

Join the revolution—go digital

A look at the players, benefits, costs and questions of publishing online

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Creating a downloadable version of your print product has a lot of advantages. Not only does your distribution go global, digital editions offer new opportunities to advertisers and easy access to your readers. They don't even have to leave the house to view your finely crafted editorial and artistic vision.

Perhaps the best thing about the digital mag is the cohesive package it offers. Everything can be presented within a single customizable interface. Audio, video, animations and ads all open without redirecting readers to a new page or website. Their eyes never stray from your magazine unless you want them to.

Many of the elements on your existing webpage can be integrated into your digital offering: subscription links, links to external websites, specially branded web tools, etc.

If you're shopping around for a company to convert your magazine to digital form, here are a few questions to keep in mind. They'll help you find a solution that fits your specific needs, and avoid unpleasant surprises after you've committed to a service provider.

- How much lead time do they need to convert your files?
- In what file format will you need to submit your layouts?
- Can you submit material through FTP or other file transfer software?
- Is their digital conversion fee arranged per page or per issue?
- Will readers need to download special software to read your magazine?
- If pricing is variable, what elements will affect the final rate (circulation? frequency? page count?)
- Considering all variables, what will your per-issue cost be over one year?
- Who will be responsible for notifying readers of new issues?
- Will they digitize back-issues to build an archive for you?
- If you are planning to increase your page count or start a subscription drive, are the providers prices locked-in for the duration of your contract?
- What kind of metrics can they provide?
- Are they ABC or CCAB compliant?
- Can you alter the design after launch?
- Can you get reduced rates if you bring more of your magazines to the table?

YOUR GUIDE TO DIGITAL MAGAZINE TECHNOLOGY

Advanced Publishing

Based in: Saint John, NB
of clients: 10-14
Examples: Oil Week, Vertical
Date founded: 2003
Runs in browser: Yes
Plug-in Required: DjVu
Contact: 605-674-9550
Pricing: \$1,000-\$1,500 setup fee + \$10-15/page

IDEA (Baxter)

Based in: Toronto, ON
of mag clients: 3
Examples: Canadian Travel Press
Date founded: 2002
Runs in browser: Yes
Plug-in required: No
Contact: 416-968-7252
Pricing: \$2000 setup fee + \$950/issue + 5 cents/subscriber.

iPagez

Based in: Mississauga, ON
of mag clients: 30-40
Examples: Aloft (CanJet)
Date founded: 2002
Runs in browser: Yes
Plug-in required: Flash
Contact: 905-361-7425
Pricing: Variable.

LinkPath

Based in: Pickering, ON
of mag clients: 40
Examples: Plant, Camagazine
Date founded: 1999
Runs in browser: Yes
Plug-in required: Flash
Contact: Daniel Glazerman (905-831-3000 x.257)
Pricing: \$500-\$1000 setup fee + \$22.50/page.

Newsstand

Based in: Austin, TX
of mag clients: 57
Examples: Hello! (UK), Harvard Business Review
Date founded: 1999
Runs in browser: Yes
Plug-in required: Flash
Contact: Myles Fuchs (512-334-5199)
Pricing: \$1000 monthly processing fee + 30-50 cents/sub (email alert to subscribers).

Texterity

Based in: Southborough, MA
of mag clients: 124
Examples: Allure, Vanity Fair
Date founded: 2000
Runs in browser: Yes
Plug-in required: No
Contact: 508-804-3062
Pricing: \$10/page + 35 cent/sub + \$300 hosting fee + variable setup fee

Olive

Based in: Denver, CO
of mag clients: 10-14
Examples: Fortune, Sports Illustrated
Date founded: 1999
Runs in browser: Yes
Plug-in required: Flash
Contact: 303-912-2761
Pricing: Variable.

Zinio

Based in: San Francisco, CA
of mag clients: 300+
Examples: BusinessWeek, Redbook
Date founded: 2000
Runs in browser: No
Plug-in required: Zinio Reader
Contact: 415-494-2700
Pricing: Variable.



Most online providers offer similar kinds of user interfaces that can be customized. In addition to "turning the page," checking the TOC and zooming in, you can often link directly to advertisers or your subscription page.