

Survey of Reading Practices 2009

September 2009

Summary for Stanley Milner Public Library (Edmonton, AB)

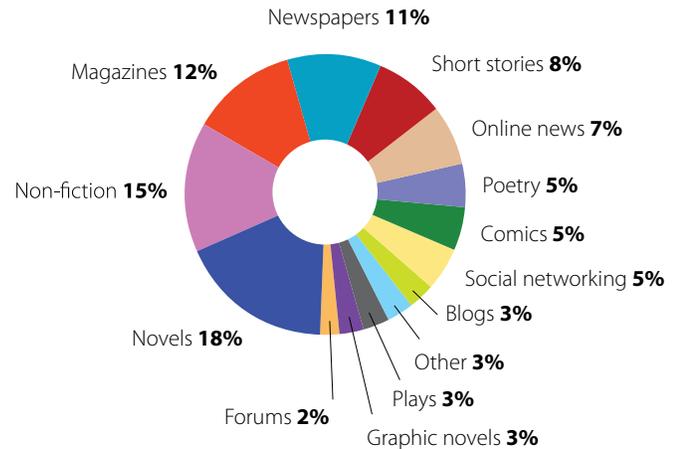
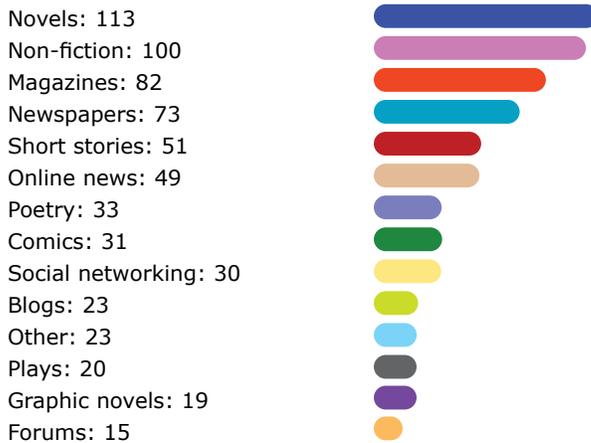
Sample size: 135

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.

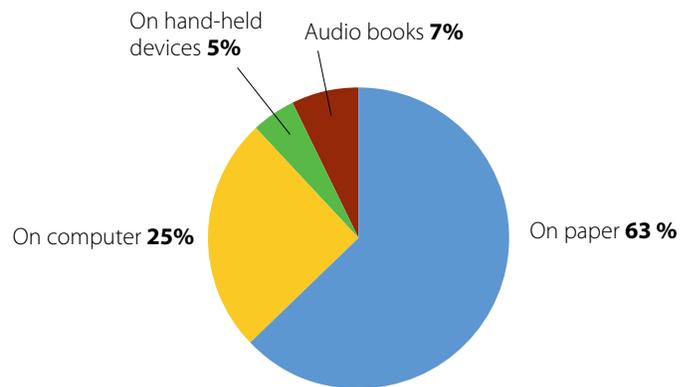
**1** What types of writing do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 662  
Total number of respondents: 137



**2** How do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 207  
Total number of respondents: 137



**3** Do you care if your reading material is Canadian?

Total number of responses: 136  
Total number of respondents: 136

45 responded YES  
91 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.

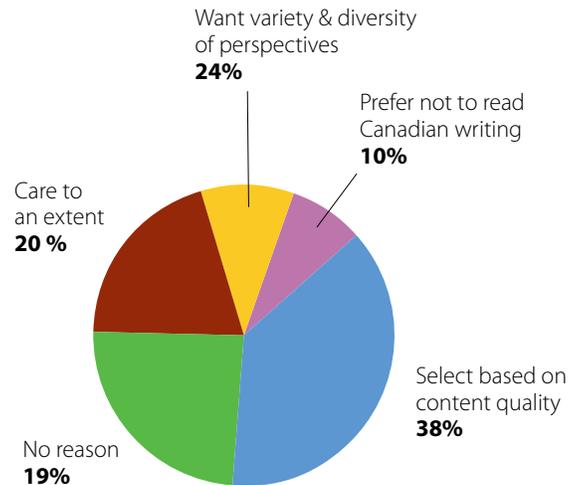
Total number of respondents: 81

Representative sample of comments:

*I read a mix of authors/topics. I do read Canadian authors (some are on my must read/follow lists) but not exclusively.*

*Good writing is good writing, whether or not it's Canadian.*

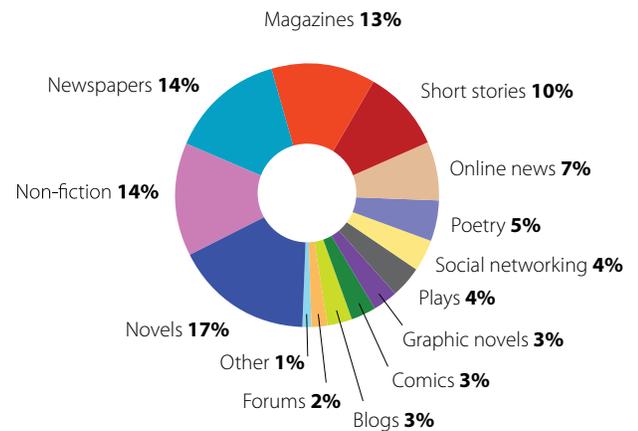
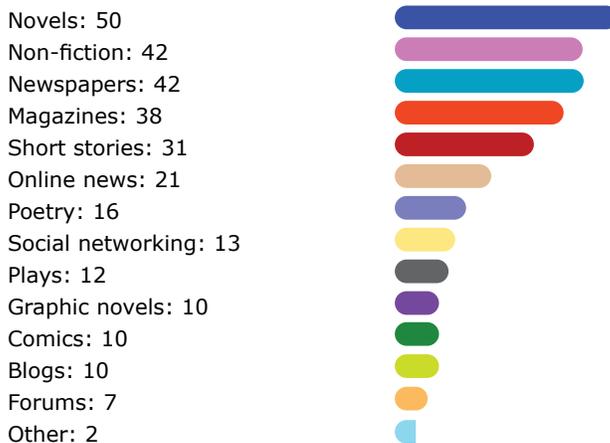
*I prefer if it ISN'T by a Canadian author. I find Canadian writing very boring—the themes are all very similar.*



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

Total number of responses: 304

Total number of respondents: 70



Note: 25 respondents who said they do not care if their reading material is Canadian in question 3 answered this question anyway.

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

Total number of respondents: 135

Yes

8%

No

92%

## 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: 85

Of the 10 respondents who said **YES**

5 indicated that they prefer the female perspective

3 indicated that they choose to read women's writing as a form of social activism

2 indicated that gender doesn't affect selection but does inform reading

Representative sample of comments:

*I identify as female and find I can relate more to a female voice.*

*I believe in giving female authors a try since I know more of the population tends to read male authors/books etc.*

*It depends on the context. If someone is writing a book about childbirth, I would be more inclined to read it if it was written by a woman. If it's a novel, gender wouldn't matter to me.*

Of the 75 respondents who said **NO**

72 indicated that they do not see a difference between male and female writers, or that content is more important than gender of the writer  
3 no reason

Representative sample of comments:

*I find it doesn't make a difference in the quality of the writing, and also it's good to get different perspectives.*

*I like writers of both genders.*

*Gender does not determine whether a piece of literature is good or not.*

8 Please provide examples of Canadian women writers you read:

- Margaret Atwood 32
- Alice Munro 17
- Margaret Laurence 16
- Carol Shields 11
- Ann-Marie MacDonald 7
- Ami McKay 5
- Miriam Toews 5
- Barbara Gowdy 4



(Letter size denotes frequency)

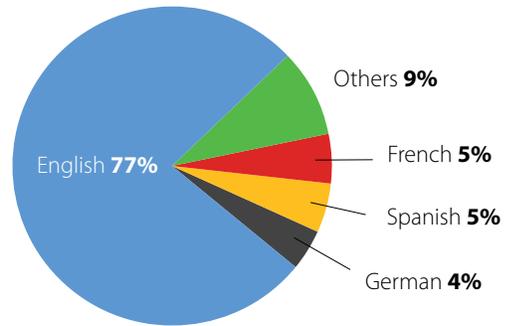
Writers Listed Twice:

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Anita Rau Badami | Margaret MacMillan |
| Anne Cameron     | Marilyn Dumont     |
| Helen Humphreys  | Mary Lawson        |
| Joy Kogawa       | Padma Viswanathan  |
| Kelley Armstrong | Pauline Gedge      |
| L.M. Montgomery  | Sandra Birdsell    |
| Louise Penny     | Shani Mootoo       |

9 In what language(s) do you read?

Total number of responses: 194  
Total number of respondents: 108

- English: 131
- Other: 16
- French: 9
- Spanish: 8
- German: 7
- Others: Mandarin, Ukranian, Arabic, Italian, Tamil, Persian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Dutch, Hindi, Urdu, Norweigan, Tagalog



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

Total number of respondents: 32



# 11

Do you enjoy reading material by international writers?

Total number of respondents: 119



# 12

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

Total number of respondents: 131



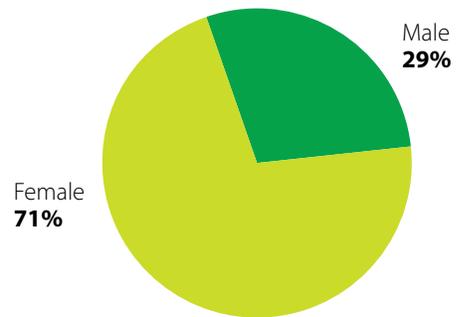
# 13

Indicate gender/year of birth:

## Gender

Total number of respondents: 132

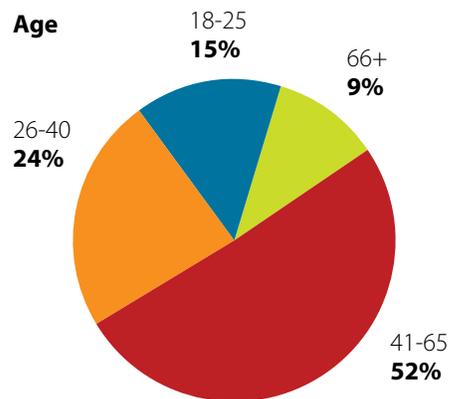
Gender



## Year of birth

Total number of respondents: 131

Age



# 14

Additional comments (selected sample):

*Canadians seem to write better non-fiction than fiction. We are awash in American TV, so I try to stick to Canadian/British writing. Hobbies: history of Canada and cooking. Dr. Merv Huston. Favour his work. Peter Newman on the Hudson Bay Co. John MacDougall-Alberta History. Agatha Christie and P.D. James (Brit. writers I enjoy)*

*I currently do the majority of my reading in book form. With the improvement and drop in price of e-readers, I can foresee that in the near future I will switch to an e-reader to do the majority of my reading.*

*I am concerned that there aren't many audio books that are produced in Canada or that have Canadian content or Canadian authors.*