

E-zines and digital dailies: Could apps save the publishing industry?

 By [Wesley Lynch](#)

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The most recent ABC figures have painted a picture of decline for newspapers, including a 6.7% drop in circulation figures for dailies and 4.9% for weekend papers. Although magazines are holding strong, they are becoming luxury items, able to compete because they are by nature more niched than newspapers.

There are many reasons why print publications are somewhat stagnant at the moment, including the need and availability of instant information online. For one thing, the public is becoming more environmentally conscious, and magazines that are consumed in a few hours before being thrown away hardly speak to the eco-conscious market. Secondly, the economy has forced most households into cutting luxuries - of which a R30-R50 magazine is certainly one.

Print publications that are going digital are simply responding to a marketplace that has already - irreparably - changed.

Digital's benefits

Android and mobile devices have changed their designs for ease of reading and most companies can easily replicate the aesthetic quality of print on a mobile platform. Not to mention that by storing information digitally, readers can access information that would have otherwise been archived to the bottom of a landfill.

There are other benefits to going digital too: it has become much easier to convince loyal subscribers to try new publications and it is now much easier to prove circulation figures accurately and instantly than it has been previously. At the end of the day, if publishers see that they are no longer providing value for readers and advertisers, it makes sense to move to a platform that will fill the gaps.

At Snapplify, we wanted to make that process easy, so that any print publication could simply take the hi-res PDFs they would normally send to the printer and we'd "snapplify" them, enabling magazines and newspapers to publish instantly to mobile.

Since then, we were surprised to find that a few forward-thinking online publications wanted to use the product too. Branko Brkic, the editor of The Daily Maverick (a successful current affairs news site) used the technology to produce a premium publication, delivered via tablet only.

Competitive advantage

iMaverick is the perfect example of how using an app allows publishers to deliver content with a premium feel to the mobile devices of a paying subscriber. By giving the reader something special - the gloss and layout of a print publication, on the go - it provides the publisher with a crucial competitive advantage over Web-based news sites.

Although the market is still small for paid-for news and analysis, it is viable. The crux of the matter was the premium experience which is only possible via an application. If publishers start engendering a culture of paying for premium access to quality photography and original reporting, the industry will continue to grow.

We are currently experiencing a transition phase for publishing. Most publications already have an online element, and this will extend to smart devices such as tablets as they become cheaper and more accessible. Now that we can mimic the tactile and aesthetic pleasure of print magazines with tablet and mobile apps, at a lower cost, with the immediacy and archival capability of online, there is no reason to fear the decline of the publishing industry. Instead, we can look forward to the evolution thereof.

The medium chosen does not matter - as long as we're on the same page.

About Snapplify

Snapplify, founded by CEO Wesley Lynch, is a mobile solutions provider that enables publishers, authors and content providers to package their books, magazines and brochures into digital publications for company branded Mobile Apps. These Apps are then distributed globally via relevant App stores. The company launch at the Frankfurt Book Fair saw Snapplify establishing a UK and South African office whilst servicing leading publishers both locally and internationally. www.snapplify.com.

ABOUT WESLEY LYNCH

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