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About half of Puerto Ricans read newspapers daily

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Online news reading on the rise; 200,000 islanders log in daily to get their news

Each day, about half of Puerto Rican adults read a printed newspaper, according to the latest results from the CARIBBEAN BUSINESS/WOSO Radio/Gaither International weekly poll. The Media Tracker study, conducted by Gaither, consisted of 35,776 face-to-face, up-to-date interviews with a margin of error of +/-0.5.

On the other hand, print newspaper circulation on the island has dropped approximately 20% during the past eight-to-10 years while online news access has steadily continued to rise. Gaither's ongoing Media Tracker syndicated study shows that 8% of the population is reading its daily news online. This represents approximately 200,000 people logging in on a daily basis.

The syndicated study asked respondents if they had read or browsed a printed newspaper in the last 24 hours, with 48% of respondents answering that they had. Those between the ages of 35 and 54 are the most likely to read printed newspapers— 51% of them compared to 44% of those younger than 35 and 46% of those 55 years or older.

“Not surprisingly, the higher the education level of the respondent, the likelier they had read a newspaper during the past 24 hours. In fact, 57% of those with a college education had read a paper compared with 51% of high-school graduates and 39% of those that did not complete a highschool education,” noted Beatriz Castro, syndicated research analyst for Gaither International.

Personal finances also influence whether a person reads newspapers on a daily basis. Wealthier respondents were also likelier to read newspapers with frequency. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds said they had read a newspaper in the last 24 hours, compared to 51% from middle-socioeconomic backgrounds and 38% from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, showing a 21% gap between high- and low-socioeconomic levels, Castro explained.

REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS STILL RELEVANT

While overall newspaper readership has dropped among Puerto Ricans, nearly one-fourth (24%) of



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them read El Nuevo Día, 21% read Primera Hora and 10% El Vocero. El Nuevo Día, the island's leading daily newspaper, has higher readership in the San Juan metro area among those between the ages of 35 and 54, the college-educated and those with high reported incomes. Its sister publication, Primera Hora, remains popular among the younger demographic, high-school graduates and those from middle-socioeconomic backgrounds.

El Vocero has a strong readership in the Caguas region, among an older, less-educated demographic audience.

Meanwhile, some regional publications maintain their relevance for residents in those markets. For instance, La Perla still corners a 4% readership in the Ponce region, La Semana in Caguas holds an 8% readership and La Estrella in Mayagüez 1%.

Consistently, as newspaper readership has dropped, so has daily newspaper circulation. About 10 years ago, El Vocero had the largest daily newspaper circulation on the island Monday through Saturday with a daily readership of 230,000.

El Nuevo Día followed closely with 203,000 from Monday through Saturday and a whopping Sunday readership of 240,000.

The now-extinct San Juan Star reported a daily circulation of approximately 45,000 and 60,000 on Sundays. Nowadays, Primera Hora and El Nuevo Día battle for daily readership.

ONLINE NEWS

The Media Tracker study also asked respondents if they frequently access the Internet for news information.

"Findings point out that while only 8% currently do rely on the Internet for news information, this number has been slowly but steadily growing. With more people getting smart phones such as Androids, iPhones, etc., all of which have integrated news applications, it will be interesting to follow online news penetration in the coming years," noted Gaither's Castro. Endi.com (elnuevodia.com) remains the island's most visited online news service to date, followed by primerahora.com.

"Not surprisingly, younger respondents who come from a more technology-driven generation were the most likely to be searching for news online; 16% of those under the age of 35 frequently do. And those from high-education and high-socioeconomic backgrounds are significantly more likely to be logging in for real-time news," Castro said. "Also, 19% of those wealthier, more educated islanders are logging in for their daily news."

ARE WE STILL READING PRINT MAGAZINES?

A significant percentage of islanders are still reading magazines, Castro said.

"In fact, 27% of Puerto Ricans read magazines at least once a month. Among the most popular are gossip magazines," she said. "Those under the age of 55 are likelier to do so and the higher the education and socioeconomic level of the person, the likelier they are to read print magazines, as well."



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