

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Launches Redesigned Newspaper

On Tuesday, [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (AJC) introduced its newly [redesigned](#) newspaper. The [redesign](#), which was based on feedback from thousands of readers and hundreds of advertisers, integrates the need to have the newspaper look like a newspaper but updated with a fresh look, more color and new features.

In addition to the new look and features, the newspaper is now printed on 44-inch broadsheet paper, resulting in a slightly narrower page. Although the most obvious change may be the physical size of the paper and the design, the redesign also focuses on other needs of readers.

Readers engage with the newspaper differently during the week than they do on [Sunday](#). The [redesign](#) reflects this by offering a quick and efficient read during the week that gets readers up to speed on the day's news, while on [Sunday](#), taking a more leisurely approach emphasizing the "why" behind the news.

What's truly unique about the AJC approach to reader engagement is ongoing, real time qualitative research with an online community of key audience groups. The AJC also conducted traditional quantitative research, segmentation studies and held focus groups.

Julia Wallace, editor of the AJC, said: "While we believe that a print newspaper will continue to play a role in our readers' lives, we also know that role will continue to change. The way people get information is changing fast, and we will need to continue to adapt. We plan on a continuous discussion between us and our readers – listening, learning from them, changing and then starting the listening cycle over."

Readers also want an easy-to-navigate newspaper with consistent sectioning and anchored features. Recent enhancements to press equipment offer more color options, which will be used as a navigational tool throughout the newspaper, as well as allow for consistent arrangement of sections.

Beyond layout of the newspaper, readers are also concerned with content being balanced and transparent. Wallace adds, "Readers want us to be transparent in our coverage as well as know the 'why' and the 'how' behind a story. We'll do this by providing pro/con stories and "check our sources" references. We also will carefully label our opinion pieces so readers don't confuse opinion with news content."

Taking a holistic approach to the redesign, the AJC also listened closely to advertisers and gained valuable insight into providing better [advertising solutions](#). The new design offers advertisers greater [color capability](#) and [flexibility](#) in ad positions. The redesign also increases engagement with readers while increasing usability and readability.



Online community participant and Lawrenceville resident, Kristofer Killian was one of the readers who helped shape the newly designed paper, "The AJC is committed to its mission of serving news to its readers," said Killian. Killian adds, "They took a considerable amount of time planning, testing and implementing the changes. Before releasing the new paper, the AJC, in a collaborative effort, ultimately looked to its own customers and readers for feedback and suggestions on proposed changes."

Although the redesign is threaded through the daily edition, the [marketing campaign](#) focuses on the unique readership habits of the Sunday product and celebrates the ritualistic experience of the Sunday newspaper. The redesign is supported by a [multi-media campaign](#), including targeted as well as mass channels such as [TV](#), [radio](#), [print](#) and [online](#). The newspaper will also focus on event partnership opportunities as well as [point-of-purchase](#) and single copy initiatives to drive the purchase of the newspaper, especially on Sunday. In addition, a robust [direct marketing](#) campaign will target non-subscribers, while a [microsite](#) was built as a creative approach to explain the changes and build retention among existing subscribers.

"It's critical that we provide a strong platform for our advertisers, invest in our brand and continue to engage with our readers," said Amy Chown, vice president of marketing. Chown added, "We've done extensive research and know

our target market, and our efforts are designed to gain acceptance within our loyal readers while increasing readership frequency with occasional readers.”

This is the most comprehensive redesign the AJC has undertaken. The printed newspaper is the flagship of the AJC’s distinct multi-media platform of digital, print and direct marketing solutions.

SNPA eBulletin 4-30-09