

Convenience and speed

Peter Ciliberto of C-Direct says we should learn from music and video stores

Over the next decade, some of the new technologies that are just starting to impact newsagencies will become pervasive. Like photo mini labs, music stores and video stores, newsagents will need to adopt a new business model in order to adapt to the digital revolution.

Newsagents are already experiencing declining sales of newspapers and magazines. Is this going to stabilise or even slow down? Probably not.

Today's consumers (and more importantly, tomorrow's consumers) want convenience and speed. Many already get instant news content sent to their computers and increasingly mobile phones. Why do they need to buy a newspaper? News consumers

terminal will progressively move to wireless paperless transactions direct to consumers' phones. This is already available, it's just not well known yet.

It's not all doom and gloom though. The local newsagency is still a strong entity, perhaps even a focus point, in many communities. Newsagents must work to retain the streams that still provide revenue, and to add new streams that maintain their relevance into the future.

1. In regional or rural centres, look at filling the gaps left by the very three declining stores mentioned – music, photo, video. embrace the 'store within a store' concept.
2. Embrace new technology as it arrives. Don't ignore it – it's not going away! You can range and sell new tech

Facebook, Twitter, Flickr or You Tube could possibly wipe out up to 50% of your current greeting card business

can elect to receive news items of their specific interest, delivered direct – fast and convenient.

We have changes already here and developments on the horizon that will directly affect traditional newsagency business.

1. Faster and cheaper broadband - especially if the National Broadband Network gets off the ground.
2. Faster and cheaper Mobile broadband – Telstra expects to be offering up to 100GB download speeds via their Next G Network within the next 12 months, equivalent to the NBN start up speed.
3. Apple iPad is already revolutionising the way people buy and read books and magazines.
4. Electronic services currently provided through your in-store

devices, like Pre Paid Wireless USB kits and mobile handsets.

3. Make your store friendly and convenient. Provide a good range of convenience store products. (Another gap to fill? Do you have a local convenience shop?)
4. Add more agencies to your range – LPO, Lotto, dry cleaning. There are still plenty of services that can't be delivered digitally!

So, is your newsagency ready for the next wave of technology? Complacency can be fatal. Just think how many photo shops, music stores or video shops were washed away by the initial waves! Without changes to the traditional business model, the same thing can and will happen to newsagents. Now is the time to prepare for tomorrow! 📱