Shem Law Q&A

Radio Times produces content that forms: a printed magazine, a website, an app, a podcast, Social Media (primarily? TikTok, Instagram)
We send content to Apple News and Apple News Plus where there is increasing readership and revenue to be had. This is being ramped up and is predominantly magazine content repurposed. On the Social Media front, it is primarily Facebook, YouTube and Instagram…

Same content cut up and repurposed multiple times.

Immediate Media is no longer a 'publishing house' but a
A media company? A content creation company? A subscription-based content company? Take your pick. We are of course a publishing company, but that just isn’t sexy anymore…

Same as other brands / companies. No individuality anymore?

Content is created simultaneously for all
That is the plan, but it’s going to take a while. ‘Engagement’ is the buzz word at the moment, (How much time someone spends reading your content) It used to be about how many people visited your site regardless of how long they stayed. They arrived at your site because they’d asked a question on a search engine. The prediction is that search engines are going to become obsolete with AI and direct access through Apps. Well, that’s the theory at least. That means the many revenue streams will change from being paid for the number of people who visit, to the number of people that will pay to subscribe to your content. It is a fearsomely hard trick and transition to pull off….

More about value than consumption

Magazine is designed by designers
For the time being the magazine is just about still designed by real, living breathing people… But what will Ai bring?

Printed magazine content is stripped out of PDF for online use
At the moment it’s the only way of accessing it, but moves are afoot to try and access content in a more efficient and less time consuming way.

Systems. Adhoc.

Online content is uploaded/populated by web team (?)
Not always, magazine content is mainly uploaded by the mag team, and soon Mag subs will be posting and publishing magazine conetent onto the website behind a registration wall. Mag content is cut and pasted to the website and then cut and pasted onto the App. It’s madness…

Madness of same thing five ways. Would you like some beetroot with your beetroot?

Some internal conflict between print and digital
The transition hasn’t been smooth and nothing has essentially changed at the moment with mag people doing most of the donkey work, as the website has still got huge targets to fulfil chasing the huge number of visits to the site. But the hope is that once ‘engagement’ becomes more of a priority, things will get better.

Engagement may help print and digital come together

Currently a shift from 'clicks' denoting success into 'value' (that will allow a paywall to access content)
That’s the plan, but the problem is if you lose the number of clicks you have at present, ads can’t sell the website as having huge numbers of visitors, which is what advertisers want, so by changing to a subscription model that is paid for, supposedly you replace that ad revenue with direct access to your readers/customers, that’s the theory, but obviously management are reluctant to enter into that change over if it means losing revenue.

You mentioned a figure of number of pieces of content the web team had to produce a week but I can't remember it - could you remind me roughly the amount of pieces they are creating?
It’s around 350 pieces a week, mostly very sort news items that get hook people in and count towards the ‘click’ targets

At odds with values of the brand and company

And of course financial pressures of lower budgets, more revenue
‘More with Less’ is the mantra. Which long term is unsustainable, I guess. Quality Journalism is the only thing people seem to want to pay for, and that quality has to be kept up, (and by that I mean good writers have to be paid well to produce it) chipping away at that hoping readers won’t notice is what all big publishers are doing and it’s stupid. We are going through the budgetary process for 2025 at the moment. We will be very lucky if we get the same money that we had last year to spend, but what we are expected to do with that money has increased considerably.

This is a lot.

Small focus.

Move towards value online requires magazine standards (writing, photography, design) online in a space that is reflective of worthy of a cost. How can digital editorial design work for print and/or vice versa? Can editorial design work for print and digital?

Familiar/Unfamiliar

If taking print into digital what aspects of print do you need to translate it as high end magazine content?

If creating a digital product, that is essentially a digital magazine, that works for the medium, content and brand, how much familiar do you need to create a digitised magazine in form and content if not medium and production. Or is production the same?

Is there an iterative process whereby you take the feature from the magazine and put it into digital and iteratively tweak to unfamiliar and then back again to maybe a happy place?

If looking at print and perception / deception how much familiar do you need to challenge perception / deception

Two separate things or can they be brought into conversation with each other?