



# Annual Salaries Report

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Year ending June 2004

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## Summary

As a recruiter of documentation specialists who work across a range of industries, TechWriter Placements and Services (TechWriter) is ideally placed to review the market rates paid and comment on emerging trends. This report discusses some of these trends.

A summary of our findings on rates is outlined in the table below.

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Contractors</b>          | <p>61% of contracts were priced at the equivalent of between \$70,000 and \$100,000 pa reflecting the high level of educational background and extensive experience of most contractors.</p> <p>30% earned between \$80,000 and \$90,000 and only 12% earned less than \$60,000. This is a significant increase since the survey conducted in 2000.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Note:</b> As this report is not the result of surveying the candidates themselves, the actual amounts received may differ depending on the variation of rates obtained during the year and the percentage of time employed. For further explanation see <i>Background, How contractor's earnings were determined</i>.</p> |
| <b>Permanent placements</b> | Generally earned less than contractors with 77% earning salary packages of less than \$70,000. <sup>2</sup>   |

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Given differences in methodology, the TechWriter surveys are not strictly comparable

<sup>2</sup> Note: small sample, 12% of total

## Background

This report summarises the analysis of rates paid for a representative sample of over 100 successful TechWriter contract and permanent placements made between June 2003 and June 2004.

### **How contractors' earnings were determined**

This information has been extrapolated to estimate a contractor's potential full year income. The equivalent annual salary is calculated assuming that the hourly rate applied for the full year (see Methodology section in the full report for details of the calculation used).

This does not take into consideration:

- some of the work might have been part-time
- any overtime worked
- the contractor may not be able to find work for the full year.

The full-year estimates were validated by comparison with the actual payments to contractors who worked for TechWriter on extended contracts (more than 6 months) during the same period.

### **Comparing results with previous years**

There have been a number of surveys conducted over the past few years that attempt to provide a view of the marketplace conditions for documentation specialists. We will conduct a similar analysis for year ending June 2005 that will enable comparisons to be made.

Other surveys you may like to refer to are listed on our website at <http://www.techwriter.com.au/candidates/salary.htm>

## Demographics

Since our 2000 salary survey, TechWriter has grown significantly and this has expanded the range of clients and industries covered. The key demographic trends within our sample are outlined in the table below.

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Location</b>                 | Most of the contractors were working in the Sydney area. This was expected given our focus during 2003 - 2004 was primarily on the Sydney market.   |
| <b>Job functions</b>            | The top three primary job functions were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Technical writing (59%)</li><li>2. Training (24%)</li><li>3. Editing and marketing (10%).</li></ol>  |
| <b>Contractors vs Permanent</b> | 88% of the sample were contractors, mostly paid on an hourly basis. 12% were permanent placements.  |
| <b>Education</b>                | <p>The majority of the sample had a higher education qualification. 87% had a university education including 49% with a bachelor's degree and 22% with a master's degree.</p> <p>This percentage is higher than our previous survey where 70% had a university qualification.</p> |
| <b>Experience</b>               | The majority of the sample (64%) had between 6 and 15 years relevant experience; however 13% had 16 or more years of experience.  |

## Industry

Candidates were employed in a wide range of industries with the majority in financial services, government, defence/aviation and information technology.

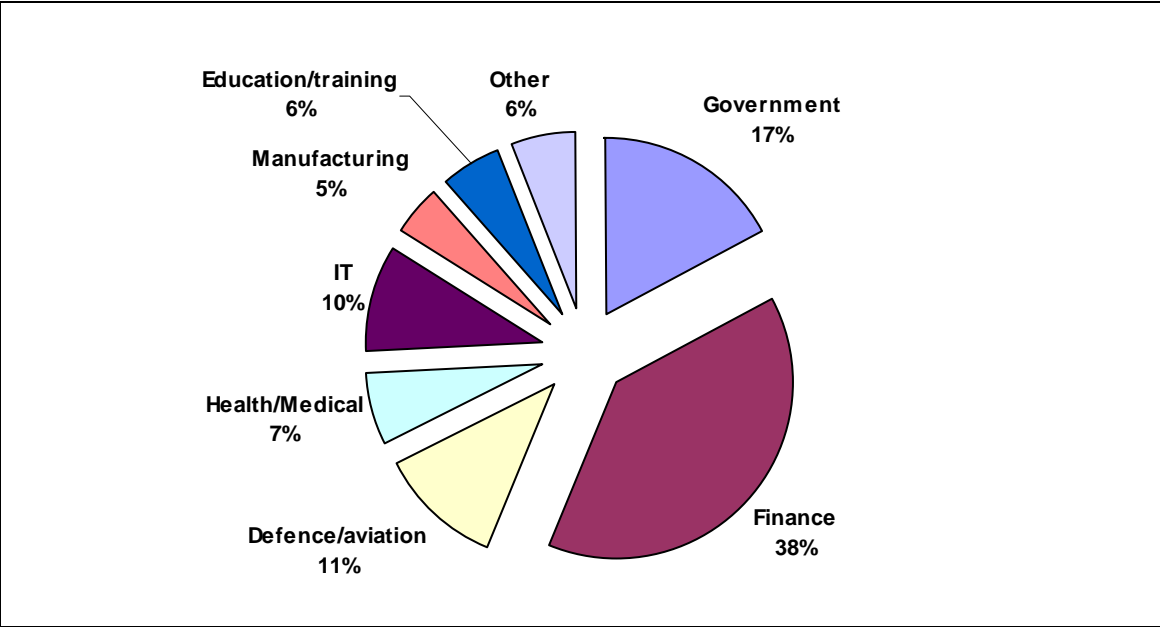


Figure 1: Distribution of documentation roles by industry

## Job Function

Candidates were placed in a variety of roles. Often the roles encompassed a number of skills and functions. The following chart indicates the main function:

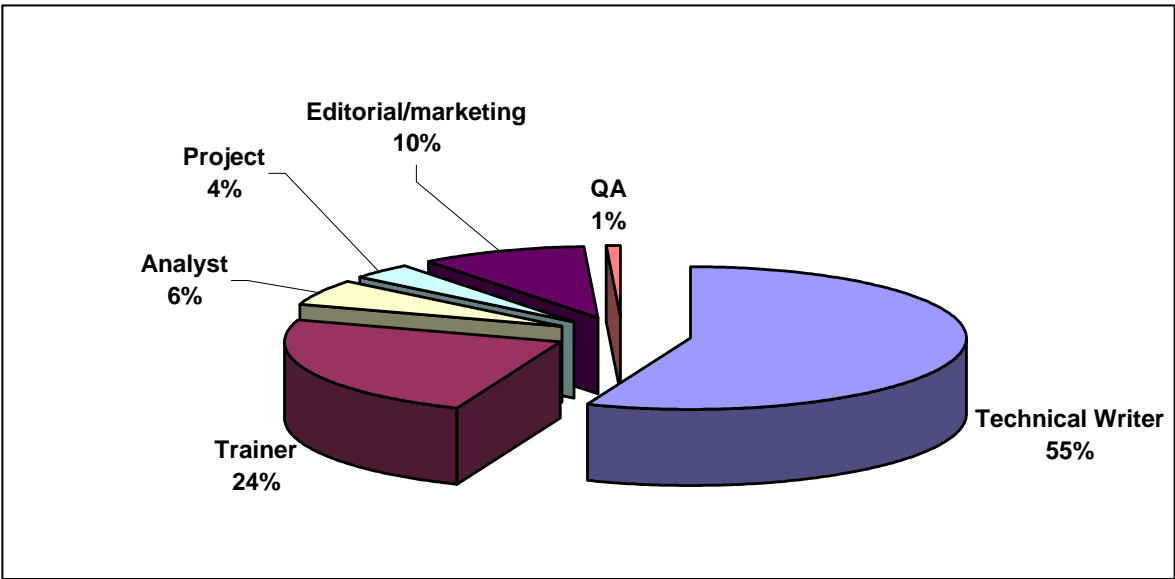


Figure 2: Main job function of documentation specialists

# Salaries

The amounts reported in this survey are equivalent full-time salary packages inclusive of superannuation.

Over 61% of candidates earned the equivalent of between \$70,000 and \$100,000 reflecting the level of educational background and extensive experience of most contractors.

There is no clear correlation between educational background and salary, or years of experience and salary, when each attribute is viewed in isolation. However, as expected, there seems to be a relationship between the combination of educational background and years of experience that generally impacts rates.

It is worth noting, however, that for some contracts the client has a fixed budget and a contractor who is keen for work may be willing to accept a lower rate than usual.

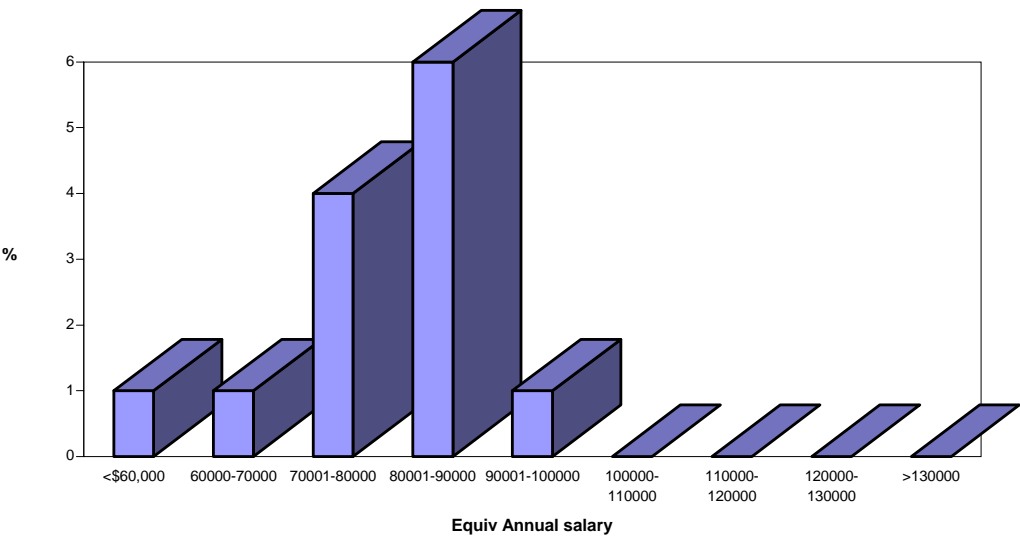
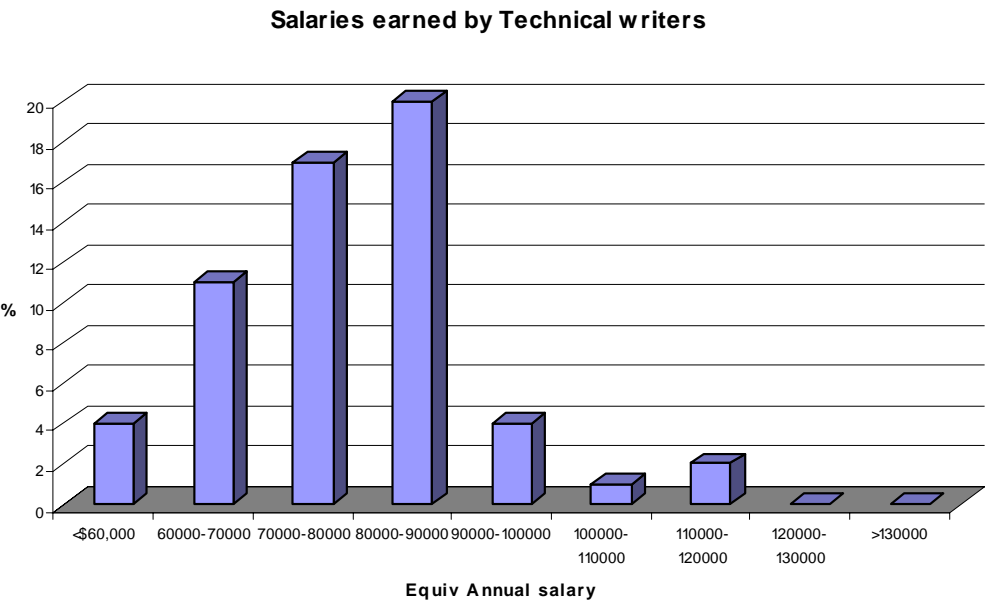


Figure 3: Annual salary ranges for documentation specialists

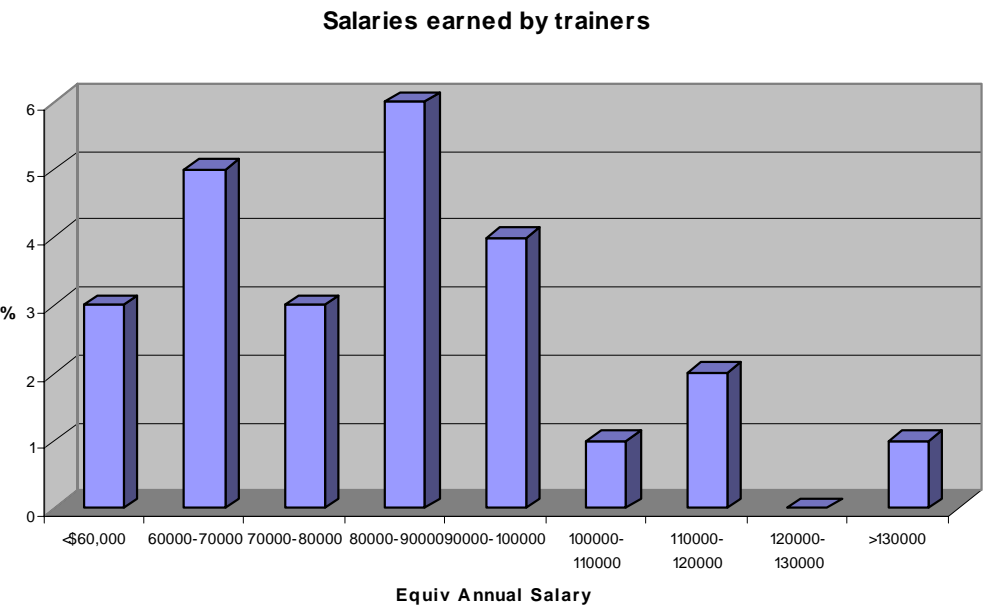
**Technical Writers**

The following graph shows the range of salaries for those candidates in our sample who were employed primarily as Technical Writers.



**Instructional Designers and Trainers**

The following graph shows the range of salaries for those candidates in our sample who were employed primarily as Instructional Designers or Trainers.





## Methodology

A number of assumptions have been made in order to produce this report. They are:

### **Equivalent annual full-time salary**

The equivalent annual full-time salary is calculated as hourly rates multiplied by 1500 hours. The use of 1500 hours allows for the fact that contractors have to cover themselves for:

- unemployment (say four weeks per year)
- annual and sick leave (six weeks)
- public holidays (two weeks).

The 1500 hours also assumes that a permanent employee is paid a maximum of 1725 hours. These hours being comprised of:

- 37.5 working hours per week
- 4 weeks annual leave
- 10 days public holidays.

The salary figures include both base salary and 9% compulsory superannuation. Sick leave entitlements and usage varies.

### **Other costs**

The salary rates discussed do not include other costs associated with hiring a documentation specialist on a contract or permanent basis: These costs include statutory costs (eg payroll taxes, workers compensation premiums) and TechWriter benefit.

### **Sample**

The individual items in the report are based on actual contracts not individual contractors. This means that if a person worked on multiple contracts, the information is reported for each contract.

Contactor information as to years of experience and educational qualifications was drawn from resumes. 'Years of experience' refers to relevant experience in a technical communication role. Contractors may have prior experience in a specialized field (eg IT) in addition to that referred to here.

### **Type of work**

As most contractors will be aware many contracts encompass various components and use multiple skills. For the purposes of this report, we have identified the primary role where possible. Training includes instructional design as well as pure training activities.