Comparing And Contrasting The Internet To Print Essay, Research Paper

Comparing and Contrasting the Internet to Print

The differences between the Internet and Print Journalism are clear immediately upon glancing at either of the two. However, to truly understand the differences you must study each carefully. I will briefly explore the differences between Newsweek and it’s printed counterpart, and Entrepreneur magazine vs. entrepreneurmag.com. These magazines are very different in content and supply good examples of different features that exist in a technological vs. a print environment. I will compare the differences between the two in three areas; 1.Content 2. Advertising and 3. Useablity.

Content

If you were to put any print magazine next to your computer monitor you would immediately notice a difference. A difference not only in the format the material is set up, but a difference in the actual content its’ self.

Newsweek is a magazine that delivers the news. One would assume that news is news, and if it is printed one way in the magazine it should be the same online. This is not true. Newsweek is a magazine that is released weekly, yet in e-commerce business moves at the “speed of thought” (Bill Gates). This means that Newsweek must update their web site daily and sometimes hourly. This makes a magazine that would seemingly follow the same pattern, very different. News in print may not be the same as “e-news”.

Entrepreneur magazine is a magazine that helps the small businesses of America. They are very crafty in using bright colors that will grab potential buyers attention at the newsstand. This creates a problem for their online business. Whenever you have lots of colors or graphics your page will not load quickly. This means that what works in print will not work for their e- magazine. They have to rely on good spot graphics and headlines to attract attention. They do not do this very effectively. From looking at their web site you will see that they have had a hard time crossing over from print to the Internet.

Advertising

Advertising is essential in both print and web business because it is a main source of income to any multi-media company. Newsweek sells pages and pages of ads in their magazine. These are well done color ads which are designed to attract the attention of the reader as they flip through the magazine. On the Internet site Newsweek chooses to place banner ads in the middle of the text page (bad placement). The difference is that advertising on the Internet is much more personable. Thanks to little mechanisms called “cookies” the ads you see on the Internet site become personalized. These cookies tell a database sites to which you have previously logged on. In a fraction of a second you receive personal advertising that you never would have seen in a print ad. Entrepreneur does the same thing. You are receiving advertising that fits your wants and needs and all at a fraction of the cost to advertisers (who generally pay about 1 cent per hit). This is an advertisers dream and is a noticeable difference between the two forms of media.

Useablity

The term useablity seems to deal only with the Internet side of the two forms of media. This is a misconception. It is not uncommon to look for a certain story in a magazine in the table of contents. This is print useablity. Online useablity is undisputably better. Both sites have a type of search mechanism so that if you are looking for a story on Bill Gates you are not limited to one issue. This may be the greatest advantage in having an online version of a magazine. No longer is the user limited to the one issue recently purchased. Stories are at the users fingertips no matter when they were written.

People have different views on what the roles of print magazines will be in contrast to online magazines in the future. Some magazine companies choose to downplay the Internet and the role it will take in regards to their industry. Neil Postman, a well known philosopher of New Media Technologies states that “when we begin relying on the Internet for all of our news and information we will turn into a nation of zombies”. I think that Bill Gates and many others would disagree. The differences are great and companies must adapt to those differences in order to be successful.