

7.4 MPX — a study of magazine page exposure

One of the important and unique values of magazines for the advertiser is the fact that the average reader reads a magazine on more than one occasion, over several reading days. This affords the opportunity for the reader to be exposed more than one time to an advertisement.

The purpose of this study, conducted by Audits & Surveys, Inc. for Magazine Publishers Association, was to obtain an up-to-date measure of magazine page traffic — that is, to what extent a magazine page generates more than one exposure per reader. Or, even more specifically: the average *number of times*, an average reader, is exposed to an average page, of an average issue of an average magazine...all of which, in turn, is defined as Magazine Page Exposure, or MPX.

The universe for this study was all persons 18 years of age and older living in telephone households, both listed and unlisted. The sample selection procedure was a multi-stage probability sampling, similar to that used by the US Bureau of the Census. In the first stage of sampling, a probability sample of 100 areas (locations) were selected to represent the continental United States. In the second stage of sampling, pages from telephone directories covering those areas were selected. In the final stage of sampling, one telephone number was randomly selected from each page. The actual number dialled was another number generated by adding ten to the listed number randomly selected. This procedure provides coverage of both listed and unlisted telephone numbers.

A total of 1,510 interviews were completed during the 30-day period, spread evenly with approximately 50 completed interviews each day to account for variations in the publication and distribution schedules for both weekly and monthly magazines as well as exposure and readership of each. Since the 30-day interviewing period of the survey covers the publication interval of one issue of a monthly magazine but 4.3 issues of a weekly magazine, the weekly magazine data were weighted so that the final tabulations take this into account.

The sample of 31 magazines was selected to provide representation across a number of variables, including:

- (1) weeklies and monthlies
- (2) dual and single sex audience
- (3) general and special interest
- (4) large and small circulation

Interviews were conducted from a centralized telephone facility using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing System (CATI) which:

- (1) randomly selected the respondent to be interviewed within each household,
- (2) randomly rotated the list of magazines the respondent was queried about, and
- (3) logically handled the branching of subsequent questions referring to only those magazines read yesterday.

Telephone interviews were conducted between 5.00pm and 9.30pm on weekdays, and between 12.00 noon and 7.00pm on Sundays to maximise the likelihood of the respondent being at home during the first household contact. Interviewers made an initial call and up to two callbacks in order to complete an interview with a designated respondent. A completion rate of 65% of all initially designated telephone numbers was achieved. Of the 35% non-completes, 22% were refusals and the other 13% were perpetual no-answers or designated respondent not at home.

The 'yesterday' recall method was used to determine:

- (1) readership of each of the 31 magazines used in the study, and number of issues read of each,
- (2) whether the reading of an issue yesterday was the *first time* respondent had read or looked into the particular issue, and
- (3) what portion of the issue's total pages were read yesterday.

The questionnaire was designed by Audits & Surveys, Inc.

Screening questions were asked of all respondents, which included number of adults in the household, and the respondent's television viewing, newspaper reading and magazine reading done yesterday.

The question about whether or not the respondent engaged in any magazine reading yesterday served as a filter question.

The specific magazine readership questions were asked of those who had 'read magazines yesterday.' These included: Had respondent read or looked into each of 31 specified magazines yesterday.

For each *magazine* read or looked into number of issues of that magazine respondent had read yesterday

For each *issue* read looked into number of occasions that issue was read or looked into; time of day for each reading occasion; percentage of pages read per occasion; whether that issue was read or looked into *before* yesterday.

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The questionnaire closed with standard demographic questions which were asked of all respondents (both magazine readers and non-readers), including respondent's age, sex, educational level, employment status and occupation and total income of the household.

When daily readership is measured on a yesterday basis, over the publication interval of a magazine — both first-time and subsequent reading days included — the result is a measure of total person reading days generated by a single magazine issue. The sum of *first-time* issue readers provides the base of total readers. It is not necessary to identify the *specific issue* read, but it is essential to record the *number of different issues* of a magazine read yesterday. With this procedure, the potential problems of parallel and replicate readership associated with the technique are avoided.

The two basic components of a measure of magazine page exposure are **(1)** average number of reading days per reader and **(2)** percent of a magazine's

pages opened per reading day.

Reading days were determined by dividing the total number of yesterday issue reading days by the number of *first-time* yesterday issue readings. This computation resulted in a finding of 3.2 reading days for the average reader of the 31 magazines — a figure, by the way, similar to that found by Politz in his classic studies of the 1960's.

The average reader opened 52.4% of the average issue during his / her yesterday reading.

The average number of reading days found by the study (3.2) times the average portion of pages opened yesterday (52.4%) resulted in a study finding of 1.7 exposures per reader per magazine page (MPX).

Demography of the respondent seemed to have a slight effect on Magazine Page Exposure. For example, college graduates were exposed 1.9 times to the average page compared with 1.6 times for those with high school graduation or less education—a 19% higher level of exposure to the magazine page by college graduates.