



Visual
Media
Association

Industry Insight # 7

NEW ZEALAND

Print remains preferred where focus, trust and choice matter.



New Zealanders are living in a multi-channel reading environment, with digital channels playing an important role across news, billing, statements and subscription communications.

However, the *New Zealand Findings, Two Sides Trend Tracker Report*, shows print continues to hold a strong and valued place in consumer reading habits, particularly for books, magazines, education, trusted information and important communications.

Rather than signalling a move away from print, the findings show New Zealand consumers want balance. They value the convenience of digital, while continuing to choose print where it supports deeper reading, comprehension, privacy, permanence and consumer choice.

Print reading still cuts through

The strongest motivation is emotional. Read NZ found that 80% of readers read for enjoyment, 68% for relaxation, quiet time or time out, and 57% to learn or gain knowledge (Read NZ, 2026).

Among those who read for enjoyment, reading is frequent: 90% read for enjoyment at least weekly and 60% do so every day or almost every day. Older readers are especially habitual, with 72% of 55+ enjoyment readers reading every day or almost every day, compared with 47% of under-35s.

The results point to a clear role for print in reading formats where attention, comfort and engagement matter. Books and magazines remain strongly print-led, while print also continues to play a role in practical information such as catalogues, medical leaflets and important personal communications.

61%

of New Zealanders prefer to read books in print.



Print remains a preferred format across several key reading categories:

51%

prefer to read magazines in print.

37%

prefer to receive medical leaflets and instructions in print.

26%

prefer product catalogues in print.

23%

prefer newspaper/news in print.



52%

of New Zealanders agree children and students learn more when reading printed books and course materials rather than digital alternatives.

Print supports learning and comprehension

The report shows print continues to support education and learning. More than half of New Zealanders agree children and students learn more from printed books and course materials than digital formats.

The good news is that Kiwis are reading more. The most current national book-reading research found that 87% of New Zealand adults had read or started at least one book in the previous 12 months, equivalent to about 3.36 million adults. Male reading rose materially, from 79% in 2021 to 84% in 2025.

This reinforces the role of print as a format that supports concentration, comprehension and information retention, particularly in learning environments where screen fatigue and digital distraction are ongoing challenges.



Trust and understanding remain important

The research also highlights the relationship between print, trust and comprehension:

29% trust news stories more when they are in printed newspapers rather than online.

51% would be concerned if printed newspapers were to disappear.

58% are increasingly concerned that their personal information held electronically is at risk of being hacked, stolen, lost or damaged.

In a fragmented media environment, printed information continues to provide a sense of reliability and focus for many consumers. While digital news is widely used, print retains a meaningful role where understanding, trust and privacy concerns influence consumer behaviour.

56%

of New Zealanders say they spend too much time on electronic devices.

Digital fatigue is real

Digital fatigue is a clear theme in the findings:

31% say they suffer from digital overload.

48% are concerned that overuse of electronic devices could damage their health, including eyestrain, sleep deprivation and headaches.

These findings show that while digital channels are embedded in everyday life, many consumers are conscious of the impacts of constant screen use. Print offers an important counterbalance, giving readers a physical, screen-free format for deeper engagement.

Advertising: Online attention is under pressure



60%

of New Zealanders say they do not pay attention to most marketing adverts online.

The report shows online advertising faces clear attention and avoidance challenges:

49%

do their best to block or avoid online marketing.

31%

trust marketing adverts they see in print, such as newspapers and magazines, more than adverts seen online.

25%

trust marketing adverts sent through the post more than adverts seen online.

36%

are more likely to act when print marketing materials are personalised to their needs and consumption habits.

For brands and marketers, the findings indicate that print remains an important channel within a multi-channel media mix. Digital may offer reach and immediacy, but print can support attention, trust and action when it is relevant and well targeted.



Consumers want choice

83% of

New Zealanders believe consumers should have the right to choose how they receive communications, printed or electronically, from financial organisations and service providers.

Consumer choice is one of the strongest findings in the report:

63% say they should not be charged more for choosing a paper bill or statement.

56% agree government, banks and other organisations want to persuade them to "Go Paperless", even though it is not truly paperless because they regularly have to print documents at home if they want a hard copy.

58% agree that when service providers say switching from paper to electronic bills and statements is better for the environment, they are really trying to save costs.

These results show the issue is not print versus digital. It is about fairness, access and the right of consumers to choose the communication format that works best for them.

Summary:

New Zealand consumers embrace digital convenience, however the findings show print remains highly relevant across reading, learning, trusted communications and consumer choice as more and more consumers are choosing which communication suits them for differing purpose.

Books and magazines remain strongly print-led. Printed news continues to support understanding and trust. Education and learning is carrying higher recall and retention with comprehension rates overlaying the output. High levels of digital fatigue

are prompting consumers to value screen-free formats, while concerns about privacy and online information security reinforce the importance of physical communications.

For industry, the message is clear: print remains a trusted, effective and valued channel. It supports deeper attention, provides a balance to digital overload and plays an important role in ensuring New Zealanders retain choice in how they read, receive and engage with information.

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The Visual Media Association (VMA) is the recognised peak industry body for the paper, print, mail, publishing, packaging, graphic design, distribution, and media technology industries across Australia.

Operating for over 141 years, the VMA is a registered organisation with direct signatory to the nine (9) Awards across our industry and membership. VMA offers an end-to-end industry association solution that is relevant in all that it undertakes: advocating the relevance of the established media – print – that we all belong to; developing global partnerships and translating to regional requirements; awarding excellence; investing in products; and arming our industry with sales tools, sustainability collateral, industrial relations representation and more.

The VMA is the largest print industry body, committed to building a stronger united leadership to deliver the goals of our members. United we lead strong advocacy, government advisory, skills and training programs, protection, and promotion of our industry channels and more to ensure our members' businesses operate within a future-proofed strategy for success.

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Sources:

New Zealand Findings, Two Sides Trend Tracker Report, April 2025.

Visual Media Association, April 2026.

Read NZ, 2025-2026.

