Media innovation in the magazine industry:
How can Egmont innovate to reach young adults?

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the reading patterns and media preferences of Norwegians aged 18-25. It also seeks to find how magazine content may be packaged and presented in order to better reach this group. Egmont Publishing Norway (hereafter Egmont) and other magazine publishers are experiencing a significant decline in the sales of printed magazines to young adults. This study aims to identify a magazine concept that can correspond to young customers' habits and needs.

The research design chosen for this thesis is an explorative one, due to lack of previous research on the topic. The main sources of data are in-depth interviews with young people and key persons in Egmont. A quantitative survey among young adults and examination of existing magazine solutions has also been executed.

The findings indicate that young people prefer paper magazines, but spend more time reading on digital devices, mainly computers and smart phones. It appears that young adults want a variety of content, the possibility of sharing stories with friends, and shorter articles that can be read in-between other activities.

The thesis points to the *à la carte model*, as adopted by, among others, Spotify and Netflix, as a possible solution for presenting magazine content according to the requirements of young adults.

Acknowledgements

1: Introduction

"I would argue that today is a new golden age – an age where the very idea of what a magazine is can be challenged" (Leslie 2013 p. 7).

The magazine industry faces a time of great challenges. In fact, the whole media industry is in crisis. Major budget cuts are made in a number of media organizations and this causes concern for the quality of editorial products (Jerijervi 9.4.2014). There is still a strong demand for journalism and media content, but it is no longer obvious that this will be consumed on paper. This creates headaches for publishers and editors, as they have still not found an optimal way of making money on digital newspapers and magazines (Jacobsen 27.6.2014).

Through the history of magazines, the industry has faced numerous challenges. New technology has regularly been met with concern. An example is the photo-typesetting technology introduced in the 1960s. It simplified the production of magazines and raised concern for the quality and expression of the designs. Retrospectively, the new technologies have mostly helped improving the magazines, even though they initially seemed problematic (Leslie 2013 p. 214).

However, Jeremy Leslie argues that today's concern is far from simply another stem in the technological timeline; the internet might be the ultimate challenge for the printed magazine (ibid.).

1.1: Motivation and aim of the study

The crisis is most evident in the teen and twentysomething market. Tim Holmes and Liz Nice report that magazines for this group have been in long-term decline since the early 1990s (2012 p. 152). This is also a major concern within Egmont. The circulation figures of *Det Nye*, a magazine for young women, fell 9.9 per cent from 2012 to 2013. The comic magazines *Nemi* and *Pondus*, also aimed at young adults, experienced a drop in circulation of 10.5 and 16.3 per cent respectively (Bækkevold 29.9.2014, MBL 2014).

According to Tore André Godager, the head of digital innovation and commercialization at Egmont, this is a great concern, not only for the few specific magazines for young adults, but for the whole corporation. – If you don't have products that reach the 18-25-year-olds, you're out of business in 30-40 years, perhaps even

faster, as you don't have anything that appeals to the new generation (Interview 19.5.2014).

An interesting question is whether the decline is due to a lack of suitable magazines for young people or whether it indicates an overall trend in which the internet is slowly beginning to kill off magazines. Some commentators suggest a young readership that "have simply stopped reading, leaving no one at all to buy any kind of print media in the decades to come" (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 152).

However, there is barely any literature that deals with this topic. The media research mostly addresses newspapers, radio and television, while the magazine research often discusses how magazines negatively impact young women's self-esteem and body image (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 157). The existential crisis in the magazine industry has rarely been a unit of analysis. Holmes and Nice call for greater collaboration between scholars and magazine producers:

> An article entitled: Can teenage magazines survive after all? or What will replace teenage magazines as the most powerful text for young readers? for example would, from an industry perspective, be a must read; however, no academic has ever tackled writing this. And therein lies the problem (2012 p. 160).

In light of this, a study that, in cooperation with Egmont, examines young people's reading patterns and media preferences will be both interesting for the magazine industry and a contribution to a field that is quite unexplored.

1.2: Research questions

This study has one overall research question: *How can Egmont innovate to reach the group of young people aged 18-25?*

This *how*-question is closely linked to *why* the sale is declining. When addressing how the magazine industry should approach the youth market, one also has to understand why fewer young people buy magazines. Hence, this study will investigate how young adults read and use media. The Norwegian market will be the main unit of analysis, even though the decline in the sales of youth magazines is a concern in several countries. A secondary research question will thus be: *What are the reading patterns and media preferences among young Norwegians?*

When it comes to strategies for reaching young adults, there are at least three issues involved that may be discussed. Firstly, the contents of the products, whether the

topics featured in the magazines interest young people. Secondly, there are the platforms or the packaging of the contents. And thirdly, a marketing perspective, the way the products are communicated towards young adults.

To narrow the research question, this study will primarily address the second point, how the packaging of the content can be changed to increase the sales within the target group. The rationale for this is the last decades' remarkable changes in the way young people read (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 131). It is continuously changing, and it is therefore important to closely follow the development. The thesis will also discuss content when it is closely linked to issues regarding platforms. Another secondary research question is thus: *How should magazine content be presented in order to correspond to young Norwegians' reading patterns and media preferences?*

1.3: Overview of research design

Due to the relatively broad research questions and lack of previous research on reading patterns and magazine concepts, an explorative design is suitable for this thesis (Gripsrud, Olsson and Silkoset 2006 p. 59). The study is based on qualitative interviews with young people aged 18-25, conversations with key persons in Egmont and examination of existing platform solutions. The research design also includes a quantitative survey, which will support and clarify information in certain cases. The main material will be the outcome of the in-depth interviews with twelve young adults. A more thorough presentation of the methods used in this study will be given in chapter 3.

1.4: Overview of key findings

After a review of the literature and methods, the study's findings will be examined in detail. However, in order to give an early overview, these are some of the main findings:

- The majority of the informants rarely or never buy printed magazines, but this is not due to a lack of interest in magazine content.
    - Similar content is found available, for free, on the internet.
    - They want more varied content than what is provided in one magazine.
    - Buying magazines requires a habit and a felt need.

- o Reading is done mostly in-between other activities rather than in a quiet moment.
- Of the informants who regularly buy magazines, relaxation and the reading experience is appreciated.
- Quality of content and gaining new insight is valued.
- The majority prefer to read on paper, but actually spend more time reading on digital devices.
- Most informants are reluctant to paying for digital media, but are open to do so if they see a special value in it.
- Smart phones and laptops are frequently used. Tablets have not to the same extent become a part of young adults' everyday life, but are on the rise.
- Social media such as Facebook are popular channels for sharing articles, pictures and videos with friends and family.
- Short articles are read on-the-go, while longer ones are often saved for later if they seem interesting enough.

2: Review of the literature

"[S]omeone has to make the first move – or the next move – before another market, like the teen market, dies with barely any useful analysis from either side as to how and why, or whether it even matters at all" (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 162).

Due to lack of previous research regarding innovative magazine concepts and reading patterns among young people, the theoretical basis chosen for this thesis is quite compound. I have extracted some applicable parts from the fields of magazine research, innovation studies, media innovation, market analysis and research on *digital natives*. There are also relevant debates outside the academic literature lead by, among others, journalists and magazine publishers.

2.1: The magazine

Magazine journalism has generally been neglected by academic disciplines (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 1). Scholars have instead primarily concentrated on other cultural products and branches of journalism. The main reason for this is that magazines have not fully been taken seriously by either the journalism industry or academia. In contrast to hard

news, magazines are thought to be light, less important and soft (McKay 2006 p. 4). Holmes and Nice note that researchers studying journalism often use the word *magazine* in a patronizing tone, linking it mainly to glossy consumer magazines for women (2012 p. 2). On the other hand, one can find academics that describe magazines with words like "heralds of social and cultural change" (Conboy 2004 p. 163) and "the main source of the innovations in the publishing industry that created the modern popular press" (Tulloch 2000 p. 139).

2.1.1: Definitions of the magazine

Magazines cover a wide range of subject matter, styles and forms of delivery (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 2). In 1930, historian and journalist Frank Luther Mott defined the magazine as a "bound pamphlet issued more or less regularly […] containing a variety of reading matter and […] a strong connotation of entertainment" (p. 7). The physical appearance should possibly no longer be included in the definition as more and more magazines are published in digital form. However, Samir Husni, the director of the Magazine Innovation Center at the University of Mississippi, does not agree. In a blog post under the heading "So, What Is A Magazine, Really?", he states:

> Magazines are much more than content. Magazines are much more than information, words, pictures and colors all combined in a platform that serves nothing but as a delivery vehicle. Magazines, each and every one and each and every issue of every one, are a total experience that engages the customers five senses. Nothing is left to chance. It is a total package. Without the ink, the paper, the touch, the smell, the look, the taste, it will not be called a magazine (11.6.2010).

Still, the leading perception is that the magazine experience does not have to be delivered via paper and ink. In the lack of a precise definition of what a magazine is, we can turn to William J. Click and Russell N. Baird who present a description of how magazines work; they form "personal relationships that are built among the writers and editors of the magazines and their readers" (1990 p. 5).

2.1.2: The future of magazines

There is some literature dealing with the recent development of magazines. In *The Modern Magazine* (2013), Leslie addresses how technology has affected design and manufacturing of paper magazines as well as the development of digital products. He is optimistic about the future, as long as creativity prevails and the technology is fully

utilized. While *The Modern Magazine* is a book designed for inspiration, with a wide range of colourful images, *The Magazines Handbook* (2006) by Jenny McKay is primarily written to teach the craft of magazine journalism. She stresses the importance of analyzing the characteristics of the readers, whether they are loyal customers of niche magazines or prefer a variety of topics and titles.

Holmes and Nice (2012) cover a wider range of subjects within the field of magazines, including history, economy and research. They also specifically discuss challenges regarding the market of youth magazines and call for more research in the field. Even though this topic has been widely ignored in academic debates, there are active discussions in different forums about what the future of magazines should look like. Journalist Hamish McKenzie and publisher Michael Turro have both criticised existing magazine concepts and proposed change towards a more convenient and elegant way of presenting content.

2.2: Innovation studies and media innovation

The study of magazines is a multidisciplinary field (Pykett 1990 p. 4) and so is the study of innovation (Fagerberg 2005 p. 3). The two fields, separately and combined, are therefore highly complex and offer plenty of perspectives. As discussed in chapter 2.1.1, magazines come in many different forms. The flexibility and rapid development of such publications make the link to innovation theory highly relevant. However, due to the field's great diversity, only a few topics within the innovation literature will be touched upon here.

The more specific field of media innovation is very young. The innovation perspective has been applied in fields like media economics and management research, yet it has been quite fragmented (Dogruel 2013 p. 32). Not until recently has there been an attempt to gather the threads and present it as one field of study. In April 2012, the Centre for Research on Media Innovations (CeRMI) at the University of Oslo hosted the 1st International Symposium on Media Innovations (Storsul and Krumsvik 2013 p. 7). The year after, Tanja Storsul and Arne H. Krumsvik edited a book based on the best papers presented there. As a next step in this process, CeRMI introduced *the Journal of Media Innovations* in March 2014.

The media innovation literature has mostly addressed issues regarding television, radio and newspapers. Nevertheless, several of the general concepts and

debates within innovation studies and media innovation are transferable to a study on the magazine industry and its future.

2.2.1: Forces of innovation

When studying what drives innovation, there are several mechanisms that are relevant. Two concepts are demand pull and technology push. These distinguish whether there is a demand in the audience that leads to an innovation, or if a new technology is presented to the audience before the demand is there. Traditionally, it was demand pull that mostly led to rapid advances in media technology, but Axel Bruns claims that the push of innovation in media technology has become significantly stronger in the last years (2014 pp. 22-23).

However, it is not always easy to clearly distinguish between push and pull. In some cases, the media company does not have the innovation ready, and likewise the target audience does not have a clear demand. The development process for the company may then be, in a simplified form, to study the target group's habits and desires, develop a concept according to this, and then push it to the market. You could say that this is a hybrid between demand pull and technology push, or perhaps more precisely a pull due to lack of demand for existing products. This is quite a normal force of innovation in today's media industry. In a study of two newspapers in Sweden and Norway, Jens Barland experienced that market challenges were defined and mapped first. Subsequently, the needed journalistic products were developed to address these issues (2012 p. 285).

2.2.2: Categories of innovation

In the innovation literature, an important dichotomy is *radical* and *incremental* innovation. The former is the introduction of a completely new type of technology. The latter is continuous improvements to an existing product (Fagerberg 2005 p. 7). Another categorization suggested by Rebecca M. Henderson and Kim B. Clark is the distinction between *architectural* and *modular* innovation, which might be even more relevant in this context. In the former concept, it is the combination of parts that constitutes the innovation. The parts are standardized but combined in new, innovative ways. In modular innovation, the combination is standardized, but parts can be changed (1990 p. 12). Since this thesis concentrates on how the packaging of the content may be

innovated, as stated in chapter 1.2, architectural innovation will naturally be the most applicable of these terms.

The innovation concept often includes both product and process innovation. Charles Edquist defines product innovation as new or better goods or services, while process innovation is new ways of producing such products (2005 p. 182). It is worth noting that services are included in the product definition; a product might as well be intangible. However, there is some disagreement in this regard. Promoters of service design as a field, among others Andy Polaine, Lavrans Løvlie and Ben Reason, argue that there are distinct differences between products and services; products are usually made, marketed and then sold, while services have multiple touch points of interaction (2013 p. 22).

Furthermore, innovation can cover more than products, services and processes. The Austrian economist Joseph A. Schumpeter, a pioneer in innovation studies, distinguished between five different types of innovation: "new products, new methods of production, new sources of supply, the exploitation of new markets, and new ways to organize business" (Fagerberg 2005 pp. 6-7).

When it comes to media innovation, Storsul and Krumsvik also identify five types of innovation. These are *product*, *process*, *position*, *paradigmatic* and *social* innovation (2013 p. 16). Position innovation involves changes in how products or services are positioned or framed within certain contexts. An example could be a magazine repositioning itself for a new target group. Paradigmatic innovation relates to changes in an organization's mindset, values and business models. The shift in the music industry from CD sales to streaming services is an example of a paradigmatic change in the market. Social innovation is innovation that meets social needs and improves people's everyday lives. This includes new ways of using media services for social objectives (ibid.).

2.2.3: The innovator's dilemma

A relevant pair of innovation categories yet to be mentioned, is *disruptive* and *sustaining* innovation. These terms may be compared with radical and incremental innovation. However, Clayton M. Christensen claims that the two conceptual pairs are very different from each other (2000 p. xiv). The radical-versus-incremental distinction emphasizes the newness of the technology, while the disruptive-versus-sustaining distinction relates

more to the consequences in the market. Sustaining innovation improves the performance of established products, while disruptive technology introduces a different set of performance attributes from what already exists, which leads to significant changes in the market (Adner 2002 p. 668, Christensen 2000 p. xv). A product does not need to be brand new to be disruptive. Even simple, convenient and affordable innovations may have major implications, and at least initially, they often seem inferior compared to the existing products on the market (Christensen 2008 p. vii).

Christensen's research shows that large and established companies are often leaders in the development and commercialization of sustaining technology, but tend to fail when facing disruptive innovations (2000 p. 11). A classical example is the Kodak case. In the company's glory days, Kodak was the market leader within photography. In 1976, Kodak accounted for 90 per cent of film and 85 per cent of camera sales in the US (Lucas and Goh 2009 p. 49). Soon, the firm faced what has been named *the innovator's dilemma*. Digital technology was on the rise, and the managers in Kodak understood that digital cameras were the future of photography. However, the existing business was thriving and the management feared that the digital technology would threaten the film sales. Already in 1975, Kodak had developed the very first digital camera, but waited to introduce it to the market until it was absolutely necessary (ibid. p. 51). The firm did not begin its full commitment to digital cameras before 2005. By then, competitors like Canon and Sony had gained a head start, and the film sales had already fallen for several years. In 2012, Kodak filed for bankruptcy protection, rearranged its business and stopped producing cameras (Taran 10.3.2014).

However, not everyone agrees with this version of the story, where Kodak was paralyzed and afraid of the consequences of digital technology. Scott D. Anthony claims that the firm innovated aggressively and worked hard to compete within the business of digital imaging (cited in Cable 8.2.2012). Despite the efforts, it was not enough to save the company. His explanation of the collapse is that Kodak was unable to move far enough and fast enough away from its core business model, as they for a long time primarily focused on photography and film (ibid.). Along with this observation, several other lessons to be learned from the Kodak example have been presented in the innovation and business model literature:

- Start innovating before you need to. The best time for changing is when the business is healthy (Anthony et al. 2008 p. 1).

- Aim to be a first mover. A second mover manifests itself in a 'me-too' business model with a smaller profit margin (Taran 10.3.2014).

- Spread the eggs. In fast-changing industries, it is risky to work with only one idea. A better approach is to develop a portfolio of growth strategies (Cable 8.2.2012).

- Be open to mindset changes. Disruptions call for different thinking: about the organization, the products and the users. One has to think beyond what the customers expect (Anthony et al. 2008 p. 7).

2.3: Market analysis

"Stay close to your customers" is a popular slogan and a good reminder that innovation should be driven by knowledge about the users instead of technological fantasies. However, Christensen claims that this is not always a robust advice. In his view, products and services should be created based on what the customers need tomorrow instead of what appears to be useful for the customers today (2000 p. 226). This is in accordance with what Henry Ford, the developer of the Model T automobile, allegedly said in the early 20th century: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses" (Barnes 2006 p. 106). However, this does not mean that one should stop listening to the customers altogether. It implies though, that one should be aware of this method's limitations. Furthermore, instead of solely asking directly what the customers envision, it may also be fruitful to ask the informants how they live their lives, about their everyday experiences, what they do and what their motivations are. This will generate insight that drives innovation in a way that makes sense in the context of people's lives (Polaine, Løvlie and Reason 2013 p. 41).

2.3.1: Market segmentation

In order to create valuable products and services for the customers, it is often necessary to divide the market into several segments. The segments are defined based on differences in customer needs and behaviour patterns (Selnes and Lanseng 2014 p. 56). In the market segmentation literature, there have been disagreements whether various segments actually exist in the marketplace or whether such groupings are constructed by market analysts. Peter R. Dickson and James L. Ginter claim that differences in demand and behaviour do exist within segments. This is not to say, however, that any

firm's identification of the market segments and their differences accurately portrays this reality (1987 p. 5).

When a company has identified a market segment, the specific customer group may not necessarily be as homogeneous as the company might think. Fred Selnes and Even J. Lanseng point out that this may either be due to analytical errors, or that the segment should be further divided into micro segments (2014 pp. 55, 58). Segment distinctions are usually blurred, and it is impossible to map every detail of a group's needs and behaviours. Therefore, every firm has to draw its own conclusions based on their conceptual and analytic approach to segment identification. Each company's definition, framing, and characterization of the market segments will likely be unique (Dickson and Ginter 1987 p. 5).

2.4: Digital natives

When selecting the segment of young adults, an important issue to consider is their use of information technology. In order to better understand their behaviour as a group, one may look to the literature about *digital natives*. In 2001, Marc Prensky was the first to introduce the term. He claims that today's students are 'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games and the internet. Earlier generations he calls *digital immigrants*. These have also learned the digital language, but since they have not been raised in the digital era, they have an 'accent'; their use of digital technology is slightly different. Prensky argues that this distinction goes deeper than one might suspect. The digital natives "think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (2001 p. 1).

The research on digital natives has created debate, and the concept in itself has been widely criticised. Siva Vaidhyanathan argues that not everyone in the young generation is skilled in digital technology. He claims that the term "ignores the needs and perspectives of those young people who are not socially or financially privileged" (19.9.2008). However, Vaidhyanathan writes from an American perspective, and one may argue that his arguments are not as relevant in Norway, where social initiatives ensure that most young people are involved in the digital age, despite social differences.

Regardless, the research on digital natives gives an interesting perspective to this thesis. It contributes in describing the reading patterns and media preferences among young people. However, the research mostly addresses digital natives in an educational

situation (e.g. Prensky 2001; Bennett, Maton and Kervin 2008; Kennedy et al. 2008) and does not examine private use of digital technology. *Born Digital* by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser (2008) also has education and upbringing in focus. Yet, it is a book that covers a variety of topics, hence it also brings up the subject of leisure activities and media habits. Among other things, the authors argue that active use of social media and collection of large amounts of information online is a natural part of young people's lives today.

3: Methods

"We will only succeed, though, in getting to the root cause of these issues if we listen carefully to what young people in our society are telling us" (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 295).

This study of reading patterns and magazine concepts is mainly based on qualitative interviews, yet also includes a quantitative survey and examination of existing platform solutions. I conducted in-depth interviews with 16 people in total. 12 of these are young adults, while four are representatives from Egmont. Of the 12 young people, there are six of each gender. Three of them are aged 18-19, two aged 20-21, three aged 22-23 and four aged 24-25. Eight of them are full time students, one is part time student/part time employed, one freelancer, one trainee and one full time employed. The four interviewees from Egmont are: the head of digital innovation and commercialization, two magazine editors and one young journalist.

3.1: Design challenges

As shown in chapter 1.2, the research questions are somewhat open, due to shortage of previous research in the field (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 160). Egmont has minimal data regarding young customers' media preferences, and this also leads to a need for broad research questions.

The lack of previous research may serve as both an advantage and a disadvantage. The uncharted territory makes it difficult to define a clear starting point, but it can also give the freedom to form an original path and the opportunity to make new and essential discoveries. In many fields, there may be barriers such as fixed, collective frames of understanding, but these are not present when the field is unexplored. The only limitations are the researcher's own assumptions of the truth.

As mentioned in chapter 1.3, an explorative research method is considered as best suited for reflecting the research questions. There is a need for explanations and context, instead of numbers and facts. In-depth interviews allow the informants to use their own words. New and important considerations may appear, which are not always easy to reveal using quantitative surveys.

Ragnhild Silkoset claims that an explorative design is suited for creating understanding, yet not solutions (2006 p. 37). In this case, there is certainly a need for a better understanding, but it would also be desirable to find contours of a solution. If the magazine industry shall reach young adults, it is more important to understand the thoughts and actions of the customers than having quantitative data.

Even so, the study will have traits from other designs in addition to the purely explorative. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, as all methods have strengths and weaknesses. It can therefore be fruitful to combine different approaches (Furseth and Everett 2013 p. 103). For the study, a quantitative survey, which would function as a supportive tool, was chosen. When a discovery was made in the qualitative material, I could turn to the quantitative data to see if it supported or weakened the finding. In such cases, it is important to ensure that the methods measure the same phenomenon (Jick 1979 p. 602).

3.2: Procedure description

3.2.1: Qualitative data collection

The qualitative interviews were conducted in May 2014. Firstly, a pilot study was carried out, with one young adult who afterwards gave feedback and suggestions for development of the interview guide. It was also a good opportunity to observe how she responded and perceived the questions.

I started finding informants by contacting people in my own network. I avoided interviewing people that I had close relations to, as it is likely that they share many of my opinions and habits, and that they will act differently towards me than others. Therefore, I picked out some in the periphery of my circle and chose interviewees with various backgrounds and different ages within the frame of 18-25. I could have involved a larger segment, for example people in the age 15-30, but 18-25 was chosen in order to make the group more specific. This age range was also mentioned as relevant by Egmont (Godager, conversation 17.3.2014).

A group of people agreed to participate and also suggested others whom I could contact. Before the interviews, the informants were made aware of the purpose of the research. They were offered to be anonymous, but all consented to the use of their names[1]. The interviews were recorded in agreement with the informants, in order to have their exact formulations and to be fully concentrated in the conversation.

For the sake of variation, I endeavoured to have informants who lived in different parts of Norway. I travelled to Kongsvinger and Vestby, had a Skype interview with a young woman in Egersund and met informants from other towns who happened to visit Oslo. However, due to resource limitations, approximately half of the interviews were conducted with inhabitants in Oslo.

The interviews were semi-structured. The interview guide consisted of predetermined questions and topics[2], but they were presented in an order that felt natural in each interview. I also asked follow-up questions when needed and went deeper into certain issues when the informant had interesting reflections on a subject.

The same technique was used when interviewing the four informants in Egmont, but the questions varied according to their different positions in the company. The head of digital innovation and commercialization was my contact person in Egmont and the first person to be interviewed. Subsequently, he put me in touch with other key persons in the company.

3.2.2: Quantitative data collection

The quantitative survey was conducted in May and June 2014, and as with the qualitative interview, it was tested beforehand. Two young adults carried out the survey and gave feedback regarding comprehension of the questions and time spent. It was important that answering the survey was manageable, to ensure a large number of respondents[3]. The survey was primarily spread through social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and was further shared by friends and followers. One upper secondary school and a university college also agreed to share the survey among a group of media students. In total, 226 respondents completed the survey. As it was mainly spread via

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[1] The informants agreed to the use of their full names, but I considered that it was only necessary to operate with their first name and age.
[2] See appendix #1
[3] See appendix #4

social media, it is not possible to determine the response rate. However, it is known that 61 per cent of those who clicked on the link, completed the survey.

3.2.3: Examination of existing platform solutions

The examination of existing platforms was carried out in July 2014. The aim of this part of the study was to explore available magazine solutions in the market, and to identify features that could be inspirational and features that could preferably be avoided.

I mainly searched for concepts that had a variety of functions and offered content from several titles. It is common for magazines to have their own application where one can buy and download each issue. These were largely avoided, as many of them primarily offer a replica of the paper product. However, there are examples of title specific apps with highly interactive content.

As the tools for examination used were iPhone, iPad and MacBook, apps that are not available for Apple, for example Google Play Newsstand for Android, were not examined. Seven platforms were chosen, and of those accessible in Norway, I reviewed the concept, availability for devices, presentation and structure of the content, navigation and readability, the possibility of sharing content, the payment solution and downloading time[4].

3.2.4: Data analysis

For the quantitative survey, the program SurveyXact served as a tool for gaining an overview of the data and conducting analyses. In contrast, the qualitative data required a more manual approach for analysis. The in-depth interviews lasted between 20 minutes and one and a half hours. The transcription of the audio files resulted in between four and eleven pages of text per interview[5]. To get an overview of the material, every relevant subject from the interview guide was listed in a spreadsheet. Thereafter, the interviews were examined in detail and the informants' main statements about each subject were plotted into the spreadsheet[6]. During this process of categorizing, supplementary subjects were identified and included in the table. In addition to presenting the main opinions in the analysis system, the transcriptions were colour coded in order to make it easy to find any specific discussion in the original documents.

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[4] See appendix #6
[5] See appendix #2
[6] See appendix #3

3.3: Quality and limitations of the data

As described earlier in chapter 3, there was some variation in the group of informants regarding gender, age, occupation and geography. This led to a relatively rich, qualitative material. However, since the informants were recruited using what can be called the snowball method, where one interviewee suggests another one (Furseth and Everett 2013 p. 116), there is a risk that the informants are more similar to one another than what a randomly selected group would be. Hence, the outcome may be more coherent or point to another direction than what the case would be with a random sample of the general young population. Nevertheless, the informants were made aware of this and engaged in pointing out people who had a different background than themselves.

This concern is also relevant in the case of the quantitative data. The social network method for spreading the survey might have led to relatively similar respondents. When analyzing the data, it was discovered that 71 per cent are female, 48 per cent live in Oslo and 29 per cent study or work within the media sector[7]. A reason for the latter may also be that media interested people are perhaps more eager to take a survey about media innovation than others. Another and more important issue, mentioned in chapter 3.2.2, is that it was only leaders of media studies that agreed to spread the survey among their students. It is highly important to be aware of such issues, so that one can take it into consideration when analyzing the data.

3.3.1: Reliability and validity

As this study is mainly based on qualitative methods, where the data is a result of interaction between the researcher and the informant, the question of replicating the research is irrelevant. In this case, reliability can instead be connected with whether or not the researcher is clear and thorough when describing the background for the methodological choices (Thagaard 2013). During the planning, collection of data and analysis, it has been important to continuously assess the methods and the context in which they have been used. Mixing the qualitative interviews with a quantitative survey was a choice to ensure multiple sources of information. If time had been a less scarce

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[7] See appendix #5

resource, it would be possible to add a third method and thus create triangulation (Jick 1979), for example a diary method where informants logged their use of media.

Another way of ensuring reliability is to ask several informants when checking specific information (Furseth and Everett 2013 p. 116). It is difficult for others to question what one informant claims to prefer of media platforms, but when a general phenomenon is described, other informants may be consulted in order to support or reject the statement.

While reliability is about whether the results can be trusted, validity is how well it measures what one has intended to measure (Gripsrud, Olsson and Silkoset 2006 p. 72). Internal validity is linked to how the casual relations are supported within the study (ibid. p. 69). This thesis does not have the ambition to establish a causal relation, but to explore and describe phenomena, more specifically in which ways young adults use media and magazines. The most relevant here is therefore whether the results are expressions of the informants' actual preferences and habits. It is important for the researcher to be aware of the risk of affecting the interviewees. The researcher will always have her own opinions, and bias in research cannot be completely avoided (Kvale 1994 p. 155). However, if the researcher is carefully checking the formulations and reflecting upon her own presuppositions, the unwitting influence on the informant's answers will be minimized (ibid.).

A bias can for instance occur when the researcher indirectly expresses that certain answers are preferable. When explaining the purpose of the study to the informants, I made sure to not indicate which specific answers I would like to have. When the informants did not have an immediate answer to a question, it was sometimes tempting to suggest an answer from my own frame of understanding. In these cases, I sought to find other formulations or additional questions that could generate answers. However, after all the questions were answered, it could be fruitful to bring up what other informants had answered in order to create a debate. In this context, leading questions do not have to be avoided at all costs, but one should be aware of their effects. Steinar Kvale explains it this way: "The decisive issue […] is not whether to lead or not to lead, but where the interview questions lead, whether they lead in important directions, yielding new and worthwhile knowledge" (1994 p. 156).

Unintentional bias may also be a problem when analyzing the qualitative data (Burnard 1991 p. 464). With such a large amount of text material, small issues may be

overemphasized and large ones may be overlooked. I was aware that it might be a challenge that I already had an idea about the situation. After all, I as a young researcher share the culture and habits of the group being studied, which could lead to a specific search for patterns I predicted to find. The analysis system was a useful tool for obtaining an overview and minimizing the risk of exaggerating or ignoring phenomena.

External validity is connected to generalization and whether or not the study applies to other people than the informants (Silkoset 2006 p. 43). One should be careful when generalizing from explorative research. This paper does not meet the requirements given in studies that are primarily quantitative, but the qualitative approach leads to a depth and understanding that would not be found in a large-scale, quantitative survey. The study provides by no means a comprehensive mapping of young adults' reading habits and optimal magazine concepts, but the findings may give an indication of certain phenomena. As a part of this thesis, I will propose some suggestions based on literature and the empirical findings, but it is important to note that further research is needed to establish broad conclusions about young adults' reading patterns and their wishes for the future of magazines.

4: Findings

"When entering a kiosk, there are many magazines on the stand, but the question is whether young people still buy them. We believe some still do, but perhaps they don't. Suddenly we come to the point when we don't sell magazines anymore" (Godager, interview 19.5.2014).

4.1: Egmont's starting point

Egmont is Norway's largest publisher of weeklies and magazines, with over 40 different titles in their portfolio. Various types of content from all the printed editions are also presented at *Klikk.no*, the largest editorial consumer website in Norway. Egmont has several loyal customer groups, especially among adult women and within niches such as interior design, lifestyle, food and health (Opaas 23.9.2014). However, their magazines are not as popular among young adults. This is one of Egmont's main concerns, and interviews with key persons within the company revealed that in order to change this, they are open to new insight and new strategies to pursue. Egmont has not previously conducted thorough analyses regarding the youth market, but wishes to acquire more

knowledge on the matter. Although Egmont lacks accurate information about the media habits of young adults, the informants had several hypotheses about the development:

- Young readers are less loyal than before, in the sense that they give less attention to specific magazines and jump instead from title to title and website to website, often while multitasking.
- Young adults appreciate quality to a greater extent. As an example, the trend has turned from watching cat videos to reading articles about social issues.
- Smart phones and tablets are on the rise, while PCs and paper magazines are used less than before.
- Online articles are not mainly read through the front websites of newspapers and magazines, but are rather found on Google or social media like Facebook.

The informants emphasized that these are just assumptions and that more certain knowledge is needed.

As of today, Egmont does not have many products or services aimed at people aged 18-25. The reason for this is that they do not know specifically what they should be. – Is it wise to have more user-generated content or more video, and if so, short or long videos? Should we cooperate with someone or buy any websites? We have many questions here and no good answers (Godager, interview 19.5.2014).

4.2: Reasons for not reading magazines

As described in chapter 1, the sale of magazines to young adults is declining - not only in Egmont, but also in the magazine industry as a whole. The situation is even more evident in the newspaper industry where declining circulations and advertising revenues have been more marked (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 144). In *Born Digital*, it is claimed that "most Digital Natives don't buy the newspaper – ever" (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 6). However, this does not mean that young people are not interested in news. In the thesis' survey, 74 per cent claimed to read newspapers or online newspapers every day. One respondent added: "There is a big difference in when I read printed and online newspapers: online newspapers almost daily and printed editions on a monthly basis".

Even though the magazine sale is declining slower than that of the newspapers, it is a situation that cannot be ignored by the magazine industry. 8 of the 12 young interviewees reported that they rarely or never bought printed magazines, and 55 per cent of participants in the quantitative survey stated the same. As with the case of news,

the decline in sales of printed magazines is not an indication of lack of interest in magazine content. Among the survey respondents who never or rarely bought magazines, 32 per cent reported that lack of interest in magazine content was not an important reason, and 22 per cent stated that it was little important for their decision.

4.2.1: Available and free articles online

When young adults rarely buy newspapers, it is because the need for news is filled by various sources online (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 239). The same can to some extent be said about magazine content. Many choose not to buy paper magazines because there is always similar content of decent quality available for free on the internet (ibid. p. 139). A respondent in the quantitative survey stated: "There is so much good stuff on the internet. That is where I cover my needs". As articles online are immediately available, it appears that the majority turns to the digital. Mathias J. (18) explained it this way: – Laziness always prevails, and as long as you can sit on your ass and still get the content without going to the store, even if your eyes are a little bit hurt, you will rather do that (Interview 15.5.2014).

Price is also an essential factor. In the survey, 35 per cent of the respondents who never or rarely bought magazines stated that high pricing was an essential reason for not reading magazines, and 32 per cent regarded it as somewhat important. In addition, 69 per cent of all the respondents stated that lower prices could get them to read more magazine journalism (Figure 1). Turning to the qualitative data, the majority of the interviewees did not think that magazines are expensive, but as there are good alternatives for free, they chose not to buy paper copies. Many in the age 18-25 are students and have a limited economy, but the informants emphasized that it had more to do with priorities than the actual money. Marius (22) stated: – If the interest is there, you will buy it. One beer is the same as a magazine. And it is no problem to buy beer, or a kebab for that matter (Interview 14.5.2014).

Figure 1:
What could make you read more magazine journalism?
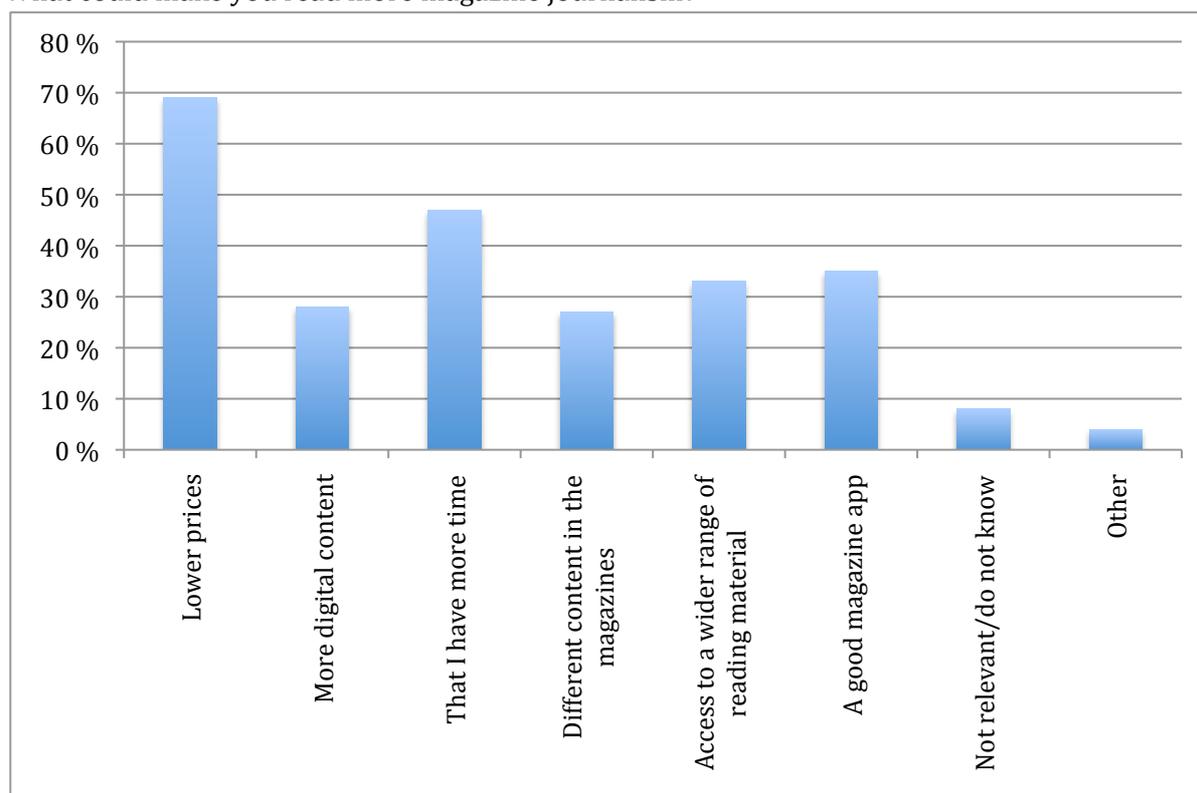
4.2.2: Varied interests

One of the strengths of magazine publishers is their ability to identify niche markets. McKay points out that "they can profitably produce publications for quite small groups of people whose shared interest may be as obscure as smoking cigars or keeping carp" (2006 p. 2). It appears that an important reason for buying a magazine may be a specific hobby or field of interest. In the survey, 77 per cent of those who occasionally or often bought magazines stated that an important motivation for their choice was a wish to read about a specific topic. However, the opposite is also true; among those who rarely or never bought magazines, a wish to read about many different topics was an essential reason for not buying magazines. One respondent called for a magazine targeting young adults that covers more than one topic. Another one wanted the possibility to pick and mix: "I would like to choose the things I want to read, and not buy a whole magazine for reading 1-2 articles".

It seems that young people read more varied than before, and according to Holmes and Nice, the loyalty to specific magazines is almost non-existent (2012 p. 156). Instead of having a few favourite magazines, many digital natives have dozens, if not

hundreds, of favourite web destinations (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 199), they are so-called 'repertoire readers' (McKay 2006 p. 196). The quantitative data supports this view, indicating that young adults find independent articles from various sources. 31 per cent of the respondents claimed to read such articles weekly and 38 per cent on a daily basis.

Cathrine (24) explained: – I think it is interesting with some fashion, some fitness and then some war, you see? I don't want a magazine with only one topic (Interview 16.5.2014). Mathias J. also shared this mindset:

> If there had been one website that could give me all the information I needed, then I would rather subscribe to the magazine that gave me the same offer. But there is so much interesting out there, so I would be poor if I had subscribed to all the magazines that I find online (Interview 15.5.2014).

4.2.3: Habits and needs

From 1968 to 1973, Odd Nordland collected data on why weeklies were so popular. He found that the magazine reading experience fills some needs that the regular literature fails to meet. Nordland assumed that these needs vary from reader to reader, but that magazines also could fill needs that large groups have in common. Such needs could be safety, attention, excitement, variety and friendship (Bjørnsen 1974). The popularity of magazines has been strong also in the decades after Nordland's research, so why is there now a generation that does not buy magazines to the same extent? Joan Barrell and Brian Braithwaite believe that the magazine producers cannot take for granted that the customers need the magazines. It does not help to have a young target group in mind when creating a product, if one does not engage in arousing a need for the product at the same time.

> Lesson one [...] is not to confuse need with condition. A condition is simply a state of being – a circumstantial existence – which in itself does not necessarily constitute a magazine audience of sufficient numbers or buying power to interest an advertiser. A need is a readership which actually wants something from a magazine – such readers being a market (Barrell and Braithwaite 1988 p. 95).

In other words, one has to convince young adults about the advantages of buying and reading a particular publication.

The majority of the informants explained that it was not natural for them to grab a magazine when they were in a kiosk or a store. For some, it had happened a few times

when they were going to the beach or were travelling and knew there would be a lot of spare time. But regularly buying a magazine seemed distant for them.

Several informants pointed out the importance of recommendations from friends. Young people are often concerned with what their friends and family do, and when reading magazines is not a common activity in their social circle, no one will encourage them to buy magazines. Ester (21) described the change in her group of friends from five years ago and now:

> A lot of people read magazines when I was 15-16 years old. We used to discuss the content among our friends. We could for example say: "I saw the nicest bikini in that magazine", "Yes, I saw it too, it was gorgeous". But now, I barely know anyone who reads magazines. When you find a nice bikini, you send each other a link from Nelly.com, and that's it. It's not a topic of conversation anymore (Interview 15.5.2014).

As most of the informants were students, many reported to spend much time reading schoolbooks, and that this lead to a view of reading as a duty. They could not bear the thought of reading for pleasure in their spare time, when they had so much scholarly literature to go through. TV shows, movies and video games were therefore more preferred leisure activities.

However, several of the informants did not believe that young adults' reading quotas had been filled up by schoolbooks, but pointed instead to lack of habits and needs. One informant spent 15 minutes every morning reading a magazine while eating breakfast, even though he spent the rest of the day reading scholarly articles. He did this because reading a magazine in the morning had been a habit for him for as long as he could remember (Mathias S. (24), interview 16.5.2014). In contrast, one respondent in the quantitative survey wrote that even though there were a lot of interesting magazines, buying them had never been a habit.

Another informant pointed out that most of his leisure activities were results of needs that had been created:

> If I find out that there is something I like, I can create a need. It's like that with all the TV shows I'm watching now. I was quite happy without those TV shows, but when I started watching it, I created a need. It has become an addiction, but there is nothing like satisfying that addiction (Mathias J., interview 15.5.2014).

Even though Mathias J. stated that he currently does not read magazines, he emphasized the possibility of creating a need for it in the future.

4.3: Reasons for reading magazines

When trying to find innovative solutions for the magazine industry, it is essential to investigate why many young adults do not read magazines, but it is also important to understand the mindset of those who actually read magazines. In the study *Reading Women's Magazines* (1995), Joke Hermes identified purposes such as practical knowledge, emotional learning, melodrama and moral duty, but she regarded relaxation as the most important reason for reading magazines. A magazine can be compared with a cup of tea: easy to pick up and just as easy to put down. It is something to be turned to in one's own time and space (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 129).

In the quantitative survey, 40 per cent of the respondents who occasionally or often bought magazines stated that relaxation was an important reason for reading magazines, and 38 per cent reported it as somewhat important. Enjoying the reading experience was a similar factor that was emphasized among the respondents. 51 per cent stated that this was an essential motivation for buying magazines and 34 per cent regarded it as somewhat important.

Several respondents in the survey also focused on quality and depth. When asked about causes for reading magazines, one respondent wrote: "I get to experience lives being lived around me. Understanding and insight". Also in the qualitative interviews, obtaining knowledge was highlighted as a significant reason for reading. Half of the informants said that they only read to gain insight and to learn something. The other half read both in order to relax and to obtain knowledge. Most of them regarded the paper format as a source of relaxation and digital platforms as tools for learning.

4.4: Paper versus digital media

Most young people are active users of digital media. As Palfrey and Gasser formulated it: "Major aspects of their lives – social interactions, friendships, civic activities – are mediated by digital technologies. And they've never known any other way of life" (2008 p. 2). However, there is at least one exception: Many young people still read hard copies of books, despite significant investments in e-book technology (ibid. p. 251). One respondent in the quantitative survey stated: "Books=paper, everything else=digital".

11 of 12 informants claimed that they in general preferred to read on paper. They felt that in printed magazines and newspapers it is easier to get an overview of the content, it is better for the eyes, it gives a different reading experience and there are no disturbances from pop-ups and notifications that can occur when reading on a computer, a tablet or a smart phone. – If I read a newspaper, then it's just the paper and I (Marius, interview 14.5.2014). Several of the informants also pointed out that they regarded a paper product as being more valuable than a digital magazine. Some liked collecting printed magazines and said that it was not the same to have it stored digitally.

However, even though paper was the preferred reading platform among the informants, most of them admitted that they mostly read on digital devices after all. Furthermore, the quantitative data indicates that access to digital articles is the main reason among young adults for refraining from buying magazines. 43 per cent of the respondents who never or rarely bought magazines reported this as an important reason and 38 per cent stated it as somewhat important (Figure 2).

Figure 2:
What are the reasons that you choose not to buy magazines? I rather read articles digitally.
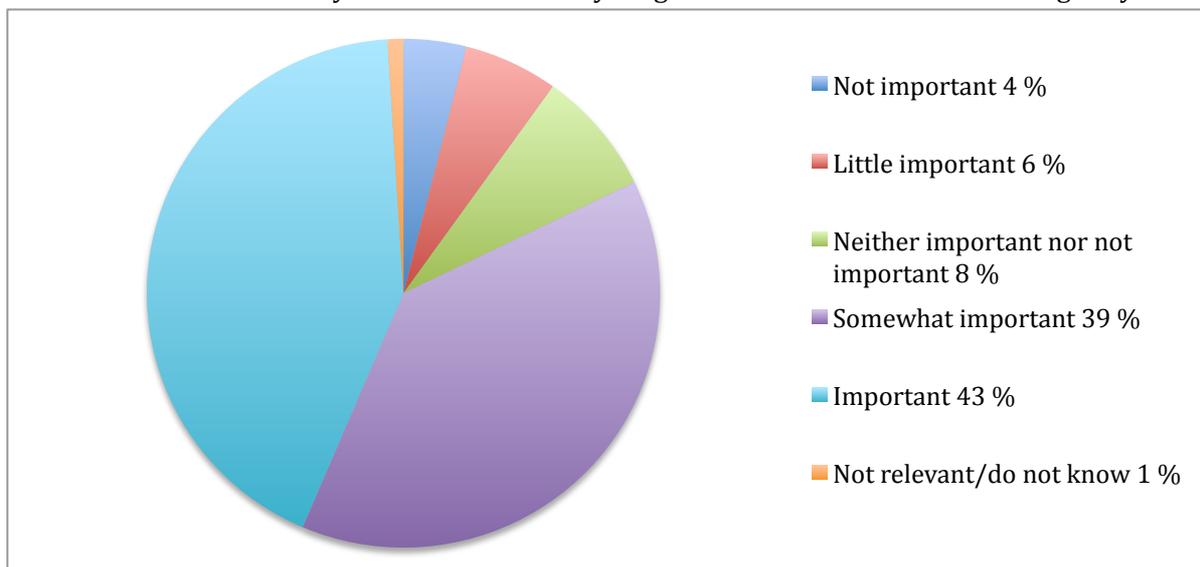
This is an interesting paradox: When paper is the preferred reading platform, why does it not reflect what the young adults actually do? In chapter 4.2.1, the convenience of online content was mentioned. Many of the informants were also tired of all the paper waste and referred to this as a reason to go digital. Yet, one of the most important reasons seemed to be the reading situation, in which settings it was natural for them to

read. The majority of the informants did not mainly read for an hour or two at home in their sofa; they read 5 minutes on the bus, between lectures or while waiting for their friends. And in these situations, they do not happen to have a magazine or a newspaper nearby. But they happen to have a smart phone in their pocket.

A prerequisite for the success of magazines is that they fit into the customers' daily lives. – Printed magazines require that people are willing to set aside time and relax. And that is quite difficult in the time we live in (Ester, interview 15.5.2014). Live Brekke, the editor of *Elle Decoration*, had also observed this development:

> In the digital world everything goes so fast; the way you find inspiration, the way you retrieve information, the way you sweep across the iPad, the way you surf online, it's like you don't have time to finish reading. If it takes too long to download, you will open another window or find a new device where it goes faster. So it's very different now than before, when you perhaps thought that to sit down and find information or inspiration was one of those quiet moments (Interview 26.5.2014).

While printed magazines are often read in quiet moments, digital media are read in other ways, other situations, the reader's mode is different (Barland 2012 p. 226). Since it seems that young adults read in-between other activities, the digital format and content have to be different from that of paper. Palfrey and Gasser claim that on the web, short formats work better than long formats, whether in text, audio, or video (2008 p. 245). Most of the informants also agreed with this, but still stressed the importance of keeping the high quality of the content. Mathias S. stated: – If the magazines manage to make their articles shorter and still keep it interesting, then I believe it will work digitally (Interview 16.5.2014).

4.5: Paying for digital media

There has been a great development in digital technology in the last decades, and the magazine industry has been quick to offer content online. This eagerness, however, also became a problem, as revenue could not keep up with technology. Holmes and Nice explain: "One of the basic problems was that 'online' had come to mean 'free': very few people proved willing to pay to look at magazine (or newspaper) websites" (2012 p. 45).

Palfrey and Gasser have experienced that digital natives may agree to pay for digital content, but only if they see clear benefits, such as ease of use or computer safety or other added value (2008 p. 139). A good example of this is Apple's iTunes. Before it

was introduced to the market, few in the music industry thought that people who had access to pirated music would be willing to pay for MP3 files. This was proven wrong, as the users appreciated a well-designed, reasonably priced model that was tightly integrated with the iPod music player (Anthony et al. 2008 p. 7).

Half of the informants had a personal policy of not paying for anything digital. The other half paid for digital services like Spotify (music) and Netflix (video content), and these were also more prepared to pay for digital magazines. However, also those who did not like to pay for digital services claimed that they would pay for something if they really saw the value of it. Thao (22) did not completely reject the idea of paying for digital media:

> I think we're just very spoiled and used to getting everything for free. It's just a mentality. I really want to pay for what the journalists write as they're doing a good job. But because it's free in some places, I don't want to pay. I would probably have paid for it, if I could find something that is truly worth it. But what is worth paying for? I cannot answer that (Interview 16.5.2014).

4.6: Devices

Smart phones, computers and tablets are common devices for media consumption. Statistics Norway operates with the group 16-24 years old. In 2013, 94 per cent of this group used a smart phone compared to 73 per cent of the population in general. 99 per cent had access to a computer at home, compared to 96 per cent in the general population (Vaage 2014 p. 82). The tablet is perhaps the most convenient device for reading magazines. The last few years there has been a significant increase in the access of tablets among young people. In 2013, 66 per cent of young men and 57 per cent of young women had access to a tablet (ibid.). The year before, in 2012, only 39 per cent of the young men and 42 per cent of the young women had such access (Vaage 2013 p. 82).

However, these figures say little about how much the devices are used in general and for reading specifically. In this study, half of the informants reported to read on their smart phone and computer. The other half read on their computer, but thought the mobile screen was too small for reading, at least when it came to longer articles. Some of those who had a tablet liked it very much and used it a lot for reading, while others hardly used it even if they had it. In these cases, they explained that it was not a habit for them to take up the tablet. The majority of the informants did not own a tablet, but most

of them liked this type of device and thought they would use it for reading if they had one.

In the quantitative survey, 79 per cent stated that they read on a computer every day (Figure 3) and 65 per cent read daily on their mobile phone (Figure 4). 19 per cent read on a tablet every day, however, 38 per cent stated that they never read on such a device (Figure 5). This might indicate that for young adults, tablets have still not become a natural part of everyday life. One could argue that young adults are not actually digital natives when it comes to tablets, but the generation coming after might be. There is no doubt that this type of device is on the rise and has gained wide recognition. As one respondent wrote: "I don't have my own iPad, but I like the format".

Figure 3:
Which devices do you use for reading? PC/laptop

- Never 0 %
- Annualy 1 %
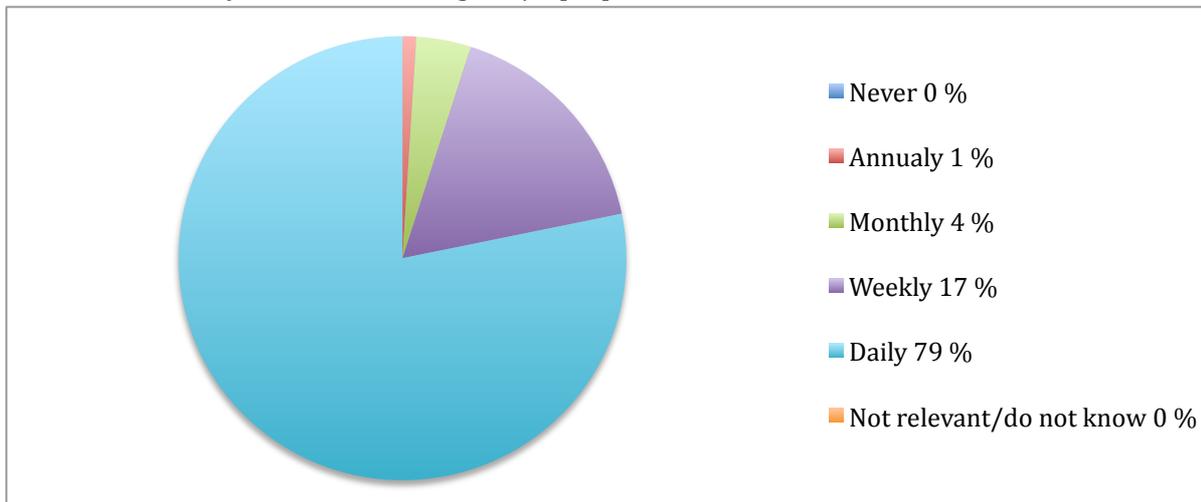- Monthly 4 %
- Weekly 17 %
- Daily 79 %
- Not relevant/do not know 0 %

Figure 4:
Which devices do you use for reading? Mobile phone/smart phone

- Never 6 %
- Annualy 0 %
- Monthly 6 %
- Weekly 22 %
- Daily 65 %
- Not relevant/do not know 1 %
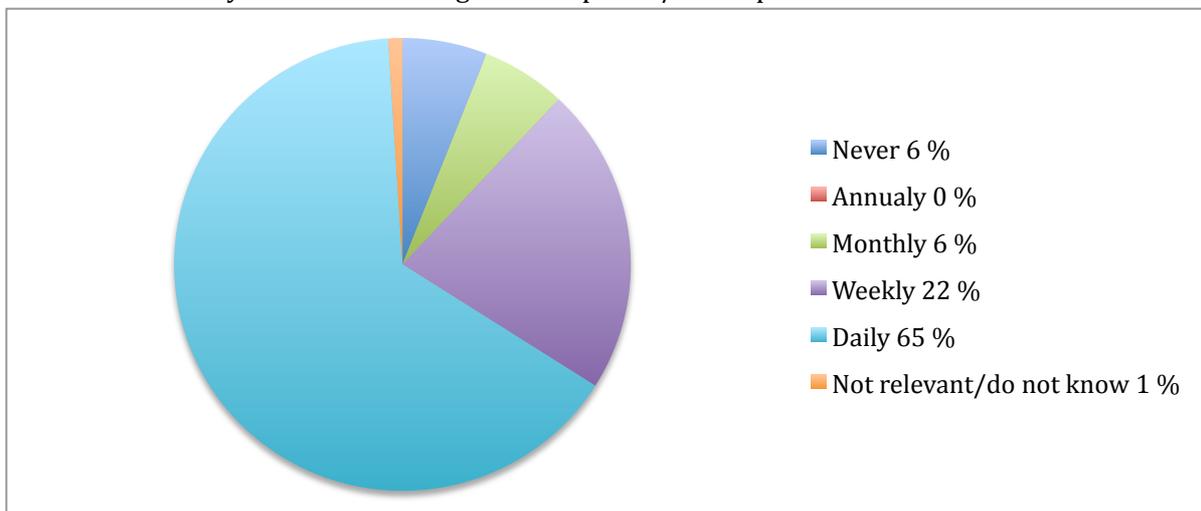
Figure 5:
Which devices do you use for reading? Tablet

- Never 38 %
- Annualy 7 %
- Monthly 11 %
- Weekly 19 %
- Daily 19 %
- Not relevant/do not know 6 %
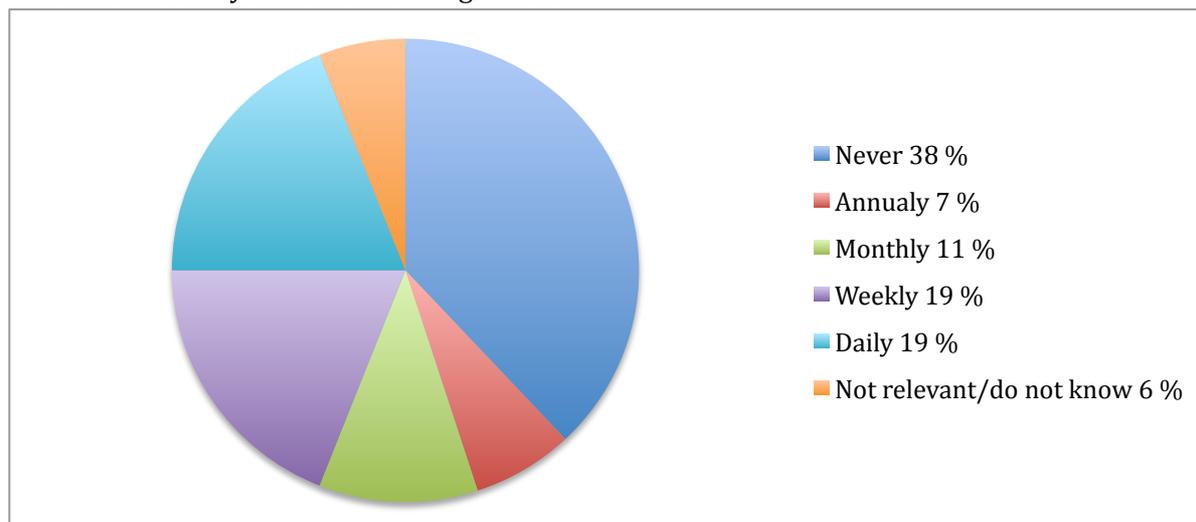
4.7: The social life of digital information

Sharing articles, pictures and videos with friends and family is a daily activity for many young people. "Digital information has a social life in the hands of Digital Natives. They share it with one another, post stories to their profiles in social network sites, and talk about it on instant messaging or on blogs" (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 243). With this in mind, Leslie stresses that in order to be successful, new magazine apps have to be able to link and share content with other parts of the digital world through social networking (2013 p. 217).

Facebook is an example of a popular social medium that also serves as a source of information and entertainment. Over half of the informants mentioned that they often read articles that someone posts on Facebook. The news feed is commonly checked many times per day, and interesting articles may therefore appear at any time. Short articles can be read there and then, and longer articles may be saved for later if they seem interesting enough.

All the informants spent a lot of time on social media, the most popular ones were Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Mathias S. suggested that magazines and newspapers should take this into account when presenting their content: – I'd probably read twice as many articles if social media didn't exist. So that is perhaps where you should incorporate news (Interview 16.5.2014).

4.8: Information overload

According to Palfrey and Gasser, digital natives consume more media content than before due to multitasking (2008 p. 191). Young people may for example sit with their laptop and mobile phone while also watching TV. However, the sea of information available is growing, and there are limits to how much information humans can process and pay attention to (ibid. p. 186). To prevent information overload, the informants tended to pick out a small number of websites and apps that they would be updated on. Some had a larger number that they followed, but several of them expressed their concern of not being able to have a full overview. Marte (25) stressed the importance of convenient access:

> I have often thought that there should be a website that serves like a collection of all the magazines, just like a virtual newsstand, where you can go to get an overview of the magazines. Like, here they are. Here you have them all (Interview 6.5.2014).

4.9: Ideas from the informants

In addition to answering questions about their reading patterns and media preferences, many of the informants had several ideas about how the future magazine experience should be.

A digital magazine concept with interactive content along with good pictures and video was something that most of the interviewees envisioned. They thought it was essential to exploit the opportunities that are present within the digital technology. Especially regarding the issue of navigation and overview, the informants stressed the importance of abandoning the idea that digital magazines should resemble the paper format. They had bad experiences with scrolling and zooming in and out on pages that were initially designed for print. There was a consensus that the methods for giving the reader overview in printed magazines should not be transmitted to digital platforms. The informants wanted less content on each page, nice and clear presentation of each story and good functionality for searching and sorting content. However, one feature from printed publications was embraced: the possibility of marking in the digital text, as you would do on paper with a highlighter (Niclas (25), interview 14.5.2014).

If there is no longer a printed copy to be found in the mail every month, it may be easy to forget to go through the magazine content. One interviewee therefore thought it would be nice to be reminded about it now and then through use of notifications

(Mathias S., interview 16.5.2014). However, there is a fine line between useful and annoying amounts of such reminders.

Since the informants often read articles when they only had a few minutes to spare, they valued minimal downloading time. The ability to read in offline mode was also mentioned, as one does not always have the possibility to be online, for example while travelling on the underground.

When time is a scarce resource, shorter articles are preferred, as discussed in chapter 4.4. Sometimes, however, the obstacle is rather that one is simply tired of reading. For longer texts, it was therefore a desire to be able to press a button and hear the journalist read the article (Marte, interview 6.5.2014). This may be part of an initiative to give readers a more personal connection with the journalists. Other ideas involved a possibility for readers to wish for certain articles to be written and to follow the development of articles in the making (ibid.).

Some of the informants had experienced to buy a whole magazine when they essentially were interested in one special article. Freedom of choice regarding payment solution was therefore a request. One should be able to either pay for single articles or a subscription with full access to one or many magazines. There are a lot of interesting publications, and several informants would have liked to explore the variety if it had been part of a reasonable, digital subscription.

4.10: Existing solutions

There are a few digital concepts in the English speaking market that have gathered magazines from a wide range of publishers. The two largest ones are Zinio and Magzter with over 5500 and 4000 titles respectively. In the applications, one can read a selection of free articles and otherwise buy subscriptions or single issues. In Zinio, it is possible to read the content as magazine pages or as adapted text for the specific reading device. In Magzter, it is only possible to read the articles as in a paper magazine. However, as it is easy to zoom in and out, the app still seems quite user friendly. In both solutions, the navigation system may be confusing in the beginning, yet manageable after some practice. The downloading time might be of annoyance, especially in Magzter where one often has to wait several seconds for each page to appear.

An application called Next Issue is fairly similar to Zinio and Magzter. The main differences are the payment solution and number of titles. For ten dollars per month,

one has access to all the 140 titles Next Issue has to offer. The solution is currently only available in the US and Canada.

Apple Newsstand is the solution that offers the most Norwegian titles. However, this is not a proper magazine application in itself, but a virtual newsstand with an overview of apps for each title. This is a relatively cumbersome solution, as one has to click on the newsstand, then click on the specific magazine app, and there find the wanted issue.

One of the available apps in the Apple Newsstand is National Geographic Magazine, which Apple ranked number one in 2012 (iTunes). Even though it only serves content from one title, it is worth mentioning due to the aesthetics of the app and the high level of interactivity. National Geographic Magazine offers nicely presented pictures, videos, audio and graphics in addition to easily readable text. The navigation is advanced, but easy to understand.

Flipboard is a slightly different type of concept. It gathers free content from social media and other websites. The users create their own digital magazines by adding articles found in chosen categories. It is possible to decide whether the self-composed magazines shall be visible to others or not.

In February, Facebook launched a new application called Facebook Paper that will share stories both from friends and the world (Bakke and Owe 3.2.2014). Even though it is currently only available in the US, Facebook shows potential as a provider of news and entertainment, without producing any content themselves.

5: Discussion

"Before, it was in the teen magazines that you could learn how to be young. Now, all the social media can teach you much of the same" (Mathias S., interview 16.5.2014).

In the media industry, one competes for the customers' time. Due to the information abundance, attention has become a strategic resource (Hjarvard 2008 p. 107). Several of the informants in Egmont thought their greatest competition was not magazines from other publishers, but blogs, Facebook, Youtube and other time consuming channels outside the magazine sector. However, Holmes and Nice urge the industry to focus more on factors in which they are able to control:

[P]erhaps the truest challenge for magazine editors working in younger markets

today lies not in the threat to their publications from outside, uncontrolled sources (the internet, demography, changes to the music market) but in a basic failure to communicate with a readership that has changed too quickly for them to keep pace (2012 p. 156).

5.1: The *end generation*?

An important consideration, touched upon in chapter 1.1, is whether Egmont should create a new magazine title to reach young readers or if they instead should create something completely new. The strong decline in the teen and twentysomething market may indicate that we are entering the *end generation*, the last generation of readers who automatically read magazines for pleasure (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 146).

Godager also raised this question and expressed a concern about whether this is a group that has simply stopped reading magazines. Yet, he still held open the possibility that the young generation will start reading in the future.

> Perhaps we should just wait until they are older and then have some good products for them. When you are finished studying, you start your first job, then you're in another mode. So it may well be that we should just be where we are, but then we have to be sure that we have the right products for them when they get older (Interview 19.5.2014).

One cannot draw any conclusions from the study's data about whether we have the end generation or not. However, the informants had some thoughts regarding the issue. Over half of the young adults saw it as likely that they would start subscribing to a magazine in the future. Several pointed out though, that this requires a new habit, a specific time of the day or week to read magazines, and that they must find something that highly interests them. The informants stated that it is a big step to start a new subscription; the arguments for it must be strong.

Several of those who thought it was out of the question to subscribe to printed magazines, found it likely that they would read more digital content in the future. Some mentioned that when they finish their studies and leave their schoolbooks, they would probably read more for pleasure.

5.2: A digital magazine feeling?

When the magazine readers appreciate the special reading experience they get, as reported in chapter 4.3, this is an important issue to address when going from paper to

digital. The reading experience is not only established by the words, it is the whole package of the magazine (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 6). So is it possible to create the 'paper feeling' on digital platforms? For example, a number of digital magazine concepts have a function where you can 'flip the pages' like you would in a printed magazine. There are also digital magazines that imitate the glossy paper quality. Husni, however, thinks such initiatives are pointless: "The digital age is helping us create new platforms and new media, but do not fool yourself and think you can recreate a similar experience to that we have in ink on paper magazines" (11.6.2010).

But even if it had been possible, would the paper experience be preferable for digital platforms? As mentioned in chapter 4.9, the majority of the informants expressed that they would rather have digital magazines that looked completely different. One argued that she was so used to the digital being different, so she did not need the paper feeling (Cathrine, interview 16.5.2014).

Tim Moore, editor, designer and coder of the tablet magazine *Letter to Jane*, wanted to create something new, without a printed magazine as a starting point. Leslie honors this method: "Publishing from scratch without a printed edition allows him to move away completely from the print flatplan and 'pages'. The result is a calm, reflective experience, with navigation that appears as it is needed" (2013 p. 217).

Lasse B. Brekke, editor of *Vi Menn*, believed it is possible to have a different, but equally good magazine experience on digital platforms:

> Even though one holds a tablet instead of a paper magazine, it is possible to fully enjoy the content. The excitement of finding the next copy in the mail disappears, but one can still be thrilled over great content (Interview 26.5.2014).

5.3: The *à la carte model*

The question is how one should distribute and receive the thrilling content. A common perception among the informants was that accessing a large number of digital magazines in one place is the future. Sources of inspiration may be Zinio or Magzter. The magazine Alwayz Therro claims on their website that "Zinio Newsstand has transformed our traditional publications into the future of what we all expect" (2011). However, not everyone is impressed. Michael Turro, a publisher of several American magazines, expressed his view in a comment on Gigaom.com: "I can almost guarantee that nobody

in the industry [...] looks at what is going on in the Zinio app and says 'this is it – this is the answer we've been looking for!'" (21.4.2010)

So what can the solution be? In 2012, journalist Hamish McKenzie claimed in the web publication PandoDaily that magazine publishers should look to the development in the music industry. The music player iTunes broke up the albums into individual songs and offered customers an *à la carte* approach for listening to music (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 251). The music streaming service Spotify further developed this new mindset, and today, the users of the service access a library of over 20 million tracks (Zhang et al. 2013 p. 4). McKenzie's point is that similar access should be given to readers of magazine journalism. An à la carte solution would break up the magazines and present the content as individual articles. For a small price per month, one would be able to read all the stories one could imagine from a wide range of magazines. Every reader, writer and magazine would have a profile page, and new stories could be discovered through the social connections built around one's profile. Latest works from one's favourite publications would show in the news feed as well as the currently most popular stories (McKenzie 26.3.2012). This would mean that the magazine experience would resemble that of social media rather than the feeling of paper. It would be interactive, social and fully centralized.

As Egmont owns a wide range of magazines, the media group would have a solid foundation for developing and operating an à la carte solution. In the long term, it could also be relevant to obtain and present content from other publishers to expand the selection of stories.

5.3.1: Objections to the model

Egmont has a large number of strong brands like *Elle*, *Vi Menn* and *Hjemmet*. An objection against a digital solution that combines the different magazines, is that the individual titles may be weakened. Lasse B. Brekke stressed the importance of keeping the brands intact: – It is essential that we don't lose our identity. We have to renew ourselves, but at the same time keep our values and what we are known for (Interview 26.5.2014). However, Egmont as a brand could be strengthened with the à la carte model, and it would also be possible to highlight the various titles within the application.

Such a magazine concept may attract new readers who do not already buy magazines, but there is also a possibility that some subscribers of paper magazines will

move to the centralized solution. In other words, the established market of printed magazines may be damaged by the arrival of a digital newcomer. In this sense, the à la carte solution will be a disruptive innovation, but since the youth magazine market sorely needs to be redefined, a disruptive strategy may be the key to success (Anthony et al. 2008 p. 5).

As we have seen with the music industry, when a large number of songs are available at all times, no single set of artists dominates the market (Palfrey and Gasser 2008 p. 128). Likewise, to gather all magazine content in one place will give the readers a larger selection to choose from. A challenge is to prevent a 'tyranny of choice' (ibid.). One initiative may be to create good sorting, searching and recommendation features. This way, the readers will see articles about topics that interest them. Still, it is equally important to let users see things that are not similar to what they have seen before.

> I want something new and surprising. I don't know what I want! Suddenly you come across something really amazing; something you did not even know existed. We don't really want to have what we think we want (Marte, interview 6.5.2014).

5.4: How to make money from digital media content?

The findings in the study strongly indicate that one should invest in magazine concepts that are digital. The problem is the customers' unwillingness to pay for digital services. One thing is how to attract users, another is how to make money on it. The audience is used to having free online media; it is therefore hard to convince users to buy digital subscriptions (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 45).

In the newspaper industry, one has not managed to replace the decline in revenue in printed editions with adequate revenue growth in new digital products (Barland 2012 p. 9). However, when it comes to magazines, Holmes and Nice are optimists: "[W]ith ad spends beginning to migrate online and publishers working out even more innovative ways of generating revenue, the picture appears more upbeat than it was a decade ago, at least for some" (2012 p. 91).

An increasing number of online newspapers offer exclusive content behind pay-walls, and this helps to soften the 'no-pay' mindset. However, it is still less profitable to sell digital content versus paper products, and it is unclear how one should approach this challenge.

Media analyst Kate Bulkley claims that it is wise not to focus too much on making

money in the beginning: "The most pertinent advice seems to be: build a large audience of users with a free-access principle supported by advertising and sponsorship and then find ways to charge for added-value services" (30.11.2009). Spotify has done this with success. In the free version, one can listen to music with breaks for advertisement, but with a monthly fee, one can among other things avoid the advertisement and listen to music in an offline mode. Daniel Ek, the Chief Executive Officer of Spotify, argues that this 'freemium' business model is the best solution:

> If you look at the two sides of my business in isolation, the ad-supported side and the subscription or premium side, they don't work. That's because the [average] revenue per user (ARPU) is high enough on the subscription side, but there is not enough of the ad-supported side, where there is a lot of traffic but not enough revenue. Only [by combining the two] and adding ticketing and other things can you get the volume as well as the revenues (quoted by Bulkley 30.11.2009).

The centralization of music makes it easier for users to choose Spotify as their provider. They only need Spotify for having the opportunity to listen to all kinds of music. In comparison, the Norwegian newspapers struggle, as each newspaper has its own pay-wall. As mentioned in chapter 4.10, Facebook Paper seeks to gather news from different agencies in one platform, but there are also solutions that only centralize the payment and not the content. An example is *Piano Media* in Slovakia, which is a national pay-wall. For a small monthly fee, the readers have full access to nine media websites. Tomas Bella, owner of the combined payment solution, believed the readers would appreciate the simplicity of the model: "We are betting the user will find this all-you-can-eat approach attractive. People in general don't have a problem to pay, but they don't want to make many payments to individual websites" (quoted by Tomek and Schweizer 13.5.2011).

5.5: From idea to implementation

The findings of this study have generated some ideas as to how magazine content could be presented in order to correspond to young adults' reading patterns. However, it is important to remember that there is a long way to go after one has come up with a good idea. Jarle Moss Hildrum, Senior Research Scientist at Telenor stated: "The easy part of innovation is the idea. The tough part is execution of complex innovation projects and market implementation of the outcome" (6.5.2014).

According to Turro, there is a great potential in building compelling magazine experiences for digital platforms if one is prepared to initiate major changes. In addition to a vision of the ideal solution, "it's about rearranging departments, processes, people, lives in a way that leads to a sustainable and logical execution of that vision" (21.4.2010).

There is no obvious way of getting from an idea to a successful product or service on the market. The process of innovation is messy and the outcome unpredictable. It is not a linear development, but a set of feedbacks and loops that occur between the stages of the process (Fagerberg 2005 p. 9). The vision of the final product remains very rarely unchanged throughout the development period.

It is important to have a clear goal, yet as McKay claims: "the only dependable information is about what the public has actually bought. You can't predict for sure what they will buy in the future" (2006 p. 188). However, research on success in previous media innovation projects might give us an idea. Piet Bakker has studied success and failure in a newspaper market, but the findings may be interesting for the magazine industry as well. Bakker's article published in *Media Innovations* is primarily a story about many failures, but he reports that a few of the innovations he studied showed a different pattern, with an almost permanent growth. What Bakker identified with the successful launches were mainly low prices, marketing campaigns, flexible subscription systems and digital products (2013 pp. 172-173).

6: Conclusion and future research

"Yes, it's a crisis but out of crisis can come some of the best and most innovative work you've ever done" (Margi Conklin 2009, quoted in Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 165).

6.1: Conclusion

The starting point for this thesis was that the sales of youth magazines have been in decline for two decades. The purpose of the study has been to explore reasons for this and find possible solutions for Egmont Publishing Norway to pursue. Because of the explorative design of the study, it is not possible to generalize from the findings, but the thesis has contributed to a greater understanding of how young Norwegians interact with media and magazines.

The study suggests that the decline in magazine sales is not an expression of lack of interest in magazine content. As Palfrey and Gasser point out, young people do not read less than before, just more varied and mostly on digital platforms (2008 p. 156). Even though the informants said they preferred reading on paper, they mostly read on digital devices such as smart phones and computers. Tablets are not as common, but are becoming increasingly popular. In other words, young adults still want what magazines provide, but not necessarily on paper (Holmes and Nice 2012 p. 163).

It appears that the interest in magazine content is largely met by similar content that is easily accessible on the internet. Large amounts of free websites have led to reluctance in paying for digital content. Nevertheless, if there is some added value to a digital service, many are willing to pay after all. Reading experience and content with quality is appreciated among young adults, and if this is served in a way that suits the users' habits, it is likely to be well received in the market.

With printed magazines, reading is often planned. When the informants for example knew that they were going to the beach or sit for hours on a train, they would buy a magazine to read in this period. But the phone can be taken up whenever they have some time to spare. Perhaps they will come across an article that someone has posted on Facebook. If the story is short, they will read it there and then, while longer articles may be saved for later. This seems like the type of reading that young adults do the most. For the majority of the informants, it was not as common to sit down at home in a quiet moment to read a magazine. They neither had a need for it, nor a habit for doing so.

The majority of Norwegians born in the 1990s and after are used to accessing large amounts of information. It may therefore seem pointless to subscribe to only one or a few magazines. Because then, what will they miss out on?

Spotify gives access to a wide range of songs, Netflix to TV shows and movies and Steam gives such access to video games, but no one has developed a similar solution for magazine content. Most of the magazine apps available only show you which magazines you can buy. An à la carte model would instead split up the magazines, introduce them as individual articles and present all content from Egmont in one digital solution.

While Facebook Paper serves news and articles without owning the content, news agencies like NRK increasingly present their information on platforms that they do not own or control, such as Snapchat and Instagram (Christensen 25.7.2014). If Egmont

develops their own platform where they serve their own content, it will be a significant advantage.

Nevertheless, the à la carte model is only one possible solution. Developing different concepts at the same time has seemed to be preferable, at least in the newspaper market (Bakker 2013 p. 173). Egmont should investigate how they can develop an à la carte model, while also looking into different variations, creating several prototypes and testing the concepts in order to spread their investment risks and not put all their eggs in one basket.

6.2: Future research

Young adults' relations with media and the possible future of magazines are wide and complex topics. This study has touched upon some important aspects, yet further research is necessary to gain a broader understanding.

While the data in this thesis was mainly derived from interviews, it could also be interesting with a similar study based on observations from either field work or experiments. The diary method could also be an alternative, where the informants write down their activities from day to day (Gripsrud, Olsson and Silkoset 2006 p. 64).

In addition to going deeper into the issues discussed in this thesis, one may also take a step further. Problem statements like "How can an à la carte model be implemented in a media company?" and "How can new concepts best be marketed towards young adults?" may be interesting for Egmont to pursue.

Another option may be to specifically look into the magazine content. Which topics are popular among the young generation? The issue of content may also be placed in a platform context. A new digital concept as the à la carte model, would give rise to new opportunities regarding content. How will the magazine journalism be different on digital devices compared to paper?

Digital technology also opens up for readers to create their own magazine content. It may be interesting to look into how young people interact with content and what encourages creativity. A relevant study would be how one can better engage and collaborate with readers.

In general, I hope this thesis may mark a beginning of several studies in a field that undoubtedly needs more knowledge.

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