



# AuSTCom

Newsletter of the Society for Technical Communication, Australia Chapter

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2, NOVEMBER 2005

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Ray Arceee*

Season's greetings to all. This is the last newsletter for the year, and I hope that your year has been as profitable and as fruitful as it has been for me. The new executive committee has met several times over the past few months but we are still short one Vice President. If there is anyone who thinks they can help out, then please contact me.

The annual Salary Survey has now ended and Rhonda Bracey has announced results which are available via the website, <http://www.stc-aus.org.au>. In fact, the results of 2003, 2004 and 2005 are published online, providing ongoing snapshots of the technical writing industry in this country. One disappointing fact has been the decreasing number of participants over the past three years. Does this mean our industry is falling in numbers or in terms of interest in filling out surveys?

We are currently having a look at our website's usability and hope that we can improve the site as much as humanly possible. Myra Gurney (current Secretary) and I have been doing some research regarding usability and culture and we have discovered that what is usable for one culture, may not be totally usable for another. While we might like to think that usability is a universal attribute, it may only be a cultural artifact.

My proposal to research the history of the professional/technical writing industry in Australia was successful, and so I will be spending the first half of next year undertaking this project. I would be very interested in chatting to anyone who has any information regarding this history.

The annual STC (Aust) competition has now closed and the judges are in the process of deciding upon the winning entries. More news to come.

I wish you a happy and a safe holiday,

Ray Arceee, [president@stc-aus.org.au](mailto:president@stc-aus.org.au)

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## FROM THE EDITOR

*Robin Swindell*

Welcome to the November issue of AuSTCom. It has been an eventful 2005 at the Australia Chapter. We have just completed another successful round of competitions (more news on that next issue!) and collated the results from the 2005 salary survey. Our webmaster, Rhonda Bracey, details those results on page 3.

Let's hope 2006 is just as fruitful. The Chapter is starting down the rechartering path and would like to hear from you. More details on the transformation on page 2.

We always welcome your feedback and contributions to the newsletter. Contact me on [newsletter@stc-aus.org.au](mailto:newsletter@stc-aus.org.au).

Happy holidays everyone.

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## STC AND CHAPTER NEWS

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### COMPETITION RESULTS

We have had some excellent entries in this year's competitions. Check out the results on our web site at: [http://www.stc-aus.org.au/competitions\\_results2005-2006.htm](http://www.stc-aus.org.au/competitions_results2005-2006.htm)

Expect to hear more on the results, including highlights on some of the award winners, in the February issue of this newsletter. Stay tuned and congratulations to everyone who entered!

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### NEW SENIOR MEMBERS

STC Australia Chapter would like to congratulate the following members who became STC Senior Members in September:

**Colin Dawson**  
**Judy Gregory**  
**Linda Littlemore**  
**Peta Moore**

Congratulations everyone.

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### PREVIOUS ISSUES OF AUSTCOM

At the recent chapter committee meeting, the committee decided that our chapter newsletter, AuSTCom, should be openly available to all visitors of our web site. Previously, the newsletter was published in the members' only section. Check out the newsletter at:

[http://www.stc-aus.org.au/members\\_newsletters.htm](http://www.stc-aus.org.au/members_newsletters.htm)

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### CHAPTER BULLETIN BOARD

For those who haven't already done so, I would urge you to have a look at our bulletin board, which is accessible at: <http://www.stc-aus.org.au/bbs/>

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### NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION DATES

February 2006, May 2006

Please have articles, notices, advertising, etc. to the editor by the 15th of January or April. Send to [newsletter@stc-aus.org.au](mailto:newsletter@stc-aus.org.au)

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### TRANSFORMATION NEWS

Most of you are probably already aware of the ongoing transformation happening at STC. These changes are touching nearly every aspect of the society, from finances to governance to leadership. Already this year we have had a new membership model where members could choose their geographic chapter, or they could choose not to affiliate with one at all. We thank you for your continued support of the Australia Chapter and endeavour to provide you good value for your membership dollar.

As part of the transformation process, every chapter and SIG has to recharter. Some of you may have taken part in this process already through a SIG or other chapter. Essentially, this gives us the chance to redefine our goals and assess how to deliver on these goals to you, the members.

You can find an interesting article on rechartering on the [STC Transformation web site](#). It was written by the TransAlpine chapter committee, another non-US chapter, and gives an excellent overview of the rechartering process from a chapter that has gone through the process and lived to tell the tale.

The committee has started down the rechartering path and we must answer the same series of questions outlined in the TransAlpine article. These are some important issues to discuss. Now is the ideal time for you to let us know what you expect for your membership dollar: what would you like to see? Or, what would not like to see?

Currently, a great deal of effort and committee members' time go into maintaining chapter resources: the web site, newsletter, bulletin board, competitions, salary survey etc. There has been some discussion and initial efforts to hold virtual chapter meetings online. Would you like to see more (or fewer) chapter meetings? Or more/less frequent, longer/shorter newsletters? We are planning for the Chapter's future and your thoughts are vital to this process.

For more information on the STC Transformation initiative, [see their web site](#). To contribute to the Chapter rechartering effort, contact one of the [committee members](#).

## 2005 SURVEY OF AUSTRALIAN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS RESULTS

Rhonda Bracey

During September and October 2005, I conducted a survey on behalf of the Australia Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. The survey asked questions about demographics, working conditions, levels of education and experience - and of course - remuneration.

The survey was open to technical communicators living in Australia. It was advertised on the Internet through various technical writers' lists, the STC Australia Chapter membership, the ASTC NSW, the ASTC Victoria, and various smaller mailing lists in Perth, Brisbane, and elsewhere.

The survey was sponsored by the Society for Technical Communication (STC) Australia Chapter and was conducted using the online service HostedSurvey (<http://www.hostedsurvey.com>).

A total of 103 people responded, with some dropping out part way through the survey (resulting in 97 responses by the final general questions). This response was disappointing compared to last year's 140 and the 206 responses from 2003.

The survey questions and results (including some data correlations) are summarised on the following pages. I have not attempted to draw conclusions or do any type of statistical analysis from the data presented.

**Total Responses:** 103  
**Survey End Date:** 15 October 2005  
**(M):** Mandatory question

### I am... (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Female	50	48.54%
Male	53	51.46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### aged ... (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
less than 20	0	0.00%
20-29	7	6.80%
30-39	29	28.16%
40-49	29	28.16%
50-59	31	30.10%
60+	7	6.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### I live in... (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
ACT	14	13.59%
NSW - Sydney area	24	23.30%
NSW - regional	3	2.91%
NT - Darwin area	1	0.97%
NT - regional	1	0.97%
Qld - Brisbane/SE Qld area	7	6.80%
Qld - regional	2	1.94%
SA - Adelaide area	2	1.94%
SA - regional	0	0.00%
Tas - Hobart area	0	0.00%
Tas - regional	1	0.97%
Vic - Melbourne area	32	31.07%
Vic - regional	3	2.91%
WA - Perth area	10	9.71%
WA - regional	0	0.00%
Other	3	2.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### (if "Other...", please specify)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
New Zealand	1

[Comment: Despite 3 selecting "Other" only 1 indicated where they were from]

### and work in ... (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
ACT	14	13.59%
NSW - Sydney area	22	21.36%
NSW - regional area	1	0.97%
NT - Darwin area	3	2.91%
NT - regional area	0	0.00%
Qld - Brisbane/SE area	7	6.80%
Qld - regional area	2	1.94%
SA - Adelaide area	2	1.94%
SA - regional area	0	0.00%
Tas - Hobart area	1	0.97%
Tas - regional area	1	0.97%
Vic - Melbourne area	35	33.98%
Vic - regional area	0	0.00%
WA - Perth area	8	7.77%
WA - regional area	2	1.94%
Other...	5	4.85%

### (if "Other...", please specify)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
New Zealand	1
International projects	1
Full time university student (Accounting and management)	1
visit Sydney once per month	1

**If you work in a different region from where you live, how do you do this work? (select all that apply) Skip this question if you live and work in the same location/region.**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
Commute by bus or train	8	7.77%	28.57%
Commute by private vehicle	18	17.48%	64.29%
Commute by plane (fly in/fly out)	0	0.00%	0.00%
Telecommute	5	4.85%	17.86%
Live on the work site	1	0.97%	3.57%
Other...	1	0.97%	3.57%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27.18%</b>	
Unanswered	75	72.82%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
Sometimes work from home	1

**What is your highest level of education? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
High school certificate or similar	5	4.95%
TAFE (or similar) diploma/certificate	21	20.79%
Bachelor's degree	45	44.55%
Master's degree	11	10.89%
PhD	5	4.95%
Other...	14	13.86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
Graduate Diploma/Certificate	8
Master of Science in Statistics (M.Sc. Stats)	1
Honours and Graduate Certificate	1
Higher National Certificate (UK)	1
Bachelors degree and post-graduate diploma	1
Certificate in Writing, Editing and Publishing	1
Almost finished B Financial Administration and Grad Dip Mgt	1

**If you have a tertiary (university level) qualification, what field(s) is it in? (select all that apply)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
Arts (English language major)	10	9.90%	12.82%
Arts (other major)	16	15.84%	20.51%
Commerce	5	4.95%	6.41%
Computer Science	16	15.84%	20.51%
Education	8	7.92%	10.26%
Engineering	4	3.96%	5.13%
Librarianship/Information Science	4	3.96%	5.13%
Management	3	2.97%	3.85%
Medicine, Pharmacy, Health Sciences	1	0.99%	1.28%
Technical Communication	18	17.82%	23.08%
Science (other majors)	21	20.79%	26.92%
Other...	8	7.92%	10.26%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>77.23%</b>	
Unanswered	23	22.77%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
Mathematics	2
See above	1
Journalism	1
Industrial Design	1
I have more than one degree	1
Environmental science	1
English Literature and History	1
Economics	1
Dramatic Art Technical Production	1
Cognitive Science	1

**What training did you do to become a technical communicator? (select all that apply) (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Self-taught (no mentoring)	60	59.41%
On the job (informal mentoring)	45	44.55%
On the job (formal mentoring/training)	33	32.67%
Private tutoring/training	3	2.97%
Conferences, seminars, workshops	49	48.51%
Tertiary course	22	21.78%
Internet course	4	3.96%
Other...	8	7.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
Technical Communication	1
Self taught, on the job	1
progression from editing and research roles, combined with an interest in technology	1
Peer reviewed documents from web sites	1
On the job, no mentoring formal or informal	1
Newbie	1
Information Mapping Training Course	2
Grad Cert - Technical Communication	1
books, listservs	1

**How do you keep up to date with changes in the technical communication field? (select all that apply) (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Information from professional associations (e.g. meetings, journals, discussion lists, bulletin boards, websites, conferences, etc.)	85	84.16%
Information from other tech comm sources (e.g. forums for software tools that you use, etc.)	65	64.36%
Information from other fields of expertise/interest (e.g. engineering, programming, etc.)	41	40.59%
I don't bother trying to keep up to date	7	6.93%
Other...	5	4.95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
Research papers	1
read new books	1
Fellow Technical Communicators	1
books	1
Blogs, Internet surfing, Word of mouth	1
austechwriter digest users	1
attending courses	1

**Membership of professional associations related to technical communication (select all that apply) (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Currently a member of STC	24	23.76%
Currently a member of ASTC (NSW or Vic)	44	43.56%
Previously a member of STC	7	6.93%
Previously a member of ASTC	13	12.87%

(NSW or Vic)

Member of other related organisation (e.g. editors, publishers, journalists)	19	18.81%
Not a member of any professional association	23	22.77%
Other...	5	4.95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
TCANZ	1
Student member of ASTC NSW	1
SA Writer's Centre	1
Member of Australian Computer Society	1
International Association of Business Communicators	1
Corporate member of ASTC	1

**How many years have you worked as a technical communicator? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Less than 2 years	7	7.00%
2 to 5 years	20	20.00%
6 to 10 years	22	22.00%
11 to 15 years	29	29.00%
16 to 20 years	12	12.00%
more than 20 years	10	10.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**What is your main job title? (select the one that most closely matches what you do) (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Content developer/manager	3	3.00%
Documentation manager/specialist	12	12.00%
Information developer/architect	4	4.00%
Instructional designer	1	1.00%
Online help developer	1	1.00%
Technical editor	3	3.00%
Technical writer	60	60.00%
Usability specialist	1	1.00%
Web designer	1	1.00%
Other...	14	14.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
Publishing manager	1
Product Information Specialist	1
Lecturer	1
IT Training & Support Analyst	1

Information Designer	1
I also freelance as an editor.	1
Electrical/electronic service manager - computers, scientific instruments - various fields	1
documentation consultant	1
Documentation and Training Team Lead	1
Business Analyst	1

### Where do you do most of your technical communication work? (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
On site (employer or client workplace)	78	78.00%
From home or own office	10	10.00%
Varies - both on site and from home/office	12	12.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### (if "Other...", please specify)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
Have previously written reports at work- am currently student full time	1

### How would you classify your level as a technical communicator? (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Entry level (junior) tech communicator	3	3.00%
Mid-level (non-supervisory)	30	30.00%
Mid-level (supervisory)	8	8.00%
Senior level (non-supervisory)	35	35.00%
Senior level (supervisory)	22	22.00%
Other...	2	2.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### (if "Other...", please specify)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
As a contractor the role varies; often its more as a consultant (work out the solution to the problem) and implementor (implement it). This can be supervisory or not, but I would say it was a senior role.	1

### What work activities do you spend more than 10% of your time on? (select all that apply) (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Technical writing	83	83.00%
Technical/copy editing	47	47.00%
Indexing	4	4.00%

Training	12	12.00%
Documentation consulting	33	33.00%
Website/intranet management/development	26	26.00%
Management (project/team/people/change...)	32	32.00%
Quality assurance/testing	15	15.00%
Usability/accessibility consulting/testing	19	19.00%
Sales/technical support	0	0.00%
Knowledge management	18	18.00%
Business analysis	17	17.00%
Graphic design	13	13.00%
Document/content management	55	55.00%
Document planning	44	44.00%
Other...	8	8.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### (if "Other...", please specify)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
XMetal typesetting	1
Student	1
Marketing Communications	1
IT Support	1
Education editing	1
content modelling, content/publication auditing, tools analysis	1
Consultant in Program Management for community groups	1
Business sales/Marketing - run own company	1

### What materials do you produce? (select all that apply) (M)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Paper-based documentation (incl. books, magazines, journal articles)	74	74.00%
Online documentation	56	56.00%
PDFs	82	82.00%
HTML Help systems (*.CHM)	43	43.00%
HTML-based Help systems (e.g. WebHelp)	45	45.00%
WinHelp (*.HLP)	16	16.00%
Web pages/sites (incl. intranet content)	50	50.00%
Multimedia (incl. Flash, video/screen animations)	13	13.00%
API documentation	10	10.00%
Marketing materials	26	26.00%
Policies and procedures	41	41.00%
Proposals and tenders	11	11.00%
Surveys	4	4.00%
Specifications	28	28.00%
Templates and forms	46	46.00%

Training and educational materials (incl. e-learning)	45	45.00%
User documentation	87	87.00%
White papers and case studies	7	7.00%
Analysis/research papers	12	12.00%
Presentations	25	25.00%
Other...	3	3.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

(if "Other...", please specify)

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
PR	1
Mostly university related	1
Have only just started	1
business plans, project briefs, quality management plans	1

**Does your employer/client employ other technical communicators? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Yes	62	62.00%
No, I am the only one ("lone writer")	28	28.00%
I don't know	10	10.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, how many do they employ in addition to you? Skip this question if you are a "lone writer".**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
1	12	12.00%	18.46%
2 to 5	18	18.00%	27.69%
6 to 10	10	10.00%	15.38%
10 to 20	7	7.00%	10.77%
more than 20	5	5.00%	7.69%
Varies	2	2.00%	3.08%
I'm not sure	11	11.00%	16.92%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>65.00%</b>	
Unanswered	35	35.00%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**How many people (in total) does your employer/main client employ? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Fewer than 50	21	21.00%
51 to 100	14	14.00%
101 to 500	23	23.00%
501 to 1000	13	13.00%
1001 or more	29	29.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**In the past year, how many paid/billable hours did you work in a typical week? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
10 or less	4	4.00%
11 to 20 hours	4	4.00%
21 to 30 hours	8	8.00%
31 to 40 hours	60	60.00%
41 to 50 hours	23	23.00%
more than 50 hours	1	1.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**In the past year, how many unpaid/non-billable hours did you work in a typical week? (M) (Only include hours worked in a technical communication capacity of some sort, such as volunteer tech comm or professional association work.)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
None	39	39.00%
1 to 10	46	46.00%
11 to 20 hours	11	11.00%
21 to 30 hours	1	1.00%
31 to 40 hours	2	2.00%
41 to 50 hours	0	0.00%
more than 50 hours	1	1.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**How flexible are your work hours? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Not flexible at all	3	3.00%
Some flexibility but I'd like more	29	29.00%
About right for me	38	38.00%
More than enough	11	11.00%
Whatever I need	19	19.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**What changes to your working conditions have occurred in the past year? (select all that apply) (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Made redundant/sacked	6	6.00%
Job offers/contract opportunities have increased	34	34.00%
Contract terminated/not renewed	11	11.00%
Salary/hourly rate has increased	45	45.00%
Increased workload due to staff cuts	17	17.00%
Extra staff have been added	17	17.00%
Projects cancelled or put on hold	31	31.00%
New projects have started	49	49.00%
Training and/or travel budget cuts	8	8.00%
Training and/or travel budget has	4	4.00%

increased		
Management responsibilities increased	22	22.00%
Management responsibilities decreased	2	2.00%
No (or less than normal) salary/hourly rate increase	20	20.00%
No changes	7	7.00%
Other...	12	12.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**(if "Other...", please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
No great changes for me. Contract rates haven't moved in years. But this year has been relatively easy to get contracts.	1
Moved to North coast and started remote work	1
Moved to Australia	1
Moved from contract to permanent/good job offer	1
Increased workload due to new projects - no extra staff employed	1
I changed jobs/country	1
Found new job	1
Employment changed from contract to permanent staff	1
Contract period ended	1
Commenced with a new employer	1

**Which ANZSIC classification best describes the industry in which you work? (M)**

[These are the ANZSIC categories from the ABS (we don't have any control over these categories; see [http://www.arc.gov.au/apply\\_grants/anzsic\\_codes.htm](http://www.arc.gov.au/apply_grants/anzsic_codes.htm) for a complete list). Guide: Select "Property and Business Services" for "Scientific research", "Technical services", "Computer services", or "Marketing and business management services"; select "Manufacturing" for "Publishing"]

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Accommodation, cafes, restaurants	0	0.00%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0	0.00%
Communication services	12	12.37%
Construction	1	1.03%
Cultural and recreational services	0	0.00%
Education	6	6.19%
Electricity, gas and water supply	0	0.00%
Finance and insurance	12	12.37%
Government administration and defence	17	17.53%
Health and community services	3	3.09%
Manufacturing	9	9.28%

Mining	6	6.19%
Personal and other services	0	0.00%
Property and business services	30	30.93%
Retail trade	0	0.00%
Transport and storage	1	1.03%
Wholesale trade	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**How satisfied are you with your current salary or hourly rate? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Very satisfied	12	12.37%
Satisfied	58	59.79%
Dissatisfied	24	24.74%
Very dissatisfied	3	3.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Which best describes your current employment status in the field of technical communication? (M)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Full time employee	51	52.58%
Part time employee	5	5.15%
Contractor / Consultant / Freelance / Self-employed	37	38.14%
Student	1	1.03%
Not currently employed in the tech comm field	3	3.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**EMPLOYEES ONLY: What was your gross salary in the previous 12 months? (Contractors: Skip this question; go to the CONTRACTORS ONLY questions)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
Less than \$30,000	1	1.03%	1.72%
\$30,001 to \$40,000	1	1.03%	1.72%
\$40,001 to \$50,000	10	10.31%	17.24%
\$50,001 to \$60,000	12	12.37%	20.69%
\$60,001 to \$70,000	15	15.46%	25.86%
\$70,001 to \$80,000	10	10.31%	17.24%
\$80,001 to \$90,000	5	5.15%	8.62%
\$90,001 to \$100,000	4	4.12%	6.90%
more than \$100,000	0	0.00%	0.00%

Answered	58	59.79%
Unanswered	39	40.21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**CONTRACTORS ONLY: What hourly rate (in Australian dollars, excluding GST) do you charge?**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
\$30 or less per hour	4	4.12%	9.76%
\$30 to \$35	1	1.03%	2.44%
\$36 to \$40	1	1.03%	2.44%
\$41 to \$45	0	0.00%	0.00%
\$46 to \$50	9	9.28%	21.95%
\$51 to \$55	5	5.15%	12.20%
\$56 to \$60	7	7.22%	17.07%
\$61 to \$65	5	5.15%	12.20%
\$66 to \$70	4	4.12%	9.76%
\$71 to \$75	1	1.03%	2.44%
\$76 to \$80	1	1.03%	2.44%
\$81 to \$85	0	0.00%	0.00%
\$86 to \$90	0	0.00%	0.00%
\$91 to \$95	0	0.00%	0.00%
\$96 to \$100	1	1.03%	2.44%
more than \$100 per hour	2	2.06%	4.88%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42.27%</b>	
Unanswered	56	57.73%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**CONTRACTORS ONLY: How do you charge for your work?**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
Fixed price contracts	1	1.03%	2.50%
Hourly or daily rate	29	29.90%	72.50%
Varies - both fixed price and hourly/daily rate	10	10.31%	25.00%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41.24%</b>	
Unanswered	57	58.76%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**CONTRACTORS ONLY: How do you get new clients?**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
Through an agency or other company	24	24.74%	60.00%
Find my own work	25	25.77%	62.50%
Referrals from past clients, colleagues, etc.	25	25.77%	62.50%
Other...	1	1.03%	2.50%

Answered	40	41.24%
Unanswered	57	58.76%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**(if "Other..." , please specify)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>
old bosses seek me out	1

**CONTRACTORS ONLY: On average, how many concurrent clients do you work for?**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% of Answered</u>
1	24	24.74%	60.00%
2 to 5	14	14.43%	35.00%
6 to 10	2	2.06%	5.00%
more than 10	0	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41.24%</b>	
Unanswered	57	58.76%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**Data Correlations**

**Notes:**

Where no responses were received for an entire row, that row was removed from the tables

- HSC = High School Certificate, or similar
- TAFE = TAFE certificate or diploma, or similar
- Bach. = Bachelor's degree
- Mast. = Master's degree
- \$30K = \$30,000 AUD
- (reg) = regional area in that State

**Gender/Age**

	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Female	5	14	14	14	3	50
Male	2	15	15	17	4	53
Total	7	29	29	31	7	103

**Age/Experience**

	< 2 yrs	2 to 5 yrs	6 to 10 yrs	11 to 15 yrs	16 to 20 yrs	> 20 yrs	Total
20-29	2	3	1				6
30-39	4	10	12	2			28
40-49	1	3	3	14	4	3	28
50-59		4	6	12	4	5	31
60+				1	4	2	7
Total	7	20	22	29	12	10	100

**Gender/education**

	HSC	TAFE	Bach.	Mast.	PhD	Other...	Total
Female	3	8	24	7	1	7	50
Male	2	13	21	4	4	7	51
Total	5	21	45	11	5	14	101

**Age/education**

	HSC	TAFE	Bach.	Mast.	PhD	Other...	Total
20-29			5	0		1	6
30-39		6	15	3	1	3	28
40-49	2	7	11	2	2	5	29
50-59	3	5	12	5	2	4	31
60+		3	2	1		1	7
Total	5	21	45	11	5	14	101

**Employees: Gender/Salary**

	< \$30K	\$30-40K	\$40-50K	\$50-60K	\$60-70K	\$70-80K	\$80-90K	\$90-100K	Total
Female	1	1	9	8	8	4	1		32
Male			1	4	7	6	4	4	26
Total	1	1	10	12	15	10	5	4	58

**Employees: Age/Salary**

	< \$30K	\$30-40K	\$40-50K	\$50-60K	\$60-70K	\$70-80K	\$80-90K	\$90-100K	Total
20-29			2	1	3				6
30-39		1	4	6	4	1		2	18
40-49			3	3	4	3	3	1	17
50-59	1		1	2	2	6	2		14
60+					2			1	3
Total	1	1	10	12	15	10	5	4	58

**Employees: Experience/Salary**

	< \$30K	\$30-40K	\$40-50K	\$50-60K	\$60-70K	\$70-80K	\$80-90K	\$90-100K	Total
< 2 yrs			3	2	1				6
2-5 yrs			4	3	4		1		12
6-10 yrs	1	1	1	5	2	2	1	2	15
11-15 yrs				1	4	5	2	1	13
16-20 yrs				1	3	1	1	1	7
> 20 yrs			2		1	2			5
Total	1	1	10	12	15	10	5	4	58

**Employees: Education/Salary**

	< \$30K	\$30-40K	\$40-50K	\$50-60K	\$60-70K	\$70-80K	\$80-90K	\$90-100K	Total
HSC				1			1		2
TAFE		1	1	1	3	4	1	2	13
Bach.			7	7	8	2	1	1	26
Mast.	1		1	1	1	3			7
PhD			1			1		1	3
Other...				2	3		2		7
Total	1	1	10	12	15	10	5	4	58

**Employees: Location/Salary**

	< \$30K	\$30-40K	\$40-50K	\$50-60K	\$60-70K	\$70-80K	\$80-90K	\$90-100K	Total
ACT		1	1	1	1				4
NSW (Syd)			1	1	5	5	1	2	15
NT (Dar)			1						1
NT (reg)	1								1
Qld (Bris)			2	1	2				5
Qld (reg)							1		1
SA (Adel)			1						1
Vic (Melb)			3	5	6	4	2	2	22
Vic (reg)				2					2
WA (Pth)			1	2	1		1		5
Other						1			1
Total	1	1	10	12	15	10	5	4	58

**Contractors: Gender/Hourly rate**

	<\$30	\$30-\$35	\$36-\$40	\$46-\$50	\$51-\$55	\$56-\$60	\$61-\$65	\$66-\$70	\$71-\$75	\$76-\$80	\$96-\$100	>\$100	Total
Female	1			4	2	1	3	4	1	1		1	18
Male	3	1	1	5	3	6	2				1	1	23
Total	4	1	1	9	5	7	5	4	1	1	1	2	41

**Contractors: Age/Hourly rate**

	<\$30	\$30-\$35	\$36-\$40	\$46-\$50	\$51-\$55	\$56-\$60	\$61-\$65	\$66-\$70	\$71-\$75	\$76-\$80	\$96-\$100	>\$100	Total
20-29													
30-39	2			2	1	2		2	1		1		11
40-49	1	1			1	2	3	1		1		1	11
50-59	1			5	3	3	1	1				1	15
60+			1	2			1						4
Total	4	1	1	9	5	7	5	4	1	1	1	2	41

**Contractors: Experience (yrs)/Hourly rate**

	<\$30	\$30-\$35	\$36-\$40	\$46-\$50	\$51-\$55	\$56-\$60	\$61-\$65	\$66-\$70	\$71-\$75	\$76-\$80	\$96-\$100	>\$100	Total
<2	1							1			1		3
2-5		1		2		3			1				7
6-10	2			1	1	1		1					6
11-15				2	3	3	4	2				1	15
16-20				2			1					1	4
>20	1		1	2	1					1			6
Total	4	1	1	9	5	7	5	4	1	1	1	2	41

**Contractors: Education/Hourly rate**

	<\$30	\$30-\$35	\$36-\$40	\$46-\$50	\$51-\$55	\$56-\$60	\$61-\$65	\$66-\$70	\$71-\$75	\$76-\$80	\$96-\$100	>\$100	Total
HSC				1	1		1						3
TAFE	1	1		2	1	2							7
Bach.	2			4	2	3	2	3	1	1	1		19
Mast.	1			2		1						1	5
PhD					1	1							2
Other			1				2	1				1	5
Total	4	1	1	9	5	7	5	4	1	1	1	2	41

## Contractors: Location/Hourly rate

	<\$30	\$30-\$35	\$36-\$40	\$46-\$50	\$51-\$55	\$56-\$60	\$61-\$65	\$66-\$70	\$71-\$75	\$76-\$80	\$96-\$100	>\$100	Total
ACT				1		4	2			1			8
NSW (reg)				1				1					2
NSW (Syd)				3	2		1					2	8
Qld (Bris)				1			1						2
Qld (reg)				1									1
SA (Adel)					1								1
Tas (reg)	1												1
Vic (Melb)	1	1		2	1	2	1	1	1				10
Vic (reg)					1								1
WA (Pth)	2		1			1		1			1		6
Other								1					1
Total	4	1	1	9	5	7	5	4	1	1	1	2	41

## Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to add further comments and/or suggestions for future survey questions. Here are the comments received:

### Any further comments?

- Very good survey
- The results of these surveys are valuable tools for those in the industry or planning to enter it. Please continue doing them!! :)
- Thanks for conducting the survey
- I'm from Toronto, Canada and have been in Brisbane for just over a year. I'm astounded by the number of technical writing positions being advertised here. At the same time, I'm disappointed by the lack of networking, training resources, conferences and even webinars (in the AEST time zone!), particularly in the area of single-sourcing. If there's an influx of tech writers in Southeast Queensland, where are the training resources to keep them up-to-speed on the latest trends in single-sourcing and content management?
- No obvious category for software manufacturer/developer/vendor, so picked Manufacturing. I am considering joining STC - my work has me somewhere between org communications and technical writing.
- Thank for the opportunity to complete this survey. Hope it helps.
- Happy to contribute.
- There was an 'unattached' other field on one page.
- Please ask early in the survey whether the questionee is a student. I am a full time uni student and student member of ASTC and therefore had to answer some questions by referring to my past employment activities; eg I entered education as an activity I regularly perform however I am a student not a teacher - it was the closest answer I could give. I am not sure whether you should use my survey as it would skew your results.

### Are there any questions you would like to see included in future surveys?

- More on ratios of working from home v in office
- The industry seems to be picking up (at last). Let us all hope so.
- I would like to know the ratio of permanent vacancies to contract vacancies that was advertised in the past year.

- Skills List
- Do you feel that your employers/clients place enough value on the work of technical writers?
- Do you think a process of formal accreditation would benefit the technical writing profession? If so, who should put it in place?
- Questions about the type of business structure under which contractors operate - agents, umbrella companies, sole trader, own company.
- Level of insurance cover held personally.
- What conference, book or journal article (new or old) did you find most useful (refer to most in your work or made you think most about your work/career) in the past 12 months?
- What is the most significant trend you are noticing in your workplace and/or with the type of work you do?
- Some question to find out who works on IT related content and other content eg agriculture, health, finance etc What industry you work in does not indicate this at all.
- No
- Perhaps something about how happy people are with career options available to them, which could arguably apply both to employees and contractors.
- At least an entry that offers people the opportunity to identify themselves as someone who has resigned.
- In my case, I have just resigned from a major American corporation here in Brisbane to hopefully pursue a career in Technical Document Writing.
- I am hoping to work on creating documents such as User Guides paired with applicable Help file documents to be embedded in software applications.
- Some of the questions assume you are working for one employer. I might work for 3 or 4 employers a year, all of different size and industry, so its difficult to answer those questions with a one off answer. I suggest you re-think some of these questions.
- Questions on employer attitudes to technical communicators - does it improve after they have hired one and see the merits of their work?

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## HOW TO CONTACT US

To contact a committee member, send e-mail to [position]@stc-aus.org.au and it will be forwarded to the appropriate person. For example, to reach the newsletter editor, send a message to [newsletter@stc-aus.org.au](mailto:newsletter@stc-aus.org.au). E-mail addresses for all committee members are also on the website: [http://www.stc-aus.org.au/chapter\\_committee.htm](http://www.stc-aus.org.au/chapter_committee.htm)



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