

News Corp. abandons digital newsstand project: WSJ

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The News Corporation building is shown in New York City. News Corp. has dropped a digital newsstand project that was part of an ambitious plan by the Rupert Murdoch-owned company to help publishers charge for content online, The Wall Street Journal reported Friday.

News Corp. has dropped a digital newsstand project that was part of an ambitious plan by the Rupert Murdoch-owned company to help publishers charge for content online, The Wall Street Journal reported Friday.

"Project Alesia" was intended to create a single online destination for a variety of publishers to sell news to users of Apple's iPad and other tablet computers, the newspaper said.

Citing a "person familiar with the matter," the News Corp.-owned

Journal said the initiative had failed to attract a "critical mass" of publishers willing to participate.

The decision to abandon "Project Alesia" was first reported by British publication Brand Republic, which said it was dropped "just weeks away from launch."

According to Brand Republic, Alesia was intended to unite content from News Corps.'s stable of newspapers with those of other publishers.

The Journal said more than 100 people had been working on the project in Britain and News Corp. had invested around 31.5 million dollars in the venture.

It said a number of News Corp. executives working on the project in New York would be reassigned.

News Corp.'s Murdoch is a leading advocate of charging readers for online access to news.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) currently charges for full online access and The Times and Sunday Times, other News Corp. titles, recently became the first newspapers in Britain to begin charging readers on the Web.

Murdoch has also been a big booster of the [iPad](#), saying recently that it could be a "game-changer" for newspapers suffering from a fall in [print advertising](#) revenue, declining circulation and free news on the Internet.

In June, News Corp. bought Skiff, an [electronic reading](#) platform developed by US publisher Hearst Corp.

[News Corp.](#) is also an investor in Journalism Online, a company launched by three US media executives last year which seeks to help

news organizations make money on the Web.

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