

The Age leads way with circulation rise

TIM DICK

The Age outperformed the *Herald Sun* in circulation growth across the week in the latest Audit Bureau of Circulation figures.

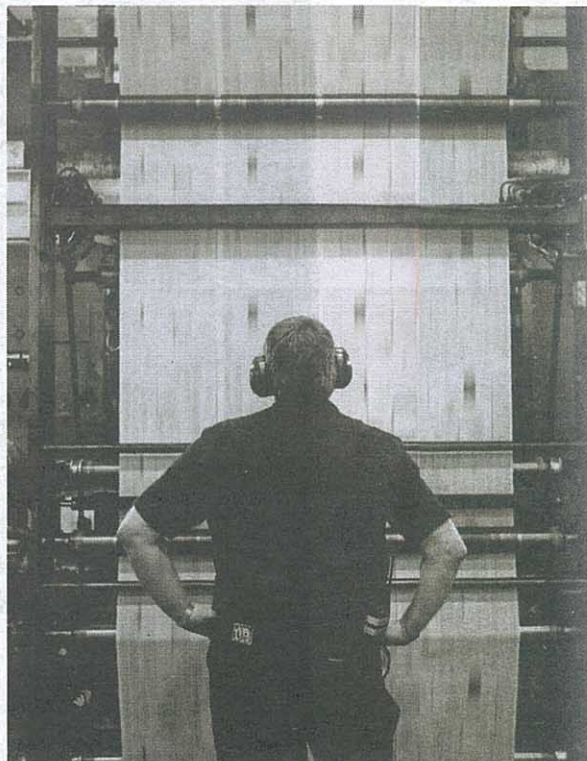
For the September quarter, sales of Fairfax Media's *The Age* rose 0.3 per cent during the week, but fell 2.9 per cent on Saturday, while circulation of *The Sunday Age* climbed 1 per cent.

Sales of News Ltd's *Herald Sun* slumped 3.8 per cent during the week and 4.83 per cent on a Saturday, while the *Sunday Herald Sun* plunged 6.4 per cent.

The figures underscore a difficult national environment as printed newspapers and magazines continue to struggle on both the standard measures — circulation of copies sold and surveys of people who read them — as the industry waits for a combined readership measure for both print and digital editions.

"*The Age* posted solid results for the September '11 circulation audit. Our weekday edition was the only major daily to record growth while *The Sunday Age* was the best-performing newspaper for the period across all categories," said Fairfax's acting Melbourne publisher, David Hoath.

"However, print circulation is no longer the key measurement of success



that it used to be, and we look forward to print media auditors changing their yardsticks to stay relevant.

"Counting only the circulation figures of our printed mastheads creates a blinkered view of what is a much bigger picture, and distorts the story of how we reach our audience.

"Many (readers) are choosing to use our online, mobile and smart TV services instead of, or as well as, our newspapers.

YEAR-ON-YEAR READERSHIP 2010-11

Weekly Times	68,388	▼3%	The Australian (M-F)	416,000	▼3.7%
Herald Sun (M-F)	1,300,000	▼2.8%	Weekend Australian (Sat)	779,000	▼11.2%
Herald Sun (Sat)	1,213,000	▼5.5%	Financial Review (M-F)	250,000	▲4.2%
Sunday Herald Sun	1,340,000	▼9.5%	Financial Review (Weekend edition)	159,000	▲3.2%
The Age (M-F)	668,000	▲2.8%			
Saturday Age	835,000	▼3.0%			
Sunday Age	689,000	▲2.5%			

QUARTER-ON-QUARTER READERSHIP

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TOP 10 MAGAZINES READERSHIP 2011

Women's Weekly	2,339,000	That's Life	1,030,000
Woman's Day	1,910,000	Super Food Ideas	880,000
Better Homes and Gardens	1,827,000	National Geographic	832,000
New Idea	1,296,000	Take 5	796,000
Open Road (NSW)	1,061,000	Foxtel Magazine	794,000

SOURCE: ROY MORGAN, ABC ADVANTAGE

"In the context of how many people it reaches each day on one platform or another, *The Age* is in great shape.

"Indeed, *The Age* and its sister paper, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, touch the lives of most Australians in some way every single day.

"First-class, independent journalism is alive and well at Fairfax."

The figures contained little good news for either of the major publishers.

Also in the News Ltd stable, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* was down 4 per cent during the week and 2 per cent on Saturday, with the *Sunday Telegraph* down 4.5 per cent. *The Australian* was down 2 per cent during the week and on Saturdays as well.

At Fairfax, *The Australian Financial Review* has stemmed the rate of downturn-related losses but continues to fall, down nearly 3 per cent during the

week and 1.5 per cent on Saturdays, while the largest fall of the major titles was for *The Sydney Morning Herald* weekday editions, down 7 per cent. On Saturday, it is down 5 per cent, while its Sunday sister masthead, the *Sun-Herald*, is down 4 per cent.

Fairfax estimates 4 per cent of *The Sydney Morning Herald's* weekday fall came about through its decision to stop heavily discounted or free copies at gyms and some other places, part of a strategic decision to stop unprofitable circulation.

The underlying fall was about 3 per cent.

In a separate readership survey conducted by Roy Morgan Research, both *The Age* and *The Australian Financial Review* recorded rises of about 3 per cent but there was bad news for most other major papers.

The *Sunday Herald Sun* was down 9.5 per cent and the *Daily Telegraph* down 7 per cent.

The readership figures do not count those who read material online, on smartphones or using tablets, but Roy Morgan calculated the combined print and website readership to name the *Herald Sun* the most-read masthead, with 2.7 million readers, ahead of *The Sydney Morning Herald* with 2.4 million, *The Daily Telegraph* on 2.3 million and *The Age* on 1.8 million.