

Going digital hurting newspapers: industry spokesman

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A local newspaper is seen in a diner on July 13, 2013 in Lac-Megantic, Quebec, Canada

Going digital is what's hurting Canadian newspapers, not a lack of revenues or readers, which are both up, a publishing industry spokesman said Tuesday.

"Newspapers don't have an audience problem," John Hinds, president and chief executive of industry association Newspapers Canada, told the Vancouver Sun.

"There's a big fallacy out there. We have a revenue problem as we transition to cross-platform materials—how do we pay for those? Our audiences are bigger than ever and actually growing."

The comments come after Glacier Media this week announced the closure of the Kamloops Daily News after 80 years, citing insufficient cost-cutting.

Hinds noted that advertising revenues dipped along with the economy, but have rebounded.

According to NADbank, which measures

circulation, half of Canadians read a printed newspaper every day.

And three-quarters read a printed newspaper at least once a week.

These figures remained steady while online news readership has grown in recent years.

Yet last year, four Canadian dailies switched to weekly publication and the free daily 24 Hours stopped publishing in Ottawa, Edmonton and Calgary.

Canada's largest newspaper publisher, Sun Media, also eliminated more than 1,000 jobs at its newspapers nationwide as part of a restructuring to meet "unprecedented changes in the print media industry driven largely by the digital revolution," it said.

A union representing Sun workers accused the company of diverting healthy newspaper profits to its "laughably bad" start-up television network Sun TV.

"All the [newspaper](#) companies are struggling because the world has changed, consumers have changed, technology has changed, but you have readers," NADbank's president Anne Crassweller told the Sun.

"Isn't that the bottom line? The audience is there."

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