


Digital Journal Test Report September 2019

Background

The Digital Journal Test project has been running for three months in the Oxford Section. The idea of the project was to get feedback on the value of a simple 'digital' journal consisting of a PDF file delivered by a convenient Mailchimp service to which members could subscribe or unsubscribe as needed. The project was supported by Liz Elvidge, The Journal editor, who provided the PDFs for the test.

To start the project the Digital Journal Test was advertised to the Oxford Section and 61 members registered to receive the digital journal, which was sent as a MailChimp campaign. On average 90% of participants opened the campaign and 53% downloaded the Digital Journal.

BMW Club Oxford Digital Journal




Please complete this simple form to receive a regular monthly email with a digital (PDF) copy of the BMW Club Journal for FREE to read at your convenience. **You will of course continue to receive the paper copy of the Journal as well - happy reading!**

Email Address

First Name

Last Name

BMW Club Membership Number



The Survey

After three months a simple Google Forms survey was sent to gather feedback, the findings are discussed in this brief report. Altogether 28 recipients of the Digital Journal Test completed the survey a response rate of 45% or about 10% of the Oxford Section as a whole.

It is important to be careful when considering response rates as there is always the possibility of non-response bias, and since the sample was not random, it is not possible to directly extrapolate to the views of the whole Oxford Section or BMW Club. BUT having given the usual caveats it is very likely that the survey does give a good estimate of the views of the test group (early adopters of the digital journal), and indeed of the Oxford Section as a whole!

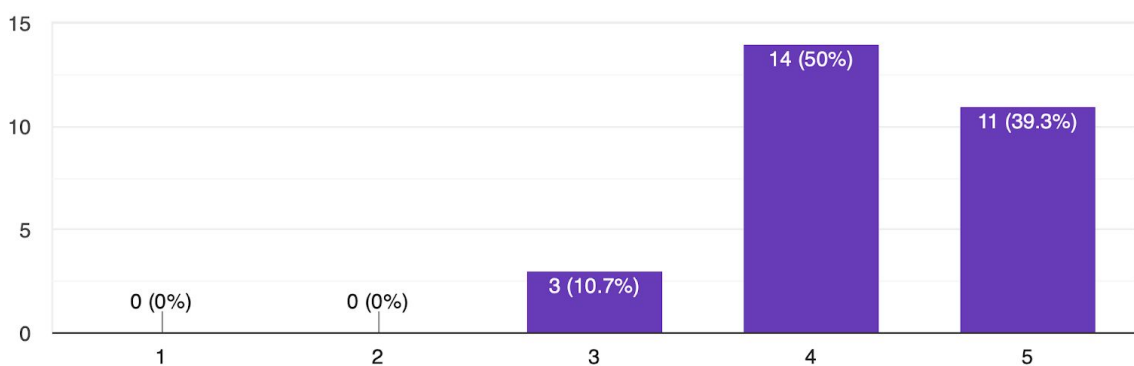
It is the job of management and leaders to make decisions with imperfect information so that progress can be made, and with that in mind the survey is a valuable insight.

Reaction to the digital journal

Participants were asked “please rate how much you enjoyed reading the Digital Journal”, where 1= not at all and 5= very much.

The response shows that 89.3% of respondents had a positive reaction to the Digital Journal (combining 4 and 5 responses), and no one disliked the Digital Journal.

28 responses



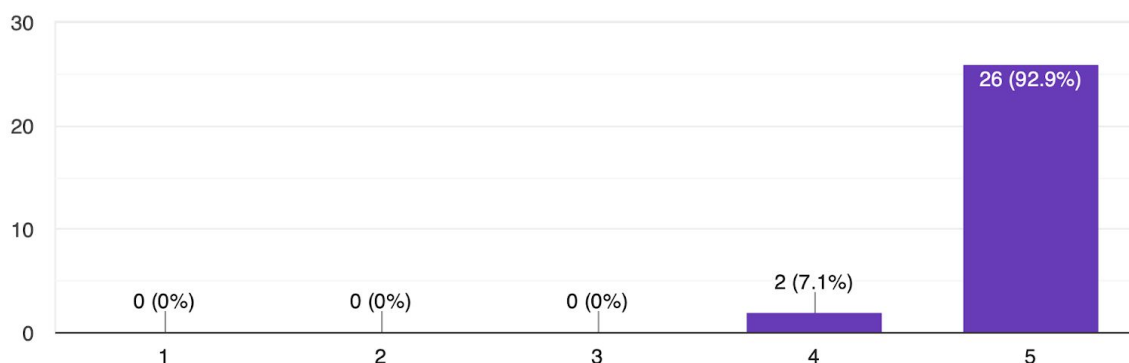
Receiving the Digital Journal

BMW club members could navigate to the club forum to download the PDF journal at the moment, and since this does not happen very much, ease of use or receiving the Digital Journal was an important question.

By using a Mailchimp service, with easy registration and unsubscribing, members received the Digital Journal in their email inboxes every month. It was hoped that this would prove easy for members, in contrast to the forum method.

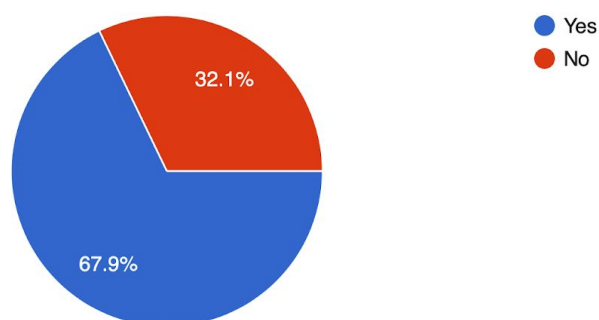
The response to the question “please rate the ease of receiving the Digital Journal during the test” was 100% positive (4 or 5 score), which demonstrates that easy to use systems are possible and were acceptable to the participants.

28 responses



The survey also asked if members would be happy to be routed to a password protected web page containing the Journal PDF. Two thirds of respondents would be happy to access the digital journal this way.

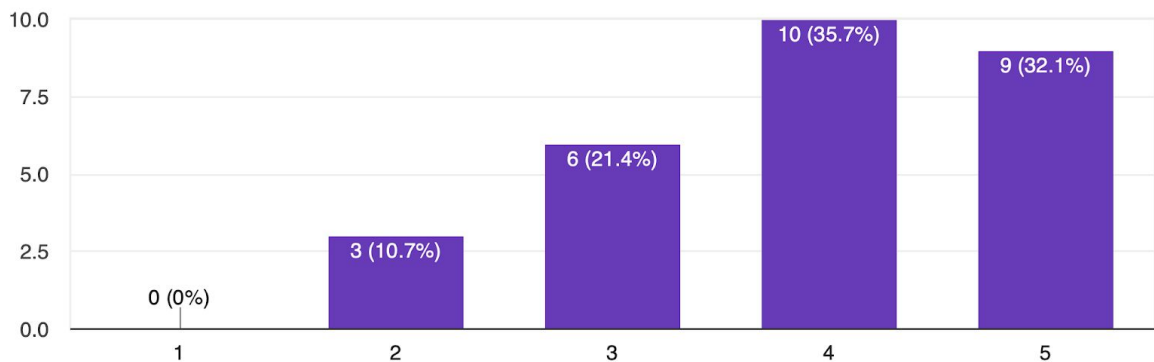
28 responses



Value of the Digital Journal

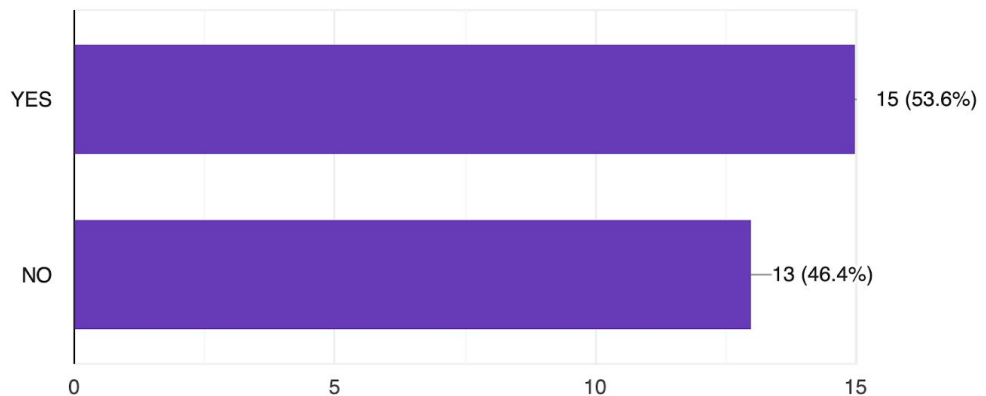
The Digital Journal offers the BMW Club an opportunity to increase value to members at little or no cost. Nearly 70% of respondents thought that the digital journal increased the value of BMW Club membership to a great degree (4 or 5 score). About 10% thought it had slightly detracted from their membership experience. There is no further information on why this might be an issue for a small number of members (7%) but this should be investigated further at some stage to see if the issues could be addressed.

28 responses



During the test members continued to receive their paper Journal as normal.; 53% of respondents would like to receive the digital journal alongside the paper journal, whilst 46% appear to be happy to just receive the digital version?

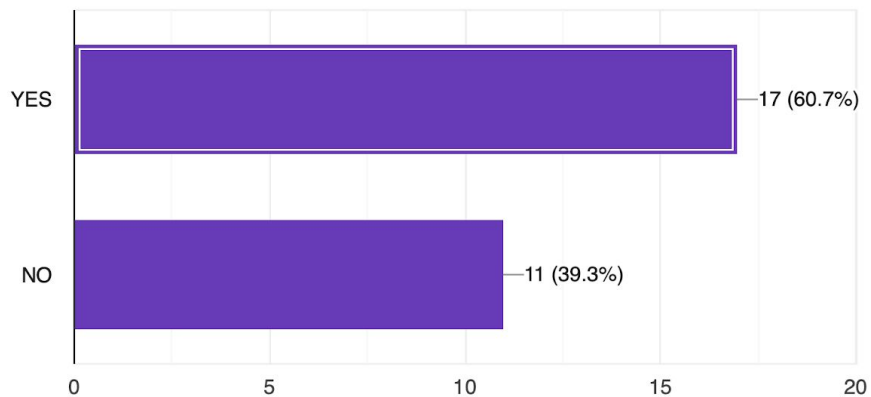
28 responses



When asked directly if they would like to replace the paper Journal with the Digital Journal, 60% thought they would like to replace paper with digital! Taking these two questions

together it is possible that people may have misunderstood what 'alongside the paper journal' meant, and may have thought that extra cost would be involved? In summary 40-60% of members appear open to replacing the paper Journal with the digital one. This question needs further research when a suitable paper/digital Journal proposition has been developed.

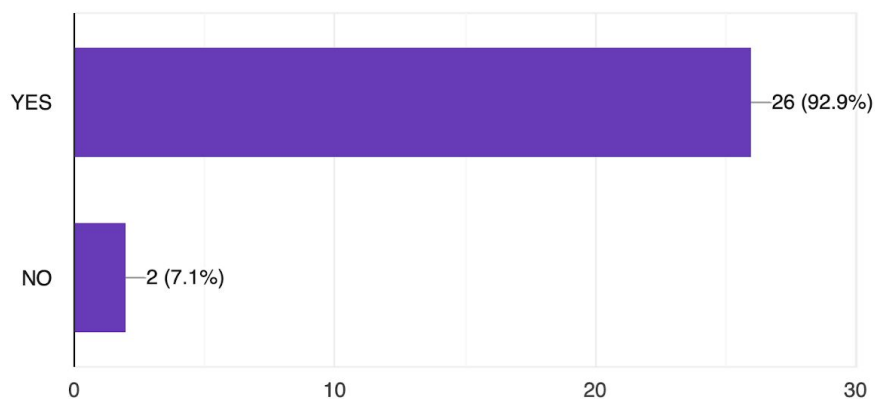
28 responses



The Future of the Digital Journal Project

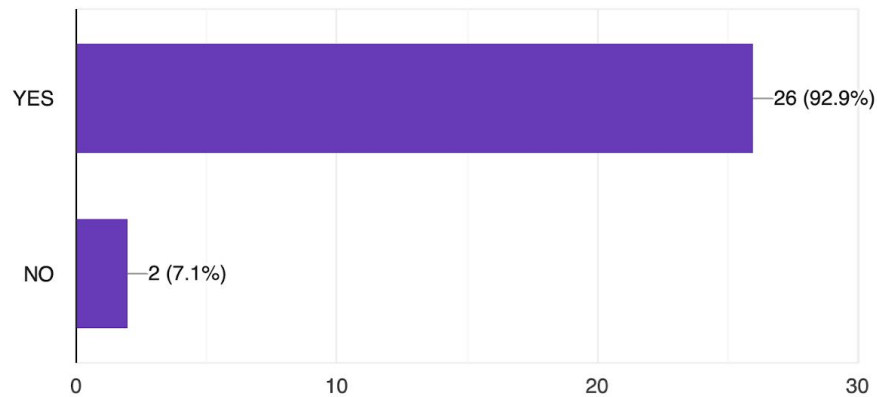
Over 90% of participants would like to continue to receive the Digital Journal if this could be organised. (Note it this were done it would make most sense to open this up to other sections in the BMW Club as it would not take much additional effort).

28 responses



Similarly more than 90% of respondents would be happy to continue in the Digital Journal Test project to try out other ideas for a Digital Journal.

28 responses



What ideas do you have to improve the Digital Journal?

The survey also asked participants for their ideas on how to improve the Digital Journal, these are reproduced here and may inspire future developments.

1. Keep it as a PDF. Indexing for the Archive?
2. Nothing specific
3. video, audio, animations
4. Include some UK bike events links or diary for SNRs if some folks want to take off and invite others a day or two before.
5. Indexing / search on old journals
6. More product reviews: Motorcycles/Clothing/Accessories. Less advertising for camping.
7. Publish motorcycle magazine articles in the BMW Digital Journal
8. I think the copy provided is good enough
9. A page turning app, an index and a search facility would be good as well as a searchable archive
10. Nothing springs to mind at this point.
11. Add some video by links perhaps? If any are made available?
12. I have enjoyed the trial as for new ideas none yet but there may be in the future.
13. Formatted as an e-book with page turning might be nice, but I quite enjoy getting a little mini facsimile of the paper version. The ability to like and comment (politely) on articles might be an interesting future enhancement.

14. Scalable pages for ease of reading; i Like the pdf format; ease of 'click thru' email contacts,
15. Word Search. Access to historic Journals with word search capability.
16. Seems as if this is OK in the format for now.
17. Linking with motorcycle media
18. Maybe a direct email link for advertisers in mutual aid
19. Hyper links to detailed subjects and to applicable video
20. Good copy as it is

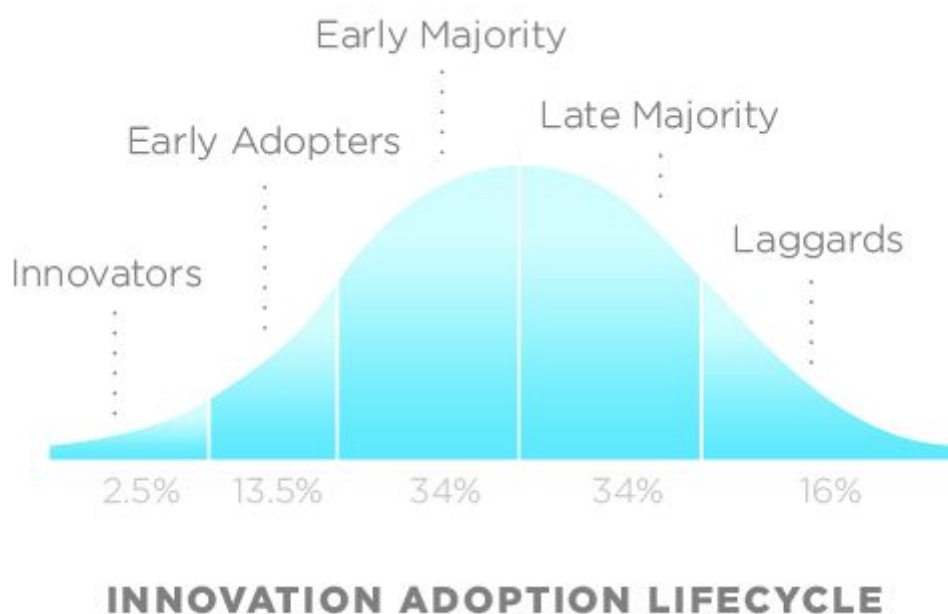
Other comments on the Digital Journal Test Project

The participants were also asked for any comments about the Digital Journal Test Project, which are reproduced here and may help guide any future testing.

1. Keep the PDFs. I don't want to have to download an app just to read the Journal.
2. The front page graphics has improved, less oldie looking!
3. Personally, I should be pleased to replace my paper copy of The Journal with a digital version. However, an electronic flip page book style would be preferable to the current pdf style. This would enable a higher quality resolution.
4. For me the Digital Journal is most useful for archive copies and when I'm away and cannot receive the paper version.
5. Although convenient for when I'm on the move, in my opinion it should not replace the printed version. By definition, on the move means reading it on a mobile phone and the screen is just too small.
6. None
7. I was dubious about the project but have changed my mind. I would like the paper copy to continue but would find the Digital Journal useful if away from home.
8. I would add that I read far more of the journal in this digital format than I ever have of the paper copy.
9. Be relevant - it should not be a vintage magazine(contributors, readers and bikes)
10. No other comments
11. Prefer paper copy. But would find Digital useful if away from home

Conclusions and Recommendations

In assessing these results it is important to remember that new ideas and technology are NOT accepted en-mass. There will always be a group of early adopters, and over time the innovation diffuses to the whole population. The early adopter group tends to be less risk-averse and is willing to iron out the bugs, thus providing a great service for the mainstream (see Everett Rodgers):



(Source Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DiffusionOfInnovation.png>)

This project was concerned with a self-selected early-adopter group, who volunteered to test the Digital Journal - it does NOT represent the views of the majority of users. HOWEVER, if the BMW Club is to introduce new innovations such as the Digital Journal, it would be vital to start with the early-adopter group and then allow the innovation to spread throughout the whole population.

The main conclusions from the Digital Journal Test project is that a simple PDF version of the current paper Journal was well received by the early-adopter BMW Club members, who valued the extra convenience of digital.

The Mailchimp delivery system, with a simple email and embedded PDF was easy to use, although the idea of a password protected webpage was not ruled out, so subject to usability testing this could also be an option. If the web page scenario was used then a monthly Mailchimp campaign would still be needed to alert members to the availability of the new Digital Journal and also to introduce the key articles. Note the BMW MOA (Motorcycle Owners of America) use a similar technique. This approach would doubtless increase the reading and satisfaction with the Journal, both paper and digital, by highlighting the key

articles and setting expectations. Members appear to like the idea of the digital journal as a complement to paper, although replacing digital with paper had some support this needs further testing when a specific proposition is available.

Members would like the Digital Journal to continue and would also support testing of further ideas.

Recommendations

Given how well the simple Digital Journal Test was received by the early-adopter BMW Club members in the project, at zero cost and a modest amount of effort, it would seem sensible to continue the Digital Journal Test, but also to expand it to the whole BMW Club.

In practice this would not require any extra effort on a monthly basis, but members from other sections would have the chance to register using the Mailchimp self-service system. Note this does not require any effort to manage as the member is responsible for their own subscription and can unsubscribe at any time.

As a stepping stone to a full BMW Club roll-out it would be possible to extend the Oxford Section pilot for a few more months to the whole section to check that the Digital Journal is well received, and to capture additional learning. Whilst the digital journal is only a test project, providing an add-on to the current paper Journal at low cost it is unlikely to change the VAT status of the BMW Club. However replacing the paper Journal with a digital version would need a careful investigation of the VAT implications before implementation by the club Treasurer, taking advice from the club's accountant's and HMRC.

As long as the number of subscribers is kept below 2,000, with up to 10,000 emails per month the Mailchimp service is free. If numbers exceeded these limits (which would be a great success) then the Mailchimp Essentials plan at £8.25 per month would allow up to 50,000 contacts and up to 500,000 monthly emails:

<https://mailchimp.com/pricing/?currency=GBP> .

It would be worth improving the Digital Journal PDF with (1) active hyperlinks to the web and (2) size optimised for Mailchimp distribution or (3) a simple web-page system with password protection. A convenient archive page for back issue would also be valuable. The Digital Journal Test would need to be managed by the Editor and Journal team in the next phase for the Oxford Section is not in a position to provide services for the whole BMW Club, although individual Oxford members would undoubtedly assist the national BMW Club in this effort.

A final thought, with all the focus on the environment and carbon footprint is this simple Digital Journal not a great chance to show that the BMW Club can help? It could be sold to our members in that way who might eventually be persuaded to relinquish paper!