

Free Daily Newspapers

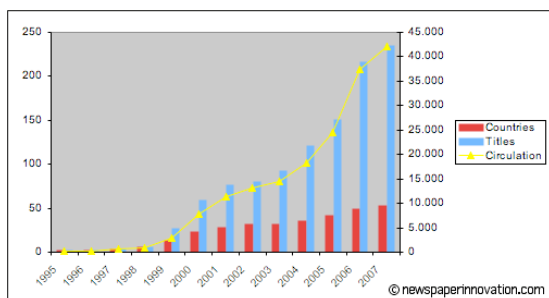
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2007 ROUNDUP: MODEST GROWTH

Circulation of free dailies reached 42 million in 2007. The year, however, showed almost the slowest rise in total circulation (13%) ever. Only in 1996 (8%) and in 2003 (10%) growth was less. Unless new markets (Germany? China? India?) are opening up, growth for 2008 will also be modest. But then again, a two digit growth is still pretty impressive.

The year showed a substantial number of closures, beginning with Metro Poland, after a six year advertising war with publisher Agora; and ending with the shutting down of City Göteborg by Bonnier. More than a dozen titles (30 editions) closed down this year.



a better graph: <http://www.newspaperinnovation.com>

In Denmark four titles vanished. National door-to-door daily Dato closed down after eight months while local titles Centrum (two editions), Xtra (Odense) and JP Arhus+ merged with 24timer. Free economic paper ErhvervsBladet moved to a paid model. Free circulation dropped from almost two million to less than 1.4 million.

In Spain the Elche edition of Metro, El Micalet in Valencia and Que Pasa in Malaga were closed. In Austria OK Graz and Kärnten by Styria closed after Heute terminated the Graz edition. In Germany Business News and Die Sportzeitung closed down. In Portugal Diario Desportivo went bankrupt; Italian sports24 closed down. In the UK Argus Lite went weekly. In Budapest Busz was only around for some weeks.

It should be added that there were more launches than closures: Croatia, Matin Plus and BretagnePlus in France, a lite edition of Süddeutsche Zeitung, the first Luxemburg and Slovenian free papers, two titles in the Netherlands, two in Portugal, one in Romania, five new editions in Spain, .ch and News in Switzerland, a new local title in the UK, Obzor in the Ukraine and five new editions for 15minut. In total more than 25 new titles (70 editions) were introduced this year.

In the US La Estrella went weekly but Boston saw a second free daily. In Canada Metro, 24heures and Rush Hour launched six new editions. Metro launched in Brazil. An economic free daily in Seoul shut down after a few months but an evening free daily was introduced while in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan new titles were launched. South Africa saw two titles, as well as one in Morocco and two in Israel. In Australia mX launched a third edition.

FDN - BAROMETER

The FDN barometer measures free dailies and circulation, comparing 2005 with December 2007.

Free Dailies 2005 / December 2007 (circ. * 1000)

	Countries		Titles		Circulation	
	2005	2007	2005	2007	2005	2007
Europe	24	31	80	137	15.291	28.047
America's	8	9	44	63	4.439	6.463
Asia/Pac/Afr	7	13	16	35	4.224	7.626
<i>Total</i>	39	53	140	229	23.954	42.136

DENMARK & SPAIN

In December I spent some time in two of the most exciting countries in terms of free dailies: Denmark and Spain. Talking and listening, counting pages and ads.

To prepare myself I picked up every free title in Copenhagen, which was not that hard because there were still plenty of them around at the end of the afternoon (not a very good sign - at 11.00 o'clock at night boxes were still not empty...).

MetroXpress counted 64 pages, 60% advertising - many for jobs. Also Urban counted 64 pages, including the wrap-around ad. The same share of ads for Urban with also many job ads. Nyhedsavisen counted 'only' 48 pages, with also more than 50% advertising - again with many job ads. The paper has a somewhat less 'serious' appearance than a year ago. Also 48 pages for 24timer with 50% ads - most of them in the special Jobs section.

Free daily Urban and paid paper Berlingske will integrate operations. Both are part of the Berlingske Group that was bought by Mecom (David Montgomery). Berlingske lost readers, circulation and probably advertising income since the flood of free dailies started in the summer of 2006. The move seems to be targeted at saving costs at both operations and also at moving towards some synergy in advertising. This model is already applied by Politiken/JP cooperating with 'their' free daily 24timer.

Readership figures for the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2007 show a decline for paid papers and the two 'traditional' free dailies MetroXpress and Urban. MetroXpress is the best read paper with 538,000 readers (661,000 in 2006) while Jyllands-Posten is second with 506,000 readers (579,000 in 2006 - 717,000 in 2002). 24timer is third with 505,000 readers (no data for 2006).

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Urban is fourth with 478,000 readers (593,000 in 2006). Paid papers Politiken with 416,000 readers (449,000) and tabloid Ekstra Bladet with 414,000 (432,000) follow on fifth and sixth place. Free daily Nyhedsavisen has 404,000 readers, tabloid B.T. 395,000 (422,000) and Berlingske Tidende 346,000 (364,000). (TNS-Gallup)

Madrid

More than 10% of the circulation of free papers, 4.5 million, is published in Spain. Four national titles with 60 editions, four free or mostly free business papers, more than a dozen local papers, and an airline paper.

Vice prime-minister María Teresa Fernández de la Vega at the conference on the free press in Madrid praised the free press for making younger people read papers. The four national free papers were present in Madrid and everybody said how great they were doing. All were attracting young and affluent readers, offering quality content and being great for advertisers as well.

The reality is of course a little less rosy. As competition is high on the Spanish market, advertising rates are under pressure which has a negative effect on revenues. One of the presenters even talked about discounts of 85%.

Market leader 20 Minutos made a profit in 2006 but other titles were not so fortunate. The three other national titles are losing money with Metro and Qué! competing for the second position.

Madrid has four free dailies, but it's not easy to find one. Unlike in cities like London, Stockholm, Copenhagen or Amsterdam, at the end of the morning all free papers seemed to have vanished. Either it is efficient cleaning or people taking their copies home or to the office, but around 11 AM they're gone. There is also surprisingly very little waste caused by free papers.

On Tuesday 11 December all papers had around 40 percent of advertising. Metro counted 24 pages, 10 with ads; 20 Minutos had 28 pages with 13 pages ads. AND had 32 pages, 12 with ads while Qué! had 24 regular pages, 9 of them filled with ads; the paper also had 4 pages extra on jobs in which it was hard to distinguish between ads and editorial. Qué! also had an editorial page on Disneyland that looked like an ad. All papers had different stories on the front page.

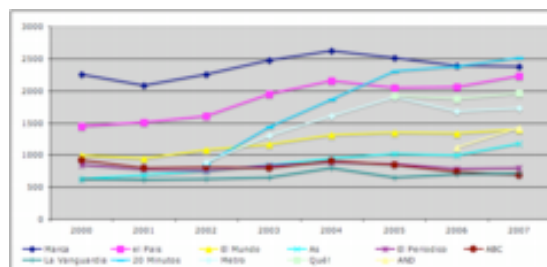
The name 20 Minutos could be changed to 9 Minutos because that was the time spend on free dailies; paid papers occupied their readers for 20 minutes.

I also picked up a copy of free real estate weekly SV by El Mundo (40 pages) while I bought a copy of the cheapie (50 cents) Publico; 64 pages, only 6 of them with ads. But the paper is only around for a few months.

Editor in chief Ana I. Pereda of Qué! pointed out that although more than 50 percent of the total Spanish circulation is free, their share on the advertising market is less. Paid newspapers have a total share of 24% while free papers take only 2% of the advertising money.

The readership miracle

New data (AIMC / EGM) on Spanish readership reveals that 20 Minutos is the best read paper in Spain before sports paper Marca and quality paid paper El País. The other free dailies Qué!, Metro and ADN follow on place 4, 5 and 6. More remarkably, however, is that all Spanish papers seem to have gained readers in the last year except for Marca (down 12,000 readers) and ABC (down 57,000 readers). (a bigger and better graph is [online](#))



All free papers increased their readership, ADN with more than 300,000; 20 Minutos with 130,000; Qué! with 80,000 and Metro with 46,000. Also paid papers El País, El Mundo, and sports paper 'As' saw substantial increased readership. Over a longer time span (2000-2007) all papers except El Periódico and ABC gained readers. Free papers were introduced in 2000, but are only measured since 2002.

LAUNCHES

Qué! San Sebastian & Santander

In the last week of November, Spanish publisher Vocento launched a Santander (Cantabria) edition of their free daily Qué! The paper was bought by Vocento earlier this year from Recoletos for €132m; Santander is the second launch after San Sebastian after the acquisition.

The launch seems to be part of a strategy of Vocento to launch editions in every market where they have a paid paper. In Santander Vocento publishes El Diario Montañés. This would mean that also editions for Vitoria, Valladolid and Granada can be expected.

For Santander Qué! is the first free daily. It is the 16th edition of Qué! The 15th edition was for the Basque city of San Sebastian. In San Sebastian Qué! is also the first free daily. Owner Vocento publishes also paid paper El Diario Vasco in San Sebastian. With the new launches Vocento is battling for the top position in Spain. ADN, Qué! and 20 Minutos all have circulations higher than 900,000; Metro distributes just under 800,000 copies.

Czech business daily E15 launched

In November free business paper E15 was launched in Prague. Circulation of the paper by publisher Mlada Fronta is 50,000. Distribution is directly to businesses, office centers, hotels, universities, and government buildings while it will also be available in trains and at the airport. Mlada Fronta publishes more than 20 magazines in the Czech Republic, some of them also in the field of economics and business. E15 is competing with the Czech business daily Hospodarske Noviny, and several business weeklies. (Interfax)

Also Metro (Metro International), 24 Hodin (Ringier) and Metropolitní Expres (Rheinische Post) are published.

Xtra! Helsingborg

Missing so far on the website was the second local free daily published in Sweden. After Extra Östergötland, launched in 2004, in February of this year Xtra! started in south-eastern town of Helsingborg. The paper is published by paid paper Helsingborgs Dagblad and has a circulation of 20,000. It is available in 160 racks all over the city. Apart from the two local free papers, Metro has a national edition that is published all over Sweden.

7th Swiss free daily launched

The 7th free Swiss daily, News was launched in Basle, Zurich, Bern and Mittelland in December. Initial circulation

will be 334,000 which will bring the total free Swiss circulation to more than 2 million. News is after 20 Minuten, Baslerstab, heute, Cash daily and .ch the 5th title in the German speaking part. In the western French speaking part of Switzerland Le Matin Bleu and 20 Minutes are published.

News is a joint operation of Basler Zeitung, Tamedia and the Berner Zeitung. All three publish News with their own sub-masthead. The Mittelland edition is the first free daily in this area. In total 26 journalists will be employed. All editions will offer advertising also in cooperation with paid or other free titles in the same area. The paper counts 40 pages and uses a very fast 'live-paper' online interface. The online reading experience is excellent.

The catch line is "News in Kürze" meaning "the news in short". News really lives up to this promise. No story is longer than 2400 characters, which is 400 to 500 words.

Rolf Bollmann Interview

Swiss website Persoenlich published an interview with Rolf Bollmann, a founder of the successful Swiss free daily 20 Minuten in 1999. After Schibsted sold 20 Minuten to Swiss publisher Tamedia, Bollmann was transferred to paid paper Tages-Anzeiger (Zurich). Now, after the launch of independent competitor .ch he's back in the free daily business and developed the News concept.

According to Bollmann, paid publishers in Switzerland underestimated the possibilities of free dailies, which explained the success of 20 Minuten. If they would have been aware of this, Switzerland would have looked like Germany now: a country without free newspapers. But in reality Switzerland nearly has a 50% share of free dailies after the launch of News.

Bollmann apparently believes strongly in spoilers, because of that, he is now in charge of News. In his view there will be only two free dailies in Switzerland: 20 Minuten and News. What News can do that .ch cannot do, however, is not explained. The only thing that News can do is teaming up with local papers in Zurich, Bern and Basle and jointly sell advertising below cost price (maybe in cooperation with 20 Minuten) so .ch can be driven from the market. Bollmann calls this "the advantage of the home market".

First Beijing free daily

The Beijing Daily Newspaper Group launched a free subway daily with a circulation between 200,000 and 300,000. The Beijing Daily Messenger was launched in 2000 as a paid newspaper. Before that it was called the Star Daily. Heavy competition in Beijing (10 different newspapers) and disappointing advertising revenues were reasons for the conversion.

Other free dailies in China started in Shanghai (2004) and Guangzhou (2007). In Hong Kong there are four titles.

The Beijing Mass Transit Railway Operation Corp. will distribute the free daily in the subway. When the Beijing Olympic Games starts in August, the paper expects to increase circulation. The Beijing Daily Newspaper Group also publishes the Beijing Evening News, Beijing Morning Post, Beijing Daily and The First.

CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

UK frees increase circulation

Comparing November 2006 and 2007 circulation data, reveals that UK free titles increased circulation. Metro went from 1,134,000 to 1,358,000; thelondonpaper from

426,000 to 496,000 while London Lite increased circulation from 395,000 to 401,000. Business paper City AM went from 94,000 to 100,000. The last three titles are published in London only. Metro is published nationwide. There were no data yet on Record PM in Scotland and the part/paid Manchester Evening News.

London mayor Ken Livingstone is not too happy about the performance of the two evening free papers in terms of providing recycle bins in London. But he is also not pleased with how the Westminster Council handles the issue: "The paucity of recycling bins for free sheets across London is as much a reflection on the poor implementation of the legislation by local authorities, including Westminster, as it is a pitiful contribution by the publishers."

Not to be forgotten, however, is that there were times when Ken was overjoyed by the prospect of new free newspapers - provided that they would be paid for the contract of distributing in tube-stations and not on the sidewalks in front of them.

Circulation Malaysia

Free daily TheSun in Malaysia had a circulation in July 2006 - June 2007 of 256,000. In the same period in 2005/2006 circulation was 175,000. TheSun is the second English language paper in the country. Paid English dailies The Star (309,000) and the News Straits Times (140,000) were stable while The Malay Mail (21,000) lost circulation. Of the Chinese language papers Sin Chew Jit Poh is still the most circulated with 336,000 copies.

Swiss 2007 circulation

Total circulation of German language free daily 20 Minuten is 435,000 while the French version has a circulation of 210,000. The Zurich edition is by far the largest with 189,000 copies. The weekly magazine 20 Minuten Week distributed 60,000 copies. The French language free daily Le Matin Bleu had a circulation of 183,000 copies. Local free daily Baslerstab (Basle) distributed 86,000 copies. Both free dailies from Ringier (heute and CashDaily) were not in the WEMF report. New entry .ch was not yet audited.

The Swiss town of Sitten, in Wallis kanton, wants to make distribution of free dailies difficult and expensive. Free dailies can only be distributed in two public places. Any private party who has a rack or box on its property has to pay an extra tax of €300,- each year. (Persoenlich)

Metro Holland 1,000,000 for one day

One million copies of Metro were distributed in the Netherlands on November 23, almost twice as much as the 540,000 that are distributed on an average weekday. The special distribution is organized in cooperation with Holland Casino, the sponsor of the issue.

In the highly competitive Dutch market (four titles, total circulation two million) Metro claims that it has not yielded to advertisers' demands for discounts on advertising rates. According to the director of the commercial department Marcel den Hoed, being the market leader in both distribution and readership in free dailies (and the second in total after paid daily De Telegraaf) Metro can even rise advertising prices: "we have increased the price per page somewhat, but because we also increased circulation, the price per 1000 readers is going down for advertisers, which makes it a good deal for both of us."

Australia: mX gains readers

Free daily mX in Sydney saw readership go up from 61,000 in September 2006 to 98,000 in September 2007.

Also the Sydney Morning Herald saw readership go up; all other papers in New South Wales lost readers. National daily The Australian saw readership increase to 477,000.

In Melbourne mX's readership went up from 134,000 to 146,000. Also The Age gained readers. The first results for the free afternoon daily in Brisbane show a daily readership of 29,000. (Roy Morgan)

Circulation Korea

Newspaper circulation in Korea has long been a mystery. Only the three largest paid papers Chosun, Dong-A and Joong Ang and two free newspapers Metro and Daily Focus reported audited circulation in 2004. The situation, however, seems to have improved. Recently the Korean ABC issued a report on free dailies circulation in 2006, with also data on the two previous years.

AM7 had a circulation of 402,000 in 2006, down from 470,000 in 2004; 62% is distributed in Seoul, 21% in the surrounding area. Metro had a circulation of 497,000 with more than 80% distributed in the Seoul area. The Busan edition had a circulation of 58,000. Metro increased circulation compared to 2005. The Daily Focus has the highest circulation of the audited free titles with 529,000 copies, compared to 2005 circulation is stable but in 2004 it was more than 600,000.

On the website also circulation data for 2007 is available. For the last period (April-June) Metro reported a circulation of 501,000, Daily Focus of 500,000 and AM7 of 422,000. Free papers Daily Zoom and Sports Hankook were not audited. New entries The City and NoCutNews were not around when the audit took place.

Circulation increase Metro Boston

The Boston edition of Metro US reported a circulation increase of 12 per cent over the last year. In the three month period ending in June 2007, the paper had an average circulation of 187,000. The Boston edition started in 2001. It was the second US Metro after Philadelphia (2000). In 2004 the New York edition was launched. Total circulation of Metro in the US is around 650,000.

PUBLISHERS & TITLES

Last European free sports daily

After closures of Der Sportzeitung (Germany), El Crack 10 and Penalty (Spain) and Diario Desportivo (Portugal) also the Italian free sports daily 24Sport seems to have vanished. I checked the website from time to time but only just noticed that the last issue was from May 28, 2007.

Sports papers seem to have difficulties attracting advertisers. In London and Paris a free sports weekly is published that seems to be more successful. In Greece a half news half sport paper Miso-Miso was launched in 2004 and still published in 2007 but detailed news on that title is lacking.

There have also been plans for a free sports daily in London but this never materialized. Also plans for France by both Metro and 20 Minutes were put on ice. In the US a semi-weekly free sports paper was launched in 2006. In Korea (Sports Hangkook) and in Dubai (Sport100) sports papers were launched but news on these titles is also mostly lacking.

Tribune settles fraud for \$15m

Tribune Co., owner of New York papers Newsday and Hoy between 2001 and 2004 settled the circulation fraud case for \$15m. In these years both papers inflated

circulation figures. Free Spanish language daily Hoy is now owned by ImpreMedia.

Metro UK explores users' content

Free UK paper Metro (Associated Newspapers) will launch a music sharing and a video upload website next year where users can earn part of the advertising revenues.

The video website MEview, will resemble YouTube while MEMusic is for unsigned bands and artists who want to share and sell their music. Both services will also launch a mobile platform in January. Videos can contain advertising clips, music tracks will cost 79p to download, 70 percent will go to the artist. (Press Gazette)

Upgrading and messing with DAG

The fourth Dutch free daily DAG will undergo an upgrade in the next months. The paper finds it hard to compete with the other free dailies, mainly with established brands Metro and Spits, and will try to target a somewhat higher income and educational group.

It will also move within publisher PCM from a separate business unit to a sub-brand of paid paper de Volkskrant. The publisher reserved €12m for the paper, of which apparently already €9m is spent in the first nine months.

What the publisher aims at with the changes is not quite clear. Especially it is unclear how de Volkskrant will profit from the move. Except being presented with the bill of the operation there seems to be no benefit. The paid paper, however, was more or less asking for trouble when it introduced a combined Volkskrant/DAG subscription model last month.

How upgrading will help DAG is also not clear. It might move up the content in the direction of free daily De Pers or cheaper paper NRC.next (also by PCM), which would mean new competition. Also, because a free paper is mostly a distribution product, it is hard to see how a change in content will be reflected in a major change of the audience. It looks more like desperately messing around with DAG.

Metro Bostad Stockholm closes

Metro Bostad in Stockholm, the weekly real estate paper by Metro, will be closed down at the end of the year. The edition for the southern part of Sweden in Skåne (Malmö) will be continued.

The weekly paper was home delivered in Stockholm with a circulation of 220,000 copies. Bostad was introduced in the beginning of 2006 as the successor of the Hus & Hem real estate spin off that was introduced several years ago. The real estate market in Stockholm will be covered in 2008 with a weekly supplement Metro Living in the traditional green Metro.

Per Mikael Jensen, CEO of Metro International, commented: "Following a review of the business model it has become apparent that the current price-pressured market in Stockholm is not supportive of the home-delivered, low-margin Metro Bostad concept. We have therefore decided to bring the home-delivered real estate edition to a standstill in Stockholm ahead of 2008, with all employees being integrated into Metro's existing business. The actions taken today are also in line with Metro International's continued strategic review, initiated by the board, which is expected to be completed during spring 2008." (Metro International)

Metro Poland with bloggers

Metro Poland (by Agora SA) published a special bloggers issue on December 5. MetroBLOX was made in cooperation with the community service Blox.pl. and was distributed with the regular national edition of Metro.

Eight bloggers were selected as editors, responsible for supervising thematic sections ranging from new technologies and career through to culture, lifestyle or sports. Each of them was free to pick up a team of bloggers helping them prepare texts to be published in MetroBlox. The bloggers worked under the supervision of the newspaper's editorial staff.

Göteborg City closes

The last issue of the Bonnier free daily for Göteborg, Sweden, will be published on Friday December 21. The edition which had a circulation of 44,000 was launched little over a year ago. There were six journalists working for the edition.

In Göteborg, City competed with the Metro edition which was launched in 1998 and distributed more than a 100,000 copies. A month after the launch of Göteborg City, a third free paper, Punkt.SE by Schibsted, was introduced with a circulation of 90,000.

In all three major Swedish markets: Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö, competition is high. Also market leader Metro felt the competition from the new launches because free papers tend to compete among themselves and competition leads to pressure on advertising rates.

Bonnier, also publisher of Dagens Nyheter and Expressen, is the first to pull out. Metro cooperates with local publisher (and market leader) Göteborg Posten while Punkt.SE sells advertising together with Schibsted's flagship Aftonbladet.

TV supplement for Obzor

Ukraine free newspaper Obzor, owned by Dutch Telegraaf Media Group, recently introduced the Telegid supplement on Fridays. The guide contains a program of 20 national, other CIS countries channels, satellite TV and Kiev regional channels.

Obzor is distributed in the morning in Kiev business areas with circulation of 120,000 at underground exits, central squares, public transport stations, cross roads, and more than 40 capital business centers in Kiev business area. Delivery to offices is also available.

MyPaper becomes bilingual

Chinese language free daily MyPaper, launched in June 2006 in Singapore, will re-invent itself in January 2007. The number of pages will be doubled from 24 to 48, while these new pages will contain English language material. The circulation of the paper by Singapore Press Holdings will increase from 180,000 to 250,000.

The new English language part will contain also new material for this section will be developed. The Straits Times' (also SPH) Life section deputy editor Yeow Kai Chai will be responsible for the new section. With the new approach MyPaper will compete more with the other Singapore free daily Today, by MediaCorp, that is totally in English. With the new circulation MyPaper will have the same number of copies printed as Today.

Germany: Business News 2.0?

German publisher Holtzbrinck will launch the website zoomer.de in 2008. The site is meant to put news items from their paid papers Handelsblatt, der Zeit and the

Tagesspiegel on line in a joint portal with interactive elements. Journalists formerly employed by Holtzbrinck's closed down free business paper Business News will work for the new 'quality journalism' website targeted at people under 40. (Horizont.net)

Israeli and Israel Today clash

Free dailies Israeli and Israel Today quarrel over the exclusivity of the distribution contract with Israel Railways. According to Israel Today the exclusive contract of Israeli is illegal because it prevents fair competition. Israeli, however, has not been published for some weeks. It is another sign of reoccurring financial problems for the first Israel free daily. (Globes)

The plan of Hebrew daily Yediot Ahronot to distribute the free daily Israeli and to cooperate with its publisher, has also been submitted to the Israeli Antitrust Authority. According to Globes, the plan might be the last chance for Israeli for survival.

Israeli was launched in the beginning of 2006 but has been in constant troubles since. Co-financer Sheldon Adelson sued the paper while the paper has seen circulation go down too and had to sack several employees. Sheldon Adelson launched his own free daily earlier this year while a third free (afternoon) daily Metro, was launched during the summer.

Yediot Ahronot has also been thinking about a (fourth) free daily but teaming up with ailing Israeli might save costs while has also the advantage of having to deal with one competitor less. Readership of Israeli was 12 per cent earlier this year.

Negotiations between Yediot Ahronot and Israeli begun last month. Israeli is also said to be negotiating with Metro International to enter in the Israeli free daily market.

RCS wants Zeta share

Italian media group RCS, publisher of Corriere della Sera and Gazzetta dello Sport in Italia, and of El Mundo, Marca and Expansión in Spain is said to be interested in the 30% of the Spanish Zeta group that is for sale. Zeta publishes magazines and several regional newspapers of which El Periódico de Cataluña is the most important. Zeta also owns 20% of 20 Minutos. RCS publishes free daily City in Italy. The RCS group, however, denied the interest. Other interested parties include Prisa (El Pais), Vocento and Planeta. (urgente24)

Children's DAG

The November 20 edition of Dutch free daily DAG was devoted to the International Day for Children's Rights. A group of six children (aged 8-11) chose content and commented on the news of the day. 25 percent of the revenues of special advertising of the issue goes to the Dutch branch of Unicef.

DAG is according to Dutch internet platform Zinfo the paper with the highest percentage of good news. Almost a quarter of the news in DAG was 'positive'. Free paper De Pers came in second. Paid paper De Volkskrant was last with less than 10 percent (although I am always very happy when it arrives in the morning). Metro did little 'better' and also scored less than 10 percent (and I'm happy with Metro as well as it always the first free paper available). Spits had 13 percent good news. Free papers in the Netherlands apparently differ a lot in content.

Metro France confident

The French edition of Metro looks with confidence towards the financial results for the year 2007. Valérie

Decamp, director of Metro France said that results so far were "encourageante" although the advertising market was difficult for every title.

In 2006 Metro made a profit of €2.1m on a turnover of €37.4m. The paper has 2 million readers which makes it the third national title after 20 Minutes and L'Equipe. Metro claims a daily circulation of 880,000 - the last official figures from OJD were 100,000 lower than that.

Seoul: from eight to seven

The last paper added to the crowded Seoul free newspaper market was closed down after a few months. The economic daily IlIlKyungJe was launched in July 2007 but closed down after three months. There are now 'only' seven free dailies left in Seoul. Circulation of IlIlKyungJe was around 100,000.

Metro moves to Fleet Street

The headquarters of Metro International will be moved from Mayfair to the historical grounds of Fleet Street. The 70 people working at the headquarters will occupy the former offices of Reuters at Fleet Street. (Press Gazette)

Three years max for Ringier titles

Heute and CashDaily, free titles from Swiss publisher Ringier are still not profitable. Both free dailies were moving into the right direction ("gut unterwegs") according to Ringier-CEO Martin Werfeli - they were still losing money although he declined telling how much the papers were losing. Ringier is giving both papers two to three years to reach break-even. Werfeli does not think that all Swiss free titles will survive. Afternoon daily heute started in May 2006 and has a circulation of 235,000 now, CashDaily was launched in September 2006 and prints 100,000 copies. (Persoenlich)

Competitor steals freebies

Distributors of the paid Boston Herald have been accused of stealing copies of the free Metro and BostonNow newspapers. Although the report on this only appeared in Boston Magazine this week, the incidents date from August this year.

Stealing free newspapers, however, is not new. Last year there even was a bill proposed in California to make such behavior punishable. In countries like the Czech Republic, Rumania and Hungary boxes have been constructed so that people can not take out too many copies in one time. Taking a whole stack to sell them or use them for heating purposes has been reported from these countries. In Switzerland, at the launch of 20 Minutes and Le Matin Bleu there were incidents of boxes being stolen.

Metro extra green

All issues of Metro by Metro International were printed on green paper on November 13. Reason was the IPCC-congress in Valencia. This year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change received the Nobel prize for peace, together with ex US vice-president Al Gore. Climate change and the environment will get extra coverage.

Daily Argus Lite goes weekly

The free daily Argus Lite, launched in February 2006, has ceased daily publication on October 2. The title (by NewsQuest, Gannett) will increase pagination and will be relaunched as a weekly. Failing to attract advertising is the main reason for the move. (Press Gazette)

RESEARCH

Thursday best day for free dailies

Swedish researchers Peter Callius and Anders Lithner (Sifo Research International) presented a paper "Daily Reach and Beyond" at the Readership Symposium in Vienna last month. In this paper - awarded as best paper of the conference - they showed detailed information on changing readership patterns of paid and free dailies in Sweden on different days of the week.

Paid morning subscription papers show almost no variation in readership on different weekdays although readership tends to go up on Sunday. Evening papers have a relatively low readership on Monday and Tuesday, and a high readership on Saturday and Sunday. Free dailies have a slow start on Monday, grow slightly from Tuesday to Thursday and see a sharp drop on Friday. Advertising on Thursday seems to be the best option (like cutting down distribution on Fridays).

The paper also shows the impact of the third Swedish free daily Punkt.SE in Stockholm. The two other free dailies Metro and City were hurt most by the new title.

Newspaperinnovation had the best month ever in November: 40,000 visits - well... 39,268 actually.

Broadsheet - tabloid readership

In the German journal Media Perspektiven an analysis of reading broadsheets and tabloids has been published. People (42) were given either Die Welt (broadsheet) or Welt Kompakt (cheaper tabloid version of same paper) to read. All respondents were interviewed and tested on reading behavior (time, subjects, choices, graphics).

Reading experiences of the two formats seem to be rather different. The tabloid seemed to be more popular although it was not a representative sample. Readers of the tabloid used a more general scanning way of reading while broadsheet readers read some articles more intensive. Lay-out and design play an important role in reading.

More new research papers were made available on the resources page on the blog. One on the German market (in German, 2006, Machill & Zenker) and the paper presented at the Vienna readership conference (2007) by myself.

EVENTS

Ireland January 30

On Wednesday 30 January Steve Auckland (managing director Metro UK), Per Michael Jensen (CEO Metro International) and myself will speak at a conference organized by [Metro Ireland](#) in Dublin.

Amsterdam February 7/8

At the [Etmaal](#) voor de Communicatiewetenschap in Amsterdam, organized by the Vrije Universiteit, I will present a paper on free newspaper readership.

Antwerp February 14

This year I will give the yearly Abraham Verhoeven lecture at the [Universiteit of Antwerp](#). It will be about the changing newspaper landscape in Europe.

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