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The effect of new media on print magazine journalism in South Africa: an examination of the case study of Rooi Rose magazine's strategy to encourage user engagement online

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The effect of new media on print magazine journalism in South Africa: An examination of the case study of *Rooi Rose* magazine's strategy to encourage user engagement online.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Magazines are a source of pleasure for millions of readers (Holmes, 2007), internationally and in South Africa[1], and publishers strive to ensure that the periodicals they produce continually meet the needs of the specified target market (Ibid, 2007). "The mantra of magazine publishing is always to pay attention to the needs, desires, hopes, fears and aspirations of 'the reader'. All major magazine publishing companies spend substantial sums on researching all aspects of the readers of their publications so that they can better tailor the product to match readers' interest," writes Holmes (2007, p. 514). He further adds that "for most publishers this is a means to an end, that end being to sell the interest (and the readers) to commercial entities who can advertise to them."

Until very recently, magazines could best be described as content printed on paper and issued at regular intervals (Holmes & Nice, 2012). A working definition of a magazine stated that it "should contain articles or stories by different authors, and that it should be published at regular intervals, which can be any period longer than a day" (Davis, 1988, p. 3). However, this definition now raises a set of questions regarding a magazine's physical form, appearance and frequency. The magazine is no longer found on paper alone, but available to view on the Internet, on mobile phones and on digital tablets with varying degrees of interactivity, evolving forms and formats (Holmes & Nice, 2012). Magazines no longer appear in isolation as printed periodicals but have associated magazine websites and social media platforms offering additional content and opportunity to engage with the brand.

This research explores how digitisation and new media are impacting the magazine industry in South Africa (Saner, 2010), changing the existing market dynamics and requiring new strategies to engage readers (Doyle, 2002); (Ellonen, 2006); (Picard, 2003). While some have heralded the Internet and digital media as a reason for declining circulations and readership figures, publishers are embracing digital media and discovering the means to use it to their benefit to boost circulation, revenue and engagement with readers. As Redmond (2006, p.

[1] The 2013 South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) All Media And Products (AMPS) release indicates that 54% of South Africa's population reads a magazine publication. This equates to approximately 19,940-million people.

115) states: "…virtually every aspect of the media business has been altered by new technology and audience fragmentation." This report will focus specifically on how digitisation is affecting local magazine content producers, using *Rooi Rose* magazine as a case study, and how these producers are engaging with their readers on online platforms.

New technology and the resultant change in audience dynamics are forcing publishers of magazines and other traditional media to change their business models and tactics to maintain a vibrant readership by engaging with readers via online platforms. User engagement will therefore be the focus of this research report as it permeates all facets of magazine publishing, from economics to journalism practice. The focus will also be on website engagement, and not specifically on social media.

1.1 AIM

The aim of this research report will be three-fold. Firstly, the report will establish what strategies are employed by *Rooi Rose* magazine to engage audiences online, and to relate this to the South African magazine publishing industry as a whole. It will also define quality user engagement by looking at a theoretical framework as a base for engagement, and the magazine's understanding of engagement. Lastly, the report will suggest an approach that encourages the creation and maintenance of engagement by previously print-only publishers.

1.2 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

In this research report I argue that magazines need to engage with their readers online if they are to continue as successful brands, by using *Rooi Rose* as a case study. As sources of pleasure for millions of South Africans with an important cultural value, magazines need to be content providers beyond the print publication if they are to engage with readers in places where they are actively seeking magazine-type content. Magazine production teams (editors, journalists and designers) will need to engage online users interested in magazine content across the many platforms found in the social media and online sphere strategically.

A daily two-way conversation, as offered by Web 2.0 [2], is not a form of journalism magazines production teams are used to (Holmes, 2007); consumer magazines are typically monthly or weekly (Buckland, 2007). Creating content and conversation to engage digital users is a relatively new challenge and opportunity for South African publishers.

By assessing the strategies employed by magazine publishers in South Africa, and using *Rooi Rose* magazine as a case study, this research report will provide insight into how some local magazines are transitioning from print publications to content production providers across multiple media platforms. This research assesses *Rooi Rose* magazine's strategy to encourage print readers to seek out the brand online and to engage its online users, to provide insight into the broader question of how South African women's consumer magazine brands engage their readers through new media.

The 2012 report of the International Federation of the Periodical Press (FIPP*),* the worldwide magazine media association, says that print media and digital media complement each other (Consterdine, 2012). The report adds that "magazine reading and Internet surfing have an affinity with each other, in that the kind of people who read magazines tend to be the kind of people who use the Internet" (Ibid, 2012, p.44). Magazine readers and those who engage in online reading do so to fill time. In addition, "tablets are beginning to change consumers' expectations of magazine content, and consumers are ready to explore more" (Ibid, 2012). The interactivity that digital and social media platforms offer can enhance a reader's involvement in, and engagement with, a magazine brand. Devices such as tablets, smartphones, along with websites, digital replicas of the printed magazine, social media, and electronic newsletters, are among the new media magazine publishers have to contend with and embrace as they transition from print magazine publishers to online content publishers (Ibid, 2012).

It is within the context of this new technology that I will analyse how *Rooi Rose* magazine, the largest selling Afrikaans monthly women's magazine title in South Africa, has used the

[2] Web 2.0 can be defined as the technologies and trend in which ordinary users collaborate to generate content or share data on the Internet (Straubhaar, et al., 2012), and connotes a "new era in media based on Internet developments of user participation and content generation" (Ibid, 2012, p.30).

digital platform to engage its readers and users. *Rooi Rose* has been published in South Africa for over 70 years and is the most read monthly Afrikaans glossy title (AMPS, January to December 2012). The magazine has also created a significant digital platform base, with websites, online forums, social media and email marketing amongst its offering.

South African media publishing houses are attempting to embrace the potentials of digital platforms. Publishers are aware of the need to offer their magazine brands on digital platforms, and serve both the reader, in finding content online, and advertisers, in marketing to an online audience (Hilderman, 2011). With increased access and faster, cheaper ways of connecting to the Internet, the digital expansion of print content in online brand sites is shaping the strategies of magazine publishers as the demand for digital content increases (Kristin, 2012). Caxton Magazines, the publishers of *Rooi Rose* magazine, has resisted entering the digital sphere, in part, as it is predominantly a printing business. The division's main source of income is found in print publications (Botes, 2013), and thus digital can be perceived as a potential threat to this revenue stream. In 2012, the Magazines division embarked on a definition of its digital strategy, and placed all of the magazines in the Caxton stable on the various social media platforms, created websites that are used to attract users and advertisers, utilised digital magazine platforms developed by Ramsay Media and Zinio, and later by Magzter, and employed the expertise of international digital publishing consultants, all with the aim of engaging its online users to strategically increase the market and revenue share of both the print publication and online platforms (Kleinloog, 2013). *Rooi Rose* was one of the Caxton magazines that actively moved online and onto social media platforms.

With magazine brands entering unchartered territory, this research provides insight into the opportunities, challenges, strategies and threats facing South African print magazine publishers in the twenty-first century.

1.2.1 Magazines as a subject of study

"The modern magazine, of all of the mass media of communication, has been perhaps the least subjected to serious study" (Peterson, 1956, p. vii). Peterson's statement, although

made in the middle of the previous century, is still valid in journalism research today (Mahrt, 2012). Holmes (2007, pp. 510-511) argues: “Magazines, then, are vectors of pleasure, they encourage the acquisition of knowledge, they may play an important role in the formation of identity, they are open to resistant readings, they easily encompass and incorporate flexible and varying conditions of consumption and production, and they form a readily accessible community focus. All this is rolled into a highly successful cultural form – yet it is a form which scholars have, with a few exceptions, tended to underestimate and overlook.” Johnson (2007, p. 525) takes this further and says, “Despite the thousands of magazines – past and present – available for us to study, magazine research has not dominated journalism, communication, mass media, popular cultural, or critical studies scholarship.”

In addition, studies of women’s magazines in particular have been conducted largely by feminist media scholars (Gough-Yates, 2003). As Gough-Yates states: “While the reading practices and meanings of magazine readerships (and the extent to which these are determined by the industry) have been subject to considerable analysis by feminist media critics, the practices and meanings of magazine producers have gone relatively unexplored” (2003, p. 14). “Scholars come at [magazines] from a wide range of perspectives: history, feminism, fan culture, visual culture, practitioner culture, political economy” (Holmes, 2007), but not much focus has been placed on their contribution to culture and participation. This research report will not focus on issues of ideology and feminist studies, but on the production of magazines, both print and online.

Very little research has been done on the production of South African magazines, and in particular, the response of the medium to digitisation. Magazine publishers are transitioning to online content producers and engagers on the social sphere, and this research will make a contribution towards understanding magazine journalism in a digital era within the South African context. *Rooi Rose* offers an opportunity to investigate a South African response to digitisation as it is published solely in Afrikaans and hence does not compete globally with English titles.

South African magazines are experiencing a need for concrete models of adaptation to new media landscapes and better communication with ever-changing readership communities

(Holmes, 2007). With a clear gap in academic literature, this research report will contribute to an understanding of how local magazines are responding to digitisation and using it to create engagement with what was once a monthly one-way linear conversation.

Research on the impact of digitisation and the Internet on the media industry have mainly focused on newspaper publishing (Ellonen, 2006) and broadcast (Chan-Olmsted & Kang, 2003). Magazine publishing is seldom the focus of the research, yet digital media have also challenged the magazine industry (Picard, 2003). Newspaper, broadcast and magazine products, and business logics differ significantly, so no direct analogy can be made to the newspaper industry (Ellonen, 2006). In addition, the challenges created by digital media are especially significant as the magazine industry is a mature industry in which opportunity for natural growth is generally limited (Picard, 2003). As Picard further argues: "Publishing industries are surrounded by challenges to their traditional positions as central providers of information and entertainment" (2003).

"Changes in audience, shifts in advertising expenditures, structural impediments to change, competition difficulties, and stagnant markets are forcing publishers to think more widely of the future of their enterprises and how to ensure survival and growth in the coming decades," argues Picard (2003, p. 127). Readers of magazines are increasingly expecting online versions (Hilderman, 2011). Consumers of digital media are searching for content online and advertisers are shifting spend to market to this digital audience (Ibid, 2011). With increased access and faster, cheaper ways of connecting to the Internet, the digital expansion of print content in online brand sites is shaping the strategies of magazine publishers as the demand for digital content increases (Kristen, 2012).

1.3 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

South African magazine brands, which include *Rooi Rose*, are acutely aware of the challenges facing them as changes in audience and advertiser behaviour demand change in magazine publishing. Magazine publishers are aware that **"**media convergence (i.e. the ability to deliver different media channels via one digital platform) is creating a new media age" (McPhillips & Merlo, 2008, p. 237). No longer can magazine content be seen in

isolation – as a print product. Magazine publishers are now contending with the need to offer magazine-type content across multiple platforms. No longer are these platforms mutually exclusive; magazine publishers need to transition to becoming cross-platform content-providers. As McPhillips and Merlo argue: "Historically, broadcast media such as radio, television and the Internet, have been distributed via different platforms. However, content is becoming increasingly digitalised: whatever the type of signal, it can all become undifferentiated bits of data converged onto the same platform. This trend is bringing sweeping changes and unprecedented levels of complexity to the current media business model" (2008, p. 237).

The challenges facing magazine publishers appear enormous. As circulations plateau or decline (Rowlands, 2013), and more demand is placed on brands to produce content to engage users online, magazine producers have to adapt to this 'digital disruption' (Flew, 2002). Rossouw argues that "publishing is no longer about printing ink … on chopped down trees. It is about distributing content on all platforms – print, online, television, radio, cellphone, etc. Journalists have to adapt to this philosophy and the new demands and accompanying work conditions" (2005, p. 218). Picard (2003, p. 135) contends that print publishers "need to adjust to the new operating environment, to defend their currently strong position as information and advertising providers, and to establish a portfolio of content-driven products that will help develop their capabilities for survival and future growth." It is with these arguments as a basis that I have conducted research into the activity at *Rooi Rose* magazine.

This research investigates whether *Rooi Rose* magazine has identified ways of creating and maintaining reader engagement, and successfully integrated this engagement into its print and online offering.

1.3.1 *Rooi Rose* magazine

Rooi Rose was first published in April 1942, with 4,000 copies sold in its initial run. It was launched during the Second World War and aimed at the 'platteland' Afrikaans woman who was living in the city (Pansegrouw, 2012). Lizette Rabe (cited in Pansegrouw, 2012) writes

that the first *Rooi Rose* magazines were more focused on sensationalism and cheap romances than developing and pursuing a tradition of good women's magazine journalism. The early editions were full of stories about love and romance, something that the war-exhausted and impoverished Afrikaans woman could read to escape and find pleasure amidst the turmoil. The magazine has evolved over the last seven decades and increased in readership to 779,000 (AMPS, July 2012 to June 2013), and is now published by Caxton Magazines in Johannesburg. The magazine still speaks to and for the Afrikaans woman – "*Rooi Rose* is the embodiment of the Afrikaans woman," writes current editor Martie Pansegrouw (2012) – and focuses on topics relevant to South African women. Pansegrouw attributes the magazine's longevity to its ability to adapt and evolve, saying: "*Rooi Rose* has endured because it keeps reinventing itself to satisfy the needs and aspirations of its readership. In this day and age it is a crucial talent. It still has the appeal it always had; it speaks to its readers on an intimate, though informed and proudly Afrikaans level. We keep our fingers on the pulse of our reader to know what she wants and needs" (Ibid, 2012).

The *Rooi Rose* reader today "is 'everywoman', a woman of her time, as she's always been," says Pansegrouw (2012). She adds that the *Rooi Rose* reader "is defined by her interests and her lifestyle, not her age or occupation. She shares a heritage of Afrikaans culture, although she is a woman of this global village we reside in. She could be living anywhere in the world; she could be married, attached or single, a young mother or a mother in later life, working, an entrepreneur or a full time homemaker. The things she has in common with other women are the defining factors that bind her soul to her sisters in this Africa we have all sprung from and love, wherever we may be in the world" (Nevill, 2012).

The magazine has always been an intrinsic part of the Afrikaans female culture. As Pansegrouw (2012) writes in an article celebrating the magazine's seventieth birthday: "She is a magazine that definitely can keep up the pace, no, actually has kept up the pace for seven decades in a world in which that pace just continues to accelerate, where women furiously try to keep up, and she does it with panache, even élan. Yes, she is a woman of her day, gargantuan and mentally strong, but also good company and friendly. She still entertains women of every generation, position and background. She offers the full

spectrum of womanhood; she's there for everyone, your companion and partner in the demanding life of today, you are part of her, you grew up with her: *Rooi Rose*."

Pansegrouw (2013) describes the *Rooi Rose* reader as "tech-savvy" and a woman "who likes to share her thoughts with like-minded people." She adds further: "She is proud of her heritage and Afrikaans, but she is very much a woman of the world." The magazine affirms the reader's Afrikaner culture: "We reflect the Afrikaans heritage and language, as well as its place in modern society. The magazine creates a forum for the Afrikaans woman of today who wants to have an intelligent read, well informed and reliable, and very entertaining. She wants to be acknowledged as a woman who makes decisions that affect her family every day. She's busy, experiencing all facets of life in her daily programme. She wants to relax in a community of like-minded women, leaning back and enjoying some personal time, basking in the sharing of identity and reality," says Pansegrouw.

The magazine is known for its longevity and ability to know and speak to its reader. As Pansegrouw (2013) affirms: "[*Rooi Rose* has] lived through the Rinderpest, so to speak, and made it, and we're still around. So there must be something that's intrinsically solid that people want in their lives, because if you compare *Rooi Rose* to a lot of other magazines, they just don't make it after a certain time. We've been able to reinvent ourselves quite regularly and I think that's part of the secret. We do look at who we are and who the person is that we are there for and in that respect we decide the direction we need to expand into or how to renew ourselves."

Since 2007, *Rooi Rose* has also positioned itself as a digital brand. The magazine launched its website (www.rooirose.co.za) in that year, and then underwent a complete redesign in 2011. The website, like the magazine, publishes content in Afrikaans only, and all social media interactions are in Afrikaans. The magazine endeavours to engage with its online users: "We created our online reader's forum six years ago [2008] and it provides us with instant and direct information on what they like and dislike in the current issue. We talk to them weekly in our online chat room where we get information from the reader herself. We have an ongoing dialogue with our reader on Facebook and Twitter that provide us with useful insights," states Pansegrouw (Nevill, 2012). The way in which the magazine

endeavours to engage with its readers is the focus of this research report, and a case study to draw conclusions on possible industry dynamics and changes in a print publication model to a multiple platform content producer.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does *Rooi Rose* approach the challenge of user engagement on digital platforms?
2. How does the print version of *Rooi Rose* integrate with the online version and extend or limit user engagement?
3. Are audiences responding to current strategies to encourage engagement?
4. How is the need for day-to-day engagement affecting the workflow of magazine production teams?
5. What are the implications of digital engagement expectations for magazine publishers in South Africa?

1.5 CONCLUSION

This research report aims to address some of the shifts experienced by print publishers as they extend their brands to include online platforms. Technological developments in the online realm have had a significant effect on the magazine industry (Ellonen, et al., 2008), internationally and in South Africa. New media has had a disruptive effect on the publishing industry in particular (Picard, 2003). Ellonen et al. (2008, p. 341) argue that "the media industry has been confronted by turbulent, complex and rapid change, high and multivariate competition, new forms of production and distribution, and entirely new types of products."

This report seeks to explore some of these disruptive effects of new media, especially within the production teams of magazines, and focuses on the necessity to create, manage and maintain engagement opportunities within the digital platforms. As magazines seek to explore new opportunities online, changes in how content creation is perceived, managed and executed are impacting publishers. This paper will, by using *Rooi Rose* as a case study,

demonstrate some of these effects and address the possibilities, challenges and opportunities facing magazines in South Africa.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This research will focus on the production of women's magazines, and in particular reader engagement, rather than the way women are represented in these periodicals or respond to them culturally. A number of previously published theoretical approaches focus on how women's magazines, as a cultural product, represent women (Ferguson, 1983); (Gough-Yates, 2003); (Hermes, 1995), while others focus more on the economic organisation of the media industries (Daly, et al., 1997); (Doyle, 2002); (Johnson & Prijatel, 1998); (Picard, 2003); (Picard, 2013). This research report aims to add to the limited body of research on print magazines and their transition to multi-platform content producers who engage actively with users in digital spaces.

2.1 AN OVERVIEW OF PRINT MAGAZINES

"Magazines are the most successful media format ever to have existed," argue Holmes and Nice in the opening line of their book entitled *Magazine Journalism* (2012, p. 1). While television may have been the dominant medium in the last fifty years (ibid, 2012), magazines are "ubiquitous" and their "consumption so engrained in habit that their importance almost ceases to register," and their significance as a medium of influence is therefore overlooked or ignored (Ibid, 2012). Yet magazines have an important role to play in our culture (Holmes, 2007). Being a source of pleasure for millions of readers gives magazines a cultural value (Ibid, 2007). In addition, "magazines play an often disregarded part in our quotidian existence: the pleasure they bring, and the ways in which they bring it, give them a social value; their ability to influence patterns of behaviour or consumption or aesthetics a cultural one; and their role as educators and informers an intellectual one" (Holmes & Nice, 2012). Gough-Yates (2003, p. 8) argues that women's magazines do not "simply offer their readers innocent pleasure," but a "key site for the development of a self-identity." Hermes also argues that women's magazines furnish readers with a "temporary fantasy of an ideal self," and that such a fantasy "can make you feel stronger and less vulnerable" (1995, p. 39). Abrahamson argues that "the magazine form – unlike newspapers, broadcasting and online media – has a unique and powerful role both as a product of its social and cultural moment and as a catalyst for social change. As a result,

periodicals can perhaps be usefully understood to lie on a continuum of function, ranging in both intent and effect from the reflective to the transformative" (2007, p. 667).

The word 'magazine' is often difficult to define as it calls forth a variety of responses:

> "It might connote a thick, luxurious, women's glossy or a throwaway weekly gossip sheet. It could just as easily be connected with a favourite hobby as with a profession. Perhaps it may be associated with a supermarket or a satellite television provider. Magazines are all of these things and more – they cover an incalculable range of subject matter, styles and modes of delivery. They give pleasure to millions, information to millions more, and frequently manage to marry pleasure and information in a way that is unique to the form. This combination of a kaleidoscopic nature, the provision of pleasure and an ability to evolve, adapt and survive has led to the axiom…: magazines are the most successful media form ever to have existed" (Holmes & Nice, 2012, p. 2).

The term 'glossy magazine' is specifically used in consumer magazines, most often targeted at a female audience (Dyson, 2007):

> "Glossy magazines … are media commodities that have a specific materiality. They are designed to be relatively hardwearing, portable and easily read. The layout of the magazines provides navigations for readers who will be expected to consume the product in snatches. The size of the publications – usually around A4, with an abundance of well-bound pages – mean they can be carried and stacked or passed on from the original purchaser or subscriber, who could be described as the 'ideal reader', to a wider circle of readers. Some glossies have been shrunk in size in order to fit into women's handbags. Glossies are produced regularly (usually monthly) and are more physically robust than newspapers because they are intended to have a longer shelf life. The design and feel of glossies connote luxury and pleasure, despite the fact that their sale price is relatively low. They have high production values – the heavy glossy paper from which they derive their industry-moniker – enables the reproduction of sumptuous photography and graphics, providing the reader with a sensuous experience. The physical feel of these magazines and their visual layout

offer pleasures over and above their use value in terms of informational content" (Ibid, 2007, p. 636-637).

The emotional responses and affective pleasures elicited are essential qualities of women's magazines.

Magazines began to develop in Great Britain and America in the 1700s (Straubhaar, et al., 2012) and carried varying degrees of fiction and non-fiction, depending on the readership (Ibid, 2012). Few magazines were widely read or enjoyed any noteworthy longevity until the 1800s when Congress in the United States of America stimulated the growth of periodicals by lowering the cost in postal rates, and the expanding public education system taught more people to read (Peterson, 1956). "Wages increased, young people moved to the cities to work in the burgeoning industrial economy, and an urban middle class grew. Prices fell with economies of scale, improved printing technology, and more demand for print media," writes Straubhaar, et al (2012). After the Postal Act of 1879 gave magazines special rates, the number of magazines available increased significantly (Ibid, 2012), and as America shifted from an agrarian to an industrial economy, conditions were propitious for magazines with a large, national circulation (Peterson, 1956). Within this shifting economy, local advertising in newspapers was no longer adequate and the need for a medium that "could take the advertiser's message simultaneously to large groups of consumers over a widespread area" emerged (Ibid, 1956, p4). As the audience grew and revenue from advertisers increased, the modern consumer magazine we know today was birthed.

After the 1920s, magazines competed with radio and film for people's leisure time. Some magazines did not adapt well to the competition and disappeared (Ibid, 1956). New magazines tried mass appeal to "become everything to everyone" and the successful magazines sold more copies, were less expensive to produce, and cost less to readers (Payne, 1993). Magazines became a major mass medium and a popular vehicle for advertisers.

By the late 1990s, desktop publishing, cheap copying and the publication of magazines in virtual form on the World Wide Web lowered the barriers to entry into the magazine

business (Straubhaar, et al, 2012). In the USA today, there are more than 20,600 business, custom and consumer magazines (Ibid, 2012).

In South Africa, magazines have also enjoyed mass medium status with high readerships and advertising revenues. As technology has become more sophisticated, magazines have become less expensive to produce and allowed more and more brands to appear on shelves. In 2011 there were 109 national consumer magazines printed to purchase, some available weekly or quarterly, but the significant portion competing for retailers and advertisers on a monthly basis (SAARF, 2012).

2.1.1 Women's magazines

Women's magazines specifically, are a "key medium for women, and indeed their demand has been sustained since their inception in the 18th century" (Stevens, et al., 2007, p. 236). Yet much of the literature on women's magazines has focused on the representation of women (Gough-Yates, 2003), and the "majority have argued that the media contribute to the reinforcement of gender differences and inequalities in contemporary studies" (Ibid, 2003, p.7). The majority of studies focusing on women's magazines have been conducted by women (Ibid, 2003) and have "invariably configured these texts as a 'problem' for women" (Ibid, 2003). Machin and Thornborrow (2003, p. 455) summarise issues found within the early critical literature as follows:

1. "Women are portrayed as sex objects.
2. Women are portrayed as doing trivial things.
3. Women's magazines present a simplified world – a world of restricted codes.
4. Women's magazines present a contradictory world and fail to provide women with a coherent model or models for living.
5. Women's magazines have been seen as damaging to women's self-image as they offer women a distorted view of themselves and the world."

Gough-Yates (2003, p. 7) adds that the "early feminist accounts of women's magazines (and their interpretation of the relationship between the texts and their readers' self-perception) were concerned with the ways that magazines offered 'unreal', 'untruthful' or 'distorted' images of women."

Joke Hermes (1995) challenged the notion that women's magazines were 'harmful' and came to the conclusion that "women's magazines are read with far less concentration and much more detachment than other popular genres" (1995, p. 14). She also aimed to address the way women's magazines "become meaningful exclusively through the perception of their readers" (1995, p. 5). She asserts that "women's magazines were not meaningful when analysed outside the context of the readers' everyday lives" (1995, p. 13). When examining the bulk of literature dealing with the representation of women in this genre of magazines, "there exists little consensus regarding the role of women's magazines in producing feminine subjects" (Gough-Yates, 2003, p. 7).

In spite of the substantial research on women's magazines briefly discussed above, there are not many works concerned with production-based studies of women's magazines (Ibid, 2003). Marjorie Ferguson's (1983) work is an exception and offers an in-depth consideration of women's magazine production. Ferguson was a former employee of a women's weekly magazine, and "rather than focusing on the *readership* of women's magazines, she sought to combine a content analysis of specific titles with her inside knowledge of industry concepts and practices" (Gough-Yates, 2003, p. 14). Ferguson's work primarily focused on the text contained in magazines, but she paid "limited attention to either reader's understanding of magazines or the everyday practices of the texts' producers" (Ibid, 2003, p.14).

In contrast, this research report focuses on the production of women's magazines by investigating the way journalism teams are shifting their focus from print publications to multi-platform content publishing. The previous research on the representation of women's magazines is helpful and will underpin this report, but will not be the focus.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

Magazines have been significantly impacted by the "breaking down of barriers between traditional media industries and the telecommunications sector" (Meyers, 2012, p. 1). Meyers further argues that "it is not simply media texts themselves that have been reshaped, but the practices associated with the production and consumption of media" (2012, p. 1). To consider the question of how magazine production teams are creating opportunities to engage in digital platforms, I draw on the following bodies of theory: new media theory, women's magazines, magazines and digitisation, and reading and pleasure.

3.1 NEW MEDIA THEORY

The research report is framed mostly in theories of new media, as set out by Flew (2002), Lister (2009) and Deuze (2001); (2003); (2004); (2007), amongst others. New media provide the potential for a participatory media culture, and refer to the transition seen in media production, distribution and use over the last three decades; changes which are technological, textual, conventional and cultural (Lister, et al., 2009). As Lister states:

> "The term 'new media' emerged to capture a sense that quite rapidly from the late 1980s on, the world of media and communications began to look quite different and this difference was not restricted to any one sector or element of that world, although the actual timing of change may have been different from medium to medium… Media had continually been in a state of technological, institutional and cultural change or development. Yet, even within this state of constant flux, it seemed that the nature of change that was experienced warranted an absolute marking off from what went before" (2009, p. 10).

The emergence of new media was, and still is, "part of a much larger landscape of social, technological and cultural change" (Ibid, 2009, p. 11). Flew argues in his introductory text on new media that new media technologies, which "arise out of the interaction between digitised content, convergent media forms, and global communication networks" (2002, p. 2), cannot be seen as a good or bad thing for publishers – it is a reality that needs to be integrated into the business of publishing and journalism as it is part of the larger changing landscape referred to earlier.

Flew also argues that “the new media can also be thought of as digital media. Digital media are forms of media content that combine and integrate data, text, sounds, and images of all kinds; are stored in digital formats; and are increasingly distributed through networks such as those based upon broadband fibre-optic cables, satellites, and microwave transmission systems” (2002, p. 10). New media’s immediacy sets it apart from traditional media (Jere & Davis, 2011) and is characterised by the potential for two-way communication through decentralised networks such as the Internet (Flew, 2002).

3.1.1 Participatory culture

Magazine publishers such as *Rooi Rose* understand that their brand requires engagement and participation on online platforms, and are assessing how to do this strategically and optimally. Jenkins et al. (2013, p. 35) affirm this: “The media industries understand that culture is becoming more participatory, that the rules are being rewritten and that relationships between producers and their audiences are in flux”. Aitamurto (2013) argues that “participatory culture is pervading society, as long since predicted by theorists, empowering users and audiences to be more active producers and participants.” New media have contributed to the augmentation of online participation.

Engagement and a participatory culture are inherent to new media. ‘Participatory culture’ (Aitamurto, 2013); (Burgess & Green, 2009); (Jenkins, 2006); (Jenkins, 2009); (Jenkins, et al., 2013) is a term theorists have penned when seeking to address the consequences of new media (Goggin, 2012). Broadly speaking, participatory culture means that “users are now able to participate in media in extensive ways that were previously much more difficult to do” (Ibid, 2012, p. 29). The ability and expectation to participate in new media is inherent in the so-called Web 2.0 technologies (Ibid, 2012).

Digital technology has meant that those working in media organisations have experienced changes within the operating environment (Jenkins, 2006). Magazine readers and advertisers increasingly expect device responsive versions of the print publication, along with websites offering original and meaningful content (Jere & Davis, 2011) and social

media platforms that engage readers and share content. In addition, the potential for applications (apps) available on platforms such as the iTunes and Google Play stores are increasingly attractive for magazine readers and online content consumers, and publishers as a revenue-generating vehicle. Technological developments continue to move rapidly (Prince, 2013), and publishers have to hastily learn how to profitably migrate editorial and advertising content onto digital platforms (Consterdine, 2012). As Picard (2003) states: "The effects of disruptive technologies on existing firms are not uniform, however, and depend to a great extent on how the firms respond strategically."

The development of the Internet has brought significant changes to audience behaviour in relation to online content that challenges the long-term survival of the newspaper, magazine and publishing industries in general (Picard, 2003). Johnson and Prijatel argue that the Internet is "a valuable resource for magazines, especially in terms of their connection with their audiences" (1998, p. xi). The Internet, and more specifically Web 2.0, has increased the capability of social interaction amongst users and has been advanced by applications and platforms such as Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, blogs, and Twitter. From a professionalised content producer's perspective, Web 2.0 allows a high level of engagement with content consumers in a manner, and on a scale, unlike that previously experienced by traditional media.

Mark Deuze (2007) argues that media participation is the defining characteristic of the Internet. "In the new media age, consumers are empowered to choose their own content, and decide when and where they want it, often free of charge and free of advertising," writes McPhillips and Merlo (2008, p. 245). Lievrouw adds that "new media also give users the means to generate, seek and share content selectively and to interact with other individuals and groups on a scale that was impractical with traditional mass media" (2002, p. 9). It is this notion of participatory culture that has print publishers re-evaluating how they position themselves as content producers, and created a needed for traditional media to produce editorial and create digital platforms where readers can engage and users can participate.

3.1.2 Characteristics of new media

The Internet, which is seen as the basis of the new media, has become the fastest growing medium ever recorded (Flew, 2002). Flew (2002) argues that four features were important in the popularisation of the Internet:

- The Internet allowed the display of text, data, images and audio, and introduced multimedia capability.
- The Internet was based on hypertext principles, allowing for "the linking of information, where links from one information source provide simple point-and-click access to related information available from other sources" (p. 14).
- Search engines, founded on the value of the Internet's capacity to hyperlink, were developed to provide an expansive and simple database of all the information stored on the Internet.
- The development of the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (http), which allowed a "platform-independent means of interconnection between websites" (p. 15), and Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), which enabled developers to write simple code for the Internet, accelerated the commercial and popular use of the Web.

New media have also had an impact on journalism as the traditional media have sought to actively distribute their content online. The characteristics of new media technologies considered to have the greatest impact on online journalism are hypertextuality, interactivity, and multimedia (Deuze, 2001); (Kawamoto, 2003); (Steensen, 2011). Kawamato (2003) defines these characteristics as follows:

- Hypertextuality: the linking and 'layering' of digital information through a nonlinear hierarchical structure.
- Interactivity: the process of engaging active human or machine participation in the process of information seeking and information sharing.
- Multimedia: the use of more than one type of media in a single product.

The impact of technology on journalism is forcing content producers to be innovative and to engage with readers beyond a printed page. Deuze (2001) explains that the "online journalist has to make decisions on which media formats best tell a certain story

(multimediality), has to allow room for options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories (interactivity) and must consider ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks (hypertextuality)."

In the same way, readers are expecting articles and stories that contain links to further information; images, videos and audio; and the opportunity to share articles or comment on them. Flew (2002) argues that new media are 'new' when compared with television because they are networked, interactive, enable two-way communication, and allow its users to be both producers and consumers of content. While online users can produce user-generated content, new media also offer the opportunity for traditional media producers such as magazine publishers to collaborate with those who previously were the 'audience' (Rosen, 1999). Lister, et al. (2009) argue that "in an age of trans-mediality we now see the migration of content and intellectual property across media forms, forcing all media producers to be aware of and collaborate with others." Aitamurto (2013) also argues that new media hold "the promise of reconfiguration of the conventional 'we write, you read' dogma of journalism by turning readers and users into co-producers. Newspapers and magazines are increasingly employing open journalistic practices by inviting reader comments or content." Readers of online magazines and users of a magazine's online brand are expecting two-way communication, opportunities to collaborate and access to sharing or commenting on content.

3.1.3 Digital engagement

Digital engagement is an aspect of new media theory that is critical to this research. Magazines cannot simply rely on the perceived strength of their brands to viably compete in an online environment. Internationally, most media companies with a strategy of exploiting the Internet understand that "it involves not just offering the same old media goods and content electronically, but also the creation of 'new' and differentiated products which reflect and suit modes of consumer interface on the Net" (Doyle, 2002). While editorial may be the most valuable form of media content because it is perceived to be unbiased and believable (Dyson, 2007), the Internet requires a more sophisticated production process than simply loading magazine editorial onto a site. Good content alone cannot fuel a site's

success. Web content requires an editorial strategy to engage with readers, with investment from the magazines' teams and publishers needed to ensure its execution. Magazine teams responsible for online content need to understand how online content is found, consumed, interacted with, and shared (Hilderman, 2011).

Prince's (2013) article on digital engagement provides useful insight into best practices that can be employed by media houses and brands. Prince argues that "the digital landscape is rapidly evolving, resulting in an uncertain and unstable environment that brings both exciting opportunities and complex challenges for organisations seeking to engage audiences through digital channels like websites and social media" (2013, p. 349). She defines digital engagement from an organisational point of view, as "using digital tools to reach, converse with, enthuse and promote specific actions among an audience. Digital tools include websites, social media, email, and mobile technologies" (Ibid, p. 349). From an audience perspective, "digital engagement would perhaps be better described as a behaviour state: the amount of effort they are willing to expend on interacting with an organisation through digital channels. It is important to acknowledge that engagement is both a process and a goal" (2013, p. 350). Lawson-Borders (2006) further argues that audiences want to actively engage the media on digital platforms and that the media compete to fulfil the needs of the audiences to engage.

Prince identifies three fundamental factors as critical to the success of digital engagement activity:

(1) there must be a defined digital audience;
(2) an understanding of what constitutes 'engagement' needs to be in place; and
(3) appropriate goals must be set, allowing outcomes to be measured and organisations to identify whether they are succeeding.

While Prince asserts that digital experimentation is a valid start to engagement, long-term success is reliant on clear planning, a fundamental understanding of how engagement works, a clear definition of who the digital audience is and how they behave (Jere & Davis, 2011), the correct skills to produce and deliver content journeys, and the tools to monitor, assess and respond to interactions on an on-going basis (Prince, 2013).

Prince defines the stages of engagement that audiences move through, and suggests these stages are ideally cyclical: “It is clear that the ultimate goal of engagement for organisations is not just the completion of an isolated task, but the creation of advocates who will continue to engage with an organisation and potentially generate further engagement from others. As such, it is possible to view engagement as both transaction and relationship, with the opportunity to increase an individual’s levels of engagement over time” (Ibid, 2013, p. 351).

The six stages of the audience engagement cycle are as follows:

- “*Awareness:* a person has knowledge of an organisation.
- *Acquisition:* the person visits their website.
- *Satisfaction:* the person is sufficiently engaged with the website to consider completing an action (e.g. buying something, downloading a document or sharing the content).
- *Conversion:* the person completes the action.
- *Retention:* the person becomes ‘loyal’ by visiting the website again to do something else or by subscribing to the organisation’s communications channels.
- *Referral:* the person becomes their advocate and generates interest in the organisation from other people” (Ibid, 2013, pp. 351-352).

All barriers to engagement must be removed by organisations if the engagement cycle is to be achieved (Ibid, 2013); (Stokes, 2011). This is almost as important as the strategy to build and develop audience engagement. The potential barriers to engagement include:

- poor website design;
- lack of intuitive paths through content;
- not meeting expectations on content, functionality, and opportunities for involvement that have been instilled in digital audiences by the big players like Google, Facebook and Apple;
- not getting content into the right channels for an audience;
- providing content that is not optimised for consumption on mobile devices. (2013, pp. 353-354)

Prince adds that “a user-centric approach requires that organisations consider and prioritise the needs of users over their own and develop digital content and resources collaboratively with users through techniques such as analysis of website use through analytics tools, regular user testing of key digital journeys and accepting comment and feedback on all published content” (2013, p. 354). She argues that while the ‘world of the social web’ requires a two-way conversation, which organisations must both lead and respond to, the “vehicle for all of this theory, the substance behind these conversations and the trigger for social sharing is good content. Content is the engagement ‘frontline’” (2013, p. 355).

3.2 MAGAZINES AND DIGITISATION

Magazines are traditionally printed periodicals that can include articles, reportage, essays, fiction, stories and photographs (Daly, et al., 1997). This research focuses on consumer magazines in South Africa, specifically women’s interest titles. Consumer magazines are “magazines with editorial content written for the average citizen; which carry advertising for products; are listed as a consumer magazine by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) in South Africa; and are distributed through newsstands, retailers, as well as through subscriptions” (Jere & Davis, 2011, p. 2). In South Africa, consumer magazines have enjoyed mass medium status with high readerships and advertising revenues (Ibid, 2011).

As technology has become more sophisticated, magazines have become less expensive to produce, allowing more and more titles to appear on shelves. At the end of September 2013 there were 218 consumer magazines printed to purchase in South Africa (ABC, Quarter 3, 2013), some available weekly or quarterly, but the significant portion competing for retailers and advertisers on a monthly basis.

In the past, magazine publishers have resisted digitisation for a number of reasons. One of those reasons is the fear of cannibalising content they produce for the printed magazine by making it freely available online (Tarkiainen, et al., 2009); (Kaiser, 2006); (Simon & Kadiyali, 2007). The perception is that if users could get magazine-type content online for free then there would be no reason to buy the print edition. As Cook affirms, “Resistance to publishing content online is born from a fear of cannibalising the print product and its

business model" (2011, p. 16). Buckland (2007), writing about South African magazines specifically, adds: "Websites of print magazines have had a rather low profile in more than ten years of Internet in this country… Magazines jealously clutch on to their content, reluctant to put it online for fear of cannibalisation."

Another reason magazines have resisted digitisation is that there seems to be no defined strategy to engage online users or to monetise content (Picard, 2013); (Berger, 2004). Buckland (2007) once again affirms this: "Online magazines in the lifestyle sector deal in small traffic and don't really touch sides. They are often there as an after-thought because everyone has to have a website these days, right?" Consequently, no publisher appears to want to lead the way digitally, with publishers waiting for others to set the trend or to incur the costs of imperfect decisions. As Pavlik (2013) argues: "…organisation leaders are reluctant to be the first to innovate; they often are more inclined to let others be the first to test the digital waters."

A final reason magazine producers have resisted digitisation is the small revenue potential online presents. High cost technology often results in low engagement users and a return on investment that media managers do not find attractive. Magazine publishers are nevertheless extending their brands onto digital platforms for three main reasons – others are doing it, readers expect it, and advertisers demand it (Doyle, 2002); (Cook, 2011); (Jere & Davis, 2011). Consequently a significant production and business model shift is occurring as "magazine publishers are deep into the process of changing from being publishers of printed periodicals, with a few peripheral other activities, to content companies who publish in many forms of media" (Consterdine, 2012, p. 8).

Digital media is interactive (Deuze, 2003); (Deuze, 2004); (Steensen, 2011), has a global reach (Jere & Davis, 2011), and allows for "sophisticated audience segmentation" (Ibid, 2011). Magazine publishers have the opportunity to utilise the interactive tools inherent in new media to build and strengthen relationships with consumers (Ibid, 2011) through meaningful, qualified and strategic online engagement.

Due to the global economic downturn and pressure from digital media, magazines have experienced a decline or plateau in sales (Ellonen, 2006); (Simon & Kadiyali, 2007). Ytre-Arnre (2011a) argues that "in spite of some decline in circulation and readership numbers, women's magazines in print still constitute a substantial cultural and economic industry worldwide. Websites with similar content are generally free of charge and offer superior possibilities for interactivity and choice." She further argues that "the future of magazine reading is thus intimately connected with overall changes in how various media are experienced" (Ibid, 2011a). Magazine producers are therefore experimenting in the digital realm by launching tablet applications, and creating a social media presence (Aitamurto, 2013); (Holmes & Nice, 2012). "Thus, magazines are seeking pointers for the future, which is accompanied by challenges ranging from keeping subscribers when readerships are declining and finding new revenue streams to adjusting to readers' changing habits" (Aitamurto, 2013).

"Because new media and communication technologies provide some substitutability for the functions of traditional print media, they are threats – to different degrees – to newspapers, magazines, and books," argues Picard (2003, p. 131). With this overriding view of the relationship between magazines and the Internet, magazine publishers are extending their brands to electronic media (Kaiser, 2006); (Tarkiainen, et al., 2009). They are creating websites, applications and digital content, and engaging on social media platforms to engage with their magazine readers, attract potential new readers, and entice advertisers to their digital space. Ellonen et al. (2010, p. 21) argue that magazine publishers are "establishing an Internet presence for their magazine brands in the hope that their websites will help them to strengthen their customer relationships and increase brand attachment and loyalty."

Publishers are spending significant amounts of money extending the brands within their stable to reach an online audience. With this comes the hope that this audience will be pushed to purchase the print publication of the magazine (Kaiser, 2006), which is still the main source of revenue for publishers. Consterdine argues: "It seems likely that most large magazine publishers will eventually evolve to the point where the majority of revenue comes from digital platforms instead of print… Nevertheless for most publishers of

consumer magazines print is still the major source of their audiences and revenue … and will continue to be so for some time" (2012, pp. 8-9).

The Periodical Publishers Association (PPA), the trade body for the magazine industry in the UK, offers a definition of magazines on its website that acknowledges the impact of digital platforms:

> "Magazine. (noun)
>
> The word 'magazine' describes branded, edited content often supported by advertising or sponsorship and delivered in print or other forms. Traditionally, magazines have been printed periodicals which are most commonly published weekly, monthly or quarterly.
>
> These may be supported by printed one-off supplements and annual directories.
>
> Increasingly, magazines exist online where content is available through websites or in digital editions, or delivered by email as an electronic newsletter. Many magazine brands also deliver tailored information services to their audiences. Magazine brands also engage with their audiences face-to-face by organising exhibitions, conferences and other events" (cited in Holmes and Nice, 2012).

Magazines are undoubtedly in transition as their traditional print platform is challenged by the interactivity and engagement opportunities found in newer media forms.

Throughout the world, the Internet is used in multiple ways – socially, instrumentally and recreationally (Chen, et al., 2012); (Hermes, 2006). As digital technologies advance, so do its uses (Chen, et al., 2012) and users (Hilderman, 2011). With more and more South Africans gaining access to the Internet via personal computers[3] and mobile devices, combined with the pending faster connectivity and broadband capabilities offered by undersea fibre optic cables and improved bandwidth infrastructure, there can be no doubt that the consumption of content is changing.

[3] 20.3 percent of South Africa's population own a personal computer or laptop, compared to around nine percent a decade ago (AMPS 2013).

3.3 DIGITISATION AND GATEKEEPERS

Normative responsibilities of the media include the dissemination of information, the expression of different views and opinions, facilitation of debate and helping the public form opinion on issues (McQuail, 2005, p. 162). Traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, television and radio have been the primary agents of information; and professional journalists the gatekeepers of what news and stories the public consumed. "Historically, publishers combined the process of content creation, aggregation and distribution. Journalists wrote stories, editors selected where those stories would be placed, advertisers purchased display space and the [publication] was printed and delivered to readers and vendors," explains McKeehan (2011).

The term 'gatekeeper' was first coined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1943 and applied to journalism by David Manning White in 1950 (Barlow, 2010), and is still in use as a "metaphor for the relationship of news organisations to news products" (Schudson, 2000). Gatekeeping is used to refer to the journalist, editor or publisher's filtering, selection and processing of a story or event (McQuail, 2005). In referring to the media as gatekeepers, the public have no role in the editorial process, except as potential sources for information (Nip, 2006).

As digital technologies emerged, traditional South African media viewed these online opportunities as extensions of their existing platforms (Jere & Davis, 2011). Newspapers and magazines created websites and social media profiles to communicate with the online audience, and by enabling comment facilities on certain stories, to encourage reader participation. Traditional media houses remained the gatekeepers of information shared with the public, but encouraged a form of participatory journalism where debate and opinion could be shared as a footnote to an online article. Moderation of reader comments by an online editor became the norm, enabling news companies to retain control by removing remarks or criticisms not in line with company policy. This form of online participation models the well-known 'letters to the editor', typically a reaction to a story or opinion already published, and filtered through the existing editorial screening process (Jack, 2010); (Cook, 2011).

Digital media and its participatory culture (Lister, et al., 2009) have significantly shifted how journalists act as gatekeepers of content and comments (Barlow, 2010). Public access to the Internet has meant "information today has become more readily available than ever before" (Ibid, 2010, p. 48) and that the "traditional gatekeepers of culture, the filters of news and guardians of quality have all had to adjust to the realities of participatory culture" (Lister, et al., 2009, p. 221).

Web 2.0 technology has enabled users to upload content on the Internet easily for public access (McPhillips & Merlo, 2008, p. 245). This has resulted in a change in the linear 'sender → message → receiver' model, which placed producers at one end and passive receivers on the other (Hartley, 2012), and "the emergence of digital, interactive, and participatory media and of the 'user' as opposed to the 'consumer'" (Ibid, 2012).

With this theoretical framework in mind, magazines such as *Rooi Rose* should be able to embrace participatory culture as it has been inherent in the print production process historically (Aitamurto, 2013). "Reader-participation has traditionally been a part of magazine publishing. Prior to digitisation, magazines published readers' letters, photographs, and stories. Reader participation is a tool used to pursue the reader–magazine relationship, which is a core competency in magazine publishing. In that relationship the magazine wants to become the reader's friend and 'speak to the reader'. The closer the relationship is, the better the magazine knows its readers, and the better the magazine can meet their needs, which increases appeal to advertisers," argues Aitamurto (2013).

New media has empowered users to produce and distribute their own content (McPhillips & Merlo, 2008, p. 245). "Production costs are falling, due, for example, to digitalisation, and the Internet provides an excellent open-source distribution platform to a large audience via the Internet" (Ibid, 2008, p. 245). This has allowed audiences to become 'users' and "user-generated content has started to become a real competitor to traditional media" (Lister, et al., 2009, p. 221).

It can be argued that new media not only encourages participatory communication, but democratises communication (Jenkins, 2009). With the removal of the traditional

gatekeeping processes, new media creates “openings for social, cultural, economic, legal and political change and opportunities for diversity and democratisation” (Jenkins, et al., 2013, p. 153).

3.4 MAGAZINES AND PLEASURE

Magazines are a source of pleasure (Davidson, et al., 2007) for millions of readers, and publishers strive to ensure the periodicals they produce continually meet the needs of the specified target market. Magazine publishers are always aware of their reader, creating content that will speak to the readers’ needs, hopes, aspirations and interests. Ytre-Arene (2011) argues that people “read women’s magazines to relax, as a reward, and as a ritual. She argues that magazine reading creates a personal space where readers can unwind and enjoy themselves (Ibid, 2011). She further contends that readers “constructed magazine reading as a fixed ritual in which they relaxed from the strains of everyday life, while emphasizing that the undemanding and adaptable nature of women’s magazines made them suitable for various reading situations” (2011b, p. 214). Hermes writes that reading magazines may have the “reassuring character of a much repeated, well-known activity that does not ask us to concentrate or think” (1995, p. 16). She adds that magazine reading is “pleasurable because it is done in your own time, when there are no obligations, no boss to tell you what to do” (Ibid, 1995, p.19). The Magazine Publishers Association (MPA) says that a “magazine is a friend, a tangible and enduring companion and an integral part of a reader’s personal and professional life” (cited in Johnson, 2007).

Magazines are “read to relax, as a reward, and a ritual” (Ytre-Arne, 2011b). Joke Hermes argues that women's magazines constitute a genre that does not make demands, but a way to relax and fill ‘empty time’, because they are easily picked up and put down, thus allowing a reader to read at her leisure (1995). She also affirms that magazine reading is a “qualitatively different activity from for instance, housework” because it is an activity readers “did for, and time they spent on, themselves” (Ibid, 1995).

Media is experienced through the senses (Ytre-Arne, 2011a) and the phenomenological differences between print periodicals and digital magazine brands online will be essential to

ascertaining the needs of creating successful engagement online. As Ytre-Arne further argues, “Perceptions of form and aesthetics could be an integral and important part of the general media experience. These dimensions could be particularly relevant in order to understand the continued appeal of an old medium such as women’s magazines in competition with websites featuring similar journalistic content” (2011a, p. 467). If print magazines represent reward, relaxation and ritual, this research report asks how online engagement fits into this norm, and if it is shifting how magazines are read, created and understood.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Reader engagement is not a new concept for magazine publishers. Yet transitioning from print engagement to the demands of online user engagement is proving to be a challenge to magazine production teams. The Internet and its technologies present new opportunities for print brands, and the inherent need for interactivity, immediacy and a participatory culture within new media are creating the potential for new relationship-building tactics. By drawing on a theoretical framework that draws on new media, women’s magazines, magazines and digitisation, and reading and pleasure, this report will investigate how user engagement is being created, maintained and measured by *Rooi Rose*. In so doing, this could present an indication of how the magazine industry as a whole is responding to the impact of new media. The focus on production teams will allow insight into the effect of new media on magazine journalism, and how magazine journalists are migrating from print producers to producers of content across multiple platforms. “New media technologies have reshaped practices of production, distribution and consumption of media, in part, by blurring the lines of distinction between the role of producer and consumer of media,” argues Meyers (2012). This research report explores the shifting practices of content production and consumption caused by new media in the magazine industry in South Africa.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Methodology, according to Bogdam and Taylor, can be defined as "the processes, principles, and procedures by which we approach problems and seek answers" (cited in Lemon, 1997, p. 30). They further add that "the term applies to how one conducts research. As in everything else we do, our assumptions, interests, and goals greatly influence which methodological procedures we choose" (Ibid, 2007).

The methodology for this report requires gathering information from a magazine publisher, namely Caxton Magazines, to assess the levels and quality of digital engagement created and responded to on their online platforms. This research employs a qualitative approach (Kothari, 2004) rather than a quantitative one. Kothari defines a qualitative approach to research as being "concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviours" (Kothari, 2004). The functions of the qualitative research will be to interpret the findings and results of the quantitative research; to understand, explain and understand the processes of any trends or patterns that may emerge; and to contextualise the behaviour, in this instance the processes of engagement, under study (Hennink , et al., 2011).

4.2 PRACTITIONER RESEARCH

Practitioner research is defined as "research concerned with issues and problems that arise in professional practice." (Jupp, 2006). Through this method of research, "practitioners become researchers into their own practice and engage in a continuing process of professional development" (Ibid, 2006). My research is, in part, drawn on from my experience as a magazine journalist and employee of Caxton Magazines. Within this methodology, "the researcher is a participant rather than an outsider or an observer" (Hermes, 1995, p. 11). I have previously worked as an editor of print magazine publications for a number of publishing houses; I now work as Creative Strategy Director for Caxton Magazines. While my role predominantly constitutes assisting the magazines with the sale and creation of advertorials and advertising campaigns within twelve of the magazines

published in the stable, part of my role is overseeing the digital replica magazine distribution of the titles on Zinio and Magzter. Additionally, I have limited input into the digital strategy of the company and its twelve magazine brands. While I do not work directly with *Rooi Rose* magazine's editorial creation and the production of its magazine and online content, I have privileged access to the editor and the journalism team, and insight into their digital and social media engagement strategy, opportunities, frustrations and fears.

Coupal (2005, p. 6) argues that "being a practitioner and participant observer can be both a highly advantageous position, and a problematic one." Wolcott (1988), and Eisenhart and Borko (1993) highlight one of the potential problems with practitioner research: They do not view practitioners as contributing to greater understanding, because they focus for the most part, on the pragmatic problems of insufficient time and inadequate skills (Coupal, 2005, p. 5). Practitioner research can cloud the research with the researcher's own frustrations and problems within the organisation, rather than maintaining a critical distance. Coupal further argues though that the shared experiences inherent in the researcher engaging with the community within which he or she works "can result in greater levels of trust and more opportunities for joint construction of meaning, while still respecting differences" (Ibid, 2005, p. 7).The insight offered in this regard can allow for honest and critical reflection that may not have been possible without practitioner insight and relationship.

4.3 CASE STUDY

A case study of *Rooi Rose* magazine was conducted for the purposes of this research report. A case study is selected when insight into a research question can be achieved by studying a particular case (Stake, 1995). The case study is a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989). Jackson, et al. argue that a case study approach to data collection can be used for analytic generalisation (Jackson II, et al., 2007). "Analytic generalisation, also referred to as theoretical elaboration, is a type of generalisation in which the researcher uses a particular set of circumstances, like a case, as evidence to refine, dispute, support or detail a concept, model, or theory. However, the case is never regarded or portrayed as a definitive test of the theory" (Jackson II, et al., 2007).

A case study of a magazine production team will also be a valuable addition to scholarly research on the magazine industry. As Johnson (2007, p. 523) states: "… it is difficult for magazine scholars to undertake industrial research. Magazine publishing houses simply don't want to share information about circulation, distribution, advertising, or editorial research – beyond what can be found in a media kit or what will be quoted in a trade publication." Having access to the production and digital team at *Rooi Rose*, and the management team at Caxton Magazines, provided insight into the workings of these teams as they unravel the opportunities and challenges that exist in their transition from print publishers to content publishers across multiple platforms.

4.4 INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with Caxton Magazines' management and *Rooi Rose* staff members responsible for creating engagement online. Readers were also questioned on *Rooi Rose*'s online platforms. Qualitative research often "relies on spoken interviews with participants to gather detailed information regarding the phenomenon under examination" (Knox & Burkard, 2009). "The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters... Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires. Interviews are, therefore, most appropriate where little is already known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual participants" (Gill, et al., 2008). Seidman argues that the purpose of "interviewing is not to test hypotheses, and not to 'evaluate' as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (2012, p. 9).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data. This means that a number of predetermined questions were asked, but the interviewer has the opportunity to digress (Berg, 2004). The following people from Caxton Magazines were interviewed:

- Martie Pansegrouw, Editor: *Rooi Rose* magazine
- Hannelie Diedericks, Deputy Editor: *Rooi Rose* magazine

- Anton Botes, General Manager: Caxton Magazines
- Angela Isbister, Head of Digital: CTP Group
- Jana Kleinloog, Digital Manager: Caxton Magazines
- Ingrid Booth, Digital Content Editor: Caxton Magazines
- Michele Nortje, Digital Editor: *Rooi Rose* magazine.

The purpose of the Caxton Magazines' staff interviews was to gain insight into the research problem: how magazines are creating and sustaining engagement on digital platforms, and to attempt to build a body of knowledge pertaining to the development of magazine brands online. The research component of this study, therefore, uses "qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects of social reality" (Bless, et al., 2006).

The industry interviewees were initially contacted via email so that a written record could be attributed to each interview. This method was also chosen as it allowed direct access to each of the interviewees. The emails were written in English, albeit this was not the first language for some. These respondents agreed to English as the medium of communication, and responded as such. A brief explanation of the topic of research was included in the correspondence, followed by questions to be answered. After the interviewees responded, face-to-face interviews were set up.

All interviews were then conducted in the interviewees' offices. The interviews were recorded onto a tablet computer, after obtaining the appropriate consent to do so. As discussed earlier, while there was a set list of questions for the interviewee to answer, conversation around the subject was allowed and encouraged.

In addition, some *Rooi Rose* readers were interviewed by email to understand their desire to engage with the brand online. While face-to-face interviews would have been preferred, e-mail interviews allowed easy access to readers across the country. In addition, face-to-face interviews, while more spontaneous, do not allow time for reflection in answering as is found in e-mail interviewing (Flick, 2014). There are, though, inherent problems that need to be acknowledged in e-mail interviewing. Flick (2014) argues that due to the greater

amount of anonymity for e-mail participants, the researcher may find it difficult to form a real-life contextualisation of the statements and person being interviewed.

The following readers responded to a small questionnaire asking them ten questions about the magazine and its online presence:

- Tilana (age: 52; occupation: University Lecturer)
- Zona (age: 42; occupation: Marketing Account Executive)
- Karen (age: 50; occupation: Process Architect)
- Deaudette (age: 43; occupation: Training Developer)
- Nicolene (age: 30; occupation: Office Administrator)

The sample group is small as access to readers proved difficult. Requests for interviews were posted on the magazine's Facebook page, with no response. The magazine management team were also hesitant to release their reader's forum database, and thus refused my request to contact readers directly.

The responses from readers I managed to interview were disappointing as the majority had not interacted with the brand online. I have therefore included reader responses only where appropriate to the research topic and discussion.

4.5 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE STATISTICS

A qualitative analysis of online statistics will also be undertaken. Data regarding unique browsers[4] and dwell time[5] give an indication of the growth in popularity of a site, and whether a website's content is engaging enough to maintain a user's interest. In addition, social media and Google analytics will be used to understand any trends or motivations in engagement. Through conducting a qualitative analysis of online data, Dey (1993) argues that we obtain a fresh view of the data. He contends: "We can progress from initial description, through the process of breaking data down into bits, and seeing how these bits interconnect, to a new account based on our re-conceptualisation of the data. We break

[4] Unique browsers are the number of individuals visiting a specific website one or more times within a prescribed period. Each individual is only counted once (Stokes, 2011). These figures are used by advertisers to assess the reach of a website.
[5] Dwell time indicates the length of time spent by a visitor to a particular website in one session. A session can include one or more page views within a site. (Stokes, 2011)

down the data in order to classify it, and the concepts we create or employ in classifying the data, and the connections we make between these concepts, provide the basis of a fresh description. The core of qualitative analysis lies in these related processes of describing phenomena, classifying it, and seeing how our concepts interconnect" (Ibid, 1993, p. 31). Through data analysis, the web analytics of activity on *Rooi Rose*'s digital platforms will reveal the level of engagement currently created by the magazine brand with its users. As Caudle (2004) contends: "Qualitative analysis means making sense of relevant data … and then responsibly presenting what the data reveal."

4.6 CONCLUSION

Through the methodology processes discussed in this chapter, the report provides insight into how magazines are transitioning from monthly content publishers to be generators of daily content. In addition, the necessity to engage beyond the printed page will be discussed, illuminating how production teams are shifting how they produce content. Digital media require a different strategy of engagement to print media, and through the methods discussed, this research will highlight the shifts in magazine journalism, as well as the strategic expectations of the management team and readers.

Chapter Five: Research findings

This chapter offers an analysis of the interview texts as well as an interpretation of the data to identify significant trends. It will further explore how magazines are creating engagement on digital platforms, through the development of community, to sustain quality conversation with their readership.

5.1 *ROOI ROSE*'S TRANSITION TO ONLINE

Rooi Rose magazine has been published for more than seven decades. What started off as a small romance-focused magazine aimed at 'platteland' Afrikaans women and printing 4,000 copies (Pansegrouw, 2012) has grown to be South Africa's most-read Afrikaans women's magazine, with a monthly readership of 779,000 people (AMPS, July 2012 to June 2013). The print magazine's circulation is 95,891 (ABC Circulation, April to June 2013) and reaches a predominantly white female audience from 15 to 50+. These readers are generally affluent, as can be seen in Table 4.1, with more than two thirds of the magazine's readership occurring in the highest living standards[6] in the country segment.

While the magazine is a successful print title, the brand is continuously reinventing itself through design changes and content research, and evaluating its digital footprint online. Magazine brands, like *Rooi Rose* are responding to this change in content consumption and creation. Magazine journalists are now creating content for more than just the print publication (Consterdine, 2012); (Holmes, 2007); (Rossouw, 2005). This has meant that additional stress is being placed on the magazine production teams to produce a monthly print magazine and populate their digital platforms appropriately.

[6] The Living Standards Measurement (LSM) is the accepted advertising industry measurement to determine the general wealth of a person. LSM is determined by access to durables in the household (electric stove, microwave oven, refrigerator, deep freezer, washing machine and tumble dryer), as well as access to certain services or amenities (water in the house, geyser, flush toilet), (The Media Online, 2012).

ROOI ROSE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
AGE %	
15-24	19
25-34	19
35-49	28
50+	34
GENDER %	
Men	25
Women	75
RACE %	
Africans	16
Coloureds or Indians	32
Whites	52
LIVING STANDARD MEASURES %	
LSM 7-LSM 10	70
LSM 4-LSM 6	31
LSM 1-LSM 3	1

Table 5.1 Reader demographic profile

(Source: www.caxtonmags.co.za/ratecards/rooirose.pdf. Accessed 16 November 2013)

5.1.1. Changes for magazine journalists

To answer the research question: 'How is the need for day-to-day engagement affecting the workflow of magazine production teams,' the interviews conducted with the *Rooi Rose* staff indicated that the way journalists were creating and distributing content was in a state of flux. In the past there was a resistance to creating online content for fears of cannibalisation, as discussed in the theoretical framework, and due to remuneration issues. Deputy Editor Hannelie Diedericks affirms the change and affect digital media has had on the magazine production team: "Everyone has had to get used to the idea that they have to provide extra content for our 'digital magazine'. Initially there was some reluctance to do extra work without being paid for it, but as more resources become available, we are starting to realise that this is the way things will work in the future."

Magazine journalism is experiencing a shift in how it is producing content. Not only are journalists expected to pen articles and write updates for the magazine and digital platforms, they are also expected to create multimedia opportunities by taking photos or videos of events, launches, or behind-the-scenes footage. Magazine journalists need to be a digital 'jack-of-all-trades' if they are to stay relevant to the direction magazine brands are undertaking. Jana Kleinloog (2013), digital manager for all of the Caxton magazine brands in the stable, says, "Journalism teams are now being expected to not only submit for print only, but to rework content or write extra content for web including multimedia elements (videos, images, links). The work shouldn't be complete without digital as part of the package. It is a challenging shift for the more conservative journalists and we've received a lot of push back, but it is a shift that is happening globally and we need to jump on the bandwagon or get left behind."

The magazine production teams are no longer creating content for their monthly print periodicals only, but are taking on the additional task of generating content for the various digital platforms. Deadlines have shifted from monthly to daily deadlines, with the teams posting regular content on their websites, social media and other digital platforms in the hope of engaging with their reader and potential new readers. Angela Isbister, head of digital for the CTP group, of which Caxton Magazines is a division, explains the impact of digital on the company's journalists and content creation: "Journalists have realised that they now need multi-disciplinary skills. They have to be up-skilled in order to produce work that is suited to digital platforms, and this includes multimedia reporting. No longer is it just a print story typed up on their time schedule. Reporting has had to take place on a much more regular basis with daily updates, and needs to include more than just a story. Social media, videos and photos now have to be part of every story." Isbister adds: "Journalists have also had to learn to operate the 'other way round': Make the conversation start with readers. Editors and journalists are content curators. They now moderate all the information they get. They have to listen to their readers and users much more, and respond accordingly."

It is clear from the responses that magazine journalists need to shift their focus from a specialisation in print to content creators across multiple platforms. Journalists are required to write additional stories that suit an online space, taking into account the specific requirements of this new media i.e. search engine optimisation and online writing best practices, which include hypertextuality and interactivity as per chapter three. Multimedia reporting requires journalists to take photographs or videos and post these on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram immediately, rather than relying on the monthly conversation inherent in the print periodical or an editor's eye to screen what is published. Journalists are now forced to become spokespeople from the magazine brand in its entirety across several platforms, rather than penning a few pages in the print magazine with relative anonymity. As a result of this, journalists are building their own 'brand', attracting followers and fans on their personal social media profiles because of their association with the magazine brand.

5.1.2. Reasons to engage

Why do magazine brands such as *Rooi Rose* want to create content to place online? Why do they need to have a constant conversation with their readers and other users if this is not a platform they are used to working on and if it is adding to their workload for no additional monetary compensation?

The first reason is that publishing management deems it essential for their magazine brands to compete in the digital space if Caxton is to remain relevant and compete with international and other local publishing houses. Anton Botes is the general manager of Caxton Magazines and oversees the magazines in the stable. He is responsible for both the print and digital products, and the management of the teams that create content for the aforementioned. Botes believes it is essential that the magazine brands are available online: "Caxton has always believed that digital media has a place in the business but that it needed to be supported by a strategy, investment and the right resources." He adds that digital has "forced" the editorial teams to work across print and new media platforms, ensuring that work commissioned now includes content for digital. With advertisers and readers creating

a demand for magazine brands to be online, magazine editorial teams are creating online content because management has insisted that they do so.

The magazine also believes that readers want the brand to be online and to share content. When asked if readers of the print magazine wanted to engage with brands online, there was an affirmative response from all Caxton staff interviewed. Pansegrouw says: “We are out there in direct competition with other Afrikaans magazines, and we can’t just ignore the fact that people are online and they are looking for us there.” Botes adds that engaging with magazine readers online is an “on-going focus.” He believes that “readers want to engage with magazine brands more and more,” because “magazine brands continue to provide quality content that informs and engages the reader and remains a trusted source of information.”

Isbister says, “Our readers want ‘access’ to the brand. They want to know that they have a voice and that they are being heard. Digital allows us to have that two-way voice, be it through social, blogging and comments, write-ins or newsletter follow-ups. It’s important that we pay attention to what they are saying and respond accordingly, and when this is done we notice increases in engagement.”

Kleinloog believes that readers are actively interested in the production of magazines, and not just on content: “Magazines are setting the trends, plus are perceived as completely glamorous. Readers want to be a part of this glamorous journey… Readers like to see behind the scenes from a shoot, or what the fashion editor is wearing today. Image driven social media platforms lend itself perfectly to publishing for this reason.”

Pansegrouw adds: “[Readers] want to engage! They really do. Even before digital. Digitally we are now just reaffirming this.” Pansegrouw’s remarks allude to the fact that engagement in magazines is not a new concept. Readers of magazines have always conversed with the magazine, through letters and telephone calls. “We have always been in direct contact with our readers. It’s the very nature of the reader: The Afrikaans reader has had a close relationship with her magazine since the very beginning. Readers would share their lives, communicate their problems, ask questions about diet, recipes, dressing for special

occasions and issues of etiquette by post, and *Rooi Rose* would receive piles of letters from readers weekly," says Pansegrouw. The possibility of engagement and dialogue with readers has now been amplified by digital platforms. The key for magazines is to strategically utilise and manage these new media platforms.

Perhaps the fundamental reason for creating content and engaging with readers online relates back to the purpose of magazines argued earlier in this report: to give readers pleasure and a sense of identity (Holmes, 2007). In essence, it could be argued that digital platforms are encouraging magazines to go back to the starting platform of why magazines were created and have experienced longevity as a medium. Pansegrouw (2013) says: "It's become clearer in our minds that we don't just have readers, we have a community of women. Some of them are not even regular readers; they might not buy more than two or three magazines a year but they want to engage about things. They're out there and they're interested in their fellow Afrikaans woman, and they want to find her wherever she is, and I think now our whole purpose has shifted towards creating an online community." Kleinloog agrees that "*Rooi Rose* is building a community" who they "engage with … on their website and social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google+ and Pinterest."

5.1.3 *Rooi Rose*'s digital footprint

One of the research questions asked in chapter one is: 'How does *Rooi Rose* approach the challenge of user engagement on digital platforms?' As discussed earlier, Prince (2013, p. 349) defines digital engagement as "using digital tools to reach, converse with, enthuse and promote specific actions among an audience. Digital tools include websites, social media, email, and mobile technologies." To create a sense of community so that engagement is enabled, *Rooi Rose* has expanded the brand into an extensive digital footprint by utilising the following digital tools:

- Website (www.rooirose.co.za),
- Social media,
- Email newsletters to a subscriber database,
- Online reader forums, and

- Digital replica magazines (hosted on Zinio and Magzter and available for download on tablets, smartphones and computers).

The various platforms are used to create engagement in different ways – to drive users to the website or to initiate a specific action such as a competition or drive to subscribe to the online version of the magazine. Isbister says that the magazines need to "tailor communication depending on the platform; however the brand voice needs to be constant." *Rooi Rose* has a very specific 'voice' when speaking to its readers. The readers of the magazine are proudly Afrikaans and are vocal about the way they are communicated with (Pansegrouw). Yet the brand has realised that their print voice and their online voice can be different. Isbister explains: "We do realise that the profile of the digital user could be different to our traditional reader and we will adapt our content accordingly. For example, the tone online may be a bit more 'edgy' and younger, and we may focus on different stories online, but always under the umbrella of the brand."

In Prince's (2013) argument on engagement discussed in chapter three, she stresses that the first fundamental factor critical to the success of digital engagement activity is to have a defined digital audience. In interviews with Isbister and Pansegrouw, it is clear that thought has been given to this critical factor by the magazine production team and its management. Isbister positions the *Rooi Rose* print reader in comparison the *Rooi Rose* online user. I have drawn up her response in table form for ease of reading:

	PRINT READER	ONLINE USER
Age and income demographic	• 35-plus years old • Mother with children • R30 000 – R40 000 household income (not much disposable income)	• From millennial (22-27) to 35- to 50-year-old • Mother-daughter team • Medium income
Interests	• Family-oriented (food, décor, health). Interested in feeding the family, health issues, home information and budgeting • Has very specific interests • More time to read and relax at home over the weekend • Has very specific interests	• Wholesome, good values, not conservative (would read *Fifty Shades of Grey* without blushing) • Hardworking • Interested in fashion, beauty and DIY • Entrepreneurs, fast movers and shakers, everything Internet-savvy • More interested in how she looks, more self-centred • Adaptable

Print versus digital affinity	• Generations of mother and daughter reading print edition • Not as open to change as digital user • Likes to stay up-to-date and be current • Loyal and expect quality content • More into in-depth articles	• Has good technical knowledge • Curious; has a crossover of news sources • They can go anywhere for their content • Want information now • Uses Google to search for information and recipes • Enjoys short, snippet online content • May have children abroad and uses digital to keep the family together

Table 5.2 *Rooi Rose* print reader compared to online user.

Booth says, "We need to define who our online user is and what content they're after. We then need to create content that meets those needs." She adds, "Using analytics and user research, we should clearly define what is working for us online and what our editorial pillars should be and focus on creating quality content around those pillars rather than trying to be all things to all people." The magazine is aware that its print reader is not necessarily the same as the user accessing their online content or interacting with them on social media platforms. This is a step forward from the past, when *Rooi Rose* solely used archived print articles to populate its landing page.

5.2 MAGAZINE UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY ENGAGEMENT

Prince's (2013) second fundamental factor critical to the success of engagement is that there needs to be an understanding of what constitutes engagement. Each of the magazine staff members interviewed were asked to define their understanding of quality engagement. This was to provide insight into their definition of engagement and how they position themselves within their own barometer of success.

Botes defines engagement by reader interactivity and the ease of possibility in which to express differing viewpoint. He says, "It is to allow the online reader a low technical barrier of entry to promote a diversity of opinion and to be involved." Isbister sees engagement more holistically. She defines quality engagement as: "A user that interacts with the brand on their platform of choice. Being able to engage with our reader or user wherever they choose. So that could be: mobile interaction while commuting to work, website interaction

while at work, or tablet and mobile while at home in front of the TV. It is very important to be where they are: Remind them that you have amazing content and remind them that you can share content on all the platforms. It's the time they spend with the brand that we are after." Isbister's definition is in line with Prince's (2013) earlier definition of digital engagement: "the amount of effort they are willing to expend on interacting with an organisation through digital channels."

Diedericks defines quality online engagement as:

- "When readers share information that we can use to improve our offering.
- When engagement leads to people buying the magazine.
- When engagement leads to people visiting our website."

Her definition is important, as it expresses more than just time spent with a brand. Diedericks identifies that quality engagement has the potential to create an action, which is in line with the 'satisfaction' and 'conversion' stages identified in Prince's six stages of audience engagement in chapter two. The desired action is to lead people to engage with the brand further. Engagement to the magazine teams means time spent on the brand's online platforms, and the potential to allow this time to lead to an action that may inform the magazine print vehicle, or add to numbers (print circulation and web traffic). Engagement is thus about offering users online content on multiple platforms, encouraging them to spend time dwelling on these platforms and exploring other platforms as a result. For magazine teams, actual conversation through online comments is not the sole driver, but merely a part of what it means to create quality engagement with users.

The editor, Pansegrouw, defined quality engagement as "any direct personal communication and sharing of opinions which can be utilised in the planning and execution of magazines." Pansegrouw's response is illuminating as it assumes that engagement is only successful (or of high quality) when it is able to speak to or add to the print vehicle. While the community is a strong focus, the core driver and custodian of the magazine brand still perceives digital as an aside to the print, and a platform to feed the print magazine.

While the temptation is to be critical, one must see the editor's response in the light of a magazine editor's targets and mandate. Even though magazine editors are expected to

manage the brand online, they are only answerable for print circulation figures and advertising revenues. No targets on digital have been set for magazine teams. When asked whether magazine teams have specific goals or targets regarding online and social media growth and engagement, Botes responded: “Although no specific targets have been set per brand, it is about consistent sustainable growth. We believe that as we improve our engagement on various platforms that we will continue to grow our online presence. Kleinloog adds, “Goals and targets will be set going forward. The last couple of months were spent getting the basics right in terms of training and getting the right people employed.” Isbister adds to this: “With the additional resources we have employed digitally we do expect significant growth in our numbers. We have not quantified this though. If I had to put a number to it I would like to see our numbers improve by 100 percent in the next six months.” When we consider that Prince’s (2013) third critical factor to successful engagement is “appropriate goals must be set, allowing outcomes to be measured and organisations to identify whether they are succeeding,” it is essential that *Rooi Rose* identify how they want to engage and set realistic targets upon which they can measure the growth and challenges they face in engagement.

Pansegrouw added to her definition of quality engagement, saying “Many personal contacts have also led to a reader subscribing or becoming an active brand ambassador; regular online visits and becoming a member of our online community.” Her understanding of engagement is in line with Prince’s fifth and sixth stages of the audience engagement cycle: ‘retention’ and ‘referral’. Ultimately, *Rooi Rose* need users to become loyal to their online brand, returning often for new content or subscribing to their communication channels (retention stage) so that they are constantly in contact with the brand. Then, these users would ideally become ambassadors for the brand (referral stage), by sharing links to *Rooi Rose*’s online content through their own personal platforms.

5.3 THE PRIORITY IN ENGAGEMENT

By using their various social media platforms, and marketing devices such as email newsletters, the magazine is able to drive readers to their website. Having users click on to the website and spend time reading the content is essential to the magazine’s digital

strategy. In chapter three, it was argued that magazine publishers are creating online sites for the magazine brands to "strengthen their customer relationships and increase brand attachment and loyalty" (Ellonen, et al., 2010). In addition, a survey conducted by the International Federation of the Periodical Press showed that more than 80 percent of the magazines sampled produced a website with the main intention to acquire more readers for the print magazine (Tarkiainen, et al., 2009). Pansegrouw (2013) affirms this, describing the mandate given to the magazine team when they launched their website: "Everything we did in the magazine had to point people to the website and back. The whole purpose, at that stage, for having an online presence or being in contact with the reader was to motivate them to buy the magazine. We were strongly pushed on that. From management's perspective, anything you did had to result in the sale of a magazine." The magazine's website still drives people to buy the magazine with a sliding banner on the home page used to inform users of content available in the magazine. The website also has links and banner advertising to purchase both print and digital magazine subscriptions. The website is still a mechanism to market the magazine, to get infrequent purchasers to purchase more and new audiences to try the magazine in the hope of becoming brand-loyal print magazine customers (Ellonen, et al., 2010).

In addition, the website is a key focus in *Rooi Rose*'s digital strategy as it offers a potential revenue stream as advertisers can potentially market their products and links to their sites to this captive and highly targeted audience. The more popular the site, the more attractive it is to advertisers. While advertising revenue is now a factor in *Rooi Rose*'s online business model, this was not always the case. Pansegrouw says, "Before 2008 or 2009 I don't think we even thought about the income. It was the 'done thing' to include [online advertising] in all kinds of agreements with advertisers, but it was just a value-add. Eventually we were worried that we had been giving it away for so long, would people now be willing to pay for it." The website offers banner advertising to advertisers at a cost per thousand impression rate, allowing the opportunity for advertisers to market to, and engage with, the magazine website's audience in much the same way as the business model for the print publication works.

In July 2011, the Caxton magazine sites were upgraded for analytics purposes, and measurement began so user trends could be analysed. In March 2012 *Rooi Rose* re-launched its website completely with the aim of increasing its traffic, engagement and user experience. The magazine's site was completely redeveloped, redesigned, and placed on a new content management system (CMS). Since launching its revamped website, the brand has increased its unique browser count by more than 300 percent (www.effectivemeasure.co.za) as seen in Table 5.3. It is clear that audiences are responding to the brand's strategies to encourage engagement.

The reasons for the growth in online browsers could be a number of reasons:

- Improved content and user experience
- Opportunities to engage online
- Improved marketing in the magazine and on social media to draw users to the website.
- An increase in the number of people accessing the Internet than in previous months or years.

Date	rooirose.co.za	Month to month % increase
2011		
Jul-11	3 999	0
Aug-11	4 909	23%
Sep-11	4 870	-1%
Oct-11	5 158	6%
Nov-11	4 676	-9%
Dec-11	3 603	-23%
2012		
Jan-12	4 588	27%
Feb-12	1 993	-57%
Mar-12	1	-100%
Apr-12	3 769	376,800%
May-12	8 332	121%
Jun-12	7 148	-14%
Jul-12	8 423	18%
Aug-12	8 789	4%
Sep-12	8 396	-4%
Oct-12	9 598	14%
Nov-12	8 965	-7%
Dec-12	7 589	-15%
2013		
Jan-13	10 432	37%
Feb-13	11 215	8%
Mar-13	10 750	-4%
Apr-13	11 744	9%
May-13	13 250	13%
Jun-13	11 012	-17%
Jul-13	12 728	16%
Aug-13	15 411	21%
Sep-13	12 910	-16%

Table 5.3: Unique browsers accessing *Rooi Rose*'s website each month. The highlighted months indicate the change of content management system, and hence fluctuations in the measurement of unique browsers (Source: Caxton Magazines Marketing Services).

5.3.1 Content focus and opportunities to engage

When www.rooirose.co.za first launched, the website's homepage content was updated monthly and opened with headlines and pictures of editorial that could be found only in the current month's print publication. Besides a few articles that were rotated monthly from the magazine's editorial archives, the website had no current content on the homepage,

and no newsworthy updates that users may well have been looking for. While the site's architecture focused on similar editorial pillars to the printed publication – fashion, beauty and wellness, entertainment and food – the website did not offer any new daily content generated especially for the website within these. Magazines are often reluctant to publish new content online for fear of cannibalisation (Buckland, 2007); (Ellonen, et al., 2010) so tend to rehash previously published content for readers who may stumble onto the site to engage with the brand. Archived previously published print content or repurposed content is known in the digital industry as 'shovelware'. Shovelware is generally perceived as a derogatory term, yet it can be argued that repurposed content is effective as an introduction to moving online, or for populating new websites. The website can be seen as competition to the mother magazine brand so media owners are hesitant to invest in a site that may draw readers but not the equivalent revenue. There is always the concern that a reader may not pay for the print publication, which is still the dominant revenue stream for a magazine media owner, when they can get similar content for free online.

Reproducing previously published content, as was done on the *Rooi Rose* site, is not the appropriate response to the concern that readers may choose online over the print publication. Instead, magazine publishers have begun to invest in newsworthy lifestyle content with the brand's overriding style and voice setting the style guide. Monthly magazines produce content to appear in print up to three months before the issue hits shelves. The print publication can never address relevant, newsworthy topics or cover events as they occur because of the lead times necessary to get the publication to and from the printers, and distributed via truck to the various stores around the country. The online site presents the perfect opportunity to share news on celebrities and lifestyle, comment on newsworthy topics while they are relevant, and engage in real conversation with their online readers. A magazine's website is an ideal platform to turn a monthly 'relationship' into a daily one, by adding current topics to the site for readers to comment on, share or distribute.

As discussed in chapter three, in order to generate newsworthy conversation, the characteristics typical of digital journalism and new media – hypertextuality, interactivity and multimedia – need to be incorporated into the magazine sites, rather than treating it as

a portal to rehash old content or advertise what content could be read if the magazine is purchased. Magazine journalists have had to be trained in all aspects of digital journalism so they are able to create content for their online portals. Ingrid Booth, digital content editor for Caxton Magazines believes that the magazines, *Rooi Rose* specifically, are "excited about writing for online channels," but require training in best practices in order to create effective online content. The way magazine editors and journalists have worked in producing monthly content is evolving due to changes in technology, and magazine creators have had to adapt to meet audiences where they are shifting.

The magazine's re-launch and the introduction of a digital focus, as well as a digital editor, has resulted in the growth of the magazine's website. Content is added daily and stories are created specifically for their web audience, as opposed to relying on shovelware. *Rooi Rose* initially relied on repurposed content to populate their website, but now focus on new, fresh content to update the site. Diedericks (2013) comments on the change in their digital strategy: "*Rooi Rose*'s digital focus has changed drastically over the last two years and there is certainly a much stronger focus on *Rooi Rose*'s digital presence than in the past. We recently appointed a digital editor, and along with the new Caxton digital team, we can look forward to a much brighter digital future."

As the country's most purchased and read Afrikaans monthly targeting women who are upwardly mobile, it would be expected that their website reach would be significant. According to AMPS 2013 (July 2012 to June 2013), more than 230,000 *Rooi Rose* readers access the Internet once or more during a week. Less than six percent of the potential number of readers accessing the Internet are logging onto the magazine's website, with October 2013 reflecting 13,407 unique browsers to the site[7]. This constitutes around 15 percent of the circulation, and a mere two percent of their total readership. This is not an insignificant number when compared with a number of other magazine brands in the market; capturing significant online audiences on South African women's magazine websites in general remains elusive (Jere & Davis, 2011). Yet the potential exists for *Rooi Rose* to grow traffic substantially. The more traffic generated on the website, the more potential for relationship and engagement with readers and new users alike (Prince, 2013).

[7] Monthly unique browsers as per Effective Measure (www.effectivemeasure.co.za).

While an online presence is significant for the brand, it is essential that women's magazines remain cognisant of their aim to provide pleasure to readers as discussed in chapter three (Ytre-Arne, 2011b). Magazines need to "create pleasure and value for their audiences across different media" (Rowlands, 2013). When assessing user behaviour on *Rooi Rose*'s website, it is apparent that users are actively consuming the content found there.

Month	Average page views per visit	Average page duration	Average visit duration
November 2012	4,62	01:05	03:48
December 2012	4,21	01:01	03:20
January 2013	4	01:01	02:52
February 2013	4,07	01:02	02:45
March 2013	4,16	01:02	02:57
April 2013	4,16	01:03	02:59
May 2013	3,95	01:02	02:53
June 2013	3,92	01:03	02:53
July 2013	3,81	01:05	03:00
August 2013	3,54	01:01	03:01
September 2013	3,4	01:02	03:03
October 2013	3,53	01:05	03:22

Table 5.4 User activity on www.rooirose.co.za (Source: www.effectivemeasure.co.za)

Analysing the page view trends in Table 5.4, it is evident that users are spending time on the website and are looking at four pages per visit to the site on average over the year. Users are delving further into the site than just landing on the home page and 'bouncing'[8] off. Table 5.4 also indicates the average amount of time a visitor to the *Rooi Rose* website spends online. It is clear that people are exploring content on the site, and engaging by reading articles, blog posts, entering competitions, or such like activity. Beyond engagement, this can also extend into pleasure. Users are spending time on the site because they are receiving pleasure from the content, or they would simply click onto another site. Magazines represent reward (Ytre-Arne, 2011b), and it is important that the *Rooi Rose* website represents the same.

[8] Bounce rates are single page view visits. These visits consist of one page on the website only (Stokes, 2011). Generally perceived as an indication that the user sees no further value in pursuing further content.

The *Rooi Rose* website allows the option of leaving comments after articles have been posted. In the audit I conducted on *Rooi Rose*'s site in September 2013, I found very few comments on the website. The magazine forces a user to register before allowing them to make a comment. This allows the magazine to moderate comments and adds to a database for further communication. Digitisation diminishes the capacity for gatekeeping, as discussed in chapter three, yet the registration process is an attempt to manage what is heard or voiced on the brand's online platform. Anonymous comments are not allowed. While these attempts at gatekeeping may seem important for the magazine so that they can be in control of what is said on their website, they potentially do minimise active engagement by making it difficult for users to initiate a response. Prince's argument on engagement quoted earlier references best practices that need to be taken into account to create quality engagement, and hindrances to possible engagement. One of these hindrances is when a website does not offer functionality and a user experience that is generally found online. For example, a number of websites allow users to log in and comment using their personal social media accounts, or to link directly to their Google mail. *Rooi Rose* needs to assess their user experience and functionality and compare it to what users are used to and expecting if they are to encourage engagement through participation.

Most activities on *Rooi Rose*'s other online platforms are used to drive users to the website. This way, the brand has an element of control of their identity and content (as opposed to social media, which allows very limited unique brand architecture or identity). "A website could make it easy for customers to be in contact with the brand in between the publication of the print issues of the magazine, From the publisher's perspective, this is an efficient method for relationship building," argue Ellonen et al. (2010, pp. 21-22)**.** In addition, "…magazine web sites often attract significant new audiences to the brand – people who do not read the print magazine but visit the website" (Ellonen, et al., 2010, p. 22). For quality engagement to continue, the magazine's website should complement rather than supplement the print magazine (Ellonen, 2006). *Rooi Rose* has the potential to be a formidable base for Afrikaans women who are active online and seeking lifestyle content. By focussing on the best practices to initiate, drive and maintain engagement, *Rooi Rose* could increase its user base and market share online.

5.4 GETTING SOCIAL

Rooi Rose has what can be described as an active social media presence. The magazine has a brand profile on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and YouTube.

"Social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content" (Kietzmann, et al., 2011). Web 2.0 social media applications such as Twitter and Facebook create new opportunities (Culnan, et al., 2010) for magazines to engage with their readers and target market.

Qualman (2011) argues, "The currency in social media isn't euros, pesos or dollars; meaningful engagement, participation, and value creation rule the day." *Rooi Rose* is acutely aware of the importance of social media for their brand:

1) As marketing tool for the magazine and website,
2) To drive directly traffic to the website, and
3) To create engagement and conversation that can both feed the direction of the magazine and foster relationships with readers and users.

"We are focussing on building a community via our social media (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest). [Users of these platforms] want to have conversations about the topics of the day and issues that are close to their hearts," says Diedericks. She adds, "We have often used suggestions by our readers from Facebook to generate articles." Daily posts are created to inform, inspire and drive people to the website or to buy the magazine.

By creating a daily, at times even hourly, conversation as opposed to a monthly, as in the case of the print version of *Rooi Rose*, journalists working on magazines are able to source information about how readers feel about the magazine, engage on topics of interest that are immediately newsworthy or current, and offer feedback in real time. Van Dijck (2013, p. 142) argues: "Web 2.0 platforms are active mediators between users, technologies and content. Connectivity has become the material and metaphorical wiring of our culture, a culture in which technologies shape and are shaped not only by economic and legal frames, but also by users and content." He further contends: "The emergence of social media

platforms is at the heart of a shifting dynamic, where agents of different nature (human and non-human, material and immaterial) and varied size (individuals, groups, collectives, societies) are building a connective space for communication and information." The connectedness offered by Web 2.0 platforms such as Facebook and Twitter is revolutionising the way magazines have engaged with their readers. Pansegrouw agrees that social media has shifted the way they communicate and speak with their readers. She says that social media is now about "getting them [readers] to communicate with us." She adds: "Getting them to feed back what they feel and think and experience when they are reading the *Rooi Rose* magazine. Making them feel at home so they know they are part of this community; and just getting the pointers and testing the waters as to the topics we get the most reaction on. We can't bombard them, but we want to entice them. There's a difference there."

The enticement Pansegrouw refers to is important to note. The magazine is using social media to 'lure' readers into conversation with them so that they are able to build a relationship with them; one that will entice them to further action – buying a magazine, subscribing to the newsletter or clicking onto the website.

5.4.1 *Rooi Rose*'s dominant social media platform: www.facebook.com/rooirose

Facebook is the largest social media platform in the world. In South Africa there are over 9.4-million active users (Goldstuck, 2013). *Rooi Rose* has 20,925 'likes' on Facebook (as at February 2014). Likes are a way a person on Facebook is able to connect with a brand. After liking a brand, any updates or content shared by the brand will be appear on that person's timeline, thus creating opportunity for continued engagement. A Facebook user can then share the content with their social network, or comment on it, allowing conversation with the brand to commence. Diedericks affirms the value their Facebook interaction has on the print brand. "We often have suggestions by our readers from Facebook to generate articles," she says. Isbister says that Web 2.0 platforms "afford us the opportunity to solicit opinion. We can also gauge interaction through the level of interest and commentary on social media."

In an assessment of *Rooi Rose*'s Facebook activity, it is clear that posts that receive the most 'likes' are news about Afrikaans celebrities. The majority of posts were photographs of the celebrities, or news about a baby being born, relationships woes, or fashion 'who wore what' content. Nortje (2013), the recently appointed digital editor of the magazine, says that the content that receives further engagement is: recipes with images, fashion news and images, news about Hollywood stars, inspirational quotes and new products on the market. Kleinloog says that Facebook is essential to their engagement strategy: "The currency for magazine publishers is content; therefore Facebook is the perfect platform for sharing that content. It allows brands to connect with users on a personal level as well as gathering crowd sourced content. If Facebook is optimised it can be a powerful medium to engage with an active and very relevant audience."

Facebook is *Rooi Rose*'s strongest digital presence. The brand has a high level of engagement with users liking posts, commenting on updates and asking questions on the page. There is far more visible interaction on their Facebook page than their website, as well as a higher number of views. As argued earlier, Web 2.0 platforms function as connective mediators between the magazine and users. It is a platform where magazine readers are already active. Over nine-million South Africans are active on Facebook and are engaging with friends and brands daily. Unlike the website, which requires people to especially seek the brand online, Facebook is a platform to engage with users who are there often, to feed content, share information and drive to the website.

In general, the magazine uses Facebook to drive traffic to www.rooirose.co.za (Booth). This is the magazine's main priority when engaging on the social media platform. Yet there is very little drive from the website back to their social media platforms. Social media, by its very nature, is an ideal space to create engagement, and the magazine should not see its social media platform as part of its offering digitally and focus on integrating the social media with the website. Interestingly, none of the readers I interviewed participated in social media with the magazine. Responses varied from "No interest" (Karen) to "I am not an active user of social media" (Nicolene).

5.5 READER'S FORUM AND EMAIL

Rooi Rose also communicates and engages with their readers and target markets through their online reader's forum. There are 2,677 women who are part of the reader's forum. Diedericks describes the reader's forum as an interactive online forum where the magazine is able to receive feedback from readers on the previous issue every month. In essence, the interactive online forum is an email database that receives a questionnaire and the possibility of a prize for joining and responding. Each month, the forum is asked five questions relating to the upcoming issue, and the current issue. Responses to the upcoming issue are then used as content and "sound bites" within articles so that reader engagement is present in the print publication. The questions on the current issue allow the magazine insight into levels of enjoyment and possible criticism of content within the issue. Diedericks believes that "their insights are very valuable and their opinions are reflected in the magazine." Each month the editorial team receive a report with the feedback on the previous issue.

Pansegrouw believes this interaction with their user is invaluable. "We started the reader's forum nearly seven years ago because we wanted to hear the voice of the reader. We created it for email so everybody could join. We invited all those who attended our reader's functions, and we also invited them to join in the magazine. They had to send us a picture of themselves because they would get exposure in the magazine. From then on we've had this 'to-ing' and 'fro-ing' going. Suddenly we could send them a question on an article we were planning to do, get their feedback and use it in the article. That's been paying off for us in spades because they feel consulted. They feel they have a voice in the magazine," says Pansegrouw.

This level of engagement is valuable for both the reader and the magazine. As Pansegrouw says, readers feel that they are given a voice within the publication, adding to the sense of community inherent in women's magazines. In addition, using email as a platform for communication encourages a participatory culture, which is inherent in new media technologies (Lievrouw, 2002). The magazine also receives valuable feedback that shapes its upcoming issues by critiquing past issues and adding content to future issues. The

immediacy of email communication is a far cry from the days of editors to the letter, where months could go by before responses to previous publications could be assessed and printed, and there was certainly no opportunity for diverse sampling of content. The immediacy new media allows (Kawamoto, 2003) has altered the way traditional media, and specifically magazine publishers, are generating and evaluating the content they produce.

In addition, *Rooi Rose* sends a weekly email newsletter to their website database. These are registered users of the website who have given *Rooi Rose* permission to mail them. The newsletters drive readers to the website and are used to market both print and digital magazine subscriptions. A newsletter is mailed to 818 people at present and a slight spike in website traffic is seen after the mail has been sent (Booth).

5.6 ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL MAGAZINES

A digital replica version of the print magazine offers limited engagement with readers[9], but users are prepared to pay for it so will be part of a key revenue and circulation building strategy for magazine publishers. The rest of the platforms are still drivers to create engagement, and to drive purchase of the print and digital magazine. At present, digital magazines are being used as a supplement to print publications, and not as a replacement in the short-term.

Digital magazines, however, are an alternative to those not wanting to purchase a print version of the magazine. Most consumer women's magazines in South Africa offer digital versions of their periodicals for download on computer, tablet or mobile telephone. In South Africa, the main distributors of digital magazines are Zinio (za.zinio.com) and Magzter (www.magzter.com). These distribution platforms allow a 'flippable' version of the magazine pages to appear on the screen; usually offering hyperlinks to find further contact and limited interactive elements such as embedded videos. These magazines are available in portable document format (PDF) and allow a reader to scroll through the pages of the magazine, replicating the feel of paging through a print version.

[9] Readers are able to engage with a magazine by accessing hypertext links in the magazine. This enables tablet or computer readers to engage beyond the page and be directed to websites with more content.

Rooi Rose is available on the aforementioned digital platforms and sold at a subscription rate cheaper than the print version. The assumption is that the reader has to pay less because the magazine is online, perhaps based on the perception that an online periodical is less valuable than a printed periodical. Other arguments could be that the magazine has less cost to publish online as paper, print and national distribution costs are not necessary.

Of all of the readers interviewed, none had bought a digital magazine, or wanted to. Tilana says that she prefers "a print version of the magazine." She adds, "One can't take a computer to bed." She does say that she would "investigate the digital version," adding, "the clutter of the print versions in my house is a problem. I therefore don't buy a *Rooi Rose* every month; my house is already full of old copies." Zona also prefers the print version of the magazine to the digital. She says, "For me, it's absolutely special. It's my time. I've got it in my hands. Little things like samples or little gifts makes it feel special. I think if you travel a lot it will be easier to subscribe to the digital version, but I enjoy actually having the magazine in my hands. It's like a gift to myself."

These quotes provide insight into the phenomenological differences between print magazines and digital platforms. Ytre-Arne (2011a) argues that these two platforms offer totally different media experiences. In her research conducted on Norwegian magazine readers, she found:

> "There is something about the way the body is positioned. Informants use computers sitting upright at a table, 'staring' at the screen, and would be uncomfortable having computers too close to their bodies. Magazines, on the other hand, are read in a more laid-back manner: 'piling yourself up in a sofa'. Magazine reading appears to have a lot in common with what we might think of as a classic mode of television viewing, in which the laid-back position is associated with relaxation, leisure and entertainment" (Ibid, 2011a).

Research conducted by Texterity in 2009, entitled "Profile of the digital reader," offers insight into the digital magazine reader (Texterity, 2009). This research is the largest survey conducted on digital edition readers; 33,784 responses were received from digital magazine readers. The research indicates that "digital readers are engaged", with 92% of readers

perusing their magazine with a week of receiving it, and 52% reading it on the same day. In addition, over 91% of readers take action after reading an article or an advertisement (Ibid, 2009). In relation to Ytre-Arne's argument that print magazines offer relaxation and entertainment and a reader who is reclining in a sofa, digital magazines demonstrate a reader who is more engaged, possibly because she is more upright than a lean-back magazine reader (to continue Ytre-Arne's sofa imagery).

Digital magazines offer the potential to engage beyond the page. Texterity's study demonstrates that many readers choose to purchase digital magazines due to the added functionality. One of the reasons given by respondents when asked why they preferred the digital version to the print version was: "You can click onto links for websites." The possibility of engaging with digital magazines and exploring further content online through hypertextuality is attractive to readers, and is an important strategy for magazines wanting to engage with readers beyond the print page. It is an ideal opportunity for magazines to offer readers more content on their own brand website, as an additional strategy to drive traffic online and to continue to further engage the reader.

To answer the research question of how the print version *Rooi Rose* integrates with the online version to extend or limit user engagement, an analysis was done of how many articles offered hyperlinks to the magazine's own site to create potential engagement. These links would be the same in both the print and digital versions of the magazine, and both would be strategic in driving traffic and engagement. In the magazines explored (July to October 2013), a link to the website is only printed between six and twelve times in the publication. Within the predominant pillars of the magazine and website – fashion, beauty, health, food and lifestyle – the website is never mentioned in fashion, beauty and food, and only mentioned once in health during the period assessed. The majority of mentions are in the upfront snippets pages (editor's letter, subscription pages, reader's letter pages and the reader's forum call to action), and some in the celebrity and lifestyle pages. In the digital magazine, there are therefore very few hyperlinks to draw readers to the *Rooi Rose* website should they wish to see what other content is contained within the relevant editorial pillars. This could potentially be a missed opportunity to drive traffic to the website and create further engagement online (Ellonen, et al., 2008).

Month	Links from magazine to *Rooi Rose* website, excluding cover & spine	SNIPPETS PAGES	CELEBRITY ARTICLES	FASHION	HEALTH	FOOD	BEAUTY	DÉCOR & LIFESTYLE
July 2013	10	6	2	0	0	0	0	2
August 2013	12	7	2	0	0	0	0	3
September 2013	10	7	2	0	1	0	0	0
October 2013	10	8	1	0	0	0	0	1
November 2013	9	7	1	0	0	0	0	1
December 2013	6	4	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 5.5 Mentions of *Rooi Rose*'s website in the print magazine

5.7 CHALLENGES FACING THE *ROOI ROSE* DIGITAL TEAM

"The dream of any content, anytime, anywhere is at hand and content owners are sitting on a goldmine of opportunity, given the direct and immediate connection with the individual end viewer. In order to capitalise on that opportunity, media organisations must be able to deliver timely and compelling content to feed consumer hunger on the consumer's terms. Their ability to do that depends heavily on their ability to overcome the legal, technical, budgetary, efficiency and workflow constraints that plague so many organisations today," argues Campanotti (2012, pp. 235-236). *Rooi Rose* and other magazines in the Caxton stable are aware that their engagement levels are lower than what can be achieved and that there is need for improvement, especially in the number of people they are engaging with.

I asked each staff member if they considered *Rooi Rose* to be a successful brand online. I then asked how they would improve their online strategy to generate quality engagement.

Isbister said that a successful online brand was one with "a large, highly engaged audience; an audience that is continually interacting with the brand and growing in size." To improve online engagement, she felt that the following areas could be of assistance:

"a. Relationships with other partners (especially pure digital partners).

b. Relationships with bloggers.

c. Increase behind-the-scenes content: video, interviews, real life stories, etc.

d. Additional spend on promoting our platforms through Google and Facebook media spend."

Botes felt that *Rooi Rose* and the other brands in the Caxton stable could improve their engagement with readers by having a better understanding of which platforms online readers access and use. "With the rapid increase by consumers to utilise alternate platforms, mostly in their leisure time, it has become a focus to ensure content is optimised to the environment the online reader chooses to engage in," says Botes.

Booth felt that the magazine needs "better online content that is the right mix between original content, curated content, user-generated content and repurposed archived copy." She adds, "To do this, we need to first define who our user is and what content they are after. We need to then create content that meets those needs."

Diedericks was forthright when asked what makes the brand successful online: "I don't think we can classify ourselves as successful yet. We need a weekly and monthly online strategy that will incorporate all the social networks and the website. Most of our activity is still too random and unsystematic."

Pansegrouw was a bit more optimistic about the brand's performance online. "I'm very excited about the possibilities," was her response.

In essence, three challenges face the *Rooi Rose* team: technological, training and fundamental challenges. The magazine only recently employed a digital editor and the division employed a digital manager in September 2013. The magazine team are still not entirely satisfied that the development and design of the website is up to the standard that they need to create quality engagement (Pansegrouw).

The magazine has a core contingency of staff members who have worked on the magazine prior to the developments that have happened online. While there has been a focus on training these teams (Botes), training is costly and needs to happen on an ongoing basis.

Fundamentally, the magazine has to deal with a paradigm shift. They need to, as a team, embrace their role as content providers across multiple platforms if they are to create quality engagement.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

As advertisers demand that print publishers offer digital marketing opportunities and readers expect to be able to read content online, magazine print publishers internationally and globally are creating content to be consumed across more platforms than before. Print publishers are transitioning to content publishers, and the production needs within magazine teams and the expectations of journalists' skills are changing. Women's magazines are now engaging with users online through multiple social platforms, and the research report will assist in understanding how this transition is being effected within the theoretical frameworks discussed. This research adds to the growing insights being made into the democratisation of content and the need for publishers to engage with readers in a new and unchartered way.

Digital platforms do not change the traditional core competencies of magazine publishers (Ellonen, 2006). "Whether publishing in print or on the Internet, sensing the customer needs and packaging segmented content under the magazine brand content are still key. However, dealing with the Internet also means dealing with change as consumer preferences are constantly changing and the magazine publisher's organisation needs to adapt to those changes," argues (Ellonen, 2006). Dynamic capabilities are needed by the publishing industry (Ibid, 2006). This is the dichotomous flux in which *Rooi Rose* find themselves. There is immense pressure to produce a monthly print publication that is read and bought more than its competitors, and now the added workload of managing multiple digital platforms to create user engagement. Within the *Rooi Rose* team, all things digital are 'new'. New media requires a different skill set to traditional media, yet the intrinsic value that readers of magazines expect need to remain their focus – relaxation, ritual and reward (Hermes, 1995); (Holmes, 2007); (Ytre-Arne, 2011a); (Ytre-Arne, 2011b).

While magazines are in a state of transition, it is evident that magazine brands like *Rooi Rose* are prioritising their need to be online more. They are discovering how to engage with their users by speaking to them appropriately and testing which topics online users wish to enter into dialogue about. While this trial and error technique of discovering what works on their digital platforms may be time-consuming and at times frustrating, it is essential that

the magazine production teams endure this process if they are to map clear strategies of engagement in the future. With no clear trailblazers in digital engagement in South African magazine publishing, *Rooi Rose* have the opportunity to lead the print publication into the future, by marrying and integrating digital and print. While embryonic, there is evidence of this occurring with elements such as their online reader's forum being used to assess and comment on past and future print issues.

While traditional media and theorists debate the ultimate role of journalists in a digital era, "there is no doubt that a future … system will be based, at least in part, on an interactive and connective mode of production where media makers and users will co-exist, collaborate, and thus effectively compete to play a part in the mutual construction of reality" (Deuze, 2009). New media offers a platform where magazine journalists and their readers can collaborate as they share, disseminate, debate and engage on issues in South Africa. The participatory culture of Web 2.0 can aid magazine journalism and potentially create an environment where engagement can lead to debate, discussion, conversation, and a relationship between readers and journalists based on immediacy and interactivity.

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