

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Cond Nast is 2017 Luxury Publisher of the Year

December 13, 2017



W Magazine was among Condé Nast's most-innovative publications of the year. Image credit: Condé Nast

By STAFF REPORTS

Condé Nast is *Luxury Daily's* 2017 Publisher of the Year for its innovative approach to tackling some of the thornier issues facing the media industry this year, including the digital revolution and smart use of video.

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Condé Nast won over runners-up Hearst Magazines and Meredith Corporation. In a time of uncertainty for media, with constant stories of layoffs, title closures and other media horror accounts, these three publishers have withstood the trials that 2017 presented with an eye toward innovation and capturing a youthful audience.

The Luxury Publisher of the Year award was decided based on luxury marketing, advertising, media and digital efforts with impeccable strategy, tactics, creative, executive and results. All candidates selected by the *Luxury Daily* editorial team had to have appeared in *Luxury Daily* coverage this year. Judging was based purely on merit.

Navigating troubled waters

Condé Nast's 2017 ended with a bang as the New York-based company proclaimed it had reached a record 113 million consumers in October, a 17 percent increase, year-over-year, from the previous October.

These impressive numbers stem from a few factors, most notably Condé Nast's embrace of younger consumers and the innovative new digital tools used to produce and consume media.

For instance, Condé Nast is putting additional stock in digital content hubs with the launch of title offshoots meant to accompany primary print publications.

Condé Nast has recently amped up its digital properties to pull millennial readership and attract advertisers that appeal to the next generation of readers. The media group's millennial-centric developments include the "Next Gen" campaign and digital companions for titles such as *Architectural Digest*, *Golf Digest* and *Bon Appetit* magazines ([see story](#)).

The media group has done this by investing strongly in the platforms that are most familiar among young consumers.



Katy Perry was photographed by Steven Klein for W magazine, September 2017. Image courtesy of W magazine

Conde Nast-owned British Vogue is the latest of the Vogue-branded magazines to launch on Snapchat Discover as publishers look to amplify their digital efforts.

Vogue is currently pushing a Snapchat Discover strategy across the markets where its publications are present to take its editorial voice from print pages to the mobile content space. Vogue's publisher has invested heavily in digital recently to ensure its titles stay modern and are fluid in an evolving print landscape ([see story](#)).

British Vogue also exhibited the pervasiveness of chatbots on Facebook Messenger, when it launched its Messenger bot to personalize fashion news for fans.

Through the British Vogue official Facebook and Facebook Messenger account, users can interact with the bot to receive up-to-date information regarding fashion. The new chatbot hopes to make a more impactful impression on readers, as publishing becomes excessively overcrowded and consumers' attention spans get shorter ([see story](#)).



Epicurious' Small Plates. Image credit: Epicurious, photo by Chelsea Kyle

Finally, Conde Nast-owned W magazine demonstrated the potential that augmented reality has for the print industry with a September cover that speaks to the reader.

W magazine's September edition, featuring singer Katy Perry, was brought to life through an augmented reality push that enhances the reader's experience via interactive features. The fashion and beauty sector, as well as the retail, travel and automotive industries, have all benefitted from applying augmented reality to campaigns as a way to heighten the effect of an initiative, thus increasing the chances of making an impression on today's consumer ([see story](#)).

These efforts show that Cond Nast is invested in using all of the latest tech trends, from augmented reality to chatbots, to reach more readers in the year ahead.

First runner's-up: Hearst Magazines

Hearst's 2017 was marked by extensive adaptations in the face of a declining print media.

In his annual New Year's letter in January, Hearst president David Carey looked back at 2016's accomplishments and shared strategy for 2017.

Mr. Carey shared with colleagues that New York-based Hearst saw increased earnings for the third straight year. As print is faced with a period of evolution due to consumer behavior that relies less on print and more on digital, Mr.

Carey and all of Hearst chose to focus on the "need to be both robust and nimble" in 2017 ([see story](#)).

This strategy manifested itself in a commitment to combining digital media and ecommerce.

Hearst-owned publication Elle Dcor introduced two new services to its digital presence with Elle Dcor Shopping and Elle Dcor Designer Directory, signaling a shift toward a hybrid media-commerce model.

The first allows for dedicated ecommerce through the publication's Web site and the second provides a directory of designers and home dcor specialists for users to browse through and contact. The shopping component will be a partnership with Dering Hall, whose products can be purchased through Elle Dcor ([see story](#)).



Sketch of Marie Claire's first-ever The Next Big Thing concept shop. Image credit: Hearst's Marie Claire

Hearst publications were also focused on commerce in the physical world as well.

Hearst-owned Marie Claire magazine headed to New York's SoHo neighborhood to bring discovering the next big thing in fashion, personal care and technology from its pages to the physical realm.

Marie Claire's first "The Next Big Thing" concept shop will opened Sept. 23 and offered consumers a new way to shop, powered by Mastercard technology and other innovative touch points that are revolutionizing the retail sector. The concept shop, in addition to selling innovative products, will demonstrate how in-store retail is becoming smarter, thanks to advances in digital technologies that mirror the online experience ([see story](#)).

Second runner's-up: Meredith Corporation

Meredith Corporation is not traditionally considered a player in the luxury media business, but one big move earned it a place in the second runner's-up spot: its planned acquisition of Time Inc.

With Des Moines, IA-based Meredith's intentions to buy Time Inc., the publisher stands to gain a new base of luxury-consuming readers.

The deal brings together two companies with vastly different portfolios: the traditional, Middle America-based Meredith with the international, cosmopolitan interests of Time Inc. By acquiring Time Inc., along with its luxury publications such as Country Life, Horse & Hound, Country Homes & Interiors and Travel + Leisure, Meredith is significantly expanding its reach to luxury consumers and the advertisers who want to reach them ([see story](#)).



Time Inc. is being acquired by Meredith Corp. Image credit: Time Inc.

As part of this acquisition, Meredith will also be able to leverage its database of 250 million email addresses and device IDs, enabling it to serve more relevant ads to readers. It is also looking ahead to the potential to further

leverage its capabilities in digital marketing solutions such as native, video and programmatic advertising.

Beyond advertising, Meredith also has plans to create revenue through activities such as licensing, events and ecommerce ([see story](#)).

With these plans in store, Meredith earned a mention in this list for its potential to grow into a significant luxury publisher in the coming year.

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