



Facts and Myths

Reading comprehension print vs video screen



Almost every reader knows Shakespeare’s advice in Romeo and Juliet that a rose smells sweet no matter what name people call it. Most people also know that reading offers an informative and satisfactory way to learn something as well, but preferences can make a difference. While the sweet scent of a rose may appeal to you, the aroma of jasmine in the evening air pleases others. Neither offers a better fragrance, and both may produce a pleasing effect, but it can change with time or in an instant.

Choosing to Read Paper Documents, Video Screens or Both

Your choice of medium that delivers written text may vary, but both provide the information that makes you want to read.

People have different opinions about which method produces the best reading comprehension, and misconceptions can occur. As a leader in the mid-Atlantic print market, Harwill Express Press offers traditional as well as state-of-the-art creations that distinguish and enhance the text and images of our clients.

Our environmentally friendly approach incorporates vegetable-based inks that produce the highest quality impressions without damaging the planet. Our leadership in transitioning away from petroleum-based inks and chemical solvents sets us apart from our competition and demonstrates respect for our clients.

Myth: Book and screen reading produce the same amount of comprehension.

Fact: **False.** Readers can memorize printed material more effectively, and it may result from the brain’s ability to note the position of the text on a page.

Myth: Focusing on a video screen makes it as easy as reading a book.

Fact: **False.** The many distractions online that may include HTML links, pop-ups, ads and new tabs detracts from the level of attention that promotes reading comprehension. Paper documents do not present distractions that interrupt your train of thought.

Myth: Video screens do not drain mental resources.

Fact: **False.** Reading video screens does tend to use more mental resources. The result makes it harder for you to remember what you read.



Myth: The layout of a book or magazine makes no difference.

Fact: **False.** The left and right pages help you achieve the orientation that a video screen cannot provide, and you can turn them when you finish reading each one. The thickness of printed material lets you estimate the length of time that you must spend to read it, and the familiar tactile feel of paper strengthens your attention span.

Myth: Online notes make as much of an impression on your memory as handwritten ones.

Fact: **False.** The margins in books or magazines give you a place to write your thoughts, and they remain in your long-term memory more effectively than notes that you may type when you read information on a video screen. They also help you to understand concepts better.

Myth: Your brain understands electronic and printed material in the same way.

Fact: **False.** You use a different part of your brain to read a page or a video screen. You probably notice that you tend to skim an online document more than when you read text on paper. The practice allows you to focus more on searching for keywords instead of on content, and it tends to inhibit reading comprehension.

Myth: Video screens and printed material affect the eyes the same way.

Fact: **False.** The pixels on a video screen make your eyes work harder than reading a book or magazine. Advances in the technology of screen resolution may eventually cause less eyestrain. However, you tend to blink less when you read a video screen, and your eyes may become dry. A look at something in the distance periodically can help prevent discomfort.

Myth: Hardcopy media presents a distinct advantage over video screens.

Fact: **False.** Both forms of presentation give you access to information that may appeal to you differently, depending on your needs and preferences. By switching between them, you can enjoy the best features and advantages of each.

Myth: The difference between the years that humans used traditional reading or video screens makes no difference.

Fact: **Possibly.** However, humans have read words for about 5000 years and computer screens for about 50. The availability of both mediums lets you choose one or the other or both.



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