

How America Uses Advertising 2009

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1. Introduction

The research reported here is based on a new survey of 3,004 American adults that builds upon and expands several earlier studies sponsored by the Newspaper Association of America.

This research is designed to help retailers and advertisers understand the current dynamics of consumer shopping and how that activity interacts with advertising media.

This report focuses on consumer engagement with advertising media. A companion report, *How America Shops and Spends*, focuses on shopping.

The report addresses many issues, including:

- Which media do consumers go to when they want to check advertising?
- Which media have shoppers used in the past 7 days to plan shopping or to make purchasing decisions?
- How do consumers compare media options regarding advertising and shopping-related benefits?
- How have consumers—whether or not they are “readers”—acted on newspaper advertising?
- How many readers look at advertising when paging through a newspaper?
- How often do readers check newspaper advertising for stores or products that they don’t normally shop?
- In what circumstances are newspaper ads most likely to be read by consumers?
- How many readers look at advertising inserts, or preprints from their newspaper?
- What do consumers think of newspaper advertising inserts, or circulars?
- From which stores do consumers regularly check Sunday inserts?
- What is the shelf-life of newspaper inserts?
- Do consumers prefer advertising circulars to be delivered with their newspaper or in the mail?
- Where do consumers go for coupons?

The research was conducted by MORI Research, Minneapolis, MN. Fieldwork was in March-April, 2009. Technical details are in the appendix.

2. Overview

The research reported here provides a detailed review of media usage in the shopping process in 2009 America. It builds upon similar research conducted by the NAA over the past decade, based on the “Thin Market” concept.

How the Thin Market Works in 2009

Consumers typically come into and out of the market for particular goods and services very quickly depending on immediate need, shopping convenience, and opportunities for bargains. There is a large degree of randomness to this, and the process is more problematic during the current recession. Except, perhaps, for Christmas, the market is always “thin” because the percentage shopping for any particular type of product is always small.

- “Need” may mean a more or less acute need for a special occasion, or a replacement, or prudence in getting something before it runs out of stock, or a desire for something that is newly available and highly desired, such as a new iPhone model. During recessions many consumers dial down such needs.
- Shopping convenience—e.g., fitting enough time in during the day, having the children with you or not with you, being near an acceptable shopping venue—is a bigger factor now than a generation ago due to busier lifestyles, especially among women. Convenience as a decision rule also became more possible as the number of retail outlets, malls, superstores, catalogs and online options grew. On the other hand, the relative importance of convenience (as opposed to need) has declined somewhat due to the decline in discretionary spending.
- Depending on their time and resources and what they are considering, shoppers veer between being optimizers and satisficers in terms of price and quality. As stated in *How American Shops and Spends*, as many shoppers (almost half) say they usually go to stores offering good sales as say that they are willing to pay more for quality. A smaller number (one-third) say they usually shop several stores to get the best price.

The window of opportunity for sellers typically ranges from less than a day to a few days for most products. Half of decisions to shop are made the same day.

- People are too busy and life is too short to drag out the process more than a reasonable period. (Big ticket items normally, but not always, take longer). Consumers are unhappy if the process is drawn out, either from parking, long lines, out-of-stock merchandise, or having too many options to easily choose from.
- Many shoppers compensate by sticking to favored stores and brands, browsing or more purposefully checking advertising, and, increasingly in the past year, putting off the decision.

The decision to shop interacts with advertising.

- Ads typically do not create needs, but ads can remind consumers that a sale will be happening, that some types of people use certain products, services, or brands, that something you want is available, or that you need to replace something. They also provide the impetus to check for other things in the store besides the featured items.
- Shoppers use a wide variety of media over the course of a week to aid shopping decisions, but they have definite preferences for what media they use most of the time when they want to check advertising. Newspapers remain the medium used most and preferred for several reasons, although usage of online sources has increased significantly.

- Shoppers typically become more aware of ads when they are in the market for the items being advertised, but other factors also can increase the odds of being noticed.
- Some advertising, especially Sunday newspaper inserts, becomes a regular occasion for checking one's "regular" stores, to scan competitors, to compare prices, and to just browse. This advertising has several usability advantages and also fits into the day of the week best suited for planning shopping. The Sunday preprint package is a unique institution that continues to appeal to shoppers at about the same level as before.
- Advertising appearing in newspapers frequently encourages shoppers to follow up by checking other media—often Internet sources—for additional information.

Advertising

- The incidence of using advertising to aid shopping decisions is quite high across multiple channels and likely has increased. For example, consumers remembered advertising messages associated with about half (47%) of specific shopping events where the decision to shop was made in the previous week. (This excluded groceries, meals, drugs, toiletries or gasoline.)
- Further, over the past seven days, some 86% of adults used at least one of 14 media options measured to aid shopping planning or a purchase decisions (average = 3.9 sources). This reflects the ubiquity of media generally (fed in part by online growth), but it also appears driven by the need for smart shopping. The top medium for this purpose was newspapers at 59% of adults, while direct mail was noted by 48%; television was at 38%, while several online options netted to 39%. Shoppers are more likely to remember email advertising than banner ads at general interest portals or ads that appear with search results.

Newspaper Advertising

- Despite the online growth, newspapers continue to be the source that consumers are most likely to use when they want to check ads. This is the choice of 41% of adults, with the Internet now in second place with 21% and direct mail third at 14%.
- More than half (56%) of shoppers strongly dislike advertising that is intrusive. User-control summarizes the advantages consumers noted for newspapers, as they also choose newspapers on several other dimensions, including bringing sales to their attention, value for planning shopping, prefer for receiving shopping information, and looking forward to read.
- Consumers divide about evenly between newspapers and the Internet regarding convenience, and this likely is extremely important because it depends on context. Online advertising can be convenient if you are online, but not everyone—even among Internet users—cares to be online when planning shopping.
- The Internet leads newspapers by a few points on ease of comparing prices and being most up-to-date. Consumers strongly favor online sources for helping plan an expensive purchase, but newspapers are the strong choice for being believable and trustworthy.
- Another important functionality of newspaper advertising is that it drives a large number of shoppers to get more information or take other action online. Some 39% of readers said they had visited Web sites, used search, or made an online purchase in following up on advertising they saw in a newspaper in the previous month.

- Newspaper readers also continue to see ROP advertising in the regular news and feature sections of the paper at about the same rate as before. Two-thirds say they usually read or glance at ads while paging through the paper, while another 16% say they only do when they are in the market for something. Together these add up to 8 in 10 readers. Coupons, sales, and personal relevance are especially strong drivers of reading, along with display factors.
- Further in line with the current shopper mood, coupon saving (non-grocery) has increased somewhat over the past three years, and coupon savers continue to prefer newspapers over direct mail as a delivery vehicle by about a 2-1 margin.
- Altogether, some 82% of adults say they have used newspaper advertising in various ways in the past 30 days, including making a purchase at a store or online (56%).
- Newspaper advertising reach is not fully accounted for by conventional readership estimates. Replicating earlier research we found that around 36% of past-week “non-readers” also dip into newspapers for information of various kinds. These individuals do not think of themselves as “reading or looking into newspapers,” as standard readership questions are asked. Non-readers thus add around 7-9 points to newspaper reach.

Preprints

- Consumer usage of newspaper preprints remains high Half of adults use inserts regularly, and three-fourths do at least occasionally (as do two-thirds of young adults). Some 82% of adults said they have used newspaper preprints in various ways in the past 30 days.
- The personal trend for using newspaper preprints is positive, as 25% of current readers say they are increasing usage, compared to 16% who are using preprints less often than before.
- Women (59%), who tend to be the primary shoppers in their households, are well ahead of men (43%) in using preprints regularly, although men lead in some product categories. Among preprint readers, 70% look at inserts from other brands beyond their regular stores.
- Readers note that preprints are especially effective in delivering sale information and also in planning “regular” shopping. In general they are perceived as helping save time and money, but their predictable delivery in a convenient format every Sunday—the favored day for planning shopping— also drive usage.
- Adults interviewed favor newspapers over direct mail for preprint delivery by a 2-1 margin.

3. Advertising Consumption and Shopping

Past Week Usage

Actively Checking Ads: It is not controversial to say that consumers are inundated with advertising messages, perhaps thousands a day, according to some estimates. Much of this exposure is passive and for many people it is intrusive.

As reviewed in our companion report, *How America Shops and Spends*, more than half of adults (56%) said they do not like intrusive or interruptive ads. This annoyance likely informs another survey question that found that only 41% of adults say they “check out advertising for things you might want to buy” at least every week.

Short-Term Decisions: On the other hand, consumers acknowledge that their advertising consumption is widespread, varied and useful. For example, adults who decided to shop for a particular item within the previous week noted whether they recalled advertising that they associated with this shopping event. For about half of these occasions (47%) shoppers remembered advertising that aroused their attention in at least one of the five “attention” functions listed below. (Groceries, meals, drugs, toiletries or gasoline were excluded.)

QUESTION: (IF DECIDED TO SHOP FOR ITEM IN PAST WEEK) DID YOU HAPPEN TO SEE, OR HEAR, OR LOOK FOR ANY ADVERTISING THAT:

Advertising for Specific Shopping Recalled

Net Any	47%
Brought a sale to your attention	30
Brought this item to your attention	25
Reminded you that it is available	22
Reminded you that you need to purchase it	18
Made you interested in going to the store or Web site for other reasons	18

Base = Decided to shop for item within past week, asked regarding up to six shopping occasions

Past Week Advertising: Advertising serves broader functions than just those listed above, and shoppers work on different time frames. The table below itemizes advertising media “used in the past 7 days to help plan shopping or to make purchasing decisions.” Thirteen media options were tested, including traditional media, email ads, and five varieties of Web advertising.

- Almost 9 in 10 (86%) adults acknowledged using at least one of these sources in the previous week, with an average of 3.9 sources among users.
- Newspapers were noted most often (59%), followed by in-store displays (53%), direct mail (48%), and television (38%). Other sources were well behind, ranging from 26% for email advertising to 2% for ads on handheld devices.
- Six Web and email advertising sources netted to 39%. Email ads lead at 26%, with search (18%) and general interest site display ads (15%) well behind. Other online advertising (social networks (6%), video games (4%) and handheld device screens (2%) make a much smaller impression.
- Above age 34, newspapers are the leading ad medium at 64%. Newspaper ad usage by 18-34s in the past week is lower but still widespread at 47%, which is about even with television but trails in-store displays and the net of six types of online options. Email (37%) is the strongest single online option for all age groups.

Media Used in Past 7 Days For Shopping Planning and Purchase Decisions

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50- 64	65+
Any listed (net)	86%	82%	91%	87%	87%	85%	88%
Newspapers	59	55	63	47	62	66	64
Advertising displays in stores	53	48	58	61	53	48	46
Direct mail, ads in the mail	48	40	55	52	50	46	39
Television	38	36	39	46	39	32	28
Magazines	28	26	29	33	27	27	21
Store or product information that comes in email	26	23	28	37	28	22	8
Radio	18	20	15	21	21	17	8
Advertising that appears when you use a search engine	18	22	14	30	19	10	5
Ad displays on general interest Web sites, e.g. Yahoo, MSN, etc.	15	16	14	27	13	10	4
Yellow Pages book	14	15	13	12	12	16	19
Billboards	9	10	9	14	11	8	1
Ads on social network sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, etc.	6	6	6	14	4	2	1
Advertising shown on video games	4	6	2	10	2	1	1
Ads appearing on your handheld device screen, e.g., cell phone, iPhone, Blackberry, etc.	2	3	1	4	1	1	--
Net Online (search, display, social networks, handhelds, games, email)	39	40	37	59	43	31	13

Base = Total adults

- Much research shows that young adults are open to advertising of all types, and 18-34s lead older groups in many categories: magazines, television, billboards, in-store displays, and each online option. They are about even with 35-49s for radio advertising. Usage for advertising steadily declines with advancing age for radio, direct mail, television, billboards, in-store displays, and online categories.
- Usage of most advertising media by different income groups does not vary very much, as other demographic factors work in opposite directions, which smoothes income differences. Newspaper usage is highest for the \$75,000 to \$99,999 group at 62%, but this is only five points higher than the lowest group (< \$50,000).

Comparing Advertising Media Benefits

Shoppers use a variety of sources, as was reviewed the companion report *How America Shops and Spends*, but they also make distinctions based on what they think are the relative strengths of different media. The table below summarizes the shopper choice for the one media platform best described by each benefit. The shaded areas show benefits where the medium either leads or is above its own average.

- Presently newspapers lead on 7 of 11 benefits but by smaller margins in relation to the Internet, which leads on the other four items. Newspaper shares of preference average around 35%; the Internet is around 25% on average but shows much more variation question by question.

Variable Demographic Patterns: As a general rule, Internet-reliance is prevalent among 18-34s (although it does not hold for each benefit), and newspaper choice always increases with age. Whether one or the other medium leads overall on particular benefits depends on the variable choices of the Gen-X and Baby Boomer (35-49 and 50-64) age groups. Another general rule is that women are more newspaper-oriented for advertising than are men.

Relative Benefits of Advertising Media (Top Media Choice for Each)

	Newspapers	Internet	Ads in the Mail	TV	Catalogs	Radio	Magazines	None
Primary medium when you want to check ads	41%	21%	14%	8%	6%	2%	3%	5%
Best for bringing sales to attention	42	9	19	14	7	3	2	4
Most valuable in planning shopping	41	25	15	4	5	1	2	8
Prefer for receiving advertising information	39	14	15	9	9	2	3	8
Spend the most time reading	38	23	11	4	8	--	10	6
Most believable and trustworthy	35	13	9	8	11	2	3	18
Look forward to this kind of ad	34	7	12	8	10	2	5	22
Most convenient to use	32	35	12	7	6	2	2	3
Easy to compare store prices	31	40	11	2	4	--	1	8
Most up-to-date	31	39	9	8	3	2	2	3
Most helpful for planning \$100 purchase	19	53	7	4	6	--	4	7
Repeats same boring message over & over	4	5	6	57	3	17	2	4
Try to avoid this type of advertising	4	13	20	23	6	10	4	18

Base = Total adults

Primary Medium When You Want to Check Ads: Newspapers clearly lead with 41% of respondents while the Internet is 21%.

- Not surprisingly, preference for the Internet skews young, as 18-34s choose online over newspapers by a 39% to 22% margin. For 35-49s, however, the order is reversed with newspapers leading 43% to 20%. The Internet does its best starting at the \$50,000 and higher income categories, each of which is around 24%. Newspaper choice is highest at the \$75,000+ levels, which average 45%. Low income shoppers are above average for television and direct mail.

Medium Used Most When You Want to Check Ads -- by Demographics

(Read Across)	News papers	Internet	Ads in the Mail	TV	Cata logs
Total	41%	21%	14%	8%	6%
Men	38	25	10	9	6
Women	43	17	19	8	7
18-34	22	39	16	8	6
35-49	43	20	14	6	5
50-64	51	13	13	8	7
65+	54	4	14	11	8
<\$25,000	37	12	18	16	8
\$25K - \$49K	38	19	18	8	5
\$50K - \$74K	39	25	12	9	7
\$75K - \$99K	47	24	12	5	6
\$100,000+	44	25	11	3	8

Base: Total adults

Newspaper Advantages

Best for Bringing Sales to Your Attention: Sale advertising long has been a staple of newspaper advertising because of its wide reach and ability to deliver a substantial amount of detailed information in a portable format. Newspapers at 42% lead the second-ranking direct mail (19%), then television (14%), and the Internet (9%). Newspapers dominate except for 18-34s where they have a 24% plurality, followed a few points behind by TV and then the Internet.

Most Valuable in Planning Shopping: Newspapers (41%) lead the Internet (25%). The Internet has a 2-1 advantage among 18-34s, but beginning at age 35, newspapers have a wide lead.

Prefer for Receiving Advertising Information: Newspapers lead the Internet 39% to 14%. Again, 18-34s are in a different media world where the Internet has a narrow 26% - 23% lead. Older adults prefer newspapers by 46% to 10%. Dislike of intrusive ads appears to drive the weak Internet result. (The companion report, *How America Shops and Spends*, notes that 56% of adults strongly agree that they don't like advertising that is intrusive or interrupts.)

Spend the most time reading: Newspapers lead the Internet 38% to 23%, with a 3-1 advantage beginning at age 35. Younger adults favor online by a 2-1 margin.

Most Believable and Trustworthy: Newspapers again have a substantial lead at 35% vs. 13% for online and less for other media (18% said "none.") Even 18-34s give newspapers a 25%-19% edge over the Internet, but this group also is above average for catalogs and direct mail. The strong newspaper advantage begins at age 35.

Look Forward to This Kind of Advertising: This benefit gets the most “none” votes (22%). Newspapers lead among all age groups, although it is a narrow advantage among 18-34s. Among 35-49s newspapers lead the Internet by 38% - 7%.

Online Advantages

Most Convenient to Use: Overall, the Internet has a slight 35% - 32% margin over newspapers, but gender and age groups are extremely divided. Men favor the Internet 41% - 28%, while women favor newspapers 35% - 31%. The 18-34 age group overwhelmingly chooses online (58% - 10%), while 35-49s are about evenly split. Shoppers 50+ favor newspapers by a 2-1 margin. Newspaper Web site users favor online by a 54% - 23% margin.

Easy to Compare Store Prices: The Internet leads newspapers by a 4-3 margin, which is driven by men and the 18-49 age groups. Women and the 50-64 age group divide evenly between the two channels.

Most Up-to-Date: The Internet also leads this benefit over newspapers by a 4-3 margin, and this also is driven by men and those age 18-49. It is interesting that the margin is not higher, since consumers in general consider Internet news sources to be more up-to-date than newspapers. Online shopping information is a different discipline than news gathering.

Most Helpful in Planning a \$100+ Purchase: The Internet’s strongest advantage by far and it has to be due to research functionality rather than advertising messages.

Negative Benefits

Repeats the Same Boring Message Over and Over: Television (57%) easily wins this designation, followed by Radio (17%). Radio’s highest numbers (around 23%) are from 18-49’s and the \$75,000+ income groups.

Try to Avoid This Type of Advertising: Television (23%), direct mail (20%), and the Internet (13%) lead this category; newspapers are only 4%.

Coupons

Half of adults now regularly or occasionally use coupons for things other than groceries or food. The recession appears to be driving this high level of usage.

Some 43% of American adults either have had a job loss or pay reduction in their households or are worried that this will happen, or have had a mortgage foreclosed. Among this group, 56% are using coupons for non-grocery items, compared to 45% of other adults.

QUESTION: HOW OFTEN DO YOU SAVE COUPONS TO BUY OR PURCHASE THINGS OTHER THAN GROCERIES OR FOOD PRODUCTS?

Frequency of Saving Non-Grocery Coupons

	Adults
Regularly/Occasionally (net)	50%
Regularly	23
Occasionally	27
Seldom	28
Never	22

Base = Total adults

- Women (57%) are well ahead of men (43%) in using these types of coupons. The Northeast Census Region (57%), where newspaper readership is highest, continues to lead the country, while the Western Region (44%) trails—again probably because newspaper exposure is weaker in that area.
- Usage is slightly below average among 18-34 adults (46%), and then rises sharply at age 35 (56%) and then declines sharply at 65+ (44%).
- Coupon usage also increases with household income, with the \$75,000-\$99,999 and \$100,000+ groups both leading at 53%. These groups also are more likely than others to read newspapers.
- The association of newspaper preprints with coupons is evident, as past 7-day readers of newspaper inserts include 66% who use coupons at least occasionally. This is about twice the rate (34%) as recorded for non-readers.

Preferred Coupon Source: Two-thirds of coupon users (64%) continue to prefer newspapers as their source for receiving them. This is mostly, but not exclusively, referring to Sunday inserts. Direct mail continues at 22% for share of preference. The Internet's share is only 10%, which suggests that print retains usability advantages.

QUESTION: FROM WHICH ONE OF THESE SOURCES I NAME DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE COUPONS?

Preferred Source for Receiving Coupons

Coupon Users	
Newspapers (net)	64%
Sunday newspaper inserts or circulars	51
Weekday newspaper inserts or circulars	8
Ads in regular pages of newspaper (ROP)	5
Other media (net)	35
Direct mail	22
Internet	10
Magazines	3
None/No preference	1

Base = Adults who ever use non-grocery coupons (78% of sample)

4. The Sunday Ritual: Advertising Preprints

Every week many millions of American consumers regularly make a point of sorting and paging through preprints that come with their newspapers. It is known from much research that preprints are a strong attraction for subscribers and single copy buyers, as these pages typically are among the most reliably-read sections of Sunday newspapers.

So what do readers get from this advertising channel, and what do advertisers get from preprint readers? Here are some basic facts of usage, reading styles, perceived benefits, and how readers respond to preprints.

Preprint Usage Incidence and Trend

Past 7 Days: Half of American adults (49%) used newspaper preprint advertising in the previous seven days to plan shopping or for purchasing decisions. Among other reasons, shoppers use preprints to comparison shop, a task that becomes more urgent during a recession.

Frequency: Another usage metric is frequency of reading preprints when they come with your weekday or Sunday newspaper, and choices are regularly, occasionally, seldom, and never.

- Regular readership on average includes 51% of adults, while three-fourths (73%) read at least occasionally. Only 13% of adults say they never look at newspaper advertising inserts.
- Usage at this high level means that it is broadly based. The table below profiles different indicators of usage, and none of the demographic categories are far from the average.

QUESTIONS: DURING THE PAST 7 DAYS, DID YOU USE ANY ADVERTISING INSERTS THAT CAME WITH A WEEKDAY OR SUNDAY NEWSPAPER TO HELP PLAN SHOPPING OR TO MAKE PURCHASING DECISIONS? WHEN THEY COME WITH YOUR NEWSPAPER, HOW OFTEN DO YOU READ OR LOOK AT ANY OF THE ADVERTISING INSERTS?

Newspaper Preprint Usage and Readership

	Used in Past 7 Days to Plan Shopping	Regularly Read	Read Regularly or Occasionally
Total	49%	51%	73%
Primary Household Shopper	51	55	75
Men	44	43	67
Women	53	59	79
18-34	40	38	66
35-49	52	60	78
50-64	57	57	77
65+	47	55	75
<\$50,000	44	46	70
\$50,000 - \$74,999	52	55	77
\$75,000 - \$99,999	53	56	79
\$100,000+	54	55	74
Northeast Census Region	55	55	79
Midwest	49	52	76
Southern	48	51	72
Western	45	48	70
African-American	50	51	73
Hispanic	47	47	69

Base = Total adults

- Young adults (18-34) are below average, as we would expect, but two-thirds (66%) of this group read newspaper preprints at least occasionally. (Among the 21% who rely mostly on the Internet for advertising and shopping information, 63% also at least occasionally read newspaper preprints.)
- Women, who tend to be the primary shoppers in their households, lead men by 9 to 16 points, depending on the metric.
- Usage is substantial across all income categories, including \$100,000+, which is above average for past week and frequent reading.

Personal Trend: The net change in personal frequency of newspaper preprints is well on the positive side. One-fourth (25%) of current readers say they are using preprints more often than they did a few years before, while 16% are using them less often, while 59% are stable. Young adults (18-34) are above average with 32% increasing usage.

Preprint Usage by Store Category

Survey respondents who read newspaper preprints account for 87% of all adults. They noted from which of 12 major store categories they “regularly” check newspaper preprints. The percentages in the table below are based on this population of insert readers. Grocery stores lead overall, with department and discount stores occupying a second tier, followed by drug stores, home electronics, and home building centers. Category readership in part is a function of the mix of categories and particular brands within each market.

QUESTION: PLEASE TELL ME IF YOU REGULARLY CHECK SUNDAY INSERTS FROM ANY STORES FROM THE FOLLOWING GENERAL CATEGORIES.

Regularly Check Sunday Inserts From Store Categories

Grocery or food stores	80%
Department stores	69
Discount stores	63
Drug stores	53
Home electronics stores	49
Home building centers	46
Office supply stores	39
Computer stores	38
Home furnishings stores	33
Sporting goods stores	33
Appliance stores	25
Cell phone stores	11

Base = Adults who ever read or look at newspaper advertising inserts (87% of sample)

- Inserts show definite gender profiles. Women are well ahead of men in using inserts from grocery or food stores, department stores, discount stores, and drug stores. Men lead on home electronics, home building centers, computer stores, sporting goods, and appliance stores.
- Usage of many of the categories spikes upward with the 35-49 age group and stays high through age 64 before declining at age 65. Exceptions to this rule include the top four categories (groceries, department, discount and drug). Drug store insert readership is the only one that increases with each age group.

- Young adults (18-34s) are close to the average on several categories, including groceries, department stores, home electronics, computers, home furnishings, sporting goods and cell phones.
- Seniors (65+) lead other groups on grocery and drug stores, and they are near the average on several others, including home electronics.

Regularly Check Sunday Inserts by Category—by Gender and Age

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Grocery or food stores	80%	72%	87%	72%	83%	82%	89%
Department stores	69	61	78	65	72	73	68
Discount stores	63	56	70	50	69	73	70
Drug stores	53	41	66	39	58	62	71
Home electronics stores	49	62	36	44	57	49	42
Home building centers	46	52	41	29	54	63	49
Office supply stores	39	39	39	26	45	47	44
Computer stores	38	47	29	39	42	33	29
Home furnishings stores	33	30	36	28	40	33	27
Sporting goods stores	33	43	22	28	43	31	19
Appliance stores	25	28	21	18	35	25	16
Cell phone stores	11	12	11	13	12	11	3

Base = Adults who ever read or look at newspaper advertising inserts (87% of sample); Bold = above average

Selectivity in Reading Preprints

Shoppers have “regular” stores where they shop at more than others. How selective are newspaper preprint readers? Most shoppers—around three-fourths—look beyond their main venues.

Readers have different strategies when working their way through the many preprints that come in their newspapers. Not quite one-half (45%) of preprint readers say they look through most inserts that come in the newspapers. Other do some sorting in a common Sunday ritual: 25% say they look at inserts from stores they shop plus a few others; and 28% say they only look at inserts from stores they shop regularly.

- Women (44%)—especially above age 35—and African-Americans (54%) are most likely to look through most inserts.

QUESTION: WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU HANDLE THE NEWSPAPER STORE INSERTS?

Manner of Looking Into Newspaper Store Inserts

Look through most inserts	45%
Look at inserts from stores they shop & a few others	25
Only look at inserts from stores they shop regularly	28

Base = Adults who ever read or look at newspaper advertising inserts (87% of sample)

Shelf-Life

Keeping preprint beyond the day of delivery increases the odds of using them since there are more opportunities for reading. On average, newspaper preprint readers keep inserts they are interested in an average of 4.4 days.

QUESTION: FOR HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU USUALLY KEEP THE SUNDAY STORE INSERTS YOU ARE INTERESTED IN?

Number of Days Keep Sunday Store Inserts of Interest

One	16%
Two to Six (net)	47
Seven or more (net)	28
None/Don't know	9
Mean	4.4
Median	3.8

Base = Adults who ever read or look at newspaper advertising inserts (87% of sample)

Acting on Preprints in the Past 30 Days

Newspaper preprint readership is widespread, and the main reason is that shoppers use the information. The survey measured among all adults nine examples of utility, including coupon clipping (67%), price comparisons (59%), and unplanned purchases (43%), among others.

- Usage is quite broad-based. Shoppers net to 82% for any of these nine behaviors (4.3 different actions on average).
- Net usage for these purposes ranges from 72% for 18-34s to 95% for 65+ adults. Among household income levels, the \$100,000 group leads at 87%. Shoppers with minor children at home are especially strong users (90%).
- Even among the 21% of adults who mainly rely on the Internet for advertising information, some 65% used newspaper preprints in these ways.

QUESTION: IN THE PAST 30 DAYS, HAVE YOU EVER DONE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WITH NEWSPAPER CIRCULARS OR AD FLYERS?

How Used Newspaper Circulars in Past 30 Days

Net Any	82%
Clipped and saved a coupon	67
Used it to compare prices	59
Compared one circular or ad flyer to another	55
Saved it until you visited the store	52
Saved it until you needed to purchase the item or service advertised	49
Saved it and showed it to your spouse, family member or friend	43
Used a special ad, sale or promotion offer to make an unplanned purchase	43
Took the circular or ad flyer to the store with you	42
Gave it to a family member or friend	22

Base = Total adults

Usage Benefits and Occasions

What do newspaper preprints do for shoppers? The evidence from the attitude battery below is that inserts continue to provide several functional benefits and that they “fit” into several routine situations in shoppers’ lives.

- **Operational benefits** include, in order of incidence: facilitating comparison shopping, easy and predictable availability, enabling the saving of time and money, learning about new products, and visually accurate product display. These elements together are consistent with the sense that the insert bundle represents a portable shopping mall.
- **Regular circumstances** for using preprints include, in order, scanning to see what is on sale at the time, searching specifically for items that you are in the market for, scanning for fun or to look for unexpected opportunities, and to plan the week’s routine shopping.
- **Strongest Drivers:** The four bolded items in the table below have the strongest statistical relationship with preprint usage frequency. These include checking because you know they are in the paper every week, checking for sales, saving time and money, and planning your regular shopping.
- Women run well ahead of men on all items by an average of around 16 points each. Ratings by age groups are mostly not far from the mean. An exception is that 18-34s, who are 14 points below average in characterizing inserts as part of their routine because they are in the paper every week. Their habit is not as well developed as is typical of older adults, but young adults have a stronger sense of the other insert benefits.

QUESTION: RATE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT ADVERTISING INSERTS IN THE SUNDAY NEWSPAPER, USING A 1-TO-5 SCALE, WITH “1” MEANING YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT AT ALL, AND “5” MEANING YOU STRONGLY AGREE.

Sunday Newspaper Advertising Insert Benefits (Rate 4-5 on 1-5 Scale)

Operational Benefits	Insert Readers
Advertising inserts make it easy to comparison shop	66%
Checking store inserts is part of your routine because they are in the paper every week	61
Checking newspaper advertising inserts saves you time & money	61
Insert ads give you a good idea of what products really look like	53
Newspaper circulars help you learn about new products	51
Usage Occasions	
You usually check inserts to see what’s on sale or other special savings	71
You make a point to look at inserts when you are in the market for what they are selling	67
You enjoy browsing through inserts even if you are not looking for anything in particular	56
You use store inserts to plan your regular shopping	46

Base = Adults who ever read or look at newspaper advertising inserts (87% of sample); Bolded items show strongest relationship with newspaper preprint usage.

Newspaper vs. Direct Mail Delivery

Preprints also may be delivered via direct mail, but consumers favor newspapers for this purpose by a 2-1 margin (60% vs. 29%).

QUESTION: IN GENERAL, HOW DO YOU PREFER THAT MOST ADVERTISING INSERTS OR CIRCULARS BE DELIVERED: WITH NEWSPAPERS OR WITH YOUR MAIL?

Preferred Channel for Preprint Delivery

	Adults
Newspapers	60%
Mail	29
No preference	11

Total adults

5. Newspaper ROP Advertising

This section considers the ROP advertising format before reviewing several indicators of newspaper general advertising response from readers—and from non-readers of the newspaper.

Advertising media can be classified by how easily the consumer exerts control. For example, with radio any program will pause and not restart until the commercial runs. Television has the same characteristic, although some viewers get around it with DVR devices. Advertising from these sources always is sequential: one ad has to stop before another one starts.

A majority of consumers, as noted earlier, strongly dislike obtrusive advertising, and this reality is an operational advantage for newspapers. Newspaper ROP advertising functions differently from insert ads because it runs within the news and feature pages of the paper. Such ads are hard to miss, but readers paging through the newspaper control how quickly they scan, read, cut out and save, or ignore them. So, what reading strategies do readers employ when paging through a newspaper?

ROP Advertising

As a matter of routine, 8 in 10 newspaper readers scan ROP ads as they page through the newspaper.

- Two-thirds (64%) of newspaper readers say they usually read or glance at advertising as they page through the newspaper. Scanning becomes reading when they come across something that is relevant to them in a substantive way, or has interesting creative content, or both.
- Another 16%, or one-fifth of this ad-reader group, say that they look at the ads if they are planning to shop or are “in the market” for something. In that case their scanning radar sees things that otherwise would be passed over.
- That leaves 15% who say they only read the stories and never look at the advertising in the paper. This group indeed is less interested in ad content, but they surely do see it sometimes, just as people who “never” watch television engage in that activity sometimes.

QUESTION: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU PAGE THROUGH A NEWSPAPER?

Newspaper Advertising Reading Style

	Newspaper Readers
Look at advertising (net)	80%
I usually read or glance at the ads when I page through the newspaper	64
I look at newspaper advertising only when I am planning to shop	16
I only look at the stories and never look at the advertising	15
None/Other	5

Base = Weekday or Sunday Newspaper Readers

- Any survey response this strong means that demographic subgroups or other segments will not vary appreciably. As expected, the 18-34 age group has the weakest response, but they are only slightly below average, with 73% of readers who say they look at ads, including 60% who do routinely. Income groups all are near the average.

- Perhaps the toughest test is the 21% of adults who say they rely mainly on the Internet for shopping-related information. Compared to the average, this group has about twice the number who never read newspapers (17%). Those who do read, however, are about average on this ad-reading indicator.

Drivers of ROP Ad Reading

Most newspaper readers thus go through the paper with an open mind regarding advertising content, but some circumstances and creative factors increase the odds of reading ads when everything else is equal. The table below ranks these factors as they were rated by newspaper readers among survey respondents.

- Having coupons sharply increases reading, with 65% saying this makes them much more likely to read the ad. This rates even above being in the market for the item advertised (57%), which illustrates the appeal of a bargain during a recession.
- Indicating a sale or savings also is a strong driver, as is listing prices generally and using color. The size and location of the ad also influence reading but at a lower level.

QUESTION: PLEASE TELL ME WHETHER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING MAKES IT MUCH MORE LIKELY YOU WILL READ OR LOOK AT THE ADVERTISEMENT PRINTED IN THE REGULAR SECTIONS OF THE NEWSPAPER, SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY, OR NOT MORE LIKELY THAN YOU WOULD OTHERWISE?

Increasing the Odds of Noting ROP Ads

	Net More Likely	Much More Likely	Somewhat More Likely	Not More Likely
Ad has coupons for something you are interested in	90%	65%	25%	10%
Happen to be in the market for item that is advertised	89	57	32	11
There is a notice of a sale or special savings	91	44	47	9
Ad shows prices of items, whether or not they are on sale	80	42	38	20
Ad is shown in color	81	37	44	19
Ad is larger than other ads on page	76	23	53	24
Ad is next to story you are reading	68	23	45	32
The ad is on the front page of the newspaper	64	22	42	36

Base = If ever read newspaper advertising in regular pages of the newspaper.

6. How Consumers Act on Newspaper Advertising

A fact of life (and statistical laws) in survey research measurement is that using multiple indicators of the same concept increase the reliability of what you are measuring. In the case of advertising-related information, asking a question in different ways jogs the memories of survey respondents as they think about circumstances around reading and shopping occasions. It can be a case of “I never look at advertising, but come to think of it, I did clip the department store coupon and I checked online to see when the doors open for the clearance sale.”

With this in mind we show how consumers respond in various ways to newspaper advertising in general over three time frames.

Past 30 Days

More than 8 in 10 of adults (82%) have acted on newspaper advertising in various ways over the previous 30 days, with coupon clipping (61%) leading but also including making purchases (56%), and following up in some way online.

Online sources enjoy a stream of visitors from print newspapers. This includes 21% of adults who used the search function, 33% who visited a Web site for more information, and 20% who made an online purchase. Netted together, we find that 39% of adults are driven to online sources by newspaper print advertising in the past 30 days.

QUESTION: NOW, THINKING ABOUT PRINTED NEWSPAPERS, PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER IN THE PAST 30 DAYS YOU HAVE TAKEN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS AS A RESULT OF ADVERTISING THAT YOU SAW.

Actions by Consumers in Past 30 Days from Print Newspaper Advertising

	Total Adults
Net Any	82%
Net purchased	56
Net Online Actions (Purchase, Search, Visit Sites)	39
Clipped a coupon	61
Visited a retail store or showroom	52
Bought something advertised	50
Picked up shopping ideas	34
Visited a Web site to learn more about an advertised product or service	33
Tried something for the first time	27
Used the search function online for more information about an ad in the paper	21
Bought something at an Internet Web site	20
Called for more information	12
Base = Total adults	

Reader Actions over the Past Three Months

Taking a longer time frame for newspaper readers, the table below itemizes usage of a different list of advertising, feature, and other editorial content apart from regular news headlines and stories. More than 9 in 10 adults (92%) who read a newspaper in an average week participated in at least one of these 15 activities in the past three months, with an average of 7.2.

There is little variation among demographic groups or users of other media who also read newspapers.

QUESTION: IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS HAVE YOU TAKEN AS A RESULT OF READING A NEWSPAPER?

Actions in Past Three Months from Reading a Newspaper

Net Any	92%
Checked sales in local stores	78
Read a cartoon or comic strip	65
Clipped a coupon	60
Checked the weather forecast in the local area or somewhere else	58
Compared prices for an item you're looking to buy	50
Checked local entertainment options such as a concert or show	50
Checked sports scores	48
Saved an article for future reference	46
Checked a classified ad from the newspaper	45
Checked movie listings	40
Saved an article to give to someone else	39
Checked local TV listings	38
Checked the horoscope	30
Used a recipe	21
Checked stock prices	22

Base = Past 7-day newspaper readers

How “Non-Readers” Act on Newspaper Content

Readers can be engaged quite a number of ways by editorial or advertising content in a newspaper. But so can consumers who are not “readers.” How is this possible?

Newspaper readership, as officially measured in syndicated studies, is defined by how a survey respondent answers a small set of questions: Did you read or look into a weekday edition of a particular newspaper brand in the past seven days? If so, then this is followed by an open-ended question that defines “yesterday” or “average issue” readership: When was the last time that you read or looked into this newspaper? A similar two-question series measures Sunday readership.

Survey respondents are left to define for themselves what qualifies as “read or look into,” and they tend to be stricter about it than they need to be. The evidence for this conclusion is that follow-up questions of the sort used in the present survey always identify a significant number of respondents who did not “read” the paper but did do any number of things that can only happen by encountering the written and visual content in the newspaper.

The table below illustrates this common behavior. Around three-fourths of respondents (76%) said that they had “read or looked into” a weekday or Sunday newspaper in the past seven days.

- More than one-third of the non-reading group, however, later indicated that they had done at least one of the following activities involving a printed newspaper in the past seven days. Checking local store sales (19%), clipping coupons (15%), checking weather (14%), and local entertainment options (13%) lead the list.
- Altogether, this unofficial exposure overall adds another 9 percentage points to the newspapers’ reach. Respondents among this group are evenly distributed among gender and age categories.

QUESTION: HAVE YOU POSSIBLY USED A PRINTED NEWSPAPER IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS DURING THE PAST WEEK?

Actions with Newspapers in Past Week by “Non-Readers”

Net Any	36%
Checked sales in local stores	19
Clipped a coupon	15
Checked the weather forecast in the local area or somewhere else	14
Checked local entertainment options such as a concert or show	13
Compared prices for an item you’re looking to buy	11
Read a cartoon or comic strip	11
Checked movie listings	10
Checked sports scores	9
Checked a classified ad from the newspaper	8
Checked the horoscope	6
Checked stock prices	6
Used a recipe	5
Checked local TV listings	3

Base = Have not read daily or Sunday newspaper in past 7 days

Appendix: Technical Notes

The Newspaper Association of America contracted MORI Research, Minneapolis, to conduct the research described in this report.

The latest edition of *How America Uses Advertising* is based on a national telephone and online survey conducted in English from March 24 to April 8, 2009. Two data collection formats were used because the questionnaire was too lengthy to administer in one telephone interview. The survey included 3,004 respondents (1,504 by telephone and 1,500 online) interviewed in English in the 48 contiguous states. The sample was balanced to match the population distributions of the four Census Regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West). The telephone sample was random digit dial (RDD) in format, while the online interviews were obtained via the e-Rewards national panel.

The telephone data set was weighted by number of adults in the household, and then post-stratification weights were calculated simultaneously for age by gender categories, race (white, African-American, and other), and Hispanic ethnicity. The online sample was balanced against the 76% of telephone respondents who use the Internet. This included the demographics mentioned above, along with frequency of going online and frequency of purchasing online, which were much higher for the online sample than for Internet users in the telephone sample. The data sets otherwise were very similar.

As a final step, the incidence of the combined online sample and the telephone sample of Internet users were adjusted so together they properly account for the 76% of the total working data set who use the Internet.

The working data sets also included a data file based on 5,398 shopping occasions noted by respondents. For up to six items per respondent, follow-up questions were asked about the circumstances of shopping for those items. Most of the analysis in the report is based both on characteristics of shoppers and also of shopping events.