



Newspaper Readership 2002

February 2002

Purpose

This survey examines student satisfaction with the Newspaper Readership Program at 20 Penn State locations, learning outcomes associated with regular readership, and feedback on effectiveness of specific efforts to publicize the availability of the newspapers.

Implications/Highlights

Most students (85%) said they regularly obtain newspapers from the distribution racks at their campus. Half (54%) said they pass along these newspapers to other students while 69% get a newspaper that was left behind by others at least once a week.

Participation Rate

Respondents were selected randomly from 20 PSU locations.

N = 3149

N = 1461 University Park[^]

N = 1688 non-University Park

[^] Of the University Park responses, 1026 were via the phone and 435 were via the Web.

Findings

Most of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Newspaper Readership Program.

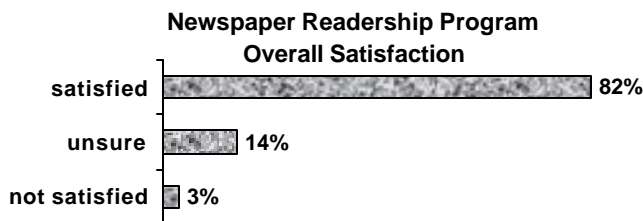


Figure 1. Most students were satisfied with the Newspaper Readership Program

Individual students commented on the impact of seeing so many others reading, that the availability added to the 'college atmosphere,' and that they appreciated the convenience.

- gives students access to most pressing concerns of our time
- beneficial to all students
- great to be able to read newspapers between classes
- gets a lot of use on my campus
- unique, informative, keeps me up with the rest of the world

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

This year more students (21%) compared to last (16%) reported they had instructors who required they read newspapers on a regular basis. More than half (61%) said other instructors referred to news articles regularly in their class presentations and discussions.

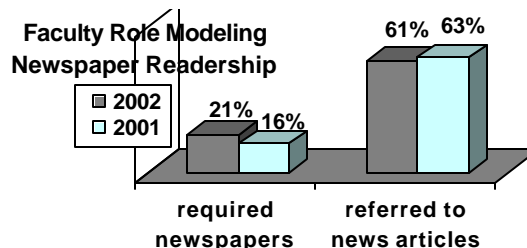


Figure 2. A fifth of respondents had instructors who required they read a newspaper, three-fifths had other instructors who referred to news articles regularly in class

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

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

+ provided on campus

Two-fifths (40%) saw a connection between regular readership and their overall college education.

Students were asked to what extent they thought reading newspapers regularly added to specific general education outcomes.

Learning Outcomes Associated With Regular Readership

70%	ability to discuss current events/issues
65%	having opinions about national/international news
47%	feeling informed about community issues
46%	feeling informed about University issues
36%	understanding public policy, law, political topics
36%	understanding contemporary ethical dilemmas
32%	participating in class discussions
30%	connecting class concepts and real life experiences
27%	evaluating use of language, statistics, illustrations
27%	gaining historical context of current issues
22%	developing strategies to pursue own goals

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Student Affairs

Students indicated they used more than a single medium to access news.

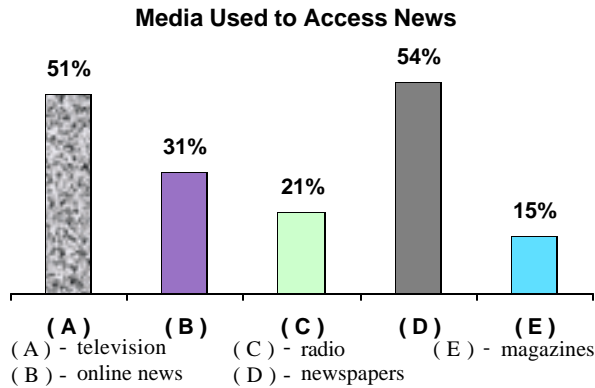


Figure 3. Students chose more than one medium to access news

When asked to specify their 'most preferred' medium, one-third chose television (39%) and newspapers (36%); 15% chose online access, 7% chose radio and 3% chose magazines. Men were more likely than women to choose online news* while women were more likely than men to choose television news.* University Park students were more likely than non-University Park students to choose printed newspapers as their preferred medium of news.*

On average, students read *The Daily Collegian* online less than once during the week prior to the survey. University Park students were more likely to read the *Collegian* online than non-University Park students.* University Park students also reported reading, on average, 3.74 issues of the printed *Daily Collegian* that week.

Students spent more hours a week online this year than last doing class-related work, surfing the net, participating in chat rooms, and using instant messaging.

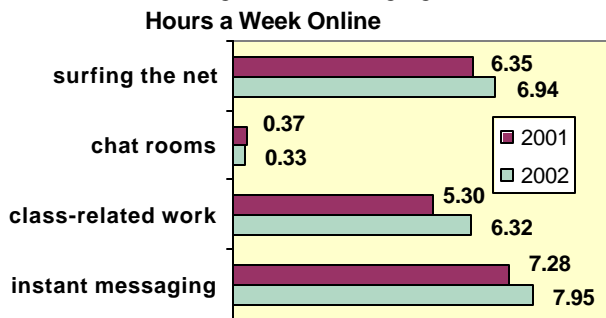


Figure 4. Students reported spending more hours a week online this year than last surfing the net, in chat rooms, using instant messaging, and doing class-related work

- Women spent more time online doing class related work* while men spent more time surfing the net.*
- Minority students spent more time online than non-minority students doing class related work* and surfing the net.*
- University Park students spent more using instant messaging than did students from the non-UP locations.*

Thirty percent of students said they would be interested in having newspapers available on weekends for a fee.

A section of the survey focused on specific marketing efforts to publicize the Newspaper Readership Program.

Effectiveness of Publicity Efforts

- 22% signs on the newspaper distribution units
- 17% banners on campus
- 30% advertising panels in buses
- 30% table tents in dining areas
- 17% news articles about the program
- 15% flyers and posters
- 42% Stall Stories in restrooms

Students living on campus in residence halls were asked where they generally picked up their newspapers.

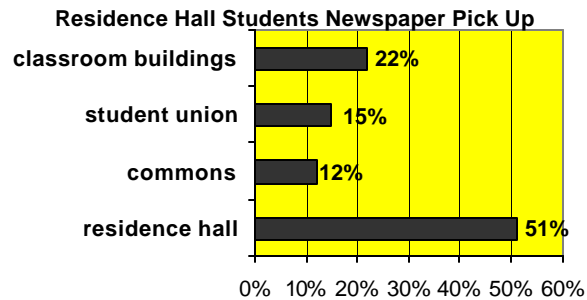


Figure 5. Students living on campus were most likely to pick up newspapers from their residence halls

A majority (85%) of students said they picked up a newspaper once or more a week from the Newspaper Distribution units on their campus. They were asked how often this year they had encountered a mechanical or supply problem with one of the distribution units.

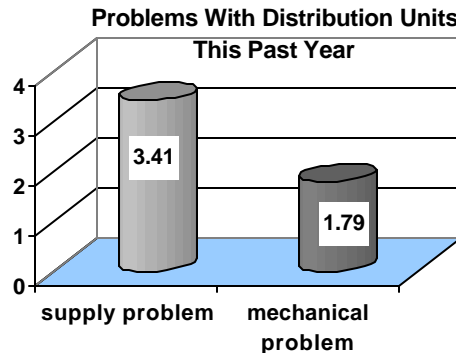


Figure 6. Over the past year, students encountered supply problems 3.41 times and mechanical problems 1.79 times - on average

In addition to campus-specific newspapers, an average of 55,000 *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and various local newspapers are picked up from the distribution units weekly. Students also report they pass along newspapers to others as well as pick up and read newspapers they found in classrooms and lounge areas.

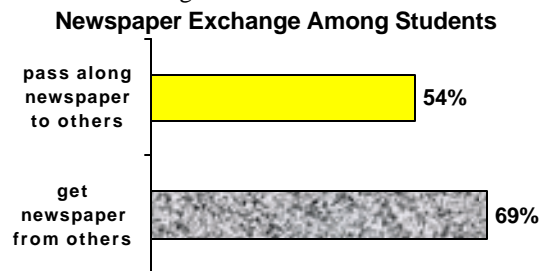


Figure 7. A majority of students exchanges newspapers with other students

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.