

2011 State of the Chapter Survey Results

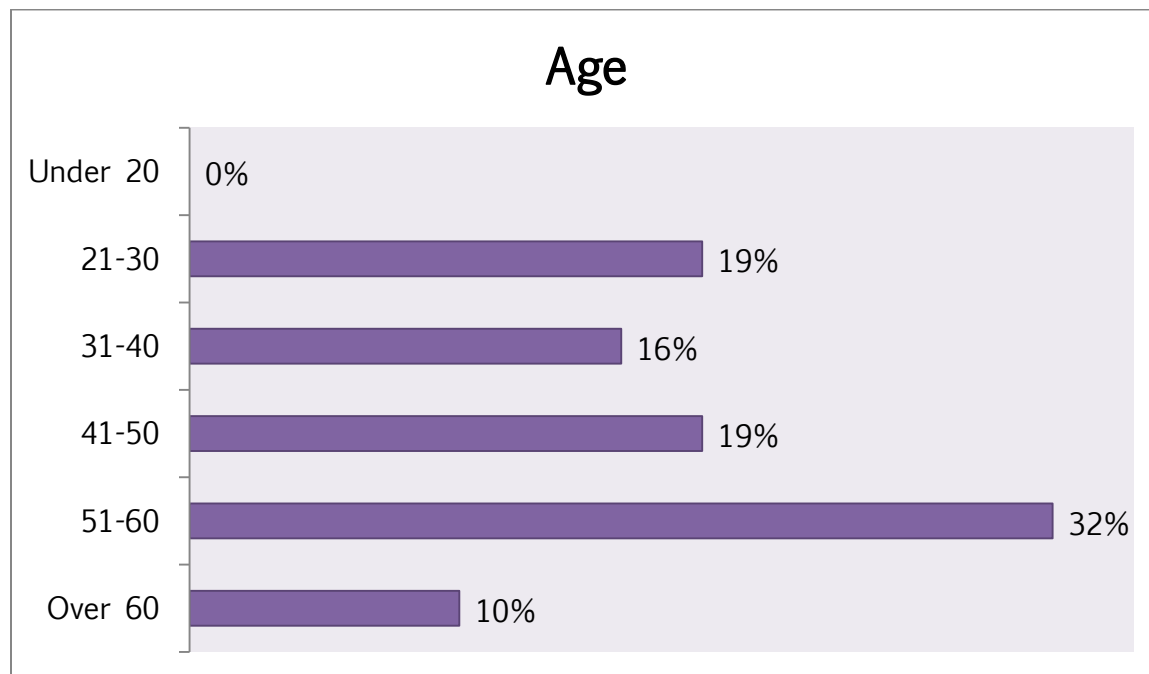
From the Society for Technical Communication, Orlando Chapter

In October, members and interested nonmembers of the Orlando Chapter STC were invited to take the State of the Chapter Survey. The electronic survey was designed to give Orlando Chapter leaders a closer look into the Orlando STC community and their current professional interests. Here are the results.

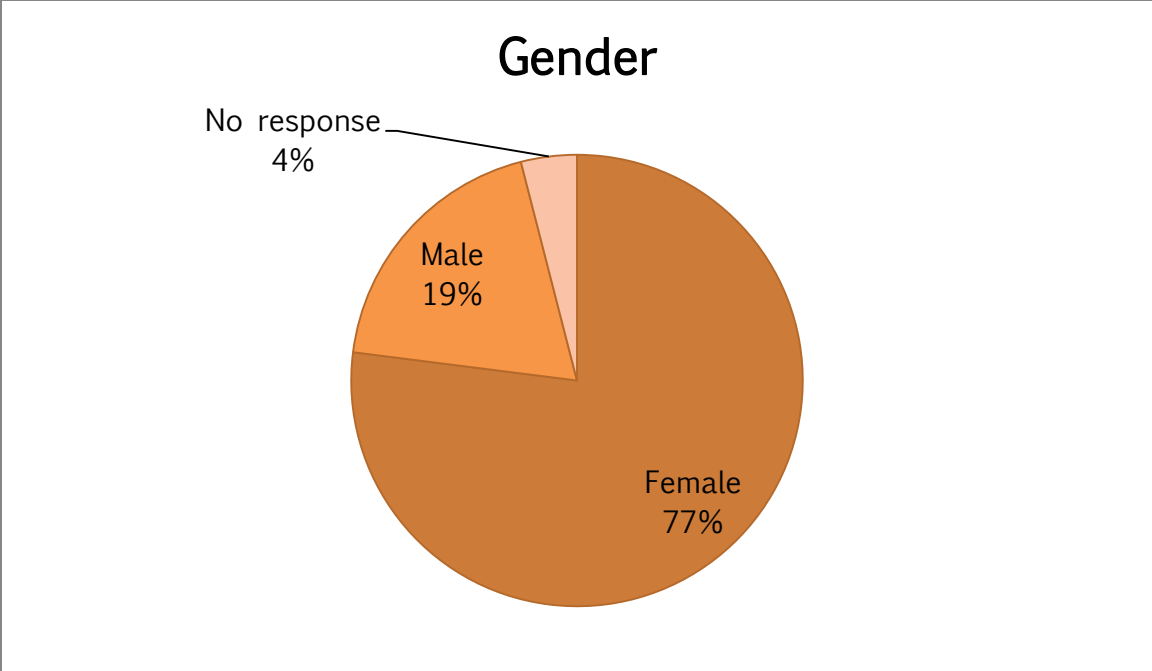
The survey had a total of 31 responses, collected from October 23 to November 16, 2011. Approximately one-third of chapter members and three nonmembers responded. Please note that the statistics in this report are based on the answers of the survey respondents, and do not necessarily accurately reflect the views and data of the entire chapter membership.

None of the questions on the survey were mandatory, so all of the data gathered were voluntarily provided by the survey respondents. It is also important to take note that **the percentages for each question do not always add up to 100%**, as the respondents were free to skip questions that they did not feel comfortable answering.

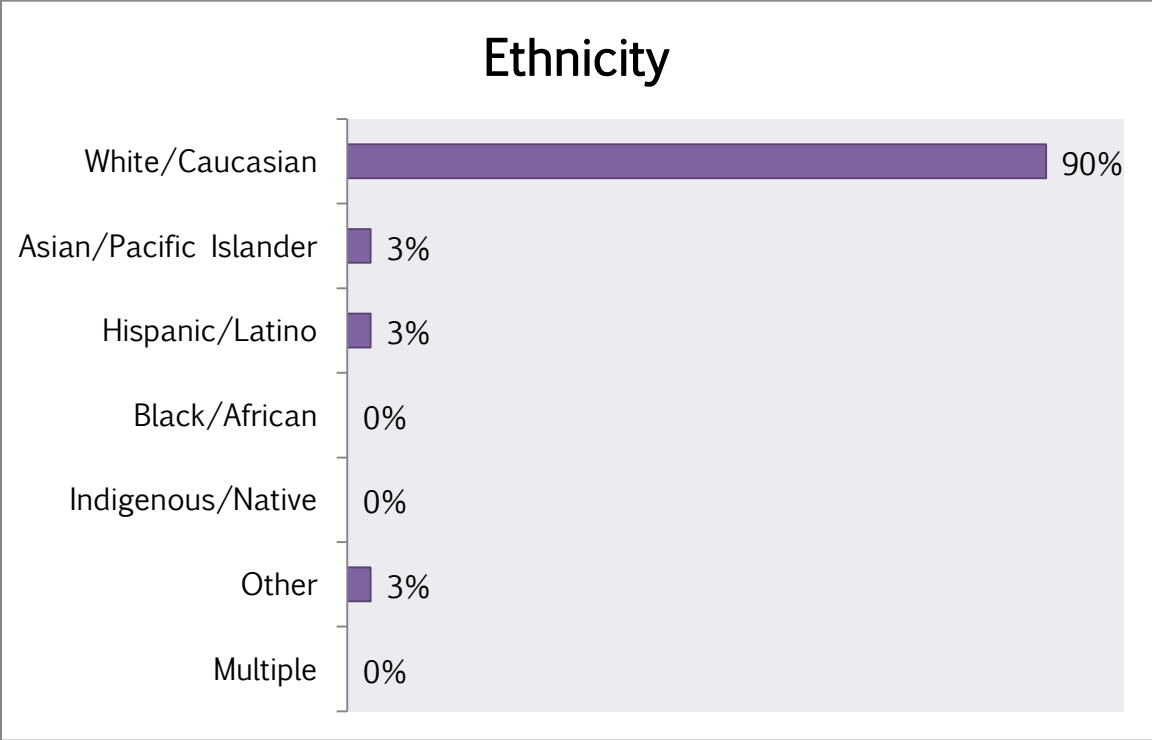
Part 1: Who are you?



Based on the survey responses, a little over a third of the respondents are between 51-60 years old.

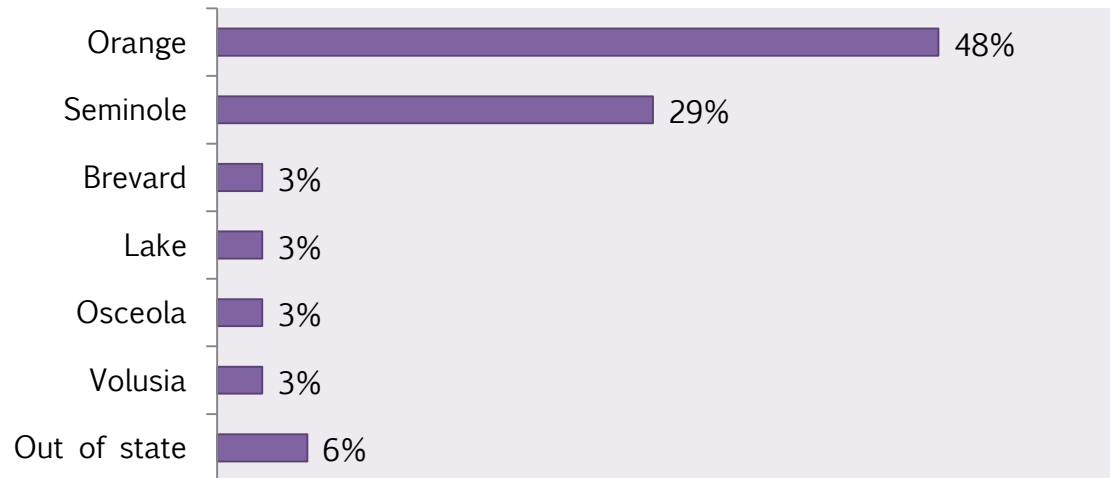


An overwhelming majority of the survey respondents are female. Actual chapter statistics show that two-thirds of Orlando Chapter members are female; one-third are male.



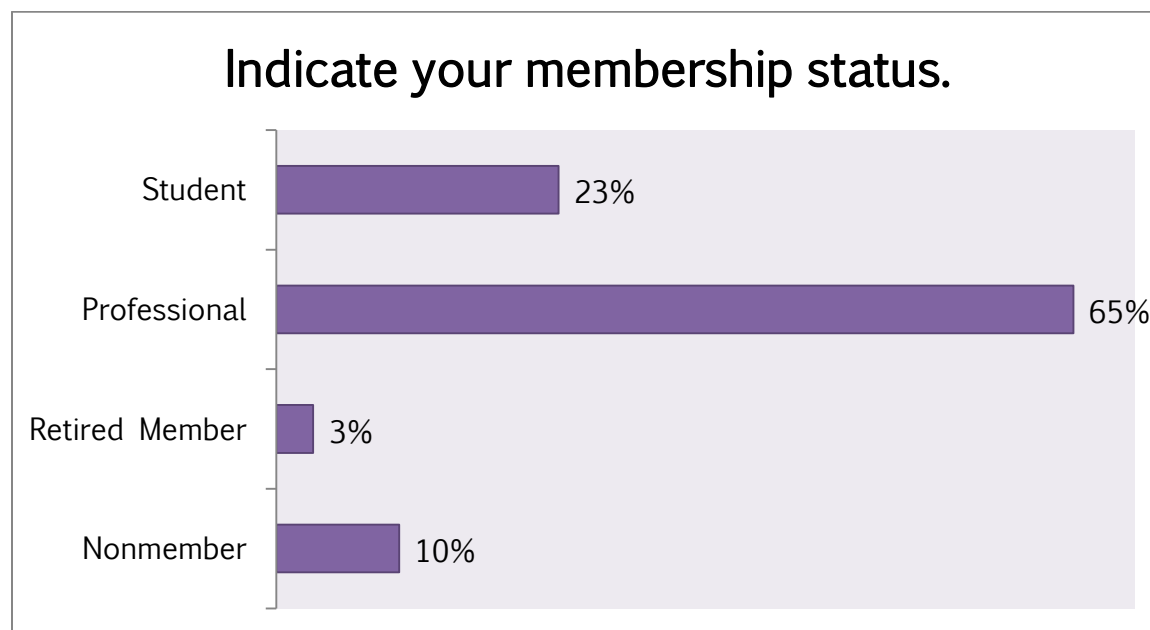
The respondents are predominantly White/Caucasian.

Where do you live? (Results sorted by county)



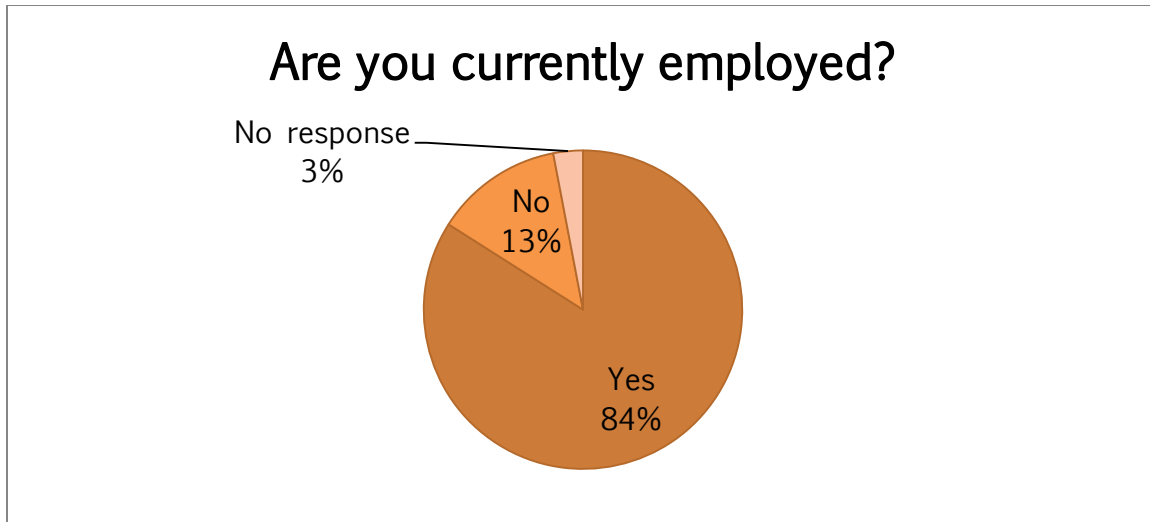
Seventy-seven percent of all the respondents are from either Orange County (48%) or Seminole County (29%). Other counties in Florida account for 15%, and 6% of the respondents are from out of state.

Indicate your membership status.

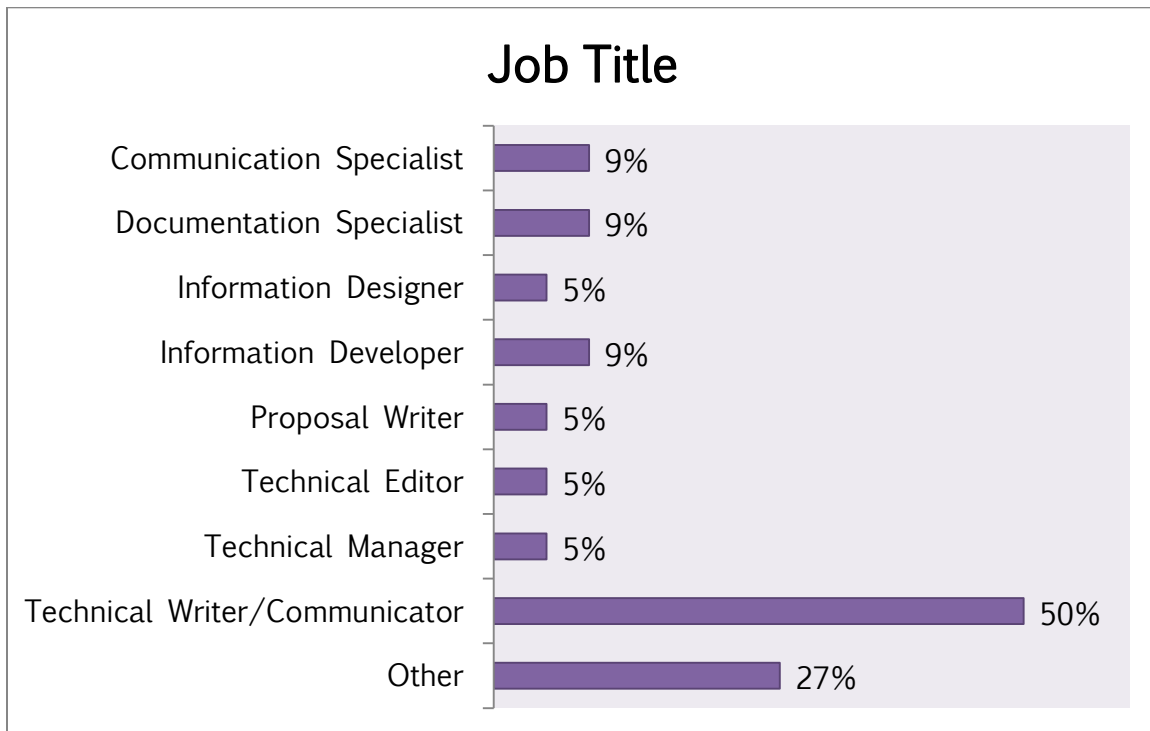


Over half of the respondents are professional members. Student members make up a large minority (23%) of the respondents (and 30% of our actual chapter membership).

Part 2: Work and Education

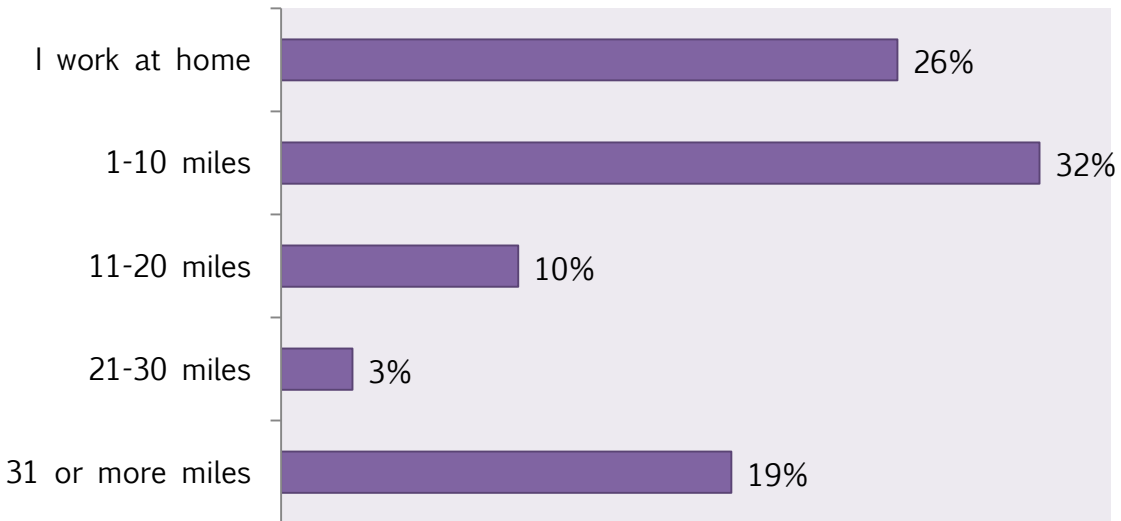


Most of the respondents are employed, with only 13% currently unemployed.



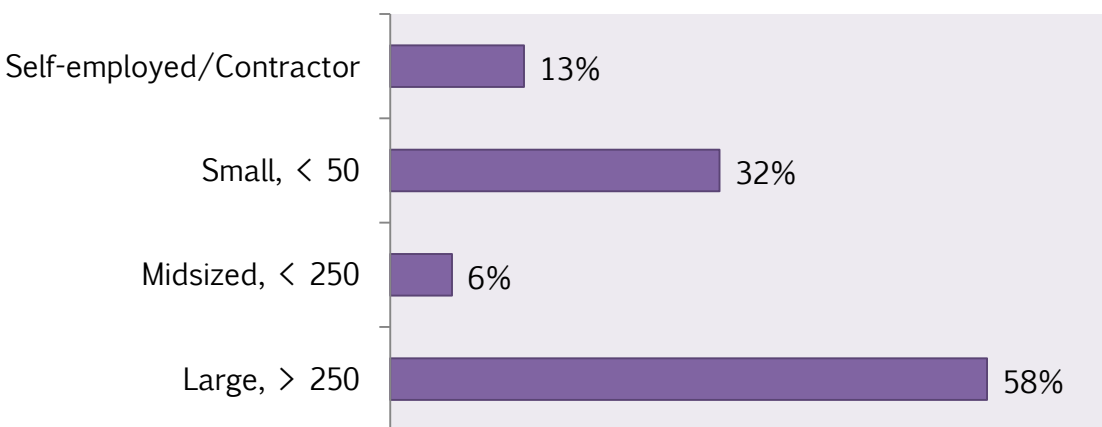
Half of the survey respondents are known in the workplace by the straightforward title "Technical Writer/Communicator." Other titles for technical communicators that were submitted by respondents were "Instructional Designer" (2 responses) and "Educator" (1 response).

How far is your place of employment from your residence?



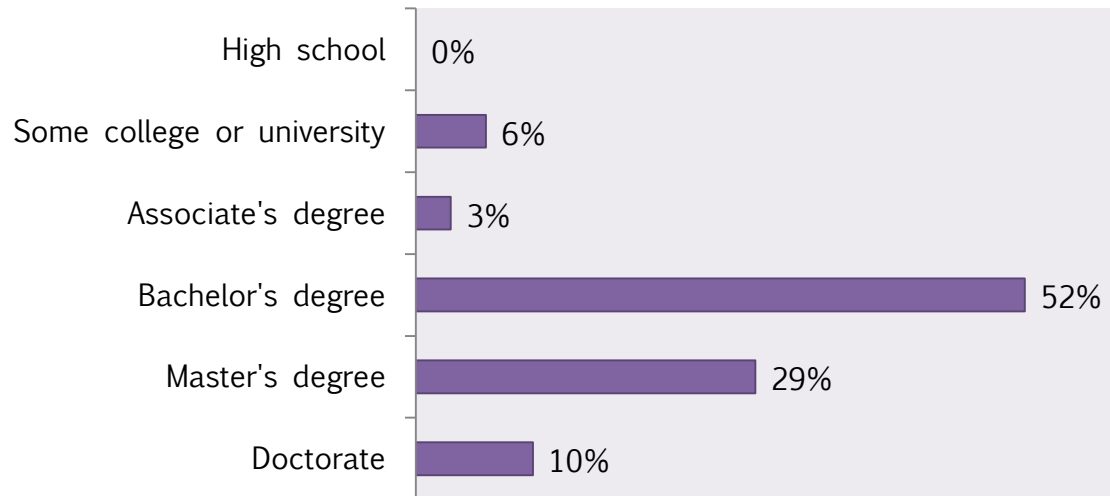
While the respondents are mainly commuters, 58% work at home or live close to their workplaces (1-10 miles).

What is the size of the company you work for?



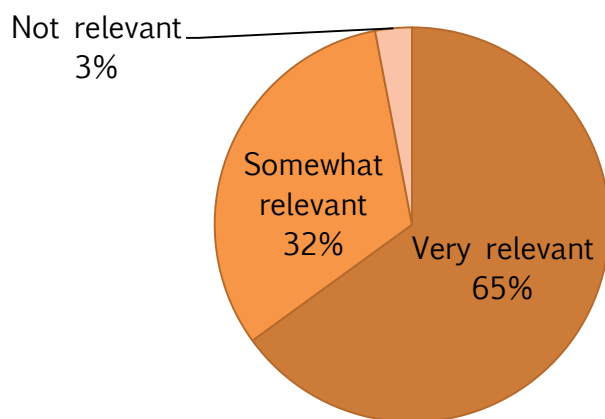
Fifty-eight percent of the respondents work for large companies. Only 13% are self-employed or independent contractors.

What is the highest level of education you have attained?



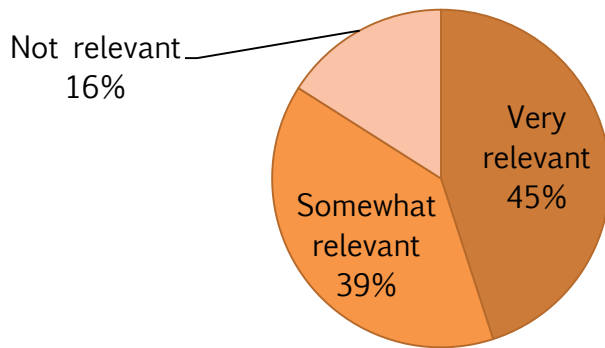
Professionals make up a significant number of the respondents. Ninety-one percent of the respondents have a **bachelor's degree or higher**. A majority (52%) hold **bachelor's degrees**.

How relevant has your education been to your present career?



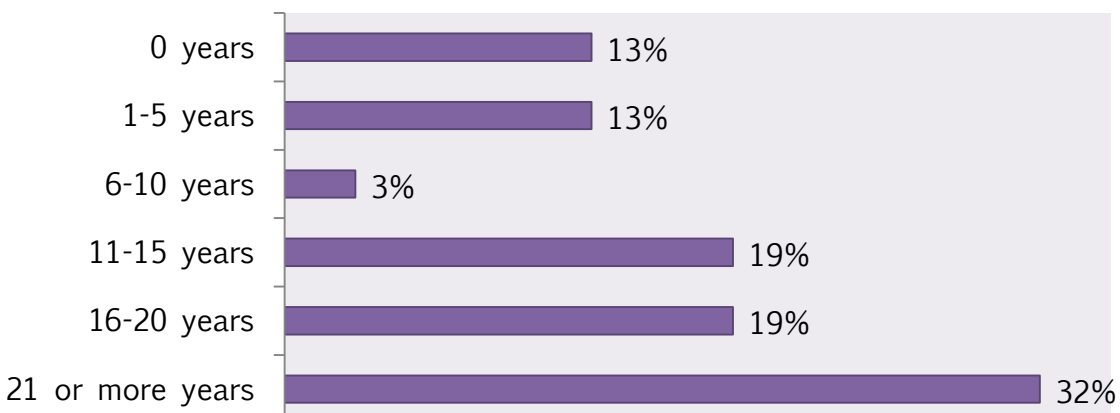
Most respondents believe that their education has been relevant to their careers in technical communication.

In your opinion, how important is post-college education to a technical communication career?



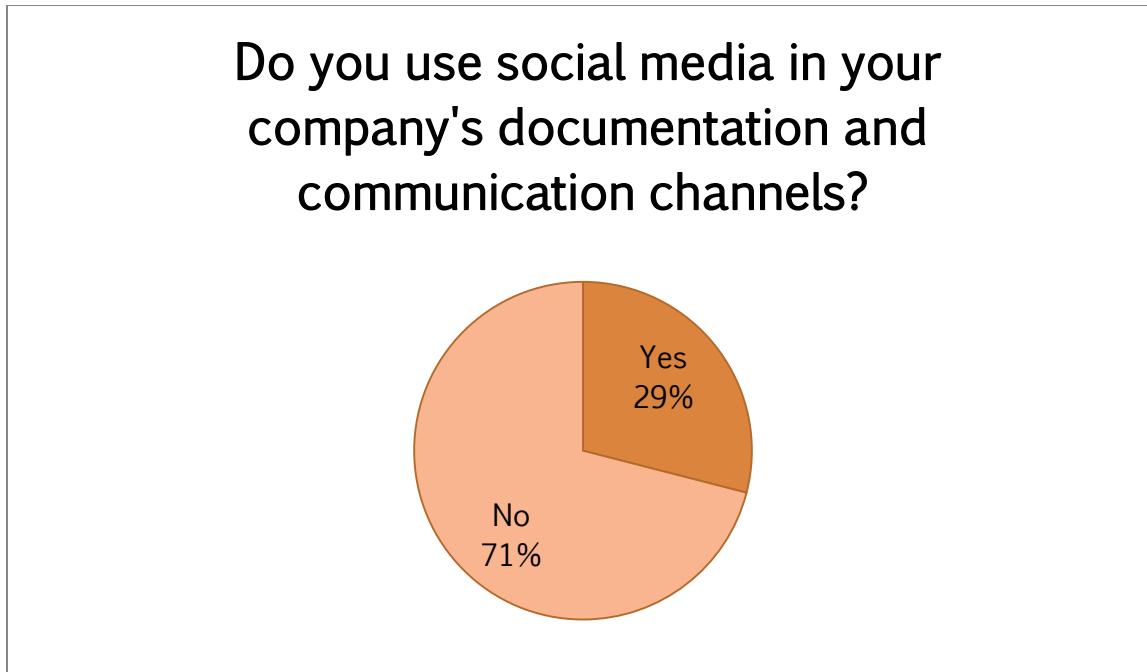
Most also agree that education beyond the bachelor's level is helpful to a technical communication career.

For how many years have you been working as a professional technical communicator?

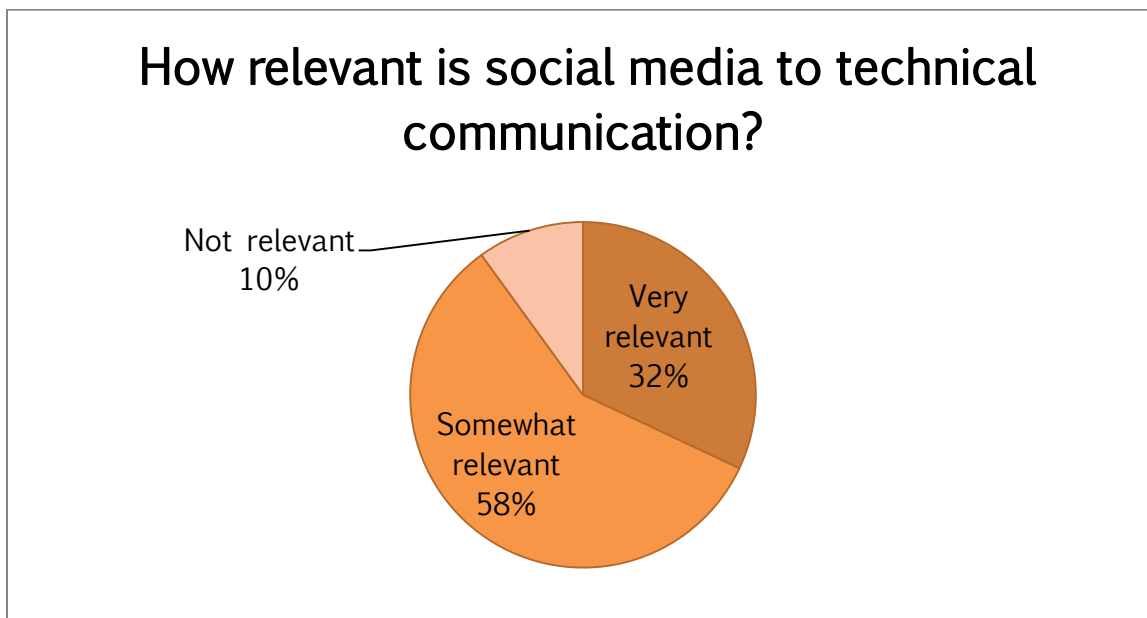


A majority of the respondents are experienced technical communicators. Seventy percent have had more than ten years' experience being a technical communicator.

Part 3: How social are you?

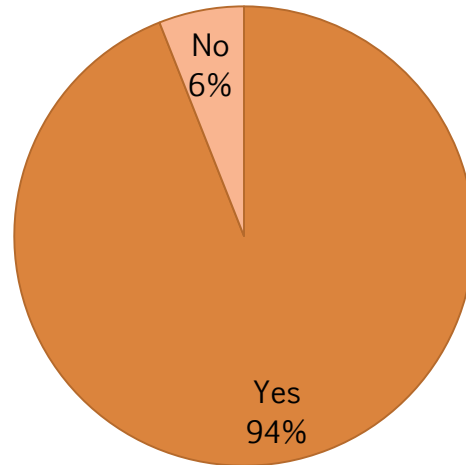


Seventy-one percent of the companies that respondents work for have not jumped on the social media bandwagon.



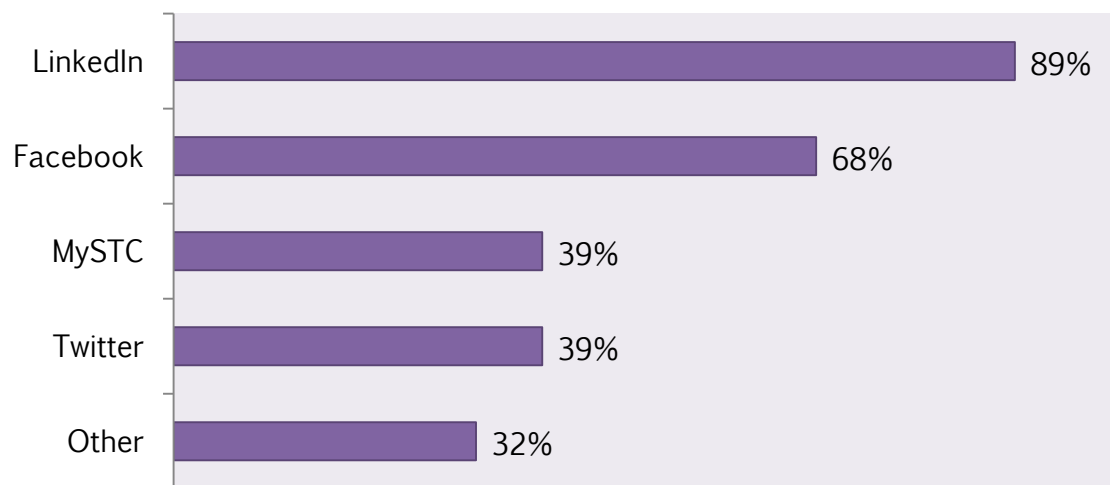
Meanwhile, 90% of respondents believe that social media is relevant to technical communication.

Do you use online social networking sites?



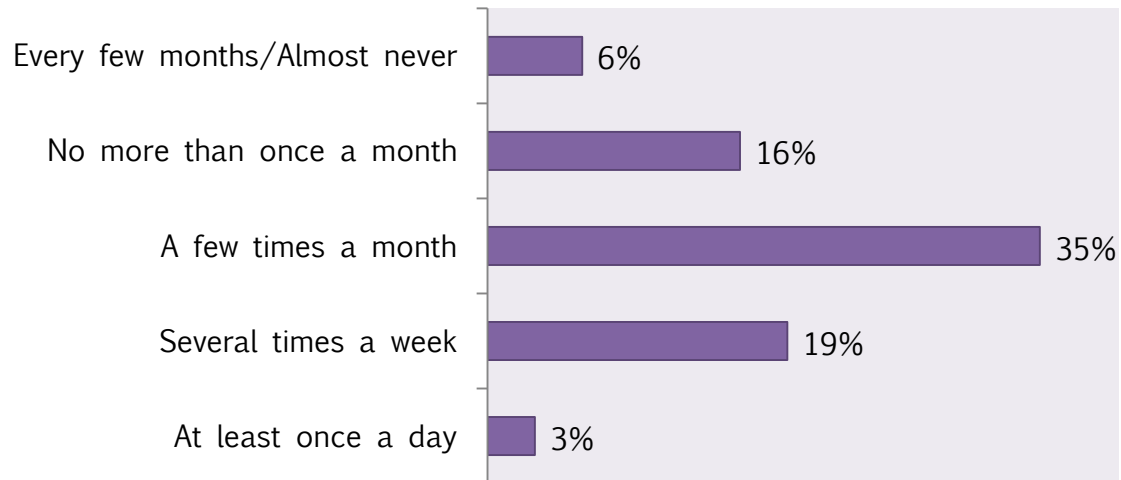
Only 6% of respondents do not use social media/networking sites.

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, indicate which sites you use.



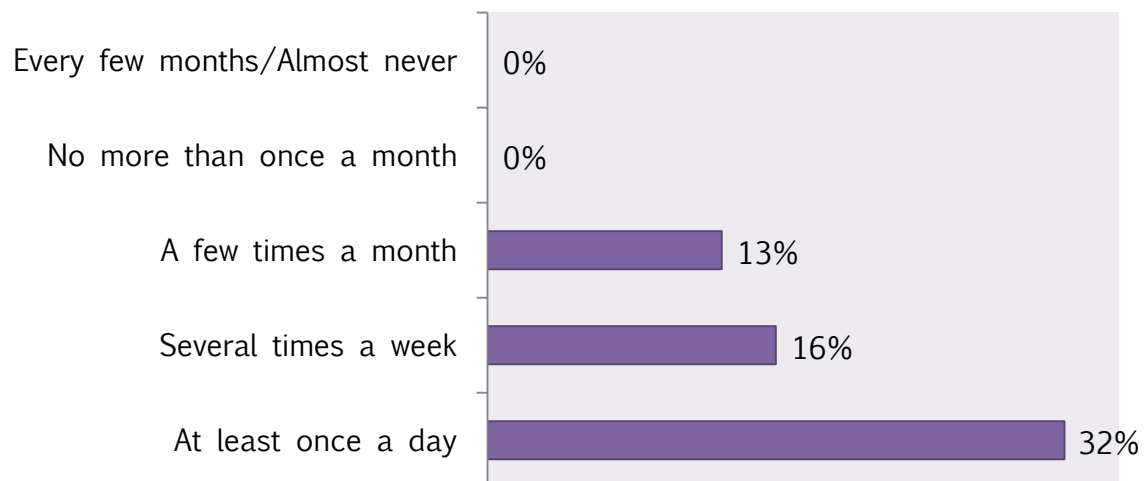
Despite the popularity of Facebook, LinkedIn remains the social media site that is used by most of the survey respondents. Facebook is a runner-up, at 68%. Other channels for social networking used by members are Google +, NING, and STC SIGs.

If you use LinkedIn, how often do you use it?



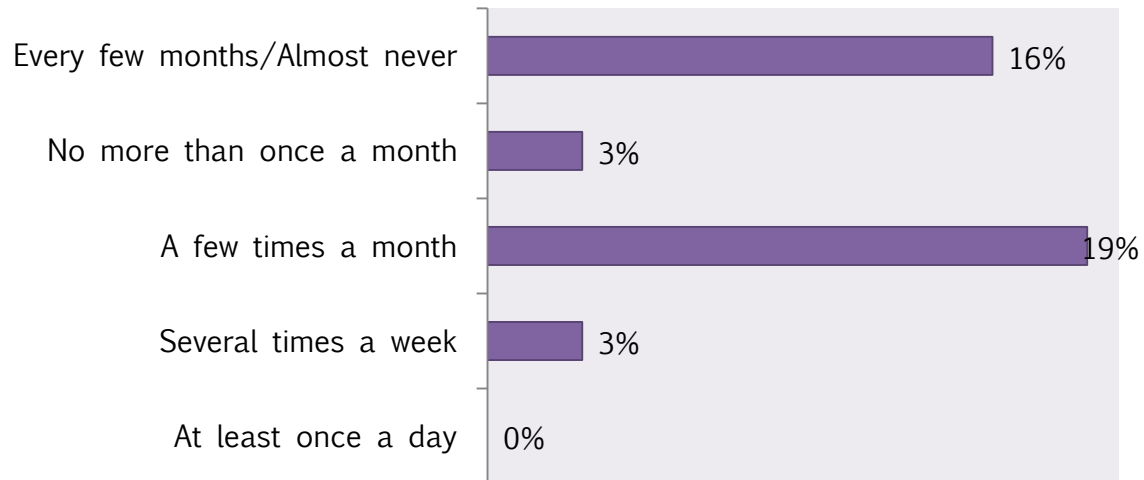
LinkedIn is checked by most respondents on a monthly basis.

If you use Facebook, how often do you use it?

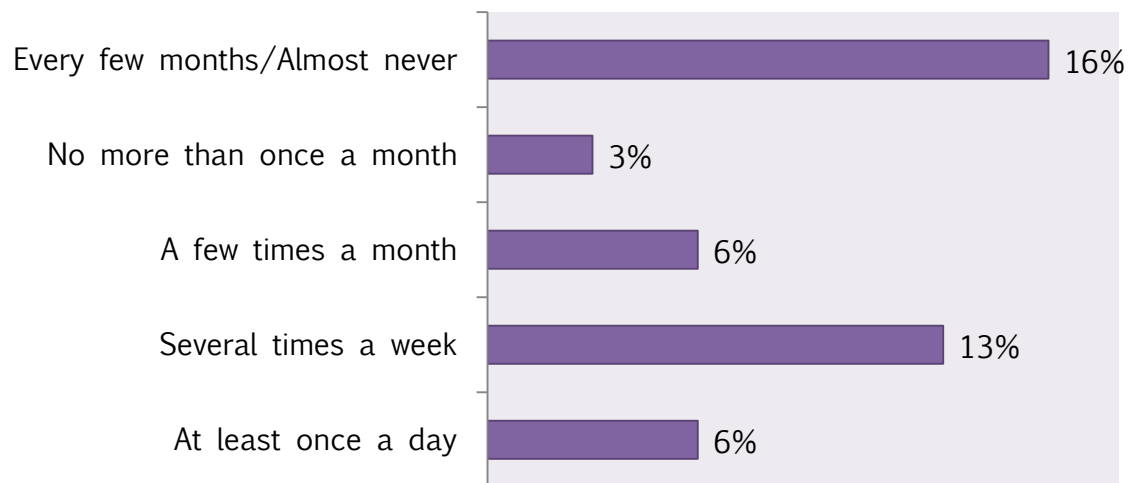


Unlike LinkedIn, a third of the respondents that use Facebook check the website at least once a day.

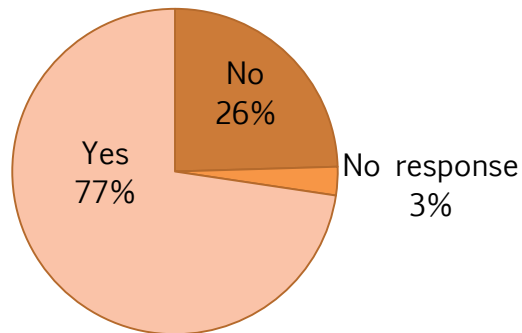
If you use MySTC, how often do you use it?



If you use Twitter, how often do you use it?

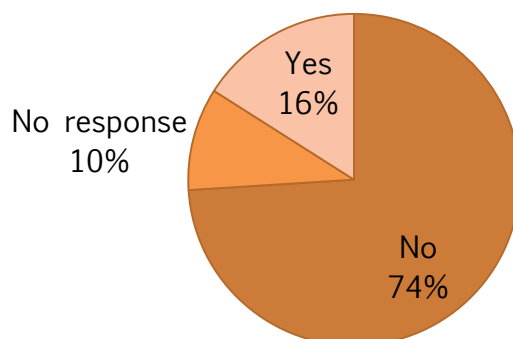


Do you use software or web-based tools on the job that enable multiple authors to work on the same document?



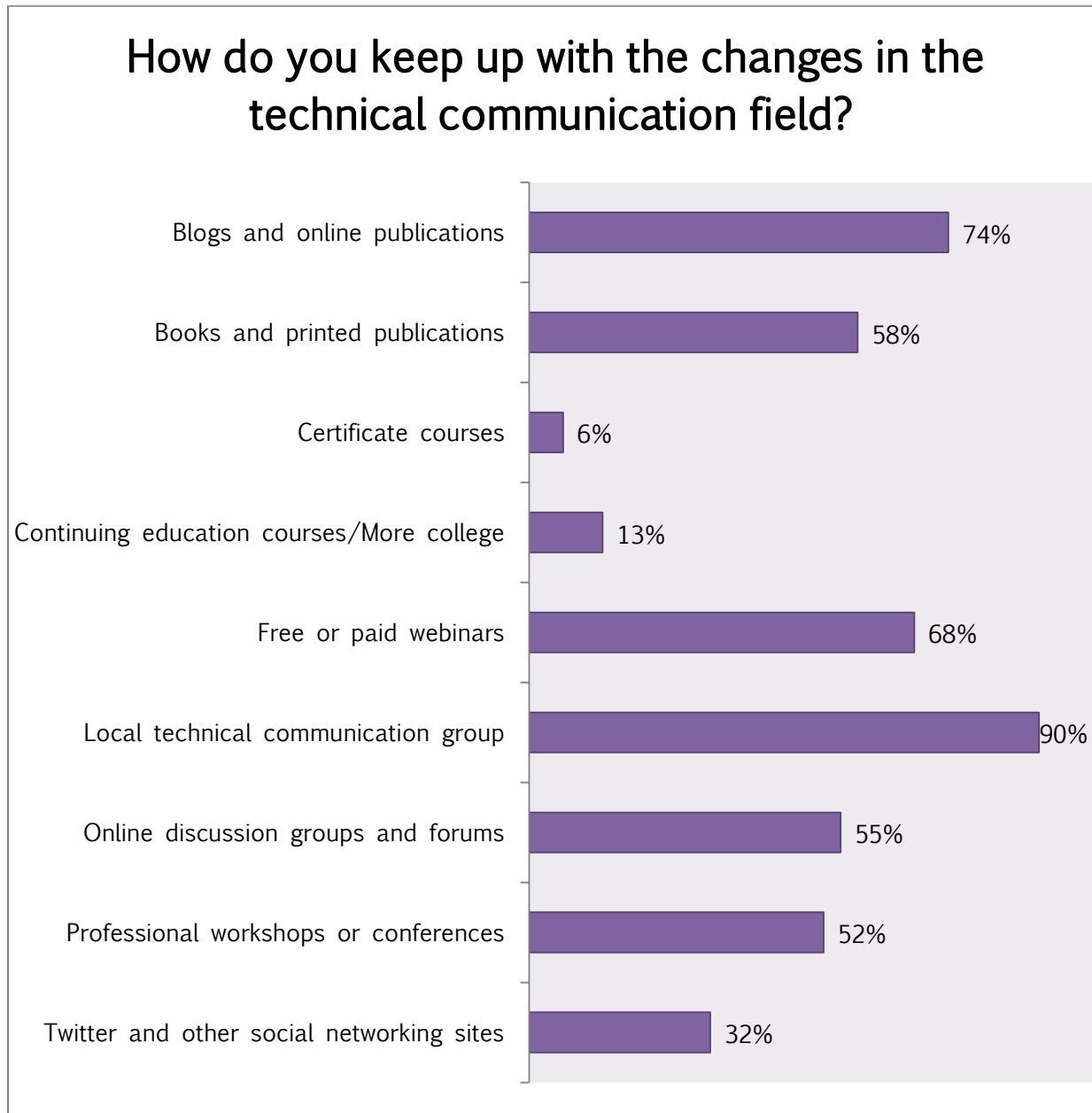
Seventy-seven percent of respondents collaborate with other authors in the workplace through software or tools that allow multiple authoring.

Are your company's customers able to contribute to the documentation (through an official company blog, wiki, or help website)?



Seventy-four percent of respondents handle documentation without the direct help of their company's customers.

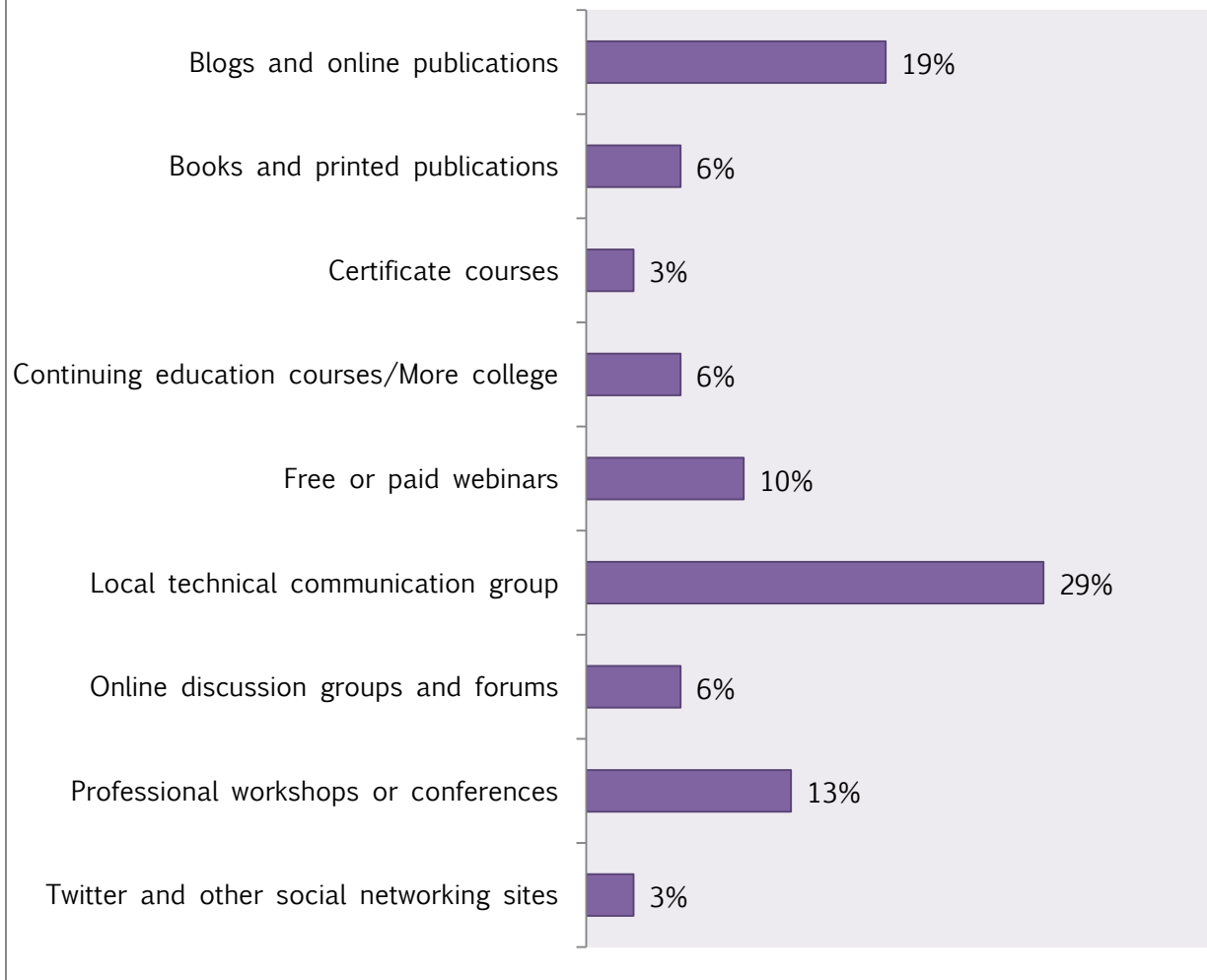
Part 4: How do you stay current with your profession?



The top three sources that respondents use to keep up with the technical communication field are

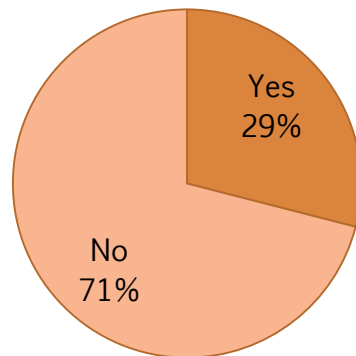
- Local technical communication groups (e.g., STC)
- Blogs and online publications
- Free or paid webinars

If you could choose only one of the choices from the previous question, which would you choose?



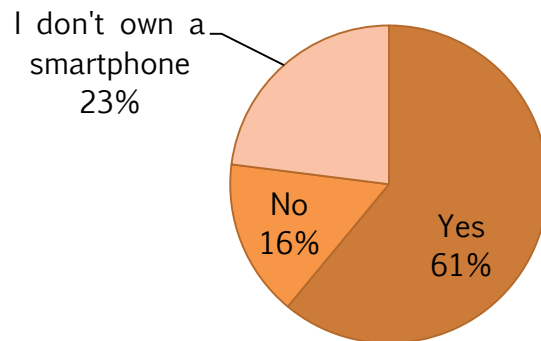
Participating in a local technical communication group is the most preferred method of keeping up with changes in the technical communication field.

Do you own a tablet or an e-reader?



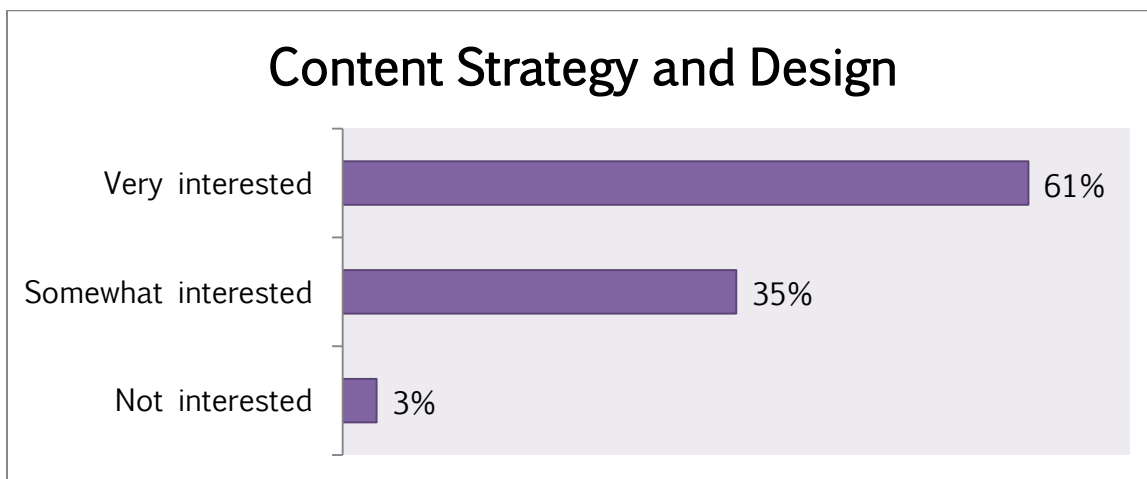
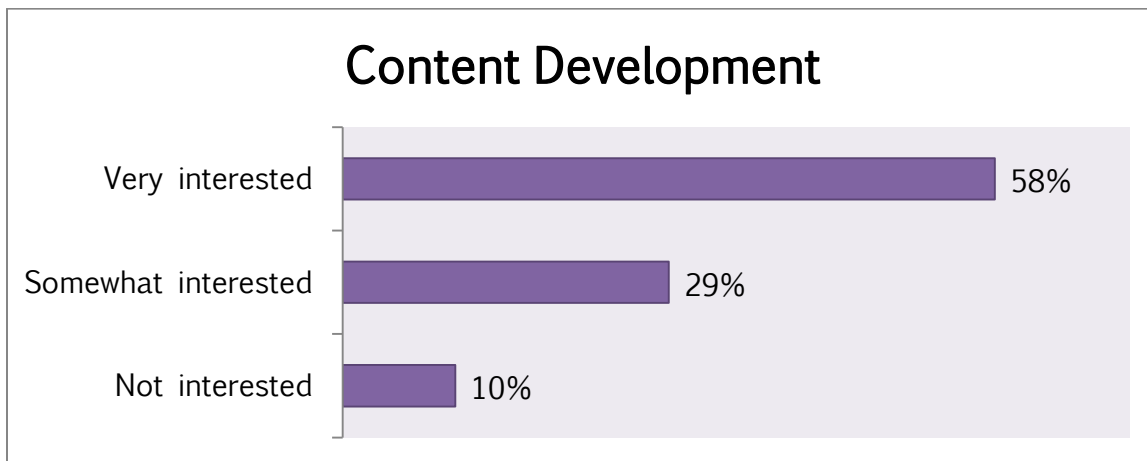
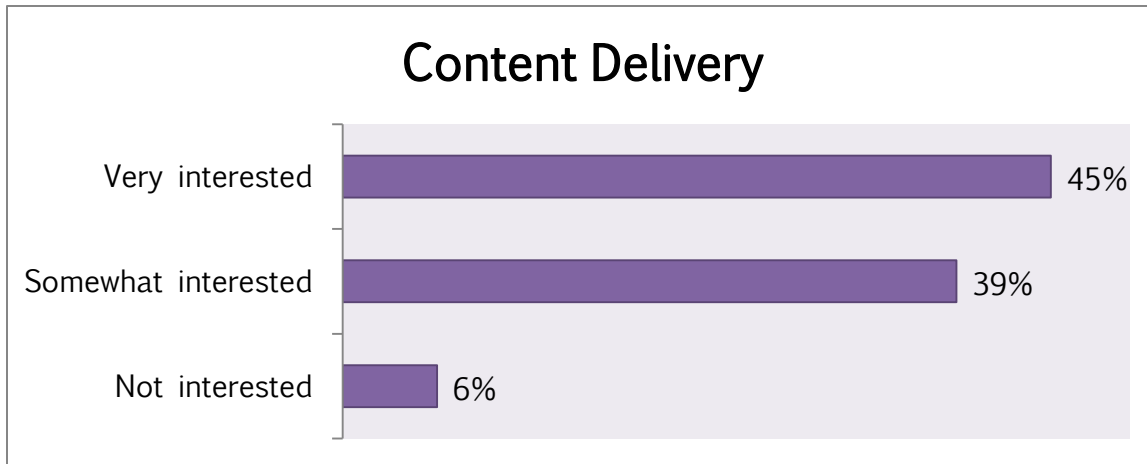
Most respondents do not own a tablet or an e-reader.

Do you use your smartphone regularly to access online content?

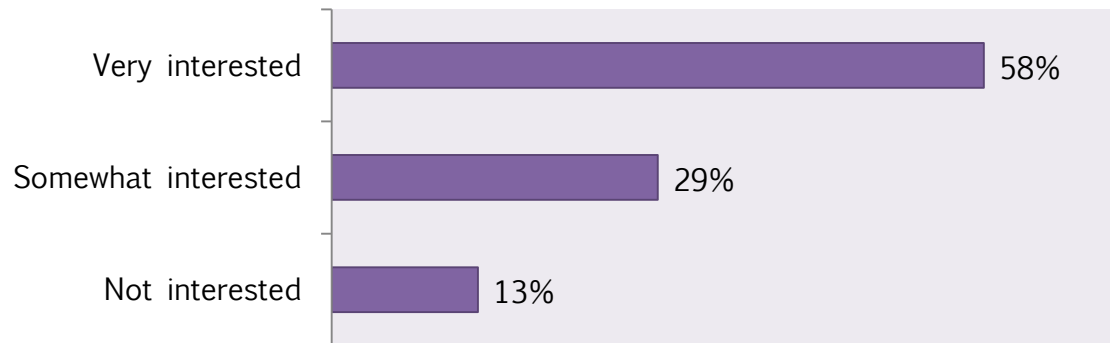


More than half of the respondents own a smartphone and use it regularly to go online.

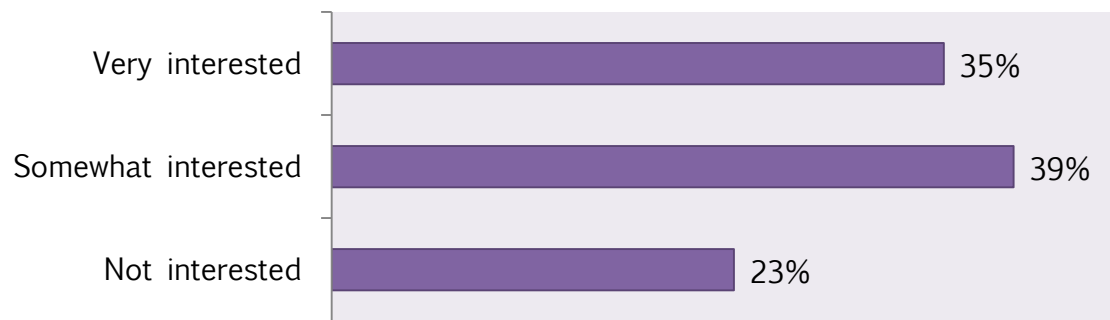
The following charts are responses to **“What would you like to learn more about next year?”**



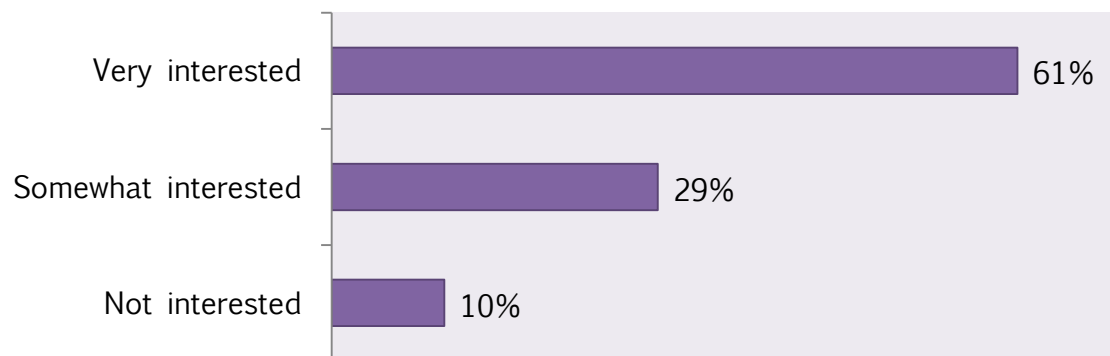
Education and Training



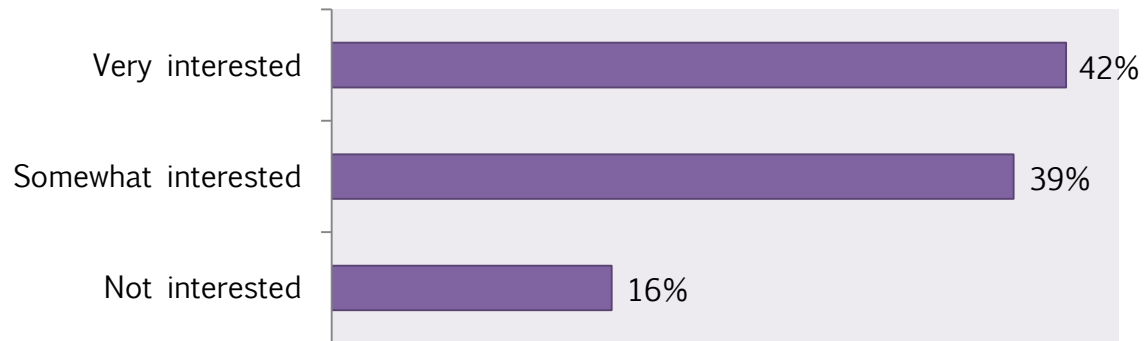
People, Project, and Business Management



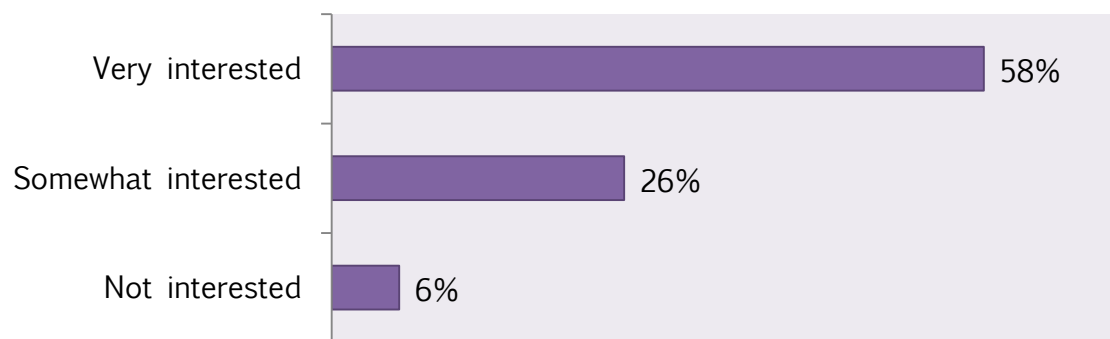
Professional Development



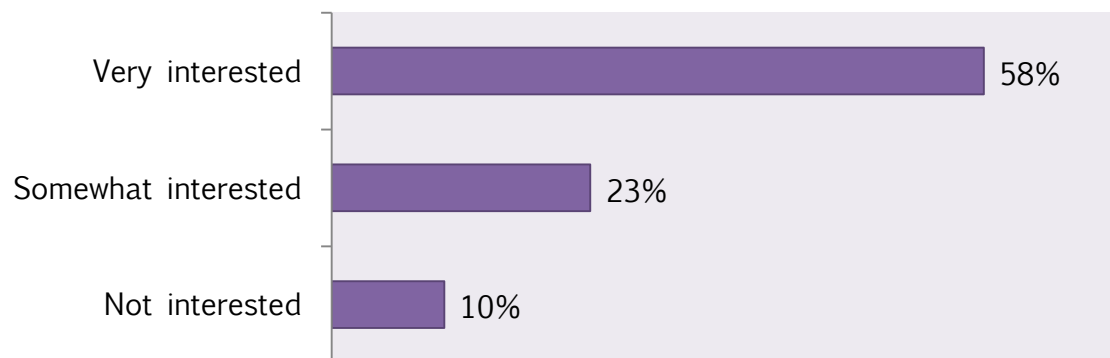
Social Media

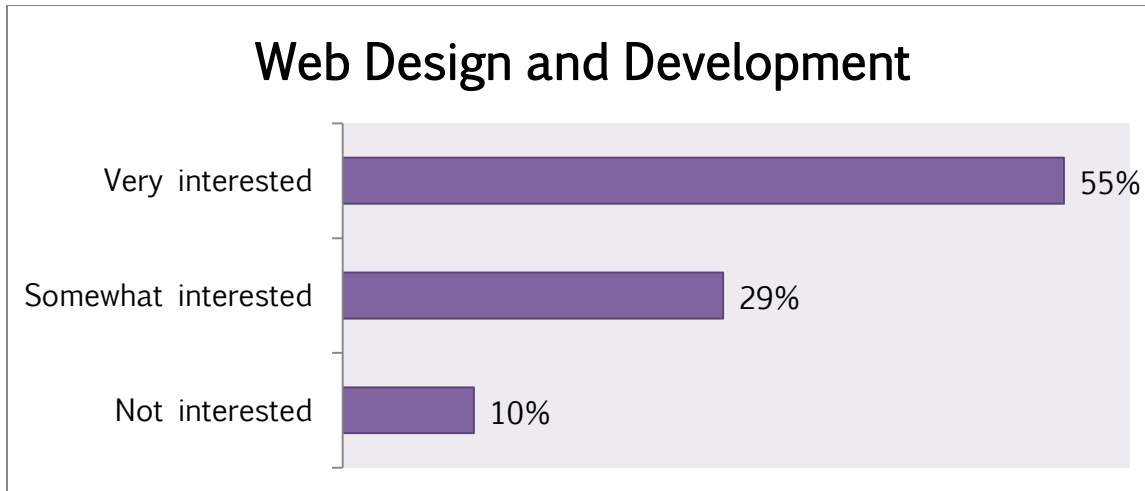


User Experience and Usability



Visual Design





Based on “Very interested” responses, the respondents were most interested in learning

- **Content Strategy and Design** (61%)
- **Professional Development** (61%)

Respondents also expressed an interest in

- **Content Development** (58%)
- **Education and Training** (58%)

Reflecting the increasingly technical nature of technical communication, the following were also ranked highly.

- **User Experience and Usability** (58%)
- **Visual Design** (58%)
- **Web Design and Development** (55%)

The least interesting topics were

- **Content Delivery** (45%)
- **Social Media** (42%)
- **People, Process, and Business Management** (35%)

Levels of Interest in Technical Communication Topics

