



The Times-Picayune in a Changing Media World: The Transformation of an American Newspaper

S. L. Alexander, Frank D. Durham, Alfred Lawrence Lorenz, Vicki Mayer

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In 2012–2013, one of the largest U.S. newspaper chains, Advance Publications, determined its main product was no longer newspapers but news, and switched from daily print publication of *The Times-Picayune* of New Orleans to three days a week, while upgrading its presence online (“Digital First”). More than two hundred employees, including half the newsroom, were laid off in one of the poorest U.S. cities with among the lowest literacy rates and percentages of households with Internet access. The decision raised a furor in New Orleans. Beginning with an historical overview of *The Times-Picayune*, from its 1837 founding through the present, *The Times-Picayune in a Changing Media World: The Transformation of an American Newspaper* describes the crucial role the dailies played in the 1960 school desegregation crisis, as well as the impact of the switch on print coverage of hard news in the context of media developments, and provides a detailed analysis of specific print editions of *The Times-Picayune* and its digital formats conducted before and after the switch. This study of the evolution of *The Times-Picayune* is instructive for all concerned with what the transformation might portend for the news profession and for the traditional role of the press in the digital age.

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