

The decline of newspaper popularity has been attributed to the rise of the internet and the proliferation of web-based content. With an extremely low barrier of entry and variable cost, the web allows anyone with a computer to become an independent publisher: As a result, the amount and variety of content online far exceeds print publications in most fields. So how can newspapers survive and do well as a business in the future? Perhaps by cutting back and going more niche to provide content that features deeper analysis and investigative reporting. In an article entitled 'The Elite Newspaper of the Future', Philip Meyer suggests that the money and audience comes from specialized, not general media. This particular quote explains in greater detail: I still believe that a newspaper's most important product, the product least vulnerable to substitution, is community influence. It gains this influence by being the trusted source for locally produced news, analysis and investigative reporting about public affairs. This influence makes it more attractive to advertisers. By news, I don't mean stenographic coverage of public meetings, channeling press releases or listing unanalyzed collections of facts. The old hunter-gatherer model of journalism is no longer sufficient. Now that information is so plentiful, we don't need new information so much as help in processing what's already available. Just as the development of modern agriculture led to a demand for varieties of processed food, the information age has created a demand for processed information. We need someone to put it into context, give it theoretical framing and suggest ways to act on it. Scaling back on the all-you-can-eat content buffet in favor of more exclusive material does not just appeal to a hardcore audience. People get their information from one another, not just through the direct consumption of media. Catering to the leadership audience, the well-educated news junkies and opinion leaders, will help spread your content in the long run. Will this topical specialization make newspapers profitable? Maybe. If newspapers can't compete with blogs and online news sites in terms of speed and variety, perhaps they can trump them in terms of depth or trust. After all, feature-length content with solid, investigative reporting is not something you'll often find on most blogs or personal sites on the web. Daily newspapers will always be around, although they will be read less as more people come to have persistent access to the internet. A newspaper gives you the opinion of the journalist, but a blog throws in the comments of other readers. The web also gives you instant social interactivity, which is appealing for people who want to connect over what they've read. To be able to share an opinion on what you've just read is enormously satisfying. Good content can be one-way but I think its increasingly important to socialize information and make it a facilitator for communal interaction. Print publications of the future would do well to consider developing some form of an online component to complement their offline product. On the other hand, the problem of information overload is very real. Just think about it. More and more online/print publications are created everyday: to track and read many of them is very time consuming. People will be forced to pick and choose what to read. Some blogs will get dropped from a feed reader, others will remain. It's easy to predict who survives. Blogs that just repeat information already published elsewhere are providing value that can be substituted. To put it another way, these sites are completely dispensable. They lose out when a choice has to be made due to time/attention scarcity. These sites are usually the ones that just regurgitate content released on mainstream media or other larger blogs. Their identity is virtually unrecognizable. A great logo and design won't save them. Sites that serve as a comprehensive and reliable filter of information on a topic will be read, but they'll always have to compete with other fast-paced news publishers. To aggregate information is incredibly easy. To process, analyze and situate it within a big picture context while offering an intriguing/unique perspective is considerably more difficult. Those who can do so will be trusted: they are a valuable knowledge asset for any reader. Detailed, unique content immediately stands out on its own, even without extensive marketing efforts. People don't just want to be informed, they want to better grasp a topic in all its nuances. The joy of consumption lies not only in the skimming of a news story but the processing of new perspectives to enrich a personal worldview or professional need. Publications that provide such content will always have an audience. In the end, it's just a natural consequence that results from the consumer's problem of information overload. "Information overload" is a term popularized by Alvin Toffler that refers to the difficulty a person can have understanding an issue and making decisions that can be caused by the presence of too much information. The term itself is mentioned in a 1964 book by Bertram Gross, *The Managing of Organizations*. The term and concept precede the Internet. Toffler's explanation of it in his bestselling book presents information overload as the Information Age's version of sensory overload, a term that had been introduced in the 1950s. Sensory overload was thought to cause disorientation and lack of responsiveness. Toffler posited information overload as having the same sorts of effects, but on the higher cognitive functions, writing: "When the individual is plunged into a fast and irregularly changing situation, or a novelty-loaded context ... print publications **In the last 30 years mankind has produced more information than in the previous 5,000.** his predictive accuracy plummets. He can no longer make the reasonably correct assessments on which rational behavior is dependent." As the world moves into a new era of globalization, an increasing number of people are connecting to the Internet to conduct their own research and are given the ability to produce as well as consume the data accessed on an increasing number of websites. Users are now classified as active users because more people in society are participating in the Digital and

What is Information Overload?

Information can be defined as a flow of data and measured in bytes, consumer hours and words. Using this definition, information is widely spread over many media. The most dominant source of information is from internet and radio browsing with a combination of 60% consumed per day.

3,600,000,000,000,000,000

3.6 zettabits = the amount of information consumed by Americans in 2008

This uncontrollable large amount of information has no restrictions to what can be written. Publishers were in control of filtering for quality. The internet has removed the process of using publishers therefore quality of information cannot be ensured.

Vast amounts of information have been a problem for hundreds of years,
“Information Overload is actually a problem of fairly ancient provenance”
Quoted by Clay Shirky

The real problem is not an overload of information, but the loss of filters through information over the internet. There is no guarantee whether information is good of quality and true.

56,700,000,000,000,000
yearly consumption of electricity
by the world (in watts)

Image below illustrates information as junk:



Some Facts:

- 1.3 Trillion hours of reading was used up by America in 2008. This averages out to 12 hours per day. The average person consumed 100,500 words and 34 gigabytes of information, this totalled to 10,845 trillion words and 3.6zettabytes .
 - Videos offer more bytes of information than reading materials, by offering approximately 1.3 total zettabytes and computer games offering almost 2 zettabytes of information in total for America.
 - About 6 hours per week are lost due to context switching (multitasking, pausing, etc). This is a widely regarded number, but was confirmed as (Nathan Zeldes, Intel).
 - Through the medium of computers, a third of every word and half of every byte are now received interactively.

Information from 20 sources, old newspapers to new media.



Solutions

Raise awareness of the problem of information overload (Spira, Levy, Hurst). Aside: knowing is not half the battle, but it's a huge first step.

Unsubscribe from anyone who only sending advert and never providing any free content. Look for more honest results.

Limit Sending Rights for users to receive information more relevant towards them.

Charge users for valuable and high quality information, controlled by a trusted brand.

Charge writers for purposely misleading users with inaccurate or false information for personal gain.