

Does traditional 'offline' media still have a place in the digital online media space?

By Margie Knap

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My career in media started somewhere in the 80's. Needless to say, what we do today in media and what we did 'back in the day' is poles apart, mostly due to media choices being extremely limited.



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TV viewing was available for just a few hours a day, alternating English and Afrikaans news, and there was no real measurement of audiences. Completing Telmar runs was done through a dial-up system using card-, key and punch codes, with faxes as a means of confirmation. Adex was a manual system of thick manuals, rulers and highlighters. When we needed information on media owners, we used SARAD books and files – on actual paper! You are either nodding in agreement right now or have a confused look on your face!

Media has evolved beyond anyone's expectations. The 2002 movie, *Minority Report* (a neo-noir science fiction movie), quite prophetically depicted the role of media in a future state where technological advancements (AI) made a brand's presence nearly boundless. The main character, chief John Anderton was reminded of his favourite brand of beer as he walked past a billboard.

We could say that right now we are all living in the *Minority Report* age, a virtual reality space.

Looking at online version of the thesaurus – of course not the actual tome - the adjectives and nouns for ‘virtual’ and ‘reality’, helped crystallise this new world for me:

• **Virtual** (adj)

- Near
- Practical
- Effective
- Fundamental
- Essential

• **Reality** (n)

- Authenticity
- Truth
- Genuineness
- Certainty
- Representativeness

Ticking all the "virtual" boxes

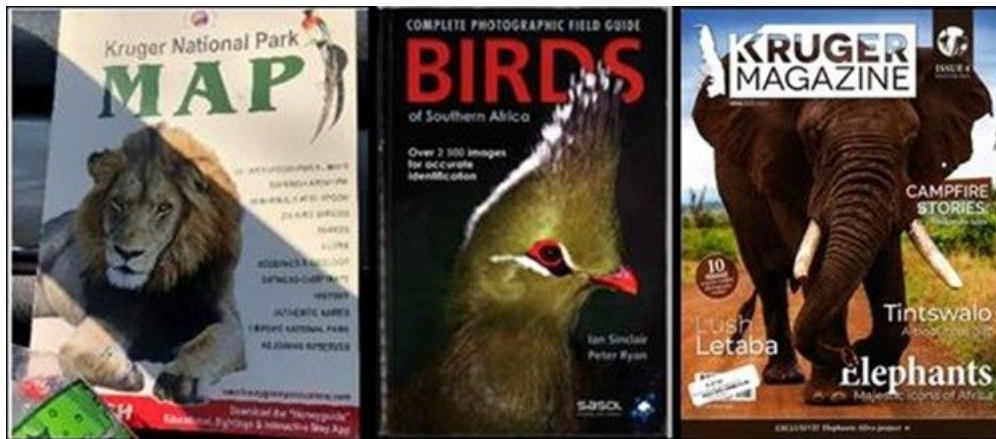
Having been fortunate enough to have a long break in the bush recently, I had a variety of apps that I could download that fell within the “virtual” space category. The apps were near (thumb length away), practical, effective, and in fact, ticked all the “virtual” boxes.

I could identify a bird, a spoor, the best loops to take, the distance from one camp to another - it was amazing!



However, the lack of internet coverage in the bush is exceptionally limited. We had to resort to paper. And it was a joy indeed – following a map instead of mindlessly listening to a disembodied voice telling us to take the third exit at the circle.

We also took great joy in hunting through the bird book to identify the variety of raptors and water birds with a mammal guide to help identify spoor. It was great! When I was putting this blog together and looking at my “material”, the smell of the bush was still on my maps in the form of a light coat of sand, and this immediately transported me back to the bush.



The written word isn't dead

Our journey was documented on Facebook for our friends and family to be kept up to date with where we were, what close encounters we had and to share in our experience. These memories are out in the ether, and every year Facebook will send me a reminder of what a great time we had.

It is a relief that the written word isn't dead. Each shop had a vast array of postcards, along with stamps and a post-box. Clearly, there was a demand for written mementoes to be sent to loved ones. An email is great, but to actually receive a handwritten postcard is just that bit more personal and memorable.

When it comes to those photographs, yes they are safely downloaded onto a memory stick. The best ones, however, are going to be printed and framed.

Our virtual world needs to live alongside and to work with the printed world. Having a mix of a variety of apps and a variety of maps and book guides made our experience so worthwhile and memorable.

ABOUT MARGIE KNAP

People fascinate me! Insights into what makes them tick, what they do with their time, where they go, what they do - this intrigues me. I thrive on coupling those consumer insights and a client's business challenges. What I can do to help a client meet those objectives using consumer insights, and delivering a creative solution - this is what I thrive on, this is what intrigues me, this is what kicks my brain into overdrive.

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