



COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT  
AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION®

# CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey Guide

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**The CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey (CMMRS) is now available on a new, dynamic platform.**

### What is the CMMRS?

The CMMRS is an online survey that your institution can use to learn more about how your constituents read your periodical publication(s) (usually magazines). Data from this survey will be collected for your readership as well as aggregated from other CASE members so that you will be able to compare your results to those from other institutions. The aggregated data has formed the first comprehensive picture of educational institutions' magazine readers.

### Who should respond?

Participation in the readership survey is intended for editors of educational institutions' magazines that are members of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). These editors will complete an online registration form and then receive a secure, unique URL to their institution's survey. In this survey guide, editors will find instructions and a template letter to send this link to a random sample of their magazine's readers. Readers' responses to the institution's survey will go directly to the survey database, where the editors will receive their own customized and

interactive reports of their data, compared with aggregate data of all of the responding institutions.

### Who developed the survey?

Many editors and other communications professionals (including the CASE research staff) have contributed ideas, questions, and suggestions. The draft survey instrument was created at the CASE Editors Forum in workshop-style sessions. After implementation in 2009, hundreds of editors used the service successfully on the legacy platform. The database has since accumulated nearly 190,000 responses from readers of roughly 300 publications.

### Will the methodology be consistent?

Every survey link will use the same questions across all participants to ensure the comparability of results. The survey is hosted by CASE on a secure server. Each editor registered for the service will be able to obtain results for both their individual publication and the aggregated set of publications in the database.

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### **What will the CMMRS tell me?**

The survey asks 22 questions on a variety of topics: how your constituents gather information about your institution (print, on-line, etc.); how they read/use your flagship print publication (usually a magazine); and how interested they are in a range of subjects (what they read, what they don't). It also asks your readers to rate your magazine's quality, to consider whether they think it's a credible source of information about your institution, and explores what actions they may have taken as a result of reading your magazine. Other questions include: How much time do they spend with it? How long do they keep it? Have they sent an article to a friend? Have they attended an event or made a donation as a result of reading it?

### **What are the advantages of participating in the survey?**

You will receive important information about your own magazine that can lead to effective improvements for your readership. All of the survey data will be aggregated into a single database. Hundreds of institutions have contributed to the common data set, enabling you to compare your school's results with those of all other institutions using the same survey. This database provides a powerful tool for communicators and magazine editors. As participation has continued to grow, we are able to make comparisons within varying sizes and types of institutions, as well as other types of publication segments.

### **What does it cost?**

CASE offers the CMMRS at an annual rate of \$500 for member institutions. The subscription includes unlimited sampling of your readers over the 12-month term. Even after the subscription expires, editors will be able to access their survey results indefinitely. The reporting service has a package of analytical tools that allow you to query the data and generate your own interactive graphs and reports from your survey results.

### **How do I get started?**

To take advantage of this survey for your institution, [you may purchase your subscription through the CASE Store](#). Within 24 hours you will receive a welcome email from CASE staff containing information about your CMMRS account. After you login to the CMMRS system, you will be asked to enter some general information about your institution and magazine. After submitting this data, you will obtain a unique and secure URL for your magazine's survey to distribute to readers. As your institution's magazine editor, all you will need to do is distribute the survey invitation and URL to a sample of your readers. They will complete the survey and their responses will go directly to the CMMRS system. While the surveys are being completed, you will be able to track and compare your data in real time.

### **What will our readers see?**

Your constituents will receive your e-mail invitation to participate in the survey, which will contain the URL for your institution's questionnaire. Upon clicking the URL, they will be directed to your survey on the CASE web site. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete, depending on whether participants choose to answer some open-ended questions.

### **Who may use the CMMRS?**

Any CASE member institution may use this survey as long as a subscription is purchased. Only participating institutions will be able to view and download results. Editors will continue to have access to the reporting site for their survey even after the subscription for data collection has lapsed.

**Questions? Please contact CASE Research at [research@case.org](mailto:research@case.org)**

## **Suggestions of ways to use results from the CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey**

### **Compare/Benchmark with Peer Magazines**

- Your survey results will allow you to compare data across varying types of institutions:
  - Help to highlight areas that merit attention from management if different from the norm. There may be a good explanation for a difference or it may point to a problem area that needs to be addressed.
  - Survey results give you a benchmark/ baseline of overall readership satisfaction and what vehicles may serve best in the future as your institution's most effective communications tool.

### **Customize Your Survey Results**

- You can choose variables from the survey that are most relevant to your situation and compare metrics, such as any question cut by the size of a magazine's circulation, student enrollment, type of institution, etc. It depends on what you need to know and what should inform your institution about your magazine.

### **Improve the Magazine through Readership Critique**

- You can learn which attributes of the magazine readers value and which ones they do not to help drive continuous improvement. This includes content, 'look-and-feel,' format, frequency, length, information about the institution, etc.

### **Strategic Focus**

- Survey results can help you emphasize a connection between the magazine and institutional advancement. For example, if your magazine is the primary way that alumni continue to feel an affinity for their alma mater, then a case can be made to include it strategically in institutional communications, fundraising, or PR to reinforce the connection and raise visibility of the magazine at the same time.
- Survey results can help you highlight to the institution's leadership the strong value and association that alumni feel between the publication and the institution (assuming that is what the data reveals) and that it is worth the investment of resources for that connection.

## Activating your subscription to the CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey

Editors can start their subscription [by purchasing the CMMRS product on the CASE Store](#). After the transaction is completed, you will receive more detailed information in a confirmation e-mail. All editors will access their surveys through this portal: <https://magazine.case.org>.

You log in to the CMMRS system by using your CASE ID and password (the same credentials that you used making the purchase in the CASE Store).

### My Active Surveys

After you log in, you'll see a screen with a list of any survey products that are associated with your CASE member ID. To access the dashboard for a given survey, click the link "**CASE Magazine Readership Survey.**"

### Magazine Profile

The first time that you enter the system, you will be prompted to enter some information about your magazine and institution. These questions are mandatory because they form the demographic and operational variables that are used to analyze the data. They should be quick for editors to complete, but there are two questions that are very important:

For "**Type of Institution**" CASE uses the Carnegie Classification system. Please make sure that you select the category that best describes the entire institution that the magazine represents. Even if your magazine only represents a small branch of a larger institution (e.g., a college of public policy within a large Research/Doctoral university), please base the selection on the whole institution so that users of the Readership Survey system will be making appropriate comparisons across the survey responses. If you aren't sure about the correct classification for your institution, you can use the [Carnegie Institution Lookup site](#).

For "**Publication Name**" please make sure that you enter the name of your magazine exactly as you want survey takers to see it. This entry will be inserted directly into several survey questions, such as "How often do you typically read [*Publication Name*]?"

### Your Dashboard

Once you have filled in the profile, you will be directed to the administrative dashboard for your account. You'll see two main sections: "**Magazine Profile**" and "**Responses.**"

"**Magazine Profile**" contains a summary of the characteristics of your magazine that you specified. If you need to make any changes, please click the "Update Profile" icon.

Under the "**Responses**" section, you'll find the current status of your survey. You can get a quick update on the number of completed surveys here. It also contains information on your survey links and reporting options.

### Responses Section

The "**Segment**" area is where you manage the survey links for distribution to your readership. The URL under "**Default Segment**" is the link to the survey questions that is automatically generated for you to use. This is the URL for the online survey that you will distribute to your readers for them to complete the survey.

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The URL is secure, and no identifying information will be passed through when one of your readers completes the survey (unless the reader voluntarily provides his/her e-mail address). You will need to copy this link and insert it into any survey invitations that you send to your readers. These default links are compatible with URL-shortening services such as tinyURL and bit.ly, if you'd prefer to reduce the length of the survey link.

You also have the ability to create other special links for different segments of your readership. Clicking **“Add Segment”** will generate a new survey link for a segment that you can name and track. Distributing this link to a sub-group of your readership will allow you to view the results only for that sub-group that you defined. For example, if you wanted to isolate readers who graduated within the last five years, you would use the link generated through the **“Add Segment”** feature.

Creating new segments will not affect the compilation of all your responses into the Default Segment. Each response that is derived from any of the links that appears in your dashboard will be deposited into the aggregated dataset for your survey account (accessed through the reporting for your Default Segment). The advantage of managing segments is that you can view results only for a particular sub-group of respondents that you define. For example, you might create a segment for young alumni only or for readers in a certain geographic region.

You are not required to create any new segments; administering the survey through the Default Segment link will be the simplest approach because all of your responses will be available through a single area in your dashboard. Again, it will be your responsibility to create, name and track any segments.

Please note that creating or deleting segments will not separate or move any responses from your total results. All of the responses to your survey will continually be preserved in the Default Segment area regardless of your activity with any other segments. So even if you delete a segment, its responses will stay in your Default Segment.

Note: the date that indicates the end of your subscription refers only to the collection of new data—it is telling you the day that your readers will not be able to submit responses to the survey. Reporting on past surveys is perpetual regardless of subscription status, so you will continue to have access to your survey results even if your subscription lapses.

**Questions? Please contact CASE Research at [research@case.org](mailto:research@case.org)**

## CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey (CMMRS)

### How to pick a random sample of your readership records for the CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey

Thank you, institutional magazine editors, for participating in the CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey (CMMRS). We hope that the results of your survey will not only be helpful to your institution and publication, but also to our profession as a whole.

Please follow the steps below to choose a sample of your readership, if desired.

If you have questions, please contact CASE Research at [research@case.org](mailto:research@case.org).

#### Selecting a Random Sample

##### *Using an Automated Program.*

If you intend to survey only a sample of the readership, the recommended method to do so is to work with your institution's database managers and Information Technology staff to choose a random sample of "n" percent of your readership's e-mail addresses.

Because this is an online-only survey, you will first need to determine the overall number of valid e-mail addresses in your readership database. Please do not exclude any particular constituency or age group from your sample. For example, do not skew the survey results by sampling only "donors" or "members." The survey asks for demographic data, including the reader's relationship to the institution. Your results will show how each constituency (alumni, parents, friends, etc.) has responded.

Your IT department or accounting office may already use an automated method for choosing a random sample from the database. If not, programs such as SPSS (<http://www.spss.com/>) can easily generate a random sample.

**Choosing the Sample Yourself.** If you have no access to a program that will automate the sample, use the following method to choose a sample of 25 percent:

- First, determine what is 25 percent of all your valid e-mail addresses. For example, if you have 20,000 records with e-mail addresses, multiply that number by 0.25. ( $20,000 \times 0.25 = 5,000$ ). You will need 5,000 valid

e-mail addresses. Round up any fractional numbers.

- One of the easiest methods of randomly choosing these e-mail

records is to pick every "n<sup>th</sup>" entry

so that the number of records you choose represents a suitable proportion of your records. In the example above for instance, choose every 4<sup>th</sup> record to get your 25 percent sample of 20,000 records.

- Once you have your sample, you will send an e-mail invitation to your readers, with a URL link to the survey that is unique to your institution so that responses from your readers will go directly to the CMMRS database. The unique URL address will identify your institution and allow customized reporting of your results.

If desired, please see the chart at the end of this document to determine how many responses you need for your sample size to be truly statistically representative of your readership. These parameters are entirely voluntary depending on the targeted level of precision; many editors have gained a great deal of insight from their survey results despite not meeting the exact threshold for statistical representation.

## Steps in distributing readership survey to readers

1. Prepare a mass e-mail for the records in your readership database. Feel free to use the sample invitation letter (included in this survey guide) as the body of your e-mail. It is important that disclaimers and confidentiality statements are included in your e-mail.
2. Insert the survey link that has been provided to you by the CMMRS system in the appropriate place in the letter.
3. Send the letter with the link to your contact list.
4. You can track the number of responses you receive via the CMMRS administrative platform. Sending reminder e-mails to your sample each week for about 2-3 weeks after the initial mailing is a popular strategy for these types of surveys. E-mails can get buried quickly and the reminder typically helps. Since the surveys are answered anonymously, respondents' addresses can't be purged easily,

so the most expedient way to do it is to state in the first sentence something like, "To those who have already responded to the survey, thank you and know that you are now part of future improvements. For those of you who haven't, please take just a few moments..." If the response is still insufficient (determined somewhat on how well the profile of your readership is represented in the respondent pool), then you may want to consider sending more reminders.

## Sample invitation e-mail letter from editor

Below is an example of language that could appear in the e-mail sent to readers invited to participate in your survey. Please insert the name of your institution and publication where indicated.

Please make sure that the information in paragraph three is included in the invitation, especially the confidential nature of the survey results. If you have questions about your e-mail invitation, please contact CASE Research at [research@case.org](mailto:research@case.org).

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

[Name of institution] would like your opinion and a few minutes of your time to help improve the effectiveness of this publication to serve your needs.

Our Web-based survey is easy to use and takes about 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about [name of publication], including several that allow for open-ended responses.

This survey is hosted by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), of which [name of institution] is a member. The results of the survey will be reported to [name of institution] in aggregate form only, and you will not be identified.

If you have questions about this survey, please contact [name and e-mail address of contact person at institution]. Do not reply to this e-mail.

Thank you in advance for helping to make [name of publication] even better. To begin the survey, click on the following link or copy and paste it into your browser.

[link to be provided by CMMRS system]

Best regards,

[name of magazine editor or university representative]



## CASE Member Magazine Readership Survey (CMMRS)

### Guidelines for Representative Sampling

The chart below can help you determine how many responses you need for your sample size to be truly statistically representative of your readership. This information is only intended to serve as a general guideline; if you want to achieve a sample that is representative of your reader population, then you will need to use precise figures from another resource.

The highlighted areas in the chart show the response needed to be 95 percent confident that your sample would be representative of your entire readership with +/- 3 percent accuracy. For example, if 40 percent of your representative sample responded that they liked a certain issue of the magazine the most, then you would be 95 percent confident that the true census of the readers would have been between 37 percent and 43 percent for that question.

#### Number of Responses Needed for Margin of Error Levels Indicated

| Population Size | Sample Size Estimates: for noted sampling error at 95% confidence and p= 0.5 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
|-----------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
|                 | ± 1%   | ± 2% | ± 3% | ± 4% | ± 5% | ± 6% | ± 7% | ± 8% | ± 9% | ± 10% |
| 100             | 99   | 97   | 92   | 86   | 80   | 73   | 67   | 61   | 55   | 49    |
| 200             | 196  | 185  | 169  | 151  | 132  | 115  | 99   | 86   | 75   | 65    |
| 500             | 476  | 414  | 341  | 273  | 218  | 174  | 141  | 116  | 96   | 81    |
| 1,000           | 906  | 706  | 517  | 376  | 278  | 211  | 164  | 131  | 106  | 88    |
| 2,000           | 1656   | 1092 | 696  | 462  | 323  | 236  | 179  | 140  | 112  | 97    |
| 5,000           | 3289   | 1623 | 880  | 536  | 357  | 254  | 196  | 151  | 119  | 97    |
| 10,000          | 4900   | 1937 | 965  | 567  | 385  | 267  | 196  | 151  | 119  | 97    |
| 20,000          | 6489   | 2144 | 1014 | 601  | 385  | 267  | 196  | 151  | 119  | 97    |
| 50,000          | 8057   | 2401 | 1068 | 601  | 385  | 267  | 196  | 151  | 119  | 97    |
| 100,000         | 8763   | 2401 | 1068 | 601  | 385  | 267  | 196  | 151  | 119  | 97    |
| > 100,000       | 9604   | 2401 | 1068 | 601  | 385  | 267  | 196  | 151  | 119  | 97    |

If your readership population is 2,000, then a 25 percent *random* sample (i.e., chosen as every 4<sup>th</sup> record in your data base that is arranged alphabetically and not in any order by grouping) is desired to achieve a +/- 3 percent margin of error (i.e., the true response of the entire readership can fluctuate no less than 3 percent or no more than 3 percent), so the required number of responses is 696.

## Using the reporting features to analyze your Readership Survey results

You can access the results of your survey in the “Segment” area of the dashboard. The icons on the right, “**Segment Reports**” and “**Survey Reports**” each provide a pathway for your custom reporting. Clicking the Survey Reports icon will give you options for viewing all of the data recorded for your survey, whereas the Segment Reports icon will give options for only the data for that particular segment. If you did not create any new segments, then both buttons will reference your aggregated responses.

After clicking either icon, you will be presented with three options. The Segment Reports area offers these three options: “**Download Responses**,” “**Comparative Report**” and “**Crosstab Reporting**.” The Survey Reports area is slightly different, with these options: “**Download Responses**,” “**Comparative Report**” and “**Comprehensive Report**.” More information about each option appears below.

### Download Responses


This report type triggers a full download of your survey responses in Excel format. Choose this option if you want to perform your own analysis and computations in another program, since it will be delivered as raw data.

### Comparative Report

The Comparative Report option allows you to perform benchmarking against results from other publications in the database. You will be able to view the results for each survey question in comparison to the results from any group of magazines that meet the criteria that you specify.

Please note that all of the data in the Comparative Report section are completely anonymous. You will not be able to specify magazines or institutions by name when you set up the comparisons. Instead, you will be able to choose other magazines based on a list of institutional and publication characteristics. For example, if you wish to view your results side-by-side with results from magazines representing Baccalaureate institutions that publish two issues annually, then you can select the appropriate filters from the list to reference this sub-group.

The default for the Comparative Report section is viewing your survey results against all of the magazines currently in the database. If you wish to make more detailed comparisons, you will need to click “**Add Filter**” in the upper right to select a sub-group. Click “Add Filter” as many times as needed to specify the cohort of magazines that you want, but please keep in mind that the number of records in the database that meet your search criteria might decrease significantly after you add more than 4-5 filters.

You may export the Comparative Report by clicking on the  icon at the top right of the chart. You will have the option of exporting the chart as an image file (PNG or JPEG), PDF, or SVG vector image. This option could be particularly useful if you wanted to incorporate the Comparative Report into a PowerPoint presentation or other document delivered to your leadership

### Crosstab Report

This report type allows you to perform cross-sectional analysis of your readers. It will create cross-tabulations for any two variables that you specify. The data in the Crosstab Reporting section will only reference responses from your magazine.

After clicking the option, you will be presented with two drop-down lists. One is a list of the survey variables that you need to specify appearing in the columns of the table, and the second is the list for variables to appear in the rows. After choosing the two variables of interest, click the “**Generate Report**” icon to create the new table.

As an example, you can determine preferences for format for different age groups by using this feature. In the “Columns” section, select “What is your age?” from the list. Then in the “Rows” section, select “Do you prefer to read your [name of publication]” and click “Generate Report.” This will render the crosstab with the number of respondents representing each category appearing in the appropriate cell.

You may export the crosstab to Excel by clicking on “Export to Excel” above the crosstab chart. By clicking “Export Chart” you will have the option of exporting the chart as an image file (PNG or JPEG), PDF, or SVG vector image. This option could be particularly useful if you wanted to incorporate the crosstab into a PowerPoint presentation or other document delivered to your leadership.

### **Comprehensive Report**

This option allows you to see all of the results for your entire readership. Clicking the button will display the results for each question, only for responses from your readers.

You can download any of the Comprehensive Report by clicking the “**Save as PDF**” icon in the upper right.

**Questions? Please contact CASE Research at [research@case.org](mailto:research@case.org)**