Craft in an Age of Change: Summary report

Prepared for the Arts Council of Wales

Final summary report
January 2012

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

Noddir gan
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Contents

Cover: 'Traces' by Ainsley Hillard, Mission Gallery. Photo by Jason Ingram, courtesy of the artist.

Acknowledgements

This project was carried out by Josephine Burns, Chris Gibbon and Cristina Rosemberg of BOP Consulting, and their research associate, Dr Karen Yair.

BOP Consulting and Dr Yair are grateful for the contributions made by all those who participated in this work. In particular, we would like to thank the project's steering group for their valuable input and support throughout the research:

- Dr Helen Bennett, Portfolio Manager, Creative Scotland
- Rachel Brockhurst, Research and Information Officer, Crafts Council
- Nathalie Camus, Senior Applied Arts Officer, Arts Council of Wales
- Caroline Docherty, Portfolio Partnership Manager, Creative Scotland
- Alistair Evans, Development Partnership Manager, Creative Scotland
- Rosy Greenlees, Executive Director, Crafts Council
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- Helena Ward, Portfolio Manager, Creative Scotland
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Foreword

This is the foreword to the main report and, as such, is signed by all four commissioning bodies. This document is a summary of the main report, and has been prepared for the Arts Council of Wales.

Craft in an Age of Change is a major survey of contemporary craft at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. It examines the place of craft in the creative economy and the working patterns of makers and other craft professionals. It also looks at a number of increasingly prominent issues, including the value of craft skills and knowledge in an economy where skills are high on the agenda; the impact of digital technology on a sector where 'hand-made' might be seen as a *de facto* requirement; the increasing need for environmental sensitivity; and the revaluing of the different facets of professional lives in answer to the 21st century move towards portfolio careers.

While it builds on previous surveys conducted at intervals over the past two decades, *Craft in an Age of Change* marks two very significant 'firsts' for surveys of the contemporary craft sector in the UK. It is the first survey to be conducted simultaneously in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, building a truly UK-wide profile and, at the same time, allowing national similarities and differences to be clearly seen. Although it focuses on the makers at the heart of all craft practice, it also differs from previous surveys in looking at the curators, gallery owners, retailers, academics, educators and writers who all play vital roles in shaping the current and future nature of the craft sector.

Commissioned from BOP Consulting by four partners – the Crafts Council, Creative Scotland, the Arts Council of Wales and Craft Northern Ireland – the survey provides a wealth of information and statistics. It demonstrates that craft continues to develop and evolve in response to the world around it, reacting to economic, cultural, technological and social changes as they unfold, while retaining its core values and purpose.

Up-to-date knowledge and robust data is crucial for informing policy to support the craft sector, and we trust that policy-makers, funders, trade organisations and the media, as well as craft professionals, will find the report equally useful.

We thank the makers and craft professionals who participated in the survey underpinning this report for giving their time and goodwill.

Rosy Greenlees, Executive Director, Crafts Council

Andrew Dixon, Chief Executive, Creative Scotland

Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Wales

Joe Kelly, Director, Craft Northern Ireland

1. Executive Summary

Early in 2011 BOP Consulting was commissioned to carry out a mapping and impact study of the contemporary craft sector. The report – *Craft in an Age of Change* – reviews the research that was conducted, and explores its findings. It examines the profile of craftspeople and their businesses, and considers the ways in which they are changing. This summary, produced for the Arts Council of Wales, draws information from that report to provide a more focused look at the data, with particular reference to Wales.

The research took a number of forms: a literature review, a series of focus groups, interviews with experts, meetings with a steering group, and a large phone survey of over 2,000 makers, retailers, educators and curators. The literature review and the qualitative research (focus groups and interviews) helped identify certain themes which were examined in the phone survey.

1.1 Findings of the research

The survey suggests that, in many respects, the structure of the contemporary craft sector is relatively stable. It remains dominated by small, well-established businesses. The characteristics of makers have changed relatively little since the early 2000s, although practice is shifting to reflect the new possibilities of digital technology and environmental and ethical concerns. Retailers reported that, on balance, their sales had been fairly steady over the last three years. Both retailers and makers were cautiously optimistic about the future at the time of the survey (June/July 2011).

Nevertheless, the contemporary craft sector clearly faces challenges in the years ahead. Insofar as it is possible to tell, given methodological differences between this survey and previous ones, makers' gross craft-related incomes have declined moderately of late. Sales through the majority of 'real world' selling channels have fallen, and while online sales have grown, they have done so from a low base, and have only partially compensated for losses elsewhere. There seems to have been an increase in part-time working, though such workers are earning more than part-timers in previous surveys were. Net profits remain modest (more than half of makers report making less than £5,000 a year), and a significant minority of makers feel they lack the general business skills they need to grow, especially in marketing. Although the large majority of makers have other craft-related income sources apart from designing and making objects, these are, with the exception of teaching, relatively small contributors to gross income. Craft sales remain locally focused, with limited exports.

1.2 UK makers and their businesses

This section explores key characteristics of makers and their business practices from across the UK. The phone survey found that:

Education levels: 61% of UK makers had a degree in art, craft or design, while 24% had other qualifications in these fields, such as formal apprenticeships, A levels/O levels/GCSEs or adult education. Only 15% had no craft-related qualifications.

Second careers: For half of makers (50%), craft was a second career.

Business type: 88% of makers are sole traders.

Average gross income in 2010 (adding craft-related and non craft-related income) was £23,485.

Figure 1 shows the various gross income streams for an 'average' maker. The combination of turnover from the sale of objects and income from other craft-related sources accounts for 84% of gross income, with non craft-related sources making up the remaining 16%.

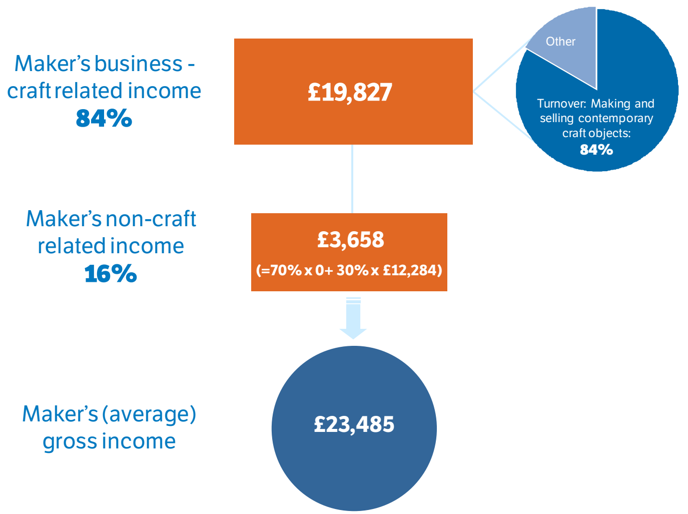
Taking the two constituents of gross income in turn:

1. Average craft-related income was **£19,827.** This is derived from:
   - Average turnover from sales of contemporary craft objects: **£16,572**

- Average income from other craft-related activities: **£3,255.** The largest source of such income was craft-related teaching.

Average income from non-craft-related activities: **£3,658.** This category includes income from sources such as non craft-related teaching, investments and pensions.

Figure 1 Makers' average gross income, 2010



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Additionally, average net profit from all craft activities was estimated separately by makers at **£6,231.** Net profit is derived from turnover, less the costs of sales (such as the materials used in the manufacture of objects), less other costs such as energy bills, repairs and maintenance, rent and salaries of staff.

1.3 Profiles of types of maker

Averages can, however, conceal as much as they reveal. In order to dig below the surface a little more, BOP Consulting constructed four profiles of makers, based on their level of craft education and whether craft is their first career or not.

Box 1: Four profiles of makers

Note that these definitions are specific to this report; other writers may use these terms differently in other contexts.

Craft careerists: committed to the idea of craft as a career, they move to start their businesses shortly after finishing their first (or second) degrees in craft-related subjects.

Artisans: do not have academic degrees in the subject but nevertheless have made craft their first career.

Career changers: begin their working lives in other careers before taking up craft as a profession, often in mid-life.

Returners: makers who trained in art, craft or design, but who followed another career path before 'returning' to craft later on.

These profiles were analysed, and showed distinct differences between the four groups. 'Craft careerists' – those with a craft-related degree and who chose craft as a first career – were the largest group, accounting for 38% of makers (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Profiles of types of maker

		Craft qualifications: First or second degree	Craft qualifications: Other or no qualification
Contemporary craft-making as a first career	Yes	‘Craft careerists’ (38.4%)	‘Artisans’ (11.7%)
	No	‘Returners’ (22.4%)	‘Career changers’ (27.5%)

Source: BOP Consulting (2011) based on 1,847 responses

The analysis suggests that the sector is in many ways being led by the craft careerists, who are younger and are earning more than the craft average, are keen to develop and use new skills, and produce work that is more likely to be exported or be bought by public collections than the other groups.

1.4 Overall size of sector

The exact size of the contemporary craft-making sector is not known. A number of factors make it hard to define, not least that many craft businesses are too small to appear in government statistics. BOP Consulting calculated its estimate of the number of contemporary craft-making businesses in 2011 by ‘triangulating’ the databases provided by the commissioning partners and the response rate to the surveys.

Estimated number of contemporary craft-making businesses in the UK: **23,050.**

Multiplying the number of businesses by the average craft-related income gives **estimated total income for all contemporary craft-making businesses of £457m.** As points of comparison from other creative industries, total revenues for London West End theatres were £512m in 2010[1], while spending on music downloads in the UK was £316m[2] in the same year.

Total craft-related income of makers by nation

This estimate of total income can be broken down by nation, based on the estimated number of businesses:

- England: £339m from 17,150 businesses
- Scotland: £70m from 3,350 businesses
- Wales: £28m from 1,500 businesses
- Northern Ireland: £20m from 1,050 businesses

The numbers of makers who took part in the phone survey were large enough to allow for robust results at the level of the four nations of the UK. Analysis indicated that there are few statistically significant differences between makers in the four countries, although there are small variations.

Makers in Wales
Makers in Wales were more likely to be male, and had the highest average age in the four nations. Wales was also the only country in which ‘career changers’ made up the largest group among makers – in the other three, it was ‘craft careerists’. Levels of sole trading were a little lower in Wales than the UK average.

[1] Figure from the Society of London Theatres, quoted in http://www.thestage.co.uk/news/newsstory.php/31087/theatreland-enjoys-golden-age-despite-ash- accessed 14 October 2011
[2] Figure from BPI Annual Yearbook 2010

1.5 Retailers' businesses

The retailers sample was much smaller and hence the findings have to be treated as indicative rather than statistically significant. The retailers came from across the UK.

The retailers had been trading for an average of 19.7 years, and employed an average of 4.5 staff. Of the sample, 44% sold only contemporary craft objects, while 56% sold other things as well. Among the latter group, fine art objects (paintings and sculpture) were the most popular 'non-craft' line, followed by stationery and gifts, and prints.

1.6 Educators, writers and curators

The research also looked at educators, writers and curators. Again, the size of the sample was much smaller than that for makers, and came from across the UK.

Educators, writers and curators are in many cases pursuing portfolio careers in which their income is derived from a mix of activities primarily in craft or closely related fields (art and design).

- Most of those we spoke to (87%) taught formally, at least part of the time, usually at a higher education institution.
- Almost 20% of respondents taught informally at venues such as community centres, gallery spaces and colleges, to a wide mix of people.
- Almost 20% had income from writing about craft, typically on a freelance basis, while 11% earned income from curating.

1.7 Demographic profile of UK respondents

The demographic profile of all respondents (i.e. makers, retailers, educators, writers and curators) shows that contemporary craft is in many ways a diverse profession. While the percentage of black or Asian professionals remains low, the sector is heavily female, with proportions of foreign-born and dyslexic/disabled people that are above the national averages.

- **Gender:** In all, 69% of respondents were female; 31% were male.
- **Age:** The estimated average age of respondents is 48.7 years.
- **Dyslexia and Disability:** 11.5% of respondents said they were dyslexic, 4.1% said they were disabled (excluding dyslexia). (These two groups include 0.5% who said they were both dyslexic and disabled.)
- **Ethnicity:** 81.0% said they were White British, 2.4% were White Irish, 10.0% were Other White (a category that includes many Europeans and North Americans), while 3.5% were from black, Asian, mixed and Other backgrounds.
- **Foreign-born:** Over 12% of respondents were born overseas, with the United States, Germany, South Africa, the Republic of Ireland and India being the most frequently mentioned places of birth outside the UK.

1.8 Broader themes

The contemporary craft sector has its own particular characteristics, but it cannot be seen in isolation. As the title of the main report suggests, the current age is one marked by rapid change: in economics, the environment, and in culture. The impact of these wider changes on craft was explored in the literature review and the discussions with the focus groups. From these, four themes emerged, which helped to shape the phone survey questions. They were:

- **How are internet and digital technologies shaping craft practice?**

Well over half (57%) of makers were using digital technology in their practice or production, with the majority of these doing so often or all the time.

Makers reported moderate declines in their main 'offline' selling channels, especially gallery and exhibitions sales, and a shift towards online sales, though these were still relatively small. Around 30% of makers were selling through their own website, but only 3% were selling through social media.

- **How does the global vs local debate play out in the sector?**

The majority of makers sell to the domestic market. Over 70% of makers do not export their products; among those who do, exports account for almost 20% of turnover.

Retailers too largely serve domestic markets. A large minority of retailers sold work by overseas makers, but these made up only a small proportion of their overall sales (6%). Just under 10% of retailers' sales were to customers from outside the UK.

- **To what extent are issues of sustainability affecting practice in the sector?**

Just under a third (31%) of makers had changed their practice in the last three years in response to environmental concerns. The most popular change was to source more environmentally sustainable or sensitive materials.

- **How have recent economic changes affected the sector?**

Both makers and retailers were cautiously optimistic about the future at the time of the survey (June/July 2011). Retailers said (on balance) that their sales had been relatively steady over the last three years.

Most makers expected to have to respond to the economic climate by changing their practice in various ways over time, predicting that they would introduce new products and make increasing use of new technology.

1.9 Conclusions

It is clear that the contemporary craft sector is likely to come under pressure from a number of directions in the coming years. *Craft in an Age of Change* is a research report, and does not seek to make direct policy or strategy recommendations. Nevertheless, the research has flagged up a number of questions and issues for the future, which are worth discussing in a little more depth.

- **What will the rise of digital technologies do to the concept of craft?**

Digital technology has been on a 'long march' through the creative industries, transforming business models as it goes. The music, newspaper, photography and film industries have been radically altered, and even sectors that initially seemed less likely to be affected, such as book publishing, are now changing fast. Craft too is now being touched by these developments. The unique, hand-made nature of craft objects lies at the heart of the profession, reflecting core beliefs such as the importance of authenticity and the value of workmanship. Yet if technologies such as 3D printing become ubiquitous, and it becomes possible to make distinctive objects at the touch of a button, what does that imply for the whole notion of craft? Will the boundaries between craft, fine art and design blur still further as a result? Is such a change a threat to the identity of craft or an opportunity for exchanging ideas across artistic and wider agendas? What will being a craft professional actually mean in these circumstances?

- **What will the economic effects of the 'age of austerity' be?**

The challenges that Britain's economy faces over the next few years suggest that domestic economic growth is likely to remain slow. Globally, growth is likely to be concentrated in the emerging economies. Most makers are sole traders, and most of them currently do not export. How can they be encouraged and supported to find opportunities overseas? Are there other ways in which makers can use their specialist skills, knowledge of materials and experience of innovation and product development to earn money in international markets?

Online sales represent the growth area in the domestic market, albeit from a low base, but a significant minority of makers feel they lack marketing skills (including in digital marketing). Currently many buyers prefer to physically see and touch the object before purchase. How can craft address this issue? What are the lessons from other art-forms, and can they be applied to craft? And what are the implications for commercial galleries?

The domestic market for low- and middle-end creative products of many kinds (i.e. products other than craft) has been affected for several years by imports of cheap goods of reasonable quality. The logic of globalisation and greater competition suggests that the future market for UK craft will become increasingly concentrated at the higher end, where originality and aesthetic value count for more than cost and where skills and knowledge can earn a premium. However, in tough economic times consumers may cut back on expensive and 'luxury' purchases. Is there a danger of a backlash against conspicuous consumption? How should craft position itself in such a market?

Economic problems may also affect the type of people who enter the profession. What will the effect of slow growth be on the career changers and returners? Will increasing levels of redundancy and unemployment lead more people to turn to craft as an alternative career, or will economic uncertainty make people more reluctant to take the gamble of changing direction?

Finally, will economic pressures accelerate the trend for portfolio working, as people look to capitalise on their craft skills to bring in income from a broader range of sources, or will it reduce the number of opportunities, as other sectors cut back too? Are makers in particular able to market themselves well enough to develop the profile required to take up opportunities outside the immediate craft sector?

- **What effect will changes to higher education have on craft?**

Craft has become 'professionalised' in recent years, with first and second degrees becoming a key pathway into the profession. Teaching in higher education institutions is also an important source of income for many craft professionals. Yet there have been signs for some years that this picture is changing. More specialist craft courses have closed (for reasons including cost, lack of demand, lack of space, and health and safety issues) than have opened, while there has been a notable rise in the number of interdisciplinary courses incorporating a craft element. What do such changes imply for the structure of the craft sector? Will other routes into the profession – apprenticeships, or working with more experienced makers – revive, or will interdisciplinary courses and other degree paths increase in prominence?

- **What effect will budget cuts in the arts and cultural sector have?**

Craft, like many of the creative industries, has a mixed private-sector/public-sector economy. As part of the wider effort to restrain public spending, cuts have been announced to the budget of the DCMS (in England) and the departments of the devolved governments (in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) which cover the arts. Local authorities too are reducing their spending on arts and culture. What will be the implications for craft, both of the likely reduction in direct spending on craft (through the purchase and commissioning of craft work by public collections) and in the arts support infrastructure on which a sizeable number of craft professionals draw? What will happen in other commissioning areas where some makers were starting to sell their services, such as healthcare?

- **Can craft respond to the growing concerns over environmental and ethical issues?**

Craft would seem, on the face of it, to be well-placed to benefit from these wider shifts in the culture. Craft-making is often imagined as a small-scale, 'authentic' form of production, rooted in natural materials, and it is true that many makers have already responded to environment and ethical concerns. However, some of the most significant craft disciplines, such as ceramics and glass, use methods (firing, glazing) that are not environmentally friendly but which cannot readily be replaced in current practice. Can makers, given their often limited financial resources, find ways to mitigate the potential damage such practices cause?

Closing thoughts

These questions and issues suggest contemporary craft may be facing a period of unusual turbulence: there have rarely been so many challenges on so many fronts simultaneously. However, craft has a range of factors in its favour. It uses modern thinking and technology to build on skills, knowledge and experience that have been tested over time, and it speaks to deep-seated human instincts: the value of distinctiveness, a pride in quality and the worth of craftsmanship. Whatever changes may be coming, the history of the sector suggests that craft professionals will find ways to re-think and re-invent their practice to adapt to a changing world, and to allow craft to flourish.

2. Introduction

2.1 Structure of report

This short report summarises the full set of evidence gathered in the longer *Craft in an Age of Change* report. The following sections elaborate on the executive summary, providing more detail in three areas: a UK-wide profile of craft professionals and their businesses; an exploration of the wider themes (such as the spread of digital technology); and a Wales-specific analysis of makers.

2.2 Craft in context

Craft has been counted as one of the 'creative industries' ever since the term was first adopted by the British government in 1998. However, the craft sector has always been difficult to measure. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) produces a range of economic estimates every year for the industries that fall into its remit, but is unable to supply figures for the craft sector for many of its indicators. This is due to the small size of most craft businesses and the difficulty of identifying makers through the standard industrial and occupational classifications – it is hard, for instance, to separate out 'studio' ceramics from more industrial processes.

In these circumstances it has largely been left to the agencies dealing with craft to conduct research into the size, value and characteristics of the sector. These bodies – the Crafts Council, Creative Scotland (the successor to the Scottish Arts Council), the Arts Council of Wales and Craft Northern Ireland – have periodically commissioned major studies into the sector. The last such series of reports was completed between 2002 and 2006. This new research is the first such one to be commissioned simultaneously by all four organisations. It focuses on contemporary craft, but attempts to look at the whole 'value chain' within that sector: not just makers but retailers, educators, curators and writers too.

'Contemporary' craft is clearly a term that is open to different interpretations. For this reason, the survey did not attempt to impose a rigid definition of the sector based on materials used or disciplines. The approach of the research broadly follows that used in research carried out in 2004[3]: to identify people who were already on established 'craft' databases, and who therefore had self-selected themselves as crafts-people, and then to ask them if they were commercially active in 'contemporary' craft. The survey did not include hobbyists and makers of traditional or heritage craft.[4]

'Loose Threads series 2010' by Laura Thomas. Photo by Toril Brancher.

[3] McAuley, A. and Fillis, I. (2004) *Making it in the 21st Century: a socio-economic study of crafts activity in England and Wales, 2002 – 2003,* Crafts Council, London.
[4] The survey issued in Scotland was adjusted to make clear that makers who describe their work as 'indigenous' were to be included. Creative Scotland defines indigenous crafts as 'those which have their origins in the cultures of Scotland' – and wanted makers who are taking such practice forward and innovating to be included.

3. UK craft professionals and their businesses

The evidence for this section is largely drawn from the phone survey of makers, retailers and educators, though the questions asked were informed by a literature review and focus groups. The figures reported are for the UK as a whole.

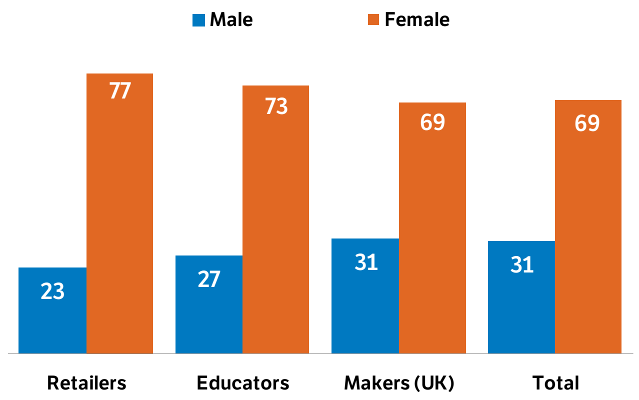
3.1 Demographic profile of UK respondents

Gender

Overall, the survey respondents were 69% female and 31% male. The percentage of women was slightly higher among retailers and educators than among makers. This figure is a little higher than that recorded in previous surveys, and confirms the trend seen over the last twenty years of a steady rise in the percentage of women in the contemporary craft workforce.

Analysis of the under-35s indicated that the proportion of women was higher still among the younger age cohort, suggesting this increase in the female share of the craft community is likely to continue in the years to come.

Figure 3 Gender by category (percentage)



Source: BOP Consulting (2011) based on 2,046 responses

Age

Respondents were asked to place themselves in one of the age bands shown in Figure 4. There were relatively few under the age of 25, perhaps because the survey methodology, which was heavily dependent on the databases of the craft agencies, was more likely to pick up established makers. Increasing debts on graduation and the greater take-up of post-graduate courses may also be causing young makers to delay setting up their businesses.

Each of the other five age bands contained at least 12% of the respondents.

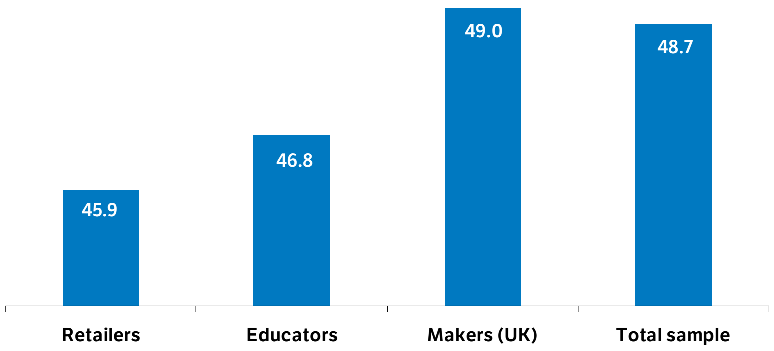
Figure 4 Respondents by age band

Age band	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
16-24	1.4	0.6	1.8
25-34	12.4	7.5	14.6
35-44	21.4	19.8	22.1
45-54	25.8	22.3	27.4
55-64	25.3	28.5	23.9
65 and over	12.2	20.0	8.8
Declined to answer	1.4	1.4	1.5

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

As is shown in Figure 5, the overall average age of respondents (an approximate measure based on mid-points within the bands) was 48.7 years. The average age of makers surveyed was 49; retailers and educators were, on average, a little younger.

Figure 5 Estimated average age (in years) by category



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Disability

While previous studies have asked about disability, there has been some ambiguity over the inclusion of dyslexia. For this study, a separate question was included for each. More than a tenth of craft professionals said they were dyslexic (11.5%), while 4.1% described themselves as disabled (respondents were allowed to 'self-define' as such). 0.5% of respondents said they were both, and are therefore counted in both the disability and dyslexia totals.

Ethnicity

The large majority of people (81%) described themselves as White British, with 2.4% choosing 'White Irish' as a designation. (Around 3% declined to answer.) Black and minority ethnic (BME) people amounted to 3.5% of the sample. The 'Other White' group accounted for 10% of respondents. This group includes many Europeans, North Americans and white South Africans.

Comparing these results with 2007 data for the general population of England and Wales (Scottish and Northern Irish figures are compiled differently) suggests that the proportion of 'Other Whites' is significantly higher among craftspeople than among the population at large, where it was just 3.4%. On the other hand, Asian/Asian British people accounted for 5.5% of the general population in England and Wales in 2007, compared with just 0.7% in the UK-wide craft survey sample.

Figure 6 Ethnicity

Ethnic group	Percentage
White British	81.0
White Irish	2.4
White Other	10.0
Black/black British	0.5
Asian/Asian British	0.7
Mixed	0.8
Other	1.5
Declined to answer	3.2

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

3.2 UK makers and their businesses

Structure of craft businesses

The second series of figures looks at the business practices of makers. In all, 88% of them were sole traders.

Figure 7 Structure of craft businesses

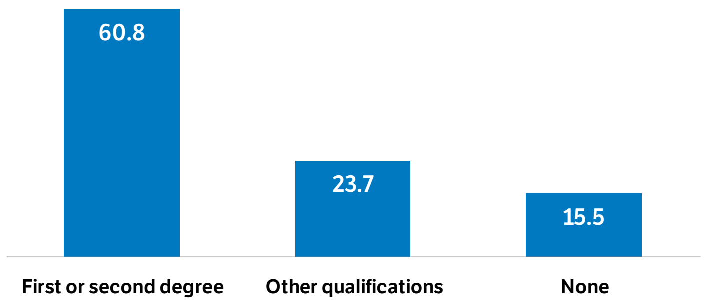
Business structure	Percentage
Sole trader	87.7
Partnership	5.8
Limited liability partnership	1.8
Private company limited by shares	2.9
Private company limited by guarantee	0.1
Co-operative	0.4
Other	1.3

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Skills

Makers are a highly qualified group: just over 60% have a first or second degree in craft, art or design. Only one in six (15.5%) had no formal craft qualifications or training. For comparison, 30.0% of all working-age adults in the UK had level-4 qualifications (degree-level) or above in 2010, according to the Labour Force Survey.

Figure 8 Levels of craft/art/design education (percentage)



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Craft as a second career

For half (50%) of the interviewees, craft was not their first career. People moved into craft from an extremely wide range of professions: examples ranged from professional cricket and management consultancy to graphic design and health care. However, just over 12% of 'second career' makers originally worked as teachers.

Disciplines and materials used

The disciplines and materials used were varied (with 32% of makers using more than one material) but the three most common were ceramics, textiles and jewellery. They were followed by 'other metal', wood, glass and silver. A number of activities do not appear in Figure 9 as they fall below the 1.9% threshold for inclusion (a full list can be found in the appendices in the main report).

Most makers – 68% – worked with just one material, with 20% working in two and 8% in three.

Figure 9 Field of activity/materials used (percentage of makers)

Materials used (percentage at least 1.9%)	Percentage
Ceramics	25.7
Textiles (including knitting and embroidery, but excluding weaving)	22.9
Jewellery	20.0
Other metal (excluding jewellery and silver)	12.1
Wood (excluding furniture)	10.7
Glass	10.3
Silver	7.1
Furniture	5.9
Paper (excluding graphic craft)	4.0
Mixed media	3.7
Stone	2.7
Graphic craft (including calligraphy, sign writing, and bookbinding)	2.5
Synthetic materials (including plastics)	2.2
Leather	2.0
Weaving	1.9

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Business income

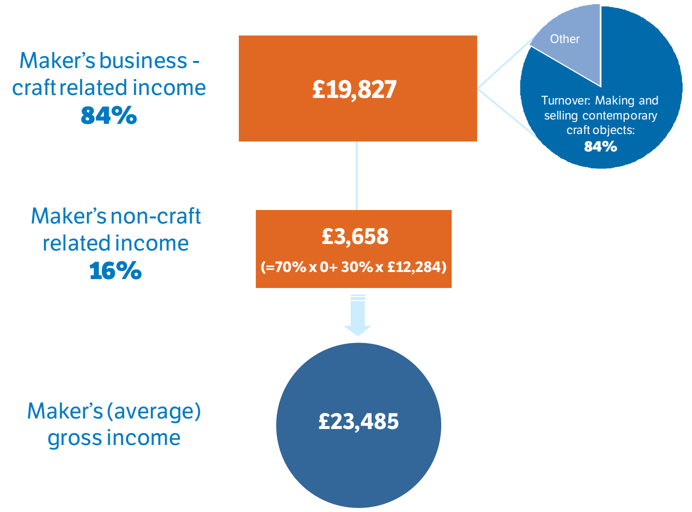
The average gross income in 2010 (adding craft-related and non craft-related income) was £23,485. As most UK makers are sole traders, the distinction between a maker as a business and as an individual is often blurred in reality. Figure 10 attempts to make the various strands of income clear. There are two elements. The first of these is the gross income from all forms of a maker's craft practice (whether that be the making of objects or another form of practice, such as consultancy). These strands are referred to in Figure 10 as the craft-related income from a maker's business.

However, many makers, as individuals, also receive income from non-craft related sources, such as part-time jobs or pensions. This is part of a craft-maker's income, and indeed may be necessary in order to support the maker's practice, but it is not directly derived from that practice. It has therefore been shown separately in Figure 10, as maker's non-craft related income. Taking the two constituents of gross income in turn:

1. Average craft-related income was **£19,827.** This is derived from:
   - Average turnover from sales of contemporary craft objects: **£16,572**
   - Average income from other craft-related activities: **£3,255.** The largest source of such income was craft-related teaching.
2. Average income from non-craft-related activities: **£3,658.** This category includes income from sources such as non craft-related teaching, investments and pensions.

Figure 10 shows the various gross income streams for an 'average' maker. The combination of turnover from the sale of objects and income from other craft-related sources accounts for 84% of gross income, with non craft-related sources making up the remaining 16%.

Figure 10 Makers' average gross income, 2010

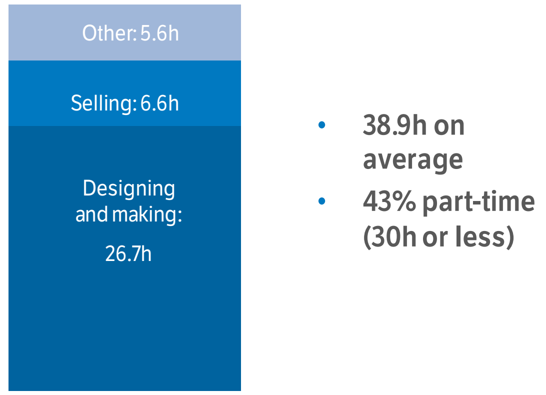


Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Hours per week

The average number of hours worked per week on craft-related activities was around 39, though the figures for individual makers varied widely. Makers spent 27 hours designing and making, more than six hours a week selling, and 5.6 hours a week on their other craft-related activities on average. Some 43% of makers worked for 30 hours a week or less on craft activities, which has been regarded as the threshold for 'part-time' work in previous surveys.

Figure 11 Hours worked



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Almost two-thirds of makers work at home. The majority of the remainder rent a workspace. Of the makers who said they rented a workspace, 56% did so within dedicated artists' studios.

Selling channels

Makers were then asked which selling channels they used, and which was the most important to them (in monetary terms).

Makers were allowed to give multiple responses to this question. More than half of them (55%) sold through commercial exhibitions and galleries, while more than a third received commissions from the general public, sold through craft fairs or sold direct to the public from their workshop/home. These four categories were also the most popular choices when makers were asked to identify their single most important selling channel.

3.3 Retailers' businesses

Craft is sold through a number of routes. Sometimes makers sell directly to the public, through craft fairs, specialist street markets or by having their work commissioned, for example. In many cases, though, craft is sold on the makers' behalf by a retailer. In order to understand this element of the craft 'value chain', 128 craft retailers from across the UK were spoken to as part of the phone survey. The retailers' database from which the interviewees were drawn included commercial galleries; sales outlets within public galleries and museums; craft shops and online retailers.

The retail unit is typically a gallery or shop, though online selling through a business website is important for a minority. Just under half the retailers surveyed sold only contemporary craft objects (44%), while the remainder also sold other items, most usually fine art or stationery, gifts and cards. Jewellery, ceramics and textiles were the most frequently sold craft disciplines, with jewellery being the most important revenue-earner for almost half of the retailers. A typical craft retail business has been in existence for just under 20 years, and employs 4.5 people.

3.4 Educators, writers and curators

The researchers also sought to speak to professionals who earn a living from craft but who do not primarily make objects, including educators, writers and curators. In all, 71 of these were interviewed, with representation from all four nations of the UK. Once again, this sample is too small to achieve the same level of statistical robustness as the makers' data, but the results can be treated as indicative.

Educators, writers and curators are in many cases pursuing portfolio careers in which their income is derived from a mix of activities primarily in craft or closely related fields (art and design).

- Most of those we spoke to (87%) taught formally, at least part of the time, usually at a higher education institution. Subjects varied: they included craft-making skills, craft appreciation and design.
- Almost 20% taught informally at venues such as community centres, gallery spaces and colleges, to a wide mix of people.
- Almost 20% had income from writing about craft, typically on a freelance basis, while 11% earned income from curating.
- Almost a third of them reported earning some money from the making of contemporary craft objects, though this was not their primary source of craft-related income.

3.5 Overall size of sector

BOP Consulting also derived an estimate of the number of contemporary craft-making businesses in the UK (detailed calculations are in the full report). Our estimate was 23,050.

Figure 12 Estimate of number of craft-making businesses by nation

Country	Population estimate (rounded to nearest 50)	Percentage of UK total
England	17,150	74.4%
Scotland	3,350	14.5%
Wales	1,500	6.5%
Northern Ireland	1,050	4.6%

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Multiplying the number of businesses by the average craft-related income gives **estimated total income for all contemporary craft-making businesses of £457m.** As points of comparison from other creative industries, total revenues for London West End theatres were £512m in 2010[5], while spending on music downloads in the UK was £316m[6] in the same year.

This figure for total craft-related income in the sector is lower than some previous estimates. One explanation is methodological – in the current

[5] Figure from the Society of London Theatres, quoted in http://www.thestage.co.uk/news/newsstory.php/31087/theatreland-enjoys-golden-age-despite-ash- accessed 14 October 2011
[6] Figure from BPI Annual Yearbook 2010

survey, makers were asked to give a specific figure for their income, rather than indicating a band into which their income fell. This approach is likely to be more accurate than the 'band' one, but also to report lower overall totals. The greater level of part-time working recorded in this latest survey also explains a large part of the gap. This change may be driven by the tough economic climate.

BOP Consulting also prepared a calculation of **Gross Value Added** (GVA) – how much value craft-makers add by transforming their raw materials into finished products and services.[7] The figure of **£220m** for craft is more than double the DCMS's estimate (for 2008) of Designer Fashion's GVA of £100m.

3.6 Profiles of types of maker

The business structure and demographic analysis is informative, but focusing on averages can mask wide variations in individuals' experiences. Through the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative information collected in this research and the literature review it became apparent that the profile of the 'typical' craft-maker was failing to capture some of the more subtle differences between types of makers.

Two characteristics of makers in particular seem to be playing a role in explaining differences between them: levels of qualifications and whether or not craft-making was their first career. Assigning makers to these categories creates four distinct groups, or profiles, shown in Figure 13. The data was then probed further to see whether there were differences in practice and business performance between the four profiles of makers.

For the sake of clarity, this report gives names to each of these four profiles, which try to capture something of the differences between the makers in them. It should be noted that the way these terms are used in this report may differ from the ways they are used elsewhere.

The first and largest group has been called the '**craft careerists**'. People in this group are committed to the idea of craft as a career, and move to start their businesses shortly after finishing their first (or second) degrees in craft-related subjects.

The second group has been labelled '**artisans**'. Members of this group also made craft their first career but did not pursue academic degrees in the subject. This is the smallest group overall, accounting for just under 12% of the sample.

The third group of makers began their working lives in other careers before taking up craft as a profession, often in mid-life. These have been called '**career changers**'. They represent more than a quarter of those surveyed.

The final group has been called '**returners'.** These are makers who trained in art, craft or design, but who did not pursue craft as a first career. They followed another path after university or college before 'returning' to craft later on. They make up 22% of the sample.

Figure 13 Profiles of types of maker

		Craft qualifications: First or second degree	Craft qualifications: Other or no qualification
Contemporary craft-making as a first career	Yes	'Craft careerists' (38.4%)	'Artisans' (11.7%)
	No	'Returners' (22.4%)	'Career changers' (27.5%)

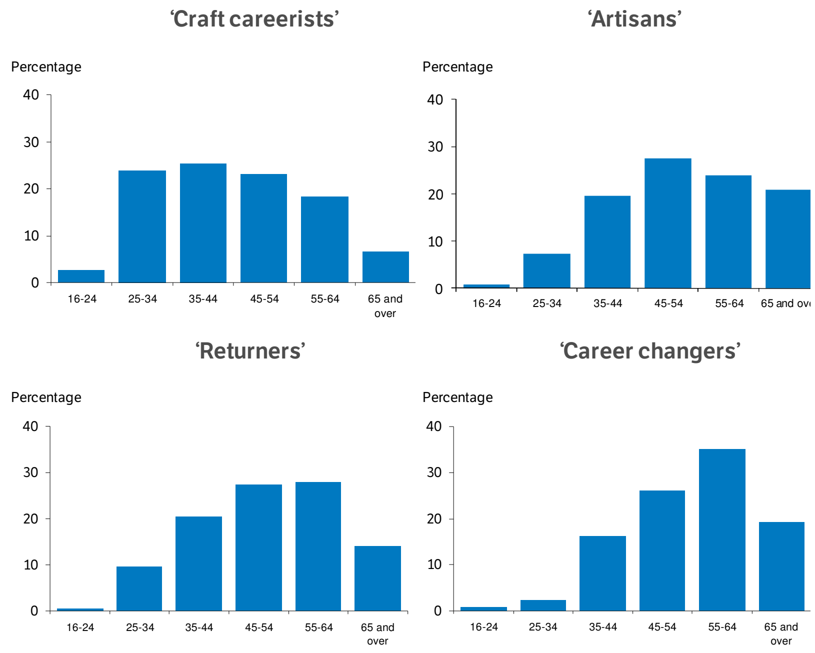
Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Craft careerists are the largest group in three of the four countries of the UK. The exception is Wales, where career changers are the largest group.

[7] More details of the GVA calculation can be found in appendix 8 of the main report.

More of the craft careerists are found in the younger cohorts, compared with the other groups. Career changers, on the other hand, tend to be concentrated among the older cohorts.

Figure 14 Age profile of types of maker



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Craft careerists and returners are more likely to be female compared with the total sample.

Artisans and craft careerists are more dependent on their craft-related income than the other two groups, being less likely to have other sources of income outside their craft practice. This is especially true for artisans, of whom just one-fifth report non craft-related income.

Career changers and returners are more likely to have non craft-related income, presumably reflecting their 'previous life' before establishing their craft practice. Career changers are more likely to have retirement income than the others (as their older age profile would suggest).

Figure 15 shows further indicators on craft practice across the different profiles. It reveals clear differences between craft careerists and the other three profiles, including artisans. Craft careerists are more likely to (i) use digital technology in their practice of making and designing their craft objects; (ii) have changed their practice (in the last three years) due to environmental concerns, and (iii) to have sold their work to a public collection. This suggests that craft careerists are more willing to adjust their practice in response to changes in the wider culture.

Figure 15 Practice, per makers' profile

Profile	%makers that sell their work online (inc websites and social media)	% of makers that use digital technology on making or designing	% of makers that have change their practice due to environmental concerns	% of makers whose work has been sold to a public collection
Craft careerists	39.3	42.7	34.1	37.3
Career changers	30.2	28.6	28.8	15.1
Returners	36.3	35.9	30.8	31.5
Artisans	32.6	29.6	30.2	26.7
Total	35.3	35.8	31.4	28.6

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

In summary, analysing makers by qualifications and first career seems to provide deeper insights into their characteristics and attitudes towards craft practice, and the performance of their businesses.

4. Focus on wider themes

The contemporary craft sector has its own particular characteristics, but it cannot be seen in isolation. As the title of this report suggests, the current age is one marked by rapid change: in economics, the environment, and in culture. The impact of these wider changes on craft was explored in the literature review and the discussions with the focus groups. From these, four themes emerged, which helped to shape the phone survey.

- How are internet and digital technologies shaping craft practice?
- How does the global vs local debate play out in the sector?
- To what extent are issues of sustainability affecting practice in the sector?
- How have the recent economic difficulties affected the sector?

These are hugely complex areas, which will continue to shape the economic, political and cultural landscape for years to come. The phone survey enabled us to gather some evidence on these long-term issues, as they affect the contemporary craft sector. This section considers the results from the survey that relate to these themes.

4.1 How are internet and digital technologies shaping craft practice?

Internet and digital technologies have radically re-shaped many of the creative industries, including music, publishing and film. These technologies have greatly amplified the potential market for creative products, by allowing producers to reach entirely new customer bases, but have also opened up such industries to foreign competition and to the risks of intellectual property theft.

Craft might seem to be relatively immune from such trends. The sector emphasises the authenticity and uniqueness of its products and services, and there is a widespread belief that people like to hold an object in their hands before buying it – and that this physical experience cannot be replicated online.

Yet cutting-edge technologies such as laser cutting and 3D printing have opened up new possibilities for makers. Indeed, 3D printing, which allows a blueprint on a computer to be 'printed' in materials such as plastic or metal, has been described by *The Economist* as 'the manufacturing technology that will change the world'.[8] While such technologies are not necessarily widely used by the craft-making population as a whole (though some mid-career makers have embraced them), they are used in universities and colleges, and are therefore shaping the next generation of craft-makers. These technologies also make it much easier to replicate the work of makers.

The survey examined two areas which relate to this question: changes in makers' practice, and changes in their methods of selling.

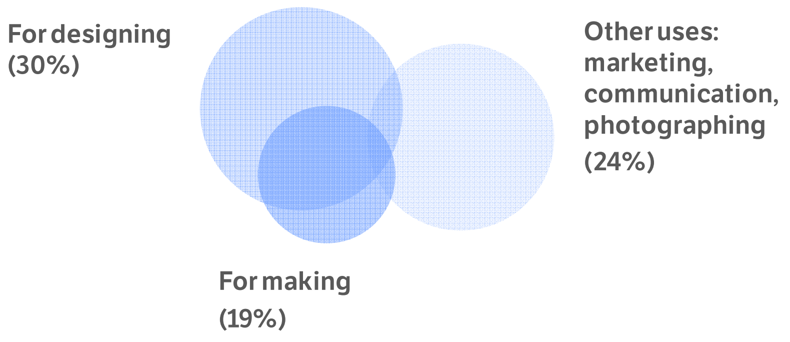
Changing practice

The majority of makers were using digital technology in some form in their practice or production: in all, 57% did so. Of all those who were using digital technology in their practice or production, 57% (by coincidence) did so all the time or often.

Some 30% of all makers used digital technology for designing, with 19% using it for making. As the chart below shows, there is considerable overlap between the two: of the makers who use digital technology in the design of their work, 44% also used such technology in the making of it.

[8] The Economist, *Print me a Stradivarius*, February 12-18, 2011, London.

Figure 16 Use of digital technology in practice/production



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Selling

While selling through websites and social media is growing strongly, their share of total sales is still relatively small. The survey suggests that around 30% of makers sell through their own website, with 13% selling through third-party websites. (The focus groups suggested that selective, 'curated' third-party sites were often valued because that 'curation' was an implicit guarantee of quality to customers.) Selling through their own website is the most important sales channel of all for around 6% of makers, which suggests that there are ways around the issue of needing to see or touch the object physically before purchase.

Just 3% of makers sold through social media, reflecting findings in the literature review that such channels currently tend to be used more for collaboration with other makers than for selling.

4.2 How does the global vs local debate play out in the sector?

The last twenty years have seen a range of changes to the world economy that has come to be known as 'globalisation'. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the economic reforms in China and India, the establishment of the European Union's single market and the spread of more market-based economies in Latin America and Africa have drawn vast numbers of new consumers and producers into the global economy. The sheer size of some of these markets and their rapid economic growth mean there are large numbers of consumers willing and able to buy branded and 'luxury' goods.

Yet new competition from these places has dramatically altered patterns of production. In particular, in many 'creative' manufacturing sectors in Britain, including clothes and furniture, the lower end of the market has been lost to overseas competition, especially from East Asia and Eastern Europe.

The craft sector finds itself pulled in different directions. There is a strong 'localist' strain in craft. Many makers seek to build small businesses strongly rooted in particular places, emphasising authenticity and building on local traditions in, for example, their choice of material. On the other hand, many makers want to take advantage of the business opportunities globalisation offers.

Higher education has also been through a globalisation process of its own. Over the last two decades, British universities have significantly increased their recruitment of overseas students. The UK's craft, art and design courses have strong international reputations, and have participated in this international outreach. Many of these foreign students stay in Britain after graduation, and it was suggested by some participants in the focus groups that this has contributed to a more cosmopolitan culture in British craft, as different national traditions come together, mix and influence each other.

Pinning down these global vs local issues in hard data is not straightforward. A number of aspects of this topic have therefore been considered.

Exports

Over 70% of makers do not export their products outside the UK. Among those who do, however, exports accounts for almost 20% of turnover. The proportion of makers who export is higher in Northern Ireland, reflecting strong market links with the Republic of Ireland and with the Irish diaspora, especially in the United States.

Retailers' sales

Looking first at purchases of craft by retailers for onward sale, some 43% of retailers sold work by overseas makers, with the largest single group of these makers coming from continental Europe. However, overseas makers made up only a very small proportion of retailers' overall sales: 6%.

Sales of craft by retailers were mostly to local customers. The majority of sales were to customers from the area local to the retailer (58%), with a further 24% from elsewhere in their 'nation'. Just under 10% of sales were to customers from outside the UK.

Tourism

Makers and retailers were also asked to estimate the importance of tourism to their business. (The survey did not distinguish between domestic and international tourists.)

Among makers, 43% thought tourism was very or fairly important to their business. Makers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were more likely to say that this was the case than were makers in England.

Tourism was more significant for retailers: two-thirds of them said that it was very or fairly important to their business.

Percentage of respondents born outside the UK

More than 12% of respondents were born overseas, with the United States, Germany, South Africa, the Republic of Ireland and India being the most frequently mentioned places of birth outside the UK. (According to the Annual Population Survey 11.5% of the UK's total population was foreign-born in 2010.) The craft sector is thus a little more diverse in this respect than the UK population as a whole, and may support the argument about craft having a cosmopolitan culture.

4.3 How are sustainability issues affecting the sector?

One area in which the global vs local debate plays out is the fields of the environment and ethics. The growing evidence of climate change is a global issue, yet local solutions are (to some degree at least) part of the answer.

The survey asked makers if they had changed their practice in the last three years in response to environmental or ethical concerns. It has been pointed out that businesses that were originally set up with these concerns in mind might not be picked up in the survey, as they may not have actually changed their practice, but continued with their existing good practice. However, as most craft businesses have been trading for some time (an average of 16 years), it was felt that it was reasonable to ask about change. With that proviso, 31% of makers had changed their practice in response to environmental concerns. Of those who had done so, more than half were trying to use more environmentally sensitive or sustainable materials, while just under a third had changed their production processes to make them more environmentally sensitive or sustainable. A fifth were using local suppliers in a bid to reduce transport miles. Makers using textiles and glass were more likely to have made such changes than makers in other materials, though the differences were modest.

Figure 17 Changes in environmental practice

Changes in environmental practice	Percentage of those changing practice
Source more environmentally sensitive or sustainable materials	51.5
Use more environmentally sensitive or sustainable production processes	32.8
Choose local suppliers to reduce transport miles	20.3
Choose suppliers with more environmentally sustainable practices	11.1
Choose distributors/retailers with more environmentally sustainable practices	7.0
Recycling	4.5
Other	15.5

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Only 14% of makers said they had made changes to their practice on ethical grounds.

4.4 Recent economic changes in the sector

In the last three years the economy has experienced its most turbulent period for decades. Alistair Darling, the then Chancellor, said at the time of the credit crunch in 2008 that Britain was facing its worst economic downturn for 60 years. The three years since have seen a deep recession followed by a period of very slow growth, as both the public and private sectors seek to pay down debt. In this time, many small companies have struggled to secure loans from banks. Prospects for the years ahead look gloomy at the time of writing, with the problems in the eurozone adding to the sense of uncertainty.

Data discussed in the literature review suggests that the craft-related income of makers' businesses has declined somewhat since the last major survey in 2004, although methodological differences between the two surveys may explain much of this. There seems, however, to be evidence of an increase in the level of part-time working compared with recent surveys, although these part-time makers are selling much more than part-timers in previous surveys did. This implies they may be previously full-time makers cutting back hours in the light of economic difficulties, though this is speculative. Makers reported declines in the value of the majority of their selling channels, though the net declines were usually relatively modest.

Retailers, on the other hand, reported that their sales have broadly been stable in net terms, with expanding businesses offsetting declining ones.

Despite this tough climate, makers and retailers are, perhaps surprisingly, cautiously optimistic about the future.

Prospects for the future

Figure 18 Makers – expected change in craft-related sales over the next three years

Expected change in craft-related sales	Percentage
Grow considerably	17.2
Grow slightly	34.9
Stay steady	21.4
Decline slightly	7.6
Decline considerably	4.6
Don't know	12.8
Not applicable	1.5

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Many makers recognised that adapting to the new economic climate would require them to make changes. Developing new or different products was the most popular option, with 63% saying they intended to do this while 58% wanted to find new markets, and 49% were looking to use different materials.

Retailers were also asked to assess their business's prospects over the next three years, both in general and considering craft sales in particular. The two sets of figures were broadly similar, with around two-thirds expecting either modest growth or steady sales.

'Comb Composition' by Anne Gibbs. Photo by John Carlano, courtesy of the artist.

5. Makers: Wales

The phone survey methodology was expressly designed to give large enough samples of makers at the 'nation' level to be able to analyse their results separately. (The number of retailers, educators, writers and academics surveyed meant that only a UK-wide analysis was possible for them).

There are few statistically significant differences between the four nations of the UK. There are, however, some minor variations. This section compares the responses from the 325 makers in Wales with the UK weighted average for some of the questions asked. A full analysis of the responses can be found in the appendices of the main report.

5.1 Demographic profile

Key demographic indicators for makers:

Gender: In Wales 61.5% of makers were female (UK 68.6%)

Age: The average age of makers is 51.0 years.

Ethnicity: Makers from Wales described their ethnicity as follows:

- 86.2% White British (compared with 81.0% in UK)
- 8.0% Other White

National identity: 52.3% of makers described their national identity as British, 28.9% said Welsh, and 8.0% English

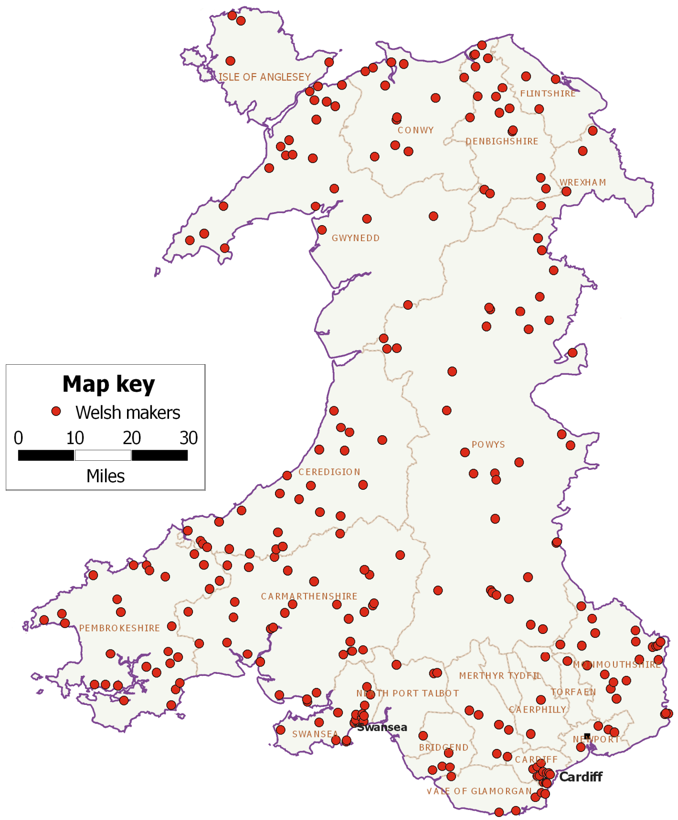
Disability: In Wales, 14.2% of makers said they were dyslexic (11.5% UK), while 3.1% said they were disabled, excluding dyslexia (4.1% UK).

Language: 10.2% of respondents said they spoke Welsh fluently, with a further 22.2% saying they spoke some Welsh. Among these two groups, 50.5% spoke Welsh in the workplace.

5.2 Survey respondents

The respondents to the phone survey came from across Wales, including Anglesey. There were larger clusters of respondents in Cardiff and in South-West Wales.

Figure 19 Location of phone survey respondents from Wales



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

5.3 Profiles of types of maker

In Wales, the proportion of 'career changers' – people who have moved into craft-making from other careers but who do not have a degree in art, craft or design – is higher than the UK as a whole. Indeed, Wales is the only country in which it represents the largest of the four groups.

Figure 20 Proportion of each type of maker

		Craft qualifications	
		First or second degree	Other or no qualification
Contemporary craft-making as a first career	Yes	'Craft careerists' (33.2%)	'Artisans' (10.2%)
	No	'Returners' (21.2%)	'Career changers' (35.4%)

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

5.4 Makers' businesses

The top five materials used by respondents in Wales (multiple responses were allowed) were:

Figure 21 Five most commonly used materials

Materials used	Wales %	UK %
Ceramics	31.4%	25.7% (rank 1st)
Textiles (exc. weaving)	18.2%	22.9% (2nd)
Jewellery	17.2%	20.0% (3rd)
Wood (exc. furniture)	12.0%	10.7% (5th)
Glass	10.5%	10.3% (6th)

Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

Education level: 54.5% of makers in Wales have a relevant degree (UK 60.8%) while 20.6% have no craft qualifications (UK 15.5%)

Hours worked: Makers in Wales spent an average of 40.5 hrs a week on their craft-related activities, of which 27.9 hrs were spent designing and making craft objects (UK average: 38.9 hrs in total, with 26.7 hrs spent designing and making).

Workplace: 67.7% of makers in Wales work from home (UK 65.9%)

Business status: 78.8% of makers in Wales are sole traders (UK 87.7%)

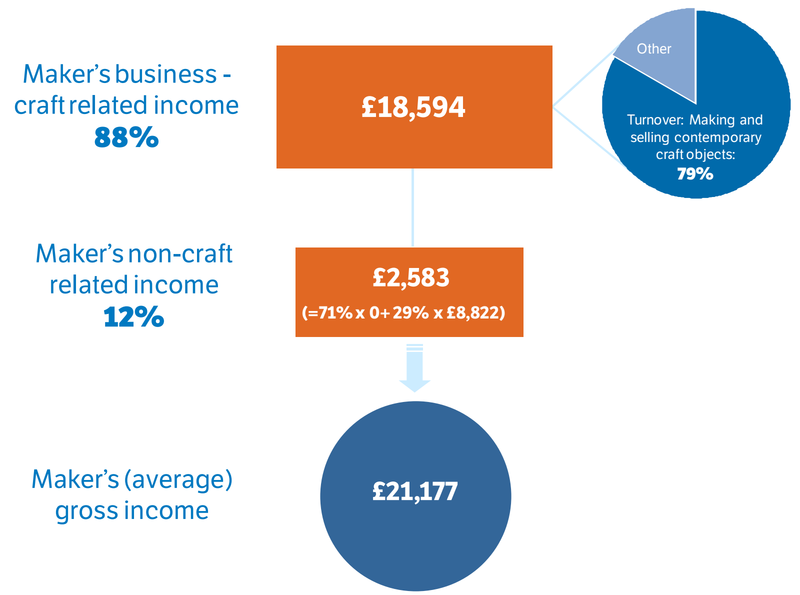
Makers in Wales are a little less likely to sell through online channels.

Makers in Wales were also more likely to have come into craft as a second career (57% vs UK average of 50%).

The average gross income of Wales makers was £21,177. Of this, £18,594 was derived from craft-related income. In turn, 79% of this came from sales of contemporary craft objects.

Makers received another £2,583 on average from non-craft related income such as part-time work or pensions.

Figure 22 Wales: Makers' average gross income, 2010



Source: BOP Consulting (2011)

The average estimated net profit for a maker in Wales was calculated to be £6,194 (UK: £6,231).

5.5 Wider issues in the craft sector

Other aspects of craft-making researched included:

Use of digital technology in practice and/or production: In Wales, 57.2% did so (UK 56.5%), most frequently for designing products.

Have you changed your practice in response to environmental concerns? 34.8% of makers in Wales had done so (UK 31.4%). The most common change was to source more environmentally sustainable or sensitive materials.

Do you export your products? 27.7% of makers in Wales had exported work in 2010 (UK 28.4%)

Use of public bodies: 20.6% of makers in Wales had used the services of the Arts Council of Wales in 2010, while 8.9% had used the Crafts Council's services.

Prospects for business: In all, 48.6% of makers expected their contemporary craft sales to grow either considerably or slightly over the next three years (52.1% in UK).