

**Analysis of Survey Results: Oregon Sea Grant Program Report (2007)**  
**with Appendix of Survey Questions and Results**

Joe Cone  
Assistant Director  
Oregon Sea Grant  
2 April 2008

## Background

In November 2007, Oregon Sea Grant (OSG) Communications distributed a program report to approximately 150 individuals considered by the program director, associate director and assistant director to be of high value to the program. The list included administrators at Oregon State University and the National Office of Sea Grant; faculty, primarily at OSU and mainly current or recent principal investigators; administrators and communicators with other national Sea Grant programs; and external program stakeholders.

OSG does not routinely produce an annual or program report designed to publicize program activities and accomplishments to external audiences. (Formal reporting as required by funding sources is done, of course.) The determination was made in the late 1990s that the commitment of Communications staff time and resources in producing such external reports was unlikely to be the best use of these assets. It is widely perceived by professional communicators that the investment in a program report rarely receives a favorable return. The perception is that recipients of annual and program (non-annual) reports tend to discount them as a program necessity and as a public relations vehicle with circumscribed credibility.

During the time that OSG has not regularly produced an annual or other program report for external audiences, Communications has instead produced an ongoing series of “one-pagers” which present “stories of accomplishment” about program activities. Anecdotal evidence is that these stories are well received by the administrative VIPs who receive them. The advantage of them to the producer is that they are cost-efficient to produce, and to the recipient they are also efficient, in terms of providing brief, occasional updates, reflecting substantive and readable accomplishments.

Several considerations led to the production of the OSG 2007 Program Report:

- 1) It summarized a number of significant and diverse projects and people from the last few years, which supported the theme and title of “Taking Risks, Making Commitments”;

- 2) This program summation served as one kind of capstone on the administration of program director Bob Malouf, who retired in February 2008;

- 3) Since we were skeptical about the reception typically given a “traditional” print-only format, and because we could, we decided to innovate. We produced a succinct booklet which accompanied a DVD of videos that further highlighted the program accomplishments in the booklet (titles of articles and videos are listed in the survey instrument and results, presented in the Appendix);

- 4) We decided to use this atypical format and occasion to help us assess whether and what sort of a difference an innovative report could make with its audiences. Such an assessment could inform future reports, if any.

The primary assessment was through an online survey administered in January and February 2008.

## Objectives

The principal objective of the survey was to understand the effect of the program report on its high-value audience. Broadly, we wanted to know who pays attention to such reports, how they used and liked this one, and whether the report affected their opinion of the program.

## Methods

Joe Cone wrote the survey questions with assistance from other OSG Communication staff members and from the contractor hired to implement the survey online, Laura Jodice. The instrument included 11 multiple-choice questions and a final open-ended question to harvest any comments.

Cone submitted the necessary explanatory and protocol materials to the OSU Institutional Review Board office, which exempted the survey from full board review and approved it (as was expected). Jodice investigated whether a free online survey program available through the OSU College of Business would meet the project's needs, but she and Cone determined that the commercial SurveyMonkey program was much more flexible and appropriate for our purposes. OSG purchased a quarterly account with SurveyMonkey.com (a second, separate survey was also in the works).

On Feb. 5, 2008, we e-mailed an invitation to participate in the survey to the existing e-mail addresses of the 136 recipients of the report who were not OSG employees. Survey dissemination followed an approach modified from the standard reference by Dillman.<sup>1</sup> One week later we reminded non-respondents with a second e-mail. We indicated a deadline of Feb. 18, but in fact continued to receive and accept responses until approximately one week later.

## Results

Before examining the responses to individual questions, it's important to know whether the responses are numerically sufficient and are representative of the population surveyed.

Surveys with fewer than 30 respondents are regarded as very difficult to treat as significant. In this case we had 58 individuals who began but 51 who completed the survey, for a response rate of ~40%, as follows:

- a. Initial mailing = 134 (two had opted out of all SurveyMonkey surveys)
- b. Bad address = 5
- c. Actual sample = 129 (a-b)
- d. Total started the survey = 58
- e. Total completed the survey = 51 (7 partial/44 completed)
- f. Response rate = 39.5% (e/c x 100)

But, were the 51 individuals a representative sample of those who received the publication? Question 11 on the survey asked respondents to "select the term that best describes you" (professionally). All 51 individuals self-reported, and their responses are

compared to the number in that professional category among recipients (as determined by us):

Descriptor	A. OSG identified	B. % of 136 surveyed	C. Respondent-identified	D. % of 51 response	E. % difference (D-B)
Faculty	36	26%	18	35.3%	9.3%
Univ. Adm.	33	24%	13	25.5%	1.5%
Other Adm.	11 [1]	8%	5	9.8%	1.8%
Stakeholder	15	10%	0	0	-10%
Other [2]	29	21	15	29%	8%
Unaccounted [3]	13	9%	?	?	-

[1] Other Admin = primarily National Office of Sea Grant and other national SG directors

[2] Other = some OSG staff, OSG advisory council, national SG communicators

[3] Unaccounted = professional relationship unknown

As the table shows, the response rate for each of the three top audiences – faculty, university administrators, and other administrators – was greater than their percentage representation in the survey population.

We did not attempt to sample non-respondents (for example by calling or emailing them) to find out why they had not responded to the survey and what their general views of the report might have been. What we don't know is whether respondents reflect who read the report and who didn't; that is, are faculty more likely to read the report and thus respond?

## Discussion

Attached to this analysis as an Appendix is a “Response Summary” report generated by the SurveyMonkey software. The report shows all the questions, response choices, response count, and response percent (frequencies). The reader is referred to this report for details; the discussion here will highlight interpretations of the questions and various responses which are considered most meaningful.

Overall, we are encouraged by the decent response rate and are somewhat reassured that the respondents may be representative of some groups. However, we can not be certain of that, as in fact we know nothing about the non-respondents. What does not responding mean – about either the report or the OSG program? You're too busy? You're indifferent? You're contemptuous? *Who knows?*

What we can do is extract some plausible interpretations from the responses we did receive while remembering that 60 percent of those who were sent the report *did not give us their opinions*.

## *Review of responses*

- Question (Q.)1. The responses here are important to further constrain our understanding of the quantity of responses overall. A total of 41 of the 58 individuals who began the survey indicated they had reviewed, or were in the process of reviewing the report. Again, one might consider this worrisome thought: If 17 of the 58 who responded to the survey hadn't looked at the report, what of the other 78 who did not respond at all? In fairness, the report was distributed during the busy time of year between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, which may have had some effect on the available time readers had (or believed they had).
- Q2. The question asked which articles in the booklet the respondent recalled reading. The response count to this question reflected what is a pattern in the other substantive questions in the survey; the count dropped to 35. In a sense this isn't that "bad," inasmuch as it's quite close to the 41 individuals who claimed to have been spending time with the report. In any case, all but one of the eleven articles in the booklet received better than 53% readership. The "letter from the director" scored the highest readership: 88%. The mean readership of articles as a whole was 64% of respondents.
- Q3. This question asked about overall impression on a very favorable-very unfavorable "Likert" scale. Favorables and very favorables totaled 85%.
- Q4. The overall DVD viewership was 12% less than the readership, with a mean viewing at 52%. This is not particularly surprising, as 1) viewing a video required a significantly longer investment of time than browsing a brief booklet article, and 2) at least two of the videos did not have an apparent direct connection to booklet content, 3) and some viewers may have found navigating the DVD beyond their abilities or interest. The most watched video was on the topic of greatest current "news" interest: wave energy (71%).
- Q5. The very favorable and favorable scores for the videos totaled 80%.
- Q6. This question asked about the "overall impression of the multimedia approach" of the report using a Likert scale. Very favorables and favorables were the highest tallied: 89.5%. This suggests an endorsement of the booklet+DVD approach among those who viewed the materials.
- Q7. This question continued probing at the differential appeal of this report. Nearly 42% of respondents said they gave "more than usual" attention to this report in "comparison to other organizational reports."
- Q8. Here we asked about factors that contributed to their giving the report attention. The three top vote getters were 1) ease of use, 2) my general interest in the program, and 3) the appeal of the design of the report.

- Q9. So what? Do reports *change opinion* about an organization? More than 51% of respondents said their opinion about Oregon Sea Grant had changed to the “positive” on a scale of much more negative to much more positive.
- Q10. This question distinguished between opinions about the report and opinions about the program. The scores here for the program were higher than for the report in Q9, with nearly 60% scoring the program as “very positive.”
- Q11 about professional self-identification has been described above. What we don’t know is how many category cross-overs there were, that is, how many people we labeled in one category thought of themselves in another. We believe the cross-overs, particularly among key audiences of faculty and administrators, are likely to be few.
- Q12 was the open-ended question for “additional comments.” We received 26 comments, from compliments to constructive criticism to pet peeves – which are rather hard to categorize more usefully, and were generally ephemeral in nature.

Beyond these counts and percentage we did not conduct other analyses, for example, to tease out the opinions of some respondent-group relative to some particular topic. Although we’re interested in such relationships, in general, we were concerned that the number of respondents associated with such relationships would be not large enough to draw meaningful conclusions.

### Conclusion

Is the program report cup half full or half empty? We’re gratified that those recipients who took the time (about 10 minutes) to respond to an online survey gave very good marks to our 2007 program report, in quite a few specifics frankly exceeding our hopes. But it’s hard to ignore the fact that the majority of those highly selected individuals who were sent the report did not take the time to respond. One is left with the nagging doubt: if they didn’t have 10 minutes to respond to a survey, did they have 10 minutes to even look at the report itself? Perhaps the November distribution date was a factor in reader response; unfortunately, we did not ask about it in the survey, although

Because workdays in our Communications office are rarely devoted to just one project, it’s difficult to be precise about the investment of staff resources and time in creating this report. But it took an estimated 2-3 workdays for each of two staff members (editor and distribution coordinator), 8-10 workdays for another (video assistant), and 20-plus workdays for the office’s leader. In addition, the graphic design was contracted out and cost \$1700. Printing of the color booklet, duplication of the DVD, and other packaging amounted to \$3000. Clearly, any calculation of per unit cost would find this to have been a very costly product.

In addition, Cone spent 3 more workdays designing the survey, getting it approved, working with the contractor to implement it, and analyzing the responses. The

contractor's fees are also in addition, although these survey costs would not recur each time a report is done.

Of course, there are both these sunk costs and the opportunity costs associated with not doing other projects during these workdays.

In sum, we believe that the least that can be said is that Oregon Sea Grant should carefully consider the likely benefits, as well as the likely costs, before undertaking any kind of program report intended for external audiences.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dillman, Don A. (2006). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

**Appendix of Survey Questions and Results**  
on following pages



survey title:

**Oregon Sea Grant 2007 Program Report Survey** [Edit](#)

[Title](#)

[design survey](#)

[collect responses](#)

[analyze results](#)

- [View Summary](#)
- [Browse Responses](#)
- [Filter Responses](#)
- [Download Responses](#)
- [Share Responses](#)

current report: **Default Report**



## Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 58  
Total Completed Survey: 51 (87.9%)

Page: Report Survey

### 1. In the time since I received a copy of Oregon Sea Grant's program report:

		Response Percent	Response Count
I have examined its contents to the extent I intend	<input type="text" value="43.1%"/>	43.1%	25
I have examined its contents some, but intend to spend more time reviewing it	<input type="text" value="27.6%"/>	27.6%	16
I have received it but not examined its contents	<input type="text" value="20.7%"/>	20.7%	12
I have not examined it but passed it on to a colleague to review	<input type="text" value="3.4%"/>	3.4%	2
I have not and will not review it	<input type="text" value="5.2%"/>	5.2%	3
<b>answered question</b>			<b>58</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>

Page: Report Survey - Articles

**2. Of the eight articles in the booklet, I read...**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't remember</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
"Risk-taking and innovation" (Director Bob Malouf's intro)	<b>88.6% (31)</b>	11.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	35
"Ripples become swells" (wave energy)	<b>71.9% (23)</b>	25.0% (8)	3.1% (1)	32
"Fostering salmon resilience" (salmon research)	<b>60.6% (20)</b>	36.4% (12)	3.0% (1)	33
"New approaches to longstanding questions" (beach erosion studies)	<b>71.0% (22)</b>	22.6% (7)	6.5% (2)	31
"A leader on the scientific frontier" (chemist William Gerwick)	<b>64.5% (20)</b>	29.0% (9)	6.5% (2)	31
"Sustained support enables sustainable contributions" (Susan Hanna)	<b>53.1% (17)</b>	40.6% (13)	6.3% (2)	32
"It's about how we learn" (free-choice learning initiative)	<b>66.7% (20)</b>	23.3% (7)	10.0% (3)	30
"Special students, outstanding opportunities" (supported grad students)	<b>46.7% (14)</b>	33.3% (10)	20.0% (6)	30
"Hipster technology for learning" (communications research using iPods)	<b>54.8% (17)</b>	32.3% (10)	12.9% (4)	31
"Ocean literacy for all Oregonians" (educational outreach to Latinos)	<b>60.0% (18)</b>	26.7% (8)	13.3% (4)	30
"Oregon Sea Grant's mission"	<b>66.7% (22)</b>	21.2% (7)	12.1% (4)	33
			<b>answered question</b>	<b>35</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>	<b>23</b>

**3. Of the articles I read, my overall impression is**

	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Not favorable	0.0%	0
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>24</b>

**3. Of the articles I read, my overall impression is**

Somewhat favorable	<input type="text"/>	14.7%	5
Favorable	<input type="text"/>	32.4%	11
<b>Very favorable</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>52.9%</b>	<b>18</b>
Don't remember		0.0%	0
<b>answered question</b>			<b>34</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>24</b>

Show this Page Only

Page: Report Survey - DVD

**4. Of the 12 short videos, I watched...**

	Yes	No	Don't remember	Response Count
Oregon Sea Grant: Celebrating 35 Years	67.7% (21)	29.0% (9)	3.2% (1)	31
Wave Power (with Annette von Jouanne)	71.0% (22)	29.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	31
Pathways to Resilience (with Dan Bottom, Court Smith)	56.7% (17)	33.3% (10)	10.0% (3)	30
Exploring Beach Recovery (with Tuba Ozkan-Haller and Merrick Haller)	70.0% (21)	26.7% (8)	3.3% (1)	30
Marine Pharmaceuticals (with William Gerwick)	58.6% (17)	41.4% (12)	0.0% (0)	29
Reflections on 37 years with Sea Grant Extension (with Paul Heikkila)	58.6% (17)	41.4% (12)	0.0% (0)	29
Learning at the Visitor Center (with Shawn Rowe)	62.1% (18)	37.9% (11)	0.0% (0)	29
Sea Grant Students: Helping them make a difference (several students)	62.1% (18)	37.9% (11)	0.0% (0)	29
<b>answered question</b>				<b>34</b>
<b>skipped question</b>				<b>24</b>

**4. Of the 12 short videos, I watched...**

The Chaos Wheel (with Bill Hanshumaker)	44.4% (12)	<b>48.1% (13)</b>	7.4% (2)	27
Using Near-Infrared Waves (with Anna Cavinato)	34.6% (9)	<b>65.4% (17)</b>	0.0% (0)	26
Las Olas Slideshow	40.7% (11)	<b>51.9% (14)</b>	7.4% (2)	27
			<b>answered question</b>	<b>34</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>	<b>24</b>

**5. Of the videos I viewed, my overall impression is**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not favorable	<input type="checkbox"/>	5.7%	2
Somewhat favorable	<input type="checkbox"/>	5.7%	2
Favorable	<input type="checkbox"/>	34.3%	12
<b>Very favorable</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>16</b>
Don't remember	<input type="checkbox"/>	8.6%	3
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>35</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>23</b>

Show this Page Only

Page: Report Survey

**6. My overall impression of the multimedia approach taken by Oregon Sea Grant's report -- DVD videos plus printed companion booklet -- is**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not favorable	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	1
Somewhat favorable	<input type="checkbox"/>	9.8%	4
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>41</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>17</b>

**6. My overall impression of the multimedia approach taken by Oregon Sea Grant's report -- DVD videos plus printed companion booklet -- is**

Favorable	<input type="text" value="26.8%"/>	26.8%	11
<b>Very favorable</b>	<input type="text" value="53.7%"/>	<b>53.7%</b>	22
Don't remember	<input type="text" value="7.3%"/>	7.3%	3
<i>answered question</i>			<b>41</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>17</b>

**7. The amount of attention I gave or intend to give to this organizational report in comparison to other organizational reports is...**

	Response Percent	Response Count
<b>More than usual</b>	<input type="text" value="41.9%"/>	18
About the same as other reports	<input type="text" value="39.5%"/>	17
Less than other reports	<input type="text" value="9.3%"/>	4
No opinion	<input type="text" value="9.3%"/>	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>43</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>15</b>

Show this Page Only

Page: Report factors

**8. Please rate the following as factors in the amount of attention you gave or intend to give to the report:**

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	No opinion	Not applicat
The appeal of the design of the report	2.4% (1)	11.9% (5)	<b>45.2%</b> <b>(19)</b>	33.3% (14)	4.8% (2)	2.4% (1)
The presence of both print and video information in the report	14.6% (6)	17.1% (7)	14.6% (6)	<b>43.9%</b> <b>(18)</b>	4.9% (2)	4.9% (2)
<i>answered questi</i>						
<i>skipped questi</i>						

**8. Please rate the following as factors in the amount of attention you gave or intend to give to the report:**

	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	0.0% (0)	5.0% (2)	25.0% (10)	<b>62.5% (25)</b>	2.5% (1)
My administrative relationship with Oregon Sea Grant	11.6% (5)	18.6% (8)	18.6% (8)	<b>25.6% (11)</b>	7.0% (3)
My funding relationship with Oregon Sea Grant	19.0% (8)	16.7% (7)	19.0% (8)	11.9% (5)	<b>26.2% (11)</b>
My interests as a program partner or stakeholder	9.8% (4)	9.8% (4)	17.1% (7)	<b>36.6% (15)</b>	9.8% (4)
My general interest in the program	2.4% (1)	11.9% (5)	35.7% (15)	<b>47.6% (20)</b>	0.0% (0)

*answered question*

*skipped question*

Show this Page Only

Page: Overall opinion

**9. Did the report change your opinion of Oregon Sea Grant in any direction?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Much more positive	2.3%	1
<b>Positive</b>	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>22</b>
Neither positive nor negative	30.2%	13
Negative	0.0%	0
Much more negative	0.0%	0
No opinion	16.3%	7

*answered question* **43**

*skipped question* **15**


10. Overall, what is your current opinion of Oregon Sea Grant, taking into account all you know about the program and its accomplishments and people?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Very positive	<input type="text" value="59.5%"/>	59.5%	25
Positive	<input type="text" value="33.3%"/>	33.3%	14
Neither positive or negative	<input type="text" value="4.8%"/>	4.8%	2
Negative	<input type="text" value="2.4%"/>	2.4%	1
Very negative	<input type="text" value="0.0%"/>	0.0%	0
<b>answered question</b>			<b>42</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>16</b>

Show this Page Only

Page: Background

11. Please select the term that best describes you...

		Response Percent	Response Count
Faculty	<input type="text" value="35.3%"/>	35.3%	18
University Administrator	<input type="text" value="25.5%"/>	25.5%	13
Other Administrator	<input type="text" value="9.8%"/>	9.8%	5
Stakeholder	<input type="text" value="0.0%"/>	0.0%	0
 Other (please specify)	<input type="text" value="29.4%"/>	29.4%	15
<b>answered question</b>			<b>51</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>7</b>

12. Do you have additional comments or observations about the program report?

	Response
<b>answered question</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>32</b>

12. Do you have additional comments or observations about the program report?

Count



26

*answered question*

26

*skipped question*

32

[Terms of Use](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [Opt Out/Opt In](#) [Contact Us](#)

Copyright ©1999-2007 SurveyMonkey.com. All Rights Reserved. No portion of this site may be copied without the express written consent of SurveyMonkey.com. 35