

research in brief

Value and Use of Ed Publications

Extension publications, at the state level or in the field, have been important, expensive, and underresearched. That it could have been and should be done are points made by a University of Rhode Island group that studied the New England Marine Resources information program. Using a mail survey, they evaluated 20 publications via 409 responses selected by a matrix from a computer data bank.

They found that the information was useful and had a positive impact on the readers, but they suggested the following changes for educational publications in general:

1. Formulate clear specific objectives for each publication. Such things to be decided are number needed, pattern of distribution, target audience,

- expected reader behavior, and benefits expected to the reader.
2. Develop procedures for identifying information needs.
 3. Increase the effort to determine writing levels consistent with the reader categories. Educational and experience backgrounds of various markets differ. (This isn't only a matter of writing style, but level of knowledge of the subject. A fisherman may not know much about reading, but a lot about fish.)
 4. Provide ongoing and periodic information that's required for effective educational publication programs. This may, for instance, involve follow-up surveys of those who request and receive the publications.

"Researching the Value and the Use of an Agency's Educational Publications." Albert J. Della Bitta, Eugene M. Johnson, and David L. Loudon. *Journalism Quarterly*, LII (Summer, 1975), 326-32

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