



Crash to Paywall: Canadian Newspapers and the Great Disruption

Brian Gorman

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In 2014, when Postmedia acquired Quebecor's Sun Media newspaper and online assets, there was a sense that the recent history of newspapers was repeating itself not as comedy or tragedy, but as eulogy. *Crash to Paywall* shows that while the newspaper business was weakened by decreases in advertising revenues and circulation, much of its problems stem from self-inflicted damage and business practices dating back to the 1970s.

Brian Gorman explores the Canadian newspaper industry crisis and the relationship between the news media and the public. He challenges both the popular mantra that a "perfect storm" of unforeseen circumstances blindsided a declining industry and the narrative that readers were abandoning newspapers, causing advertisers to turn away from "dying" media. Gorman argues that observers had been warning for decades that the business was creating its own problems by acquiring ever-larger debt and shareholder obligations while steadily cutting back on journalists' resources. Finally, by providing journalism for free online, newspaper companies devalued their most important resource and impaired their profitable print products.

With dozens of interviews conducted with leading Canadian journalists and editors, *Crash to Paywall* brings to light the many misconceptions, generalizations, omissions, and highly suspect conclusions about the present state of newspapers and their future.

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