



# A Profile of TechTarget's Hyper-active IT Researchers:

Media consumption habits of our top 30% most active users

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## Why target the top 30% most active?

- They are responsible for more than 80% of all activity in the last 6 months
  - Their average activity level is nearly 3 times that of our overall membership over the same time period
- They spend more than half their day online researching specific solutions and providers
  - When they are most active, they average between 5–20 online interactions per day
- They are not “tire kickers” but purposeful researchers whose elevated activity is being driven by a business problem that needs to be solved
  - They are highly influential members of the decision-making team
  - 55% are technical decision-makers
  - 55% determine need for products/solutions
- They are extremely thorough and will consider any vendor that can solve their business problem
- They are making aggressive technology investments even in the face of this recession
  - 90% are investing in at least one major technology project this year
  - 43% plan to take on more than 4 projects
  - More than 40% have an IT budget of over \$1 million

## Key Findings

### Executive Summary

This report reveals the tabulated results of a survey representing the top 30% most active users within the TechTarget network. The results reported here reflect both the actual response set of the survey sample and additionally the results of several in-depth interviews with respondents of the survey. Our comments often reflect perspectives from both sources.

It has become increasingly obvious that this segment of our audience, which we have been referring to as our “hyper-active users”, is a force to be reckoned with for a number of reasons. Generally speaking, when it comes to online media consumption, they should be viewed as “movers and shakers” due to the intensity with which they approach online research and the frequency with which they download information from the web and, more specifically, our sites.

Of particular interest is that the in-depth interviews revealed specific nuances of this “audience within an IT audience.” In general, their personalities emerged as huge multi-taskers who are driven by both natural curiosity and the pressures of their business environments. They identify with the term “hyper-active” because, as one interviewee put it: “that’s what we are.” They take responsibility for knowing more about new technologies and solutions to business problems and want to be forward-thinking knowledge banks for their peers and members of their buying teams. As a result, they are constantly hunting and gathering for information, sometimes at a hectic pace. However, there is a method to their madness in that they are also highly organized, if not structured people, with a strong bias toward filing or storing information as would a librarian or archivist.

Their one most interesting characteristic relates to their attitude toward the timing of when they download content and the specific stage they are in related to their buying process. As with previous Media Consumption Reports, they all agree that content is most relevant to them as it relates to the stage they need it in. Yet, as hyper-active users, they also point out that they have such an insatiable drive for information (especially technical information), they will download and catalog information they

## Key Findings (continued)

may not get to for a while but know they will need in a later stage. Many of the interviewees detailed how they store the information, archiving it by topic and stage relationship criteria, then refer to it when they get to the appropriate time in their buying process or specific interactions within their team.

Marketers need to consider the implications of this. It not only validates the continued need to map your online content to match stages, but the necessity to have all stage-related material ready simultaneously should your sponsorship of it intersect with the “ravenous appetite” of this target audience. The reality is that if your content is not available for them to proactively download and/or store away then whoever’s is will be chosen for the “grand catalogues” of information that these buyers are constantly building and referring to along their purchase paths.

## Key Research Highlights

These IT professionals are purposeful researchers, with most activity being driven by their natural curiosity and a business problem that needs to be solved

- The average hyper-active buyer spends a majority of their research time online and averages 5–20 interactions per day
- Validating findings from the Google/TechTarget Research Project, search keywords can be matched to specific stages of the research and/or purchasing process
- Nearly 1/3 of this sample plan to invest in 4–6 IT projects within the next year
- Active IT professionals mostly value content aligned to the stage they are in during their research and/or purchasing process and that is topically and contextually relevant
  - However, in-depth interviews expose that they don't necessarily download all materials in that specific stage
- 98% of IT professionals sampled cite online IT communities as an integral part of their research and/or purchase process
- IT professionals rely heavily on third-party perspective from peers, online IT communities, experts, and publishers when making buying decisions yet are notably skeptical of all material at the same time
- When selecting vendors, familiarity is important, but does not solely drive purchase decisions
- Active buyers are willing to research and consider multiple vendors within their process and will communicate with vendors who fit their needs at that specific time

## Survey Methodology and Demographics

### Methodology

- 1,765 completed survey respondents
- Fielded throughout May 2010
- Online survey fielded through SurveyGizmo.com
- Respondents part of opt-in IT Research Panel

### Roles/titles within organization

- Sr. Management: 16%
- Management: 14%
- Developer/Administrator: 24%
- Other IT staff: 46%

### Company sizes

- Small: 31%
- Midsized: 30%
- Enterprise: 39%

### IT budgets for 2010

- Less than \$5 million: 74%
- \$5 to \$25 million: 13%
- More than \$25 million: 13%

### Global breakdown

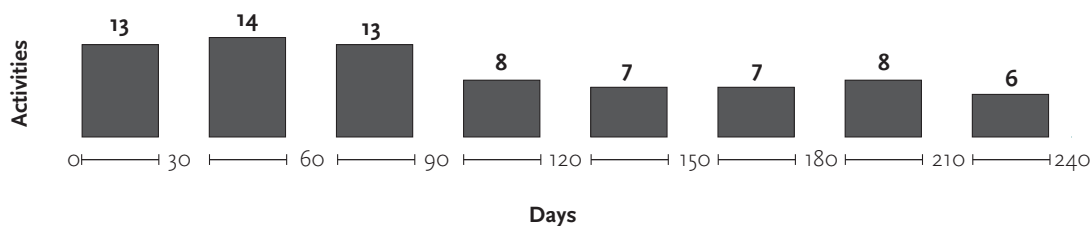
- North America: 55%
- Europe: 17%
- Asia: 14%
- Pacific: 5%
- Africa: 4%
- Middle East: 3%
- Latin America: 3%

### Top industries represented

- Financial: 14%
- Education: 11%
- Government: 10%
- Healthcare: 6%

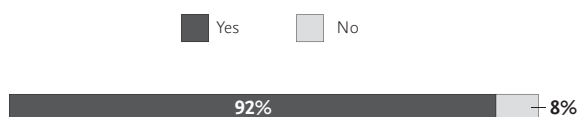
## Research Analysis

On average, these IT professionals have more than 9 online activities within the TechTarget network over a 30 day period. Because of this high activity, these IT professionals have become known as “hyper-active users”.



Most of these hyper-active IT professionals are aware that they are highly active when it comes to researching and/or purchasing a technology solution for their organization.

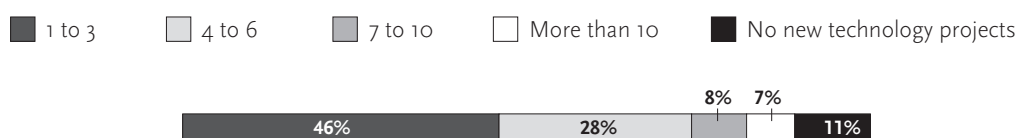
**Question:** Do you consider yourself an active participant regarding researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization?





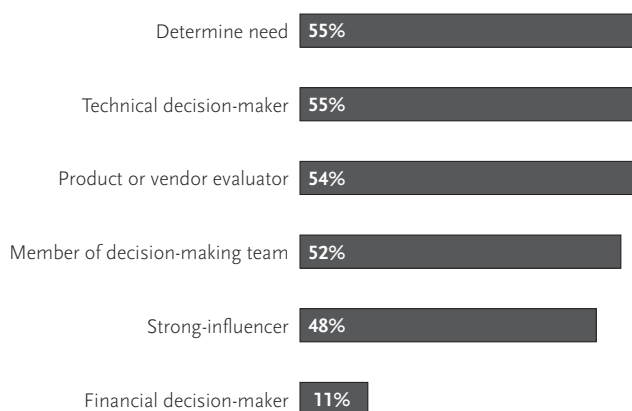
While the economy is still struggling to come out of the recession, hyper-active IT professionals are aggressively investing in enterprise technology — up to 6 major internal projects over the next year.

**Question: How many major internal technology projects does your organization plan to invest in the next year?**



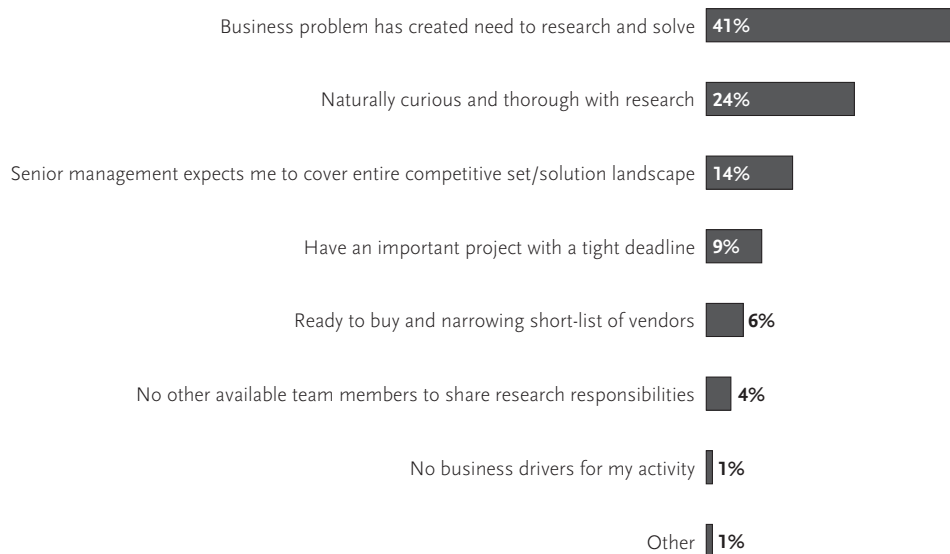
As seen in our past Media Consumption Surveys, the researching and/or purchasing of a technology solution at an organization is done by a team of IT professionals. These IT professionals/buyers are involved in all aspects of the research from determining the initial need to making the final purchase decision.

**Question: Which of the following best describes your responsibility regarding researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization?**



Although many of the hyper-active IT professionals have a personality that makes them naturally curious and thorough when it comes to their research process, most indicated that their elevated level of activity is created by the need to solve a business problem. An interesting point here is that there is only a small percentage who indicated that they increased their activity when they were ready to buy. Much of their research is done before they even get to this stage of the process.

***Question: When actively researching and/or purchasing technology solutions for your organization, what drives your elevated level of activity/information consumption?***



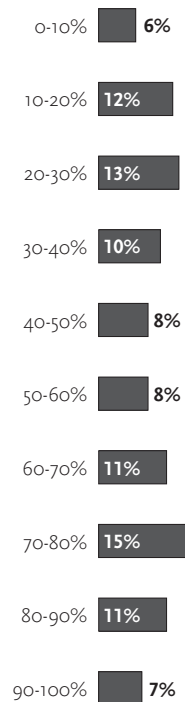
When IT professionals are in research mode, they have up to 20 online interactions per day! With such a high level of activity, it's important to realize that IT professionals aren't just reading your content— they are also reading your competitor's, so you need to make sure that you have multiple content pieces available to them wherever they are researching.

***Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, how many individual online interactions (i.e. read articles/visit pages on websites, download content from vendors, click email newsletter links, etc.) do you have per day when you are most active?***



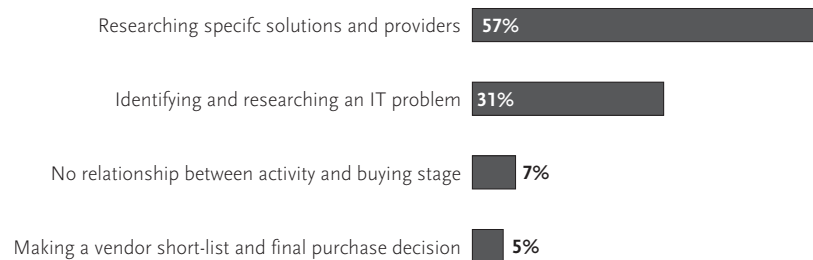
Although most research is done online—taking more than 50% of any given day—many IT professionals are also seeking out the opinion of their peers and colleagues through offline conversations and team meetings. In-depth interviews of these IT professionals also revealed that they rely on and enjoy phone conversations and will easily call a peer to get another opinion.

**Question: What percentage of your activity and time researching and/or purchasing technology solutions for your organization is focused online?**



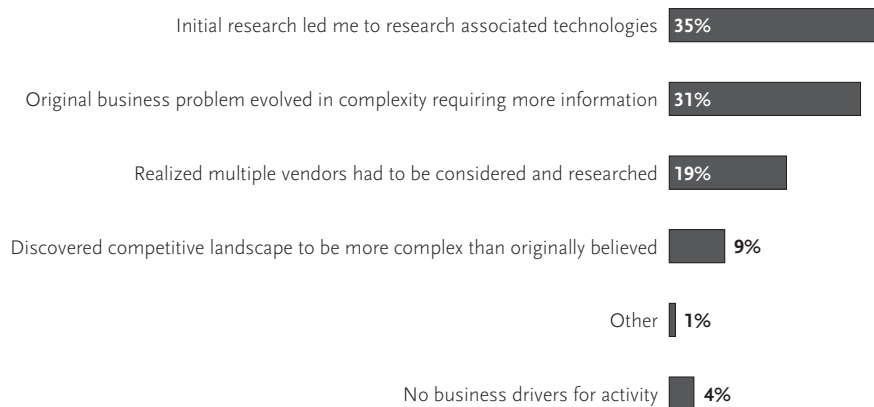
Again as we've seen in past surveys, the majority of activity during the researching and/or purchasing process is done when researching specific solutions or technology providers (consideration stage). Also, as validated earlier in this study, the final purchase decision (decision stage) has the least amount of activity associated with it.

**Question: In which stage of your researching and/or purchasing process for enterprise technology solutions do you typically have the most online activity?**



While IT professionals might enter into their research and/or purchase process with a certain research focus, this may change because their initial research generally leads to searching other technologies or their business problem becomes even more complex. Additionally, multiple vendors are being considered in this process. The IT research and/or purchase process is not a linear process, and this seems to validate that sentiment. Vendors need to always have diverse content available in order to capitalize on this trend.

***Question: When you are most active in researching and/or purchasing technology solutions for your organization, what drives your increased level of activity/information consumption?***



IT professionals are more receptive to branding messages earlier in their research process—either later in the awareness stage but mostly earlier in the consideration stage.

**Question: In which stage of your researching and/or purchasing process for enterprise technology solutions are you most receptive to branding messages from IT vendors?**

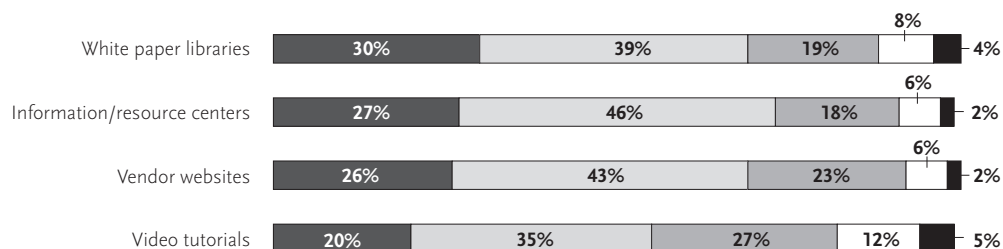
- Identifying and researching an IT problem
- Researching specific solutions and providers
- Making a vendor short-list and final purchase decision



IT professionals are most receptive to branding messages associated with relevant content in white paper libraries or information/resource centers—highly focused information portals.

**Question: In the following formats are you more or less receptive to branding messages from IT vendors?**

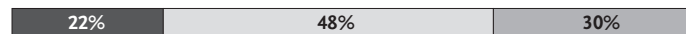
- Very receptive
- Somewhat more receptive
- No more or less receptive
- Somewhat less receptive
- Very unreceptive



IT professionals are most receptive to lead generation later in their research and/or purchase process—mostly later in the consideration stage or during the decision stage. This validates the sentiment that the buyer wants control of the process and does not want to be contacted unless they are prepared to consider a vendor—no earlier.

***Question: In which stage of your researching and/or purchasing process for enterprise technology solutions are you most receptive to completing a registration from IT vendors?***

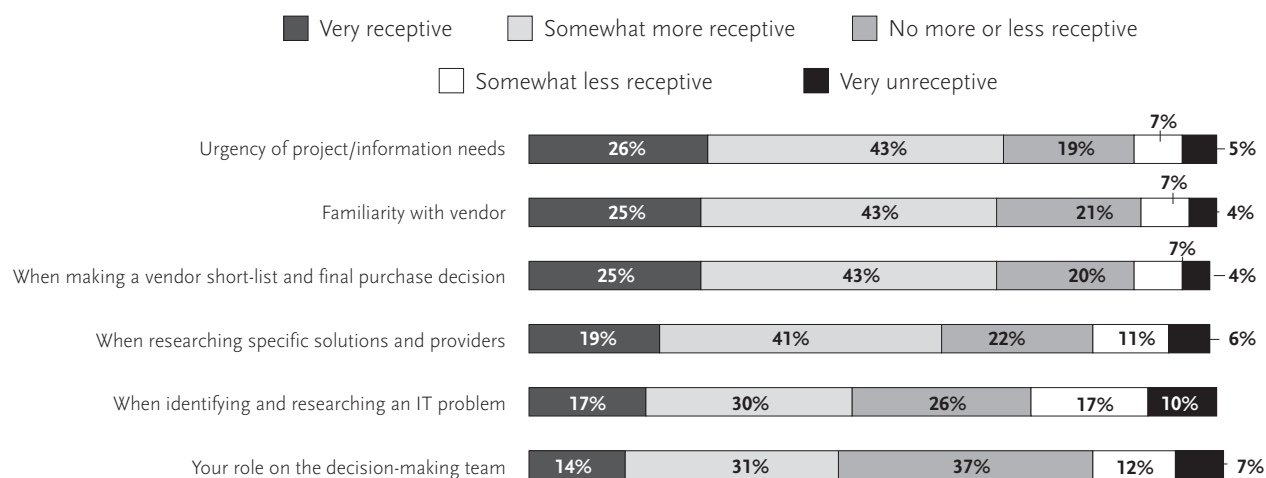
- Identifying and researching an IT problem
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As stated previously, IT professionals are more likely to share their contact information—lead generation—when they are ready to short-list and make a purchase decision (decision stage). However, IT professionals are also receptive to lead generation efforts if the timeline of their project is shortened or if they are familiar with the vendor. Telephone interviews revealed that users would prefer email first containing their interest before a phone call because sometimes they simply are not ready.

**Question: Based on the following are you more or less receptive to provide your contact information on a registration form for IT vendors?**



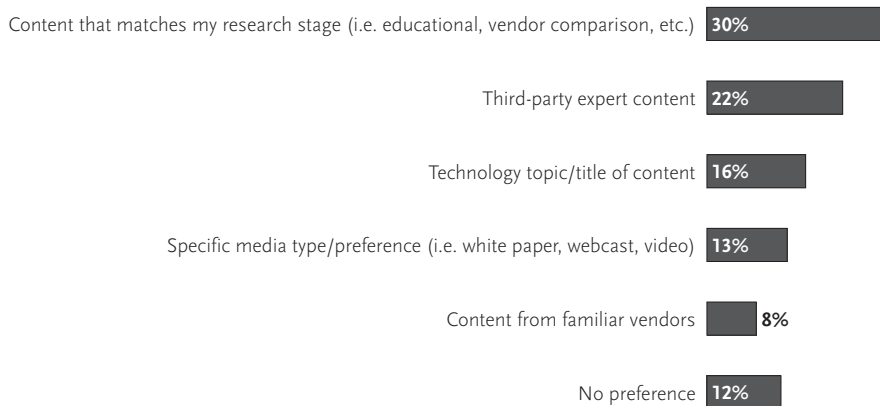
During the researching and/or purchasing process, IT professionals trust information from their peers and colleagues—be it through online IT communities or direct exchanges the most—along with unbiased research from third-parties. Overall, they tend to be skeptical of all sources except peers, which accounts for their high download rate as well.

**Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, which type of information do you trust the most?**



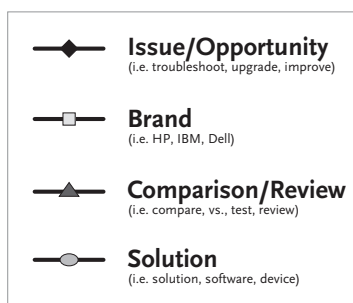
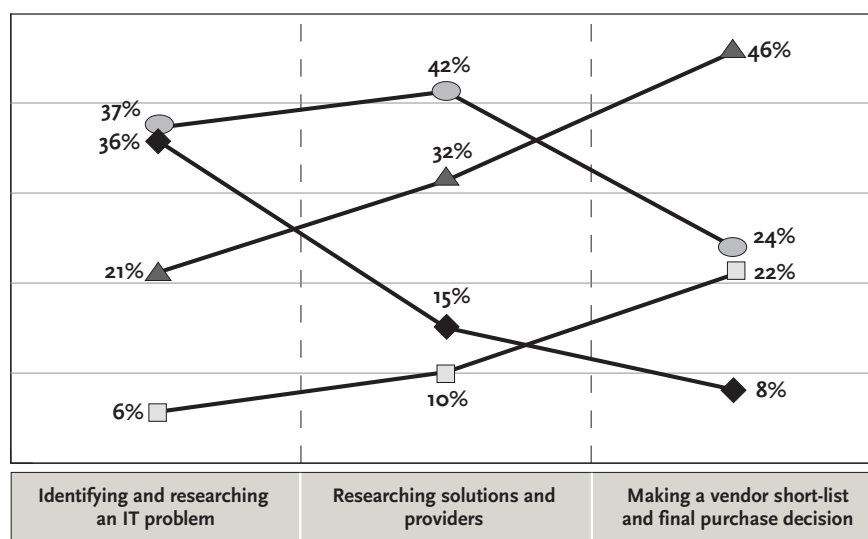
As we've seen previously, hyper-active IT professionals also favor content that matches the specific research stage they are in (awareness, consideration or decision). This highlights the importance of aligning your content to the stages of the IT buying process. However, in-depth interviews reveal they often leapfrog this process and catalog the information until the time comes when they need it.

**Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, what types of content are you most partial to?**



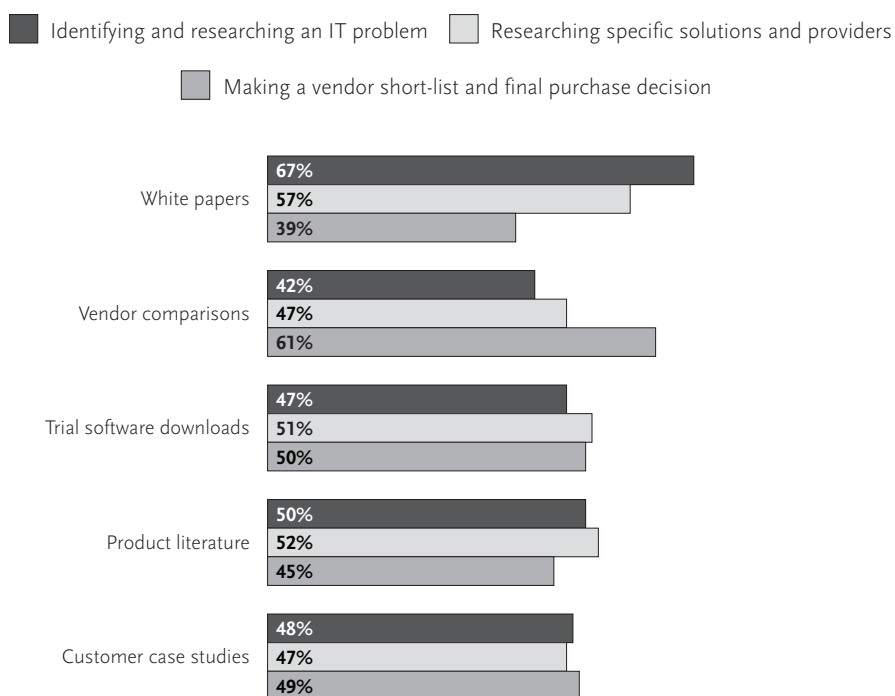
Further confirming our findings from the Google/TechTarget Research Project, online search keywords used by IT professionals can be matched to a specific stage of their research and/or purchasing process. When identifying an IT problem (awareness stage), IT professionals use search keywords around issues/opportunities and solutions. As they move into researching solutions and providers (consideration stage), the keywords used focus more on solutions. Finally, when IT professionals are making their vendor short-list and final purchase decision (decision stage), their search keywords focus on comparisons/reviews.

**Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, which of the following terms do you search around?**



While white papers are the most commonly used media type among IT professionals, vendor comparisons and trial software downloads are used the most when making a final purchase decision (decision stage). Other popular media types among IT professionals include product literature and customer case studies. A growing trend here is that IT professionals are looking for higher value content that showcases proven product success earlier and more often in their research and/or purchase process. In-depth interviews of IT professionals revealed even more emphasis on the importance of vendor comparisons as part of their researching/purchasing process.

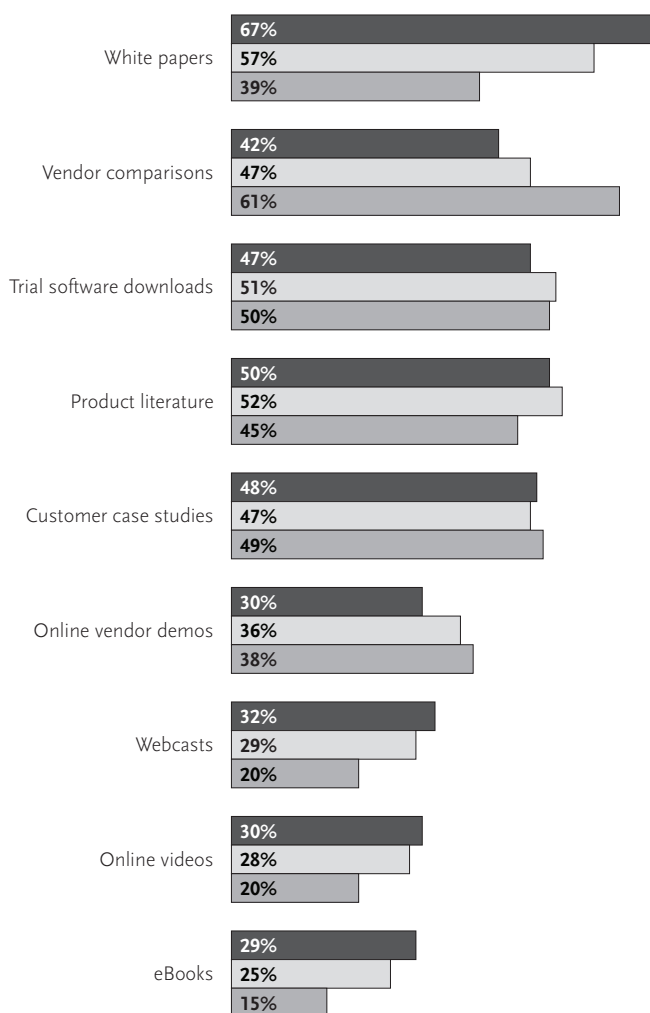
**Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, which media types are you most partial to (choose all that apply)?**



**Most popular answers only showcased above. Full results displayed on the following page.**

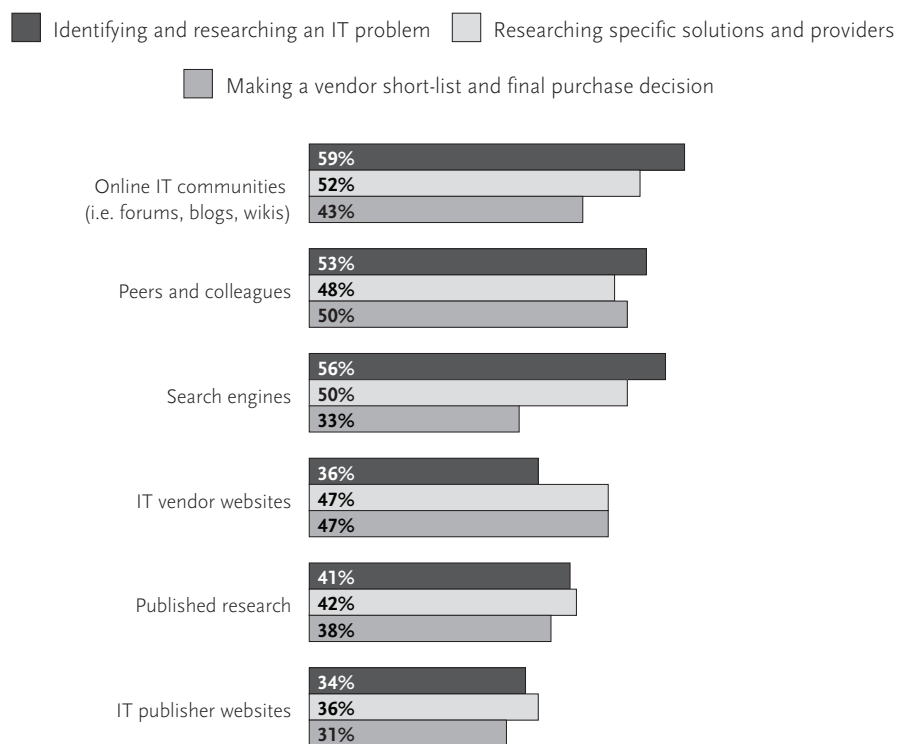
**Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, which media types are you most partial to (choose all that apply)?**

Identifying and researching an IT problem
  Researching specific solutions and providers  
 Making a vendor short-list and final purchase decision



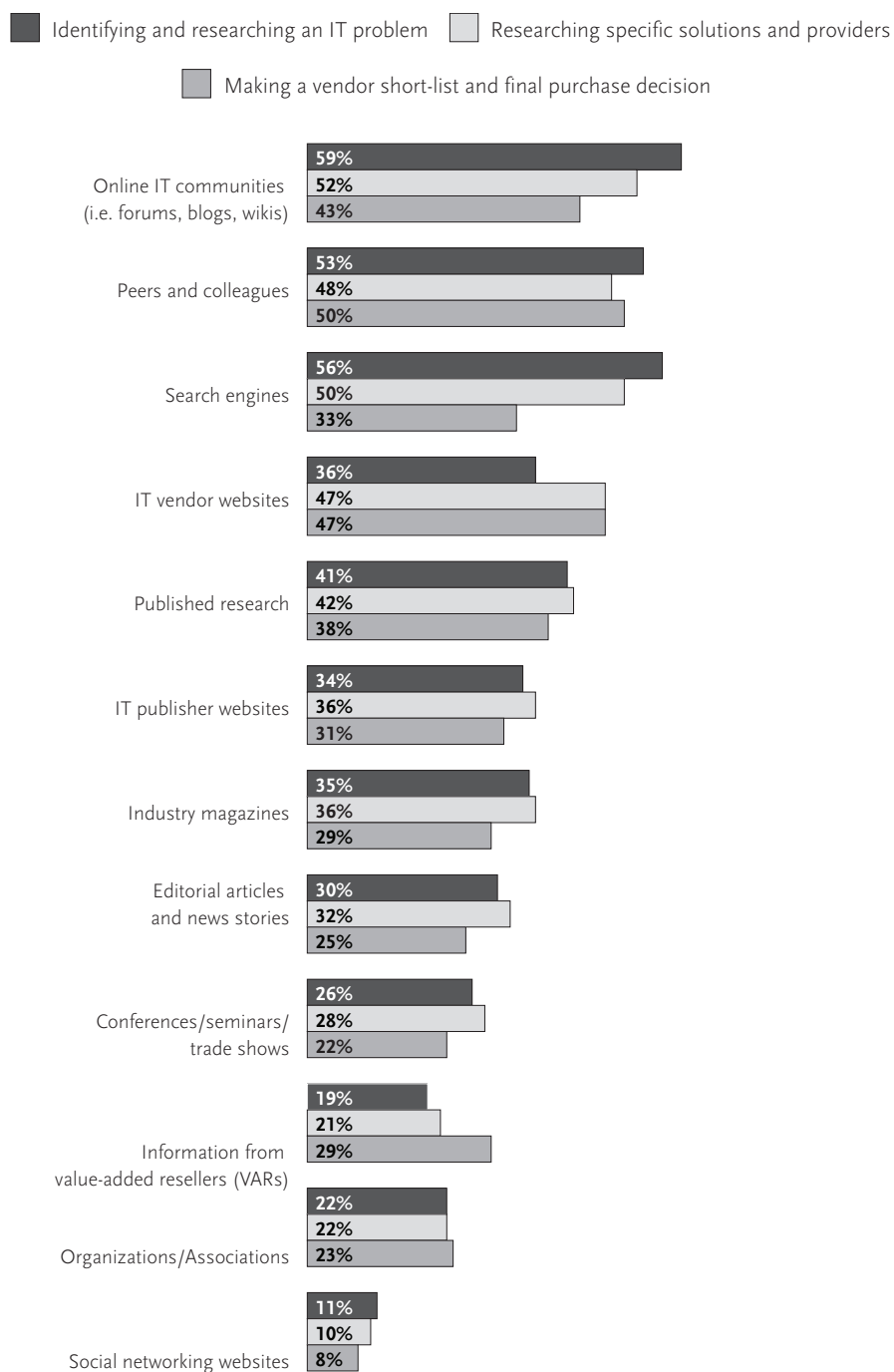
The most used information sources among IT professionals are their peers and colleagues — either through online or offline conversations. Conversations in online IT communities are used more towards the earlier stages of the research and/or purchase process, whereas direct peer-to-peer conversations are generally used during the final purchase decision (decision stage).

**Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, which information sources are you most partial to (choose all that apply)?**



**Most popular answers only showcased above. Full results displayed on the following page.**

**Question: When researching and/or purchasing technology solutions at your organization, which information sources are you most partial to (choose all that apply)?**

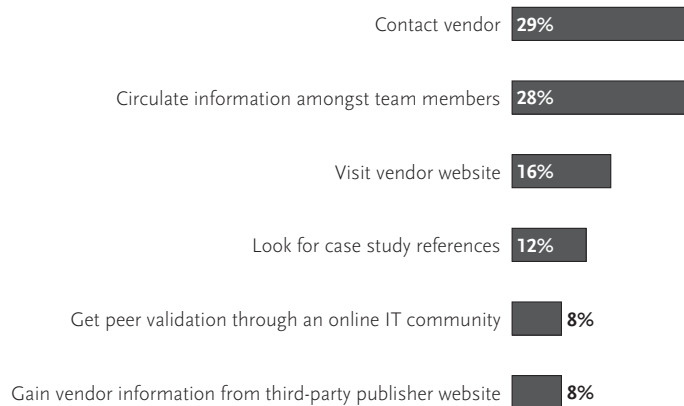




As part of their final purchase decision, IT professionals contact the vendors in their short-list and circulate their research among their research team. Then the team members meet to discuss their research and compare the vendors within the short-list.

The buying team is an essential part of the decision process. They are doing research in tandem throughout the process and then bringing the research together at the end in order to make a decision. Then, as a team, they go to senior management to get buy-in before contacting a vendor.

***Question: Once you have completed your online research and compiled a vendor short-list, what is your next action in your purchase process for a technology solution for your organization?***



Most IT professionals are visiting online IT communities to gain unbiased opinions from their peers or to validate their research on specific companies/products.

**Question: What is your primary objective when visiting online IT communities (i.e. forums, blogs, wikis) and social networking websites (choose all that apply)?**



As validated earlier in this study, online IT communities are visited by IT professionals earlier in their research and/or purchase process when they are identifying an IT problem (awareness stage) or researching a specific solution or provider (consideration stage).

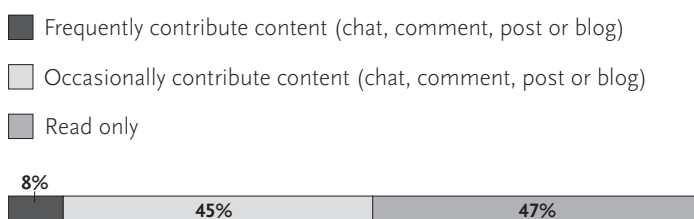
**Question: In which stage of your researching and/or purchasing process for enterprise technology solutions are you most likely to visit and participate in online IT communities (i.e. forums, blogs, wikis) and social networking websites?**

- Identifying and researching an IT problem
- Researching specific solutions and providers
- Making a vendor short-list and final purchase decision
- All of the above



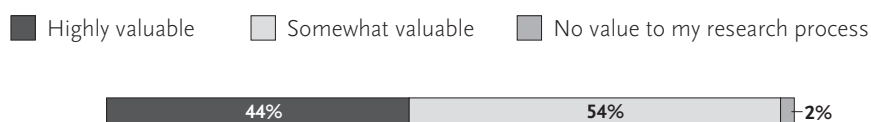
Online IT communities have become one of the most popular information sources and more than half of IT professionals that visit them are there to contribute to the content.

**Question: What is your level of participation in online IT communities (i.e. forums, blogs, wikis) and social networking websites?**



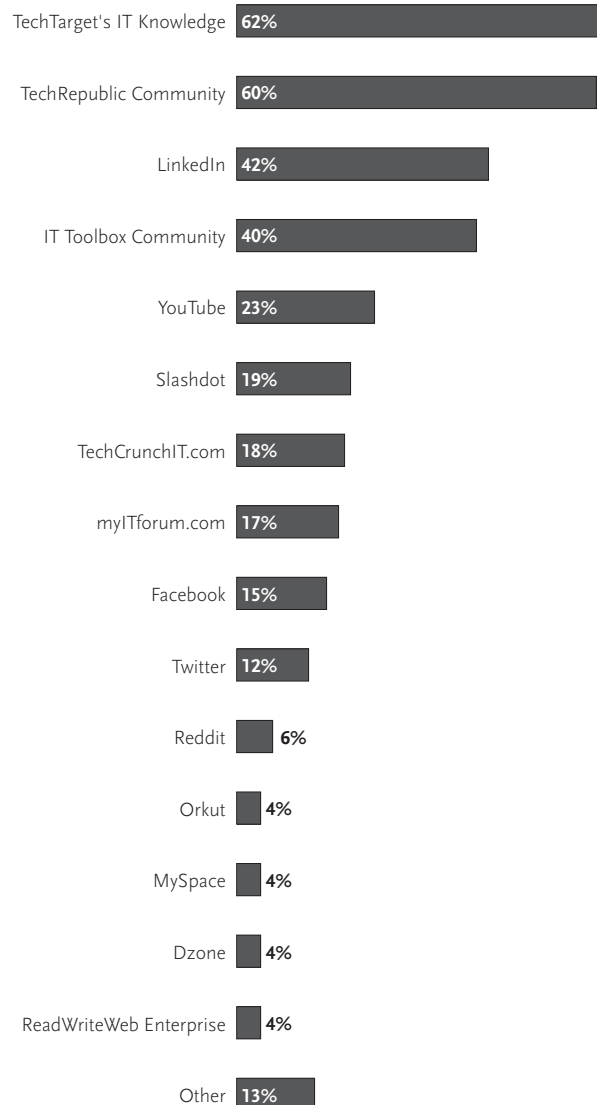
Again, as seen throughout this survey, the information found by IT professionals in online IT communities is considered very valuable to their overall research and/or purchase process.

**Question: How would you rank the value of visiting online IT communities (i.e. forums, blogs, wikis) and social networking websites when you are researching and/or purchasing technology solutions for your organization?**



TechTarget's IT Knowledge Exchange (ITKE) and the TechRepublic Community are the most popular online IT communities among IT professionals. LinkedIn is also very popular for IT professionals to use in order to stay in touch with and build out their network of peers, colleagues, and analysts. Many IT professionals are also visiting specific IT user group forums.

**Question: Which of the following online IT communities (i.e. forums, blogs, wikis) and social networking websites have you visited when researching and/or purchasing a technology solution for your organization (choose all that apply)?**



## About TechTarget

TechTarget ([www.techtarget.com](http://www.techtarget.com)) (NASDAQ: TTGT) is a leading global technology media company with more than 80 technology-specific websites, and over 9 million registered members, and more than 10 years of ground-breaking accomplishments. Our extensive editorial and vendor-sponsored content fulfills the needs of tech pros looking for in-depth coverage of technology topics throughout their buying process and positions us to meet the needs of technology marketers targeting qualified IT audiences.

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