

The opinion ad

Newspapers are in a downward spiral

Every day there is more bad news for the newspaper industry. The *New York Times* will eliminate its City section, Chicago Sun-Times is filing Chapter 11, *Washington Post* is offering its fourth buyout in 6 years, and on and on. Even CBS Sunday Morning covered the coming “death” of newspapers.

Paid opinions

One area that is fairly unique to newspapers is the paid opinion ad. Usually a full page, this ad will carry the unadulterated opinion of an organization, group, industry or even individual. The target is public opinion and/or lawmakers. We’ve seen “it’s our fault” ads and “you’re wrong and here’s why” ads. In fact, this is a time honored way of getting opinions across without the filter of an editor or a reporter.

Where will they go?

Sure there is advertising on the Internet, between pop ups and banners, we’re often inundated with advertising messages. However, we can pretty much ignore these ads. Only if we are in the market for say, acai diet supplement, do we click to find out more. Opinion ads use the full page newspaper format because they need the space to communicate a complicated message. It’s not about a sale or product attributes. I can’t see how these type of ads will subsist in an Internet-only market.

