

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

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Columbia Journalism Review to Launch First Comprehensive Study of Online Practices of Print Magazines

Initiative is supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

New York, NY (Feb. 23, 2009)—Every significant magazine in the U.S. either has or is about to set up its own website, but according to Victor Navasky, chairman of the *Columbia Journalism Review* (CJR), “No one has come forward to survey existing practices, identify the conflicts and choices, and start a conversation about guidelines and best practices.”

Now, thanks to a \$230,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the *Columbia Journalism Review* will undertake the first-ever survey of the relationship between magazines and their websites. The goal of the survey: To help magazines find a way to the best online editorial and business practices.

"It's like the wild west out there. Each magazine is making it up as it goes along, and nobody knows what anybody else is doing," points out Navasky, who is also the Delacorte Professor of Magazines at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and will serve as the principle investigator. “The advent of these online off-springs has given rise to a vast set of ethical issues, culture clashes, chaotic and inefficient business and legal practices, and perhaps even malpractices.”

As magazines cut their operational costs, the pressure for print magazines to increase online visibility—often with a smaller staff and increasingly tighter budgets—will most likely increase. So will the need, therefore, of a clearer understanding of the business and editorial practices of magazines and their Web sites. The CJR survey will shed light on the road blocks to and the opportunities for achieving the best editorial and business practices for magazines and their websites. Once the results are in and analyzed, they will be published in a special issue of CJR.

Among the issues the survey will cover: Who sets the editorial line of the website, the editor of the parent print magazine, or the editor of the website? How much material is given away for free, and how much is behind a paywall? Which magazines print only materials from the parent magazine and which add new materials, and what is the percentage of each? The survey will include many other questions related to the business model, advertising practices, and editorial standards and policies.

CJR will endeavor to survey a representative cross-section of consumer magazines' websites, including, for example, those covering general news, general interest, opinion, literature, men's

interests, women's interest, shelter, science, technology, international, news and policy, as well as magazines that focus on regional interests, business, sports, academic research and selected special interests.

To conduct the survey, CJR has retained the services of SRBI, a fully owned subsidiary of Abt Associates and a national public opinion and market research firm, which has conducted research for major media including the Associated Press, TIME, and *Fortune*, as well as for universities including Columbia, Harvard and the City University of New York.

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About the Columbia Journalism Review

Columbia Journalism Review's mission is to encourage and stimulate excellence in journalism in the service of a free society. It is both a watchdog and a friend of the press in all its forms, from newspapers to magazines to radio, television, and the Web. Founded in 1961 under the auspices of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, CJR examines day-to-day press performance as well as the forces that affect that performance. The magazine is published six times a year, and offers a deliberative mix of reporting, analysis, criticism, and commentary. CJR.org delivers real-time criticism and reporting, giving CJR a vital presence in the ongoing conversation about the media. www.cjr.org

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