

Numbers don't lie

Newspapers are in decline. It's a fact.

This is the first paragraph from a Washington Post article entitled "The accelerating decline of newspapers by Frank Ahrens:

"U.S. newspaper circulation has hit its lowest level in seven decades, as papers across the country lost 10.6 percent of their paying readers from April through September, compared with a year earlier."

The numbers were released by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), which measures circulation for print media across the United States. Some interesting (and sad) facts from the study:

- 30.4 million Americans buy daily newspapers, 40 million on Sundays
- Daily circulation has been declining since 1987
- In 1940, 31 percent of Americans bought a newspaper. Today, it is 13%.
- The top five newspapers are: Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times, Los Angeles Times and The Washington Post (all except the Journal have lost readers)
- USA Today suffered the highest reader loss, declining by 17.2%, due in part to a decline in the travel industry

As fewer people buy print newspapers, fewer advertisers will pay fewer dollars for the chance to display their ads therein. What will happen to the industry? More cuts and less paper, that is for sure. The New York Times recently announced another round of layoffs from its newsroom. The Washington Post is desperate to reinvent itself and recently went through a complete redesign.

Is there a solution? Your thoughts?