

A website for a daily newspaper offers possibilities for extending reader target markets



By [Richard Clarke](#)

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Publicity is the key word in any medium of the media. However, simply adding a website to a daily newspaper does not automatically increase sales. The immediacy and increased reach of the Net makes a website a viable marketing tool to consider - but it is not a silver bullet and solution to all woes.

A website may increase readership of the publication but sales may not follow immediately and this is a fact that must be considered and analysed before going online.

A possible method of utilising the website to gain more 'bandwidth' is to add articles to the site that did not make the print edition because they were aimed at too narrow a technology or business reader segment.

Before readers take me to task for giving away content without financial return, they should consider that there are online users that would for many reasons not buy the print edition. The likelihood of an existing print reader giving that up for only online reading is slight as the content is not the same and the lifestyle change is quite vast.

Online readers may start buying the print edition as they discover that there is different content. The overlap between online users and print readers is there, but there are more print readers that surf online than online readers that already read print.

The logic behind this has been proven with research done on DVD sales and online file swapping. Many online swappers were not DVD buyers to start off with so there is very little immediate sales loss.

The long term strategy with the website can be decided around profiles of users and whether there is a business plan that could build a revenue stream if access to certain archives was charged for.

South Africa has donated many expats to all parts of the world and these people are always hankering for some info and feedback about what is happening down south.

A website caters admirably for this market and once again builds increased 'bandwidth' which brings more advertising possibilities and a larger presence in the print media via word of mouth between expats and family and friends still here in SA.

The key to developing this online tool in conjunction with a print publication is to keep them connected within an integrated

marketing strategy. This works particularly well with a publication that has sales in some parts of the country but is yet to break into and establish itself in other city centres where there is an existing community of online readers.

Balancing both a print and online presence is not easy and should be followed only when a link between content and editorial policy has been established with online media users.

ABOUT RICHARD CLARKE

Richard Clarke founded Just Ideas, an ideas factory and implementation unit. He specialises in spotting opportunities, building ideas and watching them fly. Richard is also a freelance writer.

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