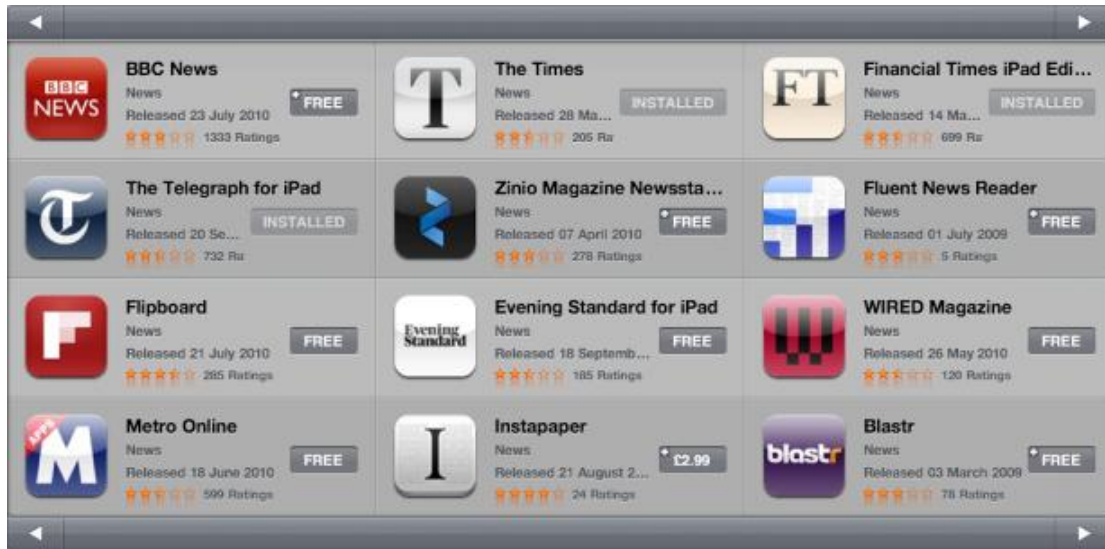


# iPad Newspapers in the UK: One Year On



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Robert Bell Travelling Scholarship  
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Visit [www.ipadnewspapers.wordpress.com](http://www.ipadnewspapers.wordpress.com) to view this project online with links to app videos.

*“There’s been a sense that iPads are going to be our salvation, but it’s salvation out of desperation. The potential is phenomenal. Can they be our salvation? Yes, if we reinvent our story telling, not if we just do what we are doing today.”* Juan Senor 2011

## **Introduction**

The newspaper publishing industry in the Western world is suffering from declining readership and revenue. Newspapers are expensive to own and run and advertising revenue has diversified between a large number of websites and other media platforms.

The iPad’s size and excellent graphic quality make it the perfect platform for reading newspapers and magazines. It is a hybrid device in that it offers the immediacy of the Internet for getting up-to-date news, but is also ideal for reading long-form journalism, providing people with background, analysis and comment.

The key quality that makes it attractive to publishers is that it provides a vehicle for monetising newspapers’ content through paid-for applications (hereafter apps) in the iTunes store. “What’s really exciting as publishers is this is for the first time the web with a cash register. A very clean easy device that by definition you know you have to pay. Ipad means iPay.”<sup>[1]</sup>

My original plan for this research was to look at “tablet newspapers” in the UK as predictions in late 2010 were that sales of other devices would catch up with the iPad and newspapers would therefore produce apps for these products as well.

However, despite the release of several other tablet devices, the iPad remains the dominant player with 69% market share<sup>[2]</sup>. When carrying out this research, UK newspapers had only produced apps for the iPad. (The Times released an android app in November 2011 which is not covered in this report.)

In light of this, my research focuses on the three UK newspapers which by 2011 had produced bespoke iPad apps including news stories and multimedia; The Times, The Sunday Times and the Daily Telegraph. Information was gathered during site visits and interviews in July and August 2011.

It investigates whether the huge potential publishing companies saw in iPads on their release has been realised in their newspaper apps on offer. It uses the industry examples outlined above to look at how iPads fit into the suite of news platforms available to media companies and whether their introduction has impacted on the journalism being produced by these companies or on the journalists working for them.

Interviews with digital experts are used to look to the future of iPad/tablet newspapers and how they can be used to attract a newer, younger audience back to traditional newspaper brands.

## The Device

The iPad is a flat mini-computer with a touch screen. It is a mobile device and can be used anywhere. "It is meant to be as transportable as a magazine and offer the same multimedia capabilities as a laptop."<sup>[3]</sup>

Apple not only makes the device, but controls the content being played on it through apps which it distributes and from which it collects part of the profits.

Apple sold 14.8 million iPads in 2010 after being released in April and predicted sales are for 48 million in 2011<sup>[4]</sup>. These figures make the iPad the fastest ever adoption for an electronic device, eclipsing even the iPhone and DVD player. Sales are expected to explode over the next four years with tablet computers selling 60% as many units as PCs by 2015<sup>[2]</sup>. The technology is moving so fast that the platform is unlikely to remain unchanged for very long, however the concept of a slim mobile device with a high quality screen will remain.

Consuming news is a key activity of iPad users. Reynolds Journalism Institute research<sup>[5]</sup> based on surveys of 1,609 iPad users worldwide found the top iPad activity category was "following breaking news and staying abreast of current events" with more than 80 per cent of respondents saying this was one of their main uses of the device.

More than three quarters (78.6%) of the users spent at least 30 minutes during a typical day consuming news on their iPad. Respondents spent a similar amount of time with other media at a much lower rate: television (52.5%), personal computers (50.7%), printed Sunday newspapers (30.7%) and weekday newspapers (18.8%). Nearly half of those surveyed spent an hour a day reading news on the device.

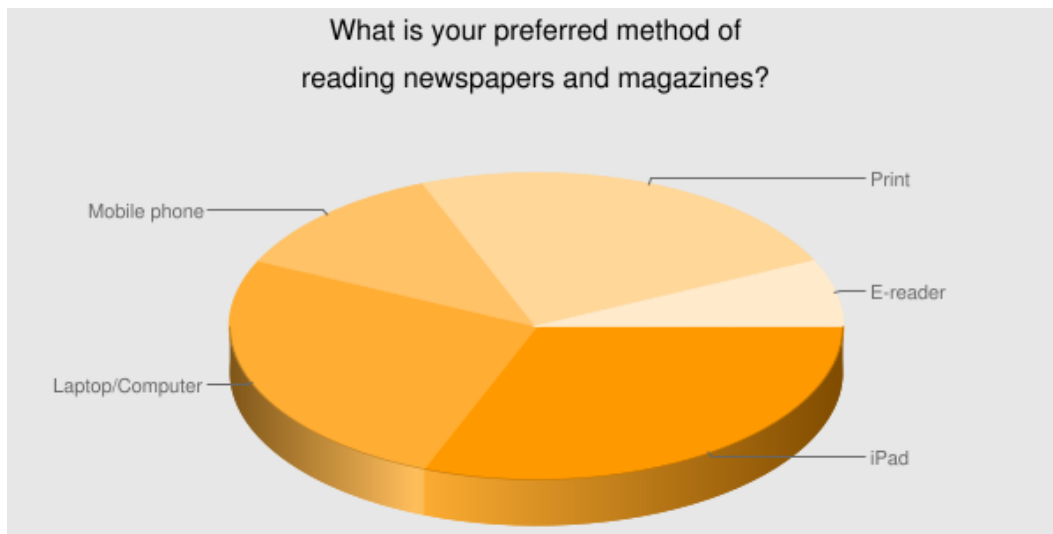
The research also found that those who already owned either an iPhone or iPod Touch were significantly more likely to be prepared to pay for digital content. More than half (52%) of owners said they were willing or very willing to pay for newspaper and magazine subscriptions specially formatted for e-readers, compared to just 22 per cent of non-owners.

The survey found that respondents were looking for a very easy to use and reliable app, with access to at least all the content available in the printed edition. "While respondents mention video and interactive features, they are much less commonly expressed in the survey than the aforementioned issues," the report's author wrote.<sup>[5]</sup>

The research showed that iPad owners are predominantly men. About half make more than \$100,000 a year and more than two-thirds are between the ages of 35 and 64.<sup>ibid</sup>

This is in line with the findings of research conducted by The Telegraph which found that the majority of users of its app were aged between 35 and 54. This older age group are more likely to have the finances to make an early investment in an iPad, but there is now a plethora of other tablet devices to choose from and many come with much smaller price tags. By 2015, the iPad's market share is projected to drop to 47%.<sup>[2]</sup>

An Adage survey from January 2011 found 90% of those surveyed were aware of tablets as a device and 21% of 18-34-year-olds intended to buy one<sup>[2]</sup>. This means the age profile of potential users of newspaper apps on android devices will get progressively younger and owners will have less disposable income.



**iPad 31% Laptop/Computer 26% Mobile phone 12% Print 24% E-reader 7%**

Source – Cooper Murphy Copywriters

### Media companies

Newspaper organisations have embraced the Internet with a proliferation of high quality news websites, but very few have managed to make money from the digital platform. Online advertising typically brings in less than 20% of a newspaper’s advertising revenue and rates on non-prominent pages are falling<sup>[6]</sup>.

On their laptops or PCs, people tend to graze between a variety of websites, spending on average less than two minutes reading on each visit.<sup>ibid</sup> This leads to short snappy news stories and little opportunity for the in-depth analysis and comment which creates trust in a newspaper brand and cannot be easily found for free elsewhere on the web.

When the iPad was released, many publishers and commentators reacted with unrestrained enthusiasm. In August 2010, Rupert Murdoch was quoted in *The Guardian* as saying that the “iPad’s convenient style would reinvigorate journalism”, get “young people reading newspapers” and that it was the “ideal device to encourage consumers to pay for digital journalism.”<sup>[7]</sup>

In May 2010, Mathias Döpfner head of German publishing house Axel Springer, said that publishers worldwide should - "Sit down once a day and pray to thank Steve Jobs that he is saving the publishing industry." The iPad, he said, was "what we were all waiting for."<sup>[8]</sup>

An Association of Online Publishers AOP study reveals apps are seen by UK publishing companies as, “the most significant route for mobile Internet revenue opportunities”.<sup>[8]</sup> The study found that publishers believed subscriptions would be the greatest income from apps with 61% expecting to see significant revenue from subscription services, compared to 55% via sponsorship and 46% via in-app advertising.

Newspaper companies worldwide have learned from their mistake of giving away valuable content for free on the website and have instead produced paid-for iPad apps. The same research revealed that while 16% of online publishers currently had paid-for iPad apps, another 60% were planning to introduce one in the next year.

What publishers such as Dopfner were so excited about, was the potential to once again deliver an editorialised package of news to readers, but in a digital form. This view of what the iPad had to offer is reflected in the decision by the British newspapers studied for this report to produce apps using all or most of their printed material reproduced in an almost identical format to a newspaper.

However, Head of Journalism at London City University and former International Editor of The Times, George Brock, says viewing the iPad as a way of “going backwards into the future” is entirely the wrong approach.

“To people in the newspaper print business who are used to regularly being beaten up over their future and the disintegration of their business model, the iPad looked awfully like a wonderful fusion of the future and the past.”<sup>[9]</sup>

Brock says iPad editions produced so far have been particularly successful with older readers. People who were traditionally print readers can be reluctant to try out new platforms, but the iPad is not too “scary” and its high quality screen makes it easy to read and view photos and videos which is particularly useful for older consumers.

These customers may be happy with a print edition replicated on a digital platform, but younger readers are “not likely simply to be satisfied with something that’s a digital page turning experience”<sup>.ibid</sup>

Whilst the publishing companies’ initial approach of reproducing their newspapers for an iPad was successful in attracting older readers - who had the money needed to invest in Apple’s device - this approach will not be nearly as successful going forward as the quality of alternative cheaper tablet computers increases and companies look to produce and sell apps for these other devices as well.

The new generation of tablet computer owners will be younger readers who have most likely never had a newspaper subscription and are used to getting their news for free from a multitude of news websites. Publishers will have to take a more innovative approach to their apps in order to capture these readers and grow their newspaper app sales.

A further issue is that while sales of newspaper apps have been steadily increasing, this has had a direct impact on the sale of printed newspapers.

At the Monaco Media Forum in November 2010, News Corp's James Murdoch said that apps were "much more directly cannibalistic" than websites<sup>[10]</sup>. Subscribers read the apps in a similar manner to how they read traditional newspapers and therefore do not need both versions.

The RJI research<sup>[5]</sup> found that 58% of respondents who used the iPad for at least an hour a day for news were very likely to cancel their newspaper subscription in the next six months.

One in ten had already cancelled and had switched to reading digital newspapers on their iPad.

On a positive note, 90 per cent said they were likely to use newspapers' apps to get news, rather than going to a news website which are usually free. When asked what factors would influence their news-application or newspaper-subscription decisions, iPad users most often said "a price lower than the price of a print subscription."

Publishers therefore need to weigh up the resource needed to reproduce their newspaper on an app and any parallel drop in print subscriptions to decide if the investment is worth it.



### **Industry examples**

This research studied the coverage of the phone hacking scandal across web, print and iPad editions in The Times and The Telegraph in July this year. This approach was used to investigate how different companies approached one story across multiple platforms and how the iPad fits into this new digital landscape. The Sunday Times was a late addition to the research project and therefore was not studied in the same detail during this time.

#### The Times

The Times is a unique news organisation to study because, unlike the vast majority of newspapers, its website can only be accessed via payment. Therefore there is no question of what information will be given away for free on the website as opposed to paid for in the print or iPad edition which was launched in May 2010.

In July 2011, The Times was offering a special subscription package of £1 for the first month of access to both The Times and The Sunday Times websites and iPad editions, then £9.99 thereafter. This is a website subscription offer which means Apple does not get the 30% cut it takes if sold through the app store. The digital subscription model also allows The Times to gather information about its readers which Apple does not allow through the iTunes store.

Figures released by News Corporation in July 2011 showed the Times and the Sunday Times had more than 100,000 digital subscribers just over a year after charging to access the website. More than 35,000 editions of The Times were being downloaded daily on to iPads and 31,000 editions weekly of The Sunday Times. <sup>[11]</sup>

The Times app is an exact replica of the printed edition formatted for the iPad. When the iPad edition was first launched it had News, Business and World sections, but no Features. Since Christmas 2010, it has had all daily sections and since April/May 2011, all Saturday pages are also found on the app.

#### Key characteristics

- Downloaded from 5am each morning.
- Read in either landscape or portrait by swiping through the pages on a carousel or by finding particular sections or articles on a pop-up menu at the bottom of the screen.
- The hierarchy of stories within the paper is replicated in the iPad edition by starting some halfway down the page and with smaller headlines.
- Photos within the app can be enlarged, photo slide shows are used and there are a large number of graphics.
- Video is used extensively – up to five per day provided by SKY news, another subsidiary of News Corp.
- Multiple editions on big news days and exclusive content from The Times archive.
- Editions saved for a week and articles can be bookmarked to read later.
- Daily cartoons, interactive crosswords and Sudoku
- The app can be downloaded and read offline, but only some photos and no video can be seen without an Internet connection.
- Readers cannot zoom in, comment, “tweet” or “like” articles.

The Times iPad editor Michael Prowse describes the iPad edition as “the newspaper, but on another platform.”<sup>[11]</sup>

Prowse regularly has a team of around 11 working on the app – 8 sub editors, 2 from picture desk and one from design - starting from around 5pm to put that day’s print edition on the iPad. Though not journalists, all have journalistic experience which Prowse says is important to ensure they make articles read naturally.

The process is very labour intensive as the aim is to make the iPad edition, which is much smaller than a printed page, look just like the newspaper and it is only once pages have been finalised for the print edition that the team get to work.

Prowse attends the afternoon news conference at about 4pm where editors decide on lay-out. He says there is no discussion about how things will look on the iPad, as it is expected that he will make it work. Once Prowse has an idea of the paper’s appearance he starts thinking of extras for the iPad edition such as graphics, video or photos.

The app team will only add content rather than take it away. Additions can be in the form of archive material, for example previous articles about a famous person added to an obituary.

Prowse says The Times is working on developing interactive options for readers to make the app a “wholly rounded product”. Soon, people will be able to share articles with friends, add comments and use hyperlinks to go to other websites, but all within the app.

These features will be an exciting addition as they are aimed at taking better advantage of the iPad as a device connected to the Internet and therefore to millions of other people and sources of information, rather than simply treating it as a reader - which is essentially what



the app does in its current form. Links to websites can be done within the app so readers are not led elsewhere for information, never to return.

Another aim is for both advertisements and content to be customised according to the reader and their location. However, all new ideas are dependent on resourcing. As Prowse says; “you are going to be limited not by imagination – there’s always great ideas – but by financial constraints.”

He does not believe in updating the app during the day as the website updates rely mostly on agency copy while the integrity of the Times brand relies on the work of its own journalists. Resourcing means it would be very difficult to regularly update the iPad edition without damaging that brand.

Prowse therefore favours the one-edition-a-day model with extra editions on big news days. However, things that could be updated easily would be sports scores or financial markets information.

Since the completion of this research, The Times has introduced an android app which is complimentary to all subscribers. An internal link to The Times website has been added as a feature in the android app.

## **The Phone Hacking Scandal on Print/iPad/Web**

### **Print**

- Front page news lead and photo every day.
- Extensive coverage including background features, comment and analysis
- Excellent use of graphics and break-out quotes to tell the story at a glance.

### **iPad**

- All front pages are the same as the print edition, but with comment and analysis pieces highlighted in a right-hand column.
- All editorial copy is identical to the print edition.
- Embedded videos supplied by Sky News
- Slide shows such as “Hold the Front Page Through the Ages” make good use of the device’s optical qualities.
- July 19, The Times does a special 8pm update of the iPad edition when James and Rupert Murdoch appear before the Culture Select Committee, leading with the attack on the older Murdoch by a pie-wielding comedian.
- The front page is changed and the update includes six new pages of stories about the appearance and attack including a statement from Murdoch, a page of selected Twitter remarks about the meeting and extra video and photos.

### **Website**

- Live updates throughout the day involve short sharp paraphrasing of the unfolding events and embedded Tweets.
- Extensive use of video added during the day, making it more up-to-date than the iPad.
- Additional documents such as full statements of key players like James Murdoch and Rebekah Brooks are available online which are not in the iPad or print edition.
- Stories attract a large number of comments.

The phone hacking case is a perfect example of what The Times iPad app is aiming to be. In a fast-moving breaking story, readers would not go to their iPad newspaper for the latest news, but would keep up-to-date on their mobile or lap top during the day and use the iPad to read the expert analysis and background when they have time in the morning or evening.

Contrary to what one might expect, the information on the iPad app about this saga did not seem stale by nightfall, though some stories did become irrelevant if superseded by the day's events. Instead, the flow of biographies of the main protagonists and articles on the history of the News of the World and its links to those in power provided context to the unfolding events.

A highlight feature of the app was an interactive graphic of the members of the Culture Select Committee. While watching the appearance of the Murdochs live, one could press on the seat of committee members to see their biography and special interests in regards to the phone hacking case. Unfortunately, these kind of "out-of-the-box" ideas are not a regular feature.

Whilst the app delivers a very elegant digital version of the newspaper, the iPad team appear too busy just getting the stories uploaded to be constantly thinking about new ways of telling stories on the device. Prowse was in complete control of the iPad edition with no input from editorial staff and said reporting staff was not at all engaged with the new medium. This means their input into what extra material is available or ideas for different narrative forms is entirely under-utilised.

Therefore, though the product is perfect for people who enjoy reading The Times newspaper, its ability to attract new readers is limited. The Times is relying on the digital platform itself to appeal to younger readers, rather than supplying new content or ways of telling stories. Prowse's response to questions about the app's potential to attract new readers is evidence of this view. "It's a multi age device, we would hope to be attractive to readers of all ages and demographics." Ibid

### The Telegraph

Tim Rowell, iPad director of The Telegraph, explains that the iPad edition is "not a substitute for print and nor should it be."

The Telegraph attempted to have an app go live on the day of the iPad launch. It was one of only three media companies given a prototype iPad which was kept chained to a desk, locked in a room with only two people allowed to enter. They had just eight weeks to build an app for launch which they decided was too short, so they decided to wait and introduce something better into the market at a later date.<sup>[12]</sup>

The Telegraph released a free app to test the market in Sept 2010. It had 160,000 downloads in total and still had 70,000 individual users by April 2011. Research showed people used it on average 7-10 times per month. Weekends were more popular than week days and usage peaked at 7am and after 9pm. The average time spent reading was 20 mins – compared to 4-5 mins on the web - and people read about 40 pages per use. *ibid*

More than 60,000 users consented to telegraph.co.uk collecting data about them. About half of all users were aged between 35 and 54 and were spread all over the world. The Telegraph

surveyed 20,000 users, held eight focus groups and had feedback within the app. Respondents said they wanted a finite/finishable product, a once-a-day edition with familiar elements of the newspaper such as Sudoku and cartoons. They wanted an archive of editions that was simple to use and were unwilling to pay for the product. <sup>ibid</sup>

Rowell says the reader responses were reassuring for journalists as they emphasised the importance of quality articles not breaking news.

In May 2011 The Telegraph launched its second edition app. It can only be bought via iTunes and costs £1.19 for a daily edition, £9.99 for a monthly subscription which includes the mobile app and is free to the paper's 340,000 print subscribers.

The iPad team has an editor and five other members including two illustrations staff and three production journalists.

### **The app**

- Downloaded from 5am
- Stories scroll down rather than across.
- Includes more than half of the stories in the newspaper, but also some extras which do not appear in either print or on the website.
- Photo galleries used to illustrate stories and as a unique section of the iPad edition
- Regular use of video which is often produced by Telegraph staff.
- Daily cartoons; crosswords and Sudoku added in late 2011

The most important difference between The Telegraph and The times is that The Telegraph app aims to add to the print experience, not replace it. "Subscribers are really important to us, the ones that matter most. What we really care about is adding more value into that subscriber package," says Rowell. This led them to include some content made exclusively for the iPad.

Rowell says there has been a lot of discussion about where to take the app, but whatever happens, it is likely to be more print than web focused. For example, the newspaper has 500 journalists producing copy, much of which never makes the paper, but could potentially be incorporated into an app.

"The digital teams were very excited when it first came out, everyone was talking about interactive graphics and whizzy features, but it ended up with the print team running it and the print team filling adverts for it." <sup>ibid</sup>

Rowell is not in favour of multiple editions as updated and breaking news is the domain of the website which can be accessed on the same device. However, The Telegraph is looking to create specific apps for subsections like culture, travel and fashion.

"I can see that 12-18 months away, we'll have an iPad app that's live with updated sports and financial information." <sup>ibid</sup>

Rowell says The Telegraph is close to the point where the iPad app is a profitable venture, but would not give figures which he says are commercially sensitive.

## **The Phone Hacking Scandal on Print/iPad/Web**

### **Print**

- A very visual product with large quantities of break-out quotes, sidebar stories and plenty of photos and graphics.
- All major stories are accompanied by backgrounder articles, analysis or comment.

### **iPad**

- Front page the same as the printed edition every day, but with a column highlighting opinion pieces.
- All stories are exact replicas of how they appear in print. However, on a regular basis, the iPad edition has articles which are unique from the web and print products. For example, it was not part of the phone hacking coverage but on July 8 there was an article about the royal visit to Canada which included exclusive video for the iPad edition.
- The app includes extra graphics, photos and video content which are not available in the newspaper, but can be found online.

### **Web**

- Online coverage includes photo galleries illustrating the unfolding events which are not available on the iPad.
- Live updates during the day include embedded tweets and the ability to “like” and comment on articles.
- A large proportion of the background and analysis pieces are free online.
- The website is easier to navigate than the iPad app as it displays all sections and options on the front page.

The main issue facing The Telegraph is that its website is free. The vast majority of content on the app is found on [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk) which begs the question – why would anyone pay for the app? The fact that it can be downloaded and read offline is attractive, but as videos and interactive graphics cannot be viewed without an Internet connection, are the stories alone going to be enough to keep people paying for the product?

The Telegraph has done the most extensive research on who its readers are and what they want. The potential problem with that is that they are only asking questions of those people who have already decided to buy or download their product. These users are likely to be early adopters of technology, keen to try out all the options on their new devices, or people who already know the newspaper brand and most likely read the print version or website.

Rowell openly explains that the app is designed to be an add-on to the subscriber package. This approach fails to take advantage of the device’s true potential and will not attract new readers as the demographics of tablet computer owners change. If the iPad is a device which can attract readers to pay for access to newspaper brands, then it is those same people who need to be surveyed about their likes and dislikes and what they are looking for in a news app.

If newspapers are to survive they need to reach and question these “potential readers” for whom the traditional newspaper format no longer appeals. These people are most likely grazers of news, picking up bits from different sources and influenced by their friends on Facebook and people they follow on Twitter. They will not be content with swiping through pages of content as being “interactive”, but will want to be able to “share”, “comment” and “tweet” on stories that interest them and that may interest others.

I believe that putting the print team in charge of an app is a mistake. A diversification of skills on the iPad team beyond those with a history in print would help move the product away from being a newspaper supplement, to being a unique product in its own right.

### The almost app

Before releasing their test app, The Telegraph team produced a video showing the concept of a completely new app. A promotion video showed to advertisers reveals it looked nothing like a newspaper and had three views for readers.

When the reader turned on their iPad on in the morning they would get a page customised to them. The day's weather forecast would become the screen background and it would feature traffic reports for the reader's usual route

The classic view allowed readers to swipe through daily news content which appeared in a carousel across the screen with the option to share articles with friends through social media.

Or they could chose the "global view" in which they could visually see what was happening on a map of the world in real time. A user could click on a country to view all the related news stories and view photos and video. They could zoom into street level to see geo-tagged information about the area and a search button would allow them to search for any key word.

The "media wall" was an aggregation of numerous stories which were likely to be of interest to the reader presented in box form which slid off the page and were refreshed if the user tilted the device left or right. The reader tapped the panel to view multi-media such as videos, interactive graphics or play games. If they liked the look of a dress on a runway they could purchase it in-app.

Rowell said advertisers were very excited by the concept, but the team decided to offer a "test" app done in a traditional newspaper style a small amount of editorial content into the market first and following a reasonably positive response, the vision outlined above was scrapped.

### The Sunday Times

The Sunday Times app is described by one of its developers as "the print edition delivered digitally. It's everything you get on paper and more."<sup>[13]</sup>

The app was launched in December 2010 with full content, unlike other newspapers that launched their first editions earlier. The basics of the app are very similar to The Times, though the two were developed completely independently of each other. It does, however, have some unique and exciting features.

### **The app**

- Every section of the paper can be downloaded individually or all at once.
- Reviews in the culture magazine include video of films and theatre, soundtracks from CDs and the ability to "buy" a product from within the app.

- The Sports section has up-to-date scores of games throughout Sunday.
- An envelope icon means you can tap to email the author.
- The app also includes exclusive offers such as a weekly movie download.

The Sunday Times has an iPad editor and two associate editors, along with people in each section of the newspaper who are responsible for putting the print edition on to the iPad.

Craig Llewelyn-Williams, Assistant Digital Editor of The Sunday Times, says the first big challenge when developing the app was determining what it should be – portable internet or a print edition? The team decided to do a full replica of the newspaper from day one.

“Web is fantastic for breaking news, reading very little, but with this it gives you the full experience, it gives you what the people who created that article in the beginning set out to achieve.”

“It’s very easy to say it should be something completely new, but I think that if you are in doubt about what that new thing is you should start off with your product that works and at least get that up so you can see how people are using it. The thing to do is to get on that platform, build a relationship with your customers on that platform and get involved.” Ibid

The Sunday Times is running analytics in the app which are “very encouraging”, according to Llewelyn-Williams. He says lot of content lives on “post Sunday” and there are cross-over people who buy the paper and the iPad edition.

Breaking news is already well covered on the web, but he says other sections like travel are thinking hard about how they can use the iPad edition or create their own apps.

The Sunday Times was a late addition to this research paper, therefore there is no analysis of its coverage of the phone hacking scandal to compare with the other two newspapers.

However, of all the newspaper apps, the Sunday Times makes the best use of the iPad’s many unique attributes. It has the highest rating in the app store of all the UK newspaper apps at 4 stars out of 5.

Visually, it is engaging and colourful with extensive use of photos and “touch” icons for more information or to enlarge a photo or graphic.

Though structured like a newspaper, the Sunday format better lends itself towards new ways of displaying information. For example, the weekly round-up of global news is presented as a world map where a reader can touch on a country to get briefs about the biggest news events from the last week. Quotes of the week are displayed by pictures of the famous speaker which one can touch to see their quote pop up in a speech bubble.

The interactive options make it more appealing to a younger audience, but there is still much to be done in terms of linking it with the website and other social media sites.

## **Digital strategists - their thoughts on the potential of newspaper apps**

Digital newspaper strategist Kevin Charman-Anderson believes the lack of interconnectivity both within newspaper apps and linking to outside websites, as outlined above, is where British newspapers are failing to harness the potential of their iPad products.<sup>[14]</sup>

He argues that too many news organisations mistake navigation, such as scrolling or multimedia, as being interactive when true interactivity is the ability to engage with the content in an interactive graphic or being able to “tweet” or “like” a certain story so it can be shared with friends.

Charman-Anderson says news organisations are failing to approach tablet computers on their own terms rather than on print terms. “Looking at the iPad as a print substitute completely misses the point, but it speaks volumes to where the industry still is.”

“Instead of adapting to new platforms and new ways of consuming information and new opportunities they all look at; how do we do the same thing we have always done and still make money on it? - That’s the fundamental problem with newspapers’ shift to the web and to tablets.”<sup>ibid</sup>

He believes the iPad is an opportunity to deliver to readers a personal package of news rather than an “all things to all people” product. The demand for this approach is shown by the huge popularity of apps like social magazine app Flipboard which allows readers to flip through their social networking feeds and pulls together stories from favourite sites and those recommended by friends.

“There’s a real challenge for media organisations as they (readers) expect a personalised package not an editorially chosen package. It’s not a print experience, not a single publication experience.”<sup>ibid</sup>

Newspapers want readers to stay within their branded apps and read their newspaper’s coverage of stories in order to prove the value of their product. However, links to other websites are often provided in website stories and can be incorporated into apps without taking the reader outside the specific application.

Another way to personalise the product is by using location tools. iPads can be locked in to a person’s location so location specific news can be directed to them or they can see sponsored reviews/advertising for restaurants or other social activities in their area.

For example, when there was a bomb scare in Time Square New York, the Wall St Journal used location to let only those readers who were near the area know about it.

I would argue that if you start delivering that kind of value to people then you can reasonably expect that they start paying for the experience.

Oxford Senior Fellow and tablet newspaper consultant Juan Senior also argues that there has been a woeful lack of innovation from the newspaper companies when it comes to their apps.<sup>[11]</sup>

Senor says newspapers are going down three paths. The first is “newspaper as a PDF” – this is the route taken by the Independent or the Irish Times which were not included in this research. The second is the “newspaper on steroids” which means vast amounts of multimedia content like video, but not much thought about the iPad as a unique platform – he would place the newspapers in this report in this category. And the last is HTML5 which is a website designed specifically to look good on the iPad, but circumvents the iTunes store. This is what the Financial Times has done.

Senor advises media companies to develop different content for different platforms because every platform is suitable for a different content experience. He advises that apps should be neither “webby” or “printy” as it is a totally new medium.

“Tablets are a new form which requires new digital narratives. For the first time we have an opportunity to present news we can read, watch and touch; new textures, new dimensions, layers that were not possible with the flat limited experience of paper and online.”

Senor says editors should be asking themselves about the format the app should take. For example, just because it is a newspaper app, does that mean it needs a front page?

His idea of the perfect team working on a newspaper iPad app is a journalist, a graphic designer and a developer as games developers are experts at telling stories in a huge variety of ways.

In his opinion, a few key news stories should be chosen for an iPad edition, presented in unique and exciting ways that use the potential of the device and updated at certain times during the day.

He gave an example of a fire department in the United States which produced an app using a 3D person to relate how an emergency event looked, sounded and felt by pressing on different parts of the body. Senor says this sort of innovative approach to conveying information could be adopted by newspapers.

Newspaper apps, he argues, should provide a reasonably short, finite experience to the reader, but this does not mean that the articles chosen to present have to be short. In fact, he argues that an app is a perfect opportunity for a newspaper to showcase all of its expertise and analytical skills on individual subjects. However, rather than presenting all articles in newspaper format on one daily app, publishing companies should be producing “many many apps”.

An example of a very successful newspaper app is the Guardian’s eyewitness app - a daily photogallery with captions – which works well because it uses the excellent graphic qualities of the iPad and is a fixed size with a distinct beginning and end.

Producing more than one app is obviously resource-intensive. However, if newspapers are serious about using tablet computers to reinvigorate the industry and reintroduce readers to their brand, and all signs point to the fact that they are, then they must start thinking outside the box and considering these new approaches.



## Impact on journalism and journalists

All experts spoken to as part of this research believe that the iPad will not fundamentally change the way journalists work - at least in the short term. The impact has certainly been minimal to non-existent so far.

However, they all agreed that the iPad has great potential to encourage more long-form journalism, investigations and analysis. Described as a “lean back” device, people are willing to invest a lot more time reading on it than on other digital platforms.<sup>[5]</sup>

In this respect, the iPad could herald a move away from the multitude of skills and tasks expected of journalists today – live blogging, tweeting videoing – and a return to the very core of what journalists do, which is dig up stories and tell them in an engaging way.

Some commentators already point to a resurgence in long-form journalism thanks to dedicated websites such as ReadItLater and LongForm.org which allow readers to save articles and read them later offline, much like articles can be read offline on iPads.<sup>[15]</sup>

Llewelyn-Williams believes the iPad is a platform where good journalism really shines through.<sup>[13]</sup>

“The opportunity is for story-telling to become multi-layered. From the web perspective the drive is to make stories shorter snappier - more is less - the opportunity here is to add a lot more to it (an article), especially something that’s investigative or heavily involved.”

“It’s a strange thing that people are actually touching it, it creates an opportunity for much more of a connection. There’s more dimensions you can add, but the tablet is still a platform for good journalism and tried and tested stuff.”

Tim Rowell says The Telegraph is taking the potential of the iPad very seriously, but believes the predictions about how it could impact journalism are far from coming true. “It’s central to what we are doing and the numbers are hugely encouraging, but there’s a disconnect between what journalists think the iPad will offer them in terms of saving their jobs and where it is actually at.”

I agree with his prediction that the vast majority of newspapers will not be hiring journalists specifically to write for the iPad editions. While some organisations may choose to have iPad journalists, others like The Telegraph already have a diverse group of reporters working on news and features and therefore have all the content they could need. However, Rowell admits that newspaper organisations will need to increase their design skills to bring the product to life.

Juan Senor argues that as the novelty of social networking and browsing multiple websites wears off, it will be the investigation, rigour, objectivity and story-telling function of journalism that the public will seek.<sup>[1]</sup> He says the change for journalists is they will have to become “platform agnostic”, producing content which can appear anywhere, but their core function will remain the same.

Ultimately, I believe that the proliferation of information on the Internet will likely lead to people returning to “trusted sources” for information. But whether those sources will be

traditional newspapers depends on whether they can adapt to the new environment. While investigative/analytical content will be highly valued, the presentation of it will be just as important.

In order to take advantage of what tablet computers can offer, journalists and photographers need to be better engaged with the platform. Much of the news produced by these newspapers' journalists never makes the paper, so how could it be used instead?

Although a journalist's primary role should be to find stories, as the 'expert' on the subject, I would argue that he or she is in the best position to think about different ways in which the story can be told. Also what available content is unlikely to make it into print, but could be incorporated into an app? For example information boxes, graphics or sidebars telling personal stories that relate to the theme of the article.

The opportunity for photographers to better showcase their work are especially exciting as the iPad provides a platform for photo slideshows that do not need a news "hook" to get them into the paper.

In contrast to the views outlined above, George Brock believes that in the future, reporters will increasingly be asked to adapt their stories to a variety of digital templates and journalists will have to be more versatile in the skills they can offer.

In his experience, graduates are increasingly being hired to newspapers from broadcasting courses as audio visual skills become more sought after. He believes this trend will likely be speeded up by the introduction of the iPad as tablet computers are a very visual medium so the skill sets needed are slightly different. However, he says training programmes do not need to undergo a radical alteration to accommodate this development as they are already moving in that direction.

I believe that journalism trainees would benefit from being encouraged to contemplate non-traditional ways of presenting stories as this skill will be increasingly valued in the future landscape of digital news. They could study successful non-news apps to see the varied ways in which information is presented in order to open their eyes to the myriad opportunities provided by a tablet computer.

## Conclusions

Experts are predicting astronomical growth in iPad and other tablet sales. The potential of these devices to deliver quality journalism to readers and financial reward to publishing companies is reflected in the massive investment of time and resource Britain's biggest newspaper brands are making in their apps.

While the iPad is a relatively new device, it is seen by some publishers as a tantalising opportunity to return to the traditional form for delivering news in a finite editorialised product – a newspaper. In contrast to this, sits its ability to tell stories in new, non-linear and interactive ways.

Today's consumers of news expect to be able to read the news on whatever platform best suits them at a particular time of day.<sup>161</sup> Newspaper companies made a fatal mistake with websites by giving away their content for free. Making people switch to paying for website access is a difficult task, but now customers can be offered more than that with a digital subscription which feeds stories to their mobile, smartphone, PC or iPad. The value comes from providing a multi-platform package and extra worth can be added by linking the reader experience across these platforms.

For example, in the morning when people are preparing for the day, they are likely to flick through their newspaper or iPad edition and delve into a few stories of interest. On the train they can get a quick overview of the important news of the day and what is coming up delivered to their smartphone. In a complete digital subscription, they could bookmark a story for later which would then appear on their PC at work or iPad when they return home in the evening. Reminding customers that they intended to read a feature or comment piece not only adds value to their experience, it also values the important work of journalists.

The iPad is an important new device in this chain as I would argue it is by far the best platform for reading long-form journalism and works well as a digital platform for an editorialised product. The iTunes store model also provides a convenient way of charging customers which had been a problem for newspaper websites.

However, this report argues that the iPad is much more than just another platform on which to deliver a printed newspaper. As a digital device plugged into the Internet, it is capable of locating a reader and feeding location-specific information to them. It can predict what individuals are likely to want to read and knows what their friends have found interesting on a particular day.

Newspaper companies therefore need to start approaching the growing array of tablet computers as an entirely new device with a huge potential for attracting a new and younger audience.

The demonstration Telegraph app described in this research is an excellent example of what the iPad has to offer in terms of delivering location-specific and personalised news packages to readers. The ability of an app to track and learn what interests a reader and therefore present a personally curated news package is a path publishing companies should explore.

While an app should not replace the website in providing up-to-date news, apps should take advantage of the fact the device is connected to the Internet and certain things can and should

be easily updated during the day. The Times and The Telegraph both have plans to update sports results and financial information as is already done by The Sunday Times. Extra editions should be used on big news days and I would suggest using a ticker at the bottom of an app as a convenient way to update readers about ongoing news events without changing the content of the app.

Making the app interactive is also important. The huge popularity of social networking amongst younger people suggests that functionality allowing readers to comment on and share stories via favourite social media sites is a key component of encouraging younger readers to invest in newspaper apps. Stories within the app should have options to “like”; bookmark for later; send or share via social media; comment or copy. The Sunday Times “buy now” button is another excellent idea which takes advantage of the tactile nature of the device and can increase revenue.

One newspaper does not necessarily mean just one app. Unique apps could be one-offs about significant news events and used by schools as a teaching resource. They could be specialist Travel, Fashion or Entertainment apps, using the newspaper’s vast knowledge bank and historical resources to become a must-have for people interested in these areas. A restaurant or film app could include all the newspaper’s reviews and use location to show people what is on in their area at any given time.

The newspapers in this report are aware of this potential and are all considering independent apps for different sections of the newspaper. As this research paper was being finalised, The Telegraph released a new Pictures App for iPad with a daily gallery of 12 pictures and a 14-day archive.

Throwing away traditional ideas and starting again is not an easy task. Achieving success will most likely need the input of people not involved in the newspaper industry. Senor suggests game developers as key people to work with on the design of news apps as they also tell stories, but in vastly different ways.

These sorts of technical advances should not come at the expense of quality journalism, which surveys have shown is highly valued by app users. To provide a truly valuable package to readers, publishers need to invest in high-quality reporting as well as the technical prowess of their apps.

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