

Empathy, distance and communications... and newsprint

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Washington, DC -- It's great to read good American newspapers again, like the [Washington Post](#). For the first time ever it has made me think about retirement. Because that's when I will be able to read the Post, and weekly editions of the [New Yorker](#), from cover to cover.

It was alarming to hear two weeks ago that [online news readership has now surpassed the reading of newspapers](#). Because newspapers give you so much more to think about.

However, even I, a child wrapped in newsprint at birth, couldn't bring myself to pay the \$22 to get into the [Newseum in Washington](#) this week. Sometimes newspapers and the news media can be their own worst enemy.

For example, I am quite horrified to find that even when reporters are talking on [CNN](#) -- live from the battlefield -- there is now music playing in the background: *Dun-dun, dun-dun...* It's like the world has turned into a comic strip.

Last night, in a rainy Georgetown, I was delighted to find a paper copy of [The Onion](#). A paper that I started reading online many years ago. And some say the most credible paper in America. Unfortunately it is all spoof news. But often spoof news that is right on the mark.

["Deaths Of 20,000 Japanese Afford Planet Solid 15 Minutes In Which Everyone Acts Like A Human Being"](#)

It's a top Onion headline that is too long to be read by many of the busy people who should find it worrying.

Distance in many cases has turned news and communication into a bad mix of adrenaline and the need for sensational 'breaking news'. What ever happened to sitting and thinking about it a bit?

Whether it's at work or at home, it feels like we could all do with a chance to sit down and really understand what's going on.

Meanwhile, the local ABC station tells us: "[Breaking news: Don't drink the rainwater](#). There could be Japanese radiation in it." *Dun-dun, dun-dun...*

Really?

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