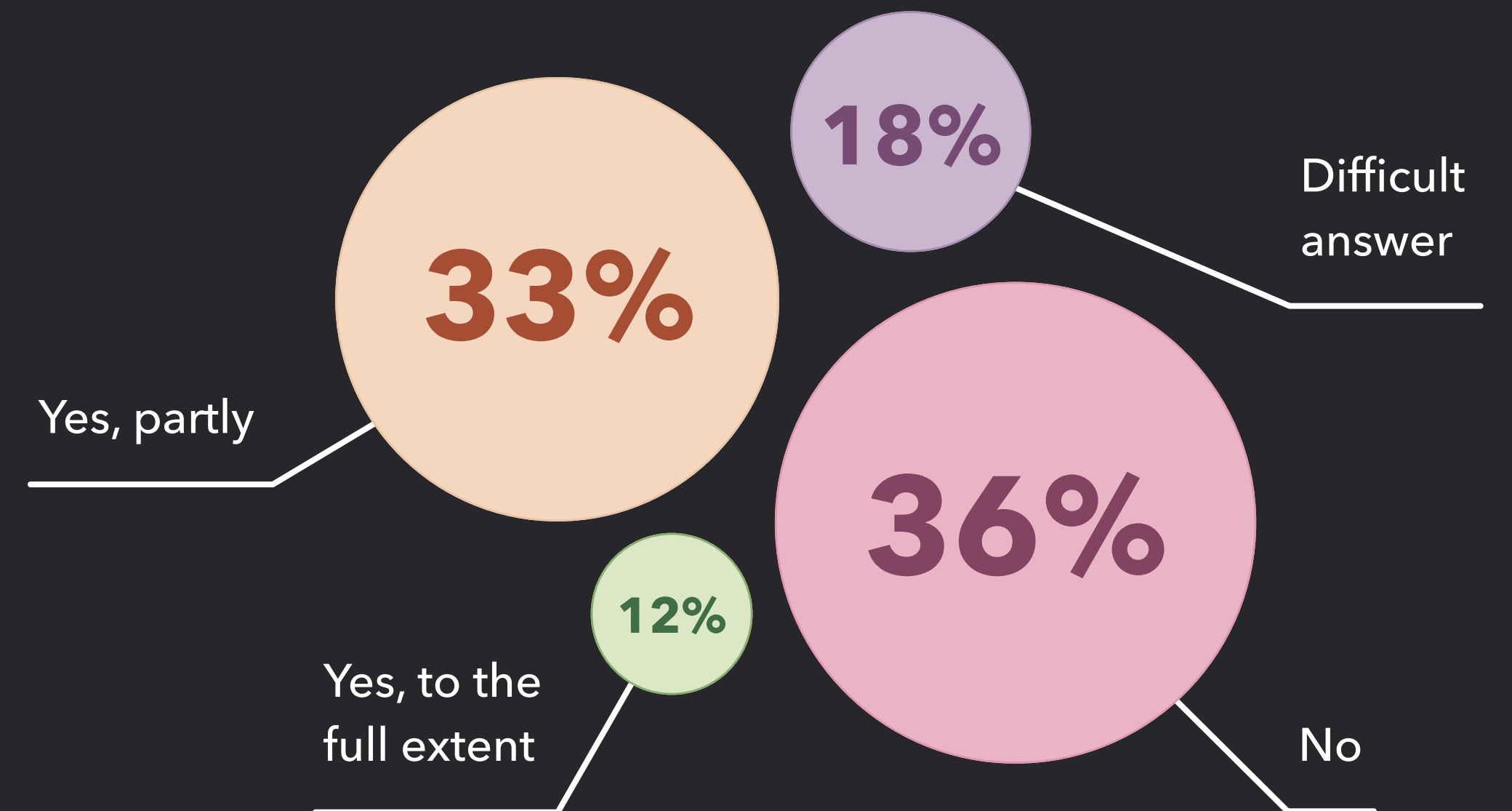
Mac App Development

Almost 70% of those who use SwiftUI consider their experience as good (rather good or good). Almost half of those who are not using Swiftul now, consider switching on it in 2024.

How do you evaluate your experience with SwiftUI?



Are you going to switch to SwiftUI framework in 2024 for your macOS apps?



Cross-Platform Development

75% of Mac developers build cross-platform solutions to attract their customers. The majority of them prefer to stay within the Apple ecosystem.

Do you develop apps only for macOS or for other operating systems too?

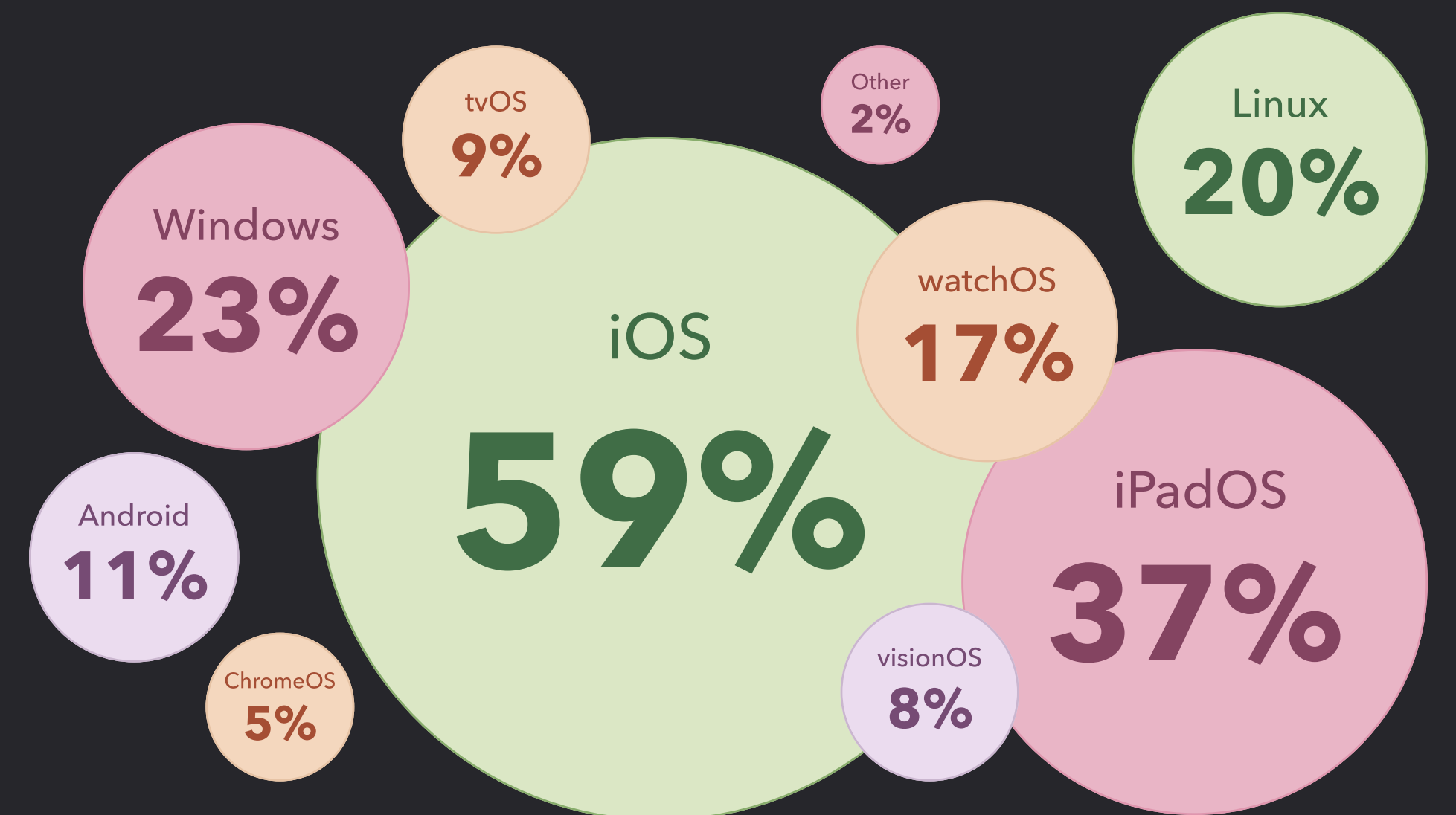
25%

Only for macOS

75%

For other operating systems too

Which operating systems, other than macOS, do you develop for?

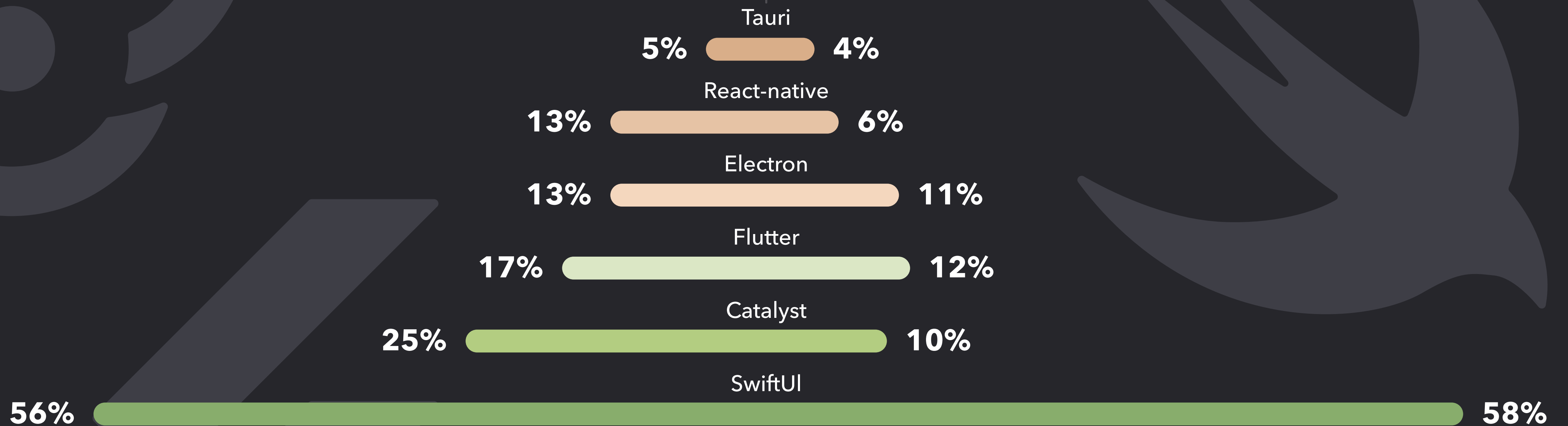


Cross-Platform Development

SwiftUI framework is the most commonly used by developers for cross-platform development. Surveyed developers also consider SwiftUI to be the most promising for future uses.

What frameworks do you use for the development of your cross-platform app(s) in the Apple ecosystem?

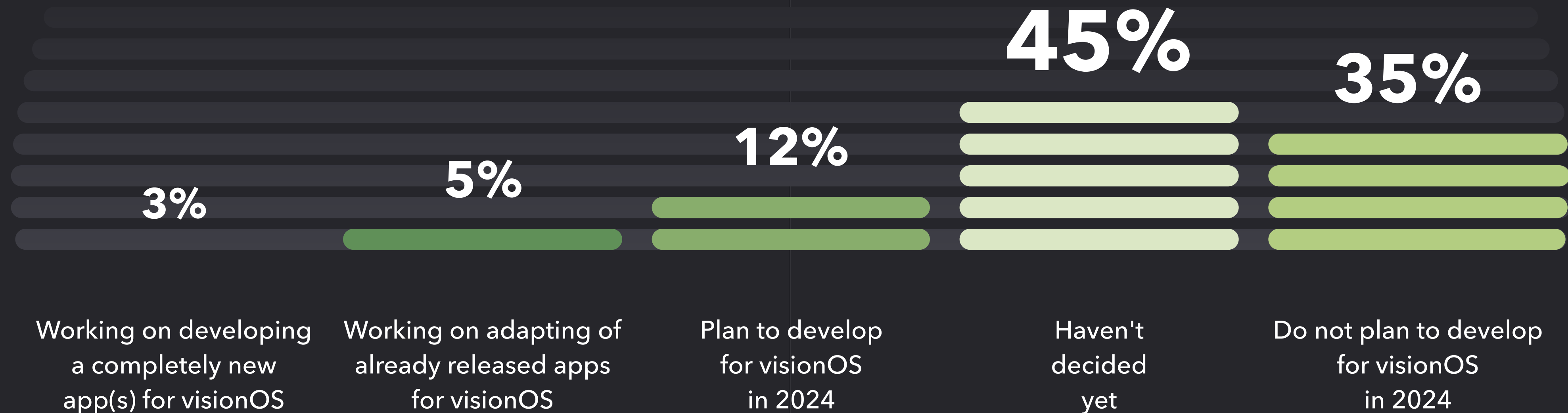
What frameworks do you consider the most promising for the future development of cross-platform app(s) in the Apple ecosystem?



visionOS

20% of Mac developers plan to develop for visionOS in 2024 or are already in the development process. Still, with Apple Vision Pro being new, nearly half haven't decided whether to develop apps for it yet.

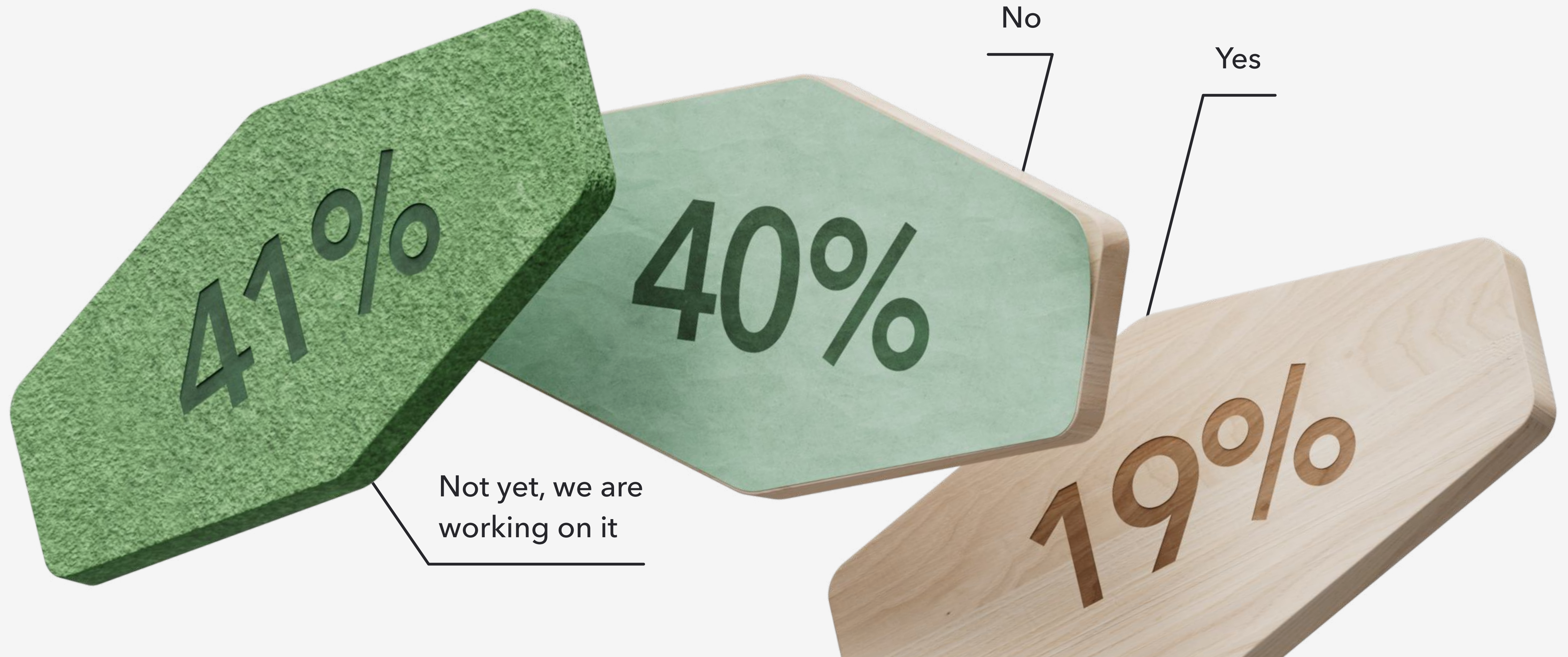
Development for visionOS in 2024



AI/ML

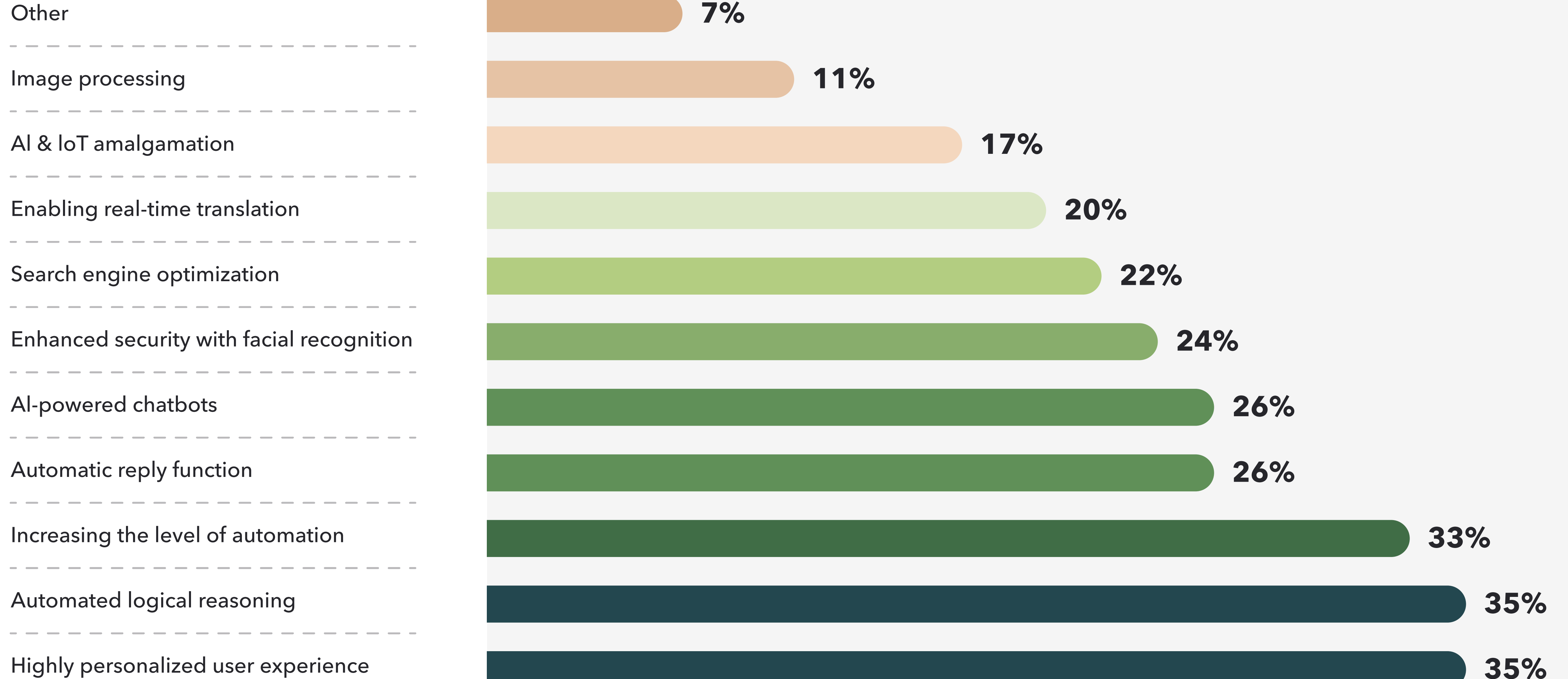
Over 40% of Mac developers are about to start using AI/ML models in their apps.

Do you use AI/ML models in your apps?



AI/ML

For what purposes do you implement AI/ML models in your app(s)?



AI/ML

Large language models are being actively adopted by developers - the majority of developers already have or are planning to implement them in their workflow.

Do you use LLM (Copilot, ChatGPT, Bard, etc.) technology in development?



Alternative App Marketplaces



1/3 of the surveyed Mac developers are interested in distributing their apps for iOS outside the App Store.

Apple is launching third-party app stores on iOS in the EU. How does that change your mind about distributing on the App Store/Setapp/other app stores?

29%

Will stay with the App Store only

5%

Will switch to outside of the App Store

40%

Haven't decided yet

26%

Will use both

Alternative App Marketplaces

Benefits & concerns

What will be the main reasons for your possible distribution via third-party app stores?

49%

Adopt new revenue models

23%

Lower client acquisition cost

40%

Get additional revenue stream

28%

React to increased competition

36%

Release apps that didn't pass App Store review

2%

Other

53%

Grow the number of users

What are the main risks that distract you from possible distribution via third-party app stores?

39%

Distrust to third-party app stores among users

47%

Numerous third-party app stores can become inconvenient for users

26%

Payments risks

33%

Risks of malware circulation

27%

High risk of personal data breach

26%

Apps piracy risks

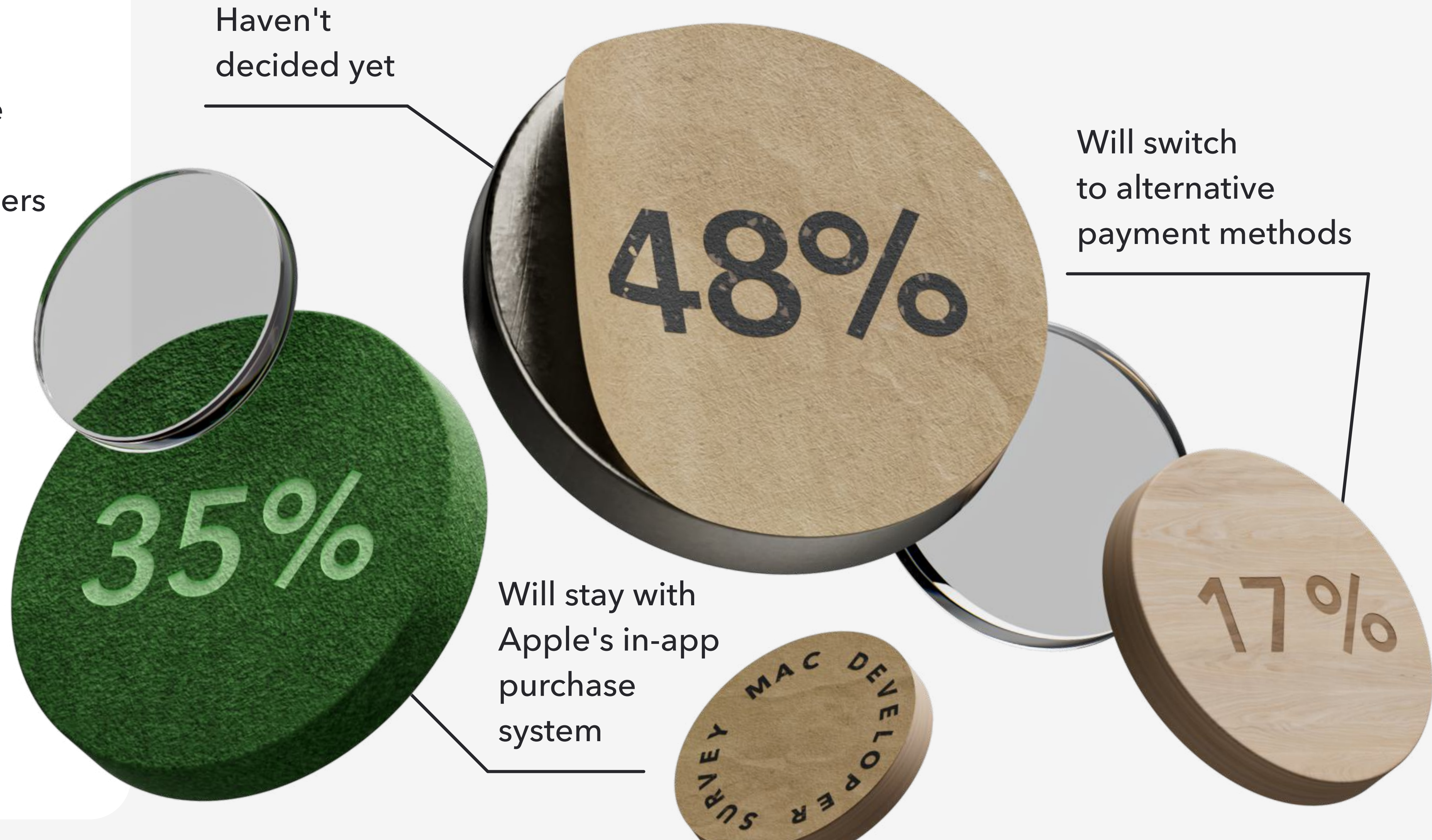
17%

Other

Alternative payment methods on iOS

Still, alternative payment methods on iOS seem to be not as attractive an opportunity to app developers thus far - only 17% of developers are prepared to switch from Apple's in-app purchase system.

Apple is updating its App Store guidelines to allow developers to link to alternative payment methods on iOS. Are you going to use this option for your apps?



Looking Forward

* Significantly different compared to the previous year

The most common plans for developers are app maintenance, launching new apps, and releasing major updates. These milestones remain at the top YoY.

This year, are you planning to achieve any of the following major milestones?	2024	2023	2022
Maintain my app(s) via incremental improvements and bug fixes	41%	42%	61%*
Launch a new app(s)	35%	37%	45%*
Release a major update to my existing app(s)	36%	34%	51%*
Launch new major new marketing or branding campaign(s)	17%*	29%	28%
Integrate new third-party technology (hardware or software) compatibility into my app(s)	19%*	29%	21%
Sunset my app(s)	11%*	19%	12%*
Hire new staff	11%*	18%	11%*
Complete certification on ISO/IEC 27001/SOC 2/etc.	6%	7%	-
No specific plans	3%	1%	7%
Other	2%	1%	2%

Looking Forward

AI/ML keeps its position as the most impactful trend as attention to it grows.

I don't anticipate any trends will have a significant impact on my app

AI/ML development

Push for personalization and custom experiences

Privacy rules and protection of personal information

Advances in hardware (Apple Silicon, 5G, wearable devices, IoT, etc.)

Augmented and virtual reality

Cloud integration

Focus on health and well-being

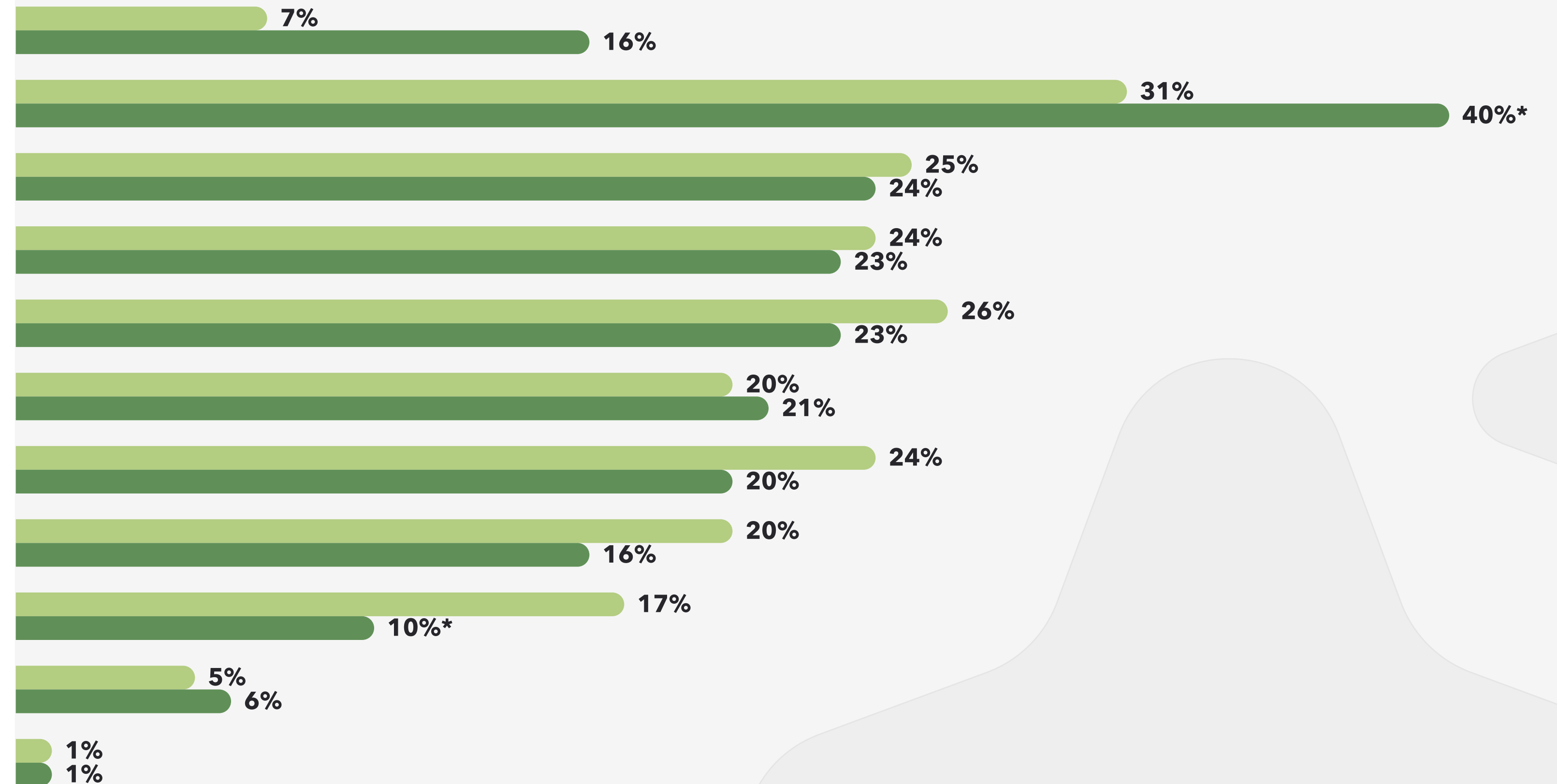
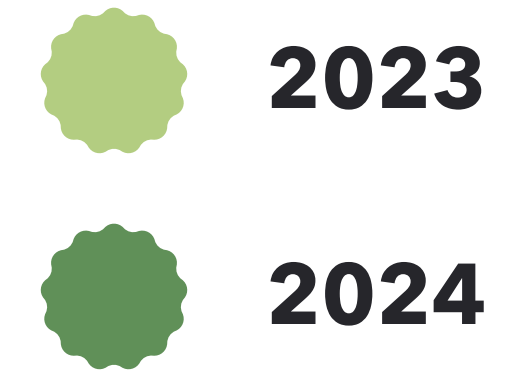
Mobile wallets

Cryptocurrencies becoming mainstream

Other

What trends do you think will have the biggest impact on your app in 2024?

*Significantly different compared to the previous year



Looking Forward

The shift from apps to more integrated experiences is a noticeable trend. $\frac{2}{3}$ of developers are keeping an eye on it. At the same time, only 21% are planning to prepare their project(s) for it.

**There is a buzz around shifting from apps to more integrated experiences.
How do you perceive such a change?**



Not paying much attention,
going to stick to the app model



Watching the trend, but not
sure the shift will happen soon



Watching the trend and trying
to prepare our project(s) for it

Thank you for exploring the results of Setapp's 8th annual Mac Developer Survey by MacPaw!



Together, we can build a passionate community that pushes the boundaries of what Macs can do for us.

Got some thoughts about this report? We'd love to hear it! Shoot us a message to: media@setapp.com.

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Hungry for more?

Discover 2023 findings in this summary:

<https://setapp.com/mac-developer-survey-2023>