

Survey of Reading Practices 2009

September 2009

Summary for Strathcona Public Library (Edmonton, AB)

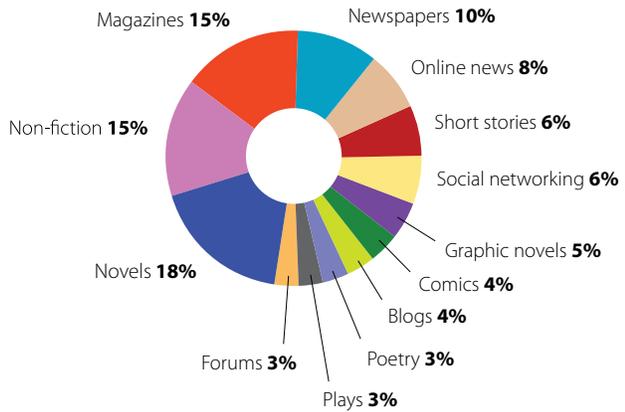
Sample size: 66

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.

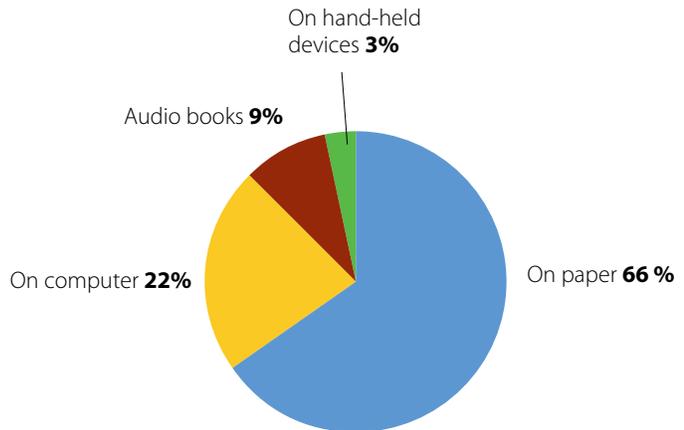
1 What types of writing do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 322
Total number of respondents: 66



2 How do you like to read?

Total number of responses: 98
Total number of respondents: 66



3 Do you care if your reading material is Canadian?

Total number of responses: 66
Total number of respondents: 65

20 responded YES
47 responded NO



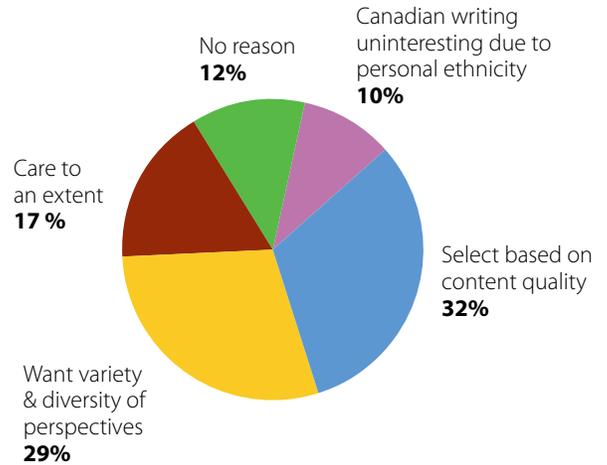
4 If not, why not?

Total number of respondents: 65

Representative sample of comments:

I don't believe that good writing/writers follow political boundaries, and I like reading about experiences of international writers.

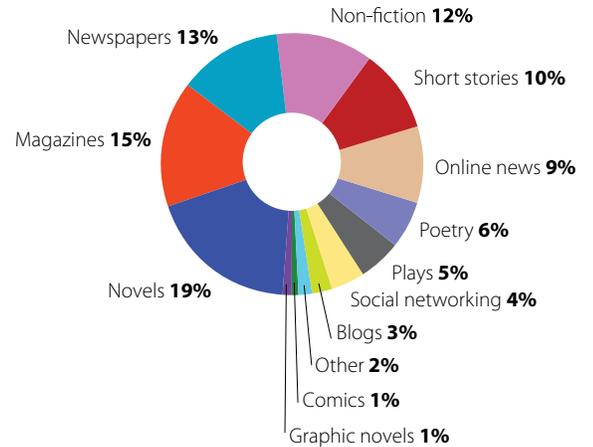
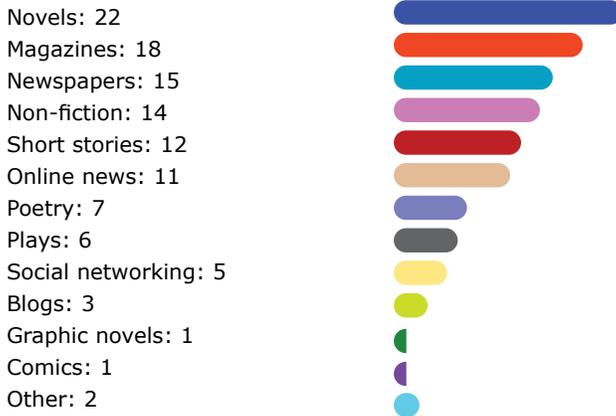
I prefer to read European literature. My cultural background is Britain - I find that Canadian newspapers lack depth (I've lived in Edmonton for 30 years).



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

Total number of responses: 117

Total number of respondents: 30



Note: 10 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:

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

Total number of respondents: 41

Of the 7 respondents who said **YES**

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

Representative sample of comments:

Ours is a patriarchal world - it's critical to read to hear women's voices.

I usually read women authors - like their perspective.

I don't like one more than the other but I like to know the gender of the author. I think knowledge of the author's gender influences how we perceive the author's voice.

Of the 34 respondents who said **NO**

- 33 indicated that they do not see a difference between male and female writers, or that content is more important than gender of the writer
- 1 indicated a preference for male authors

Representative sample of comments:

I don't think it really makes a difference. The gender of the author is usually unrelated to the genre of the book I choose to read, but I choose the book by that genre, not by the author.

I like the quality of writing, not gender.

My reading selection is dependent on my interest in the subject and the quality of the writing.

8 Please provide examples of Canadian women writers you read:

Total number of responses: 31

The most frequently listed women writers were:

- Margaret Atwood: 12
- Margaret Laurence: 8
- Alice Munro: 4
- Carol Shields: 4
- Anne Marie MacDonald: 3

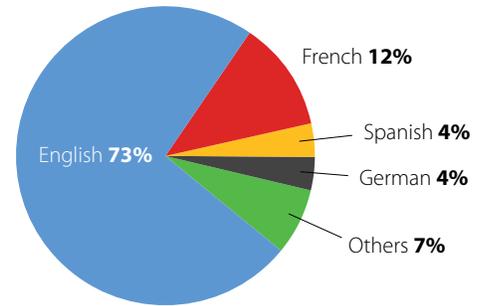


(Letter size denotes frequency)

9 In what languages do you read?

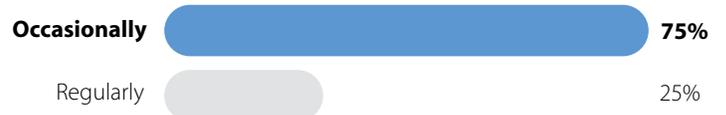
Total number of responses: 75
Total number of respondents: 63

English: 62
French: 10
Spanish: 3
German: 3
Others: Italian, Norwegian, Hindi, Malayalam, Latin, Greek



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

Total number of respondents: 16



11 Do you enjoy reading material by international writers?

Total number of respondents: 54



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

Total number of respondents: 64



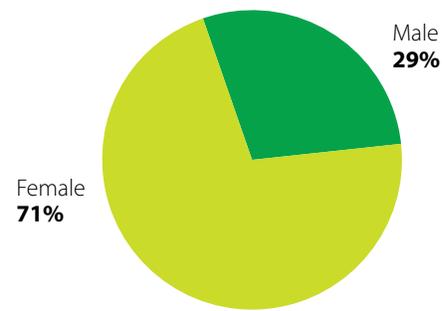
13

Indicate gender/year of birth:

Gender

Total number of respondents: 63

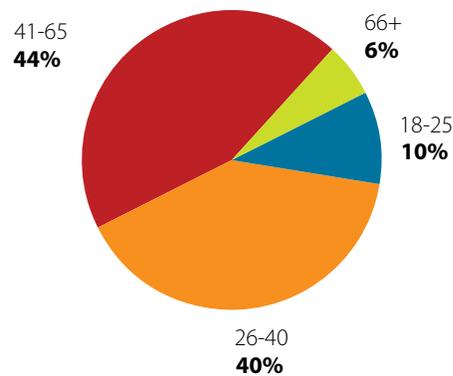
Gender



Year of birth

Total number of respondents: 62

Age



14

Additional Comments (selected sample):

I didn't list any Canadian women writers or international writers of either sex because I read a lot and can't think off the top of my head names of those I read currently. However, in the past, I've read Margaret Atwood & Carol Shields, but not at present.

I'm a professor so I read a lot of plays and literature professionally. I tend to read mystery, detective and science fiction from the library as recreational reading. I also read a lot of children's and young teen literature in conjunction with my children.

I care about reading and supporting Canadian works but I also read a tremendous amount of non-Canadian works, so it's a balance I guess. I prefer fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, mags, online news, blogs & social networking.