



# Magazines

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**In the Age of  
Specialization**



# The Development of Modern American Magazines

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- Postal Act of 1879
  - Lowered postage rates
  - Increased magazine circulation
    - Advertising revenues soared.
- Advertisers
  - Used magazines to capture attention and build a national marketplace
- *Ladies' Home Journal*
  - First with a circulation of one million



# Social Reform and the Muckrakers

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- Rise in circulation coincided with rapid social changes.
  - Magazines allowed journalists to write in depth about issues.
- Muckrackers
  - Investigative journalists
  - Raised awareness, leading to the Pure Food and Drug Act, the Meat Inspection Act, and antitrust laws



# The Rise of General-Interest Magazines

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- General-interest magazines
  - Prominent after WWI through the 1950s
  - Combined investigative journalism with broad national topics
  - Photojournalism
    - Gave magazines a visual advantage over radio



# The Rise of General-Interest Magazines (cont.)

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- Prominent general-interest magazines
  - *Saturday Evening Post*
  - *Reader's Digest*
  - *Time*
  - *Life*
- Pass-along readership
  - Total number of people who came into contact with a single copy

# Table 9.1: Top 10 Magazines

1972		2011	
Rank/Publication	Circulation	Rank/Publication	Circulation
1 <i>Reader's Digest</i>	17,825,661	1 <i>AARP The Magazine</i>	22,401,546
2 <i>TV Guide</i>	16,410,858	2 <i>AARP Bulletin</i>	22,204,197
3 <i>Woman's Day</i>	8,191,731	3 <i>Better Homes and Gardens</i>	7,633,372
4 <i>Better Homes and Gardens</i>	7,996,050	4 <i>Game Informer Magazine</i>	6,734,672
5 <i>Family Circle</i>	7,889,587	5 <i>Reader's Digest</i>	5,606,743
6 <i>McCall's</i>	7,516,960	6 <i>National Geographic</i>	4,463,196
7 <i>National Geographic</i>	7,260,179	7 <i>Good Housekeeping</i>	4,339,069
8 <i>Ladies' Home Journal</i>	7,014,251	8 <i>Woman's Day</i>	3,876,053
9 <i>Playboy</i>	6,400,573	9 <i>Family Circle</i>	3,846,672
10 <i>Good Housekeeping</i>	5,801,446	10 <i>People</i>	3,563,410



# The Fall of General-Interest Magazines

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## ○ *People*

- Launched in 1974
- First successful magazine of its kind in decades
- Some charge that *People* is too specialized to be mass market, with its focus on celebrities, music, and pop culture.

# Convergence: Magazines Confront the Digital Age

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- Magazines move online.
  - Magazine companion Web sites ideal for increasing reach of consumer magazines
  - Feature original content
- Magazines embrace digital content.
  - **Webzines** made the Internet a legitimate site for breaking news and discussing culture and politics.





# The Domination of Specialization

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- Magazines grouped by two important characteristics
  - Advertiser type
    - Consumer
    - Business or trade
    - Farm
  - Target demographics
    - Gender, age, or ethnic group
    - Audience interest area (sports, literature, tabloids)

# The Domination of Specialization (cont.)

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- Magazines are also broken down by target audience.
  - Men and women
  - Sports, entertainment, and leisure
  - Age-group specific
  - Elite magazines aimed at cultural minorities
  - Minorities
  - Supermarket tabloids



# Magazine Departments and Duties

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## ○ Editorial

- Publisher, editor-in-chief, managing editors, and subeditors
- Subeditors oversee photography, illustrations, reporting and writing, copyediting, layout, and print and multimedia design

## ○ Production and technology

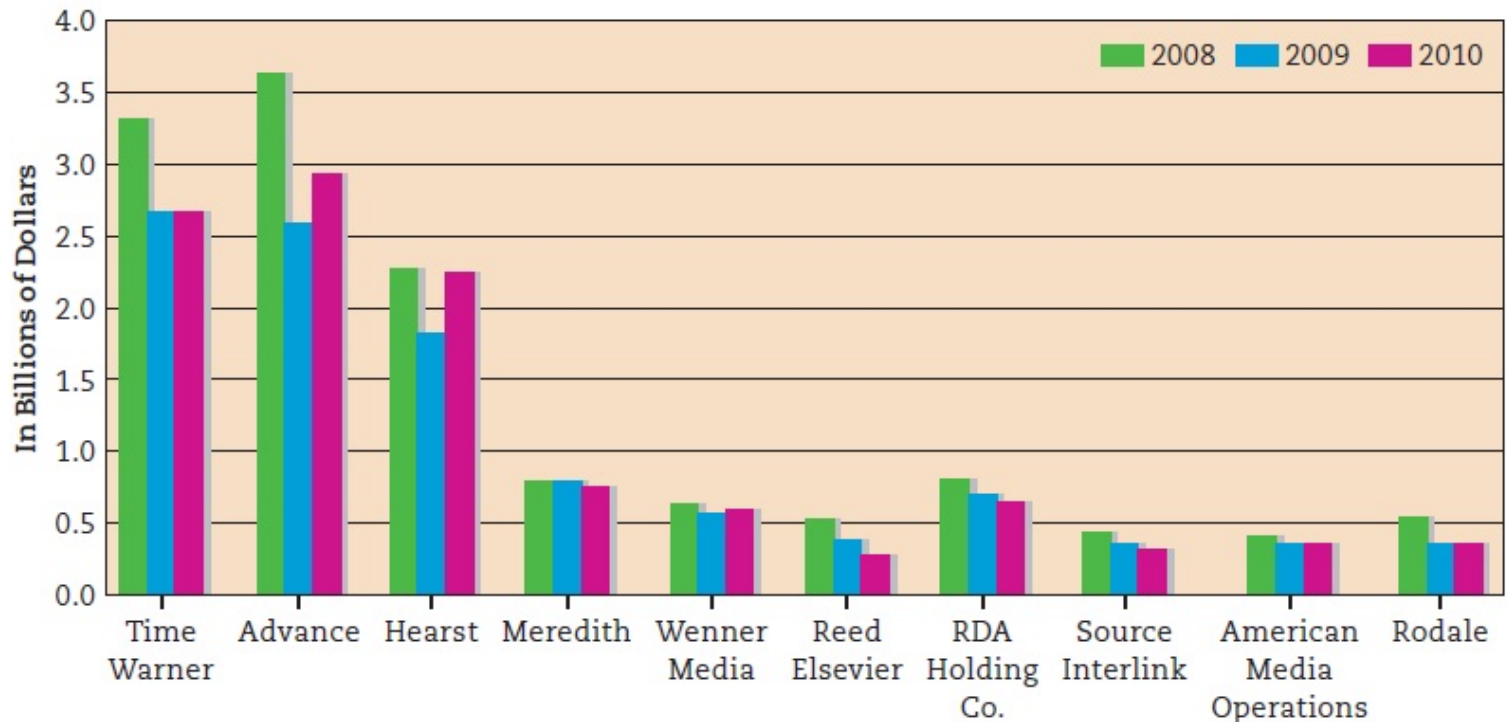
- Maintains computer and printing hardware

# Magazine Departments and Duties (cont.)

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- Advertising and sales
  - Secures clients, arranges promotions, and places ads
  - Rate cards indicate ad sizes/prices
- Circulation and distribution
  - Monitors single-copy and subscription sales
  - Subscriptions may be paid, evergreen, controlled, or digital

# Figure 9.1: Revenue Growth of Top Magazine Companies, 2008-2010





# Alternative Voices

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- Alternative magazines
  - Have historically defined themselves through politics
    - What constitutes an alternative magazine has broadened over time.
  - “Zines” are self-published magazines.
  - Some have achieved mainstream success.
    - *National Review* and *Mother Jones*