



THE BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHIC COUNCIL

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British Photographic Council Industry Survey shows true value of creators' copyright

Retaining copyright could be one of the best business decisions that freelance or self-employed photographers make, according to new research from the British Photographic Council.

The survey was completed by 1,698 photographers working in the UK market who were asked about themselves, their views on copyright, their income and the threats to their businesses.

The results, published for the first time today, show those freelance photographers who keep their copyright earn on average 33.2% more than those who routinely give their copyright to clients.¹

British Photographic Council chair John Toner said: "Copyright is not only the cornerstone of the creative industries, it is the foundation stone of creativity. Without it, creators would find it impossible to survive."

Freelances who said they retained their copyright reported an average profit of £19,272, compared to £14,471 for those who said that they gave it away by default.²

The survey showed nine out of ten freelance photographers keep their copyright rather than assigning it to their clients³ – despite almost three-quarters saying that they had encountered clients in 2009 who wrongly believed copyright belonged to whoever commissioned the photography⁴.

During 2009, 71% of freelance respondents said they had been asked to give copyright to their clients⁵, and 62% said they were pressured to give clients a more extensive licence for no increase in the fee⁶.

Three out of every five photographers said they knew of instances where their copyright had been infringed in the previous three years⁷, costing them on average just over £3,600 each⁸. But only 30% of these photographers pursued all known infringements⁹, with most citing difficulties in bring legal cases for copyright infringements¹⁰. Overall, 82% of photographers said their businesses would benefit from a quicker and easier legal redress for copyright infringements¹¹.

Just over half of photographers said their businesses would be adversely affected by any 'orphan works' legislation¹² – the controversial proposals which would allow photographs to be published without the copyright holder's permission if the copyright owner could not be identified or traced. An attempt to introduce such legislation in the UK was defeated in the last days of the previous government.

Half of photographers said that current laws affecting photography in public places were a threat to their business, with 82% saying their businesses would be adversely affected by similar additional legislation¹³.

The results show a predominantly male industry, with fewer than one in five photographers being female¹⁴. 91% of professional photographers who responded were freelance¹⁵, with staff photographers earning significantly more than their freelance colleagues.

The average salary for a staff photographer was £34,535 – 83% higher than the equivalent average profit for a self-employed photographer of £18,821¹⁶. 41% of staff photographers were paid between £20,000 and £30,000, compared to just 15% of freelances¹⁷. Only 19% of freelance photographers made a profit of £30,000 or above, compared to 35% of staff photographers with an equivalent salary.¹⁸

61% of photographers surveyed said that photography was their sole source of earned income¹⁹, with almost one in five professionals saying that photography was not their

main source of income²⁰. Only a third of respondents said they had spent 91% or more of their working life as a photographer.²¹

The survey showed photographers' career paths to be less regimented, with only half having industry qualifications²², and many entering the industry in middle age.²³ Two out of every five photographers are educated to at least degree level – but those with an undergraduate degree were twice as likely to have it in a subject other than photography²⁴.

While 73% of respondents said they thought formal photography qualifications were “essential, valuable or useful”²⁵, only 5% considered formal qualifications to be “essential” for working in the industry²⁶. Those respondents without photography qualifications are less likely to consider those qualifications to be “useful” or “valuable”²⁷.

“We believe the findings of this survey are crucial for anyone seeking to understand the photography industry in this country”, said British Photographic Council chair John Toner. “Photography is important to the cultural life of our citizens, and legislators would ignore these findings at their peril.”

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Information for newsdesks:

1. For more information about the survey, contact John Toner on 07710 314593 or at john.toner@british-photographic-council.org
2. The full survey results and analysis can be downloaded from this link: <http://www.british-photographic-council.org/survey/2010>
3. The British Photographic Council is an umbrella body which exists to protect, develop and promote the rights and interests of photographic image makers, those involved in the distribution of their work, and the bodies that represent them in the UK.
4. Its member organisations are: the Association of Photographers, the British Association of Picture Libraries and Agencies, the British Press Photographers

Association, the British Institute of Professional Photographers, the Bureau of Freelance Photographers, the Chartered Institute of Journalists, Editorial Photographers UK and Ireland, the Master Photographers Association, the National Association of Press Agencies, the National Union of Journalists, Pro-Imaging, Redeye, and The Royal Photographic Society.

5. The survey was designed and arranged by the British Photographic Council. The thirteen member organisations of the British Photographic Council contacted their members to ask them to contribute. The survey was carried out online between 24th May and 13th June 2010.

¹ All footnotes below cite “The British Photographic Council Industry Survey of Photographers 2010: Full Results and Analysis”, which is available from <http://www.british-photographic-council.org/survey/2010>

² p27, paragraph 13.3

³ p27, paragraph 13.1

⁴ p27, paragraph 13.5

⁵ p23, paragraph 11.2

⁶ p29, paragraph 14.1

⁷ p45, paragraph 22.1

⁸ p47, paragraph 23.2

⁹ p51, paragraph 25.1

¹⁰ p51, paragraph 25.2

¹¹ p35, paragraph 17.3

¹² p35, paragraph 17.2

¹³ p35, paragraph 17.5

¹⁴ p3, paragraph 1.1

¹⁵ p5, paragraph 2.3

¹⁶ p39, paragraph 19.4

¹⁷ p39, paragraph 19.5

¹⁸ p39, paragraph 19.4

¹⁹ p7, paragraph 3.1

²⁰ p7, paragraph 3.3

²¹ p11, paragraph 5.2

²² p13, paragraph 6.2

²³ p11, paragraph 5.6

²⁴ p13, paragraph 6.3

²⁵ p15, paragraph 7.1

²⁶ p15, paragraph 7.4

²⁷ p15, paragraph 7.2