

Newspapers Are Dying

Newspapers are dying and it's their own fault. The fundamental reason is that they are not meeting the needs of their readership? To wit:

- 1) The quality of newsprint sucks. Magazines do a better job.
- 2) Newspapers are not specific enough to fulfill the needs of a niche market. Once again, blame the magazines, which when you get right down to it are probably equivalent in power, prestige, and market infiltration as their mid-century newspaper counterparts, so maybe we really shouldn't be talking so much about the decline of newspapers as the rise of magazines.
- 3) Newspapers cost too much. A Sunday paper costs as much as many magazines do (via subscription on an issue for issue basis), while the big killer--websites--are free.
- 4) Newspaper's customer service sucks. Try getting a Sunday only subscription. Or better yet, try getting something instead of the sports page. Truthfully, I don't even want the stupid thing delivered.
- 5) The Internet is faster, more comprehensive, and much more up to date. In fact, I can get most of the lead stories from most every newspaper across the nation for free online, so I don't actually know why anyone would pay money to subscribe at this point (unless they read the paper on the train or something like that).

It may look grim, but there is hope for newspapers, just look to the complaints to find the cure.

- 1) Use better quality paper and increase the resolution of the pictures. Believe it or not, I'm not going to read the sports page, so you can spend the money you would have used printing that providing me with a glossed over comics page. Or let's just cut the chase and give me one nice hi-quality super-glossy of a bikini clad

babe everyday. It may not be art, but I might actually pay for that. Sex sells.

2) Give me the choice of 100 different topics to compile my custom paper from. Believe it or not, I'll probably only pick ten of them anyhow. Let's see... Give me a newspaper with comics, a girly pictorial (call it fashion if you will), information on cool websites, computer games, things to do in my part of the woods, special events, and... Well, if I was given a list of 100 choices, I might pick a few more. How about a surfing update, restaurant reviews, and info on the volcano. I live next to an erupting volcano, so excuse me if I'm a bit preoccupied. So that's what, nine items, I guess, if you must, you could also include a short section on what is typically referred to as the news. Oh, and just so we're all clear, I like advertising. What would a restaurant section be like without advertising and special offers?

3) Websites run off of advertising, I don't see why newspapers can't. I mean load that sucker down with adds and coupons. My favorite edition has always been the Sunday paper, and the thing I like best about it is all the coupons and ads. The ad inserts are what I read first.

4) Publishers need to realize that a newspaper is never going to compete with the Internet when it comes to speed, so they need to compete where the Internet fails. Reduce the daily to a weekly. Give me seven crosswords at once alternating with ads. Give me seven Suduko's, a whole ream of comics, and so many ads it will take a week to read them all, and then drop that sucker off in front of my house for free. Market penetration drives ad revenue, and you really want to know why I don't have a newspaper subscription--I don't want to pay for it.

5) Once again, the Internet IS going to kill the daily, so accept it, but even at 50 cents or \$1.50 on Sundays, there is no way the purchase price is paying for the content. If a newspaper can be cost effective because it is mostly ads, then take a moment to consider that the biggest ad driven machine in the world is the Internet. It sort of seems like a logical place for newspapers to

expand into. Don't ask me why newspapers can't seem to parlay their existing market dominance into an online presence. Maybe it has something to do with the fact they are trying to charge for admission, control the flow of traffic, and play the game by the old rules. Myspace went from 0 to 60 billion in 3.5 months, why can't The New York Times do the same thing? Because they are still trying to run the show and dictate the flow *{or so I presume, I know nothing about the Times}*. Guess what? I like my op-ed better than your op-ed if for no other reason than my op-ed is mine. Once The Times, or The Post, or The Tribune, or whatever figures that out, they'll regain their market share. Until then, I'll be looking for alternative sources of information that are:

1) Free!

2) Modular!

3) And easy to Surf. It's hard to believe, but I use Google to search on Wiki. It's stupid. Rather than staying on Wikipedia, I find it easier to search Subject + Wiki from Google, than going on Wiki and simply searching the Subject (whatever Subject might be). Get a clue. Without a smooth search engine your site is good for one stop and nothing more. I haven't got time to try endless combinations of search words on your stupid site when there's a whole Internet out there just dying, literally dying to give the same content for free.

So got it?

Free.

Modular.

And, easy.

It's the mantra of the future.

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got some "porn" to download.

{Um, yeah. That last was a joke. Had to look the word up to even know what it meant...}

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