

## Technological Advancement in the Written Press and New Reading Patterns: A Press Survival Perspective in Mauritius

Nirmal Kumar Betchoo\*

New University in Mauritius, Mauritius

### Abstract

Today's printing media evidences fundamental changes that are taking place particularly in terms of the type of publication and certain new forms of development affecting the printed news business. Gone are the days when people spent long hours reading broadsheets and grasped all the main information provided therein. Today's written media has changed dramatically and this has been more pronounced with the introduction of desktop publishing and the virtual media. Presently, all major newspapers have their websites and these are continuously being modified to offer better reading comfort to readers. Alongside, there is also the possibility for readers to interact directly with the journalists and provide constant feedback to them. Newspapers have also changed their format and presentation. At the present time, traditional newspapers are getting smaller in format, downsizing from the broadsheet format to the Berliner or tabloid format. With more flexibility to improve presentation and navigation over the pages and sections, newspapers are better aimed at providing general and specific-related themes. This research paper analyses the development of the press in this new millennium and tends to relate both the written and the virtual media as a means of consolidating readership when it is globally known that the readership of the written press has dwindled. It aims at finding out how newspapers survive in today's world, how they are dependent on new forms of technology and how they will have to review their strategies to keep themselves in business. It concludes by showing what strategies newspapers will need to retain readership which has become more uncertain with more demanding readers.

**Keywords:** Newspapers; Technology; Readership

### Introduction

In order to meet the needs of its readers, the written press has constantly gone through changes particularly in technology to better attain its audience. Newspaper reading has always been a passionate activity for Mauritians because it has been the single most affordable and predominant media in the past. Prior to the introduction of radio and television in Mauritius, cinema and newspapers remained the most popular media in the traditional society. Newspapers were nationally distributed either manually or via transport systems in the past and they have always targeted their readerships both in urban and rural areas.

In today's context of technological revolution and digital breakthrough, many media skeptics have voiced that the days of newspapers are counted and they will be replaced by new media forms about to better address the needs of a more sophisticated and demanding readership. In parallel, the reading culture has sensibly weakened over the years and this is the result of a generation gap whereby this generation is more technologically-savvy and less inclined to traditional forms of reading and learning.

In a very similar way to cinema which was the initial mass communication media, the written press has also suffered from the invasion of new media like radio and television and further suffered from the developments of such media which have been constantly marked by innovation and change. Being a traditional form of communication media, newspapers are lesser read nowadays as this is attributable to factors like generation gap, more hassle and time consuming work life, and the pervasive influence of new forms of media like social networking.

Newspapers are now obliged to consider how to compete or accommodate new media forms which are easier to access by this

generation of readers. Several titles have disappeared and some are struggling to keep their heads above water but this is a daunting experience for them since the competitive pressure of new media technologies remains persistent on newspapers.

Incidentally, readership has declined progressively but this does not necessarily mean that the written press has attained its dead end. Rather, it has survived through the years of media revolution and consistently carved its place among the different media. The challenge is that the newspaper industry has to be strategically-focused in order to survive and stay in business in the years to come.

### Aims of This Paper

This paper analyses the following issues.

- (i) It assesses the reasons behind the decline in readership of the traditional media (written press) in the contemporary context.
- (ii) It aims at finding out earlier strategies adapted by the written press that ensured their survival in a near past.
- (iii) It aims at finding out new strategic approaches that the written press can adapt to survive through the constant changes affecting newspaper business and how these align with new reading patterns of the readers.

\*Corresponding author: Nirmal Kumar Betchoo, New University in Mauritius, Mauritius, E-mail: [betchoonirmal@yahoo.com](mailto:betchoonirmal@yahoo.com)

Received August 29, 2013; Accepted October 08, 2013; Published October 16, 2013

**Citation:** Betchoo NK (2013) Technological Advancement in the Written Press and New Reading Patterns: A Press Survival Perspective in Mauritius. J Mass Communicat Journalism 3: 162. doi:10.4172/2165-7912.1000162

**Copyright:** © 2013 Betchoo NK. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

## Literature Review

### Broad trends in the global news environment

The Economist states that the advent of television news, and then cable television, lured readers and advertisers away. Then the Internet appeared in the 1990s. A new generation of readers grew up getting their news from television and the web, now the two leading sources in America.

The trend broadly explains that newspapers are being less read across the world while they are being superseded by other media. In reality, it is the western world that is more at stake compared with the developing world.

The table below explains how paid-for daily newspapers have evolved over the past years (Table 1).

Kilman [1] outlines that the United States is the worst case one sees worldwide. There is a lot of media news coming out of the US and readership has been exceedingly negative.

In Western Europe, newspapers have to manage long-term decline rather than short-term pain. Germany experienced a 10% drop in revenue within the worst recession of generation. However, Nielsen states that the German industry has strong brands, large and loyal audiences and editorial resources to manage the transition. Many European papers are family-owned which helps to protect them in difficult times.

The Japanese newspaper market is well served because 94% of newspapers are sold by subscription. However, younger Japanese show less enthusiasm for newsprint.

In India, there is no sign of news crisis. It is actually the world's fastest growing newspaper market. There are some 2700 daily newspapers now following a rise of 44% between 2005 and 2009. Nielsen India stated that newspaper and magazine advertising increased by 32% in a single year [2].

In India, there is scope for growth in print media for years to come. Kilman comments that Indian publishers are complaining that newspaper companies are too focused on digital and not enough on print. Levy [3] opposes the view by commenting that today's growing interest in news in fast-growing India will prove to be a short-term phenomenon which will be undermined by the spread of the Internet access.

### The influence of digital technology

Fitzgerald and Saba [4] express the change of the newspaper industry with regards to an unprecedented crisis that combines cyclical turbulence with the diffusion of digital technology that steals away revenue and readers at an alarming and seemingly accelerating rate, publishers and editors everywhere have thrown away their rule books and, to find their way in this new and alien environment, are ready to implement previously unthinkable changes.

Africa	30
Asia	13
Europe	-8
North America	-11
Oceania	-6
South America	5
World	6

**Table 1:** Readership progress or decline Source: OECD (2010).

Of all the "old" media, newspapers have the most to lose from the internet. Circulation has been falling in America, Western Europe, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand for decades. But in the past few years the web has hastened the decline. In his book "The Vanishing Newspaper", Philip Meyer calculates that the first quarter of 2043 will be the moment when newsprint dies in America as the last exhausted reader tosses aside the last crumpled edition.

Latency has become a massive issue in the delivery of all media, particularly news. We live in a time where on-demand is the norm and products that fall outside that are looking increasingly obscure and irrelevant [5]. As time goes on the period of latency that is acceptable and qualifies information as being "news" is decreasing. 24 hours used to be fine, it was an acceptable latency. Now only minutes and seconds will do.

The latency involved with publishing a hardcopy newspaper makes it completely irrelevant to a contemporary audience, who demand accuracy and the very latest, most accurate information.

### Tablet support changing reading habits

The digital news consumption habits are changing, with media groups seeing higher levels of engagement through tablet applications rather than on a website through a PC [6]. Not only are tablet readers leaving more comments and clicking on more ads, they're also spending more time on the page. And keeping the reader's eyes on the page means more ad revenue for publishers.

Apple's success on the competitive software marketed resulted from the success of new media supports initiated by Steve Jobs. With the launching of the Ipad tablet, newspapers could consider it as another opportunity for survival with the flexibility of presenting the news digitally.

### Newspapers failure to innovate

Cantrell [7] appreciated that the conventional wisdom is that the internet killed newspapers, but considers it too simple of an explanation. He stated that newspapers killed themselves, and the internet was simply the best and most convenient alternative. The Internet was the catalyst that started a process that had been queued up and ready to happen for a very long time.

The newspaper industry went wrong by failing to innovate. Rather than constantly trying to outdo themselves, newspapers waited for something to come along and outdo them. Up until a few years ago, the only significant change that was ever made to newspapers was the transition from black and white photographs to colour. Over the course of decades, such a transition looks pathetic.

Newspapers failed to look at the online opportunity as a second entertainment medium [8] a second way to command the attention from people—both from the print audience that they were currently reaching and from the audience who, for whatever reason, were not engaged in the print product. Newspapers have failed to realize that they had to compete with Huffington Post, YouTube, and basically anything else that can soak up one's leisure time or the time in-between when one's boss walks past one's desk.

The disastrous error that newspapers made early in our digital lives was treating online advertising as a throw-in for their print advertisers. Helping businesses connect with customers was the business of newspapers. While, newspapers were facing new technology and new opportunities they did not do anything to explore how they might use this new technology to help businesses connect with customers.

Kruse [9] explained that online newspapers have failed to produce a different experience online. The end result, because of a few programs installed on Web sites, is that the experience is different—it offers much more chance for engagement than the print version. From the ability to comment and react to the ability to share instantly with anyone in the world, the online versions offer a fairly rich experience for content that is not written for reaction. These are opportunities squandered.

## Empirical Review—Early Strategies for Press Survival

### The move from linotype to offset

Linotype was adopted by the press since the 1960s while earlier the press used monotype, a system that worked with operators that used metal characters to compose an article. Linotype was mechanical and allowed papers to be prepared more quickly. *L'Express* newspaper moved from four to eight pages in 1973.

The Offset was the major press development strategy in Mauritius. In 1978, *Le Mauricien* introduced offset printing and produced eight-page daily editions. Offset system combined the use of electronic phototypesetting, the projection of characters on film and printing on rubber which produced higher significant quality of printing. The Offset, on its own, revived press readership since the major papers, *Le Mauricien*, *Le Cernéen* and *L'Express* substantially increased their daily readership the time when they were presented in Offset print.

### The broadening of content

Following the implementation of offset printing, contents of newspapers broadened with better coverage of local and international news. Pictures could be included more easily without the need to use clichés repeatedly. Sports, which always cater to an important readership base, were prioritised and sections covering issues like popular culture got instant acclaim from readers. *L'Express* moved from eight to twelve pages and included a two-page classified section daily. Similarly, traditional papers that did not adopt Offset printing went out of business.

### The inclusion of supplements

Newspapers included supplements, usually in tabloid format, on an occasional basis as from the 1980s. Supplements covered specialist areas like sports, culture and entertainment. Certain local companies offered advertising inserts to newspapers. There were also advertorials—a new form of public relations strategy that the written press developed.

### The use of colour and desk-top technology

Two-colour printing could be afforded by *Le Mauricien* since it moved to offset printing in 1978. Occasionally, it tried three colours in order to maintain its dominance regarding publishing in Offset.

Colour printing known as Quadrichromie was introduced on special occasions by the end of 1978 while *Week-End Sports Magazine*, a publication of *Le Mauricien*, and officially proposed colour editions as from 1980. Full colour pages, usually one or two, were offered in the central pages of week-End at the beginning of the eighties.

### Enter 5-Plus and the magazine format

T-Printers, owned by Georges Chung Tick Kan, attempted to exploit a new form of publishing by proposing a magazine format using desktop technology, a production process using entirely personal computers to prepare both text and pages. Professional Computer Software like *Quark Xpress* or *Pagemaker* was used. The new printing machinery enabled readers to have access to a weekly magazine, *5-Plus*. *Week-End Scope*, another weekly magazine, was launched at the same time period and stays as the longest serving weekly leisure newspaper.

These publications have used glossies for their cover. Ultimately, *5-Plus magazine* was converted to the popular *5-Plus dimanche*, actually in a tabloid format.

Other publications adopted both the magazine format and full-colour use like horse-racing papers, namely. It is noted that earlier attempts to publish magazines existed but did not succeed among the readers.

## Reinventing newspapers in the new millennium

The development of the Internet and, eventually its breakthrough meant that Mauritius could not be spared new forms of digital media. Traditional newspapers were obliged to follow suit at the international level whereby they adopted electronic versions of their papers. Although timidly approved by the readers, e-papers and online versions are now widely read by Internet users.

### Changes in format

To be able to cope with threats both from a decline in readership and digital media, traditional newspapers changed their formats.

Broadsheets were reduced in size to make them become more practical to read. Newspapers that had earlier 10 columns were sized back to 8 columns. The dimension of the papers was reduced by 30% allowing newspapers to increase their page content. Nowadays, broadsheets have on average 20 pages.

### The Berliner format and “reader-friendly approach”

*Le Mauricien* has adopted the Berliner format since February 2010 with a view to redefining its strategy for survival. This format is popular in Europe but is gaining better acceptance in many parts of the world because of its ability to condense information over the pages, valuing the quality of information per section, and more specially, the ability to have separate sections in the same paper.

The Berliner format proposed by *Le Mauricien* aimed at making readership become “reader-friendly” and has apparently appealed to its readers. *L'Express* maintained the broadsheet format in reduced size but preferred offering supplements in the form of cahier like “*L'Express et Moi*”, “*ID*”, “etc. This paper’s objective was to reinvent its newspaper by offering added-value services to its readers.

## Strategies for Press Survival in the Future

### Aligning technological advancement in the written press and new reading patterns

The written press in Mauritius has so far benefited from technological advancements and aligned newspapers with standards comparable to international publications. Although there might still be certain reservation regarding content and visual presentation, desktop publishing has been instrumental to improving the quality of local newspapers. In addition, papers offering magazine-format editions are capable of rivaling with the best publications in the world regarding both content and presentation.

### An overview of new reading patterns in Mauritius

The argument regarding the future of press readers depends upon the readership pattern. It is argued that traditional readers of the newspaper are declining over the years. This is mainly caused by the generation change that has taken place over the past thirty years since the introduction of offset. The past generation represented early baby boomers while the present generation represents sizeable readership mainly from Generations X and Y who have followed sequentially the thriving baby boomer generation.

Generations X and Y are those who have witnessed the development and gradual integration of information technology triggered by the diffusion of the Internet in society. These people have become more oriented to using information technology and widely disregard reading the hard copy newspaper. The rise of instant communication technologies made possible through use of the internet, such as -mail or texting through websites like and social networking sites like Facebook, Myspace or Twitter may explain Millennial's reputation to be peer-oriented due to easier facilitation of communication through technology.

Consequently, they will represent those who will form the readership base in the long-term. Obviously, they will be more in tune with modern technology and display the following characteristics regarding their access to news.

Firstly, they will want to have news in the shortest time delay and would want to be the first to react to breaking news.

Secondly, the new generation will have less time to spare reading papers and try to read material that is of direct relevance to it.

Next, the new generation has developed the ability to comment articles once they are published electronically and try to bring their own input to them

Further, the new generation may have the potential of creating news and footage that could be used by journalists to make information.

### **The expected reaction of the written media**

Newspapers will not remain in their existing format. In rich nations, the days of the newspaper are counted. Experts voice that it could be 2050 as an anticipated deadline date. In the case of developing countries, Africa experienced a growth of 30% while India expects further progress in its readership patterns.

The trend in Mauritius is less predictive since the country ranks as a mid-income country with a Gross Domestic product per capita of \$12,000 making it a "rather" sophisticated economy. With the penetration of digital technology-1, 1000, 000 mobile phones and 128 000 subscribers to the Internet-there is apparent threat regarding the consumption of traditional media.

Daily newspaper readership is around 15, 0001 readers on average while readership during weekends can reach 85,000 for certain papers -an average of thrice as many readers on average during the weekdays. The popularity of week-end readership is allocated to the following factors:

-A general trend and habit of reading a weekly newspaper to get lots of information.

-The value-for-money content of weeklies which are usually around 80 pages in tabloid format and cost the same price as dailies which are leaner in content.

-The time available to read a weekly because weekends offer more reading and leisure time to readers.

### **Magazine-style format**

Following a reduction in size, newspapers could adopt the magazine format. Actually, some newspapers have separate sections covering specialized areas like general news, world news, sports, etc. They are offering "cahiers" known as special sections featuring news and events from a particular area. This format allows readers to get more attracted to the news that they wish to read while they are also offered full coverage of the rubrics that they want to have.

The magazine-style format has been a useful approach since it has given wider opportunities to new segments of readers to have their special feature. L'Express supplement *Weekly* attracts readers who want to have their news in English, Week-End special section *Sunlights* and *Sports* allow readers to gain exclusive coverage of entertainment and sports.

### **Interactive blogs and "Crowdsourcing"**

The blog concept has been a useful technique of driving modern readers to read and interact with journalists. This has become a very fruitful exercise and improved the quality of press reporting on the part of journalists. Comments, leaders and various types of blogs now receive comments from readers.

Rusbridger [10] relates this aspect to the "mutualisation" of news. According to him if journalists are open to contributions of readers, they generally end up with richer, better, more diverse and expert content [2]. Involving many readers through "Crowdsourcing" also lets news outlets do things that would otherwise be impractical, such as searching extensively and finding it difficult to look for interesting material.

### **Sequential Stories with video support**

Newspapers tend to provide continuous reporting of events, usually based from the last development that took place. New readers have complained of knowing less about certain events while they usually state like feeling lost in the event narration. The press may address the needs of such readers by using sequential story format. This allows part of an event to be continuously reviewed so that the story line is not lost.

Video support has become important as partly contributing to the development of events. Such support offers the advantage of comment and better retention of a particular event with the added facility of making the event livelier. The case of the Medpoint Saga [11] in Mauritius has been an enticing issue on an alleged corrupt practice. Due to the length of the event and unending outcomes on an occasional basis, the event source tends to be lost by readers while it would have been better to synthesize reader's understanding through sequential story-telling and video support. The same should have been applied to the Financial Crisis 2008 which was, at origin, the insolvency regarding back payment of household mortgage in America.

The need to define terms. In the same line as relating sequential events to draw reader's attention and sustain their interest, it is of utmost importance to define terms. Readers having intellectual ability can gauge most terms while ordinary readers will find them difficult and merely overlook them. Terms like "mortgage", "collateral", "hose bubble" could not be easily understood by a large number of readers due to the term complexity.

### **Internet integration**

The most practical strategy that this paper adopts concerns integrating Internet with the traditional paper in Mauritius. There are actually 258000 Internet users in the country (Ministry of Telecommunications) while the number of local newspaper readers is on the rise. Although there are not exact figures regarding the number of readers, *Le Mauricien* received 7,000 daily clicks since it had its online version at the start of the millennium. Prospects are that this figure has increased three-fold with Internet penetration in households but, more particularly, at the workplace. Newspapers have moved from the traditional and simplistic webpage that they proposed earlier to international level WebPages with much improvement afforded by the

input of professionals from companies like Harel Mallac. Incidentally, content has been made more substantial with additions as follows:

Feedback from readers. Readers are now getting more active on reading articles. *L'Express* blogs and articles get more than ten responses per major article- even twice as high for headlines- and they contribute to the main article or debate issue proposed by the journalist. This attitude provides better interaction from readers who could earlier, very rarely, afford sending a "mise au point" to support their opinions.

This practice also forms part of "crowd sourcing" where journalists have the opportunity to better consider what they have been writing and how they could enrich their article content with more in-depth and objective ideas. Some feedback can also serve as a barometer for potential, surveys that could be valid at the national level.

### PDF versions and tablets

The Printable Document Format (PDF) has been introduced in compatibility with the Internet a few years after its development. Today, many newspapers offer their first page in the PDF version allowing readers to read the paper exactly as they would hold the hard copy in their hands.

The PDF version has also been a new possibility of developing online subscription for readers. *L'Express* e-paper is now available online subject to subscription while *Le Matinal* and *Le Mauricien* currently offer their PDF version freely. Since the e-paper remains a replica to the paid for newspaper copy, it will remain impossible for existing newspapers to offer such content freely. However in the Internet context business models often have to be rethought as charging for bundles of news content such as paying for a full physical newspaper is often not a functioning online business practice (OECD, 2010). Newspapers anticipate offering the PDF version with reader-friendly approaches like magnifiers to facilitate reading, tags to make readers assess the main issues of articles.

In addition to such a novelty, newspapers in hardcopy version are already providing full access to their readers regarding the PDF version and a collection of past issues. Readers may also benefit from video streaming regarding interviews and specialized commentary both from bloggers and interviewees. UK newspapers like *Financial Times* or *The Economist* have erected pay walls for premium-content. Readers can read general articles but matters of premium content pertaining to economy, education and offering the potential of downloading such information are now subject to payment through electronic systems- Visa, Paypal or Mastercard.

Tablets on mobile phones. Tablets have become today's fad with most of the newsworthy media available online. Using Ipad system, mobiles with larger screens offer the possibility of viewing press content online with PDF-style pages while are access by simple screen touch. The tablet has provided opportunities for readers to have access to the latest novels including full access to certain television news channels like *France 24* or *BBC World*.

The penetration of tablets is a matter of choice, firstly resulting from the increase in tablet users and secondly, depending upon the prowess of newspaper groups. Tablets offer the best possibility of reading the news without the constant need to have laptops or plugging to electrical devices. Although, not much is said of the diffusion of tablet media in Mauritius, this will evidently become a reality in the coming years through better access of "haut débit" Internet.

Doctor [12] however advocates that there is the question of how

well, how easily and how dynamically publishers can pull diverse content types (text, photo, graphics, video, and audio) from their content management systems and relate them appropriately. Then there is also the question of how much formatting will have to be done for each of the separate devices.

### Projections regarding the survival of the paper version

The survival of press media will depend mostly upon how newspapers will stand the test of competition. Business forecasts in advanced countries voice that the end of the paper version will be in twenty years' time while skeptics voice that it can go up to 2050 and even beyond that. Mauritius is more likely to retain its papers in the future because the country has a long tradition of reading; the first paper being circulated in 1773 and titles have risen over the past decade from two main dailies to five major papers and numerous weeklies.

Certain projections would be possible within the actual situation. These variables depend upon independent variable -newspapers- and dependent variables like time, technology, readership base, advertisement, support from government, legislation, etc (Figure 1).

Newspapers will have to integrate the Internet with paywalls. Although, in the present case, newspapers allow all content to be free online, they will either have to reduce online content so as to favour the hardcopy version. Else, premium content information will be available subject to subscription. Many European papers already practice this.

Newspaper sales will be focused on weekends. Newspaper experts agree that daily sales may dwindle since the generation of older readers will subside with time. Daily readers will consult news online through websites more comfortably than buying the paper version. However, newspaper sales will be focused on weekends where readers have more time and opportunities for reading.

Newspapers will be useful on daily basis for new or sequential events. Dailies will not die a slow death as expected. Their sales will remain low but they will be useful in providing fresh news, exclusivities and stop press information. These will have to be supported through objective comment and point of view. Newspapers will have to ensure the timeliness of daily news like "breaking news" given on the website and the full story in the paper version.

Newspaper sales will depend upon subscriptions including a package service. Subscriptions can ensure the survival of papers. China Daily Times depends exclusively on subscription. Newspapers will have to offer attractive packages to ensure that readers get full value for money. These include hardcopy subscription and full access to archives including special supplements.

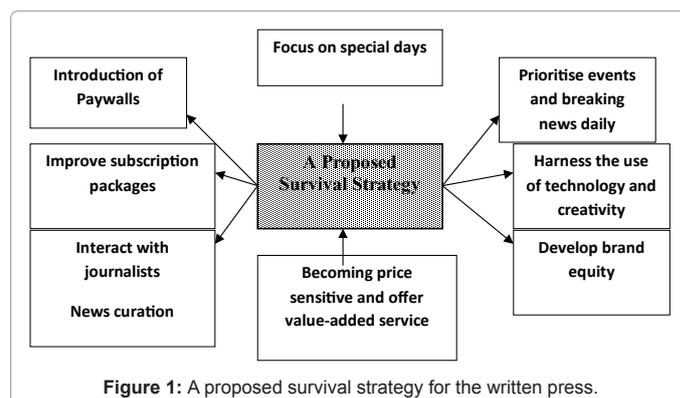


Figure 1: A proposed survival strategy for the written press.

Newspapers will have to harness technological use and use creativity. Although most papers are already making good use of desktop publishing and high resolution technology, there remains no upper limit to creativity in design and presentation. The Mauritian broadsheet will gradually disappear and reduced formats – Berliner or tabloid – will be more practical but will have to be made more content wise and visually attractive to readers. Newspapers in India add glossy pages.

News are actually being well integrated with video streamed interviews and footage. There should be better development in this area by using high definition video and translating such value-added service on tablet format.

There should be better interaction between independent bloggers and professional journalists. Mauritian readers will be sensitised to reading the news provided that they get more interactive with journalists. Assange [13] in the New Statesman expresses news breakthrough as such: “We are, in a sense, a pure expression of what the media should be: an intelligence agency of the people, casting pearls before swine.” These allow for two-way traffic in managing communication but sensibly add to the improvement of the quality of news, abiding by ethical standards in news publication while ensuring cross verification or “news curation” for more accurate treatment of news and opinion. The rise of citizen journalism where citizens play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and distributing news and information is an important catalyst for more decentralised news [14].

Newspaper readers should be price sensitive. Readers will remain price sensitive. Today’s rises are 50% compared to smaller increases in terms of one rupee and cents in the past. High price increases deter readers from buying papers regularly but are, at times, inevitable. Newspapers will have to provide value-added package to entice readers to keep reading and remain loyal to reading them. Newspapers may borrow insightful news from independent bloggers.

Newspapers will have to integrate advertising revenue both online and in the hardcopy version. Online advertising has, by large, contributed to the decline of newspapers in the USA. Papers that have gone online like the *Huffington Post* owe their success to the advertising strategy that they have developed online which drew more potential customers to get the information that they desired from well-organized classified advertisements. Readers found it easier to locate sources and come into contact with the prospective dealers. Local newspapers are already incorporating such technique but will have to be more proactive with the Internet to provide tailor-made advertising for immediate customer needs. Advertisements will be payable both per click and per service provided to the reader.

A rather new trend for newspapers is also to own other Internet-related businesses and to leverage their customer base to sell these other services to them (e.g. online classifieds for apartment rentals and sales, online dating services, online sale of air tickets and other travel services) or to lead them to other content services which are financed yet again over online advertising [14].

Newspaper branding will be significant in the future using technological tools. Mauritian newspapers will have to use marketing strategies and tools. Brand equity will have an impact on customers. Newspapers will have to sponsor activities, create events and develop advertising tactics to create brand association and loyalty. Newspaper branding will be useful to support new media offers and titles that form part of the family brand.

## Conclusion

It is difficult to reach accurate forecasts of the newspaper in the future while it remains an undeniable fact that the press should better accept digital and technological tools both as a complementary support in the immediate. Newspaper experts in Mauritius have advocated a drop in sales of the paid-for-paper version resulting mainly from a change in reading patterns mostly affected by the generation transition. Mauritian newspapers are reinventing themselves by offering tailor-made products like supplements, special sections, advertising inserts, etc. At the same time, the quality of journalism is evolving with technology in the form of more in-depth articles supported by Internet users’ comments.

The days of the traditional paper are not counted locally since sales peak up during weekends and readers are willing to flip over the pages to have access to articles or sections that they want to read. The traditional paper has the advantage of being stored and retrieved more easily than other formats. Equally, the paper version encourages readers to spend more time going through the paper and use more advantageously information, advertisements and leisure components like games, horoscope, etc.

It is sure that the development of tablets like Ipad and related innovations will give new readers access to information in an easier way while making them benefit both from picture and video streaming. This aspect of the newspaper’s future has to be reasonably assessed since it depends how there will be the diffusion of digital technology in Mauritian households.

This paper stated that newspapers in Mauritius need to strengthen their brand image and develop new services through brand extension. Equally, it spoke on the integration of various media to ensure better sources of revenue. In a nutshell, the survival of the newspaper depends more than relying on copy sales. This traditional business will have to be supported by new forms of revenue generation through harnessing new technology. In this new decade, newspapers will have to think of reinventing themselves continuously as a longer-term survival strategy.

## Limitations/Delimitations of the Paper

This paper cannot position itself as a thorough review and evaluation of the written press in the future since the research aims at presenting ideas without going too much in depth regarding each aspect being treated. Further, it is a descriptive form of research which has little to do with experimentation or surveys.

The paper, however, ensures that the information provided in it is correct and has been referenced from different sources like books, publications, blogs and online libraries.

The paper deals with the future of the press in Mauritius in relation to how it will have to depend on information and digital technologies to ensure its survival. Despite this key consideration, the paper confirms that there is no accurate estimate concerning whether the paid for paper version will exist or not.

## Acknowledgment

To enable the researcher get suitable data regarding the press evolution in Mauritius, estimates of sales have been provided by Mr Debesh Beedasy at the time he was journalist at *le Matinal* newspaper. The researcher also thanks the National Library to have provided him with access to look at newspapers published in the past and to gain data that concerns the time when certain papers were published. The online edition of *The Economist* paper allowed the researcher to have suitable access to reference sources and consolidate information with respect to the topic area. All these support needs to be thanked in the most grateful way.

---

## References

1. Kilman L (2013) World Press Trends: Newspaper Audience Rise, Digital Revenues Yet to Follow, WAN-IFRA.
2. The Economist (2011) Back to the Coffee House, a 14-page special report on the future of news. Economist Group, UK.
3. Levy S (2011) Can an Algorithm Write a Better News Story Than a Human Reporter?
4. Fitzgerald M, Saba J (2008) Special Report-“Everything’s on table” quoted in Peggyholman Surfing the tidal wave”. Journalism that matters blog.
5. Williams DP (2010) Latency has already killed newspapers, DP Williams blog.
6. Stevens T (2011) Blackbook Playbook Review.
7. Cantrell C (2011) The Internet Didn’t Kill Newspapers; Newspapers Killed Newspaper, Living Digitally, Christian Cantrell’s personal blog.
8. Buttry S (2009) Newspapers’ Original Sin: Not failing to charge but failing to innovate, The Buttry Diary, Digital first media.
9. Kruse S (2009) What’s left in the Church Blogspot. The Collapse and decline of newspapers.
10. Rusbridger (2009) The mutualisation of news, The Guardian Newspaper, July 27.
11. A national issue on corruption in Mauritius in (2011) which originated from an unfair evaluation practice of a prospected geriatric clinic and summarily incriminated certain ministers.
12. Doctor K (2010) Nine Questions, On tablet dreams, Schemes and screens of Hope. Content Bridges.
13. Assange JP (2011) What’s new about WikiLeaks” New Statesman.
14. OECD (2010) The rise of citizen journalism. The economic and social role of internet intermediaries.