

How mobile fits into the publishing puzzle

 By Leigh Andrews

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"We're a print publication, we don't need mobile." While this may be true for now, current trends indicate that you can't afford to keep your head in the sand about the changing publishing model a moment longer, particularly in Africa.



Somchai Jongmeesuk © – 123RF.com

The second day of the INMA global media summit Africa kicked off with moderator Peter Ndoro sharing a brief overview of the topics covered in the first day of the summit, including that the recent US elections forced us to look critically at how we 'do news' and how we see and tell truth as we need to regain trust. [Transformation is no longer a choice](#) as technology is forcing change as we get deeper into the digital space, so we need to be more innovative in how we engage and deliver. Publishers need to investigate all the options when it comes to news dissemination and be vigilant.

The [algorithm almost has a life of its own](#) now, which is interesting as search engines and social media platforms didn't start out trying to be media houses but that's what they now are. At the heart of it all though, good journalism is our reason for existing, so publishers should never lose sight of the importance of quality. Consumers still love the physical feel of print media, it has a nostalgic aspect and will be with us for a while, meaning it's more of a balancing act than one of leaping into the digital future and leaving print behind. Do this by building a new publishing model while staying true to your core and knowing when to wear which hat – print, digital or mobile.

Audience engagement and brand loyalty

The second morning's presentation built on those key insights, with the theme focused on the mobile moment.

The first speaker of the day was Mark Challinor of Media Futures Limited in the UK. As an example of the 'out the box' ways publishers and marketers are starting to engage their customers, the Le Petit Chef video below delights restaurant customers at their tables while waiting for their order to appear:

It clearly delights others too, as the video has already had over five million views on Youtube. Everything becomes more mobile every day and brand loyalty is increasingly about the experience you create. We need to exceed the expectation and can do so by being more creative, like investigating the feasibility of mobile coupons, mobile video and mobile payments. Challinor feels mobile wallets are the way forward with 200 billion mobile payments expected by 2019. The consumer desire for them is already there and they can even serve as a traffic driver for media, offering more personalised conversions and the ability to offer consumers reminders. The [Starbucks m-payment system](#) is a good example of this in action.

Understanding mobile through TLC: Time, Location, Context

Challinor admits this can be overwhelming as many are struggling to monetise digital traffic and we're fast realising that paywalls are not the panacea we once thought. It's all about building loyalty. He also builds on what Marcelo Benez, chief commercial officer at *Folha de S.Paulo*, shared in the first day:

“ Top [#inmafrica](#) take-away from Marceo Benez: Amid the digital storm it's not digital first, print first or mobile first - it's reader first.— Simoneh de Bruin (@SimonehDB) [November 14, 2016](#) ”

Delving deeper into mobile stats, Challinor shared that the average consumer checks their mobile 200 times per day. The good news is that 66% of mobile users engage with news, but that's only 5% of their time spent on mobile. One way to address this is to re-evaluate our definition of 'mobile' – is it a Wi-Fi connection, a handheld device or rather a mindset? How you turn data into smart data is knowing what times they access your content, how frequently they do so, on which devices, how they engage with it, and which items they linger on the most. Doing so removes irrelevant messaging noise and means even the web landing page can be personalised based on interests, delivering premium content people actually want such as with USA Today's new data-led front page. The adage: “Where the eyeballs go, the money goes, too” is becoming increasingly more important and also more complex, so keep a watch on new technologies and opportunities for collaboration. If you're simply trying to catch up it's possibly already too late. But don't give up just yet...

“ *“Be excited, not scared. There has never been a better time to work in the [#media](#).” - [@challinor](#) [#inmafrica](#)
[@INMAorg](#) [#mobile](#) [#UX](#) [#IoT](#)— Johanna van Eeden ([@JohannavanEeden](#)) [November 15, 2016](#) ”*

We're clearly living in a world of disruption, so take the time to research ways of doing what you're already doing, better.

All the presentations are available on [INMA's website](#), and be sure to follow the [#INMAAfrica hashtag](#) for the latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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