

Survey of Reading Practices 2009

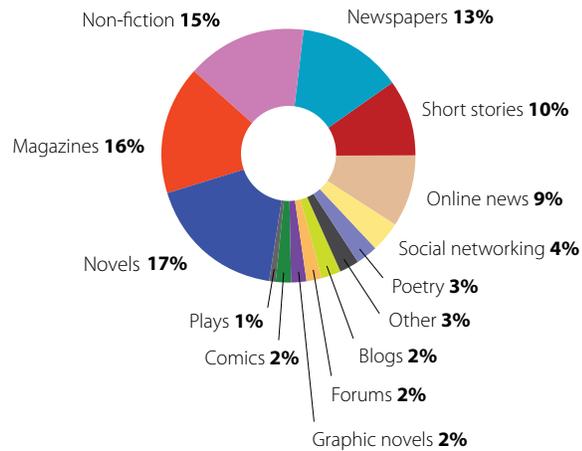
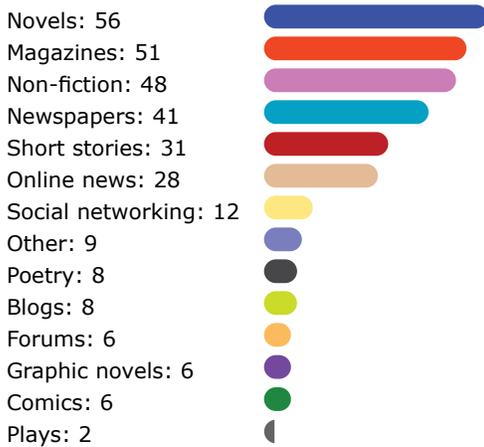
November 2009

Summary for Halifax Public Library (Halifax, NS)
Sample size: 62

This survey is part of a research study on reading practices conducted by Dr. Patricia Demers (patricia.demers@ualberta.ca) of the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta.
Unless otherwise indicated, the results for questions that allowed participants to circle more than one answer are calculated out of the total number of responses to that question rather than the number of respondents who completed the survey.

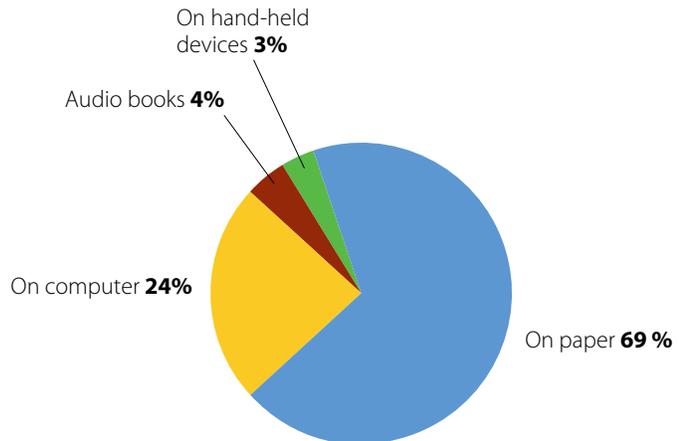
1 What types of writing do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 312
Total number of respondents: 62



2 How do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 89
Total number of respondents: 62



3 Do you care if your reading material is Canadian?

Total number of responses: 65
Total number of respondents: 62

15 responded YES
50 responded NO



4 If not, why not?

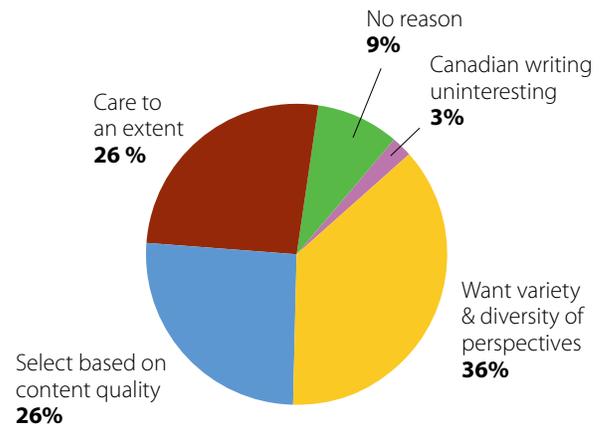
Note: We grouped the responses to this question into 5 categories and calculated the percentages based on total number of respondents who answered the question.

Total number of respondents: 46

Representative sample of comments:

I read because I enjoy the material. The source is irrelevant.

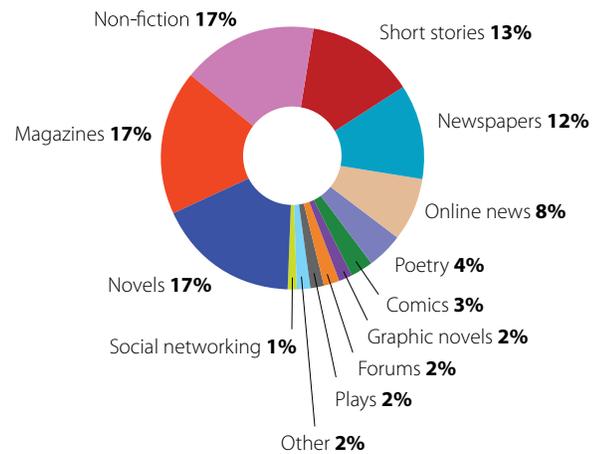
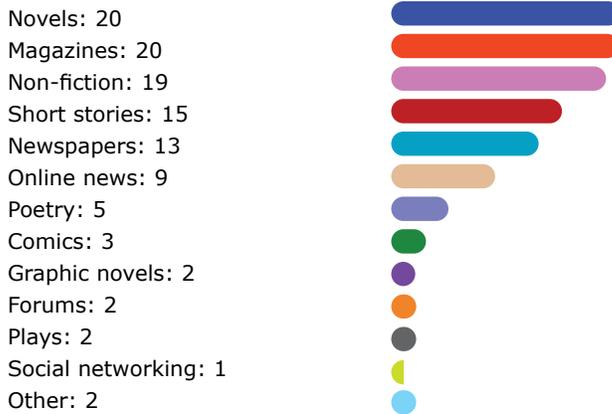
I'm happy to read Canadian authors but they don't have to be Canadian. For gardening books, I prefer Canadian.



5 If you do care, what types of Canadian writing appeal to you?

Total number of responses: 123

Total number of respondents: 27



Note: 12 respondents who said they do not care if their reading material is Canadian answered this question nevertheless

6 Do you care if the writers you read are male or female?

Total number of respondents: 62



7 If you do or do not care, provide a reason:

Note: We grouped the responses to this question into 4 categories

Total number of respondents: 37

Of the 5 respondents who said **YES**

5 indicated that they prefer either the male or female perspective

Representative sample of comments:

Prefer female authors as can relate to characters better (fiction) but am ok with male authors of non-fiction.

I usually but not always like male fiction writers.

Again, if the book is well-written, the gender of the author is unimportant ... however, I do seem to read more books written by women.

Of the 32 respondents who said **NO**

23 indicated that they do not see a difference between male and female writers, or that content is more important than gender of the writer
6 indicated that they care to an extent
3 indicated that they want a variety of perspectives

Representative sample of comments:

"To read authors of only one sex is denying oneself half of literature, social comment, etc."

"I like to read well-written work. If it is by female writers that is great but I don't first choose female authors."

"If the story is good I don't care."

8 Please provide examples of Canadian women writers you read:

Total number of responses: 34

The most frequently listed women writers were:

Margaret Atwood: 18
Alice Munro: 12
Margaret Laurence: 8
Ami McKay: 6
Carol Shields: 5
Lesley Crewe: 4
Donna Morrissey: 4
Elizabeth Hay: 4

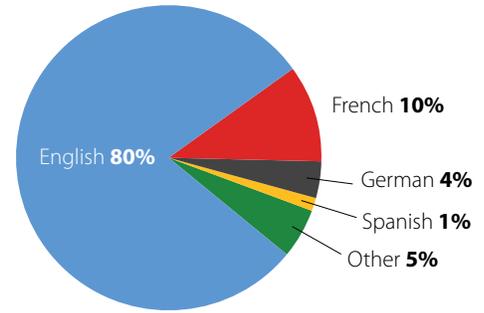


(Letter size denotes frequency)

9 In what languages do you read?

Total number of responses: 77
Total number of respondents: 61

English: 61
French: 8
Spanish: 1
Others: Russian, Arabic, German, Chinese



10 If you do read in multiple languages, do you do so occasionally or regularly?

Total number of respondents: 13



11 Do you enjoy reading material by international writers?

Total number of respondents: 56



12 Do you play electronic games that tell a story (massively multi-player online games, solo quest/adventure games, etc)?

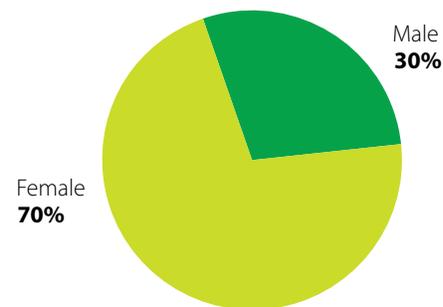
Total number of respondents: 60



13 Indicate gender/year of birth:

Gender
Total number of respondents: 60

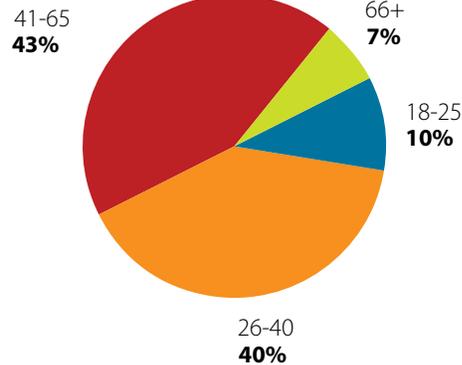
Gender



Year of birth

Total number of respondents: 58

Age



14 Additional comments (selected sample):

Reading is a great escape. A wonderful way to learn and experience new perspectives. I also love to read to prepare and educate myself about topics that interest me such as travel, health, relationships.

In one sense, I don't care if a writer is male, female, Canadian or international as long as I get quality writing that I enjoy reading. I enjoy a diverse selection of authors. If it turns out the writer is Canadian, so much the better. Recently discovered Harold Johnson - I really enjoy his books. I really enjoyed all of Carol Shields's books.

I like to read fiction especially from all over the world so I can learn about people and places outside Canada. I'm slowly learning more about contemporary Canadian writers, but gender and nationality are no concern when I select reading.