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### The growth of Africa's magazine industry

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**WGSN reports on the growth of consumer publications in Africa, south of the Sahara, and highlights the newest and most popular print and digital publications.**

**Media24 Africa, BHF, MADE and Karama Umuntu magazines share their perceptions on why they are investing in this emerging market.**

Political, business and West African vanity publications tend to dominate international perceptions of what constitutes Africa's magazine industry. These have only partially addressed the needs and aspirations of Africa and the African diaspora, and **consumer lifestyle magazines are beginning to emerge that recognise a gap in the market.**



BHF magazine

The growth in digital technology has given independent writers and publishers the tools to address the African perspective in ways that have never before been seen.

**African tastes are sophisticated, demanding and hungry for quality content.**

Many entrepreneurs have been quick to step in to address this, but with an underdeveloped African publishing and distribution infrastructure many have failed to gain a foothold and are quickly replaced by the next big thing.

With international publications struggling to maintain their status in a declining Western market, **publishers in Africa are recognising the huge potential sub-Saharan Africa has to offer.**



True Love style feature

Drum magazine

### Development of new print and distribution platforms in Africa

Douw Steyn, CEO of Media24 Africa - a division owned by African media conglomerate Naspers - is responsible for the group's media

### Magazines to watch



*HauTe - Fashion Nigeria*  
[www.fashionnigeria.com](http://www.fashionnigeria.com)

*Design Indaba*  
[www.designindabamag.com](http://www.designindabamag.com)

*Uzuri*  
[www.uzuri.net](http://www.uzuri.net)

*Kitu Kizuri*  
[www.kitukizuri.com](http://www.kitukizuri.com)

*MADE*  
[www.mademags.com](http://www.mademags.com)

*Karama Umuntu*  
[www.karamaumuntu.com](http://www.karamaumuntu.com)

*True Love*  
[www.women24.com](http://www.women24.com)

*BHF*  
[www.bhfmagazine.com](http://www.bhfmagazine.com)

*MIMI*  
[www.mimimagazine.com](http://www.mimimagazine.com)

### Other resources

Afromix  
[www.afromix.org](http://www.afromix.org)

Africa travel magazine  
[www.africa-ata.org](http://www.africa-ata.org)

GRANTA: The view from Africa  
[www.granta.com](http://www.granta.com)

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[Rebranding Africa: the Cheetah generation](#)

interests in sub-Saharan Africa beyond the long-established South African market. He told WGSN about the **challenges of launching a new consumer magazine in this region.**

"The market here began to develop about four to five years ago," he tells us. Media24 Africa began testing the market in 2002 with *Kick Off* magazine and later introduced *Drum*, *True Love East Africa* and *True Love West Africa*. These magazines have growing circulations and sub-Saharan Africa is now one of Naspers' primary focuses in its investment strategy, along with other BRIC countries; Brazil, Russia, India and China.

"The magazine industry here has been undeveloped because of the huge costs of publishing and distribution, and publishing locally is not effective," Steyn says. "Distribution in Nigeria for example is very informal - mainly through street vendors rather than through retail. **As more shops and retail outlets start to emerge in Africa, this will offer distributors and publishers a better platform for growth.**"

Media 24 Africa is **building publishing and distribution platforms** and investing in the first sub-Saharan heat-set commercial web printing plant outside South Africa. The plant in Nairobi, due to open in 2009, will provide a new benchmark for quality in the region.

Media24 Africa offers its platforms as a vehicle for distributing other magazines too.



Nollywood star Genevieve Nnaji holding the launch copy of *MADE*

*MADE* launch

*Ovation* magazine

## The growth of Africa's lifestyle publications

Readers in Africa and of African origin want media products that tell their stories, reflecting their lives, culture, people and aspirations.

### West Africa

*MADE* magazine, founded in Lagos, Nigeria, by Nebula Media, is one of the first independent publications to partner with Media24 Africa's pan-African distribution network. The new bimonthly lifestyle magazine "for Africa's *MADE* men" targets both aspiring and successful men who enjoy business, sport, politics, fashion and lifestyle topics. It **recognises the increasing growth of the successful African diaspora male and African elite.**

The group has taken a softly-softly approach and launched with just 5000 copies in June 2007. Jon Slade, operations and production director, told WGSN about the strategy behind this.



BHF

MADE Double Stitches  
Fashion Special

"There is nothing of this kind for the truly African man," says Slade. "Our long-term plan is to cover the whole of Africa and major **international cities where African men do business**. Copies are selling in **Nigeria, New York, London** and **South Africa**. We also have an **agreement with Virgin Nigeria to place copies on all business class flights**". We will grow the business from there."

Vanity publications continue to remain big sellers, as they are part of West Africa's culture. New magazines frequently come and go, but *Ovation* is one of the longest-standing.

Reliable media products provide excellent vehicles for advertisers to reach their target markets. *True Love West Africa*, Nigeria's first real glossy, addressed the **demand for aspirational content** and the fact that today's African woman leads a dynamic lifestyle. Recognising that **she wants to be constantly informed and ahead of local and global trends** has paid off.

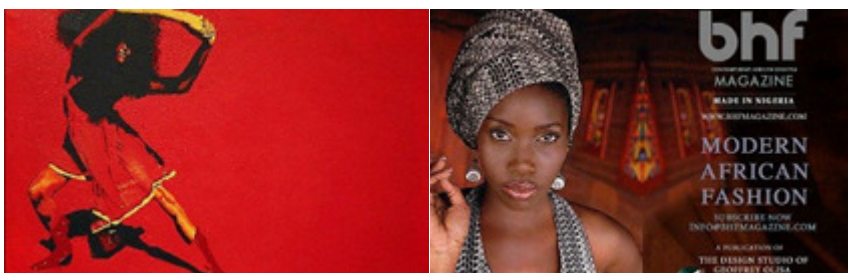
More recently West Africa has experienced **custom publishing** with the launch of *Idols West Africa* magazine this May, following the publishing of *Big Brother Nigeria* magazine. Media24 expect *Idols West Africa* to be just as popular as *True Love* and *Kick Off*.

*Idols West Africa* magazine*Big Brother Nigeria* magazine

## East Africa

The **biggest developing market south of the Sahara is in East Africa**, where infrastructure, retail development and payment platforms are better developed than West Africa. Although Nigeria is biggest in terms of population, being a cash society has made the market more difficult to develop.

Magazines in general attract the smallest advertising share of all media in Media24 Africa's market, but in Kenya it is now seeing excellent growth quarter-on-quarter. The Target Group Index shows year-on-year readership of *Drum* and *True Love* grew faster than any magazine, reaching 30-35% of the adult market.



BHF



Kitu Kizuri

Uzuri

Uzuri

## International African publications

International African lifestyle publications have been emerging over the last few years to address the **unique needs of diaspora readers**.

*BHF*, a new quarterly magazine is set to launch later this month in the US. Founder Geoffrey Olisa promises an "exciting and dynamic new African lifestyle magazine with a boldness and edge, the likes of which has never been seen before".

Olisa told WGSN his motivation for launching *BHF* was his **weariness of the way Nigerians are portrayed in the media**. And he's not alone. The publication has already gained a global following of over 4600 members on Facebook and MySpace - all excited, patriotic and eager to see the finished product.



Karama Umuntu magazine

*Karama Umuntu* is a new publication set to launch soon in the UK. It is a collective effort by **young Africans who are striving to portray African cultural heritage**.

The publication's founder, Ugandan-born Florence Abwoyo, told WGSN her aim is to "inspire young Africans". She wants to "**reflect on the meanings behind African designs** and highlight the **differences between East, West and Southern Africa**".

*Karama Umuntu* will be available in **African shops throughout**

Manchester, Birmingham and London, as well as via digital download.

## The rise of digital media and future of African publishing

In the face of poor distribution and a widely dispersed global audience, **digital technology has spawned an explosion of online content in Africa**, and now also digital publishing.

One of the most successful digital consumer magazines is *MIMI*, a free online lifestyle magazine that addresses topics from the **unique perspective of the African woman**. "It's a channel through which African women can embrace their rich cultural inheritance and remarkable talents," and receives articles from African writers globally on subjects that represent contemporary Africa.



MIMI cover



MIMI website

With evidence of an international magazine market suffering from decline and hyper-competitiveness, and of some migration in the men's market from print to digital, the team behind *MADE* is carefully managing print distribution. The magazine has adopted a revolutionary new digital download, via the Magtank "paperless newstand" platform, to **address customer demand as far afield as Australia, Israel and Hong Kong**.

**Huge opportunities prevail in the online and digital space in West and East Africa**, with a **large growth in bloggers** providing Africans around the world valuable information of what's happening at home. Publishers such as Media24 recognise the opportunities of web 2.0 and content will soon be available online.

Investment in distribution networks, systems, merchandising and commercial printing plants in sub-Saharan Africa will change the dynamics of the market dramatically - allowing publishers to grow their market share in Africa dramatically, opening new markets that have not been served by quality, reliable media products and **providing excellent vehicles for advertisers to reach their target markets**.

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