



Did the philanthropy beat disappear?

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May 1, 2012

You would think major media outlets might have someone focused on philanthropy, a reporter who can read 990s and spot new trends. Instead, *The New York Times* eliminated the philanthropy beat, one of the last daily newspapers to employ a full-time reporter to cover national nonprofits, according to [a piece](#) in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*.

We're interested in this new development with philanthropy and religion sometimes going hand in hand, since religious organizations fill a decent chunk of the philanthropic landscape. As editors have [promised in the past](#) with the religion beat, the paper promises to cover philanthropy more across the board.

Stephanie Yera, a spokeswoman for the New York Times Company, said the newspaper would still cover philanthropy-related stories "across news desks."

For example, she noted that this week Eric Lichtblau wrote an article about a lawsuit over control of the Cato Institute that appeared on the newspaper's front page. She also noted in an e-mail that "our culture and education desks are regularly churning out stories about philanthropy and nonprofits."

Sure, newspapers have to prioritize its time and attention, but it seems strange to have entire desks devoted to politics and business and not one person covering philanthropy, demonstrating media outlet's priorities, what they deem "important." Of course, a culture or education story could include some sort of philanthropy element, but if a reporter isn't focused on it, he or she probably won't know how to spot something unusual. It seems odd that the beat wouldn't be mentioned as naturally part of politics, since there seem to be so many angles about government partnerships and funding of religious charities (or [controversies that lead](#) to a split).

Online sites could pick up the slack, right? The report suggests that there's a mixed bag when it comes to whether it's fully replaced the previous print beats.

On the one hand, news Web sites, like the Huffington Post's Impact page and *The Washington Post's* On Giving section, offer more chances for charity leaders to share their perspectives. But hard news and journalism about the field, at least at the national level, seem to be dwindling along with newspaper budgets. ... *The Post* has two reporters who cover local nonprofits on a part-time basis for its Capital Business section.

Reading the piece led me to some clicking around at the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*'s website, where I uncovered this potentially helpful blog "[Rising Tithes](#)" on religion and giving. A quick scan of the calendar, though, shows that it only survived a few months last summer. What a bummer. The [religion page](#) offers a decent starting point for archives, but it's pretty much dead. Let us know if you know of other sources for religion and philanthropy news.

Back to *The Times* and whether its move signifies something larger: Is the philanthropy beat gone from general outlets? What are you seeing at your local outlets?