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## Fourth estate follies

Trawling through the dustbins of the UK media

# Will readers rise to greet The New Day? Here's what I thought of Britain's new paper

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Time poor but glass half full. Anthony Devlin / PA Wire/Press Association Images

The New Day, Trinity Mirror's attempt to breathe life into the generally moribund world of UK national daily newspapers, has been launched after a £5m advertising campaign and much industry speculation about who its market is and whether it can survive when all other newspapers are finding it so tough.

But optimism is the name of the game here – and (professing to already know all about the paper's readership) Zoe Harris, the group marketing director at Trinity Mirror Group and the publishing director for The New Day, said last week:

The launch campaign captures the spirit of how our reader feels – upbeat and positive, and relishing life.

And that broadly sums up today's – free – first edition. Its front page is certainly distinctive – it should more realistically be called a cover, leading as it does with an emotive colour photograph and issue piece on child carers. The turquoise, black and white title font is anchored neatly with the platitudinous, inclusive buzz phrase: "Life's short: let's live it well".

Indeed, the message is very much that this *our* paper – on an otherwise content-free page eight we are told it's "strangely empty" because the editors want readers to fill it with "thoughts about what they've written" and "stories and pictures that you'd love to share".

## New best friend

There are two editorials in the space of three pages which remind us that New Day can't be "just another newspaper". It is, writes editor Alison Phillips, modern and upbeat for "modern, glass half-full kind of people". I think this folksiness a little overdone – the paper clearly wants to be your new best friend, full of sage advice and warm-hearted intentions.

**WEATHER**  
Rain across north-western areas, falling as snow in the Scottish mountains, will spread south-eastwards to affect north-west England and Wales later on. However, it will stay largely dry elsewhere, but turning rather cloudy. Fresh southerly winds in northern Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**WHAT SHALL I WEAR?**  
Hats, gloves, scarves and maybe a muffler to face a cold, and in some places, frosty morning.

**TAKE IT WITH YOU**  
An umbrella or raincoat will be useful in the north-west.

**TODAY**  
Sunrise 06.47  
Sunset 17.40  
Lighting up  
18.08 to 06.17

**SATURDAY'S EXTREMES**  
Warmest  
Helen's Bay 8C/46F  
Coldest  
Loch Glascarnoch  
-10C/14F  
Sunniest  
Lerwick 8.1 hours  
Wettest  
St. Mary's  
0.7cm/0.3inches



Just look at the weather map on the back page with its utterly futile info bites:

*What shall I wear? Hats, gloves, scarves and maybe a muffler to face a cold, and in some places, frosty morning.*

*Take it with you: An umbrella or raincoat will be useful in the north-west.*

Well, I never! Who knew?

## **Not your average paper**

But let's park the cynicism. This is indeed an unconventional newspaper. There is no sport at all on the back pages. There is some sort of round-up near the middle pages but the colour photographs occupy most of the space and there are no live reports nor is there any analysis. There is no TV guide, either. What news there is is digested and condensed. In fact, The New Day is more akin to a conventional women's magazine than it is to a recognisable tabloid.

And maybe that's the point – Simon Fox, the chief executive of Trinity Mirror, told BBC Radio Four's Today programme last week that the paper would place an emphasis on reporting for women – and I noticed that nearly all of the prominent writers were women, too; only five were male and they were all well known for their expertise outside journalism. Such as David Cameron.

The commitment from Alison Phillips is not to sensationalise the news or to terrify the readers. There is to be no political bias or traditional leader columns. With all this in mind, one of the chief difficulties of the staff of around 25 will be creating enough content each and every day to fill the 40-odd pages. Perhaps this will be done through user-generated material and the willingness of the editorial team to continue to showcase the political views of "ordinary" members of the public.

One of the truly impressive innovations notable in The New Day is a two-page spread on the EU which gives equal prominence (in image, too) to the writing of the Prime Minister and Emma Thurston, an art teacher from London. The New Statesman also reports that editorial meetings will be filmed and put online in an attempt to engage with readers about how they would like a story covered.



As I said earlier, the emphasis on issues and lifestyle seems to me borrowed from the staple diet of a women's magazine. As well as the lead article on child carers there is an item on albino babies and bullying in schools. These serious stories sit alongside the more whimsical "moment of my life" pieces, inevitable quiz pages and eternal (but topical) conundrums, such as why women are so scared of proposing.

### **Leap of faith**

So The New Day delivers exactly what it promised. For readers embittered by the relentless sermonising and negativity of the Great British press, this is the paper is for you. And despite the fact that it has overplayed the "newness" aspect, I thought this morning's edition contained enough variety and innovation to separate itself from its competitors.

The key question is, of course, can it survive in an environment where sales of newspapers continue to spiral downwards?. The New Day will be on sale for 25p for the next two weeks before selling for 50p after that. In the major cities of the UK it will have to compete with the free Metro and in London with the Metro and the (also free) Evening Standard.

There is also the rather bold decision taken by the publishers of the “newspaper of the digital age” not to actually have a digital edition. Maybe that’s one clever ploy and maybe advertisers will return to print now that iPhone and iPad owners can download apps that will block ads on web pages.

It seems to me that The New Day is rather like the BuzzFeed model of news, in style and concept, re-adapted for the pre-internet era. Whether or not the “time poor” target audience of 35- to 55-year-olds are prepared buy into it is something we will find out sooner rather than later.

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