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Journal of Magazine Media, Volume 11, Number 2, Spring 2010, (Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmm.2010.0008>

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Editor's Reflection

Finishability—An Antidote to Information Overload

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"Finishability." I learned a new word this spring when I visited *The Economist's* headquarters in London with a group of study abroad students. In these days of declining print readership, media observers have tried to decode the continuing success of this high-brow British export. Reasons range from its hyper-distilled analysis and snob appeal to its global embrace and high subscription rates.

Tom Standage, digital editor at *The Economist*, pointed to "finishability" as a key to success. Each week the magazine engages readers with information about politics and science, economics and world affairs they can finish in an hour or two.

Think of "finishability" as an antidote to information overload. On the Internet, for example, we're overwhelmed with information—good, bad, unreliable, helpful, erudite, and just plain silly. One link leads to another and another....

In a world of endless websites, proliferating TV channels, and the constant ping-pong of emails and instant messages, *The Economist* gives readers a manageable handle on the world each week. Standage listed a three-step process:

- 1. Filter** what's important
- 2. Analyze** why it's important and what it means
- 3. Encapsulate** for readers

The Economist gives readers a sense of finishability.

And that's what Assistant Editor Elizabeth Hendrickson and I plan to do with this journal. We want to make it the go-to place for the latest research and information on magazines and new media. One new addition will be the expanded New Books and Research section. In addition to book reviews, this section will list recent magazine research and textbooks. If you'd like to review a book, please contact Book Review Editor Joe Bernt at berntj@ohio.edu. Send him the title and a short biography with your teaching and research interests, academic title, institutional affiliation, and information about any of your own recent publications.

Like *The Economist*, we want you to feel more informed about the world of magazines. And enjoy the satisfaction of finishability.