2020 Information Seeking and Consumption Study

For professionals in Electric and Gas Utilities, using content is essential for collaboration and staying abreast of regulatory requirements, market shifts, sustainability, environmental influences, and more. With constant pressure around performance, results for shareholders, efficiency, and increasing competition, the behaviors and attitudes of professionals in this industry regarding content use and sharing have shifted over time as they seek to establish a competitive edge in an ever-changing landscape. The pandemic in 2020 also triggered dramatic changes to where and how employees engage and collaborate using published content. The 2020 Information Seeking and Consumption Study by Outsell, Inc. focused on the speed, volume, and scale at which external content is being shared across Electric and Gas Utilities professionals. Here’s what we learned:

Importance of Content
Knowledge workers in Electric and Gas Utilities consider 6.8 different print or digital publications critical to their job function.

Types of externally published content used at work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Content</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade or business publications</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletters</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research papers</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market research</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly journals</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
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</tbody>
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The Velocity of Content Sharing is on the Rise

The amount of information being shared across professional Electric and Gas Utilities environments is nearly three times the rate of 2016 with respondents sharing work-related content on average 17 times per week with 10 other people. Considering that 47% of that content is sourced from external providers such as scientific journals, news sources, and other publications, there is the potential for more than 77 instances of unlicensed sharing per employee per week if proper permissions are not in place.
Copyright Awareness and Attitudes
Despite efforts to educate employees about copyright, according to Outsell’s 2020 research, 55% of professionals in Electric and Gas Utilities surveyed are either unaware of their organization’s copyright policies or unsure of its details.

While 75.6% believe their organization takes appropriate measures to provide information and ensure copyright compliance and 66.7% agreed there are serious risks and implications to copyright infringement:

- 66.6% agreed that information purchased by their company that they can access in digital form, through portals or in the library, is permissible to share with others inside their organization.
- 62.8% agreed that if they obtain free information on the open web or in print, sharing is permitted.
- 55.1% agreed that in competitive, mission-critical or time-critical situations, they will forward any and all relevant information that will help the organization be more competitive.

Impact of Changing Work Environments
During the COVID-19 pandemic, 68% of respondents in Electric and Gas Utilities reported working from home, of which:

- 28.3% reported sharing content more often
- 30.2% reported sharing with more people

Copyright Awareness

Why It Matters?
While the sharing of information with co-workers supports collaboration and drives innovation, the sharing of published information without obtaining the necessary subscriptions, licenses, or permissions also carries enormous potential risk. Ordinary content exchanges that come so naturally in the digital world can increase the risk of copyright infringement, costly lawsuits or settlements, and result in damage to brand reputation.

By taking steps to balance employee reuse of published content with a strong compliance and licensing program, your company can leverage today’s rise in content sharing to help support collaboration and drive innovation.

Access our complete cross-industry report for other global key findings and more information on who we surveyed at copyright.com/outsell.


Learn more
For more information on how to promote collaboration, simplify copyright compliance, and streamline your content workflow, contact us at:

Organizations in the U.S.:
- copyright.com/acl
- solutions@copyright.com

Organizations outside the U.S.:
- rightsdirect.com/mcl
- solutions@rightsdirect.com