



ADVERTISING RESEARCH FOUNDATION, Inc.
11 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N. Y. LOngacre 3-5100

"... promoting greater effectiveness in advertising and
marketing through objective and impartial research..."

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and the American Association of Advertising Agencies

New York, N. Y.

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Study No. 1

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ADVERTISING RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC.

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New York 22, N. Y.

Announcing

**THE CONTINUING STUDY of
NEWSPAPER READING**

by

The Advertising Research Foundation

of the ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ADVERTISERS

and the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES

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In Cooperation with

The Bureau of Advertising

of

The American Newspaper Publishers Association

New York City

October, 1939

(1)

THE ADVERTISING RESEARCH FOUNDATION is privileged to announce the inauguration of The Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading.

This study is in harmony with the long term objective of the Advertising Research Foundation, jointly supported by the Association of National Advertisers and by the American Association of Advertising Agencies, to make available broad and competent facts regarding the more scientific use of advertising.

This specific Study of Newspaper Reading has been established through the joint recognition of the Foundation and of the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association that a more effective use of the press for advertising purposes might result from a more definite knowledge of newspaper reading habits. The study is financed through grants to the Foundation by the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association.

The Board of Directors of the Advertising Research Foundation exercises complete control over the organization of the study, over technical methods to

be followed and over published results. This control is exercised through the Administrative Committee of the Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading.

The study is designed to reveal certain basic facts regarding the manner in which the public reads newspapers, both with respect to editorial, news and advertising matter, and to present these facts in a systematic, understandable, authoritative and continuing manner.

It does not purport either initially, or perhaps even eventually, to answer all of the questions which may be pertinent to newspaper readership, though it is to be anticipated that the original investigations here announced will be expanded to cover broader fields of interest as may justify.

Emphasis should be placed upon the title, "continuing study," for

this investigation is not projected as a single, or even a number of isolated investigations. Rather it is organized as a continuing and closely articulated series of uniform and comparable studies.

While it is felt that single units of the study, the first of which is released concurrently with this announcement, may

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have immediate interest and value, the size and complexity of the field is such that confident generalizations can be drawn only from broad cumulative data resulting from the continuing series of studies. Indeed, the individual studies are to be released as produced, only in the hope and belief that those who use them will forbear from drawing conclusions which are premature and which are not justified by sufficient breadth of accumulated data.

The individual studies are based upon an analysis of the reading habits of a representative, carefully analyzed cross section of the readers of individual newspapers.

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That there may be an exact understanding of the methods used, the following summary is presented:

(1) An analysis is made of the circulation of the newspaper to be studied and this, together with economic data regarding the city, is used as a basis to select a representative cross section of the paper's circulation. This cross section will always be of sufficient size to provide statistical adequacy.

(2) All readers interviewed are eighteen years of age or older, so the studies relate only to adult readers.

(3) Each individual is interviewed on a fresh, unmarked copy of the paper of the immediately prior day. Each respondent is interviewed on every editor-

ial item, every news item and every advertisement on each page of the newspaper. He is asked: "Did you happen to read anything on this page?" "Did you happen to read this story or this advertisement?" The technique used in interviewing is designed to afford protection against errors and to conform to the highest standards attainable.

(4) Whatever the respondent has actually read is marked on a copy of the newspaper. Each separate news story, editorial, comic, news picture, and advertisement gets its own mark. Only those things which he has actually read are recorded. The interviewers disregard anything which is "usually read," "liked," or "going to be read."

(5) The reading of advertising matter, both national and local, is recorded. The individual is questioned, with respect to the advertisements of national advertisers, as to whether he read the important portions of the advertisement, such as headline, illustrations and copy blocks.

(6) Staff interviewers are supplemented in each city by selected interviewers who are carefully trained and tested. Interviews are verified by checkers who go to individuals who have been interviewed and ascertain the validity of the questioning. Partial interviews or unsatisfactory interviews of any kind are instantly discarded.

(7) All field interview copies are filed and stored for a reasonable period of time, ready for inspection by any responsible party.

(8) The results of the individual field interviews are tabulated, and the percentage of reading of the total number interviewed is indicated on each editorial, news story, picture and advertisement. The percentages are tabulated separately for men and for women readers.

(9) A master copy is then prepared for distribution, together with a summary of important statistical data relating to the particular study.

(10) In certain of the statistical summaries an index figure is given indicating reading per line per 100,000 readers. This index is determined by applying the "per cent reading" to 100,000 and dividing by the number of lines of space used. This index is included for the convenience of the user of these reports in making comparisons of the reading of various items on the basis of the common denominator of the agate line. It should be used for no other purpose. This index figure cannot be converted into a figure showing the number of readers per line and, therefore, affords no basis for the computation of cost per reader per line nor any basis for cost comparison with other media. The figure "100,000" bears no relation to the actual circulation of the newspaper ex-

amined. It is used merely to establish a uniform range of index figures which can be handled conveniently. Being a uniform size measurement it is just as applicable to newspapers with very small circulation as it is to newspapers with very large circulation.

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The symbols and percentage figures used on the master copies are designed to be simple and understandable, but care should be taken in their interpretation.

All percentages indicated on the master copy represent the percentage of readers interviewed who read the various items in the editorial, news and advertising columns.

At the top of each page is indicated the percentage of readers interviewed, both men and women, who recalled having read any editorial, news or advertising content of that page. This percentage is carried under the caption, "Any for Page." It is in no sense a measure of the proportion of readers interviewed who turned the page or whose eyes may have brushed the page without consciously stopping to read any of the content. Sometimes the indices of "Any for Page" have been referred to as "page traffic," which is inaccurate. These indices are actually a record of "reader traffic stops" on the page.

Mere headline noters are not recorded; only actual readers of news stories. Page "reader traffic stops" would be increased if headline readers were included.

At the top of each advertisement is given the percentage of the readers interviewed who read any portion of the advertisement. This figure is indicated under the caption, "Any This Ad."

In certain editorial and feature departments, percentages may be indicated to show the percentage of readers interviewed who read some portion of that type of content. For instance, under "Any Comic Readers" is given the percentage of readers who have read one or more comics in the newspaper; and under "Any Editorial Readers" is given the percentage of those interviewed who read any one or all of the editorials. Under the caption, "Any for This Section Exclusive of First Page" is indicated the percentage of readers interviewed who read anything in that particular section beyond the front page.

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In the interpretation of percentage figures as applied to individual items, some special caution must be exercised.

(1) The page position values vary in every issue of a newspaper according to the content of that particular page or adjoining page. No satisfactory conclusions can be drawn from a few studies, in different cities. No page position

is of the same value every day if the news and advertising content is changed. Certain pages, like the front page, comic page, picture page, and editorial page, may average approximately the same audience day after day, but such is not the case of pages in the run-of-paper.

(2) Percentages on advertisements indicate only the relative audience for the advertisements and these percentages are not, in themselves, a measure of advertising effectiveness.

(3) The percentages of reader interest on editorial, news and advertising matter in a single issue of a newspaper are indicative of the reading by adult readers only.

(4) The percentages of reader interest in continuing features or departments of the newspaper are indicative of the interest in those features, comics, or departments for that issue only, and are not necessarily an indication of the reading for a particular feature or department over a period of time. The position, headline, or illustration for that particular issue may cause the item in question to vary considerably. Neither is the percentage figure indicated on continuing features or departments of a single issue of a newspaper a complete index of the *continuing intensity* of interest or popularity of the features.

(5) Until considerably more data are available, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the normal reader interest in advertisements of specific types of prod-

ucts; clothing; food and other classifications.

(6) The reader interest percentages indicated on the master copy of the newspaper studied do not afford a means of comparison between that newspaper and others in different cities or within the same city.

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To put into effect the detailed procedure the Foundation engaged the services of Publication Research Service, successor to Gallup Research Service, under the management of Mr. Carl J. Nelson and with the consulting assistance of Mr. Harold H. Anderson, and approved the appointment of an auditor directly responsible to the staff of the Foundation.

In The Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading, the Advertising Research Foundation believes there lies a potentially great contribution to a more realistic understanding of the Press.

It appreciates the candor with which the publishers of the United States and Canada have approached these searching inquiries and their confidence in the technical and judicial capacity of the Foundation.

Facts are of no value unless they are put to work. To this end the Foundation invites a critical evaluation of the materials produced and above all a practical application.

Inquiries regarding the study should be addressed to the Chairman of the Board.

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