

EDITORIAL

MAGAZINE-IFICATION: A PROBLEM OR A SOLUTION TO JOURNALISM?

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One of the most compelling insights that emerges from a magazine studies perspective is that several recent theoretical developments in journalism studies - such as the emotional turn (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020), constructive journalism (Bro, 2019; Gyldensted, 2015; Haagerup, 2017; Hermans & Gyldensted, 2019), and solutions journalism (Lough & McIntyre, 2023; McIntyre, 2019; McIntyre & Lough, 2021) -, reflect what might be described as the magazine-ification¹ of journalism. Although treated naturally by some magazine studies scholars (Holmes, 2005; Ribeiro & Costa, 2024), the concept of magazine-ification - the process by which diverse social phenomena come to adopt characteristics traditionally associated with the magazine *medium* - has received little scholarly attention. Outside academia, the term is often used pejoratively (Strauss, 2013), while journalists continue to regard it as complex (Lynch & Pompeo, 2013).

Yet, this phenomenon itself is increasingly evident. In response to growing news avoidance and what Brites (2026) terms epistemic disconnection, newspapers have increasingly embraced emotion, solutions-oriented reporting, constructive narratives, and more engaging forms of storytelling - territories that magazine journalism knows well. Consider a headline such as "Ten Ways to Reduce Anxiety." It could easily have appeared in a health magazine today or twenty years ago. From the outset, the headline signals its purpose: through direct, reader-oriented language ("ten ways"), it promises practical solutions to a real-life problem ("reduce anxiety"). Unapologetically, magazine journalism has always been committed to addressing readers' needs. By contrast, mainstream journalism has traditionally relied on the strategic ritual of objectivity (Tuchman, 1972), a defensive set of routine procedures that promotes distance and reinforces the separation between journalists and their audiences.

Despite inspiring many of the innovations now being embraced by journalism studies, magazines remain underrecognized.

Journalism studies themselves illustrate this paradox. When scholars seek to reconstruct the recent past, they typically turn to journalism, where newspapers remain the primary object of analysis. Magazine journalism, by contrast, is often overlooked, despite possessing characteristics that justify its description as "the best documentary source of recent history" (Cardoso et al., 2022, p. 6). The photographs, language, design, and advertising found in magazines bring to life vanished customs, reveal social habits and behaviors, and capture the *zeitgeist* of the societies they portray with a richness and breadth that often surpass those of newspapers.

In their mapping of magazine research, Anders Jalakas and Ingela Wadbring (2012) identified three key findings: 1) magazines are predominantly used as windows for studying other phenomena rather than as objects of inquiry in their own right; 2) content analysis is by far the most commonly employed research method; 3) only about one quarter of the articles they examined fall within the field of media and communication studies. Based on these findings, Jalakas and Wadbring concluded that magazine studies contain significant research gaps, highlighting structural, historical, and global studies as particularly promising areas for future scholarships. They argued that in this "virgin territory (...) lies a golden opportunity of finding and defining a scientific field where there still are possibilities for ground breaking pioneer work" (Jalakas & Wadbring, 2012, p. 94). In this context, when we turn our attention to magazine journalism, these research gaps persist due to the lack of a shared understanding of what magazine journalism actually is.

So, what is (or is not) magazine journalism? There is no consensus on the answer. One reason is the fact that magazines can fulfill a wide range of human needs: cognitive, affective, personal, social, and tension-release (Johnson & Priatel, 2013). Newsmagazines fall into the first category and remain the only type of magazine that journalism scholars

¹ Also referred as magazineification and magazinification.

consistently regard as a legitimate object of inquiry. Consequently, magazines that produce journalism while also addressing other human needs - such as inspiration, identity, leisure, or emotional engagement - are, in most cases, overlooked by journalism research.

This diversity is also reflected in how magazines themselves are defined. In *Magazine Journalism*, Holmes and Nice (2012) make no reference to newsmagazines. Instead, they propose a general theory of magazines, where the first principle states that "magazines always target a precisely defined group of readers" (Holmes & Nice, 2012, p. 7). The emphasis on "always" effectively places newsmagazines outside the realm of magazines as conceptualized by the authors, since newsmagazines are intended to appeal to a broad, undifferentiated audience rather than to a clearly defined readership.

An example of this continuous struggle to legitimize magazine journalism is that even newsmagazines had to pave their way to recognition as journalistic publications. In the United States, for example, although the pioneering *Time* magazine had been in circulation for 37 years by 1960, some press associations, including the Florida Press Association, still refused to recognize newsmagazines as members. As a result, in Florida and several other states, these publications were barred from carrying political advertising, a privilege reserved exclusively for newspapers (Martin, 1960).

More than 60 years later, a similar debate resurfaced in Portugal. In 2021, the national authority responsible for accrediting journalists² denied a press credential to a trainee reporter at the Portuguese lifestyle magazine *Time Out* and subsequently refused to renew the credentials of one of its senior journalists (Moura & Torres, 2021). The decision was based on the nature of the magazine's content, much of which focused on stores, restaurants, and consumer brands. At the time,

Time Out had been operating in Portugal for 14 years, and its journalistic status had never previously been questioned. The dispute ultimately had to be settled in court.

Cases such as *Time Out* reveal that the question is not merely institutional but conceptual. According to Smith and Higgins (2020), it is language - the defining characteristic of what makes us human - that ultimately distinguishes different forms of journalism. If magazine content differs from that of newspapers, so too does its journalistic language. As a *medium* organized around specific audiences and interests, the magazine is uniquely positioned to engage in direct, intimate dialogue with its readers, speaking to communities in ways that address their needs, aspirations, and everyday concerns. These characteristics, once again, set magazine journalism apart from newsmagazines. As a result, the two academic fields find themselves on a collision course: journalism studies tend to recognize journalism only in newsmagazines, whereas magazine studies locate magazine journalism primarily beyond the general-interest newsmagazine. At the heart of this divide lies a more fundamental question: what each field understands journalism to be.

Smith and Higgins (2020) argue that feature writing is the dominant mode of expression in magazine journalism, encompassing a wide range of genres, including service pieces; inspirational; personal services; relationships; interviews; nostalgia. This editorial tradition provides a useful lens for reading David Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada 2* (2026), starring Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway. Although widely perceived as a film about the fashion industry, it is equally a film about magazine journalism. Set at the fictional fashion magazine *Runway*, the story revolves around a publication struggling to remain relevant in a rapidly changing media landscape. Most importantly for the present discussion, one of its central characters, Andrea Sachs (Anne Hathaway), is a journalist.

2 Comissão da Carteira Profissional de Jornalista (CCPJ): <https://www.ccpj.pt/>

In the first film, Andrea accepts a position at *Runway* but dreams of becoming a “real journalist” in a newspaper, a goal she ultimately achieves. Ironically, in the sequel, Andrea is an award-winning newspaper journalist who returns to *Runway* as a features editor after being laid off together with her entire newsroom. Magazine journalism thus becomes the central focus of the film, which portrays an industry grappling with layoffs, artificial intelligence, declining revenues, advertiser pressure, and the growing influence of technology billionaires.

Coincidentally, while *The Devil Wears Prada 2* brought magazine journalism back into the cultural spotlight, *Encyclopædia Britannica* published its first dedicated entry on magazine journalism on May 21, 2026, defining the field as having an emphasis on “longer-form storytelling, interpretation, and specialized audiences” (Ncube, 2026). Nevertheless, the magazine industry is in transformation, a scenario encapsulated by *Runway*'s creative director Nigel Kipling (Stanley Tucci), who remarks that the magazine “stopped being a magazine many years ago. I mean, we still have a book, but practically nobody buys it. We are digital, we are downloadable, we are streamable, we are in the ether” (Frankel, 2026). In this transition from print to digital, what ultimately sets magazines apart is the quality of their content: high-quality magazine journalism. In doing so, the film presents long-form feature journalism as a potential path not only for the future of magazines but also for the renewal of journalism itself, provided it embraces a more magazine-ified approach.

In an article discussing the future of *The New York Times Magazine*³, from 2013, the newspaper *Politico* wrote that “the ongoing magazine-ification of the [news]paper, and its attendant bells and whistles on the web and mobile devices, means the line between the two may continue to blur.” (Lynch & Pompeo, 2013). More than a decade later, this analysis seems increasingly relevant, so it is time to bridge

the long-standing divide between journalism and magazine studies. In 2026, the Magazine Media Lab (MagLab), based at CICANT, Lusófona University, celebrates its fourth anniversary while publishing the third issue of the International Journal of Magazine Studies (IJMS). It was within MagLab and the IJMS that the concept of interconnected journalism (Cardoso & Figueiras, 2024) emerged and has continued to evolve. This model of journalism draws heavily on the traditions of magazine journalism, particularly its ability to build communities and foster meaningful connections with readers.

Interconnected journalism is grounded in the concept of interconnection. It focuses on issues that matter to more than one community, revealing how different communities experience the same reality. In this way, it operates as a positive Trojan horse: by engaging audiences with topics already relevant to them, it simultaneously exposes them to the perspectives of communities they might otherwise overlook. The goals are greater empathy, reduced prejudice and hate speech, and a deeper understanding of shared social challenges.

Nearly three years of research on interconnected journalism have significantly expanded MagLab's research agenda, leading to the evolution of MagLab into the Journalism & Magazine Lab (J-MagLab). This is not a merger of two fields, nor does it diminish the autonomy of either journalism studies or magazine studies. Rather, it recognizes the value of building bridges where meaningful intellectual dialogue can advance both traditions, particularly in the long-overdue discussion of magazine journalism. Having established itself as an international reference point in magazine studies, MagLab now begins a new chapter as J-MagLab, with the ambition of making equally significant and socially relevant contributions to journalism studies.

In this issue (Vol. 3, Nº. 1), we are delighted to feature a guest essay by Rebecca Johninke from the University of Sydney,

3 Magazine included with the Sunday edition of *The New York Times* newspaper.

Australia, a leading researcher in the field of magazine studies. Johnke is co-author, alongside Megan Le Masurier, of the seminal article "Magazine studies: Pedagogy and practice in a nascent field" (2014), in which the authors argue that magazine studies have been unfairly neglected and propose ways to consolidate it as a legitimate academic field.

Entitled "Discovering magazines: the scholarly meanderings of an accidental magazine scholar", Rebecca Johnke's essay takes readers on a journey through the richness of magazine studies, illustrating how the field attracts scholars from a wide range of disciplines who share a commitment to deepening our understanding of a *medium* of remarkable richness and complexity. In doing so, it reveals magazine studies as an inherently eclectic and polyphonic field of inquiry. Rebecca Johnke's forthcoming edited volume, *The Gendered Image of the Magazine Journalist on Television and Screen: Fashion and the Failing Feminist* (Routledge, 2026), provides yet another testament to the vitality and intellectual richness of magazine studies.

The peer-reviewed section opens with Ullamaija Kivikuru's examination of audience participation through an analysis of four issues of three popular Finnish magazines in "Inclusion and distance: Embedded messages in Finnish magazinescape". The article investigates the extent to which these publications promote genuine reader participation or whether they merely offer superficial invitations to react and comment. The findings reveal that invitations to participate tend to be subtle, and Ullamaija Kivikuru also identifies recurring inclusive narratives.

In "Health magazines in Portugal: publishing trends from 1993 to 2025", Hernâni Zão Oliveira and Helena Lima provide a comprehensive overview of Portuguese health magazines over three decades, analyzing circulation patterns and thematic trends within the sector. The authors identify three distinct phases in their evolution: expansion and editorial specialization; contraction and the disappearance of titles; and

structural fragility marked by the digital transition and highlight that the decline in specialist publications also represents a significant reduction in the supply of expert-mediated, evidence-based health information.

Anna Ragasová investigates the construction and presentation of emotionalism in newsmagazines, based on the coverage of Queen Elizabeth II's death, in "How do we feel about facts: Emotionalism in Newsmagazine Coverage of Queen Elizabeth II's Death". Through content analysis and semiotics applied to 111 articles from the magazines *Time* (USA), *The Economist* (UK), and *.týždeň* (Slovakia), the article examines textual, visual, and structural elements that contribute to the reader's emotional engagement. A comparison of publications from different countries, editorial traditions, and cultural contexts reveals how journalistic standards and national perspectives shape representations of mourning, legacy, and royal symbolism, shedding light on the media's influence on public perception at times of collective upheaval.

The issue concludes with "A Multimodal Analysis of COVID-19 Metaphors on Magazine and Journal Covers", where Damla Yildirim analyses the metaphorical framings of the COVID-19 pandemic on 70 magazine and journal covers published between 2020 and 2024. Using a multimodal approach, the study investigates how metaphors emerge from the interaction between visual and verbal modes and identifies war as the most recurrent source domain. Damla Yildirim highlights the central role that cover design plays in linking images and text, shaping the construction and interpretation of metaphorical meaning.

Taken together, the contributions to this issue embody the breadth, diversity, and vitality of contemporary magazine studies. They examine audiences, health communication, emotional journalism, and visual metaphors, demonstrating that magazines continue to offer a unique lens for understanding society.

Keywords: *Magazine Studies; Journalism Studies; Magazine Journalism; Interconnected Journalism; The Devil Wears Prada 2*

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