

The New York Times' Pay Wall

Yesterday, the New York Times announced its new subscription plan. Basically, you can read 20 articles on their site per month for free, and if you want continued access you will need to pay \$15 a month. This applies to your iPad subscription too. If you are a print subscriber, your digital access is included.

It is very telling that this announcement generated more than 2,000 comments on the New York Times site (more would have come in but the NYT shut down comments). I started reading through them, and the majority of what I read seemed to indicate that readers will not pay for access. The biggest argument: it is too expensive. The second biggest argument: NYTimes.com already carries lots of advertising.

Will the pay wall work? In my opinion, it will backfire for various reasons:

- **Human nature:** People do not like to pay for what they used to get for free. And, there are plenty of other news sites on the Web that are still free.
- **Work arounds:** If you click through on a Facebook or Twitter link to a New York Times article, you get around the paywall.
- **Too much money:** People are looking for ways to save money and paying for a digital subscription is probably an easy budget cut.
- **Fewer readers=lost revenue:** So say some people continue to pay for the content on the New York Times site. It will never be the same amount as the people accessing it for free. With fewer numbers, they will either have to charge less for their online ads (and lose revenue) or lose advertisers unwilling to pay for fewer impressions.

For many years, I was a subscriber to the New York Times print

edition. I was a huge fan of their crossword puzzle and I loved the Sunday Times. But, the price was exorbitant. I had to stop my subscription. I missed the crossword puzzle, yes, but not the huge bill. People will do the same with the NYTimes.com site. They will miss it at first, but they won't pay for it because of budgetary constraints.

UPDATE: Just came across this article from emedia vitals, which says that some sites using the "metered model" have actually gained visitors. Is it that you think you get what you pay for?

Your thoughts? Take my poll.

[polldaddy poll=4741554]

