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## MequodaDaily Blog

# Digital Publishing Shocker: Is Forbes Media for Sale?

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## Digital publishing news for November 18, 2013

Ad Week is [reporting](http://www.adweek.com/news/press/forbes-media-explores-sale-153904) that Forbes Media is entertaining offers to sell the company. Lucia Moses writes, “CEO Mike Perlis announced the news in a memo to employees today saying that as a result of the company having its best financial performance in six years, the company has gotten “more than a few” indications of interest. Deutsche Bank is handling the process.” Forbes is seeking $400 to $500 million for the company. This comes after turning down $400 million in 2004 from Conde Nast.

Bloomberg [says](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-11-15/forbes-media-is-exploring-sale-of-96-year-old-magazine-publisher.html), “While Forbes is seeking at least $400 million in a sale, according to a person familiar with the matter, the company will struggle to land more than $200 million.” Bloomberg also notes that digital advertising revenue accounts for more than half its revenue and that much of its content relies on more than 100 contributors, some of whom receive little or no pay for their work. It should be interesting to see who buys this publishing juggernaut. Bezos and Henry already have their hands full.

## Harpers Gets a Digital Magazine

Harpershas launched an iPhone & iPad edition of its publication that’s on sale for $21.99 a year. GigaOm’s Jeff John Roberts [reports](http://gigaom.com/2013/11/15/harpers-magazine-finally-gets-an-iphone-app-as-29th-street-publishing-hits-20-titles/), “Harper’sdecision to sit out the digital era has [harmed](http://goodereader.com/blog/digital-publishing/harpers-magazine-embracing-digital-apps-to-compete-with-the-atlantic) its reach and relevance, especially in relation to longtime competitor The Atlantic, which has [been nimble](http://paidcontent.org/2013/08/02/how-justin-smith-remakes-media-companies-and-why-the-atlantic-will-be-fine-without-him/) in the post-print era. The good news for Harpers is that it’s better late than never, and that it picked a good partner,[29th Street Publishing](http://paidcontent.org/2013/07/01/six-digital-publishing-startups-to-watch/), to navigate the app world. New York based 29th Street is a so-called [sub-compact publisher](http://gigaom.com/2012/11/30/sub-compact-media-rethinking-the-way-we-publish-online/), specializing in affordable custom apps for quality publications like The Awl.”

## Moz Predicts the Future of SERP

So what are Google SERPs going to look like in 2014? Moz does a great job of [forecasting](http://moz.com/blog/future-serp-a-glimpse-at-google-2014?utm_content=bufferb9ff7&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer" \t "_blank)Google SERPs in this new article. Using their MozCast feature, they’ve been documenting the experiments Google has been running on SERPs. According to Dr. Peter J. Meyers, “Google ran 7,018 “live traffic experiments[“](http://www.google.com/intl/en_us/insidesearch/howsearchworks/algorithms.html) in 2012 – while we probably capture only a small number of them, these tests allow us to get a glimpse into what’s coming next. While any given change may be rejected (Google launched just over 9% of the changes they tested last year), some changes appear repeatedly in testing and in different formats over time, strongly suggesting that Google is intent on launch.”

Google has been very active in the way it’s been making changes to its mobile SERPs. Most of the time changes will show up in mobile first then on the desktop.

One of the six SERP predictions that Moz makes for 2014 is that the Knowledge Graph will start using your data. Traditionally, Knowledge Graph has pulled in structured data from places like Wikipedia and CIA Factbook. Moz is predicting that Google will start using content from all of our sites to provide quick answers to search users. Google has been testing this and Moz predicts we should see a wider roll out of this in the coming months.

Secondly, there will be new ad formats. Google is testing a new ad format that removes the background color from ads on Google SERPs and added a new yellow background with a white text marker that reads “Ad”. Other than the yellow marker, the ad looks virtually the same as organic search results. This new ad format is also present on mobile search. Dr. Meyers adds, “This change will have huge implications on both organic and paid CTR in 2014, regardless of the final form. Expect Google to also test and iterate quickly when the new ad format launches.” [Read all six predictions.](http://moz.com/blog/future-serp-a-glimpse-at-google-2014?utm_content=bufferb9ff7&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer)

## Next Issue’s TV Campaign

Ad Age is[reporting](http://adage.com/article/media/issue-media-running-tv-ads-boost-subscriber-base/245257/) that Next Issue – “the NetFlix for magazines” – is running a TV ad campaign to promote its business. Michael Sebastian writes, “The goal of the campaign, which also includes print and Google search ads, is to get Next Issue Media’s all-you-can-read service to somewhere between 75,000 and 100,000 subscribers, including newcomers on the 30-day free trial period, according to Morgan Guenther, Next Issue Media’s CEO.”

Next Issue expects to have a revenue of $12 to $15 million dollars for 2013. This revenue is also shared with its publishing partners. This new ad campaign may be in response to the entrance of a new competitor, Readly.  Sebastian adds, “The business model got an endorsement of sorts this week when Next Issue Media got a new competitor: Sweden-based Readly, which also sells digital access to a collection of titles for $9.99 a month. It rolled out in Sweden in March, according to Henrik Barck, the company’s co-founder. He declined to say how many subscribers the service has in Sweden.”

Last Thursday Readly boosted the number of titles on the service to 137 magazines, which is 15 more titles than Next Issue.

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