

# EDITORIAL

## THE INSPIRING ROLE OF MAGAZINE STUDIES: THE INTERCONNECTED JOURNALISM EXAMPLE

CARLA RODRIGUES  
CARDOSO

CICANT/ LUSÓFONA UNIVERSITY  
(PORTUGAL)

ANA FIGUEIRAS

CICANT/ LUSÓFONA UNIVERSITY  
(PORTUGAL)

In December 2022, the Magazine Media Lab (MagLab) became the first international scientific structure dedicated to the comprehensive study of magazines. This pioneering initiative, established within CICANT, a research centre at Lusófona University, has spearheaded various groundbreaking initiatives. These include the creation of The International Journal of Magazine Studies (IJMS), a journal that represents the culmination of the lab's research efforts. The IJMS was announced on November 2023, four months after the inaugural biannual international conference, The Future of Magazine (19-21 July), also organised by MagLab, marking a significant milestone in the field of Magazine Studies.

Why launch the first European journal dedicated to this area of knowledge? Magazine Studies is a vibrant yet dispersed field, with researchers worldwide examining magazines through diverse methodologies and within the most varied disciplines, including Communication, History, Design, Gender Studies, and many others (Charon, J.-M., 2008; Johnson, S., & Prijatelj, P., 2013; Abrahamson, D., & Prior-Miller, 2018; McKay, J., 2019; Sternadori, M., & Holmes, T., 2020; Cardoso, C. R., & Holmes, T., 2022; Gonzales, L. dos S., & Santos, M. P. dos., 2023; Sumner, D. E., & Husni, S. A., 2023). The IJMS, published annually, aims to unify international research, thereby developing and consolidating magazine studies on a global scale. This effort underscores the potential and contributions of magazine studies to scientific production. To support this unifying goal, the journal accepts submissions in four languages: English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

There is an urgent need to pay attention to the magazine object, mainly because their absence in the digital universe is more problematic than for newspapers. The tactile experience of glossy paper, portability, vibrant colours, and meticulous design – all unique features that make magazines collectible memory builders – are diminished online. However, it is precisely this inability to replicate the physical experience digitally that sustains the existence of print magazines, even as they become fewer, more expensive, and are sometimes perceived as luxury items.

However, we only need to consider the existence of radio and television magazines to understand that the concept of a magazine extends far beyond paper. In an era where many are apprehensive about the future role of AI in society, we posed the question to ChatGPT: what is a magazine? The response was:

A publication that contains articles, photographs, and advertisements on a particular subject or topics of interest. Magazines are typically published on a regular basis, such as weekly, monthly, or quarterly, and cover a wide range of topics such as fashion, lifestyle, entertainment, news, and more. Magazines can be printed or digital and are often targeted towards specific demographics or interests. (OpenAI, 2024).

While all of that is true, AI still misses the essence of what a magazine truly is. The genuinely distinguishing element of a magazine is its ability to foster communities. A magazine acts as an aggregator of audiences, such as those drawn to women's or men's magazines, and aggregator of themes, like those found in decorating or cooking magazines. Moreover, magazines serve as aggregators beyond the newsstands. This is exemplified by the many free institutional magazines designed to bolster company team spirit.

Magazines bring people together, allowing them to share and enjoy common interests. In an era characterised by both connection and disconnection, magazines can serve as powerful unifiers. As an example, these qualities offer valuable insights into a field that often overlooks magazines: Journalism Studies. Traditionally seen as purveyors of soft news, magazines have been excluded from the role of democracy's watchdog, a position reserved for news media. Only newsmagazines have escaped this indifference as they are perceived as newspapers in magazine format.

Recent journalistic trends, such as Constructive Journalism (Gyldensted, C., 2015; Haagerup, U., 2015; Haagerup, U., 2017; Aitamurto, T., & Varma, A., 2018; Hermans, L., & Drok, N., 2018; Bro, P., 2019; Hermans, L., & Gyldensted, C., 2019; McIntyre, K., & Gyldensted, C., 2018; Mast, J., Coesemans, R., & Temmerman, M., 2019) and Solutions Journalism (Thier, K., 2016; McIntyre, K., 2019; McIntyre, K. E., & Lough, K., 2021; Lough, K., & McIntyre, K., 2023), underscore the evolving need for journalism to transcend traditional conflict-oriented news. There is an urge to shift its focus towards exploring viable pathways to overcome problems and actively contribute to the discourse surrounding plausible, actionable solutions. Journalism must move beyond its current paradigm to reconnect with an audience fatigued by negativity-centric news.

By merging these new perspectives on journalism with the concept of the magazine as an aggregator, community creator, and connector, we arrive at a novel journalistic configuration, which we term interconnected journalism. This new theoretical and practical framework has the potential to enhance the role of the media in a democratic society, counteract disinformation and populism, and contribute to greater peace and social order by fostering awareness of our interconnections. We define interconnected journalism as an evolving form of journalism that explores problems and

solutions across borders, grounded in the interconnections of local practices in diverse communities.

It's undeniable that we live in an interconnected world where local phenomena are part of broader dynamics that extend beyond their immediate surroundings, often shared by other communities or countries. Interconnected journalism aims to bridge gaps by highlighting the shared nature of problems that may seem local, emphasising their commonality across various communities within and beyond national borders. This collective awareness goes beyond recognising common issues, leading to the exploration of shared solutions that exist in other communities and could be applied elsewhere.

This new type of journalism provides visibility to the interconnections among national and transnational communities, promoting empathy and combating hate speech and social indifference. Beyond the obvious case of newsmagazines, magazines can be fertile ground for developing this type of journalism. For instance, a story about motherhood across different communities could be published in a women's or family-oriented magazine. Regardless of the magazine type, interconnected features serve as a valuable platform for discovering and sharing similarities and differences, enriching our understanding of others and ourselves.

The study of magazines can, therefore, inspire new ways of thinking about journalism theories and practices, but its scope is much broader. Magazines offer a social portrait of each era's habits, traditions, and customs. They can be found in print and online, within companies and distributed to customers. They can be analysed in the most varied ways, such as in terms of their editorial content, business models, design, advertising, and images. It is this richness that justifies the creation of the IJMS, launched to help understand the magazine's place in an interconnected world.

This is the inaugural issue (Vol. 1, Nº. 1) of The International Journal of Magazine Studies, an annual open-access and peer-reviewed journal published by MagLab. The publication is assigned with a DOI and uses the Open Journal System (OJS) platform.

This edition was jointly organised by Professors Carla Rodrigues Cardoso and Ana Figueiras from MagLab/CICANT, Lusófona University. Eight exceptional articles were selected for publication based on rigorous criteria and reviewers' comments in a blind peer review process. These articles offer a comprehensive examination of the diversity of interpretations across various dimensions of the magazine media. Proving the transnational nature of Magazine Studies, the articles come from eight different countries: Belgium, Brazil, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Portugal and UK. The articles aim to unravel the intricate complexities inherent in this field, employing diverse theoretical approaches, frameworks, and analytical methodologies.

The topics covered in these studies are remarkably varied, encompassing a wide range of specialised magazines and case studies. The research addresses both traditional print magazines and contemporary digital formats, providing a holistic perspective on the evolving landscape of magazine media. This collection of articles not only contributes to a deeper understanding of the subject but also reflects the dynamic and multifaceted nature of magazine studies.

Before presenting the individual articles, it is essential to highlight the first text of this journal, "The Future of Magazines: A Few Speculations About the Media's Evolution". David Abrahamson, one of the foremost academics in Magazine Studies from Northwestern University's Medill School, authored this article. He is known for his audacity in making predictions during a time of rapid change. Abrahamson generously contributed this piece to the inaugural issue of IJMS, and based it on his closing keynote speech at the first Future of

Magazine conference on July 21, 2023. While acknowledging the challenges magazines face, akin to those affecting all media, Abrahamson remains “optimistic”, inspired by the “very engaging and supportive role that magazines play in the lives of their readers”.

The peer reviewed section of this issue starts with an article entitled “The Digital Feminist Magazines, a Reformulation of Women’s Press from South to North: The Cases *AzMina* and *Madmoizelle*” by Mariana Fagundes-Ausani, aiming to analyse how engaged media adapt the format of women’s magazines to create new models for feminist digital publications. It compares the digital magazines *AzMina* from Brazil and *Madmoizelle* from France through the lens of gender studies and feminism, utilising in-depth interviews with content producers and support teams to understand the strategies for transitioning from print to digital and addressing gender issues.

In “The Emergence of Magazine Membership Models”, Mary Hogarth compares three special interest magazines – *Women’s Running*, *Vegan Food*, and *Country Walking* – to determine how each has developed and implemented a membership model and its impact on revenue and audiences. Utilising semi-structured interviews with editors and publishers, the study examines recurring themes and services, exploring the role of servitisation and referencing key literature to assess whether the magazines have achieved financial stability and deeper audience engagement.

Ullamaija Kivikuru shows how, for over 100 years and with differing focuses and tools, two magazines have reported about Finland to Finns in “The Story of Finland, as Narrated by Two Weeklies: the Long Narratives of *Suomen Kuvalehti* and *Apu*”. One targets the educated elite, and the other the general family audience. Throughout Finland’s independence struggle, three wars, and three recessions, these magazines – *Suomen Kuvalehti* and *Apu* – have alternately succeeded in capturing public interest, demonstrating a blend of consistency and

adaptability essential for their survival in the evolving media landscape.

This issue includes an article in French, one of the accepted languages for publication in IJMS, entitled “Les pratiques de streaming des magazines spécialisés en jeu vidéo – de l’information au divertissement?” by Boris Krywicki. In this article, the author explores how, despite the initial resistance from print journalists to appear on screen and their historical wariness of the internet, video game magazines have gradually embraced platforms like Twitch, transitioning to a “broadcast regime”. This study analyses the streaming practices of several French video game media outlets through journalist interviews to determine whether these channels act as entertainment extensions or maintain their role as sources of specialised information.

In “The Specialized TV Editorial Market in Brazil: A Study on Fan Culture in *Intervalo* Magazine”, Talita Magnolo and Daiana Maria Veiga Sigiliano analyse all 52 editions of the “Entreviste seu ídolo” section from Brazilian *Intervalo* magazine, focusing on the fan profiles, the idols’ activity segments, and the context of the questions answered by the interviewees in 1968-1969. Although the area of interest is somewhat niche, fan culture studies in Brazil are expanding, and this article examines a previously unexplored sample within these studies by highlighting the strategic movements of broadcasters and the resulting reader engagement facilitated by Editora Abril’s *Intervalo* magazine from 1963 to 1972.

Dali Osepashvili explores the case of Georgian magazines that transitioned to digital in “Magazines’ Transition to Digital: The Case of Georgia”. This article presents the results of a study that covers the innovations they employed and the challenges they faced. The study used semi-structured interviews with 12 editors and journalists and revealed that, in the digital age, Georgian magazines face significant challenges in retaining print edition readers, with a noticeable decline in readership.

In “The Decline of Music Magazines in Greece”, Coralia Xepapadea and Stylianos Papathanassopoulos show how Greek music magazines have experienced a significant decline over the years, which cannot be solely attributed to the advent of the internet but is due to multiple factors. The study reveals that market saturation, the financial crisis, and the resultant drop in advertising revenues have all contributed to this decline, reducing the number of active titles from 73 between 1946 and 2022 to just four today while highlighting their historical role in disseminating music culture in Greece.

This issue closes with “Magazines Currently: A Matter of Virtualisation” by Pedro Eduardo Ribeiro and Giselle Costa. In this article, the authors explore how the virtualization of media organisations affects magazine production, circulation, and diffusion, highlighting trends such as digital editions, digital-native magazines, transmedia dynamics, and press-edition websites while addressing challenges for the present and future. Pedro Eduardo Ribeiro and Giselle Costa highlight a noticeable reduction in material content due to various trends in the Portuguese magazine industry as magazines increasingly move online and explore the phenomenon by integrating insights from Organisational Communication Studies and the concept of virtual organisations with Magazine Studies.

The eight articles featured in this inaugural issue of IJMS vividly demonstrate Magazine Studies’ expansive scope and richness. They highlight the diverse methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches that make this field vital. These contributions underscore the importance of developing and consolidating Magazine Studies as a distinct academic discipline capable of providing deep insights into media evolution, cultural trends, and the socio-political impact of magazines in both historical and contemporary contexts.

## References

- Abrahamson, D., & Prior-Miller, M. R. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research: The Future of the Magazine Form* (First published in paperback). Routledge.
- Aitamurto, T., & Varma, A. (2018). The Constructive Role of Journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 12(6), 695–713. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2018.1473041>
- Bro, P. (2019). Constructive journalism: Proponents, precedents, and principles. *Journalism*, 20(4), 504–519. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918770523>
- Cardoso, C. R., & Holmes, T. (Eds.). (2022). *Transforming Magazines—Rethinking the medium in the digital age*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Charon, J.-M. (2008). *La Presse Magazine* (2.<sup>a</sup> ed.). La Découverte.
- Gonzales, L. dos S., & Santos, M. P. dos. (2023). A revista na era digital: Paradigmas e formatos. *Revista Alterjor*, 27(1), 108–123. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2176-1507.v27i1p108-123>
- Gyldensted, C. (2015). *From mirrors to movers: Five elements of positive psychology in constructive journalism* (1st. edition). GGroup Publishing.
- Haagerup, U. (2015). *Constructive News: Why negativity destroys the media and democracy - and how to improve journalism of tomorrow*. InnoVatio.
- Haagerup, U. (2017). *Constructive News* (2.<sup>a</sup> ed.). Aarhus University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv62hhq4>

Hermans, L., & Drok, N. (2018). Placing Constructive Journalism in Context. *Journalism Practice*, 12(6), 679–694. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2018.1470900>

Hermans, L., & Gyldensted, C. (2019). Elements of constructive journalism: Characteristics, practical application and audience valuation. *Journalism*, 20(4), 535–551. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918770537>

Johnson, S., & Prijatel, P. (2013). *The Magazine from Cover to Cover* (3rd ed). Oxford University Press.

Lough, K., & McIntyre, K. (2023). A systematic review of constructive and solutions journalism research. *Journalism*, 24(5), 1069–1088. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211044559>

Mast, J., Coesemans, R., & Temmerman, M. (2019). Constructive journalism: Concepts, practices, and discourses. *Journalism*, 20(4), 492–503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918770885>

McIntyre, K. (2019). Solutions Journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 13(1), 16–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2017.1409647>

McIntyre, K. E., & Lough, K. (2021). Toward a clearer conceptualization and operationalization of solutions journalism. *Journalism*, 22(6), 1558–1573. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918820756>

McIntyre, K., & Gyldensted, C. (2018). Constructive Journalism: An Introduction and Practical Guide for Applying Positive Psychology Techniques to News Production. *The Journal of Media Innovations*, 4(2), 20–34.

McKay, J. (2019). *The magazines handbook* (Fourth edition). Routledge.

OpenAI. (Jun 10 version). *ChatGPT*. [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

Sternadori, M., & Holmes, T. (Eds.). (2020). *The handbook of magazine studies* (First edition). Wiley-Blackwell.

Sumner, D. E., & Husni, S. A. (2023). *The magazine century: American magazines since 1900* (Second edition). Peter Lang.

Thier, K. (2016). Opportunities and Challenges for Initial Implementation of Solutions Journalism Coursework. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 71(3), 329–343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695816666078>