

Everyone seems to think that the overriding issue in the media business is technology. What impact will the internet have ? Where will people consume media, which media and how ? If you can find everything and anything on the internet, why would you need or want anything else ?

All fun questions to discuss, but none really matter. The only question that really matters is are you ubiquitous or not ?

The media business used to be ubiquitous by default. Broadcast TV was the ubiquitous outlet for visual entertainment. When it perceived the threat of cable networks, it built and bought all it could get its hands on to squash the threat to their ubiquity.

The Newspaper used to be the ubiquitous source for volume information. It was the only place you could get all of yesterdays news and information ,along with relevant display and classified advertising. When there was a perceived threat from 2nd and 3rd dailies in cities, there were price wars and consolidation to maintain as much ubiquity as possible.

The radio industry used to be the ubiquitous source for free music and audio entertainment. When perceived threats such as the internet came along, they merged and consolidated to try to fight threats with mass.

When the internet came along, there was a perceived opportunity for ubiquity in the delivery of audio, video and text. The internet could offer anything to anyone, anywhere. So businesses were defined and delivered to attempt to accomplish the goal of "replacing" traditional media in any way it possibly could hoping to become ubiquitous.

As the "Ubiquity Wars" of the past 14 years have been fought between old school and new school media, the reality is that the result of these wars is that newspapers, radio and TV have lost their ubiquitous status, but the internet has not gained it either, resulting in business models that are out of kilter.

The problem with newspapers is not simply that their revenues are declining, its that they are constructed to be ubiquitous in their marketplace. Their cost structures are the problem.

Look at it this way. If newspapers didnt exist 5 years ago, and all we had was the internet for news and information, and all of a sudden a modern day Horace Greeley came along to found the first print newspaper last year, we would be talking about how amazing it was that such an analog medium found an audience. The difference would be that as a startup, with startup expenses, a newspaper could