

Gourmet brand, dead as magazine, returns as an app

June 22 2010, By ANDREW VANACORE , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- Gourmet may be dead as a magazine, but the brand lives on.

Conde Nast, which closed the money-losing print magazine last fall, said Tuesday that it is launching a digital product called "Gourmet Live" for the iPad and other mobile gadgets.

It is another bet by Conde Nast on the world of apps - the mobile software applications popularized by Apple Inc.'s iPhone. The publisher has invested heavily to bundle its magazines as applications on both the [iPhone](#) and now the iPad.

Robert Sauerberg, the head of Conde Nast's consumer marketing division, emphasized that Gourmet's [app](#) is not a digital magazine. But he said the impetus comes in part from the reception its magazines have gotten on [mobile devices](#).

Wired magazine's first iPad edition sold more than 90,000 copies at the regular print newsstand price of \$4.99 each - an accomplishment considering that few publishers have been able to charge for their content online.

"What it has done is demonstrate to us and other publishers that paid [digital content](#) packaged in a beautiful form is valuable to consumers," Sauerberg said. "There's demand for the Gourmet brand, and I think we'll see plenty of people testing it out."

Gourmet, well respected among culinary aficionados, was the oldest food magazine in the country when Conde Nast decided to shut it down last October. Facing one of the worst advertising slumps in memory, Conde Nast decided to place its bets on Bon Appetit, a title with more of an affordable sensibility.

The new app, set to launch in the fourth quarter of this year, is aimed at least in part at winning back some of Gourmet's print readers; it had an average circulation of just under 1 million.

The Gourmet app will include articles, menus, photos and video. It will have a yet-undetermined number of "producers" feeding it content rather than a traditional magazine staff of editors and writers.

It will also have a strong [social networking](#) component, linking up with social networks such as [Facebook](#) and Twitter to spread the Gourmet name as far as possible on the Web.

Sauerberg said the app will be free to download, and Conde Nast will experiment with different business models. Users, for instance, may be able to buy credits - "virtual currency" - that allow them to access collections of recipes.

Conde Nast spokeswoman Mistrella Murphy said the details of how Gourmet Live will be distributed haven't been finalized.

But the company made it clear that Gourmet will be available on Apple's iTunes store. It's being developed using the Web programming language known as HTML5, an alternative to the Adobe Flash software that has been banished from Apple's mobile products. The company also released a demo that shows the app on what appears to be an iPad, though it doesn't mention the device by name.

The decision to use the Gourmet brand as an app rather than a magazine is an idea other publishers are trying out as well.

Hearst is also using some of its magazine titles to brand apps that have specific functions rather than [magazine](#) content. It has a Seventeen Fashion Finder app, for instance, that can help people find clothes in their size at nearby stores.

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