

Magazines: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - December 2020

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the magazine market
- Forecast for UK print circulation of consumer print magazines
- The performance of different magazine genres and titles
- Print and digital magazine purchasing habits
- Interest in different types of magazine videos
- Parents' purchasing of magazines for their children

Nearly half (48%) of magazine readers have used a magazine to learn about a hobby/interest during the COVID-19 outbreak. While the pandemic has been difficult for the magazine market overall, many people have still turned to magazines as a source of entertainment and information, with some genres, eg gardening, performing relatively well as a result.

The pandemic has been a very harsh blow for magazines and publishers. Print circulation declines will be steep in 2020, as people have had fewer occasions in their daily lives to purchase the format. Declines in advertising revenue and the inability to host in-person events have further compounded the difficulties for publishers.

The lockdown beginning in January 2021 will slow the recovery for the market, especially the print market. However while print readership is down, many digital readers have been particularly engaged with magazine content during the pandemic. This presents titles with the incentive and opportunity to further improve and bolster their digital platforms, something already crucial to their long-term survival.

There are more indications that the Netflix-style subscription model will prove to be a viable one for the magazine market going forward (eg Readly, Apple News+). The option appears to be well suited to magazines, far more so than for news/newspapers, as it offers people the opportunity to explore a large volume of very diverse content.



“While some genres have performed well since the outbreak, such as cooking, gardening and news magazines, most titles are simply trying to weather the storm, while developing their digital platforms. There are, though, more indications that multi-magazine subscriptions could be a viable and successful option for the market going forward.”

– Rebecca McGrath, Senior Media Analyst

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