Norwegian daily automates print production with Naviga app

Agderposten, headquartered in Arendal, Norway, is among the first publishers to use Naviga’s Smart Layouts, following the application’s October release. The daily went live with the software in June.

Smart Layouts pairs Naviga’s Publisher and Templates applications to automate print production workflows. Publisher uses The Globe and Mail’s Sophi AI system and Naviga’s unified CMS to automate the assembly of the publication, while Templates uses an Adobe InDesign plug-in to automate layout of individual newspaper articles.

“We are now automating production on approximately 45 percent of the editorial pages and more are to come with features pages and weekend sections,” Agderposten’s Director of Technology Bjorn Robert Knudsen told News & Tech. Agderposten is continuing to navigate the learning curve and finding a balance between editorial oversight and maximizing the benefits of automation.

“We have to make compromises,” said Bjorn Atle Eide, Agderposten’s head of digital journalism. “Every day we see the system easily making pages, and the editors are very satisfied with it.” Knudsen said that as the machine learning features of the system ramp up, editors are gaining more confidence in the app and learning to be more hands off.

Automation, control

Still, because Smart Layouts allows control over individual pages and articles, the publisher has been able to step in to make adjustments where necessary.

Washington Post has launched Project Signal, “a next-generation advertising product that brings the combination of advertiser and reader needs to the forefront,” wrote Jarrod Dicker, vice president of innovation and commercial strategy, in a blog post on the product.

Project Signal is meant to be a solution for the post-cookie era, the blog post indicated.

“The Post is well positioned to help brands prepare for this industry shift by providing a view of the content their audiences read, the topics that drive interaction and preferred forms of media consumption. This deeper understanding gives advertisers the ability to know the types of content likely to lead to more engagement and conversion with their brands,” says the blog post.

Advertisers will be able to invest and learn from insights on The Post and scale those learnings across the Post’s Zeus Prime network of publishers.

In other WaPo news, Zeus Technology, the advertising framework and rendering engine from the Post, has hooked a big fish: Alden Global Capital’s MediaNews Group. MNG will implement Zeus Performance and “optimize the advertising experience for the benefit of readers and advertisers,” a news release from the Post said. The initial implementation will include the Orange County Register, with the option of expanding to additional sites later.

“This next era in media is about collaboration over competition,” said Dicker, who is GM of Zeus, in a news release. “We are pleased to welcome MediaNews Group into the Zeus family and look forward to working with them to bring more advertiser revenue to local publishers.”

According to the Post, Zeus Performance significantly improves digital ad performance over the industry average, driving viewability over 70% for customers.

Zeus Performance has signed more than 100 sites and powers three billion monthly impressions, says the Post.
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ABB to futureproof major German printing house

Augsburg-based Presse-Druck- und Verlags, responsible for printing some of Germany’s biggest regional papers, will implement updates to offset industry cost pressures, says a news release from Switzerland-based ABB.

ABB will build provide the latest updates to the company’s planning and management software tech.

ABB will install its specialist MPS Cockpit for planning and management of the entire newspaper production process across the plant, MPS Insight for reporting and analysis necessary for process optimization to increase profitability, and MPS InsertManager for the support and coordination of sales, production planning, storage and distribution of inserts.

Europe currently has ABB’s largest installed base for printing customers, followed by the U.S.

LNP expands relationship with SCS

Longtime SCS customer LNP Media Group, based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, has selected SCS/ClassPag to automate the pagination of its classified pages across its multiple publications. LNP Media Group owns and publishes several titles, including LNP, its flagship daily paper, and Lancaster Farming, published weekly.

LNP has used Layout-8000 from SCS for more than 30 years and will lean heavily on SCS/ClassPag to streamline and automate its complex classified workflow, says SCS.

In addition to SCS/ClassPag, LNP Media plans on upgrading its editorial system to SCS’s new Community Publishing System in early 2021.

SCS offers a line of publishing-related applications, including Layout-8000.

Las Vegas Review-Journal goes with SCS’s Production Suite

The Las Vegas Review-Journal has contracted with SCS to install its production suite — Layout-8000, SCS/ClassPag and SCS/Track — in 2021, according to SCS.

The systems will be part of an overhaul of the Review-Journal’s entire advertising and production workflow.

The SCS production suite will be integrated with AdPoint from Line-up, continuing to expand a relationship that includes implementations at The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Sonoma Media Investments and, most recently, the new Gannett, says a news release from SCS.

SCS introduces Community Publishing System

SCS has released Community Publishing System (CPS), a content workflow solution.

CPS upgrades are underway for SCS’s current editorial customers. The Bee Group Newspapers, in western New York, is currently going live with the CPS suite. Once completed, all nine of their weekly community papers will be produced using CPS.

SCS offers a line of publishing-related applications, including Layout-8000. Pennsylvania-based SCS is privately held by Richard and Martha Cichelli.

Walla Walla paper works with imPRESSions

The Walla Walla Union-Bulletin has chosen imPRESSions Worldwide for the relocation and installation of a three-tower pressline.

The Union-Bulletin (owned by the Seattle Times Company) acquired the 13-unit press from Pendleton, Oregon, to be moved to its Walla Walla, Washington, facility. The press will replace an older Urbanite. The Yakima Herald (also owned by the Seattle Times Company) will support the project and run jobs for Walla Walla and Pendleton.

Once the Pendleton press is removed, delivered and installed by imPRESSions, the Walla Walla plant will print more commercial work in addition to the Union-Bulletin.

The project is underway now and the press is expected to be printing live jobs before Christmas.

Mid-America Publishing moves to NewsXtreme Cloud

Mid-America Publishing, a third-generation publishing house based in Hampton, Iowa, has moved their legacy workflow system to the hosted, cloud-based production environment offered by Presteligence, NewsXtreme Cloud, says a news release from Presteligence.

NewsXtreme Cloud services bundles NewsXtreme Prepress Production workflow, PDF corrector, ink optimization, and the NewsXtreme Commercial portal.

Telegraph Media Group goes with Twipe

Telegraph Media Group has chosen Twipe as the partner to work on their recently relaunched daily edition app, says Belgium-based Twipe.

News briefs continues on page 22

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izations to allow us to back off some of the automations where editors needed more control,” Eide said.

The front page of the paper is always created manually, for example. And editors can make small changes on pages as needed without having to recreate the entire page.

“Our editors create a list of content in the Smart Layouts dashboard to determine what can be automated,” Knudsen said. “So ultimately, they still have full control over the editorial process.”

Digital first
All of Agderposten’s copy is created for digital channels first and then for the printed newspaper, Eide said.

“The CMS accounts for our online, epaper and print versions, and then most of the changes we make are to the print headlines,” Eide said.

The app automatically removes digital elements for the print addition, including video and tweets.

Ultimately, Agderposten is finding that balance it wanted in adopting a digital-first mindset. Smart Layouts has enabled the paper to do things more efficiently, while still producing the quality advertisers expect.

“This has the potential to revolutionize newspaper production,” Knudsen said. “This is a brand-new way to do it. It’s been a journey to get where we are today and make things more efficient while still maintaining the quality of a handcrafted paper.”

Eide said Smart Layouts has allowed editors to get back to basics.

“Instead of being InDesign operators, we can focus on curating and spending more time creating and editing to produce high-quality content,” he said.

Agderposten plans to roll out Smart Layouts to other papers in its group as well.

The next paper to roll it out will be Varden in Skien, Norway. The paper is a similar size to Agderposten, with a daily circulation of approximately 20,000. Additionally, Agderposten has forged partnerships with some private papers outside of its group. ▲
Meet Column, a new option for public notice

Software startup Column (column.us) is a new option for papers to handle public notice. “All 50 states have laws that require notices to be published in local print newspapers,” says CEO Jake Seaton.

With Column’s software-as-a-service solution, newspaper staff and government officials collaborate to publish material such as budget notices, meeting minutes, tax delinquencies, election notices and ordinances. Law firms place notices on estate sales, family law matters, foreclosures and evictions.

Column also helps papers provide a section of their website that displays notices they are publishing in print.

Seaton says part of the aim is to cut papers’ costs of administering the notices. The service is free to newspapers. Column charges a small processing fee to the law firms and governments on top of the rate charged by the paper.

Among users are The Washington Post, Wichita Eagle and Rio Herald Times (Colorado). Column also works with state press associations, including the Kansas Press Association, with whom Column formed a partnership to roll the software out to papers in Kansas.

For communities with no newspaper, the law firm or government placing the notices typically looks to a publication in an adjoining county or to a statewide publication.

Column, incorporated in 2019, is a remote-first company, with team members based around the country. It has headquarters in Washington, D.C., and is incorporated in Delaware as a PBC, a public benefit corporation, often called a B-Corp. “Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose,” according to B Lab, the non-profit organization that certifies B-Corps.

B-Corps do pay taxes on profits, unlike non-profits. “At Column, our specific public benefit purpose is ‘to build technology that improves the utility of public interest information and supports the distribution of that information by journalists that serve their communities,’” wrote Seaton in an email to News & Tech.

“At Column, we acknowledge that improving public notice presents a complex economic and public policy challenge with a wide variety of stakeholders. Chief among those stakeholders are the local journalists who do the hard work to create government transparency, and who often depend on public notice as a mission-critical source of revenue. Column’s public benefit status is our binding commitment to do right by our stakeholders — the journalists responsible for distribution public interest information.”

Nancy Gibbs, former editor of Time magazine and current director Harvard’s Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, is serving as Column’s public benefit director, responsible for holding company accountable to its mission.

The company has venture backing. “We have raised its initial funding from a variety of angel investors and entrepreneurs across the media and technology industries, as well as a couple of early-stage venture funds,” according to Seaton.

Challenges

The issue of paid public notice in newspapers has been in the news as the requirement has been met with challenges in numerous states in recent years. “Defying forecasts, newspapers have retained public notices (and they’ve grown ever more critical to small papers’ survival),” read a headline over a July piece by David Westphal at Poynter.

Most recently, as reported by the Public Notice Resource Center, legislative committees in Wyoming and Arkansas took up the issue in light of budget pressure brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. The center deemed the Wyoming situation more threatening, as the joint Corporations, Elections & Political Subdivisions Committee approved a motion to introduce a bill that would transplant notices for meeting minutes and government salaries from newspapers to government websites, the center reports.

“Public notice is a really, really important issue for the future of the news business,” says Seaton. Column is helping press associations advocate on the issue with state legislatures, Seaton says.

“Each year there are legislative battles,” he says. “Column is doing everything we can to help the media industry in those battles.”

Seaton background

Seaton has roots in the newspaper business, as his family’s Seaton Publishing has owned the Mercury newspaper in the “Little Apple” of Manhattan, Kansas, for five generations. The Manhattan Mercury and Seaton Publishing are affiliated by some common owners to papers in Arkansas City and Winfield, Kansas; Newkirk, Oklahoma; Hastings and Alliance, Nebraska; Sheridan, Wyoming; Spearfish, South Dakota; and Grand Junction, Colorado. Seaton Publishing is also affiliated with the Manhattan Broadcasting Group, which includes three FM and one AM radio station in the Manhattan area.

Seaton says Column may look to expand to other services down the road, but for now, its aim is to “get public notice right.”

Column CEO Jake Seaton
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Moves, plant sales in the news

As media companies make adjustments during the coronavirus pandemic, a slew of relocations, building closures and sales is in the news.

This is nothing new, but the sales have been accelerating of late as staff work at home and the industry faces ongoing pressure. Despite the fact that the trend is not new, the sales are painful for industry participants and watchers, as jobs are lost and the landscape shifts. For some good news, see the Hearst entries at the end of this article.

McClatchy and Gannett are among companies selling property. Gannett has unloaded its BridgeTower Media, W-Systems and SweetIQ units and sold The Inquirer and Mirror (Nantucket, Massachusetts) to 41 North Media. More recent changes:

• The Kansas City Star is departing from its well-known glass building downtown and will relocate, the paper announced Nov. 10. The Star had sold the building to Ambassador Hospitality last year and had been leasing the space. Printing of the paper will be outsourced, the paper said, starting in 2021. The change in printing will result in 68 full-time and 56 part-time Star production staff losing jobs. McClatchy owns the paper.

• The Idaho Statesman is selling its building on Curtis Road to Cedar Creek Wealth, the paper reported Nov. 2. The building function as storage units, the paper says. McClatchy owns the paper.

• McClatchy has also sold a 56,000-square-foot warehouse in Charlotte, North Carolina, Charlotte Business Journal reported. The facility, at 1001 Pressley Road, went for $5.2 million to Piedmont Land Development under the name CrossPoint Property Group-LoSo, according to county real estate records, the business journal said.

• News Corp plans to shift the printing of several of its publications in New York to a different facility in the city. Under the change, the publications would be printed at The New York Times’ College Point plant in Queens. This plan would result in the closure of the company’s Bronx Print Plant.

The move may mean up to 400 layoffs, according to the New York Post. The change may not happen until early next year, says the Post. The Bronx plant produces daily print copies of the Wall Street Journal and The Post, along with Barron’s weekly. News Corp will be examining options for the future of the plant.

• The Desert Sun (Palm Springs, California) building on North Gene Autry Trail is for sale for $7.5 million, the paper reported Oct. 30. The paper produced its final locally printed edition Sept. 21, as it moved its printing to Phoenix. Gannett owns the paper.

• The St. Augustine Record (Florida) building has been sold to an undisclosed private investor for $7.5 million, the paper reported Nov. 10. The 34,400-square-foot office/warehouse facility at 1 News Place contains the paper well and other tenants, including USPS distribution center, the paper said. Gannett owns the paper.

• The Star Courier (Kewaunee, Illinois) building has been sold to a Johnson Towing and Recovery, based in Manlius, the paper reported Oct. 29. Gannett owns the paper. The paper’s staff will operate out of office space inside the building, the paper says. The Star Courier will go on printing five days a week.

• The Binghamton University Foundation bought a former newspaper printing plant in Johnson City, New York, for $4.5 million, the Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin reported in late September. Gannett, which owns the Press & Sun-Bulletin, moved the printing of that paper, the Ithaca Journal and the Elmira Star-Gazette to Rochester in 2018, the Binghamton paper reported. The building has been unoccupied since then.

Binghamton University has been looking for a spot for a library annex, the anticipated role for the site at 10 Gannett Drive, said the paper.

• The Philadelphia Inquirer is shutting its Montgomery County printing plant and moving production of its papers to Cherry Hill, New Jersey, to an operation owned by Gannett, the paper reported Oct. 9. Up to 500 people are losing jobs in the move, according to the paper. It’s possible Gannett will hire some of The Inquirer employees, but that’s not guaranteed, according to Lisa Hughes, publisher and chief executive officer of The Inquirer, the paper said.

The cuts represent nearly half of the paper’s staff of 1,073. The closure of the Schuykill Printing Plant in Upper Merion Township may come by the end of the year, the paper said. The sale is not yet final, said a memo to staff from Hughes.

The Inquirer is working with a buyer for the 45-acre property. The buyer’s identity was not made public.

The property has a 674,000-square-foot manufacturing facility, opened in 1992.

The change is “is aimed at ensuring the survival of the media company as consumers turn to digital platforms for their news,” said the paper.

Media companies continues on page 9
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• The Hartford Courant announced Oct. 19 that the paper is moving its printing to The Springfield Republican (Massachusetts). An undisclosed number of jobs will be lost, the paper said.

• The Salt Lake Tribune announced in late October that it will cease producing a daily print edition and will go to a weekly printed paper delivered through the mail, starting January 2, 2021.
  In addition, The Tribune and local rival the Deseret News won’t renew their joint operating agreement, the papers reported. That deal, made in 1952, will end Dec. 31.
  Meanwhile in early 2021, the Deseret News will move from daily print delivery to two new printed offerings — a reimagined weekly paper and a new monthly news magazine called Deseret. The Church News will stay a weekly print product. Digital delivery will go on uninterrupted the paper said.
  The Deseret News is owned by a subsidiary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
  The Tribune said it doesn’t plan to cut its newsroom staff as part of the change.
  Salt Lake Tribune Chairman Paul Huntsman bought that paper in 2016 from Alden Global Capital. The paper got IRS approval to be a non-profit last year.
  The printing presses in West Valley City that the two papers share will be “mothballed,” according to a source, says The Tribune.
  The almost 160 press operators, carriers and other facility staff will lose their jobs.

• Amazon has bought a printing plant in Santa Ana, California, that had been used by the Orange County Register, the paper reported Oct. 29.
  The plant will be knocked down and a distribution center will go up in its place, says the paper.
  Amazon paid nearly $63.2 million on Oct. 19 to purchase the facility and nearly 17 acres along the 5 Freeway, said Jack Haley with Lee & Associates, a listing agent for the property.
  Real estate developer Michael Harrah, who owned the Register property for several years, remains the owner of the well-known orange building where the paper’s newsroom and ad staff worked since the mid-80s, the paper said. That building is up for sale or lease.
  The Register newsroom operates out of a building in Anaheim near the 57 freeway south of Angel Stadium. Digital First Media bought the paper in a bankruptcy auction in 2016.

• Wisconsin-based Quad/Graphics has closed four plants and cut 1,100 jobs, the Milwaukee Business Journal reports.
  Printing company Quad shuttered plants in Taunton, Massachusetts (in May); and in Charlotte, North Carolina; Portland, Oregon; and Riverside, California (all in February). The drop in employee numbers took place since the start of the year, said the business journal.
  The closings were mentioned in Quad’s earnings call on Nov. 4, with the closures helping the company “rightsize our costs to match volumes,” according to Executive Vice President and CFO Dave Ho- nan.

• Lee Enterprises has put the Globe Gazette (Mason City, Iowa) building on the market, the paper reported.
  The news staff will operate out of a new spot in or near downtown Mason City after the building is sold, the paper said.
  Cerro Gordo property records put the tax value of the Globe Gazette property at $897,450, says the paper.
  The paper is printed at the Des Moines Register facility in Des Moines.

• It’s not a closure or a sale, but a relocation. Hearst Newspapers announced Nov. 12 that the San Antonio Express-News will be moving one block to the newly refurbished San Antonio Light building in the first quarter of 2021. Additionally, the San Antonio Express-News plans to increase newsroom staffing by 10% in 2021.

• Hearst Magazines, meanwhile, announced in September the launch of Premium Print, a new initiative that includes a multimillion-dollar investment across its portfolio of more than 25 brands to strengthen its position in the marketplace and enhance the quality of its print products.
  The additional investment will improve the product of several Hearst Magazines print properties through new, larger formats, higher-quality paper and improved editorial ratios, says Hearst.
  Immediate plans, which build on the enhanced paper quality introduced in Good Housekeeping and House Beautiful earlier this year, include adding up to 10% more editorial pages in Good Housekeeping and additional edit pages and larger trim size to the print editions of Harper’s BAZAAR, ELLE and Road & Track, effective with the brands’ 2021 issues.
  The company will also launch a new quarterly publication from Delish next year.
**True colors .... The story so far...**

Making the world better with true colors .... less ink, less paper waste, less energy use...... better quality newspaper...... the closed-loop story so far...... Q.I. Press Controls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>‘True colors’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>As pioneers in closing the loop with respect to color control in newsprint, we made a “true colors” song back in 2006. At the same time we started wearing our white suits to make everyone aware that our technology didn’t make use of any reference patches.</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>I AM...SID</td>
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<td></td>
<td>With the “I AM...” concept, also SID got a new look.</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Story so far..</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sold over 400 systems worldwide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>IDS-3D: all in one</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Combining two technologies: IDS and EAE-Loop resulting in IDS-3D. Integration of register, color, damp control and fault detection in one single camera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Smart presetting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction of Smart Pre-setting for even lower waste.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Story so far..</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sold over 1500 systems worldwide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Largest order IDS-3D in USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QIPC acquires its largest order for closed loop color control in the USA. 64 IDS-3D camera’s to control color, register and damp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>100% defect detection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Enhanced Print Fault Detection is able to scan 100% of the image during production. Meaning no defect will stay undetected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2006 ‘True colors’

2008 I AM...SID

2013 Story so far..

2014 IDS-3D: all in one

2018 Smart presetting

2019 Story so far..

2020 Largest order IDS-3D in USA

2020 100% defect detection

2020 Present Day

Fact is that the first customer who bought the system is actually still using it after 16 years on a daily basis and since then we have sold over 1650 systems in more than 30 countries all over the world and counting...
German press manufacturer Koenig & Bauer is working with fellow European partners.

In cooperation with Q.I. Press Controls (QIPC – EAE), Koenig & Bauer will be offering retrofits and technical service for presses with EAE controls or QI Optical measurement and control systems. “Our customers want one point of contact for all their needs. And we can now offer them this possibility. We have always enjoyed a very trustful relationship when working with QIPC-EAE in the past, and so this sales cooperation is the logical next step,” says Thomas Potzkai, head of service at Koenig & Bauer Digital & Webfed. The cooperation will initially cover Koenig & Bauer customers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

“It is a win-win situation for everyone involved,” says Menno Jansen, chairman of QIPC-EAE. “We are delighted that our cooperation with Koenig & Bauer has now become even closer.” The intention is to add further regions and printing presses from other manufacturers to the portfolio in the future. Koenig & Bauer established a partnership with S.E.M. Servicegesellschaft two years ago.

In April 2014 Q.I. Press Controls acquired the business and assets of EAE. Q.I. Press Controls is headquartered in the Netherlands, while EAE’s head office is in Germany.

**Earnings report, new CEO**

- Koenig & Bauer put out its earnings report for the third quarter on Nov. 11. In Q3, order intake was down 13.8%, it said. In the first three quarters of 2020, new orders were below the previous year’s figure by 15.4%, although this was better than the general sector figures for printing presses published by industry association VDMA, which dropped by 26.8% in the same period, said the report.

- Koenig & Bauer (US/CA) announced that Kilian Renschler, its current executive vice president of sales, has been named the new CEO and president. After 11 years at the helm of Koenig & Bauer (US/CA), Mark Hischar will be officially retiring as of Dec. 31.

- Koenig & Bauer Durst has unveiled updates for its Delta SPC 130 FlexLine Automatic corrugated production press that provides industrial solutions for run lengths from one to millions. New water-based orange and violet inks have been launched to ensure food safety compliance for primary packaging and extend the color gamut, says the company. Koenig & Bauer Durst has also announced new automation features for the Delta SPC 130 FlexLine Automatic that will ensure high productivity and can be integrated into existing customer workflows, according to the company.

**DCOS, Koenig work on Compacta S80**

DCOS is working with Koenig & Bauer to develop a retrofit and upgrade solution for the Koenig & Bauer Compacta S80 short-grain heatset press. Even though these presses were manufactured decades ago, they’re “still a hot candidate for service-life-extensions and automation upgrades,” says DCOS in a news release. First out of the shoot is a 1991 vintage Compacta S80 in Germany. Besides a complete drive and control system upgrade, the project also includes a fully loaded print inspection system. The original drive and control systems were facing total obsolescence. DCOS’s automation platform Printing Framework was customized to fit the needs in a combined effort between Koenig & Bauer and DCOS, says the DCOS release. The upgrade incorporates a new main drive system, mechanical PIVs replaced by shaftless drives, an updated safety system and a new machine and quality control system.

A new feature in the DCOS Print Inspection Systems family was developed for this project: a camera-based closed-loop web-guide control system. This feature will serve as a possible upgrade solution for obsolete web-guide control systems.
Bluefin lets advertisers upsell themselves

Andover, Massachusetts–based Bluefin Technology Partners recently bagged the Douglas Budget (Wyoming) as a client for its self-service advertising solutions. The company’s offerings include Bluefin Place Ad, which lets advertisers place classified ads in multiple print and online publications around the clock, and Bluefin Marketplace, where papers host their online classified listings.

Among its clients is Canadian-based Black Press, which has some 60 titles using Bluefin’s (www.getbluefin.com) tech.

“We give the publishers tools so that the application brings the advertiser into the self-service world, just like other industries,” says Steve Rosenfeld, general partner, sales and marketing. The tagline that Rosenfeld likes to use is that Bluefin’s solutions help publishers empower advertisers and engage readers.

Bluefin’s tech allows advertisers to place a “complete and compliant” ad that follows the publisher’s rules, which Bluefin programs in. “It’s all done without the interaction of anybody at the newspaper,” says Rosenfeld, although the publisher is notified so it can review ads.

The tech gives the advertiser the ability to “upsell themselves,” online, says Rosenfeld. The upsells include featured positions on a page and additional photos or video.

“Revenue comes in because studies have shown that if you compare the price of an ad that is taken in a phone room, let’s say, or internally, compared to self service, that the self-service ad price is over 20% higher than one that’s taken in the phone room,” says Rosenfeld.

Rosenfeld says he views classified and other advertising as not just a revenue source, but rich local content. “Newspapers and media organizations should be the main destination for relevant, reliable and trusted local content. Classified advertising can be an important part of this local content,” he says.

“They want us to answer the phone,” says Rosenfeld when asked what media companies want from vendors. Community newspapers is one area the company focuses on, and especially for them, customer service is key. “They need help,” says Rosenfeld. “They need help to find new ways to enhance their print and digital strategy.”

Papers pay a monthly fee for Bluefin’s service.

Rich Grover founded what is now Bluefin Technology Partners in 2005 and was joined by Rosenfeld. Both are industry veterans with companies including Atex, System Integrators, AdStar and Edgil Associates as former employers.

In December, Bluefin plans to announce that it’s extending Bluefin Place Ad to support display ads and online banner ads, said Rosenfeld.
The Local Media Association has a lot going on. Among the myriad projects the association is undertaking (see below), one jumps out at the moment: a lab on journalism funded by philanthropy. It’s spot-on with the LMA’s focus on proving out new business models for the industry.

“We really view that as the biggest opportunity that has emerged in 2020,” says CEO Nancy Lane of today’s philanthropic resources trend. “And so we’re putting a lot of time and resources towards that.”

Sixteen media companies are participating in the lab, out of nearly 40 that applied. They include two digital startups and 14 newspapers. Among the papers are the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the Record-Journal in Meriden, Connecticut, the Tampa Bay Times and Al Día, in Philadelphia.

LMA hired Frank Mungeam of Arizona State University to head the lab.

The Seattle Times, an early adopter of the philanthropic model, is leading the faculty.

“It’s not just Seattle,” says Lane. “We’ve been studying the Fresno Bee for some time. Tim Ritchie (publisher) has 30% of his newsroom funded by philanthropy and you see McClatchy making a big, big investment in this space, hiring people at the corporate level and putting them out in regions to work with their publishers on this strategy. So we’re high on this strategy.”

Increases in digital subscriptions are in the headlines, especially for big players, with Lane calling them newspapers’ “North Star right now, their top KPI.” But the digital subscription model is challenging, especially for smaller papers, and “if you can get a third of your newsroom funded by philanthropy, it’s going to be easier than getting a third of your newsroom funded by digital subscriptions. Not saying you shouldn’t do both,” she says.

“We very much wanted to prove out the model for independent and family-owned newspapers. That’s our focus, and startups, because we think they’re in a position with strong local leadership to tap philanthropic funding. They have the relationships and they care about the community.”

If it’s early, but smaller papers are doing “quite well” in the lab, which is intensive, says Lane. “They’re already making pitches to community foundations and they’re getting really positive feedback from those foundations and in some cases proposals have been requested,” she said.

Everybody has two delegates in the lab, with one on the business side and a lot of newsroom participation. For smaller operations, it may be the editor and publisher. Larger papers such as the Tampa Bay Times may have a fulltime person. Lane says more operations may put fulltime people on philanthropy as more money starts to come into the model.
The goal is for the group to collectively raise $2.25 million by June of next year to fund journalism projects. The six-month lab ends in February with the aim of another lab in spring.

Other LMA projects
Local Media Association serves more than 3,000 newspapers, TV stations, digital news sites, radio stations and research and development partners. Google and Facebook are major funders for LMA. The organization has set four strategic pillars for 2020 and 2021: journalism funded by philanthropy; industry collaboratives; sustainability for publishers of color and industry DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) initiatives; and business transformation.

Among LMA’s current projects:
- Three news collaboratives launched this year, the Oklahoma Media Center, Solving for Chicago and Word in Black. So far, $1.25 million has been raised to support them. LMA’s approach with the collaboratives is “news collaborative meets business transformation,” says Lane.
- Efforts to assist publishers of color with migrations to state-of-the-art digital publishing technologies, with new funding from the Knight Foundation. Knight support will also help LMF report to the media industry on the impact and key lessons of the migrations. Local Media Foundation is a charitable trust affiliated with LMA.
- The Fund for Local Journalism, which recently awarded 10 investigative reporting stipends of $5,000. A COVID-19 local news fund also ran earlier this year.
- A new lab with three cohorts of news organizations in the Americas to focus on developing digital subscriptions strategies. Cohorts will be organized as “North America,” “Latin America,” and “digital natives,” which includes publishers from both regions. The Google News Initiative, FTI Consulting and the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) are partners in this one. ▲
FTI Consulting has put out a report urging newspapers to rethink legacy distribution of their print product.

Here’s a key excerpt from the report:

Elimination of distribution centers could be financially beneficial. This course of action would eliminate facility and facility management expense while allowing for some re-investment in carrier operations.

As pre-prints continue to decline, newspapers can move to a one-part paper, eliminating the need for preparation time and space.

While Sundays will likely remain multiple part, offsite storage and other peak-period workarounds can be employed.

There are numerous potentially lower-cost alternatives such as employing a drop-based (parking lots, strip malls), pick-up or super-carrier models (similar to a state contract arrangement) that rely more on all carriers or a sub-set of carriers to act as distributors or agents.

In addition, mail (USPS) can be used strategically for very low-density and in-network areas.

Online retail sales

FTI also put out a report on online retail sales that sheds light on consumer behavior and advertising opportunities.

Here’s a key excerpt from that report:

This has been an unexpected banner year for online retail sales, mostly attributable to the impacts of business shutdowns and social-distancing practices on the way Americans shop in this year of pandemic. Nobody saw it coming or anticipated its effect on the consumer economy.

Whether or not they wanted to, most Americans became more frequent online shoppers in 2020. This development has profound implications for the retail sector, not just in 2020 but for the decade ahead, as most shoppers won’t likely go back to their old spending ways in a post-COVID world.

We now expect online retail sales growth will increase by 25% for the year, nearly double our previous estimate. Our revised forecast model expects online retail sales to reach $748 billion in 2020 compared to $598 billion last year and our previous 2020 forecast of $677 billion—a $71 billion windfall attributable to COVID-19.
Newsday debuts TV studio  NEWS & TECH STAFF REPORT

Newsday has a new, state-of-the-art TV studio. The Long Island-based newspaper unveiled the studio during live election night coverage.

The studio has 2,169 square feet of production space, four fully robotic 4K studio cameras and a 24’ x 10’ cyclorama green screen.

Judging from a video the paper produced on the studio, Newsday seems excited about the new space.

“There’s been a ton of chatter equating newspapers with Jurassic creatures lurching around on their last legs,” wrote Newsday owner Patrick Dolan in a post on the paper’s website in September. “The reality is far different. Though Newsday’s roots are in a product made from ink and trees, more people than ever are experiencing Newsday’s world-class journalism in many different ways on many platforms.

“We’ve invested heavily in modernizing our facility from wall to wall, including all the high tech infrastructure we need to push fresh, exciting content out on any platform,” he wrote. “Streaming video, social media, a smart TV app — all are ways to get even more enjoyment from a subscription to Newsday.”

Newsday anchor Faith Jessie on the set of the paper’s new TV studio.

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ProImage offers SPIR@L

**NEWS & TECH STAFF REPORT**

**ProImage**, owned by Agfa, is now offering SPIR@L, a new RIP screening technology, to its customers and prospects.

SPIR@L saves ink during the printing process, according to ProImage. In designing and creating solutions based on hardware, software and consumables, Agfa says it focuses on achieving three success factors: ecology, economy and extra convenience, what the company calls ECO³. The aim is to make prepress and printing operations cleaner, more cost-effective and easier to manage and maintain, says the company.

SPIR@L is Agfa’s latest patented screening technology and is based on the fundamentals of Agfa’s Sublima screening. With a guaranteed minimal dot reproduction, SPIR@L can print the entire range from 1–99% while maintaining a mathematically proven moiré-free structure, according to Agfa.

SPIR@L uses the same lpi and dpi as a conventional AM screen and draws a curve and groove to create the SPIR@L “dots.” However, the curve and groove applied will almost disappear in print, providing a similar cleanliness and rosette structure as AM, says ProImage.

Agfa’s headquarters are in Mortsel, Belgium.

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Bee News Guild starts No Pay-for-Clicks campaign

**NEWS & TECH STAFF REPORT**

The Sacramento Bee News Guild has started a No Pay-For-Clicks campaign on Twitter and the guild’s website.

The campaign comes as the guild says McClatchy, which owns the Bee, is trying to tie journalists’ pay to the number of clicks stories get.

The Bee’s management wants to have metrics goals in annual reviews, according to Poynter. The reviews are linked to raises and job advancement, says Poynter.

The idea was included in recent McClatchy-guild negotiations, which have been complicated by the company’s new owner. Chatham Asset Management bought McClatchy out of bankruptcy in July.

The guild cites a newsroom proposal to the guild as saying, “It is understood that for reporters no more than 30% of the final overall review score shall be tied to numerical performance metrics. These metrics include items such as page views, subscriber page views, conversions, time on site and other metrics that measure reader engagement.”

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Industry Musings

Whither media conferences?

What will happen with media and print industry conferences and fairs in the future? Will organizers bring in-person back after the knee-capping to the industry delivered by coronavirus? Will companies budget to send their people to the events? We can only hope.

A good guess is that post-pandemic, the events will re-emerge as permanent hybrids of in-person/digital.

Many of us have fond memories of conferences, where we met others in the industry, made connections and maybe struck a deal or laid the groundwork. For some, the conferences represent a fun journey and a chance to scrap around a new city.

Since the advent of COVID-19, we’ve seen major conferences such as the America East News Media Summit, the Key Executives Mega-Conference and drupa be canceled, postponed or up in the air.

Innumerable other events took hits, such as the Facebook/ONA/Knight Foundation conference on local news (postponed), Midwest Journalism Conference (canceled until 2021), and the big NAB Show from the National Association of Broadcasters (canceled until 2021).

Many, including the NAB Show and drupa, are offering all digital events, which serve as valuable outreach, but are no substitute for in-person gatherings.

All in Print China, co-organized by Messe Dusseldorf (Shanghai) Co., did go forward in October in Shanghai and drew more than 69,000.

We asked a few key people for their view on the events’ future.

Sabine Geldermann, director drupa and global head print technologies at Messe Dusseldorf, organizer of drupa:

“The pandemic will most certainly leave its lasting mark on the trade fair industry. The trade fair format of the future will therefore be a hybrid one, linking digital offerings with a live event.

I don’t expect purely digital formats to persist in the long term. Fairs like drupa represent an indispensable platform for industry participants, providing orientation, impetus and, above all, satisfying the demand for face-to-face meetings and experiences to a high degree. It is all about human needs, haptic experiences and running machines that fascinate participants and which definitely cannot be fulfilled at this point by digital media.

What distinguishes leading world trade fairs such as drupa is the concentrated energy that arises from the selective gathering of many people; the personal and emotional exchange; the joint presence of decision-makers, multipliers and idea providers; lively discussions; presentations that set the pace; chance encounters; opportunities to acquire new customers; recruiting options ...

In the future, it will be important to combine the advantages of both formats — digital and live — to create a strong and successful trade fair. This is why we offer an extended online service for our exhibitors and visitors on preview.drupa.com and are turning drupa 2021 itself into a hybrid trade fair.”

Zeddie Neidig, manager, meetings and events, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association, organizer of the America East News Media Summit: (from a Nov. 4 email)

“We might have a few more answers for you within the next couple of weeks. We have moved our typical March/April date to September of 2021 and we have re-located the event to the Pittsburgh area for 2021. I know we are hoping that we will be able to plan some type of in-person event, since we moved to Q3.”

NAB: (from its website)

“First, we are exploring a number of ways to bring the industry together online, both in the short and long term. We know from many years of serving the community with face-to-face events, that connectivity is vital to the health and success of the industry. That’s why we are excited to announce NAB Show Express, targeted to launch in April 2020. This digital experience will provide a conduit for our exhibitors to share product information, announcements and demos, as well as deliver educational content from the original selection of programming slated for the live show in Las Vegas, and create opportunities for the community to interact virtually — all of which adds up to something that brings the NAB Show community together in a new way.”

Nancy Lane, CEO, Local Media Association:

LMA held four annual conferences and is a host, along with America’s Newspapers, Local Media Association and the News Media Alliance, of the Mega-Conference, which remained up in the air for 2021 as of mid-November.

“We probably won’t do Mega as a virtual event. The beauty of Mega is the networking and the trade show,” says Lane.

Lane is feeling the pain of the temporary loss of the events. “We were constantly on the road at conferences and it was our lifeblood,” she says. “So it hurts.”

Indeed.

Weigh in: What do you think is the future of media and print trade shows? Are you missing them? Email your thoughts to editors@newsandtech.com. We may use them in a roundup on this issue. If you want to send them anonymously or if you don’t want us to use your name, that’s OK. Just provide basic info, such as that you’re a news editor or a feature writer.
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The digital edition app is the full, daily edition of The Telegraph newspaper, delivered to subscriber devices. Through collaboration with Twipe, a refreshed version of the daily digital edition was successfully launched earlier this year.

The digital edition is now created daily by The Telegraph’s team via Twipe’s NextGen Edition Creation Technology and distributed via Twipe’s Edition Distribution platform to mobile apps on iOS, Android and Kindle.

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**Boston Herald newsstand sales down more than 40%**

The Boston Herald’s newsstand sales have fallen 41% year-over-year in recent months, says the paper’s filing with the Alliance for Audited Media, the Boston Business Journal reported.


Over the six months from April to September in 2020, single-copy sales of the Herald averaged 12,619 per day. In 2019, the average from April to September was 21,331.

The business journal cites slowed activity in Boston during the pandemic as the major force behind the fall.

Newsstands and convenience stores are more key for the Herald than for most papers, the business journal points out, as those types of sales represent a bigger part of the paper’s overall sales.

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**ProPublica expanding, hiring**

ProPublica is adding offices in the South and the Southwest and augmenting its presence in the Midwest, the company announced in October. The expansion is in addition to ProPublica’s joint initiative with The Texas Tribune and our Local Reporting Network.

ProPublica is adding reporters, editors and members of specialized teams.

New York-based ProPublica is an independent, nonprofit newsroom that produces investigative journalism.

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**Senators introduce legislation for news publishers**

Senators Ben Cardin (D-Maryland), Jeanne Shaheen (D-New Hampshire), Chuck Schumer (D-New York) and Chris Coons (D-Delaware) have introduced the “Heroes Small Business Lifeline Act,” which provides a Small Business Administration affiliation waiver that would allow more news publishers to apply for SBA loans under the Paycheck Protection Program created by the CARES Act in March 2020, reports the News Media Alliance. The News Media Alliance says it commends the move.

The waiver language follows that included in the updated HEROES Act passed by the House on Oct. 1, says the News Media Alliance. Both bills would allow news publishers to apply for PPP loans as individual, independent entities, despite ownership by companies with other small news publishers or non-news businesses, allowing more publishers to qualify for the loans.

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**Newspaper companies release earnings reports**

Major media and newspaper companies have released earnings reports for the last quarter.

Reports are online from Gannett, New York Times, Tribune Publishing, and Meredith.

The New York Times report says that for the first time, total digital-only subscription revenue exceeded print subscription revenue, “making digital-only subscriptions not just the central engine of the company’s growth, but on its way to being our largest revenue stream.”

For its part Gannett surpassed 1 million paid digital-only subscribers. “Our third quarter results showed a significant and rapid rebound from the second quarter impact of the COVID pandemic and economic shut down,” said Michael Reed, Gannett chairman and CEO in the report.

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Pew Research Center has turned up with some unpleasant numbers. A late October study from the fact tank compares the coronavirus hits that the newspaper and TV news industries have taken.

Newspaper companies have been hit especially hard by the coronavirus pandemic, Pew says.

Among the six publicly traded newspaper companies studied — Gannett, New York Times, Tribune, McClatchy, Lee and Belo — major chains that own over 300 daily papers, advertising revenue fell by a median of 42% year over year (i.e., comparing the second quarter of 2020 with the second quarter of 2019).

By contrast, total ad revenue across the three major cable news networks was steady overall, but there were sharp differences between the networks: While ad revenue for MSNBC and CNN declined by double digits, Fox News Channel’s revenue rose by 41%.

Ad revenue for the five local TV news companies studied (which together own or operate at least 600 individual stations) was also down in the second quarter of this year, but increases in retransmission fees more than made up for this.

Meanwhile, ad revenue for nightly network TV news at the three broadcast networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) increased over the same period, as audiences have been turning to TV in record numbers for news about the outbreak.

Total network nightly news ad revenue rose 11% year over year as of the second quarter this year, outpacing its performance in the comparable presidential election years of 2016 (up 5% year over year) and 2012 (up 5%). This is driven by ABC’s 21% rise, though CBS (3%) and NBC (7%) also rose.

Among the report’s other key findings:

- Digital ads, a newer source of revenue for the newspaper industry, offered little relief in the early days of the pandemic. Digital ad revenue fell by a median of 32% between the second quarters of 2019 and 2020, even though digital ads reach not only digital subscribers, but visitors to the free offerings on a newspaper’s website as well.

- Newspaper circulation revenue, which had been steady in recent years, also declined in the second quarter of 2020, by a median of 8%. As a result, three of the six newspaper companies studied now have more revenue coming from circulation than from ads.

- In percentage terms, newspaper companies that reported revenue in both periods seemed to fare worse financially in the second quarter of 2020 than they did during the Great Recession of 2007–2009. Ad revenue for newspaper companies also dipped sharply during the Great Recession, with median declines of 11% and 30%, respectively, in the second quarters of 2008 and 2009 among these companies. Still, this does not match the dramatic year-over-year median fall of 42% in 2020. And circulation revenue was roughly steady in 2008 and 2009, compared with the 8% median year-over-year decline in the second quarter of 2020.

- As revenue fell, newspaper companies cut labor expenses. Of the four newspaper companies that reported compensation expenses in the second quarter of 2020, all showed a double-digit percentage decline year over year, with a median decline across the four of 20 percentage points. For most of these companies, labor expenses have been falling steadily over the past decade or more, reflecting the 51% decline in newspaper newsroom jobs between 2008 and 2019.

Material courtesy of Pew’s report “Coronavirus-Driven Downturn Hits Newspapers Hard as TV News Thrives”
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Report: Content marketing steady

Despite the effect COVID-19 had on businesses, content marketing remained relatively steady and is projected to be more of a priority in 2021, according to a recent report. The Branded Content Project, an initiative by the Local Media Consortium, Local Media Association and Facebook Journalism Project, has released the report on content marketing in collaboration with Borrell Associates.

With expenditures on advertising falling by double-digit percentages in 2020, the report, “Sizing the Content Marketing Opportunity,” projects that the amount spent on content marketing will be down just 1.5%, to $63.3 billion. The decline is due almost wholly to the retraction of marketing activity in a few dozen categories that have been hit hardest by the pandemic, said a news release on the report. Travel/tourism, live entertainment, sporting events, clothing, and recreation have reduced content marketing expenditures an average of 19% due to business slowdowns or shutdowns.

Content marketing has increasingly become a popular option for advertising for businesses, including small businesses, says the release. According to a Borrell Associates’ October 2020 SMB panel on content marketing, 46% of small businesses said they used branded content in some form; 45% said it had become more of a priority in 2020; and 56% said it would be more of a priority in 2021.

Additional highlights from the report include:

• Other industry categories have increased spending between 5% and 9%. They include many that are compelled to educate and inform the public: mental health services, insurance medical doctors, colleges and universities, financial services, and two of the biggest content marketing spenders: real estate agents and city, state, and local governments.

• Digital platforms are the biggest magnet for content marketing for digital’s ability to “go deep” on content without the added expense of buying more airtime or print space. Digitally placed content marketing accounts for two-thirds of all spending. The next-largest media categories are television and direct mail.

• The top five spending categories revolve around credit and finance, telecom, real estate and automotive.

The LMC and the LMA launched The Branded Content Project in 2019 with a $1 million investment from the Facebook Journalism Project. With participation by 35 media outlets, the project generated $24M in local revenue, said the news release.

SendtoNews offers automatically updating COVID-19 coverage

SendtoNews, owner and operator of a digital video distribution platform, has developed a video player with a playlist dedicated to providing publishers and their readers up-to-the-minute coronavirus coverage, the company says.

The player features coronavirus-related video from sources such as Associated Press, Bloomberg, Cheddar, the NBA, MLB, NFL and other major sports leagues and more than a hundred others to deliver contextually relevant content to publishers, updated every 20 minutes, the company says.

To use the player, publishers paste the embed code wherever they want coronavirus video coverage. The player then selects the most recent and relevant coronavirus related content from STN’s library of over 600,000 videos. STN receives up to 5,000 new videos per day, the company says.

“In times of uncertainty, information is the first line of defense and publishers serve their community well by giving them the most up-to-date and accurate news available,” says Matthew Watson, CEO of SendtoNews.

SendtoNews’s video players have been used by the New York Post, Chicago Tribune, SF Gate, Houston Chronicle and over 1,600 others, according to the company.
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What’s happening at the Reynolds Journalism Institute?

• Don’t be afraid of push alerts

We had two fellowships on this subject. One with the founder of hyperlocal news site in Princeton, New Jersey, who was having a great success with news alerts for her readers. Krystal Knapp, of PlanetPrinceton.com, said it was so easy to set up and to maintain that she wanted every hyperlocal site to offer them. The other push-alert fellowship was with The Associated Press, which is doing research on the best practices regarding various variables for push alerts such as timing, wording and topics.

• New revenue possibilities

RJI is working on a project with the Missouri Press Association, the state government reporting project at the Missouri School of Journalism and Distributed Media Lab (DML), a startup that RJI is supporting, to create a new revenue stream for local newsrooms across the state. DML has created an easy way to add a collection of news to a website including ads. It’s a win-win-win deal. The reader gets news from other news sources without leaving his or her home site. The hosting site gets to display high-quality news from elsewhere and gets some revenue. The newsrooms in the collection get wider distribution and some revenue. And, in this specific case, the Missouri Press Association gets to provide additional benefits to its members and gets some revenue too.

• New engagement ideas

Another institute attribute is its proximity to the smart students and professors at the journalism school. RJI regularly sponsors projects and works with classes of senior students who are ready to put what they’ve learned into practice. A recent example is a strategic communications (that’s the academic and industry term for combining advertising and public relations) class that worked with the Southeast Missourian in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to look for ways to increase print and digital subscriptions. The newspaper sponsored a separately branded music festival each summer and the students suggested that the separate branding wasn’t ideal and encouraged looking for ways to combine revenue sources. Their idea was to provide the sponsors of the music festival, like the local bank, hospital or supermarket, free one-year digital subscriptions to semissourian.com for all of their employees. The newspaper has agreed to try out the idea.

• Keeping up with social media and explaining what we do

Social media has been a major factor in quickly disrupting the practice of journalism. From “News Feeds” in Facebook that don’t contain much news to instant tweets about news events that don’t contain much journalism, the value of journalism has never been more important and never been less understood. RJI helped launch an initiative, called Trusting News, that is giving newsrooms the guidance and resources to better explain why they do what they do and why it matters. The American Press Institute has also joined the effort to support the ongoing work of former Missouri professor Joy Mayer and former TV journalist Lynn Walsh at trustingnews.org.

• Learning from the next generation of readers

One way to get a sense of the future is to take a look at what the young folks are doing right now with their phones, their social media accounts and their interests. Being on the campus of the University of Missouri gives RJI a terrific launchpad for numerous efforts. Some of these include the Walt Potter Digital Ambassadors, where RJI sends a student to a weekly newspaper for a week to help that newsroom learn a new digital skill like create a Twitter account or make short news videos; the RJI student innovation fellowships, where students spend a summer working on an innovative project, not getting people coffee, with a news partner; and a two-year collaboration with Instagram to send students to newsrooms to help them come up with superior Instagram strategies.

“Ensure that journalism has a long and bright future.” That’s the mission of the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri (whose journalism school is long recognized as one of the nation’s best), according to its executive director, Randy Picht. As the field of journalism and the media evolve, being open-minded and eclectic in pursuing the institute’s goals is key, says Picht. This November, News & Tech had the chance to check in with Picht about the thinking and the projects powering the institute.

News & Tech: Your website states: The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute engages media professionals, scholars and other citizens in programs aimed at strengthening journalism in the service of democracy. RJI generates and tests new techniques and new thinking that promise to improve journalism. What can you tell us about new techniques and thinking that are emerging from the institute today, in these tough times for many media operations?

Randy Picht: When we think about strengthening journalism we generally are thinking about helping local journalism, so that’s usually the first question we ask when thinking about launching a new project or collaborating on one. A project is much more interesting to us if its goal is to create new opportunities for a local newsroom, save an editor or producer time or help overcome a nagging problem.

Some recent examples:

News & Tech: The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute is now accepting 2021–22 RJI Fellowship applications from individuals or organizations with an innovative journalism project idea that could also benefit the industry.
Applications are due December 18, 2020.
What trends are you seeing in your fellowships and how do they reflect or shape the direction of journalism?

Randy Picht: Our fellows are generally an eclectic bunch from year to year and we like it that way. We want to cast a wide net and use the program as a way for RJI to explore as many new ideas as possible. This year we have fellows working on the emerging issue of unpublishing (requests to remove news items from your site), diversity in who gets quoted and interviewed by reporters in your newsroom, re-envisioning obituaries for the digital age, and addressing discrimination against Latino journalists.

Our fellows can produce specific resources to help guide the industry — for example, last year we had a fellow who was working on ideas to help newsrooms do a better job of covering gun violence in their communities which is still in progress — and/or they can raise awareness of a topic to get others involved, which is something our current fellow Sara Quinn is doing about the importance of photojournalism right now in today’s topsy-turvy world.

I always look forward to the many great ideas that come in each year and, even though we can’t do all of them, really appreciate the number of folks who raise their hand and want to try to make journalism as strong as it can be. I think with this coming class we will cross the threshold of 100 fellows since the institute opened its doors and that’s a terrific milestone and a lot of great work.

News & Tech: Where does the institute get the bulk of its funding?
Randy Picht: In 2012, RJI was fortunate to receive a $30 million endowment from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation that provides funding in perpetuity for the institute. The annual income from the endowment is also, as part of the terms of the endowment, matched with university funds. We also occasionally pursue grant funding when working on specific projects. For example, RJI is currently completing work on a $250,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to study best practices and guidance for the future around the archiving of born-digital content.

News & Tech: At your Journalism Futures Lab and Technology Testing Center, professionals, students and researchers experiment with new technologies and their potential for improving the gathering, content, design and delivery of news, information and advertising. Give us an update on what’s happening there.

Randy Picht: The hallmark of the Futures Lab is our video series called Innovation in Focus, which tackles new opportunities in the digital realm for the industry. Each month the series looks at an idea in three parts: (1) RJI tries out the technology or idea, (2) provides tips and lessons learned for other newsrooms who may be interested in trying it themselves and (3) talks with a journalist in the field who has also been using the new technology or idea to get their advice for newsrooms.

Some of the recent featured ideas include Kapwing Studio, a free online editing studio to make videos and GIFs; interactive videos that give users the ability to choose the parts of a story they are most interested in; how to create an AMP story; and using Instagram’s new Reels function for news.

We also can use the Futures Lab structure to launch projects with partners. For example, we recently teamed up with the university school of engineering to create a mobile app called JSafe that gives journalists a place to report online harassment and will be an easy way to collect the threats and abuse that come into social media accounts and inboxes of journalist, especially female journalists. The Coalition for Women in Journalism has agreed to maintain the app, which was officially launched in October.

Also, on our whiteboard, is another collaboration with the school of engineering to create an augmented reality application that can be used by local newsrooms to give their readers a better sense of items or places that are being discussed in their communities. For example, in Columbia, Missouri, residents have been concerned about whether roll carts for garbage collection are a good idea. With this application, news outlets could give viewers the opportunity to use their mobile phones to see what a roll cart would look like in their garages.

News & Tech: You also have an aerial journalism program. What’s that about?
Randy Picht: Right now, it’s mainly about experimenting with drones. In addition to working with students who want to get licensed to fly drones for work in TV and newspaper newsrooms, our director of aerial journalism writes about important issues that are coming up for this emerging newsroom capability.

Some recent headlines from him: “RJI drone journalism director proposes ID rule alternative to the FAA” and “7 hard-to-get drone visuals you can get during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

News & Tech: Anything else you want to tell us about?
Randy Picht: The two things that the folks around the institute get tired of hearing me say are: “Our mission is easy to remember — ensure that journalism has a long and bright future” and “We have the most flexible fellowship program in the country.” At the heart of both soundbites is a strategy of using a strong foundation of being open-minded and eclectic in pursuing our goals. I think that foundation has helped the institute launch and participate in a wide range of helpful projects and initiatives.

When I first started as executive director at RJI in 2012, I talked with Dean Dean Mills, who founded the institute and retired after 26 years at the Missouri School of Journalism in 2015, about the idea of focusing the institute on one particular aspect or challenge that would be shaping the future. He said that would be a good idea and as soon as I could find someone who could guarantee what the future will bring, then I should feel free to focus on that particular aspect or challenge. I’m still looking.

RJI’s cornerstone fellowship program is a good example. The program was launched as a traditional residential program which resulted in fewer applications and an academic tilt to the ideas. In 2012, we introduced the non-residential option and then the next year an institutional option, where companies could apply and designate a fellow, and applications went from 50ish to more than 300. Last year, we received more than 500.

Another example is the annual RJI student competition, which was focused on new technology, such as the Apple watch or dealing with deepfakes, and limited to Mizzou students. Predictably, our finalists for a dozen years were highly technical projects with a limited on-ramp to the industry. They were terrific to hear about but the impact to help the industry was very small. So, we’re taking steps to be more open-minded. Last year, we opened the competition to any college student in the country. This year, in addition, we made two important changes: the challenge involves a non-technical challenge — innovative ways for a newsroom to engage with an audience — and requires finalists to try out their idea in real-time with a newsroom partner. We have 10 finalists from journalism schools across the country and some very interesting ideas. We’re looking forward to the all-virtual judging in the spring.
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Buyouts, refinancing at Gannett
Gannett has accepted some 500 buyout opt-ins from employees, Poynter reported Nov. 12. The company had offered the buyouts in October.

The buyouts involve some 60 editors, 19 photojournalists, seven managing editors, three executive editors and 124 reporters, says Poynter, which got a copy of a listing of the job titles of people chosen for buyouts.

Some 600 people had wanted a buyout, Poynter said.

Gannett announced Nov. 17 that it had refinanced $500 million in debt.

Layoffs at Tulsa World
The Tulsa World has cut at least 10 journalists, Poynter reported in September.

The cuts followed layoffs at other Lee Enterprise papers, Poynter says.

The Tulsa World had cut seven people from its design desk earlier in September, Poynter says.

Iowa-based Lee bought 30 dailies, The Buffalo News and more than 49 paid weekly publications from BH Media, completing the sale in 2020.

Poynter provides a running list of layoffs around the country.

Dallas Morning News journalists vote for union; Fort Worth may follow
Journalists at The Dallas Morning News and Al Día have won the right to negotiate as a group for a union contract, the paper reported Oct. 16.

The National Relations Labor Board said newsroom staff voted 84 to 28 in favor of union representation. NLRB must formally certify the results.

“We are disappointed with the unofficial results of the union vote,” said The News' Publisher Grant Moise in a statement.

“We felt strongly that the best way to move forward is without a third party being inserted into our newspaper’s culture. We respect the rights of these employees and will proceed forward in good faith negotiations.”

A. H. Belo owns the paper.

The vote was to form the Dallas News Guild under the Communications Workers of America.

Plain Dealer’s Friday section retooled
The Plain Dealer’s Friday entertainment section has been retooled, the paper said. Starting Oct. 23, it’s been published as a broadsheet section. It’s now dubbed “In the CLE.”

The section had been a magazine-sized tabloid for more than a half century. It started as The Plain Dealer Action Tab in 1966 and was renamed Friday in 1976, says the paper.

Among “In the CLE” offerings are arts news and features, movie reviews, TV picks and coverage of musical acts to hear locally and online, says the paper.

Sen. Cantwell releases report on local journalism
Senate Commerce Committee Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-Washington) has released a report titled “Local Journalism: America’s Most Trusted News Sources Threatened.”

The report outlines how changes in the information marketplace and the dominance of online platforms pose an existential threat to local news publishers, says the News Media Alliance. The report notes the vital importance of high-quality journalism to our communities and calls for the restoration of local journalism, including through Congressional action, says the Alliance.

The publication of the report came ahead of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's hearing on Oct. 28 examining Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. The heads of Twitter, Facebook and Alphabet/Google testified at the hearing.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) announced that Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg were scheduled to appear voluntarily before the committee on Nov. 17. The hearing focus was the “platforms’ censorship and suppression of New York Post articles,” says a release from Graham.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram agrees to recognize union
The Fort Worth Star-Telegram has agreed to voluntarily recognize a union for newsroom staff, the paper reported Nov. 2.

Management’s agreeing to recognize the unionizing effort means there is no need for a vote on the issue.

More than 80% of non-management staff signed union authorization cards, the organizing committee said.

The Fort Worth NewsGuild will be part of The NewsGuild-Communications Workers of America.

McClatchy owns the paper.

It’s the second major paper in Texas to go for a union recently. Newsroom staff at The Dallas Morning News opted in October to unionize.
New York Times Co. launches
Pivotal ad platform
The New York Times Company’s advertising team has unveiled Pivotal, a platform built for marketers seeking brand relevance and consumer insight on “the most important topics today,” says the Times.

Backed by the Times’s audience data and research, Pivotal delivers guidance and recommendations for brands to shape creative work and marketing strategies.

The team conducted multilayered research, interviewed journalists, experts, readers and adults across the U.S. and tapped into The New York Times’s first-party data to outline recommendations around six key territories: race, climate, sex, gender, tech and money.

“Pivotal offers marketers insight on the role their brands can play in our lives. In the near future, we’ll introduce a variety of ways brands can engage with our experts and our insights,” says the Times.

Uberall works with Gannett, acquires SweetIQ
Uberall has been chosen by Gannett and its digital marketing subsidiary ReachLocal to become their premier provider of presence management solutions, said a press release from Uberall.

As part of the agreement, Uberall will acquire Gannett’s SweetIQ subsidiary. Providing local digital marketing services, the SweetIQ team will join Uberall and become part of a new Montreal hub, the company’s seventh location outside its Berlin headquarters.

“We’re thrilled that Gannett selected our ‘Near Me’ brand experience platform as their presence management solution,” said Florian Hubner, co-founder and CEO of Uberall. “We also want to welcome SweetIQ’s staff to Uberall and look forward to providing even better service and support to our North American partners going forward.”

Vox Media launches Concert Ad Manager
Vox Media has launched Concert Ad Manager, a self-service tool giving brands, particularly small and medium-sized businesses, the ability to build and deploy ad campaigns at scale, across premium publishers within the Concert and Concert Local marketplaces, says Vox.

Concert Local is a centralized advertising marketplace bringing together a collection of local media brands, built in partnership with the Google News Initiative.

Advertisers can access inventory across the Concert marketplace including publishers like NBC Universal, Penske Media and Quartz along with Vox Media’s 13 topically diverse networks, says Vox. Brands will also have access to ad inventory across the Concert Local marketplace, which includes dozens of local media brands like Advance Local, Boston Globe, Chicago Sun-Times, Dallas Morning News, Star Tribune, Tampa Bay Times and Texas Monthly.

Hartford council slams Alden Global Capital
The Hartford City Council (Connecticut) has thumbed up a resolution pushing Alden Global Capital, the parent of the Hartford Courant, to refrain from more layoffs, which have “decimated” the staff, and to have the paper go back to local ownership, the paper reported in September.

The strongly worded resolution, according to the paper, was proposed by councilwoman Marilyn E. Rossetti.

State Sen. Saud Anwar called into the meeting that dealt with the resolution and said that the Courant is the longest continuously published paper in the U.S. and “a gold standard for what can be trusted.”

Mayor Ben Florsheim of Middletown also called into the meeting. He said Alden Global Capital “sounds like a villainous company from a Disney movie.”

Layoffs at Meredith, Bloomberg Industry Group
Meredith Corporation cut 180 workers, the Des Moines Register reported Sept. 18.

The layoffs hit 130 staff members from its local media group, owner of 17 television stations, the paper said. The other layoffs are at Des Moines-based Meredith’s national media group, which publishes People, Better Homes & Gardens and other titles.


Staff cut at Hearst as O to lower frequency
MBeginning in mid-February of next year, 59 employees will be cut at Hearst Magazines, according to a WARN notice filed with the New York State Labor Department.

The move comes as Hearst’s O, The Oprah Magazine goes from 12 issues to four in 2021.

In a video released in the summer, Winfrey talked about the future of the magazine. “There’s been a lot of chatter and a lot of speculation about O The Magazine ending,” she said. “I want you to know it’s not ending. It’s evolving because after 20 years of covers I think it’s time. I also think it’s a good thing because none of us were meant to stay the same. We evolve with the times. So, yes, we are ending the monthly print edition with this year’s December issue,” she said.
SugarCRM buys W-Systems from Gannett
SugarCRM has bought W-Systems, a CRM and marketing automation solutions and services provider, from Gannett. New Jersey-based W-Systems, a division of Gannett’s UpCurve, is Sugar’s North America Reseller of the Year in 2020 and one of the company’s largest global implementation partners. With the acquisition, Sugar is expanding its ability to meet implementation service demand for its time-aware, AI-powered sales, marketing and service software, says a news release from Sugar. “We are excited to have the team at W-Systems, with their deep expertise and dedication to customer success, join Sugar to help fuel our continued growth in the North America region,” said Craig Charlton, CEO of SugarCRM. Based in Silicon Valley, SugarCRM is backed by private equity firm Accel-KKR.

Gannett sells BridgeTower Media to Transom Capital
Gannett has sold BridgeTower Media to private equity firm Transom Capital Group. BridgeTower is a provider of B2B information, research, events and marketing solutions in more than 25 U.S. markets and industries. BridgeTower Media is a business media and marketing platform providing content within the legal, business, construction, legislative, pet retail and home furnishings sectors through more than 40 print and digital brands, says a news release on the buy. BridgeTower provides subscribers with content relevant to their daily professional activities and has a research unit focused on employee satisfaction, lead generation services and live events centered on awards and education. BridgeTower was previously a stand-alone, B2B

Colorado Community Media buys Colorado papers
Jerry Healey announced Oct. 29 that he has closed a deal with Landmark Community Newspapers to buy all of their Colorado weekly papers and companion websites. Prior to the acquisition, Colorado Community Media already owned and operated 17 weekly and two monthly papers in the greater Denver area. New Mexico-based media merger firm Dirks, Van Essen & April represented Landmark in the transaction. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. The papers acquired are the Brighton Standard Blade, Fort Lupton Press, Commercial City Sentinel Express, Metro Advertiser, Canyon Courier, Clear Creek Courant and 285 Hustler. “It is with mixed feelings that we sold this group of newspapers which our company has owned for many years,” said Michael Abernathy, president of Landmark Community Newspapers. “In today’s challenging times, we came to the decision that the communities we serve and our employees in the Denver area.

Thrive magazine will stop publishing
Thrive magazine will stop publishing, The Courier-Tribune (Asheboro, North Carolina) reported. Gannett owns the magazine and The Courier-Tribune. The cancellation is not related to COVID-19, the paper said. “It’s more about changing roles and goals in the newspaper industry,” the story said. “More simply put, print publications are very expensive to produce, especially magazines. I will miss producing not only Thrive, but our regional groups’ other two magazines — Davidson Living and Alamance Living,” said Jill Doss-Raines, who wrote the story on the cancellations.

Twin Cities weekly City Pages shuts down
Twin Cities free weekly City Pages is shutting down, owner Star Tribune Media announced Oct. 28. The weekly has been operating for 41 years. Thirty people will lose jobs. Affected employees will get severance packages, the company said. “For more than 40 years, City Pages has been a go-to source for coverage of the Twin Cities arts, culture, politics, entertainment, and dining scenes,” said a statement from the company. “However, despite its strong presence and brand, months of quarantines, restrictions, and closures arising from the COVID-19 pandemic have disrupted the restaurants, clubs, theaters, museums, and other venues that form the core of City Pages’ revenue.” “City Pages is dead. We had a good run,” read a headline in the paper.

41 North Media buying Nantucket paper from Gannett
41 North Media is buying The Inquirer and Mirror (Nantucket, Massachusetts) from Gannett, the paper reported. The sale was expected to close on Nov. 1. The sale returns the paper to local ownership. “This is great news,” editor and publisher Marianne Stanton said, the paper reported. “Although our corporate parents have largely been ‘hands-off’ with our operations, I’ve always thought that the newspaper would be in the best long-term position with local ownership.”

Ex-owner of St. Louis Magazine files for bankruptcy
Ray Hartmann, ex-owner of alternative paper the Riverfront Times and a former owner of St. Louis Magazine, has filed for bankruptcy, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.
Hartmann and his wife have assets of about $65,000 and creditors who are owed more than have $1 million, according to the filing, says the paper.

Hartmann said he made "one really big catastrophic commercial real estate investment," the paper said.

New weeklies in South Carolina
Andrew O’Byrne Sr. and Andrew O’Byrne Jr. have started two weekly papers, one for Bamberg County and the other for eastern Orangeburg County (South Carolina), The Times and Democrat (Orangeburg) reported.

The papers will be named the Bamberg County Leader and the Orangeburg Leader.

The launch of the papers comes after the shuttering of the Bamberg Advertiser-Herald, the Holly Hill Observer and the Santee Striper.

The O’Byrnes also own The Calhoun Times Leader, the Wagener-based Aiken Leader and the Kershaw-based Kershaw News-Era, the paper says.

Powder, Snowboarder, Bike, Surfer shut down
Powder, Snowboarder, Bike and Surfer are shutting down, according to film/media company Teton Gravity Research. A360 Media owns the publications.

The company hasn’t put out a statement, but Powder magazine had a posting on its website.

"On October 2, we were notified by our parent company A360 Media, LLC (formerly American Media, LLC) that our entire editorial staff will be placed on indefinite furlough, effective November 20, 2020, when operations of the magazine, our website, and our social channels will be paused. We do not know if or when this hiatus will end," it said.

Enthusiasts have followed the action sports magazines in some cases for generations, said Teton Gravity Research.

North Equity buys Popular Science, other titles from Bonnier
North Equity, a digital media venture equity firm, has acquired a number of media brands from Bonnier Corporation. The acquisition includes Popular Science, Popular Photography, Saveur, Outdoor Life, Field & Stream, Better You and Interesting Things.

The additions complement North Equity’s home platform, where Saveur will join BobVila.com and Kitchenistic to form a new food category. They will also create a new specialty media vertical under Popular Science and Popular Photography and expand North’s growing footprint in the military, tactical and outdoor verticals, where it recently added Task & Purpose.

“Since inception, the North team has proved our ability to acquire, reimagine and profitably grow media brands," said Andrew Perlman, North Equity managing partner. "We have accomplished this by working with the teams at each brand to deliver high-quality, meaningful content and build innovative, sustainable business models.”

North is based in Miami with offices in San Francisco and New York. Bonnier is owned by Sweden-based Bonnier AB.

Pocket Outdoor Media acquires Big Stone Publishing
Pocket Outdoor Media, creator of active lifestyle content, has acquired Big Stone Publishing, the longtime publisher of Rock & Ice, Trail Runner and Gym Climber magazines and websites.

The BSP brands join POM’s existing stable of active lifestyle brands: Climbing, Backpacker, Women's Running, Triathlete, Yoga Journal, Clean Eating, VeloNews, SKI and Warren Miller Entertainment, among others.

“This acquisition significantly strengthens our ability to engage with outdoor enthusiasts across all of the seasons and sports that live at the intersection of adrenaline and adventure," said Robin Thurston, CEO of Pocket Outdoor Media.

The company’s Active Pass membership program recently launched for its endurance brands, featuring benefits that include a wide range of premium content, VeloPress books, magazine subscriptions, Roll Massif event access, and training plans through a strategic partnership with Today’s Plan. The membership program will roll out across the entire POM network in the coming months with content and benefits from the new acquisitions included.

Pocket Outdoor Media is headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, with offices in San Diego and Toronto.

209 Multimedia buys Morris Newspapers of California
The Turlock Journal, Manteca/Ripon Bulletin, Oakdale Leader, Ceres Courier, Escalon Times, Riverbank News and 209 Magazine are under new ownership, the Turlock paper reported.

Hank and Kelly Vander Veen have bought the Morris Newspapers of California (MNC) publications through their company, 209 Multimedia.

Hank Vander Veen has been group publisher of MNC for nearly ten years, said the paper. Previously he spent 25 years with McClatchy.

“I firmly believe that local community news organizations remain vital to our democracy as the trusted local source for news and information. I am committed to fostering that environment while meeting the needs of all of our dedicated advertisers and subscribers,” said Hank Vander Veen.

The paper are printed at a company facility in Manteca. All current staff will move to the new company, says the paper.
About EAE Engineering Automation Electronics GmbH:
The Ahrensburg-based company is active in graphic industries, automation solutions and automation technology. The company, founded in 1962 by Richard Ewert, is the leading supplier of controls, automation solutions and software for newspaper printers. EAE’s solutions are being used in all areas of a newspaper printing plant – from pre press to the mailroom. Worldwide more than 550 newspaper printing plants are using EAE’s control systems to produce more than 125 million newspapers each day.

For more information contact our local office 770 421 0774 or visit: www.eae.com
IDS-3D is a fully automatic image based color and register measuring and control system for web offset presses that also detects failures in print. A digital camera ensures that the measured data is processed in real-time and uses the digital file data as its reference. The ultimate result realized by IDS-3D is reproduction with absolute color and register stability in products independent of job, printing company or press at minimum waste and maximum efficiency.

For more information contact our local office 770 421 0774 or visit: www.qipc.com
More Industry News

- ESPN has announced the layoffs of 300, network president Jimmy Pitaro said in a memo to staff, USA Today Sports reported Nov. 5. Also, 200 open jobs won’t be filled.

- WSJ. Magazine is lowering its print editions to 12 to eight, WWD reported Oct. 23.

- The New York Times has partnered with creative agency Droga5 and media agency Hearts & Science on a Snapchat augmented reality lens, Adweek reported. The lens is part of the Times’ “The Truth Is Essential” campaign.

- Insider has purchased a majority stake in Morning Brew, a startup that deals in business newsletters and podcasts, Axios reported.

- San Francisco Chronicle owner Hearst extended offers of voluntary buyouts to staff Oct. 20, the paper reported.

- Michael Bloomberg may take his media business public through a company run by hedge fund manager and billionaire Bill Ackman, The New York Post reported Oct. 20.

- Batavia Newspapers started offering digital subscription models on Nov. 1 for its two papers, The Daily News in Batavia and The Livingston County News in Geneseo (both in New York), the Livingston County paper reported.

- The Williston Observer (Vermont) has new owners. Paul and Marianne Apfelbaum have sold the paper to Susan and Rick Cote.

- The Pilot (Southern Pines, North Carolina) has bought Walter, an arts and culture magazine covering Raleigh, from McClatchy.

- Southwest Journal (Minneapolis) says its final issue will be out Dec. 24. The publication blames COVID-19. The paper has been looking for a buyer for the Southwest Journal and its two magazines, Minnesota Parent and Minnesota Good Age.

- The Rantoul Press (Illinois) stopped publication with its Sept. 30 issue, the paper says. Community Media Group bought the paper in 2019.

- The Nation magazine has done a redesign.

- The weekly Philomath Express (Oregon) is ceasing publication. Mid-Valley Media Group owns the paper.

- California Sunday Magazine is stopping publication and will cut staff, the LA Times reported. Two years ago, its publisher, Pop-Up Magazine Productions, was bought by Emerson Collective, founded by Laurene Powell Jobs, widow of Steve Jobs. Emerson Collective also took majority ownership in the Atlantic.

- Santa Cruz’s Good Times (California) weekly has bought the Press-Banner from Tank Town Media.

- Detroit-based Outlier Media has decided not to finalize a merger with the MuckRock Foundation.

- The Free Lance-Star in Fredericksburg and The News & Advance in Lynchburg (Virginia) have laid off workers, Virginia Business reported Sept. 14. Two editors, a designer and two circulation clerks have were cut at The News & Advance. The Free Lance-Star’s digital editor said that he was laid off as well. Last week Virginia Business reported that at minimum five newsroom employees at the Richmond Times-Dispatch were being laid off. Sister papers Greensboro News & Record and Winston-Salem Journal (North Carolina) also saw at least five layoffs, Triad Business Journal reported. Lee Newspapers owns the papers.

- The Detroit Jewish News is becoming a nonprofit news organization, the paper announced. The paper is being hit hard by the effects of the coronavirus, it said.

- Hilton Head Island Packet and Beaufort Gazette Editor and President Brian Tolley announced in September that McClatchy would voluntarily recognize their union, according to the NewsGuild. It’s is the first voluntary recognition by a McClatchy paper in recent years, says the guild.

- Hedge fund Alden Global Capital plans to boost its stake in Tribune Publishing as soon as Jan. 1, 2021, according to internal company documents obtained by DFMworkers.org, says the NewsGuild.

- Windy City Times, a Chicago-based LGBTQ newspaper, moved to a digital-only format beginning in October, the paper announced.
• The Daily Republic (Fairfield, California) stopped its Thursday and Saturday print editions beginning on Sept. 17 and Sept. 19, the paper announced. McNaughton Newspapers owns the paper.

• Capital Newspapers has stopped print production of the Reedsburg Times Press (Wisconsin). Capital Newspapers is based in Madison and owned by Lee Enterprises and The Capital Times Company.

• Starting Oct. 6, The Herald-Whig (Quincy, Illinois) is using the U.S. Postal Service for home delivery. With the change, The Herald-Whig will become a morning newspaper. Quincy Media owns the paper.

• The Mores family has sold the Harlan Newspapers (Iowa). Louie Mullen, owner of Blackbird, is the new owner of the business.

• The Bismarck Tribune (North Dakota) went to six-day print starting Oct. 10, the paper announced. The paper will stop printing a Sunday edition. The Saturday edition will be the biggest paper of the week. Lee Enterprises owns the paper.

• The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and its parent company, WEHCO Newspapers (Little Rock), have bought The Pine Bluff Commercial, the paper announced.

• The Witness (archdiocesan newspaper in Dubuque, Iowa) put out its final issue Oct. 4.

• California’s Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill that gives a one-year extension for papers to comply with California’s new gig-worker law.

• The Union Times (Union, South Carolina) published its final edition on September 30.
Lee Enterprises has selected Dan Adams to be president and director of local sales and marketing for the company’s Central Illinois Publishing Group, which includes The Pantagraph in Bloomington, the Herald & Review in Decatur and the Journal-Gazette & Times-Courier in Charleston-Mattoon. Adams currently oversees government and political business development for the company.

Lee Enterprises announced that it has named Michael Distelhorst president and director of local advertising sales for the Daily Journal (Park Hills, Missouri). Distelhorst succeeds general manager Melissa Bellew, who has left the company.

Lee Enterprises has named media executive Robin Gruen vice president of Brand Avenue Studios. Gruen will lead Lee’s custom content division.

Paul Farrell, publisher and president of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, has been named group publisher for Lee Enterprises’ Virginia markets.

Bob Heisse, most recently editor of the Kenosha News, has been named executive editor of the River Valley Media Group. Heisse will follow Rusty Cunningham, who announced his retirement after 41 years with Lee Enterprises.

Lee Enterprises announced that Donna Denson has been selected as president and director of local sales and marketing of The Southern Illinoisan. Denson succeeds publisher Terra Kerkemeyer, who has left the company.

Carlton Charles, who served as vice president and treasurer at Hearst, has been named senior vice president, treasury and risk management.

The Salt Lake Tribune announced that it has hired Chris Stegman as its new chief revenue officer. Stegman is now responsible for The Tribune’s subscription, advertising and marketing efforts online and in print.

Nancy A. Meyer has been named president of the Miami Herald and el Nuevo Herald. Meyer recently departed the South Florida Sun Sentinel.

Paul Pham has been named the general manager of the South Florida Sun Sentinel and Orlando Sentinel. Pham will retain his current corporate responsibilities in sales strategy, analytics, and manufacturing and distribution.

Author, inventor and scholar Boris Fuchs died on Oct. 13 at the age of 87. Fuchs was a pioneer in tech innovations and developments used for newspaper production. Fuchs was instrumental in establishing standards and procedures for production and manufacturing operations.

Marc Wilson, chairman emeritus of digital services company TownNews, has been elected president of the Inland Press Foundation.

Wilson succeeds Jeremy Halbreich, the chairman and CEO of Dallas-based AIM Media Management. He will remain a member of the Inland Press Foundation board.

Joyce McCullough, former president of Miller Media Group in LaSalle, Illinois, was elected vice president of the foundation.

Also elected as foundation directors were Camille Olson, a partner at the Chicago law firm Seyfarth Shaw; Julie Inskeep, publisher of The Journal Gazette in Fort Wayne, Indiana; David Holgate, Indiana/Michigan group president for Paxton Media Group; and Jim Sprung, associate publisher of The Villages Daily Sun (Florida).

Tom Slaughter, the former executive director of the Inland Press Association, will continue as the foundation’s secretary/treasurer.

Jane Seagrave, publisher of the Vineyard Gazette Media Group, was elected president of the Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association at its annual meeting.

Boston Globe Media announced the appointment of Michelle Micone to the role of VP, innovation and strategic initiatives, a new executive-level position that will oversee the organization’s internal innovation program.

Steven Stiefel has been named the publisher of the Times-Journal (Fort Payne, Alabama).

Flint Group Flexographic welcomed Martin Cadek as VP operations.

Fujifilm Canada announced that Martin Boucher has been named as director of sales for the company’s Graphic Systems Division.
Tribune Publishing, which owns The Virginian-Pilot and Daily Press newspapers, has promoted Shaun Foga-nty, most recently the papers’ general manager of digital solutions, to executive director of sales for Virginia Media Group. The promotion comes after longtime executive Kelly Till left to join the Richmond Times-Dispatch and its owner, Lee Enterprises, to be vice president of sales for Virginia.

News & Tech has gotten word that Heinz Schmid has died. He was known and admired by many in the industry.

Schmid, who died in June, served as vice president of web offset sales for Koenig & Bauer’s newspaper and commercial web market and later was in an advisory role for the company.

He was born in 1944, in Wurzburg, Germany. In 1959, Schmid began a lifelong career with Koenig & Bauer, the Germany-based printing press manufacturer. He moved to Chicago in 1971 with his wife, Hannelore Dettenbach, and daughter, Alexandra, as he continued his career with KBA North America. In 1980 he joined their sales department in Atlanta and traveled extensively throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe.

Along the road of life, Heinz met many diverse and influential people and made lifelong friends with Americans and Europeans alike.

Michelle Lopez, manager of editorial operations for Tribune Publishing, has been named director of content for the Chicago Tribune.

Fujifilm North America Corporation, Graphic Systems has announced the appointment of Matt Bennett as vice president, global strategy and business development for packaging.

Ronald “Ron” James Lewis, 83, manager of the former Belle Banner, Bland Courier and Maries County Gazette (Missouri), died Oct. 13 following a slow recovery from two heart surgeries.

Evening Post Industries, parent company to The Post and Courier (Charleston, South Carolina) and Free Times announced that Free Times Publisher Chase Heatherly has been promoted to the position of regional chief revenue of- ficer for Evening Post’s Community Newspaper Group. The group includes news media operations in multiple South Carolina communities: Summerville, Mount Pleasant, Georgetown, Myrtle Beach and Kingstree.

Daily Nonpareil (Council Bluffs, Iowa) President and Publisher Tom Schmitt announced his retirement, effective Nov. 6.

Dave Chandler, former managing director of The Bespoke Agency, died last month at his West Sussex (U.K.) home.

McClatchy has appointed Jeffrey Dorsey to senior vice president of transformation, reporting to Chairman and CEO Tony Hunter. In this new role, Dorsey will lead all aspects of the company’s transformation efforts to accelerate progress to a digitally driven business model.

Hyperlocal chain Community Impact Newspaper (Pflugerville, Texas) announced the promotions of three to new executive roles within the organization. Claire Love is the company’s new chief information officer. Will Dahlstrom has been promoted from vice president of manufacturing to chief operating officer. Joe Warner has been promoted to the role of executive editor.

Paul Rivett and Jordan Bitove of NordStar Capital have announced that they will both be taking on senior roles within Torstar: Rivett will become the company’s new chair and Bitove will become the publisher of the Toronto Star. John Boynton, who is handing off his publishing role to Bitove, will continue in his role as president and CEO of Torstar.

Boston Globe Media announced the appointment of Peggy Byrd to the role of chief marketing officer, a newly envisioned position on the organization’s executive leadership team.

The IRE (Investigative Reporters and Editors) board has launched a search to find a successor to Executive Director Doug Haddix, who announced his resignation, effective in early January.
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Google suit draws news industry reactions
Various parties weighed in on the Department of Justice’s antitrust suit against Google, filed in October.

“It is good that the DOJ is starting the process, but ‘search distribution’ issues are a small subset of the many issues presented by Google dominance,” said News Media Alliance President and CEO David Chavern in a statement.

“News publishers are particularly harmed by Google’s control of ad tech — and that doesn’t appear to be covered at all by the DOJ’s action today,” said the statement.

Chavern pushed for the passage of the Journalism Competition & Preservation Act in his statement.

“For Big Tech, it’s a reckoning that’s been a long time coming,” says an LA Times editorial headlined “The DOJ is taking the gloves off against Big Tech.”

“The lawsuit, which was joined by 11 state attorneys general, is likely to be just the first in a salvo of antitrust cases, legislative proposals, rule-makings and other governmental initiatives to rein in Big Tech companies,” says the piece.

It’s unknown what would happen with the suit under a Biden administration. Reuters quoted one expert, William Kovacic, an antitrust professor at George Washington University Law School, as saying “What they will not do is drop this case.” Kovacic said new DOJ officials may change the complaint, however.

Google to pay for news
Google will pay $1 billion for news over the next three years, the company announced in an Oct. 2 blog post.

The payments will come as part of the new Google News Showcase, a product that will feature “the editorial curation of award-winning newsrooms to give readers more insight on the stories that matter, and in the process, helps publishers develop deeper relationships with their audiences,” said the post.

News Showcase has started rolling out to readers in Brazil and Germany, and will expand to other countries in the coming months, said the post.

The post touted Google’s other moves in the industry over the last several years, including the Google News Initiative’s $300 million commitment.

Nieman Lab provided an analysis of Google’s latest move. “The money, spread over three years and the entire globe, is welcome — but this is PR, not a product,” it said.

Agfa wins product of the year awards
Agfa took home two product of the year awards from Printing United Alliance. The Oberon RTR3300 won in the RTR UV category (over 80 in.) and Jeti Tauro H3300 LED won top honors in the UV Hybrid/Flatbed High Volume Production Class category. The Oberon is making its North America debut at the Printing United Digital Experience.

The Printing United Alliance hands out the awards for solutions from its member suppliers that are available for sale in 2020. Over 200 entries were submitted across 85 categories.

Agfa’s headquarters are in Belgium. The largest production and research centers are in Belgium, the U.S., Canada, Germany, France, the U.K., Austria, China and Brazil.

Printing United, originally scheduled to take place at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta on Oct. 21–23, was moved to an online experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Muller Martini launches Prinova saddle stitcher
Muller Martini launched the Prinova saddle stitcher this fall.

“Thanks to its innovative individual feeder, the saddle stitcher, which is capable of 9,000 cycles per hour, can be changed over incredibly quickly,” says a press release from the company.

The Prinova is the ideal solution for short runs, but as an all-rounder, it is also designed for medium-sized runs as well, says the company. The Prinova includes a number of proven technological features from its “big brother,” the Primera, said the release.

Muller Martini is based in Switzerland and has over 20 sales and service companies and 40 agencies and production sites in Switzerland, Germany, the U.S. and China.

Pulse Research, ANC form alliance
Pulse Research and revenue development company Advantage Newspaper Consultants have formed an alliance to deliver Pulse Research and Pulse Sales Tools to ANC newspaper partners.

As a part of the agreement, ANC media analysts will use Pulse Sales Tools when they work with newspaper and media partners to develop revenue. This will provide ANC and their partners current shopping intelligence and “the best ways to engage and help customers with the goal of closing more print and digital annual contracts,” said a news release from ANC.
Sammy Papert of Wormhole has represented Pulse for 16 years and was instrumental in finalizing the agreement, said the release. He will serve as point person with ANC and their newspaper partners.

Pulse was founded in 1985 by John Marling. ANC was founded in 1996 by Timothy O. Dellinger.

**Quantum Design, Hunkeler partner**

Quantum Design, a manufacturer of automatic splicers and turret rewinders and owner of the KTI product line, announced an agreement with Hunkeler, provider of digital print finishing solutions based in Wikon, Switzerland. The agreement will make Quantum Design the exclusive supplier of automatic splicing and rewinding equipment for Hunkeler.

The partnership is a result of many months of work collaborating on a custom automatic splicing machine, the Hunkeler RS8 model, and an automatic turret rewinder, the Hunkeler TR8 model. These new models are already being sold by Hunkeler as part of a complete inline finishing system for the digital printing industry.

“The technology that is central to this collaboration is a game changer for digital printing as Hunkeler will be offering the first inline finishing system with nonstop end-to-end processing in the industry,” said a press release from Hunkeler.

Hunkeler displayed the full solution at their in-house event, Innovationdays 2019, and had plans to showcase the equipment at drupa 2020 prior to the postponement of the event.

**Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei will use**

**ABB’s MPS Production systems**

Global technology company ABB has been awarded a contract to provide software system upgrades including its MPS Production and production data analysis system MPS Inform to Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei.

Based in Dusseldorf, the company publishes daily, weekly and monthly papers, periodicals and magazines for customers in Germany. These include the Rheinische Post, Westdeutsche Zeitung, Remscheider Generalanzeiger and the Solinger Tageblatt. These are produced in a print run of around 600,000 copies along with 3.3 million advertising papers and magazines.

MPS Production is an ABB press management and optimization system that enables operators to plan print products using specifications imported from an external system or created using an inbuilt graphical planner.

“Our technologies have developed beyond recognition since we first worked with Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei GmbH more than 35 years ago,” said Damian Staedeli, head of printing for Switzerland-based ABB.

**More news**

- In May 2020, **DCOS** inked a deal with Tryck i Norrbotten (Lulea, Sweden) to futureproof their eight tower, single folder Goss Magnum press. The order includes a full DCOS package solution, replacing and retrofitting the complete Omnicon system, the shaftless drive system and the QTI Multicam system. The installation will take place in the fourth quarter of 2020.

- **Stora Enso** will start codetermination negotiations with employees at its Hylte Mill in Sweden regarding a plan to reorganize the mill, including permanent closure of paper machine PM3 and the deinking plant, the company announced.

- **TikTok** can continue to operate in the U.S. under a preliminary injunction, the Commerce Department said Nov. 11. TikTok had filed a petition with a U.S. court asking for info on the government’s plans on TikTok. TikTok plans to sell 20% of itself to Walmart and Oracle.

- **Valassis**, a Vericast business, has introduced Illumis, a marketing platform that gives marketers “the ability to directly tie insights-led strategies to high-performing consumer engagement” says a news release from Valassis.

- **Flint Group Flexographic**, provider of flexographic photopolymer plates and plate processing equipment, has announced the establishment of a dedicated sales organization in South Africa.

- Finland-based **UPM** plans to sell its newsprint plant in Wales in a restructuring, Business Live reports.
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WHY SOME PAPERS ARE GROWING

Responses from publishers at growing papers provide insights

by Kevin Slimp

Over the past few weeks, I’ve spoken (virtually) at five state and regional press association conventions. In all but one, my leadoff topic was “What’s Going on in Newspapers Right Now?” based on my most recent research among newspaper publishers throughout the U.S. and Canada. At all five conferences, I spoke on the topic, “Getting People to Pick Up Your Paper,” using information from my research and other sources to help publishers and others understand what we can do to get more readers which, in turn, gets more advertisers to read and advertise in our papers.

In my past few columns, I’ve discussed results of my 2020 Publishers Survey, completed by publishers and managers representing more than 600 newspapers and groups. Today, I’d like to look at the last section of the survey which gives participants the opportunity to share advice about what has worked for them over the past year. There were thousands of responses from folks eager to share their thoughts, so I’m going to stick with responses from the 16 percent of newspapers that have grown over the past five years.

Respondents in this group universally commented that “keeping everything local” was important to sustaining growth, and I’ve written enough about that, so we’ll move on from there.

One respondent, from a small weekly in the Northeast region of the U.S. wrote, “We began a Support Local Business Subscription Campaign. When someone subscribes in the name of a business and we’ll give them $5 in advertising credit.”

A midsize weekly (4,000-7,000) on the West Coast wrote that some of their growth correlated with a stronger opinion section in the paper.

A large weekly (12,000-20,000) in the Southwest U.S. confirmed what a lot of growing newspapers noted. A redesign of the newspaper was credited as one reason for their growth. Another publisher from the Southwest U.S. indicated one key to growth at his/her newspaper was “Getting copies in people’s hands with subscription forms.”

A small weekly in the U.S. Great Plains region noted some of their growth was due to a focus on children and family activities, while a midsize weekly in the Southwest noted, “daily calls for subscriptions that are one month from expiring” was very successful for them. The respondent went on to add, “We are renewing 75 percent of them over the phone.”

The publisher at a growing midsize weekly in the U.S. Great Plains region wrote, “We did a county-wide saturation mailing for two weeks.”

A free weekly publisher in the Midwest responded that a key to their paper’s growth was “aggressive sales and marketing.”

One of the last questions on the survey was, “If you were asked to share one lesson you have learned in your newspaper career, what would it be?” Here are just a few nuggets of wisdom from publishers of growing papers:

- A publisher at a free weekly in the Southeast U.S. wrote, “Network with other publishers to learn new methods of generating revenue and survival.”
- Another publisher from the Southeast U.S. wrote, “Always make sure your employees are happy. When they are, they will do a good job.”
- “Listen to your readers and develop a product people want to read.”
- Quality local stories, written by local people who live in the community, plus great photos and good layout make for something that will interest most members of a community.”
- “Give readers and advertisers more than they expect.”
- “Always under-promise and over-deliver.”
- “Believe in your product. Those who work for a newspaper, really work for their communities. It’s a privilege and it’s a service.

I couldn’t have said it better.

In my next column, we will look at a software product that just might change the way we design newspapers.

A personal plug: If you haven’t already, check out my fictional books, The Good Folks of Lennox Valley and Who Killed A.J. Fryerson? Both are now available wherever books are sold and follow the exploits of a small-town weekly newspaper publisher as she searches for truth in a community with shady politicians who will do anything to discredit her.
DAILIES VS. WEEKLIES

2020 Publishers Survey: Examining the differences

by Kevin Slimp
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Each year, I survey U.S. publishers and general managers about the health of their newspapers. During the late spring/early summer of 2020, I received completed surveys from participants representing 500 newspapers or groups. In my previous column, I discussed some of the overall results of the survey, especially those related to financial health. In this column, we’re going to look at some of the differences noted between daily and weekly newspapers.

In some areas of the survey, there were little differences between weeklies and dailies. For instance, when compared to two years ago, both groups report similar health. While 58 percent of weekly newspapers indicate worse overall health than two years ago, 63 percent of dailies gave the same response.

Most newspapers in both groups answered “not bad” to “very healthy” when asked about their overall health, while 14 percent of weeklies and 19 percent of dailies indicated they were in poor health. When it comes to page count, again we see some similarities. 68 percent of dailies answered they had reduced pages compared to two years ago, while 61 percent of weeklies responded similarly.

Digging into other questions, we begin to see differences between dailies and weeklies:

- A majority of 71 percent of weekly newspapers are independent, with local owners, while only 27 percent of daily newspapers are owned and operated in their local communities.
- The primary source of revenue for 98 percent of weekly newspapers is print advertising. The same is true for 81 percent of dailies, with subscriptions and digital advertising bringing in a higher percent of revenue than at weeklies.
- While only 7 percent of weekly newspapers answered that their digital efforts were financially profitable, 22 percent of daily papers see a financial profit on digital platforms. 30 percent of weeklies and 43 percent of dailies indicate they see other benefits besides financial profit from their digital efforts.
- A whopping 30 percent of daily newspapers report that more than 20 percent of their revenues come from “non-newspaper sources.” Only 6 percent of weeklies responded the same way.

Speaking of digital, only 32 percent of daily newspaper publishers/managers responded that it “might be true” that they would be better off without a digital version of their newspaper. That number jumps up to 44 percent for weekly papers, with an additional 15 percent indicating they believed they “would be better off” without a digital version. Add those together and 59 percent of weekly respondents answered they might, or would, be better off without a digital version of their newspaper.

One answer that has changed significantly since I began surveying newspapers six years ago is “How long do you think you will continue to produce a printed newspaper?” In 2015 and 2016 surveys, more than 90 percent indicated they would be producing newspapers more than 20 years into the future. In this most recent survey, roughly 48 percent of weeklies and 39 percent of dailies expect to be printing papers more than 12 years from now.

Fake News

What about all that “fake news” we keep hearing about? Fortunately, fake news is “fake news” in most places. While it is a problem for many daily newspapers where 21 percent of respondents answered that more than 25 percent of the folks in their communities consider them to be fake news, weekly newspaper seem to be more trusted by their communities. Only 2 percent of weekly newspapers answered, “more than 25 percent,” while 39 percent of weeklies responded, “That’s silly. None. Zero.” 51 percent of weeklies answered, “Somewhere between 1 and 10 percent.”

I guess it just goes to show, there are always a few crabby readers out there.

In the 2020 survey, hundreds of respondents sent in advice and suggestions about things that have worked at their newspapers. In my next column, we’ll take a look at ideas newspapers have come up with to increase revenue and readership. Yes, 12 percent of weeklies and 17 percent of dailies report being in better overall health than two years ago. We’re going to find out why.

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