

QUESTION TIME

British Newspapers

History

During the 17th century, there were many kinds of publications, that told both news and rumours. Among these were pamphlets, posters, ballads etc. Even when the news periodicals emerged, many of these co-existed with them. A news periodical differs from these mainly because of its periodicity. The definition for 17th century newsbooks and newspapers is that they are published at least once a week. Johann Carolus' *Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien*, published in Strassburg in 1605, is usually regarded as the first news periodical.

In the beginning of the 17th century the right to print was strictly controlled in England. This was probably the reason why the first newspaper in English language was printed in Amsterdam by Joris Veseler around 1620. This followed the style established by Veseler's earlier Dutch paper *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* However, when the English started printing their own papers in London, they reverted to the pamphlet format used by contemporary books. The era of these newsbooks lasted until the publication of the Oxford Gazette in 1665.

The control over printing relaxed to some extent after the ending of the Star Chamber in 1641. The Civil War escalated the demand for news. News-pamphlets or -books reported the war, often supporting one side or the other. Following the Restoration there arose a number of publications, including the London Gazette (first published on November 16, 1665 as the Oxford Gazette), the first official journal of record and the newspaper of the Crown. Publication was controlled under the Licensing Act of 1662, but the Act's lapses from 1679-1685 and from 1695 onwards encouraged a number of new titles. There were twelve London newspapers and 24 provincial papers by the 1720s (the *Daily Courant* was the first London newspaper). By the early 19th century there were 52 London papers and over 100 other titles.

Nineteenth Century

As stamp, paper and other duties were progressively reduced from the 1830s onwards (and all duties on newspapers were gone by 1855) there was a massive growth in overall circulation as major events and improved communications developed the public's need for information. *The Daily Universal Register* began life in 1785 and was later to become known as The Times from 1788. This was the most significant newspaper of the first half of the 19th century, but from around 1860 there were a number of more strongly competitive titles, each differentiated by its political biases and interests.

The Manchester Guardian was founded in Manchester in 1821 by a group of non-conformist businessmen. Its most famous editor, Charles Prestwich Scott, made the Manchester Guardian into a world-famous newspaper in the 1890s. It is now called *The Guardian*.

The Chartist Northern Star, first published on May 26, 1838, was a pioneer of popular journalism but was very closely linked to the fortunes of the movement and was out of business by 1852. At the same time there was the establishment of more specialized periodicals and the first cheap newspaper in the *Daily Telegraph and Courier* (1855), later to be known simply as the Daily Telegraph. From 1860 until around 1910 is considered a 'golden age' of newspaper publication, with technical advances in printing and communication combined with a professionalization of journalism and the prominence of new owners.

Newspapers became more partisan and there was the rise of new or yellow journalism (see William Thomas Stead). Socialist and labour newspapers also proliferated and in 1912 the *Daily Herald* was launched as the first daily newspaper of the trade union and labour movement.

Twentieth Century

WW I saw the rise of the 'press barons' initially the Harmsworth Brothers (later Viscounts [Northcliffe](#) and [Rothermere](#)) and the Berry Brothers. A trend which continued between the wars when the WW I barons were joined by [Max Aitken](#) (later Lord Beaverbrook) and the newspaper industry took on an appearance similar to today's. The post-war period was marked by the emergence of tabloid newspapers (or red tops), notably with [Cecil Harmsworth King](#) and his International Publishing Corporation.

In the 1980s the powerful print [trade unions](#) were challenged and production moved away from [Fleet Street](#), marked by the successes of [Rupert Murdoch](#) and the [Sun](#) in the 1980s and 1990s. Currently circulation is in a slow but steady decline but still comparatively high.

More recently, the [NUJ](#) has complained of declining wages in the local press, which some claim are a result of increasing consolidation of the local newspaper industry. In March 2006 Labour MP Austin Mitchell called for a debate on the matter and encouraged the UK parliament to enact legislation to regulate the sector.

Current position

Newspapers are now going online as well with their own websites and with the ever increasing pressure to reduce waste in the UK and paper and ink cost rising it will not be far off when all newspapers will become electronic only using the [internet](#) and [e-paper](#) as ways to publish. This rise in costs made one UK media group to publish the UK first online only recognized local newspaper. It was [Southport Reporter](#) and it went online fully in 2000 as an online only publication from day one. This type of local newspaper could spell the move for all local newspapers in the UK to publish only on the internet. Also in the perceived gap left by local newspapers, many of which have closed 'district' offices in smaller towns, local news websites are emerging in the form of web forums and blog sites. Examples of this include a [website for the town of Bourne, in Lincolnshire](#), which is run by former Fleet Street journalist Rex Needle, and [RuberyVillage.co.uk](#), which is run by teenagers and provides news for the West Midlands village of [Rubery](#). What type of outlet will win is yet to be seen.

The Press - Tabloid Vs Broadsheet

British newspapers fall loosely into two categories: tabloid and broadsheet. The word tabloid actually describes the size of the paper (half that of a broadsheet). Actually tabloid newspapers tend to be quite different from broadsheets in style and content as well as in size

Current national newspapers still in circulation, with circulation figures

Title	Circulation	Published	Type
• The Herald (1783)	71 000	Daily?	
• The Times (1785)	640 000	Daily	B/sheet
• The Observer (1791)	456 000	Sunday	B/sheet
• The Scotsman (1817)	58 000	Daily	B/sheet
• The Guardian/Manchester Guardian (1821)	366 000	Daily	B/sheet
• The Sunday Times (1822)	1 240 000	Sunday	B/sheet
• Evening Standard (1827)	267 000	Daily	Tabloid
• News of the World (1843)	3 300 000	Sunday	Tabloid
• The Daily Telegraph (1855)	896 000	Daily	B/sheet
• The People (1881)	730 000	Sunday	Tabloid
• Financial Times (1888)	461 000	Daily	B/sheet
• Daily Record (1895)	401 000	Daily	Tabloid

• <u>Daily Mail</u> (1896)	2 300 000	Daily	Tabloid
• <u>Daily Express</u> (1900)	759 000	Daily	Tabloid
• <u>Daily Mirror</u> (1903)	1 540 000	Daily	Tabloid
• <u>Sunday Mirror</u> (1915)	1 380 000	Sunday	Tabloid
• <u>Sunday Express</u> (1918)	779 000	Sunday	Tabloid
• <u>The Morning Star/Daily Worker</u> (1930)		Daily	
• <u>Sunday Telegraph</u> (1961)	642 000	Sunday	B/sheet
• <u>The Sun</u> (1964)	3 000 000	Daily	Tabloid
• <u>Daily Star</u> (1978)	772 000	Daily	Tabloid
• <u>Mail on Sunday</u> (1982)	2 250 000	Sunday	Tabloid
• <u>Independent</u> (1986)	253 000	Daily	B/sheet
• <u>Sunday Sport</u> (1986)	101 000	Sunday	Tabloid
• <u>Daily Sport</u> (1988)		Daily	Tabloid
• <u>Independent on Sunday</u> (1990).	228 000	Sunday	B/sheet
• Manchester Evening News (1924)	95 000	Daily	
• Manchester Metro (free)	309 000	Daily	

Independence

Like the media generally, newspapers are independent of the UK Government. The Government cannot tell them what to print or which political party to support. However there are rules about respecting the privacy of individuals e.g. film stars or Royalty, which is handled by the Press Complaints Commission.