



Jonathan Shar

General Manager, Digital Newsstand and Emerging Digital Content, Barnes & Noble

Shar is perfecting the NOOK newsstand to enhance the digital content offerings of the device—a welcomed move for publishers.

Every publisher says it: We want to be everywhere the reader is. As the iPad takes off, Shar is pushing back and turning Barnes & Noble's NOOK into a "must-be" space for magazines.

Shar is responsible for the end-to-end relationships that customers have with digital periodical content—everything from a user's reading and discovery experience to the organization and delivery of digital content on the NOOK Newsstand.

"A little less than 18 months ago is when NOOK Newsstand really launched," he says. "We needed to create a customized and truly immersive experience for NOOK Color. We focused on the user experience—we wanted to take a beautiful magazine and keep the true equity of the individual brands intact while making them readable on NOOK Color."

Over the last year, Shar says his biggest accomplishment was working aggressively to ensure that Barnes & Noble could step into a new role with magazine publishers and their consumers—one that extends outside of print and into digital. While the offering has helped publishers increase content sales and foster digital discoverability, Shar's work has helped Barnes & Noble become a major player. During the nine-week holiday period ending December 31, 2011, NOOK sales increased 70 percent over the same period last year. Digital content sales grew by 113 percent for the same period.

"The opportunity with digital is really amazing," he says. "The relationships we have with customers, through the brands they love and subscribe to, we have an opportunity like never before. We're focused on taking the value proposition to the next level." ■

VITAL STATS: As of January 2011, the NOOK Newsstand exceeded 650,000 digital periodical subscriptions and single copy sales. The consolidated NOOK business across all of the company's segments, including sales of digital content, device hardware and related accessories, increased 38 percent during the third quarter to \$542 million, on a comparable sales basis. NOOK unit sales as of February increased 64 percent during Barnes & Noble's third quarter. Digital content sales increased 85 percent, which include digital books, digital newsstand products and the apps business.



HTML5

The new coding language is allowing publishers to create device-agnostic websites and apps, as well as freeing companies from the restraints of Flash technology.

In 2011, HTML5, the latest version of coding language, created as much buzz in the magazine publishing industry as any flashy redesign, product launch or industry move did. Major publishers like Hearst christened the coding platform the next coming in Web technology. The company began the migration of its entire magazine platform in September 2011 to HTML5, beginning with GoodHousekeeping.com.

Only months after its debut, *Outside Magazine* and *Financial Times* used HTML5 to update their Web presences; *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy* relied on the technology to make their content archives device-agnostic.

In a recent FOLIO: interview, Krystle Kopacz, digital product manager of the Government Executive Media Group, explained HTML5's appeal. "For us, and for many b-to-b companies, we're lean; every media company wishes they could have more development resources. Having to develop all of these different platforms, it's weight on your team," she says. "We're looking at how we can apply it and have it work in every browser, in every device in a way that makes the reading experience better."

Many publishers have yet to decide whether to launch a native app, or go the HTML5 route. HTML5 offers a clear path away from Apple's subscription terms and cumbersome app update approval process; but Web app purchasing still presents a conundrum.

"Once we got going it became clear that it would allow us to do a number of other things, not the least of which was to be functional on touch-screen devices. And that I think is one of the really future-oriented aspects of this—that people are beginning to expect that," vice president of programming and product strategy for Hearst Digital Media Mark Weinberg says. "So this really meets consumer expectations. It makes us flexible and functional on all devices and it gives us the functionality that you get with HTML5 that its predecessor didn't have." ■

VITAL STATS: The coding language is now used by industry players such as Financial Times, Hearst, *Outside Magazine*, *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy*.

Copyright of Folio: The Magazine for Magazine Management is the property of Access Intelligence LLC d/b/a PBI Media, LLC and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.