

Who we are

1261 Illustrators

Female	53%
Male	44%
Other/prefer not to say	3%



Aged 18-30	49%
Aged 31-40	33%
Aged 41-50	15%
Aged 51-60	3%
Aged 60+	> 1%

How do you create your work?

Digital/vector	56%
Traditional/digital	29%
Traditional	14%
Collage	1%



Did you study illustration at university level?

Studied another creative subject	43%
Studied illustration	36%
Didn't go to university	11%
Studied a non-creative subject	10%

You know what this means?

It means 43% of us could have a whole other creative skill to bring into our work, be it fashion, animation, writing, film-making etc. Never consider illustration to be so pure that you can't mix together your skills, practices or media!

Where are you based for your work?

Home	81%
Shared Studio	11%
Employed in-house illustrator	8%



EIGHTY ONE PER CENT!

Soooo... 81% of us really should get out of the house to socialise and exercise; we need to manage our social media use, enough for company, not enough for distraction; we could start connecting via Skype or Hangouts to get time with virtual studio buddies. Also, there's huge scope for a Freelancer's Lunch Cookbook™

Working in 2017

What was your illustration work situation in 2017?

Full-time illustration	45%
Full-time creative job with an illustration sideline	28%
Full-time non-creative job with an illustration sideline	16%
Student with a paid illustration sideline	11%

How was your workload in 2017?

Less than previous years	25%
Same as previous years	25%
More than previous years	50%

This is great news! I personally had a quieter year than usual but hopefully this is optimistic for everyone in 2018!

Which sector has most of your 2017 work been in?

Publishing	24%	Private commissions	4%
Editorial	19%	Animation/motion	2%
Art prints/exhibitions	18%	Live art/murals	2%
Advertising	16%	Console games	2%
App creation	5%	Products	2%
Textiles/apparel	4%	Packaging	2%

Publishing and editorial are commissioning well it seems, but surely there's scope for more work in motion, apps, games etc?

Which one avenue brought in the most work in 2017?

Self-promotion	33%
Regular/repeat clients	30%
Social media	21%
Illustration agents	9%
Referrals	7%



This is an important one folks... Social media is a difficult friend, illustration agents are brilliant, but we can't depend on them to bring in all our work, however we can depend on ourselves! I work by the rule 'Make Stuff And Show People' and that's obviously what we need to do, keep creating and keep promoting, get out there and shout about yourself, be original, be special, be creative. And once you've connected with the clients... keep them! Be so good, be so enjoyable and reliable to work with that they always come back for more.

Online resources

Which social media has been best for you and your business?

Instagram	53%
Twitter	30%
Facebook	7%
Tumblr	2%
YouTube	1%
WhatsApp	1%
Pinterest	1%

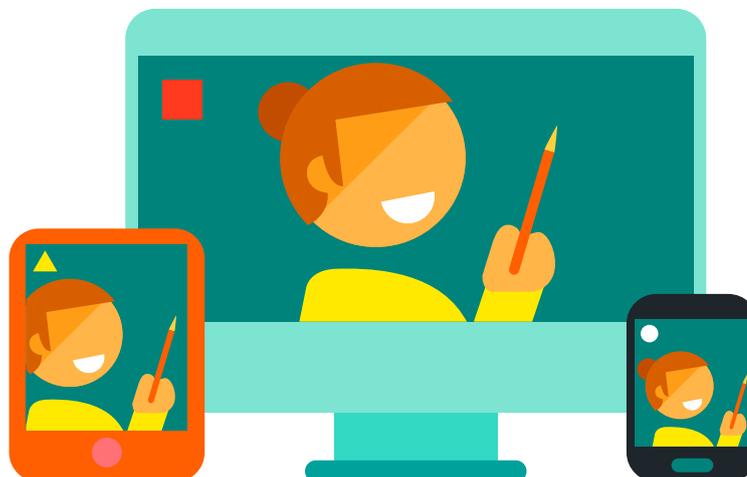
Instagram leading the way for social media. The portfolio options are overwhelming, so it's going to be time for these sites to stand out and prove how they can aid their user's careers!

Which folio sites have you used in 2017?

Personal Website	47%	AOI	7%
Behance	39%	Hire an Illustrator	5%
Squarespace	22%	Ello	5%
Dribbble	15%	Creativepool	3%
Cargo Collective	10%	The Dots	3%
Adobe Portfolio	9%	Artstation	3%

Less than 2% :

DOI, Easle, WNW, Workbook, Carbonmade, Coroflot.



Running a business



Do you use hour/day rates?	Yes, fixed rates	8%
	Yes, varying on the projects	49%
	No	43%
Do you read client contracts?	Yes and seek help if required	71%
	Mostly to check the £s	25%
	No	4%
Do you keep track on previous commissions for re-licensing?	Yes	12%
	Sometimes	37%
	No	51%

A short note on day rates : Many advisors (including The AOI) do not recommend the use of day rates, I understand that in some circumstances, or even in varying countries or work cultures they may be acceptable. Always check on a fee being offered for a project, whether it's with a union/advisory board or your peers.

How many of your commissions were paid late in 2017?

More than half	21%
Half	16%
Less than half	34%
None	29%

Statistically this looks great, however many people commented on how damaging it has been to businesses and private lives when fees are late.

It would be a huge job to campaign for law changes, however there are steps we can take, eg. requesting 50% of fees up-front or working with agents or websites that hold the payment until a job is signed off then pay the fee straight to you.

Do you feel that you earn a suitable amount to live sustainably from illustration?

Yes	31%
No	69%



Ok guys, let's work together on this. The illustration world is very busy, there really are a lot of us, but that's because it's such a damn super place to be, it's a great job to do every day. But we need to work together to ensure we all find security and sustainability in our careers. Connect with likeminded illustrators, share everyone's work, share business tips, form gangs, be there for each other and help each other to climb ladders, pick people up when they fall, advise others how to do better business, make sure everyone is being paid fairly, stay positive.

Work/life balance

Do you think of yourself as an artist or a business?

Mostly an artist	36%
50/50 artist and business	56%
Mostly a business	8%

Do you successfully balance personal and client work?

Yes	48%
No	52%



That's close! We need to aim for 100% yes, personal work can be hugely beneficial for your career. From my own experiences, personal work has led to new projects, new creative styles and new directions. 99% of us are illustrators because we enjoy creating, so do whatever you can to create something purely for enjoyment.

Which of the following would benefit you and your work?

More exercise	69%
More social time	47%
More relaxation	51%
More sleep	45%



Is this the result of 81% of us working from home? A brief walk, run or yoga session in the morning will improve productivity for the day, far outweighing the time taken to do it. Plus we can get out together with other home-workers, a coffee and a chat can spark new ideas and open new doors. Or start an illustrator's badminton club! Step away from your desk when you need to, enjoy the real world, or take a nap.

Do you feel you have anxieties or confidence issues that effect your career?

Yes	79%
No	21%

For mental health to effect our careers is a huge shame. As ever, exercise/relaxation can be invaluable, but often we need more, do not be afraid to seek counselling or talk

to friends or fellow illustrators. Could more art/design resources tackle this? We're sensitive people us illustrators! We're creative, we can be deep or emotional. In order to create for work, we put ourselves into a potentially unstable job situation and that can become personal. Again, step back from work if you feel overwhelmed, family/friends time, outdoors time, comedy boxsets time. Clear your head of worries, they don't give us anything, they only take. On the flipside, we can all take actions to help others who might feel anxious. One less humblebrag on our own socials, and one more compliment on someone else's would go a long way.

Open questions

What are your creative goals?

From the 665 answers we had to this question the most popular answer by a huge margin was to develop and improve, to make better art and to continue to do so. My two other favourites were...

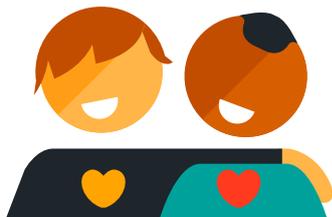
"To have illustration recognised as a true power of communication"



What are your business goals?

The majority of 655 answers on this one were to live sustainably and happily, more than seeking fame and fortune. Having read every answer, I have learnt that illustrators want to run a tidy business, but don't always know where the resources are. Firstly, depending where you are there is often local business support groups that can help you, they may not understand illustration, or the creative industry on the whole, but they can help with the formalities. Also, in the UK and worldwide The AOI offer a huge array of services, and they do know illustration!

Why did you choose illustration?



The overwhelming answer from 658 of us was passion, that illustrators just love it, they love to draw, they love to create and they love making art for clients. A majority of people didn't grow up knowing much about illustration, but often fell into it from graphic design, fine arts or animation.

Do you have concerns about your business, considering current political situations?

From 650 full answers on this, I would say this was split. The areas affected most by politics included the UK, US and South American countries, where people are feeling restricted, unable to grow businesses or plan for the future in the current climates. Some UK illustrators fear an economic crash, while also being concerned how easy it will be to work abroad in the future, likewise our European neighbours who want to live/work in the UK are sceptical about doing so. In the US, illustrators are concerned by Trump's healthcare and tax plans, and his inability to support small businesses. In South America and the Middle East illustrators are facing problems on many fronts including culture, taxes, administration and politics, all of which prevent people starting out, growing their businesses or moving to other countries to work better.