

# Circulation report

## Many papers show daily, Sunday circulation drops in latest audit

By Mark Fitzgerald

When the year began, numerous newspaper advertising analysts declared that 1988 would be a banner year.

Midway through this lackluster year, they revised their projections downward.

Much the same thing seems to be happening with newspaper circulation, according to the results of the latest FAS-FAX report from the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

When the FAS-FAX for the six months ended March 31, 1988, came out, daily circulation seemed a special bright spot in a dull year.

With the release of the FAS-FAX for six months ended Sept. 30, 1988, however, the other shoe has dropped.

Daily circulations are not down across the board, but they are down

for many — and substantially in some cases.

Those newspapers that are still growing achieved much more modest gains than in previous audit periods.

Some of the losses were dramatic.

The *New York Post*, which recently changed its publishing schedule to morning from all-day, was down 140,442 over the same period a year ago.

*Chicago Tribune* circulation was down nearly 50,000 over the same period in 1987. Its circulation of 715,618 was down 49,753 over the period.

Rival *Chicago Sun-Times* fared little better. Its loss of 25,590 put average daily circulation at 579,272 — below 600,000 for the first time in years.

Both Chicago newspapers appear

to be now feeling the full effect of the 10¢ cover price increases they introduced earlier this year.

Competing newspapers in other cities took substantial circulation hits. While their joint operating agreement proposal wends its way through the courts, both Detroit newspapers were losing circulation.

The market-leading *Detroit News* was down 9,402 to 677,385. The rival *Detroit Free Press*, the “failing newspaper” in the JOA proposal, was down even more: off 20,247 from the year-ago figure to 629,065.

This FAS-FAX included something that has been missing from the reports for about two years — figures from Dallas.

According to the unaudited report, the *Dallas Morning News*’ daily circulation is 354,703, while the *Dallas*

## ABC FAS-FAX TOTALS FOR TOP 25 NEWSPAPERS (For six months ending Sept. 30, 1988)

Daily	Total average daily circulation six months ended Sept. 30, 1988	Gain/loss same period last year	Sunday	Average total Sunday circulation six months ended Sept. 30, 1988	Gain/loss same period last year
1. Wall Street Journal (m) (national edition)	1,869,950	- 91,896	1. New York Times	1,601,085	+ 11,795
2. USA Today (m) (national edition)	1,338,734	+ 14,511	2. New York Daily News	1,568,862	- 46,176
3. New York Daily News (m)	1,281,706	- 4,163	3. Los Angeles Times	1,394,910	+ 10,053
4. Los Angeles Times (m)	1,116,334	+ 2,875	4. Washington Post	1,112,344	+ 15,624
5. New York Times (m) (national edition)	1,038,829	+ 15,930	5. Chicago Tribune	1,098,127	- 19,148
6. Washington Post (m)	769,318	+ 8,176	6. Philadelphia Inquirer	995,571	+ 11,462
7. Chicago Tribune (m)	715,618	- 49,753	7. Detroit News	828,166	- 11,345
8. Newsday (all day)	680,926	+ 39,563	8. Boston Globe	786,829	+ 5,422
9. Detroit News (all day)	677,385	- 9,402	9. San Francisco Chronicle & Examiner	712,400	- 3,939
10. Detroit Free Press (m)	629,065	- 20,247	10. Detroit Free Press	710,112	- 22,587
11. Chicago Sun Times (m)	579,272	- 25,590	11. Newsday	706,440	+ 24,422
12. San Francisco Chronicle (m)	559,312	- 8,776	12. Newark Star-Ledger	665,085	- 8,714
13. New York Post (m)	550,473	- 140,442	13. Atlanta Journal and Constitution	650,542	+ 4,270
14. Boston Globe (m)	509,060	+ 6,539	14. Minneapolis Star Tribune	644,946	+ 15,101
15. Philadelphia Inquirer (m)	502,756	- 5,740	15. Chicago Sun-Times	600,257	- 13,683
16. Newark Star-Ledger (m)	462,084	- 5,465	16. Cleveland Plain Dealer	565,673	+ 5,158
17. Cleveland Plain Dealer (m)	444,884	- 2,149	17. Houston Chronicle	561,664	+ 26,893
18. Houston Chronicle (m)	420,320	+ 13,544	18. Pittsburgh Press	548,785	- 1,758
19. Baltimore Sun (combined m & e)	406,599	- 840	19. Dallas Morning News	530,640	XXX
20. Miami Herald (m)	401,423	+ 2,811	20. Milwaukee Journal	509,795	- 7,224
21. Minneapolis Star Tribune (m)	400,914	+ 11,504	21. Phoenix Arizona Republic	507,081	+ 23,706
22. Boston Herald (m)	360,459	+ 5,104	22. Seattle Times	502,940	+ 1,898
23. Dallas Morning News (m)	354,703	XXX	23. Miami Herald	499,515	- 1,486
24. Rocky Mountain News (m)	344,550	+ 12,436	24. Baltimore Sun	475,990	- 5,489
25. Orange County Register (m)	333,560	+ 16,025	25. San Diego Union	421,943	+ 10,841

XXX—No figures given for year-ago period for either Dallas paper due to litigation at the time

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Not filing: St. Louis Post-Dispatch; ranked number 22 in FAS-FAX for 6 months ended March 31, 1988

Not filing: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, ranked number 19 for 6 months ended March 31, 1988