

# New research on media habits of youth breaks stereotypes

GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN: A new study on the media habits of young people in three countries found that television continues to be the most important source of news and information for the young, despite the rise of the Internet - and newspapers can win their attention as well. The study was at the World Newspaper Congress in Göteborg, Sweden, earlier this week.

The survey of 3500 young people between 15- and 29-years old in the US, the Netherlands and Finland found that young people get their news and information from a wide variety of sources, but that television continues to be their preferred medium.

“Young people do not seem to understand the inherent value and difference in newspaper content versus other news media. TV still dominates even in perceptions of credibility and depth of coverage,” said Robert Barnard, partner and founder of Canada-based DECODE, which conducted the survey for the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) and national partners in each country. .

Nevertheless, the study showed that newspaper companies are well placed to attract young readers if newspapers are committed to the task. The study, commissioned by WAN to help publishers better understand and meet the needs of younger readers, found:

- Young people are interested in news and see the value of being informed.
- Loyal newspaper readers are more informed, engaged and connected to community than non-readers.
- Parents (especially mothers) and teachers have successfully influenced young people to become newspaper readers - peers are not influential.
- Newspapers must start earlier to establish how the brand of news emanating from newspapers is different from and superior to other media options. This strategy should be multi-platform, accentuating content, not format.
- Young people leaving home provides an important opportunity for newspapers. The study shows a significant drop in readership at this life-stage at a time when interest in news is peaking.
- Newspaper editorial content, in general, is disconnected from youth interests -- and when it is about youth, it is mostly negative. Music and film top the list of interests while politics ranked in the lower than 30th.
- Social networks can be allies of newspapers, not the enemy. Social network users are more supportive of all media generally, but also show a higher increase of support for newspapers than non users.

The data was collected in early 2008 through online panels provided by TNS Global Research. It used a variety of recruitment methods, including telephone surveys, direct mail, and Internet advertising, allowing for a variety of key demographic groups to be sampled.

WAN and DECODE are seeking to extend the survey into additional countries. National newspaper associations interested in participating should contact Barnard by email at .

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