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This is Jill Duffy, with Community Comment

It is certainly no secret that my primary vice is being a voracious reader –newspapers, magazines, journals, books, ~~and~~ I love sifting through old stories long forgotten, patiently waiting to be rediscovered. Added to the reading list is the Internet, a relatively new and unending source of online writings. For news junkies, one of the benefits is the ease by which one can search information or discover some interesting story that affects our daily lives – but I still prefer my news in paper form.

Recently the North Coast Journal's blogthing had a tidbit about the Times Standard's parent company, MediaNews Group, and their decision to outsource graphic production to Express KCS, a company based in India instead of retaining their in-house graphic designers.

In the realm of print publications, outsourcing services isn't an entirely new concept. For example, with the exception of the Times Standard, all the local print media has their printing done by Western Web – a local company in Samoa, and they print a lot work for many publications that are then shipped to their out of area customers.

While we lament what this symbolically represents - that our local media increasingly outsourcing services such as graphic production, page layouts, ad development and for some, maybe even the circulation department, some papers are able to achieve greater efficiencies and

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able to remain in the print business – its simply an economy of scale.

It's done in an effort to remain competitive, and stabilize the bottomline, for we know well that the print media is barely teetering on the edge of solvency.

Is it really bad if a local paper uses page designers in Denver? So long as we have a local editor reviewing content, headlines, photo attributions and making certain that Manila Community Services District is really NOT looking to annex "Fairfield", does it matter? Besides, media companies could never outsource the heart of journalism...our reporters...right?

Well. That's another area the internet is changing. A reporter wanting to cover a public meeting is able to download an agenda and staff reports directly from their computer. Many public entities now stream live feed onto the internet, and any reporter armed with a pen, paper, telephone, and a cache of downloaded news archives for background information can be...well, most anywhere in the world.

The term for this is called hyper-local journalism whereby companies use freelance writers, both here in this country and increasingly abroad, to compile local news. Everything from community meetings and gatherings, sporting events, to residents receiving awards – a newspaper staffer pulls information and solicits freelancers who then work from some remote location.

What does this mean to the consumer? The old model was to put out a paper, and ~~move onto the next story.~~ ^{By stories by reporters we knew.} Today, media companies are adapting to the realities created by us, the reader, and the manner we consume news as we surf through blogs and newsmedia sites. Whether in print or on-line, use of outsourced services and increased hyper-local journalism may mean we just need to add another hefty dose or two of salt while reading the news.

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