

Enhance your Periodical with Digital Publishing

Are you considering adding digital content distribution to your periodical? Has a budget crunch forced your entity to reduce or abandon your publication's print output? Are you worried your members will equate the loss of print with a loss of membership value? This concise guide to the pros, cons, and considerations for switching from print to digital-only will help you plan your publication's future success.

Pros¹

- Strong digital presence on the ABA Website
- Email notifying subscribers upon release of new issues
- Email subscribers can click-through to the web issue and articles and download full issue PDFs for offline reading
- Content on the website is:
 - ADA accessible
 - Responsive to the user's device, screen size, etc.
 - In-article subhead navigation
 - Fully Blue Book styled cites in anchor-linked endnotes
- Content may be locked or unlocked for section members according to your entity's content strategy. By default, the ABA website meters access to member-wall articles up to 5 views a month to logged-in members and customers. Metering gives a taste of valuable content and can encourage entity membership upsells.
- Full-color images available (if converting from 2-color print) that look great on desktops, tablets, and phones
- Readers have multiple pathways to follow to find your content through browsing and their MyABA dashboard
 - Promotion to the ABA main page for a week (as requested by ABA Content)
 - Under your entity microsite's Publications section
 - Topic pages: Tag your articles and issues with relevant topic tags that promote your content to Topic collection pages where members can discover the latest periodical content, CLE, books, and ABA events related to that topic. Members may follow topics and subtopics to push new content to their MyABA dashboard.
- Search and share: easier to search for an article, search within an article, send an item to a colleague, and share an article on social media
- A timely addition or edit (e.g., case decision) can be updated relatively quickly
- Eliminates USPS postage fees (and no more lost copies)
- Eliminates print manufacturing and paper fees, reduces paper consumption

¹ Most pros apply to pubs with print and digital presence as well

- Continued editorial expertise¹

Cons

- Subscribers must opt-in to receive email announcements when new issues publish
 - Plan to announce the switch to digital in your final printed issue, a direct mail postcard, and in other entity email promotions
- Subscribers may opt-out of email at any time
- ABA customers, members, and entity members can only consume your entity's content entirely when logged-in. According to historical ABA website analytics, a low percentage of members log in to the ABA website while reading periodical content. Upcoming ABA website enhancements will hopefully improve this statistic.
- No physical artifact as a reminder to read and engage with your entity or ABA (direct marketing)
- Entities could lose members who perceive the transition from print to all electronic as a reduction in benefits
- Print pubs can be a vehicle for other information like postcard inserts, section advertisements and promotions, or announcements that may otherwise go unnoticed
- Some authors may view print as more prestigious and prefer print over digital. As digital distribution has become more normalized, this attitude can shift.
- Any members who are not in leadership or do not attend meetings (A LOT OF MEMBERS) will no longer think they are receiving something of value. If they don't get the email because they opt-out/firewall spam issues/email just gets lost in mass quantities of email, they get nothing from us. This physical periodical is the tangible item you are giving your core set, bread-and-butter, members. Without them, your entity may suffer.

Other Considerations

- Email announcements average a 25% open rate, while USPS delivery rates are up to 80%
- Keep a budget for art/illustration and keep a designer involved for branding, image concepts & sourcing, and other notable art needs
- Ask your ABA staff liasons to review the latest ABA Periodicals Service Fees Menu found on our intranet page.
- Digital publications introduce time and fees that print versions do not incur, including topic tagging, writing web descriptions, quality control, inserting and checking links, building webpages, building emails, building ePubs, and tracking and reporting user behavior through web and email analytics reports
- Digital publication does not mean instantaneous, effortless production: editors, designers, and digital producers require the same amount of time and effort to complete editing and design and additional time to convert to the digital issue after design/editorial close of a publication
- Advertisers prefer both web and print ads

How ABA Publishing Digital Can Help

Since 2011, ABA Publishing Digital has helped entity periodicals transition to digital content to benefit their members. Through the introduction of editorial production workflow systems, new efficiencies

found in design and editorial tools and templates, and new digital outputs, including accessible interactive PDFs and periodical eBooks, Digital Publishing has grown entity periodical's presence on the ABA website from posting web unfriendly print replica PDFs to device-responsive web issues and articles taking full advantage of the new ABA website. Digital Publishing seeks to further enhance your member's periodical experience beyond a simple ABA website issue by researching and developing new digital production processes and digital content delivery products. Your entity can expect considered, expert advice addressing your concerns about your publication's transition to digital or how you can enhance your member's experience beyond print. Digital Publishing has helped dozens of publications add member value to their web content's presence. We have experience with all types of publications, from small newsletters to graphic-heavy magazines to 300-page law journals with thousands of endnotes. With this broad spectrum of experience, we can provide the right advice for your publication's success. No matter the needs of your publication, we can help its presence on the ABA website.

Do not hesitate to contact ABA Digital Publishing to discuss your options for making a successful and lasting digital transition. Contact Kyle Kolbe, ABA Publishing Director Digital Publishing, kyle.kolbe@americanbar.org, with your questions and concerns. He will organize a meeting with the proper ABA Publishing staff to help progress your digital publication objectives.