

MAGAZINES ARE CHANGING FAST

Magazines are changing fast. From the major titles which have recently announced changing systems to do more in their own offices to the 'zines' which promote the likes and views of individuals, they are all doing things differently.

Publisher Gordon Woolf says that he has made more changes in the fourth edition of his book "How to Start and Produce a Magazine or Newsletter" than at any stage since it was first written two decades ago.

In the early days, producing a magazine usually involved scrawling marks over typed or handwritten 'copy' and bundling it off to a noisy, perhaps health threatening engineering works.

In a decade, much had changed as a result of computers, but it is only recently that it has been possible for an individual, even in a home office, to have much of the production power used by the largest publishers. All this could be delivered for an outlay of a few thousand dollars -- a very few thousand.

The actual printing of a magazine might still be in a large works, but now the information travels electronically to the press and it is more likely that the whole operation will be controlled by one person in air-conditioned surroundings that look more like the console of a cruise liner.

For many smaller publishers there are other options -- output in the office from a copier or produced in small quantities by the print center in the local shopping mall.

However, Gordon Woolf warns that while so much has changed, much remains the same. The editor still has to plan for a steady flow of content to interest all the readers. The advertisements still have to be sold, and obtained in time to print. The copies still have to be distributed to readers. And the whole has to be done in a way which meets a financial budget.

More successful magazines are started by individuals than by large corporations, which tend to acquire titles by purchasing them from the founders.

There have been other changes, with the creation of Web magazines, email newsletters, the newest online communications of 'blogs' and ways in which all these can be used with, or to lead to, printed publications.

Gordon Woolf states that the magazine or newsletter remains one of the few ways in which an individual can establish a continuing outlet for ideas.

How to Start and Produce a Magazine or Newsletter, fourth edition, by Gordon Woolf. ISBN 1875750 21 5. Published by The Worsley Press. US\$34.95. A\$39.95.