

Newspapers are still the cornerstone of American democracy

By: Caroline H. Little

We've been calling it the end of an era for a long time now. It's supposed to be the end of newspapers, according to naysayers who have been predicting their ultimate demise for years. But the facts prove the newspaper industry is growing and transforming rather than dying. Of course, there are always bumps in the road to innovation, but as it turns out, we're actually in the midst of a promising and exciting time.

Top businessmen and investors such as Warren Buffet, John Henry and Jeff Bezos are demonstrating that newspapers are still lucrative investments. And despite gloomy predictions, our circulation revenue is actually rising.

We're experimenting and transforming to match the pace of our innovative and digitally-driven world. Digital and bundled subscriptions accounted for a five percent uptick in circulation revenue in 2012 – the first national rise in circulation revenue since 2003.

Newspaper content is now ubiquitous and accessed on every platform and device. Recent Scarborough research also shows that across all print, digital and mobile platforms, a full 70 percent of U.S. adults read newspaper content each week. That's more than 164 million adults – 144 million of whom, still pick up the print copy.

And despite the common perception that the younger, digitally-native generation has abandoned newspapers, this study shows quite the opposite. Some 57 percent of young adults, ranging in age from 18 to 34, read newspaper content in a given week. This is a strong indication that the industry is still a relevant and vital source of information, even to Millennials, who coincidentally also contribute heavily to the growth of mobile readership, which jumped 58 percent over the last year.

The reason for this is simple. With the deluge of information available on the Internet, people of all ages rely heavily on sources they trust to provide accurate content and quickly sift fact from fiction.

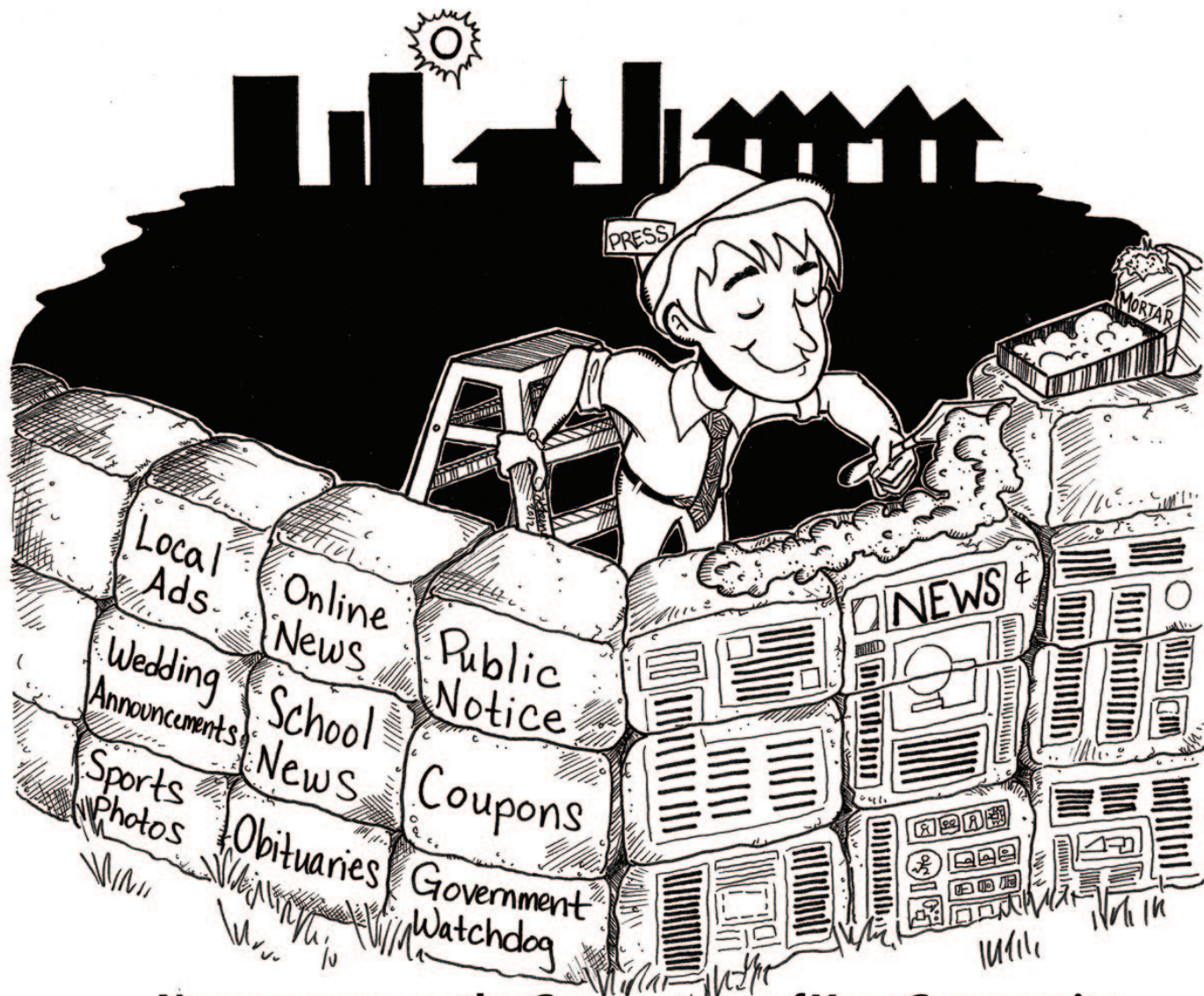
Newspapers consistently and reliably provide the most up-to-date, accurate and important news. And our audiences recognize this, rating newspapers as the most trusted of all media forms in a recent Nielsen study. While 56 percent say they trust newspapers, 52 percent trust local television and only 37 percent trust social media.

Today's technology has only proven how valuable this content is by providing a platform to widen the audience for each story, which can now be taken and repeated, shared, tweeted, condensed and emailed countless times a day.

Newspapers have always been the cornerstone of our society, and that did not change with the digital revolution. Ever since the Philadelphia Evening Post first published the Declaration of Independence, our newspapers have continued to unite us as communities and as a nation. News media connects us through stories, keeping us informed on school board decisions, local heroes, national budgets and international conflict.

The public's right to know is essential to preserving our unique American democracy, and newspapers serve the vital role of independent watchdogs – keeping governments, businesses and other institutions in check. Without a free press that can protect its sources, American democracy will suffer.

The newspaper industry will continue to innovate and transform with the times, just like any other industry. But one thing will never change: Our historic promise to connect, inform, investigate and foster an educated society.



Newspapers are the Cornerstone of Your Community

Two more off the old bucket list

If I had a Bucket List I would be able to check a couple of items off after last week. One would have been "To Sleep In a Yurt" and the other would have been "To Ride a Train To the Top of a Mountain."

Both were so much more than I ever expected.

We seldom take a vacation that doesn't include crossing a border into a foreign country and building a house. Last week, however, we spent six beautiful days traveling through colorful Colorado, visiting friends and soaking up the beauty around us. It also helps if you have bosses who make their Colorado log home available to staff.

Jim had lived and worked in Colorado several years and still pines for the many recreational areas he used to frequent. I hate to discourage him, but I think his days of midnight snowmobiling through 10 foot drifts and elk hunting are behind him. But his memories can't be taken away, nor his friends. Men he had worked with on union construction jobs became lifelong friends.

This trip we connected with two buddies and their wives. And accepted the invitation of Al and Becky to spend a night in their yurt. I couldn't believe that I knew something Jim didn't, but he had never heard of a yurt. All I knew was what I had seen in Mother Earth News.

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



The yurts depicted there were multi-sided, portable and covered with fabric. If I remember right, yurts were portable homes designed by the Mongolians.

Al and Becky's yurt was definitely the deluxe model. Heavy-duty insulated fiber was stretched over wood lattice shaped into a circle with a high ceiling. It had zippered windows, a door, electricity, solid wood floor, a 28-foot diameter and a fan in the ceiling's roof to circulate air. It was decorated with a great old iron bed, an overstuffed couch, occasional chairs, a trunk for a coffee table, dining table, chairs, lamps, pictures on the walls, an iron bistro set, a wood burning stove, a metal sink that could be hooked up to water, book cases and rugs on the floor. All the comforts of home and then some.

This is a perfect time of year to be in the mountains. The Quakie Aspen are starting to turn color in the high country and there is a crispness in the air

that just makes you feel alive.

Jim loves anything to do with trains and had made reservations weeks ago for us to ride the narrow-gauge train from Durango to Silverton Friday. It was scheduled to be about a four hour trip up, about two hours to eat and shop in Silverton and a three and a half hour return trip. Operative word is "scheduled." A massive boulder changed the plans when it took out a section of track and two trains full of passengers had to spend almost three hours on the mountain while train crews repaired the track.

The engineer stopped our train by a beautiful meadow and rushing stream. Some people walked up and down the track; some hiked up the mountainside to get a better view; some stayed on the train; and some found a rock to sit on. Jim cornered the engineer and talked trains.

I was more of the meandering variety and found a nice souvenir, an old, rusty, bent spike. The delay made it way past dark when we finally got back to the depot, but we didn't mind. We felt like we got more than our money's worth.

We came home thoroughly exhausted. So I guess it was a successful vacation. Next time, though, I vote we go to one place and stay there.

Let's talk about the weather; what else is there to do

For the first time last week a touch of fall filled the early morning air. With the coming of fall and approach of winter, it's fun to recall some time-tested weather sayings.

Many of the following weather signs were collected from farmers and ranchers across the state. It seems there is very little people would rather talk about than the weather.

So let's talk weather. During the winter season, strong northerly winds indicate snow and sometimes a blizzard within 24 hours. Southerly winds are a sign of dry, warmer weather.

When cattle stand in a line with their backs toward the northwest, you can figure on a heavy, driving snow.

Dense fog at dawn is a sign of clearing skies by mid-morning.

The absence of birds around water denotes an approaching storm.

White, fluffy, small clouds are a sign

Insight

John Schlageck



of fair weather ahead.

Odors become easier to detect just before rain. High pressure usually traps odors like a lid due to air density, while lowering pressure releases odors.

When you see lightning in the north, rain is likely within 24 hours.

When distant sounds appear louder, rain is usually on the way.

Rising smoke is a fair-weather sign. When you see smoke going downward or showing very little rise, rain is likely.

Birds perch more before a storm because the low barometric pressure makes it more difficult for them to fly.

When you see hawks circling high in the sky, this is a fair weather sign.

When frogs begin to croak, look out for rain.

Hens and other barnyard fowl pick at themselves – oiling their feathers – just before a rain.

Lots of dead skunks on the road mean plenty of moisture is on the way. Another good sign of approaching wet weather is the aggravation of corns, bunions or arthritis pains.

These signs are surprisingly accurate because they are based on generations of ancestors. There is plenty to be said for the folk wisdom of our ancestors. They watched and charted weather patterns for generations rather than just a few hours or days. It's fun to hear their conclusions handed down from one generation to the next, and anyway, what would we have to talk about if not for the weather?

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