

**FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF:**  
A CAUTIONARY & OPTIMISTIC  
TALE FOR LOCAL NEWS STARTUPS

Michele McLellan | Sept. 29, 2011

Block by Block: Community News Summit 2011 | #bxb11

# Stage 1: Newspaper replacement syndrome

**Newspaper Death Watch**

Tuesday, September 27, 2011      Chronicing the Decline of Newspapers and the Rebirth of Journalism      50 Cents, or whatever

**R.I.P.**      **R.I.P. Oakland Tribune, Contra Costa Times**

US metropolitan dailies that have closed since this site was created in March, 2007

**Tucson Citizen**  
**Rocky Mountain News**  
**Baltimore Examiner**  
**Kentucky Post**  
**Cincinnati Post**  
**King County Journal**  
**Union City Register-Tribune**  
**Halifax Daily News**  
**Albuquerque Tribune**  
**South Idaho Press**  
**San Juan Star**  
**Honolulu Advertiser**  
**Oakland Tribune**  
**Contra-Costa Times**

**W.I.P.**

Works In Progress: Former

**MediaNews Group, which has been on the ropes financially as it struggles with debt, will take drastic action in its Bay Area stronghold, consolidating 11 local newspapers in the East Bay into two regional newspapers and laying off 120 people, or 8% of its staff. About 40 editors and 80 production people are expected to be let go.**

Beginning on November 2, the *Oakland Tribune*, *Alameda Times-Star*, *Daily Review*, *The Argus* and the *West County Times* will be consolidated under the name *East Bay Tribune*.

Six other titles – the *Contra Costa Times*, *Valley Times*, *San Ramon Valley Times*, *Tri-Valley Herald*, *San Joaquin Herald* and *East County Times* will be rebranded as simply the *Times*. The *San Mateo County Times* will be merged into the *San Jose Mercury News*. The *Bay Area News Group*, which is a subsidiary of *MediaNews*, will also start two weekly newspapers.

The most visible casualty of the cost-cutting move is the *Oakland Tribune*, a daily that has been published since 1874. The most recent circulation figures we could find listed its daily circulation at nearly 93,000 in 2009. It has been the only daily newspaper in Oakland since 1950. The *Tribune* won the *Pulitzer Prize* for photography in 1950 and 1989. The other major daily title to be closed is the *Contra Costa Times*, which was founded in 1947. It has a daily circulation of 168,000.

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“I just got laid off.”

# Stage 2: Engagement stress disorder

“Whaaa? You’re saying I have to report, write, shoot photos and video *AND* post to Twitter and Facebook? Next you’ll be telling me I’ve got to respond to the comments!”



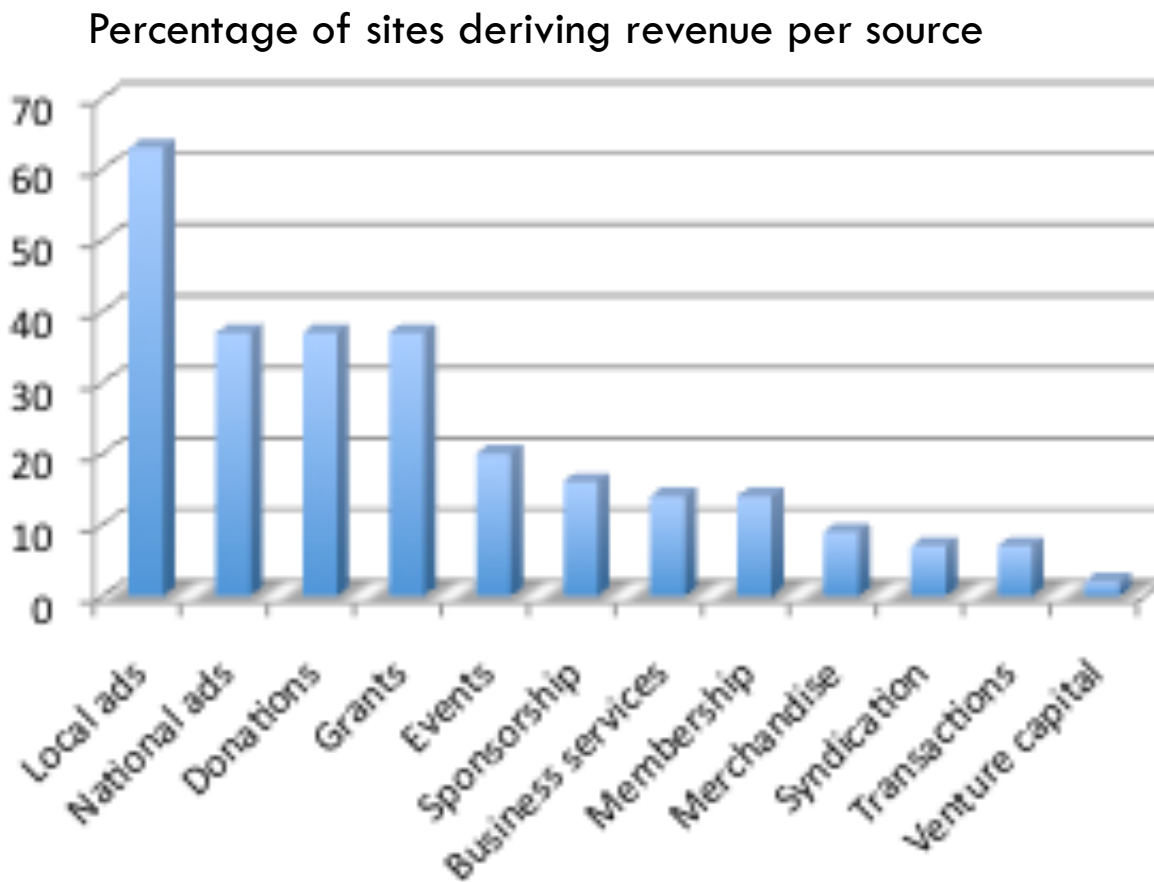
Photo by Susan Mernit

## Stage 3: Sales-phobia



“Journalism is important.  
Someone should give  
me a grant.”

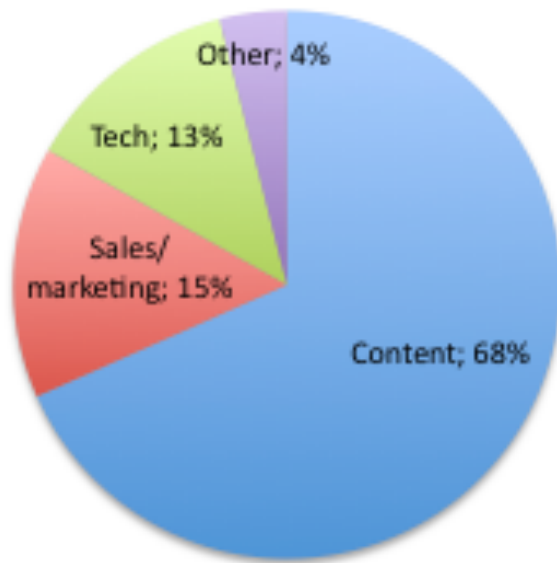
# Revenue sources 2011



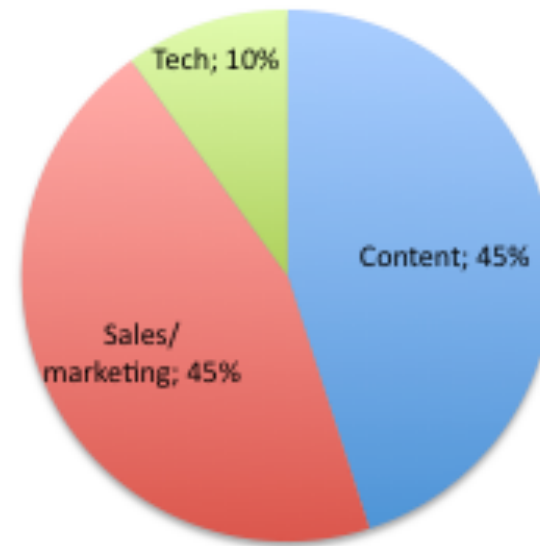
Source: Block by Block survey of 50 online publishers Jan-Feb. 2011

# Stage 4: Capacity conundrum

How do you use your resources? Take the pie test.



Problem



Promising

# Stage 5: Growth



- Your goals - What will this stage look like for you?



Thank you!

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