

SOCIAL ISSUES Public Journalism

The debate over public, or civic, journalism is a debate over the basic philosophy of journalism. Consequently, feelings run high on both sides of the issue. Put simply, the fundamental principle behind public journalism is that journalists should put aside the traditional journalistic principle of detachment and become actively involved in public life. The basic rationale behind public journalism is as follows:

- Public and political life are in trouble. Basic problems cannot be solved. Journalism is also in trouble; the public thinks the press is arrogant and uncaring.
- The viability of public life and journalism are linked. If people withdraw from public life, they have no need for journalism.
- Public life cannot be improved using the traditional journalistic principle of detachment.
- Therefore, journalism must help citizens reengage in public life.

How is this philosophy put into action? A newspaper that practices public journalism helps encourage public discussion by providing a forum where citizens can explore the issues. It develops recommendations for change and prods both the audience and the government to action. Here are some specific examples:

- The Charlotte *Observer* published a series of articles that focused attention on a high-crime section of the city and helped improve the neighborhood.
- The Bremerton (Washington) *Sun* sponsored a series of town meetings and developed a plan to preserve open spaces.
- The *Wichita Eagle* sponsored a series of surveys and intensive interviews with members of the public to identify problems that the local government seemed unable to solve and subsequently listed groups working on those problems.

All the above seems pretty exemplary, so what could be a problem?

Those who oppose public journalism contend that it takes journalism into areas where it should not go. For example, Michael Gartner, a veteran newspaper publisher and former head of NBC News, called public journalism wrong morally, philosophically, and journalistically. "Newspapers are not to take sides," said Gartner, "even for Mom or apple pie. It ultimately will cost newspapers their credibility." He went on to argue that "newspapers should not be convening public meetings. They are supposed to tell the truth . . . and God knows that is hard enough to do by itself." Other opponents note that public journalism runs the risk of losing objectivity if the newspaper becomes involved with community leaders. As one put it, "When the editor and the real estate broker and the elected official form a team, whose ethics will prevail?" Finally, some critics have questioned the very assumptions that underlie public journalism. Veteran journalist Carl Sessions Stepp, for example, notes that public journalism assumes that government is broken and it is journalism's job to fix it. If that is the case, then the press and government become linked and objectivity might be lost.

Despite all the controversy, it seems clear that public journalism has had some positive effects. For one thing, it has prompted newspapers to view their readers not simply as consumers but as citizens who are capable of action. Second, it has prompted a reexamination of the role of journalism in society. In the long run, both of these consequences will help benefit journalism.

The pros and cons of public journalism are debated at length in Theodore Glaser (ed.), *The Idea of Public Journalism*, New York: Guilford, 1999.

Portals and Partners

That situation changed in the late 1990s, however, as papers gained knowledge and experience with their online ventures. For example, the fact that the 10 most popular websites are portals provided newspapers with incentives to get into the portal business. A **portal** is the first screen users see when they surf the net. These portals contained more than just news stories. There were searchable archives, links to other sites, chat rooms, e-mail services, online shopping, online polls, interactive restaurant and movie guides, a calendar of local events, and searchable classified ads. The more people who enter the web through a newspaper portal, the more revenue the paper earns from banner advertising.

Some newspapers that compete with one another on the newsstand are joining forces in cyberspace. The rivals *Fort Worth Star Telegram* and *Dallas Morning News* cooperated to launch the local portal dfw.com.

ETHICAL ISSUES Ethical Dilemmas for Online Papers

Online journalism has raised a host of ethical questions that reporters, editors, and publishers are struggling to answer. Here are just a few:

- *What's the proper separation of news and commerce at a website?* Traditionally, to preserve journalistic integrity, the editorial side of a newspaper was separated from the business side. Online, the boundaries are blurry. For example, a person who reads a book review at the *New York Times* online site can click a button and purchase the book from Barnes&Noble.com. The *Times* gets revenue from each such sale. Is this simply providing an additional service to the reader, or is it a conflict of interest? Can the *Times* be objective when reporting news about Barnes and Noble or its rival Amazon.com? What about an online paper that publishes movie reviews and offers a link where readers can purchase tickets to a local theater online and the paper gets a commission for each online ticket sale? Would the paper ever publish a bad review?
- *If an online paper has links to external sites, is it responsible for the content of those sites?* In a story pointing out the increasing danger of electronic eavesdropping and personal data snooping by private detectives, the *New York Times*

online provided links to the websites of the companies who engaged in such practices, seemingly exacerbating the problem. Another online *Times* story about convicted killer Charles Manson contained links to four websites maintained by less-than-credible organizations that proclaimed Manson's innocence. Again, is this simply another online reader service, or is the *Times* providing its audience with dubious and potentially misleading information?

Some online papers post disclaimers noting that they are not responsible for the content of linked sites, but is this enough to fulfill their ethical obligations to readers? Is it enough for the paper to simply wash its hands and not be responsible for any harm that might come from corrupted information?

- *What ethical obligations do online papers have when it comes to corrections?* A traditional newspaper usually has an explicit policy concerning when and where corrections will be published. Most online papers have no such policy. If they make an error, they will simply correct it when someone points it out, without acknowledging the mistake. Do they owe their readers more?

In that same connection, traditional competitors are teaming up to supply classified ads to national websites. The *New York Times* and *Newsday*, for example, supply automotive classified to cars.com. The *Washington Post* and the *Chicago Tribune*, along with about 80 other papers, contribute to CareerPath.com, a website that lists more than 300,000 job openings.

E-Commerce

Online newspapers have also embraced e-commerce. Newspaper websites charge for banner ads with links that will take a reader directly to a retailer. Some newspapers form a partnership with a retailer and get a small portion of each online sale. Newspapers have an advantage in e-commerce because most have a large fleet of delivery trucks that are idle for large periods of the day. These trucks can be used to deliver merchandise ordered online. The *Arizona Daily Star's* website offers a service that allows a customer to order something from the web and have it delivered within a couple of hours.

Newspapers are also realizing that local and regional e-commerce is an untapped market. The *Augusta Chronicle* uses its website to sell posters and other souvenirs from the Masters golf tournament and makes a profit selling home-grown pecans. The *Knoxville News-Sentinel* earns money by selling University of Tennessee memorabilia online.

■ Handheld Media

Many newspapers are looking beyond the conventional Internet site to other channels of distribution for the digital newspaper. One of the most promising channels involves handheld media, such as Internet-enabled cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) such as the Palm handheld. About 3 million PDAs were sold in 1999, and the number will undoubtedly rise in the next few years. More than 70 million people in the United States have wireless telephone service, and many of those have web access. Not surprisingly, newspapers are already starting to tap into this market. *The Wall Street Journal* offers financial news to wireless customers. The *Sacramento Bee* sends local news reports to both PDAs and cell phones. The Knight-Ridder Company is a partner with AvantGo, a company that delivers content to wireless devices. Knight-Ridder supplies local and regional news, sports, and movie schedules, which AvantGo makes available to subscribers. The company reported that it was receiving about 7 million page views every month on the handheld devices. The advertising and marketing potential of this channel is enormous, because ads can reach people near the point of purchase. Reading sports scores on your handheld device? Press 1 and reserve tickets to a future game. Checking movie times? While you're at it, press 2 and reserve a table at a local restaurant for dinner after the movie.

Further, newspapers are closely watching developments in the book publishing industry, where flat-panel readers are being used to download and display books (see Chapter 6). One such reader, the Rocket eBook, lets readers access the online editions of the *New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. In short, newspapers are preparing for the digital age by exploring all emerging media distribution platforms.

■ The Siphoning Dilemma

As digital papers add more content and become more attractive, timely, and accessible, they run the risk of siphoning off readers from their print counterparts. Online papers are free (with the notable exception of *The Wall Street Journal*), and many carry breaking news stories before the print editions. A 1999 survey found that more than 10 percent of online consumers canceled their newspaper subscriptions because they thought they could get the same information free online. This is the basic dilemma faced by the modern paper: How do you produce an online version that complements rather than cannibalizes the print version?

Of course, very few experts expect the print newspaper to vanish, but most think it will have to redefine itself, as it has done in the past. Radio news effectively killed off the "Extra" newspaper edition and became the first source for many breaking news stories. Television supplanted the newspaper as the main information source and cultural leader in America. The newspaper accommodated those changes and survived. The next few years will likely see the newspaper transform itself once again as it deals with the challenges and the unknowns of the Internet.

DEFINING FEATURES OF NEWSPAPERS

Both the online and the print renditions of the newspaper share some defining features. In the first place, the newspaper is made up of diverse content. Newspapers contain international, national, and local news. In addition, they feature editorials,

letters to the editor, movie listings, horoscopes, comics, sports, film reviews, recipes, advice columns, classified ads, and a host of other material. Their range of content is extensive.

Second, newspapers are conveniently packaged. Both the print and online versions are organized according to content. There are sections devoted to general news, financial news, sports coverage, and entertainment. In addition, each story contains a headline that makes it easy for readers to decide if they want to peruse the rest of the story.

Third, newspapers are local. Reporters cover meetings of the local school board, the city council, and the zoning commission. They cover the local police station and tell about the newest store openings in the local mall. Sports sections cover the hometown Little League and high school teams. Local people with merchandise to sell use the classified ads. Newspapers are the only medium with the resources to report all the neighborhood activities in a community.

Fourth, more than any other medium, the newspaper serves as a historical record. One writer described newspaper journalism as “the first draft of history.” The typical paper contains a record of daily events, some profound, some not so profound, that influence our lives. If a person wants to get a sense of what life was like in the 1940s, for example, he or she can flip through some old issues of the paper and see what events were on people’s minds, what movies they were seeing, and what products were being advertised.

Fifth, as we have seen above, newspapers perform the watchdog role in our society. They monitor the workings of government and private industry for misdeeds and wrongdoings. They alert the public to possible threats and new trends.

Finally, newspapers are timely. News isn’t useful if it’s stale. Recognizing this fact, the largest-circulation newspapers in the United States publish daily and online editions that can break news any time of the day. Getting the news out fast has always been one of the characteristics of the newspaper business.

ORGANIZATION OF THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

As is clear by now, there are two basic versions of a newspaper—print and electronic. Let’s look at the traditional print version first.

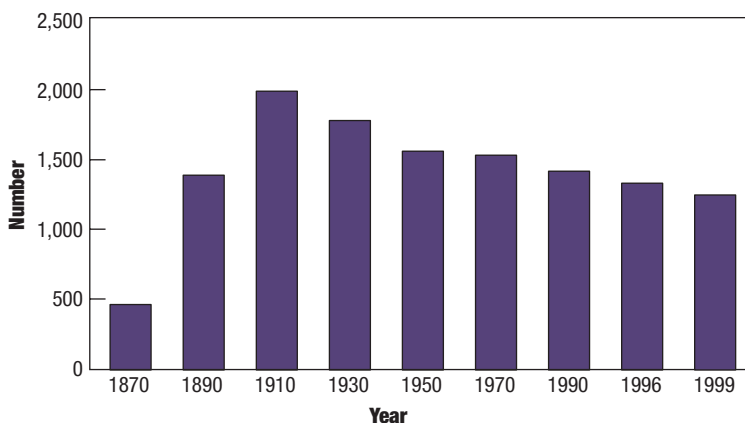
The newspapers that are published in this country are many and varied. They range from *The Wall Street Journal*, a nationally oriented financial daily, to the *Journal of Commerce*, a small financial paper published in Portland, Oregon; from the *National Enquirer* to the *Daily Lobo*, the college newspaper of the University of New Mexico; from the million-plus-circulation *New York Times* to the 6,000-circulation *Gallipolis Daily Tribune* in Gallipolis, Ohio. Obviously, there are many ways to categorize an industry as diverse as this one. For our purposes, we will group papers by frequency of publication (dailies and weeklies), by market size (national, large, medium, small), and, finally, by their appeal to specialized interest groups.

Print Dailies

To be considered a daily, a newspaper has to appear at least five times a week. In 1999, there were 1,483 dailies, down 5 percent from 1996 (see Figure 4–1), and about 7,900 weeklies. Whether a daily or a weekly, the chief concern of a newspaper is its **circulation**, the number of copies delivered to newsstands or vending machines and the number delivered to subscribers. Weekday morning circulation

Figure 4-1

Number of Daily Newspapers in United States, 1870–1999

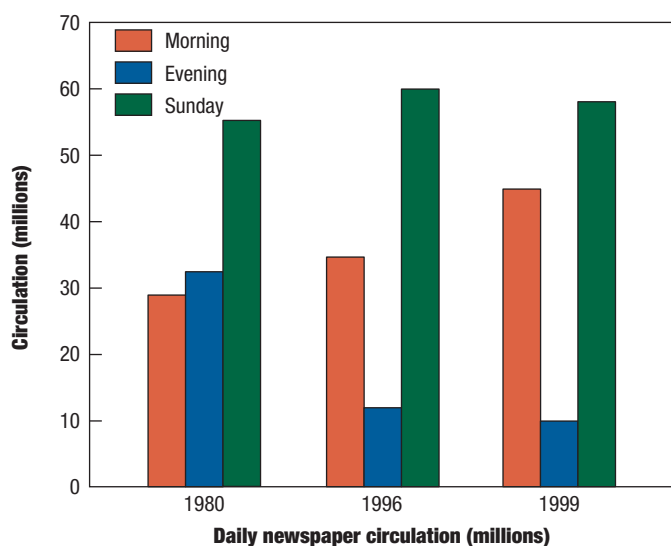


has increased and Sunday circulation has stayed about the same in the last 20 years. Evening circulation, however, has shown a major decrease. As a result, total daily newspaper circulation has declined to approximately 56 million, a figure that has dropped steadily from 1965 to 1999 (see Figure 4-2). At the same time, the population of the United States has been growing. Consequently, the ratio of newspapers per household has declined. To illustrate: In 1960, 111 newspapers were sold per 100 households; in 1999, about 58 newspapers were sold per 100 households. This circulation crunch has not hit all papers with equal force, and this becomes evident when we divide daily newspapers into market groups.

National Newspapers Only a handful of papers fall into this category. These are publications whose content is geared not for one particular city or region but for the entire country. These papers typically use satellites to transmit images and information to regional printing plants where the papers are assembled and distributed. The newest addition to this category, with a circulation of about

Figure 4-2

Daily-Newspaper Circulation, 1980–1999
(Compiled by author)



1.7 million, is the Gannett publication *USA Today*, started in 1982. The paper's use of color and graphics and focus on such topics as sports and weather made a significant impact on other newspapers. Other papers with a national edition are the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Large Metropolitan Dailies The decline in circulation has hit these papers the hardest. Although the total population of the top 50 metropolitan areas increased more than 30 percent from 1960 to 1999, the circulation of newspapers published in those areas dropped about 45 percent. In addition, the last few years have seen the demise of several well-known big-city papers: the *Indianapolis Star and News*, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, and the *Dallas Times-Herald*, to name a few. Why the drop in big-city circulation? There are several reasons, including migration from the central city to the suburbs, transient populations, rising costs of distribution, and increased competition from other media, most notably, television.

Suburban Dailies Although suburban communities of between 100,000 and 500,000 residents are home to only 12 percent of total newspapers, they account for about 40 percent of all circulation. Suburban dailies, located in the areas surrounding the larger cities, are experiencing a period of growth. Circulation of these papers grew by about one-third from 1987 to 1999. One reason for this increase is the growth of suburban shopping centers, which have attracted many merchants formerly located in the central cities. To these merchants, suburban papers represent an efficient way of reaching potential customers. In addition, suburban residents are apparently less inclined to go to the city at night for dinner and entertainment, a factor that has cut down newsstand sales of city papers. Perhaps the best-known suburban paper is *Newsday*, aimed at the residents of Long Island. In 1999, *Newsday* had a circulation of about 575,000, thereby making it the eighth largest daily paper in the country.

In a quest to regain readers, large metro dailies have taken on the suburban press on the smaller papers' own turf. Big-city newspapers are putting out more **zoned editions**, sections geared to a particular suburban area. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, for example, has eight "Neighbors" sections designed to compete with the 20 or so suburban papers that surround metro Philadelphia.

Small-Town Dailies This category of newspapers has also made circulation gains. From 1979 to 1999, newspaper circulation in towns with 100,000 or fewer inhabitants grew by 19 percent. Recently, circulation among papers in this category has declined slightly, although dailies in towns with populations of less than 25,000 have shown modest circulation gains. Surveys have shown that readers of these papers perceive the papers to be sources of local information, for both neighborhood news and advertising.

■ Print Weeklies

The number of weekly newspapers in the United States has remained fairly stable at about 7,900 over the last 20 years. The circulation of weeklies, however, has more than doubled for this same period, from 29 million in 1970 to more than 74 million in 1999. Despite this increase in circulation, the rising costs of printing and distribution have made weekly publishers more cost-conscious.

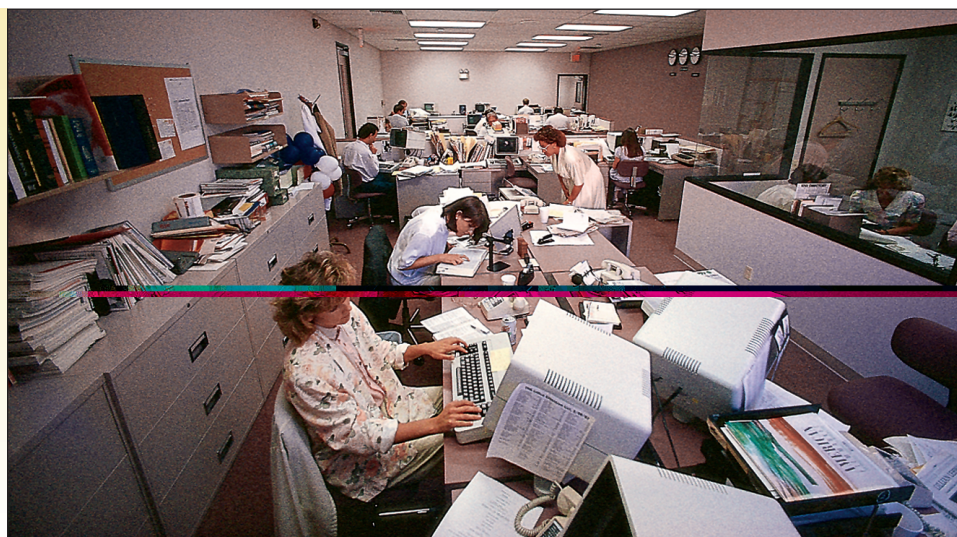
The first weekly papers were published in small towns and in rural areas that did not have a population large enough to support a daily. Although many weeklies are still located in these communities, the past few decades have seen the emergence of weekly papers in local suburban neighborhoods. In the mid-1990s, it was estimated that more than one in three weekly papers was published in suburbia. Weeklies can offer advertisers more precise local exposure at prices that are more affordable. Daily papers are competing with the weeklies by introducing more zoned editions and special deals for local merchants. It's apparent that the future may bring even more competition.

■ Recapturing Readers

No matter what their size or frequency of publication, all print newspapers are faced with the task of maintaining their local readers while attracting new ones. Newspaper executives are aware that spending time with the daily paper is no longer the habit it once was. What are some of the things that newspapers are doing to attract readers?

- They are using more color. Readers generally like color, and papers are using it liberally throughout the newspaper. Even the gray and proper *New York Times* and the conservative *Wall Street Journal* have introduced color to their pages.
- They are changing their writing and editing style. Stories are shorter and accompanied by summary decks under the headline or have story-related information in sidebars on either side of the story. Some papers run highlighted synopses within long stories.
- They are changing the content of the paper. Many papers have become less dependent on lengthy stories dealing with local government. Appearing with more frequency are features dealing with lifestyles, fashions, and entertain-

Newsroom at a medium-sized paper: A substantial part of each reporter's and editor's day is spent at the computer.



C R I T I C A L / C U L T U R A L I S S U E S

Rape in the Sports Pages

Contributed by Patricia Joyner Priest, Ph.D. As a media researcher and an advocate for rape survivors, I have a long-standing interest in how the media cover rape and how people learn about the topic. This is important because, among other things, knowledge—and myths—about rape and its aftermath influences (1) women's assessment of risk, (2) their decision to report the incident, (3) juries' verdicts, and (4) rapists' beliefs that they can get away with the crime. Here's a quick example of the problem: Recently, when I did a search using the key word "rape," I was dismayed to find that eight of the first ten web pages listed were porn sites.

Barring some terrible firsthand knowledge, most of us learn about rape from newspaper reports that provide expansive coverage to stranger rapists who commit serial assaults. Acquaintance rape is rarely covered by the press, although women much more commonly are raped by people they know. The one place where reports of acquaintance rape occasionally surface is alongside news of grand slams and touchdowns: in the sports pages. Rapes are reported here because the prominence of people involved in news items is a key factor when editors determine newsworthiness.

There are several troubling aspects of the placement and character of these articles. First, if crime coverage is partly driven by a responsibility to inform people of possible risks, why place reports of rape in a section read less frequently by women? Most troubling is the framing of these stories: The reports cast the *woman* making the claim as the troublemaker, because her allegations threaten the man's—and his team's—future. Sportswriters highlight the suspect's importance to the team with detailed statistics. The articles seem like the kind of handicapping information you might read at a horse race, not sobering indicators of what may be yet another instance of an urgent social problem.

These news stories are formulaic in other ways as well. Denials, often voiced by the man's parents, his defense attorney, and the player himself, are the most salient feature of the initial coverage. While it is *crucial* that the man have his day in court, balance is important, too, so that the sports section does not incessantly promote the insinuation that women who report rape are lying.

It is also common for the coach and teammates to praise the man's character, even though he may have had a history of serious violence. Another frequent theme sug-

gests that the woman has ruined the man's career and life.

It is the woman's reputation, in fact, that is often ruined. Humanizing details about her are rarely provided except to mention negative information such as whether she had been drinking. Instead, she is often portrayed—most prominently by the defense attorney and the alleged assailant—as a prostitute, a "gold digger," a groupie, and a liar.

Statistics indicate the overwhelming odds faced by victims seeking justice. The authors of the book *Pros and Cons* write: "Of the 217 felony sexual assault complaints against college and professional athletes that were reported to police between 1986 and 1995, only 66 ever reached the trial stage. [Of these,] 85% were acquitted."

Women who think of rapists only as strangers who jump out from behind bushes are woefully uninformed about this basic, terrible fact: An acquaintance can get away with rape fairly easily, because the man can claim consent. It is that simple. And it's simpler still for sports heroes, accustomed throughout their lives to special treatment, even—or especially—when they step over the line.

The rare cases that make it to court are usually dropped for lack of evidence. Yet we warn women that resistance might make things worse. And, clearly, many of the suspects would be highly intimidating assailants, even if they do not brandish a weapon.

We rarely perceive these harmful cultural patterns of reporting about and responding to rape, but I've talked to people visiting the United States who are often puzzled by the victim-blaming stance of the public and the press. Perhaps it will help to consider this: What if a man went up to an athlete's hotel room—perhaps because the player said he had to get something or had to use the bathroom—and then the sports star raped *him*? Would we think the man was stupid, naive, or "asking for it"? See how gendered attitudes can shape our thinking, the criminal's behavior (if he knows he will probably get away with it), the response of the criminal justice system, and media coverage?

1. Think about coverage of rape you've seen (or look up some news stories about rapes). To what extent and in what ways do these stories reinforce the problems written about here?
2. If you were a reporter, what types of things do you think you'd want to include (or exclude) in rape stories?
3. What can we, as consumers and citizens, do to try to change this pattern of reporting about and responding to rape?

Table 4.1 Top 10 Newspapers by Circulation

Although total newspaper circulation has declined slightly, there are some pronounced variations, as illustrated in the rankings below. Note particularly the changes in the volatile New York metro area (*New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, and *Newsday*).

Paper	1987 Circulation (millions)	1999 Circulation (millions)	Percent Change
1. <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	1.961	1.752	-11
2. <i>USA Today</i>	1.324	1.671	+26
3. <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	1.113	1.078	-3
4. <i>New York Times</i>	1.022	1.086	+6
5. <i>Washington Post</i>	0.761	0.763	0
6. <i>New York Daily News</i>	1.285	0.701	-45
7. <i>Chicago Tribune</i>	0.765	0.657	-14
8. <i>Newsday</i>	0.641	0.575	-10
9. <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>	0.568	0.457	-19
10. <i>Detroit Free Press</i>	0.649	0.361	-44

ment, and articles usually described as “news that you can use” (e.g., “How to Find the Perfect Babysitter,” “Best Open-Late Restaurants,” and “Managing Your Money”).

Many of the above efforts are intended specifically to attract the audience segment that has been the hardest to recapture: teens and young adults. Surveys show that in the 1990s only one in three Americans under 35 regularly read a newspaper. Fifty percent of 18- to 24-year-olds don't read a newspaper at all. A recent study by the Times Mirror Center found that the current generation of people under 30 knows less, cares less, and reads the newspaper less than any other generation in the past 50 years.

■ Special-Service and Minority Newspapers

Special-service newspapers are those aimed at several well-defined audience segments. There are, for example, many newspapers published specifically for the African-American community. The African-American press in this country has a long history, dating back to 1827. Most early papers were started to oppose discrimination and to help gain equal rights and opportunities. The African-American press reached its circulation peak in the 1960s when approximately 275 papers had a circulation of about 4 million. Since that time, the African-American press has seen a significant decline in both numbers of papers and circulation.

In 1999, approximately 200 African-American papers were publishing in 35 states and the District of Columbia. Although some African-American papers were doing well, others were facing financial problems. In general, the problems faced by the African-American press stemmed from increasing competition from white-owned papers, decreasing circulation (which made it more difficult to attract advertisers), more expensive newsprint, and criticism from many in the African-American community that the papers were too conservative and out-of-date. In an attempt to recapture readership and advertisers, many African-American papers have

SOCIAL ISSUES Diversity in the Newsroom

In the 1960s, after studying the civil disorder and racial violence that broke out in many American cities, the Kerner Commission concluded that part of the problem was the news media's failure to explore the causes of the violence. This failure, in turn, was due to a lack of minority reporters in the nation's newsrooms. Subsequently, most in the industry agreed that diversity in age, race, gender, and ethnicity on a newspaper's staff was helpful in providing more depth and perspective to news stories. In 1978, the American Society of Newspaper Editors set as its goal minority representation in the newsroom that equals that in the general population.

More than 20 years later, that goal has not been met. Minorities accounted for about 26 percent of the population in 2000 but make up only about 12 percent of newsroom employees. Hispanic/Latino journalists account for just 4 percent of this total, while Native Americans make up less than one-half of 1 percent. About 39 percent of U.S. papers have no minority employees at all.

Women in journalism have fared somewhat better, accounting for 37 percent of newspaper employees. The majority of these women work as reporters. About 22 percent are supervisors.

Why has minority employment stalled out in the past few years despite industry recruiting efforts? One reason may be that minorities are attracted to higher-paying professions. Another sug-

gests that colleges and universities are not doing enough to attract minority students to journalism programs. In that connection, the Freedom Forum and the Knight Foundation announced in 2000 that they were setting aside \$5.5 million for programs to encourage minorities to enter the journalism profession. Other reasons might be found in the results of a 1996 survey sponsored by the Associated Press Managing Editors (APME). The survey showed that the newsrooms in America were two different worlds. Minority and nonminority journalists had totally opposite attitudes about their experiences and expectations. For example, African-American journalists thought they were less likely than average to be promoted. Whites thought African Americans were more likely to be promoted. Minority members thought they spent more time in entry-level positions; nonminorities thought minorities spent less time in those types of jobs. Whites were far more likely than blacks to think their efforts were appreciated by management. Whites thought their papers did a good job in covering the minority community; minority journalists strongly disagreed.

These findings are troubling and suggest that the real benefits of diversity may be hard to realize. An increased number of minorities in the newsroom may be helpful, but changes in attitudes and perceptions have to take place before the more important advantages of diversity can be achieved.

changed their format and editorial focus and have begun to concentrate on local news. In the late 1990s it was estimated that the combined circulation of all African-American newspapers was about 2 million, down almost 50 percent from the 1960s. In an attempt to gain readers, many African-American newspapers were trying to appeal to upscale readers by emphasizing news about education, medicine, and economics. Many papers had added color and updated graphics.

Hispanics make up the fastest-growing minority group in America, and the Spanish-language press has grown along with them. According to the *National Hispanic Media Directory*, the number of Spanish-language publications has more than doubled, from 232 in 1970 to 515 in 1999. The most prominent daily Spanish-language paper is the New York City tabloid *el diario—La Prensa*, with a circulation of more than 70,000.

Many English-language papers, such as the *Miami Herald*, have introduced Spanish-language sections. Furthermore, English-language dailies in markets with a strong Hispanic population are attempting to expand their circulation by making deals with Spanish-language newspapers. In New York, for example, the *Times* teamed up with *el diario—La Prensa* in a joint promotion where a reader could buy both papers together for a reduced price. The *Los Angeles Times* and *La Opinión* have a deal where readers can subscribe to both papers at a discount.

There are many other ethnic newspaper publishers in the United States. Twelve cities have at least one Chinese-language newspaper, and eight cities have papers targeted toward Polish Americans.

The best-known member of the Spanish-language press is *el diario/La Prensa*, published in New York City. The paper has a circulation of more than 70,000. (Courtesy *el diario La Prensa*)



One survey noted that about 96 percent of students read at least part of their campus paper.

NEWSPAPERS ONLINE

Online papers do not differ from their print counterparts with regard to their primary function. Both gather, evaluate, and organize information. They differ significantly, however, in the way they distribute this news to their readers. Traditional newspapers use paper, ink, presses, trucks, and delivery workers; online papers are transmitted digitally to computers and handheld wireless media.

Online papers have certain advantages over traditional newspapers:

- Printed newspapers are limited by the **newshole**, the amount of news that can be printed in one edition. Online papers have no such limitations. The full text of lengthy speeches, transcripts of interviews, and extensive tables and graphs can be easily accommodated.
- Online papers can be updated continuously. There are no edition deadlines for online papers.
- Online papers are interactive. E-mail addresses, bulletin boards, and chat rooms allow readers to provide quick feedback to the paper. Many have searchable archives and links to other sites.



Many papers, such as the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, have turned their online editions into much more than electronic versions of the printed newspaper.

web. The NAA's site has links to more than 500 of these sites.

The relationship between the online and print versions of the newspaper varies from paper to paper. Many large papers have made the web version an autonomous operation, separate from the print side. Many other papers, however, have the web staff working under the direction of the newspaper's editors.

Online papers tend to have small staffs. A 2000 survey of newspaper editors disclosed that more than 80 percent have an editorial staff of five or fewer employees. Another survey found that only 40 percent of online editors thought their newspaper had a clear mission for the website and about 70 percent thought their website lacked needed technical resources.

Perhaps the biggest difference between online papers and traditional newspapers is one of newsroom atmosphere and attitude. Newspaper journalism has been around for more than 200 years and has established traditions and a particular culture. Online journalism has been around for less than 10 years, and its culture and traditions are still evolving. The staff at online papers tends to be younger and more casual. The atmosphere at many papers is more collaborative, friendlier, and a little irreverent. Traditional newsrooms have an established chain of command; online papers are more flexible. As a result, online papers sometime publish stories that might not make it into print. The *Baltimore Sun's* web paper, for example, carried a three-part series by a 19-year-old journalist who reported what it was like to drink Jolt cola every day for three weeks.

In 1994 about 20 daily papers had websites. In 2000, more than 1,100 are online. Of the top 150 papers, 148 offer their news online. The Newspaper Association of America's (NAA) website (www.naa.org) contains links to 1,153 online dailies, ranging from *USA Today*, with a print circulation of 1.7 million, to the *Americus (Georgia) Times-Recorder*, with a print circulation of 6,900. Online papers vary tremendously in their size and complexity. Large papers typically have extensive sites that offer more features and content than their print counterparts. Smaller papers may simply post a limited number of stories and classified ads. Weeklies and special-service papers have also branched out into the

NEWSPAPER OWNERSHIP



The two most significant facts about newspaper ownership are the following:

1. Concentration of ownership is increasing as large group owners acquire more papers.
2. There has been a decrease in the number of cities with competing papers.