

Survey of Reading Practices 2009

September 2009

Summary for Whitemud Crossing Public Library (Edmonton, AB)

Sample size: 114

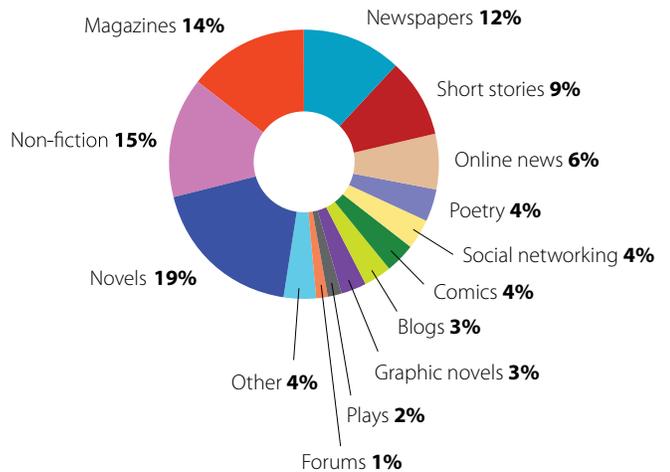
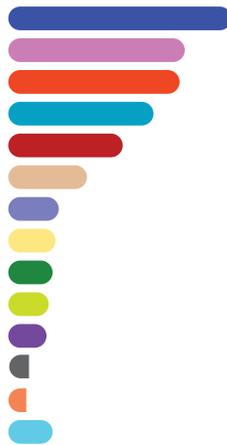
This survey is part of a research study on reading practices conducted by Dr. Patricia Demers (patricia.demers@ualberta.ca) of the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta.

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?

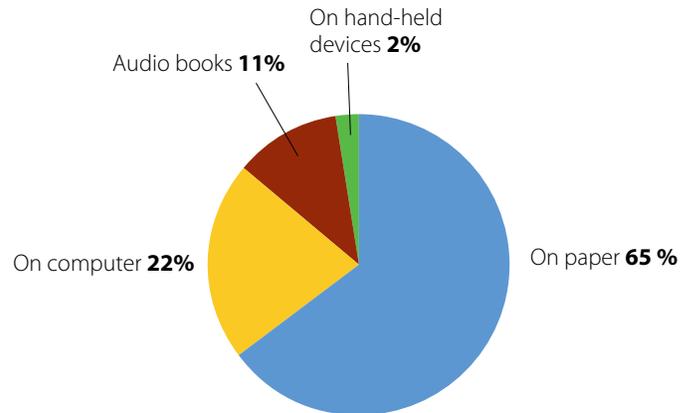
Total number of responses: 508
Total number of respondents: 114

- Fiction: 95
- Non-fiction: 74
- Magazines: 73
- Newspapers: 61
- Short stories: 48
- Online news: 33
- Poetry: 20
- Social networking: 19
- Comics: 18
- Blogs: 17
- Graphic novels: 16
- Plays: 8
- Forums: 7
- Other: 19



2 How do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 228
Total number of respondents: 176



3 Do you care if your reading material is Canadian?

Total number of responses: 114
Total number of respondents: 114

30 responded YES
84 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.

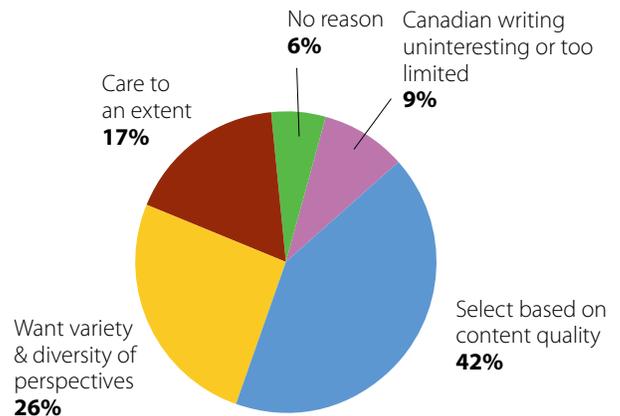
Total number of respondents: 46

Representative sample of comments:

I like to support Canadian writers, but will not read a text just because it is Canadian.

Reading only Canadian works would be extremely limiting.

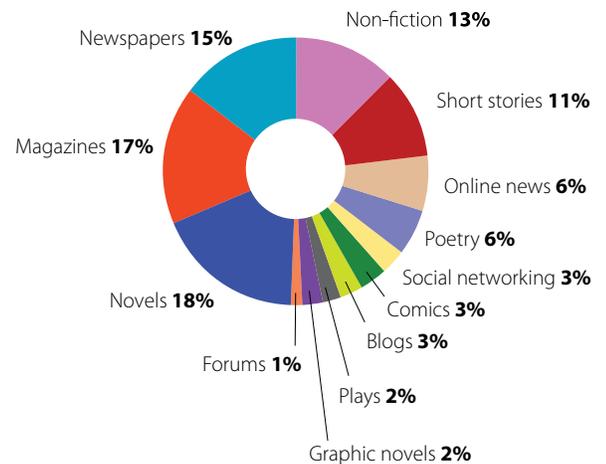
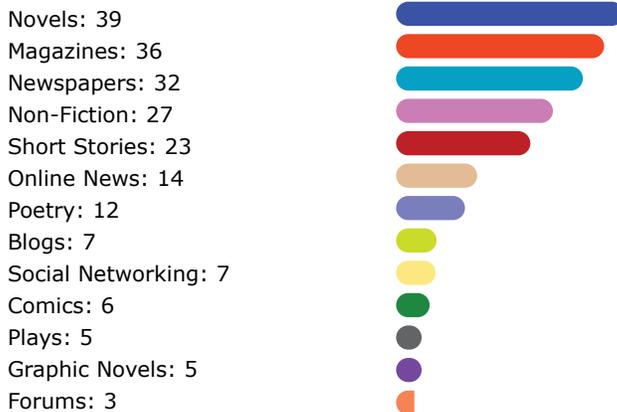
A good book is a good book regardless of the writer's nationality.



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

Total number of responses: 216

Total number of respondents: 55



Note: 22 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: 65



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

Total number of respondents: 111

Of the 10 respondents who said YES

- 1 indicated that they prefer the female perspective
- 1 indicated that they choose to read women's writing as a form of social activism
- 8 indicated that gender doesn't affect selection but does inform reading

Representative sample of comments:

I take note of their gender and how it affects their writing but I read both.

Frequently I find women writers more emotionally and spiritually satisfying. I believe is supporting in supporting women writers as a political statement. Since reading J. Russ's book How to Suppress Women Writers it has been a goal of mine to purchase Canadian women writers' work.

Of the 59 respondents who said NO

- 56 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 indicated a preference for male authors

Representative sample of comments:

Good writing is good writing regardless of the sex of the author. One does not necessarily know when reading a book by a previously unknown author whether indeed that person is male or female.

I enjoy good writing, gender does not matter.

Actually the preponderance is male - but I like Atwood, Proulx, and a few others.

8 Please provide examples of Canadian women writers you read:

Total number of responses: 129

The most frequently listed women writer

- Margaret Atwood: 25
- Margaret Laurence: 11
- Carol Shields: 7
- Miriam Toews: 7
- Alice Munro: 6
- Elizabeth Hay: 5
- L.M. Montgomery: 5



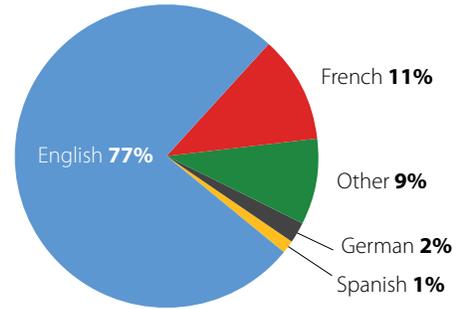
(Letter size denotes frequency)

9 In what languages do you read?

Total number of responses: 159
Total number of respondents: 114

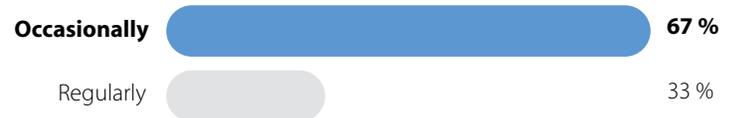
English: 113
French: 17
Other:
German: 3
Spanish: 2

Others: Italian, Farsi, Afrikaan, Chinese, Cree, Gaelic, Korean, Turkish, Ukranian, Yiddish, Greek, Ancient Greek



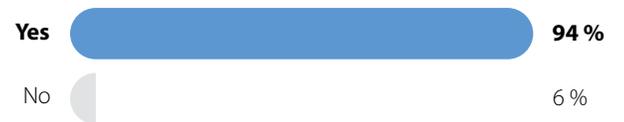
10 If you do read in multiple languages, do you do so occasionally or regularly?

Total number of respondents: 33



11 Do you enjoy reading material by international writers?

Total number of respondents: 87



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

Total number of respondents: 107

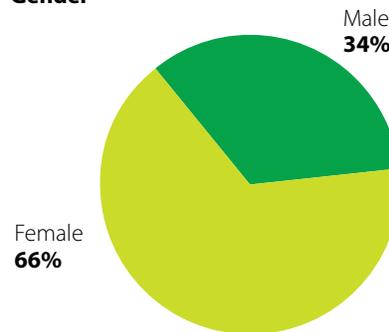


13 Indicate gender/year of birth:

Gender

Total number of respondents: 106

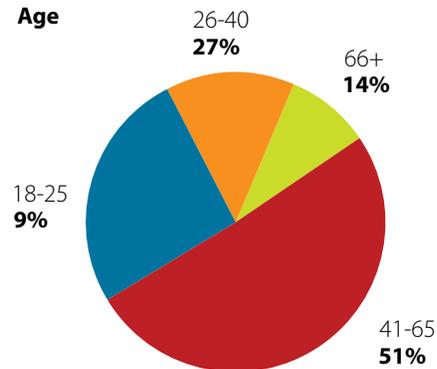
Gender



Year of birth

Total number of respondents: 102

Age



14 Additional Comments (selected sample):

I enjoy reading Young People's literature as well and children's literature, especially historical. It is important to support Canadian writers - it is not so long ago that there wasn't much CanLit!

Not everything Canadian is that good. Why should I feel like that is the only thing, I should read or watch or listen to on TV or radio. If it's good, great, if not, it is not worth reading, watching, or listening to. There are better things, sometimes, to occupy my precious time.

"Care" is a vague word to describe how a person feels about selecting reading material. I am sensitive to Canadian Lit. as American or British literature but I don't read or not read a writer's work because of their nationality. I read it because it has merit and a message for me.

Canadian authors need to be "good enough" to compete in an international or global market - not just a Canadian niche market & they need to be about more than just "Canada" or "Canadian." They still need the elements of a good story or effective communication desired to reach its audience.