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ONLINE JOURNALISM: TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

AMIC 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
THE DIGITAL MILLENNIUM: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASIAN MEDIA
June 29 – July 1, 2000, Singapore
ONLINE JOURNALISM: TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Since the last decade, discussions about the role of traditional newspapers have increased significantly at industry gatherings, academic conventions, and in professional publications. Many media futurists are pessimistic about the survival of traditional newspapers, some media historians see more value in traditional newspapers while some other media professionals believe that newspapers will continue to co-exist with new media.

In April 1993, Michael Crichton, a journalist and author of Jurassic Park, stated to the movers and shakers of journalism at a National Press Club banquet, “Change your news culture, or become fossils. Adapt to the new digital realities, or become museum relics.” He called upon news organizations to reinvent themselves and issued a warning: “To my mind, it is likely that what we now understand as the mass media will be gone within 10 years – vanished, without a trace.”(see AJR, Jan, 2000).

Nicholas Negroponte (1995), a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, sees the electronic newspaper as “a simple but unnecessary step toward the ultimate goal of interactive media.” He wrote in his book, Being Digital, that over time, “whole categories of culture – books, newspapers, magazines, videos, musical recordings, films, and personal mail, for instance, will be digital.”

Certainly, technological developments have taken place in the field of journalism itself that present challenges to the continued importance of newspapers. The prediction of many media scholars is that digital technologies will continue to grow, eventually creating
a new medium that will force all previous communications media to redefine themselves, just as radio had to do when television came along. Fiber optics and "electronic paper" will transform mass communication into an interactive, multimedia format, providing readers greater control over the timing and content of their news reading.

In their study on "Reader Preference for Electronic Newspapers," Mueller & Kamerer (1995, p. 13), concluded that "...As bandwidth, and computing power increase, and as today's young non-newspaper readers become adults, the electronic newspaper, in some form, will become a part of our daily lives."

Several newspaper journalists are pessimistic about the survival of traditional newspapers. According to media researchers Schultz & Voakes (1999), who conducted a survey of newspaper journalists from 1,487 newspapers in the United States in 1996, said, "The majority of newspaper journalists are not at all convinced that their medium will be as much needed in the future as it used to be." They add, "This, of course, can become a threat itself to newspapers. It can be hard to convince people of newspapers' significance if journalists themselves have so little faith to begin with." Results of their survey showed that 55 percent of newspaper journalists believed that newspapers will be a "less important part of American life" in the next 10 years (p. 23). In this study, 40 percent of journalists indicated that in 10 years newspapers will be about where they are now, and only 4 percent thought newspapers will become more important.

Schultz & Voakes (1999) also examined the factors that contribute toward the pessimistic attitude of journalists. One major factor is the alienation of younger readers. According to these researchers, "It is difficult to imagine the maintenance of newspaper
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readership, however, without the interest of those who will comprise the adult population in the 21st century” (p.25).

Several other researchers also find the alienation of younger readers as a major factor toward the pessimistic attitude of journalists. “Young people are not that much interested in newspapers because their orientation to mass media has begun with television, music video and video games,” according to Underwood (1995). Media researchers Mueller & Kamerer (1995) also state that “newspapers are failing to attract young readers and their current readers are slipping into middle and old age” (p.6).

According to Carl Sessions Stepp (1996), senior editor of The American Journalism Review, “Young people in particular appreciate the speed and the variety of the Internet’s information and entertainment.”

Schoenbach & Bergen (1998), in discussing the current environment for newspaper readership research at the European Conference of the International Newspaper Marketing Association in Belgium in September 1996, stated: “The general decline of the newspaper has occurred in part because a growing number of readers have discovered that it’s simply not worth turning to a newspaper anymore” (p. 89). They added that “People either get the information they regard as important elsewhere (e.g., from local radio and television, local weeklies, free sheets or from regional magazines) or, even worse, they don’t miss the information provided by newspapers at all, even in other sources. Being well-informed about community matters, for example, has lost its importance at a time of increasing mobility, individualization, of decreasing social ties and of diminished interest in conventional politics” (p. 89).
Other factors for the decline of traditional newspapers include high costs of paper, production and delivery of the newspaper. While it is getting cheaper to send electronic messages, the cost of printing is increasing. According to media researcher Harper (1996), at some point, it seems inevitable that newspapers will have to embrace electronic delivery. He states that “Today, a fundamental problem with newspapers is the high cost of production and delivery. It makes little sense for a reporter to write a story on a computer terminal that then goes to an editor and then goes to the composing room and is then printed to be put on a truck to be shipped to the suburbs, so someone can make certain it’s on a reader’s doorstep at 6:30 a.m.” (p. 10).

“As paper becomes more expensive, as bandwidth and computing power increase, and as today’s young non-newspaper readers become adults, the electronic newspaper, in some form, will become a part of our daily lives,” conclude Mueller & Kamerer (1995) in a study of “Reader preference for Electronic Newspapers.” Electronic newspapers are the beginning of what will be a major change in the history of the printed word.

One of the news media’s major problems is its unwillingness to enter into a true dialogue with readers. Many readers complain about the lack of access and interactivity with news organizations. In a “Dialogue with Readers” (AJR, Jan. 4, 2000), Tom Conrow, a manager in a San Francisco social services department stated that “Anyone, who has ever called a newsroom, only to be shuffled from one gruff or impatient voice to the next, knows full well the message we in the news media project – inaccessibility, aloofness, remoteness.”
According to David Talbot (cited in Lasica, 2000), “Newspapers have forgotten how to be stimulating, challenging, colorful and provocative. They have just become timid, dull, banal and inoffensive for economic and political reasons, and that’s why readers are flocking to the Internet.”

Many historians, on the other hand, see more value in traditional newspapers. They regard it as a “cultural document that provides a real, tangible link to history” and “an aesthetic experience of time.” (Anthony, 1996). Arthur Sulzberger Jr. (cited in Fulton, 1996) of The New York Times told a gathering sponsored by the Nieman Foundation in 1995, that “The journalism institutions have long played a role that transcended providing information. Facts are the tangible product, but other things—such as a favorite writer, commentator, or host, connection to a community, or access to experiences outside our own—are often what bring people back time and again to a hometown newspaper, a favorite broadcast show, or a niche magazine.”

Others argue that the newspaper is portable and easier to read. Older people still prefer the feel and touch of the newspapers that are delivered to their doorstep everyday. Steve Outing of Editor and Publisher (cited in Peng, et. al, 1999, p. 55) thinks that electronic newspapers are supplemental services, with little in common to print newspapers and they would not replace the print.

Media researchers Mueller & Kamerer (1995), in a study of “Reader Preference for Electronic Newspapers,” asked 62 subjects to rate their preferences between an electronic newspaper and traditional newspapers and discovered that the subjects “found the new medium to be unappealing to browse leisurely, inappropriate for all news material,
uncomfortable to travel through, not preferable over traditional newspapers, and more
difficult to read than a traditional newspaper” (p. 11). Schierhorn, et al. (1999) state that
reading from a traditional computer screen is hard on the eyes because of “the resolution
and the imperceptible flicker of the screen refreshing itself.”

According to media critic Jon Katz (1994):

Reading a newspaper online is difficult, cumbersome, and time consuming. There
is none of the feel of scanning a story, turning pages for more, skipping easily back
to the beginning. The impact of seeing a picture, headline, caption, and some text
in one sweep is completely lost. With news glimpsed only in fragments and short
scrolls, the sense of what the paper thinks is important disappears. You can’t look
at a paper’s front page to absorb some sense, however limited, of the shape your
town, city, or world is in. You can’t skip through a review for the paragraph that
tells you whether to see the movie or not or skim through movie listings for show
times. Much of what still works about a paper – convenience, visual freedom, a
sense of priorities, a personal experience – is gone. Online papers throw away
what makes them special. (p. 50)

Katz further iterates that newspapers don’t need to become electronic to survive,
instead, they must adapt to the presence of the electronic media. They need to give an
increased attention to stories that offer synthesis and context, and rely less on breaking
news. He recommends that newspapers should hire younger and more diverse reporters
to provide enhanced communication with their readers via E-mail.

This approach is shared by political scientist W. Russell Neuman (1991),
who suggested that savvy media managers follow “the upstream strategy, which means
vertical integration and heavy investment in the creative community, because value will
increasingly reside in creation rather than in delivery of media content. Thus, a newspaper
needs to promote its identity not as ink-on-paper delivered in the morning, but as a unique
and reliable information package and a contractually exclusive source for well-known journalists, commentators, cartoonists, and reviewers" (p.xii).

Several media critics believe that newspapers will find their niche and that the slow speed of daily newspapers can be an asset. Newspapers can be good at in-depth reporting and providing context. By moving away from the frenzy of breaking news, newspapers can focus on providing a more balanced analysis of events.

Some research suggests alternative explanations that would allow new technology to coexist with existing media, rather than bringing about the demise or radical change of traditional media. Bromley & Bowles (1995), in their study of the Impact of Internet on Use of Traditional News Media, found that during the startup period for Internet use, use of traditional media remained the same (p. 22). The study found no significant support for the hypothesis that "users of interactive computer networks, at least during initial start up, will spend less time with newspapers, television and radio than they did before adopting the new technology" (p. 22). The majority of respondents reported no change in the amount of time they spent with traditional media after beginning to use the new technology, while slightly fewer than 10 percent reported spending less time with traditional media."

Peng et. al. (1999, p. 59), in a survey of publishers and/or online editors of U.S. daily newspapers listed by AJR in 1997, found that 9 out of 10 expressed the belief that the print newspaper would not be replaced by the electronic newspaper. Twice as many respondents believed that electronic newspapers would be supplementary to the printed
copies (p.60). Half the respondents expressed the belief that both print and online newspapers would flourish together.

Michelle Bergman, a spokeswoman for ABCNEWS.com says, "Instead of competing, the traditional news operation and the Internet site will complement each other, growing into a 'vast newsgathering' operation. The Internet is ultimately just one more way for information to make its way into the newsroom and one they need to pay attention to." (quoted in Heyboer, 1998).

Newspapers can succeed in cyberspace, but only if they are willing to leave behind conventions that no longer make sense in the digital world. The Net provides a fantastic opportunity for newspapers to reinvent themselves and to hold onto the things that make them vital to our lives.

The Newspaper Association of America sees new technology as one key to the future health of the newspaper industry. "Whether these new channels include interactive TV, online computer services, CD-ROM technology or other emerging technologies, newspapers must ensure their place as the primary information provider regardless of the pipeline," says Eric Wolfnerman, the association's senior vice president for technology. (see Consoli, 1994, p. 19).

Trends and Opportunities in Online Journalism

Several major newspapers in the United States and elsewhere have started publishing the online version of their papers to attract more readers. The Newspaper Association of America estimated that in early 1996, 175 daily newspapers were accessible via the Internet, commercial online services and bulletin board services. (SNP Bulletin,
The Editor & Publisher Interactive (1997) listing of newspapers on the Internet identified 855 online newspaper services in the United States in early 1997. In 1998, Editor & Publisher Interactive (1998) listed a total of 2,859 newspapers (both dailies & weeklies) Web sites in the world, including, 1,749 based in the United States.

Reaching more readers seems to be the primary reason for newspapers to publish an online version. In a survey and content analytic study of Web newspapers published in the United States, Singaporean journalists Peng, Tham and Xiaoming found that 73 percent of national/metropolitan papers chose the web for publication because of the availability of worldwide readers. (Peng, et. al., p. 57). They concluded that “online newspaper readers are more likely to help swell the ranks of existing readers rather than reduce them.” (p. 60).

Michael Erlindson of the University of Western Ontario (1995), agrees that newspapers are being forced to go online, primarily because readers are turning away from traditional print products. Most the editors of online newspapers think the future lies in digital journalism, particularly to attract young, computer-literate readers. James H. Denley, editor & president of the Birmingham Post Herald, writes, “One major reason we created an electronic newspaper was to serve our audience and our community with local information” (quoted in Harper, 1995, p. 10).

Online journalism also has the potential for improving our connections with readers. Jonathan Dube (1999), senior associate producer for ABC NEWS.com. finds online journalism a rewarding experience. “What I find so exciting about online
journalism is not just the chance to tell stories in new interactive ways. It’s that these new media tools and techniques help me bring readers a truer picture of the world.”

Journalism, at its core, is an interaction between a writer and a reader. Online journalism has brought the writers and readers closer together. Readers and viewers are getting documents at the same time as reporters. Moreover, with online news, readers have more control over what they want to know and when they want to know it.

In online journalism, readers have an opportunity to share the experience. Says investigative-journalist-turned multimedia producer Pizzo: “In the old days, when I wrote about a secret White House memo that I obtained indicating the president knew about Iran-contra, the reader had to trust that I had it and I was interpreting it clearly. Today, I’m able to say, hey, here it is. Look it over and come back to me for the story.’ Readers are coming to expect that now…”(quoted in AJR, November 1996).

Rich Jaroslovsky, managing editor of The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition, says, “It makes the system of coverage more transparent, so that readers can look at the underlying documents and material and see how we ended up writing story we wrote.” (see Cunningham, 1999). The documents can also be customized for online users.

Since the online news contains links within the document to other sites, readers are able to select the information that they are interested in. Also, online newspapers offer dynamic content because the links found are constantly changing and evolving as online staff update the information continuously. Moreover, hyperlinks allow readers to go beyond daily news to other information sites and make newspaper reading non-linear. These hyperlinks can lead readers to more background information about the stories they read.
and related subjects. They can also provide the electronic mail addresses of editors and reporters and links to a host of other sources. (see McAdams, 1994).

Interaction is what the new medium is seeking. It is possible to customize a front page to reflect your interests by filling out a questionnaire or type in your opinion about a story or issue, or follow link after link on any topic that grabs your attention. The interactivity provided by the Internet offers another advantage for online newspapers to strengthen ties between editors and readers or among readers themselves (see McAdams, 1994). Peng et. al (1999) found that one third of the sampled newspapers offered their readers interactivity with other readers and their staff in a forum or live-chat environment. (p. 59).

Immediacy has proved to be a key in capturing users. Readers can get valuable, breaking news immediately. David Weir, cofounder of the Center for Investigative Reporting and a new media fellow at the University of California at Berkeley, says, “On the Web, not only does the material transcend the boundaries of space and time through linkages, it can travel faster and have a wider impact sooner” (quoted in Lasica, 1998).

When Congress released Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr’s report on President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky on the Web, making it instantly available to the public, the medium had finally become the message. Nearly 24.7 million individuals saw the Starr report the first two days it was online, according to “Relevant Knowledge”, a Web traffic tracker. That’s larger than the combined circulation of the country’s top 50 daily newspapers. Some media critics claim neither the Net nor journalism will ever be the same. The Starr Report was a major breakthrough for the Internet as an information
provider. According to Jon Katz, media critic and Freedom Forum's First Amendment scholar, "If television news was legitimized by the Kennedy assassination and the Persian Gulf War cemented the relevance of cable, then the Starr Report "ratified the Internet as America's premiere means of rapidly disseminating critical civic information" (quoted in Heyboer, 1998). "The day the Starr Report released, says Relevant Knowledge CEO Jeff Levy, "It certainly was the biggest day for breaking news the Web has ever seen" (Ibid).

All in all, it was an impressive ability of the online media to cover breaking news of Clinton-Lewinsky affair as it unfolded. In addition, the use of frank language and sexual discussion that mainstream media typically filter out, and the interactive component of the Web attracted the readers by huge numbers.

Media reporter Howard Kurtz of The Washington Post predicts that breaking stories online will be routine within a couple of years. Bernard Gwertzman, editor-in-chief of the News York Times on the Web, says that "The nature of the beast is that these people expect news as it happens, not several days later" (quoted in Hanson, 1997). According to media researcher Singer (1997), online media is better than print in some respects. "It provides more recent news, in almost unlimited quantity, with access to previous stories on the topic, as well as those are things online media can provide that a newspaper can never match." (p. 6).

Another advantage of electronic articles is that users can change the type and size of the font to adjust the visual presentation of the text. This is especially useful for readers with visual handicaps. Also, an online newspaper does not have any significant limitations on space. The newspaper articles once with little or no value because of lack of space can
be made accessible in the new media. There are constant forms of information that do not appear in the newspaper that are well suited to an online product.

In essence, the online community's message has less to do with abandoning objectivity than it has to do with voice, point of view and personal storytelling. These are qualities that people yearn for – and that are missing in most newspapers. Independence of voice is also treasured on the Internet. Point of view and opinion have a higher place in cyberspace. Personal emotion is embraced and celebrated, rather than shunned. Kelly of Wired suggests, "The kind of writing that seems to work best on the Net is much more passionate, impressionistic, telegraphic, relativistic, immediate, global and postmodern, with a far broader emotional palette than is seen in traditional media. The public is starved for point of view, subjective, passion-based journalism, and those are the sites that are flourishing on the Web"(quoted in AJR, Nov. 1996).

**Challenges of Online Journalism**

A major drawback of the new media is that it will probably make the information available to the rich and not to the poor. The new media define the have and have-nots. Those with accessibility to a personal computer and online services will have the access, and those who cannot afford it, won't.

The new medium is also uncomfortable to travel through and unappealing to browse leisurely. It is uncomfortable and inconvenient to access it while riding a subway, dining in a restaurant, or sitting on a bench in the park. Moreover, reading text online can be uncomfortable and time consuming. Readers can easily get lost and
frustrated in an article which contains many internal and/or external links. Download time may take much longer than turning a page.

Another dark side is that instant filing may make online newspapers more like wire services, and anyone who has worked under deadline pressure knows what that means: an emphasis on getting facts to the screens immediately, with little patience for enterprise, analysis and investigation. “On a twenty four-hour-a-day news cycle, the public expects a new hero every hour, a dramatic spectacular every ten minutes, a rare sensation every thirty seconds. News organizations on such a cycle – like CNN – must devote vast amounts of efforts to satisfying the public’s appetite for novelty for just the next half hour,” says Hanson, Washington correspondent for The Seattle-Post Intelligencer.

In a New York Times Magazine column, columnist Max Frankel said that the more the newspapers pursue web audiences, “the more will sex, sports, violence, and comedy appear on their menus, slighting, if not altogether ignoring, the news of foreign wars or welfare reform.” (cited in Ledbetter, 1999).

A newspaper that commits itself to the online world is likely to find its resources dissipated in just such a shallow pond, with little energy left over for the good writing, clear explanation, in-depth investigation, and offbeat approaches that have come to mark the best newspaper journalism.

While it is true that electronic publishing can considerably reduce printing and distribution costs, there are other costs incurred by electronic media which can be cumbersome. For example, editorial time is needed to establish and verify any type of
hyperlink or multimedia within an electronic article. Thus, the initial cost of publishing an electronic article may far exceed the initial cost of a print article.

We assume that the digital technology will create fascinating new ways to tell stories. But it is not as easy as we think. Frank Houston (1999) states that “The Internet is a fathomless ocean and technology is like an ever-moving shark. We are too enthralled, too busy, and too slow to see that we are powerless to guide it.”

Customized online news services may sound appealing to readers because they can choose what they want to read and hear and filter out other information. But in the process, the users may become isolated from their neighborhood, city, state and nation if they filter out important and useful information about the global village. “It’s more isolation and less real life,” says medic critic Edwin Diamond, a former MIT professor who writes about online issues.

The explosive growth on online journalism has also resulted in some legal issues. According to David Post of the Georgetown Law Center, “The judicial and legislative processes are generally ill-suited for rapid change, often resulting in awkward development gap between burgeoning technology and existing legislation and legal precedent.” (quoted in Hoefges, 1998, p. 96).

As for the threat of the new media, media futurist Roger Fidler (1992) offers a structural argument for the existence of newspapers. He argues that “Technological change may force the newspaper to take a digital form, and readers may have greater control over the timing and content of their news reading, but the traditional franchise of newspaper need not change. With a tidal wave of unfiltered information available
electronically, audiences should still appreciate current, selected information from a known and reliable source.” As long as journalists supply information that is not only credible but useful to readers’ lives, Fidler reasons, changes in technology should pose little threat.

Journalism’s Future in Cyberspace

Good journalism is good journalism, and good writing is good writing, no matter what medium you are in. It is hard to image any media in which reporting, writing, visual, design and editing skills won’t continue to be needed.

The need for journalistic involvement in online media is crucial. According to Bill Kovach (1994), former editor of the Atlanta Journal Constitution, “Unless those of us who care about...public interest journalism become knowledgeable about the technology, conversant with its applications and active in shaping the decisions that will be made about its uses, other forces with more powerful interest will make those decisions.” (p. 4)

Journalists well acquainted with daily publishing under tight deadlines are appreciated in online media also. CEO of Salon, Talbot states: “The kind of writing we want on our site works well in print, too: incisive, emphatic, colorful, clear…”(see Lasica, 1998). He added: “I heard people saying the Internet would be the death of good writing, and I thought that was just absurd because, after all, there is a medium where you are reading words on a computer screen. So I felt that columnists who would succeed would be those with the liveliest voice – colorful, opinionated writers, who are not afraid to offend readers.” (Ibid).

The new media people want reporters, editors and news directors to bring their fact-checking skills and other timeless journalistic values – trustworthiness, accountability,
balance, fairness — to this new medium. Richard C. Harwood, president of The Harwood Group, a public issues research innovation firm in Maryland, says, “The conventional wisdom — that new media users want journalists out of the way — is absolutely false.” “If journalism is to succeed on the Net,” Harwood adds, “journalists need to reach back and bring their core values of accuracy, credibility, judgment and balance into this new world.” (see AJR, 1996, “Ranters, Burrows & Skimmers”). Journalists need to hold onto such time-honored values as truthfulness, objectivity, accountability and credibility. Michael Hallinan (AJR, 1996, “What Journalism Can Bring to the Net”), a journalist-turned-online editorial administrator at USA Today Information Systems, adds: “The value of online journalists will be seen in their skills in sifting through documents, asking difficult questions and getting the “who, what, when, why and how’ right…” The most important thing newspapers can bring to the Net is context to make sense of it all.

Although most experts advise those interested in working for online newspapers to concentrate on developing strong journalistic skills first, they also highlight different attributes for online staffers. Beyond the obvious need to understand how the technology works and what can be done with it, emphasis needs to be placed on teamwork, multimedia expertise, organizational skills, and being “content providers” rather than writers or editors. (see Lasica, 1997; Moeller, 1995; Harper, 1996).

Skills in telling a story in multiple ways are deemed valuable online. W. Russell Neuman, a professor at the Kennedy School at Harvard university, says that the convergence of newspapers, television, radio and other media will result in reporters
routinely carrying video cameras, performing sound editing and doing chats and other interactive components.

Ruth Gersh, AP editor, says that in the new "technitorial" age, she needs people with "a blend of traditional and futuristic skills, who can work imaginatively with the rich swirl of text, photos, graphics, audio and video that multimedia embodies." Mary Kay Blake, Gannett’s director of recruiting and placement, says that they are hiring more on potential and brainpower and far less on functional skills. She believes that computer-literate people often show clear thinking, strong analytical skills and connective abilities (see Stepp, 1996).

In essence, future journalists will have to adhere to a new way of thinking, of editing, including the incorporation of audio and video into stories. Online journalists will have to juggle a video camera, digital camera, and microphone along with the pen and a notepad. They create stories that can be told in innovative ways, comprising of digital images, sound and text. This may very well be the future of news: custom-fitted, highly targeted, and drawn from a variety of sources.

Until recently, news has been what journalists/gatekeepers decided it was. It was the function of journalists to disseminate only the most useful, important information to the public. These days, consumers decide what they want to read or hear. They can gather information from all over the world that is not necessarily filtered by journalists. The technology of online journalism has made it possible to tailor the news according to readers’ tastes and wishes. Hence, news in the future can be defined as any information that a consumer finds useful or important. Moreover, as author J. D. Lasica states, "It’s
time for journalists to trade in our gatekeeper role for a brand of Interactive Journalism that makes readers true partners in the news process” (cited in “Net Gain,” AJR, 1996).

The role of a journalist is also changing in the new millennium. Jack Downs, a design editor at the Press Republican in New York, suggests: “We are facilitators. We bring topics to the table, we focus discussion that is already there, we talk and listen, we gather up what we find and put it in perspective, we add what our expertise and special resources allow us” (cited in “A New Mindset,” AJR, 1996).

According to Carl Sessions Stepp (1996), senior editor of American Journalism Review, “As new forms of journalism expand at a Pentium pace, more and more traditionally trained news hands are converting to jobs that were unimaginable when their careers began. It’s a proving ground forging not just new kinds of journalism but a new species of journalist as well. Expertise and versatility define the members of this new species more than attachment to one specific medium. They can think and work across the widening spectrum from print to television to new information technologies.”

News organizations know that consumers of online media in the future will be drawn by unique content and perspective, and by its quality. One prominent newspaper futurist, Roger Fidler of Knight-Riddler (1992), believes that newspapers must prepare to embrace technological change. In addition, he believes that the content of the newspaper is extremely crucial. According to him, “Contrary to what many believe, the newspaper industry is in a better position than the Baby Bells to profit from these technologies. Fiber optics and ‘electronic paper’ will transform mass communication into an interactive,
multimedia format, but it will be content, not technology, that determines its success.

And content is what newspaper publishers know best" (Ibid).

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NEW TECHNOLOGY FRONTIERS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

By:

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