

Press Release

All generations prefer paper to digital media when it comes to reading, new European research reveals

In a wide-ranging new survey, a new generation of digital natives show strong preferences for paper; still the favoured medium of all age groups for reading and safe keeping of documents.

The research conducted by IPSOS, in association with industry organisations Two Sides and Print Power, interviewed 4,500 European consumers who declared their preference for paper based media in a digital world.

UK consumers follow the European trend

“In an exciting multimedia world, with mobile devices setting the communication agenda, it’s perhaps surprising but reassuring,” says Martyn Eustace, Director of Two Sides, an organisation dedicated to promoting an understanding of print and paper’s environmental sustainability, “that paper based media is still widely trusted and preferred. Publishers of books, newspaper and magazines will be delighted, I’m sure, to know that, for their readers who can now choose to read many different devices, print on paper is still a favourite”.

In brief the survey shows that in Europe:

The 18 – 24 year old age group, the so called Digital Natives, lead consumers in appreciating paper based media:

- 83% of 18-24 year olds, (80% of all consumers), believe that reading from paper is nicer than reading off a screen.
- 78% of 18 – 24 year olds, (74% of all consumers), say that compared to other media, print and paper is more pleasant to handle and touch.
- 63% of 18 – 24 year olds, (58% of all consumers), prefer to keep important documents on paper

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have a great
environmental
story to tell



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And when it comes to the environment:

- 57% of 18 - 24 year olds, (54% of all consumers), believe that paper records are more sustainable than electronic storage of information
- 63% of 18 – 24 year olds, (68% of all consumers), believe that print and paper is based on a renewable resource.

But there are clear signs that consumers require more information about the environmental sustainability of print and paper media.

- 80% believe that forests in Europe have remained the same or decreased in size over the past 50 years. (In fact, according to the UN FAO, forests have actually increased in size by 30%)
- Most consumers believe that about 20 – 40% of waste paper is collected. (In fact, according to the European Recovered Paper Council, ERPC, the European recycling rate for paper and packaging is 69%. The industry is one of Europe's leading recyclers)

“The message here, says Eustace, is that whilst consumers are still showing strong preferences for paper, we can do more to tell them about the industry's great environmental record, particularly on recycling and the very positive development of Europe's forests. We don't want consumers feeling guilty about using print on paper; it's a fantastically powerful and sustainable way to communicate”

Two sides will be using the results of the survey to plan its continuing campaign which is creating a better awareness of the great environmental credentials of paper and print media. In a world of fast growing and energy hungry digital communication channels print and paper, being based on wood, a renewable and recyclable material, print and paper, may be the sustainable way to communicate.

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Notes to editors

About Two Sides

Two Sides is an initiative by companies from the Graphic Communication Value Chain including forestry, pulp, paper, inks and chemicals, pre press, press, finishing, publishing and printing. Today there are nearly 300 UK members. Our common goal is to promote the responsible production and use of print and paper, and dispel common environmental misconceptions by providing users with verifiable information on why print and paper is an attractive, practical and sustainable communications medium. www.twosides.info

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