

## Bonus Chapter

# Blogger Survey Results

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**I**t seems like every day, one research organization or another releases new results about bloggers, social media, and the Web. Probably the most relevant to *Professional Blogging For Dummies* is the annual state of the blogosphere report from search engine Technorati.

In 2008, Technorati reported that the top reasons bloggers blog are to

- ✓ Speak their mind
- ✓ Share their expertise
- ✓ Connect with like-minded people
- ✓ Keep friends and family updated

And in 2009, Technorati probed into the financial side of blogging and reported that only 17 percent of bloggers derive their primary income from blogging, largely from advertising and affiliate marketing. See the following site for the results:

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http://technorati.com/blogging/article/day-4-blogging-revenues-brands-and
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Not wanting to base my conclusions on Technorati alone, I conducted a little original research into the subject, using online survey tool SurveyMonkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). My survey objective was simple: To give you a snapshot of what people just like you do with their blogs. The best way to use the data is as an indicator of general trends among bloggers.

In this bonus chapter, I explain in more detail how I carried out the survey for *Professional Blogging For Dummies* and then explain the results.

## *How I Conducted the Survey*

To solicit respondents, I reached out through my blog, Facebook, and Twitter, clearly describing the survey as a survey of independent, individual, or small-business bloggers, to be used as data for *Professional Blogging For*

*Dummies*. A number of my friends and colleagues also passed the word onto their fans and followers.

The survey was conducted through an online questionnaire on the SurveyMonkey Web site in February and March 2010. To keep the survey simple for the bloggers and allow them to answer only the questions that they felt comfortable with, none of the questions required a response.

As a result, some of the 139 respondents skipped questions. In other words, if you're a stats lover, the number of respondents (or *N*) isn't the same for every question, and the percentages for each question are calculated against the total number of respondents to the question.

There also were questions that used *skip-logic*, which automatically skips follow-on questions that weren't relevant, and questions that allowed multiple responses. For these reasons, I include both the percentages and the actual number of responses so you have as much information as possible to draw your own conclusions.

I used the standard SurveyMonkey tools to perform the analysis reported here. No special number crunching. If you want to do a survey of your customers or readers, you could easily do something similar.

The questions followed the same model I suggest in the sidebar on surveys in Chapter 2 of *Professional Blogging For Dummies*. Start with general questions and proceed to the more specific ones. That way, the specifics don't influence the general, which is especially important when you don't require respondents to answer questions.

For example, in my question about making money from blogging, I ask a simple Yes/No question first: Do you make money from blogging? I do so because I expect fewer people will skip a question like that than if I just went for the specific questions about percentages and sources of revenue. As a result, I have an idea about the revenue/no revenue split in a larger population than I would otherwise.

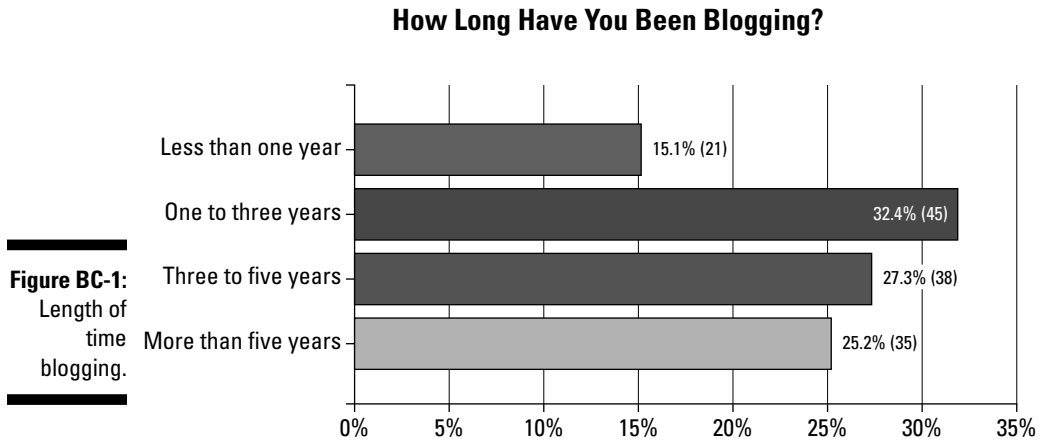
My conclusions: It's a smaller sample than a national polling organization would have, but it's sufficient to confirm the Technorati results — that a fairly small percentage of bloggers earn their livings from their blogs.

In conjunction with the in-depth case-study interviews in *Professional Blogging For Dummies*, the survey also paints a good picture of what's going on with blogging. You don't have to ask 139 bloggers what they're doing to measure results or promote their blogs.

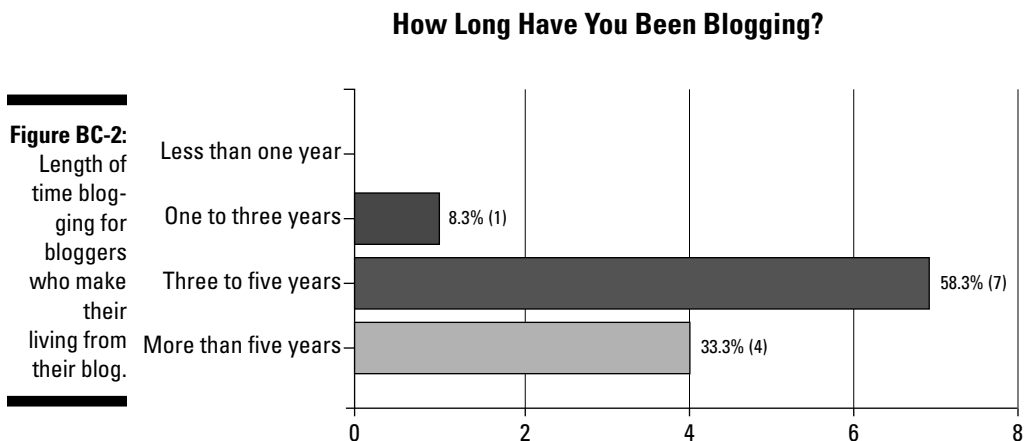
I did it for you.

## Length of Time Blogging

More than 84 percent of the respondents to the survey had been blogging for more than a year (see Figure BC-1 with 139 respondents), with the largest percentage blogging from one to three years.



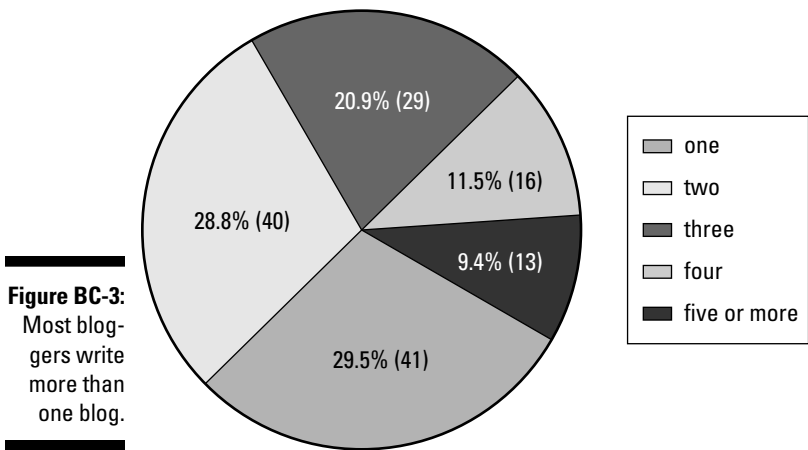
Longevity matters, though, when it comes to making money with your blog. Of bloggers who report 100 percent of their revenue as coming from blogging, 58.3 percent have been blogging more than three but less than five years, and 33.3 percent have been blogging for more than five years. That's more than 90 percent combined (see Figure BC-2 with 12 respondents).



# About the Blogs

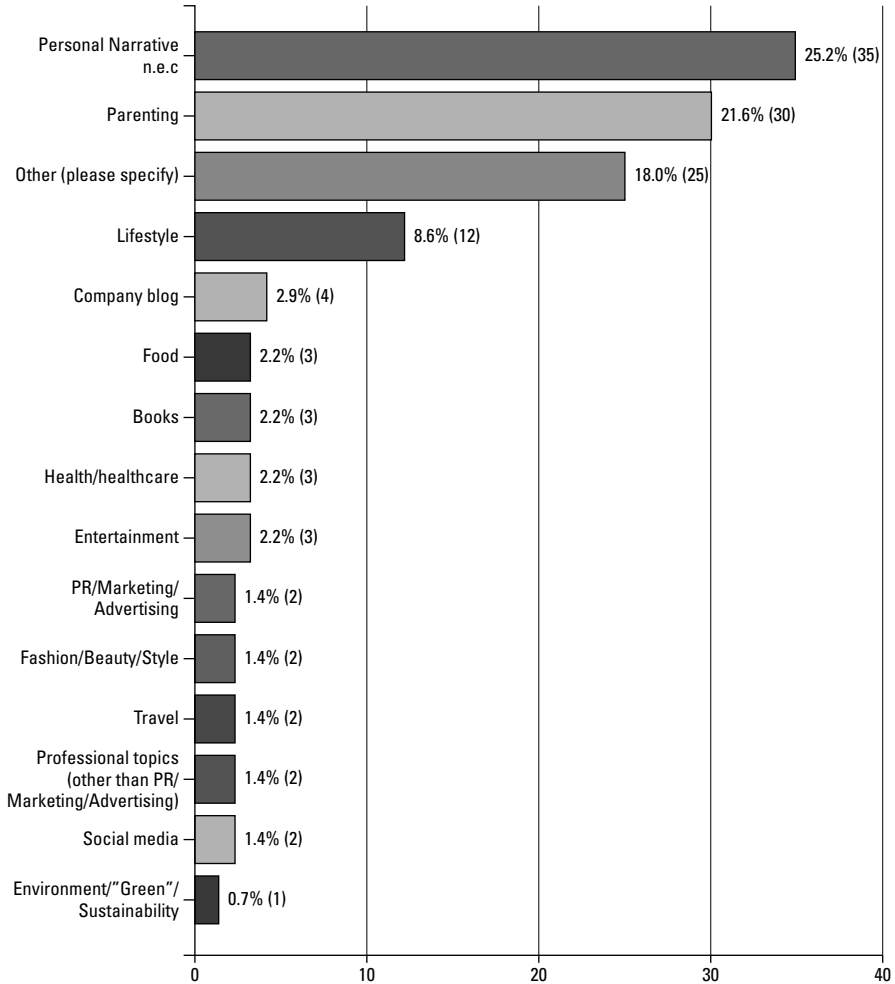
Bloggging is addictive. Slightly more than 70 percent of the bloggers in the survey write two or more blogs (see Figure BC-3 with 139 respondents).

How Many Blogs Do You Write or Contribute To?



Personal Narrative and Parenting are the top two categories of blogs. The explicit response Other, with a free-form response, was the third most reported category for the blogger’s primary blog. Reading through the free-form responses, many blogs fit into my categories, but the bloggers didn’t think so, which underscores how important it is to not assume or over-categorize. Individuals write blogs, each with their own perspectives, passions, and purposes. There’s no single flavor or size. (See Figure BC-4 with 139 respondents.)

### Top 15 Categories Reported

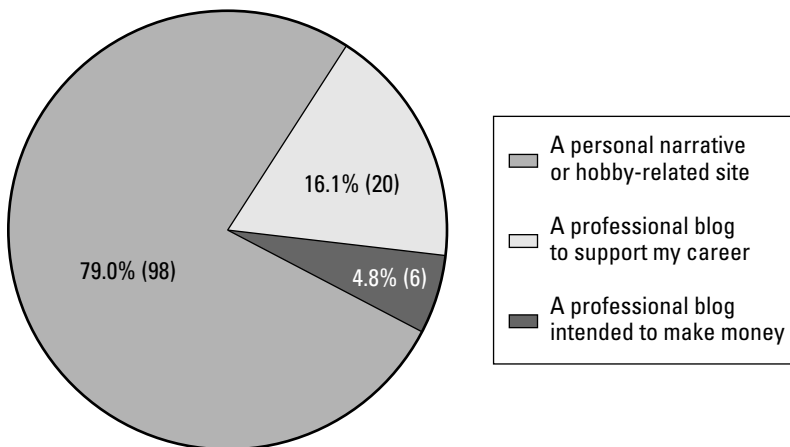


**Figure BC-4:**  
Top 15  
responses  
for cat-  
egory of the  
blogger's  
primary  
blog.

Most of the bloggers (almost 80 percent) started their blog as a personal narrative or hobby-related site (see Figure BC-5 with 124 respondents).

### What Kind of Blog Was It When You Started?

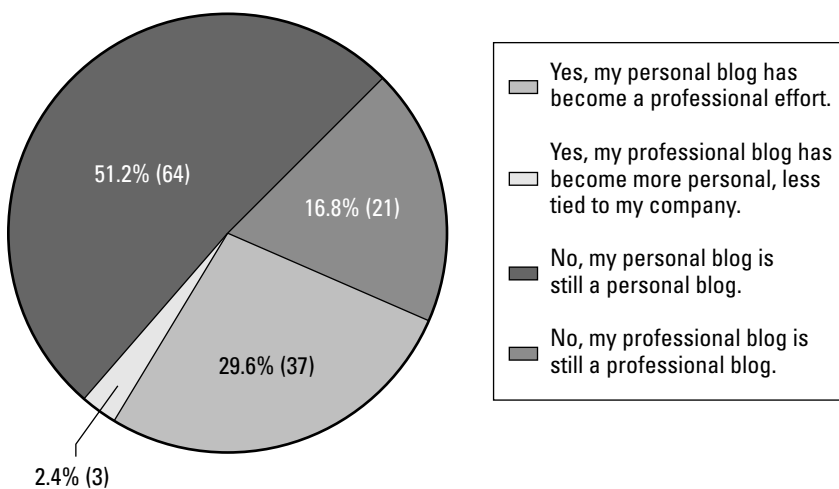
**Figure BC-5:**  
Blogs that  
began as  
personal  
or profes-  
sional.



Nearly 30 percent report that their personal blog has since become a professional effort (see Figure BC-6 with 125 respondents).

### Has This Changed Over Time?

**Figure BC-6:**  
Has this  
changed  
over time?



## *Most bloggers don't blog for the free stuff*

Only 1 blogger, out of 139, started the blog to get free stuff. The most common reasons for starting the blog fell into four broad categories:

- ✓ A creative outlet and love of writing
- ✓ Support for a business or brand
- ✓ Chronicle of life or a hobby
- ✓ Connections and community

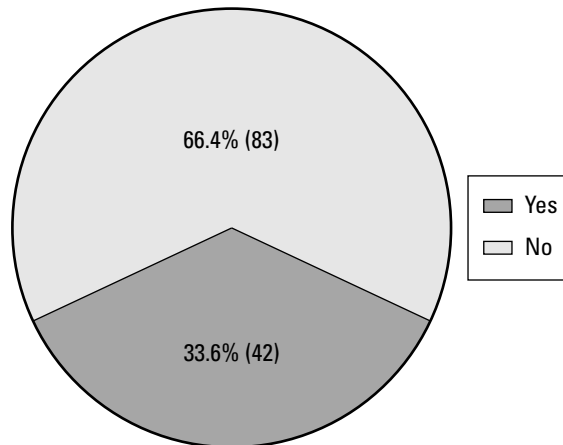
The verbatim responses to this open-ended question can be read on my blog, [www.getgood.com/roadmaps](http://www.getgood.com/roadmaps).

## *Plans and policies*

Although only 33.6 percent of the bloggers had a plan or objective when they started (see Figure BC-7 with 125 respondents), more than 63 percent have one now (see Figure BC-8 with 123 respondents).

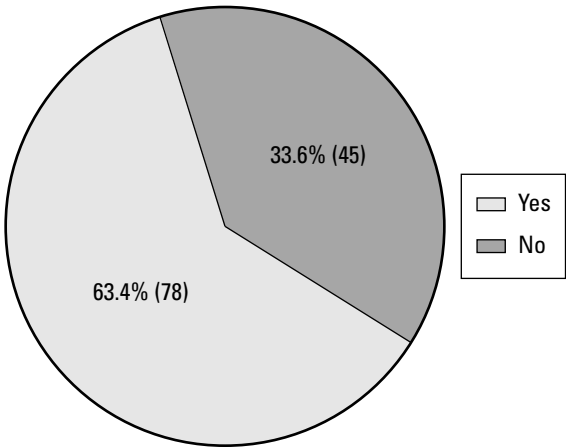
### **Did You Have a Plan or Objective for Your Blog When You Started?**

**Figure BC-7:**  
Bloggers  
with (and  
without)  
a plan or  
objective  
when they  
started.



Do You Have a Plan (Of Any Sort) for Your Blog Now?

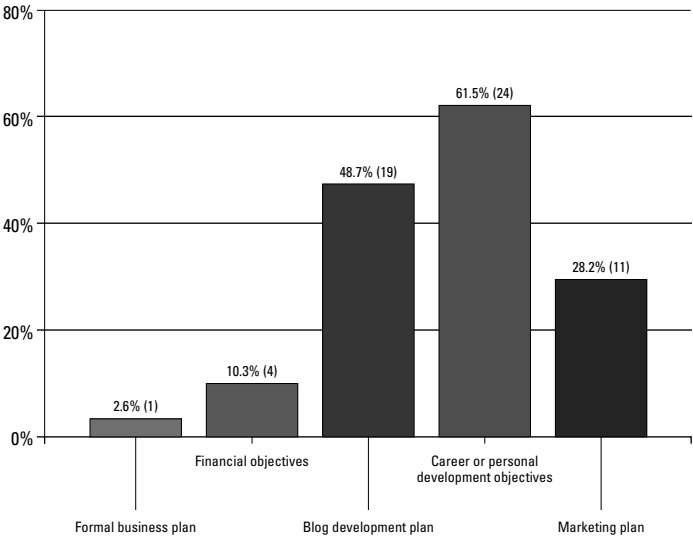
**Figure BC-8:**  
Bloggers  
that cur-  
rently have  
a plan.



The most common type of plan was career or personal development objectives followed by a blog development plan. Very few bloggers in the survey had a formal business plan (see Figure BC-9, with 39 respondents, and Figure BC-10 with 73 respondents); however, don't interpret this as license to avoid planning your professional blogging effort! A business plan is always a good idea, especially when you're investing money. But the most important thing is to have a plan of some kind. What I find most interesting in this shift is that the numbers increased for *every* type of plan.

What Type of Plan Did You Have? Select All That Apply.

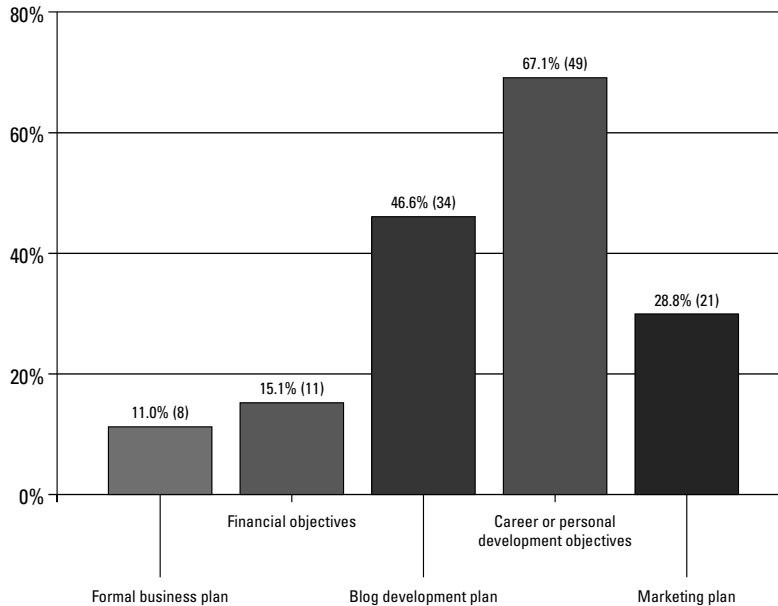
**Figure BC-9:**  
The types of  
plans blog-  
gers had.





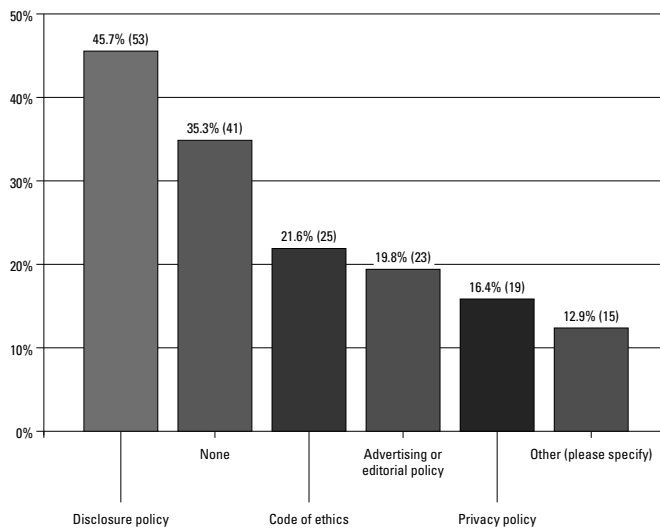
Nearly 46 percent of bloggers had a disclosure policy on their blog. (See Figure BC-11 with 116 respondents.)

**What Type of Plan Do You Have? Select All That Apply.**



**Figure BC-10:**  
Types of plans bloggers have.

**Do You Have Any of the Following Policies on Your Blog? Select All That Apply.**

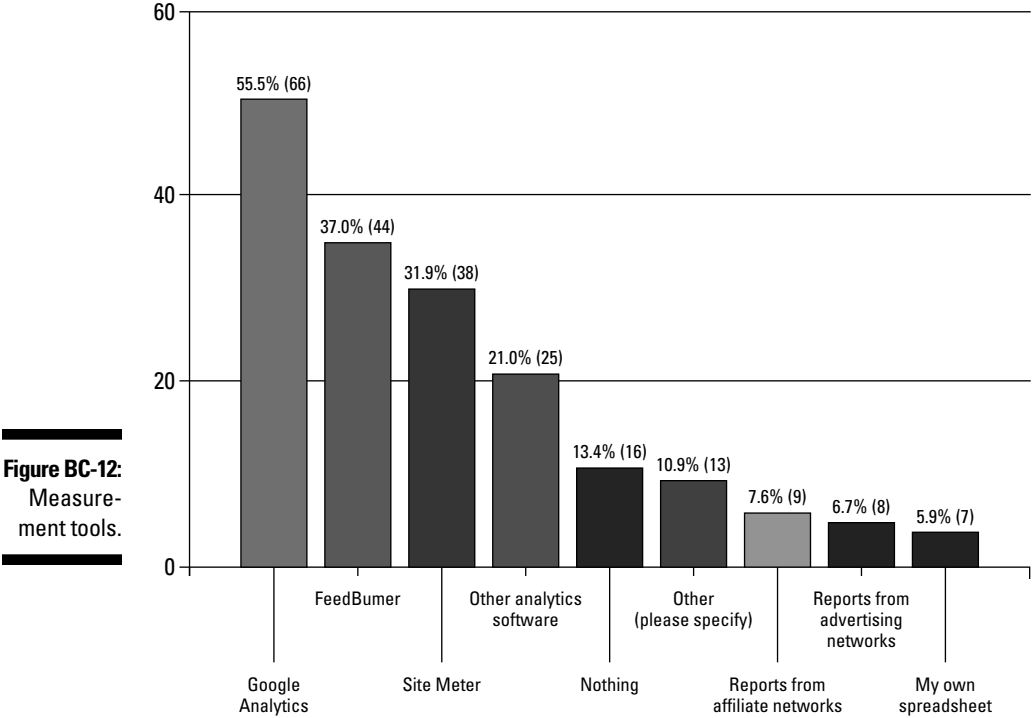


**Figure BC-11:**  
The types of disclosure and editorial policies found on blogs.

## Measurement

The most popular tools for measuring results are Google Analytics with 55.5 percent of the bloggers, FeedBurner with 37 percent, and Site Meter with 31.9 percent. (See Figure BC-12 with 119 respondents.)

What Tools Do You Use to Evaluate Ongoing Results? Select All That Apply.

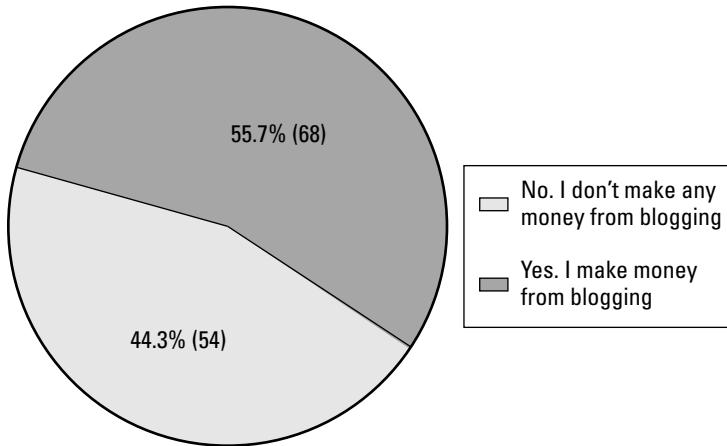


## Making Money from Blogging

Almost 56 percent of respondents reported that they make money from blogging (see Figure BC-13 with 122 respondents), but of those that answered the question about the percentage, the majority, 58.8 percent, attribute less than 10 percent of their income to blogging. Interestingly, however, the next largest group, 17.6 percent of respondents, attributes 100 percent of its income to blogging (see Figure BC-14 with 68 respondents).

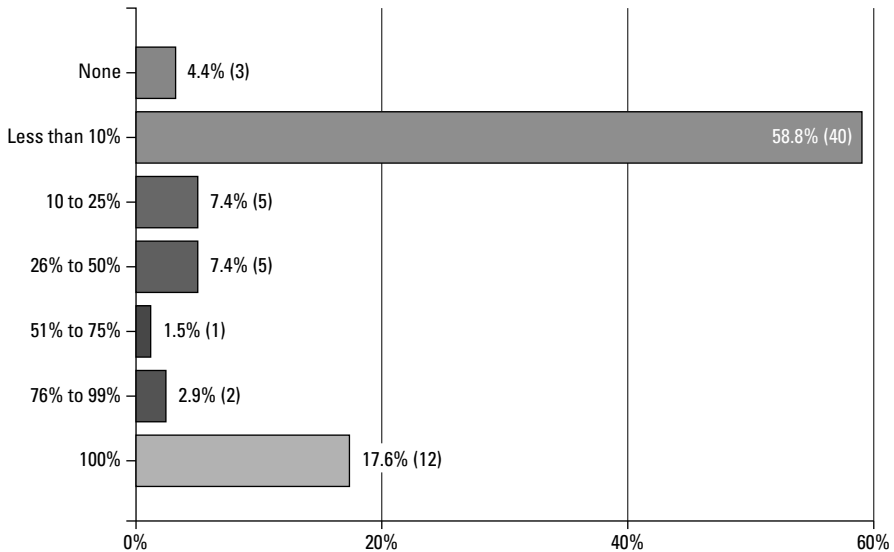
### Do You Make Money from Blogging?

**Figure BC-13:**  
People who make (or don't make) money from blogging.



### What Percentage of Your Income Do You Attribute to Blogging?

**Figure BC-14:**  
The percentage of income attributed to blogging.



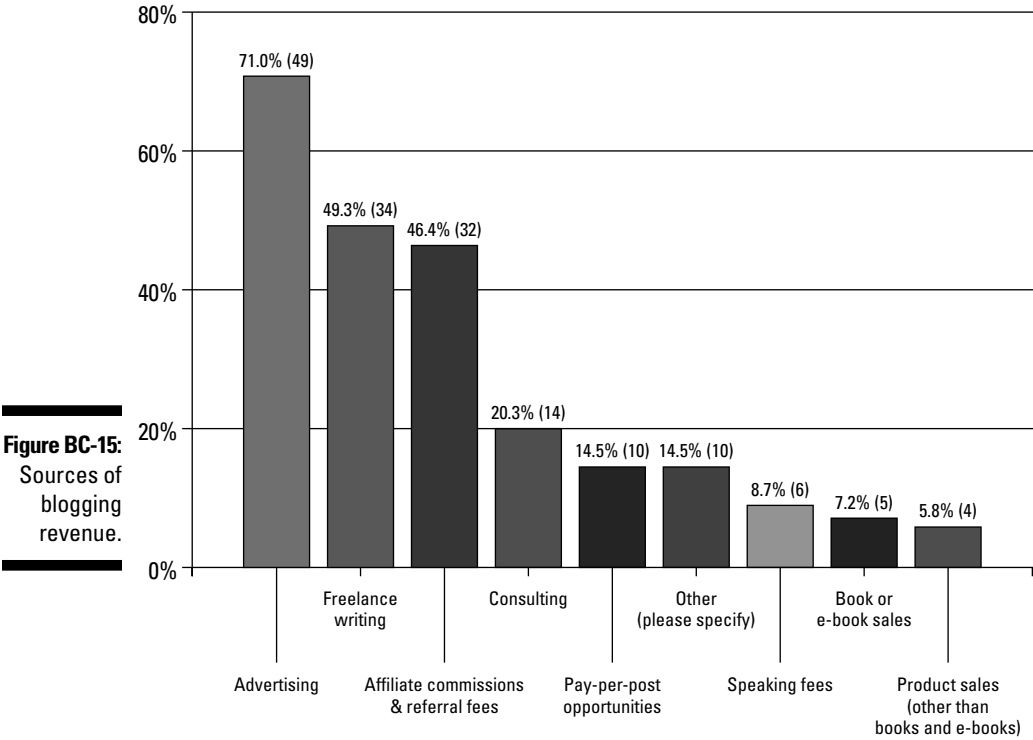
This suggests that although many bloggers view their monetization as a secondary aspect of their blog, you can make a living from blogging.

The top three sources of blogging revenue (see Figure BC-15 with 89 respondents) are

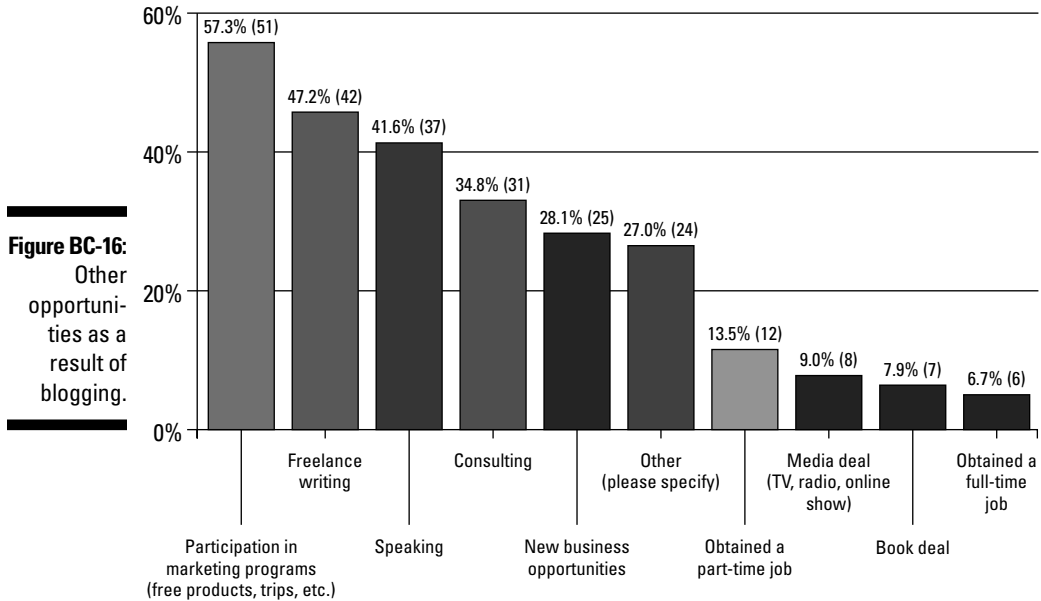
- ✓ Advertising
- ✓ Freelance writing
- ✓ Affiliate commissions/referral fees

Blogging has led to additional opportunities for 73 percent of the 122 respondents. Participation in marketing programs, freelance writing, and speaking are the top three opportunities (see Figure BC-16 with 89 respondents).

Please Indicate Your Sources of Blogging Revenue. Select All That Apply.



**Please Indicate the Other Opportunities  
You Have Had as a Result of Blogging.  
Select All That Apply.**



## *Promoting the Blog*

The top ways bloggers in the survey promoted their blogs are by commenting on other blogs (84 percent) and participating in social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter (80.7 percent). Figure BC-17 with 119 respondents shows all the tactics bloggers use to promote their blogs.

