

2004 Salary Survey



Are you getting richer?

Talking to usability business managers this year, two themes emerge.

Firstly, that it's been another solid year for the industry. Everyone reports being busy, everyone is recruiting or at least looking to improve capacity and with areas such as mobile becoming mainstream, confidence is high.

Secondly, despite the bullish marketplace, the memory of the .com crash still influences business planning. Usability business managers are looking to grow organically and hiring conservatively.

Maybe that's why, this year, overall salary levels in our survey remain almost identical to last year. The mean salary increased just 0.6% in the past year. Usability professionals in the UK must look to promotion, rather than wage inflation, to improve their lot.

Expanded results

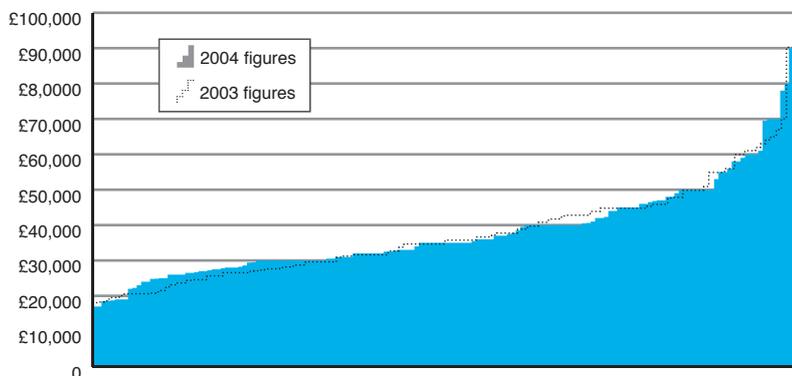
This year, for the first time, we've included results by employer as well as information on the types of technique in use today and a breakdown of salary by experience. Members of the Usability Professionals' Association are, of course, entitled to the raw data so that they can conduct their own analysis.

About the HTML & PDF versions

This year, we have tried to make our results more accessible by publishing them in HTML format as well as PDF (which includes useful graphs which cannot be rendered as HTML). In the future, we hope to continue to improve the accessibility of our surveys and welcome feedback from readers.

Giles Colborne
President, UK Chapter
January 2005

All respondents' salaries ranked from lowest to highest



Headline results

	Salaries	Freelance rates	Annualised rates*
Min	£17,000	£55	£9,075
Max	£90,000	£700	£115,500
Median	£35,000	£300	£54,397
Mean	£38,012	£340	£49,500
Base	158	30	30

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

A good year for freelancers?

The most common daily rate was around the £300 mark (43% of respondents), although 37%, or more than one third of respondents, reported charging between £400 and £700 per day.

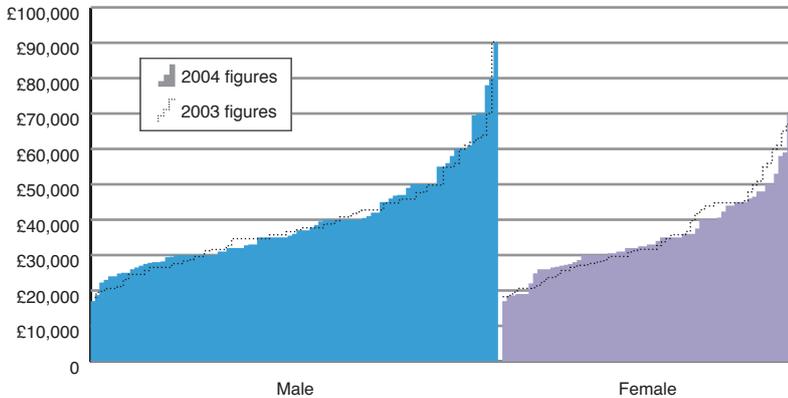
More than two-thirds of freelancers reported increased rates over the previous year, several reporting a strong increase, a sign of a healthy market for freelance skills.

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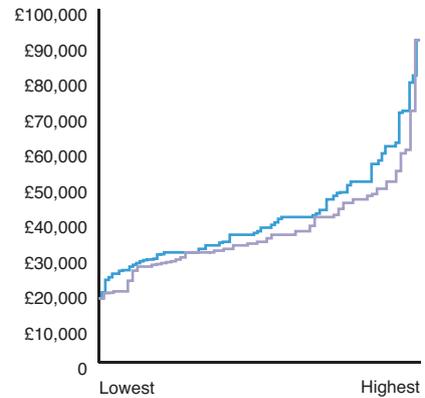


Salary according to gender

All responses (grouped by gender)



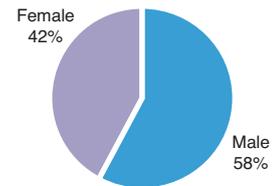
Comparison of gender salary profiles



Summary

	Male	Female
Min	£17,000	£17,000
Max	£90,000	£90,000
Median	£35,750	£33,000
Mean	£39,647	£35,767
Base	92	67

Respondents' gender



Mind the gap

This year, the proportion of male to female respondents tended slightly more to men (58% this year versus 55% in 2003).

However the mean salary paid to men was up (£39,647, up from £38,895) and the mean salary paid to women was down (£35,767, up from £36,457).

As last year, the maximum and minimum salaries were identical for each gender - but comparing the salary profiles, the gap between men and women seems more pronounced.

With the number of female respondents up by just six, what has happened to their salaries?

Interestingly, some of the highest earners who took part in the 2003 survey don't seem to be represented in the 2004 survey - either leaving the industry or not taking part in this year's survey.

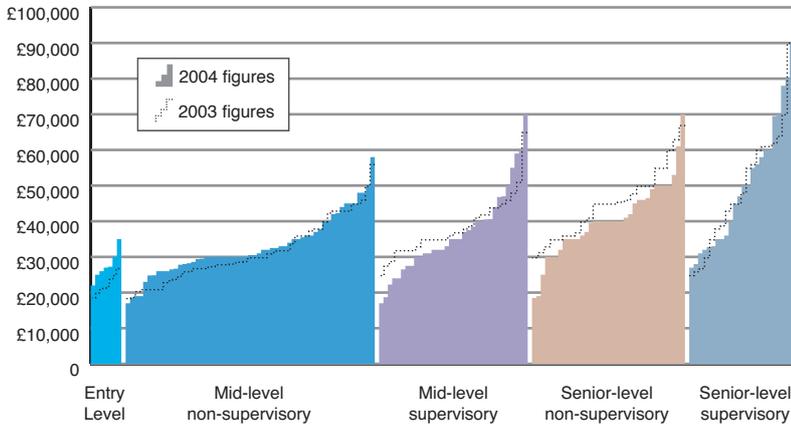
What's clear from both the 2003 and the 2004 surveys is that women's salaries continue to lag behind men's.

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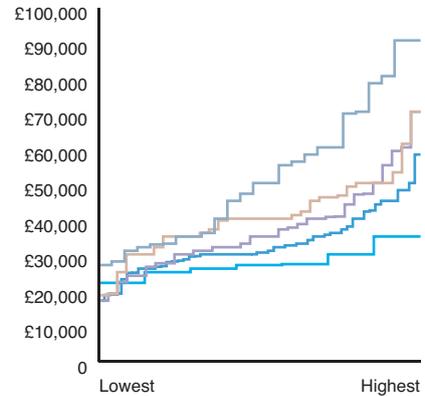


Salary according to job level

All responses (grouped by job level)



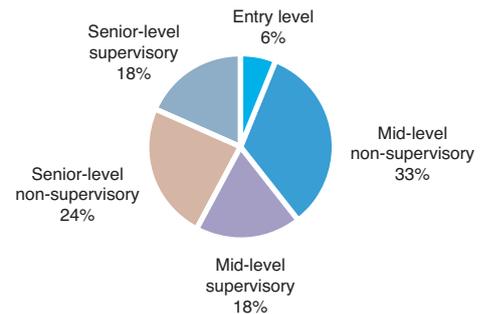
Comparison of job level salary profiles



Summary

	Entry level	Mid-level non-supervisory	Mid-level supervisory	Senior non-supervisory	Senior-level supervisory
Min	£22,000	£17,000	£17,000	£18,500	£27,000
Max	£35,000	£58,000	£70,000	£70,000	£90,000
Median	£27,000	£30,500	£35,000	£40,000	£50,000
Mean	£27,464	£32,800	£36,746	£40,471	£51,530
Base	7	57	34	35	25

Respondents' job level



Pay according to rank?

While there is still a step up in each of the 'levels' the most striking thing about this year's results is that 'Senior-level, non-supervisory' respondents' salaries are down markedly this year (the mean dropping by £1,100). The highest paid jobs remain about the same, but 'Entry-level' and 'Mid-level, non-supervisory' jobs saw increases.

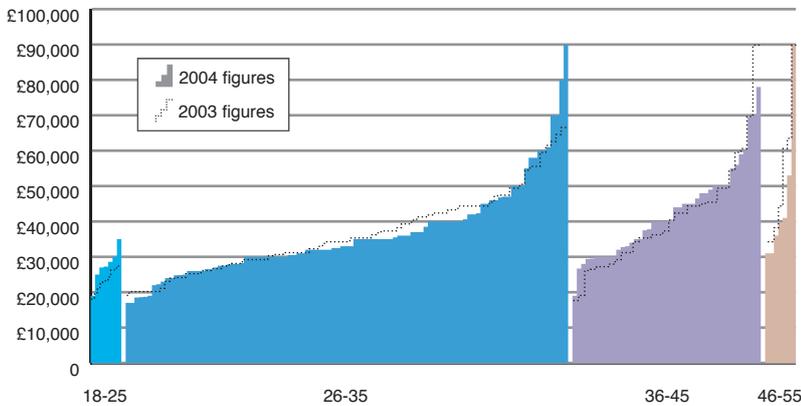
The exaggerated saw-tooth shape of the graph underlines the fact that this is a 'knowledge' industry in which career progression comes as much from developing skills and insight as from management responsibility.

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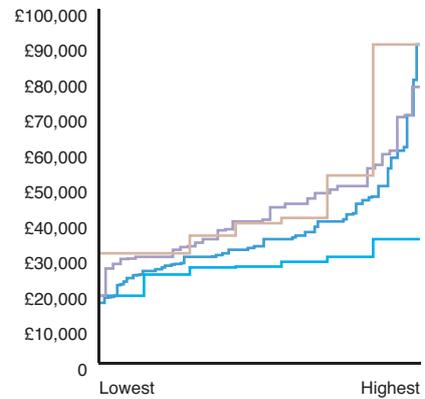


Salary according to age

All responses (grouped by age)



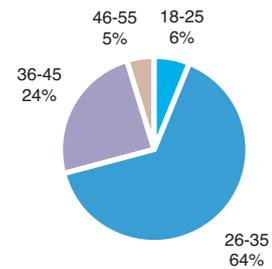
Comparison of age salary profiles



Summary

	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65
Min	£19,000	£17,000	£19,000	£31,000	-
Max	£35,000	£90,000	£78,000	£90,000	-
Median	£27,250	£33,000	£40,000	£31,500	-
Mean	£27,407	£36,222	£42,376	£45,929	-
Base	7	101	43	7	-

Respondents' age



Older and wiser

The link between age and salary remains complex. This year some of our top earners were in the younger age groups. However, there is a steady progression of mean figures as we go up through respondents' ages.

with the results from our 2003 survey. It may be a reflection of usability professionals moving into more general management roles once they have been in the industry for some time, perhaps reflecting a lack of senior roles in the business.

Usability remains a young industry. This year we had just one respondent in the 56-65 age group (we have not included the data here to preserve the respondent's anonymity).

On the other hand, usability is still a relatively new specialisation, with perhaps few mature specialists to be found.

More than two thirds of respondents were 35 or younger, around a quarter in the 36-45 age range and just 5% were 46 or over. This result is consistent

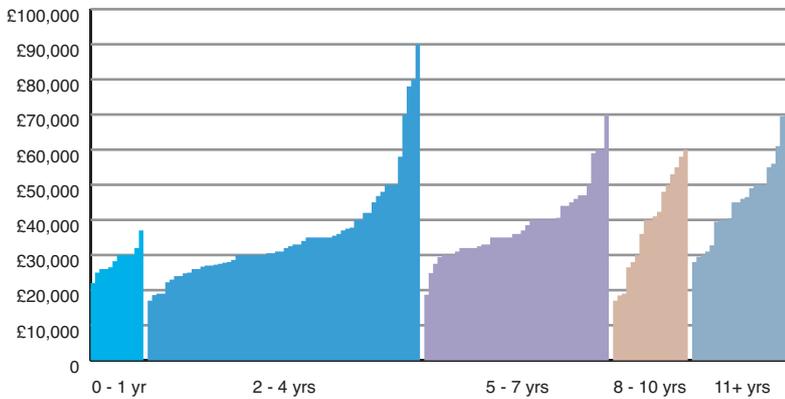
Of course age isn't the same as experience, which is why we've included a breakdown of salary by time spent working in usability - on the next page.

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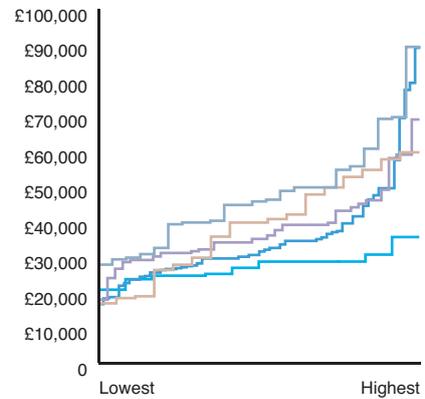


Salary according to experience (years)

All responses (grouped by experience)



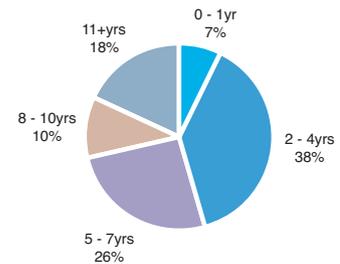
Comparison of experience salary profiles



Summary

	0 - 1 yr	2 - 4 yrs	5 - 7 yrs	8 - 10 yrs	11+ yrs
Min	£22,000	£17,000	£18,700	£17,000	£28,000
Max	£37,000	£90,000	£70,000	£60,000	£90,000
Median	£29,116	£31,500	£36,000	£40,000	£46,000
Mean	£32,500	£35,639	£38,644	£38,959	£47,577
Base	12	62	42	17	29

Respondents' experience



The rewards of long service?

As a measure of 'experience', length of time in the field of usability is not ideal. But it is probably the most readily available.

Our salary survey showed that the highest (and lowest) salaries weren't simply a matter of long service.

The pie chart shows the number of people relatively new to the field who are represented in our survey - two out of five have less than 4 year's usability experience.

But this is a multi-disciplinary field - many people come to the field bringing other skills such as design,

project management, programming or systems analysis. With that in mind, it's not surprising that people with relatively little experience in usability are commanding high salaries in some cases.

Where our 'age' comparison shows a dip in the median values after 45, here we see the progression of mean and median salaries moving up with experience.

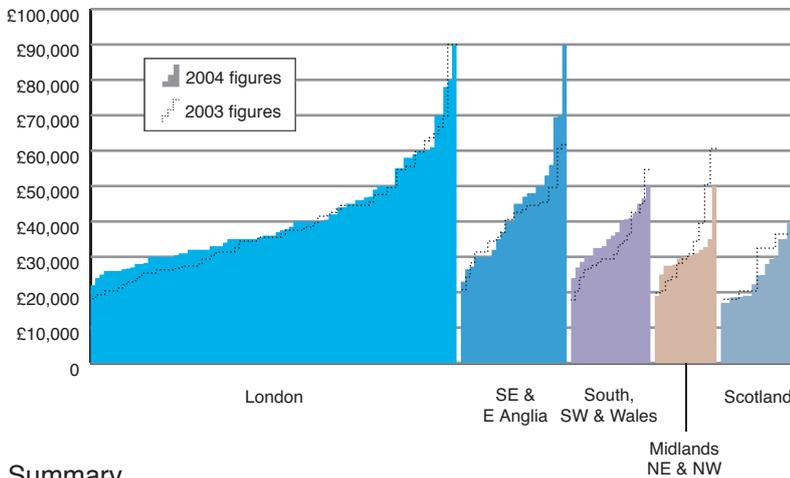
So long service leads to a higher salary on average - but it is far from guaranteed.

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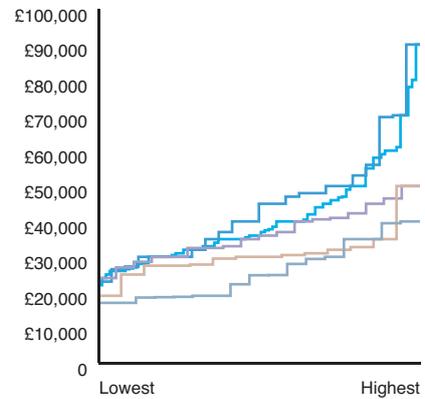


Salary according to region

All responses (grouped by region)



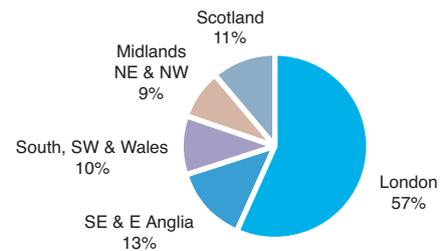
Comparison of regional salary profiles



Summary

	London	SE & E Anglia	South, SW, Wales	Midlands, NE, NW	Scotland
Min	£22,000	£23,000	£24,000	£19,000	£17,000
Max	£90,000	£90,000	£50,000	£50,000	£40,000
Median	£36,000	£42,500	£35,500	£30,000	£26,425
Mean	£40,669	£43,844	£36,166	£30,541	£26,880
Base	83	24	18	14	20

Respondents' regions



National profile

Our salary survey asks respondents to state where they work, rather than live. This is a deliberate attempt to register the location of jobs, rather than respondents.

This may be the reason that London and the South East continue to provide the bulk of employment (and the highest salaries). The commuter zone around London extends into mainland Europe.

However, responses show there is a healthy presence of professionals in other parts of the country.

Average salaries (both mean and median) were once

again higher in the South East and East Anglia than in London.

The number of respondents in the South, South West and Wales was unchanged this year, though the mean salary rose by £3,385 - with rises across the board.

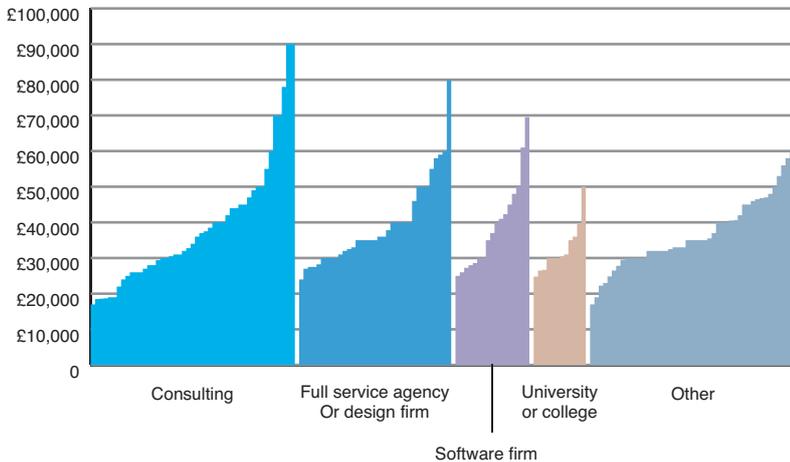
A new UPA chapter in Edinburgh was certainly responsible for the better response we received from Scotland - 20 responses this year compared with just 4 the previous year. However the salary profile and mean salary were not much changed from our 2003 survey.

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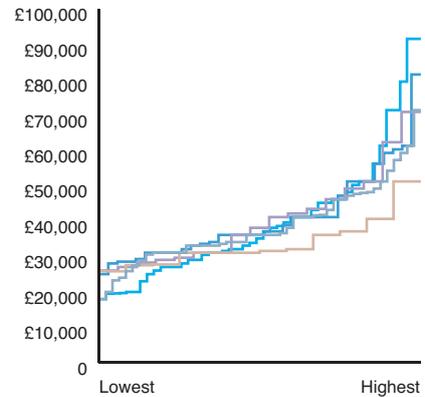


Salary according to employer type

All responses (grouped by employer type)



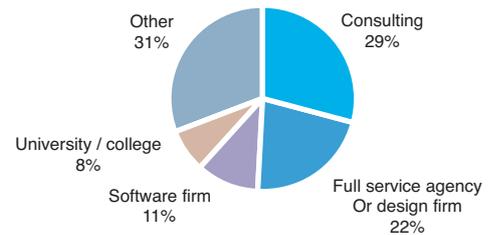
Comparison of employer salary profiles



Summary

	Consulting	Full service or design agency	Software firm	University or college	Other
Min	£17,000	£24,000	£25,000	£24,800	£17,000
Max	£90,000	£80,000	£69,500	£50,000	£70,000
Median	£34,000	£35,000	£37,000	£30,250	£35,000
Mean	£38,754	£39,301	£39,038	£32,500	£37,361
Base	47	35	17	12	48

Respondents' employer type



Public or private?

This year, our intention was to compare consultancy, private sector, public sector and academic respondents. However, we received so few responses from the public sector that this was impossible.

Given the public sector's supposed focus on accessibility, and the sums being spent on IT and projects within the public sector this is a worrying result for our industry.

UK UPA had hoped that there would be a significant number of people working in the public sector who had a detailed understanding of user centred design. These skills are important in specifying, managing

and evaluating projects and we had anticipated that more respondents would have seen usability as a significant part of their job. If user centred design is to be seen as a benefit, rather than a box to tick, more usability experts will be needed in the public sector.

Elsewhere, salaries seem broadly comparable, though top jobs in academia can't match those in other areas.

The 'other' category includes respondents from a very wide range of private and public sector industries.

2004 Salary Survey



Data collection

Data was collected between 10 November and 9 December 2004 via an online form hosted on the SurveyMonkey website.

The form was based on the 2003 form. New responses were added to the question 'Please select the following tools, techniques or activities that you use in your job'. These were 'eye tracking' and an open-ended response.

No problems were experienced with the hosting of the form or data collection.

The survey was announced at meetings of the UK UPA in London and in the UK UPA's E-mail newsletter as well as on specialist E-mail lists and web sites (including the UK UPA's web site and UsabilityNews).

Regional usability groups (such as SWUG) and other national groups (such as Scottish UPA) publicised the survey, and its existence was reported as far away as Australia.

The invitations stressed the anonymous nature of the survey and the fact that respondents did not have to be UPA members to take part. Respondents were also encouraged to ask their colleagues to take part.

Some respondents experienced problems with the URL as it appeared in some E-mail lists. This appears to have been due to corruptions in the E-mail. It was resolved by publishing a 'Tiny URL' using the TinyURL web site.

Data analysis

Data was downloaded as a CSV file from SurveyMonkey and sorted using Microsoft Excel. All graphs were produced using Adobe Illustrator.

Of the 242 results collected the following results were excluded from the main analysis:

26 respondents did not give UK as their main place of work. Although we had several respondents from Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic we did not include these in the final analysis because we were concerned over preserving the anonymity of these respondents.

19 respondents did not provide any salary details.

34 respondents identified themselves as Freelancers. These responses are summarised on the first page of this document.

2 identified themselves as part time - again, too few to include in the results.

1 response was removed from the results on the grounds that it was a test response containing no 'real' data.

1 response was excluded on the grounds that the data was improbable and, therefore, either incorrect or unrepresentative of the population.

In total, 159 responses were included in the main analysis, compared with 135 (from 177 responses received) in 2003.

NB in some sections, fewer than 159 responses have been counted as respondents may not have answered the relevant questions or have been discounted for reasons given in the accompanying text.