

Roy Morgan

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To Buyers of Newspaper Advertisements and
John Hartigan, CEO, News Ltd

By Gary Morgan and Michele Levine, Roy Morgan Research

Last week newspapers owned by News Ltd (Australian, Herald Sun, Daily Telegraph) and Fairfax (SMH, Age, Financial Review) carried reports on the new Australian newspaper industry body "The Newspaper Works". We wish them well and look forward to working with them.

Roy Morgan Research has measured and worked with newspapers since the 1940s. Today, newspaper readership measurement issues are more important than ever before – while many in the industry are of the view that newspapers are on the way out, the reality is very different – as Michele Levine pointed out at the **imAT** Conference last week: "[Newspapers are transforming not disappearing.](#)" The presentation showed that while readership of the "hard copy" Sydney Morning Herald was flat year-on-year from 2003 to 2006, the combined reach of the SMH in "hard copy" and "online" had increased substantially – plus 13%. A similar story is also seen among Melbourne Herald Sun readers which has increased its combined newspaper and Internet reach by 5% between 2003 and 2006.

This type of information is only available from the Roy Morgan Single Source survey which measures readership of print media and Internet among the **same** respondents. The information obtained demonstrates clearly a positive story for newspapers and shows that newspapers are still in the ascendance.

Some press reports included comments attributed to John Hartigan, CEO, News Ltd, namely:

"Another priority would be better measurement of readership. Roy Morgan's system, which relies on consumer awareness of mastheads, has been widely criticised by publishers and media buyers alike." Mr Hartigan also said Roy Morgan's readership measurement system was 'outmoded' and that a review was a priority.

We are always open to suggestions regarding improving methods of measuring newspaper readership, however comments by Mr Hartigan or other publishers criticising the Roy Morgan readership measurement method for relying on "consumer awareness of mastheads" are factually incorrect and could mislead those organisations who advertise in newspapers.

In Melbourne in 1941 Roy Morgan was commissioned by Sir Keith Murdoch (The Herald and Weekly Times) to survey readership of individual sections of specific issues of The Sun daily newspaper. At the same time Roy Morgan conducted a survey covering newspaper readership and interest in newspaper sections for the Sydney Sun. Since then Roy Morgan Research has conducted many experimental studies including surveys commissioned by those companies forming the new newspaper marketing body. We have published more papers on our methodology used to measure print readership and print advertising effectiveness than any other research company in the world.

The experimental readership surveys included showing respondents **specific issues**, not just the names of publications or "mastheads". In the UK and US, "mastheads" are used by our competitors (News International in the UK subscribes to this "masthead" readership data!) – we know the "masthead" method causes biases so we **do not** use this method in Australia, New Zealand, US, UK or Indonesia where we continuously measure readership of newspapers, newspaper supplements, newspaper magazines and magazines – ie. we measure all forms of print readership.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In June 2004, Andrew Green of *billetts connections* conducted [a global survey of users of print readership surveys](#) that found the Roy Morgan Readership Survey was top (78%) for “Fairness of research method between different classes of publication (eg. dailies, weeklies, monthlies)”.

The Newspaper Works members must be well aware that Roy Morgan Research methods are completely transparent. Publishers, media buyers and advertisers are always welcome to visit our operations to review our whole process - sample selection, survey design, conducting interviews, data processing and reporting readership estimates

Unfortunately, although John Hartigan complains about lack of transparency in the Roy Morgan survey, he has not yet himself taken up our offer, extended many times, to learn how we measure readership and see the process.

The fact is the Roy Morgan Readership Survey is the most transparent survey of its kind in the world today.

The issues which concern the industry have been covered in our papers such as [Reading: looking into...logging onto](#) that we presented in 2003 at the Worldwide Readership Research Symposium held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. This paper showed for the first time readership of “hard copy” vs “online” newspapers in Australia and the US. We have also published numerous papers on “sectional” readership of newspapers (detailed and linked below); while in the US our advertising research company, [Mapes and Ross](#), specialises in measuring persuasion effectiveness of print, TV, radio, Internet, outdoor and cinema advertising.

While John Hartigan seems intent on criticising Roy Morgan Research, we are pleased to see *The Newspaper Works* new CEO, Mr Hale, referring to Roy Morgan figures when he proudly says:

“At the moment 12 million are reading printed newspapers every week...” Recent figures from analyst Merrill Lynch show newspaper circulations fell 1.8 per cent between 2001 and 2005, comparing favourably with the 8.8 per cent drop in audiences for free-to-air TV in the same period.

As soon as Mr Hale takes up his position, he will be invited to visit our operation, and be shown exactly how it all works.

We look forward to working with *The Newspaper Works* and conducting for them multi-media studies as recently presented by a similar body – [The Newspaper Marketing Agency](#) in the UK.

Gary Morgan and Michele Levine

Some important papers that cover readership issues are listed below:

[“Newspapers: On the way out?”](#)

By Roy Morgan Research
July 2006

[“Letter to the Editor of *The Australian*: Readership and circulation changes do not always correlate”](#)

By Gary Morgan and Michele Levine
November 19, 2005

[“Advertising-Adverteasing-Advertiring?”](#)

By Michele Levine, Gary Morgan, Angela Brooks, Marcus Tarrant and Howard Seccombe
Presented to the 12th Worldwide Readership Research Symposium, Prague, October 23-26, 2005

[“Are you going by the numbers? IF YES: Are they the right numbers?”](#)

By Michele Levine, Gary Morgan
Presented at International Herald Tribune Media, Planning and Research in Asia — Challenging Perspectives. Media Research Methodology — Time To Rejuvenate? Hong Kong and Singapore, October 12 and 14, 2004

[“Pitfalls of international market research”](#)

By Gary Morgan and Michele Levine
July 2004

[“People vs. USA Today, US readership estimates must be believable”](#)

By Gary Morgan
July 2004

[“A Fresh Look At Estimating Readership Frequency Distributions — Modelling readership and exposure distributions using a ‘frequency’ question”](#)

By Gary Morgan, Michele Levine and Sergey Dorofeev
Presented at Worldwide Audience Measurement Conference June 13-18, 2004

[“A Global Review of Print Readership Surveys”](#)

By Andrew Green
Global Research Director of *billetts connections*, June 15, 2005
See “Fairness of research method...” (*Issue 4, p.23*)

[“It’s Time? Sectional Readership Data for Newspapers”](#)

By Gregory Hywood and William Burlace
Presented at the Australian Newspaper Industry Forum ANIF 5, February 12, 2004

[“Reading: looking into ... logging onto”](#)

By Michele Levine, Gary Morgan, Marcus Tarrant, Nicola Hepenstall and William Burlace
Presented to the Worldwide Readership Research Symposium at Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, October 26-29, 2003.

[“Readers-per-copy: beyond the phoney figure debate to understanding reader choice and how to drive it your way”](#)

By Gary Morgan, Michele Levine and Marcus Tarrant
Presented to the Worldwide Readership Research Symposium at Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, October 26-29, 2003.

[“Single Source – For Increased Advertising Productivity in a Multimedia World”](#)

By Michele Levine, Gary Morgan, Nicola Hepenstall, Nick North, Geoffrey Smith
Presented at ARF Week of Workshops, Chicago, USA, October 29-November 1, 2001

[“A New Method To Measure Media Casualness for Magazines and Newspapers”](#) (with slides)

[“A New Method To Measure Media Casualness for Magazines and Newspapers”](#)

By Gary Morgan, Michele Levine and Sergey Dorofeev

Presented at 10th Worldwide Readership Research Symposium, Venice, October 21-26, 2001

[“Single Source — The Problem Solver”](#)

By Geoffrey Smith

July 31, 2000

[“Proof! Same budget, get 30-60% Greater Value”](#)

By Gary Morgan, Michele Levine

Presented to The Inch Club, Sydney, May 7, 1998

[“Pragmatic Readership Measure for the Future”](#)

By Michele Levine, Gary Morgan, Peter Grant

Presented to the Worldwide Readership Research Symposium, Vancouver 1997, Revised October 1997

[“How a Composite Method Has Overcome Telescoping, Prestige and Replication in Readership Research”](#)

By Roy Morgan

June, 1983

[“A New Approach in Audience Measurement for Print Media”](#)

By Roy Morgan

Presented at ESOMAR Seminar ‘Improving Media Research, April 1982

[“The Accumulation of Audiences for Australian Publications”](#)

By Christopher Fry

February, 1972