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Tutorial: The Transition To Digital Journalism

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Digital technology presents an often bewildering array of choices for journalists – producing slideshows and video, joining social networks and blogging, using map mashups and mobile devices. The list seems endless.

But survival requires understanding all these new technologies so journalists and news organizations can make informed decisions about why and how to utilize them.

As more people consume news online, news organizations face the dilemma of reallocating resources to attract new readers and viewers while still trying to hold on to their existing, and usually aging, print or broadcast audiences.

Online revenues for most news media are still a small fraction of the income from traditional print or broadcast. And after many years of double-digit annual increases in online advertising revenue, the trend tapered off dramatically in 2008 and 2009, with online revenues flat or even decreasing.

For newspapers, typically 15 percent or less of total revenues come from online operations (although the Los Angeles Times reported in 2008 that online income was enough to pay for the paper's entire print and online news staffs).

Magazines similarly get less than 10 percent of their revenue from their digital operations according to an Advertising Age survey of 2008 revenues.

Financial viability for newspapers and most magazines, at least for now, requires retaining as many existing print readers as possible.

Yet the trends are clear: people, especially the young, are turning to the Internet for more and more of their news and developing an effective digital strategy is essential for long-term survival.

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