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# **“Taking the paper out of news”**

10<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism, University of Texas,  
USA, 18 April 2009

**Neil Thurman and Merja Myllylahti**







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**Taking the paper out of news:  
A case study of *Taloussanomat*, Europe's first  
online-only newspaper**

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“Print newspapers will run out of daily readers late in the first quarter of **2043**”

– **Philip Meyer**, *The Vanishing Newspaper*, 2004

“In **10 years** . . . there will be no newspapers, no magazines that are delivered in paper form”

– **Steve Bullmer**, CEO Microsoft, 2008

“by **2021** the few national US dailies . . . will not exist in print”

– **Vin Crosbie**, 2008





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## Madison's *The Capital Times* : "A fond farewell", 5 April 2008





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**Christian Science  
Monitor's last daily  
print edition: March 27  
2009**



**Seattle Post-  
Intelligencer  
newsroom, 16 March  
2009: end of an era**



***Taloussanomati's***  
**first edition:**  
**18 November 1997**



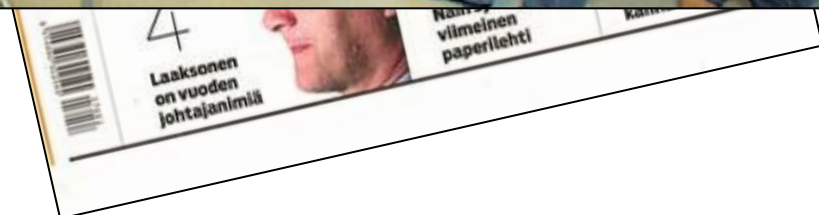




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**“A toast to the new”**

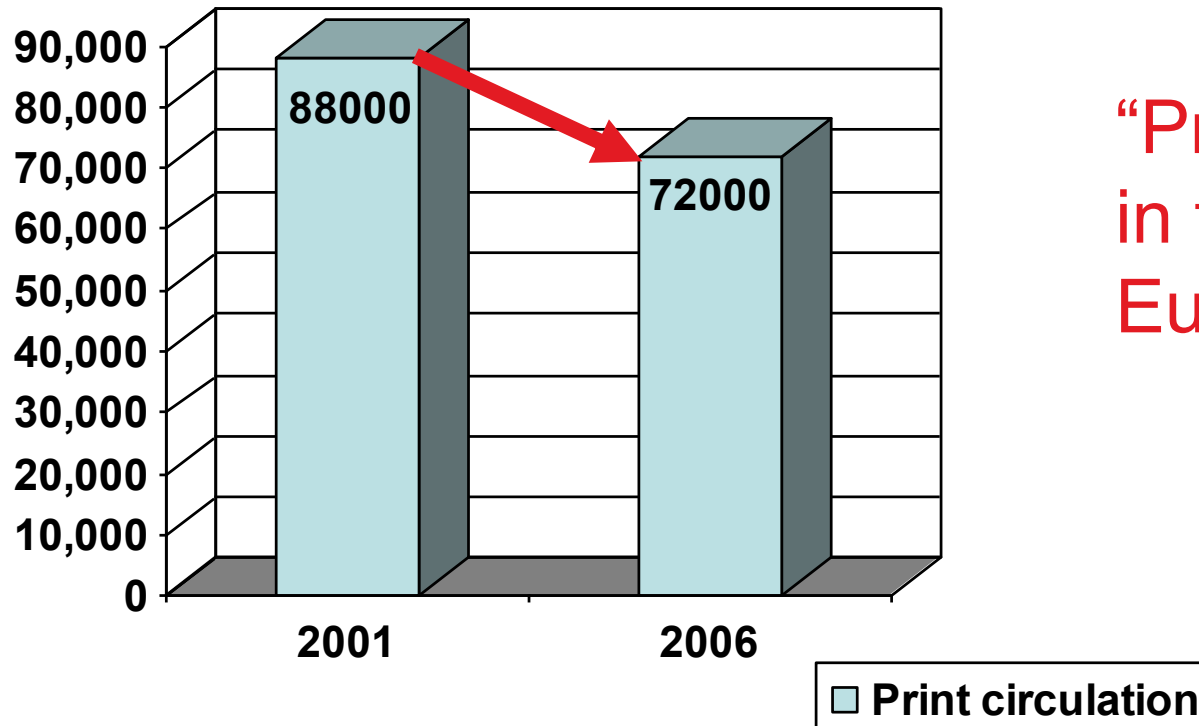






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## Taloussanommat: falling print circulation, large losses

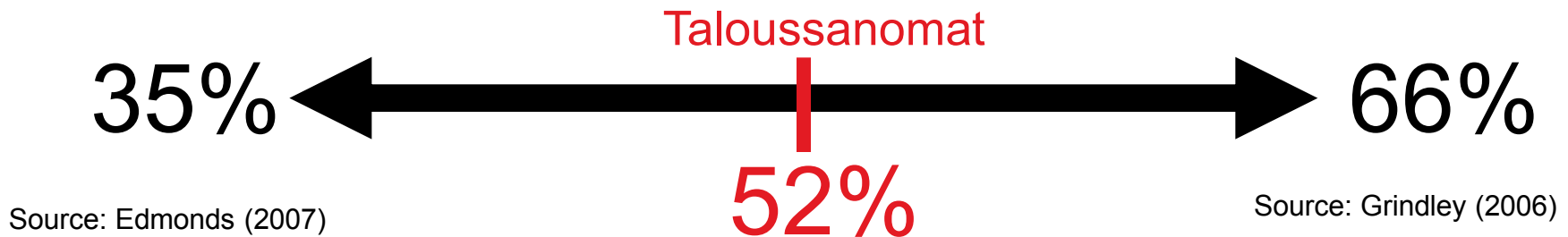


“Print-era losses:  
in the millions of  
Euros / year”



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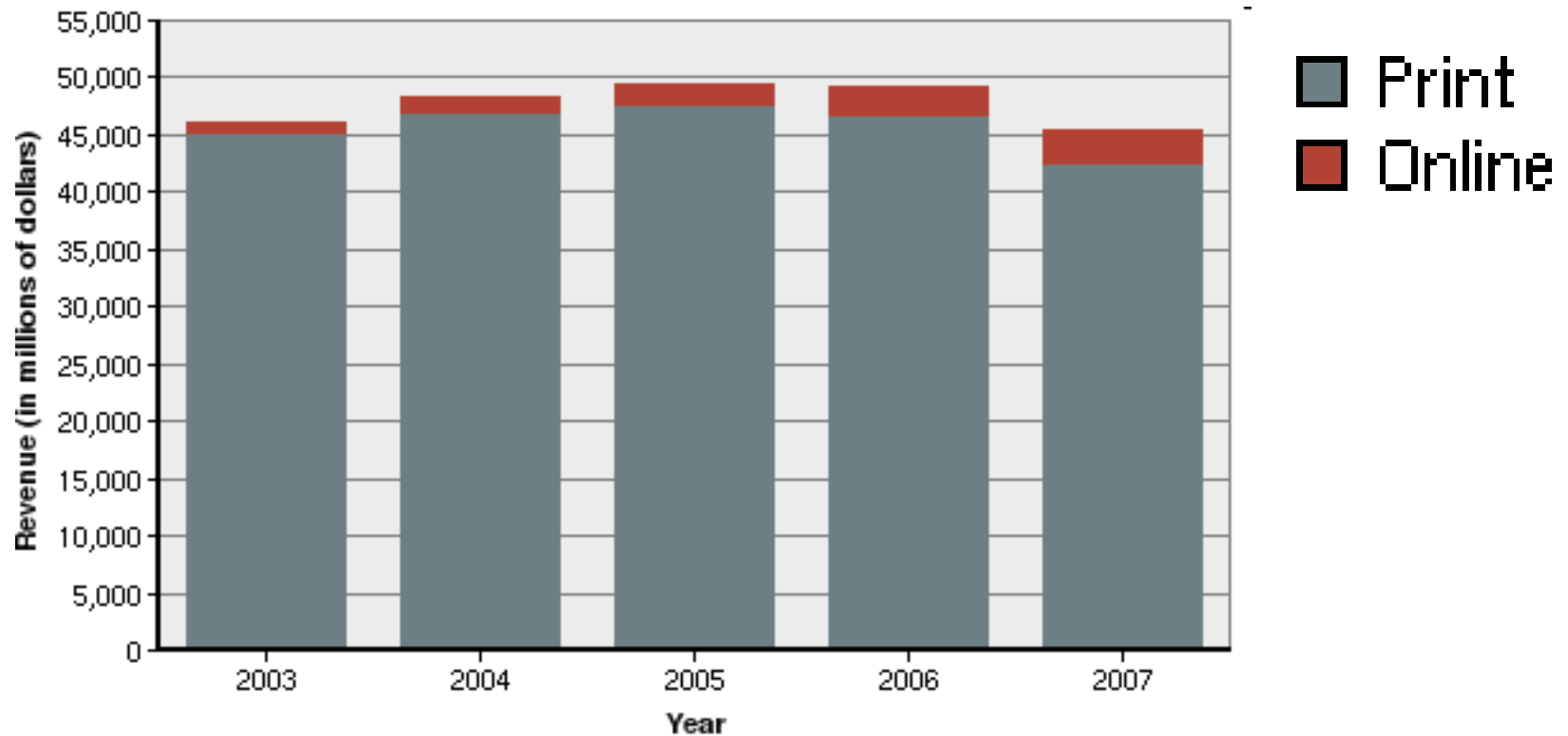
## Killing the print edition: cost savings





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## Print vs. Online Ad Expenditures, Newspapers, 2003-2007

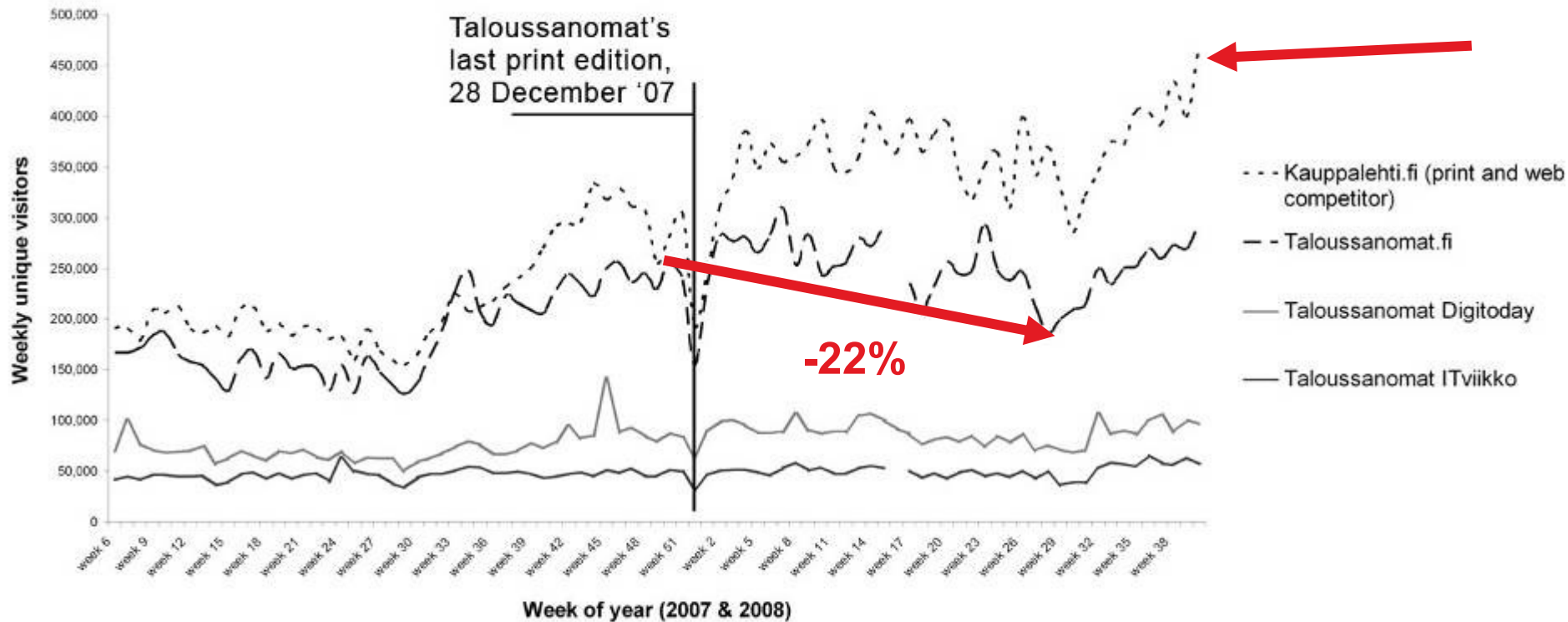


Source: Pew / Business Analysis and Research, Newspaper Association of America





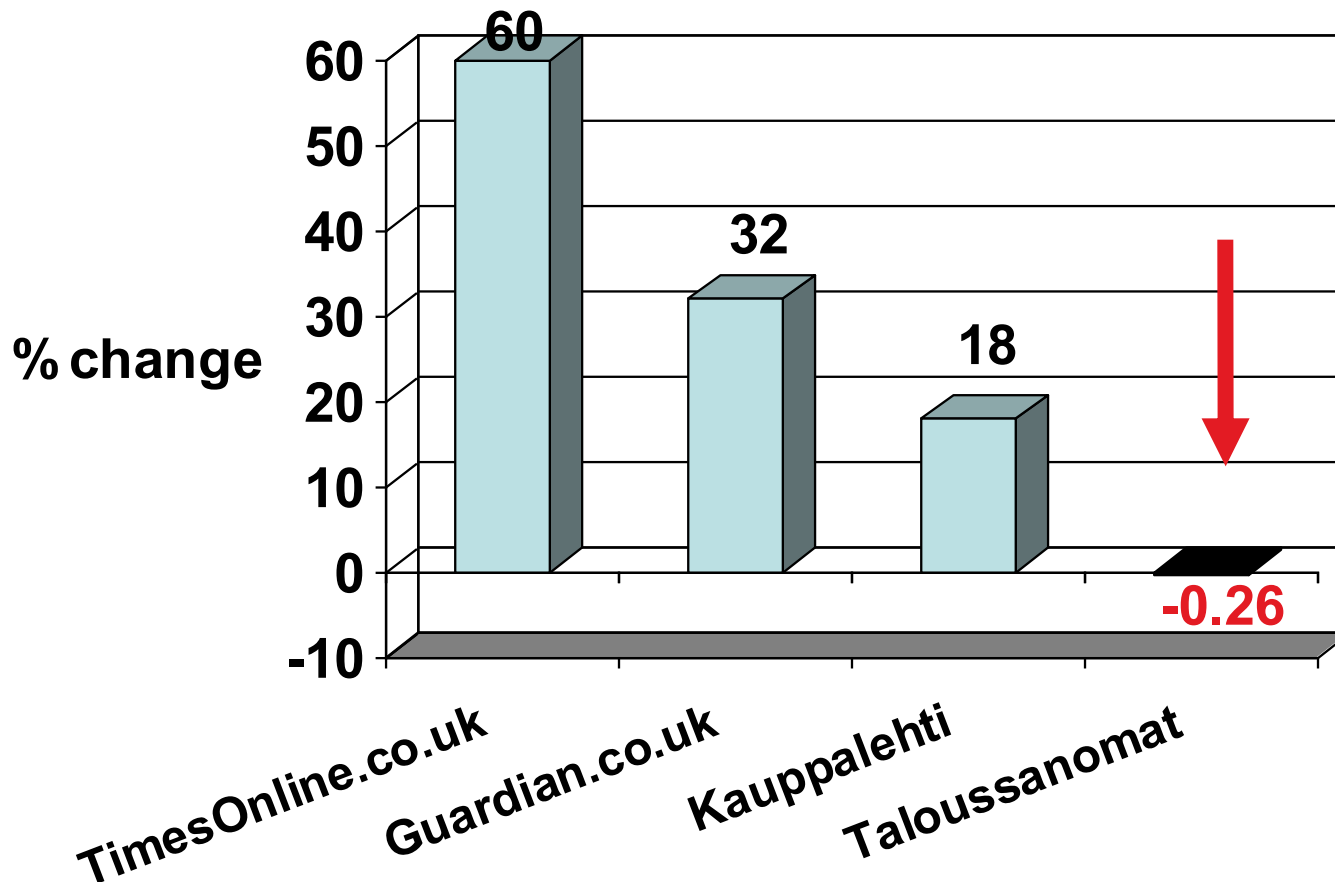
## Weekly unique visitors to *Taloussanomat* and *Kauppalehti*, 2007-2008





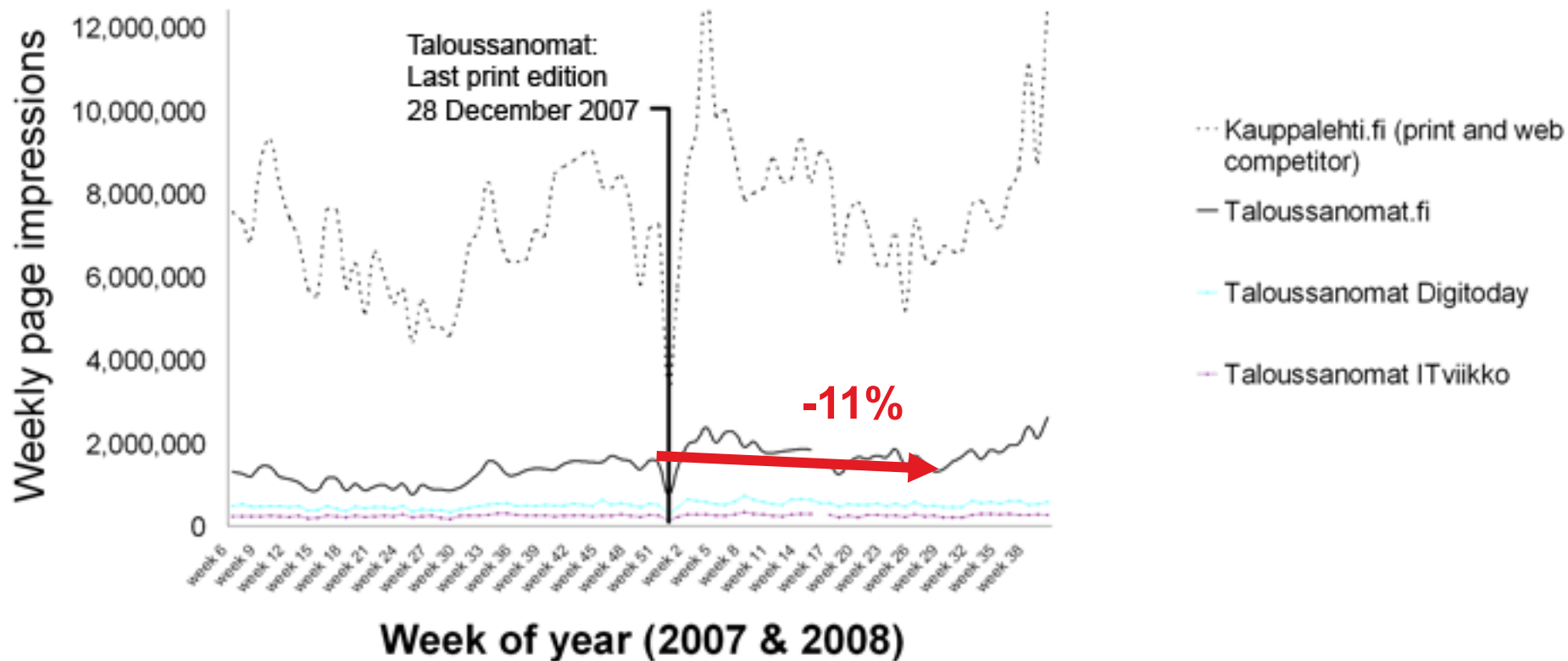
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## Nov '07 – Aug '08 Change in Unique Users





## *Taloussanomat & Kauppalehti* : weekly page impressions 2007-2008

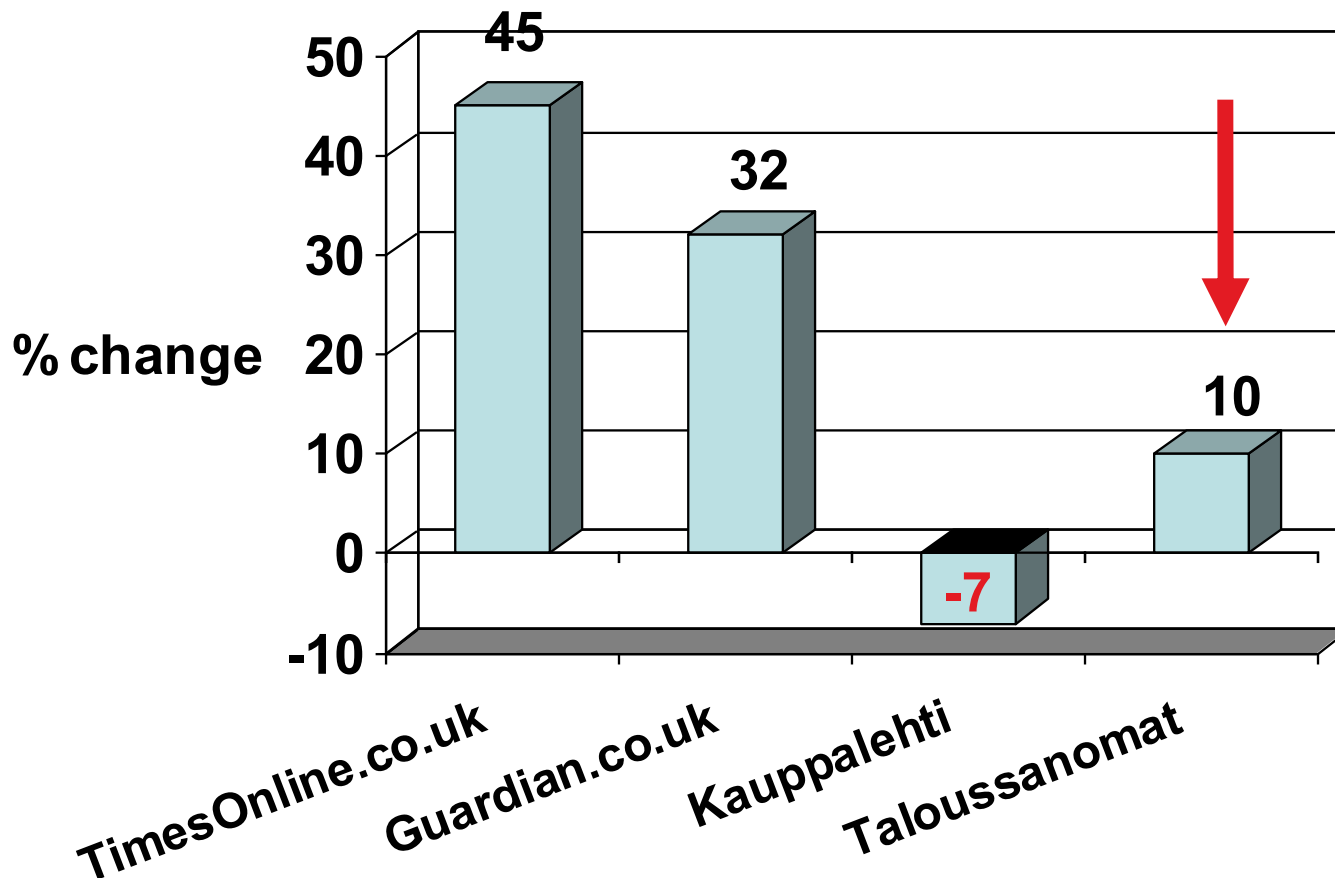






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## Nov '07 – Aug '08 Change in Page Impressions





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## Taloussanomat: web vs print reach

Daily print circulation, 2006 : **72,000**

Weekly unique users, 2008: **291,966**







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**Taloussanomat: Aggregate weekly viewing time**

Print version, 2006 : **216,000** hours.

Only-only version, 2008 : **57,316** hours.

**Revenue**  
**▼ down 75% ▼**





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"Moving online is a [prospect] advertisers will embrace"

– **The Ecologist's** publishing director, Richard Coles

"We have the luxury — the opportunity — of making a leap that most newspapers will have to make in the next five years ."

– John Yemma, editor, **Christian Science Monitor**





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## Conclusion # 1:

Ditching print edition only financially worthwhile if newspaper has operating losses of **at least 31%**.







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“Some of the journalists . . . have their stories ready at 4–5pm. This needs to change.”

– **Editor for Development and Strategy, Taloussanomat.**





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“We do not have time to go to news conferences, meet our sources or even talk to colleagues. 95% of the journalistic work is done on the phone”

– experienced news journalist, Taloussanomat

**80% of stories are written on agency**  
**2007 material 2008 news 2009 <28**

(28 July – 5 Aug 2008)



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“If you double the amount of stories or the publishing frequency it truly helps [your visitor numbers].”

– **Editor-in-Chief and CEO, Taloussanomat**

“Churn-alists”

– **Nick Davies**





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“If you want profits, your only solution is to be a Michelin star restaurant. You have to have . . . time to think.”

– **Editor-in-Chief and CEO, Taloussanomat**







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## *Taloussanomat's* newsroom

**“Your story is  
flying! In 12  
minutes you have  
got 500 readers”  
– sub editor,  
Taloussanomat, 11 July  
2008**





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“if the visitor numbers are low [the news desk] will publish some populist story like about **David Beckham’s underwear** to get reader figures up quickly”

– **multimedia journalist, Taloussanomat**





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“more ‘**how to journalism**’ ”

– **Editor-in-chief and CEO, Taloussanomat**

“We now have more stories that are closer to the consumer”

– **News editor, Taloussanomat**





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“It is worth training journalists to produce multimedia content? I think it is better to let specialised journalists do their jobs properly. To be able to write good stories, the journalists need time to analyse, think, and discuss”

– **Editor-in-chief and CEO, Taloussanomat**





paidContent.org

mocoNews.net

## paidContent.org - Tracking The Online-Only Seattle P-I: Traffic Down 20 Percent

*Joseph Tartakoff*

paidContent.org

Sunday, March 29, 2009; 9:07 PM

It makes some sense: Cut your editorial staff by 80 percent, and there's at least a decent chance that Web traffic will tumble. And that's just what has happened at the new online-only *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Page views are down about 20 percent in the week since the newspaper killed its print edition

### TOOLBOX



Resize



Print



E-mail



Save/Share +

### WHO'S BLOGGING

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“it would take years to become profitable even given double-digit growth in income from display advertising”

– **Editor-in-chief and CEO, Taloussanomat**

“**to be profitable**, we need to get our mobile services, tailored content [e.g. email newsletters], and community services to make money”

– **Editor-in-chief and CEO, Taloussanomat**





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“We have realised, that during the first six months of the operation we have changed to a news agency”

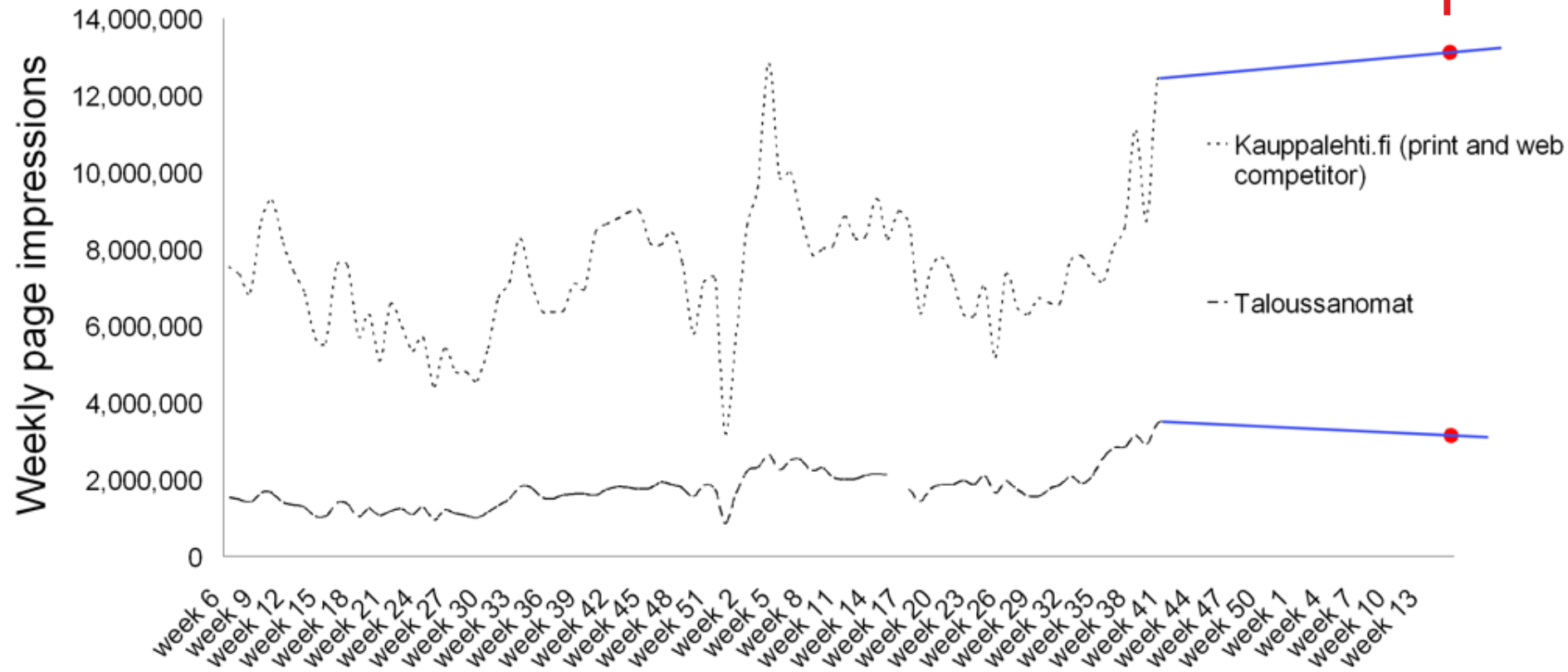
– **Editor-in-chief and CEO, Taloussanomat**





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12 April 2009







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# “Taking the paper out of news”

**Full paper in *Journalism Studies*:**

*<http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/14616700902812959>*

**Neil Thurman and Merja Myllylahti**

