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## Introduction

STC Alberta conducted an online salary survey of its members from March 6 through April 16, 2010. Details of the survey methodology and response rates can be perused in *STC Alberta Chapter 2010 Salary Survey Results: Part I*.

*Part I* also summarizes the income statistics for full-time employees. *Part II* reports the statistics for contractors/consultants and part-time employees.

STC International conducted the last international consultant/contractor salary survey in 2003. Canadian statistics were reported on a country-wide basis, rather than by provincial region, so the data is of little to no value. Note, as well, that STC International discontinued all aspects of the STC International Salary Survey in 2006, citing small sample size and distorted averages as the principal reasons for termination. Bear these statistical limitations in mind when reviewing the STC Alberta 2010 Salary Survey.

Note: STC Alberta has initiated a Canada-wide survey that will be implemented in the coming year.

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## Results

Twenty-seven contractor/consultants and five part-time employees responded to the survey. Of the contractor responses, one had to be excluded from final analysis due to inconclusive, incomplete, or conflicting responses, leaving 26 included responses. Of the part-time responses, one had to be excluded from final analysis due to inconclusive, incomplete, or conflicting responses, leaving five included responses.

The median compensation reported for contractor/consultant(s) in Alberta in 2010 was \$65.00 per hour, while the mean (average) was \$64.00 per hour. These figures are lower than the median and mean reported in the 2008 STC Alberta survey (\$70.00 and \$76.00, respectively), but still 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**

<b>Base</b>	The total number of responses in a category.
<b>Mean</b>	The average of the tabulated values.
<b>10%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 90%</b>	Percentile values. For example, in the 25% column, 25% of the responses were below this value; 75% were above this value.
<b>50%</b>	Also called the <i>median</i> because half the responses are above this value, and half are below this value.
<b>Insufficient Data</b>	Too few responses for statistical significance. Drawing conclusions would be speculative.

**Table 2. 2010 STC Alberta Salary Survey Summary: Contractors/Consultants**

		Base	%	Mean	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%
<b>All</b>		26	100	64	50	55	65	75	103
<b>Gender</b>									
	Male	3	12	56	41	46	55	65	71
	Female	23	88	65	56	60	65	75	80
<i>Total</i>		26	100						
<b>Education</b>									
	None specified/other	1	4	Insufficient Data					
	Certificate	5	19	55	28	38	60	75	78
	Bachelor	15	58	68	60	60	65	70	78
	Post-Graduate	5	19	63	47	65	65	65	77
<i>Total</i>		26	100						
<b>Technical Writing Experience (Years)</b>									
	<2	1	4	Insufficient Data					
	2-5	1	4	Insufficient Data					
	6-10	10	39	62	58	60	63	65	67
	11-15	4	15	54	32	47	58	65	74
	16-19	4	15	69	65	71	75	75	75
	>20	6	23	72	60	66	73	81	84
<i>Total</i>		26	100						

## Commentary

Influence of the current global economic situation on the Alberta market is noticeable in this year's survey data. The median hourly rate charged is \$65.00, down from 2008 for both genders –\$70 per hour. However, most benefits are up. Thirty-one percent of consultants/contractors are working longer hours, but billing for fewer of those hours.

- The median hourly rate for both genders in 2010 was \$65, down for both from 2008 (see *Table 2* above). However, the mean rate charged by males (\$56), was 14% lower than the average rate charged by females (\$65).

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## Education

Members were requested to report the highest level of education achieved. Some respondents complied and reported only one educational credential - the highest – but, many respondents reported all educational credentials earned (See *Table 2, Education* section). This discrepancy introduced an element of incompleteness and conflict to the data, as discussed in more detail in *Part I*. The education results must therefore be viewed with constraint, bearing in mind that particulars not reported may be affecting reported values.

Five respondents reported certificates/diplomas, fifteen reported bachelor’s degrees, and five reported post-graduate degrees. A relationship between compensation and educational credential was not shown for full-time employees (see *Part I*), or for consultants/contractors. Respondents with post-graduate degrees earned similar rates to respondents with bachelor’s degrees.

The data was analyzed to determine the correlation, if any, between experience in technical communication and educational credential earned (see *Table 3* below). The majority of respondents were experienced (only one reported <2 years experience), but years of experience rose with educational credential. Slightly less than half of the respondents (12) had >10 years of experience specific to technical communication (11 female, one male). Six members reported >20 years of experience: one male and five females. Four respondents reported 11-15 years of experience: all female. Four respondents reported 16 – 19 years of experience (three female, one male).

**Table 3. Post-secondary education and experience**

Post-secondary education level	% with more than >6 years experience in technical Communication
Certificate	100%
Bachelor/Applied Bachelor	93%
Post-graduate	80%

The contractors/consultants with <5 years experience were female. This lack of experience may have lowered the average hourly rate for females because less experience generally equates to lower rates; however, this group accounts for less than 9% of the female responses. The average billing rate for this group – regardless of gender - was \$35. It may be difficult for technical communicators with <5 years of experience to sell themselves as consultants, in the context of experts.

Of the 26 valid responses obtained in the survey, four contractors/consultants earned their income in Edmonton, and the remainder earned their income in Calgary. Given the four responses for Edmonton do not produce a statistically significant sample size, meaningful comparisons between the two cities could not be drawn.

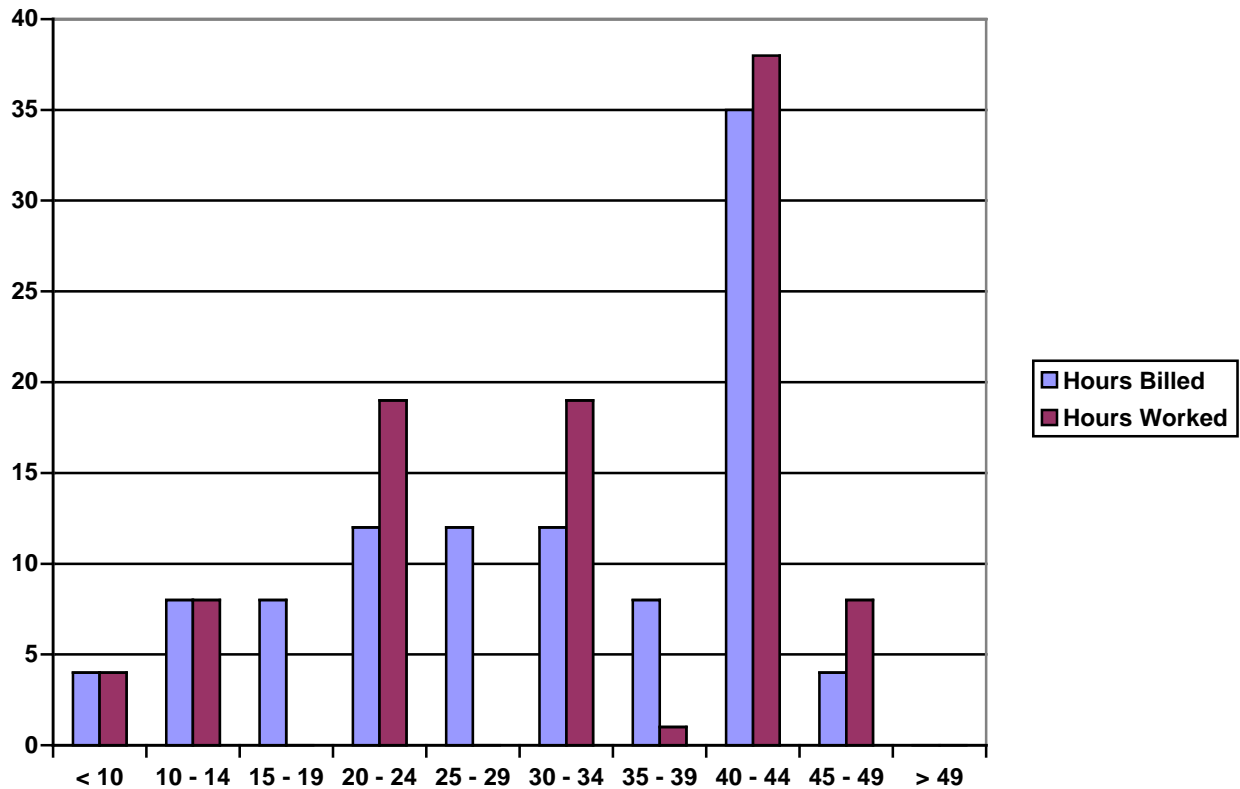
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## Hours Billed

The chart in *Figure 1* below illustrates that not all consultants/contractors are billing their client(s) for all hours worked. Fewer consultant/contractors billed according to the range of hours worked. For example,

two respondents reported working 45 to 49 hours per week, but only one of those respondents reported billing for 45 to 49 hours per week. The same phenomenon is noted in all other categories of hours worked. Zero respondents reported working >49 hours per week.

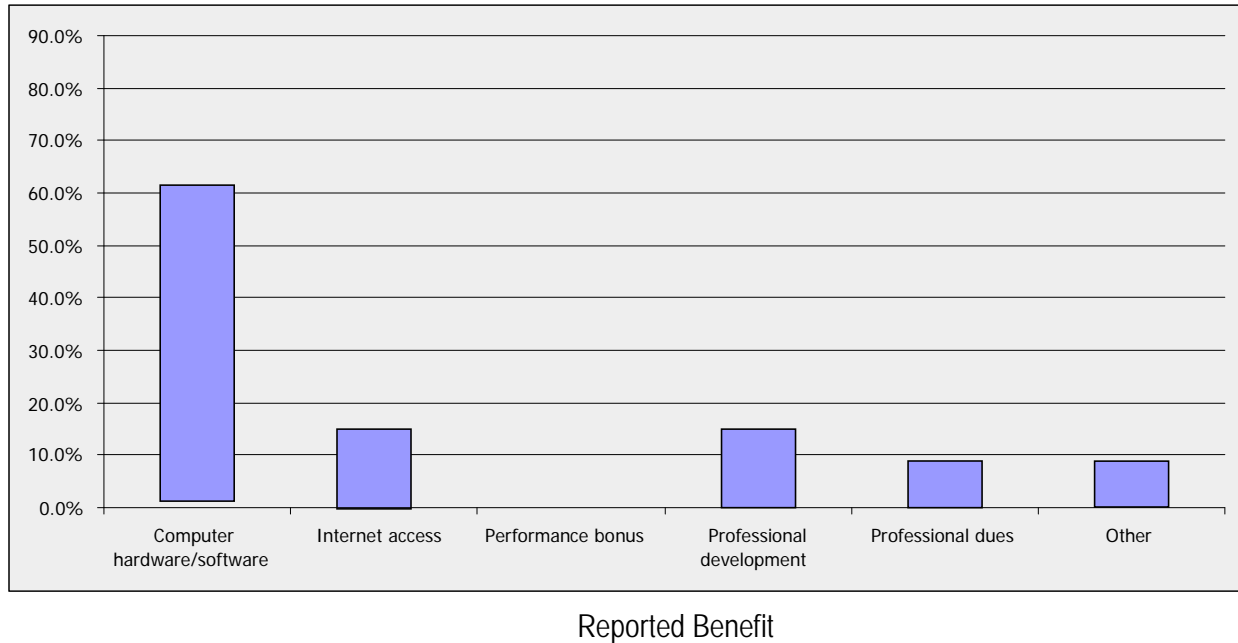
Figure 1 Hours worked versus hours billed



## Benefits

The benefits reported by contractors/consultants in 2010 are summarized below in *Figure 2*. The list of benefits and the number of consultants/contractors receiving benefits has dropped significantly from other years. Four contractors/consultants reported professional development as a benefit this year, none reported a performance bonus, but 62% received the computer hardware or software required to do their work. No one reported meals, overtime pay, office space, or full payment of invoices. This may be a reflection of the economic downturn and the effect of those changes on Alberta's market.

**Figure 2 Percentage of Consultants Reporting Additional Benefits**



### Summary of Results for Part-time Employees

Given the low response rate of five valid responses from part-time employees, the data is insufficient for rigorous analysis. A summary of the results is shown in *Table 3*. Note that the average salary per hour is roughly the same at that reported in 2008 (\$34.00).

**Table 3 Part-time employee summary**

Category	Result	Number reporting
Average salary	\$33.79 per hour	5
Technical communication experience	2-5 years	0
	6-10 years	2
	11-15 years	0
	16-19 years	1
	20 or more	2
Hours worked per week	< 10	1
	15-19	2
	30-34	2
Employment level	Mid-level, supervisory	1
	Senior-level, non-supervisory	3
	Other	1
Benefits	Annual bonus	2
	Dental	5
	Disability insurance	4
	Life insurance	3

	Professional development	2
	Professional society dues	2
	Stock options	2
	Supplemental health insurance	4
	Tuition reimbursement	0
	Pension	0

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## Conclusion

Part II concludes the report *STC Alberta Chapter 2010 Salary Survey Results*. Thank you to all the STC Alberta and STC only members who took the time to participate in this survey. The high response rate for the 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2010 surveys indicates an ongoing and increasing interest in participating in the survey.