

<i>Times-Picayune</i> cutback evokes visceral response

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For many New Orleanians, the announcement two weeks ago that *The Times-Picayune* would reduce its printing schedule to three days a week came as a gut punch. “New Orleans is something of a throwback culture,” says Paul Greenberg, director of the media arts department in the Tulane School of Continuing Studies. “We are emotionally invested in iconic cultural pieces and one of those is the newspaper.”



Locals rally on Monday (June 4) to demonstrate their support for keeping *The Times-Picayune* a daily publication. (Photos by Paula Burch-Celentano)

No doubt, the 175-year-old paper bolstered its iconic status in the weeks and months after Hurricane Katrina, when its reporting provided continuity through uncertain times. But advertising and subscription dollars have dramatically fallen off since the storm.

"It's a socioeconomic issue," says Greenberg. "Sociologically, people are still emotionally attached to the paper. Economically, they are not."

Along with cutting back its print schedule, the paper announced that it would "increase online news-gathering."

Greenberg, who was employed by *The Times-Picayune* for nine years and continues to write a weekly column on employment and careers, now works to ensure that journalism students in his department are being adequately trained for the industry's digital future.



"Digital news and information are happening and we are not going to turn back from that," says Greenberg.

And that's not necessarily a bad thing, he says.

"Over time, I don't think we are going to lose good reporting, but it's going to come in different delivery methods," says Greenberg.

Greenberg says the paper's owners made a pragmatic decision. "The paper is doing this because they are still profitable. They can survive if they take this proactive approach."

Only time will tell how journalistically and commercially effective the hybrid approach will be.

"I think people should sit back and take a measured approach to this," says Greenberg. "Right now, it's been an emotional reaction. Let's see what kind of

product they come up with.”