

2009 UPA Member Satisfaction Survey Results

1 Abstract

The Usability Professional's Association deployed a survey to their membership in late 2008. This report summarizes the responses to that survey, providing summary descriptive analysis but not seeking to derive meaning at this point. There were 157 respondents to the survey, which was deployed on SurveyMonkey from November 2008 to April 2009. The purpose of the survey was to assess the current composition of the UPA membership, as well as to provide UPA members with a forum to discuss which aspects of UPA membership provide the most value, and which need improvement. There were also questions designed to assess which UCD methodologies practitioners used, what their team structure was, what tools they used for their work, and how they positioned themselves within their respective organizations.

2 Purpose and Scope

The purpose and scope of the 2009 survey was to

- get a general update on previously collected UPA membership data
- get updated cross-organizational membership information
- to discover the needs UPA members have with regards to UPA organizational outreach
- to get insights about methods Usability practitioners are using in the field

3 Procedure

3.1 Sample

The survey was conducted online, using SurveyMonkey. Links to the survey were provided in emails to the UPA membership, as well as in the UPA Monthly and UPA Voice.

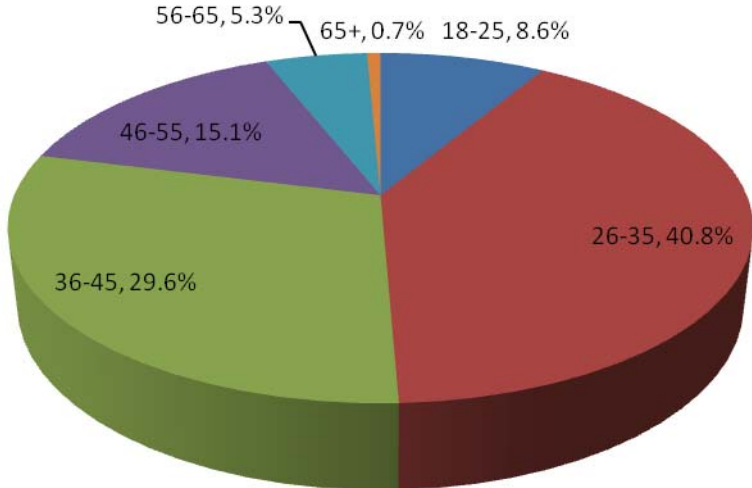
3.2 Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using the built-in capabilities of the SurveyMonkey engine, and were summarized and graphed by the report author. Any free response questions were analyzed by the report author to derive themes in response. A basic word frequency analysis was also done to determine the salience of each of these themes.

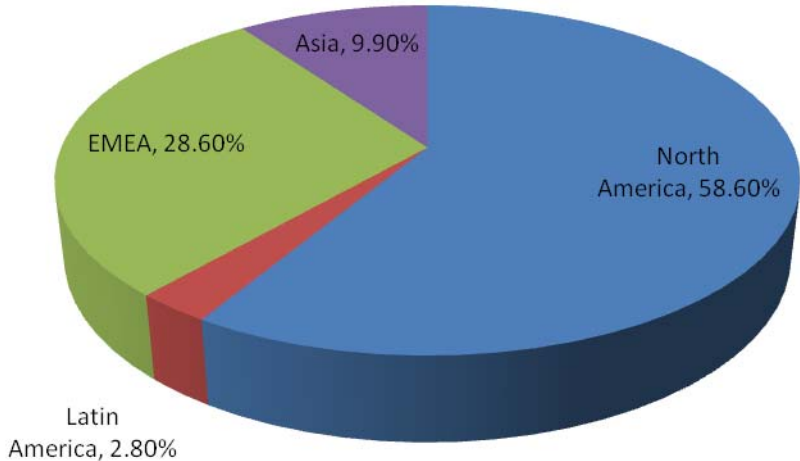
4 Survey Responses

4.1 Respondent Demographics

- **Gender:** 75 males (49.3%), 77 females (50.7%)
- **Age:**

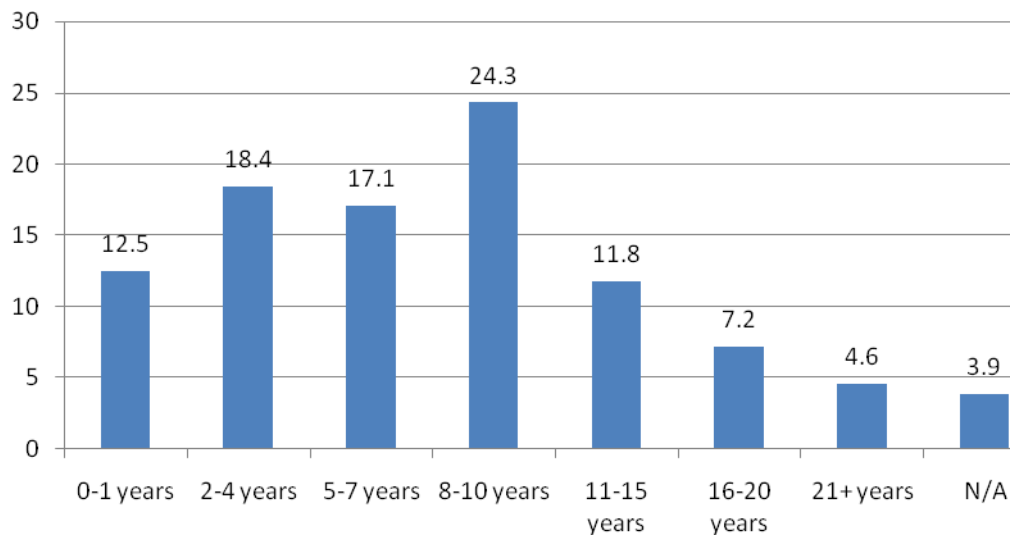


- **Geography:** Of the North America contingent, 54.9 % of respondents were from the United States. In EMEA, 7.9% were from the UK, 5.9% from Spain, 5.3% from Switzerland, and 4% from Germany.



- **Job Classification:** 73.2% of respondents were full-time employees. 12.7% identified as self-employed consultants.

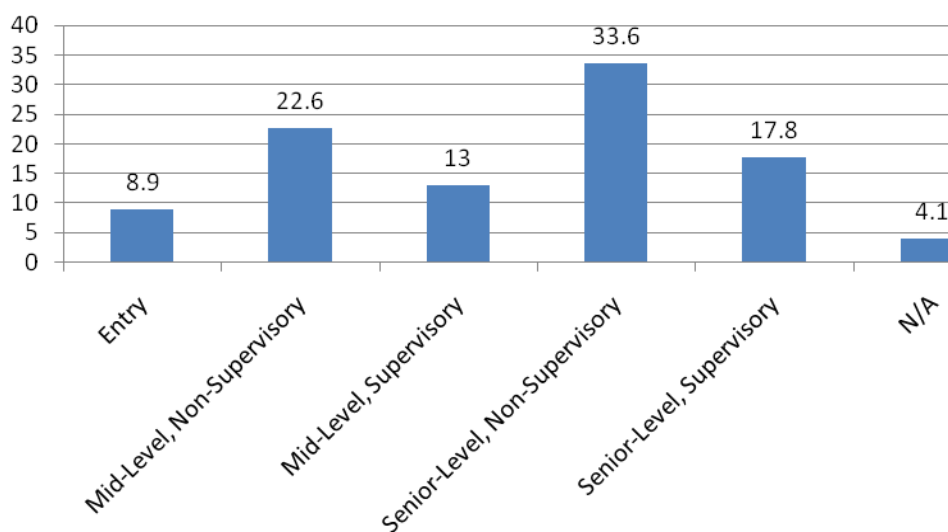
- **Usability Tenure:**



- **Education:** 54.4% of respondents reported holding a Masters Degree, whereas 31.5% reported holding a Bachelor's Degree. 4% held a Ph.D., while 5.4% held a high school diploma, and 2.7% a technical or Associates Degree. Of those surveyed, 20.8% reported their degree as having an HCI or Human Factors focus, 11.8% Computer Science, 7.6% Business Administration, 6.3% Technical Communication, and 6.3% Cognitive Psychology. The remaining respondents reported educations varying from Fine Arts to Philosophy to Engineering.

- **Certification:** 14 respondents reported holding or working towards HFI's CUA certification. 1 respondent reported holding HFES' CHFP certification.

- **Employment Level:**

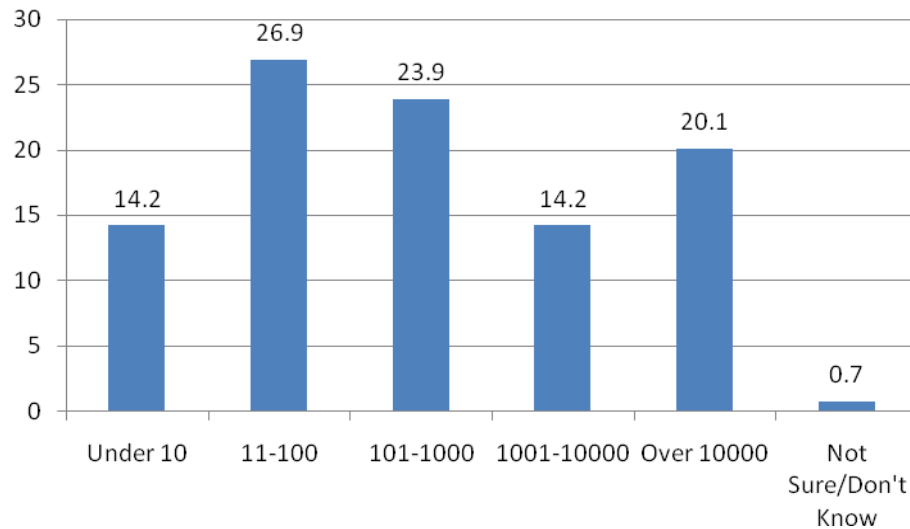


- **Types of Organizations:** 23.3% reported working for corporations other than software, while 19.2% reported working for software companies. 17.8% worked for usability consulting firms, and 15.1% worked for design or service agencies. 5.5% were government or military, 3.4% were academic, and 3.4% were non-profit.
- **Vertical Market/Industry:** 30.7% of respondents worked in the consumer products area, while 26.8% worked in the banking or financial sector. 20.5% worked in TeleCom, 18.1% in Medical, 17.3% in Insurance, 18.1% in the public sector, 11.8% in Advertising, 14.2% in publications and media, and 11% in industrial or manufacturing. Of the 28.3% who answered "Other", the responses ranged from education to government to automotive.
- **Job Responsibilities and Titles:** Over half of respondents identified usability as comprising 75-100% of their job responsibilities. The most common title was "Usability Practitioner" (28.1%), followed by "Usability Manager" (13%), "Interface Designer" (12.3%), and "Information Architect" (11%). Interesting titles from the "Other" category include "Content Developer", "Experience Designer", "User Experience Architect", and "Specialist Customer Experience".

4.2 Employment Characteristics

- **Size of Usability Team:** The average team size reported was 5.25 members. The highest team size reported was 120 members, and the lowest was 1. Removing outliers, most of the teams seem to fall in the 1-5 range. However, the mean response for ALL user experience or usability professionals in a respondent's company is 31.45 members, with the highest number reported being 1,000 practitioners.
- **Human Resources and Headcount:** 39.7% of respondents reported that they added staff during the last year, while only 11% reported they lost staff. 55.6% expected to keep the same headcount in the coming 12 months, 33.8% expected it to increase, and 10.5% expected it to decrease.
- **Budget:** 54% of respondents indicated they expected to get the same budget for UX as before, whereas 27.8% reported they expected more, and 18.3% expected less.
- **Internal vs External UX:** 58.8% of respondents indicated that they would use about the same ratio of internal testing to testing by an outside agency as before. 34.5% expected to use less than before, and only 6.7% expected to use more.

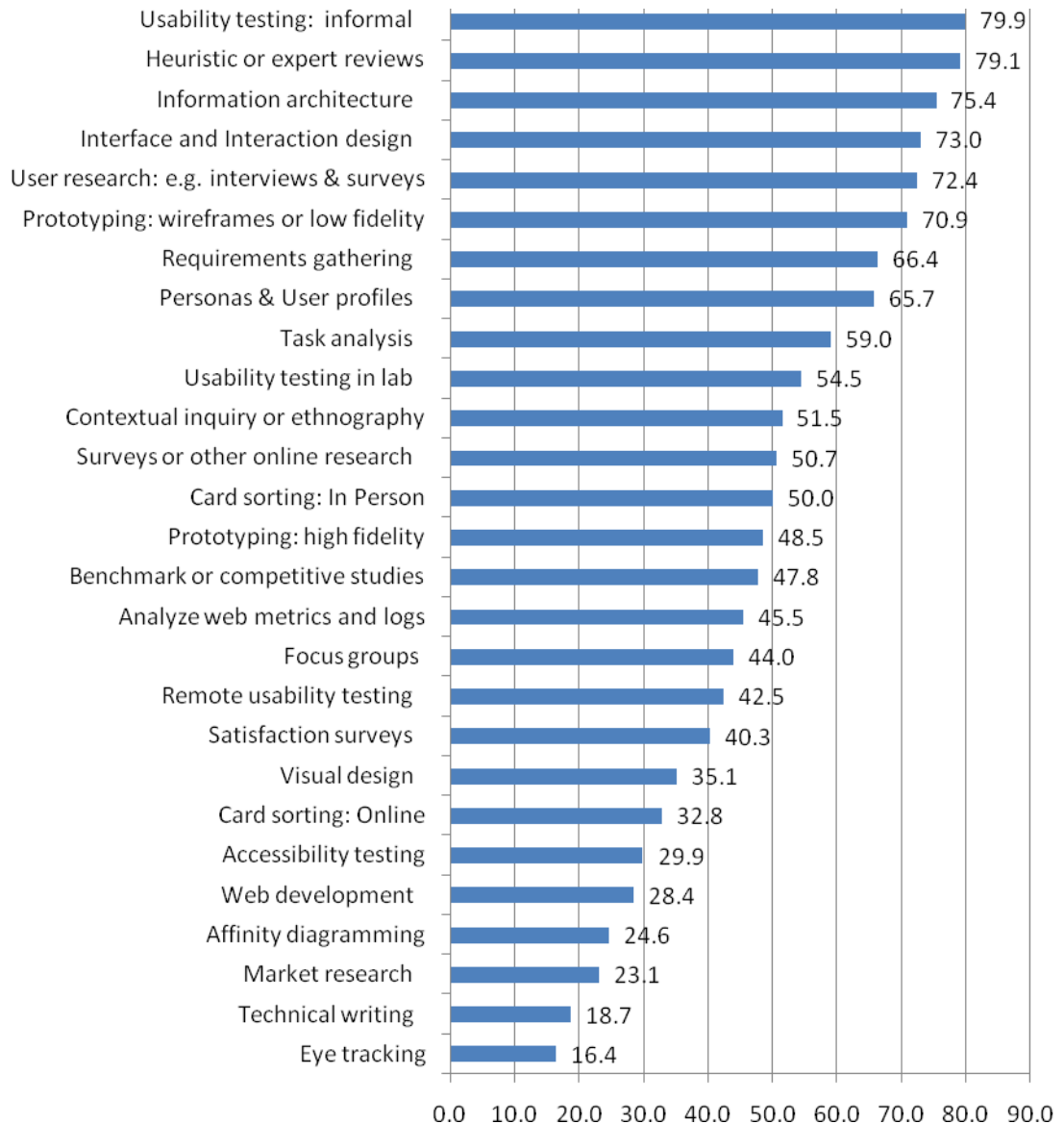
- **Company Size:**



- **Business Climate:** 59.3% of respondents felt that the business climate for usability services is improving, whereas 49.6% expected it to continue improving for the next 12 months. 20% felt that the climate was level, and 27.4% thought it would remain level for the coming 12 months. 5.2% saw it as currently declining, with 4.4% seeing it continue to decline for the coming 12 months.
- **Employment Benefits:** The most commonly responded benefit of full-time employment was Health Care Insurance (76.5%), followed by Dental Insurance (62.6%), Retirement Savings Plan (60.9%), and Life Insurance (56.5%). 52.2% reported professional conferences as a benefit, and 37.4% reported professional dues. 38.3% reported tuition reimbursement. 44.3% had family leave as a benefit. Finally, 23.5% reported some sort of Profit Sharing, and 20% reported stock options as a benefit.

4.3 Professional Practice

- **User-Centered Methods in Use:**



- **Best Practices:** Respondents were asked a free-form response question about what best practices they use to keep UX a focus in their companies. There were 74 responses. The themes that were most salient were communication with stakeholders, evangelism for UX, getting stakeholders to attend studies, and clear demonstration of ROI for all UX activities. Also mentioned were education of the development community, seeking buy-in from management, and making UX part of the development process or lifecycle.

- **Software Tools:** Respondents were asked to provide the top five software tools they use. Responses were highly variable, but consisted of a variety of visual design, office productivity, and usability-specific tools.
 - Microsoft Office and its component products were mentioned 48 times in the #1 spot, 46 times in the #2 spot, 46 times in the #3 spot, 34 times in the #4 spot, and 31 times in the #5 spot.
 - Adobe/Macromedia Products (including Flash, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Illustrator, and Acrobat) were mentioned 19 times in the #1 spot, 18 times in the #2 spot, 20 times in the #3 spot, 17 times in the #4 spot, and 11 times in the #5 spot.
 - Techsmith Products (Morae, SnagIt, Camtasia, UserVue) were mentioned 17 times in the #1 spot, 12 times in the #2 spot, 9 times in the #3 spot, 12 times in the #4 spot, and 7 times in the #5 spot.
 - Axure was mentioned 9 times in the #1 spot, 6 times in the #2 spot, 3 times in the #3 spot, none in the #4 spot, and once in the #5 spot.
 - Other tools mentioned included Keynote, Tobii, Ovo, iRise, Silverback, OmniGraffle Pro, Balsamiq, Google Analytics, and Userzoom.

- **Usability Test Logging:** 74.6% of respondents indicated they take notes on paper during usability tests, with another 47.7% saying they use a text file or Word document. 46.9% take notes in a spreadsheet, and 13.8% use Powerpoint. 39.2% of respondents use Morae. Other responses include The Observer (0.8%), Ovo Logger (3.1%), Observation Coding System (1.5%), and 3.8% report using a custom-made tool for logging.

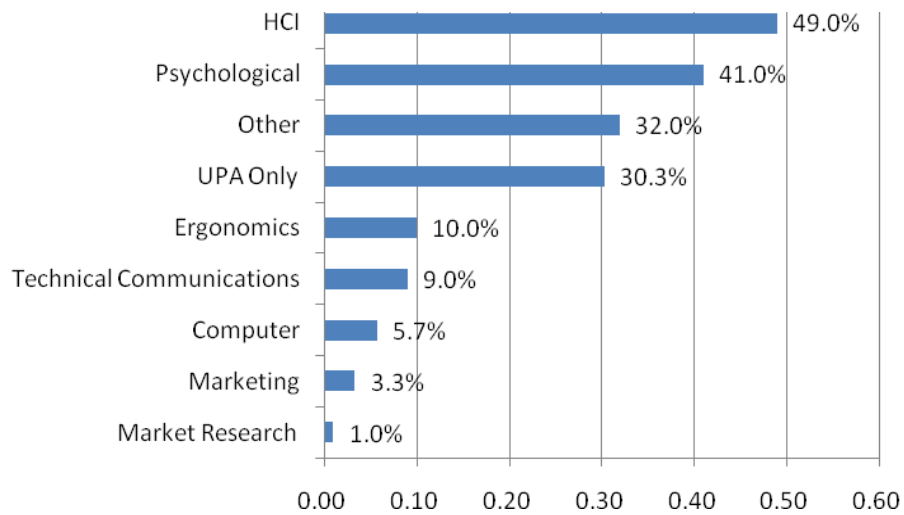
- **Usability Test Capture:** 61.2% of respondents use a software-based video capture product to record their usability tests. However, 26.4% report that they don't record their tests at all, and 20.9% record audio only. The remaining 24% use analog or digital tape-based systems to record their studies.

4.4 UPA Membership Characteristics

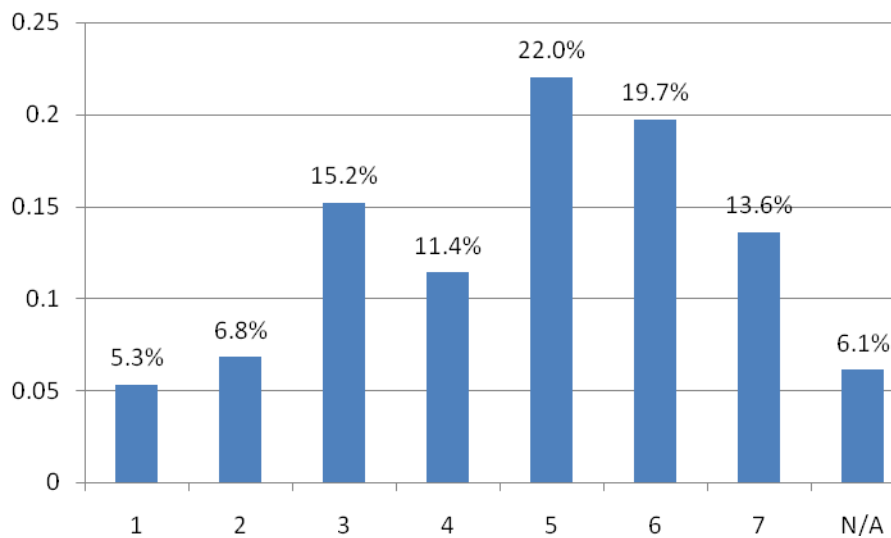
- **Membership Ratio:** 92.4% of respondents reported being UPA members.

- **Dues:** 57.3% pay their own UPA dues, while 40.5% of respondents have their dues paid by their employer.

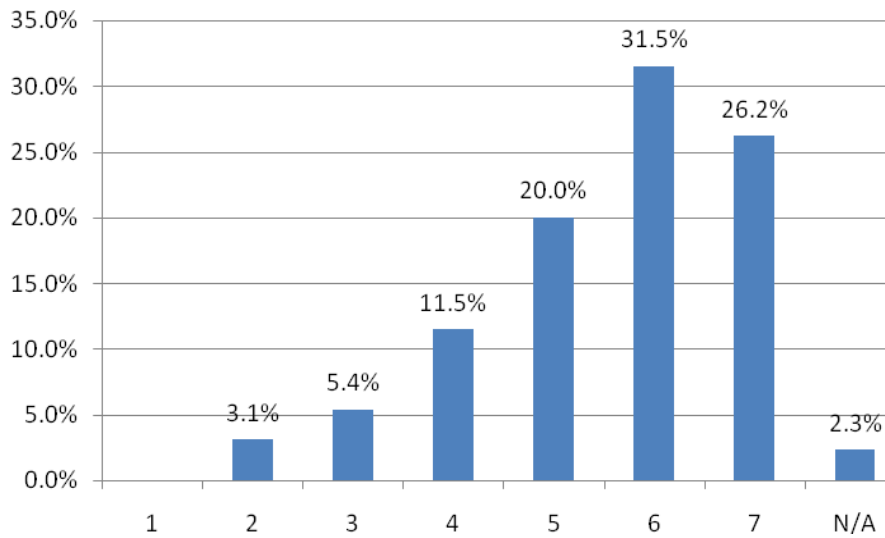
- **Other Memberships:** Some respondents reported being members of other professional organizations, though 30.3% of them reported only belonging to UPA. Of the organizations in the Other category, AIA, IXDA, AIGA, IAI, and IEEE were the most frequent free-form responses.



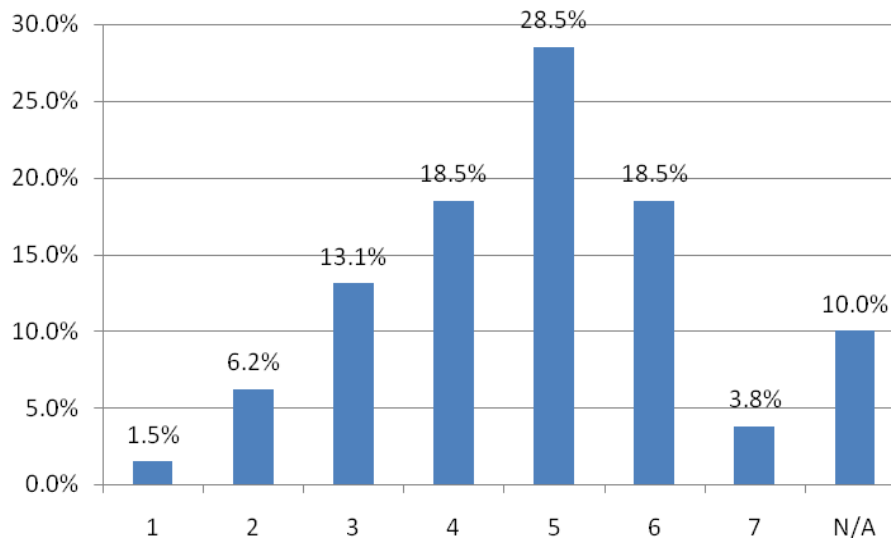
- Importance of UPA:** Participants were asked how important UPA was to their professional development, on a scale of 1 to 7, 1 being Not at All Important and 7 being Extremely Important.



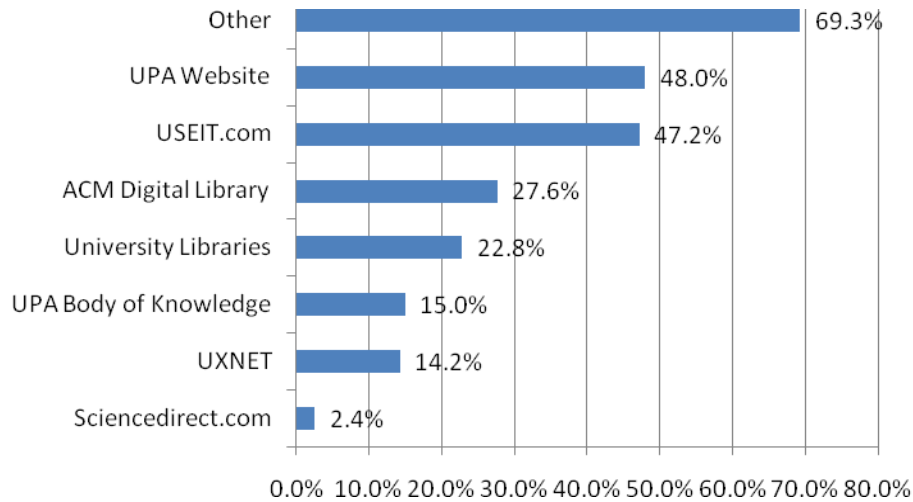
- Importance of Research Findings:** Participants were asked how important the latest research findings were to their work. The question was posed on a scale of 1 to 7, 1 being Not at All Important and 7 being Extremely Important.



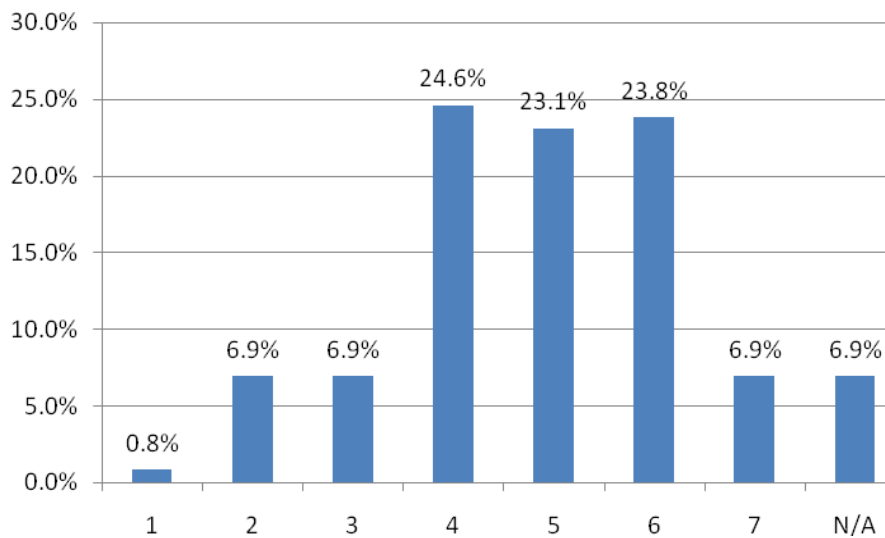
- Satisfaction With UPA:** Participants were asked how satisfied they were with the information that UPA provided them. The question was posed on a scale of 1 to 7, 1 being Extremely Dissatisfied and 7 being Extremely Satisfied.



- Sources of Usability Information:** Participants were asked what their primary sources of knowledge about usability were. Some of the most commonly responded sources in the Other category were blogs, boxesandarrows.com, books, usability.gov, AdaptivePath.com, HFI's UsabilityCentral, and UXMatters.



- Overall Satisfaction With UPA:** Participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the UPA, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being extremely dissatisfied and 7 being extremely satisfied.

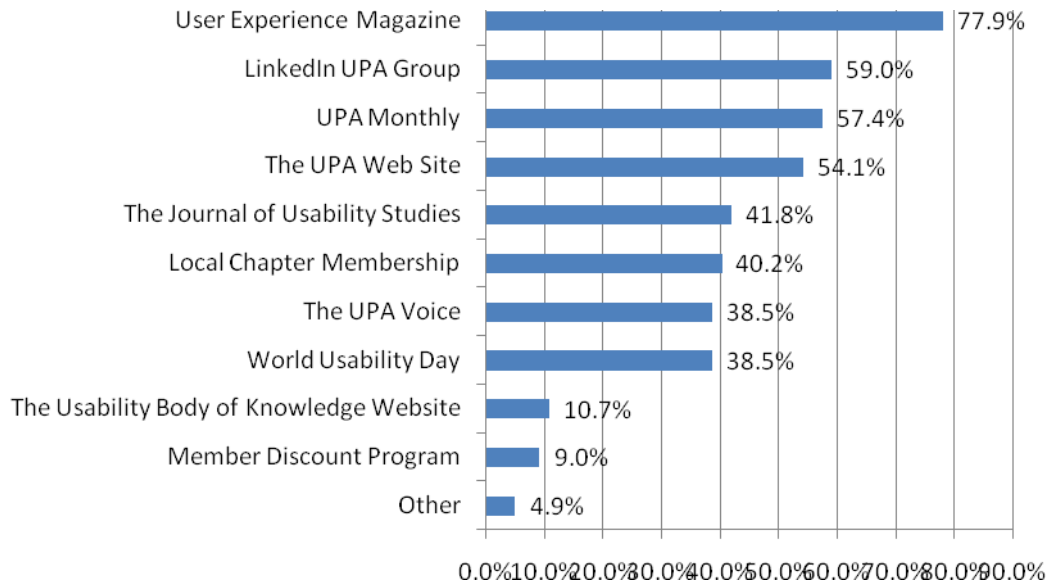


4.5 UPA Membership Benefits

- Biggest Benefits of Membership:** In a free form response question, respondents were asked what they thought the biggest benefits of UPA Membership were:
 - 26 respondents mentioned "community", "networking", or "connections"
 - 14 respondents mentioned the UPA Conference
 - 7 respondents mentioned chapters and local events
 - 16 respondents mentioned publications, most often UX.

- Other responses included World Usability Day, access to usability-specific information, and discounts on conferences.

- **Membership Benefits Used:**



- **Recommend UPA to Others:** 68.5% of respondents would recommend UPA to others in the usability or user experience field, and only 4.6% would not (26.9% were not sure, and 27 respondents did not answer).
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** In a free form response question, respondents were asked for any suggestions they might have for how the UPA could improve its value as a professional association. There were 63 responses to this question:
 - 10 respondents recommend improvements to the content, design, and usability of the UPA website.
 - “The last time I used it, the website was a usability nightmare – no sense of what I can do, hard to understand the hierarchy of what’s available.”
 - “Improve the usability of your website, sheesh! make UPA website and User Experience Magazine beautiful to show non-usability skeptics that usability can be sexy and not dull and boring.”
 - 11 respondents recommend improving communication with chapters or founding more local chapters. 3 of these responses stress the importance of international chapters.
 - “Do more for local chapters. I attempted to organize a local chapter and one area of strong resistance is that the members saw no reason to formally create a chapter--no benefits to being associated with the parent organization, as there is in STC and CHI.”
 - “Work more closely with chapters to provide ideas and guidance on how to promote usability and, indeed, what it means to promote such a broad concept.”
 - “Work with the strongest chapters UPA currently has, and leverage them to build the UPA brand.”
 - “More benefits to establishing a local chapter - my local group has other UPA members, but they don't feel the WIIFM to make our group an official local chapter.”
 - “Facilitate strong and well-funded local chapters.”

- “Better support for local chapters! Financial support; speakers; structures/ideas for events; etc. Chapters are the lifeblood of the organization!”
- 4 respondents mentioned growing new partnerships and network opportunities with other professional organizations.
 - “Consider increasing visibility in unrelated industries and popular media.”
 - “UPA currently feels a little 20th century - useful and handy but not dynamic and in your face - its easy to forget, and overlook the potential of what could be an amazing network.”
 - “Seek partnerships with other related organizations (computer, technical, ia, etc.) to co-sponsor events aimed at increasing membership for all parties involved.”
- 5 respondents mentioned growing UPA internationally (all in Europe, in this case).
 - “It feels very USA based - when it could be a model of borderless knowledge sharing.”
 - “Do something outside the US/Canada. In the UK do something outside London.”
- 12 respondents mentioned expanding the focus of UPA beyond just usability, while still establishing UPA as “one-stop shopping” for all things usability.
 - “Expanding that--the ability to find others like myself who can help me, by mentoring me or contracting for overflow work from me--would be the biggest asset for me from UPA. In other words, expand what you're already providing as a benefit--just do it more formally, expand it to the web, add resource and channels to meet and discuss, etc. My biggest complaint for UPA is that it focuses way too much on usability testing, research, methods, etc. and NOT enough on the practice of user experience design. UPA has gotten better at practitioner topics, but there still seems to be a bias toward testing and research, not design of solutions or methodologies for UX design process. ”
 - “The continued focus on "usability" as opposed to user experience makes me think the organization is old-fashioned and behind-the-times.”
 - “Make it more recognizable outside the usability field. Still feels like a small circle now.”
- 11 respondents recommended improvements to the content, design, and delivery mechanisms for UPA Publications, including the UPA Monthly, User Experience, eBlasts, and Conference Proceedings, as well as content we host online.
 - “Make your monthly newsletters into a rich-text format and use multiple mailing lists to accomodate the different languages.”
 - “We need a list like the IAI listserv, the IxDA one, etc.”
 - “A complete digital library with all conference proceedings and further case stories.”
 - “Instead of getting an email that publications are available online, I would like to see the names of the articles within the email along with links to the articles.”
 - “Provide a digital archive of *all* User Experience Magazine. - Improve search of archive - Provide User Experience Magazine sorted by categories.”
- 7 respondents recommended improvements to UPA’s mentoring regimen, as well as student outreach. 2 of these respondents recommended revitalizing our position on the certification argument.
 - “I think its absolutley critical that we figure out the "certification" process. Inaction here may have grave consequences to our profession.”
 - “Update some resources, such as the investigation into certification.”
 - “More facilitated mentoring.”
 - “A more clear mentorship/tutorship program would be very helpful.”

- “The UPA should provide development/graduate schemes for people who wish to develop their skills and knowledge in this area.”
- “Better student outreach.”
- 5 respondents recommended improving the way the UPA markets itself, including 2 who mentioned that we should make our benefit proposition more apparent (one even said they had no idea we had a magazine).
 - “Provide “inside information“ that only members have access to. It's hard for me to explain why a colleague should join UPA. I wish it offered it's members more.”
 - “Continue to market UPA as a one stop shop for usability practitioner collaboration / marketplace for sharing skills.”
 - “Had no idea that you had a magazine. Promote yourselves better.”
 - “Do a better job of advertising all the usability resources UPA provides to its members.”
- 4 respondents mentioned improvements to World Usability day, including making events free, as well as more clearly defining the theme of the events.”
 - “If UPA world day can be free,I think it is good for usability growth.”
 - “Keep putting World Usability Day in the forefront.”
 - “World Usability Day was a recent example of a poorly defined event where it was difficult to execute a local event around such an unfocused message.”

5 Next Steps

The UPA Board of Directors is in the process of reviewing the results of this survey. We intend to use the results to inform our strategy and mission. Specifically, we are interested in ways in which we can increase the value of UPA membership, better support our chapters, and make UPA a truly international organization. The results of this survey will inform the revisions we are making to our membership model. They will also allow us to better align our content strategy for publications, the website, and the conference with the needs of our members. If you have questions about this survey, or to hear more about what the Board of Directors is working on, please refer to the UPA website at www.usabilityprofessionals.org.