

committees that often do not get covered in a newspaper, local recipes, and columns, commentary, and letters to the editor.

The best of these are assembled in the weekly print publication—news of, about, and by your neighbor.

Technology is a neat thing, and early adopters drive key portions of economic growth. But sometimes it's just

another tool to help people and communities do what they've always done: connect with each other. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

HOW COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS ADAPT TO NEW TECHNOLOGY

News

- Weeklies can function as dailies for little added cost.
- The newspaper is no longer limited by 12, 24, or 48 pages.
- Photographs and color are no longer limited by press position or space.
- Web site links give readers more depth and context.
- The newspaper and its archives are searchable. Once community papers have digitized their back issues, staff and the public can easily keyword search through the history of a community with much more ease and speed than previous methods. Many such systems are set up on a fee basis, providing another revenue stream for the newspaper. Smaller community newspapers are still exploring this business model.
- Newspapers can provide everywhere, anytime delivery via cell phone text messaging, competing with radio for breaking news.

Advertising

- Newspapers can expand their reach to include Web and text message readers.
- Newspaper offerings can include video and audio advertising messages.
- Advertisers can promote a sale immediately via the paper's Web site or text messaging service, allowing greater ability to address unexpected inventory rather than waiting for next week's print edition. If a new product arrives or overstock needs handling, advertisers don't have to wait until next week's print edition but can tout a sale immediately via the paper's Web site or text messaging service.
- Newspaper Web sites can be programmed to display a different message from the same advertiser each time the same viewer clicks back on the paper's Web site.
- Readers can click on a link in an online ad that provides more detailed product information, product reviews, related services.
- Many coupons from newspaper Web sites can now be printed out on a home computer. Depending on the data collected from readers, such coupons can be individually targeted to address key demographics.
- Text message coupons can be captured on a cell phone and shown to retailers and advertisers. These, too, can be individually targeted.
- Unlike with radio, television, or the print edition, users can click through and purchase items through newspaper Web sites.

Production and Delivery

- Newspapers can publish as often as they like via the Web or electronic editions, with limited added costs. There are no added press lines and no increase in ink or paper supplies.
- Expanded distribution does not require more paper or ink.
- Electronic editions can be delivered outside the core market, even around the world, same day, without delay. No papers are lost or damaged; there are no added postage costs; and no extra delivery trucks or staff are needed.

—Brian L. Steffens