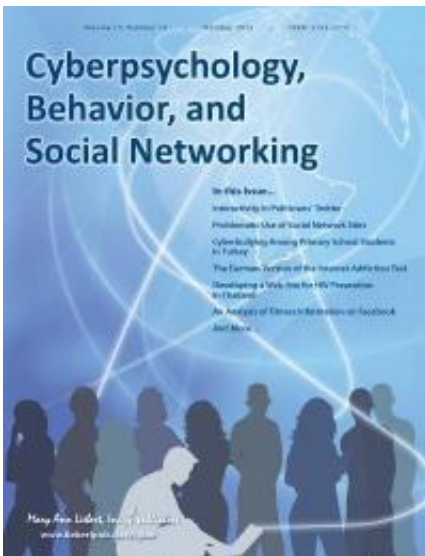


For New York Times readers, fairness matters when it comes to paying for content

October 31 2012



© Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

In a paper published today by *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* researchers found that New York Times readers who were led to believe the newspaper's paywall was motivated by financial need were generally supportive and willing to pay, while those who believed it was motivated by profit were generally unsupportive and unwilling to pay.

The article "Paying for What Was Free: Lessons from the [New York Times](#) Paywall," written by Jonathan Cook, Associate Research Scientist

in the Department of Psychology at Columbia University, and Shahzeen Attari, Assistant Professor in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at Indiana University-Bloomington is available free on the Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social [Networking website](#).

An [online survey](#) conducted shortly before the newspaper introduced its paywall found that most readers planned not to pay for access. The same people were surveyed 10 weeks later and the researchers randomly assigned half to read a justification for the paywall based on financial need and half to read a justification for the paywall based on profit motive. They found that most readers did not pay for content. Readers devalued the newspaper, visited its website less frequently, and used loopholes to read New York Times content. However, the researchers also found that readers' attitudes and behavior could be changed by providing a compelling justification that emphasizes fairness. Those readers who were given the justification for the paywall based on financial need said they were more likely to pay for New York Times content.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

Citation: For New York Times readers, fairness matters when it comes to paying for content (2012, October 31) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-york-readers-fairness-content.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--