



# **2015 Info-Entrepreneur Market Report: insights on information businesses**

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Bates Information Services  
February 2015**

**[BatesInfo.com/2015survey](http://BatesInfo.com/2015survey)**



# 2015 Info-Entrepreneur Report

- About the survey
- Cut to the chase
  - What do established info-entrepreneurs look like?
  - How much do people make?
  - Can I do this part-time?
  - Do I need an MLIS?
- Other details of info-entrepreneurs
- Advice to new info-entrepreneurs
- What could help your business the most
- What next?
- About Mary Ellen Bates
- Appendix



# About the survey

Anonymous survey of info-entrepreneurs who are already in business, solicited through the Association of Independent Information Professionals' AIIP-L list and social media

Survey conducted January 17-31 2015 via SurveyMonkey



Cut to the chase...



# What do established\* info-entrepreneurs look like?

They average 38 hours/week

They are age 50-59

82% have graduate degrees

They had already worked for 16+ years before starting their business

\*Full-time business, 5+ years in operation



# How much do people make?

It depends on how you ask...

*Revenue* is the total amount of money brought in to a business. Out of this come direct expenses, overhead and your salary or profit.

*Income* is the amount of money left over, after all expenses have been paid. Income, in this context, includes the salary you pay yourself plus any other money you have after expenses.



# How much do people make?

It depends on who you ask...

Half of established info-entrepreneurs have revenue of at least \$60K/year, and a third have revenue of \$90K/year or more.

Half of info-entrepreneurs in their first 3 years have revenue under \$20K a year.



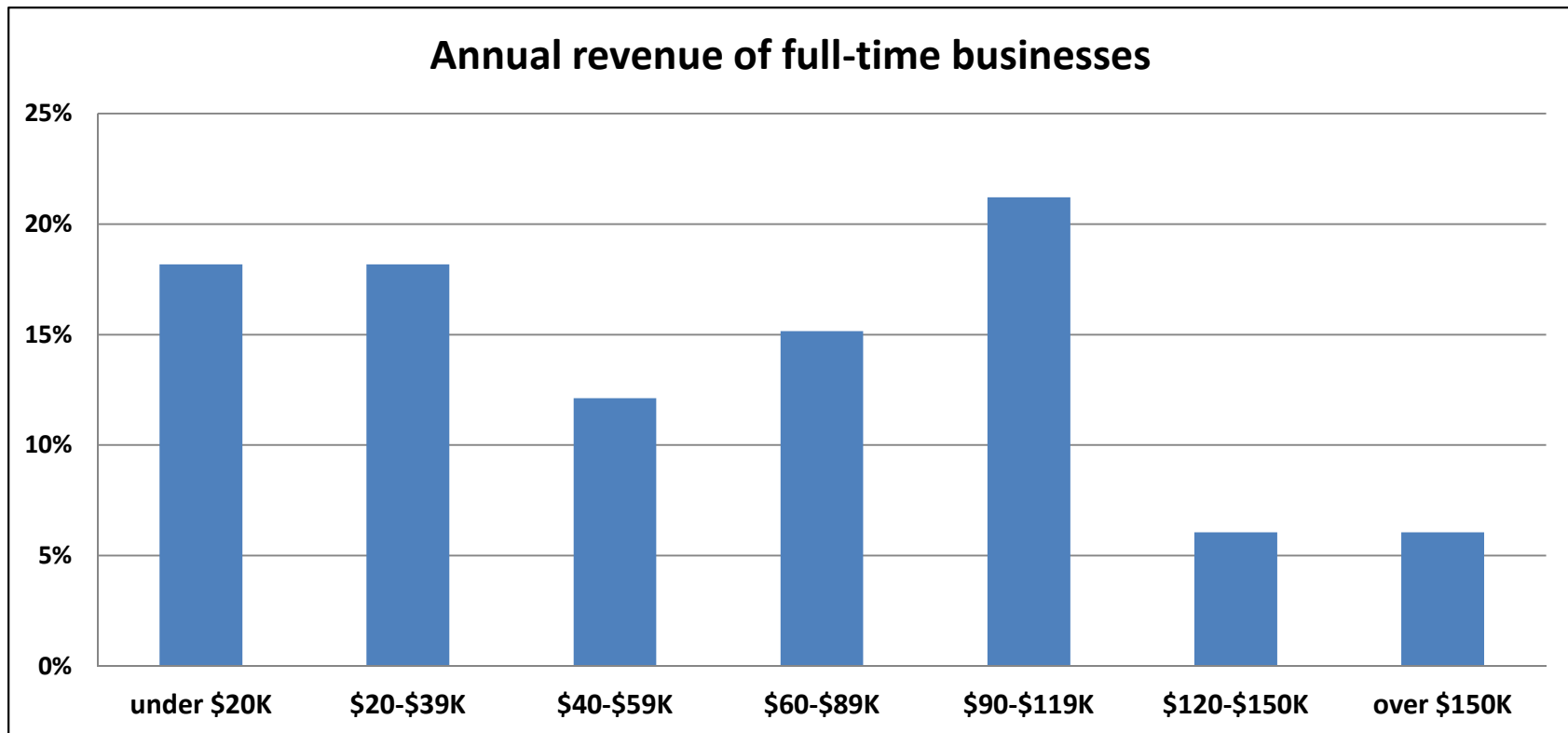
# How much do people make?

Following are charts showing *revenue* and *profit* for full-time information businesses, and for new and long-time businesses.



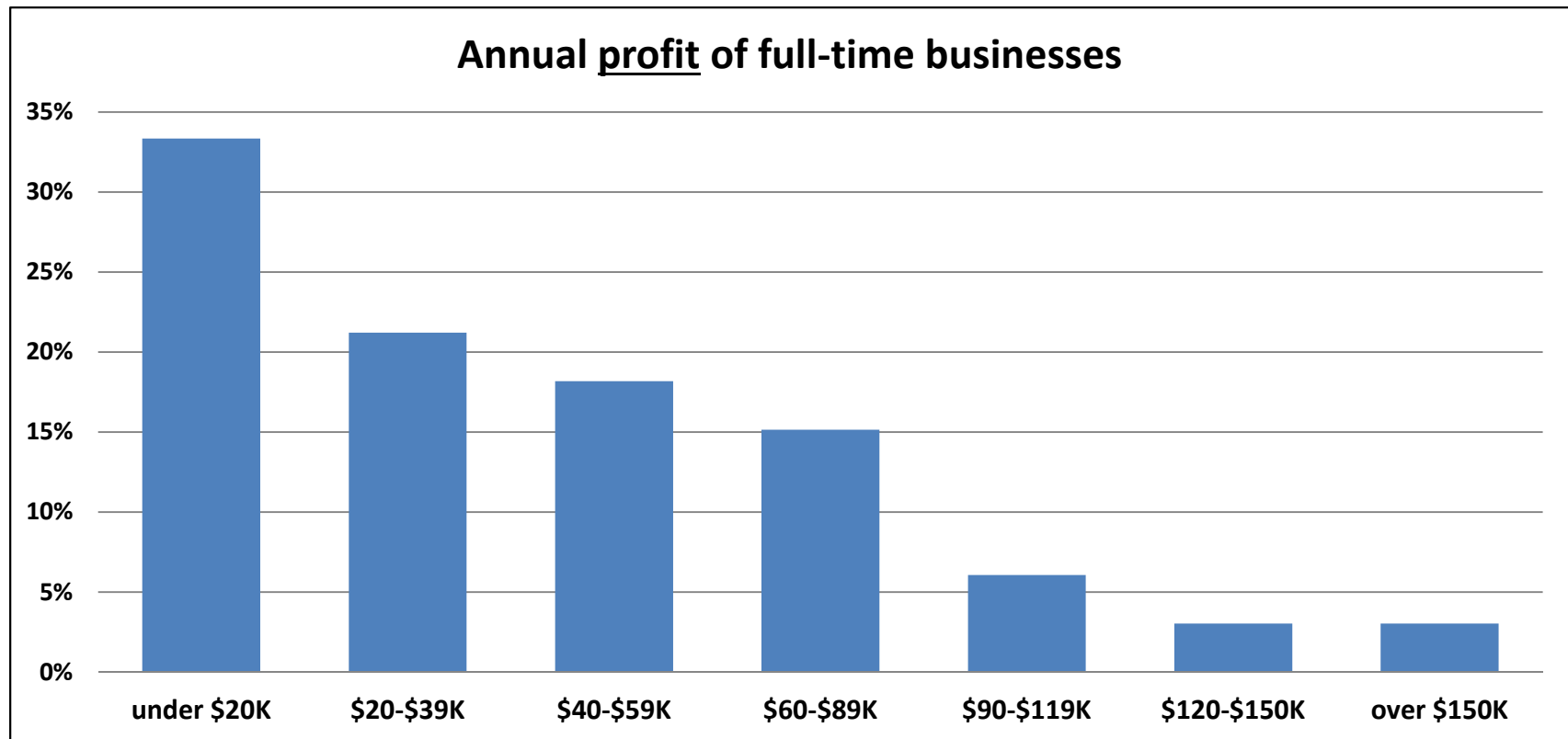


# What's the annual revenue of a full-time business?





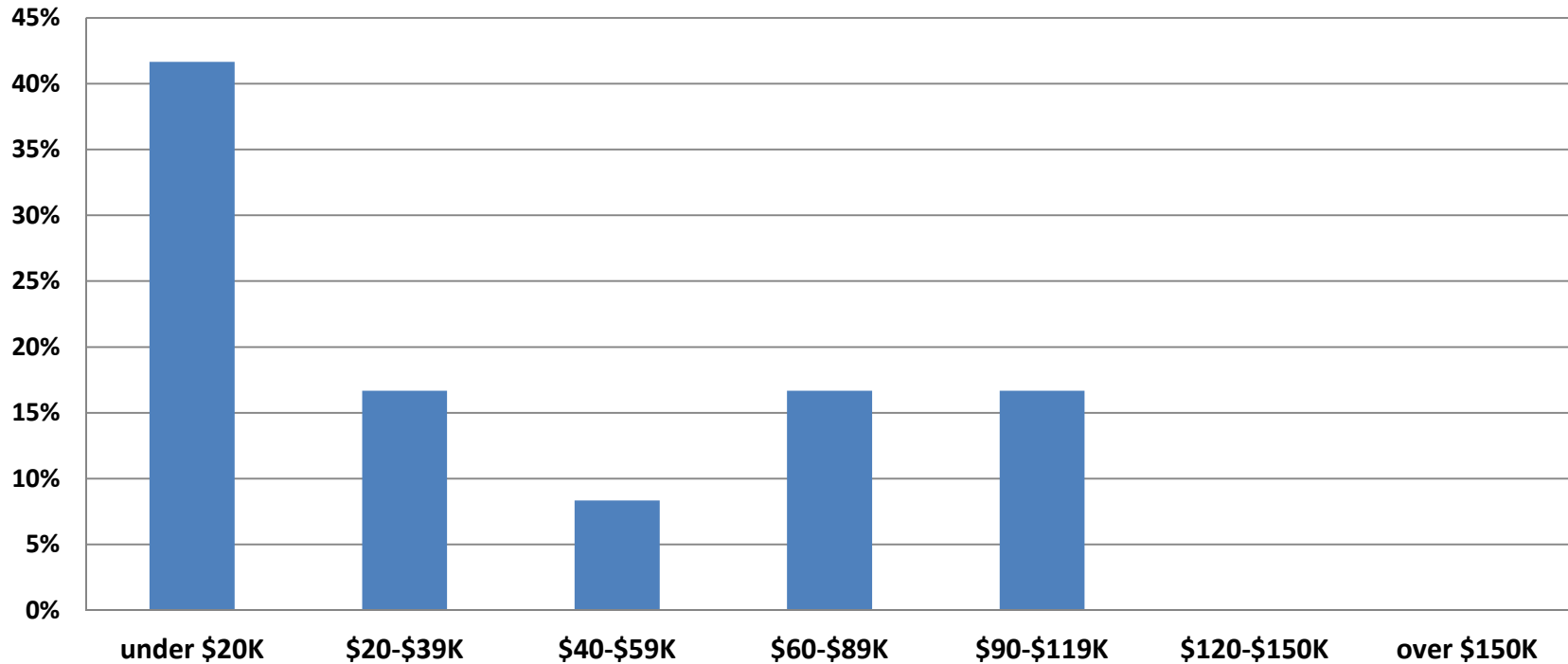
# What's the profit of a full-time business?





# What's the revenue of a full-time business in the first 3 years?

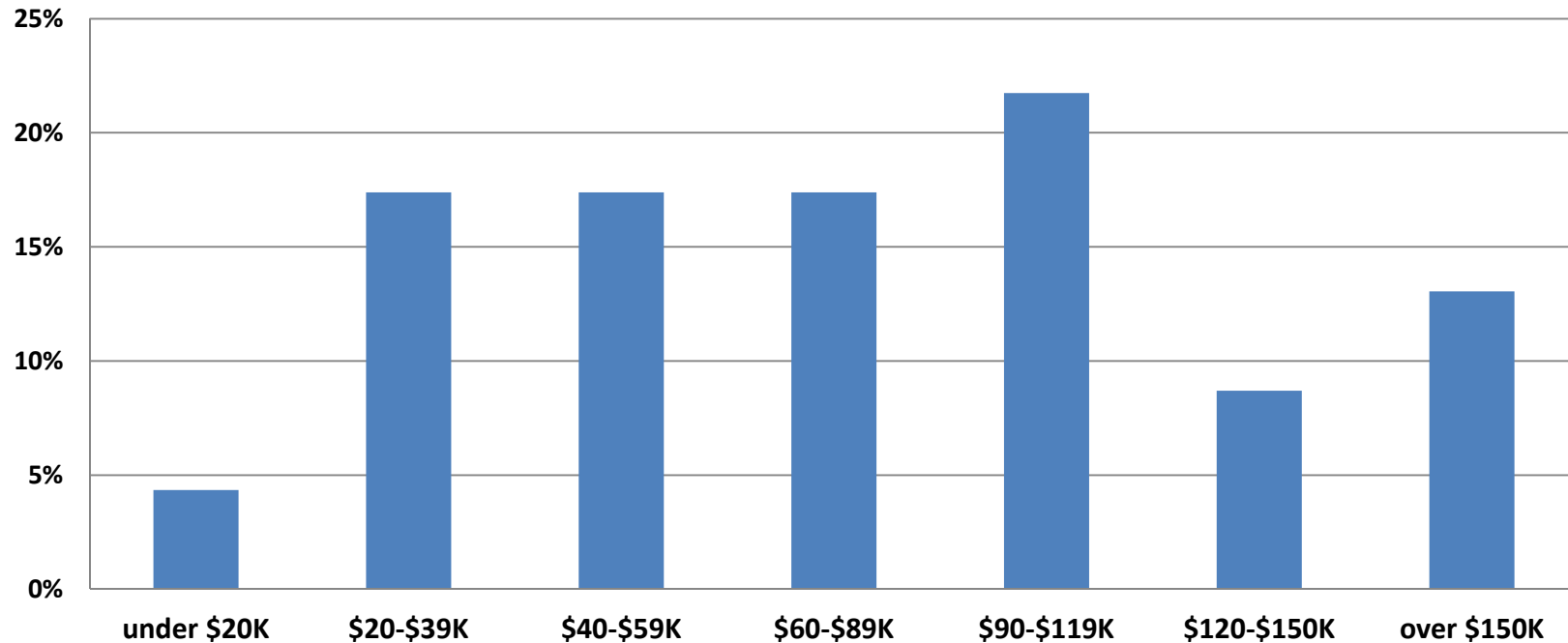
Annual revenue of businesses in first 3 years





# What's the revenue of a full-time business of 5+ years?

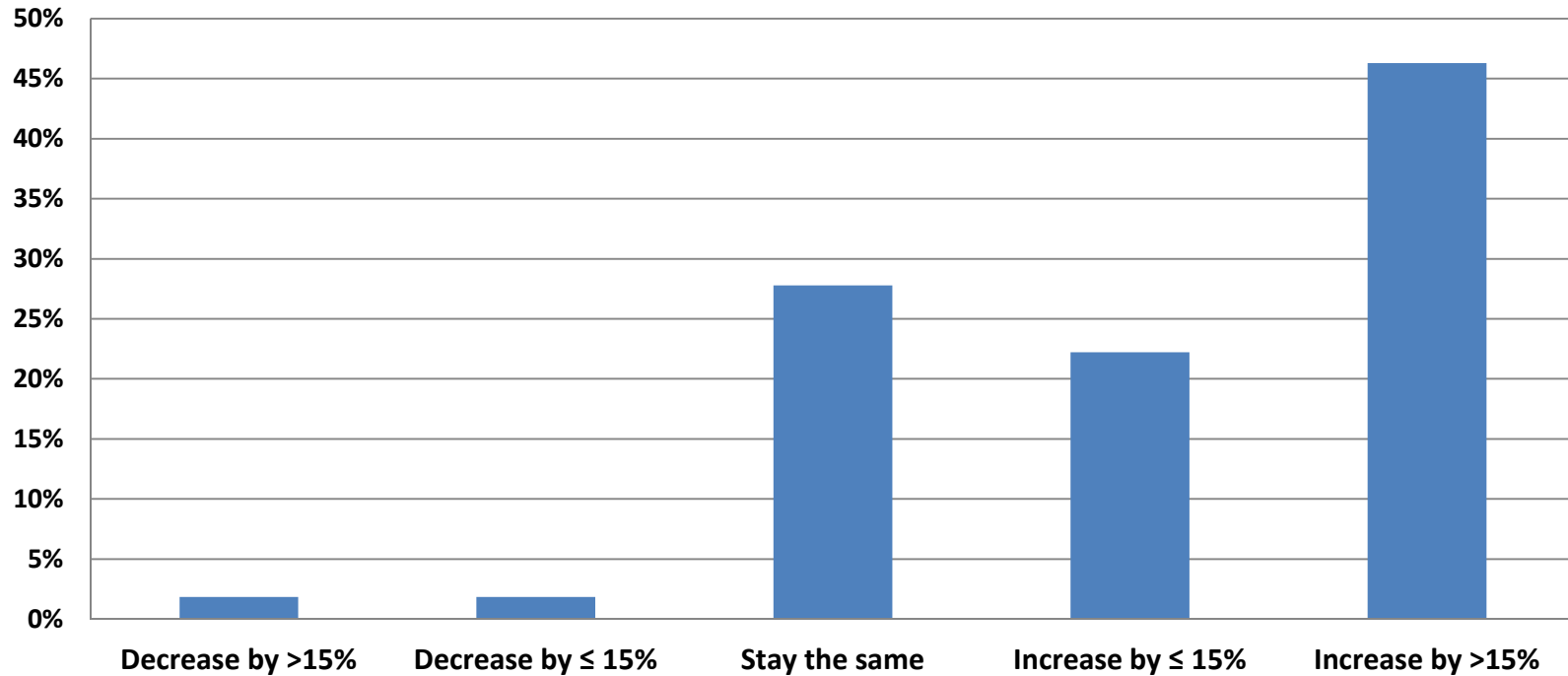
## Annual revenue of businesses of 5+ years





# What do you expect for 2015?

I expect my revenue to...





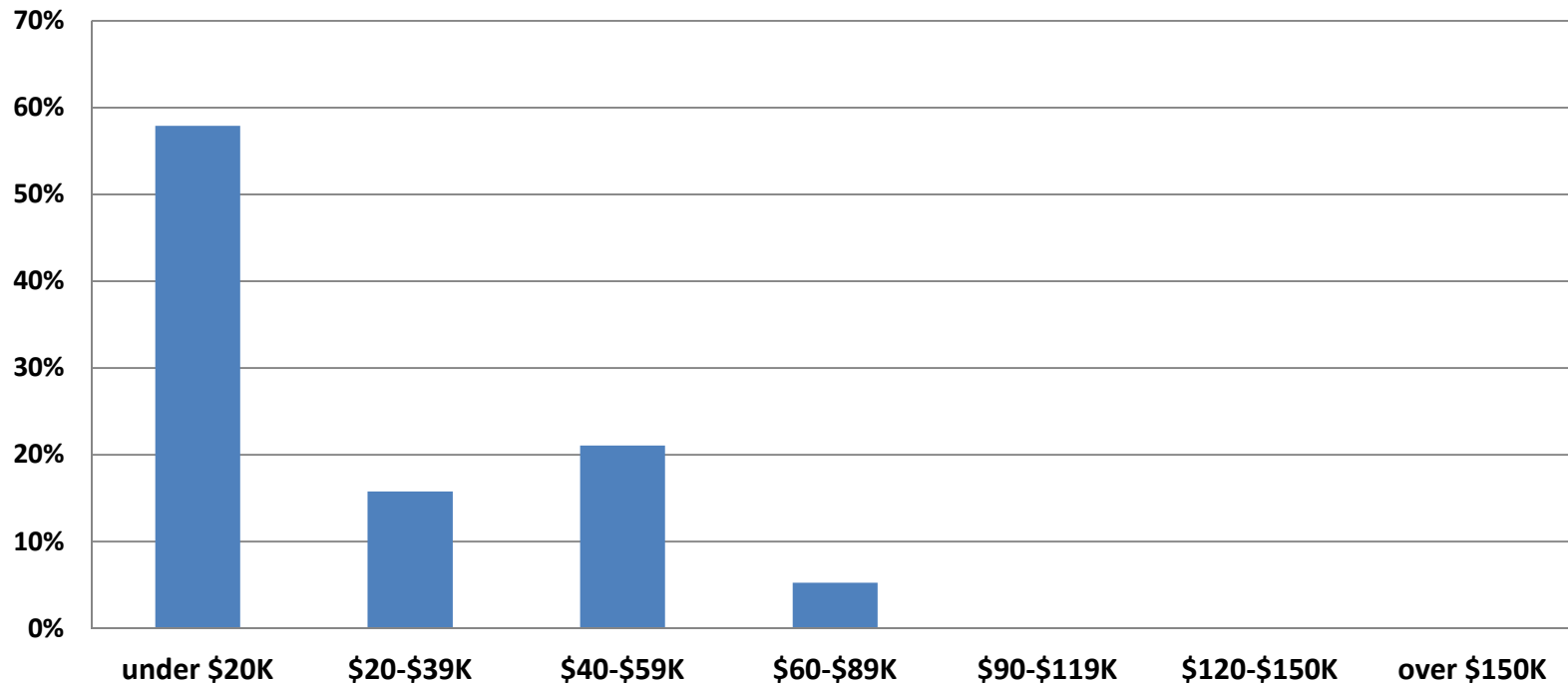
# What about a part-time business?

A part-time business can be successful, depending on your expectation of revenue. The more hours you put into the business, the higher your revenue, although there is still a limit on how much you can expect to earn.



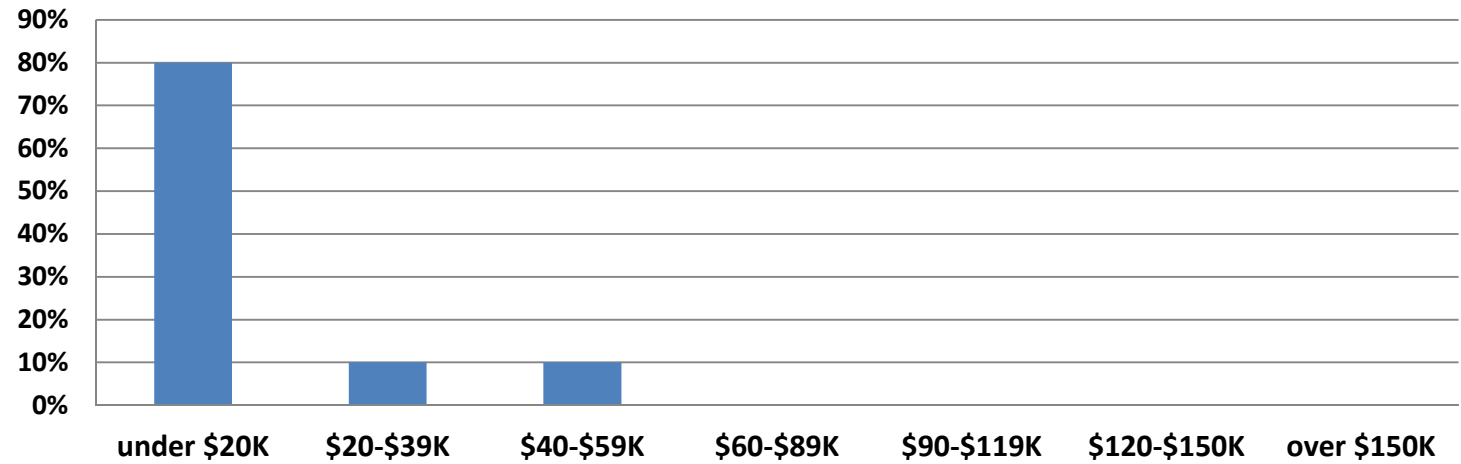
# How much do part-time businesses make?

Annual revenue of part-time businesses

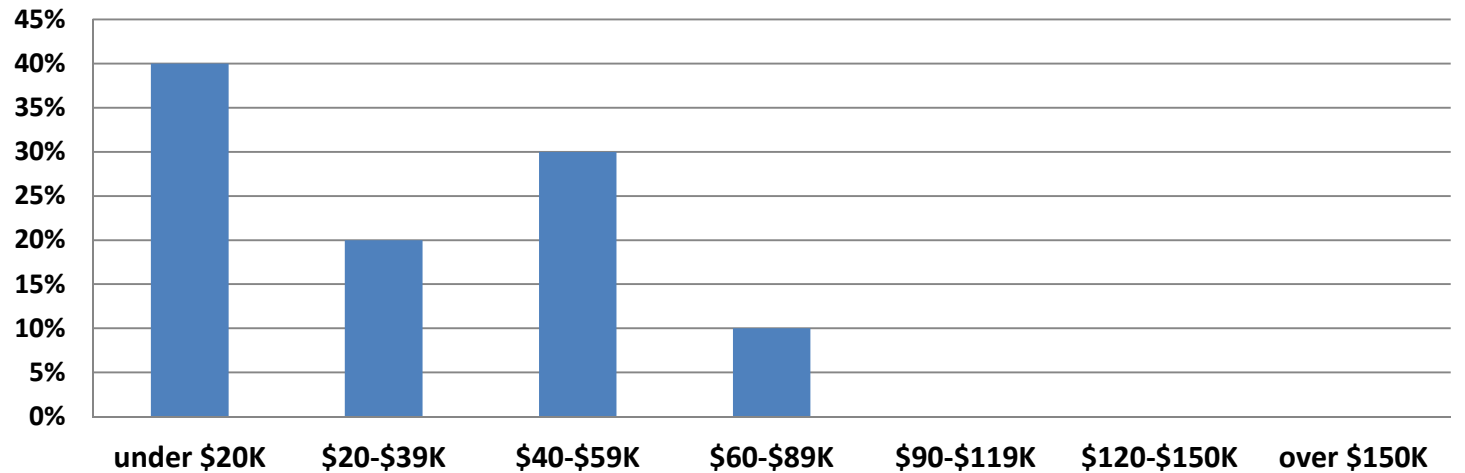




### Annual revenue for <20 hours/week part-time businesses



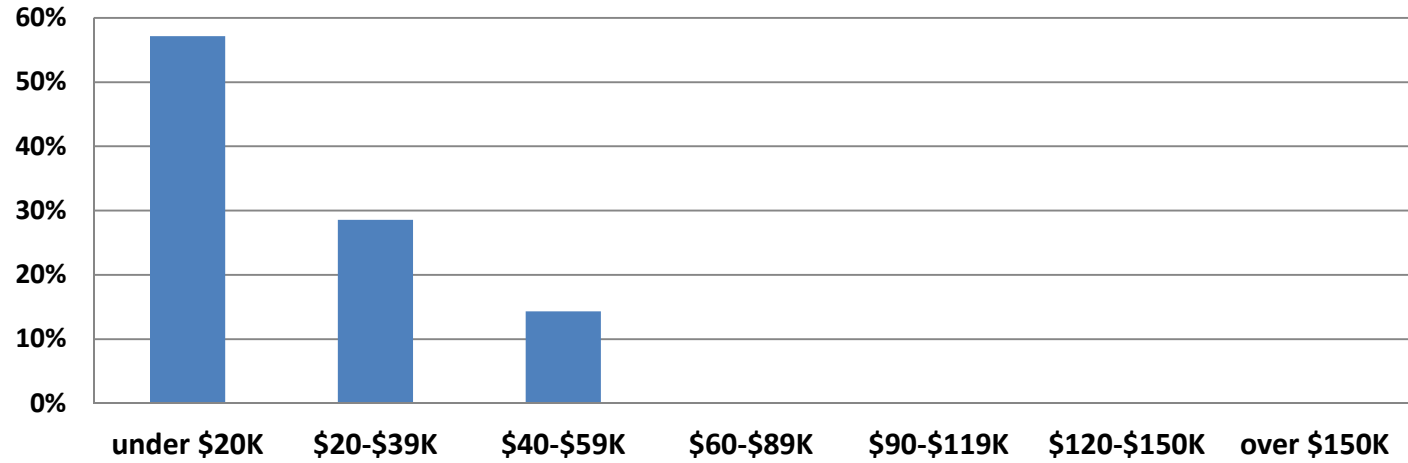
### Annual revenue for 20+ hours/week part-time businesses



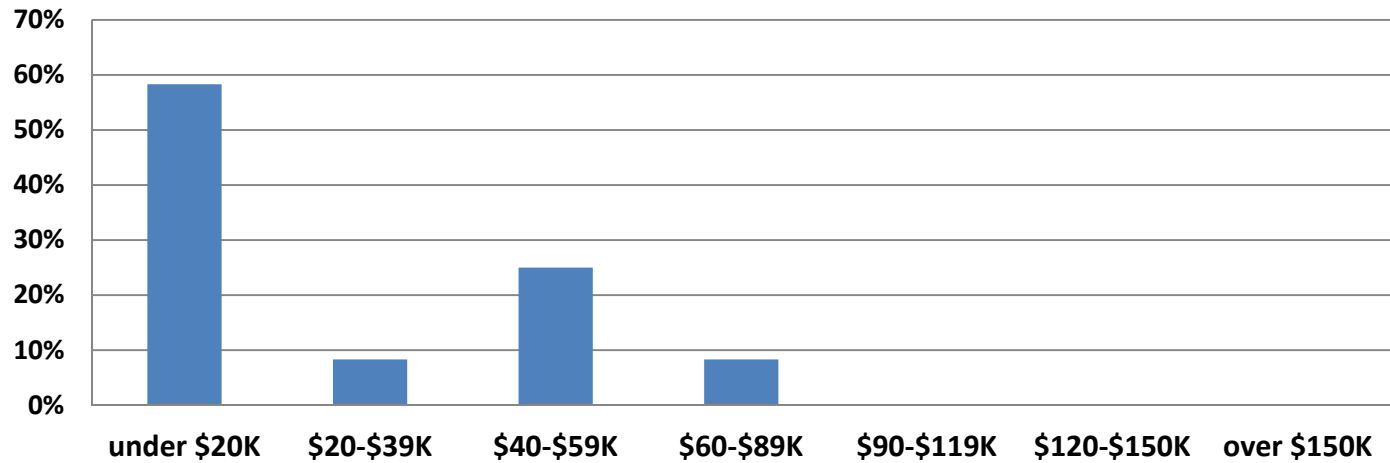




### Annual revenue for part-time business, first 3 years



### Annual revenue for part-time business after 5+ years

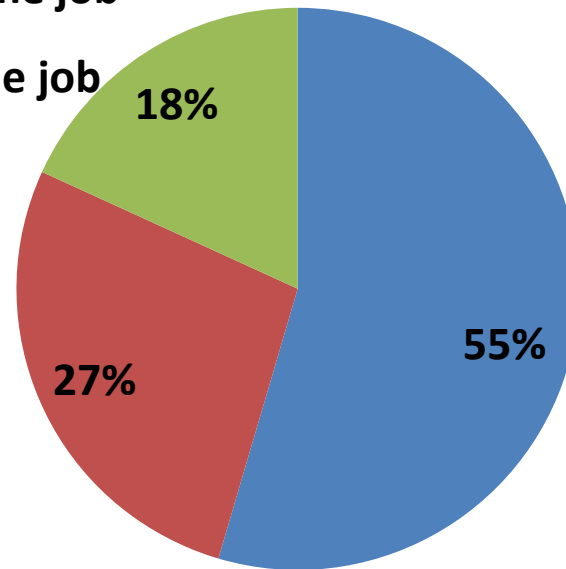




# What does a part-time business look like?

## Where else do you work?

- part-time business, no other job
- part-time business, part-time job
- part-time business, full-time job





# What does a part-time business look like?

Part-time info-entrepreneurs work an average of 19 hours/week.

They had already worked for more than 20 years before starting their business.



## Take-away

Over half of all part-time businesses have revenue of under \$20K a year, even after 5 years in business.



# Do I need an *MLS*?

About 45% of established businesses\* are run by people with an *MLS* or *MLIS*, and over half of all info-entrepreneurs have *MLSs*.

\* Full-time businesses, in operation for 5+ years



# Do I need an MLS, or an MBA?

Revenue by univ. degree





# Other details about info-entrepreneurs



## Other details

### Geographic breakout:

US: 74%

Europe: 12%

Canada: 9%

Other: 1%

Average age: 50-59

Advanced degrees: 87% (55% have MLIS)

Average 19+ years of prior experience





## Other details

60% have full-time businesses

19% have part-time businesses & are employed elsewhere

21% have part-time businesses & are not employed elsewhere

### Format of business

46% sole proprietorship

33% LLC

16% corporation

5% partnership



## Other details

Average hours/week for full-time business: 38

Average hours/week for part-time business: 18

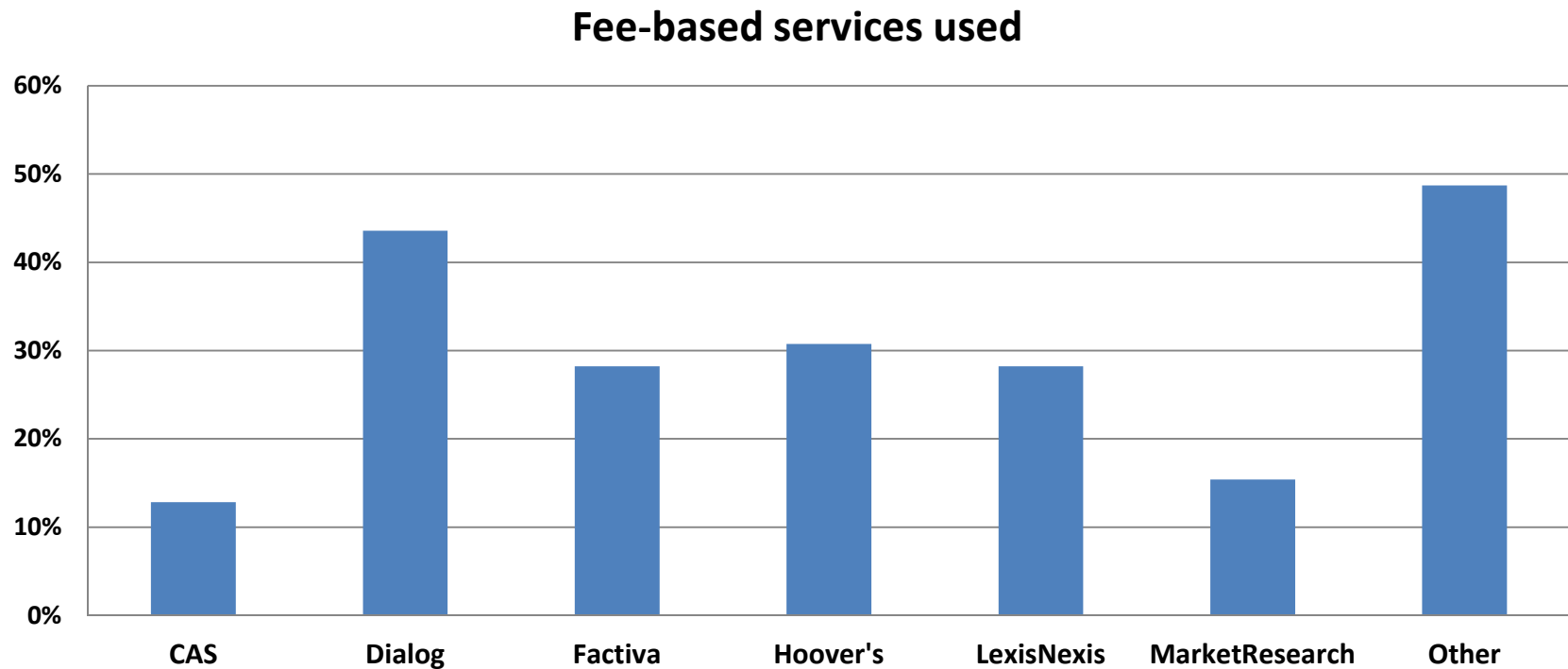
96% have no employees

40% have used subcontractors in the last year



# Other details

What online services do info-entrepreneurs use?





# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs



# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

The survey asked respondents for their advice to aspiring info-entrepreneurs.

Their suggestions and comments have been aggregated and organized by general theme.



# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

## PERSONAL SKILLS AND STRENGTHS

Be flexible.

Always do something connected to your business that you really like to do, that's fun for you or deeply engaging.

Feed your soul.

Don't give up! Keep trying new things!

Believe in yourself. Take sensible risks.

Take the long view.

Always keep learning new things.



# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

## THINK LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR

Being independent is not for the faint hearted. You have to be able to market yourself & your business.

Commit yourself wholeheartedly to making a success of your business.

You have to step out of your comfort zone to be in business on your own.

Running and owning a business is different than being an employee.

Understand your cash flow - your income will drop at first.



# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CLIENTS

Know your clients. Find a niche.

Find out what people/businesses value your services.

Make sure there is a solid market for your services.

Market, market, market - you'll always be marketing.

Set your pricing according to your market.





# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Build relationships with your clients.

Connect with your colleagues.

Get a mentor.

Find successful entrepreneurs and hang out with them,  
learn from them.

Have a support system of people you can call.

Keep networking - if you work hard AND are good at what  
you do, success WILL come.





What would help your business  
the most?



# What would help the most?

The survey asked respondents to describe the one thing that would help their business the most. The following is a summary of where info-entrepreneurs feel an unmet need.



# What would help the most?

More clients able to pay rates I want to charge

Better marketing efforts

Better marketing skills

Consistent client flow and cash flow

More time, and better time management

More pay-as-you-go online services





# What next?

Are you considering launching your business?

Do you want to move your business up a level?

Do you want to raise your profits so you have more time for the rest of your life?

Do you want to find ways to *enjoy* your business more?



## What next?

A thought leader and long-time info-entrepreneur, *Mary Ellen Bates* offers eTools, books, podcasts and one-on-one strategic business coaching for new and long-time info-entrepreneurs. She is passionate about enabling her clients to succeed and create the businesses they want.

See her resources at [BatesInfo.com/store](https://BatesInfo.com/store)

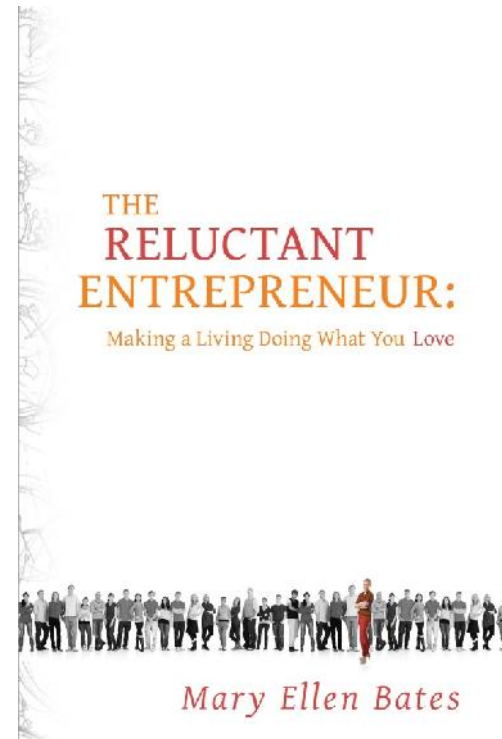
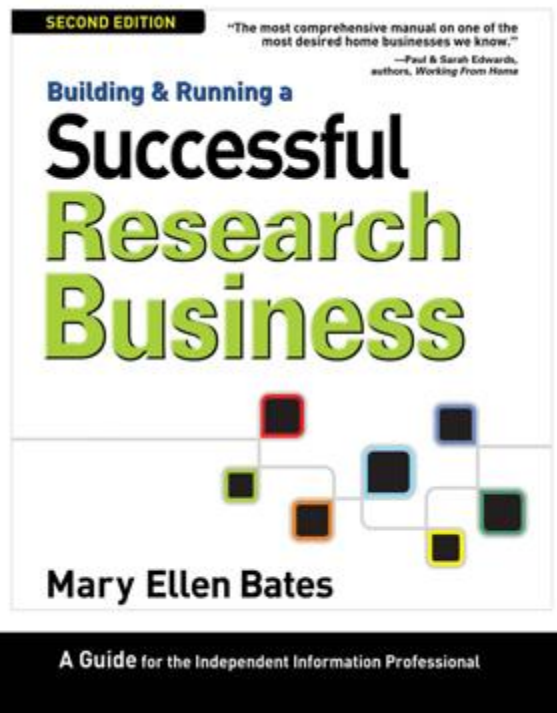
Learn about her coaching at [BatesInfo.com/coaching](https://BatesInfo.com/coaching)





# Read the books

Mary Ellen wrote the books on info-entrepreneurship!



See [BatesInfo.com/store](http://BatesInfo.com/store) for more info



# Where to learn more

Web: [BatesInfo.com](http://BatesInfo.com)

Blog: [Reluctant-entrepreneur.com](http://Reluctant-entrepreneur.com)

Twitter: [@meps](https://twitter.com/meps)

Facebook: [maryellenbates](https://www.facebook.com/maryellenbates)

LinkedIn: [maryellenbates](https://www.linkedin.com/company/maryellenbates)



# How to connect with Mary Ellen

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# Appendix



# Survey questions

1. Have you already started your information business?  
(if answer is *no*, survey is ended)
2. In what year did you start your information business?
3. In what year did you join AIIP?
4. In what country do you live?
5. What is the structure of your business?
  - Sole proprietorship
  - Partnership
  - LLC
  - Corporation/subchapter S
  - Other (please specify)



# Survey questions

6. Is your information business:

a full-time job

a part-time job (and you work *part-time* as an employee elsewhere)

a part-time job (and you work *full-time* as an employee elsewhere)

a part-time job (and you do *not work* elsewhere)

Other (please specify)

7. On average, how many hours a week do you spend at your information business?

8. Do you have any employees *other than yourself*?

No

1 to 3 employees (either full-time *or* part-time)

More than 3 employees (either full-time *or* part-time)



# Survey questions

9. Have you used subcontractors in your information business at least once in the last 12 months?
10. What fee-based online services did you use in 2014? How much did you spend on this service? (US\$)
  - CAS
  - Dialog
  - Factiva
  - Hoover's
  - LexisNexis
  - MarketResearch/Profound
  - Other provider (please list service(s) and amount you spend)



# Survey questions

11. What was your estimated *total revenue* (not net profit) for your information business in 2014? (US\$)

under \$20,000

\$20,000 - \$39,999

\$40,000 - \$59,999

\$60,000 - \$89,999

\$90,000 - \$119,000

\$120,000 - \$150,000

over \$150,000





# Survey questions

12. What was your estimated *salary* (or profit, if you are a sole proprietor) for your information business in 2014? (US\$)

under \$20,000

\$20,000 - \$39,999

\$40,000 - \$59,999

\$60,000 - \$89,999

\$90,000 - \$119,000

\$120,000 - \$150,000

over \$150,000

13. Do you expect to see your total revenue change in 2015?

Increase by more than 15%

Increase by 15% or less

Stay about the same

Decrease by 15% or less

Decrease by more than 15%



# Survey questions

14. Your age:

under 30

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

70 or over

15. What college degree(s) have you earned?

BA/BS

MLS / MLIS or equivalent

MBA

Other master's degree

Other post-graduate degree

Other (please specify)



# Survey questions

16. How many years did you work professionally before you started your information business?
17. The most important piece of advice you would give to an aspiring independent info pro is:
18. The one thing that would help your business the most is:

###



Interested in slicing and dicing the data in other ways?

Just ask!