

# Adapt and Grow

## The Ovid Bell Press Journey in Online Publishing

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When a long-time print customer decides to produce an online digital version of their publication, what does the printer do? Well, if they are a savvy printer, with an eye on trends in the publishing business, they lead the customer through the online publication journey which is what John Bell, CEO of The Ovid Bell Press, Fulton, Missouri, has done. While Ovid Bell is predominately a heatset web offset printer, they have a growing business in the online and digital publishing world.

When customers began seeking digital editions of printed magazines and newspapers, the team at Ovid Bell had the answer for them with OMag. Instead of resisting the digital conversion movement by some of their customers, Ovid Bell demonstrated its long history of serving its customers by embracing their needs, and, in this case, it was for online publications. In the process, Ovid Bell has developed a new service offering that has expanded and grown over the last three years.

### Online Journey

The e-publishing journey began three years ago when customers began expressing interest in digital editions. The request led the Ovid Bell team to seek a software conversion supplier to provide the technology to produce an online version. The Ovid Bell Press investigated numerous software suppliers such as: Folio, Texterity, Nxtbooks, Real Read, and Zmags. With an initial selection that proved unsatisfactory, the final and current software selected was Blue Toad, and OMag was created. Sandy Diehl, customer technical support at Ovid Bell, is credited with facilitating the creation of OMag. Currently digitizing more than eighty magazines, Ovid Bell does not believe digital magazines have cannibalized the printing side of the business. In fact, when asked the question, Zach Harrison, account executive at Ovid Bell, thought it actually helped with the customer relationship, and the company has not seen a decline in print revenue by customers while continuing to offer e-publishing services.

OMag's digital publications contain numerous interactive features that customers demand such as hyperlinked URLs and email

addresses. Ovid Bell also offers streaming video, streaming audio, Flash animation, and more in their e-publishing service. The service uses a Flash-based, page-flip technology that has the feel of reading in a hard copy. With the use of Blue Toad, the customer receives the URL link and can distribute as needed, or archive on a website. If the customer wants assistance in distribution of the digital version, Ovid Bell will also help with that service. Blue Toad keeps analytics on the site so the customer can review how many views the digital version receives and from what browser the reader is reaching the digital publication.

The Ovid Bell Press, founded in 1924, is a family-owned publication printer serving publishers of short- to medium-run magazines and journals. While steeped in the traditional services of a printer, the company has embraced all types of cutting-edge practices demonstrating their staying power in a changing marketplace. A quick look at their website also reveals a zest and camaraderie among their employees. Employees enjoyed developing an "OBP Jingle" for YouTube as well as a "YMCA" type song where numerous employees danced and sang about an Ovid sandwich.

With the energy of its employees and the adapting of their capabilities and customer service, The Ovid Bell Press showcases its power to change and grow with its customers.

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