

Nanowrimo – start writing your novel today (or not!)

Nanowrimo or November writing month launched today and a new survey of 1000 UK writers has discovered what is most likely to distract them from actually getting down to writing their novel.

It is hoped that sharing the results might help inspire thousands of UK writers who are now preparing to write 50,000 words of a novel in 30 days.

If you are an Edinburgh writer who might like to share even a few sentences each day with our readers then head over to our sister site [EdinburghReportage](#) and do just that. And then come back tomorrow and do it all over again!!

The survey undertaken for [Stop Procrastinating](#), the productivity application, discovered a range of domestic and life issues that distracted the most creative amongst us from fulfilling their dreams and finishing their novel.

Respondents to the survey said the following distracted them most from writing: sex; dating sites; tiredness; staying late at work; food; chocolate; their partner distracting them by offering them a cup of tea or alcoholic drink, turning on the TV or chatting; pets jumping on their lap or turning off the computer; taking the dog for a walk and a family argument. Digital distractions such as emails, social media and the internet were also most likely to prevent them from writing.

Some respondents even claimed envy of the success of other writers stopped them having the motivation to continue writing.

Broken down the survey still found that the internet was the biggest single distraction during the actual process of

writing. 59% of UK writers claimed to have turned to browsing the internet for inspiration only to be lose hours reading articles or watching videos.

Most interesting is what they were viewing. Most writers didn't turn to the great works for inspiration, but were more likely to watch YouTube videos. 20% of those who said they were distracted by the internet from writing said they had watched a funny animal video at least once to help get them through a creative block; 8% said they were distracted by a dating site; another 2% said wouldn't admit to what they browsed.

Yet 15% of respondents claimed real life animals posed a risk to undermining their writing achievements. Cats jumping on their owners lap for affection was the biggest culprit, while others claimed their dog had pulled the lead from the computer in the middle of crafting the perfect sentence.

10% of people claimed they often ate their reward for finishing writing, such as food or chocolate, before they'd reached their writing goal for the day. And 17% were so desperate to avoid writing that they did the washing up or emptied the bins.

22% said that their partner has distracted them by suggesting watching the next episode of a box set for a 'creative break', while others came into their room with a welcoming drink and chatted for more than half an hour before leaving. 3% of respondents has said that rather than get back to writing they had had sex with their partner.

32% said that they were too tired to write either from work or partying too hard. While 24% said they often couldn't write because they had stayed too late at work and didn't have time.

Will Little, creator of www.stopprocrastinatingapp.com, said: "Nanowrimo is a great celebration of writing, but sometimes even with the best of intentions writers become distracted.

“The grip of creativity to write is tenuous, it seems, prone to slip in the face of the slightest distraction. The smallest gestures such as a warming cup of coffee from a partner, or a cat jumping up for a stroke, or the distant sound of their favourite TV programme starting can be all it takes to have the writer running from the computer and away from the creative urge,” he said.

“But often the distraction is staring them in the face. The writer’s tool, the computer, is part of an interconnected planet that exists, it seems, to distract and toy with our concentration. It can take only seconds from typing a lyrical sentence to answering an email or watching a funny animal video on YouTube, and the creative moment is lost,” he said.

“Sometimes all it takes is for the writer to set down their goals – how many words they want to write and how long it will take them. Goal setting is hard wired into our brains and when we set them we are more likely to achieve our objectives.

“But sometimes writers need that extra push – to turn off the internet completely or at least filter out social media or the most distracting websites. Barring the offer of a hot drink from their partner or the sound of padded feet, they should then be set up to create their masterpiece.”