

2013 Blogger Survey

BBS COMMUNICATIONS GROUP



BBS BLOGGER SURVEY

2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The BBS Annual Blogger Survey aims to deliver insights into the nature, trends and preferences of the continually-evolving Australian “blogosphere”.

In particular, it seeks to understand bloggers’ key motivations, challenges and goals, as well as levels of engagement with the PR industry and other groups.

The survey was first launched in 2011, but this year’s survey attracted the greatest number of bloggers to date, with 83 respondents from across the country and across various blog genres.

Since BBS Communications Group was first established in 1989 by Chairman and Chief Executive Jane Edwards, it has built a strong reputation for being a leader in traditional and digital media relations through its intimate understanding of the Australian media landscape.

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KEY FINDINGS

FINDING ONE: BLOGGING CONTINUES TO PROFESSIONALISE

- The proportion of bloggers considering it a full-time job jumped from 11% in 2012 to 19% in 2013, with almost half (42.5%) blogging to build their personal or business profile.
- Of those surveyed this year, more received an income or other payment from their blog than those that did not.
- In the coming year, almost two-thirds (64.6%) expect to be remunerated in some way, through means like a wage, regular paid work, advertising or sponsorship.
- The number of bloggers selling ebooks or other online resources will grow substantially in the year ahead.

FINDING TWO: CREATIVITY AND PASSION ARE THE KEY DRIVERS

- Bloggers report that they are driven by the opportunity to have a creative outlet and to focus on a topic they are passionate about.
- In fact, 41% of those surveyed currently consider their blog a hobby or creative outlet, and it is likely that many write in addition to other work or commitments.
- This correlates closely to the finding that almost three-quarters (71.3%) consider finding time to blog one of the biggest challenges they face.

FINDING THREE: BLOGGING AND SOCIAL MEDIA ARE INEXTRICABLY TIED

- Not surprisingly, almost 90% of respondents use Facebook and Twitter in connection with their blog, with approximately half also using photo-sharing tools like Instagram and Pinterest.

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KEY FINDINGS

FINDING FOUR: BLOGGING IS ABOUT CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

- Blogging offers a great medium for connecting, whether it is with the public, leaders, other bloggers, brands or businesses.
- For other bloggers, connecting helps to create post ideas and further promote their blog or build readership and revenue.
- 25% of bloggers report that connecting with other bloggers is a key reason they blog, while 12.5% are motivated by connecting with brands or businesses.

FINDING FIVE: CONSUMER BRANDS AND SMES LEAD THE WAY IN BLOGGER ENGAGEMENT

- Consumer brands and local SMEs are currently leading blogger engagement, with 64.1% and 57.7% of this year's survey participants approached by these groups respectively.
- Politicians or government associations had connected with 11.5% of survey respondents.

FINDING SIX: BLOGGERS ARE SEEKING MUTUALLY-BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PR PRACTITIONERS

- More than half of those surveyed have used content supplied by external sources to generate content, and almost 30% have done so very often or somewhat often.

FINDING SEVEN: SHARE THE LOVE BY SHARING THE BLOG

- When asked what PR practitioners can do to better assist bloggers, the most popular response (46.3%) was to simply promote blog posts to their contacts and on social media.

THE SURVEY

THE QUESTIONS

1. Is blogging a full-time job for you, or do you do it in addition to other paid work?
2. What is your age category?
3. What is the key reason you blog?
4. Do you actively track your blog readership/followers? If so, how many people would you estimate read your blog each month?
5. What social media tools do you use in connection with your blog?
6. How do you generate content/ideas for your blog?
7. In the past 12 months, which groups have engaged with you in your role as a blogger?
8. How regularly are you contacted by groups like these?
9. How often do you use content from external sources (such as PR practitioners) as the basis for your blog?
10. What can PR practitioners do to better assist you?
11. Have you received income or payment from your blog during the past 12 months?
12. Do you expect to receive income or payment from your blog during the next 12 months?
13. What are the biggest challenges facing you as a blogger?
14. Do you have a specific goal for your blog in the next 12 months?

Please note: some findings and statistics in the 2013 BBS Blogger Survey report are based on the total number of responses, rather than the total number of respondents.

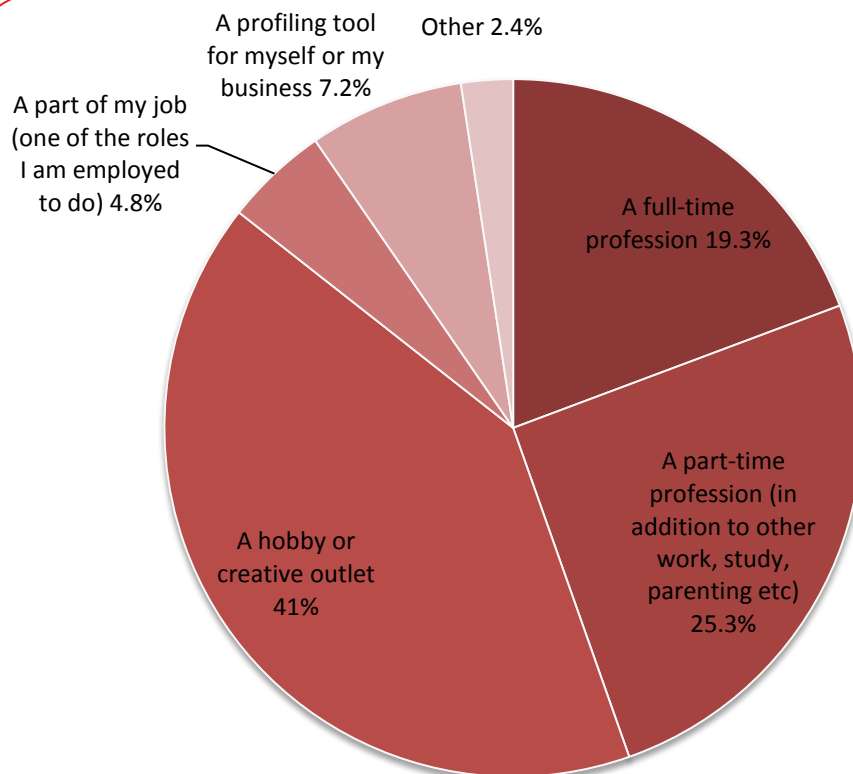
DETAILED FINDINGS

1) IS BLOGGING A FULL-TIME JOB FOR YOU, OR DO YOU DO IT IN ADDITION TO OTHER PAID WORK?

- Almost one-in-five bloggers (19.3%) considered blogging a full-time profession (almost double the number who did in 2012).
- Almost a third said blogging was a part-time profession or part of the role they were employed to do, with another 7.2% using it as a profiling tool for themselves or their businesses.
- Many people (41%) continue to blog as a hobby or creative outlet.

Additional insight

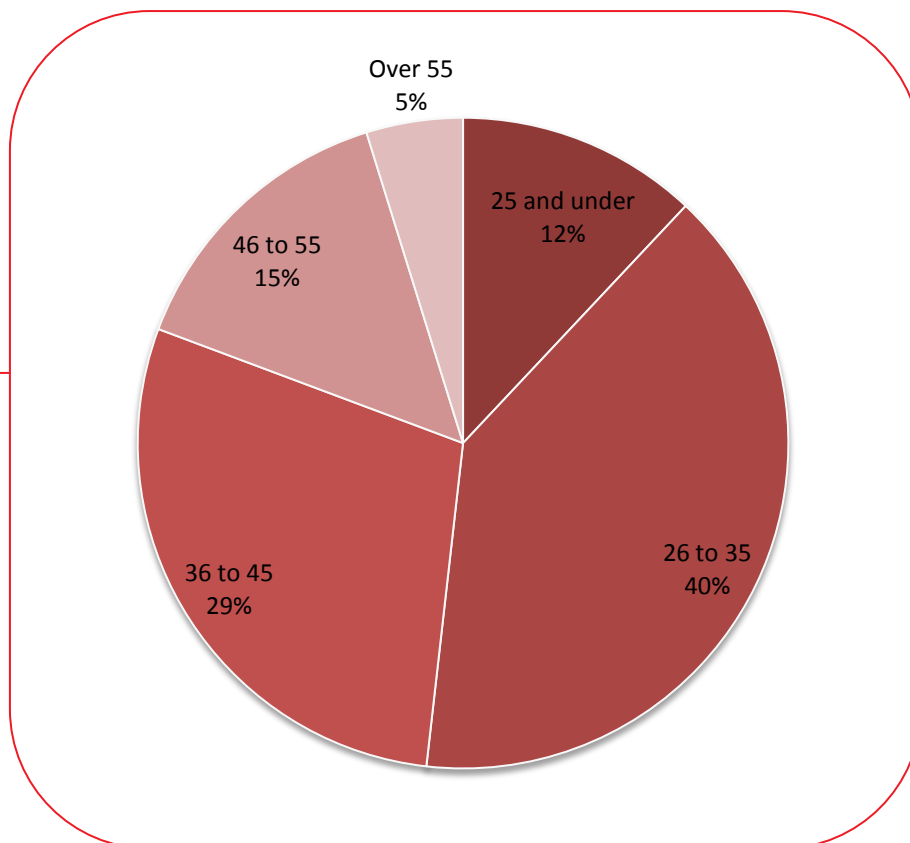
Interestingly, the 2013 BBS Media Survey found 10.1% of the 83 journalists surveyed wrote a blog as part of their work, another 8.7% wrote a personal blog and 4.3% said they wrote both a personal and work-related blog.



DETAILED FINDINGS

2) WHAT IS YOUR AGE CATEGORY?

- Blogging is increasing in popularity across most age categories, except for those aged 25 and under, which fell in representation from 28% in 2012 to 12% of respondents in 2013.
- There has been significant growth in the 36 to 45 years category (from 21% to 29% in the last twelve months), while those aged 46 and over represented 20% of those surveyed, up from 13% in 2012.
- Young Generation Xs and older Generation Ys dominated the blogosphere, with most of those surveyed aged between 26 and 35.



DETAILED FINDINGS

3) WHAT IS THE KEY REASON YOU BLOG?

RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE ANSWERS.

- Creating, sharing and connecting are the main reasons people blog.
- Most bloggers (65%) said the enjoyment of having a creative outlet was the key reason they blogged, while half of all respondents blogged to focus on a topic they were passionate about.
- In another sign of the growing professionalism of blogging, 42.5% of respondents said a key reason they blogged was to build a personal or business profile. Another third of respondents (32.5%) suggested they blogged to deliver content not found in traditional media outlets.

Enjoy having a creative outlet	65%
Focus on a topic I'm passionate about	50%
Build my personal or business profile	42.5%
Have a forum to express my ideas	38.8%
Deliver content not found in traditional media outlets	32.5%
Connect with other bloggers	25%
Create online communities	21.3%
Initiate discussion or debate on important issues	12.5%
Connect with brands/businesses	12.5%
Connect with public leaders/identities	5%

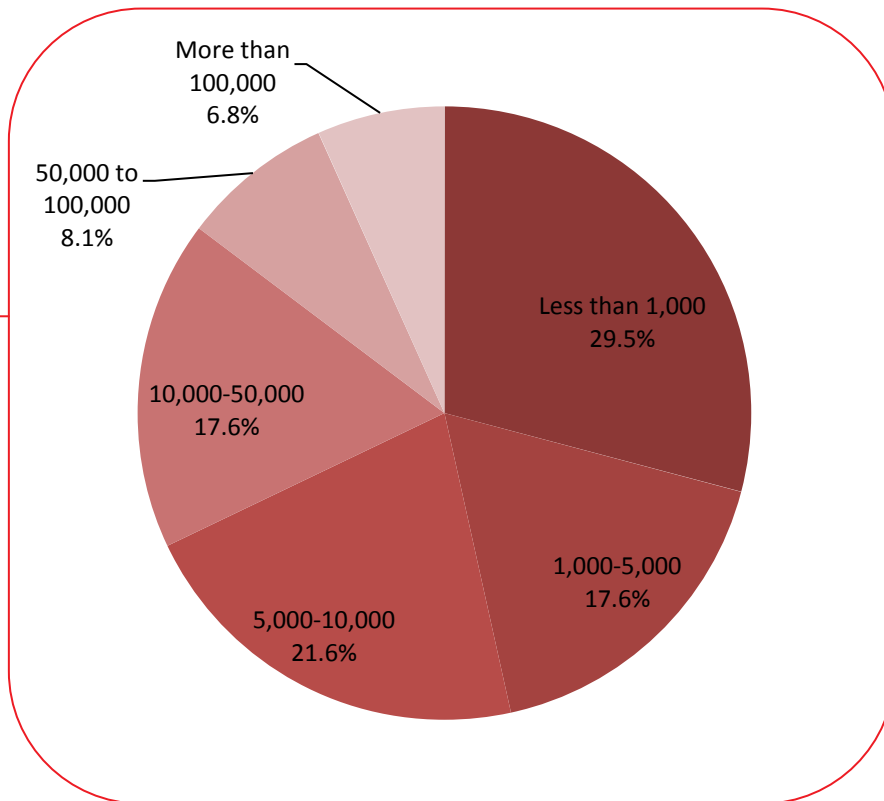
DETAILED FINDINGS

4) DO YOU ACTIVELY TRACK YOUR BLOG READERSHIP / FOLLOWERS? IF SO, HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD YOU ESTIMATE READ YOUR BLOG EACH MONTH?

- Almost all bloggers surveyed (92.5%) tracked their blog readership in some capacity, using subscriptions, page views, and/or social media following figures.
- Of these, about two-thirds (68.7%) reported fewer than 10,000 monthly readers, with 29.5% estimating their monthly readership at less than 1,000 people.
- 14.9% of bloggers estimated a large readership of more than 50,000 monthly readers, with 6.8% reporting more than 100,000 readers.

Additional insight

Comparing this to traditional media outlets, the following are the monthly figures for *Australian House and Garden* (113,569), *Marie Claire* (90,092) and the Monday-Friday daily circulation figures of *The Australian* (116,655). *Audit Bureau of Circulation August 2013*



DETAILED FINDINGS

5) WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS DO YOU USE IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR BLOG?

RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE ANSWERS

- Not surprisingly, bloggers reported using social media and online tools heavily to assist with the creation and promotion of their blogs.
- Almost all said they used Facebook (89.6%) and Twitter (88.3%).
- Photo-sharing tools like Instagram (53.2%) and Pinterest (49.4%) also proved popular, followed by Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube and Tumblr.
- In addition to the major social media tools mentioned, bloggers also cited a variety of others they used, including Bloglovin, Blogher, Coverative, Digg, StumbleUpon and Vizify.



Facebook 89.6%



Google+ 44.2%



Twitter 88.3%



LinkedIn 37.7%



Instagram 53.2%



YouTube 33.8%



Pinterest 49.4%



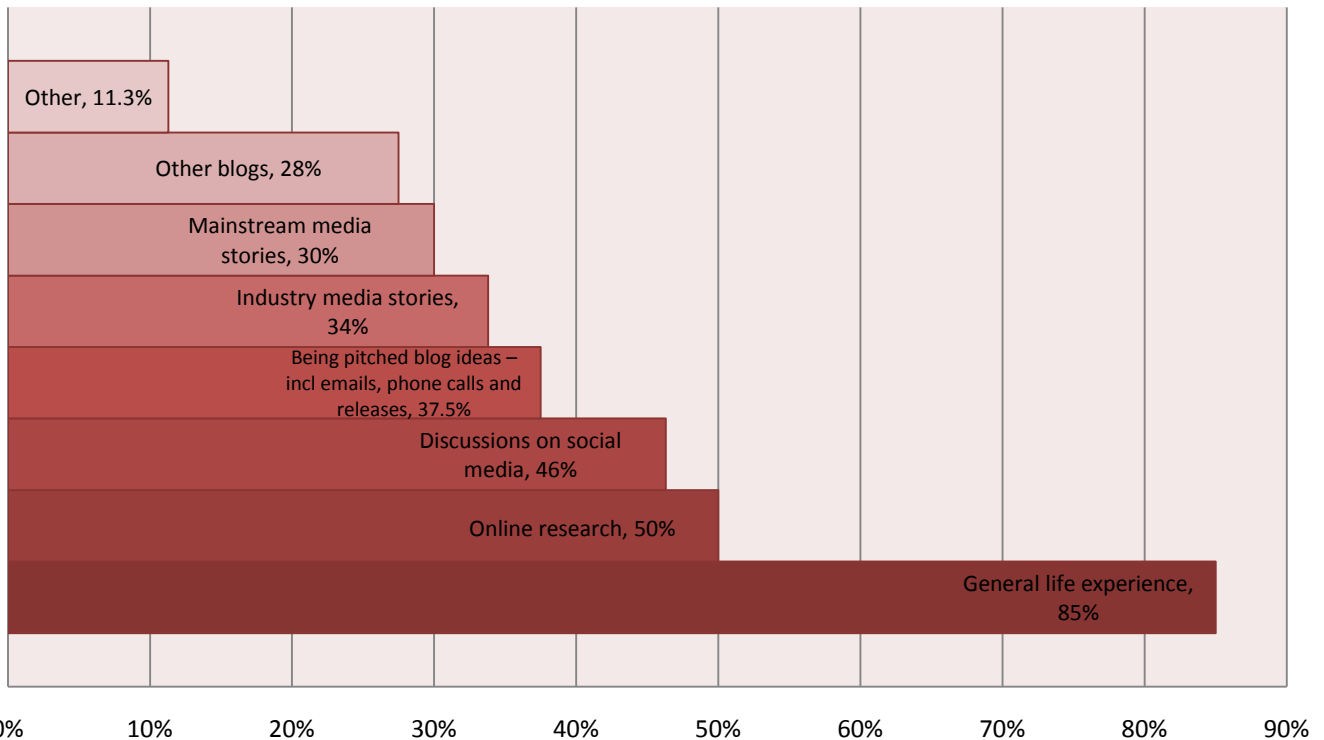
Tumblr 14.3%

DETAILED FINDINGS

6) HOW DO YOU GENERATE CONTENT / IDEAS FOR YOUR BLOG?

RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE ANSWERS

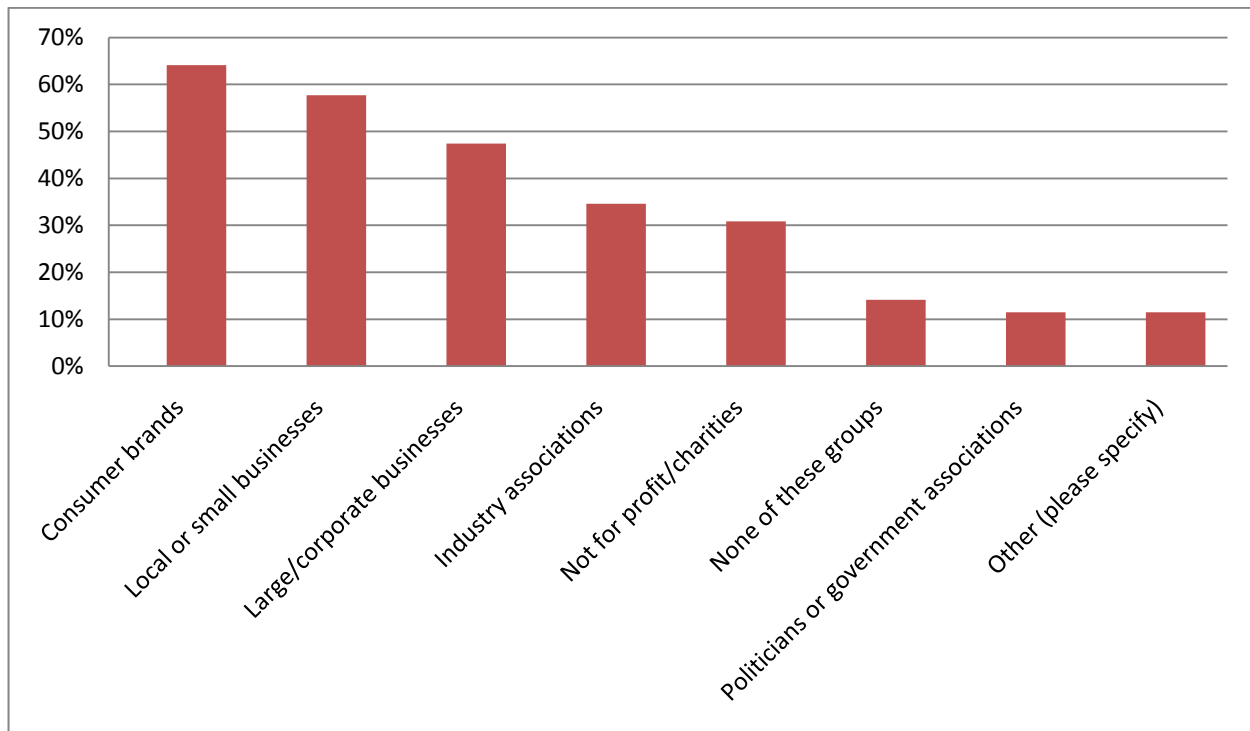
- While most bloggers (85%) said they drew on their own general life experience to drive post content, they were supported by a toolbox of inspiration sources.
- The internet and forums like Facebook and Twitter rated highly as idea sources, with online research and discussions on social media used by 50% and 46.3% of respondents respectively.
- More than a third (37.5%) said they drew content from blog ideas they had been pitched. Interestingly, the number of bloggers drawing content from other blogs almost halved from 51% in 2012 to 27.5% in 2013.
- A third of respondents (33.8%) used industry media stories as a key source of ideas, while 30% used mainstream news media. Other sources of inspiration included book and restaurant reviews, travel and professional experiences.



DETAILED FINDINGS

7) IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHICH GROUPS HAVE ENGAGED WITH YOU IN YOUR ROLE AS A BLOGGER?

- Most bloggers surveyed said they had been approached by external sources.
- Almost two-thirds of bloggers (64.1%) interacted with consumer brands during the past 12 months.
- Local or small businesses are also dipping their toes into the blogosphere, with more bloggers approached by these types of businesses (57.7%) than by large/corporate businesses (47.4%).
- More than one-in-ten bloggers (11.5%) said they had been contacted by other groups, such as PR agencies, restaurants, travel companies, authors, publishers, universities, colleges, writers and other bloggers.



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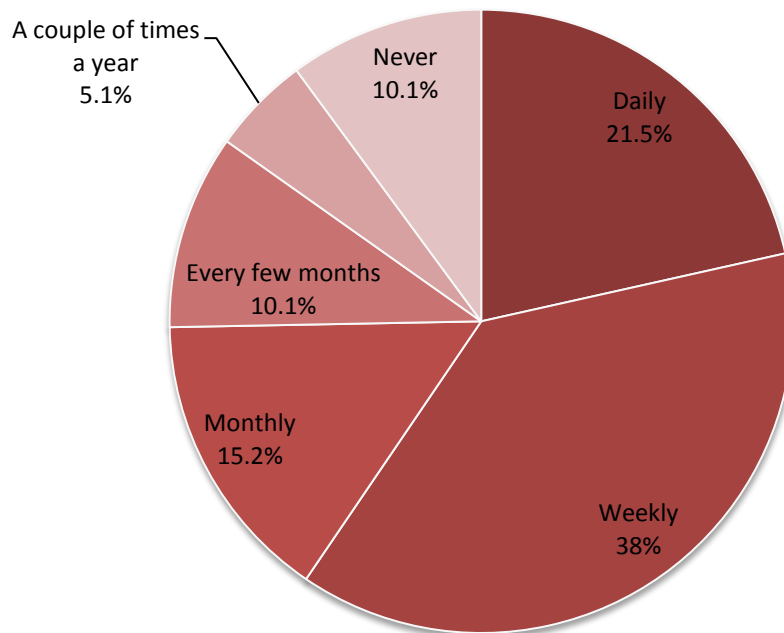
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DETAILED FINDINGS

8) HOW REGULARLY ARE YOU CONTACTED BY GROUPS LIKE THESE?

- More than half of bloggers (59.5%) said they were contacted each week by external sources, with one-in-five being approached on a daily basis.
- A quarter of bloggers (25.3%) said they were only contacted every few months, or less, while one-in-ten (10.1%) had never been contacted by third parties.



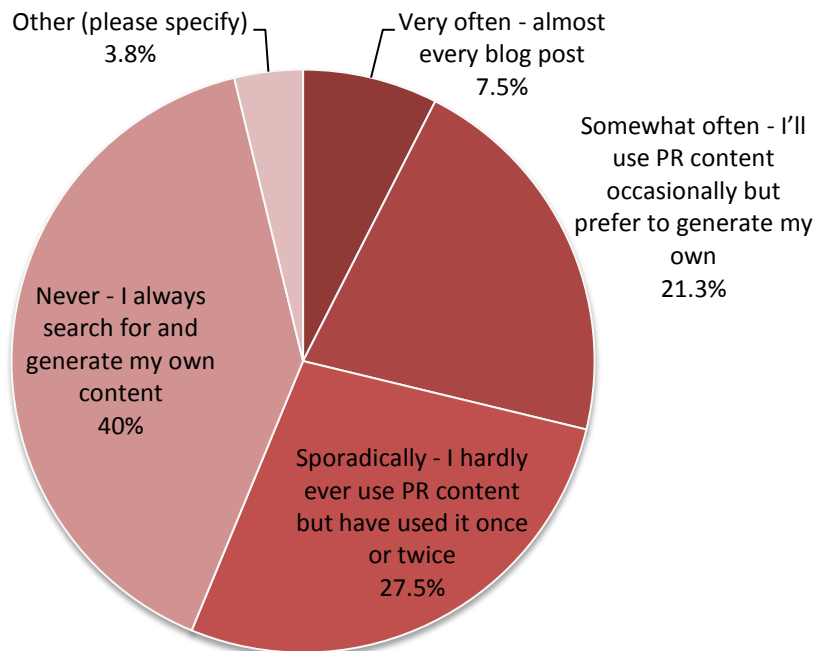
DETAILED FINDINGS

9) HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE CONTENT FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES (SUCH AS PR PRACTITIONERS) AS THE BASIS FOR YOUR BLOG?

- More than half of bloggers (56.3%) said they had used information supplied by external sources to produce blog posts, with almost a third doing so either very often or somewhat often.
- As reported in previous years however, bloggers don't use supplied content indiscriminately. They greatly value their editorial integrity and were conscious of having a responsibility to readers to produce impartial content.

Additional insight

"A PR pitch may help manifest an idea but I never verbatim publish content from PRs. Blogs need to be written in a personal voice to connect with your audience."
2013 BBS Blogger Survey Respondent



DETAILED FINDINGS

10) WHAT CAN PR PRACTITIONERS DO TO BETTER ASSIST YOU?

RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE ANSWERS

- PR practitioners can best help bloggers by helping them build their own profile and by providing quality content and experiences.
- One-in-six respondents said they did not want to be contacted by PR practitioners at all.
- The most popular request from bloggers was for PRs to promote their posts to their own contacts and on social media. Event invitations also ranked highly, as did the opportunity to cover stories exclusively.

Promote my posts to their contacts and on social media	46.3%
Invite me to events	45.0%
Provide exclusive stories or opportunities	41.3%
Provide products/prizes for my readership	38.8%
Better tailor post ideas specific to my audience	35.0%
Respond quicker to my requests/enquiries	20.0%
Be patient in waiting for posts to appear	18.8%
Not contact me at all – I'm not interested in working with PRs	18.8%
Provide better images/photos	12.5%
Understand blog SEO/analytics	11.3%
Other – understand my monetary value/provide payment	5.0%
Other – demonstrate better understanding of my blog	3.8%

DETAILED FINDINGS

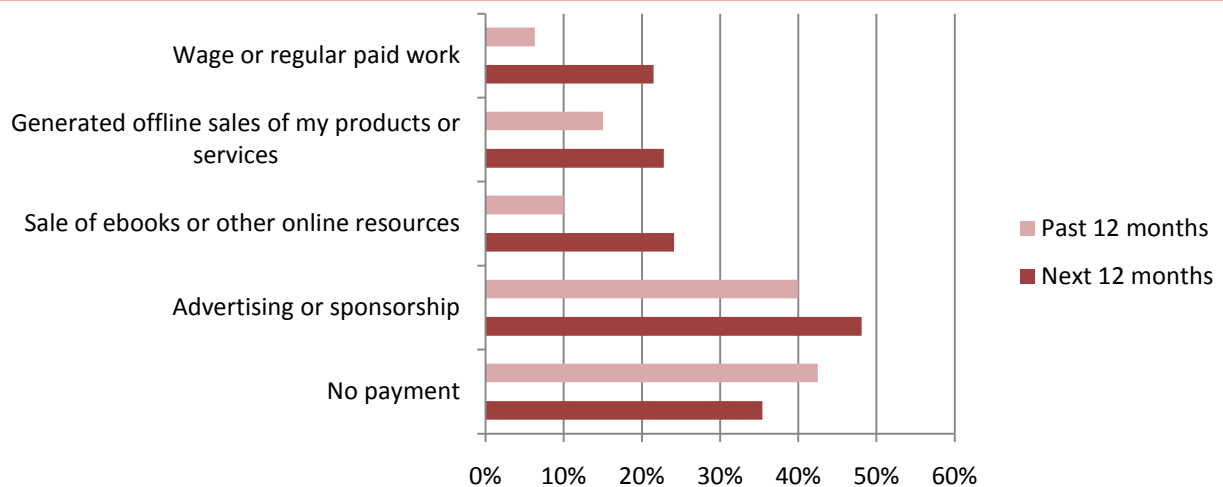
11) HAVE YOU RECEIVED INCOME OR PAYMENT FROM YOUR BLOG DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE ANSWERS

- 57.5% of bloggers said they had received some kind of income or payment from their blog during the past year (compared to 34% in 2011 and 66% in 2012).
- Advertising or sponsorship (40%) was the most common form of income, while other forms of payment included free products and events, and affiliate link commissions.
- About 15% said their blog had helped generate offline sales of products or services. One-in-ten bloggers said they sold ebooks or online resources via their blog.
- However, only 6.3% of respondents received a wage or regular paid work through blogging, while similar numbers have received payment for publication of their posts.

12) DO YOU EXPECT TO RECEIVE INCOME OR PAYMENT FROM YOUR BLOG DURING THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

- Almost two-thirds of bloggers (64.6%) said they expected to receive payment from their blogging during the next 12 months, up from the 57.5% who do currently.
- One-in-five surveyed (21.5%) said they expected to receive a wage or regular paid work in the coming year, which is more than three times the number that do now.
- The sale of ebooks and online resources is also expected to grow, with almost a quarter (24.1%) hoping to generate income from these sources compared to the 10% who did in the last year.
- Slightly more bloggers are also expecting to generate advertising or sponsorship as well as offline sales of products and services.



DETAILED FINDINGS

13) WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING YOU AS A BLOGGER?

- The majority of bloggers (71.3%) identified “finding time to blog” as the biggest challenge they faced, followed by “increasing blog-related income” (38.8%).
- This may reflect the fact that for most, blogging is not a full-time profession.

Finding time to blog	71.3%
Increasing my blog-related income	38.8%
Coming up with new post ideas	28.8%
Growing competition amongst bloggers for content and readership	28.8%
Finding advertisers/sponsors	25.0%
Managing my social media accounts	18.8%
Maintaining my editorial integrity	16.3%
Proving the legitimacy of blogging against traditional media/journalism	16.3%
Managing pitches/enquiries	16.3%
Managing/responding to blog comments	6.3%
Managing blog-related staff	5.0%
Trolling/negative commentary	3.8%
Promoting my blog/increasing my readership	2.5%

DETAILED FINDINGS

14) DO YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC GOAL FOR YOUR BLOG IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

- Fifty of the 83 bloggers surveyed said they had specific goals for their blogs, with some common themes emerging.
- The most common responses included increasing readership and followers (48%), maintaining or increasing post regularity (24%), and hoping to generate income/attract sponsorship (18%).

Blogger goals for next 12 months

