12.1: Introduction

Changing Times, Changing Tastes

On October 5, 2009, publisher Condé Nast announced that the November 2009 issue of respected food magazine *Gourmet* would be its last. The decision came as a shock to many readers who, since 1941, had believed that “*Gourmet* was to food what *Vogue* is to fashion, a magazine with a rich history and a perch high in the publishing firmament.” Stephanie Clifford, “Condé Nast Closes *Gourmet* and 3 Other Magazines,” *New York Times*, October 6, 2009, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/media/06gourmet.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/media/06gourmet.html). Although Condé Nast folded three other publications—parenting magazine *Cookie* and bridal magazines *Elegant Bride* and *Modern Bride*—the elimination of *Gourmet* received the most attention because of the publication’s long history and popularity. Although some readers were angry about the sudden print halt, some understood that the closure was simply a reflection of a changing market.


If *Gourmet*’s closure is any indication, the magazines of the future will be a product of cross-media integration, particularly between print and television. “Advertising support for luxurious magazines like *Gourmet* has dwindled, while grocery store advertisers have continued to buy pages at more accessible, celebrity-driven magazines like *Every Day with Rachel Ray*, which specializes in 30-minute meals, and *Food Network Magazine*.” Stephanie Clifford, “Condé Nast Closes *Gourmet* and 3 Other Magazines,” *New York Times*, October 6, 2009, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/media/06gourmet.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/media/06gourmet.html). This trend suggests that the best—and perhaps only—way for magazines to remain viable is to gain an audience via another medium and then use that celebrity-driven status to sell the print product.

The magazine industry may change drastically over the next several years. This evolution may be affected by a number of variables, such as the Internet, a new generation of readers, the fluctuation of advertising costs, and the recovery from the 2008 recession. What remains to be seen is whether the magazine industry can continue to be a dominant force in American culture in the midst of these changes.