READING IN UKRAINE

Results of the Study of Reading Habits and Attitudes towards Reading carried out in 2013-2014
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The following additional materials as well as the content of this brochure are available online in English and Ukrainian at www.bookplatform.org:

1. Technical Requirements to the Study of Reading Habits and Attitudes towards Reading
2. Other useful international studies on reading habits (mostly in English)
The results of the general national representative study of reading habits and attitude to reading undertaken by pro.mova experts to order and in partnership with the NGO Publishers Forum at the turn of 2013-2014 within the Book Platform project have identified certain trends in the development of an important cultural practice form for modern Ukrainians, which is reading. The principal difference between this study and previous studies consists in the fact that it focuses on various reading practices - not only books or periodicals, but text/s in general (of any size and broad content).

Sociological studies focused on several key issues relating to quality and quantity reading characteristics, the role of reading amid other information and cultural practices as well as within the leisure structure; identification of societal attitude towards reading, its role within the system of cultural values, clarification of the reasons for non-reading and the factors that could possibly promote and support the prestige of that cultural practice.

Let me try and comment upon the conclusions of sociologists in those basic issues.

The reading habit and the nature of reading among Ukrainian residents. The study results dispel one popular and frequently quoted myth saying that Ukrainians no longer read, or read extremely little. It has turned out that only 12% Ukrainians have responded that they have not read a single text out of the range of those suggested within the possible reading field throughout the year - starting with fiction up to brief Internet or glossy magazine stories about star lives, sports news, with funny stories. Instead, 88.3% of those surveyed still have read something over the last year, and that very fact in itself is already gratifying.

It is known, however, that a classic reader “starts with the book”, and systematic reading of large in scope and - most important - integral texts presupposes well-developed reading skills. If we take within a surveyed sample a group of book readers, which is the largest out of all the suggested narratives, the picture changes drastically. Then almost half of the society appears to be among non-readers - 42%, since only 58.4% of respondents have confirmed the fact of reading ‘long texts’ (book of over 100 pages in scope) over the last 12 months. If we take into account the fact that 10% of that group could not recall the name of the last book they read, the group of real readers of large texts, in particular, books, is, in fact, even smaller.

How do we react to such general figures? Is it much or little? The figure of 42% of book non-readers among Ukrainians is, in fact, twice higher than among Americans, where it makes up only 19%. However, in Ukraine the number of non-readers is almost the same as in Russia (the country with similar post-Soviet experience) - 46%, and in Great Britain (the country which represents the European experience) - 34%. Indeed, only 10.1% of the Ukrainian respondents have read more than 11 books per year (on average, the figure is one book per month), and that is three times less than among American respondents (31%). However, both in the Ukrainian, and in the American societies the share of the so-called mass reader - the one who has read from 1 to 5 books over the last year - is almost the same, which is 34.8% in Ukraine and 32% in the USA. Hence, the situation with reading in Ukraine is not unique and fits the general world trend.

Thus, it is obvious that today it is of utmost importance to realize not only “how much”, but also “what” and “how” Ukrainians read, the way they treat reading as contrasted to other social cultural practices and, finally, who and why does not read at all.

It was not that difficult to foresee that there would be more non-readers among respondents with elementary, incomplete secondary education or general secondary education, and fewer - among individuals with higher education, since there is a direct relation between the attitude to reading and individuals’ education. Quite expectedly, the main group of adult readers and even buyers is mainly made up of women, while men prevail among adult non-readers. The region does not affect the reading and purchasing behavior of Ukrainians, however, the administrative and territorial characteristics of the place of residence are of importance: rural residents read less than city residents.

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There are sufficient grounds to state that further on, as the result of distinct social stratification of the society, the difference between its individual groups in terms of their attitude to traditional cultural practices will become even more vivid.

Obviously, the share of those who will keep on participating in traditional forms of cultural activities, preserving traditional value systems, will be going down, while the share of those for whom access to culture and, finally, all culture will be brought down to TV and other audiovisual mass information and communication channels will rise.

An average Ukrainian aged 16+ has read some 4 books of over 100 pages in scope (4.3 books) over the last year. Previous studies showed similar figures. Thus, according to the GFK² studies, the share of respondents who read at least 1 book in three months makes up 51%, while the share of families with children under 15, in which at least 1 book has been read over the same period of time to children or by children on their own makes up 57%.

Within the structure of reading objects small texts prevail over long narratives: about one third of respondents read short texts only. Over 90% have indicated that they get information from TV, through communication with other people and through reading of periodicals, books. Almost the same, in percentage, number of respondents prefer fiction and ‘news’ texts to social and economic, political texts, social gossip and sports. Taking into account the number of adherents of this or that type of texts, one may claim that currently pragmatic/business motivation component prevails over the need for spiritual and aesthetic development in reading (texts about culture and art, as well as spiritual, religious literature are at the bottom of the list).

Since respondents were surveyed on a wider range of reading objects (not only books), the majority of which are represented in the world network, downloading from the Internet turned out to be one of the simplest and - most important - free-of-charge ways of getting information/book for them. In the clarifying answers those surveyed accentuated that when you do know what you are looking for it is much more convenient to order via the Internet, from the warehouse, to borrow from acquaintances. At the same time, there were many complaints heard about the quality of bookshops’ work, in particular, they were accused of it being impossible for them to help buyers to make the right choice. Of interest is the fact that book purchasing in book clubs is perceived as a pleasant consumption process. Though the notion of ‘book club’ is replaced here by direct marketing and purchasing by a ‘book-mail’ method, here favourable attitude to address work with prospective buyer is meant.

The study has traced: reading is not a daily practice. Even news texts - social and political, economic news/reviews, familiarization with which a priori presupposes daily frequency, are read on a daily basis only by 30.5% of respondents (39.7% do this several times a week, 22% - just once a week). Almost all types of texts are read only a couple of times a week. Here spiritual/religious literature comes as an exception since its adherents read it on a daily basis. The explanation should obviously be searched for in the specific nature of the vey object of reading and the nature of motivation for getting down to it.

As far as the average duration of one reading session is concerned, for the majority of suggested texts it makes up 30-60 minutes, and only fiction takes more of respondents’ time - over 1 hour. That is the longest average reading sitting. 20% of fiction readers, 12% - of professional, educational literature and texts are ready to set aside over 2 hours to reading. The average statistical fiction reading session is most durable, while that of social and political, economic news/reviews is the most systematic one. Hence, the frequency and duration of addressing reading, books primarily, goes down (becomes less intensive), even among the groups most favourable in the reading sense.

To my mind, prevalence of fragmentary superficial reading (information readout) over reflective reading is accounted for by several reasons: considerable increase in the scope of information makes it poorly ‘digestible’, makes the processes of its deep perception and realization impossible (inhibits them); massification of content not only of mass media but of book editions as well makes them treated as a cultural product of poor quality, thus presupposing facilitated (unencumbered) reception regime; among leisure forms there prevail entertainment and relaxation.

On the whole, Ukrainians read when they have an occasion for them, during break intervals or simultaneously with other activities. People tend to allow some time for reading fiction, spiritual literature, self-help manuals, guides, leisure time organization literature, but the share of such people is no more than 45.5%.

Besides regular nature and duration, an important reading criterion characterizing reflectiveness, and, thus, profoundness of reading is its integrity. Only one third of respondents turned out to be prone to integral reading, almost half of respondents demonstrated mixed (integral and fragmentary) type of reading. It stems

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² Namely the study of 2013, carried out by “GFK Ukraine” and commissioned by the “Kyivstar” company. The study in Ukrainian is available via the following link http://www.gfk.ua/imperia/md/content/gfkukraine/reports/report_gfk_reading_pres.pdf
from the data, received from the survey, that fragmentary nature is characteristic of news text reading, while more than a half of respondents tend to read fiction (69.4%), spiritual (54.7%) and professional/business/educational literature (50.4%) in full.

Judging by the fact that reflective reading is characterized by finding spare time for it, deriving pleasure from reading, reading large texts from beginning to end, focusing on reading, striving to discuss the things read, reflecting over the things read and getting back to it, sociologists have identified a group of readers by the reading habit development index. The largest (56.1%) is the group of readers who showed average level of the reading habit development. The group with high level of its development takes the second place (37.6%). However, if taken together, they form the overwhelming majority - some 90%. It is gratifying to know that an average Ukrainian, as he claims, derives pleasure from reading, he re-reads, reflects over and discusses the things read with other individuals.

Following the above differences in the way of reading, viz. the breadth (embracing the whole palette of texts suggested in the questionnaire), daily systematic nature of reading them, no less than two-hour duration per one reading session, integrity, intensity of “interaction” with the texts, sociologists have identified four groups of readers with a different nature of reading behavior. The most numerous of them (40.2%) is the fourth out of the identified groups - ‘avid readers’ with the highest reading breadth index. As for me, there is nothing strange about the fact that their reading conduct reconciles integral reading with fragmentary one: different types of texts require different ways of comprehension. Another fact is frustrating: with non-systematic and non-durable reading the reflectiveness figure is still high. The second place (29.4%) goes to the first of the identified groups - fastidious readers with the most developed reading skill. Their reading conduct is logically motivated and understandable: its representatives read persistently, reflectively and systematically, and they are quite choosy in their choice of texts. I consider it to be a general positive conclusion that in terms of quantity the representatives of those groups prevail over groups of readers with unambitious reading needs and tastes and poorly developed reflective reading skill - 70% to 30%.

On the basis of social and demographic portrait of the leader groups one can elaborate appropriate strategies of promoting the ideas of reading in the society, raising the level of the reading culture. In both groups there dominate individuals above 55, with almost the same percentage correlation between the representatives of other age groups. In both groups there prevail women, however the disproportion with men is insignificant (in the fourth group the figure is almost 62% versus 38%, and in the first one - 55% versus 45%). Over 50% in both groups are respondents with incomplete and complete higher education.

Contrary to hypotheses expressed by experts, sociologists have not traced any direct dependence between the reading skill development level and the reader’s age: proportion between those reading in an integral and fragmentary way does not change with age. And that means that youth reads no less than adults do. Among groups of people with different reading skills manifestations traced as the result of cluster analysis, though, the largest share in the group with the highest risk of fragmentary and non-reflective reading goes to those born after 1984. However, in the sociologists’ opinion, that figure rather testifies to a trend than explains the causality.

The role of reading in the lives of Ukrainians. The results of the survey show that reading, quite expectedly, is behind TV as well as communication with friends and relatives in the structure of leisure practices. That proves once again that the role of books among cultural activity forms that used to be traditional up till the recent time is fading away, and not in the least due to the impact of alternative means of audiovisual culture. Instead, the fact that searching through the Internet pages is yet far behind the three most widespread leisure types for Ukrainians is quite frustrating. I may assume that is only due to the fact that the suggested answers did not include the favourite type of Internet leisure of the young part of the audience - staying in social networks. It should be pointed out that the equally eagerly get down to reading in their free time on weekdays and at the weekend.

It should be noted that the Internet, in fact, does not constitute any hazard for real book culture supporters, but is one of the common places in the discourse focused on modern information and communication processes. As it stems from the data received by the GFK company, respondents-readers at the same time turn out to be most active in using the Internet: 46% of the category of the so-called ‘adult-readers-buyers’ and 45% of the category of ‘adult-readers-non-buyers’ use it once or several times a day. The lifestyle of readers differs significantly from the lifestyle of non-readers: they are versatile in their interests, most of them have hobbies, they make plans for the future in terms of moral, intellectual and professional development (and books and the Internet come in handy here), they often show dissatisfaction with the content of modern TV, actively use gadgets, read at any spare moment (for instance, while standing in queues or in transport) and - what is of utmost importance - it is them who make their children accustomed to reading, involve them in the reading culture, ensuing continuity of the corresponding tradition.
About 50% of respondents who have children and/or grandchildren state that they read to them on a daily basis or several times a week. At the same time a quarter of them confess that they read to their children less than once a week. And more active adults are in reading to preschool-age children than to those of primary-school age. Most probably, further they shift this complicated and time-consuming burden onto school. The group in which parents of children under 15 (or children themselves) have not read and/or bought a single book over three months makes up one third of those surveyed.

Respondents’ complaints about the fact that it is getting more and more difficult to make children read, all the more when there are such alternatives as TV or computer, and that it is difficult to make them focus on reading, which are quite often repeated in profound interviews, can be considered to be quite an alarming signal. Parents do realize that their children are less respectful of reading and of books they do not realize the importance of reading for personality development and even acknowledge their own disability in their attempts at convincing the child of the useful and interesting nature of reading.

**Attitude to reading.** 77.7% of all those surveyed have acknowledged their love for reading, and that love started being ‘nurtured’ with the majority (that making up almost 94%) back in their teens. At the same time, 62.3% of pro.mova-surveyed respondents stated that they came to like reading in the adult age. It seems that the reader does not necessarily ‘starts in his/her childhood’?

Almost half of those surveyed (53.9%) have acknowledged that they read too little. Those reading books (either 1 book, or 12 books a year) appeared to be less critical in the self-assessment of the frequency of their reading: almost 81% are sure that they read enough.

The attitude to reading in the society remains quite positive. 60.8% of the respondents consider reading to be the precondition of individual’s success in the society in general, in the Ukrainian society in particular (53.4%). There is consensus concerning its importance, along with other intangible needs (full-fledged communication with family, friends, acquaintances; respect on behalf of and recognition by the near socium, etc.). Over 80% of those surveyed consider reading to be an important component of self-development; at the same time for the majority (almost 70%) current self-development does not constitute a priority. The results of reading assessment in the context of priorities and importance of different needs for contemporary Ukrainians show that stable income source availability constitutes a more important need for the majority of the respondents. And that, in the sociologists’ opinion, confirms one of the initial hypotheses relating to prevalence of safety-related needs.

It should be stressed that 2/3 of the respondents highly appreciate the role of school and family as the factors affecting reading development in childhood. And for those born before 1984 school played a major role here, while for those born after 1984 family was more important in that. This all testifies to obvious decrease in the social role (authority) of modern school in the issues of attracting young generation to the literary tradition, cherishing reading traditions and culture.

Almost half of the respondents are real bookworms having their home libraries which they consider to be the testimony of education and intelligence, the precondition of good upbringing and positive influence on children. The reasons for absence of home library, lack of wish to buy and make collections of books, as indicated by the respondents, include both conventional (like, let us say, poor apartment conditions) and modern ones topical majorly for younger generation (let us say, mobility restrictions; easier, quicker and cheaper (free-of-charge) text search on the Internet).

In the responses to the clarifying question the book purchasing procedure, looking through the pages and book possession were treated as a special, almost festive (and thus non-trivial) practice. Book exchange was described as a convenient way of getting books and a communication occasion. It is noteworthy that those surveyed pointed out the advantages of reading paper (printed) books over reading electronic ones.

**The reasons for non-reading/insufficient reading.** The basic reason for non-reading all the suggested text types is lack of motivation for their reading. The lowest motivation was traced among the respondents for reading spiritual and religious literature (71% of the respondents indicated that they do not feel the need to read it, while at the same time reading of that literature type is associated with the highest frequency), however, the need to read texts of leisure and professional nature also turned out to be quite low. Almost equal reader ‘indifference’ was traced among the respondents to entertainment texts, leisure time organization literature, literature on hobbies and professional literature. And even in the attitude to fiction, to texts on art and culture, to social and political news block the percentage of those feeling the need to read them is lower than the percentage of those who do not have such a need.

The above reason outstrips all the other reasons 10 times like lack of money for buying, absence/lack of sales outlets and libraries, absence of high-quality texts/pieces worthy of attention, lack of reference information, etc. Does this result reflect the real situation? To my mind, such disproportion in the selection of explanatory arguments can testify to the fact that the majority of respondents, in case of absence of a basic
need to read, even do not try to analyze other, really important reasons. Since how do we explain then, let us say, the low percent of ‘complaints’ about restricted access to books and information caused by the lack of sales outlets, abundance of popular-consumption literature (mass culture) in the book trading assortment, lack of libraries staffed with topical literature, primarily in rural areas. In the responses to clarifying questions an obvious wish of the respondents ‘to justify themselves’ can be traced, like to explain non-reading by the lack of time, full immersion into family, work.

By the way, absence of time for reading is stated as the main reason for non-reading in the GFK survey (56%). Here also an alternative as presented by TV and radio (35%), loss of interest in reading coming with age (27%) and absence of interest in books throughout life (17%) are mentioned. It is indicative that only 14% of the respondents see the Internet as an obstacle on the way to reading books.

I would like to emphasize that the study dispels one more thought, quite popular in the society and among experts, which states that one of the reasons for non-buying and non-reading books is prospective consumers’ lack of money. Among the reasons for non-reading all text types this reason was mentioned by 3 to 7% of the respondents. And that is when the overwhelming majority of those surveyed are people with modest income level. Thus, 39.2% of the respondents have to borrow or save to buy a nice suit, a cell phone, a vacuum cleaner; 23.1% - to buy clothes, shoes (this group, in general, has enough money only for food); 19.5% - to buy a TV, fridge. Only 1.4% of the respondents can afford any necessary acquisitions at any time.

In fact, economic transformations that have taken place in our society over the past two decades have also caused radical changes in the issues of book culture affordability: it stopped being ‘cheap’. However, as we can see, not financial barriers, but the fundamental change in the very structure of social communication in the society’s perception of traditional forms of cultural activities constitutes the reasons for that phenomenon. The fact that in the answers book reading is shown as opposed to really ‘important things’ shows that for contemporary Ukrainians reading is not an organic part of their everyday life that goes without saying, it is rather an activity taking its toll: time, brain tension (unlike, let us say, relaxation while watching TV programs lying on the sofa) and giving no direct quick effect. Quite obvious is reading marginalization, its restriction to being a leisure field: the respondents can address it only when they either do not have, or did not have, or will not have an everyday work stress (in their childhood or in their teens, after they retire, when ill, when they have nothing to do at their workplace, etc.).

Still, in spite of all that, the respondents are not yet ready to openly admit that they are non-readers: those surveyed who stated that they read books and at the same time could not confirm that fact by indicating the titles of the books read, in fact, obviously, wanted to seem better. Otherwise, why dodge then?! Thus, it stems that reading so far keeps its status positions, being an important attribute (marker) of individual’s educational and cultural level.

Conclusions. It does not have to be proved that the reading culture constitutes an essential precondition for the development of the informational culture of personality and society in general: it cannot be formed in the society that does not read. However, it is worth reminding of the profound spiritual changes reading can cause. The communicative essence of reading, affirmation of generally recognized cultural norms through reading contribute to mutual understanding between people, tolerance, mildening and humanization of life in the society, contacts between peoples.
Ukrainian experts on reading state that reading habits and attitudes towards reading are changing. With the help of reading, a person can process much more information than before due to a rapid “informatization” of society in recent years. At the same time, readers now have fewer opportunities and less motivation for reflective reading, which, according to experts, is an important factor in the development of personality. Analysts working on this study have tested the hypotheses formed on the basis of interviews with experts, which constituted part of the nationwide representative survey of reading habits and attitudes towards reading in Ukraine.

The way Ukrainians read and their general attitude towards reading

Over the past twelve months, the average Ukrainian aged sixteen or over read approximately four (4.3) books of over 100 pages in length. The majority of the respondents (58.4%) claim that during the past twelve months they read long texts (books over 100 pages in length), while 11.7% of Ukrainians admit they do not read any texts. Thus, around one-third of respondents read short texts only.

Almost 80% of Ukrainians say they love to read. At the same time, the majority of Ukrainians admit they do not read enough. Of those who say they read enough, 80.7% actually read from one to twelve books (of over 100 pages) a year.

When it comes to preferred leisure activities, reading ranks third, behind only watching TV and communicating with friends and loved ones. Watching movies and surfing the Internet are ranked far behind these three leading leisure activities.

The attitude towards reading in society is rather positive: Ukrainians perceive reading as an important part of self-development (more than 80% of respondents say so). However, at the same time, for the majority of respondents (almost 70%), self-development itself is not a priority. There is a statistically significant difference between those born before and after 1984 in terms of their assessment of the impact of school and friends/peers on the development of reading habits. Respondents born before 1984 assess impact positively.

The main reason for not reading turned out to be the lack of the need to read, rather than limited access to quality texts, as the experts had initially suggested. When asked about their reasons for not reading or reading less, respondents noted external factors (work, family, Internet), which take up most of their time, not leaving time for oneself. Based on this, we can assume that Ukrainians consider reading as a superfluous activity, which does not provide instant gratification, but instead demands some sacrifice (time, effort). Respondents juxtaposed reading against more important things such as work and family. Reading is associated with periods free of work-life stress (such as early in life, retirement, during sick leave, or when there is nothing to do in the work place).

The average Ukrainian adult reader (16+)

Ukrainian readers do not suffer from a lack of good texts to read. Only 28.8% of respondents said they read belles-lettres several times a week or more.

Ukrainians read in sporadically, simultaneously with other activities, instead of setting aside some time for reading. However, Ukrainians tend to read texts in full, not in fragments.

The level of reading skill does not correlate with age or with educational level, nor with gender, nor with place of residence. There is a positive correlation only with readers’ subjective estimation of their love of reading.

Using cluster analysis, we identified four groups of people with different levels of reading habits. The largest share of readers born after 1984 falls into the group with the highest level of fragmented and careless reading. This indicator signifies a tendency and not a cause-and-effect relationship.

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These are people who left school before 2000, whose teenage years coincided with the critical years of the 1990s, when financial burdens may have been shifted parents’ priorities with respect to the development of their children’s reading skills.
METHODOLOGY

Research objectives

The aim of the study was to understand the phenomenon of reading as a cultural practice and to study the attitude towards reading in modern Ukrainian society.

Characteristics of the research flow

During the preparation phase, pro.mova experts, together with partner and the contractor of the research, the NGO Publishers’ Forum, within the Book Platform project discussed the research process.

In-depth interviews and discussions with experts accompanied the process of developing hypotheses and deciding how to test them. Several factors forced us to rethink our methodology: the need to clarify and conceptualize the research subject (i.e. developing an agreed-upon concept of “reading” with the community of experts), as well as the social and political events that unfolded in the country during the course of the research. In addition, the expert discussions on the topic of reading deeply touched social and political issues related to subjectivity - individuals’ willingness and ability to make decisions and form their own opinions, which also required coordination with the study’s methodology. The researchers used a wider variety of statistical procedures than they had initially planned to (including cluster analysis). Instead of focus-group discussions, they held clarifying phone interviews with part of the respondents in the national quantitative survey and categorized reader types according to the hypotheses and practical goals of the research. All these steps were necessary to synergize and activate various stakeholders’ efforts in the area of reading.

Research stages

1. Preparatory stage (development of methodology and deepening of preliminary understanding of reading, expert interviews and discussion)

In-depth expert surveys were conducted in the period between August 18 and September 2, 2013, via personal meetings with the pro.mova analysts team (Viktoriya Bryndza, Lyudmila Yankina, Taras Prokopyshyn, Alim Aliev) in Lviv and Kyiv, as well as through phone calls and Skype connections. In total, twenty-eight experts were interviewed. Interviews lasted 40-90 minutes. In addition, one expert’s opinion was registered through the analysis of his public appearance in the media. Five experts took part in the thematic discussion; two others gave their comments on the list of hypotheses, which were adapted as a result of the expert surveys. The list of experts and the level of their involvement is available in the document “Results from the Preparatory Stage (Technical Requirements) of the Study of Readers’ Habits and Attitudes towards Reading” at bookplatform.org.

2. National quantitative research

The fieldwork stage of the research was held between October 10 and December 10, 2013. The sample size includes 1,962 respondents aged 16 years or older (with a theoretical margin of error of 2.18% at a 95% confidence interval). The sample is probabilistic, includes many steps and uses quotas according to sex and age characteristics during the last stage of selection.

Some of the questions were aimed at readers only; for this parameter, the sample size equals 1,733 respondents (with a margin of error of 2.4% at a 95% confidence interval)

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### Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kherson</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmelnytskyi</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherkasy</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chernivtsi</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chernihiv</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Educational level

- **Degree**: 1.2
- **Higher**: 32.4
- **Incomplete higher**: 12.1
- **Vocational, secondary vocational**: 37.0
- **General secondary**: 13.9
- **Primary, basic general education**: 3.4

#### Language

- **Russian**: 16.8
- **Ukrainian**: 42.8
- **Both**: 39.4
- **Other**: 4.6
Material security

Forced to save on food 3.7

Enough for food. To buy clothes, shoes there is a need to save or borrow. 23.1

For such purchases as a good suit, a mobile phone, a vacuum cleaner there is a need to save or borrow 39.2

In order to purchase things like a TV-set, a fridge there is a need to save or borrow 19.5

For such purchases as a car, an apartment there is a need to save or borrow 7.4

I can do any necessary purchases at any time 1.4

Refusal to answer 5.7

Research subject

- Ukrainians’ reading methods
- Reading skills
- Reasons for not reading
- Position of reading among leisure and info-cultural practices
- Perception of reading
- Public opinion about
  - the importance of reading for the accumulation of cultural capital
  - the influence of family, school, media, state policy and the church on the development of reading habits
  - changes in the influence of family and school on the formation of reading habits

More detailed information about the hypotheses and questionnaire can be found in the document “Results of the Preparatory Phase (Technical Requirements) of the Study of Reading Habits and Attitudes towards Reading” at bookplatform.org.

3. Deepening the understanding of the quantitative research results with additional surveys among the respondents

This research stage was implemented between December 23, 2013, and January 18, 2014, by pro.mova researchers (Lyudmila Yankina, Maryna Tkachenko and Diana Baka) using the phone survey method. Interviews were held with selected respondents from the national quantitative survey who represented specific groups of readers/non-readers according to the research hypothesis and practical goals. The average duration of a single interview was 10-15 minutes. Forty-eight persons were interviewed in total (24 groups, two persons in each):
The following questions were prepared in order to obtain a deeper understanding of reading practices and factors that affect them for the particular groups:

- What prevents you from reading? What would need to happen for you to read more?
- Why don’t you build up your own library? How do you get books?
- Under what conditions do you read more?
- Under what conditions do your children read more?

4. Preparation of the conclusions and recommendations

The study’s conclusions and recommendations were prepared taking into account the results and achievements of all stages of the research: preparatory interviews with experts, as well as the quantitative and qualitative phases. In addition, the analysts took into account the data from the study “Reading Books in Ukraine”, conducted by GfK Ukraine for “Kyivstar”.

The Researchers

The analytical center of the pro.mova company conducts research both for company’s internal needs and as stand-alone projects. In this way, the center initiates public debate and stimulates the stakeholders’ subsequent activity.

The company’s analysts are experts in quantitative and qualitative research who have developed unique methods and approaches and also provide training for social scientists in Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The analytical center’s strength lies in the deep interpretation of data and research results thanks to a solid European education, international experience, and understanding of the local context and trends in world development.

Responsible persons: Viktoriya Bryndza and Ruslan Savchynsky
SURVEY RESULTS

How Ukrainians read and relate to reading generally

Overall, 88.3% of Ukrainians read something (i.e., read at least one type of text listed in the questionnaire). Almost 12% of Ukrainians do not read any of these text types.

Figure 1. Share of readers and nonreaders

The largest share of those who do not read at all can be observed among persons with primary or secondary education, while the lowest is among people with higher education.

Figure 2. Ratio of readers and nonreaders with respect to educational level
The survey included seven text types:

1. Fiction: Poetry and Prose
2. Professional/business/academic/scientific literature, analytical articles, reviews, professional guides
3. Socio-political/economic news, reviews
4. Texts on culture, art, literature
5. Texts about celebrities, sports, fashion, interesting events, puzzles, jokes
6. Tutorials/guides/hobby literature, handicrafts, gardening
7. Spiritual, religious literature

Each text type was evaluated by respondents as to whether they had read such texts or not during the last twelve months. Socio-political/economic news were the most commonly read text types, followed by fiction and texts about celebrities. Spiritual and religious literature was read by the smallest percentage of respondents.

![Figure 3. Share of readers of each text type (answers “yes” to the question “Have you read these text types over the last twelve months?”)](image)

The main reason for not reading among those who had not read any text types, appeared to be the lack of a need or desire to read. This tendency is relevant for all types of texts. The percentage of individuals who cited this reason for not reading is much higher (approximately ten times larger) than the share of other reasons.
In my locality they are not sold
There is not enough money to buy them
In my opinion, there are no good, interesting, useful texts of high quality
Other

In my locality they are difficult to find in libraries or to borrow
I do not have enough information to choose what to read
There is no need or desire to read such type

Figure 4. Reasons for not reading various text types (“What are the reasons that you do not read this type of text?”).

The most common explanation for “other” reasons for not reading fiction was a lack of free time and eyesight concern.

In specifying their reasons for not reading or reading less, respondents cited external factors (work, family, Internet), which take up most of their time, not leaving them time for themselves. Based on this, we can assume that Ukrainians consider reading as a leisure activity, which does not provide instant gratification, but instead demands some sacrifice (time, effort). Respondents juxtaposed reading against more important things such as work and family. Reading is associated with periods free of work-life stress (such as early in life, retirement, during sick leave, or when there is nothing to do in the workplace).

Another component of their explanation for not reading was the absence of interesting books and the complexity of choosing valuable books that are worth one’s time and effort. There were also other types of explanations related to the physical inability to read, the lack of promotion of reading in the media, and the mostly negative media discourse. Respondents interpreted reading as a positive activity.

Respondents mentioned various incentives for reading from their own experience: searching for information, needing to kill time, friends’ recommendations, book promotions, the desire to read a story after watching a movie based on it, membership in a book club, the desire to escape into another world, and cases when a book turned up by chance.

Almost 80% of Ukrainians say they love to read. At the same time, the majority of Ukrainians admit they read not enough.
Experts claim that the ability to read long texts is crucial for the development of reading skills. The survey data shows that only 57.9% of Ukrainians state that they have read books over 100 pages in length over the past twelve months. However, about one-tenth of that 57.9% could not specify the name of the last book they had read. On average Ukrainians have read 4.3 books of over 100 pages during the last twelve months.

The share of Ukrainian nonreaders — 42% — is double the share of nonreaders in the USA. The same indicator in Russia is 46%\(^4\), while in the UK it is 34%\(^5\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of books read in the last year</th>
<th>Ukraine(^6)</th>
<th>USA(^7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) share of people aged 18+, face-to-face survey, n = 2000, 2008, Levada Center
\(^5\) share of people aged 16+, face-to-face survey, n = 2000, 2008, BML
\(^6\) share of people aged 16+, face-to-face survey, n = 2000, 2008, pro.mova
\(^7\) share of people aged 18+, phone survey, n = 2000, 2008, Levada Gallup surveys and Pew Research Center
Almost 50% of respondents state that they already have or are building up their home library, but 46% state they are not.

In clarifying the answers, respondents explained the absence of a home library on the one hand by the “housing problem” and the limits on mobility potentially caused by a large number of books, while on the other hand, the respondents expressed no need to buy/store books when it is faster to find the text on the Internet than on a bookshelf.

For some respondents, a home library was an indicator of accomplishment and intelligence, an integral part of a good upbringing that has a positive impact on children.

In clarifying their answers, respondents described the process of obtaining and using books, buying them, and turning pages like a special, almost festive (and therefore unusual) practice. Sharing literature was described as a handy way of getting books and a reason to communicate. Downloading a text from the Internet was interpreted as a simple and free way to get a “book”.

Buying books was considered unnecessary, because one can get reading materials for free. This is particularly true if bookstores cannot help the customer choose what to buy. Respondents explained that now in bookstores you can get lost, waste time and buy something of low quality. If you know what you are looking for, it is more convenient to order a book online, from the warehouse, borrow it from friends or upload the text. Accordingly, the role and function of bookstores was seen as marginal.

Another method of obtaining books was associated with the established process of buying books through a book club, which was seen as a pleasant means of consumption.

Reading is one of the three most common leisure practices, outranked only by watching television and chatting with friends and family. The largest proportion of respondents preferred the following leisure activities: watching television (80%), communication with friends and family (70%), and reading (approximately 65%). Internet browsing was preferred by around 40% of the respondents, and watching movies by approximately 30%. There were no significant differences between weekdays and weekends with respect to respondents’ preferred leisure activities.

The time allocated for different types of leisure practices were the same, averaging from half-an-hour to hours (respondents assessed the approximate duration on a five-point scale where “1” was a few minutes, “2” - from half-an-hour to an hour, “3” - approximately 1-2 hours, “4” - approximately 2-5 hours, and “5” - more than 5 hours).

This a post-soviet phenomena - a situation, when young people economically and mentally are not able to live separately from parents. Several generations live together and share their private space.
The majority of Ukrainians tend to think that reading in general contributes to success in life. The share of those who agree with this statement in relation to the realities of Ukrainian life is slightly lower. Nearly 13% believe that reading does not contribute to success in modern Ukrainian society.

Over 80% of Ukrainians agree that reading is very important to self-development.

Figure 9. Ranking of leisure practices

Figure 10. Evaluation of reading’s contribution to success in general and in the Ukrainian context

Figure 11. Evaluation of reading’s role in self-development
In order to estimate the importance of self-development itself, respondents were also asked to rank the relative importance of various life needs, including the need for financial security, for self-development, etc. In assessing each need individually, Ukrainians point to the importance of lower- and higher-level needs. The mean value assigned to the importance of each need is greater than 3.9 (on a scale from “1” - not important to “5” - very important). When the same list of needs is ordered in terms of priority, a stable source of income is the most important need for the respondents and self-development is the least important (on a scale where “5” is the highest priority and “1” is the least preferred).

These findings confirm the hypothesis that security-related needs are the highest priority in society. However, a recognition of the importance of non-materialistic needs is also in evidence.
The next questions were about the development of reading skills among children. Respondents were also asked to estimate the impact of various factors on the development of children’s reading skills. They largely evaluated positively the effects of each of the studied factors on reading. According to the respondents’ estimations, family and school had the most positive influence on children’s reading. However, in assessing the impact of other factors, respondents’ opinions differed greatly. Approximately 25% and 30% of respondents thought that friends/social environment and the media, respectively, have a negative influence on the formation of reading habits among children in Ukrainian society. Almost one of four respondents thought that the media, friends and social environment, civic initiatives and special projects do not affect the development of reading habits in children at all.

![Figure 14. Evaluation of various factors’ impact on reading skills](image)

Two-thirds of respondents declared that family and school had a positive effect on their reading habits, noting that these factors developed their reading habits. A third of respondents felt that friends/social environment did not affect the development of their reading habits.

There is a statistically significant difference in the evaluation of the influence of school and friends/social environment on the development of reading skills among respondents born before 1984 and those born after 1984. The proportion of those who said that the school and the friends/social environment helped developed their reading habits is greater among those born before 1984 than among those born after 1984.

Approximately half of Ukrainians with children and/or grandchildren read to them every day or several times a week. About a quarter of Ukrainians with children and/or grandchildren read to them at least once a week. Respondents read a bit more frequently to children of pre-school age, in comparison to those of elementary school age.

In clarifying their answers, respondents complained that it is difficult to make children read when alternatives such as the computer and TV exist. It is hard to hold a child’s attention even in the process of reading. Respondents cited various ways of helping children pay more attention to reading: the parents’ attention to child and their intonation while reading; the bright design of the book; reading after playing active games reading; reading stories they are already familiar with from cartoons or movies; reading exciting stories that describe the unknown. Some of respondents replied with regret that children do not value books as their parents do; they do not realize how important reading is for development; that parents make only a feeble effort to convince the child of reading’s usefulness.
Figure 15. Evaluation of different factors’ impact on reading skills by persons born before and after 1984

Figure 16. Estimated frequency of reading to children
Who is the average adult (16+) Ukrainian reader?

In general, there are enough good texts for reading, regardless of the type. 23.2% of respondents say that there is a “lack or rather poor amount” of works of fiction. This is the highest rate of “lack” among all types of texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Type</th>
<th>Not enough or rather not enough</th>
<th>Enough or rather enough</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-political/economic news, reviews</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction: prose and poetry</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts about celebrities, sports, fashion, interesting events, crosswords, jokes</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/business/academic/scientific literature, analytical articles, …</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorials/guides/hobby literature, handicrafts, gardening</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts on culture, art, literature</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual, religious literature</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's fiction and educational texts (if you read to children)</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17. Readers’ estimation of the amount of quality texts (“Are enough good texts available for you to read?”)

Ukrainians read several times a week on average. The greater part of daily readers read socio-political/economics news and religious literature.

28.8% of the total respondents (including nonreaders) read fiction several times a week or more.

Ukrainians usually spend from a half-hour up to an hour reading. Reading fiction lasts longer — usually between one and two hours.

The average period for reading fiction is the longest in comparison to the other text types. The reading of socio-political/economics news and reviews is the most consistent.
Figure 18. Reading duration and consistency

The size of each bubble reflects the share of respondents who read the corresponding appropriate type of literature.

The bubble’s position on the horizontal axis reflects the average systematic reading of the relevant type of literature. The bubble’s position on the vertical axis reflects the average duration for reading such literature (for one session).
The majority of those who read fiction and spiritual literature tend to read it whole works from beginning to end. For other types of literature, about half of the readers state that they practice fragmented reading. For each type of text, the greater proportion of readers read mostly during forced breaks, in between other activities.

![Figure 21. Distribution of respondents according to the fragmentation of their reading](image)

![Figure 22. Distribution of respondents according to the way they read](image)
One important indicator of the development of reading skills is the level of reader-to-text-interaction. It involves focusing on the reading, reflecting on the material read, discussing it with others, enjoying reading, etc.

Almost 80% of respondents state that they enjoy reading. The majority claim that they reflect on what they have read. Nearly half of Ukrainians discuss what they have read with friends and colleagues, less than half reread texts they like and confess that they lose track of time when reading. One third admit that they feel distracted and think about something else while reading.

Figure 23. Self-estimation of the level of reader-to-text-interaction

Men hold a larger share among those who enjoyed reading in their teenage years. At the same time, 62.3% of those who did not enjoy reading as teenagers state that they enjoy reading now.

Figure 24. Self-estimation of enjoying/not enjoying reading now and in one's teenage years
This reading preferences map was built based on the respondents' answers to the question:

“Please recall the name of a book of over 100 pages in length that you have read over the last twelve months. If the author was mentioned (n=816), the font size reflects the number of readers who named a given author, ranging from one reader (the smallest size) to 26 readers, who named Bulgakov (the largest size). The most frequent answer was, however, the Bible (40 readers named it).
Groups of readers

Groups were bunched in two ways:

1. By the aggregate measure of their level of reading skill.

This measure was calculated as a mean value of respondents’ estimation of their reading habits and their level of reader-to-text-interaction:

- ability to enjoy reading
- ability to read long texts in full
- ability to focus on reading
- inclination to discuss what has been read
- tendency to reflect on what has been read
- inclination towards rereading
- readiness to allow time for reading

A high level of reading skill development (when respondents strongly or simply agree with the majority of statements) was demonstrated by 37.6% of readers. The majority of readers have a medium level of reading skills (they neither agree nor disagree with the majority of statements or agree with half of the statements). Only 6.4% of readers demonstrate a low level of reading skills (they strongly or simply disagree with the majority of statements).

![Figure 25. Reading-skill levels](image)

2. By cluster analysis. For the sake of cluster analysis, indexes were calculated to describe:

- Reading breadth (index of 1 if the respondent reads all the text types mentioned, index of 0 if the respondent reads only one text type)
- Reading consistency (index of 1 if the respondent reads texts every day, index of 0 if the respondent reads less often than once a week)
- Reading duration (index of 1 if the respondent reads all his texts for longer than two hours at a time, index of 0 if the respondent reads only for several minutes)
- Reading integrity (index of 1 if the respondent reads all his texts in full, allowing special time for reading, index of 0 if the respondent reads only occasionally and reads mostly fragments)
- Reader-to-text-interaction (index of 1 if the respondent agreed with all statements that reveal reader-to-text-interaction, index of 0 if the respondent disagreed with all the statements).

Cluster analysis revealed four groups of readers.

Cluster analysis is a method of grouping objects in such a way that objects in the same group (called a cluster) are more similar (in some sense or another) to one another than to those in other groups (clusters). Hierarchical cluster analysis, a Ward’s minimum-variance method, was used for clusterization (N = 1494, standard error 2.5 %). An analysis of agglomerations number did not allow us to define a clear conclusion about the number of clusters. The data indicated the possible presence of three to five clusters. The most applicable solution for interpretation was the four-cluster solution, which gave a sufficient homogeneity of clusters. The procedure of additional k-means cluster analysis was implemented to check the validity of the cluster solution. The results showed the same clusters.
Group 1 (29.4%). Representatives of Group 1 demonstrate the most developed reading skills: they are motivated and consistent, and read for a long time; they are able to focus on reading and read only a few text types.

Group 2 (17.4%). Representatives of Group 2 seldom read and for a short period of time only, they read few text types, but their level of reading integrity and reflective reading is higher than average.

Group 3 (13%). Representatives of Group 3 read in fragments, for the shortest time spans and the least reflectively, but with the most consistency. Only 27.3% of representatives from this group read fiction.

Group 4 (40.2%). Group 4 reads different text types. This group’s representatives read reflectively, but inconsistently and not at length, they combine fragmented and integral reading approaches.
Figure 28. Groups of readers by gender

Figure 29. Groups of readers by age

Figure 30. Groups of readers by educational level
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The lack of consensus among experts in understanding the situation and describing reading problems became obvious at the very start of the research during expert interviews. Accordingly, finding solutions and coordinating efforts to promote reading may appear unsynchronized and therefore may be inefficient and fail to synergize. The research results could serve as a content base for a constructive strategic discussion involving all stakeholders: schools, civic initiatives, publishing houses, businesses, the government, the church, media, etc. Taking into account the general socio-economic state of the society (when the need for security dominates) and the transition period, sporadic initiatives may not be sufficient to revive positive reading tendencies. If the society will not overcome the stagnation of education and will stop considering reading books as an important instrument for human capital development, Ukraine may lose its human potential and downgrade.

Analysts must monitor reading levels, the level of reading skill development and attitudes towards reading in future to coordinate efforts to stimulate reading. Programs promoting book reading must be targeted at all segments of the potential audience, including those readers who may have more complex and deeper demands for reading material, but may simultaneously be small and needy.

After the cluster analysis, it became clear that we can no longer promote reading in general. Promotional messages must be clearly targeted — aimed precisely at the kind of reading we plan to boost. In light of these results, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Fostering interesting events and literature reviews, discussing the relation of social and historical plots to the readers’ experience, creating vivid, but meaningful audio trailers for books;
2. Allowing separate efforts by publishing houses aimed at narrow segments of readers, anticipating their needs and not just following them (cluster analysis results may be helpful in understanding the different types of readers);
3. Family, school, media, church and civic initiatives may influence the education and culture, developing a love of reading among children, youth and professional groups, instead of forcing young people to read and browbeating them about the importance of reading. It is crucial that such promotion exclude any attempts at manipulation, guilt-tripping or any form of demonstrating superiority;
4. Promoting various ways of accessing good texts (from exchanges, or offering free trials)
5. Rethinking the role of the bookstore, changing it from a place for purchasing books to a space for choosing books (educating consultants on how to assist readers in the first place and not to force to buy), purchasing books should be a pleasant process, the bookstore’s atmosphere must be welcoming and cozy;
6. Combining the promotion of new books with the promotion of reading itself (synergizing promotional costs and coverage);
7. Helping parents “sell” books to their children, explaining what children may feel, how they perceive information and how long their attention span is at different ages. Parents may not know these basics and be overwhelmed by loads of quick advice;
8. Monitoring the experience of other societies, discussing the success stories of specific international events, as the Ukrainian reading situation may be not unique.