

## Chapter 5

# We Interrupt this Program . . . The Cosmic Change in the “News Business”

Jeff Gralnick

This history of global communicating growth and the history of the businesses that have been created so that people could reach out to other people with news and knowledge are measured in the time lapses between disruptions caused by new and innovative technologies.

What this chapter attempts to provide is a documented reading tour through that history as one new technology after another produced cosmic change in what we call “the news business.” It was not so much just dog-eat-dog competitiveness that changed this business and the business of journalism. It was instead new technology displacing old that produced the disruptions that first challenged successful business and then turned into failures those that could not adapt, adept, or chose not to compete. Those who won did. Those who did not died.

### Disruptive Technologies: New vs. Old

Movable type – Gutenberg’s, not today’s web publishing tool – displaced monastery-bound calligraphers in the 13th century and began to make reading materials available to the masses.

Radio brought the world of entertainment and news into people’s homes, which put the first pressure on newspapers to be quicker on their feet but did not appear to cut into growing American newspaper circulation in the first half of the 20th century.

Something called the transistor was invented in the 1950s, which made possible the transistor radio and magically a socially binding wire was cut. With those small plastic boxes in purse or pocketbook or shirtfront pocket the world went with you – news, sports, music – any time, any place. It was “on demand” before the phrase had been invented to go along with a new technology. And the company that introduced the transistor radio in 1954? It was a little firm called Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo Ltd. which today we know as Sony. Later on in this chapter we will deal

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with the true meaning of that little transistor to the businesses that we call news and entertainment.

Television was the next so-called game changer as the cost of having that “box which brought pictures through the air into your home” came down to the point where the TV was something every middle class home had to have. It was radio with pictures and it mesmerized.

1953

- APRIL: 5,343,000 TV sets are in American homes
- MAY: 103 TV Stations in 60 cities
- SEPTEMBER: 7,535,000 TV sets in USA
- OCTOBER: 8,000,000 TV sets – 107 stations

1959

RCA SELLS 90,000 *COLOR* TV SETS – Model CT-9. In 1960, after spending more than \$130 Million in research and advertising, color television finally records its first profit for RCA. From a production standpoint, the one million units per year barrier is not broken until 1964.

<http://www.tvhistory.tv/index.html>

This growth of television stations and television sets also began to make outdated and ultimately unnecessary that American staple, the evening newspaper, which slammed onto the porches of millions homes each late afternoon. Trace the “de-circulation” of newspapers and it begins in 1960 as television news began to mature on both national and local levels. The numbers are startling.

In 1960, the population of the United States was still below 200 million and in that year Americans bought and read just under 60 million morning and afternoon newspapers, with slow growth to continue until 1980 and then the cratering began. By 1999, with the American population at 277 million, newspaper circulation had dropped to just under 56 million and the rate of decline continued to accelerate. By 2008 total newspaper consumption had dropped to 48 million as Internet sites and search engines made them less and less necessary (Table 5.1).<sup>1</sup>

**Table 5.1** Number of daily newspapers, total paid circulation

Year	Morning	Evening	Total newspapers	Morning (000)	Evening (000)	Total (000)	Sunday	Total newspapers
2000	766	727	1,480	46,772	9,000	55,773	917	59,421
2001	776	704	1,468	46,821	8,756	55,578	913	59,090
2002	777	692	1,457	46,617	8,568	55,186	913	58,780
2003	787	680	1,456	46,930	8,255	55,185	917	58,495
2004	814	653	1,457	46,887	7,738	54,626	915	57,754
2005	817	645	1,452	46,122	7,222	53,345	914	55,270
2006	833	614	1,437	45,441	6,888	52,329	907	53,179
2007	867	565	1,422	44,548	6,194	50,742	907	51,246
2008	872	546	1,408	42,757	5,840	48,597	902	

Source: Editor & Publisher International Yearbook, <http://www.editorandpublisher.com/>

Equally instructive in charting the decline of the newspaper in the United States is to look at those evening newspapers. They were the first casualties of the advent of television as the beginnings of “news at the dinner hour” on television – both local and national – made totally outdated the paper picked up on the way back from work or at the doorstep on arriving home. In 1960, 34 million afternoon papers were sold; by 1999 that number was down to just under 10 million; and that had dropped another 3 million by 2008 (Table 5.2).<sup>2</sup>

**Table 5.2** The decline of the evening newspapers

Year	Population	Morning circulation	Percent of population	Evening circulation	Percent of population	Total morning/ evening	Percent of population
1960	180,671,158	24,028,788	13.30	34,852,958	19.29	58,881,746	32.59
1965	194,302,963	24,106,776	12.41	36,250,787	18.66	60,357,563	31.06
1970	205,052,172	25,933,783	12.65	36,173,744	17.64	62,107,527	30.29
1975	215,973,199	25,490,186	11.80	35,165,245	16.28	60,655,431	28.08
1980	227,224,681	29,414,036	12.94	32,787,804	14.43	62,201,840	27.38
1985	237,923,795	36,361,561	15.28	26,404,671	11.10	62,766,232	26.38
1986	240,132,887	37,441,125	15.59	25,060,911	10.44	62,502,036	26.03
1987	242,288,918	39,123,807	16.15	23,702,466	9.78	62,826,273	25.93
1988	244,498,982	40,452,815	16.55	22,242,001	9.10	62,694,816	25.64
1989	246,819,230	40,759,016	16.51	21,890,202	8.87	62,649,218	25.38
1990	249,464,396	41,308,361	16.56	21,015,795	8.42	62,324,156	24.98
1991	252,153,092	41,469,756	16.45	19,217,369	7.62	60,687,125	24.07
1992	255,029,699	42,387,813	16.62	17,776,686	6.97	60,164,499	23.59
1993	257,782,608	43,093,866	16.72	16,717,737	6.49	59,811,594	23.20
1994	260,327,021	43,381,578	16.66	15,923,865	6.12	59,305,436	22.78
1995	262,803,276	44,310,252	16.86	13,883,145	5.28	58,193,397	22.14
1996	265,228,572	44,789,322	16.89	12,200,486	4.60	56,989,808	21.49
1997	267,783,607	45,433,888	16.97	11,294,021	4.22	56,727,902	21.18
1998	270,248,003	45,643,495	16.89	10,538,603	3.90	56,182,092	20.79
1999	272,690,813	45,997,367	16.87	9,981,971	3.66	55,979,332	20.53

Source: Editor & Publisher (2000).

## The Decline of Traditional Network Broadcast News and the Rise of Cable

Trace the “de-circulation” of traditional network broadcast news and its decline and the year to circle is 1980. CNN’s creation that year by Ted Turner was the beginning of the long and continuing downward slide for what is now called “over the air news.” In the late 1970s, the three evening news broadcasts were watched “at the dinner hour” by those in almost three-quarters of American homes owning television sets. When I produced the first iteration of the nascent ABC News World News Tonight in 1978, our program was a distant third, but still during the winter standard-time months, it commanded a share in excess of 20% while the CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite had a 35% share and the NBC Nightly News

**Table 5.3** Evening news rating and share – TV

	NBC		CBS		ABC	
1977	12.4	26	14.1	30	8.9	18
1978	12.2	25	13.4	28	9.2	20
1979	11.9	24	14.0	28	11.2	22
1980	12.0	23	14.0	27	12.0	24
Each rating represents						
1977	718,000 homes					
1978	734,000					
1979	751,000					
1980	775,000					

*Source:* NBC Universal Research.

Reprinted with permission of NBCU Research.

the rest, an audience size that held through 1980 as the race among the then “big three” tightened (Table 5.3).

The numbers are stunning by today’s standards, as we will see. By 1980 29.4 million American homes were tuned to one of the three network evening news broadcasts at the dinner hour. Population that year stood at just over 227 million which meant that just under one in every 8 households was still settled into the decades old habit and of that number over a third were still wedded to Walter Cronkite.

But the most astonishing statistic I recall from that era was the share 3rd place World News Tonight had in Philadelphia the year before. Each evening, WPVI, the long dominant local ABC affiliate in the City of Brotherly Love, delivered to World News Tonight a 70 share which meant that at the dinner hour, seven of every television sets on in that city were turned to ABC News and its nascent three-anchor broadcast. That was the power of broadcast news before the erosion caused by the next waves of disruptive technologies – cable – and then the Internet.

By the time CNN reached its 16th birthday in 1996 it had been joined by NBC which launched MSNBC and then Rupert Murdoch who was still months away from his launch of Fox Cable News. But even with only two new choices for news viewers, the impact of cable news was beginning to be felt fully on traditional network news programs. The 75 share total that the three network powerhouses enjoyed at the dinner hour less than two decades before were nothing but painful memories. Cable news and its lure hurt as did changing life styles, which made settling in for the news “at the dinner hour” nothing more than a dim memory.

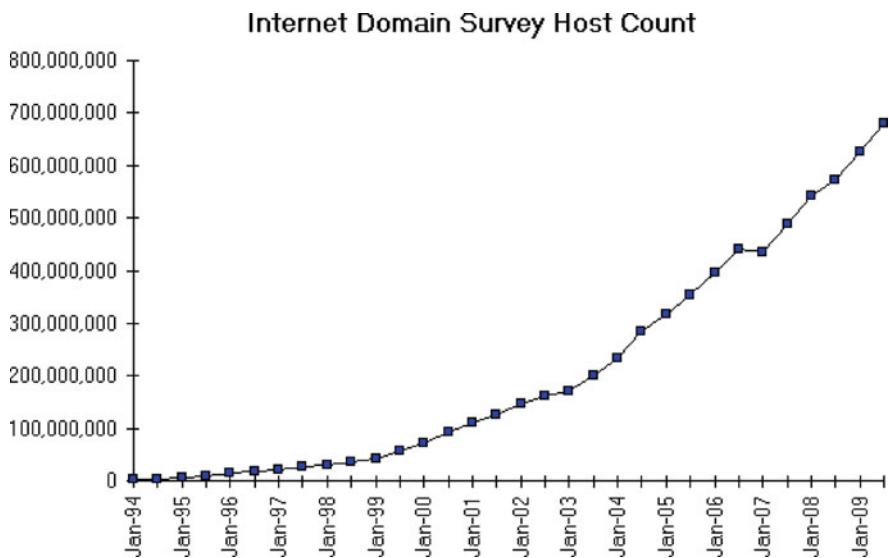
Just after 1996, the three-network share was well below 30% and worse for the outlook of the industry as a whole. You also found NBC Nightly News, which I was producing at the time, tied for first place with smaller audience than it had when it was third 4 years before and that steep decline did nothing but continue. In August of 2009, NBC Nightly News posted its 28th consecutive first place weekly finish, but the total number for the once “big three” was anything but encouraging for anyone looking for a future for this broadcast form.

Total Viewers: NBC: 7,770,000/ABC: 6,790,000/CBS: 5,560,000<sup>3</sup>

For that week in 2009, barely 20 million were watching news at the dinner hour which had come to mean in some parts of the country 5:30 in the central time zone and 4:30 in the mountain states and 6 pm in much of the rest of the country when so-called HUTs – homes using television – were low. Put another way, the three broadcasts together had lost fully a third of the audience they had enjoyed in 1980 despite a population increase of more than 75 million.

But there was worse ahead for broadcast news and print as well as 1996 was drawing to a close. As noted, Murdoch was about to launch Fox Cable News but even before that news on the Internet – true news and information on demand – was on the verge of its disruptive and explosive growth. CNN.com was the first and then with the joint venture created by NBC and Microsoft, MSNBC.com entered the field in early 1996, followed almost immediately by ABCNews.com and finally the Fox News Web site. Internet users were not yet great in number; computers back in that day were slow and clunky to be kind; and web speeds of 14.4 kbs were the norm. Pages downloaded slowly; pictures even more slowly; and streaming video was still nothing more than a hopeful gleam in the minds of news web site designers.

Look at how slowly it grew from a bare beginning just three years after what is considered the nominal invention of the Internet. From just over 50 million Internet domains in mid-1994 to over 450 million as 2006 was drawing to a close – almost a half billion new places for those interested in news and information and knowledge to seek out instead of traditional sources (Fig. 5.1)<sup>4</sup>.



**Fig. 5.1** Internet growth 1994–2009. How the baby has grown.  
 Source: Internet Systems Consortium, <https://www.isc.org/solutions/survey>

And the worldwide growth of Internet users has skyrocketed the same way as computer speeds and speed of the Internet grew almost boundlessly. The number of Internet users increased almost 80-fold. From under 1% of global population to almost 16% by mid-2006, an increase from 16 million users to over a billion in under a decade and that geometric growth continues as big sweeps of the so-called third world begin to be wired for broadband connectivity (Table 5.4).<sup>5</sup>

**Table 5.4** Internet growth users: 1995–1996

How the baby has grown . . . and grown		
Year	Number of users (million)	World population (%)
Dec-95	16	0.40
Dec-96	36	0.90
Dec-98	147	3.60
Dec-99	248	4.10
Dec-00	451	7.40
Dec-03	719	11.10
Dec-04	817	12.70
Dec-05	1,018	15.70
Jun-06	1,043	16.00

Source: World Wide Web Consortium, [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org)  
 Copyright © World Wide Web Consortium (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics, Keio University). All Rights Reserved. <http://www.w3.org/Consortium/Legal/2002/copyright-documents-20021231>

## The Internet Earthquake

In a way, the invention of the Internet in 1991 was much like an undersea earthquake which set in motion unseen forces that ultimately created a tsunami of change that would wash over traditional news sources. It would accelerate the decline of newspaper consumption started by broadcast news and combined with the growth of cable news would begin to drive a stake into the heart of over the air broadcast news on the major networks. It was the beginning of a cosmic transition in the way we get our news, information and knowledge.

True, news on the cable networks was always on removing the need to wait for “scheduled news,” but the Internet now made news ubiquitously and instantly available, first to those tied to wired computers in their homes and workplaces and then as bandwidth and transmission speeds grew, ubiquitously and instantly available to anyone, anywhere at any time on devices that slipped into purse and pocket as easily the transistor radio had four decades before. Instantaneous availability of breaking news on the Internet made newspapers outdated even as they were being shaped by their writers and editors and old and in many ways unnecessary by the time they were delivered. Circulation for many collapsed along with advertising as other web

sites ate into print’s cash cow, the classified ad. And what was true for print was similarly true for broadcast news. Its audiences knew the news long before the dinner hour and so the audience erosion continued and with it ad revenue for broadcast as well. And where those ad dollars went was to the Internet, first in a trickle and then as part of the tsunami wave set in motion at the start of the 1990s. Total US Internet advertising had reached \$21.2 billion in 2007, a 26% increase over 2006 and those were the ad dollars once spent elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

But if there was and is disruption that was and is endangering the old and accepted media models there was – and continues to be – huge opportunity for those with foresight enough to embrace rather than resist the change that was happening. So at this point in this chapter I am going to focus on a single instance – a case study, if you will – that I know well and that is, I believe, emblematic, of how when management is smart and daring “old media” can leverage the new to its advantage and both create and grow the communication and business models that work and succeed.

## **The MSNBC.com Case Study**

The case in point is MSNBC.com, arguably by 2009, the dominant news website in the United States a point it had reached in fewer than 15 years. Its birth in 1995–1996 was a product of recognition by Bob Wright, then Chairman of NBC, that significant change was at hand and that NBC News, if it was to continue to grow, needed to change as well. CNN was making it abundantly clear that cable was a place NBC needed to be, but would that be enough? Enter here Tom Brokaw, anchor and Managing Editor of NBC Nightly News which I was producing after a Brokaw invitation that lured me away from ABC News after almost two-and-a-half decades.

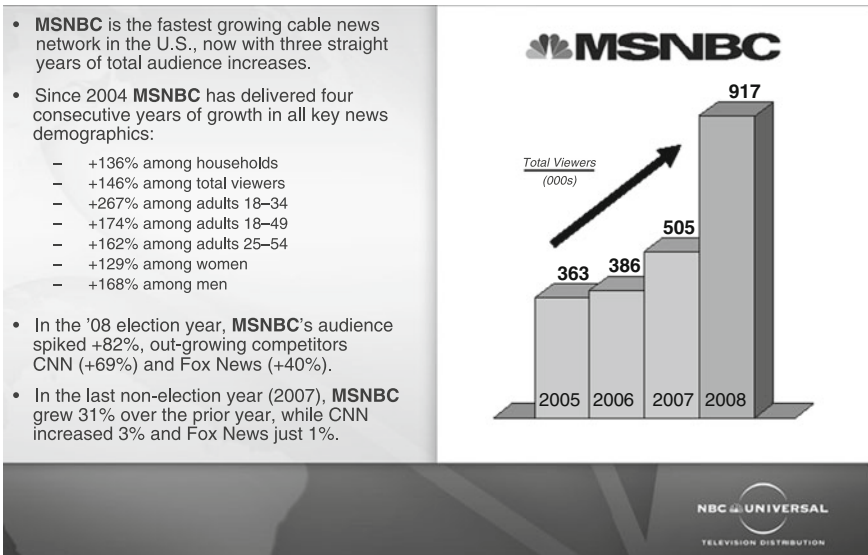
Brokaw was an early new media visionary and pushed for inclusion of news about that change in the program he anchored. He also had a close relationship with someone named Gates who owned a company called Microsoft. What Brokaw saw in the Internet in those early days was the potential of reporting news and informing an audience in multiple ways simultaneously. He was talking about multi-media before the phrase had really entered the lexicon. Brokaw talked about the concept with Bill Gates and he connected Gates and Wright which led to a seminal moment in the fall of 1995.

October 16 of that year was the date set for the Million Man March on Washington, a day of black awareness and mobilization. Brokaw was in Washington for that day’s special coverage and at one point disappeared for several hours. Where? He told me later he had been on a conference call linking NBC’s Wright, then NBC News President Andrew Lack and Microsoft’s Gates during which he spelled out a vision for the future where web sites and broadcast news would coordinate on events such as the one they were watching, providing deep and unifying coverage and content.

That is nothing special now but in 1995 it was exciting and captivatingly ahead of its time. It set in motion several months of intense negotiations between NBC and Microsoft that 2 days before Christmas<sup>7</sup> gave birth to joint ventures forming both MSNBC as the nation’s second cable news network and MSNBC.com. For the joint announcement, Wright, Lack and others from NBC were connected with Gates in Redmond, Washington and Brokaw at the US Air Force Base in Frankfurt, Germany where he was attempting to get into Bosnia to cover events there. Seminal it was and all the players sketched out a vision for the powerful unifying force of Microsoft’s technology and the NBC News reach both as a traditional over the air broadcaster and now as a cable news player. It was perfect synergy and a model many in media are still trying to replicate today.

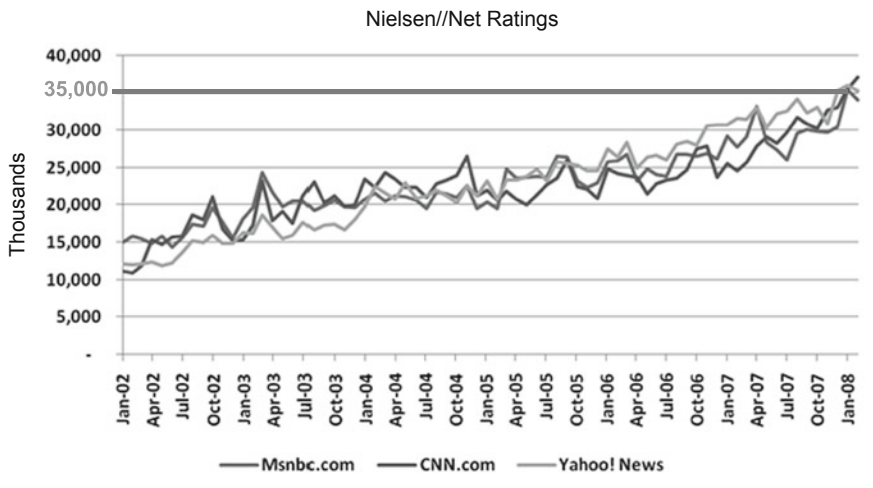
And it has paid off mightily for NBC News because even as its reach and audience diminished as we have seen, its reach and audience has grown greatly on its two new platforms. MSNBC-tv has steadily grown from also ran status, overwhelmed by CNN’s history and brand identify and Fox Cable News’ politically driven juggernaut to the point of being a viable and dangerous competitor for both (Fig. 5.2).<sup>8</sup>

As for the dot com piece, it too has become a juggernaut. It has been number one news web site in unique users for a string of months beginning in 2008 and continuing to this writing in late summer 2009 and by every metric, it has done nothing but grow. The chart below tracks Unique User<sup>9</sup> growth from the beginning until 2008 (Fig. 5.3).<sup>10</sup>



**Fig. 5.2** MSNBC is #1 in cable news audience growth.  
 Source: Nielsen NHI, calendar years as dated, primetime M-Su 8-11 P.M. average viewer impressions. Includes all programming. Demographic increases based on 2008 vs. 2004 averages. NBCU research. Reprinted with permission from NBCU Research

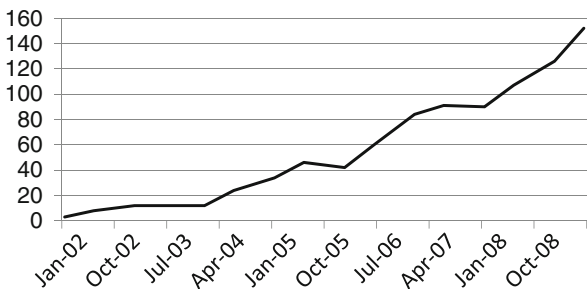




**Fig. 5.3** MSNBC.com on-demand video growth (in millions).  
 Source: MSNBC.com Research/Nielsen Net Ratings, NBCU Research. Reprinted with permission from NBCU Research

More stunning even than User growth has been the growth in what those users prize the most, video clips and streaming live streaming video which allow them to see what they’ve missed or ARE missing and in more cases than not see all that will be on the news that night even before they reach a television set. Aided by increased bandwidth and far better technology, MSNBC.com has seen geometric growth (Fig. 5.4).<sup>11</sup>

**Fig. 5.4** Streaming video growth.  
 Source: MSNBC, NBCU research. Reprinted with permission of NBCU research



And the truth of the matter is that the preparation of charts and graphs cannot stay current with the growth of use that continues to explode. Unique Users for MSNBC.com reached a monthly average of 60 million by late 2009. Video usage reached a monthly of average 160 million in the same time frame and page use was averaging in excess of 1.2 BILLION a month by then.

So, here you have a creation barely into its mid-teens providing more than a billion pages of information and tens of millions of video viewing opportunities to

what amounts to more than 6 broadcast rating points of users and doing it steadily month in and month out and growing as it goes. In addition to MSNBC.com, CNN.com and the news site of Yahoo.com have also been providing a billion or more pages of information a month and countless video streams to its viewers. So, is there any wonder why traditional wait-to-see-it broadcast news viewers are in decline and wait-to-read-it-until-its-published newspaper circulation has and continues to crater?

And what has seizing the future, in essence before it had truly become visible, meant for NBC News? Survival and a longer life for its brand is this author's guess. The two MSNBCs – tv and .com – are significant profit centers for NBC's News Division and without them it would be forced to make even deeper operational cuts as traditional revenues have fallen.

So there we have in the preceding dozen or so pages the past as guide to what the growth of new media has done to old media and one case study of how embracing the old and accommodating to it was the path to survival and future growth for at least one old and potentially endangered journalism and media giant. We could pause here to annotate failed efforts and opportunities missed – CNN.com and ABCNews.com attempts at pay-to-see streaming video and the lamented New York Times “Select” – but they are documented and can be studied at leisure, so best to move forward to the current “game changer” or what I called in 2006 “The Next New thing” and its meaning and opportunity. And it is called wireless.

## **Wireless, the Current “Game Changer”**

Earlier in this chapter one of the disruptive technology changes pointed to was the invention in late 1947 of a complex little sliver of silicon by Bell Laboratories now known as the transistor. This led to development of the transistor radio and then after fierce competition among a number of companies around the world, a small technology firm in Japan called Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo Ltd introduced its TR 63 “pocketable” radio in the United States in March of 1957.<sup>12</sup> Some months later it mass marketed the TR-610 which sold an astounding half million units at more than \$100 a unit. Trade name for the device was Sony which became the company name a year later and the little battery-powered portable radio it marketed changed the way we live. It made no longer necessary sitting at home to hear news, follow sports or experience entertainment. The world – all worlds – now traveled with you without benefit of wired connection and made forever different the way we consumed what we now know as media.

Pick a date when old media in the United States and ultimately the world began to die and I think it fair to offer up that date in 1957 when Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo offered for sale the first of its little Sonys. And why all this fairly ancient history? It is because what the so-called pocket radio did to media consumption and the way we lived just past the turn of the 20th century foreshadowed perfectly what another invention by Bell Labs in 1947<sup>13</sup> – the cell phone – would begin to do four decades later.

The cell phone and all the variants that followed – Blackberrys, iPhones and myriad other brands of hand held devices and PDAs – completed the job of unwiring the information seeking world. It became no longer necessary to be connected to any kind of device – tv, desk top, or laptop – to access news and information of any kind; see television news live or, in one form or another on demand; watch or review sporting events; and experience entertainment of almost any kind. The 4.1 billion of them in the hands of global citizenry by the end of 2008 made broadcast and print news content out of date and old even as it was being created. What the cell phone was doing was mirroring what television news had done to print a half century before and doing the same thing to broadcast news itself.

And how big the threat to what remained of news media as we knew it once and know it now? The numbers tell the story beginning with global growth.<sup>14</sup> By the end of 2007 in the developed world there were 97 mobile phones for every 100 people and just under half that number in the hands of those in the total world population (Fig. 5.5).

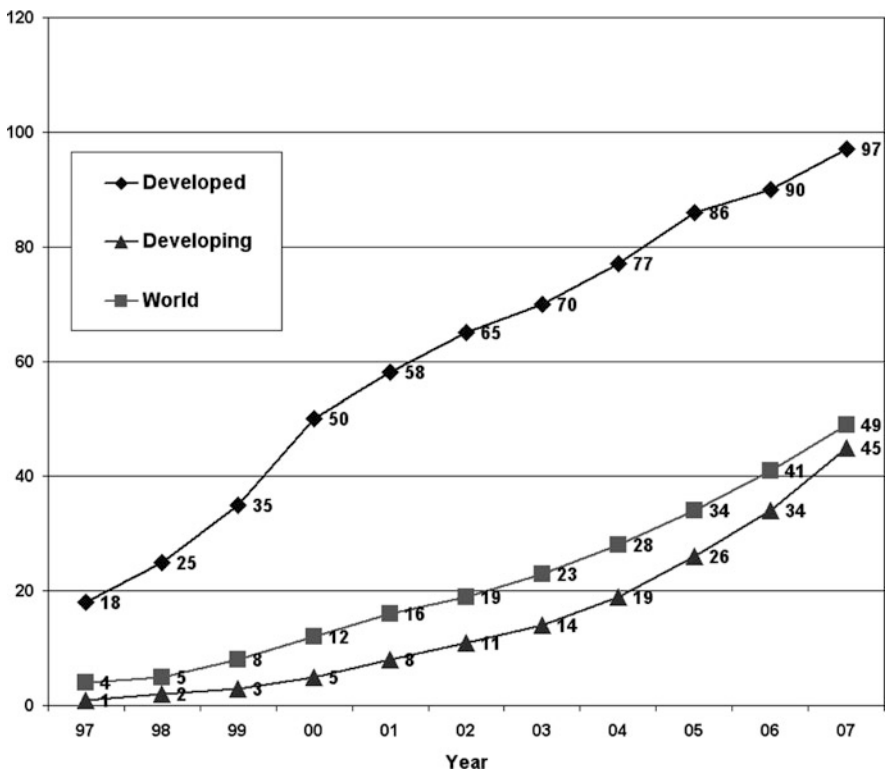


Fig. 5.5 Mobile phone subscribers per 100 inhabitants 1997–2007.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile\\_phone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_phone). See: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

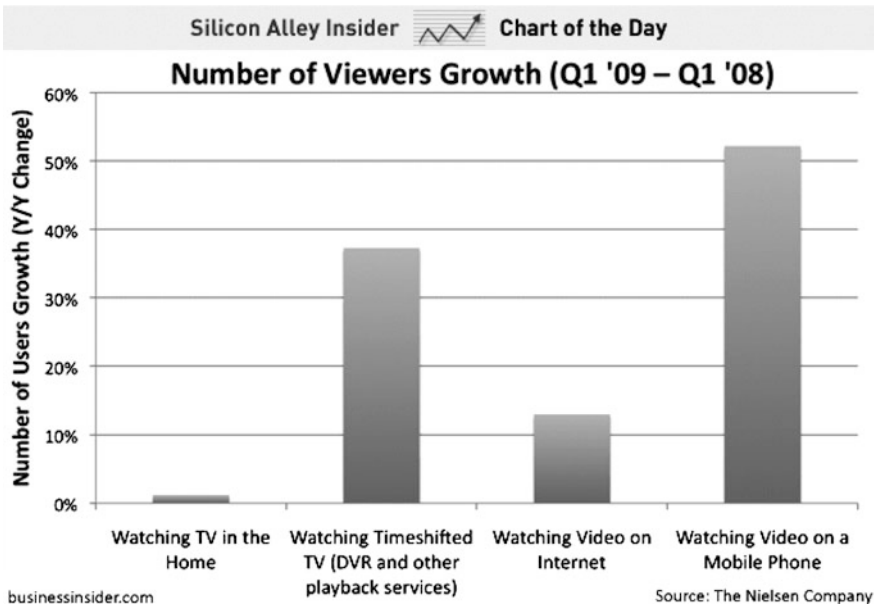
Within those numbers some equally startling numbers I have learned as I traveled. In India alone it was expected there would be more than 300 million video-capable hand held devices in use by the end 2009. In Vietnam, Motorola’s President told a west coast media conference in 2007, there were already 50 million mobile phones and wireless PDAs in use and that was then and this was the now of just a year later (Fig. 5.6).

And if this was the now of the first quarter of 2009, what of the future beyond that point?

- By end 2009, China alone will have 116 million video-capable cell phones.
- By 2010, global shipment of new cell phones will reach just over 1 billion; 87% of those will be video capable.<sup>15</sup>
- By 2010, 228 billion images (still and moving pictures) will be transmitted by cell phone. That is more than will be taken by all other devices combined.<sup>16</sup>

What of the future, indeed? To that end in search of an answer, something I wrote barely 35 months before this writing in mid-2009 that holds up and I would offer because it continues to hold up and speaks to the shaping of the future for the industries of news and information.

Put all of this together [the explosive growth of handheld broadband] and it adds up to the kind of omen a very smart man I once worked with would warn about when he perceived a coming trend or event that demanded attention: “There’s a cloud,” he would say, “out there



**Fig. 5.6** Number of viewers growth (Q1'09–Q1'08).  
 Source: Chart of the day <http://www.businessinsider.com/chart-of-the-day-screen-shift-us-dvr-and-mobile-video-growth-climbing-fastest-2009-5>

on the horizon that’s no bigger than a man’s hand right now.” Small now, he was suggesting, but watch out when it gets here. That is exactly what cell phone video represents—a coming cloud ready to burst over the communications landscape. What will the world be like when it does? Listen to several experts:

At the Barcelona conference where Virgin made its announcement, T-Mobile Chief Executive Rene Obermann predicted that “mobile will progressively become the primary personal access to the Internet.”

Sree Sreenivasan, former director of the New Media Department at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, currently the dean of student affairs and a regular and respected commentator on the Internet, and digital media, sees a world that will be made both “exciting and scary,” where there is access to “video of things we haven’t seen properly [or ever] before.” He cites the horrific Paris Concorde crash in 2000 as an example. “Instead of just a couple of grainy photos, we’ll get high-resolution video from . . . hundreds or millions . . . ready to whip out their [cell phone] cameras and point them at every perceived event.” It’s a world of instant reporting by a universe of citizen journalists who are empowered by and armed with nothing more than cell phones.

Adam Clayton Powell III, director of the University of Southern California’s Integrated Media Systems Center, projects a world in which cell phones begin providing the opportunity for truly merged communicating.

“It is clear,” he told me, “that people want video wherever they are. And in a few years, video IM [instant messaging] no doubt will coexist on cell phones with [programs like] the NBC Nightly News and people will be toggling back and forth between the broadcast and video IM to chat with friends about the news and the newscast.” In this merged world, he wonders “whether those users will still be called ‘viewers’ and the programs they watch will still be called ‘television.’”

How fast is this happening and how do we know it is happening?

Dr. Reuben Abraham, who has done work for the Columbia Institute for Tele information (CITI) is convinced that while doing research in India he found the answer. “I watched fishermen come in from a day on the sea,” he told me, “and they were watching videos and news on their cell phones. So when it is already happening in parts of the economic spectrum where you would least expect it, you know it is exploding.”<sup>17</sup>

And what does this mean for what is left of the traditional media – broadcast news, print news in all forms, and even cable news of today? It means constant and ongoing change and a growing need for incredible flexibility if the so-called digital pennies, in the words of Richard Ebersol, Chairman of NBC Sports, that are replacing analog dollars in all mediums are to grow in a way that keeps old brands alive in new forms. When he and I spoke briefly after the 2008 Beijing Olympics where Ebersol had added broadband access on the NBC Sports site we agreed that scale – multi-platform reach – was the likely only answer.

And how to achieve the scale and growth needed to keep the brands of journalism alive was a question I put to Dr. Max Nikias who is Provost of the University of Southern California and before that Dean of its Viterbi School of Engineering and before that as an Associate Dean created the Integrated Media Systems Center. And the prediction of this visionary in essence is think small.

“Journalism’s future lies in the creation of smaller news businesses,” he told me. “We’ll increasingly see journalists and entrepreneurs form their own companies

to provide news and news analysis. We've already seen a similar paradigm unfold in the music industry, and it's just a matter of time before it takes hold in the large broadcast media companies." And Nikias is not talking about the profusion of so-called Citizen Journalist sites and business trials and has this pointed warning

In order to survive, particularly in the face of all the various disruptive technologies, traditional broadcast news must preserve journalism's core values: the relentless search for truth and a commitment to finding where truth lies.

## Notes

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6. [http://www.wikinvest.com/concept/Impact\\_of\\_Internet\\_Advertising](http://www.wikinvest.com/concept/Impact_of_Internet_Advertising).
7. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MSNBC>.
8. Nielsen NHI, calendar years as dated, primetime M-Su 8-11 pm average viewer impressions. Includes all programming. Demographic increases based on 2008 vs. 2004 averages.
9. business dictionary.com Individual visitor to a website who is counted as a single visitor irrespective of the number of times he or she revisits the site in a given measurement period.
10. MSNBC.com Research/Nielsen Net Ratings.
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