

Institution of Knowledge

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Editing for Clear Communication

MC 3387-254

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Source Materials:

Smithsonian Magazine, January/February 1992, 132 pages.

Smithsonian Magazine, January/February 2018, 132 pages.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com>

<https://siarchives.si.edu/history/smithsonian-timeline>

<https://wakelet.com/wake/4bd55250-26a3-4625-9161-3ac3ae4ad4fa>

The Smithsonian Magazine is covers many different content topics in their publication website as well as their magazine. I chose them because I like history and innovation. When I think about the name Smithsonian I always think of the museum and the abundance of artifacts that are inside of it, as well as the amount of knowledge that can be learned from it.

The Smithsonian holds a British background. The founder, James Smithson, lived in England as a scientist. He left his estate to the United States of America in Washington D.C., to be turned into an institution after his nephew who inherited it passed away. The Smithsonian Institution was established in 1846. Former President James K. Polk signed an act to turn it into a trust. It is looked after through a Secretary and a Board of Regents still today. In 1970 the institution created the Smithsonian Magazine and released its first issue. The founding editor-in-chief was Edward K Thompson, who had been a former Life magazine editor. The magazine was selectively available to National and Resident Associates at the time. The content that was created back then is similar to what they create today. They laid down a foundation of diverse topics and knowledge they already had, such as science, innovation, and history. They still carry those topics into the publication today. In comparison to length of stories back then to now, has stayed pretty consistent in the amount of spreads the magazine uses. The amount of advertising back then throughout the magazine was heavily complied throughout the magazine. The design of it varies from simple illustrations, cartoons, and slogans in a full color photo to information

just typed out for each ad and run down a **column** on the sides of the pages in black and white.

When it is lined up on the sides of the **facing pages or spreads**, the only thing separating it from the copy of the story on the page is a bounding box around the ad. The layout of the ads throughout the magazine is something that has improved in current issues as design is always evolving just as journalism does.

3rd paragraph- content analysis

In the Jan/Feb 1992 issue of the Smithsonian Magazine, the **cover** contains one dominant photo and effectively utilizes the positive and negative space on the page. The photo itself holds **visual hierarchy** within the layout. The **cover lines** are aligned on the page with the main headline and are **reversed type**. The use of **serif** fonts at different sizes and headline styles creates inconsistency on the cover. The next spread in the “then” set is the Table of Contents. The page layout uses two columns. The typesetting of the headline, date, and volume on the top could be better arranged, the headline feels small in regard to the page. The amount of **white space** blocked off underneath the headline to the start of the table of contents is a reoccurring theme throughout the magazine. All the text is serif on the page with the only bold setting used as a variation. The page numbers run along the left side of the text and the ad on the opposite page still feels dominant over the spread, both of these qualities remain the same in the current issues. In the “then” issue we see the addition of coupons throughout with an advertisement and that is something rarely seen today. The spread for “then” uses four columns, holds **cutlines** under the photos on the **right facing page** and is not well laid out. Two of the photos **bleed** off the page. The type is all the same font and size across the spread. The **leading** is good within the copy making it reader friendly. Though there is a dominant photo with the photo set up, it is not pulling

the reader's eye into the page or guiding the eye anywhere. The use and arrangement of **colors** within the photos could be better set up and organized to provide more movement to the piece. The **pull quote** on the page is so small it gets almost lost within the page ineffectively doing its job.

The "Now" version of this magazine is **saddlestitched** in its binding. The cover is created through typography and color usage. The faded text in the background is an added visual element that helps to balance this cover. The gradient of the text and directional movement of it leads the eye to want to flip the page into the magazine. The contrast of **sans serif** and serif type creates **visual interest**. The decision to leave Smithsonian in white and bleeding off the page, give the eye a break and attracts to the headline of the magazine. The use of this **color palette** holds meaning and historical context, but it also creates a feeling of heat when looking at it. The table of contents holds more design elements than the "then" version. The addition of **lines** and different **stroke** weights creates movement on the page and an order of importance to guide the eye. The **mugshot** pulled to the side next to the headline of the story, creates a feeling of connection and engages the reader to want to know more. The use of color remains the same throughout the magazine, providing consistency and a system of **unity**. In comparison to the "then" spread this newer spread layout flows much smoother and adds **balance** to the spread. The use of white space and color are more effectively used and give the eye places to travel across the page. The illustrative quality and overlay of illustrations on the page hold a nice design aesthetic and unique way to showcase what could have been just photography instead. The headline utilizes the **upstyle** usage and is consistent throughout. The pull quote is better placed, and the directional quality of the photo pull the reader into the story. The **folio** is

different and has added information and the addition of technologies advancements. It includes the page number, the website, and the issue date. The ads within both versions of this magazine are inclusive of their representation of diversity for all.

The website holds an abundance of information, is well organized, clean and user friendly to navigate. The ad content on the webpage is not overwhelming only when you click to a different page do they have pop up ads. They use of their social media platforms are easy to find and are actively used. They engage the audience through contest submissions, posting articles, and information. They offer the ability to subscribe to a newsstand copy of the magazine at \$12 an issue, it includes Smithsonian membership benefits. The readership of this magazine and audience is diverse and can be something for all ages and backgrounds, it holds an education aspect to it as well. Their headline logo has remained the same and they carried it over to their website, it provides a staple for them and the readers when they see the headline in the serif typeface.

The design evolution of this magazine has not been altered in terms of rebranding. Their headline logo has remained constant and unchanged in typeface. Their layouts and the inside design of the publications from “then” to “now” follow most current publications. They don’t push the boundaries too much, but are also not strictly traditional either. They overall remain a source of knowledge and provide relative articles for everyone.

