Get a newspaper subscription: Support democracy, journalism and be interesting!



By Laura Pedulli

There was a great Washington Post slogan from about 15 years ago: “If you don’t get it, you don’t get it.”

We need another slogan—but scaled nationally. Since that came out, subscriptions are falling, newspapers are shuttering, and too many of us take for granted the information and data we get from newspapers, and how this informs our everyday lives.

This is my call to the American Newspaper Association: Hire the best damn marketing gurus in the country and launch a campaign for people to actually invest in newspapers.

Tree-hugger? Get it digitally. More interested in international news and national trends? Invest in a Sunday

subscription of the New York Times. Love investigative journalism? Put your money into institutions that support it.

I'm sick and tired of hearing that the Internet killed journalism. The internet is a vehicle – still someone needs to go out and report and write the news. Haven't you noticed that news wires just basically repeat the same stories over and over again? There may be more of it out there, but less original news content.

And yes, there is the chorus of everyday people writing blogs, and a proliferation of hyper local online communities. These are great and serve as a wonderful platform for community engagement. But will these online hubs bring about the Watergate scandal, whistleblower Edward Snowden's National Security Agency revelations, or otherwise bring to light hidden truths in an unbiased manner? No, in my humble opinion.

More and more rooms of our fourth estate are getting rented out by corporate interests. I'm fine with advertising, but at the end of the day, it should be owned by the public. I won't digress into a debate on the merits of public funding of media (But I do believe this is why NPR, PBS and BBC produce some fine journalism), but support journalism and then the news is truly for the people.

Journalism schools are withering away. A few years ago the University of Colorado, in my hometown of Boulder, shuttered its formal journalism program. But it's no surprise why.

Journalists can't find work so they end up migrating away to marketing and public relations. And even if you can find a job, expect to get paid in the low $30,000s, or $35,000 with a Masters degree. Some weekly newspapers pay their reporters a pathetic $26,000, so they are probably eligible for food stamps. Imagine all the talent we are losing, all the stories we aren't reading, and all the insights lost just because of

the inevitable brain drain. Newspapers need a budget, and that is where you come in. It costs $10 per month for an online subscription for many papers, is that really so much to ask for?

Information is power. So do the American thing and support a newspaper—digital, local, national, whatever. Democracy needs you to support the fourth estate. And like the Washington Post said in the 1990s, “If you don’t get it, you don’t get it.” And in the end, we all get what we pay for.