



UPA 2005 Member and Salary Survey

ABOUT THIS REPORT

During 2005 the Usability Professionals' Association surveyed members of the user experience field to learn:

- Who our respondents are, where they work and what they do
- How much they are paid
- Their satisfaction with UPA

We received a total of 1,329 responses. Of these, 736 were UPA members; 110 respondents were affiliated with a UPA chapter but not the international organization, and 483 respondents were not affiliated with UPA or a UPA chapter.

The respondents were equally split between males and females (647 respondents were male and 659 female; 23 did not report their gender).

Salaries for all respondents outside the US were converted to US dollars. Respondents entered salary information in their local currency, and all non-US salaries were converted to US currency at the exchange rates prevailing on September 2, 2005.

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promoting usability concepts and techniques worldwide



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THE RESPONDENTS

Country

This group of respondents represented 24 countries. The majority of respondents were from the United States (891), the United Kingdom (113), Canada (83), and Israel (49). The remainder hailed from France (24), Germany (23), New Zealand (21), Australia (19), Switzerland (17), India (11), and several other countries in the European Union, Asia, and South America.

US Region

The respondents from the US were mostly from the Northeast (323) and the Midwest (252). Approximately 18% of the US respondents (163 total) were from the West; the rest were from the Southeast (90 respondents) and the Southwest (65 respondents).

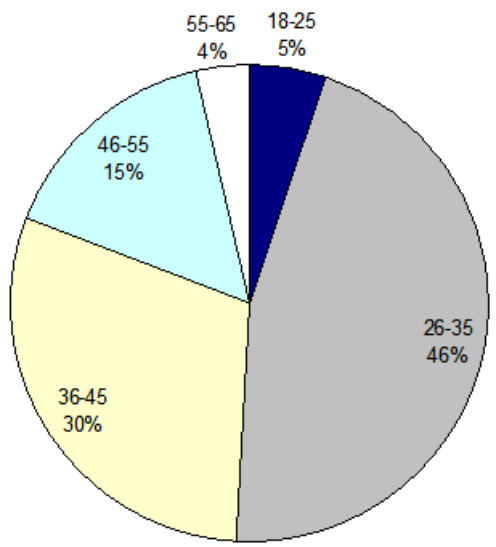
Count and Percent by US Region		
US Region	Count	Percent
Northeast	323	36%
Southeast	90	10%
Midwest	252	28%
Southwest	65	7%
West	163	18%

Count by Country	
Country	Count
USA	891
UK	113
Canada	83
Israel	49
(blank)	34
France	24
Germany	23
New Zealand	21
Australia	19
Switzerland	17
India	11
Italy	10
Brazil	4
Spain	5
Belgium	2
Denmark	4
Finland	4
Hong Kong	4
Netherlands	4
Argentina	2
Japan	1
Luxembourg	1
Singapore	1
South Korea	1
Sweden	1

Age

Almost half (46%) of respondents reported their age as between 26 and 35; 30% were between 36 and 45. About 15% reported their age as between 46 and 55. About 5% were between 18 and 25, and less than 4% were between 55 and 65.

Age Distribution - All Respondents

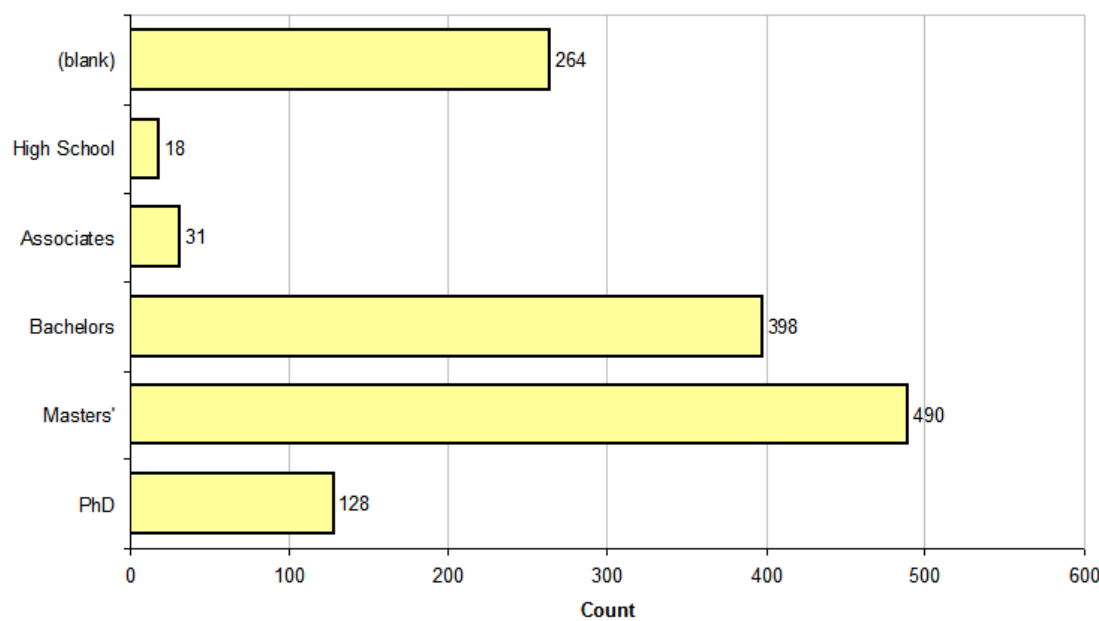


Highest Degree Held

Roughly 13% of the respondents hold a PhD. Nearly 45% of the total have earned a Masters degree.

Thirty-six percent hold a Bachelors degree, and 5% have earned an Associates or high school education.

Highest Degree Held - All Respondents



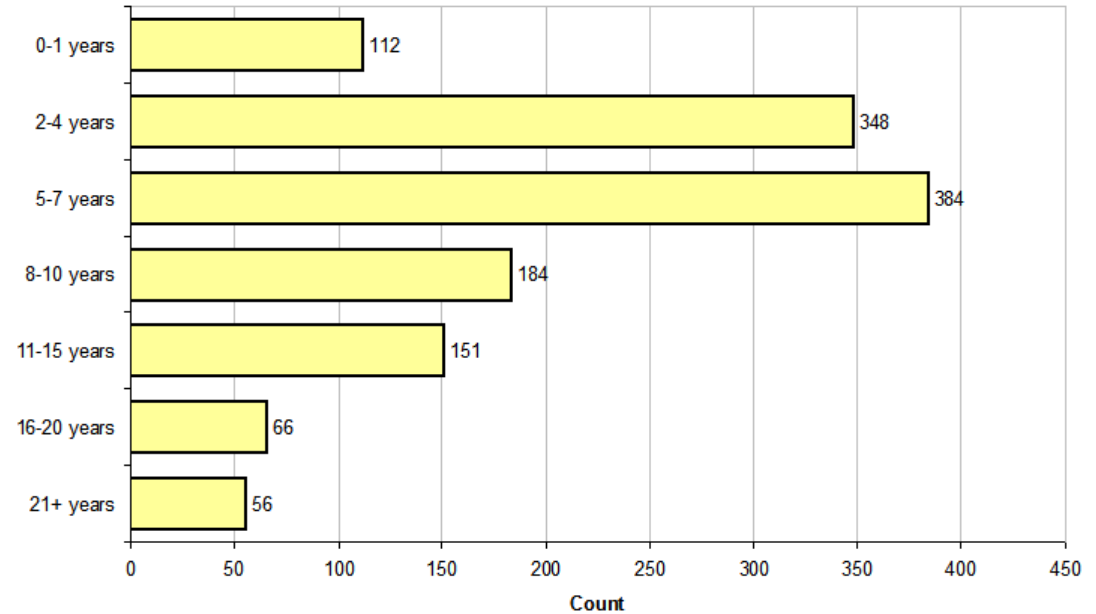


Experience

Most respondents – about 65% - reported between 0 and 7 years experience in the field.

Nearly 25% reported 8 to 15 years in the field, and 9% have worked in the field for 16 or more years.

Years of Experience - All Respondents



Current position

Most of the respondents (1116, or 86%) indicated that they currently hold full-time permanent jobs. A bit more than 10% are contractors or independent consultants. The remainder were either employed part-time, unemployed, or students.

The 1116 respondents who reported full-time employment worked for a variety of organizations. Many reported working for software corporations (286 respondents) or other types of corporations (426). A large group of respondents (147 total) worked for a usability consulting firm. Ninety-one respondents worked at a full-service advertising or design firm. The rest of the full-time employees worked for non-profit, government/military, or educational institutions.

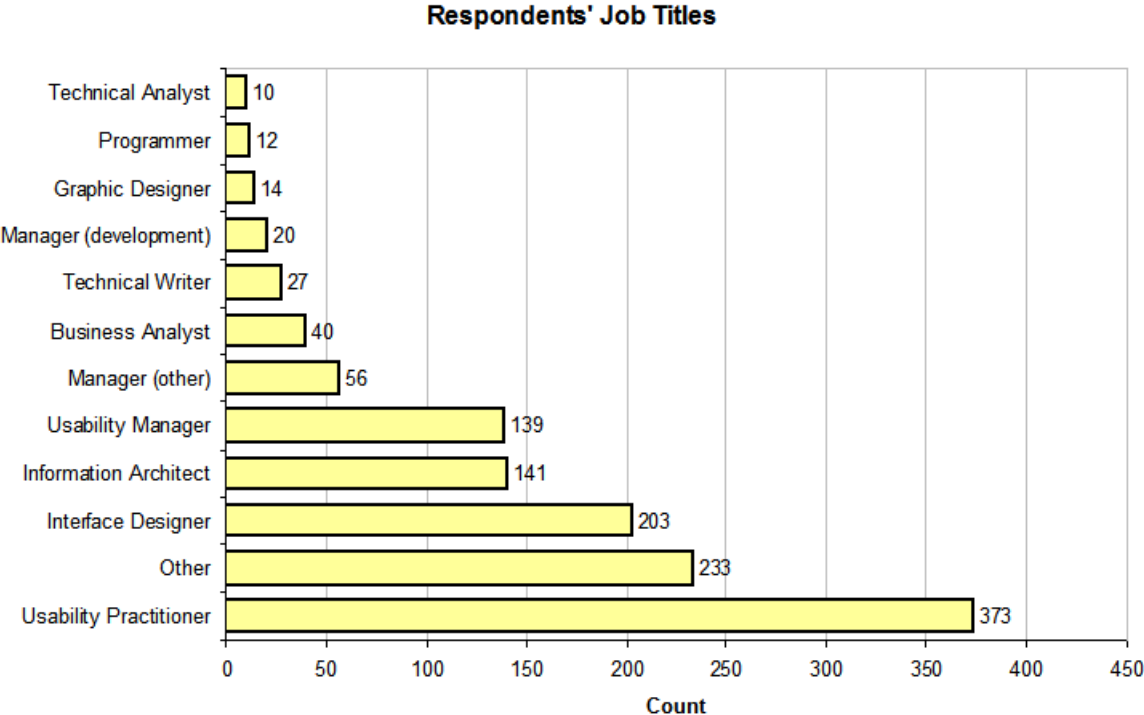
Organization Type – All Full-Time Employees

Employment Types	Count
Advertising or design firm	91
Corporation – software	286
Corporation – other	426
Education (university or college)	50
Government/military	28
Non-profit organization	25
Usability firm (1-4 employees)	25
Usability firm (5-10 employees)	30
Usability firm (10+ employees)	92
Other	44

Job Title

The respondents reported a variety of job titles. Most prevalent were Usability Practitioners (373), Interface Designers (203), Information Architects (141), and Usability Managers (139).

A small number of programmers, technical writers, and people from other related disciplines responded to this survey as well.



Employment Level

A small number of respondents (79) indicated that they were in an entry-level position. Approximately 57%, or 721 respondents, are currently in a mid- or senior-level contributor position. Almost one-third of the respondents (31%, or 393) indicated that they were in a supervisory or executive position.

Employment Level – All Respondents		
Employment Level	Count	Percent
Entry	79	6%
Mid-level, non-supervisory	380	30%
Senior level, non-supervisory	341	27%
Mid-level, supervisory	174	14%
Senior level, supervisory	129	10%
Executive	90	7%
Not applicable to me	81	6%

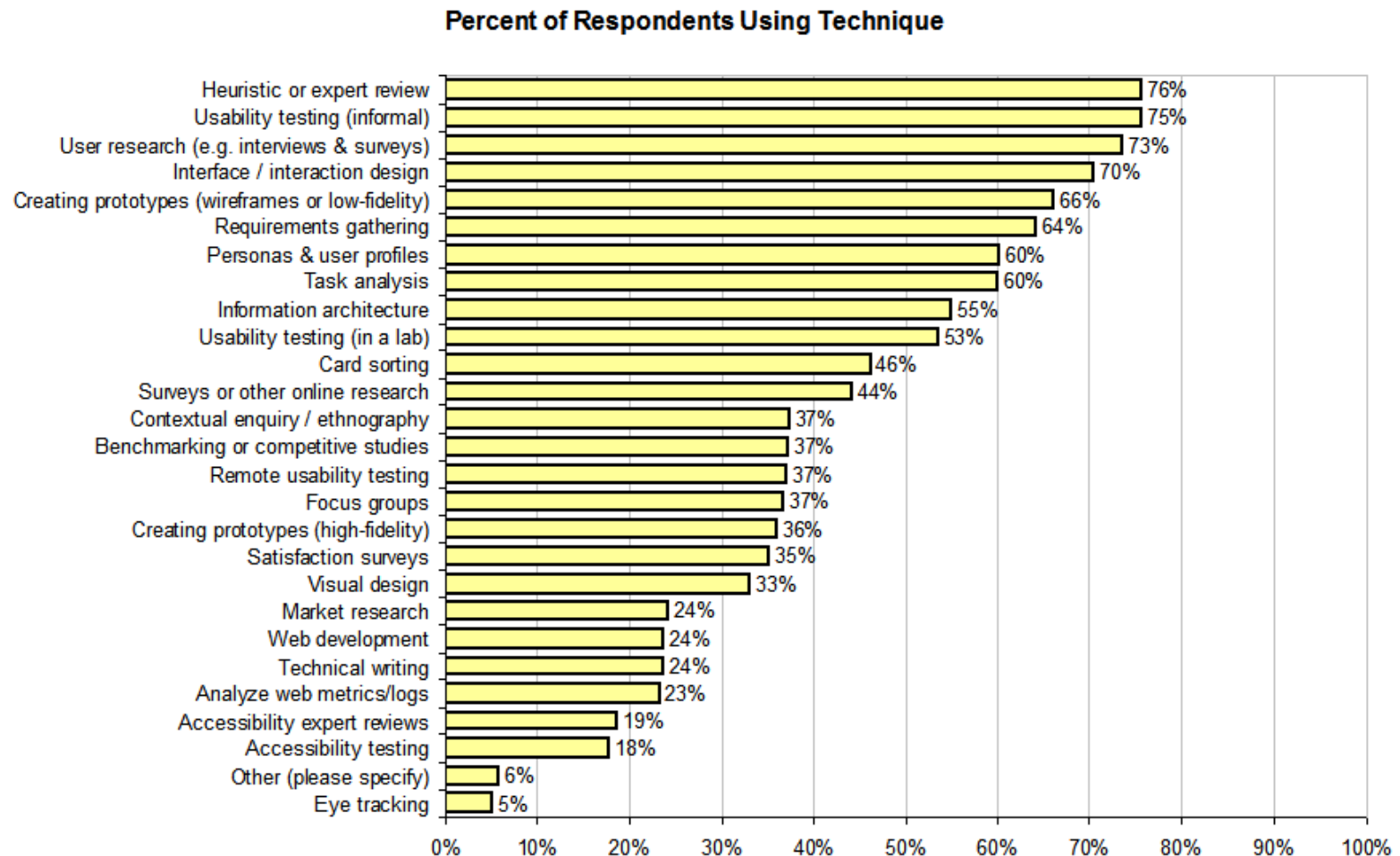


Techniques

Respondents also indicated which techniques they used in the course of their job tasks. The techniques used most often included informal usability testing (used by over 75% of respondents), heuristic / expert review (also over 75%), user research such as interviews and surveys (73%), and interface / interaction design (70%).

Also widely used were low-fidelity prototyping or wireframing (66%), requirements gathering (64%), personae and user profile creation (60%), and task analysis (60%).

The least prevalent techniques were eye tracking, accessibility review and testing, and web metrics analysis.



SALARY

Overall

Overall, the average salary for all respondents was \$78,466 (the median salary was \$75,000). By gender, males earned about \$8,500 more per year on average, with males earning \$82,882 and females earning \$74,316. (Across all respondents, the median salaries were \$80,000 for males and \$72,000 for females.)

Average and Median Salary – All Respondents and By Gender			
	All	Male	Female
Average	\$78,445.05	\$82,882.70	\$74,316.36
Median	\$75,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$72,000.00
n	1329	647	659

By Years in Field

As could be expected, the salary data showed a linear pattern when broken out by length of time working in the user experience field. The respondents were asked to indicate how long they had been working in the field. The response options were 0-1 years, 2-4 years, 5-7 years, 8-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21+ years. A total of 1,052 respondents answered this item.

Average and Median Salary By Years Working In The Field							
	0-1 Yrs	2-4 Yrs	5-7 Yrs	8-10 Yrs	11-15 Yrs	16-20 Yrs	21+ Yrs
Average	\$49,098.86	\$63,634.73	\$78,904.36	\$87,263.16	\$94,740.03	\$106,532.36	\$120,277.14
Median	\$48,000.00	\$63,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$85,000.00	\$93,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$115,000.00
n	84	287	315	148	123	50	45

The average salary for respondents who were just starting their career in the field was \$49,098 (median=\$48,000). Respondents with 2-4 years of experience averaged \$63,634 (median=\$63,000). People with 5-7 years of experience reported an average salary of \$78,904 (median=\$75,000). Those with 8-10 years in the field averaged \$87,263 (median=\$85,000). People with 11-15 years in the field averaged \$94,740 (median=\$93,000). Respondents with 16-20 years averaged \$106,532 (median=\$100,000); and respondents with 21 or more years in the field averaged \$120,277 (median=\$115,000).

By Country

Salary across countries differed widely. Usability professionals in the US earned

Average and Median Salary By Country							
	US	UK	Germany	Can	NZ	France	Israel
Average	\$86,689.87	\$72,435.98	\$64,119.80	\$59,729.15	\$55,850.61	\$40,968.83	\$34,386.72
Median	\$80,000.00	\$67,574.59	\$61,300.00	\$59,241.70	\$55,713.49	\$38,067.30	\$37,541.66
n	763	91	16	76	18	18	40



the highest average salary in 2005 (\$86,680).

Practitioners in the UK were next-highest (\$72,435), followed by Germany (\$64,119), Canada (\$59,729), New Zealand (\$55,850), and France (\$40,968). Israel-based usability professionals earned an average of \$34,386. Not enough Swiss and Australian respondents provided salary information, so these groups were not included in the analysis. (All non-US salaries were converted to US dollars at the prevailing exchange rate published on September 2, 2005.)

By Region Within US

There were sufficient data from US respondents to allow within-US regional comparisons. US respondents indicated what region of the United States they worked in by choosing either Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, or West (which included the Pacific Coast states of CA, WA, and OR).

Median salaries were highest in the West (\$90,000) and Northeast (\$83,000), followed by the Southwest (\$81,250), Southeast (\$80,000), and Midwest (\$73,000). (Inspection of the Southeast data revealed several highly compensated individuals, so we considered the median to be a more accurate measure of central tendency for this analysis.)

Average and Median Salary By US Region					
	Northeast	Southeast	Midwest	Southwest	West
Average	\$89,540.80	\$96,524.33	\$76,371.50	\$83,569.13	\$93,902.73
Median	\$83,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$73,000.00	\$81,250.00	\$90,000.00
n	266	79	222	54	133

Management and Individual Contributors

As expected, Usability Managers' average salary was the highest of these four groups; managers averaged \$91,776.49 (median = \$85,652.80).

Interface Designers' average salary was next highest (\$76,145.33), followed by Usability Practitioners (\$75,343.30) and Information Architects (\$71,709.73). Median salaries for Interface Designers, Usability Practitioners, and IA's were 77K, 70K, and 71K respectively.

Average and Median Salary By Job Title				
	Usability Manager	Interface Designer	Usability Practitioner	Information Architect
Average	\$91,776.49	\$76,145.33	\$75,343.30	\$71,709.73
Median	\$85,652.80	\$77,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$71,000.00
n	123	170	306	141

By Education Level

A clear linear pattern emerged when respondents' salaries were broken out by education level. PhD's reported the highest average salary (\$102,792; median = \$100,000), followed by respondents with a Masters (average = \$78,228; median = \$75,000), Bachelors (average = \$72,631; median = \$70,000), and Associates degrees (average = \$63,642; median = \$61,500).

There were too few respondents with high school degrees to include in this analysis.

Average and Median Salary By Education				
	Associates	Bachelors	Masters	PhD
Average	\$63,642.18	\$72,631.87	\$78,228.20	\$102,792.51
Median	\$61,500.00	\$70,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$100,000.00
n	31	398	490	128

SATISFACTION WITH UPA

Overall

Respondents indicated their satisfaction with the Usability Professionals' Association by responding to the question "Please rate your overall satisfaction with UPA" on a seven-point scale, with 1 denoting "Extremely dissatisfied" and 7 indicating "Extremely satisfied". Nine hundred and forty respondents answered this question. Overall, all respondents' average on this item was 4.77. The pattern of responses was approximately normally distributed.

When broken out by UPA membership, differences in satisfaction were evident. In general, respondents who were members of the international UPA indicated higher satisfaction than respondents who were not members of the international association. (Members included respondents who were members of *both* the international association as well as a UPA chapter, and respondents who were members of the international association only.)

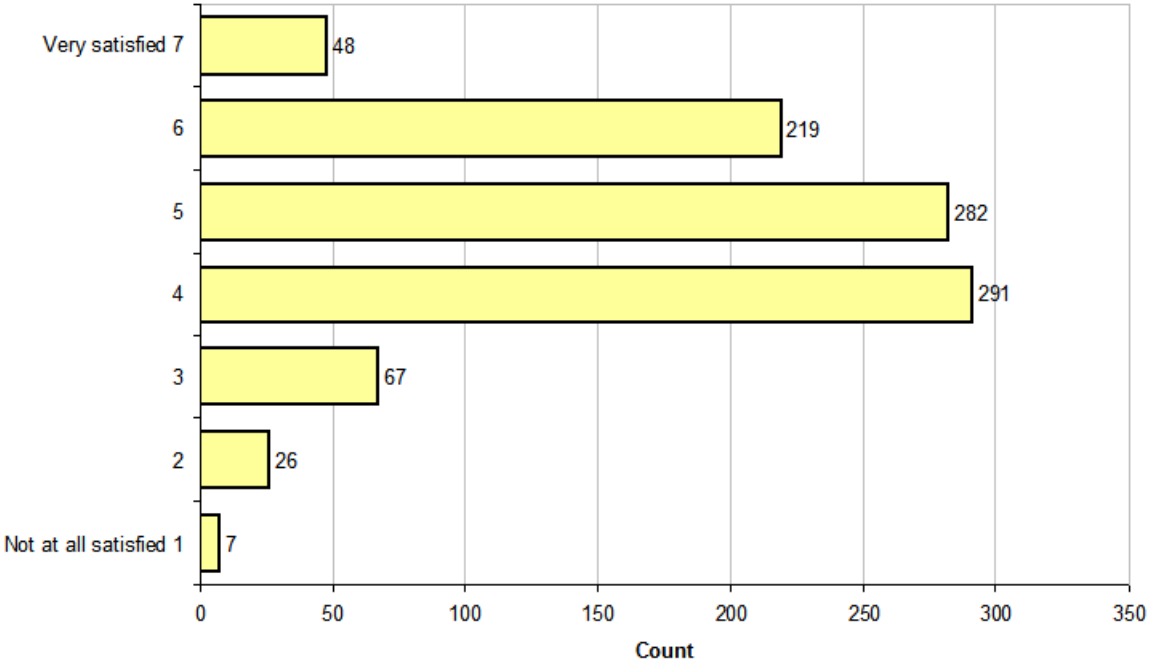
Respondents who belonged to both the international UPA *and* a local UPA chapter were most satisfied, averaging 4.96. Respondents who were members of UPA but not a chapter were next, averaging 4.83. This suggests that there is a relationship between level of engagement with UPA and overall satisfaction with the organization. It also shows that respondents who are actually members of the UPA were most satisfied.

Members of local UPA chapters who were not international UPA members averaged 4.69 (UPA does not require chapter members to be members of the international organization). Finally, respondents with no UPA affiliation averaged 4.10.

Satisfaction With UPA – By UPA Membership			
	All	UPA members	Not UPA members
Average	4.77	4.88	4.69
SD	1.16	1.14	1.20
n	940	728	212

Satisfaction With UPA – By UPA Involvement				
	UPA and Chapter	UPA Only	Chapter Only	Neither
Average	4.96	4.83	4.69	4.10
SD	1.13	1.20	1.08	1.16
n	272	456	104	108

Satisfaction with UPA - All Respondents





OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

We also asked the respondents the open-ended question “Do you have any suggestions for how the UPA can improve its value as a professional association?” We received 125 comments.

The comments were content coded into exclusive categories. (When appropriate, responses with multiple comments were split and the individual comments were each coded into a single category.)

The comments were grouped into the following 12 categories: Administrative, Career, Chapters, Conference, International Issues, Kudos, Public Relations, Practice, Professional Development, Publications, Relationships with Other UX Organizations, and Web. Representative comments from each category are provided below.

(Please note that the UPA Board of Directors reads all of the comments received via the salary survey. The Board also strives to respond in a timely fashion to those comments that appear to be particularly important or time-critical.)

Administrative

- “I’m a member, but lately when I go to the website & see what the society is doing, I’m surprised that I haven’t heard about what it’s up to, before it occurs! Seems like more outreach to involve members would be useful.”
- “Online renewal of membership.”
- “I would like a newsgroup or some type of online networking tool that would allow us to post issues and collect input from other members. Right now, any electronic messages go through a single point of contact. I would suggest offering a place for people to discuss real-world issues as they come up and in more real-time.”
- “Better consistent communication around events. Better publications and more relevant.”

Career

- “Provide some help on getting new students jobs.”

Chapters

- “Provide more help to local groups and facilitate communication amongst more and less established UPA chapters so that we all can help each other grow.”
- “Make it possible for me to develop a local chapter more easily.”
- “Organize local reading groups to meet up and exchange with other professionals.”



- "Encourage more relationship building between local chapters."
- "Reach out to its members more often. Encourage local chapter development."

Conference

- "Stronger peer reviews for the conference. Many sub-par presentations at the conference."
- "The conference could offer more real world, NON-consultant based experiences. There are many people that do not consider themselves usability professionals per se, but clearly because of training/education this informs their work in less formal ways."
- "Provide conferences worldwide and not just in North America."

International Issues

- "More international focus to publications - can be a tad too US focused at times."
- "More activities in Europe."
- "Needs to be relevant to ALL members, not just those US-based."

Kudos

- "I'm a recent member, and compared to other groups I have belonged to, this is one of the best. I don't take advantage of it as much as I could/should, but I'm aware of things, and I like the communications. My local chapter is getting better... still has some way to go. I don't know how much support they get."
- "I recently joined and haven't had time to explore all of the benefits of being a UPA member. But I really like the effort you put into the newsletter. And I think the international approach is great."

Public Relations

- "Continue to raise usability profession in the main stream. Contributing not just to our own publications (which are Great!), but also be regular contributors in related fields who use our services."
- "Do more spreading of knowledge to those that do not know what the UPA is. Spread the word of usability! I belong to UPA, but if I can't go to the conference, then what do I get?"

Practice

- "Keep members informed of what's out there about new ideas and technologies."
- "Provide neutral test reports of different interview / usability testing software tools."
- "Focus more on how to appeal to business owners."



- "Concentrate on expanding beyond usability testing to user research and driving strategy. Usability tests are small potatoes!"
- "Mentoring program."
- "As usability matures as a profession, UPA needs to meet the needs of usability managers in terms of providing resources and tools to manage and supervise usability teams."
- "More!!! Salary survey results would be most useful. More frequent issues of UX magazine. Webcasts on related subjects. It would be very helpful to allow for White papers and articles to be published easily on the UPA website."
- "Continue to add more offerings for senior or expert practitioners."

Professional Development

- "Professional accreditation to standardized industry qualifications."
- "Offer suggestions for online/distance academic degree programs (Masters/PhD)."
- "I think the UPA should be more active and/or visible in improving standards in usability-related fields and promoting best practice (and exposing bad practices!)"

Publications

- "I know there are plans for a peer-reviewed journal, and I think that will help us gain some traction as a serious professional society. I'd like to see more of a marketing effort to increase the visibility of UPA in both the business world, as well as with the public in general. I consistently hear from people, when I explain my job, that a) they have never heard of it, and b) that they are very fascinated by it. We should leverage that interest somehow."
- "I like that we'll be adding a peer-reviewed journal, but I'd like to see a little more rigor in our field and I'd like to see UPA lead that effort."

Relationships With Other UX Organizations

- "Find ways to align with other UX organizations."
- "Open itself up for more design related issues, the focus on usability seems to forget that usability is part of good design."

Web

- "Improve UPA website and use it as a shop window for usability plus great design. Update UPA website more frequently."
- "Create a Web site section on building a professional portfolio--i.e. sample documents, approach, design etc."



ABOUT THE USABILITY PROFESSIONALS' ASSOCIATION

The Usability Professionals' Association supports usability specialists, people from all aspects of human-centered design, and the broad family of disciplines that create the user experience in promoting the design and development of usable products.

Our goals are to:

- Provide an international network through which usability professionals can share information about the techniques and methodologies in the profession.
- Create an inclusive community for those interested in usability, whether it is their primary focus or a related discipline.
- Change new product development processes to include a concern for the people who use them by presenting the business case for usability in product development to colleagues, customers, the public and governmental agencies.
- Increase the body of knowledge about usability and user-centered design through professional education, meetings and conventions and other professional interchanges.

Contact UPA

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