

Written by Emily Tan

In contrast to global trends, Malaysians are not giving up newspapers for the Internet. Research based on data sourced from the Nielsen Media Index from 2006 to 2008 shows that newspaper consumption levels held steady throughout 2008 despite the rise in Internet consumption.

While the average time a Malaysian spends online has increased by 24% from three hours a day in 2006 to three hours and 46 minutes a day in 2008, the average time spent reading a newspaper has held steady at 49 minutes in the same time span. There is no sign that Malaysians are shifting from newspapers to the Internet, said the report published in PHD's August newsletter PHD Pioneering. PHD is a media service agency under the Omnicom Media Group.

The Nielsen Media Index continuously tracks media consumption, product ownership, demographics and lifestyle information. The latest survey interviewed a representative sample of 10,000 individuals aged 15 years and above in Peninsular Malaysia over a continuous period each year.

Two conclusions to draw from the Nielsen data are that Malaysians are great at multi-tasking, and the assumption that the Internet will cut out other mediums is wrong, said Andreas Vogiatzakis, managing director of Omnicom Media Group Malaysia.

Multi-tasking is a way of life; people read papers while watching TV and surf online while listening to the radio, he said. He also pointed out that Internet use has grown to include so many activities that are non-competitive with other mediums. We chat, we email, it doesn't compete.

Malaysians are also unusual in that newspapers have a reach of about 50% with all age groups, from teenagers to pensioners. However, the PHD study found that Malaysians over the age of 30 spend more time (about 50 minutes daily) reading newspapers, while teenagers and young adults read for about half an hour on average.

Despite the rapid increase in time spent online, the Internet still has the lowest reach with a high of 38% among young working adults and a low of only 7% among senior citizens in 2008. Although teens are considered the digital generation, the data showed Internet reach among them has dropped marginally from 23% in 2006 to 22% in 2008, and teens spend only three hours and 19 minutes online a day compared with the four hours-plus spent by those aged 20 to 29.

Another surprise is that Malaysians aged over 50 also spent about three hours a day online in 2008, almost the same as teens.

However, Vogiatzakis pointed out that due to their high level of engagement, teens accomplish far more in their three hours than those aged 50 and over do.

They have 20 sites open and are emailing and chatting at the same time! he laughed.

Television viewership has also not been affected by the increasing amount of time spent online. On average, Malaysians watched 18 more minutes of TV in 2008 than they did in 2006.

The report also found that the Malaysian couch potato those who spent over five hours a day in front of the television is someone over 50.

Teenagers spend the least amount of time watching TV, averaging four hours and 20 minutes daily.

Radio with a media reach of 68% in 2008 has also remained popular despite the increasing popularity of online music downloads and MP3 players.

Although radio has seen a slight drop from its reach of 71% in 2006, it is still among the highest in the Asia-Pacific region, said the PHD report.

Radio is still an effective medium for reaching people on the go, it said.

The hype about digital media's increasing popularity at the cost of traditional media among Malaysian youth is therefore not truly realised, concluded the report.

Media consumption trends among teens are consistent with the

Malaysian newspaper consumption holds steady despite Internet

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general population, it said. </p><p align="justify">But time and reach alone may not capture the complete picture, as the Nielsen Media Index does not measure the level of engagement the Internet has fostered with its teenage audience. </p><p align="justify">In future, the Internet will be a vital part of life for today's teen, said the report. </p><p align="justify">When looking to the future, traditional mediums should consider using the Internet as an ally and a means to include factors loved by digital natives, said Vogiatzakis. </p><p align="justify">Use online forums and social networks to gain feedback that can be included in the newspaper, TV and radio. Give them the control and engagement they love, he added.</p><p align="justify"></p><p align="justify">This article appeared on the Media & Advertising page, The Edge Financial Daily, Sept 1, 2009. </p><p align="justify">Source: http://www.theedgemaalaysia.com/media-a-advertising/148429-malaysian-newspaper-consumption-holds-steady-despite-internet.html</p>