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The marketing of news as a product and the use of modern technology to dramatically cut costs gradually elevated newspapers from an entrepreneurial stage to the status of a mass medium. By adapting news content, penny papers captured the middle- and working-class readers who could now afford the paper and also had more leisure time to read it. As newspapers sought to sustain their mass appeal, news and “factual” reports about crimes and other items of human interest eventually superseded the importance of partisan articles about politics and commerce.

## The Age of Yellow Journalism: Sensationalism and Investigation

The rise of competitive dailies and the penny press triggered the next significant period in American journalism. In the late 1800s, **yellow journalism** emphasized profitable papers that carried exciting human-interest stories, crime news, large headlines, and more readable copy. Generally regarded as sensationalistic and the direct forerunner of today’s tabloid papers, reality TV, and celebrity-centered shows like *Access Hollywood*, yellow journalism featured two major developments. First was the emphasis on overly dramatic—or sensational—stories about crimes, celebrities, disasters, scandals, and intrigue. Second, and sometimes forgotten, were early in-depth “detective” stories—the legacy for twentieth-century **investigative journalism**: news reports that hunt out and expose corruption, particularly in business and government. Reporting during this yellow journalism period increasingly became a crusading force for common people, with the press assuming a watchdog role on their behalf.

During this period, a newspaper circulation war pitted Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World* against William B. Ewing’s *Chicago Daily Tribune*. Pulitzer’s *World* won the war was the first popu-