

*Mario Garcia, the great guru of newspaper redesigns worldwide and exponent of WED (writing-editing-design) as a newspaper construction philosophy, was at the World Newspaper Congress and World Editors' Forum in Cape Town, to tell both sets of participants just how online media is being used by tech-savvy users. His conclusion – for those who may be worried –*

# We do read!



**I**n 1990 Garcia, now a professor at Syracuse University, and Dr Peggy Starke Adam, who were both working at the Poynter Institute in Florida, came up with a method to figure out how people read newspapers called Eyetrac. By attaching small cameras which look into the eyes of readers and recall their eye movements, they could tell what readers were attracted to, how long they would read

and how they navigated information.

This method has been repeated with online readers in a new survey this year. Part of the driving thought behind the research was the hunch that because of the speed of delivery of breaking news by digital and broadcast media, many people already know the news before they come to read it in their newspapers. A recent survey he did of *Wall St Jour-*

*nal* readers showed that 60% of them know the news before they pick it up in this paper.

The survey involved 600 print and online readers in four US cities, Minneapolis, St Petersburg, Philadelphia and Denver, reading dailies and news websites on "ordinary days" involving no extraordinary news events. 100 people read the *StarTribune* and 100 the *StarTribune.com*; 100 read



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*Sherwin Bryce-Pease  
Weekend Live: SABC 2*



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the *St Petersburg Times* and 100 the online version; 100 read the *Daily News* and another 100 the *Rocky Mountain News*. Each person was recorded reading for 15 minutes.

50% of the study were between 18 and 41 years old, and 44% from 42 to 60. 80% of these news consumers used two media simultaneously. 71% used four or more websites in a week. 87% had at least some tertiary education and 75% were employed.

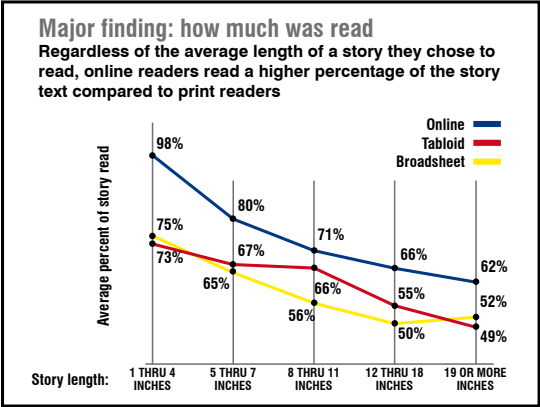
Garcia presented the main findings of this study as:

1. These 600 guinea pigs are “choosing what to read and then reading it a lot”. Conclusion: “The long form is not dead.”



2. These readers read more of the online story and do more depth reading online. “People stay there [online] longer,” Garcia said. His quick conclusion: in print you can see how long the story is on the page, thus getting intimidated, online you can’t see the end! Watching carefully how his study group was reading he discovered that if the story started to flag in interesting detail at about 21 lines, the reader could be lost. His advice: refresh the story at about that point. “Online is a bit like a book, readers don’t get sidetracked,” he said, adding “newspaper design is distracting, there are many things on the page that set up competition.”

When figures were compared: 57% of stories in tabloids which readers chose to read were read in their entirety; and the figures were 62% for broadsheet stories and 77% for online stories. For online stories overall two-thirds were read entirely. The most text that was read was in the news section, and it seems that when a newspaper’s brand is trusted, so is their online version.



3. Garcia characterises the reading in two types: scanning and methodical. And readers do both.

But when they move online they combine these two types of reading more evidently than they do in print. “People have not lost the ability to read in depth, they are now more selective. One becomes a methodical reader if the content seduces us,” but, “you must also create opportunities for scanners, as scanners can turn methodical”.

4. In terms of design and navigation of text, Garcia says “online and print are two worlds apart”. He still believes that design is aesthetically important for print media but “not so critical” for online reading. Online readers, he believes, are “not into beauty, but utility”.

He also made the following points:

- In the 1990 survey of newspaper readers, he and Starke found that teasers were important in luring readers to stories. The 2007 survey shows that they remain important for readers in both print and online.
- Photographs and headlines remain important as drawcards to pages in both environments but in the case of photos they must be “action” pictures – “live” pictures get more attention than staged shots. In the case of headlines the personal address to a “You!” is noticeably useful.
- Graphics get eye attention: but, says Garcia, they have to be explanatory and accessible, charts are difficult to read.
- What about opinion pieces? Print and online, readers are interested in what other readers have to say, and not really in what editors think. In print the letters pages attracted “more attention than we expected”.
- Interactive elements need to be emphasised and given attention so that readers can use them.
- If advertising takes up a full page readers ignore it, if it’s surrounded by content it gets attention. Colour “is a big draw”.

Garcia now has a new philosophy he punts for how to deal with breaking news: begin online and on mobile technology with the first version of the story, then move it to print, then move it back online with more details. He calls the first version “the report”, the print version “the story 1” and the fuller online version – with interactive possibilities – “the story 2”. The rationale is “assume the reader knows more than you do” and certainly that by the time the breaking news story reaches the print pages it is already known to readers. The idea of the “newspaper of record” is no longer sustainable in a new technology regime, you have to “begin the record in some other medium” and Garcia says “online is now where the story begins and the story ends”. To make this “fusion of print and online” Garcia advocates appointing a “fusion editor, someone who can keep a foot on the printed edition, one on the online edition” or “naming a ‘storytelling sheriff’ to decide on and to patrol the path of the story throughout an entire cycle”.

He said to the WAN/WEF audiences: “If your organisation has not put together a small group of thinkers and visionaries to study multi-platforms and how to achieve them, then start as soon as possible. This may be the most important topic to deliberate in the next year.”

So what of the future? Is the large format newspaper going to disappear? “Yes,” says Garcia.

And what does he think of the mobile phone? “One of the most impactful tools of today.”

Has the newspaper habit disappeared from most people’s lives? “For an increasing number, the

answer is yes. But our interest in **news** is forever increasing.”

Is this the end of print? “Certainly not. But it is a change of role for print for sure. Remember,” he says, “books killed sermons.”

And for those who continue to worry about reading as an issue: “We have not lost our ability to read in depth, and, in fact, reader attention spans have not shortened dramatically or irreversibly. But we do have more highly selective readers who choose what they want to read, and then read a lot. Even more than we thought they would.”

...  
*Navigational guides like teasers, tips and summaries remain important devices for luring readers into pages and stories.*



### Online Stock Trades Get Even Cheaper

By JANE J. KIM

IT'S GETTING CHEAPER to play the market. Discount brokerage firms are cutting commissions on stock trades to all-time lows in the latest round of price cuts. This time, though, it's not only established players, such as Charles Schwab Corp. and TD Ameritrade Holding Corp., that are cutting prices. New firms are making a price war out of it.

Low-priced trading, while still a hot item, is being used by such firms as E\*Trade, Ameritrade, and others to lure investors. The move is part of a larger effort to attract investors to the online world. The move is also a response to the fact that many investors are now using the Internet to trade. This is a trend that is likely to continue for some time.

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### How to Buy a Cheap Seat in First Class

Obscure Class of Coach Fares Guarantees Seats; The Search for 'Q-Up'

By EVAN PEREZ

A MAJOR AIRLINES ground planes and eliminate flights to avoid the industry's losses, up- and down-grades to first class are a long shot for travelers who aren't in the top tier of a frequent flyer program.

For you could sneak your way to the front, as Julie Vitale did on a Chicago flight to Washington, D.C., from Los Angeles. The special education teacher stumbled into an obscure category of discounted coach fares that actually guaranteed her a first-class seat and frequent flyer credit on UAL.

Mr. Vitale's flight was a particular type of coach fare called "Q-up." Other airlines use codes such as "Y-up" and "Z-up." They represent little-known but surprisingly big bargains on thousands of first-class seats a day throughout the U.S. And often they cost much less than last-minute coach seats.

Why would airlines encourage passengers to slip into first class — and on the cheap? Most people sitting in first-class seats on domestic flights aren't paying first-class prices. Instead, many passengers are taking in frequent-flyer miles or buying upgrades, meaning those seats generate little extra revenue for the airlines. Q-up fares help carriers increase the number of paying passengers in first class.

Airline won't disclose exactly how many Q-up, Y-up or Z-up fares are available. That's partly to avoid raising the eye of frequent flyers. The fare of upgrading from a cramped middle seat near the back of the plane to first class

is one of the few perks these travelers will have following industry talk right now. The U.S. airline industry has lost more than \$42 billion since the start of 2001, according to the Air Transport Association, an industry trade group. Between New York and Miami, ASX Corp.'s American Airlines recently offered a one-way Y-up fare of \$129 — 60% lower than the \$200 price of a regular first-class seat. The Y-up fare costs less than half the price of a one-way seat in the coach section, though American also offered a restricted discounted round-trip coach fare for \$353. Recently, it cost \$291 for a one-way seat to the next plane.

### Unlocking Your Inner Architect

New Home-Design Software Saves Money, but Some Users Neglect Details, Like Plumbing

By SARA SCHAEFFER MURPHY

A slew of sophisticated software for home design has recently hit the market, allowing homeowners to create a 3D rendering of their dream home. The software is designed to help homeowners visualize their ideas and make changes on the fly. It's a great tool for anyone who is planning a renovation or building a new home.

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As an addition to Bruce Owen's new software, in part a response to widespread spending on home remodeling, maintenance and repairs, \$225 million in 2004, up from \$190 million in 2003, according to the Census Bureau. Even as the housing market cools, people are still putting money into their homes, especially kitchens and bathrooms.

In contrast to computer-aided design programs of the early 1990s, which were cumbersome and often crude, the latest programs feature realistic graphics, automatic price quotes for complex steps like adding cabinets, and thousands of materials, textures and even landscaping plants to choose from.

In the past year, Chief Architect Inc., one of the few software companies that dominate the market, has released a new version of its software. The software is designed to help homeowners visualize their ideas and make changes on the fly. It's a great tool for anyone who is planning a renovation or building a new home.

**BALANCING**  
**Should Kids Help Foot the Bill For Their College Tuition?**

WHENEVER Edith Schultz, his wife and friends in Atlanta, Calif., get together these days, they end up in a debate over the same emotional topic. And it's not over tonight's game. It's over the right way for families to pay college tuition.

Mr. Schultz and his wife believe parents should model self-reliance and sacrifice by scrimping and saving for their kids' college. Some of their friends feel just as strongly that children learn to value their education only by taking on some to pay their own way. "It's a topic of heated debate," Mr. Schultz says. "Nobody knows the other way is doing it right."

With full tuition bills arriving in just a few weeks, arguments are erupting at cocktail parties and kitchen tables alike. What values should guide families on paying for college? Do students learn responsibility — or foster a lifelong over-reliance on debt? Are parents who pay their kids' way through college modeling self-sufficiency — or martyrdom? Does requiring a student to get a job during the academic year instill a work ethic — or workaholicism?

Some 28% of families with children who attended college last year said they discussed how to pay for college with their kids. But the college often is not a high priority — with tuition, fees, room and board at private universities averaging \$29,026 a year, and \$32,327 at public ones, the College Board says — that these rules don't work as well. An \$8-an-hour part-time student job doesn't make much of a dent in a four-figure tuition bill, for example. A decision by parents to shoulder the entire cost of college can push retirement back by a decade. And helping students stay debt-free is harder in a society where heavy debt loads have become so prevalent.

Mr. Schultz, a bank executive vice president and father of a 15-year-old son and a daughter, 20, a sophomore at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Ga., feels strongly that saddling students with heavy debt loads is a bad idea. "They're not even in the real world," she says, "they're not even in the real world." She says that her children won't take their education seriously.

Other families clash over whether students should work during the academic year. Some and Angela Cody, Lincoln, N.J., parents of a college senior and a freshman entering this fall, have never "sweat the details" of their children's education. They say that their children won't take their education seriously.

Mr. Schultz says that the best way to teach children to value their education is to make them pay their own way. "They're not even in the real world," she says, "they're not even in the real world." She says that her children won't take their education seriously.

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