

Will Newspapers Survive?

Last night, I attended a forum on politics and the Internet. The Internet has changed the way politicians campaign. Every self-respecting candidate has a website AND an Internet strategy. Candidates have Facebook/MySpace profiles and supporters use YouTube and other social media to post items in favor of their candidate/opposing the other candidates. It certainly has opened the playing field far and wide. Yet candidates are still spending millions of dollars on TV advertising. It seems that only 50% of Americans have broadband access so the various graphics/videos available on the Internet are not available to everyone. People still watch TV, but do people still read newspapers? I do, but declining numbers have certainly been the trend in recent years. As more and more people get their information ONLINE (even from newspapers websites) and as more people are concerned about environmental issues (paper=trees), are printed newspapers going to disappear? The biggest advertisers in print are retailers. Everyone has seen the full page ads for Macy's and other department stores. In fact, I would bet that 90% of all print ads are retail oriented. In this case, printed newspapers are not going away soon. It is not the same to peruse a website for news as it is to read through a newspaper and look at the ads, especially if you are looking for a specific item or a sale. But will retail traffic be able to save newspapers in a recession-bound economy? I am not sure. Also, the younger generation definitely does not read newspapers and baby boomers are headed toward senior citizen status. Perhaps in another generation or so the newspaper will go the way of the videotape and become a recollection of how things USED to be done.