

Will print survive?

 By [Rod Baker](#)

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VALENCIA, SPAIN: Following the thoughts of Alisa Bowen, SVP, head of consumer publishing, Thomson Reuters and Mike Cooper, worldwide CEO of PHD, the question could almost be posed - do we *care* if print survives? Bowen and Cooper made presentations and shared their thoughts on the future of print at the [Festival of Media 2010](#) in Valencia, Spain.



In 1455, Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg, a German printer and the inventor of mechanical movable type printing published his major work, the Gutenberg Bible (also known as the 42-line Bible) and since then the printed word has been the means of communication.

But has it run its course?

Naturally, those in print and who depend on their livelihood for it are adamant print has been around for the past 565 years and will be around for the next 565 years. There are others, the tech-savvies operating in the digital world, who reckon print is a dinosaur and should go the way of the dinosaurs.

Most people in the media, however, in whatever particular field, probably reckon that print is here to stay, and is and will remain an important adjunct to digital - but it will have to adapt and innovate in order to remain relevant in a media world that is constantly changing and evolving.

Hands up - who cares if print dies?

"It's a case of innovate or die," says Bowen, who then probably caused a shiver to run down the spine of every print-centric delegate at the festival when she immediately posed the question: "Should we care if the printed page goes?"

She says that newspapers have never made most of their money from pure news - it's come from other sources such as job ads and so on. She went on to say that while she reckons there will always be a place for print, "It will be as only one of

many media and quality will be paramount.” As for the rest of what newspapers, for instance, do, stick to the core.

The UK's *Telegraph* has a motto or saying, namely “Do what you do best, outsource the rest”, and it points to a much leaner, more adaptable, innovative and responsive operation - let's face it, getting a smallish core team to change and adapt is a great deal easier than trying the same with a staff of hundreds - akin to the difference between a speedboat and an oceanliner.

Survival of the fittest

Cooper said most of the changes in media in the past 30 years or so have been in technology but there was one aspect of newspapers and their readers he finds strange: “I find it bizarre that someone will go to a shop and buy a newspaper printed 12 hours previously, rather than log on to an online news site that is being updated continuously and with which you can have an instant relationship - and it's all free!

“The fact is people tend to mix and match far more than they did... so you don't have ‘only’ a newspaper reader, but rather someone who also watches TV for the news, picks it up online and so on,” he says.

The key is to engage with readers and welcome their experiences.

Bowen offered a ray of hope, however, when she said that she is very encouraged by the manner in which publishers have embraced the iPad, for instance: “They have been very inventive and we should rally around them,” she said.

On the question of the role of newspapers in countries in which the media is still highly regulated and politicised, Bowen acknowledged that the situation is very different and one is looking at a very different dynamic in the media.

Cooper said that in China one of the challenges is intellectual property - and that adds a whole new dimension there.

As regards Africa, Cooper says: “Newspapers are not encouraging readers to embrace digital, but that will change - newspapers cannot afford to cling to the past.”

In short, it will be a case of survival of the fittest - adapt, embrace, innovate or go to the wall.

Alisa Bowen

Alisa Bowen is senior vice president, head of consumer publishing at Thomson Reuters, where she oversees the sales, marketing, product development and operations for the advertising supported web, mobile, ipTV propositions in 12 languages and 17 markets globally. Prior to her appointment to this role, Bowen was the head of product management for the consumer publishing business, based in New York. Before relocating to New York, she was general manager of Reuters European consumer publishing business overseeing product, sales and marketing, based in London. For almost a decade, She has played a role in the evolution of the organisation's multimedia strategy since joining Reuters in 2001, after working as a public relations and communications consultant specialising in major corporate change programs. She holds an MBA with distinction from the London Business School.

Mike Cooper

Mike Cooper, currently worldwide CEO of PHD, started working in advertising in the Saatchi & Saatchi media department in London in 1984. Over the next five years he was promoted several times and worked on accounts such as Nissan, Anchor Foods, Abbey National and Campbell's Soup. In 1989 he was transferred by Saatchi's to Hong Kong to become media director of the local office and after nine months he was made regional media director for Asia Pacific. During this period he founded a Saatchi media operation (later to become Zenith) in southern China.

In 1991 he took over running Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Hong Kong and led the agency through a period of rapid

growth winning new accounts including Toyota, Schweppes, Hewlett Packard and Nomura.

In 1995 he joined ABN, the regional business television network based in Singapore. His responsibilities there included distribution, advertising sales and marketing. He was involved in the merger of this business in 1996/7 with CNBC to create CNBC Asia.

In 1997 Cooper was recruited by Omnicom to set up OMD across Asia Pacific. Over the following few years he recruited a regional management team and opened 17 OMD offices across Asia Pacific. OMD grew to become the region's second largest media specialist and by far the most awarded. Between 1999 and 2006 OMD was Media Agency Of The Year three times, in 1999, 2002 and 2006.

In 2004 Cooper took over responsibility for OMD WW's Global Account Management Programme overseeing the network management of Nissan, McDonald's, PepsiCo, GE, Vodafone, Apple, and Exxon Mobil amongst others.

In 2005 Cooper became CEO for Omnicom Media Group across APAC in addition to his Global Account responsibilities and oversaw the roll out of PHD across the region opening nine offices over the following 12 months. At the end of 2006 he was made Regional Agency Head of the Year by *Media Magazine* and one of the top 10 Brits working overseas by *Campaign Magazine*.

In 2007 Cooper became CEO for PHD WW based in London. PHD has 45 offices across the world and employs approximately 2000 staff.

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ABOUT ROD BAKER

Rod Baker is Content Director at Bizcommunity.com. A journalist since before computers, he worked on a wide range of magazines and, in his youth, rose through the ranks from being a lowly and abused sub-editor, to a high and still abused editor and publisher. He has been editor and publisher of a number of magazines, as well as a newspaper. He has edited many books, and written a number too. Email him at rod@bizcommunity.com

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