

Newspapers of today and the electronic media of tomorrow

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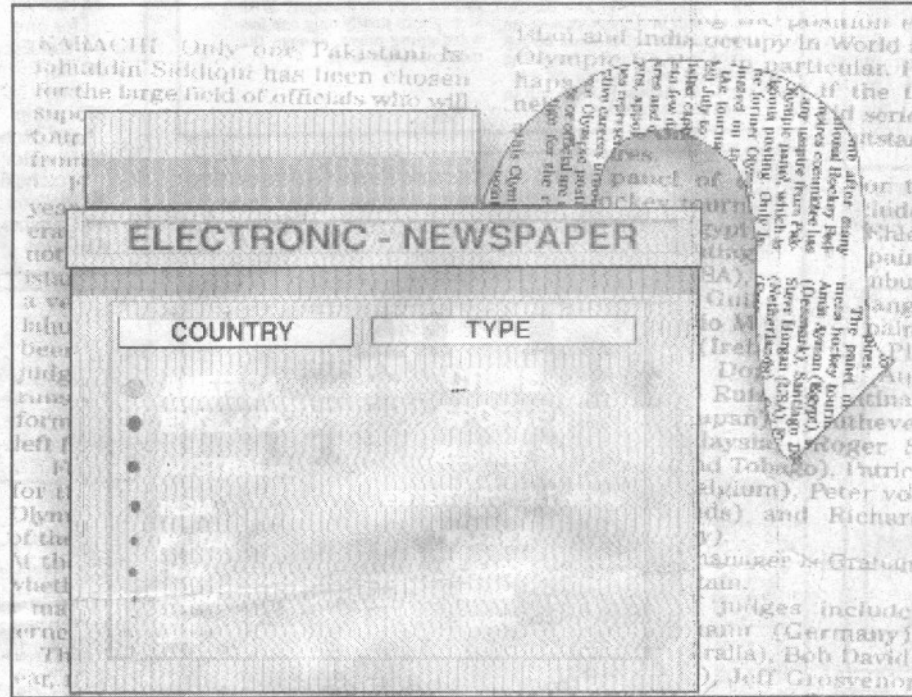
Would newspapers as we see it today survive the competition with electronic newspapers of tomorrow? With the information technology taking leaps beyond imagination, it is now the 'seconds' that count. Time is the essence. News - as it happens, minute to minute like a live TV relay and on top of it, a wide range of selection to choose from. Latest crime news, sports results, news on investments or simply the weather, all updated minute to minute and made available through connecting up to data bank or simply dispenser machines installed in offices, at road sides or in busy shopping centres. Make your selection for the type of news you want, worldwide news or specifically a country of your choice and presto - there it is, all that you want.

The days of portable electronic newspaper are not science fiction any more. It has become a reality. And as the Japanese are masters of turning fiction into reality, we don't have to look very far. Once again it is here in Japan that the third largest selling national daily, has launched what it believes is the world's first pocked-sized computer newspaper, and is confident that it will reach its target of 50,000 subscribers within the year. Beware, the year of the electronic 'Mainichi' is upon us.

Someone in Timbuktoo wants to know the weather conditions in a most unlikely place such as Bhutan but it would be available at the press of a button. A simple menu enables readers to download and store news stories. These can be filtered according to personal interests, to be recalled and read one handed, if necessary, in crowded buses, in shopping centres while holding a shopping bag, or while one is engaged in eating and drinking at a party.

The electronic newspapers will make it possible to have news on the subject of one's choice and the latest i.e. updated every 5 minutes. This is where the newspapers of today will lose out to the electro-newspapers of tomorrow. It is in the realm of news that people are becoming more interested. Midnight's news in morning papers, approximately a six hour delay, is out dated.

Today's newspapers, news-wise are late and behind. What one reads in the morning is already at least eight hours behind. A lot may have happened while one is going through the morning paper. The leap forward is from 8-hours-behind-news to minute-news. In this info-tech revolution



and electro-techno days of gadgets, the newspapers as we see it today - for its news value - is a dying trait.

Most newspapers are connected up to news-network services through satellite receiving minute to minute relay of information but to pass on the same to their readers in a newspaper format causes delay. In this regard newspapers are at a disadvantage as the selection, editing and printing takes time. Printing deadline has to be met. From printing press to agents to hawkers and delivery men, even though is carefully scheduled for early delivery of newspapers but obviously there will always be a period remaining unattended.

In a global-village concept, what happens in a small country could affect a great deal to what is happening in business and finance world. News and minute to minute news affects businesses of all sorts; international currencies, raw material prices, supply of oil, and many other commitments. Not having up-to-minute news could have devastating effects on international trade.

The other important factor is the choice of news. In newspapers someone else makes a choice of what interests people. But here also, for newspapers to cater to all tastes, is an impossibility. Selected news, categorised news and news where all kinds of selections

The newspaper, nevertheless remains the ultimate random access information provider, and its role clearly goes beyond even that, as a source of entertainment and analysis.

may be possible cannot be through newspapers.

The one thing that newspapers may still hold its ground, would be articles, analysis, reviews and viewpoints on a wide range of subjects which will still hold people's interest as it will have local flavour and known personalities involved.

The new technological break-through now makes it possible to have easy access to news, all sorts of news with multi choice system readily available. At present, the first country to experiment with this electro-news technology is Japan. But soon, the

electro-news delivery system.

The electronic newspaper, more frequent that people work-places, the most possible could be picked public call for information has made a selection of stories per minutes to download and mode.

For more will be selected minute papers and out.

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