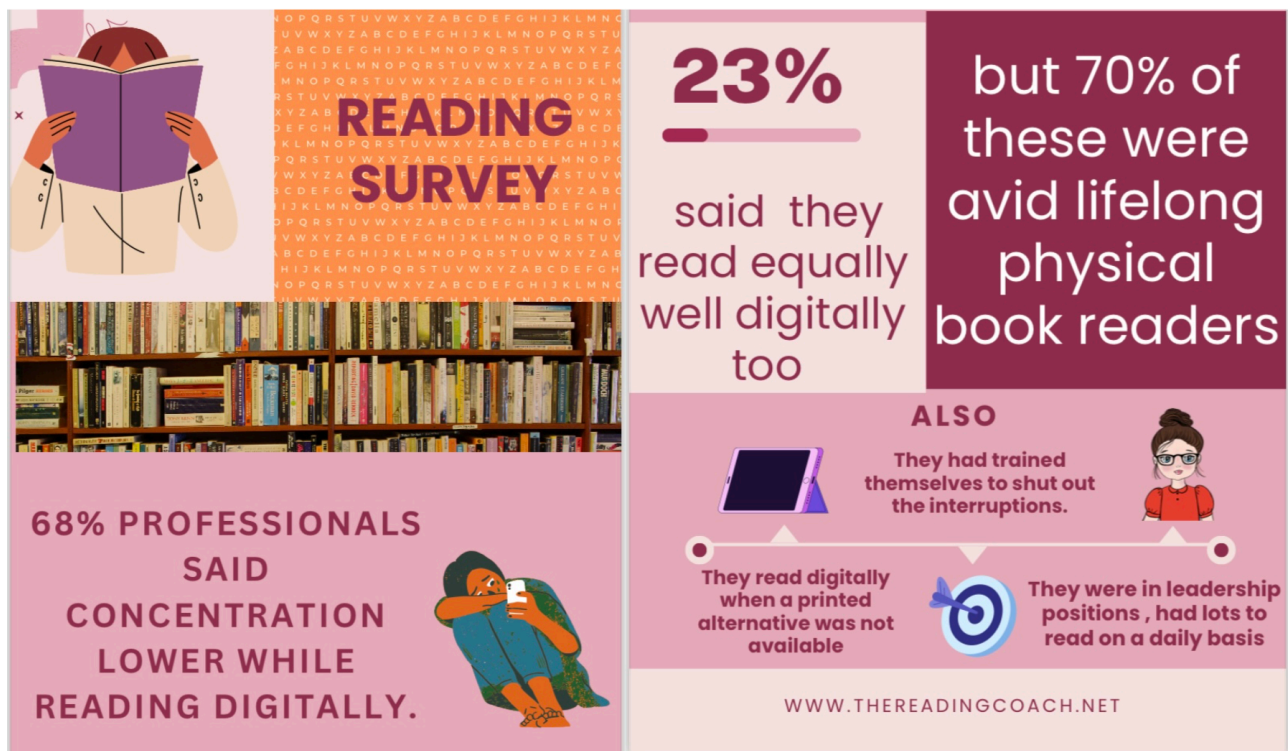


68% professionals say concentration lower while reading digitally



A July 2024 survey conducted by 'The Reading Development Project,' an initiative of The Reading Coach, across 319 professionals (53 on LinkedIn and 266 on google forms) revealed that a majority are not convinced that reading on digital is anywhere the same as reading on print.

A simple question was asked- "Is your concentration level the same, when you read digitally or from a printed page?" and three options were offered for responses- yes, no and 'I don't know.'

A total of 217 respondents said that their concentration levels were lower, while reading digitally. 9% of the respondents said that they could not decide. And 23% respondents felt that they saw no difference while reading digitally over on paper.

Interestingly enough; additional trends were as follows.

Of the 23% respondents who said they saw no difference between reading digitally versus a printed page.

1. 70% were lifelong avid physical book readers
2. They read digitally when a printed alternative was not available and had trained themselves to shut out the interruptions.
3. They were in top management positions and had very large volumes to read on a daily basis.

Their only concern was that it tended to take longer to finish the same volume of material online as compared to offline.

The 9% respondents who answered 'I don't know' offered interesting follow up answers. A senior investment banker said "he had not considered this question" at all while a young marketing professional said that "there was no time to choose between online and offline in real time."

Among the 68% respondents who said that their focus was much higher for print reading, they separated 'transactional' work such as email, documents, presentations etc from 'deep work.' A seasoned entrepreneur said, "You cannot avoid digital reading on a day to day basis. But if you're wondering how to take your company to the next level, that requires deep work and I would prefer to read a physical book for those insights."

A successful PE investor attested to the power of reading fiction as pure entertainment. "Reading fiction is a break that energises me. Unlike binge watching TV when we get up the next morning with a heavy head and sore eyes, going to bed reading a good book of fiction has you sleeping in less than an hour, entertained and way more empathetic! Screen reading can never give you this experience."

Another head of a 'learning and development' function of a large blue chip company said, " You can't stay in a culture of partial attention forever. It dims your ability to focus; you need to get off digital and read a book to reclaim your attention span."