

Restart the Presses!

It's been another up and mostly down year for print media and the dwindling number of professionals (writers, editors, paper mill owners, singing-dancing newsies) who still care about nonvirtual publishing.

There were the customary newsroom layoffs, budget parings, revenue shrinkages. The venerable Boston Globe and Washington Post were each sold to billionaires, the papers' futures, whether as first-rate news sources or playthings, yet to be determined. New York magazine announced that it would scale back to publication every two weeks; The Onion ceased print publication altogether. One of the year's few bright spots: Newsweek's brave but seemingly quixotic decision to return to print in 2014. Yes, it could work, many observers thought, and maybe Tiny Tim will live to see another Christmas!

Is such cynicism justified? The thinking here is that if vinyl records, straight razors, slow food and absinthe cocktails can all mount comebacks, there is no reason print can't as well. The keys are marketing, perception and, frankly, snob appeal, plus a few minor tweaks....

By BRUCE HANDY and DASHA TOLSTIKOVA of the New York Times