



UK BLOGGERS SURVEY 2019

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO INFLUENCER MARKETING

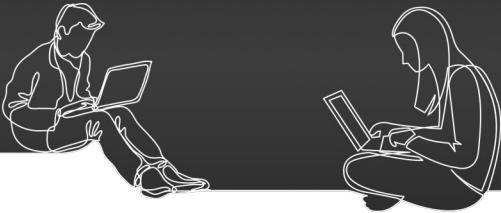


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1. Overview

Blogging is now a well-established media for consumers who rather than just focus on broad news coverage are also seeking specialist knowledge and information to match their interests and, often, mirror their opinions.

This survey was also conducted in 2016 and 2017, and along with the Vuelio Blog Awards, builds on the Vuelio network to develop a greater understanding of bloggers, the topics they cover, how they work with PR professionals and how they see their role changing in the future. This year's survey has a much greater focus on compensation as it is a topic that is attracting growing interest and debate.

The data for this year's survey was collected in 2018 and a number of key findings emerged:

- The year sees the rise of the professional blogger with the main reason for blogging being 'It's my main source of income'
- Bloggers are posting less frequently with most posting just once a week
- Over a quarter of all content published on a blog is compensated for in some way
- Five supersectors have emerged: Lifestyle, Food & Drink, Fashion & Beauty, Parenting and Travel
- Bloggers are still predominantly female, but the age profile of bloggers is more widely spread
- Lifestyle then parenting are the most popular blogging topics, with fashion seeing the biggest decline in the number of bloggers choosing this as their topic
- Lifestyle blogs are mostly written by females whereas travel blogging is split between men and women equally
- Most bloggers have just one blog which they own and manage – agents generally have little impact on their work
- Twitter and Facebook are the preferred channels to promote blog content, while Instagram, Pinterest and Bloglovin' are more popular with women and LinkedIn with men
- Traditional PR pitches based on sending press releases are ineffective as they're not resulting in published content
- Relationships with PRs are generally good but bloggers feel they lack credibility compared to traditional journalists
- Bloggers prefer to negotiate compensation based on non-quantifiable measures such as quality, whereas PRs use data to measure the blog performance
- Bloggers expect to increase the amount of advertising they carry and their audience to become more sceptical of their motives

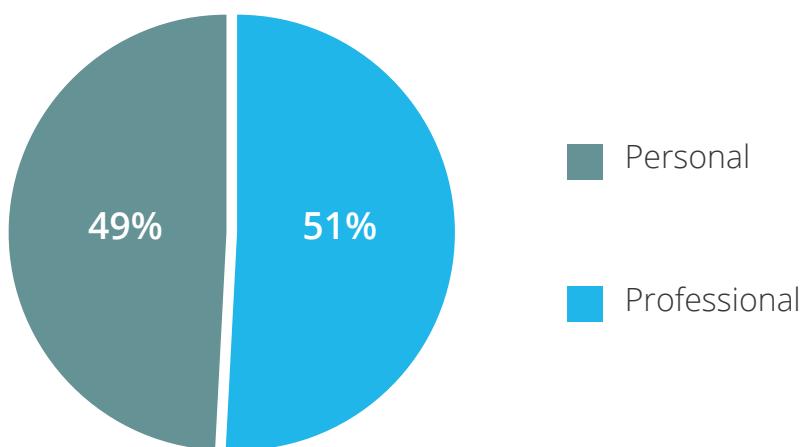


2. The rise of the professional

2.1 The rise of the professional blogger

Respondents reported an almost equal number of those blogging for personal and professional interests. The professional bloggers (those who seek to monetise their blog) have been growing quite rapidly – an increase of 17% since 2016.

Figure 1: Percentage split of those blogging for professional or personal reasons.



On further analysis, the biggest growth given in terms of why people blog is 'It's my main source of income', which increased by 10% to 18% in the last two years. 'It's a hobby' has also declined 10% (from 34% to 24%) as a main reason for blogging, which suggests that the trend is for bloggers to start their blogs as a hobby and then, as they grow, see new potential to pursue it as a money-making venture and career.

2.2 Increase in those using their blog as their main source of income

Overall, the trend for blogging shows that 18-24 years olds are most likely to blog for personal reasons, as do those 65+ (both 60%). However, a majority of 25-54 year olds (25-34, 35-44 and 45-54) are doing so for professional reasons (70%, 77%, and 67% respectively).

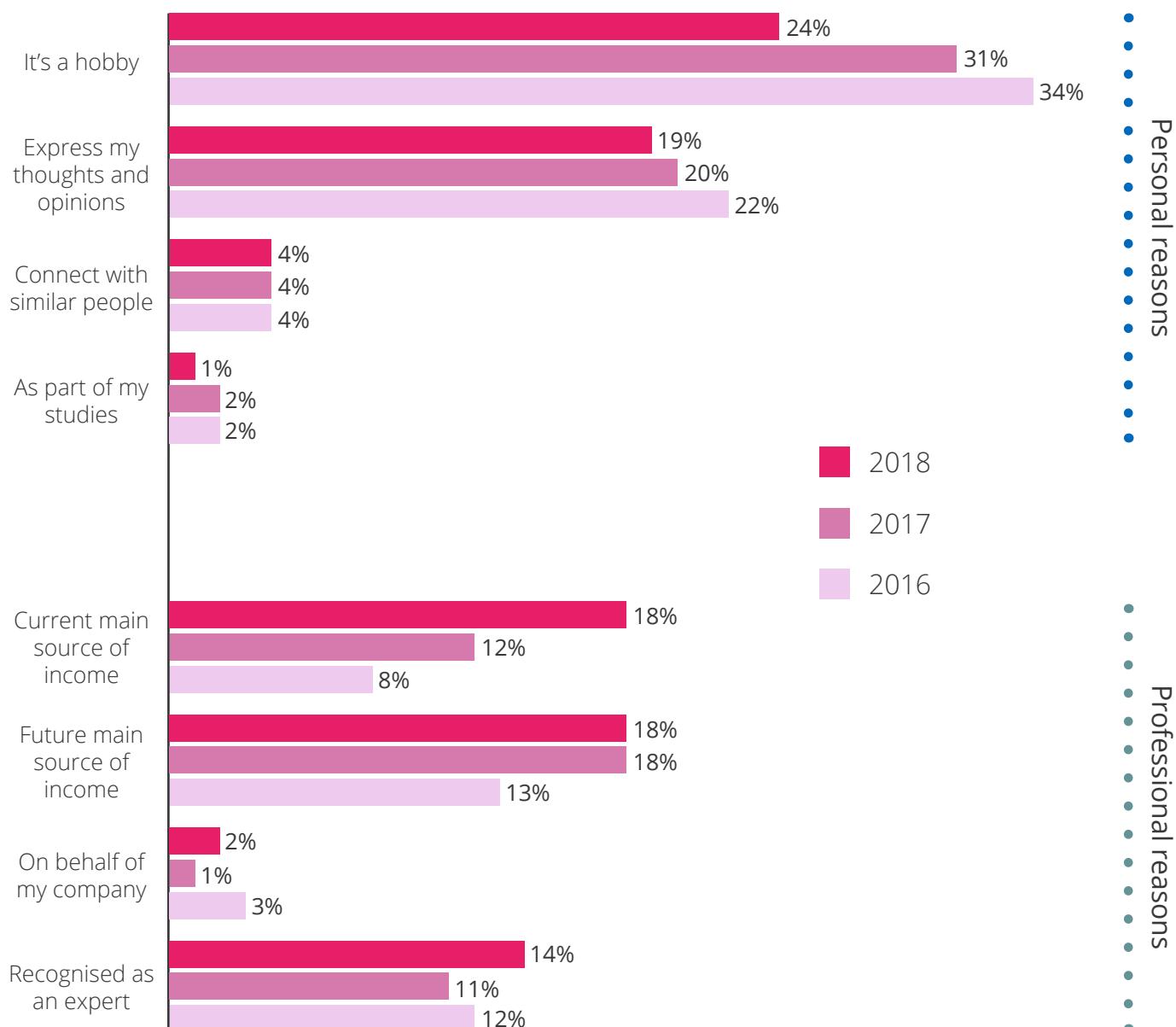
Table 1: Percentage of Professional Blogs 2016-2018

Year	% Professional Blogs
2016	34%
2017	42%
2018	51%

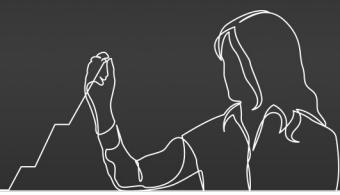


Men are equally likely to blog for personal (44%) and professional reasons (56%) however women are particularly dominant in developing their work professionally (72%) against 28% who do so for personal reasons. This might suggest that females, more than males, have better opportunity to develop their blogs with a higher proportion of part-time female workers and those who choose independent working to fit around other family and caring duties. However, this requires further research to support this assertion.

Figure 2: Reasons for blogging (%)



Note: Data excludes 'to keep in touch with family and friends' due to low response rate.



3. The growth of the supersector

3.1 Blogs focus on five 'supersectors'

The same top five categories have dominated over the last three years: Fashion & Beauty, Lifestyle, Parenting, Food & Drink and Travel. Fashion & Beauty appears to be in decline though, it has seen the biggest drop in number of blogs from 2016, and as this category is most likely to attract between 1,000 – 10,000 unique visitors per month (medium size), it suggests that the market for this topic is in decline.

Given their dominance, these categories have been named the 'supersectors' as they account for, on average, two-thirds of all blogs.

Table 2: Key categories for blogging over time

	2016	2017	2018	Change
Fashion & Beauty	22%	13%	8%	-14%
Lifestyle	22%	24%	20%	-2%
Parenting	9%	16%	13%	4%
Food & Drink	7%	8%	11%	4%
Travel	6%	9%	10%	4%
TOTAL	66%	70%	62%	-4%

Distribution of age by blog category shows that those aged 18-24 focus on Lifestyle (37%) and Fashion & Beauty (29%) whereas those aged 25-34 focus on Lifestyle (26%) and Parenting (18%). Those aged 35-54 blog across all categories with Parenting being the most popular (20%).

Choice of categories is completely different for the 55-64 age group, with Food & Drink (14%) followed by Travel (12%) and Nature/Gardens (12%) being preferred themes for their blogs. Those who are over 65 also indicated that they blogged more about Food & Drink (15%) than any other topic, meaning this supersector appeals strongly to those over 55.

3.2 Men and women focus on particular sectors although both pursue Travel equally

Gender approaches to blogging show some interesting differences. Men, for example, blog across all categories surveyed, with the exception of Craft and Creative blogs, whereas women generally concentrated on a few key themes.



In fact, female respondents in this survey do not blog about Politics, Gaming, Music or Technology. Although we know this is not correct for the wider blogging community, it may suggest that women overall are underrepresented in these sectors.

Only travel blogs were shown to be significantly addressed by male and female bloggers equally (10% men/10% women).

Table 3: Main* categories of blogs by gender (%)

Category	Male	Female
Lifestyle	4%	23%
Food & Drink	8%	12%
Fashion and beauty	2%	10%
Sport/exercise	5%	2%
Parenting/family	7%	17%
Health and Wellbeing	2%	3%
Travel	10%	10%
Business	5%	1%
Political	8%	0%
Media and Marketing	3%	1%
Craft and Creative	0%	3%
Technology	3%	0%
Film and TV	6%	1%
Gaming	2%	0%
Music	4%	0%
Nature/Gardens	3%	3%
Arts and culture	8%	2%
Literature/Writing	1%	3%
Education	1%	1%
Wedding	0%	1%

*Other smaller categories omitted



Over the years there has been considerable consistency in the choice of categories that appeal to the different genders. Given the personal nature of blogging, it isn't surprising that these categories perhaps reflect wider societal gender differences in the topics.

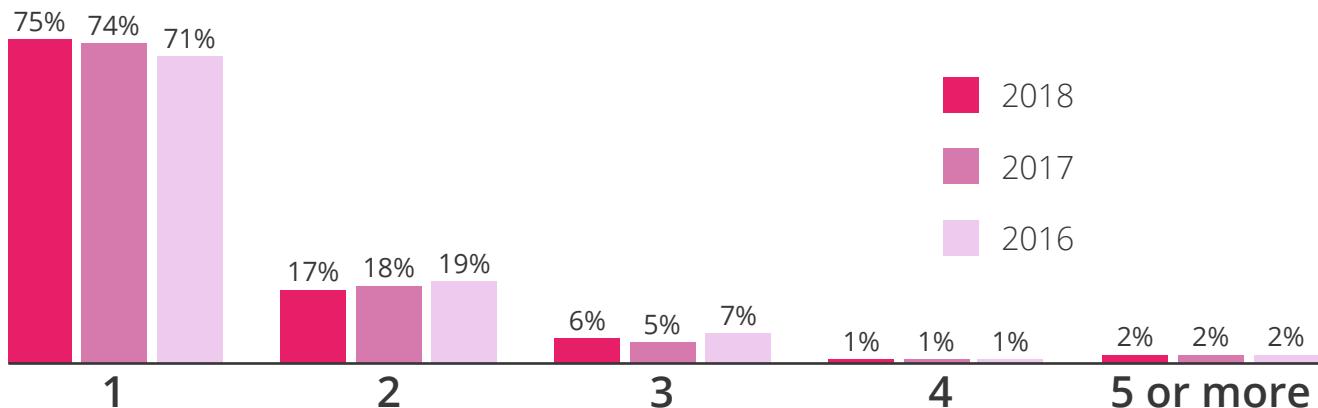
Table 4: Change in main categories of blogs by gender (%)

	Male 2016	Female 2016	Male 2017	Female 2017	Male 2018	Female 2018
Lifestyle	4%	27%	5%	29%	4%	23%
Parenting	5%	11%	13%	16%	7%	17%
Fashion & Beauty	4%	27%	3%	17%	2%	10%
Travel	10%	5%	9%	9%	10%	10%
Food & Drink	11%	6%	5%	10%	8%	14%

3.3 Most bloggers focus on just one blog

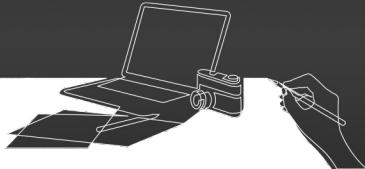
From this survey it is clear that most bloggers (75%) produce content for just one blog and this is owned and managed by the individual rather than on behalf of another organisation. Very few reported having work through an agent (2%) but as this is a new concept and market, there is huge scope for growth in the future. In fact, when asked whether agents would become more important in this regard, 22% said yes with more than half (51%) indicating they would in some cases.

Figure 3: How many blogs do you own or manage? (% of respondents)



Over the last two years, the trend of posting with higher frequency is declining and correspondingly there is a significant increase in bloggers writing one post a week.

Those working in music and Film and TV are most likely to write five or more times a week (75% and 69% respectively) followed by Political (46%). Those in Health and Wellbeing are most likely to post just once a week (72%) followed by Food & Drink (58%) reflecting the less urgent or topical nature of the content.



4. Bloggers' work

4.1 A reduction in posting frequency with a less-is-more approach

Overall there has been a reduction in more frequent posting over the years with almost half (44%) opting to post just once a week.

Table 5: Number of blog posts per week (%)

Number of posts	% of respondents			
	2016	2017	2018	% change
1	24%	38%	44%	+20%
2	27%	25%	21%	-5%
3	23%	18%	15%	-8%
4	8%	6%	6%	-2%
5 or more	18%	13%	14%	-4%

Those who cited that they blogged professionally were more likely to post five or more times per week (24%) against those who cited personal reasons (14%), so it seems the blogging profession splits into two key styles.

Those who own more than one blog tend to write more posts, although the differences are marginal. For example, of those who own three blogs, 27% post once a week, 15% twice a week and 30% three times a week.

4.2 Slight trend towards larger blogs but most have between 1,000 and 10,000 monthly visits

There has been very little change in the size of blogs since 2017 for those attracting between 1,000-10,000 unique visitors per month (classed as medium size). However, there was an increase in the large blogs (increase of 4%) with a corresponding decline in the smaller blogs (5% reduction). Approximately 7.5% of the respondents weren't sure how many visited their blog.

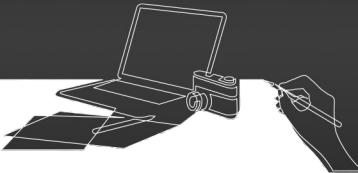
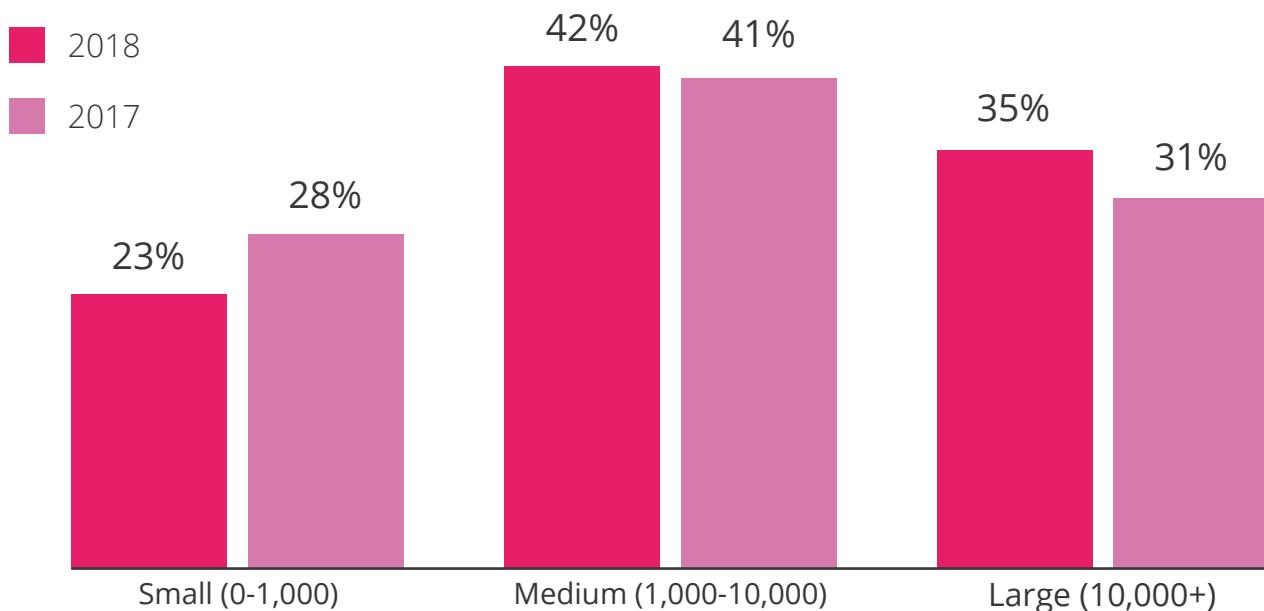
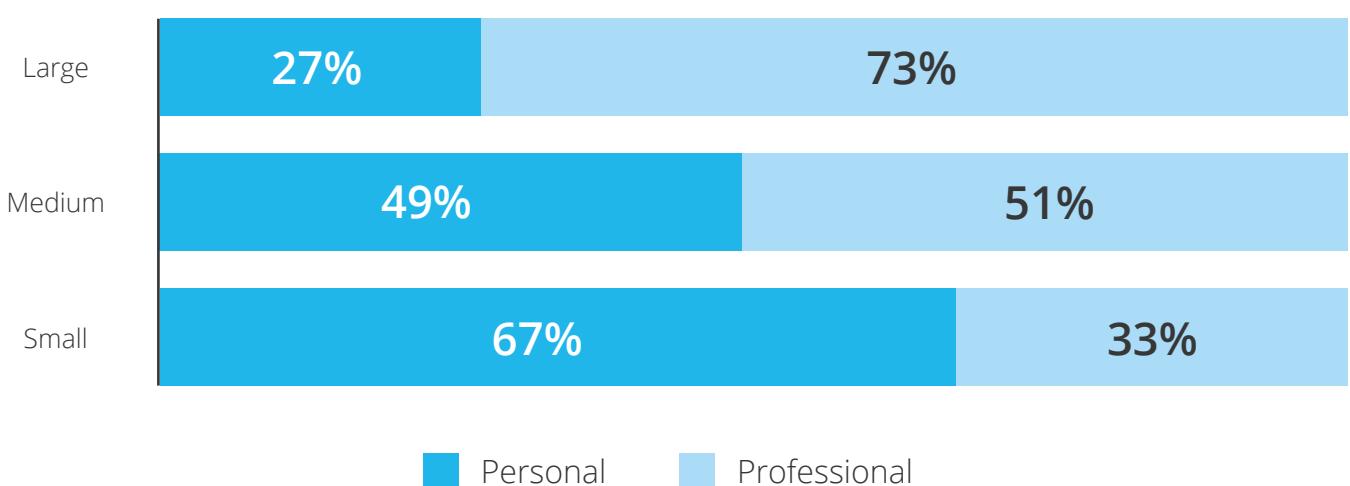


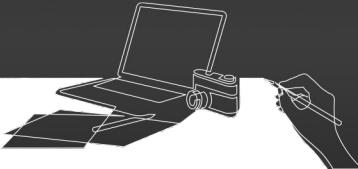
Figure 4: Number of unique visitors



There was a noticeable difference in size between those citing professional reasons for writing their blogs – 73% of professionals were classed as ‘large’ – compared to just over a quarter (27%) of those who blogged for personal reasons. Equally, those who blog for personal reasons are more likely to have a small blog.

Figure 5: Number of unique visitors depends on reasons for blogging



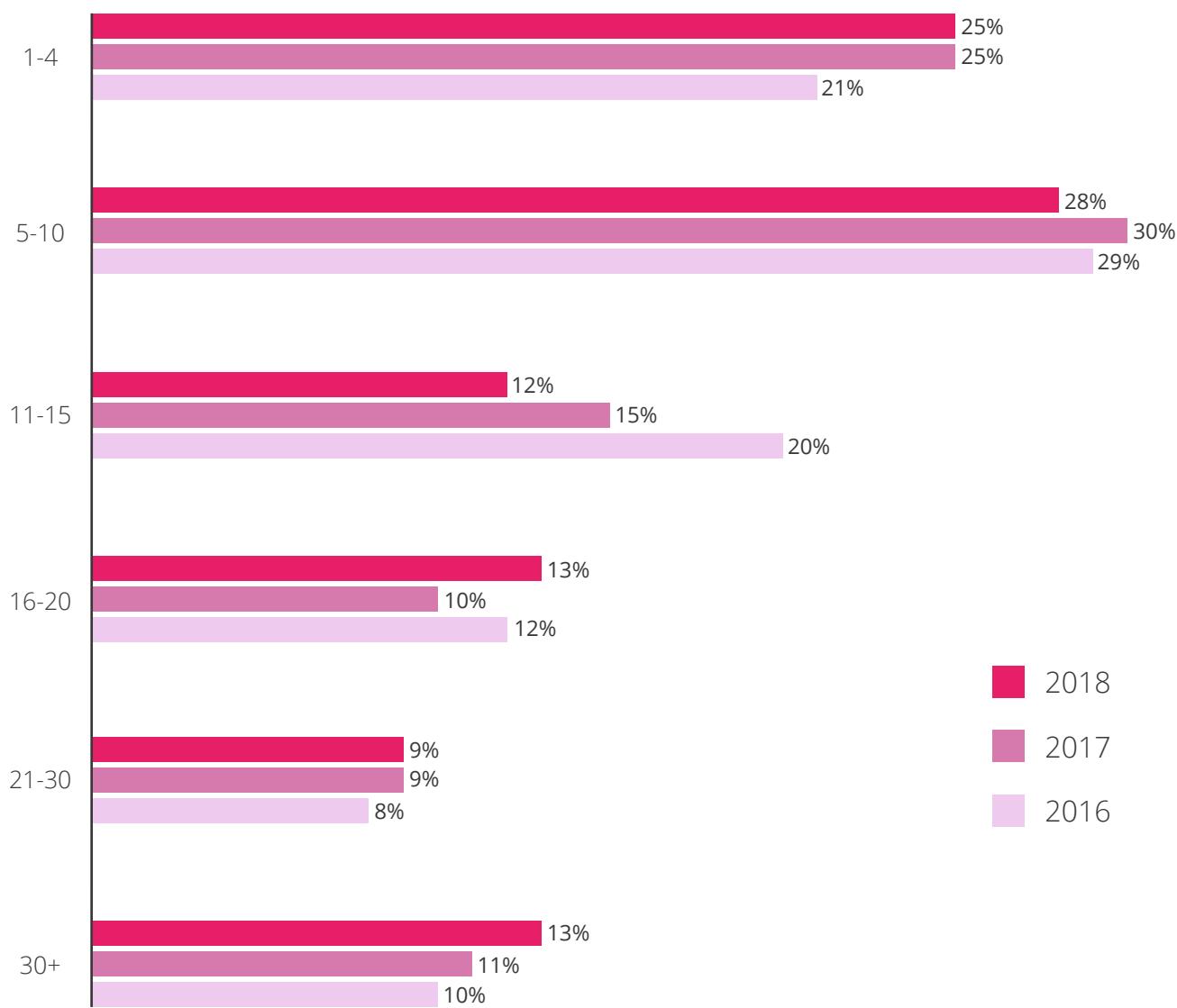


4.3 Almost two thirds of bloggers spend up to 15 hours per week on their blog

Most (28%) bloggers spent between 5-10 hours per week on their blog and this has remained fairly consistent over the last three years. At the opposite end of the scale, a small growth has emerged for those spending 30 or more hours a week on their blogs, which is likely to occur given the growth of professional (paid for) blogging.

It is also evident that the market is segmenting with a small number of very dominant blogs, where those spending the longest (over 30 hours) are most likely (74%) to be attracting the largest number of visitors.

Figure 6: Time spent on blogging





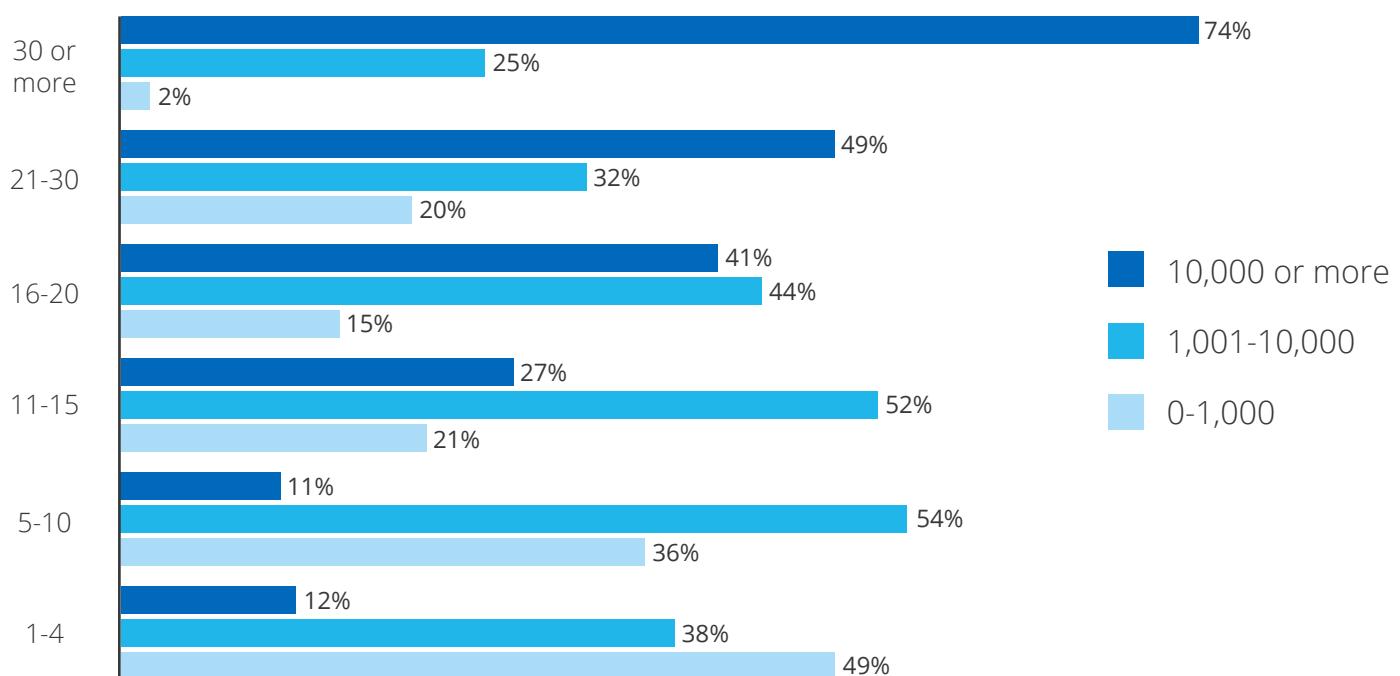
For those who blogged for personal reasons, most spent between 1-4 hours per week (34%) or 5-10 hours (30%) whereas those blogging for professional reasons were most likely to spend over 30 hours per week (23%) with an almost equal number (22%) of professionals also spending 5-10 hours per week promoting their blog.

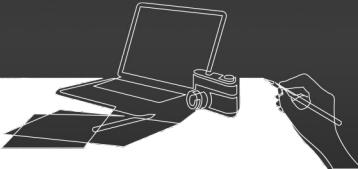
To further reinforce the divide between the hobbyists and professional bloggers, of those who spent more than 30 hours per week, over three quarters (91%) of those were blogging for professional reasons, which is also a 16% increase since last year.

It was also apparent that the more time spent blogging, the net result was a larger audience. So, for large bloggers (those who have 10,000 unique visitors per month), 30% of them are spending 30 hours or more a week on their blog, although this is down 10% from last year.

This is not surprising – if you are aiming to make your blog your main source of income, you need to invest time in it and this is clearly indicated from the responses below.

Figure 7: Number of unique visitors against time spent on main blog (%)

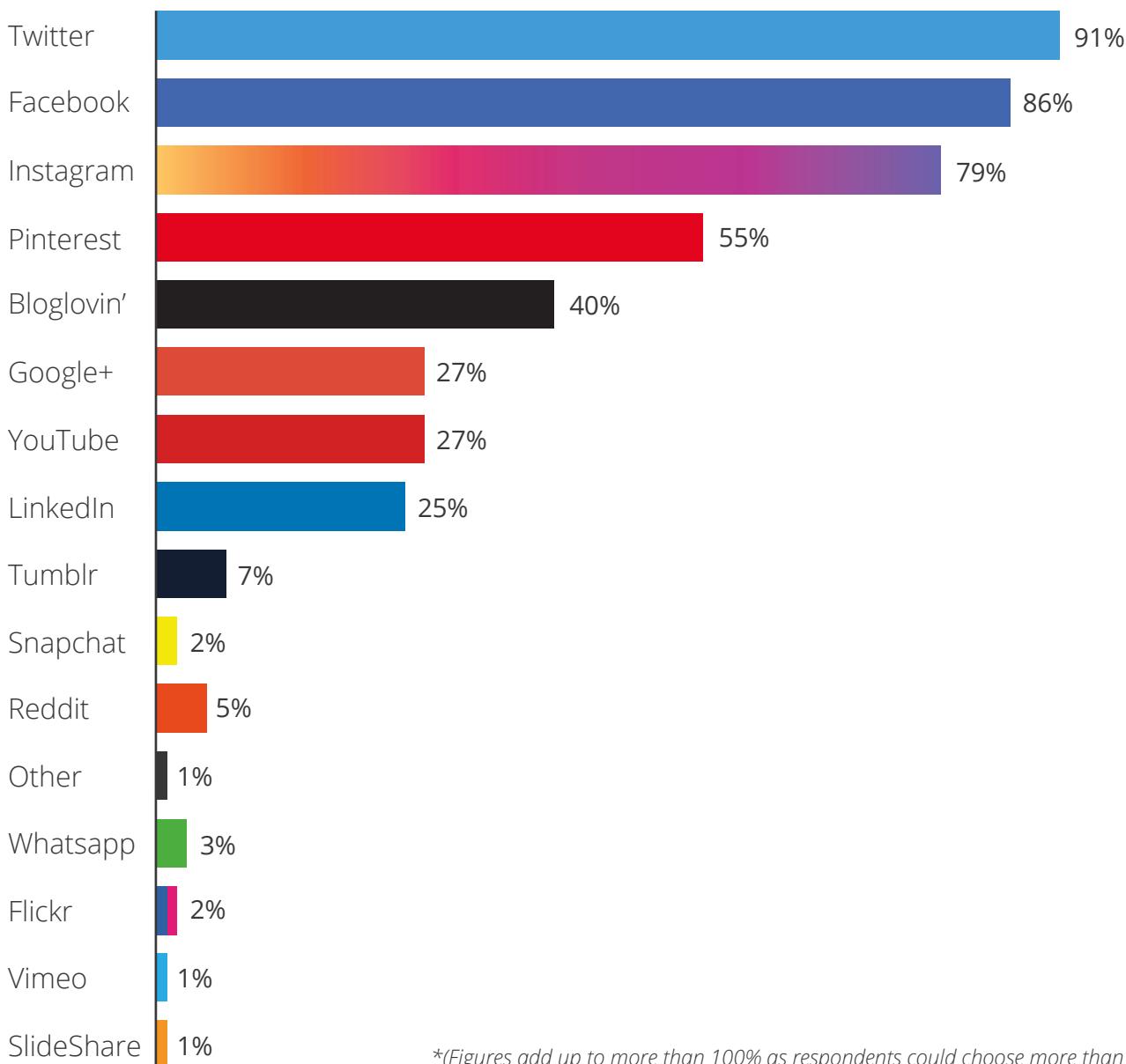




4.4 Twitter and Facebook are the preferred channels to promote content while there's a clear gender split across other platforms

Twitter, Facebook and Instagram remain the preferred channels to promote blogs and this is consistent with findings in 2017. However, this year revealed a significant drop in those promoting their blog via Google+ (now 27%, down from 54% in 2017), which is unsurprising considering the platform is being shut down, with consumers unable to access it beyond 2 April. Bloglovin' saw 40% of respondents using it to promote their work, a slight decline from 50% in 2017.

Figure 8: Most frequently used social media to promote and share blog content (%)*

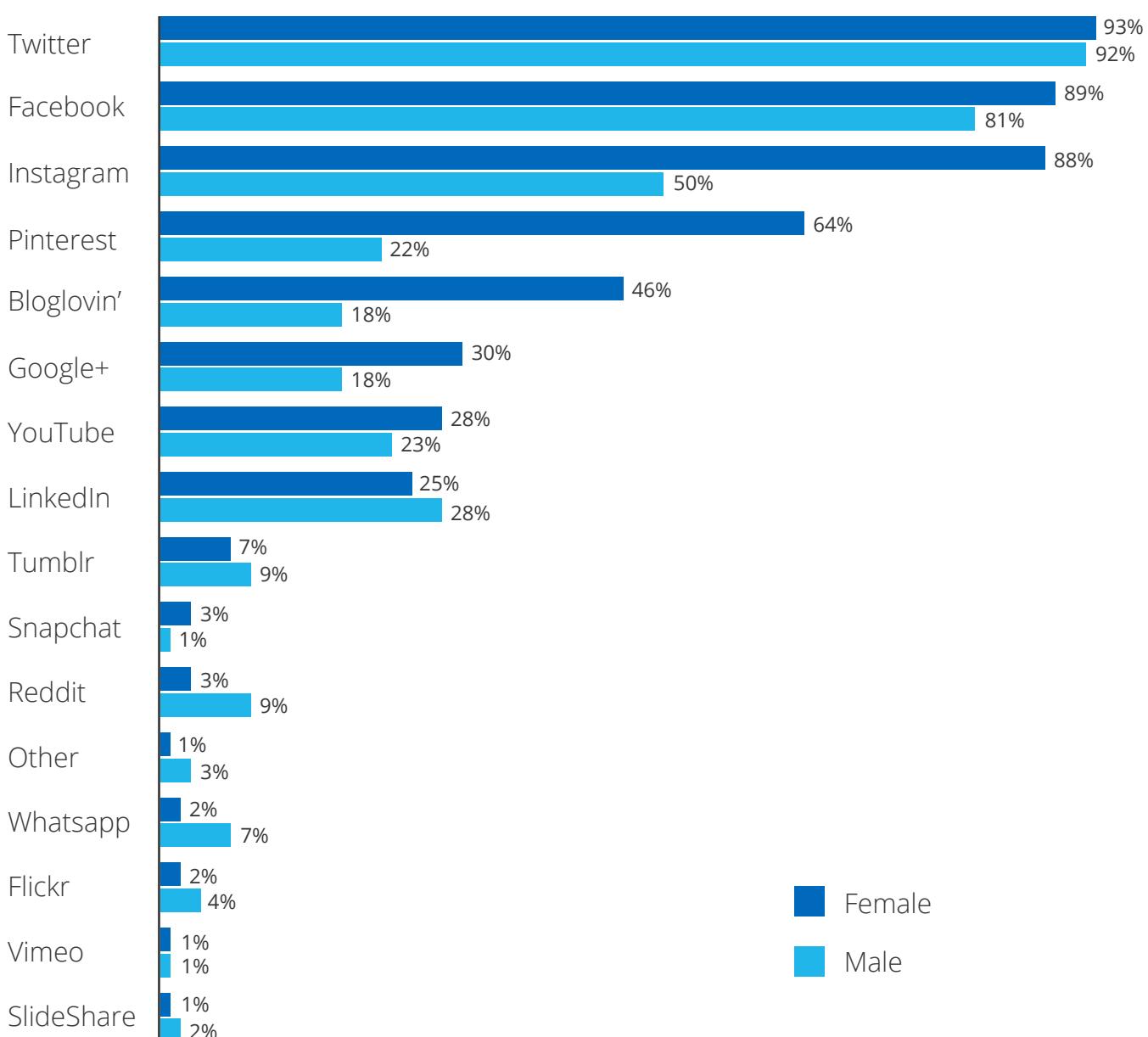


*(Figures add up to more than 100% as respondents could choose more than 1)



While Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are the leading platforms to promote blogs, women are much more likely to use Instagram (88%) than men (50%). In fact, women are using a wider variety of social media and in particular visual channels, which reflects the main categories of blogs that women tend to write e.g. Fashion & Beauty, Lifestyle etc. Men are less likely to promote their blogs on Pinterest (22%) and Bloglovin' (18%) compared to women at (64% and 46% respectively). Alternatively, men are more likely to turn to LinkedIn than women to promote their blogs.

Figure 9: Differences in social media brands used by males and females to promote their blog (%)



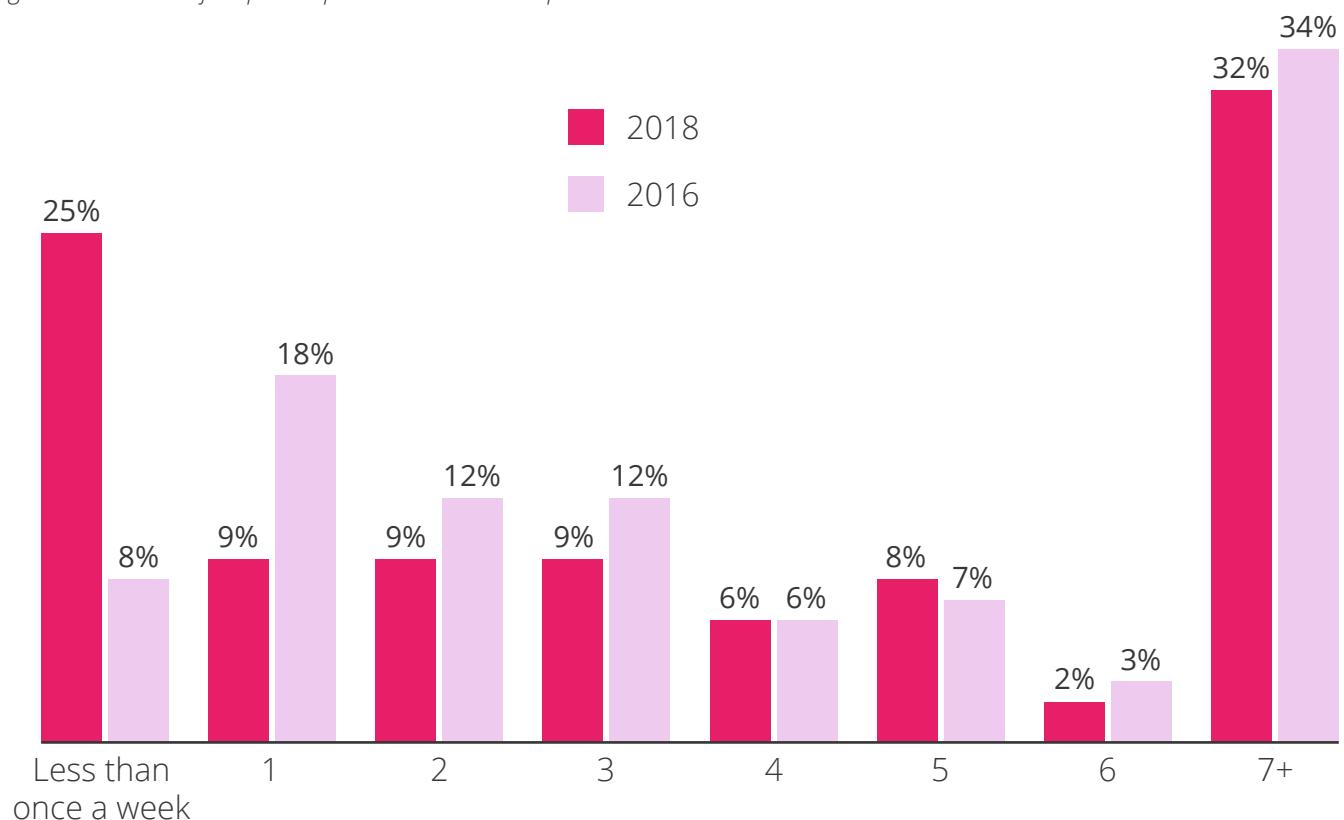


5. Working with PRs

5.1 Small blogs have fewer pitches with large blogs contacted most frequently

Overall it appears that there is a polarisation in how PRs are targeting bloggers, with a 17% increase of bloggers being contacted less than once a week since 2016. At the opposite end, 32% are being contacted seven times or more per week, which is a slight decrease since 2016.

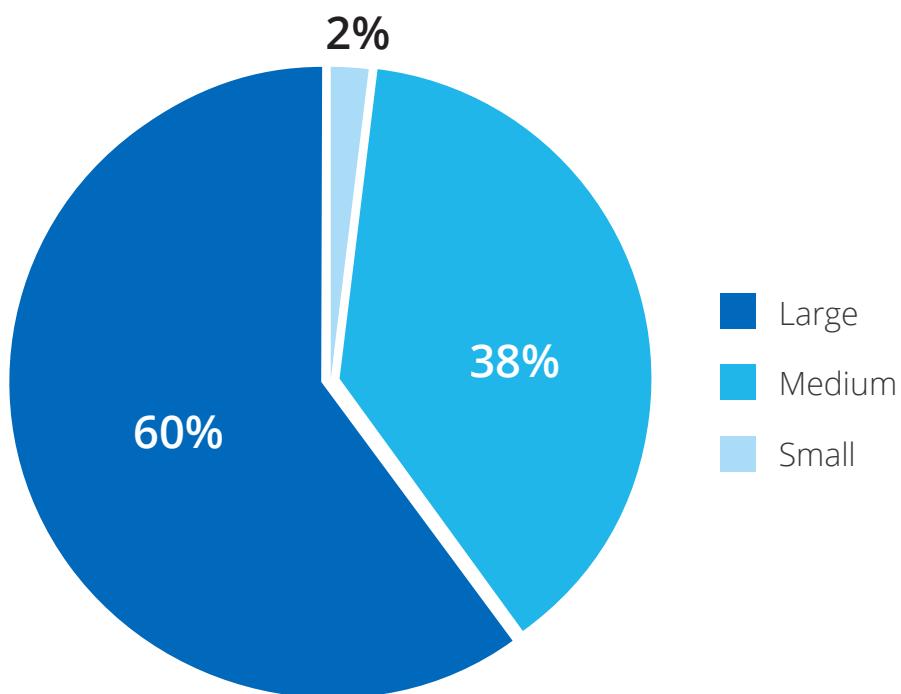
Figure 10: Number of PR pitches per week in 2018 compared to 2016



On close inspection this difference appears to be due to the size of the blog, with 41% of small blogs most likely to be contacted less than once a week compared to only 5% who are contacted seven or more times. In comparison, 8% of the largest blogs are contacted less than once a week while just over half (51%) are contacted seven times or more. This might suggest the PR industry is identifying small, niche up-and-coming blogs and targeting them with specific content, compared to the 'supersectors' that have many more larger blogs that are pitched to much more frequently.



Figure 11: Bloggers who are pitched to 9 or more times per week by size of blog (%)



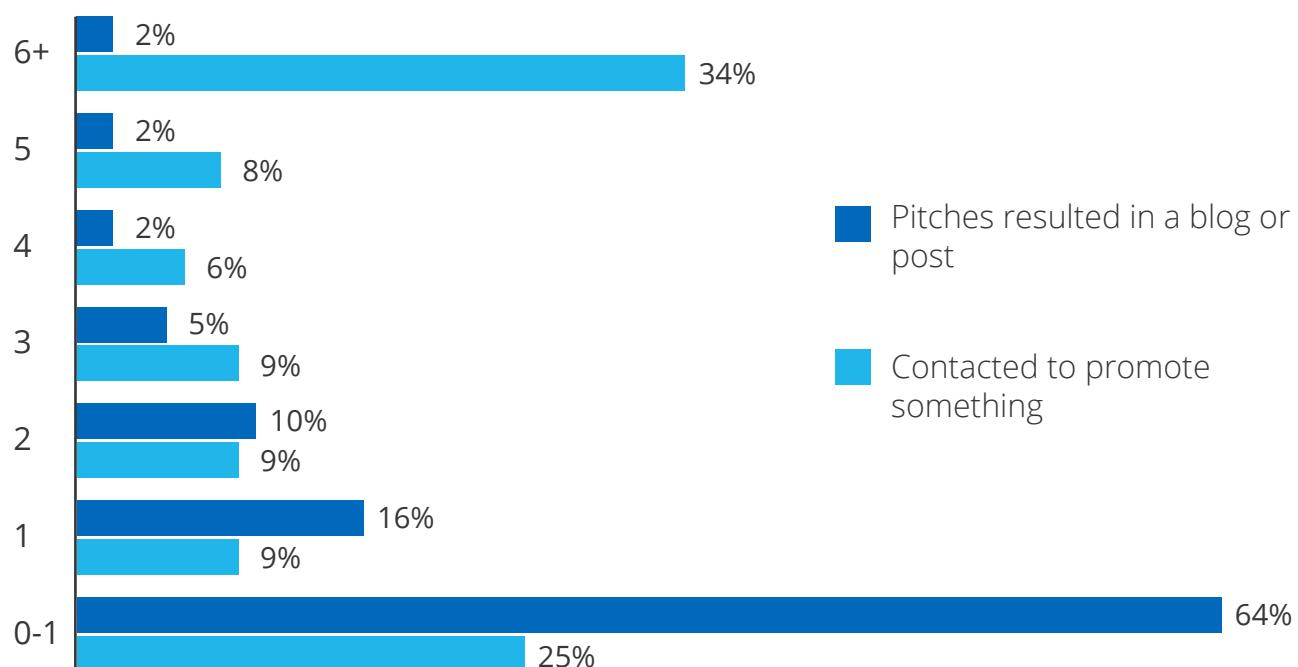


5.2 Traditional PR pitches are ineffective as published outcomes are not being achieved

A key question for PR practitioners is the effectiveness of their pitches in terms of published outcomes.

Despite the relative frequency of pitches from PR professionals, 64% bloggers stated that only one pitch a week or less resulted in any promoted content on their blog. The patterns were very similar for those who were writing for personal reasons and those with a more professional interest, suggesting that PRs are not pitching effectively.

Figure 12: Number of pitches made against whether this resulted in content (%)



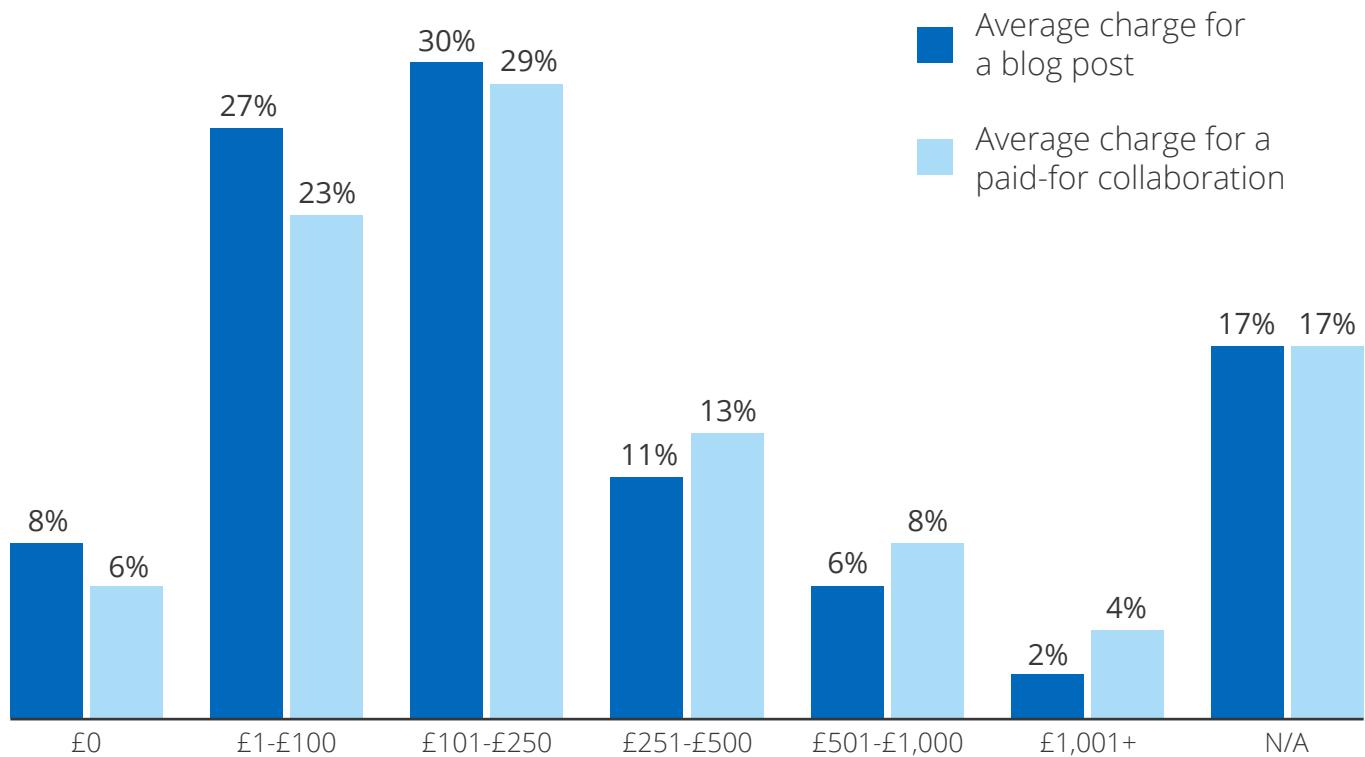
While pitching was evident to all different types of blogs, those receiving the most pitches in a week were the 'supersectors' of Fashion & Beauty, Lifestyle, Parenting, Food & Drink and Travel.

6 The state of pay

6.1 Amount of compensation

There was a very clear pattern of compensation with bloggers most likely to receive up to £250 for collaborations and paid for blogs.

Figure 13: Average charge for a blog or paid-for collaboration



On average, just over three quarters (78%) of respondents said that up to half of their work is compensated. Parenting, Fashion & Beauty, Nature/Gardens* and Lifestyle are the most likely categories where more than half their work is compensated.

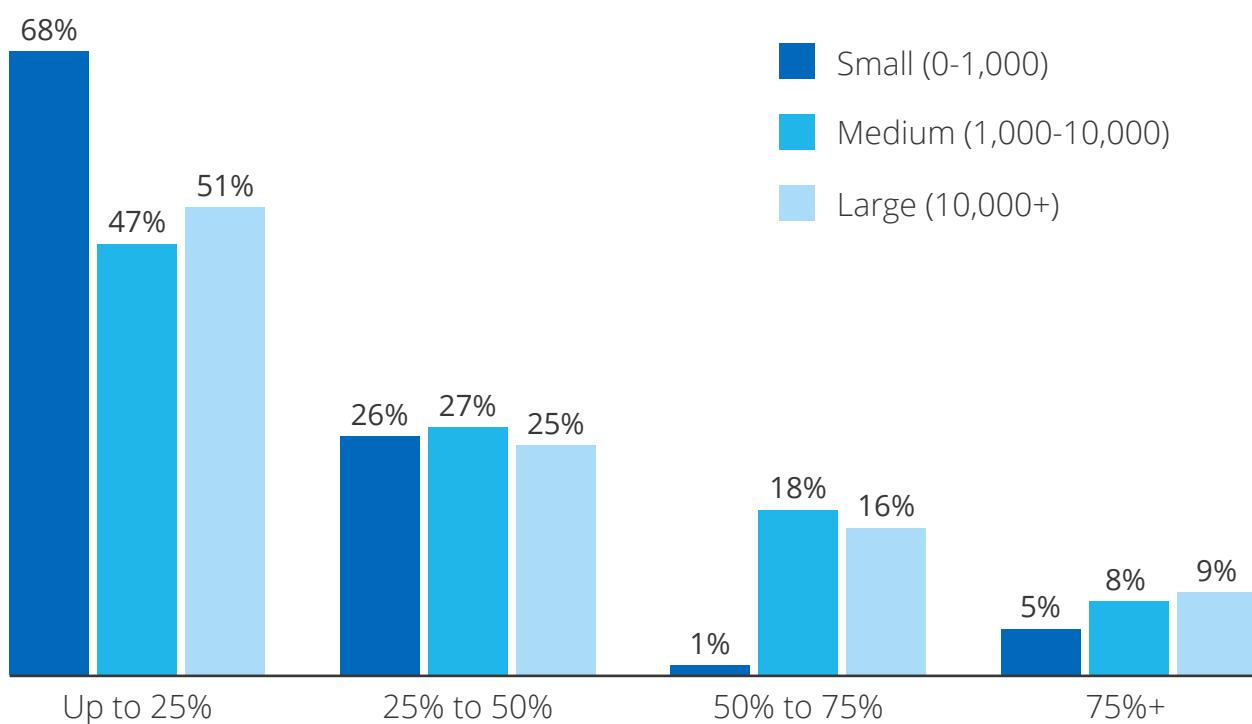
When it comes to receiving the greatest payments for collaboration, it is a mixture of supersector blogs and niche blogs that command highest reward. For example, those most likely to be paid more than £1,001 are Weddings, combination blogs (e.g. Food and Travel) *Business, *Media and marketing, *Political, Travel, Fashion & Beauty.

*Small sample size.

6.2 Amount of compensation is similar across all size of blogs but higher when blogging for professional (monetary) reasons

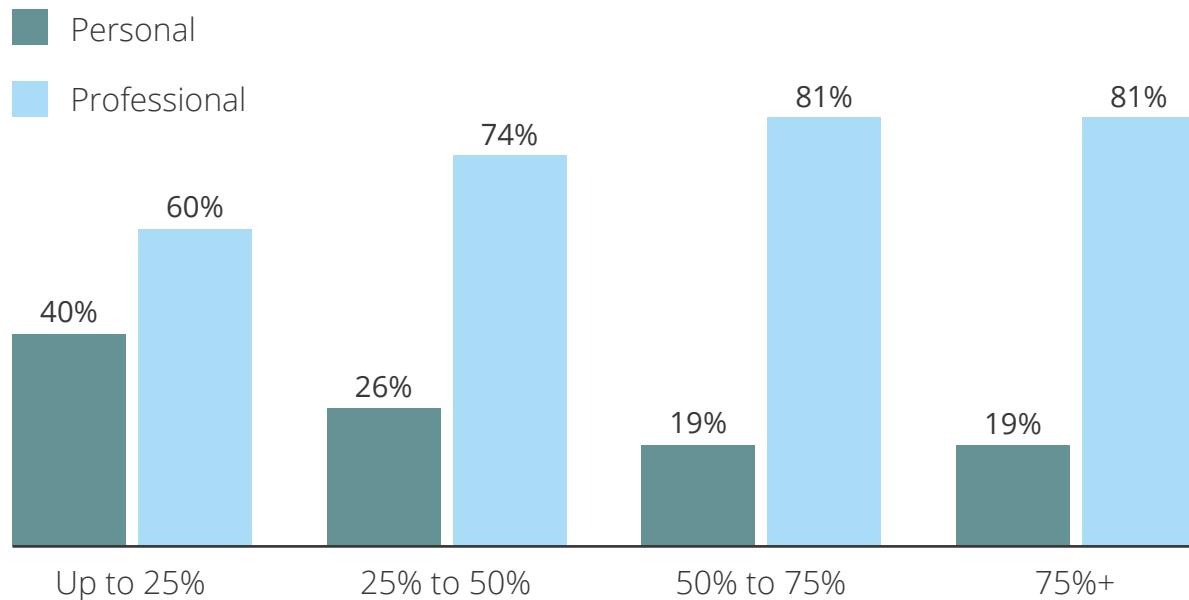
Overall, about 27% of all content that appears on a blog is compensated for in some way, through products and services, direct payment or advertising. Surprisingly, there is little difference between the size of blogs and the amount of content that is compensated for.

Figure 14: Compensation for blogs



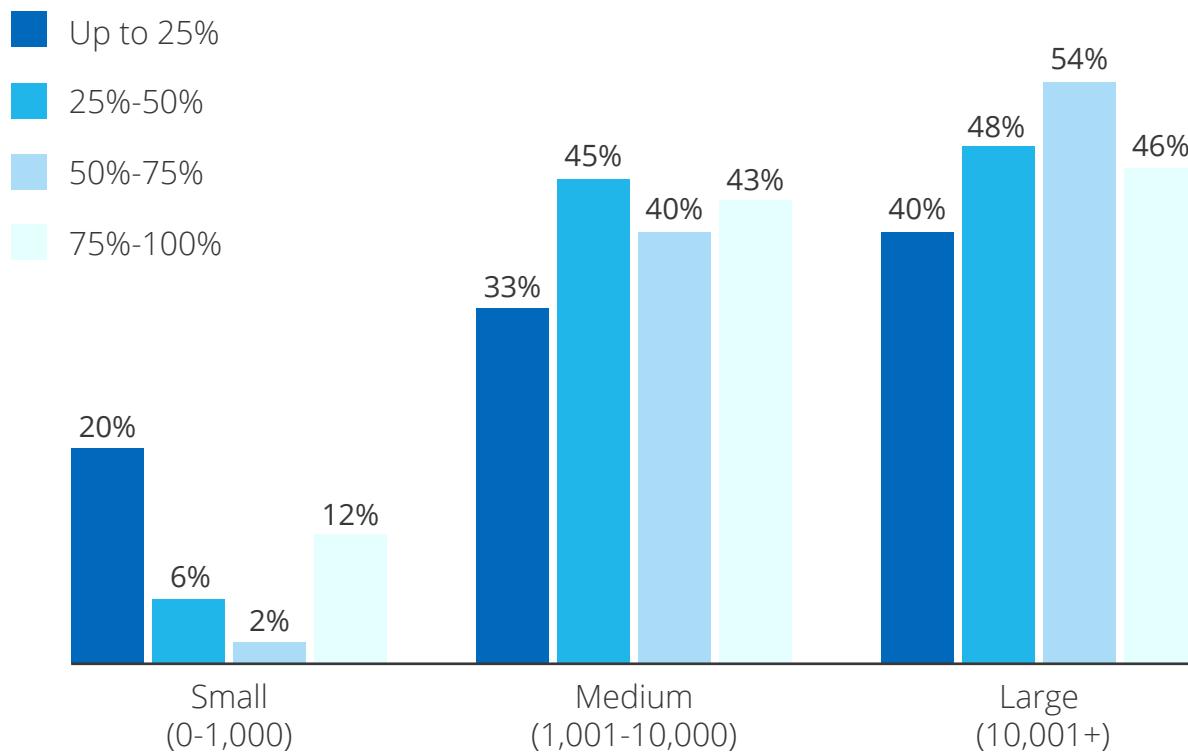
However, there is a more apparent divide in compensation between personal and professional blogs; essentially, if you blog to make money, clearly the focus is on ensuring the content is compensated.

Figure 15: Amount of content that receives compensation (%) for a personal or professional blog



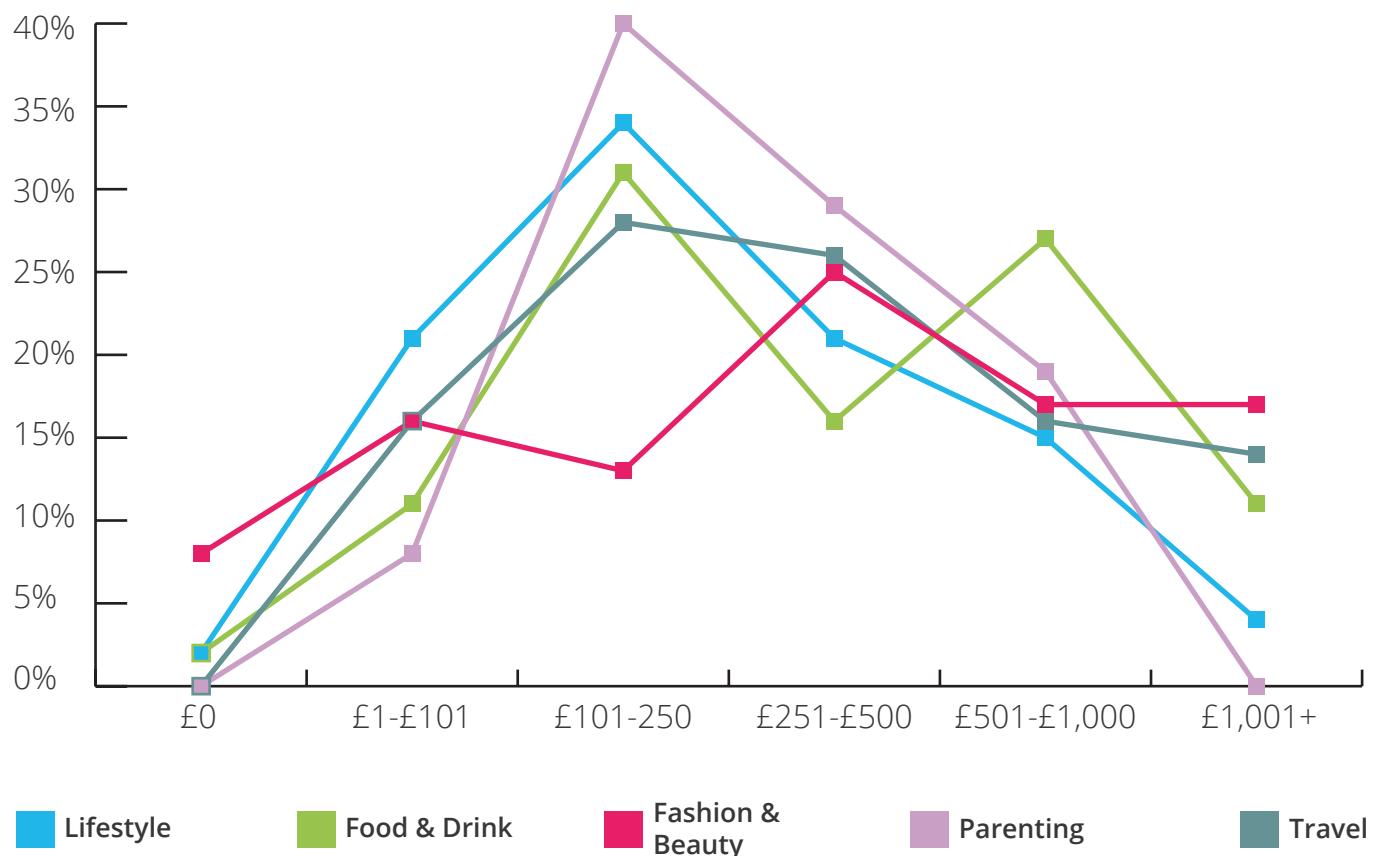
To explore this in more detail, it seems that when looking at just the 'professional' bloggers, the amount of content that receives payment is not dependent on the audience size, suggesting that other factors influence how much content receives payment.

Figure 16: Amount of content that receives compensation (%) by size of professional blog



What is also noticeable is that the top five supersectors show similar patterns of income for collaborations, although for Parenting, 40% receive between £101-£250 with none charging £1,001 or more. In contrast just 13% of Fashion & Beauty bloggers charge £101-£250 and they are most likely of all sectors to receive over £1,001 for their work (17%).

Figure 17: Amount charged for collaboration (%) by supersector



This pattern remains consistent across the sectors when charging for individual blog posts. The most popular amount to charge is between £101-£250 with almost half (48%) of Parenting blogs charging at this rate. No Parenting blogs charge the higher fees of £1,001 or more for a post. In contrast, both Food & Drink and Fashion & Beauty reach these higher fees (7% and 8% respectively).

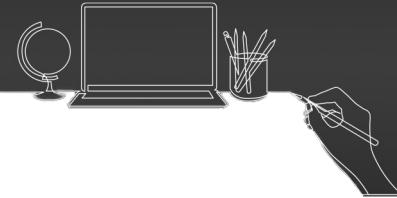
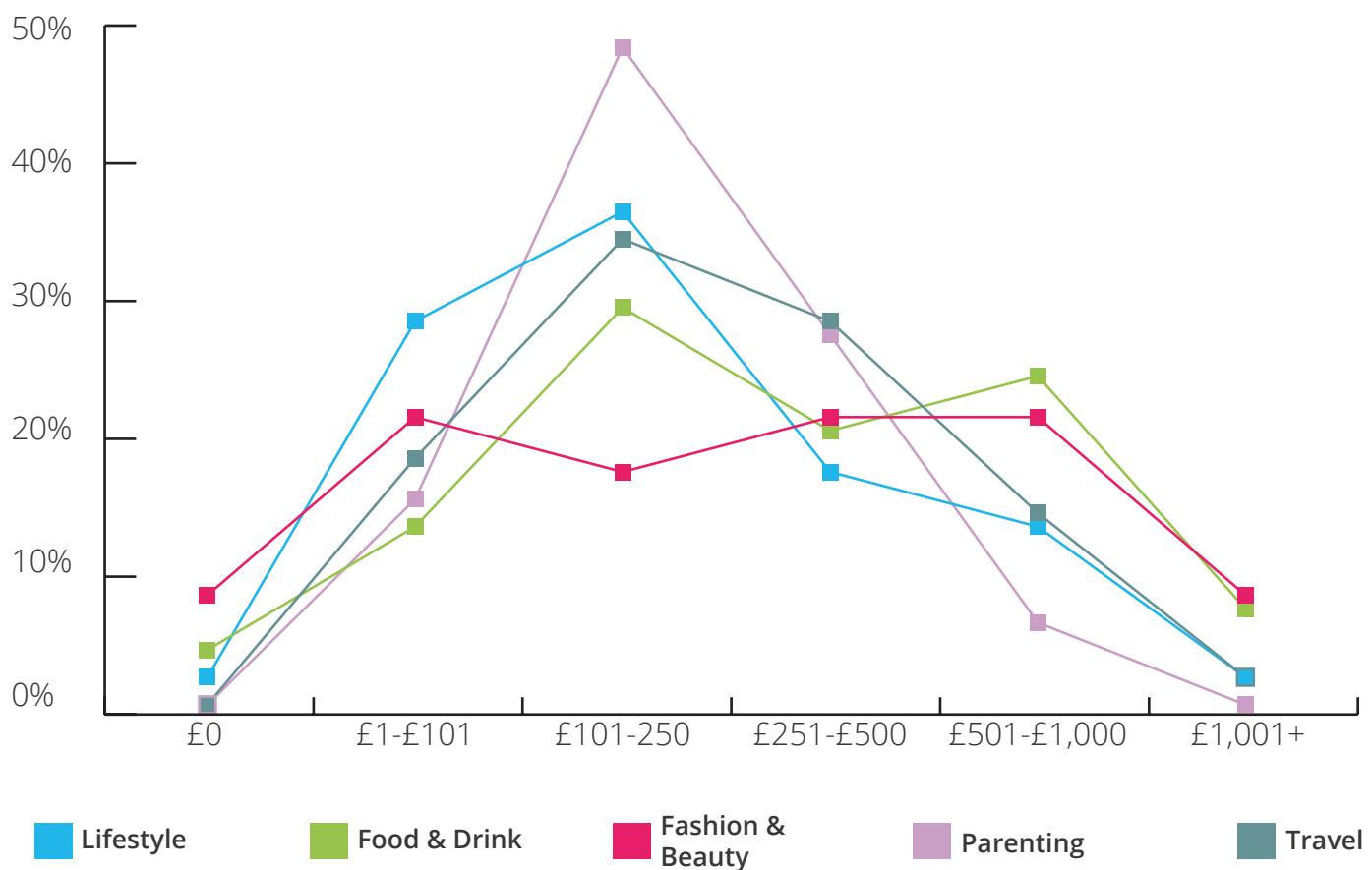


Figure 18: Amount charged for a blog post (%) by supersector



Of additional interest is that for both paid-for collaborations and charges for blog posts, men are almost three times as likely to charge nothing for both collaboration and blog posts compared to women and almost twice as likely to charge £1,001 or more.

However, these figures have fairly small sample sizes so caution should be taken.

Table 6: Differences in male and female charges for blog posts and collaborations (%)

	£0		£1,001 and more	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Charge for collaboration	12%	4%	7%	4%
Charge for blog post	16%	6%	2%	1%



6.3 Bloggers expect to be paid for their product mentions

Views on payment for coverage and disclosure have remained consistent from last year with a small increase (8%) in those expecting to be paid for their collaboration.

Table 7: Views on commercialisation of blogs (%)

	Agree/strongly agree 2017	Agree/strongly agree 2018
I should be paid for all coverage I give to brands	50%	58%
Sponsorship disclosure is important for every collaboration	87%	88%

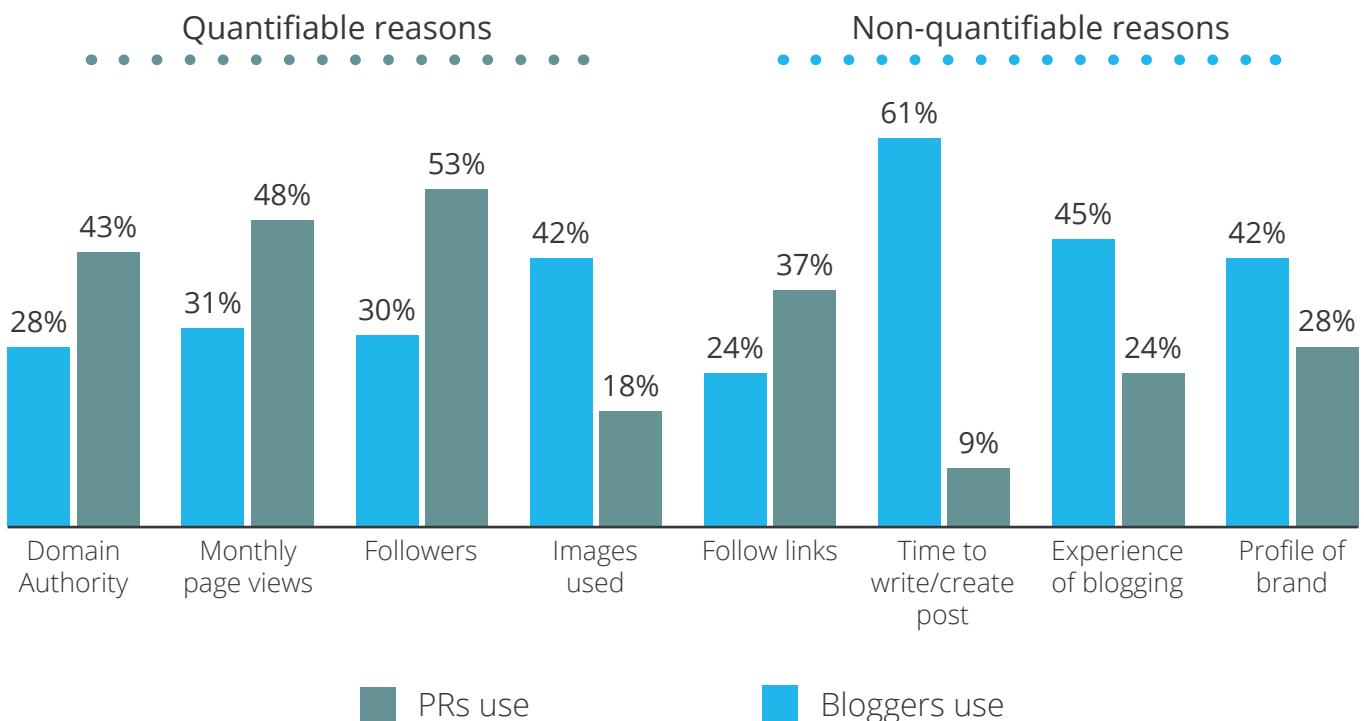
Those who blog professionally were more likely to agree/strongly agree that they should be paid for brand coverage (61%) against those who blog for personal reasons (54%) although this has risen by almost 10% since last year, suggesting that on the whole, bloggers agree they should be compensated (but this is by no means unanimous). Naturally those who stated that blogging is their main source of income are more likely to strongly agree they should be paid for all coverage (39%) followed by those who blog as part of their professional development/studies (29%) compared to those writing a blog for a hobby (15%).

Professional bloggers feel strongly that sponsorship disclosure is important with 65% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing, suggesting the industry is currently self-regulating. How effective this is remains unknown.

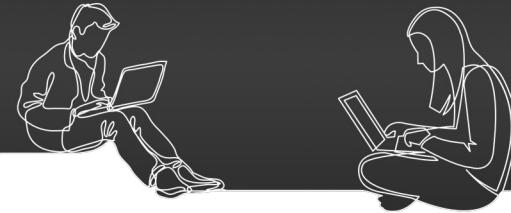
6.4 Agreeing compensation

There is clear evidence from the responses that PR professionals and bloggers place different importance on measures to assess how compensation is agreed. Noticeably, PRs measure blogs against specific measurable criteria whereas bloggers use more qualitative measures to express the importance and value of their blog. In particular, PRs are reported in placing little emphasis on how long it takes to write a blog (9%) compared to 61% of bloggers who use this as a key criteria for helping to assess how much compensation should be set.

Figure 19: Measures used to agree compensation



This perception of the mismatch between the quality of the blog against the quantifiable measures of a blog remains one that bloggers feel strongly about, with 89% agreeing/strongly agreeing that PRs should focus on the quality of engagement rather than follower numbers.



7 Bloggers' views of their industry

There has been very little year-on-year difference in the perception that journalists are more important than bloggers to PRs, but of particular interest is that compared to last year there has been a decline from 54% to 40% agreeing that bloggers are more trusted than traditional journalists.

These views are consistent regardless of the size of the blog and the type of blog, so it seems to be a widely accepted view.

Table 8: Views on blogging and PR (%)

		Disagree completely	Disagree somewhat	Neither agree/disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree completely
PRs regard traditional journalists as more important than bloggers	2018	1%	15%	26%	39%	20%
	2017	2%	13%	24%	40%	22%
Bloggers are more trusted than traditional journalists	2018	4%	21%	35%	30%	10%
	2017	2%	13%	32%	37%	17%

There is no doubt that bloggers feel their contribution to society is that their work airs views and opinions not represented in the mainstream media (81% agree/strongly agree) and that they feel they offer impartial advice to their readers with over half agreeing/strongly agreeing (52%).

Figure 20: Bloggers views on the industry (%)

Bloggers give a platform to opinions the mainstream media neglects



Bloggers are more trusted than journalists



Bloggers provide impartial advice for their readers



PRs regard traditional journalists as more important than bloggers



Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree



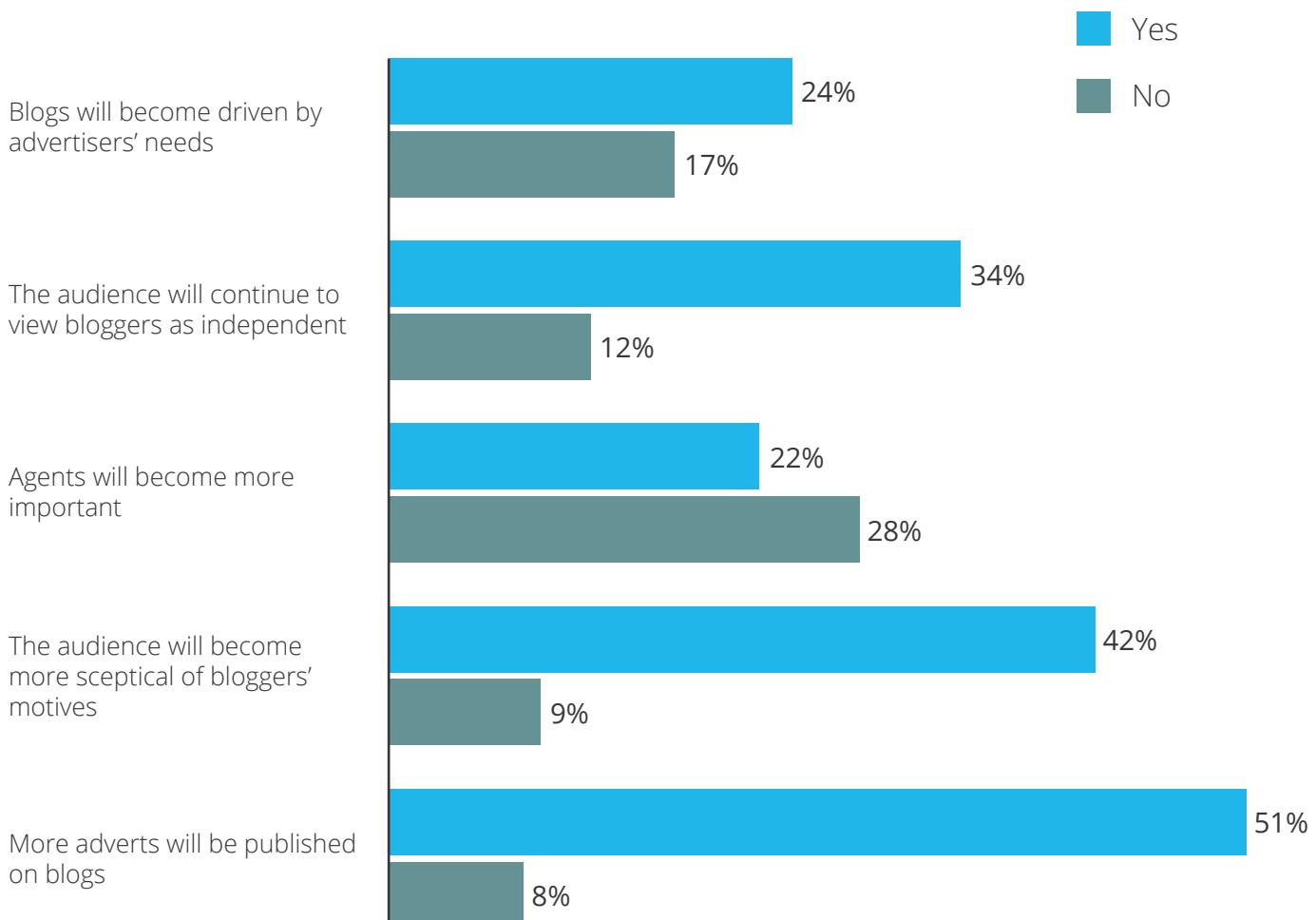
8 The blogging dilemma

Respondents indicated that the future of the industry is likely to be driven by the needs of advertisers, and that this will undermine the position of bloggers as media experts offering a different perspective or tackling issues that are under-reported by mainstream media.

This is likely to result in a divided blogging community as it appears that bloggers feel they deliver a specialist range of content, which is both independent and offers a different viewpoint unmet by mainstream media.

However, with an increased likelihood of advertising playing a more important role, it's possible that readers might become more sceptical of this independent viewpoint.

Figure 21: Views on the future of the blogging



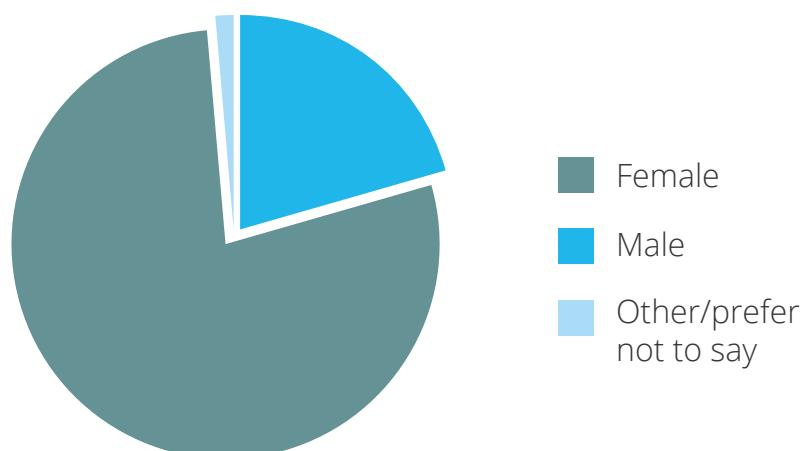


9. Profile of a blogger

9.1 Blogging dominated by women but is no longer the preserve of the young

Respondents to this survey were 78% female, 21% male and 1% other/prefer not to say, which is similar male/female split to last year (78/22) and to 2016 (77/23).

Figure 22: Gender of bloggers (%)



Respondents reported that 93% were White British, which compares to 86% White British from across the UK suggesting there is work to be done to encourage greater diversity in this sector.

Figure 23: Ethnicity of bloggers (%)

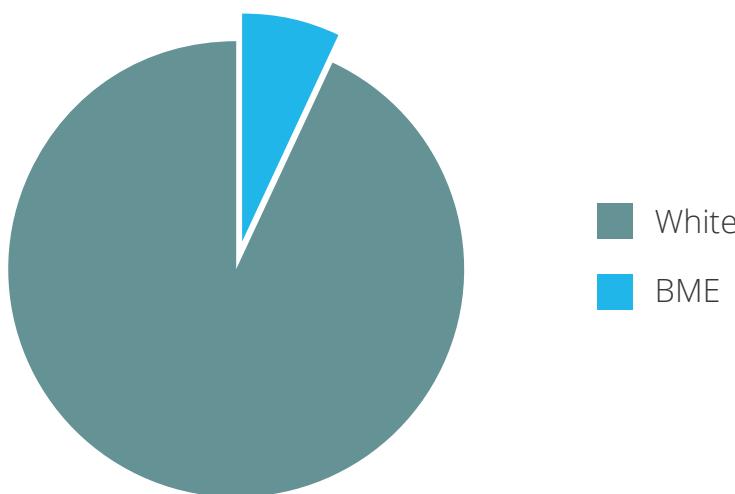
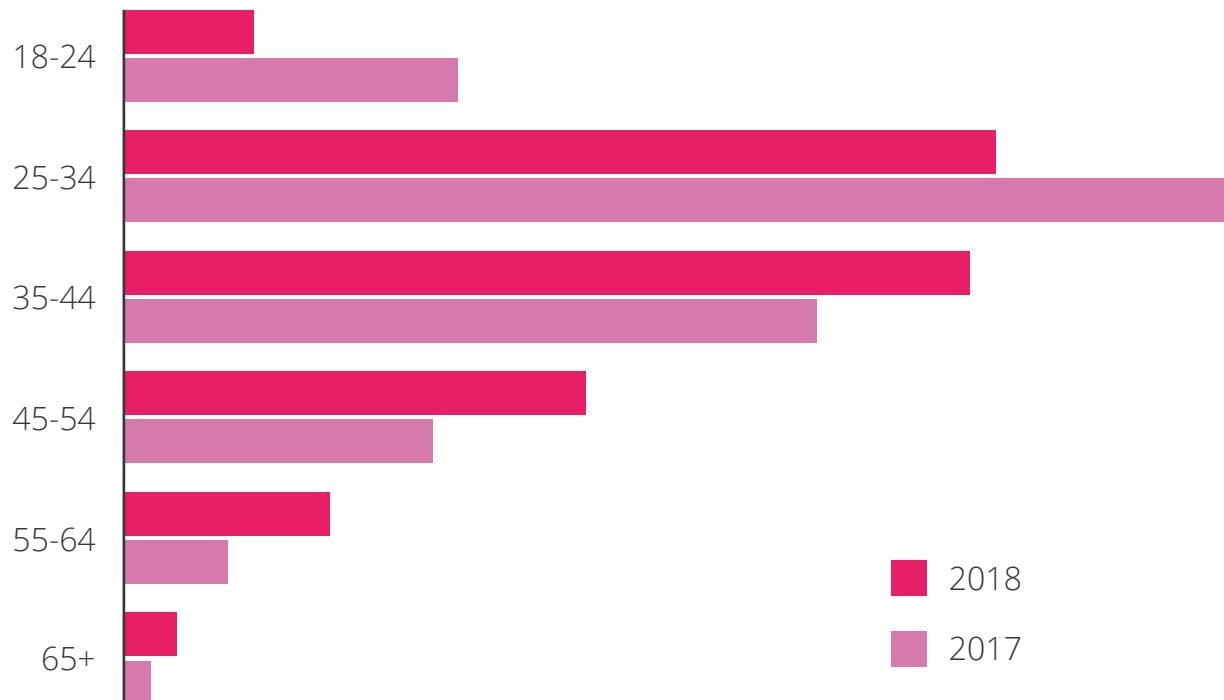
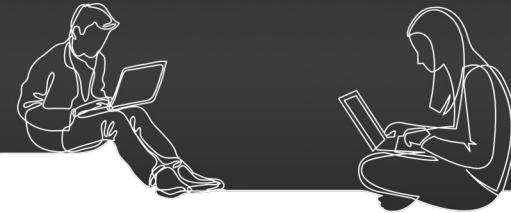




Figure 24: Age of bloggers (%)



The biggest change this year compared to 2017 has been a widening of blogging activity across age groups, with more aged 35 and over becoming bloggers. Although the largest group (34%) remains the 25-34 year olds, this is very closely followed by the 35-44 age group (33%) with just over a quarter (28%) of respondents who said they were 45+.



10. About the survey

This survey was conducted in November 2018 to explore how bloggers work, their activities and views about their relationship with PR professionals and the future commercialisation of their work. To reach this group of bloggers an online survey was sent to a list of 7,500 bloggers from the Vuelio database. This resulted in 534 usable responses which represents a response rate of 7.12%. As the database largely represents those owning and managing their own blog, those who blog on behalf of organisations are under-represented and would be likely to have different views and behaviours than are represented here.

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About Vuelio

Vuelio offers an unrivalled portfolio of products and services for more than 3,000 clients across the UK and Europe, specialising in software for public relations, public affairs and stakeholder communications. With its acquisition of ResponseSource, Vuelio also now includes the market-leading Journalist Enquiry Service, which delivers targeted journalist requests directly to your inbox.

Vuelio has always had a close relationship with its extensive influencer network and is known the world over for its weekly top 10 blog rankings as well as the market-leading Vuelio Blog Awards. Its influencer database, available to PR and communications professionals, has comprehensive profiles of thousands of bloggers, vloggers, Instagrammers and influencers, alongside traditional media outlets, journalists, editors, broadcasters and opportunities.



About Canterbury Christ Church University

Canterbury Christ Church University is a modern, multi-campus University offering higher and professional education across key Kent and Medway locations: Canterbury, Broadstairs, Medway and Tunbridge Wells. It has a strong community of 17,000 students and 2,000 staff, studying and teaching across four faculties: Arts and Humanities, Education, Health and Wellbeing, and Social and Applied Sciences.



The Vuelio Influencer Database
lists over 1 million bloggers,
journalists, editors and
opportunities.

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