

Tech generation still values print

LONDON, UK: Despite the increasing popularity of digital media, consumers with a technological bent are still checking out the print editions of their favourite titles, says Katherine Page, technical consultant at the UK's National Readership Survey.



In January 2010, the latest Bellwether survey revealed that investment in digital initiatives in the UK had increased by 20%. A direct result of continual technological developments in the online environment, the results also reflect that there is certainly a growing consumer appetite for digital content.

However, it is not just consumer brands that are continually developing and investing in their online offerings: the mass media is too. Understandably, with the increase of media content now readily available online, many people might expect traditional media platforms to lose favour with consumers.

However, new research from the National Readership Survey (NRS) in fact shows that Britain's technophiles are still keen on reading the conventional print versions of newspapers and magazines.

Over the course of the past year, NRS has incorporated questions on the use of technology, particularly to access media, into the wider survey.

Paper power

The results have already identified that those who most enjoy technology also enjoy reading newspapers and magazines. The extended survey data has outlined who these people are and whether their media consumption is changing, particularly among Generation Y.

Of those surveyed, 33% have actively used technology in four or more of the eight ways included in the questions. The activities that were most relatively prevalent were PVR at home (22%), listening to music on a mobile phone (22%) or listening to DAB (25%).

Activities still at the 'early adopter' stage include wirelessly streaming music and movies around the home (7%), and using Blu-Ray Disc players (7%). The NRS plans to track the take-up of these and a number of other activities as the digital space continually changes.

The sample offers a large and reliable base to analyse such developments in detail: 36 000 in-home interviews are conducted each year on a continuous basis. Its random sample is particularly well-suited to representing the hard-to-reach demographic groups in the vanguard for new technology. Indeed, it is for this reason that the NRS sample is used to provide the Establishment Survey data for the UK Online Measurement Company (UKOM).

TV, radio has a place

Aside from tracking developments, NRS data can be used to profile the most avid consumers of technology. The 14% of the population who are the most active tend to be young, well-educated and affluent, with a net personal income 30% above the average. However, most interesting is the insight NRS gives as to their media preferences.

These technophiles are more likely than average to be light consumers of commercial TV and radio. On the other hand, they use the internet on a daily basis, and are leading the way in consuming all kinds of media online, including RSS feeds. However, despite their substantial online consumption, they are still keen readers of newspapers and magazines, reading 25% more titles than the average British adult.

Above-average readership

Perhaps most intriguing are the reading habits of the 15 to 24-year olds. It is often assumed that this generation will give up on print media. However, the reverse is true for the 2.5 million in this age group who are the most active consumers of technology, since the number of magazines and newspapers they read is well above average.

Overall, the survey revealed that the magazines that particularly appeal to tech-savvy consumers include *Stuff* and *What Hi-Fi*, while other titles mentioned were *NME*, *Kerrang*, *GQ*, *Men's Fitness* and *Men's Health*. Newspapers selected with an above-average readership comprised the *Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *Independent on Sunday* and *Sunday Times*.

Although it is true that active consumers of technology are more likely to be male than female, nearly 2.5 million women have participated in four or more of the activities mentioned above.

Alongside their interest in technology, they are particularly heavy consumers of print, reading an average of more than 10 titles apiece, compared to the norm of seven. They are also interested in a wide range of publications, including many titles nominally targeted at men. Examples of those women's magazines with above-average popularity are *InStyle*, *Elle*, *New!* and *Glamour*.

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