

## Reader Behavior Scores 2000 – 2003

### For more information:

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### Background

In the summer of 2000, the Readership Institute conducted a mail survey among 37,000 respondents in 100 randomly selected local daily newspaper markets across the country. Data were collected on frequency of reading, time spent with the newspaper and completeness of reading. Those dimensions were rolled into Readership Behavior Scores, on a scale of 1 (non-readers) to 7 (heavy readers.)

In February 2003, a re-contact study was done among randomly selected readers from the initial Impact survey. Respondents had to be at least a light reader with an RBS of 2.0 or higher.

Of 10,000 surveys mailed, 4,437 surveys were returned.

### Findings

Overall RBS dropped slightly—0.08 points on the seven-point RBS scale. Heavy readers' RBS increased slightly, but light readers' RBS decreased significantly— by 0.5 points.

Although not all young adults are light readers, readership decline can mainly be attributed to them. While older readers increased their readership over the past three years, respondents under age 35 dropped by 0.25—a statistically significant decrease.

(Although statistical significance is dependent on several factors, as general rule of thumb, RBS changes of 0.15 or greater are statistically significant.)

	<b>RBS 2003</b>	<b>RBS 2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
<b>Overall</b>	4.74	4.83	-0.08	4,437
<b>Light Readers (RBS under 4.75)</b>	3.50	3.99	-0.50	1,393
<b>Heavy Readers (RBS 4.75 and above)</b>	5.64	5.43	0.21	2,686
<b>Gen X and Y (Under 39 years old)</b>	4.14	4.39	-0.25	382
<b>Boomers (39 to 58 years old)</b>	4.72	4.70	0.02	2,158
<b>59+ years old</b>	5.26	5.18	0.08	1,783
<b>Male</b>	4.79	4.81	-0.02	2,204
<b>Female</b>	4.71	4.75	-0.04	2,193
<b>HS Grad</b>	4.93	4.85	0.07	964
<b>Some College</b>	4.67	4.71	-0.04	1,537
<b>College Grad</b>	4.74	4.79	-0.05	1,882
<b>Married</b>	4.84	4.83	0.01	3,139
<b>Single</b>	4.38	4.67	-0.29	414
<b>Divorced</b>	4.70	4.55	0.15	509
<b>Children in the home</b>	4.41	4.52	-0.11	1,079
<b>No children in home</b>	4.91	4.90	0.01	3,342
<b>Employed Full Time</b>	4.56	4.61	-0.04	2,255
<b>Not full time / retired</b>	5.01	5.03	-0.01	2,072
<b>under \$35K</b>	4.65	4.63	0.02	1,023
<b>\$35-75K</b>	4.70	4.76	-0.05	1,682
<b>over \$75K</b>	4.80	4.84	-0.04	1,247

The overall decline in readership comes mainly from decreasing frequency and completeness. Time spent with the paper has actually increased slightly among readers over the past three years.

### Frequency

Overall, readership frequency dropped slightly. The number of people who do not read at all during the week increased 4% and the number of people who read five or six weekdays dropped about 5%. In addition, Sunday frequency among readers dropped about 4%.

#### Weekday Frequency

	2000	2003	% Change
	%	%	
Do Not Read	14.8	19.3	4
1	7.1	6.6	0
2	6.2	5.7	-1
3	3.4	3.9	0
4	0.7	1.6	1
5	6.0	4.4	-2
6	61.8	58.6	-3
Average Days Read	4.3	4.1	-0.2

#### Sunday Frequency

	2000	2003	% Change
	%	%	
Do Not Read	5.5	9.1	4
Read	94.5	90.9	-4

## Time Spent

Readers report that the time they spend with the newspaper in a typical week is up slightly. Weekday time spent is up by about one minute (24 minutes to 25 minutes) and Sunday time spent is up about five minutes, from 68 minutes to 73 minutes.

### Weekday Time Spent Reading

	2000	2003	
	%	%	% Change
Do not read	11.6	11.3	0
1-15 minutes	20.9	19.2	-2
16-30 minutes	38.3	37.2	-1
31-45 minutes	16.6	18.0	1
46-60 minutes	8.7	9.8	1
61 minutes or more	3.8	4.5	1
Avg minutes	23.8	25.0	1.2

### Weekend/Sunday Time Spent Reading

	2000	2003	
	%	%	% Change
none	4.5	4.9	0
<1/2 hour	14.9	9.8	-5
half hour < 1 hour	34.3	31.1	-3
1 hour <2 hours	32.7	41.0	8
2 hours <2 1/2 hours	8.4	6.5	-2
2 1/2 hours < 3 hours	2.5	2.8	0
3 hours or more	2.8	3.8	1
Avg minutes	67.7	73.1	5.4

## Completeness

Overall, readers are reading the newspaper less completely than they were three years ago. Weekday completeness dropped more than any other component. The number of people who read all or almost all of the paper decreased by seven percent, and the number of people who do not read at all during the week increased by seven percent. Sunday completeness also dropped by about 2%.

### Weekday Completeness of Reading

	2000	2003	% Change
	%	%	
none	9.7	16.8	7
1/4	15.5	13.9	-2
1/2	17.5	18.1	1
3/4	18.6	20.1	2
Almost all/all	38.6	31.2	-7
Avg completeness	65.2%	58.8%	-6.5

### Weekend/Sunday Completeness of Reading

	2000	2003	% Change
	%	%	
none	2.8	6.3	4
1/4	13.6	10.8	-3
1/2	18.9	18.7	0
3/4	25.0	27.6	3
Almost all/all	39.6	36.6	-3
Avg completeness	71.3%	69.4%	-1.9