

Tobert M. Hayes:

The Collapse of United States Newspapers and Journalism

What are the Problems?

The NY Times

Jayson Blair, 28 April 2003. Plagiarism
Howell Raines, failures as managing editor
Maureen Down
Michael Gordon and Judy Miller, failures to treat government claims with scepticism

Junk News—style, celebrities

Closures

Rocky Mountain News
Seattle Post Intelligencer
San Francisco Chronicle

Bankruptcies

Tribune Company bankruptcy (Chicago Tribune, LA Times, Baltimore Sun), 8 Dec 2008
Star Tribune, Minneapolis, bankruptcy, 15 Jan 2009
Journal Register bankruptcy, 21 Feb 2009
Philadelphia newspaper (Inquirer, Daily News), 21 Feb 2009
McClatchy chain bankruptcy?

What are the alternatives?

Government bailout of the newspapers

Given the economic context of the moment, it is possible, though highly unlikely, that the federal “stimulus package” might be used to support some newspapers. It could be argued that they are crucial to economic development and to political stability.

Adopt a subscription model for online news services

To this point, the major newspapers, led by the New York Times, have provided essentially free access to their online news services. They do receive advertising income for those services, but apparently quite small.

Adopt a patronage model for online journalism services

The patronage model is well represented by National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting counterpart for television, in which there is some base support from the federal government, but the major source of income is gifts from patrons, including small gifts from the general listening or viewing public.

The problems, of course, are many. But the substantive problem is the maintenance of local news (substantive, that is, and other than junk news)., not just international and national

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