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INTENSIVE CARE

Paper Beats Digital For Information Retention
Research, Comprehension Experts Agree

Los Angeles, CA — As more people acquire digital devices, comprehension experts warn that print is far superior when it comes to information retention.

An article in ScienceNordic said that, "numerous studies show that when you read a text on paper your understanding is deeper and longer lasting than if you read that same text on a computer."[1]

According to Anne Mangen, a professor at the National Centre for Reading Education and Research at the University of Stavanger, in Norway, the text you read in digital form simply doesn't have the same tangibility as on the printed page.[2] When Mangen tested people reading the same material both digitally and in print, those who had read the story in print fared significantly better, making fewer mistakes and re-creating an over-all more accurate version of the story.

Mangen warns educators in particular to not get rid of paper based on a blind faith in digital technology. "The results clearly demonstrated that those who had read on computer screens had understood less than those who read on paper."[1]

The problem of skimming has been highlighted by Ziming Liu, a professor at San Jose State University whose research centers on digital reading. Liu reviewed studies that compared print and digital reading experiences, supplementing their conclusions with his own research, and he found that "on screen, people tended to browse and scan, to look for keywords, and to read in a less linear, more selective fashion. On the page, they tended to concentrate more on following the text."[2]

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