

# Can Frees Defy The Big Freeze?

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Free Newspapers have been the unexpected commercial good news story over the last few years, from London to Reykjavik. Some [commentators](#) have pointed out that they are well-placed to survive the coming economic freeze. The excellent media analyst [Frederik Filloux](#) agrees that they are good performers in relation to advertising:

*“I tend to believe the free press has two assets that could attenuate the effect of a recession — only for the best of them. One is (again) the ad performance: much better than in the paid press (each time I’ve seen an advertiser doing a test based on performance, it scored high). The second asset being the distribution/logistic system. It’s not always known, but in many instances, free newspapers are much better at targeting and tracking audiences than the paid ones (which have a sick 30% rate of unsold papers every day). This has a tremendous value in itself and advertisers will certainly bet on it.”*

That’s not so surprising coming from someone who works for [Schibsted](#), a company that publishes some of the Continent’s most popular freesheets. But he also warns of tough times ahead for all:

*“OK, some British free papers such as [City AM](#) (in my view one of the best of its league) or [The London Paper](#) are still in expansion mode (the former is launching new cities, and the latter enjoys record ad revenue), but 70% of the free titles are still not making profits, and will face hard times, as everyone else will.”*

Polis is currently scoping an event on the future of the journalism business model – contact us at [polis@lse.ac.uk](mailto:polis@lse.ac.uk) if you are interested in getting involved.

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