



Introduction

STC Alberta conducted a member salary survey in May and June 2006. 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 2006 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. This report constitutes Part II and 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.

Results

Twenty-eight contractor/consultants and three part-time employees responded to the survey. The median and the mean (average) salary reported for contractors/consultants in Alberta in 2006 was \$60 per hour. This figure was somewhat higher than the median and mean Canadian rates reported in the 2003 STC International contractor/consultant survey (\$51 and \$45, respectively).

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%, 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. 2006 STC Alberta salary survey summary: Contractors/Consultants

	Base	%	Mean	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%
All responses	28		60	40	47	60	65	80
Education Level								
None specified/other	0	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Certificate	3	11%	76	63	64	65	83	93
Bachelor/Applied Bachelor	19	68%	52	40	45	50	60	65
Postgraduate	6	21%	78	55	66	72	86	108
Sex								
Female	21	75%	55	40	45	55	65	65
Male	7	25%	75	49	58	69	83	104
Technical Writing Experience (Years)								
<2	0	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-5	8	29%	47	36	44	46	50	58
6-10	6	21%	67	43	46	63	86	95
11-15	7	25%	58	46	55	60	65	65
16-19	5	18%	75	58	62	65	69	103
>20	2	7%	63	-	-	63	-	-
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. 57 percent of the respondents worked the same range of hours each week as they billed, while the remaining 43 percent worked more hours than they billed. A summary of the hours worked and billed is shown in Figure 1 Hours worked and hours billed on page 3.

Commentary

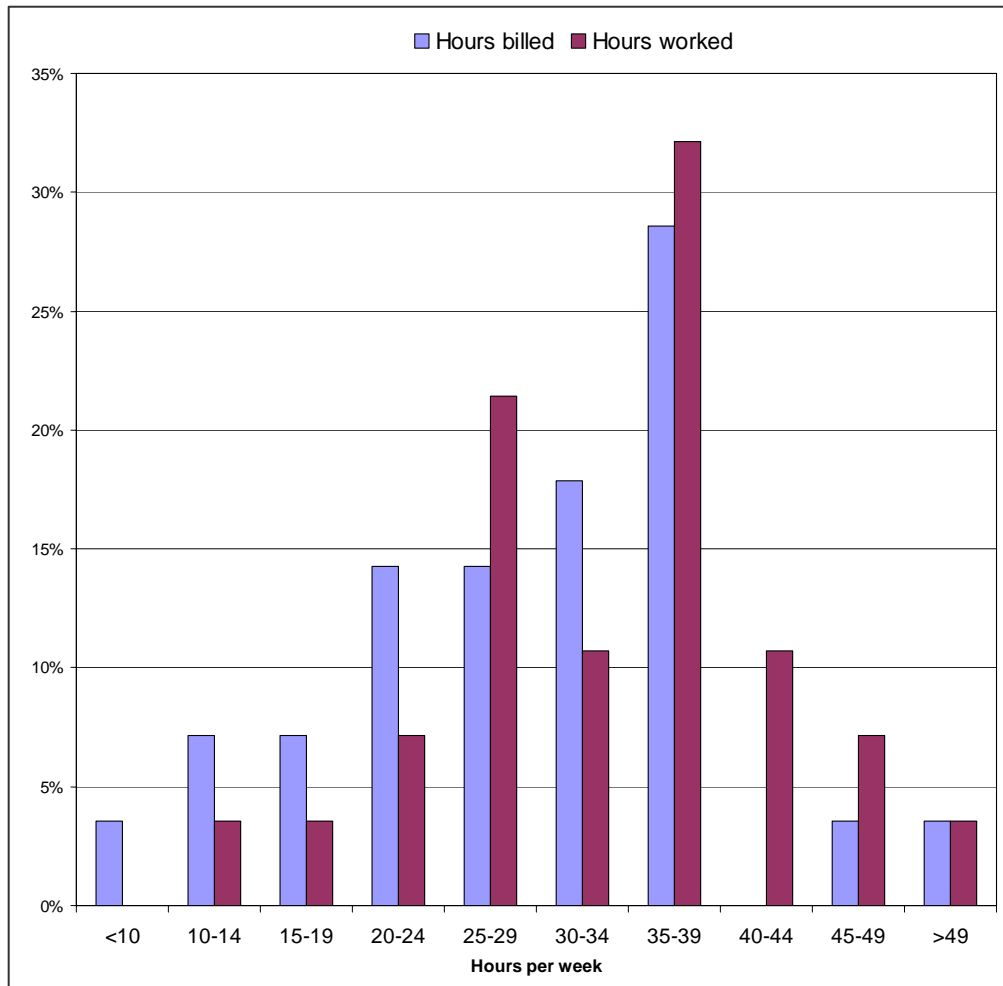
The gender gap between male and female employees reported in Part I of this survey was also evident for contractors/consultants. The mean salary for men (\$75) was considerably higher than that reported by women (\$55), even though both groups had roughly the same distribution of technical writing experience and age. However, five of the seven male respondents had postgraduate degrees, compared to only one of the twenty-one female respondents.

Participants with certificates reported higher hourly rates than those with bachelor degrees. However, certificate holders also reported a greater number of years of technical writing experience, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Post-secondary education and experience

Post-secondary education level	Percentage with more than six years' experience
Certificate	100%
Bachelor/Applied Bachelor	58%
Postgraduate	100%

Figure 1 Hours worked and hours billed

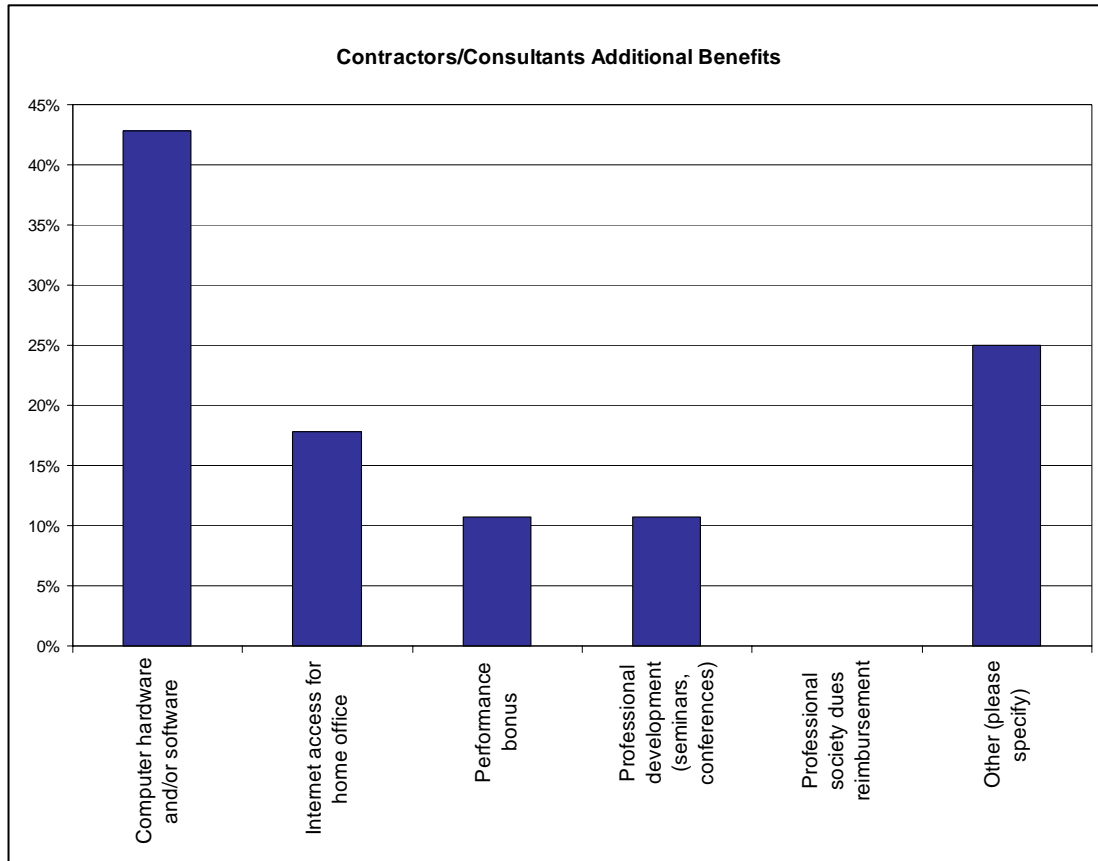


Additional benefits for contractors/consultants

The benefits reported by contractors/consultants are summarized in Figure 2 Additional benefits. The other benefits reported by 25 percent of the contractors/consultants included:

- meals
- use of office space
- travel expenses
- Six Sigma training
- occasional overtime pay
- referrals to other clients
- full payment of all invoices

Figure 2 Additional benefits



Summary of results for part-time employees

As there were only three responses from part-time employees, there was insufficient data for rigorous analysis. The summary results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Part-time employee summary

Category	Result	Number reporting
Average salary	\$34 per hour	3
Technical communication experience	6-10 years	1
	11-15 years	2
Hours worked	20-24 hours/week:	2
	30-34 hours/week:	1
Benefits	Dental, disability, life, and supplemental health insurance	3
	Annual bonus, pension, professional development, professional society dues, tuition reimbursement	2
	Stock options	1

Conclusion

Part II concludes the 2006 STC Alberta Salary Survey Report. The author would like to thank Ian Hawkins, former STC Alberta Executive member and technology adviser-at-large for recommending SurveyMonkey. It was not only economical, but greatly simplified the survey design, delivery, and analysis. In addition, the author is especially grateful to Ken Schatzke, STC Alberta Past President, for reviewing the analysis with his characteristic meticulous attention to detail and rapid turnaround time. Finally, *SuperScript* Editor Kate Christie generously expanded her duties to edit this report.

It is the author's hope that the Alberta survey will become an annual event. However, this survey, like all local STC offerings, is only made possible through the contributions of time and effort by member volunteers. If you are interested in seeing the results of the 2007 Alberta survey, and have an aptitude for statistics, we encourage you to consider volunteering as the 2007 survey coordinator.