



## Will professional magazines survive AI?

Magazines have existed for more than 350 years. In the business world, they have played a pivotal role in informing people about trends and solutions, sharing good-better-best practices and thereby establishing thought leadership. Of course, the added benefit of (self-)promotion of authors and (products and services of) their employers is also a key factor for writing articles for magazines. Some magazines, whether digital and/or print, even organize events and trainings and build a community.

Publishers focus on business magazines for specific industries (e.g. financial or public sector), subjects (e.g. cloud) or generic areas (e.g. leadership). Subscription-based magazines are more difficult to sustain than sponsored closed circulation publications. For instance, in several countries IT magazines that relied heavily on subscriptions or advertisements, have vanished in the last decade or have been replaced by blog-style e-newsletters rather than content-rich magazines with long-form articles. On the other hand, closed circulation magazines as well as research journals have survived, the latter due to an explosive growth in the number of articles – not even taking AI-generated articles into account.

Although certain types of AI have been around for well over 40 years, the advent of GenAI changed the scenery. For publishers that embrace AI, the technology has the potential to:

- produce very specific content efficiently;
- scale content for and translate content into any language;
- analyze and profile online reading behavior;
- show real-time adapted and interactive content;
- personalize publications based on (historical) preferences;
- stimulate engagement and community-building, etcetera (see also [ACAI25]).

All these can be realized with currently available technology, such as AI assistants, bots (RPA or chatbots), LLMs and agents, and do not even require neural networks or other advanced types of AI. AI is much faster than any human being for reproducing, editing, translating and prettifying all types of multimedia content, as long as one does not expect an AI-generated outburst of creativeness.

However, most online content of magazines has probably already been hoovered by LLMs, without any referencing or payment when leveraged further, for compiling summaries or responses to prompts (ignoring the author's intellectual property rights). Magazine websites in the US have already identified a significant decline in traffic from



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search engines, approximately 26% to 34,5% fewer visitors due to AI summaries based on LLMs scraping all content (for the impact of GenAI on US publishers, see [SIMI25] and [Law25]). This is especially the case if the magazines feature high-quality content, which the LLMs are primarily aiming at when crawling ([Wuko24]). These articles and entire digital magazines can also be identified and retrieved easily if their content was just optimized for search engines (SEO). Recently, Cloudflare implemented functionality to enable publishers to block AI scrapers or to charge a micro payment for content, so-called “pay per crawl”.

Since Compact Magazine strives to publish high-quality content, our Editorial Board is also considering the future in light of the advent of AI as well as other methods and tools for just-in-time knowledge acquisition and professional skills improvement. If all our content is gobbled up without any relationship between authors/employers and readers, our authors would be better off becoming (live) speakers or teachers.

After finishing this column in a manual, old-fashioned manner, I posed the title of the column as a question to a LLM, Claude<sup>1</sup>. Claude responded by advising to become AI-native (only using and discussing AI), using AI for personalization (AI-driven content recommendations) and pivoting to expertise curation (becoming a trusted filter & analyzer of AI developments). Claude further suggests to let Compact:

- become the signal in the noise;
- champion human-AI collaboration stories;
- create communities around shared challenges for peer-to-peer learning;
- focus on strategic depth, long-term implications of technology trends;
- deliver exclusive access and investigations (own research).

Interestingly enough, ChatGPT indicated that due to AI, several magazines in physical format are making a comeback, while others are increasing the publication frequency of their print magazines.

We will solicit your input on viable options for Compact Magazine via a structured questionnaire and selective interviews. You may already provide your viewpoint and other input via **info@compact.nl**.

<sup>1</sup> Perplexity and ChatGPT reacted with responses that were partly similar, but overall less extensive or insightful. ChatGPT did mention the ethical questions regarding intellectual property, biases, transparency and editorial integrity of AI-generated content.

## References

- [ACAI25] ACAI (2025). The Rise of AI-Generated Corporate Magazines: A New Era in Content Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://acai.news/ai-generated-corporate-magazines/>
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