

Problematic Print Journalism

Pick a major, pay for college, and graduate with a degree; playing by the book no longer guarantees success in ones chosen career, even more so for students pursuing careers in journalism.

“Be very cautious about that major,” says unemployed Lisa Butt, a 30 year-old graduate of San Jose State University’s Journalism program, “if I had known when I was in college that my job as a journalist could essentially be outsourced, I would’ve picked a different major.”

The former magazine journalism major was first laid-off by The Sacramento Bee newspaper where she worked as an editor and writer for its advertising special sections department. More recently, her employment at Kayak.com in Sunnyvale was terminated upon her department being taken over by a company in India.

“The company had changed its business plans and unfortunately, it looks like my position was not part of those plans,” said the unemployed journalist. Companies in the print journalism industry have been required to lay-off more employees in order to develop more profitability and efficiency, and as of February 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau has reported the loss of 9,700 jobs from newsrooms around the United States.

With the loss of her job, new car owner, Lisa Butt, has loosely been looking for employment. “I have the luxury of not feeling desperate to apply for any and every job.” She received a good severance package and saved enough for ten months in her emergency fund. However, she went on to say, “I also bought a car in December, so it’s not so fun to have a car payment while laid off.”

In a survey taken in December and January by citizens 18 or older, a CNN report stated that news has become omnipresent in this new digital era. The report went on to read, “The days of loyalty to a particular news organization on a particular piece of technology in a particular form are gone.”

The decline in newspaper readership and the diminished funding for newspaper companies have directly affected the employees of newspaper companies who have worked to perfect their craft in the journalism profession.

According to Byungkwan Park of The Cornell Daily Sun, recent studies have shown a generational shift away from print journalism. "As technology improves, more people would utilize it for the news, instead of relying on print journalism," says Ze Zhou, third-year Journalism student at Cornell University.

Amidst the drop in print journalism sales and job opportunities, rapid technological advancements and the growing population of people unwilling to read a physical newspaper have also halted many possibilities of growth in the print journalism field.