

History of the new york times media essay

[Media](#)



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Introduction

The media organisation selected for the purpose of this assignment is The New York Times (NYT), an American daily newspaper. This assignment will provide an analysis on the various forms of development that has shaped the daily newspaper into what it has become today and describe how these developments affect its readers.

History of The New York Times

The New York Times was founded on 18th September 1951 by a journalist and politician, Henry Jarvis Raymond and former banker, George Jones. In 1897, the newspaper's motto, " All the News That's Fit to Print" was formed and has since then been printed in the upper left-hand corner of the front page on every copy. Since then, the newspaper achieved international scope, circulation, and reputation and extended its range in the 1940s by adding regular crosswords and a fashion section. Today, the print format of the newspaper remains the largest local metropolitan newspaper in the United States and is considered the third-largest newspaper in national circulation, behind USA Today and The Wall Street Journal. It has received 108 Pulitzer Prizes (a prize awarded for excellence in journalism), which is more than any other news organisation (Rainey & Garrison, 2012) and its online website is the most popular American newspaper website, receiving more than 30 million visitors per month (Adams, 2012).

Types of Developments

The newspaper organisation has made substantial progress in terms of development and upgrades to the services that it provides since it began its operations. These developments mostly involve the use of new media such as the Internet.

Content and Style

The content in The New York Times is organised into three categories: News (International, National, Sports, Business), Opinion (Editorials, Letters to the Editor), and Features (Fashion, Film, Travel, Home, Crossword). Several changes were made since 2008, such as folding the Metro Section into the main International and National news section and combining the Sports and Business section. In terms of style, The New York Times switched to a six-column format after staying with an eight-column format for years until September 1976. In addition to that, it was also one of the last newspapers to adopt color photography and its first color photograph premiered on the front page on October 16, 1997. On July 18, 2006, the company announced that it would be narrowing the width of its paper by six inches which in turn would result in a 5 percent reduction in news coverage and lead to a target savings of \$12 million a year for the paper (Seelye, 2006). On August 6, 2007, the company changed its paper size from the traditional 54 inches (1.4 m) broadsheet style to a more compact 48-inch web width.

Online Presence

Ever since it introduced a website in 1996, The New York Times has had a strong online presence and has been ranked as one of the top websites in the United States. In March 2005, its website, nytimes.com, has achieved a <https://assignbuster.com/history-of-the-new-york-times-media-essay/>

traffic record of 555 million page views (Park, 2005) and by 2008, it managed to attract at least 146 million visitors annually. In March 2009, the website ranked 59th by number of visitors, with over 20 million visitors accessing its website. In September 2005, the company initially began a subscription-based service for its daily columns in a program known as TimesSelect, which in addition to providing up-to-date news also encompassed many previous columns and articles for free. Although it was free for print copy subscribers and university students, the service was eventually discontinued in 2007 because the cost of the service was seen as a little too expensive for other subscribers, costing \$7.95 per month or \$49.95 per year. Instead however, The New York Times announced that it would stop charging fees for access to parts of its website, as they are against the idea that newspapers can earn big profits by hiding their online content behind a subscription service (Cassel, 2007). Other than the Premium Crosswords section, the news archives from 1987 to the present are available to all readers free of charge. In 2012, The New York Times introduced a Chinese-language news site, cn.nytimes.com, with content created by the international staff based in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong (Haughney, 2012).

Mobile Presence

In April 2006, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr., chairman of The New York Times and Bill Gates introduced the Times Reader which is a digital version of The New York Times that can be installed on all computers. Times Reader was created through collaboration between The New York Times and Microsoft with the purpose of taking the principles of print journalism and applying

them to the technique of online reporting. What makes it unique is that while the user requires an Internet connection to download or sync the content, no Internet connection is required to read the content that has been downloaded, therefore allowing the user to take the news on their laptops or netbooks wherever they go. Times Reader 2.0 was later released in May 2009 (Larson, 2009). In 2008, The New York Times released an application software for the iPhone and iPad touch which allowed users to download any article to their mobile devices which enables them to read the paper even when they were unable to receive a wireless connection. An app for the Android smartphones was made available in 2010. The New York Times announced in April 2010 that daily content will be published through an iPhone app (Wauters, 2010) and later in October 2010, announced that the iPad will be ad-supported and available for free, however that later gets overhauled into a subscription-based model in 2011 (Albanesius, 2010).

Pricing

Faced with a continuous decline in its print advertising revenue, The New York Times introduced a subscription service or paywall in March 28, 2011, which by 2012 garnered modest success of several hundred thousand subscriptions and roughly \$100 million in revenue (Sass, 2012). The company would charge visitors for access to its online content monthly ranging from \$15 to \$35 (Sulzberger, 2011); however as of April 2012, it would allow visitors without a digital subscription to access up to 10 articles every month without charge. This method of sales would allow free access for casual readers, but produce revenue from "heavy" readers. Subscribers to the print format of the newspaper however would get full access to its

online content without any additional fee (Kramer, 2011). For the mobile devices, selected content, like the front page and the section fronts as well as the top news will remain free while others will require a subscription to access.

Affects of Developments

The developments of The New York Times has managed to affect the way that the readers access the content as well as playing a role of influencing the readers' opinion on the newspaper company. Firstly, the change in their paper size has been considered a reader-friendly move as the reduction has made it a better quality paper. The most important aspect of the development process for The New York Times is using New Media to integrate the content from print format to electronic format in order to appeal to the mass audience. As newspapers are now considered by many as a " sunset" industry, the only way that newspaper organisations can still stay in business is by providing an electronic edition of their newspapers on the Internet. By using the Internet, readers will still be able to access the same the information provided in the print edition through the use of their computers. The website may provide a more in-depth coverage of any news article as well as including several pictures that the readers may view and they may also access older news stories through its online archives. This strategic development is considered essential in order to maintaining the business because it is the most effective way of attracting young readers to read the news as research has shown that young people would rather get the news through the Internet rather than reading the print format. In addition to providing the news online, newspaper organisations like The New

York Times also provides applications for mobile devices such as laptops and iPhones which would make it possible for readers to access the news from anywhere and anytime. Considered both portable and convenient, this would benefit the readers as it eliminates the need to carry around a newspaper as all one needs to do in order to access the news is to be in an area that has a wireless connection. Through the development of technology, readers may now download and save any news articles on their mobile devices in order for them to read the news without the need for an Internet connection. One of the downside of this development is the pricing as a majority of online newspapers these days charge a subscription fee in order to access the online content. While this considered an effective way of earning revenue, it also may isolate a number of readers who would prefer to get the same information for free through other online news websites.

Users and Gratifications Theory

The communication theory that best relates to the developments of The New York Times is users and gratifications theory which is a way of understanding how and why people seek out specific media in order to satisfy their specific needs. Instead of understanding how the media influences people, this theory focuses on why people use the media and what they use the media for. This theory also describes how people intentionally choose media that will satisfy their given needs (McQuail, 2010) and serve other functions that includes knowledge gathering, entertainment, escapism or social interactions. Users and gratifications theory relates mostly to the application of new media as part of the developments of The New York Times, specifically the introduction of the Internet, social media and the advances in

mobile technology which provides a source for people to use and seek gratification. By establishing an online presence, The New York Times has successfully combined two forms of mass communications medium, newspapers and the Internet, and allows people to fulfil one of the main needs of uses and gratifications, cognitive needs. This particular need is fulfilled through the acquisition of knowledge, information and understanding (West & Turner, 2010) which in this case is to make use of the Internet to access news websites like nytimes. com in order to read any news events which in turn, allows them to acquire knowledge and information. These Internet news websites would allow users to keep informed on what is currently happening around the world at a regular basis and is also an effective way of making sure users revisit the website to check for updates. The rapid development of mobile technology makes it easier for people to achieve their needs as access to such websites may now be available from anywhere and anytime as long as they have their mobile devices with them. Users and gratifications theory would also satisfy social integrative needs of people by allowing them to discuss any news topics through the news forums or posting opinions and feedback through the comments section of any news websites. Some news websites like The New York Times have implemented a system which allows users to follow a blog or an article on social networking sites such as Twitter. This would play a role in allowing people to stay up-to-date with the latest news and events in order for them to stay on the same topic while discussing it with other people.

Conclusion

While all these developments point to the demise of the print media industry, it is important to state that much like all newspapers with an online and mobile presence, the evolution of The New York Times' delivery of the news seeks only to complement the already effective and traditional delivery method. The New York Times is still one of the most well-known newspaper publications in the United States in spite of its growing online and mobile popularity which proves that new media does not eliminate traditional media so long as there is still a demand for it.