

Charting a Course for Change: Transforming the Albany *Times Union* in a Wired World

Abstract

This case study takes students inside the offices and strategic thinking of the executive team at the Albany *Times Union*, a prototypical regional newspaper. The *Times Union*, like other newspapers its size, in 2006 faced the challenge of how to choose the best path to transforming itself from a traditional ink-on-paper product to a hybrid paper/Web product. No role model seemed appropriate, so Editor Rex Smith and Publisher Mark Aldam charted their own course. They hired a consultant to map the newsroom editorial process—an exercise which revealed technological weaknesses, organizational inefficiencies and shortcomings in physical arrangements. But these findings were not recommendations. The paper's team would have to choose among competing priorities in order to move their organization forward.



Students are asked to think in detail about the complex challenges faced by news editors and publishers in early 21st-century America. The case will allow them to grasp the fundamental realignment of roles and responsibilities going on within newsrooms, as well as to understand the often painful choices newsroom leaders must make. Discussion could focus on strategic planning, the role of newspapers in the Internet era, or the challenges to regional publications at the turn of the century.

The case can be used in a class about newspapers and technology, about editorial leadership, or about newspaper management.

Credits

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[Introduction »](#)
