

The Readership Has Spoken

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Recommended Citation

Hinkamp, Dennis (2006) "The Readership Has Spoken," *Journal of Applied Communications*: Vol. 90: Iss. 4. <https://doi.org/10.4148/1051-0834.1262>

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Abstract

Thanks to everyone who completed the "Do You Know JAC" readership survey.

Journal of Applied Communications, Vol. 90, No. 4, 2006, 5-7 ©ACE

The Readership Has Spoken

Dennis Hinkamp

JAC Professional Development Editor

Thanks to everyone who completed the "Do You Know JAC" readership survey. We hope you felt it was time well spent, rather than another 10 minutes of your life wasted on the Internet when you could have been watching dog tricks on YouTube.

That said, we do take the results seriously and will use them to shape the future of the JAC. We presented the results at the ACE conference in Albuquerque and provided a Web link with the results to the membership e-mail list.

The problem with most readership surveys is that they often don't reach the people you most want to hear from: the nonreaders, who may have long ago given up on your publication. According to the recently released JAC Task Force Report, only slightly more than 50% of the ACE membership requested printed copies of the JAC. This is a problem, since the journal's mission is to serve the whole membership. My sense is that there are many reasons we've gradually lost readership over the years. I'm not sure how we can better reach this audience, but we need to know why they have drifted away.

For now, we need to be responsive to that half of the membership who reads the JAC by incorporating some of the survey findings. Some of the highlights are as follows:

About 93% of the 129 respondents are or were university affiliated. Nearly 30% describe themselves as writers or editors, and 22% list education and teaching as their primary job responsibility.

Only 27% hold tenure-track positions, with only slightly more (35%) responding that peer-reviewed publishing is required for advancement.

Respondents are well balanced in terms of gender, at 54% female and 46% male. Our survey included retirees, so it should not be a big surprise that 23 of the respondents had 20 or more years in ACE. Although experience and age are not perfectly correlated, it is encouraging to know that 53% of the respondents had been in ACE 10 years or less.

I was most interested in the open-ended survey questions that asked respondents for suggestions for new JAC categories and topics. In the spirit of change, I'm going to present the answers to these questions with a new content analysis tool called "word clouds" that gives a visual representation of word frequency. (A number of content analysis programs incorporate

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word clouds. One free one can be found at <http://www.usingenglish.com/>.) The larger the word, the more often it was mentioned. First, "What new sections or categories would you like to see added to the JAC's editorial content?"

academic accessibility **ace** actually add-to address already analyses anything applications
applied applies areas around **articles** asked attention audiences awareness briefs broaden
budget camera campaigns categories category checkers classroom colleagues
communication communications communicators computer
conceptual conducted conferences contains contemporary continuing cost-saving counterpoint
covers creativity curriculum dev **development** dictionaries didn't different direction discipline
discussions dovetail duds easy editorial editors education educational effectiveness electronic
emerging emphasis enjoying **etc** ex **examples** excellent exceptionally features framework
games gaming graphic graphics how-to i'm ideas ie image-based images impact improve institute
international issue **issues** **jac** knowledgeable know land-grant **leadership** letters links lists
management **marketing** maybe media methodology mission multimedia needs news nicely
none nurturing ok okay online **opportunities** papers parts peer photography pieces practical
pro profession **professional** project readers **related** relations relevance relevant report
reports **research** resource results retirees reviewed **reviews** rundown satisfied **sections**
series serious sigs sites software something studies teaching technical techniques **technologies**
technologists **technology** thematic things time-saving **tips** tools topic **topics** training tricks
trying **useful** video volunteer web web-related websites worked writers

Next, "What new topics, if any, would you like the JAC to address?"

achieve **actually** administrators adoption **adult** affect affects ag agricultural agriculture
amateur analysis **applications** **applied** array **articles** aspect-what audience
audiences based basics **being** besides broadly budgets can't challenges collaboration colors
communicating communication communications
communicators completely consolidation consumer **content** contributions convergent countering
created creative critical cultures cumbersome defined delivery designed designing detract
development difference **different** digital discipline dissemination doing donors educational
effective efficiently **electronic** elements **emerging** engaged enhance entities environment
equipment **etc** evaluations excited ext **extension** facts faculty focus focusing **fonts**
foundation friendly futuring games generous groups helping hinders immigrants impact
improved improves including info information institute interesting intergenerational international
internationals interplay introduced issues issues - impact **jac** jobs journal **keeping kids**
knowledge **layout** leaders **leadership** magazine makes **management** manager
marketing media message methodology mission models mood multimedia necessarily
news newspaper nil non-tenure-track **none** offices **opportunities** organizational outcomes
partner performance personal personnel photos portray poynter practices preferences preparing
profession **professional** project promotion proofread public publications publish quickly
readability redesign **related** relates relations releases **research** review reviews reward rss
scared seeking seems serious situation software someone sort **specialists** statements status
steward studies subscribe surviving targeting **technologies technology** tenure
theoretical **theory** timely tips **tools** topic topics traditional transportation typography
underserved understand universities **university** useful user users **uses** warehousing ways web

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As you review these results, you can see that—beyond the common words such as “communication” and “extension”—“marketing,” “tips,” and “tools” also were frequently mentioned. Please squint at this further and make your own interpretations.

Again, you have spoken and we have listened. We are starting to be more proactive and to solicit articles on the topics identified in the survey. This material may come from within the ACE membership, but we are not opposed to soliciting outside contributors. Just as we don’t rely on our membership for all of the ACE conference presentations, we don’t need to ask that the membership supply all of the JAC’s content. If you have an idea, please send it to us.

I am sometimes discouraged by all the changes in this publication and its seemingly declining readership, but history reveals that some of these issues have always been with us.

At this stage, it is a bit difficult to say what will make up the July-September issue of ACE Quarterly. We have had inklings from a few members, but no outright promises of forthcoming manuscripts. We do have a couple on hand which we shall probably use.

... So, “The Lord willing and the crick don’t rise” (too high), we’ll have another issue this summer. (Chapman, 1977, p. 29)

References

Chapman, J. P. (1977). What’s coming. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 60(2), 29.

