

Print or online?

1 Work with a partner and answer the questions.

- 1 What types of texts do you usually find in print? What types are usually digital?
- 2 Do you prefer to read the print version or online?

2a Read the newspaper article. What is the difference between reading and scanning a text?

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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Print or online?

Before smartphones, laptops, tablets and even desktop computers, most people simply read a traditional newspaper. In the year 2000 – which wasn't all that long ago – people in the UK bought more than 13 million newspapers every day. Today however, they buy just seven million and the number continues to get smaller. This doesn't mean to say we aren't reading the news. We read more in fact, it's just that we have the option to do so digitally these days.

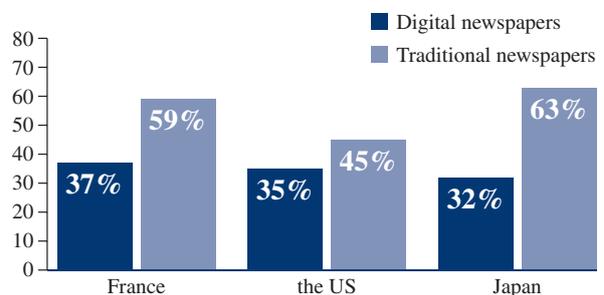


Reading on a digital device isn't quite the same as reading a traditional newspaper though, and people today don't really read in the same way as they did in the past. Now we're more used to reading online texts that include links, images, movies and sound. All of these things are there to distract us and send us in different directions as advertisers fight for our attention. This means it's more difficult to concentrate on a single paragraph of text, and online readers often get distracted.

This also affects us when we read material that isn't online. When we try and read printed text in a book or a newspaper, it can sometimes be hard to focus simply because we're used to scanning and looking quickly for information rather than reading every word carefully. So although we may be lazier readers of print today, we're in fact much better at looking for information. Websites such as Wikipedia mean that we've become better researchers and collaborative readers and writers.

Despite the rise in Internet usage over the last decade for access to the news, people are still buying newspapers. Nowadays, we have a choice. Take a look at these statistics which interestingly show us the reading trends of people in countries on three different continents and their preference for traditional or online newspapers. Even though the Internet is so popular these days, it seems that globally print is still very popular, too!

Digital vs. print newspaper statistics



Online reading statistics

35%
of UK adults accessed the Internet daily in 2000.

78%
of UK adults accessed the Internet daily in 2015.

2.6 seconds
the average amount of time people look at a webpage for before focusing on one section.

200 words per minute
the average reading speed in your native language.

15 seconds
the average time a reader spends on a webpage.

50%
the percentage of people who scroll down and read a whole webpage.

2b Read the article again and choose the best alternative to answer the questions.

- 1 According to the writer, why is it more difficult to read online texts?
 - a Our screens are too small.
 - b There are too many distractions.
- 2 As readers, what are we better at now than in the past?
 - a looking for information
 - b concentrating on a reading text
- 3 What is a key difference between reading online texts and printed texts?
 - a We read online texts more slowly.
 - b We read printed texts more carefully.
- 4 How are people reading the news nowadays?
 - a They prefer to read it digitally.
 - b They have the choice to access it online or read traditional newspapers.
- 5 What do the statistics tell us about Internet usage in the UK since 2000?
 - a The number of adults going online daily has more than doubled.
 - b The number of adults going online daily has nearly doubled.
- 6 What do the statistics tell us about the trend for reading traditional newspapers in the three countries?
 - a The trend is moving towards digital newspapers.
 - b People still prefer reading the printed version.

2c What do the statistics refer to? Read and match.

- 1 59%
 - 2 7,000,000
 - 3 15
 - 4 78%
 - 5 2.6
 - 6 32%
- a average time in seconds a reader spends looking at a page on the Internet
 - b percentage of Japanese who read newspapers online
 - c average time in seconds spent looking at a webpage before choosing a section
 - d percentage of French people still reading traditional newspapers
 - e number of British people buying traditional newspapers today
 - f current percentage of British people using the Internet every day

Gateway to culture

3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 How often do you go online? Why do you go online?
- 2 Do you think people in your country generally prefer reading online or in print?
- 3 Do you think it is important to keep reading printed texts? Why/Why not?

PROJECT

3b You are going to work on a project about news reporting in different parts of the world. Read the questions and prepare your research.

- 1 Work with a partner. Choose two online newspapers from different parts of the world (not your own country) and look at the news stories on the first few pages for the same day.
- 2 Compare and contrast the newspapers, making notes on the following questions:
 - Which international news story do they both have?
 - Where is the story featured in the newspaper – on the front page, on page 3, etc?
 - What are the main points of this story?
 - How is the story reported differently in the two newspapers? Is there a difference in the information covered? What is the journalist's point of view?
 - What are the main differences between the two newspapers? Think about the design, the length of the articles, the tone (serious or light?).
 - Can you find any news about your country reported in either of the newspapers?

3c Report your observations back to the class. Use comparative adjectives and link words to explain the difference between the two online newspapers you have compared.

- Firstly/Secondly ...
- Newspaper A is more ...
- In addition ...
- One difference is that ... Newspaper B is more ...
- In contrast with Newspaper A, Newspaper B is ... because ...
- Finally ...