

BOOK PROPOSAL

I. Title

The Future of the Magazine Form: Research Perspectives and Prospects

II. Authors/Editors

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III. General Description of the Work

Many media scholars agree that magazines—even more than newspapers, which are geographically limited, or the broadcast media, which are largely derivative, amplifying rather than creating social and cultural trends—serve both as a mirror of and a catalyst for the tenor and tone of the sociocultural realities of their times. A few historical examples can illustrate the point. In the 1950s, the glossy photographs of *Life* and *Look* defined a new era of American abundance. In the 1970s, as the political activism of 1960s' magazines such as *Ramparts* gave way to the “Me Decade,” city and regional magazines, with *New York* taking the lead, extolled passions for consumer goods and the politics of the personal. In the 1990s and the first decade of the current century, an era defined by the globalization of commerce and communication, magazines entered a period of evolution, distinguished by niche marketing and a fertile interaction between print media, the World Wide Web and proliferating digital media forms. Exactly where these developments will lead in the future is not entirely clear, but it is certain that magazines are likely to benefit from their unique ability to provide specific information of perceived value to a definable group of readers/viewers who are both attractive to marketers and for whom the content of magazines they value is an informational good worth paying for.

Equally notable, the last 20 years have seen enormous change in the industry. It is now clear that much of the innovation in these “new media” areas is being led by

magazine firms. In the main, the reason for this has been the fortuitous convergence between the strengths (and needs) of the magazine industry and the emerging directions in which the Web seems to be evolving. These include at least four significant trends, the first of which is specialization. In many ways, the development of the on-line realm has followed the historical model of magazine development: mass vehicles that, over time, evolve to define and serve specific niches. In the beginning of the on-line world, many of the newly created sites were fairly general in their orientation. Today, however, despite the success of “portals” such as Google and Facebook, the dominant on-line trend seems to privilege significant content specialization. As in the conventional magazine world, beyond the gateway afforded by the portal, there will be more different sites serving more different audiences—and, driven by diverging audience interests, the content of the sites themselves is in turn becoming more differentiated.

A corollary of specialization will be that fewer magazine Web sites will identically mirror the hard-copy print version of the publication. No longer will the Web site be a mere archive of the print product. Many magazine publishers will come to believe that other principles of conception and presentation apply on-line. However, no industry-wide agreement has as yet emerged on the operative principles to be applied when taking information originating in print form and putting it on-line. Some publishers, for example, believe that the average reader’s on-line attention span is limited to one screen’s worth of information; others think that as many as five screens are acceptable. Some believe that on-screen flashing banner advertising makes no difference; others find it an abomination. With all the different on-line presentation solutions currently in use, it is evident that there is as yet very little unanimity on trade practices.

It is likely that the historic adaptability of the magazine form will serve exceedingly well in the future. The basic strategic model of “narrow-casting”—serving the specific information needs of specific audiences for whom advertisers will pay a premium—will certainly continue to prevail. In large part due to their skill in applying this niche-driven economic model, successful magazine publishers will remain at the forefront of World Wide Web development, providing on-line information derived from, yet not identical to, that contained in their printed versions. Despite the importance of the Web, it is clear that both as a self-contained, highly targeted information vehicle and as a core “brand” from which other products will be extended, the magazine in its contemporary printed form will continue to demonstrate its efficacy as a source of information and pleasure for its readers, its utility as a marketing vehicle for its advertisers and its viability as a business enterprise for its publishers well into the 21st century.

As a concomitant result of all of the above, the last two decades have seen a flowering of scholarly research focused on the magazine form. Much of it, however, has been published in inordinately diffuse circumstances, making it relatively inaccessible and difficult to retrieve. What is lacking is a coherent scholarly anthology which will provide not only the much-needed coalescence of the recent research but also a coherent information structure that will facilitate further research into diverse aspects of the magazine form.

To accomplish this, the proposed volume will be comprised of seven parts and include a total of more than 30 chapters. Each chapter will survey the last 20 years of scholarship in its subject area, identifying the major research themes, theoretical

developments and interpretive breakthroughs. It is expected that every chapter will include the contemporary research in its subject area regarding the digital challenges and opportunities which currently face the magazine world

IV. Work's Central Argument

a. 50-Word Version

Magazines are unique in that they both reflect and shape the sociocultural reality of their times. As a result, they are certainly a worthy scholarly study subject. The last two decades have seen a great deal of research related to the magazine form; hence, this scholarly anthology will definitively identify, organize, evaluate, summarize and present the working state of the academy's engagement with the magazine form.

b. 150-Word Version

Scholarly engagement with the magazine form has, in the last two decades, produced a substantial amount of valuable research. However, the best of this scholarly effort needs to be assembled into an interpretive scholarly anthology which will both document the recently created new knowledge and encourage further research. Through the use of discursive research review articles authored by the leading academic authorities in the study of magazine journalism, the proposed volume will not only create an architecture to organize and archive the new knowledge but will also explicitly suggest possible new avenues of future investigation. The ambition of this book is undergirded by a tangible argument: That there is a genuine need for such a volume that might further broaden and deepen our understanding of the magazine form, as well as the sociocultural realities it both mirrors and influences.

V. Table of Contents

The structure of the proposed volume—including part and chapter titles—is as follows (Please see Attachment A for *Detailed Chapter Descriptions*):

Foreword

Introduction: Expansion and Coalescence - The Scholarly Engagement with the Magazine Form (David Abrahamson, Northwestern University)

Part I. Perspectives on Magazine Research

Chapter 1. Theory and Methods of Analysis (Carolyn Kitch, Temple University)

Chapter 2. Issues in Magazine Typology (Marcia Prior-Miller, Iowa State University)

Chapter 3. Methodological Studies (Kathleen Endres, University of Akron)

- Chapter 4. Magazines as Historical Study Subjects** (Cynthia Lee Patterson, University of Southern Florida)
- Chapter 5. Business-to-Business Media** (Abe Peck, Northwestern University)
- Chapter 6. International Magazine Publishing** (Leara Rhodes, University of Georgia)

Part II. Magazine Publishing's Social Structure: The People and the Work

- Chapter 7. Editorial Roles and Practices** (Susan Greenberg, Roehampton University)
- Chapter 8. Autobiography and Biography** (Elizabeth Hendrickson, University of Tennessee - Knoxville)
- Chapter 9. Source and Citation Analysis** (Nick Lasorsa, University of Texas – Austin)

Part III. Studies in Content: Magazines as Textual Communication

- Chapter 10. Gender, Race and Ethnicity** (Cheryl Renée Gooch, Lincoln University of Pennsylvania)
- Chapter 11. Public Affairs** (Isabel Soares, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Portugal)
- Chapter 12. Business Journalism in Magazines** (Dane S. Claussen, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)
- Chapter 13. Societal Considerations** (Vincent F. Filak, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh)
- Chapter 14. Communication and Consumer Lifestyle Behavior** (Yanick Rice Lamb, Howard University)
- Chapter 15. Magazines and Popular Culture** (Elizabeth Crisp Crawford, North Dakota State University)
- Chapter 16. Religious Issues** (Ken Waters, Pepperdine University)
- Chapter 17. Covering Science and Technology** (Lulu Rodriguez and Michael Dahlstrom, Iowa State University)
- Chapter 17b. Magazines and the Arts** (Sheila Webb, Western Washington University)
- Chapter 18. Literary Journalism** (Miles Maguire, University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh)

Part IV. Studies in Presentation: Magazines as Visual Communication

- Chapter 19. The Magazine Cover** (Ted Spiker, University of Florida)
- Chapter 20. Magazine Graphic Design** (Carol Holstead, University of Kansas)
- Chapter 21. Photography and Illustration** (Berkley Hudson and Elizabeth A. Lance, University of Missouri)
- Chapter 22. Infographics and Interactivity** (Carol B. Schwalbe, University of Arizona)

Part V. Pedagogical and Curricular Perspectives

Chapter 23. Magazine Journalism Education (Elliot King, Loyola University of Maryland)

Chapter 24. Teaching Writing - Long and Short Form (Kim Martin Long, Delaware Valley College)

Chapter 25. Teaching Magazine Editing (Bill Reynolds, Ryerson University, Canada)

Chapter 26. Teaching Research - Theory and Methods (Carolyn Ringer Lepre, Marist College)

Part VI. Economic Aspects of Magazine Publishing

Chapter 27. Magazine Management (Hanna-Kaisa Ellonen, Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland and Anette Johansson, Jönköping International Business School, Sweden)

Chapter 28. Magazine Advertising and Circulation (Sela Sar, Iowa State University)

Chapter 29. Magazines and Sustainability (Helen Kopnina, The Hague University of Applied Science, the Netherlands)

Part VII. The Future of the Magazine Form

Chapter 30. The Changing Magazine Audience (Rachel Davis Mersey, Northwestern University)

Chapter 31. The Digital Present and Future (David Abrahamson, Northwestern University)

Bibliography / Notes on Contributors / Index

VI. Existing Books on the Subject

There is no dearth of books related to the current state of affairs in journalism, but these vary in their attention to the magazine form, from little to none. It is worth noting, however, that a great deal of highly germane research has been accomplished since the publication of an earlier scholarly anthology.* The underlying premise of the proposed volume is to organize, document and interpret the last two decades of scholarship related to the magazine realm. Otherwise there are no known books that can make available a definitive compendium of magazine research—a decided lacuna in the context of the current information explosion that has increased scholars' needs for periodic syntheses of research in their fields and sub-fields.

Additionally, three early bibliographies that assembled the body of magazine research for scholars, students and professionals might also be noted.** They differ from the proposed work in that they were simple and annotated bibliographies, not syntheses

of the literature. At this point all are sufficiently dated as to be useful only to a limited cadre of scholars, primarily for historical purposes.

*Abrahamson, David (Ed.). *The American Magazine: Research Perspectives and Prospects*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1995.

** Earlier works:

Paine, Fred K. and Nancy E. Paine (Compilers). *Magazines: A Bibliography for Their Analysis, with Annotations and Study Guide*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987.

Schacht, John H. (Compiler). *A Bibliography for the Study of Magazines*. Urbana: University of Illinois, College of Communications, 1979.

Danielson, Wayne A. and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, Jr. (Ed.). *A Computerized Bibliography of Mass Communication Research: 1944-1964*. New York: Magazine Publishers Association, 1967.

VII. Thoughts on Target Audiences

Because the proposed work presents a much-needed new framework for the scholarly engagement with the magazine form, it is expected that it will find a high level of interest both in the academy and, to a lesser extent, the profession. It could be used as a supplementary text in graduate-level seminars and courses in communication research on magazine and journal periodicals as well as graduate- and undergraduate-level standing courses in media management and economics, communication and technology, mass communication and society, magazine writing, magazine editing, magazine publishing and editorial management. There is also evidence to suggest that journalism schools are being compelled to adjust education to serve the changing media environment and are regularly incorporating special-topics seminars for which this book would be of service. Moreover, it is clear that it will be of use to all researchers—in the professoriate, in graduate programs and in the profession—who might benefit from a definitive baseline review of the extant academic research focused on the magazine form.

VIII. Schedule and Length

The deadline for completing the manuscript is November 30, 2013. The length will be 125,000 words, with the understanding that this limit does not include endnotes and bibliography.

IX. Summary Biographies of Co-Editors

David Abrahamson is a professor of Journalism and the Charles Deering Professor of Teaching Excellence at the Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, where he teaches courses exploring the changing nature of long-form journalism. He is the author of *Magazine-Made America: The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical*, an interpretive history of the magazine profession since World War II, and editor of a previous anthology of magazine scholarship, *The American Magazine: Research Perspectives and Prospects*. He also is the general editor of a multi-volume historical series, "Visions of the American Press," published by the Northwestern University Press, past president of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies and past head of AEJMC Magazine Division, which awarded him its 2011-2012 Educator of the Year Award.

Marcia Prior-Miller is an associate professor of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Meredith Apprenticeship Professor at the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University. She teaches courses in contemporary magazine publishing, advanced magazine editing and magazine and journal periodical research. The author of "Issues in Magazine Typology," her long-term research focuses on the question of magazine types. Her research also includes identifying and mapping the historically scarce and persistently scattered body of scholarly knowledge on magazine and journal periodicals. She is the compiler of the *Bibliography of Published Research on Magazine and Journal Periodicals* [Ames: Iowa State University]; 8th edition, forthcoming.

X. Curricula Vitae

Please see Attachment C.

XI. Attachments

- A.** Detailed Chapter Descriptions
- B.** Summary Biographies of Contributors
- C.** Abrahamson and Prior-Miller Current Vitas