

US newspaper industry limits revenue drop to 2%

NEW YORK, US: US newspapers saw revenues fall 2% in 2012, an industry association said on Monday, suggesting an easing of the woes of the beleaguered sector.

The Newspaper Association of America, in what it termed the most comprehensive look at the industry, said revenues totalled US\$38.6bn last year compared with US\$39.5bn 2011.

The group said the revenue mix is changing, offering a reason for optimism.

Advertising revenues fell 6%, extending a recent trend, but other sources of income are growing, it said. This includes circulation revenue, which rose 5%.

The survey said new revenue sources such as digital consulting for local business and e-commerce transactions grew by 8%.

"America's newspaper media are transforming themselves," said Caroline Little, NAA president and chief executive.

"In virtually every community they serve, newspapers have the biggest newsrooms, the best-known brands and significant audience market share.

Now they are building on those to find new ways to serve audiences and local businesses."

The report, which covers US newspaper operations excluding international operations or non-media enterprises, found that US\$18.9bn of revenue came from print advertising and US\$3.4bn from digital advertising.

That's in addition to another US\$10.4bn from circulation, US\$3bn from new revenue sources and US\$2.9bn from advertising from direct marketing or non-daily publications.

Digital revenues - which include circulation, advertising, e-commerce, digital marketing and other sources made up 11% of total revenue in 2012 for the 13 companies that provided this data, the NAA said.

The 5% overall growth in circulation revenue was the first gain in this category for the newspaper industry since 2003. These gains were from digital or bundled subscriptions, which offset a 14% drop in print-only circulation revenue.

A study last month by the Pew Research Centre's Project for Excellence in Journalism said newspapers "have started to experiment in a big way with a variety of new revenue streams and major organisational changes."

Source: *AFP, via I-Net Bridge*

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