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USA Today Leads Big 3 National Newspapers in 80 Metro Markets Says Embarrassed Research Firm

Houston – (09/08/04) – The Big 3 – New York Times, Wall Street Journal and USA Today – collectively have almost 12 million readers in 80 metropolitan markets surveyed by The Media Audit in 2003.

In July, The Media Audit reported that the Big 3 had more than 15 million readers in the 80 metro markets. “We excluded the New York metro market from our computations because we wanted to show the national impact of these three newspapers,” says Bob Jordan, president of International Demographics, Inc., a 33-year-old market research firm that produces The Media Audit. “Unfortunately,” says the embarrassed Jordan, “the NYC market found its way back into our computations. I wish we could say it was caused by a “computer glitch” but it was entirely a human error.” The error affected only the collective totals for all markets. Individual market numbers were not affected.

Collectively in the 80 markets (not including NYC) USA Today has 5.0 million readers (not 5.3). The New York Times has 3.6 million readers (not 6.1) and the Wall Street Journal has 3.2 million (not 3.7). Jordan stresses, that “these are readers, not subscribers. These are people who say they have read one or more of the last five editions of these publications.”

Each Market Is Distinctive

“For the three newspapers each market is distinctive,” says Jordan. The New York Times readership outside New York City ranges from 314,000 in Washington, D.C. to 3,000 in Peoria. With the Wall Street Journal the numbers of readers range from 239,000 in Chicago to 3,000 in Columbia-Jefferson City, Missouri. The USA Today has 258,000 readers in Atlanta and 6,000 in Eugene/Springfield.

According to The Media Audit data, the New York Times has 50,000 or more readers in 22 metro markets. The Wall Street Journal has 50,000 or more readers in 20 markets and USA Today has 50,000 or more readers in 43 markets.

Affluence & Politics Of Readers

In affluence the readers of each publication are similar at some levels and very dissimilar at other levels. Of those who read the New York Times, 60.3 percent have household incomes of \$50,000 or more, 42.5 percent have household incomes of \$75,000 or more and 28.7 percent have household incomes of \$100,000 or more. For the Wall Street Journal the comparable percentages are 64.2 percent, 48.4 percent and 36.9 percent. The USA Today percentages are 62.3, 42.6 and 26.4. In the total aggregate adult population of all 80 markets there are 44.9 percent of households with incomes of \$50,000 or more, 25.3 percent with \$75,000 or more and 13.9 percent with \$100,000 or more.

The distinctions between readers grow when political party affiliations are considered. The New York Times readers are 46.4 percent Democrats, 14.6 percent Republican and 31.8 percent Independent. The Wall Street Journal readers are 25.0 percent Democrats, 39.6 percent Republican and 28.0 percent Independent. USA Today readers are 30.2 percent Democrats, 32.9 percent Republican and 30.9 percent Independent.

The Data Source

The Media Audit, a syndicated media ratings service currently covering more than 80 metropolitan markets, provides both quantitative data for media web sites as well as for traditional media.

Traditional media – print, broadcast and outdoor – have used The Media Audit data in sales, marketing and management for more than 30 years. In 1998, the survey started providing data on local media websites. The surveys now contain more than 400 fields of qualitative information in addition to quantitative measurements of local web audiences.

The Media Audit is a product of International Demographics, Inc., a 33-year-old firm engaged exclusively in syndicated, multimedia surveys conducted at the local market level.

Note: If you would like to periodically receive market survey data from The Media Audit, please contact us by email (info@TheMediaAudit.com) and leave your name, title, company affiliation and email address.