

its interesting to me that the organizations that should be combining as quickly as they can aren't.

What are the strongest news brands in this country ? Rupert Murdoch would tell you that the Wall Street Journal is at or near the top. You can put the New York Times, [Washington Post](#) and others up there as well.. You could probably put Time and Newsweek on the list as well. All are print.

For years the TV networks have spent billions on promotion, people and production to try to create a definable and sustainable brand that drives viewership. In the internet era, it hasn't worked as choice has significantly diluted their audiences.

Cable News Networks have tried to expand the market for news consumption, but really haven't grown beyond niche audiences, with 2mm viewers for any given program being a huge hit.

What I find interesting is how duplicative all their efforts are. Each of the above has a significant news departments with reporters out in the field looking to break stories or do a better job of reporting than their competitors, regardless of medium.

Riddle me this Batman: Rupert Murdoch has figured out that Print and TV can be combined to be a vertical news organization and is willing to pay 5 billion dollars to do it. Why has no one else realized the value of combining big news brands and organizations ?

Why isn't a CBS News merging their news department with a NY Times and rebranding itself as the 6pm NY Times News ? Or with Time Magazine News ? Or NBC News and ???

I recognize the arrogance factor. That each wants to be the defacto source of news in this country and lever what little editorial power they still have left (Does anyone other than the people who write editorials or are written about really read the editorials in newspapers these days ?). But its time to realize that drastic change is necessary and that ego needs to be put aside.

Put simply, a NY Times reporter with a camera crew can reach every medium available today. Right now any video that reporter captures is relegated to the net. Instead, that resource could be available to a network news department , the net, heck, even as part of a DVD series or to theaters as part of a weekly series. We would show it at Landmark Theaters.

News should be available to its customers in the medium that its customers demand, and in those customers don't even know they want yet. I know there has been many a time when i have read a Times story thinking that it would be interesting to see video to support the story. Why not ?

This post is a long way of saying that I think news is a unique opportunity still. But what is happening is that everyone is cutting back individual news operations rather than partnering to ramp up. Consumers dont need more brands, they need more indepth reporting of more stories.

Its time for convergence of mediums. The NY TImes 6pm News on CBS makes a lot more sense to me that teleprompter reading by talking heads with nice legs. As Dan Rather often says, its time for news "with Guts"

While on the topic of news, 2 quick thoughts:

1. One of the biggest all time product branding blunders in any business is newspaper columnists and reporters calling what they write on the web a blog. When you have a reporter in the field offering online updates and you call it a blog, you define them as peers of the many unwashed masses who post on a blog, myself included. Suzy and Don on myspace have a blog, and so does your intrepid reporter. Its not too late to come up with a name to brand what professionals call their timely infield updates. Its the only way you are going to differentiate your news organization from user generated content.

2. I was trying to remember the last time I heard a question from a sports reporter before or after a game or event when i thought to myself "What a great question". Why ?