

Edition

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Program Report

Magazines and the Web

by Grace Cherian; editing by Renée Mina

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Presenters from left to right: Noel Hulsman, Kathy Bergen, Derek Chezzi

On April 24, 2006, I listened to three online editors—Kathy Bergen of *Today's Parent* magazine, Noel Hulsman, a reporter with *Small Business Magazine* of the *Globe and Mail*, and Derek Chezzi, presently news editor at Yahoo Canada but formerly of *Maclean's*—discuss the topic “Magazines and the Web” at the EAC monthly meeting, held at the Women's Art Association.

Listening to Kathy, Noel, and Derek was a real eye-opener. They taught me that online editing is different from print editing in many, many ways. Here's how.

Noel said that his experience was considerably less than that of his colleagues: “...it's very much a living example of taking content from a magazine and bringing it to the Web.”

Newspapers are not the best forum for reporting on small business; their focus is storytelling. A Web site, on the other hand, aims to be the dominant

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hub for small businesses in Canada while providing content generated from magazines, columns, and photo essays. There is a strong threefold service orientation: to provide small businesses with tools, content, and a community environment. Small businesses can go to a Web site and play games, determine their cash flow, and evaluate their businesses.

theglobeandmail.com provides a community for businesses through advertising, marketing, live discussions, and interaction. People can ask questions and receive answers about any number of business issues.

The Web can thus provide more in-depth coverage of a topic than a magazine. With budget requirements being minimal, it's also possible to update and edit the material instantly.

Five years ago, Kathy Bergen and her team were charged with editing the

Today's Parent Web site. They learned a lot through trial and error. The primary task of the Web editor is to serve the audience, which is comprised of people who surf, do Google searches, research, etc.

The integration of the Web and print formats has extended *Today's Parent* magazine from a monthly magazine to a digital medium. Its Web site has become the gateway to what the magazine can offer. Today it boasts about 150 different newsletters, and 40,000 Web site members who discuss a spectrum of issues both related and not related to parenting.

The magazine itself is a promotional tool for the Web site. For instance, it directs readers to the Web site for more information on breastfeeding.

Derek Chezzi spoke about his five years of online editing at Maclean's. "Magazines must have a Web presence to engage their audience," he said. Maclean's had content, but the question was, where would it work best?

The Maclean's Web site was launched in 1995. The challenge? To create a compelling presence online. The Web site's team needed to attract the more casual

reader to visit the site frequently to enable Maclean's to post business promotions. Daily as well as weekly updates were necessary, but creating them was promoting only 35 per cent of the content. Derek realized that a more focused approach was necessary. For instance, in January 2006, the entire home page concentrated on the Federal elections. He worked with 680 News to make Maclean's the hub for the elections within Rogers. An online survey that would be meaningful to readers was included. Guerrilla marketing tactics combined with a little media coverage by the

Globe and Mail, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Toronto Sun* doubled traffic to the Web site. Because the content was re-packaged with a more meaningful focus, it was successful in reaching a wide audience.

The Web site also enabled *Maclean's* to use multimedia, conduct reader polls, and interact

with its readers in a way it could not do in print. Even though the magazine conducted a weekly recap, no one was reading it—it was ten days old.

The Web allows content to remain alive a little longer than in magazines. Sometimes material becomes popular at a later time. For example, during the 2005 Toronto Film Festival, photographers took pictures of galleries, snapped photos of celebrities, and even made videos of their subjects. It was the "coolest thing" Derek had ever seen. Even though the Film Festival took place in September, Web traffic was higher in October. It is expected that this year's traffic will be even higher.

You can do different things—and do things differently—online than you can in print. For instance, the topic of "Smoking Pot with your Kids" was very successful online. Traffic increased by a multiple of ten. Listening to Kathy, Noel, and Derek about magazines and the Web was a terrific learning experience. E

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