Magazine Publishing Innovation: Two Case Studies on Managing Creativity

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Abstract: This paper aims to highlight a link between publishing business innovation and how editors manage creativity in the digital era. Examining the changing industrial and historical business context for the U.K. magazine publishing industry, two case studies are analyzed as representatives of different ends of the publishing company spectrum (one a newly launched magazine published by a major, the other an independent 'magazine' website start-up). Qualitative data analysis on publishing innovation and managing creativity is presented as a springboard for further research on magazine media management.

Keywords: magazines; magazine business; magazine publishing; magazine advertising; content marketing; native advertising; digital magazines; magazine websites; innovation; creativity; managing creativity; media management style at home; the upcoming; magazine case study; media business; magazine publishing history

1. Introduction

Although professional magazine media is a topic widely written about within scholarly and industrial commentary, according to magazine publishing economist and historian Howard Cox, "what has been largely overlooked in the vast literature surrounding the industry has been a focus on the magazine companies themselves as businesses" [1]. In a recent compendium of magazine research by Abrahamson and Prior-Miller [2], an examination of its contents shows themes of historical study, taxonomic and definition debate, interpretation of audiences, semiotic analysis of journalism and art forms, and even journalism education—but nothing on magazines as businesses and how to manage them.

Adding to the new interdisciplinary field of media management, which is said by Kung [3] to require more "micro level" analysis on companies (given the plethora of industry-level discourses on technology, regulation, and consumption), the aim of this modest study is to act as a springboard for further research into consumer magazine publishing innovation (excluding trade, business-to-business, or academic publishing) and media management during times of structural and technological change. Starting with a review of the industrial context of magazines past and present, the paper aims to draw generalizable conclusions about contemporary magazine publishers via qualitative, thematically driven case studies of approaches by editors/publishers of distinctly different contemporary U.K. magazine innovators in the digitally transformational media marketplace.

2. Contextual Review

2.1. A Brief Industrial History of Magazines

The story of magazine publishing is one of a medium, a product, and a business model that adapts and adopts. In the magazine's relatively 'ancient history' in the Georgian and early Victorian

era, its first adaption (from the printing technology of book publishing) was the idea of making a collection. Academics and historians, such as Christine Stam [4], Marcia R. Prior-Miller [2], and Howard Cox [5] all point to the 'storehouse' or 'repository' etymology of the word magazine from the French, *magasin,* first used by Edward Cave in the 1730s for *The Gentleman's Magazine*, as the first use of the term 'magazine' [6]. Periodically published magazines were collated, edited, and narrated pieces of satirical writing about political news and current affairs—done so successfully in the Victorian era that many of its titles have resonance today, such as *The Spectator, Country Life*, and *Melody* (later becoming *Melody Maker*).

In adopting the production and distribution technologies of printing, paper production, and the infrastructure of a national railway system [7], the business model of magazines (unlike book publishing) developed a new model outside of the selling of magazines for a cover price. The birth of consumerism during the Industrial Revolution brought with it a new 'golden child' of advertising for newspapers and magazines [8] as a new and lucrative source of revenue. This growth of media and communication and with it advertising went hand in hand with magazine publishing's growth until, according to Prior-Miller [9], the middle of the 20th century, when the business had to again adapt. As magazine advertising's 'reach' became insignificant compared to that of the mass media of radio and television, the modern magazine was re-born with a new genre—the specialist magazine. In the 20th century new magazine business empires were created (such as the National Magazine Company and IPC, now Time Inc. UK) on the back of defining and reflecting a new way of life by the crafting of editorial content to well-defined demographics, and latterly the lifestyle psychographic profile of the magazines that reflected fashion, attitudes, and pastime tastes of the 1980s and 1990s.

2.2. What Is a Magazine Business Today?

This process of mining more targeted readers, and the advertisers who pay for this connection, is one that has extended from the 20th century well into the 21st. Although the advent of the digital era was hailed as the death of the modern magazine, the industry's process of adoption and adaption has showed that although the magazine business has changed in the last two decades in particular, the metaphor of the magazine endures, regardless of definitions of what a magazine actually is.

Given this history of change, the debate about what a magazine is predates the digital era by some way. There are a number of definitions of a magazine. Issues of format, distribution mechanism, platform, and periodicity are all variables that magazines have adapted over time. From one-off collections in books, regular leaflets, weekly periodicals, monthly 'glossies,' consumer magazines, daily 'freesheets,' to the continuously changing digital and Web based magazine, the taxonomic and definitional issues around what a magazine is predate any contemporary digital debates about magazines. For example, Click and Baird describe a magazine as "more of an approach or a process rather than a format (bound periodical)" [10].

In the contemporary digital context, this approach to magazines might not be considered singular, but consisting of several processes and platforms. Examples of this plurality of approach today might exist in traditional print-only independent and niche magazines (such as *Huck*, *Delayed Gratification*, and *Monocle*), in a focus on being a video channel (such as *Vice*), socially shared and user generated websites (such as *The Upcoming*), or e-mail and print subscriptions to other services (customer publishing titles such as *Tesco Magazine* and *ASOS*). It seems that the contemporary magazine might therefore arrive to its reader as a form of content marketing or a digital retailing device, with its branded messages and editorial content appearing in print, online, and on mobile phones and tablets.

2.3. The Consumer Magazine Business in the Digital Era

2.3.1. The Strength of Print

Despite presently being in a period of technological change, mainstream consumer magazine publishing has been relatively sheltered from the disruption that the so-called 'digital revolution'

has had on the music, newspaper publishing, and film production industries. Magazine publishing, although evolving over the last 15 years into new areas, distribution platforms, and advertising models, is still defined by its printed magazines. The reasons, according to Cox and Mowat [5], lie in the preference consumers still have, in the main, for their magazines about lifestyle, special interests, hobbies, and current affairs to be in a format that has been around since the turn of the century—the printed page. Theorized as a "trusting relationship" by worldwide magazine media association (FIPP) research consultant Guy Consterdine, the relationship between a printed magazine and a reader "remains true after the arrival of the Internet and other new digital platforms" [11], which is one of the strengths the medium has a vehicle for the advertising industry and brand communications.

In addition to what might be deemed the tenacity of the majors, it is said that there has been nothing less than a recent explosion in the number of small-publisher 'independents' or 'indie mags' that choose print as their medium [12]. Linking the growth of such magazines to Richard Florida's rise of the 'creative class' [13], Le Masurier [14] points to hundreds of "producer-owned and made [magazines], occupying a zone of small-scale creative commercial publishing between DIY zines and mainstream niche consumer magazines" published in cities around the world from London to Sao Paulo and Helsinki to Melbourne based around subjects like underground art, culture, food, music, and film. Citing the ideas of Thornburn and Jenkins [15], Le Masurier reminds us that during times of technological and cultural transition, relations between old and digital technologies are complex, more 'congenial', and less disruptive than might be imagined, as older technologies find new functions and audiences. In recent years the commercial success of titles such as *Monocle* has epitomized this concept within the genre of travel and current affairs, publishing their uniquely print-only expensive 'bookazine' or 'artisanal' magazine successfully for readers across the world [16].

2.3.2. In the Face of Long-Term Decline

The strength of the traditional printed format, however, does not mean the mainstream publishing industry has not been affected by the seismic shifts of digital technology in general. On the contrary, many industry analyses show a slow but continuing fall in circulation—and indeed in profits for some of the United Kingdom's largest magazine publishers. According to a recent industry estimate, while U.K. magazine publishers saw a modest overall decline in revenue of 0.9% in 2013 [17], circulations of many printed magazines are set for a sharper decline in future years, especially in areas where digital and mobile media provide alternative and often free content—such as women's monthly magazines, music magazines, and most of all men's magazines. The demise of the so-called 'lad mag' in recent years, seeing a number of closures, including *Loaded*, *Maxim*, and more recently the weekly men's titles *Nuts* and *Zoo* in 2014 and 2015, respectively [18], has not been replaced by the modest shift into men's health titles, which is often pointed to as a growth area.

2.4. A Move towards Digital Platforms

In the last few years, the magazine industry has examined the digital world, slowly and carefully, as printed magazine sales and circulation figures have followed audience behavior into a digital world of portable devices, tablets, and smartphones capable of accessing a variety of content through a number of media channels in the form of websites, mobile phone apps, news subscription services, and social media.

Although publishers are well placed to be able to move all of their content online, there has been much debate in the media industry about 'monetizing' that content, as the 'giving it away for free' option is something that the magazine world sees as a trap that other media industries got caught in that they want to avoid. According to Jim Bilton [19], "magazine publishers have observed with some trepidation the fundamental changes experienced by the music business (into digital products) . . . which have completely disrupted the business models of an entire industry." in what might be called a cautious response to digital growth, publishers have experimented with mobile devices, in particular tablet platforms, as a hopeful route from the printed page to a digital one. As such, many

magazine publishers have created digital editions of their magazines. Recent figures have shown some growth in this area. However, comparing figures from Key Note [17] with trade press reports from the ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulations) [20], the official number of digital-only magazines sold online or through app stores (and audited by the ABC) has only increased by a modest 4.6%, from a mere 86 magazine titles in 2014 to around 90 titles in 2015. Where audited figures now combine both digital and print circulations figures (not including all kinds of digital websites, apps, and mobile platforms) the data currently portray a somewhat skewed picture. With the exception of news current affairs and especially technology titles such as *Wired* (which reported 14.1% of sales as digital versions), women's magazine such as *Glamor and Marie Claire,* for example, see digital sales representing a mere 1% of total magazine sales [17].

2.5. New Magazine Business Models

Consumer magazines have always had duality in their business model. On the one hand, they are a media consumer product, one aimed at providing journalistic content via copy sales (circulations) through the news trade and subscriptions. On the other hand, they also provide B2B (business to business) service for advertisers wishing to engage with their readers. According to Andrew Scott [21], in recent decades mainstream consumer publishers estimate that around 36% of all their revenue derives from advertising.

The new commercial challenge provided by digital online media is therefore two-fold—coping with circulation decline and with the changing nature of advertising sales in digital platforms. Not only are digital editions not replacing print sales, studies commissioned by the media industry show that the conventional rules of advertising do not work well online. It seems that digital users do not treat screens like magazine pages, with one survey commission by Adobe [22] of over 1,200 U.S. adults even showing a massive 68% of people seeing online ads as 'annoying' and 'distracting.'

Magazines now seek new ways to reach audiences, new forms of recommendation culture via social media, and new forms of advertising, where the relationship between publisher and the brand are more than just messenger and medium. Large magazine publishers, such as Bauer Media, Time Inc., and Hearst (who between them control around 50% of the magazine publishing market) cannot imitate what they have done in print in the digital context.

2.5.1. New Forms of Advertising and 'Content Marketing'

Reacting and adapting to such challenges, the magazine industry has invested in new innovations—in particular, in new forms of advertising sales. In addition to the rise of customer magazine publishing (made by contract for advertisers) and free distribution models (such as *ShortList*, *TimeOut*, and *NME*), many new innovations involve new digital, web-based, and mobile platforms, where paid-for content development advertising models have been called 'native advertising' or, more generally, part of a trend in journalism towards an acceptance of 'content marketing'.

Native advertising is an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of unloved online advertisements in the form of on-screen banners and pop-up windows. Something being pioneered by websites and digital brands such as BuzzFeed, according to C.J. David, native advertising consists of "discretely placed content blocks embedded within the content you were originally seeking" [23]. Unlike the 'stop reading and look at this' model of display advertising in printed magazines, the 'native' metaphor gives us a clue that embedding paid-for content is something that readers may accept, or even like. This halfway house between editorial and advertising, "advertorial," has been discussed by a number of academics (Cameron [24], Cameron & Haley [25], Cameron, G.T., Ju-Pak, K., & Kim, B.H. [26], and Burner and Nowak [27]) where discussion about the practice's effectiveness, reader perception, and the degree of 'deceptiveness' led to the magazine industry publishing guidelines via the PPA [28] on how to clearly demarcate advertorial as "promotions" and the implied 'recommending' of products and services by a publication's editor, although these guidelines have not always been observed, according to Morrish [29].

2.6. Church versus State in Magazine Publishing

Despite the 'church *versus* state' concerns of keeping editorial pure from commercial decisions [30], research by the magazine industry showed how much readers accepted and even enjoyed this kind of advertising. In a report commissioned by the National Magazine Company on eight different magazine reader groups [31], advertorials were positively viewed by readers and therefore concluded as representing 'premium' value for advertisers. An illustrative quote given by FIPP researcher Guy Consterdine typifies the feelings around advertorials in the ephemera of fashion and lifestyle magazines: "It says 'an *Esquire* promotion' so it looks as though *Esquire* are endorsing the product and that in my eyes gives it extra value" [32]. In the contemporary digital era context, such forms of advertising are becoming increasingly popular, with one of J.P. Morgan's lead media market analysts signaling that 'native ads' "are quickly becoming the *de facto* ad format on mobile and increasingly moving into desktop" [23].

Native advertising could be considered part of a bigger grouping of what is becoming known as branded content, across media, blurring the lines between journalism, editorial, and a branded message paid for by a publisher's client. Increasingly, magazines are said to be more like retailers, and retailers are increasingly said to be like professional publishers [17]. For example, *Radio Times* magazine boasts a lucrative travel and holiday service; fashion magazines like *Grazia* have increasingly focused their mobile platform on the e-commerce retailing of garments, accessories, and products reviewed in their editorial content. On the other hand, traditional retailers such as the John Lewis Partnership and Tesco have become publishers (through customer magazine agencies) of large circulation magazines in the United Kingdom. According to a content marketing report by Econsultancy, nearly three-quarters (73%) of digital marketers agreed that "brands are becoming publishers" [33].

3. Innovation and Creativity Theory

A working definition from an organizational perspective by O'Sullivan of innovation is defined as: "the process of making changes to something established by introducing something new that adds value to customers and contributes to the knowledge store of the organization" [34].

If magazine innovation requires publishers to develop content across platforms, to cross boundaries and even industries (for example, between the publisher and an advertising agency, as discussed) in challenging market contexts, then innovating by feeding creativity in media firms, as pointed out by Lucy Kung, becomes important. In her words, "the value of media products derives from the level of novelty and creativity, [the greater it is] the greater the potential for competitive advantage" [3]. Creativity, viewed this way, is the route to innovation because of the more artistic and cultural capital 'uniqueness' of media businesses. Media firms develop products for other than purely commercial reasons—it can be public interest, taste-making, or the creative and artistic imperatives at play. Another difference between innovation in consumer products and media products, Kung explains, is that "cultural goods can rarely be standardized on a long-term basis . . . [therefore] the requirement for creativity is constant" [3].

This focus on novelty and creativity in the media requires some understanding of the large body of literature on creativity theory. Although the subject of creativity theory struggles with definitions, depending on readings grounded in psychology or sociology [35], there is said to be a consensus on a definition that sees it as a process leading to some sort of tangible novelty and uniqueness. In the view of creativity and media scholars such as Gauntlett, it is something novel that gives a feeling of 'surprise' or 'joy' [36]; in the view of the most well-cited scholar in the field of creativity research, Teressa Amabile, creativity is simply "novelty and appropriateness" [37], suggesting the two-fold imperative of bringing forth new ideas, but always ones that need to be 'rated' or validated in some way as to be useful in their context.

3.1. Managing Creativity in Media

According to Lucy Kung, the field of media management is formed of a mixture of disciplines: media economics, media studies, mass communications, and journalism [3]. This breadth, Kung suggests, has led to a lack of clear application of theory to management practice as the result of a dominance of more exogenous or "macro" and industry-level analysis (based largely around regulation, consumption, and technology) and little given over to internal firm dynamics and how they affect successful outcomes [3].

In the words of the famous business organizational theorist Henry Mintzberg, management is a subject of "arts, crafts, and science" [38], and the quest for management as an applied science is fraught with problems of breadth, different perspectives, and many business school instruments and technique revisions after waves of critical reflection since the 1960s [39]. One such problem is creativity. Although the subject of innovation management is widely taught as a business discipline, it is said by Paul Dwyer (during his study of creativity and management at the BBC) that creativity and management are poor bedfellows. According to Dwyer, despite creativity being "a unique characteristic of media management in both theory and practice," management and creativity are still seen as "antithetical" [40]. This may be a legacy of business theory from Max Weber's enduring bureaucratic management concepts, provided in DuGray [41] and elsewhere, as the lingering ideas of scientific and technical process-driven innovation endure over the new economics of creative ideas and people [13].

The result is that the media industry is said to manage its most important asset with what Chris Bilton [42], Zafirau, and Xu Rickards [43] might call a 'heroic' or 'talent' model based around 'myths' of creativity, managing it by solely hiring and acquiring creative people. Such approaches, says Dwyer [40], ignore the implications of established 'confluence' model theory in social science, a theory that explains the causes of creativity, as related to Amabile's (i) "creativity skills," (ii) "domain knowledge" and (iii) "intrinsic motivation" towards something [37] and situated in what Csikszentmihalyi describes the wider social–cultural or environmental context of their 'field and domain' [44].

4. Methodology and Research Design

Aiming to directly address this specific area, and take what Kung has identified as a more 'micro', internal, business focus, the research design aims to highlight processes, strategic views, and working dynamics by focusing on the magazine editor. Although described by a layperson as a journalist risen through the ranks, a proper examination of the role of magazine editors by Morrish [45], McKay [46], and Stam and Scott [47] sees them as central to the business of making magazines—especially in the leading of a team [48] and also in defining an editor's job as specifically involving "harnessing the creativity of a team" [49]. In terms of research design, this central 'creativity harnesser' is seen as a research participant best able to provide insight into the managerial realities given the context of changing platforms and advertising discussed above. The study in this way positions a magazine editor as a person who considers both internal and external management processes and people in publishing, dealing with both a network of contributors with regards to content and narratives, and a network of commercial connections to meet readers' and advertisers' needs.

4.1. Case Study and Semi-Structured Interview Method

A qualitative design of a 'snapshot' or cross-sectional comparative case study method [50] was developed from two purposefully selected magazines identified as different in type and context (aiming for maximal variation validity), with both cases meeting a criterion of being 'innovators' after launching in 2011 and 2015. As we have seen, innovation is hard to define objectively (see Section 3.1), but as "a process that transforms ideas into outputs, which increase customer value" [51] a proxy measure can be justified as recent success, accolades, or showing improvement over time in 'adding value' in some way in order to make a connection to what 'works' for innovation.

Both launch editors were interviewed in separate one-hour semi-structured interviews in 2015. Taking a ground-up approach aiming to develop theory from the reconstruction of knowledge from semi-structured interviews with experts is said by Flick [52] to be appropriate as a stand-alone method for research that compares the contents and differences of experts when they are "representatives of different institutions in a field." Expert interviews in this way are, according to Bogner and Menz [53], well placed for research on technical knowledge, process knowledge, as well as the interviewee's interpretive knowledge or points of view and interpretations.

Following the analysis of the data generated from these expert interviewee transcripts, four clear strands or themes (encompassing the breadth discussed around publishing business) were coded for analysis when examining the interview data with each editor. These might subjectively be identified as 'dependent' variables towards an explanation of the causes of magazine publishing innovation in the above cases (or the 'independent' variables).

4.2. Case One: The Upcoming

4.2.1. Context and Content

A micro-publishing website in the digital era that challenges the format of periodical publishing, according to their publisher [54], the website is in fact a "daily online magazine" for "thought-provoking stories, cultural insights, and interesting news." Since being launched in 2011 by law school graduate and aspiring journalist Filippo L'Astorina, it has developed readers in across the United Kingdom (with around 10% of its readers in the United States and Canada) for its entertainment and arts content with a more alternative voice than the traditional listings magazines, such as *TimeOut*, freesheets such as *Shortlist*, and online guides such as *The Nudge* and *AllinLondon.co.uk*.

4.2.2. Proxy for Innovation

Launching during a global recession into a fiercely competitive environment where traditional magazines and freesheets compete against large media websites and social media is no small undertaking. From a single person running the magazine in 2011, by 2015 the magazine had built a reader base of over 3000 unique visitors per day [55] and now boasts a wide range of contributors from well-known journalists to aspiring writers, bloggers, and reviewers. They have been quoted by established national and regional newspapers for their ratings of independent films and more underground releases such as *Pandorica*, recently mentioned by the largest Midlands news website [56].

4.3. Case Two: Style at Home

4.3.1. Context and Content

Launched during the same period (2011) by IPC (now Time Inc., London, UK), one of Britain's largest magazine publishers that dominates the homes and gardens genre, Time Inc. also publishes titles such as the United Kingdom's best-selling homes magazine, *Ideal Home*, alongside *Living etc.*, *Wallpaper, Country Homes & Interiors*, and the longest running title in the sector, *Homes & Gardens*, which launched in 1919. Published monthly in a traditional print-based glossy format, according to Time Inc.: "*Style at Home* aims at the lower end of the market, for younger readers with a hands-on approach to decorating, revamping and styling their homes on a budget" [57].

4.3.2. Proxy for Innovation

A sector that many consider crowded, with falling circulation [58], the launch was conceived and headed up by then *Ideal Home* features editor Jennifer Morgan. As a publisher that often conducts and commissions lots of magazine consumer panel and audience research, Jennifer Morgan spotted what she described as a 'gap in the market' and shift that was taking place. Morgan acknowledged a growing body of adult women who had taste (but perhaps not tens of thousands of pounds for home

improvements) and wanted to engage in creative craft projects and share them on social media. After a soft launch in 2011 (to test the sales figures through the news trade), they surprised the industry with launch circulation figures of around 50,000 copies and by 2014 became the third best selling home interest magazine [57].

5. Findings

Having validated the two cases selected on the basis of proxy indicators as innovators, four areas, or themes, were associated with managing creativity in magazines. Coding for these areas in the transcript data, the aim was to reveal insights into possible causes of their publishing innovation. The themes emerged by considering responses around the widest possible aspects of the editor's publishing remit, considering him/her as central to a media business. The four themes were: (i) content, (ii) advertising to support content, (iii) an understanding of audiences, and (iv) business philosophy and approach to management.

A summary of key quotes to illustrate viewpoints from the coded data is given below in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Case Study: The Upcoming.

	Quote 1	Quote 2	Quote 3
Content	*It's not easy turning a reader into a writer. Take someone who is not experienced and turn them into a journalist. Luckily we have very good editors that turn this stuff into content.*	*Video is complicated if you want to maintain a standard. Even practical things, like the time it take to shoot, and the time it takes to send or upload video. It's a longer process and it doesn't pay off. We don't want to make viral content. We just want to make good content, not catchy videos.*	*Obviously we cannot compete (with TimeOut) in terms of quantity-they have a huge machine. But we have benefit of people writing for us who are more personal—maybe rawer, ideas you cannot find.*
Advertising and revenue	*Clients are fashion, watchmakers, designers. Things like that. Usually it's through an agency. Rarely we speak directly to the client. 90% of income is from digital marketing agencies. It's nice for us, as we don't have to worry too much about finding clients.*	*We have content advertising–and no other income. A lot of small digital marketing companies have a lot of content they want us published for them. Advertorial basically, like one Cineworld.*	*Maybe one percent [of content] is branded. Content is the most important we're not going to give that away. When we do advertorials, we write them for the paper, we may only adjust one sentence for the client, but not the other way around.*
Business and management approach	*I need to keep giving people an easy opportunity. Innovation is having a platform online that they can interact with. They don't just send, then partake in the magazine.*	*Maybe I should work on a magazine or start a career in publishing. I said 'Why should I waste my time convincing an editor that I have ideas?' So I put out an ad, and got like 50 CVs.*	*The culture editor, she had a different background. Mine is law, she was a professional session musician and also studying psychology. She could detect things I couldn't see. She had a totally different approach—the same field, but doing things that I couldn't see before.*
Understanding Audience/readers	*[We need] writers who write but who also market their content.*	*The main thing is having a platform that is easy for readers to access and contributors to work with. I need to keep giving people an easy opportunity. Innovation is having a platform online that they can interact with. They don't just send, they partake in the magazine.*	*It's easy to get data. But the tricky thing is to analyze this amount of data. You get these figures about percentage returning, and then see what they read about. Theatre reviews for example were found to be popular, so we started to do more of that. Cover more concerts and plays then the* Guardian.

Table 2. Case Study: Style at Home.

	Quote 1	Quote 2	Quote 3
Content	Style at Home *creates some bespoke content, but around 60% was repurposed. We did research into Ideal Home.*	*It's about seeing how far you can stretch something, pull different content from different places and see if you can get a feature out of it.*	*There's nothing to be ashamed of wearing a bargain. People are proud of saying I've got a bargain. When did you last go to Pizza Express and not have a voucher in your pocket.*
Advertising and revenue	*The ad market has changed so much in the last couple of years—you have to know where the line is between advertorial and editorial, but also look at profit. It's not just my job as editor, it's everyone's.*	*Print is not dead in the homes market. We went from 0 to 54,000 and now we're nearly selling a 100,000 copies.*	*[we have an] umbrella site online. We started with individual brand sites, but agencies want to buy a targeted reader. We have launched a blog called Cushy Number. All about cushions FB, Twitter.*
Business and management approach	*I'm a print journalist. But now I'm a brand curator.*	*Being editor on the new launch, we made a profit in year 2. Other new launches may take five or 10 years to break even.*	*[We work in] small teams, share ideas. We all have a blurred view between life and jobs. We all live in the lifestyle.*
Understanding Audience/reader	*We discovered that first-time buyers were at least 34+, so what's happening before then? Do they not want to 'kit out' their rented houses? They do.*	*There was a shift I acknowledged. Social media and all sorts of things have precipitated a shift in which hints and tips, sharing and the 'look what I've done'.*	*Peer to Peer involvement. Sense of a club. We have stylists at home. When I started we had people on TV as home and style experts. Now it's a reader.*

6. Discussion

6.1. The Changing Nature of Magazine Editing

Both cases show an acknowledgement of a shift in audience taste and a desire for more dialogue and connection with readers. In the case of the start-up, the audience was part of both the readership and the production. Echoing the democratization of media via citizen journalism and crowd-sourcing dialogues in media studies [59], *The Upcoming* editor saw his primary role as providing ordinary readers with "an opportunity" to publish. In the case of *Style at Home*, despite the editor's background in large and mainstream professional print magazines, she acknowledged such shifts in taste from a more consumerist and celebrity-led 'being told' narrative in content to creating interaction and continuous dialogue—a more direct connection, or, in the words of the *Style at Home* editor, a sense of "being in a club."

6.2. The Increasingly Commercial Focus of the Editor

There is evidence to support what journalism commentators might call a recent break between 'church and state' [30]—the divide between content and commercial (paid-for) editorial content. In both magazine cases, the editor perceives themselves to be someone in a creative and a business role—there is no clear separation between the two. In fact, it could be suggested that in magazines, perhaps the commercial ideas (ideas that might generate revenue) are the most important considerations when launching a magazine title or even commissioning features.

In the case of *Style at Home*, thinking about being a "brand curator" rather than an editor may explain the repurposing of other magazines' content (content to be re-used to go further than before) and the consideration of aiding the company's group 'umbrella website' and blogs. This focus on promoting the brand is one that could be aligned to that of marketing and not to journalism.

In the case of *The Upcoming*, a staggering 90% of the publisher's income was said to come from "digital agencies." Although there was consideration of not doing 'advertorials', agencies can be seen as major gatekeepers and influencers on the editorial choices made. These agencies were said to furnish the magazine with content, ideas, and stories, and to provide access to events, products, and people, with the editor admitting their importance as they provide "a lot of content they want us to publish for them."

6.3. The Importance of 'Managing Creativity' in Magazine Media

Given the industrial changes, adaptions, and adoptions, the distinctions between industrial roles such as publisher, brand marketer, editor, and journalist seem less well defined in the digital era. What does seem to be clearer, however, is that whether magazine publishers are selling ideas to readers or ideas for campaigns to brand clients, creativity from key staff is vital.

Aiding innovation through the creativity of media managers might mean more than finding extraordinary creative talent (in magazine publishing, perhaps 'stars' such as Tim Southwell with *Loaded* or Ian Hislop with *Private Eye*). As Chris Llewellyn, CEO of FIPP (the worldwide magazine media association), puts it in his keynote forward in his world trends report, ideas (and therefore 'ideas people') come easily but "innovation . . . the implementation of ideas is a much tougher prospect. It's creativity with its sleeves rolled up" [60]. As new launches, both case studies confirmed, a person with a good idea needs to be filled with ability and given freedom and the resources to enact them. While in the case of *The Upcoming* this was achieved in a rather crowd-sourced and digitally 'punk' manner, at *Style at Home* it required corporate will and an investment in the individual's understanding of an audience and market.

The editorial roles in both case studies involved managing a large periphery of people from a small or even tiny core team. The example of *The Upcoming* shows the power that start-ups can have with few or no resources and that this 'lean' and very digital-era creative and business 'mindset' can also be adopted in larger companies, where editors such as *Style at Home's* see themselves as small enterprises, despite the huge and increasingly international companies that own them. In both cases examined here, neither launch editor began their brand with either 'genius' status or a track record of running a magazine—particularly in the case of *The Upcoming*, where the launch editor was previously a law student with hardly any editorial experience at all.

7. Conclusions

Although this paper by no means seeks to provide clear instrumental 'keys' to the factors for innovation in magazine publishing in the digital era, it is a starting point or touchstone for further research in the area—especially in the field of media management. However, in relation to a review of context literature, a number of insights were gained from two different innovative magazine publishing cases (one a start-up; the other from arguably Britain's largest magazine publisher), suggesting that more research is required to nuance the following assertions:

- Magazines are adapting well to a shifting economic and industrial context not by 'going digital' but by developing new business models across old and new platforms. These are based less on selling advertising space and more on forms of sophisticated 'content marketing'.
- A new type of editor has emerged in lifestyle consumer magazines, one who is both a journalist and a brand manager. This new editor is a more commercially minded professional who curates and co-creates with agencies, advertisers, and audiences as part of the journalism of commissioning for readerships.
- Given this more complex and entrepreneurial context, the subject of managing creativity (over managing production or journalism) in media studies may better inform future inquiries into what it takes to be innovative in magazine media, pursuing the growing connection between the social science of creativity theory and media management.

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