

# NRJ

## *Editors' Comments*

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We've been reading with interest the comments in the online discussion of the future of newspapers.

The question posed by Wilson Lowrey, head of the Newspaper Division of AEJMC, asked whether newspapers still hold a central place in our collective civic and social lives and whether there is a disconnect between journalists and readers.

His question provoked responses ranging from customer service problems that still plague some newspapers and discourage subscribers to questions about what the future delivery system or format for news would or should be.

Some also talked about the importance of newspapers to civic discourse and as the glue that holds a community together. For most newspapers, community means the city in which they publish and through which a shared body of information and concerns can lead to community problem solving.

This last, we think, is the heart of the issue. We think the role reserved for most traditional newspapers, the one information void not filled by any other medium, is still substantive coverage of local news. The question is whether and to what extent newspapers are tackling the tough issues in their own communities and laying claim to the one type of information that readers/viewers can't get in-depth elsewhere. A tandem question is whether and to what extent newspaper editors are trying to compete with flashier media through fluffy content.

If the last is true, then these same newspapers may be, and this we borrow from a popular book title, entertaining themselves to death. You can join the discussion at <http://www.aejmc.net/newspaper/>. Click on "What's Next for Newspapers."



We've persuaded Glen Bleske, chair of the Department of Journalism at California State University, Chico, to serve as book review editor for *Newspaper Research Journal*. The *Journal* has benefited greatly from his thoughtful manuscript reviews for many years, and we're grateful that he has agreed to join our editorial staff.

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Below is the policy for books that will be reviewed in *NRJ*:

The *Newspaper Research Journal* reviews recent books about topics of interest to professionals in the newspaper industry, to educators who specialize in courses that prepare journalism students for working in the industry and for scholars who do research on newspaper topics. We do not review books that serve mainly as skills texts.

Typical reviews of single books should be 800 to 1,000 words. Longer reviews may focus on more than one title if the books deal with a closely related topic. Responses to book reviews may be published at the discretion of the editor. Reviews will be solicited mainly from members of the Newspaper Division of AEJMC. Potential reviewers or educators or journalists should contact the book review editor if they have a book they would like to review or see reviewed. Please contact Glen L. Bleske, Department of Journalism, CSU-Chico, Chico, CA 95929-0600. He may also be reached by e-mail at [gbleske@csuchico.edu](mailto:gbleske@csuchico.edu).



How far have most newspaper / television partnerships come toward a real commitment to convergence? Not far, according to Daily, Demo and Spillman, in a study of how convergence is practiced at U. S. daily papers, despite industry leaders' predictions that such partnerships are going to be part of the future of all newspapers.



Another study by St. Cyr, Lacy and Guzman-Ortega showed a relationship between newsroom investments at newspapers with more than 25,000 circulation and increases in circulation over a five-year period. The authors say their results indicate a need to study the relationship between newsroom investments and reader perceptions of the value of the newspaper.



A content analysis of one newspaper, which changed owners four times in two years, led Maguire to conclude there is a negative effect on content with this churning in ownership, which is becoming more common.



Newspapers' use of online technology to stimulate more public affairs debate is not happening, according to a study by Rosenberry, who found limited evidence that newspapers are using available online tools to enhance their coverage or to stimulate such discussion.

Hardin and Shain studied issues facing female sports journalists and concluded that many don't feel the rewards of staying in the business compensate for the on-the-job discrimination and the sacrificing of time and family relationships. Many said they plan to leave the business.



A survey of editors at small newspapers showed a continuing concern for errors in their publications, which they rated as serious. More than half of those surveyed by Mensing and Oliver said they saw factual errors in their own newspapers.

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The name of Yoonhyeung Choi, one of the authors of "House Ads in Print Editions Promote E-newspapers," 26, no. 3 (spring/summer 2005) 95-112, was misspelled. We regret the error.

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