



LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

DEPARTMENT
INSTITUT FÜR KOMMUNIKATIONSWISSENSCHAFT UND MEDIENFORSCHUNG



It's time to talk metrics: Audiences, attention, and the persistent power of print

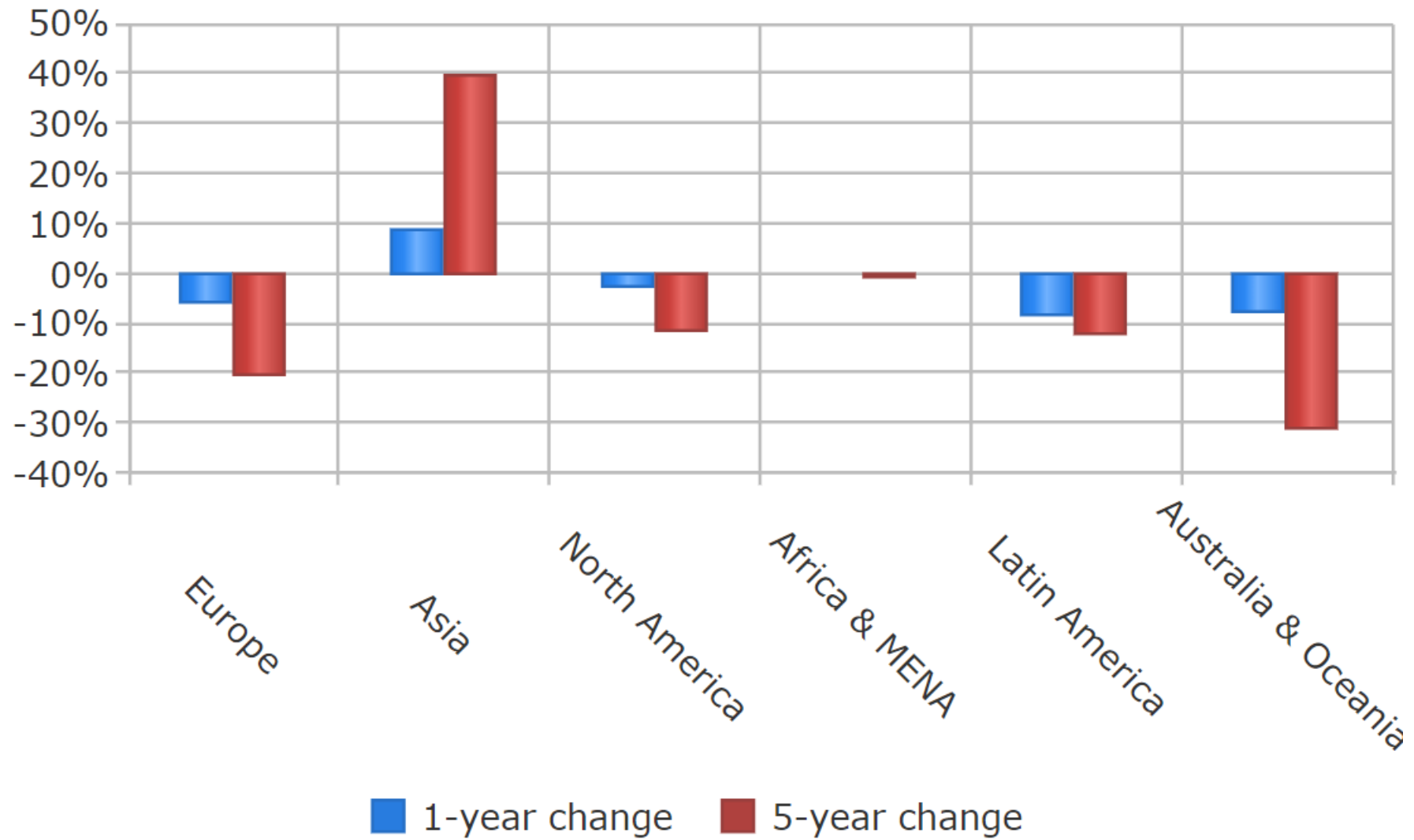
Prof. Neil Thurman

Ludwig Maximilians University Munich

neil.thurman@ifkw.lmu.de

[@neilthurman](https://twitter.com/neilthurman)

Daily print newspaper circulation change by region



Source: World Press Trends, 2016

Guardian and Observer to adopt 'digital-first' strategy

GMG chief executive says newspaper group aims for 'major transformation' as he announces £33m cash losses for last year

Dan Sabbagh

Thu 16 Jun 2011 16.53 BST



This article is 6 years old

15

▲ The Guardian and Observer aim to double digital revenues by 2015/16

The Guardian and Observer lost £33m in cash terms last year, the chief executive of [Guardian Media Group](#) has said, as he committed the newspaper group to a "digital-first" strategy in which digital revenues would double to nearly £100m by 2016.



REPORT

Shaping the Future of News Publishing

PRINT-ONLINE PERFORMANCE GAP

World Printers Forum Report: A US-only study raises debate



REALITY AND IRRATIONALITY

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US Metropolitan Newspapers Between Print and Digital

by H. Iris Chyi, Associate Professor, School of Journalism at the University of Texas, Austin, USA

Twenty years into US newspapers' experiment with digital, most are stuck between an unsuccessful experiment (for their online offerings) and a shrinking market (for their print product). Facing existential challenges, newspaper publishers have become more determined than ever, acting upon the assumption that print is dying so newspapers must transform themselves digitally to survive.

As a result, newspaper executives allot already dwindled resources to digital. Thousands of print journalists have lost their jobs, and the disinvestment results in more declines in circulation and advertising revenue, which serve as further evidence that the print format is dying. This suicide spiral may kill

ship, engagement, subscription and advertising revenue – all by a wide margin.

It is 2017. Newspaper executives can no longer afford to ignore the fact that their digital strategy is not working.

As a reality check, this report first presents research findings on US newspapers' digital struggles in terms of readership and business prospect, and by doing so, examines two prevalent-yet-unchecked assumptions about an all-digital future. The second part of the report addresses major pro-digital, anti-print arguments surfaced in a recent debate regarding what went wrong during the past two decades. The purpose is to expose some of the irrationalities that may have

technology for news delivery. The World Wide Web did not become publicly accessible until 1991, and the first web-based newspaper (the Palo Alto Weekly) went online in January 1994. By May 1995, as many as 150 US dailies offered online services – when less than 1% of the US population had web access (Carlson, 2003). The New York Times went online in January 1996, and by 1999, more than 2,600 US newspapers offered online services (Editor & Publisher Interactive, 1999). However, by 2003, the industry consensus was that no business model had been found (Carlson, 2003). Media scholars also wondered whether online media can survive without a viable model and whether maintaining digital media is of value when profitability is not achievable

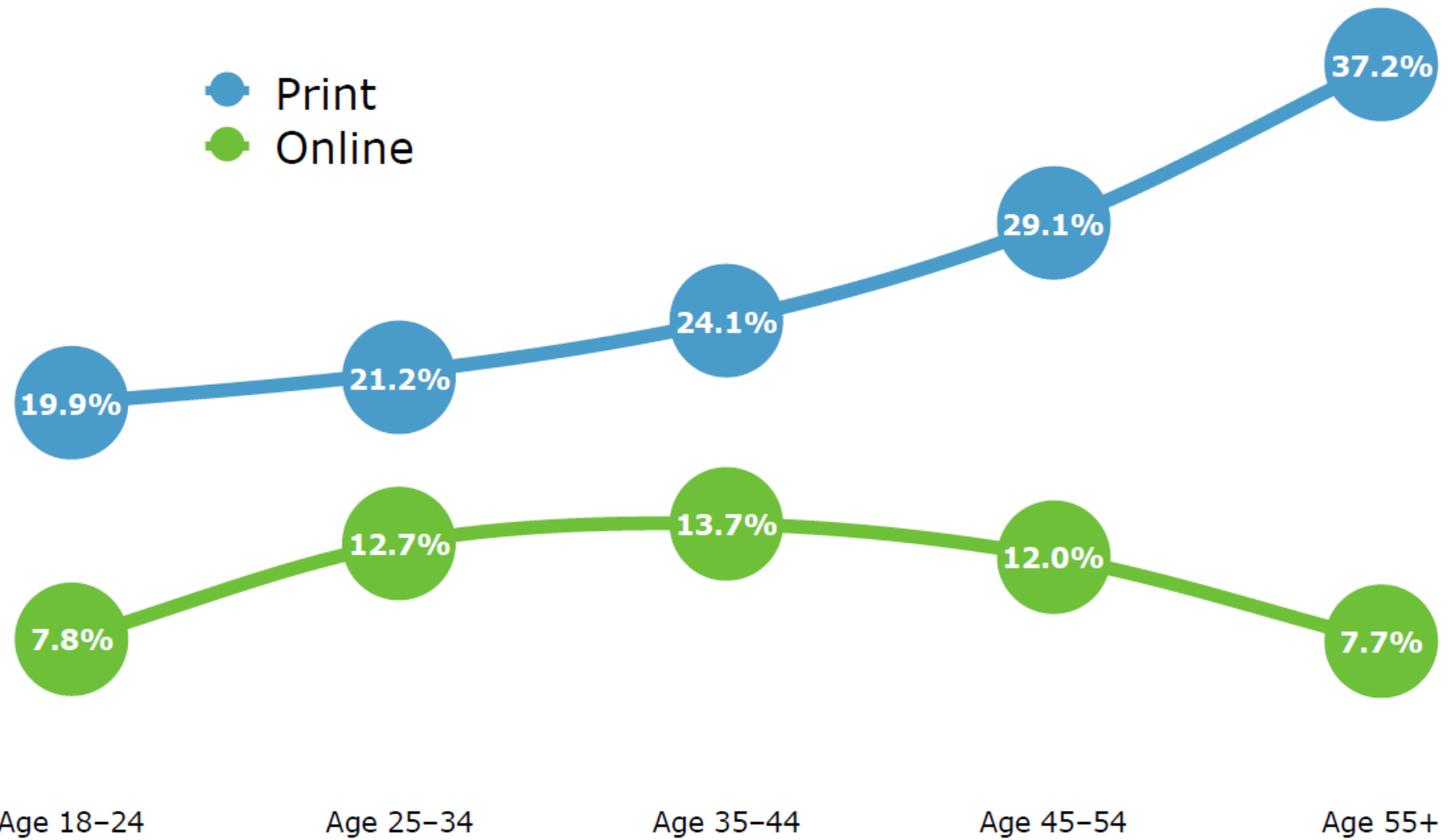


Fig. 2: In-market Print and Online Reach by Age, 2015¹²

Source: WAN-IFRA, *Print-online performance gap*

- Didn't include newspapers' mobile channels



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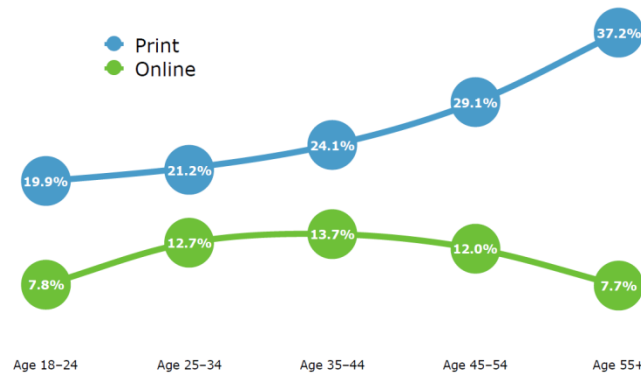


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As a result, newspaper executives all too readily divvied resources to digital. Thousands of print journalists have lost their jobs, and the disinvestment results in more declines in circulation and advertising revenue, which serve as further evidence that the print format is dying. This suicide spiral may kill print newspapers prematurely.

Observed among industry leaders is a collective pro-digital, anti-print mentality, so robust that even the Newspaper Association of America (NAA) dropped "paper" from its name, which is interpreted as "a move that signals the changing fortunes of print in a media ecosystem dominated by digital news" (Mullin, 2016a, para. 1). Ironically, the (supposedly dying) print edition still outperforms the (supposedly dominating) digital edition by almost every standard – reader-

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The story could have ended there. But new technological advances one after another – the emergence of post-PC devices (e.g., smartphones, e-readers, and tablets), the rise of web 2.0 technology (e.g., blogs), and the astounding growth of social networks – all reinforced newspaper executives' belief in a digital future. Every technology looks like the next thing, where

- Didn't include newspapers' mobile channels
- Asked people to remember their digital consumption

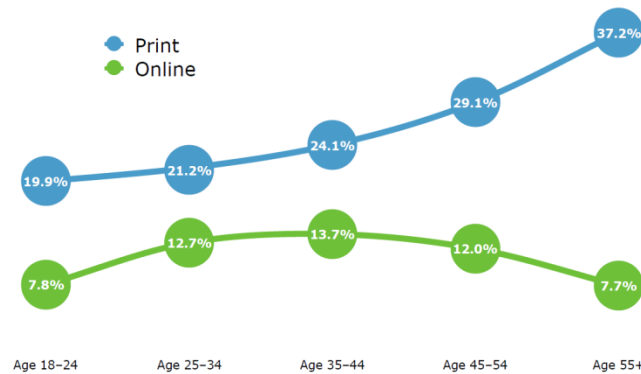


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- Digital not doing so badly?

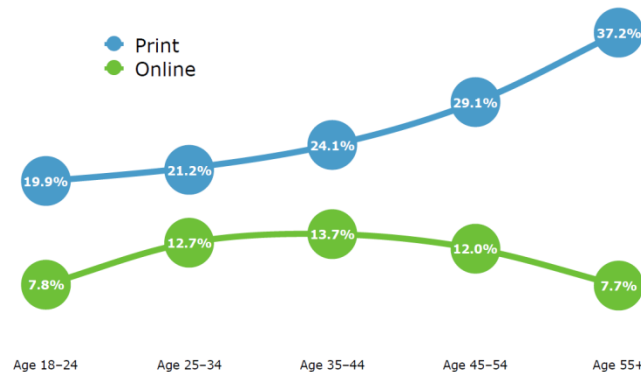


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- Takes mobile into account
- Measures digital consumption passively



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Shows **print's performance** against digital is **even better** than Iris Chyi suggests!

What's the magic metric?



Süddeutsche Zeitung¹

**1.13 million
readers per issue**

SZ.de desktop³

SZ.de mobile³

**7.07 million
Unique Users/month**

**4.49 million
Unique Users/month**

**107.35 million
Pls per month**

**66.62 million
Pls per month**

**31.87 million
visits per month**

**21.31 million
visits per month**



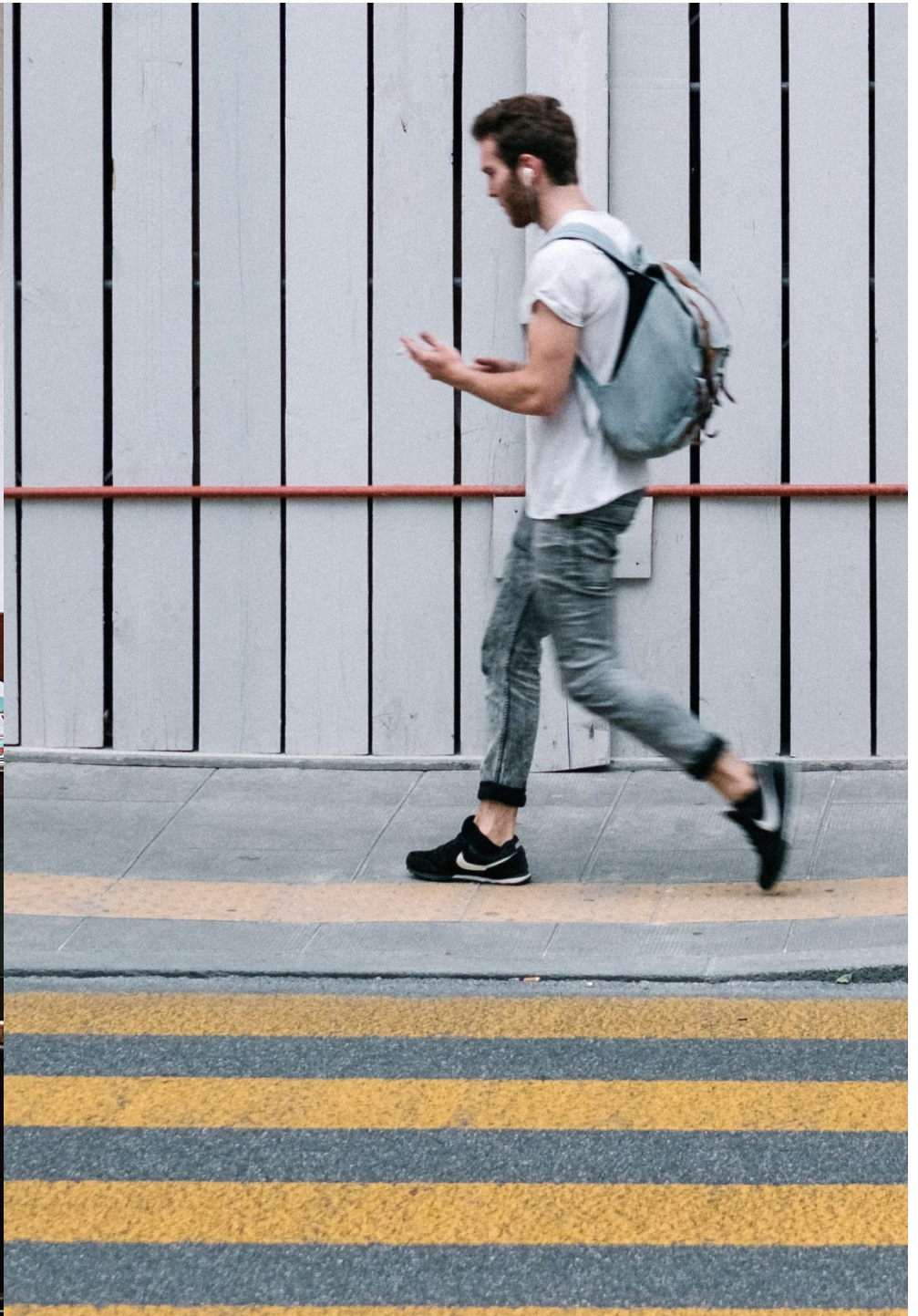


Print survey data
(e.g. from national
readership
surveys)

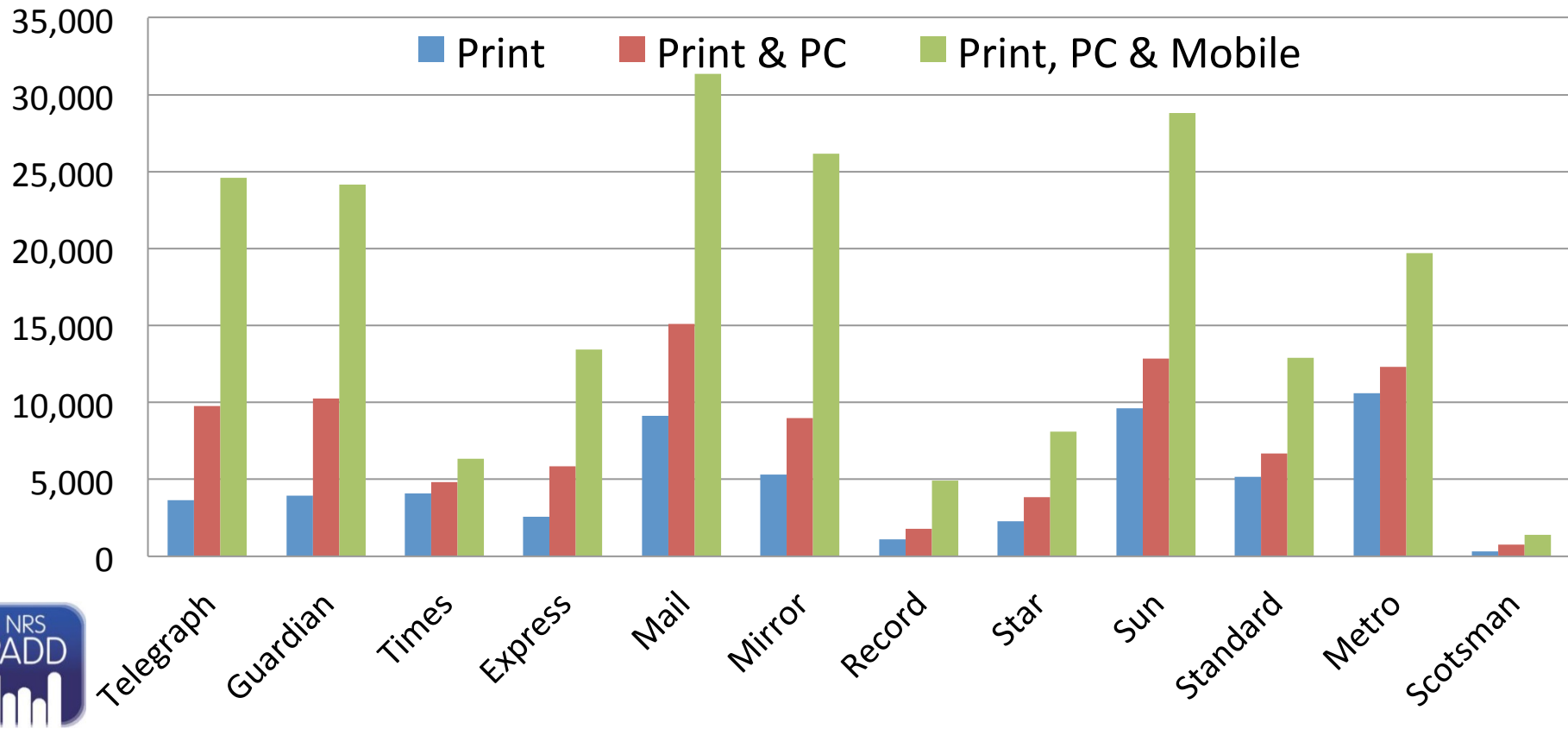
'Fusion'

Passive online
measurement
data (e.g. from
comScore)

**Net (de-duplicated)
readership** reported
over common time
periods



Net monthly British readership ('000s)

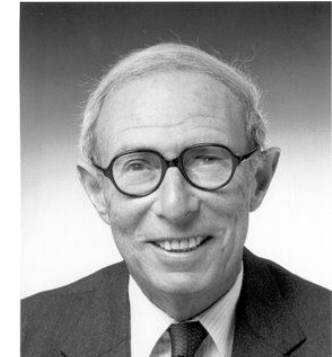


“The inclusion of the PC website and mobile data ... created impressive headlines as to the overall reach of publisher brands”

Katherine Page, NRS

(“Breaking and making: A new measurement service for the British published media”)

“the preoccupation with audience size has led to erroneous decisions in the management of media content”
- **Bogart (1966: 47)**





“the preoccupation with audience size has led to erroneous decisions in the management of media content”
- **Bogart (1966: 47)**



Source: Bogart, Leo (1966) “Is it time to discard the audience concept?”
Journal of Marketing 30.1.





Frequency

73% of print readers read it “almost always” (i.e. every day), with 13 percent reading them “quite often” (NRS 2017).

Online visitors visit an av. of three times a month

(comScore 2016).

Time spent: the magic metric?

- Time spent is the “biggest predictor of whether readers notice advertisements” (Petric et al., 2017).
- *Financial Times* believes “time-based metrics will benefit publishers” because they value “real reader engagement over clicks” (FT.com 2015).

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(no. of **print** issues per year ×
Average.Issue.Readership ×
av. reading time per reader per issue)

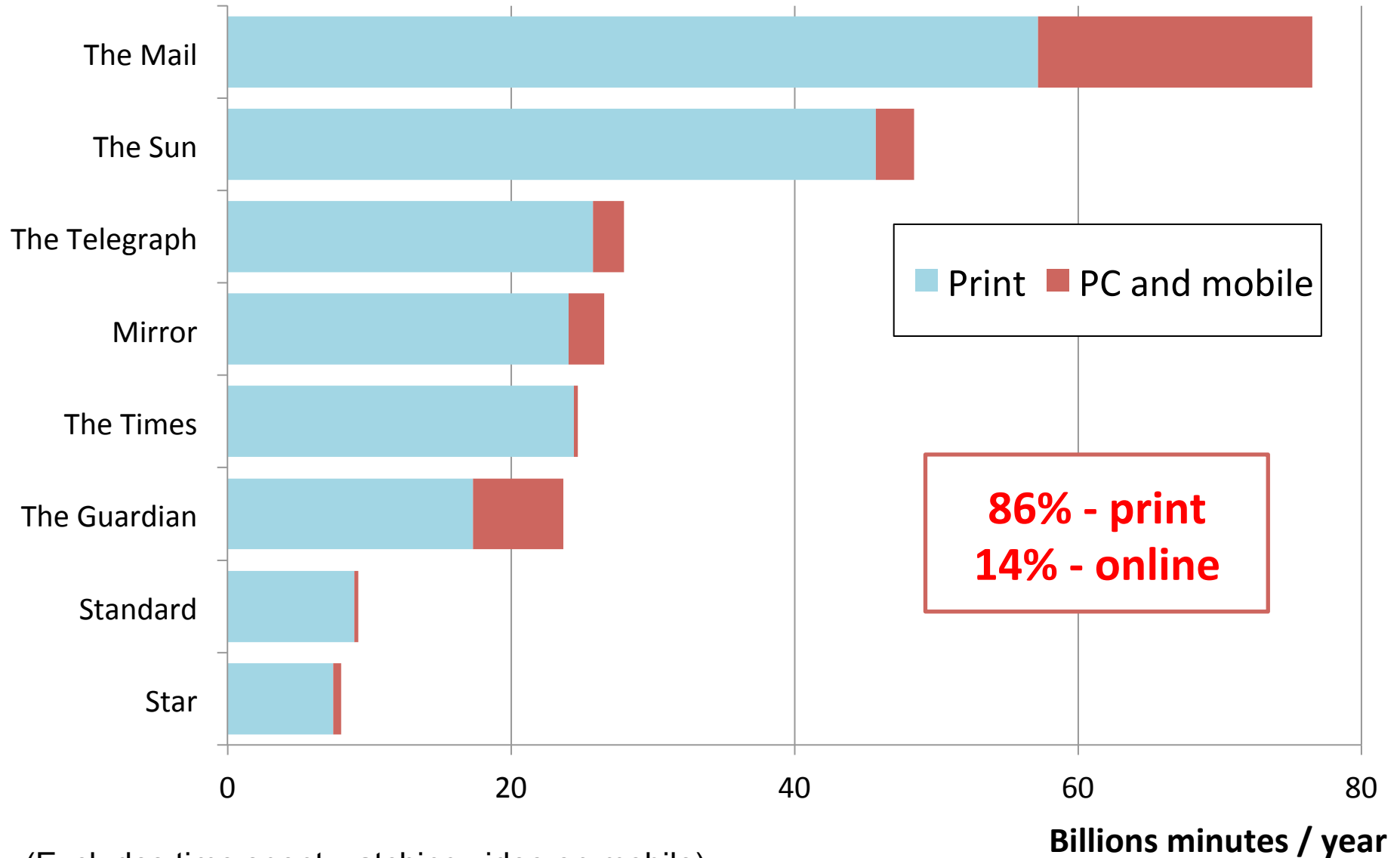
+

(annual **online** minutes)



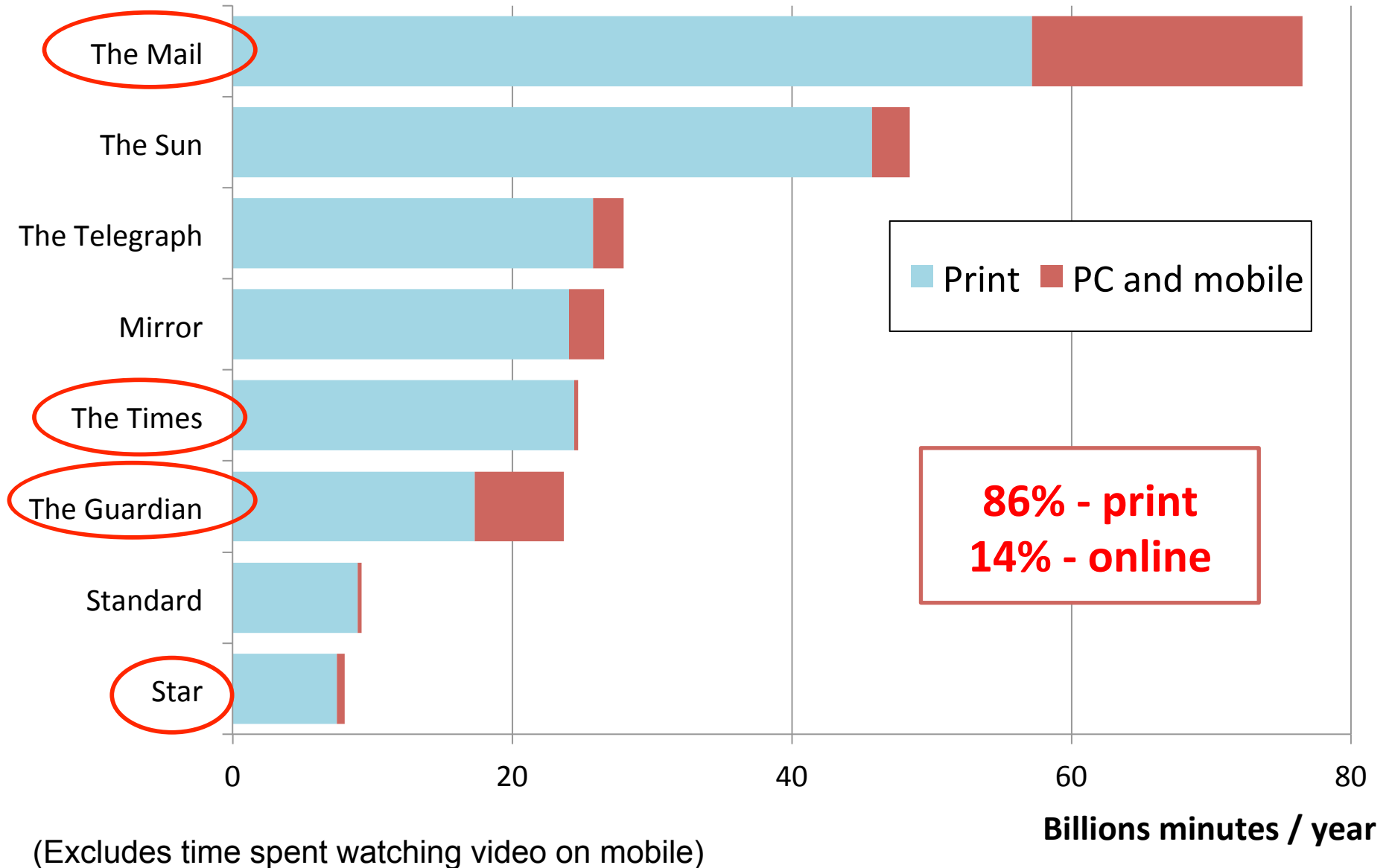
Total annual time spent with brand

Total minutes spent reading by the aggregated British print, PC, and mobile readerships (18+) of each of 8 UK national newspaper brands, 2016



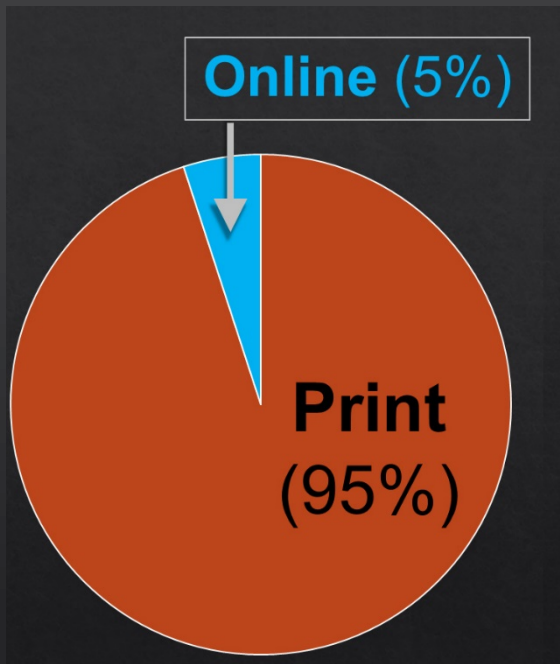
(Excludes time spent watching video on mobile)

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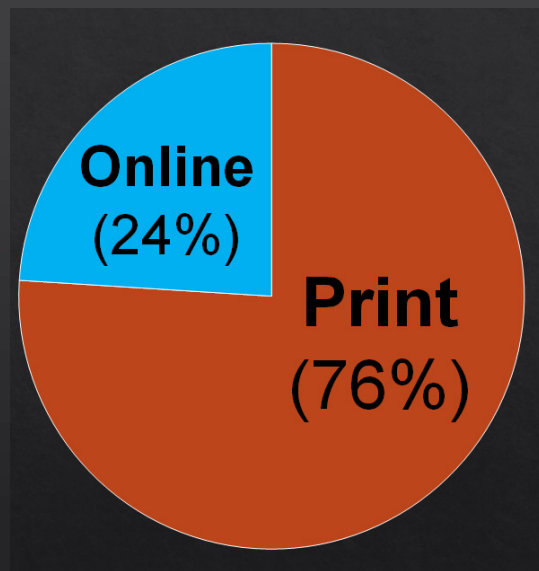


Time spent reading UK newspaper brands in 2016 by their British audiences aged:

55 & older



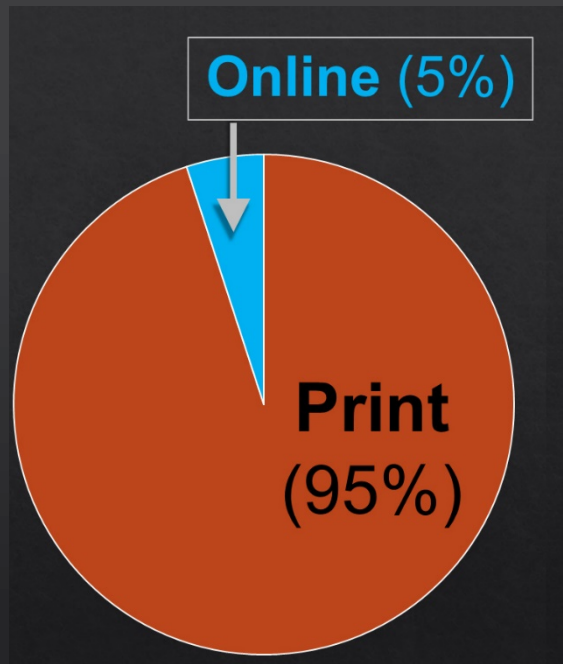
35-54



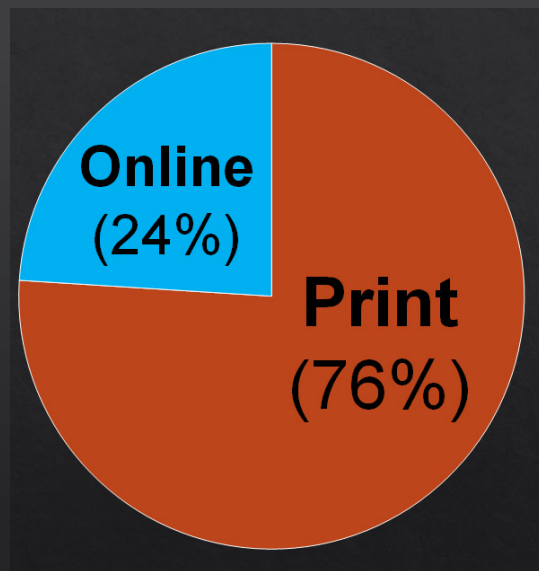
Newspaper brands in sample: The Mail, Mirror, Star, The Telegraph, The Guardian, The Sun, Standard, and The Times.
Sources: NRS and comScore.

Time spent reading UK newspaper brands in 2016 by their British audiences aged:

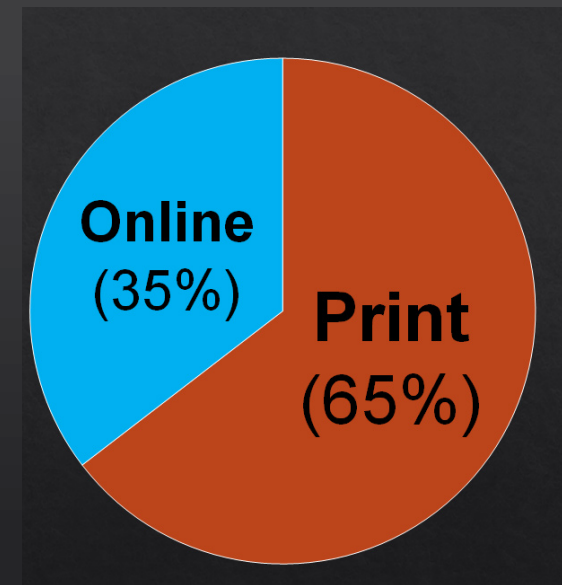
55 & older



35-54



18-34



Newspaper brands in sample: The Mail, Mirror, Star, The Telegraph, The Guardian, The Sun, Standard, and The Times.
Sources: NRS and comScore.

Daily Mail
 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2016 www.dailymail.co.uk DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 65p

An electrifying human drama and a seismic election creating shockwaves on both sides of the Atlantic ...

TRUMPQUAKE



UNRIVALED REPORTS AND ANALYSIS PAGES 2-23

From Tom Leonard in New York
A REVOLT by America's 'forgotten' white working class swept Donald Trump to the presidency yesterday. As one of the biggest election upsets in history, the Republican victory means the President-elect will have to deal with a much more hostile Congress than Clinton. While she has a much better chance of health because of Clinton, the extent of victory will have repercussions across the world. Clinton's victory will have repercussions across the world. Clinton's victory will have repercussions across the world.

1999/
2000

Daily Mail
 FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2009 NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 30p

Gold-digging wife who gambled £1m and lost

IS CLINTON GOING TO LET THE SERBS OFF THE HOOK?

Baby Beth had a new heart a month ago. Just look at her now



A FORMULA for a Kosovo peace deal hammered out yesterday raised fears that President Clinton is ready to

By JOHN DEANS
 Chief Political Correspondent

most powerful nations in Rome yesterday came as Nato chiefs finally admitted publicly that they had failed in their main military objective: preventing the Serbs' ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Albanians.

2016

Like 10,291 Friday, Sep 22nd 2017 11AM 18°C 2PM 21°C 5-Day Forecast

MailOnline Robert Hardman

Home | News | U.S. | Sport | TV&Showbiz | Australia | Femail | Health | Science | Money | Video | Travel | Fashion Finder

Will QUILTY sink the EU? Tomorrow, a 'No' vote in a referendum in Italy could lead it out of Europe - and spark an economic crisis, writes **ROBERT HARDMAN**

By ROBERT HARDMAN FOR THE DAILY MAIL
 PUBLISHED: 00:42 BST, 3 December 2016 | UPDATED: 08:16 BST, 3 December 2016

9.8k shares

Leading his marchers down Rome's Via Ostiense a few days ago, the rising star of Italian politics took a tumble. "F***** pothole! Who did this?" roared Beppe Grillo, the foul-mouthed anarchic comedian who passes for the leader of the opposition in Italy these days.

On this occasion, the joke was on Grillo. As his opponents were quick to point out, Roman potholes — and I have seen some real shockers this week — are actually his responsibility.

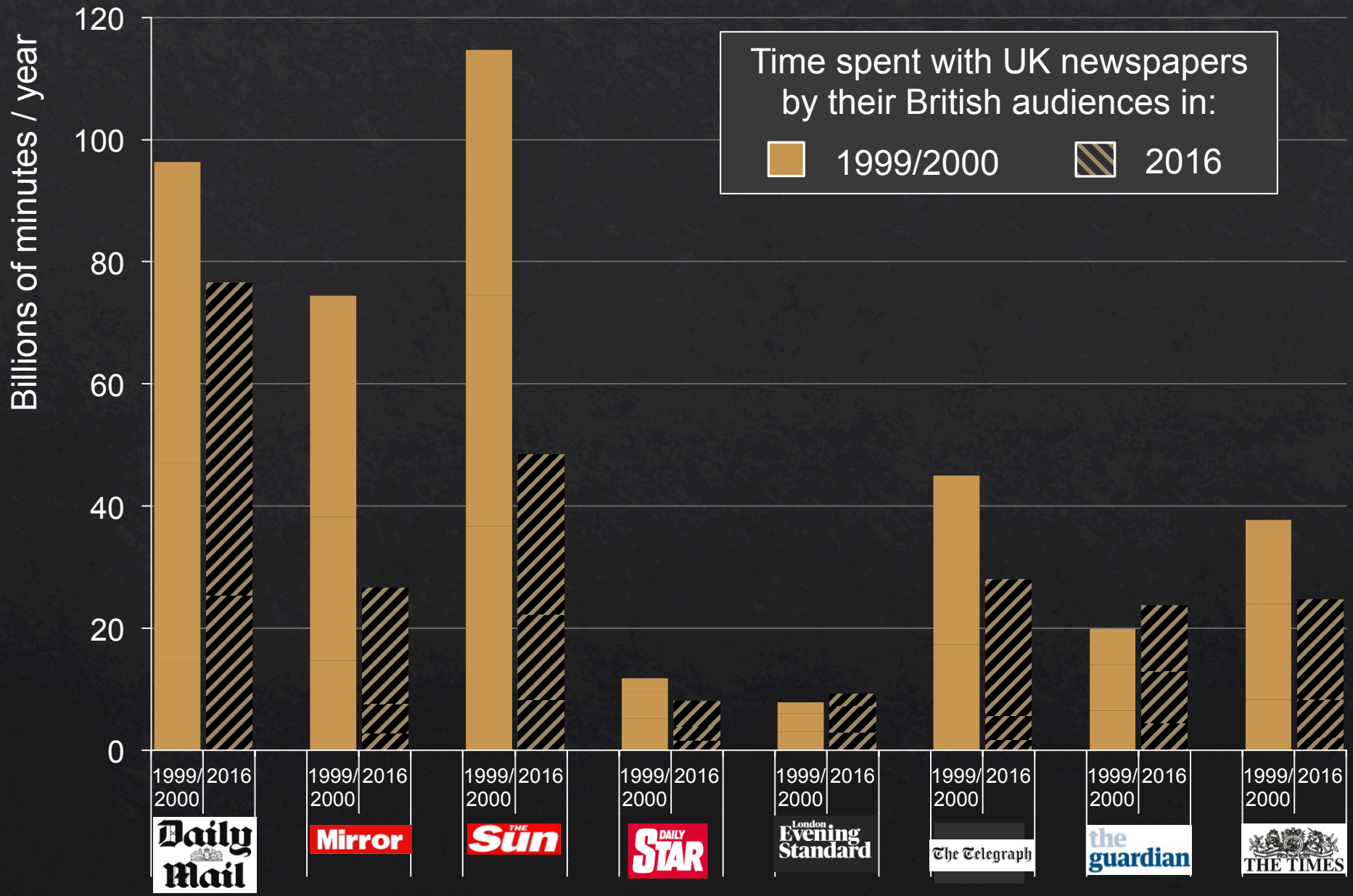
It is now six months since his Eurosceptic, anti-capitalist, semi-bankers party, the Five Star Movement, swept the board in mayoral elections across Italy. And Rome today is run by Five Star's own mayor, Virginia Raggi, 37, a leading light in this madcap political movement whose slogan is "F*** Off" — yes, really — and who still can't fix a pothole.

PETER HITCHENS' BLOG

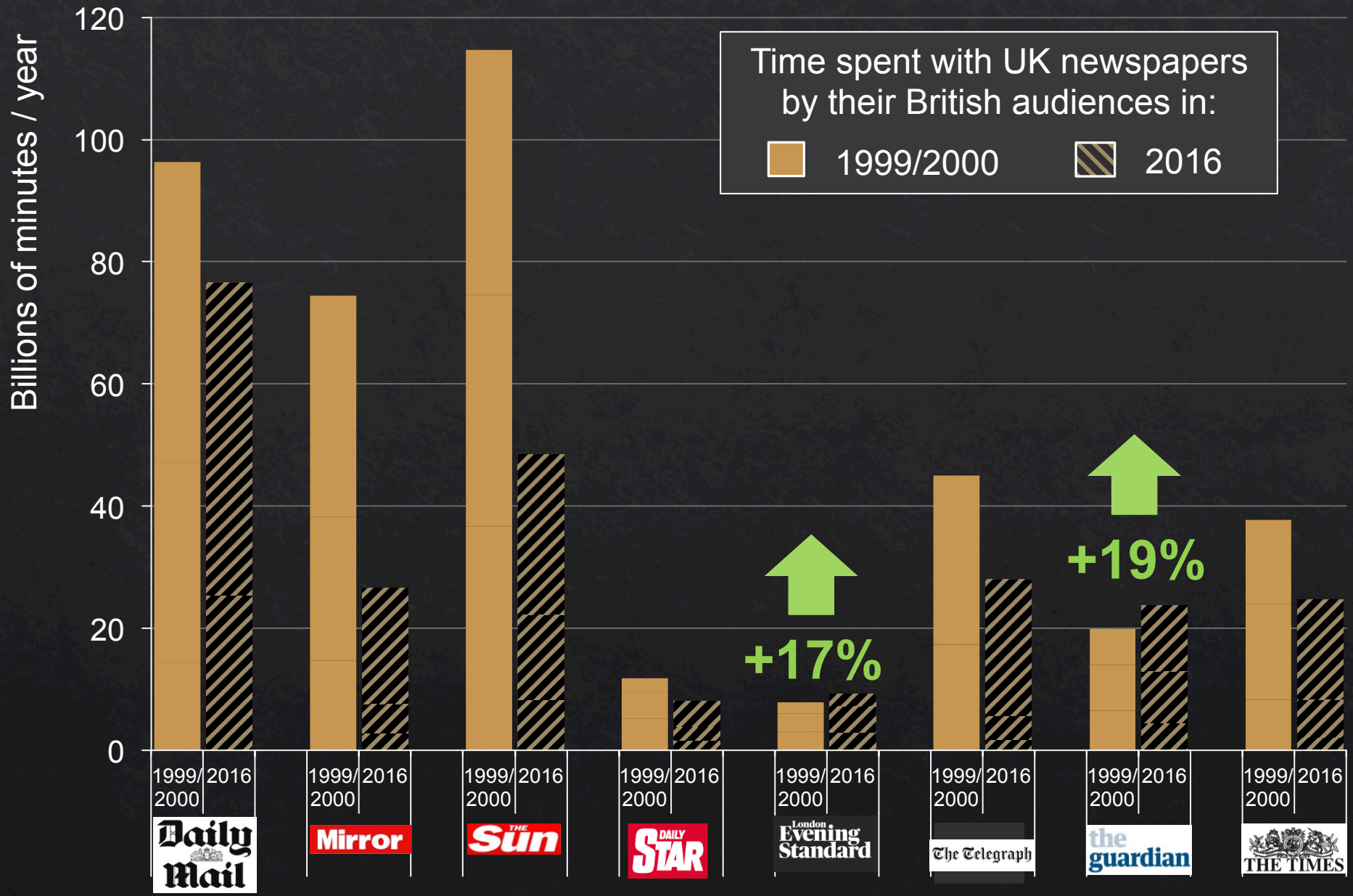
Ephraim Hardcastle
 Britain's most acerbic diarist

DON'T MISS

- PICTURE EXCLUSIVE: Making it official! Scott Disick, 34 and bikini-clad Sofia Richie, 19, share a poolside kiss in Miami as they FINALLY confirm romance
- Yeezus he's cool! Kim Kardashian's one-year-old son Saint rocks brand new cowroves for ice skating date with his curvy mom and big sister North
- Chloe Green and 'Hot Felon' Jeremy Meeks hold hands for PDA

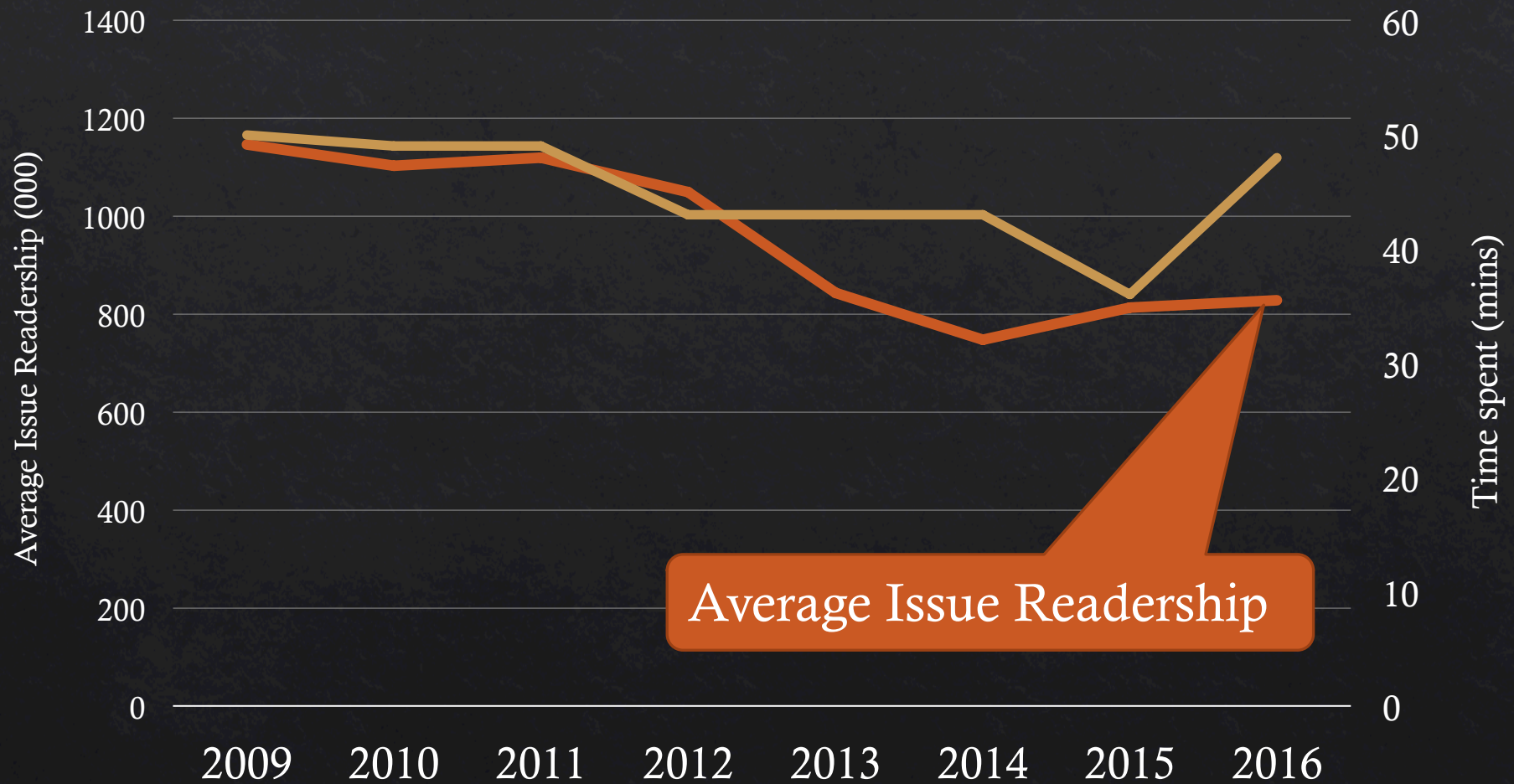


Sources: NRS and comScore.



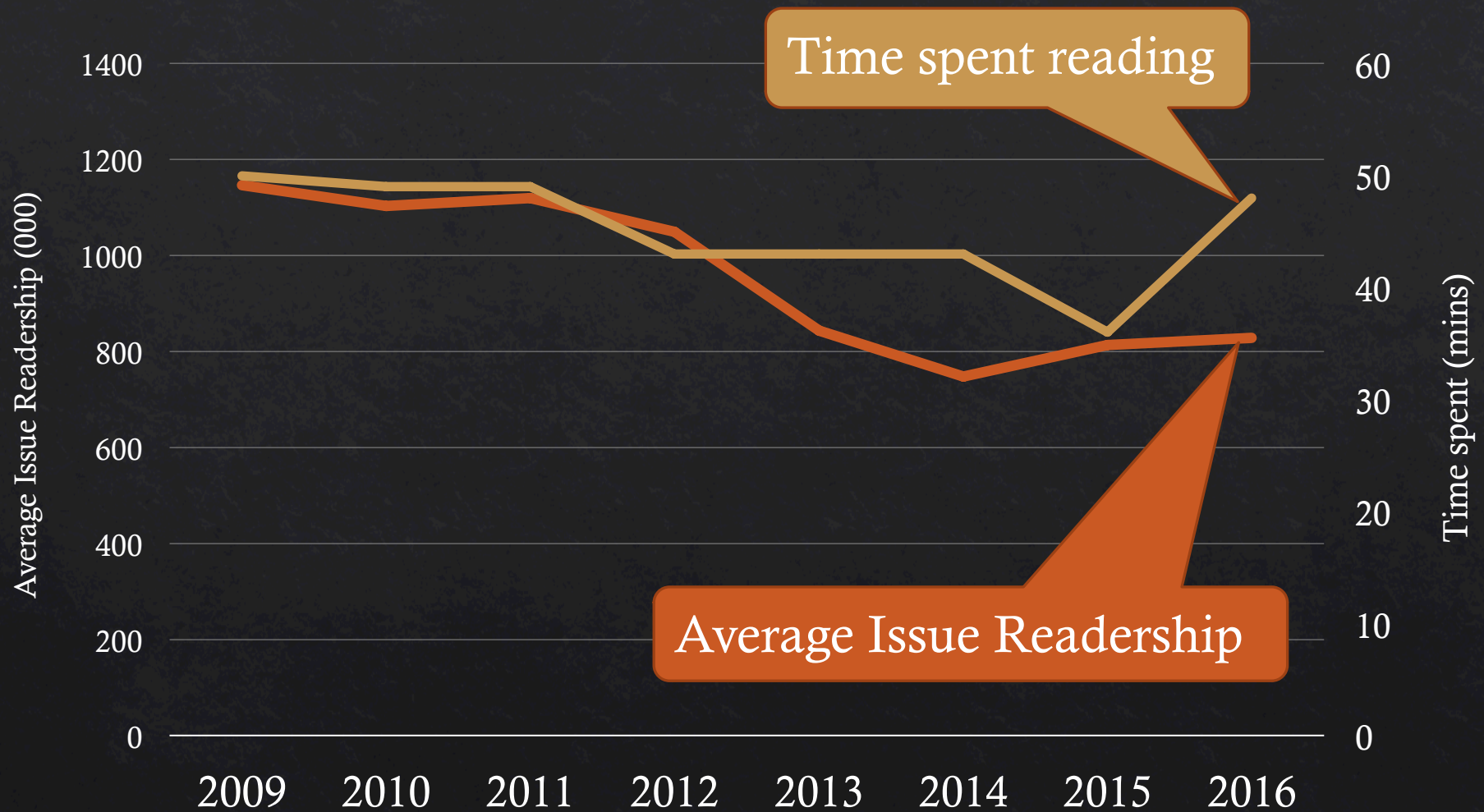
Sources: NRS and comScore.

Changes in AIR and time-spent with *The Guardian* in print, 2009-2016



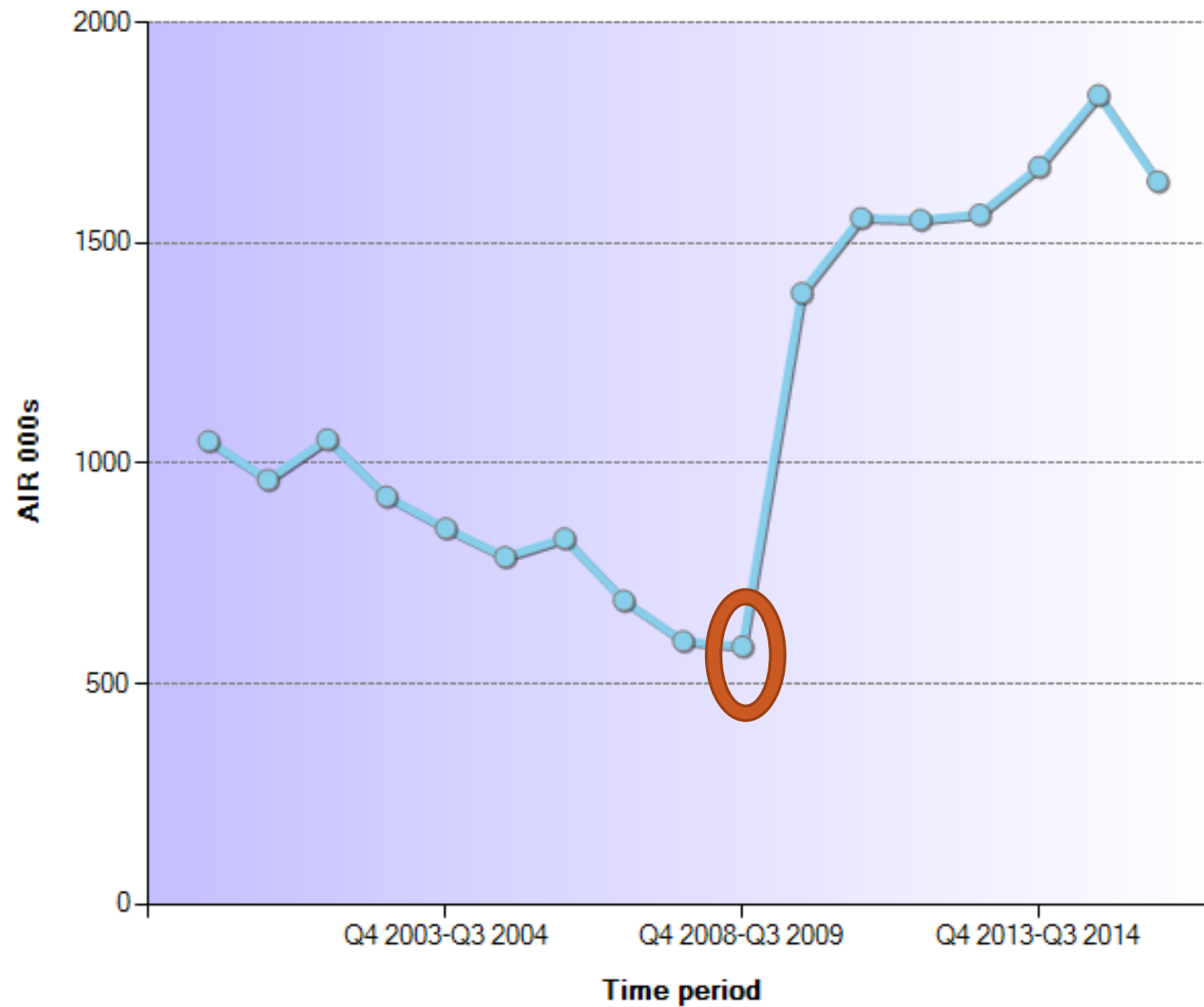
Source: NRS

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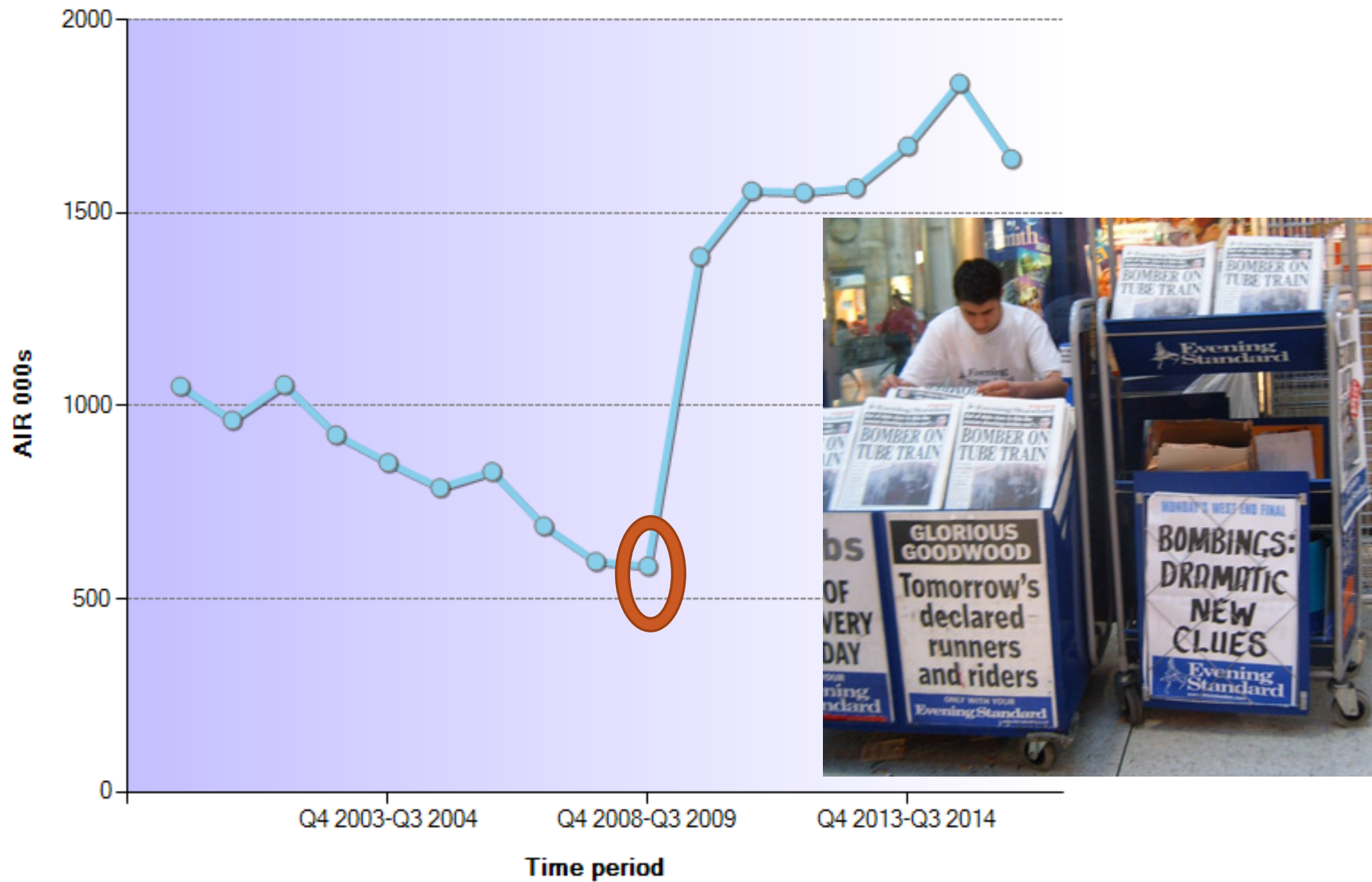
Source: NRS

London Evening Standard, Average Issue Readership



Source: NRS

London Evening Standard, Average Issue Readership



Source: NRS

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

P-I TRADITION IN TRANSITION

P-I PRESSES FALL SILENT

From print to pixels - seattlepi.com assumes legacy



No ruling yet on SR 520 west-side design

TALOUS-SANOMAT

YRITYKSET
Suomi-yhtiö menettää osuksia henkivakuutusissa

TYÖMARKKINAT
SAK:n ihminen uskoo: Tupo-sopimus valmis ensi viikolla

Ahtisaari haluaisi laskea palkkaveroa

Uusi pääministeri Matti Ahtisaari on ilmoittanut, että työllisyystoimien toteuttamiseksi on otettava käyttöön palkkaveron alennus. Ahtisaari on myös ilmoittanut, että hän aikoo laskea palkkaveroa.

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Voitoin hallituksen puheenjohtaja Jyrki Katainenin yllätyksellisesti voittaneen "Valion ja Arlan fuusiota ei vielä valmistella"

Gone online-only

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

BOSTON FRIDAY MARCH 27, 2009

Beyond bailouts: reforms ahead

The push to revitalize the financial industry's role in the real world is being met by a new wave of regulatory proposals. The Treasury secretary is expected to announce a series of reforms to the financial industry.

U.S. FORCES MAY NOT LEAVE KEY IRAQI CITIES

U.S. troops will stay in key Iraqi cities for the foreseeable future, according to a report from the Pentagon. The report says that U.S. forces are needed to maintain stability in the region.

US workers migrate overseas

More Americans are working abroad, according to a new report. The report says that the number of U.S. workers overseas has increased significantly in recent years.

WHAT MAKES A TEACHER GOOD?

This series explores efforts to attract and cultivate more excellence in the head of the class. How are future teachers prepared for the work ahead?

IN TRAINING

David G. Johnson, a former U.S. Marine, is training to become a teacher in Chicago.

LAST OF THREE PARTS

THE INDEPENDENT



Last print edition – March 2016

Continues online-only at:



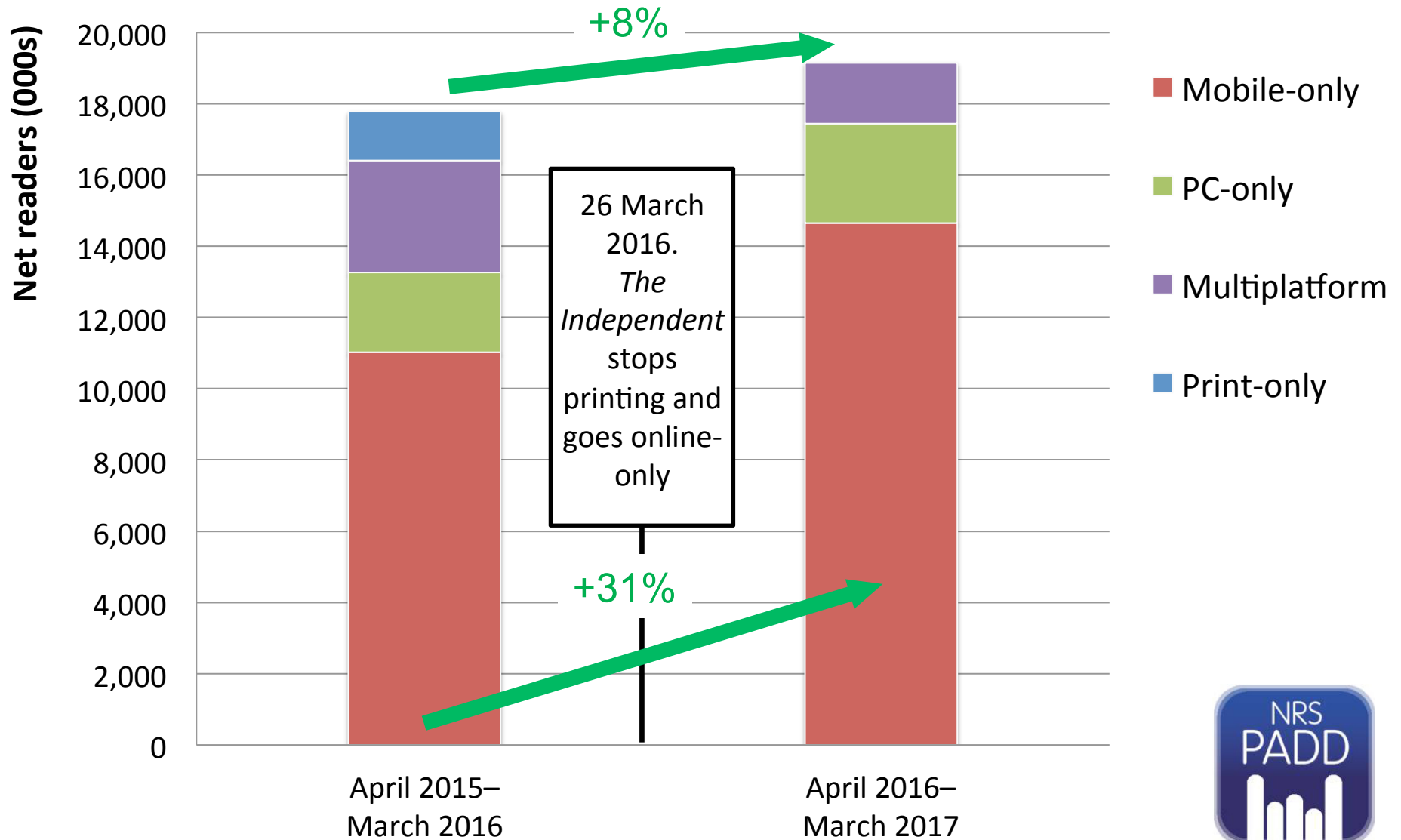
INDEPENDENT

www.independent.co.uk

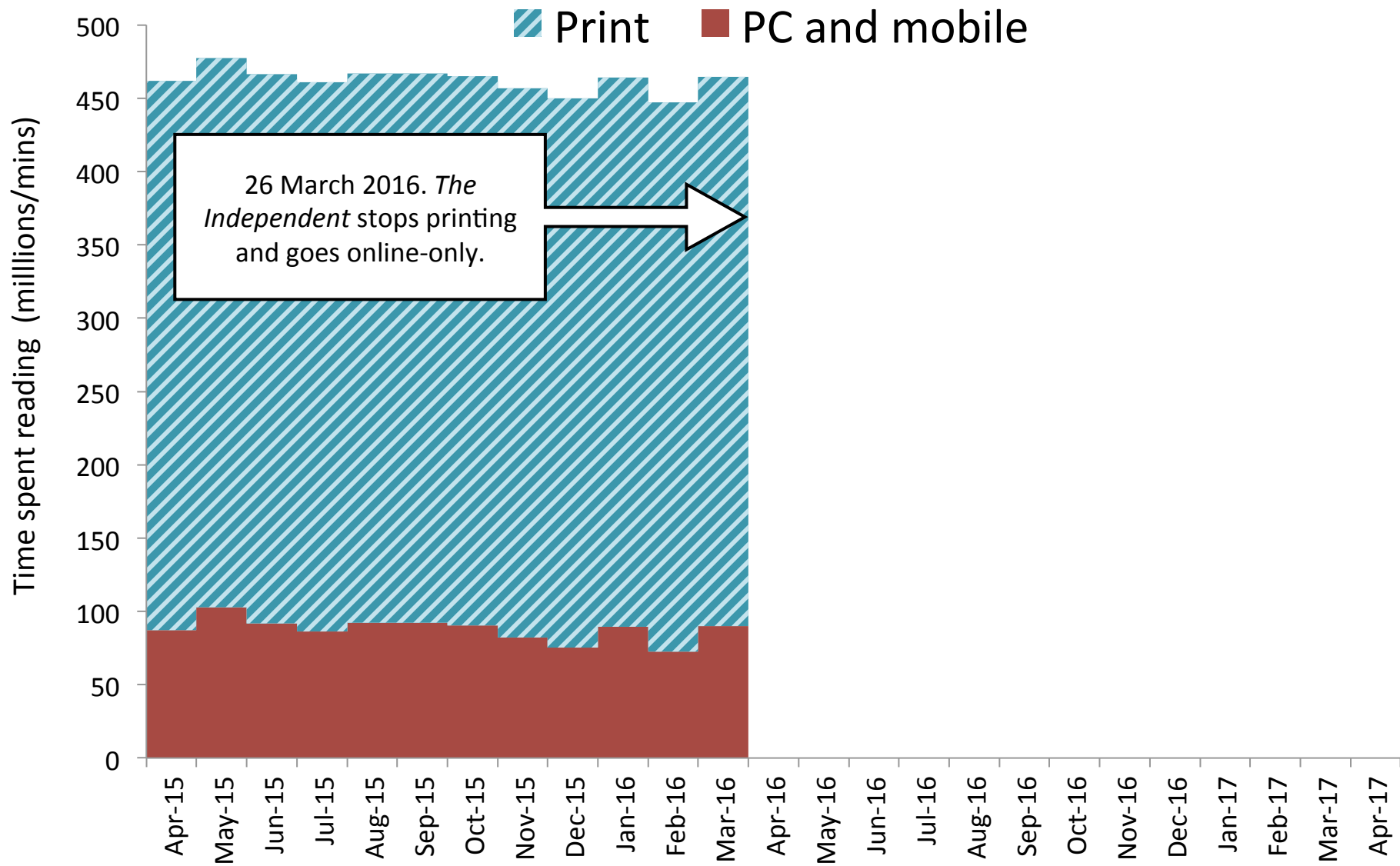


www.indy100.com

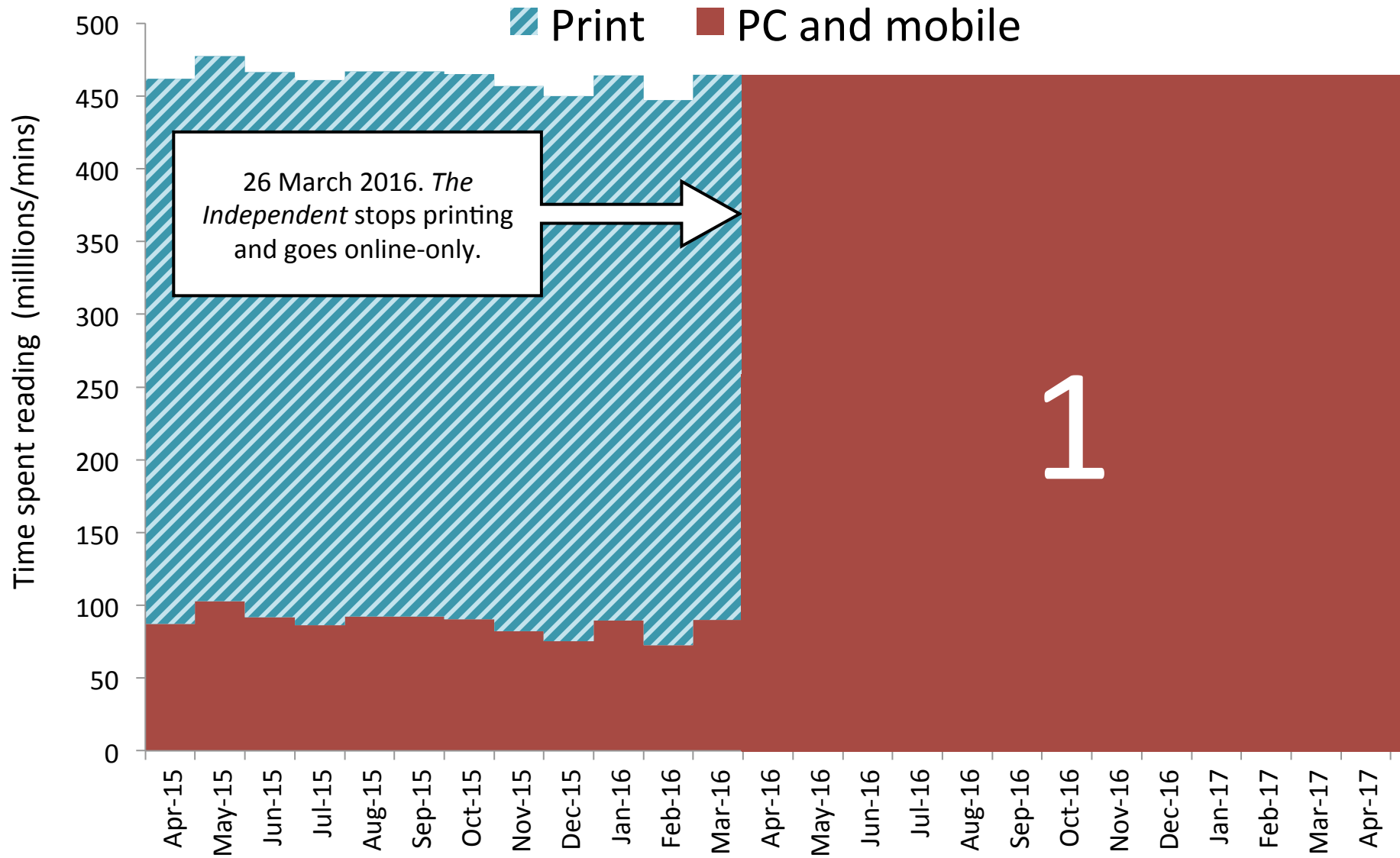
Net monthly British readership (aged 15+) of *The Independent* in the 12 months before and the 12 months after it stopped printing and went online-only



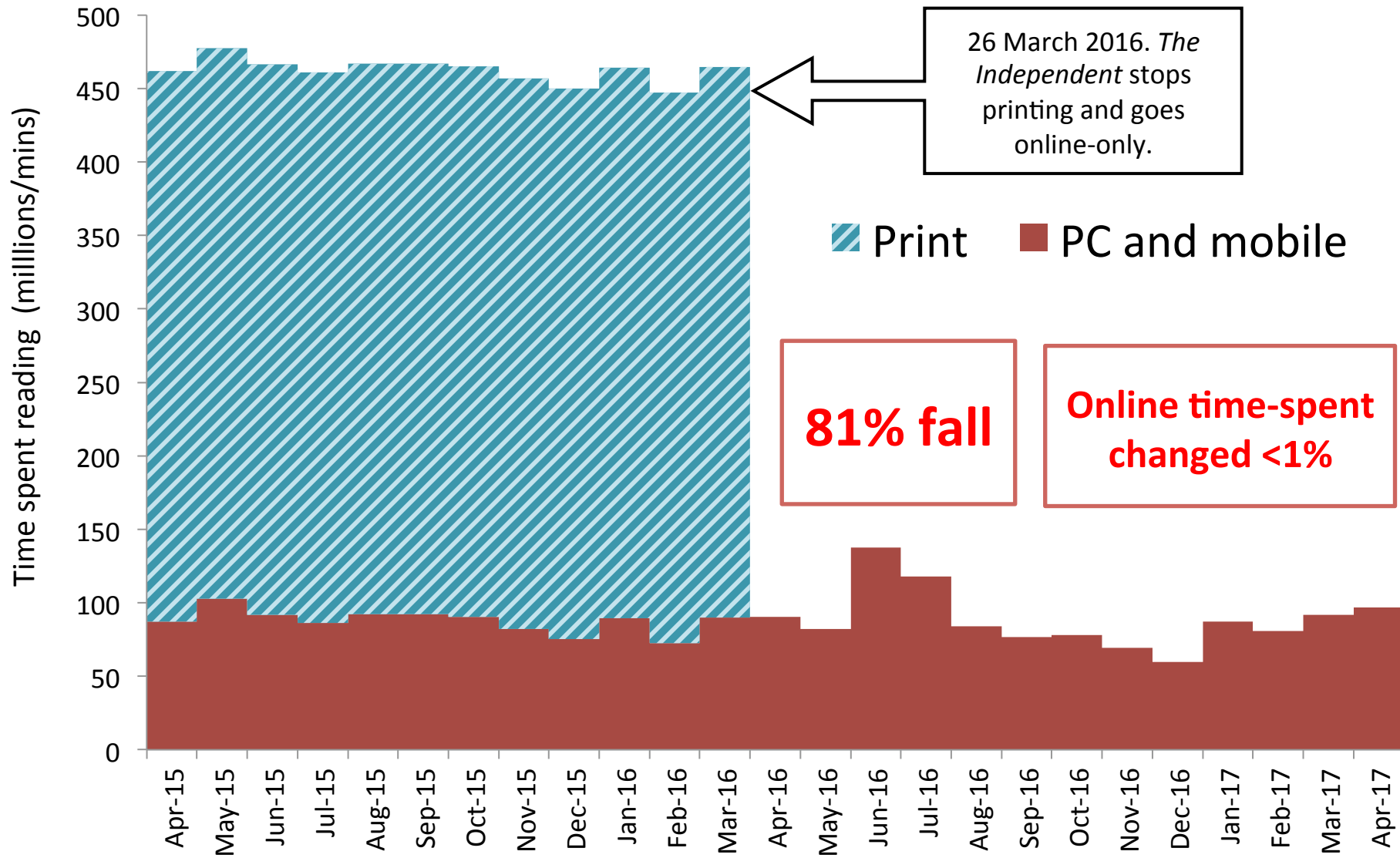
Total attention (measured by time spent reading) received by *The Independent* from its British audience before it went online-only



Total attention (measured by time spent reading) received by *The Independent* from its British audience before it went online-only



Changes in the total attention (measured by time spent reading) received by *The Independent* from its British audience before and after it went online-only





Conclusions

- Focus on reach/readership promotes false equivalence between print and online reading



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- Av. print reader spends x80 more mins. with UK news brands than their av. online visitor
- 'Annual time spent' accounts for this difference & can be calculated using available data



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- Focus on reach/readership promotes false equivalence between print and online reading
- Av. print reader spends x80 more mins. with UK news brands than their av. online visitor
- ‘Annual time spent’ accounts for this difference & can be calculated using available data
- **What’s in it for publishers?**
 - Help make argument about value of print
 - Inform strategic decisions



Conclusions

- **Product perspective:**
 - Take inspiration from print's ability to engage
 - Design cues
 - Contained experience / sense of completion
- **Content perspective:**
 - Consequences of chasing reach:
 - Click-bait and fake news



Conclusions

- **Product perspective:**
 - Take inspiration from print's ability to engage
 - Design cues
 - Contained experience / sense of completion
- **Content perspective:**
 - Consequences of chasing reach:
 - Click-bait and fake news
- **Keep exploring quality of reading and new business models!**



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Thank you

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