

Miami Herald drops reader contribution program

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The main entrance to the Miami Herald and El Nuevo Herald building is shown in 2006. Just two months after it was launched, The Miami Herald is ending a program asking online readers to make a contribution to support the newspaper.

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The Miami Herald, in a brief article over the weekend, said it was

discontinuing the "voluntary payment program" launched in December.

"After evaluating two months of response, we've decided to end the program," the newspaper quoted Elissa Vanaver, a company vice president and assistant to the publisher, as saying.

Vanaver declined to say how much money the effort had raised.

The Miami Herald on December 15 began running a link at the bottom of each story on the Web saying: "Support ongoing news coverage on MiamiHerald.com."

The link took readers to a page which asked them to "please consider a voluntary payment for the Web news that matters to you." Readers could contribute to the newspaper using a major credit card.

Faced with a steep decline in [print advertising](#) revenue, falling circulation and free news on the Internet, US newspapers have been looking at ways to boost revenue online.

The New York Times has announced plans to begin charging readers next year for full access to NYTimes.com.

The Wall Street Journal currently charges online readers and [News Corp.](#) chairman [Rupert Murdoch](#) has announced plans to erect pay walls around all of his newspaper empire.

Many newspapers have been hesitant about making such a move, however, fearing it would drive readers to free sites and cut into their online [advertising revenue](#).

Vanaver told the Miami Herald that the newspaper did not currently have any plans to begin charging readers of miamiherald.com.

The Miami Herald, which is owned by US newspaper publisher McClatchy Co., cut some 200 jobs last year.

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