

Zell Posits Newspapers Withholding Content

By L. Carol Christopher

With thanks this week to the Online Journalism Review, iTWire Update, Paid-Content.org, Poynter.org, Cyberjournalist.net and MediaBistro.com.

Newspaper News

Sam Zell pondered **what would happen to Google if newspapers withheld content** from them during a talk at Stanford Law School (may require registration). Zell is **the new minority stockholder with veto power at the Tribune Company**. Zell, who reportedly **hopes to be chairman of the company by the end of the year**, gave a **post-announcement interview to three Chicago journalists** that was published in the *Chicago Tribune*. The match between Zell and the paper is **"improbable,"** though, said the *Tribune's* Michael Oneal. There are winners and losers in the deal no matter how you look at it, though, report the **Los Angeles Times** and **the Tribune**. (The *Tribune*, by the way, will be **selling off the Cubbies** after this year's season.) With *The Tribune* going private, **Gannett is the only large, publicly traded, non-family controlled newspaper left**, which means fewer targets for unhappy investors.

Meanwhile, stockholders at the *New York Times* are trying to gain control over decision other than by withholding from Class A directors, reported the **New York Post** and the **New York Times**. The *Times* is making news and creating speculation over its future **with its move to a new building**, while the *Post* has begun selling **weekday subscriptions** for \$13 annually, which evens out to 5 cents a day. But all of this boils down to one thing for TheStreet.com writer Jim Cramer (via **Poynter's Romenesko**), who said, "All of these companies seem to be run, frankly, by jokers or dreamers who had no idea how to deploy capital."

Citizen Media has become the cause du jour, it seems. At **Associated Content, citizen journalists can even get paid for their work**. Most recently, **Topix**, a news aggregator jointly owned by Gannett, McClatchy and Tribune, **has decided to become a citizen media site**. The **Catholic Church** has also decided to create its own citizen media site, **Pewsitter.org**. Elsewhere,

the Center for Citizen Journalism has released **a new report on the first generation of traditional media citizen journalism innovators**, with input from, among others, both Dan Gillmor and Craig Newmark (of CraigsList), and **profiles of exemplars**. Relatedly, newspapers may want to take a look at **this critique of newspaper attitudes toward blogs** from the *Online Journalism Review*, or at the *Review's* article on **how to make money from online news content**.

The **Washington Post** has **redesigned its home page**, and Jim Brady, executive editor, explains why. But **what works for a national newspaper site may not work for local sites**, reports *Business Week*. Nonetheless, **the J-Lab: Institute for Interactive Journalism** at the University of Maryland's Merrill College of Journalism has made **10 New Voices grants** of \$12,000 each in the hope of creating news sites for underserved communities.

If you've been around long enough, you'll remember the mass migration from p.m. to a.m. newspapers in the U.S. **The Chicago Sun Times has a 10-page PDF edition** that is moving in the opposite direction as part of a redesign of its print and Internet editions. The redesign has gained lots of attention, including **a column in the Chicago Tribune**. Meanwhile in Boston, **the Globe has launched a new fashion magazine**.

USA Today has begun to include **scented stickers on the front page of papers delivered to guests of Omni hotels**. The first offering was blackberry, to suggest that guests have Starbucks and muffins for breakfast. The promotion will last six months or more.

Maybe we're not as global as we think: **the Washington Post is withdrawing its Canadian correspondent** who, as it turns out, was the last U.S. newspaper correspondent in Canada. News will now come mostly from freelancers, contract writers, wire services and the like.

USA Today will be **increasing its freelance photographers' day rates**, but will retain all rights to the images.

There's a bit of **a dust-up surrounding the departure of folks from the St. Paul Pioneer**

Press to the Minneapolis Star Tribune, ranging all the way from the publisher to ad execs. The *Pioneer Press* claims that **its former publisher took confidential information** when he left for the *Star Tribune*.

We're always interested in **the projected future of newspapers**, and the Newhouse School recently held **a panel discussion on the subject** that included **speakers Ken Auletta, McClatchy CEO Gary Pruitt and former LA Times editor Dean Baquet**. But it seems to be difficult to even deal with the present sometimes: the American Society for Newspaper Editors (ASNE) reported **that there are 57,000 folks in U.S. newsrooms, up 4% over last year**. However, that **"surge" is contested** because of changes in who gets counted how.

In other news, **Brant Houston, head of Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) will be moving on** to fill an endowed Knight Chair in Investigative and Enterprise Reporting at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The Allentown (Pa.) Morning Call got some **well-deserved attention** for creating a widget — basically a search interface to an online database. The attention came in part because of the promotion the paper's online editor did in advance of its release. If you're looking for your own widget ideas, Poynter recommends subscribing to the **Sexy Widget blog**. The Boston Globe also got attention from Poynter for its tax-season inspiration: it made it possible for folks to download "just about every tax form they would need," along with **tax-filing tips**.

Web 2.0

Social networking sites such as **MySpace may be forced by the Connecticut attorney general to require age verification** or face a \$5,000 fine per violation. Forty-four other states are considering similar legislation.

It isn't only age that's a problem, either: Popular social networking **site Second Life is being investigated for unlawful Internet gambling**. The site also will now allow residents to **use real names with avatars** for \$50 a year, but they don't necessarily have to use their own names. There's another, more unusual — and legal — form of gambling at **NewsFutures.com, where they bet on future news with fake money**.

You might want to take a look at three reports from the recent Online Journalism Review conference: **"From blogging to business," "From MySpace to your space,"** and **"How to sell your website without selling out."**

Podcasts are fine for some things, but revenue may or may not be one of them according to this article from *Business Week*. The magazine also has an article describing **a new Web video venture between News Corp. and NBC Universal**.

If you can't beat 'em, print 'em: The free paper **BostonNOW plans to turn over some of its editorial space to bloggers** rather than compete with them.

Going Global

The BBC is moving toward offering **live, streamed mobile TV** by joining with three U.K. carriers. The Middle East's Javna plans to deliver BBC WorldChannel via live stream to MobileCom customers. Yandex, a Russian search and portal service, **has bought out local business social network MoiKrug.ru**. **Webjam.com**, a London-based online community tool, has **raised funds to expand across Europe and into the U.S.** Meanwhile, **Ericsson is taking over a Norwegian video company** that will provide it with Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) infrastructure.

Research Revelations

A study by Vidmeter.com and reported by Reuters **via Fox News** said that copyright-protected videos removed from YouTube at the request of owners accounted for a very small portion of views. "News, Improved," published by the Knight Foundation and written by Michele McLellan and Tim Porter, is **the story of the foundation's \$10 million Newsroom Training Initiative** which began in 2003. It's **available for free** if you fill out their survey.

If you're intrigued by multimedia and scour every tutorial for more insight into how to make it work, you'll find **"How to Win a Multimedia Contest"** to your liking.

If you're not sure you know what you need to know about social networking, this **downloadable white paper** promises to provide plenty of answers.

DoubleClick has done some research that indicates that **click-through rates are higher on video ads than single-image ones**.

Contrary to received wisdom, **apparently young adults 25 to 34 do like newspapers**, according to new data from the Newspaper Association of America.

Googlisimo

It probably isn't a big surprise **that Microsoft would slam Google's Book Search project**, but

here's the report on an address delivered by a Microsoft counsel at the annual meeting of the Association of American Publishers. In Dallas, a court has **issued a subpoena to Google/You Tube** to discover who uploaded horror movie "The Host" prior to its release date. In unrelated news, Google's YouTube hosted **its first online video awards**, including best series, best comedy, best commentary, most inspirational and most adorable.

Google is sponsoring its third Google Summer of Code, wherein it invited applications from students and mentors to write open source code over their summer vacation. Upon completion of the project, students will receive \$4,500 and mentors \$500. The **list of accepted applications** is extensive. You can see what happened in **2005 and 2006** as well.

Google is also tapping into the hyper-local phenomenon with **a feature called My Maps** that allows users to **turn Google maps into personalized cartography** to share with family and friends.

If you're a Mac user who's been coveting the PC version of the Google Desktop, good news — there's now a **Mac version**, too. PC World offers **a review**.

Google, which has already hired its own international lobbyists, is now **forming a political ad sales team, according to the Los Angeles Times**. Unsurprisingly, **Yahoo has the same idea**. Meanwhile, Google has also entered **into an arrangement with U.S. satellite TV operator EchoStar to sell television ads**.

Google has resolved **its lawsuit with Agence-France Presse** with a settlement that allows Google to link to the wire service's stories and display some additional content. Google also has **previously settled a lawsuit with the Associated Press**.

Also at Google: **a new translation tool; says Poynter's E-Media Tidbits**: "Google has released its new way of using pinyin (the Latin alphabetic transcription of Chinese characters) to display Chinese on computers: Google Pinyin."

Magazine Musings

Australia's **Connection Magazines** has launched a separate entity, **Connection Research**, which will focus on the convergence of information and communications technologies. Three reports are already available on the site.

Gemstar-TV Guide is acquiring Aptiv Digital, maker of software solutions for those top-of-the-TV boxes, as it continues to make inroads in digital media.

According to PaidContent.org, **InfoWorld is closing its print pages** and going all digital. Meanwhile, **The Week is publishing an extra issue, but it'll only be available online**. Makes sense since the issue is about the environment.

Because of increased postal rates, **Star, the celebrity magazine, is reducing its guaranteed paid circulation by 10%**, or 150,000 copies. But things are looking better for **BBC Magazines, which is working on a deal to publish in the U.S.** by via syndication through Newscom.

Could be a first — or a last: *Gentlemen's Quarterly (GQ)* **has conducted its interview with actress Lindsay Lohan via Blackberry**. In another oops moment, **U.S. News accidentally included two low-ranked schools** in its top listings of U.S. colleges.

A few writers at Business 2.0 have received their first checks, in the range of \$2,000 to \$2,500 at \$2.50 per thousand views, for traffic to their blogs.

Between the covers

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer quoted Booklist magazine as saying that young adults are buying books in previously unseen quantities. Among the reasons is simply that there are more teenagers than at almost any time — outnumbered only by Baby Boomers.

Events

Media Magazine's 2007 Outfront Conference is set for April 26 in Manhattan. This year's focus will be on "Inside the Box or Outside the Box" — with reference to the box we all know affectionately as TV, as well as the conventional and digital issues of advertising. The **agenda** looks full, with a long list of **speakers**.

It's after the fact, but **notes from CTIA Wireless 2007**, held March 27-29 in Orlando, are online at the site of **The International Association for Wireless Communications**. MocoNews covered the conference and has **its own analysis** available.

The **Newspaper Association of America** will hold its annual **NEXPO** technology conference in Orlando April 21-24 this year and has posted its program. **TSR**

L. Carol Christopher is principal analyst for JJCS. She has written about newspapers and new media — their people, processes and technologies — for many years.