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An Electronic Citizen

by Larry Dobrow, March 2006 issue

WHEN *CITIZEN CULTURE* SHIFTED FROM print to digital distribution a few months ago, Jonathon Feit, its editor-in-chief and founder, knew he had one major hurdle to clear before going about the usual business of circulation. He had to sell the concept of an "electronic magazine" to a tech-skeptical business. "I got a lot of, 'Is it online or is it print?' If I told people that it was both, I got the over-the-phone version of a blank stare," he recalls. "Agencies and advertisers love what some of the new technologies can do, but they're not sure what to make of them." It doesn't hurt Feit's case that the digitized *Citizen Culture* is an impressive product: The mag, targeted at young professionals of both sexes, has run everything from an interview with Sen. John McCain to a loosely veiled Playboy Mansion exposé written by a former Playmate. On the tech side, the magazine uses a publishing module developed by Zinio. *Citizen Culture* actually looks like a magazine; the downloadable PDF file also accommodates full-motion video and sound.



"We're not a blog. We're not a Web site," Feit stresses. "We have editors who follow style guides and a set format. The reason we're delivering the content digitally is because that's where our readers are."

An adept schmoozer -- over the course of a conversation, he drops nuggets about recent sit-downs with publishing luminaries like Time Inc.'s John Huey and *The Wall Street Journal* publisher Karen Eliot House -- Feit has set his sights on inking partnership deals with young Democrat and Republican groups, *Dwell*, *Martha Stewart Living*, and other "organizations that want to reach the audience in a creative way." He aspires to a circulation of 150,000 by the end of the year, adding, "I want to be available in Palm or BlackBerry format."

Larry Dobrow is a Contributing Writer.

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