

Newspapers in Digital Age: A Study on different Strategies Adopted by Kannada Dailies

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Abstract - Technological advancement has changed the world drastically. The newspaper industry is not barred from it. It is facing a tough competition from blogs, online news channels and various other websites that provide easy accessibility to free, real-time and more visual information. This industry's relevance is depended on lifestyle, work, changing habits of the people. The readers are becoming more technology friendly and consume information through smart phones, tablets, notebooks etc. The print media industry has been successful for decades until television introduced and then was the internet boom of 1990's stumbled the newspapers' profits, meagre sales and less subscriptions (Boyer, 2013).

Generation Y and generation Z who grew up with computers are not much comfortable with reading newspapers or even physical books but they want to know everything around the world. For targeting them the Kannada newspapers have been come up with new survival tactics like offering free/discount subscriptions, free magazines or supplements, or shopping coupons and even they transformed to colour format, new layout design of newspaper, online newspaper (E-Paper), short news feeds on different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. covering local news in supplements and so on, which are necessary to make the readers to hold on to their subscriptions. The digital news content has been carefully curated and they reflect the needs and aspirations of people of Karnataka, especially the Kannadigas, which makes them feel that they are highly valued and it also made the advertisers more confident. They launched on-ground and digital initiatives which have received tremendous response from the readers, and this has helped to connect to the readers.

In this background, the present research aims to study strategies adopted by Kannada newspapers to stay relevant in the Digital era. The specific objectives are to analyze challenges facing by Kannada newspapers in digital era, to find opportunities for Kannada newspapers in digital era, to explore how readers are perceiving this change brought by Kannada newspapers.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the objectives. Observation of Newspapers' strategies, interviews with journalists and survey method to know the readers' perception. Kannada newspapers like Prajavani, Kannada Prabha, Vijaya Karnataka, etc. are considered for the study. The study would help the Kannada newspapers to improve their strategies to reach their readers in the digital era.

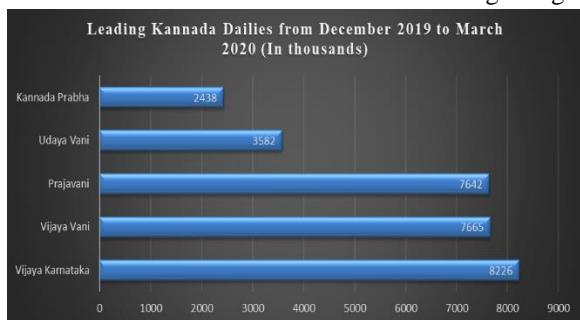
"Digital is not a threat to print. In our experience, digital has led to renaissance of print" – Fraser Nelson, editor at The Spectator.

1.INTRODUCTION

Are Newspapers relevant in the Digital Age? this question is striking many people for the past many years. Newspapers are oldest form of mass media and known for the most authentic sources of information around the world. The advent of digital media in the 21st century has brought the discussion of print industry's relevance. In the present world of internet and smart phones information is just a click of a second without extra fees for accessing. Newspapers are facing a tough competition from blogs, online news channels and various other websites that provide easy accessibility to free, real-time and more visual information. The World Press Trends 2019 report shows that the digital news subscribers increased 15 percent, in comparison print circulation and advertising revenues both decreased.

Though Kannada newspapers are helping to better understanding of the community, state, nation and the world and cultivate critical thinking, reading and writing skills to the readers. To face the Digital Age market disruptions, diversification of news dissemination is need of the hour for Kannada dailies like Prajavani, Kannada Prabha, Samyukta Karnataka, Vijaya Karnataka, Udayavani etc. So, Kannada dailies from manual operations transformed to computerised

systems and focusing on electronic news transmission and processing. Offices are computerized, provided notebook computers to state correspondents. Moreover, all district correspondents have desktops and modems are connected over I-Net. The Printers (Mysore) Private Limited was the first Indian publication group to introduce colour in the main issue and Praha Vani evolved to colour in 1987 with colour supplements and other dailies also followed it later. Praha Vani installed a quality system ISO 9001:2000 model for quality assurance in production, installation and servicing of newspaper. It is the first publishing newspaper in the country to receive this prestigious certification for all its facilities. After advent of internet in 1990's Prajavani, Kannada Prabha and other Kannada dailies came up with new survival tactics like along with core competency satisfying the aesthetic needs of its readers with innovative layout and design in all its publications, offering free or discount subscriptions, free magazines or special supplements, or shopping coupons, online newspaper (E-Paper), short news feeds, podcasting and live programmes on different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. about current issues, covering local news in supplements and so on, which are necessary to make the readers to hold on to their subscriptions. According to the Indian Readership Survey, Vijaya Karnataka was the leading Kannada publication during December 2019 to March 2020. The newspaper had the highest readership with over eight million readers followed by Vijayavani and Prajavani with over seven million readers each during the survey period. This was a proof to believe that their efforts reached readers in a decent level in digital age.



Source: Statista2021

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

In his research article titled 'The Newspapers in digital era' Jerry Boyer mentions that- The print media

industry has been successful for decades until television introduced and then the internet's boom of 1990 stumbled the newspapers' profits, reduction in sales and subscriptions. This industry's relevance is depended on lifestyle, work, changing habits of the readers. People are becoming more techs savvy and consume information through smart phones, tablets and notebooks. Gen Y who grew up with computers is not comfortable with of idea of reading paper based newspapers or even physical books. Not only have we changed our habits of how we consume, but also what we consume has changed. People today want to know every small little thing around the world, which as a matter of fact is easily accessible via Internet. Industries dependent are also facing problems due to the collapse of newspaper industry such as printing press.

In its article titled 'Are newspapers relevant in digital age?' Creative thinks media Mentions that Newspapers are part of daily routines: newspapers are what many people begin their morning with, especially people who are in the Mid 40s and 30s and who are raised with newspapers being the only source of information at that time. Newspapers have been authentic sources of information primarily because the journalists writing for newspapers have more time to investigate and gather information and there is no pressure of "breaking the news". newspapers are very organized in the way they present the news. Like most important information is always on the first page, the second page is for city news, the last page is a sports page and so on. This makes it very easy for the reader to read his desired news. Newspapers are more soothing to the eyes than reading news on any digital platform. it's difficult to read very lengthy pieces on the screen as they tend to hurt eyes. The attention retaining power of the newspapers is much higher than any other medium. And the Newspapers are beyond digital divide as they reach the places where there is no access to information or no accurate digital literacy and for such people and in such areas the newspapers and other traditional media are the only sources of information.

In the article titled 'Will Technology cause extinction of newspapers' Newspaperlinkswebsite mentioned that the increase in wi-fi capable digital devices and wider availability of computers in general, has taken a toll on the traditional newspaper. The reasons for this extinction are more apparent with each passing year.

As the newer generations have been brought up with access to computers and other digital media devices. They are accustomed to getting nearly all of their information and much of their entertainment at the touch of a key or screen. Digital news sources provide information more quickly like by the time the standard newspaper lands at the front door the next morning, the headlines have already been covered online by multiple digital media outlets. Newspapers have been facing a steady decrease in readership and advertisers have turned more and more to the digital world, leaving the newspaper ship behind. It makes more sense to advertise products and services in front of as many eyes as possible, and nowadays that means the internet. With the loss of both readership and advertising revenue, papers struggle against a rising tide that appears impossible to breach.

In its website Newspaperlinks mentioned in the article titled 'why newspapers are still great?' that greater diversity, quantity and delivery speed of digital news. The Internet's vast mass broadcast capability is in fact a double-edged blade. Despite infinite variety, quantity and transmission speed of data, the virtual world simply can't compete with the time and cost customizable reports that print newspapers deliver every day of each week. Besides these benefits, physical newspapers are readily available and easily portable for very low cost. This means readers of modest means without residential broadband WI-FI facilities never have to miss a chance to read the latest news. Likewise, more mature readers whose old-school ways are firmly set in can enjoy leisurely relaxation at the morning breakfast table propped behind a newspaper. Another item in favor of printed news text is that it is far easier on human eyes than harsh laptop LED screens. As true for virtually all modern commercial enterprises, the key to survive Digital Age market disruptions is diversification of news dissemination. Although print news media probably won't ever become completely extinct, today's journalists must adjust to digitized mass broadcast formats. One highly recommended solution is creative subscription restructuring that can create

3.OBJECTIVES

1. To know strategies adopted by Kannada newspapers to stay relevant in the Digital era.

2. To analyze challenges facing by Kannada dailies in digital age.
3. To find opportunities for Kannada newspapers in digital era.
4. To explore how readers are perceiving strategies brought by Kannada newspapers.

4.SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Most of the Kannada newspapers have come up with survival tactics in news providing in digital era to compete with other media like Television, Radio, Internet etc. Hence, the present study would help the Kannada newspapers to improve their strategies further to reach their readers in the digital age.

5.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to answer the objectives. Observation method was adopted to know the Kannada newspapers' strategies, interviews with journalists of three leading newspapers of Kannada was conducted to learn the challenges and opportunities for Kannada dailies in the digital era, survey was conducted among 80 respondents to know the readers' perception about newspaper's strategies. Kannada newspapers like Prajavani, Kannada Prabha, Vijaya Karnataka, etc. are considered for the study.

6.RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1. The strategies adopted by Kannada newspapers to stay relevant in the Digital era:

For first objective, researcher had observed and understand the popular Kannada dailies like Prajavani, Kannada Prabha, Vijaya Karnataka etc. and their strategies to stay relevant in digital age.

- The newspapers had come up with innovative layout and colour design in all its publications, offered free or discount subscriptions on monthly and yearly basis, free magazines or special supplements daily or weekly, or shopping coupons.
- They had opened websites like www.prajavani.net, www.kannadaprabha.com, vijayakarnataka.com etc. They had started giving news online and electronic copy of newspaper for free of cost or with minimal charge. Every day

they publish special supplements and articles dealing with different subjects like Politics, Sports, Cinema, Agriculture, Science and Technology, History, Archaeology, Astrology, Language and Literature etc. and also kannada dailies opened web pages in social media like Facebook, Twitter etc. and broadcasted short news feeds, podcasting and live programmes.

- The journalists had opened personal social media accounts for sharing the news, videos and photos about current issues. Especially during Covid-19 they have utilized it effectively.
- Currently the Facebook pages of Kannada dailies followed by many readers like Prajavani followed by 1,019,957 readers, for Vijaya Karnataka 1,044,628 readers are following, for Kannada Prabha 62,760 readers and so on.

6.2. The Challenges and opportunities for Kannada dailies in digital age: For the 2nd and 3rd objectives the researcher had interviewed the journalists from leading Kannada newspapers and found the challenges and opportunities for Kannada dailies in digital age.

A. One of the journalists from Prajavani had responded for the challenges to Kannada dailies in digital age. According to him to remain authentic source of information Kannada dailies have to be careful and cross check before publishing any news, though they will publish news after one day it's a challenge for them to be truthful. Now a days filter less, false and fake news related information comes at bulky to news desk but it is their responsibility to crosscheck and publish it. Even while publishing news journalists of Kannada dailies have to follow certain standards like important news in 1st page and writing with 5w's and 1h to suit the reading style of readers. And also making news according to people's requirement, usage of technology in publishing news with images, pictures etc., and maintaining of the same rate of subscription with special supplements and free discounts on subscriptions.

Other challenges of Kannada dailies are adopting to digitalization and using relevant digital fonts, digital layout design and creating social media pages. Though the Kannada dailies came up with short newsfeeds, podcasting, conducting phone in programmes, discussions and giving Facebook live on different current issues like Covid-19, Farmers, Budget, Sports on their respective social media pages. Here they have

challenges in providing each update frequently regarding to such current issues.

B. Another Journalist from Vijaya Karnataka responded for the challenges of Kannada dailies in digital age that the availability of more smart devices and computers increasing the pressure on journalists of the Kannada dailies. It made necessary to adopt the same technology in traditional dailies and bring some relevant strategies to compete in the current media trends.

The newer generations have been brought up with computers and other devices and they are accustomed to getting all information and much of their entertainment at the touch of a key or screen. This is one of the great challenges for Kannada dailies to reach them.

By the time the standard newspaper lands at the front door digital news sources made many headlines and already been covered the same stories multiple times. This is another challenge for Kannada dailies. They opined newspapers have been facing a steady decrease in readership and advertisers have turned more to the digital world especially for social media because its reach is limitless. So, they would like to advertise there. With the loss of both readership and advertising revenue, Kannada dailies are struggling a lot with these challenges.

C. Another journalist from Udayavani reacted that digital media houses publish without reconfirmation of news whether it's true or false, because they have less time for that while breaking the news, but Newspapers have ample time to collect and making sure about the authenticity of news and publish. Anyone can carry newspaper anywhere and read desired news completely, but other media like television shows the same news with repeated telecast so, viewers will feel tense, pressure and irritation.

But television channels don't do that and they just need sensational news to make breaking news. Kannada dailies are adopting new strategies to reach the new audience which are tech friendly. So, they are making subscriptions with discount, special supplements and shopping coupons related to Coffee and Shampoos etc.

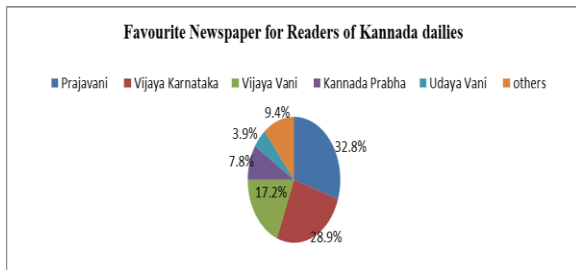
Targeting youths is important area for Kannada dailies now and prime time newsfeeds related to politics, cricket, cinema etc. are coming now in the Kannada dailies' websites and social media pages.

6.3. The Readers perception about strategies adopted by Kannada newspapers: For that Researcher had sent the structured questionnaire in Google form to 80 Kannada newspapers readers. Among 80 respondents 62 were male and 18 were female.

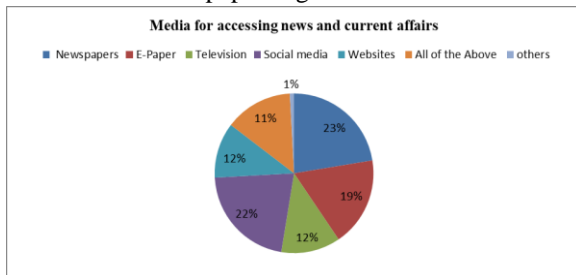
Among 80 respondents, majority of them (67.5%) were from 18 to 27 age group, 27.5% were from 28-37, 5% of them were 38 and above age group.

The data showed that more than 87.5% people are read newspaper daily, remaining 12.5% of them don't read newspapers daily.

Among respondents, most of the them'(32.8%) favourite newspaper in Kannada dailies is Prajavani, 28.9% of them favoured Vijaya Karnataka, 17.2% of them preferred Vijayavani, 7.8% of them said Kannada Prabha, 3.9% of them liked Udayavani, 9.4% of them preferred other newspapers. More than 77% of the readers are preferring only top 3 Kannada dailies.



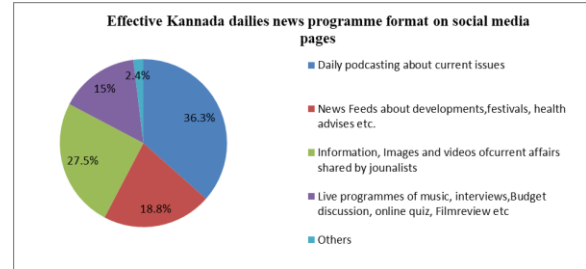
- Among respondents, majority of the them (23%) preferred Newspapers for accessing news and current affairs. 22% of them used for social media, 19% of them replied E-Paper, 12% of them reacted Television, 12% of them said websites, 11% of them used all of the above and only 1% of them preferred for others. Most of them still believed newspaper is good media for news.



Among respondents, 72.5% of them liked the websites and social media pages of Kannada dailies, 21.3% of them said not sure about it, 6.3% of them not liked the same.

Among respondents, majority of them (36.3%) opined daily podcasting about current issues is effective

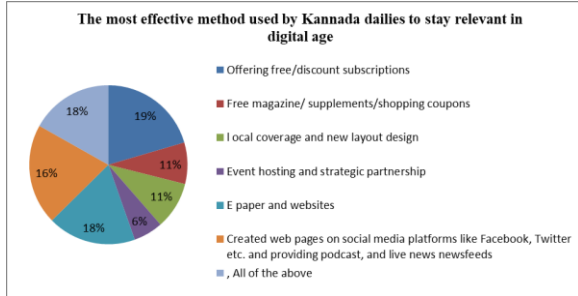
Kannada dailies programmes format on social media pages, 27.5% of them told that information, images and videos of current affairs shared by journalists, 18.8% of them reacted newsfeeds about developments, festivals, health advises etc. 15% of them replied live programmes of music, interviews, Budget discussion, online quiz, films review etc., 2.4% of them preferred for others. The data shows that readers' changing trends towards social media pages of dailies for accessing news.



Among respondents, majority of the respondents (62.5%) visit the apps, websites or social media pages of Kannada newspapers daily, 15% of them said once in 2 days, 7.5% of them reacted fortnightly, 7.5% of them reacted twice in a week, 3.7% of them replied once in a week and only 3.6% of them chosen for others. The data shows that more than 62% of readers daily visit the apps, websites or social media pages of Kannada newspapers.

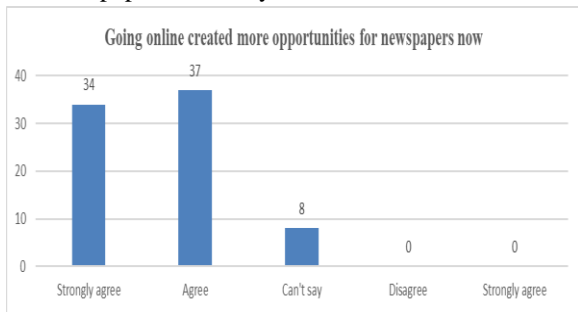
Among respondents, majority of the them (60%) downloaded Kannada newspapers' online apps and 40% of them not downloaded the Kannada dailies online apps. This shows that more than half of the readers have interest for accessing news through online applications of Kannada dailies.

Among respondents, most of them (19%) replied offering free or discount subscriptions is the most effective method used by Kannada dailies to stay relevant in digital age. 19% of them replied E-paper and websites, 16% of them chosen creation of web pages on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter etc. and providing podcast, and live news newsfeeds, 11% of them replied local coverage and new layout design, 11% of them reacted free magazine or supplements or shopping coupons, 6% of them said event hosting and strategic partnership, 18% of them said all of the above. The data represents that offering free or discount subscriptions and E-paper and websites are the most effective methods used by Kannada dailies to stay relevant in digital age at present.

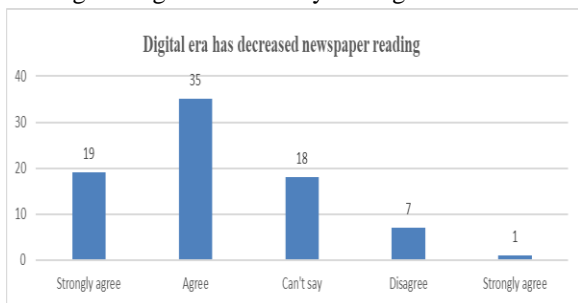


The respondents had provided their opinion about the statements related to the research topic in the following manner.

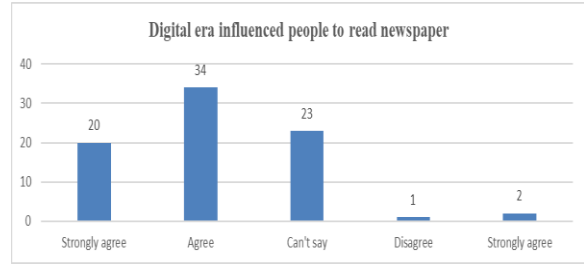
For the statement of going online created more opportunities for newspapers now. Among 80 respondents, 34 of them strongly agreed, 37 of them agreed, 8 of them not sure about it and one of them disagreed. The data reveals that majority of them agreed for the online version of newspapers will help the newspapers currently.



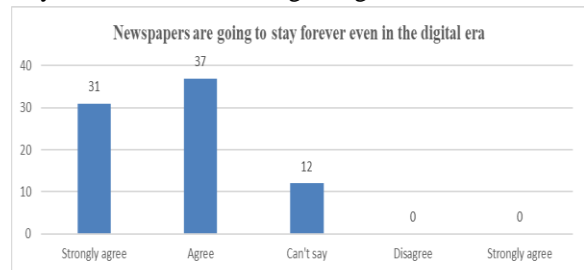
For the statement of the digital era has decreased newspaper reading, 19 of them strongly agreed, 35 of them agreed, 18 of them not sure about this, 7 of them disagreed, only one person strongly disagreed. This data shows that majority of the readers' newspaper reading habit got influence by the digital era.



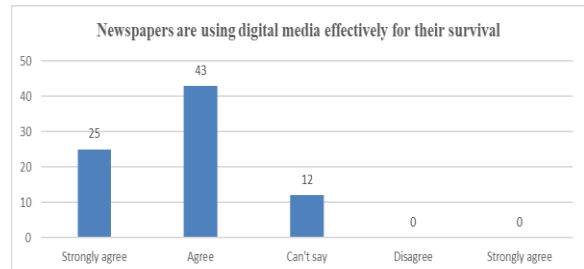
For the statement of the digital era influenced people to read newspaper 20 of them strongly agreed, 34 of them agreed, 23 of them not sure about this, one of them disagreed for this and 2 of them strongly disagreed. More than 67% of readers agreed for digital era influenced people to read newspaper.



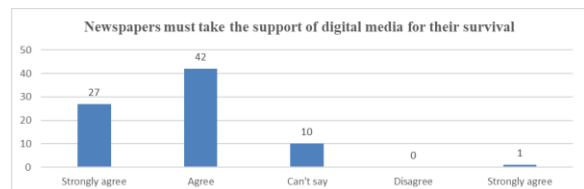
For the statement of newspapers are going to stay forever even in the digital era, 31 of them strongly agreed, 37 of them agreed, 12 of them could not say anything about this. The graph shows that more than 80% of readers believed that newspapers are going to stay forever even in the digital age.



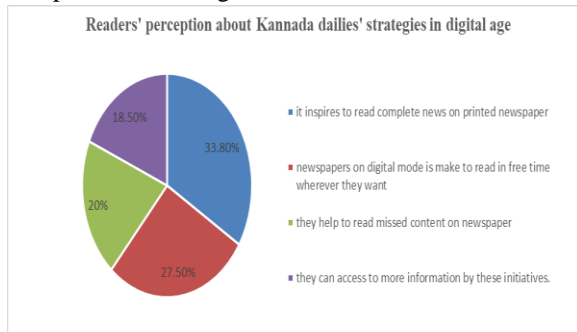
For the statement of newspapers are using digital media effectively for their survival, among 80 respondents 25 of them strongly agreed, 43 of them agreed, 12 of them not sure about this. The graph reveals that more than 30% of readers had felt strongly that newspapers are using digital media effectively for their survival.



For the statement of newspapers must take the support of digital media for their survival, 27 of them strongly agreed, 42 of them agreed, 10 of them not sure about this and one of them strongly disagreed. The graph shows that more than 86% of the readers opined that newspapers must take the support of digital media for their survival.



Among respondents, majority of them (33.8%) opted it inspires to read complete news on printed newspaper, 27.5% of them replied the content provided by newspapers on digital mode is make to read in free time wherever they want, 20% of them reacted they help to read missed content on newspaper, 18.5% of them replied they can access to more information by these initiatives. The chart shows that majority of the readers believed that the new strategies adopted by Kannada dailies will make them to complete the reading of news.



7.CONCLUSION

The research findings revealed that majority of the them liked the new strategies initiated by Kannada dailies in the digital era. Most of them had the habit of visiting the apps, websites or social media pages of Kannada newspapers daily. many preferred Newspapers and social media for accessing news and current affairs. Offering free or discount subscriptions, e-paper and websites are the most effective methods used by Kannada dailies to stay relevant in digital age. Daily podcasting about current issues is effective Kannada dailies news format on social media pages as most of them say. The information, images and videos of current affairs shared by journalists is also effective on social media pages at present.

The readers are becoming more tech friendly and consume information through smart phones, tablets, notebooks etc. New strategies of newspapers to make the digital age as level playing field for them by targeting youths along with Women, Government employees and old age people. Which are necessary to make the readers to hold on to their subscriptions to reduce their advertising and circulation losses.

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