business blogging trends

2016

THIRD ANNUAL SURVEY

Orbit Media Studios

ANNUAL BLOGGER RESEARCH

For three consecutive years, Orbit Media has surveyed

1000+ business bloggers to assess their publishing habits.

Last year, in addition to learning how business bloggers work,

we probed deeper to learn which tactics produce the strongest

results. We're excited to share what we learned.

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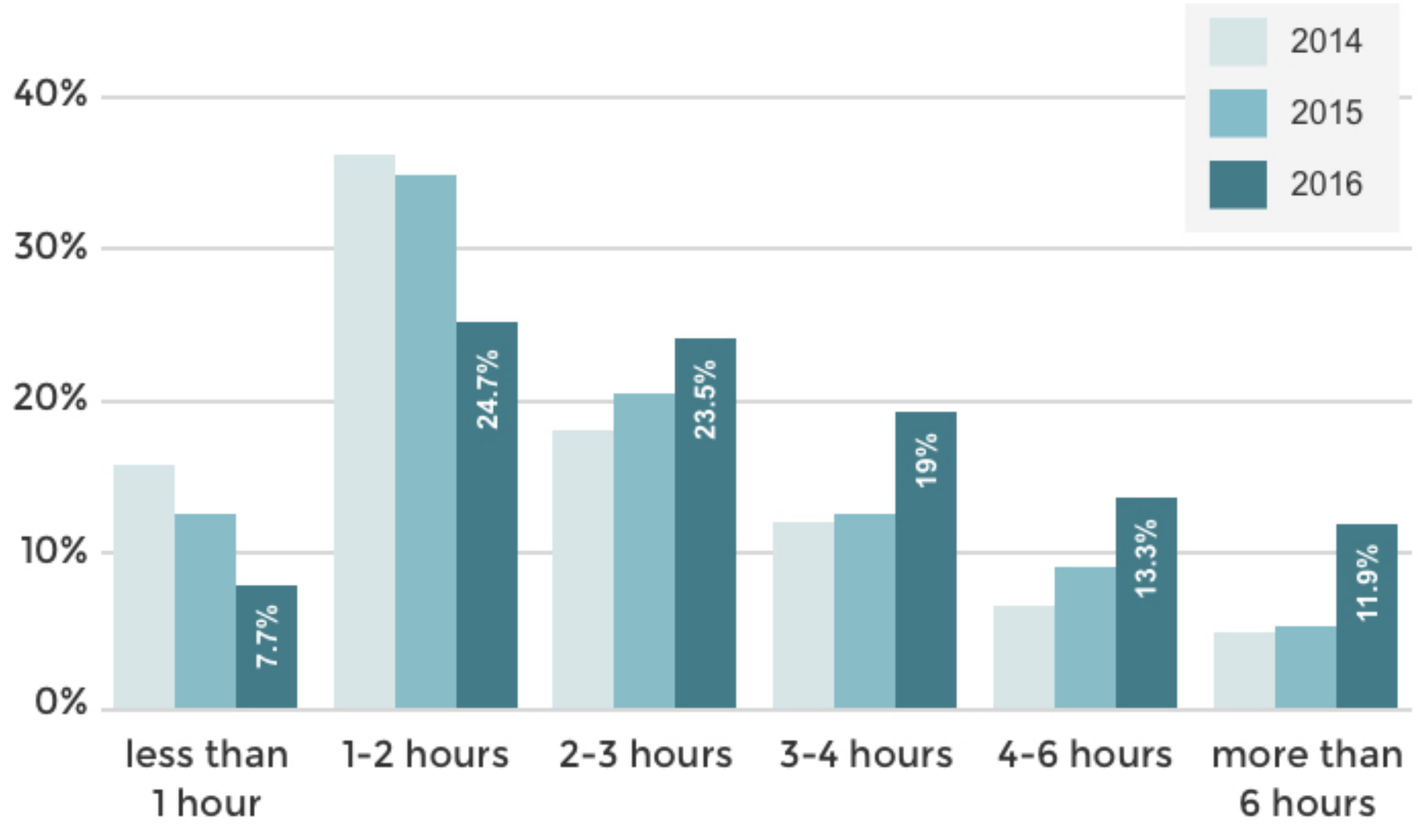
2014
2015
2016

"All along, experts have been saying to focus on quality, promotion and measurement. Bloggers seem to be listening, finally."

Andy Crestodina, co-founder and strategic director of Orbit Media Studios

How long does it take to write a typical post?



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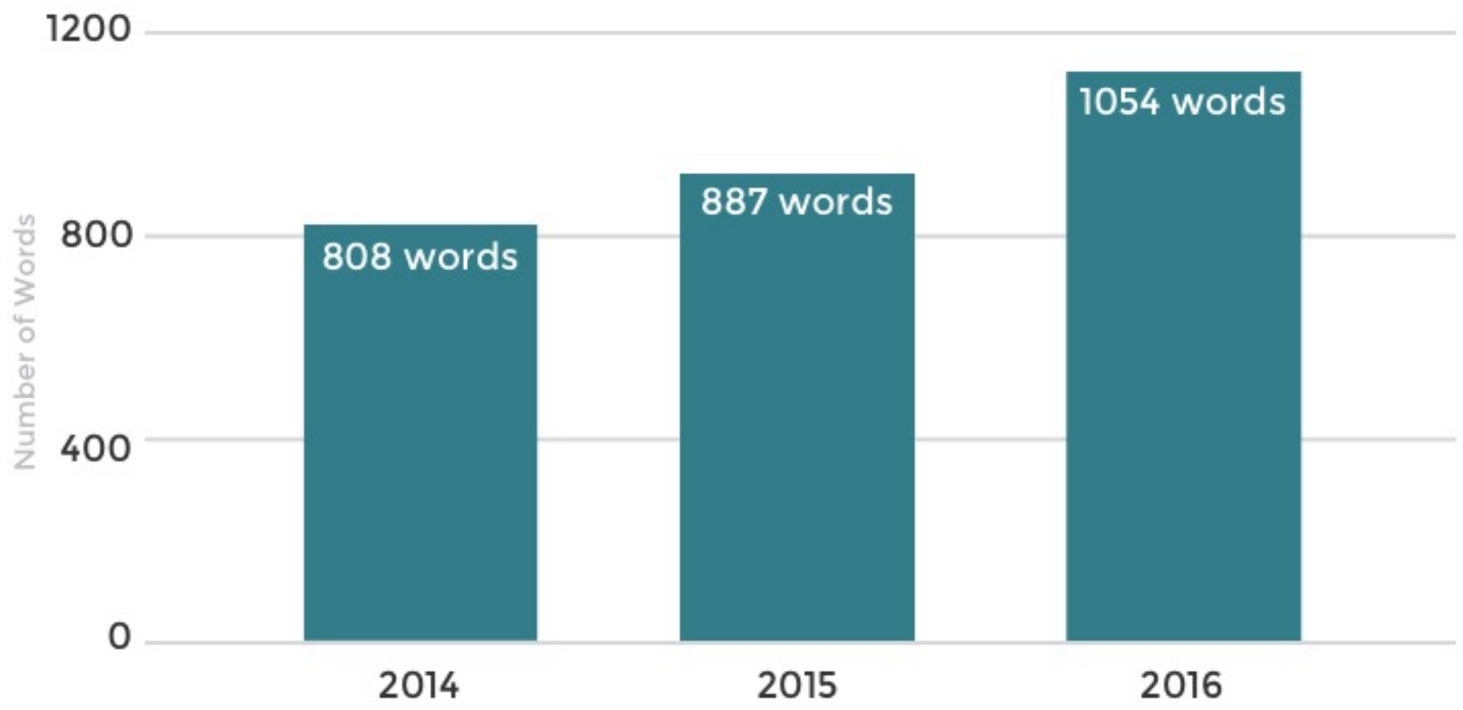
Bloggers are putting more time into writing posts.

The results in 2014 showed bloggers averaged 2.5 hours to write their posts. The average time increased slightly in 2015, but took a 26% leap in 2016.

KEY FINDINGS

- The average is now 3 hours, 16 minutes.
- Twice as many bloggers spend more than 6 hours on average per post.
- One-half of the survey's participants spent less than two hours on a typical post in 2015, but the percent has shrunk to one-third.

How long is a typical blog post?



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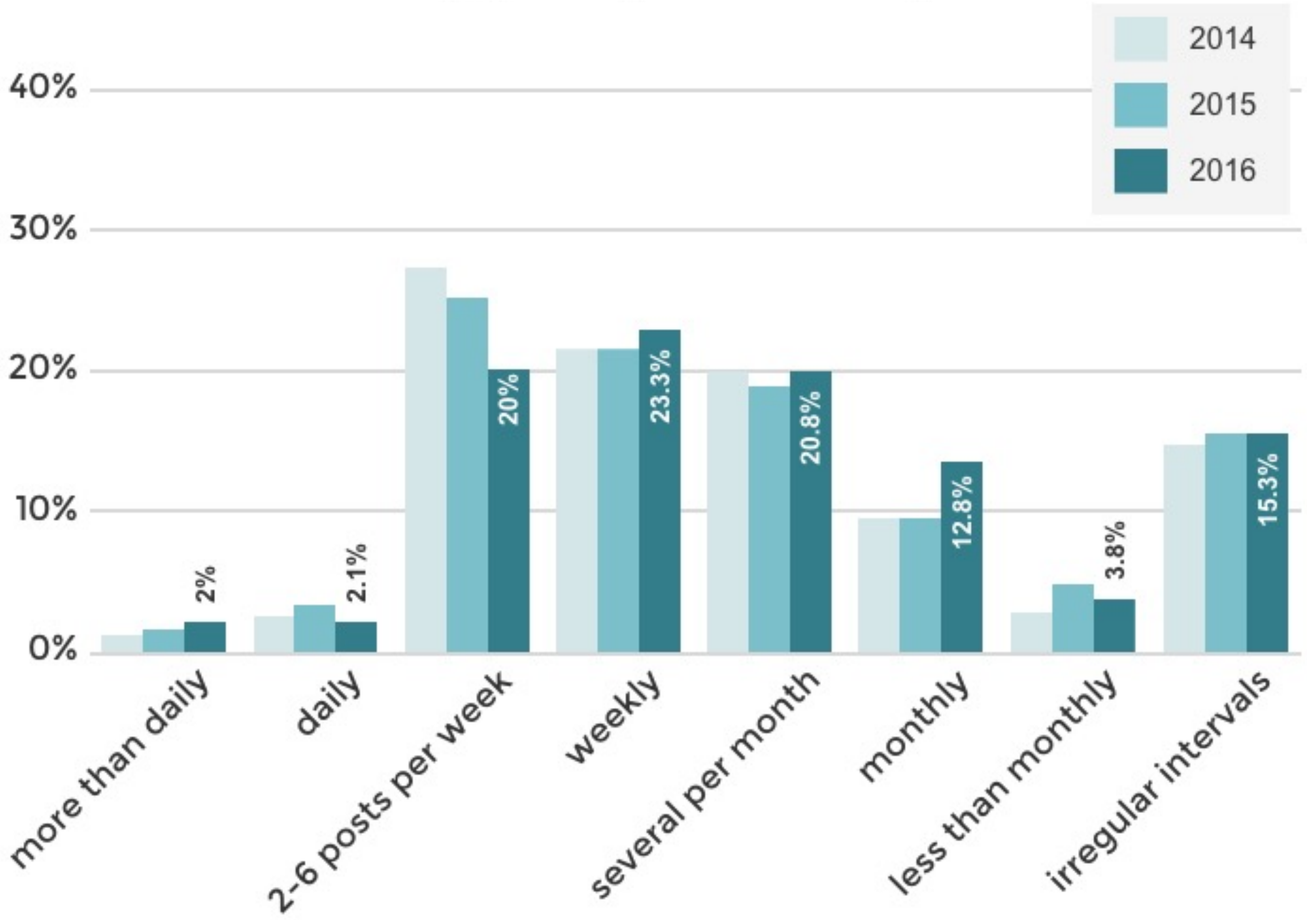
The length of blog posts has increased.

The length of blog posts has grown mightily.

KEY FINDINGS

- The average blog post ran 1,054 words in 2016—a 19% increase from the prior year.
- The percentage of posts with fewer than 500 words is half what it was in 2014.
- The percentage of posts with 2,000 or more words has doubled each year.

How frequently are bloggers publishing?



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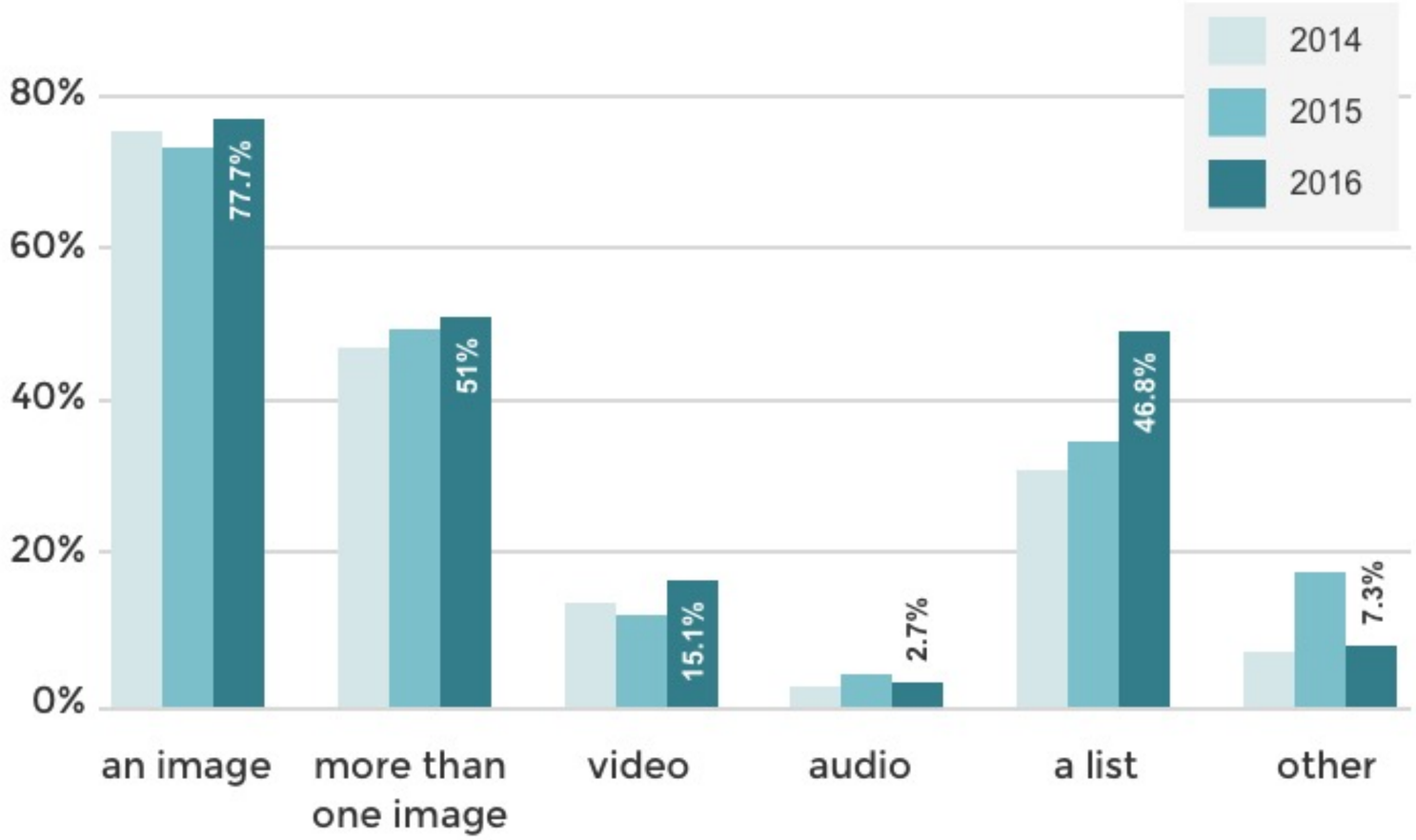
Publishing frequency has declined.

Bloggers publish less often now.

KEY FINDINGS

- The practice of blogging daily went down more than 50%.
- Weekly publishing has become the most common cadence.
- Publishing monthly rose by 38%.

What media does a typical blog post include?



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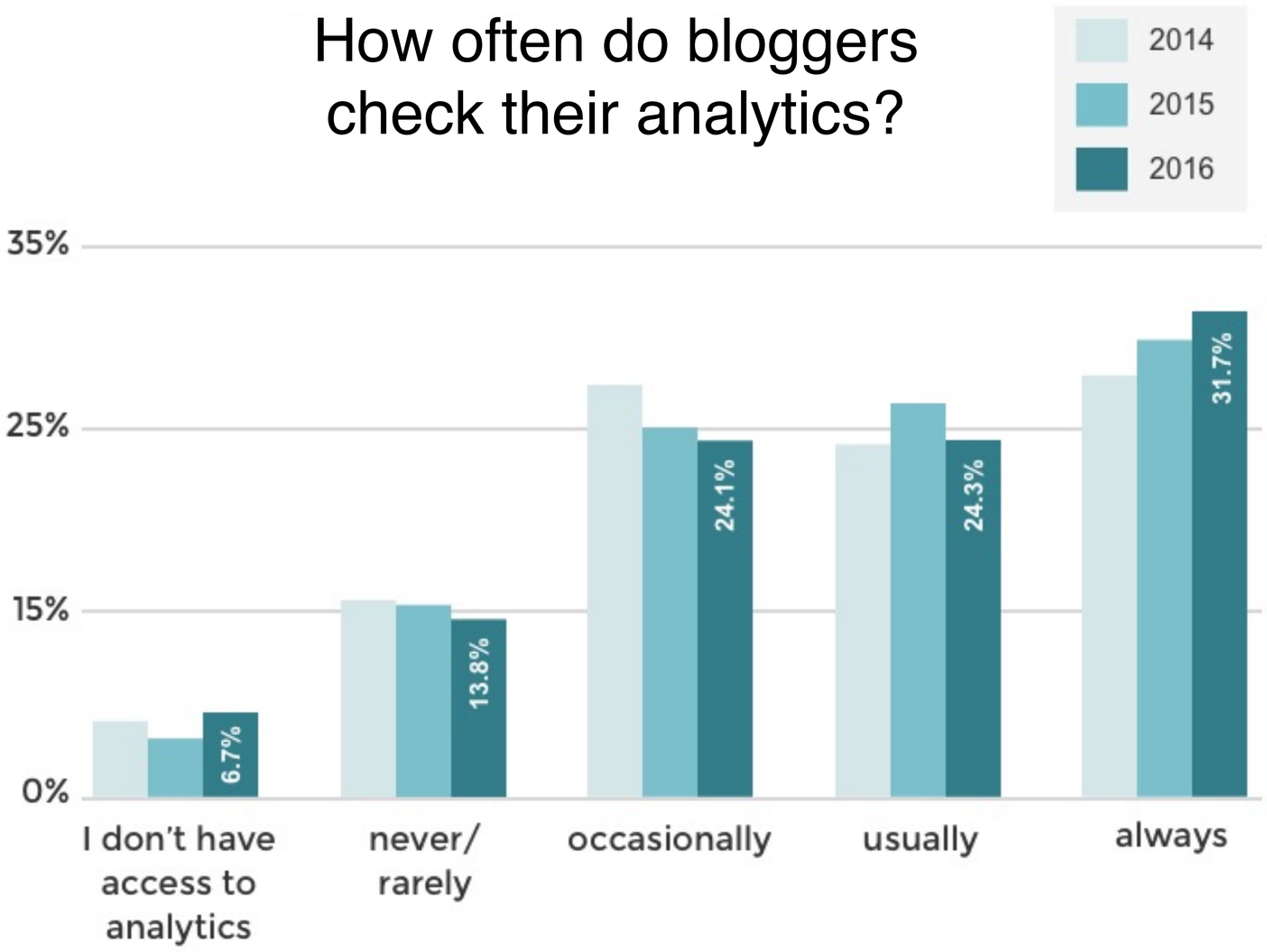
Bloggers are using more media.

The results reveal a big increase in the inclusion of a variety of media, especially images.

KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of bloggers include more than one image in their posts.
- 15% use video. Video use is up; audio is flat.
- Nearly half add lists to their posts.



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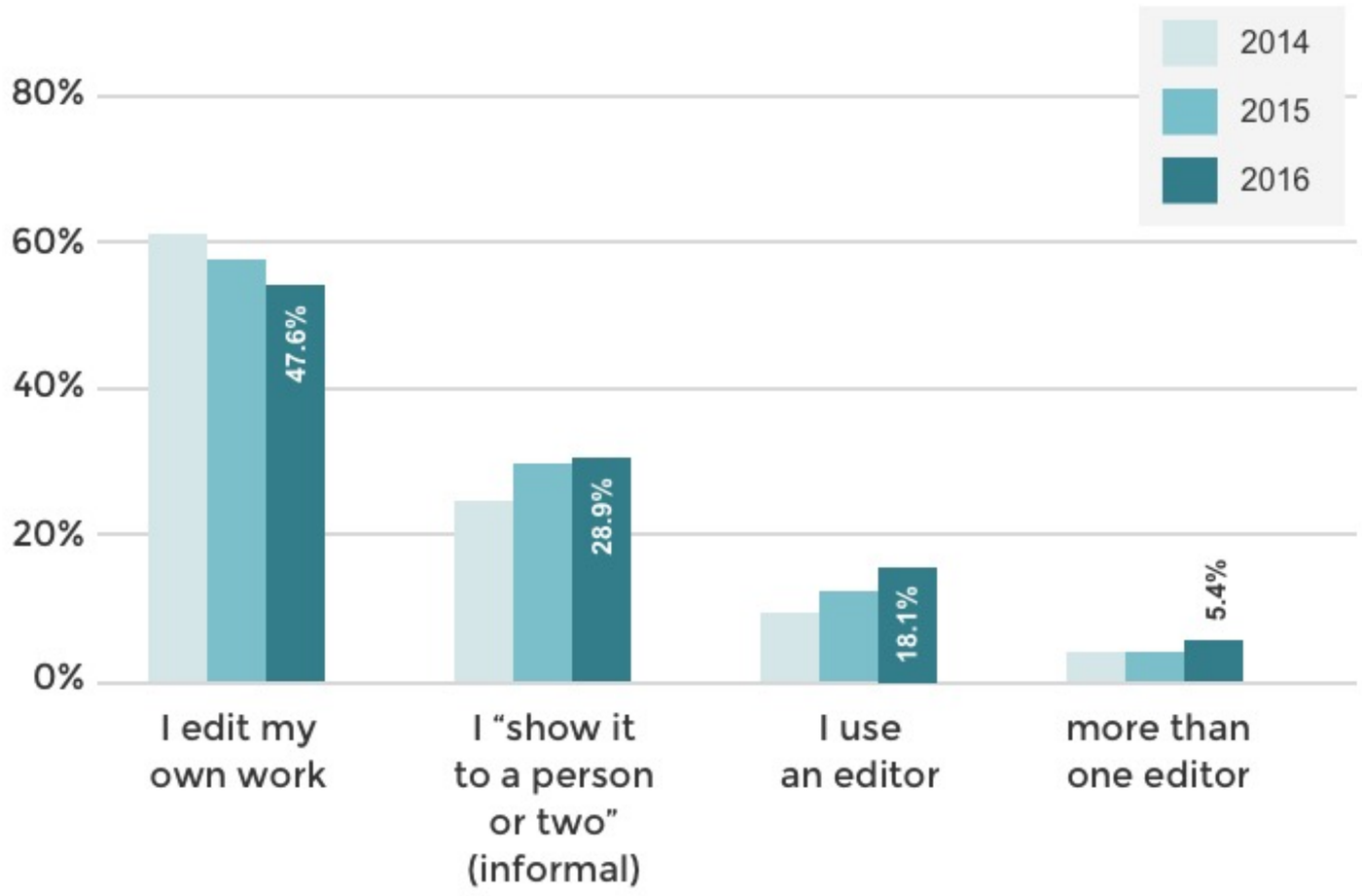
Analytics isn't fully embraced.

The use of analytics to measure and improve blog content is a mixed bag.

KEY FINDINGS

- Nearly 7 in 10 bloggers don't check content performance consistently.
- 1 in 5 bloggers don't even have access to analytics.
- The three years of data indicates an 18% increase in bloggers who "always" check analytics.

Do bloggers use editors?



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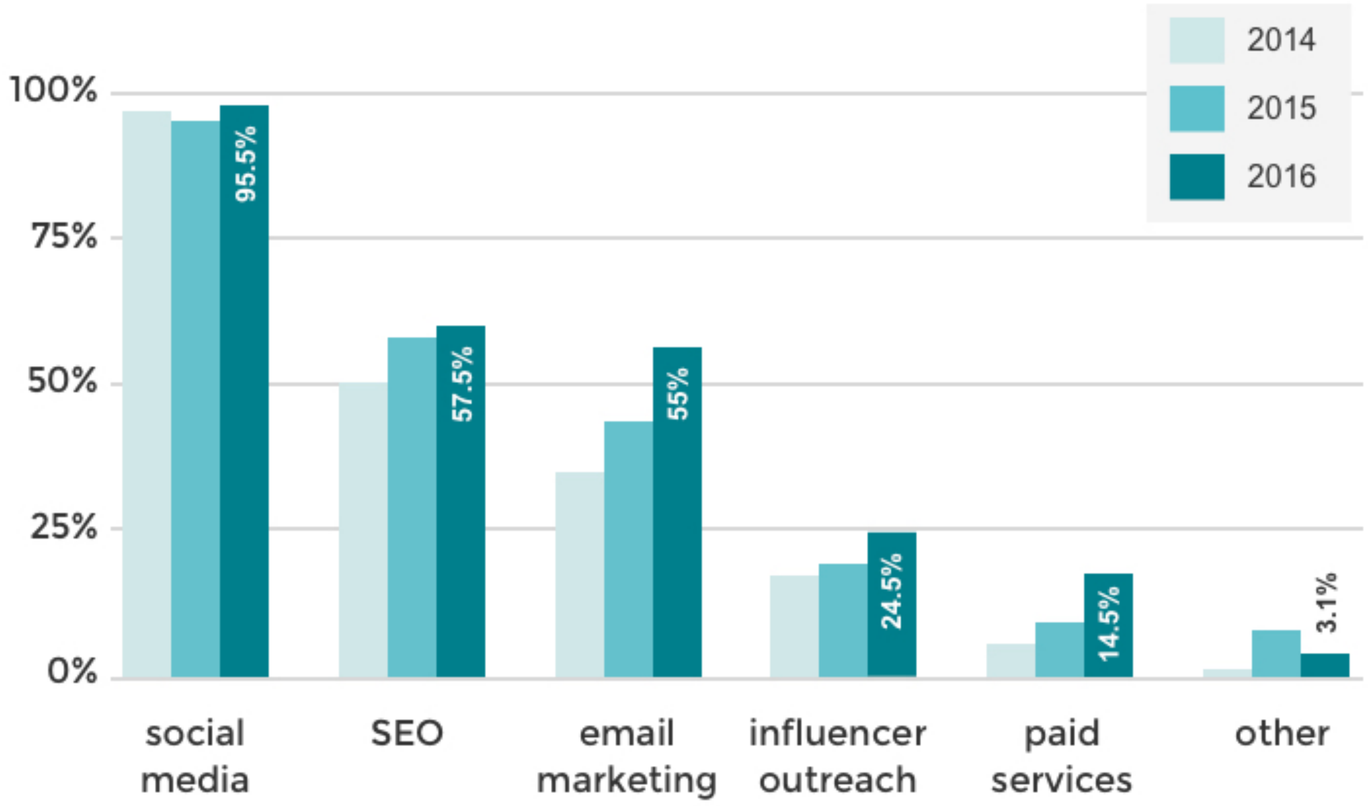
Bloggers rely more on editors each year.

An increase reliance on editors indicates business bloggers get more serious each year. Most bloggers get a second set of eyes on a typical post.

KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of bloggers now have editors, which was not the case prior to 2016.
- About 1 in 4 bloggers have a formal process for editing.
- The percentage of bloggers using multiple editors doubled last year.

How are bloggers driving traffic to their posts?



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Social media is the top promotional channel.

All promotional tactics are on the rise indicating bloggers are increasingly focused on building traffic.

KEY FINDINGS

- Nearly all bloggers promote their posts via social media, which has been steady in our research for three years running.
- More than half use SEO to promote their content.
- Email promotion has increased dramatically since 2014.
- Only 14% use paid services to generate traffic, however, the percentage has tripled.

WHICH TACTICS PRODUCE

strong results?

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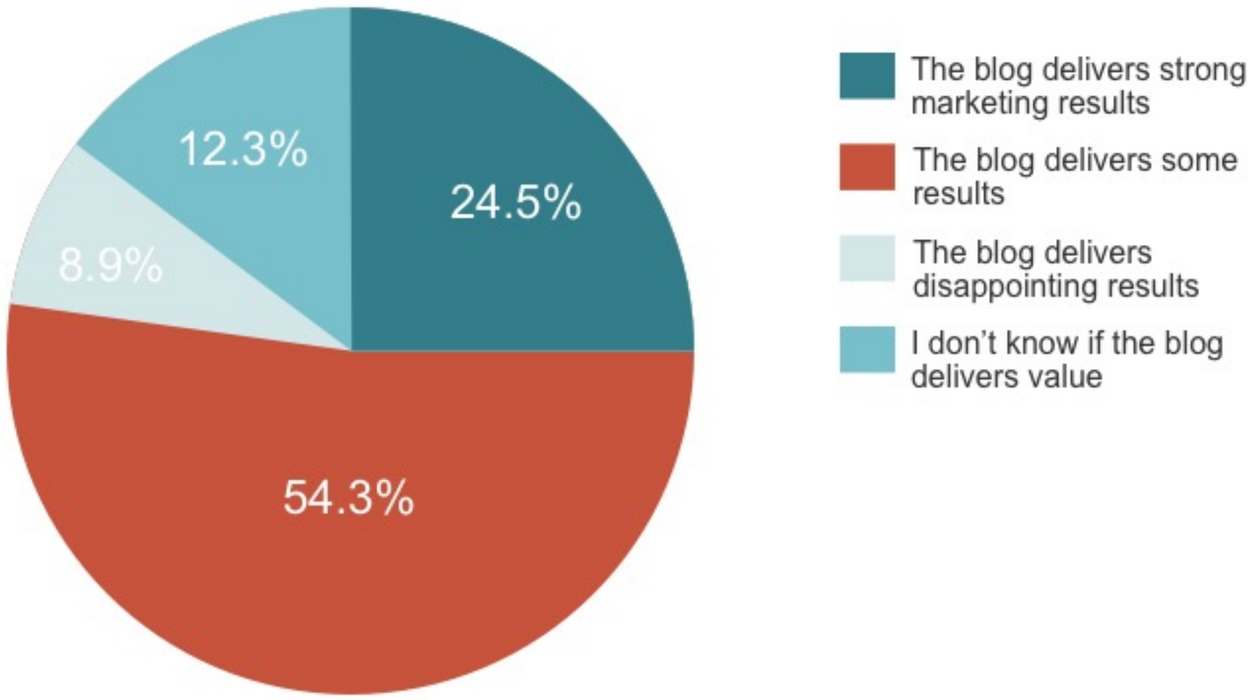
How the bloggers surveyed rate their results.

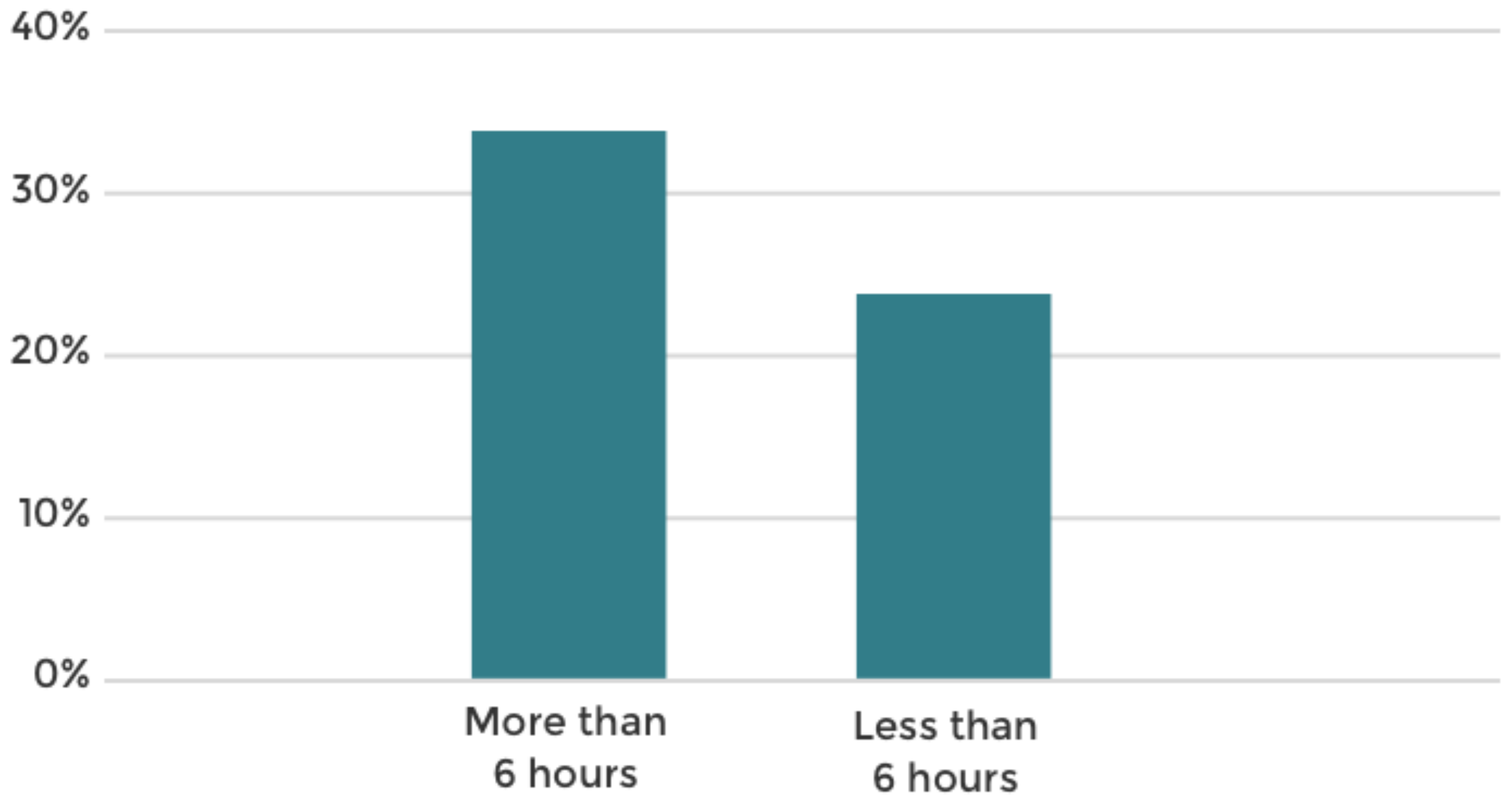


The survey participants were asked to rate their results.

KEY FINDINGS

- Nearly one-quarter claim to get strong marketing results.
- Over one-half claim "some" results.
- The remainder (~21%) report disappointing results or don't know.

Percent of bloggers who report “strong results” by time spent.



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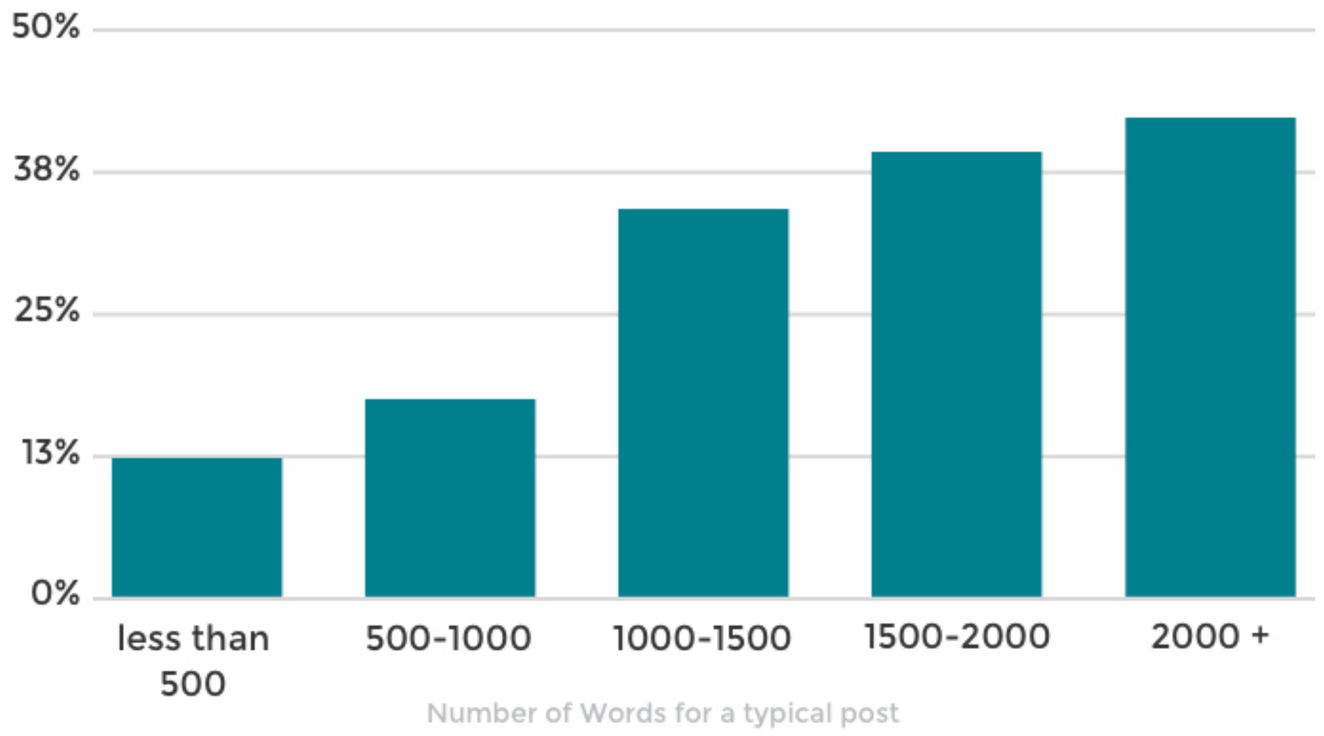
Extra effort, extra results.

KEY FINDINGS

- 33% of bloggers who spend 6+hours per post report strong results.
- Only 23% who spend less than 6 hours per post report strong results.

Percent of bloggers who report “strong results” by average length of posts.



More copy, greater results.

KEY FINDING

- There is a direct correlation between blog post length and the results reported.

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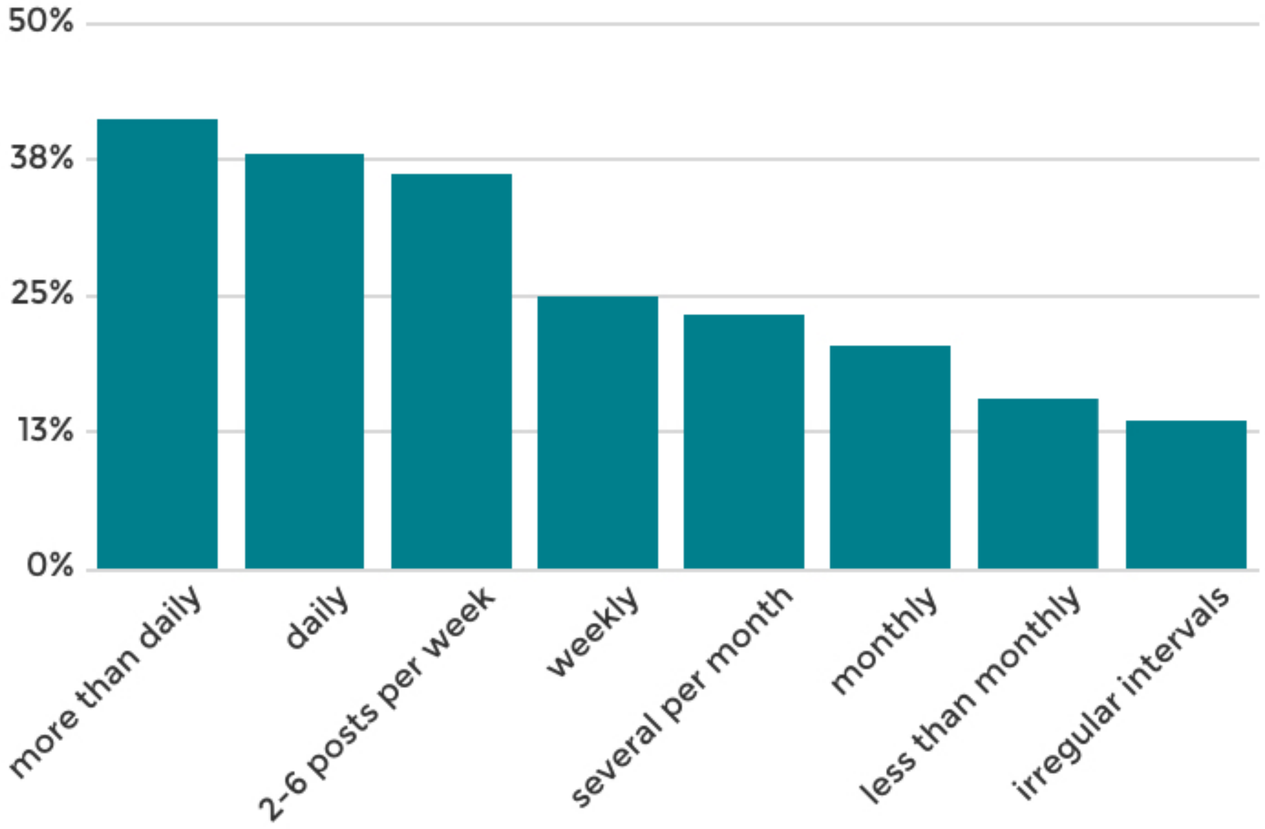
Percent of bloggers who report “strong results” by frequency.

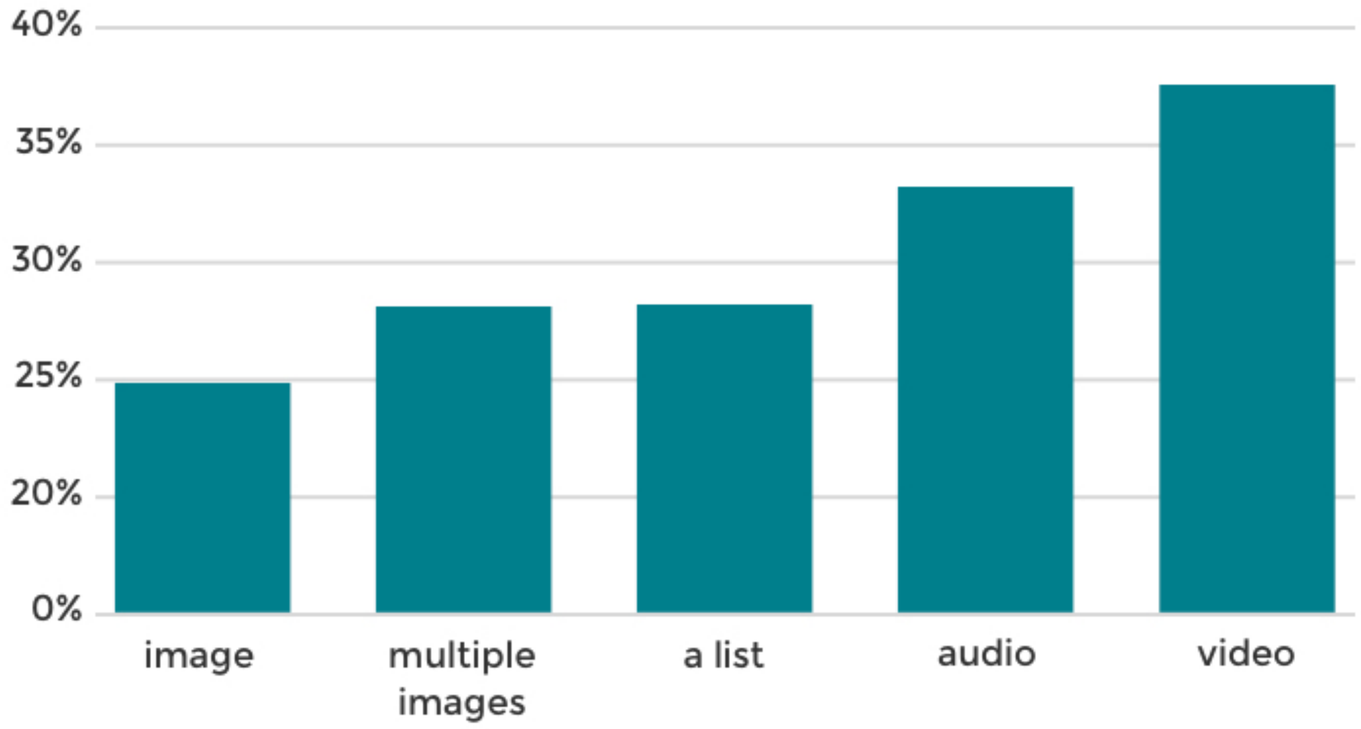


Frequency may be a factor.

KEY FINDINGS

- Bloggers who publish more often report stronger results.
- *Note: A very small percentage of those surveyed blog daily or more often.*

What media was used by those who reported “strong results?”

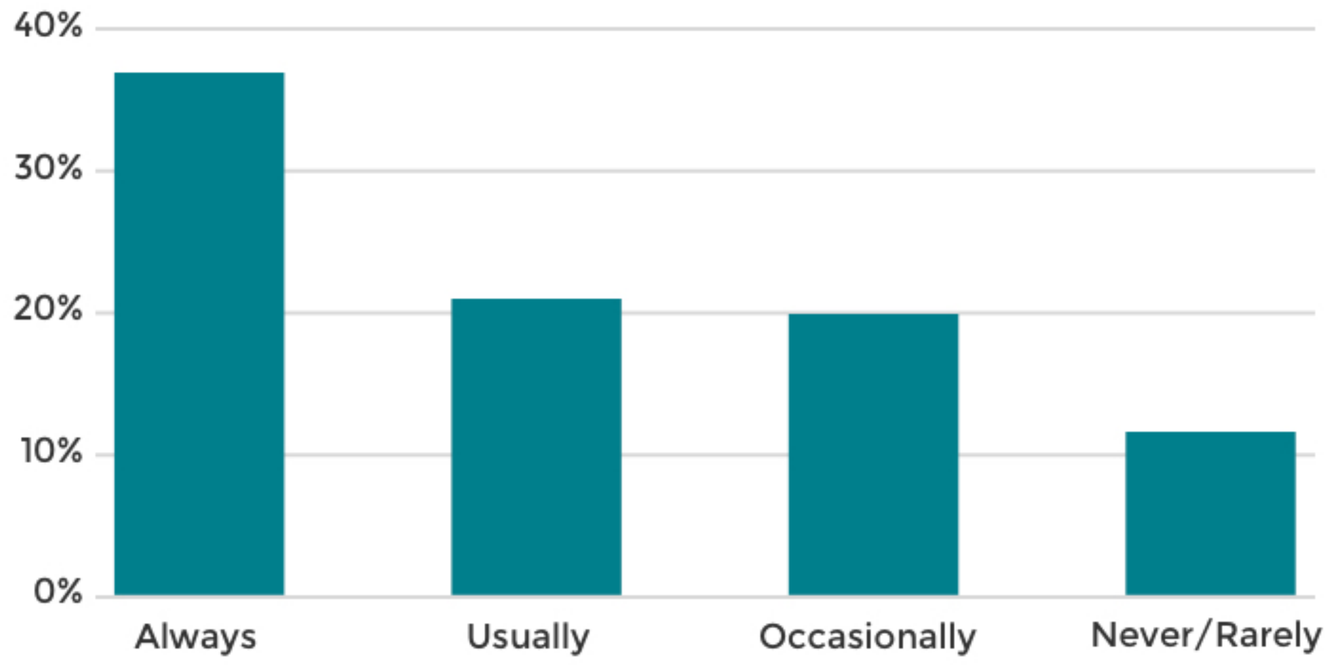


Media matters.

KEY FINDING

- Video was the most common media included for those reporting strong results.

Percent of bloggers who report “strong results” by frequency of checking analytics.

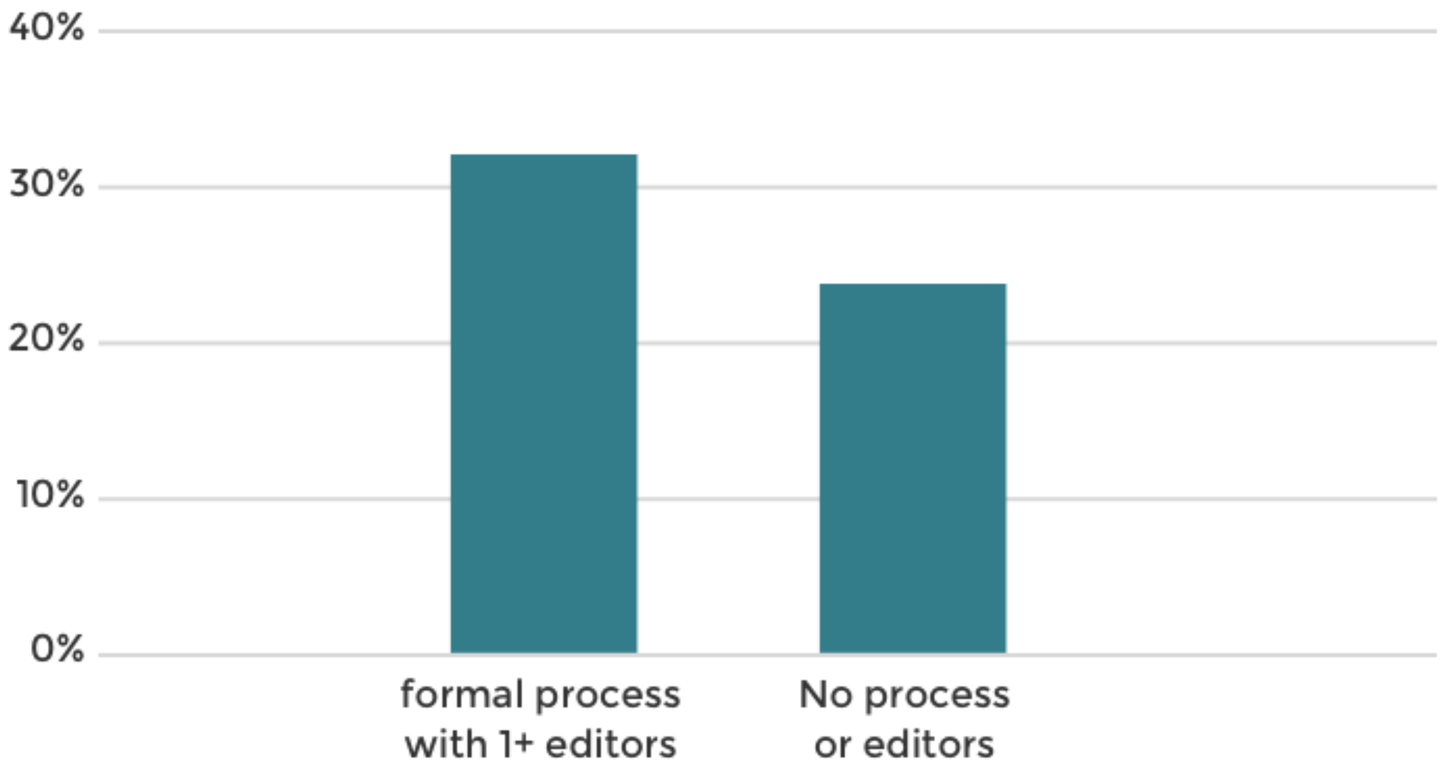


Analytical bloggers get better results.

KEY FINDINGS

- 30% of bloggers who regularly check analytics (always or usually) report strong results.
- Only 18% who don't regularly check analytics (rarely, occassionally, or “don’t have access”) report strong results.

Percent of bloggers who report “strong results” by editing process.



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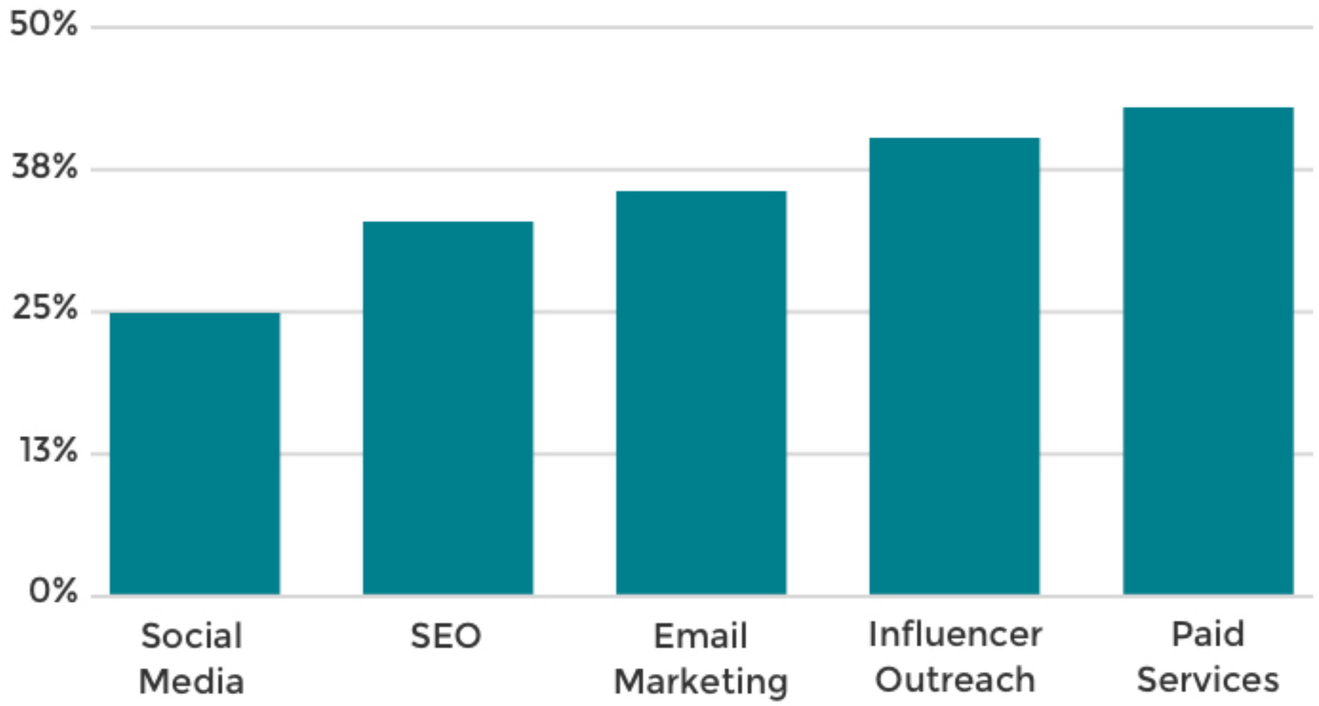
Does editing pay?

KEY FINDINGS

- 31% of bloggers with a formal editing process involving one or more editors report strong results.
- Only 23% with no editors or editing process report strong results.

Percent of bloggers who report “strong results” by promotion channel.



Which promotional channels work?

KEY FINDINGS

- The most popular channel, social media, delivers the weakest results.
- The inverse is also true. Paid media, the least popular promotional tactic, produced the best results.

summary

Bloggers that get the strongest results:

- Invest **more time** into writing their posts
- Write **lengthier** posts
- Blog more **frequently**
- Include more **media**
- **Promote** their posts and invest in online advertising
- Are more committed to using **analytics**

THREE YEARS OF DATA

Want more data about blogging trends? Here are the results gathered from each of the three studies thus far:

> 2014—1st annual survey
> 2015—2nd annual survey
> 2016—3rd annual survey

2014
2015
2016

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ABOUT ORBIT MEDIA STUDIOS

Orbit Media Studios is a web design and development team focused on results. Services include:

- Strategy & analytics
- Web design & UX
- Web development
- Analytics & optimization

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- **Website**
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