

NY Times net profit declines in fourth quarter

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The Times Co., which owns The Boston Globe, International Herald Tribune and About.com in addition to the flagship New York Times, said [net profit](#) fell 12 percent in the quarter to \$58.9 million compared to a year ago.

Revenue declined 2.8 percent in the quarter to \$643 million.

The Times Co. said it posted a net loss of \$39.7 million for the full year compared to a net profit of \$108 million the previous year, mostly because of a \$161 million write-down in the value of its regional newspapers.

The Times Co. has since agreed to sell 16 regional newspapers for \$143 million but the proceeds from the sale did not figure in the fourth-quarter results.

Earnings per share were 39 cents in the fourth quarter compared to 44 cents in the same quarter of 2010, slightly below the 42 cents per share forecast by [Wall Street analysts](#).

The Times Co. said it ended 2011 with 390,000 digital subscribers to The New York Times and International Herald Tribune, up from 324,000 at the end of the third quarter, and 16,000 [digital subscribers](#) for the Boston Globe.

The Times began charging in March for full access to NYTimes.com and it launched a subscription-only website for the [Boston Globe](#) in October.

Like other US newspapers, The New York Times has been struggling with declining print advertising revenue, falling circulation and the migration of readers to free news online.

"In 2011 we made significant strides in our strategy to transform and rebalance our company," Times Co. chairman and chief executive Arthur Sulzberger said in a statement.

"Our fourth-quarter results demonstrate the continued focus on building The Times's [digital subscription](#) base and developing a new robust consumer [revenue stream](#), while maintaining its significant [digital](#)

[advertising](#) business."

Sulzberger announced that the Times Co. has reached an agreement to sell another part of its stake in the Fenway Sports Group, which includes the Boston Red Sox baseball team and their iconic stadium, Fenway Park, for \$30 million.

Print advertising revenue fell 7.8 percent in the quarter and digital [advertising revenue](#) was down 4.9 percent, mostly because of a slide in ad revenue at About.com.

About Group revenue decreased 25.9 percent to \$26.1 million.

"The About Group's fourth-quarter performance continued to reflect the competitive and cyclical challenges that it faced through much of 2011," Sulzberger said. "The Group has made progress in its efforts to grow its content and traffic and to roll out its new display advertising sales plan."

Times Co. shares were down 2.15 percent at \$7.51 in early trading on Wall Street.

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