



Lee Newspapers Report Jump in Readership and Online Use

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DAVENPORT, Iowa--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

The reach of newspapers and their online sites among young adults in Lee Enterprises (NYSE: LEE) markets has grown from 54 to 64 percent over the last year. Use of the printed newspaper alone among young adults has grown from 48 to 55 percent.

Those findings are among results of comprehensive audience studies by Wilkerson & Associates in Lee's 10 largest markets. The studies measured seven-day reach of newspapers and their online sites from January to June in 2007 and 2008.

Other findings:

- Combined reach of Lee newspapers and their online sites over the course of a week grew from 66 percent of all adults in the markets in 2007 to 71 percent in 2008.
- The printed newspapers alone reach 65 percent of all adults in 2008, compared with 61 percent during the six-month period a year ago.
- 16 percent of all adults both read the newspaper and visit the newspaper online site, an increase from 13 percent a year ago.
- 6 percent of adults access the newspaper online site but do not read the newspaper, compared with 5 percent in 2007.

The research involved more than 7,200 interviews in both years and carries an overall error margin of 1.2 percentage points.

In other findings, use of the printed newspapers and newspaper online sites increased across all age groups:

- Among ages 18-29, use of the printed newspaper increased from 48 percent in 2007 to 55 percent in 2008. Dual users of the newspaper and online site increased from 13 to 18 percent. Combined, the newspapers and their online sites reach 64 percent of young adults in 2008, compared with 54 percent in 2007. Online-only use increased from 6 to 9 percent.
- Among ages 30-39, total reach of the newspaper and its online site grew from 62 to 67 percent. Use of the printed newspaper increased from 55 to 57 percent. Dual users of both the newspapers and online sites increased from 18 to 20 percent. Online-only use increased from 7 to 10 percent.
- Among ages 40-59, total reach of the newspaper and its online site increased from 67 to 74 percent. Use of the printed newspaper climbed from 62 to 68 percent. Dual users of both the newspapers and online sites increased from 15 to 19 percent. Online-only use increased from 5 to 6 percent.
- Among ages 60 and older, total reach of the newspaper and online site increased from 69 to 74 percent. Use of the printed newspaper increased from 68 to 73 percent. Online-only use increased from 1.0 to 1.4 percent.

"These findings show the opposite of what is often thought to be true," said Suzanna Frank, Lee vice president - audience. "More people of all ages are reading our printed newspapers as well as using our newspaper online sites."

The reason, she said, is that the two media are increasingly working in tandem. "In addition to providing a growing range of unique, interactive content, we update our online sites with local news continually throughout the day. Our sites have become the first as well as best source for local news and information. Because of cross-promotion, users of our online sites have become more inclined to pick up a printed newspaper, where we provide greater context and perspective, as well as portability."

She added: The traditional measurement of newspaper readership, paid circulation, is no longer an adequate indicator of our audience strength. Although paid circulation has declined across the industry over the last 20 years as a result of many factors, it measures only copies sold, not the number of readers per copy. In a way, that's like trying to measure television audiences by the number of TV set sold. Our research provides a much truer measure of readership, and it indicates that the increasing popularity of our online sites has led to more readers per copy of the printed newspaper itself."

The research also showed that the newspaper online sites continue to be the primary source for online local or community news, attracting 44 percent of local online news seekers, compared with 32 percent for all other local sites combined, 11 percent for Google, 8 percent for Yahoo and 5 percent for all other national sites.

Highlights of the Lee Enterprises Audience Report for January-June 2008 are available at www.lee.net/audience.

Lee Enterprises is a premier publisher of local news, information and advertising in primarily midsize markets, with 49 daily newspapers and a joint interest in four others, rapidly growing online sites and more than 300 weekly newspapers and specialty publications in 23 states. Lee's newspapers have circulation of 1.6 million daily and 1.9 million Sunday, reaching more than four million readers daily. Lee's online sites attract 12 million unique visitors monthly, and Lee's weekly publications have distribution of more than 4.5 million households. Lee's newspaper markets include St. Louis, Mo.; Lincoln, Neb.; Madison, Wis.; Davenport, Iowa; Billings, Mont.; Bloomington, Ill.; and Tucson, Ariz. Lee stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol LEE.

Source: Lee Enterprises