

**SIB Survey on Print Media
at the D-BSSE of ETH Zurich**

September 2021



Sustainability Initiatives @DBSSE
D-BSSE, ETH Zurich
Mattenstrasse 26
4058 Basel, Switzerland
sib@bsse.ethz.ch

1. Rational

ETH Zurich uses multiple channels to communicate news and events to its employees as well as to the public. Although mail as the 'traditional' delivery method has been accompanied by Email or Apps, the delivery of printed media via mail remains the default.

To assess how employees at the Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering (D-BSSE) in Basel are using the provided ETH related print media, the SIB (Sustainability Initiatives @D-BSSE) conducted a survey with the goal to reduce unnecessary copies. This will increase the department's sustainability by decreasing transport emissions, especially to the D-BSSE in Basel, and by saving resources such as paper, ink, and plastic wrapping.

This report evaluates the survey and recommends actions to be taken.

2. Method

The survey was sent to all D-BSSE employees and participation was possible from December 2020 until January 2021. The results were analyzed by 4 people from 3 different research groups.

3. Results

3.1 General information

Out of 713 employees that received the survey, 104 from all employment levels participated. In detail, this includes PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, administrative and facility staff, and professors.

3.2 Print-media in the "Science Lounge"

The majority of survey participants (83%) answered that they do not read the ETH specific print media provided in the "Science Lounge". The remaining 17% answered that they read magazines, such as ETH-GLOBE, annual reports, or D-BSSE specific print media, sometimes or regularly (questions 3 & 4).

3.3 Digital formats of media distribution

A stunning 92% of participants prefer to read updates and news from ETH in an electronic instead of a printed version. However, 85% of participants are not aware of the ETH-Magazine App, which grants access to the GLOBE magazine, and a minority (12%) is aware of it but never used it. The questions do not allow for determining if participants knowing but not using the app do read the GLOBE magazine in print format or not at all (questions 5 & 6).

3.4 Personally addressed ETH print-media

Asked about the usage of personally addressed print media (Magazin life, Polykum, and Treffpunkt Science city), 30% of participants replied that they do read them, 16% that they read them online, and 54% that they do not read them at all. Unfortunately, 74% of all participants were not aware of the possibility to manage delivery/subscription options via EThis (<https://www.bi.id.ethz.ch/eAdressen/>) and 11% were aware but never used it.

The questions do not allow for determining if participants not reading the print media are aware of the unsubscription option.

Unsurprisingly, 89% of participants prefer the default delivery option for the personally addressed magazine distribution to be set to email/no delivery (Question 9).

4. Conclusion

The survey tackles two different types of print media provided by the ETH to its employees, personally addressed and publicly displayed (in "Science Lounge"). Both are perceived and used differently and should be handled accordingly.

In general, most survey participants prefer to receive news and magazines in digital format. However, several participants also use and advocate for the availability of the publicly displayed print media in the "Science Lounge".

Therefore, we recommend the following measures for the management of print media to reduce its negative effects on the environment while maintaining easy accessibility to it.

5. Recommendations

The recommendations are divided into personally addressed print media and publicly displayed print media in the "Science Lounge".

Personally addressed print media:

- We recommend changing the default setting for the delivery of print media to email/no delivery for new department members. Instead, a notification should be devised to help new employees to access digital formats or sign up for the delivery of physical copies.
- We recommend delivering print media to the D-BSSE only, unless an employee is permanently working from home.
- We recommend raising awareness for the different delivery options e.g. by including instructions/links in the back of magazines or the D-BSSE wiki. Unsubscribe links are already common practice for Email newsletters and can easily be adapted for print media.

Publicly displayed print media in the "Science Lounge":

- We recommend reducing the number of repetitive samples. This accommodates the low but existing demand for print copies as well as an increased sustainability.

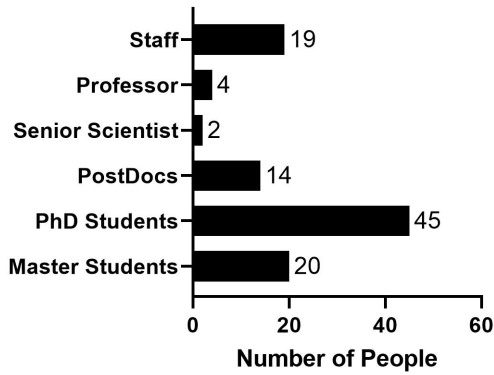
Appendix

Survey results

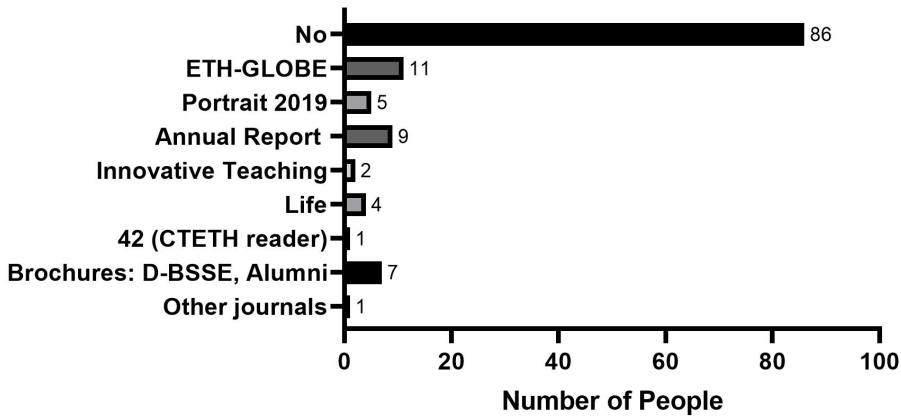
Question 1. Name

This was a free text question.

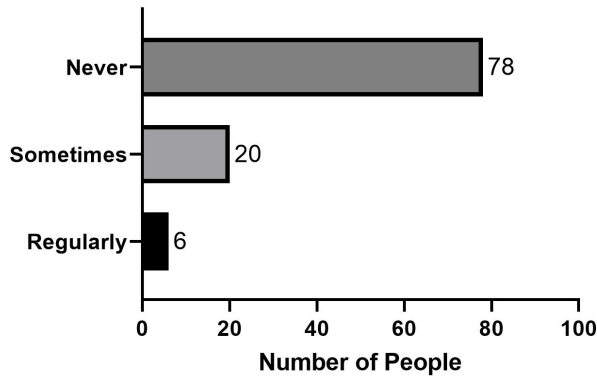
Question 2. What is your role at D-BSSE?
(104 responses)



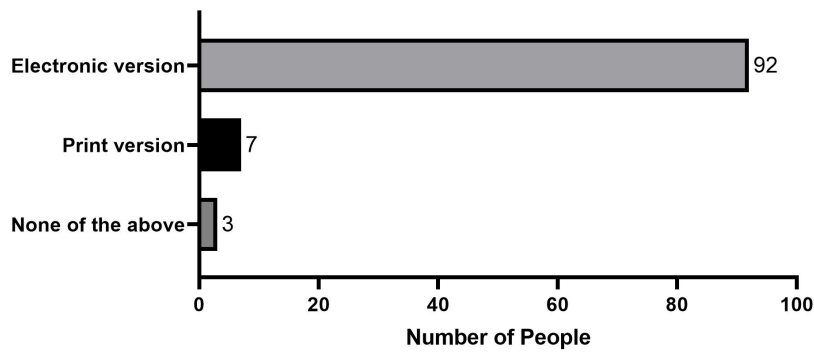
Question 3. Do you read ETH print-media on display in the "Science Lounge"? If Yes, which ones? (Multiple answers possible)
(103 responses)



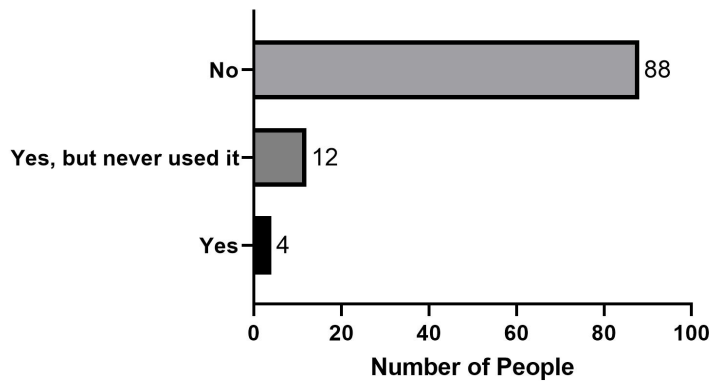
Question 4. How often do you read the above?
(103 responses)



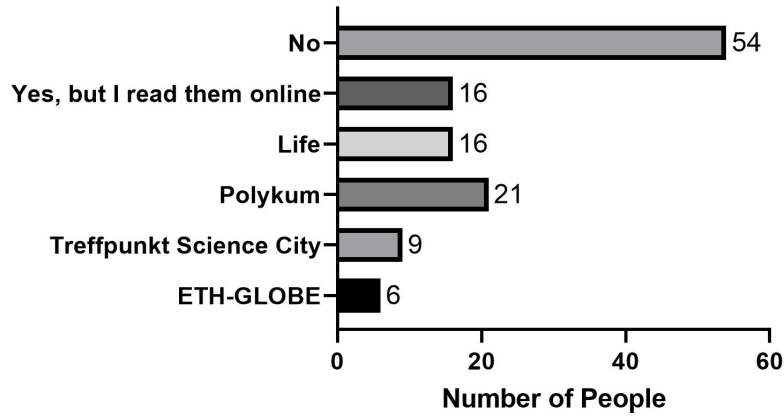
Question 5. Do you prefer reading updates and news from ETH in the form of magazines (print media) or electronic versions?
(102 responses)



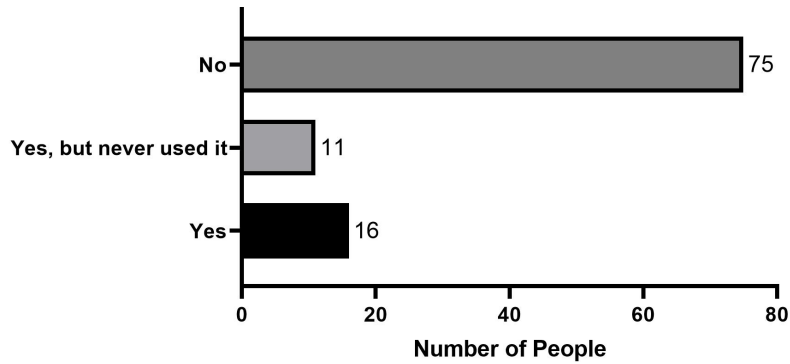
Question 6. Were you aware of the ETH-Magazine App which gives you access to the GLOBE magazine?
(104 responses)



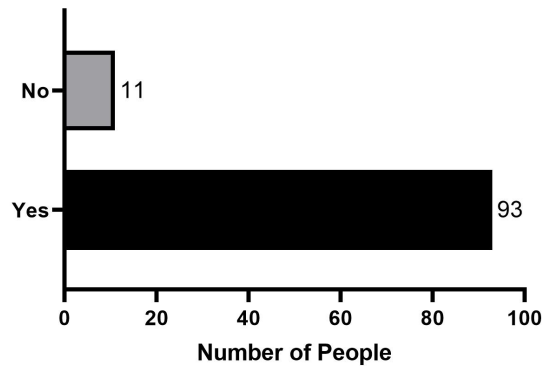
Question 7. Do you read ETH print-media addressed to you? If yes, which ones? (Multiple answers possible)
(101 responses)



Question 8. Did you know that you can manage your magazine subscription via ETHIS (<https://www.bi.id.ethz.ch/eAdressen/>)?
(102 responses)



Question 9. Currently, the default setting on EThis is for the magazines to be sent by post. Would you like it to be changed to email mode/no delivery?
(104 responses)



Question 10. Any other remarks

This was a free text question