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NEWSPAPER STAFF WORK FROM BRANDED CAFÉ, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

 PUBLISHING & MEDIA

The Winnipeg Free Press online team work from a branded café to increase community engagement.

Regular Springwise readers may have noticed the numerous citizen-journalism platforms that we've featured recently, allowing the public to direct reporters to the action, leave comments and add detail and imagery to stories. Now, inviting the public to interact with the actual publication of the paper, the [Winnipeg Free Press](#) in Canada, has opened a café in the city centre where three of their employees work permanently, giving the public direct dialogue with newspaper staff. The Winnipeg Free Press has a circulation of approximately 116,000 from Monday to Friday, and is the first newspaper in Canada to open a news café. The café — fully decked with Winnipeg Free Press branding — serves up a menu of locally-sourced, organic dishes to office workers, while also functioning as the workspace of the newspaper's multi-media team. Open daily, it also hosts special events organized by the newspaper, such as book readings, music gigs, and earlier this month it streamed the live results of the Manitoba election, followed by a Q&A session with café guests and audience members. The café gives the public open access to journalists and editors, and reporter Lindsey Wiebe says "it's about turning the organization outwards". Members of staff are also encouraged to have meetings there. Hoping to attract a larger, younger audience, the paper claims to have seen increased social media presence as well as more visitors to the café, which suggests that giving a face to the newspaper has succeeded in boosting community engagement. It seems accessibility and transparency is the order of the day, and just last month we saw the [Seattle Police Department](#) open their virtual doors to the public, tweeting emergency calls as they were received. This is a trend sure to touch newspapers and other institutions worldwide, don't get left behind!

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