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Business & Economics

Breach of Faith: A Crisis of Coverage in the Age of Corporate Newspapering
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For most, sitting down with a cup of coffee and the newspaper is the only way to start the day. But while many have decried the capitalization of coffee, which has changed a twenty-five-cent cup of joe into a three-dollar double-shot mochaccino, a similar shift in the morning paper has perhaps gone largely unnoticed. As documented in this volume, all the news that's fit to print has become glossy news lite, often not much more than a well-packaged press release.

Breach of Faith is the second in a series; the first was titled Leaving Readers Behind: The Age of Corporate Newspapering. It all began when Gene Roberts, a former managing editor at the New York Times and executive editor at the Philadelphia Inquirer, concerned by the "corporatizing" of newspapers around the country, spearheaded a study of his own industry. From the work of more than two dozen experienced journalists and writers came the Project on the State of the American Newspaper, designed to answer the question: "Are American communities, in the very middle of the so-called information explosion, in danger of becoming less informed than ever?" Published in June of 2001, the project documented the blitz of buying, selling, and consolidating newspapers. Now, in this second volume, trends in reporting and coverage are explored: which topics are getting more inches in print, and which less, in an age where financial concerns often run roughshod over the editorial mission?

The eight chapters, each written by a different journalist, endeavor to answer this question by thoroughly covering every facet of the newspaper business. With such familiar names as Peter Arnett, Chip Brown, and Lewis M. Simons covering topics including "Goodbye, World," "Fear.com," and "Follow the Money," the results are thought-provoking. Although the corporate folks assert that they are only giving the readers what they want, the authors contend that most readers want coverage of world and government events along with their celebrity news and sports, not instead of them. What has fallen by the wayside in today's print, from the small-

town dailies to the big-city heavy hitters, are world news (ignored unless a local connection can be made), Washington, D.C. news (ditto), and state government news (double ditto). As would be expected, given the talents of the authors, each chapter delivers solid research and reporting and is written in a lively and informative manner.

Be warned: this book may cause readers to look differently at the morning newspaper. But since being better informed is surely one of the reasons to begin the day with the paper, start with Breach of Faith.

Vicki Gervickas