

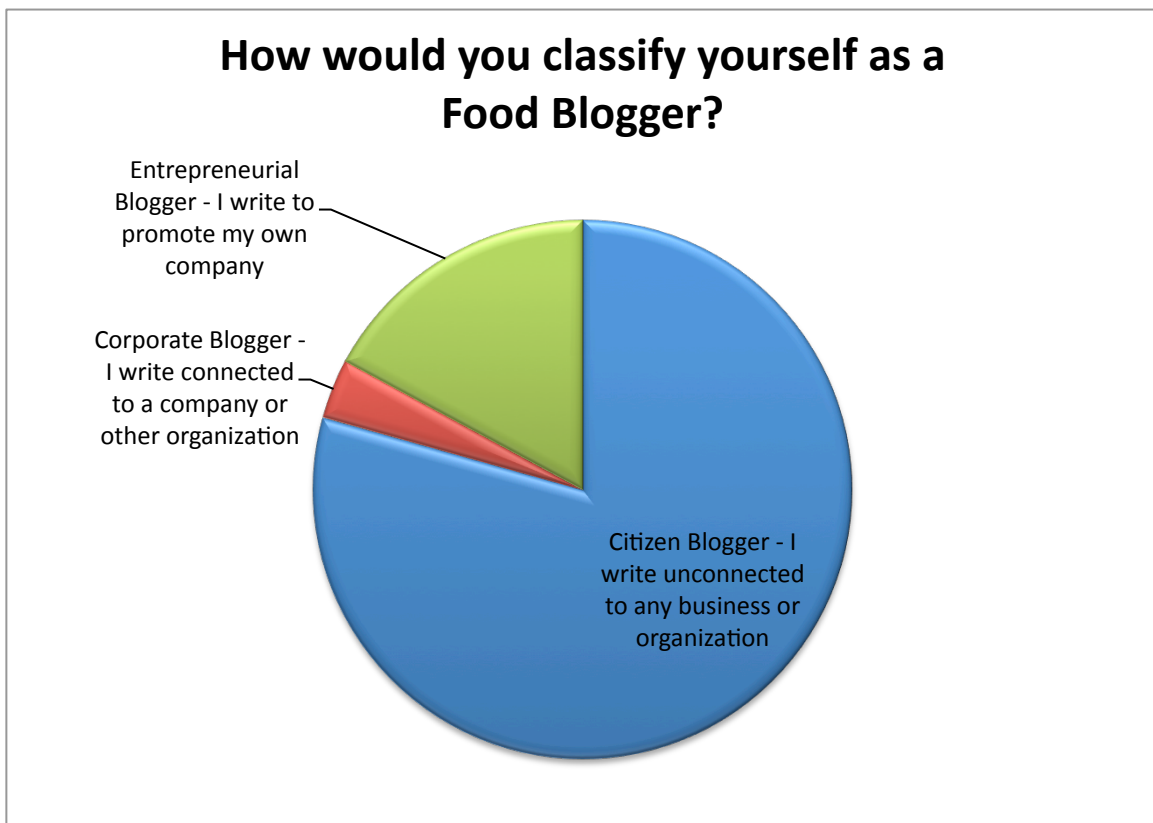
The State of Food Blogging

March 2012

Part I: The Bloggers

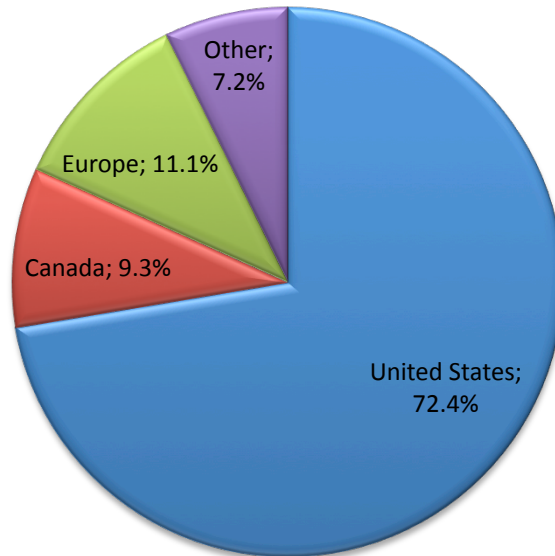
The State of Food Blogging Survey was conducted in February of 2012 by [Foodista](#) and [Zephyr Adventures](#), organizers of the [International Food Blogger Conference](#).

694 food bloggers completed a 30-question online survey. The respondents were primarily Citizen Bloggers (79%) with a small minority of Entrepreneurial Bloggers promoting their own company (17%) and the remainder connected to corporations (4%). At least per the results of this survey, most food bloggers are blogging for their own account.



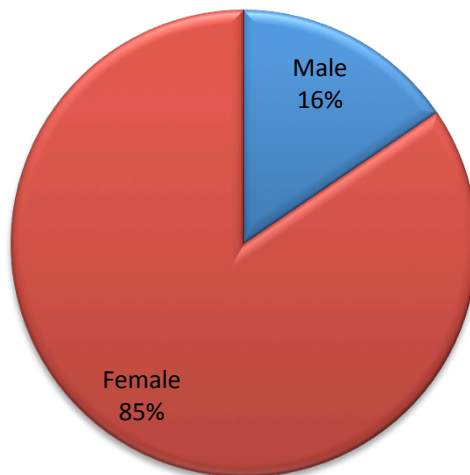
Almost 73% of respondents live in the United States with 11% in Europe, 9% in Canada, and 7% in other parts of the world.

Where do you live?

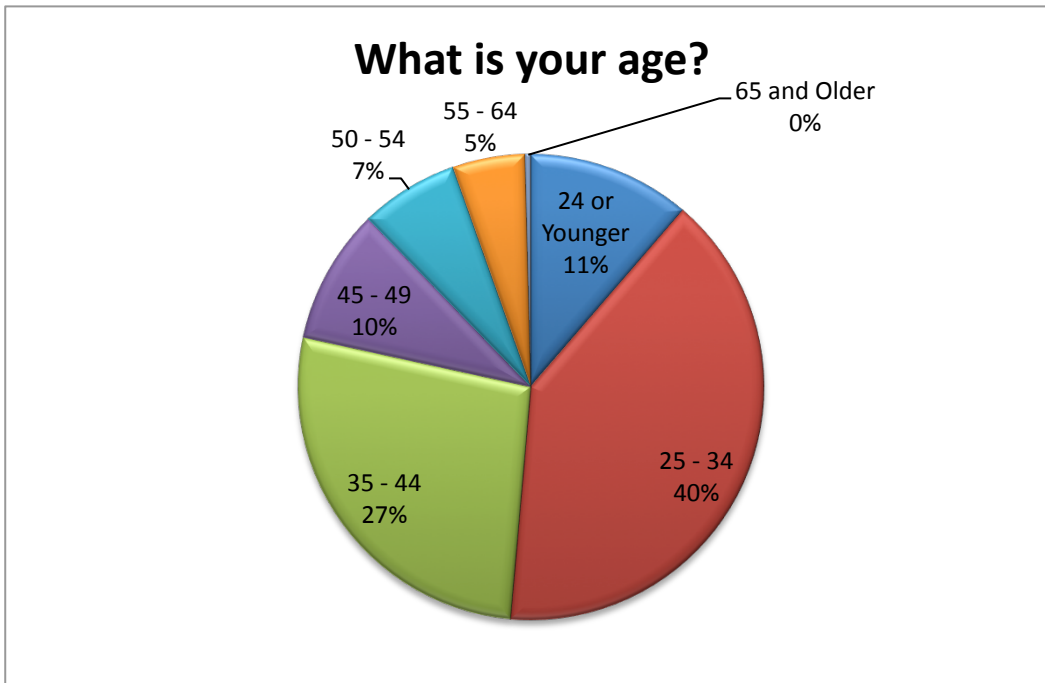


84.5% of respondents were female with the remainder male.

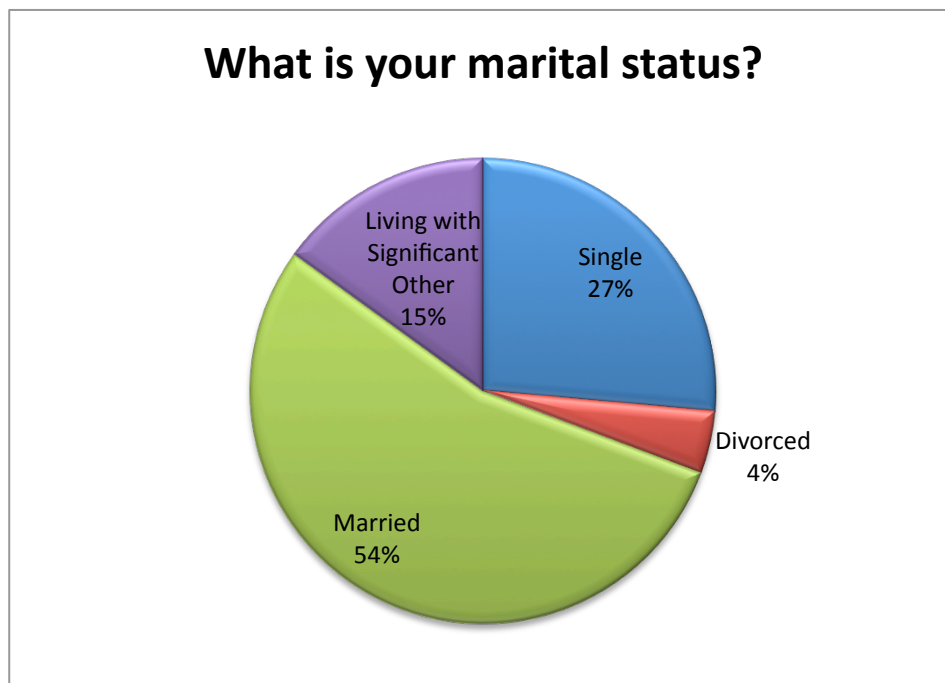
What is your gender?



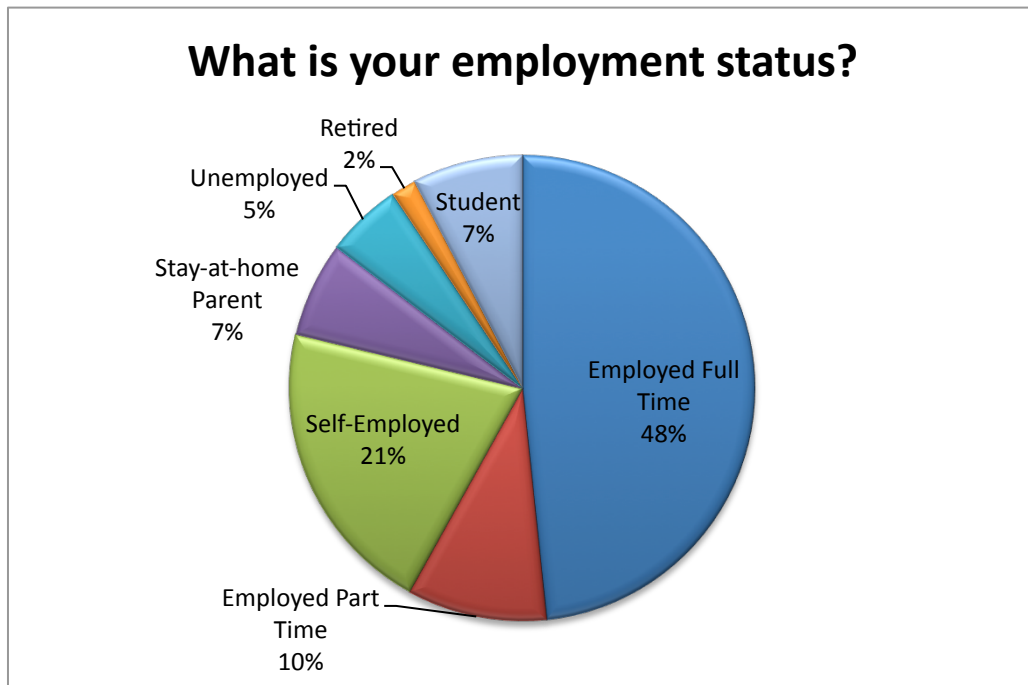
67% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44. The food blogging world is not made up of youngsters – only 11% of respondents were aged 24 and younger.



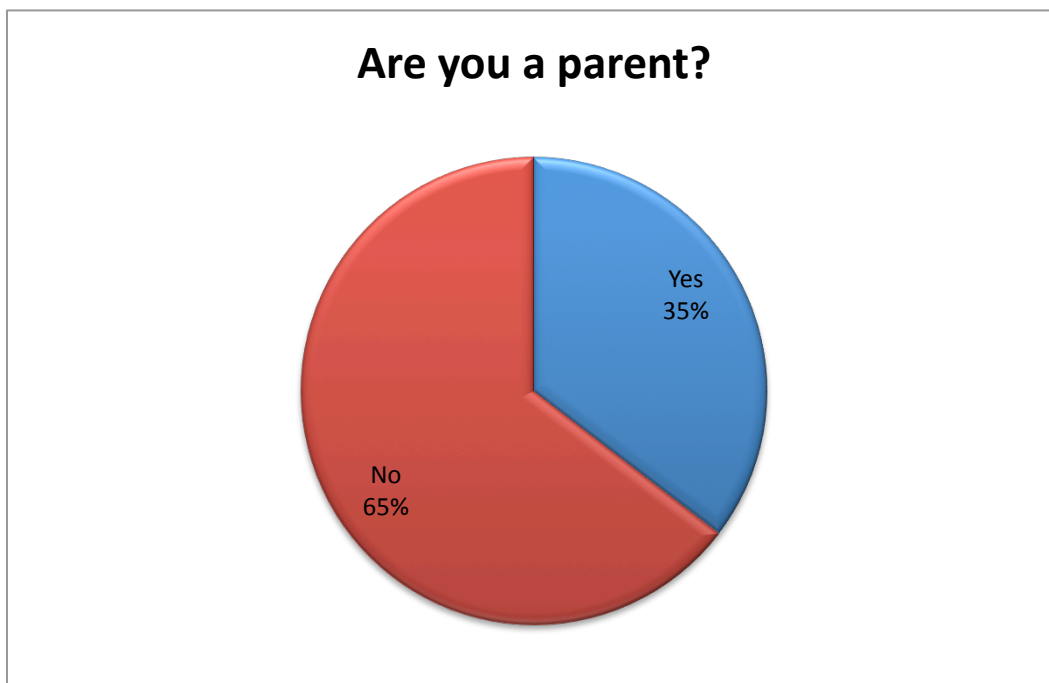
69% of respondents are either married or living with a significant other, while 35% of respondents are a parent.



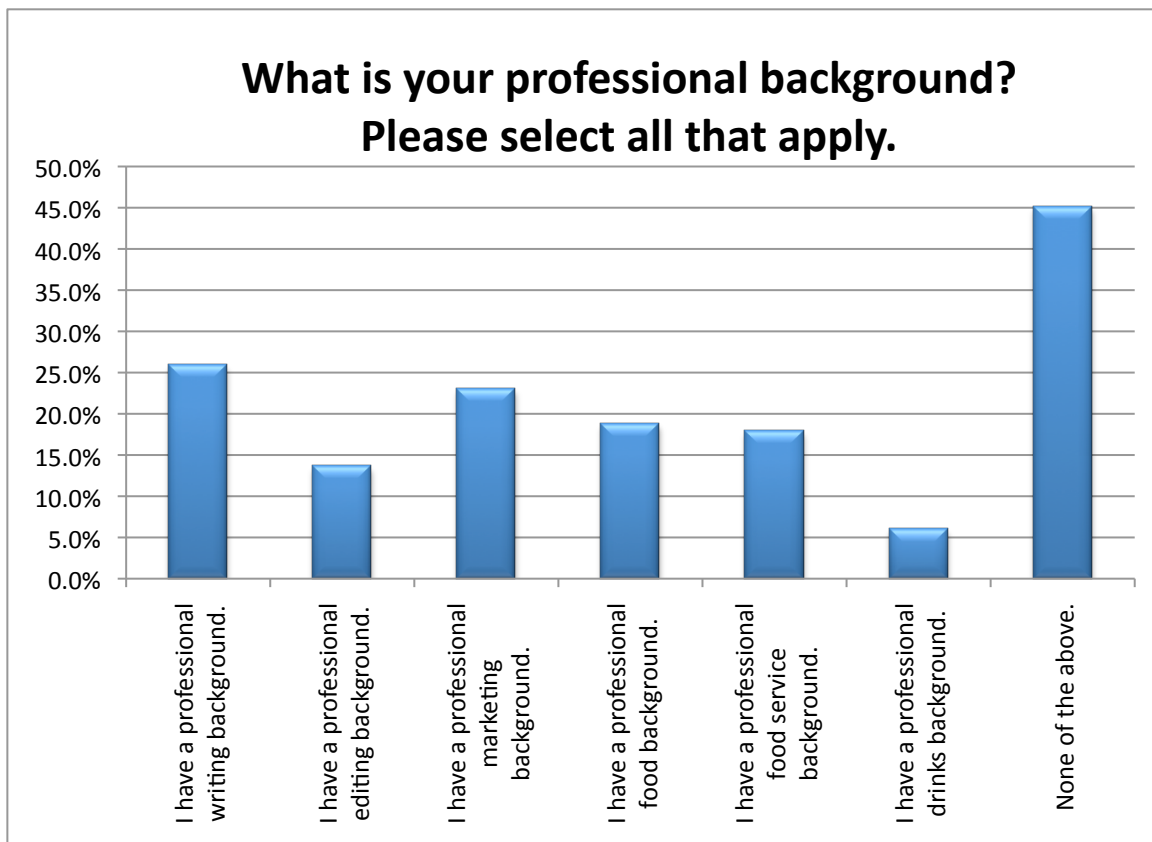
Almost half (48%) of respondents are employed full-time, with another 21% self employed and 10% employed part time.



Of those with children, only 7% are stay-at-home parents.



As far as professional background, 45% of respondents had no background related to food blogging while 55% claimed some related professional experience. The most likely professional experience includes writing or editing, marketing, and food or food service.



While it is impossible to generalize, the prototypical food blogger is a married woman in her 30s or 40s living in the United States. While she is either a parent or perhaps on the way to being so, she is likely to be employed full time, part time, or working in her own business. She most likely comes to the food blogging world with some relevant food, marketing, or writing background.

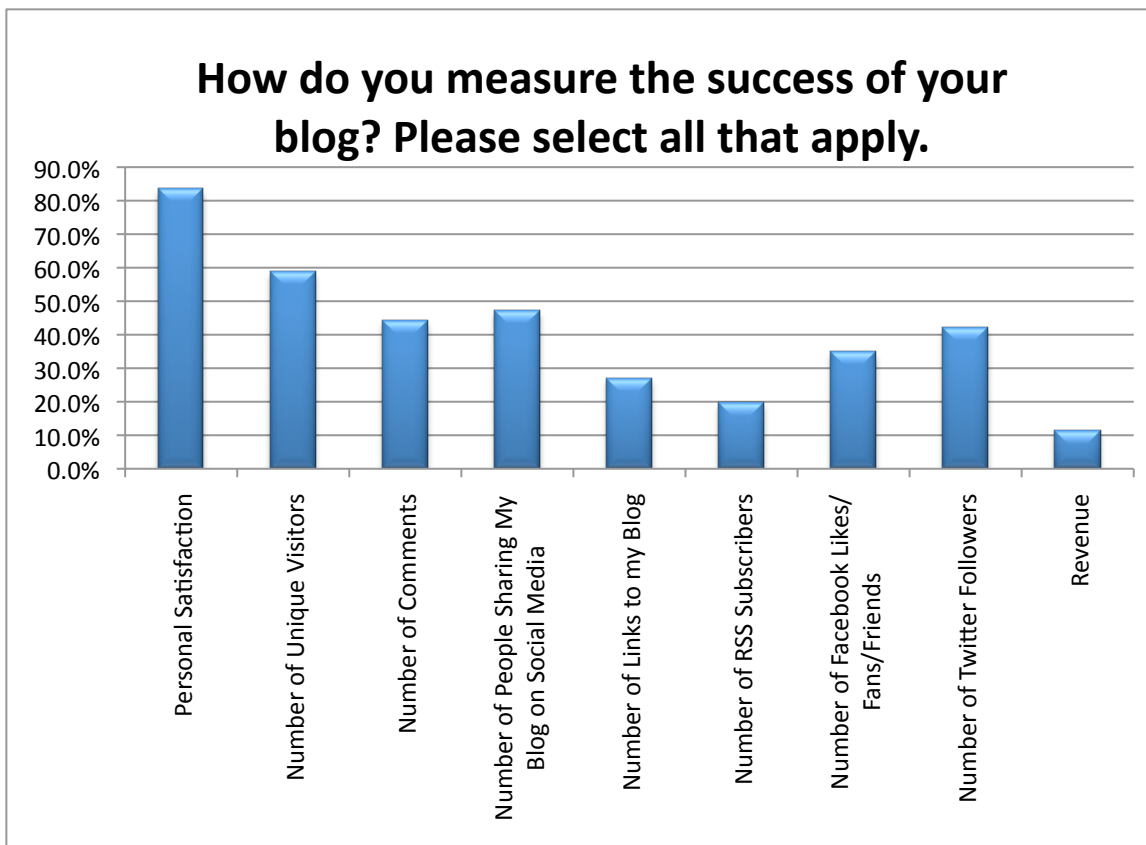
Part II: The Motivation to Blog

When asked, “Why do you blog?” 88% of respondents replied, “Food is my passion.” Four additional answers that drew heavy response included:

- To make a name for myself in the food world (49% of respondents)
- To have a voice so I can say what I want to say (48%)
- Writing is my passion (44%)
- In hopes of turning my blog into a job (41%)

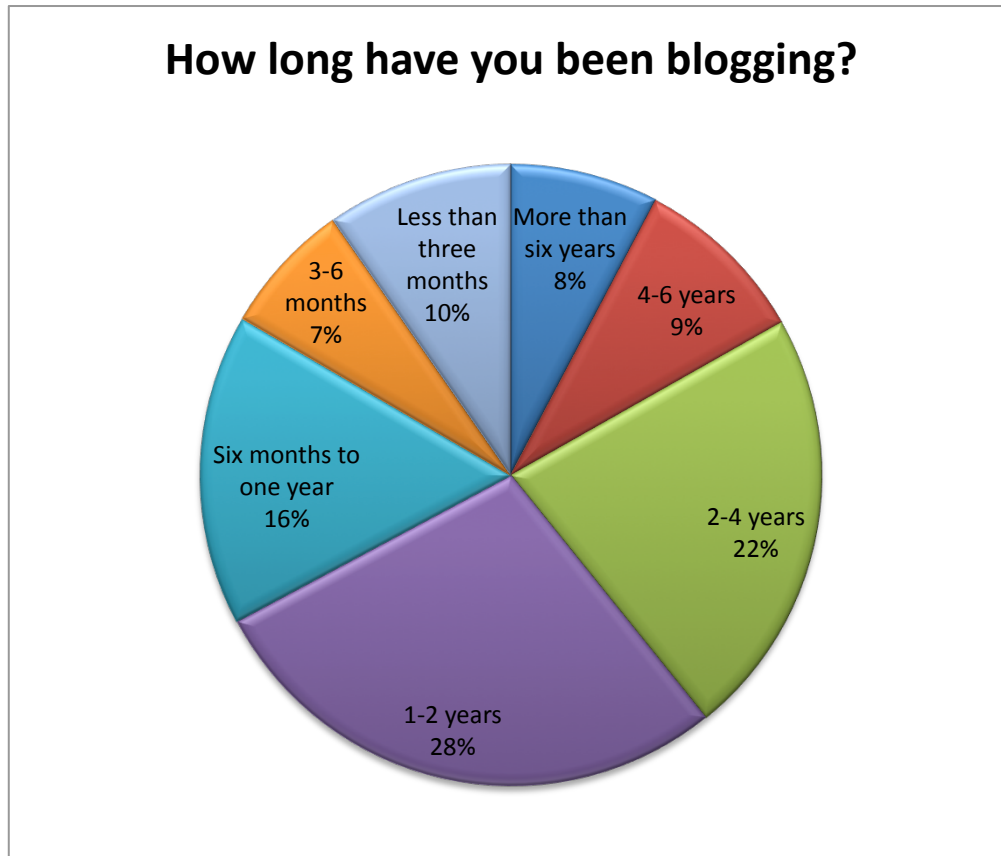
Food, then, is by far the most motivating factor driving food bloggers. Two traditional blogging motivations regardless of subject (passion for writing and to have a voice) are also important. It is interesting to note, however, that a large population of bloggers is looking to capitalize on their blogs by becoming more involved in the food world professionally.

When asked how bloggers track the success of one's blog, the primary answer was simply "personal satisfaction". Ultimately, a successful food blog is one that makes a blogger happy. Digging deeper, food bloggers track their success via the number of unique visitors (59% of respondents), social media references (47%), comments (44%), Twitter followers (42%), and Facebook fans or "likes" (35%). By far the least important factor in judging success was revenue earned from the blog, with only 11% of respondents indicating this was important.

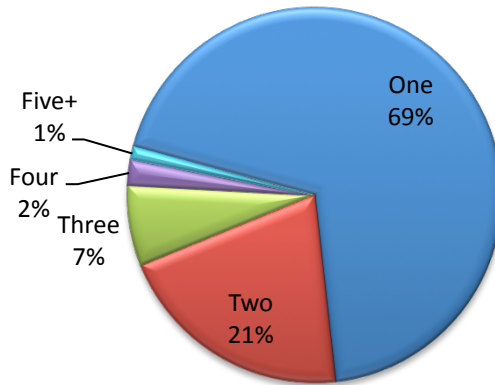


Part III: The Blogs

Not a large proportion of food blogs have been around a long time. Only 17% of respondents have been blogging for over four years while 33% of respondents have been blogging for less than one year. (It is possible there is some bias in the survey, as potentially newer food bloggers were more likely to complete it, but this is just speculation.) As expected given the newness of most blogs, 69% of blogs are standalone. 21% of bloggers write for another blog and only 10% write for more than two blogs.

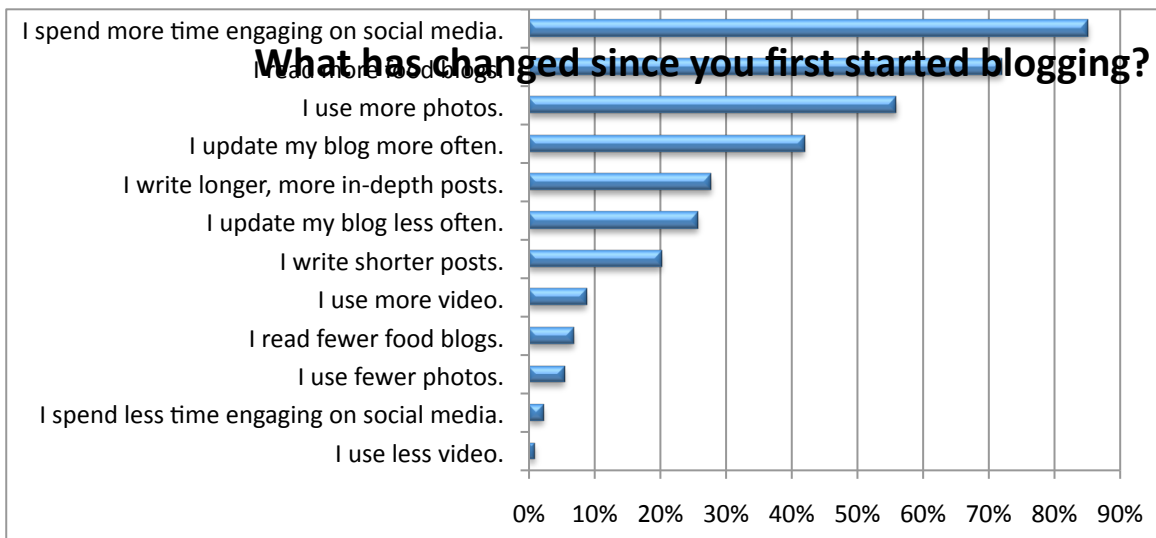


For how many blogs do you write?

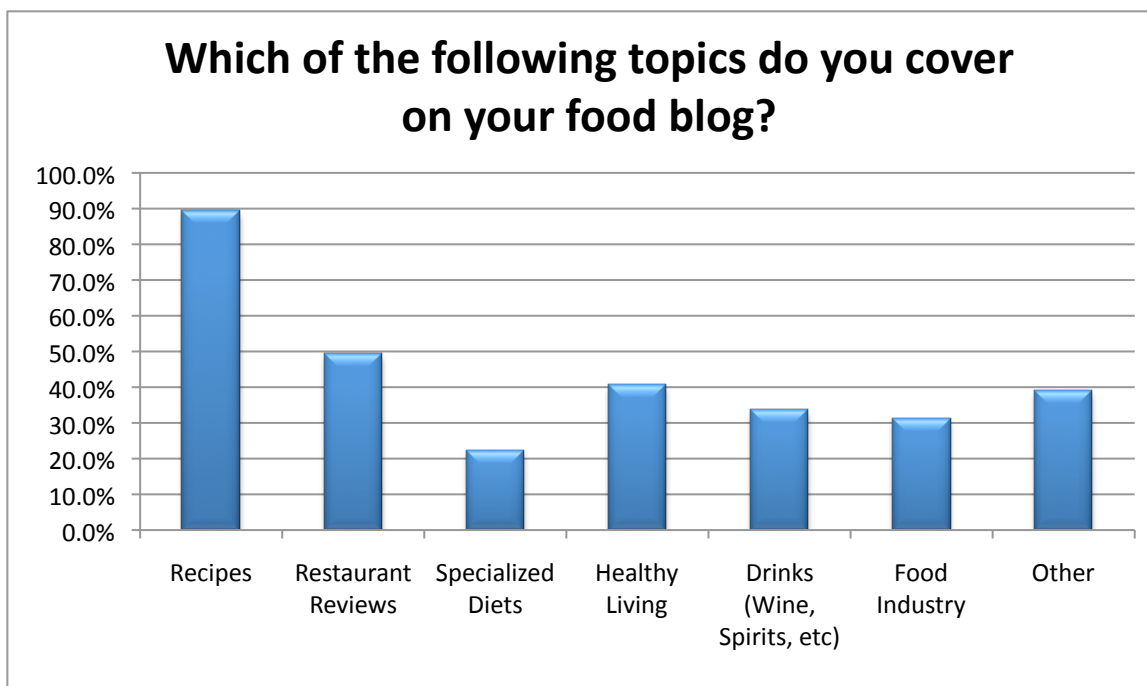


Time spent by the responding bloggers on their blogs has increased since they started blogging. In fact, 77% of bloggers post at least weekly.

- 85% spend more time on social media
- 72% read more food blogs
- 56% use more photos in their posts
- 42% blog more often
- 28% write longer, more in-depth posts



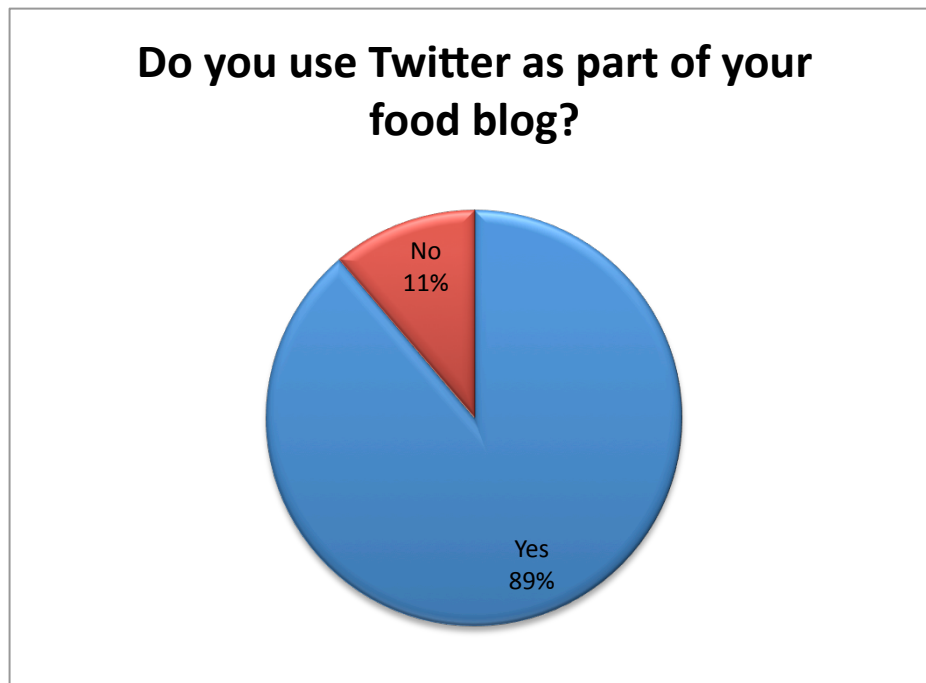
When looking at the topics covered by food blogs, recipes are by far the number one most favored topic, covered by 89% of food bloggers. Despite the intense publicity, few bloggers cover specialized diet topics.

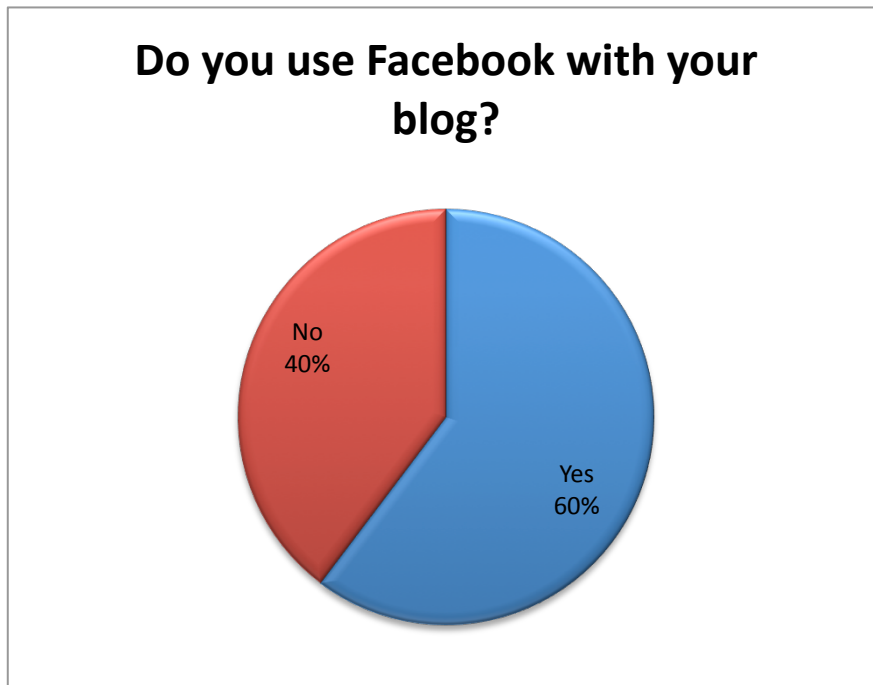


Part IV: Social Media

As revealed earlier, while not the primary indicator of success, social media does play a role in determining whether a food blogger feels successful with his or her blog. 47% of respondents cite social media references to her blog as an indicator of success while 44% cite the number of Twitter followers and 42% the number of Facebook fans or “likes”.

In terms of engagement, 89% of food bloggers use Twitter as part of his or her blog while 60% use Facebook. The average food blogger using Twitter has 763 followers while the most active 10% of bloggers on Twitter averaged 4,656 followers. It is interesting to note we received many unsolicited comments from bloggers saying they had just starting using Twitter. In fact, 35% of bloggers using Twitter had 100 or fewer Followers. The average number of Twitter followers will likely increase significantly over time.





In terms of Facebook, the average number of fans/likes is 817, with a high of 30,000. The top 10% of bloggers on Facebook had an average of 6,059 fans. Like with Twitter, some food bloggers are simply much more active on social media than others.

Part V: Traffic, Profitability, and Conferences

Traffic

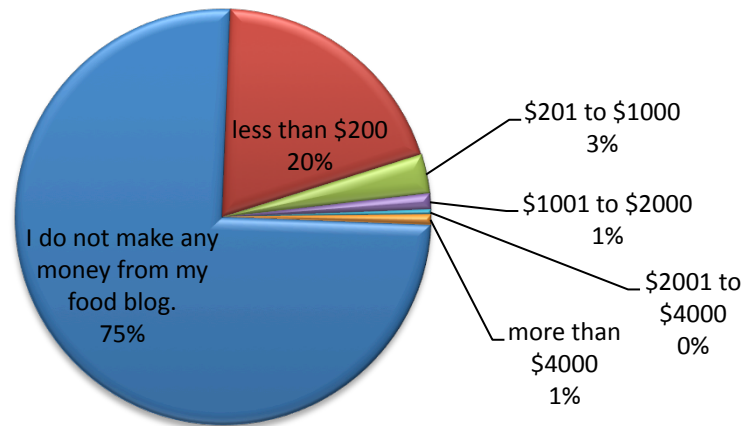
Food bloggers were asked how many unique visitors they had per month and the average number of visitors was over 16,000. However, this number should be used with care, since each blogger might be getting numbers from different sources and some bloggers probably incorrectly calculate “unique visitors”. Many bloggers explained they did not track this number or did not know how to find it. One blogger even gave a clever answer as to how many visitors she had each month. “At least one!”

Perhaps more useful is to look at the ranges of answers. 21% of those who appeared to provide a valid answer said they have 100 or fewer monthly unique visitors on average. On the other end, the high was one million visitors per month and the top 10% most trafficked blogs averaged over 138,000. Clearly, there is a huge disparity in terms of traffic among food blogs.

Profitability

75% of respondents said they do not make any money at all from their food blog and another 19.5% make less than \$200 per month. Clearly, most food bloggers are not doing this for the income they receive and many do not even attempt to monetize their blogs. Only one percent of food bloggers are making anything close to an annual salary.

Do you make any money from your food blog? How much per month?



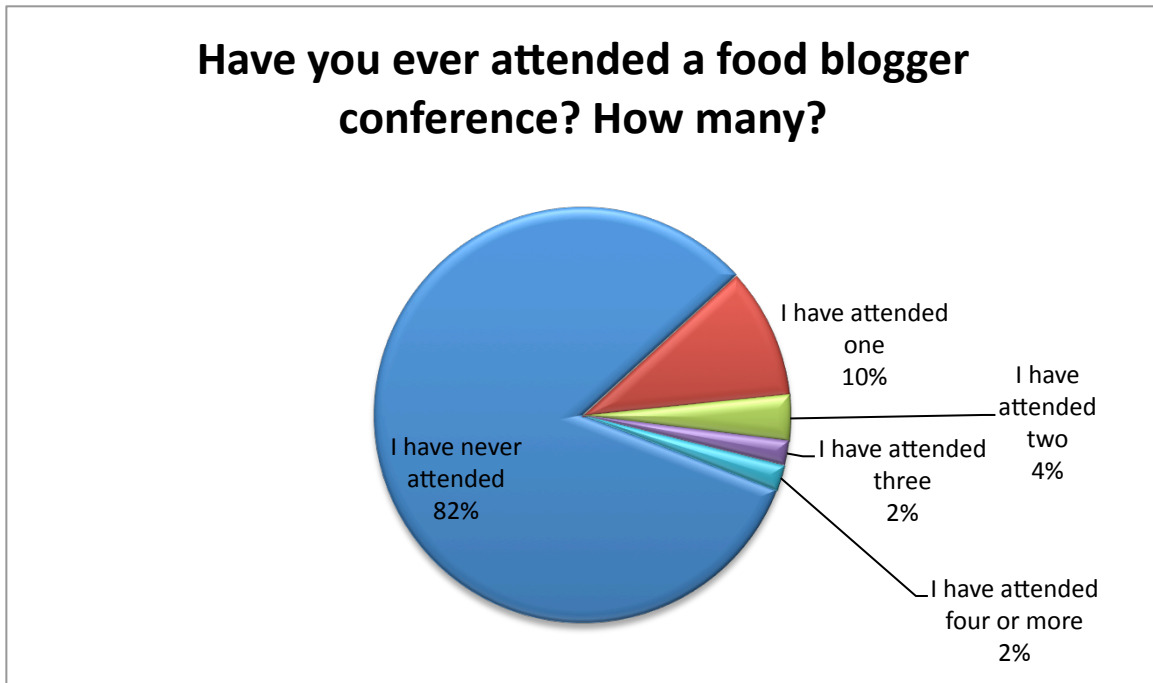
Of those who do make some money from their blogs, the most successful methods tried were joining an ad network or getting paid to write for a magazine, newspaper, or other website. Tried but not effective were general ad servers (such as Google AdSense) and affiliate programs (such as Amazon.com). Most food bloggers have not tried direct ad sales to advertisers, sponsored posts, brand promotion for companies, selling a book or e-book, and consulting.

If you do make money from your food blog, how do you make it?



Food Blogger Conferences

There are now almost a dozen food blogger conferences in the United States alone with half a dozen more in other countries. Surprisingly, 82% of respondents have never attended a conference.



When asked what factors are important in determining whether a blogger would attend a food blogger conference, the most important four factors (out of 14 to choose from) in order were:

- Cost of travel including airfare and hotel
- Outstanding speakers and content
- Works for my schedule
- Cost of registration fee

The five least important factors in order were:

- Accommodation for dietary restrictions (least important)
- Wine or cocktails included
- Goody bags or gift suites
- Sponsor support
- Conference is run by a community of which I am a part

Clearly, bloggers are looking at costs and schedule when determining whether to attend a conference and are more concerned about the content quality than they are about receiving free gifts or perks from sponsors, which is to their credit.

Part VI: Blogging in the United States

72% of respondents were from the United States, so the results are weighted towards what is happening in the US, where blogging is more popular and has been popular longer than in the rest of the world. Removing non-US results from the data, however, does result in some interesting conclusions.

Non-US bloggers tend to be a bit younger; 22% are 24 years or younger as compared to 10% of US bloggers. Fewer US food bloggers are brand new (28% have been blogging less than a year as compared to 50% for those outside the US) but, otherwise, the motivations and blog characteristics are substantially the same. While 43% of US food bloggers enter with no previous relative work experience, 52% of foreign bloggers have no such experience.

The proportion of food bloggers who use both Twitter and Facebook is close to being equal.

In terms of profitability, 72.5% of US bloggers do not make any money from their blog, as compared to 81% of those outside the US. In terms of attending a food bloggers conference, 79.5% of food bloggers in the US have never attended one while 90% of those outside the US have never attended one.

It can be seen, therefore, that the younger, newer food bloggers outside the US are likely to travel down a path where a few more of them start to earn money from their blogs, and attend food blogger conferences.

Part VII: Summary of Conclusions

- The prototypical food blogger is a married woman in her 30s or 40s living in the United States. While she is either a parent or perhaps on the way to being so, she is likely to be employed full time, part time, or working in her own business. She most likely comes to the food blogging world with some relevant food, marketing, or writing background.
- Food bloggers blog primarily because food is their passion.
- A large population of bloggers is looking to capitalize on their blogs by becoming more involved in the food world professionally.
- Almost all food bloggers judge their success based on the personal satisfaction they achieve. Very few judge this based on revenue earned.
- 28% of food bloggers in the US have been blogging less than a year while 50% of those outside the US have been blogging less than a year.
- The time spent posting, using social media, and reading other food blogs has increased dramatically for most food bloggers since they first began blogging.
- The subject of “recipes” is by far the most common topic covered by food blogs, with 89% of blogs addressing this.
- Twitter is more important than Facebook in terms of usage by food bloggers and is becoming even more important.
- 75% of food bloggers do not make any money at all from their food blog and another 19.5% make less than \$200 per month.
- 82% of food bloggers have not attended a food bloggers conference.
- Food bloggers outside the US tend to be younger and more recently drawn to blogging than those in the US.