TECHWRITE STL "MEMBERS' FAVORITE TOOLS" SURVEY

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MARCH 2021 (REVISED 3/18/21)

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GENERAL

- 16 respondents answered at least one question (Thanks!)
- Employment type
  - 11 self-employed
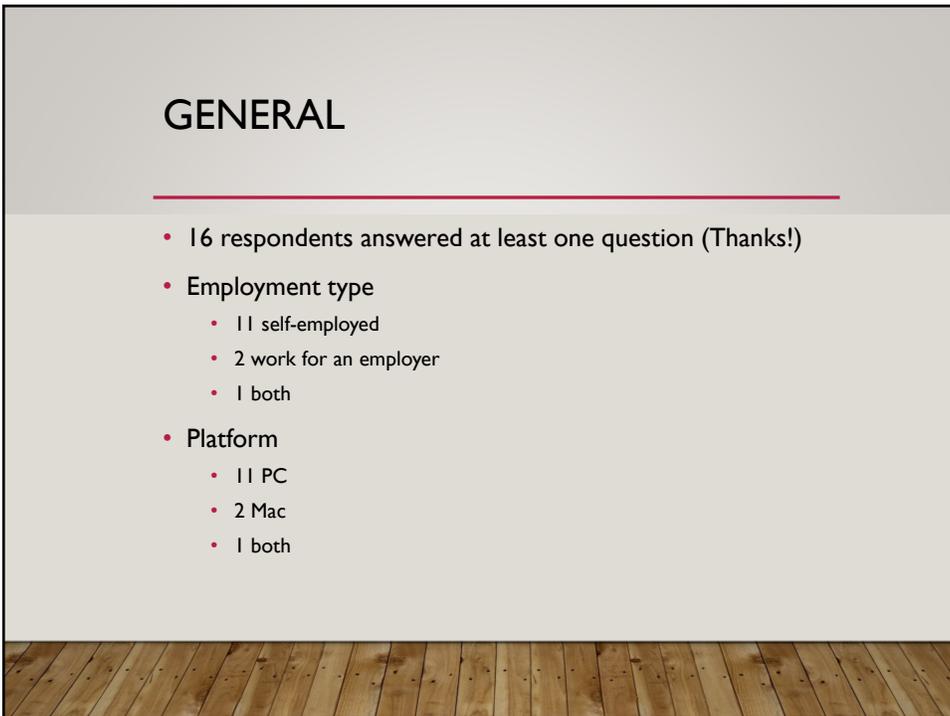 - 2 work for an employer
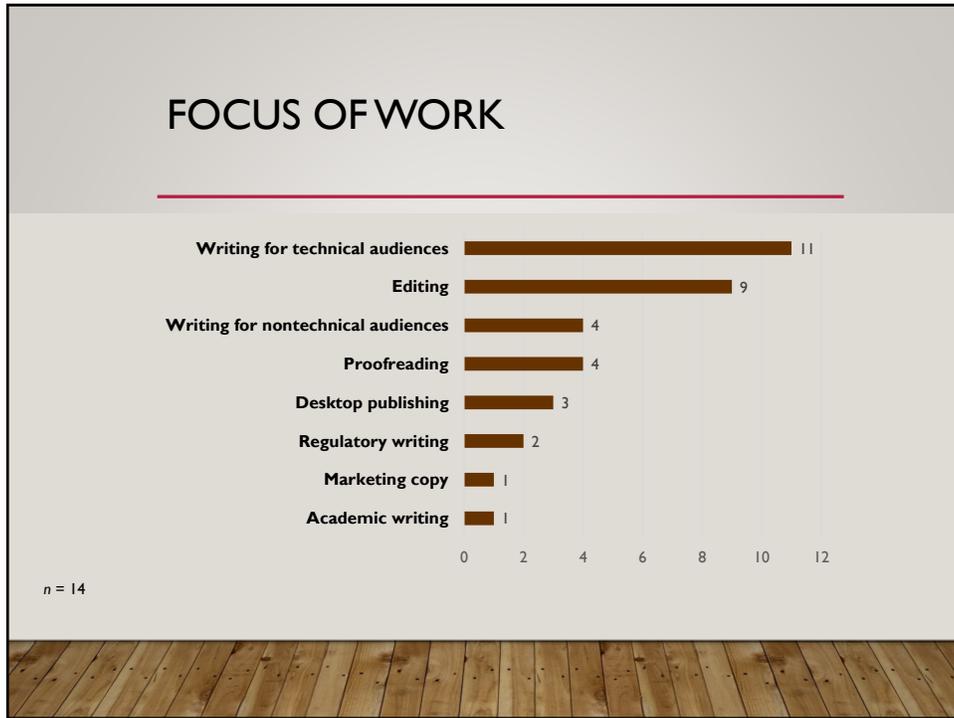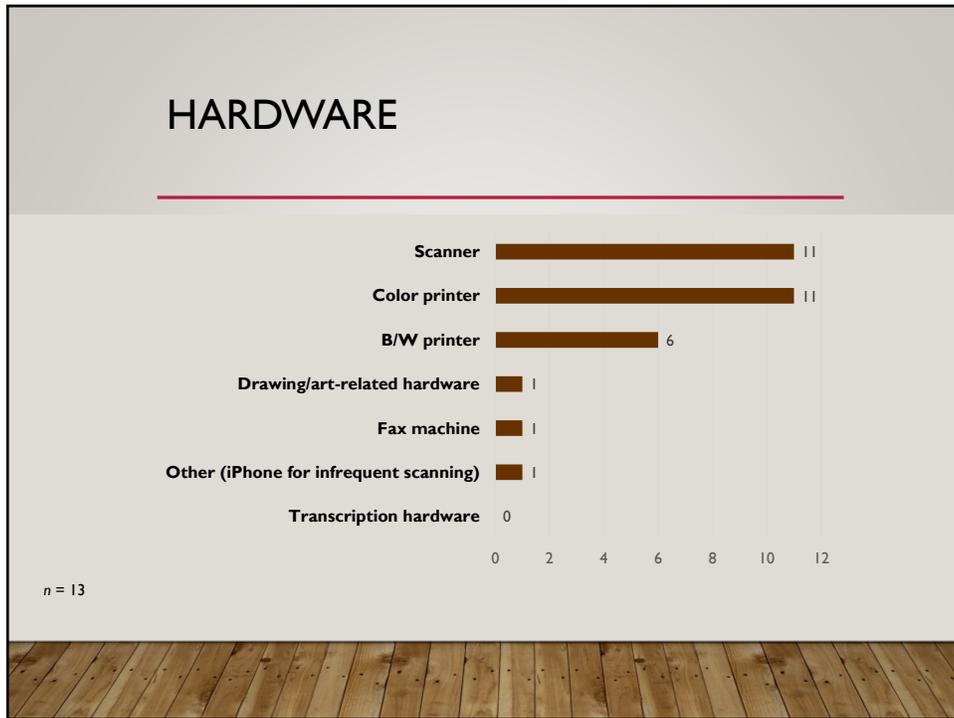 - 1 both
- Platform
  - 11 PC
  - 2 Mac
  - 1 both

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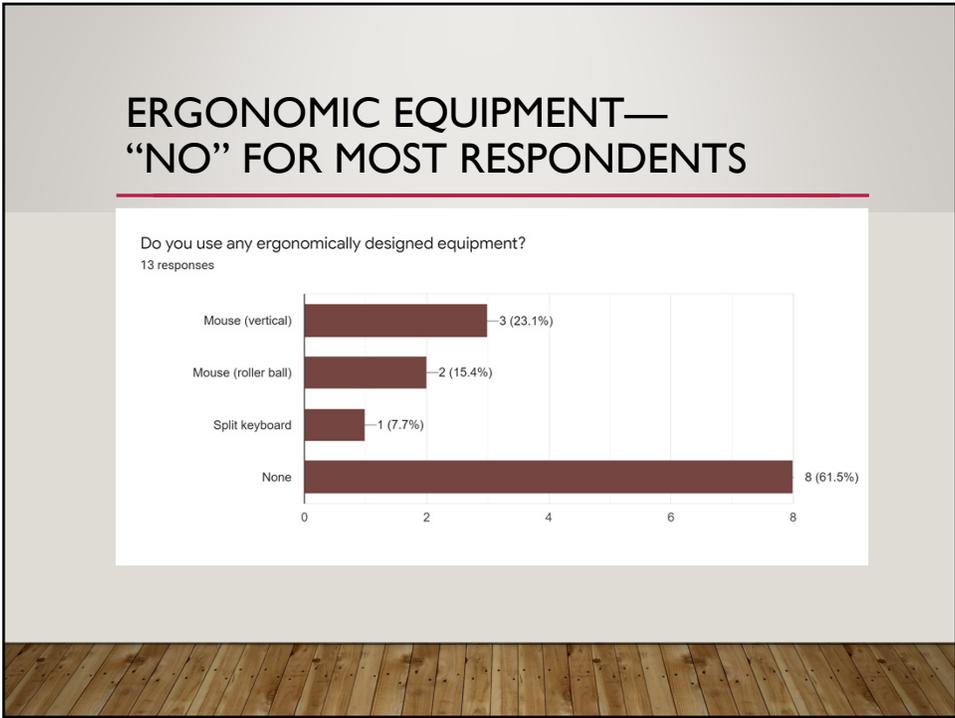

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MOST RESPONDENTS EITHER HAVE OR WOULD LIKE TO USE 2 MONITORS

How many monitors do you have?	Would you use more if you could?
2-3	
2 large	No
2	
2 in office, 1 at home	Yes (1 more at home)
2	No
1-2	Prefer 2
1-2	
2	Probably not
1	Yes
1	Yes if employer would provide
1	Can use 2 with some rearranging
1	
1	Would love several ;-)
1	No

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ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT— "NO" FOR MOST RESPONDENTS

Do you use any ergonomically designed equipment?
13 responses

Mouse (vertical)	3 (23.1%)
Mouse (roller ball)	2 (15.4%)
Split keyboard	1 (7.7%)
None	8 (61.5%)

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COMMENTS ON HARDWARE

- I love my Brother all-in-one color laser printer/scanner!
- I really like having two monitors (one main for writing/editing; one on the side for reference material). My printer is a Brother multi-functional laser printer (print, copy, scan, fax) that I also really like. My Nulaxy vertical mouse was much cheaper than others (approx $12) but works just as well as pricier models I've tried.
- The Microsoft Sculpt keyboard and wireless mouse are great. Yumqua has a mini handheld track ball mouse (Y-01) it's not perfect but using it some of the time can help relieve pressure on the wrist.
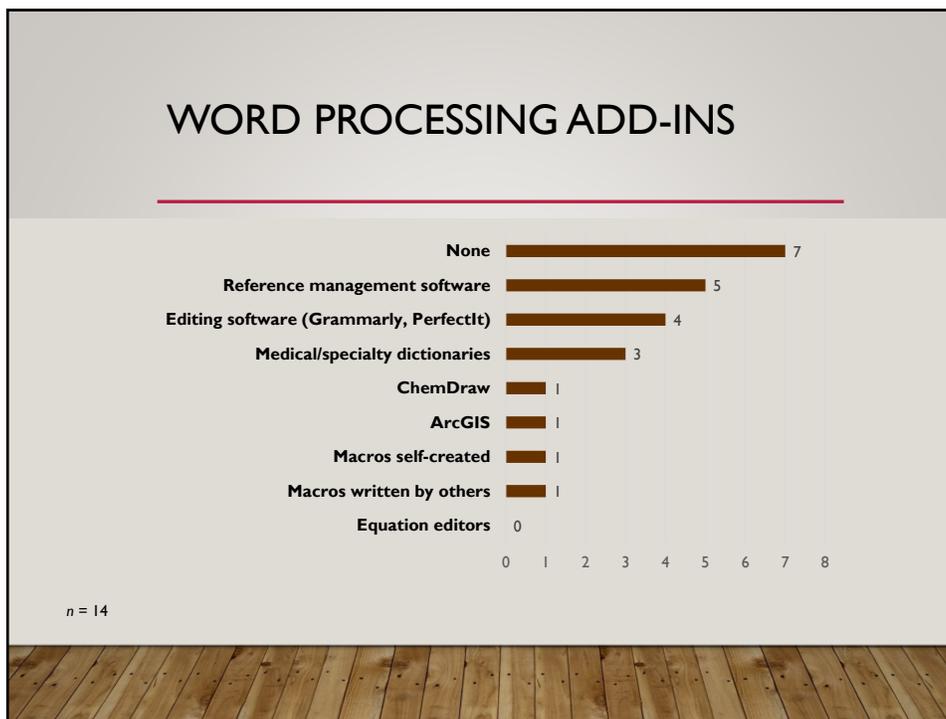
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WORD PROCESSING SOFTWARE

14 responses

Microsoft Word	14 (100%)
Google Docs	9 (64.3%)
OpenOffice or other open-source word pr…	0 (0%)
Pages (preferred for working; usually e…	1 (7.1%)

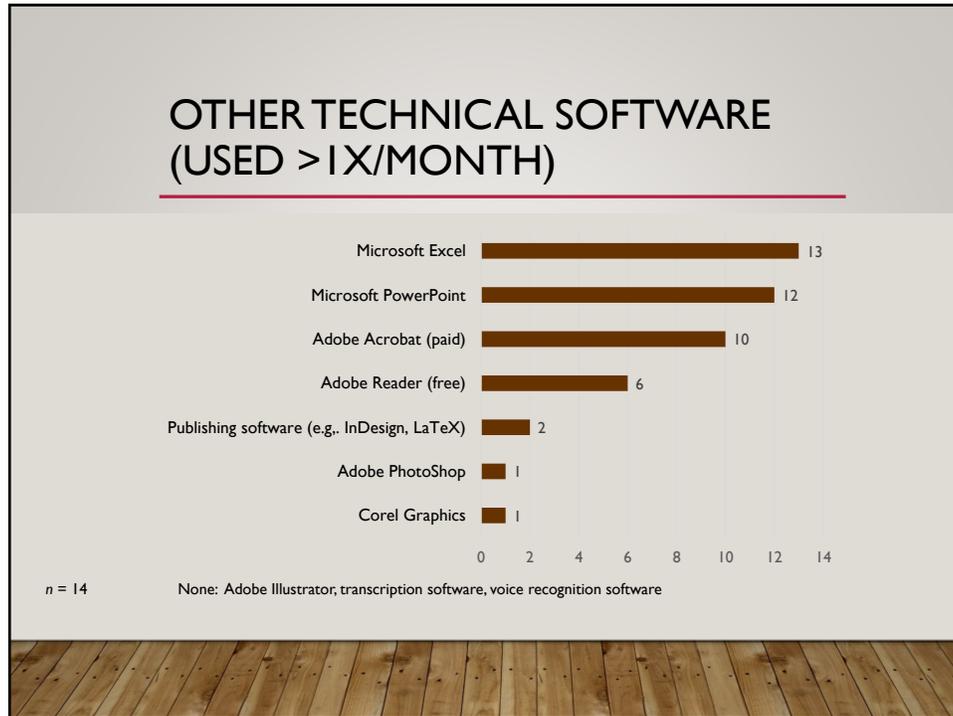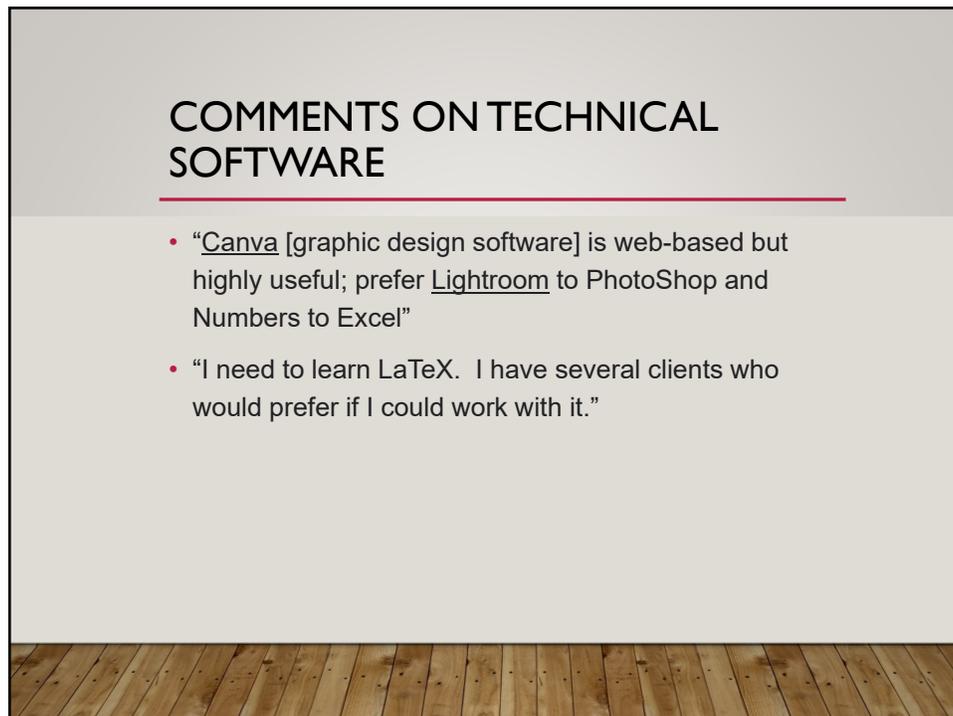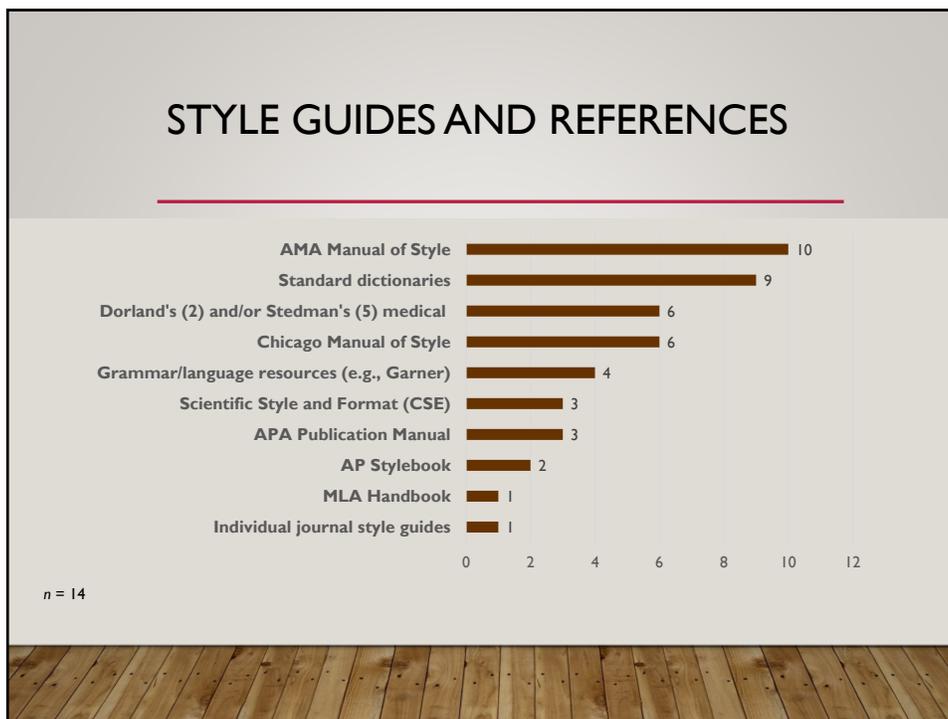Pages (preferred for working; usually export final draft to Word)

0   5   10   15

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WORD PROCESSING ADD-INS

Category	Value
None	7
Reference management software	5
Editing software (Grammarly, PerfectIt)	4
Medical/specialty dictionaries	3
ChemDraw	1
ArcGIS	1
Macros self-created	1
Macros written by others	1
Equation editors	0

$n = 14$

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COMMENTS ON ADD-INS

- "EndNote, Grammarly, and PerfectIt are most useful for me and what I recommend to others"

- EndNote is a terrific tool for large reference lists.

- Although I have EndNote, I rarely use it because I do more editing than writing and clients have their own ways to do references. I use and recommend PerfectIt. I use macros and Word's AutoCorrect function for repeated insertions of text. I've got a few specialty dictionaries (medical, chemical, Japanese) made by other users.

- I would probably use more tools or customizations but truthfully haven't taken the time to figure them out.

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OTHER TECHNICAL SOFTWARE (USED >1X/MONTH)

Software	Value
Microsoft Excel	13
Microsoft PowerPoint	12
Adobe Acrobat (paid)	10
Adobe Reader (free)	6
Publishing software (e.g,. InDesign, LaTeX)	2
Adobe PhotoShop	1
Corel Graphics	1

n = 14   None: Adobe Illustrator, transcription software, voice recognition software

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COMMENTS ON TECHNICAL SOFTWARE

- "Canva [graphic design software] is web-based but highly useful; prefer Lightroom to PhotoShop and Numbers to Excel"

- "I need to learn LaTeX. I have several clients who would prefer if I could work with it."

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WEBSITES— GRAMMAR AND WRITING

- Grammar Girl
- english.stackexchange.com
- acronymfinder.com
- OneLook Dictionary Search
- Purdue OWL

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WEBSITES—REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL

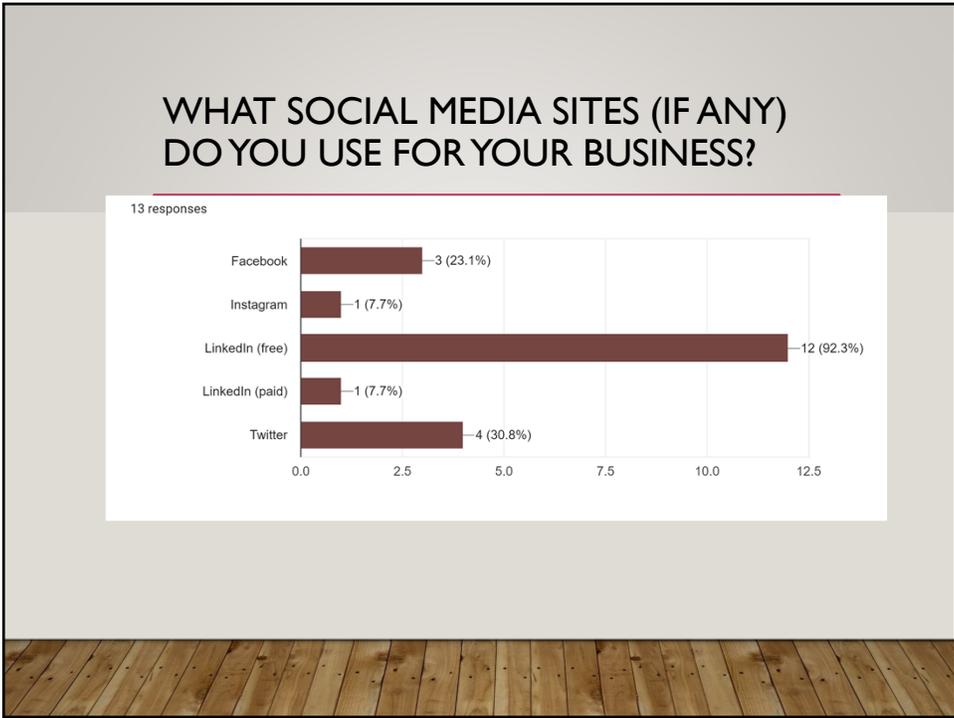- wikipedia.com (just for broad, superficial, or quick checks)
- https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html (time conversion)
- http://www.worldfloraonline.org/ (to check plant species names)
- https://www.uniprot.org/taxonomy/ (to check species names)
- https://cassi.cas.org/ (journal name abbreviations)
- Google Scholar
- PubMed
- NLM catalog (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/)
- "I have a whole collection on my business website: https://www.joannemcandrews.com/links"

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DO YOU HAVE A WEBSITE?

n = 14

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WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA SITES (IF ANY) DO YOU USE FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

13 responses

- Facebook — 3 (23.1%)
- Instagram — 1 (7.7%)
- LinkedIn (free) — 12 (92.3%)
- LinkedIn (paid) — 1 (7.7%)
- Twitter — 4 (30.8%)
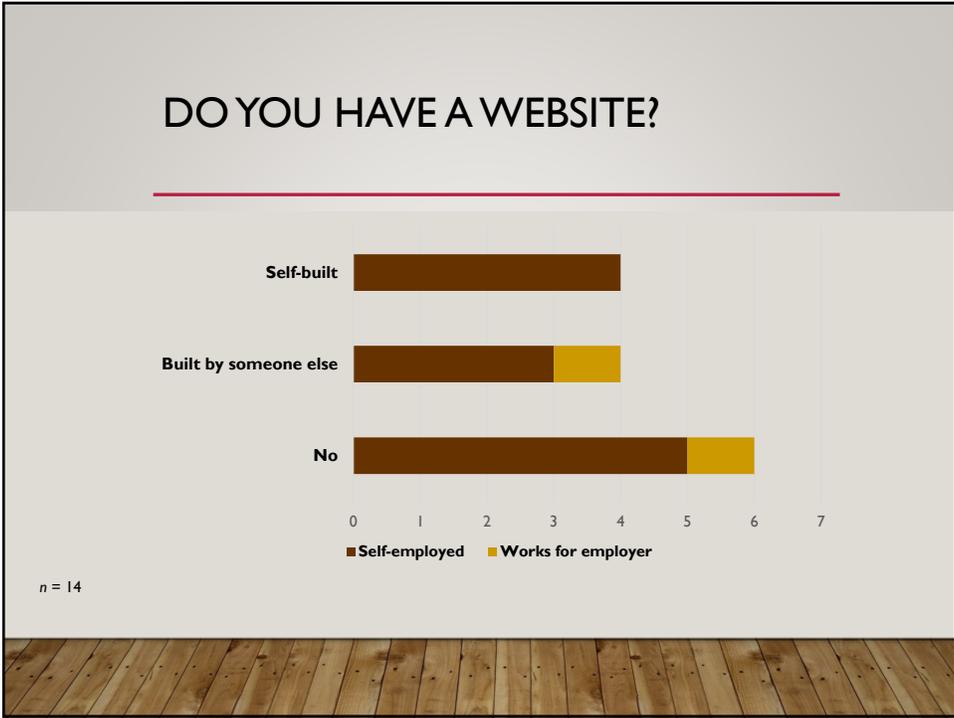
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MOST USEFUL SOCIAL MEDIA

- "LinkedIn if I'm looking for people, the others if I'm looking for content"
- "LinkedIn, since it's the business networking site"
- "I only used LinkedIn professionally, and not enough. I'm trying to use it more since everyone says it's key to finding clients."
- "I use social media as little as possible but find LinkedIn useful for locating colleagues."
- "FB and LI"
- "Twitter"
- "I don't really emphasize my business on them and rely primarily on word-of-mouth."

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USE OF TIME-TRACKING SOFTWARE? NOT TOO MUCH.

- Toggl--very easy to use. I only use it PRN [as needed] and not for all projects.
- OfficeTime--very helpful for time tracking regardless of whether I'm being paid by the hour on a particular project
- Asana
- Not yet but I plan to once I begin to freelance full time. For now, I just use Excel for tracking my projects.
- No, but I think I need to get some.
- No

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ACCOUNTING/INVOICING SOFTWARE

- I have used QuickBooks but all of my current clients use online platforms that generate invoices and it is no longer useful to generate my own invoices in most situations.

- I use an old version of QuickBooks Pro (2009). Newer ones are more pricey and I think require subscriptions.

- Quickbooks and I don't [like it]; I end up using a spreadsheet as well just so I can understand it.

- Quickbooks

- I bill one client through Square but otherwise use Excel or fixed agreements are in place and no invoice is needed.

- No (2; 1 self-employed and 1 employed)

    All 5 who specified an accounting program are self-employed.

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OUTSIDE SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

See "Summary" file for full list

(Includes website designers and other professionals)

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ANY ONE RESOURCE THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND (I)…

- EndNote (2 votes; 1 called it "fabulous")
- AMA Manual of Style (2 votes; 1 specified online version)
- "Being a freelance forced me to learn Google Docs, and it's my go-to now. I love being able to work in the cloud, from any computer, and it's very easy to share documents. I also think having a second monitor was life-changing!"
- Probably PerfectIt, because it finds many of the little inconsistencies and allows me to spend time on the more difficult items. A close second is OfficeTime.
- OneLook Dictionary Search
- PubMed

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ANY ONE RESOURCE THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND (II)…

- "I really like Windows Video Editor. It's easy to use and you can learn how to use it by watching a 30-minute YouTube tutorial."
- "InDesign is growing on me, although I don't find it to be intuitive."
- "Canva. I'm not a designer by trade, but this has enabled me to create much more professional layouts without outsourcing."
- "I work on journals, so it would be our manuscript-submission system."
- "I can't think of one in particular. I use many that I value."

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OTHER COMMENTS

- "[A]ccess to PubMed and full journal articles has been crucial for me."
- "Join a professional society, such as the American Medical Writers Association!"
    - AMWA members receive a 20% discount when purchasing the AMA Manual of Style.
- "You didn't mention Zoom! :) Also, Slack works well for organizing group projects."
- "PubMed (especially the "Cite option), MedlinePlus, DailyMed, NLM Drug Information Portal, AMWA resources, Chicago Manual of Style"

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POSSIBLE FUTURE TOPICS

- Video conferencing software, hardware, best practices
- Backup software, hardware, best practices
- Survey software ☺
    - I found Google Forms easy to use for survey development and administration, less so for summarizing results.

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