

Print Magazines in the Digital Environment

Editorial and Positioning Strategies

Dora Santos Silva | ICNOVA / NOVA FCSH

dorasantossilva@fcsb.unl.pt



escola
de comunicação,
arquitetura,
artes e tecnologias
da informação



Research Objective

How is the media magazine industry innovating in the digital environment, regarding the editorial process and the media brand positioning?

Research Questions

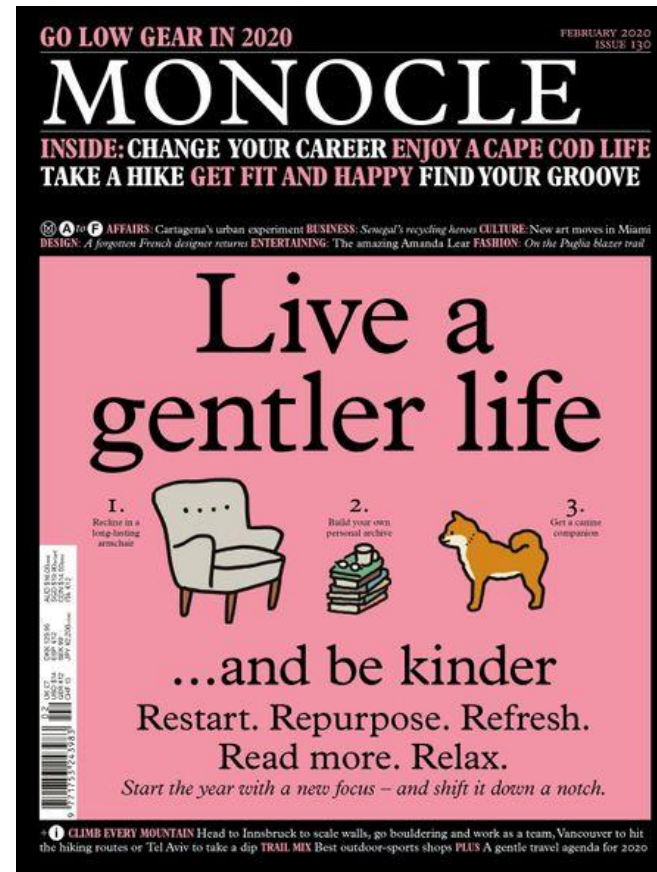
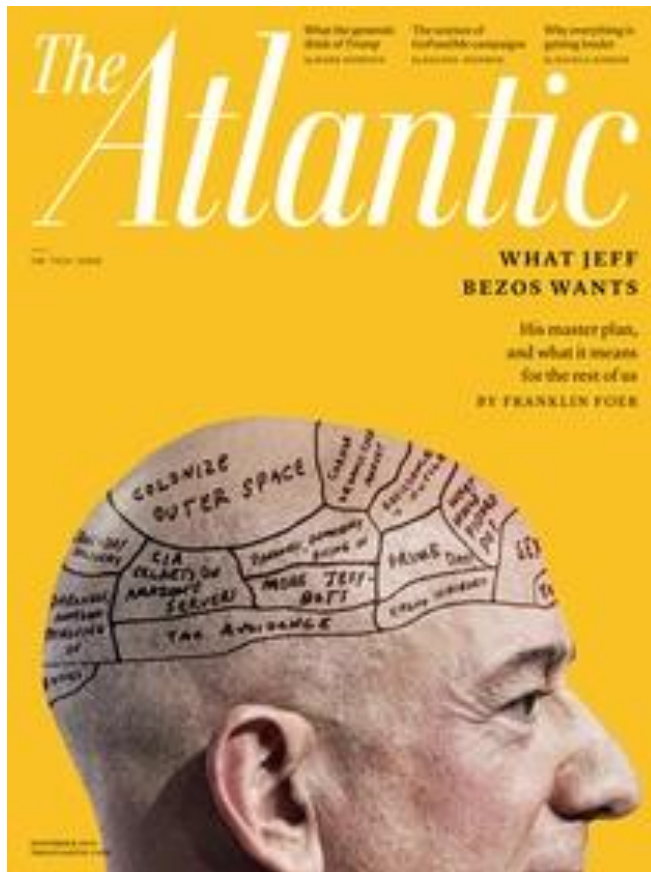
RQ1. Which are the main magazine brand extensions in the digital environment and how can they relate with the print product?

RQ2. Which are the main editorial differences between the print product and the digital one?

RQ3. Which are the main strategies to keep the magazine relevant, both in print and digital world?

6 MAPPING the MAGAZINE

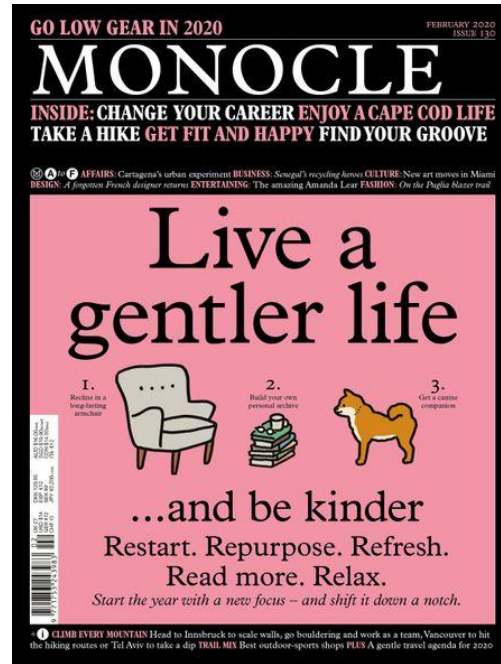
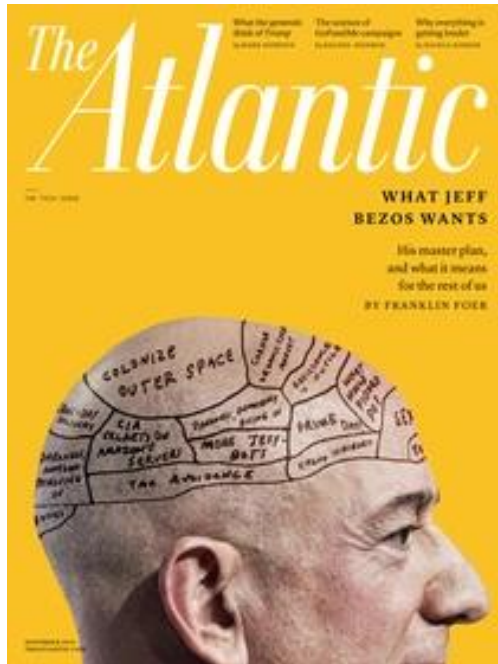
Corpus



Media brands that have started as print magazines (their core business)

6 MAPPING the MAGAZINE

Methods



Content analysis (print and online) between January 2020 and april 2020

Interviews to the editors*

Theoretical background

The need for innovation, seeking “new combinations”, using Schumpeter’s words

Tipology of media innovations

- Product
- Process
- Positioning
- Paradigm
- Social

Theoretical background

This innovation, focused on the product or on the way that the news are distributed, meant assuring a presence in the digital environment. However, this wasn't so clear to magazines, especially considering that this medium has distinguished features, a periodicity and its online presence is not necessarily a "digital magazine" (Santos-Silva, 2011): it may be an extension of the media brand, a digital enhanced version of the magazine or a new media product itself; it may be a monthly magazine thriving in a 24-7 media.

Findings



We define it as a

Digital extended media brand experience positioning

Everything is paid and the concept of the brand experience is very strong

Editorial: cultural dimension of everything, best cultural practices around the world and annual rankings of the 25 most liveable cities



Business model: paid content, co-branded advertising and retail

Findings

They don't give any content for free. They are not on social media

A global taste making brand – they have besides Monocle magazine, two seasonal magazines, an online radio station (the programs are single-sponsored), Quality of Life conference, 5 retail shops and 4 coffee shops

Findings

PRINT

- Core
 - Materiality
- Quality of paper
- Nothing for free
- Status and style

DIGITAL

- Digital subscription
- Free content:
 - Radio
 - Short films
 - Newsletters
 - Shop

SUSTAINABLE BOTH IN PRINT AND DIGITAL (22%)
RADIO IS PROFITABLE FROM THE START

Findings

The Forbes logo is centered within a teal rectangular box. The word "Forbes" is written in a white, serif font.

We define it as a
Magazine Window Shop
All the content is a teaser

Findings

PRINT

- Core
- Materiality
- Very poor paper
- Exclusive content

DIGITAL

- No digital subscription (only on mobile devices)
- No digital-only content
- The digital presence is only a marketing /sales component

Findings



We define it as a

Enhanced digital positioning

Different strategies for both print and online

Findings

A

The Atlantic

Editorial: international affairs, society, politics, urbanism...

upmarket extended

media brand

experience

paradigm

Business model: 4 free articles per month
Online subscription of the magazine: digital, print & digital and premium (no ads)

Digital-only free content (podcasts, newsletters, daily ideas)

The Atlantic monthly belongs to a group with many single-subject websites and other brand editorial extensions

Findings

PRINT

- It's not core anymore

DIGITAL

- Different types of digital subscriptions
- 4 free articles p/month
- The digital presence is a lot more than the print magazine experience

Conclusions

RQ1. Which are the main magazine brand extensions in the digital environment and how can they relate with the print product?

Podcasts and newsletters and teasers for the print magazine. Print magazines still struggle with a strategy to exist online. Any of the magazines studied has (only) a digital version of the magazine on the site.

Conclusions

RQ2. Which are the main editorial differences between the print product and the digital one?

None. The stories could be enhanced and presented in a different way (using the digital formats), but magazines prefer to just copy+paste the print content and create native digital content.

The magazines themselves don't explore the digital potential on their core business.

Conclusions

RQ3. Which are the main strategies to keep the magazine relevant, both in print and digital world?

It's mainly an economic strategy (not editorial).