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ille, Fla.

V to cells

channels has improved markedly over the years, but still remains more akin to live radio played against a jittery slideshow rather than normal full-motion video.

Despite those quality issues, which MobiTV says will dissipate as handsets improve, more than 1 million cell phone users worldwide now are paying for the service through Sprint and about 30 other wireless carriers.

"The only people trying to point out a strain on the cellular network are the people not operating a cellular network themselves," said Phillip Alvelda, chief executive of MobiTV. He argues that network congestion will become a problem only when there are millions of mobile TV users, by which time a new generation of robust wireless technologies may give cellular networks ample capacity.

Alvelda also contends that the mobile broadcast networks, limited to about 20 channels, run

Editors told big changes needed

By VICKI VAUGHAN
EXPRESS-NEWS BUSINESS WRITER

Newspapers each must engineer their own transformation — and the faster the better, two experts told a Texas editors' convention Friday.

That change could be "blowing up the newspaper and starting over," said Michael P. Smith, executive director of the Media Management Center at Northwestern University.

Bringing in new readers likely will mean beefing up newspaper Web sites to allow more reader participation and interaction; connecting to communities, much as the popular Web site MySpace does now; and launching publications aimed at younger readers.

"It's the concepts that matter, and the audience, the people we're trying to reach, is shifting," said Howard Finberg, director of interactive learning at the News University at the nonprofit Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Not even popular online sites can rest easy, Finberg told members of the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors. "The challenge," Finberg said, "is young people," who by and large aren't newspaper readers.

"The growth and energy is in new business," Finberg said, and it is now "an online world."

Most readers of news content find stories through search engines such as Google and Yahoo, not the newspaper's home page, he said. That's a problem for newspapers because the lucrative advertisements are on the paper's home page.

Editors need to find better ways to guide readers to their content, he said. And editors can't forget they're dealing with an audience that's "digitally equipped," as more people own devices that give them

control of a medium, such as digital video recorders like TiVo.

Those digital devices give control.

"No one wants to give up something that gives them control," Finberg said. Young people, especially, "want to take somebody else's content and add to it."

Finberg advised editors to experiment, to try more "hyper-local" news, to move more employees to online duties and to keep track of what stories get the most hits.

Smith's exhortation to "blow up the newspaper" means most publications "require a major rethinking."

The changes won't disturb readers as much as editors may think. "Readers are more receptive to change than those running the newspaper," he said.

He cited the Hamilton Spectator in Ontario. It boosted readership among women by almost 7.7 percent and drew more than 8.3 percent more baby boomers after making major changes to content and design.

Saying that 21- to 25-year-olds have been "killers of newspapers," Smith said editors must find a way to attract readers from cradle to grave.

One key to reaching the young: Launch publications just for them, ranging from special papers for kids to those for young adults, Smith said.

In the French capital, 20 Minutes Paris is now the No. 2 daily. It's a colorful publication heavy on sports and entertainment and aimed at young adults. And it's designed to be read in 20 minutes.

That publication listened, he said, when young adults said most papers were too bleak, too preachy and contained too much political spin.

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