LAURA DIETZ
Anglia Ruskin University

Online versus Print: The reputation of literary fiction magazines

ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of literary magazines in the age of digital delivery, specifically the way in which their traditional functions as talent scouts and taste-makers are affected by the perceived second-class status of electronic publishing. What are the implications for a vital publishing outlet for short stories and what might editors and writers do to remain influential and relevant? Our findings suggest that post-print magazines can be taken seriously, and hence that the category will remain relevant, as some (but not all) titles employ use specific strategies to make the leap to online or other digital delivery with their status and influence intact. This article presents original survey data on the reputation and legitimacy of online versus print literary magazines, examines the potential impact of recent business model changes and makes predictions on how the genre will continue to evolve.

KEYWORDS

literary magazines
legitimacy
prestige
digital
survey
future

The story of the short story in English is not complete without consideration of the literary magazine. Literary magazines have played a key role in the development of every form that they consistently publish (Allen 1943; Kuebler 2010), particularly short fiction and poetry, and as commercial publishing opportunities for short fiction have reduced dwindled in the past century

1. Allen calculated that 'about 80% of our most important…critics, novelists, poets and storytellers' between 1912 and 1948 were first published in little magazines, although he did not explain his methodology (Hoffman et al. 1948: 4).

(Whitehead 2011), the relative importance of remaining committed publishers of short fiction has grown. But as literary magazines experiment with digital delivery, their traditional roles in the literary ecosystem – often as talent scouts (Pierce 2006) and purveyors of the avant-garde (Cox 2005) – are called into question by the perceived second-class status of electronic publishing. There will inevitably be tastemakers and gatekeepers in the new paradigm. The question is whether these will include recognizable descendants of *The Little Review* or *The Dial*. The question is understandably of interest to the literary magazine community. Experts like magazine editors frequently gather to share observations and discuss strategies, in print, as in the *Mississippi Review*'s 2008 special issue, and in person, such as on Associated Writing Programs conference panels. But hard data are hard to come by. While there are empirical studies of perceptions of online reputation and legitimacy in the commercial and academic spheres, particularly on peer-reviewed models (published in journals – themselves peer-reviewed – such as *The Journal of Electronic Publishing, The Journal of Scholarly Publishing* or *Book 2.0*), the literary magazine sector has not enjoyed as much attention.

We aimed to complement qualitative commentary with a quantitative study. By asking how literary magazine readers perceive, and rate, online literature, we can begin to offer useful data on the question on how small literary magazines can continue to play their traditional role in the digital age.

DEFINING 'LITERARY MAGAZINE' – WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

The first question is one of definition. In theory, 'literary magazine' could refer to any publication printing work of literary merit, or even anything printing fiction or poetry. This article will apply the familiar parameters of what in America has been called – affectionately, not derisively – the 'little magazine'. Defined in 1948 by Hoffman et al. as 'a magazine designed to print artistic work which for reasons of commercial expediency is not acceptable to the money-minded periodicals or presses' (1948: 2), many of the characteristics identified then are familiar to the modern editor or author: token or non-existent payment for contributors, staff who work for free, frequent reliance on institutional or philanthropic support and tiny circulations (today, even the giants – the *Grantas, Ploughshares* or *Paris Reviews* – are lucky to have circulations measured in the tens of thousands (Garfield 2007; McGrath 2005; Alter 2010) compared to the hundreds of thousands or the millions enjoyed by *The Atlantic, Harpers, The New Yorker* (Matsa et al. 2012; *Harper's Magazine* Media Kit 2013) and other mainstream magazines that publish poetry and literary fiction). It is their ability to take risks – on unknown authors, on new movements and styles, on 'difficult' work, on unfashionable or taboo subject matter – that gives small literary magazines a claim as the 'advance guard' (Allen 1943) of literature.[1] They have no monopoly on talent-spotting, but have been the first to publish rule-breakers from T.S. Eliot to Junot Díaz:

> Little magazines are willing to lose money, to court ridicule, to ignore public taste, willing to do almost anything – steal, beg, or undress in public – rather than sacrifice their right to print good material, especially if it comes from the pen of an unknown Faulkner or Hemingway […] periodicals are, therefore, *noncommercial by intent* …
>
> (Hoffman et al. 1948: 2, emphasis added)

Modern editors might dispute the 'especially' – would they really reject a superb story because the author was insufficiently obscure? – but not the concept of the 'little magazine' in symbiosis, not competition, with commercial presses. With their minute (we might politely say 'exclusive') readerships their best hope of widespread notice is like that of a third-party political candidate, pressing for their ideas to be co-opted by the establishment, for their 'outsider literature' (Paling and Nilan 2006: 2) to eventually become insider literature. But they are united by assumptions that commercial publishing does pass on important work because they fear it will not sell and that they do not make such compromises, and hence play an essential role in maintaining standards and promoting innovation (Burch et al. 2008). These 'avant-garde' (Geyh 2002: 2) and 'oppositional values' (Paling and Nilan 2006: 2) require a garde to be ahead of and an opposite to work against – defined as a dependence on large audiences and significant profits.

The small literary magazine model – cheap or free content, part- or all-volunteer staff, frequent affiliation (at least in America (Cox 2005)) with universities and concern with influence over mass audiences – sounds like it has much in common with that of the peer-reviewed academic journal. But the other matter of consensus is that the small literary magazine is not and 'cannot be a professional magazine nor the organ of a professional society' (Bixler 1948: 81). University and angel support are commonplace, but such sponsors have nonetheless been greeted with wariness (Gross 1969), viewed as carrying the constant threat of bias, craven conservatism or capitulation to commercial values. Without the supposed objectivity of the market as a counterweight, the small literary magazine is particularly vulnerable to accusations of cronyism. Hence, institutional support, a positive trophy for other fields of intellectual endeavour, here has the aroma of a necessary evil, a less compromising choice than indiscriminate advertising or crassly commercial content, but not an end in itself. While the classic journal covering physics or economics or archaeology is confident that expertise resides, predominantly or exclusively, in institutions, the literary magazine is confident that it does not, and that an establishment perspective is guaranteed to miss the newest and most exciting writing.

Hence, there exist the century-long ambivalence about popularity and enduring debate over the right way, not just the easiest way, to build and to use the reputations essential to their advance guard role. Literary magazines by no means object to wide readership, but maximizing sales is not their main goal. As William Pierce, publisher of *AGNI*, puts it,

> One of the most important aims of *AGNI* is to boost the readership for writers we consider important, but I wouldn't use the size of the audience or the number of subscribers to measure a magazine's success. Long-term influence on careers, on what's published and read, on individual writers' incentive to go on writing: those count for more.
>
> (Pierce 2006)

('Long-term influence on careers' being a category that includes future publishing opportunities, such as books with mainstream publishers, that literary magazine alumni may enjoy if the right editor reads their work or even recognizes the name of an illustrious literary magazine on a résumé.) They want, above all else, to recognize and elevate the best literature. For publication in a given magazine to be a help rather than a hindrance – given that the

The literary magazine has always been to a degree defined from the outside: more easily classified in terms of what it is not than what it is. The mission and identity of the classic literary magazine is not evolving in a vacuum. Developments on its borders – in commercial and academic publishing, and also in lightly or wholly unedited literature communities (the post-it-yourself poetry, flash fiction, fan fiction, etc. collectives thriving on websites, blogs, Twitter and Tumblr) – inevitably affect consensus on what is 'core' and what is 'fringe'.

typical small magazine will not be able to pay the author handsomely – publication must be an honour and a distinction, rewarding not only the author but the aesthetics embodied by the piece.

The most useful quality for categorizing literary magazines, then, may be not what it looks like or how readers find it, but how it functions. Like (perhaps uncomfortably like) the peer-reviewed academic journal, the literary magazine mints prestige, creating and allocating a kind of capital. A literary magazine's mission is inextricably entwined with its ability to establish and maintain high reputation. 'Reputation', of course, can be as difficult to define as 'literary magazine'; for this discussion, we shall consider reputation to be a comparison of organizations on social attributes such as desirability, quality and esteem (Deephouse and Carter 2005). (Organizational reputation has two overall dimensions: perceived quality and prominence/collective recognition (Rindova et al. 2005).)

THE SURVEY

We carried out a small initial survey, supported by seed funding from the Cultures of the Digital Economy (CoDE) research centre at Anglia Ruskin University. The team included Chris Hamilton-Emery, Publishing Director of Salt Publishing, Dr Samantha Rayner, senior lecturer in Publishing at University College London, Dr Noshua Watson, an economist at the Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex), whose research includes the investigation of reputation and legitimacy in corporate social responsibility, and myself, a writer and lecturer in Creative Writing – a mix of industry and academic perspectives, and of humanities and social science approaches. We conducted an online survey over the summer and autumn of 2010. The survey was open access and promoted via industry (Cambridge Publishing Society news, Salt news and Twitter), academic (Anglia Ruskin staff, student and alumni channels), personal (study team Facebook and Twitter networks) and general (Linkedin writing interest group) channels. We invited responses from authors, editors, students, reviewers, book enthusiasts and anyone else interested in the question, and then boiled down our sample to the rarefied group of actual literary magazine readers. The resulting pool was small (as literary magazine editors might attest, there are more who like the idea of avant-garde literature than actually consume it) but authentically informed.

The survey played to online attention spans. We limited ourselves to just over two browser pages and to core questions on reading habits, reading preferences, perceptions and basic demographics (a requirement for a credible study). Using the first question ('do you read literary magazines?') as a gatekeeper, we cut down to 139 respondents. For some detailed analysis, such as the popularity of given magazines, we limited that again to 82 UK readers who might reasonably be said to have similar access to given print titles. Having found no statistically significant differences between age or gender groups – an interesting finding in itself, given stereotypes of male or youth dominance in online communities – we balanced the UK-only sample by age and gender (see Appendix A for full survey question list).

The survey's first target was respondents' current definitions of 'literary magazine'. There was only one opportunity to capture their unguarded opinions; once primed with a given definition, respondents were likely to cooperatively reform their own ideas of the genre either in agreement or opposition.[2] Instead of giving or requesting an abstract description, we used only the term
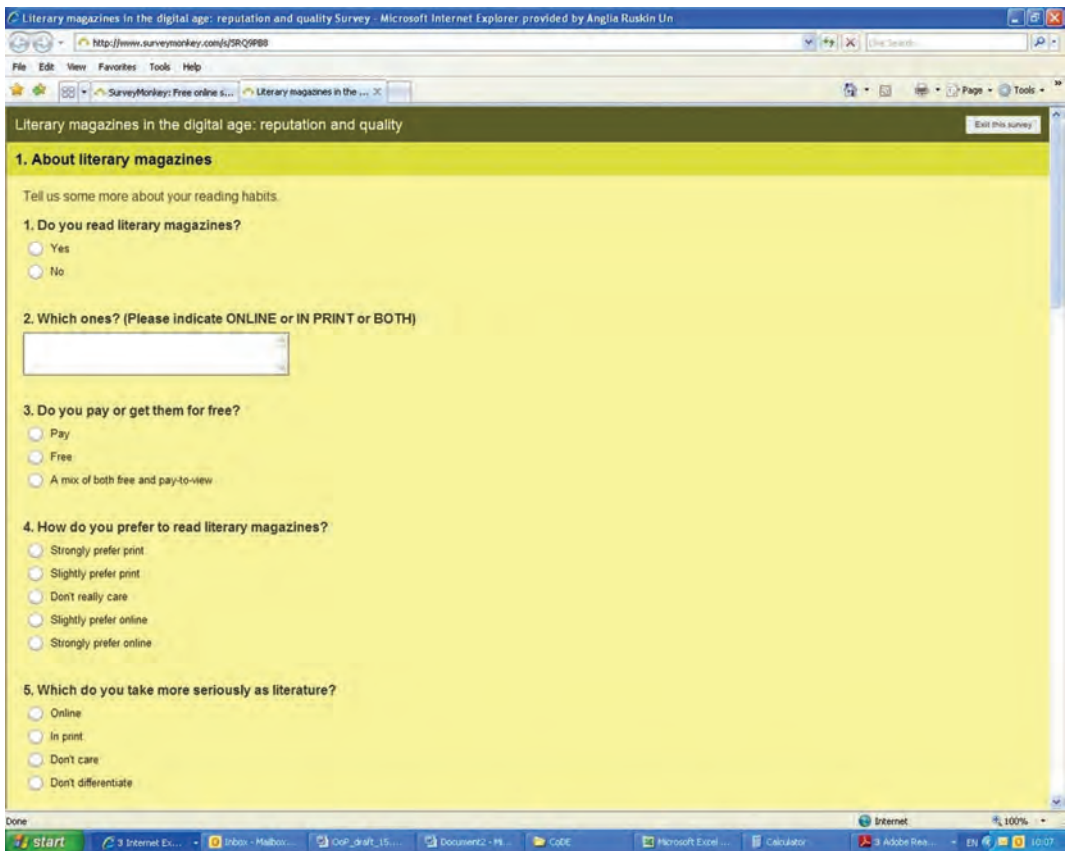
Figure 1: Screenshot of the original online survey.

itself and asked not for 'please define "literary magazine"', but 'what literary magazines do you read?' The free text responses harvested a roster of magazines that they considered legitimate, a roster from which conclusions can be drawn and against which traditional definitions like the American 'little magazine' can be tested.

WHAT THEY READ

The first finding was that the vast majority of titles (89 per cent) cited did fall comfortably into the category of the classic 'little magazine', suggesting that the 1948 definition is far from outmoded. Exceptions included magazines of reviews and essays like the *Times Literary Supplement*, commercial magazines aimed at aspiring writers like *Writer's Journal* and *Writer's Magazine* and mainstream magazines like the *The New Yorker*. The 'little magazine' group represented the full range from established players like *Poetry Review* and *Tin House* to niche or emerging publications like *Obsessed With Pipework*. Intriguingly, only a tiny fraction of the 'little magazine' titles was identifiably focused on a genre like science fiction or mystery: *Interzone, Apex, Electric Velocipede* (all science fiction and fantasy), *Danse Macabre* (fantasy) and *Pseudopod* (horror)
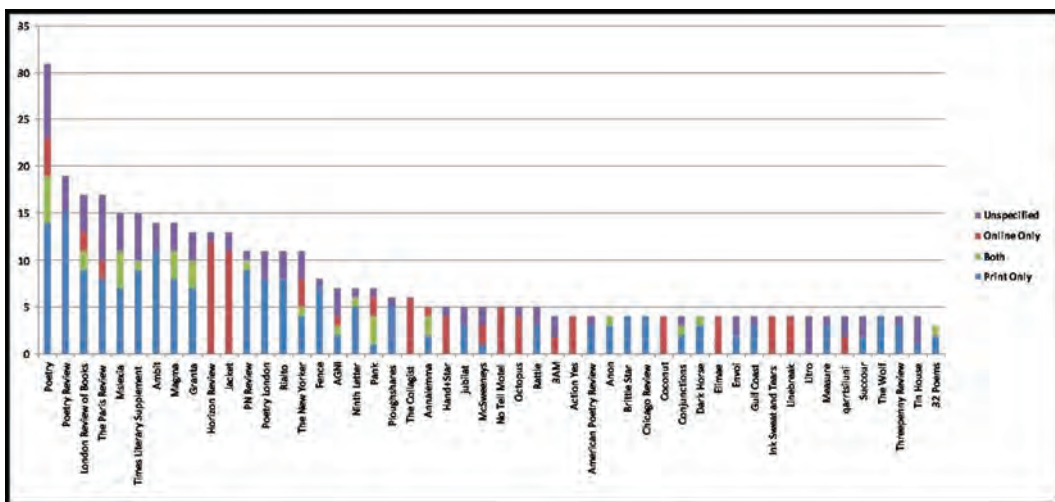
Figure 2: Most widely read magazines, UK sample.

were the only examples. Of the non-'little magazine' group, only *Romance Matters* was explicitly genre-focused.

Just as interesting were the current publishing formats of these magazines. Of the identifiable traditional literary magazines, 23 per cent were at the time of the survey pure print publications, with no website or a 'business card' offering contact details but no content, 33 per cent were pure online and the rest some hybrid form – from print magazines with online samples, to print with online exclusives, to online with a yearly print anthology. All readers, UK and international, reported reading 354 publications between them.[3]

Two thirds of the 'little magazine' group published short fiction. Only 5%, however, published short stories exclusively; these included predictable titles like *American Short Fiction* and *Short Fiction*. The rest (61%) published short stories alongside poetry, creative non-fiction or both. Pure poetry magazines (29% of the sample) were far more common than pure short story ones. Readers proved to be omnivores. Most (89%) read poetry, most (88%) read essays and most (83%) read short stories.

Our UK-only sample, which offers a more apples-to-apples comparison with respect to access to printed material, named 175 different publications.

Only eleven of those publications were read by more than 10 per cent of the people we surveyed and 110 of the publications were named by only one respondent: a tidy representation of the much-discussed 'long tail' (Anderson 2004). The most popular publications overall, such as *Poetry*, *Magma* and *Granta*, were among the most popular in both print and online. Frequently cited online publications included *Horizon Review*, *Jacket*, *Hand+Star* and *Ink Sweat & Tears*, but it is worth noting that the most widely read online-only magazines, *Horizon Review*[4] and *Jacket*, are new incarnations of respected, but now defunct, print magazines. When the publication is available in both print and online, the more popular publications were still read in print more often. But smaller publications are more often read online, and not only in the case of pure online publications – probably reflecting the distribution advantage of the established magazines.

HOW THEY VALUE WHAT THEY READ

We also asked what attracts readers to a literary magazine. As with the definition of 'literary magazine', the first objective was to capture unprompted responses, hence, freetext. The four key clusters of responses were on 'quality writing' (unsurprisingly), 'design', 'readability' (perhaps surprisingly – with specifics from layout to font size to ease of fitting into a handbag) and 'clear editorial vision'. Smaller clusters included 'resistance to fashion', 'experimentation', 'a mix of established and newer writers', 'growth/change/dynamism', 'reviews and comment' (i.e. something other than 'wall-to-wall poems'), 'credentials/reputation/recommendation/credibility' and 'objectivity and integrity' (i.e. not an obvious bunch of cosy insiders). Rarely mentioned factors were price (either as a signifier of quality or a barrier to access), value and longevity.[5]

What is so striking about these attractive qualities is that most of them would seem to be completely within the grasp of a new and/or online magazine. While 'credentials' or 'established writers' might be more of a challenge to a start-up publication, the big four can be achieved (at least for those who do not mind reading on-screen) from the first issue. None of these, even 'longevity', would in theory be a barrier to an existing magazine looking to move online.

There would seem to be little to stop a literary magazine moving online or to stop authors clamouring for inclusion. (Although magazine-specific barriers, like the requirements of an institutional grant, may also be factors in the decision to stay on paper.) Moving online does not in itself alter editors' values or priorities (Paling and Nilan 2006), and our study concluded that most what readers say they look for is perfectly achievable without a paper or glue. Online publication offers some lower costs and can open up new opportunities for writers to be published. However, for writers and editors, these advantages have to be weighed against the lower perceived reputation of online literary fiction outlets.

All respondents in our sample read literary magazines and 70% report reading at least one specific title online (and that is a likely underestimate because some respondents gave titles without specifying medium) – frequently using online and print access for the same magazine. However, this heavy online use has more to do with convenience than any fondness for the medium. Only 8% prefer to read online, a mere 1% strongly preferring to do so. 71% prefer print and 44% strongly prefer it. Only 16% say that they do not really care. (The remaining 5% did not answer the question.)

A focus on short story readership reveals, despite the convenience of online access, a lingering reliance on print. Although the great majority (83%) of respondents read short stories, roughly half of those (56%) do so only in print, and half (43%) both in print and online. Only 1% reported reading short stories exclusively online.

In terms of prestige, online literary magazines are not on a level pegging with their print counterparts. 46% of respondents took print more seriously as literature, with only 1% (despite the body of respondents valuing 'experimentation' and 'growth/change/dynamism') saying the same about online. That said, the remaining reported that they do not care (9%) or, mainly, do not differentiate (44%) between the two. This claim of indifference begins to wobble when more specific questions tease out distinctions.

Despite the solid third of readers who say they do not care or do not differentiate, opinions on the comparative value of online publication are pliable;

slight shifts in the way the question is phrased tease out unspoken assumptions about the quality of paperless publications. Asked about the statement 'online publication in a high-quality journal is just as valuable to a writer as print publication in a high-quality journal', two thirds agreed. But asked whether 'print publication is more desirable than online publication' – without the words 'high-quality' – two thirds agreed with that too. They apparently accept that there are, or can be, excellent online magazines, but believe that the typical online magazine remains a cut below.

Attitudes about price are just as nuanced as attitudes about online publication. When asked directly 'does the price you pay for a work of literature (story, novel, poem or essay) affect your perception of it?' almost nine out of ten (89%) insist that it does not, although three out of ten (30%) concede that they 'think it affects the perceptions of others'. Translating this abstract stance into real-world open-mindedness is problematic when, in practice, respondents see a gulf between writing you pay for and writing you get for free. Nearly two thirds (61%) agree with the statement 'a print magazine that you pay for tends to be of better quality than a free one', 23% agreeing strongly. Only 15% disagree. (A cynical way of looking at it would be that respondents are either pragmatists, reporting personal experience with titles that have money from readers and titles that do not, or raging hypocrites who dismiss free writing while claiming to be above such distinctions.) But when it comes to online magazines, attitudes about price are all but reversed. Half (49%) of respondents *disagree* that an online magazine you pay for tends to be of better quality, a quarter (25%) disagreeing strongly. A mere 13% agree that payment is linked to higher quality online. Keeping in mind that respondents see online magazines as lower quality in general, this finding indicates that readers' experience does not lead them to dismiss a free online magazine out of hand, as they might dismiss a free print one.

One area where print and online publications are judged similarly is design. When asked whether they agree with the statements 'the quality of a print magazine's design affects my view of its prestige' and 'the quality of an online magazine's design affects my view of its prestige' responses were almost identical: the vast majority agree (83% for print, 78% online), a small slice are indifferent (8% versus 11%) and the tiniest fraction disagree strongly (2% in both cases). Clearly, moving online does not mean escaping high expectations. Attitudes towards the amount of content harmonize almost as closely. Asked about 'the amount of content available in an online magazine is a sign of its quality' and 'the amount of content available in a print magazine is a sign of its quality', the majority (52% print, 54% online) disagree and another quarter (20% print, 24% online) are indifferent. Far from looking somehow skimpy, the smaller (one might say 'edited' or 'exclusive') journal has a clear advantage in terms of perception of quality.

We found that print publications, in general, are valued more highly, even after accounting for content quality, design quality and whether the magazine is paid for or free. The business and management literature on organizational reputation (Rindova et al. 2005; Love and Kraatz 2009) suggests a number of reasons why online literary fiction magazines have lower reputations: they are less visible (arguably), they are perceived as lower quality, they have lower achievement, they have less affiliation with high-status actors and they have low trustworthiness and credibility. On the other hand, the organizational reputation literature suggests that higher reputation increases price, but we find that it is the other way around. Those who pay for literary fiction take print more seriously.

Marketing research also has a possible explanation for our observation that the preferred online literary magazines are also read in print. Purchasing online can be risky; thus customers are loyal to a smaller set of popular brands because they know they are likely to be satisfied with their purchase (Danaher et al. 2003).[6] Consuming a preferred product both online and offline is common because it satisfies both customers' preference for experiencing a known quantity and also gives them rapid access to information and a larger selection (Levin et al. 2003).

Unlike some research specifically on print versus online media consumption (Chyi and Lasorsa 2002) we generally did not find age or gender to affect readers' perceptions of print versus online reputation. We found some evidence that the only readers who believe that print literary fiction is more reputable than online are those who are only writers or readers of literary fiction, but who are not the editors, publishers or reviewers who are gatekeepers to publication. (Our survey lent emphatic support to the conventional wisdom that literary magazine readers tend to be part of the community: of the UK sample, 21% were magazine publishers and readers, 47% were editors, 39% were reviewers and 94% were writers, although not necessarily writers for literary magazines. Overall, 72% of the sample fell into at least two categories – many three or more.) It could be that those non-gatekeepers – 38% who read and write, or just read – are the only ones who actually pay for print literary fiction and, thus, take it more seriously.

But those on the inside are also biased towards print on certain dimensions. Gatekeepers – those readers who are also editors, publishers or reviewers – who believe that design is important for reputation also think that print is more reputable. This alliance of values does not establish any kind of cause and effect – it is possible that such gatekeepers regard print more highly in part *because* they find superior design in print, but not certain – but such a preference by the most design-conscious insiders has the potential to set up a vicious (or virtuous, depending on one's perspective) circle, where design sensibility flocks to print because design sensibility flocks to print.

Writers, whether gatekeepers or not, who agree that, 'A print magazine that you pay for tends to be of better quality than a free one', also find that print has a higher reputation.

STRATEGIES FOR MAGAZINES

How, then, can editors or authors respond? What tactics will help literary magazines and short story writers make the digital leap with reputation and relevance intact? Studies of online delivery in other industries can offer clues. The first is that the lower status of online publications is not some temporary construct of literary luddites or book-loving snobs. It is seen across industries, and strategies to deal with lower perceived reputation in other industries may have applications here.

Together, the literature and our findings offer a set of recommendations for maintaining reputation and influence. Editors can emulate and writers can target online literary magazines that have high-quality content and design, are associated with high-status people, have a good track record, charge a fee for print editions and offer both print and online content. The marketing literature would also suggest cultivating a niche/cult brand offline (Danaher et al. 2003), forming an alliance with a good offline brand (Levin et al. 2003) and creating online content that is distinct from the print version (Chyi and

6. Keeping in mind the difficulty of defining literature as a product with value linked to its sale price (Hyde 1983).

Lasorsa 2002). Most particularly, editors contemplating a free magazine may wish to eschew print altogether, gambling that the stigma of digital delivery is outweighed by receptiveness to free literature online.

Some of these strategies are already familiar. The pursuit of excellence, in both writing and design, is a fixture. Offering 'web exclusives' and other unique online content, like *AGNI*, and cultivating strong offline brands, like *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, are tactics being attempted right now. Less clear are the ways in which emerging financial models – alternatives to cover prices and institutional grants – may affect reputation and prestige.

While mixed-access magazines, offering some content for free and reserving other content for those who pay, were the largest category in our survey, they did not yet constitute a majority. Online-only magazines charging fees are still rare. More common are print magazines that put some or all online content behind a paywall, but provide free access to their print subscribers, much like the *New York Times*. The most dramatic shift in terms of revenue generation is increased reliance on turning submitters, who often vastly outnumber subscribers (Minot 1977; Burch et al. 2008), into a revenue stream rather than a financial drain. Reading and responding to unsolicited submissions has always been a major task, devouring the limited resources of a small magazine. Online magazines, and, as they have established websites, many traditional print magazines have gone to electronic submissions (typically using the same few standard content management systems), which reduces paper and administrative costs for the magazine, but also postage and effort for authors, considerably increasing the volume of submissions. As institutional support is squeezed in the recession (even *The New England Review*, one of the most revered and venerable magazines in America, cannot rely on indefinite support from Middlebury College (Tuff 2009)) fees offer a way to reduce submissions and increase revenue. The calculation that reduced submissions will not lead to a reduced standard of writing is not a blind one. Magazines are able to compare the quality (by their own criteria) of the old postal submission-only pool to the new, expanded electronic submission pool, and determine whether larger harvests have really led to a greater number of outstanding literary offerings. The question of whether reduced submissions will lead to a *perception* of lower quality is another question, and one that can only be answered by future research.

Charging even a small fee has been, for generations, taboo: the mark of a vanity publisher with no legitimate claim to art. But when major magazines like *The New England Review*, *Ploughshares* and *The Missouri Review* begin to charge (still offering no-fee postal submissions) other magazines may feel safe in following. In 2011 some respected titles like *Hunger Mountain* moved to fee-only, closing even the free postal submission loophole (and resulting in a ban from Duotrope, the dominant listing site). How this will affect their reputations, or the quality and diversity of their content, remains to be seen. It is possible that their influence will wane, but just as possible that their prestige will legitimize the practice, giving permission to magazines with less secure reputations – or even to make submission fees a signifier of quality.

Less controversial, but arguably more significant in terms of the content and image of a given magazine, is the reliance on contests. Once a comparative rarity, contests are now at least an annual event for almost any given magazine and the space available to non-competition writing is increasingly squeezed. Competition charges do not have the negative associations of the 'reading fee' and a magazine can collect larger amounts per entry (say, $15

rather than $3) without attracting comment. Competitions also have a distinguished lineage, enjoying credit for launching the careers of writers as illustrious as Muriel Spark (Cox 2005). But will magazine readers assign the same status to a magazine populated by earnest winners? Reader response to a changed balance, with contests (and, by extension, new rather than established writers) edging out other writing, remains to be seen.

The survey asked about attitudes towards magazines that charge readers, but not (in part because the phenomenon is growing so quickly) about magazines that charge contributors. This parallels a decade-old shift by some scholarly journals to charge for submissions – typically, to protest high charges by for-profit academic publishers and to make possible open-access scholarly resources (Bergstrom 2001). Such a policy could remain obscure for a publication where readers vastly outnumber contributors or would-be contributors, but for the literary magazine audience surveyed here, where 94 per cent of readers were also writers and many have at least one additional role (editor, reviewer, etc.) the average reader is likely to be aware of the terms. This, of course, concerns only unsolicited submissions; established writers approached by the editors, who traditionally anchor a magazine and lend credibility to the title and to newer authors who appear beside them, are unaffected.

This shift could, of course, prove irrelevant to prestige and reputation. The relationship of an emerging author to a respected magazine has long resembled that of a contest entrant: long odds, and a reward in laurels rather than dollars, pounds or mass readership. Fees may only make explicit the contest analogy and offer an explanation as to how literary magazines, respected but rarely purchased (even by those who aspire to write for them), influence literary culture even when so few read them. As a DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency) competition – say, for a new unmanned combat vehicle – focuses the creative efforts of engineers on a selected military project without paying those engineers for their time, or demanding that the competitors study rival approaches, a literary contest focuses the creative efforts of a population of writers on a given aesthetic. Targeted rewards can shape entrants' writing and advance the careers of those who (ironically, for a sector with 'oppositional values') conform.

CONCLUSION

Against this backdrop of rapid change we return to the following questions: will literary magazines remain relevant and how can they adapt to continue to fulfil their traditional role of aesthetic leadership? Our conclusion is that post-print magazines *can* be taken seriously, and hence that the category will remain relevant, as some titles shrewdly and selectively exploit digital opportunities to make the leap to online or part-online delivery with their reputations and influence intact. We predict that, in the short term, the most influential players will fall into two categories. One: established magazines exploiting new technology without abandoning the trappings of pre-Internet success. These are likely to be known titles (continuing or revived), with some material by established authors, maintaining a print presence – even if this is small – while offering at least some original online content. Two: non-charging magazines moving online specifically to take advantage of receptivity to free literature when offered digitally. Both types are likely, in the current landscape of dwindling institutional and charitable support, to charge readers in some way, either by experimentation with paid access or following the trends

of online submission fees and contest fees. Perhaps most significantly, they will not exploit the digital opportunity of unlimited content, acting instead as if they were still limited by the size of a printed book, and maintaining the old vocabulary of 'issues', 'volumes', etc. to emphasize their selectivity. These leaders have every chance to exert influence and fuel literary movements as effectively as they ever did in print, minting prestige to bestow on their chosen aesthetics.

REFERENCES

Allen, C. (1943), 'The advance guard', *The Sewanee Review*, 51: 3, pp. 410–29.

Alter, A. (2010), 'Lorin Stein named new editor of Paris review', *Wall Street Journal*, 5 March, Speakeasy blog, http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2010/03/05/lorin-stein-named-new-editor-of-paris-review/. Accessed 5 September 2011.

Anderson, C. (2004), 'The long tail', *Wired* 12:10, October. Available on http://archive.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html. Accessed 9 September 2014.

Audit Bureau of Circulations (2011), 'Circulation averages for the six months ended June 30th, 2011', Audit Bureau of Circulations, Arlington, IL, Available online at http://abcas3.accessabc.com/ecirc/magtitlesearch.asp. Accessed 5 September 2011.

Bergstrom, T. C. (2001), 'Free labor for costly journals?', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 15:3, pp. 183–98, Available online at: http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.15.4.183. Accessed 25 November 2011.

Bixler, P. (1948), 'Introduction', *The Antioch Review*, 8: 1, pp. 63–77.

Burch, A., Hammond, R., Horowitz, E., Morgan, S., Speer, R., Rosser, J., Allyn, R., Roth M. and Zuniga, T. (2008), 'A roundtable on the contemporary literary magazine', *Mississippi Review*, 36: 3, pp. 34–61.

Chyi, H. I. and Lasorsa, D. L. (2002), 'An explorative study on the market relation between online and print newspapers', *The Journal of Media Economics*, 15: 2, pp. 91–106.

Cox, A. (2005), *Writing Short Stories*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Danaher, P. J., Wilson, I. W. and Davis, R. A. (2003), 'A comparison of online and offline consumer brand loyalty', *Marketing Science*, 22: 4, pp. 461–76.

Deephouse, D. L. and Carter, S. M. (2005), 'An examination of differences between organizational legitimacy and organizational reputation', *Journal of Management Studies*, 42: 2, pp. 329–60.

D'Haenens, L., Jankowski, N. and Heuvelman, A. (2004), 'News in online and print newspapers: Differences in reader consumption and recall', *New Media & Society*, 6: 3, pp. 363–82.

Garfield, S. (2007), 'From student rag to literary riches', *The Observer*, 30 December, Available online at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/dec/30/culture.features. Accessed 5 September 2011.

Geyh, P. (2002), 'The literary magazine, the web, and the changing of the avant-garde', in L. Hurliman and N. C. Kunakemakorn (eds), *Without Covers://literary_magazines@the_digital_edge*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, pp. 36–55.

Gross, B. (1969), 'What ever happened to lit magazines?', *The Antioch Review*, 28: 1, pp. 43–56.

Harper's Magazine Media Kit (2013), *Harper's Magazine*, http://harpers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Harpers-Media-Kit-2013.pdf. Accessed 25 April 2013.

Hoffman, F., Allen, C. and Ulrich, C. (1946), *The Little Magazine: A History and A Bibliography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hyde, L. (1983), *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, New York: Random House.

Kuebler, C. (2010), *Literary Magazines in Context: A Historical Perspective*, New York: Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, http://www.clmp.org/adoption/pdfs/Carolyn_Kuebler_essay.pdf. Accessed 21 November 2011.

Levin, A. M., Levin, I. P. and Heath, C. E. (2003), 'Product category dependent consumer preferences for online and offline shopping features and their influence on multi-channel retail alliances', *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 4: 3, pp. 85–93.

Love, E. G. and Kraatz, M. (2009), 'Character, conformity, or the bottom line? How and why downsizing affected corporate reputation', *Academy of Management Journal*, 52: 2, pp. 314–35.

McGrath, C. (2005), 'Does the *Paris review* get a second act?', *New York Times*, 6 February, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/06/weekinreview/06mcgr.html. Accessed 7 December 2011.

Matsa, K., Sasseen, J. and Mitchell, A. (2012), 'Magazines: By the numbers', The State of the News Media 2012: The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, http://stateofthemedia.org/2012/magazines-are-hopes-for-tablets-overdone/magazines-by-the-numbers/. Accessed 25 April 2013.

Minot, S. (1977), 'Hey, is anyone listening?', *North American Review*, 162: 1, pp. 9–12.

Paling, S. and Nilan, M. (2006), 'Technology, genres and value change: The case of little magazines', *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 57: 7, pp. 862–72.

Pierce, W. (2006), Interview with www.newpages.com by J. Powers, http://www.newpages.com/interviews/pierce_agni/pierce_agni.htm. Accessed 23 November 2011.

Rindova, V. P., Williamson, I. O., Petkova, A. P. and Sever, J. M. (2005), 'Being Good or being known: An empirical examination of the dimensions, antecedents and consequences of organizational reputation', *Academy of Management Journal*, 48: 6, pp. 1033–49.

Tuff, S. (2009), 'The future of the New England review', *Middlebury Magazine*, 83:3, available online at http://blogs.middlebury.edu/middmag/2010/02/03/the-future-of-the-new-england-review/. Accessed 12 December 2011.

Whitehead, S. (2011), 'Reader as consumer: The magazine short story', *Short Fiction in Theory and Practice*, 1: 1, pp. 71–84.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1: Do you read literary magazines? [Yes/No]

Q2: Which ones? (Please indicate ONLINE or IN PRINT or BOTH) [Open-ended response]

Q3: Do you pay or get them for free? [Pay/Free/A mix of both free and pay-to-view]

Q4: How do you prefer to read literary magazines? [Strongly prefer print/Slightly prefer print/Don't really care/Slightly prefer online/Strongly prefer online]

Q5: Which do you take more seriously as literature? [Online/In print/Don't care/Don't differentiate]

Q6: What characteristics attract you to a literary magazine? (Please list.) [Open-ended response]

Q7: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [all Strongly agree/Somewhat agree/Neither agree nor disagree/Somewhat disagree/Strongly disagree]

> The amount of content available in an online magazine is a sign of its quality.
>
> The quality of a print magazine's design affects my view of its prestige.
>
> Online publication in a high-quality journal is just as valuable to a writer as print publication in a high-quality journal.
>
> A print magazine that you pay for tends to be of better quality than a free one.
>
> The quality of an online magazine's design affects my view of its prestige.
>
> An online magazine that you pay for is better quality than a free one.
>
> The amount of content available in a print magazine is a sign of its quality.
>
> Print publication is more desirable than online publication.

Q8: Does the price you pay for a work of literature (story, novel, poem or essay) affect your perception of it? [No/Yes/No, but I think it affects the perceptions of other readers]

Q9: What else do we need to know about the reputation of literary magazines in the digital age? [Open-ended response]

Q10: I am a (tick all that apply) [Writer/Editor/Publisher]

Q11: I am a (tick all that apply) [Student/Reviewer/Journalist]

Q12: I read [short stories online/short stories offline/poetry online/poetry offline/ /essays/creative non-fiction online/essays/creative non-fiction offline]

Q13: My age [18–24/25–34/35–44/45–54/55–64/65+]

Q14: My gender [Female/Male]

Q15: Do you reside in the UK? [Yes/No]

Q16: Would you like to be contacted for a follow-up survey? All results are purely for research purposes. [E-mail address]

SUGGESTED CITATION

Dietz, L. (2014), 'Online versus Print: The reputation of literary fiction magazines', *Short Fiction in Theory & Practice* 4: 1, pp. 7–21, doi: 10.1386/fict.4.1.7_1

CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Laura Dietz is a Senior Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University, where she convenes the M.A. in Creative Writing. Her first novel, *In the Tenth House* (Crown, Random House), explores the incestuous relationship between spiritualism and early psychiatry. Her research interests include online literary culture, cognitive approaches to literature and science in contemporary fiction.

Contact: Anglia Ruskin University, East Road, Cambridge, CB4 3JL, United Kingdom.
E-mail: laura.dietz@anglia.ac.uk

intellect

publishers
of original
thinking

Journal of
Contemporary Chinese Art

Aims and Scope

The *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* seeks to explore the relationship between contemporary art and Chinese cultural identity in its broadest sense. The journal provides a forum for critical debate and the presentation of new research into Zhongguo dangdai yishu, which is the 'avant-garde', experimental and museum-based visual art produced as part of the liberalization of culture that has taken place within mainland China since 1978. It also explores works produced by artists of non-Chinese ethnicity who live and work within Chinese contexts or whose work has a strong relationship to Chinese culture, society and history.

Call for Papers

Contributions are sought from scholars, and from cultural practitioners and professionals including artists, curators and critics. Welcomes contributions that address contemporary art produced in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as well as in diasporic Chinese communities worldwide.

This journal is not available through any other channels, to find out how to order visit the subscription information page of the Intellect website www.intellectbooks.co.uk

Principal Editor
Paul Gladston
University of Nottingham
paul.gladston@nottingham.ac.uk

HALF PRICE

**Half Price
Personal subscription**
Print only*: £18 / $34 USD
(Full price: £36 / $68 USD)

Please contact
Turpin Distribution,
quoting 'HALF PRICE PC':
☎:+44 (0) 1767 604 951 (UK & ROW)
☎:+1 860 350 0041 (US & Canada)
✉:custserv@turpin-distribution.com

Institutional subscription
Print and online*: £180 / $290 USD
Online only: £147 / $220 USD

* Postage is included for UK, US and Canadian orders. Please add £9 postage for EU orders and £12 for ROW orders.