

Abstract

The central contention of this thesis is that an increase in *image-focused* or *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 *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 *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 *news*.