

Digital news offering aims at high ground

September 16 2012, by Rob Lever



A man in an internet cafe in Tehran, Iran. It seems like a terrible time to be launching a news operation. But there are opportunities and niches, and the new digital media launch called Quartz from Atlantic Media Company seeks to exploit them.

It seems like a terrible time to be launching a news operation. But there are opportunities and niches, and the new digital media launch called Quartz from Atlantic Media Company seeks to exploit them.

Quartz is set to launch in the coming weeks as a "100 percent digital" news operation covering "the most important themes of the new [global economy](#)," said editor-in-chief Kevin Delaney.

Quartz has been recruiting a small number of veteran journalists for an overall news staff of around 25 people. The operation will feature tablet and mobile displays as well as a desktop website, qz.com.

"There is an opportunity to do great journalism on a digital platform," Delaney, a former [managing editor](#) of The [Wall Street Journal](#) Online, told AFP.

"It's a great time to launch a project like this. We've learned the lessons of what works over the last few years."

Quartz will offer free content, with revenue coming from advertising, aiming to cover key global business issues and reach readers around the world.

"We're really confident in the ad-supported model," Delaney said. "There has been strong advertiser interest."

The name Quartz was chosen "because it embodies the new brand's essential character: global, disruptive and digital. Quartz, the mineral, is found all over the world, and plays an important role in tectonic activity," a statement said.

Analysts say the project has the potential to succeed, but that it won't be easy.

Ken Doctor, a news industry analyst and consultant with the research firm Outsell, said there is a market for well-produced financial news—and advertisers are eager to reach these readers—but the competition is fierce.

Quartz will be competing against industry "behemoths" such as [Dow Jones](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Reuters](#) and the [Financial Times](#), he said.

For Quartz to succeed, "they have to decide which audience they going after, and how to serve it in a different way than the other giants do," Doctor said.

"It's definitely an uphill battle, but it has a strong ability to succeed, if Atlantic [Media](#) is willing to put at least three years into it."

Dan Kennedy, a Northeastern University journalism professor who follows new media, said Atlantic Media, which also publishes the Washington-based National Journal, is one of the few media organizations doing well with free online content.

As a result, he said, Quartz is "a logical continuation" of the company's efforts.

"It sounds like they are going for a high-end audience which is affluent and well-educated," Kennedy said. "If you want to have any success at all, those are the people you need to reach."

Quartz said it has sponsors for its launch that include Boeing, Cadillac, Chevron and Credit Suisse.

"They share our view that there is a new audience of global business leaders—influentials who are on the move—who want reported [global business](#) news and analysis delivered to them whenever they want it and wherever they are," said Atlantic Media president Justin Smith.

Rebecca Lieb, analyst and consultant with Altimeter Group, said Quartz enters "a crowded and competitive marketplace" but can build an audience by using social media tools to gain recognition.

"What's going to be important is its social and marketing strategy as well as its availability across platforms," Lieb said, unlike NewsCorp's tablet edition The Daily, which has slashed staff amid disappointing subscriptions.

Even though the news industry is facing a severe crisis, analysts point out

there can always be opportunities for new players with a winning strategy.

Other recent launches include a luxury lifestyle website and magazine called Du Jour from the Gilt Group and HuffPost Live, a streaming video site from the AOL-owned Huffington Post.

Doctor said that with lower technology costs and social marketing, the barriers to entry for a new venture are lower than just a few years ago.

"It's much easier to become known through social marketing, which is essentially free," he said.

"Robust, often-cloud-based technologies, often getting cheaper by the year, make content creation, distribution and presentation far easier."

That means if economic conditions improve, "we might see a lot more startups."

Perhaps more significantly, the lines are being blurred between so-called print news, websites and broadcast media. Websites are offering streaming video, and sites like HuffPost Live are effectively competing with broadcast and cable television news.

"The idea of edition is gone and the idea of real-time [news](#) is here," Doctor said.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: Digital news offering aims at high ground (2012, September 16) retrieved 21 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-09-digital-news-aims-high-ground.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.