Newspaper front pages from 50 years ago reveal how the world reacted to the Apollo 11 moon landing

Morgan McFall-Johnsen  Jul 20, 2019, 8:03 AM

Harry's American Bar in Paris created a cocktail in honor of the Apollo 11 astronauts. The bartender, Daniel (left), said the drink was "guaranteed to make anybody take off."  Bettmann/Getty
Fifty years ago, on July 20, 1969, NASA's Apollo 11 astronauts walked the moon for the first time in history. The Apollo 11 moon landing, as seen on newspaper front pages - Business Insider

The achievement made global headlines, with many newspapers tracking the mission from its Florida launch to the splashdown in the Pacific Ocean.

Here's what newspapers from the time looked like.

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On this day 50 years ago, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped through the hatch of a rickety spacecraft, climbed down a ladder, and made history as their feet touched the dusty lunar surface.

The Apollo 11 moon landing made headlines worldwide; newspapers announced the accomplishment in big, bold letters. Many papers covered every step of the crew's journey, running stories about what the astronauts ate in space, how they slept, and what they said to each other while standing on the moon.

Take a look at how the world's papers covered the event.

During the week the crew spent in space, newspapers across the globe covered their progress.

Newspapers published the day after the Apollo 11 astronauts landed on the moon are displayed at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in Cape Canaveral, Florida, July 16, 2009. Chip Somodevilla/Getty
A paper in Houston, Texas even printed Aldrin's son Andrew's photo the day after the mission launched.

Andrew Aldrin, 10, is followed by a group of neighborhood youngsters anxious to see his picture in the newspaper, July 17, 1969 in Houston.  

The day of the landing — July 20, 1969 — Sunday morning newspapers reported about the anticipation. Armstrong's son picked up the Houston Chronicle at their home in Houston, Texas.
Mark Armstrong, 6-year-old son of astronaut Neil Armstrong, picks up the morning paper at the family home in Houston, Texas on July 20, 1969. Associated Press

Armstrong stepped onto the moon at 10:56 p.m. ET on July 20, 1969. About 650 million people watched the historic event live. Apollo 11's success came after eight years of grueling engineering work at NASA and eight other missions in the program.
The following morning, local, national, and international newspaper printed the news in big, bold headlines.

The Las Vegas Sun published some word-for-word dialogue between Aldrin and Armstrong, including Aldrin's now-famous description: "magnificent desolation."
The morning edition of the The Sydney Morning Herald went to press before Armstrong stepped out of the lunar lander and onto the lunar surface. So it covered the landing, as well as the astronauts' sleep habits and meals.
The pre-moonwalk issue of The Sydney Morning Herald announced plans to publish a special souvenir edition the next day. The Sydney Morning Herald

Other papers across the globe printed dramatic headlines, declaring "The New World" or "The Moon Vanquished."
The moon-landing headlines are shown on various newspapers, including the International Herald Tribune, L'Humanité, and Le Figaro. Bettmann/Getty

The Eugene Register-Guard offered a more critical angle. "Are we on the moon at this moment for the wrong reason?" William Wasmann, the paper's managing editor, wrote. He said "man's inhumanity to man" would not be solved by exploring space, but that it could demonstrate "the nobility man is capable of."
An editorial in the Eugene Register-Guard discussed the potential for territorial scrambles in space. Eugene Register-Guard

The Saigon Post, an English-language newspaper published during the Vietnam War, reported the story for Americans stationed in South Vietnam.
But it wasn't the top story everywhere. Soviet newspaper Izvestia put stories about communism in Poland and the Soviet Luna 15 spacecraft above the fold, with a mention of the moon landing at the bottom of the front page (where the arrow is pointing).
The headlines inspired celebrations: This American bar in France offered a "moonshot cocktail."

Harry's American Bar in Paris created a cocktail in honor of the Apollo 11 astronauts. The bartender, Daniel (left), said the drink was "guaranteed to make anybody take off."

For the astronauts' hometowns, their safe return was just as exciting as the moon landing. The Wapakoneta Daily News in Ohio celebrated Armstrong's homecoming and announced a party to be held there when he visited the area in September.

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