

Five Places to Research the Business of Magazines

Practical advice on where to find information about magazine circulation, revenue and other trends, and issues in the magazine business.

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The five organizations and associations described here collect and publish extensive amounts of information about magazines, magazine circulation, and ad and circulation revenue. Some of the expensive reports and publications mentioned may be available free or at reduced prices to academic researchers. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

1. Magazine Publishers of America • www.magazine.org

The MPA compiles industry-specific information from a wide variety of sources for its members and their clients. The Information Center is a storehouse of information, both historical and current, concerning magazines. Thousands of inquiries are answered each year from members, the advertising community, and the press on virtually all aspects of magazine publishing. For queries, call 212-872-3745 or e-mail infocenter@magazine.org.

- **MPA Research.** Visit the research section of the MPA website to search by topic and keyword for hundreds of research studies dating back to 1947. Studies are conducted by the MPA, publishers and various associations, or consulting firms. While full-text documents are not available, you can probably obtain copies by calling Information Services or e-mailing infocenter@magazine.org.

- ***The Magazine Handbook 2008-09.*** MPA publishes and updates *The Magazine Handbook* annually. You can download and save as a pdf document from www.magazine.org. It contains more than 75 pages of data and statistics about magazine industry circulation, advertising revenue, reader usage, and distribution. While the data is accurate, it's limited to MPA-member magazines and presented in such a way to convince advertisers about the effectiveness of magazine advertising. I recommend it as required reading for magazine journalism students because it offers a concise overview of American magazines not available elsewhere.

- **Publishers Information Bureau** is an MPA membership organization that measures magazine advertising spending and advertising pages by category and title. With a membership representing roughly 85 percent of consumer magazine advertising in the U.S., PIB is recognized as the primary source for consumer magazine advertising data. To access this information, visit www.magazine.org/pib.

2. Audit Bureau of Circulations • www.accessabc.com

900 N. Meacham Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173 • 847-605-0909

For \$15 a year, journalism departments can apply for an associate membership and obtain a username and password to access publishers' circulation statements, demographic data, and CPM rates for more than 600 ABC-member magazines. You can obtain a five-year history of circulation data for each magazine. The site license allows for only one online user at a time, so it's not possible for an entire class to access the data simultaneously.

- ***Magazine Trend Report.*** This report on circulation and rate base data for 600 U.S. and Canadian magazines is published annually. It contains a five-year history of single-copy and

subscription sales numbers, single-copy and subscription prices, and advertising and CPM rates. Retail cost is \$115, but discounts are available for ABC associate members.

3. Advertising Age Datacenter • www.adage.com/datacenter

The Ad Age Datacenter is probably the best place for students to conduct research on ad and circulation revenue for top magazines and magazine publishing companies. It contains an extensive collection of data on the 100 largest media companies, top 300 magazine circulation rankings, ad revenue, circulation revenue, and total revenue dating back five years. Most data can be downloaded into a spreadsheet. A free registration is required to access the data. While recent information is free, older information has nominal charges that vary from \$5 to \$10.

4. International Federation of the Periodical Press • www.fipp.com

Queens House, 55-56 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ • info@fipp.com
Guy Constandine, research director (guy@fipp.com). Periodic research reports on world magazine trends published online and in print. *World Magazine Data Book* is published annually and contains data and other information on magazines in more than 60 countries but costs \$300.

5. Veronis Suhler Stevenson • www.vss.com

Communications Industry Forecast 2008-2012 (August 2008). VSA publishes its Communications Industry Forecast annually containing revenue and trends in a dozen media sectors, including magazines. The 50+ page chapter on magazine trends deals with sectors and does not contain detailed information for individual magazines or publishers. The list price is more than \$3,000, but old copies might be available free or at reduced cost to academic researchers. Summary of forecasts available free online.

Based on a presentation at the AEJMC Convention, Chicago, August 8, 2008