



Newspaper Readership

January 2003

Purpose

This survey continues to monitor the impact of the Newspaper Readership Program available to students at all 20 Penn State locations.

Implications/Highlights

A majority of students were satisfied with the Newspaper Readership Program and felt that it contributed to the quality of their education. There continues to be a growing number of faculty who require newspapers or who refer to news articles regularly in class discussions. Students report they pass along newspapers to friends or pick them up in classrooms and lounge areas nearly twice a week in addition to taking about 60,000 copies weekly from the distribution units. Students report spending more time online than they did in previous years.

Participation Rate

N = 3048 overall
 N = 1150 University Park
 N = 1898 all other PSU campus locations

Findings

Students were generally pleased with the Newspaper Readership Program. More of those at University Park than of those at the other PSU campuses indicated they were satisfied.

Satisfaction with Newspaper Readership Program

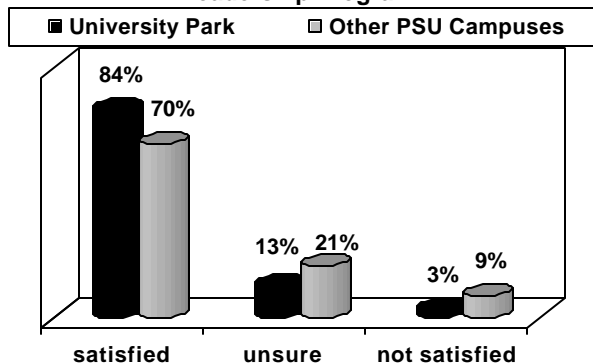


Figure 1. The majority of students are satisfied with the Newspaper Readership Program

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

More students in 2003 than in 2002 saw a connection between regular newspaper readership and the quality of their overall Penn State education.

Contributed to Penn State Education

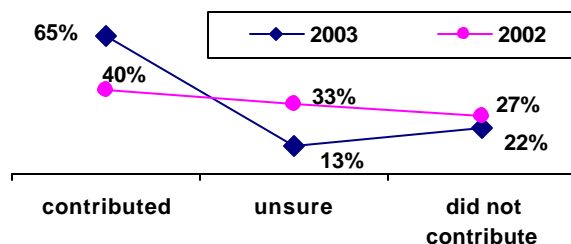


Figure 2. Nearly two-thirds of respondents in 2003 said reading newspapers regularly added to their PSU education

Several survey questions focused on learning outcomes associated with reading a newspaper on a regular basis.

Learning Outcomes of Regular Readership

learning outcome	2003	2002
ability to discuss current events or issues	91%	70%
having opinions about national or international concerns	90%	65%
feeling informed about local community issues	84%	47%
understanding ethical dilemmas of contemporary issues	75%	36%
understanding public policy, law and political positions	74%	36%
feeling informed about University issues	71%	46%
participating in class discussions	71%	32%
connecting class concepts and real life experiences	68%	30%
gaining insight into historical context of current issues	68%	27%
evaluating use of language, statistics, arguments	66%	27%
developing strategies to pursue own goals	52%	22%

- More of the minority students connected newspaper readership with understanding policy, law and political positions* as well as gaining insight into the historical context of current issues.*
- More of the women linked newspaper readership with participating in class discussions* and connecting life experiences and class concepts.*

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U.Ed. STA 03-242

Division of Student Affairs

There was an increase both in the number of instructors who required newspaper readership and who referred to news articles regularly in their class discussions.

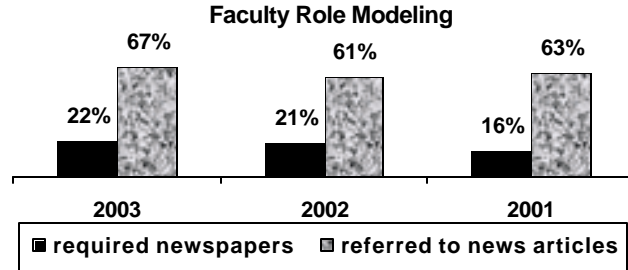


Figure 3. A growing number of faculty require newspapers or refer regularly to news articles in their classes

Of those faculty who required that their students read newspapers, most specified *The New York Times*.

	2003	2002	2001
<i>The New York Times</i> +	25%	29%	28%
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	10%	18%	13%
<i>USA Today</i> +	10%	15%	17%
local newspaper+	8%	16%	18%
own choice	14%	9%	15%
student newspaper	4%	8%	8%
other	30%	5%	1%

+ provided through the Readership program

Nearly 60,000 newspapers are picked up weekly from the Newspaper Readership distribution units throughout the 20 PSU locations. Students also report they pass along newspapers to friends (mean = 1.15/week) as well as read newspapers found lying around in classrooms and lounge areas (mean = 1.72/week).

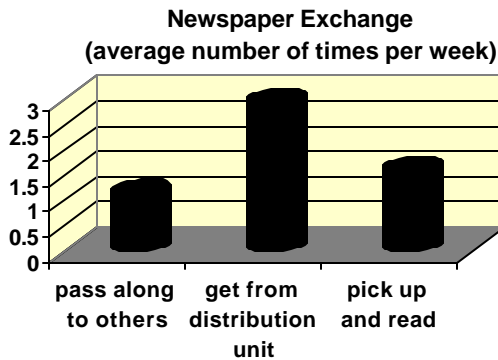


Figure 4. Newspapers from the Readership Program are often read by more than one student

Of those respondents who reported getting newspapers from the distribution units (84%), approximately one-third (37%) encountered mechanical problems and 73% ran into a supply problem.

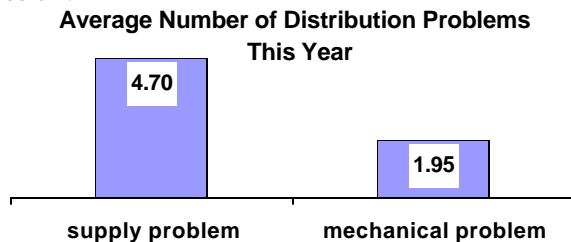


Figure 5. Students reported mechanical and supply problems when they picked up newspapers from the distribution units

Students indicated they used more than one medium to access news. There was a difference between students at University Park and the other PSU campuses when choosing the one 'preferred' medium to access news.

	University Park		Other Campuses	
	access news	preferred source	access news	preferred source
radio	9%	3%	25%	9%
TV	42%	35%	56%	45%
online	38%	18%	32%	15%
magazines	12%	3%	15%	3%
newspapers	58%	42%	45%	27%

Students report spending more time online than they did in previous years.

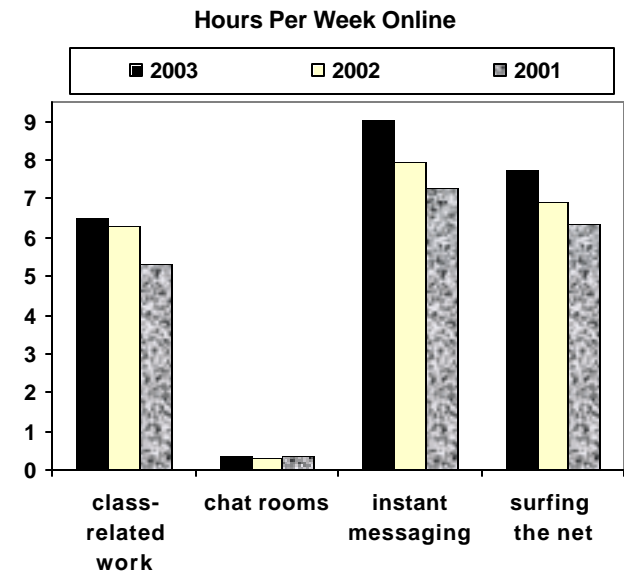


Figure 6. Students are spending more time online

Men spend more time surfing the net.* Minority students spend more time online doing class work.*

The survey asked for feedback on the effectiveness of efforts to publicize the Newspaper Readership Program.

Effectiveness of Publicity Efforts

	University Park	other campuses
+ signs on distribution units	43%	40%
+ banners on campus	26%	33%
+ ads on buses	32%	16%
+ table tents	22%	12%
+ news articles	31%	28%
+ flyers/posters	29%	38%
+stall stories	55%	32%

Some students indicated an interest in having newspapers available Saturdays and Sundays on a charge-per-copy basis.

Interest in Weekend Newspapers

31%	University Park
52%	all other PSU campuses

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.