



Society for Technical Communication (STC)

France Chapter

Salary Survey 2001: Summary

There were 39 respondents to the survey this year. When the questionnaires were mailed out in February 2001, the Chapter had 138 members, which is a response rate of 28% (the same response rate as for the last survey in 1999). This isn't bad for a postal survey. Ninety per cent of respondents were from France, where Paris was the most important centre (82% of respondents work there). Since the last survey in 1999 there has been a decrease in the number of respondents from outside of France. This isn't surprising as there are now more European chapters than before so the geographical spread of the Chapter has decreased.

Most of respondents are employed (76%). There has been, however, a large drop in the number of respondents who are independent since 1999. Telecommuting and part-time work remain unusual.

The most common job title is Technical Writer or Author (or the French equivalent). Nearly all of respondents have university degrees, and the trend is for more to have Masters and Doctorates. Most degrees are in language subjects. However, there has been a large increase in the number of respondents with degrees and diplomas in technical communication.

The most frequent main activities are writing/editing and documentation management. Writing online documentation has increased in importance. A quarter of respondents have it as a main activity now, a big increase since 1999. Also more of us are involved with localisation and translation as our markets go more international.

Most respondents occupy midlevel positions. Since the last survey there's been a large increase in the number of respondents in management positions (39% of respondents). One possible reason for this is the large increase in number of documentation groups of between three and five people. There were fewer respondents at entry level than in other years (15% compared to 26% last time). However, there has been a large increase in the number of respondents with several years experience (36% respondents have now more than 10 years experience compared to 16% in 1999). The average age of respondents has increased to 42 years.

There continues to be a strong demand for technical communicators. Salaries are increasing much faster than the cost of living index. The average salary is 335,000 FF/year, which is a 25% increase since 1999. This might partly be explained by the large increase in the number experienced respondents. For the first time we have people earning above 460,000 FF/year. The rates for independents have also increased significantly since the last survey. The average is now 365 FF/hour.

There are two main sectors of employment: computing/software and telecommunications: 75% of respondents work in one of these sectors. Fewer respondents now work in the financial sector compared to other years.

For the first time we asked about benefits respondents received from employers. The most common benefit was training. However, as nearly 60% of respondents received no training in the last year it's not clear what benefit this benefit actually is. Half of respondents had their STC membership paid for by their employers.

Also for the first time we asked about the languages people use. Unsurprisingly the Chapter is anglophone, but a quarter of respondents are francophone. All of us are fluent in a second language and use it regularly as part of our job.

Overall, our profession continues to be dynamic and to offer many opportunities.

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1 Employment

Since the last survey there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents who are employed full-time. It's now three quarters, up from two thirds in 1999. The number of independents has halved since 1999. Part-time work remains unusual. Even rarer is unemployment!

There has been an increase in the number of respondents telecommuting. In a separate question on the subject, three respondents now do it, one of whom was independent.

	2001	1999	1996	1992
Employed full-time	30 (77%)	34 (68%)	33 (72%)	18 (72%)
Independent	5 (13%)	13 (26%)	12 (26%)*	7 (28%)
Employed part-time	2 (5%)	2 (4%)	-	-
Telecommuter	(Separate question)	1 (2%)		
Unemployed	1 (3%)	-	1 (2%)	-
Student	1 (3%)			
	n=39	n=50	n=46	n=25

* the 3 people who were part-time/independent and full-time independent in 1996 have been reclassified as independent here.

* grey squares: question not asked.

2 Education level

The question asked respondents for their highest education level. Nearly all respondents have degrees from higher education colleges, most having either a BA/BSc (or equivalent) or a Masters (or equivalent). We are becoming more educated too over time: the proportion of respondents with Masters or Doctorates has been increasing recently.

Nearly a third of degrees are in fields related to languages. More respondents now have degrees in Technical Communication.

	2001	1999	1996	1992
High school/lycée	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	-
Deug	3 (8%)	4 (8%)	4 (9%)	1 (2%)
BS/BA/license	11 (28%)	20 (40%)	23 (50%)	6 (24%)
Master's/maitrise/DEA/DESS	20 (50%)	20 (40%)	16 (35%)	10 (40%)
Doctorate	4 (10%)	3 (6%)	5 (12%)	1 (4%)
Level not stated	1 (2%)	-	1 (2%)	-
	n=39*	n=50	n=46	n=25**

* One person had two Master degrees.

** Unfortunately we no longer have the original data to check.

	2001	1999
Languages	13 (33%)	16 (30%)
Humanities	6 (15%)	13 (24%)
Science/engineering/computing	8 (21%)	13 (24%)
Business	3 (8%)	8 (15%)
Technical Communication	5 (13%)	3 (6%)
Not stated	4 (10%)	-
	n=39	n=50

3 Diploma in technical communication

This is the second year that the question has been asked. In the last two years there has been a significant increase in the number of respondents with diplomas in technical communication. Most have now received training in the field.

	2001	1999
Yes	23 (60%)	13 (26%)
No	15 (37%)	37 (74%)
	n=38	n=50

4 Sex of respondents

There are more women respondents than men. The 60:40 ratio of women to men has remained constant for several years.

	2001	1999	1996	1992
Male	16 (41%)	18 (37%)	18 (41%)	10 (32%)
Female	23 (59%)	31 (63%)	26 (59%)	17 (68%)
	(n=39)	(n=49)	(n=44)	(n=25)

5 Age of respondents

The average age of respondents has increased during the last two years from 37 to 42 years. There has been a significant increase in the number above 50 years of age, up from 8% to 36% of respondents. The age pattern suggests that many come to technical communication as a second career having first gained experience in another field.

As many of the respondents have university degrees, such as Masters and Doctorates, we would not expect a large number of respondents younger than 30 years (13%).

Age (years)	2001	1999	1996	1992
< 30	5 (13%)	11 (22%)	3 (6%)	3 (12%)
30-34	4 (11%)	12 (24%)	9 (20%)	8 (32%)
35-39	6 (16%)	7 (16%)	13 (28%)	3 (12%)
40-44	5 (13%)	11 (20%)	9 (20%)	7 (28%)
45-49	4 (11%)	5 (10%)	4 (9%)	4 (16%)
50-54	9 (20%)	4 (8%)*	8 (17%)*	-*
>55	6 (16%)			
Mean age	42	37	39	37
	(n=39)	(n=50)	(n=46)	(n=25)

* includes all over 50 years

6 Training in the last 12 months

This is the first time we've asked this question. Only a third of respondents have received training in the past year (although training is the most frequent benefit. See the Benefits section below). Training is most commonly a week or less during the year. Nobody received training by correspondence in the last year. At least one of the 20-week training responses was the AUP technical communication course in Paris.

No	25	64%
Yes	14	36%

If Yes, length of training:

1 day	-
2 days	1
3 days	3
4 days	2
5 days	-
1 week	1
2 weeks	1
3 weeks	2
20 weeks	2
Not stated	2
	(n=14)

7 Benefits

This is the first time we've asked this question. The most frequent benefit is training. However, two thirds of respondents didn't receive any in the past year (see above) so this benefit is not often used/available. Nearly half of respondents have their STC membership paid for by their employer.

		%
Training	25	64
STC membership	18	46
Private health care	18	46
Conferences	17	43
Flexible hours	17	43
Pension scheme	17	43
Profit sharing	16	41
Stock options	13	33
Teleworking possible	12	31
Mobile phone	5	13
Health club/gym	5	13
Other: Bonuses	2	5
Company car	-	-

n = 39

More than one answer is possible

8 Job title

There was a wide range of job titles in two languages. As in previous surveys, the most frequent job title was technical writer or author: nearly half of respondents have this job title. There were no translators in this year's survey unlike previous years.

Many respondents are involved in management: 21% of them have "manager" in their job title. Although nearly two thirds of respondents have one of the four most common job titles, most job titles are unique. This was the same in previous years.

Technical writer or technical author	14	(36%)
Senior technical writer	2	(5%)
Rédacteur technique	1	(2%)
Documentation manager, technical documentation manager or technical communication manager	8	(21%)
Documentation consultant	1	
Technical writer/trainer	1	
Document project manager	1	
Documentation project manager	1	
Co-ordinator international article development	1	
Manager of corporate communications	1	
Chef de projet	1	
Project manager/technical writer	1	
Documentation development manager	1	
Project manager, Marketing communication	1	
Information developer	1	
Not stated	3	

9 Main and secondary activities

As in earlier surveys, most of us write/edit and manage projects/documentation as our main activities. Writing online documentation is the most common secondary activity followed by project management. Not many people are involved with web, intranet or multimedia activities. However, online documentation is becoming increasingly important. There's been a large increase in the number of respondents who now do it as a main activity.

An increasing number of people are working with documentation produced in more than one language as can be seen in the increase in respondents dealing with translation and localisation. However, translation and localisation are mainly secondary activities.

There's been a big drop in the number of people giving writing computer documentation as a primary activity since the last survey.

	Primary		Secondary	
Writer/editor	27	(69%)	4	(10%)
Project management	10	(26%)	8	(21%)
Computer documentation	10	(26%)	7	(18%)
Online documentation	9	(23%)	11	(28%)
Publications management	9	(23%)	7	(18%)
Training	3	(8%)	1	(2%)
Localisation	3	(8%)	6	(15%)
Web/intranet	2	(5%)	4	(10%)
Translation	1	(2%)	8	(20%)
Visual communication	1	(2%)	2	(5%)
Public relations	1	(2%)	2	(5%)
Multimedia	1	(2%)	1	(2%)
Other: Web marketing	1	(2%)	0	
Other: Business development	1	(2%)	0	
Other: Software development	1	(2%)	0	
Other: Interface design	1	(2%)	0	
Other: Market research	0		1	(2%)
Advertising agency	0		0	

n=39

More than one answer is possible.

	% of respondents					
	2001		1999		1996	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Writer/editor	69	10	50	12	37	24
Project management	26	21				
Computer documentation	26	18	54	10	45	13
Online documentation	23	28	10	42	6	35
Publications management	23	18	16	4	24	11
Training	8	2	2	6	11	-
Web/intranet design	5	10	2	14	1	11
Localisation	8	16				
Translation	2	18	2	2	4	6
Visual communication	2	5	2	8	-	9
Public relations	2	5	2	0	-	4
Multimedia	2	2	0	0	4	2
Other: Web marketing	2	0				
Other: Business development	2	0				
Other: Software development	2	0	2	0		
Other: Interface design	2	0	2	0		
Other: Market research	0	2	4	0	-	2
Other: Telecomms documentation					2	-
Other: Public speaking					1	-
Other: Marketing communication					1	-
Other: Document database management						
Other: Technical support			2	0		
	n=39		n=50		n=46	

(more than one answer is possible)

10 Employment level in company

Most of us occupy midlevel positions. There's been a large increase in the number of respondents who are now managers (which is also seen in the job titles). As the option "Consultant" was not included this year, perhaps this accounts for some of the rise in the number in midlevel management. However, there has been a decrease in the number of respondents at entry level, perhaps suggesting that fewer have been recruited.

	2001	1999	1996	1992
Entry level	3 (8%)	6 (12%)	5 (11%)	-
Midlevel non-management	16 (41%)	22 (44%)	21 (46%)	8 (40%)
Midlevel management	15 (39%)	11 (22%)	12 (26%)	8 (40%)
Upper management	3 (8%)	-	4 (11%)	4 (20%)
Upper non-management	2 (5%)	1 (2%)		
Consultant		10 (20%)		
	n=39	n=50	n=46	n=25

11 Years of experience in the profession

We are maturing as a profession. In the last couple of years there has been a significant increase in the number of respondents who have more than 8 years experience in the profession and a corresponding reduction in the number of respondents entering it. This change in experience could also possibly be due to an influx of experienced communicators to the Chapter in the last couple of years (although Chapter membership has fallen).

Number of years experience	2001	1999	1996	1992
Less than 2	6 (15%)	13 (26%)	7 (15%)	2 (9%)
2 to 5	8 (20%)	18 (36%)	6 (14%)	6 (27%)
5 to 8	7 (18%)	8 (16%)	6 (14%)	6 (27%)
8 to 10	4 (11%)	3 (6%)	7 (16%)	2 (9%)
More than 10	14 (36%)	8 (16%)	6 (14%)	2 (9%)
	n=39	n=50	n=46	n=25

12 Number of communication staff at place of work

As with previous surveys, most of us work in small groups of five people or less. The trend seems to be that the small groups are expanding and the large groups contracting.

	2001	1999	1996	1992
Less than 3 people	5 (14%)	11 (23%)	9 (24%)	4 (25%)
3 to 5	15 (42%)	9 (19%)	10 (26%)	1 (6%)
6 to 10	2 (5%)	3 (6%)	9 (24%)	1 (6%)
11 to 25	13 (36%)	23 (49%)	9 (24%)	2 (13%)
More than 25	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	1 (3%)	-
	n=36	n=47	n=38	n=16

13 Gross annual salary of respondent

There has been a significant increase in the average salary earned by respondents in the last two years. Salaries have increased by 25%! This increase is higher than the cost of living index increase for this period, which was around 5%. The average salary is now 334,500 FF/year or 27,870 FF/month (12 month year and not 13). For the first time we have people earning above 460,000 FF/year.

There continues to be a strong demand for technical communicators, which is pushing the salaries up. The higher salaries are probably also a reflection that there are more people in this survey who have several years experience than in earlier surveys. The internet boom may also have played a part.

When we look at the respondents' salaries by employment level we see that the largest increase in salaries has been for entry level respondents: 27% since 1999 (however, the sample is only three people). Although fewer entry level people have been employed proportionally in the last couple of years, they are getting good salaries. The salary increase for mid-level positions averages 10% since 1999. In 1999 there was only one respondent in upper management position so the salary increase since should be treated carefully (but whoever it was, has either moved on or received a significant pay rise).

Annual gross salary (KFF/yr)	2001	1999	1996	1992
Up to 167	-	-	2 (18%)	1 (6%)
168-215	4 (13%)	7 (19%)	13 (37%)	2 (11%)
216-263	7 (24%)	19 (51%)	12 (25%)	11 (61%)
264-309	4 (13%)	8 (21%)	5 (12%)	2 (11%)
310-450	13 (43%)	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	2 (11%)
Greater than 460	2 (7%)	-	-	-
Average	335	250	225	?
	n=30	n=37	n=36	n=18

Breakdown of respondents' salaries by employment level:

Annual gross salary (KFF/yr)	Entry level	Midlevel non-management	Midlevel management	Upper level
Up to 167	-	-	-	-
168-215	-	2	2	-
216-263	3	3	1	-
264-309	-	4	-	-
310-450	-	3	9	2
Greater than 460	-	-	-	1
n=30				

Average gross salary by employment level (KFF/year) since 1992:

	Average annual gross salary			
	2001	1999	1996	1992
Entry level	249	196	160	-
Midlevel non-management	273	245	218	230
Midlevel management	342	309	273	263
Upper non-management/management	393	240	281	-
Specialist		290		
	n=30	n=37	n=36	n=18

Grey squares: question not asked

14 Independent rates

The hourly rate has increased since the last survey and is now on average 365 FF/hour, which is an 18% increase in two years (but based on a smaller sample than other years). The rate of increase continues to progress faster than inflation.

Hourly rate (FF/hr) since 1996

	2001	1999	1996
< 200	-	-	1
200-249	-	1	1
250-299	1	4	4
300-349	2	3	4
350-399	2	1	-
>400	1	1	-
Not stated	-	3	-
	n=6	n=13*	n=10**

* Respondent whose rate varied between 250-360 FF/hr was averaged as 300 FF/hr

** Respondent who earned 210 FF/page was not included

15 Gross annual salaries known by respondent

There has been a large increase in the average salary known by respondents, which is now 298,000 FF/year or 25,000 FF/month (12 month and not 13), which is a 35% increase since 1999 and 52% increase since 1992.

As with earlier surveys, this average is less than that of the respondent's average salary. This is probably because although many respondents may know the salaries of colleagues at a lower level, fewer know the salaries of those at the same or higher level. By asking this question we can throw the net over a wider population and get some idea of what's happening on the salary front. This average figure should, however, be treated carefully.

Annual gross salary (KFF/yr)	2001	1999	1996	1992
<168	-	2 (3%)	16 (18%)	20 (34%)
168-215	10 (12%)	48 (61%)	34 (37%)	11 (19%)
216-263	21 (24%)	16 (20%)	23 (25%)	20 (34%)
264-309	20 (23%)	6 (7%)	11 (12%)	4 (7%)
310-450	30 (35%)	7 (9%)	7 (8%)	2 (3%)
>450	5 (6%)			
Average	298	220	210	196
	n=86	n=79	n=91	n=58

16 Region in France and country

We had responses from four countries. Unsurprisingly most respondents were from France (90%). The questionnaire this year was only sent to France Chapter members unlike in 1999 where it had been sent to other European chapters. As in 1999 the response rate across Europe was too low to be able to compare the results between countries. There were several respondents from outside France in 1996 but the France Chapter then was the only European STC chapter and so had a much wider geographically spread.

As in earlier surveys, most respondents work in Paris and its suburbs. Since the 1996 survey, opportunities for technical communicators in France have been consolidating around the Paris region.

Country of respondent	2001	1999	1996	1992
France	35 (90%)	40 (80%)	34 (74%)	11 (92%)
UK	-	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	-
Luxembourg	-	2 (4%)	-	-
Belgium	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	5 (11%)	-
The Netherlands	-	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	-
Germany	2 (5%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	-
Italy	-	1 (2%)	-	-
Austria	1 (3%)	-	1 (2%)	-
Switzerland	-	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (8%)
	n=39	n=50	n=46	n=12

French postal code	2001	1999	1996
Paris and suburbs (75, 78, 92, 93, 94)	31 (89%)	34 (85%)	20 (59%)
91	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	-
82	-	-	2 (6%)
77	-	-	2 (6%)
76	-	-	3 (11%)
38	1 (3%)	-	1 (3%)
31	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)
22	-	1 (2%)	5 (11%)
13	1 (3%)	-	-
67	-	1 (2%)	-
	n=35	n=40	n=34

19 Languages used at work

For the first time we asked respondents about the languages they use as part of their work. Most respondents in the Chapter are anglophone but a quarter of them have French as their mother tongue. Everybody was fluent in a second language. Unsurprisingly French is the most frequent second language. Several people are fluent in a few languages. We use our second language regularly as part of our work.

Mother tongue: (more than one answer possible) (n=39)

French	10	26%
English	28	72%
Spanish	1	3%
Italian	1	3%

Second tongue: (more than one answer possible) (n=39)

English	10	25%
French	27	69%
German	5	13%
Spanish	2	5%

Level of compency in second tongue:

Excellent	29	74%
Good	10	26%
Poor	-	

Use second tongue at work:

Regularly	35	90%
Occasionally	1	2%
Never	3	8%

20 Telecommuting

Only three people telecommute but this is an increase on 1999 when there was only a sole telecommuter.