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## Introduction

STC Alberta conducted a salary survey of its members in May and June 2007. Depending on the employment type specified by respondents (e.g., full-time employee, part-time employee, or contractor/consultant), they were asked a subset of questions regarding such items as employee benefits, annual salary, and hourly rate.

Part I of the 2007 salary survey report provides an overview of the survey as a whole: the methodology used and the response rates. Part I also summarizes the income statistics for full-time employees. Part II reports the statistics for contractors/consultants and part-time employees.

The most recent worldwide survey of contractor/consultant income conducted by STC International was in 2003. Because it reported overall statistics for all Canadian responses, and not individual provinces, it is of limited value for comparison purposes.

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## Results

Twenty-four contractor/consultants and five part-time employees responded to the survey. The median salary reported for contractors/consultants in Alberta in 2007 was \$62.50 per hour, while the mean was \$64.50 per hour. This figure was higher than the median and mean reported in the 2006 STC Alberta survey (\$60 for both), and considerably higher than the Canadian rates reported in the 2003 STC International contractor/consultant survey (\$51 and \$45, respectively).

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## Income Survey Statistics for Contractors/Consultants

The percentiles used to analyze the data correspond to those of the STC International consulting and independent contracting survey. Table 1 outlines the definitions of the terms used in the salary survey. Table 2 summarizes the survey data.

Table 1. Survey definitions

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Base                       | The total number of responses in a category.   |
| Mean                       | The average of the tabulated values.   |
| 10%, 25%, 50%,<br>75%, 90% | Percentile values. For example, in the 25 percent column, 25 percent of the responses were below this value; 75 percent were above this value. |
| 50%                        | Also called the <i>median</i> because half the responses are above this value, and half are below this value.                                  |

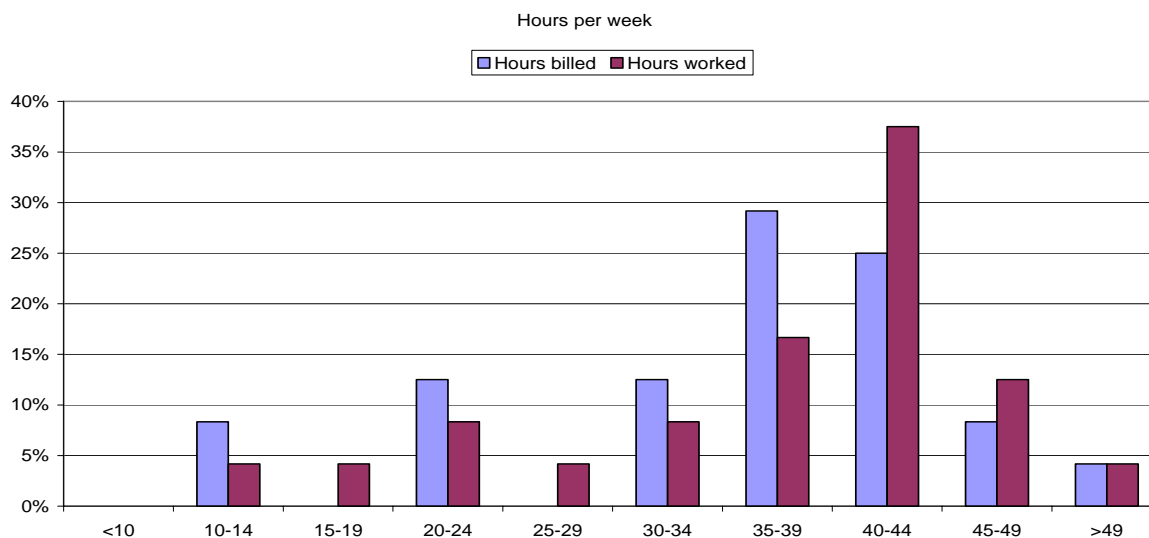
Table 2. 2007 STC Alberta salary survey summary: Contractors/Consultants

|   | Base | %   | Mean | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% |
|---|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>All responses</b>                        | 24   |     | 64   | 40  | 52  | 63  | 71  | 80  |
| <b>Education Level</b>                      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |
| None specified/other                        | 4    |     | 58   | 44  | 50  | 60  | 68  | 72  |
| Certificate                                 | 13   |     | 61   | 45  | 50  | 60  | 68  | 72  |
| Bachelor/applied bachelor                   | 26   |     | 69   | 45  | 54  | 65  | 76  | 80  |
| Postgraduate                                | 5    |     | 88   | 64  | 70  | 70  | 75  | 129 |
| <b>Sex</b>                                  |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |
| Female                                      | 14   | 58% | 53   | 37  | 41  | 54  | 64  | 70  |
| Male  | 10   | 42% | 80   | 60  | 80  | 73  | 80  | 89  |
| <b>Technical Writing Experience (Years)</b> |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |
| <2  | 2    | 8%  | 38   | 36  | 36  | 38  | 39  | 40  |
| 2-5   | 3    | 13% | 54   | 39  | 44  | 53  | 64  | 71  |
| 6-10  | 3    | 13% | 48   | 41  | 43  | 45  | 53  | 57  |
| 11-15                                       | 6    | 25% | 68   | 55  | 59  | 70  | 78  | 80  |
| 16-19                                       | 8    | 33% | 78   | 54  | 63  | 68  | 76  | 106 |
| >20   | 2    | 8%  | 65   | 61  | 63  | 65  | 68  | 69  |

**Note:** All figures are in Canadian funds, rounded to the nearest dollar.

Contractors/consultants reported a wide range of hours worked and hours billed each week. 62% of the respondents worked the same range of hours each week as they billed. A summary of the hours worked and billed is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Hours worked and hours billed



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## Commentary

The narrowing gender gap between male and female employees reported in Part I of this survey was not evident in the data gathered from contractors/consultants. The mean salary for men (\$80) is considerably higher than that reported by women (\$53). However, 90% of male contractors had more than 10 years experience and were all over the age of 40, compared with 50% of female contractors with more than 10 years experience—72% of whom were over 40. However, four of the ten male respondents had postgraduate degrees (40%), compared to only one of the fourteen female respondents (7%).

Of the 24 contractors/consultants who responded to the survey, only three earn their income in Edmonton. The mean (average) hourly rate reported in Calgary was \$64 per hour, compared with \$65 in Edmonton. The education levels for both cities appear in Table 3 below, but with so few respondents from Edmonton, little comparison can be drawn between them.

**Table 3. Comparison of Calgary and Edmonton levels of experience: Contractors**

|          | < 2 Yrs  | 2-5 Yrs  | 6-10 Yrs  | 11-15 Yrs | 16-19 Yrs | > 20 Yrs |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Calgary  | 2 (9.5%) | 2 (9.5%) | 3 (14.2%) | 5 (24%)   | 7 (33.3%) | 2 (9.5%) |
| Edmonton | 0        | 1 (33%)  | 0         | 1 (33%)   | 1 (33%)   | 0        |

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## Education Levels

As in the 2006 survey, respondents were asked to report on the levels of post-secondary education they have achieved, as well as the domain in which they received their education (see Table 4 below). This question allowed respondents to report on multiple diplomas/degrees and domain areas.

**Table 4. Breakdown of education levels and domains**

|                           | Cert/Diploma | Bachelor's | Master's | PhD | Other |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------|----------|-----|-------|
| Arts (other than English) | 0            | 5          | 0        | 0   | 0     |
| English                   | 0            | 8          | 1        | 0   | 1     |
| Info Tech / Comp Science  | 6            | 3          | 1        | 0   | 1     |
| Science / Math / Eng      | 1            | 4          | 0        | 1   | 0     |
| Tech Comm                 | 4            | 3          | 1        | 0   | 1     |
| Other                     | 2            | 3          | 1        | 0   | 1     |
| Total                     | 13           | 26         | 4        | 1   | 4     |

The majority of post-secondary education is at the level of certificates/diplomas and bachelor's degrees, with only a handful of respondents reporting graduate work or other forms of post-secondary education. Interestingly, the domain with the highest concentration of diplomas/degrees reported is in English, which differs from that reported by full-time employees (technical communications, followed closely by arts other than English).

Unlike in *Part I: Full-time Employees Survey Results*, those respondents who had no specified post-secondary education did not report higher salaries than participants with certificates or bachelor's/applied bachelor's degrees.

In the 2006 survey, participants with certificates reported higher hourly rates than those with bachelor degrees, which did not hold true in 2007. In the education levels represented in Table 5, we see a drop in the reported experience levels for both the Certificate and Postgraduate degree holders. This may indicate that less experienced individuals have successfully entered into the independent contracting/consulting field.

**Table 5. Post-secondary education and experience**

| Post-secondary education level | Percentage with more than six years' experience |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Certificate                    | 55%   |
| Bachelor/Applied Bachelor      | 72%   |
| Postgraduate                   | 80%   |

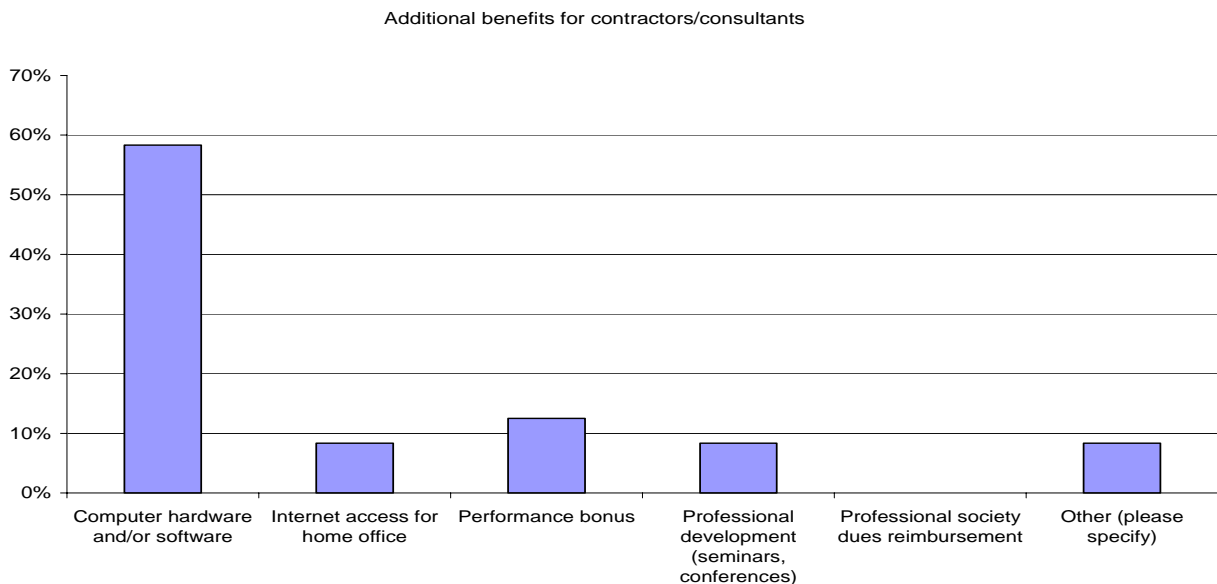
## Additional Benefits for Contractors/consultants

The benefits reported by contractors/consultants are summarized in Figure 2. The other benefits reported by two of the contractors/consultants included:

- Car allowance
- Client expense account
- Access to computers at their site

This list of other benefits for 2007 has dropped significantly from 2006, which included benefits such as meals, training, overtime pay, referrals, use of office space, and full payment of all invoices.

**Figure 2 Additional benefits**



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## Summary of Results for Part-time Employees

As there were only four valid responses from part-time employees, there was insufficient data for rigorous analysis. The summary results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Part-time employee summary

| Category                           | Result                             | Number reporting |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Average salary                     | \$36 per hour                      | 4                |
| Age                                | 30-39 years                        | 2                |
|                                    | 40-49 years                        | 2                |
| Technical communication experience | 6-10 years                         | 2                |
|                                    | 11-15 years                        | 1                |
|                                    | 16-19 years                        | 1                |
| Hours worked                       | 15-19 hours/week                   | 1                |
|                                    | 20-24 hours/week                   | 2                |
|                                    | 30-34 hours/week                   | 1                |
| Employment level                   | Mid-level, non-supervisory         | 3                |
|                                    | Senior-level, non-supervisory      | 1                |
| Benefits                           | Dental, disability, life insurance | 4                |
|                                    | Annual bonus                       | 3                |
|                                    | Professional development           | 2                |
|                                    | Professional society dues          | 3                |
|                                    | Supplemental health insurance      | 3                |
|                                    | Tuition reimbursement              | 2                |
|                                    | Pension                            | 1                |

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## Conclusion

Part II concludes the 2007 STC Alberta Salary Survey Report. Thank you to all the STC Alberta members who took the time to participate in this survey. The high response rate of the 2006 and 2007 surveys indicates that the membership is comfortable participating in a survey hosted by an external site. This high response rate also enables more detailed and meaningful calculations, such as percentiles and cross-tabulations.