

About Us

Real Change is an award-winning weekly newspaper that provides immediate employment opportunities and takes action for economic, social, and racial justice.



Our Values

- **Courage:** Telling the truth and taking risks
- **Community:** Fostering healthy relationships across differences
- **Creativity:** Pushing beyond the obvious to promote change
- **Compassion:** Treating everyone with respect and accepting them as they are
- **Integrity:** Doing what we say and taking responsibility for our mistakes

Report Prepared by:

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BIS 315: Understanding Statistics Students¹

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¹See Appendix A for full name list

OVERVIEW

In the spring of 2015, *Real Change* partnered with a team led by Dr. Charlie Collins at the University of Washington | Bothell to conduct an online questionnaire of *Real Change* publication readers. The aim of the survey was to gather feedback regarding the quality of the publication, readership styles (e.g. other publications read), and to better understand the demographic of its readers. *Real Change* is an award winning weekly newspaper that empowers un- and under-employed citizens by providing job opportunities selling its newspaper. These individuals are *Real Change* newspaper vendors. The *Real Change* organization strives to enhance local awareness and social action around the topic of homelessness, and provides job opportunities for low-income and homeless communities. Their core values include courage, community, creativity, compassion and integrity in which they bring social reform to fruition. *Real Change* has created a political and social voice for those whose voice is typically unheard. *Real Change* also targets racial justice and social reform. The organization helps vendors to foster healthy relationships with community members and those who purchase their publication.

Real Change as an organization exists as a high integrity journalistic newspaper which provides local news and stories, as well as representation for the low income and homeless communities it partners with. This positions *Real Change* with a unique view, as well as access to a generally overlooked population. It also helps to culture a readership supportive to low income and homeless individuals, which is not only socially just, but also raises awareness in a solution based dialogue.

Survey Development & Timeline

In fall of 2014, Dr. Charlie Collins met with leadership at *Real Change* to discuss the implementation of a reader survey through his BIS 315: Understanding Statistics course starting spring 2015. Leaders at *Real Change* had developed a survey based on a previous iteration created three years prior to collect data on *Real Change* readers. Through several edits, the survey was finalized for the 2015 data collection. In the week prior to April 24th, a student committee created the online version of the reader survey on *Qualtrics*, and online survey collection tool. The survey launched April 24th. The survey was active until May 23rd, 2015, at which point the online survey was closed and potential readers no longer had access to complete the survey.

At the conclusion of the survey, the online data were downloaded to be cleaned and analyzed. The BIS 315 students then spent the remainder of the quarter analyzing and interpreting data from the survey. This report highlights the findings of the reader survey.

Reader Recruitment

There is an important relationship operating between *Real Change*, its vendors, and its readers. There is a close sense of community, as well as a knitted interdependence that has been fostered over the years. An integral part of this relationship is maintaining trust and open communication, which is why *Real Change* reaches out to its readers to hear what they value most in the paper – which is the purpose of the survey. Although the survey was advertised on its website, Facebook, and other venues, the paper heavily relied on its greatest partners – *Real Change* vendors. The vendors provided cards to readers to distribute to patrons. The cards provide a url to the website where readers could complete a survey. Vendors were provided payment in the form of a free paper (a value of \$0.60) as compensation for recruiting survey respondents. For each respondent who completed the survey, vendors received one free paper. This implementation is a demonstration of the importance of the relationship between *Real Change*, and its vendors and readers.

RESULTS

Survey Responses: Overview

In total, there were 1,181 surveys were completed by *Real Change* readers. However, 81 cases were removed due to validity issues. Specifically, 37 cases were removed due to completion time, as these cases concluded the survey in less than two minutes. In addition, 37 more cases were removed because they completed less than 50% of the survey items (excluding demographic information). Finally, seven cases were removed due to duplication.

After removing 81 invalid cases, we were left with 1,100 valid cases. Of these, 649 individuals or 59% of respondents found out about the survey through an announcement card distributed by a vendor. In addition, other noteworthy methods of advertisement were email notifications from *Real Change* (208 or 19%) and ads published in *Real Change* (105 or 10%). Finally, 114 (or 10%) of survey participants indicated that they discovered the survey by “other” means, such as word of mouth.

Gender Identification	Frequency	% Responding
Man	413	39%
Woman	638	60%
Trans	7	.66%
Queer	4	.38%
Gay	2	.19%
Gender fluid	1	.09%

Regarding demographics of survey respondents, the highest proportion of survey participants were women (N=638, 60%), racially identified as White (N=907, 82%), and reported an average household income of \$54,769.64 (median = \$60,000; min = \$0, max = \$1M). Additionally, most respondents reported a 4-year college (N=436, 40%) or post-graduate education (N=414, 38%). Geographically, most respondents reported residing in Seattle, making up 83% of the total 1100 respondents.

Other notable concentrations of respondents were East King County (4%), Snohomish County (2%), and South King County (2%). Within Seattle, neighborhoods with the greatest amount of respondents reside in

What region do you live in?	Frequency	% Responding
Seattle	881	83%
South King County	20	2%
East King County	46	4%
Snohomish County	23	2%
Other	92	9%
Total	1062	

West Seattle making a sizable 10% of those surveyed, followed by Capitol Hill 8.99%, and Ballard at 8.88%.¹

Supporting *Real Change*

Real Change supporters purchase the newspaper for a variety of reasons. A majority of respondents buy *Real Change* to *support individual vendors* and/or to *support Real Change*. Of all supporters, 376 (34%) responded that they purchase one copy of *Real Change* every week. A small percentage of respondents (12%) *almost never* buy *Real Change*. Regarding weekly purchasing habits, 38% of the total surveyed or 418 individuals, indicated that they *never* buy more than one copy of *Real Change* per week. However, a small minority of those surveyed (2% or 22 individuals) purchase multiple copies of *Real Change* every week.

How often do you buy <i>Real Change</i> ?	Frequency	% of Responding
Every week	376	34%
Three weeks per month	159	15%
Two weeks per month	234	21%
One week per month	199	18%
Almost never	126	12%

How often do you buy more than one copy of <i>Real change</i> in one week?	Frequency	% Responding
Never	420	38.53%
Rarely	331	30.37%
Some of the time	256	23.49%
Most of the time	58	5.32%
Every time	25	2.29%

Participants were asked about alternative reasons not listed for purchasing *Real Change*. The majority of responses applauded *Real Change* on the great work they have done for the homeless community. The majority of answers from the survey showed people who buy the *Real Change* newspaper preferred it to other newspapers because it strived to represent voices outside of the mainstream. Readers of *Real Change* believed the newspaper conducted high quality journalism and provided unique and useful information. Another popular answer stated that those who purchased *Real Change* wanted to support the organization in addition to believing in their personal contribution to help the homeless people. Overall, people who completed the survey either responded they support the organization, support high quality journalism that is different from mainstream

newspapers, or simply believed that all possible reasons why they buy *Real Change* newspaper had been listed in the survey.

What are the TOP TWO reasons you buy <i>Real Change</i> ?	Frequency	% Responding
To support the individual vendors	967	47.84%
To support <i>Real Change</i>	494	24.44%
To learn more about ways I can be involved in the issues I care about	35	1.73%
To get perspective on the news that's different than mainstream media	469	23.20%
To read stories about people who are different than I am	56	2.77%

newspapers, or simply believed that all possible reasons why they buy *Real Change* newspaper had been listed in the survey.

Respondents commented on the newspaper’s success at supporting the Real Change mission. Common themes found were categorized as either positive or negative trends. The general consensus’ results were positive. They spoke to how impressed readers were of *Real Change*’s commitment to helping the vendors, ending homelessness, and providing the public with the opportunity to learn about less publicized issues from a different perspective.

Looking closer into the content of *Real Change*, we found that the majority of respondents (about 1,043 individuals of the 1,100 total respondents or 95%) either agree or strongly agree that *Real Change* is a newspaper that advocates for low-income people. Furthermore, a large percentage of 89%, or 887 survey respondents, believe *Real Change* does well or very well at producing content for the newspaper that supports their mission “to provide opportunity and a voice for homeless and low-income people while taking action for economic, social and racial justice.” To continue, 77% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that *Real Change* covers issues that are important to them. A little under half (44.79%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that *Real Change* stays objective and covers both sides of an issue.

	Read Cover to Cover	Read Most Articles/ Columns	Read about half of the articles/ columns/ sections	Read one or two of the articles/columns/ sections	I do not read the paper at all	TOTALS
Did not finish high school	0	1	1	0	0	2
High School Diploma	3	9	4	6	0	22
Some College	19	38	16	17	5	95
2-Year Degree	17	22	12	13	4	68
4-Year Degree	75	148	104	79	29	435
Post-Graduate Degree	77	141	97	85	12	412
TOTALS	191	359	234	200	50	

To dig a little more in-depth, we wanted to examine relationship between reader educational level and quantity of paper consumed. Using a cross-tab analysis, we found an evident relationship between the quantity of *Real Change* consumption and reader education levels. Specifically, the majority of readers who had a four-year degree or higher read more articles, sections, and the paper from cover to cover than those with a two-year degree or less. This smaller portion of readers were less likely to read as much of the paper. Readers with a lower education level are not reading the entire paper. However, and interestingly, *Real Change* readers tend to be highly educated with a majority (82%) having at least a 4-year degree (see table above).

Paper Quality

A total of 826 respondents (75%) rated the *overall quality of Real Change* as very good or excellent. The data in the table below represents the quality of each aspect of the newspaper in which the features/interviews, cover, and vendor profiles are rated the highest. The crossword puzzle, book reviews, Rev. Rich Lang’s column, Dr. Wes’ column, cartoon/metro fare and the calendar had the fewest very good/excellent ratings. However, only 191 (17%) of respondents reported usually or always reading the *Crossword Puzzle*, which may contribute to the low ranking.

This information on lower rated portions of *Real Change* can be used to improve the selected sections in order to increase complete consumption of *Real Change* newspaper articles. Furthermore, respondents described the *Real Change* newspaper as, inspiring, visually appealing, high-quality journalism that advocates for low-income people. This response is consistent with the values and goals of the Real Change organization as well.

Please take a few minutes to rank the quality of each aspect of the paper.	% Responding “Very Good” or “Exceptional”
Cover	63%
Editorial/Op-Ed (page 2)	57%
Directors Corner	51%
Local News Coverage	62%
Features/Interviews	67%
Book Review	36%
Dr. Wes’ Column	43%
Rev. Rich Lang’s column	42%
Crossword Puzzle	29%
Vendor Puzzle	67%
Cartoon/Metro Fare	38%
Calendar	40%

Please indicate the extent to which you think each statement below describes Real Change.	% Responding “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”
It provides high quality journalism	80%
It is inspiring	83%
It is one of Seattle's best newspapers	63%
It is a newspaper written by homeless people	28%
It is a newspaper that advocates for low-income people	95%
It is visually appealing (photos, art and layout)	79%

The survey compiled a wide variety of responses regarding what participants would like to see in *Real Change*. 15-20% indicated there was nothing else they would like to see in *Real Change*, or complimented *Real Change* for “covering what’s important”. While more *Real Change* organization and vendor profiles were requested, the

majority of responses asked for more political and motivational works along with a better understanding of the vendors who work with *Real Change*. There were also contradictions in the trends, where some readers asked for more information about the world around them while others requested more information on Seattle politics, including ideas for articles about what Seattle is doing about homelessness and interviews with Seattle’s top officials. Many responses indicated a desire for more information about the vendors and more focus on the homeless, but some responses also expressed a desire for *Real Change* to do more advocacy in arenas outside of homelessness. Overall the responses indicated readers’ desire for more information surrounding homelessness so as to be further educated on the realities within their community.

Whenever you buy a paper, how frequently do you read each of its sections?	% Responding “Usually” or “Always”
Editorial/Op-Ed (Page 2)	60%
Directors Corner	50%
Local News Coverage	74%
Features/Interviews	65%
Book Review	32%
Dr. Wes’ Column	41%
Rev. Rich Lang’s Column	36%
Crossword Puzzle	17%
Vendor Profile	62%
Cartoon/Metro Fare	49%
Calendar	37%

Reading and other News Habits

The survey measured readers preferred method for receiving news. Participants were asked to select either tablet, print, desktop, smartphone, or television. Results revealed that 47% of *Real Change* consumers in the Seattle region favored print magazine over other methods of consumption. However, this is likely to be a biased observation as the primary recruiting source for the survey was through the vendors selling printed copies of *Real Change*. Because *Real Change* and its vendors primarily advertise and sell print newspapers, it is difficult to determine whether a more general readership prefers print over other methods. The second-most preferred method of consumption (31%) was via desktop/laptop, which could benefit from further analysis in future production of *Real Change* media. This could potentially expand readership of *Real*

Change beyond the Seattle metropolitan area. With current scannable QR codes and the *Real Change* app on Google Play, transitioning consumption of *Real Change* towards mobile devices as a preferred medium isn’t far off. There is a potential for greater vendor profits through mobile device sales which should continue to be developed. While the demand for desktop/laptop consumption was relatively high, tablets were the least popular choice for consuming *Real Change* media. The data indicates an age and/or technology gap is likely to contribute to higher physical copy sales and fewer digital sales, especially in tablets, as the average *Real Change* consumer is 54 years old.

What is your preferred way to get your news?	Frequency	% of Responding
Tablet	52	5%
Print (newspapers, magazines, etc.)	506	47%
Desktop or Laptop computer	330	31%
Smartphone	122	11%
Television	60	6%

The survey also identified other publications *Real Change* purchasers read, and which publications they read most frequently. Respondents read two other local publications on average in addition to *Real Change*. *The Seattle Times* was read most frequently, followed by *The Stranger*, and then other neighborhood and community blogs. *Publicola* was the least read local publication. While there was a strong overlap between *Real Change* readers and the publications above, respondents read *The Seattle Times* significantly more frequently than other publications included in the survey (see table on page 8).

What other local publications do you read?	Frequency	% Respondents
Seattlepi.com	159	6.88%
The Stranger	464	20.09%
My Neighborhood paper	169	7.32%
The Seattle Times	663	28.70%
Seattle Weekly	219	9.48%
Crosscut	123	5.32%
Publicola	72	3.12%
Other neighborhood/community blogs	286	12.38%
I don't read any other local publications	155	6.71%

Conclusion

Generally, *Real Change* is highly regarded among its readers. Regarding demographics, readers tend to be women, highly educated, identify racially as white, and are middle income earners. Additionally, readers tend to reside in Seattle and primarily in the West Seattle and Ballard neighborhoods. However, this could simply be due to sampling—or where vendors most frequently recruited survey participants.

Readers also frequently support the paper and vendors. Most survey respondents cited supporting the goals of *Real Change* and its vendors as the primary reason for purchasing the paper. Readers most frequently purchase the paper once a week, but do not usually purchase more than one paper per week. With regard to reading patterns, readers who read more of the paper are typically higher educated. But again, *Real Change* readers tend to be highly educated as a group.

Regarding paper quality, readers report the local coverage and the features/interviews as the highest quality. They also report the paper as being high quality journalism, inspiring, and advocating for low-income people. Indeed, readers reported wanting more coverage about vendors and the homeless population more generally.

Finally, readers tend to read the op-ed's, the features/interviews, and vendor profiles the most frequently. With consuming news, readers also read the *Seattle Times* and *The Stranger*. Additionally, readers prefer to receive their news via print compared to laptops or tablets. However, this could be due to the technology gap and the age of *Real Change* readers.

Appendix A: Full BIS 315 Student Name List

- Alvarez, Amber
- Carpenter, Eric
- Castro, Angie
- Cimpan, Andreas
- Coomer, Christina
- Debesay, Root
- Forsen, Michelle
- Garcia, Jaime
- Gaspar, Martha
- Gaukroger, Ian
- Ghias, Feruza
- Grimm, Lindsey
- Hussain, Faheem
- Julien, Jacquelyn
- Karr, Diana
- Lam, Tsz
- Layson, Moriah
- Lee, Hyangchoon
- Lee, Matthew
- Mohamed, Fatin
- Mohamed, Samuel
- Mueangcharoen, Wichaya
- Park, Jennifer
- Perez, Maria Alejandra
- Prevot, Hai
- Ramirez, Karen
- Taskin, Selen
- Tekleab, Heaven
- Tsai, Andrew
- Wong, Ah
- Yao, Nan
- Yin, He
- Yu, Yihua
- Zaporjhets, Veronika