

2021 Media Study HIGHLIGHTS by Community Size

9 Support for Local Newspaper and its Advertisers

Respondents Who Said it Very Important to Buy From Companies that Advertise in the Local Newspaper
 Farms – 35.2% Villages – 32.5%
 Large Towns – 39.7%
 Medium Cities – 28.8%
 All Communities – 34.3%

Respondents Who Said They Will Be More Likely to Buy From Companies That Advertise in the Local Newspaper in the Future'
 Farms – 51.0% Villages – 46.5%
 Large Towns – 51.1%
 Medium Cities – 38.3%
 All Communities – 46.5%

10 Readership of Printed Flyers Remains Strong

'Looked at a Printed Flyer in the Last Week'
 Farms – 61.4% Villages – 50.6%
 Large Towns – 51.8%
 Medium Cities – 42.0%
 All Communities – 50.6%

11 Newspaper Ads Are #1 Media Platform to Inspire Action in Key Sectors

Automotive:
 Farms – 28.3% Villages – 19.4%
 Large Towns – 17.7%
 Medium Cities – 11.7%
 All Communities – 18.4%

Food/Groceries:
 Farms – 42.8% Villages – 36.0%
 Large Towns – 42.2%
 Medium Cities – 25.8%
 All Communities – 35.9%

Communities represented:
 Farms, Villages/Small Towns <10,000 Pop
 Large Towns/Small Cities: 10-50,000 Pop
 Medium Cities: 50-100,000 Pop
 All Communities: <100,000 Pop

New Media study confirms habits

Continued from front

Content.” The findings indicated a strong affinity for consumption of news following the traditional feel of a newspaper with nearly 23% (22.8) of study participants saying that they read the local newspaper on a tablet or E-reader in the last week. Conversely, and contrary to the narrative, only 1 in 5 respondents (21.1%) admitted to visiting a local newspapers’ website for posted stories or content. That number jumps to 30% in cities of between 50,000 and 100,000 population, and drops to just over 12% with farm households.

Just as the results from previous studies showed,

internet connectivity continues to be a key issue for households outside of metropolitan areas. Across all community sizes and particularly with those respondents living in communities under 10,000 population and on farms, the primary internet connection method used in the home affected virtually every activity undertaken online. According to respondents, streaming video and online research were cited as the online activities affected to the greatest degree with 61.2% indicating their internet connection either affected their ability to stream video or it was an activity they couldn’t do

because of it. Meanwhile, nearly half of respondents said the ability to conduct online research was affected by their internet connection. As far as social media activities were concerned, one in three (34%) respondents admitted their internet connection played a role in their activities.

Likely underpinning the challenges with online activities is the fact that a higher percentage of households in remote rural areas tend to rely more heavily on connection methods tied to usage and/or caps on data than those in larger communities using traditional, wired services.

Readers find newspaper ads useful

More likely to inspire action than other platforms

New research from Totum Research Inc. has determined that with people living in communities of less than 100,000 population in Alberta, 4 in 10 (40.4%) found newspaper ads to be “Useful” while just over 3% claimed to be annoyed by them. Conversely, the same percentage of respondents who saw value in print ads, admitted to finding little in online ads with 40.4% saying online ads, “Annoyed Them.”

Perhaps chipping away at the foundation of online advertising, the study uncovered some interesting insight into what platforms are likely to Inspire Action (seek more info, in-person or online store visit or purchase).

Across 10 advertising category sectors, ads in traditional media ranked at the top in terms of being most likely to Inspire Action, with ads in newspapers being the most influential in half

of them (Automotive, Agriculture, Government Services, Food/Grocery, Retail). Television ads were found to be most likely to Inspire Action for the remaining half including: Financial Services, Telecommunications, Coronavirus, Charities/Lotteries and Other Healthcare Services.

In terms of potential actions, visiting a store in-person or online was shown to be the most likely action to have been undertaken after seeing an ad, but it was print ads rather than online ads that respondents said would be most likely to get them into a store or onto a website.

Just over 36% claimed to have visited a store either in-person or online after having seen an ad in the local paper, whereas less than one-quarter (24.1%) did so based on exposure to an online ad. The findings suggest that not only should traditional media not be excluded from campaigns with an objective to drive traffic to a website, but should perhaps be viewed as a critical to the campaigns success.

Study Details

Interview Timing
July/August 2021

Study Management
Totum Research

Margin of Error
1005 Interviews = +/- 3.1% At 95% confidence level

Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) Method
Market Pulse

Random HH Selection
Last Birthday method used to select respondent in household. No age or gender quotas.

Geographic Coverage
Alberta communities >100,000 plus farms. Data Set Includes these measured communities:
 Farms Small Towns/Villages <10,000 pop
 Small Cities/Large Towns 10-50,000 pop
 Medium size Cities 50-100,000 pop



Alberta Community NEWS

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December 2021

New Media study confirms media consumption habits vary between community groups

The local newspaper continues to be the preferred source of information

The results of a new study focused on media habits confirms that the transition to online consumption of news and information is happening differently depending on where you live.

The study, *How Geography Impacts Media Access, Usage and Engagement*, was conducted in July 2021 by Canada’s leading media research firm, Totum Research Inc.

The research, based on a random sample of 1,005 Albertans living exclusively in com-

In terms of reach and readership, the numbers from the 2021 study show very little has changed from previous studies dating back as far as 2006.

munities of less than 100,000 population, based its findings on individual samples drawn from four distinct community sizes: Farms and communities less than 10,000 population; communities between 10,000 and 50,000 population; and communities 50,000 to 100,000 population. The surveys were conducted in July 2021 via 20-minute interviews using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) method.

Central among the objectives of the study was to determine whether factors such as lifestyle, information of relative importance, availability of media and internet connectivity have an impact on the use of different information sources and channels.

Topping the list of key findings, the study determined that in all measured geographies, the community newspaper continues to be the preferred source of information with respondents for local topics of interest including: issues about the community (51.6% preferred), information about people in the community (52.4% preferred) and information on local sales and events (50.6%).

By contrast, the percentage of respondents who indicated a preference for social media platforms as a tool for consumption of locally relevant information trended at roughly half the levels of the local newspaper: issues about the community (22% preferred), information about people in the community (26% preferred) and information on local sales and events (25%).

In terms of reach and readership, the numbers from the 2021



study show little has changed from studies dating back as far as 2006. About two-thirds (64.6%) of respondents in communities with less than 100,000 population reported that a printed community newspaper arrived in the household each week, with more than one-quarter of respondents (28%) saying that the newspaper was delivered free to the mailbox. This translated to a weekly readership of 78.4% in Alberta households outside of Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer.

This not only matches the 78% of respondents from the 2019 study who indicated they had read a printed community newspaper in the last seven days, but actually eclipsed the 76% of Albertans who reported reading a printed community newspaper

in 2005 with research provided from ComBase.

In keeping with the objectives of the study, the results showed that engagement with the local newspaper increased with households in smaller geographies with Receipt Of a local newspaper topping out at 80% among respondents in Farm Households with Read Last Issue numbers hitting nearly 80% with households in communities of less than 50,000 people.

While confirming that a transition to online consumption is occurring — albeit at a slower rate in smaller communities — the study was designed to differentiate between digital consumption of an electronic replica of the printed newspaper in PDF or E-Reader format and visits to websites for “Posted Stories or

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This study *How Geography Impacts Media Access, Usage and Engagement* was made possible through the generous support of the **Alberta Civil Society Fund**.



2021 Media Study HIGHLIGHTS by Community Size

1 Printed Newspapers Reach Remains Solid

Received a Printed Community Newspaper in the home in the last 7 Days:

Farms – 80.1% Villages – 66.9%
Large Towns – 79.4%
Medium Cities – 37.5%
All Communities – 64.6%

2 Newspapers Capture Local Audience Attention

Engaged with a Local Newspaper in Any Form in the Last 7 Days

Farms – 76.6% Villages – 78.4%
Large Towns – 81.5%
Medium Cities – 52.6%
All Communities – 72.5%

3 Transition to Online Newspaper Consumption Linked to Community Size

Read or Looked at Community Newspaper Website For Posted Stories/Content in Last 7 Days

Farms – 12.4% Villages – 19.1%
Large Towns – 18.8%
Medium Cities – 29.9%
All Communities – 21.1%

4 Engagement With Electronic Versions of Printed Newspaper on E-Reader Increasing

Read or Looked at a Community Newspaper on a Tablet or E-Reader

Farms – 20.7% Villages – 22.3%
Large Towns – 24.1%
Medium Cities – 23.1%
All Communities – 23.0%

Communities represented:

Farms
Villages/Small Towns <10,000 Pop
Large Towns/Small Cities: 10-50,000 Pop
Medium Cities: 50-100,000 Pop
All Communities: <100,000 Pop

Aging demographic: The opportunity is

If you have products or services to sell in rural Alberta, recent research shows that some currently fashionable marketing metrics and priorities might have to take a back seat to tried and true traditional methods.

Totum Research's 2021 study of media habits in rural Albertan shows a significant skew toward older populations and more traditional media habits.

The study's sampling measured responses from respondents at random thus allowing the sample to mirror the population itself. Of 1,005 total respondents, 251 or 24.9% are aged 18-44 years; 355 or 42.3% are between 45 and 54 years of age; and fully 566 or 56.3% are aged 55 years or older.

The implication in this most basic of findings is that for campaigns to be successful in rural areas, they will need to consider that populations living in those communities will lean towards an older demographic. In the five distinct community size groupings under 100,000 population measured, the mean age of the population is 57 years old.

While a marketing challenge, this discovery also reveals an opportunity for efficient media buying. With consumer power in the hands of a significantly narrower age group, campaigns efficiently targeting these rural residents can be focused in more concentrated ways than would otherwise be possible. Media selection becomes essential and this study shows newspapers are a strong media choice.

Where newspapers fit in

The 2021 results show newspapers are present and visible in rural households and read by all ages. More than 72% of residents 55 years and older reported receiving a printed newspaper in a typical week and 60.6% of those 45-64 reported receiving one. Among those under 45 years of age, a solid 51.8% reported typically receiving a newspaper.

To measure the engagement newspapers generate, survey respondents were asked if they had read or looked into a newspaper in the past week and how they had accessed it. Readership rates in those 46 and older categories remain practically unchanged from the levels of the past 10 years, hovering between 78 and 80%. Among the

youngest age segment, 53% said they had read or looked into a printed newspaper or its electronic replica, with another 26.3% saying they had sought out posted content from a newspaper's website.

What about the next generation?

Some interesting results came to light in the 2021 Media Usage Study concerning how younger audiences in rural markets may be effectively reached.

Limited, metered, unreliable, expensive and/or non-existent internet connections affect the ability of rural residents of any age to do many of the things residents of metropolitan areas take for granted. Being younger doesn't solve those problems. In fact, in the youngest, most digitally savvy segment, nearly 41% reported that their ability to take part in "Social Media" is curtailed by connectivity issues and another 10% just don't bother.

Something as routine for urban residents as "Online Shopping" is another activity that is hindered by internet connectivity issues, according to younger respondents, forty per cent say the activity is affected and a further 10% say it's something not done.

"Doing Online Research", perhaps the most foundational of all internet activities, is hampered for nearly 46% of under 45-year-old respondents, with another 3.5% not doing it at all. These numbers represent a serious impediment to reaching the younger audi-

Media selection becomes essential and this study shows newspapers are a strong media choice.

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in embracing the reality

ence and become even more pronounced with older age segments.

Reluctance to intentionally click on digital ads also appears to exist across all age groups with more than half (51%) of the presumably most digital friendly group reporting they NEVER do it. For the older age groups that reluctance is higher at 54%.

Inspiring Action

To be effective with youths, or any age group for that matter, advertising must inspire action. The 2021 Totum study asked respondents what media platforms are most likely to inspire them to make a store visit, either in-person or online.

The results? Even with the younger and presumably digital-savvy age segment, ads in printed newspapers scored equal to ads on social media and/or websites, with 34% being inspired by both platforms. Among respondents over 55 however, ads in printed newspapers were far more likely to be driving consumers to action with 38% saying they'd visited a store or a website after seeing a print ad, compared to 28% for an online ad.

Taken as a whole, the research suggests it would be hard to point to any platform that would engage younger audiences as effec-

tively as newspapers for local information. When asked about their preferred source of information of Importance to the Local Community, newspapers – in print and their online replicas – at 43% scored ahead of social media and random websites at 41%.

Newspapers reach and engage

So when it comes to the next generation, the latest study from Totum Research pulls back the curtain on several key issues that touch younger and older audiences equally. While the population undeniably skews older, respondents across all age groups continue to value the unique content package that is the value proposition of typical community newspapers.

While usage habits among younger people in rural areas is definitely shifting with technology, the digital revolution so prevalent with urban media has yet to transform rural media consumption. Once again it's the 'content' not the necessarily the platform that underpins engagement.

Newspapers reach, engage and inspire action within the rural households they serve in ways other media struggle to achieve. Marketers with messages for rural Albertans may well find the "cutting edge" by looking to the "traditional."

Study reveals readers intention to support local, includes advertisers

Respondents to the latest Totum Research Inc. Study, *How Geography Impacts Media Access, Usage and Engagement*, admitted that the pandemic has caused them to reflect on the importance of supporting local businesses – including those who advertise in the local newspaper.

The results are another likely indicator to separate smaller communities served primarily by locally-owned companies from larger centres served by high concentrations of US-based corporations and media platforms.

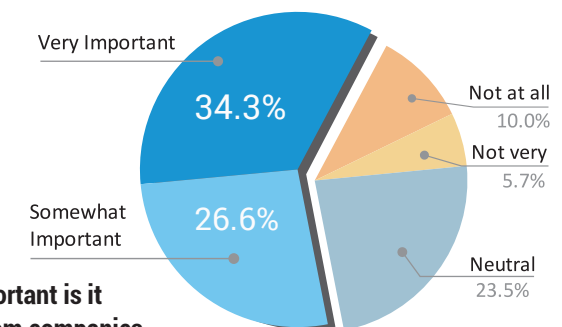
When asked 'How important is it to buy from companies that advertise in the local newspaper?' a clear majority (61%) said it was at least "Somewhat Important" with 1 in 3 respondents going so far as to say it was

"Very Important" to buy from companies who invest in the community via ads in the local newspaper.

Post-pandemic, it appears that respondents' opinions on companies that spend money with local media are unlikely to change. Nearly half of respondents (48.1%) claimed that they will be "more likely to buy from companies that advertise in the local newspaper in the future," with the remainder

saying they either "Weren't Sure" (21.6%) or "No" they wouldn't be more likely (30.3%).

Once again, the results showed marked differences between respondents in small communities versus those in the larger measured ones, likely providing yet more evidence of the deep relationships that exist between newspapers and readers in rural communities.



How important is it to buy from companies that advertise in the local newspaper?

2021 Media Study HIGHLIGHTS by Community Size

5 Trusted Source of Information

Local Newspapers Remain Preferred Source for Important Community Issues

Farms – 52.4% Villages – 51.0%
Large Towns – 53.9%
Medium Cities – 35.2%
All Communities – 48.1%

6 Ads in Newspapers Viewed Favourably

Respondents Indicating They Found Ads in the Newspaper to be 'Useful'

Farms – 53.8% Villages – 40.8%
Large Towns – 42.9%
Medium Cities – 29.5%
All Communities – 40.4%

7 Newspaper Ads More Likely to Drive Website Visits

Respondents Indicating That Newspaper Ads Were Likely to Inspire a Website or In-Person Store Visit or a Make a Purchase.

Farms – 35.2% Villages – 39.8%
Large Towns – 41.8%
Medium Cities – 25.8%
All Communities – 36.2%

8 Online Display Ads Not Engaging

Respondents Indicated That They Were Rarely Inspired to Click on Online Ads

Farms – 0.8% Villages – 3.3%
Large Towns – 4.2%
Medium Cities – 2.0%
All Communities – 2.9%

Communities represented:

Farms
Villages/Small Towns <10,000 Pop
Large Towns/Small Cities: 10-50,000 Pop
Medium Cities: 50-100,000 Pop
All Communities: <100,000 Pop