

STC's

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR/ TEMP AGENCY EMPLOYEE SURVEY

Twenty-four percent of all STC members call themselves independent contractors. This percentage has remained fairly constant over the past decade, despite many changes in the profession.

In 2001, STC conducted a survey of technical communicators in the United States and Canada who call themselves independent contractors or temp agency employees. Like our annual survey of STC members who identify themselves as technical writers and editors, this survey looked at compensation. But the independent contractor/temp agency employee (ICTAE) survey also sought other information in order to shed some light on this major demographic group.

STC sent this survey to a total of 2,554 people, 580 of whom responded (a response rate of approximately 23 percent). Of these, 377 responses from independent contractors and 88 responses from employees of temp agencies were used in the results that follow. (Note: Other responses were discarded because respondents gave incomplete or self-contradictory information.)

Some results of this survey are presented in tables. The column headings for these tables are defined below.

Base—The total responses in a given category.

Mean—The value computed by averaging the tabulated responses.

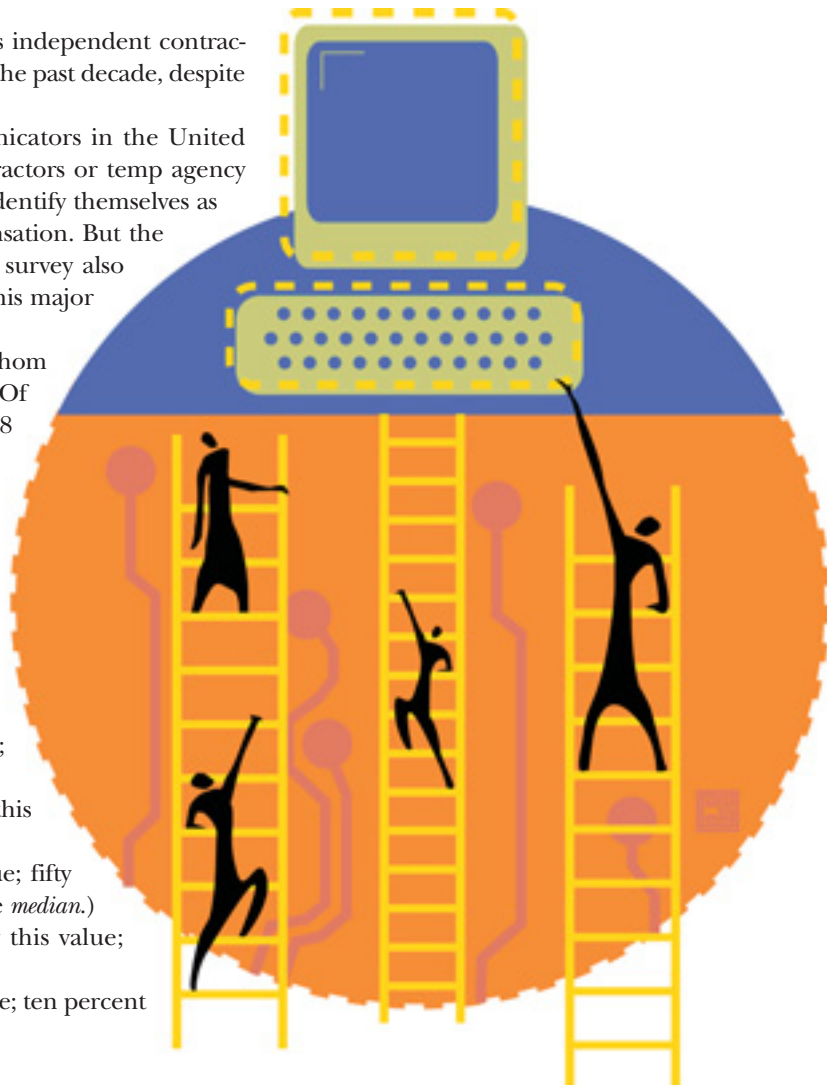
10%—Ten percent of the responses were below this value; ninety percent were above this value.

25%—Twenty-five percent of the responses were below this value; seventy-five percent were above this value.

50%—Fifty percent of the responses were below this value; fifty percent were above this value. (This is also called the *median*.)

75%—Seventy-five percent of the responses were below this value; twenty-five percent were above this value.

90%—Ninety percent of the responses were below this value; ten percent were above this value.



Work Habits—U.S.

During a typical week, how many hours do you work?

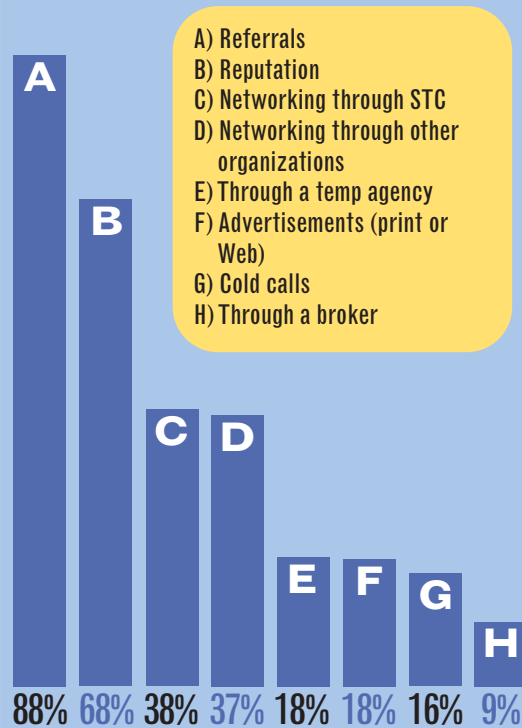
How many hours do you bill?

	Base	Mean	25%	50%	75%
All Respondents					
Hours Worked	361	38	30	40	45
Hours Billed	361	34	30	40	40
Independent Contractors					
Hours Worked	277	38	30	40	45
Hours Billed	277	32	25	35	40
Temp Agency Employees					
Hours Worked	84	40	40	40	43
Hours Billed	84	39	40	40	40

Marketing—U.S.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

How do you get new clients? %



- A) Referrals
- B) Reputation
- C) Networking through STC
- D) Networking through other organizations
- E) Through a temp agency
- F) Advertisements (print or Web)
- G) Cold calls
- H) Through a broker

Job Satisfaction—U.S.

ALL RESPONDENTS

How many years have you worked in the technical communication field?

15 years (average)

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

Is being an independent contractor what you expected?

Yes	90%
No	10%
	100%

Given the choice, would you prefer to be an independent contractor rather than a full-time, salaried employee?

Yes	98%
No	2%
	100%

TEMP AGENCY EMPLOYEES

Is being an employee of a temp agency what you expected?

Yes	93%
No	7%
	100%

Given the choice, would you prefer to be an employee of a temp agency rather than a full-time, salaried employee of another type of company?

Yes	81%
No	19%
	100%

ALL RESPONDENTS

Give the most important reasons why you are an independent contractor or temp agency employee. %



- A) Flexibility in work schedule
- B) Opportunity for greater income
- C) Need for autonomy/independence
- D) Makes the most of my skills/interests
- E) To avoid organizational policies
- F) Prompted by getting laid off
- G) Best way to break into the field

% Because respondents were asked to give multiple answers, percentages do not add up to 100 percent.



Conducting Business—U.S.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

What percentage of your work is performed on a fixed contract

(one price for the job)? What percentage is performed on an hourly rate?

Fixed contract	13%
Hourly rate	<u>.87%</u>
	100%

Regardless of your actual employment status, which category best describes your level of authority on your current contract or project?

Staff	36%
Supervisor	5%
Project manager	42%
Other	<u>.17%</u>
	100%

Do you subcontract work to others?

Yes	36%
No	<u>.64%</u>
	100%

What percentage of your work is performed in each of these environments?

A rented office	5%
Home	61%
Client sites	<u>.34%</u>
	100%

Legal Status—U.S.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

What is the legal status of your business?

Sole proprietorship	74%
Partnership	2%
Limited liability company	3%
Corporation	19%
Other	<u>.2%</u>
	100%

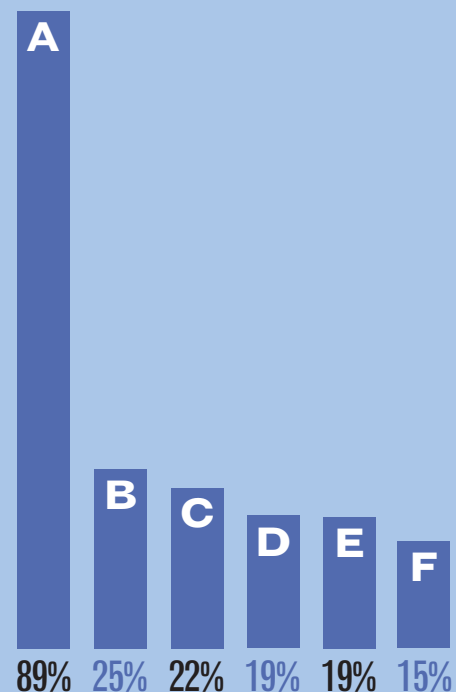
TEMP AGENCY EMPLOYEES

What is the legal status of the entity that issues your IRS 1099?

Sole proprietorship	5%
Partnership	0%
Limited liability company	3%
Corporation	87%
Other	<u>.5%</u>
	100%

ALL RESPONDENTS

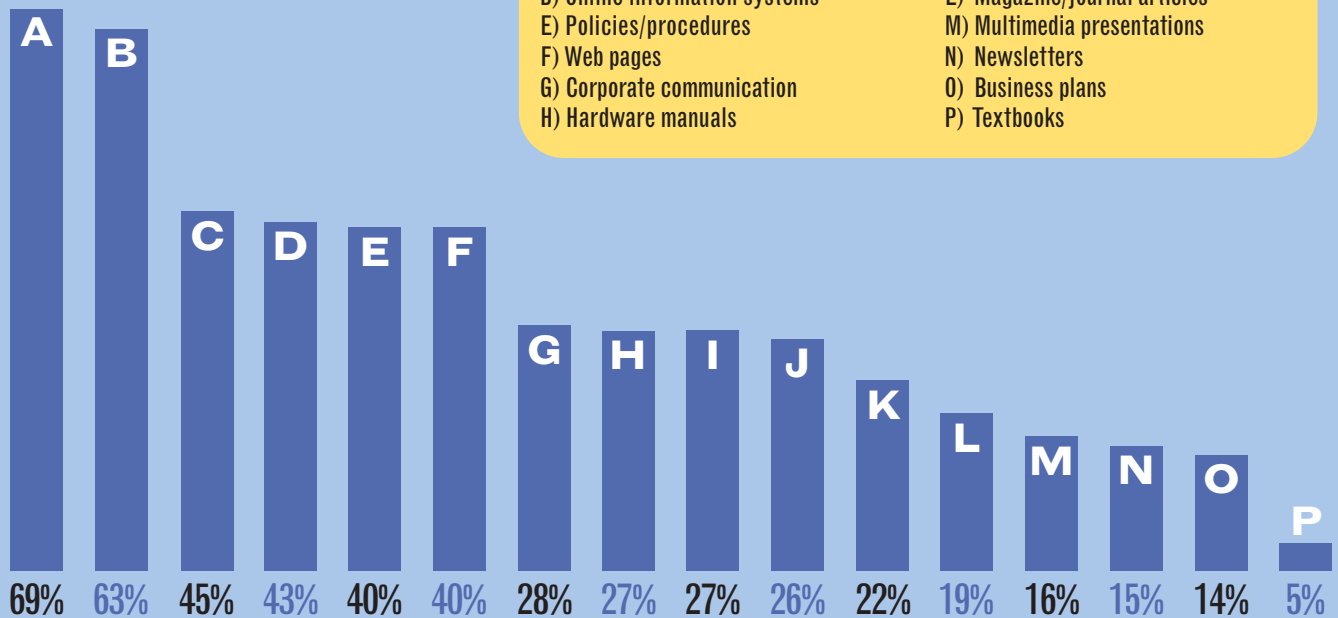
In which industries do you work? %



Kinds of Business—U.S.

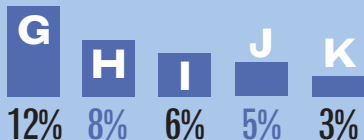
ALL RESPONDENTS

What do you produce for your clients? %



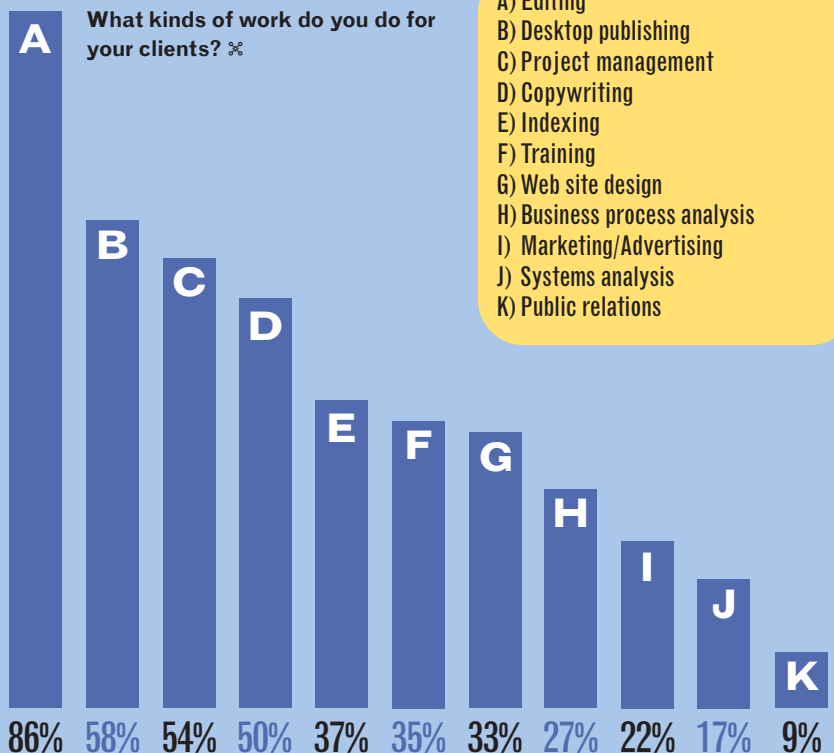
- A) Technical reports/documents
- B) Software manuals
- C) Training materials
- D) Online information systems
- E) Policies/procedures
- F) Web pages
- G) Corporate communication
- H) Hardware manuals
- I) Promotional materials
- J) Graphic design/illustration
- K) Indexes
- L) Magazine/journal articles
- M) Multimedia presentations
- N) Newsletters
- O) Business plans
- P) Textbooks

- A) Computer/hardware/software
- B) Telecommunications
- C) Engineering
- D) Manufacturing
- E) Medical/health care
- F) Banking/finance
- G) Education/university/academia
- H) Nonprofit
- I) Federal government
- J) Insurance
- K) Aerospace



ALL RESPONDENTS

What kinds of work do you do for your clients? %



- A) Editing
- B) Desktop publishing
- C) Project management
- D) Copywriting
- E) Indexing
- F) Training
- G) Web site design
- H) Business process analysis
- I) Marketing/Advertising
- J) Systems analysis
- K) Public relations

% Because respondents were asked to give multiple answers, percentages do not add up to 100%.

Salary — Annual Wages—U.S.

STC's 2001 Independent Contractor/Temp Agency Employee Annual Salary Survey

(Note: The figures below represent U.S. dollars per year. Respondents reporting less than 35 hours of work per week were not included in this table.)

Grouping	Base	Mean	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%
Total	136	\$65,400	\$30,000	\$38,000	\$55,690	\$79,500	\$119,000
Independent Contractor	102	69,870	29,500	39,140	60,000	85,000	120,000
Sole Proprietorship	71	67,040	29,500	38,140	60,000	82,500	120,000
Corporation	23	75,060	—	38,750	62,500	109,000	—
Temp Agency Employee	34	51,980	—	38,500	45,010	64,000	—
Corporation	21	45,800	—	38,500	43,510	50,750	—
Education Level							
High School	6	69,650	—	—	—	—	—
Associate's	8	62,000	—	—	—	—	—
Bachelor's	57	69,210	29,500	36,660	56,500	82,500	130,000
Master's	54	62,390	28,640	39,000	55,190	77,150	114,000
Doctorate	10	62,509	—	—	53,000	—	—
Sex							
Female	83	60,560	29,000	39,140	54,450	76,650	114,000
Male	53	72,980	30,000	36,160	60,000	82,500	158,000
Age							
30–39	21	59,160	—	34,500	49,750	72,500	—
40–49	48	67,330	—	37,750	67,500	85,000	—
50 years and over	61	68,610	30,000	43,460	55,190	78,500	122,500

Salary — Hourly Wages—U.S.

STC's 2001 Independent Contractor/Temp Agency Employee Hourly Salary Survey

(Note: The figures below represent U.S. dollars per hour. Respondents reporting less than 35 hours of work per week were not included in this table.)

Grouping	Base	Mean	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%
Total	249	\$54	\$32	\$40	\$50	\$65	\$75
Independent Contractor	178	58	35	46	55	68	80
Sole Proprietorship	120	57	35	45	55	65	77
Corporation	39	62	—	54	60	71	—
Temp Agency Employee	71	45	25	34	41	50	66
Corporation	45	44	—	31	39	50	—
Education Level							
High School	9	54	—	—	—	—	—
Associate's	13	59	—	—	50	—	—
Bachelor's	112	52	30	40	50	65	75
Master's	100	59	35	47	60	70	85
Doctorate	14	54	—	—	51	—	—
Sex							
Female	153	55	33	40	50	65	75
Male	96	53	31	38	50	65	75
Age							
30–39	42	51	—	35	47	64	—
40–49	88	57	35	45	55	65	85
50 years and over	109	53	30	40	51	65	75

Work Habits—Canada

During a typical week, how many hours do you work?

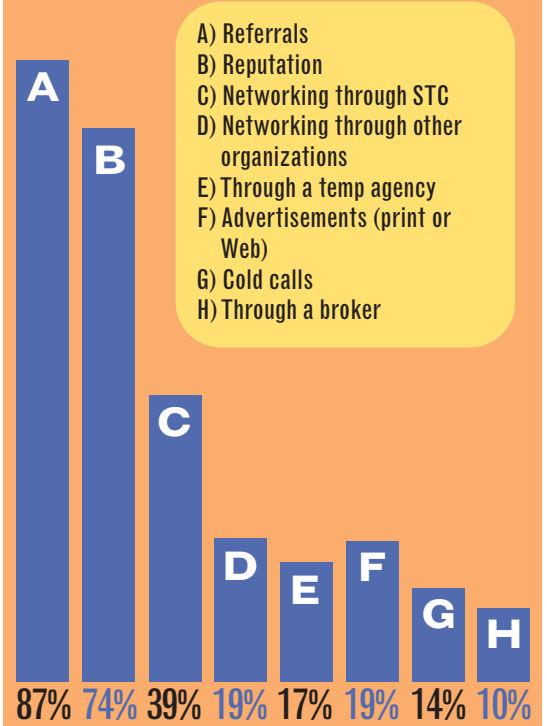
How many hours do you bill?

	Base	Mean	25%	50%	75%
All Respondents					
Hours Worked	85	41	35	40	45
Hours Billed	85	37	30	38	43
Independent Contractors					
Hours Worked	84	41	35	40	45
Hours Billed	84	38	30	38	43

Marketing—Canada

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

How do you get new clients? %



Job Satisfaction—Canada

ALL RESPONDENTS

How many years have you worked in the technical communication field?

11 years (average)

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

Is being an independent contractor what you expected?

Yes	96%
No	4%
	100%

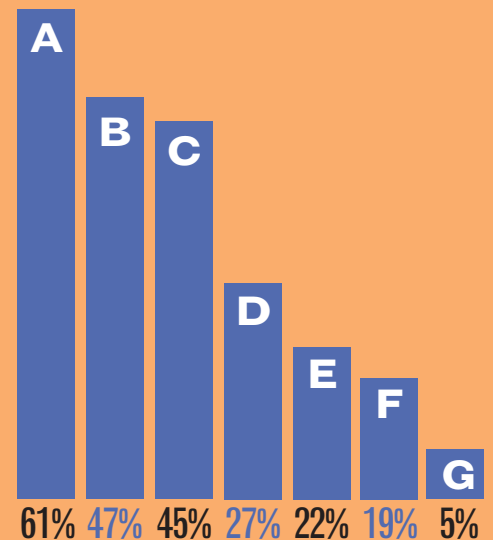
Given the choice, would you prefer to be an independent contractor rather than a full-time, salaried employee?

Yes	88%
No	12%
	100%

- A) Flexibility in work schedule
- B) Opportunity for greater income
- C) Need for autonomy/independence
- D) Makes the most of my skills/ interests
- E) To avoid organizational policies
- F) Prompted by getting laid off
- G) Best way to break into the field

ALL RESPONDENTS

Give the most important reasons why you are an independent contractor or temp agency employee. %



% Because respondents were asked to give multiple answers, percentages do not add up to 100 percent.



Conducting Business—Canada

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

What percentage of your work is performed on a fixed contract (one price for the job)? What percentage is performed on an hourly rate?

Fixed contract	18%
Hourly rate	82%
	<u>100%</u>

Regardless of your actual employment status, which category best describes your level of authority on your current contract or project?

Staff	47%
Supervisor	11%
Project manager	23%
Other	19%
	<u>100%</u>

Do you subcontract work to others?

Yes	40%
No	60%
	<u>100%</u>

What percentage of your work is performed in each of these environments?

A rented office	3%
Home	49%
Client sites	48%
	<u>100%</u>

Legal Status—Canada

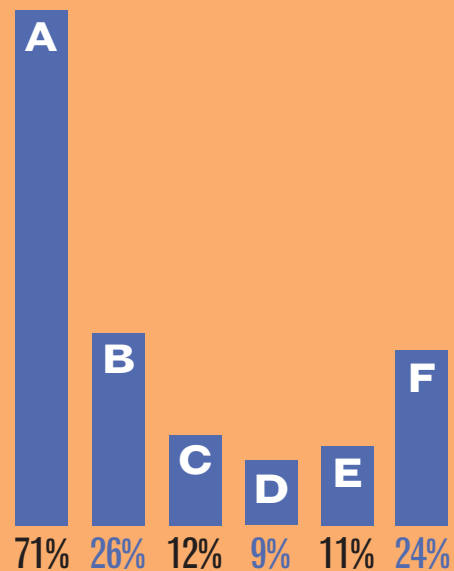
INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

What is the legal status of your business?

Sole proprietorship	60%
Partnership	2%
Limited liability company	6%
Corporation	31%
Other	1%
	<u>100%</u>

ALL RESPONDENTS

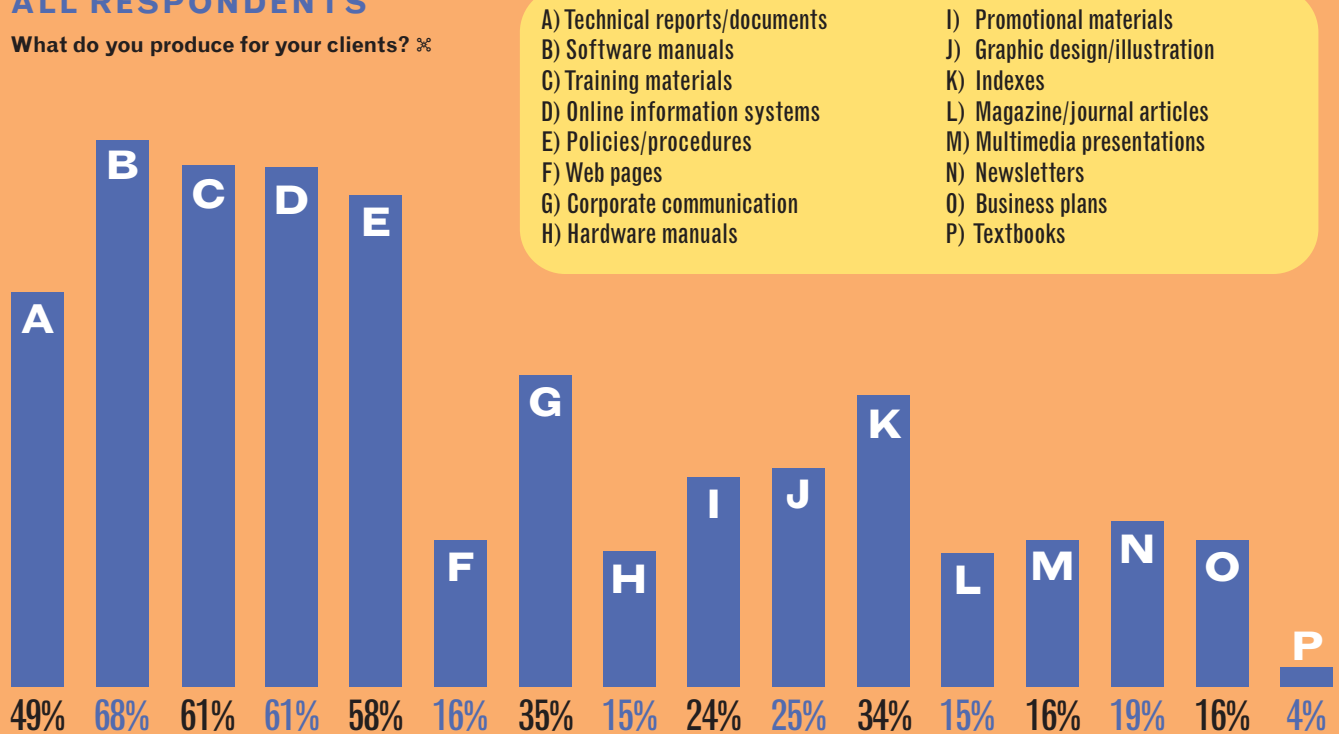
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Kinds of Business—Canada

ALL RESPONDENTS

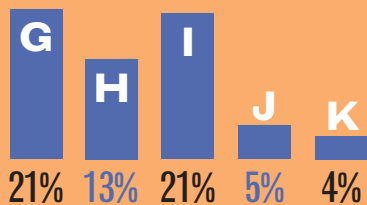
What do you produce for your clients? %



- A) Technical reports/documents
- B) Software manuals
- C) Training materials
- D) Online information systems
- E) Policies/procedures
- F) Web pages
- G) Corporate communication
- H) Hardware manuals

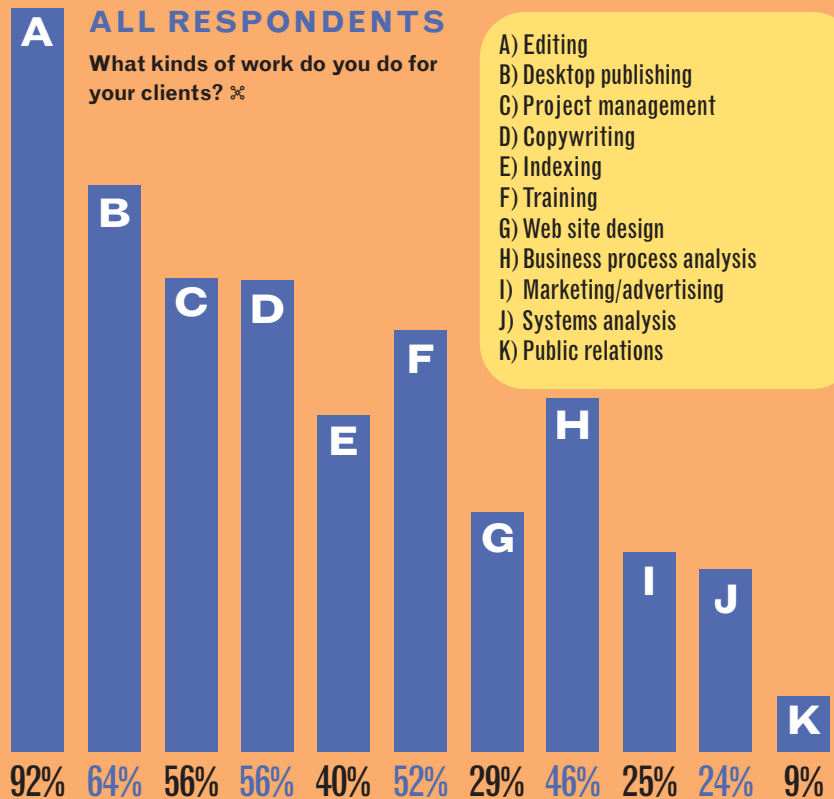
- I) Promotional materials
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- K) Indexes
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- P) Textbooks

- A) Computer/hardware/software
- B) Telecommunications
- C) Engineering
- D) Manufacturing
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Salary — Annual Wages—Canada

STC's 2001 Independent Contractor/Temp Agency Employee Annual Salary Survey

(Note: The figures below represent Canadian dollars per year. Respondents reporting less than 35 hours of work per week were not included in this table. Because of the small number of responses, the 10 and 90 percentiles were not statistically significant and are not reported here.)

Grouping	Base	Mean	25%	50%	75%
Total	32	\$61,360	\$30,000	\$43,690	\$80,000
Independent Contractor	32	30,680	30,000	43,000	80,000
Sole Proprietorship	19	58,120	—	39,500	—
Corporation	11	64,020	—	59,000	—
Education Level					
High School	6	56,920	—	—	—
Bachelor's	14	55,870	—	35,000	—
Master's	10	65,370	—	40,000	—
Sex					
Female	20	55,770	30,000	35,000	56,000
Male	12	70,670	—	70,000	—
Age					
less than 50	26	33,180	33,250	43,000	80,000
50 years and over	8	24,300	30,000	39,000	85,000

Salary — Hourly Wages—Canada

STC's 2001 Independent Contractor/Temp Agency Employee Hourly Salary Survey

(Note: The figures below represent Canadian dollars per hour. Respondents reporting less than 35 hours of work per week were not included in this table.)

Grouping	Base	Mean	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%
Total	63	\$57	\$29	\$40	\$50	\$60	\$78
Independent Contractor	62	57	28	40	50	60	78
Sole Proprietorship	31	47	—	36	42	55	—
Corporation	25	71	—	45	55	60	—
Education Level							
High School	11	42	—	—	40	—	—
Bachelor's	34	65	—	41	54	65	—
Master's	12	52	—	—	46	—	—
Sex							
Female	42	58	—	39	50	58	—
Male	21	55	—	40	63	65	—
Age							
30–39	10	47	—	—	39	—	—
40–49	30	63	—	40	50	65	—
50 years and over	21	53	—	40	51	60	—