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## **Survey: Only 5% of readers would pay for online-news content**

**London — 21 September, 2009** — Exclusive research by **Harris Interactive®** for **paidContent:UK** (part of the Guardian News & Media Group) released today reveals that, if newspaper groups were to begin charging for their websites, three quarters of users would abandon them in favour of a free alternative.

These findings are the first in a series to be released throughout the week at <http://www.paidcontent.co.uk> examining the possible consequences if media organisations were to introduce a paid content strategy – something that Rupert Murdoch has already pledged to do and other major media organisations have said they're seriously considering.

The research, which polled 1,188 British adults, found that among users who read, as their top source of news, a free site at least once a month, just five percent would continue reading that website if they had to begin paying for the content. Seventy-four percent would simply find a free alternative news source. A further eight percent would continue reading the website's free headlines only. Twelve percent were not sure what they would do.

"This does not look like good news for a pay model in a competitive environment, and as long as free alternatives exist, consumers will turn to them for their daily news information, meaning heavy losses in terms of audience figures for those that charge," Andrew Freeman, Senior Consultant of Media Research at Harris Interactive, said about the survey results.

Robert Andrews, editor at paidContent:UK, added: "With the low prices of online ads and the recent slowdown in advertising generally, it is not surprising that publishers are re-examining the financial viability of online news provision. However, the question that publishers have to ask themselves is: is five percent of your readership enough to offset the decline in advertising revenue that would come with charging for content?"

Other findings from the joint research between Harris Interactive and paidContent;UK released this week will examine whether consumers would prefer to pay for a subscription or pay-per-article if they had to, and how much they would be prepared to shell out for online content.

Freeman continued: "This study is a first for Harris Interactive working in partnership with paidContent UK, and demonstrates the capability of the team in producing innovative, finger on the pulse research which is highly topical. We look forward to working with Robert and his team again in the future."

**ENDS**

### **Notes to editors**

Harris Interactive surveyed 1,188 adults (aged 16-64) online, using the Harris Poll GB Omnibus, within Great Britain between 26<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2009. Figures for age, sex, education, region and Internet usage were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

**About Harris Interactive®**

[Harris Interactive](#) is a global leader in custom market research. With a long and rich history in multimodal research that is powered by our science and technology, we assist clients in achieving business results. Harris Interactive serves clients globally through our North American, European and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms. For more information, please visit [Harris Interactive | Europe](#)

**About paidContent:UK**

PaidContent:UK is part of ContentNext Media, a media and information company owned by [Guardian News and Media Limited](#). Based in New York City, it writes about the business of digital media, serving decision makers within the media, entertainment, publishing, advertising, marketing and technology sectors. Founded by journalist [Rafat Ali](#) in 2002, the company's four news sites chronicle changes in the economics of digital content – an evolution that is reshaping the media, information and entertainment industries. Operating on the assumption that all media will be digital media in the near future, the company aims to identify sustainable business models and promising innovation.