

News execs pessimistic, but don't want handouts

April 12 2010, By DAVID BAUDER , AP Television Writer

(AP) -- Although news executives know their industry is in trouble, most are unwilling to turn to the government or interest groups for help.

Three quarters of editors and [news](#) directors polled say they have "serious reservations" about government funding of journalism, and 78 percent say the same thing about interest groups, primarily for fear that independence can be compromised, according to a study by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism.

Pew surveyed members of the American Society of News Editors and [Radio Television Digital News Association](#) and found that less than half of them believed their organizations would be solvent in 10 years without the discovery of a significant new revenue stream.

"One thing they say is that we've got to figure this out for ourselves," said Tom Rosenstiel, Pew's director. "We can't wait for Big Brother to help us."

Fifteen percent of the news executives said they believed setting up "pay walls" so much of their content can no longer be viewed for free would be bringing in significant revenue over the next three years. There was even less confidence in the idea of surcharges placed on monthly Internet bills as a way of [raising money](#).

Nearly two-thirds of the executives say that the Internet is changing journalism by loosening standards.

By a nearly 2-to-1 ratio, broadcast executives are pessimistic about their industry's future. It's about an even split among newspaper editors.

Rosenstiel suggested the disparity may be because newspaper executives have been dealing with the financial problems for a longer time than the broadcasters, and many are being creative in trying to fight back.

Pew's nonrandom survey, taken in December and January, had 353 participants.

"The feeling isn't defeatist," he said. "The feeling is the defeatist ones have left. Those of us who remain are going to fight."

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