

Conventions in online news

This activity looks at online newspaper generic conventions. Compare the print and online editions of a number of newspapers – see whether or not they fit the description of the similarities and differences in the table below:

Broadsheet newspaper print conventions also followed in online home pages	How broadsheet newspaper online editions are different to the print editions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the home page of the website prioritises hard news stories towards the top of the home page • the same traditional masthead is used as in the print edition • most home pages use a four column layout which fills the homepage with news, connoting seriousness • most typography is serif, connoting formality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more extensive use of colour and multimedia (e.g video clips) • opinion, lifestyle and sports pieces appear on the home page, these would not appear on print broadsheet front pages • some use of sans-serif fonts. • slightly more tabloid approach to news presentation. Image led stories and clickbait headlines. • Perhaps more celebrity driven storylines - attracts younger audience. • More visible sub-sections – allows for a more personalised (non-linear) approach to consuming news. • Archived stories available and hyperlinks to provide previous context and content.
Tabloid newspaper print conventions also followed in online home pages	How tabloid newspaper online editions are different to the print editions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lifestyle, 'showbiz' and human interest stories are prioritised towards the top of the home pages • fonts are sans-serif • use of saturated colour, especially red • photography dominates the home pages • the language register is more informal • the red-top tabloids all use the same red masthead as the print newspaper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little use of banner headlines • the larger number of headlines connotes more 'newsiness' than the print front page • more extensive use of multimedia (e.g video clips) • the home page layout is generally less photograph/image and headline dominated than the print front page • the large number of headlines means that some hard news stories are covered on the home page that would not appear on the front page of the print newspaper. • Heavy presence of advertising through banners and sidebars as well as promotions, freebies and competitions.

Note why you think there are differences between the print and online editions of the newspapers. How much is due to the technology itself?