



MA Rossa<sup>1</sup>, JT Lovelett<sup>2</sup>, DC Schreiner<sup>2</sup>, BE Spencer<sup>1</sup>, MA Kirchgessner<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Neurosciences Department, <sup>2</sup>Psychology Department, UCSD

## Introduction

Science communication is an increasingly vital skill as public misconceptions about the goals and outcomes of research abound. However, few scientists are trained to write and communicate with audiences outside of their immediate field. NeuwriteSD, founded in 2013, is an organization run entirely by UC San Diego graduate students with the goals of: a) writing, editing, and publishing weekly blog-style posts on neuroscience-related topics that are accessible to a general audience; b) providing training in effective science communication and; c) offering resources and support for individuals seeking a career in science writing and communication.

In addition to reaching thousands of readers across the world with its weekly posts, NeuwriteSD also affects its local community through a bi-annual print edition, collaborations with other outreach organizations, and regular workshops. On an individual level, NeuwriteSD members have gone on to have successful careers both inside and outside of academia, with the majority citing NeuwriteSD as having helped them develop skills essential for their current job.

NeuwriteSD could serve as a model for other graduate programs and institutions to both increase public understanding of neuroscience and train scientists in effective and compelling scientific communication.

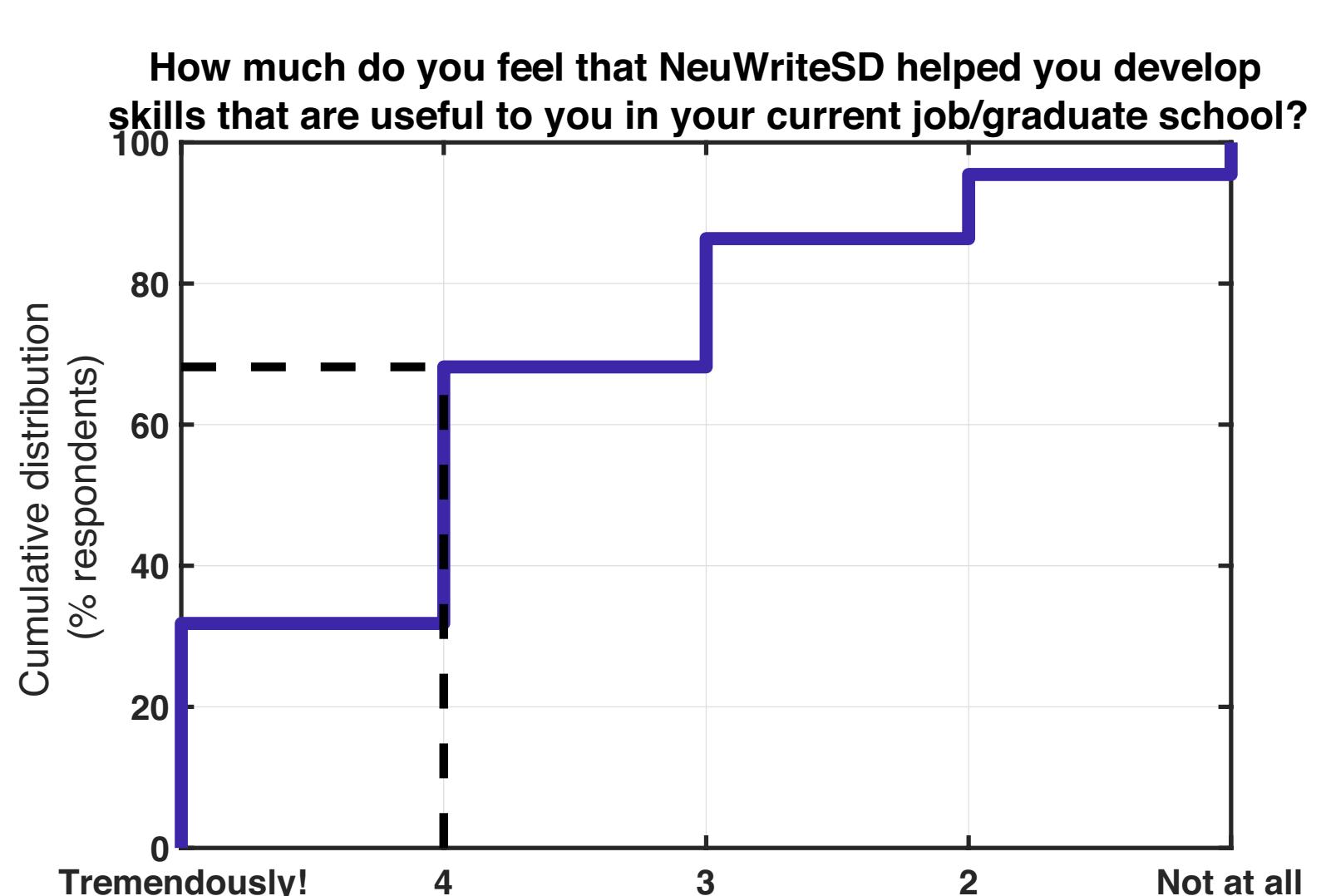


NeuWriteSD members after a successful "pitching" workshop in May 2018

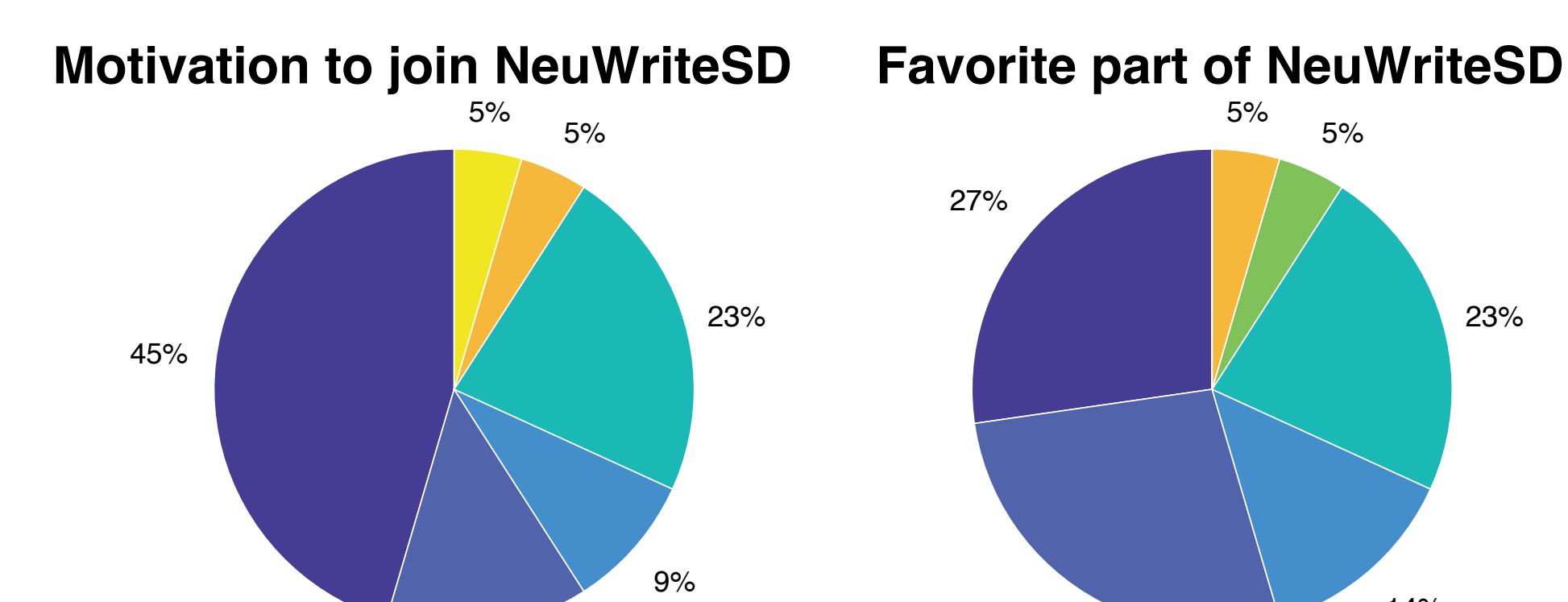
## Our Members Say...

Current and past NeuWriters were asked to complete a brief survey assessing how NeuWriteSD has impacted their communication skills and career choices.

We received 22 responses (50% current NeuWriters, 50% past NeuWriters):



68% of respondents rated the usefulness of skills developed through NeuWriteSD in their jobs/graduate school as 4 or higher (out of 5).



"NeuWriteSD is so great because it forces you to practice multiple forms of communication: both writing and talking about an interesting subject, and delivering written and verbal feedback [...]. These communication skills are important for virtually every career path!" – Dr. Ethan McBride Payne (PhD in Neurosciences from UCSD), Scientist I at the Allen Institute for Brain Science

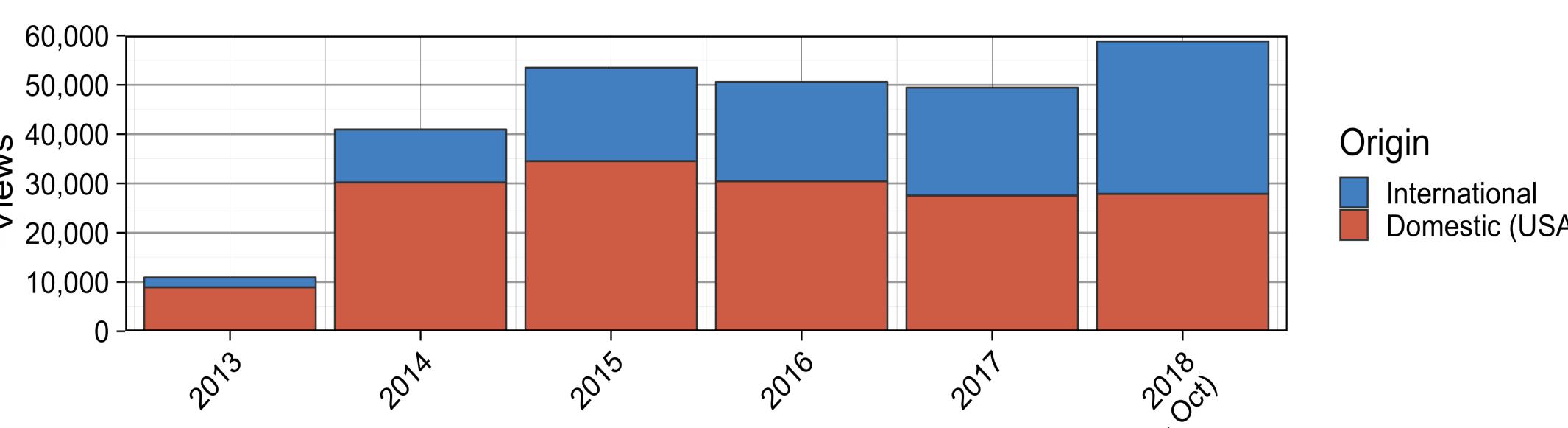
"Without NeuWrite, I don't know if I would have developed the skills (or portfolio) that I needed to land and succeed at my job." – Dr. Kerin Higa (PhD in Neurosciences from UCSD), Scientific Writer at City for Hope

- NeuWriteSD alumni now have gone on to a variety of different positions, such as postdoctoral fellowships (45.5%), research- or teaching-oriented academia (27%), non-profit work (18%), and technical science writing (9%)

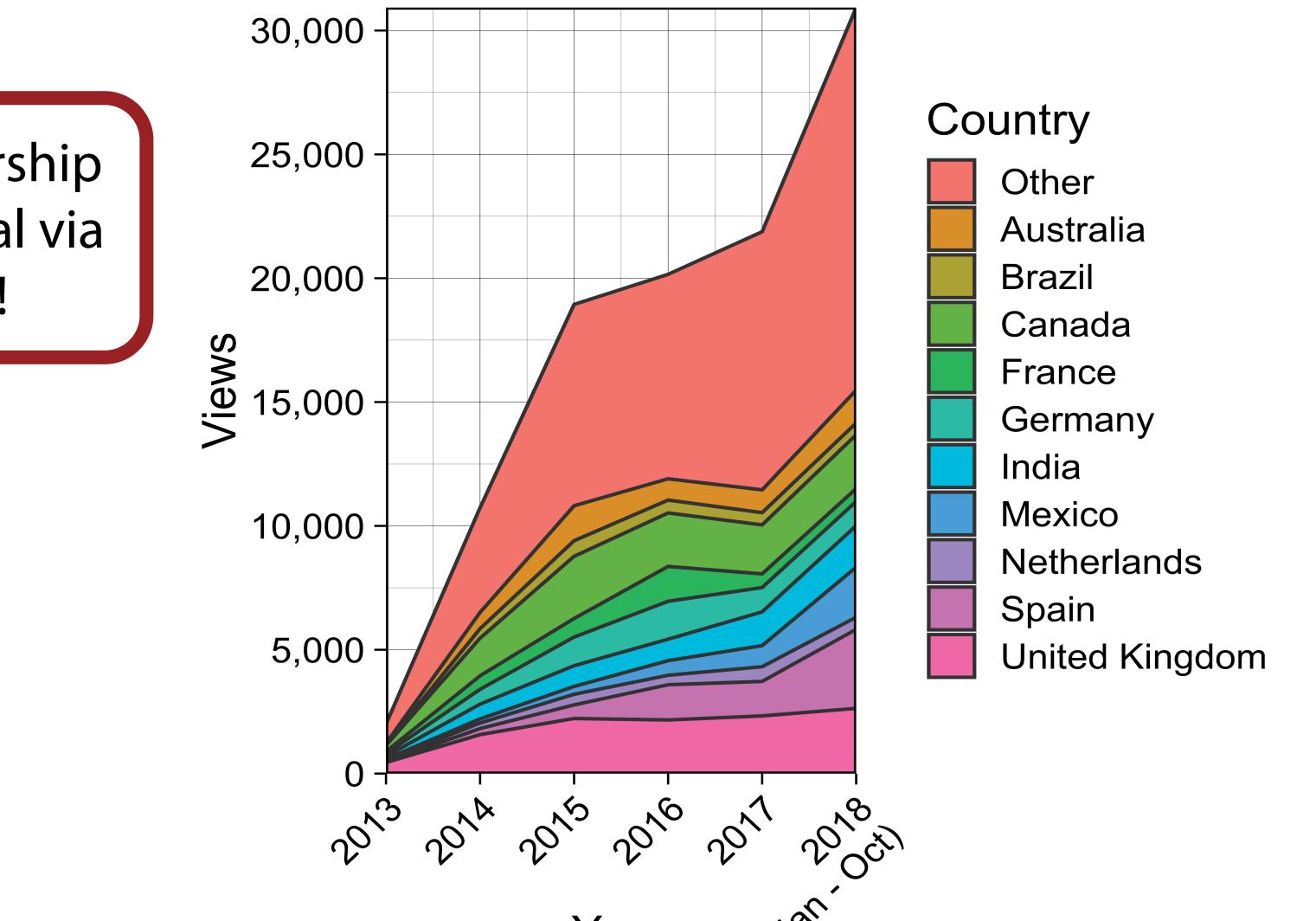
- **41% of respondents have been paid for their writing** for outlets such as Massive Science, Salon, Psychology Today, The Conversation, and more

## Our Expanding Global Readership

### Domestic vs. International Readership



### International Readership by Country



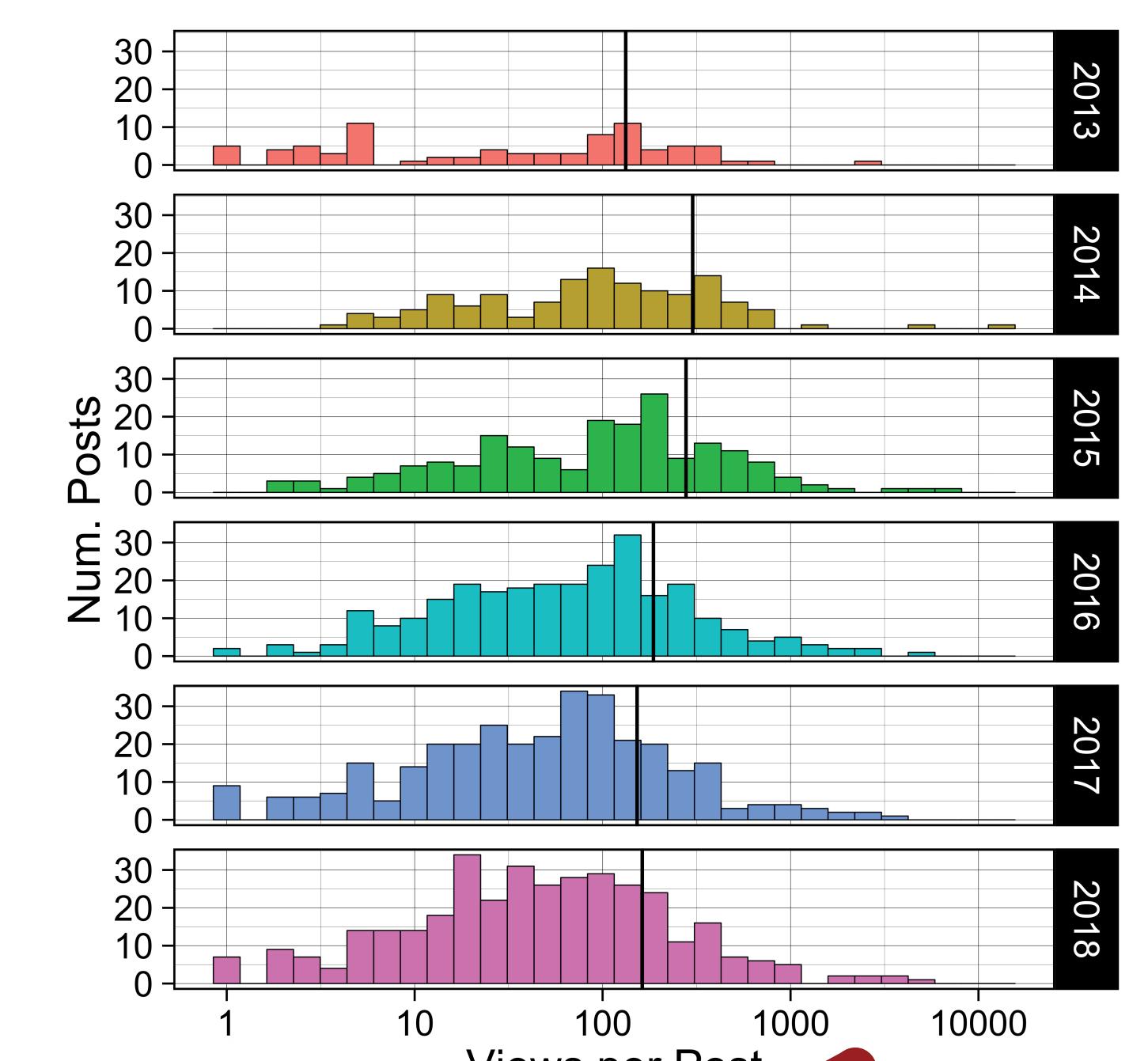
- NeuwriteSD reaches an international audience surpassing 40,000 individuals thus far in 2018, and our website has received nearly 60,000 views
- Overall readership has increased since the group's conception in 2013, and this is largely comprised of a dramatic increase in international readership

## Neuroscience Made Accessible

The weekly articles published on [neuwritesd.org](http://neuwritesd.org) are intended to break down a neuroscience topic of broad interest into engaging and accessible language

The publication of the **NeuWrite Times** print edition allows us to be able to distribute physical copies of some of our favorite articles at local outreach events, conferences, and other venues

The median number of views per post has remained relatively stable since 2013, but each year there are certain posts that get thousands of views



**TWO BRAINS IN ONE HEAD?: THE STORY OF THE SPLIT-BRAIN PHENOMENON**  
by Catie Profaci



"[...] the brain is indeed split into a right and left hemisphere, and the two are connected by a structure called the "corpus callosum", a bundle of nerves through which information can be shared. **Imagine two incredibly powerful computers connected by a bundle of wires such that each computer has access to the data that the other one is processing.** How would you determine which computer was processing what? You guessed it. Cut the cords."

### Most popular article categories in 2018:

1. Pop culture
2. Spanish-translated articles
3. Gender/hormones and sex
4. Drugs
5. Open science

## Conclusion

- NeuwriteSD reaches thousands (over 40,000 so far in 2018) of readers across the world with its weekly blog posts
- NeuwriteSD trains both its members and the UC San Diego community in science communication through workshops and collaborations with other outreach organizations
- NeuwriteSD members have gone on to have successful careers both inside and outside of academia, and the majority cite NeuwriteSD as having helped them develop skills useful to them in their current job
- NeuwriteSD's readership has grown increasingly international, and the immense popularity of spanish-translated articles suggests further opportunities for increasing and diversifying its audience
- NeuwriteSD is effective in both training scientists to communicate and increasing public understanding of neuroscience, and could therefore serve as a model for other graduate programs or institutions

## Contact Us!

Web: <http://neuwritesd.org>

Email: [neuwritesd@gmail.com](mailto:neuwritesd@gmail.com)

 NeuWrite San Diego

 @NeuWriteSD

NeuWriteSD is generously supported by the UCSD Neuroscience Graduate Program & an SfN: San Diego Chapter Grant.