Print Magazines: Linking to the Digital World

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Abstract

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This study will show how magazines and their advertisers are using print to send their readers to digital sources of information. Placing URLs, QR codes, promoting Facebook/Twitter and mobile/iPad apps are becoming very popular ways to advertising products and services. Print magazines are utilizing these trends to link their readers from the print to the digital world and are reaping the benefits.

Seven different magazines were analyzed in this study. In studying the trends from 2008 to 2011, it is obvious that magazines and their advertisers want readers to expand their scope of knowledge by visiting their digital counterparts for additional information. While URLs have been popular for many years, 2010 shows the introduction of mobile apps and social media, and 2011 shows the recent boom of QR codes. There is no question that these digital references are successful at driving readers to outside sources of information. By providing the reader with multiple platforms to view content, a unique interactive experience is created.

All the magazines analyzed for this study use slightly different methods to provide their readers with supplemental information. One thing they all have in common is the increase in digital references overall. Today, it is very uncommon to find an advertisement without any sort of link to a digital platform. It is also expected to see more QR codes, more references to Facebook and Twitter accounts and more mobile app advertisements in future magazines.

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Chapter 1 ◆ Introduction

With the rapid growth in technology and use of mobile devices, there is a large misconception that digital is going to make print obsolete. Though the current trend is moving toward the use of iPads, e-readers, and 3G networks to obtain and read information, this trend will not replace print. There is something special about physically holding and reading from an actual printed object – whether it be a newspaper, magazine, or book – that can make the experience more enjoyable. This is an experience digital media cannot provide. The experience alone often outweighs the convenience of digital media, allowing print magazines to remain in demand from consumers.

The Internet is increasingly becoming more accessible and easier to use. This is not to say the Internet is better or ideal for acquiring information; it is just different. New technology does not replace the old, but rather finds room to exist along side it. It is important to note that print magazines and digital magazines are not competing against each other, but rather are supplementing each other. Print magazines have been including their website URL inside the magazine for years to encourage their readers to go online and find more information about the content presented. With the new trends in digital media, print magazines have only increased the amount of advertisements sending the reader to get outside information. They are not trying to divert the reader away from the magazine, but rather be a helpful tool to direct viewers to other services that the magazine and advertising companies offer, giving the reader a more complete experience.

Some of these links to the digital world are Quick Response (QR) codes, mobile apps, and website URLs, such as Facebook and Twitter. A QR code is essentially a barcode that allows the user to scan it with a mobile device by taking a picture. It will direct the viewer to website or video allowing for a seamless transition from the physical to the digital world, in a fun way. The goal is ultimately to enrich the viewer with more information in an efficient manner (Tanny, 2010).

Along with QR codes, a current trend in print magazines is to include Facebook and Twitter Icons and/or URLs leading the reader to social networking sites. These sites offer tools for collaboration and interaction, while also serving as a platform for advertisements and up-to-date information. Print magazines want to see the readers use multiple platforms to access their information. Now with the popularity of smart phones and mobile devices, this information can be accessed from anywhere at anytime. Magazines have also engineered mobile apps and iPad apps that allow the viewer to peruse the contents and jump to sections of their interest. Advertisements for these mobile apps are placed in print magazines to, once again, direct the reader to outside resources.

The purpose of this study is to show how print magazines are incorporating various elements to link the reader to the digital world. There is so much information available to the public and magazines want to share additional resources to give their readers an interactive experience. By including QR codes, mobile apps, and URLs, print magazines are expanding their opportunities and are benefiting in a major way. This study will show how magazines and their advertisers are using print to send their readers to digital sources of information.

Chapter 2 ◆ Literature Review

Despite the growing trends in digital media, print is staying afloat. In 2010 the number of print magazines remained steady, with 193 launches and 176 closures. This is a great improvement from 2009's 596 closures. The integration of successful digital magazines will take some time and will not replace the need for print. Several different interfaces are being developed to present magazines on screen. Online sites, Apple's iPad, and portable document format (PDF) magazines are all being integrated simultaneously. Online sites have been created to display magazine articles on the web with links and navigation for quick and selective reading. The Apple iPad is a lightweight portable computer tablet used as a platform for audio-visual media, including books, periodicals, movies, music, games, and web content. Though they all have great potential, currently users are left disappointed and even discouraged from reading digitally. With limited audience interest and small financial gains a rapid transformation is no longer expected. More challenges and opportunities will present themselves in the upcoming years for digital media, but for those who thought 2010 would forever change the way we read magazines, now realize this is not the case (Sivek, 2010).

Though digital media is in the developmental stage, there are already many features that are favored over print. It has the ability to be interactive with the viewer through animation, navigation, video and audio. Digital media is mentally stimulating and can keep up with the fast-paced world we live in. Changes can be made instantaneously, which is extremely important for news and sports enthusiast, who can now stream live footage from almost any electronic device. Technology is the driving force behind innovation and the advancements made so far are incredible. There is huge potential for digital media to become the main platform used by consumers in the future ("Advantages of Digital Media" 2008).

Print and digital both offer unique benefits and, for this reason, magazines and advertisers are utilizing both. Magazines want their readers to go online for more information to supplement the

content. According to a study by Affinity, magazines have excelled at driving web searches since 2008. By simply including a URL in the advertisement, website visits tripled! The study also showed that offline advertisements performed better than online advertisements in driving web traffic and search (Loechner, 2009). This says two things: print sends an extremely strong message and readers are jumping at the chance to go online for more information.

URLs are the most popular way for magazines and advertisers to get their reader to go online, however, some companies are becoming more creative. One approach is to include QR codes in the magazine. This allows the reader to instantly go online through their mobile device without having to type in an often lengthy URL on a small screen. The goal for advertisers is to make it easy for the readers to connect the products they see on the page to a place where they can further be viewed, researched and potentially purchased (Keane, 2009). QR codes are very versatile in the sense that they can link to websites, videos, or even serve as coupons. Though advertisers use QR codes in a variety of different ways, magazines are mainly using them to drive the readers directly to their website or mobile app.

Another new marketing technique for both magazines and advertisers is to promote their mobile apps, also known as "app-vertising" (Schmitt, 2009). In a world where about 50 percent of people own a smart phone, application downloads are through the roof. It is absolutely beneficial to get the reader involved with a different platform to market a product or service. This is also a reason for magazine and advertising companies to get their readers involved in social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. The more possibilities for the reader to interact, the better. Offering numerous ways for the reader to come in contact with the brand, the more successful the company will be. Those who are innovative enough to embrace popular trends will be the forerunners and will pave the way for others to follow.

Chapter 3 ◆ Research Methods & Procedures

This study will show how magazines and their advertisers are using print to send their readers to digital sources of information. This study employed Content Analysis and Historical Research to find out specifically which methods magazines are utilizing to send their readers to different platforms.

Content Analysis is often used in combination with other research methods in developing results and drawing conclusions. It is a method used for quantifying qualitative information (Levenson, 28). The goal for using Content Analysis was to determine the increase in innovative ways magazines are trying to link the reader digitally. In order to gather information about the magazines and their advertisers, seven different types of magazines were obtained. It was important to compare and contrast different genres of magazines, therefore, media kits were analyzed to find magazines with different target audiences. The magazines analyzed specifically were *Cosmopolitan*, *GQ*, *Real Simple*, *Town & Country*, *How*, *Health*, and *Allure*. For each magazine a 2011 issue was compared with two previous years. A chart was created to document the types of digital references being used and the number of times each element appeared. The chart is shown below:

Magazine Name 2009 2010 2011

MAGAZINE

URL			
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App			
Facebook/Twitter			

ADVERTISERS

URL			
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App			
Facebook/Twitter			
Nothing			
Total Advertisements			
% of ads w/ digital ref			

In order to collect data, each magazine was flipped through page-by-page and any instance of digital marketing was recorded. It was also important to count the total number of advertisers in each issue to determine percentages since some issues have a higher page count than others. After collecting data from all 21 issues, totals and percentages were calculated to accurately determine the increase in digital references between 2011 and previous years.

Along with Content Analysis, Historical Research was used. Historical Research is defined by Harvey Levenson as, "an attempt to establish facts and arrive at conclusions concerning past events. The historical researcher must systematically and objectively locate, evaluate, and interpret evidence available for understanding the past" (Levenson, 32). With this method trends and patterns may present themselves allowing the researcher to accurately predict what may happen in the future. Through Historical Research, it can be predicted that more advertisers and magazines companies will place links to outside resources in print magazines. We will see more QR codes, more references to Facebook and Twitter accounts and more mobile app advertisements in future magazines.

Chapter 4 ◆ Results

Through this study I found several interesting ways magazines and their advertisers are directing their readers to other platforms of information. The most common way to promote outside sources of information is to include a URL. Nowadays anyone can look up a website by simply typing in a web address; it is understood by the general population. Another way to drive readers to other platforms is to include a QR code. QR codes have started to gain popularity and are useful for anyone with a mobile device. QR codes may not be understood by a large majority of the population, however they seem to be grabbing people's attention, especially the younger crowd and the tech savvy people. Also popular among magazines with younger target audiences are Facebook and Twitter references. Facebook was originally targeted toward college students and is now gaining popularity with businesses and people of all ages. Social media is huge phenomenon, especially among the younger generations immersed in the digital world. In analyzing magazines with different target audiences, it is clear that the preferred method of promoting outside sources of information differs. The final method analyzed for this study was advertising for a mobile app or iPad app. Several magazines are trying to get their readers to download their app in order to read the magazine on their mobile device. The following sections will take a closer look at the uses of URLs, QR codes, Facebook/ Twitter, and mobile/iPad apps within magazines. Please refer to the appendix for more detail on the following data.

URLs

Magazines have been including the URL of the magazine website for years. 100% of the magazines analyzed had a URL for the online magazine site. The number of instances of the URL has generally increased form 2008 to 2011, however some magazines are using fewer due to other alternatives, such as, references to Facebook, Twitter, and mobile apps. The most extreme example of this is in

HOW magazine. In 2008, eight URLs of their website were found versus thirty-eight in 2011 – a 475% increase! *HOW* magazine has embraced the opportunity to drive their readers online. *HOW* is a design magazine that features digital art and often holds design competitions. In order to enter the competition, participants must submit their entry through the website. This is a very creative way to get the readers to visit the site that works with their target audience. Another magazine with a significant increase in URLs for their website is *Allure*. In the 2011 issue, almost twice as many URLs were included to link to their website than in 2008.

Cosmopolitan, *GQ* and *Health* all remained fairly consistent throughout 2008 and 2011 in relation to the number of URLs for the magazine's website. The typical places for URLs to be located are on the front cover, spine, masthead, and alongside the folio on all department pages. For the purpose of this study if a URL was included in the footer on every page, it was counted as only one instance. Since magazines are placing their URL on almost every page it seems as though their goal is to get every reader online. A printed URL is highly successful at driving traffic to a website and magazines are taking advantage of it.

Surprisingly, two magazines had a decrease in the number of their URLs: *Town & Country* and *Real Simple*. In 2009 *Town & Country* had seven URLs for their website and only one URL in 2011. When looking for a reason why, it is most likely due to their use of Facebook, Twitter, and iPad apps in substitution of their URL. *Real Simple*, on the other hand, decreased the number of instances by almost half from 2008 to 2011 and only added one QR code and one advertisement for a mobile app.

Magazines are not the only ones driving readers to their websites. Advertisers within the print magazines are also jumping at the chance to send their readers elsewhere for more information for their products. *Health*, *Real Simple* and *Cosmopolitan* all had a significant increase in the number of URLS for their advertisers. In the 2011 issues of these magazines over 91% of advertisers are including their URL. Prior to 2011 more advertisements featured minimal amounts of information, often only an image and a logo. In 2011 it is rare to find an advertisement without an accompanying URL.

The target market and the type of brand also seem to determine the need for a URL. For example, the advertisers for *GQ* have the lowest percentage of URLs for their advertisers. Though still high at 85%, the advertisements without URLs were often for alcohol or high quality accessories, where a URL may not be necessary because they are so well known. This percentage also has not increased over the last three years. *Allure's* advertisers have not increased the percentage of URLs either. It is important to note that even though no increase has taken place, 89% already include their URLs. For both *GQ* and *Allure* it has been important for their advertisers to include URLs for the last 3 years. We may see this number increase in the upcoming years.

Two magazines have advertisers that consider URLs a must. In *HOW* and *Town & Country* every single advertiser lists a URL, and has since 2008 or 2009 respectively. This is not surprising for *HOW* because it is a digital oriented magazine. These advertisers see the value of a URL and most likely have noticed a positive impact and increased web traffic. Their websites offer information about the products and, in most cases, the opportunity to make a purchase. It is beneficial to send the reader online to become familiar with the product on another level. The more interaction a potential buyer has with the product, the more likely it is for them to buy it.

QR Codes

Real Simple and *Allure* were the only magazines to generate and include a QR code as a link to their website. *Real Simple* included one, while *Allure* included two in their 2011 issues. This is a great way to get the reader involved with the magazine beyond print. *Allure* has a younger target audience, which may be one reason for including QR codes. The younger generations have a good grasp on new technology and may think QR codes are cool and fun to scan. *Real Simple* is very up to date with current trends and has a fair amount of advertisers using QR codes as well. Since QR codes are new to the public, it would not be surprising to see the other five magazines utilizing QR codes in the near future.

Advertisers seem to be flocking to the idea of QR codes. Advertisers in *Cosmopolitan* and *Real Simple* included a QR code or two in a 2010 issue. They may have sparked the trend for advertisers to follow in 2011. In 2011 eight advertisers in *Cosmopolitan* placed a QR code on their print ad. *Real Simple* had five advertisers place QR codes. However, the magazine with the most QR codes on advertisements was *Allure* with eleven. Since both *Cosmopolitan* and *Allure* had the most instances of QR codes, this indicates where the target market for QR codes lies. Both magazines are directed toward a similar audience in age and interest, with a median age of 30.7 for *Cosmopolitan* and 32.4 for *Allure* . *Real Simple*, however, has a higher median age of 45.6 and is also utilizing QR codes.

Advertisers included one QR code in *GQ* and two in *Health*. In future issues it is likely to see more QR codes from these magazines, especially in *GQ*, where the target audience is sophisticated males. The most interesting observation dealing with the use of QR codes is that *HOW* magazine did not include any! Since they are largely a digital design publication, it was expected to see the use of QR codes throughout the magazine. The other magazine without the use of QR codes by their advertisers was *Town & Country.* This is also interesting because they used several references to social media and mobile applications. Though no QR codes appeared in the issues used for this study, it is possible that they have used them before and will use them again.

Facebook/Twitter

Social media and online networking have exploded in the last couple of years and magazines are taking advantage of their popularity. People of all ages are logging on to sites like Facebook and Twitter on a regular basis, often several times a day. Magazines and advertisers see a huge opportunity to be involved and are beginning to drive their readers there as well. Including Facebook and Twitter URLs of magazines started appearing in the 2010 issues of the magazines used for this study. *Allure*, *Health* and *Real Simple* were the first of the magazines in this study to send their readers to their social media sites. The number of instances double for *Health* in 2011 and tripled for

Allure. References to Facebook and Twitter became more prominent in 2011 for the other magazines used for this study.

Town & Country and *GQ* started including Facebook and Twitter references in 2011. *Town & Country* showed no hesitation with eight different instances, while *GQ* referenced them twice. *Cosmopolitan* and *HOW* did not reference Facebook or Twitter at all for their publication. Both have Facebook and Twitter accounts so it was unusual they did not include the URLs or icons in their magazines to help drive readers there for more information. This is surprising since the audience for *Cosmopolitan* is largely the same generation who uses Facebook and Twitter regularly. *HOW* magazine also caters largely towards a digitally savvy audience, with whom Facebook and Twitter is popular.

Mobile/iPad App

Although *Cosmopolitan* does not reference Facebook or Twitter in their publication, they did include four advertisements for their iPad app in 2011, tying with *GQ*. IPads are quickly gaining support in today's fast paced digital world. Currently some of the more popular apps available on the iPad are magazines. It is beneficial for magazines to be available utilizing the latest technology; therefore, advertising their app is necessary. *GQ* was the only magazine to include an ad for a mobile app in 2010. In 2011 two other publishers, *Real Simple* and *Town & Country* advertised for their iPad apps. Two magazines that have not yet advertised in 2011 for a mobile or iPad app are *HOW* and *Allure*. Again it is interesting that *Allure*, having a similar target market to *Cosmopolitan* uses different marketing strategies to drive the readers to alternate sources of information. *Allure* is more focused on turning their readers on to social media while *Cosmopolitan* is more concerned about promoting their iPad app.

Advertisers are also beginning to integrate the use of mobile apps for their products. In the magazines studied, the first to do so was an advertiser in *Real Simple* in 2008. In 2010 *Real Simple*

and *Town & Country* both had a mobile app advertisement. In 2011 advertisers in *Town & Country*, *HOW*, and *GQ* had one reference to a mobile or iPad app, while advertisers in *Allure* had two and *Real Simple* had four. Currently advertisers in *Health* and *Cosmopolitan* do not promote mobile apps, however with the popularity of the iPad rapidly increasing, it can be expected to see more advertisements for mobile and iPad apps throughout all magazines

Chapter 5 ◆ Conclusion

This study has shown that magazines and their advertisers are using print to drive their readers to digital platforms for more information. With new technology and the rise of mobile devices and social media it is imperative to get potential customers interacting with useful information on different platforms. Directing readers outside the magazine allows them to gain more knowledge about the advertised product or service, which often leads to a purchase. Print is one of the most effective ways to advertise a product or service. For this reason, placing URLs, QR codes, Facebook/Twitter references and advertisements for mobile/iPad apps has become a trend in the magazine publishing industry.

In the seven magazines analyzed for this study, there was, overall, a large increase in the number of instances of URLs, QR codes, Facebook/Twitter references and mobile/iPad app advertisements from 2008 to 2011. From this trend, it can be predicted that magazines will increase their use of digital references in future years. Also, the percentage of advertisers who do not include any reference to a digital counterpart has decreased overall. Two magazines in this study, *HOW* and *Town & Country*, showed 100% of their advertisers including a URL. It will be interesting to see if this will become the standard for print magazine advertisers in the near future.

There is no doubt that print magazines will remain in high demand from their readers. For as long as they remain in circulation, they will be a vital to the success of their digital counterparts. Digital platforms need print to help people gain insight into the capabilities of new technology. This is just the beginning of mobile apps, iPads and e-commerce, and the possibilities for digital technology are seemingly endless.

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Appendix

Allure

	2008	2010	2011
MAGAZINE			
URL	14	19	23
QR Code			2
Mobile/iPad App			
Facebook/Twitter		1	4
ADVERTISERS			
URL	96	82	34
QR Code			11
Mobile/iPad App			2
Facebook/Twitter		1	13
Nothing	12	17	7
Total Advertisements	108	100	67
% of ads w/ digital ref	88.89%	83.0%	89.55%

Cosmopolitan

	2009	2010	2011
MAGAZINE			
URL	6	6	8
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App			4
Facebook/Twitter			
ADVERTISERS			
URL	83	79	73
QR Code		1	8
Mobile/iPad App			
Facebook/Twitter		11	22
Nothing	32	30	23
Total Advertisements	115	121	126
% of ads w/ digital ref	72.17%	75.21%	81.75%

GQ

	2009	2010	2011
MAGAZINE			
URL	13	9	12
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App		1	4
Facebook/Twitter			2
ADVERTISERS			
URL	50	46	58
QR Code			1
Mobile/iPad App			1
Facebook/Twitter		11	13
Nothing	6	10	12
Total Advertisements	56	67	85
% of ads w/ digital ref	89.29%	85.07%	85.88%

Health

	2009	2010	2011
MAGAZINE			
URL	18	17	15
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App			
Facebook/Twitter		2	4
ADVERTISERS			
URL	60	65	37
QR Code			2
Mobile/iPad App			
Facebook/Twitter		6	17
Nothing	14	18	5
Total Advertisements	74	89	61
% of ads w/ digital ref	81.08%	79.78%	91.8%

HOW 2008 2010 2011

MAGAZINE

URL	10	21	38
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App			
Facebook/Twitter			

ADVERTISERS

URL	52	62	84
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App			1
Facebook/Twitter			4
Nothing			1
Total Advertisements	52	62	90
% of ads w/ digital ref	100%	100%	98.89%

Real Simple 2008 2010 2011

MAGAZINE

URL	17	19	9
QR Code			1
Mobile/iPad App			1
Facebook/Twitter		2	

ADVERTISERS

URL	83	112	108
QR Code		2	5
Mobile/iPad App	1	1	4
Facebook/Twitter		13	30
Nothing	20	18	14
Total Advertisements	104	146	161
% of ads w/ digital ref	80.77%	87.67%	91.3%

Town & Country	2009	2010	2011

MAGAZINE

URL	7	3	1
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App			2
Facebook/Twitter			8

ADVERTISERS

URL	81	59	43
QR Code			
Mobile/iPad App		1	1
Facebook/Twitter			1
Nothing			
Total Advertisements	81	60	45
% of ads w/ digital ref	100%	100%	100%