

**THE IMPACT OF THE COMPACT
BY DR. MARIO GARCIA**

**AN IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATION
OF THE RENAISSANCE
OF THE TABLOID FORMAT**

**VERSION 1.0
A GARCIA MEDIA WHITE PAPER
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**WITH CASE STUDIES
INCLUDING:**

20 Cent, Germany
24 SATA, Croatia
Bohuslaningen, Sweden
Crain's Chicago Business, USA
De Standaard, Belgium
Diario de Noticias, Portugal
El Litoral, Argentina
El Mercurio, Chile
Goteborgs Posten, Sweden
Het Parool, Holland
Kleine Zeitung, Austria
Liberation, France
Newsday, USA
Philadelphia Weekly, USA
Quick, USA
Reflejos, USA
S.F. Examiner, USA

1 The big buzz about small formats

EVERYTHING MAKES A COMEBACK. There is an eternal renaissance of essential things. In journalism, design, literature and art. Things tend to simplify themselves. As life in the big cities turns more chaotic, technology becomes more accessible with wireless, fast communication available to larger masses of the population. For the printed media, this translates into smaller formats, more reader-friendly for users who seek simpler storytelling, quicker messages, and who seem to prefer, as in everything else, the smaller packages.

In the case of newspapers, we have had to wait a long time and climb a steep mountain to get to this exciting moment in which more newspapers are looking at smaller formats as an option. For many, it is already a reality. Conversion from broadsheet to tabloid has paid off: Readers like it, advertisers get used to it faster than anyone thought, and the “wave” of tabloid conversions extends globally. Even the United States taking a peek into what some of their newspapers will look like in a format other than the huge broadsheet that has served as the canvas for decades.

Who would have guessed only 20 years ago that this would be the case? In 1999, when the American Press Institute sponsored a seminar about “the newspaper of the future,” many of those invited to present their visions displayed electronic newspapers, tablets, and, of course, broadsheets with touches of electronic navigational techniques. I opted for a micro format (A4 for the Europeans, 8 1/2 x 11 for others), which we designed with the assistance of Rodrigo Fino and Paula Ripoll in our Garcia Media Latinoamerica office in Buenos Aires. I mentioned at the time that by the year 2020, most newspapers



Dr. Mario Garcia, founder of Garcia Media with offices worldwide, has overseen the conversion of numerous newspapers to smaller formats. He has devoted more than 30 years to redesigning publications, and has personally collaborated with more than 500 news organizations. His personal involvement has defined large projects such as The Wall Street Journal, The Philadelphia Inquirer and Die

Zeit, as well as medium-size newspapers such as The Charlotte Observer, and smaller ones such as the Lawrence (Kan.) Journal-World. Mario founded the Graphics & Design program at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies (www.poynter.org), and has been a presenter, organizer and moderator for hundreds of educational programs at Poynter, IFRA, API, SND, IAPA and elsewhere.

would be converted to smaller formats. If that seminar were held today, I would place the date much sooner.

In the United States, it was the *San Francisco Examiner* that dared to make the transition from a traditional broadsheet to a classic tabloid about the same time that conversions were beginning to take place in Europe. As of this writing, the tide has changed dramatically, with several major U.S. newspapers announcing intentions to consider a smaller format.

Suddenly, tabloids are protagonists in a play about newspaper survival, adaptation to change and a spirit of renovation. Ironically, tabloid formats were always protagonists in the life of the reader. The tabloid wave has swept from New Zealand and Australia to the pampas of Argentina, and, of course, the four corners of Europe. It is, I believe, unstoppable. The tabloidization of newspapers is a global phenomenon.

We will see how, one by one, the largest and best known newspaper titles around the world will make the transition to smaller formats.

2 A little history

IT IS NOT SURPRISING that the birth of tabloids, around 1830, was accompanied by two characteristics that are, ironically, the same that motivate publishers and editors to convert to smaller formats today:

1. Catering to “readers in a hurry,” specifically in cities with large numbers of commuters in public transportation environments.
2. Offering a unique journalistic formula generous in human interest stories, police news, entertainment and sports.



A single definition of what a tabloid is simply does not exist. Not only do small formats vary in length and width – from the traditional tabloid (Times, of London) to Berliner (Le Monde, of France) to the micro (Kleine Zeitung, of Austria)— there are also stylistical differences that relate to content and overall philosophy of the newspaper. In the “visual track” of Garcia Media clients that runs through the bottom of this report, you will find representatives

of such variety, from the traditional tabloid with its big headlines and bright color palette (San Francisco Examiner) to the more classic tabloid (Newsday) to the poster-look tab (Liberation) to the alternative weekly (Philadelphia Weekly). The purpose of this report is to convey the excitement of small formats, and to emphasize that uniquely different content and design philosophies can be expressed through them.

The birth of tabloids was accompanied by two characteristics that are, ironically, the same that motivate publishers and editors to convert to smaller formats.

But there was always room for stories that led to what some historians call the “birth of investigative journalism,” as tabloid newspapers in the U.S. and the United Kingdom published extensive reportages about prostitution and police corruption.

However, it is with the early tabloids in large metropolitan areas that one first sees human interest stories on page one, presented with greater visual impact than ever before, with images playing as important a role as text. It was, indeed, Charles A. Dana, editor of *The New York Sun*, who announced to readers: “The Sun will specialize in presenting the news in a concise manner, with greater clarity, and will attempt to present a photographic report of significant events taking place in the world, but always doing it in a friendly, entertaining manner.”

Depending on which source one consults, tabloids, as we know them today, were born either in London or New York. According to Mitchell Stephens, a media historian, there isn’t any document about American journalism that places the tabloid as an original United States product, since the outside influences are considerable, especially those coming from Great Britain. Stephens adds that “London already had a thriving penny press before the concept would make its entrance into New York. And there is no doubt that American tabloids are inspired by the British model.”*

The first tabloid newspaper in the United States was *The Daily Graphic* (1873-1889), followed by the unsuccessful *The Daily Continent*, which published

* Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved December 3, 2004, from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=28674>

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



24 SATA Zagreb, Croatia

This new daily in Croatia was designed to make reading faster, more pleasurable, and was aimed at the “digital-age reader.” The newspaper is entirely sans serif; headlines are set in Interstate. Because the 24 SATA rotary press allows color on every page, with clean, clear reproduction, we opted for more use of color in

headlines and other typographic elements, such as quotes. Lead headlines almost always carry a word in burgundy. Architecturally, double pages take precedence here, allowing for one dominant photo per spread, surrounded by smaller images which evoke cell-phone or digital camera images. These popular photos are usually arranged to form the shape of the letter L from left to right on the spreads.

only briefly during 1891. If, however, we are discussing large-circulation tabloids, it is *London's Daily Mirror* (1903) that can be considered the pioneer in the genre. It was created by Alfred C. Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe), who went on to become a giant of the press in his time. *The Daily Mirror* was, since its inception, a sensationalized tabloid, emphasizing crime, sex and entertainment, a successful formula that led it to sell one million daily copies by 1909.

London's *Daily Mirror* is also linked to the creation of the first mass circulation tabloid in the United States, the *New York Daily News*. As historians tell us, Lord Northcliffe imagined that someone would sooner or later produce a newspaper in the style of the *Daily Mirror* in the United States. That someone happened to be a captain in the U.S. Army, Joseph Medill Patterson, grandson of one of America's greatest journalistic figures, Joseph Medill. Patterson and his cousin, Robert McCormick, were partners at *The Chicago Tribune* since 1914.

The two joined forces in New York to produce a tabloid inspired by the *Daily Mirror*. That is how the *New York Daily News* was born. An instant success, the *Daily News* was selling 1.32 million copies daily by 1929 – making it the largest circulation daily in the U.S.

Tabloid journalism in the U.S. seems to be incredibly linked to the Medill family. In 1940, a Long Island, New York, tabloid is born aimed at a more educated audience. *Newsday*, which was redesigned by our team at Garcia Media in 2004, was the creation of Alicia Patterson, daughter of Joseph Medill Patterson, who knew, perhaps instinctively, that her new newspaper would be a tabloid in format – even though it would not follow the “standard” tabloid content formula. And what a success it became, and remains today.

The historical importance of *Newsday* – and of Miss Patterson's visionary creation – helps debunk the myth that “tabloid” means “down market” content and audience. *Newsday* gave the tabloid format respectability. It could be

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Newsday

New York, NY, USA

In February 2004, Newsday unveiled its first dramatic visual transformation in 25 years. More than just new fonts and color palette, this project involved a total reorganization of the content,

addition of new content, and increased navigation to allow readers to move more quickly through the paper's many sections. We concentrated on three major points: Navigation, elegant typography and a new color palette to bring visual order to the pages.

a small format newspaper, but still win Pulitzer prizes, devote itself to outstanding journalism and attract readers who expect more from their newspapers than a light fare of crime and entertainment news.

Therefore, it is imperative today that we abandon this notion, once and for all, that the smaller format is synonymous with a less credible, sensationalistic press. Industry leaders must begin to understand that a contemporary newspaper can be serious, smart and classic in its design style. And, at the same time, it can be packaged in a compact, more manageable format.

3 Tabloid: Not a dirty word

NOBODY DOUBTS THIS FACT: Many editors and publishers still relate tabloid to lower quality journalism. Despite the recent success of quality newspapers, such as *The Times of London*, converting to tabloid, the “myth” of tabloids as less than quality prevails in the minds of many inside newsrooms. I find the myth difficult to debunk, despite what research shows us about readers preferring the smaller formats (a majority of readers, especially younger ones, do), as well as the circulation success of those newspapers making the transition. (Sixteen newspapers that changed formats have seen an average 4.6 percent increase in circulation.*)

It is this myth of the tabloid or, better yet, the irrational fear of some editors and publishers of the word “tabloid” itself that keeps many from contemplating the idea of testing their newspaper in a smaller format. Using stereotypes, and even worse, formats, to determine what constitutes serious versus sensational journalism is not going to lead to better products.

A probable question is: What constitutes serious journalism today? For many editors, it begins with a newspaper in the broadsheet format. For readers,

*“The Bottom Line of Broadsheet-to-Compact Format Change,” an INMA Report, February 2005



Het Parool Amsterdam, Holland

One of Holland’s best known dailies, Het Parool, converted to a tabloid in March 2004. But it was more than just a change of format. The newspaper approached the transition as an opportunity to rethink content, style of headline writing, use of photos, and even how advertising

was sold, switching from a space-based method to a modular system, with much success. At the same time, Het Parool’s editor Erik van Gruijthuisen thought the change allowed his newspaper to become more of an Amsterdam daily, which gave it instant appeal with younger readers.

Going “tabloid” isn’t just changing the newspaper’s format. It’s a state of mind which translates into content that is more appealing and more personal.

fortunately, it is decided by content and presentation, *not* on the size of the sheet on which it is printed. In my almost 35 years in this business, I have never participated in a focus group or reader test in which two formats – one large, one smaller – were presented when the majority of readers did not go immediately toward the smaller format. This is a trend I have seen in the United States as early as 1984, and, since then, globally.

Simon Kelner, editor-in-chief of London’s *The Independent*, one of the first quality newspapers to make a 2003 switch to a tabloid format, has said that “newspapers are the only product whose size and form are determined by those who produce it, and not by those who consume it.” *The Independent* and *The Times* are both excellent examples of successful conversions, not just because they adopted the small-

er formats readers preferred, but because editors of both newspapers also looked at content enhancements, styles of storytelling, and ways to make their products more fun and easy to navigate as they went to a different, more manageable format. This is as it should be with redesign in any format.

The numbers plainly testify to the success of these conversions: *The Independent’s* circulation rose 15.5 percent versus its pre-tabloid numbers; *The Times* experienced a 4 percent increase over its pre-tabloid numbers.

It helps to have an open mind and to look at the larger picture. In the case of newspapers, it pays to consider that going “tabloid” isn’t just changing a newspaper’s format. It’s a state of mind, as well, which translates into content that is more appealing and more personal, redefining the old definition of news. It includes more people coverage and trends starting on page one

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Reflejos Chicago, IL USA

For this weekly tabloid serving Latino readers in suburban Chicago, Garcia Media helped refine a new strategy for bilingual publishing. The free distribution was increased by 40,000.

New “layers” of information were added to appeal to younger and time-starved readers. Training was critical to allow a small staff to execute this dynamic design — highlighted by a modern, bold palette of typography, color and architecture.

regardless of page size. More often today we are seeing that a form of “tabloidization” for newspapers is taking place by using more content that has traditionally been described as “soft” news on page one.

For example, at *The New York Times*, there is rarely a front page today without a “trend” or lifestyle article. A recent front page carried an article about young men in New York wearing their shirts untucked, even when wearing a tie. Other front page stories have ranged from furniture and style to technology to food. The new definition of serious journalism allows for such themes as well. In a world where readers are constantly bombarded by information, perhaps the “trend” story on page one is the only item that carries a sense of “discovery.” It’s the one item the reader has not heard or read about before.

4 The role of free newspapers

ONE CANNOT BE TRUTHFUL in describing the popularity of small formats for newspapers without crediting one important phenomenon: free newspapers. Whether one reads them or not, free newspapers are a presence not to be ignored. And they are not likely to disappear anytime soon. And, yes, all of the free newspapers that have sprung up from Stockholm to Seattle are published in tabloid format or smaller – another reminder to the usually larger, broadsheet established newspaper in these cities that readers do prefer the smaller formats.

Free newspapers obviously have made editors and publishers take a second look at what they do and how they do it. With this introspection has come much better content, livelier design, a sense of competition, and, why not say it, more inclination for the publisher of a broadsheet to start considering going tabloid, or as many prefer to call it, “compact,” a word that does not drag with it the myth of less than serious journalism. Compact in a newspaper could be a

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Bohuslänningen Uddevalla, Sweden

This traditional regional, published since 1878 in a picturesque coastal town in Sweden, went from broadsheet to tabloid with much success. “This was not an easy decision to make,” said Tommy Hermansson, editor and publisher. “We had to do this

methodically, testing to see that our conservative readers were ready for the change.” The result? “Overwhelmingly positive attitudes followed our conversion. Readers in this traditional area adapted well to the smaller format. We are still gaining readers and advertising. If we have any regrets is that we should have done it earlier.”

luxury version of something good and credible, just as compact in a luxury automobile brand such as Mercedes Benz or Jaguar could mean the same absolutely wonderful machine, just smaller.

5 The English revolution, circa 2003

BRITISH TABLOIDS ARE LEGENDARY within the genre for their huge headlines, the photos of the topless Page 3 girl, exclusive reports on the latest monarchic saga, not to mention front page gossip about sports and entertainment figures. In London, 11 newspapers hit the streets daily, with styles as varied as Londoners themselves, from the popular *Sun* with its bright color palette, to the conservative *Financial Times*, printed on its trademark peach-colored paper.

Amid this cacophony of styles, one of the titles, *The Independent*, after losing circulation for many years, makes an attempt to stand out and becomes one of the first newspapers to publish in two formats: broadsheet and tabloid. The reader's first impression was surprise and shock, then acceptance followed by what normally happens, imitation. The success of *The Independent* experiment, which was started with the Sept. 30, 2003 edition, propelled in a major way the tabloid revolution that we have experienced since.

The Independent's pioneering adventure into the world of tabloid conversion begins with a visit by its editor, Simon Kelner, to the supermarket: "It was a moment of clarity," he said. "I realized that one can buy toothpaste in a variety of tube sizes, so I asked myself: 'why can't we do the same with newspapers?'"

So he did, starting with both broadsheet and tabloid editions daily, until May 2004 when, reassured by the success of their tabloid, the editors felt they could just publish in one small format, abandoning the broadsheet for the daily, and leaving that format only for their Sunday edition. The results continue

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Kleine Zeitung Graz, Austria

Published in the smallest possible format among the "compacts" (23 by 30 cm) the *Kleine Zeitung* ("Small newspaper") displays all pages in color. It is a general circulation daily, with strategic use of photos, ranging from one

dominant visual image on each page to small photos that fall in the category of what we call "visual briefs." This paper is an example of how to make the best use of a front page to display a visual lead that may or may not have anything to do with the lead story of the day.

to be positive, altering the course of a 10-year circulation decline in 10 weeks. *The Independent's* daring adventure into tabloid has forever changed the horizon of London daily journalism, and the perception of tabloids by publishers and editors worldwide.

6 The Times likes what it sees

HOWEVER, IT WAS A sort of next door neighbor of *The Independent* that watched the paper's experiment closely, and acted on it. Who would have guessed only five years ago that the honorable *Times of London* would ever become a tabloid? Few failed to take note Nov. 1, 2004, when the first tabloid-only *Times* hit the streets of London - a process set in motion Nov. 26, 2003. *The Times* began to publish parallel editions as both broadsheet and tabloid, following the dual-format model of *The Independent*. Its front page referred to the change as "*The Times*, the compact newspaper."

The Times' tabloid version is typical of what many classic, traditional newspapers do when converting to a tabloid format: incorporate too much text on page one, and treat inside pages following the same layout principles that work well on broadsheets but not at all on tabloids. (See "Contemplating a Switch" section in this document.) But experience tells us this is a normal process of adaptation, which lasts until editors adjust their mentality from one format to another. Eventually, the paper emerges as a true tab, with more graphic presentation on page one, better navigation to the inside and more color.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Liberation Paris, France

Liberation, a publication considered to be the "darling of left wing French intellectuals" for more than 30 years, has long been one of the world's most admired tabloid designs. Garcia Media was asked to redesign Liberation in 2003

to give it a more unified, harmonious look, including better navigation and better utilization of photos. Since Liberation was long known for its full poster front page, the redesign attempted to preserve this spirit, while adding more promotional headlines to the front page.

7 Vivan los tabloides!

REGARDLESS OF WHERE the conversation takes place about tabloid conversions, one thing remains constant: Spain raised its tabloid flag first in the late '70s, leading the way for what would become some of the best designed small format newspapers in the world. The conversions were to take place at a time when all of Spain basked in a new spirit of renovation and rebirth, following the death of Francisco Franco, who had run the country with a stern hand for more than four decades. With newly acquired freedoms, the arts flourished in Spain, as did technology.

In the rest of the world more newspapers were beginning to print color. And, as if to break with a past that many Spaniards preferred to forget, the old “sabanas” or “broadsheets” would no longer be the canvas on which to print newspapers. One after another, newspapers converted to smaller formats across the Iberian peninsula. New newspapers such as *El País* and *Diario 16* started it all, and the rest followed: a real festival of good typography, elegant design, a revolution in the use of infographics. All in small formats.

For many admirers of Spanish newspapers, the question would be: “Why are all these fantastically designed newspapers tabloids? Did the Spanish editors and designers know something that would take the rest of the world two decades to find out?” Perhaps, but they also infused those elegantly designed small-format newspapers with quality, aggressive investigative journalism. Add to that a voracious appetite of Spanish readers in the post-Franco era for news and analysis and it was a winning formula for circulation, too.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Diário de Notícias Madeira, Portugal

Diário de Notícias converted from broadsheet to tabloid in July 1986, but Garcia Media redesigned it in 1993, then retouched the design in April 2002. Published in the colorful island of Madeira, Diário is read by 90,000 of a total population of 130,000.

Its front page uses the “mini-poster” concept, emphasizing a dominant photo and headline. “Our format and design are successful. We increased subscriptions and street sales about 15%, especially after we introduced a daily sports supplement,” says Dr. Jose Camara, publisher.

8 Scandinavian conversions

“The GP tab is a tremendous success. We have 8,500 new subscribers and will reach 10,000. It truly is amazing.”

PER ANDERSSON-EK
GÖTEBORGS-POSTEN

WHEN IT COMES TO CONVERSIONS to small formats, nobody does it more ceremoniously, well planned and in perfect harmony than the Scandinavians, but specifically, the Swedes. As in a well-orchestrated choreography, three of the country’s largest circulation dailies – *Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm, *Göteborgs-Posten*, Gothenburg, and *Sydsvenskan*, of Malmö – said goodbye to the broadsheet the morning of Oct. 5, 2004, after a collaboration that involved synchronizing their advertising and marketing efforts. Earlier, another Stockholm newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet*, had made the move to tabloid, and also the regional newspaper *Bohuslänningen*, of Uddevalla, leaving only three newspapers with broadsheet formats in Sweden.

The Göteborgs-Posten, a newspaper for which I have served as design consultant for 11 years, began its journey toward tabloid conversion in an evolutionary way over a two-year period, first converting its Book 3 (culture and entertainment), then Book 2 (sports and politics), while readers kept asking: “Why not change the whole newspaper to tabloid?” But the wait was worth it, and today, after the conversion, the *GP* counts 10,000 more subscribers among its readers.

In Norway, the tabloid phenomenon has been noticeable. “The figures tell the success story,” says Eric Wilberg, of Wilberg Management, an Oslo firm specializing in media studies. “In 1966 there were 16 tabloid newspapers in Norway, and 136 broadsheets. In 2005, that figure is almost the opposite, with five newspapers remaining broadsheets, and 146 tabloids.”

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Göteborgs Posten Gothenburg, Sweden

The GP went from broadsheet to tabloid in an evolutionary way, initially changing its section three (Culture), then a year later its second section (Sports, Business), and eventually, went to a full tabloid.

Per Andersson-Ek, Managing Editor. Goteborg Post described the change: “Our readers wanted us to be a tabloid since we changed the first section two years ago. The result has been terrific and far beyond our expectations; we’ve added over 10,000 new paid subscribers.”

“Street sales for Het Parool were up five to 10 percent after the first few weeks.”

ERIK VAN GRUIJTHUIJSEN
HET PAROOL

In Denmark, the small, left-leaning daily, *Information*, was the first to jump to a tabloid format, on Oct. 30, 2004. The change was promoted as “a step to make reading easier, without altering our editorial content.” Nikolai Thyssen, a staff journalist, said: “This is our second time converting to a tab, since we began as a tabloid newspaper during World War II, then from 1945 to 1947 switched to broadsheet.

“Then that year we converted to tabloid, but without much success, so in less than a year we went back to being a broadsheet. Now we are proud that, even though we are one of the smallest dailies in Denmark, we are the first to make the jump to tabloid.”

Other Danish dailies are in the process of considering a change to tabloid, and one of the largest ones, *Berlingske Tidende*, has changed all its sections to tabloid, except the first.

9 Europe says YES to compacts

THE TABLOID FORMAT HAS SEDUCED readers throughout the continent:

■ **Germany** The Germans prefer to call tabloids *compact*, but it is here that the tabloid fever has run the hottest, with the most prominent conversion being that of *Die Welt*, which, like *The Times* and *The Independent* in London, started in 2004 with parallel broadsheet-compact editions daily. *Die Welt's* experiment has the compact edition printed only in selected cities, not all over Germany. Soon, a compact edition of the wildest broadsheet almost anywhere, *Bild*, may be pub-

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



20 Cent Cottbus and Saarbrücken, Germany

Started in 2004 to appeal to young readers in the former East Germany, 20 Cent, in its A4 micro format, soon became popular with its targeted audience. “We designed it to be a photographic record of the

news of the day; a visual surprise on each page,” says Jan Kny, of Garcia Media. Says Frank Hudecke, publisher: “The young readers like 20 Cent, and its price, so we expanded to a different city (Saarbrücken), with the same successful concept of short news, lots of photos and a quick read.”

lished as well. Among new papers sporting small formats are *NEWS*, published in Frankfurt, and *20 Cent*, in Cottbus, created for the “iPod generation.” *20 Cent*, a Garcia Media design, was voted Most Innovative at the European Newspaper Awards 2004.

■ **Holland** In Amsterdam, the traditional daily *Het Parool* converted to tabloid March 31, 2004, increasing its circulation and profile vastly by gaining young readers and being voted Best Regional Design in the European Newspaper Awards 2004 competition.

■ **Switzerland** The free newspaper *20 Minutes* has become a success in Zurich since it appeared three years ago. But other dailies, such as *The Blick*, are now making the move to tabloid. *Le Matin*, the French-language daily, converted to tabloid in 2002, and the editor of *Tages Anzeiger*, the second largest circulation newspaper, says that it would be “imaginable that we would start publishing some of our sections in the tabloid format.”

■ **Luxembourg** In this tiny country, the German-language daily, *Luxemburger Wort*, traded its very traditional broadsheet, gray look for a colorful tabloid in March 2005.

■ **Belgium** There is much conversion activity taking place here. Already *De Morgen*, one of the leading Flemish language dailies, had become successful in a small format. Then *De Standaard*, a Garcia Media project, followed in May 2004. In 2005, the French-language daily, *Le Soir*, will switch from broadsheet to Berliner, also working with the Garcia Media team.

■ **Italy** The editors of Italian dailies also have decided that perhaps “piccolo” is better when it comes to newspapers. Some already have made the switch to tabloid; others are contemplating it. According to Luca Michelli, member of the ASIG Service, a newspaper organization,

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



De Standaard Brussels, Belgium

In March 2004, a new De Standaard appeared in the streets of picturesque Brussels, smaller, yet with the same sense of credible, traditional journalism and gravitas that has made it a classic daily in Belgium.

Garcia Media worked on the redesign as a broadsheet, as well as a tabloid. “I want to make our newspaper, which is already one of the best read in Belgium, easier for our readers,” said Peter Vandermeersch, editor in chief of De Standaard.

already *Il Messagero* (Rome), *Il Mattino* (Naples), *Il Restodel Carlino* (Bologna), *La Nazione* (Florence) and *Il Giorno* (Milan) have converted. And one of Italy's most respected dailies, *La Repubblica*, began as and continues to be a Berliner.

10 Latin American resistance?

IT APPEARS NATURAL that the vibrancy and energy of tabloids would have an instant cultural appeal among editors and publishers. Not so fast, however, in some areas of the world. Historically, the influence of American newspapers has been enormous in Latin America, and, therefore, a large majority of newspapers in this part of the world appear as broadsheets. As a result, a newspaper in Bogota has more to do with one in Kansas City than one in Spain. This is beginning to change as more editors and publishers in Latin America become aware of the tabloid revolution, which they follow with great interest.

■ **Argentina** Ironically, it has been in Latin America where one could easily abandon the myth of tabloids representing a lesser quality newspaper. One could say that the tabloid format has found some of its most successful exponents as a quality newspaper in Argentina, through *Clarín*, one of the largest circulation tabloid newspapers published in Spanish. *Clarín* has a solid journalistic tradition, not to mention its use of photos and graphics, that has placed it consistently on the list of best designed newspapers in the world. Starting in the 1980s, all new newspapers launched in Argentina, with various journalistic formulas, followed the tabloid format. This includes the highly regarded financial newspaper, *Ambito Financiero*, as well as the newer *Buenos Aires Económico*. In addition, also in the 1980s, *Página*

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



El Litoral

Santa Fe, Argentina

In the words of Maria del Carmen Caputto, editor: "A format change is not just a modification of page measurements. It is a total rethinking that involves all areas of the newspaper,

not just the editorial folks. El Litoral has four simple ideas: rethinking of our content, reorganization of our sections, creating a new style for the newspaper and giving it a completely crisp new look."

12 was born in Buenos Aires with aggressive, but savvy, journalism and contemporary graphics and design. The traditional quality newspaper *La Nación*, of Buenos Aires, has converted its classified section, as well as other supplements, to tabloid. The Argentine regional press also has seen the rise of new tabloids, including the successful *UNO*, published in Mendoza. In 2005, the Garcia Media Latinoamerica team assisted in the conversion to tabloid of *El Litoral*, Santa Fe's traditional newspaper.

■ **Brazil** While most newspapers still follow the broadsheet format (many publish in the 50-inch format), one quality newspaper, *Zero Hora*, in Porto Alegre, has appeared as a tabloid for decades, with much success. And when the company that owns *Zero Hora* decided to publish a sister publication in a neighboring city, the tabloid format was also used. The success of the new newspaper, *Diario Catarinense*, was instant, and this Garcia Media design remains one of the most vibrantly designed quality newspapers in Brazil.

■ **Chile** *Ultimas Noticias* and *La Tercera* represent examples of extremely successful quality newspapers published as tabloids. In September 2002, the Garcia Media Latinoamerica team assisted with the conversion of *El Mercurio* of Valparaiso, recorded as one of the oldest Spanish-language dailies in the world, from broadsheet to tabloid.

■ **Peru** The country's leading newspaper, *El Comercio*, launched a new tabloid newspaper, *Peru 21*, on Aug. 21, 2002.

■ **Central America** The quality press has embraced tabloid formats for such newspapers as *El Diario de Hoy* and *La Prensa Grafica*, of San Salvador, *Mi Diario*, in Panama, *Nuestro Diario* in Guatemala and *El Heraldo*, in Honduras.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



El Mercurio Valparaiso, Chile

This 178-year-old newspaper made the change to tabloid even after focus groups said "NO." The reality was different, according to Marco Antonio Pinto, editor: "Not only did traditional readers NOT abandon us, but we gained new younger ones, resulting in 8% more

readers daily. We continue to grow and expect it to be at 10% by the end of 2005. Advertisers are happy too, with 2004 being our best year. Converting is not just a change of format, it must be accompanied by more creative content. Our most proud gain is that of young readers. Our new format has done that."

“We had to address declining circulation. We were nervous about putting out a tabloid, but we’re making sure the paper has a future.”

STEVE NEWHOUSE
THE JERSEY JOURNAL

■ **Columbia** *El Tiempo* relaunched its regional editions as tabloids five years ago, with much success.

■ **Dominican Republic** In Santo Domingo, *El Caribe* converted from broadsheet to Berliner format in March 2004 and saw its circulation rise nearly 26 percent.

■ **Puerto Rico** No historical account of the impact of tabloids in Latin America would be complete without a reference to *El Nuevo Dia*, of Puerto Rico. It originated a formula for the lively, graphically appealing, big headline and “big heart” newspaper, and soon became the leader of its market in San Juan, which it remains today.

11 USA tabloid contemplations begin

THE ONE QUESTION one gets when conducting seminars around the world is: “When do you think American papers will embrace the tabloid phenomenon?” “When will we see that vast landscape of broadsheets that extend from Miami to Los Angeles making conversions to tabloids? “Is it possible that the Americans could be the last bastion of broadsheets in the world?”

Let’s remember that the tabloid as we know it had an early start in New York City in the 1870s. True, the tabloid style born at that time defined the iconic sensational newspaper, which probably contributed to the birth of broadsheets to define serious journalism.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Crain's Chicago Business, Chicago, IL USA

This flagship of the Crain's empire of business publications underwent a total makeover in 2004. Ron Reason, of Garcia Media's Chicago office, said highlights included a “rebooking” into three distinct sections, a tightening of stories, and a dramatically increased use of infographics and other layering devices.

Today, conversion to tabloid among publishers of broadsheets is beginning to take place. I would say that we are in a Tabloid Contemplation mode, which would have appeared unimaginable only three years ago.

The New York Times chronicled this progress in its March 21, 2005 editions (“The News Is Big. It’s the Papers That Are Getting Small”), making specific references to *The Jersey Journal*, the 138-year-old daily published in Jersey City, N.J., which announced its intentions to convert to tabloid the next month. The article quotes Steve Newhouse, editor-in-chief: “We had to address the declining circulation of the daily. We were nervous about putting out a tabloid, but we’re making sure that *The Jersey Journal* has a future.”

But is there a future as a tabloid for other American newspapers? The answer is “yes,” and we will witness a positive shift in mentality among editors and publishers, with some large-circulation metropolitan dailies making the switch to some type of a smaller format. I predict it will be the Berliner format that will win the day, as it fits nicely in a transition from the much-used 50-inch web to a trimmer sheet. The Berliner format also allows editors to make a change, without going to their much dreaded “real tabloid” format, for which many still have little respect. Editors think the tab might drag down the journalistic quality of their newspapers, at least in the eyes of the reader - something which is not so, but which the Berliner format resolves easily and effectively.

But these editors and publishers don’t have to look far to find examples of notable small formats right in the U.S.:

- **Newsday** The quality newspaper of Long Island has been a tabloid since its creation in 1940. Its success is based on a well balanced dose of very local news and interpretive reporting, combined with a complete national/international report, along with smart opinion pages and award winning editorial cartoons.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Quick, Dallas, TX, USA

Like many newspapers, The Dallas Morning News was looking to appeal to younger readers. It hit the target audience square with the launch of Quick, a daily tabloid full of national news, local news, entertainment,

business and sports. But rather than repurposing Dallas Morning News editorial, they created an entirely new product, written, edited and packaged for young readers. Quick is now the no.2 circulation paper in the Dallas-Ft. Worth metro area.

- **Chicago Sun-Times** This prominent tab in the heartland recently underwent a gradual but total redesign that resulted in a more upscale, contemporary look. Its bold front page features a menu-only approach, with lively headlines and art promoting inside stories and actual story text rarely starting out front. It has a longstanding reputation for aggressive sports reporting and solid investigative news.
- **Red Streak, Red Eye** New in the tabloid horizon in the U.S. are these “young readers” newspapers in cities like Chicago and Dallas. These are published by major dailies (the *Chicago Tribune* publishes *Red Eye*; *Chicago Sun-Times, Red Streak*; *The Dallas Morning News, Quick*). The front pages promote trends and features, display photographs of young people, and the definition of news is tied to entertainment, sports and “whatever the young are talking about today.”
- **The Christian Science Monitor** This is one of the most respected newspapers in the world for its quality journalism. Since 1975, the *Monitor* made a quiet, but successful, switch to tabloid, introducing color photography and graphics, but maintaining its same level of award-winning reporting and editing.
- **The San Francisco Examiner** One of the most discussed conversions from broadsheet to tabloid, the *Examiner* made the switch in May 2002, with a design created by Garcia Media. The change was more than just in the size of the pages; along with the transformation to tabloid came a new direction in tone and content. *The Examiner* became a free newspaper, has undergone changes in ownership and management, and is now gaining some notice, as is its new sister publication in Washington D.C., *The Washington Examiner*.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



San Francisco Examiner San Francisco, CA USA

In 2002, we engineered the switch of the 115-year-old Examiner from broadsheet to tabloid. With its new look, the paper sought to distinguish itself in a dynamic market and attract more advertising and readers.

The paper also wanted to capitalize on the commuter market, where the format is more convenient. The new look reflects reading habits of the 21st century, with clear labeling and navigation, direct headlines, concise summaries and a bold use of color for navigation.

Why change to a smaller format?

CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES favor considering a switch to a small format:

- Newspapers that are in the process of “rethinking” their entire operations, from journalistic content to repositioning in the marketplace, to innovative advertising strategies.
- Metropolitan markets with a large number of readers who use public transportation. These cities often already have the competing presence of a free newspaper vying for the attention of potential readers (and advertisers).
- Competitive markets with all broadsheets, where perhaps one newspaper would adopt the smaller format to identify itself as unique.
- Newspapers that have experienced an abrupt drop in readership, needing to reinvent themselves. Format is one important signal to the reader – especially younger readers – that change is taking place.
- Newspapers everywhere whose editors listen to what their readers are telling them: Small is preferred.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE GARCIA MEDIA PORTFOLIO



Philadelphia Weekly Philadelphia, PA USA

Philadelphia Weekly, one of the largest alternative newsweeklies in the nation, underwent a dramatic redesign by Garcia Media. Readers saw significant changes, including fresh, impactful typography throughout; improved organization

and navigation; a revitalized Arts section, new cover design and logo emphasizing the initials “PW.” “The redesign went well and we are pleased with the new look,” said publisher Nancy Stuski. “This project was more than just a redesign; it was a full re-launch of our new brand.”

Contemplating a switch?

10 WAYS TO MAKE IT EASIER

- 1. Forget the techniques** of laying out a broadsheet. You are now working with a smaller canvas.
- 2. Don't try to squeeze** your entire broadsheet and its contents into the smaller format. Instead, here is an opportunity to rethink, revise and to reinvent your newspaper, so while adapting to a new form, you also incorporate new content, and rethink the presence of your front page, especially, to make it more visual and less gray.
- 3. Involve your reporters** since they will have to write shorter articles, more focused and direct.
- 4. Involve your photo editor** and all photographers since photos play an important role in the smaller format. For example, while big photos continue to be utilized, there is also a greater need for smaller images, which would have disappeared on a broadsheet, but which stand out in the tabloid format.
- 5. Revise the flow** of content, so that you assign "destination" pages every 6 to 8 pages. Because sectionalizing is a bit more difficult in tabloid formats, one must make an effort to keep the reader's interest focused. Destination pages do that. What are destination pages? If, for example, you have run six pages of straight news reports, then suddenly a page with two opinion columns, or with brief items and what I call a "staccato" tempo, break the monotony and bring the reader back.
- 6. Consider the role** of infographics: smaller is better here. Infographics on a tabloid page must be simple and to the point, devoid of decoration, and, if possible, fit into one or two columns.
- 7. Review your advertising** positioning and distribution and use the switch to the tabloid to incorporate new formulas, innovative approaches, and, perhaps, a modular system to sell ads.
- 8. Make the front page** as much a poster as possible, with a large dominant photo and headline that signal "lead piece," then followed by good navigational devices, and, if possible, text only for one story.
- 9. Create a color palette** to help readers identify content with sections, if possible. Remember, it is more complicated to organize a tab than a broadsheet. Color can help here.
- 10. Consider using back pages** to introduce a new section within a section. Many newspapers use the last page of the newspaper to start Sports or Lifestyle. The so called "back doors" allow an editor to give a section its own opening page, yet not necessarily at the front of the book.

Our Client List

In addition to our lengthy roster of broadsheet redesigns, the Garcia Media team is proud to have directed more tabloid redesigns, and to have converted more broadsheets to tabloid, than any other design firm worldwide.

Following is a sampling of our tabloid clients, as of May 2005:

CONVERSIONS TO TABLOID FROM BROADSHEET

El Litoral, Santa Fe, Argentina
 Goteborgs Posten, Gothenburg, Sweden
 De Standaard, Brussels, Belgium
 Le Soir, Brussels, Belgium (in progress)
 Bohuslaningen, Uddavalla, Sweden
 Het Parool, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 The Observer (in progress), London, UK
 Diario de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain
 El Mercurio, Valparaiso, Chile
 Diario Catarinense, Santa Catarina, Brazil
 Main Post, Wurzburg, Germany
 San Francisco Examiner, USA
 El Mundo, Puerto Rico
 El Tiempo, Bogota, Colombia (regional sections)
 Diario de Noticias, Madeira, Portugal
 The Miami Herald (Tropical Life section)

TRADITIONAL TABLOID REDESIGNS

Newsday, Long Island, NY, USA
 La Prensa Grafica, El Salvador, San Salvador
 The New Paper, Singapore
 Liberation, Paris
 Hamburger Morgenpost, Germany
 Yeddiyth Ahronoth, Israel
 Midi Libre, Montpelier, France

Pioneer Press Newspapers, suburban Chicago, USA
 Diario de Noticias, Madeira, Portugal
 Star, Kuala Lumpur
 Bluffton News, Hilton Head, S.C., USA
 Quick, Dallas, TX, USA
 Boston Herald, USA
 Ultimas Noticias, Dominican Republic
 Diario de Noticias, Lisbon
 24 Sata, Zagreb, Croatia
 20-Cent, Cottbus, Germany
 Nowy Dziennik (in progress)
 Our Sunday Visitor (USA national Catholic weekly)
 Kleine Zeitung, Graz, Austria
 Crain's Chicago Business, USA
 Sudkurier, Konstanz, Germany
 Lausiter Rundschau, Cottbus, Germany
 Kicker (sports newspaper), Hamburg, Germany
 Trier Volksfreund, Trier, Germany
 Tiroler Anzeigen, Tirol, Austria
 Salzburger Nanchrichten, Salzburg, Austria
 Reflejos, suburban Chicago, USA
 Philadelphia Weekly, USA
 Bristol Phoenix and five sister tabloids
 of East Bay, R.I., USA
 Bainbridge Island Review and six sister tabloids
 of Puget Sound, Wash., USA

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 Garcia Media

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Contact Garcia Media

To **contact** Garcia Media about a conversion to tabloid, a traditional redesign for newspapers or magazines, an evaluation of your product or strategy, or management and staff training programs, **contact Dr. Mario Garcia directly at mario@garcia-media.com or phone (813) 872-0875.**

To date, more than 500 organizations worldwide have trusted the Garcia Media team with helping communicate their messages more effectively. The firm's successes with *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Miami Herald*, *Newsday*, *Die Zeit*, as well as many smaller community papers and specialty publications, have given it an unparalleled reputation in newspaper design, and the same successful philosophy of "thinking like the audience" has crossed over to magazines, web sites and corporate communications. The firm has offices worldwide.

For regular updates of our work, and more details and visuals from many of the case studies presented here, visit our web site, www.garcia-media.com

Tampa - Headquarters

PO Box 172059
Tampa, FL 33672-0059
Tel: 813.872.0875
Fax: 813.872.0962
info@garcia-media.com

Chicago

540 W. Aldine Ave., Suite E
Chicago, IL 60657
Tel: 773.562.7464
ron@garcia-media.com

New York City

350 Central Park West, 6l
New York, NY 10025
Tel: 917.295.0947
kelly@garcia-media.com

Canada

9 Meadowglen Circle R.R. 5
Kemptville, Ontario K0G 1J0
Tel: 613.258.1734
Fax: 613.1258.9927
Pegie@garcia-media.com

Germany

Neuer Wall 35
20354 Hamburg
Germany
Tel: +49 40 32 57 82 10
Fax: +49 40 32 57 82 28
jan.kny@garcia-media.de

Spain

Maisonave, 9, 8º A
03003 Alicante-Spain
Tel: +34 965 13 20 22
Tel: +34 965 13 20 23
fortanet@imacom.net

Latin America

Guemes 4149 Piso 5 Oficina A
Buenos Aires Argentina
CP 1425
Tel: +54+11+4832 3915