

**Web No Threat To Traditional Media - Survey
10/05/99 by Steven Bonisteel
Newsbytes News Network, Oct 5, 1999**

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, U.S.A., 1999 OCT 5 (NB). People who spend a lot of time surfing the Web aren't necessarily cutting back on television or other sources of news and entertainment, a study released today says.

In fact, the every-other-year Pathfinder Study from Arbitron NewMedia showed that the heaviest users of the Web may spend slightly more time reading and listening to the radio or their own stereos than people who don't use the Internet at all.

Arbitron said surfers who sat in front of their computers an average of 4.5 hours in a day (the high end of the Pathfinder survey) watched only slightly less television (about 12 minutes less) than non-surfers.

How do heavy users of the Web find the time? Arbitron spokesman Thom Mocarsky told Newsbytes that many Net-connected survey respondents reported being online and using other media simultaneously.

"They would either be listening to radio and surfing the Web, or watching television and surfing the Web," Mocarsky said.

Roberta McConochie, director of research for Arbitron, said the fact that consumers seem to be multitasking when it comes to the Web and radio or television "points to the possibility of some innovative cross-media promotion and programming."

McConochie also said, "The slightly lower levels of TV viewing among the Web population appear more related to the income, education and age profile of Web users rather than to any displacement by Internet use."

The Pathfinder survey of 5,500 US adults found that, during the peak hour for Web use at work (9 a.m. to 10 a.m.), 26 percent of heavy Web users reported listening to the radio - a higher share than reported for those who don't use the Internet at all.

Arbitron said the peak hour for Internet use at home was between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m., when 52 percent of heavy Web users reported that they watched television, only slightly lower level than that of all Web users (55 percent) or the total population (59 percent).

When asked how long they spent with various forms of media in the day, those who don't use the Web reported watching television for an average of 3.7 hours. Heavy Web users reported an average of 3.4 hours.

The off-line crowd averaged 2.4 hours listening to radio, 0.7 hours listening to audio tapes or CDs, 0.7 hours reading newspapers, and 0.4 hours reading magazines. Heavy Web users (more than three hours a day) spent 2.9 hours with the radio, 1.4 hours listening to tapes or CDs, 0.8 hours reading newspapers, and 0.6 hours reading magazines.

The survey also matched specific preferences in music, television programs, and reading material with Web-use levels. Arbitron says heavy Web users prefer classic rock, "The Simpsons" television show, and the business sections of their newspapers. When they're not watching "The Simpsons," heavy Web users' favorite cable television networks are The Discovery Channel and The Learning Channel.

Mocarsky said the share of the US population getting online continues to grow.

"We've seen a four-fold increase in Web users since 1995," he said.

"When we first did Pathfinder, we found 10 percent of adults between the ages of 16 and 74 used the Web. In 1997 that figure was 25 percent. In 1999 that figure is 39 percent."

Arbitron says additional data from the current Pathfinder surveys will be released throughout 1999 and 2000.

Arbitron is on the Web at: <http://www.arbitron.com/> .

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