

# The Rapid evolution of **Digital Publishing**



Digital technologies have disrupted several sectors and publishing has been no exception. Changes in the way audiences consume information have led publishers to work like digital agencies, providing cross-platform access to clients to help reach a more diverse and discerning audience.

Indeed, digital publishing will continue to gain traction over more traditional methods given its several inherent advantages as encapsulated below:

## Cost-Effective Publishing and Expanded Reach:

Cost is and always will be one of the most important criteria for choosing a publishing medium; and this is where digital publishing scores heavily over physical formats. This is because the former eliminates a lot of processes that are involved in traditional publishing such as printing charges, distribution costs, cover page illustration charges, transportation of physical copies etc., all of which are built into the cost in traditional formats.

A related benefit comes from the vastly expanded reach of digital publishing. With print publications, your circulation is limited and related to your print run. With digital, your audience is virtually unlimited as even local publications can reach worldwide.



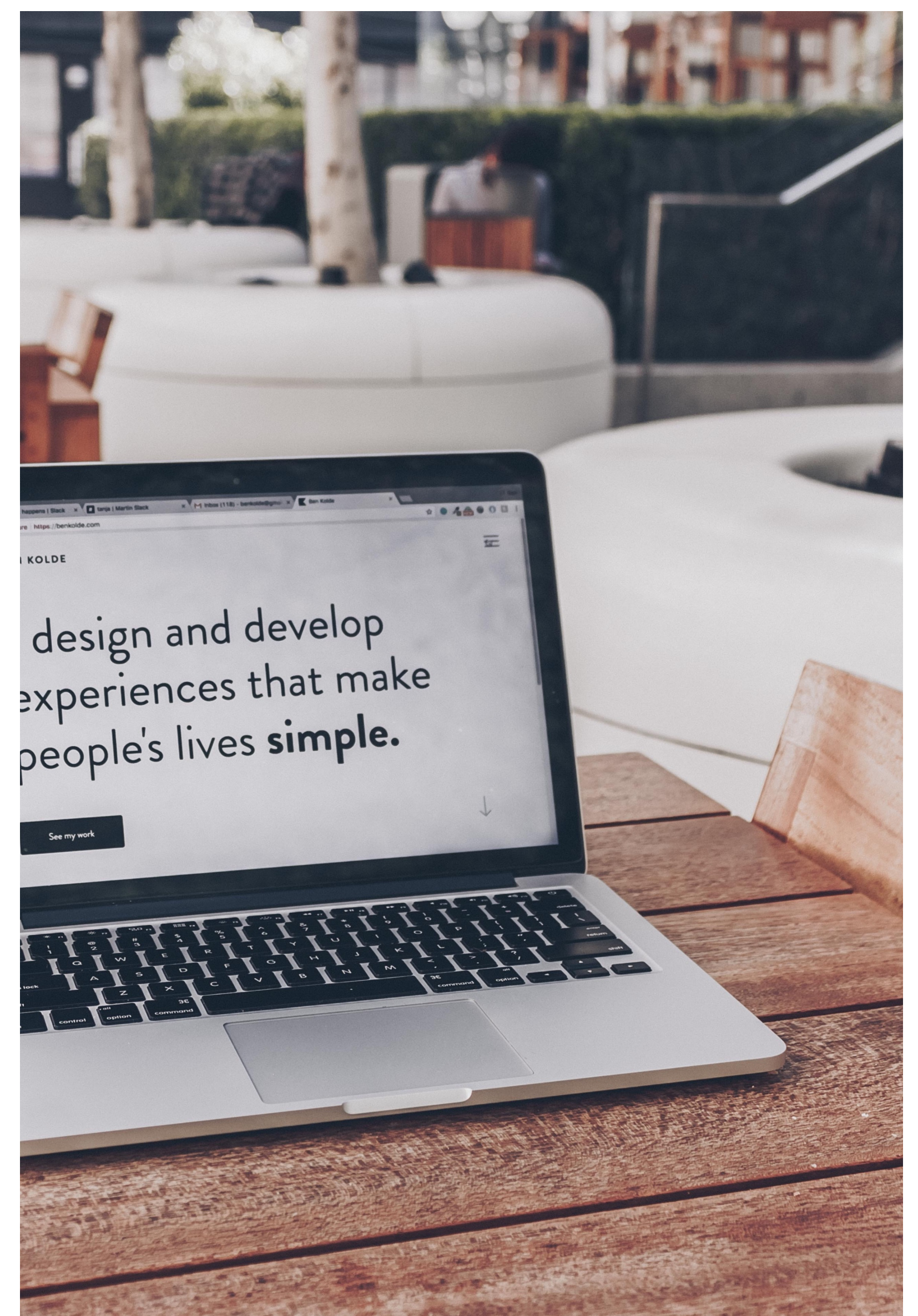


## Simplifies the Process of Content Creation:

Publishing software enables you to create content directly on a digital publishing platform; and you can even design or just download the cover page illustrations using simple digital tools. A digital publishing platform allows you to add HTML interactivities, drag and drop elements and the like with ease, design the layout and select themes for your publication.

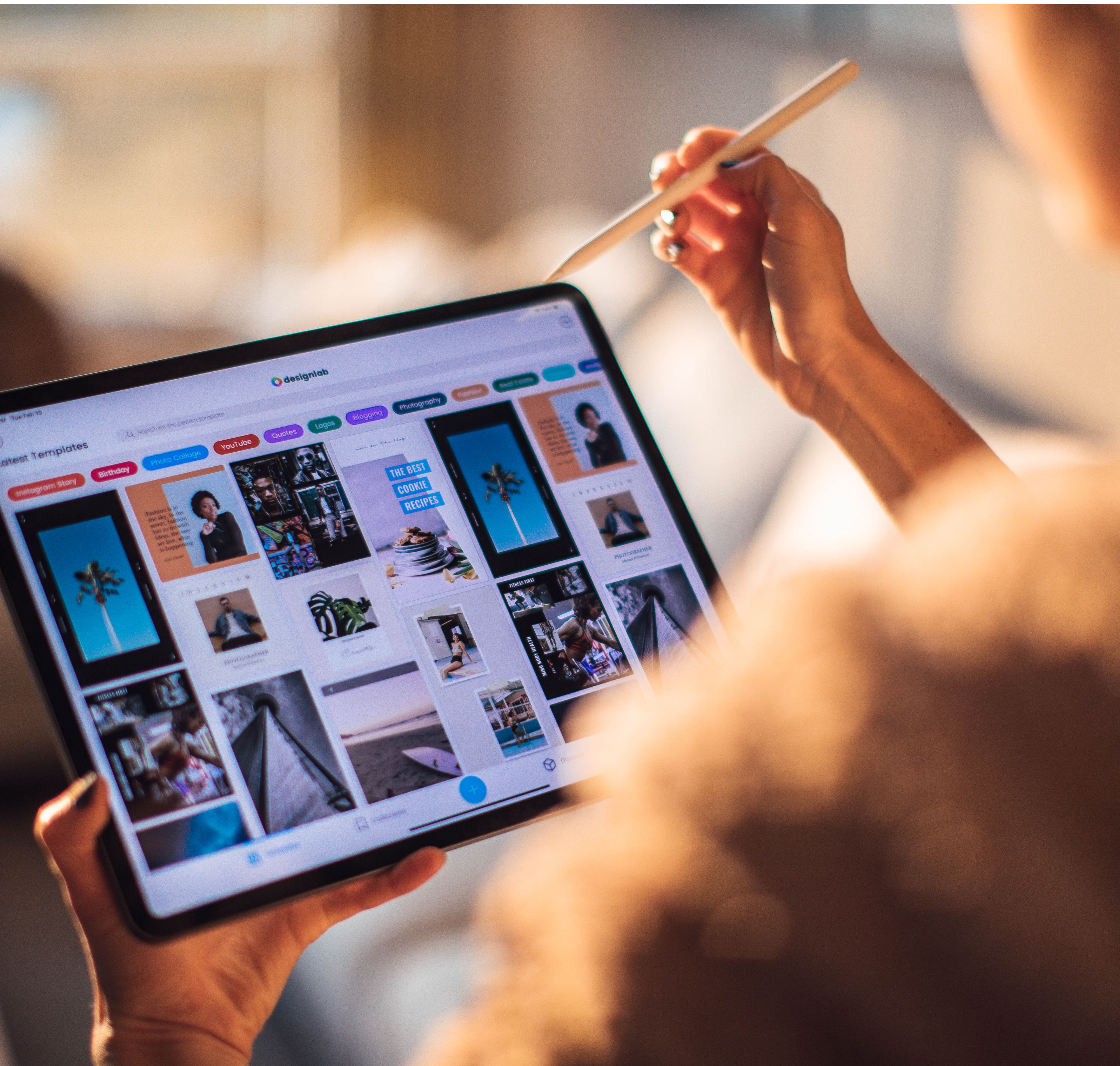
## Provides an Interactive Reading Experience to Users:

One of the major benefits of using a digital publishing platform is that it offers users an interactive reading experience; and recent trends point to an increased usage of this aspect. For example, publishers can include Gifs, images and videos; users can access the dictionary to look up words or search for words or dialogues using the search feature; listen to content read aloud using that specific feature etc; all of which make digital publications more interactive and engaging for the users.



## Ease of Editing (even after Publishing):

In digital formats, edits and corrections can be made anytime, even after publication as cloud-based publishing platforms are used. Content can be updated in real time, a necessity in today's fast changing world.



**Given these advantages, let us now look at some trends that are manifesting themselves with respect to digital publishing:**



## **Mobile-first Publishing**

Smartphones have become the most frequently used device for reading news. The average time spent on mobile devices is on a constant upswing. Search engines such as Google have accordingly been prioritising digital content for relevant topics. Publishers who have not yet prepared mobile version of their websites, are lagging behind the competition and are slowly losing their “visibility”.

At the same time, it has been found that user behaviour on desktops and smartphones is fundamentally different from print. It has been found that people read more slowly on the screen; also often skimming through or skipping paragraphs; or looking for summaries.

People consume mobile content “on the go”, while standing in queues or while using public transport. In such a situation, a smooth user journey on mobile is becoming essential.

Publishers therefore are looking to offer an optimized user experience. The user-friendliness of the website is part of search engine optimization: the user must feel that he is able to navigate the website or App smoothly irrespective of whether he uses a desktop, tablet or mobile device. A well designed menu and website structure, ease of navigation and an easily visible search bar are de rigueur.

## Podcasts and Audio Content

One of the major trends being seen is the rise of Podcasts. Podcasts are an audio-only show usually spread across a series of episodes, which can be downloaded from the Internet and heard on portable players such as iPods or smartphones.

This medium will continue to grow as people consume content on the go- it is after all a much better idea to listen to news, comments or interviews in a podcast than trying to read an article while driving a car!

Hence platforms that allow for uploading of Podcasts are likely to see a rapid growth; these typically create algorithms that allow listeners get or create lists of varying content.



## The Increased Dominance of Video and Visual content

The rise of digital content and Video/ Visual content go hand-in-hand. The last few years have all been about varying forms of visual content: videos, infographics, presentations etc.

According to reports, by the year 2022, 82% of all online content will be video. Video keeps people on your site longer and has a considerably higher click through rate (CTR) in video search results than text-based content.

Digital publishing platforms are providing capabilities to embed gifs, videos, and links to other media; they also allow to integrate PDFs with sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, SlideShare etc.

## Usage of Analytics

One of the mega-trends being witnessed today is an increased usage of analytics and analytical tools. This is true in the world of publishing as well; and digital publishing provides for a rich source of real time analytics.

It lets you track your distribution patterns; and you can find out how many users have downloaded and accessed your content. You could also get to view the reviews of your content. Contrast this with traditional publishing, where the author/publisher has to wait for weeks or months to obtain information.

Another related trend is the usage of A/B testing which allows for multiple versions of content to be put before users; and the one which creates the maximum impact is finally used.

Analytics is allowing publishers to learn more about and understand their users/ readers; both who actually consumes the content that a publisher brings out as well as what readers are most interested in learning more about. This could be as simple as using website analytics to see which headlines got more clicks than others.

Analytics is likewise proving to be a major boon for advertisers, who can regularly track what people click on most often, or for how long they engage with promotions. Advertisers are increasingly tailoring their ads to the most relevant target audience using the rich information analytics throws up.



## Varied and Interactive Content

The usage of plain text and photos is giving way to an increased variety of content through digital publishing mediums; including those geared to increase interactivity. Audiences are increasingly encouraged to leave comments, write reviews, take part in interactive polls and perform other tasks such as hovering over certain words or phrases to learn more. Interactive content is even more important when people are spending more time at home, as users have been doing in recent times.



Publishers are also being creative, experimenting with games that can be played in their publications as an example or putting in interactive infographics to engage readers.

Such content also provides for increased promotions and possibilities for sales built into digital content. This is being done through seamless ways such as adding a link to the product being spoken about and allowing the reader to be taken straight to the page where they can buy it on clicking the link.



## New revenue models

New revenue models are leading to different website design considerations. Publishers today are experimenting with different payment models to generate revenue beyond the traditional subscription.

This includes the creation of paywalls and freemium content. In certain cases, websites even ask for donations which can be set up either as a one-time transfer or as a standing order.

As media companies navigate the world of digital disruption, more such innovative models that appeal to readers in a new way are being seen.

### These include the following:

- Use of Affiliate links or Sponsored Content: Online editors curate affiliate links in articles, often on trending topics. This in turn results in the continuous updation and optimization of digital content as opposed to the traditional “publish and forget” approach. Sponsored content is commissioned by a third party with links to their landing pages.
- Use of a ‘Platform’ strategy, in which the main medium is expanded and fanned out to separate the formats and generate traffic at the same time.

# Mindfire, partnering in innovation of Publishing technologies and Platforms

Mindfire develops solutions in line with the trends described above and has deep expertise in print and publishing software and technologies; having worked with clients in building software systems for print newspapers, magazines, journals, media houses, catalog sales, and digital publishers.

Solutions built include Variable Data Publishing (Database-driven Publishing), Editorial/Workflow Systems, Custom Adobe/Macromedia Development, Cross-media Publishing, Advertising Management etc with specific skills in Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat, Flash, DreamWeaver, AfterEffects, Bridge, Flex, LiveCycle, AIR, ColdFusion, FrameMaker, PageMaker; using various Platforms and Databases, Protocols and Scripting.

One of the early ones we developed included building an application that allowed the Windows 8 Tablet users to read the publications of a Denmark-based client; Mindfire's solution allowed potential buyers to browse through or download the publications, enabling them to read with a smooth swipe operation with page by page view, use a Zoom In and Zoom Out feature etc.

## Another project for a US-based client envisaged the following:

- To generate the product label for the items which are ready for shipment
- To create Product Code/Label for the packages ordered by a customer

In order to automate the process of creating labels for the items and packages, Mindfire Solutions carried out extensive customizations using SuiteScript and SuiteBuilder and came up with an optimum solution.



## About Mindfire Solutions:

Since its inception in 1999, Mindfire Solutions has successfully executed 1000+ projects for global clients across all major industries. Some of the prominent ones include Aviva, GE, SAP, DHL and Thomson Reuters. Simultaneously, the organization has forged partnerships with global technology players like Adobe, Apple, Microsoft etc.- thereby enabling it to continue to drive innovation and growth.



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