

Transformation of Newspapers in the Technology Era

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Abstract

This study attempted to investigate how newspapers were adapting to technology and how well the changes were keeping up with altering consumer demands. This research examined what prominent technology newspapers were using to deliver news and whether adjusting to current technology was keeping readers satisfied. Using a triangular research approach by conducting interviews, secondary research, and survey, this research tackled questions from various perspectives to reach a multi-faceted conclusion. Despite the decline of print newspaper subscriptions, this research explained why newspapers might not be a dying business. To remain competitive news sources, newspapers were implementing new technologies, such as web sites, blogging and text/instant messaging, to deliver information. By optimizing advertising dollars and promoting consumer participation, these changes suggested a positive future for the newspaper industry.

I. Introduction

Over the past several decades, many newspapers became sluggish. They had been accustomed to raking in revenue without much competition. After the onset of the Internet, newspapers are realizing they will encounter a financial crisis if they do not keep up with new technological competitors. Now, newspaper businesses are embracing technology as a way to meet audiences' expectations. The researcher will investigate whether newspapers have been successfully transitioning toward technologically advanced media and how well the changes are keeping up with consumer demands.

II. Literature Review

Profitability of Online Business

The first goal of a business is to make a profit. Without earning enough money, a business simply cannot succeed. Newspapers are no exception. As years go by, businesses must adapt to meet customer demands. For decades, newspapers have dealt with small adjustments, but they are now at a point where major changes need to take place to remain competitive. Researcher Trombly (2002) found that just over half of 170 online newspapers showed a slight profit in 2001. The nearly 10-year-old study would probably show significantly different results if it had been conducted in 2011. Still, the numbers show an increase of previous years and could give important insight into the future of newspaper profitability online. During this study, Trombly found that Web development was the second-most revenue-generating element of newspapers,

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which many people may not realize.

Since the beginning of the Internet, newspapers have asked themselves if they could provide a healthy stream of revenue for business, and if so, how it would be possible. The question is not simple to be answered, especially by a study conducted nearly 15 years ago (Kirsner, 1997). There was no way for anyone to understand how fast technology would grow in the next decade. Although Kirsner's predictions may be slightly conservative, he made several fair arguments. For instance, he mentioned that people need to be patient. Even newspapers today fail to allocate enough resources to technology, thinking it will not deliver worthwhile results. Further, he mentioned how vital advertising on the Web will be to online businesses. This statement is very accurate, because newspapers with Web sites now see increases in revenue from advertising as long as they deliver large audiences other businesses seek to target. In the last few years, advertisers are finding that online advertising is much more effective than print. Online advertising is more of a long-term investment (Dorroh, 2005). In print, readers can identify advertisements much more easily, but online it is sometimes difficult to separate advertising from entertainment. According to Robertson (2005), newspaper subscriptions are decreasing, because consumers are realizing they can read the same content online for free. If newspapers require users to pay for online subscriptions to read all content, they may lose revenue.

Advantages of Using the Internet and Other Technologies

Judging from many studies, using up-and-coming technologies could provide newspapers with many advantages. Besides increased revenues, they offer many other advantages that people often overlook.

New technologies attract audiences to the news industry. For instance, the interactivity of social media is transforming the way consumers receive and participate in news (Gleason, 2010). For instance, Twitter allows "followers" to personalize their news and respond to the news sources they "follow" with questions, ideas or concerns (Farhi, 2009). Farhi observed that social media, especially Twitter, has changed the newspaper landscape. Consumer involvement appears to be a significant advantage of using new, innovative technologies, and the participation makes audiences feel appreciated. Further, these technologies are giving audiences a sense of power when they comment on news content (Bly, 2010). According to Bly, audience interaction via social media could be the "new 'big thing'" (Bly, 2010, para. 1).

With profitability still the ultimate goal, some newspaper businesses transformed once-print newspapers into primarily online-based news sources. The article "Small Paper Redefines Itself Online" (Frye, 2003) describes how much more money has been generated from online news than print. Most newspapers find it difficult to change and adapt to different methods to which they are unaccustomed; however, one 70-year-old weekly turned to the Internet as a lifeline for its business. Even in a small town of 3,500 residents, it found that publishing news on a Web site brought the business great success. The opposite is a common problem with many newspapers struggling to keep customers reading, because they choose not to invest the time and money into technology that they should have years ago (Morton, 2007). The small-town newspaper gave great insight into how taking the first step could turn a newspaper business around for the better. Advertising online is much easier to track and gives advertisers more flexibility than print. As a result, they are willing to pay top dollars to make sure that their messages are seen by specific audiences for certain time periods.

Different Types of Technologies

Throughout the last decade, technological advancements have changed the way we live our lives. They each come with their own advantages and disadvantages that consumers must weigh before making decisions. There were several researchers who took an in-depth look at the most popular technology that shaped the way newspapers are now doing business.

Researcher Yahr (2008) wrote that blogs would contribute greatly to online newspapers' success in the coming years. Blogs provide a lot of audience interaction that was not previously possible, not just between audience members, but also between journalists and audiences. Consumers feel more connected and continue coming back for more when they are a part of an intellectual conversation about a news topic that interests them. Yahr said blogs are not for everyone. With blog editors monitoring conversations, blogs can be a healthy addition to all news-related Web sites that can help increase audience numbers as well as improve the way news is delivered.

Cellular phones are also an up-and-coming technology to which newspapers are adapting. Smartphones are rapidly changing the way audiences perceive news. In the article "The Ever-Evolving Newspa-

per,” Frye said that text messages and phone applications are becoming popular in newsrooms, because they send information instantly to readers (2006). Adjusting to this new phenomenon helps maintain audiences’ trust and attention.

In the 1990s, newspapers did not embrace technology as much as broadcasters and even tried to block telephone companies from entering the electronic market, because they feared competition and the unknown (McKenna, 1993). In this decade, combining things consumers want into one product is common, and newspapers are finding that they cannot continue to shy away from broadcast, cell phones and the Internet any more. Not only do newspapers need to compete against these technologies, but they need to learn to collaborate with them.

Future of the News in a Technological World

It is uncertain where technology is headed in the future, so it is difficult to gauge what the future of the newspaper business will look like. Information from the past and present, however, will help forecasters make predictions about future trends. Media futurists also share their insights on how newspapers will change in the future.

Often, people attribute the decline of newspapers to the rise of the online news. On the contrary, there is not as much of a connection between the two as many people believe (Palser, 2007). Certainly, people have begun to gravitate toward quick and effective news on the Internet and slowly cancel newspaper subscriptions, but Palser suggested it is the type of journalism, not the form, that contributes to newspaper struggles. Audiences’ demands are changing, and they want something convenient instead of tangible.

Secondly, a fair amount of customers still find it difficult to trust online news. Since anyone can contribute to news content online, some consumers hesitate to give much credibility to information on the Internet in comparison with other news sources (Baetke, 2006). Newspapers need to reach out to these online customers by building trust. Once newspapers develop trust, they will see higher profits rolling in.

Many newspapers are monitoring consumers’ online comments by requiring them to register. Newspapers are trying to balance audiences’ freedom to post what they please on Web sites with the responsibility of making sure that comments are appropriate and relevant. By keeping track of identified posts, offensive comments will decrease (Gsell, 2009). The growing transparency and consumer involvement are building audiences’ trust of technologies that newspapers use. If newspapers continue on their current route, readers will be pleased, and newspapers will more than likely advance as a result.

Research Purpose

The 21st century has brought along with it a long list of new technologies. It seems that one technological discovery is quickly replaced by something more impressive and efficient. As a result, “old-fashioned” technologies to which we have been accustomed in the past are forced to fight for survival or surrender. In the age of the Internet, online news businesses are popping up daily, leaving print news in dust. As a result, many newspapers are realizing they need to tailor their news-delivering techniques to be quicker and more accessible. It has been a slow and difficult process, but hundreds of newspapers are transforming the way they approach news. Older businesses are trading in their pens for a keyboard and desk phones for online video conferencing. This change newspapers are embracing is extremely important to understand, because it helps us comprehend not only why it is happening, but what the future of news will look like. This research will discuss how newspaper businesses are embracing technology, how journalists and audiences are accepting the transformations and which technologies audiences prefer. Newspapers’ potential depends on their ability to continuously alter the fundamentals they held close for many years. The researcher will not be explaining how the newspaper industry is in decline and why electronic media is now the industry’s strongest competitor for audiences.

III. Methods

This study aims at deciphering how newspaper businesses are turning to technology to remain a successful and credible news source. The researcher chose to triangulate the topic by investigating the topic with a survey, interviews and secondary research. Utilizing these three methods will provide well-rounded

explanations to research questions.

In April 2011, 109 people participated in a survey conducted using Survey Monkey where the researcher created her own survey (www.surveymonkey.com). The author provided a web link on Facebook so research participants could answer 12 questions in the survey. The researcher invited all of her “friends” to complete the survey, and these participants did invite their own “friends” to complete the survey. Users were able to complete the survey at their own convenience. Of the participants, 90.7% were between the ages of 18 and 25; 0.9% between the ages of 26 and 39; 5.6% between the ages of 40 and 54; and 2.8% 55 years and older.

The survey includes multiple choice questions regarding how much participants use newspapers and other news-delivering technologies, how often they use these technologies and to what extent they would go to obtain news from different forms. Additionally, they ranked various platforms in order of how much they trust the information they read from them (Refer to Appendix).

The survey questions asked audiences how they perceive the current newspaper industry, what they like and dislike about how the industry has adjusted to technology and what changes would make them more likely to choose print news over news that utilizes technology.

Interviews with people from different backgrounds provide a greater, more in-depth perspective on the state of the newspaper business. The researcher interviewed four people: *Burlington-Times News Online* Content Editor Joe Journey, *Miami Herald* Vice President of news Anders Gyllenhaal, freelance writer John Smith and newspaper consumer John Yancey. The researcher selected these interviewees, because she wanted to accurately gauge the success of newspapers’ transition to technology by hearing diverse perspectives.

IV. Findings and Analyses

Technology

Over the past decade, technology has advanced drastically. The growing presence of technology is influencing the way newspapers are distributing news, and audiences are noticing it. In the survey, 63.3% of 109 participants believed that newspapers are doing a good job adapting to new technology. Although types of technology used by newspapers are continuously changing, survey participants are accessing newspaper-published information in five core ways. With 97.2% of participants using Web sites, 70.6% using social media, 42.2% using text or instant messaging and 37.6% using Smartphone or iPad applications, newspapers are delivering news via more devices than in previous decades. These percentages compare to 93.6% watching television and 71.6% listening to the radio for news (see *Figure 1*).

Asked to choose one of the seven news sources they preferred, 50.5% of the participants favored Web sites and only 29.3% favored television. The rest of responses were split, with each source receiving approximately 2-4% of the vote.

In an interview, *Burlington-Times News Online* Content Editor Joe Journey said that several employees at the *Times-News*, a local newspaper with a circulation of 36,000, write blogs for the business. Two or three employees at this North Carolina newspaper blog about entertainment while the others write primarily news. The newspaper offers free text message subscriptions, which notify readers of breaking news, but there are no text services for other content. With the rise of Smartphone popularity, the *Times-News* is working to create a Smartphone application, which will allow subscribers to view the latest headlines, videos and Web exclusives from anywhere (personal communication, April 19, 2011).

Miami Herald Vice President of news Anders Gyllenhaal believed the modern approach toward technology is not only about the Internet, but also dependence on other technology (personal communication, April 21, 2011). For instance, the *Herald* partners with a public radio company. Gyllenhaal said the partnership provides an interesting combination, because the *Herald* uses its news staff for all of the different positions needed. Changes go far beyond news distribution. The *Herald* and *Times-News* are also upgrading technology within the newsroom, from new publishing systems and wire feeds via satellite to pre-press machines that create plates for the press.

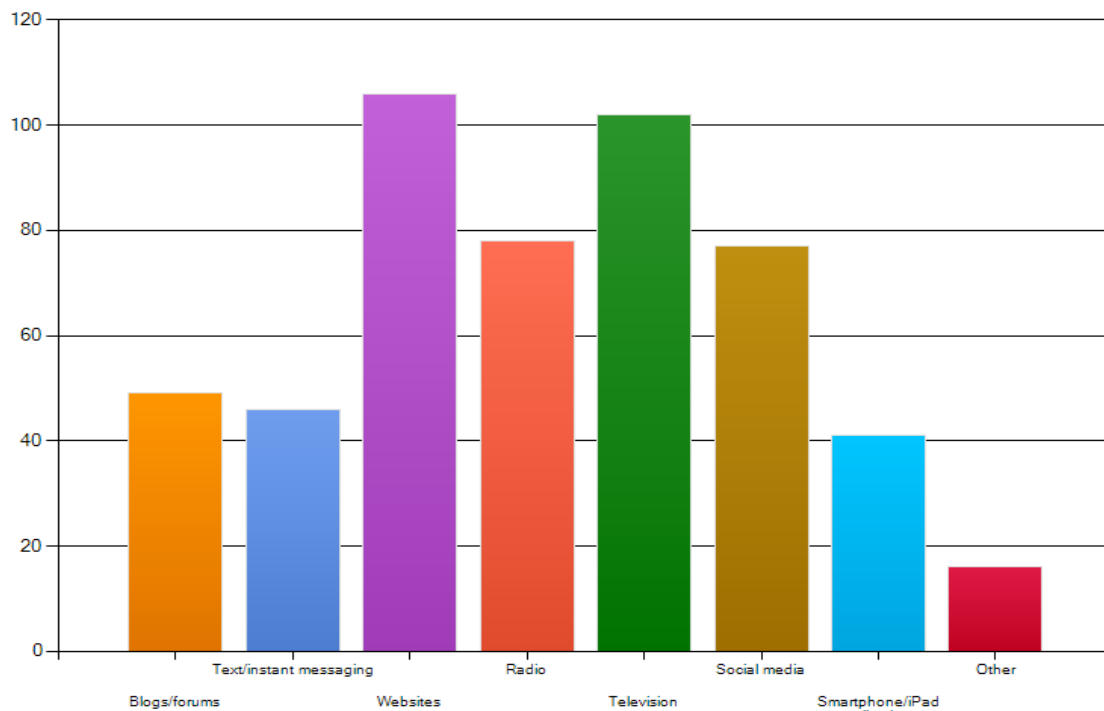


Figure 1. Types of Technology Consumers Use for News

Secondary research confirms mobile technology may have a promising future, although the technology's potential has yet to be discovered. This "direct channel to contact mobile Internet customers is an important asset and suggests a growing importance of customer relationship management as well as brand strategy" for newspaper businesses in the mobile Internet (Feldmann, 2002, p. 352). Social media is also becoming an important element in news distribution. The growing demand has led news organizations such as the *New York Times* and the *Associate Press* to create new social media job positions. For example, 27-year-old Lauren McCullough filled a new social media editor position at the *Associated Press* in 2010. Describing her job as "both emerging and evolving," she said her position requires her to be "keeping an eye on various social networks and have an understanding of what's being talked about" and new trends (Gleason, 2010, p. 6). News organizations are utilizing social media as a strategy to help "reach an audience, especially when major news erupts" that is usually difficult to target (2010, p. 6).

Blogging, text and instant messaging, Smartphone applications and social media are sweeping across the news industry. Although slower to adapt, newspapers are now embracing innovative technologies to enhance business. Tighter budgets make it more difficult for newspapers to hire employees to utilize all new technologies, but many newspapers find ways to explore at least one of them.

With smartphones and iPads populating millions of consumers' pockets and purses, creating applications to access news via these platforms only seems natural. Further, text messaging is still an emerging concept in the newsroom, and newspapers are still exploring ways to maximize the potential of this infant technology.

The largest finding from interviews was that technology is changing the way newspapers are doing business and it is very unlikely they will ever go back to older, antiquated methods. Many newspapers' fear of jumping into the technological world once interfered with the ability to compete against innovative, technology-embracing opponents. Now, newspapers do not appear to be going anywhere soon, and survey results show consumers' ages only appear to play a slight role in the success of new technologies in the newsroom.

Because technology is constantly changing, the future of the newspapers remains unclear; however, it is certain that newspapers will encounter new challenges and successes while expanding their use of technology.

Demand for Free News

Research participants gravitate toward free news content. Based on results, 16% of them currently subscribe to at least one newspaper, and only 9% are willing to pay to read news content online. Further, 17.4% of participants said no cost is the greatest advantage of reading news online. Despite online reading being free, 32.7% still prefer reading a physical newspaper to its Internet counterpart.

John Yancey, interviewed for this study, is a 24-year-old industrial engineer who looks forward to reading his weekend newspaper even though it costs money. It is only during the week that he reads news online. He said, "Free is definitely an advantage, but there is just something about being able to hold a physical copy that makes the cost worthwhile" (personal communication, March 30, 2011). Despite Yancey preferring print news, the *Times-News* reported a decrease in newspaper subscriptions due to the rise of the Internet. Online Content Editor Joe Journey said *Times-News* newspaper audiences tend to be older and online readers younger, because "younger readers tend to use computers more" (personal communication, April, 19, 2011).

In 2004, the *Spokesman-Review* in Spokane, Washington, began charging readers to view online content. During the first eight months of the year, the publication experienced a site traffic increase of 42%. Immediately after the site imposed a subscription fee, online subscribers became angry and many refused to continue their subscriptions (Robertson, 2005, p. 52). Although more people subscribed to the site over time, its 1,000 online subscribers are still much fewer than the newspaper's 100,160 paper subscribers (2004, p. 52).

Newspapers realize consumers are hesitant to pay for subscriptions when they can access news free online. To combat this problem, newspapers are experimenting with ways to tailor subscriptions in a way that will make customers happy and consequently maximize readership.

It is unlikely that newspapers will remain successful if they charge fees for accessing all online content. The virtually unlimited space on the Internet gives audiences the opportunity to read news about any topic, and to many people newspapers are not worth the cost. In many cases, newspapers are losing money from print subscriptions because consumers recognize that they can find the same information online for no charge.

Profitability

Newspapers are businesses, and the goal of businesses is to be profitable. Using technology to deliver news is opening up a whole new realm of money-making possibilities. Although the concept of newspaper advertising has been around for many decades, there are many forms of advertising that would not be possible without technology. At the *Miami Herald*, 21% of revenue comes from online. Although this percentage is higher than many other newspapers, Anders Gyllenhaal said it isn't good enough and should be closer to 40-45% (personal communication, April 21, 2011).

Publishing online continues to be an experiment for newspapers, and for years they spent resources on developing Web sites and lost money. Now, newspapers are employing various strategies to make online businesses profitable. The most common approach is to require consumers to register before permitting access to content, which consequently boosts advertising revenue (Brown, 2003, p. 55). Registration reveals great amounts of valuable consumer information, such as demographics and reading habits, that publishers can sell at top dollar to advertisers who want to target specific audiences (Shiver, 2006, para. 8). This strategy creates a huge advantage for online publishing, making it easier to bring in advertising revenue than print.

Selling advertising space is especially important in recent years, because consumers are less willing to pay for subscriptions to news, whether print or online (Brown, 2003, p. 54). Over the last five years, advertising has contributed to about 75-80% of revenue for newspaper companies (Morton, 2007, p. 76). In 2006, only 5% of this amount came directly from online advertising. The "major reason for this small presence is that entrepreneurs in the early years of the Internet era did invest the money necessary" and have become online competitors, which are now taking away business from newspapers (2007, p. 76).

The blurring of news and advertising can make it even easier to draw consumers' eyes to advertisements. If advertisers create an ad to simulate the appearance of newspaper content, they can draw greater viewership. Although this strategy may backfire in the future, the theoretically endless space on the Internet makes it easier for newspapers to pack in more advertising for more money (Dorroh, 2005, p. 38). Additionally, display advertising on the Web is quite different than in print news, because advertisers pay to have their

ad displayed for a specific period of time on a particular number of pages (Kirsner, 1997, p. 42). Interested consumers click the ad to visit the sponsoring company's Web site and learn more about the advertised product or service.

Although profit margins are steadily decreasing, newspapers have still managed to keep them high not only through technology-driven successes, but also "cost-cutting and the decline of newsprint costs" (Morton, 2007, p. 76).

New forms of advertising make it much easier for advertisers to gain attention and make money, because clicking on a link on a web newspaper is easier than looking up the advertising company from a print version. Even though newspapers struggled in the past with how to make money from technology, they are beginning to figure out how to profit successfully, even though it may take time.

Consumer Involvement

The growing presence of technology lets consumers connect with newspapers in a way not previously possible. Newspapers' Web sites often allow users to comment on any article or repost it via social networks.

Gyllenhaal said that audiences can contribute to news in many ways, such as submitting photographs and videos of breaking news (personal communication, April 21, 2011). For instance, if a tornado destroyed buildings, witnesses could use cell phone cameras or other technology to record footage reporters cannot. Freelancer John Smith is one of the thousands of people taking advantage of consumer involvement opportunities online. He frequently comments on Web content and blogs about stories that are most important to him, such as politics and international affairs. Online participation is creating career opportunities for his future (personal communication, April 3, 2011).

Success from consumer participation is partially responsible for the spike in blogs and forums on newspaper sites over the past several years, but audience involvement does have a downside. Even though "most readers are civil," there are sometimes "comments that turn nasty and unduly personal" (Yahr, 2008, p. 11). The benefit of having open discussion among readers can spur people to take advantage of the freedom. Therefore, newspapers are assigning employees to act as moderators to supervise discussions. Often, newspapers allow readers to flag comments that are offensive or inappropriate. In response to inappropriate reader submissions, the *Raleigh News and Observer* requires users to register before participating. This strategy keeps participants from posting anonymously and consequently decreases the amount of offensive comments (Gsell, 2009, para. 3). Although there are editors on most newspaper blogs and forums, online participation takes the "power out of the hands of the publishing establishment and puts it into the hands of individual authors" (Bly, 2010, para. 1).

Social media introduces a new level of consumer involvement. Twitter has become a leader of social networking in the newsroom. The site not only allows consumers to interact with newspapers, but it allows reporters to stay in close contact with sources (Farhi, 2009, para. 12). In many cases, the number of readers "following" newspapers almost exceeds actual print circulation (2009, p. 3). Arizona State University journalism professor and news blogger Dan Gillmor said journalists can "follow people who point them to things they should know about" and followers can direct questions or concerns back to them (2009, para. 13).

Not only does participation make it easier for newspapers to receive constructive feedback from audiences, but it also gives readers a sense of importance. Many newspapers often receive valuable story ideas, pictures and other information from devoted audiences. If readers feel that their thoughts and opinions are valued, they are more likely to continue reading the newspaper.

As technology improves, newspapers become more transparent. They are taking advantage of innovative technologies to become closer to audiences than ever. Readers often feel distant from the media, and new developments, such as blogging and forums, help bridge this clear gap between writers and readers. Newspapers are able to use the Internet as a tool to make audiences feel appreciated.

Anyone Can Be Published

Technology makes it quick and easy for consumers to be involved in the news industry. Survey results show that 30.8% of participants have commented or contributed to a news article online at least once.

Writers without college educations now have more of an opportunity to have their work published because of technology. John Smith, a 22-year-old freelancer for the *Examiner*, an online news publication,

sees newspapers' slow progress toward technology as a strong career-advancing opportunity. Unlike the vast majority of journalists, Smith does not have a college degree, but still reaches hundreds of people through his work. Without the Internet, Smith said he would not have the same career opportunities as someone with a college education. Instead of fiercely competing against college graduates for top journalism jobs, Smith emails articles to U.S. senators, the publisher at the *Moscow Times* and many others. Although he lacks a strong academic background, Smith utilizes technology to branch out, make contacts with news outlets and be published in news media (personal communication, April 3, 2011).

Smith said that without editors or other management monitoring writing, casual writers feel free to write what and how they please without others' supervision. In newsrooms, editors often decide which stories are newsworthy, but people who post news-related content on their personal blogs or social media sites lack this restriction and publish information they feel is most important (personal communication, April 3, 2011).

Although it is easier for anyone to be published online, Gyllenhaal said there is "no substitute for good, solid reporting" (personal communication, April 27, 2011). The Internet and other technologies provide a very open platform for people to freely express their beliefs; however, audiences still give credibility to educated journalists (John Yancey, personal communication, March 30, 2011).

Ultimately, "news sites must strike a delicate balance when deciding whether to allow those who comment to remain anonymous" (Gsell, 2009, para. 4). Newspapers want to attract people to participate by making it easy and giving consumers a certain amount of freedom; however, they do not want offensive comments to hinder others' abilities to participate. Newspapers' use of new technology, such as blogs, forums and social media, are a fresh, unique way to attract readers while increasing advertising revenue and consumer loyalty. By hiring employees to monitor audiences' conversations, newspapers keep content clean while making sure comments are relevant and productive.

Trust and Credibility

Older technology has had the opportunity to develop the most credibility in the eyes of consumers; however, the survey showed Web sites as an exception. Results show that participants trust Web sites the most as a news source, with 93.4% at least somewhat trusting the platform. Radio and television followed with 90.7% and 89.9%, respectively. The most recent developing technologies, such as blogs, forums and social media, were not viewed as credible as Web sites, radio and television. Further, 56% of participants do not think blogs are reliable, and 58% do not trust text or instant messaging as news sources (see *Figure II*).

Yancey said he has difficulty trusting online content, because anyone can publish on the Internet. "Newspapers, radio and television have been around longer, and professionals are in greater control of the content published on these sources than on other technology" (personal communication, March 30, 2011). An avid reader of the *News and Observer*, a daily circulation of 176,000, Yancey is learning to trust what he reads via technology, but puts the most trust in content published by a newspaper.

Using these technologies is cheap, quick and easily-accessible to a wide variety of audiences, and businesses do not have to personally deliver the information. In fact, "when it comes to reaching audiences, the Web is actually the best thing that could have happened to newspaper journalism" (Palser, 2006, p. 62). Distribution comes at the touch of a button and allows more people to read and participate in the news than ever. Many news experts said the controversy with technologies, such as blogging and forums, "lies with accountability, accurate reporting and fair access to information" (Baetke, 2006, para. 4). The Web provides more people with the opportunity to stay updated on news by lowering costs (Martin & Robinson, 2007, p. 1), which may be a reason why participants trust it the most.

The growing transparency of newspapers online helps readers develop a deeper trust for what they read. They are not only able to read, but they can participate. If a reader wants to contribute information to a topic or make a complaint, they can post what they want instantly. As consumers' trust in new technology strengthens, so should their personal connection with newspapers. Audiences will feel that the business really values their contributions, and will develop more respect for the business as a result.

Trust takes time to build, and newspapers worked hard over the years to earn this trust. Technology will also need time to develop credibility as a news source, especially since many writers who use technology lack journalism degrees. As newspapers adjust to new technology, audiences will develop confidence in new technology as a news source.

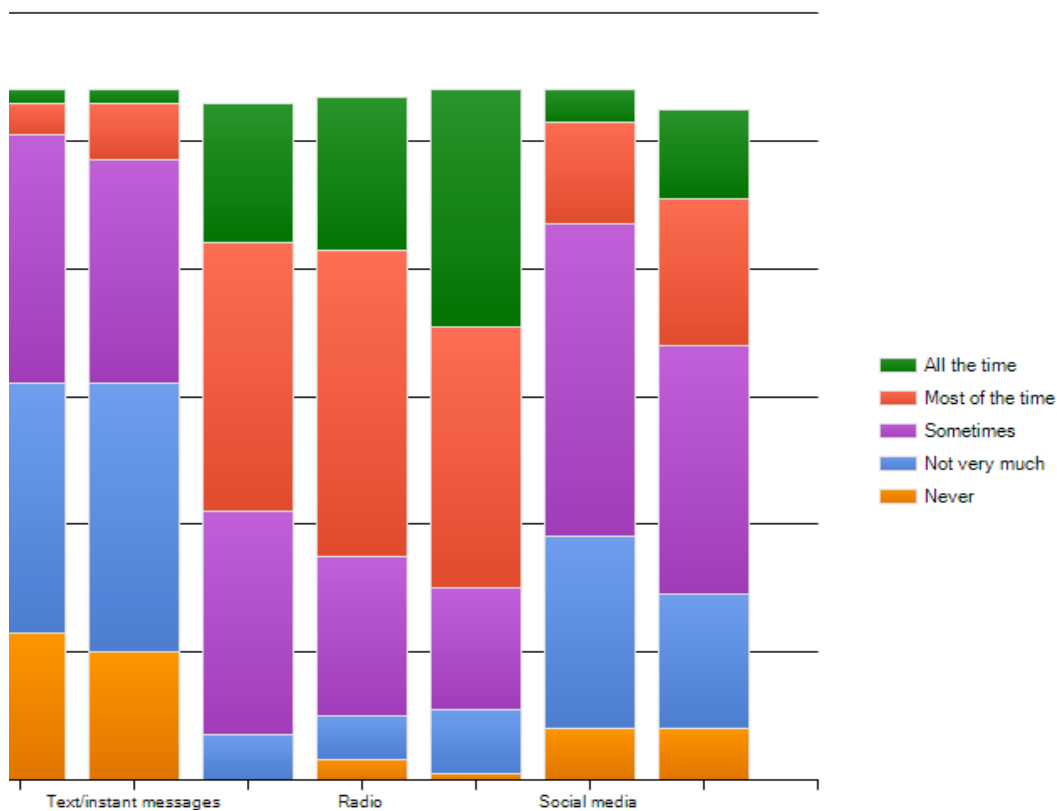


Figure II. How much Consumers Trust Types of Technology for News

Future of Newspapers

Because newspapers are adapting to technology to meet consumer demands, what audiences want will likely play a significant role in newspapers' futures. The survey shows that 61.1% of participants think newspapers will be less popular in the next 10 years and 22.2% think they will not exist. Because 58.7% of participants said they use electronic devices all of the time, survey results suggest newspapers have to continue adapting to new technology.

A major challenge for the *Times-News* will be to continue utilizing new technology and figuring out ways to make their online product profitable. Because consumers are demanding more electronically-based news, Online Content Editor Joe Journey said more "reporters will need to realize that the Web is the future and that newspapers need to provide news instantaneously" (personal communication, April 19, 2011).

The newspaper mentally needs to switch from print to online, and reporters and editors need to realize future success is with the Internet. Like the *Times-News*, it is a concept many newspapers now recognizing. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who owes his success to technology, said "people are online because it is a more efficient way of doing things" (Cassidy, 2006, para. 63). As competitors post news on the Internet 24 hours a day, the pressure increases for newspapers to also deliver news quickly.

Selling information acquired through online registration has been a primary resource for money for newspapers; however, a line should be drawn as to how much information they should sell to whom. Online publishing has thrived by selling consumer information to advertisers, but they could lose audiences' trust if they begin to carelessly sell the information to other businesses. Ultimately, newspapers need to strike a balance between customized advertising and intrusiveness. If the balance is found, newspapers as well as advertisers will be able "to capitalize on the Internet's commercial possibilities" (Brown, 2003, para. 24).

Some experts suggest that to have successful future, newspapers need to put their resources toward developing more technology for newspapers to use, instead of pushing to preserve profit margins (Frye, 2006, p. 15).

Content is often judged by what topics interest readers. Because technology makes it easier to distribute information, some critics suggested newspapers may encounter major challenges preserving “editorial independence while trying to grab the attention of Web readers” in the future (Shiver, 2006, para. 18).

For now, the benefits of online newspapers appear to outweigh the costs, and newspapers will continue building up their businesses with up-and-coming technology (Gentzkow, 2007, p. 742). “The reality is that for the future, there won’t be any single product that will capture a large audience,” said Roger Fidler, the director of technology initiatives for the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism (Frye, 2006, p. 14). As trust for new technology continues to develop, it will be more likely newspaper businesses will make money from online subscriptions (Grabner-Kraeuter, 2002, p. 1).

Although it will be difficult to convince audiences to pay for online content that they used to read for free, subscriptions will still likely increase as consumers begin to trust technology newspapers use. Accurately measuring how many newspaper Web sites are profitable can be difficult, especially because each business may do its accounting differently (Trombly, 2002, para. 14). Even so, trends are showing an increase in online profitability.

Ultimately, newspapers are experiencing a lot of change, and they are transforming in response to altering consumer demands. Gyllenhaal said, “The future, in a lot of different ways, has never been more interesting” and the transformation of newspapers over the last several years is opening up new opportunities for people trying to enter journalism careers (personal communication, April 21, 2011). Although newspapers’ future remains relatively unclear, they are now embracing change in a way that promises an optimistic future.

V. Conclusion

Newspapers in the past seemed to fear technology. Now recognizing that technology is becoming the way of the future, newspapers are adapting and reaping many of the consequential benefits. As competition continues to challenge newspapers, it is highly unlikely that newspapers will ever return to the way they were decades ago. Newspapers are finally “coming to terms with the inevitable high-tech future” (McKenna, 1993, para. 11).

Newspapers have gone from seeing technology as a rival to embracing it as a companion. The competition between old and new is becoming obsolete, and newspapers and technology are unifying. Technology may be changing how news is delivered, but newspapers are still as focused as ever on delivering quality journalism that readers trust (Palser, 2006, p. 62).

Although the future of newspaper businesses is obscure, it is certain that it will include technology. Newspapers are transforming into a news source that consumers want, and are successfully embracing their technological fate.

The survey had a small sample of participants, and the majority of participants were between the ages of 18 and 25. More participants especially from a wider age spectrum would have produced a result that can be generalized more accurately to a broader group of the population. Because technology is rapidly transforming, sources in the author’s literature review, such as scholastic journal articles, cannot be updated quickly because of their nature. Even so, these publications provided plenty of evidence on how far newspapers have advanced and their previous successes and challenges.

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Appendix: Survey Questions

1. What is your age group:

18 – 25

26 – 39

40 – 54

55 and older

2. What forms of technology have you used as a news source? Choose all that apply.

Blogs/forums

Text/instant messaging

Web sites

Radio

Television

Social media

Smartphone/iPad applications

Other

3. Which is your favorite source for news?

Blogs/forums

Text/instant messaging

Web sites

Radio

Television

Social media

Smartphone/iPad applications

Other

4. Do you subscribe to a newspaper?

Yes

No

5. Would you pay to access news online?

Yes

No

6. Have you ever commented or contributed to a news article online?

Yes

No

7. On a scale of 1 – 10, how much do you trust news you read from:

Blogs/forums

Text/instant messaging

Web sites

Radio

Television

Social media

Smartphone/iPad applications

Other

8. Where do you think newspapers will be in the next 10 years?

More popular

Same as now

Less popular

Non-existent

9. How often do you use an electronic device each day?

- Never
- Not often
- Often
- Very often
- All of the time

10. What is the biggest advantage of reading news online?

- Inexpensive/free
- Convenient
- Fast access
- Interactive
- None

11. Are newspapers doing a good job adapting to technology?

- Yes
- No

12. Do you prefer to read news from newspapers or the Internet?

- Newspapers
 - Internet
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