

Do You Believe Everything You Read?

By Carrie Ellis, Editor, *Chem.Info*



"When the media reduces people's livelihoods and futures to current statistics and trends, **they're bound to hit the "what if" nerve.**"

Although you may have a considerably stable job at the time, you open the newspaper (correction: you don't even have to open the newspaper to read about the economic "crisis" anymore as it has become everyday front-page news as of late) only to be overcome with deep-rooted anxiety. How will you get by? Should you start scrimping and saving for next year's meager Christmas in advance?

These questions, however pragmatic, may be a bit premature. Yes, the government has confirmed our fears about the U.S.'s plummet into an economic recession, but you have a good job now. How much should you worry about your and your family's future? It's difficult to tell with the headlines cropping up these days:

- ["YEARENDER: From US financial centre, world economy unraveled"](#) [1]
- ["Nasty Recession Plus 4 Quarters of Declining GDP - Anderson Forecast"](#) [2]
- ["GM, Chrysler Failure Would Push Economy Into Abyss"](#) [3]

I'm not promoting that we should irresponsibly blow money on our every wish and desire—that's partially what got us into this mess in the first place. But I *am* saying that the media's portrayal of our economic situation is going to be harsher than it

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really is.

If you took the top headlines seriously all the time, you'd wind up in the emergency room with a panic attack—or even worse—and that's more money out of your pocket. Therefore, gauge the news as best you can and plan ahead. Some times the best you can do (especially in circumstances like these) is have a plan of action in place rather than having a knee-jerk reaction, such as cashing out of the stock market, which would only spur the economic "crisis" on even more.

In fact, it is just this media-fed bad news (and the snowballing thereof) that causes people to back out of new investments, which in a vicious cycle, worsens the economy more, thereby tarnishing our daily news with even more negativity. This, again, makes more people doubt themselves and their economic stability, and the cycle repeats.

When the media reduces people's livelihoods and futures to current statistics and trends, they're bound to hit the "what if" nerve. Economic predictions from even the least credible economist can send the American public into a paranoid tailspin. Please take heed when reading this drivel, as statistics, trends and predictions are just that.

Couple all of this with the fact that responsible spending should be at the forefront of everyone's minds all the time—not just in economic uproar. My suggestion is that you keep one peripheral eye on the economy (as it doesn't look like it's going to improve on its own any time soon), yet try to maintain a somewhat normal life while anticipating that you may not be able to keep the same quality of life forever. And that's a reality we should all keep in the back of our minds, as nothing perpetually stays the same.

What's your take? Send comments to Carrie.Ellis@advantagemedia.com [4]

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