The death of newspapers

We've spoken about it before on this blog, and the bad news for newspapers continues to come in. As you probably know, the *Rocky Mountain News*, Colorado's oldest newspaper, ceased publication as of Friday (Feb. 27). Add to that, the continual bad news concerning all print media, and you know that the outlook for newspapers in particular, and print media in general, is not good. The reasons boil down to: 1) fewer advertisers/less ad dollars; 2) the Internet and 3) the environment (and perhaps not in that order). We've seen the print news industry has been battered by reductions in advertising, and also, in reductions in people buying the print edition since they can get most content for free online. And some people are not buying paper because of the environmental consequences. So there you have it– we know the reasons why print media is going to be gone sooner rather than later. But how will we get our news if there are no newspapers?

In today's *Washington Pos*t there are two articles I'd like to bring to your attention. In one, Howard Kurtz, the Post's media commentator, discusses this phenomenon in detail. And another, by Marc Fisher, has to do with the lack of reporters covering Washington news. Indeed, this is the problem. If there are no newspapers, there are no reporters. With no reporters, there is no news.

Of course, part of the answer is adaptation. Newspapers will have to figure out a revenue stream from the online versions of their products and they will have to adapt what was essential reporting for print to reporting for the Internet age. However, the issue of advertising and paying for content will be just as relevant for the online versions of newspapers. If advertisers are cutting back, they are cutting back across the board. And if people are watching their pennies, they will also not pay for content.

Well, time will tell. In the meantime, I will continue to read my print newspaper as long as it continues to exist. And I will also read it and other newspapers online (after all, I am a news junkie). What will you do?

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