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## How Weekly Magazines Try to Balance News on the Internet, in Print Editions


By SARAH ELLISON  
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Time Magazine's announcement that it will shift publication dates -- hitting the newsstands before the weekend instead of Monday to appeal to busy readers -- is emblematic of a dilemma facing media companies' bottom lines: What to do with the news?

As news organizations put more breaking news online -- from news about terrorism plots to the latest celebrity wedding -- tabloids and serious magazines alike must wrestle with what role that perishable commodity plays when their regularly scheduled magazine issue or newspaper edition comes out.

News on the Web has evolved to the point where it is providing a more serious challenge - how to use both the Internet and the print publication to enhance both media rather than creating two anemic products. For the most part, it means luring readers to the print publication for extra details on news that was posted on the Web or for narrative stories that the Web version didn't have.

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### Day In, Day Out

Publication cycle of some major magazines

MAGAZINE	CLOSES	APPEARS ON NEWSSTANDS	STARTS REACHING SUBSCRIBERS
<b>Time</b>	Saturday	Monday <sup>1</sup>	Monday
<b>Newsweek</b>	Sunday	Monday <sup>1</sup>	Tuesday
<b>New Yorker</b>	Friday	Monday	Monday
<b>People</b>	Tuesday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Us Weekly</b>	Monday	Friday	Thursday
<b>Forbes</b> <sup>2</sup>	Monday	Friday	Friday
<b>Economist</b>	Thursday	Friday <sup>3</sup>	Friday

<sup>1</sup>Appears in some airports Sunday night

<sup>2</sup>Operates on a two-week news cycle <sup>3</sup>Most major markets

"We make decisions all day long about what stories we think we can hold for the magazines and the ones we put online," says Bonnie Fuller, editorial director of **American Media Inc.**, which publishes the celebrity weekly **Star** magazine. "If it's a story we know we're one step ahead of competition and we know there's just no way it'll hold, we put in on the site," she says. "On the other hand, you want to break stories in your magazine and on your magazine cover, because that gives you the most pop."

Ms. Fuller, for instance, decided to hold certain details of Pamela Anderson's

wedding to Kid Rock for Star's print magazine, even though Star's reporter, on location in St. Tropez, had been posting almost constant updates about the ceremony and subsequent reception online. For the magazine, Ms. Fuller saved the details of the couple's vows, which they read off their Blackberries, as well as their versions of "I do," such as, "Hell, yeah!" from Kid Rock. "We save some of the really exclusive details we have for the magazine," says Ms. Fuller.

In Time's case, Richard Stengel, the newly appointed managing editor, recalls that earlier this summer a reporter in Washington heard midweek that John McCain's son was enlisting in the Marines. "We did a story that ran online on Thursday," he says, but followed up in Monday's magazine with "a more narrative and elegiac thing," with pictures of Senator McCain and his son, as well as a 1965 black-and-white photo of the senator with his own father, both dressed in military uniforms.

Weekly news magazines have been grappling with their publishing cycles for years: Some naysayers pronounced them dinosaurs in the 1980s, saying that cable-TV news would drive them out of business. But the magazines proved them wrong: They increased their lifestyle and news-you-can use coverage, tried to become breezier and more opinionated, and still managed to jump on the news of the week. Time, published by Time Inc., a unit of **Time Warner** Inc., and rival Newsweek, published by **Washington Post** Co., have shared the job cuts and assorted pains of all print publications, but still boast circulations in the millions.

The magazine industry has been struggling to attract dollars from advertisers who are chasing young people as they migrate from mainstream media to Web sites, cable television and niche publications. As media fragment, so do the advertising dollars away from industry stalwarts like Time and Newsweek. Lately, however, one of the reasons magazines have been willing to pour resources into their online operations is that advertisers have shown themselves willing to start spending money on the Web. Many magazine companies are hoping to sell package deals to advertisers both online and in print, with the notion that editors are creating content that will drive readers back and forth between the two.

At Time Inc.'s People magazine, there is not much overlap between the magazine and the Web site, says Managing Editor Larry Hackett. "The online users are much more hard-core entertainment aficionados," which is what the Web site primarily covers. The magazine has entertainment news, but "we have crime and heroes and angels and teachers and stuff like that," he says.

He hopes news breaks on Tuesdays, after his competitors, such as Star and Us Weekly, have wrapped up their issues Monday night. (People's deadline is Tuesday night.) However, even if Mr. Hackett thinks he has a scoop on a Monday, he is loathe to hold onto it for the magazine in case competitors catch wind of the story. When he learned of Kate Hudson's divorce from Chris Robinson last Monday, "I would have liked to have held it, but we wanted to post it as soon as we knew it, and we got some credit," he says.

At Newsweek, driving readers from the magazine to the Web site often takes the form of polls and contests, says Greg Osberg, Newsweek's world-wide publisher. Such efforts are

sold to advertisers as a package deal, with marketers such as Fidelity Investments and AstraZeneca PLC sponsoring various topics. Newsweek's online efforts for years have been hosted by MSNBC.com, and the two sites benefit from sending traffic back and forth.

For Time, the shift in publication date is an early step in what Mr. Stengel promises will be an evolution in the relationship between Time magazine and its Web site, which has been complicated by turf wars between Time Warner's various divisions, including America Online, CNN and Time Inc. Recently, CNN.com's "analysis" tab has started linking to Time.com, and the two sites are increasing their efforts to move traffic between them. For now, the percentage of readers who read both Time magazine and Time.com, Mr. Stengel says, is "such a low number I'm embarrassed to tell you."

At Time, Mr. Stengel has made a recent push for high-concept covers, such as July's "The End of Cowboy Diplomacy," that appear to mimic covers of the Economist, the British weekly magazine, which has doubled its circulation in the U.S. in the past 10 years by analyzing big-picture topics rather than emphasizing breaking news, often with a strong, sometimes sharply irreverent, point of view.

"We are very opinionated and have more analysis than breaking news," says Paul Rossi, the Economist's publisher for North America.

Time's Mr. Stengel admires the Economist's approach. "They do so many things right," Mr. Stengel says. "Why can't a big weekly news magazine be as smart as the Economist?"

Recently, Time has gravitated toward user-friendly topics such as health and education. "I'd love to get back to being a must-read," says Mr. Stengel. Yet last week, as news unfolded about what British authorities said was a foiled terrorism plot, Time decided to stick with a cover on "Who Needs Harvard?" largely because it was a financial calculation to counteract the popular U.S. News & World Report college issue, Time insiders say.

---- Emily Steel contributed to this article.

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