

JOINT INDUSTRY COMMITTEE FOR REGIONAL PRESS SURVEYS

SURVEY GUIDELINES

2007

PUBLISHER'S SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Pre-amble

This summary of the JICREG Readership Guidelines contains information relevant to publishers. For more detail, the main edition of the Guidelines should be consulted.

Important note

If a publisher wishes to have research results put onto the JICREG Database, the JICREG Secretariat must be informed before the commencement of fieldwork. However, surveys complying with the JICREG Guidelines may be submitted purely for inclusion in the model if the publisher so indicates before the research is conducted; no data would therefore appear on the JICREG Database.

It is extremely important that publishers examine the allocation of circulation or distribution to postcode sectors on the NS Database before the research is commissioned because the area to be researched is based on this entry. The breakdown should total the audited figure but if significant changes have taken place since the last audited figure which better reflects the position of the paper during the anticipated fieldwork period, then this breakdown should be submitted to the consultant at JICREG responsible for the design of research areas (not the NS). The circulation allocation covering the audit period encompassing the fieldwork period should reflect this more recent breakdown (when it becomes available).

As far as possible, copies should be allocated to the postcode sectors where readers live rather than where copies are sold. In many cases, this will be the same, but, particularly in the centre of towns and cities, it may be quite different. 'A Guide to Circulation Allocation' is available to be downloaded from the JICREG website to assist.

If changes are required to the circulation breakdown on the NS Database, they should be submitted to the Newspaper Society before the research area is designed.

Note that if the circulation or distribution of editions is not allocated to postcode sectors correctly, there will be a mismatch between circulation and readership resulting in inaccurate readers-per-copy figures.

Publishers submitting research to JICREG thereby accept that such readership data may be used (unattributably) as part of input data for any readership modelling process that JICREG may carry out from time to time. By being included on the JICREG Database, a publisher is also accepting that his masthead may be used in research conducted by a competitor.

JICREG reserves the right to amend these Guidelines at any time and without warning, as necessary. JICREG also reserves the right to publish or to omit data for any newspaper on its data system without condition.

Newspaper research may be carried out for many purposes - to assist with editorial policy, to examine newsagent attitudes, or to test the effectiveness of promotions, for example, but JICREG has no concern with these. It is interested solely in the accurate measurement of the readership for a newspaper and the nature of that readership (in terms of demographics and time spent reading). Newspapers will frequently wish to add many other questions and, providing these come after the "JICREG required questions", it is of no concern of JICREG (with the exception of demographics which should come at the end).

Any publisher is free, of course, to use any methodology, any contractor and ask any questions he chooses in his own research, but because the Technical Subcommittee of JICREG needs to establish clear guidelines for newspapers wishing to have their individually commissioned surveys included in JICREG, any deviation from the Guidelines will cause a close examination of the study. Surveys complying will be automatically included on the JICREG Database; others will be considered on their merits.

Newspapers appearing on the National Readership Survey (NRS) may elect to use a readers-per-copy figure calculated from that research in place of a modeled figure or a figure taken from the newspaper's own research. This will be updated automatically every six months. It should be noted that the readers-per-copy figure published in the NRS volume may be different from that calculated by JICREG. ~~This is b~~JICREG will perform the calculation when the data become available. Having elected to use an NRS figure, newspapers cannot then revert to an earlier piece of their own research.

Modeled figures will replace the surveyed figures after three years on the Database or four years from the last date of fieldwork (unless there is new research in the field). The fieldwork dates for all studies appear on the Database. JICREG will advise newspaper managements one year before the expiry of the "shelf life" of the research to enable them to commission new research or, at least be aware that modeled figures will be used from that expiry date.

If the circulation or distribution of a newspaper has changed significantly since the research period and this is brought to the attention of JICREG, it will be examined to see if the changes would render the readers-per-copy figure invalid. In particular, JICREG would take account of the proportion of copies in the research area. Each case will be considered on its merits and discussed with publishers before any action is taken. JICREG reserves the right to disallow a current readers-per-copy figure taken from research and substitute a modeled figure where it is considered that the newspaper has changed to such an extent that it renders the researched readers-per-copy figure invalid. However, publishers will be consulted before such a change would take place.

Those titles using surveyed rather than modeled data, may enjoy the benefit of having time spent reading added to the Database (if the question has been asked in the right format) as well as a profile page containing:

1. The sample profile in terms of age, sex and social group
2. The readership profile in terms of age, sex and social group
3. Car ownership
4. Household tenure
5. 60+ readership (proxy 'grey' market)
6. Children in household
7. Home delivery percentage (percentage of readers, not copies)
8. Business readership
9. Time spent reading

if the appropriate additional questions have been asked in the right format.

Note that these data may not be the same as those on the main JICREG Database as they are taken directly from the research, and should be sourced to the research rather than JICREG.

Home delivery is defined as the percentage of readers who read a home delivered copy, not the percentage of copies which are home delivered. Note that the ed/ad ratios and paginations for free newspapers come directly from VFD, and for paid-for newspapers they can be provided by the newspaper but may be checked by the JICREG Secretariat who may ask for selected issues as proof.

JICREG appraises only the methodology, sample sizes, time spent reading, demographics and readership questions. Promotional use of these data may carry the imprimatur of JICREG. However, other questions on the survey are not appraised by JICREG and must not use the JICREG imprimatur nor suggest that JICREG has approved or endorsed them. Note that JICREG may be quoted as a source only when the survey has passed its appraisal. If JICREG is quoted as the source, the date should be the month and year that the data appear on the JICREG Database.

The sample sizes which are recommended minima for JICREG may be insufficient for other research purposes.

Newspapers conducting research for the first time (which is defined as not previously having put onto the JICREG Database a readers-per-copy figure which has been calculated from actual research or having registered the intention to do so) may examine their results before deciding whether to have the readers-per copy figure from the research put onto the Database or to use modeled figures. If a newspaper believes it has changed significantly since its last piece of JICREG research and wishes to be treated as a title conducting research for the first time, it should make out a case to JICREG.

For newspapers not conducting research for the first time, researched figures must take the place of modeled figures if research has taken place (and the JICREG Secretariat has been advised of it). Such research results should in any case be submitted for JICREG appraisal which will be undertaken by independent consultants. If the JICREG Secretariat is not informed that a survey is being undertaken BEFORE fieldwork commences, then the readership data might not be included in the Database.

All surveys must be submitted to JICREG for appraisal if newspapers wish the results to be included on the Database. The main criteria on which surveys will be appraised are to be found in the Appendix to this document. Newspapers should ensure that this information is readily available within the surveys (in the introduction or appendices).

Only titles with an acceptable audited figure can go on the Database. ABC, VFD and independently audited figures are acceptable.

The number of bulk copies which are distributed during the research period must not exceed the average for the six month period.

For a new or re-launched free newspaper, an independently audited total average distribution figure for a minimum period of six weeks, but not the first four weeks in order for the distribution to settle down, may be used. This must be the household delivered average total, not the print run and not the total allocation. In other words, any returns or copies not delivered for any reason must be subtracted from the total. The final total will normally exclude copies delivered in bulk or to businesses because the final figure needs to be matched to household penetration. In addition, JICREG requires a measure of advertising/editorial ratio (e.g. 80%/20%) and average pagination for a minimum of six issues. The pagination should include all regular printed pages distributed over the whole area but not inserted material such as leaflets and so on. JICREG reserves the right to request supporting evidence for the figures submitted: records from distributors, from back checks and from printers.

Paid-for newspapers can also submit an independently audited figure for a minimum period of six weeks, but not the first four weeks in order for the circulation to settle down. This should be the average weekly sale. Again, JICREG reserves the right to request supporting evidence for the figures submitted.

A title can appear only once on the Database - as an individual title in its own right or as part of a group. Researched titles cannot be included in a series with non researched titles. Publishers need to decide to research every title in a series as listed on the NS Database or split entries and research some (which will receive a calculated rpc figure) and not others (which will receive modeled figures). A title can be a series of titles if all titles within the series are similar and there is an entry for the series on the JICREG Database. The normal criterion used to decide whether to research titles individually or as a series, is how the advertising in the titles is sold nationally - individually or as a series.

The entity to be researched and the entity on the NS and JICREG Databases must be the same.

Newspapers must therefore decide before they commission research, which titles, series or groups constitute an entity and ensure that the data for this entity are entered on to the Database.

By being included on the JICREG Database, a publisher is accepting that his masthead may be used in research conducted by a competitor. Promotional activity during the research period should be of a similar level to that conducted before and after it. Significant increased promotional activity conducted solely during the period of the fieldwork may cause the survey to fail the JICREG appraisal.

In summary, methodology, readership and time spent reading are of prime interest to JICREG; other questions, e.g. time lived in area, are highly recommended but their absence would not cause a survey to be excluded from the Database. If in doubt, check it out!

The newspaper is free to choose to research any postcode sectors where it has any circulation at all in addition to the following minima. However, the research area must be agreed before fieldwork is commenced. In practice, the research area will be designed by JICREG based on the NS Database entry and submitted to the research company for approval.

The research area of a newspaper is normally defined as those postcode sectors where the newspaper has household cover of 10% or more. There are rules for treating lakes (postcode sectors under 10% surrounded by sectors over 10%) and islands (sectors over 10% cut off from the rest of the research area). At least 80% of copies should fall into the research area. If using the 10% rule less than 80% of copies fall into the research area, then this rule becomes 9%, 8% and so on. More details are to be found in the full version of the Guidelines. Pick-up papers may use any area for research but the readership found in this area will be divided by the total audited distribution to produce a readers-per-copy figure. If the newspaper believes that it has a credible source of data which enables it to allocate copies to sectors, then this source should be submitted to JICREG. If it is found to be acceptable, then the pick-up paper may be treated in the same way as others with the same periodicity. More details of how pick-up newspapers may be researched may be found in the full version of the Guidelines.

If a publisher wishes to research a larger area than the minimum required by JICREG, then any additional postcode sectors must also follow the lakes, islands and bridges rules. However, the official JICREG area must be agreed before research commences. A publisher cannot research two areas and choose which one is submitted to JICREG after the research has been completed.

A readers-per-copy figure is calculated from the study and this is applied to current circulation to give current readership. A detailed explanation of how this is done can be found in the Readers-Per-Copy Technical Report which can be downloaded from the JICREG website. Often circulation data covering the period of the research are not available at the time the readers-per-copy is calculated. In this case, the most up to date figures on the NS Database are used to calculate a temporary readers-per-copy; a final readers-per-copy is calculated when the concurrent data become available.

It is suggested that all national dailies be included on a survey as it will help regional newspapers to compete with the national press, but exclusion would not cause the survey to be rejected. For the same reason, national Sunday titles should be included where possible.

Average issue readership, weekly readership for the dailies and cumulative readership will be used on the JICREG Database, but other measures can be used for promotional purposes (such as regular readership) providing the definition appears prominently in any promotional material.

A document entitled "Promoting Research Results - A Guide to Good Practice" can be downloaded from the JICREG website or obtained from the Newspaper Society which facilitates the use of research findings including JICREG data.

All promotional use of research must be cleared by the market research company commissioned to conduct the study.

If there is reasonable evidence that the Guidelines have been broken, ignored or abused, then the Chief Executive may request one or more of the technical consultants and/or others he may consider appropriate to investigate this evidence. If this investigation substantiates an infringement then the Chief Executive will take appropriate action which may include speaking to the management of the newspaper concerned and referring the matter to the JICREG Board. The Board will take the final decision as to whether the newspaper's data should continue to be published by JICREG or to take any other course of action which it considers appropriate.

JICREG reserves the right to publish or to omit data for any newspaper on its data system without condition. JICREG reserves the right to amend the Guidelines at any time and without warning, as necessary. Publishers should check that they have the latest version with the Secretariat or on the Web site.

APPENDIX

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR A JICREG APPRAISAL

The name(s) of the publication(s) to be appraised.

Type of publication (e.g. free weekly).

Name of company which conducted research.

Date of research.

Name of fieldwork company and confirmation that they are members of the Interviewer Card Scheme (if fieldwork carried out by another company).

Interviewing method.

Quality check details.

Definition of research area by postcode sector and description (e.g. 10%+ circulation area).

Details of sampling methodology; including details of sampling frame (NS Database list), sample selection and interviewer instructions.

Details of competitive titles included (Area Report).

Sample size.

Age of respondents.

Time spent reading publication - mean figure based on average issue readers.

A full copy of the questionnaire including demographic questions.

Copy of masthead booklet cards or similar.

Details of publication rotations used.

Details of quotas used and percentage of interviews conducted at weekends or in the evening.

Details of weights applied (i.e. weighting factors).

Details of disproportionate sampling if used.

Readership Tables:

Average issue readership of title being appraised by sex, seven age groups and four social grade groups.

Average issue readership of all other titles included in the research.

Read in the past 12 months readership of the title being appraised by sex, seven age groups and four social grade groups.

Read in the past 12 months readership of all other titles included in the research.

Frequency of readership of the title being appraised.

Readership matrix tables by sex, seven age groups and four social grade groups.

Overall sample size (absolutes) by sex, seven age groups and four social grade groups.

For the purposes of modelling, it is desirable to have cross tabs showing readership of all titles against all other titles (duplication) tables for all titles included in the research. The base should be average issue readers of each title.