

Survey of Reading Practices 2009

December 2009

Summary for Strathcona County Library (Sherwood Park, AB)

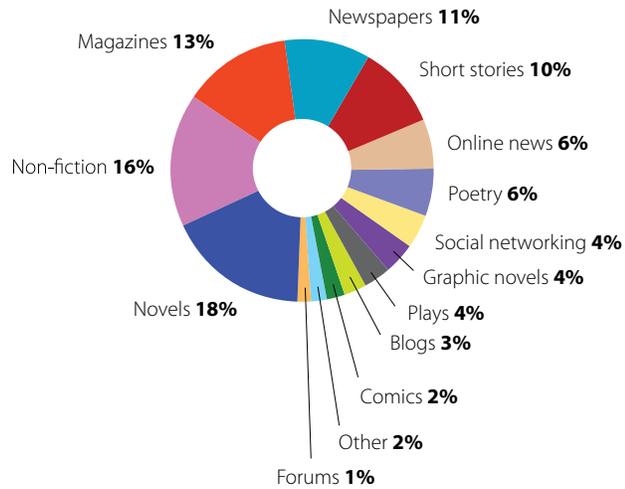
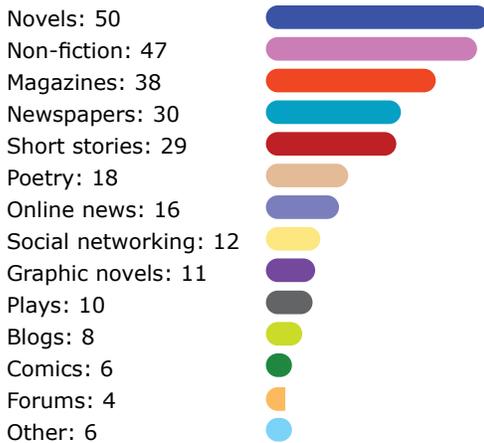
This survey is part of a research study on reading practices conducted by Dr. Patricia Demers (patricia.demers@ualberta.ca) of the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta.

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.

Sample size: 59

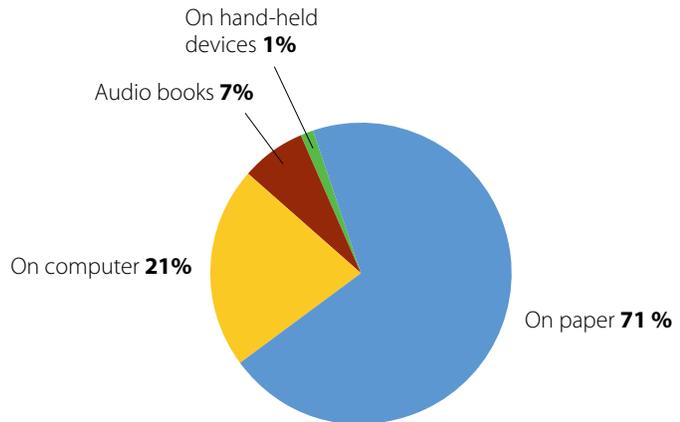
1 What types of writing do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 285
Total number of respondents: 59



2 How do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 84
Total number of respondents: 59



3 Do you care if your reading material is Canadian?

Total number of responses: 61
Total number of respondents: 59

18 responded YES
43 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.

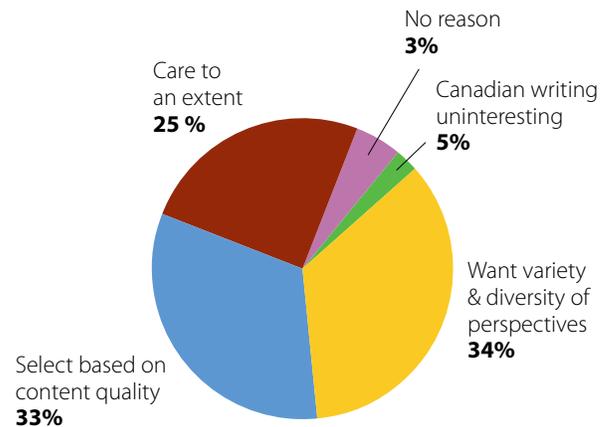
Total number of respondents: 40

Representative sample of comments:

I always like to read Canadian - some really good authors and content out there but a good read is a good read.

Why limit yourself to Canadian writing?

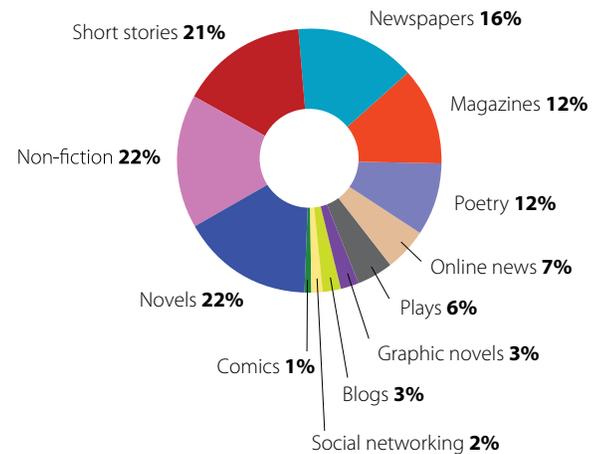
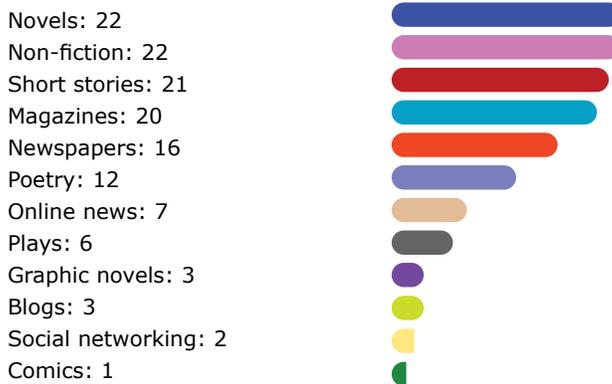
I choose to read what interests me regardless of country of origin.



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

Total number of responses: 135

Total number of people who answered: 32



Note: 16 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: 59



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

Note: We grouped the responses to this question into 5 categories

Total number of respondents: 36

Of the 2 respondents who said **YES**

2 indicated that they prefer the female perspective

Representative sample of comments:

I find female characters written by women more convincing.

Of the 34 respondents who said **NO**

24 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 like a variety of perspectives
4 indicated that they prefer one gender over the other in certain genres

Representative sample of comments:

I am interested in content and a good story - regardless of who writes it.

Again I enjoy reading things from a wide variety of perspectives.

Sometimes. I read what appeals to me, rarely notice gender of author as a choice point unless its romance or fantasy - then prefer females. Spy/ espionage/ suspense/ thrillers - prefer males.

8 Please provide examples of Canadian women writers you read:

Total number of responses: 78

The most frequently listed women writers were:

- Margaret Atwood: 17
- Alice Munro: 9
- Margaret Laurence: 8
- Gail Bowen: 5
- Carol Shields: 4

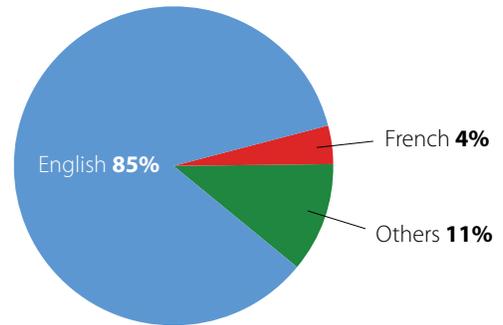


(Letter size denotes frequency)

9 In what languages do you read?

Total number of responses: 66
Total number of respondents: 57

English: 57
French: 3
Others: German, Japanese, Dutch, Punjabi, Hindi



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

Total number of respondents: 9



11 Do you enjoy reading material by international writers?

Total number of respondents: 46



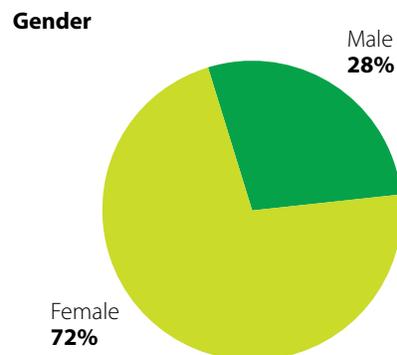
12 Do you play electronic games that tell a story (massively multi-player online games, solo quest/adventure games, etc)?

Total number of respondents: 56



13 Indicate gender/year of birth:

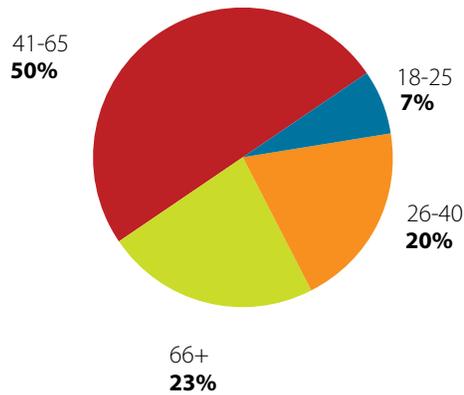
Gender
Total number of respondents: 58



Year of birth

Total number of respondents: 54

Age



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Additional comments (selected sample):

I don't really pay attention to the sex of the author - unless it becomes someone I want to keep reading.

I love to enter the library and just randomly pick a book to read.

Audio books are too slow for me, and my experience with ebooks is very limited as I don't own one, have just experimented with those owned by friends. I would like to say that there are Canadian women authors that I like - Jane Jacobs and Heather Menzies for non-fiction, PK Page and Jon Zwicky - poetry, novels by Jane Urquhart, Frances Itoni, Margaret Sweatmon come to mind, also Elizabeth Hay, Diane

Schoemperlan, Lori Lansens. However, much of that reading (the novels) is not totally voluntary as I feel a need to keep current with Canadian literary fiction for my library job. These are often the titles I'll use for book club suggestions or for the reader who wants to read what's being talked about on radio, etc. For pleasure reading I wait for particular writers in a range of genres - romance, fantasy, historical fiction, espionage. Literary fiction is rarely something I select for pleasure reading. And for my pleasure reading, the authors are often female, and generally not Canadian.