

Children's Comics and Magazines - UK - April 2010

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What is this report about?

The market for children's magazines has succumbed to the economic downturn, despite having traditionally boasted a greater degree of resilience to economic turmoil than many of its more vulnerable counterparts in magazine publishing. There is also a widely held belief across the publishing industry that this is a recession that will be harder to emerge from than in previous years, because of the strength of competition coming from the internet.

At present, however, the children's magazines market has a viable future, because the full breadth of online facilities that have become the playground of today's youth only really take a hold on consumers when children reach their teenage years. However, as the internet and digital entertainment become further ingrained in consumer lifestyles, the competitive threat is likely to intensify.

What have we found out?

- Despite traditionally having some resilience against economic turbulence, the children's magazines market has succumbed to the same fate as many of its contemporaries in the magazine industry. 2009 proved to be something of a bloodbath for consumer publishing, with sales of children's comics and magazines falling 8% to £125 million.
- Pre-teen titles have shown greater resilience than the early years category, with sales of the former falling by 12% between 2007 and 2009, compared with a 17% decline for the latter.
- Although 82% of children read comics or magazines, children themselves are much less likely to actually buy them. Among 7-10s, magazines are being purchased primarily by parents for their children, with only 18% of children buying for themselves.
- Nearly six in ten kids are attracted by free covermount giveaways that come with comics and magazines, reflecting the growing consumer expectation of getting things for free.
- One in five consumers have bought a children's magazine for their own children, while a similar proportion have purchased for other people's children. Vital targets include part-time employees, high-level internet users, consumers aged 25-34 and of those with children aged 5-9.
- The most common reason for buying magazines is as a form of distraction, with 42% of families who buy them saying they do so to keep the kids occupied. This motivation is ahead of the promotion of literacy – only 25% feel comics and magazines are the best way to encourage kids to read.

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