

Online magazine founder thinks she's onto next big media trend

BY DEREK ABMA, POSTMEDIA NEWS DECEMBER 6, 2010

The founder of a new Canadian online fashion magazine feels her product is a model that other online publications will follow.

Real Style Magazine was launched this week, promoted by its creators as "Canada's first interactive digital fashion magazine."

The online publication is designed to have the look and feel of a hard-copy magazine. Readers can start from the cover, easily flipping through the virtual pages, like they can with any other magazine.

But along the way through the content, readers can click on links that will bring them more details on the topic they are reading about, or even a related video. As well, the advertisements provide direct links to an online property that sells the product being promoted.

The magazine is associated with Real Style Network, a website that has been in operation for about a year. Most of this network is more typical of other online publications, providing various headline links and subcategories to click on, with updates throughout the day.

Real Style Magazine, which is not available in hard copy, will follow the traditional magazine model in that it will only change when a new edition comes out. The current plan is to publish quarterly.

As a bonus, readers can click the headlines on the cover, or listings in the table of contents, to go directly to the article they are seeking.

Real Style founder and president Elen Steinberg said the value being offered to both readers and advertisers makes her magazine's format something others are likely to copy.

"It's really exciting, because you're kind of on the front lines of the way the media's changing," she said. "You can recreate the experience of a print magazine, but it's so much more enhanced. You've got video, everything is linkable. . . . It's really the next generation."

Given the growing popularity of mobile devices, Steinberg said there are plans to install technology to make the online magazine compatible with devices such as BlackBerrys, iPhones and iPads by next week. As well, making the publication available for Kindle e-readers is something she's looking into.

Steinberg said allowing readers to make purchases by clicking on ads is an advantage that can be used to lure ad revenue, which many media companies have found increasingly difficult to come by in recent years.

"We're already able to prove and to track that people like what they see . . . follow the links and physically purchase the items that they see," she said. "We're able to generate that report, and you can never really do that with print media."

The new magazine can be accessed at realstylemag.com.

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