We're all familiar with the Metro distributors who lurk on the main floor of the U of T building on campus, waiting for unsuspecting students trying to get class or go home. I often take one out of pity for the students who have just stepped off the train station, wandering flapping through a few pages on the bus. Some students, however, dive headlong into their phones or push themselves closer to the wall as possible, trying to duck out of sight while the waves the paper in her hand, weakly adding on in particular, "Free Metro! Free Metro!" Many of those students seem to corner themselves into spots with the least foot traffic, picking in the face of her mild desperation.

Recently, as I stood in the station, clenching the daily tabloid I'd felt obliged to take, I watched the woman in the green apron paper a towards a girl and her friend. The girl, perfectly poised and cool, ignored her completely, saying to her friend, "I don't read the news." I was briefly startled by the urge to run across and hurl her over the head with the crumpled paper in my hands.

Our generation, we're told, is increasingly immersed in current affairs. Headlines of "Teenagers have little interest in news" are only a quick Google search away. There are of course some truth to these. Students, on media — young adults have short attention spans, we're bombarded by everything except celebrity gossip and sports, we're shallow and distracted by shiny objects or Facebook games — the lie goes on and on, with many messages as to why our demographic is seemingly quite to discovering any useful information.

I think the explanation is much simpler: we're not opposed to useful information, it's just that newspapers contains less and less of it as time goes on. No matter where you look, relevant news stories about current events are frequently overshadowed by the repeated Twitter insights of celebrities, as if Twitter's gym workout just as relevant as the pronouncements of Parliament. Actual content is replaced by massive amounts of adver- tising, gossip, and headlines about some- times, no wonder news organizations are voicing concerns about the decline of print media.

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This slump in the quality of our news is largely a result of corporate interests crum- pying real journalism, and a deeply flawed business plan. It's a scary time to work in news media, as the industry is facing mass- ive layoffs, cuts, and even bankruptcy. And, by the way, it's not just newspapers that are attempting to cut down on staff by offering voluntary buyouts, or generally offering to allow their employees to work fewer hours for less money. CubeNet, the company that publishes the Konfocal newspaper, has been continually trying to "encourage editorial operations," which is a nice way of saying, "lay off and buy out as many as we can to keep the service possible.

These layoffs are part of an attempt to allocate more funds to online resources, and to increase profits by competing with YouTube and Wikipedia. The Canadian Association of Journalists, however, points out that the true result of these mass layoffs — more than 2,000 in the past five years — is a drop in the quality of media, both online and in print. And, really, isn't that the most damaging? Readership is falling, not because we're not interested in the news, but because we're more or less stopped paying for it. With less income from the sale of papers, newspaper publishers try to keep the adver- tising A-Js coming in, and censor those journalists who might damage profitability by rocking the boat. Journalists who are too independent are liable to find themselves out of a job. This has obvious implications for investigative journalism, an invaluable source of news that's often unpopular with the men in suits. The void left by those sto- ries is then filled with a combination of ads and bland pieces that are as insipid as possible. It's not surprising that many Canadian journalists are considering the buyout offers due to plummeting industry standards.

With all the issues of mainstream news sources, where's the information that we need to do? Well, if you desperately need to know what Paris Hilton is wearing during the next season, you could follow her private Instagram feed. But in general, you want more than where her clothes sit. Otherwise, you might as well have的投资 a newspaper. "David is going to tell you what's going on in the Edmonton Police Force where they're so awesome at their jobs that they can take the time to talk up over musical numbers," says the Edmonton Cops. Congratulations! (I promise the soundtrack.

DAVID JOHNSTON

The Metro Pedastal is a semi-rare feature where a person or group who does something particularly noteworthy and awesome is elevated temporarily to a pedestal of praise and praise. No actual achievements are performed.

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WINTER 2010 STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS 2010 TO BE OR NOT TO BE? IT'S UP TO YOU!

This year's referendum questions will appear on the ballot of this year's March 3 and 4 Students' Union Election. For more information about the elections process or the registration of sides please visit University of Alberta Newsroom or www.universityofalberta.ca/vote