

## **Should News Sites Have Paywalls?**

**Beatrice Harvey**

What do you do when you find that the content you're looking for is behind a paywall? Would you ever consider paying for your news or would you simply settle for sources that are free? If you could illegally circumvent the paywall would you? Is piracy concerning the news somehow less objectionable than stealing music, for instance?

The author notes that local newspapers and fact-based journalism are disappearing due to their struggle in the marketplace. Can we offer any compelling reasons for why we should step in and save these ventures from going under? If their products can't compete with their competitors' products, perhaps they shouldn't be saved.

Whose obligation is it to see that citizens are well-informed -- that they are made aware of local policy changes or the date of upcoming elections, that they hear about weather advisories or construction schedules. Does that burden fall to the citizen herself or someone else? Are news sites central to that task or should it be accomplished by other means?

The author cites a study that indicates only 16% of people in the U.S. have an online news subscription. Why might that figure be a cause for concern? Why might that statistic be less worrisome than it first appears?