

If you can't find the statistics you want, then just make them up

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Yesterday, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on [America's Newest Profession: Bloggers for Hire](#) and included this handy little chart:

Lawyers	555,770
Bloggers	452,000
Computer Programmers	394,710
CEOs	299,160
Firefighters	289,710

Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

Comparing Job Numbers in America

I found this number hard to believe, so I followed the *Source* link to the information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. I found that, yup, in a May 2007 survey, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that there were indeed 555,770 lawyers, 394,710 computer programmers, 299,160 chief executives, and 289,710 fire fighters in the United States.

Bloggers? Didn't even make the list. The number 452,000 appears nowhere in the Bureau of Labor Statistics report.

If you can't find the statistics you want, then just make them up (but claim somebody else provided them).

(The comments on the article suggest that the number 452,000 was derived from a Technorati report that there were 20 million blogs, of which only 4.7 million have been active in the past four months. The number 20 million was then combined with a Technorati survey

of active bloggers in which 2% of them self-reported blogging as their primary source of income.)

Pre-emptive snarky comment: “Microsoft’s current advertising campaign uses made-up numbers.”

Bonus statistics: The claim that “It takes about 100,000 unique visitors a month to generate an income of \$75,000 a year” is a total misrepresentation of the Technorati report. Technorati said that the average annual income among people with 100,000 or more unique monthly visitors is \$75,000. That’s like seeing that the average salary for a professional baseball player is \$3.1 million and concluding that once you reach the big leagues, you’ll be pulling down \$3.1 million, when in fact—as the new guy—you’ll most likely be making the baseball minimum wage of \$390,000.

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