

The Changing Reader

**Understanding the Forces Changing
Newspapers**

Acknowledgements

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The Age of Opportunity for Newspapers

By Michael P. Smith

Most Americans are entering an age of independence, or better stated, an age when independence is held dearly. As we age, we Americans value being able to do things for ourselves: driving, shopping, raking the yard. Independence may mean different activities in different life stages, but it clearly is cherished by all.

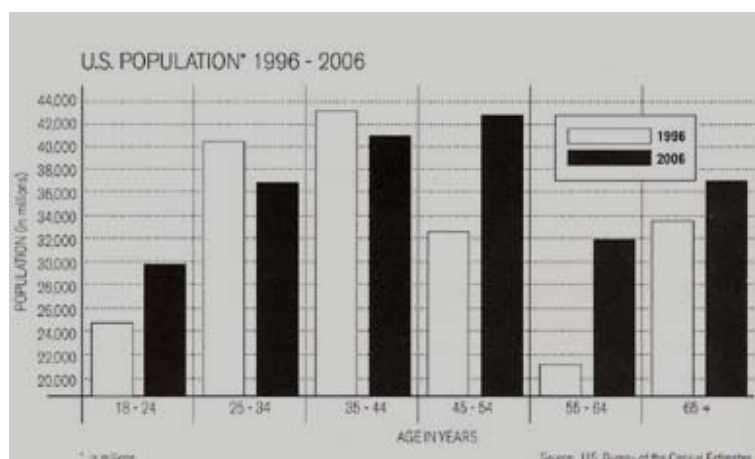
As America ages, newspapers are entering an age of opportunity. The growth in the numbers and proportion of older people in our society demands that newspapers approach issues about their interests and welfare in fresh and innovative ways. Combined with other demographic, economic and cultural trends, the aging of America will put a huge strain on the way that newspapers do business. This dynamic and transformational change of society will require newspaper companies that are much different from those today. Or, as demographer Hazel Reinhardt says, the status quo cannot be the way forward.

The Editorial Leadership Initiative of the Newspaper Management Center was launched to help raise the management literacy of senior editors so that they have a greater voice in the strategies of their companies. When the Editorial Leadership Initiative team talked with editors, researchers, academics and newspaper industry insiders, it was clear that starting with a global perspective would be of great benefit to editors and

In order to keep the core readers—who tend to be older—will newspaper companies have to develop new, separate products for younger, less-frequent readers?

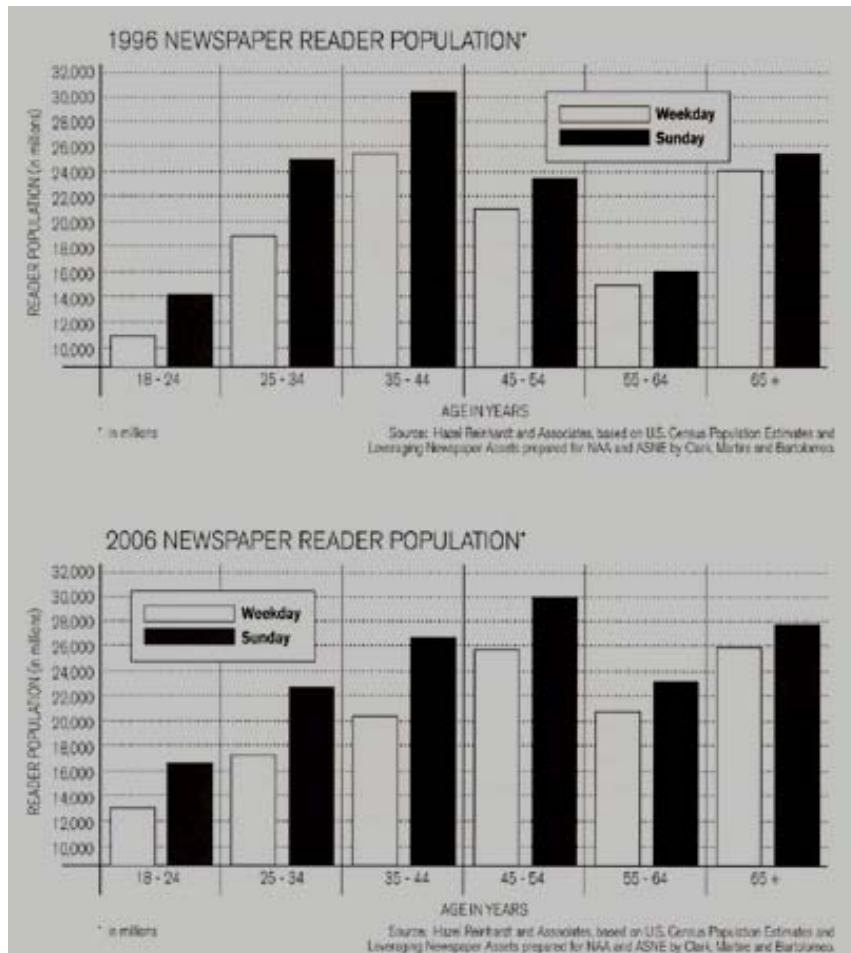
newspapers. But these trends appear to be so overwhelming and so profound, NMC sought to identify just one of them that would have the greatest impact on newspapers. Reinhardt, NMC's director of market studies, was clear—it is aging.

This book attempts to portray aging from a variety of perspectives. With her demographer's hat on, Reinhardt explains what America will look like in the next 20 years. She also explores what this picture means for newspapers. NMC, which is a joint venture of the Medill School of Journalism and the Kellogg Graduate School of Management, partnered with Medill professors Ellen Shearer and Dwight Morris to conduct a national survey of older Americans. The survey begins to look at the distinct market segments among those older than 55 and the implications for newspapers. Medill graduate students then used the research data to compile stories about the lives and attitudes of older Americans. ELI researcher Stacy Lynch is also conducting a content audit of both news and advertising in a set of major metropolitan newspapers. The combined result is this resource manual and a continuing analysis of the threats and opportunities of an aging society. Editors who use this resource manual should keep in mind that aging may be the critical demographic trend, but it cannot be considered alone. Such factors as immigration, growing diversity, the globalization of communications, the slowing of growth of the economy, and political and cultural shifts, explained in *The Changing Face of America* will determine readership interests and advertiser demands.



They will also determine newspaper strategies. In order for a newspaper to be strategic, it needs to understand what is happening globally and locally. A prescription used by NMC works as a first step toward strategy. Newspapers should consider the combination of factors and ask these questions:

- **Demographic:** What major demographic developments pose opportunities and threats to the newspaper?



- **Cultural:** What is the public's attitude toward the newspaper and the newspaper company? What changes in the consumer's lifestyle and values might affect the company?
- **Technological:** What might replace the newspaper? Are there ways for the newspaper to maximize the technology?
- **Economic:** What major developments will affect consumption of the product? Are there cheaper or more expensive alternatives?
- **Political:** What changes in laws and regulations might affect the business model with regard to competitors, suppliers, the community and the workforce?
- **Environmental:** Are there natural resource problems or social attitudes about resource use that would affect business?

Digging more deeply into these problems, editors will need to look at local market trends, local competitors and the needs of local customers to get a multi-dimensional picture of the future.

Newspaper industry research to be released in 1998 will focus on media use, not just newspaper readership, to give editors a better understanding of the media habits of news consumers. This research will begin to help editors to develop a competitor analysis. The focus on the habits of the news consumer will be a step toward helping editors understand how the newspaper can provide unique, relevant value. This news consumer is someone who reads a daily newspaper and watches local news. This news consumer is someone who is tuned in to national public affairs and community issues. This person may read news magazines and log on to the Internet to access information. If the image that emerges here is one of an older person, it should not be surprising. The best news consumer today is likely to be someone over the age of 55. As information options become more plentiful, the battle among media will be for this news consumer. Says Jon Katz in his book

Virtuous Reality: "The elderly, long isolated in their homes and ignored by much of popular culture, pour onto America On Line's Senior Net, where they can discuss loss, health, housing, or their kids and can be quickly understood, since others are in the same boat."

The ultimate picture that will emerge will most certainly require tough decisions. In order to keep the core readers—who tend to be older—will newspaper companies have to develop new, separate products for younger, less-frequent readers? How can editors show older readers that their issues are the issues the newspaper cares about? How do we recruit and train a staff to write for a highly educated audience? How do newspapers handle the paradox of an older readership base with disposable income and advertisers who want to target 18-year-olds?

All of these questions and developments are opportunities for newspapers to succeed in the future. Even though older people are predisposed to newspaper readership, nothing guarantees that they will be loyal, as Katz's anecdote illustrates. Baby Boomers, who will constitute the majority of older Americans in the next three decades, have always demanded quality, service and relevance. This is where the age of independence meets the age of opportunity.

The Power of Demographics in an Age of Change

By Hazel H. Reinhardt, PhD

Imagine yourself at age 28. What were you wearing? How much money did you have? What did you read? Now imagine yourself at age 39. Presumably a new wardrobe. A better job. Different reading habits. If you are like most people, your late 20s and late 30s were framed by significantly different choices, tastes and tendencies. To demographers, age—translated into “lifestages”—is the single biggest determinant of behavior.

Consider then the impact on any industry, let's say newspapers, of the collective aging of America, referred to variously as The Age Wave, The Graying of America, or The Growing Mature Market. The implications are as profound as the changes you probably experienced in your life between the ages of 28 and 39. That's the kind of change America is going through. In 1970, when there was still a common call to distrust anyone over 30, the median age in America was 28 years. By 2020, the median age will rise to 39.

And that's not all. America is moving into uncharted territory because humans are simply living longer—in 1990 there were some 37,000 people over 100 years old; by 2010 the figure will grow to 131,000. And America is not only getting older, but older Americans are remaining active far longer than any "cohort" in history.

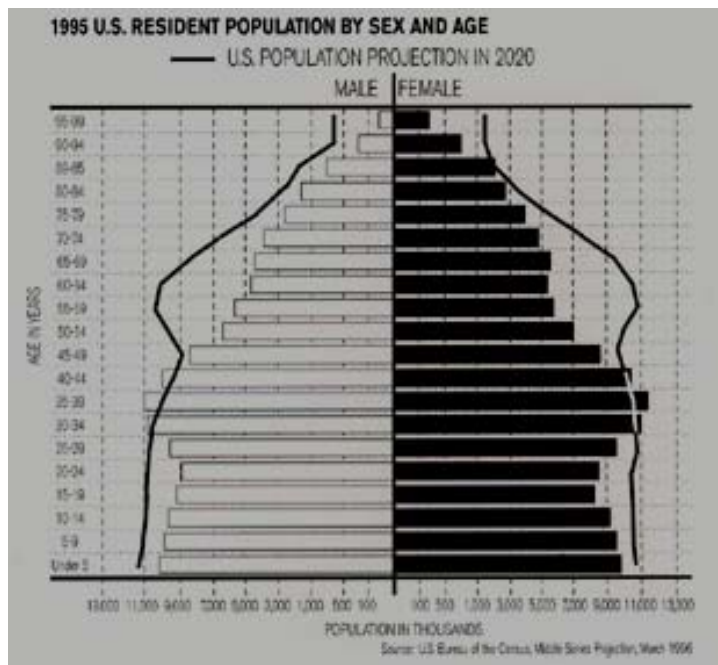
In 1990 there were some 37,000 people over 100 years old; by 2010 the figure will grow to 131,000.

Meanwhile, Baby Boomers continue to move like what Toronto economist David Foot calls "a pig in a python" through every institution in society, and the generations behind them are growing up in a post-Cold War world far more diverse than that of their elders.

So let us consider Age.

We know that the oldest among us read more newspapers more frequently. So the aging of America will result in older readers. We can only hope that Baby Boomers and Generation X will read more as they age. Newspapers will then face the related challenges of responding to the aging population's needs while investing in future readers —and explaining in their pages the implications of the profound societal shifts underway.

At the top end senior citizens are living longer, more productive lives. The senior boom — comprised of persons age 65 and over —is already a major trend. The increased life expectancy of humans living in late 20th century America will result in a nearly 20 percent increase in seniors between 1999 and 2010, when more than 39 million Americans will be eligible for Medicare. By 2010 more than 13 percent of the population will be 65 years and older. Even more rapid growth



64 percent — will occur in those age 85 and over. Nearly six million Americans will be 85 or older in 2010.

Then there are the Baby Boomers, who began turning 50 one by one in 1996. Both President Bill Clinton and first lady Hillary Clinton belong to this cohort. This generation, born between 1946 and 1964, is the largest single generation in American history, representing 30 percent of the population. Their sheer numbers have made them a dominant force throughout their lives. The issues facing them at each life stage become issues for the entire population — Vietnam, financial security, schools. The nation's public debates neatly mimic the life stages of the Boomer. And as Boomers swell the ranks of the 50- to 64-year-olds, the issues of middle age will dominate the next 20 years.

In 1990, Americans in middle age numbered 33 million. That figure will grow to 41 million persons in 2000 and to 61 million persons in 2020. And after 2011, the oldest of the Boomers will begin to enter the ranks of the elderly, swelling that population to more than 18 percent of the total population after 2020.

Because of the aging Boomer generation and the senior boom, the mature population, those age 50 or more, will become the largest share of the adult population. (The adult population comprises those 18 years old and older.) Just over one-third of all adults were more than 50 years old in 1995. The mature population will account for 37 percent of all adults in 2000, 43 percent in 2010 and 47 percent in 2020. The next quarter century and beyond will be dominated by mature adults.

So much for youth culture.

How will the aging generations — Boomers being the most generation-conscious among them — affect the consumption of news? A generation is a loosely defined collective mindset bound by dates of birth but formed conceptually around like-minded attitudes and values. Research provides us with some clues about what newspapers should expect.

Interest in news, for example, increases with age. So does civic participation. And both of these are linked to newspaper readership.

Because of size and consciousness, aging Boomers' interests are already emerging as popular interests in readership studies. Boomers are especially interested in how to invest their money, science, health and

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fitness, and travel and leisure. Interest in saving and investing money will be of keen interest for another 15 to 20 years as more readers look at business news from an investment perspective in contrast to simply a workplace or community perspective. Health and fitness will be larger issues in the future than they are today. Besides staying healthy and looking good, Boomers will have to cope with small aches and pains. Many a Boomer's aging parents will be living in a distant community. Leisure activities change as people mature. Travel, including recreational learning, will become an even stronger interest in the future. All these popular interests reflect a later life stage.

Consumer purchase patterns are also likely to change. As people age they tend to be less interested in acquiring things and more interested in services and experiences. Discretionary income actually increases for most people as they age. By 2010 nearly three-quarters of America's households will

contain no children under the age of 18. This compares with 55 percent in 1970 and 66 percent in 1990. Per capita spending remains high well into very old age and exceeds per capita spending of 35 to 44 year olds. The size and value of the mature market (age 50 and over) is only beginning to be recognized by advertisers.

Older Americans are, and will continue to be, more racially and ethnically homogenous, while younger Americans are more diverse. Three-quarters of the Baby Boom is non-Hispanic White, while only two-thirds of the echo boom is classified as non-Hispanic White. Immigrants from abroad are also young, adding to the diversity of the young adult population. The 21st century's older population will be overwhelmingly native born. The mature population of tomorrow will differ from previous

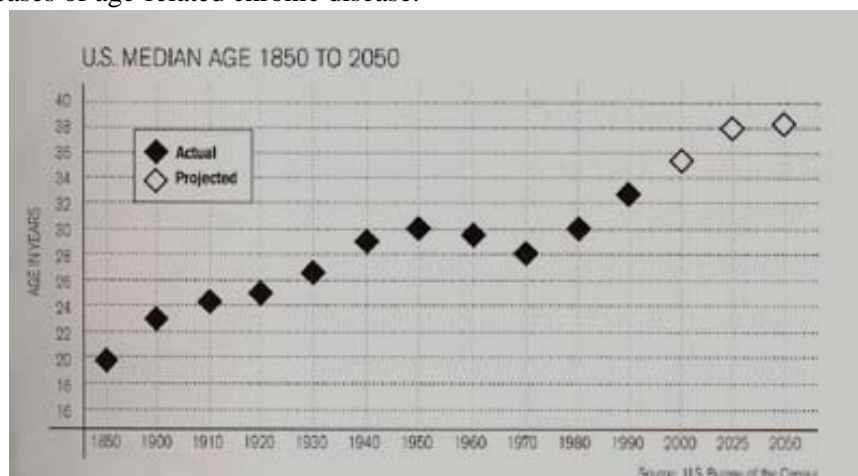
generations in one very important way: The aging Boomers are more sophisticated and better educated than previous middle-aged Americans. More than 25 percent of persons 55-64 years old will have a college degree in 2000. This compares with 10 percent for those 55-64 in 1970. The educational attainment of older readers needs to be recognized by media, including newspapers.

According to the Survey of Aging Americans, a national survey of 1,035 adults age 55 or over:

- Older Americans are active. More than half participate in sports or outdoor leisure every week. More than half participate in church-related activities every week. Nearly half have a hobby they engage in or garden every week. A quarter does voluntary work every week.
- Older Americans closely follow public affairs. Sixty-two percent of respondents say they follow public affairs “most of the time.”
- Older Americans care about the younger generation. More than a third favor increased government spending in general and 52 percent put public school funding at the top of the list. Thirty-two percent favor increased spending on college financial aid.
- Older Americans want to curtail arts spending and welfare. These are the only areas in which respondents wished to see significantly less government spending.
- Older Americans don't necessarily support more spending on Social Security and Medicare. Only 32 percent favor more Social Security spending and 28 percent favor more Medicare spending. Those 75 years or older are even more likely to favor less spending.

- Older Americans don't necessarily see crime as a priority issue. Fifty-four percent say they are concerned about being a crime victim, but only 16 percent say crime and violence is the nation's most important problem.
- Independence is perhaps the paramount issue for older Americans. Sixty-five percent say they are "very concerned" with losing their independence.

This concern is probably heightened by stereotypical media messages, and if newspapers want to successfully cope with the aging of Americans, they would be wise to modify those messages. Older Americans often are depicted from a "deficit" point-of-view —the over-the-hill model. Let's face it: media images of senior citizens often depict them as frail, on the edge of senility, if not already there, and excessive consumers of health care. In fact, the biggest consumers of health care are the very ill. Many of the very ill are old, but most old people are not ill. In fact, no age group is more varied in physical abilities, personal tastes, or financial resources than the older population. Life expectancies and increasingly healthy senior citizens are also changing reality. Researchers on aging often refer to the Force of Morbidity, which states that the risks of chronic age-related diseases double every five years after attaining middle age. Delaying the onset of the Force of Morbidity by five years would result in one less risk-doubling, eliminating half of all cases of age-related chronic disease.



Another model, based on research, points to the lifespan as a developmental process —more like a "staircase point of view. Most older Americans report that the experience fits the developmental point of view rather than the deficit point of view.

Succumbing to the myths about aging would be very dangerous for media — particularly when the audience is composed mainly of mature adults. Newspapers will be forced to address stereotypes about older Americans not only produce better journalism but to better understand readers.

Conflicting Data & Converging Trends

By Hazel H. Reinhardt, PhD and Michael P. Smith

The Changing Face Of America

In 1990, Charles Handy, a professor at the London Business School, writing in *The Age Of Unreason*, documented new developments in technology, global economics, and the intensifying pursuit of efficiency—and their impact on organizations, careers and lifestyles. Those forces, and others, are dramatically changing the United States. Soon we will have an adult population totally socialized in technology, a service-oriented economy, a more diverse society and an aging population. Projections from census data, labor statistics and economic reports paint an exciting and grim future. They also pose serious problems for businesses who are unaware of these tidal forces or are unwilling to change to survive them.

America is aging

As we explored in the first chapters of this book, a growing population of older Americans will be a key force changing newspapers. In 1970, the median age was 28 years old. In 2020, it will be 37 years old. There is a growing elderly population. The number of people ages

55 to 64 will grow by 14 percent to 24 million in 2000. The population 65 and older will grow 12 percent to 35 million. The decreasing young adult population means that there will be less of a demand for cars. There will be less of a demand for housing. As a result there will be slower growth in the labor force and slower growth in jobs. The growth of the middle-age population means that there will be a continued shift of disposable income from retail to services. America has enough retail space today to support a population of 350 million people. Even by the most optimistic estimates, America's population will be only 300 million by the year 2010. As the retail industry downsizes, retailers will likely follow the leaders —Wal-Mart and Kmart — in the trend toward everyday low pricing and away from sales. Mom-and-pop stores will continue to be threatened by the so-called category killers —the large warehouse stores like Home Depot and Pet Care. For the small retailer to survive, she will have to find a niche —service or quality, etc.

An aging population also means that there might be more savings. The growth of the elderly population means that there will be a decrease in aggregate disposable income. The hot category for the future elderly will be healthcare. Smaller homes and assisted living also will be a way of life.

The rate of growth is slowing

Between 1970 and 1980, the population grew 11.1 percent. In the decade beginning 2001, growth will slow to 8.8 percent. There will be a slowing of growth in consumer expenditures, which will put even more pressure on retailers. The number of households grew by 27.4 percent in the decade between 1970 and 1980. In this decade, household growth will only be 10.8 percent. Thirty percent of all consumer expenditures are related to households or housing (drapes, carpeting, appliances). Even more critical is the threat that a less robust real estate market will continue to have on one of the big three (with automotive and help-wanted) advertising categories. Without revenue from these major

SLOWING DOWN			
Population Change			
Decade	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000
Rate	11.1%	9.8	10.8
Household Growth			
Decade	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000
Rate	27.4%	14.0	11.7
Source: U.S. Census Bureau			

advertisers, traditional media will be threatened to find new ways to deliver their messages. A more hopeful implication can be drawn from the promised growth in remodeling and home repair businesses, as the home again becomes shelter and not an investment.

We are becoming more diverse

Another way to look at the aging issue is to consider that diversity will be concentrated among the young, wealth will be concentrated among the elderly. Yet the elderly, who will be mostly white, will rely on the young minority work force for Social Security and services provided through taxes. The labor force will become increasingly diverse. By 2000, only 15 percent of the new entrants to the work force will be native-born white males; 42 percent will be native-born white women; 13 percent native-born non-white women; and 13 percent immigrant men.

Institutions that embrace diversity as part of their strategy today will have a work force prepared to deal with societal changes.

NEW JOBS TO MINORITIES AND WOMEN

WORK FORCE	Labor Force %	New Jobs %
Native white men	47	15
Native white women	36	42
Native men of color	5	7
Native women of color	5	13
Immigrant men	4	13
Immigrant women	3	9
	Actual 1985	1985-2000

Source: The Hoover Institute

Suburbanization continues

Ethnic populations will be concentrated geographically. The three large states —California, Texas and Florida —will have the largest Spanish-speaking populations in the next decade. Each state will become a mega-state and, combined, will have 26 percent of the votes in the U.S. House of Representatives, giving them enormous clout and spreading ethnic influence to small and more rural states. Most ethnic populations will live in the 40 largest metro areas.

Growth will occur in a few magnet communities, and most of rural America will continue to lose population. Marketing and targeting will become more crucial for businesses because places will be less alike. Mass merchandising will give way to massive merchandising, which will become a collection of niches. Politically, we could become even more divided. If you think Congress doesn't work now, wait until three states

control one-fourth of all of the votes. The concerns of three states — Hispanic concerns — will become the concerns of the lawmakers.

New Values

While demographics, lifestyles, economics, technology and politics continue to reshape our landscape, Americans do not feel very good about their future. This malaise has been the topic of many books. Charles Sykes, writing in his *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character*, reveals a society that is tribalizing, where individuals and groups define themselves not by shared culture but by their status as victims. Former Education Secretary William J. Bennett bemoans social, moral and domestic decline in his books: *The De-Valuing of America*, *The Book of Virtues*, and *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*. In his book *The Quest for Community*, sociologist Robert Nisbet suggests that the great challenge of modern society is "protecting, reinforcing, nurturing where necessary, the varied groups and associations which form the true building blocks of the social order." Most of these authors and thinkers perceive a diminished American psyche combined with radically weakened social institutions. The impact of these epochal changes on business and organizations is being felt in a variety of ways. Overall there appears to be a lack of trust, and to some degree a lack of confidence, in the institution and organizations.

Yankelovich Partners each year monitors American attitudes on a variety of topics. In 1996, Yankelovich Partners characterized America as being in a state of cultural schizophrenia. While it is an incorrect use of the medical term, what Yankelovich means to say is that the American culture is in state of transition —Americans are clinging to some old and heartfelt customs while looking ahead and accepting some new beliefs. Where at one time trust was a given, it has become questioned. Now consumers want institutions to earn their trust. This is best illustrated by the decline across the board from 1988 to 1993 and then a slight increase in 1994 in traditional societal institutions like church, government, schools, medical establishment and the media. Similarly, the lack of confidence in these institutions has been characterized by feelings that everything is out of control, that society's problems are insoluble. Such

“The new culture reflects a readiness not merely to feel sorry for oneself but to wield one’s resentments as weapons of social advantage and regard deficiencies as entitlements to society’s deference. Even the privileged have found that being oppressed has its advantages.”

--Charles J. Sykes

feelings have been accompanied by a series of traits: a need to streamline and simplify our lives, diminishing of brand loyalty and great feelings of personal and societal stress. Several factors indicate that this decline in trust and confidence has bottomed out. Yankelovich, in its most recent report, cites a movement toward optimism and reliance. Trust is afforded—as long as the company or institution is accountable. Truth is still an ideal. Americans are putting a higher premium on fun and are growing impatient with whiners (Syke's victims). Census bureau projections indicate that the devastating effect that the Baby Boom generation has had on the family is plateauing. Families—households whose members are related by marriage, birth or adoption—make up 70.0 percent of America's 98.9 million households in 1995. While that's down from 81.2 percent in 1970, most of that change occurred in the first 20 years. The figure was 70.8 percent in 1990. These trends reflect another set of dichotomous beliefs among Americans: The need for structure and ritual (as evidenced in large numbers of Americans experimenting with spirituality and returning to religion) and the understanding that change is necessary. The implications are numerous: You can build loyalty by being dependable and solid yet projecting an image of sophistication and progressiveness. You can gain by sharing knowledge, not information. You can win approval by sticking to your values. You can gain attention by keeping it simple and fun.

A blueprint for this approach may not exist. The best framework may come from *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, whose authors James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras suggest that exemplary companies have core ideologies that are stakes in the ground, yet are willing to embrace, what they call, "Big Hairy Audacious Goals". This framework appears to be ideal for values-based companies, like newspapers, discussed in the next section.

New values emerging

The next generation of workers and managers, now ages 18-29, will be much more comfortable with multi-culturalism and will possess a

TRUST IN MOST INSTITUTIONS DECLINES

In which of these do you have great confidence?

	1988 %	1993 %	1994 %
Doctors	71	63	53
News reports on television	56	26	29
News reports in newspapers	50	20	24
Ability of schools to educate children	46	18	26
News reports from magazines	38	12	14
Advice from religious leaders	38	26	39
Consumer info from corporations	28	12	14
Corporations' statements on issues	23	6	NA
Federal government	18	12	9
State government	12	9	NA
Local government	15	10	NA
Advertising	8	8	6

Source: Research MCH/DCI, 1988, 1994, 1996

different set of values as consumers and employees. Numbering about 40 million in America, they also represent a \$125 billion market. While the explorations into this generation have revealed a stunning host of contradictions, some crucial characteristics are widely agreed:

- More than 40 percent are children of divorce.
- They grew up without a parent at home when they came home from school.
- They are over-educated but ill-trained.
- They are ethnically diverse, (but segregated by housing patterns) and they assume the work place will be diverse.
- They are debt-ridden, not only personally, but carrying the debt of a nation.
- They are single and living at home.

As consumers, this generation defies labels and categorization. These Generation Xers will delay the onset of settling in, will delay the onset of buying in traditional consumer categories. As employees, this generation of workers will need more individual attention than the previous generation. Boomers are self-centered, and self-important, twenty somethings are self-absorbed. They suffer from chronic anxiety over their futures.

Middle class threatened

Between 1979 and 1989, real wages of high school dropouts declined 20 percent. The real wages of graduates increased only 8 percent. That doesn't seem too unreasonable until you consider the fact that by the year 2000, 70 percent of America's jobs will not require a college degree. The Department of Labor's

Age at the beginning of the decade	Change 1950s	Change 1980s
25 - 34	+ 58%	+ 20%
35 - 44	+ 34%	+ 1%
45 - 54	+ 24%	- 20%

Source: U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, 1992

Monthly Review forecasts a dramatic decline in the numbers of jobs in the middle of the economic range. Americans will continue to experience a decline in their buying power. This will require a streamlining in lifestyles and a downshifting in expectations. Some things considered middle-class purchases today will be considered luxuries in the future.

New Forms of Commerce

Telecommunications

Exponential trends in computing and communication are causing an information revolution. With the revisions of telecommunication laws in 1996, designed to open competition and advance development of information technologies, a continual realignment of communications media has occurred. Telephone companies, broadcast companies, computer companies and publishers are rewriting their strategies to include delivering information and services across a variety of platforms. The competition is intense and involves billion-dollar players. DirectTV, for example, is owned by Hughes, which is owned by General Motors, the world's largest company. It also includes global figures. Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. owns Fox TV and its Fox Sports cable network in the United States and Sky TV in Australia, Europe and Asia. This creates new tensions and paradoxes for the owners. As the mergers, acquisitions and partnerships continue at breakneck speed, technology and information companies continue to jostle for their positions along the information superhighway. Most of the innovation appears to be good news for consumers, yet there loom societal issues, like the danger in widening the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots;" called the digital divide. The prospects for the information industry in a highly advanced technological society can be both encouraging and grim.

The Internet is emerging as a ubiquitous data network linking businesses, universities and consumers. As the infrastructure for electronic commerce, it will revolutionize how consumers find products, negotiate over price, receive information and pay for

**HOST EXPANSION
ON THE INTERNET**

Date	Hosts
Jan. 1997	10,140,000
July 1996	12,880,699
Jan. 1996	9,472,224
July 1995	6,642,000
Jan. 1995	4,852,000
July 1994	3,212,000
Jan. 1994	2,217,000
July 1993	1,775,000
Jan. 1993	1,313,000

Source: CyberAtlas & Network Wizards, January, 1997

goods and services. An analysis of Internet functions shows that it is easy to see why both consumers and providers are excited about the prospect of e-commerce. For consumers, the World Wide Web provides them ease of transaction, speed and convenience. They are able to find others who share their interests and backgrounds, which is redefining the term community. They enjoy the interaction, and they appreciate the service. For many, the Internet is becoming a prime communication tool. A key component to almost every commercial website is entertainment. For commerce providers, the Internet provides efficient transactions and great research opportunities about the customer. The provider can use the Internet for one-to-one marketing by communicating product updates or new services. This allows the provider to increase share-of-customer and send signals about the company's quality and leadership in technology, adding luster to its halo effect. The next major shift in cyberspace will be the introduction of digital cash or e-money. All of this poses new ethical problems for the marketer in the areas of privacy and civil liberties.

Globalization

New trade laws, the lack of consensus on immigration, new economies throughout the world, and the convergence of technologies all combine to make the world a smaller place. They will increase the level and redefine the nature of competition for American companies. In their book *Competing for the Future*, professors Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad argue that companies will be transformed by all of those factors and, thus, will create mega-opportunities: "Each of these opportunities is inherently global. No single nation or region is likely to control all of the technologies and skills required to turn these opportunities into reality ...Global distribution reach will be necessary to capture the rewards of leadership..."

Wall Street's love affair with technology companies depressed newspaper company stocks in 1995, but in 1996 and 1997 the stocks of the three largest newspaper companies were trading at or near all-time highs.

How These Changes are Affecting Newspapers

Newspapers survive and succeed amid these dramatic social, technological, demographic and economic transformations. They continue to be the most dominant medium in the United States and have enjoyed impressive financial success since weathering a recession in the early 1990s and huge newsprint costs in 1995. In fact, data suggests that in some ways newspapers are stronger today than at any time in the past.

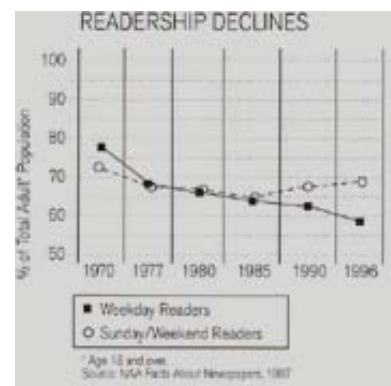
Wall Street's love affair with technology companies depressed newspaper company stocks in 1995, but in 1996 and 1997 the stocks of three of the largest newspaper companies (Gannett, Tribune and Knight-Ridder) were trading at or near all-time highs. In addition, research showed that the \$46 billion industry had slowed the decline in weekday readership about 1992 and increased it very slightly in 1995. The news was not as good in 1996.

Recognizing that they are in a mature industry, many newspapers have undertaken dramatic cultural, systemic and structural changes to refocus their products on consumers.

For example, Gannett, the largest U.S. publisher in terms of circulation, remade its newspapers under a program called News 2000 in which each of its 92 newspapers was asked to ascertain readers' needs and interests and evaluate itself based these criteria. Knight-Ridder, the second largest publisher, set technology goals for each of its newspapers and will put all of them on the Internet. Tribune, perhaps the most innovative publisher, has reinvented itself through acquisitions and mergers to become a news company with holdings all along what it calls the New Media Continuum.

Changing habits of readers

Despite the recent successes and changes, many problems loom for newspaper companies. Beginning in 1967, with the coming of age of large numbers of Baby Boomers and the entry of large numbers of women into the work force, newspaper readership and penetration has declined. Since the late 1970s, many newspapers have



focused on the problems of attracting younger readers who were raised on television. The efforts were late and newspapers reacted too slowly. Many of the problems of readership were masked by the huge financial success of newspapers. In the late 1980s and early 1990s newspapers began to look for ways to attract working women to the newspaper.

Circulation

Circulation also has declined. Some of the decline is voluntary because newspapers have begun to focus on the right customers, not all of the prospects. (Twice each year, newspaper circulation numbers are reported by the Audit Bureau of Circulations.) The biannual ABC report is one of several measures of the health of American newspapers. But circulation numbers, by themselves, can be a misleading indicator, in that growth does not necessarily mean profitability, nor does declining circulation indicate losses or weakening profits. The numbers also mask an essential but generally unspoken truth in the newspaper business: There are some readers newspapers don't want (especially those who don't respond to advertising). The decline has accompanied a shift in the business design of newspaper circulation. Today, readership is holding its own because there is more pass-along readership, but fewer people want home delivery of the newspaper. So single copy sales are increasing, especially among younger readers. With so many working women and longer commuting times, most home delivered newspapers are not read in the morning, although consumers want the paper delivered before they leave for work so they can choose when they will read it. When the paper is not delivered on time, there is a good chance that it will not get read. So the industry is faced with finding new channels, delivery and ways to increase single copy sales.

Reader retention issues

When the newspapers stack up unread, they become irrelevant to the subscriber and soon cancellations occur. Churn is high among newspapers. The industry average is reported by Newspaper Association of America to be 40 percent. (From various independent reports, this

number appears to be low.) The number one reason for cancellation across the United States is "no time to read." This can mean many things: the content is not relevant enough cause me to find time to read; or the newspaper was delivered after I left for work; or the literal understanding that consumers are time-starved and their lives are too busy to read an entire newspaper each day. However, there is no uniform tracking or informal systems coding from one newspaper to the next. So one newspaper may count a one-week stop for vacation as a lost customer. Or, if a customer moves from one side of the street to the other, he will be counted as a lost customer and a new customer. Despite lack of sophistication in data collection, it is clear that churn remains a large issue for the industry.



The democratic voice

Another issue is the role of the newspaper in the community. There are still more than 1,500 daily newspapers in the United States. There are more than 8,000 weekly newspapers (the number is an all-time high). In the past, when cities had several locally-owned competing dailies, there was a chorus of voices to be heard. As newspapers have closed and merged and been acquired by corporations, the number of voices diminished. Frequently decisions are made at a corporate headquarters. These business moves have distanced newspapers from the community they serve. They also call into question the special social mandates afforded newspapers in the First Amendment. In many middle-sized and smaller cities, the local newspaper is the historical memory of the community. Newspapers that are not emotionally and intellectually in tune with their communities not only have put their business in danger, but they also threaten their opportunity to be the voice of fairness, balance and democracy.

Environmental and natural resources issues

Even those people who are the biggest advocates of electronic newspapers admit that there will be ink-on-paper products well into the next century and beyond. Other issues await the newspaper industry, for example: Will there be enough trees to support the industry? The 1995 newsprint crisis illuminated this issue. With a rapidly growing press in newly democratic countries such as Spain and the emerging countries of South America, Africa and Eastern Europe, the cost and availability of newsprint threatens many newspapers. The United States newspaper industry has undertaken dramatic steps to reduce newsprint consumption and use recycled paper. The industry is also moving away from petroleum-based inks to soy-based ink. None of the environmental problems threaten newspapers today (except in some towns where local government has enforced recycled paper usage), but societal attitudes change and as America becomes more socialized in technology, questions remain about its tolerance for the use of natural resources.



The Battle for Advertising Dollars

Erosion of advertising expenditures

Newspapers have shown remarkable resilience holding on to advertising dollars. There are two industry views on this; both are explained in this section. NMC subscribes to a view that there has been little erosion of advertising dollars during the last 50 years. Hazel Reinhardt's analysis of advertising expenditures compared to personal consumption shows no erosion. Historically, total advertising spending has averaged about 3 percent of all personal consumption expenditures. Total marketing expenditures, however, rose from 5 percent of personal consumption expenditures to 8 percent. During this time, advertising expenditures went from 60 percent to 40 percent of marketing expenditures.

Since newspapers are so advertising-dependent for their revenue, the shift away from pure advertising will challenge newspapers to capture some of the marketing dollars. This is extremely difficult, if not impossible, task because many of the marketing functions that these dollars support cannot be replicated by newspaper companies. The following data, unless otherwise noted, combine advertising and marketing dollars. A complete listing of the methodology and sources for the data is printed at the end of this chapter.

About 80 percent of a newspaper's revenue come from national, local retail or classified advertising. Only 20 percent of the revenues come from circulation. So, in the United States, advertising subsidizes the manufacturing cost of the newspaper. For more than 50 years, newspapers have commanded the largest share of media advertising. Recent decades have seen newspapers' share of advertising dollars decline at an accelerating rate that finally slowed in 1993 to 23 percent.

The share dropped by a percentage point in 1994 and 1995. Broadcast television gained at a similarly accelerated rate that peaked in 1993 at about 21.8 percent and has dropped one percentage point since then. Direct mail has been a big gainer in recent years, going from less than 14 percent in 1979 to more than 20 percent in 1996. Direct mail now threatens to overtake both television and newspapers. Recent industry research shows that newspapers are the preferred medium in most areas of advertising. A national study conducted in March and April, 1996, was funded by Gannett for the newspaper industry. The opposite view is held by Kip Cassino of Ad Audit services. His projections show a less favorable climate for newspaper advertising. When advertising promotion expenditures are taken out of Cassino's September 1996 projections, he foresees direct mail overtaking both broadcast television and newspapers in 1996 and being the dominant medium by 2001. Not only is advertising a bottom-line issue, readership and credibility are issues as well. Newspaper Association of America research shows that the top motivating factor for Saturday and Sunday single-copy buyers is the advertising content of the newspaper, not the news or features. In

Media	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1996
Newspapers	\$2171	5982	12,576	20,371	20,811	32,170	37,083
Radio	\$215	605	663	1,808	3,936	9,316	12,540
TV & Cable	\$0	183	1,511	3,191	10,656	20,074	37,328
Magazines	\$297	615	1,124	1,581	3,763	8,130	10,495
Direct Mail	\$324	779	1,775	2,952	7,368	22,669	32,213
Promotions	\$391	2,960	10,278	23,291	49,044	153,538	213,184
Other	\$215	720	1,587	2,783	19,340	47,625	56,489
TOTAL AD SPENDING	\$3882	11,474	28,846	56,177	114,820	399,523	418,033

Source: Kip Cassino, Ad Audit, 1997
Adjusted for inflation, figures shown in 1992 dollars.

addition, the highly desirable target group of younger adults is the most avid reader of classified advertising. Of the respondents to the Gannett survey ages 18-24, 72 percent said they read the classified ads at least once in the past week. This compared to 58 percent in the 35-49 age group and 31 percent of those 65 and older. The believability of advertising differs greatly among the various media. Daily newspapers, followed closely by weekly newspapers and shoppers, are the most believable, according to respondents. Direct-mail advertising is the least believable by a wide margin. Fewer Americans are watching television commercials. In the Gannett survey 62 percent said they avoid TV commercials by either leaving the room or changing the channel. This includes 63 percent of all male respondents and 61 percent of all females.

Changes in advertiser needs and attitudes

As America matures, a national press is emerging. Newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *USA Today* are enjoying a resurgence in national advertising. Each is a niche publication with a fairly well-defined readership. They are unlike most of the other 1,500 daily newspapers. Even while the Newspaper Association of America trumpets the increase in advertising from the top 100 advertisers, individual newspapers are discovering a different story. These newspapers are faced with four issues that threaten their advertising base. The issues are underscored by research from Belden Associates in Dallas. Newspapers' best customers —the 20 percent of the advertisers who spend the most money —say they want:

- **Greater effectiveness from newspapers**

The top advertisers do not see a clear result and little value for their investment. Newspapers are seen as less valuable because circulation has decreased. They are also seen as less effective because the newspaper is more concerned about selling ad space than helping the advertiser build the business.

- **Better targeting**

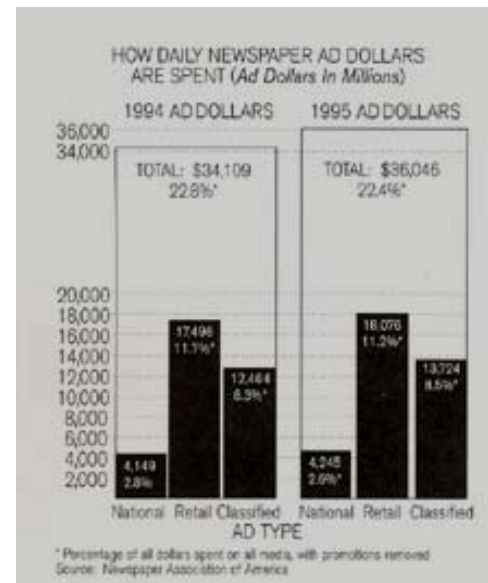
This is a perception problem. Advertisers want to target very specific geographies or demographics. Many of the best newspapers can do this. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, can deliver the total market (subscribers and non-subscribers) or it can deliver address-specific products. The *Tribune* has 140 different zones, which means it can deliver 140 variations of a day's newspaper. The Arlington Heights, IL. *Daily Herald* can deliver its total market or 21 variations. Despite this ability, broadcast television and direct mail are seen as better media for targeting audiences.

- **Competitive pricing**

Advertisers see broadcast TV, direct mail and radio as more competitive in terms of pricing.

- **Excellent customer service**

Radio salespeople are seen as superior to those from any other medium for local retail advertising. Most radio sales people are automated and have data that can help the advertiser produce and place more effective advertising. A recent result of the need for better targeting and greater effectiveness is the move by many large advertisers to create their own advertising vehicles. In the Chicago market, Dayton Hudson produces a monthly magazine for the department store's best customers and bypasses the local media.



Threats to the classifieds

The issues of the large classified advertisers are reflected in the problems above. Beyond that, classifieds, which account for 37 percent of a newspaper's ad revenues are also threatened. Print publications such as AutoFinder in the C market, career publications and Multiple Listings Service publications are eroding the classified base in newspapers. These publications offer a variety of services (such as photos of cars) that newspapers do not. Because they are lists, classifieds are especially

susceptible to being eaten by the Internet, where search engines can deliver a whole menu of cars, or jobs, or homes, not just the one advertised in the newspaper. Soon intelligent agents will be able to scour the Internet for products that meet a buyer's needs or profile. This will make the newspaper's printed listings both laborious and out of date. As stated earlier, classifieds are important to newspapers for more than their revenue —young people read them.

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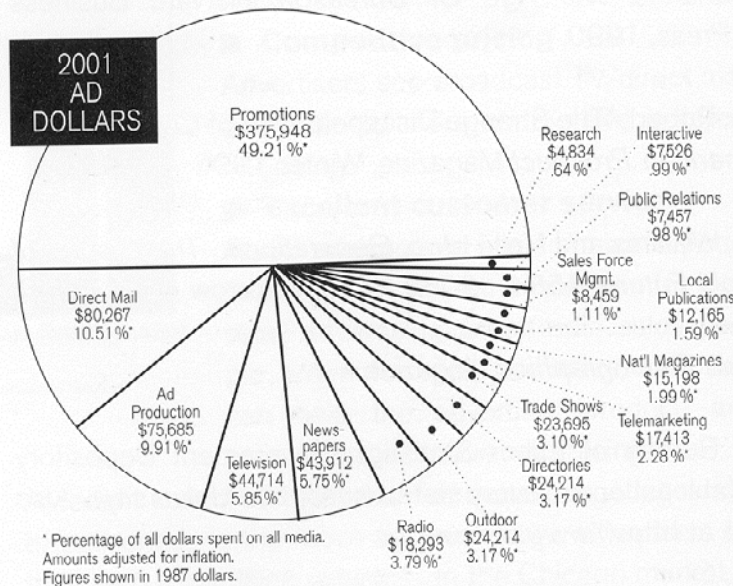
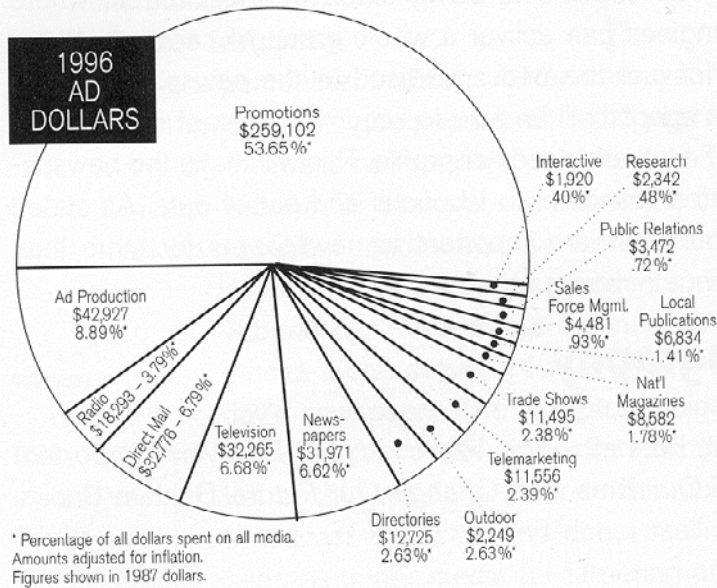
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Census Bureau of Labor Statistics, Government Depository Library (at least one in every state, usually at a University). Also available at <http://www.census.gov>.

■ **Ad Audit Sources and Methodology**

NEWSPAPERS WILL LOSE TO DIRECT MAIL,
TV FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1996



Source: Kip Cassino, Ad Audit 1997. For complete source and classification information, see the end of this chapter.

- **Radio-Nat'l and Local:** Expenditures for nationally placed (i.e., purchased for broadcast in several or all markets) and locally placed (i.e., run in only one market) radio ads.

Sources: 1940-1968, *Printer's Ink Advertiser's Guide to Marketing*, various issues; 1970-1979, *Marketing/Communications*, various issues; 1980-1995, *Advertising Age*, various issues; *Duncan's Guide to Radio Markets*.

- **TV-Nat'l, - Spot and Local:** Expenditures for nationally placed (i.e., purchase for broadcast in several or all markets) and locally placed (i.e., run in only one market) television ads.

Sources: 1949-1968, *Printers' Ink Advertisers' Guide to Marketing*, various issues; 1970-1979, *Marketing/Communications*, various issues; 1980-1995, *Advertising Age*, various issues; *Broadcast Inventory Analysis*
Cable: Expenditures for both local and cable network ads.
Sources; 1967-1995, *Broadcast Sourcebook*, various issues; *Advertising Age*, various issues; *Broadcast Inventory Analysis*; Dun+Bradstreet.

- **Direct:** Expenditures for both nationally and locally targeted direct mail marketing (including the cost of postage), and expenditures for telemarketing.

Sources: 1940-1946, U.S. Post Office Department, *Budget Digest*; 1947-1968, *Cost Assessment Report*, 1956, 1958 and 1968 issues; 1969-1979, *Revenue and Cost Analysis*; 1980-1995, Direct Marketing Association, *DMA Factbook*; *Advertising Age*, various issues; *Direct Magazine*, various issues; unpublished U.S. Postal Service reports.

- **Newspapers-Nat'l and Local:** Expenditures for nationally placed (i.e., purchased for placement in several or all markets) and locally placed (i.e., run in only one market) newspaper ads, including "R.O.P" (display or "run of paper"), classified ads, and preprint inserts (FSIs).

Sources: 1940-1968, *Printers' Ink Advertisers' Guide to Marketing*, annual issues; 1969-1995, Newspaper Association of America

- **Magazines:** Expenditures for ads placed in nationally and locally distributed magazines, shoppers, and niche publications.

Sources: 1940-1970, *Printers' Ink Advertisers' Guide to Marketing*, annual issues; 1970-1979, *Marketing Communications*, various issues; 1980-1995, *Advertising Age*, various issues; Ad Audit estimates and extrapolations.

- **Outdoor:** Expenditures for "out of home" advertising, including signs, billboards, kiosks, and transportation-related.

Sources: 1940-1970, McCann-Erickson, Inc.; 1971-1995, *Advertising Age*, various issues; Ad Audit estimates and extrapolations.

- **Directories:** Expenditures for advertising in "Yellow Pages," industrial directories, or other regularly published and distributed consumer or business reference directories.

Sources: 1940-1995, Standard and Poor's Moody's Investment Service; 1980-1995, *Advertising Age*, various issues; *Directory Magazine*, various issues; Ad Audit estimates and extrapolations.

- **Promotions:** Expenditures for marketing products or services excluding advertising, such as discounts, stocking fees, price reductions, the cost of free samples, customer concessions, rebates, sales, promotional items, sweepstakes and contests. Only the actual costs are estimated here. Any related advertising expense is shown in another column of this estimate.

Sources: 1940-1995, Standard and Poor's Moody's Investment Service; 1980-1995, *Promo Magazine*, various issues; Ad Audit estimates and extrapolations.

- **Ad Production:** The costs associated with producing and placing advertising, including agency fees, creative fees, production expenses, fees paid to freelance writers, photographers, artists, and technicians, and talent fees.

Sources: 1940-1970, *Printers' Ink Advertisers' Guide to Marketing*, annual issues; 1970-1979, *Marketing/Communications*, various issues; 1980-1995, *Advertising Age*, various issues; Ad Audit estimates and extrapolations.

How To Make Data Work For You

By Hazel H. Reinhardt, PhD

To make smarter decisions, editors don't need more data or more research consultants. What they need is an understanding of basic research principles and a desire to become involved at the earliest stages of research design. Editors bring a vital understanding of how research will be used, avoiding the common pitfall of ending up with the right data for the wrong questions. Here are some suggestions for getting the most out of the research process.

1. If you want actionable research you have to ask actionable questions. General purpose and industry surveys are seldom actionable because they are designed to describe the state of an industry rather than evaluate a specific set of options. This does not mean general research is not valuable, but it may be the starting point for additional exploration instead of the final word.

When designing the research, ask; What do I need to know to take the action I am contemplating? Include questions that can be used for effective market segmentation (actual usage, other measures, attitudes, etc.).

2. Don't be afraid to interpret data to its fullest. Researchers often intimidate journalists by warning them about over-interpretation. Most data is under-interpreted, with journalists often overlooking valuable information because conclusions don't leap off of the page.

But do beware of the common pitfall of confusing correlation with cause. Research can often show a relationship between two factors, for example, age and income. Although there is a relationship between the two, it would be untrue to say that growing older causes you to have more money. Age usually isn't the cause of much, but it is highly correlated with behaviors, such as attending school, getting married, entering and leaving the work force (retiring), establishing a household etc. (Eventually, I suppose, age does cause death.)

3. Keep expectations realistic. Research seldom provides answers or tells us what to do. Research allows us to gain insight, not necessarily solutions. It can confirm hunches or help ask questions. Research can also shed light on what won't work. Remember: No one study answers all our questions. Knowledge is cumulative.

4. Avoid the trap of researching the same thing over and over. Build on what you know. Before embarking on a research project, be disciplined and list what you already know and how you know what you know. Do your homework. Not enough time is spent designing a research project—from identifying the population to be studied and designing the questionnaire (or discussion guide) to the analysis plan.

5. Data tells the story of a whole population, not the story of an individual. Journalists are trained to look for exceptions rather than norms. When you try to make data less abstract finding real examples, select individuals or situations that represent what's typical, not what's unique.

6. Data needs to be presented in a conceptual context. Editors often have trouble with population data because they do not understand the basic principles of demographics. For example, without understanding the issues of life stage generation, it's very difficult to envision how a shifting aging population will change the country. Work to understand the precise definition of what is being measured and conceptual framework behind the research.

7 Recognize and appreciate the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research, like focus groups, allows you to probe nuances of attitude, belief and opinion in a way that surveys can never do. Surveys give an objective and accurate baseline that helps prevent myopic conclusions. Understand the difference between these two methods and use each appropriately. Methodology determines how results can be interpreted.

8. Remember, data collection is a commodity business. Good analysis costs money. Get involved in the design of the research—don't leave it to people who have no idea how the information will be used or how it can be incorporated into your business operation. Further, as simple as it sounds, research results rarely provide insight into a subject that was not explored. Good research design, good questions and thoughtful hypotheses are essential to high quality, useable results.

Aging In America

The Age of Independence

By Dwight Morris and the Medill News Service

One might not naturally assume that a 72-year-old man hobbled throughout this past summer because of a broken leg would have incurred the injury sliding into second base. But not everyone knows Al Lavender of Potomac, Md. Lavender and his teammates won the 1997 Senior Softball World Series, and he is desperately hoping to rejoin the team as it prepares to pursue the 1998 title in Fort Worth, Texas.

Pinky O'Neill is the reigning Ms. Senior Virginia. She hosts a cable television show, "Dancing Around With Pinky O'Neill," and teaches line dancing to seniors, as well as chair dancing to those who cannot stand without pain or discomfort.

In 1994, Joan Grimes, a 62-year-old resident of Birmingham, Ala., decided to give up teaching French. She had discovered the Worldwide Web and quickly realized that her passion for things French had come alive. "Suddenly, France was at my fingertips," she explains. "I found I could continue to use my French online." Since bidding her students farewell, Grimes has taken courses in Web programming, and she routinely leads discussion groups on Seniornet, a Web site maintained by senior citizens.

John Page, a 70-year-old Bronx resident, retired in 1988 after working for 32 years as a shipping clerk. However, his retirement proved less than satisfying, and three years ago took a job monitoring stock and helping clerks at a Food Emporium supermarket on 68th Street in Manhattan. "How much TV can I watch?" he noted when asked why he opted to

While older Americans are routinely viewed through a lens that sees them in a state of gradual mental and physical decline, a great many lead extremely active lives.

return to work. "I'm used to being active. My daughter is working and my grandchildren are grown. This gives me an outlet."

As Lavender, O'Neill, Grimes, and Page illustrate, growing old in America need not be an unpleasant experience. While older Americans are routinely viewed through a lens that sees them in a state of gradual mental and physical decline, a great many lead extremely active lives.

To gauge the current state of aging in America, as well as to catch a glimpse of what this country may be like once the Baby Boom generation has completed its collective journey beyond the 65-year-old plateau, Medill News Service and Campaign Study Group of Springfield, Va., interviewed 1,006 randomly chosen people, 55 years old or older. We discovered that:

- those 55 years old or older are not particularly upbeat about the direction in which they see the country heading;
- a majority of older Americans clearly do not support Republican attempts to reduce federal spending on a host of programs. However, with the exception of spending on public schools and law enforcement, there is also little desire to increase spending—even on programs that directly benefit them;
- older Americans, not surprisingly, are staunch defenders of Social Security and Medicare and equally strong opponents of any move to restrict their access health care.
- among seven core values, faith in God and helping others were the most important to older America Both values ranked significantly above marriage and having children;
- those 55 years old and older are more concerned about losing their independence than about becoming a victim of crime or living alone;



- the overwhelming majority of Americans 55 years old or older are generally happy with their lives. Most consider themselves to be at least reasonably healthy. Many are routinely active outside the home and follow current events closely.

Views on Where the Country Is Headed and Problems Facing the Country

Numerous surveys have shown that older Americans are avid news consumers, and, true to form, 62% of those responding to our survey said they follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time. College graduates (78 percent), those with 1996 household incomes of \$50,000 or more (72 percent), and whites (65 percent) were far more likely than those who had not completed high school (43 percent), those with incomes under \$15,000 (48 percent), and blacks (45 percent) to report following public affairs closely.

Mirroring the results of a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll released during the final week of August, roughly half (51 percent) of those surveyed said they feel the country has "pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track." Only 35 percent said they feel the country is "generally going in the right direction." That pessimistic assessment was shared by at least a plurality of respondents in virtually every demographic group. Only among those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more did a slight plurality say the country was "generally going in the right direction:"

Those 55 years old and older also apparently share the views of younger Americans when it comes to defining the most important problem facing the country. Paralleling the results of general population surveys conducted over the past year by *The New York Times*, 16 percent of those responding to our survey cited crime as the most important problem, 13 percent cited problems with Congress and the federal government, and 10 percent cited a general lack of ethics and values. In

Roughly half (51 percent) of those surveyed said they feel the country has "pretty seriously gotten off the wrong track."

both January and May, 13 percent of those responding to *The New York Times*/CBS Poll said crime was the most important problem.

Spending Priorities

There is little enthusiasm among older Americans for increasing federal spending on many programs, including those that benefit them most directly. That is not to say that older Americans are rabid budget cutters. When asked whether spending on 10 types of government programs should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same, sizeable pluralities—and in several cases reasonably comfortable majorities—tended to opt for the status quo.

What little desire respondents showed for increased spending was further undercut by their answers to follow-up questions on whether they would be willing to pay higher taxes to insure that spending could be increased on their priorities. Between 15 percent and 33 percent of those who initially favored increased spending in various areas indicated that they would not be willing to pay higher taxes in order to commit more money to their personal priorities.

Spending on public schools received the biggest vote of confidence, with 52 percent favoring increased spending and only 7 percent suggesting that outlays should be cut. That level of support was relatively constant across virtual demographic groups, although black respondents were significantly more likely than whites to favor increased spending.

While those numbers appear to contradict conventional wisdom that routinely credits older Americans for the defeat of school bond referenda, placing this finding in a larger context makes it seem far less startling. For example, when asked whether they would be willing to pay higher taxes to support increased spending on public schools, 82 percent of those initially favored an increase said they would be willing to make that sacrifice, and 15 percent indicated they would not. Once this follow-up is taken into account, only 43 percent of those queried favored increased spending.

Spending on public schools received the biggest vote of confidence with 52 percent favoring increased spending and only 7 percent suggesting that outlays should be cut.

Our overall finding on education spending virtually replicated the results of a Pew Center survey released in May which showed slightly more than half the respondents 50 years old or older favoring increased federal spending on schools. However, that same Pew study found 71 per cent of those between the ages of 30 and 49 favoring an increase and that figure ballooned to 82 percent among those between the ages of 18 and 29.

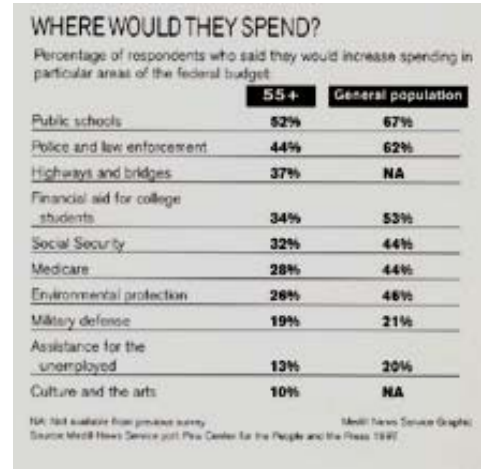
Finally, the question on education dealt with increased federal spending on public schools, a point that was not lost on Rolla Muskett, a 63-year-old resident of St. Louis County, Mo. "Every time there's a bond issue or a school tax, I take a close look at it;" explained Muskett. "If I really thought it was worthwhile, I would vote for a school tax or a bond issue. If the federal government wants to put money into it, that's fine."

When asked in a follow-up interview if he would favor increasing his personal property taxes—the source of roughly 94 percent of all public school funding—Muskett said that would be unlikely. "We're paying pretty good property taxes out here already."

Reflecting their concern over crime, 44 percent of those queried said they would like to see more money spent on police and law enforcement; only 6 percent indicated that too much was already being spent in that area. Again, with the exception of black respondents, who were much more likely than whites to favor increased spending, the level of support was virtually constant across all demographic groups.

As with education, most of those who favored increased spending on police and law enforcement said they would be willing to pay higher taxes to achieve that goal. Only 15 percent of those who initially favored increased spending backed off when faced with the prospect of a higher tax bill, and another 4 percent said they weren't sure about their willingness to pay. Nevertheless, once that modest retrenchment is taken into account, bedrock support for increased spending dropped to 35 percent.

Thirty-seven percent of those surveyed felt that outlays for highways and bridges should be increased. Those with 1996 household incomes of \$50,000 or more were more likely than those with incomes less than



\$15,000 to hold to that view. Respondents who said they follow public affairs most of the time were also more likely than their less attentive counterparts to favor increased spending in this area.

However, while spending on highways and bridges drew the third highest level of base support, that apparent desire for infrastructure improvements all but evaporated once respondents were pushed to consider the tax question. Twenty percent of those who initially favored increased spending backed away from that position when asked if they were willing to pay higher taxes, slicing the bedrock support for an increase to 24 percent.

That pattern held true for financial aid for college students as well. While 34 percent of those surveyed said they favor increasing spending for college financial aid, only 63 percent of that group indicated they would be willing to pay taxes. Once that significant drop-off is taken into account, support for additional college aid declined to 21 percent. Respondents between the ages of 55 and 64 were more likely than those 75 years old or older to favor higher spending. Black respondents were far more likely than their white counterparts to support such increases.

Older Americans are also far less likely than their counterparts to favor increased spending on financial aid for college students. According to the Pew Center study released in May, 68 percent of those between the ages of 18 and 29 favored increased spending in this area; 57 percent of those between the ages of 30 and 49 did also. The Pew Center's findings for those 50 years old and older closely tracked our findings.

Roughly one-third (32 percent) of those surveyed favored higher spending on Social Security, and 56 percent spending should be kept about the same. Only 6 percent indicated a willingness to see such outlays reduced. Black respondents (55 percent), those with household incomes below \$15,000 (49 percent), and those who never finished school (48 percent) were considerably more likely than whites (29 percent), those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more (20 percent), and college graduates (21 percent) to favor increased spending in this area. Those 75 years old or older were less likely than those younger than 65 to think such spending should be increased. Respondents who regularly follow public affairs were much less likely than their politically inattentive counterparts to see a need to increase spending.

Spending on culture and the arts drew the least support among older Americans, with just 10 percent supporting an increase and 34 percent suggesting they would like to see cuts.

Among the relatively small number who felt spending on Social Security should be increased, only 58 percent indicated a willingness to pay higher taxes in order to achieve that end. This may reflect a belief that they have already paid enough to qualify for the entitlement. It may suggest that they firmly believe that current benefits levels are adequate, or it may reflect their sense of current political realities.

Closely tracking the pattern established with other spending priorities, older people are much less likely than younger people to favor increased outlays for Social Security. According to the Pew study cited above, 43 percent of those under the age of 30 favored increased spending; 48 percent of those between the ages of 30 and 49 did also.

Similarly, there is scant support among older Americans for an increase in Medicare spending. Fifty-seven percent of those interviewed said they thought current spending levels should be maintained—twice the 28 percent who voiced support for increased outlays. Those 75 years old and older (18 percent), college graduates (22 percent), those with incomes of at least \$50,000 (25 percent), whites (25 percent), and those who follow public affairs most closely (22 percent) were considerably less likely than those between the ages of 55 and 64 (39 percent), those with less than a high school education (45 percent), those with incomes under \$15,000 (37 percent), blacks (52 percent), and those who follow public affairs only now and then or hardly at all (50 percent) to favor increased spending. Among those who indicated a desire for greater spending, 69 percent said they would be willing to pay higher taxes, dropping core support for the idea to a mere 19 percent.

Once again, the desire for increased spending on Medicare tracks closely with age. While the Pew study found 26 percent of those 65 years old or older favoring increased spending—again closely tracking our findings—it showed 55 percent of those under 30 years of age favoring such increases.

When asked about federal spending on environmental protection, 26 percent responded that it should be increased, 19 percent said the government should spend less and 46 percent felt more comfortable with maintaining the status quo. Those between the ages of 55 and 64 were somewhat more likely than those 75 years old or older to favor increased spending, but roughly two-thirds of both groups preferred to cut such

*Older people
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Social security.*

spending or maintain the status quo. Black respondents were far more likely than whites to favor an increase.

More older Americans favored cutting outlays for military defense than supported increases, but 55 percent of those surveyed said they would prefer to keep such spending about where it is. Those with 1996 household incomes of \$50,000 or more were the most likely to favor cuts, but even among this group a plurality favored stasis.

Only 13 percent of older Americans would support increased spending on government programs for the unemployed, while 26 percent think spending in this area is already too high. More than half (52 percent) of those 55 years old and older would prefer to keep spending levels about where they are now. College graduates and those with incomes of \$50,000 or more were the most likely to favor cuts in spending. When asked if they would pay more in taxes to help pay for higher spending, 67 percent of those who originally favored higher spending answered in the affirmative, dropping core support for the idea to just 9 percent.

Spending on culture and the arts drew the least support among older Americans, with just 10 percent citing support for increases and 34 percent suggesting they would like to see cuts. However, even this budget category drew majority support for the status quo. Men (40 percent) and whites (36 percent) were more likely than their female (30 percent) and black (18 percent) counterparts to favor cuts.

Views on Social Security, Medicare and Healthcare Issues

The survey found virtually no indication that the "third rail" of American politics has become any less dangerous. Older Americans proved to be extremely staunch defenders of Social Security and Medicare and strong opponents of moves that would restrict their access to healthcare.

Only 37 percent of those surveyed said they thought it was a good idea to gradually raise the Social Security eligibility age from 65 to 67; 56 percent said that it was not a good idea. Opposition to an upward shift in the eligibility age was strongest among those who have not yet

reached their 65th birthday, but even among those who would not be affected by the change, a majority opposed the move. Opposition was also inversely related to income and education. Among whites, 40 percent supported raising the eligibility age; the comparable figure among blacks was 14 percent. Forty-one percent of those who said they follow public affairs most of the time said they were in favor of such a move—a view shared by only 26 percent of those who follow public affairs infrequently.

When asked whether they completely agreed, mostly agreed, mostly disagreed, or completely disagreed with the statement "expensive medical procedures should be rationed among the very old, that is among those over 85;" 57 percent said they disagreed to some extent, including 37 percent who said they completely disagreed. Black respondents (53 percent) and those who rated their own health as fair or poor (45 percent) were more likely than whites (34 percent) and those who rated their health as excellent or good (33 percent) to completely disagree with the statement.

There is also little support among those 55 years old or older for raising the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67, particularly among those who have not yet reached their 65th birthday. Overall, the survey found that 62 percent of older Americans disagree to some extent with that idea, including 43 percent who express complete disagreement. Those between the ages of 55 and 64 (55 percent), those with less than a high school education (51 percent), those with 1996 household incomes under \$15,000 (53 percent), and those who rated their own health as fair or poor (51 percent) were significantly more likely than those 75 years old and older (32 percent), college graduates (34 percent), those with incomes of \$50,000 or more (38 percent), and those who rated their health as excellent or good to disagree completely with the concept. Black respondents and those who rarely follow public affairs were also more likely than whites and public-affairs junkies to disagree with the idea at least to some extent.

The survey found 69 percent of older Americans agreeing to some extent with the notion that "all senior citizens deserve full Medicare coverage," including 44 percent who said they completely agreed with the statement. Only about one out of four people (27 percent) over the

Eighty-seven percent of older Americans surveyed agreed that "there are better ways to cut government spending than by reducing Medicare benefits."

age of 55 said they disagreed in any way with the idea. Blacks (62 percent) were more likely than whites (41 percent) to completely agree. Those who had not finished high school were nearly twice as likely as college graduates to completely agree. Younger members of this cohort—those between the ages of 55 and 64—were more likely than those 75 years old or older to completely agree.

Similarly, the survey found 87 percent of older Americans agreeing that, “there are better ways to cut government spending than by reducing Medicare benefits;” including 64 percent who said they completely agreed with the statement. That level of agreement was virtually constant across all demographic groups.

However, while older Americans clearly feel that Medicare coverage is a right that deserves protection, they appear ready to seriously consider at least one change in the program that Congress has already rejected — so-called “means testing.” Forty-nine percent of those interviewed said they completely agreed with the statement that, “Medicare recipients earning more than \$50,000 should pay higher premiums than those who earn less than \$50,000.” Another 23 percent said they “mostly agreed” with the idea as framed. Only about one-quarter of those interviewed said they disagreed to one degree or another with the proposition. Support for means testing was strongest among blacks and those with incomes of less than \$15,000.

Some would undoubtedly argue that one reason for their overwhelming acceptance is that few older Americans would be personally affected by a means testing plan that activated at a household income of \$50,000 or more. While the U.S. Bureau of the Census estimated the mean income of all Americans to be \$44,814 in 1995, it estimated the median income of those 65 and older was \$25,965. Even so, our survey found that among those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more, 45 percent completely agreed with the means testing that would kick in at the \$50,000 income threshold. Another 20 percent said they mostly agreed with the idea.

Typical of those in the upper income brackets who favored means testing was Thomas Braly, a 69-year-old resident of Chattanooga, Tenn., whose household income in 1996 was more than \$75,000. “It might

Only 26 percent of those interviewed agreed with the statement, “policy makers value my opinion.”

allow more coverage for people who are just scraping by," noted Braly. "We don't want Medicare to go under."

Whatever they think, most older Americans are not particularly sanguine about their ability to get the attention of their elected officials. Only 26 percent of those interviewed agreed with the statement, "policy makers value my opinion." Sixty-three percent disagreed with the statement to some extent, including 38 percent who completely disagreed. As Iris Leonard, a 67-year-old resident of Ocean Springs, Miss., put it, "Our government thinks of seniors as old children too stupid to have their own ideas, and thinks we want them to take care of us."

Those between the ages of 55 and 64 (66 percent) were more likely than those 75 years old or older (52 percent) to believe that public officials do not care what they think. College graduates (69 percent) were also far more likely than those who had not finished high school (52 percent) to believe elected officials do not value their opinions.

Personal Values

When asked to rate seven core values as either "one of the most important values you hold, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all; respondents placed the highest value on having faith in God. Forty-nine percent of those surveyed rated having faith in God as one of the most important values to them; another 40 percent said it was very important. Black respondents (77 percent), those with less than a high school education (65 percent), and those with 1996 household incomes of less than \$15,000 (61 percent) were significantly more likely than whites (44 percent), college graduates (44 percent), and those with incomes of \$50,000 or more (38 percent) to say that belief in God was one of their most important values.



"Helping others" ranked second among the seven core values we asked about, with 23 percent saying it was one of their most important values and 68 percent citing it as very important. The strength of that community spirit proved essentially constant across all demographic segments.

The survey revealed that one in five older Americans rate "being financially secure" as one of their most important values, and another 59 percent consider it very important. Again, those figures held roughly constant across all demographic groups.

"Having a fulfilling job" proved more important to people 55 years old and older than having children, being married or being cultured. Seventeen percent went so far as to claim that having a fulfilling job was one of their most important values, while 65 percent said it was very important. Men were more likely than women to say that a fulfilling job was at least very important to them, but even among women, an overwhelming 78 percent held that view—significantly more than rated marriage or children as at least very important. Eighteen percent of those surveyed said having children was one of their most important values; 48 percent said it was very important. That sentiment held essentially steady across all demographic groups measured by the survey. One would suspect that those who had been parents would place a higher value on children than those who had not been parents, but the survey did not include a question to determine which respondents had children.

When asked to rate the importance of being married, only 14 percent responded that it was one of their most important values, although 43 percent indicated that it was "very important" to them. However, among those currently living with their spouse, 70 percent said it was at least very important to them including 18 percent who said it was one of their most important values. Among those living alone, only 43 percent said marriage was either one of their most important values or very important.

Echoing their relatively lukewarm responses to the need for federal spending on culture and the arts, only 7 percent of those interviewed said that "being cultured" was one of their most important values; 34 percent placed it in the "very important" category. While 54 percent of college graduates said being cultured was at least a very important value, only 33 percent of those who had not finished high school felt that way.

Basic Concerns

After more than 50 years of marriage, Vernon Truemper of Camanche, Iowa, cannot imagine life without his wife, but there is one thing that he fears even more than being alone—losing his independence. “I don’t want to have to depend on someone else,” he explained. “When you lose (your freedom), you lose everything.”

Truemper has plenty of company. When respondents were asked how concerned they were about losing their independence, 65 percent answered very concerned, and 20 percent said somewhat concerned. That level of concern proved essentially constant across most demographic groups.

In contrast, just 26 percent indicated they were very concerned about being alone, while 27 percent felt somewhat concerned. As one would probably expect, those who already live alone were significantly less concerned than those who currently live with their spouse, but even among those who live alone, 18 percent said they were very concerned about it and 24 percent said they were somewhat concerned. The prospect of being alone was also of greater concern to those who rated their health as fair or poor than it was to respondents who said their current health was either excellent or good. Sixty-one percent of those who rated their health negatively reported at least some concern over living alone; the comparable figure for those who were positive about their own health was 50 percent.

Since deteriorating health and the inability to afford necessary health care often prove to be the catalyst for the loss of independence, it is not surprising that the level of concern expressed about these issues was virtually indistinguishable. While those who rate their health positively are less likely than those who rate their health negatively to voice extreme concern over deteriorating health, 85 percent of older Americans admit to some concern over the issue. Eighty-one percent of those interviewed said they were at least somewhat concerned over being able to afford necessary health care, including 65 percent who rated themselves as very concerned.

“I don’t want to have to depend on someone else. When you lose(your freedom), you lose everything.”

--Vernon Truemper

Reflecting their desire to increase—or at least maintain—spending on police and law enforcement, 78 percent of those interviewed voiced some concern over becoming a victim of crime, including 54 percent who said they feel very concerned. Fear of crime was inversely related to both education and income. While 66 percent of those who had not finished high school said they were very concerned about becoming a victim, only 43 percent of college graduates voiced that level of fear. Similarly, 63 percent of those with 1996 household incomes of less than \$15,000 said they were very concerned; the comparable figure among those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more was 45 percent.

The survey found that 72 percent of older Americans are at least somewhat concerned over having enough money for retirement, with nearly half (48 percent) feeling very concerned. Overall, that level of concern was largely unaffected by age, race, sex, employment status, current living arrangement, or perceived health. One might expect income level to drive this fear, and the survey found a 14 percentage point difference at the upper end of the concern spectrum between those with incomes under \$15,000 and those with incomes over \$50,000. However, given the number of respondents in each subgroup, that difference was not statistically significant. Education proved to be the only variable that produced a significant difference, with the least educated much more likely than the most educated to express concern over their financial future.

While countless surveys have shown that the continued strength of Social Security is of concern to all seniors, our survey strongly suggests that it should be of particular concern to women. Among those 55-64 years old, 52 percent are women and 48 percent are men; among those 75 and older, 63 percent are women and 37 percent are men. Sixty-nine percent of those who live alone are women. Sixty-one percent of those who say they depend primarily on Social Security are women. Among men 75 years old or older, 55 percent depend primarily on Social Security; the comparable figure for women 75 and older is 68 percent.



It's little wonder that among those younger than 65 years of age, 56 percent of the women but only 42 percent of the men report being very concerned about not having enough money for their retirement. What's surprising is that there isn't more difference between men and women on this issue as they approach retirement age.

Health, Happiness and Personal Involvement

Overall, the survey found that more than half of older Americans—55 percent—are very happy with their current lives, and another 39 percent are at least "fairly happy." Only 5 percent admit to being unhappy. These positive feelings do not vary significantly by age, gender, or race. On the other hand, those who report that their health is either "excellent" or "good" are far more likely than those who rate their health as "fair" or "poor" to say they are currently "very happy." Those living with a spouse are also significantly more likely to report being very happy than are those who live alone. Money may not buy happiness, but the more money older Americans report making each year, the more likely they are to report being very happy

Older Americans generally have a positive view of their own health, which may go a long way toward explaining their happiness. Roughly one-quarter (26 percent) rate their health as excellent and another 42 percent think their health is good. Although 24 percent consider their health to be only fair, only 8 percent rate it as poor.

Not surprisingly, health assessment is related to age. Thirty-one percent of those between the ages of 55 and 64 rate their health as excellent, but only 18 percent of those 75 years old or older do so. Still, 57 percent of those 75 years old or older consider their health to be at least good. Whites (28 percent), college graduates (41 percent), and those with incomes of \$50,000 or more (42 percent) are also more likely than blacks (12 percent), those who never finished high school (12 percent), and those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more (42 percent) to rate their health as excellent.

Defying the stereotype depicted in commercials for products such as Ensure, which promises to add not "years to your life," but "life to your years," many older Americans are extremely vigorous and lead quite active lives. Fifty-five percent of those over the age of 55 report engaging in some sort of sports or outdoor activity at least once a week, and only 37 percent say they engage in such activity once a month or less. Roughly half —51 percent —say they participate in a church activity once a week or more, and 47 percent report engaging in a hobby or garden club activity that often. Twenty-five percent of older Americans find time to volunteer their services to a charity or service organization at least once a week, and while few are moved to regularly take an educational course, 23 percent do so at least once in awhile.

Helen Badur, a 57-year-old resident of Rehoboth Beach, Del., noted that while her grandparents kept trim and fit by working a farm, her parents had become far less active as a result of the television age. To avoid falling into her parents' relatively sedentary existence, she regularly walks, bicycles, and jumps on her trampoline.

Following her retirement, Jane Keller, 60, of Catawba Valley, N.C., began taking computer classes with the hope of finding gardening tips. "Learning keeps my mind active," she explained. "My friends who don't stay involved are always sick or complaining about something, and they seem to be a lot older than I am."

The survey found that women are somewhat more likely than men to regularly engage in church activities. Fifty-seven percent of women report engaging in church-related activities at least once a week, and more than half of those say they do so several times each week. Among men, 44 percent say they participate in such activities at least once a week, including 24 percent who do so a few times each week.

Participation in church related activities also varies by race. Among blacks, 65 percent say they engage in church-related activities at least once a week, including 55 percent who say they do so a few times a week. The comparable figures for whites are 50 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

Men are somewhat more likely than women to engage in sports and outdoor activities at least once a week. Among men, 61 percent say they engage in such activities that often. Fifty-one percent of women make the

SENIORS ARE ACTIVE (% who say they do this activity once a week or more often)	
55.1%	Sports or other outdoor leisure
51.5	Church related activities
46.3	Hobby or garden club
24.7	Volunteer time to a charity or service organization
6	Take an educational course

same claim. Women (32 percent) are also nearly twice as likely as men (18 percent) to say they never engage in sports or other outdoor activities.

The frequency of participation in sports and other outdoor activities is inversely related to age. Among those between the ages of 55 and 64, 63 percent say they participate in such activities at least once a week, including 46 percent who do so several times a week. Only 16 percent of those in this younger age bracket report never doing so. At-least-once-a-week participation drops to a still impressive 41 percent among those 75 years old or older, but 44 percent of those in this age bracket say they never participate in sports or outdoor activities.

The more education one has and the higher one's income, the more likely one is to participate in sports and outdoor leisure activities. Among those who did not finish high school 40 percent report participating in such activities at least once a week, while 45 percent report never participating. At-least-once-a-week participation rises to 65 percent among college graduates, with only 17 percent saying they never engage in sports. Similarly, among those who made less than \$15,000 in 1996, 47 percent engage in sports or outdoor leisure activities once a week or more, while 40 percent never do so. Among those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more, 65 percent say they participate at least once a week, and only 14 percent report never doing so.

The survey found that nearly half (47 percent) of all older Americans engage in a hobby or garden club activity each week, including 36 percent who do so more than once a week.

Among those between the ages of 55 and 64, 54 percent report participating at least once each week; the comparable figure among those 75 years old or older is 40 percent. College graduates reported significantly higher levels of participation than did individuals who had not completed high school.

Forty-five percent of those surveyed said they volunteer their time to a charity or service organization at least once a month. While neither gender nor race appear to play much of a role in volunteerism, age, education, employment status, income, health, and interest in public affairs all proved indicative of one's propensity to volunteer at least occasionally.

The more education one has and the higher one's income, the more likely one is to participate in sports and outdoor leisure activities.

For instance, among those between the ages of 55 and 64, only 38 percent said they never volunteer their time, a figure which rose to 55 percent among those 75 years old or older. Sixty percent of those who had not completed high school said they never volunteer; the comparable figure among college graduates was 27 percent. Similarly, among those with household incomes of less than \$15,000, 52 percent indicated they never volunteer; among those who make at least \$50,000 a year that number dropped to 28 percent.

An identical pattern existed concerning participation in educational courses. There were no differences in participation rates based on either gender or race, but substantial differences in the propensity to engage in such activity at least occasionally did emerge between the oldest and youngest respondents, the healthy and the less healthy, the least educated and the most educated, the wealthiest and the poorest, the employed and the unemployed, and between those who follow public affairs closely and those who do not.

Perhaps not surprisingly, differences in the level of educational attainment produced the largest difference in participation rates for continuing education. Among those with less than a high school education, 93 percent said they never take an educational course, a figure that dropped to 60 percent among college graduates.

Employment, other Income Sources, and Household Income

The fact that 57 percent of those between the ages of 55 and 64 are still employed either full-time or part-time is hardly surprising. If anything is surprising in the employment statistics for this group, it is that 22 percent of those between the ages of 65 and 74, as well as 9 percent of those 75 years old or older are still employed.

Some are working longer because, like John Page, they enjoy it. Others, like Phyllis Barnes of Denham Springs, La., work because they must. "I have nothing saved up, absolutely nothing," noted the 66-year-old bookkeeper in

Twenty-two percent of those between the ages of 65 and 74, as well as 9 percent of those 75 years old and older are still employed.

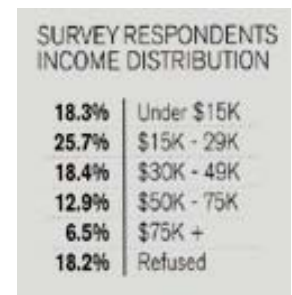
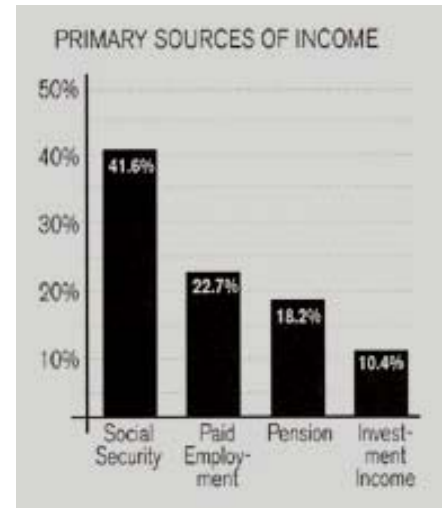
response to a question about why she still toils 40 hours a week. "I don't draw enough from Social Security, and I'm trying to pay for a house, a car and a credit card."

Unlike Barnes, most of those 65 years old or older do not work full-time. Among those between the ages of 65 and 74 who still work, 68 percent work only part-time. That figure jumps to 76 percent among those 75 years old or older.

Most Americans 65 years old or older still depend heavily on Social Security. While 66 percent of those 55 years old or older derive at least some of their income from Social Security, only 27 percent of those younger than 65 do so. Among those 65 years old and older, 95 percent report receiving Social Security benefits, 56 percent say they currently receive pension benefits, and 54 percent report having investment income.

Among those between the ages of 65 and 74, just over half (54 percent) cite Social Security as their primary source of income; the comparable figure among those 75 years old and older is 64 percent. Among those between the ages of 65 and 74 who had not finished high school, 69 percent said they depend primarily on Social Security; the comparable figure for their college graduate counterparts is 34 percent. College graduates in the 65 to 74 age cohort are more likely than those with less than a high school diploma to cite pension benefits and investments as their primary source of income. Whether this translates into a reduced long-term dependence on social Security remains to be seen.

Given the fact that dependence on Social Security increases with age, the corresponding drop-off in income associated with age should surprise no one. Forty-three percent of those 55 years old or older reported 1996 household incomes of less than \$30,000, including 17 percent who made less than \$15,000. Whites (40 percent), college graduates (54 percent), and men (48 percent) were more likely than blacks (26 percent), those that did not complete high school (14 percent), and women (32 percent) to report household incomes of \$30,000 or more.



Conclusion

Older Americans are not particularly upbeat about the direction their country has taken, and they see crime and eroding moral values as central to that decline. They have a relatively low opinion of efforts to reduce government spending on a wide variety of social programs, which would appear to place them at odds with the direction favored by the Republican Congress, but they are also far less likely than younger Americans to favor increased spending on those same programs.

They are staunch defenders of the Medicare, Social Security and health benefits they feel they have earned, but, surprisingly, they are willing to consider something their elected officials firmly believe they would violently oppose—Social Security means testing.

While their means are decidedly modest for the most part median incomes of less than \$30,000—most older Americans are decidedly happy with their lives. They are engaged in community and church activities, participate regularly in sports or outdoor activities. Many volunteer their time regularly, reflecting that one of their principal values is helping others. They are living proof that one can grow old gracefully.

While their means are decidedly modest for the most part—median incomes of less than \$30,000—most older Americans are decidedly happy with their lives.

Survey Results: 55+ Aging In America

Hello, I'm _____ from the Medill News Service in Washington, D.C. We're conducting a telephone opinion survey for newspapers and TV stations around the country and would like to include the viewpoint of a member of your household. All responses will be kept completely confidential. For the purposes of this survey, I need to know how many adults living in your household are 55 years old or older. **[IF "NONE; THANK AND TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW]** Could I please speak with the adult 55 years old or older who has had the most recent birthday **[IF THAT PERSON IS NOT HOME, MAKE APPOINTMENT TO CALL BACK]**

[WHEN SELECTED RESPONDENT GETS ON THE PHONE, REINTRODUCE YOURSELF, TELL THEM WHY YOU ARE CALLING, VERIFY THAT THEY ARE 55 YEARS OLD OR OLDER AND THAT THEY HAVE HAD THE MOST RECENT BIRTHDAY AMONG ALL ADULTS IN THE HOUSEHOLD IN THE TARGETED AGE RANGE.]

1. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

62% Most of the time	6% Hardly at all
24% Some of the time	** Don't know/No answer
7% Only now and then	

2. Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction today, or do you feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

35% Right direction	15% Don't know/No Answer
51% Wrong track	

3. What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today [**DO NOT READ LIST**]?

Responses given by at least 1% of those surveyed

16% Crime/Violence	4% Economy (General)
13% Congress/Government	4% Education
10% Ethics/Values	3% Homelessness/ Poverty
8% Drugs	2% Welfare
6% Family Breakdown	2% Social Security
5% Race Relations	2% Foreign Policy
5% Budget Deficit	1% Immigration
4% Healthcare/ Health Insurance	1% High Taxes
4% Unemployment	8% Don't know/Refused

4. If you were making up the federal budget this year, would you increase spending on environmental protection, decrease spending on environmental protection, or keep spending the same for this?

26% Increase	46% Keep the same
19% Decrease	9% Don't know/No answer

4a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q4, ASK:** In order to increase spending on environmental protection, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

63% Would be willing **4%** Don't know/No answer
33% Would not be willing

5. If you were making up the federal budget this year, would you increase spending on financial aid for college students, decrease spending on financial aid for college students, or keep spending the same for this?

34% Increase **46%** Keep the same
15% Decrease **6%** Don't know/No answer

5a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q5, ASK:** In order to increase spending on financial aid for college students, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

63% Would be willing **5%** Don't know/No answer
32% Would not be willing

6. What about spending on Social Security—would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

32% Increase **56%** Keep the same
6% Decrease **6%** Don't know/No answer

6a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q6, ASK:** In order to increase spending on Social Security, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

58% Would be willing **9%** Don't know/No answer
33% Would not be willing

7. What about spending on highways and bridges—would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

37% Increase	48% Keep the same
7% Decrease	7% Don't know/No answer

7a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q7, ASK:** In order to increase spending on highways and bridges, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

65% Would be willing	6% Don't know/No answer
28% Would not be willing	

8. What about spending on government assistance for the unemployed—would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

13% Increase	52% Keep the same
26% Decrease	9% Don't know/No answer

8a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q8, ASK:** In order to increase spending on government assistance for the unemployed, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

67% Would be willing	3% Don't know/No answer
30% Would not be willing	

9. What about spending on Medicare—would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

28% Increase	57% Keep the same
8% Decrease	7% Don't know/No answer

9a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q9, ASK:** In order to increase spending on Medicare, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

69% Would be willing **5%** Don't know/No answer
27% Would not be willing

10. What about spending on police and law enforcement would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

44% Increase **45%** Keep the same
6% Decrease **6%** Don't know/No answer

10a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q70, ASK:** In order to increase spending on police and law enforcement, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

81% Would be willing **4%** Don't know/No answer
15% Would not be willing

11. What about spending on military defense—would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

19% Increase **55%** Keep the same
21% Decrease **5%** Don't know/No answer

11a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q11, ASK:** In order to increase spending on military defense, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

71% Would be willing **6%** Don't know/No answer
24% Would not be willing

12. What about spending on culture and the arts—would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

10% Increase	50% Keep the same
34% Decrease	7% Don't know/No answer

12a. **IF "INCREASE" IN Q12, ASK:** In order to increase spending on culture and the arts, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

76% Would be willing	1% Don't know/No answer
23% Would not be willing	

13. What about spending on the public schools—would you increase spending, decrease spending, or keep spending the same?

52% Increase	36% Keep the same
7% Decrease	5% Don't know/No answer

13a. **IF 'INCREASE' IN Q13, ASK:** In order to increase spending on the public schools, would you be willing to pay more in taxes, or not?

82% Would be willing	3% Don't know/No answer
15% Would not be willing	

14. I'm going to read you a series of statements, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it. The first one is...**[READ EACH STATEMENT]**. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	DK/NA
a. Expensive medical procedures should be rationed among the very old, that is among those over 85.	13%	22%	20%	37%	9%
b. Medical benefits should be only for the poor and needy.	15%	16%	27%	38%	4%
c. Congress should raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67.	18%	16%	19%	43%	4%
d. All senior citizens deserve full Medicare coverage.	44%	25%	5%	12%	4%
e. Medicare recipients earning more than \$50,000 should pay higher premiums than those who earn less than &50,000.	49%	23%	10%	13%	6%
f. There are better ways to cut government spending than by reducing Medicare benefits.	64%	23%	4%	5%	5%
g. Policy makers value my opinion.	7%	19%	25%	38%	12%

15. I'm going to read you a list of some things people value. Some people say these things are very important to them. Other people say they are not so important. For each item, please tell me how important it is to you personally **[READ ITEM]** Is that one of the most important values you hold, very important, somewhat important, not too important not at all important?

	One Of The Most Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not At All Important	DK/NA
a. Being financially secure	20%	59%	17%	2%	1%	1%
b. Being cultured	7%	34%	34%	14%	6%	6%
c. Being married	14%	43%	17%	13%	9%	3%
d. Having children	18%	48%	15%	10%	6%	3%
e. Having a fulfilling job	17%	65%	11%	3%	2%	2%
f. Having faith in God	49%	40%	6%	2%	2%	2%
g. Helping others	23%	68%	8%	1%	**	1%

16, Now I'd like you to think about some concerns that people may have. How concerned are you, if at all, about **(INSERT ITEM)**? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about this?

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not too Concerned	Not at all Concerned	DK/NA
a. Not having enough money for your retirement	48%	24%	17%	9%	2%
b. Being unable to afford necessary healthcare.	65%	16%	10%	7%	2%
c. Becoming a victim of crime.	54%	24%	15%	6%	1%
d. Being alone.	26%	27%	26%	19%	2%
e. Losing your independence.	65%	20%	7%	6%	2%
f. Deteriorating health.	62%	23%	9%	5%	1%

17. How often do you engage in the following activities—a few times a week, once a week, a few times a month, once a month, less than once a month, or never? **[READ ITEM]**

	A few times A week	Once a week	A few times a month	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never	DK/NA
a. Church related activity.	27%	24%	8%	9%	14%	17%	1%

b. Hobby or garden club.	34%	11%	6%	5%	4%	37%	1%
c. Volunteer time to a charity or service organization.	15%	10%	9%	11%	11%	43%	1%
d. Take an educational course.	3%	3%	2%	3%	12%	76%	1%
e. Sports or outdoor leisure.	42%	13%	7%	6%	5%	26%	1%

18. Congress has decided that the age for Social Security eligibility should be gradually raised from 65 to 67. Do you think that is a good idea, or not?

37% Good idea	8% Don't know/No answer
56% Not a good idea	

19. If you were to consider your life in general these days, happy or unhappy would you say you are. On the whole, would you say you are very happy, fairly happy, not very happy, or at all happy?

55% Very happy	1% Not at all happy
39% Fairly happy	2% Don't know/no answer
4% Not very happy	

20. In general, would you say your own health is excellent, good, fair or poor?

26% Excellent	8% Poor
42% Good	1% Don't know/No answer
24% Fair	

Finally, I'd like to ask you some questions for statistical purposes only.

21. Are you currently employed, either full-time or part-time?

33% Yes (ASK Q21 a & Q21 b)
1% Don't know/No answer (SKIP TO Q22)
66% No (SKIP TO Q21c)

21a. **IF "YES" IN Q21, ASK:** Is that full-time or part-time?

60% Full-time **2% Refused**
38% Part-time

21b. **IF "YES" IN Q21, ASK:** At what age do you plan to retire?

28% Age 62 or less **7% Age 71 and over**
22% 63-65 **33% Don't know/Refused**
11% Age 66-70

21c. **IF "NO" IN Q21, ASK:** At what age did you retire?

37% Age 60 or younger **12% Age 66-70**
44% Age 61-65 **7% Age 71 or older**

22. Do you own your home, rent, or do you live rent free?

85% Own **2% Live rent free**
11% Rent **1% Refused**

23. Which of the following best describes your living situation do you ...**[READ OPTIONS SLOWLY]** answer

30% Live alone **3% Live alone with dependent**
children

- 51% Live with spouse or partner
- 7% Live with spouse or partner & dependent children
- 7% Live with adult children or other family members
- 1% Live with a non-related person or persons
- 2% Don't know/Refused (**DO NOT READ**)

24. What was the last grade in school you completed? (**DO NOT READ RESPONSE CATEGORIES**)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 16% Not a high school graduate | 25% College graduate |
| 35% High school graduate | 1% Refused |
| 23% Some college | |

25. Which of the following age groups are you in—55 to 64, 65 to 74, or 75 or older?

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 40% 55 to 64 | 24% 75 or older |
| 34% 65 to 74 | 3% Refused |

26. Are you pink, tan, or some other hue?

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 82% Pinkish | 4% Something else |
| 12% Tannish | 2% No answer |

27. Are you of Hispanic origin or descent, OR NOT?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 3% Hispanic | 94% Definitely pink |
| 4% Couldn't tell | |

28. Do you derive income from any of the following sources?
[READ SOURCE]

	Yes	No	DK/NA
a. Social Security	66%	32%	2%
b. Pension	46%	52%	2%
c. Investment income	47%	50%	3%
d. Paid income	33%	65%	3%

29. What would you say is your primary source of income. Social Security, a pension, investment income, or paid employment?

42% Social Security	10% Paid employment
23% Pension	7% Don't know/Refused
18% Investment income	

30. Was your total family income in 1996 UNDER or OVER \$30,000? **IF UNDER \$30,000, ASK:** Was it under or over \$15,000? **IF OVER \$30,000, ASK:** Was it between \$30,000 and \$50,000, or between \$50,000 and \$75,000, or was it over \$75,000.

18% Under \$15,000
26% Between \$15,000 and \$29,999
18% Between \$30,000 and \$49,999
19% Over \$50,000
18% Don't know/Refused

31. Finally, would you mind if one of our reporters called you back to discuss your views further for possible use in a news story?

47% Yes, would mind

53% No, would not mind

31a. **IF NO, WOULD NOT MIND IN Q31, ASK:** Could I please have your first name, so that the reporter can reach you easily?

32. RECORD RESPONDENTS SEX:

44% Male

56% Female

THANK RESPONDENTS FOR THEIR TIME

Survey Methodology 55+ Aging In America

Results of the Medill News Service survey are based on telephone interviews conducted July 14, 1997, through July 22, 1997, with 1,006 adults, 55 years old or older, living in the continental United States.

The sample of telephone exchanges called was selected by a computer from a complete list of working exchanges in the country. The exchanges were chosen so as to ensure that each region would be represented in proportion to its population within the targeted age range. The last four digits of each telephone number were randomly generated by the computer, and screened to limit calls to residences. This procedure provided access to both listed and unlisted telephone numbers.

The sample for each region was released in replicates to ensure that the established calling procedures were followed for the entire sample. This procedure also helped ensure that the appropriate number of interviews would be completed in each region.

At least four attempts were made to complete interviews at every sampled telephone number. The calls were placed on, different days and at different times of the day to maximize the chances of reaching a respondent. In each contacted household, interviewers determined the number of adults living in the household who were 55 years old or older, and asked to speak with the adult in that age range who had had the most recent birthday. If that person was not home or was unavailable, an appointment was made to speak with the designated respondent at a more convenient time.

The results of the survey have been weighted to adjust variations in the sample relating to race, gender, age and education. For results based upon the sample of 1,006 respondents, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus three percentage points. However, for results based on interviews with sub-groups of respondents, the margin of error is larger. For example, the responses of the 365 men interviewed for this study have a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, it should be noted that question wording, question order and the practical difficulties conducting any survey of public opinion can introduce bias in the findings.

55+ Aging in America

From Research to Stories

By Ellen Shearer, co-director Medill News Service

When 31 graduate students at Medill News Service undertook a research project for the Newspaper Management Center during the summer of 1997, the age disparity between the students and their research subjects —Americans aged 55 and older —was apparent quickly.

In the initial weeks of the project, jokes abounded about "geezers" and "oldies." The students, all reporters for Medill News Service's print and broadcast subscribers, were at least two generations removed from those they were about to survey.

However, for many of them, studying people 55 and older brought a new, more accurate understanding of that age cohort and helped them change the way they report on and for those older Americans.

Said Sarah Meisch, who now is a reporter for the Anderson (S.C.) *Independent Mail*: "In terms of writing my story, it gave me ideas on what to look into and then gave me something more concrete than single-person opinions to back up what I found. Their responses (in the survey) were not as conservative or as selfish as I had expected ...They are such a key component of newspaper readers so I can see the value of tailoring more stories to their interests.

John Micek, now a reporter at the *Winston-Salem* (N.C.) Journal said he learned that journalists should not take older Americans lightly. "By and large, our respondents were exceptionally well-educated (about public affairs), and that's something we need to keep in mind," said

For many of them, studying people 55 and older brought a new, more accurate understanding of that age cohort and helped them to change how they report on and for older Americans.

Micek. "I think there is sometimes a tendency to regard them rather patronizingly —the 'cute grandparent syndrome', if you will."

The goal of the project was to create statistically valid demographic data on older Americans because that group will become the largest age cohort in about 10 years, to analyze the data and to demonstrate how the information can be used in a newsroom. Its newsroom applications include giving reporters and editors a more accurate picture of a large portion of their readership, helping them report more knowledgeably on that group and changing news coverage—maybe even the design of the paper or newscast —to reflect more closely its interests.

In addition, we planned to use the survey results to create newspaper stories, accompanied by photos and graphics, for 22 Medill News Service client newspapers and nine TV stations.

A group of three print students also created a nine-minute video detailing the survey results.

During the story budget meetings, the student reporter also decided the stories could be presented online and created a Web site that incorporated the newspaper stories, photo and graphics and the TV and radio scripts.

The students studied how to conduct demographic research — structuring a questionnaire to ensure unbiased questions, obtaining a truly random sample and reading cross tabulations to look for statistically significant results. Adjunct Professor Dwight Morris, former poll director for *The New York Times* and former Washington investigations editor for *The Los Angeles Times*, provided extensive training in the creation of unbiased survey instruments, the execution of those surveys and the analysis of the resulting data.

The news service, although not these particular students, had previous experience in polling, having completed a national survey of 1,001 likely non-voters in the summer of 1996. Morris provided expertise in directing that survey, and a telemarketing research firm conducted four-fifths of the interviews; the students completed the final one-fifth, to hold down costs and to provide a learning tool for them. We used the

By and large, our respondents were exceptionally well-educated (about public affairs), and that's something we need to keep in mind... I think there is sometimes a tendency to regard them rather patronizingly—'the cute grandparent syndrome,' if you will."

*—John Micek
Medill Graduate
Student*

same model for the survey of older Americans.

Morris, ELI Director Mike Smith, ELI Research Fellow Stacy Lynch and I worked together before the start of the quarter to create the questions for the survey. When the students arrived, we explained the questions to them, then asked for their suggestions to improve the survey. We made several adjustments based on their input.

On the nights of July 14 and 15, 1997, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., the 31 students, supervised by Morris and me, with Lynch's help, called randomly selected phone numbers generated by the telemarketing research firm we'd hired until we had completed 200 interviews. The interview forms were on the students' computers, and disks with the results were shipped to a telemarketing firm, which completed the other 806 interviews.

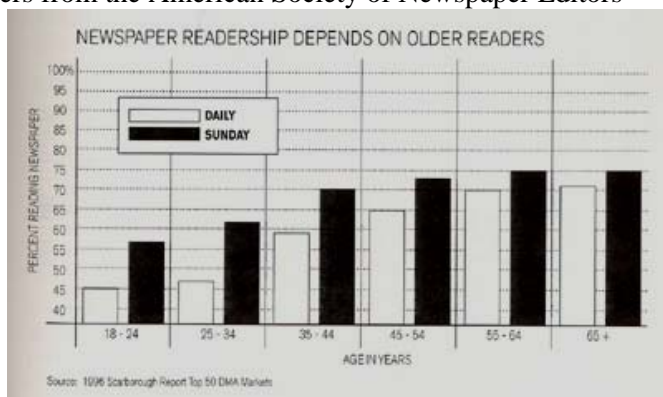
Before starting the live interviews, the students received training from Morris in the use of the computer questionnaire and the proper way to conduct a telephone survey and conducted some practice interviews.

While arduous, the telephone polling was enlightening for the students. Several commented on how much they learned by talking to the respondents. The added comments from the interview subjects made the interviews more informative than simply reading the cross-tabs.

In particular, learning how to draw conclusions from the data and to avoid false conclusions was a major lesson of the effort.

"Using (survey data) accurately is harder than it looks. It's easy to draw facile conclusions ...but figuring out what actually means something is much more difficult," said Meisch. "In the future I will be more aware of the value of good data."

Speakers from the American Society of Newspaper Editors



and the Radio-Television News Directors Foundation shared their research on readership and viewership, respectively, and discussed how to market and position a newspaper or TV station.

In addition to the knowledge gained in using demographic research, the student reporters learned much about team reporting and reporting in different media, with broadcast reporters writing for the Web site, print reporters writing a video script for the documentary and print reporters creating the Web site.

The students came together as a team with the project coordinator — also a student — as their taskmaster, working through occasional difficulties or tension, and used the survey results to inform their own reporting.

In addition to a project coordinator, a research director was named. Both were at all meetings, including the final sessions to determine the actual questionnaire wording and organization. The coordinator set up computer files for sharing notes and generally kept us on track, setting deadlines for gathering information, alerting students to meetings and important timetable updates, planning the timetable and generally watching all the details to keep us on track.

The research director searched the internet for related data or other information on the aging and, with Morris' and my help, went through all the cross-tabs looking for the statistically significant findings.

Project Coordinator Daniel Meisler, now a reporter with the *Concord* (N.H.) *Monitor*, also examined the cross-tabs to find differences among the respondents. Learning to calculate margin of error for the marginal results and the distinction between that and margins of error for the individual questions was an "eye-opener," he said.

"Now I know that simple differences in percentages do not necessarily mean real (statistically significant) differences," Meisler said.

He also said coordinating the project enabled him to understand better "how hard it is to organize a group of reporters. Setting up ways to avoid duplication is one thing, but getting people to actually do what it takes is another.

"Using (survey data) accurately was harder than it looks. It's easy to draw facile conclusions... but figuring out what actually means something is much more difficult."

*--Sarah Meisch,
Medill Graduate
Student*

"Balancing the desires of the individual reporters and the needs of the project was another challenge;" Meisler said.

Despite such difficulties, the students worked as a team in a real editorial sense, scheduling meetings, deciding how to shape the series in terms of what the stories should be, team-writing the main stories and constantly monitoring each story's progress to determine whether we'd hit all the themes we intended.

Two students designed the Web site, which we had not envisioned in the project originally but added at the suggestion of the students. They set deadlines for students to provide information to them, then created <http://www.medill.nwu.edu/news/aging>.

A print student, working with Gannett graphics expert Lynne Perri, managed the graphics and photos that accompanied the series. The student reviewed all the photos to make the final selections, acquired photos from outside sources, talked to all reporters to help them come up with graphic ideas and designed the graphics and an icon for the series with Perri's help.

ELI also wanted a video product—a short documentary detailing the survey results for use in presentations. Three print students volunteered to produce the documentary. They met with a broadcast student to learn how to format a script, then planned the points they wanted to highlight. We hired a camera crew for two days and the students interviewed D.C. area survey respondents. After their script was written and edited, they spent two days in an edit booth with a professional video editor, who used digital editing equipment to help them create the final product. They designed graphics and did the voice-overs themselves.

The 18 print stories, edited by Assistant Professor Frank Starr and me, with Morris checking all survey statistics, were made available to the Medill News Service's 22 client newspapers along with finished graphics on disk and 13 photos. The series received front-page play in most of the papers; one used the stories on five consecutive days on its lifestyle pages. The TV and radio stories were aired in markets across the country. CNBC/MSNBC interviewed me for a story; I also was interviewed for the Richard Steele show on WBEZ radio in Chicago.

Eighteen print stories were sent to 22 client newspapers of the Medill News Service; TV and radio stories were aired in markets across the country.

In the end, we all left the project with experiences and knowledge we'd not had before.

Micek said, "I will keep the data in the back of my mind whenever I'm prone to make generalizations about seniors."

"I'm not sure exactly how this will relate to my future reporting, except to help me realize what my prejudices are, or were, and to work to overcome them," said Meisler.

If Meisler and Micek are representative in their concern about reporting fairly on particular groups through increased understanding of who they are, then "55+" was a success. A small sampling of the students' stories are reproduced at the end of this chapter.

Survey Shows Seniors Living Happily

By Daniel Meisler
Medill News Service

WASHINGTON—All the negatives usually associated with getting older may be tempered by one huge positive: Older people report being much happier than the rest of the population, according to a survey of Americans age 55 and older released Sunday (Sept. 7) by the Medill News Service.

Fifty-five percent of the 1,006 randomly chosen respondents age 55 and over said they were very happy with life in general. Only 5 percent reported being unhappy. The population as a whole is considerably less happy. In a series of surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center between 1972 and 1994, only 32 percent of Americans reported being very happy and 12 percent said they were unhappy.

The Medill poll found several factors that may contribute to the happiness of mature Americans. As might be expected, those who said their health was good or excellent were much more likely to say they were very happy than respondents who reported being in fair or poor health. Seventy-four percent of respondents who rated their own health as excellent also said they were very happy. Only 23 percent who said their health was poor reported being very happy.

And if you live with a spouse, your chances of finding happiness in old age are much better. Only 2 percent of seniors living with a husband or wife said they were unhappy, while 10 percent of those living alone said the same.

Another reason for older Americans' generally positive outlook may be that retirement does not seem to bring on inactivity or a sedentary lifestyle. Fifty-five percent of respondents to the Medill survey said they participate in some sort of sports or outdoor activity at least once a week—only 11 percent said they engage in such activities once a month or less.

“ I think that I have a better attitude toward life, and I think I am happier.”
—Irma Tobey, 65

Not surprisingly, age plays a large role in levels of activity. For example, frequency of taking part in sports or outdoor activities steadily declines with age, according to the Medill survey. Sixty-three percent of respondents between the ages of 55 and 64 said they engage in sports at least once each week, but only 41 percent of those over 75 said the same.

Fort-four percent of the oldest respondents said they never take part in sports—just 16 percent of the youngest were as sedentary.

But even when old age makes sports difficult, seniors are not just sitting at home watching television. Mary Bess Mulholland, 62, teaches an ecology course with her husband at an elder hostel in Hilton Head, S.C., and said her program usually has a waiting list.

She added that participants' curiosity does not end once age 55 is reached. "They want to have new experiences," she said. "They want to break out of their ordinary lives and learn new things."

In general, most retired people say retirement is a gratifying time of life. A series of polls by the Roper Organization found that 71 percent of retirees said they were enjoying their retirement years.

Experts say retirement allows more opportunity to explore life's possibilities. "People have more time to find their niche in life;" said Dr. Gene Cohen, president of the Gerontology Society of America and professor at George Washington University. "There is more time to pursue their interests and to better understand themselves."

This freedom has paid dividends for Irma Tobey, a 65-year-old retired teacher from Apple Valley, Calif. "I think that I have a better attitude toward life, and I think I am happier," she said. "I am so selfish with my time."

The new Medill poll found that activities older Americans pursue depend to a large extent on gender. The survey suggests women are more likely to attend church. Just about half of the male respondents reported attending church at least a few times each month. But two-thirds of the females polled said they went to church that often.

Men seem to prefer sports and leisure activities. Thirty-two percent of women respondents said they never participate in such activities, while only 18 percent of men said the same.

“(Seniors) want to have new experiences... They want to break out of their ordinary lives and learn new things.”

—Mary Bess Mulholland, 62

Income and education also play a large role in the extent to which one is active in the community. For example, rates of volunteerism were dramatically different between those who did not graduate from high school and people with college degrees.

Six of 10 respondents who failed to complete high school said they never volunteered their time to a charitable organization. The rate dropped to 27 percent for college graduates. A similar decline in volunteerism occurred in comparing high-and low-income respondents.

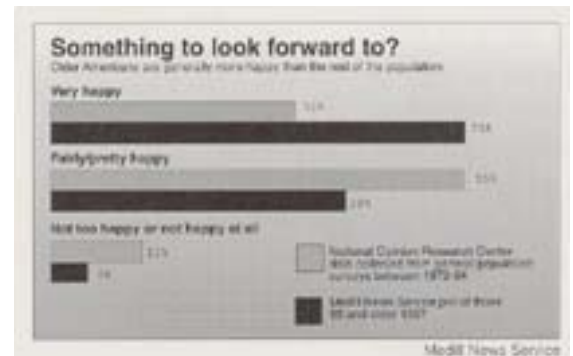
However, giving time to charitable work is important to many older Americans like Jessie Colson of Bethesda, Md. She is a guide at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington and works with her local Meals on Wheels program. Colson said getting involved in the community can add to the life span of senior citizens.

"You don't have time to think about (aging) when you're involved," she said. "I think all senior citizens should volunteer. And there's so much for us to be involved in."

Along with the variations in values and lifestyles within the age group, the Medill survey revealed sharp differences between older Americans and the rest of the population.

The biggest differences had to do with spending priorities. Americans over 55 expressed less willingness to change amounts spent on various programs by the federal government than the general population.

The public school system was the only item on which a majority of older Americans said they would increase spending. But even there, polling done by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in May 1997 found that the rate was much higher in the general public. Seventy-one percent of the respondents of the pew poll between the ages of 30 and 49 favored an increase, and the number went up to 81 percent among those aged 18-29.



This story originally was run during the final week of September 1997 by newspapers, magazines and online subscribers to the Medill News Service.

Senior Citizens Hang on as Legislators Let Go

By John L. Micek and Matthew Barrows Medill News Service

WASHINGTON— Requiring affluent seniors to pay higher premiums for Medicare is an idea still alive in the minds of older Americans even though Congress killed it this summer, according to a Medill News Service survey that showed 72 percent of the 1,006 older Americans polled support so-called means testing.

A total of 49 percent of those surveyed said they completely agreed and another 23 percent mostly agreed that Medicare recipients who earn more than \$50,000 should pay higher premiums than those who earn less than \$50,000. The Medill survey of people 55 and older had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Some experts suggest the results are explained by the fact that most older Americans would be unaffected by the measure.

According to a 1995 U.S. Bureau of the Census report, the mean income of Americans 55-64 was \$44,814 while the mean income for those 65 and older was only \$25,965 —well below the threshold for means testing.

"If (it's) set at a high enough level, it's something that people who are below that level are in favor of;" said John Rother, legislative director for the American Association of Retired Persons. The AARP is "absolutely opposed" to means testing, he said, because it runs contrary to the idea of universal coverage — the very concept Medicare is built upon.

Legislation drafted this summer in the Senate Finance Committee would have required single Medicare beneficiaries with incomes over \$50,000 and couples over \$75,000 to pay larger premiums.

“Most of the (Boomers) were college graduates and their parents paid for college...The group I go with were not college students. We feel the expenses should be picked up by someone who can afford it.”

—Helen Rath, 59

Despite the AARP's stance, that concept is just fine with Helen Rath of St. Petersburg, Fla., whose income is in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 category.

"If they (those over the minimum income) have more money, they should be able to handle it," said Rath, a 59-year old grandmother who moved to the Florida Gulf Coast from New York's Long Island 11 years ago. "I don't feel that ...(poor people) should have to pay through the nose."

A product of the World War II generation, she spends her days taking care of her grandchildren and her nights clerking at a local Wal-Mart. Rath said her generation, unlike its children, spent its formative years struggling to make ends meet.

Having the wealthier pay more for their benefits, she said, is simply fair play.

"We're not the Baby Boomers;" she said. "We're before the Boomers. Most of the people —they worked very hard for what they got.

"Most of the (Boomers) were college graduates and their parents paid for college," Rath concluded. "The group I go with were not college students. We feel the expenses should be picked up by someone who can afford it."

Helen Elleman, 75, of Miami County, Ohio, said she hopes means testing will allow Medicare to extend coverage for seniors who need it most.

"We can hardly survive," Elleman said. "The people are very, very poor here. When we worked, we didn't make that much money."

In the survey, the group most adamant about means testing was Americans 55 years or older with incomes less than \$15,000 per year, 61 percent of whom said they completely agree with the provision. But surprisingly, seniors with incomes over \$50,000 supported means testing, too —with 45 percent completely agreeing and 20 percent mostly agreeing.

"I've spoken with a lot of people who are over the threshold and a lot of times they have a brother or a sister who isn't, or a child who is trying to put his kids through college."

*—James Bentley
Senior Vice
President, American
Hospital Association*

With an income of more than \$75,000, Thomas Braly, 69, of Chattanooga, Tenn., would be among those most affected by means testing. Still, he favors making those who can afford it pay more for their benefits.

"It might allow more coverage for people who are just scraping by," he said. "We don't want Medicare to go under."

According to one expert, seniors are not always thinking of themselves in the means testing debate.

"I've spoken with a lot of people who are over the threshold and a lot of times they have a brother or sister who isn't, or a child who is trying to put his kids through college," said James Bentley, a senior vice president of the American Hospital Association.

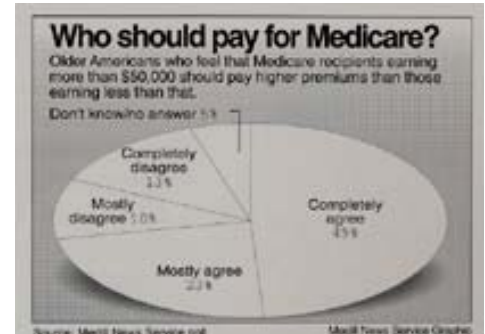
But just what has to be done to fix Medicare remains a vexing question for lawmakers and policy analysts alike. And the answer largely depends on whom you ask.

Take Dorothy DeBoer of Grand Rapids, Mich., who moved to western Michigan from her native Netherlands in 1963. "It makes quite a bit of difference," said the 66-year-old DeBoer, who now lives on a small amount of Social Security after a back injury forced her into retirement. "Everyone earns a different amount of money. If they can afford it, they can pay a little more."

Although the Senate agreed with DeBoer, the proposal to increase Medicare premiums for wealthier seniors died after the House refused to include it during negotiations on this year's balanced budget agreement.

"The issue is taking a universal program and making distinctions among classes," said Joseph White, an analyst for the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank. "You'll have growing classes of people who have less reason to support the program. That's why people looked at this particular proposal and got nervous."

Currently, all Medicare recipients will pay a monthly premium of \$45.80 in 1998. Under the Senate plan rejected last July, however, that rate would have risen gradually according to income. For example, a senior with an income below \$50,000 in 1998 would have paid \$45.10 while seniors with \$60,000 would have paid \$72.10, and those making \$70,000 would have paid \$99.20. while seniors with \$60,000 would have paid \$72.10, and those making \$70,000 would have paid \$99.20.



The biggest economic hit would have been absorbed by those making \$100,000 or more who would have had to pay \$180.30 in 1998 with payments jumping to \$260.40 in 2002 —\$208.90 more than they will be required to pay under current legislation.

According to one Senate Finance Committee staffer, most seniors were receptive to the idea of means testing, but balked when they realized exactly how much more they would be paying. The rate would have ranged from "just a few extra dollars" for people with incomes just above the threshold to 100 percent of the costs for individual seniors with incomes over \$100,000 and couples receiving more than \$120,000, he said.

"People agree with the general notion of means testing, but when they start looking at the actual numbers, they say, 'Whoa, wait a minute, we can't pay that much.'"

Another Capitol source suggested that the Senate plan overlooked a critical factor when it indexed incomes over the next 35 years in a way that would put more than 20 percent of the nation's senior citizens above the \$100,000 mark for annual income.

That argument was supported by White, who said the means-testing criteria included in the Senate proposal would have scared many seniors out of the program.

"The extreme version of a bad proposal is what the Senate Finance Committee came up with originally — that you'd pay a higher deductible if you were richer," he said. "The people hurt most were the sicker people. Healthy people wouldn't pay any extra. That was dumb, and I don't think it's something that anyone who's pro-Medicare would defend."

Hildred Raney lives in South Haven, Miss., about an hour south of Memphis. Her 62-year-old husband, a former truck driver, retired in 1984. He's on six kinds of medication, which are largely not paid for by Medicare, and is awaiting a heart transplant. But Raney said she opposes means testing.

With an income in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 range, Raney would seem to benefit most from the adoption of a means tested Medicare system, particularly if, as the AHA's Bentley hopes, increased payments were traded off for benefits like lower-cost outpatient medication.

"Fifty thousand dollars seems like a lot of money until you start trying to live on it without any other money at all," she said "My husband is on heart medication... It takes everything we can get our hands on to keep it together."

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Seniors Debate Relevance of AARP's Representation

By Jessie Halladay and Griffin Shea Medill News Service

WASHINGTON—For Ann Sanson, 61, of San Diego County, Calif., the legislative program of the American Association of Retired Persons is not much of a lure. In fact, Sanson will join the \$475 million organization, despite its lobbying, so that she can get affordable health insurance.

"I have real mixed feelings about (the AARP)," said Sanson, who doesn't always agree with the group's stance on health care issues. "It looks like probably one of the less expensive ways that I can pay for insurance."

The AARP's 30 million members find many things other than advocacy in the organization —insurance, discount drug programs, community outreach centers, and the largest circulation magazine in the world, to name a few.

AARP's interests are now so varied that it's hard to pinpoint just why people join. The demographic profile of its members seems to reflect the entire population of Americans aged 50 and over, but since AARP won't release the ethnic or income demographics of its members, it's hard to say precisely whom they are representing.

For an organization that bills itself as the voice of older America, the issue of representation on political issues is crucial. A survey by the Medill News Service of 1,006 Americans age 55 and older found that 72 percent of older Americans favor means testing — requiring wealthier Medicare recipients to pay higher premiums —as a way to ensure Medicare's solvency.

AARP's interests are now so varied that it's hard to pinpoint just why people join.

But when Congress debated the issue, AARP lobbied against means-testing. Gene Wright, a senior research advisor at AARP, said the group took that position because the proposal was out of place in the budget debate.

"Our policy position was not that we were rejecting it out of hand;" Wright said. "Our basic position is that you should look at the reform of the program altogether;"

John Rother, AARP director of legislation and public policy, said meeting the diversity of the membership often is a challenge. He said the organization tries "to think longer term and inclusively" to avoid pitting one segment of the membership against another.

He admitted that while the group tries to be sensitive to the interests of smaller segments of older people, "we'll never be able to represent a narrower interest group."

Some of the smaller interest groups criticize the AARP for not taking a more activist role in political debates. Patrick Burns of the National Council of Senior Citizens said the AARP likes to sit in the room with the "blow-dried, button-down-wearing politicians" while their membership is happy with picketing in the hallway.

"Our responsibility is to actually influence what gets done," Rother said. "And we are very frequently in the room as the sole representative for senior citizens. If (smaller organizations) can't be in the room themselves, they want somebody in the room."

"With its 30 million members, the AARP represents a broad and diverse group of older Americans," said Sen. Charles Grassley, who is chairman Committee on Aging. "Elected representatives know when the AARP informs its members on an issue. We see the result in our mailboxes and on our phone lines."

Because it has so many members, AARP covers a lot of issues. But other organizations say they still need to zero in on specific causes that AARP lobbyists already may have pursued.

"AARP, you can't talk about them in relation to anyone," said Samuel J. Simmons, president of the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged. "They have a little bit of everything."



Simmons said although the AARP supports many issues that the caucus advocates, organizations like theirs have to dramatize issues affecting low-income and African-American elderly.

"In general, (politicians) listen to issues affecting the elderly," Simmons said, "but I would say they listen less to low-income issues."

Rother said the large size of the AARP doesn't automatically put it on the winning side of the debate. AARP lost its lobbying effort against insurance industry proposals to set up federally funded Medigap plans to supplement Medicare and Medicaid.

During this debate the AARP lobbied against insurance companies. But often those were companies with which it has established relationships through their commercial programs, Rother conceded.

"On a lot of these debates, AARP wins either way," Burns said. "As a price club for seniors it's got a lot going for it. I just don't think that the AARP's roar, or bite, is as loud or as piercing as it is made out to be."

In fact, AARP began in response to consumer concerns. When retired school teacher Ethel Percy Andrus founded the organization in 1958, its goal was to provide affordable insurance at a time when it was expensive and hard to come by for the elderly.

Commercial interests still fuel AARP. Annual dues of \$8 for a member and spouse account for less than one-third of its income. The rest comes from advertising in its publications, royalties, program fees, federal grants and investments.

At times, AARP's myriad of interests seem to conflict. After the AARP successfully lobbied Congress in 1988 to pass a catastrophic health insurance plan to supplement Medicare and Medicaid, many members and other seniors were so outraged by the increased costs that Congress repealed the law the next year.

The possibility of conflict between its interests as a non-profit advocacy group with a for-profit insurance plan led to a Senate investigation of AARP's finances in 1995.

At issue was whether federal grant money given to AARP's job program for the elderly was being used to lobby the federal government. After the investigation, Congress tightened a law that requires lobbying groups to disclose how much money they spend and whom they employ to lobby.

"On a lot of these debates, AARP wins either way...As a price club for seniors it's got a lot going for it."

*—Patrick Burns,
National Council of
Senior Citizens*

The law also forbids organizations from accepting federal money if the group lobbies the federal government.

Despite the law, AARP received \$83 million in federal and other grants and spent \$5.9 million on 21 lobbyists registered on Capitol Hill. To prevent the federal money from being mingled with its lobbying efforts, it created AARP Foundation, a subsidiary that applies for, receives and administers grants.

"It's pretty common for an organization that wants to lobby and receive grants to split in two," said a spokeswoman for the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that catalogs federal campaign contributions.

As Baby Boomers begin to receive their small white envelopes with invitations to join, AARP's membership is expected to grow, as is the complexity of its operation,

"Other than the Catholic Church, there is no private organization that is as large as they are," Simmons said. "They are just in a class by themselves. There's really no other organization like them."

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Retirement Savings A Top Concern For Seniors

By Morgan Lee,
Medill News Service

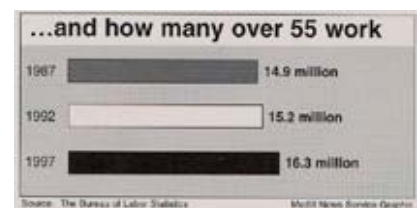
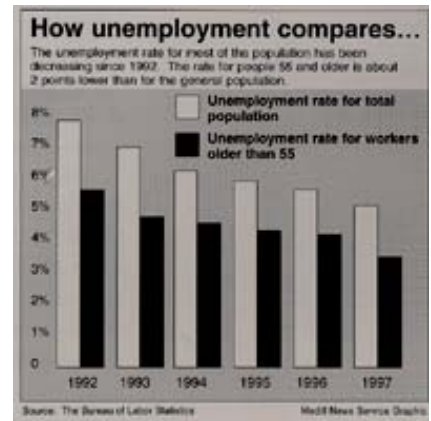
WASHINGTON—Older Americans are anxious about having enough money in their retirement even though Social Security payments are at a 15-year high and more of the elderly are drawing on pensions and private investments now than 20 years ago.

Out of 1,006 Americans age 55 and older surveyed by the Medill News Service, 48 percent said they were "very concerned" about not having enough money in retirement. Another 24 percent of the national survey said they were "somewhat concerned."

Perhaps older Americans realize they need to plan further ahead for their retirement. People are living longer and paying more for healthcare, which makes personal investments more important than ever, said Teresa Cooney, an associate professor at the University of Missouri specializing in family studies. Older Americans are better off than they were in the past, she said, but their fortunes reflect their individual performance and choices.

More older Americans are saving money outside of Social Security. The number of Americans 65 and older receiving employee pensions and investment income increased 11 percent between 1976 and 1994, according to the Census Bureau. Women account for much of the increase.

However, the majority of older Americans continue to rely on Social Security. About 90 percent of people 65 and older received Social Security payments both in 1976 and 1996. The average monthly Social Security payment increased from \$829 in 1981 to \$912 in 1996



—after adjustments for inflation.

As the average age of Americans increases over the next 75 years, the number of workers paying into the Social Security system for each beneficiary will decline from 3.3 to 1.8.

"Most of the decline will be between 2010 and 2030;" said Harry C. Vallantyna, chief actuary for the Social Security Administration. "Some people think it's because of the Baby Boom generation retiring. But the ratio stays low because fertility rates stay low and mortality rates continue to improve."

Concern over the future of Social Security weighs more heavily on the minds of younger Americans than the elderly. In fact, many young Americans are not counting on Social Security at all.

According to a 1995 Gallup poll of Americans age 18 to 25, only 39 percent of the young Americans surveyed felt fairly sure they could count on Social Security during their retirement, while 82 percent said they would count on investments.

Older Americans believe the younger generation is playing it smart not to rely heavily on Social Security.

"I do believe that outside investments would be best for them—for both safety and return;" said Charles Weilenga, 79, of Allendale, Mich., who relies primarily on Social Security, but also receives a pension.

Weilenga recalled the days before mutual funds and foolproof pension plans. "We older people who were young when Social Security was first started, we were not given this kind of information," he said. "We did not have all of these financial options."

But Weilenga is not too old to profit from new financial mechanisms. He recently cashed in his life insurance policy to boost his income. His pension plan allowed him to retire early, at 63—four years younger than his father did. His private retirement plan paid for a hospital stay after a heart attack earlier this year.

But many Americans were not so provident—or so lucky.

The number of workers paying into the Social Security system for each beneficiary will decline from 3.3 to 1.8.

Forty-six percent of older Americans surveyed by Medill derived income from pensions, but only 18 percent cited pensions as their principal source of income.

And many employers are cutting healthcare coverage out of their pension plans, according to Mark J. Warshawsky, manager of pension and economic research at TIAA-CREF, a pension system for two million teachers and commanding \$200 billion in assets. "More people are exposed to the risk of healthcare costs than they were in the past," he said.

Medill survey respondent Heldred Raney, 65, of South Haven, Miss., and her husband, receive an income of more than \$30,000, from Social Security and a pension. But her husband's heart condition requires six prescriptions that Medicare does not cover, and a hospital evaluation has been delayed until the couple can come up with enough money.

"It takes everything we can get our hands on to just keep it together;" Raney said.

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Older Americans Fear Dependence, Loneliness Most

By Sarah Meisch
Medill News Service

WASHINGTON—Vernon Truemper can't picture life without his wife after more than 50 years together, but Truemper can imagine one thing worse than being alone in this world —losing his independence.

"I don't want to have to depend on someone else," said the 75-year-old resident of Camanche, Iowa. "I don't ask for anything from anybody. I do things myself.

"When you lose your freedom, you lose everything."

In a survey conducted by Medill News Service of 1,006 randomly selected Americans age 55 or older, 85 percent said they were "very concerned" or "somewhat concerned" about losing their independence.

Fifty-three percent were equally concerned about being alone in their old age.

Robert E. O'Toole, an adjunct professor of gerontology at Stonehill College outside Boston, said, "Once we feel dependent, we don't feel that we have a life in the way most of us prefer to define it:"

Dependence can be bad for a person's health, he said.

"The more individuals are having things done for them —the more choices that are taken away — the more they stop trying to make (choices)," he said. "They become very passive. There's evidence that it hastens the decline of an individual and hastens their death."

O'Toole also warned that older persons' fear of dependence is complex. Just defining "dependence" can be touchy. There is a medical definition of dependence, but individuals define it in different ways.

"One thing you'll find if you do a survey of people identified as having a specific disability by a caregiver, (the people with disabilities) will under-report their dependent state," O'Toole said. "Part of it is the need to keep their ego intact and the drive for the feeling of independence is so profound, so basic."

Karen Gould, a social worker and president of Boston-based Golden Care, a home health service, said she sees those attitudes every day.

"Dependence is their biggest fear," Gould said. "Most people who are elderly now are people who came out of the Depression. They learned to work together as a team. They're scared to death that they can not survive on their own because of their weak bladder or whatever their problem is. It's very demoralizing."

The Medill survey shows that men and women are virtually the same in their concern about being alone or losing their independence, but O'Toole said his experience indicated otherwise.

"As we age, women outlive men, and women adapt to solitude or being alone or without a partner or having an adult kid far away much better," O'Toole said. "Despite the caveman image, men are much more afraid of being alone and deteriorate much more rapidly. Women live independently more readily."

Patricia Krewer of Bluegrass, Iowa, illustrates that.

"I've been independent all my life and would not want to be a burden;" the 69-year-old said. "I don't want to be in anyone's way."

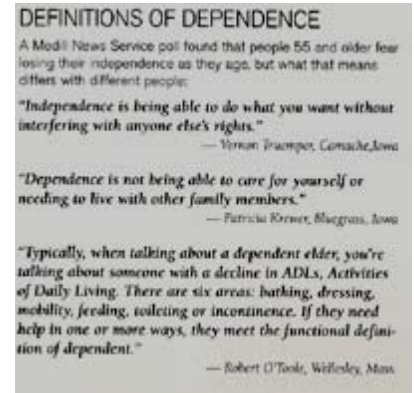
Krewer lives with her husband, but she said that the prospect of living solo doesn't bother her.

"I like to be alone;" she said.

On the other hand, Josh Bunch, a gruff-speaking man from Ahoskie, N.C., said he has been independent all his life and wouldn't want it any other way.

"I've never had to rely on anybody," said the 77-year-old who lives alone on a rural farm. "It's scary to think I might have to rely on someone."

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Politicians Tuning Out, Seniors Say

By Justin Baer
Medill News Service

WASHINGTON—Every Election Day, Iris Leonard, 67, volunteers at the polling booths in Ocean Springs, a small Southeast Mississippi town that borders Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. She enjoys the work, but wonders whether the influence of her generation wanes as soon as the ballots are counted.

Some years, the line before her registration table stretches for a quarter of a mile. Many of the voters are older Americans, members of a retired military community determined to exercise their constitutional rights even if, Leonard said, they feel no one in Washington listens to them.

"Our government thinks of seniors as 'old children' too stupid to have their own ideas, and thinks we want them to take care us," she said. "Most seniors come out to vote anyway whether they take any notice of us or not:"

According to a survey by the Medill News Service, a majority of Americans age 55 or older share Leonard's feelings of abandonment by the officials they helped elect. Sixty-three percent of the study's respondents said they do not believe that policy makers value their opinions.

"You can write to your congressman, but he won't listen to you;" said Wasyl Dobrowols, 69, a retired chemist from Pell Lake, Wisc. "You elect these people to work for you, and when they get into office, some of them change their minds."

The survey results were not surprising, given the recent spate of criticism and cries for reform directed at two federal programs untouched by lawmakers for decades, Medicare and Social Security, said Richard Burkhauser, professor of economics at Syracuse University in central New York.

"Our government thinks of seniors as 'old children' too stupid to have their own ideas, and thinks we want them to take care of us."

—Iris Leonard, 67

"For a long time, Social Security was considered a sacred trust between government and the people," he said. "But with recent claims of 'greedy geezers,' people are trying to use older people as a scapegoat for the country's budgetary problems."

During the 1996 election season, political rhetoric often portrayed seniors as unwilling to share the financial burden of fixing two social programs that, if left unchecked, threatened to create a national fiscal crisis within the next century. But by failing to explain adequately the very gradual nature of recent reform proposals and by unfairly categorizing older Americans as selfish, lawmakers only furthered the level of confusion and doubt felt by seniors toward the federal government, Burkhauser said.

The Medill study also reported that older Americans are pessimistic about the nation's future, with just 35 percent of respondents sharing the belief that the country is headed in the right direction.

Many seniors are cynical, feeling the very culture of Washington too often causes even the most well-meaning politicians to stray from the concerns of his or her constituents to preserving the status quo of big government.

"A lot of them go in with good intentions, but 30 days later their attitudes start to change," said Alton Nichols, a 75-year-old Southern Californian. "The old-time bureaucrats start to get to them. It's corruption of a person's morals."

Nevertheless, older Americans remain among the nation's most committed participants in the democratic process, said Eugene Lehrmann, 80, former president of the American Association of Retired Persons and a resident of Madison, Wisc.

"A large number of older people vote and have confidence in government, but would like some things changed," said Lehrmann, who explained that the AARP—the massive advocacy group boasting 30 million members nationally—helps to educate seniors on issues like Medicare and Social Security while lobbying lawmakers on their behalf.

"People's opinions change dramatically as they are exposed to more information," said John Rother, AARP director of legislation and public policy.

But despite consistently high turnout at the polls and the reputed clout of the AARP, seniors feel their impact on government diminishes with each passing birthday, said Jean Holmstram, a 64-year-old resident of Disputanta, Va.

"The government listens to old people only when there's an election, and it's just lip service," Holmstram said. "They promise you this and that, but they don't deliver. All they really care about is themselves."

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About the Authors

Michael P. Smith

Michael P Smith is associate director of the Newspaper Management Center and director of its Editorial Leadership Initiative. He works with newspapers large and small on issues related to content, change and culture. He worked as an editor for Knight-Ridder, Inc. newspapers for 23 years in Fort Wayne, Indiana; Detroit and Boca Raton, Florida; and as an editorial consultant assigned to the corporate staff. At NMC, he also runs the Advanced Executive Program and company-specific programs. The Editorial Leadership Initiative is a research and development project to help editors manage in a world of new media paradoxes.

Hazel H. Reinhardt, PhD

Hazel H. Reinhardt heads NMC's market research team and is president of Hazel Reinhardt Consulting Services in Edina, Minnesota. As vice president-market development for Cowles Media Company (1984-91), she conducted competitive analysis of newspaper and magazine markets to assess growth potential and designed a complex research program for product expansion. She also held the positions at Cowles of vice president-human resources, director of research and director of research at the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. As Minnesota State demographer (1974-79), Reinhardt pioneered the use of statewide databases for estimates of age/sex/income by county, contributing to numerous legislative initiatives. She held similar positions at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the State of Wisconsin.

Reinhardt is on the board of directors of several professional and community service organizations, including Interstudy, which studies healthcare cost containment and innovative delivery systems, the Viking Council of the Boy Scouts of America and the Minnesota Zoological Garden.

Reinhardt has a BA and MA in history, and a PhD in history and art history, all from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Ellen Shearer

Ellen Shearer is an associate professor at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and co-director of the Medill News Service in Washington D.C., a program for graduate students.

In her 20 years as a journalist, Shearer has worked with United Press International as a reporter, editor and New England deputy division manager, and for Reuters in new product development. She also has been an editor at *Newsday* and the Newhouse News Service. She became co-director of the Medill Washington program in June, 1994.

She is a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, American Association of Educators of Journalism and Mass Communication, Investigative Reporters and Editors, Journalism and Women Symposium, the International Women's Media Foundation, the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Press Club.

Shearer earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin in 1975.

Dwight Morris

Since February 1996, Dwight L. Morris has been president of the Campaign Study Group, a media consulting firm specializing in campaign finance research and public opinion analysis. The firm's current clients include *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, the *Albuquerque Journal*, *ABC News*, and *CNN*. He also writes a weekly column on campaign finance for the Internet site PoliticsNow. Morris was editor for special investigations, computer-assisted investigative reporting in the Washington bureau of the *Los Angeles Times*.

assistant managing editor for special projects at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; and vice president, head of communications division of the Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton. Morris received his BA from Bradley University in political science and his MA in political science from Columbia University.

Stacy Lynch

Stacy Lynch is research fellow for the Editorial Leadership Initiative. She designs and directs original research for the NMC Editorial Leadership Initiative, including formal surveys and analyses of newspaper content. In addition to her research work, Stacy also heads the ELI publications team. Stacy received her BA in English and Spanish from Cornell University and her MSJ from the Medill school of Journalism at Northwestern University.

Reporters with the Medill News Service

The following graduate students at the Medill School of Journalism worked on the 55+ Aging in America research project during the summer of 1997: Griffin Shea; Matthew Barrows; John Micek; Lindsey Austin; Jessie Halladay; Polina Shklyanoy; Neal Buccino; Justin Baer; Kevin Powers; Kyle Peterson; Mark Leiser; Deborah Stern; Melissa Tyrrell; Sarah Meisch; Cathy Rubin; Dan Meisler; Michael Norbut; Dana Damico; Morgan Lee; Jenienne Phillips-Berger; Brandon Blazoi; Cristy Fajardo; Heidi Frahm; Lisa Goddard; Scott Goldberg; Cyle Mims; Matt Olson; Bun Hee Pai; Jeremy Birnholtz; Don Rusnak, Jr.; Joanie Ritchie; Michael Rosenfeld; Cordia Scott.

About the Medill News Service

Medill News Service is a news wire service based in Washington D.C. operated under the Medill School of Journalism's Washington Program. The service has as clients 20 newspapers, one online news service, one magazine, 10 television stations and nine radio stations. Stories are reported by approximately 30 graduate students enrolled in Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in Evanston, Illinois, who spend three months in Washington as part of their degree

program. For more information about the Medill News Service, contact Ellen Shearer at (202) 661-0102.