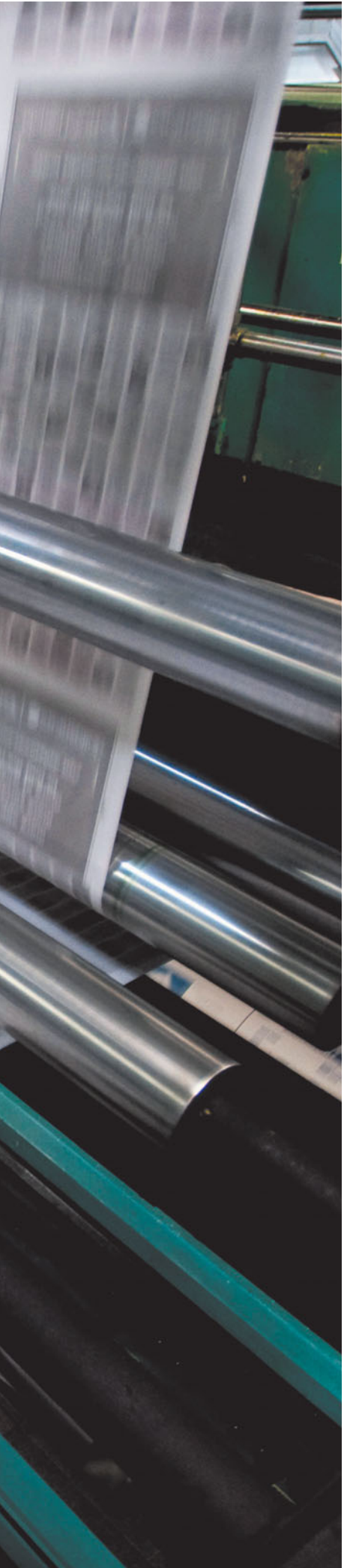


7

Newspapers:

The Rise and Decline of Modern Journalism

Much of the recent worry over and sentiment about the struggling newspaper industry is reflected in the name of the Web site "Newspaper Death Watch," which lists newspapers that have folded since the site went up in 2007 (newspaperdeathwatch.com). Among them are the *Tucson Citizen*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *Cincinnati Post*, *Union City Register-Tribune*, *Honolulu Advertiser*, and *Albuquerque Tribune*. The site also lists *hybrids*—daily newspapers that publish a print version only a few days a week—and those that have converted to online editions only. Among hybrids and online-only papers are the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Detroit News*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Ann Arbor News*, and *Flint Journal* (Michigan). Not since the recording industry in the 1930s (during the Great Depression, when few people could afford to buy records) or radio in the 1950s (when television "stole" radio's ads and programs) have we seen a mass medium in such a crisis.

We should not be surprised. We have known for years that television and cable delivered news cheaply and more immediately than printed newspapers. We have known that the Internet, which solved the space limitations of newspapers, allowed papers to compete with television for breaking news and provided a cheaper alternative to expensive newsprint. Still, few people thought that newspapers would decline this rapidly as the main vehicle for carrying news. So what happened?

Newspapers were overwhelmed by two changes that collided with the 2008–10 economic recession. First, new generations of readers grew up not on their local paper's comic strips and sports sections, but on cable TV and the Internet. By 2009, more than 65 percent of the adult population over age sixty-five reported reading a newspaper the previous day, but less than 30 percent of young people between eighteen and thirty-five did the same. Second, the advertising climate cooled. Newspapers lost their strong grip on classified ads with the emergence of mostly free Web sites like craigslist and eBay. Revenue from such ads peaked in 2000, with newspapers earning a total of $19 billion from classifieds. By 2009, newspapers earned only $6 billion from classified ads. The recent economic recession and housing crisis substantially limited traditional retail ads, especially from department stores, realtors, and car dealers (some of which were driven out of business by the bankruptcies of GM and Chrysler in 2009). Newspaper advertising overall spiked in 2005 at $49 billion in earnings, but by 2009 that figure was cut almost in half to just $27.6 billion.[1] With fewer advertisers, newspapers laid off workers, shrank their size, changed formats, or declared bankruptcy.

In addition, many newspaper owners like the Tribune Company, which declared bankruptcy in 2008, had become *overleveraged*. That is, many media conglomerates borrowed lots of money in the 1990s to buy more media companies and newspapers to expand their businesses and profits. They used some of the borrowed money to fund these purchases, and some they invested. Then they used the interest from their investments, plus profits from ad revenue, to pay their bank and loan debt. But when advertising tanked and their investments began losing money in fall 2008 (as the stock market crashed), many big media companies became incapable of paying their debts (just like bankrupt and overextended home owners who borrowed too much money and could not keep up expensive house payments—often after they lost their jobs). To raise capital, reorganize their debt, and avoid bankruptcy, media companies had to lay off reporters and sell valuable assets.

So what will happen to newspapers? Just as the music and radio industries adapted and survived, newspapers will survive, too—likely by delivering a print version every few days or going online only. In this chapter, we examine the rise and fall of newspapers in the United States and discuss what the future may hold for them.

"We will stop printing the *New York Times* sometime in the future, date TBD."

ARTHUR SULZBERGER, *NEW YORK TIMES* PUBLISHER, 2010

DESPITE THEIR CURRENT PREDICAMENTS, newspapers and their online offspring play many roles in contemporary culture. As chroniclers of daily life, newspapers both inform and entertain. By reporting on scientific, technological, and medical issues, newspapers disseminate specialized knowledge to the public. In reviews of films, concerts, and plays, they shape cultural trends. Opinion pages trigger public debates and offer differing points of view. Columnists provide everything from advice on raising children to opinions on the U.S. role as an economic and military superpower. Newspapers help readers make choices about everything from what kind of food to eat to what kind of leaders to elect.

Despite the importance of newspapers in daily life, in today's digital age the industry is losing both papers and readers. Newspapers have lost their near monopoly on classified advertising, much of which has shifted to free Web sites like eBay, monster.com, and craigslist. According to the Newspaper Association of America, in 2009 total newspaper ad revenues fell 27 percent. This was on top of the 17.7 percent decline in advertising in 2008. Despite a 20 percent rise in online ad sales in 2007, the year 2009 saw an 11 percent decrease in online ads–which usually account for about 10 percent of a newspaper's revenue. Because of these declines, many investors in publicly held newspapers don't believe print papers have much of a future. The loss of papers, readers, advertising, and investor confidence raises significant concerns in a nation where daily news has historically functioned to "speak truth to power" by holding elected officials responsible and acting as a watchdog for democratic life.[2]

In this chapter, we examine the cultural, social, and economic impact of newspapers. We will:

- Trace the history of newspapers through a number of influential periods and styles.
- Explore the early political-commercial press, the penny press, and yellow journalism.
- Examine the modern era through the influence of the *New York Times* and journalism's embrace of objectivity.
- Look at interpretive journalism in the 1920s and 1930s and the revival of literary journalism in the 1960s.
- Review issues of newspaper ownership, new technologies, citizen journalism, declining revenue, and the crucial role of newspapers in our democracy.

As you read this chapter, think about your own early experiences with newspapers and the impact they have had on you and your family. Did you read certain sections of the paper, like sports or comics? What do you remember from your childhood about your parents' reading habits? What are your own newspaper reading habits today? How often do you actually hold a newspaper? How often do you get your news online? For more questions to help you think through the role of newspapers in our lives, see "Questioning the Media" in the Chapter Review.

"There's almost no media experience sweeter . . . than poring over a good newspaper. In the quiet morning, with a cup of coffee—so long as you haven't turned on the TV, listened to the radio, or checked in online—it's as comfortable and personal as information gets."

JON KATZ, *WIRED*, 1994

The Evolution of American Newspapers

The idea of news is as old as language itself. The earliest news was passed along orally from family to family, from tribe to tribe, by community leaders and oral historians. The earliest known written news account, or news sheet, *Acta Diurna* (Latin for "daily events"), was developed by Julius Caesar and posted in public spaces and on buildings in Rome in 59 B.C.E. Even in its oral and early written stages, news informed people on the state of their relations with neighboring tribes and towns. The development of the printing press in the fifteenth century greatly accelerated a society's ability to send and receive information. Throughout history, news has satisfied our need to know things we cannot experience personally. Newspapers today continue to document daily life and bear witness to both ordinary and extraordinary events.

"Oral news systems must have arrived early in the development of language, some tens or even hundreds of thousands of years ago. . . . And the dissemination of news accomplishes some of the basic purposes of language: informing others, entertaining others, protecting the tribe."

MITCHELL STEPHENS, *A HISTORY OF NEWS*, 1988

Colonial Newspapers and the Partisan Press

The novelty and entrepreneurial stages of print media development first happened in Europe with the rise of the printing press. In North America, the first newspaper, *Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick*, was published on September 25, 1690, by Boston printer Benjamin Harris. The colonial government objected to Harris's negative tone regarding British rule, and local ministers were offended by his published report that the king of France had an affair with his son's wife. The newspaper was banned after one issue.

In 1704, the first regularly published newspaper appeared in the American colonies—the *Boston News-Letter*, published by John Campbell. Considered dull, it reported on events that had taken place in Europe months earlier. Because European news took weeks to travel by ship, these early colonial papers were not very timely. In their more spirited sections, however, the papers did report local illnesses, public floggings, and even suicides. In 1721, also in Boston, James Franklin, the older brother of Benjamin Franklin, started the *New England Courant*. The *Courant* established a tradition of running stories that interested ordinary readers rather than printing articles that appealed primarily to business and colonial leaders. In 1729, Benjamin Franklin, at age twenty-four, took over the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and created, according to historians, the best of the colonial papers. Although a number of colonial papers operated solely on subsidies from political parties, the *Gazette* also made money by advertising products.

Another important colonial paper, the *New-York Weekly Journal*, appeared in 1733. John Peter Zenger had been installed as the printer of the *Journal* by the Popular Party, a political group that opposed British rule and ran articles that criticized the royal governor of New York. After a Popular Party judge was dismissed from office, the *Journal* escalated its attack on the governor. When Zenger shielded the writers of the critical articles, he was arrested in 1734 for *seditious libel*—defaming a public official's character in print. Championed by famed Philadelphia lawyer Andrew Hamilton, Zenger ultimately won his case in 1735. A sympathetic jury, in revolt against the colonial government, decided that newspapers had the right to criticize government leaders as long as the reports were true. After the Zenger case, the British never prosecuted another colonial printer.

Newspapers: The Rise and Decline of Modern Journalism

First Colonial Newspaper
In 1690, Boston printer Benjamin Harris publishes the first North American newspaper—*Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick* (p. 222).

First Precedent for Libel and Press Freedom
In 1734, printer John Peter Zenger is arrested for seditious libel; jury rules in Zenger's favor in 1735—establishing freedom of the press and newspapers' right to criticize government (p. 222).

First Native American Newspaper
The *Cherokee Phoenix* appears in Georgia in 1828, giving a voice to tribal concerns as settlers encroach and move west (p. 238).

Yellow Journalism
Joseph Pulitzer buys the *New York World* in 1883; William Randolph Hearst buys the *New York Journal* in 1895 and battles Pulitzer during the heyday of the yellow journalism era (pp. 225–227).

1650 • 1800 • 1850

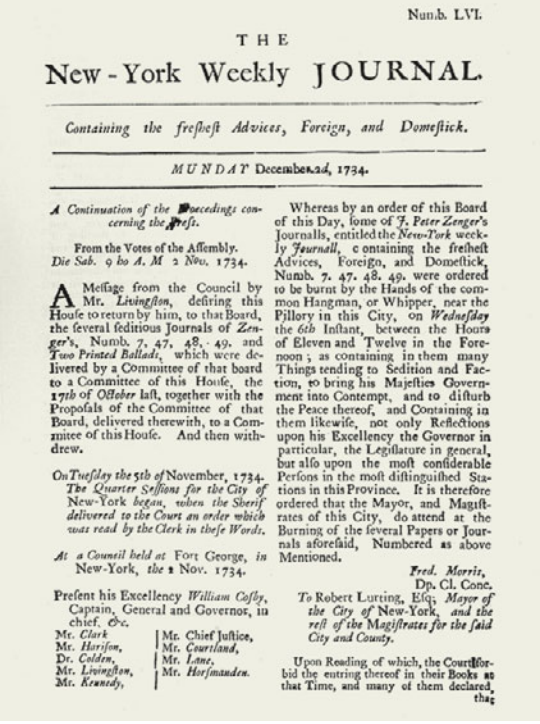

THE
cw-York Weekly JOURN
Containing the freshest Advices, Foreign, and Domestick.
MUNDAY Decemberand, 1734.

First African American Newspaper
Freedom's Journal begins short-lived operation in 1827, establishing a tradition of newspapers speaking out against racism (p. 236).

Penny Press
Printer Benjamin Day founds the *New York Sun* in 1833 and sets the price at one cent, helping usher in the penny press era and news for the working and emerging middle class (p. 224).

The Zenger decision would later provide a key foundation—the right of a democratic press to criticize public officials—for the First Amendment to the Constitution, adopted as part of the Bill of Rights in 1791. (See Chapter 15 for more on the First Amendment.)

By 1765, about thirty newspapers operated in the American colonies, with the first daily paper beginning in 1784. Newspapers were of two general types: political or commercial. Their development was shaped in large part by social, cultural, and political responses to British rule and by its eventual overthrow. The gradual rise of political parties and the spread of commerce also influenced the development of early papers. Although the political and commercial papers carried both party news and business news, they had different agendas. Political papers, known as the **partisan press**, generally pushed the plan of the particular political group that subsidized the paper. The *commercial press*, by contrast, served business leaders, who were interested in economic issues. Both types of journalism left a legacy. The partisan press gave us the editorial pages, while the early commercial press was the forerunner of the business section.



Numb. LVI.

THE

New-York Weekly JOURNAL.

Containing the freſheſt Advices, Foreign, and Domeſtick.

MUNDAY December 2d, 1734.

A Continuation of the Proceedings concerning the Preſs.

From the Votes of the Aſſembly.
Die Sab. 9 ho A. M 2 Nov. 1734.

A Meſſage from the Council by Mr. *Livingſton*, deſiring this Houſe to return by him, to that Board, the ſeveral ſeditious Journals of *Zenger's*, Numb. 7, 47, 48, 49. and *Two Printed Ballads*, which were delivered by a Committee of that board to a Committee of this Houſe, the *17th of October* laſt, together with the Propoſals of the Committee of that Board, delivered therewith, to a Committee of this Houſe. And then withdrew.

On Tueſday the 5th of November, 1734. *The Quarter Seſſions for the City of* New-York *began, when the Sheriff delivered to the Court an order which was read by the Clerk in theſe Words.*

At a Council held at Fort George, *in* New-York, *the* 1 Nov. 1734.

Preſent his Excellency *William Coſby*, Captain, General and Governor, in chief, *&c.*

Mr. *Clark*	Mr. Chief Juſtice,
Mr. *Harriſon*,	Mr. *Courtland*,
Dr. *Colden*,	Mr. *Lane*,
Mr. *Livingſton*,	Mr. *Horſmanden.*
Mr. *Kennedy*,	

Whereas by an order of this Board of this Day, ſome of *J. Peter Zenger's* Journalls, entitled the *New-York* weekly *Journall*, containing the freſheſt Advices, Foreign, and Domeſtick, Numb. 7. 47. 48. 49. were ordered to be burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman, or Whipper, near the Pillory in this City, on *Wedneſday* the 6th Inſtant, between the Hours of Eleven and Twelve in the Forenoon; as containing in them many Things tending to Sedition and Faction, to bring his Majeſties Government into Contempt, and to diſturb the Peace thereof, and Containing in them likewiſe, not only Reflections upon his Excellency the Governor in particular, the Legiſlature in general, but alſo upon the moſt conſiderable Perſons in the moſt diſtinguiſhed Stations in this Province. It is therefore ordered that the Mayor, and Magiſtrates of this City, do attend at the Burning of the ſeveral Papers or Journals aforeſaid, Numbered as above Mentioned.

Fred. Morris,
Dp. Cl. Conc.

To Robert Lurting, Eſq; *Mayor of the City of* New-York, *and the reſt of the Magiſtrates for the ſaid City and County.*

Upon Reading of which, the Court forbid the entring thereof in their Books at that Time, and many of them declared, tha;

COLONIAL NEWSPAPERS
During the colonial period, New York printer John Peter Zenger was arrested for libel. He eventually won his case, which established the precedent that today allows U.S. journalists and citizens to criticize public officials. In this 1734 issue, Zenger's *New-York Weekly Journal* reported his own arrest and the burning of the paper by the city's "Common Hangman."

From the early 1700s to the early 1800s, even the largest of these papers rarely reached a circulation of fifteen hundred. Readership was primarily confined to educated or wealthy men

First U.S.-Based Spanish Paper
New York's *El Diario–La Prensa* is founded in 1913 to serve Spanish-language readers (p. 237).

Catholic Worker
In 1933, Dorothy Day cofounds a religious organization; its radical monthly paper, the *Catholic Worker*, opposes war and supports social reforms (p. 240).

First Underground Paper
In 1955, the *Village Voice* begins operating in Greenwich Village (p. 239).

Postmodern News
In 1982, the Gannett chain launches *USA Today*, ushering in the postmodern era in news with the first paper modeled on television (pp. 232–233).

Paywalls
By 2010, newspapers begin charging readers for access to all or part of their Web sites (p. 247).

1900 • 1950 • 2000 • 2050

Modern Journalism
Adolph Ochs buys the *New York Times* in 1896, transforming it into "the paper of record" and jump-starting modern "objective" journalism (p. 228).

Watergate
Investigative reporting by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the *Washington Post* uncovers the Watergate scandal and leads to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974 (p. 232).

First Online Paper
Ohio's *Columbus Dispatch* in 1980 becomes the first newspaper to go online (p. 232).

Dominance of Chains
Led by Gannett, the Top 10 newspaper chains by 2001 control more than one-half of the nation's total daily newspaper circulation (p. 242).

Newspapers in Peril
In 2009, a number of daily newspapers either close, stop publishing daily editions, or go online only (p. 241).

who controlled local politics and commerce. During this time, though, a few pioneering women operated newspapers, including Elizabeth Timothy, the first American woman newspaper publisher (and mother of eight children). After her husband died of smallpox in 1738, Timothy took over the *South Carolina Gazette*, established in 1734 by Benjamin Franklin and the Timothy family. Also during this period, Anna Maul Zenger ran the *New-York Weekly Journal* throughout her husband's trial and after his death in 1746.[3]

The Penny Press Era: Newspapers Become Mass Media

By the late 1820s, the average newspaper cost six cents a copy and was sold through yearly subscriptions priced at ten to twelve dollars. Because that price was more than a week's salary for most skilled workers, newspaper readers were mostly affluent. By the 1830s, however, the Industrial Revolution made possible the replacement of expensive handmade paper with cheaper machine-made paper. During this time, the rise of the middle class spurred the growth of literacy, setting the stage for a more popular and inclusive press. In addition, breakthroughs in technology, particularly steam-powered presses replacing mechanical presses, permitted publishers to produce as many as four thousand newspapers an hour, which lowered the cost of newspapers. **Penny papers** soon began competing with six-cent papers. Though subscriptions remained the preferred sales tool of many penny papers, they began relying increasingly on daily street sales of individual copies.

Day and the *New York Sun*

In 1833, printer Benjamin Day founded the *New York Sun*. Day set the price at one penny and sold no subscriptions. The *Sun*—whose slogan was "It shines for all"—highlighted local events, scandals, and police reports. It also ran serialized stories, making legends of frontiersmen Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone and blazing the trail for the media's enthusiasm for celebrity news. Like today's supermarket tabloids, the *Sun* fabricated stories, including the infamous moon hoax, which reported "scientific" evidence of life on the moon. Within six months, the *Sun*'s lower price had generated a circulation of eight thousand, twice that of its nearest New York competitor.

The *Sun*'s success initiated a wave of penny papers that favored **human-interest stories**: news accounts that focus on the daily trials and triumphs of the human condition, often featuring ordinary individuals facing extraordinary challenges. These kinds of stories reveal journalism's ties to literary traditions, such as the archetypal conflicts between good and evil, or between individuals and institutions. Today, this can be found in everyday feature stories that chronicle the lives of remarkable people or in crime news that details the daily work of police and the misadventures of criminals. As in the nineteenth century, crime stories remain popular and widely read.

Bennett and the *New York Morning Herald*

The penny press era also featured James Gordon Bennett's *New York Morning Herald*, founded in 1835. Bennett, considered the first U.S. press baron, freed his newspaper from political influence. He established an independent paper serving middle- and working-class readers as well as his own business ambitions. The *Herald* carried political essays and news about scandals, business stories, a letters section, fashion notes, moral reflections, religious news, society gossip, colloquial tales and jokes, sports stories, and, later, reports from the Civil War. In addition, Bennett's paper sponsored balloon races, financed safaris, and overplayed crime stories. Charles Dickens, after returning to Britain from his first visit to America in the early 1840s, used the *Herald* as a model for the sleazy *Rowdy Journal*, the fictional newspaper in his novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*. By 1860, the *Herald* reached nearly eighty thousand readers, making it the world's largest daily paper at the time.

Changing Economics and the Founding of the Associated Press

The penny papers were innovative. For example, they were the first to assign reporters to cover crime, and readers enthusiastically embraced the reporting of local news and crime. By gradually

separating daily front-page reporting from overt political viewpoints on an editorial page, penny papers shifted their economic base from political parties to the market—to advertising revenue, classified ads, and street sales. Although many partisan papers had taken a moral stand against advertising some controversial products and "services"—such as medical "miracle" cures, abortionists, and especially the slave trade—the penny press became more neutral toward advertisers and printed virtually any ad. In fact, many penny papers regarded advertising as consumer news. The rise in ad revenues and circulation accelerated the growth of the newspaper industry. In 1830, 650 weekly and 65 daily papers operated in the United States, reaching a circulation of 80,000. By 1840, a total of 1,140 weeklies and 140 dailies attracted more than 300,000 readers.

In 1848, six New York newspapers formed a cooperative arrangement and founded the Associated Press (AP), the first major news wire service. **Wire services** began as commercial organizations that relayed news stories and information around the country and the world using telegraph lines and, later, radio waves and digital transmissions. In the case of the AP, the New York papers provided access to both their own stories and those from other newspapers. In the 1850s, papers started sending reporters to cover Washington, D.C.; and in the early 1860s more than a hundred reporters from northern papers went south to cover the Civil War, relaying their reports back to their home papers via telegraph and wire services. The news wire companies enabled news to travel rapidly from coast to coast and set the stage for modern journalism.

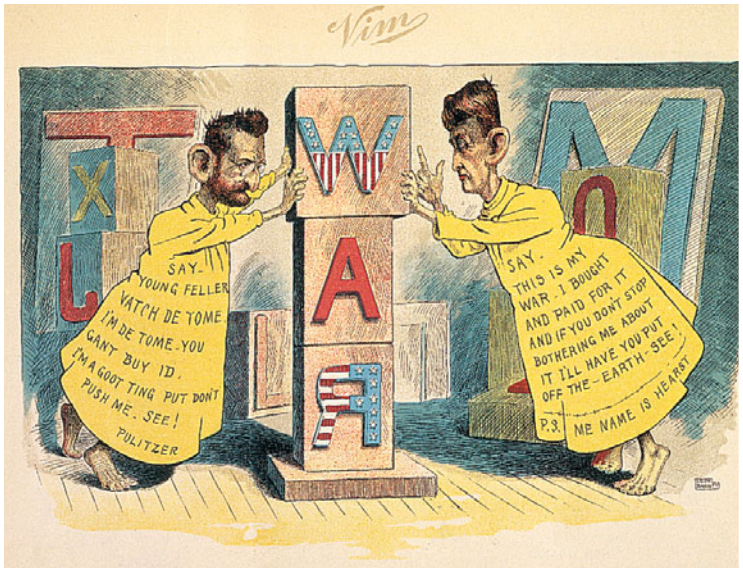
The marketing of news as a product and the use of modern technology to dramatically cut costs gradually elevated newspapers from an entrepreneurial stage to the status of a mass medium. By adapting news content, penny papers captured the middle- and working-class readers who could now afford the paper and also had more leisure time to read it. As newspapers sought to sustain their mass appeal, news and "factual" reports about crimes and other items of human interest eventually superseded the importance of partisan articles about politics and commerce.

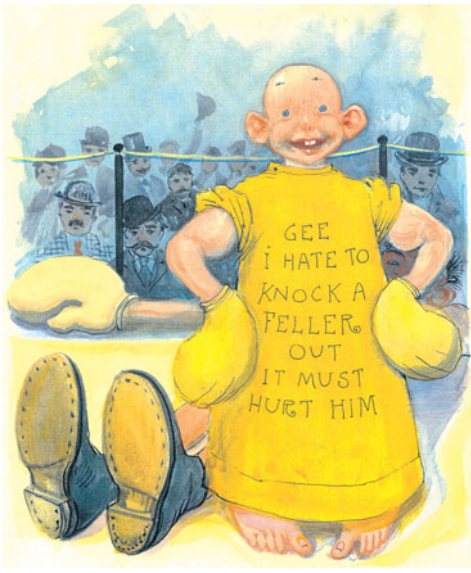
The Age of Yellow Journalism: Sensationalism and Investigation

The rise of competitive dailies and the penny press triggered the next significant period in American journalism. In the late 1800s, **yellow journalism** emphasized profitable papers that carried exciting human-interest stories, crime news, large headlines, and more readable copy.

NEWSBOYS sold Hearst and Pulitzer papers on the streets of New York in the 1890s. With more than a dozen dailies competing, street tactics were ferocious, and publishers often made young "newsies" buy the papers they could not sell.

YELLOW JOURNALISM
Generally considered America's first comic-strip character, the Yellow Kid was created in the mid-1890s by cartoonist Richard Outcault. The cartoon was so popular that newspaper barons Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst fought over Outcault's services, giving yellow journalism its name.





Generally regarded as sensationalistic and the direct forerunner of today's tabloid papers, reality TV, and celebrity-centered shows like *Access Hollywood*, yellow journalism featured two major characteristics. First were the overly dramatic—or sensational—stories about crimes, celebrities, disasters, scandals, and intrigue. Second, and sometimes forgotten, are the legacy and roots that the yellow press provided for **investigative journalism**: news reports that hunt out and expose corruption, particularly in business and government. Reporting increasingly became a crusading force for common people, with the press assuming a watchdog role on their behalf.

During this period, a newspaper circulation war pitted Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* against William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*. A key player in the war was the first popular cartoon strip, *The Yellow Kid*, created in 1895 by artist R. F. Outcault, who once worked for Thomas Edison. The phrase *yellow journalism* has since become associated with the cartoon strip, which was shuttled back and forth between the Hearst and Pulitzer papers during their furious battle for readers in the mid to late 1890s.

"There is room in this great and growing city for a journal that is not only cheap but bright, not only bright but large . . . that will expose all fraud and sham, fight all public evils and abuses—that will serve and battle for the people."

JOSEPH PULITZER, PUBLISHER, *NEW YORK WORLD*, 1883

Pulitzer and the *New York World*

Joseph Pulitzer, a Jewish-Hungarian immigrant, began his career in newspaper publishing in the early 1870s as part owner of the *St. Louis Post*. He then bought the bankrupt *St. Louis Dispatch* for $2,500 at an auction in 1878 and merged it with the *Post*. The *Post-Dispatch* became known for stories that highlighted "sex and sin" ("A Denver Maiden Taken from Disreputable House") and satires of the upper class ("St. Louis Swells"). Pulitzer also viewed the *Post-Dispatch* as a "national conscience" that promoted the public good. He carried on the legacies of James Gordon Bennett: making money and developing a "free and impartial" paper that would "serve no party but the people." Within five years, the *Post-Dispatch* became one of the most influential newspapers in the Midwest.

In 1883, Pulitzer bought the *New York World* for $346,000. He encouraged plain writing and the inclusion of maps and illustrations to help immigrant and working-class readers understand the written text. In addition to running sensational stories on crime and sex, Pulitzer instituted advice columns and women's pages. Like Bennett, Pulitzer treated advertising as a kind of news that displayed consumer products for readers. In fact, department stores became major advertisers during this period. This development contributed directly to the expansion of consumer culture and indirectly to the acknowledgment of women as newspaper readers. Eventually (because of pioneers like Nellie Bly—see Chapter 13), newspapers began employing women as reporters.

The *World* reflected the contradictory spirit of the yellow press. It crusaded for improved urban housing, better conditions for women, and equitable labor laws. It campaigned against monopoly practices by AT&T, Standard Oil, and Equitable Insurance. Such popular crusades helped lay the groundwork for tightening federal antitrust laws in the early 1910s. At the same time, Pulitzer's paper manufactured news events and staged stunts, such as sending star reporter Nellie Bly around the world in seventy-two days to beat the fictional "record" in the popular 1873 Jules Verne novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*. By 1887, the *World*'s Sunday circulation had soared to more than 250,000, the largest anywhere.

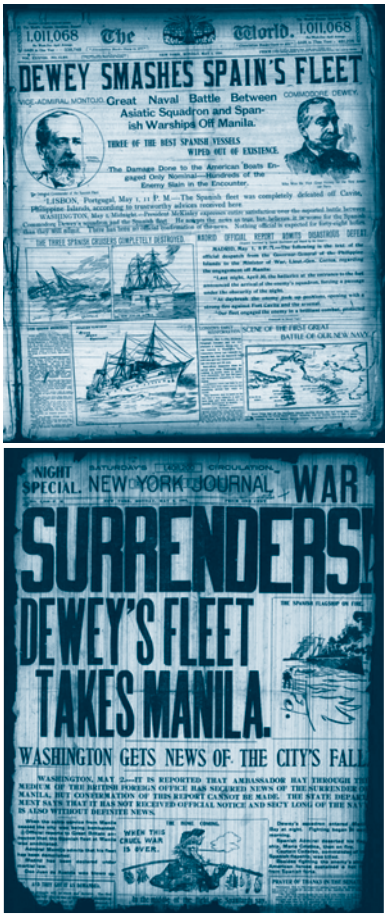
Pulitzer created a lasting legacy by leaving $2 million to start the graduate school of journalism at Columbia University in 1912. In 1917, part of Pulitzer's Columbia endowment established the Pulitzer Prizes, the prestigious awards given each year for achievements in journalism, literature, drama, and music.

Hearst and the *New York Journal*

The *World* faced its fiercest competition when William Randolph Hearst bought the *New York Journal* (a penny paper founded by Pulitzer's brother Albert). Before moving to New York, the twenty-four-year-old Hearst took control of the *San Francisco Examiner* when his father, George Hearst, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1887 (the younger Hearst had recently been expelled from Harvard for playing a practical joke on his professors). In 1895, with an inheritance from his father, Hearst bought the ailing *Journal* and then raided Joseph Pulitzer's paper for editors, writers, and cartoonists.

Taking his cue from Bennett and Pulitzer, Hearst focused on lurid, sensational stories and appealed to immigrant readers by using large headlines and bold layout designs. To boost circulation, the *Journal* invented interviews, faked pictures, and encouraged conflicts that might result in a story. One tabloid account describes "tales about two-headed virgins" and "prehistoric creatures roaming the plains of Wyoming."[4] In promoting journalism as mere dramatic storytelling, Hearst reportedly said, "The modern editor of the popular journal does not care for facts. The editor wants novelty. The editor has no objection to facts if they are also novel. But he would prefer a novelty that is not a fact to a fact that is not a novelty."[5]

Hearst is remembered as an unscrupulous publisher who once hired gangsters to distribute his newspapers. He was also, however, considered a champion of the underdog, and his paper's readership soared among the working and middle classes. In 1896, the *Journal*'s daily circulation reached 450,000, and by 1897 the Sunday edition of the paper rivaled the 600,000 circulation of the *World*. By the 1930s, Hearst's holdings included more than forty daily and Sunday papers, thirteen magazines (including *Good Housekeeping* and *Cosmopolitan*), eight radio stations, and two film companies. In addition, he controlled King Features Syndicate, which sold and distributed articles, comics, and features to many of the nation's dailies. Hearst, the model for Charles Foster Kane, the ruthless publisher in Orson Welles's classic 1940 film *Citizen Kane*, operated the largest media business in the world—the News Corp. of its day.



THE PENNY PRESS
The *World* (top) and the *New York Journal* (bottom) cover the same story in May 1898.

Competing Models of Modern Print Journalism

The early commercial and partisan presses were, to some extent, covering important events impartially. These papers often carried verbatim reports of presidential addresses and murder trials, or the annual statements of the U.S. Treasury. In the late 1800s, as newspapers pushed for greater circulation, newspaper reporting changed. Two distinct types of journalism emerged:

the *story-driven model*, dramatizing important events and used by the penny papers and the yellow press; and the *"just the facts" model*, an approach that appeared to package information more impartially and that the six-cent papers favored.[6] Underpinning these efforts is the question of whether, in journalism, there is an ideal, attainable objective model or whether the quest to be objective actually conflicts with journalists' traditional role of raising important issues about potential abuses of power in a democratic society.

"Objectivity" in Modern Journalism

As the consumer marketplace expanded during the Industrial Revolution, facts and news became marketable products. Throughout the mid-1800s, the more a newspaper appeared not to take sides on its front pages, the more its readership base grew (although editorial pages were still often partisan). In addition, wire service organizations were serving a variety of newspaper clients in different regions of the country. To satisfy all their clients and the wide range of political views, newspapers began to look more impartial.

Ochs and the *New York Times*

The ideal of an impartial, or purely informational, news model was championed by Adolph Ochs, who bought the *New York Times* in 1896. The son of immigrant German Jews, Ochs grew up in Ohio and Tennessee, where at age twenty-one he took over the *Chattanooga Times* in 1878. Known more for his business and organizational ability than for his writing and editing skills, he transformed the Tennessee paper. Seeking a national stage and business expansion, Ochs moved to New York and invested $75,000 in the struggling *Times*. Through strategic hiring, Ochs and his editors rebuilt the paper around substantial news coverage and provocative editorial pages. To distance his New York paper from the yellow press, the editors also downplayed sensational stories, favoring the documentation of major events or issues.

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* established itself as the official paper of record by the 1920s. The *Times* was the first modern newspaper, gathering information and presenting news in a straightforward way—without the opinion of the reporter. Today, the *Times* is known for its opinion columns and editorial pages as much as for its original reporting.

Partly as a marketing strategy, Ochs offered a distinct contrast to the more sensational Hearst and Pulitzer newspapers: an informational paper that provided stock and real estate reports to businesses, court reports to legal professionals, treaty summaries to political leaders, and theater and book reviews to educated general readers and intellectuals. Ochs's promotional gimmicks took direct aim at yellow journalism, advertising the *Times* under the motto "It does not soil the breakfast cloth." Ochs's strategy is similar to today's advertising tactic of targeting upscale viewers and readers who control a disproportionate share of consumer dollars.

With the Hearst and Pulitzer papers capturing the bulk of working- and middle-class readers, managers at the *Times* at first tried to use their straightforward, "no frills" reporting to appeal to more affluent and educated readers. In 1898, however, Ochs lowered the paper's price to a penny. He believed that people bought the *World* and the *Journal* primarily because they were cheap, not because of their stories. The *Times* began attracting middle-class readers who gravitated to the now affordable paper as a status marker for the educated and well informed. Between 1898 and 1899, its circulation rose from 25,000 to 75,000. By 1921, the *Times* had a daily circulation of 330,000, and 500,000 on Sunday. (For contemporary circulation figures, see Table 7.1 on the next page.)

Newspaper	2008 Weekday Circulation	2010 Weekday Circulation	% Change from 2008
Wall Street Journal	2,069,463	2,092,523	+1.1%
USA Today	2,284,219	1,826,622	- 20.0%
New York Times	1,077,256	951,063	-11.7%
Los Angeles Times	773,884	616,604	-20.3%
Washington Post	673,180	578,482	-14.1%
(New York) Daily News	703,137	537,676	-23.5%
New York Post	702,488	525,004	-25.3%
San Jose Mercury News	234,772	516,700	+120.1%
Chicago Tribune	541,633	452,145	-16.5%
Houston Chronicle	494,131	366,542	-25.8%

TABLE 7.1

THE NATION'S TEN LARGEST DAILY NEWSPAPERS, 2008 vs. 2010

Sources: Audit Bureau of Circulations FAS-FAX Report, March 31, 2008; Audit Bureau of Circulations, FAS-FAX Report, March 31, 2010; Audit Bureau of Circulations, Audience-FAX eTrends, http://abcas3.accessabc.com/audience-fax/default.aspx.*

"Just the Facts, Please"

Early in the twentieth century, with reporters adopting a more "scientific" attitude to news- and fact-gathering, the ideal of objectivity began to anchor journalism. In **objective journalism**, which distinguishes factual reports from opinion columns, modern reporters strive to maintain a neutral attitude toward the issue or event they cover; they also search out competing points of view among the sources for a story.

The story form for packaging and presenting this kind of reporting has been traditionally labeled the **inverted-pyramid style**. Civil War correspondents developed this style by imitating the terse, compact press releases that came from President Abraham Lincoln and his secretary of war, Edwin M. Stanton.[7] Often stripped of adverbs and adjectives, inverted-pyramid reports began—as they do today—with the most dramatic or newsworthy information. They answered who, what, where, when (and, less frequently, why or how) questions at the top of the story and then narrowed down the story to presumably less significant details. If wars or natural disasters disrupted the telegraph transmission of these dispatches, the information the reporter chose to lead with had the best chance of getting through.

For much of the twentieth century, the inverted-pyramid style served as an efficient way to arrange a timely story. As one news critic pointed out, the wire services distributing stories to newspapers nationwide "had to deal with large numbers of newspapers with widely different political and regional interests. The news had to be 'objective' . . . to be accepted by such a heterogeneous group."[8] Among other things, the importance of objectivity and the reliance on the inverted pyramid signaled journalism's break from the partisan tradition. Although impossible to achieve (journalism is after all a literary practice, not a science), objectivity nonetheless became the guiding ideal of the modern press.

Despite the success of the *New York Times* and other modern papers, the more factual inverted-pyramid approach toward news has come under increasing scrutiny. As news critic and writing coach Roy Peter Clark has noted, "Some reporters let the pyramid control the content so that the news comes out homogenized. Traffic fatalities, three-alarm fires, and new city ordinances all begin to look alike. In extreme cases, reporters have been known to keep files of story forms. Fill in the blanks. Stick it in the paper."[9] Although the inverted-pyramid style has for years solved deadline problems for reporters and enabled editors to cut a story from the bottom to fit available space, it has also discouraged many readers from continuing beyond the key details in the opening paragraphs. Studies have demonstrated that the majority of readers do not follow a front-page story when it continues, or "jumps," inside the paper.

Interpretive Journalism

By the 1920s, there was a sense, especially after the trauma of World War I, that the impartial approach to reporting was insufficient for explaining complex national and global conditions. It was partly as a result of "drab, factual, objective reporting," one news scholar contended, that "the American people were utterly amazed when war broke out in August 1914, as they had no understanding of the foreign scene to prepare them for it."[10]

The Promise of Interpretive Journalism

Under the sway of objectivity, modern journalism had downplayed an early role of the partisan press: offering analysis and opinion. But with the world becoming more complex, some papers began to reexplore the analytical function of news. The result was the rise of **interpretive journalism**, which aims to explain key issues or events and place them in a broader historical or social context. According to one historian, this approach, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, was a viable way for journalism to address "the New Deal years, the rise of modern scientific technology, the increasing interdependence of economic groups at home, and the shrinking of the world into one vast arena for power politics."[11] In other words, journalism took an analytic turn in a world grown more interconnected and complicated.

Noting that objectivity and factuality should serve as the foundation for journalism, by the 1920s editor and columnist Walter Lippmann insisted that the press should do more. He ranked three press responsibilities: (1) "to make a current record"; (2) "to make a running analysis of it"; and (3) "on the basis of both, to suggest plans."[12] Indeed, reporters and readers alike have historically distinguished between informational reports and editorial (interpretive) pieces, which offer particular viewpoints or deeper analyses of the issues. Since the boundary between information and interpretation can be somewhat ambiguous, American papers have traditionally placed news analysis in separate, labeled columns and opinion articles on certain pages so that readers do not confuse them with "straight news." It was during this time that political columns developed to evaluate and provide context for news. Moving beyond the informational and storytelling functions of news, journalists and newspapers began to extend their role as analysts.

"Journalists must make the significant interesting and relevant."

BILL KOVACH AND TOM ROSENSTIEL, *THE ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM*, 2007

Broadcast News Embraces Interpretive Journalism

In a surprising twist, the rise of broadcast radio in the 1930s also forced newspapers to become more analytical in their approach to news. At the time, the newspaper industry was upset that broadcasters took their news directly from papers and wire services. As a result, a battle developed between radio journalism and print news. Although mainstream newspapers tried to copyright the facts they reported and sued radio stations for routinely using newspapers as their main news sources, the papers lost many of these court battles. Editors and newspaper lobbyists argued that radio should be only permitted to do commentary. By conceding this interpretive role to radio, the print press tried to protect its dominion over "the facts." It was in this environment that radio analysis began to flourish as a form of interpretive news. Lowell Thomas delivered the first daily network analysis for CBS on September 29, 1930, attacking Hitler's rise to power in Germany. By 1941, twenty regular commentators—the forerunners of today's "talking heads" on cable, radio talk-show hosts, and political bloggers—were explaining their version of the world to millions of listeners.

Some print journalists and editors came to believe, however, that interpretive stories, rather than objective reports, could better compete with radio. They realized that interpretation was a way to counter radio's (and later television's) superior ability to report breaking news quickly. In 1933, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) supported the idea of interpretive journalism. Most newspapers, however, still did not embrace probing analysis during the 1930s. So in most U.S. dailies, interpretation remained relegated to a few editorial

and opinion pages. It wasn't until the 1950s—with the Korean War, the development of atomic power, tensions with the Soviet Union, and the anticommunist movement—that news analysis resurfaced on the newest medium: television. Interpretive journalism in newspapers grew at the same time, especially in such areas as the environment, science, agriculture, sports, health, politics, and business. Following the lead of the *New York Times*, many papers by the 1980s had developed an "op-ed" page—an opinion page opposite the traditional editorial page that allowed a greater variety of columnists, news analyses, and letters to the editor.

Literary Forms of Journalism

By the late 1960s, many people were criticizing America's major social institutions. Political assassinations, Civil Rights protests, the Vietnam War, the drug culture, and the women's movement were not easily explained. Faced with so much change and turmoil, many individuals began to lose faith in the ability of institutions to oversee and ensure the social order. Members of protest movements as well as many middle- and working-class Americans began to suspect the privileges and power of traditional authority. As a result, key institutions—including journalism—lost some of their credibility.

JOAN DIDION'S two essay collections—*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968) and *The White Album* (1979)—are considered iconic pieces from the new journalism movement. Both books detail and analyze Didion's life in California, where she experienced everything from the counterculture movement in San Francisco to meeting members of the Black Panther Party, the Doors, and even followers of Charles Manson.

Journalism as an Art Form

Throughout the first part of the twentieth century—journalism's modern era—journalistic storytelling was downplayed in favor of the inverted-pyramid style and the separation of fact from opinion. Dissatisfied with these limitations, some reporters began exploring a new model of reporting. **Literary journalism**—sometimes dubbed "new journalism"—adapted fictional techniques, such as descriptive details and settings and extensive character dialogue, to nonfiction material and in-depth reporting. In the United States, literary journalism's roots are evident in the work of nineteenth-century novelists like Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, and Theodore Dreiser, all of whom started out as reporters. In the late 1930s and 1940s, literary journalism surfaced: Journalists, such as James Agee and John Hersey, began to demonstrate how writing about real events could achieve an artistry often associated only with fiction.

In the 1960s, Tom Wolfe, a leading practitioner of new journalism, argued for mixing the *content* of reporting with the *form* of fiction to create "both the kind of objective reality of journalism" and "the subjective reality" of the novel.[13] Writers such as Wolfe (*The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*), Truman Capote (*In Cold Blood*), Joan Didion (*The White Album*), Norman Mailer (*Armies of the Night*), and Hunter S. Thompson (*Hell's Angels*) turned to new journalism to overcome flaws they perceived in routine reporting. Their often self-conscious treatment of social problems gave their writing a perspective that conventional journalism did not offer. After the 1960s' tide of intense social upheaval ebbed, new journalism subsided as well. However, literary journalism not only influenced magazines like *Mother Jones* and *Rolling Stone*, but it also affected daily newspapers by emphasizing longer feature stories on cultural trends and social

"Critics [in the 1960s] claimed that urban planning created slums, that school made people stupid, that medicine caused disease, that psychiatry invented mental illness, and that the courts promoted injustice. . . . And objectivity in journalism, regarded as an antidote to bias, came to be looked upon as the most insidious bias of all. For 'objective' reporting reproduced a vision of social reality which refused to examine the basic structures of power and privilege."

MICHAEL SCHUDSON, *DISCOVERING THE NEWS*, 1978

issues with detailed description or dialogue. Today, writers such as Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (*Random Family*), Dexter Filkins (*The Forever War*), and Asne Seierstad (*The Bookseller of Kabul*) keep this tradition alive.

The Attack on Journalistic Objectivity

Former *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker argued that in the early 1960s an objective approach to news remained the dominant model. According to Wicker, the "press had so wrapped itself in the paper chains of 'objective journalism' that it had little ability to report anything beyond the bare and undeniable facts."[14] Through the 1960s, attacks on the detachment of reporters escalated. News critic Jack Newfield rejected the possibility of genuine journalistic impartiality and argued that many reporters had become too trusting and uncritical of the powerful: "Objectivity is believing people with power and printing their press releases."[15] Eventually, the ideal of objectivity became suspect along with the authority of experts and professionals in various fields.

A number of reporters responded to the criticism by rethinking the framework of conventional journalism and adopting a variety of alternative techniques. One of these was *advocacy journalism*, in which the reporter actively promotes a particular cause or viewpoint. *Precision journalism*, another technique, attempts to make the news more scientifically accurate by using poll surveys and questionnaires. Throughout the 1990s, precision journalism became increasingly important. However, critics have charged that in every modern presidential campaign—including that of 2008—too many newspapers and TV stations became overly reliant on political polls, thus reducing campaign coverage to "racehorse" journalism, telling only "who's ahead" and "who's behind" stories rather than promoting substantial debates on serious issues. (See Table 7.2 for top works in American journalism.)

Contemporary Journalism in the TV and Internet Age

In the early 1980s, a postmodern brand of journalism arose from two important developments. In 1980 the *Columbus Dispatch* became the first paper to go online; today, nearly all U.S. papers offer some Web services. Then the colorful *USA Today* arrived in 1982, radically changing the look of most major U.S. dailies.

TABLE 7.2

EXCEPTIONAL WORKS OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM

Working under the aegis of New York University's journalism department, thirty-six judges compiled a list of the Top 100 works of American journalism in the twentieth century. The list takes into account not just the newsworthiness of the event but the craft of the writing and reporting. What do you think of the Top 10 works listed here? What are some problems associated with a list like this? Do you think newswriting should be judged in the same way we judge novels or movies?

Source: New York University, Department of Journalism, New York, N.Y., 1999.

	Journalists	Title or Subject	Publisher	Year
1	John Hersey	"Hiroshima"	*New Yorker*	1946
2	Rachel Carson	*Silent Spring*	Houghton Mifflin	1962
3	Bob Woodward/ Carl Bernstein	Watergate investigation	*Washington Post*	1972–73
4	Edward R. Murrow	Battle of Britain	CBS Radio	1940
5	Ida Tarbell	"The History of the Standard Oil Company"	*McClure's Magazine*	1902–04
6	Lincoln Steffens	"The Shame of the Cities"	*McClure's Magazine*	1902–04
7	John Reed	*Ten Days That Shook the World*	Random House	1919
8	H. L. Mencken	Coverage of the Scopes "monkey" trial	*Baltimore Sun*	1925
9	Ernie Pyle	Reports from Europe and the Pacific during World War II	Scripps-Howard newspapers	1940–45
10	Edward R. Murrow/ Fred Friendly	Investigation of Senator Joseph McCarthy	CBS Television	1954

USA Today Colors the Print Landscape

USA Today made its mark by incorporating features closely associated with postmodern forms, including an emphasis on visual style over substantive news or analysis and the use of brief news items that appealed to readers' busy schedules and shortened attention spans.

Now the second most widely circulated paper in the nation, *USA Today* represents the only successful launch of a new major U.S. daily newspaper in the last several decades. Showing its marketing savvy, *USA Today* was the first paper to openly acknowledge television's central role in mass culture: The paper used TV-inspired color and designed its first vending boxes to look like color TVs. Even the writing style of *USA Today* mimics TV news by casting many reports in present tense rather than the past tense (which was the print-news norm throughout the twentieth century).

Writing for *Rolling Stone* in March 1992, media critic Jon Katz argued that the authority of modern newspapers suffered in the wake of a variety of "new news" forms that combined immediacy, information, entertainment, persuasion, and analysis. Katz claimed that the news supremacy of most prominent daily papers, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, was being challenged by "news" coming from talk shows, television sitcoms, popular films, and even rap music. In other words, we were changing from a society in which the transmission of knowledge depended mainly on books, newspapers, and magazines to a society dominated by a mix of print, visual, and digital information.

Online Journalism Redefines News

What started out in the 1980s as simple, text-only experiments for newspapers developed into more robust Web sites in the 1990s, allowing newspapers to develop an online presence. Today, online journalism is completely changing the industry. First, rather than subscribing to a traditional paper, many readers now begin their day by logging on to the Internet and scanning a wide variety of news sites, including those of print papers, cable news channels, newsmagazines, bloggers, and online-only news organizations. Such sources are increasingly taking over the roles of more traditional forms of news, helping to set the nation's cultural, social, and political agendas. One of the biggest changes is that online news has sped up the news cycle to a constant stream of information and has challenged traditional news services to keep up. For instance, Matt Drudge, the conservative Internet news source and gossip behind *The Drudge Report*, hijacked the national agenda in January 1998 and launched a scandal when he posted a story claiming that *Newsweek* had backed off, or "spiked," a story about President Bill Clinton having an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Although Drudge's report was essentially accurate, *Newsweek* had delayed the story because its editors thought they needed more confirming sources before they could responsibly publish the allegations. Drudge effectively "outed" the *Newsweek* story prematurely, and critics debated whether his actions were legitimate or irresponsible.

Another change is the way nontraditional sources help shape news stories. In summer 2010, British Petroleum's CEO Tony Hayward first called the oil spill in the Gulf Coast "relatively tiny" and later made the insensitive remark, "I want my life back" (after eleven of his own workers lost their lives in the initial explosion). Internet bloggers, Twitter users, and 24/7 cable analysts ignited a media storm that forced traditional news to cover the remarks (and backlash) and prompted BP to start a giant $50 million ad campaign in which Hayward apologized and said BP would take full responsibility. However, online and cable commentators then criticized BP for spending money on advertising and buying access to Internet search terms like "oil spill" (so its corporate Web site appears first on Google searches) rather than putting that money into cleanup. The traditional media followed suit and began to cover the criticisms and arguments taking place online as the story and cleanup unfolded for months. For more about how online news ventures are changing the newspaper industry, see pages 245-248.

"Too many blog posts begin with 'I heard that . . . ' and then launch into rants and speculation. No phone calls, no emails, no interviews to find out if what they heard is true. It's the Internet version of the busybody neighbor, except far less benign."

CONNIE SCHULTZ, PULITZER PRIZE–WINNING COLUMNIST FOR *CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER*, 2010

The Business and Ownership of Newspapers

THE *WALL STREET JOURNAL* not only has the largest circulation of any newspaper in the United States, it also has the most online subscriptions—over 400,000 members pay for access to the paper's Web site. Its online success has been attributed to two facts: It instituted a paywall as soon as the paper went online in 1995, and it provides specialized business and financial information that its readers can't get elsewhere. (Pictured above is News Corp. CEO Rupert Murdoch reading the *Wall Street Journal*.)

In the news industry today, there are several kinds of papers. *National newspapers* (such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and *USA Today*) serve a broad readership across the country. Other papers primarily serve specific geographic regions. Roughly 100 *metropolitan dailies* have a circulation of 100,000 or more. About 30 of these papers have a circulation of more than 200,000. In addition, about 100 daily newspapers are classified as medium dailies, with circulations between 50,000 and 100,000. By far the largest number of U.S. dailies—about 1,200 papers—fall into the small daily category, with circulations under 50,000. While dailies serve urban and suburban centers, more than 7,500 nondaily and *weekly newspapers* (down from 14,000 back in 1910) serve smaller communities and average just over 5,000 copies per issue.[16] No matter the size of the paper, each must determine its approach, target readers, and deal with ownership issues in a time of technological transition and declining revenue.

Consensus vs. Conflict: Newspapers Play Different Roles

Smaller nondaily papers tend to promote social and economic harmony in their communities. Besides providing community calendars and meeting notices, nondaily papers focus on **consensus-oriented journalism**, carrying articles on local schools, social events, town government, property crimes, and zoning issues. Recalling the partisan spirit of an earlier era, small newspapers are often owned by business leaders who may also serve in local politics. Because consensus-oriented papers have a small advertising base, they are generally careful not to offend local advertisers, who provide the financial underpinnings for many of these papers. At their best, these small-town papers foster a sense of community; at their worst, they overlook or downplay discord and problems.

In contrast, national and metro dailies practice **conflict-oriented journalism**, in which front-page news is often defined primarily as events, issues, or experiences that deviate from social norms. Under this news orientation, journalists see their role not merely as neutral fact-gatherers but also as observers who monitor their city's institutions and problems. They often maintain an adversarial relationship with local politicians and public officials. These papers offer competing perspectives on such issues as education, government, poverty, crime, and the economy; and their publishers, editors, or reporters avoid playing major, overt roles in community politics. In theory, modern newspapers believe their role in large cities is to keep a wary eye fixed on recent local and state intrigue and events.

In telling stories about complex and controversial topics, conflict-oriented journalists often turn such topics into two-dimensional stories, pitting one idea or person against another. This convention, or "telling both sides of a story," allows a reporter to take the position of a detached observer. Although this practice offers the appearance of balance, it usually functions to generate

Media Literacy and the Critical Process

1 **DESCRIPTION.** Check a week's worth of business news in your local paper. Examine both the business pages and the front and local sections for these stories. Devise a chart and create categories for sorting stories (e.g., promotion news, scandal stories, earnings reports, home foreclosures, auto news, and media-related news), and gauge whether these stories are positive or negative. If possible, compare this coverage to a week's worth of news from the business boom years of the 1990s. Or compare your local paper's coverage of home foreclosures or auto company bankruptcies to the coverage in one of the nation's dailies like the *New York Times*.

2 **ANALYSIS.** Look for patterns in the coverage. How many stories are positive? How many are negative? Do the stories show any kind of gender favoritism (such as more men covered than women) or class bias (management favored over workers)? Compared to the local paper, are there differences in the frequency and kinds of coverage offered in the national newspaper? Does your paper routinely cover the business of the parent company that owns the local paper? Does it cover national business stories? How many stories are there on the business of newspapers and media in general?

3 **INTERPRETATION.** What do some of the patterns mean? Did you find examples where the coverage of business seems comprehensive and fair? If business news gets more positive coverage than political news, what might this mean? If managers get more coverage than employees, what does this mean, given that there are many more regular employees than managers at most businesses? What might it mean if men are more prominently featured than women in business stories? Considering the central role of media and news businesses in everyday life, what does it mean if these businesses are not being covered adequately by local and national news operations?

4 **EVALUATION.** Determine which papers and stories you would judge as good and which ones you would judge as weaker models for how business should be covered. Are some elements that should be included missing from coverage? If so, make suggestions.

5 **ENGAGEMENT.** Either write or e-mail the editor reporting your findings, or make an appointment with the editor to discuss what you discovered. Note what the newspaper is doing well and make a recommendation on how to improve coverage.

Covering Business and Economic News

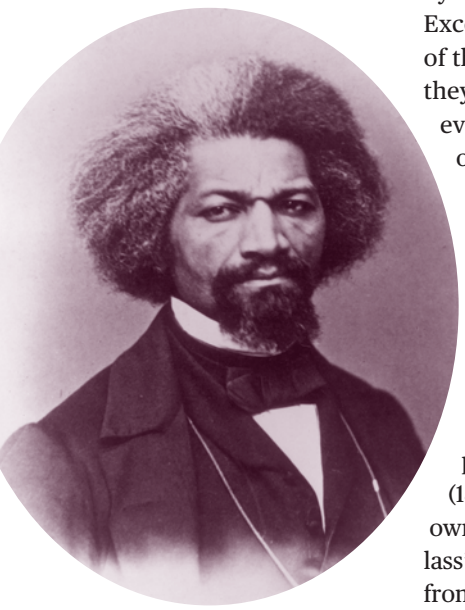
The financial crisis and subsequent recession spotlighted newspapers' coverage of issues such as corporate corruption. For example, since 2008 articles have detailed the collapse of major investment firms like Lehman Brothers, the GM and Chrysler bankruptcies, the fraud charges against Goldman Sachs, and of course all the scandals surrounding the subprime mortgage/home foreclosure crisis. Over the years, critics have claimed that business news pages tend to favor issues related to management and downplay the role of everyday employees. Critics have also charged that business coverage favors positive business stories—such as managers' promotions—and minimizes negative business news (unlike regional newspaper front pages, which usually emphasize crime stories). In an era of Wall Street scandals and major bankruptcies, check the business coverage in your local daily paper to see if these charges are accurate or if this pattern has changed.

conflict and sustain a lively news story; sometimes, reporters ignore the idea that there may be more than two sides to a story. But faced with deadline pressures, reporters often do not have the time—or the space—to develop a multifaceted and complex report or series of reports. (See "Media Literacy and the Critical Process: Covering Business and Economic News" above.)

Newspapers Target Specific Readers

Historically, small-town weeklies and daily newspapers have served predominantly white, mainstream readers. However, ever since Benjamin Franklin launched the short-lived German-language

FREDERICK DOUGLASS helped found the *North Star* in 1847. It was printed in the basement of the Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, a gathering spot for abolitionists and "underground" activities in Rochester, New York. At the time, the white-owned *New York Herald* urged Rochester's citizens to throw the *North Star*'s printing press into Lake Ontario. Under Douglass's leadership, the paper came out weekly until 1860, addressing problems facing blacks around the country and offering a forum for Douglass to debate his fellow black activists.



Philadelphische Zeitung in 1732, newspapers aimed at ethnic groups have played a major role in initiating immigrants into American society. During the nineteenth century, Swedish- and Norwegian-language papers informed various immigrant communities in the Midwest. The early twentieth century gave rise to papers written in German, Yiddish, Russian, and Polish, assisting the massive influx of European immigrants.

Throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, several hundred foreign-language daily and nondaily presses existed in at least forty different languages in the United States. Many are financially healthy today, supported by classified ads, local businesses, and increased ad revenue from long-distance phone companies and Internet services, which see the ethnic press as an ideal place to reach those customers most likely to need international communication services.[17] While the financial crisis took its toll and some ethnic newspapers failed, overall, loyal readers allowed such papers to fare better than the mainstream press.[18]

Most of these weekly and monthly newspapers serve some of the same functions for their constituencies—minorities and immigrants, as well as disabled veterans, retired workers, gay and lesbian communities, and the homeless—as the "majority" papers do. These papers, however, are often published outside the social mainstream. Consequently, they provide viewpoints that are different from the mostly middle- and upper-class establishment attitudes that have shaped the media throughout much of America's history. As noted by *The State of the News Media 2010*, a report from the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, ethnic newspapers and media "cover stories about the activities of those ethnic groups in the United States that are largely ignored by the mainstream press, they provide ethnic angles to news that actually is covered more widely, and they report on events and issues taking place back in the home countries from which those populations or their family members emigrated. These outlets have also traditionally been leaders in their communities."[19]

African American Newspapers

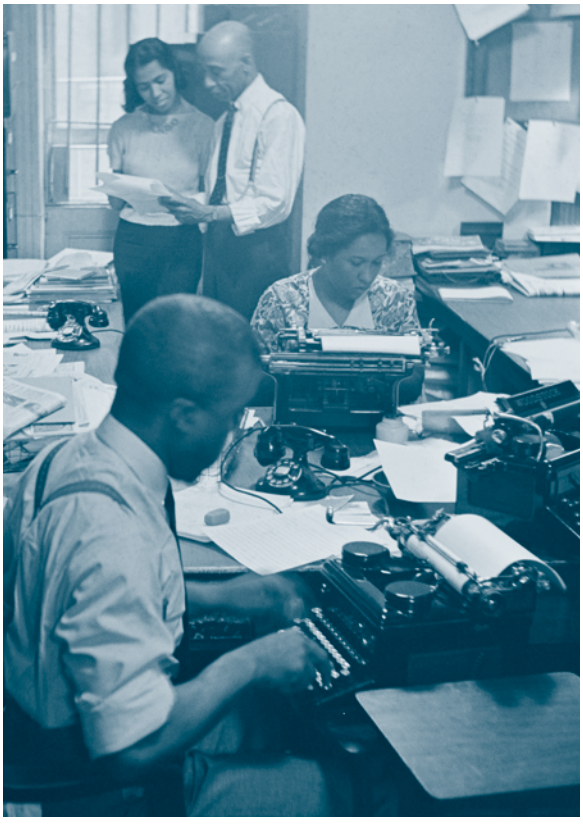
Between 1827 and the end of the Civil War in 1865, forty newspapers directed at black readers and opposed to slavery struggled for survival. These papers faced not only higher rates of illiteracy among potential readers but also hostility from white society and the majority press of the day. The first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, operated from 1827 to 1829 and opposed the racism of many New York newspapers. In addition, it offered a public voice for antislavery societies. Other notable papers included the *Alienated American* (1852–56) and the *New Orleans Daily Creole*, which began its short life in 1856 as the first black-owned daily in the South. The most influential oppositional newspaper was Frederick Douglass's *North Star*, a weekly antislavery newspaper in Rochester, New York, which was published from 1847 to 1860 and reached a circulation of three thousand. Douglass, a former slave, wrote essays on slavery and on a variety of national and international topics.

Since 1827, more than three thousand newspapers have been edited and owned by African Americans. These papers, with an average life span of nine years, took stands against race baiting, lynching, and the Ku Klux Klan. They also promoted racial pride long before the Civil Rights movement. The most widely circulated black-owned paper was Robert C. Vann's weekly *Pittsburgh Courier*, founded in 1910. Its circulation peaked at 350,000 in 1947—the year professional baseball was integrated by Jackie Robinson, thanks in part to relentless editorials in the *Courier* that denounced the color barrier in pro sports. As they have throughout their history, these papers offer oppositional viewpoints to the mainstream press and record the daily activities of black communities by listing weddings, births, deaths, graduations, meetings, and church functions. Today, there are more than two hundred daily and weekly African American papers, including Baltimore's *Afro-American*, New York's *Amsterdam News*, and the *Chicago Defender*, which celebrated its one hundredth anniversary in 2005.

"We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."

FREEDOM'S JOURNAL, 1827

The circulation rates of most black papers dropped sharply after the 1960s. The combined circulation of the local and national editions of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, for instance, dropped to only twenty thousand by the early 1980s.[20] Several factors contributed to these declines. First, television and black radio stations tapped into the limited pool of money that businesses allocated for advertising. Second, some advertisers, to avoid controversy, withdrew their support when the black press started giving favorable coverage to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Third, the loss of industrial urban jobs in the 1970s and 1980s not only diminished readership but also hurt small neighborhood businesses, which could no longer afford to advertise in both the mainstream and the black press. Finally, after the enactment of Civil Rights and affirmative action laws, black papers were raided by mainstream papers seeking to integrate their newsrooms with good African American journalists. Black papers could seldom match the offers from large white-owned dailies.



AFRICAN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS
This 1936 scene reveals the newsroom of Harlem's *Amsterdam News*, one of the nation's leading African American newspapers. Ironically, the Civil Rights movement and affirmative action policies since the 1960s served to drain talented reporters from the black press by encouraging them to work for larger, mainstream newspapers.

In siphoning off both ads and talent, a more integrated mainstream press hurt many black papers—an ironic effect of the Civil Rights laws. For example, today while more than one-third of the overall U.S. population counts as part of a minority group, only around 13 percent of the newsroom staffs at the nation's daily papers are racial minorities.

Spanish-Language Newspapers

Bilingual and Spanish-language newspapers have long served a variety of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Hispanic readerships. New York's *El Diario-La Prensa* has been reaching Spanish-language readers since 1913, while Los Angeles' *La Opinión* was founded in 1926 and is now the nation's largest Spanish-language daily. Other prominent publications are in Miami (*La Voz* and *Diario Las Americas*), Houston (*La Información*), Chicago (*El Mañana Daily News* and *La Raza*), San Diego (*El Sol*), and New York (*Hoy* and *El Noticias del Mundo*). In 2010, more than eight hundred Spanish-language papers operated in the United States, most of them weekly and nondaily papers.[21]

Until the late 1960s, mainstream newspapers virtually ignored Hispanic issues and culture. But with the influx of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban immigrants throughout the 1980s and 1990s, many mainstream papers began to feature weekly Spanish-language supplements. The first was the *Miami Herald*'s "El Nuevo Herald," introduced in 1976. Other mainstream papers also joined in, but many folded their Spanish-language supplements by the mid-1990s. In 1995, the *Los Angeles Times* discontinued its supplement, "Nuestro Tiempo," and the *Miami Herald* trimmed budgets and staff for "El Nuevo Herald." Spanish-language radio and television had beaten newspapers to these potential customers and advertisers. As the U.S. Hispanic population reached about 16 percent by 2009, Hispanic journalists accounted for only about 4.6 percent of the newsroom workforce at U.S. daily newspapers.[22]


世界日報
WORLD JOURNAL
等待綠卡期間 H1B可延兩年
救災失事直升機骸、遺體尋獲
移民查核延宕部分積壓3年
司法部報告 責FBI效率太差 影響數十萬件綠卡入籍申請案
唐家山潰洪加速 大水漫北川
油價飆漲 沙國召開峰會
陳德夫
Dr. Thomas T. Chen M.D. F.A.C.C. C.B.N.C.
第三屆慈善跳舞暨助學籌款晚會

THE *WORLD JOURNAL* is a national daily paper that targets Chinese immigrants by focusing on news from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other Southeast Asian communities.

Asian American Newspapers

In the 1980s, hundreds of small papers emerged to serve immigrants from Pakistan, Laos, Cambodia, and China. While people of Asian descent made up only about 4 percent of the U.S. population in 2008, this percentage is expected to rise to 9 percent by 2050.[23] Today, more than fifty small U.S. papers are printed in Vietnamese. Ethnic papers like these help readers both adjust to foreign surroundings and retain ties to their traditional heritage. In addition, these papers often cover major stories that are downplayed in the mainstream press. For example, in the aftermath of 9/11 airport security teams detained thousands of Middle Eastern-looking men. The *Weekly Bangla Patrika*, a Long Island, New York, paper with a circulation of twelve thousand, not only reported in detail on the one hundred people the Bangladeshi community lost in the World Trade Center attacks but also took the lead in reporting on how it feels to be innocent yet targeted by ethnic profiling.[24]

A growth area in newspapers is Chinese publications. Even amid a poor economy, a new Chinese newspaper, *News for Chinese*, started up late in 2008. The Chinese-language paper began as a free monthly distributed in the San Francisco area. By early 2009, it began publishing twice a week. The *World Journal*, a daily, is the largest U.S.-based Chinese-language paper. It publishes six editions on the East Coast; on the West Coast, the paper is known as the *Chinese Daily News*.[25]

Native American Newspapers

An activist Native American press has provided oppositional voices to mainstream American media since 1828, when the *Cherokee Phoenix* appeared in Georgia. Another prominent early paper was the *Cherokee Rose Bud*, founded in 1848 by tribal women in the Oklahoma territory. The Native American Press Association has documented more than 350 different Native American papers, most of them printed in English but a few in tribal languages. Currently, two national papers are the *Native American Times*, which offers perspectives on "sovereign rights, civil rights, and government-to-government relationships with the federal government," and *Indian Country Today*, owned by the Oneida nation in New York.

To counter the neglect of their culture's viewpoints by the mainstream press, Native American newspapers have helped to educate various tribes about their heritage and build community solidarity. These papers also have reported on both the problems and the progress among tribes that have opened casinos and gambling resorts. Overall, these smaller papers provide a forum for debates on tribal conflicts and concerns, and they often signal the mainstream press on issues—such as gambling or hunting and fishing rights—that have particular significance for the larger culture.

The Underground Press

The mid to late 1960s saw an explosion of alternative newspapers. Labeled the **underground press** at the time, these papers questioned mainstream political policies and conventional values often voicing radical opinions. Generally running on shoestring budgets, they were also erratic in meeting publication schedules. Springing up on college campuses and in major cities, underground papers were inspired by the writings of socialists and intellectuals from the 1930s and 1940s and by a new wave of thinkers and artists. Particularly inspirational were poets and writers (such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, LeRoi Jones, and Eldridge Cleaver) and "protest" musicians (including Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, and Joan Baez). In criticizing social institutions,

alternative papers questioned the official reports distributed by public relations agents, government spokespeople, and the conventional press (see "Case Study: Alternative Journalism: Dorothy Day and I. F. Stone" on page 240).

During the 1960s, underground papers played a unique role in documenting social tension by including the voices of students, women, African Americans, Native Americans, gay men and lesbians, and others whose opinions were often excluded from the mainstream press. The first and most enduring underground paper, the *Village Voice*, was founded in Greenwich Village in 1955. It is still distributed free, surviving only through advertising. Among campus underground papers, the *Berkeley Barb* was the most influential, developing amid the free-speech movement in the mid-1960s. Despite their irreverent and often vulgar tone, many underground papers turned a spotlight on racial and gender inequities and, on occasion, influenced mainstream journalism to examine social issues. Like the black press, though, many early underground papers folded after the 1960s. Given their radical outlook, it was difficult for them to generate sponsors or appeal to advertisers. In addition, like the black press, the underground press was raided by mainstream papers, which began expanding their own coverage of culture by hiring the underground's best writers. Still, today more than 120 papers are members of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies (see Figure 7.1).

FIGURE 7.1

SELECTED ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Source: Association of Alternative Newsweeklies, http://www.aan.org.

Newspaper Operations

Today, a weekly paper might employ only two or three people, while a major metro daily might have a staff of more than one thousand, including workers in the newsroom and online operations, and in departments for circulation (distributing the newspaper), advertising (selling ad space), and mechanical operations (assembling and printing the paper). In either situation, however, most newspapers distinguish business operations from editorial or news functions. Journalists' and readers' praise or criticism usually rests on the quality of a paper's news and editorial components, but business and advertising concerns today dictate whether papers will survive.

Most major daily papers would like to devote one-half to two-thirds of their pages to advertisements. Newspapers carry everything from full-page spreads for department stores to shrinking classified ads, which consumers can purchase for a few dollars to advertise used cars or old furniture (although many Web sites now do this for free). In most cases, ads are positioned in the paper first. The **newshole**—space not taken up by ads—accounts for the remaining 35 to 50 percent of the content of daily newspapers, including front-page news. The newshole and physical size of many newspapers had shrunk substantially by 2010.

"We received no extra space for 9/11. We received no extra space for the Iraq war. We're all doing this within our budget. It is a zero-sum game. If something is more important, something else may be a little less important, a little less deserving of space."

JOHN GEDDES, MANAGING EDITOR, *NEW YORK TIMES*, 2006

News and Editorial Responsibilities

The chain of command at most larger papers starts with the publisher and owner at the top and then moves, on the news and editorial side, to the editor in chief and managing editor, who are in charge of the daily news-gathering and writing processes. Under the main editors, assistant editors have traditionally run different news divisions, including features, sports, photos, local news, state news, and wire service reports that contain major national and international news. Increasingly, many editorial positions are being eliminated or condensed to a single editor's job.

CASE STUDY

Alternative Journalism: Dorothy Day and I. F. Stone

Over the years, a number of unconventional reporters have struggled against the status quo to find a place for unheard voices and alternative ways to practice their craft. For example, Ida Wells fearlessly investigated violence against blacks for the *Memphis Free Speech* in the late 1800s. Newspaper lore also offers a rich history of alternative journalists and their publications, such as Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker* and *I. F. Stone's Weekly*.

In 1933, Dorothy Day (1897–1980) cofounded a radical religious organization with a monthly newspaper, the *Catholic Worker*, that opposed war and supported social reforms. Like many young intellectual writers during World War I, Day was a pacifist; she also joined the Socialist Party. Quitting college at age eighteen to work as an activist reporter for socialist newspapers, Day participated in the ongoing suffrage movement to give women the right to vote. Throughout the 1930s, her Catholic Worker organization invested in thirty hospices for the poor and homeless, providing food and shelter for five thousand people a day. This legacy endures today, with the organization continuing to fund soup kitchens and homeless shelters throughout the country.

For more than seventy years, the *Worker* has consistently advocated personal activism to further social justice, opposing anti-Semitism, Japanese American internment camps during World War II, nuclear weapons, the Korean War, military drafts, and the communist witch-hunts of the 1950s. The *Worker*'s circulation peaked in 1938 at 190,000, then fell dramatically during World War II, when Day's pacifism was at odds with much of America. Today, the *Catholic Worker* has a circulation of 80,000.

I. F. Stone (1907–1989) shared Dorothy Day's passion for social activism. He also started early, publishing his own monthly paper at the age of fourteen and becoming a full-time reporter by age twenty. He worked as a Washington political writer for the *Nation* in the early 1940s and later for the *New York Daily Compass*. Throughout his career, Stone challenged the conventions and privileges of both politics and journalism. In 1941, for example, he resigned from the National Press Club when it refused to serve his guest, the nation's first African American federal judge. In the early 1950s, he actively opposed Joseph McCarthy's rabid campaign to rid government and the media of alleged communists.

When the *Daily Compass* failed in 1952, the radical Stone was unable to find a newspaper job and decided to create his own newsletter, *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, which he published for nineteen years. Practicing interpretive and investigative reporting, Stone became as adept as any major journalist at tracking down government records to discover contradictions, inaccuracies, and lies. Over the years, Stone questioned decisions by the Supreme Court, investigated the substandard living conditions of many African Americans, and criticized political corruption. He guided the *Weekly* to a circulation that reached seventy thousand during the 1960s, when he probed American investments of money and military might in Vietnam.

I. F. Stone and Dorothy Day embodied a spirit of independent reporting that has been threatened by the decline in newspaper readership and the rise of chain ownership. Stone, who believed that alternative ideas were crucial to maintaining a healthy democracy, once wrote that "there must be free play for so-called 'subversive' ideas—every idea 'subverts' the old to make way for the new. To shut off 'subversion' is to shut off peaceful progress and to invite revolution and war."[1]

Reporters work for editors. *General assignment reporters* handle all sorts of stories that might emerge—or "break"—in a given day. *Specialty reporters* are assigned to particular beats (police, courts, schools, local and national government) or topics (education, religion, health, environment, technology). On large dailies, *bureau reporters* also file reports from other major cities. Large daily papers feature columnists and critics who cover various aspects of culture, such as politics, books, television, movies, and food. While papers used to employ a separate staff for their online operations, the current trend is to have traditional reporters file both print and online versions of their stories—accompanied by images or video they are responsible for gathering.

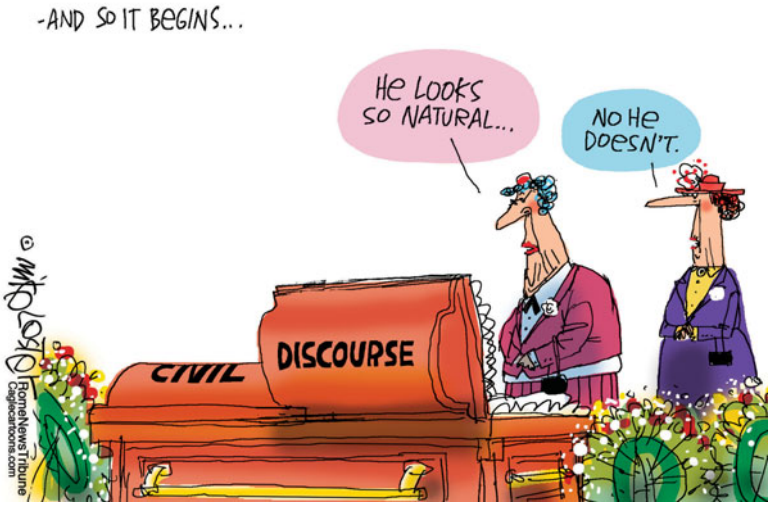
Recent consolidation and cutbacks have led to layoffs and the closing of bureaus outside a paper's city limits. For example, in 1985 more than six hundred newspapers had reporters stationed in Washington, D.C.; in 2010 that number was under three hundred. The *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Baltimore Sun*—all owned by the Tribune Company—closed their independent bureaus in 2009, choosing instead to share reports.[26] The downside of this money-saving measure is that far fewer versions of stories are being produced and readers must rely on a single version of a news report. According to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), the workforce in daily U.S. newsrooms declined by 5,900 jobs in 2008 and by 5,200 more in 2009.[27] These trends have put a strain on the remaining reporters and editors, who are increasingly being asked to develop stories in multiple formats with fewer personnel.

Wire Services and Feature Syndication

Major daily papers might have one hundred or so local reporters and writers, but they still cannot cover the world or produce enough material to fill up the newshole each day. Newspapers also rely on wire services and syndicated feature services to supplement local coverage. A few major dailies, such as the *New York Times*, run their own wire services, selling their stories to other papers to reprint. Other agencies, such as the Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), have hundreds of staffers stationed throughout major U.S. cities and world capitals. They submit stories and photos each day for distribution to newspapers across the country. Some U.S. papers also subscribe to foreign wire services, such as Agence France-Presse in Paris or Reuters in London.

Daily papers generally pay monthly fees for access to all wire stories. Although they use only a fraction of what is available over the wires, editors routinely monitor wire services each day for important stories and ideas for local angles. Wire services have greatly expanded the reach and scope of news, as local editors depend on wire firms when they select statewide, national, or international reports for reprinting.

In addition, **feature syndicates**, such as United Features and Tribune Media Services, are commercial outlets that contract with newspapers to provide work from the nation's best political writers, editorial cartoonists, comic-strip artists, and self-help columnists. These companies serve as brokers, distributing horoscopes and crossword puzzles as well as the political columns and comic strips that appeal to a wide audience. When a paper bids on and acquires the rights to a cartoonist or columnist, it signs exclusivity agreements with a syndicate to ensure that it is the only paper in the region to carry, say, Clarence



POLITICAL CARTOONS are often syndicated features in newspapers and reflect the issues of the day.

Page, Maureen Dowd, Bob Herbert, Anna Quindlen, or cartoonist Tom Toles. Feature syndicates, like wire services, wield great influence in determining which writers and cartoonists gain national prominence.

Newspaper Ownership: Chains Lose Their Grip

Edward Wyllis Scripps founded the first **newspaper chain**—a company that owns several papers throughout the country—in the 1890s. By the 1920s, there were about thirty chains in the United States, each one owning an average of five papers. The emergence of chains paralleled the major business trend during the twentieth century: the movement toward oligopolies in which a handful of corporations control each industry.

By the 1980s, more than 130 chains owned an average of nine papers each, with the twelve largest chains accounting for 40 percent of the total circulation in the United States. By the early 2000s, the top ten chains controlled more than one-half of the nation's total daily newspaper circulation. Gannett, for example, the nation's largest chain, owns over eighty daily papers (and hundreds of nondailies worldwide), ranging from small suburban papers to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, the *Nashville Tennessean*, and *USA Today*. (See "What Gannett Owns.")

Around 2005, consolidation in newspaper ownership leveled off because the decline in newspaper circulation and ad sales panicked investors, leading to drops in the stock value of newspapers. Many newspaper chains responded by significantly reducing their newsroom staffs and selling off individual papers. According to Pew's *State of the News Media 2010* report, about "13,500 jobs for full-time, newsroom professionals" have disappeared since 2007, "the total falling from 55,000 to 41,500. . . . That means that newsrooms have shrunk by 25 percent in three years. . . . To put it another way, newspapers headed into 2010, devoting $1.6 billion less annually to news than they did three years earlier."[28]

For an example of this cost cutting, consider recent actions at the *Los Angeles Times* (owned by the Chicago-based chain Tribune Company). Continuing demands from the corporate offices for cost reductions have led to the resignations of editors and publishers. Cuts have also caused the departures of some of the most talented staff members, including six Pulitzer Prize winners. In 2007, Chicago real estate developer Sam Zell bought the Tribune Company for $8 billion and made it private, insulating it for a time from market demands for high profit margins. However, by 2008 the company faced declining ad revenue and a tough economy and was forced to file for bankruptcy protection. While it continues to operate, its recent history indicates the sorts of troubles even major newspapers face.

About the same time, large chains started to break up, selling individual newspapers to private equity firms and big banks (like Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase) that deal in distressed and overleveraged companies with too much debt. For example, in 2006, Knight Ridder—then the nation's second-leading chain—was sold for $4.5 billion to the McClatchy Company. McClatchy then broke up the chain by selling off twelve of the thirty-two papers, including the *San Jose Mercury News* and Philadelphia Newspapers (which owns the *Philadelphia Enquirer*). McClatchy also sold its leading newspaper, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, to a private equity company for $530 million, less than half of what it had paid to buy it eight years earlier.

Ownership of one of the nation's three national newspapers also changed hands. The *Wall Street Journal*, held by the Bancroft family for more than one hundred years, accepted a bid of nearly $5.8 billion from News Corp. head Rupert Murdoch (News Corp. also owns the *New York Post* and several papers in the United Kingdom and Australia). At the time, critics also raised serious concerns about takeovers of newspapers by large entertainment conglomerates (Murdoch's company also owns TV stations, a network, cable channels, and a movie studio). As small subsidiaries in large media empires, newspapers are increasingly treated as just another product line that is expected to perform in the same way that a movie or TV program does.

"Sadly, today in America when a newspaper reader dies, he or she is not replaced by a new reader."

JEFFREY COLE, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR THE DIGITAL FUTURE, USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL, 2006

As chains lose their grip, there are concerns about who will own papers in the future and the effect this will have on content and press freedoms. Recent purchases by private equity groups are alarming since these companies are usually more interested in turning a profit than supporting journalism. However, ideas exist for how to avoid this fate. For example, more support could be rallied for small, independent owners who could then make decisions based on what's best for the paper and not just the quarterly report. For more on how newspapers and owners are trying new business models, see "New Models for Journalism" on page 248.

Joint Operating Agreements Combat Declining Competition

Although the amount of regulation preventing newspaper monopolies has lessened, the government continues to monitor the declining number of newspapers in various American cities as well as mergers in cities where competition among papers might be endangered. In the mid-1920s, about five hundred American cities had two or more newspapers with separate owners. However, by 2010 fewer than fifteen cities had independent, competing papers.

In 1970, Congress passed the Newspaper Preservation Act, which enabled failing papers to continue operating through a **joint operating agreement (JOA)**. Under a JOA, two competing papers keep separate news divisions while merging business and production operations for a period of years. Since the act's passage, twenty-eight cities have adopted JOAs. In 2010, just six JOAs remained in place—in Charleston, West Virginia; Detroit; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Las Vegas; Salt Lake City; and York, Pennsylvania. Although JOAs and mergers have monopolistic tendencies, they sometimes have been the only way to maintain competition between newspapers.

For example, Detroit was one of the most competitive newspaper cities in the nation until 1989. The *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*, then owned by Gannett and Knight Ridder, respectively, both ranked among the ten most widely circulated papers in the country and sold their weekday editions for just fifteen cents a copy. Faced with declining revenue and increased costs, the papers' managers asked for and received a JOA in 1989. But problems continued. Then, in 1995, a prolonged and bitter strike by several unions sharply reduced circulation, as the strikers formed a union-backed paper to compete against the existing newspapers. Many readers dropped their subscriptions to the *Free Press* and the *News* to support the strikers. Before the strike (and the rise of the Internet), Gannett and Knight Ridder had both reported profit margins of well over 15 percent on all their newspaper holdings.[29] By 2010, Knight Ridder was out of the chain newspaper business, and neither Detroit paper ranked in the top 20. In addition, the *News* and *Free Press* became the first major papers to stop daily home delivery for part of the week, instead directing readers to the Web or brief newsstand editions.

Challenges Facing Newspapers Today

Publishers and journalists today face worrisome issues, such as the decline in newspaper readership and the failure of many papers to attract younger readers. However, other problems persist as newspapers continue to converge with the Internet and try to figure out the future of digital news.

Readership Declines in the United States

The decline in newspaper readership actually began during the Great Depression, with the rise of radio. Between 1931 and 1939, six hundred newspapers ceased operation. Another circulation crisis occurred from the late 1960s through the 1970s with the rise in network television viewing

WHAT GANNETT OWNS

Consider how Gannett connects to your life; then turn the page for the bigger picture.

NEWSPAPERS

- 85 daily papers and 650 nondaily publications
  - *USA Today*
  - *Asbury Park Press* (N.J.)
  - *Detroit Free Press*
  - *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* (N.Y.)
  - *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix)
  - *Cincinnati Enquirer*
  - *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Ky.)
  - *Des Moines Register* (Iowa)
  - *Indianapolis Star*
  - *News Journal* (Wilmington, Del.)
  - *Tennessean* (Nashville)
  - Army Times Publishing Company (newspapers)
  - Newsquest plc (newspaper publishing, United Kingdom)

TELEVISION

- Captivate Network (advertising-based television in elevators)
- 23 TV stations
  - KARE-TV (Minneapolis)
  - KNAZ-TV (Flagstaff, Ariz.)
  - KSDK-TV (St. Louis)
  - KTHV-TV (Little Rock, Ark.)
  - KUSA-TV (Denver)
  - KXTV-TV (Sacramento, Calif.)
  - WATL-TV (Atlanta)
  - WBIR-TV (Knoxville, Tenn.)
  - WCSH-TV (Portland, Me.)
  - WGRZ-TV (Buffalo, N.Y.)
  - WJXX-TV (Jacksonville)
  - WKYC-TV (Cleveland)
  - WTLV-TV (Jacksonville)
  - WTSP-TV (Tampa)
  - WZZM-TV (Grand Rapids, Mich.)

INTERNET

- CareerBuilder (50 percent)
- Metromix.com
- ShopLocal.com
- MomsLikeMe.com

MAGAZINES AND PRINTING

- Clipper Magazine (direct mail advertising)
- Gannett Healthcare Group (periodical publishing)
- Gannett Offset (commercial printing)

Turn page for more

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

To recoup some of its lost newspaper advertising revenue, Gannett is investing in online sites that are similar to classified ads.

- **Revenue.** Gannett's 2009 revenue was $5.6 billion, down 28 percent from 2006's peak revenue of $7.8 billion.[1]
- **Advertising.** Despite the declines in print advertising, 74 percent (or $4.1 billion) of Gannett's revenue still comes from newspapers.
- ***USA Today*.** The second-largest newspaper in the United States, *USA Today* has a daily circulation of more than 1.8 million. However, its Web site attracts 56 million visitors per month, more than thirty times the print circulation.[2]
- **Market Reach.** Gannett's ownership of newspaper, television, and direct mail companies means it can reach large segments of the population. For example, in 2009 "in Indianapolis, the combination of all Gannett products reached 79% of the adult population, an average of 5.4 times a week for 5.3 million total impressions each week—a 5% increase since 2007."[3]
- **Television.** In 2009, Gannett's twenty-three television stations earned $56 million in retransmission fees. This is up from $19 million—or 199 percent—in 2008.[4] The stations reach over 20 million U.S. households (18.2% of the population) and account for 11 percent of Gannett's revenue.

CAPTIVATE NETWORK reaches 3 million people a day in elevators.

and greater competition from suburban weeklies. In addition, with an increasing number of women working full-time outside the home, newspapers could no longer consistently count on one of their core readership groups.

Throughout the first decade of the 2000s, U.S. newspaper circulation dropped again; this time by more than 25 percent.[30] In the face of such steep circulation and readership declines, newspapers began to adopt new strategies:

After years of trying to maximize audience with relatively low circulation prices, relying more on advertising for revenue, [newspapers] raised the price of print editions substantially, to 75 cents or $1 in most cities. And many were preparing for experiments with a version of paid online content early in 2010. As a result, many companies by the end of 2009 were reporting at least a modest increase in circulation revenue. But that came at a cost, the biggest print circulation losses yet for an industry whose audience numbers chart over the last six years has come to look like a ski slope.[31] (See Figure 7.2.)

Remarkably, while the United States continues to experience declines in newspaper readership and advertising dollars, many other nations—where Internet news is still emerging—have experienced increases. For example, the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) reported that between 2003 and 2009, there was an 8.8 percent growth in newspaper readership worldwide, mostly in regions where the Internet had not become ubiquitous.[32] These increases are concentrated in Asia, Africa, and South America, while sales are declining in North America and Europe. In 2010, WAN's Web site also boasted that newspapers are still the world's "second largest advertising medium" (after television) and that worldwide newspapers have "more than 1.6 billion readers a day."[33] (See "Global Village: For U.S. Newspaper Industry, an Example in Germany?" on page 246.)

Going Local: How Small and Campus Papers Retain Readers

Despite the doomsday headlines and predictions about the future of newspapers, it is important to note that the problems of the newspaper business "are not uniform across the industry." In fact, according to the Pew Research Center's *The State of the News Media 2010* report, "small dailies and community weeklies, with the exception of some that are badly positioned or badly managed," still do better than many "big-city papers."[34] The report also suggested that smaller papers in smaller communities remain "the dominant source for local information and the place for local merchants to advertise."[35]

Smaller newspapers are doing better for several reasons. First, small towns and cities often don't have local TV stations, big-city magazines, or numerous radio stations competing against newspapers for ad space. This means that smaller papers are more likely to retain their revenue from local advertisers. Second, whether they are tiny weekly papers serving small towns or campus newspapers serving university towns, such papers have a loyal and steady base of readers who cannot get information on their small communities from any other source. In fact, many college newspaper editors report that the most popular feature in their papers is the "police report": It serves as a kind of local gossip, listing the names of students "busted" over the weekend for underage drinking or public intoxication.

Finally, because smaller newspapers tend to be more consensus-oriented than conflict-driven in their approach to news, these papers usually do not see the big dips in ad revenue that may occur when editors tackle complex or controversial topics that are divisive. For example, when a major regional newspaper does an investigative series on local auto dealers for poor service or shady business practices, those dealers—for a while—can cancel advertising that the paper sorely needs. While local papers fill in the gaps left by large mainstream papers and other news media sources, they still face some of the same challenges as large papers and must continue to adapt to retain readers and advertisers.

Convergence: Newspapers Struggle in the Move to Digital

Because of their local monopoly status, many newspapers were slower than other media to confront the challenges of the Internet. But faced with competition from the 24/7 news cycle on cable, newspapers responded by developing online versions of their papers. While some observers think newspapers are on the verge of extinction as the digital age eclipses the print era, the industry is no dinosaur. In fact, the history of communication demonstrates that older mass media have always adapted; so far, books, newspapers, and magazines have adjusted to the radio, television, and movie industries. And with more than fifteen hundred North American daily papers online in 2010, newspapers are solving one of the industry's major economic headaches: the cost of newsprint. After salaries, paper is the industry's largest expense, typically accounting for more than 25 percent of a newspaper's total cost.

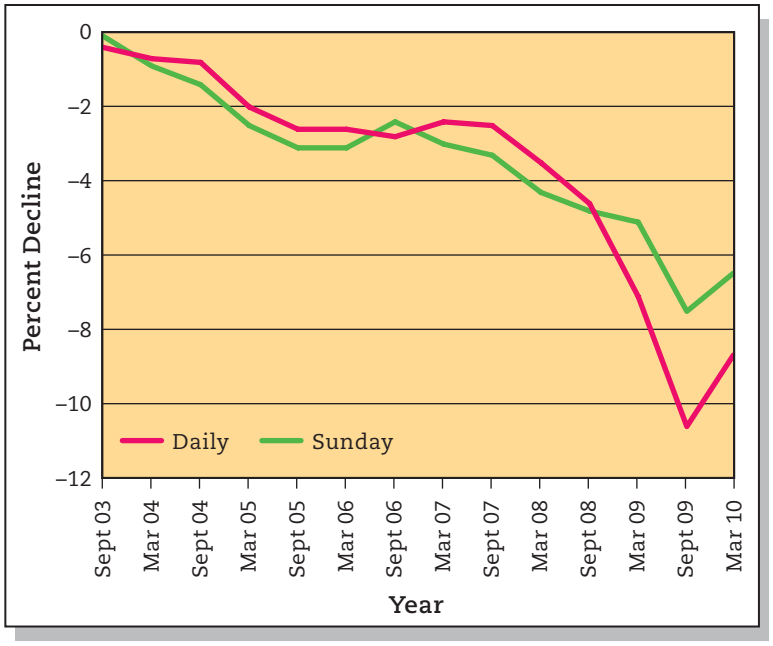


FIGURE 7.2

NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION PERCENTAGE DECLINES, 2003–2009

Source: Pew Research Center, Project for Excellence in Journalism, "Newspapers: Charts & Graphs: Newspaper Circulation Percentage Declines," The State of the News Media 2010, http://www.stateofthemedia.org/2010/chartland.php?id=1321&ct=line&dir=&sort=&ckal1Cols=1&c1=1&c2=1, accessed July 6, 2010; Joseph Plambeck, "More Steep Circulation Declines at Newspapers," New York Times, April 26, 2010, http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/26.

Online newspapers are truly taking advantage of the flexibility the Internet offers. Because space is not an issue online, newspapers can post stories and readers' letters that they weren't able to print in the paper edition. They can also run longer stories with more in-depth coverage, as well as offer immediate updates to breaking news. Also, most stories appear online before they appear in print; they can be posted at any time and updated several times a day.

Among the valuable resources that online newspapers offer are hyperlinks to Web sites that relate to stories and that link news reports to an archive of related articles. Free of charge or for a modest fee, a reader can search the newspaper's database from home and investigate the entire sequence and history of an ongoing story, such as a trial, over the course of several months. Taking advantage of the Internet's multimedia capabilities, online newspapers offer readers the ability to stream audio and video files—everything from presidential news conferences to local sports highlights to original video footage from a storm disaster. Today's online newspapers offer readers a dynamic, rather than a static, resource.

However, these advances have yet to pay off. Online ads accounted for only about 10 percent of a newspaper's advertising in 2009—up about 3 percent from 2007. So newspapers, even in decline, are still heavily dependent on print ads. But this trend does not seem likely to sustain papers for long. Ad revenue for newspaper print ads declined 7 percent in 2007 and another 17 percent in 2008 (see Figure 7.3 on page 247). Then in 2009, print ad revenue fell another 25 to 35 percent at many newspapers.[36] To jump-start online revenue streams, more than four hundred daily newspapers collaborated with Yahoo! (the number one portal to newspapers online) in 2006 to begin an ad venture that aimed to increase papers' online revenue by 10 to 20 percent. By summer 2010, with the addition of the large Gannett chain, Yahoo! had nearly nine hundred papers in the ad partnership. During an eighteen-month period in 2009-10, the Yahoo! consortium sold over thirty thousand online ad campaigns in local markets with most revenue shared 50/50 between Yahoo! and its partner papers.[37]

One of the business mistakes that most newspaper executives made near the beginning of the Internet age was giving away online content for free. Whereas their print versions always had two revenue streams—ads and subscriptions—newspaper executives weren't convinced that online revenue would amount to much, so they used their online version as an advertisement for the

"In 2009, the [*Christian Science*] *Monitor* [became] the first nationally circulated newspaper to replace its daily print edition with its website."

DAVID COOK, *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR*

GLOBAL VILLAGE

For U.S. Newspaper Industry, an Example in Germany?

by Eric Pfanner

In 2010, print news readership was climbing in places like India and China. And many "modernized" European countries also seem to support papers better than the United States does. Why? One possible reason is that the Internet developed faster in the U.S. and, therefore, was adopted earlier by new generations. To explore this discrepancy further, this New York Times *article offers insights into Germany's ongoing cultural and economic embrace of newspapers.*

While daily newspaper circulation in the United States fell 27 percent from 1998 through 2008, it slipped 19 percent in Germany. While fewer than half of Americans read newspapers, more than 70 percent of Germans do. While newspapers' revenues have plunged in the United States, they have held steady in Germany since 2004.

American publishers blame the economic crisis and the Internet for their plight, but [a new] report says the structure of the U.S. newspaper industry is a big part of the problem.

Most German newspapers are owned by [families] or other small companies with local roots, but the American industry is dominated by publicly traded chains. Under pressure from shareholders clamoring for short-term results, the study contends, U.S. newspapers made reckless cuts in editorial and production quality, hastening the flight of readers and advertisers to the Web.

Instead of focusing on journalism, . . . U.S. newspapers made unwise investments in new media and compounded the damage by giving away their contents free on the Internet.

German publishers have been much more reticent about the Web, in some cases keeping large amounts of their content offline. . . .

[However,] it is equally possible that German newspapers have yet to bear the brunt of the challenges confronting American papers.

Germans have been slower than Americans to embrace the Internet for some other purposes, not just news. E-commerce in Germany, for example, was slow to take off because of concerns about data security and a suspicion about the use of credit cards. While German publishers have recently stepped up their efforts to develop new digital business lines, in this regard they trail American newspapers. As the study notes, the Internet generates only low-single-digit percentages of most German newspapers' sales, while online revenue has reached double figures at some U.S. papers.

German papers do have one big advantage in dealing with the digital challenge: they are well organized at an industry level.

Publishers have lobbied the government of Chancellor Angela Merkel to draft legislation that would create a new kind of copyright for online content; German publishers say this could serve as a lever to extract revenue from search engines and news aggregators. And they have complained to the German antitrust authorities about the dominance of the biggest search engine, Google.

Whether these moves will help publishers build for the future, or simply protect their existing businesses, is not clear.

For now, however, German publishers profess confidence in a continuation of the status quo, a luxury that newspapers in the United States and other countries, for whatever reasons, cannot afford.

In thinking about differences between Germany and the United States, can you suggest other reasons that account for the U.S. newspaper struggles? Do you think the points made in this article will continue to keep Germany more newspaper-friendly over time? Would similar measures make a difference in the United States, or is the move to the Internet and the disappearance of newspapers inevitable?

Source: Eric Pfanner, "For U.S. Newspaper Industry, an Example in Germany?," New York Times, *May 16, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/17/business/media/17iht-cache17.html?_r=3&ref=media.*

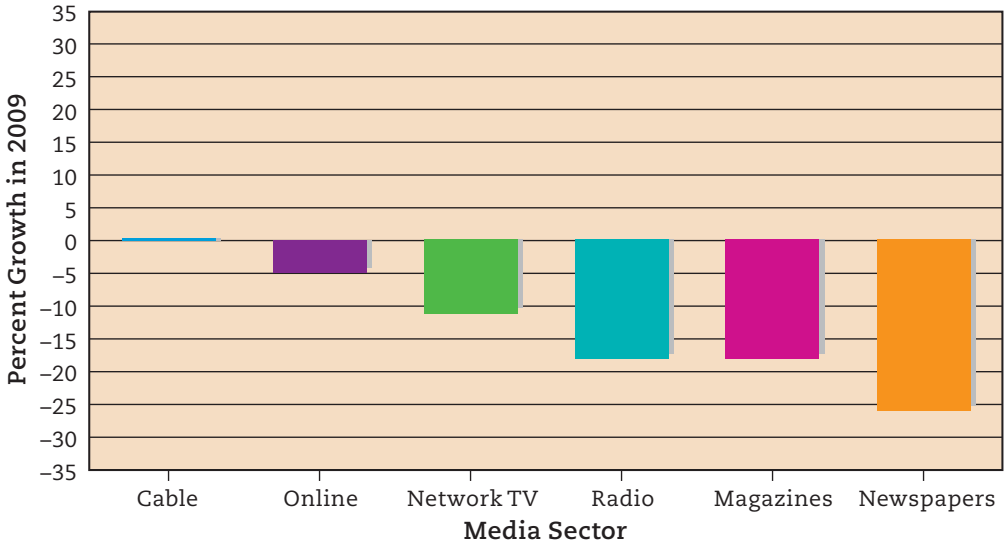


FIGURE 7.3

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AD SPENDING BY MEDIUM, 2008–09

Source: Project for Excellence in Journalism, "State of the News Media 2010: An Annual Report on American Journalism," Overview: Key Findings, Economics," http://www.stateofthemedia.org/2010/overview_key_findings.php#keyecon, accessed July 6, 2010.

printed paper. Since those early years, most newspapers are now trying to establish a **paywall**—charging a fee for online access to news content—but customers used to getting online content for free have shunned most online subscriptions. One paper that did charge early for online content was the *Wall Street Journal*, which pioneered one of the few successful paywalls in the digital era. In fact, the *Journal*, helped by the public's interest in the economic crisis and 400,000 paid subscriptions to its online service, replaced *USA Today* as the nation's most widely circulated newspaper in 2009. Locally and regionally, however, fewer than thirty newspapers charged for online content in 2010. Most of these papers—like the *Santa Barbara News-Press* and the *Idaho Press-Tribune*—had print circulations under 30,000 and paid online-only subscriptions in the 100-1,200 range. They charge anywhere from $3 to $15 per month for an online subscription.[38]

An interesting case in the paywall experiments is the *New York Times*. In 2005, the paper began charging online readers for access to its editorials and columns, but the rest of the site was free. This system lasted only until 2007. Starting in 2011, the paper will again add a paywall where visitors who read more than a certain number of articles each month will have to pay a fee for unlimited access to the site. The *Times* is hoping that many loyal readers—the site gets seventeen million visitors a month—will pay for unlimited access, while casual visitors will still be able to view a handful of articles each month.[39] However, a 2010 report found that even among the "most loyal news consumers," only 19 percent "said they would be willing to pay for news online." The report, based on a national random telephone sample of 2,259 consumers, also found that "a large majority"—82 percent—of consumers who had favorite online news sites "said they would find somewhere else to get the news."[40] The hard truth may be that most consumers who are already accustomed to getting "free" news online won't like the idea of paying. Only time will tell if paywalls will create new revenue for papers or alienate readers.

LOCAL PAPERS

In Palo Alto, California, newspapers are thriving. The city has three active papers (two dailies and one weekly) that, despite some cutbacks, remain profitable and have survived the recent recession. Their success comes from a combination of factors, including: The papers are free, short (fifteen to twenty pages), have a local focus, and sometimes act as a watchdog on the local city government. Would you read such a paper? (Shown here are two editors of the *Palo Alto Weekly*.)

Blogs Challenge Newspapers' Authority Online

The rise of blogs in the late 1990s brought amateurs into the realm of professional journalism. It was an awkward meeting. As National Press Club president Doug Harbrecht said to conservative blogger Matt Drudge in 1998 while introducing him to the press club's members, "There aren't many in this hallowed

NEWSPAPER WEB SITES provide papers with a great way to reach thousands, if not millions, of potential readers. But, with readers used to getting online news for free, most sites lose revenue. Would you pay for online news? Does it make a difference if the paper is national or local?

"Now, like hundreds of other mid-career journalists who are walking away from media institutions across the country, I'm looking for other ways to tell the stories I care about. At the same time, the world of online news is maturing, looking for depth and context. I think the timing couldn't be better."

NANCY CLEELAND, ON WHY SHE WAS LEAVING THE *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, POSTED ON THE HUFFINGTON POST, 2007

room who consider you a journalist. Real journalists . . . pride themselves on getting it first and right; they get to the bottom of the story, they bend over backwards to get the other side. Journalism means being painstakingly thorough, even-handed, and fair."[41] Harbrecht's suggestion, of course, was that untrained bloggers weren't as scrupulous as professionally trained journalists. In the following decade, though, as blogs like the Daily Kos, the Huffington Post, AndrewSullivan.com, and Talking Points Memo gained credibility and a large readership, traditional journalism slowly began to try blogging, allowing some reporters to write a blog in addition to their regular newspaper, television, or radio work. Some newspapers such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* even hired journalists to blog exclusively for their Web sites.

By 2005, the wary relationship between journalism and blogging began to change. Blogging became less a journalistic sideline and more a viable main feature. Established journalists left major news organizations to begin new careers in the blogosphere. For example, in 2007 top journalists John Harris and Jim VandeHei left the *Washington Post* to launch Politico.com, a national blog (and, secondarily, a local newspaper) about Capitol Hill politics. Another breakthrough moment occurred when the Talking Points Memo blog, headed by Joshua Micah Marshall, won a George Polk Award for legal reporting in 2008. From Marshall's point of view, "I think of us as journalists; the medium we work in is blogging. We have kind of broken free of the model of discrete articles that have a beginning and end. Instead, there are an ongoing series of dispatches."[42] Still, what distinguishes such "dispatches" and the best online work from so many opinion blogs is the reliance on old-fashioned journalism—calling on reporters to interview people as sources, look at documents, and find evidence to support the story.

New Models for Journalism

In response to the challenges newspapers face, a number of concerned journalists, economists, and citizens are calling for new business models and ideas about how to combat newspapers' rapid decline. Possibilities include developing new business ventures like online papers begun by former print reporters, or having wealthy universities like Harvard and Yale buy and support newspapers, thereby better insulating their public service and watchdog operations from the expectations of the marketplace. Another possibility might be to get Internet companies involved. Google's executives worry that a decline in quality journalism will mean fewer sites on which to post ads and from which to earn online revenue. Wealthy Internet companies like Microsoft and Google could expand into the news business and start producing content for both online and print papers. In fact, in March 2010 Yahoo! began hiring reporters to increase the presence of its online news site. The company hired reporters from Politico.com, *BusinessWeek*, the *New York Observer*, the *Washington Post*, and *Talking Points Memo*, among others.

Additional ideas are coming from universities (where journalism school enrollments are actually increasing). For example, the dean of Columbia University's Journalism School (started once upon a time with money bequeathed by nineteenth-century newspaper mogul Joseph Pulitzer) commissioned a study from Leonard Downie, former executive editor of the *Washington Post*, and Michael Schudson, Columbia journalism professor and media scholar. Their report, "The Reconstruction of American Journalism," focused on the lost circulation,

advertising revenue, and news jobs and aimed to create a strategy for reporting that would hold public and government officials accountable for providing basic access to the kinds of information and documentation that citizens in a democracy need in order to be well informed.[43] Here is an overview of their recommendations, some of which have already been implemented:

- News organizations "substantially devoted to reporting on public affairs" should be allowed to operate as nonprofit entities in order to take in tax-deductible contributions while still collecting ad and subscription revenues. For example, the Poynter Institute owns and operates the *St. Petersburg Times*, Florida's largest newspaper. As a nonprofit, the *St. Petersburg Times* is protected from the unrealistic 16 to 20 percent profit margins that publicly held newspapers had been expected to earn in the 1980s and 1990s.
- Philanthropic organizations and foundations "should substantially increase their support for news organizations" that have shown a commitment to public affairs news and the kind of reporting that holds local leaders, politicians, officials, and government agencies accountable.
- Public radio and TV, through federal reforms in the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), should reorient their focus to "significant local news reporting in every community served by public stations and their Web sites."
- Operating their own news services or supporting regional news organizations, public and private universities "should become ongoing sources of local, state, specialized subject and accountability news reporting as part of their educational mission."
- A national Fund for Local News should be created with money the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) collects from "telecom users, television and radio broadcast licensees, or Internet service providers."
- Via use of the Internet, news services, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies should "increase the accessibility and usefulness of public information collected by federal, state, and local governments."

As the journalism industry continues to reinvent itself and tries new avenues to ensure its future, not every "great" idea will work out. Some of the immediate backlash to this report raised questions about the government becoming involved with traditionally independent news media. What is important, however, is that newspapers continue to experiment with new ideas and business models so they can adapt and even thrive in the Internet age. (For more on the challenges facing journalism, see Chapter 13.)

POLITICO quickly became a reputable place for Washington insiders as well as the general population to go for political news and reporting, allowing the organization to thrive at a time when other papers were struggling. As Editor-in-Chief John Harris states on the site, Politico aims to be more than just a place for politics; it also "hope[s] to add to the conversation about what's next for journalism." What do you think its success means for the future of the news media?

Alternative Voices

The combination of the online news surge and traditional newsroom cutbacks has led to a new phenomenon known as **citizen journalism**, or *citizen media*, or *community journalism* (in those projects where the participants might not be citizens). As a grassroots movement, citizen journalism refers to people—activist amateurs and concerned citizens, not professional journalists—who use the Internet and blogs to disseminate news and information. In fact, with steep declines in newsroom staffs, many professional news media organizations—like CNN's iReport and many regional newspapers—are increasingly trying to corral citizen journalists as an inexpensive way to make up for journalists lost to newsroom "downsizing."

MEDIA MOBILIZING PROJECT (mediamobilizing.org) is a community-based organization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that helps nonprofit and grassroots organizations create and distribute news pieces about their causes and stories. Such organizations are key to getting out messages that matter deeply to communities but that the mainstream media often ignore.

A 2008 study by J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism reported that more than one thousand community-based Web sites were in operation, posting citizen stories about local government, police, and city development. This represented twice the number of community sites from a year earlier. J-Lab also operates the Knight Citizen News Network, "a Web site that advises citizens and traditional journalists on how to launch and operate community news and information sites."[44] In 2009, academics examined "60 of the most highly regarded citizen sites identified by nationally known experts in new media." While the study found that "a number of these sites individually revealed some impressive work," the funding and "resources to provide these services at the same level of full news operations, day-in and day-out, do not exist, at least as of now." The report also found "fairly limited levels of new content," many sites that were not very transparent about funding and daily operations, and policies "no more likely to encourage citizen postings" than traditional commercial news media sites.[45] While many of these sites do not yet have the resources to provide the kind of regional news coverage that local newspapers once provided, there is still a lot hope for community journalism moving forward. These sites provide an outlet for people to voice their stories and opinions, and new sites are emerging daily.

"It may not be essential to save or promote any particular news medium, including printed newspapers. What is paramount is preserving independent, original, credible reporting, whether or not it is popular or profitable, and regardless of the medium in which it appears."

LEONARD DOWNIE AND MICHAEL SCHUDSON

Newspapers and Democracy

Of all mass media, newspapers have played the longest and strongest role in sustaining democracy. Over the years, newspapers have fought heroic battles in places that had little tolerance for differing points of view. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), from 1992 through June 2010, 815 reporters from around the world were killed while doing their jobs. Of those, 72 percent were murdered, 18 percent were killed in combat assignments and war reporting, and 10 percent were killed while performing "dangerous assignments."[46] By fall 2010, 37 reporters had died, including 6 in Pakistan and 3 in Honduras. Many deaths in the 2000s reported by the CPJ came from the war in Iraq. From 2003 to fall 2010, 144 reporters had died in Iraq, along with 54 media workers and support staff. For comparison, 63 reporters were killed while covering the Vietnam War; 17 died covering the Korean War; and 69 were killed during World War II.[47] Our nation is dependent on journalists who are willing to do this very dangerous reporting in order to keep us informed about what is going on around the world.

In addition to the physical danger, newsroom cutbacks, and the closing of foreign bureaus, a number of smaller concerns remain as we consider the future of newspapers. For instance, some charge that newspapers have become so formulaic in their design and reporting styles that they may actually discourage new approaches to telling stories and reporting news. Another criticism is that in many one-newspaper cities, only issues and events of interest to middle- and upper-middle-class readers are covered, resulting in the underreporting of the experiences and events that affect poorer and working-class citizens. In addition, given the rise of newspaper chains, the likelihood of including new opinions, ideas, and information in mainstream daily papers may be diminishing. Moreover, chain ownership tends to discourage watchdog journalism and the crusading traditions of newspapers. Like other business managers, many news executives have preferred not to offend investors or outrage potential advertisers by running too many investigative reports—especially business probes. This may be most evident in the fact that reporters have generally not reported adequately on the business and ownership arrangements in their own industry.

Finally, as print journalism shifts to digital culture, the greatest challenge is the upheaval of print journalism's business model. Most economists say that newspapers need new business models, but some observers think that local papers, ones that are not part of big overleveraged chains, will survive on the basis of local ads and coupons or "big sale" inserts. Increasingly, independent online firms will help bolster national reporting through special projects. In 2009, the news Web site Huffington Post hired a team of reporters to cover the economy. Also that year, the Associated Press wire service initiated an experiment to distribute investigative reports from several nonprofit groups—including the Center for Public Integrity, the Center for Investigative Reporting, and ProPublica—to its fifteen hundred members as a news source for struggling papers that have cut back on staff. But in the end, there will be no returning to any golden age of newspapers; the Internet is transforming journalism and relocating where we get our news.

As print journalism loses readers and advertisers to digital culture, what will become of newspapers, which do most of the nation's primary journalistic work? John Carroll presided over thirteen Pulitzer Prize–winning reports at the *Los Angeles Times* as editor from 2000 to 2005, but he left the paper to protest deep corporate cuts to the newsroom. He has lamented the future of newspapers and their unique role: "Newspapers are doing the reporting in this country. Google and Yahoo! and those people aren't putting reporters on the street in any numbers at all. Blogs can't afford it. Network television is taking reporters off the street. Commercial radio is almost nonexistent. And newspapers are the last ones standing, and newspapers are threatened. And reporting is absolutely an essential thing for democratic self-government. Who's going to do it? Who's going to pay for the news? If newspapers fall by the wayside, what will we know?"[48]

"The primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing."

BILL KOVACH AND TOM ROSENSTIEL, *THE ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM*, 2007

CHAPTER REVIEW

COMMON THREADS

One of the Common Threads discussed in Chapter 1 is about the role that media play in a democracy. The newspaper industry has always played a strong role in our democracy by reporting news and investigating stories. Even in the Internet age, newspapers remain our primary source for content. How will the industry's current financial struggles affect our ability to demand and access reliable news?

With the coming of radio and television, newspapers in the twentieth century surrendered their title as the mass medium shared by the largest audience. However, to this day newspapers remain the single most important source of news for the nation, even in the age of the Internet. Although many readers today cite Yahoo! and Google as the primary places they search for news, Yahoo! and Google are only directories that guide readers to other news stories—most often to online newspaper sites. This means that newspaper organizations are still the primary institutions doing the work of gathering and reporting the news. Even with all the newsroom cutbacks across the United States, newspapers remain the only journalistic organization in most towns and cities that still employs a significant staff to report news and tell the community's stories.

Newspapers link people to what matters in their communities, their nation, and their world. No other journalistic institution serves society as well. But with smaller news resources and the industry no longer able to sustain high profit margins, what will become of newspapers? Who will gather the information needed to sustain a democracy, to serve as the watchdog over our key institutions, to document the comings and goings of everyday life? And, perhaps more important, who will act on behalf of the people who don't have the news media's access to authorities or the ability to influence them?

KEY TERMS

The definitions for the terms listed below can be found in the glossary at the end of the book. The page numbers listed with the terms indicate where the term is highlighted in the chapter.

partisan press, 223
penny papers, 224
human-interest stories, 224
wire services, 225
yellow journalism, 225
investigative journalism, 226
objective journalism, 229
inverted-pyramid style, 229
interpretive journalism, 230
literary journalism, 231
consensus-oriented journalism, 234
conflict-oriented journalism, 234
underground press, 238
newshole, 239
feature syndicates, 241
newspaper chain, 242
joint operating agreement (JOA), 243
paywall, 247
citizen journalism, 249

For review quizzes, chapter summaries, links to media-related Web sites, and more, go to bedfordstmartins.com/mediaculture.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

The Evolution of American Newspapers

1. What are the limitations of a press that serves only partisan interests? Why did the earliest papers appeal mainly to more privileged readers?
2. How did newspapers emerge as a mass medium during the penny press era? How did content changes make this happen?
3. What are the two main features of yellow journalism? How have Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst contributed to newspaper history?

Competing Models of Modern Print Journalism

4. Why did objective journalism develop? What are its characteristics? What are its strengths and limitations?
5. Why did interpretive forms of journalism develop in the modern era? What are the limits of objectivity?
6. How would you define *literary journalism*? Why did it emerge in such an intense way in the 1960s? How did literary journalism provide a critique of so-called objective news?

The Business and Ownership of Newspapers

7. What is the difference between consensus- and conflict-oriented newspapers?
8. What role have ethnic, minority, and oppositional newspapers played in the United States?
9. Define *wire service* and *syndication*.
10. Why did newspaper chains become an economic trend in the twentieth century?
11. What is the impact of a joint operating agreement (JOA) on the business and editorial divisions of competing newspapers?

Challenges Facing Newspapers Today

12. What are the major reasons for the decline in U.S. newspaper circulation figures? How do these figures compare with circulations in other nations?
13. What major challenges does new technology pose to the newspaper industry?
14. With traditional ownership in jeopardy today, what are some other possible business models for running a newspaper?
15. What is the current state of citizen journalism?
16. What are the challenges that new online news sites face?

Newspapers and Democracy

17. What is a newspaper's role in a democracy?
18. What makes newspaper journalism different from the journalism of other mass media?

QUESTIONING THE MEDIA

1. What kinds of stories, topics, or issues are not being covered well by mainstream papers?
2. Why do you think people aren't reading U.S. daily newspapers as frequently as they once did? Why is newspaper readership going up in other countries?
3. Discuss whether newspaper chains are ultimately good or bad for the future of journalism.
4. Do newspapers today play a vigorous role as watchdogs of our powerful institutions? Why or why not? What impact will the "downsizing" and closing of newspapers have on this watchdog role?
5. Will blogs and other Internet news services eventually replace newspapers? Explain your response.