

SECTION B QUESTION 2

CANDIDATE (B)

MAGAZINES.

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prosumers. ~~pillar of~~ shift.

new tech ~~can~~ synergies. stab about decline.  
— website & subscription. Adv. boost. circ. drop.

2 In recent times, the media industry has witnessed a meteoric rise in new technologies. The advancement of the internet, for example, as it entered its second phase, enables consumers to access media in new and unparalleled ways. For the magazine industry, this has presented both challenges and opportunities. Print media is mostly in decline, a worry, of course for producers of magazines. Therefore, they must assess just how important technological convergence is for helping their magazine to survive in the long run.

The Future Plc title Metal Hammer is a monthly rock and metal magazine that has existed since 1994. In that time, Metal Hammer has built a reputation as a bible of both modern and traditional ~~mag~~ metal music. Its publisher, Future, is an independent company with a portfolio of magazines aimed at niche market sectors. As a whole, Future ~~as~~ has performed well in a declining market, with Metal Hammer and Classic Rock reporting

increases ~~in~~ in circulation, with Metal Hammer reaching 50,269 and Classic Rock 70,188. (ABC, Dec 08). Perhaps, future's strategies of involving technological convergence have something to do with this success. One of their 'pillars' of business strategy is to build upon their existing convergences in order to further appeal to prosumers. This is important; Futre defines prosumers as "young men or young-at-heart men" (futurelicensing.com) in general, this demographic will be one of the most technologically involved, or be even about the latest technologies. They are also, incidentally, one of the most valuable demographics for advertisers. In this respect, convergence is extremely important for Futre, and indeed Metal Hammer in retaining advertising revenue. Advertising revenue has already fallen for Futre, as they saw a 15% drop in advertising from December 08-March 09 (futurelicensing.com, 09). It is, therefore, vital that they ~~can~~ use technological convergences to remain advanced enough to attract ~~to~~ advertisers. Metal Hammer's target audience is a young audience interested in music, "emerging adults", according to Futurelicensing.com. The National

Leadership Survey 08, the latest available, shows Metal Hammer readers to be 64% male, average age 22. Again, this is an audience that will be interested in many forms of media, so for Metal Hammer to maintain their loyalty, they must fulfil their newly growing needs (Uses & Gratifications, McQuail). The Metal Hammer website is a demonstration of convergence, and has proved popular with nearly 60 000 individual visitors since starting (futureadvertising.com). Alexa's web traffic analysis suggests these visitors are mostly male, aged between 18 and 24, and spend around 2.7 minutes on metalhammer.co.uk. Therefore, the website has apparently targeted the right audience for Metal Hammer. Users can interact, voting in polls such as "Who has the best Slipknot mask?", giving users the sense that they are contributing to a community. They are also educated and entertained with video excerpts, "Metallica live!" and "Opeth on tour". In this way convergence maintains interest in the Metal Hammer brand. Web 2.0 allows user-submitted & generated content, so Metal Hammer has competition in that users can go elsewhere for such videos. It is up to future to continue advancing.

convergence in order to provide the best service for users. ✓

Metal Hammer has also had successful synergies created as a result of convergence. In 2008, Metal Hammer.co.uk encouraged users to send in photos taken on their mobiles, of them playing "Guitar Heroes", combining internet and mobile technology. The Guitar Hero synergy continued with a party sponsored by Metal Hammer at the O2 (metalhammer.co.uk). Podcasts have allowed content to be sent to Metal Hammer users, faster than ever, in multimedia formats. ✓

Indeed, distribution is an interesting issue to consider for the magazine industry. The internet, podcasts and video channels allow readers to access their wanted content within seconds, whereas hard copies of a magazine must be ordered or bought from a shop. Indeed, it could be suggested that the gathering of content from the internet or mobile has replaced the need for ritual of buying the magazine itself. ✓  
As subscriptions for Metal Hammer rose 8% from Dec - March 09 (for the UK), suggesting there is not the same novelty when buying a magazine. ✓

However, whilst technological convergence is important for the

Magazine industry. Publishers must consider that the extra content offered to consumers via convergences in technology could replace the magazine itself. IPC's NME is an example of this as circulation dropped 26.1% to a circulation low. Whilst its website has been praised for the amount of content on offer, so far, Future's experience with the markets and titles has prevented this happening to Metal Hammer. Aware that Metal Hammer has a unique community created by the chattering mode of address, "for the crusade" and writing style filled with expletives "F--- you!", readers of Metal Hammer feel a strong sense of uninvited community within the magazine, which they have not in anyway attempted to recreate. On the website, in blogs or videos. Therefore, the magazine is a more Metal Hammer, sticking closer to its ideologies of 'anti establishment avant garde' by featuring adverts appropriate to this such as Affix clothing and HMV metal CDs, whilst the website has adverts for O2, Orange and ~~BT~~ T-Mobile.

Overall techs convergence is important as consumers needs alter and change, but for the magazine industry to survive they must make any technological

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advancements not a replacement//  
for the hard-copy of the magazine, as  
people have so far successfully done.//  
As online advertising reached 18% for  
where it is important.

## Section B Question 2

### Institution and Audience

#### Examiners comment: Candidate B - Magazines

This is a candidate's response on the **magazine industry** and begins with a clear argument about the new challenges facing the industry giving the development of digital initiatives and technological convergence. This shows good knowledge and understanding.

Using Future PLC title, Metal Hammer, a monthly rock magazine, the candidate places a context on its ownership characteristics (p9) and statistical evidence of its size and scale as a publication – this success the candidate argues, is in part due to technological convergence.

On page 10 the candidate identifies the audience for Metal Hammer as 'prosumers' (source: futurelicensing.com) with a disposable income and a liking for media technology. The candidate uses Metal Hammer website to illustrate why convergence is important for both the consumer and publisher. Users find the **interactivity** of the website appealing, the fact they can identify themselves with other fans as **community users** and watch online music video, as stated on page 11. (Cross media links)

Further, the candidate also links the issue of technological convergence with the key media concept of **Synergy**. For example, subscribers to the website were encouraged "to send photos of themselves from their mobiles of them impersonating their 'Guitar Heroes'".

Technological convergence is identified from reading the magazine, using the website and making use of mobile phone technology – all appealing to its predominately male audience (p12).

The candidate then moves on to discuss the distribution of the magazine and highlights the benefit of downloading content, which to some extent compliments the buying of the magazine and importantly recognises that subscriptions to the magazine rose by 8%. (p12). The candidate then contrasts NME, which did not offer such wide choice through digital initiatives and the circulation figure dropped. The reasons for this the candidate offers as the involved online community (p13).

This is a detailed sustained level four response. It would have been awarded a high mark for EAA, and a low level four for the use of examples, perhaps other wider and comparative examples could have been used. The use of media terminology is relevant and accurate. This answer does offer a full range of case studies and own experience. An excellent response.