

Print media: an early history

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Print Media's Early History Print media is constantly evolving. Back in 1690, stories in the newspaper required royal consent to be printed. Benjamin Harris who wrote a story of an affair about the King of France, was jailed for his words. It was this that sparked the protest against royal consent. The paper industry expanded. It eventually split in to two types of papers, federalist (for the crown) and anti-federalist (against the crown), these papers were constantly competing.

In 1791, after the American revolution, free press was born. Allowing people to write what they think without risking jail, this saw the first African-American and Cherokee papers. As technology advanced, more and more papers could be produced at a time, with steam power, 4000 copies could be printed an hour, this was called mass newspapers. The Literacy rate was low in 1830, so the role of newspapers changed, it was now to support literacy and public education.

Public Schools now taught people to read and understand the issues of politics, so they could make an informed vote, seeing as now everyone could vote, not just the rich. Thus began the Penny Press era, this involved, mass printing, which meant mass distribution. You could buy 100 papers for 67 cents, sell them for 1 cent a piece and turn a profit. With newspapers now everywhere, this meant mass education therefore mass literacy, and mass vote.

Newspaper industries began to compete for profits, and advertising was a result of that, more ads meant more money for the newspaper companies. Advertisements were around for five major reasons; To sell products / services, to educate people about products, to reach a mass audience, for

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economic / business reasons, and to perform a social function. Advertisements were also very common in magazines. The idea for magazines came from Benjamin Franklin and his brother.

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Magazines are different from newspapers because they specialize in certain areas, where as newspapers report on everything. A magazines focus was on a niche market. The number of magazines rose exponentially from 260 to 1800 between the years 1860 and 1900. There was better printing technology, lower prices and special mail rates. After the war there was a larger selection of topics, from golf to porn. People had much more leisure time. Print media has advanced and developed for hundreds of years, but it often keeps the same format, just look at news websites today.