

TO PROTOTYPE OR NOT TO PROTOTYPE, THAT IS THE QUESTION – CAN USA GUIDELINES BE EMBRACED WORLDWIDE?

Tony Jarvis, MediaCom/Grey Global Group
Stephen A. Douglas, The Douglas/Jones Group

Background

There are a rich variety of magazines serving a wide array of niche targets vital to promoting targeted brands. The nature of their audiences are such that many (hundreds) cannot be rigorously measured by the syndicated services and *prototyping offers a solution*. Prototyping - estimating a magazine's audience based on a subscriber study and using a model (judgmental and/or computerized approach used individually or together) to select surrogate "measured" publication(s) - is perhaps as much an art as a science. However, because of the pressure to include audience estimates in computerized planning systems necessary for increasing productivity, virtually all the major agencies, as well as the publishers, follow this process in the USA. Prototyping provides the data to create an estimate for the "unmeasured" magazine audience within the appropriate syndicated study for subsequent computer assisted media analysis along with all measured publications. This increases efficiency for media planners, buyers, and sellers tremendously.

This paper will review:

- The history of prototyping in the USA
- The current practices used by agencies and publishers
- The new preliminary USA Guidelines with input from the members of the ARF Print Council members

The authors wish to seek input at the symposium (and beyond) on the Guidelines and ask whether such practices should be considered worldwide.

Importance

Increasingly, advertisers worldwide are requiring agencies to quantify magazine audience delivery for all titles comprising the print plan, regardless of whether they are measured by syndicated research. These data are becoming more important as many advertisers need these inputs for business results modeling (e.g., evaluating print's contribution to sales). More than ever, quantifying readers of unmeasured magazines has become a daunting task, primarily due to the number of publications that are *not* measured by syndicated research and the need to develop audience estimates or prototypes.

Although the number of magazines measured by syndicated research has grown over the past two decades, for obvious reasons it has not kept pace with the increase in titles available to today's consumers. Over the past 20 years, syndicated studies in the USA have increased the number of titles measured by 48% while the number of consumer magazines has risen 76%. Despite the increase in the number of titles measured, these books represent only a fraction of all consumer magazines, resulting in a greater need on the part of agencies to develop estimates.

	1980	1985	1990*	1995	2000
# Of Consumer Titles	10,236	11,090	14,049	15,996	17,970
Avg. # of Titles Measured by Syndicated Research (MRI, SMRB)	147	151	178	198	217

Source: Gale Directory of Publications, The Nat'l Directory of Magazines, MPA Handbook

This paper will offer the magazine industry worldwide a preliminary recommendation and rational regarding prototyping "best practices" (Principles or Guidelines) for the first time. The reviews of current practices are based on extensive interviews conducted by Steve Douglas with agencies over the years together with the collective input of the ARF Print Council. The preliminary Prototyping "Best Practices" are based on the authors experience and input from all members of the Prototyping Committee of the ARF Print Council. Prototyping is one way (in the USA, very successful way) of including *new or unmeasured magazines and new categories of publications* in syndicated readership research analysis so important to media planning, buying and selling.

Subjects to be covered

- Why agencies began prototyping
- The current situation
- Definition of a Prototype
- The policies of the Syndicated research services on prototyping
- When and why magazine publishers develop prototypes
- Outline of Prototyping approaches
- Review of the methods used to develop prototypes
- How To Estimate the Reader-per-Copy
- A Note on Duplication
- How are prototypes typically used in media planning?
- Suggested Prototyping Principles (Guidelines/Best Practices)

Why agencies began prototyping

Since the appearance of regularly published magazine readership studies in the United States in the 1950's, there has always been pressure to measure more publications. By the 1970's BRI, Simmons and TGI were providing audience estimates for over 150 different publications.

As the number of magazines began to increase, those unmeasured publications between 100,000 and 600,000 circulation presented a problem to advertising agencies in the media planning process. The planning groups wanted to account for those publications contribution to reaching their advertisers demographic or behavioral target(s).

Agency media researchers tended to resist "making-up" or prototyping numbers in this period. In the Seventies and Eighties planning groups made their own judgments about new or unmeasured magazines. Senior media executives closely supervised planners as they developed plans that included unmeasured (new or old) publications. However, these procedures were never formally institutionalized.

Prototyping was mentioned for the first time at a worldwide research conference by Steve Douglas in the 1991 Hong Kong Readership Symposium (1). That paper described how prototyping was being approached for the first time in the U.S. and described a new and exciting computer model developed by Roger Baron (2). That model's current applications will be discussed later.

Media Departments were downsized in the Nineties and yet analyses of many unmeasured magazines were still required. Centralization of the prototyping process became necessary to save time for the Senior Planners and Buyers and provide agency clients consistent "best" estimates. Consequently, many agencies had to develop standardized agency positions for use across all of a given agency's Planning Groups. For the most part that assignment in major agencies was given to the media research department. Traditionally one or two senior research executives would review all available data, produce an estimate and review it with other members of the media research department and senior print planning/buying directors. However, the review processes vary from agency to agency. Almost all major agencies will discuss and review their estimates with the publishers of the publications they are evaluating.

This "centralizing" requires fewer man-hours to do the work. Centralizing serves as a "clearing-house" for prototypes and standardizes the process across the entire agency. It can be explained and defended.

It is recognized that some agencies have criticized centralizing prototyping and prototyping in general because they think "formula-driven" methods remove sensitivity and editorial judgment from the equation. Some agencies believe prototyping decreases responsibility of planners to fully review the media options.

The current situation

The number of unmeasured magazines exploded during the Nineties and continued through the year 2000. The year 2001 brought a major economic downturn. U.S. magazines such as Industry Standard, Dads, Family PC, Sesame Street Parents, Outdoor Explorer, Senior Golfer and Maximum Golfer, to name just a few, have all ceased publication.

Media operations like, MediaCom, STARCOM, MindShare, Foote Cone & Belding and Saatchi USA, produce anywhere from 100 to over 500 proprietary prototypes of new or unmeasured publications throughout the year. The Douglas/Jones Group prepared a special analysis of the number of generally available prototypes and demographic editions available on IMS in August 2001. They identified 166 prototypes and demographic estimates. Of the 166, 129 were prototypes.

All Prototypes and Demographic Editions	166
Total Prototypes	129

All of these estimates were prepared either by major publishing companies or firms like DJG. The major agencies will often review these “publisher provided” estimates. Some agencies may accept some or all of the recommendation after a thorough review and examination. After this review major agencies will usually “prepare” their own estimates using their own standards or procedures. (As noted above, however, almost all agencies will review a publisher’s work prior to making their final determination.)

Tony Jarvis of MediaCom and Tonya Deniz of Arnold developed a paper for the ARF Week of Workshops in October 2000 titled (4), “To Prototype or not to Prototype? That is the Question.” Based on confidential prototype estimates supplied to the ARF from a limited number of agencies, it was concluded that while prototype profiles from agencies and publishers generally reflected the “actual” profile of magazines when subsequently measured by a syndicated service, the total audience prototype estimates varied widely and from the “actual” syndicated measurement.

Even though the agencies were not very forthcoming with data for the ARF study, many of them have joined the special ARF Prototype Committee to frame general principles and guidelines for best practices as a practical and necessary effort for use either by agencies or publishers. It is expected that ultimately industry standards (or guidelines at a minimum) will be developed by the Committee, on behalf of the ARF Print Council, for approval by the ARF Board.

One of the strong beliefs of the authors of this paper is that publishers worldwide who prepare their own estimates will have agencies review them with more confidence if they follow the principles laid out in this paper. It is understood that this would be a “revolutionary” approach in some countries.

Definition of a Prototype

Definition: *A magazine prototype is an audience estimate of an unmeasured magazine developed for use within syndicated research for media planning, buying and selling. It is typically based on an existing measured publication(s) or “host(s)”.*

It is important to note that this definition has three important variations:

- A publisher’s estimate is an audience estimate for an unmeasured magazine without a subscriber study. Generally these publications have not yet been published, but are accepting ad pages, have produced an editorial mock up and are prepared to guarantee a rate base. Recent examples of publications that have had publisher’s estimates prior to launch include: Oprah; National Geographic Explorer; and My Generation. Some media research departments at major agencies will not even consider publisher’s estimates. They require planning groups, which would logically be interested in the new publication, to review it and recommend it on the group’s perceived level of value to the brand and suitability of the environment for the creative execution.
- A traditional audience prototype estimate has come to represent a prototype based on a publication that has published enough issues to have an ABC or BPA statement as well as a subscriber study, conducted by a reputable firm, after at least three or four issues have been published.
- Demographic edition prototype audience estimates have been developed since the Seventies. The evolution of demographic edition estimates was stimulated originally by the launch of Newsweek Executive, Time Business and Time Top Management. Both publishers produced different estimates for each publication, which required the agencies to evaluate each estimate to make decisions.

Agencies traditionally require the following before proceeding with a prototype:

- A high quality subscriber study. The ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) has laid out a set of standards that are “best practices”. Included in these standards, ABC monitors the selection of the sample of subscribers and audits the study execution. There is no minimum response rate, but the goal has traditionally been 50%. The subscriber study is necessary to assist in selecting host publication(s) with comparable demographic and lifestyle compositions. A copy of the ABC Magazine Subscriber Study best practices is included as an Appendix.
- Third party research data can also be used as a foundation for building either the prototypes or publisher’s estimates. Mendelsohn, for example, measured Investors Business Daily. DJG suggested a prototype on MRI that matched the demographic profile and produced similar relationships to the MMR data. The analysis was carried out on MRI \$75,000+ HHI to be comparable to MMR. Another example of using third party data for a publisher’s estimate is using the MRI product data as an anchor for host selection, e.g. using MRI’s gardening data to provide a benchmark for developing an estimate for a gardening publication.

- Recent copies of the magazine. Usually, agencies not only want media kits but also require a complete briefing on the editorial positioning of the publication. Most agencies that do prototyping spend great deal of time evaluating the editorial of the unmeasured magazine relative to its competitive set.
- Circulation data. Audited circulation data is the foundation of any audience prototype and is always thoroughly reviewed. The information agencies generally require includes:
 - An ABC or BPA statement.
 - A minimum level of circulation (typically ranging from 100,000 to 250,000).
 - Detailed circulation plans for either rate base increases or reductions, publication frequency changes and any changes in the mode of distribution. Agencies media research departments require publishers to go “on the record” with these changes. The agencies require a complete explanation of the home subscription development plan; newsstand performance or future plans for news stand sales; public place programs; etc. Agencies are extremely tough on publications that are distributed in “non traditional manners” like daycare centers, as part of membership or loyalty programs, etc.
- Minimum frequency of at least four issues per year. Most agencies will only prototype publications, which publish six times a year or more.
- Information that would assist the agency in estimating a Reader-per-Copy. If a publisher has a large number of public place copies and the editorial genre has a proven track record of producing readers, this information should be made known to the agencies.
- Before the prototyping process begins, at least one planner/buyer or planning/buying group will typically have to request that the media research department develop a prototype. This policy is in place in almost all of the major agencies to save time and prevent doing unnecessary prototypes that would never be considered for a plan. This practice also insures the sellers have contacted the appropriate planning/buying groups.

The policies of the Syndicated research services on prototyping

The following reflects the general policies of the major syndicated services:

- MRI allows publishers and agencies to prototype as long as they are subscribers to the studies they intend to use. Publisher and the computer bureaus are required to clearly label the estimate as a “Publisher’s Estimate/Prototype”. Agencies, which subscribe to MRI, can prototype any publication they want any time they want.
- Mendelsohn allows prototyping for only the first five years of a publication life or until it can be measured. It will also allow prototyping for publications that are impossible to measure such as Stagebill. Agencies, which subscribe to MMR, can prototype any publication they want any time they want.
- IntelliQuest CIMS allows publishers to produce audience prototypes for one year prior to being reported. Magazines that cannot be reported after the one-year period may not be prototyped by publishers after that. Agencies may prototype a publication any time as long as they have subscribed to IntelliQuest CIMS.
- J.D. Power does not currently allow publications to subscribe for prototyping purposes. Agencies may prototype a publication any time as long as they have subscribed to the JD Power.

When & why magazine Publishers Prototype

- When agencies start asking for estimates of composition, Readers-per-Copy or audience estimates.
- When the circulation size suggests the magazine is about to be measured.
- When the sales force feels that an estimate can significantly improve sales potential. Especially for positioning the publication versus the competition.
- Because, even a “good” subscriber study does not permit evaluation on common ground - total audience.
- Because too many agencies use research as a “screener.”
- Because if you are not on the planner / buyers computer screen, you don’t exist.

Outline of Prototyping approaches

Demographic Prototypes

A broad evaluation of larger titles to assess the “similarity” of the potential “host” book(s) demos to the unmeasured magazine. Typically, based on:

- % Male
- Median Age
- Household Income
- Education
- Marital Status
- Regional skews

Strengths:

- Simple. “Puts the number on the computer!”
- Allows agencies to include the publication in their computerized analysis

Weaknesses:

- Usually fails to give proper weight to endemic special interest pursuits
- Rarely captures subscriber study’s affluence
- If vertical title is used as a host, there may not be adequate statistical stability for key demographics or product behavior categories

Product/Behavior Prototypes (often used for special interest titles)

A detailed analysis of the unmeasured magazine’s current subscriber study will identify any special characteristics or interest behaviors and/or product purchase behaviors, e.g. gardening or skiing. If these “drivers” are matched and adjusted to a host publication(s), the profile of the host becomes like the profile of the special interest title. Weighting adjustments can be made to provide the best possible prototype estimate relative to subscriber study and other third party data acceptable to agencies and advertisers. ALL ADJUSTMENTS SHOULD BE FULLY DISCLOSED BY PUBLISHERS.

Review of the Methods used to Develop Prototypes

A Simple Scaling Based On Circulation:

Take a similar, reported magazine, e.g. *Travel & Leisure*, raise or lower the reported magazine’s audience level (RPC) and call it *Travel Holiday*.

The Primary Demo/ Product Method

Develop a weighted average of two or more demos or products on one or more magazines e.g. simulate Travel Holiday based on 50% Travel & Leisure or perhaps 50% of American Way.

Any product category, service or brand can now be used as a possible host. Some examples: “On a Diet” for a dieting magazines (maybe); Fly United (In-flight title); people who shop at Home Depot (Home Depot Magazine). Each decision to use one of these groups must still have to have a solid rationale. Care has to be taken since the prototype may over-represent the relevant behavior. Again the basis of the prototype must be fully disclosed.

Computer Modeling

Computer models are used because, “They are an aid in judgment for developing the best prototype for unmeasured magazines.” They are typically only used for selecting a host publication, or several host magazines, that best reflect the unmeasured magazine’s demographic composition. The best example of a computer model for reducing the number of possible host publications is UMPIRE. UMPIRE is an acronym that stands for, “Unmeasured Magazine Profil Method”. (3)

Objective of Umpire:

To find the single magazine or group of magazines that most closely matches the demographic profile of an unmeasured magazine’s “readership” study.

UMPIRE – What it Can and Cannot Do

It is a prototyping tool for developing demographic compositions only. Total audience and consequently Reader-per-Copy remain a judgment call by:

- Agency media researchers or planning groups
- Publishers who develop prototypes

Why Does UMPIRE Use?

- % Women
- Median Age
- % Graduated College
- Median Household Income
- % Married

Roger Baron, FCB Chicago, analyzed 20 different unmeasured magazine’s subscriber studies. MRI subsequently measured the publications. He compared 31 different demographic characteristics reported by the respective subscriber study and MRI. Of particular note is that he used MRI *primary* audience because it was better data with which to compare the traditional subscriber study data. Primary audience is defined as individuals who claim to have purchased or subscribed to a copy or who are in the household of someone *they perceive* as having purchased or subscribed to the publication. The five demographic characteristics above emerged as the best variables to use in host selection. (See his paper for the full analysis and rationale.)

The Way UMPIRE Works

- The five demographic compositions from the unmeasured magazine subscriber study are entered.
- They are compared one at a time, with national, non-ethnic magazines with more than 175 respondents on the MRI database.
- The goal is to find the magazine, or pair of magazines, that was closest on all five demographic variables to those of the unmeasured magazine.

Umpire’s selections, like any computer analysis, must meet the test of reasonableness.

How To Estimate the Reader-per-Copy

The final prototype audience level is determined by multiplying the rate base or average (ABC/BPA) circulation by the RPC. Many agencies recommend using the 48 states paid and unpaid circulation since that is the geographic area studied by MRI. MRI uses 48 state paid and unpaid for its reader per copy derivations.

To determine a reader per copy one must determine the competitive set of measured magazines. This is sometimes an extremely difficult part of the process. Once the set is determined, generally two or three years of Reader-per-Copy estimates are analyzed.

Not surprisingly, most agencies are less generous on Reader-per-Copy estimates than the publishers. To organize the thinking process, some researchers begin with a “typical” Reader-per-Copy. Roger Baron suggests 3.0, Cynthia Evans suggests 2.5 and Tony Jarvis suggests 2.8. One unusually tough agency starts every magazine out at 1.0. The whole point is to start from a frame of reference.

RPC Considerations

Analyze the competitive set in the study being used for prototyping and other studies where the title is reported if possible. The audience level is determined by multiplying the RPC by rate base or average (ABC/BPA) *total* (paid and unpaid 48 state for MRI since that is their circulation standard) circulation.

In the development of the reader-per-copy, the mode of distribution, the genre, the presence, or absence, of public place copies are all extremely important elements.

Subscriber studies frequently ask the subscribers to report how many other people have read the subscribers copy. ***This question is fundamentally flawed because the respondents can never tell how many other people read their copy.*** (DJG reports, in an internal analysis, that this *specious question* tends to produce a total reader per copy of 2.5 to about 3.5. This of course is incorrect. Public place availability drives readership (3). If the subscriber leaves a copy in the office and one of the other people in the office pick up the copy and take to the doctor's office that copy could get 15 – 50 more readers. If that person throws it away without reading, it gets 0 readers per copy.)

Never take the average of two host publications selected by a computer model (it is for host selection only). The reader per copy estimate requires a **separate** analysis to be fair to the prototyped publication and its competitors.

A Note on Duplication

Currently, duplication of the prototype magazine with measured publications is ignored. There is no way to estimate it and the publications, which are being prototyped, have generally small audiences.

How are prototypes typically used in media planning?

Essentially, as if they were measured, but with the strongest cautions and only in basic computerized analysis.

- Efficiency rankings and cross tabulations – yes
- Reach/ Frequency analyses, etc. - no
- Optimizations - no

Suggested Prototyping Principles (Guidelines/Best Practices)

Unmeasured publication candidacy

Length of Life

Prototypes for new publications, or publications which have published their first few editions, should be labeled publisher's estimates.

Agency prototypes may be developed for publications, which have published at least four issues.

Publications in existence for over 2 years, which have developed a "substantial" circulation and have not requested audience measurement by a syndicated service, should not be prototyped.

Circulation Size

Minimum 100,000.

Geographic Coverage or Concentration

Geographically skewed publication prototypes should be clearly disclosed. Publications cannot be prototyped if their geography restricts the samples available in the syndicated service or suitable hosts, e.g., on MRI you could potentially develop a prototype for a new magazine distributed in New York off of New York Magazine that is measured, but you could not prototype an Atlanta city magazine as there is no geographically similar host available.

Demographic Profile

The magazine's demographic profile must be consistent with the syndicated service being used for the host selection. Highly upscale magazines that may be appropriately prototyped (or measured) in MMR would not work in MRI.

Publication Frequency

There is no restriction on frequency of publication. It should be noted that most major agencies will not prototype if the publication frequency is not quarterly or more frequent. Many agencies require six-time frequency per year as a minimum.

Publication Genre

Publication genre is typically not a factor. Any publication can be estimated. However, certain agencies may not prototype particular genres.

From the agency perspective it is important to note that there is normally a request from the planning/buying group for a prototype to be developed by the agency's media research group.

Circulation Audit

Circulation data that should be provided includes:

- An ABC or BPA statement.
- Detailed circulation plans for either rate base increases or reductions (rate of change), publication frequency changes and any changes in the mode of distribution as "on the record".
- The effect of ABC reporting changes and their potential effect on any prototype estimate should be made explicit.
- Complete explanation of the home subscription development plan, newsstand performance or future plans for newsstand sales, public place programs, including all forms "non traditional manners" like daycare centers, publications as part of membership or loyalty programs, etc. (Controlled versus paid)

Prototypes should not be developed on publications with less than 100,000 circulations.

Audience Source

Typically, prototypes are developed for use within syndicated audience surveys. Publishers, agencies and the research syndicators may establish their own guidelines notably, the latter.

Bases for Prototype**Subscriber Study requirements**

It is preferable that ABC audit subscriber studies or such studies closely follow their guidelines. The key element of the ABC audit is a third party verification that the sample selected was a fair representation of the geographic definition of the prototype, e.g., 48 State circulation. (A 48 State sample is necessary for MRI national prototypes.)

Brand new publications

Publisher prototype audience estimates of new magazines shall be labeled as "publisher's estimates". They should be based on the best available third party data. However, agencies will make their own decisions on whether to use any or none of the information provided.

Whatever is used to develop the "publisher's estimate must be fully disclosed.

News stand Circulation Proportions & need to Profile Both Segments

Magazines with a large concentration of newsstand distribution are at a severe disadvantage when it comes to developing a prototype. High quality newsstand surveys requiring probability sampling of newsstand locations, intercept interviewing, etc. (i.e. ***based on a random basis with a known sample frame***) are generally out of financially reach of most publications. However such surveys are required to provide a reasonable estimate of the profile of the newsstand reader.

{Traditionally, insert studies either bound in the book or inserted in the publication, have been used in the past for directional data. DJG has found in one controlled experiment that an insert study of subscribers greatly understated the demographic quality relative to a high quality subscriber study. The reason was simply response rates. The insert study got about 5%, and the direct mail subscriber study 55%.}

Frequency

Prototypes should be considered for re-evaluation based on new subscriber studies at least every two and a half years often sooner depending on the evolution of the editorial and the circulation.

Tie profile to Syndicated Source

Each prototype requires a unique analysis of the potential host publications in the syndicated service. Even if the two syndicated audience studies purport to measure the same universe using the same methodology, the selection of the host publications should be executed separately and independently albeit, based on the same subscriber study.

Frequency of Prototype Execution/Currency Issue**When to Re-Examine**

New prototypes should be prepared from scratch whenever a new (audited) subscriber study becomes available.

Prototypes should be updated as each new syndicated study comes on-line using the latest audited circulation available. (Currently, in the USA publishers who produce estimates for their own use or as an aide to agencies to speed up their prototype review process should provide updates for every release of MRI.)

Matching/Host Selection

Use all available validated data:

- High quality subscriber study (ABC audited)
- Data from other reputable third parties, e.g., evaluate MMR, JD Power, or IntelliQuest data if a publication is measured in one of those services prior to developing an estimate for an unmeasured publication.
- Determine the competitive (demographic/editorial/lifestyle) set from review of all data, media kits and discussions with the publisher (and the publication's competitors).
- Execute a complete demographic analysis. Remember that a subscriber study always produces a richer profile than a total audience estimate.
- Use a computerized profile model as a starting point. This will insure that possible unlikely demographic hosts are not missed.
- Review the editorial genre of the unmeasured title, but remember sometimes there are differences that suggest using a near competitor may not be appropriate. Do not be afraid to use a large publication with a large unweighted sample of people who do a specific behavior, e.g., Time readers who hunted with a shot gun was a "good" surrogate for Duck's Unlimited.

Duplication (1 book vs. multi-book host prototype estimates)

Duplication cannot be dealt with at this preliminary stage. It should be reviewed in the future.

Host selection Models

The Authors think most of the current computer models, like UMPIRE, that are commercially available from IMS, Telmar and MEMRI are useful. If considering another model, remember UMPIRE was built in a systematic well-tested scientific way. Any modeler should reveal exactly how they built the system. This should include:

- Disclosure of the underlying assumptions
- Composition Basis
- The number of variables being used
- A detailed validation

Readers-Per-Copy

The process and rationale should be transparent. In other words it should be possible to evolve (replicate) the estimate even though the process is essentially judgmental.

Key considerations:

- Competitive Set
- Public place copies – numbers and general description by location.
- Mode of distribution
- Voice from Sky – "a postcard from God?" (Richard Lysaker)

Readers-per-copy estimates based on a question to a subscriber regarding "how many other people read or looked into your copy of ..." are considered specious.

Disclosure

Agency

Agencies are not required to disclose anything. It is recommended that the agencies share their estimate of the publisher's publication with the publication's research and sales/marketing executives.

Publisher

The publisher should fully disclose everything they have done including how the codes are specifically built on the various computer systems.

Uses

Reach & Frequency Analysis

It is not recommended that prototypes or publisher's estimates be used in reach and frequency analysis since they are based on hosts and duplication cannot be accounted for. They should be included in the plan on a gross rating or gross target point basis only.

Optimizations

Prototypes should not be used in optimizers.

Overall Summary

This paper has attempted to provide a detailed background and explanation of prototyping in the USA, its evolution, its practices and its current value and use for media planners, buyers and sellers.

Notable differences were found in the prototype estimates for the same publications between publishers, between agencies and between agencies and publishers as revealed in the ARF pilot study and reported by Tony Jarvis and Tonya Deniz at the ARF in October of 2000. As a result, the ARF Print Council asked a sub-committee to embark on developing industry principles or guidelines. These suggested preliminary principles are the start of that journey. Prototyping is still as much an art as it is a science but to ultimately develop Prototyping Standards Worldwide, the approaches, procedures and models must be investigated and be found to be reliable (validated). The prototypes produced based on such Standards must ultimately be replicable.

The authors prepared these suggested *preliminary* USA Prototype Principles with input from the members of the ARF Prototype Committee of the ARF Print Council. As such, they are a work in progress. It should be noted that the ARF Print Council has yet to approve these suggestions. As part of their development, the authors wish to seek input at the Symposium on these preliminary Prototype Principles/Guidelines. We believe that prototyping is an extremely useful, practical, day-to-day media research tool. We look forward to a discussion on whether these prototyping principles/guidelines should be reviewed for use in your own countries.

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Appendix**ABC Magazine Subscriber Profile Verification Service:
Research Standards for Direct Mail Studies
Draft as of September 3, 2001****INTRODUCTION**

The Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) has launched a Magazine Subscriber Profile Verification Service to help fulfill the magazine industry's growing need for credible, standardized subscriber profile information. This service is designed to permit comparisons of direct mail subscriber studies conducted by different survey research organizations for a variety of individual magazines.

Direct mail research is a standard method used for conducting magazine subscriber studies. ABC has been asked to develop a set of minimum standards for the execution of subscriber studies conducted by ABC-member magazines.

To qualify for the ABC Magazine Subscriber Profile Verification Service, a magazine's subscriber study must be audited by ABC. Each subscriber study must employ identical procedures.

ABC has commissioned Stephen A. Douglas, General Partner of The Douglas/Jones Group, to assist on this project. The standards and guidelines articulated below were developed under the guidance of Task Forces consisting of research practitioners from advertising agencies, ABC-member magazine and research suppliers.

RESEARCH STANDARDS**Market Definition**

The market definition for the subscriber study executed by a participating magazine will be the total paid and non-paid circulation for the 48 contiguous states. This 48-state market definition is mandatory, because subscriber studies are frequently used to develop audience estimates by MRI, Simmons and other syndicated services. Participating magazines may employ additional market definitions in their studies. If this is the case, the ABC-reported circulation, for the area defined in the subscriber study, must be reported in the first paragraph of the ABC Magazine Subscriber Profile Service Audit Report.

Research Supplier

The research firm selected must be a member of CASRO, or agree to comply with the standards established by CASRO. Publishers may use a third party supplier or conduct their subscriber study themselves, as long as they agree to follow the CASRO standards in conducting the study.

Drawing the Sample

All subscribers should be included in the sample frame, excluding subscription copies delivered to businesses that lacked individual names, public place/sponsored copies, recipients of complimentary copies and copies delivered outside of the 48 contiguous states. Any subscribers excluded from the frame must be clearly described and delineated. The research sample must produce a minimum of 500 completed subscriber questionnaires.

ABC will review the specifications for the sample pull, which must be described in the study's Technical Appendix.

The magazine must submit an ASCII comma-delimited version of the complete subscriber file. ABC will adjust the subscriber file to comply with the definition delineated above and will verify that the subscriber file is accurate. ABC will then select the mail-out sample from the subscriber file, on an nth name basis, in such a way that every subscriber has a known chance of selection. If a publisher wishes to over-sample a particular geographic, circulation source or demographic edition segment, the publisher must so specify. The data must not be incorporated into the final tabulations until it has been weighted to reflect each segment's true level of incidence in the subscriber file. The publisher may choose to report only the total subscriber profile. In this case, the total number will be the standard used.

Response Rate

While these standards establish no minimum response rate, every effort should be made to achieve the highest possible response rate using the procedures outlined below. ABC recognizes that numerous factors can impact the actual rate achieved. In all cases, regardless of the response rate, ABC auditors will closely examine the research methodology to ensure that all standards were observed.

The response rate must be calculated by:

- Subtracting the non-deliverables from the total mail-out to determine the net mail-out.
- Subtracting incomplete and non-usable returns from total returns to determine net returns.
- Dividing net returns with completed demographic questions by net mail-out to determine the response rate.

The following example illustrates how the response rate must be calculated:

Total mail-out	1,000
Non-deliverables	99
Net mail-out	901
Total returned	541
Net returns with completed demographic questions*	500
Response Rate	55%

*A questionnaire is considered completed when **two-thirds** of the mandatory demographic questions have been answered.

The Questionnaire

ABC requires the participating publication to have the mandatory demographic questions audited. These questions incorporate MRI standard demographic breaks and have been converted to a direct mail format. ABC wishes to thank MRI for its cooperation. If the participating publication wishes to report additional information, the questions must be pre-approved by ABC.

The following questionnaire is divided into two sections:

1. The first section contains those questions designed to generate the information that must be reported in the ABC Magazine Subscriber Profile Verification Service Audit Report (i.e., the mandatory questions).
2. The second section contains questions designed to generate information that publishers participating in the Magazine Subscriber Profile Service can report at their option (i.e., the optional questions).

*Note that several questions include optional segments (OPT1, OPT2, etc.). Some of those optional segments are designed to reflect demographic conditions found in various magazine target audiences, and the research questionnaire must pose one of these options for each market area/target audience surveyed. Other optional segments are additive.

Section 1: Mandatory Questions

1. About you and your household

(All answers are confidential and will be used only in combination with those of other respondents to form a composite picture.)

- a. Are you a man or a woman? Man Woman

b. What is your age?

OPT1	Under 18	30 – 34	50 - 54
	18 – 20	35 – 39	55 - 59
	21 – 24	40 – 44	60 - 64
	25 – 29	45 – 49	65 or over
OPT2	Under 16	25 – 34	55 - 64
	16 – 17	35 – 44	65 - 69
	18 - 20	45 - 54	70 - 74
	21 – 24		75 or over

2. What is your current marital status (Please X one answer only)

Married	Living in a partnered relationship
Single, never married	Separated or divorced
Widowed	

3. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received? (Please X one answer only)

Less than high school graduate
 Graduated from high school or received equivalent degree (e.g., GED)
 Attended college but did not graduate
 Graduated from two-year college
 Graduated from four-year college
 Post-graduate study
 Post-graduate degree

4. Which of the following best describes your present employment status? (Please X one answer only)

<u>Employed:</u>	<u>Not Employed:</u>
Full-time (35 or more hours per week)	Temporarily unemployed
Part-time (less than 35 hours per week)	Full-time student
	Retired
	Homemaker
	Other: _____

5. If Employed

What is your job title or position? (Please be specific. For example: Office Manager, Partner, Nurse, Salesperson, Teacher, Doctor, Lawyer, Vice-President, etc.)

(Write in)

ALL RESEARCH FIRMS WILL USE THE SAME CODING RULES

6. What are your most important responsibilities or duties? (For example: patient care, supervising order clerks, etc.)

(Write in)

ALL RESEARCH FIRMS WILL USE THE SAME CODING RULES

7. Counting yourself, how many people are currently living in your household?

Number living in household _____

8. Counting yourself, how many are there in each of the following gender and age groups? (If “none,” please write “0”. Please be sure that the total here equals your answer to the previous question.)

		Number Of Males	Number Of Females
<u>Counting yourself:</u>			
OPT1	18 years or older	# _____	# _____
	12 – 17 years	# _____	# _____
	6 – 11 years	# _____	# _____
	5 years or younger	# _____	# _____
OPT2	18 years or older	# _____	# _____
	17 years or younger	# _____	# _____
	2 – 5 years old	# _____	# _____
	Under 2 years old	# _____	# _____

9. Please indicate the box which of the following best describes the total combined income before taxes of all members of your household in the previous year. (Please include all income for yourself and all other persons living in your household from all sources. For example: wages, bonuses, profits, dividends, rental income, interest.)

OPT1

Under \$25,000	\$75,000 – 99,999
\$25,000 – 49,999	\$100,000 – 149,999
\$50,000 – 74,999	\$150,000 +

OPT2

Under \$10,000	\$30,000 - \$34,999	\$60,000 - \$74,999
\$10,000 - \$14,999	\$35,000 - \$39,999	\$75,000 – \$99,999
\$15,000 - \$19,999	\$40,000 - \$44,999	\$100,000 or more
\$20,000 - \$24,999	\$45,000 - \$49,999	if more than \$100,000, enter
\$25,000 - \$29,999	\$50,000 - \$59,999	approximate amount
		\$ _____, _____

OPT3*

\$100,000 - \$124,999	\$250,000 - \$299,999	\$500,000 or more
\$125,000 - \$149,999	\$300,000 - \$349,999	If more than \$500,000,
\$150,000 - \$174,999	\$350,000 - \$399,999	enter appropriate amount:
\$175,000 - \$199,999	\$400,000 - \$449,999	\$ _____, _____
\$200,000 - \$249,999	\$450,000 - \$499,999	

*Note that the OPT3 is additive, the publication must pose OPT1 or OPT2 followed by OPT3.

10. About Your Home

Which of the following best describes your primary place of residence? (Please X one answer only.)

Own

House

Co-op/Condominium/Apartment

Other: _____
(Please X box and write in)

Rent

House

Apartment

Other: _____
(Please X box and write in)

11. Geographic Area

Your State? _____

Your ZIP code? ____ _

Section 2: Optional Questions1. Race / Ethnicity

a. What race do you consider yourself to be?

White/Caucasian	Other
Black/African American	Don't know
Oriental/Asian	

b. Are you of Hispanic origin or descent?

Yes	No
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2. Real Estate

Which of the following do you or other members of your household own?

Vacation/weekend home	Retirement real estate
Farm	Investment real estate
None of these	

3. (If "Own"), what is the approximate market value of your primary home (including land) or condo/co-op? That is, if you were going to sell it what do you think your home would be worth?

OPT1	Under \$50,000	\$250,000 - \$299,999
	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$300,000 - \$399,999
	\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$400,000 - \$499,999
	\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$500,000 or more
	\$150,000 - \$199,999	If more than \$500,000, enter
	\$200,000 - \$249,999	approximate amount:
		\$ __, __ __ __, __ __ __
OPT2*	\$500,000 - \$599,999	\$900,000 - \$999,999
	\$600,000 - \$699,999	\$1,000,000 or more
	\$700,000 - \$799,999	If more than \$1,000,000,
	\$800,000 - \$899,999	enter approximate amount:
		\$ __, __ __ __, __ __ __

*Note that the OPT2 is an additive option; the publication must pose OPT1 followed by OPT2.

(If "Own House"), what is the approximate size of the property your primary residence is built on?

Less than ¼ acre	More than 1 acre to 3 acres
¼ to 1 acre	More than 3 acres

4. What is the approximate market value of your vacation or weekend home(s)?

Under \$50,000	\$250,000 - \$299,999
\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$300,000 - \$399,999
\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$400,000 - \$499,999
\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$500,000 or more
\$150,000 - \$199,999	If more than \$500,000, enter
\$200,000 - \$249,999	approximate amount:
	\$ __, __ __ __, __ __ __

5. (If not married): Are you currently engaged to be married?

Yes No

6. If Employed

In what kind of business, industry or profession do you work?

(Describe the activity at location where employed. For example: newspaper publishing, cereal manufacturing, etc.)

 (Write in)
7. Are you an owner or partner in your business?

Owner Partner Neither

8. Do you consider your work a career or just a job?

Career Job

9. Are you self-employed?

Yes No

10. Do you primarily work out of an office or company location away from home or do you primarily work from your home?

Primarily work out of an office/company location
Primarily work from home

11. Do you have an office in your home?

Yes No

12. Please X the box that describes your own employment income before taxes in the previous year. (Including salary, wages, tips, bonuses, share of profits, commissions, etc.)

OPT1

Under \$10,000	\$30,000 - \$34,999	\$60,000 - \$74,999
\$10,000 - \$14,999	\$35,000 - \$39,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999
\$15,000 - \$19,999	\$40,000 - \$44,999	\$100,000 or more
\$20,000 - \$24,999	\$45,000 - \$49,999	If more than \$100,000, enter
\$25,000 - \$29,999	\$50,000 - \$59,999	approximate amount
		\$ __ __ __, __ __ __

OPT2*

\$100,000 - \$124,999	\$240,000 - \$299,999	\$450,000 - \$499,999
\$125,000 - \$149,999	\$300,000 - \$349,999	\$500,000 or more
\$150,000 - \$174,999	\$350,000 - \$399,999	If more than \$500,000. enter
\$175,000 - \$199,999	\$400,000 - \$499,999	enter approximate amount:
\$200,000 - \$249,999	\$450,000 - \$499,999	\$ _____, _____

*Note that the OPT2 is an additive option, the publication must pose OPT1 followed by OPT2.

13. How many employees are there in your entire company, including all plants, branches, divisions and subsidiaries?

Under 10	100 - 499	10,000- 24,999
10 - 24	500 - 999	25,000 - 49,999
25 - 49	1,000 - 2,499	50,000 or more
50 - 99	2,500 - 9,999	

14. What are the approximate gross annual sales or revenues of your entire company, including all plants, branches, divisions and subsidiaries?

Under \$5 million	\$ 25 - \$ 49.9 million	\$ 1 - \$4.9 billion
\$ 5 - \$ 9.9 million	\$ 50 - \$ 99.9 million	\$ 5 - \$9.9 billion
\$10 - \$24.9 million	\$100 - \$499.9 million	\$10 billion or more
	\$500 - \$999.9 million	

15. Are you currently attending any school either full-time or part-time?

Yes No (If "No", X box and go to question 15.)

16. Are you currently a . . .

High school student
Part - time college student
Full - time college student

17. In what type of locality do you live? (Please X one answer only.)

City Small town
Suburbs of a city Rural area

Finally, we would appreciate any comments, either positive or negative, you might care to make about (MAGAZINE).

THANK YOU! We appreciate your help. Please mail the completed survey in the reply envelope (no postage necessary), or return to:

Tabulations

Quality controls must be used in editing, entering and tabulating the data. For example, the percentage of the questionnaires that were verified must be reported and attested by affidavits. Sample weighting and projections must be consistent with the sample design. The method of sample weighting and the distribution of sample weights used must be reported. Ascription must not be used.

For each demographic question, the percentage of respondents not answering must be reported. The number of adult respondents (18 years and older) answering the question will form the base for all demographic breakouts.

Technical Appendix

The Technical Appendix must include sufficient descriptive information about the study so that the study can be replicated. The Technical Appendix must fully explain the study procedures, including detailed descriptions of the following:

- Geographical area of the survey
- Sample design and sample selection request form
- Complete text of all questionnaires, alert letters and cover letters used during the course of the study
- Periods during which all initial and follow-up mailings occurred, as well as the final response cut-off date
- Coding and editing procedures used
- Description of "cleaning," data entry and percentage of key verification process
- Data tabulation including respondent counts by demography
- Weighting procedures if the design called for over-sampling of any kind (e.g., geography or source of circulation)
- Response rates within each reported geographic area or source if over-sampled

FILES TO BE RETAINED

The following records must be retained for at least two years:

- Basic sampling materials
- All study questionnaires (complete or incomplete)
- Statistical computations
- Tabulation forms and/or computer printouts
- Computer tapes or disks containing respondent data
- Raw data tables

These materials must be available for inspection by ABC auditors at their request. An ABC representative may also visit the research facility to review the materials before, during or after completion of the fieldwork.

What will be audited?

1. The sample specifications, subscriber master tape and questionnaire
2. The response from the questionnaires relative to final computer tape
3. The response rate calculations
4. The final weighting procedure

ABC METHODOLOGY STANDARDS

The goal of a high quality direct mail subscriber study is to achieve the highest possible response rate. ABC has reviewed the literature and sought additional input from several prominent direct mail media research specialists to determine best practices in this area. At a minimum, the research firm conducting the study must do the following:

Choose one of two alternative mailing procedures:

OPT1

- Send a personalized cover letter with a personal signature from the editor, the publisher or a well-known individual associated with the publication alone with the questionnaire.
- Send a second personalized cover letter alone with the questionnaire to non-responders.

OPT2

- Send an alert letter or postcard from the editor, the publisher or a well-known individual associated with the publication asking the subscriber to cooperate by completing the questionnaire.
- Send a personalized cover letter with a personal signature from the editor, the publisher or a well-known individual associated with the publication alone with the questionnaire.
- Send a reminder postcard about one week after the questionnaire is mailed.

In either case, the cover letter and the questionnaire itself must ask that the individual within the subscribing household who is most involved with the publication to complete the questionnaire.

- Use the magazine's stationery, and a logo envelope.
- Advise respondents that their confidentiality will be protected.
- Use a first class postage stamp, not a meter.
- Unless prohibited by law or religious practice, use a monetary or other incentive (i.e., premium, sweepstakes) with minimum value of one dollar

Optional Guidelines

- A personalized alert letter or postcard
- Additional mailings may be necessary.
- A telephone follow-up contact may be necessary.
- Use a large enough envelope to send the questionnaire without folding it, if possible.
- Select a research supplier who has experience with direct mail surveys and a proven track record of achieving high response rates.

