

2011 Magazine Culture Jeremy Leslie



Diego Ortiz and Pepe Murciego, *La Más Bella*, Spring 2010
Courtesy the publisher



Penny Modra, *Is Not Magazine*, issue 1, Love Is/Not Lust, 2005
Courtesy the publisher



Designer unknown, *Nice Magazine*, 2002
Courtesy Jeremy Leslie



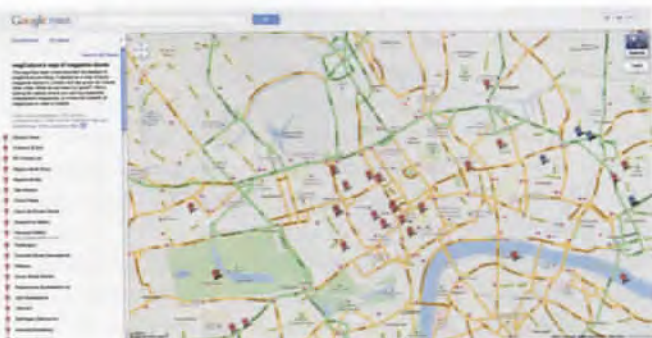
Joseph Ernst, *One Page Magazine*, French Vogue, 1960s
Courtesy the artist



Left to right: Nick Mrozowski, *i* newspaper, vol. 2, no. 392, August 9, 2010; *i* newspaper, vol. 2, no. 395, August 12, 2010; *i* newspaper, vol. 1, no. 249, February 23, 2010
Courtesy the publisher

magCulture Map

In 2009 Jeremy Leslie, editor of *magCulture*, launched this Google-based map, which pinpoints the best magazine stores around the world as identified by the blog's readers.
—EL See magCulture.com



Colophon Conference 2007, International Magazine Symposium
Photo ©Eric Chenal

—Melovecolophon.com

Rethinking the Magazine

Magazines are such a ubiquitous part of today's media landscape that we easily take them for granted. But what is a magazine? The word brings to mind a specific physical object. We think of a standard package of full-color pages printed on glossy paper. But in recent years a number of publishing projects have challenged such assumptions, reminding us that magazines can in turn challenge their readers in terms of how they look, feel, and read.

Nice Magazine—a magazine-size piece of wood imprinted with just its name, or masthead—tests our basic physical expectations of what a magazine is, while *Naked woman covered in glitter, and words* and *One Page Magazine* are genre-specific critiques that use humour and visual analysis respectively to highlight the underlying banalities of much mainstream content.

The advent of the web as a common utility has led magazines to reexamine their physical properties, with some, like *Monocle*, deliberately adopting a more booklike format. *Monocle's* cover design is composed similarly each issue, rejecting the received wisdom that covers should be a rotating series of familiar celebrity faces from issue to issue.

The web has had an acute effect on newspapers, many of which have turned to magazine-style content and design to justify their existence now that they are no longer the first source for breaking news. The Portuguese newspaper *i* is effectively a daily magazine rather than a newspaper in the traditional sense.

Other publishing projects have taken the word "magazine" back to its Arabic etymological roots, where it means emporium or warehouse, coming up with surprising ideas of what a magazine can be. The editors of *La Más Bella* produce themed collections of objects embellished with content, while South Africa's *Afro* presents new, non-magazine paper formats for delivering content.

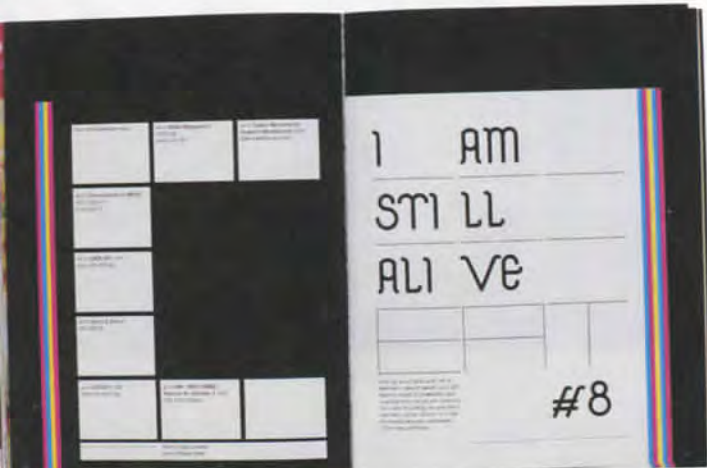
Thanks to technology, it is cheaper and easier than ever to create a magazine, but the hardest part of the process, getting your publication to readers, remains as difficult as ever. The makers of *Is Not Magazine* solved this by posting their poster-size publication on city walls. *I Am Still Alive* appears as part of other magazines, taking over several pages as a parasite project that cleverly piggybacks its host.

Other publications with more recognizable formats challenge editorial conventions in their pages. *City* appears using a different person's name each month; *O.K. Periodical* curates content submitted

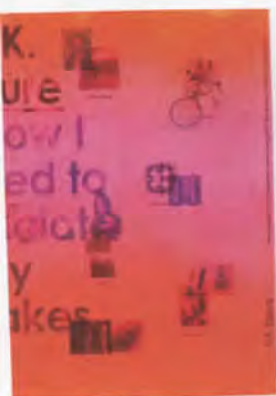
by readers in response to a theme; *Carlos* eschewed photography in favor of illustration; and *Kasino A4* and *Monika* play with the concept of the didactic editorial voice to subvert the idea of lifestyle advice. Perhaps most confrontational of all was *Re-Magazine*, which during its seven-year lifespan went through several distinct phases, such as embracing the ordinary lives of everyday people as its editorial subject matter, toying knowingly with the expectations of both publishers and readers. ☒



above and right: Peet Plensa, Afro, Cube edition, 2006. Courtesy the publisher



bläke, I Am Still Alive #8, in Sugo, issue 1, 2004. Courtesy the artists



Wille-Jan van Ekert, O.K. Periodical, issue 2: Failure, Winter/Spring, 2009. Courtesy the publisher



Clockwise from top left: Mike Meiré, Brand Eins, vol. 2, no. 7, September 2000; vol. 12, no. 10, October 1, no. 1, October 1999; vol. 2, no. 3, April 2000. Courtesy the publisher



Jop van Bennekorn, Re-Magazine, Hester issue, 2004. Courtesy the artist



Monika, Monika, It's About What Is Said issue, Spring/Summer 2004. Courtesy the publisher



Pekka Toivonen, Kasino A4, issues 1-2, This Aggressive Melancholy, Summer 2006 Courtesy the publisher

Glitter-covered woman covered in glitter, and words, 2005 Courtesy the artist



Above and right: Warren Jackson, Carlos, issue 1, Spring 2003 Courtesy the publisher



Richard Spencer-Powell, Monocle, vol. 5, no. 45, July/August 2011; Monocle, vol. 1, no. 1, March 2007 Courtesy the publisher



Left to right: Guido Kruger, Anne's City Magazine Luxembourg, June 2011; Laurent's City Magazine Luxembourg, April 2011; and Dennis's City Magazine Luxembourg, May 2011 Courtesy Maison Moderne

Reinventing Genres

Look across the shelves of any decent magazine store and you'll find a range of publications that reflect just about every human need and desire. What began one hundred fifty years ago as an upmarket vehicle for distributing news and opinion in a world facing major geographic and political upheaval has evolved into a sophisticated mass-market industry.

That industry developed alongside, and often as part of, the consumer boom of the late twentieth century. General advice became "lifestyle" as our interests in food, sex, fashion, sport, and travel were indulged and major publishing brands created. Many great magazines were launched as a result, but with success came a fear of failure and a blunting of the will to innovate. Lifestyle magazines became predictable and formulaic.

Against that background, a body of new independent magazines are reinterpreting these now traditional genres. Taking advantage of the cheaper, easier production methods provided by computers and encouraged by the Internet's forthright sharing of opinions, these magazines exist as implicit critiques of their mainstream rivals.

An early example is *Carl's Cars*, founded in 1999. Auto magazines generally focus on speed, power, and statistics, but this biannual took a more realistic approach. Subtitled itself "A magazine about people," it revels in the day-to-day presence of cars in our lives and presents its subject with a light and often humorous touch that is reflected in its page designs. It is anti-car magazine rather than anti-car. The same is true of cycling title *The Ride Journal*, which represents a genuine shared interest rather than filling an advertising niche.

Shelter magazines are another genre that have tended toward an aspirational ideal. *Apartmento* offers a more honest approach, identifying with the limitations facing young city dwellers who have limited space and money. Its small format, matte paper stock, and informal design aesthetic reflect its vision. Children's magazines have a similarly positioned hero in *Anorak*, which shuns the usual commerciality and brand tie-ins of kids' magazines in favor of a well-designed and inventive approach to activities and storytelling.

Fantastic Man has already proven itself a commercial success in the men's lifestyle/fashion world. Built around creative director Jop van Bennekom's vision of modern masculinity, it favors "real" men instead of models and presents an ironic outlook that references an earlier age of

etiquette guides and "proper" behavior. It is a world away—both editorially and graphically—from the confusing mix of camp fashion and explicit heterosexuality found in the mainstream men's titles. *Manzine* and *Port* provide two further examples of divergent men's magazines. It remains to be seen whether the recent launch of *The Gentlewoman*, a women's magazine from the publishers of *Fantastic Man*, can match its older brother's success.

An alternative take on the movie world is provided by *Little White Lies*, which has quietly developed a voice that has attracted a passionate following. Each issue is built around a single new release and addresses broader cultural themes around the movie as well the film itself.

Many other titles have found new ways to reinvigorate their respective genres, whether architecture (*Pin-Up*), sex (*Jacques*), food (*Fire & Knives*, *Put A Egg On It*, *Meatpaper*), fashion (*Rubbish*), music (*'Sup*), business (*Brand Eins*), or soccer (*Sepp*). Many have already had an outsized influence despite their modest sales figures, as their new approaches attract an international, media-savvy, and upmarket audience. ☒



McGinnis and Raigh, Put A Egg On It, March/April 2011. Courtesy the publisher



Rob Lowe, Fire & Knives, 2007. Courtesy the publisher

meatpaper



Stansky, Meatpaper, issue 15, Summer 2011. Courtesy the publisher

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Cathy Olmedillas and Rob Lowe, Anorak, vol. 19, 2011. Courtesy the publisher



Omar Sosa, Apartamento, issue 3, April 2009. Courtesy the publisher

PIN-UP

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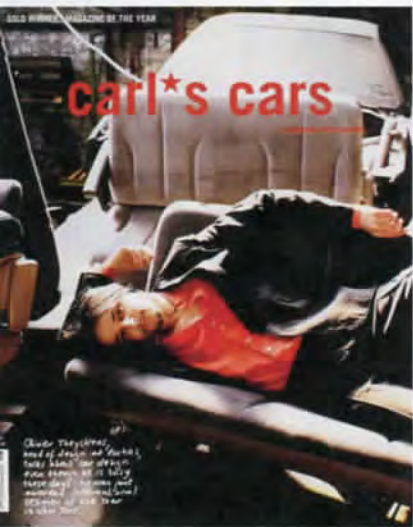
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Felix Burchter and Dylan Fracasta, Pin-Up, issue 10, Spring/Summer 2011. Courtesy the publisher



Stephanie Dumont, Carl's Cars, issue 16, Summer 2006. Photo: Damien Metelau and Xavier Cariciu



Karen, issue 3, 2007. Courtesy the publisher



Andrew Diprose, The Ride Journal, issue 5, 2011, cover illustration by lovedust. Courtesy the publisher



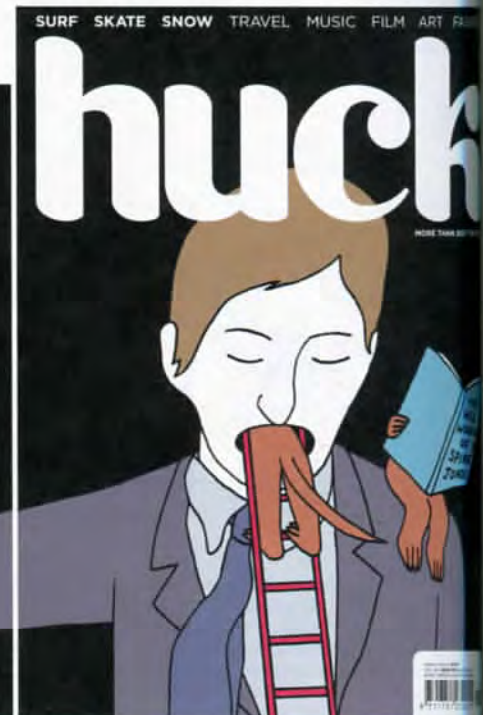
Bianca Wendt, Rubbish, issue 2.5, 2010. Courtesy the publisher



Paul Willoughby, The Church of London, Little White Lies #26, The Where the Wild Things Are issue, November/December 2009, illustration by Geoff McFetridge. Courtesy the publishers



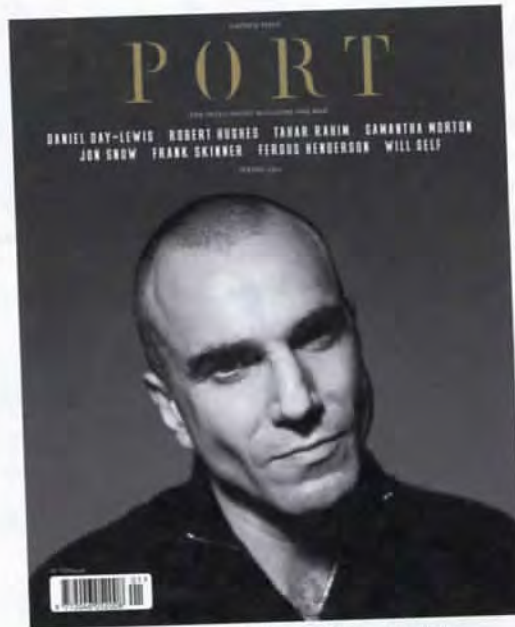
Brendan Duggan, 'Sup, issue 22, 2010. Courtesy the publisher



Rob Longworth, Huck #18, The Spike Jonze Tribute Issue, December 2009, illustration by Geoff McFetridge. Courtesy the publishers



Kevin Braddock (actor), Manzine, issue 4, Winter 2010/2011
 Publisher: Kevin Braddock



Matt Willey and Kuchar Swara, Port, Spring 2011, Courtesy the publisher



Mirko Borcsh, Sepp, issue 5, 2010, Courtesy the publisher



Jonathan Leder and Buro Svenja, Jacques, Winter 2011
 Courtesy the publisher



Jos Bennek, Fantastic Man, issue 2, Autumn/Winter 2005-2006, Courtesy the publisher



Jop van Bennekom, The Gentlewoman, issue 3, Spring/Summer 2011, Courtesy the publisher

FASHION
 JUST THE RISE

THE WILD WORLD OF PIKE

Design x Content

Magazines are vehicles for content, and this raw material is the same in any magazine—words and images. Words are generally the responsibility of the editor, while images are tended by the art director. A design team combines these two elements to create the page layouts we recognize as magazine design.

Our basic expectation of design is that it presents the content in a clear and legible manner, just as the editor must ensure that the words are factually and grammatically correct. Rules have developed over many years to achieve this goal. Pages are labeled with page numbers and running heads that help readers find their way around the magazine. A hierarchy of information exists on each page—the headline attracts the reader's attention, the sell or deck explains more, and the text carries the story. Large initial letters or "drop caps" at appropriate points break the uniformity of columns of text, and pull quotes hint at points of intrigue to encourage the reader to remain engaged with the text.

Such conventions are just the beginning of the design process. Every magazine aspires to have a unique character, and to help achieve this the designer will make choices of scale, color, and relationship between elements on every page. This is part of what defines a publication as a magazine rather than, say, a book, and today this process has been extended by computerization, bringing almost limitless options to the desktop.

But it doesn't matter how stunning the page designs are if they don't reflect the tone of the written content. This is where the relationship between editor and art director is a vital one. A good editor must have a working knowledge of design and the art director must understand writing. The two must work together to create a synthesis of design and content that adds up to more than the sum of its parts.

Several magazines have recently epitomized great editor-art director relationships. *Wired* has developed a high-tech graphic style that perfectly reflects its content while bringing to visual life what might otherwise be quite dry science and technology content. Weekly magazines present their own challenges in terms of timing, and *New York* and *Bloomberg Businessweek* have made a speciality of applying monthly design standards to a weekly production routine. *New York* has a long history of strong editorial design, and the latest iteration combines intelligent templating of regular pages to help rapid page turnaround and bespoke feature designs at the front of the magazine.

The recent redesign of *Bloomberg Businessweek* has seen the introduction of a crisp and functional modernist design aesthetic that is softened by the use of illustration. This is most obvious on the front cover designs, which make a virtue of the spontaneity required of a weekly news title.

Such work relies on modern design software to achieve the detailing and quality of their typography and layouts. But some magazines react against the possibilities provided by the software. *Marmalade*, a London-based creative magazine, refused to use page layout programs such as QuarkXPress, the standard software of the time. Instead, the design team created pages as physical tableaux, complete with headlines, text, and imagery, to be photographed and printed as single images. This attempt to circumvent software was effective despite the irony that the final photographs had to be designed using the very software the magazine sought to avoid. The untitled magazine published by M-real paper corporation also used technology against itself to suggest copies of the publication had been scribbled over and marked up after its printing. German culture magazine *032c* has experimented with definitions of what is ugly and beautiful, deliberately subverting ideas of "good" design to reflect the edgy nature of its written content. In all three cases it can be argued that the design has *become* content.

Design also informs and directs the physical nature of a magazine. In part a response to the challenge of the Internet, publishers have looked to special printing finishes to emphasize their engagement with multiple senses (touch and smell as well as sight) and exaggerate their physical presence. *Wallpaper** has made a speciality of this, inviting guest creatives to contribute ideas, such as when architect Zaha Hadid created laser-cut paper sculptures based on one of her building designs. *Amelia's Magazine* also used laser cutting to execute Rob Ryan's intricate design. Shelter magazine *Nest* used different physical effects every issue, often giving its pages curved or asymmetrical edges, while *Mined* left its edges untrimmed, requiring the reader to tear the edges for access.

Taking a simpler but just as effective route, *mono.kultur* is always the same size but uses different folding and finishing techniques to vary its format every issue. Art magazine *Esopus* encourages artists to experiment with paper folding and other techniques. Other magazines rely on special fluorescent and metallic inks to help their covers demand the attention of readers, something *Sleazenation* mocked with

a cover featuring the line "Now even more superficial—over 100 pages of hype and lies." Foil stamping is also often used to add drama to a cover, and British *Harper's Bazaar* went further, embellishing its logo with Swarovski crystals for a special issue.

Magazines also develop new ideas from their production processes. It has long been possible for publishers to vary the front cover content of different editions of their magazines. British *Elle* is one of several magazines that adopted a clever strategy to make their subscriber issues special and therefore more desirable. Every month they now produce entirely different front cover designs for their newsstand and subscriber issues. With no need to sell the content to the subscriber, their cover can be more creative rather than commercial. ☒



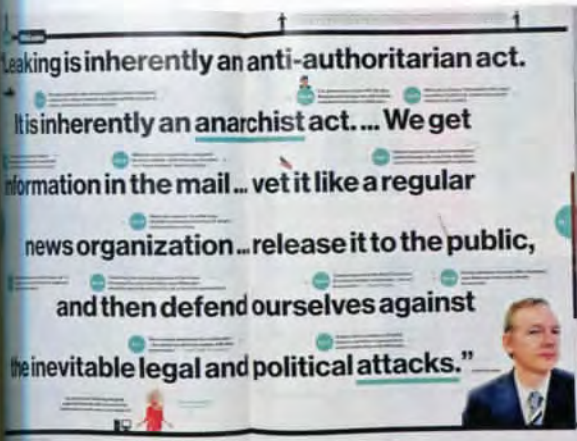
Scott Dadich, Wired, vol. 16, no. 9, September 2010; vol. 17, no. 5, May 2009 Courtesy the publisher



above and right: Chris Dixon, New York, January 16, 2006, and December 22-29, 2008 Courtesy the publisher



Scott King, Sleazeration, vol. 4, no. 8, Ever More Superficial issue, September 2001 Courtesy the designer



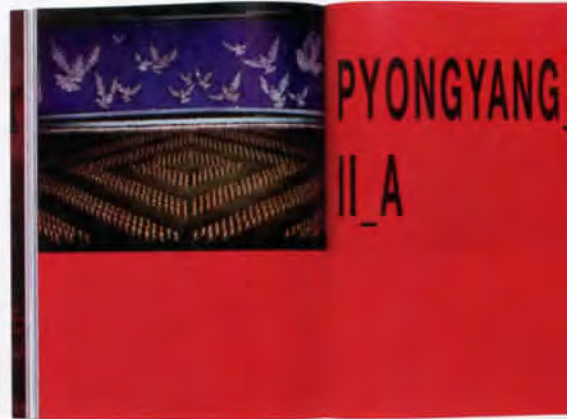
NODE Berlin Oslo, mono.kultur #23, Spring/Summer 2010 Courtesy Kai von Rabinau



Bloomberg Businessweek, Year in Review, December 20, 2010-January 2, 2011 Courtesy the publisher



Mike Meiré, 032c, issue 14, Winter 2007/2008 Courtesy the publisher





JP Thurlow, Wallpaper*, Handmade issue, August 2010. Courtesy the publisher



Sha Spence-Trace, Marmalade, issue 5, Winter 2004. Courtesy the publisher



Tom Usher, Harper's Bazaar UK, September 2007. Photo: Alexei Hay. Courtesy Swarovski Crystals



Tarissa Bourke, Elle UK, June 2010 issues. Courtesy the publisher



JP Thurlow, drawings from series 100 Covers, 2010. Courtesy the artist

JP Thurlow
These lovingly rendered magazine covers were created by illustrator JP Thurlow. Explaining the motivations behind the series, Thurlow says, "Like anyone I enjoy the beauty of fashion and marketing gloss but I'm not hypnotized or brainwashed by it. What lurks behind it is the desire to sell stuff, and having worked in and around advertising, I just like to corrupt that stuff to my own ends." Paying tribute to the tawdry allure of magazines, Thurlow's drawings convert mass media into intimate works of art. —EL



Ted Lippy, Esopus, 2010



Andreas Lantieri, Fantastico, 2010



Esopus, issue 8, 2006 ©The Esopus Foundation, Ltd.



Above and right: Joseph Holtzman and Tom Beckham, Nest, Summer 1999, photography by Jason Schmidt and Summer 2000, photography by Nathaniel Goldberg. Courtesy Jeremy Leslie



Amelia Gregory, Scott Bendall, and Asgur Bruun, Amelia's Magazine, issue 2, Autumn/Winter 2004. Courtesy the publisher



Christopher Harrison and Polly Glass, Wrap, issue 2, 2011 ©2011 The Wrap Paper Limited



Mind over Matter, issue 2, October 2001. Courtesy the designer



Jeremy Leslie, untitled, issue 9, 2004. Courtesy M-real Corporation



Print x Digital

Newer media always arrives to fanfare about replacing older media, and we've been hearing about the web replacing magazines for more than a decade. But the relationship between magazines and websites is far more complex than that, and still largely unresolved. Whatever their long-term relationship, in the short-term magazines have benefited creatively from the arrival of the Internet and other digital forms.

Many independent magazine-makers discovered their voices writing blogs; others, like *Karen*, have bypassed the web while applying a highly personal bloglike sensibility to content creation. Increasing numbers of bloggers have found a use for printed publications alongside their websites. *It's Nice That* launched a biannual print edition to counteract the disposability of their daily posts and enable a more precise editorial voice. Blog and magazine live side by side, supporting each other through their distinct roles. *magCulture* produced a printed publication to focus on several years of archive material, and *Linefeed* identified common themes in their posts and created the printed *LineRead* as a vehicle to investigate those themes in more depth.

Some of the most interesting cross-overs occur when print and digital media are entwined. *Things Our Friends Have Written on the Internet* was a one-off newspaper project that combined multiple sensibilities. Content was sourced by its editors from a selection of their favorite blogs and websites and reproduced without the permission of the originators. Instead, the blogging convention of providing URL links was used. The result was a printed newsfeed—an aggregation or collection of unrelated content, a snapshot of the web.

Club Donny is a magazine that explores the relationship between nature and the city and is composed of folded poster-size sheets of paper left unbound. Its content—from a nudist camp in the Netherlands to a former Soviet resort overgrown by nature—is submitted unsolicited online through its website. Its editorial hand is largely absent, allowing the individual vision of its authors to be fully present.

Newspaper Club is an award-winning concept that takes advantage of newspaper printers' downtime to provide access for outsiders to print small-run newspapers. Users can either upload finished PDFs or take advantage of a series of ready-made design templates. Either way, a few days after uploading your content, printed newspapers—in runs as small as five copies—arrive by courier.

Print-on-demand services such as MagCloud (used by *LineRead*, for example) mean individual copies of a magazine are printed to order. While more expensive per unit, they allow the publisher to avoid the heavy investment involved in printing hundreds of copies in advance of sales.

The Internet has also revolutionized the distribution of magazines, vastly increasing the reach of magazines of all types and sizes. Smaller, specialist magazines can now find global niches they could only have dreamed of just five years ago.

The latest digital development is Apple's iPad, seen by many before its April 2010 launch as the savior of publishing. Less than two years on the market, it's too early to tell if iPad magazines will live up to such lofty expectations, but huge resources continue to be devoted to editorial apps in the hopes that they will do so. To date, much creative effort has been spent trying to define how an editorial app should function, with major projects such as *Wired* defining a busy, clamorous visual direction, and the independent iPad-only publication *Letter to Jane* taking a calmer, more reflective route. There should be room for both approaches, but what will define their success will more probably be their ability to link and share content with other parts of the digital world through social networking, something the stand-alone Flipboard app has focused on since its launch. ☒



It's Nice That in collaboration with Joseph Burrin, *It's Nice That*, issue 3, April 2010. Courtesy the publisher

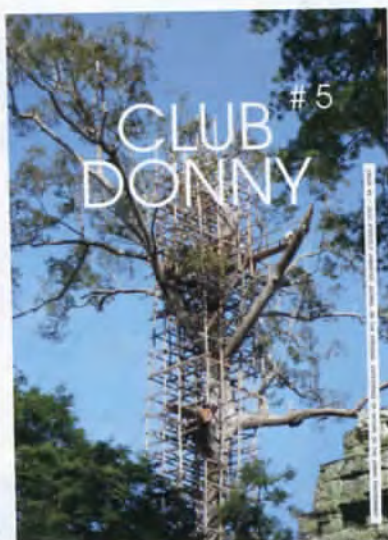
MagCloud is a print-on-demand tool that allows designers to produce and distribute their own magazines. Readers can browse magazines from the MagCloud site, which handles printing, fulfillment, and digital downloads. MagCloud's direct-to-print service is a new kind of DIY marketing tool, allowing small businesses to print and distribute catalogues and other collateral. See MagCloud.com



LineRead, issue 3, March 2011. ok interrupt (design). Courtesy the publisher



Above and right: Jeremy Leslie, *magCulture Paper*, 2010. Courtesy the publisher



Arno Bregman, Ernst van der Hoeren, and Ben Lalova/Didier Pascal, *Club Donny*, N° 1, 2008, and N° 5, 2010, and N° 3, 2009. Courtesy the publisher



Scott Dadich, Wired, August 2011 Courtesy the designer

Adobe DPS
 From its April 2010 launch, the iPad was seen by many publishers as an ideal vehicle to bring printed content into digital form. Adobe, makers of the primary page layout software InDesign, developed a set of add-on tools, Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, which bypassed the need for traditional coding skills. iPad "pages" are created using InDesign, enabling print designers to work directly on print and digital designs of the same content while adding simple interactive elements. iPad material. Wired magazine were first to use this software, and many others have followed. The same software as well as competitors such as Woodwing, Mag+, and Aquafadas. —JL



Zinio
 An early entrant to the world of iPad publishing, Zinio offers subscriptions to digital magazines that closely resemble the print versions, incorporating additional features such as audio, video, and live web links. Content is presented via Zinio's proprietary reading platform. The service is compatible with multiple devices. —EL See Zinio.com

Newspaper Club



Courtesy Newspaper Club

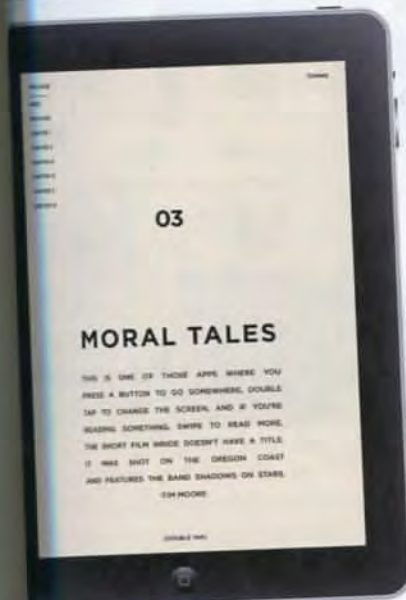
Newspaper Club

Keep the engines of capitalism moving! Newspaper Club utilizes the high-capacity printing plants employed by major newspapers to produce short-run tabloid editions. Serving as a broker between manufacturers and DIY publishers, this web-to-print service allows users to upload PDFs online and order print runs as low as a single copy. (Unit cost goes down as volume goes up.) Publications have included everything from wedding keepsakes to community newspapers. Newspaper Club offers a "bespoke service" that assists customers with design and editorial; clients have included Penguin to the BBC. —EL See NewspaperClub.com



Ben Termit, *Things Our Friends Have Written on the Internet 2008*, issue 1, 2009
Courtesy the publisher

...cle to adapt their
...nDesign, quickly
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... —Jeremy Leslie



Letter to Jane, 2011 Courtesy the publisher

