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The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research: The Future of the Magazine Form.

David Abrahamson and Marcia R. Prior-Miller (Eds.). (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015). 650 pp. \$210 hardcover.

The worst mistake beginning researchers can make is to begin a project without a thorough review of the literature. As a result, an ill-conceived research project can try to answer questions that no one cares about or—at the other end of the spectrum—answer questions that have been discussed *ad nauseum* by dozens of researchers. A thorough literature review allows the researcher to discover gaps or contradictions in the research, and develop a unique angle and methodology for any project.

A “thorough” review of magazine research—which often crosses academic disciplines—has been difficult for even the most advanced scholars. *The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research* now makes it possible and even easy. Its many contributors review the last 25 years of magazine scholarship in 33 chapters and subject areas. Each chapter offers a splendid review of major research findings in all the areas that magazine research encompasses: magazine writing, editing, design, covers, content, advertising, management, information graphics, photography, history, biographies, as well as broader areas like literary journalism, curriculum, and undergraduate and graduate education. Other chapters look at segments of the magazine industry such as newsmagazines and religious, celebrity, science, technology, and business-to-business magazines. Still more chapters explore broader areas in the context of magazine research, such as theoretical foundations, uses and gratifications, race and gender, cultural influence, sustainability, pedagogy, and international publishing.

Contributors generally follow the same format. First, they explain the purpose of their essay. Then, they explain the search terms and data sources (such as Google Scholar or Academic Search Premier) used to locate available books and articles on the topic they are writing about. The bulk of each essay summarizes the results from the major books, articles and research studies on that topic. Authors organize the results of their research into categories or some logical structures. Finally, each author suggests directions and topics for future research, ending each chapter with a long list of endnotes and a bibliography. The end of the book includes a 77-page complete bibliography of more than 2,000 articles and research on magazines. A list of contributors contains a biography of each author. Finally, an 18-page index makes any topic or name easily accessible.

The 33 chapters are divided into six parts.

I. Magazine Research: Methodologies and Structures presents theories and models for magazine research in an evolving, global context.

- II. Magazine Publishing: The People and the Work** introduces the roles and practices of those involved in the editorial and business sides of magazine publishing.
- III. Studies in Content: Magazines as Textual Communication** surveys the field of contemporary magazines across a range of theoretical perspectives, subjects, genre, and format questions.
- IV. Studies in Presentation: Magazines as Visual Communication** explores cover design, photography, illustrations, and interactivity.
- V. Pedagogical and Curricular Perspectives** offers insights on undergraduate and graduate teaching topics in magazine research.
- VI. The Future of the Magazine Form** speculates on the changing nature of magazine research via its effects, audiences, and transforming platforms.

The names of the two editors and most of the authors will be familiar to anyone who has been active in the Magazine Division or in publishing magazine research. They include scholars and magazine professionals from the U.S., Finland, England, Sweden, the Netherlands, Qatar, Canada, and Portugal. David Abrahamson is the Charles Deering Professor of Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University and author of *Magazine-Made America* and editor this handbook's predecessor: *The American Magazine: Research Perspectives and Prospects* (1995). Marcia R. Prior-Miller is an associate professor emeritus at Iowa State University, who compiled the *Bibliography of Published Research on Magazine and Journal Periodicals*, now in its 9th edition. Their idea for publishing this follow-up to Abrahamson's 1995 book emerged from a discussion they had at the 2011 AEJMC conference in St. Louis.

Prior-Miller wrote a research essay on magazine typology and the difficulties of classifying magazines into different "types." Everyone who attempts to do so comes up with different schemata, she says. Abrahamson wrote the final essay on digital transformation and the future of magazine publishing. "It seems unlikely that the magazine form in print will disappear," and "providing valuable content to a definable audience which advertisers regard as potential customers—appears to be viable in both the print and digital realms," he wrote.

Part I on research methodologies and structures offers a useful framework for approaching magazine research. No one should begin any research project without reading this complete section. Carolyn Kitch (Temple) analyzes theory and methods of analysis in magazine research. As mentioned earlier, Marcia Prior-Miller (Iowa State) examines magazine typologies. Kathleen L. Endres (Kent State) looks at magazine research in an interdisciplinary framework, and reports on key magazine studies from the

fields of sociology, women's studies, business, physical sciences, and other academic studies. Cynthia Lee Patterson (South Florida) summarizes research articles and books on magazine history. Beginning with Frank Luther Mott's five-volume *History of American Magazines* (1938), she reviews each magazine history book that has been published since then. Dominic Lasorsa (Texas) discusses "Source and Citation Analysis: An Epistemology of Magazine Research," and Abe Peck (an emeritus professor at Northwestern University) discusses "Business-to-Business Media: The Informational Needs of Professional Life." Michael Heller (Brunel University, UK) and Michael Rowlinson (Queen Mary University of London) examine the under-researched sector of organizational magazines. Leara D. Rhodes (Georgia) concludes this part with her review of research on international magazine publishing.

Researchers in visual communication will be interested in Part 4 on "Studies in Presentation: Magazines as Visual Communication." Ted Spiker (Florida) begins this section with a review of research on the fascinating subject of magazine covers. Carol Holstead (Kansas) writes about research on magazine design and "Defining the Visual Architecture." She has located only 12 scholarly articles and one book on magazine design, but reviews a much wider body of literature on graphic arts. She examines the research by dividing it into three sections: theoretical, applied, and historical.

By contrast, Berkley Hudson (Missouri) and Elizabeth A. Lance (Northwestern-Qatar) report having located more than 300 articles and books about magazine photography and illustration. Because of this high number, they focus on some exemplars that "highlight the substantial recent research about photography and illustration in magazine." Some of their sub-topics include cartoons, biographical studies, cultural communication, and women as both subjects and photographers. Carol B. Schwalbe (Arizona) reviews scholarship in the more recent field of infographics and interactivity, which emerged with the rise of desktop publishing and the Internet in the 1990s.

After teaching magazine courses for 25 years, I found Part 5, on "Pedagogical and Curricular Perspectives," particularly interesting. Elliot King (Loyola-Baltimore) writes about the challenges of assessing and measuring outcomes in magazine education. He includes results from research about particular skills employers have found most useful in new hires. Other chapters analyze best pedagogical techniques for teaching magazine and feature writing. Kim Martin-Long (Delaware Valley College) critiques the range of textbooks on teaching magazine and feature writing. Bill Reynolds (Ryerson University) discusses the challenges in teaching magazine editing, which range from copy editing to content development and structure. Carolyn Ringer Lepre (Marist College) addresses curricular issues in undergraduate education, along with the challenges of teaching magazine theory and research techniques in graduate programs. Based on her research, only 80 of 1,332 articles published in *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* between 1990 and 2013 have examined magazines, and only 10 of 728 articles in *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator* have discussed magazine education.

This book review does not allow for an in-depth discussion of each essay and author. Besides the contributors mentioned above, others include Dane S. Claussen (Shanghai International Studies University); Elizabeth Crisp Crawford (North Dakota State); Michael F. Dahlstrom (Iowa State); Hanna-Kaisa Ellonen (Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland); Bill Emmott (*The Economist* magazine); Vincent F. Filak (Wisconsin, Oshkosh); Cheryl Renée Gooch (Lincoln University of Pennsylvania); Susan Greenberg (University of Roehampton, London); Elizabeth Meyers Hendrickson (Ohio); Anette Johansson (Jönköping University, Sweden); Helen Kopnina (Hague University, The Netherlands); Yanick Rice Lamb (Howard); Elizabeth A. Lance (Northwestern, Qatar); Dominic L. Lasorsa (Texas); Miles Maguire (Wisconsin, Oshkosh); Rachel Davis Mersey (Northwestern); Lula Rodriguez (Illinois); Sela Sar (Illinois); Isabel Soares (University of Lisbon); Ken Waters (Pepperdine); and Sheila M. Webb (Western Washington).

I find little to criticize about *The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research*. The writing is clear and concise, without frequent use of “academese” or esoteric terms one might expect. When scholarly terms appear, the authors explain their meaning. Certainly each reader, depending on his or her research interests, will find some parts and essays more interesting than others. Each topic is easy to find in the index. While the price seems high, it is competitive for a 640-page hardcover scholarly book from an academic publisher. The publisher’s list price is \$210, but Amazon offers the book for \$164. Kindle editions are less expensive. Most university libraries solicit suggestions from professors for new acquisitions. Readers should recommend the addition of this book to their universities’ acquisition librarians.

If you are looking for an idea or an angle for research, begin here, and you will discover what topics have and have not been researched in the magazine literature. You will discover the major authors in the field. This 650-page volume will become an indispensable “bible” and starting point for any kind of magazine research.