TECHWRITE STL
“MEMBERS’ FAVORITE TOOLS” SURVEY

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MARCH 2021 (REVISED 3/18/21)

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
FOCUS OF WORK

- Writing for technical audiences: 11
- Editing: 9
- Writing for nontechnical audiences: 4
- Proofreading: 4
- Desktop publishing: 3
- Regulatory writing: 2
- Marketing copy: 1
- Academic writing: 1

n = 14

HARDWARE

- Scanner: 11
- Color printer: 11
- B/W printer: 6
- Drawing/art-related hardware: 1
- Fax machine: 1
- Other (iPhone for infrequent scanning): 1
- Transcription hardware: 0

n = 13
MOST RESPONDENTS EITHER HAVE OR WOULD LIKE TO USE 2 MONITORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many monitors do you have?</th>
<th>Would you use more if you could?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 large</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 in office, 1 at home</td>
<td>Yes (1 more at home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:2</td>
<td>Prefer 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Probably not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes if employer would provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Can use 2 with some rearranging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Would love several ;-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

WORD PROCESSING SOFTWARE

14 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Word</td>
<td>14 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Docs</td>
<td>9 (64.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OpenOffice or other open-source word pr.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages (preferred for working; usually export final draft to Word)</td>
<td>4 (28.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
word processing add-ins

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

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.
OTHER TECHNICAL SOFTWARE (USED >1X/MONTH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Excel</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft PowerPoint</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Acrobat (paid)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Reader (free)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing software (e.g., InDesign, LaTeX)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe PhotoShop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corel Graphics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 14

None: Adobe Illustrator, transcription software, voice recognition software

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.”
STYLE GUIDES AND REFERENCES

- AMA Manual of Style 10
- Standard dictionaries 9
- Dorland’s (2) and/or Stedman’s (5) medical 6
- Chicago Manual of Style 6
- Grammar/language resources (e.g., Garner) 4
- Scientific Style and Format (CSE) 3
- APA Publication Manual 3
- AP Stylebook 2
- MLA Handbook 1
- Individual journal style guides 1

n = 14
WEBSITES—GRAMMAR AND WRITING

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

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
- “I have a whole collection on my business website: https://www.joannemcandrews.com/links”
DO YOU HAVE A WEBSITE?

Self-built
Built by someone else
No

n = 14

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

13 responses

Facebook 3 (23.1%)
Instagram 1 (7.7%)
LinkedIn (has) 12 (92.3%)
LinkedIn (said) 1 (7.7%)
Twitter 4 (30.8%)
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."

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
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.

OUTSIDE SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

See “Summary” file for full list

(Includes website designers and other professionals)
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

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."
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”

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.
THANK YOU!!