



Vuelio

UK BLOGGERS SURVEY 2016

1. Overview

Blogs now constitute a well-established media with particular appeal for consumers who rather than focus on broad news coverage, seek specialist knowledge and niche information. This survey was conducted to gain a greater understanding of who UK bloggers are, how they work, and what they want to achieve – with particular emphasis on the increasingly commercial character of blogging.

What have emerged are a number of key findings about the industry;

- **Bloggers are predominantly female and blog for personal reasons**
- **Fashion, beauty and lifestyle dominate the blogging categories**
- **Most bloggers own and manage a single blog, and those blogging across multiple platforms are rare**
- **Most UK blogs receive fewer than 10,000 unique visits a month, but those with more commercial ambitions tend to receive more than 10,000**
- **Half of UK bloggers spend fewer than 15 hours per week on their blog**
- **Twitter and Facebook are the preferred way to promote blog content, although Instagram and Pinterest are more popular with women**
- **PRs frequently pitch bloggers, but the proportion of pitches that actually generate content is very low**
- **Relationships with PRs are generally good, but bloggers feel they lack credibility when compared with traditional journalists**
- **While UK bloggers expect to be paid to promote brands, there is strong agreement that disclosing any commercial arrangement is very important**

2. Profile of a UK blogger

2.1 Bloggers are predominantly female and blog for personal reasons

77% of respondents were female, a pronounced but not unexpected gender split, paralleling as it does the gender split reported in surveys of bloggers elsewhere in the world.

The survey also identified that most consider blogging as a hobby or an extension of personal interest, with only 9% reporting it as their main source of income. These are writers who are highly engaged with their subject and not just writing about any topic commissioned by an editor.

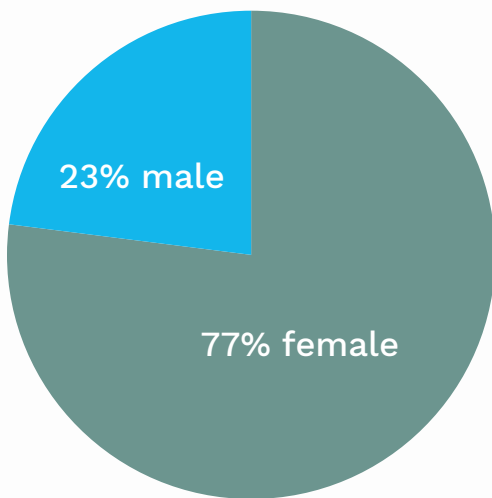


Chart 1: Gender of bloggers (%)

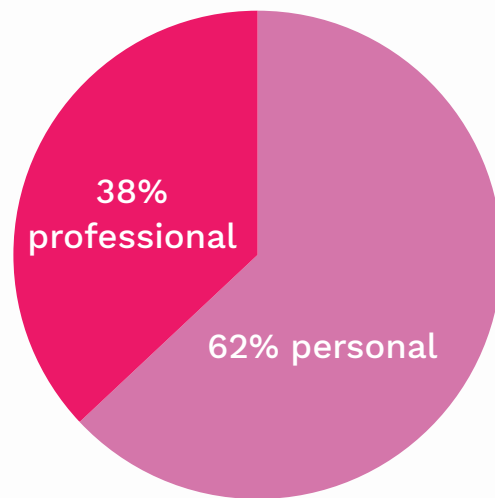


Chart 2: Personal v professional reasons for blogging (%)

Overall most respondents (62%) reported blogging for personal reasons, and most of those (34%) stated it was a hobby.

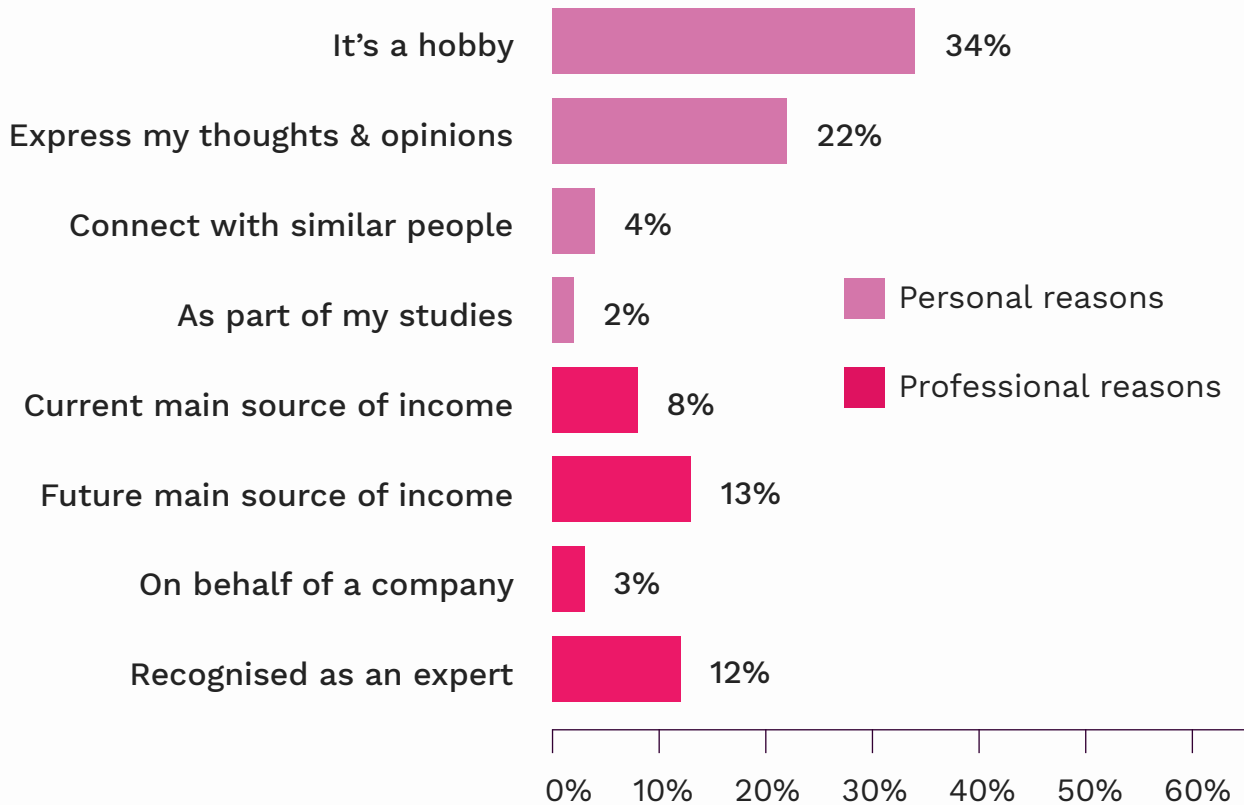


Chart 3: Reasons for blogging (%)

2.2 Fashion, beauty and lifestyle dominate the blogging categories

The most popular categories overall were fashion and beauty, lifestyle, parenting and family and food, and there was a clear gender divide across those subjects. Overall male bloggers tended to write about a greater variety of subjects, whereas female bloggers were concentrated within a handful of categories.

Food, travel, tech and gaming were the most prominent themes for men who were also much more likely to use a single blog to address multiple topics, e.g. travel, food and health under one banner. In contrast, women are focused on fashion/beauty and lifestyle blogging, and also strongly represented in the parenting and family categories.

	Male	Female
Lifestyle	4%	27%
Food	11%	6%
Fashion and beauty	4%	27%
Sport	5%	2%
Parenting/family	5%	11%
Health and wellbeing	3%	3%
Travel	10%	5%
Business	4%	2%
Political	4%	0%
Media and marketing	6%	0%
Religious	5%	0%
Art, craft and creative	6%	4%
Technology and gaming	10%	1%
Music	0%	3%
Entertainment	7%	5%
Other and combinations	16%	4%

Table 1: Main categories of blogs by gender (%)

2.3 Most bloggers own and manage their own blog

71% of UK bloggers write a single blog that they own and manage, rather than blogging on behalf an organisation of some kind.

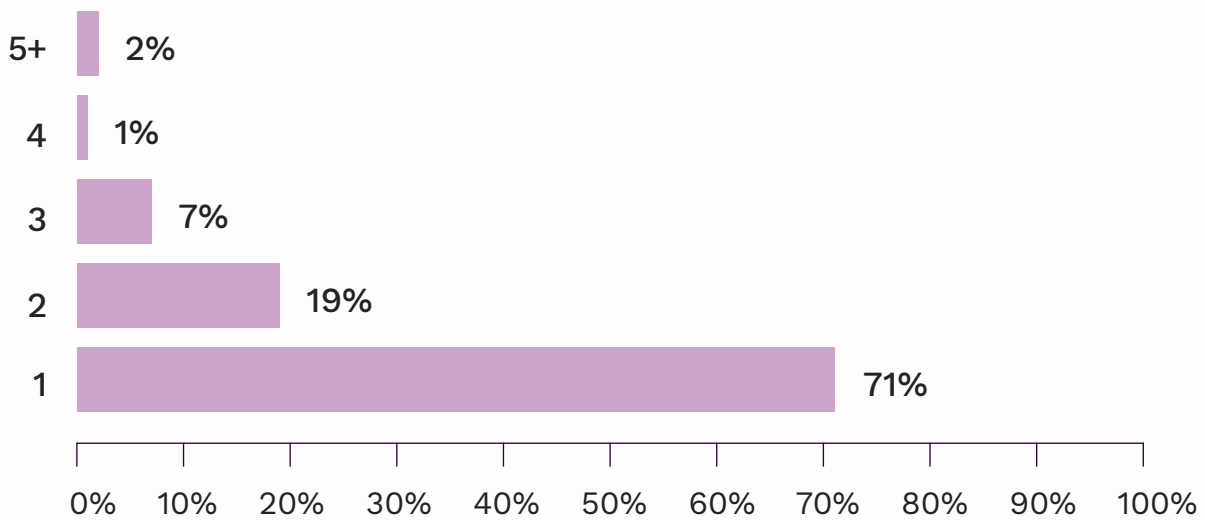


Chart 4: How many blogs do you own or manage? (% of respondents)

Overall three-quarters (74%) of respondents wrote between 1-3 posts per week. Post frequencies of one, two and three posts per week were evenly represented by respondents – although almost a fifth of UK bloggers post five times or more every week.

Number of posts	% of respondents
1	24%
2	27%
3	23%
4	8%
5 or more	18%

Table 2: Number of blog posts per week (%)

Those who said that they blogged professionally were more likely to post 5 or more times per week (24%), compared with those who cited personal reasons (14%). Those who own more than one blog also tend to write more posts, although the differences here are more marginal. For example, of those who own three blogs, 27% post once a week, 15% twice a week and 30% three times a week.

2.4 Blogs are most likely to receive more than 1,000 but fewer than 10,000 unique visits

About 10% of the respondents weren't sure how many visited their blog but of those who knew, most (45%) said that their blogs are medium in size attracting between 1,000 – 10,000 unique visitors per month, with an almost equal split between the much larger and smaller blogs.

For those citing personal reasons for writing their blogs, most (77%) had fewer unique visitors (up to 1,000), whereas bloggers citing professional motives were more likely to have a large number of unique visitors (63%).

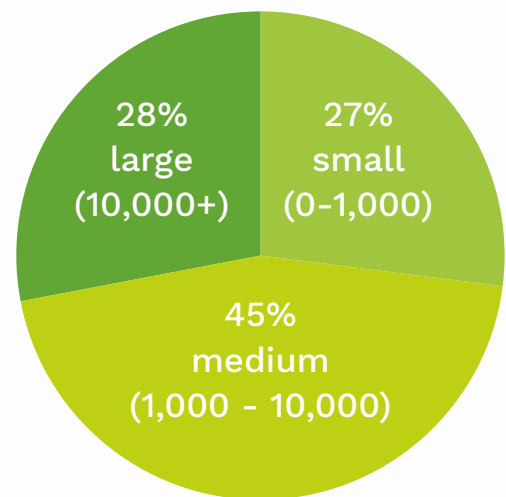


Chart 5: Number of unique visits received per month (%)

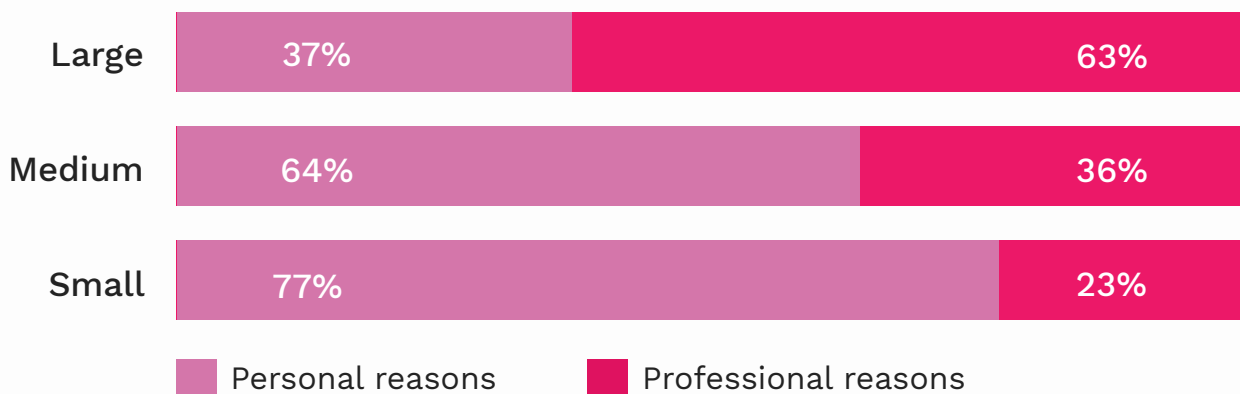


Chart 6: Number of unique visitors depends on the reasons for blogging

2.5 Over two fifths of UK bloggers spend more than ten hours per week on their blog

Most UK bloggers spent between 5-10 hours per week on their blog, but there were equal numbers spending between 1-4 hours and 11-15 hours per week.

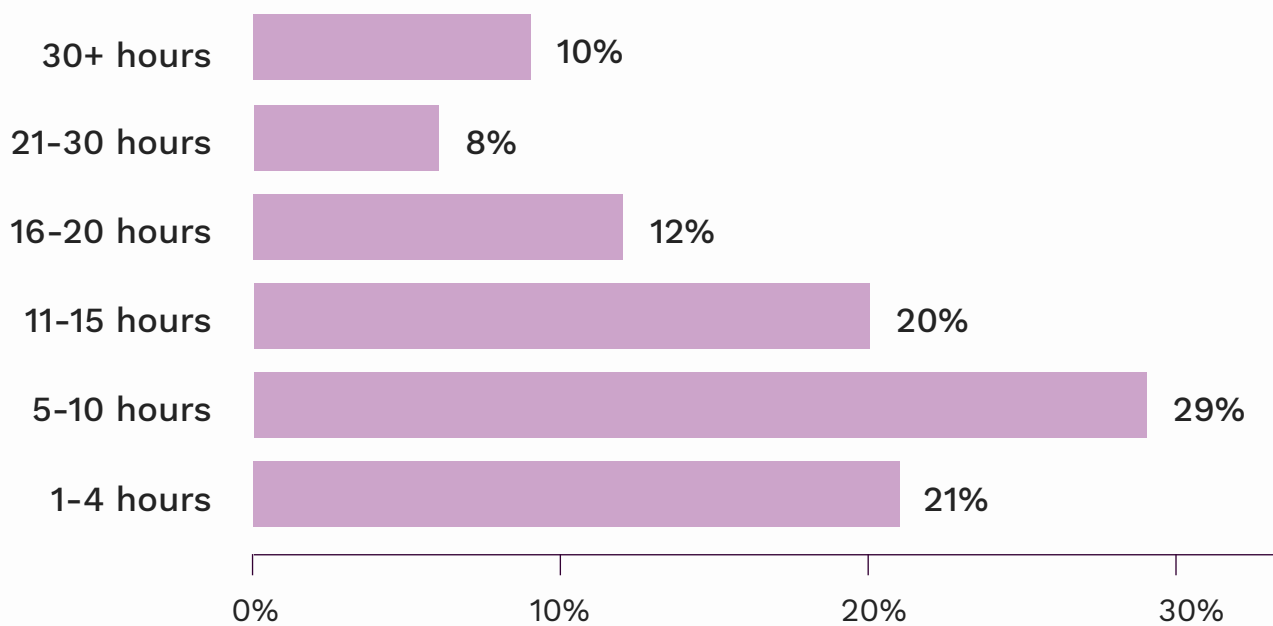


Chart 7: Time spent on blogging

Of those who blog for personal reasons, most spent between 5-10 hours per week (34%), whereas those blogging for professional reasons were most likely to spend between 11-15 hours per week working on their blog. To further reinforce the hobbyist-professional divide, three quarters (75%) of those spending more than 30 hours per week do so for professional reasons.

Commitment pays. 40% of bloggers with 10,000 or more monthly unique visitors spend 30 hours or more a week on their blog, and 65% of those for whom their blog is their main source of income spent more than 30 hours per week on it - in comparison with only 11% of those blogging primarily to express their own opinions, and 3% of those who see their blog as a hobby.

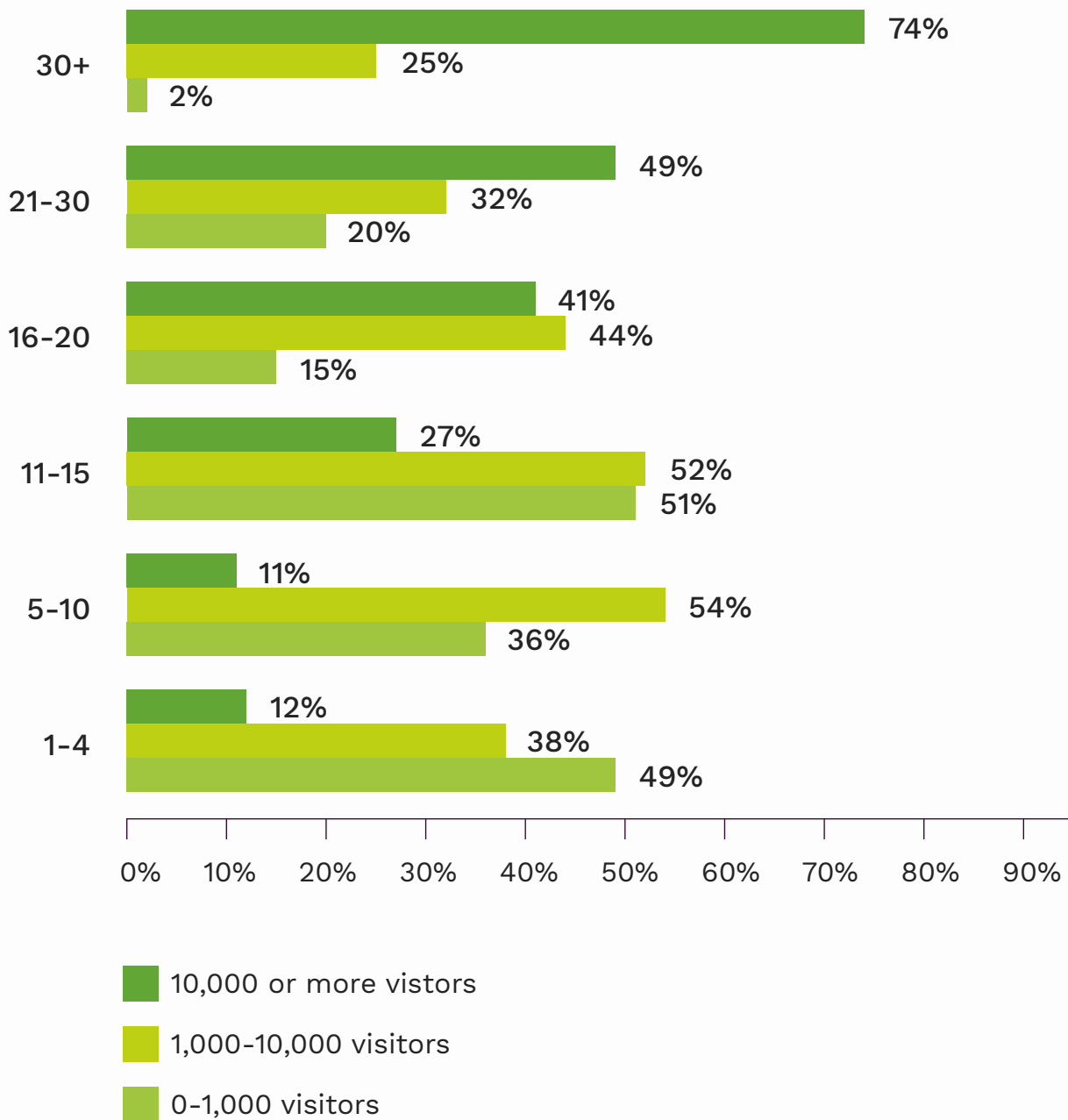


Chart 8: Number of unique visitors against time spent on main blog (%)

2.6 Twitter and Facebook are the preferred way to promote content, while women are also active on Instagram and Pinterest

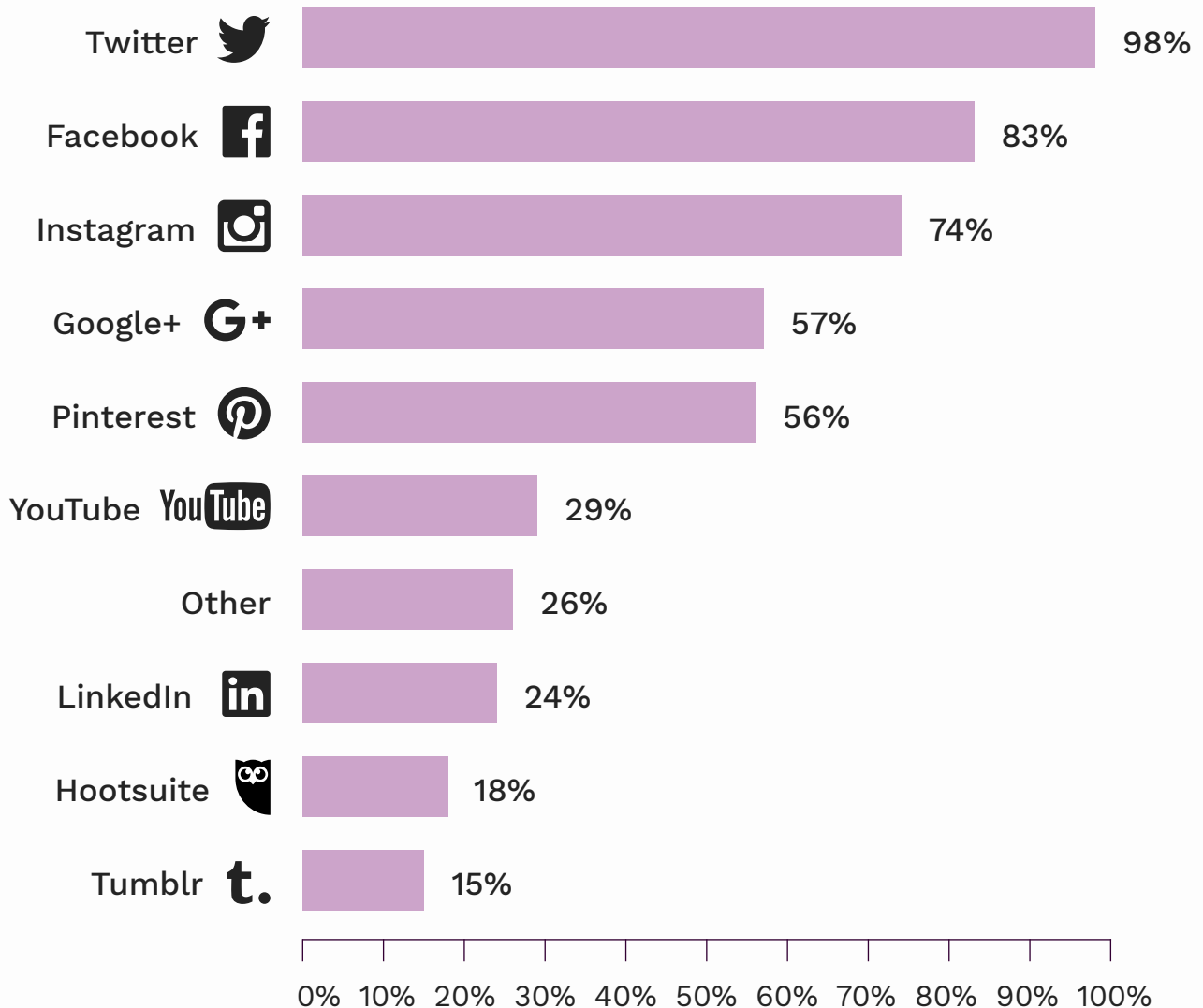


Chart 9: Social media most frequently used to promote and share blog content (%)*
 *(Figures add to more than 100% as respondents could choose multiple options)

Whilst Twitter remained the preferred social media tool to promote their blogs regardless of gender, men were also likely to use Facebook and Google+, women a wider variety of social media and in particular visual channels - a reflection of the main categories of blogs authored by women e.g. fashion/beauty, lifestyle etc.

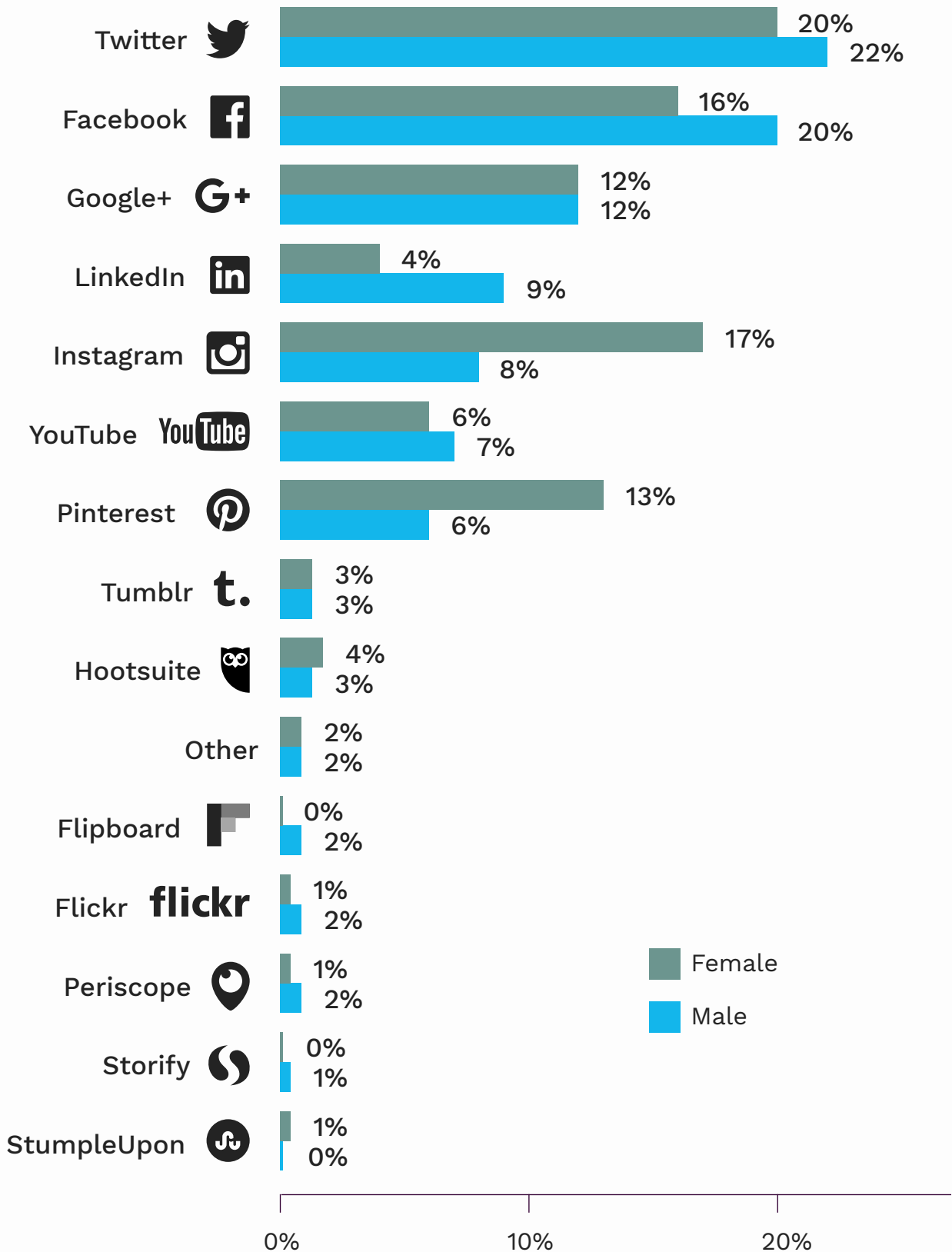


Chart 10: Social media channels used by males and females to promote their blogs (%)

3. Working with PRs

3.1 Bloggers are pitched to frequently by PR professionals

34% of bloggers reported being pitched to seven or more times a week. Unsurprisingly, PRs are focusing on larger blogs with a greater number of unique visitors.

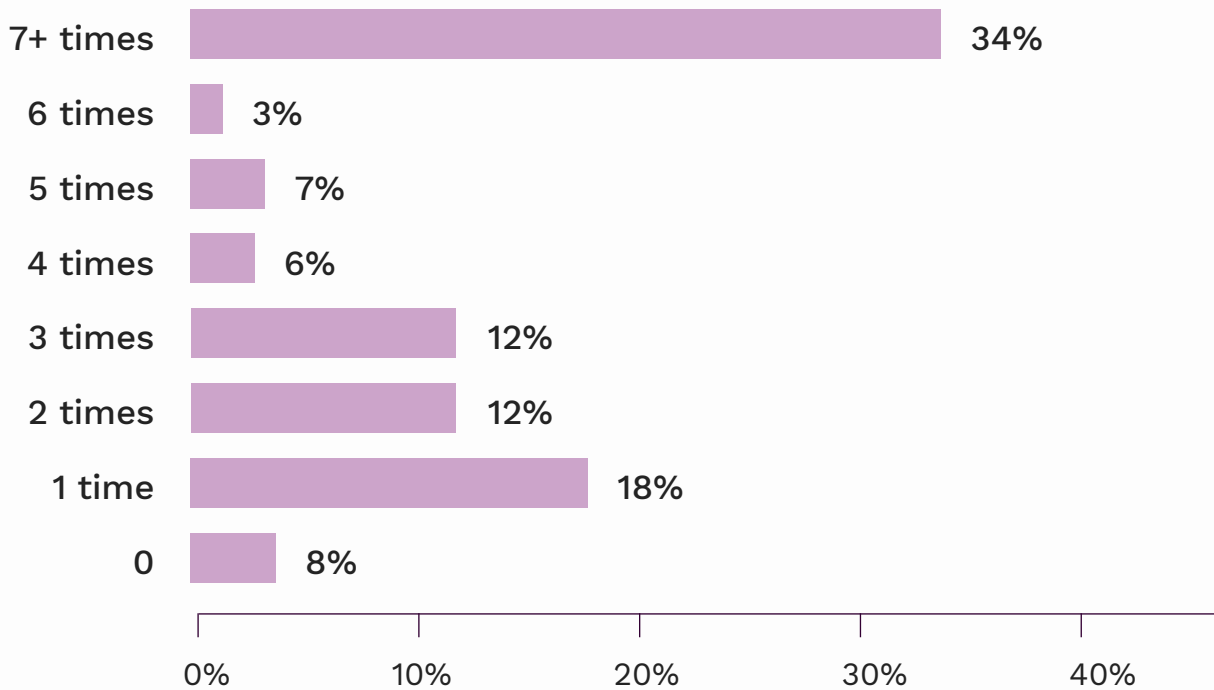


Chart 11: Number of times per week bloggers are pitched to (%)

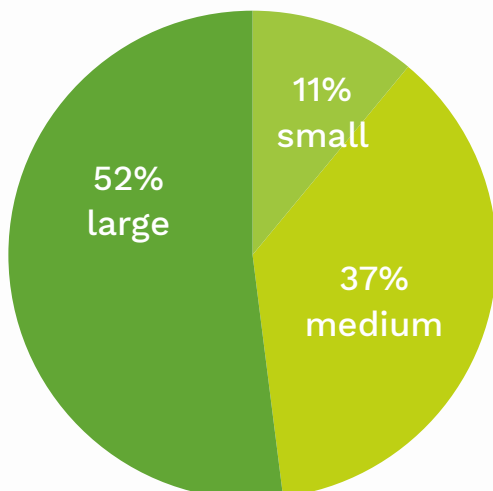


Chart 12: Bloggers who are pitched to 7 or more times per week by size of blog (%)

3.2 PRs pitching frequently but not productively

Despite the frequency of pitches received, 70% of UK bloggers said that only one pitch a week or less resulted in content on their blog. The patterns were very similar for those who were writing for personal reasons and those with professional motives, suggesting that PR professionals are taking a more blanket approach rather than concentrating on the most receptive bloggers.

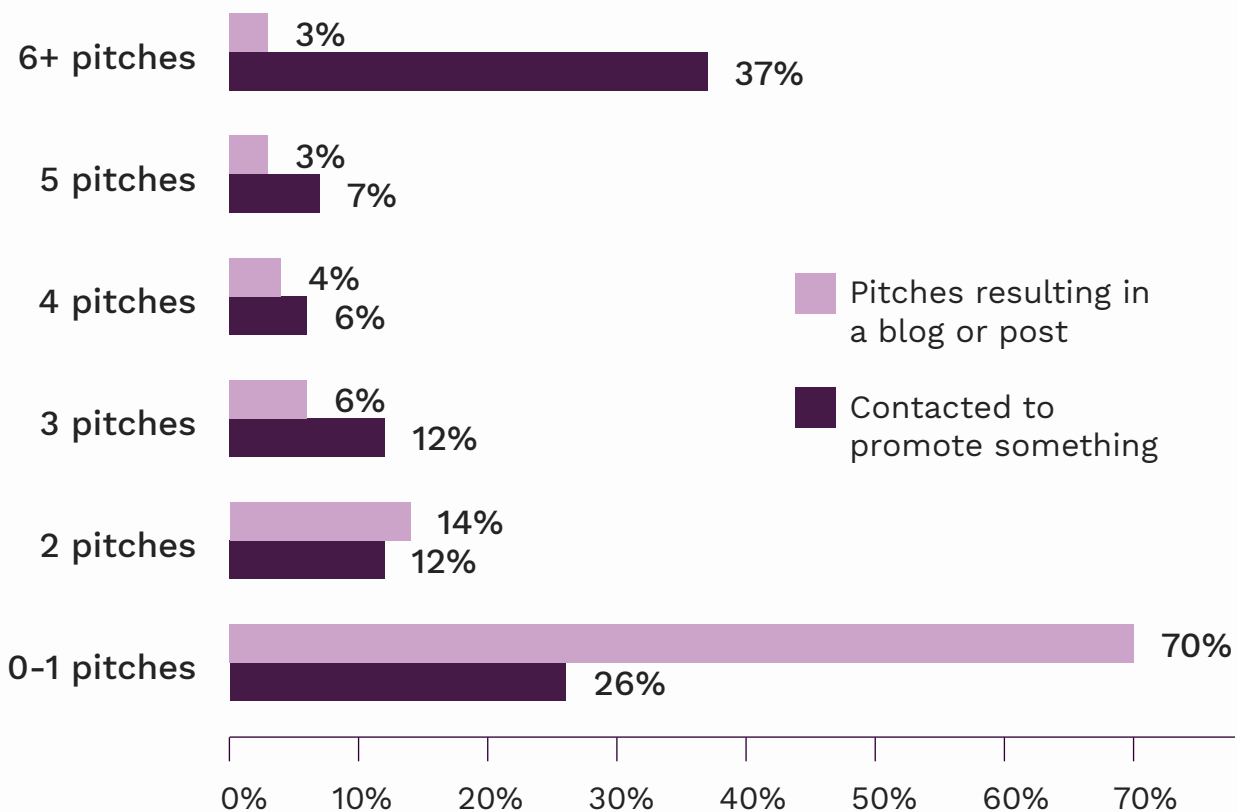


Chart 13: Number of pitches made against whether this resulted in content (%)

While all sizes of blogs addressing all kinds of subjects received pitches from PRs, those receiving the most were found in the fashion/beauty, lifestyle, parenting/family, food and travel categories.

3.3 Relationships with PRs are generally good, but UK bloggers feel they lack credibility

Despite the performance of commercial pitches, respondents say they have a good relationship with PRs. UK bloggers still feel that they and their output does not have the credibility or status of journalists and traditional media – an outlook that differs only marginally from professional bloggers to the hobbyists.

More than half of respondents (55%) feel that they will be more trusted than traditional journalists in the future.

	<i>Disagree completely</i>	<i>Disagree somewhat</i>	<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	<i>Agree somewhat</i>	<i>Agree completely</i>
I have a good relationship with PRs	1%	3%	23%	39%	34%
PRs regard traditional journalists as more important than bloggers	2%	13%	24%	40%	22%
In the future, bloggers will be more trusted than traditional journalists	2%	13%	32%	37%	17%

Table 3: Views on blogging and PR (%)

4. Remuneration & disclosure for UK blogs

4.1 Bloggers expect to be paid for their product mentions

Not surprisingly, those who blog professionally were more likely to agree/strongly agree that they should be paid for brand coverage (62%) compared with those who blog for personal reasons (43%). In particular those looking to their blog to generate income were much more likely to agree than those writing as a hobby, or to connect with like-minded people.

	Agree	Strongly agree
PRs expect bloggers to support their brand for little in return	47%	21%
I should be paid for all coverage I give to brands	30%	20%
Sponsorship disclosure is important for every collaboration	25%	62%

Table 4: Views on commercialisation of blogs (%)

Agreeing payment or compensation ranked as the number one biggest challenge that bloggers face when working with PRs. There appears to be significant scope for wider industry standardisation and/or transparency to help bring the two groups together.

4.2 Strong agreement that sponsorship disclosure is important

However, regardless of the reason for blogging, there was strong agreement that all sponsorship should be disclosed.

	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
It's a hobby	6%	5%	89%
I plan for it to be my main source of income in the future	1%	9%	90%
It's my main source of income	4%	17%	79%
To connect with like-minded people	0%	18%	82%

Table 5: Respondents considering sponsorship disclosure “important” by reason for blogging (%)

About the survey

This survey was conducted in February 2016 to explore how bloggers work, and better understand their activities and views about their relationship with brands and other commercial entities.

To reach this group of bloggers an online survey was sent to all UK bloggers registered with the Vuelio database. This resulted in 534 usable responses. As the database largely represents those owning and managing their own blog, those who blog on behalf of organisations are under-represented and would be likely to have different views and behaviours than are represented here.

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About Vuelio

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Canterbury Christ Church University is a modern, multi-campus University offering higher and professional education across key Kent and Medway locations: Canterbury, Broadstairs, Medway and Tunbridge Wells. It has a strong community of 17,000 students and 2,000 staff, studying and teaching across four faculties: Arts and Humanities, Education, Health and Wellbeing, and Social and Applied Sciences.

Christ Church was established in 1962 and is a Church of England Foundation University, welcoming all faiths and none. Today, the University continues to shape courses and research around critical social issues, the latest industry developments and public service need. Nearly 90% of its research submitted to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) was assessed as world-leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised, and 95% of our UK undergraduates and 98% of our postgraduates were in employment or further study within six months of completing their studies, with 9 out of 10 of our employed graduates in graduate level jobs three-and-a-half years after finishing their studies – higher than the national average. Visit: www.canterbury.ac.uk.