

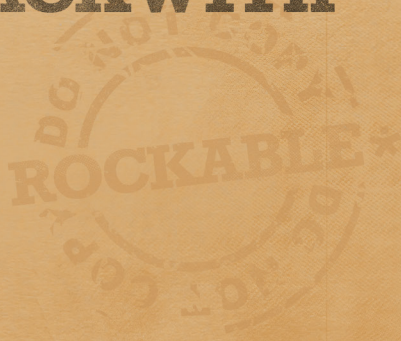
ROCKABLE*

FREELANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

The Whole Truth on
Successful Freelancing!

AMANDA HACKWITH



FREELANCE

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INTRODUCTION

What this Book's All About

Freelancing is a solitary pursuit by nature. Frequently, you are working in isolation from a home office (or the occasional coffee shop). Even if you are contracted to work on site, freelancers are often relegated to outside the community of the workplace. We're transitory, temporary. We're "other."

As Editor of FreelanceSwitch, one of my most rewarding experiences has been to witness online spaces where communities of freelancers can share experiences, advice, and questions. It is important to have spaces where freelancers are no longer an "Other." Instead, they're "Us."

Frequently, in these discussions, the same questions always come up. "How much do you charge?" "Where do you find your clients?" Freelancers want to know. We need that information. We want to see how we're doing compared to others and how we can improve.

This book aims to answer some of those sensitive questions and use the experience of experts and our survey respondents to show you how to expand your business. FreelanceSwitch asked freelancers of varying backgrounds and experience to anonymously answer frank questions about every aspect of the world of freelance. Over 3,200 members generously responded. Their answers gave us the straight numbers on freelancing, including:

- Rates, how much you charge, how much your local colleagues are charging.
- How many hours you work, how many hours you bill.
- Where you find most of your paying clients.

- How freelancers really feel about their profession.
- The future of freelance business.

In the first part of the book, we'll look at what those numbers mean for new and experienced freelancers, and we'll also look at how those numbers reflect any change in the freelance landscape since the original 2007 survey. For the full survey results, be sure to check out the appendix at the end of the book.

In the second half of the book, we'll build on those numbers with advice from our experts and suggestions for growing your business in key areas — things you can do right now, this minute. We'll finish with an interview with Collis Ta'eed, CEO of Envato, founder of FreelanceSwitch, and general entrepreneurial veteran.

This book is **not** a how-to guide on freelancing; for that, you'll want to check out the *How to Be A Rockstar Freelancer*, written by Collis Ta'eed, also by Rockable Press. (<http://rockablepress.com/books/rockstar-freelancer/>) This book will not tell you how to file your taxes or build your portfolio. However, if you're a freelancer and want to know how others like you are doing and how to take your business to the next level, we'll get you there. Find out where your colleagues are finding their clients, how they're estimating projects, or billing their hours. If you want to know how freelancing has changed (or stayed the same) in the last three years, we'll show you the numbers.

But numbers will only take us so far! To get the whole picture on freelancing, we need to put faces to the numbers. Ten of the most prolific and successful freelance experts in our community sat down with us to share their experiences and advice they would give to fellow freelancers. You'll hear from the likes of Ed Gandia, founder of International Freelancers Day and Freelance Academy, James Chartrand from Men With Pens, Collis Ta'eed, founder of FreelanceSwitch and co-founder of Envato, and many more.

We've aimed to pack this book full of all the useful numbers and experiences that you'll will need to assess your business. Find it helpful? Make sure you visit us back at [FreelanceSwitch](#) to let us know about it!

Let's get started!

Meet the Experts

Ten experts from our freelance community took time out of their very busy schedules to talk with us. Successful designers, writers, bloggers, well-known entrepreneurs, they all at some point were one man shops working their way up. Whatever your experience or industry, you've likely heard from one of these experts before.



James Chartrand is the owner and founder of Men with Pens, the world-class web design and web copy team that also produces one of the top leading blogs for freelancers, writers and online entrepreneurs today.



Ed Gandia is a founding partner of International Freelancers Academy and co-founder of International Freelancers Day (www.InternationalFreelancersDay.com) the world's biggest online educational conference for solo professionals. He's also a successful freelance copywriter, speaker and trainer, as well as the co-author of the bestselling book *The Wealthy Freelancer: 12 Secrets to a Great Income and an Envious Lifestyle* (Penguin/Alpha).



Linda Formichelli has written for more than 130 magazines, from *Pizza Today* to *Redbook*, and is the co-author of *The Renegade Writer: A Totally Unconventional Guide to Freelance Writing Success*. Linda teaches an e-course on breaking into magazines and offers phone mentoring for freelance writers. She lives in Concord, NH, with her freelancer husband and toddler son. Her website is <http://www.lindaformichelli.com> and her blog is <http://www.therenegadewriter.com>.



Travis King is a long time freelancer who has a strange obsession for most things Asian. When he's not running his web design business Green Tea Design (www.greenteadesign.ca) you'll either find him writing for his Japan travel site I Heart Japan (www.iheartjapan.ca) or doing work for his favorite client Envato (www.envato.com) (which just so happens to be one of the clients he pestered until they hired him).



Benek Lisefski is a popular face in the FreelanceSwitch community, and an experienced web designer with a passion for creative design, typography, clean hand-coded HTML/CSS/JavaScript, and great user experiences. Based in Auckland, New Zealand, he works for local and international clients both large and small to create tailored web solutions that are beautiful and easy to use on both the front and the back-end. Professionalism, reliability, and great communication keep each and every one of his clients satisfied and coming back for more. His portfolio is at www.benekdesign.com.



Chris McConnell is the co-founder and co-editor of FreelanceReview.net, a design magazine that has created crave-worthy content since 2009. Chris also co-founded Brandeluxe.com, a freelance design company. Follow Chris on Twitter: [@FreelanceReview](https://twitter.com/FreelanceReview) and [@Brandeluxe](https://twitter.com/Brandeluxe)



Collis Ta'eed started freelancing in 2003, and he's the co-founder of [Envato](#), the parent company of FreelanceSwitch, Rockable Press and dozens of other sites including the popular series of [Tuts+](#) tutorial sites and the [Envato Marketplaces](#). There's no doubt that Collis has established himself and Envato as a powerhouse in the web development and design community.



Amber Leigh Turner is a graphic and web designer from Nashville, Tennessee, focused in branding design and development. A full-time freelancer and full-time student, Amber spends most of her time doing what she loves to do, and nothing less. Amber is also the muscle behind [studentsthatfreelance.com](#), a blog and forum community dedicated to all things student freelancing. Visit her website at [amberturner.com](#).



N.C. Winters has been freelancing off and on since 2002, but made the jump to full time in 2007 after a move to Southern California. He works as a cartoonist, illustrator, designer, and all around creative guy. His artworks can be seen at [ncwinters.com](#). He does a weekly comic about freelancing called *Freelance Freedom* which can be seen at [freelanceswitch.com](#), and with the birth of his son, has recently launched a new website about the absurdity of parenting at [NoodleKnobs.com](#).



Lea Woodward is a freelance business coach and runs a number of online businesses and communities, including Location Independent (locationindependent.com) and Kinetiva (kinetiva.com). She blogs at www.LeaWoodward.com and can be found on Twitter at [@leawoodward](https://twitter.com/leawoodward).



FREELANCE FREEDOM

BY N.C. WINTERS



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM FREELANCE FREEDOM!

The 2010 Survey: Portrait of a Freelancer

This chapter will compare results between the 2007 and 2010 global freelancer surveys and discuss the changes in the make-up of the freelance market. In particular, we'll look at:

- Changes in the basic demographics of gender, age, and location.
- Differences in experience and background.
- Tips you can take away from the survey to improve your own business.

Before we can dive into the attributes and behaviors that will give you an edge in your business, we need to take a step back and see where we are as a whole. To know where we're going, we have to know where we are and where we've been. Consider it our "You Are Here" map for the trip. (If the demographics of your fellow freelancers don't interest you, feel free to skip ahead to the *Big Questions*.)

Over 3,200 freelancers responded to our Global Freelancing Survey and provided a complete portrait on freelancing, which we can compare to the 2007 edition and see some interesting developments. It's been a big year (or three). 2010 saw a significant rise in self-employed individuals. **Ed Gandia**, freelance copywriter and founder of International Freelancers Day, thinks changes are here to stay:

“ I'm seeing a continuation of the trend that started gaining momentum about three years ago, where a growing number of organizations are less willing or able to hire full-time employees. Interestingly, the

workload in many of these organizations has not decreased all that much. But because they're working with a leaner staff, they have to outsource projects and tasks to freelancers and outside vendors. This trend has only helped my business, and I truly believe that even when the economy rebounds, we will continue to see more of it. Organizations simply don't want the risk that comes with hiring more employees, and they're getting more and more used to paying for deliverables rather than for someone's time. ”

E lance reports that “contingent” or freelance workers have grown to nearly 40% of the workforce, and in the past year alone, 300,000 professionals chose to begin a freelance career on the job website. Likewise, [Monster.com](#) has seen a significant spike in contract job listings (42% in March 2010 alone). The media is fond of heralding the increase of on-going contract workers, sometimes called *permatemps* or *permalancers*, as the new norm for the work force.¹ Freelancing is suddenly *en vogue*.

So what's changed and how does it effect you? Some highlights include:

- Increased freelancing in Asia and Europe.
- A more rural shift. More freelancers are working in medium-sized cities to small towns, with fewer living in the biggest urban centers.
- Surprising news about happiness and income.
- Previous work for a full-time employer can benefit your business.

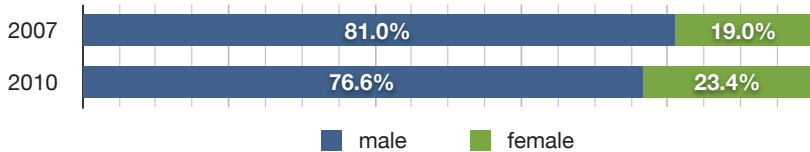
¹ “Need a job? Contract work could be new normal.” MSNBC. May 6, 2010. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36826679/ns/business-going_green/

Identity: Who is Freelancing

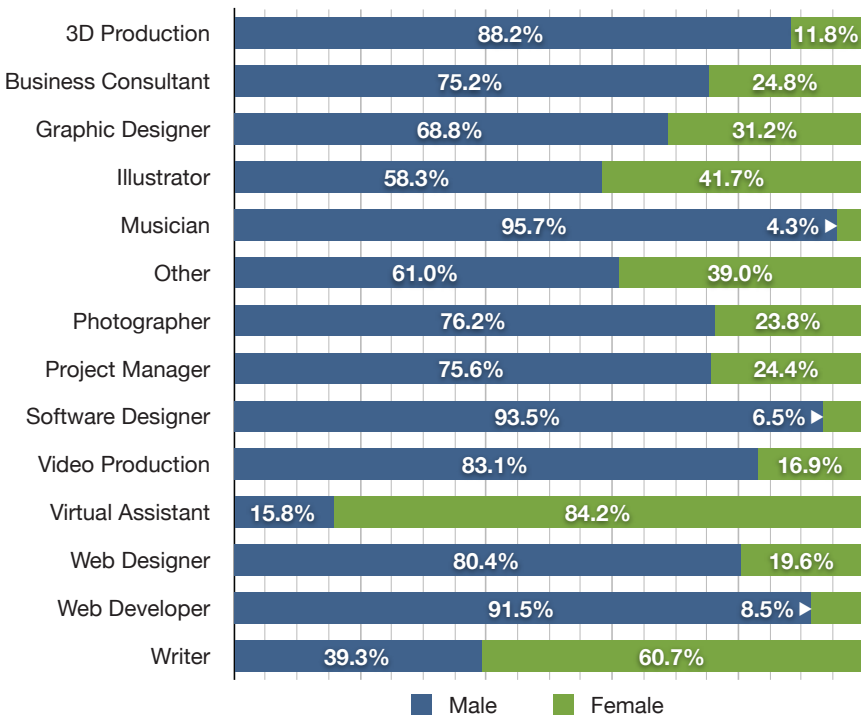
Gender

The distance provided by working alone and selecting your own clients makes freelancing an exceptionally egalitarian profession, however female freelancers continue to remain a minority. More women are branching out into self-employed work in 2007, though the freelance market continues to be dominated by men. From 2007 to 2010, there was a 4% increase in women freelancers.

Overall



Gender by Profession



While there are more female freelancers in some roles, like graphic designers, web designers and writers, women are still a freelancing minority. In fact, communication-centered roles like Writers and Virtual Assistants were the only professions that resulted in more female than male respondents.

Despite the low number of female freelancers, it's important to note that on almost every other result, female freelancers reported just as much success, income, experience, and happiness as their male counterparts. Although women may not be as inclined or encouraged to build a freelance business, those that choose to do so enjoy equal success.

Age

The age of self-employed freelancers continues to skew towards young, with an average age of 30. Part-time freelancers are slightly lower at 28 and full-time freelancers are slightly older at 32.

To get a better look at how age effects your freelancing and how various elements change over the course of a freelancer's life, we pulled in some other numbers:

Age	Avg. Income	Hourly Rate	Hours per week	Happiness
< 21	\$12,756	\$29.91	Less than 5 hours	99.5%
21-30	\$17,962	\$48.62	40 to 60 hours	92.1%
31-40	\$42,790	\$65.55	10 to 20 hours	90%
41-50	\$54,223	\$71.67	20 to 30 hours	94.2%
51+	\$68,271	\$77.52	40 to 60 hours	90.4%

Note: Hours per week was averaged by using the majority response. All statistics include both full-time and part-time freelancers.

The results are certainly interesting. Income-earning potential increases steadily through out the life of a freelancer, with the

most drastic jump appearing in the 20 year old and 30 to 40 year old brackets. This paints the most “successful” freelancer as being middle aged, highly skilled, and has worked as a freelancer for more than eight years. It is fairly easy to attribute this to experience: a highly trained professional who has successfully worked at their business for a number of years will have had time to build up client demand and keep rates high.

However, contrary to what you would assume, happiness does not appear to be tied to income. Reported happiness is highest in our very youngest freelancers, who are making the least amount of income. Young freelancers seem better equipped to handle the longer hours and relatively lower rates which come with a new business or a low level of experience. I’ll explore the issue of happiness and success more in the *Myths of Success* chapter.

TIP: SURVEY SAYS...

- ☑ Like most careers, a freelance business can take time to build. Invest as much time and energy into your work early on in order to set up the framework for success later in your career.
- ☑ Money isn’t everything. Happiness doesn’t necessarily peak with income — working hours, age, and ability to handle stress effect your perception of happiness. Take the time to evaluate what your personal goals are outside of income.



Location

2010 saw growth with more freelancers working from Asia and Europe, with a very slight decline in the Americas. With the economic growth of China and other countries in the region, I expect to see more entrepreneurs and freelancers over time in Asia. Continent of residence reflected very little difference in the results; Europeans enjoyed slightly better health benefits and

About The Author



Amanda Hackwith is the Editor of FreelanceSwitch (freelanceswitch.com), a freelancing blog and home to a growing community of expert freelancers from around the world. She also is Site Manager for Graphic-River (graphicriver.net), a creative stock marketplace for graphic design files. In her free time, she blogs about web-working and media at her personal blog.

Amanda lives in Omaha, Nebraska with her husband, Levi, and a family of cats and dogs. When she isn't writing, she's an avid gamer and likely to be found playing the latest MMORPG or tactics game. Amanda got her start designing and writing about new media in college and never looked back. You can find out more about Amanda on her blog: <http://www.amandahackwith.com>.

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In **Freelance Confidential**, FreelanceSwitch editor **Amanda Hackwith** uncovers the facts about freelancing and reveals what freelancers everywhere want to know:

- How much do others charge?
- Where do other freelancers get their clients?
- How many hours do they work?

Drawing on survey statistics from over 3,200 participants and insights from 10 notable freelancers, including Envato's founder **Collis Ta'eed**, **Amanda Hackwith** asks frank questions and gets the honest answers every freelancer should know.

