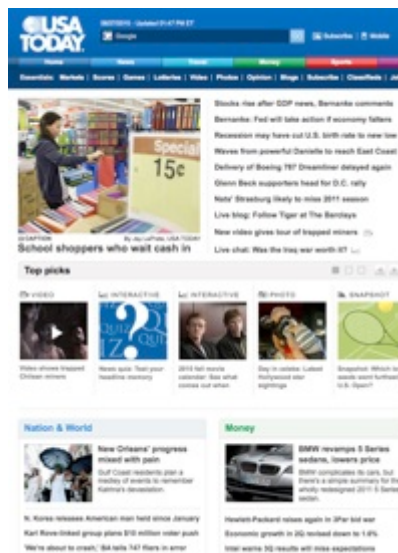




Written by [Dennis Behreandt](#) on August 27, 2010

USA Today Restructures to Emphasize Web and Mobile Markets

“This significant restructuring reflects USA TODAY’s evolution from a newspaper company to a multi-platform media company,” David L. Hunke, President and Publisher of *USA Today* said. “When USA TODAY first launched in 1982, we led the news and information industry in aligning our content with readers and advertisers. I’m confident these key executive appointments in new and current departments will continue our legacy as a vital, valuable media brand across print, digital and mobile platforms.”



The changes come amidst a well-publicized downturn in the traditional print publishing business, that has seen many venerable publishers scale back operations, or go out of business altogether. In 2008, for instance, [the *Christian Science Monitor* announced](#) that it was abandoning its daily print edition to focus on its Website. Other papers fared worse and went out of business altogether.

The spiraling out-of-control media closures even prompted the creation of websites dedicated to tracking the traditional media catastrophe. One such site, [Newspaper Death Watch](#), which claims to be “chronicling the decline of newspapers and the rebirth of journalism,” features an “R.I.P.” sidebar “above the fold” on its homepage listing “U.S. metropolitan dailies that have closed since this site was created in March, 2007.”

The papers listed by *Newspaper Death Watch* as having passed into the ash bin of history include the *Tucson Citizen*, Denver’s *Rocky Mountain News*, the *Baltimore Examiner*, and the *Honolulu Advertiser*, among others. Traditional magazines haven’t fared well either. In 2009 *Country Home* with a gaudy circulation of 1.2 million was shuttered. [According to MarketingCharts.com](#), it was joined in closing by *Domino* with a circulation of 1.1 million, *Nick Magazine* with a circulation of 1 million, *Gourmet* with a circulation of 977,000, and *Hallmark Magazine* with a circulation of 750,000, among others.

Add to those closures the travails of *Newsweek*, the increasingly scorned-as-biased news magazine that is on track to lose a staggering \$20 million this year, [according to the *Wall Street Journal*](#). Recently acquired by 92-year-old Sidney Harman, who claims to have “plenty of ideas” for how to save the magazine, the issue remains in doubt, and the fact that one of the liberal mainstream media’s former superstar publications has been brought this low demonstrates just how bad the market has become for traditional publishers.

Scarred by that market, *USA Today* has seen its circulation fall from 2.3 million in 2007 to 1.83 million this year. And ad revenue, the lifeblood of the publishing industry, has slipped significantly for the paper, down 50 percent for the quarter ending in June, as compared to the same period from 2006.

To cope, the paper is banking its future on digital editions and delivery, both on the Web, and especially on mobile devices like Apple’s iPhone and iPad and Google’s Android platform. “We’ll focus less on print



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... and more on producing content for all platforms (Web, mobile, iPad and other digital formats),” the paper told its employees in slideshow on August 26, the [Associated Press reported](#), claiming it had seen a copy of the presentation.

While most in the publishing industry are optimistic, or at least very hopeful, that embracing digital and mobile delivery of content will prove to be the salvation of traditional publishers, ultimately it will take time for the real impact of the change to be measured.

As such, *USA Today* publisher Dave Hunke admitted the changes at his paper are daunting.

“This is pretty radical,” he said, according to AP. But, optimistically referencing *USA Today’s* 28-year history, he concluded: “This gets us ready for our next quarter century.”



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