

**The Death of Print Magazines : In the Middle of Coronavirus
Pandemic, May I Propose A Vaccine Against This Other Kind of
Epidemic ?**

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Abstract

In 2020, the world is fighting against the coronavirus pandemic, and many people share the same mind that it may be the end of the world as we know it. The virus has not merely infected humanity, but also many corporations and their employees. A lot of magazine and newspaper publishers are not immune either, as they have been suffering from the collapse of the advertising industry, not only since the coronavirus hit, but in fact, as noticed by many, since the invention of the internet. As the race to make a coronavirus vaccine is currently in progress, another race to find another vaccine against this other kind of epidemic is being proposed.

A. Introduction

I. The Rise of Magazines & Newspapers Before The Internet Era

The modern print media such as magazines and newspapers is no doubt product of European invention. Magazine & newspaper publishing began in the early 17th century in Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands; approximately two hundred years later after Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing machine. Afterwards, word of mouth was no longer the primary source of news.

In the late 19th century, monthly magazines covering general interests gained popularity. In contrary to their predecessors, magazines published in this era were targeted for mass circulation and wider public, and thus they were less expensive, and in the end of the century, they began to cover not only general interests, but mainly aimed to provide amusement to readers.

Along with television and radio, magazines and newspapers in the 20th century became very essential in the life of every person in the world. For instance, Vogue magazine – the American monthly fashion and lifestyle magazine, was unofficially named as the fashion bible in the eyes of many women in the fashion industry, and it possessed the largest authority on fashion, beauty and lifestyle.

The newsprint newspapers such as The Guardian, The New York Times etc., achieved similar success to print magazines. It is very common in this era in popular culture to find such clichés: a man reading a newspaper next to their morning tea, or a woman reading it while waiting at the bus stop; or a businessman reading it while flying on a plane, or even a husband while watching TV at home with his wife and children. Reading newspaper as a lifestyle gave those ultimate impressions that its readers were intelligent and important.

II. The Decline of Magazines & Newspapers After The Invention of The Internet

In May 1990, Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist, proposed the implementation of WWW (World Wide Web), which is the internet as we currently know it. Decades

later, the invention of the World Wide Web could prove as significant as the invention of printing press. In early 2000s, according to The Guardian, newspapers and magazines have been toppled as the main alternative to television in every household that has access to the internet. Since 2009, the rise of smartphones and tablets has enabled every one of us to get online without the need to be sitting in front of any personal computers. The internet has become the main source of news, entertainment, lifestyle and communications. Google has revolutionized the way people search for information. Instagram has replaced fashion magazines, and enabled celebrities to interact directly with their fan base. Facebook and Whatsapp have set a new standard in social communication. Youtube and Netflix have replaced the traditional television, and so have Spotify to radio. Free online newspapers and magazines have made lots of printed magazines and newspapers technically redundant. Ironically, some of these successful online newspapers or magazines are in fact products of transformation from printed media to digital one, e.g. New York Times, Wired, The Guardian, Vogue, The New Yorker etc. To many other print publishers which have not met similar success in the shift, the downward spiral is as real as the existence of Kim Jong Un to South Korea, or the UK way of Brexit to the European Union, or the existence of Donald Trump to journalism in The United States.

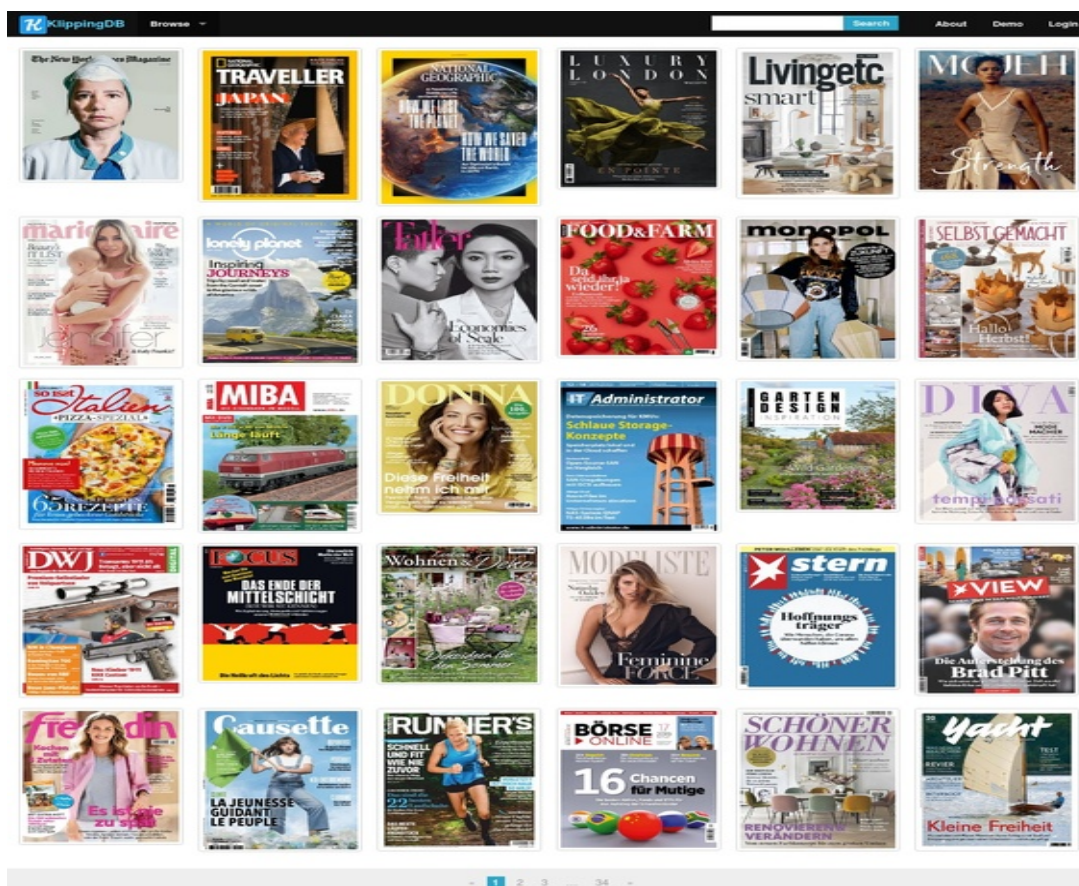
III. The Death of Magazines & Newspapers During The 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic

Since early 2020, the world is fighting against the coronavirus pandemic, which originally started in China, and has now spread to nearly every continent on earth. The coronavirus has infected many print publishers as well and many of them have now been in life support, and in desperate need for government bailouts or donations from readers. For instance, Playboy magazine has decided to suspend print publications indefinitely, or Bauer Publisher decided for shutting down its whole operations in New Zealand. Some have been trying to speed up the shift from print publication to digital as the last-minute effort to survive.

In fact, magazine publishers are now seeing print sales boost due to coronavirus, yet, the advertisers have decided to shun any coronavirus coverage, and tighten any marketing budget, based on the assumption such as : who needs a Gucci bag in the middle of this crisis ? is it ethical to have a Lamborghini advertisement on the page next to a story of a dying coronavirus patient ?

Despite the efforts to shift from print media to digital, Google and Facebook still account for 70% of the U.S. market for digital ads prior to coronavirus pandemic, which left publishers the rest of the chunks, and it implies their loss, not only to the internet giants, but to the internet, in general. Now their loss has been worsened further. Finding the right business model in the virtual era, in which people don't usually pay for reading online news or getting any information, is indeed as tough and complex as finding the vaccine against the coronavirus.

IV. The Future of Newspapers & Magazines : A Proposal – www.klippingdb.com



B. Business Analysis Behind The Proposal of The Alternative Future of Magazines & Newspapers

I. The Failure of Existing Digital Magazines & Newspapers Publishing Platforms

Nowadays, there are so many startups in the publishing platform business, which have been trying to be the market where publishers can distribute their work. Some of them are Issuu, Scribd, Magzter, etc., and even Apple And Google have released their own apps. Their main purpose is basically to simplify the transformation process from print magazines or newspapers to digital ones, so that each one of those can be conveniently displayed on many devices, such as Android phones, iPhones, iPads, or even PCs or Macs.

Nevertheless, as noticed by many, reading them on these mediums which is supposed to be a child's play, has become one of the hardest things to do on this planet. People have to zoom in and zoom out on the smartphones or tablets, as they can not read the text on those magazines or newspapers. Meanwhile on personal computer which has enough large screen generally and makes reading simple, yet, it still loads slow and is unreadable, either because the file is too large, or as the existing publishing platforms are trying to mimic a real-life print magazine.

II. The Problem with PDF File Format For Viewing Digital Magazines & Newspapers

The power of the PDF file format is undoubtable, as it has become industry standard in the information technology. It is merely not suitable for distributing digital magazines or newspapers. Magazines, for instance, can comprise of hundred pages and all of those can be full of high-quality images embedded, thus these PDF files can be so large to download. In this era where people can get everything instantly, they tend to be unwilling to exhaust another hour simply to read so-called digital media.

III. Returning The Focus To Desktop PCs, And Not Mobiles Phones or Tablets

As for the problems with the PDF file used as file format for viewing digital magazines or newspapers on many publishing platforms, the focus is now the mediums or devices people use to read, namely smartphones, tablets or PCs. Instead of creating a technology to read magazines or newspapers on smartphones or tablets which in fact do not have adequate screen size based on their physical size, the industry should instead focus on the desktop PCs or Macs. The internet already has pure online format magazines or newspapers such as www.wired.com, or www.nytimes.com, or www.newyorker.com which are based on HTML, and thus, it is not a smart way for digital magazines or newspapers under PDF file format to pretend to behave like those, as PDF particularly is not built and designed for that purpose.

IV. The Importance of TOC (Table of Contents) In Digital Magazines & Newspapers

Since Google was founded, it has revolutionized the way people search for information on the internet. People nowadays tend to search for news or information they want to read based on the specific keywords. If people want to find “Harry Potter”, they will then input the keywords “Harry Potter” on Google, and then it will show the results, and let them read about it on the their desired websites which they will click. Once they are done with it, they will just leave for the next interesting website.

The assumption that people nowadays will read digital magazines or newspapers the same way they read print magazines or newspapers tends to be out of fashion. According to Forbes, millennials and gen Z have even lost trust and loyalty with business. In the world where people can get everything instantly thank to the internet, it has made things simpler for these generations to jump from one business to another, to whichever offers better, simpler, or cheaper.

Hence, it is inevitable to have a table of contents for every digital magazine or newspaper, which people can click and go directly to the content they are

interested in. And publishers should not expect people will read each item from page to page as in traditional way.

V. The Possible Business Model To The Proposed Technology And The Impact To Print Advertisement

Subscriptions have been the most common way to sell magazines or newspapers, but nowadays, magazines are struggling to maintain the steady revenue. Paywall, where readers have to pay in order to be able to access and read the articles, may have been working for some well-known publishers such as New York Times, yet to many, it is another failed business model. The Guardian, for instance, relies instead on reader donations, in order to maintain their own independence. Many publishers have also tried to be innovative by trying to generate revenue from events, or by producing and publishing video contents on Youtube, etc.

While Google and Facebook thrive with their digital ads, print ads are in fact still the primary revenue for many print publishers, although the trend tends to favor digital ads. Therefore, many online publishers which still publish print media offer their advertisers omnichannel marketing experience, in which their campaign will be published both on print and digital media across various platforms such as mobile phones, tablets, or PCs.

The proposed technology running on www.klippingdb.com can behave as one of the omnichannel marketing medium which allows readers to read the print magazines or newspaper online / digitally, and on the other side, also allows publishers to display the print advertisements. On the proposed platform, they may have to adapt the position of each ad or may put it on best viewing position in the way that it will not disturb readers' convenience.

C. Conclusion : The Willingness To Share As The Key To Survival

30 years ago, Tim Berners-Lee had very good idea and intention by inventing the internet, and he knew it the only way to make it work is by the willingness to make it free and allows people to share the technology with each other. It may not make him the superrich guy on Earth, but it has allowed life to transform from one era to

another, from a traditional to a modern one. Print publishers have met the similar fate, as it is now time to decide whether they want to keep all the resources they have by themselves and face the death of magazines or newspapers, or are they willing to share those they have with everyone and be survival ? The first option will let them be the victims of the internet era, and slowly but sure, all print media will be forgotten by readers. The second option requires them to adapt to technology, and to share with people. If they can not release the latest edition for free as they have to monetize it, then at least the back issues of any magazines or newspapers are absolutely still meaningful resources people can consume and still find interesting to digest. The thing is many readers just do not have the willingness to pay for these back issues. Of course, in the perfect world, publishers would expect readers to pay for everything, and it should not be matter, whether it is the latest magazine issued or it is a back issue one. But unfortunately, without its free and open accessibility, internet culture as we know it wouldn't exist.