

July 2004

New Readers: Market Selection and Consumer Survey Methodology

For more information:

Todd McCauley

Mary Nesbitt, m-nesbitt@northwestern.edu, 847-467-4285

The purpose of the New Readers study was to examine how the newspaper-reading experience differs for readers of various ethnic and age groups and to identify factors within a newspaper's control, such as advertising and editorial content and service, that drive those experiences.

Market Selection

Because conducting research of this magnitude using random sampling methods would have been cost-prohibitive, we used panels recruited and maintained by research company NFO WorldGroup (since merged with TNS market research.)

New Readers is a study of different demographic groups, not markets. Our objective was to identify cities across the country that could produce a minimum of 50 completed surveys by newspaper readers in one or more of the following groups:

- African Americans
- Latino/Hispanics
- Asian/Pacific Islanders
- Caucasians under age 34
- Caucasians age 35+

Step 1: Identify cities with sufficient numbers of each group to meet criteria

NFO ran panel member counts for every Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in their panel. To achieve our objective of 50 completed interviews per group, we estimated that we would need a minimum of 175 panel members per demographic. We eliminated those markets where there were not enough qualified panel members.

Step 2: Stratify newspaper markets by demographic groups

Due to the relatively small and concentrated number of Asian/Pacific Islanders in the United States, only a limited number of cities could produce a sufficient number of panel members for all demographic groups. We devised the following strata for classifying the various cities to be considered for inclusion in the sample.

	Demographic Groups	Qualifying Markets
Group 1	Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian	13
Group 2	Caucasian, African American, Hispanic	17
Group 3	Caucasian, African American	22
Group 4	Caucasian, Hispanic	15
Group 5	Caucasian	219

Step 3: Select newspaper markets and the newspapers to be studied

We had determined *a priori* to include approximately 50 markets in the final sample. We wanted as many markets as possible with all demographic groups represented. As a result, almost all of the markets that qualified for Group 1 or Group 2 were included in the study. We randomly selected the markets from Groups 3 through 5 to fill out the sample and then adjusted the final sample for broad representation by geography and group ownership. In total, 52 newspaper markets were identified for the study.

	Demographic Groups	Markets
Group 1	Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian	10
Group 2	Caucasian, African American, Hispanic	14
Group 3	Caucasian, African American	8
Group 4	Caucasian, Hispanic	9
Group 5	Caucasian	11
	TOTAL	52

As indicated, the study was designed to examine attitudes and behaviors of newspaper readers. In addition, because we intended to couple the survey data to newspaper content analysis, we needed to find readers of specific local daily newspapers – not simply readers of any newspaper. Our next step was to identify individual newspapers within each market. In most cases, there is only one primary daily newspaper. In markets where multiple daily newspapers were available, we selected the newspaper that provided the most diversity by ownership, given the other newspapers in the sample. The final sample frame had the following newspapers.

Group 1	Newspaper	City
	Chicago Tribune	Chicago, IL
	The Fresno Bee	Fresno, CA
	Los Angeles Times	Los Angeles, CA
	The Oregonian	Portland, OR
	The Press-Enterprise	Riverside, CA
	The San Diego Union-Tribune	San Diego, CA
	San Francisco Chronicle	San Francisco, CA
	San Jose Mercury News	San Jose, CA
	Seattle Post-Intelligencer	Seattle, WA
	The Washington Post	Washington, DC

Group 2	Austin American-Statesman	Austin, TX
	The Boston Globe	Boston, MA
	The Dallas Morning News	Dallas, TX
	The Denver Post	Denver, CO
	Houston Chronicle	Houston, TX
	The Kansas City Star	Kansas City, MO
	Las Vegas Review-Journal	Las Vegas, NV
	The Miami Herald	Miami, FL
	New Haven Register	New Haven, CT
	Newsday	Melville, NY
	Orlando Sentinel	Orlando, FL
	The Philadelphia Inquirer	Philadelphia, PA
	The Star-Ledger	Newark, NJ
	The Tampa Tribune	Tampa, FL
Group 3	The Augusta Chronicle	Augusta, GA
	The Commercial Appeal	Memphis, TN
	The Daily Advertiser	Lafayette, LA
	The Daily Reflector	Greenville, NC
	Montgomery Advertiser	Montgomery, AL
	News & Record	Greensboro, NC
	The Plain Dealer	Cleveland, OH
	The Times	Shreveport, LA
Group 4	Arizona Daily Star	Tucson, AZ
	The Bakersfield Californian	Bakersfield, CA
	The Californian	Salinas, CA
	Corpus Christi Caller-Times	Corpus Christi, TX
	El Paso Times	El Paso, TX
	The Monitor	McAllen, TX
	Standard-Examiner	Ogden, UT
	Times-Herald	Vallejo, CA
	Valley Morning Star	Harlingen, TX
Group 5	Amarillo Globe-News	Amarillo, TX
	Billings Gazette	Billings, MT
	Cumberland Times-News	Cumberland, MD
	Danville Register & Bee	Danville, VA
	Greeley Tribune	Greeley, CO
	Hickory Daily Record	Hickory, NC
	The Joplin Globe	Joplin, MO
	Quad-City Times	Davenport, IA
	South Bend Tribune	South Bend, IN
	The Times Herald-Record	Middletown, NY
	Tri-City Herald	Kennewick, WA

Step 4: Selecting Respondents

The next task was to identify readers of the specific newspapers in the sample. Where we had excess sample available (primarily in the largest markets), we matched NFO's panel membership against the target newspaper's circulation by zip code to determine which respondents had the greatest likelihood of being newspaper readers.

Screener and Questionnaire

To identify readers of the sample newspapers, we sent screeners to approximately 106,000 households to screen for newspaper readership. Using the Reader Behavior Scores (RBS) questions, readers who read the target newspaper at least once in an average week qualified for inclusion in the survey. Approximately 81,000 screeners were sent to NFO panel members and 25,000 were sent to additional randomly selected respondents to augment the NFO panel in some markets.

Screener respondents who were readers of the target newspaper in their market were sent a 12-page questionnaire. Each respondent was given \$2 and promised inclusion in a drawing for additional cash prizes. In total we mailed out 19,575 surveys and received 10,858 usable surveys (a response rate of 55%).