

Plastic electronic newspaper to be launched in Britain

London, Oct 15 : A British-designed electronic newspaper - made out of plastic and no larger than a table mat - is to hit the market next year as an alternative to, well, paper itself, according to a report Wednesday.

The new kind of newspaper has been conceived by Cambridge University scientists, who pioneered the idea of replacing silicon chips with plastic ones, and is being developed by Plastic Logic, a company based in Dresden, Germany.

"The device looks just like a table mat and it's as light as a magazine. But onto it you can download hundreds of newspapers and - at the touch of a button - browse through them quite safely, without elbowing anyone ever again [in a crowded commuter train]," the BBC reported on its website.

The plastic microchips are produced in a top security

'clean room' at the Plastic Logic factory, which opened last month as the world's first commercial-scale plastic electronics manufacturing plant.

With every part of the product - from the screen to the electronics - made of plastic, the newspaper is described by engineer Dean Baker as "very robust".

Baker said the plastic newspaper could help address the problem of waste associated with

traditional newspapers. "There's a huge amount of waste. We have paper being distributed all over the country which is consumed on that day and then discarded into the bin. This doesn't need to be the case.

"All of that content could be transmitted electronically and stored on a single e-reader, with the same visual appeal as paper," Baker said.

The plastic newspaper is expected to hit the high streets next year, the BBC said.

Source: IANS, October 15, 2008



Plastic Logic flexible displays



Questions:

1. What are the benefits of using "plastic newspapers" over traditional paper newspapers?
2. How might this technology affect the pulp and paper industry in Canada?
3. Do you think there will be any traditional daily newspapers being produced in 50 years? Why/why not?

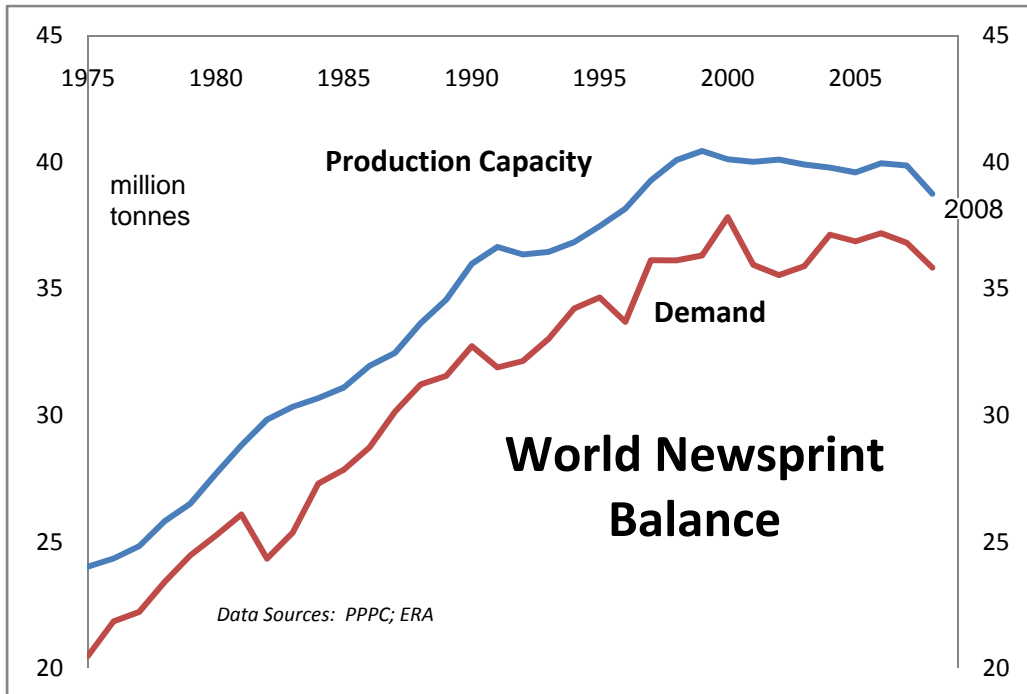


Figure 1

Figure 1 to the left shows the capacity (how much is being produced) and demand (how much is needed) of newsprint worldwide. Newsprint is the paper on which newspapers are printed.

Figure 2 below shows changes in demand for newsprint in *North America* since the early 1990's.

Questions:

1. Describe the trend found in the two graphs
2. What are the implications for the pulp and paper industry in Canada?
3. Why do you think this trend is occurring in the worldwide demand for newsprint? Provide a list of all possible reasons, including those found in this article.

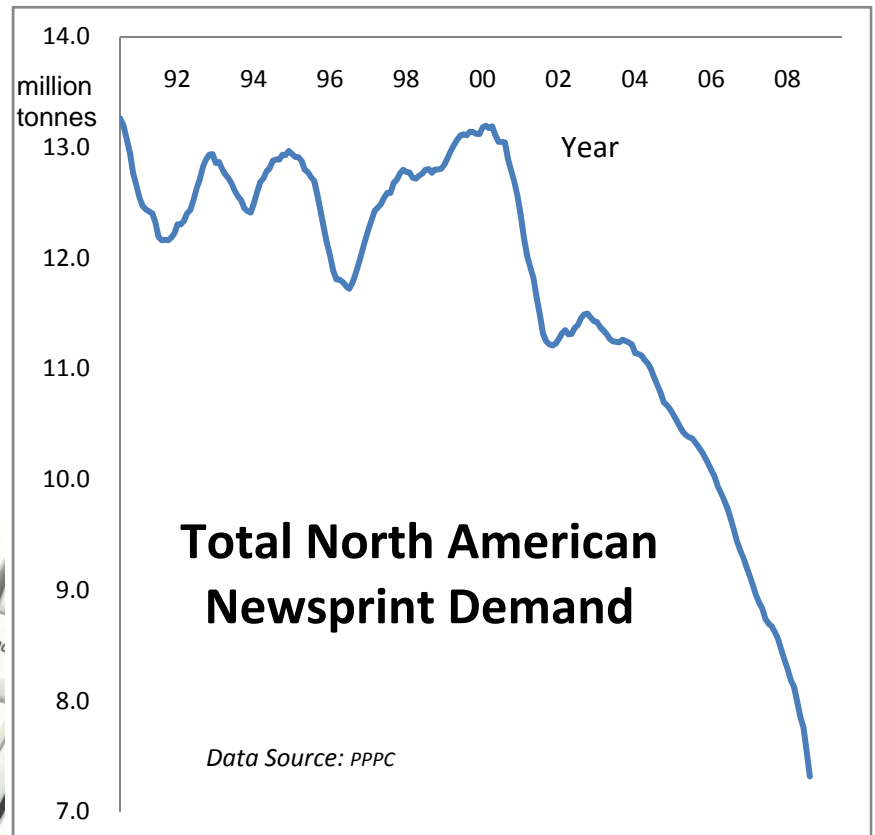


Figure 2