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GETTING AT THE MESSAGE - MORE COST EFFECTIVE MEDIA SELECTIONS

SUMMARY AND MAIN FINDINGS

The subject of this paper is the page exposure and the intensity of reading. It is based on a survey on behalf of the group of newspapers within the German MA, dealing with amount read, reading time, page exposure time, page traffic and recognition scores for advertisements. The conclusion can quickly be drawn:

(1) Dailies are read more thoroughly

The experiments of the MA aimed at exposure qualifications making use of an 'amount read' scale. In general the scale is useful, but it measures differently for dailies and for magazines. Not considering the differences would erase the advantages of newspapers.

(2) Large page volumes are counter-productive

The survey demonstrates: The more pages the less the recall of pages opened.

(3) Dailies achieve a long page exposure time

The page exposure time for dailies is sufficient for effective communication processes. This is not true for the majority of magazines, which achieve only short page exposure time spans.

(4) Ads in dailies have higher effectiveness chances

With equal size advertisements the daily newspapers offer better effectiveness conditions because the larger type area attracts a longer exposure time through a varied environment.

(5) Reader-Loyalty influences the advertising effectiveness

The more positive the attitude towards the newspaper the larger the amount read, and therefore the better the chance for advertisements to be noticed.

(6) Reading intensity influences the ad noting scores

The opportunity to be exposed to an advertisement is influenced most by the intensity of reading the pages, i.e. the parts noticed as a share of the total page.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past there have been many attempts within and outside the bodies of the MA = German Media Analysis to find a way of moving from the carrier contact to the exposure to the message. Yardsticks for Exposure Quality and the follow-ups were probably the most important surveys, showing a quality index for different carrier contact probabilities - mainly for magazines - that finally lead to the AG.MA experiments of 1990, the 'Parallelwelle' getting closer to the exposures to the message, to the advertisements.

All the results were of relatively little value to the dailies and could only partially transferred from magazines to newspapers, due to the specific functions of newspapers and magazines within the total scope of information sources. Therefore the majority of the regional dailies within the MA commissioned extensive experiments to investigate the contact qualities from the view of daily newspapers.

The results of these experiments demonstrate the special qualities of daily newspapers, however, in addition they allow evaluations based on different using probabilities and therefore a direct intermedia comparison with magazines.

For the German population the daily newspapers are indispensable sources for information. They deliver facts, references, background information, entertainment for different aspects of life in its different sections.

The main characteristics can be seen in the regional reference, with its extensive reporting on the immediate surroundings, in a way no other print or electronic medium can offer. The multidimensional functions of the papers and their indispensability were confirmed in many representative regional analyses.

Always more than half of the respondents claimed, they could least dispense with reading their dailies. Television and radio trailed far behind. Magazines played hardly any role looking at it from this point of view.

The following table demonstrates this fact by showing the results of two very recent surveys from spring 1990.

Table 1: Indispensability of Media

	Cologne Survey	Bremer- haven Survey
	N = 721	N = 1180
Indispensable are ...		
Daily newspapers	51	55
Television	27	22
Radio	16	15
Magazines	5	7
Free sheets	1	2

Daily newspapers enjoy a very high degree of competence and credibility. They can only achieve this status because they are well accepted and used by the readers.

The advertisements are a very important and surprisingly indispensable part of the papers. Some parts of the classified ads are rated to be as equally important as the editorial sections. The transfer from the editorial parts to the level of advertising messages is intense. Page exposure and reading intensity scores are far higher than comparable scores for other print media.

Until now these statements could only be confirmed via occasional and sporadic surveys, however, the global and compatible evidence in relation to the methods developed for the magazines within the MA was still missing. This gap has now been filled. The new and comprehensive experimental survey TZ90 (TZ is short for Tageszeitung = Daily Newspaper) includes results for

- page exposure
- amount read
- intensity of reading
- time spent reading
- page exposure time (PET)

for dailies as well as magazines. The survey includes a quasi validation through a reading-noting study, measuring recall and recognition of editorial and advertising contents of the most recent copies of the magazines or dailies respectively, after the end of the publishing interval.

The main findings here beforehand: The study confirms with all assumptions and 'prejudices': The advantage of the newspapers can be found in the large number of intensive communication processes, processes a reader can remember, a substitute for advertising effectiveness.

2. AMOUNT READ

The amount read was measured in two ways:

(1): Compatible to the MA scales and answer categories:

- (almost) no pages
- only a few pages
- approximately a quarter of the pages
- approximately half of the pages
- approximately three quarters of the pages
- (nearly) all pages

... opened to look at something or to read (dailies excluding classified advertisement pages).

(2): Through a reading/noting study of complete issues of selected regional newspapers, which in Germany are sold almost exclusively by subscription, and 14 general interest magazines, representative of the scope of German magazines within the MA, for the issue of the most recent completed publishing interval. The noting study for the magazines was limited to 54 pages selected at random, to avoid interview overload, which could have influenced the answering behaviour negatively by going through too many pages.

For dailies as well as magazines, the top box of the scale: 'all, almost all of the pages' was filled most and almost equal with 57% or 53% respectively.

Therefore, numerically both media would achieve the same communication performance. However, this does not correspond with the cross-check through the reading/noting study. Here the qualities of the dailies can be demonstrated clearly.

For dailies the scale score can be verified to 71%, whereas the match for magazines comes up to only 61%.

Table 2: Correspondence Between Scale Scores and Noting Scores

Top Box of Intensity Scale	Recognition Score
(Nearly) all pages opened	%
Dailies	71
Magazines	61

Daily newspapers communicate much more contents that can be recalled and achieve therefore a higher conformity of the 'amount read scale' scores with actual recognition scores. Compared to journals the carrier contacts of dailies can be given higher weights to express their communication performance.

For the dailies all 'amount read scale scores' confirm well with the noting scores, independent of format and pagination. The national or supra-regional dailies show slightly lower scores, but they fulfil different functions and are, outside their main distribution area, to some degree regarded as 'second paper' in addition to the local paper with the regional orientation.

The differences for the individual magazines are much more severe. The conformity of the scale results with the noting study varies from 52% to 78%, depending on the magazine.

Table 3: Correspondence Between Scale Scores and Noting Scores

Top Box of Intensity Scale	Recognition Score
(Nearly) all pages opened	%
BILD der Frau	78
Das Beste	75
Tina	71
BILD am Sonntag	70
Bunte	65
Schöner Wohnen	65
Hörzu	61
Brigitte	60
Freundin	60
Für Sie	60
Das Haus	59
Der Spiegel	55
ADAC Motorwelt	53
Stern	52

The recall of the contents is multi-dimensionally influenced. It reflects the interest in the topic, the layout, the inclusion of photos and other formal criteria as well as socially expected behaviour resulting in over- or underclaims of noting individual articles or topics, depending on their social acceptance.

These dimensions are different facets of just one variable: communication performance. It differs extremely by titles in relation to the amount read scale.

Part of the variation can be explained by factors such as reading habits (parallel versus replicated reading), actuality, information versus entertainment function, thematic structure, lexical character, reference function, pagination. Such a bundle of influencing factors leaves the conclusion: reading of daily newspapers is more homogeneous, calculable, but also: the 'amount read scale' scores have to be evaluated differently for the individual magazines or at least magazine groups.

3. INTENSITY OF READING

The amount read scores include intensive as well as transient exposures to the page opened. These exposures are being qualified by reading time, perception, appreciation and involvement with the contents. The longer the reading time, the better the chances for advertising messages within the editorial environment to be picked up. The average reading time offers some clues. In the survey it was measured by means of an estimation scale with the following categories:

- at the most 5 minutes
- 5 - 10 minutes
- 10 - 15 minutes
- 15 - 20 minutes
- 20 - 30 minutes
- 30 - 45 minutes
- 45 - 60 minutes
- 60 - 90 minutes
- 90 - 120 minutes
- 120 - 150 minutes
- 150 - 180 minutes
- longer than 180 minutes

Table 4: Average Reading Time in Minutes by Amount Read (Scale)

	All Subscription Papers	Regional Papers	National Papers	Newsstand Papers	60 Selected Magazines
	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.
Total (average)	42.3	41.9	47.2	24.2	44.0
(Almost) no pages	*	*	*	*	*
Few Pages	16.3	16.7	10.1	10.7	16.7
One quarter	23.6	24.2	18.9	13.2	21.0
Half	33.7	34.0	30.7	14.8	29.9
Three quarters	43.9	42.4	58.0	25.1	42.6
(Nearly) all pages	48.7	47.9	62.8	27.2	54.0

* = Low base

The average reading time is almost the same for subscription newspapers and magazines. The time score increases steeply with the increasing amount read, as expected. This intensity of the exposure is effective every day with the dailies as against the more sporadic consumption of magazines.

From the total media time budget per day a considerable part is reserved for information, for the reading of newspapers, matching the indispensability of this medium.

Time spent reading on its own is only one indicator. It has to be linked with pagination of the issues and number of pages opened. This combination shows the extraordinary intensity of reading and thus the quality of daily newspapers as an effective advertising medium.

The average page exposure time (PET) comes to 90 seconds per average newspaper page opened. With magazines the average reading time per page opened varies extremely and comes at the unfavourable end to 12 seconds and at the favourable side to 53 seconds with an average of 27 seconds.

Table 5: Quality Factors

	Amount Read	Average Reading Time	Number of Pages	Exposure Time per Page Available	Exposure Time per Page Opened
	%	min.	abs.	sec.	sec.
All newspapers	78	42	36	71	90
Regional papers	79	42	35	72	91
Newsstand papers	83	24	19	76	91
Magazines	74	42	136	21	27

Note: 'Amount read' has been calculated by weighting the scale boxes literally: (almost) no pages = 0.05; only few = 0.10; a quarter = 0.25; half = 0.50; three quarters = 0.75; (nearly) all = 100

Even if dailies are only being read selectively in parts, the reader takes sufficient time. In this case the average page exposure time does not differ much from cases when (nearly) all pages were seen.

With magazines this is again extremely different. Small amounts read lead to short reading times. Sufficient time for effective communication can only be assumed when (nearly) all pages were claimed seen, i.e. at least 30 seconds time spent reading one page on average.

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Table 6: Exposure Time per Page Opened According to Noting Study

	Hardly any pages sec.	Index	Nearly all pages sec.	Index
Total pages				
Dailies	94	100	97	103
Magazines	14	100	22	154
Text pages only				
Dailies	117	100	118	101
Magazines (1)	16	100	26	159
(1) TV schedule section excluded				
Advertising pages				
Dailies: Ads less than 1/6 page	87	100	92	106
Magazines: Ads between 1/5-1/2 page	17	100	28	168
Dailies: Ads between 1/6-1/5 page	98	100	107	109
Magazines: Half page ads	17	100	23	134
Dailies: Ads 1/4 page or 1000 mm	91	100	112	123
Magazines: Ads 2/3 page or 1000 mm	13	100	26	205

4. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PAPERS

Amount read, established by means of a verbal scale and time spent reading combined are a reliable indicator for intensity of reading, here the exposure time per page opened. The dominance of this reading intensity creates a substitute for communication and advertising effectiveness.

The long reading times for dailies cannot be explained just by the larger formats and the special editorial mixtures per page, or by the mixture of editorial parts and advertisements. The main factor seems to be the reader-paper-loyalty, the proximity of the readers to 'their' paper as a consequence of the indispensable information supply: The more positive the attitudes towards the newspapers the higher the amount read.

Table 7: Attitudes towards Dailies and Amount Read Based on Readers of Test Issues

	Compliance with Statement	Amount Read
	%	%
'For the daily reading of papers I usually take enough time'		
I agree...		
completely	47	67
largely	35	58
less	14	53
not at all	3	40
'I read papers to get more information'		
I agree...		
completely	80	62
largely	18	56
less	1	54
not at all	0	37
Proximity to newspapers		
This paper is...		
very close to me	74	63
close to me	24	56
distant	2	48

The daily newspapers show advantages for those advertisers who need an intensive contact with the readers to communicate the message and to anchor the central statements of the advertising copy within the minds of the target persons.

5. EVALUATION

So far the basic and significant insights from the survey. However, the question remains open, how can these findings be used for media planning? To answer this question, we have to recap and highlight:

- the 'amount read scale' discriminates between readers of high and readers of low reading intensity.
- The 'amount read scale' is reliable. Repetitions of measurement resulted largely in similar levels.
- However, corresponding scale steps do not mean the same amount read for dailies and magazines . The top box '(nearly) all pages opened' is 10 percentage points higher for dailies than for magazines.
- Therefore, the 'amount read scale' steps have to be evaluated differently for dailies and for magazines. The calibration should be based on individual evaluations of the scale steps in correspondence with the noting scores.

The noting scores can be considered as a valuable tool because the AG.MA experiments conducted by Peter Beike in Spring 1990 showed that page exposures recorded on video in a test studio were reproduced relatively closely in subsequent noting studies. The results of these experiments suggested separate calibrations for dailies and for magazines. The following weights were discussed.

Table 8: Weighting According to the 'Amount Read Scale'

	Literal Ascription	Noting Scores Papers	Noting Scores Magazines	Trans- formed Scores Papers	Trans- formed Scores Magazines
Scale steps:					
(Almost) no pages	5	16	17	0	2
Few pages	10	30	27	25	20
A quarter	25	42	40	47	44
Half	50	56	52	73	65
Three quarters	75	61	60	82	80
(Nearly) all pages	100	71	61	100	82

The first column considers a literal translation of the 'amounts' as weights. However, the experiments showed that there were allowances for the different media in different areas of the scale. These differences result in partiality to the media. Accordingly, columns two and three show the weights suggested by the findings of the experiments, e.g. oriented on the noting scores in correlation with the 'amount read scale'.

These weights can be transformed (weighted with 0 for the lowest recognised number of pages and 100 for the largest number of recognised pages within the noting study) to reflect the 'literal' scores more and accurately, and to allow for the relative high tolerance range for small 'amounts read', thus providing an improved comparison to the literal verbal scale. The effect of the calibration is shown in the following rank orders:

Table 9: Page Exposure Probability (PEP) as Percent of AIR (Different Weightings)

Title	PEP Literal Weighting	Title	PEP Noting Score Weighting	PEP Transformed Noting Scores
Bella	88	BILD	64	86
Bravo	85	Regional Papers	63	85
Gong	85	National Papers	59	79
Hörzu	85	Bella	58	77
Burda Moden	85	Fernsehwoche	58	77
BILD der Frau	84	Gong	58	77
Tina	84	Hörzu	58	76
Fernsehwoche	84	BILD der Frau	58	76
Funk Uhr	83	Bravo	58	76
BILD	83	Tina	58	76
TV Hören &	83	Funk Uhr	57	75
Brigitte	80	Brigitte	57	75
Regional Papers	79	TV Hören &	57	74
BILD am Sonntag	78	Neue Revue	57	74
Für Sie	78	Burda Moden	57	74
Neue Revue	77	BILD am Sonntag	56	73
Der Spiegel	75	Für Sie	56	73
Stern	75	Stern	55	72
Bunte	74	Der Spiegel	55	72
National Papers	70	Bunte	54	69
Quick	69	Quick	53	68

As we have seen earlier, the different meaning of the scale steps for dailies and magazines is to a large extent caused by the significant differences in the pagination. It accounts for the extreme differences found for different issues of the same title. To arrive at realistic estimates of the Page Exposure Probability based on the amount read, both the noting or scale scores and the pagination have to be included for the publication in question.

The page volume of dailies (excluding classified) is usually significantly smaller than that of magazines. It explains to an extent the closer correlation between the scale top box and the recognition scores. But: The more voluminous the pagination the fewer pages will be recognised, even by people who have claimed to have opened nearly all the pages.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIA SELECTIONS

The main question then is: How can 'amount read' and pagination be used for the evaluation of Page Exposure Probabilities? To get at the message? The answer is: Using multiple regression analysis.

Multiple regression analysis allows the simultaneous comprehension and demonstration of a number of variable on one dependent variable. In this case the page exposure probability according to the noting study was set as the dependent variable. The interesting question was, how the scale scores together with the pagination would influence the page exposure probability.

Both newspapers and magazines were included in one regression run. The different sample sizes for the two media categories were compensated by factor weighting. The main findings were:

The most important criterion for the determination of the page exposure probabilities is the 'amount read score'

the next is pagination

The result is the following regression equation: Page Exposure Probability in Percent = 0.32079 * Amount Read Score - 0.04854 * Pagination + 38.80 (level constant)

For simplification and to match this experiment with the AG.MA experiments the 'amount read' scale steps were weighted literally, i.e. 0.25 for one quarter, 0.75 for three quarters etc. Pagination has a negative influence on the page exposure probability, as expected and as shown by the minus sign.

The following table illustrates the effect of the regression formula.

Table 10: Page Exposure Probabilities (PEP) by Different Weightings

Title	Page Exposure Probability Literal Weighting	Title	Page Exposure Probability According to Regression Analysis
Bella	88	BILD	65
Bravo	85	Bella	63
Gong	85	Bravo	63
Hörzu	85	Bild der Frau	62
Burda Moden	85	Regional Papers	62
BILD der Frau	84	Tina	62
Tina	84	Funk Uhr	61
Fernsehwoche	84	Fernsehwoche	61
Funk Uhr	83	Gong	60
BILD	83	TV Hören & Sehen	59
TV Hören & Sehen	83	Hörzu	59
Brigitte	80	National Papers	59
Regional Papers	79	Neue Revue	59
BILD am Sonntag	78	Bild am Sonntag	59
Für Sie	78	Burda Moden	59
Neue Revue	77	Bunte	55
Der Spiegel	75	Quick	55
Stern	75	Für Sie	53
Bunte	74	Brigitte	51
National Papers	70	Stern	51
Quick	69	Der Spiegel	51

Some of the changes in ranking are quite dramatic, especially for the newspapers. They in general move up. The majority of magazines remain at their original rank, established by 'literal' weights of the 'amount read scale', in the way the MA experiments 1990 tried to solve the problem of getting at the message. However, this way is not impartial to the individual media vehicles as shown before.

With the help of the regression formula it is possible to reflect the reality of the page exposure probability much better, therefore, any media selections incorporating the regression formula weights should produce a clearer image of the actual probabilities of contact with the advertising message. This can easily be achieved by using the regression results as a new media weight.

Future steps will make it possible to incorporate more of the exposure qualifying criteria such as page exposure time, calibrated scale weights etc to reflect a wider scope of the exposure quality and to get even closer to message.

7. OVERVIEW

In addition to the AG.MA experiment of 1990, incorporating exposure qualifying criteria into the MA questionnaire as published in the 'Parallelwelle', a group of daily newspapers in Germany have submitted a large scale experiment to evaluate the 'amount read' as it was used in the AG.MA experiment.

'Literal' weightings according to the verbal scale lead to biases and false evaluations of the media. In general the 'amount read scale' overestimates the actual page opened or the page opened as measured via a noting study.

The key factor is that the claims mean different amounts for different media. There is no average or consistent distortion. For example, for daily newspapers the top box of the 'amount read scale' (literal weight = 100) means 71 percent of all pages opened. For magazines the same scale score means only 61 percent of pages opened.

Whereas the levels for newspapers do not vary much from the 71 percent score, corresponding levels for magazine vary from 78 to 52 percent. It is therefore less of a problem for dailies and more an intramedia problem for magazines.

The experiments show a clearly visible correlation between pagination and over- or underestimations of the amount read. The more pages the larger the difference between amount read claims and 'reality' as measured through the noting study. This explains to some extent the lower level of magazine pages opened. Magazines in this country have an average pagination of approximately 140 pages, while the subscription newspapers range between 20 and 40 pages, not counting classified advertisement pages. The popular paper BILD-Zeitung claims an average of 13 pages.

The experiment shows that the establishment of exposure qualifying criteria such as 'amount read' is feasible and useful. However, the direct claims of the respondents have to be corrected to better reflect the probability of page exposures:

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- The higher the amount read scores, the higher the real amount reading.
- Low actual reading scores are underestimated by the amount read scale, high actual reading scores produce overclaims. Therefore, the amount read scores have to be weighted to produce the effective page exposures.
- Overclaims in reading correlate positively with large number of pages. Therefore, pagination has to be considered as an important variable.

All factors can be incorporated into a multiple regression analysis to show the effects each of these variables on the page exposure probabilities. The basic regression analysis delivered the tool for calibrating the exposure qualifying characteristics for the probability of getting at the message:

- the numerically converted reading scores multiplied with 0.32
- plus
- level constant of 38.80
- minus
- pagination of the issue multiplied with 0.05

The comparatively low weight of the reading scores reflects the fact that the share of pages opened increases less severely than the respondents claim. The level constant takes into account that an amount read claim of 'one quarter' correspond with roughly 40 pages opened.

The suggested calibrations will hopefully contribute to the efforts to abolish current distortions and partiality to the media factor as they are applied within the MA experiments. Bearing in mind that in Germany the users of the MA data, agencies and clients aim at exposure qualifying characteristics to replace vehicle contacts and get at the exposure to the message, it would be more consistent to reflect all the variations of the media and to calibrate the MA results accordingly.

8. BOILER PLATE

Questionnaire Contents

MA media questions including the establishment of the amount read and for magazines the multiple page exposure plus further criteria such as time spent reading within the broadest audience of 60 magazines and all dailies distributed in the test area.

Reading/noting study for a selection of dailies and magazines establishing the Starch scores for editorial articles and advertisements.

For daily newspapers the noting study was based on the issue of the previous day. The interviews included the three quality national, respectively supra-regional, German dailies: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Die Welt and Süddeutsche Zeitung plus a selection of regional subscription newspapers to reflect a representative variety of the different areas, especially the metropolitan areas, as well as the different sizes of German papers.

The noting study for the magazines included 14 titles to reflect a representative variety of magazine groups across the German Media Analysis. (The titles were: Das Haus, Schöner Wohnen, Das Beste, Hörzu, Stern, Bunte, Tina, Der Spiegel, Für Sie and ADAC Motorwelt. The test issue had to be at least as old as one full publishing interval and be replaced by a more recent issue to ensure the reading events being completed.

If a respondent had been reading more than one magazine and newspaper from the selection, only one noting study for a daily and one for a magazine (selected at random) were carried out.

Sample

Random sample of the German adult population (14+ years) within the test area. Per household one person was selected at random, regardless if the person was a reader of a magazine or daily in question or not. Sample size 1,314 respondents.

Plus a random sample of subscribers of daily newspapers within the test area. Per subscriber household one person was selected at random, independent from the reading of magazines or the subscribed newspaper. Sample size: 1,043 respondents.

Both sample components were merged into one data base to reflect the structure of the German population within the test areas, using MA data from the newspaper part as guide-line. The total data base matches the official statistics and includes 2,357 respondents.

Interview Timing

For dailies all of the six issues of a week were included. Sunday papers play hardly any role in Germany, except for the two national Sunday editions: BILD am Sonntag and WELT am Sonntag. The interviews were almost equally distributed over all days. They were set as exactly equal in the weighting process. Sunday and Monday interviews were related to the Saturday issue and accordingly seen as one day.

Test Areas

Due to the fact that the survey was aimed at establishing criteria such as amount read and reading time of dailies and magazines and confronting those results with the page traffic scores of the noting studies it was necessary to restrict the test area to the circulation areas of the representative dailies. So far the results are not representative for the whole Federal Republic of Germany. But due to the extensive selection of test areas the findings can largely be generalised and allow fundamental statements and insights concerning methodological questions and relations between different print media.

In view of merging with the MA data the test areas of both sample components were based on Landkreise, which are relatively small administrative districts, similar to counties. The following were included:

München Stadt
München Land
Starnberg
Hamburg
Kassel Stadt
Kassel Land
Leverkusen
Würzburg Stadt
Würzburg Land
Oldenburg
Stuttgart
Böblingen
Bochum-Wattenscheid
Gelsenkirchen

Fieldwork

The data were established in two sweeps, the first from September 29th to October 4th, 1989, the second from October 10th to October 16th, 1989, one sweep per test area. The supra-regional dailies are represented with 12 issues, the magazines with the exception of the monthlies are represented with two issues.

Research Company: Infratest Kommunikationsforschung, München

Survey Design

Dr. Siegfried Geiger, Köln and the Technical Sub-Committee of the German Daily Newspapers within the AG.MA

Analysis: ISBA Informatik Service GmbH, Hamburg

Sponsors: The German Daily Newspapers within the AG.MA

OUTLOOK

Both surveys: "More on Yardsticks" as well as "Getting at the Message" aimed at going beyond the carrier contact level towards page exposure. Both surveys are based on the same philosophy. However, the newspaper survey "Getting at the Message" had the advantage of learning from the weak spots in the design of "Yardsticks", due to timing.

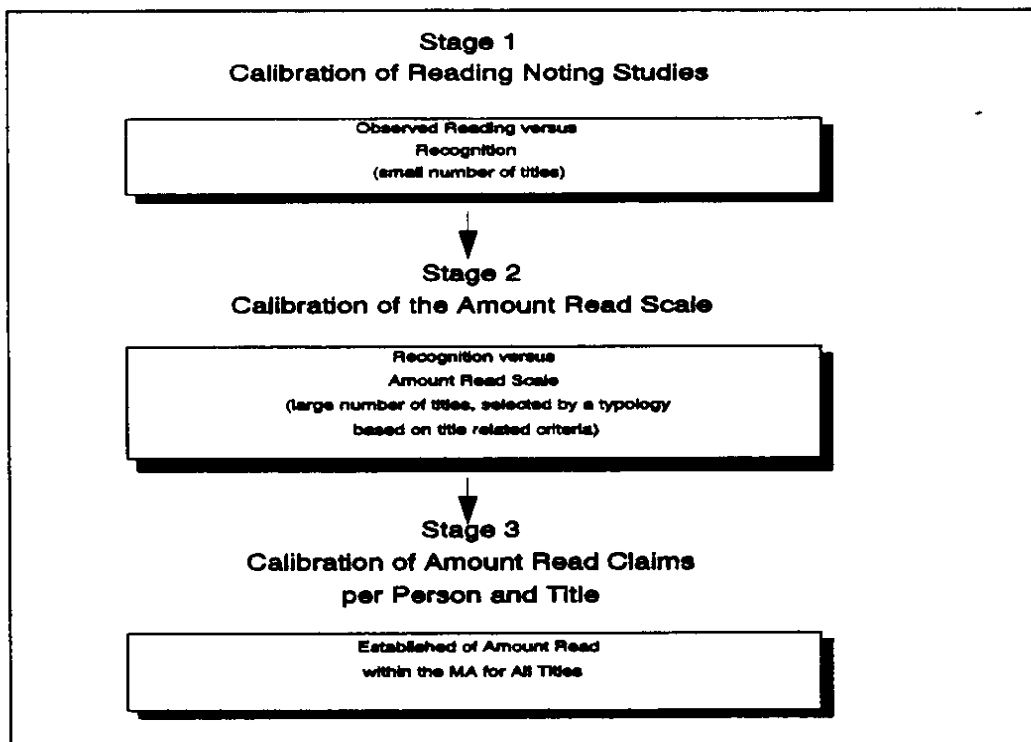
It started a new and lively discussion within the committees of the MA and the common agreement was, the verbal "amount read scale" had to be calibrated before using the scores for media planning.

Calibration, how? The Starch approach has some weaknesses, as shown in the first "Yardsticks for Exposure Quality". What had to be achieved first was, to examine what the Starch scores really mean for the different publications and reading situations. Therefore, the MA commissioned Peter Beike to do a "validation study" of the reading and noting surveys.

First results were presented at a meeting of the technical sub-committee of the German AG.MA in Frankfurt three weeks ago, on January 9, 1991. Due to this timing, this paper can only highlight the procedure.

The validation survey has to be seen in three stages.

Graph 1



- (1) The first stage concentrates on the validation, respectively calibration of the noting studies. This stage is almost completed. It should show the correlation between actual, observed reading in a studio situation (the video tapes allow an analysis of exposures to single pages) and recognition in an interview situation a few days later. In addition to the main objective, the amount read claims according to the scale were established to allow comparisons for different claim levels. For simplicity, we shall not go into detail and describe the two different noting studies and the two different amount read scales which were used in the experiment, but concentrate on the aggregate figures.

The global result was: The noting scores under-estimate the actual page exposures by ten percent on average. However, apparently with different levels of under- and overclaims for the separate steps of the amount read scale, with the tendency of severe underclaims of the actual amount read at the lower scale end and overclaims at the upper end of the scale. For example, a 25 percent amount read claim corresponds with 40 percent actual, observed reading, whereas a 75 percent scale-claim matches only 65 percent actual reading.

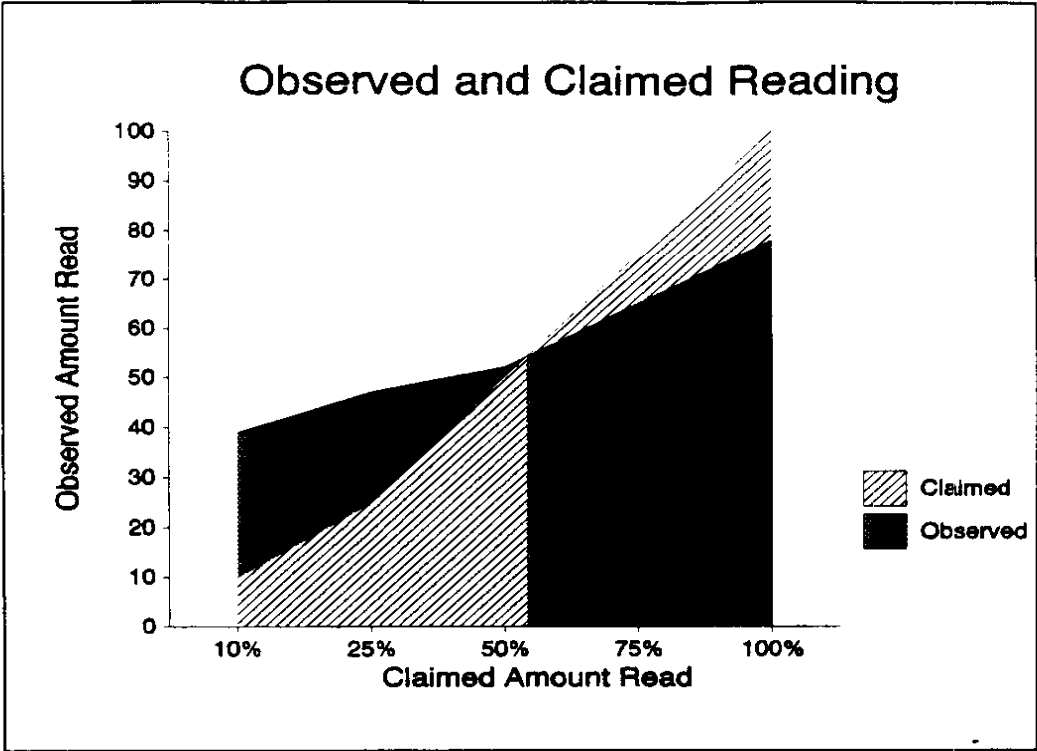
Therefore, the results from the reading/noting interviews have to be calibrated with the help of a multiple regression analysis. The dependent (target) variable is the actual page exposure, the "reality" as a result of the videos observation. The independent variables are a function of the amount read claims, socio-demographic and psychographic criteria as well as criteria relating to the individual publications, such as function, layout, page volume, editorial structure, publishing interval, copy price and the like.

- (2) The second stage: The determination of the interdependence between the corrected noting scores, the amount read claims, the socio-demographics of the target persons and the criteria related to the publications.

This stage requires noting studies for at least 30 or 40 different publications, selected with the help of a typology, to take into account the full scope of publications by variables such as amount read, the socio-demographics, and title related criteria such as page volume, reading time and category of the publications will be analyzed through a typology. The result should be a regression formula, showing the corrected noting scores as the dependent variable. The independent variables are a function of amount read, demographics and title related criteria.

- (3) The third stage will be the ascription of the values to all titles, person by person and publication by publication. However, this procedure will produce some aberrations so that it might be better to stick with the amount read scores just as they are. A final graph can demonstrate that the results at the early stages offer a feasible tool for the goal that should be achieved. The curve shows the result for all pages, editorial as well as ad pages. The increase for pure editorial pages is much steeper than this general incline. However, individual figures were not available at this early stage. They will probably be published this spring.

Graph 2



One last word about the timing. The three stages are not only extremely costly but also extremely time consuming. The presentation of stage 1 is scheduled for March this year. Perhaps stage 2 could be completed within this year. That would mean, that stage 3 could be completed just in time for the deadline, to have a hard currency available for the 1992 report. However, this information is supplied with no liability and subject to change.