

# Guide to create a digital magazine



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There are lots of compelling reasons to create a digital magazine. You may already produce content in another format and want to expand your range, for example by collecting a selection of your **previous blogs to resell in another format.**

You may sell other goods and services and want to create a magazine as a showcase for them. You may simply have spotted a gap in the market for content and want to fill it without having to deal with the overheads of setting up a printed edition. Whatever your reason for wanting to create a digital magazine, you'll find a lot of help in this guide.



# 1. Invest in the Tools you Need to Create a Quality Product

You're going to be spared the expense of printing and distributing a physical product, but you will still **need to budget for any software you need** to create your content and also the software needed to turn it into a flip book magazine and app.

For the record, you can create **digital magazines in PDF** format, but this carries a lot of drawbacks with regards to tapping into that vital mobile market, so is probably best avoided for most chargeable content, except, perhaps, for very small, niche publications.

If you intend to create a digital magazine to sell outside of the stores run by Google and Apple, then you'll also need to **check out your hosting options**, although some of the companies which offer flip book or reflow software, also offer hosting.

## 2. Get the Cover Design Right (and Make Sure you Own it)

While many of the basic principles of cover design apply both to paper magazines and their digital counterparts, there are, as always, details which can make all the difference.

Detail number one is that physical magazines are usually stacked either vertically or horizontally, so the left third and top third of paper magazine covers are much more important than the rest of the available space. In the digital world, customers are far more **likely to see the whole cover.**

Detail number two is that they're probably going to **see it at a much faster speed** than they would see a paper cover on a magazine shelf.

Detail number three is that they could **see the cover in a wide range of sizes** (from a PC screen to a smartphone screen) and it has to look good in all of them. This is quite a challenge and therefore it may be worth paying a professional designer to create your covers for you. If you go down this route, double-check that it is absolutely clear that you **own the copyright to it in all formats.**

This means not only that you avoid legal complications with regards to your magazine itself, but if you then want to monetize the cover in another way, for example, by selling it as a print, you can do so.

### 3. Put Together a Content Team (and Schedule)

Your first step is to decide how often you are going to publish your magazine. Remember that this is a **commitment you must keep come rain or shine**. This includes when you are ill or when you have family situations you need to manage.

Hence, even if your main game plan is to produce all the content yourself, it's strongly recommended for you to **have a plan B** in case you are ever out of action. If you publish frequently and/or use a lot of topical content then it is massively helpful for you to have an actual human to cover for you if the need arises.

With this in mind, you may want to **consider recruiting someone via a freelancing site** in advance so that you have plenty of time to check that they are a good fit

for you and that their writing meets your standards, rather than trying to rush around when you're already ill or under stress.

If your magazine is less topical, then at the very least you should try to **prepare a bank of reserve content** so that you can put together a respectable issue of your magazine even when you're feeling off colour or stressed or in a rush (or all three). Regardless of which approach you take (and you can use both), **having a content schedule** can go a long way to keeping you on track and can make it vastly easier to delegate work to someone else. It will also help you to produce "coming up next issue" teasers to help keep your readers interested and coming back for more.

## 4. Create a Stylebook

Nothing to do with the world of fashion, this is just a **list of the conventions you follow** in your magazine and which, by extension, you expect other people to follow if they produce content for you.

This may seem superfluous to requirements if you plan to produce all your content yourself, but nobody can be expected to remember everything and **readers may well notice if formatting is different between issues**. For example, if you use title case for sub-headings on one issue but then forget and only put a capital at the start of a sub-heading in the next issue.

You will also want to put in stylistic points such as **what fonts you use for what purpose** and what size(s) they should be.

If you ever need to jog your own memory, the information will be there for you and, again, if you need to get other people to produce content for you, you can just hand them the stylebook rather than having to explain your conventions each time (assuming you remember them). Your stylebook could also come in handy if you decide to move on from your magazine and want to hand the reins over to someone else.

# 5. Sell and Cross-Sell

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After all the hard work you've put into creating a great magazine with compelling content, it would be nice to think that you could just switch off and let readers discover it for themselves. In the real world, however, cyberspace is a big place and the chances are that you're going to have to **put even more hard work into getting noticed.**

With this in mind, **be realistic about your likely sales for your first few editions** at least. Unless you already have a significant social media following, you're going to have to get out there to work to build one. There are various strategies for this, some of which come at a financial cost and others which come at the cost of your time.

For example, **you can simply pay to advertise your new publication.** You can **reach out to social media influencers,** who may or may not request reimbursement for mentioning you to their followers, or you can work to become an influencer yourself. This can take much longer, but does give you maximum control and the option to sell advertising space rather than having to pay for it.

At the similar time, look to maximize your revenue streams by **cross-selling products at every opportunity.** For example, even if you are giving your magazine away for free, you could charge for access to premium website content or other digital downloads such as podcasts and videos.

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