

Highlights from the State of Blogging in 2017 Survey

By Frank Strong, Founder & President of [Sword and the Script Media](#)



It's easy to believe there are a million marketing blogs but that's just not true. If you blog about marketing – especially with any semblance of frequency – you are in fact among a fairly small group. That's one surprising conclusion I drew from a survey of 850 bloggers by ConvertKit.

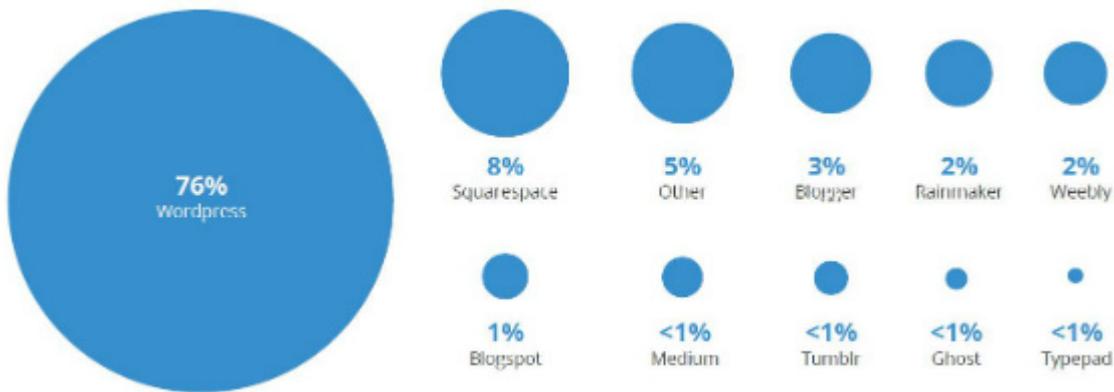
There are more blogs focused on personal development than any other topic, according to the survey. Entrepreneurship and small business ranked second and third respectively. Marketing ranked sixth, which I'd have guessed would have earned a higher designation.

The company published its findings in an impressive 60-page report called the [2017 State of the Blogging Industry](#). It's important to note that the report includes – in great detail – fairly significant variations between those who blog professionally and those who do not (the report refers to this segment as “not-yet-pros”).

It'd probably be worth ConvertKit's time to produce a second, albeit shorter report, focused solely on the professional blogging segment. In any case, I found clear lessons for corporate blogging in this study, which I've weaved into these highlights.

WordPress the Dominate Platform

What do you use as your blog platform?



STATE OF THE BLOGGING INDUSTRY 2017

Bloggers, by an overwhelming majority (76%), choose to run their blogs on WordPress. The next most commonly used platform for blogging is Squarespace at 8% and Blogger at 3%.

This makes sense to me since WordPress is surrounded by a community of developers that created plugins and themes to assist with design, organization, and content distribution – for search and social. There simply isn't another platform that can match the capabilities available in WordPress.

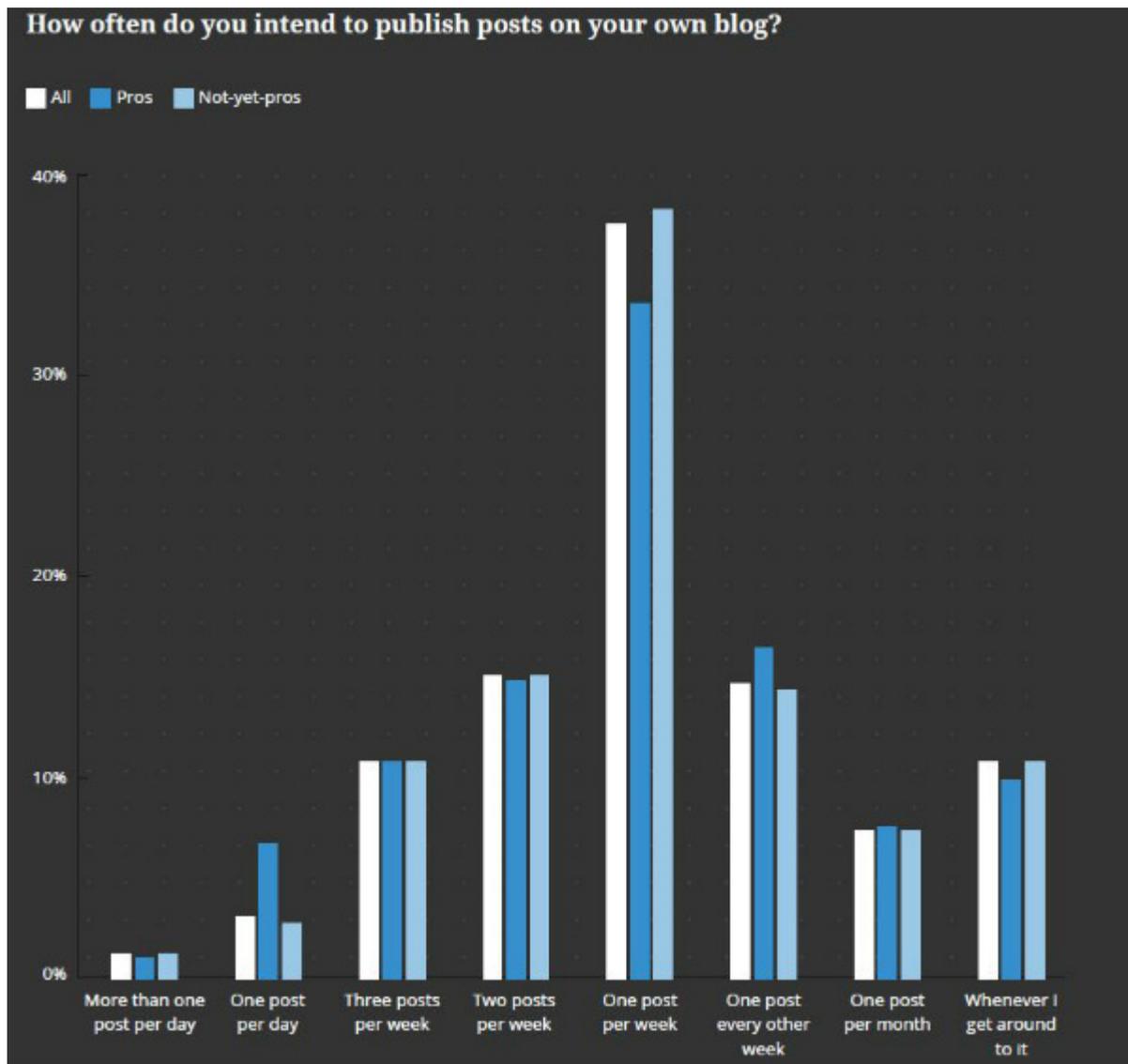
It was interesting to see that a relatively new player like Squarespace ranked second while Blogger, which was acquired by Google in 2003, for a [rumored](#) \$20 million trails further behind.

In subsequent years, Google hasn't updated the Blogger platform to maintain parity with modern content management systems. This blog was originally penned on Blogger beginning in 2009 and migrated to WordPress in 2012 in order to take advantage of the advances.

Blogger was founded by Evan Williams, a one-time CEO of Twitter who later created Medium. Medium, which [announced layoffs](#) recently, polled at less than 1% in the CovertKit

survey.

Lackluster Consistency and Frequency



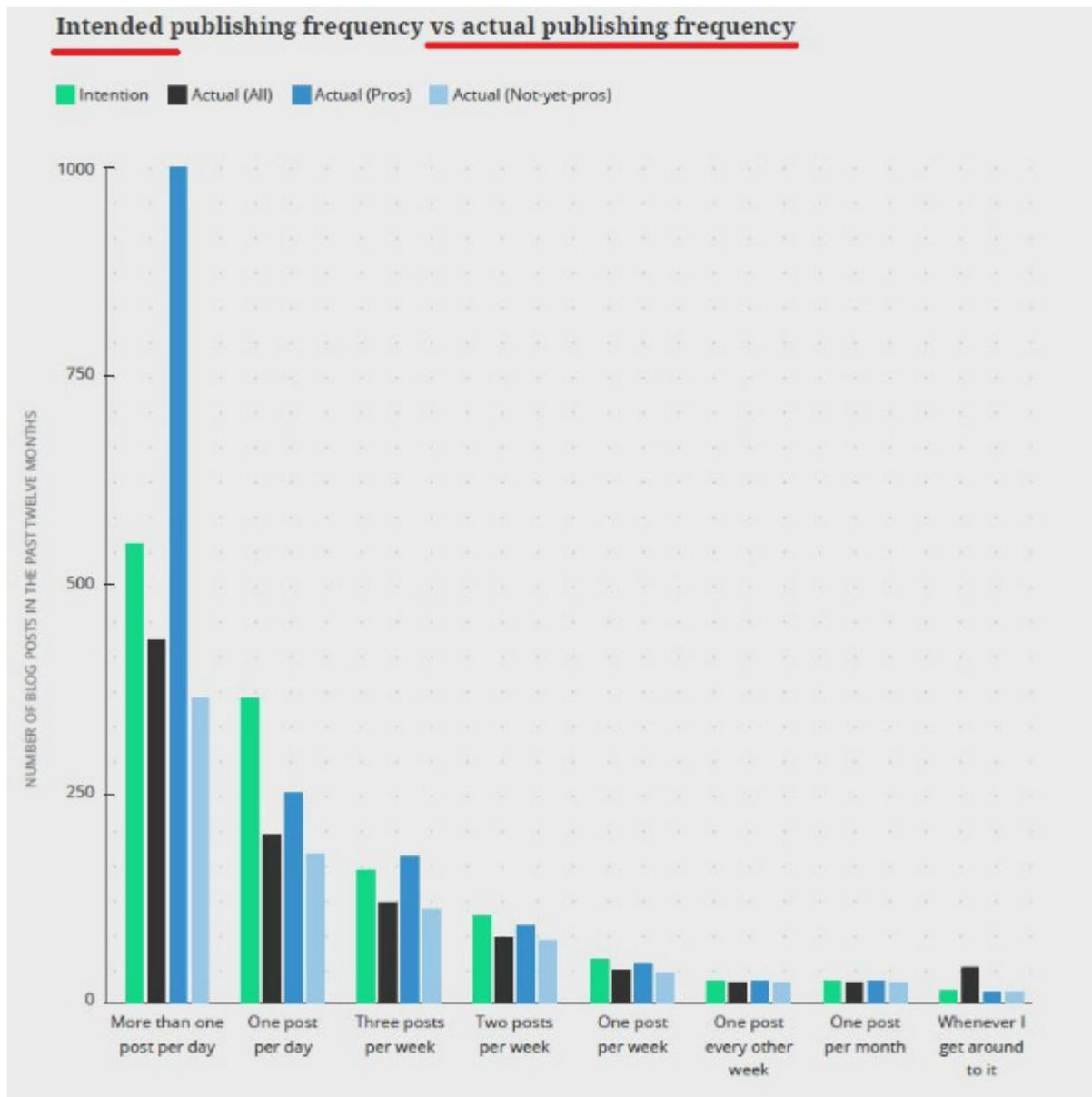
Experience – and analytics data – tells me there is a fairly strong correlation between the success of a blog and the consistency of publishing. In fact, I’ve found consistency is more important than frequency.

Yet just 38% of bloggers intend to publish once a week. Although there are a few ambitious bloggers aiming for two or three posts per week, an equal number intend to publish once per month (see chart above).

According to the report, “11% of bloggers plan to publish whenever they get around to it.” ConvertKit, which provides email marketing tools for bloggers, diplomatically calls “remarkable.”

Yet that’s only the intent to publish. “In every case, the average number of posts published for all respondents was less than the intended number of posts published,” according to the report (see chart below).

Businesses face the same struggle in consistency and frequency – and that’s usually wrapped up in competing priorities. Half the battle in business is showing up every day in relentless pursuit of excellence. Success in corporate blogging is the same way and with modern web analytics and marketing automation, the business case is straightforward.



The Average Length of a Blog Post

On average, the survey says blog posts run between 500 and 1,000 words – that’s true for some 40% overall. However, there’s been a steady stream of data over the last couple years indicating long form content has grown increasingly important.

The ConvertKit survey has similar findings. In fact, when the survey data was segmented by professional bloggers, it found the pros were nearly 70% “more likely to write posts of 1,000 words or more.”

To be clear I find the best length for a blog post – especially a corporate blog – is simply whatever it takes to clearly articulate an idea. With that philosophy in mind, a corporate blog will naturally publish a mix of long and short posts.

Don't get hung up on how long a post should be – focus on conveying an idea.

Consistency is so important in blogging.
Corporate blogging is an investment that over
time will yield compounding returns.



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State of Blogging Benchmarks

The report contains several benchmarks that will be of interest to anyone who blogs. The following benchmarks that stood out for me include:

- ***Measuring the success of a blog post.*** Most bloggers see the overall site visitors (sessions) as the best sign of success. This was followed by email subscribers gained, unique visitors, social shares and comments on a post. Interestingly, just four percent cited time-on-page (ToP) as a measure of success. In my view, ToP is one of the best indications of content quality. People don't generally stick around long with things that are

uninteresting.

- **What does good traffic look like?** If traffic on an individual post is an indication of success, what does the volume look like over the course of a good month? According to the survey, the median volume of visitors for all blogs in a successful month is 2,000 visitors. Professional bloggers, however, will net 22,000 visitors per month, which in business, is liable to put a blog on par with a trade publication.
- **Search and social as sources of traffic.** Professional bloggers (52%) are almost twice as likely to experience organic search as the top source of traffic, while the rest (28%) are reliant on social media sharing. It takes time for a blog to earn search rankings, as professional bloggers are aware. Yet this is why consistency is so important – blogging, like marketing, is an investment that over time will yield compounding returns.
- **How often should you share a post?** Most bloggers share a post 3-4 times (median). This is likely specific to Twitter, given the speed of the stream, as opposed to another platform. For example, it's not a good practice to share the same post repeatedly on Facebook or LinkedIn. Recently, however, some pundits have theorized that Twitter is making algorithm changes that dilute the value of a link shared more than once. I haven't personally seen – and continue to share a post more than once on Twitter by re-writing the tweet – but it's worth keeping an eye on this suggestion.

About the Author: Frank Strong is the founder and president of Sword and the Script Media, LLC, a veteran-owned PR, content marketing and social media agency in greater Atlanta.