

Research Reviews

Reviews are prepared by Larry Meiller, Lloyd R. Bostian and others in the Department of Agricultural Journalism, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Audiences for Contemporary Radio Formats. James T. Lull, Lawrence M. Johnson and Carol E. Sweeny, *Journal of Broadcasting*, fall, 1978, Vol. 22:4, pp. 439-453.

As radio has become more specialized, a need has developed for more precise probes into the nature of its diversified audience. Researchers construct a demographic profile of audience types by radio formats. The work provides those in information work with some clue as to who is listening to the half dozen standard radio formats. (The standard formats are: Top Forty, with 3 or 4 minutes of news an hour; Beautiful Music, Mancini, for example; Middle of the Road; Live Progressive Rock, albums, popular with college students; Automated Rock, most f.m.; and All News.)

The research was conducted in the Santa Barbara, California area. It confirmed such traditional beliefs as the All-news format being normally the best way of reaching those who are married, educated beyond high school, have not moved, and are over 35. However, some less intuitive findings were apparent. For example, the stereotype that Top Forty radio listeners are mainly teenagers was not supported by the data. In fact, about half were married and more than half owned their own homes.

The All-news, Top Forty, and Live Progressive formats proved to be the most efficient way of disseminating news to their specific audiences.

How Numbers Are Shown: A Review of Research on the Presentation of Quantitative Data in Texas. Michael MacDonald-Ross, *AV Communication Review*, winter 1977, Vol. 25:4, pp. 359-409.

MacDonald-Ross reviews research showing how to prepare charts, graphs, and tables (19 forms) for presenting numbers, both abstract relationships and exact number comparisons.

His information will help the communicator choose the ap-

appropriate graphic format based on: the kind of data to be shown, the teaching points to be made, what the learner will do with the data, and the amount of time and skill needed to prepare the format. The article is too long and thorough to present conclusions here. It is useful for any publications editor or communicator presenting data, and it is a must for research editors.

The Picture in Your Mind. Malcolm L. Fleming, *AV Communication Review*, 1977, Vol. 25:1, pp. 43-62.

Fleming examines research on what we mean by "image," whether it is in the head or on the screen or both. He probes similarities and differences between projected images and mental images. He examines how fundamental and instrumental the picture in your head is to perception and memory. And he examines whether relatively abstract concepts and thoughts involve imagery. Fleming's purpose is to extract a few implications for the AV field, and overall, to stimulate research and theory. For example, he reports people retain information better when pictures also are used rather than words alone.

Fleming discusses some related theoretical constructs that provide a useful way of thinking about learning, especially learning from pictures. One explains pictures are more memorable because they are more "novel," since they are not frequently used. Another says pictures facilitate memory since photos organize information elements. Fleming calls for more research to test the effectiveness of pictures used for a fresh effect compared with those used to organize information. He also examines the concepts of verbal learning, symbolic imagery and of imagery and understanding.

TV Captures Extension Farm Audience. Marion E. Kroetz and Robert Cole, *Journal of Extension*, September/October, 1978, pp. 18-23.

Extension agents in Northwest Ohio attracted a sizeable viewing audience to their television program, "The Crop Game." The program provides market analysis, timely short topics and a "main" topic dealing with such things as herbicides, tillage and harvesting. Film and slides were used to bolster this portion of the program. In analyzing the viewing audience, Kroetz and Cole found that about 10,000 farmers watched the programs. Over half the viewers changed their farm prac-

tice in tillage, harvesting and pesticide treatment. They voiced strong support for similar programs. Informational packets mailed by county agents to supplement the programs also were viewed favorably. Researchers found that 60 percent favored airing the program at 7 p.m. on Tuesday. Half wanted it repeated once. Nearly two thirds of the viewers said programs ranging from 17 to 22 minutes were adequate to cover such topics as harvesting.

Communication Behavior and Effectiveness of Professionals in a Research Dissemination Organization. Nemi C. Jain, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 1977, Vol. 5:1, pp. 15-24.

The author looked at the communication behavior of professionals performing linking roles in a research dissemination organization. The object was to learn whether variations in four stated dimensions of the interorganizational communication of the linker are systematically related to effectiveness in the linking role. Data were collected from faculty members from seven departments of a land-grant university's Cooperative Extension Service program, using only those specifically assigned a linking role. Results indicated that number of colleagues, frequency of communication, and communication network centrality dimensions are positively related to linker effectiveness. Contrary to previous studies by Pelz and Andrews, the author finds a negative relationship between time spent by the linker and communicating effectiveness. This could possibly be accounted for by the extent of measurement error in the time variable.

Newspaper versus "Newspaper"—A Statewide Study of the Weekly. George M. Winford, *Journalism Quarterly*, spring 78, Vol. 55:1, pp. 135-139.

This study sampled the total rural population of Louisiana to determine rural residents' preferences for receiving information via radio, television, daily and weekly newspapers. The response rate for the mail questionnaire was 65 percent after four mailings. (Respondents averaged 10.4 years of school, compared to 9.3 for the average rural Louisianan, indicating that those who return questionnaires are better educated than those who do not.)

The author compared rural residents' use of these media for news about local government, local community news, informa-

tion about agriculture and homemaking, and advertising information.

For local government information, television was used *regularly* by 64 percent and weekly newspapers by 57 percent, daily papers 41 percent, radio 34 percent.

Regarding local community news, the weekly newspaper was clearly ahead. Weeklies were regularly used by 59 percent, television by 46 percent, dailies 38 percent, radio 29 percent. Combining *regular* with *sometimes* use (categories were regularly, sometimes, and never) showed 85 percent of the rural residents using weeklies for local community news, 74 percent television, 68 percent dailies and 66 percent radio.

Regarding information about agriculture and homemaking, weeklies and television were close with 72 percent and 74 percent respectively, dailies 63 percent, radio 61 percent.

For advertising information, 80 percent used weeklies regularly, 72 percent television, 71 percent dailies and 62 percent radio.

Thus for rural Louisiana residents, the weekly newspaper continues to be an important information source.

Impact of Follow-up Mailing on Return Rates in Surveys of Six Different Elite Groups. Michael Ryan, *Journalism Quarterly*, autumn, 1978. Vol. 55:3, pp. 579-581.

This study examines response rates for each of several mailings in six recent mail questionnaire surveys of elite groups. All of these studies used an initial mailing and two follow-ups. All mailings had cover letters of explanation and stamped, self-addressed envelopes for return, with first class postage stamps on envelopes sent and returned. The first follow-up was mailed four weeks after initial mailing; the second follow-up four weeks after that. Questionnaires ranged from 2 to 11 pages. Length of questionnaire did not affect the percentage of return.

The groups receiving the surveys were elites, mostly mass media people. The first mailing produced response rates ranging from 29-67 percent, and averaging 50 percent. The second mailing brought in an average of 18 percent more, ranging from 12-28 percent. The third and final mailing averaged 10 percent (8-11 percent). The total response rate for the six surveys averaged 76 percent.

Ryan concludes that follow-up mailings are generally worth the time and money in surveys to elite groups such as media.

people and gatekeepers. He believes that follow-ups are essential if the initial mailing response is low.

Comparison of Factual Recall from Film and Print Stimuli. Karen Browne, *Journalism Quarterly*, summer 1978, Vol. 55:2, pp. 350-353.

This study compared the teaching effectiveness of film versus print by measuring immediate recall of facts presented in a film documentary and a written version of the documentary.

Before viewing the film or reading the feature story, the sample answered a series of questions about the subject matter. After seeing or reading the message, they answered the questions again, so the experimenter could determine knowledge gain from each method of presentation.

Results showed the reading group gained more knowledge. The mean number of correct answers (40 questions) for the film group increased from 8.93 to 12.23, or 3.84. Means for the reading group went from 7.90 to 13.68, or 5.78. Although the difference between 3.84 and 5.78 is statistically significant, it is not of *practical* significance, since the reading group's improvements averaged only two more questions than the film group.

The author cautions against overvaluing these findings, commenting that "for a documentary or article at the comprehension levels used in this study, other factors besides the relative teaching value of the media seem more important in deciding which medium to use."

Recall of Television Weather Reports. David Hyatt, Kathy Riley, and Noel Sederstrom, *Journalism Quarterly*, summer 1978, Vol. 55:2, pp. 306-310.

Researchers asked several questions: How well could television weather watchers (33 percent of the respondents) recall weathercast information? Were they satisfied with the amount and kind of weather information available from television? Did they understand weather terms? This was a telephone survey of a random sample of Minneapolis-St. Paul residents.

Results showed 61 percent of the respondents listened to *radio* for weather information, 33 percent watched weathercasts on TV, and 15 percent read weather information in the newspaper. Older persons preferred to get weather information from television; young people from radio. Those watching

weather telecasts remembered *little* of what they saw, but recalled local weather information better than facts about national weather (75 percent remembered nothing about national weather). Only one third of the respondents understood such weather terms as "barometric pressure" and "high pressure system." Viewers were satisfied with the amount and type of weather information presented. Most people said they watched TV weathercasts "to see what the weather would be like tomorrow."

