

INNOVATIONS IN NEWSPAPERS2009 WORLD REPORT

“From media companies to Information Engines.™
From readers to audiences.
From audiences to communities.”

INNOVATION
INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CONSULTING GROUP

INNOVATIONS IN NEWSPAPERS: 2009 WORLD REPORT

A report of the
INNOVATION International Media Consulting Group

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COMPLACENCY IS THE BIGGEST THREAT TO NEWSPAPERS

Rupert Murdoch

Chairman and Chief Executive, News Corporation



This annual report demonstrates powerfully how newspapers around the world are being reinvented in the digital age. I believe newspapers have a wonderful future as printed products and

as newly empowered news brands that deliver great journalism across many platforms customized to the interests of readers.

The past year provides wonderful examples of what I believe will be the defining trend in media in the 21st century: an ever growing hunger for reliable information from trusted sources from a rapidly expanding middle class around the world. In 2008 the Beijing Olympics, the election of President Obama and the global financial crisis commanded all-time record audiences for news, information and intelligent analysis. It might have been delivered on many different platforms but the most trusted coverage was produced by experienced, intelligent journalists.

The reliability of this coverage and the speed with which it covered the globe, had an enormous impact on the way political leaders, regulators, companies and the wider population responded to these events.

Our role is to give our readers great journalism and great judgment. I am convinced circulation and readership will grow on web pages, through RSS feeds, in e-mails, on mobile devices and in printed newspapers.

When I look around the world at the newspapers that are growing their audience – *The Australian*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the many free newspapers in Europe, the reformatted newspapers everywhere from London to Lisbon and Lima – they all offer variations of the same thing: news people want and information they need in an inexpensive, portable, ergonomically improved format.

When *The Economist* newspaper declares with a cover story that newspapers are endangered, I wonder how they reconcile this with their own phenomenal success in recent years.

It's not newspapers that will become obsolete, it's newspaper proprietors, their executives, editors and reporters that are at risk if they forget their newspaper's most precious asset; the bond with their readers.

My father taught me something important that hasn't diminished in value; hire editors

■ Our role is to give our readers great journalism and great judgment.

who care about their readers' interests and give them good, honest reporting on issues that matter to them the most.

My optimism is informed largely by my experience. When I took over *The News* in Adelaide in 1954 I had to fight off a larger competitor. We did so by confronting them head-on.

When I launched *The Australian* in 1964 we had to overcome many setbacks to make it truly national at a time when even telephone links were unreliable.

At Wapping in London, we endured horrific violence when we tried to revolutionize printing. But, we had a plan, we implemented it well and we prevailed, helping transform the viability of all British newspapers.

When we changed *The Times* from a broadsheet to a compact we did so because more people wanted it that way. While some lamented the passing of a tradition, *The Times* moved on and now reaches 26 million people a month.

The real threat now is not competition from new technology, it is the complacency in our industry among people who have enjoyed monopolies, who have to compete for an audience they once took for granted, who don't trust their audiences and who have not responded constructively to challenges from readers who no longer think editors are omnipotent oracles.

To compete today, we can no longer rely on the one size fits all approach. The defining digital trend is the increasing sophistication of search that allows each individual reader to customize the content they want.

But, in the end, our success will still depend on the bond of trust between readers and our content, not on how many platforms we use. If we earn the trust and loyalty of our readers, good newspapers, and their electronic siblings will become even stronger news brands. They may not always be thrown over the fence each morning but their impact will continue to resonate in the communities they serve.