

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Allure's companion app could augment real change in publishing

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Image courtesy of Allure magazine

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As virtual reality continues to shape publishing, augmented reality comes into play with beauty publication Allure's standalone application that brings print magazine issues to life as everything shifts to digital.

Subscribers of Allure are getting a unique and innovative experience with magazine reading with the latest December issue. The publisher, which caters to a younger, millennial-stocked audience, is releasing its next print issue with an interactive experience in which users can use their mobile devices to unlock 3D motion-enabled images.

"This will be huge in terms of PR. Especially for the first publishers launching this type of app. However, their real utility remains to be seen," said Juan Margenat, chief operating officer at **Marfeel**. "There are many barriers to an app like this: people need to see the "scan + see" symbol, they need to download the app, and then they have to scan it.

"In the beginning it will probably just be a nice thing to look at and a conversation starter with friends & colleagues," he said. "However, until that action brings real value to the user, the fad will just disappear."

Alluring publishing strategy

Supermodel Gigi Hadid is ushering in Allure's latest technology move, which could dramatically change the publishing world. Ms. Hadid will be featured on December's cover of Allure's print magazine; the first to feature augmented reality content viewed through a mobile app.

Allure Unbound, available on the App Store and Google Play, allows users to make the pages of the magazine come to life by viewing the magazine through their mobile devices. Readers can download the app and scan the "Scan + See" symbol within the platform to unlock the interactive experience.

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On the cover of the issue, Ms. Hadid is shown completing leaps, spins, even handstands during the photo shoot. When a page has an accompanying augmented reality experience, the symbol will appear on the page throughout the

issue.

The "Scan + See" symbol looks similar to a QR code and is featured within a square box. After allowing the app to have access to phone's camera, users will be able to scan the code.

Allure Unbound is free to download, which will hopefully make the experience more popular. The innovativeness is enough to bring in users through the cool factor, but might even shape the future of publishing.

As print publishing continues a downward spiral, more media brands are taking to digital, many completely shutting down print and even more competitors being born in online-only. Allure's idea could be a saving grace for its print side of its publishing.

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While many consumers are still reading print magazines, digital is still overpowering. Allure Unbound will be able to capture users' attentions, as their attention spans continue to shrink.

Virtually a different world

Technology is continuing to alter the publishing industry and virtual reality is becoming a significant factor in that change.

A panel of women working in virtual reality at ad:tech New York 2016 held an intense conversation about the future of the platform, including insight from an executive with The New York Times on its VR users, who clock in over six minutes on the application more than even the newspaper's core apps.

During Madwoman VR's The New Reality of Virtual Reality panel, Jessica Northrup, who has been virtual reality program manager at The Times since the newspaper launched VR in November of last year, described its dedication towards including VR reporting as a central facet of its newsroom. She also commented on The Times's relationships with brands in working to advance its VR presence ([see more](#)).

HTC also partnered with Cond Nast China to release a new technology that will bring augmented reality to publishing, a move that will be sure to catch consumers off guard.

The collaboration will debut in December's edition of the Cond Nast Traveler's China Edition, which will feature a new technology from HTC called Vivepaper that allows for AR compatibility through a Vive virtual reality system or comparable cardboard VR apparatus such as Google Cardboard. The technology carries the potential to open up the publishing world and its platform in terms of accessibility and content, but consumers' willingness for uptake will be determined by a variety of considerations ([see more](#)).

"Long term this could be huge for the publishing industry, as this links the paper to the digital world," Mr. Margenat said. "Imagine you like something on a picture and through the scanning app you can virtually try it yourself, and then even buy it online and have it delivered to your doorstep in a few hours.

"The possibilities are endless," he said.

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