

US newspaper circulation figures herald more bad news

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A pedestrian walks by the San Francisco Chronicle building in February 2009 in San Francisco, California. The latest daily circulation figures for US newspapers provided more bad news on Monday for the embattled industry.

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Average daily [circulation](#) at 395 US newspapers fell 7.09 percent in the first quarter of the year, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), accelerating a slide which has led to cutbacks in newsrooms across the country.

Daily average circulation in the three months ending on March 31 declined to 34.4 million from 37.1 million a year ago.

The 7.09 percent fall was greater than the 4.64 percent drop posted in the April to September period of 2008 and the 3.6 percent drop in the October 2007 to March 2008 period, according to the ABC.

Sunday circulation of 557 newspapers also declined in the first quarter -- by 5.37 percent to 42.1 million from 44.5 million a year ago.

US newspapers have been grappling with a steep drop in [print advertising](#) revenue, steadily declining circulation and the migration of readers to free news online.

Of the top 25 newspapers in the United States, only The [Wall Street Journal](#) and Denver Post gained circulation during the period -- the Denver Post through its absorption of the subscribers of the now defunct Rocky Mountain Times.

The Wall Street Journal's daily circulation rose 0.61 percent during the quarter to 2.08 million compared with a year ago.

However another [Rupert Murdoch newspaper](#), the New York Post, reported the steepest decline in circulation among the top 25 US dailies, down 20.55 percent in the period to 558,140.

Other top 25 papers posting steep circulation drops included the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, down 19.91 percent to 261,828, the Newark Star-Ledger, down 16.82 percent to 287,082, the San Francisco Chronicle, down 15.72 percent to 312,118, and the New York Daily News, down 14.26 percent to 602,857.

USA Today retained its top spot despite losing 7.46 percent to 2.1 million.

The [New York Times](#) lost 3.55 percent to 1.04 million while the

Washington Post shed 1.16 percent to 665,383.

The Los Angeles Times, owned by the bankrupt Tribune Co., saw its circulation decline by 6.55 percent during the period to 723,181.

The Tribune flagship Chicago Tribune lost 7.47 percent to 501,202.

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