2020 WVU Magazine Readership Survey Results

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2020 WVU MAGAZINE READERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS
BACKGROUND
The editor of WVU Magazine wanted to understand what specific content is of interest to readers, as well as gauge their interest in coronavirus content and see how they're engaging with online-only content (which will be provided this summer due to budget cuts). The learnings will be used to help better inform the magazine’s summer and fall content.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The Foundation sent an email that included a link to the survey and introductory text to everyone who receives WVU Magazine – approximately 142,000 individuals. Over 600 readers responded to the survey. Approximately three-fourths of the respondents are at least 55 years of age.
Executive Summary

WVU Magazine is a very popular publication, with most recipients reading every issue. The articles are memorable as well, with a significant amount of readers recounting at least one story that appeared in the past two issues. Most recently, that which had the greatest recall dealt with the opioid epidemic in West Virginia. It was said to be an interesting, well-researched, balanced and well-written presentation on a timely topic.

With regard to the June newsletter, the most well-read and liked story dealt with how the 2020 pandemic in Morgantown closely resembles that which occurred in 1918. Unsurprisingly, it was popular with readers who feel it’s important to understand history. Also, it has similar elements to the opioid story. Readers recounted it as being well researched, well written, interesting and timely piece that links the topic to both the state and WVU.

There is not expected to be a great amount of interest in the upcoming summer “issue,” which will feature online-only content, nor is there tremendous interest in any single proposed stories related to the pandemic:

* How alumni are dealing with the pandemic and helping their communities
* How the campus is planning to mitigate the community spread of COVID-19
* How WVU is responding to COVID-19 through research and innovation

Rather, about half are interested in reading all three stories – far less than those who acknowledge reading every issue of the magazine – because they enjoy wide-spread coverage. To reiterate, readers also appreciate articles that aren’t a reiteration of news they can find elsewhere and present a balanced perspective, rather than sensationalism.
DETAILED FINDINGS
Nearly three-fourths (73%) of WVU Magazine recipients acknowledge they read every issue; another 15% read most issues. Just 7% only read it occasionally; 4% do not typically read it.
MAGAZINE

Readers in every age category peruse every issue. However, those ages 25-34 read it less often than others.
MAGAZINE

Four in ten (40%) readers said a story(ies) from the last two issues of the magazine stood out in their mind.
The story most readers found memorable addressed the opioid epidemic.

**Epidemic (50 mentions)**
- “I read every word of two stories related to the opioid epidemic in WV. The one about the man who had electrodes implanted in his brain in order to treat his opioid addiction, and the one about how the reporter and law professors unearthed the sinister motives of the pharma companies. The facts and figures related to the number of pills per capita for the region were both sobering and sickening.”
- “The addiction crisis in our state... so many young people affected as well as the older generation. Great article on the perils of pain control that becomes an unwilling nightmare for those caught in the web!”
- “The epidemic story and the consequences its having on rural WV. It was memorable because it seems people outside of WV forget about the people inside WV. “
- “The Epidemic. It hits hard because this is my home.”
- “The Epidemic (s) stories because this has gripped our country, as well as West Virginians. Happy to see in the article legal action being pursued.”
- “The opioid epidemic. Painful to acknowledge but you took it on and when WVU takes on something I think all of us recognize its importance and that it needs to be solved.”
- “The opioid pandemic story stands out in my mind. So much has been written about this situation that has plagued our state for years now. Rarely has it been written so well and so succinctly than in this article.”

**Pandemic (14 mentions)**
- “Details about how WVU is dealing with the pandemic.”
- “Issues about COVID-19. This issue stood out in my mind because we are all dealing with this pandemic.”

Q. Which story(ies) stood out in your mind. Please be sure to explain what is it about that story that made it memorable.
Overall (5 mentions)

“The magazine seems to emphasize the studies that help the people, rather than just generating new patents or new ideas. I really enjoy reading and learning about them.”

“Country music origins - just a topic I don’t know much about. It is interesting to learn new things.

“Can’t say which I liked the best. I receive several university/college magazines from my husband and children’s alma maters, and the WVU magazine is superior.”

“Davis College is my "homeplace", and I check first to see if they have an article. Then I read from "cover-to-cover". It is enriching to learn about all of the students, research, and advance planning that is ongoing. Please keep this wide-scope coverage.”

“Don’t recall specifically, but each issue features current events and personable stories.”
NEWSLETTER

Readers were reminded of the four stories featured in the June newsletter. The story regarding the pandemic garnered the highest readership (49%), with Ask an Expert being of least interest (35%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Read it</th>
<th>Skimmed it</th>
<th>Skipped it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020 Pandemic in Morgantown closely resembles 1918 pandemic in Morgantown</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WVU grad one of first plasma donors in U.S. to save COVID-19 patients</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask an Expert: Coronavirus Hotline</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Way Forward (WVU responds to the new coronavirus)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Below are the four stories that were featured in the June newsletter (pictured below) Which of the following describes your engagement with them?
Most Interesting Article
1. 2020 Pandemic in Morgantown closely resembles 1918 pandemic in Morgantown (100+ mentions)
2. The Way Forward (WVU responds to the new coronavirus) (35 mentions)
3. WVU grad one of first plasma donors in U.S. to save COVID-19 patients (53 mentions)
4. Ask an Expert: Coronavirus Hotline (7 mentions)

• “It was fun to compare and contrast the town, the University, and the state of healthcare over what was almost exactly a century. Very well researched and presented!”
• “The comparative article of the two pandemics in Morgantown primarily because of the human interest side of the story.”
• “The feature that interested me the most was the one about the pandemic in Morgantown then and now. I'm fascinated when history seems to repeat itself especially if it is an increment of approximately 100 years.”
• “2020-1918 Pandemic in Morgantown. I'm interested in historical perspectives about all life events.”
• “The 2020 Pandemic in Morgantown closely resembles 1918 pandemic in Morgantown. Most of my family lives in Morgantown. Went to WVU and studied in Public Health. Keeping up with what goes on in Morgantown health field and how it affects the children in preschool. To see if updates from 2018 compares to now.”
• “2020 Pandemic - I'm a history buff and it was about "us."
• One of the great things about WVU is its history. Reminding us of how things change but are still the same in many respects.”
• “Actually the 1918 article. It was the first of its kind that I read. I really found it fascinating.”
• “The one about Morgantown. It was a little more unique. Meaning, I've been reading corona explainers all over the internet from multiple news outlets. I don't look to WVU Magazine for that. So the Morgantown story was unique and one I couldn't find elsewhere.”

Q. Which of the four features interested you most? Please explain your response. If none of them were of interest, please indicate that as well.

NEWSLETTER
The feature regarding the pandemic was of interest to the most readers. They are intrigued by history and liked the story’s focus on Morgantown.
NEWSLETTER

The story thought least interesting was “Ask an Expert,” as readers felt other resources provided similar information.

Least Interesting Article
1. Ask an Expert: Coronavirus Hotline (75 mentions)
2. The Way Forward (WVU responds to the new coronavirus) (22 mentions)
3. WVU grad one of first plasma donors in U.S. to save COVID-19 patients (17 mentions)
4. 2020 Pandemic in Morgantown closely resembles 1918 pandemic in Morgantown (15 mentions)

• “Ask an Expert - I live in Miami, Florida which has had COVID issues from the beginning. Have many experts here pumping out information.”
• “Ask an Expert - again, that's content I can find from other news outlets.”
• “Ask an Expert didn't do much for me. I'm over-saturated with articles on COVID-19 and this one seemed somewhat duplicative or unnecessary in my opinion.”
• “Ask an Expert. I'm feel like no one is really an expert on this pandemic and all of the information is coming from too many different sources all of the time.”
• “Ask an expert Coronavirus Hotline. There are so many studies, reports, you do not know which to believe or trust.”
• “Ask an Expert - it is unlikely that an alumni magazine is where I would come for the type of information the headline suggests.”

Q. Which of the four features interested you least? Please explain your response.
SUMMER ISSUE
A minority like the idea of online-only articles being run as the “summer issue” a great deal (8%) or a lot (14%). Three in ten (30%) like it a moderate amount or a little (21%). Another 27% do not like the idea at all.

Q. The summer issue is going to be a series of online-only articles. How much do you like that idea?
FUTURE TOPICS
About two in ten (19%) are not interested in any of the three topics below. Of those who are interested, about half (51%) would like to read about all three of them. Far less are interested in reading about one singular topic; the topic of least interest is how alumni are dealing with the pandemic and helping their communities (11%).

Interest in Future Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How WVU is responding to COVID-19 through research and innovation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the campus is planning to mitigate the community spread of COVID-19</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How alumni are dealing with the pandemic and helping their communities</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WVU MAGAZINE STORY IDEAS
Nearly two in ten (17%) have an idea for a story. These are their ideas in their own words:

- Do we have any international alumni who are working to control this pandemic in their own countries? Or how are other countries dealing with this problem in the eyes of our alumni?

- A series of articles on the histories of the major towns in WV and what they are doing to retard economic decline.

- A short review of the challenges that alumni have faced (not just COVID 19) and how the education, experience and knowledge gained while at WVU has helped and guided them.

- An article about Steve Douglas, the Alumni CEO who passed a few years ago.

- Any story focusing on older students would be a nice change. There is an assumption that students are generally around ages 18-25 in undergrad and graduate programs, and older students feel excluded.

- As a former Peace Corps Volunteer (12-71 through 06- 75) in Nicaragua and as a former WVU On Campus Peace Corps recruiter I'd be interested to know how the worldwide COVID pandemic has affected Peace Corps programs around the world, the Peace Corps Volunteers individually and how the National Peace Corps Administration is coping and what are their plans for utilizing Peace Corps Volunteers who have been "forced" to hastily leave their overseas stations and return to the United States.

- Current follow-up on well-known WVU athletes. Most readers probably follow athletics.
• Canvas all nursing homes and prisons in state in relation to terrible life taking virus. I previously completed form but pressed too fast when this question asked--unable to back up.

Linn Power Master in Social Work 1964. I share magazine and other reports from University with Edgar Huffman (MSW Class 1964 in Delaware.

• Community service that sororities and fraternities engage in. Stories of Freshmen and what their first few weeks are like.

• Courageous WV law makers with WVU connections that did the right thing - not the politically easy thing - and how they ended up. I hope the result is that courage was rewarded but even if not that looking back courageous decisions were the right thing to do.

• Cover some of the philanthropists who are regular donors, but who don’t have their names over the door.

• Cover the ROTC programs in an article. WV has very few active duty military members. When I was on active duty I was only one of around 600. These military members are assigned all over the world. They become international emissaries of WV & WVU. They serve in some very interesting locations and jobs.

• Early on when COVID-19 started and tracking the number of cases by state numbers were growing, I couldn't help wonder why WV was the last state to record their first case. Obviously those numbers have since grown, but not in great detail, I'd love to know how either: 1) WV managed not to get a single case? Or 2) the state managed the testing, reporting of all metrics (cases, hospitalizations, fatalities, etc...)? Lastly what was WVU Medicine's role in the above?
• Every issue a story on a West Virginia county and how the University and the graduates of WVU have helped shape the county and how they are moving forward in their area if in too many counties then regions of the state .... carry on.

• For a land grant school, why isn’t there more emphasis on agriculture and its potential for expansion and economic development, particularly in ruminant production. Sheep and cattle complement the poultry industry and can utilize hill country pastures that have been let go to brush.

• Greater emphasis on Alumni and how they are contributing to the University, not just the big financial contributors.

• How about a story of the history of downtown Morgantown and how its growth and development has shifted and changed with the University over the years.

• How and why were long standing Greek Organizations forced underground (Kappa Alpha Order and others).

• How are athletes and staff coping.

• How the changes from COVID-19 have affected the WVU students. Housing, campus living, school, etc.

• WVU has a great number of foreign alumni. It would be interesting to get their perspective from their home countries on any number of issues that are still relevant to West Virginia.

• How out of state alums maintain their WVU loyalty when surrounded by other college enthusiasts and maniacs.
• How the politicians have corrupted our society and have no real interest in we the people. They just want to grab glory for themselves.

• How the University's is responding to the coronavirus challenge as it affects particular populations, e.g. looking particularly at race, class and gender, disability, increased violence in the home.

• I am an addiction therapist would like to see how the school is handling addiction.

• I enjoy reading about former students who've been leading interesting lives at least as much as reading about current cutting edge scientific projects at WVU. If the latter bear fruit, we'll learn about in the real world. Ex: the Volkswagen scam uncovered with help from WVU.

• I had read about the first black Mountaineer and responded to the author that I had the privilege as a WWII Veteran student to meet and know one of the first black students on WVU campus. Might be of interest these days.

• I would be interested in reading about how certain departments or certain clubs (WVU Chess Club comes to mine...you did a great feature on that club last year) are carrying on during the pandemic.

• I would like to see a story, and hope that is occurring, that WVU is researching and economically preparing the state for reusable energy. I feel WV should remain an energy state, but must get with it. Hydrocarbons will outlive the energy system. Solar cells will be huge. Every house in America will have them. Communities will have solar farms. This will happen in 25 years. Let’s get busy. I am not some crazy environmentalists, I am a realist.
• I would suggest covering the student and alumni stories regarding how we continue to live instead of how COVID is affecting us.

• In general: what are they doing now.

• It would be interesting to know if university researchers were doing any research regarding cannabis.

• Looking back at Sunnyside over the decades with stories from alumni about their most memorable experiences there.

• Memories of the campus life in the 1960's and 1970’s.

• More features on the diversity of careers.

• My experience as working as a Conductor on Amtrak passenger trains.

• National rankings of various colleges and program.

• Out of state students that attended WVU, and later on became state residents and developed a career in the state.

• Not only about research and innovation, but how WVU is building community and helping students to keep up with their degrees and all the effort invested to keep engaging students while teaching remotely.
• Pictorial update on changes to the Morgantown campus.

• Something about what gives rise to conspiracy theories and maybe some estimates of how often such theories gave any basis in fact.

• Strong and effective ways for Mountaineers across the United States and even overseas connect outside of Morgantown West Virginia.

• Talk about Morgantown, the people, the great state of West Virginia. Don't give in to the ideolog of the fear mongers. Talk about jobs, the economy, nature, anything but politically biased suspect topics.

• The heath department refuses to share the information on how the virus is being spread. They are using vague statements like social distancing and wearing masks. The WVU reopening will be a disaster unless WVU directly deals with the root problem which is the sex drive of the students. How are you going to encourage them to get married so they will not need to go to bars and congregate in large crowds. You could set up an online marriage site for WVU students. You could created an online true stories drama involving live students and how they are winning and losing the coronavirus battle. Those who get married live and those who get drunk and have sex die.

• West Virginia University graduates who have returned to their hometowns after graduating in hopes of enhancing the community through economic investment or social engagement.
• The media bombards people with facts, fiction & partial truths 24/7, so avoid that area. How is WVU being recognized in the country & globally? Academics, fine arts, athletics, etc. & report what the individuals &/or departments are doing to receive recognition (good & bad). Also, how does WVU rank in the various college ranking reports. Discuss what hampers WVU performance, what is being done about it, the milestones that show progress & the timing to complete the challenge for improvement. Then report on the results vs its justification.

• There is not much articles or stories tells us what to do and how to recover from the COVID19 once we tested positive. Any recommendations for people having mild-moderate symptoms would be great.

• Trump and is reckless regard for our constitution and the US citizens and how this effects the WVU community.

• Updated story about Hearts of Gold program.

• We have information at our finger tips 24 hours a day about the coronavirus. If WVU a Graduate has something new to add to this conversation, please include. Otherwise, focus on not bragging so much about what is offered on campus, unless amazing. Rather, focus on Alumni - differences they are making, both on a local, state, or national level. I feel inundated about how wonderful WVU is doing in Research. The students and the Alumni are what this alum want to read about. Or, about the students, student groups, student accomplishments. My University is about its people!

• West Virginia Mountaineers worldwide and examples of how they are dealing with the new normal.
• What alumni think of the politics and direction of the University. Is it too liberal for their likes? What curricula changes would they recommend? What courses did they take, which were the most useful to their careers? Should WVU capitalize on being a conservative institution with WV changing political support from Blue to Red?

• What is happening on campus as result of virus.
  - Enrollment
  - Financial
  - Sports
  - Classes

• What is the Vision of WVU going forward? Who are competitor universities with WVU? What steps has WVU taken to reduce the costs of a 4 year education? How many Merit Scholars attend WVU. I believe that the WVU Magazine should be devoted solely to the educational programs and students.

• What will the world look like "post COVID"...perhaps a panel of faculty experts.

• What WVU is doing to educate students in actual US history, good, bad, and ugly, and efforts to promote unity in our great state and nation.

• What's life like for WVU students and faculty after COVID in Morgantown.

• Why President Trump is good for America. Because 1/2 or more of legal citizens believe in his leadership.
• WVU does a great job informing ALUMNI of our achievements, i.e. working with the NBA on (aural, I think I spelled that correctly) and have John Chambers become a partner/donator for the business school. I want to know that as an alumni but everyone who is making a choice about higher education at this time needs to know more than me. Please get someone hired for publicity for the great things WVU is doing.

• WVU in the Kanawha Valley.

• WVU Libraries - Our role in online learning in this new environment and the challenge for libraries in general. Our alumni do value the library but are not always taught to think about its role in the university. We tend to focus only on historic aspects.

Our "Undefeated" exhibit for the coming year that kicks off in early August with an online webinar. highlights ideas of voter suppression since the suffragist movement.

• How about a story of the history of downtown Morgantown and how its growth and development has shifted and changed with the University over the years.

• A short review of the challenges that alumni have faced (not just COVID 19) and how the education, experience and knowledge gained while at WVU has helped and guided them.
DEMOGRAPHICS AND MAGAZINE READERSHIP
MAGAZINE READERSHIP

AARP had the most single mentions, followed by Time Magazine and the Smithsonian. Only a small minority indicated they didn’t regularly read magazines aside from WVU Magazine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>MAGAZINES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIFESTYLE (80)</td>
<td>AARP, Southern Living, etc., The New Yorker, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL INTEREST (25)</td>
<td>Vanity Fair, People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENT/SCIENCE (25)</td>
<td>National Geographic, Smithsonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL NEWS (25)</td>
<td>TIME, Newsweek, The Week, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS (20)</td>
<td>Kiplinger's, The Economist, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORTS (20)</td>
<td>Sports Illustrated, Mountain Bike, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER ALUMNI (20)</td>
<td>The Penn Stater, Ohio State Alumni Magazine, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRADE/PROFESSIONAL (18)</td>
<td>Ohio Lawyer, Podiatry Today, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGIONAL (15)</td>
<td>Pittsburgh Monthly, Connecticut Magazine, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOMEN’S/HOME (12)</td>
<td>Good Housekeeping, Better Homes and Gardens, etc.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Q. The last few questions are about demographics. What gender do you most identify with? Q. Please check all that apply to you. Q. Into which category does your age fall?
At least three readers responded from 25 different home states.