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# How Engineers Find Information in 2022





# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ..... [3](#)

## **Section 1**

### **How Engineers Consume Content**

Thirty-Day Consumption Trends ..... [5](#)

Consumption Changes: New Challengers ..... [6](#)

COVID Impact on Consumption Preferences ..... [7](#)

How Engineers Find Information ..... [8](#)

## **Section 2**

### **Forms of Content Engineers Prefer**

The Rising Importance of Email ..... [10](#)

Video Continues to Gain Steam ..... [11](#)

LinkedIn Dominates Social Media ..... [12](#)

**Survey Demographics** ..... [13](#)

**Helping Marketers Win** ..... [14](#)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2014, engineering.com has surveyed engineering professionals to identify their information consumption habits and preferences. However, with the impact of COVID-19, we decided to take a break from this sizable project to focus on other priorities.

As most businesses begin to thrive in our new version of reality, we are excited to resume the exercise once more. Over the last few months, we've conducted the survey, analyzed response data, and drawn insights from the results. The following report summarizes our findings based on 732 fully completed surveys.

Over the years, this report has been the most downloaded asset on our marketing website. The survey has two significant benefits. First, the data guides our actions to improve how engineers find, access, and leverage content to fuel their growth and proficiency. The report also helps B2B technology marketers understand how their target audiences engage with technical content. The insights offer marketers ideas for strategic planning and creating more effective campaigns.

Here are a few significant findings from the survey:

- *Digital publications remain the most popular source of information for professional engineers*
- *In-person events were impacted most negatively by the COVID-19 pandemic, while virtual events and videos gained significantly more traction*
- *More engineers opened and read marketing emails in 2021 than in prior years*
- *Articles are still the preferred medium for content consumption, but videos are quickly gaining steam and could overtake articles in the years to come*
- *LinkedIn is by a large margin the most popular social media platform used by engineers for work-related tasks*

We wish to thank the engineering professionals who committed their valuable time participating in the study. Their willingness to share a glimpse into their preferences helps us all. Thank you for reading, and I wish you continued success in your marketing efforts!

Adrian Nash  
Chief Revenue Officer



# SECTION 1

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## HOW ENGINEERS CONSUME CONTENT

This section examines which sources engineers turn to for their work-related information, and the methods they use to consume that information.



## THIRTY-DAY CONSUMPTION TRENDS

### Digital Publications Remained the Most Popular Source of Engineering Information in 2022

We asked respondents in each survey which mediums they regularly turn to for engineering-related information, and the majority chose digital publications for the third consecutive time. The second most popular sources ranked in the survey were online training initiatives like webinars and courses.

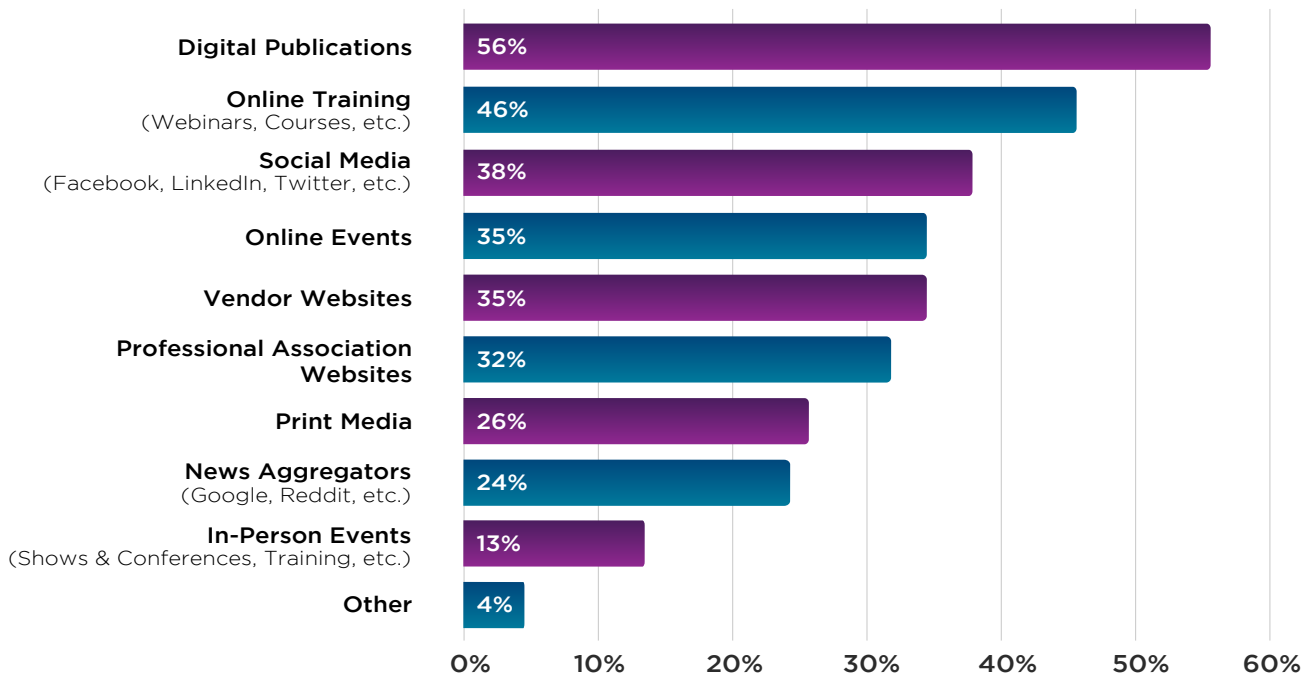
Poor showings from print and in-person events should not surprise most marketers. Print has been declining for many years, being long surpassed by digital alternatives.

As far as in-person events, the pandemic has severely restricted the hosting of live venues since the second quarter of 2020.

While in-person events ranked low in this year's data, we don't expect them to occupy the bottom spot for long. As restrictions continue to ease and people are more comfortable gathering in large numbers, we suspect in-person events will be a powerful tool for marketers once more. However, we believe hybrid live and augmented online models will become the new norm.

**Question #1:** Which of the following have you used in the last month as a source of engineering information? [Check all that apply]

### Information Sources for Engineers



### Digital Sources of Information Continue to Lead

Digital publications remained in the top spot in our survey, but there is more to the story.

Our data showed that engineers primarily consumed articles on publishing sites in previous years. Although written content is still the top choice, as we'll see in section two, engineers have come to rely on digital publishers for more than just articles.

We measured two new options in the recent survey that became very popular - online events and professional association websites. Digital publishers support these channels directly and indirectly by providing focused information in more accessible ways for engineers to view and digest what they need.

In the wake of the pandemic, online information has become more crucial than ever, so engineers increasingly lean more toward digital training and collaboration to up-skill and solve their challenges.

With many working remotely, engineers may be turning to online professional associations and gatherings for advice to replace previous conversations with colleagues in the company break room.

Written articles from digital publishers remain the most widely used source for engineers because they provide substantial value, but we now see the increasing use of other digital channels.

For engineers, more options are available to personalize further how they learn and retain information most effectively.





## COVID IMPACT ON CONSUMPTION PREFERENCES

### In-Person Activities Were Negatively Impacted by COVID; Virtual Events and Digital Content Filled the Void

Since it began, the pandemic has changed how we communicate, collect and digest information, and interact with one another. So naturally, a question on this subject seemed crucial for this year's survey.

In the graph below, you'll find data on content sourcing that engineers either increased, decreased, or maintained at the same level during COVID.

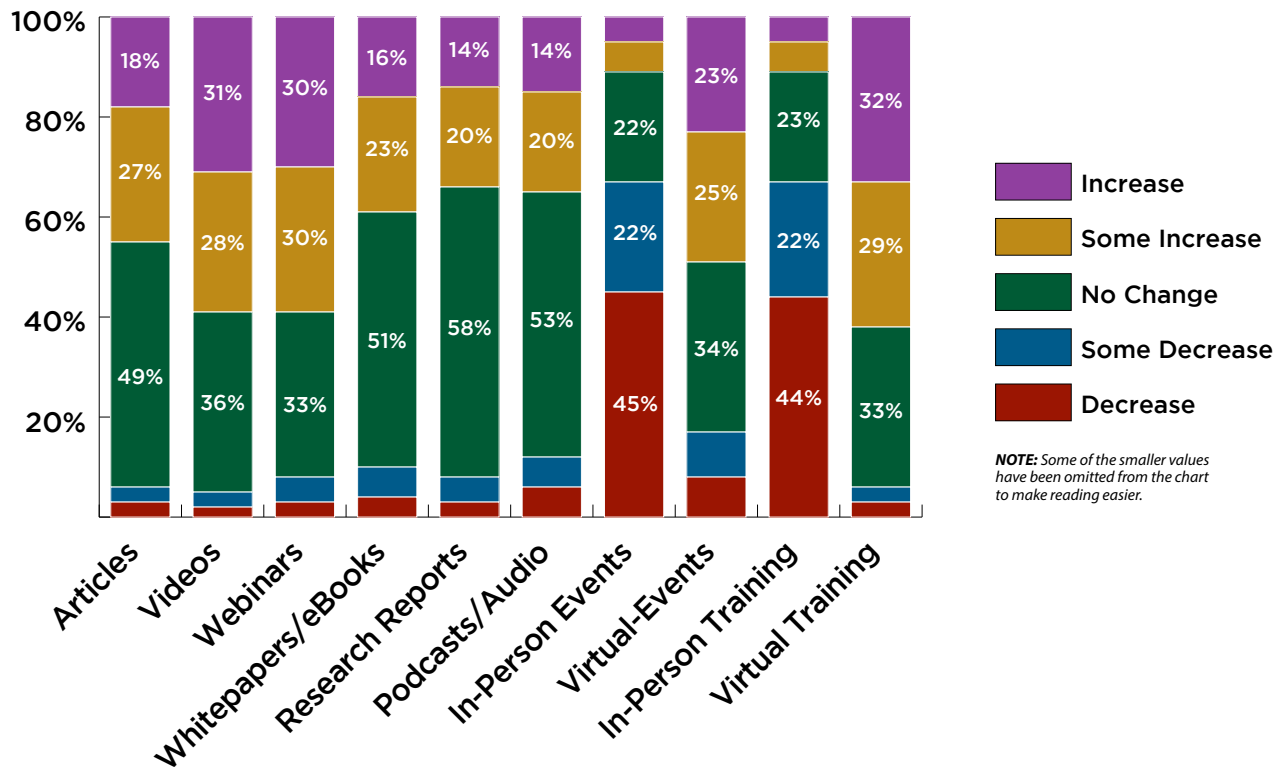
Not surprisingly, 44% and 45% of respondents indicated a significant decrease of in-person training and events,

respectively, and a further 23% and 22% showed a minor decline. In total, 67%, or two-thirds of engineers, decreased their participation in on-location events in 2021.

By contrast, virtual training (62%), webinars (60%), and video (59%) saw the highest amount of increased usage by engineers. The data collected from this question highlights how the pandemic accelerated the trend of engineers turning to digital sources of information.

**Question #2:** COVID has increased/decreased how much I use the following:

#### Changing Information Sources During COVID



# HOW ENGINEERS FIND INFORMATION

## Search Engines, Industry Publications, Vendor Websites and Email Subscriptions Top the List

As we've seen in previous years, engineers start finding what they want the same way that most everyone does - using a search engine like Google. Vendor sites ranked second, with industry publication sites, news aggregators, and email subscriptions clustered close together for the third spot.

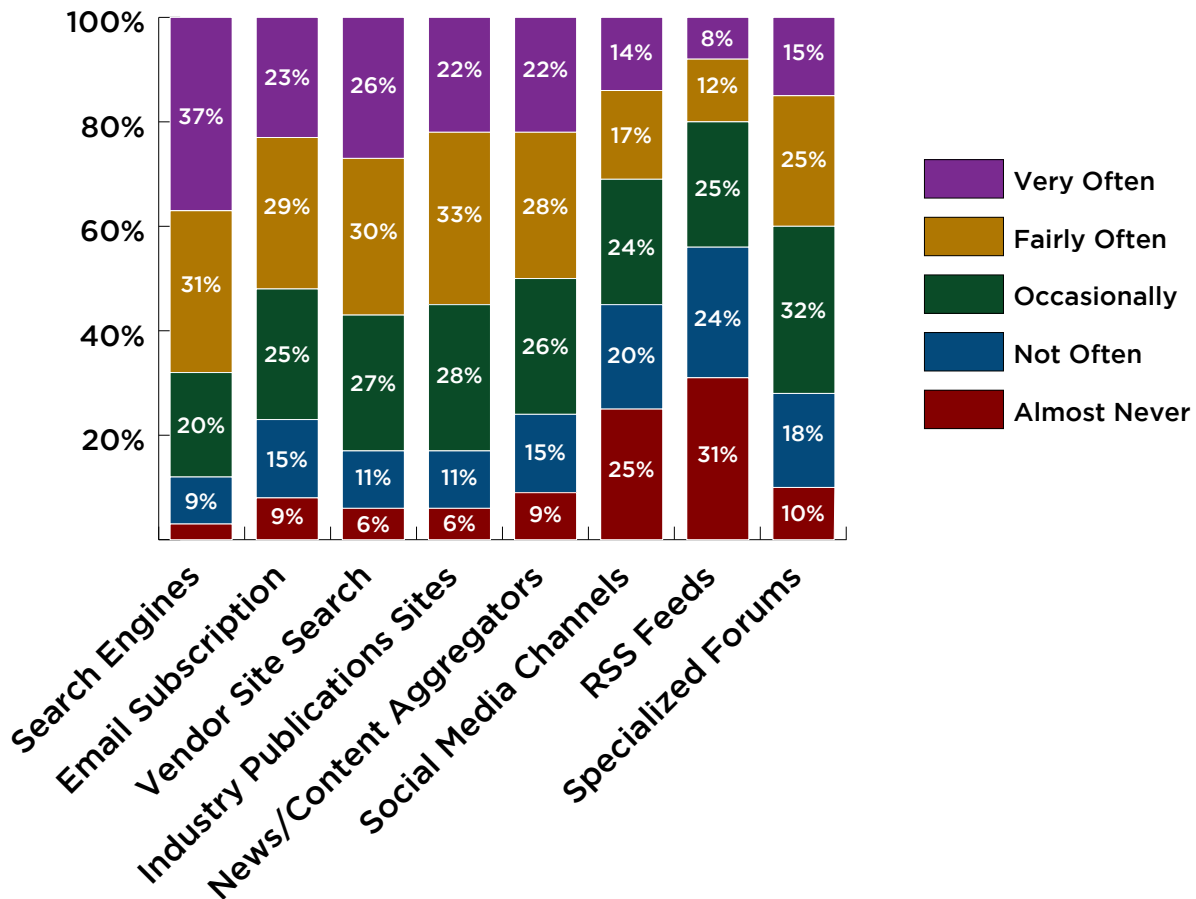
The results are consistent with previous surveys, and we expect future behavior will conform closely with this pattern.

There is a typical sourcing process we've seen engineers repeatedly use over time.

1. They search for topics or detail they want to learn about.
2. They visit one or more reputable sites offering that information.
3. If they perceive the value of the content gained exceeds their investment of time and energy, they join the site's community and email list for ongoing content updates.

**Question #3:** What is your preferred way to acquire work-related engineering information online?

### How Engineers Find Information





## SECTION 2

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# FORMS OF CONTENT ENGINEERS PREFER

This section explores specific forms of content preferred by engineers, along with social media use and email engagement patterns.



## THE RISING IMPORTANCE OF EMAIL

### Engineers are Opening and Reading More Emails than in Previous Years!

Email has gained a tarnished reputation over time due to misuse and saturation. But, the pandemic seems to have reaffirmed email's importance.

The trend is good news for digital marketers as more engineers seem to be taking the time to open and read their emails.

Perhaps email's resurgence makes sense since most people were forced to work from home and used email as the primary means to communicate with coworkers and others.

It's also possible that people had some extra time on their hands without commuting and, therefore, more time to devote to email. It will be interesting to see if this remains the case moving forward.

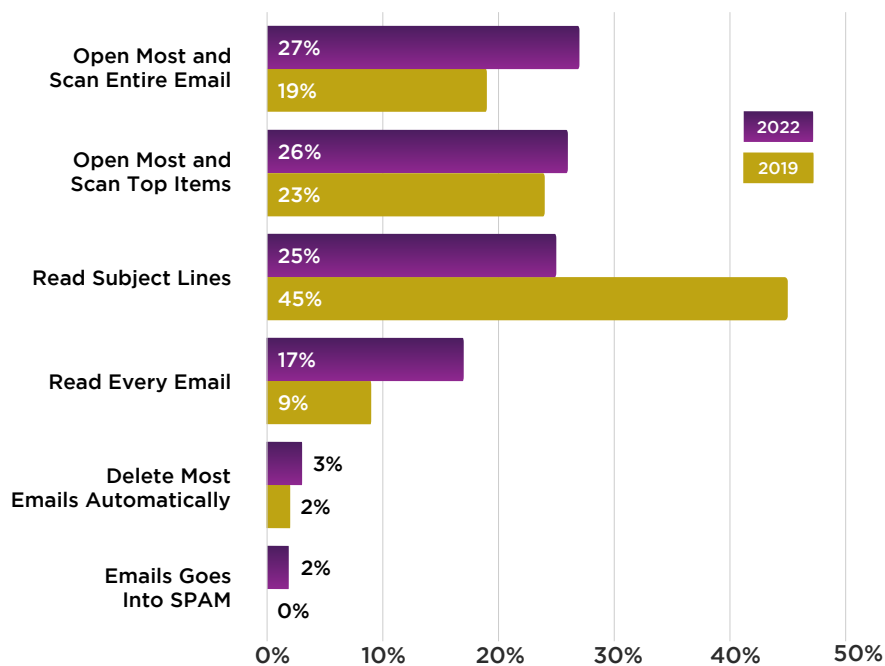
When we last asked this question in 2019, 42% of engineers said they at least opened most emails (with varying degrees of reading them). In this survey, the total was 53%. In addition, 17% claimed to read every email compared to 9% in 2019.

Interestingly, these numbers improved while significantly fewer claimed to read subject lines. Perhaps at least for a while during COVID, less non-relevant senders were cluttering inboxes.

More than 95% of emails were reported as getting through in the last two surveys. While a good start, well-segmented contact lists and relevant messaging will help improve the odds of engagement.

#### Question #4: How do you process engineering information emails you receive?

### How Engineers Process Job-Related Email



## VIDEO CONTINUES TO GAIN STEAM

### Articles Remain an Engineer's Favorite Form of Content, but Videos are Gaining Steam

The graph below highlights the forms of content engineers prefer when consuming engineering-related information.

A significant 66% or two-thirds of engineers read articles to get their professional news and information. Both short and long-form pieces have consistently occupied the top spots of this question for years, but serious contenders are now in play.

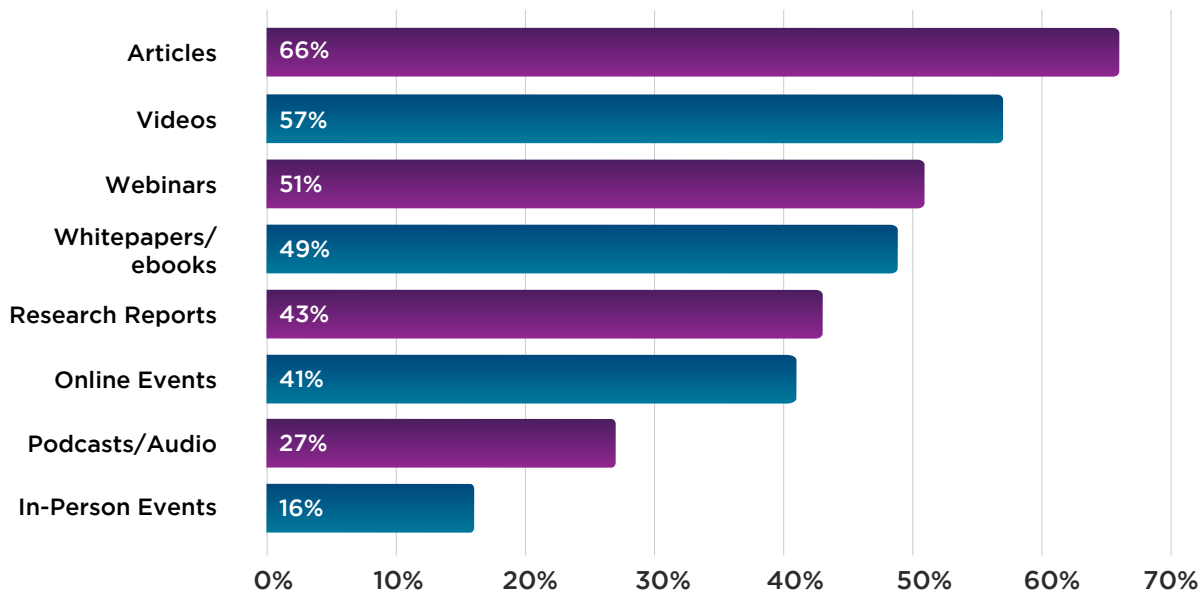
Although we discussed online events and association websites on [page 6](#), video consumption became the second most popular way to consume engineering information and news in our recent survey.

In our 2018 survey, only 27% of respondents selected “recorded videos,” with an additional 8% choosing “streamed videos.”

The 35% total contrasts sharply with the 57% of respondents who cited video as their preferred information format in this survey – an increase of 22%! Video is indeed coming into its own in the engineering world, with a vast amount of high-quality content available. As a result, video may overtake articles for the number one spot in the years to come.

**Question #5:** What format(s) do you prefer for consuming engineering news and information? [Check all that apply]

#### Content Format Preferences of Engineers





## LINKEDIN DOMINATES SOCIAL MEDIA

### LinkedIn Rules as the Most Commonly Used Social Media Platform for Work-Related Tasks

In question 1 on [page 5](#), social media ranked as the third most popular source of engineering-related information. Here, we break down the specific platforms.

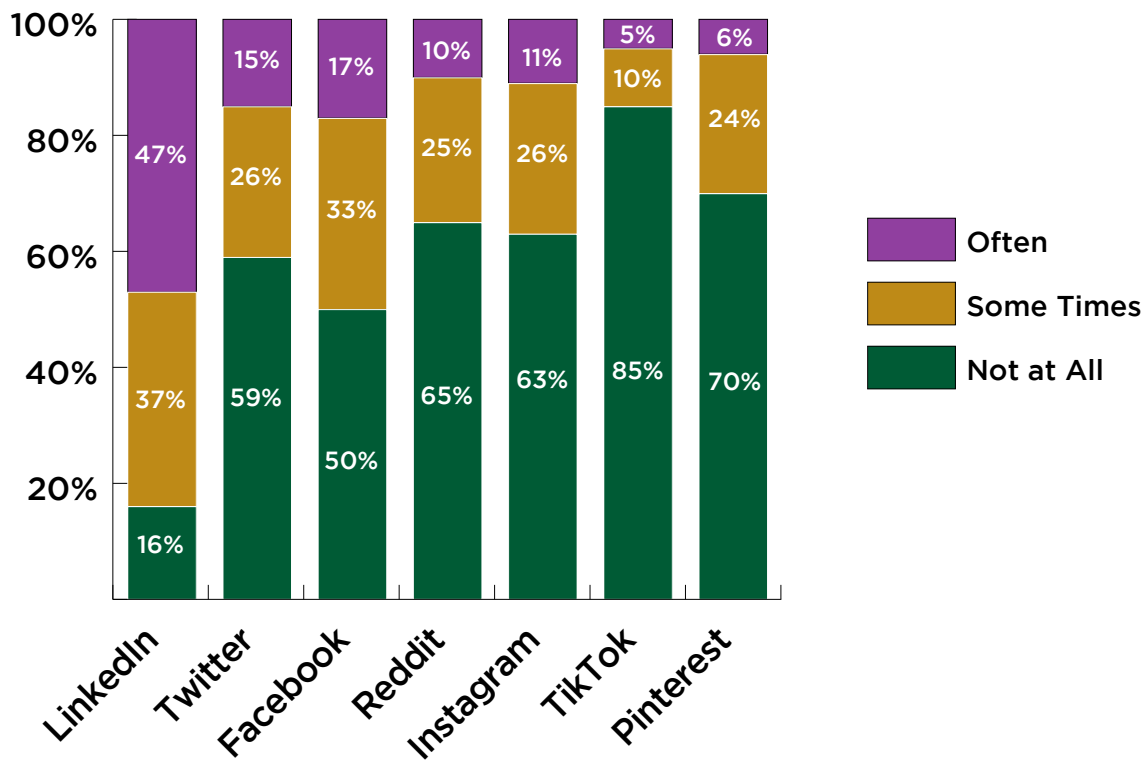
The graph below shows which social media platforms engineers use for work-related tasks. With 85% of respondents indicating they use LinkedIn at least sometimes, this platform is easily the most popular and widely used by engineering professionals.

Facebook is the only platform that comes close to having most respondents report some amount of usage (50%). However, more engineers report never using the other social channels for work.

These findings align well with other surveys and data we have examined in blogs or research reports. Engineers consistently rank LinkedIn as the most helpful platform, while others generally fall by the wayside for non-personal use.

**Question #6:** Which social media do you use for work-related tasks?

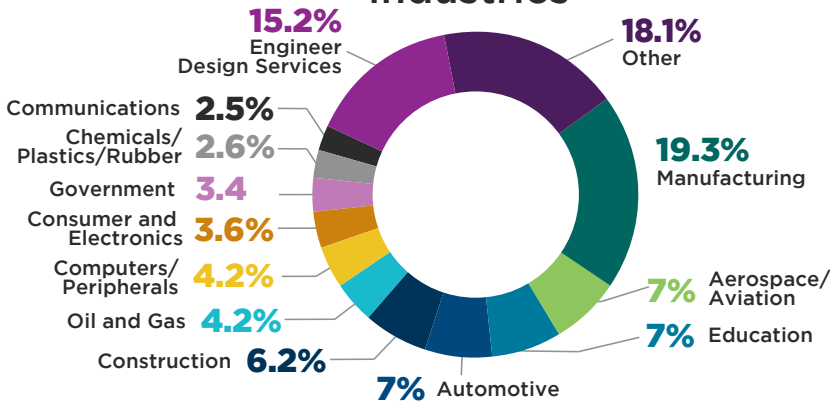
### Social Media Preferences for Engineers



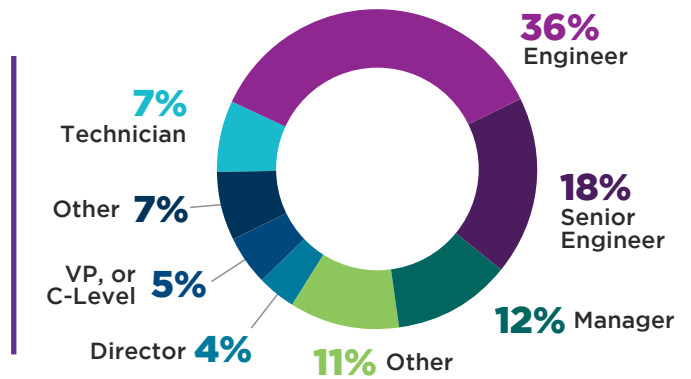
# SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS



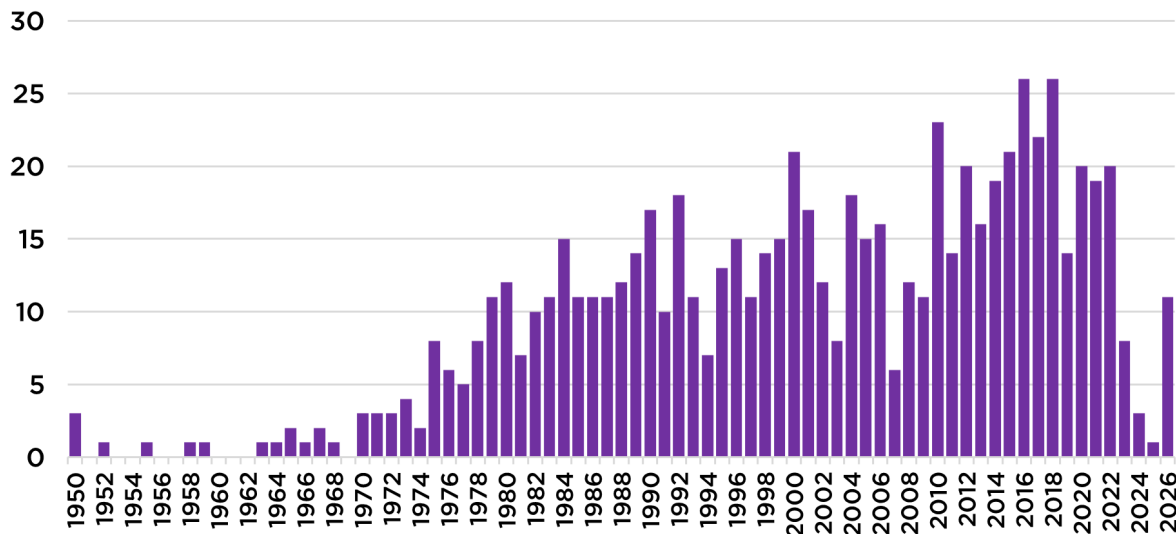
## Industries



## Job Roles



## First Year of Working Career



# Our Engineering Marketing Community

Marketing to engineers can be challenging given their unique pain-points and a natural aversion to engaging with sales and marketing people.

Engineering.com maintains a regularly updated blog and LinkedIn discussion group called “Digital Marketing for Engineers” to share meaningful insights gleaned from daily interactions with our engineering audience and engineering marketers.

We also publish analyses, best practices, and market research reports from our industry experts and guest authors from some of the world’s largest engineering marketing firms and consultancies.

Check it out for yourself and see why over 13,000 engineering marketers have connected with us!



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## Want to Learn More?

Talk to one of our marketing consultants today! We offer a wide range of services that can be customized to meet your specific needs.



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