

Community Surveys on MSIX Autumn 2019



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1 Introduction

This year I created the first two Community Surveys to explore the public opinions about how they view MSIX. The intent of these surveys was both to provide the community a chance to see what their peers think, and to provide Microsoft an additional avenue of feedback. As an initial attempt at the survey, included were many open-ended questions that we hoped would help us to better understand what questions *we should be asking* next time!

Two surveys were conducted in the last calendar quarter of the year. The first survey was intended for people at companies that produce software for internal or external use. The second survey was for people at companies that acquire and distribute applications internally.

The results are presented in this document, organized into three categories:

- Questions asked of both surveys
- Questions asked in the Developer Survey
- Questions asked in the IT Pro Survey.

Responses were elicited via social media, visitors to the m6conf.com website, our own training classes, and attendees to many conferences with MSIX content. Without a budget to market the survey (this is all volunteer work by a single individual after all), the responses tend to come from my followers, but attempts were made to expand the reach somewhat. This year we had 94 responses from the IT Pro community and 23 from Developers (keep in mind that not everyone answers all questions).

While these numbers may reflect my audience balance more than interest level, we have traditionally seen much more interest in containerization of applications by the IT Pro community than from Software Vendors going back to Centennial and even App-V/SoftGrid. The Enterprise believes there is value (eventually) here, but the Software Vendors may not be convinced it is in their interests (yet).

This work represents the output of a community effort, and is part of a larger project called “*The Report Card on MSIX for 1909*”, available from www.m6conf.com.

Comments and interpretations presented on the data in this paper are my own.

Tim

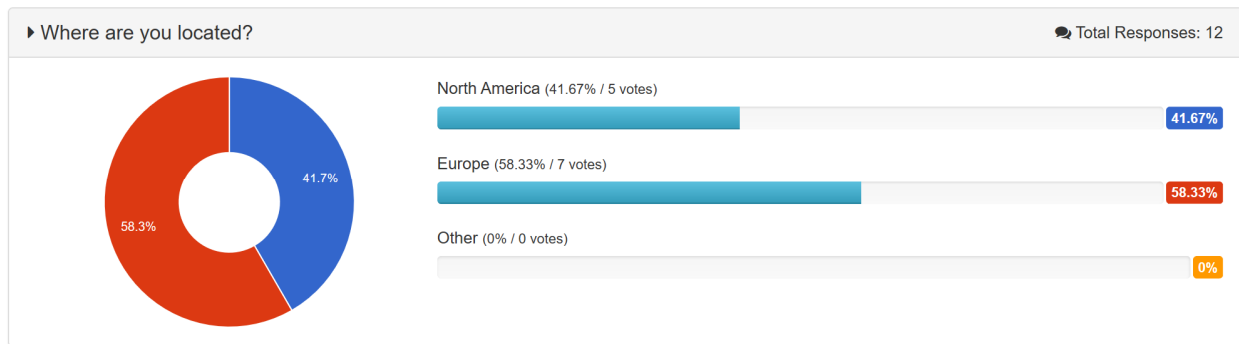
2 Questions for both surveys

The following questions were asked of both surveys and provide clues about who was taking the surveys and their overall opinions on the same topic.

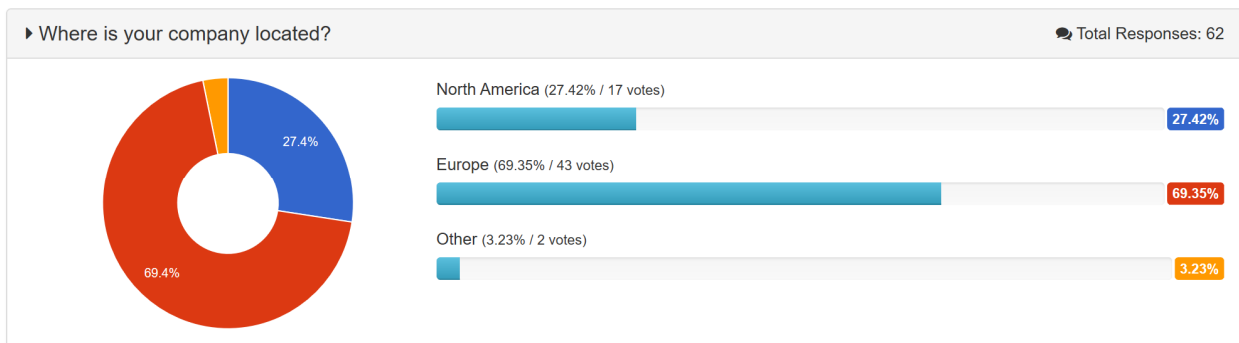
2.1 Where are the interested parties?

The geographic breakdowns of responses are shown here:

Developers:



IT Pros:

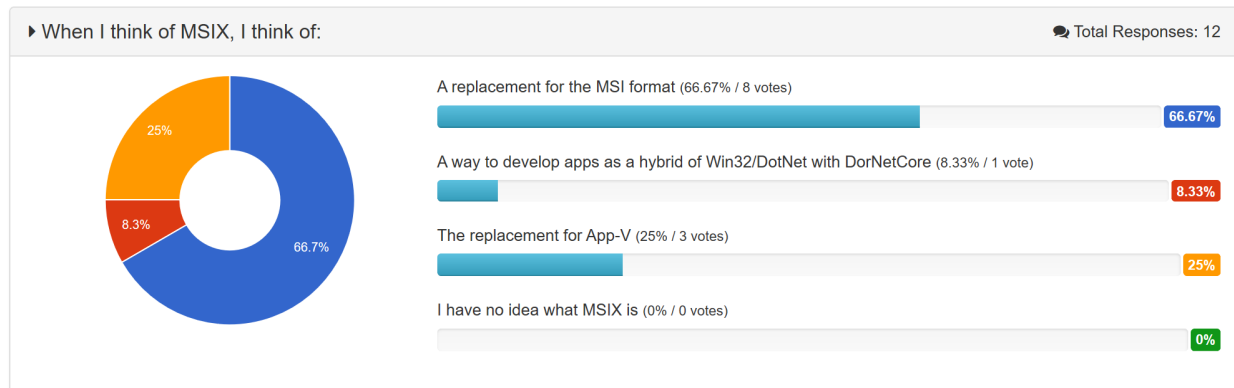


The IT Pro responses reflect what I see in my business; even though I am based in the US I see much more interest from the European IT Pro Communities. Although the US dominates in software development in general, we see spill over in developer interest in Europe. This may be because many Enterprises also have in-house developers and were forwarded the survey by their colleagues.

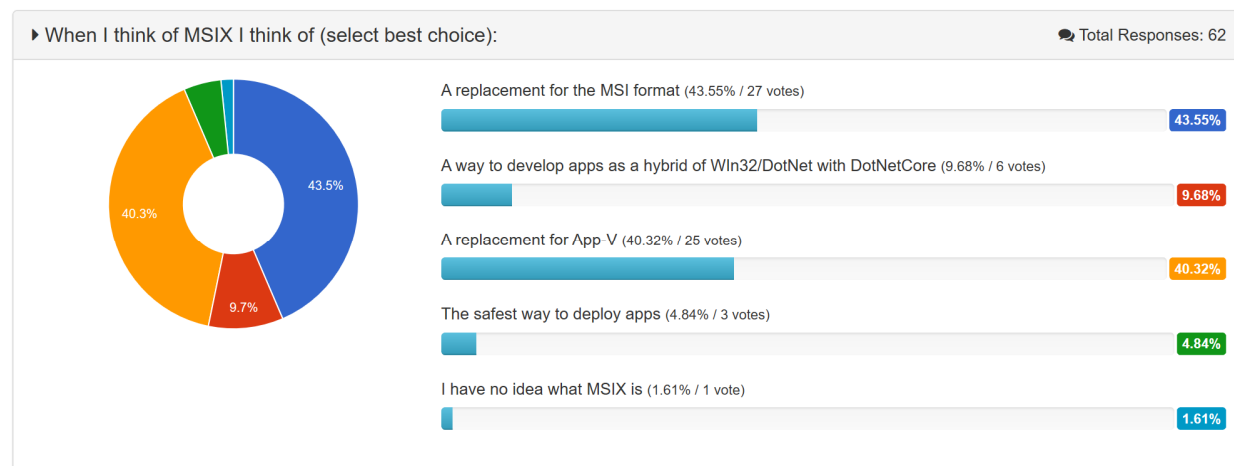
2.2 Understanding of what MSIX is

MSIX is a lot of different things. This question helps to understand what the audiences have heard.

Developers:



IT Pros:



The results here are not surprising.

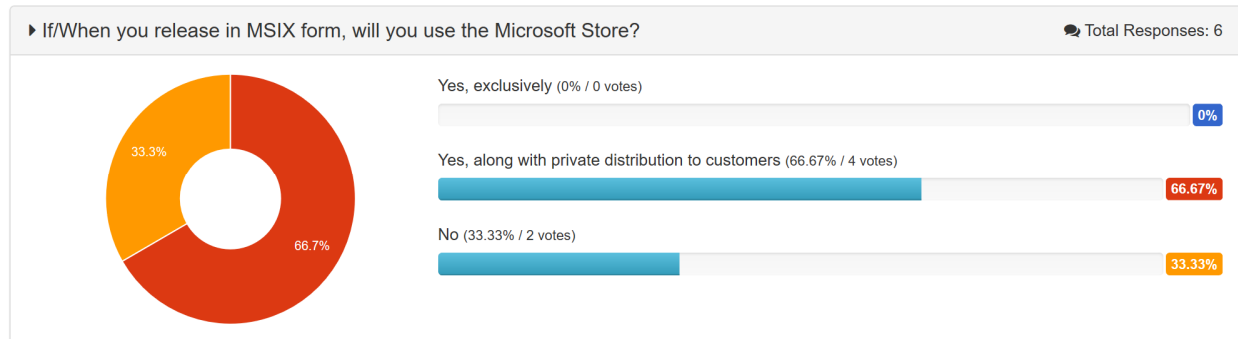
Developers understand the message that this is a replacement for the MSI output. The messaging about .Net Core UI3 at the Ignite conference came out late during the survey response period. I believe that it will be important for developers to understand that messaging going forward if Microsoft is going to get the developers to take action, but it was too early this year to have an impact in the survey.

IT Pros, especially the audience interested in MSIX, have had a lot of experience with App-V and clearly hear the message from Microsoft. We didn't ask any questions in this survey to elicit what they think about App-V going away, but my inbox tells me there is much consternation in the App-V community over Microsoft's plans regarding replacing App-V with MSIX.

2.3 Questions on the distribution chain

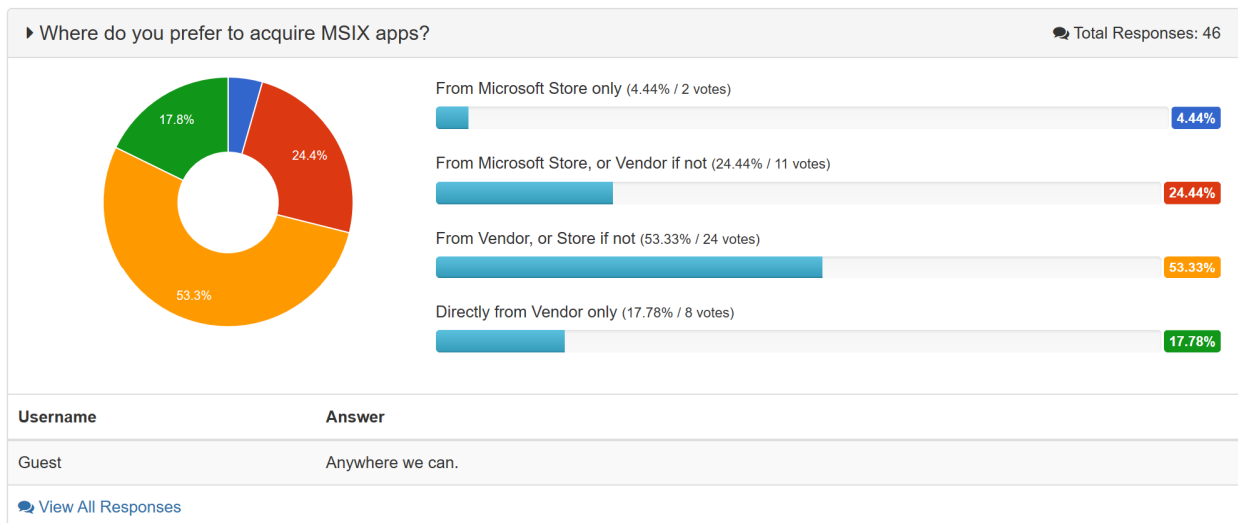
I know that Microsoft values their store as a distribution method more than the IT Pro community does. Software vendors building the Enterprise have so far mostly avoided the store, but I wasn't sure if it was because they couldn't produce equivalent software in UWP form, or if it wasn't a valuable outlet if the Enterprise community doesn't go there. A year ago, Microsoft was pushing the idea that MSIX outlets would be the Store (or Store for Business/Education), however later in the year the messaging became more friendly towards private distributions. So these questions were asked to take the Developer and IT Pro pulse.

Developers:



I think that the store provides an additional level of visibility, and access to consumer and small businesses, but software vendors will continue to drive a direct relationship with customers as well. As products hit the marketplace, we will want to look for hints as to which channels are more effective.

IT Pros:

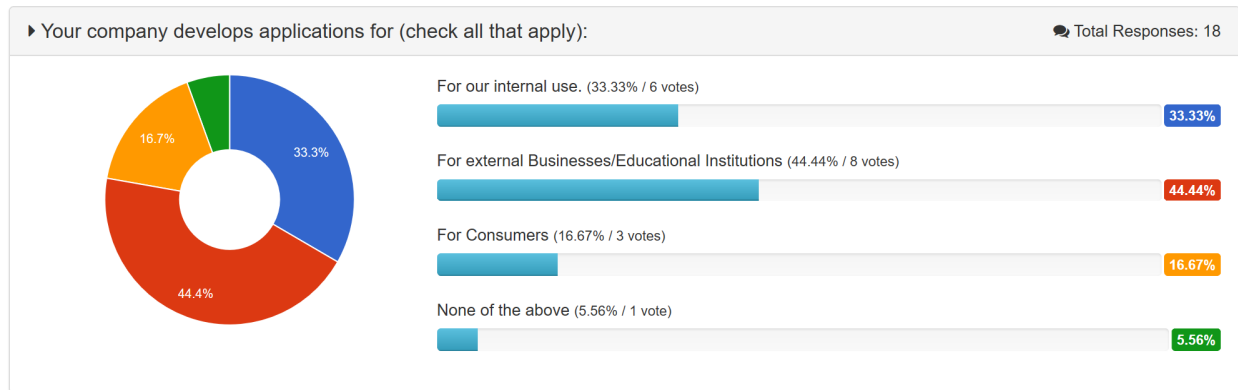


The responses here show stronger support for the Microsoft Store than I expected. Possibly respondents were thinking about the Store for Business/Education? We hear a lot of enterprises are blocking access to the Microsoft Store for end-users, but perhaps IT is more open to acquiring apps from the store on behalf of their organization than we had thought. But if the Store for Business/Education goes away (as is now rumored), this might impact their answers in the future.

3 Developer Questions

There were 23 entries in this survey, although not everyone completed all questions. Remember that these may be commercial developers or in-house developers.

3.1 Develop internally or for others?



Based on the response to this question, we can see that the Developer survey picked up a significant amount of inhouse developers. As multiple responses were allowed in the question, the low number of responses for “For Consumers” should be taken as a limitation of reach of the survey; simply put those software vendors are not within our reach at this point.

3.2 What value does MSIX give to developers?

As a follow-up to developers, after asking what they thought MSIX was we asked what value was to their company. This was asked as an open-ended question:

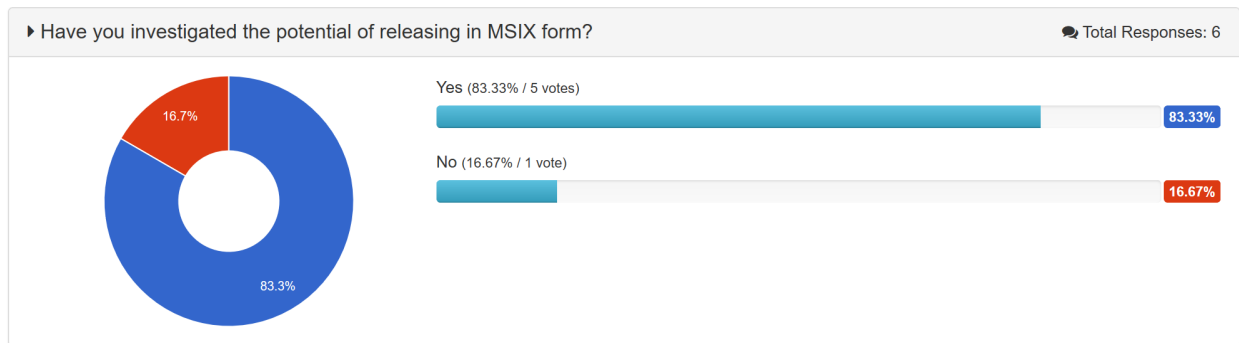
► What is the bennefit to your company to release in MSIX form? Total Responses: 6

Username	Answer
Guest	blah
Guest	No DLL hell. Easy and reliable app update.
Guest	Clean uninstall
Guest	Simplicity
Guest	clean

[View All Responses](#)

We see some of the rationale that Microsoft used in various announcements and presentations showing up in these responses, but nothing that sounds like personal experience.

3.3 Have you considered MSIX?



► Regarding the previous question on investigation: Why or why not? Total Responses: 3

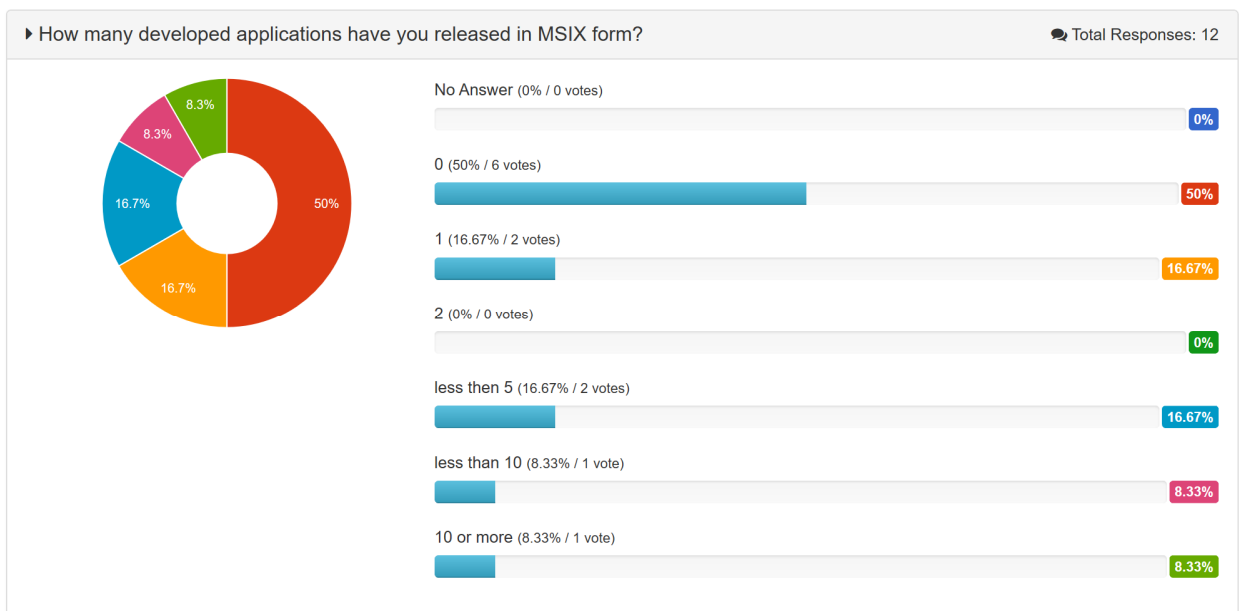
Username	Answer
Guest	Hard to find docs. Tooling not good. To utilize MSIX I need to be confident that all my customers (from Windows 7 up) can download and install my app without downloading anything else beforehand.
Guest	Lack of time
Guest	To be up to date

[View All Responses](#)

These two questions show that at least those involved in the survey have done at least some level of investigation into MSIX. The audience participation might skew the numbers compared to overall levels by all vendors.

3.4 What have you accomplished to date?

This question was intended for us to understand how much MSIX experience the participants have.

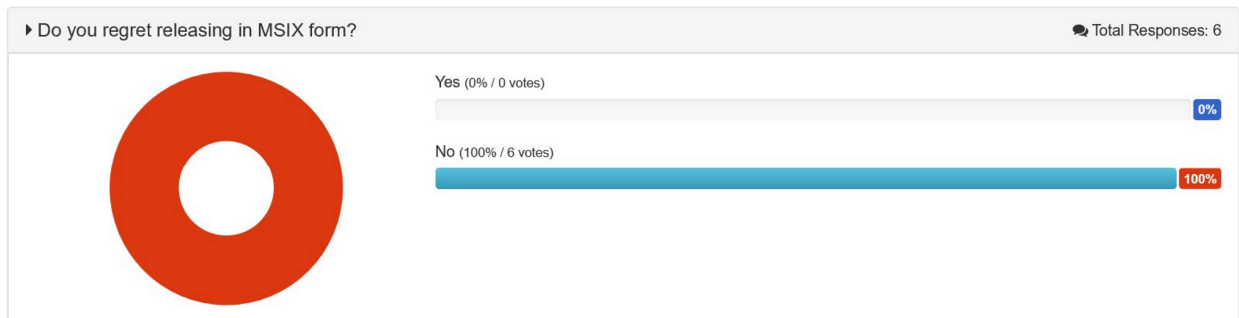


The question brings up a larger one for which there is no clear answer: Just how much MSIX has been released by vendors to date? We really have no way to measure that today, but antidotally I would

suggest the answer is very, very, little as of the end of 2019. I'd really like to know who answered "10 or more"!

3.5 Are there problems if you did?

This intent of this question was to determine if vendors experienced problems with releasing in MSIX form.



It may be too early for this question, but at least nothing popped up yet. There was an open-ended question later in the survey that adds to this story and provides clues as to what we should be on the lookout for.

Please provide details about your experience with MSIX Total Responses: 5

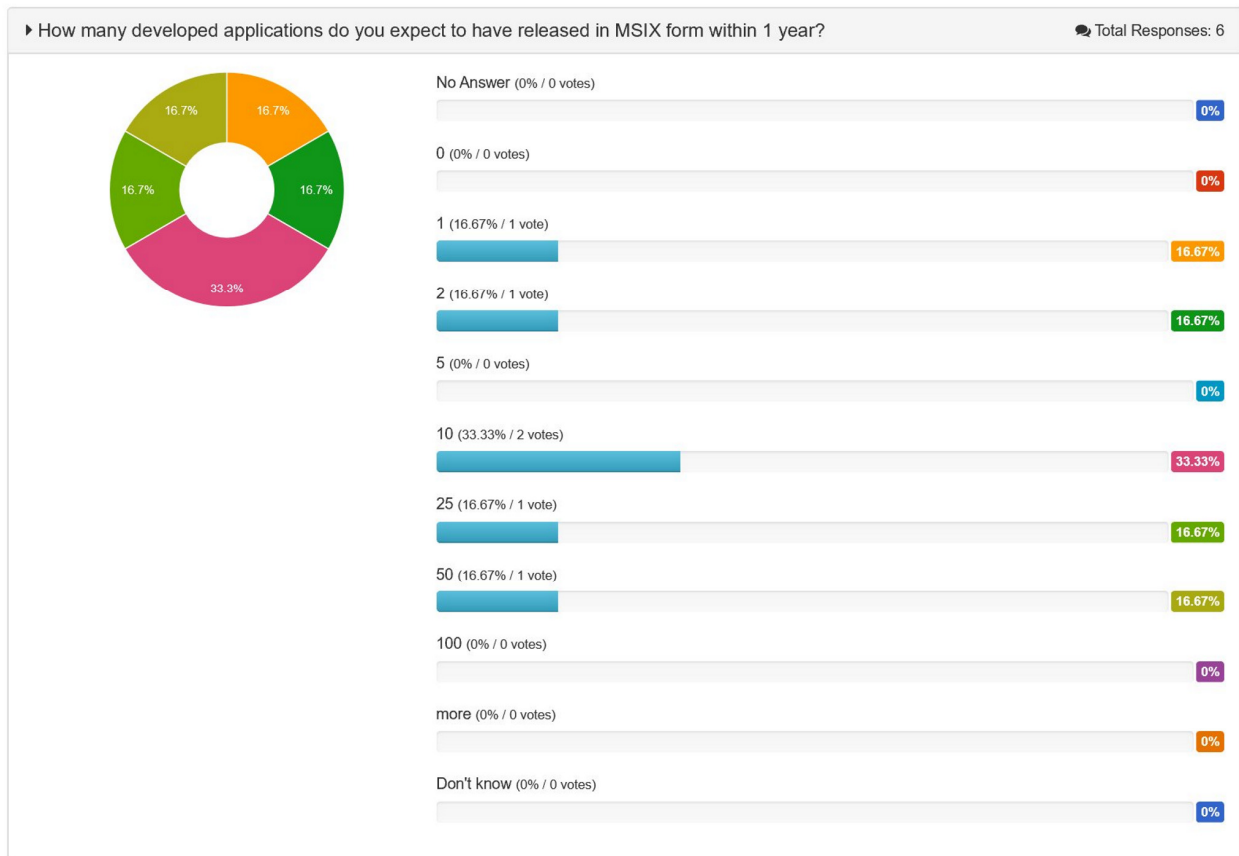
How was the experience of building for MSIX? Did it do what you wanted? What was hard? If you needed external help, was it readily available? Give us a sense of how it went.

Username	Answer
Guest	Most of the issues we run into is when users already have MSI-installed versions of our apps already. They install MSIX and then have both.
Guest	good
Guest	?
Guest	Since we offer both msi and msix installers (Using Advanced Installer) there's no downside or risk. Once Windows 7 is out of service we may drop msi.
Guest	I can only package the less complex applications. converting app-v to msix does not work on more complex application. Stil missing a lot that app-v does today.

[View All Responses](#)

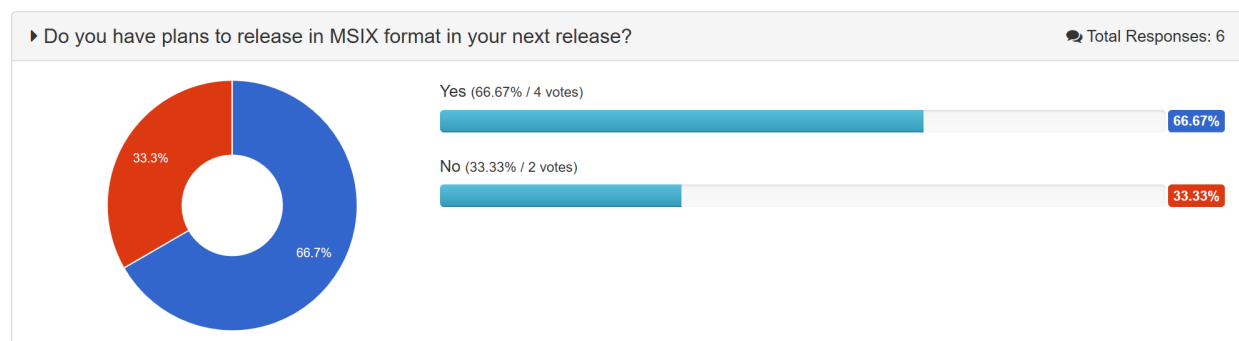
3.6 Plans for 2020?

These two questions are intended to provide feedback on near term plans for MSIX in the developer community.



Plans don't always pan out, but this indicates that we should be on the watch for early-adopter releases later this year.

The question was re-asked in a different form later in the survey:



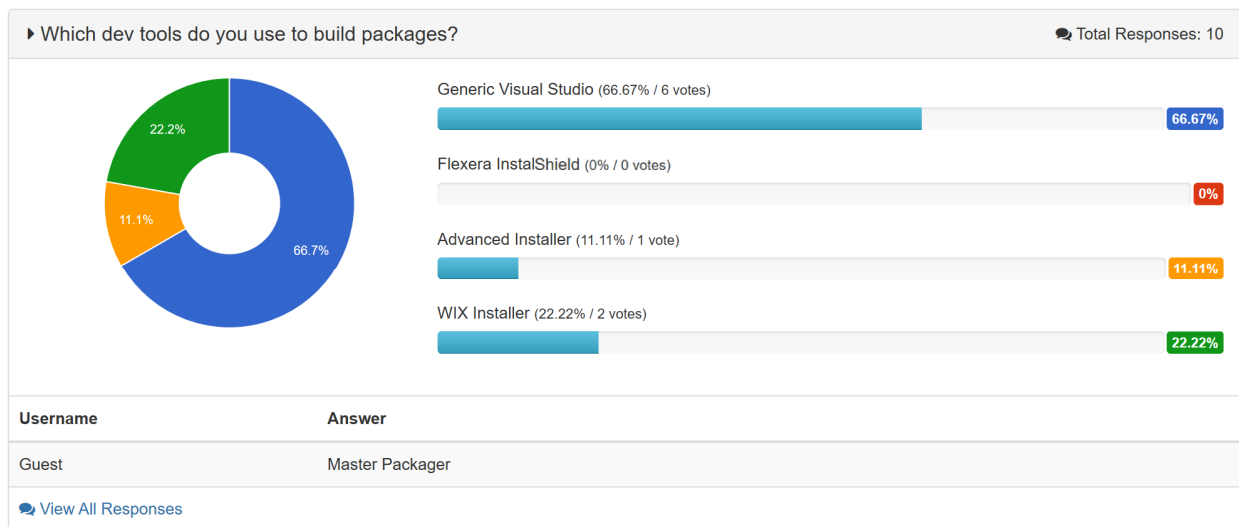
The limited number of responses to this question might indicate a lot of unsureness about MSIX plans going forward.

This question was followed by an open-ended question that got even less response:

▸ Regarding the previous question on plans: Why or why not?		Total Responses: 2
Username	Answer	
Guest	See previous answer.	
Guest	Because we do not see any benefits	
View All Responses		

If MSIX is to be successful with the Software Vendors, I would expect to see a “Chasm¹” like impact where we see a number of early-adopters, a lull, and then mass conversion by others once they see it is safe to take the leap.

3.7 What tools do you use to build your releases?



While Visual Studio is clearly the overall choice for building apps in general, given the audience the numbers here took me by surprise. Especially given the high amount of messaging from the Microsoft partners on how they were supporting MSIX.

3.8 Other feedback from Developers?

A final open-ended question for the developers resulted in just one response:

▸ Please provide any additional feedback regarding MSIX that you would like to add:

Total Responses: 1

Username	Answer
Guest	I also need the ability to easily package my app after post processing (obfuscation, etc.).

 View All Responses

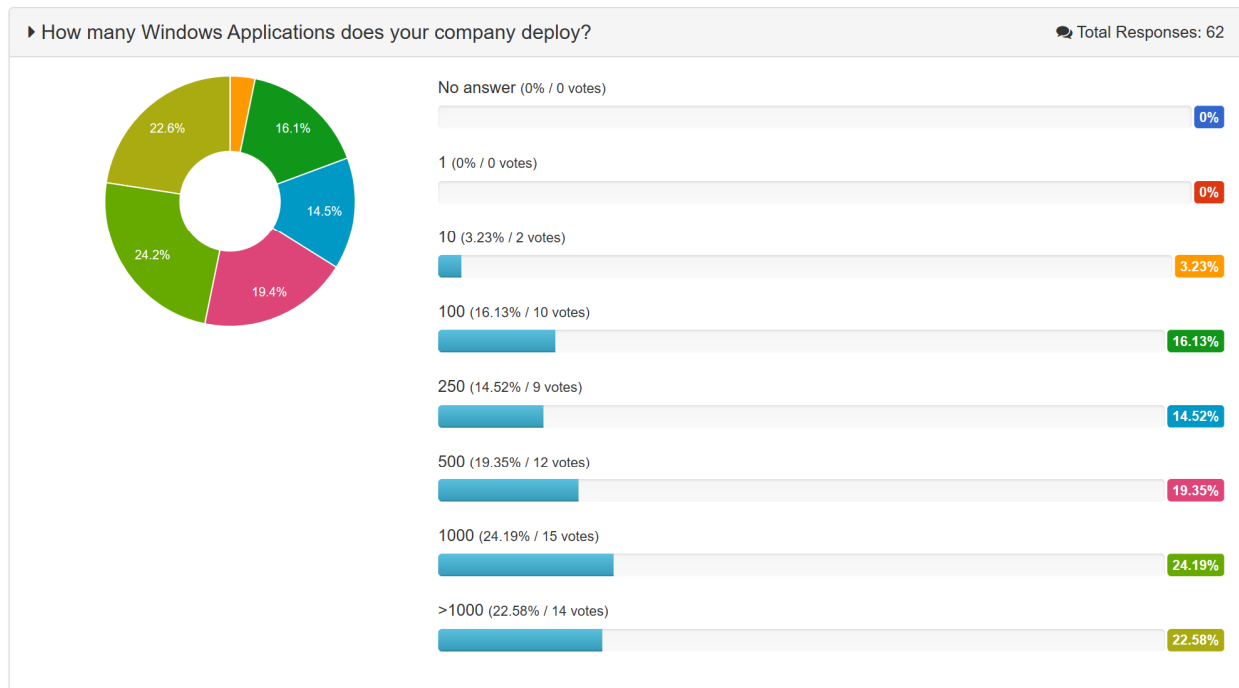
¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossing_the_Chasm

4 IT Pro Questions

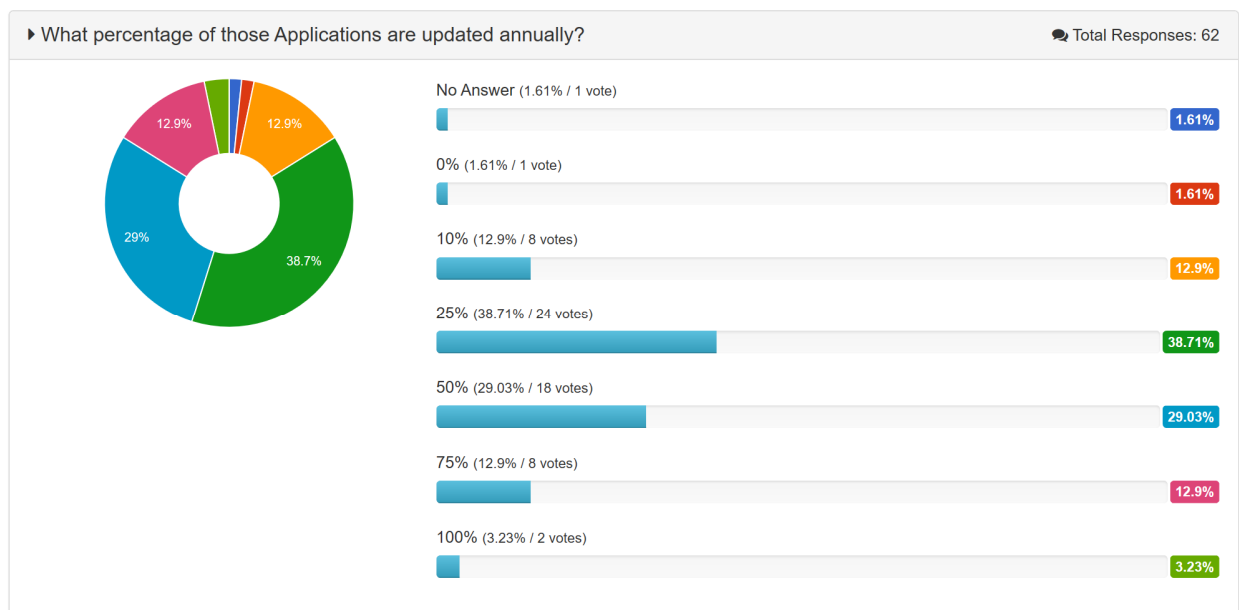
There were 94 entries in this survey, although not everyone completed all questions.

4.1 Getting a feel for the participants

This question provides a feel for the size of the organizations responding. The number of applications could be an indicator of the level of importance that MSIX has to their operations.

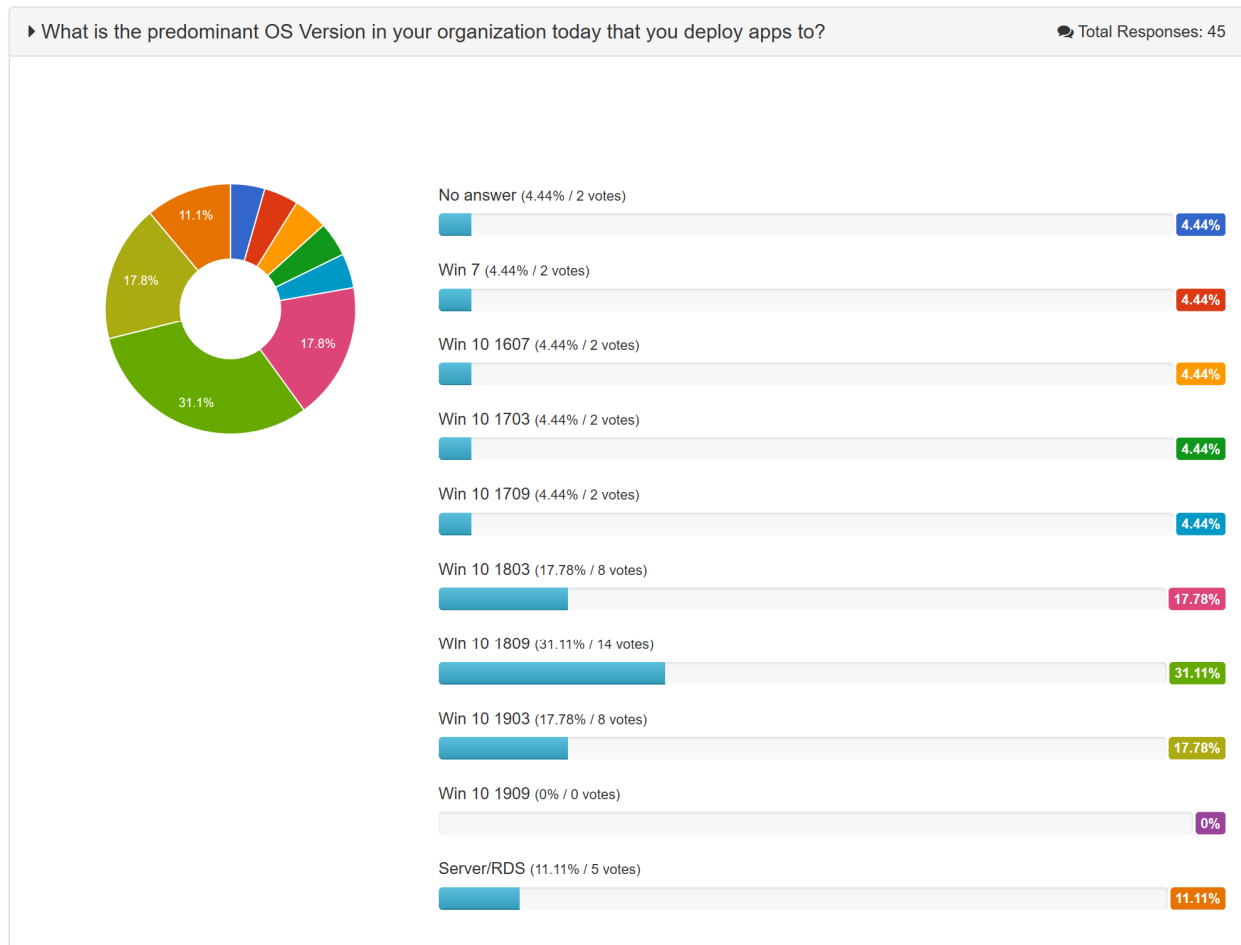


4.2 What is the “churn rate” for updating applications?



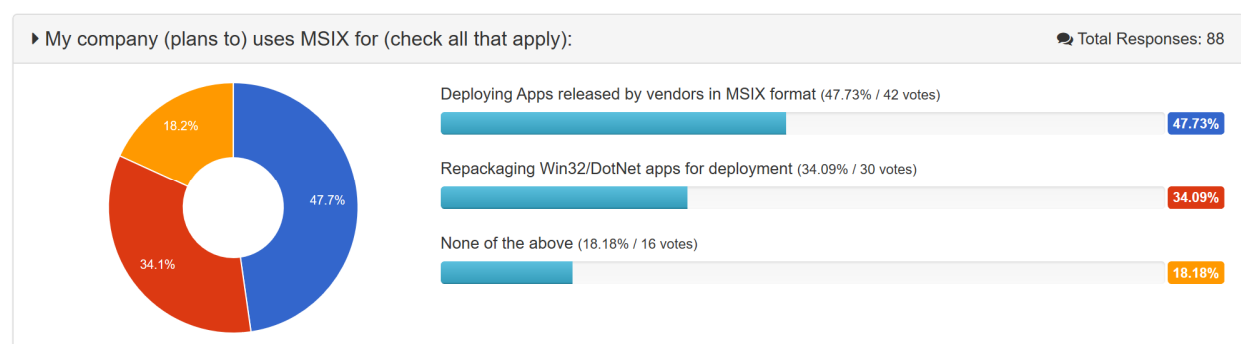
These churn numbers don't reflect what I see large enterprises doing in practice, which is a lower rate of churn. The form of the question might tend to lead participants to only think about apps they recently worked on. I typically find at least 10 percent of applications in the large enterprise have not been updated in over 10 years. The long tail of application lifespans is not represented here.

4.3 What OS versions do you use today?



Note: OS1909 only because available mid-survey and it takes time before enterprises deploy the latest.

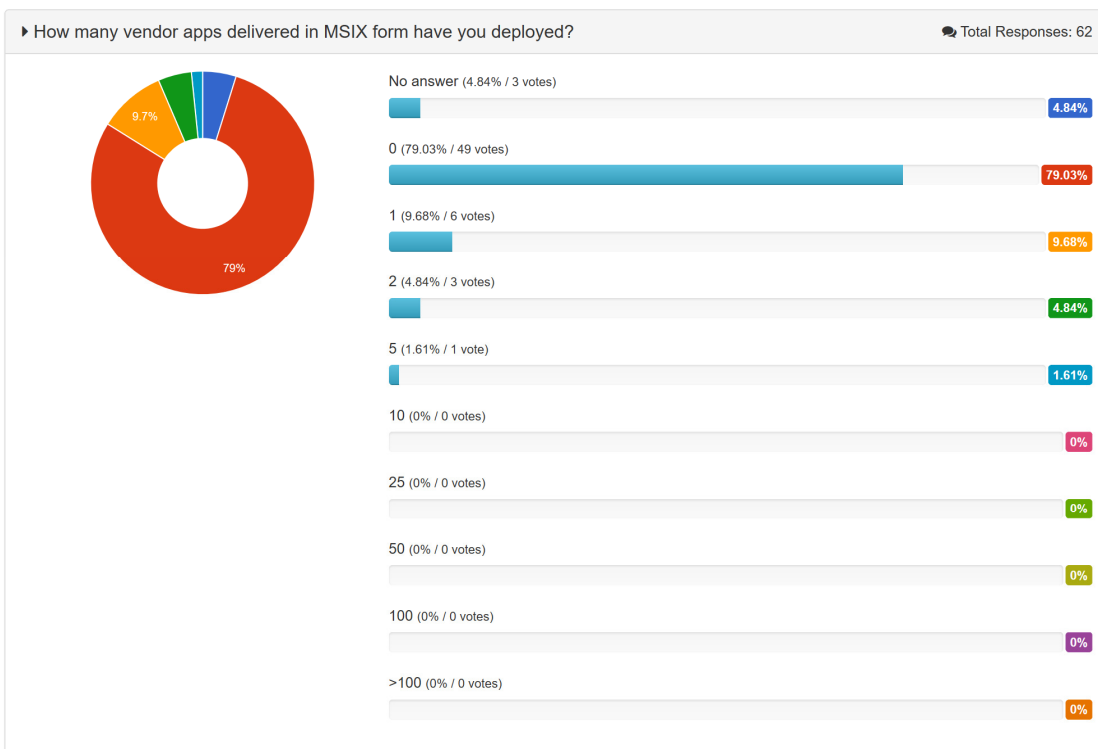
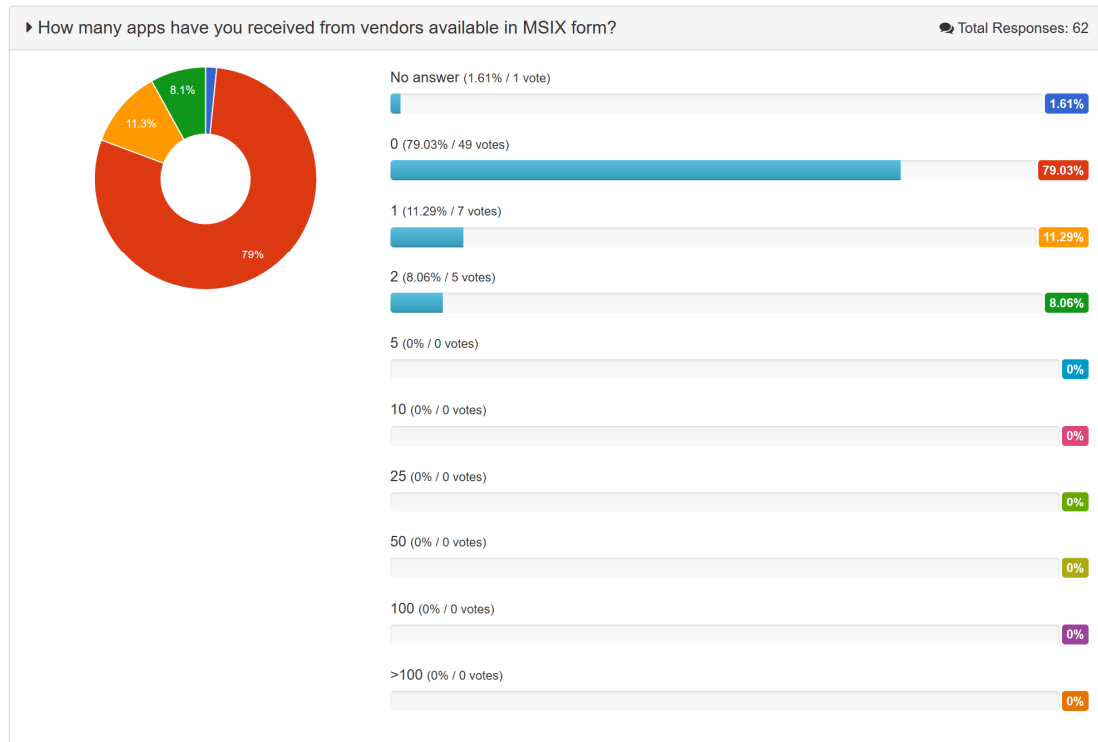
4.4 What do you plan to deploy as MSIX?



If Microsoft is to succeed with MSIX, they will need to get the Software Vendors on board!

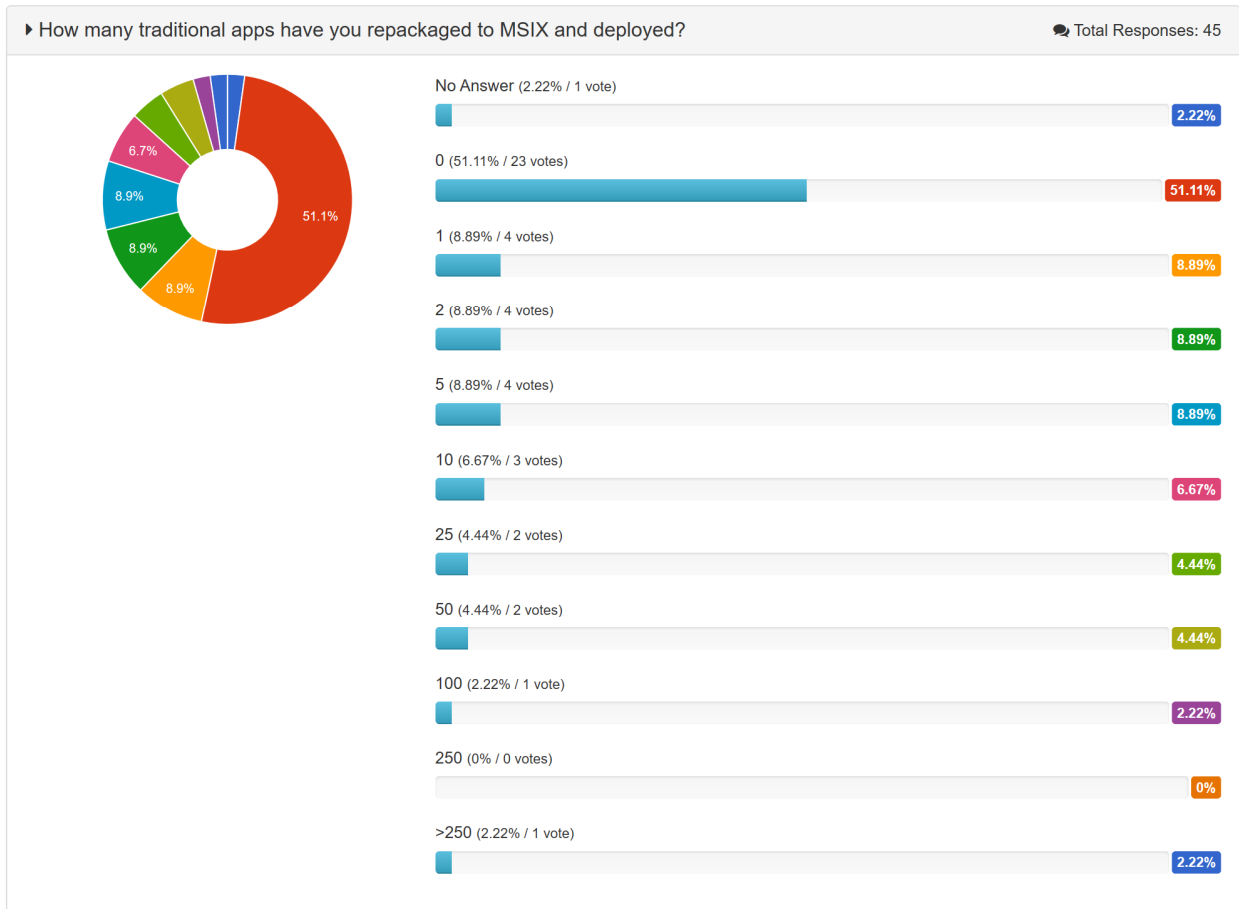
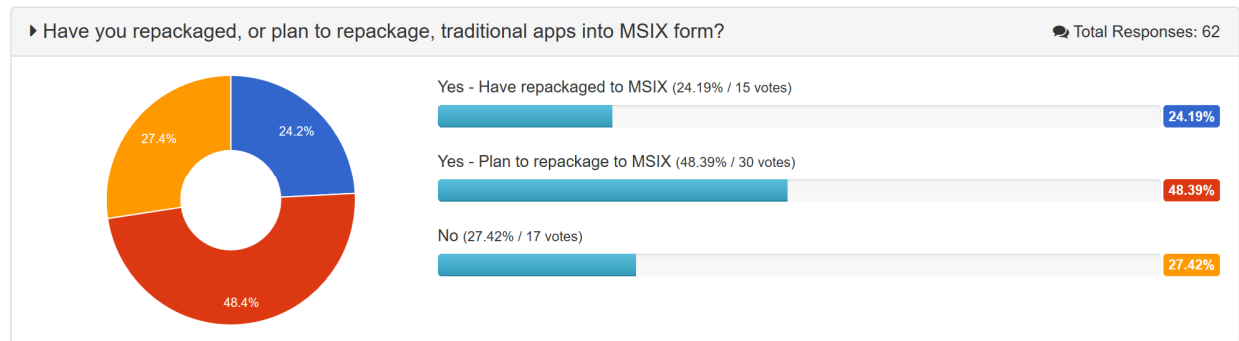
4.5 How much IT Pro Experience do you have with MSIX from vendors?

This is broken into two questions.



As noted in the *Report Card on MSIX*, they may have gotten a few MSIX apps and not have known it.

4.6 How much IT Pro Experience do you have with repackaging to MSIX?



Somebody is ambitious and has been busy! Or maybe ignored s/he the “and deployed” part of the question. While we see evidence of people elsewhere of IT Pros working on with repackaging to MSIX, apparently very little has been deployed.

4.7 What is the quality of experience with Vendor supplied apps?

► What is your opinion of vendor supplied MSIX apps		Total Responses: 34
Username	Answer	
Guest	Not enough available	
Guest	Do not yet understood it	
Guest	fine	
Guest	Nice to see	
Guest	No opinion formed.	
View All Responses		

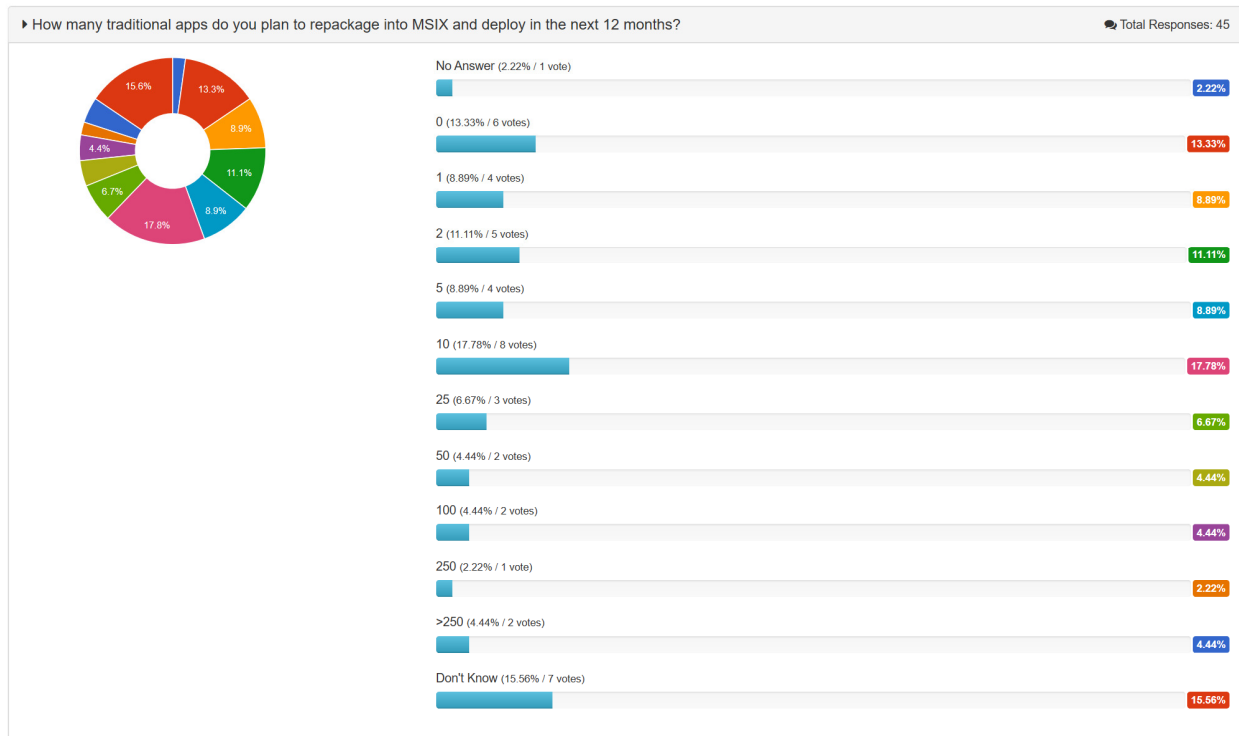
Answers speak for themselves.

4.8 What is the quality of experience with repackaging apps into MSIX?

► Please provide details about your experience repackaging to MSIX		Total Responses: 23
Username	Answer	
Guest	While msix cannot do the same what appv or msi, there is a no chance we would use it in production	
Guest	Microsoft tool works well. Lack of context menu is a large drawback as is inability to script deployment scripts to break out to the underlying os (registry)	
Guest	Relatively quick and painless using power shell Script to bulk convert appv apps.	
Guest	not done enough tp provide feedback	
Guest	It's still a lot of effort, as an example in terms of multi shortcut applications and the PSF is not really user-friendly there should be more psf stuff be done automatically	
View All Responses		

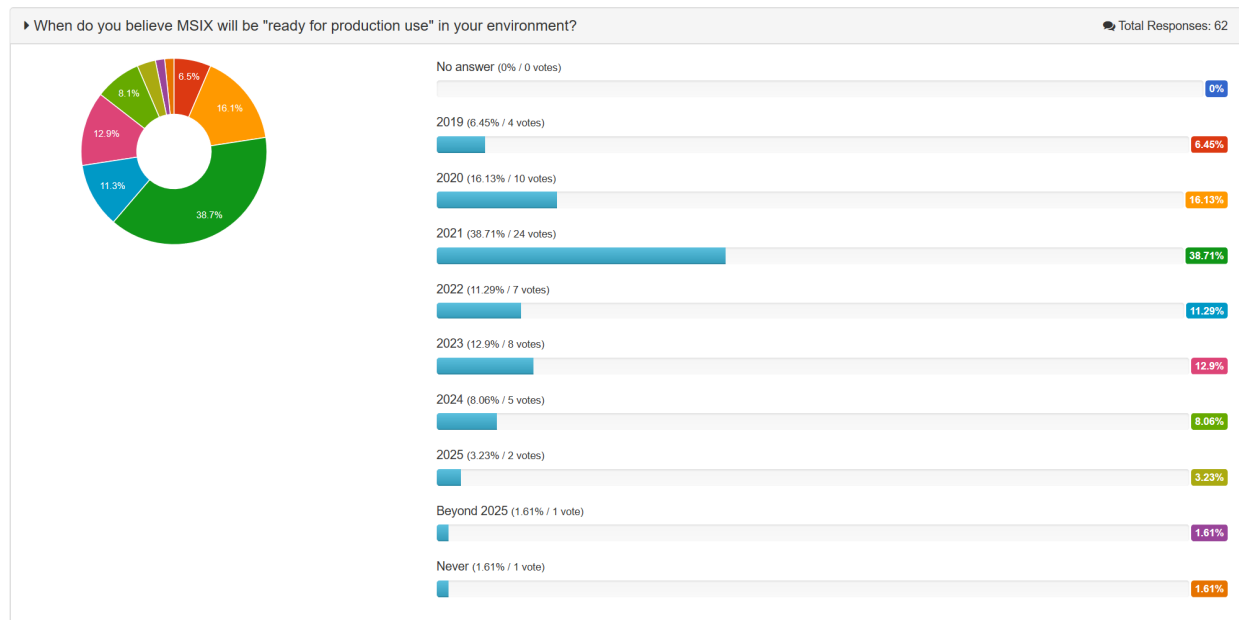
Although the open-ended question did not elicit as much response as I expected, they cover the basics.

4.9 What are your plans for repackaging apps into MSIX in 2020?



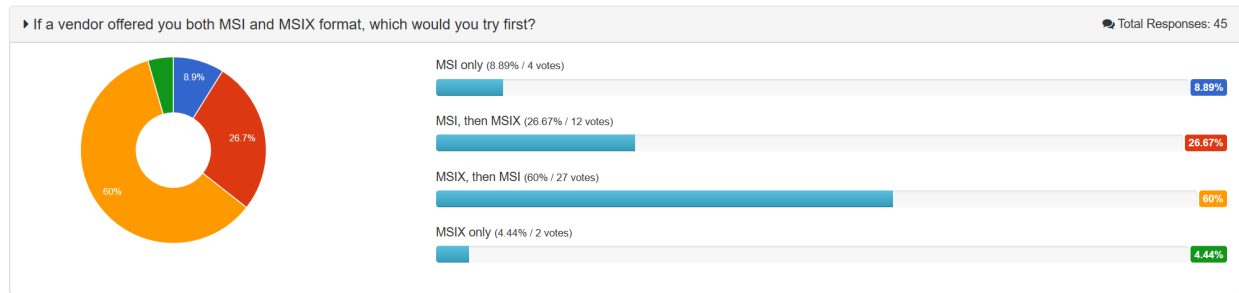
An expectation to do more this year than they did last year, but not significantly more.

4.10 When do you think MSIX will be “Ready”?



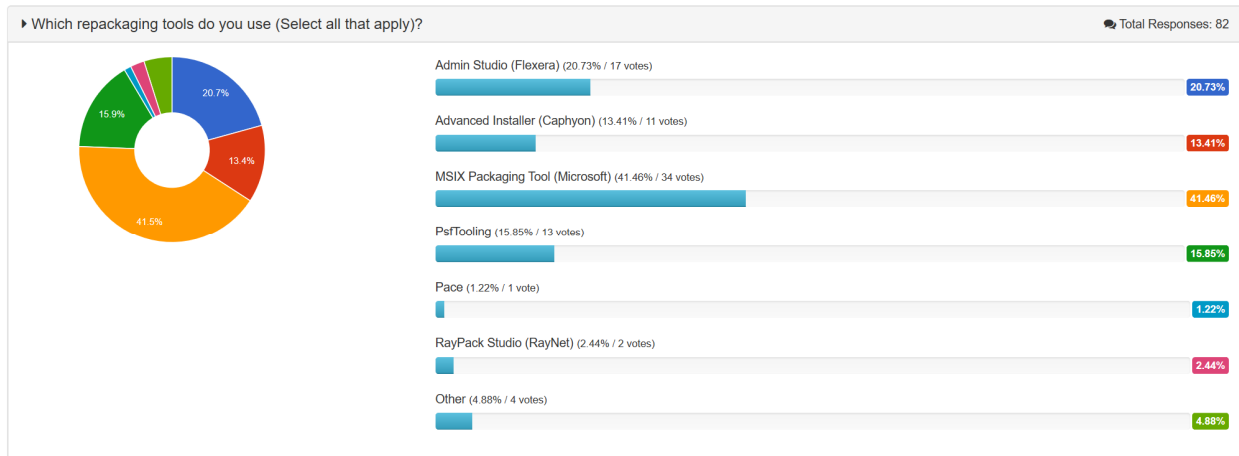
The community has moved their expectations out in time over the last year when they were unrealistically short. It will be interesting to see these answers in another year. It is too bad we don't have press pundant around to declare this the “year of MSIX”.

4.11 How would you prefer your apps from vendors?

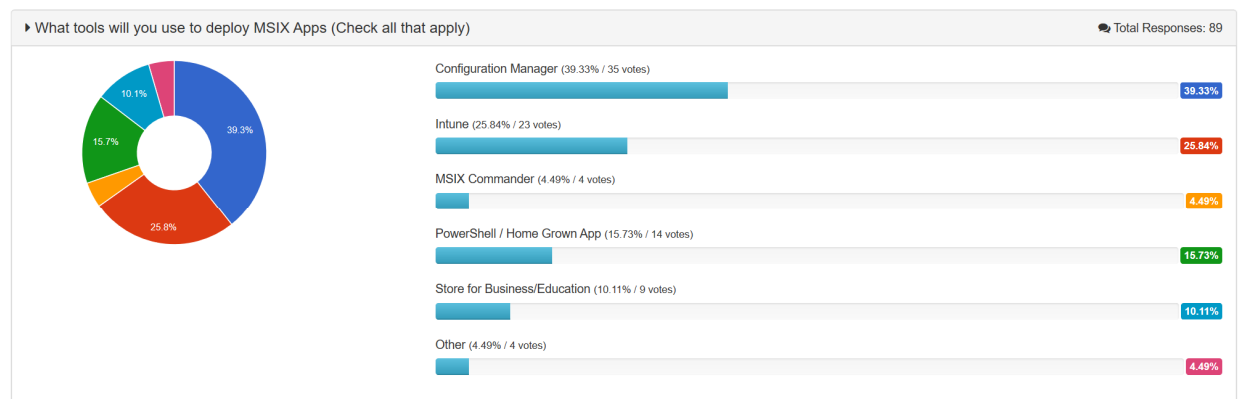


Here we can see that the enterprise values the promise of what MSIX is supposed to offer them.

4.12 What Packaging Tools are you using/looking at?



4.13 How do you plan to deploy the MSIX apps?



Note: This survey was conducted before word got out regarding the potential of Microsoft dropping the Store for Business/Education.

4.14 Do IT Pros have additional feedback on MSIX?

Please provide any additional feedback regarding MSIX:		Total Responses: 12
Username	Answer	
Guest	More information is required especially In relation to application virtualisation replacement	
Guest	Long way to go	
Guest	nope	
Guest	Still missing a few key features to be able to use MSIX as primary delivery format for applications. Will look at Package Support Framework to maybe solve some issues when repackaging.	
Guest	Some training!	
View All Responses		

5 Closing

A huge thank you to everyone who responded to the surveys. There is a vocal MSIX community out there and we need to hear more of their voices.

Please use the Microsoft Community forum for MSIX (<http://aka.ms/MSIXCommunity>) to communicate directly with Microsoft Engineers.

Please visit the www.m6conf.com site, home for the community surveys and *Report Card on MSIX*, for independent MSIX information from a variety of players in this space.

And please keep an eye out next autumn when I intend to issue another set of surveys.

Our work is cut out for us, but we're on it!