

Date: March 5, 2022

To: Hillary McCoy, Technical Writing Club President – Texas Chapter

From: Julia Lilly, Technical Writing Club Member – Texas Chapter

Subject: Job Path Statistics, Requirements, and Future for the Technical Writer

In this memo, you will find the information you requested for your Technical Writing Club – Texas Chapter members on the job path of Technical Writer. Data for this report was sourced from the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)), O\*Net Online ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)), and a peer-reviewed article from Austin Community College Online Library Database ([www.library.austincc.edu](http://www.library.austincc.edu)). In this report you will find information on the following topics related to the job of a Technical Writer:

- Job statistics such as description, salary, positions, education, and skills required
- Job path choice by salary, degree plan, and special talents
- Job future by growth and effects of technology
- Job Summary

## Job Statistics

As of 2021, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the following statistical data for the job of Technical Writer:

**Job Description:** “Technical writers prepare instruction manuals, how-to guides, journal articles, and other supporting documents to communicate complex and technical information more easily.” (BLS)

**Current Salary:** \$76,650 (Texas), \$78,060 (nationwide)

**Current Number of Positions:** 3,300 (Texas), 55,400 (nationwide)

**Entry Level Degree:** Bachelor’s Degree

**Entry Level Skills:** Effective writing, reading comprehension, active listening, good communication, and critical thinking.

## Job Path Choice

The widely varied field of Technical Writing will allow your club members to narrow in on their special interests, talents, and desired salary; still, they will have many choices when it comes to a job path. To express this idea for your club members, I've chosen the five most common job paths taken by Technical Writers and broken them down into three categories: Path by degree, Path by talents, and Path by salary.

**Path by degree:** O\*Net Online reports the basic, entry-level education requirement for a Technical Writer is a bachelor's degree with no specific degree plan recommended; however, the club members' interests may dictate their degree plan choice.

<u>Job</u>	<u>Degree</u>
• Interpreter and Translators	Second Language ESL
• Journalist Editor	Journalism
• Public Relations Manager	Communications
• Computer Hardware Engineer	Computer Science
• Clinical Data Managers	Medicine and Dentistry

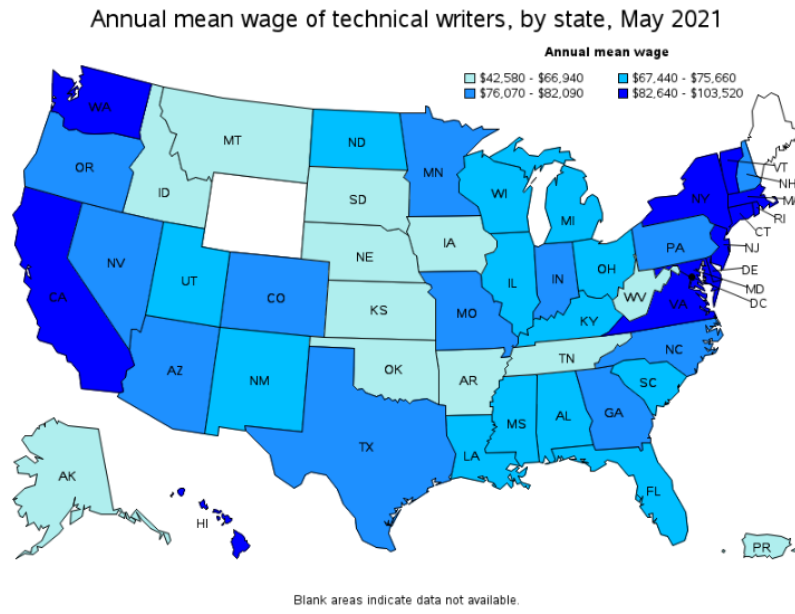
**Path by talents:** O\*Net Online reports a very specific skill set required of a Technical Writer; however, the club members' special talents may dictate their choice of a job title direction.

<u>Job</u>	<u>Talent</u>
• Interpreter and Translators	Bi-Lingual
• Journalist Editor	Investigative
• Public Relations Manager	Creative
• Clinical Data Managers	Conventional
• Computer Hardware Engineer	Mathematical

**Path by salary:** O\*Net Online reports a wide range of salary levels available for a Technical Writer; however, the club members' salary requirements may dictate their choice of a job title direction.

<u>Job</u>	<u>Salary</u>
• Interpreter and Translators	\$49,110
• Journalist Editor	\$63,350
• Public Relations Manager	\$119,860
• Clinical Data Managers	\$100,910
• Computer Hardware Engineer	\$128,170

Traditionally salary is a major deciding factor when choosing a career path. Therefore, I have included Figure 1 (below) which reflects, by state, where an aspiring Technical Writer has the highest earning potential. The data shows that Delaware, California, Massachusetts are the top three states in which a Technical Writer has the best potential to earn an above average salary. For the Technical Writer focusing on salary as his or her path, these states should be researched for available positions.



Top paying states for Technical Writers:

State	Employment (1)	Employment per thousand jobs	Location quotient (9)	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage (2)
<a href="#">Delaware</a>	110	0.25	0.74	\$ 49.77	\$ 103,520
<a href="#">California</a>	5,420	0.33	0.97	\$ 48.43	\$ 100,730
<a href="#">Massachusetts</a>	2,060	0.61	1.80	\$ 46.85	\$ 97,440
<a href="#">Hawaii</a>	(8)	(8)	(8)	\$ 45.86	\$ 95,390
<a href="#">District of Columbia</a>	800	1.20	3.56	\$ 43.81	\$ 91,120

Figure 1. Annual Mean Wage of Technical Writers by State, May 2021. *Source:* <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

## Job Future

**Growth:** The path of the Technical Writer is a promising one for your club members. As shown in Figure 2 (below), The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a 6% overall growth in the field in the next 10 years (2021-2031), with an estimated 5,400 new jobs hitting the market annually nationwide. The 6% percentage represented in Figure 2 for Technical Writers is just slightly over the national average of 5% signifying stability in the market.

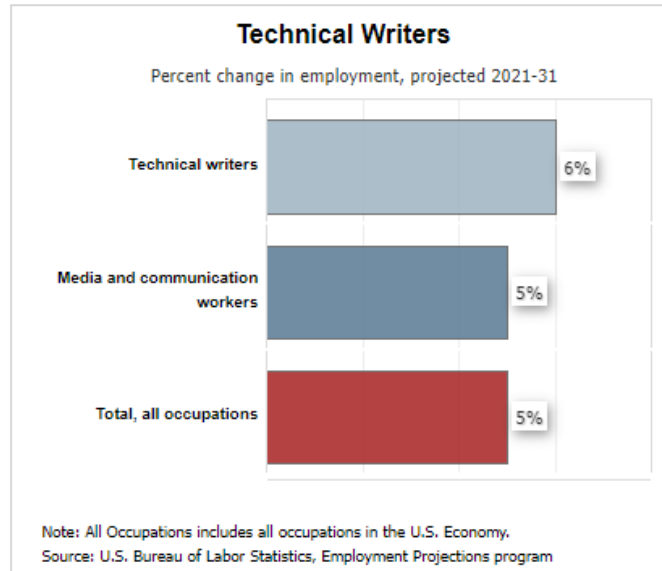


Figure.2. Percent Change in Employment, Projected 2021-31. Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Additionally, the most secure industry sectors, as reported by O\*Net Online, require Technical Writing services. Some of these top industries include:

- Computer Systems Design
- Technical Consulting Services
- Employment Services
- Scientific Research and Development Services
- Architectural, Engineering Services

**Technology:** New technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) should not deter club members from pursuing a Technical Writing job. Despite the initial concern about AI, a generative software that can mimic human speech patterns and create content, the Bureau of Labor Statistics debunks the idea that it will reduce jobs for Technical Writers in their report posted in July 2022, “Growth trends for selected occupations considered at risk from automation.”

The report draws on historical data to prove that overall new technology such as AI can take over a particular task, but it allows the human to “spend more time on other, perhaps new tasks without necessarily a reduction in the number of jobs” (BLS) and when referencing writing careers the report further states that “AI may automate certain tasks, like composing certain kinds of press releases, without substituting for enough tasks within the occupation to meaningfully decrease employment.” (BLS)

To help ensure your club members are on the right job path, I have also included a reference to the recent peer-reviewed article, “ChatGPT: The Opportunities and Risks of AI-Generated

Content” by *Information Today*, which cites biased and incorrect information as the main reason that AI cannot take the place the singular human talent of “critical and creative thinking, and strategic decision making,” (Information Today) which just happen to be the most common special talents of the Technical Writer.

## **Job Summary**

In summary, the job path of a Technical Writer is a path to success! The median job salary and predicted growth rate over the next 10 years are stable. Furthermore, the varied job titles available to the Technical Writer will allow your club members the added benefit of choosing an exciting path that suits their personal needs.

Club members who are looking to further invest in the job path of Technical Writing should be encouraged to join one of the top three trade associations known to the field as a resource for connecting with industry experts, job and intern opportunities, and scholarships:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: Technical writers
- National Association of Science Writers
- Society for Technical Communication

This research should assist your club members in making an educated decision about their Technical Writing careers and the direction in which they pursue. If you have any additional questions, I encourage you or your club members to reach out to me at 817-680-6860.

## Works Cited

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Technical Writers, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm> (visited *February 03, 2023*).

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