Par. 4: "I believe our competitor's through-the-book method understates magazine audiences, while recent reading obtains more accurate readership counts". Comment: In fact, Simmons through-the-book could overstate magazine audience because their showing of separate colored card for each masthead one by one, which must cause over-claiming of reading in the last six months. This may, or may not be offset by skeletonizing, referred to in the next paragraph.

Par. 5-14: "Through-the-book (described in Par. 5) using untouched full magazines, establishes the audience of a specific magazine (P. 13). However, skeletonized issues, as used by Simmons (Pars. 8 & 9) lead to understatement..." capturing only about 60% of total reading found by full through-the-book). Comment: To say Simmons loses 40% of readers is ridiculous. Comparison with Audits & Survey's 1975 figures from full through-the-book shows no difference for in-home reading. For out-of-home reading, Simmons is 40% less than Audits & Surveys, giving a net difference of 15%, which can't be ascribed to skeletonizing.

Par. 14: "The level of reading advertisements is relatively constant between in-home and out-of-home reading". Comment: What does "level of reading" mean? The number of times looked at by the one person for a weekly is probably only once out-of-home, compared with probably about twice in-home. For a monthly, the figure is also probably only once out-of-home, but probably several times in-home. Has this been studied and reported in recent years?

Par. 15: "If monthlies take longer than weeklies to accumulate their audiences, and if forgetting is a function of time, it is obvious that (the readership of) monthlies is understated by through-the-book". Comment: That is obviously true, but the understatement is likely to be very small compared with the vast over-statement from recent-reading, caused by prestige, telescoping and replication, which is not offset by parallel reading.

Par. 17-19: Here it is explained that in recent-reading people are simply asked whether they had read any issue of each weekly in the last 7 days, and of each monthly in the last 30 days. It is also explained that the arithmetic of this method is, for example, that assuming the June issue of a monthly is read by 2% of adults in the month of issue (June) by 3% in the next month (July) by 2% in the 3rd month (August) and by 1% in the 4th month, then each issue has an audience of 10% built up over 4 months. Looking at those figures another way, in June 2% read the issue, 3% the June issue, 3% the April issue and 1% the March issue. Therefore, asking whether any issue of a particular monthly magazine has been read in the last month gives a fairly accurate estimate of average-issue readership.

Comment: Of course it should, if exaggerations from prestige, telescoping (elastic memories) and replication can be reduced to insignificance. But every readership survey (except the Morgan Readership Survey) maximises prestige by showing separate mastheads one by one, instead of showing several at a time, either as a list or as reduced block-and-write covers. Moreover, other surveys don't try to minimise telescoping, as the Morgan Readership Survey does by first asking about the reading of dailies yesterday, and then day by day backwards for a week. That 'teaches' people that a week ago began 7 days ago, not about a fortnight ago, as in many peoples' minds.

Replication (i.e. the repeated reading of back copies) seems to affect monthlies more than weeklies, which quickly 'chase each preceding issue out of the house', as pass-alongs or as waste paper.

Par. 21: In this par, Timothy Joyce wickedly uses the above assumption of 4, 3, 2, 1 as if it were a fact. He applies it to all monthlies, and then claims that a through-the-book survey
of a monthly, using an issue 2 months old, would miss 30% of its readers!
Comment: In fact, through-the-book surveys of monthlies are conducted on issues 10 to 12 weeks old, not 8 weeks old. Moreover, most copies of monthlies gather most of their readers in the month of issue (after which they are shelved or destroyed) while other copies gather readers month by month, at varying rates depending on their pattern of pass-alongs, etc.

Par. 21 (1): Here it is claimed that replication and parallel reading have little effect and tend to offset each other, except that in recent-reading parallel reading may slightly underestimate audiences for monthlies.
Comment: We have not seen any recent figures to support those claims. Our comparisons of through-the-book and recent-reading indicate that with weekly magazines, replication and parallel reading have little effect. However, something (probably a mixture of telescoping and replication) produces too-high figures for monthlies from recent-reading, compared with true through-the-book. That is why we tried using reduced black-and-white front covers of specific issues, we obtain figures for monthlies close to those from true through-the-book.

Par. 21 (2): Here it is claimed that "telescoping" (i.e. saying a reading event happened more recently than it did) can be reduced to an acceptable minimum (does he mean maximum?) by proper questionnaire design.
Comment: There is no evidence that he has succeeded. However, asking first about daily papers, and going back day by day for a week, before asking about weeklies, we seem to have reduced telescoping for weeklies to insignificance. However, we have not succeeded (with the recency question) with monthlies so (as stated above) we use reduced black-and-white covers of 10 to 12 week old specific issues.

Par. 22: This says the recent-reading method can potentially solve its problems.
Comment: Yet the previous 21 paragraphs claim all problems have been solved! We believe we have found a reliable way of using recent-reading for weeklies - by showing lists of titles in several sequences, instead of showing mast-heads one by one. This reduces to insignificance the effects of prestige i.e. wrongly claiming to be a reader. It seems that no other readership survey has considered prestige as an exaggerator. Unfortunately that does not "work" for monthlies, because telescoping and replication inflates claimed readership. However (as mentioned above) by using reduced black-and-white front covers of specific issues, we obtain figures for monthlies close to those from true through-the-book.

Frequency: In this article Timothy Joyce does not mention that he asks frequency of reading and that he uses it to calculate reach. We don't ask frequency of reading, because it is exaggerated by prestige, telescoping and replication. Instead, we double-interview some cross-sections after 4 weeks, to measure the number of casual readers i.e. those who were in the first survey but not the second. Simmons also uses double-interviews to measure casualness, which he calls turnover. Note that casualness is the reciprocal of regularity. If two magazines have similar numbers of readers, the one with the larger number of casual readers will reach the greatest number of people in a given period.
FROM 1959 ON, the Alfred Politz firm adopted and refined the technique for Life magazine and other publications. Politz insisted that 12 was the maximum number of titles which could be measured by the technique.

Over the years, the measurement of only a dozen magazine titles proved inadequate, so the number was increased. As more titles had to be shown to respondents, the use of skeletonized issues was abandoned. Such issues exclude regular features and present only the opening pages of a limited number of sections.

During the 1950s, our major competitor, using this technique, became the dominant force in the syndicated magazine research field. By the late 1970s, the firm had refined the art of using skeletonized issues to the point where it was measuring about 75 titles, containing 12 items. Today, our competitors measure 110 titles, with skeletonized issues consisting of the first six months of the year.

In the through-the-book interview, the respondent is handed a deck of cards on which are printed four-color reproductions of the logos of 110 magazines. The respondent is asked to sort the cards into two piles: those which he might have read or looked at in the last six months and those which he is sure he has not read.

The ones placed in the first pile each issue are considered to be "seen-in" magazines. For each of these, a test item is taken out of the interviewee's kit and the respondent is asked whether any of the nine editorial elements are interesting. Then the interviewer asks whether the respondent has read or looked at the issue before.

As new issues of each magazine go on sale, they are sent to the field so the interviewer's kit of test issues is kept current. Six weeks or so after the first interview with a respondent, a second interview is attempted. If it cannot be completed, the data are ascertained. Audience estimates are averages of the two interviews.

The full through-the-book methodology has a number of merits. It establishes the audience of specific magazine titles. It uses a recognition procedure which should, ideally, minimize confusion between different magazines and issues. However, the skeletonizing of the test issues produces negative results.

Overall, skeletonized-issue measurement leads to an understanding of out-of-home reading (magazines read in the doctor's waiting room or barbershop, for example), exploring only about 60% of the total reading which is found by full through-the-book reading.

Similarly, out-of-home readers spend much less time reading than in-home readers. However, a recent study by People magazine shows that the level of reading advertisements is relatively constant between in-home and out-of-home readers. The problem arises when many items (feature articles, for example) are removed from a skeletonized test issue and the respondent may show only artifices that he has not read.

A problem with through-the-book measurement is issue age. Assuming that monthly magazines have longer shelf lives than weeklies to accumulate the actual issue audiences, and assuming that forgetting is a function of time, it is obvious that specialty magazines are understated by the through-the-book methodology.

The test issues shown are not old enough to pick up the late readers, but are too old to serve as satisfactory memory aids for the older readers.

The principle of the recent-reading method is that respondents are asked whether they have read any issue of each publication in its most recent publication interval. That is, the final seven days for a weekly and the last 34 days for a monthly. This yields an estimate of the audience of the average issue, even through the method is not "issue-specific." It is a much simpler technique to apply than through-the-book.

Each issue has a total audience of 1% of the adult population, built up over 24 months. Equally, 10% of the population reads any issue in each month. For example, in June, 1% reads the June issue while the May issue, 1% reads the May issue, 2% reads the April issue, and 1% reads the March issue. Asking whether any issue has been read in the last month will yield an estimate of the average issue audience.

A recent reader, responding to the question, may have read more than one issue which has occurred up to three months before the interview.

Furthermore, this principle serves to understate the flaws in the through-the-book method: its inability to pick up late reading. If a test issue is three months old and still has not been read, it will be missed; if it is only two months old, 3% of the population (10% of all readers) will be missed. This means that the differences are largely accounted for by the two deficiencies in skeletonized-issue measurement: the loss of a substantial proportion of out-of-home readers who would be picked up by full through-the-book measurement and a further loss of the readers of monthly and ultimate, due to the issue-reading problem which all issue-specific measurements suffer from.

In recent-reading, relatively high levels of readers-per-copy are accounted for by high rates of home-to-home passing along and/or by substantial levels of out-of-home reading. The availability and appeal of copies in public places is a particularly important determinant of reader-per-copy.