

Irish Newspaper ABC Circulation July December 2018.

The latest 'Island of Ireland' report was released today outlining the continuing decline of newspaper sales in Ireland. The report compares newspaper sales for the last six months of 2018 to the same period in 2017. Looking at the overall figure first, it shows that over the year newspaper sales have declined by 10.4% in the twelve months.

The Sunday market fell by -9.9% and the morning market by -11.3%. A double-digit decline in the total market had not been experienced before, the closest being a 9.4% decline in 2010. That last testing of the -10% mark can be 'explained away' by one set of figures (2009) containing sales of the Sunday Tribune and the comparative (2010) set is without those sales because of its closure – thus the 9% decline.

The plunge into the double-digit decline could have been lessened, and possibly kept the market just into the single digit decline, except for a policy change by one publisher, something I'll return to.

#### Sunday Market

The Daily Star on Sunday had a poor year dropping 16%, admittedly from a low base. The publication doesn't editorialise or market to potential Irish purchasers and possibly only sees the publication at this point as a cash generative vehicle.

The Mail on Sunday and DMG is the publisher I alluded to earlier. In 2018 they stopped carrying bulks and this 'cold turkey' policy in 2018 makes the fall in their circulation look somewhat dramatic. In 2017 (the comparative year) the paper was carrying circa 6,000 bulks on average every Sunday – these are not there anymore which accounts somewhat for their headline -20% decline. Had they not had a change of heart on the bulks, their decline would still have been in or around -12%.

The Sunday Times takes this period's Least Worst award (for the larger circulating papers) managing 'only' a -5% decline in a market back nearly -10% overall. There's been a real drive by the paper of late to convert away from the print platform to its digital offering. At the time of writing you can get the six day Times Ireland and the Sunday Times digitally for €5 a month. I'd expect to see that take up filter into their ABC's over the next few months.

The three tabloids in the Sunday market took a hit of between -8% and -10%. The tabloid market saw some changes in 2018 with Media company 'Reach' (Daily Mirror etc) taking over the assets of Northern and Shell (Daily Star and Daily Express etc). The Irish side of that purchase was approved by the CCPS late last year as within those assets included a 50% in Independent Star Limited (Irish Daily Star) the other 50% owned by IM&M.

The Sunday Business Post (SBP) posted sales of 25,000 a decline of XXX on the previous year. On top of the print sales they have XXXX digital subscribers. Late in 2018 the Sunday Business Post was sold to Kilcullen Kapital Partners where a full review of the business began in October with an eye on a digital future. In their ABC certificate for July Dec 2017 they had 2055 (2,631 for JJ 2018) digital subscriptions. This time out their digital subscription base was XXXX meaning they have added XXXX subscribers in the last 12 months.

Irish Times 16,939 digital subscribers in JD 2017.

Irish Times 2796 digital subscribers in JD 2017.