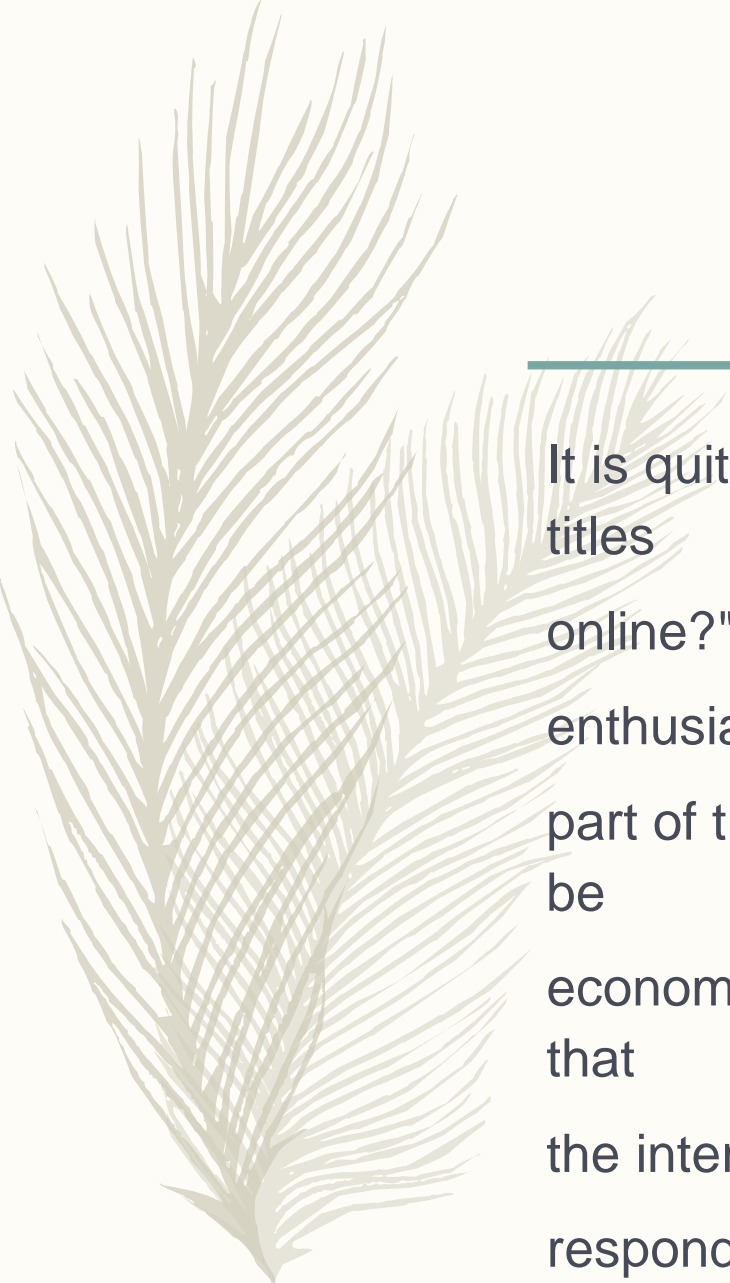





Why Go Online?

مادة إعلامية س 1 ف 1

Third Lecture 9/1/2021




It is quite legitimate to ask the question "Why has there been this flood of titles online?" There are numerous possible secondary explanations_ including enthusiasm for new technology and the general sense that one wishes to be part of the wave of the moment – but the fundamental reasons must surely be economic. The people who own newspapers have, by and large, decided that the internet provides opportunities and challenges to which they need to respond.



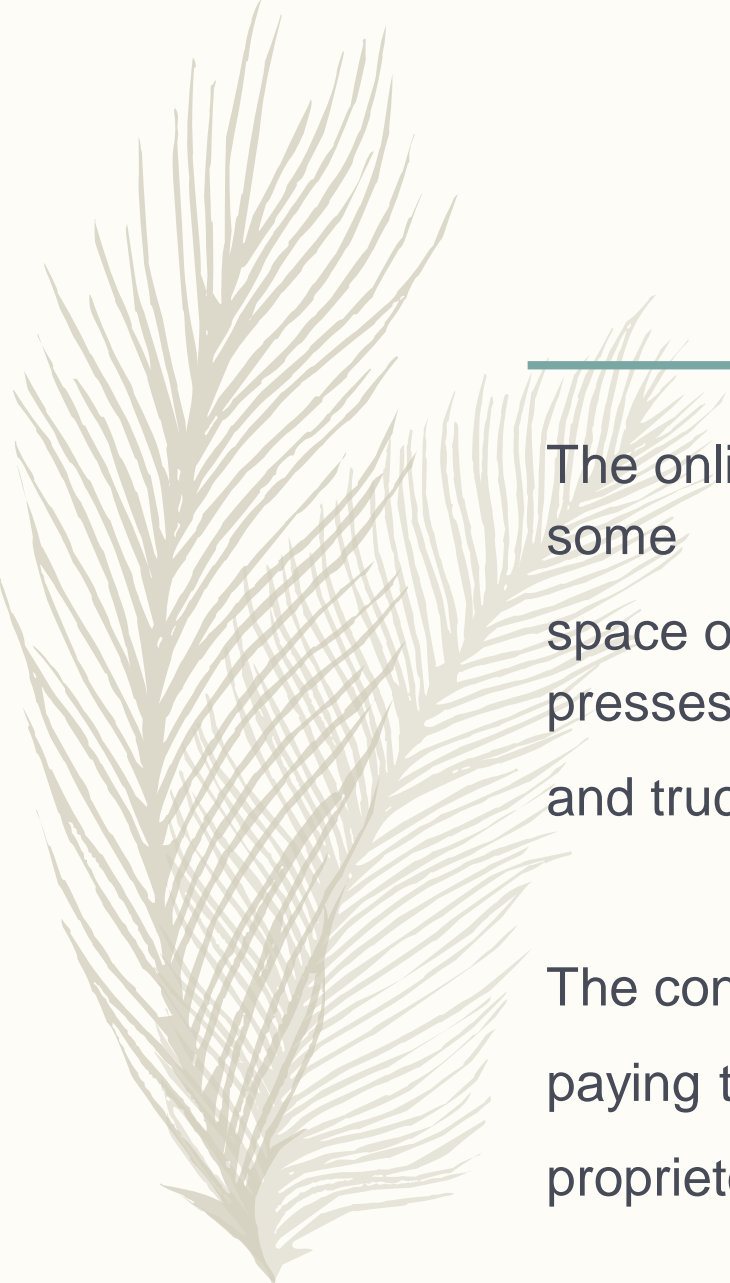
Some of the opportunities are obvious. The offline newspaper is in part a process of manipulating symbols, and in part a straightforward industrial production process.

Once the journalists and the advertising people have delivered the made-up, final copy, the newspaper undergoes series of a transformations that constitute the physical production and distribution of a commodity.




Printers and printing presses produce thousands or millions of more or less identical physical copies of the newspaper. Dispatchers load the newspaper on to trucks, and drivers distribute it to wholesalers and then to retailers.

They in turn either deliver it to the user, or put it on display next to the sweets and the cigarettes. All of this costs money for wages and equipment. It has been estimated that something like 50 per cent of the costs of a US newspaper are

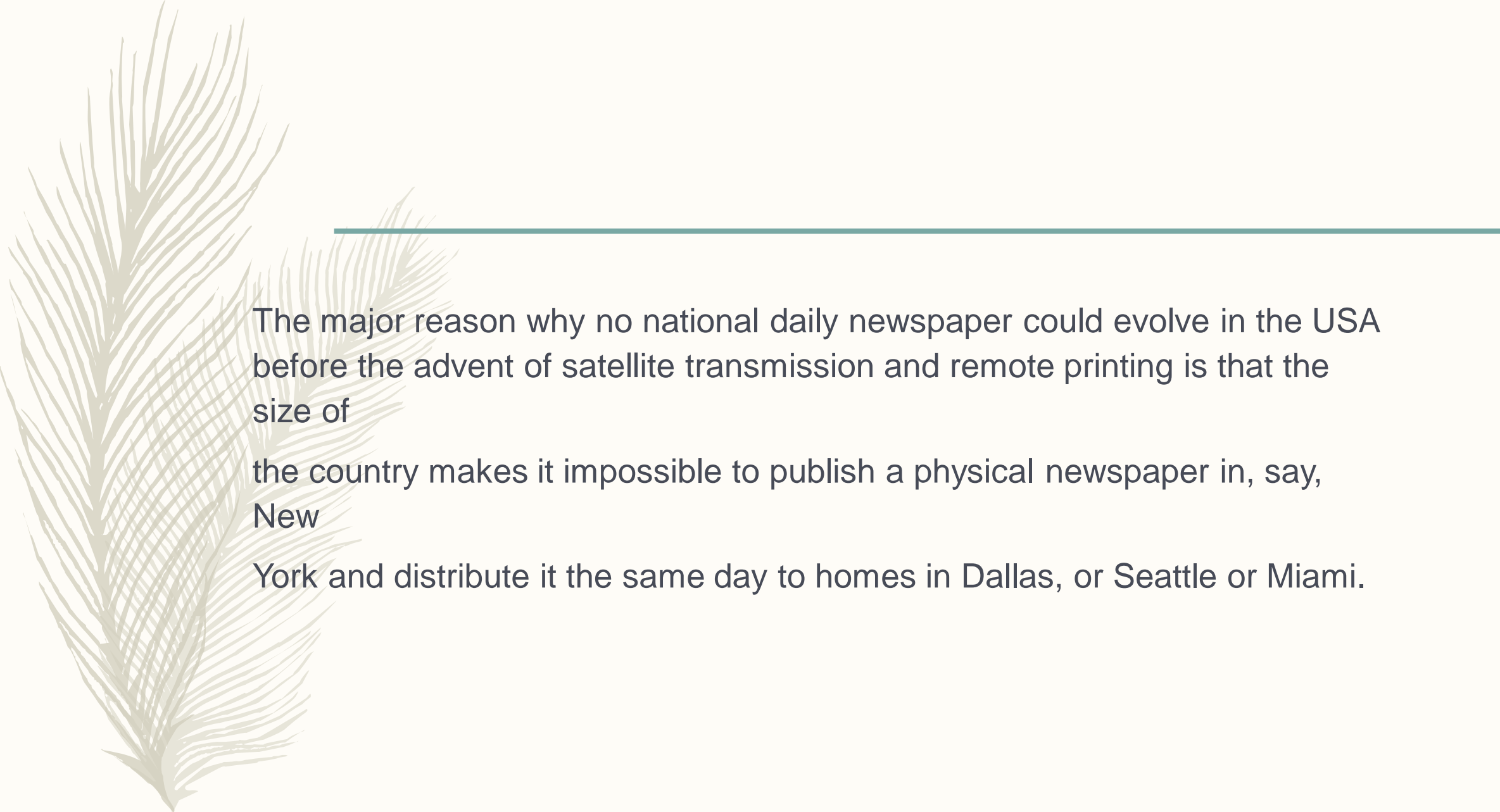


The online newspaper does not incur any of these costs. True, it requires some space on a server, but this is not a comparable expense to the printing presses and trucks needed for the physical product.

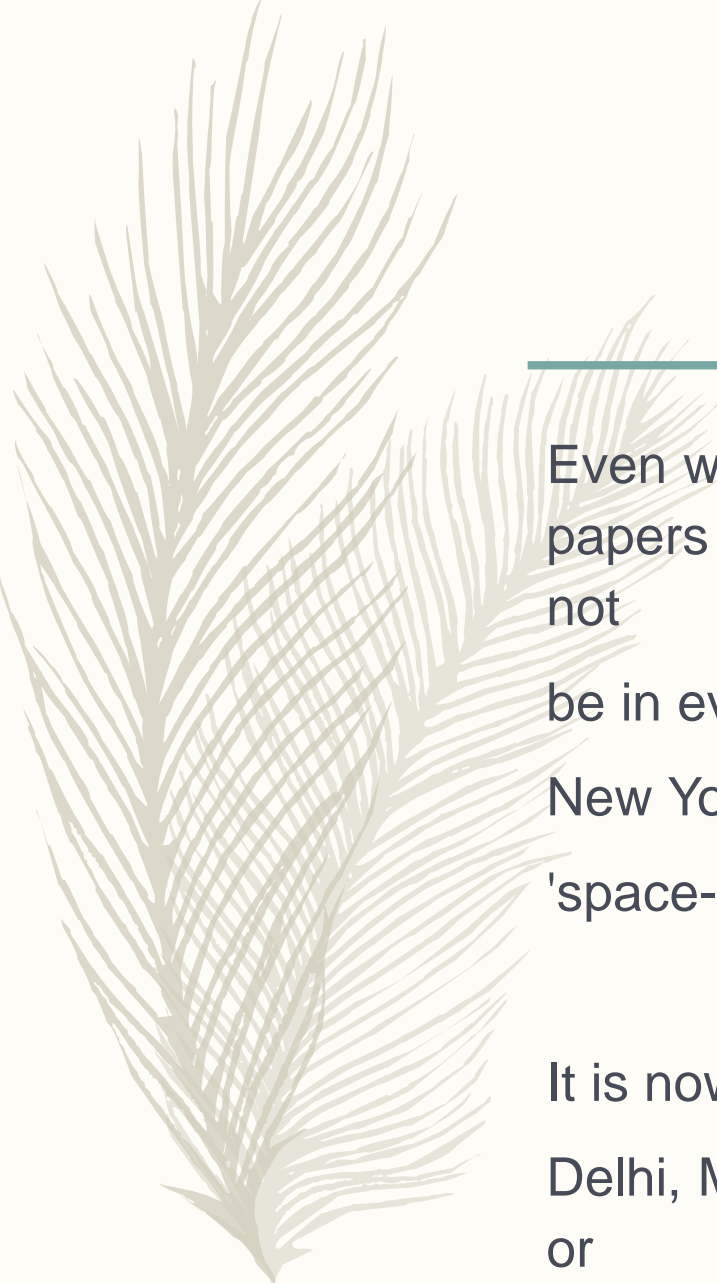
The consumers themselves pay costs of distribution, buying the PCs and paying the telecommunications charges. The online newspaper offers the proprietors the prospect of substantial cost reductions.



It also provides the possibility of new readers. One key constraint on the circulation of newspapers has always been physical distance. Particularly with a daily newspaper, there is a limit to how widely it can be distributed, and this limit is set by the time it takes a truck or a train to make the journey to the point of delivery.



The major reason why no national daily newspaper could evolve in the USA before the advent of satellite transmission and remote printing is that the size of the country makes it impossible to publish a physical newspaper in, say, New York and distribute it the same day to homes in Dallas, or Seattle or Miami.




Even with the technologies of the 1980s, distances were still so great that papers like the Wall Street Journal, New York Times and USA Today could not


be in every home in every hamlet the morning after they were put together in New York, Telecommunications is, famously, one of the main engines of 'space-time compression', and it abolishes this tyranny of distance.

It is now perfectly possible for readers in Seattle - or for that matter Tokyo, Delhi, Moscow and London - to access a New York-based newspaper more or

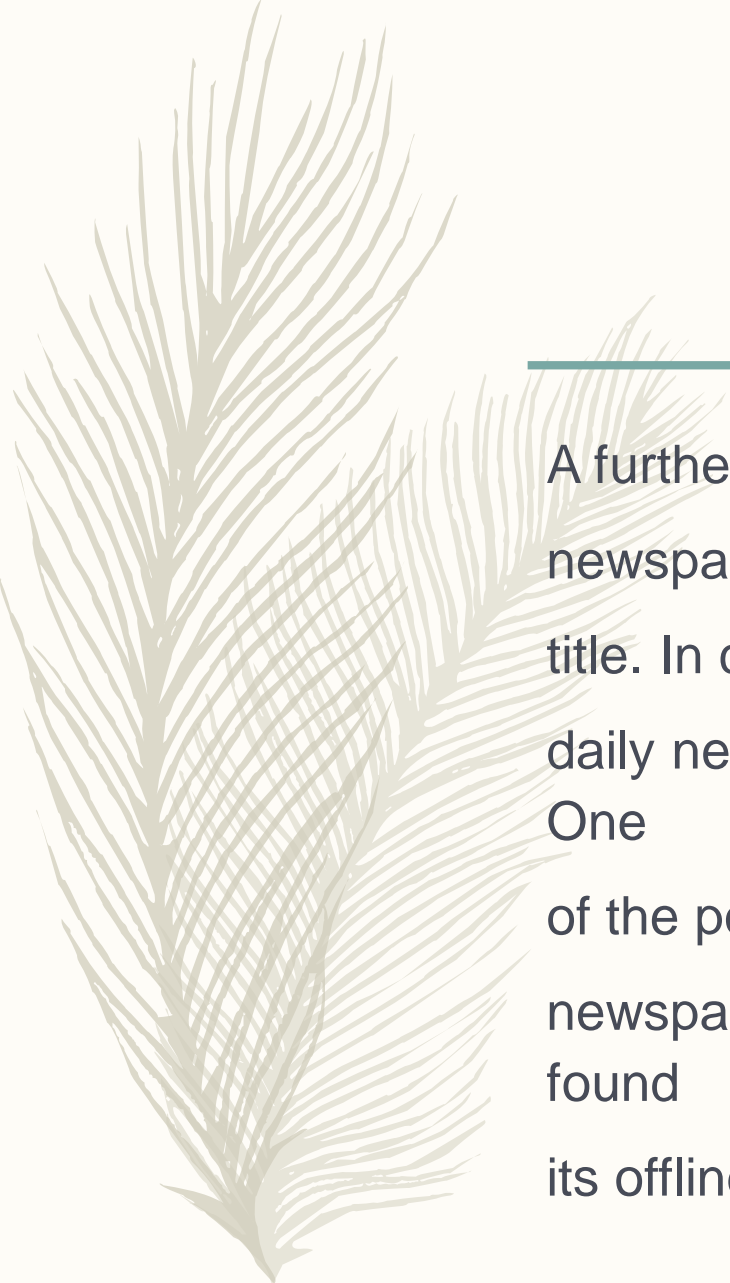
less simultaneously with people in Brooklyn



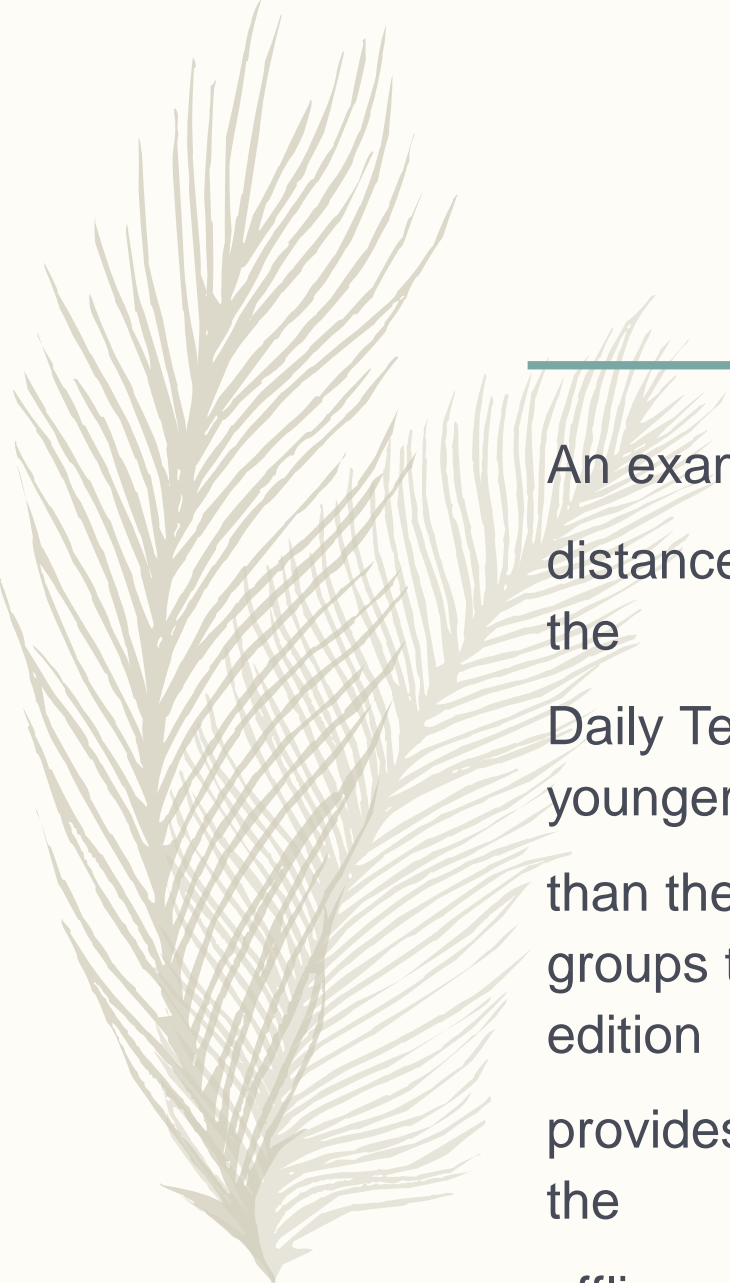
Newspapers are now freed of the physical limitations on their potential audience and can attempt to find readers around the world. One obvious example of this is that newspapers in regions of high emigration can reach people who have left the land of their birth but who still hanker after news of the 'old town' and the people who stayed behind.



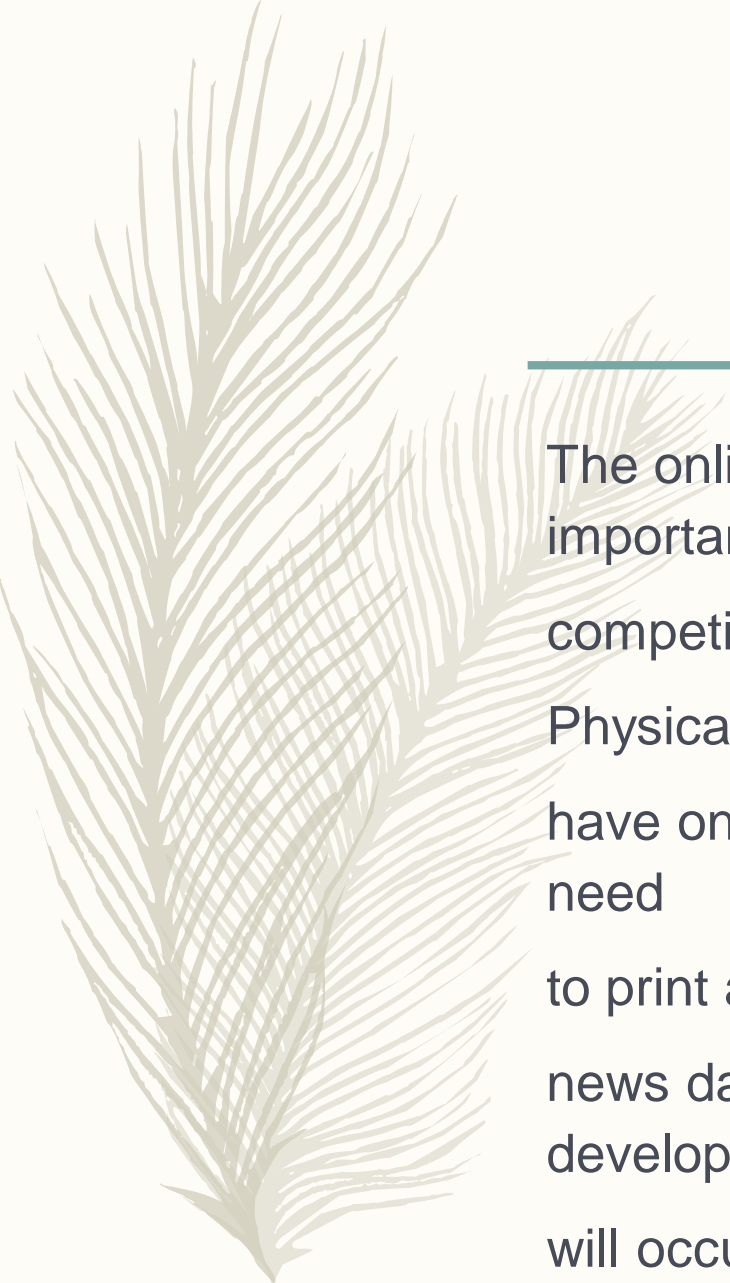
The electronic newspaper provides ties for diasporas that the older émigré media once provided much less efficiently. Other readers, particularly for the leading titles published in the main global centers, will be attracted by the depth and detail of the coverage of important events that are shaping the contemporary world, and that are not available in such detail in their own local newspapers. The New York Times, for example, found that half of its 3 million registered online users had never bought an offline copy of the paper.



A further opportunity for expansion is provided by the opportunity for a newspaper to reach new social groups who previously did not buy the offline title. In countries with competitive newspaper markets, like the UK. National daily newspapers have strong brands that both attract and repel readers. One of the possibilities of an online edition is that it makes it feasible to modify a newspaper's image to that which becomes more attractive to those who found its offline embodiment repellent.



An example of this process is the Electronic Telegraph, which consciously distanced itself from the elderly and reactionary image of its physical parent, the Daily Telegraph. More generally, the online audience is believed to be younger than the population as a whole, and it is precisely amongst younger age groups that newspaper reading is a less well-entrenched habit. The online edition provides a way to reach people who perhaps seldom or never purchased the offline edition.




The online newspaper also confers what journalists perceive as an important

competitive feature in news-gathering as compared with working offline.

Physical newspapers may produce several editions, but in general they only have one, at most two, main publication points in any 24-hour period. The need

to print and transport a physical product imposes strict time deadlines on the news day. This means that there is a risk that an important news development

will occur too late to be put in to the newspaper on the day of its occurrence.



Journalists think that covering these "breaking stories" is a very important part of their work. Printed newspapers have long been thought to be at a disadvantage to radio and television, both of which offer the opportunity continuously to update news throughout the day, although observation suggests that this facility is used, at best, for a minority of items. The online newspaper, on the other hand, is free from these constraints. It can be updated as quickly and as continuously as a radio or television broadcast, and thus newspaper journalists are once again on an equal footing with their competitors.