

Editorial

Print v digital

The article by Jesper Kjøller later in this issue about the thinking behind their new magazine Dive the World makes interesting reading but I suspect, even at this early stage of this Editorial, you might have the sneakiest suspicion where I'm going to take this. However, you may be wrong.

Digital photography has almost totally replaced film. Fact. Get over it. Like for like it's better quality, quicker and much cheaper to run and so much easier to share.

When it comes to publishing however, and in particular, magazines, there is still the old claim that "they're tactile and I like turning the pages". Also "Size matters and quality counts".

All of these are totally true if you look at them from one angle but if you move round the circle and look back you might say that the flexibility of paper distorts the image whereas a flat

screen is static and displays the image perfectly. Turning or flicking pages is actually also quite exciting on a touch screen tablet but in a different way but it's all still about 'the reveal'. The moment when you see a new page layout. That's what that is all about.

Size has always mattered to 'man' ever since the dawn of time except where mobile phones and integrated circuits are concerned but, with publications, 'size matters' is a slight red herring. It should really be 'size to viewing distance ratio' (now you know why it has never really caught on). Basically what it means is that the larger an image is, the further away you should be from it to view it comfortably. Reducing the size of the image doesn't necessarily reduce its effect especially when it's viewed from the correct distance.

Apple's recent introduction of Retina Displays are a new generation of higher definition screens aimed

(successfully) at making the pixel invisible and they provide a viewing experience which is significantly enhanced, even on a 15" screen at close distances (no I haven't got one but they all know me by my first name at the local Apple store).

Let's just go back a paragraph to the size-to-viewing-distance ratio to make the final point. Multiplex cinemas were created firstly to keep cinema companies profitable and secondly to meet the needs of the customer (obviously the companies promoted it in the reverse order). The result was an increase in cinema audiences without (too much of) a decrease in audience enjoyment.

I guess the trick is to see how much smaller images can be and still be effective. YouTube has proved beyond doubt that a small size can still be popular otherwise we wouldn't watch it so much and people wouldn't post videos to it.

It's a bit like that game 'Kerplunk' which has proved the perfect business model for most modern corporations i.e. if we cut back this expense or service, will anyone notice or will the business collapse and image viewing, unfortunately, is a little like this.

The truth is that there are just as many people out there who see and appreciate quality but the unfortunate truth is that there are far, far fewer nowadays who are prepared to pay for it.

New Oceans series on BBC

Don't even start me.

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