

SA newspapers hold their own

Fewer people are reading magazines, but daily newspapers are retaining their readers, the late All Media and Products Survey (AMPS) revealed on Thursday.

By [Richard Davies](#) 15 Apr 2013

"Magazines have posted lower readership levels causing print in general to trend down," said the SA Audience Research Foundation, which directs and publishes the survey.

"Daily newspapers maintained their readership bases, with weekly publications stable but trending down."

The latest AMPS, for the period January to December last year, compared results to the previous survey (July 2011 to June last year) and, in some cases, the one before that.

Internet usage 'rising strongly'

The survey found internet use was "rising strongly", while the number of radio, television, and cinema listeners and viewers remained stable.

The survey is based on a South African adult population of 34.9m and a "household" population of about 14.1m.

"After trending up in the previous survey reading on non-paper platforms is now up significantly. Online and cellphone reading both showed significant gains, although their bases are still extremely small - 5% for online reading and 2.8% for cellphone reading."

The survey found people were not "reading digitally" to the exclusion of printed formats.

"Analysis of the figures shows that, for the most part, people who are reading print titles online, or on their cellphones, are also consuming print in its traditional form."

Little movement in newspaper readers

There was little movement in the number of newspaper readers.

"Average issue readership remained firm at 49.0%, giving newspapers a combined audience base of 17.1m."

A depressed economy and growing challenges from technologically enabled media platforms "had done nothing to suppress the daily press", the AMPS found.

"Daily newspapers have maintained their readership, attracting an almost-unchanged audience over AMPS June 2012. Average issue readership is 30.9%, with 10,795m readers."

While weekly newspapers had shown "some decline", this was not statistically significant.

On "significant readership changes", the survey found there was a decline in the Sunday Times' readership

from 10.6% previously to 9.8%.

The drop was "almost entirely from the metro areas".

There was also a "significant decrease" in Saturday Weekend Argus readership, from 0.6% to 0.4%, attributable to "a drop-off of readers in small urban and rural areas, and in KwaZulu-Natal".

'Entertainment/celeb' magazines decline

On "entertainment/celeb" magazines, the survey found that nearly half of all publications in this sector had posted "significant" readership declines.

"DStv, the satellite bouquet's TV guide, continues to lose readers, despite the platform's growing subscriber base. Readership fell from 11.5% to 8.9%, a loss of just over a million readers since the previous AMPS."

The survey found "traditional" TV sets remained the primary access platform for TV, with only 0.8% of people watching online and 1% watching on their cellphones.

"Total TV viewing is at 91.5% for an average week, equating to 31,978m viewers aged 15 [and older]."

Viewership figures by station included:

- SABC 1: 78.8%;
- SABC 2: 71%;
- SABC 3: 57.6%;
- e.tv: 68.6%;
- DStv (total): 28.3%;
- TopTV: 1.3%; and,
- Community TV: 8.5%.

Radio listening "remains resolutely stable", with total weekly radio listening at 92.6%.

Source: Sapa, via I-Net Bridge