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Concord Monitor

Publisher: Newspapers of New England

Website: <http://www.concordMonitor.com>

Paywall initiated: May 3, 2011

Paywall specifics: \$1 for 24-hour Web subscription; \$17/month for 7-day print subscription + Web access; \$9.99/month for Web access only. Users can register for free to view 10 articles/month.

Service provider: Clickshare Service Corp.

The most positive statement I heard during interviews with several newspaper publishers the last few weeks came from John Winn Miller, publisher at the Concord Monitor: "I can't say anything bad about the paywall. I think it's been the best thing, or one of the best things, we've ever done."

Miller has some bragging rights: The paper has managed to keep traffic numbers steady and grow revenue since the **paywall went up** in May. Initially, the paper saw a minor year-over-year 3 percent drop in unique visitors, but visitors are now up this month, he said. (Our analysis showed a traffic increase that he attributes to technology platform changes.)



Miller added that some advertisers that left when the paywall launched are beginning to come back. Overall, the paper has seen year-over-year increases in online revenue and print circulation. After three months, the newspaper attracted

more than 100 online paid subscribers, which projects to about \$25,000 a year in extra revenue. In the long term, Miller expects the increase in circulation numbers to also drive an increase in advertising revenue.

The Monitor also has gained incremental subscription revenue by changing its print rates to account for digital content. The paper required subscribers to opt out of paying \$0.25 more a week (\$17 a year) for unlimited Web access. Miller was pleasantly surprised when 90 percent of print subscribers did not opt out — resulting in a “tremendous boost to revenue.” Furthermore, print circulation has gone up.

The Monitor chose the paywall model, fulfilled through [Clickshare](#), after analyzing their own traffic and the experiments in other newspapers, particularly in the Northeast. They paired the new pricing structure with a complete redesign of the website, including more of a focus on breaking news and including new features like stock picks and movie listings. The newspaper decided to put only local copy behind a paywall and offer some content, such as wire stories and classifieds, for free. In the future mobile content will also be behind the paywall.

While some readers were initially upset at the change, the backlash has subsided, Miller said. "It has been so successful for us that I can't believe everybody hasn't been doing something like this," he said.