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EXPECT more media firms to announce plans to charge for content online in early 2010. City Spy hears that business-to-business publisher United Business Media is the latest outfit which is thinking of ramping up its subscription model. Property Week and Building are among the titles which recently started asking users to register their details to keep reading stories, which is seen as a possible precursor to charging.

**BUSINESSES TIPPED TO COME A CROPPER**

AMID all the contradictory forecasts for recovery or double-dip recession in 2010, what do the insolvency practitioners say? City Spy's mole in the bean-counting world says the last quarter of 2009 was surprisingly quiet as the economy stabilised but they are not optimistic about the new year: "We reckon there's going to be a rush of insolvencies in the second quarter, after the end of the financial year." The next quarterly rent review is due tomorrow, Christmas Day, then again at the end of March. But given the number of "seasonal sales" that started on the High Street at least a week before Christmas, it would be no surprise to see some retailers come a cropper sooner...

**EPSTEIN PILOT TAKES TO THE ROAD**

FURTHER news reaches City Spy of former Bear Stearns trader, Prince Andrew's shooting companion and convicted sex offender, Jeffrey Epstein.

The ex-Wall Street star served 13 months in jail on criminal charges of soliciting prostitution and procuring a minor for prostitution and he now faces civil claims from young women accusing him of having unlawful sex with them. This week, City Spy recounted how Epstein had transferred the title deeds of his prized 2003 Ferrari 575M Maranello to his private pilot Larry Visoki, prior to the car going on sale for \$159,000 (£99,000) (possibly to help Epstein pay his legal bills). It turns out, the same Visoki was deposed last week by Bradley Edwards, an attorney for three of the women suing Epstein. Questioned by Edwards about plane passengers who might have witnessed Epstein in the company of young girls, Visoki admitted Bill Clinton, Prince Andrew, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, former Colombian president Andrés Pastrana Arango, Obama economic adviser Lawrence Summers, billionaire Ron Burkle, and actors Kevin Spacey and Chris Tucker had been on board the plane while young girls were present. Fortuitously for Epstein, however, Ferrari-selling Visoki swore on oath that he never suspected his boss of having sex with them.

Of course not, Larry. Now drive off into the sunset.

More on Prince Andrew, our special representative for international trade and investment. The European Parliament and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe have strongly condemned Azerbaijan for tightening restrictions on the media and jailing two bloggers who were critical of the government. It transpires the oil-rich country has long blocked BBC broadcasts there, which might explain why oft-criticised Andrew and former Prime Minister Tony Blair spend so much time visiting the sometime Soviet State.

What does the snow have in common with the recession? Every other country can get out of both but Britain can't get out of either. HAPPY news: private jet travel is back, reports the Wall Street Journal. Alas, there is a "but" [#x2039]

in-flight food remains in recession. Apparently, those who supply food to executive aircraft are seeing demand soar after a slump, but says one caterer: "No one is eating lobster. A quick turkey box lunch is the order of the day." Of course, that has nothing to do with the industry being desperate to re-brand itself as time-saving and cost-efficient.

WHICH insurance broker saw a compliance officer pass out after the office Christmas lunch and have to be taken to hospital?

WHO MADE OFF WITH THE MONEY? IT's a year since the Bernie Madoff affair blew up and the hedge fund king was found to have been ripping off his clients. If he was in Britain the old fraudster would still be at liberty as lawyers pored over his case and the prosecution had barely cranked into operation. But the US is different [x2039] his case is done and dusted, and he's languishing in jail. Even so, by US standards, the Madoff conviction was going some. Rumours persist that he pleaded guilty as quickly as he did and said the absolute minimum because he wasn't the main crook of the piece [x2039] the main business of his hedge fund was washing money for organised crime. As soon as the balloon went up and he was arrested, he was warned by friends with Italian-American origins that his life, and the lives of his family, would be at risk were he not to "take the rap".

OETaking the rap': hedge fund fraud Bernie Madoff

UNFORTUNATE name? City Spy's eye is drawn to a forthcoming lecture at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. It's in partnership with the Market Abuse Association. What? Do they wear a club tie? Do they refer to each other as fellow market abusers?

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