Abstract

The central contention of this thesis is that an increase in \textit{image-focused} or \textit{pseudo-event-focused} hyperlinked-headlines is occurring on online news sites. This central contention contains at least three implications. First, holding that the newspaper is the epitome of traditional journalism, a crisis in the news industry is underway. The crisis began as a result of newspapers’ financial challenges posed by electronic media, but the growth of online news sites has accelerated and worsened conditions. Second, as a result of this dire financial situation, news outlets, collectively, are shifting focus from traditional journalism’s concept of \textit{news} to a 1830s-era Penny Press sensationalism style, marked by human-interest pieces, entertainment fluff and celebrity gossip. Third, news is shifting away from the ironic reporting method and theory of \textit{detached observer} to a more personally connected style of narrative storytelling, which, together with the aforementioned implications, signifies a cyclical cycle and consequential return to the colonial roots of the American press and its definition of \textit{news}. 