DOES TITLE CONFUSION AFFECT MAGAZINE AUDIENCE LEVELS?

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Introduction

The three most popular magazine audience measurement techniques in the U.S. place a substantial burden on the "screen" question. As devised, the screen is supposed to eliminate non-readers of specific titles so the rest of the questioning can be devoted to determining reading of a specific issue or reading during the most recent publishing interval. But, does it?

Since the screening question is designed to be all encompassing, it includes subscribers, single copy purchasers, pass-along readers, regular readers and very casual readers. A person who reads a magazine only once or twice in a six month period is certainly a casual reader. His/her incidence of reading poses a difficult measurement problem.

Regular readers, those that read three or four of every four issues are easier to measure. Casual readers, or those that read zero, one or two of four issues out of the last four are much more difficult to measure. Wally Langschmidt, speaking about confusion points out "In the work that has been undertaken on this subject the evidence indicates that confusion mainly occurs among the more casual or occasional readers." Less frequent readers are more likely to misjudge whether or not it was in the most recent time period that they read a magazine. In addition to having difficulty judging their incidence or frequency of reading a publication, infrequent readers may also confuse titles with similar names. Although title confusion can occur among all readers, it is reasonable to assume its occurrence is greatest among the more casual reader because their involvement with the publication is on a more superficial basis.

Background

To understand how magazine audiences are estimated, it is important to review the mechanics of the questioning sequence. There are three basic systems being used currently in the U.S., "Recent Reading" as practiced by Mediamark Research, Inc. and the Nielsen Advertising Service, "Through The Book" as practiced by Simmons Market Research Bureau, Inc. and "The Frequency Technique" as practiced by J.D. Power Car and Truck Media Reports.

All three use a similar technique to reduce the number of magazines that are asked the reading question. This filter question, or screen as it is commonly called, asks respondents, in one way or another, whether they had read or looked into an issue in the last **six months.**

The reason for the screening question is generally agreed as being threefold. These are described below and are not necessarily in order of their importance.

- By affording respondents the opportunity to say yes in the screen, a potential response bias is avoided. Theoretically, these respondents are subsequently eliminated when the reading question is asked.
- It eliminates non-readers.
- It reduces the number of titles that will be used for further questioning (i.e. the reading questions) to 8 on average for SMRB currently and 12 on average for MRI. Thus it has a practical application.

As suggested in the first reason above, the screening question probably does allow some people to name magazines they don't read. Whether this is remedied later in the read question remains to be proven. As we will see, the read to screen ratio has relatively little variation from year to year or among magazines. A screen "yes" is a tacit commitment to reading. It is probable that some of these "response bias" screeners do slip through as reads.

The screening question is implemented by sorting small logo cards onto a sort board. Simmons instituted this procedure in 1979 and MRI started their sort board about the same time. However, after testing, MRI added the "Not Sure" box to account for those who were uncomfortable being asked for a yes/no response. Although MRI uses black and white logo cards and Simmons four-color, a test has been conducted by SMRB which showed there was no difference in the screen-in levels whether color or black and white were used.

Except for the black and white cards and the additional "Not Sure" question, MRI's questioning sequence and Simmons' are quite similar as shown below.

MRI uses the following series of statements before handing the respondent a deck of black and white logo cards.

- We want to know whether you've read or looked into any copy *whether it belonged to you or not.*
- It could have been in your home, someone else's home, or any other place at all, such as the beauty (barber) shop, doctor's office, etc.
- It doesn't matter whether you read it, or just look into it.

The cards are then sorted into three blocks on a sorting board to indicate reading; "Yes - Sure Have", "Not Sure" and "No - Sure Have Not". The "Yes - Sure Have" cards and "Not Sure" cards are used for the subsequent questions on reading.

Although Nielsen Home*Scan, a new service introduced in the fall of 1991 claims not to be a "magazine rating service", they do measure magazine audiences. The Nielsen Home*Scan technique, although similar to MRI, is conducted via the mail and as such is self-administered. They use a sort board and the logo cards are sorted into one of three boxes "Yes", "Maybe" or "No" in terms of whether or not the respondent had read or looked into any issue of the publication in the last six months. They scan the "Yes" and "Maybe" cards with a hand-held scanning device and proceed with the questions on the number of issues on average that are read out of the last four published, 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4. Both MRI and Nielsen Home*Scan then proceed with the reading question - whether the magazine were read or looked into in the last publishing interval; last seven days for a weekly, last thirty days for a monthly, etc.

SMRB uses a similar screening technique with minor variations. The logo cards are four-color rather than black and white. They preface the screening question with a show card and the following statement.

"People read or glance through magazines and newspapers in many different places. Here is a list of places where people often look into these kinds of publications."

Publications that I might have read or looked into during the last 6 months either at home or at some place else

Place of reading

In own home
In someone else's home
At your place of work
At beauty parlor or barber shop
At doctor's office or dentist's office
At school or at a public library
In reception room or library of a business or organization
In store check-out line
While commuting to or from work or school
On an airplane
During other traveling
Elsewhere

Then in a green space on the sort board they are asked to place those publications they might have read or looked into in the last six months at home or someplace else. In a pink space they are asked to place those publications they are sure they haven't read or looked into during the last six months. This is then followed with the stripped issue showing of those publications that were "Yes" on the screen question. No frequency question is asked since the second interview is used to produce turnover factors.

J.D. Power Car & Truck Media Reports use a mail technique with a black and white reproduction of the logos. Next to the magazine logo is a question with the column heading "May have read or looked into in last 6 months" with boxes for "yes" and "no". The next columns have the instruction, "If YES, mark how many of the past 4 issues you have read or looked into", None, 1, 2, 3, 4. These answers are used to assign probabilities of reading to produce their average issue audience measures.

Screening Implications

In each case an attempt is made with the screen to include everyone who possibly could have read in the past six months and exclude only those that definitely were poor prospects for reading. The purpose of this, of course, is to reduce the burden on the respondent and interviewer by including only those titles that were possible prospects for the average-issue audience. This all-inclusive screen includes not only regular readers but also those that are very casual readers and all in-between.

Screen-in levels do vary by frequency of reading and these varying levels affect the subsequent reading levels. The 1980 ARF Comparability Study demonstrated first that there was a difference in the ratio of those that screened in and subsequently said they read by periodicity of publication. Monthlies had a higher Read/Screen ratio than weeklies and the difference was greater for Recent Reading than for Through The Book. Analyzing this further, it was found that Read/Screen ratios were lowest among the infrequent readers for both methodologies. Moreover, the differences in Read/Screen ratios between the two techniques were most pronounced in the infrequent reader segment where the Read/Screen ratio for Recent Reading was 2/3 that of Through The Book. This finding led to the conclusion that the overall differences in Screen-In levels and Read/Screen ratios combined to create the differences in audience estimates. Furthermore, these differences were concentrated among out-of-home, infrequent and off-sex readers.

The study design of the ARF Comparability Study offered a means to explore title confusion. Nine pairs were examined that were either similar in name or content. The findings demonstrated that when only one of the titles of such a pair appeared in a sample (rather than together as normally measured), the screen-in level was elevated and higher audience levels resulted. Apparently, there were enough respondents who actually were readers of the missing title that named the single title shown to increase its screen-ins and readership levels above what was observed when both titles were shown.

Investigation and Evaluation

While read-to-screen ratios are very comparable within magazine groups, the ratios of read-to-circulation vary dramatically when similar titles or titles with similar names are compared (see table below). MRI data are used for this analysis since they have measured more of the pairs longer.

Following are circulation and readers-per-copy data for all publications with similar names or titles and similar editorial content measured by MRI.

	Circulation 000's	Adult Readers-per-copy
American Baby	1,159	2.80
Baby Talk *	1,139	2.16
Better Homes & Gardens	8,060	4.24
House Beautiful	954	6.83
HG (House & Garden)	642	9.18
Bride's	324	13.42
Modern Bride	323	9.96
Country Living	1,729	6.47
Country Home	1,073	6.40
Field & Stream	2,142	6.46
Sports Afield	530	9.63
Golf Digest	1,343	4.26
Golf	1,072	4.00
Golf Illustrated	507	5.60
Hot Rod	852	6.91
Popular Hot Rodding	191	16.83
New Yorker	602	4.56
New York	443	3.66

	Circulation 000's	Adult Readers-per-copy
Parents	1,812	6.09
Parenting	758	6.78
Popular Science	1,756	4.16
Popular Mechanics	1,585	5.94
PC Magazine	742	5.01
PC Computing	700	5.12
PC World	520	6.47
Ski	435	4.38
Skiing	434	4.96
Sport	858	4.80
Inside Sports	681	7.53

* Controlled Circulation

Source: MRI Spring 1992

Of the ten pairs and three triplets listed above, the disparity in readers-per-copy between or among these similar titles generally favors the smaller circulation title, One exception is **American Baby** and **Baby Talk.** In the sense that **Baby Talk** is not distributed through the normal channels of newsstand and subscription but rather by controlled circulation, it might be expected that it would develop its audience differently than other magazines and would generate a smaller number of readers-per-copy. Another situation is **New York Magazine** and **The New Yorker. The New Yorker** circulation is much lower than that of **New York Magazine** in its area of dominance, the Mid-Atlantic states.

Mid Atlantic States

	Circulation 000's	% of Total	Adults Readers per copy
New York Magazine	328.8	75.9	2.93
The New Yorker	155.1	26.6	4.78

Source: ABC Dec. 1990 Statement MRI Spring '91

Here we see the trend reversed, the smaller circulation magazine, now **The New Yorker**, receiving the highest readers-per-copy. The breakdown by casual and frequent readers for all titles listed above is shown in Exhibit 1.

In the 1991 MRI study Modern Bride's circulation was 77% of Bride's and their readers-per-copy was slightly higher 12.61 vs 12.54. In the 1992 Study, Modern Bride's circulation increased to equal that of Bride's (323,000 vs 324,000) and their readers-per-copy dropped dramatically, by 79% as shown.

The Nielsen Home*Scan data show the same pattern as does MRI. This is not too surprising since the techniques are similar with MRI being presented by an interviewer and Nielsen being self-administered. As in MRI the data that follow, with the same two exceptions, show in all other cases the smaller circulation title(s) achieving the higher readers-per-copy.

	Circulation 000's	Adult Readers-Per-Copy
American Baby	1159	4.42
Baby Talk*	1139	2.77
Better Homes & Gardens	8060	3.95
House Beautiful	954	6.81
HG (House & Garden)	642	10.20
Bride's	324	16.57
Modern Bride	323	15.88
Country Living	1729	6.60
Country Home	1073	8.43
Field & Stream	2142	4.85
Sports Afield	530	9.41
Golf Digest	1343	2.52
Golf	1072	2.90
Golf Illustrated	507	N.A.
Hot Rod	852	6.29
Popular Hot Rodding	191	15.51
The New Yorker	602	7.15
New York	443	3.03
Parents	1812	5.87
Parenting	758	6.97
Popular Science	1756	5.70
Popular Mechanics	1585	7.17
PC Magazine	742	N.A.
PC Computing	700	N.A.
PC World	520	N.A.
Ski	435	3.91
Skiing	434	4.04
Sport	858	6.83
Inside Sports	681	9.06

*Controlled Circulation Source: Nielsen Home*Scan October 1992

The lower readers-per-copy for **Baby Talk** again is suggested to be due to its being distributed via controlled circulation. And, when restricted to the Mid-Atlantic states, **The New Yorker** becomes the smaller title and has the higher readers-per-copy.

Mid-Atlantic States

	Circulation 000's	% of Total	Adults Readers per copy
New York Magazine	328.0	75.9	4.67
The New Yorker	155.1	26.6	10.50

The screen-in levels are substantially higher in Nielsen Home*Scan than MRI. They suggest the reason is because the questionnaire is self-administered and there is no inhibiting interviewer bias. The read-to-screen ratios however, are substantially lower and exhibit the same pattern in regular and infrequent readers as does MRI, but the range is not nearly as tight. Even though the read-to-screen ratios are lower, the screen-in levels are so high the resultant audiences are still higher than MRI.

MRI not only has the frequency statement for further analysis but also can be trended for a fairly long period of time. Thus this analysis is based on MRI. However, a few of the examples will be explored in more detail to attempt to describe why the smaller circulation title usually appears to have higher readers-per-copy and why some have extraordinarily higher readers-per-copy.

As has been described, the ARF Comparability Study demonstrated frequency of reading was a critical variable in understanding differences in audience levels. This variable will be used as a basis for the succeeding analysis. The following data show the number of people that screened-in: in total, for casual readers (0,1,2 frequency) and for regular readers (3,4 frequency).

Screen Levels (000)

INSIDE SPORTS			SPORT		
Total	Freq. 0,1,2	Freq. 3,4	Total	Freq. 0,1,2	Freq. 3,4
11,592	8,828	2,764	10,299	7,948	2,351
POPULAR HOD RODDING			**HOT ROD**		
6,764	4,837	1,927	11,213	7,788	3,425
SPORTS AFIELD			**FIELD & STREAM**		
10,387	7,812	2,575	24,422	16,220	8,202

MRI Spring 1992

The absolute screen-in levels do not correlate very closely with the differences you might expect to find based on circulation levels. To demonstrate this point, screen levels can be divided by circulation to achieve a screen-per-copy level. The total circulation is applied to both the casual and regular readers so that the two combined add to the total screen-ins.

Screen pre Copy

INSIDE SPORTS			SPORT		
Total	Freq. 0,1,2	Freq. 3,4	Total	Freq. 0,1,2	Freq. 3,4
17.2	13.0	4.2	12.0	9.3	2.7
POPULAR HOD RODDING			**HOT ROD**		
35.4	25.3	10.1	13.2	9.1	4.1
SPORTS AFIELD			**FIELD & STREAM**		
19.6	14.7	4.9	11.4	7.6	3.8

MRI Spring 1992

In all of the cases, the circulation for the smaller circulation titles appears to generate substantially higher screens-per-copy among the infrequent or casual readers. All of these paired titles have similar but not identical distribution patterns.

Why then the disparity in reader-per-copy? Examination of the absolute screen-in levels and analysis of the disproportionate shares among the smaller circulation member of the pair suggests the culprit is title confusion. Title confusion is more likely to occur among the infrequent or more casual reader since reading

in this group is a non-reoccurring incident. The reading event by a casual reader is not as impactful an event as it would be for a regular reader. There is opportunity for confusion.

Assuming this to be true, there could be a substantial group of potential readers that pass through the screen that are reasonably sure they read either **Inside Sports** or **Sport,** or **Popular Hot Rodding** or **Hot Rod,** or **Sports Afield** or **Field & Stream**. Confusion in this context, is an amalgam of two titles with similar names and editorial content. There is no evidence to indicate it is other than random when the screen-in levels are examined. Assuming this to be true, half of those confused would say one title and half the other title. For the purpose of this demonstration, it is assumed that of the gross 12,625,000 (4,837,000 + 7,788,000) casual readers of **Popular Hot Rodding** and **Hot Rod,** about one third or 4,000,000 were not sure which one they actually read.

Hypothetical Case(000)

POPULAR HOT RODDING		HOT ROD	
Sure 0,1,2, Screens	Confused 0,1,2, Screens	Sure 0,1,2, Screens	Confused 0,1,2 Screens
2,837	2,000	5,788	2,000

The read-to-screen ratios have remained constant for these titles over the past ten years as they have for the other paired titles (see Exhibit 2). A predictable proportion of the screens will translate into readers who claim to be in the average-issue audience. Applying the 1992 MRI Read-to-Screen ratios to the above hypothetical case results in the following:

Hypothetical Case (000)

	POPULAR HOT RODDING		HOT ROD	
	Sure 0,1,2, Screens	Confused 0,1,2, Screens	Sure 0,1,2 Screens	Confused 0,1,2,Screens
	2,837	2,000	5,788	2,000
R/S Ratio	.32	.32	.36	.36
Reads	908	640	2,083	720
Total Reads	1,548		2,803	

If the "confused" screens were in the same proportion as the"sure" screens, i.e. approximately 2:1 in favor of **Hot Rod,** the 4,00,000 confused infrequent reader screens would be 1,316 vs 2,684 instead of 2,000,000 vs 2,000,000 and the total screen-ins would then be 4,153,000 vs 8,472,000 and a little closer to the relative differences in the size of the two publications. This would result in the following audience estimate.

Hypothetical Case (000)

	POPULAR HOT RODDING	HOT ROD
	0,1,2 screens	0,1,2, screens
Screens (000)	4,153	8,472
R/S Ratio	.32	.36
Adjusted Reads	1,329	3,050
Adjusted/Actual	-14.2%	+8.5%

Although this is an hypothetical case, it does demonstrate how confusion could effect audience levels. The title with the least circulation always will achieve a relative advantage from the confused readers because of their lower base.

There is a consistency in the Read/Screen ratios over time, ranging between 0.3 and 0.4 for the infrequent readers (0,1,2) and between 0.8 and 0.9 for the frequent readers (Exhibit 3). As Dr. Val Appel pointed out in his paper, ANATOMY OF A MAGAZINE ESTIMATE - THE ARF COMPARABILITY STUDY REVISITED, Delivered in Hong Kong February 1991 --

> "... one would predict (1) that the screeners-per-copy would explain more of the readers-per-copy variance than would the read/screen ratios, and (2) that this relationship would be stronger for monthlies than for weeklies.
> "After controlling for circulation size and publishing interval, most of the variance in magazine audience size is determined by the screen-in levels, with the variation in the R/S ratios having a decidedly lesser effect."

Thus, the screen-in levels have the predominant effect on audience levels. It is suggested that once a respondent screens-in on a title, he is semi-committed as a reader. Even if he is confused, a predictable percentage will answer positively to the reading question. To a large part, it is these "phantom" reads which contribute to the extraordinarily high readers-per-copy, particularly for smaller titles in similar pairs.

During the past ten years, **Hot Rod's** circulation has increased 9%, **Popular Hot Rodding's** circulation decreased 17%. This widening gap caused **Popular Hot Rodding's** readers-per-copy to increase 59% while **Hot Rod's** remained constant. During this same ten years, the screens-per-copy for **Hot Rod** were down 2% and for **Popular Hot Rodding** up 41%.

In the seven years since 1985, **Inside Sport's** circulation has increased over 2 1/3 times from 280,000 to 681,000. During this same period, **Sport's** circulation dropped slightly from, 900,000 to 858,000. Even though **Sport's** circulation is 26% higher than **Inside Sport's,** its adult audience is 20% less in the Spring 1992 MRI. Despite the lower circulation of **Inside Sports,** it screened-in 900,000 more among the infrequent readers. Since the read-to-screen ratios remain constant and have been for a number of years, the resultant audience levels and readers-per-copy are very high.

It would follow that given the possibility of confusion among the infrequent readers, as circulation increased, and the gap closed, there would be less advantage for the smaller title, the screen-to-circulation ratios would decline and the readers-per-copy would decline also (see Exhibit 3).

Although the relative decline in "Screen-in" levels for **Inside Sports** was about the same for both classes of readers, the screen/circulation levels are still higher than for **Sport** or any other sports title, particularly among infrequent readers.

The same phenomenon exists for **Golf Magazine** and **Golf Digest**, but is not as pronounced. **Golf Magazine** has always lagged behind **Golf Digest** in circulation but in recent years has narrowed the gap. According to the proposition presented here, **Golf Magazine** should have higher readers-per-copy, but the difference should narrow as the circulation gap closes. That seems to be what has happened. Until the current report where the situation has reversed.

Circulation & Readers - per - Copy

	Golf Magaz		Golf Digest	
	CIRC 000's	READ/ CIRC	CIRC 000's	READ/ CIRC
1992	1072	4.00	1343	4.26
1991	1063	4.21	1281	4.17
1990	987	3.85	1284	3.46
1989	892	4.22	1258	3.94
1988	862	2.87	1181	3.44
1987	809	4.16	1170	3.90
1986	772	3.99	118	3.57
1985	749	4.45	115	3.35
1984	706	3.82	1106	3.00
1983	709	3.96	993	3.04
1982	683	4.05	975	3.46

Source: MRI Spring Reports

Sports Afield compared to **Field & Stream** is another example of a smaller circulation title achieving exceptionally high readers-per-copy. The titles are similar, and easily could be confused by the casual reader. The following data demonstrate the disparate circulation and readers-per-copy.

Circulation & Readers - per - Copy

	Sports Afield		Field & Stream	
	CIRC 000's	READ/ CIRC	CIRC 000's	READ/ CIRC
1992	530	9.63	2142	6.46
1991	531	11.34	2140	6.60
1990	542	9.86	2104	6.56
1989	533	11.29	2173	6.05
1988	530	8.61	2137	6.12
1987	528	12.19	2064	6.14
1986	529	11.19	2072	6.71
1985	519	11.36	2066	6.76
1984	543	11.80	2088	6.35
1983	531	14.02	2020	7.48
1982	533	14.49	2035	7.18

Source: MRI Spring Reports

In this case the circulation for **Sports Afield** has remained relatively constant for the past ten years with **Field & Stream** showing a slight increase. The readers generated by these copies also has remained relatively stable since 1984 showing very little variation during these nine years.

Total Adult Readers

	Sports Afield		Field & Stream	
	READ/ SCREEN	SCREEN/ CIRC.	READ/ SCREEN	SCREEN/ CIRC.
1992	.49	19.60	.57	11.40
1991	.49	23.15	.55	12.01
1990	.47	20.93	.55	11.86
1989	.53	21.34	.57	10.51
1988	.49	17.72	.61	10.01
1987	.56	21.91	.58	10.54
1986	.52	21.50	.60	11.15
1985	.55	20.83	.57	11.81
1984	.55	21.37	.57	11.06
1983	.58	24.21	.61	12.27
1982	.58	24.97	.57	12.65

Source: MRI Sprint Reports

As in previous examples, the read-to-screen ratio shows relatively little difference between the two magazines and consistent levels over the ten-year period although there is a slight drop-off in 1988, 1990-1992 for **Sports Afield.** Once a respondent passes through the screen, there is a predictable percentage that will convert to readers. Breaking these data into their component parts of infrequent and frequent readers, we see a familiar pattern (see Exhibit 4).

Again the smaller circulation title has a much higher number of screens-per-unit of circulation than does the larger circulation title and it is most pronounced among the infrequent readers.

Popular Mechanics and Popular Science are another pair of titles with similar names and subject to confusion by the infrequent reader. The smaller circulation title generates more readers-per-copy as has been shown in previous examples.

Circulation & Readers - per - Copy

	POPULAR MECHANICS		POPULAR SCIENCE	
	CIRC 000's	READ/ CIRC	CIRC 000's	READ/ CIRC
1992	1585	5.95	1750	4.16
1991	1605	6.13	1778	4.22
1990	1636	5.45	1774	3.62
1989	1619	3.77	1782	5.08
1988	1586	5.38	1779	3.48
1987	1576	5.89	1771	3.70
1986	1592	6.38	1724	4.09
1985	1589	6.21	1695	4.28
1984	1555	6.44	1706	4.20
1983	1544	7.34	1669	4.42
1982	1550	N.A.	1624	5.12

Source: MRI Spring Reports

Reader Demographics

The demography of the screens is the same as the demography of the reads. This has been demonstrated in the past and it still exists. Although the infrequent screen/read demos can vary from the frequent screen/read demos, the screen demos are the same as the read demos in each case. This is not too surprising in the case of the frequent readers since the read-to-screen ratios are 0.9. Almost all of the screens are reads so the demos can't be different. However, the infrequent readers read-to-screen ratios are 0.3 to 0.4, so 60% to 70% do not convert to reads after screening in. This could mean that the screening question is very efficient at screening-out non-readers. As is postulated here though, evidence would indicate this is probably not true. It is almost as if the conversion of reads-to-screens is a random phenomenon among the infrequent readers.

Discussion

Can magazines generate high readers-per-copy? Of course. Some are edited to do just that with short, topical, illustrative articles. Mark Munn, in a paper delivered in 1983 in Montreal, described how **Family Circle** influenced out-of-home readers by distributing free copies in public places. At that same meeting, Steve Douglas described the dynamics of the distribution of **Newsweek**, emphasizing how public place distribution occurs.

Confusion between comparable publications does exist. In a lengthy article on this subject in the April 1988 issue of **Folio**, a study conducted for **Metropolitan Home** was described. They replicated the screen used by MRI but added a fictitious logo card **"Metropolitan Home & Garden"** in one fourth of the sample. They found that of those who claimed readership of the genuine **Metropolitan Home**, three out of four said they also subscribed to the fake title and had read it just last month.

It has been postulated that smaller circulation titles generate higher readers-per-copy than larger circulation titles because they are generating new audiences and have more room to grow in their particular market segment.

MRI Spring 1990

Circulation Level	Number of cases	Adult readers per copy
Up to 500,000	22	7.03
500,000-1,000,000	60	5.30
1,000,000-1,500,000	25	4.09
1,500,000-2,000,000	10	5.77
2,000,000-3,000,000	7	4.48
3,000,000-5,000,000	9	5.51
5,000,000 Or more	9	2.95

While this is true, at the extremes there is no apparent pattern among the 111 other titles where 24 of the 29 titles analyzed fall. It should be noted too, in the 5,000,000+ group, two of the titles are TV listings magazines which generate smaller reader-per-copy because of the nature of their edit content and one is a controlled circulation title .

Although Simmons Market Research Bureau (SMRB) did not ask the frequency question as does MRI, they will in their upcoming report. However, an examination of the readers-per-copy levels indicates the same phenomenon exists, the smaller circulation title generating the largest number of readers-per-copy. Since screen-in levels are not generally available from SMRB, and it is not possible to get any indication of frequency from the two interview systems due to the 20% fall off in the second interview, the readers-per-copy data only do not lend themselves to a diagnostic analysis of the confusion hypothesis currently.

Summary

The data presented in this report suggest that-

- Confusion between comparable titles does exist.
- Confusion occurs mostly among the infrequent reade
- A smaller circulation title will almost always benefit from the confusion since half of the confused readers will be applied to a small base. This will be to the relative advantage of the smaller title increasing their screen-in-levels disproportionately higher particularly among infrequent readers.
- The read-to-screen ratios are relatively constant across magazines and over years, within frequent and infrequent readers.
- Since read-to-screen ratios are constant, any artificially inflated screens will result in artificially inflated reads.
- When circulation is applied to these data, unusually disparate readers-per-copy figures can result.

Conclusion

It would seem apparent that more work and analysis should be done for the screening-in process. Does the screening process distinguish adequately between and among magazines? Evidence to date would indicate--probably not. Experimentation might be conducted with the Canadian screen-in card showing the covers of the most current twelve issues along with the magazine logo. This possibly could clear up some confusion.

Perhaps we should acknowledge to the respondent up front that because of similar names and/or formats they might be confused as to whether they read or looked into a title in the past six months. If they are, they should be questioned further with whatever cues are necessary to eliminate the confusion. Is six months the right time frame for a screening question?

Perhaps casual readers in particular could be re-interviewed in depth to determine whether they read the subject title or not.

It is very obvious more tests need to be conducted on the screening question since it is such an overwhelming determinant of the resultant audience estimate.

EXHIBIT 1

	Screen Levels			Read-to-screen levels		
	Total 000's	Freq 0,1,2 000's	Freq 3,4 000's	Total	Freq 0,1,2	Freq 3,4
American Baby	7007	5169	1838	.46	.33	.85
Baby Talk	5757	4610	1147	.43	.32	.86
Better Homes & Gardens	59267	39199	20068	.57	.40	.93
House Beautiful	16315	13252	3062	.40	.29	.87
HG (House & Garden)	13801	10672	3129	.43	.30	.80
Bride's	8390	7120	1270	.52	.41	.77
Modern Bride	6628	5877	751	.49	.38	.76
Country Living	21588	14382	7206	.52	.32	.91
Country Home	14019	10625	3394	.49	.37	.89
Field & Stream	24422	16220	8202	.57	.39	.92
Sports Afield	10387	7812	2575	.49	.37	.89
Golf Digest	9682	6004	3678	.59	.38	.93
Golf	8070	5048	3022	.53	.30	.91
Golf Illustrated	5676	3748	1928	.50	.30	.89
Hot Rod	11213	7788	3425	.53	.36	.90
Popular Hot Rodding	6764	4837	1927	.48	.32	.87
New York	5822	4818	1004	.28	.16	.86
New Yorker	11010	9226	1784	.25	.13	.85
Parents	20835	14339	6496	.53	.36	.90
Parenting	10617	7657	2960	.48	.33	.88
Popular Science	16329	11907	4422	.45	.29	.86
Popular Mechanics	19312	13723	5589	.49	.32	,89
PC Magazine	7526	4822	2704	.49	.26	.91
PC Computing	6201	3821	2380	.58	.36	.93
PC World	6129	3915	2214	.55	.33	.94
Ski	5693	4428	1265	.38	.17	.68
Skiing	5273	4057	1216	.36	.16	.69
Sport	10299	7948	2351	.40	.28	.81
Inside Sport	11592	8828	2764	.44	.31	.88

Source: MRI Spring 1992

EXHIBIT 2

ADULT READ/SCREEN RATIOS

	SPORT			INSIDE SPORT		
	Total	Freq 0,1,2	Freq 3,4	Total	Freq 0,1,2	Freq 3,4
1992	.40	.28	.81	.44	.31	.88
1991	.45	.29	.83	.47	.34	.83
1990	.49	.36	.83	.44	.30	.84
1989	.46	.32	.85	.44	.31	.85
1988	.46	.33	.82	.51	.35	.87
1987	.49	.35	.81	.47	.32	.85
1986	.50	.37	.82	.50	.35	.86
1985	.47	.36	.78	.40	.25	.81
1984	.50	.33	.89	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1983	.52	.40	.79	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1982	.53	.38	.83	.48	.37	.77
	HOT ROD			POPULAR HOT RODDING		
1992	.53	.36	.90	.48	.32	.87
1991	.56	.38	.91	.50	.33	.90
1990	.54	.38	.86	.44	.29	.80
1989	.54	.38	.85	.50	.32	.88
1988	.58	.36	.90	.52	.34	.86
1987	.59	.41	.86	.56	.39	.88
1986	.57	.37	.93	.48	.32	.85
1985	.59	.41	.90	.43	.27	.83
1984	.53	.36	.83	.46	.26	.85
1983	.59	.39	.69	.49	.34	.88
1982	.55	.39	.87	.44	.29	.80
	SPORTS AFIELD			FIELD & STREAM		
1992	.49	.36	.81	.57	.39	.92
1991	.49	.36	.83	.55	.38	.90
1990	.47	.33	.77	.55	.37	.87
1989	.53	.37	.90	.57	.40	.87
1988	.49	.30	.88	.61	.45	.89
1987	.56	.40	.85	.58	.41	.88
1986	.52	.39	.88	.60	.43.	.91
1985	.55	.38	.91	.57	.43	.87
1984	.55	.38	.85	.57	.41	.88
1983	.58	.41	.92	.61	.45	.90
1982	.58	.42	.87	.57	.41	.87

Source: MRI Spring Reports

EXHIBIT 3

CIRCULATION & READERS - PER - COPY

	INSIDE SPORTS			SPORT		
	CIRC 000's	SCREEN/ CIRC	READ/ CIRC	CIRC 000's	SCREEN/ CIRC	READ CIRC
All Readers						
1992	681	17.02	7.53	858	12.00	4.80
1991	656	16.89	7.89	894	11.04	4.93
1990	576	17.66	7.83	949	11.07	5.45
1989	537	16.95	7.46	922	11.30	5.18
1988	447	17.47	8.84	912	9.70	4.42
1987	388	20.80	9.68	912	10.40	5.05
1986	333	26.37	13.08	903	12.24	6.07
1985	280	29.44	11.72	900	11.35	5.38
			INFREQUENT READERS (0,1,2)			
1992	681	12.96	3.96	858	9.26	2.57
1991	656	12.41	4.17	894	7.89	2.31
1990	576	13.08	3.98	949	7.87	2.81
1989	537	12.76	3.89	922	8.40	2.73
1988	447	12.32	4.36	912	7.17	2.33
1987	388	15.24	4.94	912	7.30	2.53
1986	333	18.81	6.59	903	8.74	3.20
1985	280	21.77	5.50	900	8.21	2.95
			FREQUENT READERS (3,4)			
1992	681	4.06	3.57	858	2.74	2.23
1991	656	4.48	3.71	894	3.14	2.62
1990	576	4.58	3.85	949	3.19	2.64
1989	537	4.19	3.57	922	2.90	2.45
1988	447	5.15	4.49	912	2.53	2.08
1987	388	5.56	4.75	912	3.10	2.51
1986	333	7.56	6.49	903	3.51	2.87
1985	280	7.67	5.50	900	3.13	2.43

Source: MRI Spring Reports (1983/1984 not available for INSIDE SPORTS)

EXHIBIT 4

READ - TO - SCREEN AND SCREEN - TO - CIRC

	Infrequent Readers (0,1,2)				Frequent Readers (3,4)			
	SPORTS AFIELD		FIELD & STREAM		SPORTS AFIELD		FIELD & STREAM	
	Read/ Screen	Screen/ Circ	Read/ Screen	Screen/ Circ	Read/ Screen	Screen/ Circ	Read/ Screen	Screen/ Circ
1992	.36	14.74	.39	7.57	.81	4.86	.92	3.83
1991	.36	16.80	.38	8.01	.83	6.35	.90	4.00
1990	.33	14.09	.37	7.57	.77	6.84	.87	4.28
1989	.37	14.91	.40	6.63	.90	6.43	.87	3.88
1988	.30	12.11	.45	6.33	.88	5.61	.89	3.69
1987	.40	14.29	.41	6.61	.85	7.63	.88	3.93
1986	.39	15.83	.43	7.10	.88	5.67	.91	4.05
1985	.38	14.34	.43	7.99	.91	6.49	.87	3.82
1984	.38	13.57	.41	7.12	.85	7.80	.88	3.94
1983	.41	16.11	.45	8.00	.92	8.10	.90	4.27
1982	.42	16.19	.41	8.44	.87	8.78	.87	4.21

Source: MRI Spring Reports

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