



What do readers want: How do editors and publishers find out what readers want?

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In 1990 the Publishers of the *Journal of the American Dental Association* randomly selected 1,000 names of subscribers and sent a survey with questions based on clinical as well as research areas. 453 of the 1,000 surveys were returned. Much of what is presented in this brief paper, which is based upon the result of the survey of the *Journal of the American Dental Association* survey and the *Journal of the American College of Dentists*.

What about the title: Does it create interest enough to look at the article, the authors, the summaries and conclusions? Is the abstract informative and concise? What about the summary and the conclusion: Is it complete, does the reader want to briefly look at the article. Do the summaries and conclusions invite the reader to read and study the article?

WHEN AND WHERE ARE MOST JOURNALS READ: Most Journals are mailed to the readers' offices. Often the reader scans the contents of the publication rather quickly then makes a few reminder notes to read a specific article, or puts the publication on the shelf to be read possibly later.

Most readers are lap readers: they sit comfortably in a chair, usually at their home, during the evening and they place the publication on their lap. This reader's position requires the size of the font and line spacing to be important issues for Editors and Publishers to consider.

What about the reader taking a quick look at the article:

the topic and the title, the graphics, the font size, the line spacing size, the quality of the paper, the binding, the bibliography and citations, length of sentences and ease of remembering the main points of the sentences.

THE TITLE AND TOPIC: Is it appealing? Does it encourage me to read it now or later or never?

THE GRAPHICS: Are the graphics complete, legible,

with graphs large enough to view and read comfortable? Is color used effectively and attractively?

THE FONTS: Are the fonts varied for emphasis and are they easy to read? Is the ink dark enough?

LINE SPACING: Is there enough space between the lines to read rapidly without losing their place? How many lines per inch is standard for the publication?

THE QUALITY OF THE PAPER STOCK: Does it feel good, do the pages separate easily? Is it permanent so the reader will keep the Journal in their library? The binding, is it secure, will it withstand a lot of bending without tearing or having pages loosed? Are margins large enough to allow copying?

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY: Is it complete, does the reader recognize the names of the authors of the citations? Are the citations recorded correctly and with accurate details?

The length of the sentences: is it short, succinct, and do not have too many parenthetical expressions or acronyms? Are the sentences direct and are the authors points clear and easy to understand? Is the reader to able to quickly analyze the article and carefully evaluate the benefit the reader may obtain by reading the article?

Are the summaries listed as points for thoughts and presented in the order of the material in the publication?

Are the articles contemporary and are they related to clinical presentations or to research or both? Is there a good mixture of clinical and research material offered in each issue?

If by briefly looking at the summary, is the reader stimulated to desire to read the article at this time? Does the reader have the time to read the article and does it keep the reader interested in the author's presentation?



Do I want to bookmark the article for additional reading and study?

Are the Journal articles sent to reviewers? Are the reviewers free to make specific comments to the Editor (question the data, suggest changes, even disagree with the author's statements or conclusions)?

Is the material presented relevant, is its basis oriented toward clinical, research, historical or is it opinionated.

Is there a book review section?

Are obituaries published for imminent colleagues who died?

Are the articles germane to various readers' interests, needs and desires for information? Have surveys to determine, which group of readers always read their Journals as soon as they arrive and what readers seem to want to see in a publication?

Do the Editors encourage authors to address the: who, what, when, where and how concepts as the authors put their words on pages?

Does the reader enjoy and appreciate the articles published in a Journal to the extent of letting the Editor know?

Does the reader obtain information that is helpful and does the reader make notes to review or use in a

clinical or a University setting?

Do the articles serve as a stimulus for additional research?

Does the Journal permit or encourage "Letters to the Editor?"

Does the Editor publish point and counterpoint comments related to articles?

The members of any orthodontic organization should be proud of the Journal that is published and supported by their organization. Does the Editor desire to present a survey to the readers that can be sent to the Editor?

These are a few points of interest. All folk are busy and they try to use their time wisely. They want articles that are meaningful to them, either in their clinical practices or can be used as a further basis for research on various topics.

The publication costs are increasing. Libraries are having problems with enough space to file journals and books. Most readers go to internet sites daily.

Should the articles in journals be available on CD's and on the internet? Would the reader be satisfied with reading articles that are web based? Is the reader permitted to print articles?