

Readership of Advertisements with All-display Typography

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Experts differ in their opinions regarding the effect on readership of composing an entire advertisement in all-display typography. A sampling in *Life* and *Ladies Home Journal* magazines from 1954 through 1965 has revealed an upward trend in the use of such ads. To measure the effect, correlative studies were made relating the numbers of words to Daniel Starch readership records. Negative correlations were found for "Read Most" and "Seen Associated" ratings. With inherent reader interest in the advertised product held constant, correlations for both ratings were low. It was concluded that all-display typography may not be restrictive in dampening readership. However, rank correlations of all-display product categories with category rankings from Starch findings were so high as to lead to the conclusion that the effect on readership beyond the reader-interest level was not likely.

Rather recent comments from two well-known authorities in separate issues of an advertising trade journal represented divergent opinions regarding the increasing use of all-display type in advertisements.

One observer stated, "A venerable . . . school of advertising is finally and grudgingly biting the dust."¹ He referred to what he called "the old one-two ad presentation." This involves (1) getting attention and then (2) presenting the sales story. In today's fast-moving world, he pointed out, the one-two approach is giving way to a "big, fat Sunday punch." This involves dramatic delivery of the message utilizing, among other techniques, liberal use of display type. The objective is to assist the reader in getting the message *now*.

In a memo to the staff of Foote, Cone and Belding advertising

1. William D. Tyler, "One-Two Punch Is Out—You Must Score with 'One,'" *Advertising Age*, XXXVII (October 10, 1966), 106, 108.

agency, Fairfax Cone, the other observer, characterized the use of shouting type as "advertising's latest fad."² His memo referred primarily to the use of excessively large type in headlines, but he did point out that what is said is what counts and not how loudly it is said.

Concerning the use of larger type, two major questions seem to warrant research attention: (1) How significant has the increased use of display type in ads become? (2) Are there any possible discernible effects on ad performance? In this study we have attempted to find some answers to these questions.

Method

Life and *Ladies' Home Journal* were selected for this study because of their broad variety of consumer advertisements. The sample was composed of 12 issues of each publication, covering the years 1954 to 1965 inclusive. It was constructed as an artificial year. That is, for *Life* 12 issues were selected; January 1954, February 1955, March 1956, and so on. The same procedure was used for *Ladies' Home Journal*.

All ads one full page or larger were subjected to the following measurements:

1. Is the entire verbal message, except for such incidental information as standing detail, set in 18-point or larger type? Standing detail refers to recurring statements in ads, such as copyright notices, references to television programs, company address, slogans, price information, and so on.

2. The number of words in 18-point or larger type.

Figure 1 shows a variety of ads that would qualify as all-display.

Ads qualifying as having all-display typography were then followed up in an effort to learn something of their relative effectiveness. Each ad was checked for its Starch ratings. Daniel Starch and Staff, Mamaroneck, New York, cooperated by allowing us to check into ad performance records.

The Readers-per-Dollar ratings for three Starch categories (Noted, Seen Associated, and Read Most) were determined.

2. ———, "Must Ads Shout in Big Type?" *Advertising Age*, XXXVII (November 28, 1966), 72.

NEW DELCO ENERGIZER

IT IS SUCH AN IMPROVED SOURCE OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY THAT IT HAS BEEN GIVEN A NEW NAME. IT IS CALLED A DELCO ENERGIZER. IT IS THE FIRST VACUUM SEALED AUTOMOTIVE ELECTRICAL POWER SOURCE—VACUUM SEALED TO KEEP STARTING POWER FRESH UNTIL YOU BUY. IT WILL GIVE YOU A LOT MORE STARTING POWER THAN A SIMILAR CONVENTIONAL BATTERY—ESPECIALLY IN COLD WEATHER. IT HAS A BUILT-IN "DELCO EYE" THAT CHECKS ITS OWN FLUID LEVEL. IT IS AVAILABLE FOR MOST CARS AT UNITED DELCO DEALERS. IT IS CALLED A DELCO ENERGIZER. THE OLDER YOUR CAR OR THE COLDER YOUR CAR THE MORE YOU NEED A DELCO ENERGIZER.



Don't miss "NFL COUNTDOWN TO KICKOFF," Sunday, afternoons on the CBS Television Network.
UNITED MOTORS SERVICE, Division of General Motors

Figure 1. The advertisements shown here are typical of those that qualified as having all-display typography. Aside from incidental information, the entire message of each is composed of 18-point or larger type. These are shown as examples and did not necessarily fall within the range of the study.

Soft Whiskey doesn't pack a wallop. It packs a love tap.

If you so much as bat an eyelash when you take a drink of Soft Whiskey, you're a lightweight.

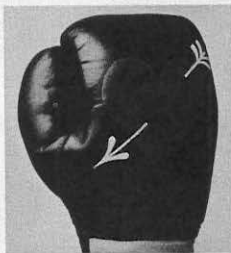
Soft Whiskey's very gentle going down. It swallows real easy. It sort of carries you for a few rounds. But not for too many rounds.

It's 86 proof and does anything any 86 proof does. It just does it softer.

How do we soften Soft Whiskey? Well, all we can tell you on that score is that we do some of our distilling in small batches as opposed to large



BLENDED WHISKEY - 86 PROOF - 100% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS ©1989 CALVERT DIST. CO., N.Y.C.



ones. And not another word more.

You can appreciate our being so secretive when you consider that other distillers have been dreaming of a Soft Whiskey for a long time. And it was a long, long time before we even had it. (Not to mention the thousands of experiments we had to go through.) After all that, we take a kind of selfish pride in being the only Soft Whiskey.

We're not about to give anyone a crack at the title.

Would you believe Avis is No.1½?



Avis

Well, in a manner of speaking, we're still No.2.

But technically, we're No.1.5556. After four years of trying harder, we've cut No.1's lead almost in half.

(Based on the latest figures from 26 major airports.)

And do you know what happens when you get that close to the top?

Your people try even harder.

Take Ernie Foote, for example.

A customer showed up with an expired out-of-state driver's license. So Ernie took him to the highway patrol for a driver's test. He passed. Got a Mississippi license. And was off in a shiny, new Plymouth.

Obviously, our people are keeping score. And they can smell the pennant.

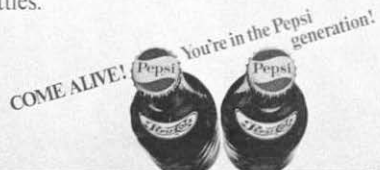


Push-button drive.
Custom-built for the Pepsi generation.

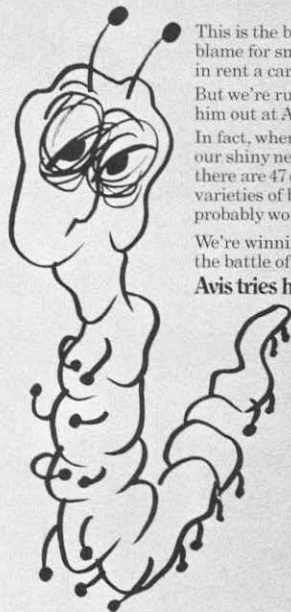
Instant pick-up.
More go for your money.

Taste?
Automatic.

Buckets?
Not yet. You'll have to
settle for bottles.



The Mirror Smearer.

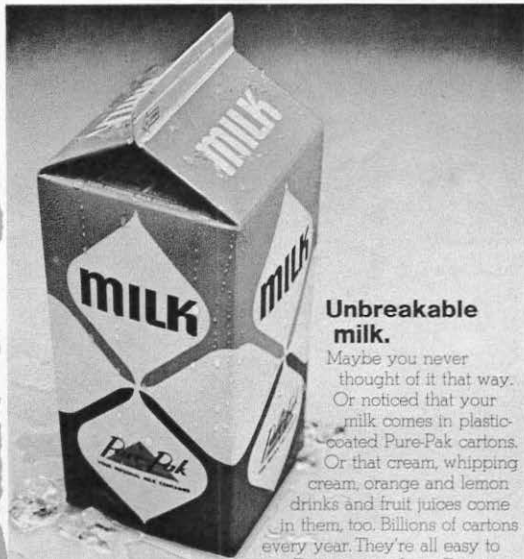


This is the bug to
blame for smeared mirrors
in rent a cars.

But we're rubbing
him out at Avis.

In fact, when you rent
our shiny new Plymouths,
there are 47 different
varieties of bugs you
probably won't be seeing.

We're winning
the battle of the bugs.
Avis tries harder.



**Unbreakable
milk.**

Maybe you never thought of it that way. Or noticed that your milk comes in plastic-coated Pure-Pak cartons. Or that cream, whipping cream, orange and lemon drinks and fruit juices come in them, too. Billions of cartons every year. They're all easy to carry. Easy to pour from. Easy to re-close and store in your refrigerator. And just as easy to crunch up and throw out. Now, how's that for convenience?

Ex-Cell-O Corporation, Pure-Pak Division, Detroit, Michigan.

No splashy picture.
No long story.
We know you know
what Michelob is.



In beer, going first class is Michelob. Period.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH, INC. • ST. LOUIS

These ratings establish the performance of each ad in terms of readers reached per dollar invested. By use of Readers-per-Dollar, ads of different sizes and color treatments can be compared over a period of time.³

Readers-per-Dollar is established by multiplying the number of magazine readers by the per cent of the rating (Noted, Seen Associated, or Read Most) and then dividing the result by the cost of the space. The Starch method of securing the Noted, Seen Associated, and Read Most ratings involves a technique of recall survey in which respondents indicate whether or not they saw an ad, read or saw parts of an ad that indicated product or advertiser, and whether they read 50% or more of the verbal message.

Results

Our data confirm the observation that use of all-display ads has been on the increase. We found that of 1,147 full-page or larger ads run between 1954 and 1965, some 17% qualified as all-display. Figure 2 shows percentages of qualifying ads run in both publications.

Tables I, II, III, and IV show average performances by product category of all-display ads, 1954 through 1965.

In an effort to establish relationships between number of words and Read Most ratings, we did correlations for *Ladies' Home Journal* and for *Life*, men and women separately in the latter case. Statistics are shown in Table V.

With $\bar{X} = 47$ (words) and $\bar{Y} = 24$ (R/\$), we found that $r = -.44$ for *Ladies' Home Journal*. Testing the significance of r , we found a t of 4.12, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis that $r = 0$.

In the case of *Life* (women), \bar{X} equalling 47 and \bar{Y} being 15, $r = -.278$ and $t = 2.76$. For *Life* (men), \bar{X} and \bar{Y} were 48 (words) and 10 (R/\$). We found $r = -.16$ but had to retain the null, since N being 101, $t = 1.60$.

3. Daniel Starch, *Measuring Advertising Readership and Results* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 117.

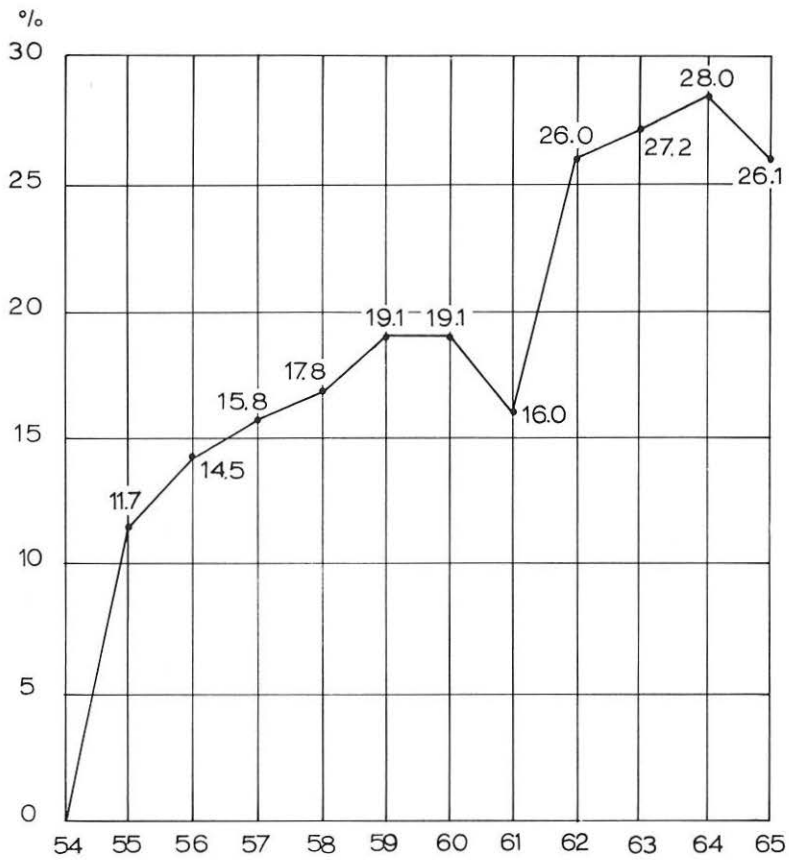


Figure 2. Percentages of All-display Advertisements each year in *Life* and *Ladies' Home Journal* from 1954 through 1965.

TABLE I: *Average Readers-per-Dollar Scores for All-display Advertisements—1954–1965*

<i>Magazine</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Seen Associated</i>	<i>Read Most</i>
<i>Ladies' Home Journal</i>	91	75	24
<i>Life (Men)</i>	38	34	10
<i>Life (Women)</i>	49	43	15

TABLE II: *Average Readers-per-Dollar (Women) by Product Classifications for All-display Advertisements—Life, 1954–1965*

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Seen Associated</i>	<i>Read Most</i>
Automobile passenger cars	30	27	4
Automotive, miscellaneous	36	27	3
Books and magazines	32	28	16
Clothing, men's	72	28	16
Clothing, women's	86	75	43
Fabrics	64	53	11
Foods	69	63	21
Household equipment, major appliances	35	31	9
Household supplies	101	89	17
Insurance and finance	41	32	13
Jewelry and miscellaneous	41	32	13
Liquor	23	19	10
Motion pictures	61	57	29
Machinery, metal and industrial	29	14	—
Pharmaceutical	61	59	33
Radio-TV	59	55	11
Tobacco, cigarettes	40	35	8
Toilet goods	48	46	11
Travel	30	28	3

TABLE III: *Average Readers-per-Dollar (Men) by Product Classifications for All-display Advertisements—Life, 1954–1965*

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Seen Associated</i>	<i>Read Most</i>
Automobile passenger cars	53	50	13
Automotive, miscellaneous	49	46	10
Books and magazines	34	29	15
Clothing, men's	40	28	4
Clothing, women's	33	14	4
Fabrics	21	8	2
Food	39	27	7
Household equipment, major appliances	23	18	4
Household supplies	28	16	—
Insurance and finance	36	28	14
Jewelry and miscellaneous	61	56	16
Liquor	38	36	13
Motion pictures	59	45	31
Machinery, metal and industrial	41	32	11
Pharmaceutical	44	41	16
Radio-TV	66	63	16
Tobacco, cigarettes	36	33	5
Toilet goods	40	37	6
Travel	27	26	4

TABLE IV: *Average Readers-per-Dollar by Product Classifications for All-display Advertisements—Ladies' Home Journal, 1954–1965*

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Seen Associated</i>	<i>Read Most</i>
Books and magazines	59	46	8
Clothing, women's	99	87	22
Cosmetics	88	74	16
Fabrics	118	105	25
Food	92	85	24
Household equipment, misc.	102	94	8
Household supplies	88	78	29
Jewelry and miscellaneous	96	85	25
Pharmaceutical	107	91	34
Tobacco, cigarettes	28	28	2
Toilet goods	90	85	30

TABLE V: *Correlations of Numbers of Words and Read Most Readers-per-Dollar for Women in Ladies' Home Journal, Women in Life, and Men in Life*

	N	X	Y	ΣX^2	ΣY^2	ΣXY	r
Ads in <i>LHJ</i>	89	47	24	270,771	89,203	77,040	-.440*
<i>Life</i> (Women)	97	47	15	370,577	48,049	50,661	-.278**
<i>Life</i> (Men)	101	48	10	392,083	16,798	42,754	-.160

X = Average Number of Words

Y = Average Readers Per Dollar

* $p > .01$

** $p > .01$

TABLE VI: *Rank Order of Product Categories by Average Seen Associated Readers-per-Dollar Scores (Women), Life and Ladies' Home Journal—1954–1965*

1. Fabrics	9. Clothing (men)
2. Clothing (women)	10.5. Insurance and finance
3.5. Toilet goods	10.5. Books and magazines
3.5. Household supplies	12. Household equipt., major appli.
5. Pharmaceuticals	13. Tobacco, cigarettes
6. Food	14. Travel
7. Cosmetics	15. Automobiles
8. Motion pictures	16. Liquor

TABLE VII: *Rank Order of Product Categories by Average Seen Associated Readers-per-Dollar Scores (Men), Life—1954–1965*

1. Automobiles	8.5. Clothing (men)
2. Automotive	8.5. Insurance and finance
3. Motion pictures	10. Food
4. Pharmaceutical	11. Travel
5. Toilet goods	12. Household equipt., major appli.
6. Liquor	13. Cosmetics
7. Tobacco, cigarettes	14. Clothing (women)

TABLE VIII: *Correlations of Numbers of Words and Readers-per-Dollar (Seen Associated and Read Most) for Women's Food and Men's Auto Advertisements Combined*

	N	X	Y	ΣX^2	ΣY^2	ΣXY	r
Seen Assoc.	67	50	72	279,723	382,608	224,017	-.273*
Read Most	67	50	21	279,723	484,474	54,749	-.350**

* $p > .05$

** $p > .01$

It should be noted that all correlations were negative. This was to be expected in a test where rating increases as number of words decreases.

Inasmuch as there was no provision in the above for control of inherent reader interest in the product advertised, we devised another test, using men's and women's scores for all qualifying ads run in both publications. Averages were drawn for product categories shown in Tables II and III. Categories including one ad were excluded, as well as jewelry, since the latter contained ads primarily of interest to men.

These rankings were then compared with those shown by Starch.⁴ Our rankings were made in terms of Seen Associated scores, since this rating was used by Starch. The rank correlation for women was .724 and for men .742, both significant at the .01 level. Our rankings are shown in Tables VI and VII.

We then made another measurement by correlating numbers of words with Seen Associated and Read Most Readers-per-Dollar scores of all ads in both publications, holding reader interest constant by using women's food ad ratings from both publications and men's automobile ratings from *Life*. Utilizing a somewhat similar technique, Starch demonstrated that the lower the number of words the higher the two ratings.⁵ Our statistics are shown in Table VIII.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 103.

We found $r = -.273$ for Seen Associated and $r = -.35$ for the Read Most with $N = 67$. Both scores show a low correlation between words and ratings.

Conclusions

The range of our study might have been extended if we had secured ratings for the non-qualifying ads during the period. Time-cost considerations precluded this. There are, nonetheless, several interesting points to be observed.

The high rank correlations suggest that if the all-display technique is useful in extending readership, the technique's effect beyond the inherent reader interest level is questionable. In other words, the splash of a message in all-display should not necessarily be expected to excite readership from readers whose interest is low.

On the other hand, in those tests in which numbers of words were correlated with Readers-per-Dollar ratings, reader interest held constant, the correlations were for the most part low, suggesting that copy in all-display may not be severely restrictive in dampening readership scores.

Copy lengths in these measurements ranged from four to 242 words. Forty-eight per cent of the 67 ads contained above average length copy; 36% had above average Read Most Readers-per-Dollar scores, and 52% had above average Seen Associated Readers-per-Dollar scores.

Measurements in this investigation were made only on ads that qualified in terms of an extreme definition. That is, the entire verbal message had to be set in 18-point or larger type, except for incidental information. Many ads incorporate something of this technique into formats that include some body copy in display-size and some in reader-size type. A study of this effect on readership might prove interesting.