

Dont ask me why I like to write about the newspaper industry. Maybe for the same reason I bought the Dallas Mavericks. Everyone else said it was a disaster, I saw that there was no place to go but up. A great challenge that got the juices going and my asking the question of "What would I do". Its the same thing we saw when Todd Wagner and I bought Landmark Theaters with many people predicting the decline of the theater industry because of technological changes.

In the last couple days, I have read, or had people in the newspaper industry email saying that their papers were going to extend their newsgathering to all platforms. Rather than being deadline driven, they would capture and publish. Every platform, any platform where people want to read, watch or listen. If they had it, they would publish as soon as they got it.

I agree that its a good strategy.

I wrote a couple posts ago that sales should be a core competency and paper and local media outlets should be selling everywhere and anywhere that their customers allow them to. That local media has a local salesforce and thats a huge differentiation that needs to be a focus.

The same applies to local newsgathering. Reporters have recorders for interviews (every one i do these days). Some interviews could easily be expanded to include video. Should the reporters be required to not only write a story, but also edit the audio and even video of an interview ? ABsolutely. I recommend that EVERY reporter or columnist spend a morning with a disc jockey in a radio station. Watch how quickly and easily they edit together audio into a package they turnaround in seconds and put on air. Take a look at how easy it is to use basic video editing equipment.

Once you have packaged the interview or story, a quick fact check, and it should be posted to the net.

Across newsrooms oldschoolers are throwing up, right ? You write, you arent a DJ. You dont do wedding videos. Right ? Well you should probably reconsider . The more you package with multimedia, the less your editors can do to the story.....

Which leads to the question, how do you differentiate the paper from the net ? Its easy. For features, Online is where you put it up first to let people know you are working on it. Online may be where you intentionally overwhelm them with TOO many choices and too much information. Put up a complete 45 minute interview with Mark Cuban with a 400 word summary and you know how many people will listen to the entire interview ? None. People will read the 400 words and make a decision if they want more. Polished ? Absolutely not. And thats what differentiates it. Its your tease for the indepth article where you add context to the interview, write in depth about how wonderful, exciting and exceedingly handsome I am, get quotes from others confirming the same and create a story with such depth that maybe someone will believe it, but many will buy the paper expecting to find and read it.

If Google or Yahoo are immediate gratification for everything and anything globally, Newspapers can be the library for everything and anything locally. The attraction of Youtube isnt the quality of its content, its the breadth. You can find anything and everything. Your website can be the same. Its what we did at broadcast.com . We drowned them with volume and alternatives. We didnt care if it was audio or video of a cat screeching, 2 people playing bridge or a cousin telling jokes. We figured if there was enough choice, people would come back out of curiosity to find out what was there. Only your newspaper can do the same thing locally.

The interview you did with the high school basketball player who went on to the nba, you are idiots if its not posted. The interview with the cheerleader who went on to do Debbie Does Dallas 19, you are an idiot if you dont have it up. Every interview from every high school football game, lacross game, talent contest or 3rd grade recital should be on the net. Who else has the amazing library of great stuff that you have accumulated over the years ? Your editors' mundane is the high school kid discovering audio or video about their parents and spending all day looking for more and telling all his/her friends and family about the amazing and crazy stuff they found. Every thing that isnt digital needs to get digital and every new piece of information /story/feature/report/editorial needs to be digital and added to the website as its found.

Then you take a page from Youtube and create a "related" or recommended listing of stories in the paper that day or upcoming that would refer people to the paper.

For time sensitive events, like a sporting event, you only have so many teams to cover. Cover them fast and well. Teams have coaches who track everything and anything in a game. We have guys tracking tipped passes, which plays are run, tons of minutiae. If we can process it and cut film from it for a quick turnaround at halftime, so can a newspaper. I would get multiple stringers, former coaches, fans, whatever, who track and compile as much different information as they can, and the beatwriter becomes the editor who takes in all the data and turns it into an indepth story that gives the paper brand as the place to go for information like you cant get anywhere else.

High School kids would kill to be able to do the same thing for any of their school;s sports and publish it to your website or for the big games, to your paper.

And if you are really good at compiling esoteric statistics, not only can you trademark those, but you can create your own fantasy leagues that incorporate that data. High School Fantasy Football anyone ?

Online is fast and overwhelming quantities of minimally packaged and information by reporters. The paper is for indepth, feature stories that encourage people to committ to the paper and the story.

But I digress. This is about RSS.

RSS (if you dont know what it is,[this is a good resource](#)) is something few beyond the technically literate have a clue about. Thats a good thing for newspaper. It means you can brand and own it. RSS has expanded to the point where the latest versions of IE and Firefox , the 2 most popular browsers both have icons in the URL bar. Its a little [orange burstie thingie](#) . Make it your orange burstie thingie.

The great thing about this RSS Icon, is that when you click on it , it gives the user the ability to bookmark the page they are on and receive continuous headlines from that page right in their browser.

What did I just say in English ?

It means that you can open your readers up to Click and Read, or whatever you want to brand that Icon as. I realize that most newspapers offer RSS Links on their websites so people with RSS readers can subscribe. I do it all the time.

What newspapers, or any entity hasnt done, is take branded ownership of the Live Links that browsers just started offering across IE 7 and Firefox and using it as a marketing tool.

Put in URLs around reporters/columnists/whatevers along with the orangamajiggi, and teach your users that your newspaper is now putting up everything and anything that they do. Get it first, get it best with the Heralds LiveLink. Just go to this webpage, click on the Yellow and then click on Bookmarks Toolbar Folder. The Herald will then automatically send you headlines of every story we put on the net by category. We bring the news to you ! No more having to search through Google News, or searching for the latest stories, we bring it to you !

Of course RSS can do more than send a headline, it can send full articles files, ads, and teasers to send people to the paper for more info.

As anyone who uses live bookmarks on firefox knows, its just too easy to use and it works.

I just could never figure out why Live Bookmarks and their IE equivalent havent become an integral part of internet site marketing to consumers.

Maybe this is all just craziness to those in the newspaper industry, but I think there might be an opportunity to take your content, touch it one time, put it on the net, extend the stories into features in the paper, and use RSS to make it easy to alert your customers about new news in a manner that is far less intrusive than email alerts

And writing this of course gives everyone in the sportsjournalists.com forums a chance to support or hate me. Which is always fun to read.