

# 2003 Salary Survey



## Salary surveys and human nature

It's human nature to believe that 'others may be overpaid, but I never am'. Sure enough, about half of the survey respondents said that they were underpaid and about half said that their pay was 'fair'. Only one person was said he was 'overpaid'.

Which begs the question will this survey prove divisive or inflationary? Not if readers use the survey results wisely. Employers should find it helpful in setting a wage policy (balancing salary with conditions, opportunities and performance); employees should gain an overview of the market.

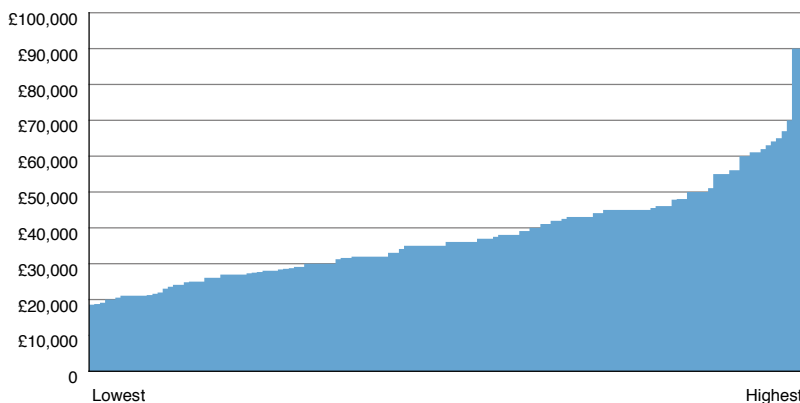
If your salary seems low, your challenge is to convince an employer you deserve more. The advice given by employers and careers advisors at the UK UPA's recent careers event stressed the

need for a career plan, constant improvement of technical skills, and strong interpersonal skills.

In putting together these results, we've cut the data several ways to allow individuals to compare salaries according to gender, geography, job-level and age. Breaking the data down further would have yielded small, unrepresentative samples. The results provide a feel for the market, rather than direct comparisons. No survey is without bias or error. For this reason, details of the methodology are included herein.

Finally, UK UPA would like to thank those people who gave their time and trust to take part in the survey. We hope you find the results useful.  
- Giles Colborne, November 2003

All respondents' salaries ranked from lowest to highest



## Headline results

	Salaries	Freelance rates	Annualised rates*
Min	£18,500	£110 / day	£18,150
Max	£90,000	£1,200 / day	£198,000
Median	£35,000	£250 / day	£41,250
Mean	£37,801	£357 / day	£52,714
Base	136	22	22

\* Annual freelance earnings, assuming 235 working days at 70% utilisation (165 billable days). These figures do not include deductions for running costs

## Usability professionals?

Access to the survey was unrestricted. However, the survey respondents counted in these results had good usability credentials.

Three-quarters belonged to either UPA, SIG-CHI or BHCIG, with half belonging to UPA.

Nine out of ten had a bachelor's degree or higher.

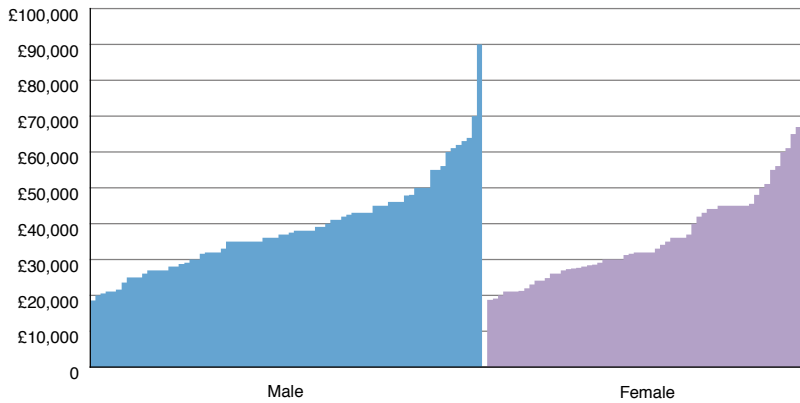
43% of respondents had a degree in HCI or human factors and around seven percent had a degree in psychology.

Half of respondents said that their entire job was related to HCI or human factors. 86% of respondents said that the majority of their job was HCI or human factors related.

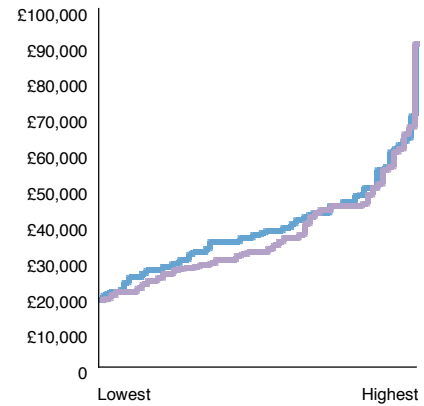


## Salary according to gender

All responses (grouped by gender)



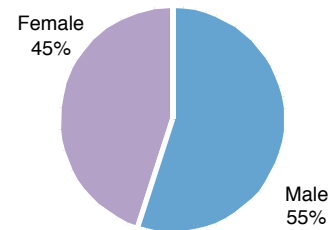
Comparison of gender / salary profiles



## Summary

	Male	Female
Min	£18,500	£18,700
Max	£90,000	£90,000
Median	£37,000	£32,000
Mean	£38,895	£36,457
Base	75	61

## Respondents' gender



## The gender gap

The figures show that there is a gender gap when it comes to salaries of usability professionals - but it's not a simple matter.

Starting salaries are equivalent. So are the salaries of senior people. But in between, a gap opens up with men earning more than women.

You can see that gap clearly if you look at the comparison of the profiles of the male and female salaries. The graph makes the gap between men and women look quite small - but it runs at about

five percent. Overall, this accounts for a difference in average salary of about £2,500.

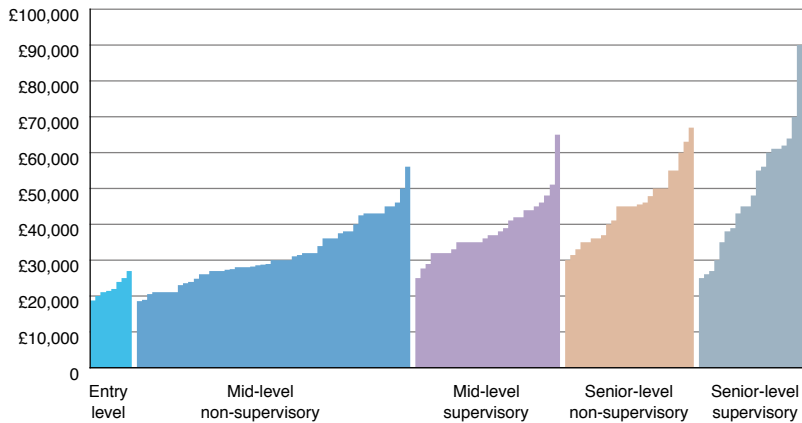
It's possible that the difference is accounted for by the different career patterns of women - and it's reassuring to know that there appears to be equality of opportunity. However, this topic bears further investigation.

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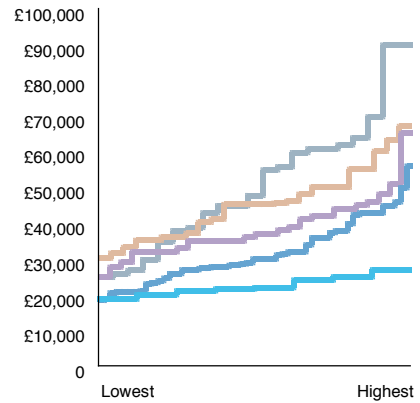


## Salary according to job-level

All responses (grouped by job-level)



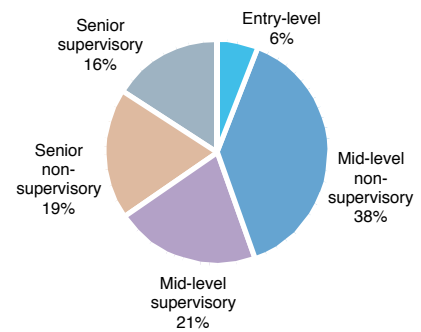
Comparison of job-level / salary profiles



## Summary

	Entry level	Mid-level non-supervisory	Mid-level supervisory	Senior non-supervisory	Senior supervisory
Min	£18,700	£18,500	£25,000	£30,000	£25,000
Max	£27,000	£56,000	£65,000	£67,000	£90,000
Median	£21,750	£30,000	£36,500	£45,000	£51,500
Mean	£22,400	£31,609	£38,307	£44,573	£51,750
Base	8	53	28	26	20

## Respondents' job-levels



## What the salary figures tell us about career paths

In careers such as usability, where technical expertise is important, it should be possible to move up the career ladder without the taking on additional managerial responsibility. In other words, it should be possible for your salary to reflect your level of expertise, rather than your management status.

The results of the survey do show this is the case. There is a career path from entry-level to mid-level to senior level which avoids supervisory responsibilities and which offers a good pay

structure. The best salaries, however, remain for those with supervisory responsibilities.

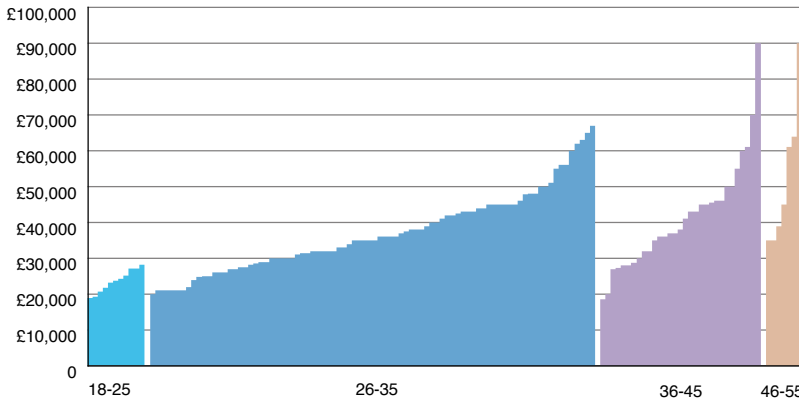
If your company pays at the low end of the scale, then the results suggest that your starting salary would be around £18,700, rising to £25,000-£30,000 by the time you had reached a senior grade.

Most respondents described themselves as mid-level, non-supervisory - probably one of a few usability specialists within their company.

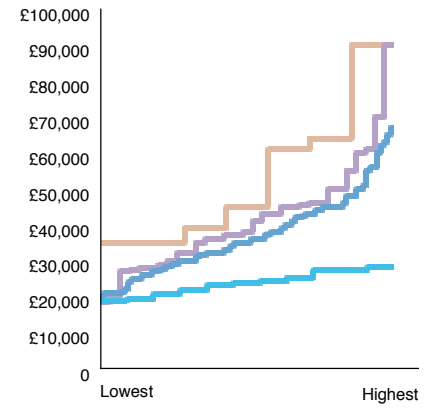


## Salary according to age

All responses (grouped by age)



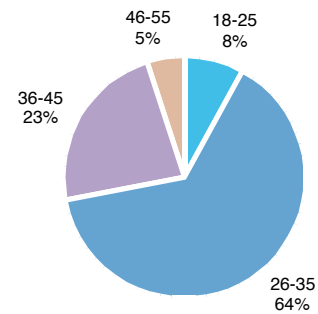
Comparison of age / salary profiles



## Summary

	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65
Min	£18,700	£20,000	£18,500	£35,000	-
Max	£28,000	£67,000	£90,000	£90,000	-
Median	£23,500	£35,000	£42,000	£45,000	-
Mean	£23,382	£36,963	£41,323	£52,714	-
Base	11	86	31	7	-

## Respondents' ages



## A young industry

The 'sawtooth' shape of the graph of 'All responses (grouped by age)' shows that the link between age and salary is loose. Some of the highest earners in the survey fell into the 25-35 age group. Equally, some of the lowest were in the 36-45 age group.

The comparison of age / salary profiles takes each of the 'jags' in the sawtooth and stretches it for comparison with the others. From this, one can see that salaries within the 26-35 age group are just £2,000 to £3,000 less than those in the 36-45

age group. The 18-25 age group is far lower and the 46-55 group comfortably higher (though the base of seven respondents in this group means these figures are most prone to error).

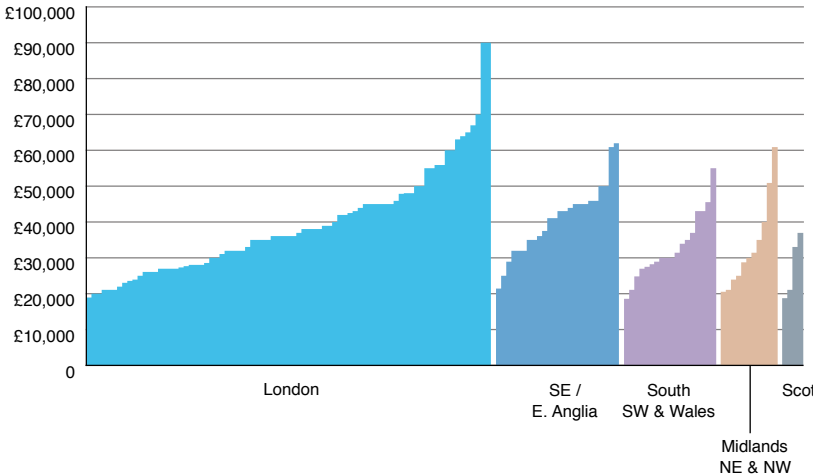
The largest group of respondents to the survey were in the 26-35 age group, representing the explosion in usability practitioners over the past decade. There were no respondents in age categories over 56. This could be due to the media used to recruit respondents (primarily email).

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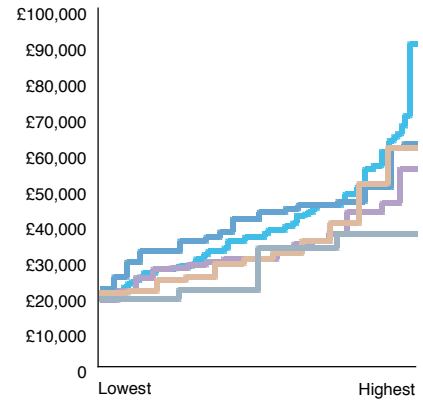


## Salary according to region

All responses (grouped by region)



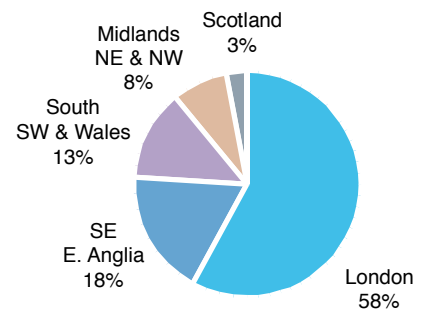
Comparison of region / salary profiles



## Summary

	London	SE / E. Anglia	South SW & Wales	Midlands NE & NW	Scotland
Min	£19,000	£21,500	£18,500	£20,500	£18,700
Max	£90,000	£62,000	£55,000	£61,000	£37,000
Median	£36,000	£42,000	£30,000	£30,000	£27,063
Mean	£39,195	£40,708	£32,781	£33,427	£27,456
Base	79	24	18	11	4

## Respondents' regions



## Streets paved with gold?

London had by far the largest number of respondents to the survey - and accounted for the highest earners in the country.

Overall, the South East and East Anglia edged London in terms of average salary. From the profile graphs, one can see that the distribution is flatter in this region than in London.

The salaries and profiles in the other two regions of England and Wales were broadly similar. The numbers of respondents here are smaller and it

would be wrong to read too much into the variations between these regions.

Scotland was poorly represented in this survey and the four respondents can't be taken as representative of the entire country.

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## Notes on data collection

Data was collected on 16 September 2003 (anonymous paper forms handed in at a meeting of UK UPA in London) and from 26 September to 10 October 2003 (anonymous online forms hosted on the SurveyMonkey website).

The online survey was publicised in a mailing to UK UPA members, and in postings (entitled 'UK UPA Salary Survey') to the London Usability and UK Usability mailing lists and the 'UsabilityNews' website. The publicity stated that the survey was anonymous, and that it was being conducted by the UK Usability Professionals' Association.

For a period of about 2 hours on 26 September, users were unable to specify their age range as '36-45' due to a fault with the form. During this period one complaint was logged, and 30 people, none of whom skipped this question, successfully submitted data.

The online survey included three questions that were not in the paper version of the survey. These were:

Are you a member of any of the following professional organisations? (tick all that apply)

What do you expect to happen to demand for your usability services in the next 6 months?

What do you expect to happen to demand for technology services in general in the next 6 months?

Results from these questions will be reported separately.

The UK UPA's members work predominantly in new media and technology consultancy.

## Notes on data analysis

Of the 177 results collected, 41 have been excluded from the main analysis making a base of 136 results. The exclusions were:

12 respondents who failed to complete their salary details

2 respondents who registered salaries of £8,000, and this, along with their other answers suggested that they were students on full research grants, rather than employed in the main job market.

5 respondents who said their main place of work was not in any of the regions of the UK and Ireland described on the questionnaire. It was assumed that these respondents were working outside of the UK.

22 respondents who quoted daily rates, rather than salaries. A brief analysis of these rates is included on the first page of this report.

NB the 'job level' and 'age' results have bases of 135 because one respondent skipped the relevant question.

A complete database of responses is available to UK UPA members (please contact [membership@ukupa.org.uk](mailto:membership@ukupa.org.uk), quoting your membership number).