

Survey Results

Print vs. Electronic: The Membership Has Spoken

Today, people are inundated with information. This scene is probably familiar to many — there is a stack of magazines that you've been meaning to leaf through, but you haven't quite found the time to do so. Once you finally get around to doing this task, you decide that some magazines aren't even worth opening and toss them into the wastebasket.

With this in mind, AIChE sent out a web-based survey asking the membership to offer its opinion on the relevance of *CEP*. Over 32,000 surveys were e-mailed, and approximately 7,500 members responded, giving a healthy response rate of about 23%. We are pleased to report that members are still finding the time to read *CEP*. Of the respondents, 3% said they read it from cover to cover, 23% said they read most of the articles, and 54% said they read one or two articles. Only 2% said they never read it at all. And not surprisingly, when people open up *CEP*, they look to it for impartial technical information (Figure 1).

The survey also asked the membership to rank *CEP* as a membership benefit on a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the highest. The respondents found the publication to be a significant membership benefit, with over 45% ranking it as either a 1 or 2 (Figure 2).

And how does *CEP* stack up against other similar publications, such as *Chemical Engineering*, *Chemical Week* and *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*? *CEP* was, hands down, the magazine of choice. 41% of the respondents indicated that given the option of choosing any of these magazines, they would select *CEP* as their first choice. The next closest percentage was 27% for *Chemical Engineering*, followed by 22% for *C&EN* and 5% for *Chemical Week* (Figure 3).

Go electronic only and pay for print?

Interestingly, many members are unaware that *CEP* is available online. Only 36% of the respondents knew that it could be accessed at www.cepmagazine.org. Therefore, it wasn't surprising to see that 85% of the respondents browse/read only the print version, while a mere 2% view the online version and 7% view both.

Another interesting result of the survey involved the distribution medium of choice — print or electronic. In past surveys, the question, "Would you prefer print or electronic?" usually garnered a response of roughly 80% print and 20% electronic. However, for this survey, the split between the two types of distribution media was not as great — 58% wanted print, while 42% asked for electronic. But, we must keep in mind that unlike past surveys, which were sent out via direct mail, this survey was sent out via e-mail.

There is a certain economical attraction to converting to an electronic-only version. For one thing, production, paper and mailing costs would be virtually eliminated. If *CEP* were to continue with its print version, AIChE wanted to know, would the membership partially subsidize it? Therefore, another series of questions focused on whether or not members would be willing to pay an additional fee for the print version of *CEP*, should only an electronic version be available. 28% said they would be willing to pay an additional \$10. The number drastically decreases when the respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more. Only 7% said they

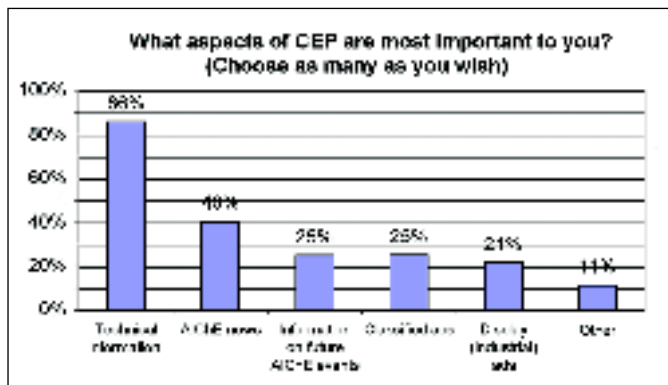


Figure 1. Not surprisingly, members look to *CEP* for unbiased technical information.

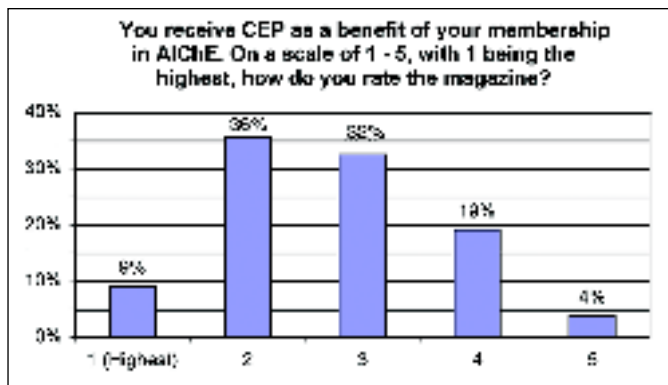


Figure 2. Survey respondents found that *CEP* is a significant membership benefit.

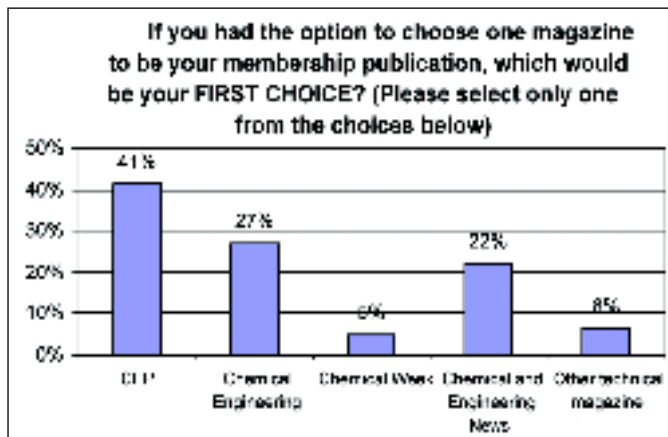


Figure 3. Compared to similar publications, survey respondents prefer *CEP*.

would be willing to pay \$20, while 2% said they would pay \$30.

Furthermore, some respondents felt very strongly about keeping the print version. When asked if they would cancel their membership if *CEP* were to become exclusively online, 7% said that they would drop their membership.

So what have we learned from this survey? The results reinforce the notion that *CEP* is a quality magazine and that it is an important membership benefit. It also tells us that we need to heighten membership's awareness of the electronic version. Hopefully, the survey has done just that. For the foreseeable future, *CEP* will continue to operate via a print and an electronic version.

We'd like to thank all of our respondents for sharing their opinions. For those who did not receive the e-mail survey, please visit www.cepmagazine.org, print out the survey and fax it back to Kristine Chin at 212-591-8899.