

The Demise of the Newspaper

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Historically, newspapers in the United States were owned by families. They were the family business, and as such, were passed on from generation to generation. Initially, cities and towns had one or two newspapers. Large cities had multiple newspapers. Eventually, most places had, at least, two editions (morning and evening) of the same newspaper. Newspapers served to refresh and enlighten those who were already educated. However, the same newspapers also served to teach those who were just learning to read.

As time moved on, many family papers became property of “paper chains” and eventually “mega media” conglomerates as big business became the new ownership model. To make matters worse, with the advent of digital “new media” much of the audience base for papers shifted to new ways of seeking and finding information. In essence, the young audience moved away leaving an older and decreasing audience. Consequently, some cities are down to only one newspaper, while other areas have none at all. Indeed, in some cases the last paper has folded.

Along these lines, the new book *Out of Print* by George Brock examines the history and development of newspapers. Brock looks into the past, present, and possible future of journalism--questioning how it is likely to develop.

The book examines the importance of experimentation to journalism. It also covers the challenges of digital technology and the internet. The increased competition from radio and 24 hour television news channels is examined. Other areas of review include news service via billboards, podcasts, and mobile. Blogs, citizen journalism and user generated content are also discussed.

In conclusion, Brock advocates the rebuilding of twenty first century journalism through the combination of old practices and new tools. Job well done!

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