



The UK Drone Users Report

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Introduction

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Drones are now a mainstream gadget with a huge range of applications. These intelligent pieces of kit are now being used for everything from entertainment and racing, to photography, news gathering and even as a tool for providing humanitarian aid.

Many industries are using drone technology to completely overhaul and innovate traditional processes and methods.

Despite this, drones have had some negative press, and here at DronesDirect.co.uk, we wanted to provide a realistic picture of how they are actually being used across the UK.

Using a survey of 274 UK drone owners, and by studying data from thousands of sales of drones, this report will set out to educate who is making use of these fascinating and exciting gadgets, how they are being used, and what the truth behind the headlines about irresponsible drone usage is.

We hope you find it as interesting as we do.

Tim Morley, managing director at DronesDirect.co.uk



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Drone Owners

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In the past, technology enthusiast stereotypes often painted a picture of younger adults, who spent a lot of time indoors and were more concerned with playing computer games than playing sports. But the data proves that droners simply don't fit this description.

Rather than being youngsters, the opposite is true – drone owners aged under 34 are actually in a significant minority – just 16% are aged 25 – 34, and 6.6% are 18 – 24.

The majority (25%) of the community is actually 55 years+, and 46 – 53 years. Many are adopting droning as a new hobby later in life, or perhaps early retirement.

They also enjoy active, outdoor lifestyles. A significant portion count outdoor activities such as hiking and walking (42.3%) amongst their hobbies, while 1 in 5 enjoy adrenaline-fueled exercise, such as extreme sports, and 17.5% go to the gym.

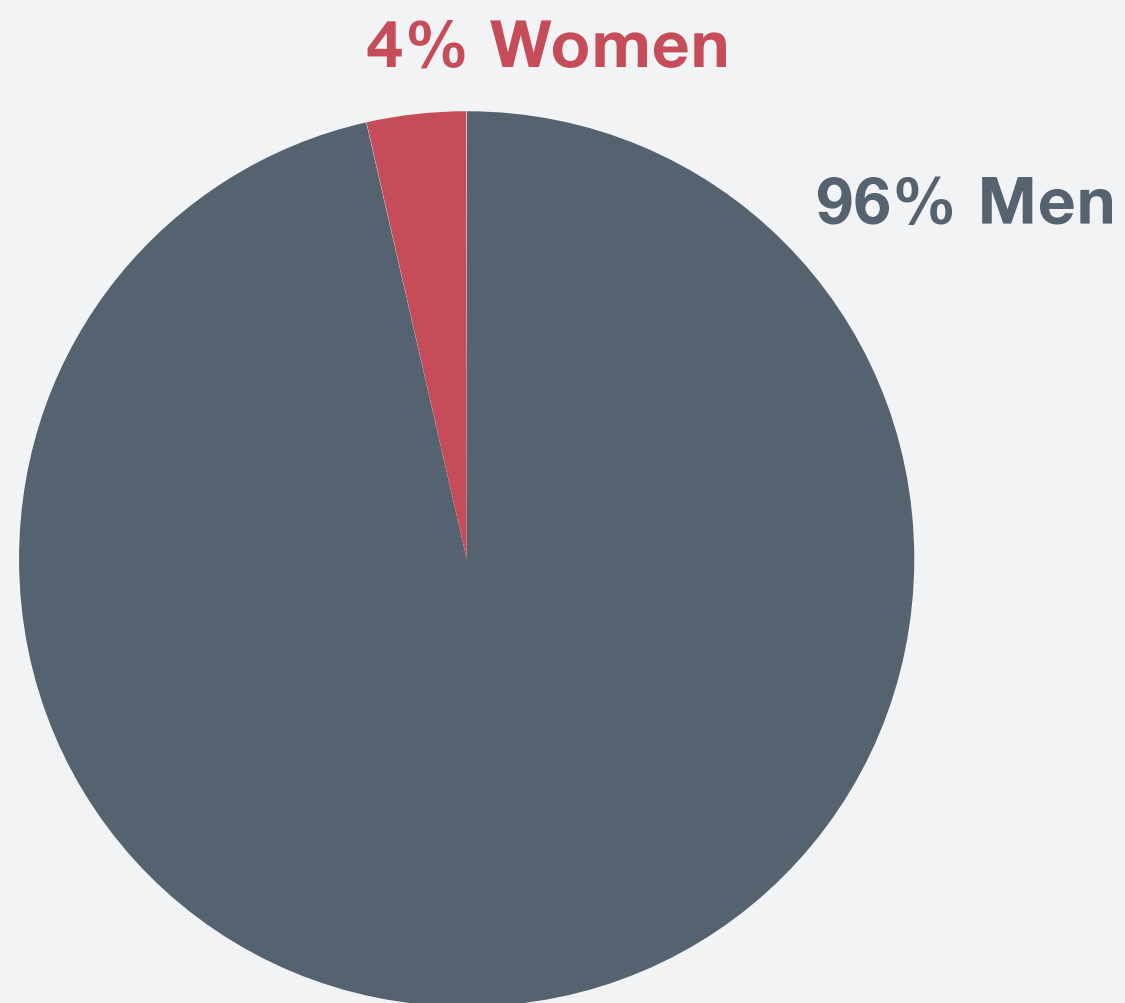


Rather than citing computer games or cinema as favourite past-times, the majority cite photography (67.9%) as one of their main interests outside of droning.

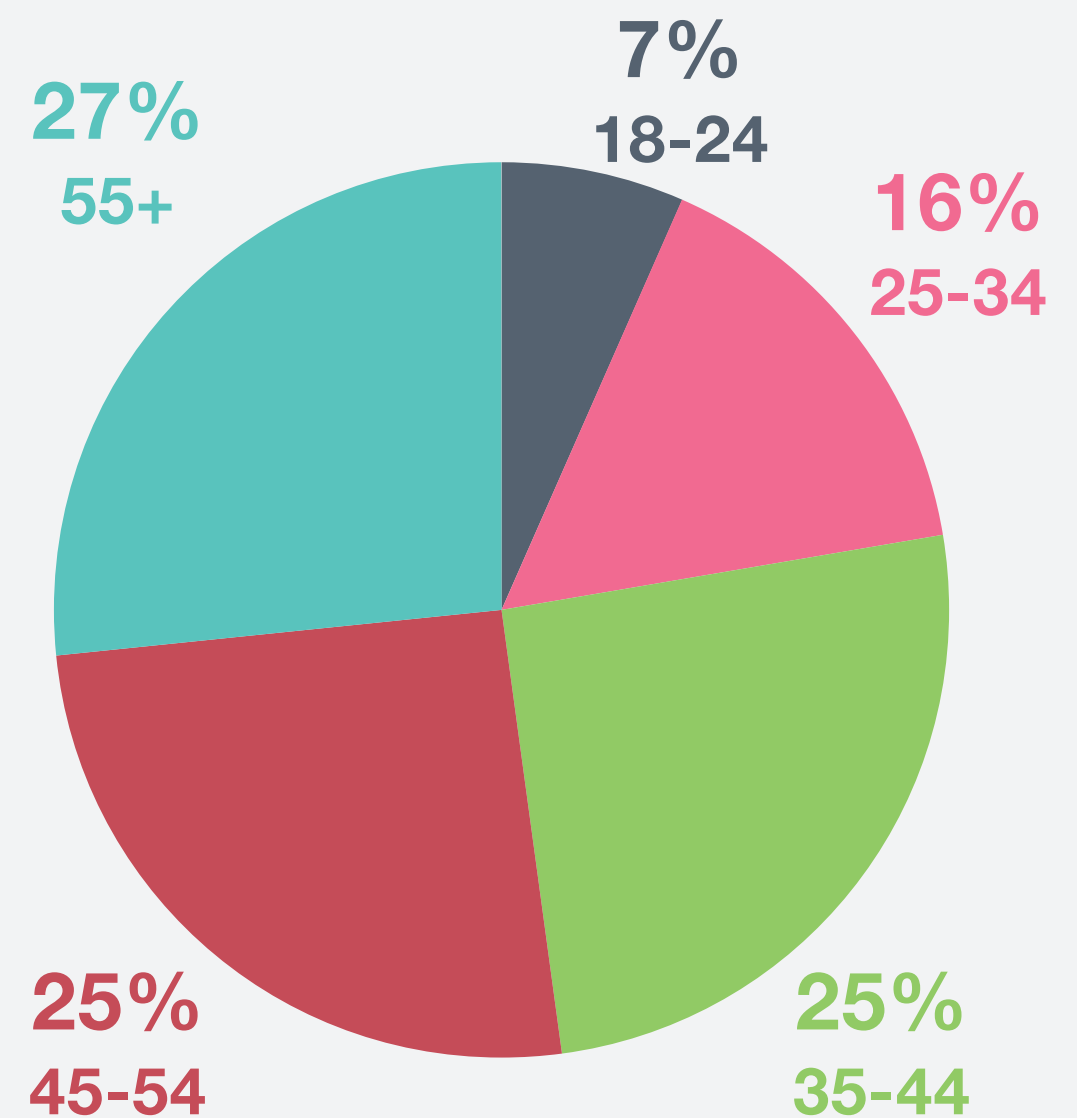
It is however true that the overwhelming majority of drone owners are male, with men accounting for 96.4% of all in the UK. However, when sales statistics are considered, 74% of drone buyers are male, and 26% female – suggesting this higher proportion could be a result of gifting purchases.

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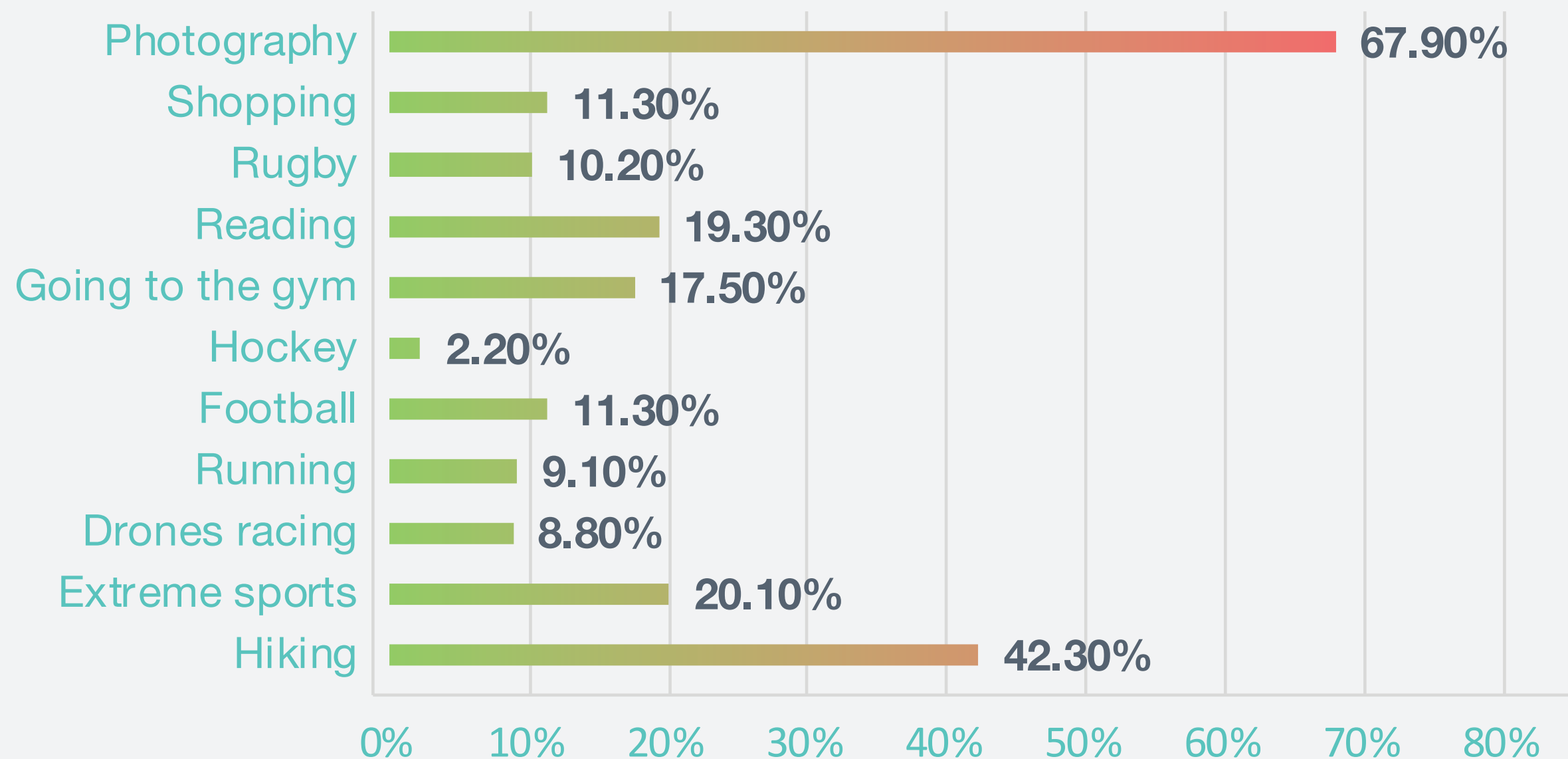
Gender Split of Drone Owners



Age of Drone Owners



Which of the following would you say you counted amongst your other hobbies, besides droning?



The UK's Droning Capitals

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DronesDirect.co.uk sales, weighted by local populations, have revealed the county of Hereford and Worcester is the current UK drones capital, with more sales per capita having occurred there than anywhere else in the UK.

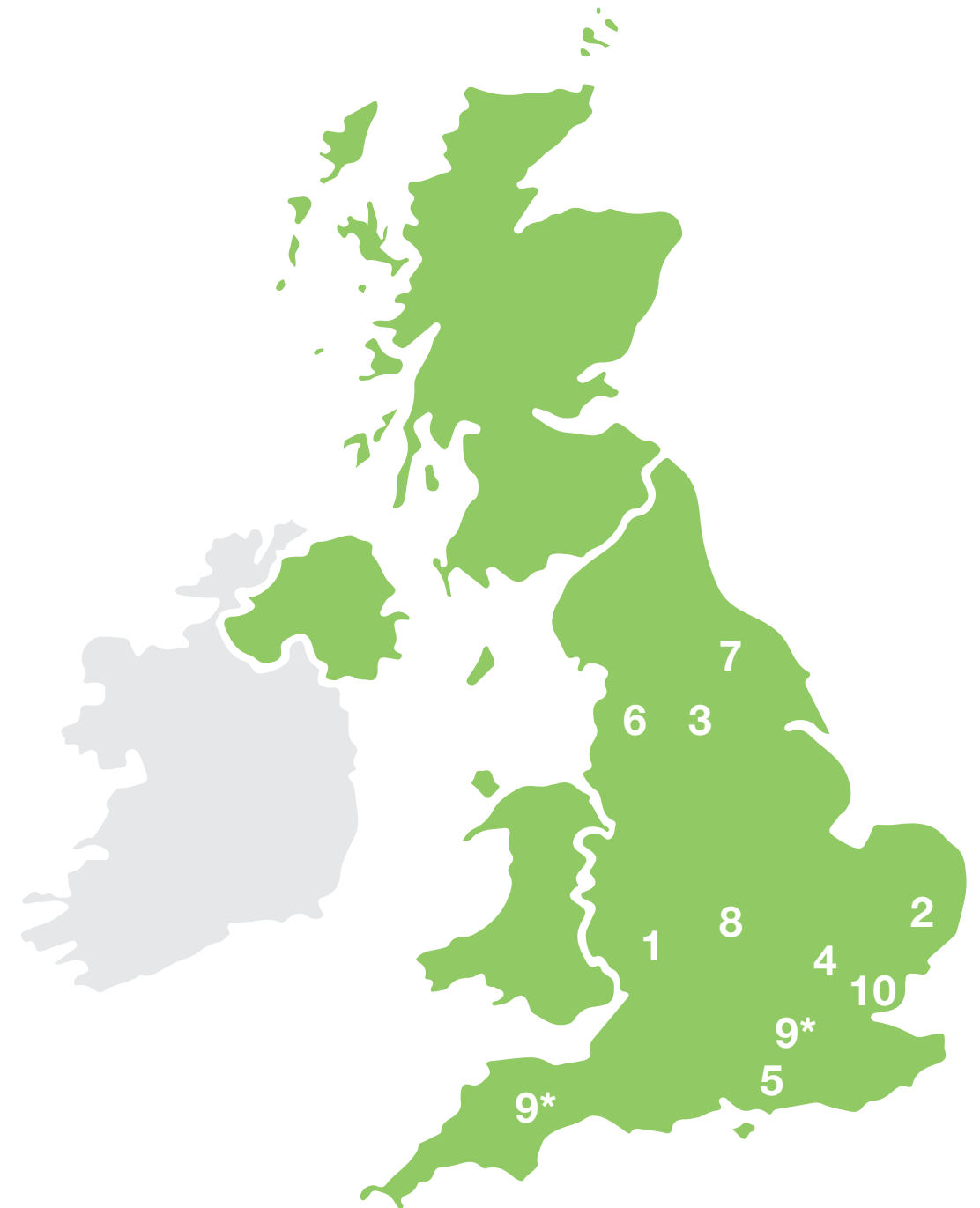
The rest of the top 5 show that the South of England is currently dominating the per capita drones sales – with Suffolk, Hertfordshire and West Sussex, following in second, fourth and fifth place.

The only northern county to make the top 5 was West Yorkshire.

Tyne and Wear, Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire were the UK counties with the fewest sales per capita.

TOP 10 DRONE CAPITALS OF THE UK (based on sales per capita)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Hereford and Worcester | 6. Lancashire |
| 2. Suffolk | 7. North Yorkshire |
| 3. West Yorkshire | 8. Warwickshire |
| 4. Hertfordshire | 9. Devon and Surrey (joint) * |
| 5. West Sussex | 10. Essex |



The UK's Droning Capitals

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DronesDirect.co.uk sales data shows that Chichester is the city with the highest number of sales per capita in the UK.

The cathedral city is the UK's current drones hotspot, with more purchases of the flying gadget than area than anywhere else in the UK:

Leeds, Preston, York and Watford followed in second, third, fourth and fifth place, respectively.

Exeter, Kingston Upon Thames, Maidstone, Oxford and Sheffield completed the top 10 cities which have seen the biggest proportion of sales in the UK.

TOP DRONE CAPITAL CITIES OF THE UK (based on sales per capita)

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Chichester | 6. Exeter |
| 2. Leeds | 7. Kingston Upon Thames |
| 3. Preston | 8. Maidstone |
| 4. York | 9. Oxford |
| 5. Watford | 10. Sheffield |



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How are Drones Being Used?

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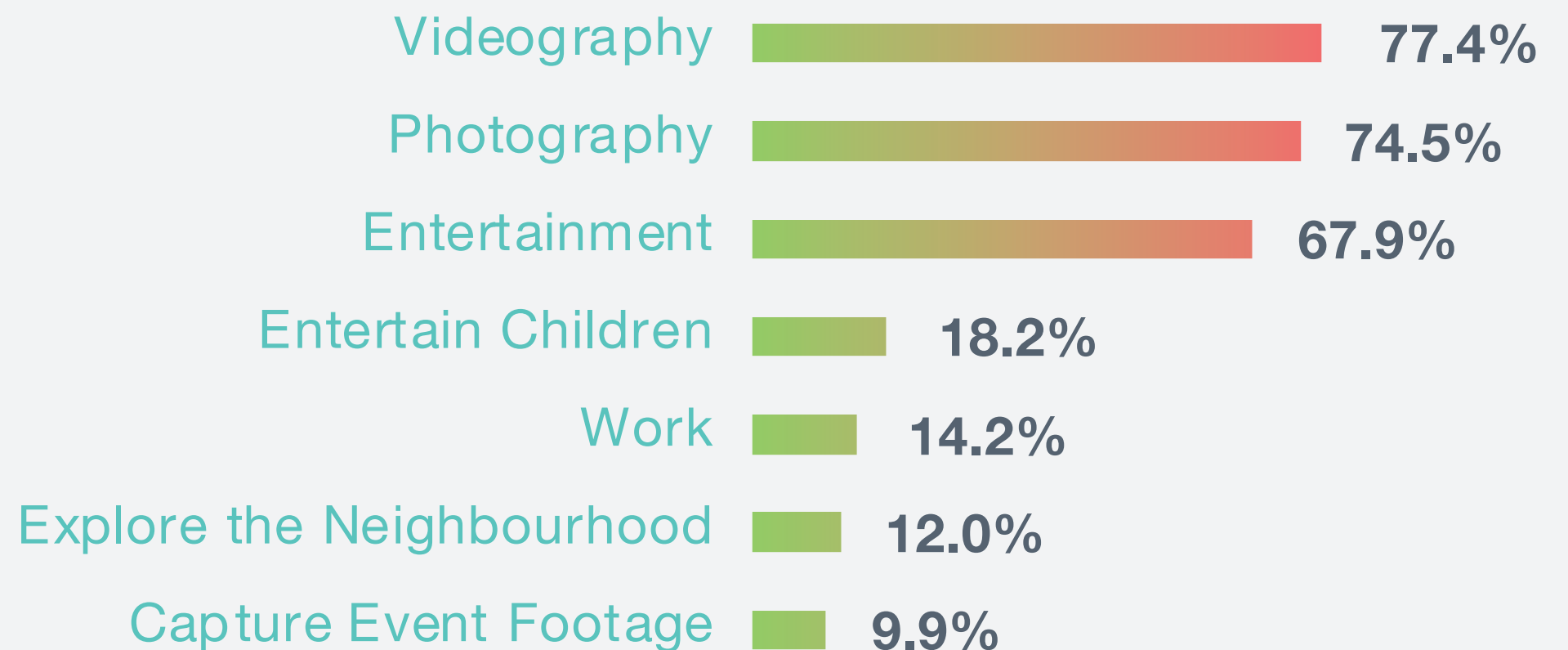
Drone owners report overwhelmingly using their drones for recreational purposes, with 85.8% doing so.

The main uses of drones are capturing videography (77.4%) and photography (74.5%) – but there are also some other intriguing ways these clever devices are being used.

67.9% enjoy using their drone for entertainment – e.g. simply flying it in the park, while 12% are using them to get to know their neighborhood better and 9.9% have used theirs to capture footage at events.

Many parents are even recognising the benefits of using drones to encourage children to spend more time outdoors, whilst still satisfying their hunger for technology - indeed, 18.2% of drone users have enlisted their children in their hobby, using drones to play with them and keep them entertained.

Since getting your drone what have you used it for?



Drone Photographers

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Drones are increasingly inspiring a new generation of tech-savvy photographers and videographers.

The data shows that 81% of those who own a drone have used it to capture their own amateur photographs and videos, and 67.9% of those in possession of a drone cite photography as one of their hobbies.

DronesDirect.co.uk's sales figures complement this finding – to date, the best-selling drone on the website remains the DJI Phantom 3 – a drone that is renowned for possessing fantastic photographic capabilities.

A further 38% and 37% of users believe that their droning hobby has actually improved their skills in videography and photography, respectively – suggesting many are using drones to expand their repertoire of skills behind the lens.

Many professional photographers and videographers are also utilising drones to create interesting imagery and footage – 14.6% have used their drone to take professional photographs and 13.9% have done so to make professional videos.

The survey data also shows that 35.9% of those who have used their drone for work purposes work in the creative and photographic industries – suggesting many companies are now buying in drones for professional use.



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How Invested are Drone Owners in Their Hobby?

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Almost half (48.5%) of drone users own one droning device – however 1 in 4 (23.7%) have invested in two.

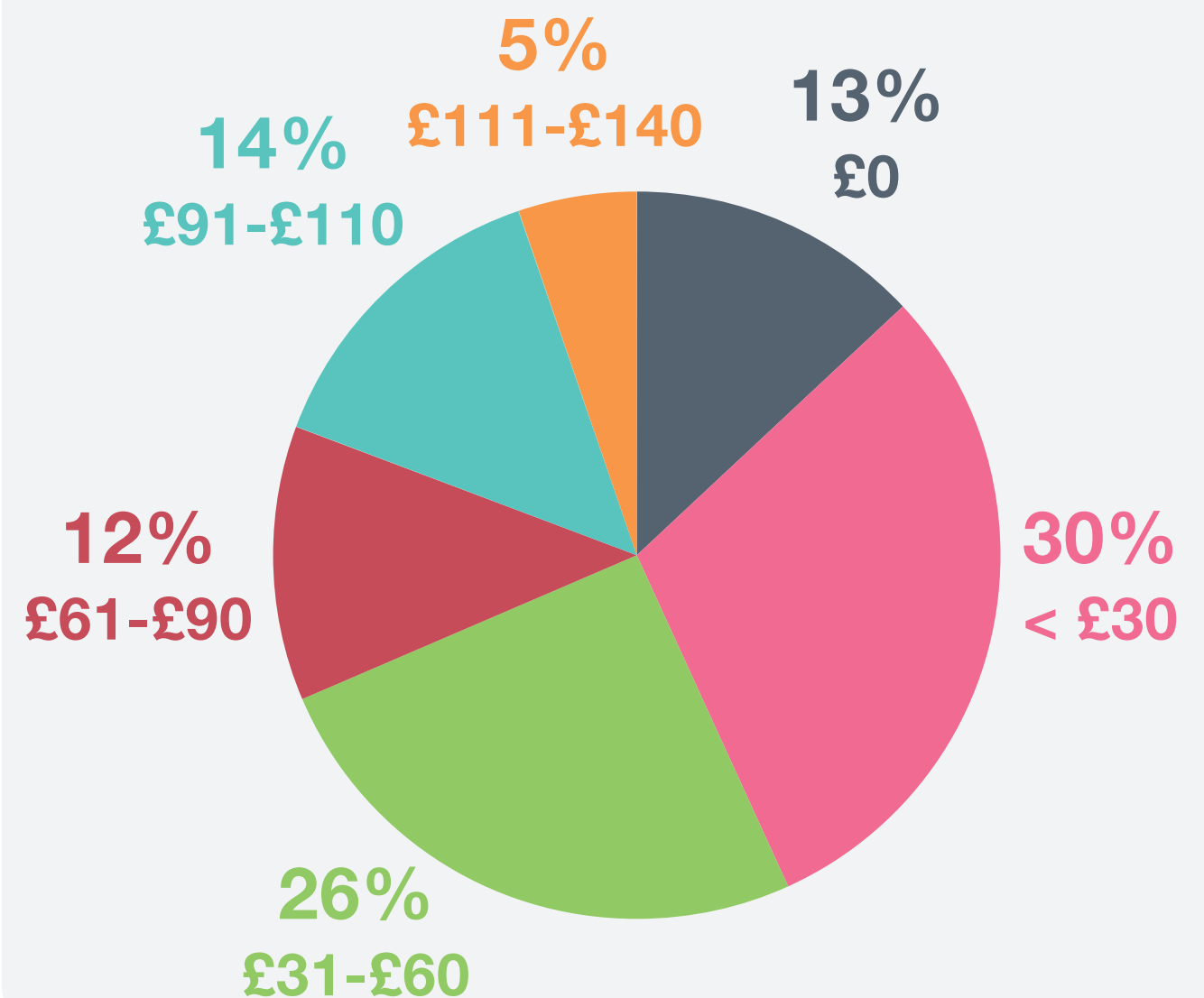
1 in 10 (10.6%) own 3 drones, while 1 in 20 (5%) possess as many as 4.

The majority (30%) will spend up to £30 on droning per month, but an especially committed 26% will invest £31 – 60 every four weeks. A flush 13% will spend between £91 – 110.

When quizzed about the amount they plan to spend on their next drone, the majority (14.3%) said they are considering splashing out more than £1500.

These findings indicate droning is a hobby often enjoyed by individuals with a decent disposable income, such as empty nesters who have climbed to the top of their career ladders – a conclusion that is only reinforced by the fact that the over 55s, followed by 45 – 54 age group dominate the UK drone owning population.

On average, how much would you estimate you spend on your droning hobby per month?



How Active are Drone Owners as Users?

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The data shows that droning is a hobby that is enjoyed on a regular basis, suggesting the investment required when purchasing a high-specification drone often results in regular enjoyment and usage. With 1 in 3 (32.8%) of drone owners using their drones every week, the data suggests that the majority get regular fun and enjoyment from their investment.

There is also a small but growing number of drone enthusiasts who are not only using their drones regularly, but who are actively participating in specialist events and meetings dedicated to droning – 1 in 10 drone owners attend droning clubs, while 8% attend specialist drone racing groups.



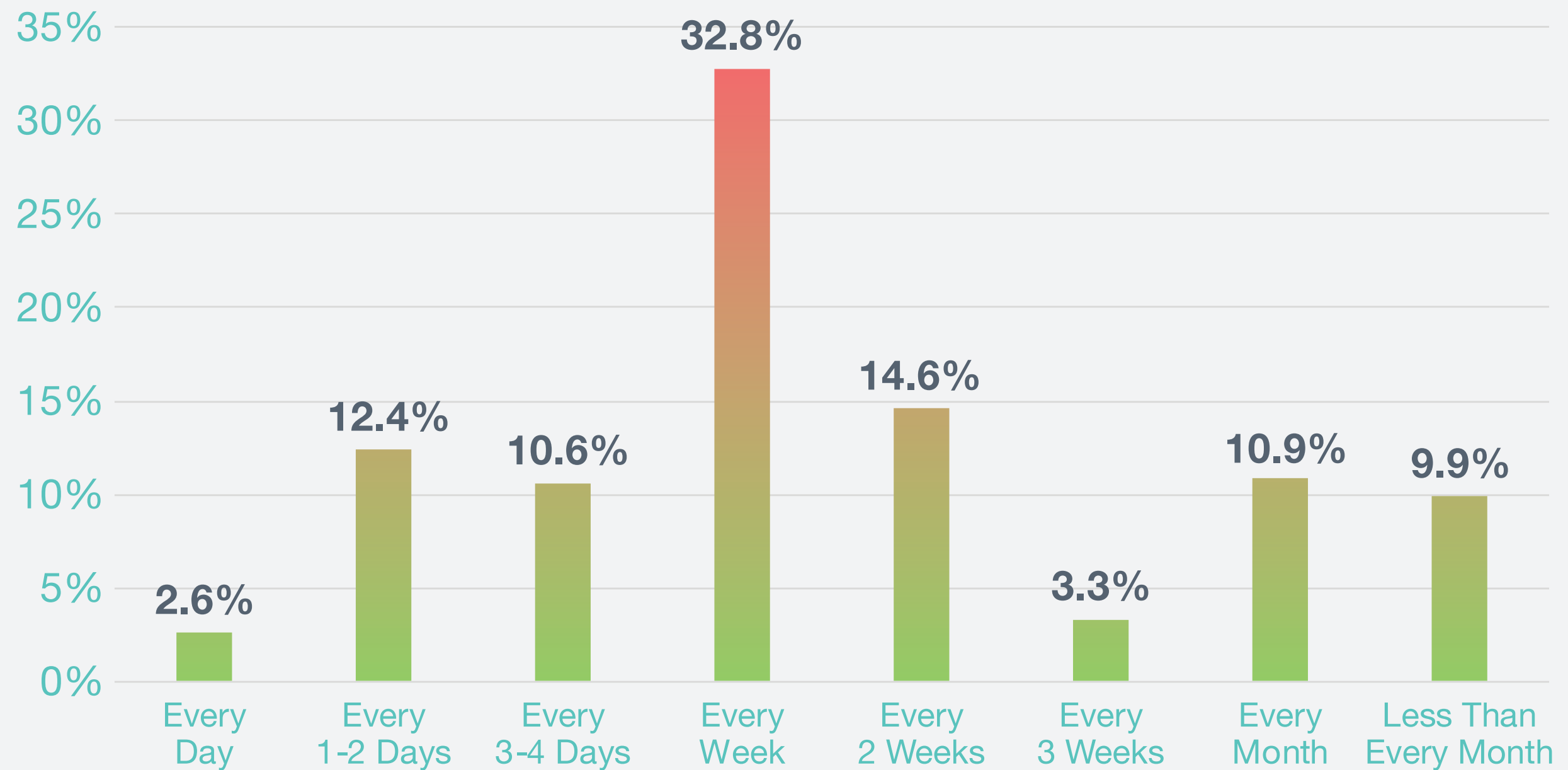
5.8% have participated in amateur drone racing tournaments with friends.

These findings, coupled with the proportion of owners who enjoy spending time playing with their drones with their children (18.2%), or flying on friends' property, suggest that, unlike other types of leisure technology, droning can actually be quite a social past-time.

How Active are Drone Owners as Users?

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How often do you use your drone?



Where are Drones Being Used?

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25.2% of drone users are using their drones in the home, or on their own property, while 6.2% are doing so on or inside the properties of friends.

Some are even packing their drones in their suitcases, taking them on abroad to use them to capture content and try piloting in different countries – suggesting drone tourism is a trend that could take off more in the near future.



However, the majority (34.3%) are using them in public spaces – suggesting the issue of responsible drone usage is rightly an extremely important one.

With the majority of use happening within spaces the public has access to, the need to ensure owners are aware of the legalities of flying their drones near buildings, individuals or events, as well as data protection law for those inadvertently capturing members of the public in their photographs and footage, is crucial.

Drones and the Law

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While the headlines may have many believing that drone users regularly disregard the law around the usage of unmanned flying aircraft, the data shows that this simply isn't the case – and indeed, most drone users fly responsibly and adhere closely to the rules.

97.7% of drone users were aware of the rules and regulations set out by the Civil Aviation Authority, on the operation of drones.

And many were also aware of wider guidance, too – including the Information Commissioner's guidelines (58%).

50.7% were even clued up on the application of the Data Protection Act to footage and images captured by drone.



Only a minority had broken the rules relating to where it is acceptable to fly – suggesting most users are considerate, law-abiding pilots.

Just 3.6% had flown their drone within 5 miles of an airport, 4% within 150 meters of an organised open-air event (e.g. a football match or concert) and 5.8% on someone else's property without their permission.

Only 14.2% had operated their drone more than 400 feet above the ground.



Drone technology is sophisticated and versatile. And there is no doubt that the industrialisation of drones is taking off, with drones already being used for deliveries of consumer products, providing humanitarian aid, security, and more.

Indeed, 14.2% of drone owners have used them for work purposes.











The survey data shows that it is the more hands-on sectors, such as the trades (e.g. construction and plumbing) and manufacturing industries, where there is a requirement for equipment that can make costing jobs or checking on machinery easier, are leading the way in utilising drones for business purposes.

However, industries involved in content creation – such as information and communications – are also shown to be dominating professional usage.

Naturally, the very nature of drone technology lends itself well to the creative and photographic industries, which are also amongst the biggest sectors adopting drones.

Drones are also being used within the transportation sector – a business area which has already seen the industrialisation of drone usage, via services such as drone deliveries.

THE TOP 10 BUSINESS SECTORS UTILISING DRONES:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 |  | Trades (construction, plumbing) – 11.5% |
| 2 |  | Manufacturing – 9.9% |
| 3 |  | Information and communications – 9.1% |
| 4 |  | Creative and photographic – 8.8% |
| 5 |  | Transportation – 7.7% |
| 6 |  | Professional service (e.g. law, accountancy) – 6.6% |
| 7 |  | Marketing – 5.1% |
| 8 |  | Education – 4.7% |
| 9 |  | Retail – 4% |
| 10 |  | Healthcare (e.g. pharmacy, care home, hospital, etc.) – 3.3% |

Conclusion



The findings of our research demonstrate that the drone community is bucking the picture that is often painted of technology enthusiasts – far from being anti-social, sofa surfing students and teenagers, they're a sociable, physically active, more mature bunch.

Drone owners embody a new generation of gadget lovers, who enjoy sharing their hobby with family and fellow enthusiasts, spend time in the great outdoors, and whom have creative hobbies, such as photography.

Indeed, some drone owners are using their devices as a complementary hobby, with many reporting that their drone piloting has allowed them to further develop their videographic and photographic skills.

Despite the headlines, the majority are well-informed about the laws, rules and guidelines surrounding the operation of drones, and the content they can be used to capture. And most are responsible, law-abiding pilots.



The industrialisation of drone usage is also taking off, with many businesses making use of drone technology to innovate and modernise more traditional processes. Many are using drones for professional purposes – most notably in those industries such as manufacturing and trades, where drones can aid the production and sales processes.

But drones are also proving useful for the creative and photographic, information and communications sectors, where they enable content creation.