

What is a newspaper?

The Australian Newspaper Plan libraries have adopted the following definition of a newspaper:

A newspaper is a serial publication which contains news on current events of special or general interest. The individual parts are listed chronologically or numerically and appear frequently, usually at least once a week but sometimes fortnightly or monthly.

Newspapers are printed on newsprint paper, usually appear without a cover, folded rather than bound together, with a masthead, and are normally larger than 297 mm x 420 mm in size. They may include supplements such as colour magazines, or other inserts for special features or events.^{1 2}

With the advent of digital technologies, electronic newspapers are being produced. An electronic newspaper is a serial publication containing news on current events of special or general interest, issued in a machine-readable format, and 'accessed via input/output devices connected electronically to a computer' (AACR2).

E-newspapers are accessed most frequently via the Internet—online newspapers. E-newspapers are often associated with an existing newspaper in print. Most e-newspapers do not have enumeration, though they do have chronology, and many maintain archives of back issues online.^{3 4}

¹ International Organization for Standardization (ISO) definition of a newspaper quoted in CONSER Cataloguing Manual (Library of Congress, 2002 edition, updated to 2006), 33.1 What is a newspaper?

² This definition includes:

- all general interest newspapers mainly reporting events that have occurred within the 24-hour period before going to press;
- non-daily general interest newspapers (e.g. local and neighbourhood newspapers) that provide news covering a longer period of time, and also serve their readers as a primary source of general information due to their local origin;
- newspapers that contain current news of special interest, in addition to general information, and are targeted to clearly identified groups. More common types of special interest newspapers include those directed to ethnic or racial groups, labour unions, farming community, religious groups, and political groups;

and excludes:

- newsletter publications that are intended to report *only* news of a particular organisation or institution, or that are specifically limited to coverage of a business, industry, craft, market, etc.;
- shoppers and other publications issued *primarily* for advertising purposes (CONSER Cataloguing Manual (Library of Congress, 2002 edition, updated to 2006), 33.1 What is a newspaper?).

³ CONSER Cataloguing Manual 2006, www.loc.gov/cds/PDFdownloads/ccm/CCM_Update_3.pdf, accessed 4 March 2009

⁴ This definition excludes:

- home pages mounted by publishers (without links to issues);
- "teasers" or advertisements for online papers;
- world wide web sites that only compile news from external sources;
- online news services (without designated issues);
- dial-up bulletin board services (see Reference 3, Section 33.18.1).