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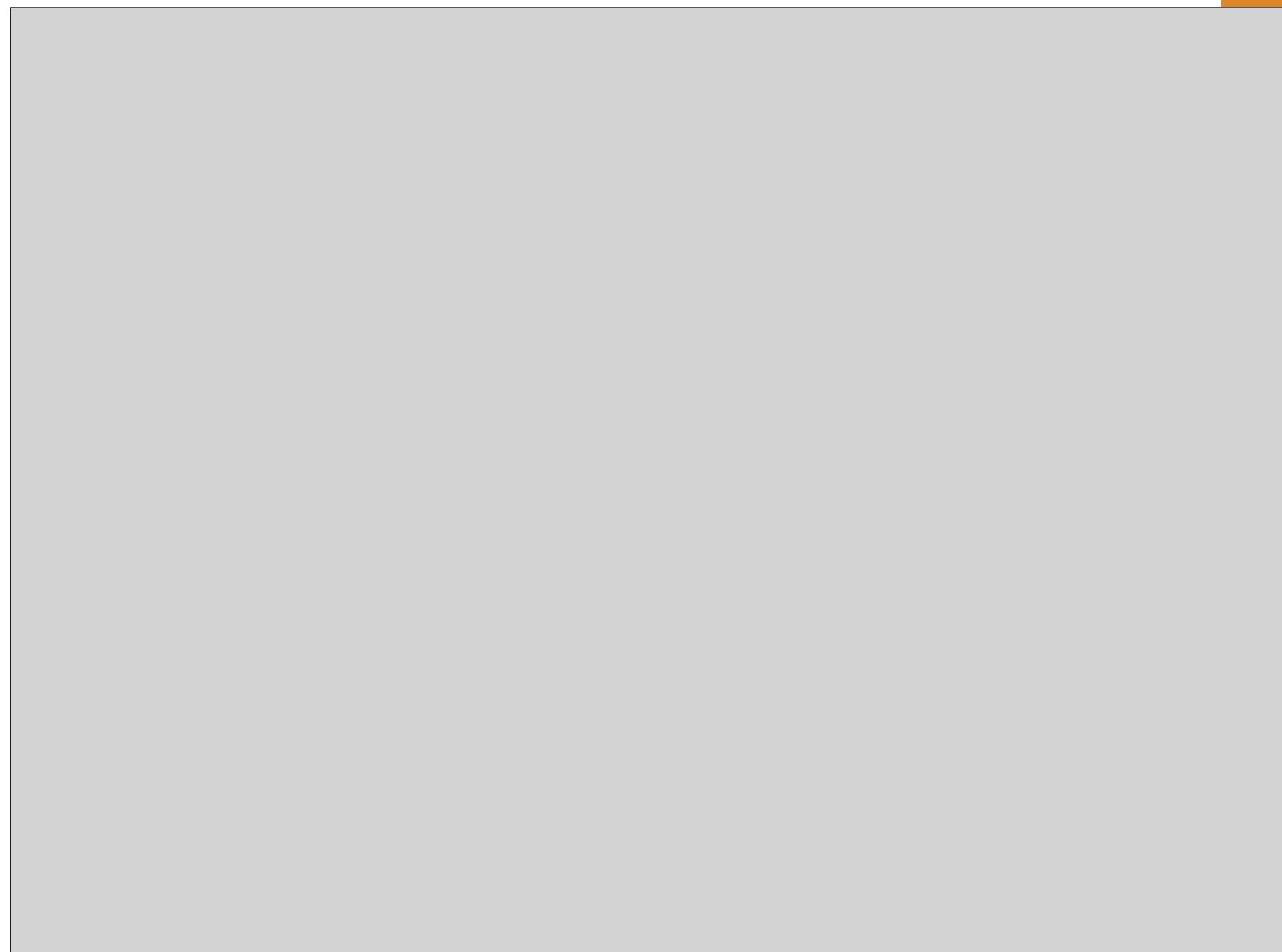
- [Welcome](#)
- [Issue 10.2 Index](#)
- [Issue 10.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 9.2 Index](#)
- [Issue 9.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 8.2 Index](#)
- [Issue 8.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 7.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 6.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 5.2 Index](#)
- [Issue 5.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 4.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 3.2 Index](#)
- [Issue 3.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 2.2 Index](#)
- [Issue 2.1 Index](#)
- [Issue 1-2 Index](#)
- [Issue 1-1 Index](#)
- [AJE Website](#)

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[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

Cover price rises of regional newspapers accentuated decline in sales as digital media grew between 2006-2016

Richard Bowyer, Derby University



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Abstract

The decline in the regional press, traditional wisdom asserts, has been firmly placed on the rise in the number of people moving from newspapers and reading news online for free. While this is not disputed, this paper will show that cover price increases have in recent years been higher than in previous years and that a correlation exists between these larger than usual increases in cover price and the acceleration of decline in newspaper sales. The findings indicate that a vicious circle has been created in which budget shortfalls have prompted higher and faster price rises, which have driven down sales, leading to further shortfalls as falling circulation also leads to falling advertising revenue. Historically, newspapers put their cover price up by 1p to 3p a year or held the price in an attempt to keep sales high, an obsession of regional newspapers. For example, the Sheffield Star cost 32p in 2000 and did not increase in cost until 2005. In 2011, with the battle to keep readers a lost cause, regional newspapers decided to use cover price to help finance its business and the same newspaper which cost 47p rose in price to

Articles

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