Pace University
DigitalCommons@Pace

Master of Science in Publishing | Dyson College of Arts & Sciences

7-1-2009

Bridal Website/Blogs vs Print Magazines

Courtney Muir
Pace University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/dyson_mspublishing

Part of the Communication Commons

Recommended Citation
Muir, Courtney, "Bridal Website/Blogs vs Print Magazines" (2009). *Master of Science in Publishing.* Paper 2.
http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/dyson_mspublishing/2

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Dyson College of Arts & Sciences at DigitalCommons@Pace. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Science in Publishing by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Pace. For more information, please contact rracelis@pace.edu.

BRIDAL WEBSITE/BLOGS VS PRINT MAGAZINES

"Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Publishing degree at Pace University"

Courtney Muir

699B-4044.200940

Professor Jane Kinney-Denning

July 10, 2009

Over the past ten years, an evolution in technology has lead to media distribution taking on various forms. Books have become kindles, magazines have created e-zines and newspapers have become websites, which update multiple times per day. In the age of the Internet, these mediums have become interactive through surveys, posts and blogs, which allow the readers to participate and add value to both the content as well as give feedback about the demographic.

However, it can be difficult to maintain a reader's attention and the interest of advertisers due to the vast amount of information available almost anywhere.

In order for the publications to have a better sense of control, specifically in terms of bridal magazines, a bride's source of inspiration and creativity is commonly derived from wedding magazines. Since bridal blogs now provide a place where women can share with one another everything from details of their engagement to ideas and advice with instant feedback, magazines have to figure out the best way to adapt. This change means that magazines are now using information that these blogs offer in terms of inspiration and trend spotting to include in their issues.

As an intern at *Modern Bride,* a majority of my responsibilities were to review all the popular wedding blogs and keep the magazine up-to-date with the latest discussions about trends and new ideas. Simply by typing bridal blogs in the Google search engine, I was able to find many blogs dedicated just to discussing weddings. Once I had accessed these websites, I then read through them for content. One woman used her grandmother's dragonfly pins in her bouquet not only as a decorative statement, but considered it her

"something borrowed." This reuse of a family heirloom had a strong response from many readers who commented that this was an accessory they would like to do as well for their weddings. By alerting *Modern Bride* of this trend and the favorable responses the idea received, the magazine then featured this concept in their Notebook section telling readers this will be a trend for 2009.

This raises the question that if magazines too are using information from blogs and the Internet as their sources for content, why are readers still purchasing wedding magazines when they can just read bridal websites and wedding blogs for free?

HISTORY OF BRIDAL MAGAZINES

Bridal magazines have been hit the least in terms of percentage changes in advertising. According to Media Week, in 2008 the lowest percentage changes were among the bridal category for a total of -10.17%. This is a vast difference between the women's lifestyle category, which totaled to -21.72% (Levith, 41). This proves that advertisers are more willing to continue business with bridal magazines more so than with women's general interest publications because advertisers can be assured their product is reaching their target audience within this specific niche.

Understandably in times of recession, consumers will cut back with spending money on what might be seen as luxury goods. Magazines usually fall into this category but are bridal magazines considered a luxury read? Most of the consumers are brides-to-be in search of advice and ideas for the wedding they are planning. So it's only natural to assume that *Brides* would be purchased over a general magazine like *More,* which focuses on women over the age of 35 dealing with broader interests of beauty, fashion, career, finance and culture. But then again the question arises, just how much of a

magazine's success is based on consumer purchase? To most magazine publishers, it can mean very little as advertisers are a market for the success of a magazine. Fortunately enough for bridal publications, certain vendors or wedding gown companies don't have anywhere else to advertise but bridal magazines with assurance that they are reaching their target audience, as opposed to the more generalized magazines which have a much broader demographic. Consumers then become concerned about how credible a magazine can be if they are slanting their articles to favor their advertisers. As a hypothetical example, advising readers that Sandals is the top resort for honeymooners when really another resort may have more honeymoon packages. Yet because Sandals advertises with the magazine, they are viewed as the more favorable candidate. The concern that the content would not be objective in order to support the advertisers is what fuels the debate of wedding blogs versus bridal magazines.

Looking back into the past, when women's magazines were first published, it is seen that advertisers learned early on just how important it was for companies to promote their products within these publications. Sure enough magazines such as *Ladies Home Journal* and *Godey's Ladies Book,* learned just how important those advertisers were in terms of the cost of their production. Much like we see in the book, A Magazine of Her Own, by Margaret Beethham.

> The magazines positioned women both as purchasers and readers of texts, although the two were not necessarily the same person Mrs. Smith, like many other purchasers, circulated her magazine around her family. In the nineteenth century, when magazines were relatively more expensive, the ratio of readers to purchasers were even higher than today. The magazines bought by the upper,

> middle-class woman might be read by her daughters, her servants and her friends, then swapped for another through the exchange pages of the first magazine before being thrown out or sent to a second-hand book shop. (Beethham, 8)

As seen here, editors had a hard time figuring out who the demographic was as they couldn't base the assumption on the purchasers. The staff also had to recognize, that although it was the upper class that bought the magazines, all classes including servants read the content.

Once women in the 1880s and 1890s were considered or even defined as "shoppers," publications realized that women's magazines based on commodities would be very effective in terms of both their readership as well as advertisers.

> By the end of the century, women's magazines across the market were carrying as many pages of advertising as of editorial copy and were relying on advertising revenue at least as much as direct sales. (8)

Suddenly, the magazine became the woman's read gearing editorial content to appeal to these "shoppers." Unlike periodicals that attracted men, women now had a voice that was believed to reach the needs of women as well as advertisers.

In 1934, the market for the woman's read became more enhanced when Condé Nast decided to launch the magazine *Brides*. This soon created a niche market that was based on the bridal experience, but was so narrowed in interest that it became a great investment for advertisers within the wedding industry.

> Its frequency reflected the transient nature of the bridal market. The readers were avid enthusiasts during the marriage preparations, not only for the fashion and wedding etiquette features but also for editorial about setting up the nuptial home.

> This provided ample scope for selling advertising to the electrical gadget manufacturers, furniture makers, etc. It was a powerful market, and a profitable one, if confined to six issues a year. Condé Nast had followed this policy consistently, with some success. (Braithwaite, 18)

This achievement was noticed by other publications such as Odhams Press. In 1968 the company made an attempt to create a new title *Woman Bride & Home* in hopes to slightly broaden the niche.

> Odhams thought they saw the opportunity for a 'me-too' publication but with a much broader target of *Woman*-type readers. It was launched to be brought out six times a year, as the market is limited by the amount of advertising available. Frequency is an important factor in these rather more esoteric markets, as there is little point in publishing monthly and losing in the other six months all the profits you can make in the good six months. But, by and large, the public are not happy with infrequent or eccentric publishing dates. They know where they are with monthlies and weeklies and their memoirs—purchasing pattern—can become lazy when there is too long an interval between issues. (Braithwaite, Barrel, 51)

This is why it is important to remain consistent with publishing dates. Especially when it comes to a bridal publication, as brides view these magazines as an important guidebook to the wedding industry more so than a leisure read.

The Odhams, unfortunately gave into the temptation of advertisement possibilities that the bridal market usually brings in. It's important however, before jumping into the market, to be sure to fully understand how it works and why it is considered successful.

> In theory this would seem rich because it opens up all the usual home-making equipment that packs the pages of the home monthlies. But *Woman Bride & Home* never got up the aisle and the father soon gave the bride away by selling the magazine to Condé Nast, who absorbed it into *Brides.* (51)

Advertisers recognized women as a good target audience to focus on when it came to magazines. An even bigger response was given when women's magazines had narrowed down to smaller niches such as weddings. However, the difficulty of maintaining consistency is an important factor to consider if a publisher is going to compete with fellow bridal publications. The few magazines that were able to survive this was *Modern Bride*, which debuted in the fall of 1949. It kept up with its sister publication *Brides* as both stemmed from Condé Nast. Each offered the same needs but focused on different age demographics. *Southern Bride* then came about in 1988, which was then re-launched in October of 1990 as *Elegant Bride,* appealing to brides in their mid thirties. (Stuart)

HISTORY OF BLOGS

Fast forward to 1994, where a Swarthmore student named Justin Hall creates the first blog ever. It wasn't until around 1997 that blogs really started to catch on and in 2005, a study showed that 32 million Americans read them (Thompson, 1). This new use of the Internet sparked the creation of more of these social networks ranging from blogs on an author's website to a company's homepage. They expanded the consumer's ability to talk about whatever they wanted; from gossip, to a shared hobby or even the planning of one's wedding. Blogs quickly grew powerful, catching the attention of not only readers, but also advertisers and unfortunately those who were blogged about. In

February of 2002, Heather Armstrong was fired for discussing certain aspects of her job as a web designer and graphic artist on her blog, Dooce, which has now become a verb for "fired for blogging" (1).

Since blogs appear to be powerful enough that one could lose their job because of them, are they a threat to magazines? According to Stephen Baker from Business Week, magazines and blogs are very different.

> I looked at a story over the weekend, suggested changes, and spent nine hours editing it yesterday… Then I sent it to the copy desk. There, people who are new to the story read it to see if it makes sense, if the thinking is logical, the context clear, the grammar and spelling ok, the names and titles correct, Meantime, some facts such as names and web addresses, are checked by a researcher. The copy desk sends the story, with questions, back to the writer and me. At the same time, the top editors of the magazine have a chance to read the story and suggest changes of their own. Potentially contentious or delicate stories are often sent upstairs to a McGraw Hill lawyer, who might suggest further adjustments. Today we work answering the questions, clearing up doubts, filling in holes, and cutting the story to fit on the page. Then…the story goes back to the desk. They edit again—mostly proofreading, making sure answers have been answered and writing display language this time around—and put it on a literal sheet of paper. Then that paper is circulated back to us. We read it and make fixes, and then carry it to the close desk, where editors make the final changes and push the button to send it to the printing press. (Baker, 4)

This is obviously a very detailed process that magazine editors must go through before printing anything. Here is what Baker then said about the process of blogging.

> The editorial process of blogging is far simpler. We write, we publish. This takes our journalism into a new sphere, but carries inherent risks. How do we handle them? First, we reduce risk by avoiding the sorts of stories that require heavy editing. We don't blog investigative pieces, for example, or heavy financial analysis. Second, we consult our gut. If it looks risky, we'll push it towards the more edited BW Online or the magazine. Finally, when we make mistakes—which we do—we aim to correct them quickly and ask for your understanding. We're into something new, and all of us, you and I, are only coming to understand it as we create it. (5) Baker makes a good point about steering away from any topic that may seem a bit controversial in terms of content. But with bridal blogs or wedding magazines, for the most part, there is no content that involves any investigative journalism and any financial articles usually revolve around how to keep a budget for the wedding. For example, brides.com isn't going to feature any postings of bridal kidnappings in Kyrgyzstan, like *Modern Bride* did in their April/May issue, but the blog will talk about fashion, makeup and style details.

An article from HFN, the weekly newspaper for the Home Furnishing Network discusses how during the 2001 recession, bridal magazines were still considered fruitful ventures; this being when blogs and company websites were just starting to gain their popularity. Then why were wedding magazines still not taking a hit economically as far ad sales? Margery Gladstone, President of Modern Bride Group explains. "People continue to get married whether times are good or bad" (The Wedding Planners, 1).

Diane Forden, editor in chief and vice president of Bridal Guide also points out. "Weddings are constantly in the news. Movies come out involving weddings. Society on the whole has been addressing and looking at weddings more than ever. People look at this industry—a $32 billion industry—as a big moneymaker" (1). According to a recent article by Media Watchdog Publication, *Brides* ranked among the top 15 magazines in terms of sell-through in 2000, above even *Martha Stewart Living* (1) one of the more higher ranked consumer magazine.

With the bridal market remaining a steady venture, magazines such as *Martha Stewart Living* created a spin off magazine *Martha Stewart Weddings* in 1994 to be published quarterly. By producing these publications, magazines had the ability to use their name to attract brides to be. If a woman were a fan of the magazine before, then it would be assumed they would be interested in their special wedding editions.

Yet even with these blogs and websites growing, does that necessarily mean that magazines can only exist in print? Tom Curtin, senior vice president and publisher of Bridal Guide doesn't seem to think so.

> We like to think of the people who already have web sites as being smart, fast first movers who may have endured a fair amount of pain by being first movers. We consider ourselves to be smart and effective second movers. Our web site will have as many bells and whistles as the other sites. (3)

It's interesting to see how certain magazines are concentrating on creating special wedding issues, while bridal magazines were then branching their success over to the Internet in hopes that readers and advertisers would follow. Even though the advertising

side has been slow moving, this concept of bringing bridal information to the Internet sparked the evolution of blogs and websites.

CASE STUDY: MAGAZINES VS. BLOGS

Currently in 2009, the economy has taken another hard hit. Yet once again, bridal magazines have not faltered. Michaela Garibaldi, assistant to the managing editor at *Modern Bride*, states her reasoning for this.

> A bride is a bride only once. It's an exciting time in a woman's life and, no matter what's going on in the economy, most brides-to-be don't want to pass up certain traditions that go with this special role. This includes going to the newsstand and buying bridal magazines. Pouring over the pages and tearing out those that catch her eye. There's something about the experience of reading a bridal magazine and using it as a planning tool that no blog can replicate. (Garibaldi)

At the same time, managing editor of *Modern Bride* Kara Corridan, adds to the discussion that wedding magazines can be considered a special privilege.

> For many engaged women, there's an unspoken "bridal license" to buy wedding magazines. Some women have been buying *Modern Bride* et al for years before they got engaged. (In fact, a few years ago we ran a story called "Early Bird Brides" which was about women who start planning their wedding without a proposal—sometimes even without a boyfriend! These are the same ones who've been purchasing wedding magazines since they were in high school or college.) But many others wait until they're officially entitled—in other words, until they have a ring on their finger. Only then do they feel like they have the "right" to buy

> a wedding magazine. So for these women it's basically a rite of passage, and one that can't be achieved by going on a web site. (Corridan)

Elaine Stuart, associate travel and features editor for *Modern Bride* also contributes to the forum.

> I would also add that the physical experience of perusing a magazine is very different from reading bridal blogs. I recall from my own planning process that being online felt like work (probably since many of us stare at a computer all day,) while flipping through the glossy pages of a magazine felt like leisure time. I think during a period as stressful as the engagement, sitting down to read a magazine feels more like relaxing to brides than reading pretty much anything online, no matter how insightful or entertaining the subject matter. So I'd argue that bridal publications offer a sense of comfort and stress relief—in an escapist sort of way—that bridal blogs don't. (Stuart)

In addition to what a bridal magazine represents to a bride, the success can also be credited to what others believe the bride wants out of a wedding magazine. Popular engagement gifts for brides are subscriptions to various bridal publications. Though many have reached different conclusions based on experience and tradition, some may look at the result through very basic reasoning.

To share a different opinion is Xochitl Gonzalez, creator of "Always a Bridesmaid" blog. "I think the answer are the gown ads" (Gonzalez). Unlike blogs, gown advertisements in magazines can pick up on the intricate details, which can easily be torn out and looked for in a store or sent to a personal designer. The gown advertisements in a magazine are viewed more like artwork. Certain aspects of the dress can be highlighted

and the amount of hard work that goes into making the gown jump out at the reader. It is the intricate beading and fabric work that attract a bride looking for her perfect wedding dress.

Christa Terry, author of I Do: Planning Your Wedding with Nothing But Net, shares her insights as well. “Some people think blogs are the result of a flood of mediocre writers desperate to have their say” (Terry, 18). “Unlike articles and editorials penned by paid writers who have to adhere to the standards laid out by a stody editorial team that is at its very core a slave to advertisers…but most bloggers have the luxury of picking and choosing their ads carefully” (19). “When your eyes aren’t being bombarded with ads, you can make up your own mind about what is and what isn’t important to you” (19).

To add to this is Kelly Bare, author of DIY Wedding: Celebrate Your Day Your Way.

> Wedding magazines…can be full of inspiration and ideas—some more so than others. But at a certain point, well, they can threaten to take over your home…but do consider that a steady diet of wedding mags can give even the most centered bride nervous indigestion. They’re the wedding industry’s most powerful tool for convincing you that you need things you really don’t. (Bare, 11)

Many brides will admit that wedding magazines can get a bit overwhelming but the same can go for bridal blogs as well. On weddingbee.com, an engaged woman who goes by the domain name of Miss Cheese, asked this question to fellow bloggers.

> Wedding blogs have filled in the gaps, helped me imagine pretty things, and provided me with more than a few ideas for which I get full credit…I’m also a girl who gets overwhelmed when it’s time to choose something, to commit to one

> of the many options and then forge confidently ahead. I melt down. I know this, and so does everyone who's ever had to hear me obsess about paint colors or invite designs or the pants I just paid full price for…. So I have unsubscribed to every wedding inspiration blog in my reader. With sixty days to go, it's time to say adios to inspiration and hola to getting things done. If I haven't heard of it, pictured it, or imagined it, it's no longer a possibility…Wedding information will be on an as-needed basis, and any and all "pushed" communication is cut off…

Have you hit a "blogs are bad" point in your wedding planning. (Cheese) Notice how Miss Cheese makes a point in saying any "pushed" communication is cut off from her. This indicates that she feels that blogs are just as guilty of pressuring brides of things they really don't need. Here are some of the responses that Miss Cheese received on her post:

- While blogs give huge amounts of inspiration and support, sometimes there is just too much. I think it's smart that as you get closer to your wedding that you reduce the white noise around you so that you can concentrate on relaxing and enjoying your last couple months of engagement and the start of your marriage. (JennyBryde)
- I think this post is a perfect **hard knock back to reality** for ALL brides. We are ALL different. We all want something different in our weddings. Blogs should be used for inspiration. It's fun to ooh and ahh over other people's great ideas. But at the end of the day I think your wedding should be a reflection of you & your fiancé. Not someone else's wedding. (Gerbera)

- I work at a wedding magazine…and I agree. It's so very easy to get overwhelmed when all you see is wedding stuff. I don't know how may people have said to me (or my other engaged coworkers), "Oh, you must have everything planned out perfectly then!" No, Actually I really don't. There're too many great ideas, there's too much pressure to have everything picture perfect, too much pressure to either be picture-perfect fabulous or unabashedly indie. Middle of the road cheapskate that I am, I think I may be with you in that I need to eventually limit my wedding idea intake. Sadly, unless I change jobs, I can't be wedding-crap free, but such is life. (SpinningJenny)

This concept of too many blogs or magazines being pushed at the reader is coined by most wedding bloggers as "wedding porn." After seeing what bloggers themselves have to say it almost seems as if blogs are worse in terms of offering things most brides don't need and can be more invasive because they are always right in front of you just a click away. For example, weddingbee.com, alwaysabridesmaid.com and 2000dollarwedding.com are websites that are not necessary to sign up as a member in order to view posts. These websites can be accessed as easily as typing in the URL.

CASE STUDY: THE KNOT

While magazines have been slowly making the transition to websites, other brands such as *The Knot* are not only a magazine but also features an interactive website that assists brides to be with their wedding planning. Their brand overview is as follows:

The Knot is the Internet's most-trafficked one-stop wedding planning solution. Founded in 1996 to offer a much-needed alternative to the white-gloved, outdated

> advice of the available etiquette experts, The Knot has quickly become America's leading wedding brand reaching out to millions of engaged couples each year through our award-winning websites, books, magazines, and broadcast offerings. The brand's trademark fresh voice and real-world sensibility can be found everywhere a bride looks: on newsstands in national and regional editions of *The Knot* magazine; in bookstores; in newspapers through Scripps Howard and McClatchy- Tribune News services; online at major portals like MSN and Comcast; and on TV through original programming on the Style Network and a weddings-only, video-on-demand channel on Comcast Cable (Roney, 1).

With its brand, *The Knot* has been able to transcend to each different medium, maintaining its reputation throughout. For example, TheKnot.com includes information on: fashion, inspiring images, local resources from florist to photographers, personalized tools such as an interactive checklist, guest list manager and budgeter, modern advice, a 24/7 community which includes blogs, boards, hosted chats and personal profiles, convenient shopping and lifestyle registry through Macy's. In addition, The Knot TV provides bridal fashion shows, honeymoon specials and makeovers.

In addition to having a magazine and a website, this franchise has also published multiple books such as <u>The Knot Ultimate Wedding Planner: Worksheets, Etiquette, Calendars and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions</u> that are directed to brides, wedding guests, grooms and planners. The books give insider advice, true tales, checklists, wedding etiquette, cost-trimming tricks and stressful family situations.

There now is a blurred line between wedding magazines and bridal blogs as *The Knot* is both. This shows that the more adaptable a brand is, the better chance it has at

success. For magazines, it's very easy to create a blog on their website, while blogs can take their content and easily turn it into a book. This would then help create the image of a trustworthier blog to readers.

ONLINE WEBSITES

Of course you don't have to start as a blog or a magazine in order to gain what *The Knot* has. Other websites like mywedding.com offer a similar service such as comprehensive wedding planning with easy-to-use local resources. Some additional features to this website are online RSVP management, guest emailing, as well as advice and blogs.

> Mywedding.com was formed in 2002 and is now the most comprehensive, easy-to-use local wedding resources in North America. Couples can source everything they need for their big day, from photographers and flowers to dresses and DJ's. Mywedding.com is one of the only wedding resources that offers 100% free wedding websites (mywedding.com, 1).

Each website although similar, offers a little something different. Wedding Channel offers wedding planning content, in-depth celebrity wedding coverage and features more than 1.5 million registries from leading retailers.

> Our staff is dedicated to creating the most comprehensive, useful and fun wedding-related site on the Internet. Our team members bring to the site not only their professional expertise, but their personal experiences as wedding guests, wedding party members, and as brides and grooms. In creating our site, we strive to embrace and celebrate the very best of the marriage tradition, while at the same

time addressing the tastes, interests and issues of concern to today's couples (weddingchannel.com, 1).

Magazines and blogs are starting to become one in the same. However, once again the concern for one being a threat to the other is debated while others argue all of this should be considered a step in the right direction.

ADVERTISING IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET

Many like Xochitl Gonzalez believe advertisements are the reason that magazines haven't gone into extinction yet. Advertisements spend a lot of money to have their ads put into magazines and this is pretty much what keeps the magazines running. With these publications now having websites the question arises; why are ads spending much more money to be in the print version rather than the online?

I decided to look at the magazines *Modern Bride, Brides, Elegant Bride* and *Martha Stewart Weddings* to compare the ads in the print version to the online websites. One might think they would be the same, but surprisingly there were far less ads on the website and the ads in the magazine were very different from the online version.

It was surprising to see that the *Martha Stewart Weddings* website didn't even have advertisements other than for their own Martha Stewart products.

While looking at *Modern Bride*, *Brides* and *Elegant Bride* advertisements, destinations such as Aruba and Barbados with beautiful scenic backgrounds took up pages of the bridal magazines along with bridal gowns, vendors and commonly registered stores such as Macy's.

Brides.com, a combination of all three magazines, didn't have nearly as many advertisements. Although some ads were similar, such as registered stores and destination

resorts, others like California Almonds and Bluefly.com were unique and not acknowledged in the print version (brides.com).

There are various reasons for why these advertisements are different. First, advertising on a website is far cheaper than on the back cover of a magazine and the second reason is the audience. When looking at the demographics of *Modern Bride, Brides* and *Elegant Bride* the media kit shows that the median ages are slightly different in each magazine. *Modern Bride's* target audience averages around age 29, while *Elegant Bride* ranges around 36. *Brides* bridges that gap with a median age of 32. While these age differences may only seem slight when looking at general interest magazines, in the wedding industry that gap is much bigger. For example, the gown style of a 29-year-old is going to be different from the average taste of a 36-year-old. There is also the factor of money, which means that a 36-year-old will most likely have more money to spend on a wedding than a 29-year-old. Since the website combines these three magazines into one with general information that all brides need to know, regardless of age, the audience is broader and it is harder for advertisers to target their niche.

Then there are online wedding websites. When looking at mywedding.com, the site has the visitor choose what state they live in and from there, display advertisements from vendors based on that location. Other websites such as Wedding Channel, stick to more generalized stores such as the commonly registered Tiffany's, Bloomingdales, and honeymoon resorts such as Sandals. The Knot on the other hand, grabs the registered stores, but also branches out to Master Card, MySpace, and even M&M's, which since now can be personalized, have been very popular as wedding favors.

Then of course there are blogs. In these cases, advertisers take on the name of sponsor. Weddingbee.com features sponsors such as American Bridal, Aria and Project Wedding. Brooklyn Bride is sponsored by Satsuma Press, Couture Letterpress and even has an advertisement from Kohl's. Of course with all the wedding blogs out there, not all of them have advertisements or sponsors, but the more popular a blog becomes, the more willing advertisers are to contribute.

This is evidence of the fact that there aren't nearly as many ads on websites compared to that in print. One issue advertisers have realized is that once the ad is printed in a magazine, it isn't going anywhere. So even if someone reads the magazine and passes it on to someone else, the company's ad will still be there.

On the other hand, advertisements online can be a great because it allows instant feedback that can let the company know how many views it received by the amount of times the ad was clicked on.

As we come into the age of the Internet, there will be a shift advertisers will make to be on websites, but whether that effects print magazines seems unlikely.

CASE STUDY: WEDDING BEE

I decided to subscribe to weddingbee.com under the user name of Miss Emerald and asked fellow bloggers if they still have any use for wedding magazines since they can receive so much content on websites and blogs. I received a lot of feedback with very interesting points. The following were some of the responses I received.

- I think magazines are great for the beginning of the process, especially with all the ads and stuff it gives you an idea of what kind of dress you want, and invites, etc. You can also pick up on what's HOT for a current

year. Towards the final part of my wedding planning I looked to blogs for how-to's and for quick answers. Basically, when I finally needed to make a decision researching online and blogs like wedding bee helped me find answers much quicker than leafing through a wedding magazine.

Plus, magazines now have so many advertisements for wedding dresses, and once you have your wedding dress it's hard to find information. Of all magazines the one that was most helpful for the longest period of time was *Martha Stewart Weddings* but they only publish four times a year. I think that's why blogs like these are so important. (Chela429)

- I think getting something to hold in my hands is wonderful. Plus, the photography you can't beat most of the time. I work in the magazine industry, so I understand how important it is to have a wonderfully crafted and EDITED piece of work in a magazine vs. something that is just there so it's posted kind of blog. Plus, what other time in your life can you get away with buying *Martha Stewart Weddings*. (MoSnow, 2)
- One major use I have for magazines is tearing out inspiration pics…not all of my vendors are web-savvy, so bridal magazines were really helpful for showing my makeup artist and hair stylist what I was looking for. Also, they're my new bus/train/plane reading material of choice. (worcesterbride, 3)
- I bought a few wedding magazines early on, but haven't bothered since. It seemed like a waste of my money to me—nothing was very helpful, especially being on a budget and not wanting a very traditional kind of

wedding anyway. Blogs have been MUCH more helpful in finding a variety of voices and ideas—and the best DIY projects. I like reading about a wide variety of people's planning experiences, and with most magazines, I felt like I just saw the exact same wedding or two over and over again. *Martha Stewart Weddings* was the one I liked best, but in general, none of the magazines I ever bought were worth it. (Minneapolitan, 3)

- Most of my wedding magazines were either passed down or an impulse buy…they are hard to resist! I like the magazines for overviews of lots of different trends and the blogs for in-depth stories about how people pulled off specific trends. Weddingbee has a good mix of both, but sometimes I ache to be away from my computer so the magazines are a good break from all the online information. (Sezzy, 3)
- The bridal mags I bought were almost all impulse. ALTHOUGH, I found they really helped get the big things situated in regards to planning. When the big things were out of the way the blogs helped with the intricate details, the inspiration, the colors, more emotional, more sentimental details. (Beesknees, 4)
- For me (as an MS in Communications), bridal magazines have the benefit of being created and published by professionals, so I rely on them for facts far more than I do on blogs, which are generally clouded by opinion. That being said, I only spend money on a magazine if it has interesting "how-to" information that I can save. Dress advertisements, "real weddings,"

> and other things that are readily available on blogs are actually a deterrent for me. Finally, I really love good photos in magazines, and I am much more likely to buy a magazine that is full of photos with details than anything else—magazine photos can be much better organized, clearer, and more useful than those on blogs. (Piaffete, 4)

Through hearing the opinions of others, I decided for myself to observe more of my surroundings at *Modern Bride* and weigh in the difference between the two being as I am an impartial party who is not much of a bridal blogger nor do I work full time with a bridal magazine.

SUMMARY

I started to make the comparisons that fellow contributors have stated: Blogs are better for more intricate details, but at the same time you aren't going to find your wedding dress on a blog. What I believe it comes down to is the type of wedding the bride is looking to have. If they are looking for a traditional wedding and they aren't on a budget, then wedding magazines will get brides through the general process from not only local advertisements of gowns, but will offer up the newest trends in colors, favors and even do it yourself projects. Magazines are also able help research more thoroughly information that a bride needs to know. An example is a list of where brides needs to go if they are going to change their last name, or advice for brides with questions and concerns. This is where readers can learn of ideas and issues going around the industry that magazines bring to the surface as opposed to blogs where content is less organized and it can feel like it is all being thrown at a bride at once.

Blogs on the other hand are more accessible if a bride decides to go the nontraditional way. Offbeat Bride, offer postings such as “Real Offbeat Weddings: Stasha & Rob’s Vintage Goth Wedding with Bubbles (offbeatbride.com), or Eastside Bride, where one will find people’s comments on practical wedding shoes and where to buy them (eastsidebride.blogspot.com). Then there is Brooklyn Bride featuring everything from vendors in Brooklyn to wedding photos shot in the subway station (Bklynbrideonline.com). These blogs introduce weddings and ideas for those who want to stray from the beaten path. Yet even those who are traditional but are trying to stay within a budget can turn to blogs such as $2,000 Dollar Wedding, and how to make do it yourself eco friendly invitations (2000dollarwedding.com), DIY Bride shows you how to do everything yourself from cakes to your own bridal veil (diybride.com), Broke Ass Bride shares stories of other couples who have gotten married and what they did to save money (thebrokassbride.com) and Etsy is your go to place for cheap accessories from wedding favors to jewelry (etsy.com). Also if a bride is looking for a certain theme, Eco Chic Weddings talks about how to save money and the environment. For example making cloth boutonnières as to not waste flowers (ecochicweddings.com), and The Hand Crafted Wedding are set for those looking for an earth friendly wedding in all aspects (thehandcraftedwedding.com).

What it comes down to is magazines are perfect for the beginning of the wedding process. It opens a bride’s eyes up to what is standing out currently in the industry and allows her to choose from a broad range what she wants to do from her honeymoon destination to the type of dress she wants to wear. Blogs are much better when the bride has decided what her and the groom want to do. Do they want to do welcome bags, a

slideshow, and a photo booth for guests? From there the couple can decide what is affordable and what is not. This is also where blogs can help with do it yourself projects in order to save money. For example, making a card box shaped like a wedding cake. Normally those can go for $100 but with a little elbow grease that price can be shaken down to $20.

It is true that when a bride starts to reach her wedding date, websites, magazines and blogs should be shut out. Each are capable of pushing more ideas and products that when the couple is so close to the date can just confuse and create more issues.

Currently, I believe that advertisements have not made the jump to blogs because I don't believe blogs are fully reliable just yet in terms of an investment because they can easily stop working, or people could just decide to stop blogging on the website. However, certain advertisements like those for bridal gowns and those that are based on scenery such as resort in Atlantis aren't going to settle for a small corner on the bottom right hand side with five other advertisements next to it to really create any effect on the reader the way that a two page spread in a magazine can.

CONCLUSION

Although bridal blogs, websites and magazines offer up all aspects of the wedding industry that a bride could want, they are by no means a threat to one another, rather they just coexists within the same industry. Each serve the different needs of individual brides. In fact we have seen that wedding magazines already have blogs on their websites and surely with the amount of ideas and stories shared on blogs, these social networks could even possibly become published into books. When it comes to any type of media, the key is versatility. Any medium, whether that be a website, blog, or magazine should be able

to take advantage of the technology available and reach people in anyway possible. By magazines creating websites and blogs, they attract readers so that when the time comes and a woman becomes engaged, she will turn to the magazines that she saw the most blogged about, advertised about, even came up in the most Google searches. Which brings up an important point, that maybe magazines such as *Modern Bride, Martha Stewart Weddings,* and *Brides* should make a point in advertising with these popular wedding blogs and vice versa. With all these services dealing with the different needs of a bride and different aspects of the wedding, a good relationship between all mediums is key.

Work Cited

Baker, Stephen. "Editorial Process: The Magazine vs. The Blogs." Business Week, July 2005: 4-11. http://www.businessweek.com/the_thread/blogspotting/archives/2005/07/editorial_stand.html

Bare, Kelly. The DIY Wedding: Celebrate Your Day Your Way. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007.

Beesknees "The bridal..." weblog comment. 12 May 2009. "Wedding Blogs versus Bridal Magazines." Emerald, Miss. Weddingbee.com 12 May 2009.

Beetham, Margaret. A Magazine of Her Own. Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine 1800-1914. London: Routledge, 1996.

Braithwaite, Brian. Women's Magazines: The First 300 Years. London: Peter Owen, 1995.

Braithwaite, Brian and Barrell, Joan. The Business of Women's Magazines. London: Kogan Page, 1988.

"Brides." Condé Nast Media Kit. 2009. Condé Nast. 24 June 2009. http://www.condenastmediakit.com/bri/index.cfm

Chela429. "I think…" weblog comment.12 May 2009. "Wedding Blogs versus Bridal Magazines." Emerald, Miss. Weddingbee.com. 12 May 2009

Cheese, Miss. "Are Blogs (Sometimes) Bad?" weddingbee.com. Kim, Bee. 26, March 2009. http://www.weddingbee.com/2009/03/26/are-blogs-sometimes-bad

Corridan, Kara. Email. 1 June 2009.

"Elegant Bride." Condé Nast Media Kit. 2009. Condé Nast. 24 June 2009. http://www.condenastmediakit.com/eb/index.cfm

Garibaldi, Michaela. Email. 29 April 2009.

Gerbera. "I think…" weblog comment. 26, March 2009. "Are Blogs (Sometimes) Bad?" Cheese, Miss. Weddingbee.com. 26, March 2009.

Gonzalez, Xochitl. Email. 2 April 2009.

JennyBryde. "While blogs..." weblog comment. 26, March 2009. "Are Blogs (Sometimes) Bad?" Cheese, Miss. Weddingbee.com. 26, March 2009.

Levith, Will. "Magazine Monitor." Mediaweek 18.36 (2008): 41.

Minneapolitan "I bought…" weblog comment. 12, May 2009. "Wedding Blogs versus Bridal Magazines." Emerald, Miss. Weddingbee.com 12 May 2009.

"Modern Bride." Condé Nast Media Kit. 2009. Condé Nast. 24 June 2009. http://www.condenastmediakit.com/mod/index.cfm

MoSnow "I think..." Weblog comment.. 12 May 2009. "Wedding Blogs versus Bridal Magazines." Emerald, Miss. Weddingbee.com. 12 May 2009

Mywedding.com. Kraft, Nicole. Press Kit. 30, March 2009. http://www.mywedding.com/apps/public/mw/press_kit.php

Piaffette "For me…" weblog comment. 12 May 2009. "Wedding Blogs versus Bridal Magazines." Emerald, Miss. Weddingbee.com 12 May 2009.

Sezzy "Most of…" weblog comment. 12 May 2009. "Wedding Blogs versus Bridal Magazines." Emerald, Miss. Weddingbee.com 12 May 2009.

SpinningJenny. "I work…" weblog comment. 26, March 2009. "Are Blogs (Sometimes) Bad? Cheese, Miss. Weddingbee.com. 26, March 2009.

Stuart, Elaine. Email. 1 June 2009.

Wedding Channel. Penn, Charles. Us Weekly. 30, March, 2009. http://wedding.weddingchannel.com/about_us.article-1318.asp

Terry, Christa. I Do: Planning your Wedding with Nothing But Net. New York: Simone and Schuster, 2008

Theknot.com. Roney, Carley. About Us. 30, March 2009. http://weding.theknot.com/wedding-tools-help-center/the-knot-about-us.aspx

Thompson, Clive. "The Early Years." New York Magazine Feb. 2006. http://nymag.com/news/media/15971

Worcesterbride "One major…" weblog comment. 12 May 2009. "Wedding Blogs versus Bridal Magazines." Emerald, Miss. Weddingbee.com 12 May 2009.