

LONDON'S NEWSPAPER DESIGN

An analysis of visual journalism

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LONDON is among the biggest cities in the world with the one of the largest newspaper markets in the media industry. This is not by coincidence. In a city where so much goes on every day, the news must come out. Londoners are given many options to decide what they want to read and how they can consume their news. And how the audience perceives its news is an important and influential element in the journalism process, simply put: what they see. “‘Vision’ is abstracted from the concrete activities of human perception and presented as a disengaged act of ‘mental seeing’.

Perception is treated ahistorically as an invariant faculty of the mind.”¹ The reader must make a series of decision, what they want to read, if they want to read, how they want to read, especially in such a diverse market. Now, two more papers join the newspaper market but are uniquely free, eliminating many questions in the decision making process. Distributors compete to smash free papers in the hands of commuters. Morning, afternoon and evening, readers choose their media source and how they want to “see” their news. As so many compete in an arguably crowded market, each publication services a sector of the diverse society and use the design as a way to convey their news and express their brand.

The papers take their efforts steps further than good story telling and the delivery of accurate news. The look and feel of the newspaper plays an essential role in establishing and building relationships with the readers. The visual ingredients, the design, define much of what separates one paper from another. The design of the papers is first cue that helps the reader understand what to expect from the content. The physical format of a newspaper is often an important factor for readers when deciding which periodical to choose. They may question how mobile the paper is, how easily it can read including in public transportation spaces, or even what story form the articles take. As London is one of the major commuter cities in the world, most of the newspapers in the market have shifted to a tabloid or compact format.

This report will study design of the major quality and free evening papers distributed in London. By the standards of the Audited Bureau of Circulations (ABC),

¹ Heywood, 40

National “Quality” newspapers are *The Guardian* (Guardian Media Group), *The Independent* (Independent News and Media), *The Telegraph* (Telegraph Group Limited), and *The Times* (News International, Murdoch). International paper *The Financial Times* and Scottish papers *The Herald* and *The Scotsman* are also included in the ABC’s standards for quality national papers but have been excluded from this research because they are not London focused. In 2006, two new papers entered London’s evening market. *The London Paper* (News International, Murdoch) and *The London Lite* (Daily Mail, General Trust) targeting a young audience launched on the same day in early September 2006. These new tabs are more noted for their low price: free. Studying the visual language of newspapers will help interpret what is at stake for the industry and visual culture.

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Ten years ago, newspapers looked and read very different. Quality papers did not give a second thought to their broadsheet paper size. A broadsheet paper, like *The Daily Telegraph*, is the traditional newspaper. Each section opens wide like a butterfly and reads from top to bottom. Each section is tucked into one another other, making the main fold on the front page like the spine of a book. Each section is separated by subjects like business arts, or sports. They all have a front page similar to the main section though has the more opportunity to be more creative. The inside pages may or may not have colour. On a news stand, only the top half of the main or front section is visible. “Though newspaper publishers spend fortunes on readership surveys, they’re still unsure what front-page formula is guaranteed to fly off the racks.”² The head of the paper or the region “above the fold” is the most valuable space. This is because it is the one opportunity to attract readers passing by the news stand. A traditional front

² Harrower, 7

page paper has four to seven stories displaying the top news of the day, whereas a tabloid will have about half that, two to four.²

FRONT PAGES

The compact and tabloid or the 'tab' papers function and feel much different than the folded papers. The pages are laid out like a magazine or book because they open like a wingspan. But unlike the broadsheet, it only folds widthwise, not heightwise like compacts *The Times*, *Independent* and of course the *London Lite* and *thelondopaper*. This gives the tabloid designers a new perspective on the real estate for a front page. Some papers, will typically use the whole front to design a single story package using a magazine cover style. Whereas, others use a dominant story with a generous design and have one or two subordinate stories.² Doing this gives the opportunity to include a variety of news stories, but challenges the designer to create a point of focus and not overbear the reader. A tab can be a visual cue that associates with red top papers that are celebrity and gossip infused. For quality papers, if the news is not presented well, format alone can misrepresent the entire news story. Times Editor Robert Thompson prepared for criticisms that may suggest the quality of the editorial would decline. "Outstanding editorial quality forms the basis of everything we do, whatever the shape, and the compact, like the broadsheet, will be informed by expertise, wit and passion." he said.³

The Independent

The Independent was the first of the quality papers to move to the compact size in 2003 and sparked the domino move to the mobile size.

Really, *The Independent* took a chance, because its readership wasn't very strong, it was falling, to try something different. And the traditional British newspaper of broadsheet, and the quality of a tabloid being a sort of

³ Byrne, Times Goes Tabloid

downmarket, and it was an obvious thing to do, and it got over the classes of size. And for people on the train and the tube, broadsheets aren't very practical for that sort of reading. And they did very well, their circulation jumped, and the people thought it was a very accessible format.⁴

Independent commuters responded very well to the mobile size. Women especially shared their appreciation for the new size, saying it is “less bulky and easier to read on public transport.”³ The *Independent*'s flag is separated from the top of the page by a black thick stroke. The flag is the stylized or branded version of the papers name. It is almost always at or near the top of the front page and is among the most recognizable features for readers. The words in the title of the newspaper are stacked and a bird holding an issue of *The Independent* flies next to the word “THE.” Flushed to the right of the flag is price and online information. Below that is a small promo, or section of the paper that quickly sells what else is inside the paper. Stepping down a banner promo will usually appear spanning the width of the page separating the flag from the editorial.

The Indie's style functions more like a magazine in some ways and features one major story package on the front page. Other promos also appear near the top half of the page but are much lower on the hierarchy chain. However, the jazzed up front page usually has stylized typography, a compelling photo, and the beginning of the correlating story. “For some reason, the big hot issue in design has become typographical manipulation as well as the question of whether it's readable or not—not exactly the most informed issues that criticism might deal with”⁵ Graphic designer Milton Glaser, questions the role of that visual designers play. There is a challenge for news designers specifically to give the product both utility and visual grace: Glaser ads:

I think the role of design is so all-enveloping that it's hard to separate characteristics critically. Is design a job that gives many people basic

⁴ Leeds Interview

⁵ Glaser, *Design Dialogues* 155

employment providing a utilitarian product? Is it a craft requiring measurably objective skill that should be maintained? Is it an art that can serve as a potent means of self expression? Is it a profession whose members can influence the health and well-being of the general public? Is it a discipline that involves a philosophical inquiry into the nature of truth, beauty and reality? Is it an instrument for social change or manipulation? If the answer is all of the above,” then I guess I’m looking for a broader critical voice that makes the significant differences between these issues clear. I haven’t heard that voice yet.”⁵

The Independent runs the risk of losing some readers because of its one story front. If the main story in their package does not seem significant for the reader, they may lose some pickups. Collaborative work between the editorial and production side are especially important. The main package and promo must work together so that either will pick up or encourage a reader on the fence about choosing that paper. Headlines must be carefully crafted, photos must be specially chosen, and the design overall must be to resonate with *The Independent’s* general target audience because the front page only offers one or two stories.

The Times

The Times followed soon after *The Independent* when they decided to move to a compact size. But they did not make the full jump all at once. In 2004 both compact and broadsheet versions were printed. For a year both papers struggled looked the same, but the display fonts struggled and were reworked to fit the new format.

In two articles published by *The Times* David Driver makes conflicting testimonial about the current state of readers. In one article, he says in response to their font changes and influence of technological innovations, “The change is not reckless impulse, but reading conditions for many people have become less leisurely.”⁶ But in another article published the same day Driver comments on the relationship between the paper and mass market publications and says, “Few of our readers today

⁶ Driver, After 221 years, the world’s leading newspaper shows off a fresh face, *The Times*

read us at leisure in leather armchairs.”⁷ NewsDesigner.com reaffirms this is a direct quote from Driver⁸.

When it was printing both the broadsheet and compact sizes, their efforts to keep them the same was a big challenge for designers and the compact debatably suffered from this. “They took their old advertising structure and reapplied it to their new tabloid structure. Whereas, if you start from scratch, you can agree on sizes that actually help the page.”⁴ Luke Prowse, *Times Modern* designer reinforced that the effort was not to reinvent their look but to allow some of the old elements transfer to the new paper. “We wanted something crisp and fresh that maintained the heritage of the paper. It wasn't the objective to create something a million miles away from its previous font, and so far I think it's ticked all the right boxes,” Prowse said. Though the new font received both good and bad press, Prowse reminded that high profile redesigns will inevitably see a mixed of response.⁹ The success of the compact did eventually help the phase out the broadsheet leaving just a few broadsheets in the market.

The Times mention that they are the Newspaper of the Year on their front page, like *The Guardian*, but with more discretion. The nameplate is at the absolute top of the page with promos between the body and flag. It is flushed to the right, but in a barely notable font size, it names itself the paper of the year in red next to the black thicker price label. The flag is most recognisable for its Royal Coat of Arms. This is because the King's Printing House was at the site of *The Times'* original publishing places in 1785.¹⁰ It was removed and replaced many times, but in 1982 *The Times* moved to an older feeling Hanovarian coat of arms to representative of the paper's birth time. “In 2006, the Coat of Arms used by *The Times* was redrawn by wood engraver Edwina Elli.”¹⁰

⁷ Times Modern, The Times

⁸ Friesen, Mark

⁹ Prowse Interview

¹⁰ Online Times FAQ

The finalised compact paper now works very much from top to bottom. Usually one story and a dominant photo are tucked into the gap of the page opposite the rail. It is tucked in by the flag and promos on the top and a rail down the side. The “rail” is usually a column’s width with bite sized news or short tight bits of news that promote news stories in the other sections of the paper. The rail is a powerful tool for tab especially. Because they can only fit stories on their front page, this is a good middle ground between an index and promos. *The Times* rail separates itself from the other content with a solid black line and cream box behind the copy. The rail here also saves the bottom corner to promote online content.

The Times’ front page has confusing hierarchy. Dominant photos and large headlines compete for competition. With a limited space separating unrelated photos and stories from one another with more than a line is especially difficult, but all the more important. “Stand alone photos should be encouraged, but they must be packaged in a consistent style that instantly signals to readers that the photo stands alone.”¹¹ Overline headlines can be especially confusing in this space. Readers can easily associate the dominant headline with the dominant photo which distorts the news and its value. The design of the page does allow for some flexibility. There is room for an extra promo appears at the bottom of the page but is subordinate to the skyboxes, rails, and editorial. The new tab front page stills has reflections of its once broadsheet format.

The Guardian

The Guardian was the last paper to redesign. It launched the new Berliner size in 2005. This layout falls somewhere between the two formats. In width, it is smaller than both the Broadsheets and compact tabs. It has the small size that gives the mobility of a tabloid paper but shares most of the same physical structures of a broadsheet. The main sections share the over the fold format, but tucked into the

¹¹ Harrower, 108

paper's backbone are smaller extra sections with more casual news with a tab shape within the broadsheet pouch.

Special Project Director, Mark Leeds at *The Guardian* said the staff had been discussing format options for a long time. Instead of redesigning with a quick turnaround, they started from scratch and invested "whole heartedly," he said. Taking the time to focus on the details gave them time to think about "what goes in, what gets lost in the new world, what new things come in," and to see how the content works. "That was a catalyst for making a change in the format, but we didn't want to do a reactive. We didn't want to just change the format. You have time to think about how the content works, what word length should be, what design should be, how pictures should be used. And you get to think about it again," he said. ⁴

Leeds explained one of the redesign philosophies was to transfer the same total word count from the old to new format. The change was to allow story lengths to fit their content better instead of forcing some stories shorter and some longer. The goal was to improve the pace of articles and keep "flabby" stories tight. That way, some pieces work better as short chunks and the saved words can serve for a better literary piece. "The idea is that you really focus on what's really great, give it more space, and what is okay," Leeds said.⁴

Since then *The Guardian's* circulation has not only risen but "in contrast to some of the other redesigns or format changes our acquired readership has stayed with us," Leeds said. He described *The Independent's* circulation changes like a heart beat monitor that quickly blipped up with gradual falls back down.⁴

The Guardian's design has especially received praise for their work in the news design industry. In 2006, after the redesign, it was awarded one of the most sought after Society for News Design (SND) recognitions: World's Best Designed Newspaper.¹² For the 27th Edition of the Annual, *The Guardian* shared this award with only one other newspaper, Rzeczpospolita from Warsaw, Poland. The following year four papers from

¹² Winners (SND) 27th Edition

the international community shared the title. In 2006, *The Guardian* won 11 Awards of Excellence and 2 Silvers and *The Independent* also won a Silver.

The next year, *The Guardian* took home 30 Awards of Excellence, 4 Silvers, and 1 JSR, *The Telegraph* trailed behind with 3 Awards of Excellence.¹³ The following year in 2007, *The Guardian* won two gold and two bronze awards from the SND Spanish awards, Malofiej.¹⁴ The British Press Awards named *The Guardian's* sister Sunday paper *The Observer* Newspaper of the Year.¹⁵ During the event, Tom Jenkins of *The Guardian* won Sports Photographer of the Year and Peter Brookes of *The Times* was awarded Cartoonist of the Year.

The Guardian marks itself as the Newspaper of the Year directly below the flag or nameplate and is flushed right. Its flag is dark blue banner that spans across the page. The type within the box use varying shades of blue from the same color palate. The skyboxes, promos or teasers appear above the flag, which is a traditional for a broadsheet or Berliner. *The Guardian's* skyboxes use about 40% of the available space above the fold. The display type in the flag and copy in the promos are all written in variations of the Egyptian fonts. Creative Director Mark Porter said the new calmer font would match the modern look and feel of the Berliner.¹⁶ The struggle to find the balance between a serif and san serif font ended when Porter and Paul Barnes made a serif free Egyptian font that had a personable feel and flexibility for daily use. They settled on a 96 member family of fonts to give all the options their designers would need.

Generally two stories begin above the fold and no more than three promos will usually appear above the flag. The top half is reserved for this and most of the visual elements are left for the promos unless there is also a dominant image. Consistently at the bottom of the page, are four short bits of news that function like the rail but have a little over 100 words per section. They highlight the big news in sections like national,

¹³ Winners (SND) 28th Edition

¹⁴ Awards (SND Malofej 15)

¹⁵ Press Gazette, Observer

¹⁶ Branigan, Guardian

international, business and finance and navigate the reader to the inside of the paper. The design is very consistent from day to day but still has enough flexibility to adjust to different story or photo dimensions. Most importantly, their large font family gives the paper an overall connected feel. Except for and photos, all the colors come from the same palate to give a breathable clean look. *This Guardian's* unique design in the sea tabs shares the newsstand in confidence.

The Daily Telegraph

The Daily Telegraph is nearly in solitude as one of the few surviving broadsheets in London. However, it is not a place for pity because it has the highest total and UK circulation of the quality newspapers. It beats its second runner up, *The Times*, by over 25,000 papers on average. Below its Victorian styled flag is a centered small bold san serif reminder that it is "Britain's Best-Selling Quality Daily." Between that and the flag are the promos. This is a space *The Telegraph* has become comfortable to use for free giveaways with purchase of the paper. Offering something extra with the product is an effective way to help and persuade readers which paper to choose that paper. The newspaper culture in England is very different because of its mass transit making street sales excessively more important than home delivery.¹⁷ Thus, persuading the reader to pick up the paper requires much more energy than for a community that targets home delivery methods like the United States.

The unit above the flag may explain why the print issue has not seen a redesign: the mark of their massively successful website. A red, blue, yellow and white banner advertises for Telegraph.co.uk: "IT'S OFFICIAL TELEGRAPH.CO.UK WAS THE UK'S NO 1 QUALITY NEWSPAPER WEBSITE IN 2006." The very modernised website emphasises how ancient the broadsheet feels in the compact market. However, among these papers, *The Telegraph* may have an old fashioned or conservative look, but its content is neither liberal nor left sided. *Telegraph* readers are likely to be conservative.

¹⁷ Clark

The broadsheet version may serve to keep their traditional older audience who prefer the print while appealing to a younger connected audience with their online sphere.

Though *The Telegraph* is among the lone broadsheets, its design is most similar to *The Times*. *The Telegraph* also has a rail down the side using standing heads that functions more like an index than shorts like in *The Guardian*. Instead each section in the rail is separated by a thick solid bar followed by a column width photo below. The *Telegraph* is the only paper to include a photo with nearly every plug in the rail. Though, because it is a small space the paper is not always successful in finding newsworthy photos but is bound by its design. Below the rail there is a small section to plug any sections that were not included. Though this paper is good about keeping within a color scheme but the design is less sleek. It uncomfortably mixes serifs, sans serifs, bold and roman fonts. However the hierarchy below the fold is messier than above because some shorter stories have all the body copy in bold or a headline in a gray sans serif. *The Telegraph* is the only paper of the group to allow dog legging on their front page because of the advertisements which adds to the somewhat muddled look.

As the biggest physically biggest paper among the group it has the most stories, again functioning like a traditional paper. *The Telegraph's* front page is the best about encouraging reader involvement and especially navigating them to the web. This is designated by a small light blue solid box and a web-style chat icon. It is the only paper to use web icons on their front page. Nearly every story has a small standing head and section that encourages readers to voice their opinion online or find extra related information inside. The language is very personal and does not distance itself from the reader. Also, because it is the widest of the papers, 8 columns, it has the most flexibility. Also like *The Times*, it makes room for a small promo at the bottom of the page if not interrupted by ads that appear below the fold.

All of the papers in the group have moved away from some traditional looks. There were no papers with an index, a table of contents, weather or stylised

centerpieces on their front pages. Also, all of the papers compete in the market for 70 pence on the news stand except *The Times* which costs 65 pence. *The Daily Telegraph* has the highest total circulation at almost 9 million followed by the 5 pence cheaper compact: *The Independent* with about 640,000 circulation. Next is *The Guardian* about a 364,000 circulation and *The Times* follows 10,000 less. Conversely, *The Guardian* earns most from UK subscription because of their loyal and vocal readership. Yeah, they're quite vocal too, they're quite opinionated in a good and bad way....There are groups where people trust what we have to say. And it's a contribute to that. We do lots of travels to, Sicily, Edinburgh Festival, things that are tailored to our market than say *The Daily Telegraph* that might be to Province. It's a slightly, sort of liberal, readership. *The Telegraph* earns second most but still £215 less per audit period, followed by *The Independent*. *The Times* offered a broad range that fell below *The Independent* but above *The Telegraph*.

INSIDE PAGES THE NATIONAL PAPERS

The front page serves as an advertisement for the paper. Some of the most important information appears there and it also uses promos and standheads to sell the content inside. Once the reader has chosen to open the paper or buy it off the news stand, it is important that the inside section delivers. Graphic designer and architect Richard Saul Wurman coined the term "information architecture" which he defines as the relationship between words and visual things. "The disease is when information doesn't tell you what you want or need to know," said Wurman.¹⁸ The bulk of the news is not on the front page but inside. It is essential that here on the pages inside the information is best architected to best deliver the content.

The Independent

¹⁸ Heller, 200

The broadsheet roots of *The Independent* still run deep in its newer tab design. Though the front is most drastically different, many of the layouts on the inside could easily be transferred back to the traditional format. However unlike a traditional paper, pages 2 and 3 are not reserved for hard news. These are the spaces for the rest of the cover story and often another soft piece, both which may include more photos.

Page 2 uses a small horizontal rail at the bottom with a suggestion to an index that quietly advises some of the hotspots in the rest of the paper like obituaries, weather, sport and the crossword. The package on this page may have extra related stories, photos, or rails of quick information. There is little to no emphasis to the online sphere.

It is obvious that the designers make a conscious effort to include photos and extra graphs of information. The pages cannot escape the heavy weighted look caused by the body copy. The copy is tight and thick that does not leave much room for breath. The paper does have photo and social spreads throughout the paper that serve well to their audience like a literary piece on British wines for example.

The stories and shorts nook themselves with the advertisements. The benefit is that the space is used efficiently but the editorial can easily get lost when they are jumbled. Because the pages are already visually heavy, the reader may find themselves between editorial and paid spaces. This is especially true because some of the smaller short chunkier pieces get shoved to the bottom of the page, where they may be stronger between less alternative story forms. *The Independent's* greatest strength is properly devoting the right amount of space to the right content. Though it resonates with a broadsheet in some traditional form, it also takes the opportunity to include smaller bits of information, yet is still not afraid to give a two page spread a photo and literary essay. This makes it commuter friendly, where the reader can decide how much time and attention they can devote during their journey, which makes it very readable.

The Times

The inside of *The Times* is organised and branded much better than its coversheet. It is much grayer than *The Independent* on the inside pages but has a better hierarchy. It is more readable and has more breath, the gutters between columns are wide and it only uses horizontal “rules” or lines in its front section. Many of the longer stories are accompanied by sidebars which makes quick reading much more doable. Also, at the end of major stories, the Times online symbol encourages readers to log onto the website for additional information or for interactive purposes.

Photos and sidebars are organised much cleaner on the inside and still mimic their front page design and use rails for more fast data. There is a good use of bulleted and numbered lists throughout the editorial pieces, most of which are in front of light gray boxes to separate from the editorial. Also even short column width pull outs reference important numbers or facts. *The Times* gives the reader many entry points to the articles and has more chances to hook the readers.

Ads in *The Times* all fit the columns comfortably. However not only do the articles can “dog leg” or wrap around the ads but on some occasions they even wrap around one another. *The Times* is a photo friendly paper but still maintain a newsy traditional feel. It avoids literary and photo spreads and focuses on harder news. Except for photos and some deck heads, color is barely or not used at all for detail or sidebars.

The Guardian

The inside of *The Guardian's* 5 column grid pages have a clean consistent look. Page two has short descriptions of what is in each section of the papers and the jump from the feature story from the front page. Below the fold on this page is the index to navigate around the rest of the paper, sudoku and basic contact information next to a space reserved for an advertisement. The first portion of the main section is dedicated to national news. It begins with hard news and softens as the pages progress. The stories stick clean to the grids and have breathable columns. The Egyptian family

throughout the headlines, decks, and body copy give the inside pages a look as smooth as its front page. Every page uses colour and has at least one photo or infographic. Usually there are more than one and very heavily uses sidebar information to add new dimensions to the stories. Many of the smaller sidebars are quick number statistics or short profiles with mug shots about an individual relevant to the story.

A unique feature of *The Guardian* is the Eyewitness feature. It is always a double truck in the spread of the center page. It is a long literary piece that features quality journalism and photography. Behind this is the back section that has shorter pieces and more sub sections like International, Financial, Environment that target their audience that is slight to the left. *The Guardian's* comment&debate and reader feedback section is the most extensive of all the papers. The Berliner has the main section and a second section tucked inside that rotates during the week. The sweeping success of *The Guardian's* design is the durability of its stories. The photos, sidebars, and even the decks serve to give the page more backpack and improve consumability.

The Daily Telegraph

Not only is *The Telegraph* a wide broadsheet but once unfolded it is extremely tall. If the goal is to look and feel like a traditional newspaper, it is successful. The format is impractical for the Underground or bus. But, for readers searching for lots of information per page, this is an obvious choice.

Page 2 is the among the most forward thought section of all elements in the studied papers. At the top of the left inside page a section the width of the page is dedicated to their online sector. It first reminds the reader their website is the most visited quality newspaper website. Then it brings feedback from what were the most read and most commented on stories from the day before online. It refers to the same online icons used on the front page. Next to yesterday's reflection shares what readers will find online today. It includes a whole section dedicated to which podcasts will be available to download. These are organised in short lists and have icons, photos, and

reminders of the web address to make it easily accessible. *The Daily Telegraph* is the only newspaper to include the lottery results in such a prominent place, page 2.

Below the *telegraph.co.uk* section are the top hard news stories. The page also includes a double column news bulletin rail which is interestingly written in san serif font to separate itself from the formal articles. The san serif fonts add to the confusion of competing headlines. The ads are proportionally as enormous as the paper when compared to the tiny tabs. The whole paper is not full of hard headlines and straight paragraphs. Moving deeper into the sections it softens up and includes creative photo shapes and alternative forms to organise bits of data, especially numbers. Like *The Times*, some shorter block stories get tucked into the bottoms of the page next to ads and easily get lost. It also is guilty of having a messy front page but a cleaner inside that helps the information function better. Nearly every page inside includes a reference to the website or advises the reader to get online.

Each paper has a very distinct personality. They have strengths in their design that properly reflect their target audience. *The Times and Guardian* both publish media tabs that are inserted with the papers. *The Times* insert is the same size as the rest of the paper and uses some, but not all opportunity for more creative design. *The Guardian's* insert uses a tab format. Tucked in the elbow or middle section are two more sections that fold in heightwise like its main section. This improves the mobility of both papers. All the papers used full color on both their front and back covers.

None of the papers used staples to hold the pages together. *The Times* was the floppiest paper and fell apart the easiest, followed by *The Independent*. *The Daily Telegraph* was strong but had the poorest mobility. After opening the pages it was difficult to fold them over without having a table to help. *The Guardian's* Berliner format was the most successful format and used the design most efficiently and held itself together best. As the newspaper readers are changing so must the media groups. It is a deep rooted part of the London culture but should expect to see some changes if

the papers do not evolve. “The British market has very loyal readership. It’s getting older basically, and less new readers are coming through. And as the readership sort of dies off, it just slowly shifts, the average age of the reader slowly shifts older and older. I don’t see any papers disappearing in the short term, but maybe in a long time after their readers die,”⁴ Leeds said.

THE STATS

NATIONAL 'QUALITY' NEWSPAPERS

Newspaper	Total Circulation	UK Circulation	Price	Format	UK Subscription
Telegraph	896,476	851,760	£ 0.70	Broadsheet	£ 408.72
Times	642,711	612,118	£ 0.65	Compact	£ 165.00 to £ 555.00
Guardian	364,491	319,852	£ 0.70	Berliner	£ 624.00
Independent	264,182	216,630	£ 0.70	Compact	£ 363.48

Audited Bureau of Circulations, Standard Certificate of Circulation distributing average net circulation between 29 January to 25 February 2007. Expired 31 May 2007.

BULK 'FREE EVENING' DISTRIBUTION

Newspaper	Certified & Bulk Distribution	Pages	Ad space	Target Age	Dimensions
thelondonpaper	896,476	40	20%	16-35	290 x 370 mm
London Lite	642,711	43	24%	16-34	300 x 395 mm

Audited Bureau of Circulations, Standard Certificate of Circulation distributing average data and between 29 January to 25 February 2007. Expired 31 May 2007.

FREE EVENING NEWSPAPERS

There was a big gaping hole in the evening newspaper market. *The Evening Standard* has long held the monopoly for the evening market. 20 years ago, *The London Daily News* tried to challenge *The Standard* but failed.¹⁹ The evening market has proved to be tough but the free morning *Metro* paper that targets young readers has proved something new. “You can reach young people with a newspaper provided they don't have to pay for it,” said Torin Douglas, BBC Media correspondent, which is exactly what the new free evening papers are doing. *The London Paper* owned by News International and *The London Lite* published by Associated Newspapers (part of the Daily Mail) both launched on 4 September 2006. The two papers have been competing for attention from young socially active commuters. The papers are distributed by hand in high traffic central London areas. Both distributors wear iconic—but different shades of—purple jackets that match the flags on the print version.

CEO of VisualEditors.com said if *The Lite's* editorial with *The Paper's* design, Londoners would have a very strong free product to read.²⁰ Since the papers are both free, and are handed to the reader without them even seeing the paper yet, it becomes slightly less important to *sell* the front page. But according to an article in Business Week, both publishers believe the new papers may revitalise the newspaper industry. After a few years, the industry will know if they have attracted brand new readers to the market.²¹

The London Paper

The Paper has an overall consistent look and feel. Each section is divided visual separated and has a focus color. For example, the front page uses purple, news is blue, entertainment is orange, sports is red and the 'break' section which has

¹⁹ Douglas

²⁰ Montgomery

²¹ Capell

horoscopes comics, sudoku and crosswords is green. The day after the launch Editor's Weblog said:

Despite having hit the streets first, Associated Newspapers' new evening free paper, *London Lite*, was dealt the first blow in the London newspaper war by the superior design of News International's *thelondonpaper*. Media buyers were happier with the color-coded Murdoch publication, one saying "*thelondonpaper* looks cleaner and somehow more modern than *Lite*."²²

The front page has a consistent look but is not without some flexibility. Directly below the flag is their URL and the date of publication. Between that and the editorial are the skyboxes. The skyboxes are always color coded to match their inside section. The skyboxes almost never come without photos. A slim rail down the left side first promotes what's online with a web style icon. It also has a short index for the print version the weather for the evening that advises how to dress. *Thelondonpaper* twice modestly includes their ABC circulation numbers and the previous weeks unaudited daily distribution number.

The design gets weaker in the body of the front page. Readers are trained to expect one major headline a corresponding story and a stand-alone photo, a photo that tells its own story and is not directly related to editorial on the page. A major flaw of *thelondonpaper* is that the stand alone photo is almost always directly below or next to the big headline. There is always a caption to explain what is meant by the photo, but the reader sees all the big elements on the page before the details. In *The Newspaper Designer's Handbook*, author Tim Harrower warns about this exact common problem. He illustrates a dominant photo of a young girl hugging Mickey Mouse with their heads nestled together. Next to the photo is a headline that reads, "Seattle girl attacked by killer rat." Obviously the two are not related but at first glance, a very different story

²² UK: First battle

could be understood. “Stand-alone photos should be encouraged, but they must be packaged in a consistent style that instantly signals to readers that the photo stands alone.”²

During *The London Paper's* first launch, Al Trivinio, art director for new projects at News International shared with NewsDesigner.com shared that the goal was to draw up a very British design but cleaner and younger than the red-top culture. During the initial launch he shared that he was “very happy to see how the market is answering to that.”²³ But less than a year later, Trivinio has moved onto other projects with News International and reflecting back he said he is disappointed with the progress of *thelondonpaper*.²⁴ The paper still uses colour and icon branding. But to hold its young readers and compete with *The Lite* the paper is infused with celebrity-photo heavy pages. There is not a far distance from the red-top culture as though the fresh design suggests otherwise. But a strength of *thelondonpaper* is keeping closely related to their readers. Except for the extensive listening of events for young people around London, nearly every section includes reader contribution.

The London Lite

The Lite's design is a lumpy look that is much more reflective of the free morning *Metro* paper. The purple-top paper looks feels and sounds much more like a red-top reader. As the competing evening paper that intentionally has light news to separate day from night, nearly everything about its front page design is loud. Photos, headlines, sidebars, and even the flag are all in competition with each other. The short beginning of the only story on the front page barely makes it to the nutgraf. However, the *Lite* benefits by having a loud verbose front page because it gives the reader many entry points. If the reader is not turned off by the flashy front, they may be more likely to get hooked by the big story or the celebrity gossip sidebar.

²³ Friesen, Newspaper War

²⁴ Trivinio Interview

Tucked around the flag there is always a large photo with boisterous reverse text functioning like a skybox. Its neighboring space has stacked promos in bright colors. Almost half way down the page, one large headline that is sometimes accompanied by a photo competes with the flag and promo leaving barely any room for the story. The front page also includes more column wide promos that refer the reader to the inside.

The first two inside pages give a brief look at the days news and a full column dedicated to a review and prediction of the weather. This section also usefully warns about traffic and tube delays. The design can easily be described as cramped, heavy or lumpy. It uses a purple, blue and crème colored theme that is less intense than *thepaper* but fails to have easily navigate the reader through the pages. *The Lite's* entertainment news is equally extensive but has a heavier emphasis on what is on television rather than music like its competitor. Its sports section is shorter but makes good competition as a sidebar friendly section. Almost the entire paper is stacked with short articles, stories in brief, and quick listings of upcoming fashions.

Both the papers have advertisements about the size on their front page that span about the whole width of the page. Their size is comparable and almost always span the whole width of the. Each paper is also fairly durable and bound by two staples at the crease to hold them together. *The London Paper* is 25mm shorter and 10mm slimmer than *The Lite*. When folded and shuffled around it holds its pages together better, though both pass the test of mobile durability. Media analysts agree that there will be a “blood bath” between the two papers but it will take some time to find which, if either, or both will sink or swim. But there is no doubt that design wise *The London Paper* is floating on air compared to the deeply sunken *Lite*.

“The British market has very loyal readership. It’s getting older basically, and less new readers are coming through. And as the readership sort of dies off, it just slowly shifts, the average age of the reader slowly shifts older and older. I don’t see any

papers disappearing in the short term, but maybe in a long time,” said Leeds.⁴ As the digital and journalism cultures mature and cross, the heat between the papers will intensify. There will always be a strong need for information, story telling, and well organised data. Whether it comes from the print, the web or through a cell phone, the people will demand to be informed. “The obvious and familiar way to illustrate a story is to render, in a recognizable way, the images described by the text. This didactic method is the one generally favoured in journalism since objective credibility is the sought after heart of journalism,” Glaser said.⁵ Each paper in the market has a distinct design that sets itself apart from its competitors. Time, technology, change, and essentially the voice of the readers will determine what direction visual journalists will take next.

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