

The Media Audit

NEWS RELEASE

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Classified Readership Up 29 % In 2001; Audience Has More Education & Money

Houston - (09/17/02) Classified advertising readership, which declined in the three preceding years, increased 28.9 percent during 2001 in the 85 metro markets surveyed regularly by The Media Audit.

"The number of adult classified readers increased from 14,680,000 in 2000 to 18,928,000 in 2001 in the 85 metro markets we survey," says Bob Jordan, co-chairman of International Demographics, Inc., a 31-year-old market research firm that produces The Media Audit. Classified readers, as defined here, are phone survey respondents who say they "regularly" read newspaper classified ads. The 85 metro markets surveyed have an aggregate adult (18+) population of 128,393,000.

The research also shows significant increases in the percentage of classified readers who graduated from college. "College graduates, with one degree, increased from 17 to 19 percent while those with advanced degrees increased from 6 percent to 8 percent. Together the two groups increased from 23 to 27 percent of the total classified audience," says Jordan. Those with "some college" increased from 25.5 to 26.8 while all those with less education declined as a percent of the group.

Improved Demographics

As would be expected, the affluence of the classified audience increased along with the number of college educated. Households with annual incomes of more than \$50,000 increased from 37.6 percent to 41.9 percent. The entire classified reader group improved demographically. "There was even some minimal increase in the proprietor/managerial category while the clerical category declined slightly and blue collar stayed even at approximately 25 percent," says Jordan.

In 2001 The Media Audit started asking respondents if they read newspaper classified ad sections regularly and also if they read employment classified ads regularly. The answer to the employment classified ad question may explain the 29 percent increase in classified readership, says Jordan. In response to that question, 12,406,000 said they read newspaper employment ads regularly. The 12 million, says Jordan, are also counted among the 18,928,000 who said they regularly read newspaper classified ad sections and as such they represent more than 60 percent of the total classified readership.

"When the economy slows, people start reading employment ads," says Jordan, "and if white collar workers are affected disproportionately by the economic slow down, they show up in greater numbers in our surveys which would account for the improved demographics of the classified reader group."

Print Audience Vs Web Audience

While the number of those who read newspaper employment ads was increasing to more than 12 million, web job classified visitors totaled 4,553,000 in the 85 markets surveyed. When the survey asks for "occasional" rather than "regular" readers/visitors of employment ad venues, the 12 million becomes 32 million and the 4.5 million becomes 20 million.

Forty percent of those who regularly read newspaper employment ads also regularly visit web classified job sites. Conversely, only 14.9 percent of those who regularly visit web classified job sites also regularly read newspaper employment ads.

"The level of duplication between employment ad readers on the web and in the newspaper may be of critical importance to newspaper publishers," says Jordan. "The competition for recruitment advertising expenditures is not simply a battle between newspapers and the dot.coms. The newspapers are playing on both sides of the ball. They have powerful print products and a growing presence on the web. And, for these reasons they still dominate the recruitment advertising market."

Old Media Vs New Media

"We tend to forget that Monster.com is selling a single media, while CareerBuilder.com is selling a multimedia package of web and print. As our knowledge of the Internet increases, it becomes more evident that in many instances the 'new media' is becoming an extension of the old media," says Jordan.

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 surveys started providing data on local media web sites. 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 31-year-old Houston firm that is 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 Bob Jordan by email (bjordan@themediiaudit.com) and leave your name, title, company affiliation and your mailing and/or email address.

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