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Hardwiring consumer desire: Publishing and promoting the online technocultural experience : a critical textual analysis of Wired magazine and its advertising, 1993-1996

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Hardwiring Consumer Desire:
Publishing and promoting the online technocultural experience

A critical textual analysis of *Wired* magazine and its advertising, 1993-1996

by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the evolution of magazine publishing in the face of significant technological change in print-based industries. It takes as its focus the techno-lifestyle magazine *Wired*, and to a lesser degree its online derivative, *HotWired* because both these media magazines exemplify the changes in publishing examined.

In the magazine's initial editorial statement Louis Rossetto, the publisher and editor of *Wired*, claimed to "reinvent the magazine...going beyond paper by making our hard copy edition a gateway to our interactive services" (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12). This claim demands an explanation as it suggests that changes in media are revolutionary rather than evolutionary. Specifically, it suggests a reinvention (rather than evolution) of magazine publishing, magazine form, the media environment and reading and consumption practices. The thesis takes this claim as a basis for exploring the evolution of the magazine as a cultural and material form in the context of late 20th century, hypermediated capitalism.

In order to achieve a detailed yet nuanced analysis of *Wired*'s claim of reinvention, the thesis has been organised into areas which analyse *Wired*'s material and textual characteristics, the construction and promotion of techno-lifestyle in relation to *Wired*'s readership, and an examination of *Wired*'s online derivative - *HotWired*. To achieve this level of analysis the thesis draws upon three theoretical approaches. It analyses the history and characteristics of the magazine form by drawing upon medium theory as articulated by Harold Innis and his successors Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and Ronald Deibert. This approach is combined, secondly, with a historical comparative analysis of the American specialist lifestyle magazine as refracted through the work of Harold Abrahamson. Finally, to analyse the relationship between magazines, technological convergence and the construction and promotion of techno-lifestyle, the thesis uses contemporary, critical textual analysis as articulated by theorists such as Ellen McCracken and Andrew Wernick.

Medium theory suggests that there is, increasingly, convergence at the level of production. Here media, telecommunications and computers/IT intersect to create

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a new kind of publishing environment. Such changes in textual production reflect an emerging techno-lifestyle that promotes interconnectivity between consumers and producers and an intensification of hybridity and intertextuality in material forms such as *Wired*.

This thesis will demonstrate that some material characteristics of the print magazine have evolved more gradually in the past century than other aspects connected with the magazine form and magazine publishing. These other aspects include, digital and online technologies, which are currently informing change in modes of production, distribution, content, design, authorship, readership and consumption. Relationships between media form and media environment, reading practices, reader and text, however need to be examined further before the claim that magazines have been 'reinvented' can be critically assessed. This research is part of that project. It contributes to the nascent body of new media research by providing an innovative theoretical framework that challenges and dispels the claim of media reinvention by interrogating the technological and commercial processes of media evolution in relation to the mid-1990s print magazine and emergent new media technologies.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signature,

Date 18 · 10 · 02

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	artificial intelligence
AOL	America Online
BBS	bulletin board system
CBOE	Chicago Board of Options Exchange
CD-ROM	Compact disc-read-memory
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGI	computer generated image
CMC	computer-mediated communication
ECI	entertainment communication information
EFF	Electronic Frontier Foundation
GBN	Global Business Network
HDTV	high-definition television
HTTP	hypertext transfer protocol
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
IRC	Internet Relay Chat
ISP	Internet service provider
IT	information technology
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MOO	multi-user object orientated
MPA	Magazine Publishers of America
MTV	Music Television
NII	National Information Infrastructure
TCI	Tele-Communications Inc.
TNC	transnational corporation
URL	universal resource locator
VR	virtual reality
WELL	The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In the 199^ 'ecade defined by the globalization of commerce and communica.. .. magazines are now in the middle of a new evolution, one distinguished by niche marketing and a fertile interaction between print media, and the World Wide Web (Abrahamson, 2000, p. 1).

Over the last twenty years, within Western democracies, there has been a proliferation of new lifestyle magazines (Nourie & Nourie 1990, Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991, Janello & Jones 1991, Usherwood 1997, Abrahamson 2000). This proliferation can be attributed to a wide variety of factors such as: new developments in printing and other technologies, increased demand by advertisers for access to colour print media, increased demand by advertisers for access to specific and distinct readership markets, demand by readers and consumers for more specialised print publications, failure of larger established publishers to respond to the changing demands of readers/consumers and advertisers for more specialised content and markets, new methods of distribution, and the emergence of new spatial and temporal modes of consumption reflecting contemporary changes in lifestyle patterns.

Although magazine publishers had always targeted specific readerships, magazines in the 1990s increasingly tended to specialise in fields with an identifiable collection of advertisers. The continued proliferation of 1990s specialist lifestyle publications reflects a divergence away from the prior mass-market philosophy of mass consumption into niche-markets.[1]

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[1] In her study of the 1980s British interior home decorating magazine market, Usherwood states: In most other sectors, the increase in titles reflected a fragmentation of an *existing* readership rather than an increase in the magazine-reading public (Braithwaite and Barrell 1988:153). This splintering of magazine genres can be explained in relation to the move away from the vestiges of mass-marketing and towards precise target-marketing techniques, involving the increasingly refined skills of market-research companies (see Gunter and Furnham 1992). So, not only were more people reading home-interior magazines but, as with other types of magazine, the range had become more varied as publishers sought new niche markets to target (Usherwood, 1997, p. 178).

During this time, within the discipline of media studies, there has been extensive academic analysis of media forms such as television, radio, film, newspapers and advertising. However, print magazines in general, and contemporary lifestyle magazines in particular, have received comparatively little academic attention[1]. It is paradoxical that while there has been a proliferation of lifestyle magazines over the last twenty years, there has been no corresponding proliferation of academic research in this area. My study aims to redress this imbalance in some way, through a critical textual analysis of a 1990s American magazine called *Wired* and, to a lesser degree, its online derivative *HotWired* from the periods September/October 1993 to October 1996.

The reasons for this timeframe are twofold. From a business perspective, this period represents the birth, growth and successful maturation of both the *Wired* and *HotWired* publishing projects. From a bi-monthly magazine launched in March/April 1993, *Wired* did so well it became monthly in November of that year. My study starts with the end of the very beginning – the final bi-monthly issue, and the precursor to the monthly magazine. By October 1994, *HotWired* was launched online and included an electronic version of *Wired* as part of its site. By April/May 1996, the online version of *Wired* was renamed *Wired Online* and promoted as an interactive link between the *Wired* staff and *Wired* readers. The successful incorporation and consolidation of *Wired* into the commercial American print and online publishing environment followed, where numerous industry awards were won[3] and its issue pages (particularly its paid advertising) continued to increase. From a *Wired* reader's perspective this time frame is significant as it represents an evolution in reader expectation: what was once perceived as different, became with each edition, familiar and normal. The currency of the new and leading edge attached to the experience of reading *Wired* became redundant over time as the *Wired* style became increasingly mainstream. I conclude the timeframe to coincide with the second anniversary of *Wired* being launched online as part of the *HotWired* site.

This chapter introduces the thesis topic, theoretical framework, methodology, background to this study, and the *Wired* and *HotWired* products. The analysis provided is interwoven with a general overview of magazine research and concludes

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[2] This claim is addressed in chapter two.

with an outline of the remaining thesis chapters and a discussion of the significance of my study.

Thesis topic

Wired can generally be described as an upmarket, specialist, techno-lifestyle magazine[4] that promotes the consumption of information technology (IT), computer-mediated communication (CMC), the people and companies involved in these industries, and some of the economic, political, cultural and (to a lesser extent), social issues surrounding new IT and CMC. It has been chosen for this study for specific reasons. *Wired* represents an innovation in magazine publishing, as well as a technological, textual and material site of convergence and divergence with regards to the commercial print media and online culture. The inaugural issue of the magazine was launched in March/April 1993, at a time when the Internet[5] was being increasingly positioned by the commercial media as an alternative communications environment in which to do business on a 'global' scale. In North America particularly, the vision for an 'online future' was endorsed a year after *Wired*'s launch, when, in 1994, the United States government "outlined a plan for a National Information Infrastructure (NII) to transform its domestic economy based on broadband networks" (Barr, 2000, p. 170). One issue arising concerned how convergence, new media forms and online services might replace, or even lead to the disappearance, of 'old' media forms like newspapers and magazines.

. In light of this possible 'new' media scenario it seemed logical, yet paradoxical, that established publishing companies would attempt to take their media interests online. The publisher of *Wired* magazine (Louis Rossetto) and his publishing company (Wired Ventures Ltd) were exemplary in this respect. Having established *Wired*, which promoted the 'new' online media, the publisher launched

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[3] These awards are outlined in chapter four.

[4] This claim is justified and its implications addressed in chapter five.

[5] Kitchin (2000) in *Cyberspace: the world in the wires* defines the Internet as:

> a vast collection of computers linked to networks within larger networks spanning the globe – a huge anarchic, self-organising and relatively unpoliced system which allows unlimited access to other people connected, and the information stored on public data bases and computer sites...the Internet is not one networked space but consists of several separate but interconnected networked spaces (each consisting of thousands of individual networks), all linked through common communication protocols (ways of exchanging information) (Kitchin, 2000, p. 3).

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his World Wide Web[6] (WWW) site *HotWired* a year later. This lead to the print magazine's editorial content, brand name and services becoming embedded in a *Wired* magazine micro-site, within the larger *HotWired* site. By doing this, Wired Ventures Ltd created a complementary synergetic cross-media publishing package which conforms to Barr's view that, "New media have long tended to complement rather than replace old media" (Barr, 2000, p. 155).

The *Wired* publisher's decision to connect the print magazine to (and on) the Internet was significant because it represented another evolutionary trajectory of print magazines specifically, and publishing generally. What can be viewed as an example of media evolution in the form of technological convergence of telecommunications, computing and media, and the divergence of the magazine form, was interestingly, yet not surprisingly, packaged and promoted by the *Wired* team as a form of reinvention of the print magazine.

The 'reinvention' dynamic was officially articulated in the November 1993 issue of *Wired* when the then editor (*Wired* founder and publisher) Louis Rossetto issued an editorial statement that claimed:

> Our mission is to cover the biggest story of the decade -- the convergence of computing, telecommunications and the media for the most powerful people on the planet today, the people making this Digital Revolution. In this process we are trying to reinvent the magazine...Going beyond paper by making our hard copy edition a gateway to our interactive services...our goal is to create a new kind of publication that is not complete unless you are plugged into the hard copy and the on-line experience...As I wrote in our first issue, if you're looking for the soul to our new society in wild metamorphis [sic], our advice is simple (only now it's monthly): Get Wired (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12).

This thesis interrogates Rossetto's claim that *Wired* represents the reinvention of the magazine. Such a claim suggests that significant changes in the magazine form and magazine publishing were occurring at this time. Specifically, this claim implies that the print magazine changed as a result of new online communication technologies and technological convergence; it suggests a repositioning and redefinition of the

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[6] The WWW is probably now the largest commercial platform that runs off the Internet which "offers text files, images, sound, animation and graphic inputs from an enormous variety of sources all over the world" (Barr, 2000, p. 118).

magazine as a material, cultural and promotional form. The thesis argues however that what Rossetto considers a reinvention of the magazine is actually an example of its evolution. The term evolution is used analogously to demonstrate that changes in media products do not occur in a culturally isolated, pre-determined or causal manner. Nor are they the result of a single variable. Rather, changes in media products represent a gradual evolutionary process of adaption and modification of new media with previous media and are contingent upon numerous political, economic, cultural, social and technological factors.

Theoretical framework: an evolutionary analogy

The publisher's claim of reinvention implies that a new magazine *qua* communications technology has been created. This view is a general example both of a promotional claim and of a utopian, technological determinist discourse which positions change in media as a direct result of change in technology. Technology in this discourse is positioned as an autonomous agent, operating outside society. As Kitchin states "Technological determinists argue that the social, cultural, political and economic aspects of our lives are determined by technology; 'technology is culture'" (Kitchin, 2000, p. 57). Pacey comments that this position is:

> untenable – but so is its complete opposite. Most inventions have been made with a specific social purpose in mind, but many have an influence, which nobody has expected or intended. The reality is perhaps easier to comprehend by thinking about the concept of technology-practice with its integral social components. Innovation may then be seen as the outcome of a cycle of mutual adjustments between social, cultural and technical factors (Pacey, 1983, p. 25).

As Pacey (1983) points out, technological change and innovation are the result of numerous factors. Changes in media form are not examples of reinvention, but are evolutionary. One theoretical proposition informing this thesis is a derivative of the work of Canadian International Relations theorist, Ronald Deibert, who formulated an equivalent argument in order to understand the relationship between new communication technologies and world order transformation.

Deibert's theoretical framework is of particular interest to my thesis because the study of the relationship between change, society and technology has often been split into binary approaches; the deterministic approach which argues that technology

shapes society, and the social constructivist approach which argues that society shapes technology. Deibert overcomes both types of theoretical mono-casual reductionism with an approach that essentially "reformulates" (Deibert, 1997, p. x) and "embeds" (Deibert, 1997, p. x) traditional medium theory within an "ecological framework" (Deibert, 1997, p. x). He states:

> At the heart of these modifications are the drawing out of the 'media as environments' metaphor...and the use of an evolutionary analogy to describe the processes by which social forces and ideas at the margins of society are brought into the center by the unintended consequences of technological change. Contingency figures predominantly in my analysis, with the central mechanism of change being a kind of chance 'fitness' between social forces and ideas on one hand, and communications environment on the other (Deibert, 1997, p. x).

Deibert's 'ecological holist' framework is a derivative of medium theory, and he cites the work of Canadian medium theorists Harold Innis (1951) and Innis' protégé Marshall McLuhan[7] (1964), to provide the theoretical underpinnings for his approach. Deibert states:

> The central proposition of medium theory [which was first articulated by Innis and McLuhan] is that changing modes of communication have effects on the trajectory of social evolution and the values and beliefs of societies. Medium theory traces these effects to the unique properties of different modes of communication – to the way information is stored, transmitted and distributed through different media at different times in history. It focuses on the material properties of communications environments rather than on the content of the message being conveyed (Deibert, 1997, pp. ix-x).

As a theoretical approach however, medium theory, also referred to as "comparative media theory" by Angus and Shoesmith (1993, p. 13), has been successfully employed by a number of communications analysts. In addition to Innis (1951) and McLuhan (1964) these theorists include Ong (1982), Meyrowitz (1985), Havelock (1986), Crowley and Heyer (1991), Angus and Shoesmith (1993), and Deibert himself (1997), all of whom used medium theory to study the history of communication, and to examine relationships between communication technologies, change and society. Significantly, medium theory recognises, "that the medium of communication – far from being an empty vessel or transparent channel – has

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[7] Marshall McLuhan is posthumously incorporated into *Wired* magazine. His image and one of his

significant influences on the nature and content of communication" (Deibert, 1997, p. 22).

Research focus

My primary research question therefore asks how, if and in what context *Wired*'s publisher's claim of reinvention of the print magazine form may be justified? This question is addressed by conducting a critical textual analysis of *Wired* from edition 1(4) (September/October 1993) to 4(10) (October 1996). This includes analysis of the material and textual characteristics and structure of the magazine, as well as the promotional activity, which shapes these features. This thesis comprises two interrelated components that integrate subsidiary research questions:

1. Section one focuses primarily on the material and textual characteristics of *Wired*. It asks first, what type of media form is being reinvented (or evolving), in relation to what; and what, if anything, has this reinvented media form replaced? Second, what, if any, textual and material features of *Wired* lead its producer to claim reinvention? Third, how does *Wired* conform to or deviate from accepted understandings of the print magazine?

2. Section two builds on this discussion by considering the area of promotion, since *Wired* magazine is a commercial media form. Furthermore, it is through the process of promotional activity that the initial claim of reinvention was made. This area of my thesis charts the significance of promotional culture to *Wired's* reinvention/evolution through the following questions: Does this claim of reinvention appear to be a promotional device and if so, what is being promoted? Is it a new type of magazine, magazine readership, online lifestyle or advertising vehicle for IT goods and services or all of these?

3. Finally, this thesis asks, what does the reinvention claim represent within the context of promotion, contemporary magazines and 'new' media forms such as the Internet and its subsidiary area of electronic publishing? What issues does this raise with respect to the evolution of magazines?

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sayings (e.g. a 'McLuhanism') appears in the editorial staff list of every *Wired* edition.

Methodology

As an Australian consumer of *Wired*, this thesis draws at times upon my own subjective experiences of being a *Wired* reader, and the social and cultural experiences regarding my first encounter with the magazine. This 'unintended' yet evident phenomenological application appears in sections of chapters five and seven of this thesis. This subsidiary form of analysis is incorporated into the primary methodology of this thesis, which pricipally adopts the reworked medium theory approach and theoretical position offered by Deibert (1997, p. 37) whereby media (either in general or in specific forms like magazines) are recognised as 'environments'. It interrogates Rossetto's claim that *Wired* represents a reinvention of the magazine and evaluates this against Deibert's (1997) view that change is best studied through evolutionary analogy. As Deibert points out:

> The Darwinian analogy is particularly useful because it moves away from the technological determinist view of technologies "generating" specific social forces and ideas. It affirms that the genesis of social forces and ideas ultimately reflects a multiplicity of factors that cannot be reduced to a single overarching "master" variable. Instead, it focuses on the existing stock of social forces and ideas, asking which will likely flourish or wither depending on their "fitness" or match with the new communications environment (Deibert, 1997, pp. 30-31).

Deibert uses this framework to study the relationship between shifts in international relations and changes in communication environments. My research uses an interdisciplinary methodological approach that combines Ronald Deibert's (1997) media evolution analogy and revised medium theory, with critical textual analysis. It is designed to examine *Wired* magazine as a media environment in relation to the thesis' reinvention/evolution problematic. This approach allows a critical analysis of the magazine's material characteristics, form and content as well as of the textual and promotional constructions at work in *Wired*.

Wired magazine is also a media text, which is inscribed with symbolic meaning. In order to understand and critique the *Wired* text the thesis uses critical textual analysis. This includes using (and dipping into) some of the methods which fall under the rubric of critical textual analysis. These are semiotic analysis,

discourse analysis and ideological analysis. This type of analytical approach can also be defined as "media text analysis" (Turner, 1997, p. 310). Turner states:

> The idea of 'textual' analysis is itself borrowed from literary studies; with the appropriation of the term there is also an appropriation of some of its assumptions. To see media products as texts is to emphasise their complexity, to question their 'taken-for-grantedness', and to imply that they will repay the kind of close study customarily applied to culturally valorised works of art – poems, plays, novels, paintings and the like. The idea of the text, then, corrects precisely the flaw in empirical or social sciences-based communication theory and its dealing with 'the message': it problematises the way meanings are generated, it interests itself in the various textual forms employed (television genres, for instance), and it privileges the reader-text relationship over the sender-receiver relationship (Turner, 1997, pp. 310-311).

The link between both critical textual analysis and media textual analysis is as Turner (1997, p. 311) points out the method of "problematis[ing] the way meanings are generated". Analysis of the meanings generated in *Wired* however, also requires examination of the characteristics that constitute its print media environment and which contribute to how its content is structured and organised. The thesis methodology incorporates therefore, some specific aspects of magazine analysis derived from the work of magazine scholar Harold Abrahamson, and in particular, his 1996 text *Magazine Made America – The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical*. This historical work studies the rise of the American 1960s special interest magazine and examines factors which shaped the specialist lifestyle magazine. It also discusses the editorial principles and practices of special interest magazine publishers, which influenced how these magazines were structured in terms of their editorial content. In his study, Abrahamson (1996, p. 58) identified three basic editorial structural elements common to the 1960s American specialist magazine: columns, departments, and features. My research compares these structural elements (columns, departments and features) with the structural elements in *Wired*, to see if and how these elements have evolved over time. The purpose is to investigate whether *Wired* constitutes a typical specialist lifestyle magazine or a new type of magazine form.

To ensure a comprehensive examination of *Wired*, analysis of the editorial structure is incorporated with other areas that define the material, textual and

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promotional characteristics of this magazine environment. These include: the material characteristics and features of the magazine (issue frequency, trim size, covers, paper type and weight); magazine structure (Peterson 1972, Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991, McCracken 1993, Abrahamson 1996); its temporal and spatial characteristics (Innis 1951); the textuality of the print (and electronic) form (Ong 1982, Ess 1996, Snyder 1996, Deibert 1997, Gaggi 1997); relationship between old and new media forms – *Wired* and *HotWired* (Innis 1951, McLuhan 1964, Deibert 1997); the relationship between medium, cultural form and text (Williams 1974); the design of content (layout, typography and style); the construction of aspirational reader lifestyle (McCracken 1993, Schiffman, Bednall, Watson & Kanuk 1997); the discourses of technology (Feenberg 1991, Nye 1994, Marx & Smith 1994, Mitcham 1994, Ess 1996, Leonard 1997, Wertheim 1999) and technology promotion (Wernick 1991, Marx & Smith 1994, Aronowitz & Menser 1996).

Paid advertising is also an integral component of *Wired*. In order to see the material, spatial and economic relationship advertising has with the editorial structure and layout of *Wired's* columns, departments and features, a diagram representing *Wired* issue 3(10), is appended (see appendix 1). This issue was chosen because it represents a typical (defined as an average ratio of page numbers and editorial and advertising) and established *Wired* issue of the period in question (1993-1996). This diagram displays a representation of the economic value of the material magazine space, the way the contents are structured, and the promotional relationship between editorial and advertising content. It illustrates discussion points in chapters one and four and generally examines how paid advertising contributes to the construction of the magazine environment.

In order to substantiate particular claims made by this thesis the following aspects of *Wired* were examined: the ratio of advertising and editorial content per issue, (including advertisement size and its page placement); paid advertising (technology and non-technology accounts); occupations and public profiles of people who appear on the magazine covers; regular themes and promotional discourse between advertising and editorial matter; types of editorial content (regular topics, issues and stories); and common technological discourses used to promote the consumption of the Internet and a computer-mediated lifestyle.This synthesised methodological approach, which combines critical textual analysis of the medium;

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analysis of the material characteristics of the magazine form and a critical review of the content allows a linkage of the material and symbolic characteristics of the magazine as both a text and a communications technology. The purpose of this combined approach is to avoid a reductive analysis, which privileges the content over the material form and/or the material form over the content. Instead this approach positions both material form and content as constituents of the magazine environment. The aim is to achieve a wider understanding of the relationship between material form, text and symbolic meaning in order to address the thesis' reinvention/evolution problematic. The result is a method and inquiry produced from the synthesis of two differing positions (medium theory and critical textual analysis). An analogy which best describes this approach is the deejay process of "mixing of two records to effect the creation of a third thing" (Poschardt, 1998, p. 32).

Background for this study

The subject areas that inform my thesis topic are technoculture, convergence, hypermedia and magazines. These subject areas are positioned together because *Wired* magazine represents a textual and material site where all of these elements intersect. When discussed in the one context, these areas of study provide background information about the circumstances, influences and cultural climate from which *Wired* magazine emerged.

The first section of this background discussion introduces and outlines the emergence of technoculture and cyberculture. The second section introduces the study of convergence and the hypermedia environment to demonstrate how both have altered what was traditionally known as 'the mass media' and 'the modern communications environment'. The third section introduces *Wired* magazine, its electronic derivative *HotWired* and, very briefly, the history of Wired Ventures Ltd, which was the founding publishing company that originally produced *Wired* and *HotWired*.

Technoculture

Academic definitions of many affluent (modern) Western societies range from terms like – Post-Fordist economy (Wollen 1993), Post-Service economy (Jones 1990), Post-Industrial society (Bell 1974, Kumar 1978, Beniger 1986), to –

Postmodern society (Lyotard 1984, Harvey 1989, Jameson 1991), Information society (Barr 1994, Cunningham & Flew 1997), and Cyber society (Jones 1995). All of these terms contain ideas about the relationships between technology, art, science, politics and society. In particular, they relate to information, and IT. Furthermore these terms signify ideas and futurist notions about where Western societies may be heading.

Timothy Druckrey (1994) argues there has been a specific societal shift from – "industrial culture to media culture to information culture to technoculture" (Druckrey, 1994, p. 6). In this context the term technoculture merges the concepts of technology with culture. It implies that IT is the dominant feature and operative principle of Western society. The term technoculture has circulated for at least twenty years and its use has become prolific again in the 1990s, along with what Michael Galvin refers to as "its cognate term, cyberculture" (1995, p. 62). He states, " the genesis of this culture is clearly connected with the increasing fusion of computers, traditional communications media and telecommunications" (Galvin, 1995, p. 62).

In addition, Druckrey's (1994) use of the term technoculture implies that society has shifted to a new level of technological/social/cultural and economic relations. In this type of technocultural scenario, where and how one works, communicates and experiences life, will be increasingly mediated through, respondent to and dependent upon, a growing proliferation of IT. Druckrey (1994) believes that a technocultural model such as this is neither closed, linear nor modern. Rather it is postmodern. He states:

> What is emerging is a discourse of ideologies formed within a distributed set of technologies...The privatisation of the technology market and the lapse of other short-term goals positions technology as the essential media of a postmodern culture, a pastiche of instrumentality and speculation...Never before has there been such an integrated transformation of culture (Druckrey, 1994, pp. 1-2).

Regardless of whether or not a "transformation of culture" (Druckrey, 1994, p. 1) is occurring in everyday life, the discourses of technoculture and cyberculture are informing areas of official public discourse in Australia. For example, terms like technoculture and IT are commonly used in mainstream media texts and government policy announcements. It is not unusual to read and hear in the mass media, terms

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like: technoculture, cyberculture, the information age, and even a phrase *Wired*
magazine itself refers to and promotes – the 'digital revolution'. As Galvin argues:

> One somewhat paradoxical effect is the impetus that technoculture has
> provided to a wide range of 'traditional' print-based media. The
> fusion between computers and communications now provides the
> subject matter of a wide range of print-based material. The point has
> been reached in the 'mass' media and in popular culture where many
> of the technical words, phrases and ideas used to describe what
> computers do, or how they do it, are part of a general discourse
> (Galvin, 1995, p. 65).

The discourse of technoculture is situated within the context of culture and
technology. In this sense technology can be viewed as a mediated, social, economic
and political set of relations. The technology and media industries both play a key
role in this articulation. The promotion of new technologies thus becomes a process
of technocultural textual construction. This articulated process is summarised by
Jensen who states:

> For the construction of technology in the market is primarily
> rhetorical (Dahlberg et al.:62ff.) in the sense that technologies are not
> simply – are often not even primarily – marketed as machines defined
> solely in terms of their technical functionality and performance, but
> often also as a particular idea, lifestyle, image, social status, particular
> attitude to the world, relationship to a (technological) subculture,
> promise of a stake in the future, and so on. And here it is done
> specifically by means of rhetoric, the 'adorned statement' or the
> 'convincing argument' which attempts to construct an appealing,
> coherent, convincing system of meaning around technology: a text
> (Jensen, 1993, p. 308).

An example of this 'convincing system of meaning' is the creation of specific
IT niche-markets within the traditional mass media areas. These include a new genre
of mass media/popular culture texts such as magazines (*Mondo 2000, 21.C, Internet
Australasia, Wired*), television shows (*Hot Chips, Beyond 2000*) and newspaper
columns (*The West Australian:@ccess, The Weekend Australian: Living IT, Syte*)
that specifically promote IT, CMC, and/or technoculture.

A common feature of many of these 1990s IT/technoculture products like
Wired magazine is the stereotyped link between 'upwardly mobile', middle
class/upper class, university educated, white males and their new 'state-of-the-art'
IT. This linking of new technologies, the early adoption of the latest technological

practices and educated, middle to upper class lifestyles is also reflected in many of the contemporary IT advertisements. In these promotional contexts technology is reinscribed with a personality and repositioned as a commodity, accessory and text that symbolises a 'high tech', postmodern, ultra-affluent, Western lifestyle. The types of technologies used in this promotional rearticulation include: personal computers; software applications; the Internet; and mobile phones, all of which have the capacity to link the domains of work, entertainment and education. Two dominant features of the types of IT being promoted are their interactive and networking capabilities, or what telecommunications companies claim as – 'the ability to connect'.

The concepts and implications surrounding the practice of CMC, (i.e. the ability of individuals to connect via computers and interact over space and time), has long been the focus of academic studies. Yet the desire for CMC in the 1990s has gained an increased economic and commercial currency. This is evident in the growing number of advertisements that promote IT. For example, when companies like IBM, Microsoft or Telstra address the business sector via paid advertisements, it is not unusual to see sales pitches which suggest that high tech communications and networking systems are the key to maintaining and running an efficient and successful business.

In many IT business-advertising scenarios, the key selling concepts are connectivity and interactivity. However, these concepts are not just promoted within an economic context. The mobile phone and Internet are also being promoted within social and cultural contexts. In these instances they are positioned as technologies which will enhance interpersonal skills and provide extra social, cultural and education opportunities for both individuals and families alike. Some of the more fantastic advertisements credit these technologies with creating a 'global village' and offering a cultural renaissance, (e.g. 'Where do you want to go today?' which is the title catch phrase from a 1996 Microsoft advertisement for Microsoft Network).

What is implied by the growing academic, media, political, corporate and consumer interest in IT, in particular the computer, the Internet and online practices, that I have outlined so far in this chapter is the emergence of an innovative cultural tendency. Philip Hayward defines cultural tendency as "a set of discourses activated at a particular historical moment and present across a whole range of media" (Hayward, 1992, p. 162). I argue, that there is within the affluent Western context, an

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emergent technocultural tendency which centres around IT and particularly the computer and CMC.

Convergence and hypermedia

The general historical background to this emergent technocultural tendency can be attributed to a process whereby communications started to move into the centre of Western (via American) modes of economic production, particularly after World War Two (Innis 1951, Bell 1974, Wollen 1993, Kumar 1995). The key technologies involved in this process were the telegraph, the transistor, the computer, microprocessors and later the satellite (Beniger 1986, Carey 1989, Deibert, 1997). These technologies – along with cultural, economic, social and political factors – all cumulatively contributed to a process of technological and industrial convergence which integrates and merges previously separate, vertical and horizontal industries under what is sometimes called, the 'scientific, military, industrial, corporate complex' (Rheingold 1991, Kumar 1995). Since the late 1980s this complex has changed in emphasis, to become the corporate, commercial, scientific, military complex (Deibert, 1997, p.141). According to Cunningham and Flew (1997) one of the integral links to this process of late 1980s industrial and technological convergence is digitalisation which:

> involves the capacity to encode such diverse forms of information as text, sound, image and voice according to a single 0-1 binary code. The significance of digitalisation lies in the capacity to store, carry and translate these multiple information forms through single platforms, most notably digital computers. Digitalisation is critically linked to *convergence*, or the bringing together of previously distinct technologies, services and industries associated with sectors such as computing, telecommunications, broadcasting, film and video, and print publishing (Cunningham & Flew, 1997, p. 404).

As outlined by Cunningham and Flew (1997) one example of this convergent integrative process within the context of communications[1] is the media,

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[1] The term 'communications' is taken from Barr and in this thesis is:
    used in [an] encompassing sense. Its key parts are: *media* – which includes newspapers, magazines, radio, television and advertising; *telecommunications* – which includes telephony, data and other information-related products and services; and *information technology* – which includes computer-based systems and software (Barr, 2000, p. ix).
Communications is also an:
    umbrella term to encompass the study of an extraordinary range of activities and

telecommunications and IT/computing industries which have combined to form
Entertainment, Communication, Information (ECI) industries, or what is often called
the "new media" industry (Moran, 1994, p. 29).

Figure 2.3 Convergence of industries
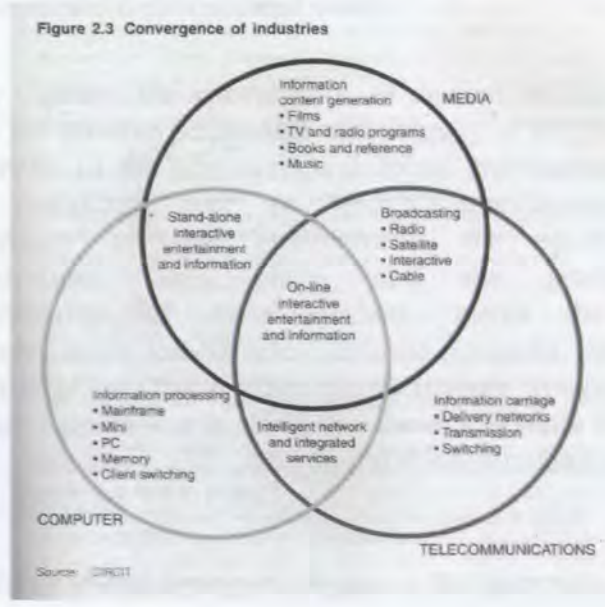
**Figure 1.1.   The convergent 'new media' industry. Diagram taken from Barr
(2000, p. 25).**

An example of the convergent 'new media' dynamic is addressed by Barr
(2000) who states:

> *the boundaries between media, telecommunications and computing
> have blurred in a process called convergence.* One can now sit at a
> personal *computer* to send an e-mail *message* that is transmitted
> through a *telecommunications* system to a friend overseas. Or, one can
> watch a horse race on television and soon afterwards see the dividends
> on the screen (*media*), delivered through a Telstra landline
> (*telecommunications*) from a central dividend database in the TAB
> (*computing*). This process of convergence is a major force for change in
> the growth of the new media (Barr, 2000, p. 22).

From Barr's example we can see how social and cultural communicative
practices enabled through technological convergent media redefine modernist

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relationships, including traditional media program makers, information content
providers, telecommunications carriers and associated service providers,
information technologists, institutional managers, policymakers and regulators
and, not least, citizens and users (Barr, 2000, p. x).

notions of time, place, space and identity. Technologically convergent communicative practices are a central characteristic of the emerging electronic-digital communications environment (Meyrowitz 1985, Green 1994, Deibert 1997, Barr 2000, Kitchin 2000). This thesis chooses Deibert's (1997) term 'hypermedia' to describe a communications environment which:

> not only captures the convergence of discrete technologies, it also suggests the massive penetration and ubiquity of the electronic media characteristic of the new communications environment. The prefix "hyper" (meaning "over" or "above") emphasizes two central characteristics of this environment: the speed by which communications takes place, and the intertextuality or interoperatibility of once discrete media...the hypermedia environment is not just the television, the computer, the fax machine, the cellular phone, the satellite reconnaissance system, or the hand held video camera – it is all of the above and more linked *together* into a seamless web of digital-electronic-telecommunications (Deibert, 1997, pp. 114-115).

The evolving global, synergetic, hypermedia environment also led to the creation of additional if not innovative communication industries and alternative trade opportunities within traditional media markets. One response to the restructured ECI market is the emergence of the Internet Service Provider (ISP) which links the home and/or office computer to the Internet. Via the Internet, ISP companies provide consumers and businesses with access to a wide variety of information and services ranging from banking, shopping, business, education, news, interactive chat sessions, academic research, e-mail and bulletin boards.

The potential of the Internet system as a means for conveying and handling information is yet to be realised. It is also however, becoming a site for expansion since an increasing amount of traditional media industries are developing Internet delivered products. An example of this is the publishing sector. Certain magazine and newspaper companies are extending their existing print formats online via the Internet. This means that their clients potentially have a wider range of media choice, and advertisers have access to different consumer demographics. For example, I can buy a print version of a magazine, or alternatively (having subscribed to an ISP'and, if necessary, the electronic magazine/newspaper) be connected to the magazine's online site.

An ECI configuration such as that implied by Wired Ventures Ltd, is the creation of a convergent media formation that integrates several different media products across formerly separate media markets. These products include magazine publishing (*Wired*), book publishing (*HardWired*), print and electronic advertising, public relations, sponsorship, online Internet publishing (*HotWired*), and an online search engine (*HotBot*). *HotWired* for example, is best described as a multimedia, business/info-tainment[9] site. Its main sites/channels comprise (at the time of writing) audio-visual broadcasting (Web TV), radio (online interviews), magazines (*Wired*), e-commerce, online software education/tutorials (*Web Monkey*), online gossip/commentary (*Suck*), and news services (*Wired News*).

Wired magazine

Wired Ventures Ltd officially launched the first of its new media products *Wired* magazine in San Francisco in March/April 1993 with-founding editor and publisher, Louis Rossetto and *Wired* president, Jane Metcalfe. Prior to this, Rossetto and Metcalfe had produced the computer magazine *Electric Word* in the Netherlands before moving to San Francisco to start up *Wired*. Their company, Wired Ventures Ltd, was backed by Charlie Jackson, the founder of Silicon Beach Software; Sterling Payot, (an investment banking interest) and Nicholas Negroponte, the founder and current head of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Media Lab (Eden Hoffman, 1995a, p. 2). As well as helping to finance *Wired*, Negroponte provided initial editorial advice concerning the direction *Wired* should take. He became the magazine's manager (Eden Hoffman, 1995a, p. 2) and secured a senior editorial position where he wrote a regular column throughout the 1993-1996 period (Bass, 1995, p. 148).

Other key senior staff from the periods 1993 to 1996 include Kevin Kelly (executive editor), John Battelle (managing editor in-chief), and John Plunkett and Barabra Kuhr (co-creative directors). A large number of *Wired*'s contributors have backgrounds in the areas of computing, science, the media, academia (cultural/media/literary studies), art, economics, and business. These include:

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[9] Terms like 'info-tainment' and 'factual-entertainment' describe convergent genres, and convergent texts.

- Stuart Brand (a regular *Wired* features writer, author and academic)

- Douglas Coupland (a technoculture and 'Generation X' author)

- Esther Dyson (a senior Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) member)

- Mitch Kapor (the computer developer of Lotus 123 software, EFF and Global Business Network (GBN) member)

- Brenda Laurel (academic)

- Jaron Lanier (virtual reality developer)

- Steven Levy (author and magazine columnist)

- Charles Platt (author)

- Howard Rheingold (author)

- Rudy Rucker (academic and software designer)

- Neil Stephenson (technoculture novelist and writer)

- Bruce Sterling (science-fiction, cyberpunk author)

My reading of the ECI, IT and CMC environment (1993-1996) suggests these people were amongst the most significant contributors, constructors and promoters of the discourse of contemporary technoculture and cyberculture.

In terms of its issue frequency, *Wired* was originally launched as a bi-monthly magazine but changed in November 1993 to a monthly format. The US version of *Wired* was, during this time (1993-1996), distributed overseas by World Wide Media to twenty-seven other countries (Eden Hoffman, 1995b, p. 1). There was also a Japanese adaptation of *Wired*, entitled *Wired Japan*. It was launched in November 1994 as a subsidiary of Tokyo's Dohosha Publishing Company Ltd (*WiredWorld*, 1996, p. 1). A UK version of *Wired* was launched in March 1995 as part of a joint publishing deal with the Guardian Media Group (Eden Hoffman, 1995c, p. 1). In February 1997 however, the UK *Wired* officially folded. According to *Wired*'s (then) editor, Louis Rossetto, the UK version's closure was due to *Wired* "being a small company [where] we simply ran up against the limits of our ability to finance and operate a stand-alone magazine without a major partner in the hyper-competitive London market" (Rossetto cited in *Media Daily*, 1997, p. 1).

Wired was distributed within the USA by the Hearst Corporation. This company, which began as a newspaper publisher, set the benchmark of success in the early 1960s within the context of American corporate synergetic media activity through its expansion into the magazine market. Abrahamson states:

> The Hearst Corporation set the precedent, and was soon followed by Times Mirror, CBS, the New York Times, and ABC. Some started new magazines; others bought existing titles. This 'multimedia-isation' dramatically changed special interest publishing, transforming what had been a number of small separate cottage industries into big competitive businesses (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 26).

The 1960s were also marked by intense competition for advertising revenue between the traditional mass-market media forms of television, radio, newspapers and magazines. This competition had drastic effects on the American mass magazine market, since it could not compete with the potential advertising reach offered by the emerging medium of television and the spread of the portable radio. The result for many publishers, was a shift away from mass-market magazines to niche-marketed magazines, which could address a specific, desirable consumer demographic. The shift away from the mass-marketing of magazines in America represented a combination of social, economic and technological factors. Abrahamson states:

> By the end of the 1960s, the transformation of the consumer magazine industry was virtually complete. Victims of television's ascendancy and their own mismanagement, many mass-audience magazines had failed. In their place, a wide variety of specialized magazines were flourishing. The evolution of both targeted marketing techniques by major advertisers and of publishing technology contributed to their development, and many magazine publishers eagerly established new and expanded existing special-interest magazines titles, particularly those concerned with leisure activities (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 31).

According to Abrahamson, the 1960s specialist magazine "address[ed] particular reader interests" (1996, p. 2) which centred on "active leisure activities" (1996, p. 31). The late 1980s and early 1990s specialist lifestyle magazine genre (discussed fully in chapter five) is historically similar to its 1960s forerunner in this respect in that these magazines target particular areas and activities and are aimed at a specific rather than general readership

From the mid-1980s onwards specialist lifestyle magazines can be seen as adopting an individualised, niche-marketing approach. The astute placement of advertising as a result of niche-marketing plays a major role in the commercial success of these specialist magazines. In fact, advertisements and the techniques of advertising are integral skills in specialist magazine production and are now a generic feature of commercial magazines (both mass or/and specialist circulations).

Unlike many other forms of print media however, the specialist lifestyle magazine displays an intense yet subtle relationship between advertising content and editorial copy. The origins of the symbiotic relationship between advertising and the specialist lifestyle magazine are discussed by Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1990) who state:

> The newer special interest magazine's editorial focus is on a particular activity and product array, for example *Skiing*, *Tennis*, *Photography*, and *Computers*. Advertisers tend to think of these as reflecting a certain lifestyle with a direct connection to a product range (Leiss et al, 1990, p. 106).

Leiss et al's (1990) quote is, however, a precursory indicator of the avenues created by this symbiotic relationship in terms of the synergetic marketing potential for magazine publishers. The material characteristics of the magazine form, with regards to trim size and paper thickness, have seen it, at times, function as a synergetic promotional 'vessel' for other related media and (at times) unrelated goods and services. Such promotional activities may be defined as supplementary gifts or 'giveaways' which are, with the exception of perfume and/or cosmetic samples, usually attached to the front cover creating a cross promotional, synergetic media package. Some examples of this are: personal computing magazines which contain software; computer games magazines that contain gaming software and/or cheat booklets; music magazines that contain CD-ROMs and/or music software and/or posters; women's magazines that contain short novels and/or sample beauty and/or perfume products; teen magazines that contain posters and/or food. Furthermore, improvements in niche-marketing techniques, as well as the convergence of ECI industries have (within the context of publishing) extended the print magazine's synergetic market reach to include the Internet where new combinations of consumer demographics and goods and services are for sale. Free ISP hours are an example of an Internet giveaway.

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The number of publishing companies extending their services online continues to grow yet in 1994 *Wired* magazine's technological interface with the Internet differentiated it from other types of specialist and mass-market magazines. Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd's (PBL) (then) managing director Richard Walsh offered his mid-nineties perspective on the effect online magazine publishing would have on the Australian magazine market. With regards to print magazines he commented:

> Well it's not challenged too much because magazines, the heartland of magazines are women readers, not male readers, and the heartland of entertainment [sic]. At this stage the Internet is primarily like 80% of consistent Internet users are young men [sic]. They have never been the strongest magazine readers, although we are seeing some resurgence even in young males' reading of magazines. But the heart of the magazine business is not young men, and therefore the growth of the Internet really is not likely to have too much of an adverse effect on the prosperity of the magazine industry (Walsh cited in *The Media Report*, 1996, p. 6).

Contrary to Walsh's 1996 Australian statement, in America the mid-1990s popularity for magazines for both male, female and general readerships was reflected in the scope and range of magazine titles listed in both *Advertising Age* (1995) and *The Folio* (1995) 'top 500' US magazine list. Specialist and lifestyle titles included computing, sport, entertainment, current affairs, news and ladies' home journals; all of which featured predominately in the top ten magazines lists of both surveys. In Australia, in 1996, specialist lifestyle magazines experienced the largest growth in the magazine market. Nene King, (the former editorial director of the *Australian Women's Weekly* and *New Idea*) predicted how: "niche marketing, with most magazines selling around 30,000 copies is the way of the future, [the] tabloid approach has had its day" (King cited in *The Media Report*, 1996a, p. 7). King's view that non-tabloid niche magazines are 'the way of the future' is also reflected in American magazine statistics.

The biggest increase in American magazine 'coverage percent' (the level of penetration of estimated maximum readership) from the period 1991 to 1996 was in the specialist niche-market of computer magazines which increased by 47% (*The Source*, 1996, p. 2). *Wired* magazine is part of this 'niche market' magazine trend with a circulation of 143,000 in 1994 and 245,000 in 1995. *Wired's* circulation listing in the

top 500 magazines in America was ranked at 415 in 1994 and 202 in 1995 (*The Folio*, 1995, p. 4).

Wired features

There is an ambiguity in the promotional nomenclature of *Wired* and *HotWired*. The name *Wired*, within the context of contemporary youth culture, denotes two contradictory concepts; being strung out in the bodily sense and being connected in the metaphysical and/or spiritual sense. Yet both these concepts are, arguably, metaphors for the telegraph; a technology of the industrial era, which had its wires strung out and connected over space. The name *Wired* is culturally anchored within the Industrial Society epoch, from which both the telegraph and the contemporary magazine form emerged. The name *HotWired*, which is an extension of the name *Wired*, is however, associated with the Information Society. As a verb it describes a bypassing of conventional methods (e.g. hotwiring a car). When positioned within the context of publishing the term can be seen as a metaphor for *Wired*'s publisher's bypassing of traditional modes of print in favour of an alternative system like the Internet. When positioned however, within a broad social, cultural and economic context, the names *Wired* and *HotWired* signify multiple identity forms and connected ideological meanings.

Wired represents contradictory definitions. In an initial commercial press release, *Wired* was promoted as "the first combined computer/consumer title" (Eden Hoffman, 1995b, p. 1). *Wired* editor, Louis Rossetto, described his publication as a "techno-mindstyle magazine" (Rossetto cited in Eden Hoffman, 1995, p. 1). John Batelle, the then manager-in-chief, put forth a less cryptic description when addressing a group of university students. He stated: "*Wired* is a computer magazine that focuses on social, political and cultural issues that are the result of a generation of computer users. We are reflecting and building and illustrating a community" (Batelle cited in Hartwick, 1996, p. 1).

Wired represents two distinct concepts. On a general level the magazine represents a textual site where technoculture, technological convergence and the magazine form intersect. For example, the company, Wired Ventures Ltd is representative of an ECI convergence. The company's print magazine called *Wired*, represents a material and textual example of ECI convergence. Technological

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convergence influences the magazine form at the material stage of production where the magazine content is collated online and produced with digital technologies. Technological convergence is also articulated on a textual level, where it forms part of a larger techoculture discourse that influences the contents in terms of subject matter and style, and in terms of how the content is structured.

Wired represents a specific textual site where the discourses of IT and promotion (advertising/marketing) intersect. What this reveals is a textually constructed dynamic between the promotion of IT and the formation of an aspirational lifestyle. *Wired* magazine overtly promotes the use and consumption of new IT on a textual level via its content and design. Evidence of this exists within the print magazine and is extended through the link with its electronic site *HotWired*, which supports an innovative computer-mediated reading experience and a mode of excessive hyperconsumption of both print and online media products.

As outlined previously the word hyper means "over and above" (Deibert, 1997, p. 114) and is used by Deibert (1997, pp. 114-115) as a prefix to describe the technical features of hypermedia. These include the capacity for large amounts of information to be compressed and digitalised, the high speed of data transmission and delivery, and the intertextuality of the online digital form. When positioned within the context of online consumption, the prefix hyper describes a computer-mediated, networked practice that is fast, transcendent and over-the-top. Online modes of hyperconsumption are connected to the speed at which one can consume, the quantity that one can consume and the locale from which one can consume. *HotWired* (as discussed in chapter nine) represents a locale of hyperconsumption in that it offers users a vast array of hyperlinked media, goods and services (including the online version of *Wired* magazine). This mode of hyperconsumption differs from previous modes of offline consumption where media forms are discrete and only accessible individually and in temporal contexts that are often positioned in different spatial locales.

While hyperconsumption can be related to technical aspects regarding how one consumes online, the term *über alles* (which like hyper also means over all, or over and above) can be indicated as a prefix to this online mode of hyperconsumption which (in theory) transcends the limitations of time and space. The obvious cultural and historical connotations of the *über alles* prefix are drawn

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from the infamous national anthem of the German Third Reich (circa 1920-1945) –
'*Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles*'. This fascist phrase "was once synonymous
with the German Third Reich's ambitions to rule the world" (Schaetzl, 1998, p. 1).
When indicated out of its original context, the über prefix can be used to signify the
capitalist practice of consumption as a form of cultural fascism – i.e. 'consume,
consume, over and above all'. As McGuigan points out, when consuming online,
"Anything can be downloaded any time, in principle, at the whim of the consumer.
All culture is, in this way, eternally available, although at the same time it is
curiously ephemeral" (McGuigan, 1999, p. 114). Online überconsumption signifies
being able to consume on an international scale, vast amounts of information, goods
and services representative of the resources of the entire globe without the 'earthly'
material constraints of time and space. Instead, consuming online is reduced to a
keyboard stroke.

The particular material link between CMC and online überconsumption of the
HotWired site is reinforced on a textual level by Rossetto's editorial statement: "our
goal is to create a new kind of publication that is not complete unless you are
plugged into the hard copy and the on-line experience" (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12). In
this context, what *Wired*'s producer is promoting for magazine readers (and re-
enforcing through its title) is an incentive to fully invest in the techno-lifestyle
package; they should read the print magazine and use the interactive services on offer
through *HotWired*. This cross-promotional activity attempts to construct a basic
consumer need and desire for a 'new' online experience. Significantly, it is the
appeal of being able to consume a new experience which lies at the heart of most
commercial projects. As Campbell (1995) points out:

> The essential activity of consumption is thus not the actual selection,
> purchase or use of products, but rather the imaginative pleasure-seeking to
> which a product lends itself, real consumption being largely a resultant of this
> mental hedonism. Using this framework it becomes possible to understand
> how it is that modern consumption centres upon the consumption of novelty.
> For modern consumers will desire a novel rather than a familiar product
> because this enables them to believe that its aquistion and use will supply
> experiences that they have not yet encountered to date in reality. It is
> therefore possible to project onto this product some of the idealised pleasure
> that has already been experienced in daydreams, and which it is difficult to
> associate with those familiar products currently being consumed. Actual
> consumption of a product or a service, although it might well provide
> satisfaction and pleasure, is nevertheless still likely to be a disillusioning

experience, since real products cannot possibly supply the same quality of perfected pleasure as that which attends imaginatively enjoyed experiences (Campbell, 1995, p. 118).

As argued in chapters four and seven however, the expectations of the online experience created in the print version of *Wired* exceed those constructed in the online version of the magazine. By constructing the representation of an online experience and techno-lifestyle in print, the producer situates within *Wired*'s promotional discourse, concepts and connotations associated with technological media convergence (such as online connectivity and interactivity), which are made graphic through textual visualisation, and subsequently narrativised. To create this narrative process, which articulates a technocultural lifestyle, the text draws from a range of utopian and deterministic techno-themes, myths and discourses, all of which derive from a larger and more traditional continuum of utopian discourses celebrating the progress of technology. In *Wired* these recontextualised technological discourses are interwoven with other promotional devices that centre on the consumption of technological goods. The promotion of online computer activities and the active consumption of IT and media goods and services are a particular feature of full interaction in the *Wired* process.

This process of rearticulation results in older technological themes being reinscribed and recontextualised, and the promotional avenues of technology markets becoming expanded. Further, this form of promotional reinscription for IT is historically similar to the way previous communication technologies like the telephone, camera and cinema were promoted to the public during the early periods of the 20th century (Kern, 1983). In the case of *Wired*, the coupling of online high technology (its consumption, use value and practice) with the notion of lifestyle works to construct a set of signifiers that link together to represent a particular type of imagined technocultural lifestyle.

The construction of *Wired*'s imagined technocultural lifestyle, incorporates promoting the goods of technological convergence such as the latest ECI products (computers, ISPs, and software), as well as other luxury consumer goods (alcohol, accommodation, perfumes, cars and clothes) which are not "directly related to the publication's area of interest" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 66). The exclusiveness of the products in *Wired*'s technocultural projection signifies a niche-market segmented to

capture "class not mass" (McCracken, 1993, pp. 257-8). This perspective is articulated by *Wired*'s press agent Taara Eden Hoffman, who asserts:

> The average *Wired* reader is a 35-year-old-college-educated professional who sets purchasing standards for his or her company. With an average salary of [US] $85,000, they can afford to drive high-tech cars, buy sophisticated home entertainment gear, be among the first to discover new wines and liquors. In short they are the ultimate early adopters. And can't be reached through any single magazine. Except *Wired* (Eden Hoffman, 1995b, p. 2).

Hoffman's press release demonstrates how *Wired* constructs and represents its target readership, which has been created by linking the concepts of new or 'high tech' technology with an affluent, educated, Western, consumer lifestyle. Hence the genesis of the co-joined term: techno-lifestyle. This constructed demographic can, as Eden Hoffman's communication suggests, be promoted as a new niche-market to which a diverse array of companies can advertise. The economic potential of this new niche-market has been extended into the electronic sphere through *Wired*'s link with its Internet site *HotWired*, and the commercial interests represented and constructed using the *HotWired* brand name.

On October 27, 1994 *HotWired* began operating on the WWW (Eden Hoffman, 1995d, p. 1). Its URL (universal resource locator) was http://www.hotwired.com. The user did not have to pay to access the *HotWired* site, but s/he did have to subscribe by entering a user name, a password and an e-mail address. *HotWired* provides an online hyperlinked service that offers access to a large variety of electronic articles, interactive chat sessions (with *Wired* writers, staff, *Wired* readers and non-*Wired* readers), e-commerce and high-tech luxury consumer goods, and links to other Internet homepages and services.

Wired Ventures Ltd's extension of the print format into the sphere of online publishing and interactive services creates a technological and promotional synergetic quality. For example, many *Wired* staff contribute to both print and online publications as do *Wired* readers who participate in the online discussion forums. Thus this dynamic is evident in many areas such as modes of production and consumption, where a crossover promotion and a consumer dialogue occurs in the content of the respective 'publications'. Furthermore, extending the magazine into the online realm alters modes of access and consumption of the publication, as well

as ways of (and places for) reading and discussing *Wired*. While there are material, textual and economic differences between the print and online versions of *Wired*, there are also similarities. This signifies that evolutionary processes of media convergence and divergence may be occurring within the magazine form, rather than a one-off process of print magazine reinvention, as initially announced by *Wired*'s publisher and editorial team.

The study of *Wired* has been constructed into a concurrent interrogation of the evolution/reinvention problematic. It interweaves the thesis which has been organised into eight following chapters. Chapter two is a literature review. In this review I analyse how other writers have perceived the magazine form and examine research problems associated with studying magazines generally, and my own interest area specifically. Incorporated into this review is also a subsidiary outline of literature that has informed my methodological and theoretical underpinnings.

Chapter three begins to address my research question, which asks how, if, and in what context *Wired*'s claim of reinvention of its print magazine form may be justified. In doing so the chapter focuses on the first component of this area that analyses the material, structural and textual characteristics of *Wired*. It compares these with historical definitions and characteristics of the print magazine such as form, editorial structure, textuality, issue frequency and persona in order to identify any defining material and textual features which may be exclusive to, or differentiate, *Wired* from the traditional magazine form. This includes a structural breakdown of *Wired* in order to examine the relationship between magazine form, textuality and content.

Chapter four extends its examination of the relationship between *Wired* magazine's structure, form, and text by focusing specifically on the area of design. This chapter begins to link the first research area of material analysis with the second area of promotion. My proposition is that design functions as a promotional and aesthetic device which thematically contextualises the magazine. I introduce, examine and link the concepts of techno, media sampling, computer-mediated, cyberdelic and postmodern aesthetics in order to argue that these features are integral to the formation of the magazine's identity and also its construction and promotion of a computer-mediated online techno-lifestyle.

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Chapter five develops my argument with an examination of how *Wired*'s editorial and advertising constructs and promotes the publisher's aspirational constituency/ideal readership and the techno-lifestyle shared by that aspirational readership. This is done through a critical textual analysis of *Wired*'s magazine structure, covers, articles, letters, press releases and paid advertising. The chapter argues that the producers of *Wired* define the readership through financial, social, ethnic and gender hierarchies – a typical practice for specialist lifestyle magazines, and essentially conservative/pro-business in effect.

Contradictory critical issues evident in *Wired*'s utopian construction of online techno-lifestyle are analysed in chapter six. This chapter argues that *Wired*'s ideal techno-lifestyle is restricted to an exclusive constituency that is predominately white, male, affluent and educated. This exclusivity and the bolstering of privilege contradicts the libertarian and utopian discourses promoted by the magazine and website. To analyse *Wired*'s contradictory assertions regarding a utopian techno-lifestyle, this chapter examines concepts such as cyber-democracy, ethnicity, class, gender, commerce, consumerism, and the public interest.

Chapter seven examines the relationship between technology, desire and consumption. These three areas constitute a utopian promotional master-narrative evident in both the magazine and the publisher's editorial claim of 'a reinvention'. This chapter also examines how older utopian technological discourses are rearticulated via editorial and advertising copy as promotional statements regarding the benefits of consuming ECI technologies, practices and lifestyle.

The repositioning of particular characteristics of *Wired* magazine online, within the *HotWired* site, alters the general notion of what the/a magazine is. This difference is not only constructed in terms of form and textual organisation, but also where, when, how and by whom the *Wired* text is (re)produced, consumed and promoted. Chapter eight examines shifting sites of production and consumption and is essentially a study of the relationship between 'old' and 'new' media. It analyses *Wired* and *HotWired* (which contains a variety of material including the online version of *Wired*) through a recombination of medium theory and critical textual analysis. Chapter eight addresses how the print magazine form is positioned within the online environment, and the process of media transference, convergence and divergence. It includes why, how and where some aspects of the print magazine evolved online while

others did not. Finally, the chapter outlines the benefits and limitations of both online and offline 'magazine forms' as promotional media, and how the two constitute a media process, which is evolutionary.

Chapter nine is my concluding chapter. It provides an overview of the thesis and of my findings. It also investigates, within the context of the sp .cialist lifestyle magazine, what the evolution/reinvention debate means to magazines generally in online/offline environments and how *Wired* is central to this contemporary discussion.

Conclusion

At the beginning of my research this thesis topic raised a number of significant issues. These include: gaps in the academic analysis of, and research perspectives devoted to, the print magazine; gaps in academic research of the magazine form in terms of characteristics, format and structure; and gaps in the analysis of the textual form of the contemporary specialist lifestyle magazine from the period 1990 onwards. Magazine research in the early 1990s also failed to address the evolution/reinvention debate in relation to the 'old' print media with 'new' online media.

General magazine research issues also encountered include Abrahamson's (1995) view that there is a lack of a clear continuum, or connected body of magazine scholarship and no visible methodological frameworks and/or "overarching intellectual structure" (Abrahamson, 1995, p. xviii). These are some of the factors (discussed later in my literature review chapter) which contribute to the fact that magazine research, within the context of academic scholarship, still remains a small and fragmented area of study (Abrahamson, 1995, p. xviii).

Mainstream academic research has overlooked critical analysis of the 1990s magazine form, including material characteristics and structure. This view is also held by Beetham (1996) who states "The woman's magazine has had a central place in popular print throughout the 20th century, but the history of the [magazine] form has almost been completely neglected" (Beetham, 1996, preface). An exception to this general rule is Abrahamson (1996), who studied the emergence of the American specialist magazine from 1950 to 1960. His purpose was to "attempt to portray

interaction between social change and specific magazine developments" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 6). This 1990s landmark study shows the potential of magazine research that integrates magazine form and content with the social environment.

Using *Wired* magazine, my thesis analyses the *Wired* publisher's claim of media reinvention and my own proposition of media evolution with regards to *Wired*'s relationship to the print magazine. By revisiting and analysing the print magazine form and its emergent electronic derivative this research and approach contributes to a wider understanding of the material, textual and promotional characteristics of the contemporary magazine in the age of convergent media.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of literature

An overview of academic theory indicates that the print magazine is constructed as a contradictory and ambiguous media form. One of the reasons for this could be that magazine research is not as developed as other media/communications subjects so the nuances have yet to be teased out. Secondly, when magazines are examined the research focus is usually on magazine content rather than on the form. This statement is supported by my review of literature. The areas I will review in this chapter include how other researchers have defined the magazine, its history, why there is a lack of academic research into magazines, current issues surrounding magazine research, and the dominant context in which magazines have been studied. Finally, I analyse the subsidiary texts that have influenced my theoretical underpinnings and methodological approach. These texts focus on promotion, medium theory, cultural studies and contemporary critical studies.

Defining the magazine

Greenop (1947, p. 2) asserts that magazines had "their origin in Paris in the seventeenth century". He further states that the word 'magazine' is:

> borrowed from the French *magasin*, for store or warehouse, a meaning which the word still has in colloquial German and Russian; its particular application to a specific type of publication is figurative, exactly parallel to the better understood use of the word 'treasury' as a name for an anthology of verse or prose pieces. It is useful at once to picture the actual meaning of magazine as a store of goods of varied interest and usefulness, in order to make a sharp cleavage between the magazine proper, and that host of weekly and monthly publications which are certainly not magazines (Greenop, 1947, pp. 1-2).

Given that Greenop's definition of the magazine was published in 1947, his discussion acknowledges the contradictory definitions used to define and describe the magazine. A contemporary perspective offered by Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer and

Hebron (1991) points out that the term 'magazine', as it relates to the periodical, first began appearing in England around the 17th century where:

> it came to be employed in book titles to refer to "a storehouse of information" or miscellany. Not until the eighteenth century, and specifically with the first publication of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1731, was it used to denote a periodical publication directed toward a general readership (Ballaster et al, 1991, pp. 50-51).

Greenop (1947), Ballaster et al (1991), Schmidt (1981) and Beetham (1996) all make reference to the terms store, treasury and miscellany to describe the early magazine form. Schmidt (1981) complements Greenop's (1947) - and foreshadows Ballaster et al's (1991) - historical descriptions of the term magazine, and its changing use from the 18th to 20th century. She states:

> The descriptive term caught on so well that by mid-[18th] century several publications included the word *magazine* either in their titles or subtitles. Today, two and half centuries later, *magazine* is still the preferred and most commonly used designation for thousands of miscellaneous collections for the general public. Other terms such as *bulletin, journal, quarterly* and *review* are used for more specialized publications, including business, professional, trade and scholarly periodicals, but even many of these are actually consumer magazines (Schmidt, 1981, p. 137).

Given the above descriptions regarding how the term magazine was used historically, it becomes evident that the term still retained a degree of flexibility in the 1990s at the time of the *Wired* launch where it was used to denote a variety of media forms. For example, there are both print and electronic (television and Internet) media forms which use the term magazine to describe their content. Wozencroft (1988) describes the contemporary print magazine format as:

> a sequential structure [of a kind that] most closely resembles television's programming. A news story may be followed by a documentary, star profile or soap opera, and not only does each feature have a headline, there is a front cover as well (Wozencroft, 1988, p. 94).

The "sequential structure" (Wozencroft, 1988, p. 94) of magazine content, differentiates it from the book but is similar to its predecessor: the print newspaper. Like the magazine, the newspaper has what McLuhan (1964, p. 205) and Williams (1974, p. 45) call a "mosaic" style as well as hierarchical structure whereby page

positioning, page numbering and headline size delineate the stories in order of importance. Unlike the magazine format however, newspaper stories are presented in a less fragmented way in that story run-ons (stories continued from one page to another) are limited. When they do appear they are usually positioned in close page proximity to the main front-page stories from which the majority of newspaper story run-ons are derived.

The print magazine form has two traditional and common features: miscellany and periodicity. Miscellany is a structural device which employs "multi-authorship and offer[s] a variety of not necessarily related items" (Ballaster et al, 1991, p. 51). Miscellany is a feature that also characterises other media like web sites, newspapers and some television forms (like news and magazine programs). Periodicity signifies time. Every media is demarcated through time and has temporal characteristics; media consumers have to know when the next edition, issue or show is available. Beetham describes magazine periodicity as the form's "double relationship to time. Each number of a periodical is both of its moment and of a series different from and yet the same as those which have gone before" (Beetham, 1996, p. 12).

Concepts of magazine miscellany and magazine periodicity appear in Greenop (1947), Ballaster et al (1991), Beetham, (1996) and Schmidt (1981). This body of work also provides my thesis with a substantial historical underpinning, analysing the magazine form from the 17th to early 20th century.

In addition to the foregoing, Peterson's *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (1972) is, due to its breadth, a seminal text within the area of American magazine research. Peterson's analysis of the development and growth of the national magazine industry at a time when America shifted from "an agrarian to an industrial economy" (Peterson, 1972, p. viii) also offers a comparative historical base for my thesis. My concern is the contemporary magazine form at a time when society is moving from an Industrial to Post-Industrial (i.e. Information) society. From this perspective, I argue that *Wired* is at the nexus of the material and textual transition from print to electronic production. Furthermore, *Wired* articulates its own type of social attitudes regarding the relationship between lifestyle and new IT in a way that reflects conventional magazine relationships between lifestyle and consumer goods.

The historical and social role of American magazines is discussed by Peterson (1972), Schmidt (1981), Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991) and Abrahamson (1996). They assert that magazines have provided social, cultural and historical portrayals of American life. Abrahamson states:

> Like all communications media, magazines are not merely self-contained journalistic or economic artifacts. In a larger context they can be interpreted as both products and catalysts of the social and cultural realities of their time. They can serve as windows into the tenor, spirit, attitudes, concerns and underlying values of their age. And they help to shape these attitudes (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 71).

Magazines are also viewed as "reflectors and molders of public opinion" (Schmidt cited in Abrahamson, 1996, p. 4) which, "held up the mirror to national life" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 7). Tebbel and Zuckerman's view also implies, however, that the magazine is a mass media form similar to broadcast television or national newspapers. Notwithstanding this, the American mass magazine market is generally comprised of a heterogeneous variety of magazine niches as Peterson points out:

> magazines spoke to and for little publics within the population as a whole...the typical magazine was not edited for just 'everybody'; it was edited for a following with some mutual activity or outlook. Because they sought out little publics within the population at large, magazines in the aggregate represented a wide range of tastes and opinions (Peterson, 1972, pp. 444-51).

On the whole, Greenop (1947), Richardson (1966), Peterson (1972), Nourie and Nourie (1990), Ballaster et al (1991), Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991), Tinkler (1995), Abrahamson (1996) and Beetham (1996) all provide useful historical and social accounts of the American, English and Australian magazine during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. They provide comparative background information for the area of my thesis that analyses the history of the form, and the relationship between old and new media forms. Nonetheless, my searches found that while commercial-industry based material (i.e. circulation figures, advertising rates, etc.) is available, there remains a general lack of academic research regarding magazines compared to other mass media; newspapers and television, and 'new' media such as CMC.

The lack of academic magazine research

Abrahamson (1996), Beetham (1996) and Bonner (1997) have also noted this lack of magazine-specific research. Beetham states:

> Theoretical work on periodicals as popular texts is still relatively underdeveloped despite their importance. Where it exists is in cultural and media studies and in relation to late-twentieth century texts (Beetham, 1996, p. viii).

I agree in general with Beetham's comment. There still remains, however, a lack of research into magazines within the media and cultural studies areas. My position on this is consistent with Bonner (1997) who, when speaking from an Australian research perspective, states:

> There is little recent research into magazines in Australia and virtually nothing on magazines other than women's. Windshuttle provides a little general discussion of magazines, but like Bonney and Wilson (1983) concentrated on women's magazines...The paucity of Australian studies of magazines cannot easily be redressed by reference to analogous overseas work. There are simply few studies. Joke Hermes (1995) Ellen McCracken (1993) and Janet Winship (1987) are rare exceptions, though they too focus on women's magazines (Bonner, 1997, p. 123).

Additionally, a similar lack of American academic magazine research is outlined by Abrahamson (1996):

> As a generalization about journalism scholarship, magazines have drawn less attention as a research subject than either newspapers or television. A study conducted in the mid-1980s covering 20 years of issues of the professional research journal, *Journalism Quarterly*, found that magazine subjects represented only 6% of the articles, and more than half of them were somewhat narrowly focused on journalistic "content analyses". A similar survey of *Communication Abstracts* found that scholarly articles about magazines account for less than 1% of the contents; in comparison, research concerning newspapers represent more than 5% of the articles, and television, more than 20% (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 4).

Why is there a lack of academic research?

Both Abrahamson's (1996) and Bonner's (1997) quotes raise questions concerning why there is a lack of academic magazine research within the American

and Australian media/communications studies disciplines. One reason offered is that communications/media studies curricula do not traditionally position magazine research as an autonomous area of study. Instead magazines, (unlike the other media streams of television, radio, film, advertising or journalism), are often positioned and studied within the context of journalism and/or advertising. When speaking from the American academic perspective Abrahamson states:

> · even though magazines are a popular major in many university journalism and mass communication departments, instruction in magazine research is part of the curriculum at only a small number of institutions (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 4).

Abrahamson's 1990s assessment is a continuation of a critique made in 1989 by Schmidt whose view is that: "Academic disciplines have routinely concentrated on the other legs of the print triad [i.e. newspapers and books]" (Schmidt cited in Abrahamson, 1996, p. 4). The implication of positioning magazine research as a sub-branch of the print media and advertising has lead to ambiguity regarding where academic texts on magazines and magazine research can be found. This ambiguity was highlighted in a request posted on the *Media History* website by magazine researcher Elizabeth Benston when she wrote:

> I'm trying to track down any data bases on the history of magazine publishing in the U.S. – specifically, lifestyle magazines which capture the particular spirit of the decade (Example: general interest magazines in the Fifties like *Time* and *Look*). 'Print media' indexes are often restricted to newspaper/book publishing industries. Any leads would be helpful. Thanks (Benston, 1997, p. 1).

Benston's problem regarding magazine databases, distinct from other areas of print media, is not unusual. It is significant because it reveals a late 1990s continuation of a historical and contextual ambiguity regarding how magazines have been traditionally classified and positioned in relation to, and within, other media streams. Benston's request is for information about new locations for discussions of magazine classification. In addition to traditional print media reference areas (like libraries) these possibilities now include electronic research areas on the Internet.

The ambiguous nature of magazine classification and the multiple locations of relevant discussions can create a situation where there appears to be (but this is not always the case) a lack of information regarding specific sub-fields of magazine

study. Jolliffe (1995) found this when searching for information about magazine editing practices. She suggests that her inability to locate research into this area was a result of "poor indexing" (Jolliffe, 1995, p. 51). She states: "The best journalism biographies available may still mix magazine research irretrievably with works on newspapers or with popular press articles that are by no means empirical" (Jolliffe, 1995, p. 51). Prior-Miller (1995) analysed the different approaches and problems surrounding the magazine classification in her article *Research Review: Issues in Magazine Typology*. In doing this she raises a number of important issues. For example:

> The ability to identify trait patterns that distinguish one group of magazines from another is basic to the systematic study of magazines. Yet there are no published analyses of the competing classification schemes. Neither is the problem addressed in the research methods literature...the lack of a clearly defined and empirically tested method for classifying non-newspaper periodicals is a problem that has theoretical and methodological implications central to the study of magazines (Prior-Miller, 1995, p. 3).

Schmidt's article, *Magazines* (1981), also traces the problematic history of magazine classification. According to Schmidt (1981), the attempt to classify magazines grew out of an initial "identity confusion" (1981, p. 144) regarding the magazine form which, consequently, affected the way in which the magazine was positioned in relation to other media:

> Research on American magazines in American culture is hampered in several ways. First, despite their long presence as a distinct entity in American publishing, for most of the nineteenth century, indexing and statistics for magazines were included under a blanket designation, 'periodicals'. Therefore magazine researchers must often categorize and subdivide census data and commentary on historical or economic importance to separate the role of magazines from newspapers (Schmidt, 1981, p. 144).

One academic text that does focus on magazine research techniques is Abrahamson's 1995 edited collection, *The American Magazine: Research Perspectives and Prospects*. His text is extremely useful because it provides a (rare) cross section of academic articles dealing with contemporary magazine research and methodological approaches. The text confirms my view that academic magazine research is a marginalised area of study within the context of media studies.

Abrahamson argues that: "many researchers have often produced what might be characterized as 'brilliant fragments' – worthy research of clear merit but, it might be argued, occasionally unconnected to any larger framework" (Abrahamson, 1995, p. xviii).

Abrahamson's statement is given credence because there is no methodological correlation between, and continuum of, magazine research. There is nonetheless a contextual framework which connects magazine research with media history and media evolution. Given that uncertainty exists with regards to magazine classification and what constitutes the magazine form, a metaphorical evolutionary approach is useful to the project investigated here. It permits the examination of Rossetto's claim of *Wired* as the reinvention of the magazine form while also embedding magazine research within the field of media/communications/cultural studies. My study of the magazine form is positioned within a continuum of media history using an approach which considers both form and content because, as McLuhan provocatively argues, "Having noticed nothing about the *form*, they could discern nothing of the *contents*, either" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 168).

The context in which magazines have been studied

Abrahamson's 1996 text, *Magazine Made America – The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical* provides an analysis of the 1960s American specialist magazine from the perspective of editorial structure and editorial content. Abrahamson's study is an exception to the general rule that when magazines have been studied the typical focus is on the content (usually through textual and/or content analysis) not the form. Further, the content of magazines (usually women's magazines) has been studied to extend research in other academic areas such as feminist studies, history, communications technology history, and media/cultural studies. These studies, however – particularly within the field of feminist media criticism – succeed in offering a broad historical and contemporary research into the textual form of the magazine.

Consequently my thesis is informed by (among other academic perspectives) an area of feminist media criticism which studies women's magazines. These critiques include: *Woman's Worlds Ideology: Femininity and the Women's Magazine*, Ballaster et al (1991); *Decoding Women's magazines: From*

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Mademoiselle to Ms, McCracken (1993); *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England 1920-1950*, Tinkler (1995); *Reading Women's Magazines: An analysis of Everyday Media Use*, Hermes (1995); *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine 1800-1914*, Beetham (1996).

These texts are linked insofar as they support the argument that discourses of promotion and consumption in relation to the construction of gender identity influence the magazine form. They are chosen for inclusion here because their comparative information and research perspectives inform sections of my theoretical and methodological approach, viz: how the construction of gender shapes the textual form (Tinkler 1995, Beetham 1996); how, where and why (women's) magazines are read (Hermes 1995, Ballaster et al 1991); historical and/or contemporary information and analysis into the magazine form (Ballaster et al 1991, Beetham 1996); and how the discourse of advertising influences the textual form (McCracken 1993).

Ferguson (1983) and Tinkler (1995) provide examples of the shifting relationship between capital, market trends and the form of women's magazines. Both these works argue that constructions and representations of gender identity influence the magazine form. Tinkler, in her study of English female adolescent magazines (from the period 1920 to 1950), argues that:

> the form and content of magazines represented the articulation of capital's concern to exploit girls as consumer[s] with patriarchal interests in the heterosexual development and orientation of girls as a necessary precondition of their acceptance of unequal gender relations and a subordinate position within marriage (Tinkler, 1995, p. 5).

Ferguson (1983) also argues that contemporary women's magazines "promulgate the cult of femininity" (Ferguson, 1983, p. 5). To investigate her argument, Ferguson employed content analysis where: "[a] set of categories ...[were] used to identify and quantify the dominant themes, values, goals and roles, for example the role of the wife, mother, and waiting to be wed" (Ferguson, 1983, p. 4). Both Ferguson (1983) and Tinkler (1995) provide background theoretical concepts for an area of my thesis which examines the relationship between magazine genre, gender and the promotion of ECI goods and services, consumption and lifestyle. In examining these relationships, however, I agree with Hermes (1995). Hermes (1995)

argues that Ferguson's (1983) and Tinkler's (1995) critical position constructs women's magazines as homogenous instructive texts and "agents of oppression dressed up as popular pleasures" (Hermes, 1995, p. 1). Hermes regards the critical position taken by Ferguson (1983) and Tinkler (1995) as being part of "the modernity discourse [where] *concern* rather than *respect* for those who read women's magazines is shown" (Hermes 1995, p. 1). My research perspective inclines towards this latter view within the context of women's magazines.

Hermes (1995) text *Reading Women's Magazines: An Analysis of Everyday Media* is an ethnographic study of the pleasures of media consumption within the context of women's magazines. While my study is a critical textual analysis of the form and content of *Wired*, Hermes' (1995) interviews with readers of women's magazines provide my thesis with useful background insights regarding the magazine form within the context of time, space, reading patterns and consumption. For example, there is an evident relationship between the consumption patterns of some readers (e.g. home-based carers) and the way the magazine form lends itself to being easily picked up, skimmed through and put down at irregular intervals.

Beetham's (1996) analysis of women's magazines, 1800-1914, provides a rare account of the origins of the magazine form's structural elements and conventions, as well as how and why these elements evolved. Beetham's (1996) study identifies a number of significant areas regarding the evolution of the print magazine's form including: the relationship between news, instruction and information; periodicity and time; the use and the origin of illustration and portraiture; generic characteristics (beauty columns, cooking, domesticity, fashion and style departments and features); the growth of the popular press; and, the historical relationship between advertising, editorial and text. Beetham's (1996) work provides my thesis with fundamental information regarding early features of the magazine that can be used to inform my own analysis of *Wired*, and my discussion of evolution versus reinvention in the development of the magazine.

Promotion

Wired constructs a promotional discourse that centres on ECI industry production and also reader consumption of ECI goods and services. In this context,

the magazine, is both a material, commercial and symbolic commodity[10] that represents a general "articulation of a continued capitalism" (Docherty, 1993, p. 37).

McCracken (1993) argues in her text, *Decoding Women's magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms*, how American women's magazines, in their attempts to promote commodities, articulate a pleasurable, (yet subordinate) women-centred view of the world. Underpinning McCracken's argument is a methodology she calls a "materialist semiotic" analysis (1993, p. 2), which she uses to critically examine the covers, the content, and the relationship between the editorial content and the advertising content of a wide variety of American women's magazines. Further, McCracken asserts that while (women's) magazines are on a surface level polysemic (in that they signify a variety of contradictory ideological meanings), they can also be seen as signifying a market driven, promotional "master text" which "articulates desire and consumption" (1993, p. 299). In the case of *Wired* an equivalent 'promotional master narrative' articulates a discourse of desire and consumption regarding the Internet, high technology and a computer-mediated lifestyle.

The process of commodification (i.e. attaching a monetary value to an ever increasing array of material and symbolic goods and services) is a key feature of Western capitalist systems of production. The current techniques (i.e. rate, volume and speed) of commodity production, and the inscription of economic and symbolic value to goods and services, can be described as excessive. This not soley due to the actual commodity which is priced according to its material and symbolic value, but also due to the value attached to the commodity's company logo, brand name and cultural context in which both the material commodity and its commodity sign[11] circulate.

It is within this excessive promotional context that *Wired*, *HotWired* and their parent company Wired Ventures Ltd circulate and form part of "[the] larger pan-promotionalism of contemporary communications (private as well as public, political, academic artistic, etc)" (Wernick, 1991, p. vii). My second theoretical position regarding *Wired*, and the discourse of promotion, is derived from Wernick's (1991) text *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression*.

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[10] A commodity is defined as, "any good that can be exchanged for other goods" (Haugerud, Stone & Little, 2000, p. 9).
[11] Goldman (1992) defines a commodity sign as, "a composite of signifying unit and signifying meaning" (Goldman, 1992, p. 18).

Wernick defines promotion as: "advertising and its practices taken in the widest and most generic sense" (1991, p. vii). Wernick's definition accompanies a general argument that positions promotion as the dominant "cultural condition" (1991, p. 386) of contemporary Western society. Wernick's view regarding promotion as a dominant 'cultural condition' also informs my study of *Wired* within the context of promotion, magazines and the construction of lifestyle choices and options.

Medium theory

Promotion, in the form of paid advertising and editorial content, which encourages the consumption of new products and services, has a direct impact on what can be considered a magazine media environment. The use of the term 'media environment' is taken from Deibert's work, *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia: Communication in World Order Transformation* (1997). In this study, Deibert combines a revised medium theory with an ecological holist approach, which is:

> fundamentally *historicist* in outlook, meaning that all human existence is seen as continuously evolving interplay between environmental and technological conditions, formal and informal institutions and practices, intersubjective values and beliefs (Deibert, 1997, p. 39).

This perspective connects with the complex relationship between media and change which can be studied through the use of a "media as environment metaphor" and "evolutionary analogy" (Deibert, 1997, p. x). Further, the model supposes that changes to media environments are not determined by any single political, technological, social or cultural variable but is contingent upon a complex interdependency of these factors. Deibert's work provides a major theoretical underpinning for my thesis' discussion of the reinvention/evolution study of *Wired*. His medium theory approach is based primarily on a revision and modification of the works of Canadian medium theorists Harold Innis (1951) and Marshal McLuhan (1964). My thesis is informed by the work of these two scholars to analyse the magazine form, as well as that of American communications scholar Walter Ong (1982).

Innis' work *The Bias of Communication* (1951) puts forward the theory that each media form can be analysed within the context of time and space and exhibits a temporal or spatial bias. According to Innis (1951), print media (like magazines and

newspapers) exhibit a spatial bias because they are light and portable. They can be moved easily over large distances. Furthermore, their spatial bias means they are not bound geographically like heavier time-biased media forms such as statues, obelisks, totem poles, and monuments. Like Innis, McLuhan recognises that media are not discrete. His work, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), traces spatial, temporal and textual features of print and links them to other (electronic) media forms. As a result of his belief that language itself is a technology and a medium, McLuhan (1964) proposes that: "the 'content' of any other medium is always another medium" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 8). Ong's work in *Orality and Literacy: the technologizing of the word* (1982) analyses the shift from oral to print culture. Ong (1982) traces "the effects of print on the use of visual space" and, in doing so, analyses the textual features of both the page and earlier print media forms (Ong, 1982, p. 116).

Innis (1951), McLuhan (1964) and Ong (1982) all analyse how shifts from one form of media to another (i.e. orality to literacy to print culture to electronic culture to interactive computer culture) lead to new forms of textuality and restructure human consciousness (Ong, 1982, p. 78). These views are pertinent to the study of *Wired*. *Wired*'s editorial team argue that they have responded to a new form of hypermediated textuality and postmodern consciousness associated with interactive, online, multimedia computer culture, translated stylistically into the textual form of their print magazine.

British communications theorist Raymond Williams (1974) interestingly responds to McLuhan's proposal that one cannot understand the content of a medium without considering its form (McLuhan, 1964 p. 168). Williams describes his study as an examination of "the relationships between television as a technology and television as a cultural form [which] relates social history and analysis with critical and analytical examination" (Williams, 1974, p. 6). This response explains why Williams' work *Television Technology and Cultural Form* (1974) also informs my theoretical approach. It provides a model for an analysis of the relationships between form, text and technology.

Cultural Studies and Contemporary Critical Studies

In addition to theorising technology and cultural form, Williams' (1974) text also bridges communications history and my other theoretical influence derived from British cultural studies. Williams' work is often seen as a precursor to the field of British cultural studies, which emerged from the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) during the 1970s. Fiske (1992) describes this tradition as "essentially Marxist in the traditions of Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci, though this Marxism is inflected sometimes with a structural accent, sometimes with an ethnographic one" (Fiske, 1992, p. 285).

My methodological and theoretical approach to critical textual analysis is "inflected sometimes with a structural accent" (Fiske, 1992, p. 285), in order to critically study textual constructions and representations in *Wired*. To do this I incorporate the methods of semiology – defined by O'Shaughnessy as "the science of signs" (1999, p. 85) into my critical textual analysis. As Turner points out semiotics can "deal comfortably with the combination of signifying practices which customarily occur in most mass media – the relation between headlines, photos, layout and stories in the newspaper, for example" (Turner, 1997, p. 312). I acknowledge, however, that media texts and their signified meanings are not fixed and change over time, and are dependent on individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts and subjective positioning. O'Shaughnessy also discusses this position in his 1999 text, *Media and Society: an introduction*. He states:

> In the end semiology's acknowledgement of polysemy and its awareness that cultural knowledges, contexts, and audiences are elements that need to be taken into account in understanding meanings, actually leads to the realisation that there are too many variables. We can point to significant probabilities and 'preferred meanings' of texts, but we have to acknowledge other possible meanings (O'Shaughnessy, 1999, p. 85).

While accepting the limitations of semiotic analysis, it is used (when needed) as an analytical tool for critical deconstruction of the *Wired* text, and identification of 'possible preferred meanings' regarding ECI technology, promotion, consumption and lifestyle. My semiotic analytical component is repositioned within an interdisciplinary analytical field known as critical textual analysis. Robert Allen describes the area of contemporary critical theory as:

a diverse (and frequently contentious) family of critical approaches: semiotics, narrative theory, genre theory, reader-or-audience orientated criticism, ideological analysis, psychoanalytic criticism, feminist criticism and British cultural studies (Allen, 1992, p. 5).

Allen's quote is taken from his edited collection *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*. This work helped define my critical studies approach, including certain theoretical approaches employed in my methodology, which incorporates elements of British cultural studies, semiotic, ideological and discourse analysis (Allen, 1992, p. 5).

The Media in Australia: Industries, texts, audiences (1997) by Stuart Cunningham and Graeme Turner also assisted in this process, particularly a chapter by Turner called *Media texts and messages* which provided a historical overview of the media and cultural studies traditions and approaches from European, American and Australian perspectives. As such, it provides useful discussions and examples of the different analytical approaches regarding the study of media including analysis of the media content, texts and audiences.

Conclusion: magazine as media environment

It was the *Wired* publisher's claim to have reinvented the magazine form that originally prompted me to explore what the magazine form is and how it relates to online culture. I found that within the general context of media/communications studies, the magazine form itself has not received as much attention as other media, such as newspapers and television. Given that magazines have been used extensively by general academic and media/communications disciplines for study, teaching and research purposes, the focus has usually been on the content, and not the form of the magazine. Further, the relationship between the areas of magazine form and magazine content is usually not considered. This has contributed to an ambiguity regarding why and how magazines have been classified historically, and positioned and studied in relation to other media (print, electronic and online). This situation raises questions with regard to what constitutes a contemporary magazine; the relationship between form, content and technology; and issues arising from the interplay of these areas.

From a research perspective, my aim in this thesis is to address this conundrum. This thesis considers both form and content as co-constituents of the magazine environment. This combined focus is necessary for an investigation of *Wired* magazine framed by a reinvention/evolution problematic. This thesis attempts to contribute to magazine research, and to further the study of magazines within the general field of media and communication.

CHAPTER THREE

Material analysis of *Wired* magazine

This chapter examines the material and textual characteristics of *Wired* magazine between 1993 and 1996. It does this by comparing *Wired* magazine specifically with magazines generally. The general print magazine 'environment' is a discrete, material, contextualised form established through and comprised of certain editorial characteristics; issue frequency, editorial structure (the way the editorial and advertising contents is organised), and "editorial persona" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 67). The following chapter will demonstrate that rather than representing a 'reinvention' of the magazine; *Wired* exhibits these above characteristics. The chapter therefore positions *Wired* in this context as a typical commercial print magazine which has evolved rather than been reinvented.

The context of *Wired*'s material form is important because the publisher of *Wired* initially claimed to have 'reinvented' the magazine. The publisher's suggestion that the print version of *Wired* magazine has been 'reinvented' is due to its connection with *HotWired* and represents a general promotion of the publisher's cross-media package. I acknowledge that positioning elements of *Wired* magazine on the *HotWired* site does represent an evolution of the print magazine. From this perspective, and within this context, *Wired* magazine is not typical but evolutionary. Examination of the print magazine.*Wired* itself, however, out of this context, has revealed it to be a typical print magazine in terms of material form, generic codes and conventions and editorial characteristics.

The magazine environment: a virtual department store

What is it that distinguishes print magazines from other media? One approach to this question is through metaphor, which can be used to construct and define different media environments. The print magazine represents a media environment which has specific material, textual, spatial and temporal characteristics that distinguish it from other media like books, newspapers and television. To start

constructing a metaphorical image of the magazine, as a media environment distinct from other media, is to consider first, the etymology of the word 'magazine'.

According to *The American Heritage® Dictionary of English Language: Fourth Edition* (2000, p. 1), the word magazine is derived from the Arabic word *hazana* (to store) and the French word *magasin* (storehouse). Lancaster suggests that the word *magasin* was later used to describe a particular type of mid 19th century French shopping environment like the *Bon Marché* and others, which were commonly referred to as *grand magasins* (Lancaster, 1995, p. 64). The function of these '*grand magasins*' was to evoke personality and mood in order to promote a desire to consume the spaces themselves, and the goods they sold. Such locales were also a collection of differing physical marketplaces, and product layout was signified through spatial hierarchies.

Links between *magasins* (where goods are sold) and magazines (where goods are advertised) effect a spatial bias across media. This spatial bias allows magazines to transport brand names, trademarks and goods and services to the consumer. Mail order and department store[12] catalogues, were simulations (if not virtual examples), of the department store experience. In effect they shifted the tactile (department store) mode of consumption into a privatised and virtual experience[13]. This view is also discussed by Ohmann (1996) who refers to the advertising section of *McClure's* magazine in the late 19th century as "evoking in print the experience of the department store" (Ohmann, 1996, p. 255). The same points can be advanced for contemporary print magazines like *Wired*. They represent a communications environment where "art and commerce" (Lancaster, 1995, p. 59) meet, where specific identities are projected; they display hierarchies of space, and contextualise a variety of 'unrelated items' within a limited and discrete material product.

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[12] Interestingly, the introduction of magazine departments and department stores in America occurred at about the same time. According to Lancaster (1995) the department stores began with proprietors from areas of New York with A.T. Stewart (1842), Roland Macey Enterprise, (1858), John Wannamaker in Philadelphia, Filene in Boston and Potter and Palmer in Chicago (Lancaster, 1995, p. 59). Department stores followed the same routes as magazine publishing which began in the North East followed by the Mid West and later West Coast. This presents an example where markets, as pointed out by Innis (1951), follow communication routes.

[13] Advertising in contemporary magazines serves an equivalent function.

Editorial structure

The term 'unrelated items' is another way of describing the content of magazines, which in the case of contemporary magazines, comprises editorial and paid advertising. The editorial is the space which contextualises goods for sale; the environment within which the advertising is placed and which enhances its attractiveness. One way of discussing how the content is organised is to examine the structure of the magazine. This will be explained by focussing first on editorial content. *Wired*'s editorial content is organised into sections known as editorial columns, departments and features. This type and form of *Wired*'s 'editorial structure' is characteristic of most contemporary (specialist lifestyle) magazines and bears a direct similarity to the 1960s American specialist magazine (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 56).

Given that each column, department and feature performs a different function, in combination they all help construct the persona/identity of the magazine. In short the differences represented by these distinctions are as follows. Columns are critical and subjective, they establish and maintain the magazine's authorial identity and persona. Departments are overtly commercial; they sell – while reinforcing the magazine's persona through the range of goods and services, critiques, product evaluation and reviews. Features are a showcase for the magazine in terms of design; they sell both the magazine's persona and, in the case of *Wired*, project the techno-corporate identity and lifestyle. These three editorial sections of columns, departments and features will now be discussed in more depth.

Columns

Of all the editorial sections, *Wired*'s columns contain the most information, and place an emphasis on written rather than visual material. Between 1993 and 1996 *Wired* ran three regular columns: *Electrosphere*, *Idées Fortes* and *Negroponte*. Unlike the departments or features sections, *Wired*'s columns are longer, in depth, and the tone and mode of address varies to include the critical, the investigative, the humorous, and at times, the academic. The main function of the column is to establish an authorial identity for the magazine. Columns usually contain no images and this is a characteristic that distinguishes them from editorial departments and features. This is in keeping with the column format of the 1960s specialist magazines

that, as Abrahamson notes, also lacked illustration (1996, p. 59). Columns offer strong support for the content of the magazine and the layout appearance is similar in structure (columns of typographic information) to other media like newspapers.

Idées Fortes and *Electrosphere* are columns which run, on average, two to four articles each and vary each month with regards to contributors. *Negroponte*, however, represents the traditional 'editorial' column or 'leader' column, and is a one-page address to the readers. Although *Negroponte* is positioned idiosyncratically at the end of the magazine, the layout of *Wired*'s columns display more similarities to, than differences from, the 1960s specialist magazine columns. These were:

> usually placed at the beginning of an issue, were used to provide a variety of viewpoints that readers would find either instructive or entertaining. Rarely more than one typeset page (approximately 1,000 words) in length, columns were regarded as the appropriate vehicle for argument and opinion. Because of the personal nature of their perspectives, most columns were accompanied by a small photograph or illustration of their authors (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 58).

Following this description, both *Electrosphere* and *Idées Fortes* are positioned at 'the beginning' of the magazine. They tend to appear in the first third of the magazine, but are not the first editorial sections to appear (these are the departments). Instead, *Electrosphere* and *Idées Fortes* are columns positioned among the editorial departments. This positioning allows them to set the tone for the magazine regarding themes and issues, and these same themes sometimes carry on into the feature articles. *Electrosphere* is the longest *Wired* column and includes (on average) between two to eight articles written by different contributors. Each article can span up to five pages on a given topic. This format deviates from the traditional 'thousand word' length described previously by Abrahamson (1996). *Idées Fortes*, which is second in the column running order, comprises shorter 'snippets' of opinion from different contributors on a variety of ECI related topics.[14]

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[14] The *Wired* issues this thesis focuses on (between 1993 and 1996) do not list their editorial sections under the headings: columns, departments and features. This changed with later issues following the take over by Condé Nast, which announced, via headings, the terms — columns, departments and features. My catergorisation of which *Wired* sections constitute either a column, department or feature article is based on Abrahamson's (1996) definition of these editorial sections, as well as comparison with other contemporary magazines which use this same editorial structure.

Again, if we compare *Wired*'s columns with the 1960s specialist magazine format, we can see that these earlier columns are "Often editorial (in the newspaper sense) addressing contemporary social, political, regulatory or economic issues of concern to the magazine's readers" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 58). *Wired*'s editorial style, format and content tend to focus on ECI 'issues'. Such elements construct a critical, contemporary, social, political, technical and (at times) historical, commentary. Such constructions are often reminiscent of the journalistic traditions of 'muckraking' and satire, which characterised earlier American magazines around the 1920s and 1930s.

Thus *Wired*'s evolutionary trajectory extends backwards through the 1960s specialist lifestyle magazine to the gossip and argument of previous magazines in the early decades of the 20th century. According to Janello and Jones (1991) the journalistic practice of American magazine muckraking became prominent at the turn of the 20th century when American magazine publisher S.S. McClure established his namesake *McClure's Magazine* (1893). With this magazine came the tradition of muckraking -- political commentary exposing 'big city' corruption of government and business corporations (Janello & Jones 1991, p. 60). According to Janello and Jones (1991), McClure's practice of muckraking proved to be part of a successful formula in attracting readers. As a consequence the practice prompted other leading magazines to follow suit. They state:

> Publications like *Collier's, Hampton's, The Independent, Success, The American Magazine,* and *Cosmopolitan* jumped into the fray sending writers to peer into the hidden recesses of corporations, political machines, prisons, hospitals and factories (Janello & Jones, 1991, p. 23).

Ohmann (1996, p. 273) points out that during this time the magazine practice of muckraking also "coexisted with [the] celebration" of the American expansion of capitalism, big business and national progress. *Wired* is more like its historical ancestors in this respect. Rather than critique big business and corporations, *Wired* focuses its attacks on governments. These are constructed as impeding the process of IT expansion and hampering the legitimate interests of big business. The point is that *Wired*'s columns are (like their predecessors) instrumental in creating points of identification for the reader with regards to where the magazine stands ideologically on business and ECI issues.

Wired's columns therefore represent an overt critical, knowledgeable and authoritative voice of the magazine. This representation is also signified by including a byline for each column contributor which, (unlike departments) includes both the name of the contributor and their occupation. Such a device validates the columnist as a voice of authority and knowledge regarding their given column subject. The magazine's persona is constructed through the opinions offered by the columnists who are hired to 'speak' on behalf of the magazine. Providing personal and professional information about the columnist via bylines also gives magazine readers a subjective point of identification with the magazine, particularly if a picture of the writer is supplied.

In the case of *Wired*, *Negroponte* is the only *Wired* column to display a photograph of the contributor. It is also the only editorial piece in the magazine written by the same, regular, contributor – Nicholas Negroponte. Naming the column after the contributor signifies Negroponte as *Wired*'s most authoritative, consistent and 'visible' voice. Further, Negroponte is more than a 'voice', since he is one of *Wired*'s co-founders and both an investor and adviser. Negroponte's anchor role in the magazine is reinforced through regularity in terms of layout, photograph and column position, on the last editorial page of the magazine, next to the back inside cover.

Out of all the *Wired* columns, *Negroponte* is closest in format to the editorial column of the 1960s specialist lifestyle magazine and the contemporary magazine editorial column. Although not the editor, Negroponte's column represents (if not mimics) what is traditionally the magazine editor's column. Traditionally, the editor's column addressed readers on behalf of the magazine, and usually included a photograph of the magazine editor.

The editor's column (as it usually exists) also sets the context, agenda and issues in every edition of a magazine. With the 1960s specialist magazines, and with contemporary magazines and with newspapers, however, the editorial column is usually positioned at the beginning of the publication. Notwithstanding the disparity in the positioning, *Negroponte* performs the same function as an editorial column because it sets agendas and outlines the main ECI issues for *Wired* readers to consider during the month. Unlike traditional editorial columns, however, by being

positioned at the back of the magazine *Negroponte* signifies an editorial closure (or 'kiss off') for readers on behalf of the magazine[15].

Naming the column after a contributor also 'celebritises' Nicholas Negroponte and synergetically constructs for him a textual persona. This persona positions Negroponte as part of the *Wired* brand name which in turn, is co-branded with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) since this institution employs Negroponte. Negroponte's *Wired* column therefore extends his professional profile beyond academia and industry and positions it within the context of popular culture where he is constructed as an IT authority, public figure, and techno-corporate celebrity/writer.

'Brand name' writers like Negroponte did not exist in early American magazines. Writing for magazines in the 18th and early 19th century used not to be a profession, rather it was seen to be a 'disreputable' and 'unprofitable' occupation (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 10). Magazine writers were often anonymous, which only served to confirm the perceived 'scurrilous' nature of the job (Greenop 1947, Peterson 1972, Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991).

In these early stages, magazine contributors were semi-professional, anonymous, background figures. Contributing to this perception was a lack of a magazine writing culture itself, fuelled by a lack of payment for stories. There was little fulltime employment for contributors/writers. According to Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991) even magazine editing was a part-time, secondary occupation with payment directly related to the magazine's financial success. Payment for writers/contributors was "rare in America until 1819 when the *Atlantic* [magazine] became first to offer payment" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 10). This professionalisation of the publishing culture had a great effect on the content in terms of the originality, and at times the quality, of early American magazines. With payments – along with the growth of the magazine industry generally – came the term 'magazinist', which was used to describe a person who wrote for magazines. Nonetheless, while early magazines often focussed on public, heroic, celebrity figures, the early writer as 'personality/celebrity' did not exist, and was not

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[15] This only refers to the editorial. The 'last say' of the magazine is actually the advertising, which follows Negroponte's column on the inside and outside back cover of *Wired*.

constructed as a selling point for the magazine as it is today. This changed in the mid 18th and 19th centuries when public figures, politicians (George Washington) and writers such as Charles Dickens, Mark Twain and Thomas Paine began their writing careers with magazines.

Columns also involve a pattern of repetition and variation (discussed later in the chapter). The three staple columns *Electrosphere*, *Idées Fortes* and *Negroponte* appear in every issue. Variation occurs with regards to the amount and types of stories and contributors in *Electrosphere* and *Idées Fortes* while *Negroponte* retains the same contributor and the same 'one page – one story' format for every issue. *Wired* has not evolved beyond conventional magazines in that its columns remain showcases for regular contributors like Nicholas Negroponte.

Negroponte's editorial column – like other editorial content – also works on a formula of repetition and variation. Repetition occurs in this column format, in its positioning within the magazine, in the article size (one page), in mode of address, graphic style and also in terms of thematic content. The column's content revolves around regular topics and issues concerning (usually American) IT, telecommunications and media/ECI industries, and ECI convergence and the latest IT product developments.

Topics covered by *Negroponte* usually allude to other editorial columns, features and departments, which involve both guest and regular contributors. This repetitive formula presents familiar topics, themes and issues treated in a variety of ways for example: ECI regulation; ECI business machinations and business profiles; techno-corporate success stories, new technologies and applications; privacy and security; cyber democracy and cyber art and commerce. This editorial formula of repetition and variation represents an evolution (not reinvention) in editorial structure specifically and magazine form generally.

Departments

Abrahamson (1996) positions departments behind columns as "the second major structural element utilised by special interest magazines" (1996, p. 59). He states: "Positioned both in the front of the magazine after the columns and in the back of the publication, departments principally served a utilitarian function, providing 'service' and 'how-to' information" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 59). In the

case of *Wired*, the layout and utilitarian functions of departments described by Abrahamson (1996) is still evident. This utility however is within an overtly commercial and promotional context – since the primary function of *Wired*'s departments is to champion new products and ideas.

On average, *Wired* ran twelve to fifteen departments per issue between October 1993 and 1995; thus departments represent the largest editorial section of the magazine. *Wired*'s departments can be divided into generic categories of letters, news, and overt and covert advertisement/advertorials. Each department has a title, and at times, a byline. A typical issue from this period – October 1995 – included the following departments:

- ➤ *Rants & Raves: Reader Feedback* (the letters pages)
- ➤ *Electric Word: Bulletins from the frontline of the digital revolution* (news, gossip and IT updates)
- ➤ *Scans: people, companies, and ideas that matter* (ECI people and issues)
- ➤ *Fetish: Technolust* (the latest luxury ECI and lifestyle products)
- ➤ *Reality Check* (futures forecasting)
- ➤ *Raw Data: Stats 'R' Us* (graphical depiction of, and commentary on, ECI technology and product futures)
- ➤ *Geek Page* (semi-technical computer information)
- ➤ *Cyber Rights Now* (political commentary)
- ➤ *Follow the Money: Introducing the Wired interactive technology fund* (*Wired* ECI stock portfolio)
- ➤ *Updata* (ECI personality profiles and news)
- ➤ *Street Cred* (ECI product reviews)
- ➤ *Just Outta Beta* (ECI product reviews)
- ➤ *Netiquette* (Internet etiquette)
- ➤ *Deductible Junkets* (calendar and diary of ECI events/conferences)

All these departments represent *Wired*'s 'official' editorial content; their 'official' status is signified by their listing on the magazine's Table of Contents

pages. There is however one further 'unofficial' department not listed on the Table of Contents pages called *Addlinks*, which provides the names and online addresses of paid advertised products and services.

Of all these departments *Rants & Raves* stands apart from the others. It is the letters department, it is non-commercial, and it is laid out as the first editorial section of the magazine. *Rants & Raves* is a traditional generic department that represents the magazine's 'official' dialogue with readers. Printing readers' letters 'makes visible' a section of the *Wired* readership *qua* 'community', and constructs a point of social and geographical identification regarding who *Wired*'s readers are, what types of occupations they have, and where *Wired* readers live. *Rants & Raves* also performs a temporal function because every issue contributes to the construction of continuity regarding the magazine's identity and its history. This department sets up issues to be addressed by the readers into the future, and relates these to the present – and to the past.

With the exception of *Rants & Raves, Wired*'s departments are the most overtly commercial sections of the magazine's editorial content; promoting goods and services, and offering critiques, product evaluations and reviews. Departments are more numerous and varied in content than columns and feature sections, but are often shorter in length. They are lavishly illustrated and represent areas within the editorial structure that showcase design elements particular to *Wired* and which have won acclaim in the publishing industry. Design helps make departments interesting, (along with the variety of department types) because each department has its own distinctive visual style and offers various modes of address. Terms of address range from dry promotional/advertorial ECI reviews, informal *Rants & Raves* style, the diary format announcing events and conferences, contemporary prose commentaries on geek interests and technocultures, business reporting, to 'byte-size' news grabs and ECI industry and techno-celebrity updates.

Initially the magazine contained a staple of six regular departments in its editions from the periods October 1993 to August 1994. These were *Rants & Raves, Electric Word* and *Fetish* that appeared at the start of the magazine and *Street Cred, Net Surf* and *Deductible Junkets*, which appeared at the back of the magazine. While these six remained staple departments, from the September 1994 edition onwards a number of other regular and semi-regular departments began to appear. The reasons

for this expansion (which are discussed further in the chapter) can be attributed to the growth in the magazine's paid advertising. An increase in editorial departments during this time helped to maintain a balance between editorial content and advertising content.

Features

Unlike columns and departments, feature articles are the only editorial contents flagged on the front cover indicating, as the name implies, that these are the main stories. In the 1960s specialist magazines, features were positioned in what Abrahamson (1996) calls, "the features well, [which is] after the columns and departments in the front of the magazine, and before the closing departments" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 61). *Wired* applies the same type of editorial organisation as this. *Wired's* features well contains the largest amount of advertisement-free editorial page space, whereby all the stories listed run in an initial advertisement-free block in the middle of the magazine.

In 1994 the features well contained, on average, ten features that ran for 32.27 advert-free pages. In 1995 it averaged nine features, which ran for 33.27 advert-free pages. This type of advert-free layout helps to achieve an appearance of editorial balance (Abrahamson, 1996). Nonetheless, although the features well may be where stories begin, for the most part they do not finish there: many are continued at the back of the magazine between advertisements and other editorial departments. Feature stories – while signified on the magazine cover as being the most important element of *Wired* – are also the most discontinuous in terms of a closed narrative structure. Feature stories start linearly, but do not end in a linear fashion – rather a new feature item begins, then another and another – many of which remain unfinished unless the reader wants to go to the back of the magazine to continue reading a particular story. For example, a particular feature story in issue 2(6) was continued from page 81 to begin again on page 128.

Unlike columns, (which often focus on social, political or regulatory issues), *Wired's* features usually focus on the 'success stories' of individuals – from business people, politicians, academics, artists – from commercial business and cultural groups and/or companies within or associated with the ECI industries. Feature stories can vary in length and may also at times act (like departments), as showcases for the

magazine's design. This is evident is the layout of some feature stories which combine text with lavish design, illustration and four page colour spreads (see figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Feature story "Pachinko über Alles". In *Wired* 4(6)

Wired includes a variety of editorial content which has direct or indirect links with ECI culture. These links appear as traditional generic magazine categories such as fiction, 'travelogue' stories, critical analysis, features, qualitative product and/or industry evaluations and letters to the editor, as well as personalities/biographies.

Paid advertising, however, is more 'random' in the sense that the magazine promotes consumer (non-ECI) lifestyle products including cars, shoes, music, accommodation, education, clothing, toiletries and alcohol. These consumer (non-ECI) adverts combine with the rest of the editorial content to create a lifestyle context, which is discussed in chapter four.

Miscellany

Wired is a specific, niche-marketed magazine, branded as such by the 'specialist' nature of the contents. Nevertheless, the 'unrelatedness' of some of its content – like the paid advertising – is a historical, generic feature of traditional magazines. The positioning of 'unrelated items' into a single medium was traditionally seen as a 'miscellaneous' collection of articles. Historically, the term miscellany was used as a generic name for publications like literary journals, promotional pamphlets and periodicals. Within the context of American publications, miscellany can also be used to describe the content and textual arrangement of the earliest American publications referred to as magazines. For example, Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991) describe the content of a typical mid 18th century American[16] magazine as:

> a mix of comments on manners, fashion, social life, religion, morals and politics – no long fiction however...instead of novels, or excepts from them, editors gave readers the kind of piece that would later evolve into the short story...[often]...called 'character sketches'...or 'fragments', brief sentimental stories (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 7).

This mix of editorial content remains a generic characteristic of contemporary magazines like *Wired*. The function of miscellaneous content remains the same over time: to inform, educate, advise, entertain, and to promote the magazine's own brand name and associated goods and services. One can also trace another similarity between the miscellaneous content type and function in early 18th and 19th century American magazines and contemporary magazines like *Wired*. The earliest American

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[16] The first American magazine published in Philadelphia by Andrew Bradford on February 13, 1741 was *The American Magazine, or A monthly view of the Political State of the British Colonies* (Greenop, 1947, p. 2). This magazine appeared "three days before the first issue of [Benjamin] Franklin's *General Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, for All the British Plantations in America*" (Greenop, 1947, p. 6; Janello & Jones, 1991, p. 12; Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 3).

'magazines' and *Wired* were/are both aimed at a specific readership 'community'. The difference is that early magazines were aimed at a small, geographically localised[17], educated, 'upmarket' readership, while *Wired* is aimed at a small, niche-marketed readership not bound by geography yet is similarly upmarket in terms of lifestyle, education and consumption patterns. This aspect of the *Wired* readership and 'community' is discussed more fully in chapters five and six.

Issue frequency

The frequency with which contemporary magazines are issued helps distinguish them from other print media like newspapers (less frequent than newspapers) and books (more frequent than books). Historically, this was not always the case as the quote below demonstrates:

> The line between magazines and newspapers was still blurred in the late eighteenth century in terms of content...both continued to devote much space to politics...and printed literary material...Magazines even published a respectable quantity of news, particularly calendars of current events such as births, deaths and marriages as well as such newspaper staples as meteorological tables and current prices (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 7).

This quote also demonstrates why magazines and newspapers were often perceived as similar at that time: they had similar issue frequency and overlapping contents. Distinctions between contemporary print materials not only relate to issue frequency and content, but also the material characteristics of the medium in terms of paperweight and trim size. Magazines occur less frequently than newspapers and are produced from more luxury materials, superior paper grades, high quality colour printing – and in theory at least – have better crafted writing. The extra preparation time for each issue also allows the illustrations and advertisements to be finished to a far higher standard than is the case in a newspaper. For example:

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[17] These early American magazines were originally produced in Philadelphia (1741) and Boston and later in New York from 1787 (Greenop, 1947, p. 8). Early production was expensive, and limited to a North Eastern seaboard area, which constituted a small, fragmented and localised market. Sales mainly relied on subscription via mail order (and would later include the newsstands). The magazines were, on a whole, aimed at a specialist rather than general readership.

> Magazines are designed to be kept much longer than newspapers. For this reason, most magazines are smaller [trim sizes] and are printed on better paper. Many have covers and a binding of staples or stitching [or glue]. In content, magazines have less concern with daily rapidly changing events than newspapers (*World Book*, 1990, p. 42).

> In form and periodicity, magazines are more durable than newsprint, less formidable than hardbound books, less precipitate than newspapers, yet more timely than books; and magazine content must be designed to attract and hold reader allegiance and to ensure either repeated purchases or continuing subscription (Schmidt, 1981, p. 138).

It can be concluded that one way to define 'a magazine' is by its material characteristics and issue frequency. Contemporary magazines now appear on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or bi-monthly schedule. *Wired* was initially issued as a bi-monthly (six times a year) in 1993. Towards the end of 1993 the magazine switched from being a bi-monthly issue to a monthly issue, beginning with the November 1993 issue, 1(5). This change was promoted on the issue cover which states "First Monthly Issue" and was followed up with an inside editorial announcement by the (then) *Wired* editor, Louis Rossetto, titled "Get Wired (Monthly)" (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12).

Rossetto's announcement/injunction is significant because *Wired* did not usually run editorial notices, and also because it describes and promotes the *modus operandi* of the *Wired* team in relation to potential advertisers, giving reasons as to why they should invest promotional resources in the magazine. The *Wired* editorial statement attributes the decision to go monthly to the magazine's 'overwhelming' successful track record, in terms of newsstand and subscription sales. Rossetto also outlines some of the contemporary characteristics of print magazine modes of production, including the aesthetic advantages of paper in terms of presentation of content, and the latest technology used to produce *Wired*. These include for example "a US$8million Heidelberg Harris six color press" (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12). *Wired*'s online services, and their link to the print magazine are also trumpeted (i.e. "making our hard-copy edition a gateway to our interactive services") as is the fast level of service and turn around time offered to subscribers and advertisers due to the magazine publisher's adoption of the latest communication technologies like e-mail (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12).

Wired's editorial statement announcing the changed issue frequency in the magazine's move to a monthly issue provides a product overview, a news update and a prospectus for present and prospective advertisers and subscribers. Further, the decision to 'go monthly' demonstrates to potential clients: success, stability and market savvy on behalf of the publisher, who has evidently managed the development phase well and can thus afford to produce and distribute the magazine on a monthly basis. Finally, *Wired*'s transition to a monthly publication positions the title as typical within the context of American magazines, as Schmidt points out – "As for frequency of publication, magazines have traditionally appeared monthly" (Schmidt, 1981, p. 138).

Material features

As well as switching from being bi-monthly to monthly, graphic and material changes introduced a changed look and feel to the monthly *Wired*, suggesting that the alterations in issue frequency can also affect the material form in terms of production choices relating to paper size, quality and weight. In *Wired*'s case, these alterations also include font type and paper thickness on the inner pages. The publisher may have had an idea as to an acceptable annual subscription rate, which was permissible for 6 issues but unsustainable at 12 issues, requiring a reduced specification for paper type and weight. This cost dynamic may also reflect the price of postage in relation to page numbers and weight, and the overall cost of the product.

For example, the *Wired* inside paper type, which is Multiweb matte, decreased from 50#[18] paper thickness (thus weight) in the last bi-monthly issue (September/October 1993), to 45# in the first monthly issue (November 1993). The magazine's trim size, which is 229mm x 273mm (9" x 10 3/4"), remained the same, as did *Wired*'s cover which is an 80# Lithofect Plus Dull cover. This cover paper type is a thick, high quality, 'matte' finish paper, which (along with the trim size, glued spine and retail price) positions the magazine as 'upmarket' in a style, similar

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[18] The symbol # indicates the thickness of the paper. A decrease in thickness is a decrease in paperweight.

to the many other 'glossy'[19] men's and women's magazines. The cover also, as McCracken points out, "reflect[s] the distribution requirements and the market relations of the magazine" (McCracken, 1993, p. 16). The most significant change in material quality is the decrease in *Wired*'s inside-page paperweight.

Throughout the history of magazines in America, the combination of paperweight and trim size (in relation to distribution costs) has been a problematic and expensive issue. Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991) point out how rises in postal costs (110 percent) and paper prices (7 percent) in the 1960s lead to a change in format, and decreases in the size of many established large circulation magazines. This included *Esquire, Saturday Evening Post, McCall's, Holiday* and *Boy's Life*, all of which switched to the smaller newsmagazine size used by publications like *Life, Time* and *Newsweek* (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 247).

US magazines are distributed both by traditional government postal services and by private carriers. The rise of the use of private delivery services by larger publishers was a direct response to dramatic increases in US postal rates during the 1960s and 1970s (Peterson 1972, Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991). By the 1980s however, costs were "comparable between the two systems; government and private" (Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991, p. 366). Ways of combating raised postal rates by reducing publishing costs include cutting the trim size, or magazine page numbers, or paperweight.

Advertising and issue frequency

When it went monthly, *Wired*'s trim size remained the same while the number of pages per issue increased 35 percent during the periods October 1993 to July 1996. This page increase translates to an average of 159 pages in 1994 to an average of 215 pages in 1995. An increase in magazine pages is predominantly driven by an increase in advertising, and the 'newshole' (the non-advertising content of a commercial print publication) is determined by the advertising sold. Increasing the issue frequency of the magazine is a sign of success in terms of attracting more/and

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[19] According to Hermes (1995, p. 6), "glossy" is a term used to signify an expensive look or type of paper. *Wired*'s publisher does attempt however, to distinguish his magazine from other glossy magazines via promotional material which emphasises that *Wired*'s paper is made from recyclable paper (http://www.wired.com/home/digital.html).

regular advertisers. During 1994 to 1995, the increase in pages represents an increase of 63% of paid advertising (not including inserts) and only an 18% increase in editorial content.

Table 1. *Wired* advertising ratios between 1994-1995

Wired total pages average	Editorial	Advertising	Ratio of editorial to paid advertising
1994: 159	97	63	1.68:1
1995: 215	114.5	100.5	1.14:1

Seasonality and advertising

Apart from the periodicity/frequency of issues, there are also degrees of temporality operating in print magazines; and links between the temporality and seasonality of issues. Rituals and capital meet in magazines, which also promote/revolve around the natural seasons. Issues carry themes which promote goods associated with summer, autumn, winter and spring. Global marketing, however, changes the general meaning of seasonality. Seasons are historically associated directly with the geographical and natural environment in relation to time. These days, seasonality is a commercial, symbolic temporal signifier of time and of cyclical consumption.

The symbolic, commercial themes associated with spring, autumn, winter and summer have a currency related to the fashionablity of the commodities promoted in the magazine's editorial and advertising narratives. This is a trait of 20th century magazines. For example, when referring to commercial American magazines of the 1920s, Tebbel and Zuckerman state: "Summer issues were skimpy, and Christmas issues overflowed with pages of advertising" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 146).

This quote indicates that some rituals associated with particular seasons/ times of the year carry greater symbolic and economic currency for magazine publishers. For example, the Christian religious ritual of Christmas merges with the

ideology of capital in December issues of magazines which are the largest in terms of paid advertising. *Wired* is typical in this respect regarding its Christmas issues. For example, a notable page increase began with the 1994 August magazine issue. This page increase per issue continues and peaks in the December 1994 Christmas issue. This pattern of steady page increases per month becomes consistent again in the September 1995 edition and (once again) peaks in the December 1995 Christmas edition. While this was the largest edition that year (comprising 129 pages of paid advertising and 131 pages of editorial), the November 1995 edition was the first and only edition between 1994 and 1995 where paid advertising outweighed editorial content, with 131.5 pages of advertising to 124.5 pages of editorial.

The rise in *Wired*'s page numbers during the 1994/1995 period is consequently attributable to an increase in volume of paid advertising, which rose 63% in conjunction with an 18% percent increase in editorial material. The increase in volume of paid advertising signifies *Wired*'s success as an advertising medium and indicates sharply rising profits. Further, as its advertising pages per issue rose during 1993 to 1996, so did its advertising rates. For example, towards the end of 1993 the rate was: [US]$7200 for a full colour page; [US]$13,680 for a full colour spread; [US] $5760 for a black and white full page; [US]$10950 for a black and white spread; while cover costs were $8300 (inside cover), third: $8000, fourth: $9000 (*Wired* general advertising rate, 1994, p. 1). In 1996 the rate had increased to (US) $9000 for a full colour page and $7200 for a black and white full page (Bowker, 1996, p. 1894). The symbiotic relationship between advertisers, clients and publisher signifies the development of confidence on behalf of advertising agency personnel in the potential of *Wired* as a suitable media investment and vehicle to promote their clients' goods and services.

Increase in editorial matter

Unlike the dramatic increase in advertising pages and rates, the amount of editorial matter (columns, departments and features) increased from 23.7 articles in 1994 to 29.6 articles by the end of 1995. This can be viewed as an increase from an average of 8.4 to 9 feature articles and a rise from 15.4 to 20.6 departments. The amount of feature articles hardly increased (8.4 to 9 features) but editorial matter in the form of departments grew. The new 1995 departments included – *Reality Check;*

Netiquette; *Scans*; *Follow the Money*; *Just Outta Beta* and *Addlinks*. It was the introduction of these new departments that accounted for the 18% increase in editorial material. Further, three of the new departments – *Addlinks*, *Just Outta Beta* and *Follow the Money* – represent the more overtly commercial genre of editorial departments from that year on. For example, *Addlinks* (while not listed as editorial content) provides a consumer contact list for advertised products in each issue, while *Just Outta Beta* provides ECI product reviews and prices. *Follow the Money* provided a virtual ECI stock portfolio, performance reviews for ECI companies, ECI stock investment advice, and commentary regarding ECI market trends. Even though these new departments appear as editorial material, and account for an increase in editorial content, the generic function of their content (i.e. company and/or product reviews and evaluations) also positions them as covert (and overt) forms of advertising for the ECI industry, commerce and lifestyle.

Editorial departments, columns and features that address ECI products, companies, people or brand names in positive terms also establish promotional relationships between the advertising and editorial content. McCracken (1993, p. 38) describes this dynamic as a form of "covert advertising", which is crucial in establishing the 'seamless' relationship between advertising and editorial content. She defines this relationship as:

> promotions disguised as editorial material or hidden in some other form so that they do not appear to be advertising. Covert advertising extends structural links to the purchased advertising, creating a harmonious, integrated whole. It can take specific forms such as the recommendation of brand name products in an editorial feature or be more generalized as in broad, thematic correlation of editorial content to advertising. Appearing in both verbal and non-verbal forms and often claiming only to present advice or information, covert advertising helps to position readers favorably toward the overt advertisements; the purchased ads appear to be natural extensions of the editorial material. In fact, however, editorial matter is often an extension of the overt advertisements, another crucial element of the reciprocal structural support that the two give each other (McCracken, 1993, pp. 38-39).

This type of symbiotic, promotional relationship – between editorial and advertising content – is not new[20]; rather, it is a generic feature of most modern, commercial magazines. Advertising in general (and the techniques of advertising) plays a specific role within magazine production and is a defining feature of the commercial magazine genre. Advertising sales departments are acknowledged arms of publishing companies, with more advertising sales executives employed than journalists, yet their work appears 'unofficially' throughout the magazine. Advertising is demarcated officially from editorial content through absence; through not being listed in the magazine's Table of Contents pages. Nonetheless, operating alongside editorial content, advertising helps create both the marketing context of the magazine and its editorial persona. Further, (like many contemporary women's magazines), *Wired* also acknowledges advertising through its inclusion of *Addlinks* at the back of the magazine, which implicitly signifies that the advertising is part of the reason that consumers purchase the magazine.

The magazine structure: textual market space

Traditionally the organisation of print information in magazines is linear, hierarchical and numerical with beginning points and ending points represented by the front and back covers respectively, and by page numbers. These features remain a characteristic of non-magazine print media, like novels. In commercial magazines like *Wired*, this linear and sequential format (in terms of how information is organised via layout and page numbers) operates within a context of economic value with the costs of information/design placement relating to space; size and positioning. Unlike commercial television, which is organised and economically valued around time, magazines organise and value their content in relation to material space.

Each issue of *Wired* therefore represents a material and textual market place, analogous to the early *grand magasins*. For advertisers, cost is based on combinations of size/dimension, positioning, colour, frequency and type of advertisement (i.e. display or classified). Textual space is economically valued by the

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[20] Advertising agencies in America began establishing themselves around the 1890s. Tebbel and Zuckerman further point out how, "By the 1920s agencies were orchestrating entire marketing strategies for clients and their products. This development proved to be critical in the evolution of the relationship between publishers and advertisers" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 145).

publisher according to page dimensions which are sold as full page, multi-page spreads, two-third, one-half (horizontal) and one-third pages (in relation to colour). Given that colour is more expensive than black and white, the most expensive textual spaces are combinations of both colour and page size and culminate in their ultimate expression with the four page colour spreads. The second most expensive textual spaces (valued according to position, size and full colour characteristics) are the inside and back covers.

Buying advertising in a print magazine is like purchasing a section of real estate, or a market stall, or a shop within an arcade. Using this analogy, we can see that paid advertising in a typical issue such as issue 3(10) (see appendix 1 for full breakdown) is given the prime real estate positioning in the magazine environment. Apart from the front cover, which advertises the magazine content, advertising occupies the primary areas of the magazine including the inside front cover, the inside and outside back covers and a majority of the right hand pages. It runs uninterrupted for in an initial block of eleven pages, comprising full colour double-page spreads. What this initial eleven-page block establishes is a continuum of advertising which monopolises large blocks of page space (particularly on the right-hand pages) throughout the magazine. For example:

Left Page		Right Page	
Left Page: Inside cover: 100% Ad: *Microsoft*		**Right Page** 1.100% Ad: *Microsoft*	
pg.2 100% Ad: *Chrysler Corporation*		pg.3 100% Ad: *Chrysler Corporation* (ends)	
pg.4 100% Ad: *Motorola*		pg.5 100% Ad: *Motorola,* (ends)	
pg.6 100% Ad: *Samsung*		pg.7 100% Ad: *Samsung* (ends)	
pg.8 100% Ad: *Microsoft*		pg.9 100% Ad: *Microsoft* (ends)	
pg.10 100% Ad: *Microsoft*		pg.11 100% Ad: *Microsoft* (ends)	
pg.12 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote		pg.13 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote cont.	
pg.14 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote		pg.15 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote cont.	
pg.16 100% Ed: Table of Contents page cont.		pg.17 100% Ed: Table of Contents page ends.	
pg.18 100% Ad: *Dewers Whiskey*		pg.19 100% Ad: *Dewers Whiskey* (ends)	
pg.20 100% Ad: *Discovery Channel Online*		pg.21 100% Ad: *Discovery Channel Online* (ends)	
pg.22 100% Ad: *CMP Publcations,Inc*		pg.23 100% Ad: *CMP Publcations,Inc* (ends)	
pg.24 75% Ad:*Virgin Records Inc*	25% Ed:Staff Dept	pg.25 100% Ad:*Airwalk*	
pg.26 100% Ad: *Fujitsu*		pg.27 100% Ad: *Fujitsu* (ends)	
pg.28 75% Ad: *RAI Corpl*	25% Ed: Wired Ltd	pg.29 100% Ad: *Cathay Pacific*	
pg.30 100% Ed:Dept:Rants and Raves		pg.31 100% Ad: *Levi Strauss &Co*	
pg.32 100% Ad: *Radius*		pg.33 100% Ad: *Radius* (ends)	
pg.34 100% Ed:Dept:Rants and Raves (ends)		pg.35 100% Ad: *Chrysler Corporation*	
pg.36 100% Ad: *Media 100*		pg.37 100% Ad: *Media 100* (ends)	
pg.38 100% Ad: *Nortel*		pg.39 100% Ed:Dept:Electric Word	
pg.40 100% Ed:Dept:Electric Word		pg.41 100% Ed:Dept:Electric Word (cont.)	
pg.42 100% Ad: *Nintendo*		pg.43 100% Ad: Nintendo (ends)	
pg.44 100% Ed:Dept:Electric Word		pg.45 100% Ed:Dept:Electric Word (cont.)	
pg.46 100% Ed:Dept:Electric Word (ends)		pg.47 100% Ad: *Motorola*	
pg.48 100% Ad: *USRobotics*		pg.49 100% Ad: *USRobotics* (ends)	
pg.50 100% Ad: *Wollongong*		pg.51 100% Ed:Dept:Scans (cont.)	
pg.52 100% Ad: *AT&T*		pg.53 100% Ad: *AT&T* (ends)	
pg.54 100% Ed:Dept:Scans (cont)		pg.55 100% Ad: *Nike*	
pg.56 100% Ed:Dept:Scans (cont)		pg.57 100% Ad: *Joe Boxer*	
pg.58 100% Ed:Dept:Scans (ends)		pg.59 100% Ad: *The Columbia House Company*	
pg.60 100% Ad:*Touche Touch Pad*		pg.61 100% Ed:Dept:Fetish (cont.)	
pg.62 100% Ad: *Microsoft*		pg.63 100% Ad: *Microsoft* (ends)	
pg.64 100% Ed:Dept:Fetish (cont.)		pg.65 100% Ad: *Budweiser*	
pg.66 100% Ed:Dept:Fetish (ends)		pg.67 100% Ad: *l.aEyeworks*	
pg.68 100% Ed:Dept:Reality Check		pg.69 100% Ad: *VLSI Technology, Inc*	
pg.70 100% Ed:Dept:Raw Data		pg.71 100% Ad: *ITC@55 Broad*	
pg.72 100% Ed:Dept:Geek Page		pg.73 100% Ad: *Toshiba America Consumer Products,Inc*	
pg.74 100% Ed:Dept:Follow the Money		pg.75 100% Ad: *Fujitsu*	
pg.76 100% Ed:Dept:Deductible Junkets		pg.77 100% Ad: *Americas TELECOM 96,ITU*	
pg.78 100% Ed:Dept:Updata		pg.79 100% Ad: *Xircom,Inc*	
pg.80 100% Ed:Dept:Cyber Rights Now		pg.81 100% Ad: *Burn:cycle:- Philips*	
pg.82 100% Ed:Column:Electrosphere 1.		pg.83 100% Ad: *SkyTel*	
pg.84 100% Ed:Column:Electrosphere 1.(cont.)		pg.85 100% Ad: *Hush Puppies*	

Figure 3.2. *Wired* 3(10) editorial and advertising layout up to page 85. The total issue comprises 220 pages (plus the back inside cover and back cover). Shaded areas represent paid advertising accounts.

This advertising layout is typical of most *Wired* issues. The use of the right page is significant. Book chapters traditionally start at the right hand page, since it is the right-hand page that is visible when 'thumbing through' the publication. In placing advertising on the right-hand pages, and editorial on the left, the magazine signals subtly that advertising has pride of place.

This continuum of paid advertising space ends with the first editorial insert, comprising two, double-page, four-colour editorial spreads. This regular four-page

spread is referred to subsequently as a 'visual quote' (see figure 3.3). The visual quote acts as the lead-in for both the Table of Contents pages and the main editorial feature story which is advertised on the cover and will appear later in the editorial features section.
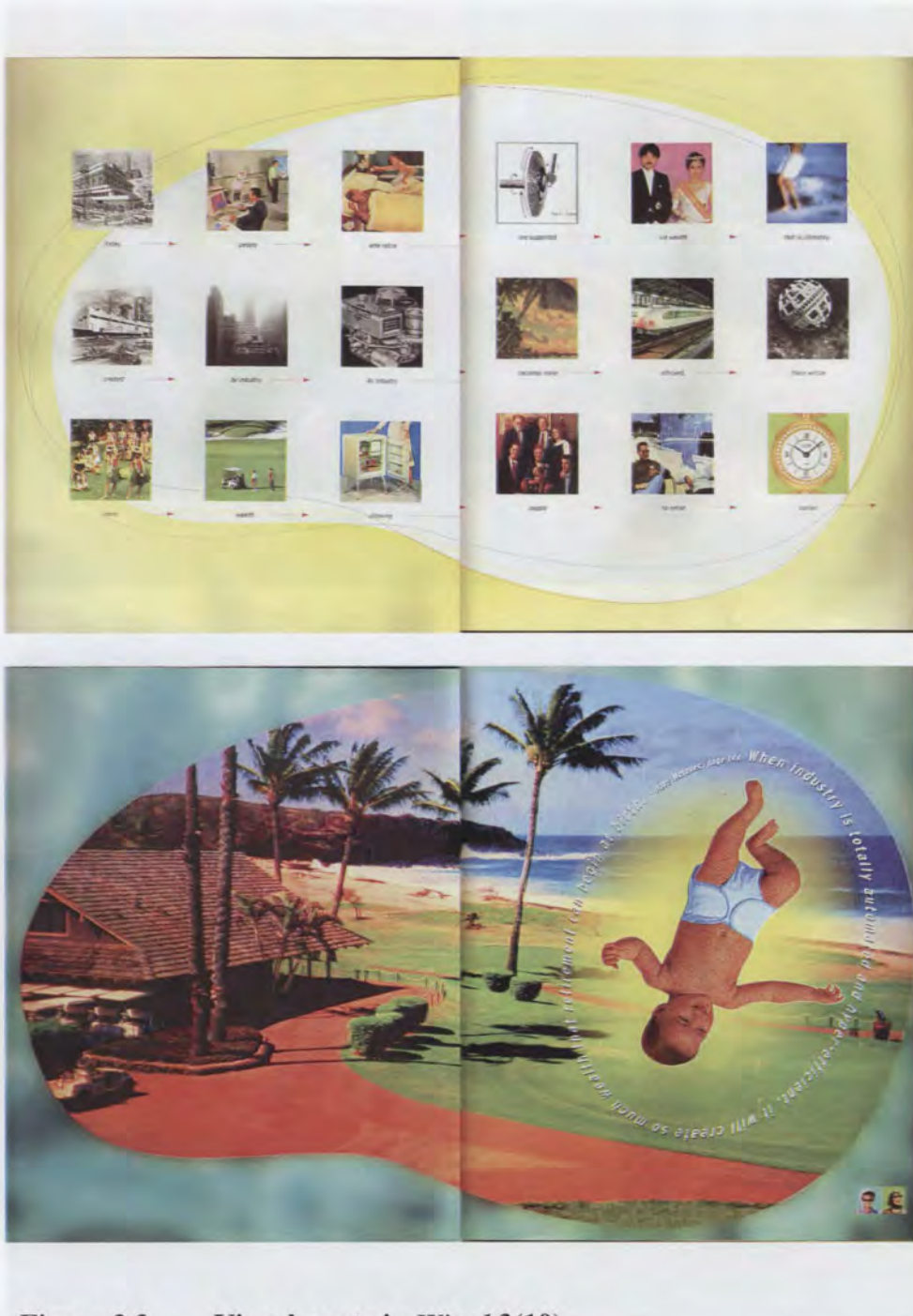
Figure 3.3.   Visual quote in *Wired* 3(10)

To suggest that editorial visual quote 'disrupts' the initial flow of advertising in (every edition of) *Wired* is arguable, because aesthetically this editorial spread is

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similar in terms of mode of address and design to the advertising spreads that precede it. An exemplary example of this synergetic design process appears in issue 4(6) and begins with the front cover (see figures 3.4 - 3.12, below).

Figure 3.4. *Wired* **4(6) front cover spread**

Figure 3.5. **Advertisement. Inside front cover and page 1 in *Wired* 4(6).**

Figure 3.6. Advertisement. Pages 2 & 3 in *Wired* 4(6).

Figure 3.7. Advertisement. Pages 4 & 5 in *Wired* 4(6).

Figure 3.8. Advertisement. Pages 6 & 7 in *Wired* 4(6).

Figure 3.9. Advertisement. Pages 8 & 9 in *Wired* 4(6).
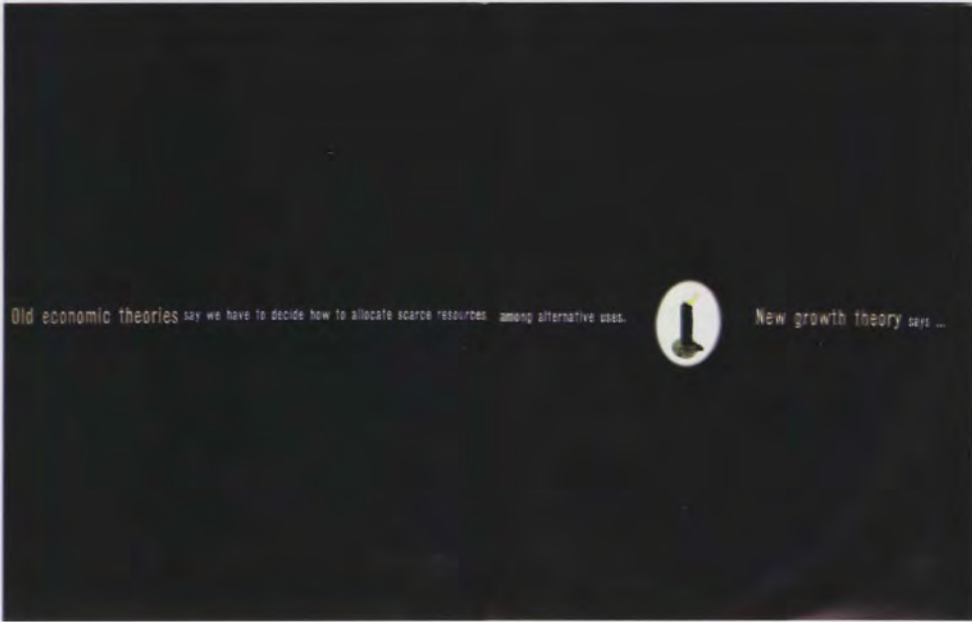
Figure 3.10. *Wired* editorial lead-in: the visual quote. Pages 10 & 11 in *Wired* 4(6).
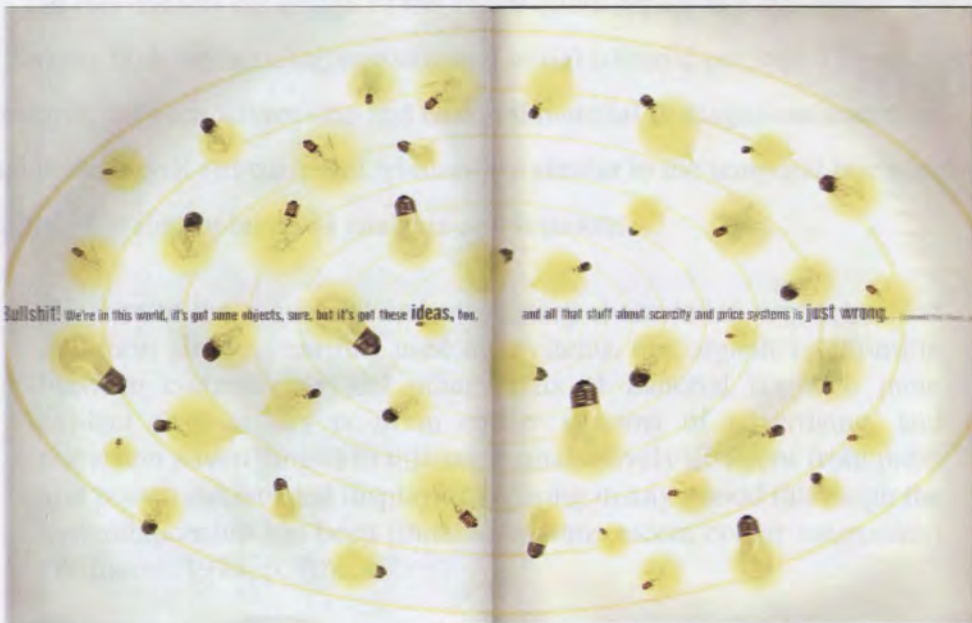
Figure 3.11. Editorial lead-in, the *Wired* visual quote continued. Pages 12 & 13 in *Wired* 4(6)

Figure 3.12. The *Wired* Table of Contents. Pages 14 & 15 in *Wired* 4(6)

In this context the design of the visual quote serves as a synergetic 'relay text' linking both the initial advertising and initial editorial content. The synergetic relationship between advertising and editorial material in magazines constitutes a spatial promotional structure and relationship similar to the temporal one which Williams identifies in his 1974 analysis of television:

> Because of the sequential and integrating characteristics of television in almost all of its existing uses and systems, this organic relationship between commercials and other kinds of material is much more evident than at any point in earlier systems of advertising, and television advertising is in this sense qualitatively different from press and poster and isolated display advertising in any period (although the new relationship has been imitated in some recent colour magazines) (Williams, 1974, p. 70).

Given that Williams' analysis dates from 1974, his comments have come to fruition in contemporary magazines like *Wired*. *Wired* exhibits more than an 'organic relationship' between advertising and editorial content. For example, (even though the reader may spend longer at the Table of Contents pages) the layout and colour-coordinated design of the editorial lead-in (visual quote) and the Table of Contents pages are stylistically similar to the advertising which precedes it. Sometimes the only distinguishing factor between the two is the placement of brand names, which

signify the advertising spreads. The promotion of the magazine's editorial contents is seamlessly integrated with the promotion of ECI lifestyle and consumer goods.

For example, apart from the lead-in visual quote, the Table of Contents pages (together comprising six full-colour pages) and *Wired* publishing details (comprising two, third-page columns of text), advertising dominates the page space for the first thirty pages: or up to a quarter of issue 3(10). This overt promotional run ends with the first editorial department, *Rants & Raves*. The size and type of each advertisement in relation to their near-uninterrupted positioning at the front of the magazine, performs a promotional function for the editorial contents and the other advertisements which follow. This is reminiscent of the way ads function as trailers in cinema and TV formats. Any disruption caused to the continuum of advertising by editorial is rectified by the magazine's synergetic design, which sutures both the advertising and editorial copy into a harmonious whole, meaning that neither the advertising nor the editorial content interrupt each other.

As a rule, paid advertising and editorial are positioned in alternating blocks (see appendix 1). There is a balance achieved in this distribution with editorial running predominately on the left and advertising predominating on the right – (although both do run on both pages at times). The editorial departments and columns usually begin and are positioned on the left-hand pages. The more important feature stories (which are usually four-colour spreads) appear in the third quarter of the magazine and begin on the right page. Features comprise the only large block of editorial running in an uninterrupted sequence of approximately 30 pages and this constitutes the features well (Abrahamson, 1996). The term 'features well' can signify both 'a black hole' – in terms of an absence of advertising in this area, and the 'well spring' of ideas, comments and content from which readers/consumers can draw inspiration.

In the context of the entire magazine, editorial and advertising are generally given equivalent page space. Both adhere to the same layout and design formats in terms of size, colour and positioning (four colour, two colour, black and white, full, half, two third and one third page dimensions and spreads). What the schematic representation of issue 3(10) shows (see appendix 1) is that advertising is given the most desirable page space. It therefore has a great influence upon the layout and

format of the magazine, and constitutes a major and integral part of the magazine's persona.

Further, the diagram of advertising/editorial content for issue 3(10) also demonstrates that advertising continues its spatial reach deep into the body of the magazine. In doing this, advertising has moved beyond the traditional space demarcated for it in early American magazines. For example, when advertising first began to appear as a constitutive element in commercial printing it was originally positioned at the back of the magazine. As advertising in magazines became a standard economic and cultural practice, advertisers gained more control over magazine spaces with some positions deemed more important than others[21]. Peterson (1972) points out how advertisers in the early 20th century favored spatial positions such as:

> pages 1, 3, 5; the page facing the first page of editorial copy; the first page following the body of editorial matter; and so on. The Campbells Soup Company for so many years bought the first right hand-page after the body of editorial matter that the page became known in magazine and advertising offices as the 'Campbells' Soup position' (Peterson, 1972, p. 35).

Advertisers pay for what they consider to be the best sales locations within their budget. In issue 3(10), the prime real estate positions for advertisers are the covers, the right-hand pages, the first two quarters and the last quarter of the magazine. Internet advertising continues this rule of thumb regarding prime advertising positions since it is usually the first "ten or twenty pages" (Madsen, 1996, p. 208) of a website that carry the most advertising.

Table of Contents

Following the initial block of display advertising in *Wired*, the first editorial section is the 'visual quote' and the Table of Contents pages. This is significant in terms of constructing a prime advertising position because the Table of Contents pages signify a break in the flow of advertising, and a change in the nature and pace

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[21] Advertisers were aware of their power and could demand strategic positions within the magazine's pages, which in turn lead to a standardisation of the page size and the volume of many commercial magazines. It also influenced the appearance of magazines in terms of design and colour (Peterson 1972, Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991).

of reader consumption. The Table of Contents pages function as a stopping point for the reader, a structured pause for thought. They represent, for the reader, a regular feature, a 'place', the point of orientation and navigation. This device is a derivative of 'the index', which Ong describes as a "shortened form of the original *index locorum* or *index locorum communium*, 'index of places' or 'index of common places'" (Ong, 1982, p. 125). The magazine's Table of Contents pages retain this notion and function of being a 'common' textual place and space where readers can make decisions regarding how they will read the text. Significantly more time is usually spent reading this double page Table of Contents than is the case with the advertisements which precede it.

As a navigational device, *Wired*'s Table of Contents pages perform a similar function to television schedules and newspaper indexes in terms of orientating the reader within the text. They signify however, a more rigid and less miscellaneous structure than a newspaper index. The structure demarcates via inclusion and exclusion official and unofficial editorial content. It lists, numbers, and spatially positions every editorial column, department and feature – in essence every 'official' editorial item. What is not listed is the publication's unofficial editorial information such as, in-house publication material, paid advertising and *Addlinks*. Even though the advertising content balances the editorial content, the *Wired* Table of Contents pages construct its editorial content as the primary/only content of the magazine. Thus the Table of Contents pages establishes an 'official' information hierarchy through the listing of what comprises the 'contents' of every issue. The Table of Contents list includes only primary editorial matter, leaving advertising and editorial information regarding publishing and advertiser contact details as 'unofficial' and as non-content.

Abrahamson states: "One useful way to visualize the 'editorial structure' of any publication is to simply think of its Table of Contents page" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 88). *Wired*'s editorial columns and departments are listed on the left side of the Table of Contents pages and editorial features are listed on the right side of the Table of Contents pages. This listing represents the order in which they are laid out in the magazine and an ordering of importance. Features are signified as 'more important' because they are given the right hand page (and have images/graphics attached to them) while columns and departments are plain text and positioned together on the

left page. On the Table of Contents pages, different editorial categories are separated and demarcated via graphics, icons and typography (see figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13.   Table of Contents in *Wired* 3(10).

The use of page numbers in the Table of Contents suggests that articles will follow in an ordered linear progression. They signify the hierarchical traditions of print in terms of (locating stories via) page numbers. Generally, page numbers represent one of the devices of manuscript and print culture where 'places' are "physically and visibly localised" as Ong (1982, p. 125) points out:

> the indexer of 400 years ago simply noted on what pages in the text one or another *locus* was exploited, listing there the locus and the corresponding pages in the *index locorum*. The *loci* had originally been thought of as, vaguely, 'places' in the mind where ideas were stored. In the printed book, these vague psychic 'places' became quite physically and visibly localized (Ong, 1982, p. 125).

In the case of modern print media, page numbers construct place and space as linear. All magazines, including *Wired*, use sequential page numbering to construct the practice of linear textual navigation. They operate as a navigational device for print magazines, unlike hypertext, which Deibert (1997) cites as the navigational device for computer-mediated reading. In conjunction with the Table of Contents

pages, page numbers are an integral modernist navigational device for contemporary, postmodern[22] magazines like *Wired* and they are also a marker for differentiating advertising and editorial copy, which might otherwise be hard to distinguish. As a modern feature applied in postmodern contexts, page numbers originally differentiated the book from the (earlier) scroll. These days, as web pages scroll down, the divisions are lost, blurred and contradicted in the new locus of cyberspace.

The characteristics of modern print culture implicit in magazines include, the hierarchical categorisation and sequential organisation of editorial information, which is constructed and located via devices like page numbers, Table of Contents pages and indexes. These strategies compartmentalise and contextualise the magazine's 'official' contents, relegating advertising to 'otherness'.

Flow

There is nonetheless a contradiction between the linearity of the text, represented (for example) in the Table of Contents pages and the page numbers, and the fragmented nature of the text itself in the way the contents (adverts and editorial) are structured throughout the magazine. For example the linear, numerical and hierarchical order of editorial departments, columns and features signified by the Table of Contents pages is immediately contradicted by the mosaic layout encountered when one turns the *Wired* page.

A specific example of this contradiction between narrative linearity and visual discontinuity is the breaking up of the editorial feature story. This usually runs uninterrupted for a certain number of pages before the reader is informed that what is being read has ended temporarily, and will be continued on a separate page in another area of the magazine: usually towards or within the final third of the magazine. This fragmented structuring of feature stories is typical in *Wired* and many other contemporary magazines, and may represent a carry-over from newspapers where only motivated readers ever finish a story.

Such a discontinuous layout provides constant entry and exit points for the reader in its combination of broken and unbroken narratives. It also includes a sense of 'capturing' the reader and the reader's time. Readers need to make easy progress

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[22] The postmodern nature of *Wired* is addressed in chapter four.

through a story to the point where their motivation to continue reading is assured, and the remaining matter can be used to fill less accessible 'space' towards the end of the magazine.

In this 'capture' of the reader, the editorial text works in parallel with the seduction of the advertising spreads. The reader is enticed with promises of easy layout and attractive presentation but full consumption involves movement to a different structure of exchange. The power relationships change over the length of a story with the reader being welcomed into the narrative and held to the point of interest and enthusiasm. The power of the reader's interest is then used to subjugate the reader – via techniques of editorial layout – until the reader (now reduced in power) submits to the magazine's convenience regarding the placement of tail-end information which coincides with the placement of the less visually exciting classified advertising. As the reader turns the page, searching for the remnant of the feature, so they are seduced into a journey through a maze of lower budget advertising.

Wozencroft (1988) believes the magazine "mirrors city life, always moving from one point into the next through different systems of information" (Wozencroft, 1988, p. 94). Specific examples of this phenomenon are the editorial departments *Electric Word* and *Just Outta Beta*. Information here comprises a horizontal and vertical mosaic layout of 'information segments' which run over a four or five page spread (see figures 3.14, 3.15 & 3.16).

Figure 3.14. *Just Outta Beta* editorial spread in *Wired* 3(12).

Figure 3.15. *Electric Word* editorial spread in *Wired* 4(3).

Figure 3.16.   *Electric Word* editorial spread in *Wired* 1(6).

The design effect quotes both print, televisual and hypermediated forms. Dery (1999) defines *Electric Word* as:

> An eight-page barrage of newsbriefs and product reports whose layout crosses the hard edge geometry of Bauhaus design with stroboscopic editing and in-your-face camerawork of MTV: images inset in colored rectangles float over blocks of prose, headlines chop articles in half, and a gossip column set in type so small and light it can only be read with a jeweler's eyepiece slices horizontally across the entire section (Dery, 1999, p. 1).

From Dery's perspective, *Electric Word* invites comparison with the Bauhaus *Quarterly* journals of the late 1920's which Droste (1990) saw as introducing "advertising and design initiatives [that] can today be viewed as exercises in 'image' and 'public relations'" (1990, p. 139). Specifically, the *Electric Word* layout (and *Wired*'s format generally) represents a site that positions the consumer as reader, spectator and "sensualist" (Darley, 2000, p. 169). Part of this multi-faceted construction of the reader are the notions of pleasure and play displayed in departments like *Electric Word* and *Net Surf*. The construction of spectator/sensualist questions the practice of linear reading. As *Wired* co-creative designer, John Plunkett, states "we've deliberately pushed as hard as we could against the conventional linear presentation of information" (Plunkett cited in Dery, 1999, p. 1).

This breaking with convention however, is constructed fantastically, subject as it is to a print format symbolising how print-mediated culture is being contested by electronic, postmodern, and computer-mediated culture – particularly in terms of (the future of) textual navigation.

Wired is one of a number of contemporary magazines[23] and television programs[24] that construct via design a range of vertical and horizontal flows of information. This design device challenges linear narrative structures and linear reading practices. The magazine's design and layout presents the reader with an environment where "Simultaneities intervene, extending our point of view outward in an infinite number of lines, complicating the temporal flow of meaning" (Soja, 1994, p. 138). In the case of *Wired*, its 'temporal flow of meaning' is disrupted by a complicated spatial arrangement of information, which is often not linear, but mosaic. Most magazines, including *Wired*, construct discursive environments with regards to meaning. As indicated earlier, the discursive environment of the commercial magazine has some similarities with television. For example, when Andy Warhol discussed the nature of American television with Roman Polanski, he observed that:

> Watching for a whole day is like watching one movie – a one-day-movie. Because you see News, and you see Comedy, and you see everything. And it's so great. And the commercials are just as beautiful and they're...a breather. It makes it even more exciting (Warhol, 1989, p. 90).

In this sense, the discursive textuality of the *Wired* print magazine environment is similar to television. Taken as a whole, 'you see everything'. However, as Warhol (1989) points out, television ads are 'breathers'. They need not be constructed as irrelevant, or interruptions. They are often referred to as ad 'breaks' in that they signify valid exit and entry points for the consumer. As McCracken (1993) comments, "Television ad breaks present moments when people get up, sometimes to do other things, yet rarely does this occur with magazines" (1993, p. 38). Unlike television advertising however, magazine advertising does not displace

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[23] This includes, *The Face, i-D, 21.C, Mondo 2000, World Art* and *Internet Australiasia*, to name but a few.

[24] *The Times* was an early 1990s Australian television show that integrated a 'tele-text' segment into its format, which ran at the bottom of the screen, under the images. Also precursory to this media format of vertical and horizontal information flows are television 'news flashes'.

the reading process, but is part of it (unless one is engrossed in a particular story). In magazine reading the reader has the power to concentrate attention in one space or another making exposure to advertising feel voluntary. Furthermore, McCracken (1993) argues that "the flow or continuum between ads and editorial material in women's magazines is more profound than that of television" (McCracken, 1993, p. 38). Her position was made in response to Williams' (1974) analysis of television programming where he stated:

> In all developed broadcasting systems the characteristic organisation, and therefore the characteristic experience, is one of sequence or flow. This phenomenon, of planned flow, is then perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form. In all communication systems before broadcasting the essential items were discrete. A book or a pamphlet were taken and read as a specific item. Meetings occurred at a particular date and place. A play was performed in a particular theatre at a set hour. The difference in broadcasting is not that these events, or events resembling them, are available inside the home, but by the operation of a switch. It is the real programme that is offered as a *sequence* or set of alternative sequences of these and other similar events, which are then available in a single dimension and in a single operation (Williams, 1974, p. 87).

The process of uninterrupted 'flow' that McCracken identifies in women's magazines as eliding between adverts and editorial is also exhibited in *Wired*, and is an integral characteristic of the commercial magazine form. Such a situation is partially due to the magazine's "homologous structuration [which like women's magazines] links ads and editorial material...so that ads seem a natural and logical extension of the editorial content " (McCracken, 1993, p. 38). Linked into *Wired*'s process of 'homologous structuration' is design, which creates colour-coordination and aesthetic similarities between editorial and advertising content, as in the case of the visual quote. Combined with this are the material characteristics of print magazines which allow for a more covert "organic relationship" (McCracken, 1993, p. 38) between advertising and editorial content. Unlike television, which is contextualised in relation to time, magazines fix advertising and editorial and rigidly contextualise these within a discrete material space.

Formula

Like most successful contemporary magazines, *Wired* is formula driven. Due to its issue frequency, *Wired* needs to sell itself to both established and new readers and advertisers, "...month after month at the newsstand and at subscription renewal time" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 57). Capturing and maintaining reader interest every month relies on the *Wired* editorial team creating a successful formula which balances the thrill of the 'new' with the pleasure of recognition.

The 1960s specialist magazine paid great attention to creating just such a successful and individuated formula. Editorial content was organised around a production rhythm based on repetition and variation. Abrahamson (1996) describes the process whereby:

> Most publishers and editors believed the most effective way to organize the editorial content of their magazines was a blend of the *expected* (that which would remain constant and could be looked forward to by readers) and the *unexpected* (that which extended the readers' knowledge or exceeded their expectations) (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 57).

Wired's design (discussed in chapter four) is one example of the application and evolution of this formula of the expected and unexpected outlined by Abrahamson (1996). For example, judging by *Wired*'s readers' letters, and industry awards won, the magazine design exceeded reader and industry expectations while building a constant anticipation in the reader of the same standard and type of design together with continuing innovation. Every issue of *Wired* follows a repetitive format in terms of the layout, inclusion and positioning of the Table of Contents pages, and the inclusion of regular columns, departments, feature articles and advertising. Variation occurs cosmetically with every new cover, the cover design, and via content in terms of new subject matter appearing in editorial columns, departments, features and advertising.

Retrospectively, the evolution of the 1960s formula for special interest magazines occurs with regards to the fluidity of *Wired*'s inclusions and exclusions – at times – of new and old editorial departments. This fluidity can also, however, be seen as a form of repetition and variation for the regular *Wired* reader. Regular readers become familiar both with recurrent departments, and also with *Wired*'s

practice of including 'one off' or experimental departments, which may appear in one or two issues only (e.g. *Netiquette*). For example, the number and names of *Wired* editorial departments alter from issue to issue. Some staple departments appear regularly, and contain new information and stories every month. A small number of departments appear only in alternate issues (e.g. *Cyber Rights Now*, *Raw Data*).

Covers

This formula of repetition and variation in terms of content, themes, new and regular contributors and design is encapsulated in the *Wired* cover. The brand name *Wired* remains constant and familiar, yet each month it appears on a 'new' cover (see figures 3.17 - 3.20).
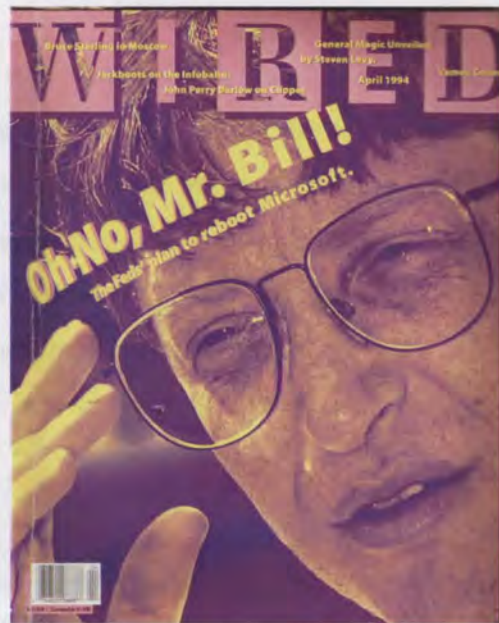
Figure 3.17. *Wired* 1(6).   **Figure 3.18.** *Wired* 2(4).
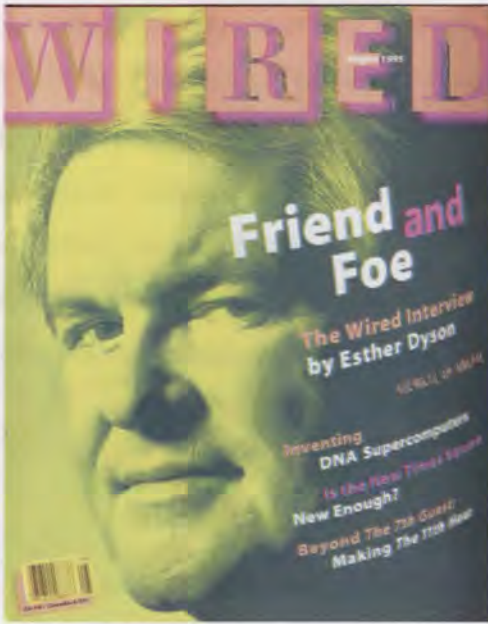
Figure 3.19. *Wired* 3(8).   **Figure 3.20.** *Wired* 4(2).

This magazine practice of combining a new image with the established title was already over a century old when *Wired* was started. Changing the cover image of a magazine with each new issue began in America in 1883 when the publishers of *The Inland Printer* created new covers for every edition, establishing what is now regarded as a contemporary trend and standard practice (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 71). Prior to this, covers of early 19th century magazines showed little individuality and did not distinguish themselves from their rivals as they do today. Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991) state:

> Magazine covers were usually gray, buff or brown and carried no pictures, with one exception. The highly popular story paper magazines, small folios, splashed sensational woodcuts on their front pages – what would later become called a self-cover. These scenes presaged the pulp magazine covers of a later era – locomotives plunging off tracks, duelists, firemen rescuing people from burning buildings, and women threatened by obviously villainous men. The story papers were a striking contrast to the standard magazines on the stands (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 60).

By the 1890s, the cover of the magazine became the key visual signifier of difference and a characteristic feature of the magazine form. Its function was to act as an advertisement for the magazine itself, and to establish the identity of the magazine (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 71). Over a century later, front covers of

contemporary magazines still perform the same promotional functions. In the case of *Wired*, the front cover functions as the most important, initial advertisement for the magazine, and a material marketing tool both for the publisher and for their advertising clients. The cover design, mode of address and promoted contents attracts advertisers and readers to invest in the magazine. Specifically, the front cover advertises the magazine and its feature stories. A description of this function is outlined by Abrahamson (1996):

> With few exceptions the first or 'lead' feature was also the subject highlighted on that particular issue's cover. Additional features, however, were likely to be mentioned in the secondary headlines (called 'coverlines' or 'coverblurbs') on the cover (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 61).

With this practice, the cover signifies the magazine as both a promotional agent and a content provider. It also establishes a marketing context through the development and communication of the magazine's persona.

Magazine persona

The cover, in distinguishing "one magazine from another" (McCracken, 1993, p. 19) also creates a distinct identity for the magazine: this is known as the 'magazine persona'. Paid advertising and the three editorial sections (columns, departments and features) combine to create the persona of all commercial magazines – including *Wired*. The magazine persona is constructed and projected through its content, and through the style in which this content is organised and presented. Together these elements constitute an "aspirational identity" (Schiffman et al, 1997, p. 314) for the readership; an image of themselves as consumers of their vibrant, exciting future-driven lives, as imagined through *Wired*. The magazine persona (McCracken, 1993, p. 43) constructs (and is constructed for) a readership which is also an attractive target market for advertisers. As McCracken comments: "The infrastructural foundation of a magazine's special image is...linked to consumer spending" (McCracken, 1993, p. 43). The magazine persona is designed to attract both the reader and the advertiser.

This contemporary view of the magazine persona highlights the commercial imperative of magazines. It presents a broader view than suggested in Abrahamson's

(1996) reference to the editorial persona of 1960s specialist magazines, which he describes only within the context of editorial content:

> One of the unique aspects of the magazine form itself was that most magazines possessed individual editorial personalities. Often termed the 'editorial persona', it was the voice through which the publication spoke to its readers, and set the tone for the entire editorial contents. Unlike that of a typical newspaper, the persona of a given magazine could be characterised as if it were a single individual. In most cases, this individual voice or persona represented a set of values and attitudes with which the magazine's intended readership could expect to sympathize. Most special-interest magazines sought to create distinct personas: clear, unmistakable, easily identifiable (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 56).

Abrahamson's 'persona' only implicitly addresses the influence of advertising in constructing the 'voice' of the magazine. This perception may result from advertising being less overt or pervasive in the 1960s specialist magazine than in *Wired*. Abrahamson goes on to say that while the 1960s special interest magazine created an individual identity to distinguish each from the other, the personas all "shared a number of characteristics" (1996, p. 56). These included: "enthusiasm for subject matter...motivation...advice, assistance, instruction, accessibility...mixed levels of complexity...authority...knowledge and experience" (Abrahamson, 1996, pp. 56-57).

Abrahamson's comment that a magazine persona speaks with an individual 'voice', however, differentiates the 1960s magazine persona from the *Wired* persona. Like many other commercial magazines, *Wired* comprises multiple (and at times contradictory) 'voices' which present different ideological viewpoints. For example, there are computer-hacking stories alongside corporate success stories – all of which are juxtaposed with "transnational corporation (TNC)" (Bryan, 1994, p. 145) ECI advertisements. This exactly parallels many contemporary women's magazines (e.g. *Cosmopolitan, She, B*) which construct conflicting ideologies of femininity; or *Rolling Stone* which promotes both 'alterna-youth' bands and corporate music packages like *Bardot*. Thus, commercial magazines like *Wired* can be viewed as contradictory texts that rely on a formula of repetition and variation and appeal to both conventional and subversive reading positions.

Nevertheless, the overarching narrative that links most contemporary magazines (including *Wired*, *She* and *Rolling Stone*) is the commercial imperative. The acquisitive dimension to the magazine persona represents the strongest 'voice' of commercial magazines and can be described as a magazine's promotional "master narrative" (McCracken, 1993, p. 2). This element of the magazine voice addresses readers as consumers, while promoting consumer consumption of both the magazine and the goods and services discussed and advertised within it.

While *Wired* contains 'contradictory voices' of techno-libertarianism and ECI domination, the editorial and advertising content construct a synergetic, promotional master narrative regarding ECI goods and services (and some specific non-ECI, luxury consumer goods and services). *Wired*'s promotional master narrative sells the discourse of consumption formulated and repackaged as a particular upmarket techno-corporate lifestyle which promotes a desire to consume new communication technologies. This feature of the magazine is discussed specifically in chapter seven.

Conclusion: magazine environment and evolution

Print magazines historically demonstrate a complex relationship between form, structure and media environment. For example, magazines (like newspapers), are constructed as traditional and modernist mass media forms (Peterson, 1972). This construction may relate to the magazine's historical and tactile associations with print, ink and paper; and the earlier mode of mechanical production and reproduction. These features, along with Table of Contents pages and page numbers, anchor them conceptually and experientially as 'traditional' modern media forms.

Nonetheless *Wired*, like many other contemporary media forms, is produced online using state of the art digital technology. It represents a contemporary example of hypermediated, media production. Given the developments in print (and paper) production processes over the past century (from mechanical, to electronic, to digital), the magazine form has altered in terms of appearance, style and layout. It has been demonstrated, nonetheless, that a contemporary specialist lifestyle magazine such as *Wired* still shares consistent textual and editorial characteristics with earlier print magazines.

The sharing of common characteristics between *Wired* and 1960s special interest magazines can be explained through a 'medium as environment' metaphor. *Wired*'s 'biology' denotes a material, physical object comprised of covers, paper and ink. As a 'media environment', every issue is discrete and concrete rather than 'networked' and indeterminate. *Wired*'s discrete, material form means that space is limited, therefore economic value is based on page space. This is a historical feature of magazines, and is also demonstrated by *Wired*. *Wired*, in this context, is conventional not revolutionary.

A further similarity between *Wired* and its historical predecessors is the contradictory 'environment' of every issue from the perspective of textual form. As discussed in this chapter, the editorial content of *Wired* is structured in a numerical, linear fashion as evidenced by its Table of Contents. Yet *Wired*'s editorial content is laid out throughout the magazine in a way that is both linear and discontinuous. The editorial 'structure' signified by the Table of Contents belies the fragmented experience of consuming *Wired*. The editorial content is juxtaposed with paid advertisements and, as the magazine moves towards the final quarter, these elements disintegrate into discontinuous commentary and narrative.

The experience of reading/consuming *Wired*'s editorial text is analogous to wandering through a shopping centre or department store – there is no rigid beginning, middle or end to the process of consumption. The multitude of compartments means one can pick up a magazine and read discrete 'bits' at any point of the text. This feature is characteristic of magazines, including *Wired*, which is why they were often called 'miscellanies'. Finally, *Wired* exhibits historical and contemporary characteristics of magazines in terms of material form, editorial structure, issue frequency and formula-driven contents based on a pattern of repetition and variation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Design as a promotional device

> Today's information and communication machines do not merely
> convey representational contents, but also contribute to the fabrication
> of new assemblages of enunciation, individual and collective
> (Guattari, 1992, p. 18).

> *The Face* had two narratives, the writing and the design (Brody cited
> in Wozencroft, 1988, p. 96).

Commercial magazine design performs a promotional function at a material,
symbolic, creative, and textual level. Commercial design (like music) also creates
and evokes 'feeling'; its form articulates ideas in an ephemeral, visual way while
creating a context for the content or even, as typographer Neville Brody (cited
above) argues, 'the writing'.

Design is metaphorically an environment. This chapter analyses these
features of *Wired* magazine by examining its design in relation to its promotional
function. Arguably, this function is to establish 'new'/future articulations and
'assemblages' to promote the production and consumption of computer-mediated
online technologies, Internet practices and technocultural lifestyle in a print
magazine format.

Story-telling

Magazines have historically used images as part of the narrative treatment of
themes, concepts, stories and articles. An emphasis on visualising the content and
representing it pictorially and graphically became a characteristic of the modern print
magazine, which (prior to the cinema) can be regarded as an early form of
spectacular media[25]. Contemporary magazine design also owes a debt to other

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[25] Spectacular is used here to describe an astounding, theatrical and promotional construction, which
has been created by human agency.

spectacular media forms such as advertising and television, both of which use a pictorial treatment to communicate concepts and content. The importance of visuals was acknowledged by *Wired* co-creative designer John Plunkett:

> From the beginning, we decided that *Wired* should be as visually powerful as it is intellectually stimulating. In the age of MTV, anything less would have been reactionary. Conceptually the design of *Wired* is based entirely on its content. This is a rare luxury in the age of information overload, where design is often eye candy, not mind-food...our work is still essentially story-telling. Everything we do as designers involves communicating an idea through words and pictures (Plunkett cited in Eden Hoffman, 1995f, p. 1).

Wired's emphasis on design functioning as a form of 'story-telling[26]' continues a tradition seen in the American fashion and graphic design magazines of the 1920s and 1930s, like *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* (Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991, Janello & Jones 1991). An early example of this is described by Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991):

> Alexey Brodovich, Russian born art-director of *Harper's Bazaar* in the thirties, once described poetically what he wanted to give his magazine. It was "a musical feeling", he wrote in print, "a rhythm resulting from the interaction of space and time." Brodovich wanted the Bazaar to read like sheet music (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 362).

Brodovich's vision of wanting "the Bazaar to read like sheet music" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 362), can also be seen as a creative response to contemporary influences of that era which challenged people's perceptions of time and space (Kern, 1983, p. 6). These challenges included perspective relations, electric light, World Standard time, automation and new communication technologies like the phone, radio and music recordings. Similarly, in their attempt to portray graphically *Wired*'s editorial content as a convergent, three-dimensional, hypermediated online

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[26] The American Civil War stimulated, for magazines like *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's*, a genre of "pictorial journalism" (Janello & Jones, 1991, p. 166). In doing this magazines could "show dramatically what newspapers could only report, more or less matter-of-factly" (Janello & Jones, 1991, p. 166). The use of illustration as a promotional device was further developed by quality women's magazines, with the introduction of the 'fashion spread'. 'Ten-cent publishers' also began to use illustration to accompany their feature stories (Peterson, 1972; Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991). Tebbel and Zuckerman state: "By 1884, such magazines as *Century* and *Harper's* were using about 15 percent of their space for pictures" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 64). This is a very small amount compared to today's magazines.

lifestyle experience within a two-dimensional print magazine form, the producers of *Wired* responded to contemporary artistic and technological influences regarding the computer and online technologies.

Promoting the future: form, media and space

According to creative designer and typographer Neville Brody (2001), one of the characteristics of late 20th century design sensibility is the idea that "form follows fashion" (Brody, 2001, p. 2). This implication, that computer technologies allow form to override content, is important. In other words, computer-mediated design (particularly on Internet sites) may rely more on the 'wow factor' than on clearly communicating the information needed to sell a concept. The increasing use of computer-mediated technique prompts a consideration of the role of late 20th century media production in relation to form, fashion, function and content – in other words in relation to design.

In the case of *Wired* magazine, the designers[27] aimed to create a promotional environment where design promotes the content. In so doing, the magazine graphically constructs concepts of simultaneity, CMC, media excess, 'otherworldliness' and nonlinear navigational formations. What the design symbolises is a hypermediated communications environment characterised by the hyperproduction and consumption of computer-mediated information. The design signifies a dialogic encompassing the shifts between print and electronic media forms and practices.

The purpose of a project helps define the relationship between media form, content and function. Josef Albers, a Bauhaus teacher from 1923-33, is cited by Droste as saying: "The complexity of the form is dependent upon the material with which we are working" (Droste, 1990, p. 141). This quote forms part of a set of instructions Albers gave to a class of painting students during his time as a teacher. Having given the class a set of newspapers, scissors and glue, he required his pupils to experiment with the simplicity and the functionality of the form. According to Hannes Beckmann, who was a student, many elaborate designs were created yet

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[27] *Wired* was originally designed by John Plunkett and Barbara Kuhr. Each had the job title 'Co-creative designer'.

Albers dismissed all but one. The design which was accepted was a design created by a student who had folded a piece of paper in half and stood it up to resemble "a pair of wings" (Beckmann cited by Droste, 1990, p. 142).

By folding the newspaper sheet in half the student had fully utilised the print form, since both sides of the printed page could be read/viewed simultaneously from a number of angles – repositioning the medium and the text for multiple viewing positions. What the student had created was a visually active three-dimensional viewing space using a form which (when utilised traditionally i.e. laid down to read) becomes two-dimensional. Albers' Bauhaus School exercise in design offers, on the surface, an analogy for *Wired*. *Wired* magazine's design suggests a way of visualising a number of dimensions in relation to space (particularly non-linear, networked 'space') represented on two-dimensional paper surfaces.

Both the Bauhaus exercise and *Wired* are examples of how textual spaces can be redesigned in relation to the communication intent. Furthermore, both offer comparative historical and aesthetic examples of how "Technology and social organization influence the way we structure the world...Aesthetic form, although not as obviously historical as message or content, is a barometer of outside social pressures" (Ridless, 1984, p. xxi).

Wired magazine's style is as much a marketing strategy as it is an exercise in innovative design. As Usherwood points out "the design of a magazine can be understood as part of a network of factors relating to the magazine's production, including its producers' assumptions about readership" (Usherwood, 1997, p. 178). One 'assumption' about *Wired*'s target readership is that they are people who "grew up with MTV [and are] a generation that's accustomed and familiar with computers" (Rossetto cited in Eden Hoffman, 1994, p. 2). They are also familiar with the excess, overload and visual style of video clips. *Wired*'s designers' aesthetic sensibilities therefore represent a commercial engagement with ECI technologies, the Internet, techno/cyberculture, video culture and hypermediated forms.

Wired's aesthetic sensibility and style can be viewed as both a commercial and a creative response to a shift in modes of communication relating to the technological convergence of media, IT and telecommunications (Barr, 2000, p. 23). The magazine can be considered in this context, as a media form that stylistically

signifies the hybrid influence of electronic and digital communication including print (paper and celluloid), television, computers and the Internet.

In some ways, this is not surprising. Electronic and digital communication technologies inform a wide variety of contemporary cultural production ranging from television, film, video clips, computer games, novels, and advertising, to fashion, music, dance and magazines (like *Wired*). The content of *Wired* is contextualised within a futuristic 'techno' design environment which incorporates 'samplings' of styles; particularly phosphorescent, chromatic, colour saturated, hyperreal simulations of television and computer screens, silver barcodes, different languages, computer signs and symbols, and advertising designed to promote ECI technologies.

'Techno[28]' is a broad, synthetic term that describes a wide style of cultural production defined primarily through its association with computer technology, both as a mode of production and as a means of creative inspiration. For example, when discussing *Wired* and an earlier technoculture magazine *Mondo 2000*[29], Mark Dery describes both magazines' techno-aesthetic environment as "a post-literature blur" (1996, p. 36) whereby:

> jumbled fonts that buzz against fluorescent backgrounds, digitally enhanced photos that flow under, over and around article copy. [*Mondo 2000*'s] Art direction, like that of its competitors *WIRED* and *AXCESS*, accepts on faith the cybercultural truism that information overload is the operating mode of computer mavens accustomed to surfing the Internet or bouncing around in hypertext programs (Dery, 1996, p. 36).

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[28] This is noted by Sam Inkinen (2001, p. 2) in his article *'The Sound of a Binary Machine – An Introduction to Techno Music and Rave Culture'*. Techno can and has been linked to a wide variety of styles, products and practices like music (differentiating between electronic, post-industrial, house, acid, dance, trance), film, video games and fashion, as well as raves and dance parties.

[29] *Mondo 2000* and its relationship with *Wired*, are discussed in chapter five.

Figure 4.1. *Mondo 2000* cover. 1996(6).

Figure 4.2. *Wired* 4(9) cover.

What Dery outlines in his discussion of *Mondo 2000* and *Wired* is a dynamic, excessive, multi-layered, and information saturated style of postindustrial media production made possible through digital computer production and extended through computer-mediated communication. The digital production process (while allowing producers to sample, synthesise and create a hybridity of styles and media) also inspired genres of techno and cybercultural texts devoted to the study of lifestyle and computer culture. A small fragment of this 'techno' genred media includes, for example, Australian magazines like *21.C* and *Internet Australia*, North American fiction like *Neuromancer* (1986), *Count Zero* (1986), *Burning Chrome* (1988) and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988), and movies like *Blade Runner* (1982), *The Terminator* (1984), *Total Recall* (1990) and *Terminator 2* (1991).

| Figure 4.3. *21.C* cover. 1994 (12). | Figure 4.4. The cover of William Gibson's novel *Burning Chrome*. |

These techno genre media sample and fuse other media texts (e.g. the hard-boiled detective novel, film noir genre and high technology and/or future/sci-fi technology scenarios). The term sample[30] is used in this instance both as a metaphor and a technical practice to describe what can also be referred to as taking fragments, parts, bits and bytes of other media texts to recontextualise them into further media forms. Interestingly, the process of sampling is reminiscent of 17th century sewing techniques employed by women to create a pictorial cloth arrangement known as a 'sampler[31]'. This form of sampler usually comprised a variety of threads, decorations, motifs, images, stitching styles and words that were sewn and embroidered into a piece of canvas.

In the case of *Wired* and its culturally specific predecessor *Mondo 2000*, techno influences are combined with other aesthetic and stylistic influences such as a Californian 'cyberdelic' sensibility that Dery (1996) describes as:

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[30] Nowadays the term sample can refer to the practice of taking a 'bit' and/or bytes of information (sound, image, music, and conversation) and mixing it via computers.

[31] According to the web site – *Simply Samplers*: "The term sampler comes from the Latin exemplum meaning an example to be followed, a pattern, a model or an example" (*Simply Samplers*, 2001, pp. 1-2).

Rooted in Northern California [and] encompass[ing] a cluster of subcultures, among them Deadhead computer hackers, 'ravers' (habitues of all-night electronic dance parties known as 'raves'), techno-pagan, and New Age technophiles. Cyberdelia reconciles the transcendentalist impulses of the sixties counterculture with the infomania of the nineties. As well, it nods in passing to the seventies, from which it borrows the millenarian mysticism of the New Age and the apolitical self-absorption of the human potential movement. In cyberdelia, the values, attitudes, and street styles of the Haight-Ashbury/Berkeley counter culture intersect with the technological innovations and esoteric traditions of Silicon Valley (Dery, 1996, pp. 22-23).

Wired's aesthetic graphic style can be described as both techno and cyberdelic, yet it has also experimented with a dystopian, 'tech-noir' style which was incorporated in its earlier covers (see figures 4.5 & 4.6).

Figure 4.5.   *Wired* 1(4) cover.   Figure 4.6.   *Wired* 1(5) cover.

This tech-noir style, however, contrasts with the magazine's psychedelic banner and a cover blurb comprising Day-Glo green and orange typography. These contrasting (mostly Day-Glo) colour schemes became permanently integrated within future cover images and magazine content. Furthermore, this cyberdelic colour scheme is often combined with metallic and luminous inks plus experimental computer fonts which in combination signify the future, youthfulness, high tech, the contemporary and the new: a willingness to experience and embrace innovation and

change. Louis Rossetto explains: "When we decided on the design strategy, we said that we wanted to make *Wired* as visually exciting as the revolution it's describing" (Rossetto, 2001, p. 1).

While acknowledging the promotional function of *Wired*'s design, Rossetto's use of the term 'revolution' also signifies 'the new' and the 'future'. These are connected through the magazine's design to the promotion of computer and online technologies. Examples of this in the magazine include different styles of futuristic typography. Mark Eastman (2001) asks, "What makes typeface inherently futuristic?...One underlying factor of all type identified as having futuristic aspects is experimentation. Experimentation in type projects ideas we associate with the future" (Eastman, 2001, p. 1). *Wired* adopts a highly experimental typographic approach (see figures 4.7, 4.8 & 4.9).

Figure 4. 7.   **Part one of the editorial visual quote, in *Wired* 2(7).**

Figure 4.8. The editorial department *Scans*, in *Wired* 4(1).

Figure 4.9. Part one of the editorial visual quote in *Wired* 2(8).

Throughout the early issues, the designers of *Wired* experiment with fonts in relation to inks and layout. This is represented in figure 4.8 through the stretching technique of the title 'Scans' in relation to it being overlaid on a metallic ink block. In this instance, the title design makes reference to both the computer and barcode. In

figure 4.9 the design creates a futuristic techno-signifier of speed and three-dimensional, computer-mediated space.

The use of photographic material also creates a promotional reference to computer-mediated communication and online identities. For example, photos of human subjects that feature in *Wired* are often transformed via techniques of morphing, stretching and photomontage; reconstructed and recontextualised within what could be constructed as a hyperreal computer-mediated world. When recontextualised via computer production, *Wired*'s editorial subjects become second order referents relating primarily to computer code rather than to the 'real or analogue' images[32] (Wark, 1993, p. 144) of the cover subjects.

Figure 4.10.   *Wired* 3(7) cover.   **Figure 4.11.**   *Wired* 3(11) cover.

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[32] Wark (1993) distinguishes the historical transition from photography to computer imagery as being a shift from "analogue photospace to digital cyberspace – a difference between a continual variation and a binary code" (Wark, 1993, p. 144).
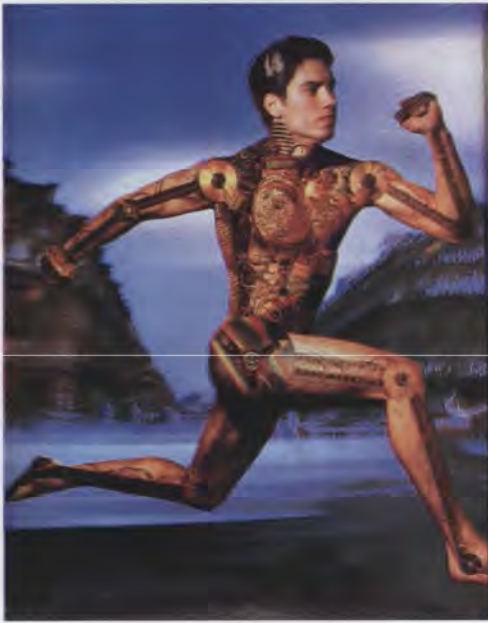
Figure 4.12. Page one of the editorial visual quote in *Wired* 2(10).

Figure 4.13. Page two of the editorial visual quote in *Wired* 2(10).

Computer design

These visual techniques (illustrated through figures 4.10 - 4.13) also highlight the spectacular effects which can be created by computer-mediated design. Further, computer-generated spectacular effects produced as the primary artistic purpose of a computer-mediated design become, as defined by Walter Benjamin (2001, p. 6), one of "the new functions" attached to the "exhibition value" of a work of art. He states:

> Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out; with one the accent is on cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work...With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between the two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature. This is comparable to the situation of the work of art in prehistoric times when, by the absolute emphasis on its cult value, it was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic. Only later did it come to be recognized as a work of art. In the same way, by the absolute emphasis on its exhibition value, the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental (Benjamin, 2001, p. 6).

This feature is also acknowledged by Mitchell (1992) who draws upon the work of Benjamin to argue: "If mechanical image reproduction substituted exhibition

value for cult value as Benjamin claimed, digital imaging further substitutes a new kind of use value – *input* value, the capacity to be manipulated by computer for exhibition value" (Mitchell, 1992, p. 52). The 'exhibition value' of digital imaging in *Wired* is representative of a larger, commercial discourse of spectacular promotion often associated with computer-imaging technologies which celebrate what can be produced with the 'latest' technology. Usually this celebration occurs in the form of spectacular visual display and special effects, which are, in the case of *Wired*[33], one of the magazine's most stylistic, graphic signifiers.

Computer generated images (CGI) occur throughout the magazine, particularly in the display advertisements for technology advertising accounts such as video games, software, and online servers. Nonetheless, some of the most spectacular use of computer-generated imagery occurs in 'non-technological' consumer lifestyle accounts like Absolut Vodka (see figure 4.14 – 4.18).
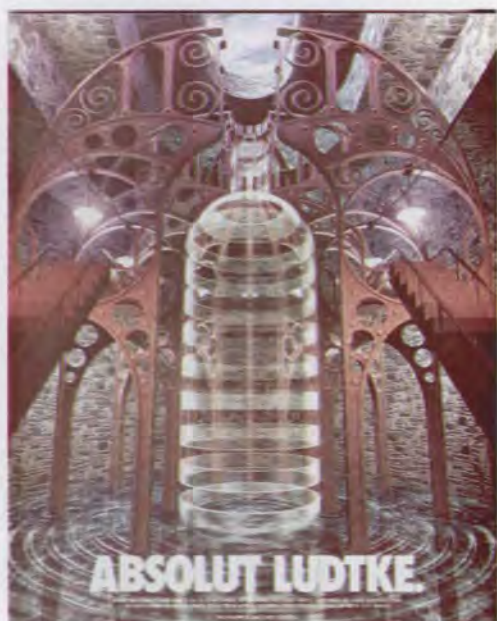
Figure 4.14. *Wired* **3(10) back cover.**

Figure 4.15. *Wired* **2(3) back cover.**

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[33] Further analysis of this can be found online in Michelle Pierson's 1988 article, *Welcome to Basementwood: Computer Generated Special Effects and Wired Magazine.*

Figure 4.16. *Wired* 2(5) back cover.

Figure 4.17. *Wired* 3(5) back cover.

Figure 4.18. *Wired* 2(9) back cover.

Figure 4.19. *Interview* (October 1989), back cover.

The co-branding and expansion of the Absolut target market with the *Wired* readership occurs here not just by including the brand name 'Absolut' in the magazine, but also through design which includes the *Wired* techno-future in the brand. The Absolut Vodka adverts that often feature on the back cover of *Wired* magazine in this period used CGI to recontexualise the product thematically within

hyperreal, computer-generated, virtual environments. Using these devices, design repositions the Absolut Vodka image and brand name within the computer-mediated *Wired* aesthetic.

This promotion by association strategy resonates the 1980s Absolut Vodka brand strategy, when the advertisement appeared on the back cover of the New York magazine, *Interview* (see figure 4.19). In this example, the advertisers reposition (through design), the Absolut Vodka brand name and image within the context of Manhattan, New York. Manhattan inspires much of *Interview*'s editorial content and persona, particularly that reflected by the magazine's original owner – Andy Warhol. Consumer lifestyle accounts like Absolut Vodka expand their brand image by association with other brands and icons. They also achieve this brand expansion through positioning and design which (in the case of *Wired* magazine) responded to a thematic context integrating the Internet, computers and the hyperreal, and computer-mediated futures.

The Absolut campaign in *Wired* highlights the process and *Wired*-wide theme of spectacular image production. When considering this as a *Wired* design feature, it is evident that "Digital imaging technologies now routinely use computer sequences to dramatize their own contents" (Druckrey, 1994, p. 6).
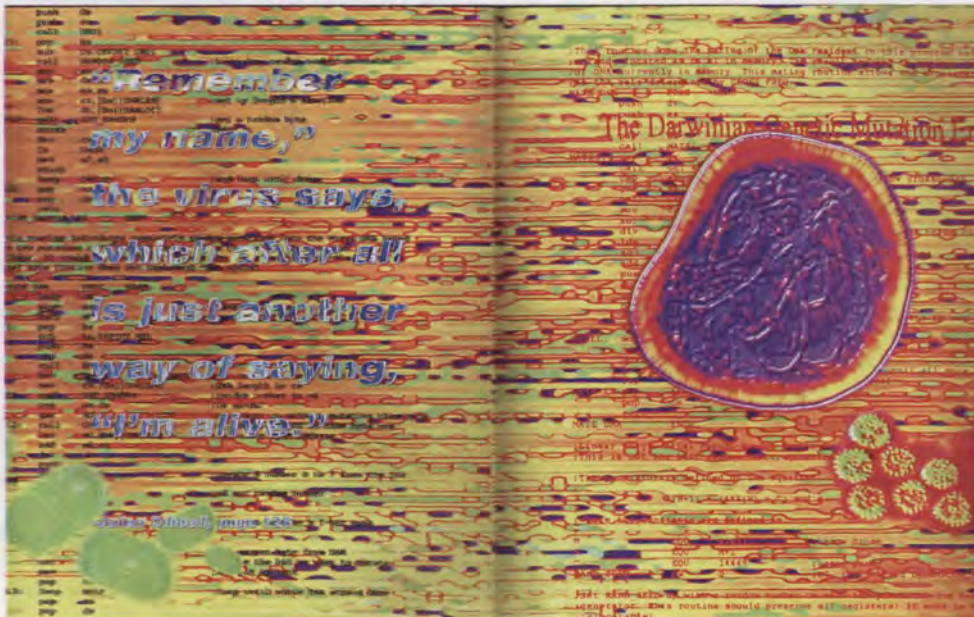
Figure 4.20.   Second part of the editorial visual quote in *Wired* 3(2).

In this example (figure 4.20), the editorial design constructs a spectacular, biological metaphor for an online computer virus, as well as demonstrating the processes of computer-generated image production. On the surface, this spectacular design technique also signifies the designers' creation in print of a type of computer aesthetic which represents an engagement with the "notions and practice of interactivity, simulation and artificial reality" (Popper, 1993, p. 172). Computer-generated image production in *Wired* exhibits a contemporary aesthetic and viewing position. According to Popper:

> A common aesthetic factor in technological art regarding the visual and multi sensorial is the new way human perception can be stimulated by creating the conditions in which the metamorphosis of form and colour, the immateriality of objects, the paradox of image and reality in illusionism and, above all, the unseen aspects of our universe can be perceptible (Popper, 1993, p. 180).

Typical computer-generated techniques in *Wired* include halftone image sharpening, halftone colour, special effects, slanting letters and typefaces, and undulating baselines. The integration of graphics and typography produces texts (e.g. figure 4.9) that can be opaque, transparent, reversed, morphed and stretched. Such practices are often coupled with fluorescent, luminous, and chromatic inks to signify computer-mediation and hyperreality. Another characteristic of the computer aesthetic articulated through *Wired*'s design is the self-referential use of computer language, signifiers and code such as zeros and ones, windings and fractal imagery.

What is significant, however, is that the full range of computer-generated editorial imagery is usually found only in certain feature stories, the covers and the opening visual quotes. These use computer-generated techniques that enhance or manipulate digitalised photographic images or text. This is to say that certain elements of the magazine are identified by the editorial design team as a showcase for hypermediated graphic promotion. It is through the sampling, synthesis and combination of CGI techniques (including photography, photomontage, and collage) that simulations of futuristic, computer-mediated environments are produced in *Wired*. This is why constructing and promoting a computer-mediated future via design – an online experience in a print form – is a paradoxical and contradictory process.

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This paradox lies in the fact that the construction of the online environment in *Wired* relies on the application of older media production and design techniques. Thus Pierson (1998) argues (in her analysis of *Wired*'s use of CGI) that:

computer generated imagery does not lend itself particularly well to the make-do, fly by night ethos of monthly magazine production. This is one reason computer generated images are actually so scarce in *Wired* [my italics]. Sprinkled across a design space where collage and photomontage...still define the graphical style of the magazine, these images are designed and placed to arrest the gaze of the magazine browser like so many special effects (Pierson, 1998, p. 13).

Hence it is ironic, but not surprising, that the print magazine's continual reference to the online electronic/digital medium is also a reference to 'the imagined other'. This dynamic constructs the online environment as *Wired*'s most successful special effect. Dery (1996) draws a similar analogy when he comments (regarding *Mondo 2000*): "Ironies abound here...a print medium counterfeiting a virtual one" (Dery, 1996, pp. 36-37). Unlike Dery's view of *Mondo 2000*, *Wired* positions itself not so much as 'counterfeiting' a virtual environment as projecting a very particular manifestation of 'online' within a two-dimensional print form. The real irony of this lies in the fact that the online lifestyle and environment constructed on paper is much more exciting than the reality of (the contemporary 1993-1996) online computer screen. This precognition of the visual potential of online environments highlights the (then) limitations of online technology where, as Pierson (1998) points out, digital works were reproduced better on video, and CD-ROM, than in online forms like the Internet. She states:

At present, however the printed page still produces a more lustrous, higher resolution image than most online delivery systems, which tend to deliver grainy, pixilated images that in most instances still take time to download (Pierson, 1998, p. 13).

The result is that expectations created and promoted via the magazine's print design exceed the capacity of the mid-1990s electronic environment to deliver. This visual misrepresentation of the Internet experience includes the *HotWired* site. The analogy is that of an advert or film trailer which is better than the product. Given all this, however, what remains significant is that computer-mediated production techniques and typographic arrangements used to construct the vision of the Internet

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promoted in *Wired*'s print version achieve their goals successfully. *Wired*'s design manages to convey a compelling vision of the online future, including a technologically mediated computer aesthetic and a technologically mediated computer production process.

Postmodern, hypermediated design

Wired's design can also be considered postmodern in a stylistic sense because draws from a wide variety of historical and contemporary media imagery and influences that are retrofitted stylistically within a high tech, cyberdelic, commercial context. According to Popper (1993), postmodern design:

> eclectically combines a plurality of preceding art styles, it revives history and tradition as well as ornament and decoration. Complexity, contradiction and ambiguity are favored over simplicity, purity and rationality; and a mixture of high and low culture, fine art and commercial styles, is encouraged. Multi-layered readings are both permitted and encouraged, and an appeal is made to audiences at different levels of knowledge and sophistication (Popper, 1993, p. 181).

Computer technologies and networked modes of production further enhance the postmodern design process. They provide the opportunity for producers to synthesise large combinations of data from numerous sites in order to create and disseminate a plurality of styles in a much faster way than previous manual and mechanical technologies could do. This production dynamic is evident in *Wired* and directly reflects other postmodern characteristics displayed by the text such as self-reflexivity, parody, pastiche, juxtaposition, hybridity, bricolage, simulation and intertextuality.

Figure 4.21.   Part one of the editorial visual quote in *Wired* 1(5).

For example, *Wired*'s visual quote in figure 4.21 lifts numerous cultural texts out of their historical contexts and reconstructs them stylistically within this layout to create another system of meaning. These include Andy Warhol's 1960s image of the mass-produced Campbell's Soup cans, the aphoristic prose of McLuhan and Fiore's *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), the mid-1990s image of geek e-zines[34] and Baudrillard's 'disappearing' commodity (held up for display by the female subject). On a connotative level figure 4.21 signifies niche-markets, mass-markets and "the transition to late capital" (Jameson, 1991, p. 9).

Another specific yet common example of the magazine's postmodern design is the intertextual reconstruction of 'real life' editorial subjects via computer montage, computer simulation, photomontage, computer morphing, oil painting and cartooning to display novel and recontextualised, hyperreal identities positioned in hyperreal landscapes (see figures 4.22, 4.23, 6.2 & 6.4).

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[34] e-zines are non-commercial online magazines.

Figure 4.22.   *Wired* cover 3(4).   Figure 4.23.   *Wired* cover 3(9).

This postmodern style of design includes innovative intertextual reconstruction and simulation that mimics and combines other media forms and cultural images. For example issue 3(1)'s cover quotes and reinscribes the Beatles' *White* album, while at the same time replacing the regular typography of the *Wired* cover banner with embossed Braille lettering. Further reconstructions and simulations of media images and communication symbols and signs include: a facsimile of a fax (in the *Negroponte* column, issue 2(4)), subjects depicted in oil paintings, layouts incorporating computer icons and symbols such as pop-up dialogue boxes, tool bars, split screens and mouse arrows, computer-simulated handwritten notes (in the *Geek Page* department, issue 3(12)), barcodes, road and danger signs.

The magazine's excessive recycling and rearticulation of media forms (music, video, film, advertising, cartoons, television, video games, portrait painting, websites, computer art, documentary realism, photographic and digital imagery, computer graphics and software) creates a particularly dense, intertextual and hyperreal print environment. On one level, this design arrangement self-referentially acknowledges the online, computer technologies used to produce the magazine, as well as the media and communication codes that preceded these technologies. On another level, this postmodern style of design can be linked to a more general

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postmodernist philosophy which "implie[s] shifts in sensibility, practices and discourse formations" (Smart, 1993, p. 16). Boyne and Rattansi describe postmodernism as a "culture of ontological doubt" (1990, p. 281). They argue how:

> the key shift from modernism has been the replacement of the plurality of interpretation by the exploration of multiple realities...We may also refer here to Lyotard's (1971) parallel distinction between discourse and figure. Even though such views may be too simple – for we are not yet beyond discourse, nor beyond the conflict of interpretations – the notion that the postmodern sensibility involves a shift of emphasis from epistemology to ontology, if it is understood as a deprivileging shift from knowledge to experience, from theory to practice, from mind to body, is one that is, as far as any notion can be, broadly correct (Boyne et al, 1990, p. 281).

Signifiers of a technologically mediated 'ontological doubt' are commercially rearticulated in *Wired's* editorial design and paid advertisements. Furthermore, these signifiers contribute to postmodern design as constructed in *Wired* and are thus part of the magazine's commercial, aesthetic and graphic style. For example, simulations of postmodern computer-mediated communication appear in the magazine as the depiction of interactive games, and virtual environments such as SimCity programs and online chatrooms. Deibert defines computer-mediated practices – and engagement with SimCity programs – as forms of technologically mediated "world creationism" (Deibert, 1997, p. 191). This becomes a postmodern, promotional activity when represented in a two-dimensional text like *Wired*.

The concept of computer-mediated creationism can also apply to the construction and application of online identities and avatars[35]. The term avatar has been reappropriated in the online context to refer to computer constructions of identity that represent a form of computer-mediated ascension, an out-of-body digital experience. For example, a Wired Ventures Ltd book entitled *Wiredstyle* defines avatar as

> How we bring our bodies into cyberspace. A graphical handle, a persona in pixels, or sometimes a description. The avatar - a cartoon, a collage of Marilyn Monroe photos, a fish - is essentially a placeholder, representing who you are in the virtual world (Hale, 1996, p. 64).

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[35] An avatar is defined in *The Australian Oxford Paperback Dictionary* as: "(In Hinduism) 1. The descent to earth of a deity in human, animal or superhuman form. 2. Any of the ten incarnations of Vishnu" (Turner & Turner, 1989, p. 50).

Figure 4.24. The LambadoMOO chat room represented in *Wired* 2(3).

Figure 4.25. An "Avatar-based online shared virtual environment" (Rossney, 1996, p. 142), fantastically represented in *Wired* 4(6).

Figure 4.24 spectacularises in a print format what an online environment and avatars could 'look like' in the text based chat room of the LambadaMOO site. This image accompanies a *Wired* feature story; "Johnny Manhattan meets the FurryMuckers":

> There's a virtual place for everyone. If you don't like to hang out in a 'chat house', you can live a world of virtual vampires on Elysium, or be a cartoon character on ToonMUD or be a sleek, post-pubescent otter on FurryMuck, where you can have net-sex with a fish (Quittner, 1994, p. 92).

Figure 4.25 promotes a later *Wired* feature story 'Metaworlds' which anchors fantastic graphic constructions of online personas with written copy about corporate ECI software developers:

> Choosing an avatar is a new and significant way to project your identity into cyberspace. People can stake out their own territory in metaworlds, make these places their own. This is where the next revolution in cyberspace is going to take place (Rossney, 1996, p. 146).

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An avatar becomes the latest 'must-have' of the digitally enabled. By appearing in a commercial media form like *Wired* these online constructions (as well as the culturally specific Hindi word 'avatar') become recontextualised as Western commercial promotions for the Internet and for online practices. Further, the promotion through graphic depiction of multiple worlds and online identities also operates as a creationist narrative regarding the digital domain, and is an example of the commercial repackaging of postmodern experience. While these constructions leave open the possibility that computer-mediated avatars represent the evolution of human/technological forms of convergence, they also spotlight the postmodern concept of decentred subjectivity which Deibert argues has become accentuated with the "advent of digital-electronic telecommunications" (Deibert, 1997, first page preface).

In this respect aspects of postmodern and poststructuralist[36] theory can be used to analyse some aesthetic elements of *Wired*'s design and certain characteristics of hypermediated[37], online communication that are represented metaphorically in the magazine. This includes the way people consume information online which is acknowledged by co-creative designer John Plunkett (2001, p. 6), as a key influence in defining the 'look' of *Wired*:

> I think it [*Wired's* design] has more to do with the Internet than it does with computers. I think the other thing we're trying to do with the typography is trying to send a message that the means of receiving information is changing – that while we used to all assume that we were going to, you know pick up a book and start on page one and go through it in a linear way, I think that once you get onto the Internet, in particular, you discover that communication can be asynchronous and non-linear (Plunkett, 2001, p. 6).

Plunkett is referring here both to online computer-mediated reading practices as a model for graphic design and layout, and to the role of the magazine design in representing online reading and navigation. Notwithstanding Plunkett's comment,

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[36] Gaggi (1997) states:
  Hypertext is a mode of textuality that encourages writerly, active reading rather than passive consumption of what has been produced by a conventionally authorial author. Landow sees hypertext as a technological embodiment of the insights of post-structuralist theory, which valorizes modern and postmodern texts that are anti-classical and "writerly," in contrast to classic realist texts that are less demanding and encourage passivity (Gaggi, 1997, p. 104).
[37] Hypermedia "unites sound, graphics, print and video" (Moulthrop cited in Snyder 1996, p. 2).

Wired generally conforms to the conventions of a linear print format, yet there are instances where the design also signifies a construction in print of non-linear, computer-mediated modes of textual navigation. In an online context, this form of navigation is hypertextual in that it allows users/readers to move through "databases on a myriad of links between documents that provide that additional or unnoticed dimension (Deibert, 1997, p. 189). The computer-mediated hypertext process is further outlined by Gaggi who states:

> In a fully developed hypertextual system, texts to which one moves are also networked to their own references and allusions. In the end, what results is a complex, interconnected network of nodes and links. The reader enters at any node and chooses any path through and about the network (Gaggi, 1997, p. 102).

Wired's editorial department *Electric Word* (see figures 3.15 & 3.16) is an example of this hypertext system graphically reconstructed and envisaged in print. The department runs over a four or five page spread. Its print design constructs a fragmented, vertical and horizontal layout of inter-layered images and written text, which play with (and interrogate), notions of linear print formation through the reconstruction of the discursive and tangential textuality of hypertext. Not only does *Electric Word* connote this type of online navigation, but it further highlights the ability to:

> find "traces" of documents in widely disparate areas [which] complements both the postmodern notion of "intertextuality" as well as a nonlinear cognitive orientation favoring jumps in intuition over the step-by-step logical chain...a cognitive trait that mirrors the pastiche and juxtaposition of the postmodern *mentalité* (Deibert, 1997, pp. 189-191)

The magazine's layout also offers surface references to the conventions of hypertext in other editorial areas, such as feature stories, which may contain separate sections of information relevant to the story but not included in the main body. Further, written text is often arranged around other written text to form a boarder. The result is a page comprising discrete yet linked areas of unified editorial content. This layout technique constructs bundled and clustered sections of information from single words, sentences and multiple paragraphs. Entire departments (see figures 3.14, 3.15 & 3.16) and single editorial stories can (on one level) be described as

'mosaic' in the style of online and print newspapers and magazines. However, the horizontal and vertical mosaic layout of image segments and lexias – defined by Ess (1996, p. 2) as "text units" – also bear a surface resemblance to the hypertext lexia. This is described by Snyder (1996) as "chunks of text [that form] units of local stability in the general flux of hypertext" (Snyder, 1996, p. 46).

Specific graphic representations of hypertext lexia formations occur in the Table of Contents pages, and editorial departments like *Electric Word* and (in particular) *Just Outta Beta* and *NetSurf*. *Just Outta Beta* and *NetSurf* both offer 'freeze frame' depictions of what hypertext lexias look like. This visualisation is communicated via the reconstruction, simulation and merger of digital, electronic and print codes. Both departments comprise two double-page spreads and incorporate 'byte-size' chunks of text, graphics, images of websites and website products which are positioned with their reconstructed http:// addresses (URLs).

Figure 4.26.   *Just Outta Beta* in *Wired* 3(8).

Figure 4.27. *Netsurf* in *Wired* 4(9).

Netsurf and *Just Outta Beta*'s arrangement of graphic content is a visualisation of what constitutes a hypertextual reading practice, translated into a two-dimensional paper format. For example, images and written text are linked via graphics. Colour, lines and icons link and contextualise each site fragment and provide a visual/graphic (rather than written) navigational guide for the reader. These linear and colour cues signify paths, space and networks, as well as contextualising content. In doing this, the design mimics what it is replacing: the dynamic, push-button sequentiality of hypertext.

Connected to this is another feature of hypertext which is the absence of a "single dominant axis that directs the reader from beginning through middle to end" (Gaggi, 1997, p. 102). The graphic arrangement of the printed pages in *Wired* also signifies, at times, (particularly in *Electric Word*) the concept of digital 'borderlessness': an open rather than closed text. The following figures (4.28, 4.29) demonstrate a typical *Electric Word* sequence.

Figure 4.28. *Electric Word* part one in *Wired* 3(7).

Figure 4.29. *Electric Word* part two in *Wired* 3(7).

In these arrangements (see figures 4.28 & 4.29), words and paragraphs are
sometimes mosaic, cut up, bled off one page edge and continued onto another and
overlaid on top of each other. This signifies both a non-linear and non-hierarchical
arrangement of information and positive, negative and white page space. Both
Netsurf (see figure 4.27), and *Electric Word* departments construct print metaphors

for the process of hypertext through their non-hierarchical arrangement of texts that 'cross over' each other from one page to another, indicating alternative information entry points and pathways for the reader. By incorporating these features via design, within the two-dimensional textuality of print, the magazine signifies its text as a network (rather than a single, linear body of information), continually restating the "unnaturalness" of print (i.e. its linear sequentiality) and the conventionality of linear reading practices (Snyder, 1996, p. 41).

Print and electronic dialogues

The publisher's attempts to reproduce an electronic layout within a print format also signify a redefinition of the codes of print[38] space. The best example of this is the *Wired* cover banner which mixes traditional print fonts (Walbaum serif) with computer fonts (Adobe myriad san serif).

Figure 4.30.   *Wired* 2(3) cover banner.

Alternating typeface characters represents a playing with the graphic design conventions of typographic space and visual perspective. This layered effect (of solid and non-solid typefaces, background typeface shadows and colour background) creates a three-dimensional image. The illusion it creates is the visual impression that the space has become a poetic riddle, where the distinction between the foreground and background is flattened. Instead, the typographically driven perception is that the letters alternately recede into and advance from the page. This graphic dynamic also connotes a playful investigation of the idea of the solidity of print and the

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[38] Janello and Jones (1991) point out: "The look of the early magazines depended almost entirely on typography and the compulsive urge to decorate pages often resulted in typeface combinations that were the visual equivalent of a raucous crowd" (Janello & Jones, 1991, p. 162). American typefaces became more standardised and organised in the early to mid-19th century with the introduction of William Carlson's 'Carlson type' and new typefaces produced by Giambatista Bodoni which, Janello and Jones (1991) believe, were the beginnings of a modern style of typeface. This is particularly the case with Carlson type, which is still used today (Janello & Jones, 1991, p. 162).

ephemerality of the electronic; and of the real and the virtual. It challenges Ong's idea that "Print situates words in space more relentlessly than writing ever did. Writing moves words from the sound world to a world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space" (Ong, 1982, p. 121). Due to its design, *Wired*'s banner makes reference to, and promotes, the ephemerality of the digital domain, yet the materiality of the paper medium on which it is positioned constructs this reference as another textual illusion.

Resonating the typographic style of the *Wired* cover banner, alternating typefaces occur throughout the magazine. This reinforces the notion of an evolution (rather than reinvention) of classical print fonts co-joined with computer-mediated ones. In a different vein, the banner also symbolises (through design) the evolution of magazine production from mechanical to computerised modes, and presages the translation of the magazine from paper to online environments.

Wired's typographic style has altered since its inception. In 1995 the *Wired* creative team commissioned typographer and designer Matthew Carter to redesign the original Walbaum typeface. This led to the 'Wiredbaum font' being created especially for *Wired* magazine (Plunkett, 1995, p. 126). This typographical evolution was announced in a *Wired* feature article, "Bespoken Type: The subtle art of Matthew Carter" (Plunkett, 1995, p. 126). The reason for the commissioning was "to create a more legible version of Walbaum" (Plunkett, 1995, p. 126). While this may be a commercial rather than creative decision, the statement remains paradoxical considering *Wired* represents a (high) technological vanguard that encourages the acquisition of, and experimentation with, the latest ECI technologies; and presumably the most innovative design and typography.

Nevertheless, the *Wired* producers' celebration of their commissioning a new typeface acts as a signifier of quality and of thoughtful craftsmanship. It also signifies the 'new' and the cutting edge. More importantly, these features of quality, craftsmanship, and the cutting edge are recontextualised to construct a high tech promotion for the digital technology used by Carter to produce the magazine's Wiredbaum typeface. As the *Wired* feature article states:

> Carter is the type designer's designer. His 40-year career spans every
> phase of the transition from hot-metal to digital typesetting...he
> produced, among other typefaces, Bell Centennial for the US

telephone directories, co-founded Bitstream – the first digital type foundry...turned his attention to special commissions, including...Apple, Microsoft, and *Time* magazine...In addition to Wiredbaum, Carter has recently completed original type designs for the Walker Art Center and Ziff (now AT&T) Interchange online information service (Plunkett, 1995, p. 126).

This extract illustrates how (unlike many other magazines) the designers of *Wired* use design both to visualise the magazine's content and also to promote the technologies used to produce the magazine's look and 'feel'. This foregrounding of its technological production is a major promotional characteristic of the magazine[19] and is continually reiterated by *Wired* staff. As Plunkett comments: "We employ the technology we write about, and opted for a bigger book, a full nine-inches wide to showcase our art" (Plunkett cited by Eden Hoffman, 1995f, p. 1).

Through active promotion of this kind, high tech production techniques become anchored as a specific stylistic and generic marker of the magazine's identity and the *Wired* brand name. Thus one of the magazine's earlier press releases (entitled: "*Wired* features innovative design and high technology production") states:

> *Wired* is totally digital. It was edited, designed and laid-out on networked Macintosh computers. Prepress was performed by Danbury Printing, one of the best prepress houses in the United States, on a digital Scitex system. "Modern technology allowed us to produce the magazine on the West Coast, and do the prepress on the East Coast," said *Wired* editor Louis Rossetto. "We use modems and broadband as well as overnight couriers and airfreight. And we use the Kodak Approval proofing system – a new digital proofing system" (Eden Hoffman, 1995f p. 1).

Apart from press releases, which help construct a preferred context in which to read *Wired*, the magazine contains an 'unofficial' department called *Colophon*[40]. This is not listed in the Table of Contents, but appears on the back-pages section of the magazine. *Colophon* announces that: "*Wired* is designed and produced digitally"

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[39] Many contemporary commercial magazines are produced using publishing technology similar to *Wired*, yet few magazines foreground and promote their mode of production. Ballaster et al (1991), on the contrary argue that some women's magazines deliberately construct (via design) an "aura of amateurism" (1991, p. 170) which appears in mode of address, layout and presentation.

[40] According to Lynch:

A *colophon* gives information about the publication of a book: usually the author, title, publisher (or printer or bookseller), and date. In older books, the colophon usually appeared at the very end. In modern books, it's usually on the title page. The word colophon also refers to the emblem or logo a publisher uses – a ship, an open book, a torch, a tree (Lynch, 1999, p. 1)

and lists all the 'latest' technologies (hardware, software and network) used to produce the magazine as well as "Music that helped get the magazine out" and "drugs of choice" (*Colophon*, 1995, p. 221). Many of these 'brand name' technologies, plus music and food products, also appear as advertising clients throughout the magazine. They include Kodak, Apple Macintosh, Nikon, Adobe, Qualcomm Eudora and RCA records, for example.

The promotion of these technologies and lifestyle products is complex and synergetic, because they also feature continually in the myriad of online *Wired* press releases, editorial content and in advertising. As a cultural commodity[41] the magazine performs yet another promotional function by linking the brand names with the 'promotional subject' of 'high technology'. *Wired* is consequently constructed as a complex and multi-faceted cultural commodity. As Wernick points out:

> cultural commodities are vehicles for the promotion of more than one producer's serial product...the multiplicity of promotional names on the site of the cultural commodity is not just nominal: it corresponds to the multiplicity of promotional subjects involved (Wernick, 1991, p. 107).

This promotional cycle extends further when *Wired*'s designers' use of the 'latest' digital production technologies is validated and celebrated by the publishing, computing, design and advertising industries.[42] For example, when *Wired* won the category for Broad Interest Magazine (at the 1995 American 10th Annual Computer Press Awards), the magazine's design was described as "innovative...bold and daring; glitzy and gaudy; offbeat and uncouth. It's overkill. It's the mirror image of high tech. We love it!" (Eden Hoffman, 1995g, p. 1). The *Wired* producers (via press releases such as this example, and via editorial content) then redistribute these ECI industry accolades. Through this dynamic, the industry awards serve a promotional function for the magazine, the technologies used to produce the magazine, and for the magazine's advertisers who promote their technologies in the magazine.

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[41] Cultural commodities are defined in this context as material objects and/or services and/or ideas and values that are exchanged and consumed for both economic and symbolic purposes. Cultural commodites such as print magazines are both material and cultural artefacts that are "embedded in political and social systems which they both reflect and help to shape" (Angleique et al, 2000, p. 9)

[42] For information on this refer to the hotwired.com site particularly the press release, *Wired and HotWired Win at 10th Annual computer Press Awards* (http://www.hotwired.com/lib/PR/HW.95-04-24-/award.html), *Wired, HotWired Honored early in 1995* (http://www.hotwired.com/lib/PR/HW.95-03-06/four-awards-html). For a complete list of awards won between 1993 and 1997 see *Wired Magazine Awards* (http://www.wired.com/wired/aboutus/awards.html).

Promoting high tech to the end users: the *Wired* readers

Wired readers are encouraged via editorial and advertising copy to become ECI consumers and producers. Through association with *Wired*, brand name software and hardware technologies used to produce the award-winning magazine are advertised to *Wired* readers. This linkage informs the consumer/reader that they too can be producers of professional, industry standard work (as if it is the technology which straightforwardly converts ideas to products). *Wired*'s design confirms what the advertisers promote: that these technologies do work, and can achieve spectacular results, provided you can afford the soft/hardware and know how to use it. For example, a double page advertisement for Media 100's digital video systems tells the 'creative' *Wired* reader that video production work can be easy and fun if you use their technology:

> This machine is just perfect for you creative types...You can create a finished, broadcast quality video without having to leave the room...Hours later you present your ideas to Mr. Big. He smiles. You sip expensive drinks until dawn (Media 100, 1995, pp. 36-37).

This type of advertising suggests (apart from the gender stereotyping) that everyone can design and produce creative media forms – all that is required is the technological interface.[43] This 'technology-can-do' concept is reinforced by the presence in the magazine of many other adverts for brand name ECI technologies which have been used to create *Wired*.

Display advertisements are a significant design component of *Wired*. As the number of advertising pages grew in *Wired*, so the magazine's identity and aesthetic style also became increasingly connected to the aesthetics and discourse of advertising. By the same token advertising (as in the Absolut Vodka adverts, for example) became an increasingly important part of the magazine's aesthetic and graphic sensibility. Goldman argues:

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[43] The vast array of media forms and styles can be attributed in part to computer, digital and online technologies now available to the average 'home producer'. It can be argued that digital technologies like the personal computer and software represent the democratisation of art in the same way that public school systems represent the democratisation of knowledge. It could also be argued that the mass commercialisation of cultural technologies like design software could lead to a loss of form due to poor design skills.

When art invades advertising it opens up a contested terrain, a space in which the hegemony of commodity discourse is momentarily disclosed and challenged. But art is also swallowed up by the commodity form – instrumentalized into another marketing ploy aimed at extending the commodification of desire (Goldman, 1992, p. 171).

This observation is especially relevant given the context of a magazine like *Wired*. When advertising becomes content for the magazine, and editorial text positions advertisers as integral contributors to the magazine's aesthetic identity and style, the design signifies a repositioning of editor and advertiser. This dynamic is acknowledged by Plunkett: "I'm pretty sure the ads are as much a part of the message as our editorial. And it changes the way you perceive the magazine" Plunkett, 2001, p. 6).

Rather than editorial competing with advertising[44] (which is the usual pattern for magazines) *Wired* is one of a growing group of media products where advertisements assist in the creation of the magazine's graphic style and identity. It is clearly no accident that display advertising and editorial often share similar aesthetic and promotional codes and conventions, (see figures 3.9 & 3.10). *Wired* particularly uses layout and colour co-ordination as synergetic promotional devices to link editorial content with advertising.

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[44]Improvements in magazine design grew out of having to compete with advertisements for reader attention. This point is explained by Peterson (1972) who states:
> as advertisers made increasingly skilful use of artwork, typography, and white space, editors were encouraged to dress up their own pages. In time they [magazine editors] came to realise that design could contribute as much to the personality of their magazine as the editorial content they ran (Peterson, 1972, p. 6).

Figure 4.31.   *Wired* 3(7), pp. 70-71.

Figure 4.31 represents a two-page spread taken from *Wired* issue 3(7). The Clarion advert (right) is positioned next to the *Wired* department *Updata* (left). The purple and black colours, in combination with the circular photo inserts, act as a "relay device" (McCracken, 1993, p. 48) that directs the reader's attention from *Updata* to the Clarion advertisement while graphically linking both editorial and advertising content. The design functions to coordinate and complement both advertising and editorial content to construct a promotional environment where each refers to the other. This is achieved through synergetic presentation of both advertising and editorial, including the layout, image and typographic balance, and colour co-ordination.

Pierson states that "*Wired* [my italics] blurs the distinctions between special effects and art, commerce and art, and art and advertising" (Pierson, 1998, p. 14). From a general perspective, *Wired*'s design symbolically signifies the convergence of media forms, information abundance and at times, information overload. The design signifies a hyperproduction and consumption of media forms, including the material white space of magazine pages. This type of design metaphorically 'consumes' a large volume of page space and is analogous to the magazine's thematic context, which centres on the hyperproduction and consumption of new and online technologically mediated goods, services and experiences.

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Conclusion

Wired's design successfully functions as a promotional device for both the magazine and the technology which produces it. While not 're-inventing the magazine', the magazine's futuristic, cyberdelic design does articulate new ways of consuming media – particularly print representations of non-linear computer-mediated forms. Ironically, constructing and projecting the aesthetics of online media and multimedia production practices relies on a convergent combination of the modern and the postmodern, and upon print and digital design. In the case of early (1993-1996) *Wired*, the projections of hypermediated networked environments are paradoxical: simultaneously attainable in print yet unattainable in online form. *HotWired* (at that stage) could only aspire to a design aesthetic already discarded in *Wired*.

Former *Wired* contributor Paulina Borsook challenged the usual order of production priorities when she said; "Only the superficial think style doesn't matter" (Borsook, 2000, p. 171).[45] For *Wired*'s publisher, creating a new style was vital in establishing a distinct identity for the magazine so as to distinguish *Wired* from other computer lifestyle publications. This market positioning through high tech, design, and aspirational lifestyle identification was integral to the commercial success of the magazine, and to the establishment of *Wired* as a recognisable brand in which advertisers, readers and financiers were prepared to invest.

Symbolically, *Wired*'s creative designers constructed a seductive projection of 'the new' – a projection of what computer-mediated, online networked environments and information could/would look like, and how they could/would be produced, consumed and experienced. Textually, the magazine's design created a promotional context and functioned as an adhesive that synergetically bound together editorial and advertising content. Materially, the print magazine design (which includes production, paper, ink and trim size) acts as a promotion for the technology used to produce the magazine, as well as for the content, and for the designers of the magazine. By consuming the magazine, the readers of *Wired* are symbolically joined in a production/consumption relationship with the magazine's designers, producers,

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[45] The political significance of style is not just limited to design and fashion. Leading youth culture theorist, Steve Redhead spotlights this in his article, *Thatcher's Boys (Next Door)* and outlines the strategies of style employed by British soccer hooligans in the mid-1980s. Redhead's article appears in his (1997) work, *Subculture to clubcultures. An Introduction to Popular Cultural Studies*.

subjects and advertisers who together form an important and mythologised, aspirational group.

Commercial magazine design should be seductive, pleasurable and exciting, and should establish a context and 'feeling' for the content. The design is integral to how a print magazine is read/consumed. Design styles articulate technological, socio-cultural, political and economic conditions from which a magazine as media product emerges. In the case of *Wired* the influence of digital design technologies, information abundance, technoculture, the Internet and computer-mediated communication are paramount. Regardless of the production techniques used, the design *Wired* projects in print serves to showcase characteristics of the online environment including non-linear navigation and consumption, technologically mediated spaces, and technologically-driven identities and realities.

CHAPTER FIVE

Geek Chic: (De)constructing the aspirational *Wired* reader and *Wired* techno-lifestyle

In her article *Transnational publishing: The case of Elle Decoration*, Barbara Usherwood studies the 1989 marketing strategies of the British magazine, *Elle Decoration* (1997, p. 178). She states:

> The launch of *Elle Decoration* could...be seen as an attempt to seize and control a set of favorable conditions. On one hand, there was an increased interest in home furnishing and decoration, which had boosted the provision of goods and services for the home and given rise to a number of new home-interior design magazines. On the other, there appeared to be a potential readership of affluent young home-makers whose aspirations were not being addressed by these magazines. The task of this new magazine was to articulate a relationship between such people and the advertisers who wanted to reach them (Usherwood, 1997, p. 179).

In a similar fashion, the 1993 launch of *Wired* magazine in San Francisco, USA signified an attempt by its publisher to 'seize and control a set of favourable conditions' regarding both the ECI 'boom' of the early to mid-1990s and the growth of commercial lifestyle magazines. In an attempt to 'articulate a relationship' between advertisers and a potential niche readership, *Wired*'s publisher constructed an "aspirational" (Schiffman et al, 1997, p. 314) ideal[46] that converged notions of 'quality lifestyle', 'new' communication technologies, computing and online culture. This conceptual ideal materialised in *Wired*. What was signified by the magazine's content was an emergent high tech lifestyle, predominately mediated through new communication technologies and other upmarket, quality consumer goods and services.

From a marketing perspective, the publishing success of the magazine signified that "culture and 'computing' were not mutually exclusive [and] that the

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[46] Aspirational ideal describes a consumer's desired goal or target, which might indicate consumption of goods and services or behavioural change. It is used within the context of this chapter to describe the affluent techno-lifestyle constructed by *Wired*'s publisher via the magazine.

technology economy and digital culture were juicy and vital and necessary to The Way We Live Today" (Borsook, 2000, p. 119) [capitalisation in original]. The *Wired* team's successful promotion of these concepts as ideal created another variety of American magazine/lifestyle niche and commercial co-branding. The consumption practices of computing and the Internet were redefined as a culturally specific lifestyle choice, and reconstructed, mainstreamed and inscribed within the commercial North American magazine market.

This chapter examines the process of this co-inscription. It traces the *Wired* magazine marketing project and the aspirational ideal constructed by its publisher and marketed through the magazine. This is done through the analysis, comparison and metaphoric deconstruction of *Wired* magazine's historical pedigree, press releases, magazine structure, editorial content and paid advertisements.

Creating the concept: plugging the margin into the mainstream

In 1994 original *Wired* editor Louis Rossetto gave a presentation at the *Doors of Perception* conference held in the Netherlands. Rossetto had previously spent time in Amsterdam in the late 1980s producing his magazine *Electric Word* which focussed on "very advanced technologies for handling word-based information" (Rossetto, 1994, p. 1). *Electric Word* was both a culturally specific, specialist computing magazine and a precursor to his next, more commercial, project. Rossetto launched *Wired* magazine in San Francisco in 1993 with business partner Jane Metcalfe.

While *Wired* was launched in America, it was initially 'hatched' in Amsterdam. This was clear from Rossetto's 1994 presentation at the *Doors of Perception* Conference. He effectively provided a prospectus of the *Wired* project and an outline of what was, at the time, a new product that was to be launched and based in the USA. Further, as Rossetto's presentation suggested, the level of financial sustainability sought for the *Wired* project could only be found in North America. Looking back at that time, he stated:

> We would have loved to have done it [*Wired*] here in Holland, but it was our belief that the culture that we're describing in *Wired* hadn't developed sufficiently in Europe to support a magazine like *Wired*, so we decided to take the *Wired* concept and go to the place where we

had the most chance of being received, the place where all of this was happening...and for *Wired* it's a matter [that] if you're alive at the time of the digital revolution, you'd want to live where that revolution was happening, and that place, the seat of the revolution, comes out of Silicon Valley...It was time to talk to an audience that was doing exciting things, to show this audience who they were themselves, because they were doing these exciting things in lots of different fields, and to let the rest of the world see who these people were, and what they were doing, and how interesting and powerful the things that they were doing really were (Rossetto, 1994, p. 1).

Wired magazine was (to use the biological metaphor) 'a convergent creature'. Historically Euro-centric, white, affluent, male and college educated, its 'molecular structure' included responses to (and anti-bodies for) subcultures like cyber, hacking and cypherculture[47], computer culture, 1960s counter-culture, drug culture, pop-culture, and the corporate/military/industrial/technoculture. Some of these counter-cultural features include anti-corporate ideologies and dissident practices like hacking, and illegal substance ab/use which are at odds with the commercial ethos and techno-corporate culture of Silicon Valley specifically, and the USA generally. Given that this is the geographical and cultural environment within which Rossetto initially sought to position his project, it is evident that some political and cultural features associated with *Wired* would not be suitable in their raw form for mainstream, commercial, American magazine consumers and related advertiser investment.

Evidence of this is demonstrated by the performance of *Wired*'s predecessor, and one time competitor, *Mondo 2000* (1989-1995). The San Francisco based magazine was launched in 1989 and was produced and financed by Alison Kennedy (Queen Mu) and Ken Goffman (R.U. Sirius). Informed (and fuelled) by designer drugs, cyberculture and New Ageism, the sporadically issued magazine represented the youthful, alternative, hedonistic, artistic, dangerous, irresponsible and at times, illegal, side of technoculture.

Mondo 2000's publishing organisation was an informal and at times chaotic affair. Nonetheless, by 1992 the magazine's readership circulation had risen from "15,000 to nearly 100,000" (Boulware, 1995, p. 6). Further, in January 1993 the magazine appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine (Boulware, 1995, p. 11). Two

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[47] Defined by Borsook as "radical pro-privacy computer activists" (Borsook, 2000, p. 17).

months later the first issue of *Wired* magazine hit the newsstands. According to Boulware (1995), fifteen months previously, *Wired* creators Rossetto and Metcalfe arrived from the Netherlands and (with the assistance of *Mondo 2000* advisor Randy Stickrod) set up their business offices in San Francisco. Rossetto and Metcalfe also spent time with the *Mondo 2000* publisher Alison Kennedy, as well as "hosting a conference on the WELL[48], schmoozing contributors and working on a business plan package for investors" (Boulware, 1995, p. 10).

The reasons for *Wired*'s success and *Mondo 2000*'s failure are due to almost diametrically opposite business plans augmented by editorial decisions regarding the content and advertising of the respective magazines. *Mondo 2000* did not exhibit a clear marketing strategy and was not published regularly which affected the ability to attract substantial investors and advertisers. Advertisers (like IBM) did not respond to the magazine's high advertising rates and alternative editorial stance that promoted the cyberpunk ethos – 'information wants to be free'; individual rights without responsibility; conspicuous consumption (of drugs, art, clothes, technology, sex); and personal transformation through drugs and technology (Boulware, 1995).

While widely publicised for its 'on-the-edge' attitude and design, plus unconventional business practices, the *Mondo 2000* project seemed to represent more of a fringe publishing phenomenon than a viable, long-term investment opportunity. On the other hand, *Wired* magazine was constructed and promoted from the first issue as being a well researched, mainstream and commercial, publishing venture that attracted blue chip advertising accounts.

Wired's management did poach *Mondo 2000* contributors, and editorial ideas, yet the magazine itself was unlike *Mondo 2000* in the respect that it was written in a standard journalistic style and focussed primarily on the ECI industries, business and people. Drugs, New Ageism, rave culture, and hacking - while covered as editorial topics - were not advocated unless (as in the case of hacking) the practice would protect and/or aid the expansion of North American techno-corporate business interests[49]. Business practices aside, an analogy for the difference between *Mondo*

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[48] The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (The WELL) was established in 1985 and can be considered one of the first online communities (Hale, 1996, p. 32).

[49] Issue 4(2) of *Wired* ran a feature story called "How I Caught Supercracker Kevin Mitnick". It was about the computer hacker, Tsutomu Shimomura, whose computer skills, knowledge and collaboration with the FBI lead to the capture of renowned computer cracker, Kevin Mitnick.

2000 and *Wired*'s position regarding the latest technological and scientific developments lies in the perceived use of new technologies: *Mondo 2000* pushed aspects of illegal use and abuse while *Wired* remained within the law. As Penley and Ross (1991) comment, "The arrival of...technologies, then is accompanied, as it were, by ideological instructions about their "proper" use that are often in direct contradiction to the obvious practical uses of the technologies" (Penley & Ross, 1991, p. x).

In order to make the *Wired* project easier to consume culturally, politically and commercially, the (Dutch-developed and *Mondo 2000*-influenced) *Wired* concept (magazine object, persona and brand name) was 're-Americanised' and mainstreamed. This meant reconstructing its earlier subcultural biology and incorporating within it commercial, 'respectable', and law abiding, culturally specific North American elements.

Like most contemporary media forms, *Wired* was conceived as an 'alt-com' – a media hybrid that was both alternative (in design) and commercial (in practice). In mainstreaming computer culture as a lifestyle choice, *Wired* combined the old and familiar with the new and the cutting edge. More specifically, this meant creating a new commercial mix in order to attract the potential niche-lifestyle market. Established consumer (non-ECI) product names could be combined with both new and established ECI technology goods and services in a media form aimed at this desirable consumer niche. Not only did *Wired* magazine represent a vehicle for established consumer (non-ECI) products to extend and redefine their brands into both an online culture and a new niche-market; it also provided a way to incorporate (the then) culturally marginalised practices of the Internet, computing and online activity into a commercial lifestyle magazine market.

In order to reconstruct the consumption of the Internet and online culture, the publisher of *Wired* had to redefine historically the pedigree and content of the magazine within the culturally specific context of the mainstream North American publishing market[50]. The magazine's pedigree was initially redefined via press

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[50] Abrahamson states: "Approximately 12,000 different periodicals of all types are published in the Unites States. Somewhat less than 2,000 of these, representing a total circulation of over 700 million readers, can be considered consumer magazines" (Abrahamson, 2000a, p. 2).

releases, whereby *Wired* magazine was positioned, rewritten and anchored in the tradition of quality North American publishing. For example:

> Every generation has its own magazine. In the fifties it was *Life*. In the sixties, *Playboy*. In the seventies, *Rolling Stone*. In the eighties, *Vanity Fair*. In the nineties, that special magazine will be *Wired*. The digital generation has come of age (Eden Hoffman, 1995b, p. 1).

Wired: a contemporary specialist lifestyle magazine

Apart from the hyperbole, this type of content redefinition constructs a temporal genealogy of the successful contemporary North American, commercial, specialist lifestyle magazine. It also positions *Wired* magazine within this historical publishing context. On a general level, the press release signifies *Wired* as a North American consumer lifestyle magazine aimed at a specific readership. Magazines which focus on specific, rather than general, subject areas are often referred to as specialist magazines "which technically appeal to a larger audience, but in fact [are] fairly specific in focus" (Nourie & Nourie, 1990, p. ix).

A contemporary example of this within the North American magazine market is *Sports Illustrated*, which is aimed at a specific readership but has a high circulation. For example, in 1998 this magazine was listed as having a circulation figure of 338,000 (*The Folio 500*, 2000, p. 1). Conversely, *Wired* had paid circulation figures of 143,000 in 1994 and 245,000 in 1995 which signifies both a substantial circulation growth yet a much smaller magazine readership. Magazine statistics regarding circulation and readership can differ however, as Abrahamson's comments show: "The average (mean) circulation of all American consumer magazines is 442,851. Due to a large number of magazines with quite small readerships, however, the median circulation of U.S. consumer magazines is only 86,000 readers" (Abrahamson, 2000a, p. 2). Generally, however, most contemporary magazines comprising the North American consumer magazine market are extremely diverse in circulation figures and genres, yet can be regarded as specialist in content.

The contemporary specialist magazine genre became prominent in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. It arose in response to a failing national, mass magazine market and intense competition between general interest magazines competing with broadcast (colour) television and radio for advertising revenue.

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Commercial mass magazine publishers were also combating extremely high postal rates, rising paper costs, difficulties in gaining new subscriptions and complaints from advertisers that their magazines were not reaching their intended readerships (Peterson 1972, Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991, Abrahamson 1996).

The answer was to factor in economies of specificity and/or niche-marketing with the aim of delivering more specific types of readerships to advertisers. By the 1970s many commercial magazine publishers in North America displayed a trend away from delivering a mass readership to advertisers in favour of a specific readership (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 20). As Tebbel and Zuckerman state: "Circulation was now being defined not as how many people read a magazine but rather who they were" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 247).

The importance of 'who the readership was' became materially evident with the emergence of quality (also referred to as 'upmarket' and 'upscale') lifestyle magazines. These terms -- quality, upmarket and upscale -- can be used in a contemporary sense to describe both a type of magazine and the above average spending capacity of a target magazine readership. Further, in a discussion of American 19th century magazines, Peterson (1972) used the term quality to describe a type of magazine which "addressed an audience well above average in income and intellectual curiosity" (Peterson, 1972, p. 2). Peterson's quote can also be applied to the contemporary practice of "publishing for the affluent" (Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991, p. 228). According to Tebbel and Zuckerman (1991) quality/upmarket magazines in the 1980s were aimed at readers who earned [US]$50,000 or more a year.

Using these definitions we can position *Wired* as an upmarket, quality publication because its publisher defines its target readership as "college educated people who earn [US]$85,000 a year" (Eden Hoffman, 1995b, p. 1). *Wired*, as with a number of quality lifestyle magazines, represents a section of the North American commercial magazine market which "has doubled in size since 1983" (Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991, p. 298). Furthermore "Members of this market have more in common than money, in whatever quantity. They are also united by education, value systems and roughly comparable lifestyles" (Tebbel and Zuckerman 1991, p. 298).

The term lifestyle is "nebulous" argues Chaney (1996, p. 4), in that it is used to describe a wide variety of artefacts and practices ranging from identity and taste to

consumption practices[51]. Reading a magazine like *Wired* can indicate both membership of a lifestyle group and a lifestyle activity. From a marketing perspective, the term lifestyle is often used to refer to both tastes and values. Brierley (1995) along with Campbell (1995) and Dant (1999) argue that marketing, which catergorises consumers according to broad 'lifestyle' profiles and types, is often insufficient. That is, individual tastes and desires are ephemeral and cannot be rigidly pinned down, demarcated or matched with "objective criteria" (Campbell 1995, p. 113). From another perspective, as Campbell (1995, p. 113) comments, the distinction between individual taste and values is often ignored or blurred – even though taste may alter over time, values may not.

The emergence of a wide variety of lifestyle magazines coincided with the re-employment of psychographic (psychologically driven) marketing techniques. Lifestyle research "underwent a revival in the 1980s...Rather than focusing on the product, it focuses on consumers, their lifestyle, values and beliefs. Lifestyle advertising involves the reinterpretation of the consumer's self image" (Brierley, 1995, p. 32). For example:

> Lifestyle "types" are categorised on the basis of a specific personality trait. People can be virtuous, admiration seekers, pleasure seekers, security and stability seekers, anti-authority rebels who want everything their way, joiners who want to be accepted and follow others, those who don't want any responsibility or commitment, those who haven't got a clue what they want and don't really care (Generation X), materialists who want fast money and lots of it, complainers, do-gooders, survivors, achievers, belongers, experimentalists, succeeders, working-class puritans, struggling poor, resigned poor. If you are someone who likes to leave your mark and likes new things all the time, new gadgets, computers, hi-fis and new food and drink, you are an "innovator" (Brierley, 1995, p. 33).

Via press releases and editorial content, the *Wired* team rhetorically employs typical lifestyle advertising techniques and psychographic marketing approaches to categorise and address their potential readership. In many cases the ideal *Wired* reader is promoted as being an innovator in their consumption choices and an early adopter of the latest technologies. For example:

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[51] Goldman refers to lifestyle as "experiences defined by consumption of aesthetically coded sets of commodified experiences" (1992, p. 30).

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> *Wired* attracts what Lyman calls the Digital Vanguard – technology-
> savvy early adopters who can afford to purchase the latest products
> and services…*Wired* readers are the first to adopt new ideas, attitudes
> and technologies. They are the ones others seek out for advice about
> new products (Eden Hoffman, 1995b, p. 1).

This type of construction and promotion of ideal *Wired* readers as early
adopters is further announced via the paid advertising carried in the magazine, and
through editorial content. Promotional editorial rhetoric is common: "Normal people
should wait for the next model, but it's a critical status symbol for the truly wired"
(Davis, 1993, p. 33). This quote is from an editorial product review for the (then)
latest Apple Newton Message Pad. Editorial departments of the magazine, like *Fetish*
advise readers to keep ahead of their peers through the acquisition of the latest
technologies. *Fetish* is preceded in almost every issue by ECI technology advertising
that uses a similar type of promotional address for new communication technologies.
For example – "Point. Shoot. Plug it into computer. Apple's newest digital camera is
the fastest, easiest way to add high-quality photographs to your work. No film. No
waiting" (Apple Macintosh, 1994, p. 23).

Electric Word is the editorial department before *Fetish*. It provides the latest
ECI industry news, gossip and updates. When anchored together on a regular issue
basis, these editorial departments and the paid advertising accompanying them (and
sandwiched in between them) synergetically signify a constant promotional theme of
change and upgradable futures, which hail the *Wired* reader as being an early adopter
of the latest ECI technologies.

Wired's promotion of the new and the high tech (which is discussed fully in
chapter seven), signifies the magazine's reconstruction and recontextualisation of
leading edge ECI technology as an upmarket lifestyle consumer choice. The concept
of consuming the new as a lifestyle choice is, however also anchored with traditional,
established non-ECI brand names described in this thesis as consumer goods and
services. This is because *Wired*'s management categorise its advertising accounts
into two types: technology accounts (ECI goods and services) and consumer
accounts (non-ECI goods and services). However, Abrahamson (1996, p. 66) defines
advertising categorises in specialist magazines as 'generic' accounts (directly related
to the focus interest of the publication) and 'non-generic' advertising accounts. For

the sake of consistency, this thesis uses the *Wired* management's definitions to define the advertising areas that appear in the magazine.

The main quality consumer accounts advertising in 1994 and 1995 include; Luxury goods; Alcohol/Spirits; Finance/Business; Automobile Companies; Clothing; Toiletries; Travel; and Hotels/Accommodation.[52] The majority of the consumer goods and services advertised in *Wired* are established brand names. By combining established/traditional consumer goods and services with new and developing ECI technology products, the magazine publisher creates a double pitch to both new (early adopter) and brand loyal consumer groups. This strategy is naturally promoted through the magazine's press releases:

> The magazine's current technology account includes Apple, IBM, Compaq, NEC, Softimage, and Intel; consumer accounts include Absolut, Virgin Records, Saturn, Nike, Dewars, Guess Jeans, Volkswagen, HBO and Calvin Klein. *Wired* was also one of the first publications to feature the new Tanquery gin series, featuring ad character "Mr Jenkins" (Eden Hoffman, 1995e, p. 1).

As is evident in a depiction of the magazine content for issue 3(10), (see appendix 1), consumer accounts including Cathay Pacific, Levi Strauss, Dewers Whiskey, 1.A Eyeworks, Nike, Joe Boxer, Hush Puppies, Chrysler, the New York Stock Exchange, Airwalk Shoes, Virgin Records, Saab and Absolut Vodka (to name a few) are constructed as corollaries of a lifestyle which includes technology consumption promoted through technology accounts like Microsoft, IBM, Phillips, Time/Warner, Nortel, Samsung, US Robotics, Radius, Fujitsu, Motorola and Toshiba.

From one perspective, the high tech is associated with ephemeral signifiers of quality, class and style. It carries the connotation of impermanence, since the high tech inevitability becomes low tech with the passage of time. However, the quality, consumer accounts, (which are less time bound), become more contemporary when positioned as accessories of high tech culture. The producers of *Wired* are bricoleurs[53] (those who produce a different or new text, product, meaning or sign

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[52] See appendix 2 for a list of *Wired*'s regular 1994 and 1995 consumer advertising accounts.

[53] Bricolage can be used within the context of cultural studies to describe "the process of transforming the meaning of objects or symbols through novel uses or unconventional arrangements of unrelated things" (Jary & Jary, 1991, p. 51). This explanation of bricolage is, as Jarey and Jarey (1991, p. 51)

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system from a variety of other texts, materials or signs) in their construction and organisation of a specific, promotional, technology/lifestyle sign system[34]. This bricolage is signified by editorial content and paid advertising that is organised on principles of content specificity and reciprocity, where the advertisements and the editorials both work together to promote a high tech, affluent lifestyle. Furthermore, creating specific rather than general systems of meaning results from the environmental context within which particular signs circulate. An analogy for this is provided by Dant who states:

> The habitual wearing of a style of clothing, say, a woman wearing fitting trousers and a bare midriff, may have been construed as a lifestyle choice to fit with the flow of action and interaction at her evening dancing in a club. In these instances the clothes have meanings which are not properties of garments but of the garments-in-a-situation (Dant, 1999, p. 97).

Dant's idea can also be used to describe the process of signification, consumption and meaning in relation to the material magazine environment. The magazine constructs and therefore contextualises 'new' meanings – like the fashion system which, "takes new styles of clothing or home furnishings and associates them with established cultural categories and principles" (McCracken, 1990, p. 80). In this instance, promotional signs-in-a-situation are contextualised both thematically, and by the material environment wherein they exist. From a marketing viewpoint, the magazine 'environment' is effective because the experience of sign consumption is synergetic, materially specific and limited spatially.

Synergetic and thematic correlation of editorial and advertising signs are vital in constructing a promotional technology/lifestyle context. This occurs overtly or covertly, and is a common practice for *Wired* (see appendix 1 for full breakdown) and for most commercial magazines. An overt example of this is when the same

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point out, slightly modified and taken out of its original French context as defined by Claude Levi-Strauss in his book, *The Savage Mind*. Here, the term was used by Levi-Strauss to:
refer to the (bricoleur's) practice of creating things out of whatever materials come to hand – the structure and outcome being more important than the constituent parts which themselves are changed through the act of creation (Jarey & Jarey, 1991, p. 51).

[34] This is not to suggest that the sign system operating in *Wired* is by any means stable. While problematic for advertisers, one of the pleasures of reading *Wired* (like any other magazine or text) is the inherent instability of the meanings produced.

magazine issue that features an ECI personality on its covers and in its editorial also runs paid advertisements for the ECI personality's company. For example:

> Bill Gates/Microsoft, *Wired* 2(4) & 4(6)

> John Malone/Tele-Communications Inc, *Wired* 2(7)

> Ray Smith/Bell Atlantic, *Wired* 3(2)

> Frank Biondi & Ed Horowitz/Viacom, *Wired* 3(4).

> Nicholas Negroponte/MIT, *Wired* 3(11)

> John Lasseter/Pixar Animation Studios, *Wired* 3(12)

> Steve Jobs/Apple Macintosh, NeXT Computer Inc, *Wired* 4(2)

Covert examples of synergetic advertising (which also construct a high technology lifestyle context) occur through the "thematic correlation of editorial content to advertising" (McCracken, 1993, p. 38). A typical instance of this is in issue 3(10). The magazine begins with the front cover and features the promotion of digital technology in the Indy 500 racing cars. The advertising spreads featured in the front section of the magazine are for NEC, Chrysler, Motorola, Samsung and Microsoft. These advertising spreads are followed by the Table of Contents pages and include the Indy 500 feature cover story. Overt synergetic advertising through brand reciprocity occurs when editorial sections are mimicked by advertising copy. For example, (in the same issue), Fujitsu (see figure 5.1) ran a double page advertising spread that announced: "*Tired Wired*" (Fujitsu, 1995, p. 75). Eighteen pages later the same '*Tired Wired*' phrase appears in the editorial department *Electric Word*, because '*Tired Wired*' is a regular section of this editorial department[55]. This type of thematic correlation between *Wired*'s editorial and paid advertising is a common marketing strategy for corporations advertising in *Wired*.

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[55] '*Tired Wired*' lists what ECI products and ideas are 'in and out' for that month.

Figure 5.1.   Fujitsu advertisement in *Wired* 3(10).

The *Wired* high technology lifestyle context is also constructed through overt synergetic advertising that favours the magazine. This occurs when some of *Wired*'s paid advertisers include the *Wired* brand name within their adverts, or use *Wired* staff to endorse their products. One typical example of this is an advertisement for Your Personal Network (YPN) and their Internet guidebooks, which are endorsed by *Wired* editor Louis Rossetto. This creates a type of co-branding that promotes both YPN and *Wired* magazine; including promotion of the brand names, goods and services while also validating *Wired* magazine as a techno-corporate authority.

Another overt example of this practice is Random House's paid adverts, which promote the book *Being Digital*, by *Wired* senior columnist Nicholas Negroponte. The Random House adverts in *Wired* also include their website address[56]. This represents an early example of an established consumer account "extending its brand name identity" (Aaker, 1996, p. 85) onto the Internet through *Wired* magazine. Furthermore, it promotes consumption both of the actual product and of the Internet.

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[56] There are a number of consumer accounts that advertise their Internet sites in *Wired*. In 1993 however, the consumer accounts that advertised their Internet sites in the magazine were rare. The increase began in 1994 and continued. It is now standard advertising practice for advertisements in *Wired* to include their http addresses. This advertising practice also applies to many other magazines.

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In another issue, Paco Rabanne ran a one-page colour advert to promote its fragrance XS Pour Elle and its Internet site: Cybershop, with the caption "The first fragrance launched in cyberspace. http://www.cybershop.com" (Paco Rabanne, 1995, p. 29). Again, this is an example of consumer brand extension onto the Internet via the magazine. It represents synergetic cross promotion of the Paco Rabanne brand name, the Internet and *Wired* magazine (see figure 5.2).
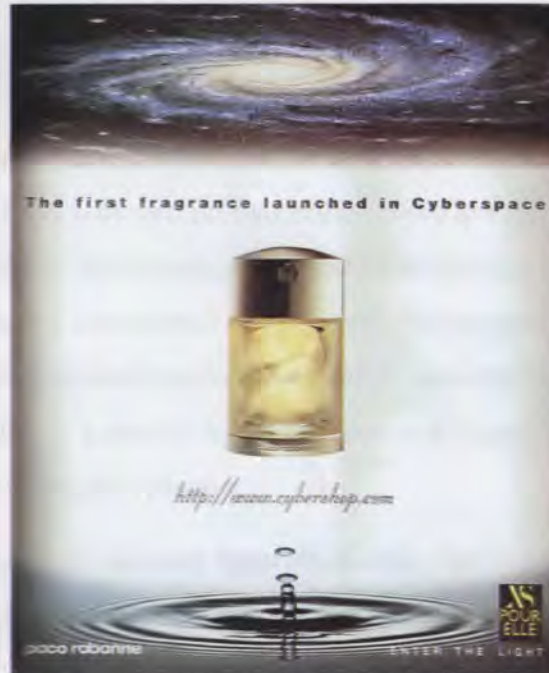
Figure 5.2.   Paco Rabanne advertisement in *Wired* 3(7).

Given that co-branding, brand name reciprocity, and thematic correlation of editorial and advertising content creates a high technology lifestyle context within the pages of the magazine, a significant added-value of this is the opportunity provided by the magazine for brand extension onto the Internet. This brand extension is reinforced via editorial stories and the unofficial (i.e. not listed in the Table of Content pages) *Wired* department, *Addlinks*. The consumption of these branded goods and services, and the Internet, is also promoted via editorial content whereby 'personalities' (either *Wired* contributors or feature subjects) appeal to readers to go onto the *HotWired* site to discuss stories which appear in *Wired*[57]. The promotional

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[57] This practice is commonplace nowadays. It can be argued however, that Wired Ventures Ltd was one of the first commercial media companies to promote this type of cross-media consumption via the Internet.

cycle established through the magazine in which co-branding and brand name extension operates on multiple levels and in sites that extend beyond the magazine itself is a complex and multi-layered ploy. What was significant at the time, however, was that *Wired* magazine hot-housed the extension of advertising onto the Internet, and therefore also promoted consumption of the Internet and CMC practices.

Lifestyle ideals and the principle of excess

It can be argued that the ideal lifestyle and the ideal reader projected by the marketing strategy of any commercial magazine should always exceed the reality as ultimately experienced by consumers. The lifestyle projection fostered by the magazine, which is based on material and symbolic consumption, is 'excessive' in that it always fuels expectations and keeps ahead of consumption patterns of its target readership acting as a spur to consume more and bigger, and to introduce the readership to new consumption practices.

For example, *Wired* editorial departments like *Fetish* promote an incredible array of products on the basis that nothing exceeds like excess in the range, type and scope of the latest, upmarket ECI technologies. These include: virtual reality (VR) body suits, geo-stationary tracking devices, home entertainment systems, industry standard computers and production technologies, digital cameras, sound systems and the like. These products are juxtaposed in *Fetish* with other 'James Bond-like' luxury lifestyle technologies such as cars, satellites, motorcycles, submarines, jet-skis and speedboats. Not only do these luxury products act as iconic signifiers for a fantastic and glamorous playboy lifestyle, but the combined wealth/glamour connotation signified in *Fetish* also becomes an important feature in the construction and mainstreaming of a computing/lifestyle ideal and the consumption of online culture.

Figure 5.3. *Fetish* products in *Wired* 2(10).

Figure 5.4. *Fetish* products in *Wired* 3(7).

Glamour is a term appropriately used to describe the *Wired* team's approach to marketing their magazine. Former *Wired* contributor Paulina Borsook, who frequently uses the term 'glamour' in her book *Cyberselfish*, states: "*Wired* was all about going for the glam and making things digital larger than life" (Borsook, 2000, p. 88). Apart from the content, the magazine also constructs and signifies being 'larger than life' in a material sense. One example of this is the silver metallic ink that borders the pages of the editorial department *Just Outta Beta* and the products reviewed in the department. The contemporary, 'techno-chic' ink acts a fashionable graphic signifier for the latest ECI technologies and alerts the not-so-competent and not-so-knowledgeable computer user that a high tech lifestyle is stylish, desirable, and pleasurable.

Pleasurability is an important marketing message. Lovibond points out, "The word 'pleasure', at all events is apt to be brought out with a flourish, as if it clinched the case for seeing progressive or creative possibilities in something previously viewed with suspicion" (Lovibond, 1993, p. 407). This is especially so when many of *Wired*'s reviewed technologies (particularly those featured in the *Fetish* department) are representative of "advanced technological systems" (Aronowitz & Menser, 1996, p. 21). For most part, these advanced technologies are beyond the purchasing reach

of even the ideal *Wired* $[US]85,000 target readership. For example, a typical product promotion in *Fetish* states: "Why spend US$600,000 on a Jaguar XJ220...when you can pick up a Scarab and go full throttle on the open sea? 43-foot Scarab Superboat: US$500,000" (Jacobs, 1994, p. 56). Examples of other *Fetish* technologies (and price ranges) include:

> McDonnell Douglas 520N helicopter [US]$735,000; issues 2(10) & 3(10)
> Sony WDA-550 76 disk jukebox [US]$112,500; issue 3(7)
> The Bitsy Aero Astro satellite [US]$100,000; issue 3(7)
> C-Questor personal submarine [US]$85,000; issue 2(9)
> The Wedge motorcycle [US]$75,000; issue 3(4)
> Mitsubishi 3000GT Spyder VR-4 [US]$64,449; issue 3(11)
> PROVISION 100VPX VR display [US]$49,600; issue 2(11)
> Toyota Supra Turbo [US]$44,100; issue 2(7)

The price of these 'top-end' products fits in with the aspirational reference groups depicted in *Wired* such as ECI billionaires like Microsoft chief Bill Gates, or NewsCorp boss Rupert Murdoch. *Fetish* products, such as powerful motor bikes and speedboats, also signify that the textually constructed techno-corporate and computer geek community participate in physically dangerous, masculine, luxurious, outdoor pursuits. The *Fetish* department specifically (and *Wired* content generally), performs both a promotional and ideological function in that the products featured in editorial departments project a purchasing power/potential of the imagined reader to an idealised limit – beyond the price required for most of the products promoted via paid advertising. Products of this price and type form part of a larger chain of promotional signifiers that confer symbolic power and prestige to the magazine, and to both the real and the ideal reader. The context of *Wired* sets the scene for 'the ultimate' in consumer spending. The magazine is a showcase for products appearing in both editorial and advertising contents. Further, because these commodities often carry excessive prices, they communicate both symbolic and economic value and prosperity. They constitute a fantastic lifestyle sign system of masculine wealth, glamour and social power that is almost always beyond the purchasing power of the reader.

It is ironic, and deliberate, that *Wired*'s preferred luxury sign system has to (for the most part) exceed what the ideal and actual reader can afford. Nevertheless,

even if you never appear on the *Wired* cover and/or can not afford the featured lifestyle, you can participate through the consumption of the magazine itself, or identify with this pattern of consumption through the purchase of technology or consumer brand names (ranging from Motorola to Calvin Klein) featured in the magazine. Failing this, one can achieve a second-order signification of high tech glamour and progressiveness by wearing the *Wired* brand name. This self-branding became available via *Wired* magazine's own stock-list of geek lifestyle clothing and accessories called *Wired Ware*. The *Wired Ware* range includes black sweatshirts, pants, tee shirts, bags and caps, all of which carry the Day-Glo orange *Wired* brand name.

Figure 5.5.   'Celebrity' *Wired Ware*   Figure 5.6.   *Wired Ware in Wired*
in *Wired* 1(4).   3(8).

Geek becomes even more 'chic' when fetish celebrities like Princess Diana and Bill Clinton are (via morphing) depicted in the *Wired Ware* section wearing a *Wired* tee shirt. The significance of this morphed effect lies not only in the co-branding of the purchaser with the *Wired* product and with celebrity identities, but also the linking of subject identity with the power of techno-corporate industry. As Davidson states, "The identity of the consumer is tied up with the identity not only of the brand, but of the company that produces it. Lifestyle becomes the nexus between corporate identity on the one hand and our personal lives on the other" (Davidson, 1992, p. 178).

Re-Americanising the nerd: techno-corporate geek chic

Wired magazine serves the function of celebrating, personalising and promoting the North American techno-corporate world while mainstreaming ECI technologies and ECI companies. The covers and the periodic and serial editorial structure, rhetorically create and (re)introduce for the *Wired* readership a community of techno-corporate personalities. These personalities also promote and personalise many transnational ECI companies by providing a face behind the company for the reader. For example, Bill Gates is characterised as 'the face that launched a thousand chips'. Personalising the company by focusing on the ECI CEOs as likable and quirky individuals also depoliticises the political and economic machinations of the companies these people work for or (indeed) own. Generally, the stylistic (and at times humorous) visualisation and narrativisation of the techno-corporate sphere provides both a personality and a re-Americanised cultural biography of the computing and IT environment for *Wired* readers.

Specifically, many of *Wired*'s cover subjects own or hold positions of power in companies that advertise in the magazine. This raises and personalises the profiles of *Wired*'s North American advertisers (e.g. Microsoft, Netscape, Bell Atlantic and Viacom) for the reader. In doing this, the magazine encourages other TNCs to advertise within it. This rhetorical focus and the association with powerful American techno-corporate personalities and their companies assists in realigning the reader's subjective positioning with white, male discourses of corporate power and control of: companies, workers and technologies, and technological systems. It positions the reader on the side of 'the bosses', and as a beneficiary of the techno-corporate revolution.

The 'manufacturing of consent' (Chomsky & Herman, 1988, p. xi) for these techno-corporate entrepreneurs is constructed primarily through editorial features and personality profiles which occur in every issue of *Wired*. Many of the magazine's feature articles focus on the individual techno-corporate and/or ECI personalities and their achievements. What is always signified to the reader, via editorial commentary, is the celebration of techno-corporate success and the amount that the reader has in common with the featured CEO, in terms of vision, passion and commitment.

To achieve this end, *Wired*'s editorials readapt a variety of writing styles. These include analysis, report, commentary, gossip, lifestyle and personality journalism. Janello and Jones (1991, p. 30) refer to "personality journalism" as "news of the day...[interpreted] through profiles of the people making the news" (Janello & Jones 1991, p. 30)[53]. The different styles of journalism are combined in *Wired* with another historical form 'lifestyle journalism', also used by many 19th century magazines and sometimes called the 'celebrity article' which:

> collected memorable facts into an illusion of intimacy with the great man or woman. The 'visit' admitted readers to the home or country retreat of a painter, writer, or statesman, and documented what could be called 'lifestyle' (Ohmann, 1996, p. 230).

In the case of *Wired*, lifestyle is often (re)documented within the context of the techno-corporate business profile, which is set in the business leader's workplace or (to a lesser extent), against a background of people involved in ECI projects. This narrative genre includes profiles of a significant number of North American ECI company CEOs, as well as computer programmers, designers, artists and people working within the fields of computing, business, science, media, academia and communications. *Wired*'s editorial material often promotes these people collectively as the 'new information elite', 'the most powerful people on the planet today', or 'the digerati'. Unlike *Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, Interview,* or *The Face,* most of *Wired*'s CEOs or digerati subjects (with the exception of Bill Gates) are not usually, well-known media celebrities. By appearing in *Wired* these relatively unknown, and culturally specific people gain a media profile, become re-constructed as celebrities of the techno-corporate realm, and lend *Wired* credibility, speaking on behalf of the ECI industries in which they work.

Reconstructing "the geek[s] as chic" (Borsook, 2000, p. 120) is achieved via *Wired*'s journalistic (and in particular, graphic) treatment of its subjects and topics. For example dry (yet highly political) subjects – such as technology policy or the business machinations of communication CEOs or Microsoft employees – are written of in a variety of journalistic styles and presented in a stunning visual format.

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[53] Janello and Jones (1991, p. 30) believe personality journalism became prominent in America during the 1970s with magazines such as *People.*

Special effects and contemporary graphic design create an impression of visual excess, which spectacularises *Wired*'s topics and human subjects. Dry editorial subject matter is rearticulated via design whereby, for example, many scientists, programmers and CEO's are visually constructed as 'having a good time' (see figures 3.3, 4.22 & 6.4). This signification often contradicts and livens what may be dense, theoretical or complex editorial subject matter: ECI business, topics and issues. What is significant is how many of *Wired*'s featured editorial subjects are represented via cover or inside portraits reconstructed through digital special effects; often to the point where the special effects become the key signifier, rather than the individual character him/herself. This signifies the pleasure, glamour and power of identity reconstruction through technology, and through technological association. Secondly, these practices signify that a techno-corporate business lifestyle mediated through technology and digital effects is fun, hip and happening.

Converging business and leisure through technology

Convergence is one of the most consistent features of *Wired*'s construction of a techno-corporate lifestyle. Building on telecommunications systems as connecting home and work, business and pleasure, the magazine constructs communications technologies as agents, which allow business and work to become a pleasurable lifestyle activity. For example, *Wired*'s one-page editorial department *Deductible Junkets* announces up-and-coming US and global ECI conferences. This editorial usually provides an upmarket tourist review of a particular host city in terms of sights, accommodation and leisure activities. For example, issue 2(4) featured a picture of a skier aloft a snowy mountain. Below this was the introductory caption, which stated "If you're heading to Banff for 4CYBERCONF" Having identified the delectable nature of the junket, the editorial went on to say:

> Nestled within the majestic Canadian Rockies, and in one of Canada's first National Parks, Banff is a pristine, glittering example of a gentle resort town. If you'll be travelling to this wonderland for 4CYBERCONF...a multitude of indoor and outdoor activities will complement this trip (*Deductible Junkets*, 1994, p. 126).

In every issue the *Deductible Junkets* department reinforces the blurring of boundaries between work and pleasure whereby techno-corporate business becomes

equated with leisure lifestyles and pleasurable activities. It regularly announces to its readership that the ideal *Wired* reader is a seasoned traveller who can afford to stay in luxury accommodation and venture (physically) overseas. Luxury accommodation and travel is further signified as part of the techno-corporate lifestyle through the regular inclusion of, for example, advertisements for Cathay Pacific airlines, and the Chateau Marmont – an exclusive Los Angeles Hotel.

Paid advertisements provide the most overt signifiers that new communication technologies converge work and leisure. For example, Nortel Networks announce: "What do you call an application that makes phone, fax and e-mail accessible from anywhere? Actually, it's called computer telephony integration. Cool. The latest addition to Nortel's portfolio of business applications" (Nortel Networks, 1995, p. 38). Although the words sound technical, the image depicts the outdoor activity of café dining, with an elegant table, cappuccino, menu, vase of flowers, and laptop. In the same issue an advert for Fujitsu promotes the computer and CMC as the virtual office: "Escape the office without leaving it behind. These days your office can be anywhere you do business. Whether you're downtown or in your dining room, you need to say in touch" (Fujitsu, 1995a, p. 75). One page prior to this, Toshiba states "You can do anything with Timm. Write a speech. Zap an alien. Speak to the world. See a horror flick. Make a presentation. Get into shape. Solve a mystery. Meet Timm. The Toshiba integrated multimedia monitor" (Toshiba, 1995, p. 72). Not only do these advertisements blur the notion of home and office, business, pleasure and leisure but they also converge the notion of IT consumers and IT professionals; producers and consumers; mass-produced appliances and creative art forms.

Average consumers are also positioned 'within' the ECI industry simply by reading the magazine, and are located techno-corporately in relation to their aspirational reference group: their ECI featured personalities. A sense of getting to know the latest inside industry gossip, and leading edge technology and business developments, is conveyed to the reader through editorial features and, particularly, the editorial department *Electric Word*. This provides gossip, information, news and a 'who's who' of the ECI industry. Usually, 'who's who' personalities are affluent, white, North American males.

Wired's predominantly male editorial subjects, and male editorial contributors, combine to construct a masculine high tech discourse for the magazine's readers. High technology is once again (re)positioned in relation to gender and class ideologies. For example, *Wired*'s covers consistently anchor ECI technology within the context of white, educated, socially and economically powerful, Western men. Often, the image is manipulated to indicate physical prowess. These techno-corporate actors are constructed as representative of an elite high tech community. Furthermore, as Green who cites Wajcman states: "In our culture to be in charge of the very latest technology signifies being involved in directing the future and so it is a highly valued and mythologised activity" (Wajcman, 1991, p. 144 cited in Green, 2001, p. 212). Green continues:

> Such activity is quintessentially a masculine one, and particularly associated with young, educated, highly paid western men. When technological competence is being gauged and discussed, there is a disproportionate emphasis given to *new* technology – technology which is jealously guarded, difficult to find out about, and the hardest to use (Green, 2001, p. 212).

While this area is analysed further in chapter six, *Wired*'s covers and editorial content conservatively reinscribe the mythologised construction of high technology as representing a masculine, white, educated, affluent class. Even when *Wired*'s male cover subjects are depicted with cartoon avatars, the humour is renegotiated by the magazine's editorials. These inform the reader that male cover subjects have, in real life, varying degrees of actual power and authority within the techno-corporate sphere. Even if the reader cannot afford to occupy this powerful, affluent social space themselves in their everyday lived reality; they can gain access (regardless of gender) to these people, technologies and technological practices through the pages of *Wired*. Notions of power and prestige are communicated via the magazine. As Aronowitz and Menser state:

> Both subjectivity and agency are wrapped up in technological systems. To have 'power' and 'prestige' is to possess or be able to access the most advanced technological systems (whether a private jet, CD player, or laptop) (Aronowitz & Menser, 1996, p. 21).

In marketing terms this relationship between reader and content – which offers psycho-emotional access to the power and prestige of ECI leadership – is

articulated overtly through products which are editorially reviewed and/or advertised. It is also articulated covertly through the individuals or groups that appear in the magazine. These act as both "Reference groups [which] serve as a point of comparison for individual consumers...[and] symbolic group[s]...[e.g.] professional golfers may be a symbolic group for a weekend golfer" (Schiffman et al, 1997, p. 311).

Either as symbolic or reference groups, *Wired*'s editorial subjects provide the pinnacle of techno-corporate achievement against which *Wired*'s readers compare themselves and with which its readers are encouraged to identify. Most commercial magazines provide some form of aspirational group for their readers (e.g. *Vogue*, *Rolling Stone*). Nonetheless, Borsook notes that *Wired* has "a cross-generational appeal" (Borsook, 2000, p. 138) and provides "a pillowbook full of dreams for the young guns to aspire to" (Borsook, 2000, p. 138). Thus *Wired* represents a form of masculine handbook for its 'ideal' 35-year-old, target demographic.

The textually constructed and imagined thirty-something, *Wired* community member, is offered an older, successful, white, techno-corporate patriarch as the model of success in the form of a relevant CEO or ECI company owner. 'He' is the symbolic archetype aspiration. The youthful precursor identity -- the white, computer graduate -- is also projected as a heroic member of the *Wired* community and as an ultimate contender for the glittering techno-corporate prizes.

The mainstreaming of computer culture is thus represented through the magazine's reinscribing of its younger nerds as techno-corporate aspirants rather than as the culturally marginalised computer geeks, hackers and crackers[59]. The *Wired* reference group for its nerd readers comprises (judging by the covers and editorial content), famous techno-corporate businessmen like Bill Gates, rather than famous computer crackers like Kevin Mitnick. One typical example of this dynamic is an editorial feature cover story called "Microserfs. Seven Days in the life of

[59] A cracker is defined in *Wired Style* as: "An intruder, one who breaks into computer systems, 'cracking' them" (Hale, 1996, p. 66). The term hacker is used to describe: "A skilled computer programmer, or engineer who loves a techno challenge especially one that involves accessing and manipulating another individual's or corporation's computer" (Hale, 1996, p. 70). Difference is constructed via the positive and negative connotations attached to words and phrases like -'intruder' and 'skilled computer programmer'. It signifies a need to control and reinscribe computing practices and stereotypes which support the capitalist ideology.

Generation Microsoft" in issue 2(1) which was written by *Wired* contributor and *Generation X* author, Douglas Coupland.

The feature article comprises a fictitious, day-in-the-life, week-long, diary-based, mockumentary about a young Microserf (a Microsoft employee) constructed as a 'wannabe techno-corporate contender': that is a white, male, middle class, twenty-something, American computer graduate who works for Microsoft. The 'dreams, hopes and aspirations' theme centred on when and whether the young Microserf would get a job promotion and ultimately achieve what every Microserf dreams of – the e-mail from Bill Gates. What the story represents is a contemporary 'boys' own adventure' for nerds, represented through this young Microserf''s techno-corporate (rather than cyberpunk) rite of passage negotiating the hierarchical offices of Microsoft. The magazine's story-format narrativises for its readers the techno-corporate, career path aspirations of a young, nerd, graduate. The story's content and mode of address speaks to ideal and actual *Wired* readers who may hold similar occupations – thus providing a bridge between the constructed and ideal readership, and the constructed and imagined lifestyles. The featured narrative also serves to reinforce the success of *Wired*'s other techno-corporate subjects who have achieved their senior positions while avoiding Microserfdom.

Whether the textual projection is that of the junior Microserf, or of the older, successful, techno-corporate CEO, *Wired*'s editorial content invites reader identification with a textually constructed, masculine techno-corporate community. *Wired* magazine's covers and editorial content function both as convergent, intermediary textual spaces that connect their aspirational (and symbolic) reference group[60] with the constructed target demographic, and with actual readers. The magazine contains composite elements of these aspirational and actual groups, which signify similarity and difference. For example, the aspirational groups that feature in *Wired* editorial matter predominately comprise male ECI professionals that are – on average – older than the 35 year old male (and female) target profile described in the magazine's press releases. Further, the personalities and groups offered as

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[60] Schiffman et al define an aspirational reference group as "a group in which a person does not hold membership and does not have face-to-face contact, but wants to be a member" (Schiffman et al, 1997, p. 314). The interactive nature of some online properties like *HotWired* alters this notion of aspirational reference group as defined by Schiffman et al (1997), in that Bill Gates could be a contributor to an online discussion.

aspirational role models by the magazine are usually more affluent, famous, successful, powerful and knowledgeable than the publisher's target readership profile.

Thus there is a clear, but slight, difference between how the magazine publisher constructs the readership via target demographic data and, the aspirational techno-corporate community and lifestyle projected on the covers and throughout the magazine. As discussed previously, these various constructions contribute to the formation of the magazine's editorial persona . One of the traditional functions of a magazine's editorial persona is the construction of similarity and difference between the magazine's ideal, target and actual readerships. As Abrahamson points out:

> In any consideration of a particular magazine's editorial persona, it is revealing to contrast it with an intuitive estimate of the characteristics of the publication's average reader. In virtually every instance, the persona of the magazine was slightly older, somewhat better educated and more affluent, more widely traveled and certainly more sophisticated than the magazine's average reader. As a result the editorial persona was ideally suited for the role of guide, counselor, friend, and adviser to the reader – which in the case of most special-interest magazines, was the essence of its function (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 57).

Given that Abrahamson (1996) is describing the function of the editorial persona of 1960s special-interest magazines, it is clear how contemporary magazines like *Wired* also construct an editorial persona, contrasting the similarity and difference grounded in textually constructed aspirational reference groups and ideal target demographics. Another function of this editorial persona is to construct and promote a high-tech, techno-corporate lifestyle. Abrahamson's point here indicates again that *Wired* is a continuation of an established magazine tradition, rather than a reinvention.

Paid advertising also contributes significantly to this editorial persona of *Wired*. Advertising is an integral component that combines with the editorial content to help construct the magazine's identity as a complete package. When considered within this context, the magazine persona, (*qua* identity), is also a form of reciprocal covert and overt advertising for itself and for its paid advertisers (McCracken, 1993, p. 31). In particular, *Wired*'s advertising promotes the construction and consumption of high technology, CMC and the Internet as a lifestyle practice. In so doing, the

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publisher successfully creates *Wired* magazine as an intermediary 'agent' for the co-branding of established and emergent technology and other consumer products and services, and relocates these onto the Internet. This dynamic is not surprising considering *Wired*'s historical pedigree, where it came from, its purpose and the timing of its launch in 1993.

Conclusion

When it was launched in 1993 *Wired* magazine was, like most commercial magazines, a material and symbolic product that allowed readers and advertisers to "fix their bearings in the fluid social space of that moment" (Ohmann, 1996, p. 230). For the publisher of *Wired* that moment was a concept initially constructed in the magazine form and marketed as 'the online future'.

Wired's publisher seduced potential and actual consumer and advertising markets with the lure of being an element of the 'leading edge'. The magazine formed a bridge to the Internet, online interaction and associated goods and services. The currency attached to this investment was culturally symbolic, material and economic. The culturally symbolic value of the magazine included the promotion of its capacity as an intermediary, a virtual socio-cultural and political link to 'the future' – not only in terms of the Internet, but in terms of any potential online economy to follow.

Marketing the construction of, and consumption for, the Internet and online culture was a process of media (re)construction and promotion that demystified by valorising and incorporating geek/nerd culture, a high tech business-as-pleasure lifestyle and CMC into the mainstream North American publishing sector. This marketing process included historically reconstructing (and re-Americanising) the nascent *Wired* magazine, and promoting the consumption of online practices, as a desirable and fashionable, and culturally specific, North American lifestyle choice. In so doing, computer culture (and some of its adjunct subculture groups such as hackers and Microserfs) once deemed as cult or marginal became a commodified part of this mainstream, commercial publishing project.

The success in marketing 'the geek' as a chic, corporate, identity lies in the publisher's choice of medium, editorial practices and the timing of the magazine's

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launch. In retrospect it is evident that there was fitness between the commercial possibilities of the Internet, the synergetic possibilities of print and online media, and the opportunities this conjunction posed for relocating brand name products in upmarket print and futuristic digital media. This process of commodification heralded the promotion of consumer goods and services onto the Internet. The publisher of *Wired* demonstrated this fitness through a magazine that successfully integrated current and developing ECI technologies and services with established consumer product brands. Rather than create a new type of medium, the publisher created another genre of lifestyle magazine to occupy a niche in the commercial North American magazine market. What made *Wired* unique was a marketing concept that promoted both, the consumption of upmarket consumer products and mainstreaming (what was then) the marginalised practices of computer culture and online culture. The result was an ideal projection of a 'new', yet evolutionary, techno-corporate lifestyle based on 'high' technology consumption and online communication practices.

CHAPTER SIX

Critical Issues

This chapter critically interrogates notions of the techno-lifestyle constructed in *Wired* magazine. What is implied is a cultural collision between society as we know it, and the techno-lifestyle anticipated by the *Wired* visionaries. This cultural collision occurs at the nexus of: cyberdemocracy and restricted cyber-access; social hierarchies of race and gender; and participation as consumption reinforced through the *Wired* text. The notion of public interest espoused in the early issues of *Wired* is specifically articulated to privilege the techno-corporate world. In exploring *Wired* magazine's early incarnation, this chapter reveals the mid-1990s vision of the CMC future as the techno-lifestyle of the successful American male – nerdy no more. The argument is that the cyber is seen less as a site for empowerment, and more as a re-powering vehicle for expressing and consolidating existing patterns of power and advantage and propelling these forward into the next stage of corporate development.

Cyberdemocracy and restricted cyber-access

> *Wired* never set out to be anyone's hero. All we wanted – and still want – is to report accurately on the future that's arriving. The *Wired* editorial line today is exactly the same as it was when it was launched. We believe as strongly in Mitch Kapor's vision of a Jeffersonian Democracy in cyberspace today as when we published it in our first year (Rossetto cited in Hudson, 1997, p. 236).

This quote, by *Wired*'s co-founder and then-editor, Louis Rossetto was part of an interview with David Hudson, which appeared in Hudson's book *Rewired*. It is one of the many texts which revisits the hype surrounding what was commonly referred to as the digital revolution in the USA during the mid-1990s. The initial media hype surrounding virtual reality, the possibilities of CMC, the Internet and online global communication has died down somewhat. In some respects the then 'techno-possibility' stories of a democratic and philosophical bent are being overlaid with the now real-time stories (e.g. *Time Warner/MCI* partnership) of actual capital

advantage, regarding old and new media mergers, deals and machinations as companies re-shuffle to position themselves within an online services communication context. This new jockeying for position raised and re-played many age old critical issues regarding equity, access, identity politics, information rich and poor, power and control.

These, and other, critical issues appeared in *Wired* magazine which was (and remains) one of the most strident voices promoting technological change and the free market ideology. Self-professed 'voice of the digital revolution' *Wired* promoted social, cultural, economic and political change through technological convergence. Its affluent, target readership is presented with a masculine, utopian, market-driven, techno-narrative regarding the convergence of telecommunications, computing and the traditional media, all of which *Wired* positioned historically for its readers as the biggest paradigm shift since the industrial revolution.

Wired thus provides a particular and compelling and sometimes contradictory vision, a history of how communication, technology and change are perceived and projected into the future. As both a historical and cultural artefact *Wired* represents one of the many sites "for negotiating issues crucial to the conduct of social life; among them who is inside and outside, who may speak, who may not, and who has the capacity to be believed" (Marvin, 1988, p. 4).

Described by Dery (1999, p. 2) (to the chagrin of editor Louis Rossetto), as a "bully pulpit for corporate futurists, laissez-faire evangelists, and prophets of privatization", *Wired* presents and renegotiates, 19th and 20th century debates of access and equity, representation, power and control, in the context of online communication. This is compelling because many of these "bully pulpit" (Dery, 1999, p. 2) debates are articulated by *Wired* associates who can be described as US-based power players, who operate at the top levels of corporate, peak-body, government, and academic institutions.

Dery's view is not surprising when we acknowledge *Wired*'s pedigree. The San Francisco based magazine was created as a techno-corporate product with initial backing from individuals within the American financial, industrial, software and academic industries. As the offspring of such parents, the magazine naturally champions American techno-libertarians and digerati like Nicholas Negroponte, Alvin Toffler, George Gilder, John Perry Barlow and Newt Gingrich. In doing so, the

magazine has successfully niche-marketed a 'localised' affluent, info-rich, techno-lifestyle and techno-libertarian ideology which was (during this time) distributed internationally by publishing giant Hearst Corporation. Hudson (1997) describes the libertarian ideology as "a mutant cross between San Franciscan psychedelia – the ferocious entrepreneurial spirit (and its accompanying greed) of the 80s – and the massive wave of disenchantment with all things governmental that has swept through the 90s" (Hudson, 1997, p. 173).

The utopian techno-libertarian ideology espoused through *Wired* is however, tempered (depending on where you are positioned) firstly, by an almost right wing, binary attitude regarding speaking positions – who will be inside (and who will be outside) the world of CMC, signifying that the online community is not so much fluid as it is gated[61]. Participation in the *Wired* vision of the online world is dependent on social and financial status, education and knowledge, as well as – keeping up with the latest technologies. For example, universal access to the (American) CMC world is, according to Rossetto (1997), "only an issue in an environment of certain scarcity" (Rossetto cited in Hudson, 1997, p. 245). He further states:

> Do we ensure universal access to air, water, food, clothing, television sets? No, we only do it to regulated, monopoly communication services. The monopoly is going away with deregulation. The increased supply of telecommunication services (wireless, cellular, satellite) is driving the cost of access affordability for the entire population. Access is a non-problem (Rossetto cited in Hudson, 1997, p. 245).

Rossetto's view is reiterated on the cover on *Wired* 2(9) which, announces "Universal Service: An idea whose time is past". This cover headline is followed up with a feature story that states:

> Universal service turns on its head the usual way of setting prices. Instead of starting from costs, universal service starts from a calculation of how much a customer [not citizen] should ideally have to pay – "affordability," in the legislative jargon. The goal is to maximize social benefit rather than cost...Universal service requires regulators to decide what services people should have and what prices they should pay. Service made cheap by cross-subsidy offers equality,

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[61] As pointed out by Ess (personal communication, August, 2002) "Steve Jones uses the phrase "Gates-ed communities (2001, p. 56) to refer to this kind of phenomenon".

yes, but also fewer choices, fewer and bigger companies, and fewer opportunities for innovation. In could, in fact, derail the entire information economy (Browning, 1994, p. 102).

This type of argument which limits technology access debates within the confines of business and economics, cost effectiveness and individual consumer choice remains a consistent one in *Wired* throughout 1993-1996. As is the contradictory nature of most commercial magazine texts, however, the magazine does run counter views that focus on social rather than economic cost. Nonetheless, these views do not appear however on covers or in feature stories. Rather, they appear less frequently, and in less spectacular areas of the magazine such as the reader letters section and columns – signifying a lower level of importance and less dominant speaking positions. Together, this arrangement of placement and inclusion of views signifies to the *Wired* readership, "a hierarchy of discourse" (McCabe cited in O'Shaughnessy, 1999, p. 157) regarding what constitutes a 'critical issue' in relation to the online 'digital revolution' and what does not.

It can be argued that the discourse of 'individualism rather than social responsibility' makes it easy to accuse *Wired* of ignoring and perpetuating notions of information rich and information poor. This is not an issue that only affects *Wired*, however. An assumption that access to CMC is universally available (to people in developed countries) overlooks a myriad of other issues which impede access. For example, when Western Australian university students were exploring these issues in a communications unit, New Communication Technologies, the debate regarding why everyone is not 'wired' regularly resulted in comments from affluent and educated young 'techies' that computing facilities are available to 'the public' – it is just up to 'them' to use it. Attached to this *Wired*-like logic is the positioning of IT as the panacea for social issues with little thought about the other cultural, economic or social factors which may inhibit the consumption practices and characteristics, required to be 'info-rich'.

This logic forms part of a techno-deterministic, "silicon social" (Dery, 1999, p. 2), quasi-Darwinian philosophy of survival in the digital age – you are either wired or not, connected or not, techno-literate or info-poor, in or outside the digital debate: and those who are in are fitter than those who are out. This philosophy was summed up in an advertisement for *Wired* magazine which stated: "This is the digital

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revolution, you are either part of the steam roller or part of the road" (*Details* magazine cited in Hudson, 1997, p. 220). It is this sort of philosophy that makes the techno-corporate advertising in *Wired* magazine a magnet for criticism from media academics and digerati analysts. Whether the publisher likes it or not, *Wired* magazine is positioned as an agent for the techno-corporate world of computer-mediated goods and services.

Re-powering the powerful?

"The real significance of the Information Revolution is that a worldwide network centered on true many-to-many communication is our first chance since the Industrial Revolution to take large scale power back into our own hands" (Cappio, 1994, p. 71). This quote from Cappio's *Wired* article, "Bad Attitude: Business as usual on the infobahn", reiterates a common yet ambiguous rhetorical theme about using communication technology to take back, and reclaim, power from the government to 'the people'.

While carrying on the historical magazine-tradition of muckraking, the article voices its distrust of government control and regulation of online technologies and activities. *Wired*'s often-voiced distrust of all things government signifies a radical resurface of 1960s ideologies interfaced with 'alternative' techno-libertarian ethics. More to the point is how government is constructed as impeding the growth of online technologies which, according to *Wired*, should be left to the free market – a view consistently shared by ECI magnates like Rupert Murdoch and Bill Gates.

Apart from the plethora of Microsoft advertising which appears in *Wired*, Gates is the only person to have featured on the covers twice (1993 and 1997). Gates shares the same view as *Wired* about the role of government. This is articulated in an interview Gates gave the magazine: "I hate the term information superhighway...it implies that the government should build this thing, and I don't happen to think that's wise or necessary. The government does have a role: it's to clear the way" (Rockin' with Mr Bill, 1994, p. 166). A mistrust of (any) government is understandable, yet *Wired*'s 1960s dictum of 'power to the people' often translates as 'power to the techno-corporate individuals'. Ironically, these individuals (who were themselves 1960s people) seem to fail to notice that only the already-powerful are re-powered via *Wired*'s vision of techno-lifestyle.

This 'power to the techno-corporate people' discourse, consistently reinforced by the magazine, begins each month via *Wired*'s covers which almost always feature economic and socially powerful (male) techno-corporate individuals. *Wired*'s promotion of this particular social group via its covers and editorial content re-powers through re-invention: the wealthy, white, corporate male is reinvented as the wealthy, white, techno-corporate male.

Men feature on thirty-one of the thirty-seven covers between issues 1(4) and 4 (4)[61]. Specifically, twenty-two covers depict individual males. Four covers depict 'buddy/business partner shots' of two males. One cover depicts a group male 'business buddy' shot, another depicts a male group shot, while, three covers depicted male cartoon parodies. Finally, three covers feature individual women (Sherry Turkle, Laurie Anderson and an unidentified model), one cover featured a mixed gender group, and two covers featured graphic illustration.

In total, what these covers signify are a number of masculine identities, yet two dominant masculine stereotypes emerge – the white techno-corporate male and (to a lesser extent), the computer geek turned technology expert/business entrepreneur. These include Bill Gates (Microsoft), Steve Jobs (Apple), Robyn and Rand Miller (Myst CD-ROM creators), Ray Smith (Bell Atlantic CEO), John Malone (Tele-Communications Inc.), Frank Biondi (Viacom), Ed Horowitz (Viacom) and Steve Blank (CEO Rocket Science Games Inc.).

The magazine also constructs certain masculine technocultural stereotypes and social groups, some of which are depicted on its covers, and appear within the magazine generally. These include technocultural sub-groups such as hackers, ravers, rocket scientists, cryptographers and organisations like the EFF. Finally, a small percentage of artists, politicians and academics connected with the technoculture area also feature on *Wired*'s covers. For example:

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[61] This does not include a special edition of *Wired* issued in January 1996 called *'Scenarios – the future of the future'*. This cover did not however, feature any male or female subjects.

> Issue 1(4), William Gibson (cyberpunk[63] author)

> Issue 2(3), Laurie Anderson (musician)

> Issue 2(9), Penn Jillette (media personality/magician)

> Issue 3(1), Marshall McLuhan (media academic)

> Issue 3(5), Brian Eno (musician)

> Issue 3(7), Richard Dawkins (scientist)

> Issue 3(8), Newt Gingrich (Republican politician)

> Issue 4(4), Sherry Turkle (academic)

Given this inclusion of more than one representation of techno-corporate masculinity, particular social forces and hierarchies are positioned as operating within the re-imagined *Wired* CMC world. Bill Gates is, in this respect, the ultimate *Wired* 'cover boy' – representing a symbolic, and convergent, hybrid of powerful businessman and computer nerd although naturally cast as a 'nerd no more' (see figure 3.3).

Wired's computer nerd narratives represent a shift in masculine power whereby computer geeks re-power themselves through technology and astute business practices. With the aid of visual techniques/technologies such as montage and morphing, they also acquire hard bodies along with large corporate empires. The nerd narrative (which is inherently rooted in masculine mythology) is textually anchored by *Wired* to narratives of corporate power and digital revolution. This revolution is constructed as planned, instigated, controlled and fought over by socially and technologically powerful businessmen. For example issue 2(7)'s cover headline announced "Infobahn Warrior – John Malone on the Telco-Cable Wars. His amazing Wired Interview." Malone (who was at the time CEO of the US company Tele-Communications Inc.) has his image 'reconstructed' into a scene from the futuristic, dystopian, Australian movie *Mad Max 2* (re-titled *Road Warrior* for the American market).

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[63] Cyberpunk is a term described by Hale (1996) as "Science fiction genre in which high tech goes lowlife. Postmodern pulp" (1996, p. 66). According to Featherstone and Burrows (1995):
> The term cyberpunk was first used in a Bruce Bethke short story called 'Cyberpunk', published in the November 1983 issue of *Amazing Stories*...It has since been used to describe writers such as William Gibson, especially *Neuromancer* (1984), Pat Cadigan, Bruce Sterling, Lewis Shiner and Greg Bear (Featherstone & Burrows, 1995, p. 7).

Figure 6.1. **Mighty morphin'** **Figure 6.2.** *Mad Max 2*'s road
telco-warrior John Malone. **warrior Mel Gibson.**

In *Wired*'s reconstruction (figure 6.1), Malone's identity is transformed from telecommunications businessman to 'infobahn warrior', signifying the corporate telecommunication CEO as a tough maverick, 'lone wolf' and formidable competitor. This cover image feature story is about a failed business deal between Malone's company, Tele-Communications Inc (TCI) and its then rival – Bell Atlantic. Even though Malone is constructed and positioned within a futuristic setting on the cover, the story promotes the 'CEO as corporate warrior' theme through journalistic descriptions and dramatic narrative style, rhetorically connoting traditional masculine metaphors of 'business as war' and 'survival of the fittest'. For example, the opening lines of the editorial feature read:

> 'Converging alliances' is supposed to be the catch phrase of the information age, but in many ways the emerging digital landscape looks like a vast battlefield of colliding empires. Huge cable TV companies war against mammoth regional and national telephone companies for control of information highways. Sometimes the cable and telephone companies war among themselves, and occasionally they form truce-building cross alliances. Behind the front lines of these business skirmishes, corporate generals plot strategy, forge Machiavellian allegiances, and manoeuvre over a corpse-strewn marketplace (Kline, 1994, p. 86).

Some months later issue 3(2) follows up the Malone/TCI story and the 'techno-warrior' discourse through a cover shot and feature interview with the head of TCI's major competitor, Ray Smith, CEO of Bell Atlantic (figure 6.3).


Figure 6.3.   Ray 'Conan' Smith – Bell Atlantic CEO.

The cover headline states – "The Cable Slayer Bell Atlantic CEO Ray Smith explains why Cable is Dead". Smith is visually reconstructed as the character, 'Conan the Barbarian' who (like the character of Mad Max) represents another form of hypermediated, masculine warrior. Smith's 'barbarian' persona also denotes a comical parody due to the designers' inclusion of a traditional nerd (e.g. Clark Kent) signifier: reading glasses. This construction of Smith as a tongue-in-cheek, nerd warrior contrasts with Malone's 'sexier' road warrior image. In both these examples (6.1 & 6.3) however, the magazine uses language and images to associate the discourses of technology and business (representative of masculine social and economic power) with the discourse of masculine physical power.

While reinscribing masculine hegemony for the Internet age, the magazine also reinforces traditional social hierarchies and hegemonic power with regards to race and gender. The discourse is almost entirely about white Anglo-Saxon masculinity. African-American people do not feature prominently in *Wired*'s CMC narrative, although the magazine did feature an African-American male on its cover on one occasion (figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4.   Homeboy hacker. *Wired* 2(12).

Unlike *Wired*'s other techno-corporate male cover subjects, this subject is a model constructed to represent a fictionalised, rather than real-life, identity. He does not have any of the usual *Wired* nerdy or corporate signifies, like reading glasses, suit or tie. Instead he has a 'homeboy hairdo', and grungy, working class, flannelette shirt. This identity (figure 6.4) is constructed to represent a computer hacker involved in an online racial fight with a rival gang. This type of construction perpetuates the stereotype of the African-American male as gangland criminal. It also positions this ethnic group on the social margins, if not outside, the techno-corporate world of power and success.

Women as a social group have actually featured more in *Wired* (covers and editorial) than African-Americans (but this is saying very little). The most notable 'real life' examples of this female representation are academic Sherry Turkle and musician Laurie Anderson. They (plus an unidentified female subject) are the only women to make the covers of *Wired* from 1993 to October 1996. Not only does this signify a minimal speaking position for women within the techno-corporate narrative but it also constructs this speaking position according to social class, with both Turkle and Anderson representing American, professional, educated, white, affluence.

Considering that the cover is the most important advertisement for a magazine, men were signified to *Wired* readers as being the dominant group promoted by the magazine between 1993 - 1996. During this time, however, women did however appear more frequently in *Wired*'s feature articles (nine times) than on its covers (two times). Nonetheless, it is men who remain the key focus of *Wired*'s feature articles, while women remain marginalised as a social group in the *Wired* vision, and are disempowered through their lack of representation. When referring to *Wired*, and other techno magazines like *Mondo 2000* and *bOing-bOing*, Deitrich (1997) states:

> It is ironic that even as these publications herald new forms of 'egalitarian' networking, they replicate the sexist discourse(s) that mark late capitalist culture, particularly with respect to the representation of women and women's issues (Deitrich, 1997, pp. 170-171).

Deitrich's (1997) point is significant because it re-articulates the ongoing issues regarding gender, representation and technology. New technologies and practices continue to be culturally positioned and promoted using older (discriminatory) gender stereotypes and discourses. *Wired*'s mixture of tokenist inclusion and general lack of representation of women continues to be significant because it reconfirms the traditional, one-sided stereotypical discourse of technology being rather than representing a masculine culture (Wajcman, 1991, p. 158), and propels this discourse into new and emerging technocultures.

What is significant, however, is when, how and in what context, women are positioned in *Wired*. The representation of women in *Wired*'s digital revolution and cyberspatial narratives by and large signifies the female gender as a commodity fetish and passive promotional object occurring in advertisements for online adult Bulletin Board Chat Services and games, for computer technology and for office equipment (see figures 6.5 & 6.6)[64].

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[64] Figure 6.5 appeared in *Wired*, 4(2), p. 89. Figure 6.6 appeared in *Wired*, 4(2), p. 83.

Figure 6.5. Prodigy's full-page advertisement.

Figure 6.6. Virgin Atlantic's full page advertisement.

These feminine stereotypes continue in *Wired*'s (few) editorial features that focus on women working within the ECI fields. In most instances professional women, like for example, Martha Rogers and Sherry Turkle, are visually reconstructed as passive objects of beauty to be looked at (see figures 6.7 & 6.8)[65].

Figure 6.7. Professor Martha Rogers.

Figure 6.8. Professor Sherry Turkle.

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[65] Figure 6.7 appeared in *Wired*, 4(3), p. 154. Figure 6.8 was the cover of *Wired*, 4(4).

Women thus resume their 'old tech' passive role as 'classified wall paper' adorning the constructed, masculine, textual space of the magazine content along with other commodities like games, music CDs, books, online services and electronic gizmos. As Deitrich (1997) rightly points out, none of this is 'surprising' considering that – "most cybernaughts are white males between the ages of 15 and 45...the rhetoric of these print texts tends to reflect, white heterosexual males perspective(s), desires and idealizations" (Deitrich, 1997, p. 171).

Wired's historical idealisation of the 'digital revolution' is naturally a continuation of masculine technological (e.g. industrial, electrical, medical and artistic) narratives, created by and fought over by men. This is the case even though women play significant roles in the magazine's production process in that they write for *Wired*, and have been key instigators in its production and success. For example, Barbara Kuhr was co-creative designer, and Jane Metcalfe started *Wired* with partner Rossetto and was president of Wired Ventures Ltd. Women as textual subjects in *Wired* however, become ironic reconstructions, marginalised by the techno-corporate discourse.

Adding to these ironies are female writers working within the 'techie' environment, who perpetuate masculine discourses of gendered technology by reinforcing traditional, binary notions of femininity. For example, Paulina Borsook's *Wired* feature fiction story "Love over the Wires" states: "her computer had become a sex-toy, a marital appliance for the end of the millennium" (Borsook, 1993, p. 97). Borsook's fictional story (which is unusual for *Wired* because feature stories usually focus on interviews with real subjects) is set in contemporary times and has a female protagonist who is a professional, computer literate woman. The placement of this phrase by the editors as the story lead-in, however, sets up traditional gender stereotyping in terms of story style (i.e. women's romance) and technology gender relationships. Instead of constructing the computer as an empowering, creative or business tool to achieve in the public sphere, Borsook's (1993) description of the female protagonist's computer as a "marital appliance", retrofits this technology as a traditional, feminine, domestic appliance to be used within the domestic sphere of marriage and home. This binary 'either/or' defining of the computer conveniently locates technologies, practices and gender power relations in an era more akin to the 1950s than the 21st century.

From another textual perspective, gender difference and absence is raised by the magazine when *Wired* publishes the occasional letter of complaint in *Rants & Raves* (the 'letters to the editor department') by women readers who are concerned about the magazine's lack of female representation. The rare inclusion of such letters is significant because *Rants & Raves* represents (as in most other magazines) the official site of dialogue and negotiation between the publisher and the magazine's readers. It is the only site in the magazine where a direct contestation between female readers and *Wired*'s publisher occurs.

For example, issue 2(9) contained two letters of complaint by female readers against the magazine; one regarding lack of female representation, the other concerned about the negative portrayal of women. The first reader stated: "we are not in *Wired* magazine. Who are we? Women of course. C'mon guys. Each time I read the cyber-publication of my time, I'm amazed that it reads as though it was published twenty years ago" (*Rants & Raves*, 1994, p. 28). The second reader commented that some of *Wired*'s paid advertising was "violent, sexist, sick and offensive" (*Rants & Raves*, 1994, p. 28). By publishing the occasional letter of complaint, *Wired*, like many other magazines, continues a process that Deitrich (1997) describes as:

> both exaggerated for heightened visibility and erased for (potentially) exploitative purposes. And because these publications rely strategically upon various modes of ironic discourse, they are able to 'neutralize' their political stance, in effect defending against criticism through displacement of their (real) subject(s) (Deitrich, 1997, p. 171).

Wired's inclusion in its letters section of female readers' criticisms regarding lack of representation reconfirms and re-powers for other male readers the high tech gender imbalances and stereotypes. The appearance of these pro-feminist letters articulates both absence and difference overtly. It is (un)surprisingly 'blokey', and (like Borsook's feature story) re-states the binary germinating out of 1950s gender ideologies of women in the domestic private sphere and men in the public sphere of work and business. Thus *Wired* operates in a much less sophisticated style than other postmodern texts like *South Park*, where difference is ironically defused.

As experienced in the *Wired* text (and as Deitrich 1997 points out) – when women are the topic for major *Wired* stories, traditional social and public discourses of femininity are interwoven in the copy. For example, their hobbies, likes and

dislikes, home environments, the sort of men they like to date and how they stay 'in shape', are threaded through commentary regarding their professional roles (Deitrich, 1997). In doing this, the magazine continually relocates traditional discourses of femininity and contextualises gender in relation to technology in ways that reinforce the status quo.

The magazine re-confirms online culture as a masculine domain and place. It re-constructs a masculine CMC using spatial and geographical metaphors, in particular the frontier. This boundary metaphor is used to describe a wild, dangerous, out-of-control place. One of the myriad examples of this is an advertisement, which appeared in issue 2(6) of *Wired*, for the MegaRace CD-ROM game.

Figure 6.9.   No girls allowed! MegaRace advertisement in *Wired* 2(6).

The MegaRace caption reads: "No Cops No Laws No Wimps – Are you a girlie-man or a Megaracer?" (MegaRace, 1994, p. 113) and signifies that you have to be a 'tough guy' to survive in this wild, anarchic, computer-mediated frontier environment. Significantly, the frontier is also a place where women traditionally do not go unless they are whores, or the colonised other. The film, *My Darling Clementine* (Ford, 1946) is a classic example of the construction of the American frontier environment as a place where good girls do not go until law and order are established, and bad girls who do, suffer the most dire consequences. This frontier

myth operates as a convenient one for the CMC experience because it reconfirms and justifies (particularly for men) why women should not be there, and reconfirms the stereotype that (sensible, worthwhile) women themselves should not and would not want to participate in this environment anyway.

The frontier discourse of 'should not and would not' is rearticulated in a *Wired* article called "alt.sex.bondage" by Richard Kadrey. His exploration of the *alt.sex.bondage* site, provides, as it were, "a novice[s] guide" to the site (Kadrey, 1994, p. 40). Kadrey (1994) positions CMC within the masculine discourse of cyber-frontiersville. In doing so, he reiterates the stereotype that women should not really be there because it is too mad, bad and dangerous. Describing the CMC environment as an "asylum" he states:

> While the overall tone of abs [the *alt.sex.bondage*.site] is friendly and open, not everyone who visits here feels safe. Women, especially, who have posted openly about their sexual lives have reported being inundated with e-mail from guys offering to 'do' them. One discouraged female user wrote, "Unless a woman has a strong stomach, she won't post here more than once" (Kadrey, 1994, p. 42).

Participation as consumption

Wired's geospatial/psychological metaphors of the marginal, out-of-control, free wheeling, CMC frontier and the accompanying laissez faire ideology, are peculiarly combined with other socially-imagined locations and systems such as electronic democracy and the computer-mediated public sphere. Johnson (1997) is sceptical of the term – 'electronic democracy' which, he believes:

> suggests that the Information highway will enhance democracy by allowing citizens to communicate with elected representatives and participate more effectively in government policy making. In some fantasy worlds but not this one...It [democracy] requires debate, not just clicking For or Against buttons (Johnson cited in Hudson, 1997, p. 147).

Nevertheless, debate and discussion (which are characteristics of any democratic process), do occur online. These practices do not, however, suggest that the Internet is a democratic system. Internet speaking rights are dependent on online access. Online speaking forums are (by their electronic nature), transcendent of

national boundaries, discursive, unstable and fragmented. Terms like 'democracy' and 'public' become (in the *Wired* context) open signifiers, conveniently re-appropriated to describe a smaller site of communication arguably than those of everyday life. Even though this may obviously change, Jones (1997) holds the view that:

> Internet users are in the main the 'educated classes', and the 'scattered small-scale personal exchanges' that take place do so on a larger scale, are "made mass", giving the illusion that they are now a form of participatory democracy when in fact the exchanges are only mediated on a larger scale than ever before (Jones, 1997, p. 26).

Like many techno-utopians and techno-determinists such as Kevin Kelly, Alvin Toffler, John Perry Barlow and Louis Rossetto, the *Wired* team carries on a tradition of promoting the liberatory potential of new communication technologies, positioning them as agents of change. Unsurprisingly, the *Wired* techno-libertarian stance promotes the Internet as a democratic system. In this online system, market forces are considered the key democratising instruments, whereby consumer trading (as in the offline world), is constructed as public participation. Rossetto (1997) states: "there are no signs that it [the Internet] is becoming any less democratic. What is happening is that commerce is arriving on the Net...I don't think that's a bad thing...commerce is inherent in human life" (Rossetto cited in Hudson, 1997, pp. 241-242).

Rossetto's (1997) quote is reminiscent of a perspective that appeared in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (*FEER*). Describing the Asian economic reconfiguration occurring in the mid-1990s the article states – "Markets are by consequence, inherently civilising" (*FEER*, 1993, pp. 24). Both Western, neo-colonial/conservative and determinist pro-market viewpoints assume that markets and commerce are essentially value free, 'rational', produce democratic activity and as Innis (1951) points out, follow communication innovation. When situated within the context of online CMC, Rossetto's (1997) position vis-a-vis 'the market' describes an (exclusive) networked trading post (based on consumption-power) rather than a participatory democratic community in which all potential members have equal participation rights.

As commodification of Internet and CMC participation (which is hinged on the adage that time is money) increases, it does not so much evoke metaphors of large public spaces and participatory communities, as simultaneous yet contradictory images of discursive and convergent, computer-mediated, modes of consumption and production. These, arguably, transcend consumption practices of everyday, offline life.

Computer-mediated hyper and/or 'überconsumption[66]' is a commercial motif that appears in many of *Wired*'s paid advertisements. Producers of hardware and software, as well as online service providers, often promote their products as providing fast and easy access to people, information, entertainment, goods and services (e.g. Microsoft Network's "Where do you want to go today?" advertisement). This mode of online überconsumption is promoted by advertisers as being transcendental of everyday, earth bound, 'real-time' consumption experiences such as walking, driving, tasting, queuing, smelling, chatting, and waiting. An example of this promotion appeared in *Wired* for Delrina Internet software. This advertisement, (which depicted a male snowboarding over a planet) stated, "Announcing software that utilizes astral projection to send your consciousness to any point on the space-time continuum" (Delrina, 1996, p. 119).

Commercial online consumption questions the *Wired* vision of techno-libertarianism and techno-corporate empowerment because online participation is too narrowly defined as a constantly 'upgradable', commercial consumer activity. Evidence of this exists in *Wired*'s vast array of ECI advertisements and in editorial commentary. For example, in *Wired* 2(8) an advertisement for Fujitsu states: "We'll show you how to enjoy some monstrous savings" (Fujitsu, 1994, p. 28), while an OSC advertisement announces, "Instead of just watching, create the media with low-priced, high-powered media software from OSC" (OSC, 1994, p. 18). This advertisement is followed by an editorial commentary by Jaron Lanier who believes "Raising the price of a service bumps it up to another energy level. If it costs more, there'll be more of it" (Lanier, 1994, p. 63).

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[66] As prefixes both hyper and über can be attached to networked, online consumption practices that are fast, transcendent and excessive.

Solnit (1995) uses the computer game Pac Man as a symbolic metaphor to describe the contradictions between interactivity, consumption, empowerment, participation and choice, in the computer-mediated environment. She states:

> The audience-user is not literally passive; he is engaged in making choices, but the choices do not necessarily represent freedom, nor does his activity represent thinking. Participating is reduced to consuming...Pac Man made this all apparent: the sole purpose of Pac Man, a disembodied head-mouth, is to devour what is in its path as it proceeds through an invisible maze (Solnit, 1995, pp. 230-231).

Conclusion

Wired continues to profit from convergence and from contradictory claims. A 1960s American counter culture ('power to the people') libertarian free market ideology which incorporates online democracy sits unselfconsciously alongside neo-colonial, meritocratic, patriarchal, corporate, nerd-no-more narratives. McLuhan's (1964) 'global village' revisited in capitalist terms is coupled with utopian discourses of empowerment through technology.

Nevertheless, for all *Wired*'s foibles, underneath the outstanding design, Day-Glo hype and matte-gloss, the magazine offers a voice, a cultural artefact and a work in progress which highlights (via absence or rearticulation), a number of age-old contradictory issues concerning relationships between technology and society, and definitions of what these represent. Even though the magazine's (masculine) vision of the future is positioned in CMC society, it provokes ongoing questions regarding gender, technology, power and control, identity politics, access and equity.

Therefore, even if the media techno-hype has died down ('everyone's over the Internet and *Wired*'s a little bit tired') this does not mean the critical issues have been resolved. These issues are why *Wired* – (during the peak of the info-hype of 1993-1996) – is so compelling. Its content (both advertising and editorial), press releases and staff interviews regurgitate a number of regressive discourses which seem at odds with the 'revolutionary' technological and cultural developments the magazine promotes. Interwoven with its techno-libertarian ideology are patriarchal, meritocratic, free market ideologies; and info-rich/poor disparities. These latter are accepted as an unproblematic given; there are simply winners and losers; it goes without saying. *Wired*'s CMC world is constructed as a frontier signifying it as an

inherently unstable, contested, masculine (and therefore dangerous) 'place', where the operative principle is participation through consumption and through überconsumption of time, resources and experience.

Questions remain as to what exactly is revolutionary about *Wired*'s digital projection? What is so revolutionary (to use Nicholas Negroponte's 1995 book title), about *Being digital*? Is it the potential for new communication technologies to re-power traditional (masculine) classical and hierarchical structures? Ironically, *Wired*'s promotion of a digital paradigm – and the dismissal of 20th century concepts such as 'universal access' and 'equity' – does little to convince a critical analyst of the liberatory potential of the new communication technologies. Instead, it reinscribes older, feudalistic and laissez faire ideals and practices, inhibiting possibilities of the participatory potential for modes of communication like CMC.

The new CMC communication technologies have the potential to connect or disconnect various social fabrics, identities, classes, and markets. What may be deemed revolutionary by *Wired*'s techno-corporate visionaries is the potential for new technologies to assist in the creation and maintenance of two new separate classes of people – those online and those offline. In the networked discourses of *Wired*, this frequently-used binary vision signifies a separation demarcated by technology, gender, knowledge, and by social and economic power. As their advertisement reminds us as would-be *Wired* readers – Do we want to be part of the steamroller or the road?

CHAPTER SEVEN

The promotional master narrative: technology, desire and consumption

> The Thirties had seen the first generation of American designers; until the Thirties, all pencil sharpeners had looked like pencil sharpeners – your basic Victorian mechanism, perhaps with a curlicue of decorative trim. After the advent of the designers, some pencil sharpeners looked as if they'd been put together in wind tunnels. For most part, the change was only skin-deep; under the streamlined chrome shell, you'd find the same Victorian mechanism (Gibson, 1988a, p. 39).

This excerpt is taken from *The Gernsback Continuum* which is a short story that appeared in William Gibson's novel *Burning Chrome* (1988). It is used in this chapter as an analogy to describe 'selling the old-as-reinvented' using old philosophical positions regarding technology and contemporary (yet conventional) marketing techniques. This analogy of 'selling the old-as reinvented' relates to *Wired*'s construction and promotion of consumer and corporate desire for the 'new' and the future. This is also integral to both the magazine's promotion of its techno-corporate lifestyle and the publisher's promotional claim that the magazine is being reinvented.

Wired's content and its form were promoted by its publisher as being 'the next big thing' - a revolutionary medium which showcased the latest communication technologies and online modes of communication. What this 'new media' promotion constructs is a futuristic discourse about new and emerging technologies, and media consumption. Yet, promotion often 'creatively imagines' what the product can do.

A commercial magazine like *Wired* is a discursive and polysemic text in that it contains a variety of contradictory sub-texts and signifiers. Meaning can be constructed in a number of ways from the same material, and thus is dependent on the individual reader's subjective positioning. While acknowledging this aspect, I contend that for the main, meaning in *Wired* is positioned within a discourse of promotion – creating what McCracken calls a promotional "master narrative" (1993,

p. 2). This occurs, as McCracken has argued, in women's magazines, which reconstruct particular discourses and idealisations of femininity in relation to lifestyle practices and conspicuous consumption.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how *Wired* constructs its 'promotional master narrative'. This is based on the desire to consume 'the new' and the future in terms of the magazine, the ECI technologies used to produce the magazine and the ECI driven, online techno-lifestyle constructed and represented through the magazine. The chapter argues that consumer and corporate desire for new ECI technology is constructed and promoted by *Wired* as deterministic, progressive, utopian, ideal and future driven (never arriving but worthy of infinite investment).

Two areas regarding technology and promotion will frame this interrogation. The first area outlines technological discourses[67] and related themes used in the magazine to promote the consumption of ECI technology and computer-mediated practices. These are: technology as deterministic, progressive, anthropomorphic, sublime, and utopian. The second section examines how these technological discourses are incorporated into the magazine's content in order to construct a corporate and consumer desire for new and future ECI technologies and online practices. This includes analysis of *Wired*'s (posthumous and living) 'experts' – Marshall McLuhan and *Wired* columnist Nicholas Negroponte, - as well as analysis of *Wired*'s press releases, editorial, and advertising content.

Reconstructing the old to sell the new: promoting technological discourses

> The infobahn emerges as a fantasy to fill a certain void, a certain faltering of the 'animal spirits' of capital's desire. Without an object of desire, capital cannot invest itself in the world it finds itself. As Michael Eisner, CEO of Walt Disney, says about this infobahn thing: 'I don't get it so we are not investing in it' (Deagon 1994b). Without investing in that world it cannot remake itself. It becomes as they say 'mature' – a short step away from death (Wark, 1994, p. 15).
>
> Rather than having to wait until the Last Judgement for the advent of a perfect community, Renaissance visionaries suggested that men

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[67] A full investigation of these technological discourses is beyond the scope of this thesis. Only the relevant features of these discourses are outlined in order to further my thesis argument.

could create heavenly cities themselves, by their application of science and technology. Technology would thus become a medium for *salvation* (Wertheim, 1999, p. 286).

These quotes focus on the relationship between human desire and technology. The former focuses on corporate desire and the latter focuses on a religious (if not masculine) spiritual desire. Both position technology as a site for material and religious investment in order to create profit and fulfill spiritual needs. Theological, utopian, commercial, political, artistic, and scientific meta-narratives have become part of a historical continuum, wl..:h relates to technology, human desire and consumption. As evidenced in media products and texts like *Wired*, the ethereal characteristics of relationships between humans, science and technology have extended to the realm of the Internet and CMC. As Wertheim rightly points out, "The sheer scale of interest in cyberspace suggests there are intense desires at work here" (1999, p. 29).

Technology as deterministic and progressive

Wired's constructions of a consumer desire for the latest ECI technologies and online techno-lifestyle are inextricably underpinned and connected to a more general "modernist meta-narrative" (Featherstone & Burrows, 1995, p. 1) which positions technology as positive, instrumental and progressive. *Wired*'s promotional discourse of technology thus favours the philosophical views of certain select historical periods over others. In particular, the Renaissance/Enlightenment period which (according to Mitcham, 1994), displayed an optimistic bias regarding technology that was unlike the premodern 'distrust' and 'scepticism' displayed in archaic mythology and throughout Greek antiquity (Mitcham, 1994, pp. 277-279).

The contemporary Western notion of technological progress emerged from the European Enlightenment period where, arguably, one masculine narrative/discourse gained favour over others in constructing a relationship between 'man', technology and nature. In doing this, "The Aristotelian distinction between the arts of cultivation and construction [was] jettisoned in favour of universal construction" (Mitcham, 1994, p. 288). Mitcham (1994) outlines four interrelated arguments that emerged during this period to formulate both an ideology and a meta-narrative of modern technological progress. These tenets form the basis of many

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discourses and themes which *Wired* recontextualises and reinscribes in its construction of contemporary ECI technologies. They are:

> (1) the will to technology is ordained for humanity by God or by nature; (2) technological activity is morally beneficial because, while stimulating human action, it ministers to physical needs and increases sociability; (3) knowledge acquired by a technical closure with the world is more true than abstract theory; and (4) nature is no more real than artifice – indeed it operates by the same principles (Mitcham, 1994, p. 289).

Anchored to Mitcham's thesis is the idea that the will for technological progress and change is an inherent human desire. This position becomes promotional rhetoric when discussed within the context of *Wired*. For example, *Wired* writer John Katz states, "neither technology nor the essential human desire for change can be suppressed" (Katz, 1995, p. 162). This view regarding the inevitability of technological progress and change is not surprising considering the commercial forum in which it is made. Such a view also confirms that, "when it comes to technology, the rhetoric of progress still surrounds the way we tend to think about the changes it implies" (Markussen, 1995, p. 160).

Change is a significant facet of the 'technology as progressive' discourse. For example, whilst discussing computing, science and the Internet, John Brockman stated in one *Wired* feature story that:

> What we've lacked is an intellectual culture able to transform its own premises as fast as our technologies are transforming us...we're living through the most intense change in the history of the human race. It's absurd to hide one's head in the sand (Brockman cited in Leggiere, 1995, p. 119).

Change also operates as a rhetorical driver for the marketing of the latest ECI technologies. Technology is also promoted as an agent of change, a sign of progress, as well as a signifier of modernity[61]. This deterministic view of technology as an agent of change often comprises two positions, however – "one enthusiastic, the

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[61] This is discussed by Feenberg (1991) who states:
The dominant view of modernization is based on the deterministic assumption that technology has its own autonomous logic of development. Technology, according to this view, cannot be integrated to a variety of social systems and cultures, but is an invariant element that, once introduced, bends the recipient social system to its imperatives (Feenberg, 1991, p. 122).

other critical" (Smith, 1994, p. 2). The technologically deterministic position is outlined by Feenberg (1991):

> 1. The pattern of technical progress is fixed, moving along one and the same track in all societies. Although political, cultural, and other factors may influence the pace of change, they cannot alter the general line of development, which reflects the autonomous logic of discovery. 2. Social organization must adapt to technical progress at each stage of development according to 'imperative' requirements of technology. This adaptation executes an underlying technical necessity (Feenberg, 1991, pp. 122-123).

It is not the purpose of this chapter to debate the extensive literature concerning theories of technology and technological determinism. It must be noted however, that the deterministic view[69] is insufficient because it constructs change as universally linear and causal. It positions technology as an autonomous agent operating outside culture (an arena which is often regarded as either "obstructing or motivating technological progress" Feenberg, 1991, p. 123). A more defensible perspective (as discussed in chapter eight) is to recognise technological change as a contingent, evolutionary process.

Nevertheless, the deterministic positioning of technological change as fixed and causal serves a classic narrative and explanatory function in that it allows the history and development of technology to be easily told. Such a perspective makes technological discourse an unambiguously positive promotional device. As Marx and Smith state: "It [technological change] is embodied in a series of exemplary episodes, or mini-fables, with a simple yet highly plausible before and after narrative structure" (Marx & Smith, 1994, p. ii). This type of classical, deterministic 'before and after' narrative structure has been a modern advertising staple for the promotion of the future, and of new technologies.

For example, in 1880, the American magazine *Scientific American* predicted the effects of the telephone as "nothing less than a new organization of society" (Marvin, 1988, p. 65). Similarly, in 1993, *Wired*'s editor, Louis Rossetto, stated in *Wired*'s first issue, "The Digital Revolution is whipping through all our lives like a Bengali typhoon [bringing] social changes so profound the only parallel is probably

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[69] See Innis 1951, Marx 1957, Mummford 1963, Ellul 1964, Bell 1974, Pacey 1983, Marvin 1988, Franklin 1990, Feenberg 1991, Marx & Smith 1994, Nye 1994, and Deibert 1997.

the discovery of fire" (Rossetto cited in Eden Hoffman, 1995, p. 2). Another typical 'before and after' example is the Network MCI advertisement which states: "Assembly line 1914, Personal Computer 1976, Network MCIBUSINESS 1994...Today, the information superhighway moves from speculation to reality"(Network MCI, 1994, pp. 47-48). This deterministic 'before and after' position continues in *Wired* editorial features, via propositions such as:

> Is technology a good witch or a bad witch? In this country, where faith in technology is the closest thing we have to a national religion, and in the new media culture, where belief in technology *is* a religion, it's a riveting question (Katz, 1995, p. 162).

These types of deterministic editorial propositions, and 'before and after' advertising narratives which position technology as a powerful agent of change and progress, were articulated by *Wired*'s publisher in the initial promotion for the magazine's launch. The launch marks the starting point of the magazine's own narrativisation of ECI convergence whereby society is described as undergoing a "wild metamorphis [sic]" (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12) as a result of technological change. Elsewhere, the magazine's self-reflexive, promotional, hyperbole underpins the concept of inevitable technological change with 'revolution' - another metanarrative, which now doubles as a contemporary marketing device for the latest high tech products. This is partially due to the term's Western cultural meaning being recontextualised in the modem era, as Kumar points out:

> Since classical times the uses of the word [revolution] in political and social life had reflected pretty faithfully its clear etymological root. Revolution meant a turning back, or a turning round, as in the motions of a wheel...This conception conspicuously lacked any idea of novelty...It was in the course of the French Revolution that the word 'revolution' acquired its modern meaning, its modern associations of novelty and fundamental change. It was only then that 'revolution' ceased to be a phenomenon of the natural or divine order, made by non-human, elemental forces, and became part of a man-made conscious purpose to create a new order based on reason and freedom...Henceforth the idea of a fundamental transformation, of the whole restructuring of human society, became deeply lodged in the European mind and, by a later export, in the consciousness of the rest of the world (Kumar, 1978, p. 20).

Kumar's quote also highlights the exportation of Western European discourses. This includes technologically deterministic and progressive social values

that became relocated in and rearticulated by (former Western European) frontier colonies such as America. According to Marx and Smith (1994), technologically deterministic and progressive discourses:

> Found even more fertile ground in the newly independent United States – primarily because Americans were so taken with the idea of progress. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, [were] foremost among the nation's prophets of progress (Marx & Smith, 1994, p. 3).

Imperialistic Renaissance values regarding the use of technology to maintain control and power over nature and 'others' were included in this process. These exported Western European values underpin a rhetoric of technology as morally, culturally and economically progressive, as well as "highly compatible with the search for political order" (Marx & Smith, 1994, p. 5). This view is backed up by Druckrey: "With the legitimation of cultural technologies widely seen as contributing to social progress, emerges a set of ideologies whose function serves as the rationale for stability" (Druckrey, 1994, p. 1). The institutional linking of technological progress with social progress and the stability of political institutions was later packaged and mass-marketed by commercial organisations. For example, in the American advertising industry, discourses of mass consumption became inextricably entwined with a technologically deterministic value system. As Smith[20] (1994) points out:

> Characterized by historians as the distinctive institution of American technological culture, advertising became the instrument by which big business, in need of ever-expanding markets for its mass produced products, imprinted instrumental values - and with them an ethos of mass consumption - on the populace. Advertising, in short, not only sold the products of industrial capitalism but also promoted a way of thinking about industrial technology...advertisers encouraged people to believe technology, broadly construed, shaped society rather than the other way around...Such technocratic pitches constituted a form of technological determinism that embedded itself deeply in popular culture (Smith, 1994, p. 13).

The exportation of these deterministic 'technocratic pitches' continues specifically via *Wired*'s ECI advertisements, editorial commentary and generally in

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[20] For an analysis of the American history of technological determinism see: L. Marx & M. R. Smith, (1994). *Does technology drive history? The dilemma of technological determinism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

the present day naming and promotion of computer technologies. The most obvious and powerful examples of this are the brand names used to define the most widely used software packages – Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer. Both these titles derive inspiration from male Renaissance identities such as Columbus and Drake. They connote white, Western colonisation and imperial 'new-world' discoveries. Via promotion, the history and mythology of first (Western) contact and colonial America become embedded and recontexualised into contemporary products and promotions for ECI technologies and computer-mediated practices.

Throughout *Wired*, masculine, pioneer stories of heroic explorers, inventors and (white) freedom fighters are coupled with narratives regarding technological expansion and the conquering of the frontier of the 'new-world' (otherwise known as cyberspace). Cyber-dwellers are constructed as 'enlightening' the 'ignorant' (those who aren't 'wired') and bringing a new gospel to the masses. One example of this dynamic is a *Wired* feature story about the American-based EFF. It includes a description of EFF co-founder John Perry Barlow, and begins with the title – "A Rancher's Soul" (Quittner, 1994a, p. 81) thus echoing the American mythology of the pioneer settlers already conveyed by the word 'frontier'. This colonial mythology reinscribes again and again, the story of discovery of the new land and the imposition of the conqueror's white man's (European) values. For example:

> Barlow's great-granduncle had been the first white man to spend a winter in the upper head waters of Wyoming's Green River, in 1875, and stories of that time had always resonated in Barlow. It's what Barlow was thinking about when he encountered cyberspace 111 years after his great-granduncle's adventures (Quittner, 1994a, p. 81).

Just like the film, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, (as well as a myriad of CD-ROM games advertised in *Wired*), this story rearticulates the Euro-centric 'boys own adventure': a white, masculine, colonial discourse; the desire to covet and control. The continuance of this colonial discourse in the promotion of CMC, the Internet and computers is also noted by Wertheim, who rightly contends, "It is certainly worth asking…why is it that at a time when colonial frontier metaphors are being so critiqued elsewhere they should be embraced by champions of cyberspace?" (Wertheim, 1999, p. 297). Apart from being racist in failing to acknowledge the displacement of original inhabitants and their cultures to the colonial advance, these frontier discourses continue 'to be championed' because they

are implicitly and historically bound up with the promotional rhetoric of the 'new', and the discourse of white, Western, technological progress.

As a promotional theme, the recontextualised colonial frontier metaphor is linked to a discourse of personal progress, empowerment and control over nature through technological application. For example: "Suddenly technology has given us powers with which we can manipulate not only external reality – but also, and more portentously, ourselves" (Regis, 1994, p. 102). This quote comes from a *Wired* feature story about the Extropian movement, whose 'techno-promethean' philosophy resonates a technological determinist position. In the story, Regis describes Extropianism[71] as a "philosophy of boundless expansion, of upward-and-outwardness, of fantastic superabundance. It's a doctrine of self-transformation, of extremely advanced technology" (Regis, 1994, p. 104).

Regis' quote also displays how positive social values are attached to technologies that transform nature. In this context, technologically deterministic values are combined with those of the 'hyper' in terms of lifestyle, production and consumption. Attaching positive social values to technology is, however, a common promotional device, particularly when constructing notions of techno-lifestyle – as Nicholas Negroponte's editorial column reminds us: "My own lifestyle is totally enhanced by being online" (Negroponte, 1995a, p. 206).

McCracken (1990) suggests it is, "through advertising, [that] old and new goods are constantly giving up old meanings and taking on new ones" (McCracken, 1990, p. 78). Smith (1994) argues that American advertisements for domestic technologies in the 1920s were constructed as being "the cause of human well-being" (Smith, 1994, p. 15). Contemporary advertisements for the Internet, computers, software, ISP's, online sites and networks, often promote technological applications, practices and services not only as "the cause of well being" but as integral to (and imperative for) the areas of work, leisure, entertainment, education and employment.

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[71] The Extropian movement can be described as techno-promethean. Extropians are the individuals who comprise this movement. Wertheim claims "Extropians imagine eternal life becoming possible through a powerful cocktail of new technologies, ranging from genetic engineering to nanomachines capable of repairing individual cells" (Wertheim, 1999, p. 265).

Technology as anthropomorphic

Significantly, the types of ECI advertisements that constitute quintessential *Wired*, highlight how the artefactual understanding of technology has been reconstructed and repositioned as a commodity and accessory within a lifestyle context. Linked to this dynamic is the way social relations between humans and technology are defined via advertisements. For example, many of *Wired*'s ECI advertisements combine the artefactual (and the ubiquitous 'black box') metaphor of technology with anthropomorphic metaphors whereby computers and software are promoted as being friendly, intelligent and human-like. Animals ('man's best friends') are used symbolically to personify computer technology and software. Just like the old RCA dog symbol ("his master's voice"), images of dogs are used to connote friendly, loyal and lovable technology, as well as reinforcing the master/slave power balance between 'men', their machines and nature. A classic example is a *Wired* Microsoft advertisement for software called Bob.

Figure 7.1.   **Microsoft's advertisement for 'Bob'. In *Wired* 3(6).**

This advert constructs a 1950s, retro style 'Leave It To Beaver' image that has a (pipe-smoking) middle-aged man sitting in front of a wood fire with his dog (presumably Bob). The copy states:

> Oh sure fancy is popular. But fancy usually pinches and well, heck, it just isn't comfortable. That's why there's Bob. Bob makes your

computer as comfortable as an old shoe...Bob features the newest thing in software: a social interface...To meet Bob for yourself, stop by a local software retailer and ask for Bob (Microsoft, 1995, inside front cover).

Microsoft's 'Bob' software is a contemporary example of "social interface" (Leonard, 1997, p. 95) computing which was designed with the idea that "human-computer interaction would proceed best if conducted along the lines that recognized the social actor status of the computer" (Leonard, 1997, p. 95). What 'Bob' represents is a historical shift from the way previous ECI technologies were promoted – highlighting only the merit of use-value and functionality – towards the personification, anthropomorphic and quasi-biological qualities of computer technologies. For example, Nicholas Negroponte refers to interface agents as "digital butlers" (1994, p. 142) and redefines the human subject/object relationship with computers through statements like, "Your face is in effect your display device, it makes no sense for the computer to remain blind to it" (Negroponte, 1994a, p. 158). The provocative posturing of Negroponte represents a promotional ploy for the new/cutting edge. Even so:

> The idea that the computer is an intelligent agent is nothing new. Alan Kay once attributed the idea of an "interface agent" to John McCarthy in the mid-1950's [sic] and the term itself to Oliver G. Selfridge a few years later, when they were both at MIT (Kay 1984). In the AI tradition of regarding the computer as a "colleague," these conceptions treat the personal as a personified computer – a surrogate person. The result is a rampant anthropomorphizing of the machine via metaphors spanning the human-computer boundary, metaphors that mostly describe the computer in terms of human attributes: as a tool or factory, but also as an oracle (Janlert), brain (MacCormac), protagonist (Janlert), second self (Turkle, 1984), poison, sin, or idol (Mitcham). Because it is evident from the nature of today's computer hardware and software that computer interfaces as intelligent agents are none of these things, however, today's personification of the computer still requires a "momentary suspension of disbelief" (Laurel, 1991, p. 113, cited in Bardini, 2000, p. 224).

The promotion of an anthropomorphic 'suspension of disbelief' is nonetheless a common theme of many *Wired* advertisements, including Microsoft's advertisement for its 'Bob' software. This advert along with some of the views articulated by Negroponte, also uses and reconstructs a master/servant discourse that positions the human subject back in 'control' of technology. Microsoft's 'Bob'

advertisement constructs its software as an ideal social interface, a companion, and a neo-classical robot reminiscent of "The ideal robots of the nineteenth century [which] were still conceptualized as individuals, unique artefacts with a personal relationship to their maker" (Wollen, 1993, p. 44). The implication here is that *Wired*'s promotional master narrative constructs master/companion; maker/made; creator/subject relationships between the individual and their hardware/software applications. For example, 'personal' and unique 'relationships' between computer and 'master' are reiterated and extended in an advertisement for Sun Microsystems:

> His name is network. Tell him what you need and he'll get it for you...A network so powerful and so approachable it becomes almost a living thing. That gets you whatever you want, whenever you want, without asking why (Sun Microsystems, 1995, inside front cover - p. 1).

Significantly this advert anthropomorphises the network as the masculine. It not only commodifies the masculine, but also endows it with a benevolent, omnipotent power. As with many other ECI advertisements, the 'high tech' and/or the anthropomorphic 'intelligent' machines and systems are given masculine names or connote a masculine identity and domain.

The technological sublime

Such promotional devices resonate a continuance of the older discourse of the technological sublime in the sense that "scenes that elicited the sublime were usually more accessible, and accessible at an earlier time, to men than to women" (Nye, 1994, p. 283). The concept of the technological sublime discussed here is set within a North American context as identified by Nye in his 1994 work *The American Technological Sublime*. Nye explains how:

> By conflating the man-made and the natural...the technological sublime is identical with the natural sublime. Here is that typical American amalgamation of natural, technological, classical, and religious elements into a single aesthetic. In it natural wonders, such as Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, and Yellowstone, become emblems of divinity comparable to the wonders of the ancient world and the greatest architectural achievements of modern times (Nye, 1994, p. 23)

When discussed within the context of modern 20th century America, the technological sublime was not usually constructed as a negative, metaphysical or even terrifying experience, rather it "celebrated rationality, substituting techniques for transcendental reason, celebrating work and achievement" (Nye, 1994, p. 295). One modern characteristic of this was "the logic of the technological sublime [which] demanded that each object exceed its precursors" (Nye, 1994, p. 284). A contemporary embodiment of this technologically sublime 'logic' is Digital's advertisement which depicts a 19th century steam train positioned next to the caption "Their Unix", and a 20th century high speed train positioned next to the caption "Our Unix" (Digital, 1994, pp. 18-19).

Figure 7.2. **Digital advertisement in *Wired* 2(4).**

Another historical feature of the American technological sublime which "exhort[s] the observer to dominate and control nature" (Nye, 1994, p. 295) is reinscribed in Quantum Corporation's advertisement for its latest disk drive by their claim that: "This is the drive that guides the laser that cuts the plastic that forms the hip that fits the man so he can laugh in the face of nature" (Quantum Corporation, 1996, p. 22-23). In a technologically deterministic, sublime and masculine fashion, this advertisement maintains perceived hegemonic power relations between 'man' and nature, and resolves them via the consumption and application of the latest computer technologies. Apple Macintosh cuts to the chase of this deterministic 'man

vs nature' discourse with the reminder that: "It's not how powerful the computer is. It's how powerful the computer makes you" (Apple Macintosh, 1995, pp. 94-95). What is reinstated is the idea that humans (providing they can afford and use the technology) are the most powerful, if not sublime, forms of nature.

As evidenced in these high tech advertisements, technological sublime notions of human control and empowerment are inextricably connected to being able to consume the latest technologies. Many (ranging from the latest Apple Macintosh computer to Net Nanny and VR programs), offer the promise of technologically mediated, controlled and pleasurable (rather than terrifying) "sublime secular spaces" (Nye, 1994, p. 301). They represent "the antithesis of realism – the antithesis of the chaos of everyday life" (Pimentel & Teixeira, 1993, p. 156). These "well designed" (Pimentel & Teixeira, 1993, p. 156) computer-mediated sublime experiences, advertised and discussed in *Wired*, represent the antithesis of the Kantian notion of sublime, where human rationality and power is superceded:

> For Kant the natural sublime object evokes the feeling of enthusiasm, or a pleasure of a purely negative kind, for it finally concerns a failure of representation. In contrast, the American technological sublime is built on pleasure of a positive kind, for it concerns an apparently successful representation of man's ability to construct an infinite and perfect world. In the search for this positive pleasure, a "consumer's sublime" has emerged as Americans shop for new sensations of empowerment (Nye, 1994, p. 287).

Figure 7.3.   'Even better than the real thing'. One of the digital high definition television sets promoted at the *1999 Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas* (Bray, 1999, p. 1).

Technology as utopian: the 'desire to be wired'

Wired itself represents (and is marketed as) one of these sublime 'new sensations of consumer empowerment' and promotes to its readers the new products and a utopian voice of the technological future. Ironically, it was in the 'middle of nowhere' that I first encountered this self-proclaimed 'messenger from the future' which was promoting "The desire to be wired" (Branwyn 1993, p. 62). The magazine had been gathering red dust on a store shelf in Kalgoorlie (pop 30,000), a Western Australian gold mining town which is geographically positioned 'on the margins' – that is – in semi-arid desert, 614kms east of Perth, on the Indian Pacific railway line.

Apart from being my hometown, Kalgoorlie is a place many from Perth (the state capital) and relatives from South Australia and Victoria would strangely call 'the middle of nowhere' - hence the use of this phrase to describe my first encounter with *Wired*. Paradoxes abound in this 'centre/margin' scenario. Here was a magazine extolling the virtues and characteristics of an online, techno-society: an ephemeral, utopian, electronic world that promised clean machines, nanotechnology, digital butlers, paperless offices and the end of the body – in a town characterised by both high and low technology, all forms of legal and illegal body trade, indigenous poverty, large earth moving machines, mining equipment, superpits and extremely high levels of sulphur dioxide.

The (then dusty) cover of issue 1(4) featured the characteristic Day-Glo orange and green *Wired* banner and cyberpunk author William Gibson (see figure 4.5). The luminous colour-coded captions read "Michael Crichton the Real Dinosaurs are the Media; Special Fiction Bonus Paulina Borsook Love over the Wires" (*Wired*, 1(4), 1993, front cover).

Opening the magazine I was greeted with an array of double-page, high tech, postmodern TNC advertising. This included Origin's "Civilization/Savages", Sony's "Mini Disk", Apple's "what's on your Powerbook" and Objective Communication's "Virtual City – Paradigm for Cyberspace". Following up these double page visual spreads was the cyberdelic Table of Contents that announced:

> **51. Disneyland with the Death Penalty.** We sent William Gibson to Singapore to see whether that clean dystopia represents our techno-future. Then we asked Sandy Sandfort to tell us whether technology will ultimately liberate the Intelligent Island.

56. The Mediasaurus. Today's mass media is tomorrow's fossil fuel. Michael Chrichton is as mad as hell, and he's not going to take it anymore.

60. Electrotecture. Imagine architecture that changes as information flows through it. By Kristian Spence

"I am interested in becoming a guinea pig for any cyberpunkish experiment from a true medicine/military/neuro place. New limbs, sight/hearing improvements, bio-monitors etc. or even things as simple as under the skin time pieces." – Anonymous
62. The Desire to be Wired. Some people are *really* Wired. Gareth Branwyn plugs into the ultimate wire-heads.

66. The End of the Party Line. Getting wired in Russia. By George Lawton

"The role model for the future of human interaction with machines, if we want to avoid our own destruction and regain control, is to start thinking in terms of the intuitive, the irrational."- Mark Pauline
70. Out Of Control. Maybe the only way to control technology is to give up control. A trilogy on machine consciousness with Mark Pauline, Manuel De Landa, and Mark Dery

"The world has been running a massively parallel computation for billions of years; how can we even dream of trying to make our machines catch up?"
72. Use Your Illusion. The Industrial Light & Magic tour: What's so special about special effects. By Randy Rucker

WIRED FICTION SPECIAL
97. Love Over the Wires. Wired's first short story is a modern romance via e-mail. By Paulina Borsook

This journalistic mix of techno-facts, hyperbole, speculation, and fantasy regarding the Internet, ECI technologies and CMC which appeared in this and subsequent issues of *Wired*, are reminiscent of how older technologies were promoted by the-then media to capture both corporate and public imagination; consumers and potential investors. Just as *Wired* constructs its version of the digital revolution, its print-magazine predecessors like *Cosmopolitan, The Live Wire, Scientific American, The New York Herald,* and *Electrical Review,* constructed utopian visions of what was commonly referred to as the electro-mechanical/electrical 'revolution' of the late 19th century (Marvin, 1988).

Newspapers, journals and magazines in particular, have historically played and continue to play, a key role in "titillating the collective for imagining...the new media [as well as] instruct[ing] collective imagination to explore the possibility of dramatic shifts in the social order in an age of communications transformed" (Marvin, 1988, p. 187). While Marvin's quote refers to the media coverage of electricity in the late 19th century, the late 20th century saw similar rhetoric and hype employed at the point of the 'popularisation' of new ECI technologies and practices in everyday life. For example, in 1983 *Time* magazine ran a cover story that "pronounced the personal computer as the machine of the year" (Dery, 1996, p. 5). Ten years later in 1993, *Wired* continued this promotional discourse but the discussion now focussed on technological ECI convergence and, in particular, the Internet. According to Dery (1996):

> Media awareness of the Internet [in the USA] reached a critical mass in 1993. "Suddenly the Internet is the place to be," wrote *Time*'s Philip Elmer-Derwitt; the *New York Time*'s John Markoff confirmed that the global network was "the world's most fashionable rendezvous, a trendy on-line gathering spot for millions of PC users around the world" (Dery, 1996, p. 5).

At this time marketing the consumption of the Internet, CMC and accompanying ECI products involved a substantial amount of promotional hyperbole. One general marketing strategy used was to promote these ECI technologies as utopian rather than dystopian (e.g. lauding the potential benefits without elaborating upon the possible negative effects). Significantly, in the case of *Wired*, the promotional, utopian construct is both a marketing device and a philosophical theme connected to the central interest of *Wired* (and *Wired*'s readership), which is technology itself. Technology as object, practice and knowledge (Wajcman, 1991, p. 158) has historically informed both utopian and dystopian discussions. Wertheim (1999) points out:

> The very word 'utopia' derives from the visionary community of the same name imagined by the Englishman Thomas More. Like Francis Bacon's 'New Atlantis', More's original utopia was an idealized community located on a remote island, far away from the corrupting influence of a decadent world. In both cases inhabitants had created for themselves a kind of earthly paradise, made possible by their piety, their communal spirit, and crucially, by their devotion to the technical arts (Wertheim, 1999, p. 286).

It is not hard to see this link between this historical 'spiritual' view and the utopian cyber/technoculture discourses at work in contemporary ECI technology promotion. These utopian or 'optimistic' Renaissance perspectives also resurface in the *Wired* philosophy regarding the liberatory potential of communications technology. Mitcham argues that Francis Bacon was the first to suggest the importance of promoting technological invention, while David Hume championed the 'civilising' effect technology and technological systems such as commerce would have on society (Mitcham, 1994, pp. 284-289). Wertheim (1999) however, argues that part of the utopian appeal of technology is the power (political, cultural, economic and spiritual) that new technologies and technological developments give their 'creators' and/or 'users'. A contemporary example of this is Touché Pad's advertisement which announces "Control your computer the way God intended" (Touché Pad, 1996, p. 117). The Christian subtext here suggests that humans have replaced God as the producers of divine creation. This represents a continuance of previous technological utopian discourse. As Wertheim points out:

> With these utopian visions we witness the emergence of the idea that man, through his *own efforts*, can create a New Jerusalem here on earth. All these visions were profoundly Christian in intent, inspired as one commentator has put it, by a 'yearning to bring heaven down to earth' (Wertheim, 1999, p. 286).

Given this quote, it is also possible to construct a connection between utopian religious notions of 'being' and the McLuanesque notion of "allatoneness" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 53) achieved via electric and electronic/digital technology. Simultaneity of experience, which is a characteristic of electronic and digital communication, has now been recontextualised as a contemporary, utopian feature of CMC. An example of this is an advertisement that *Wired* ran for IBM. It depicts a businessman in a restaurant being served coffee while he works on his laptop computer. Accompanying this image is the statement: "You're finishing a presentation on Lotus Freelance Graphics, printing a report on your boss' desk, and browsing the Internet at the same time. Is that Expresso or OS/2 Warp connect?" (IBM, 1995, pp. 34-35). Another example appeared in the *Wired 'Scenarios'* special edition[72] where an advertisement for Discovery Channel Online states: "It's more

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[72] *Scenarios: the future of the future* 1(1) was a special 'one-off' edition of *Wired* issued in January 1996.

than a destination, it's a departure" (Discovery Channel Online, 1996, pp. 8-9). Both these advertisements resolve the human paradox of simultaneously 'leaving there and being there' by constructing CMC as a technological practice that enables a form of material/biological transcendence.

These two examples, like many other ECI advertisements, promote computer-mediated 'travel' via digital networks, and anchor technology with utopian human ideals of being able to leave or transcend the physical/material world. Connected to this utopian notion of projecting the self elsewhere are positive gnostic[73] themes regarding technology's mystical or magical or divine properties, which were also associated with the introduction of electricity and earlier modern electrical technologies like the telegraph and telephone[74] (Marvin, 1988; Carey, 1989; Davis, 1994, 1997, 1999). This is discussed by Wertheim (1999, p. 280), who (citing Davis) states:

> The pattern of seeing new technology as a means of spiritual transcendence has been repeated so many times that Erik Davis has coined the term 'techgnosis' as a generic description of the phenomena. As the latest incarnation of techgnosis, cyber-gnosis reflects a deep and recurring theme in Western culture. In the glorious futures imagined by cyber-religionists like Vinge and Moravec, Godlike omniscience and immortality will be vouchsafed for everyone (Wertheim, 1999, p. 280).

Techgnosis (mechanical technology as a means of spiritual transcendence) and cyber-gnosis (computer technology as a means of spiritual transcendence) are both deterministic terms in the sense that they imply a special (if not unique), knowledge, that can only be found in (for example) 'the machine' or the computer. An analogy for both techgnosis and cyber-gnosis can be found in Grapard's description of geognosis. He states:

> the term geognosis (from *gaia*, "earth," and *gnosis*, "knowledge,") as something akin to a type of soteriological knowledge (i.e., leading to salvation) is gained through specific spatial practices of a predominately ritual or mystical character...geognosis refers to a

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[73] For a further critique of cyber-gnosis see Charles Ess' article, 'The Word online? Text and image, authority and spirituality in the Age of the Internet'. In *Mots Pluriels*. No 19, October 2001. http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP1901ce.html

[74] Davis believes that, "any time we have a scientific or technological condition, it always breathes myths. It always produces its own kind of uncanny, its strange realm of questions and ambiguities. A certain kind of magic" (Davis, 1997, p. 2).

specific knowledge that is claimed to have been extracted from the earth itself, to correspond in mysterious ways to sacred scriptures and to divine rule, and to lead either to mystical achievement or to religious salvation (Grapard, 1994, pp. 374-375).

Utopian cyber-gnosis and techno-corporate cyber-salvation are both recurrent promotional themes in *Wired*. They appear in advertising, in editorial copy and in press releases from the *Wired* team. At its most basic level cyber-gnosis and salvation through technology are offered to the consumer via ECI corporations. For example, a *Wired* advertisement for Nintendo's Virtual Boy game states:

> I was passing through a wasteland when suddenly my mind drifted...my spirit lifted, my location shifted into a new dimension a third dimension a good dimension. Was it their intention? To crash my dimension? I stepped into the invention and heard a voice say, Turn it on Virtual Boy. A 3-D game for a 3-D world (Nintendo, 1995, pp. 44-45).

In this example, advertising constructs a cyber-gnostic narrative. The TNC Nintendo is constructed in this role as a God-like creator that proffers its gifts – spiritual enlightenment and transcendence – to an individual human subject. What is signified in this advertisement is that these divine experiences can only be achieved through the consumption of the latest ECI technologies.

From another perspective, CMC and network technologies are positioned as agents of spiritual and psychic well being which will also allow the creation of a collective global consciousness. For example, Rheingold describes the experience of CMC as: "The feeling of tapping into...[a] multi-brained organism...[and] – a merger of knowledge, capital, social capital, and communion" (Rheingold, 1994, p. 110). As Rheingold's quote suggests, cyberspace itself, is sometimes constructed as representative of a technologically mediated, sacred, quasi-religious space. This is implicit in the views of the *Wired* team themselves. For example, *Wired*'s editorial team member, Kevin Kelly, also comments: "I have experienced soul-data[75] through silicon" (Kelly cited in Wertheim, 1999, p. 19). In one of his *Wired* feature articles, Kelly further states, "I agree with the idea of making technology more biological and

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[75] For a discussion on soul data see http://mheim.com/html/av99.html. Here, cyberspace is referred to as a 'place' or realm where "the psyche, or the gods have room to grow" (Davis, 1999, p. 2).

making it express the organic. The more we make our technology lifelike the better it will be" (Kelly, 1995, p. 211-212).

These types of personal (quasi-religious sublime) views on techno-biological creationism and electronic, digitally mediated consciousness are given a historical context (and an 'expert' historiography) in other *Wired* editorial articles. For example, one *Electrosphere* column states:

> An obscure Jesuit Priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, set down the philosophical framework for a planetary, Net-based consciousness 50 years ago...says John Perry Barlow "The point of all evolution up to this stage is the creation of a collective organism of the mind" (Kreisberg, 1995, p. 108).

This idea (which resonates with both Rheingold and Kelly's evolutionary techno-biological mediated consciousness) is also championed by *Wired* editor Louis Rossetto:

> What seems to be evolving is a global consciousness formed out of the discussions and negotiations and feelings being shared by individuals connected to networks through...computers. The more minds that connect, the more powerful this consciousness will be (Rossetto cited in Hudson, 1997, p. 241).

Dovey points out that these ideas are not a new phenomena: "technologically mediated utopias have characterised the industrial and modernist age" (Dovey, 1996, p. 113). Thus it is not surprising to find such utopian rhetoric in a commercial magazine like *Wired*, which promotes the benefits of the 'latest' communications technologies.

Cyberpunk author Bruce Sterling reconstructs the relationship and logic existing in ECI and CMC techno-utopian themes as economic imperatives and a marketing strategy. His commentary appears on the last page of the *Wired Scenarios* edition and alludes to the way in which utopian scenarios are used to promote technological products:

> If the future were really predictable, we'd all hang ourselves right after killing our children. Apocalypse always sells. It sells like lipstick. Because it flatters our vanity. When H.G. Wells was dying, he somberly predicted the imminent collapse of all human civilization. Real futurism means staring directly into your own grave and accepting the slow and thorough obliteration of everyone and

everything you know and love. Does this sound like fun? It can be. Just don't expect it to move a lot of product (Sterling, 1996, p. 170).

Sterling suggests that while dystopian technological scenarios make great entertainment in terms of movies and books (hence dystopian science fiction writer William Gibson on the cover of an early edition of *Wired*) they do not sell ECI technologies. Subsequently, as the advertising pages in *Wired* grew, it can be argued that the dystopian technological cover themes in *Wired* were replaced with utopian ones. It is illogical to use a dystopian scenario to promote new technologies and technological future. … :ause it does not construct the products in a positive light, nor suggest a promising future for the potential consumer. This is why *Wired* editorials (like the paid advertisements) construct utopian projections of new communication technologies. These constructions complement a desire to keep up with the latest technologies. In *Wired*, the only dystopian possibility facing the consumer is if they do not 'keep up' with the latest technological developments as Compaq's advertisement for it latest personal computer attests: "Just because you learned the hard way doesn't mean your kid has to" (Compaq, 1994, p. 18-19).

In *Wired*, both dystopian and utopian 'possibilities' are constructed as consumer choices – it is up to the reader – you can either be 'tired' (if you do not buy the latest ECI products) or 'wired' (if you do buy the latest ECI products). In this way, *Wired*'s editorial overtly constructs its aspirational readers as people who are not 'tired' and not worried about the future because they position themselves within an economically utopian (technologically rich and materially abundant) scenario. The magazine may comment occasionally on the dystopian possibilities of technology in order to create interesting and entertaining copy, yet the underlying threat projected in its pages lies not with technology or its applications but rather with not being able to afford to keep up with 'new' technological developments. The magazine adopts an optimistic stance regarding this, as illustrated by editorial statements such as "people everywhere are worried about the future. (The only two exceptions we've found are business people in South East Asia and readers of *Wired*)" (Brand, 1996, p. 30).

Wired's deterministic utopian futures are frequently constructed using binary phrases such as 'inside and outside', 'networks rather than hierarchies', 'wired and tired', 'the old and the new'. In doing this, writers create a foundation for (if not

spatially position) the notion of utopia, just like Thomas More did with his original utopian island. The cyber-utopia becomes located as the preserve of *Wired* readers; a white, corporate, masculine hierarchy. This is at odds with what Cubitt describes as "the very purpose of utopian thought, of keeping the future open to all possibilities" (Cubitt, 1998, p. 51). Haraway (1998) uses the metaphor of vision to critique historical utopian meta-narratives, as well as to describe new possibilities which:

> are not the product of escape and transcendence of limits, i.e. the view from above, but the joining of partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position that promises a vision of the means of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions, i.e. views from somewhere (Haraway, 1998, p. 198).

Wired magazine also offers its own partial and specific views, in the guise of academic, business and technical expertise. These include those who have reached 'iconic' status – in Marshall McLuhan's case, rediscovered posthumously. These experts are commodified in *Wired* so that particular areas and types of 'expert knowledge' can be used to engage readers. The binary values of utopian/dystopian oppositions position readers to consume new ECI technologies in order to keep up with *Wired*'s vision of the computer-mediated online future.

The experts

Like most commercial media, the publisher of *Wired* magazine refers to experts and/or authorities to assist readers construct their relationship with the online future. The use of 'authorities' and 'experts' to explain technology and technological futures is a traditional and rhetorical marketing strategy to validate, popularise and promote new technologies and suggest their incorporation within constructed notions of the techno-lifestyle. In this context, the 'expert' and his/her 'expert knowledge' operate whereby "invention is undertaken by 'opinion leaders' who help shape and refine existing cultural meaning" (McCracken, 1990, p. 80). 'Expert' and 'expert knowledge' become recontextualised within the promotional process, which according to Wernick (1991):

> crosses the line between advertising, packaging, and design, and is applicable as well to activities beyond the immediately commercial...it has come to mean any kind of propagation (including that of ideas, causes and programmes), reflects a real historical tendency for all

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such discourse to acquire an advertising character...A promotional
message is a complex of significations which at once represents
(moves in place of), advocates (moves on behalf of), and anticipates
(moves ahead of), the circulating entity or entities to which it refers
(Wernick, 1991, pp. 181-182).

It is within this promotional context that 'expert' ECI computer, academic
and business knowledge is reconstructed. This commercial process of product
hybridisation sees 'expert/opinion leader' and 'expert knowledge' boundaries
intersecting with those of entertainer, and promoter of consumer culture. *Wired*
represents a contemporary facet of promotional culture because, until recently, "A
true and full appreciation of scientific knowledge was off limits to all except properly
schooled experts who belonged to restricted textual communities" (Marvin, 1988, p.
42). Today, advertising, the media, promotion and the commercialisation of
knowledge provide access to discussions of these 'restricted textual communities' by
the development of an 'everyday' science and technology consumer culture. One of
the techniques used by the media to do this is a form of address defined by
Fairclough (1995), as 'conversationalisation' which:

helps to democratise technology, making it more accessible to people,
raising the status of language and experience of ordinary life by
recasting science in their terms to a degree, and rejecting the elitism
and mystification that go along with science as authorised specialists
talking technical language (Fairclough, 1995, p. 14).

Conversationalisation however, does not entail the full-scale democratisation
of knowledge and expertise to the extent Fairclough suggests. Rather, it routinises
aspects of knowledge, technical terms and codes of expertise; and commodifies and
structures these to fit commercial applications. Given that *Wired* does "presume an
awareness" (Galvin, 1995, p. 67), in its readers of such codes, the magazine's
editorial and (in particular) paid advertisements are examples of how "so many once
restricted terms (network, interactive, digital and so on) have become part of
everyone's language" (Galvin, 1995, p. 67).

Even so, while *Wired*'s ECI technology experts may write for the magazine
to explain certain concepts, regulations, technical applications or ideas, the expertise
communicated is always a partial, abridged knowledge, set within the promotional
context of the commercial magazine format, and in accordance with editorial

agendas. Some proposals and theories put forth in the magazine would not pass rigorous, scientific, academic debate.

Nonetheless, *Wired* can be viewed as both a commercial and "popular cultural forum" (Amad, 1994, p. 92) which rearticulates, scientific, business, technical and academic knowledge via the agency of the 'expert'. In doing this the magazine exhibits postmodern tendencies which "tease academic theory by their knowingness which mimics rather than emulates, making it impossible to judge them according to a binary which privileges theory over practice" (Amad, 1994, pp. 91-92). For example, *Wired*'s articles often recount or discuss (and at times provide biographies of the work of) utopian philosophers, 'thinkers', academics and communication theorists; providing 1000 word summaries of ideas which have previously provoked thousands of pages of discussion.

The historical and contemporary futurologists, scientists, and academic 'techno-experts' in *Wired* include Thomas Paine, Herman Kuhn, Heidi and Alvin Toffler, John Naisbett, Marshall McLuhan, Nicholas Negroponte, Sherry Turkle, Donna Haraway, and Mark Dery (to name but a few). Most (with the exception of Dery and Haraway) represent utopian techno-experts. The choice of these expert theorists, who can be viewed as 'content/context' providers for the commercial core of the magazine, highlights a postmodern dynamic whereby the technocultural lifestyle becomes "cultural studies...best understood as a supplement to leisure markets in a very loosely deconstructive sense" (During, 1993, p. 142).

Nowhere is this tendency more apparent than *Wired*'s appropriation of 1960s Canadian medium theorist Marshall McLuhan, who appears in the magazine as its self-proclaimed 'Patron Saint'. McLuhan's exhumation as spiritual guide, prime expert, and *Wired* visionary is significant for a variety of reasons. First, McLuhan's views on electronic media are recontextualised thematically within *Wired*'s cyber-gnostic, utopian discourses. This recontextualisation includes (sometimes playful), incorporation of the concepts of psychic, spiritual and technological convergence, plus the potential for CMC to link people collectively through time and space. Second, McLuhan was an early (1960s) example of the convergence of the 'academic expert', celebrity, entertainer and entrepreneur, and thus a representative of "cultural studies and the leisure industries" (Amad, 1994, p. 92).

McLuhan's self-promotional style lead to television and movie appearances, newspaper and magazine interviews, and celebrity status. His theories of media were criticised in academic circles, however, for being technologically deterministic, and his exploratory, aphoristic method lost him credibility. What caught the media's (and the then ECI advertisers') attention was the promotional potential of his ideas regarding ECI technologies. This was particularly true of electronic media, which he considered to be "extensions of some human faculty – psychic or physical" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 26). It is easy to see why McLuhan's theories of media were appropriated after the event. Not only were his views in keeping with 1960s pop culture, they were also in tune with the changing media industries. When repositioned within the context of *Wired*'s pages one can see how his theory is used both to "imagine" and "prescribe" (Amad, 1994, pp. 91-92) relationships between humans and technology.

McLuhan's views have been in and out of fashion over the past forty years or so, and fellow literary and communication theorist Raymond Williams stated in the 1970s that "The particular rhetoric of McLuhan's theory is unlikely to last" (Williams, 1974, p. 28). Nonetheless, the changeability of academic views on McLuhan's achievements did not stop them being re-appropriated by *Wired*, primarily because his theories of media support their construction of the contemporary, utopian, rhetoric of the ECI market. For example, statements or 'McLuhanisms' such as the now famous "Ours is a brand-new world of allatoneness. 'Time' has ceased, 'space' has vanished. We now live in a global village...a simultaneous happening" (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967, p. 53) [underling in original] is a standard ECI advertising theme for *Wired*, CMC and the Internet.

McLuhan's ideas have been resuscitated and recontextualised within the discourse of promotion both by *Wired* and a host of commercial, media and cultural studies marketeers. His 1960s theories have become adverts and sound bytes for the millennial ECI industry. This may be one reason why Williams was so critical of McLuhan; he foresaw the potential for the commercial exploitation of both the 'academic expert' and his aphoristic, deterministic theories:

> technical abstractions in their unnoticed projections into social models, have the effect of canceling all attention to existing and developing (and already challenged) communications institutions. If the effect of the medium is the same, who ever controls or uses it, and

whatever apparent content he may try to insert, then we can forget ordinary political and cultural argument and let the technology run itself. It is hardly surprising that this conclusion has been welcomed by the 'media men' of the existing institutions. It gives the gloss of avant-garde theory to the crudest versions of their existing interests and practices, and assigns all their critics to pre-electronic irrelevance. Thus what began as pure formalism, and as speculation on human essence, ends as operative social theory and practice, in the heartland of the most dominant and aggressive communications institutions in the world (Williams, 1974, p. 128).

As recognised by Raymond Williams (1974), there is a fit between McLuhan's ideas, his 'McLuhanisms' (which foreshadowed the advertising sound bytes of today), his aphoristic medium theory approach and the potential for promoting utopian discourses through ECI advertising. The publisher of *Wired* picked up on this 'fitness' between McLuhan's work and the discourses of technoculture from the magazine's beginning, particularly using notions of techno-psychic convergence, techgnosis, cyber-gnosis, simultaneity of experience and the global village. Further, *Wired*'s creative designers appropriated elements of the typographic and layout presentation of McLuhan's ideas regarding 'conceptualisation', and the 'visualisation' of information and ideas, as displayed in such works as *The Medium is the Massage*. Nowhere is this more evident than *Wired*'s regular four-page 'visual quote' that could well have been extracted from McLuhan and Fiore's book (see figures 7.4. 7.5, 7.6 & 7.7).


Figure 7.4. *The Medium is the Massage,* (1967), pp. 34-35.

Figure 7.5. *The Medium is the Massage,* (1967), pp. 36-37.
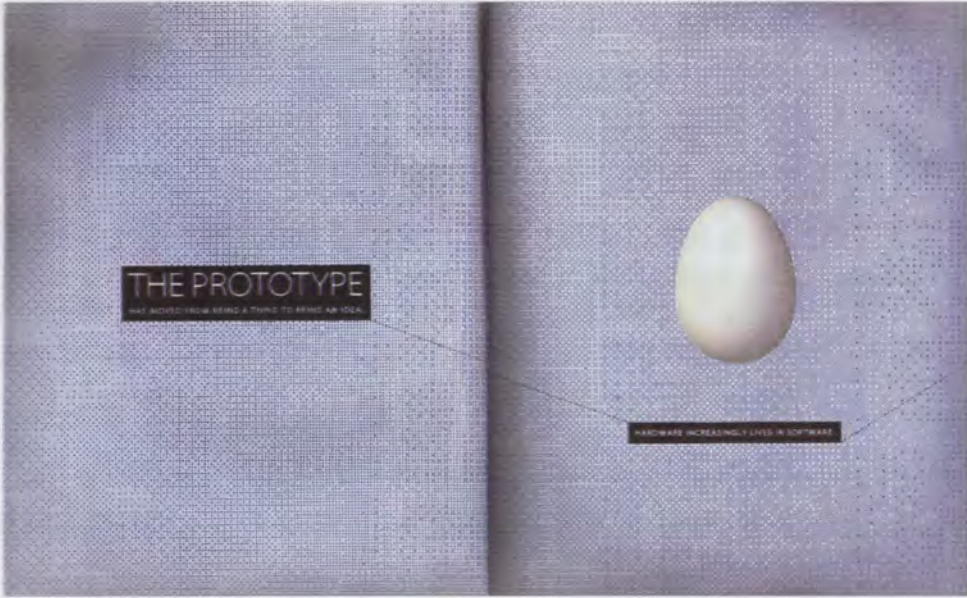
**Figure 7.6.** *Wired* 2(4), pp. 8-9.
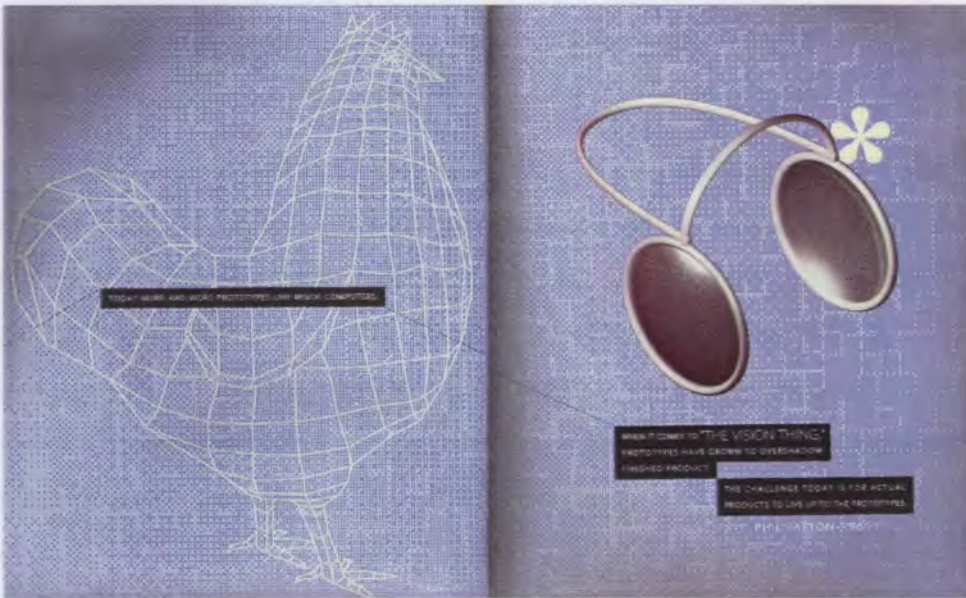
Figure 7.7. *Wired* 2(4), pp. 10-11.

Marshall McLuhan is positioned as expert, psychic visionary and part of the *Wired* team. His work has become a hyperreal extension of the *Wired* persona and reinforced via his image and a 'McLuhanism' that appears every month in the magazine. Like most of *Wired*'s experts and opinion leaders, McLuhan has also appeared on a *Wired* cover (in January 1996). He has, in effect, become a reconstructed promotional icon, sign and "achronistic signifier" (Galvin, 1995, p. 70)

for the new ECI media, for technocultural discourse and (from a marketing perspective), for the 'desire for the new'. Galvin suggests:

> McLuhan can stand as emblematic for the value of those who can articulate the future, a future moreover, with a particularly positive gloss...the implication is that what McLuhan could do for the 1990s from the perspective of the 1960s, those in the technological vanguard are in fact doing for the decades ahead. McLuhan, then, in this context, is an important validator of the tendency towards futurist thinking *per se* (Galvin, 1995, p. 70).

As academic and cultural expert, McLuhan provides a legitimate, theoretical framework for the magazine from the perspective of ideas and design. Another important and more contemporary "validator of the tendency towards futuristic thinking" (Galvin, 1995, p. 70) is *Wired* expert Nicholas Negroponte, referred to as "Saint Nicholas" (Bass, 1995, p. 146) and thus placed along side '*Wired* Patron Saint' Marshal McLuhan. Negroponte (MIT Media Lab founder, *Wired* financial-backer and senior columnist), is less 'a saint' and more a 'showman' and represents the hybrid academic expert/ECI entrepreneur.

Negroponte is positioned as one of *Wired*'s most influential figures and authoritative voices and his views are presented in every issue via his editorial column *Negroponte*. His legitimacy as an expert is synergetically confirmed on and offline via *Wired* press releases, his books, through online forums (which are advertised in *Wired*), and also by the media and cultural studies industry. As is the case with McLuhan, the legitimisation process of Negroponte's project and authority as an expert reflects favourably upon *Wired* via (for example) publicity statements such as:

> *Wired* marks the first time Nicholas Negroponte, director of MIT's Media Lab and one of the world's leading technology visionaries, has written for any magazine, despite numerous offers. "Computing and communications is now about lifestyle, not bytes, pixels or gigaflops," Negroponte said. "The founders of *Wired* are the first to recognize that" (Eden Hoffman, 1995a, p. 1).

These views validate Negroponte's appointment as a columnist, as Negroponte's appointment validates *Wired*. Like McLuhan, Negroponte has also featured on the cover of *Wired*. This led into two feature stories covering the MIT Media Lab and Negroponte himself. One of these described the MIT Media Lab as

"inventing the future" (Hapgood, 1995, p. 142) while another, titled "Being Nicholas", playfully stated: "His MIT colleagues sometimes dismiss him as the P.T. Barnham of science who puts on a flashy show without much substance" (Bass, 1995, p. 148). Notwithstanding this, Negroponte is constructed by the magazine and via intertextual promotion, as the quintessential technology and academic expert whose knowledge is translated into an accessible, popular format. Like McLuhan, his role as 'the expert' is used to legitimise and promote new technologies as "objects of desire" (Wark, 1994, p. 15) in which companies can invest. As Negroponte states in his *Wired* column: "If I had to define my job at MIT, I would say simply that I connect passions to companies" (Negroponte, 1995b, p. 252).

Techno-corporate and consumer desire

Negroponte's expert and entrepreneurial role as techno-corporate mediator is significant in facilitating a desire to connect technology producers, technology investors, and technology markets. Further, his views represent a mode of address that invites aspirational *Wired* readers into these markets. The construction of techno-corporate desire and the logic within it is also evident in the ECI TNC advertising campaigns that run in *Wired*. ECI TNC companies such as Compaq not only remind us of the techno-corporate desire for a connected future, but also 'feed' this desire via promotional explanations. For example:

> Servers are built by teams of people. Solutions are built by teams of Companies...You see, they may be Compaq servers. But they are Compaq-Microsoft-Oracle-SAP-Intel-Novel-SCO-Sybase-Cheynne solutions (We just couldn't fit all those logos on them) (Compaq, 1995, pp. 2-3).

Techno-corporate desire for new and future technology investment/promotion opportunities is perhaps the most evident desire underlying *Wired*'s master narrative. This is evident in *Wired*'s constant in-text promotion of its online property *HotWired* which represents an example of the expansionist possibilities of electronic and digital capitalism. Connected to this are online investment possibilities, which are embodied in *Wired*'s editorial commentary. For example:

> What the net is, more than anything else at this point, is a platform for entrepreneurial activities – A free market economy in the truest

sense...It's a level playing field where people can do anything they want to (Andreessen cited by Bayers, 1995, p. 165).

This editorial quote, by Netscape creator Marc Andreessen, constructs new ECI technologies as being the force which will provide 'capital' with an alternative route for trade, as well as the promise of new markets and companies in which to invest. This type of promotion – which constructs the Internet as an unrestricted and non-regulated trading area – makes for an idealised (if not utopian) investment opportunity. Andreessen's utopian view of the Internet is backed up in the same issue by an advertisement for the Chicago Board of Options Exchange (CBOE) online trade index:

> Put your money where your mouse is. New CBOE Technology Index Options (TXX). http://www.cboe.com. Here are thirty companies in just about anything you can boot up, download, talk into or log into. All incorporated into a single index. So you can buy or sell them all with one quick transaction. The ultimate tech investing opportunity. Available for the first time ever. Only on the world leader in index options – the CBOE. Browse the possibilities at http://www.cboe.com or call 1-800-OPTIONS (Chicago Board of Options exchange, 1995, p. 75).

The CBOE's instruction to 'put your money where your mouse is' stands alongside Andreessen's (1995) vision of the financial utopian possibilities for the Internet. These utopian, techno-corporate views (which appeared in *Wired*'s 1995 Christmas issue) construct a celebration of the market and a reassurance from the techno-corporate world to potential online investors. At another level, convergent ECI technologies and modes of CMC are symbolic, utopian agents of capital in that they represent new forms of, and future possibilities for, "abstract[ing] social relations...out of their organic context" (Goldman, 1992, p. 21). As with the earlier "separation of communication from transportation" (Carey, 1989, p. 203) this online potential promises profit.

Marketing the future: keeping up with the new

Wired's most common promotion is the construction of a corporate and consumer desire based on online investment and the latest ECI technologies. *Wired* acts as an agent, and promotes a future (that never quite arrives). One reason the future never arrives is because it is constantly updated. Foreseeing the future

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(Hawkins, Neal, Quester & Best, 1994) is one of the strategies of commercial marketing operating in *Wired* to construct an ongoing and eternal promotion of new ECI technologies and services. Rhetoric and repetition, similarity and difference – these operate in every new edition of *Wired* whenever readers are presented with a new array of ECI technologies and services. 'Newness' in this context is central to this type of marketing strategy according to McCracken (1993). She states:

> As corporations introduce new products and services in accordance with market exigencies, the advertising industry promotes the concepts of the 'new' and the 'up-to-date' as ideological supports for these goods and services...Thus, one important use of the ideological code 'information' is to promote in its readers a sense of the new and up-to-date. Closely linked to its opposite, the old-fashioned and obsolete, the ideology of the new often helps create feelings of inadequacy in readers which the new products are promised to remedy (McCracken, 1993, p. 61).

The *Wired* department *Fetish* is a typical example of how both these rhetorical marketing strategies operate. *Fetish* reviews and promotes new ECI and leisure technologies. *Fetish* however, drives McCracken's (1993) formula further in that 'new' products are often signified as being already redundant. In *Wired* 1(5), *Fetish* promoted Crystal Eyes stereo wear and concluded their copy with "They cost US$1,500, but we bet that a US$150 Nintendo version will be out by next year" (Davis, 1993, p. 36). In this instance *Fetish* promotes consumer investment in a yet to be realised TNC corporate product rather than the actual product being advertised - which is already signified as redundant. Furthermore, readers are encouraged to invest in not just any future, but in the proffered techno-corporate one. The potential Nintendo product is projected by the *Fetish* editorial as being ahead of the techno futures discussed. Two other examples of this type of technology marketing occur in issue 2(12). Here, an advertisement for NEC states, "While other CD-ROM readers are contemplating your question we have already given you the answers (NEC, 1994, pp. 18-19). This is followed by the *Fetish* promotion for the 'latest' DaynaLINK for ARA technology, which announces, "The next generation of network access for the Macintosh is now here" (Jacobs, 1994a, p. 54).

These examples exemplify the magazine's promotional strategy regarding consumption of the 'new', which is based on speculation and endless updates. There is a currency attached to the 'new' whereby textual products potentially become

commodity signs, like a stock-market derivative. Both are based on a speculative investment in future products yet to be made or released. This hypermarketing strategy privileges the 'yet-to-arrive' by making that which has already arrived seem redundant.

On one ideological level, the promotional address in *Fetish* uses products to interpellate consumer social groups – that is, to communicate who is 'inside' and who is 'outside' the aspirational lifestyle constructed by the magazine. Alternatively, the magazine's mode of address self-reflexively restates both the publisher's dictum that *Wired* readers are 'early adopters' of the latest technologies, and the aspirational readerships' desire to consume - as it is constructed in the magazine's pages. *Wired's* articulation that the 'new' cannot be consumed quickly enough before it becomes obsolete permeates the magazine in many ways and directions, illustrating a "'disjunctive' rather than 'deterministic' relationship" (Amad, 1994, p. 15) in terms of production and consumption.

The 'disjunctive' textual characteristic in play also involves fetish and fetishism, technology and desire. Dant[76] rightly views fetishism of objects as a "discursive" social practice (Dant, 1999, p. 57). He states, "It is through the displacement of desire than an object acquires social value, indicated by the reverence, worship or fascination with which it is treated" (Dant, 1999, p. 43). The *Fetish* department both "valorises" and "ascribes properties" of the 'new' to ECI technologies, constructing "objects of mediation of social value" (Dant, 1999, p. 41). When positioned within the promotional context of *Wired*, the 'social value' of ECI technologies is imbued with symbolic and material properties, which are synergetically reinforced throughout the text.

Fetish's championing of the new represents a general promotional rhetoric of *Wired*, amplified by synergies between paid advertising and editorial (including the *Fetish* department itself). An embodiment of this promotional rhetoric for the new is *Wired's* special issue edition entitled *Scenarios: the Future of the Future*, which was designed specifically to promote new and future ECI technologies and techno-

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[76] Dant's text, *Material culture in the social world* (1999), provides a study of fetishism and a critical analysis of Marx, Freud and Baudrillard's use of the term. He proposes that, "the concept of fetishism cannot be based on any simple notion of what constitutes the 'real' but can alert us to how the social value of things may be enhanced through cultural mediations that identify and ascribe properties to them" (Dant, 1999, p. 2).

lifestyles. In this edition the rhetoric of the future is reiterated in a myriad of editorial stories. For example: "Technology seems to be accelerating, and you have to keep up. Networks and markets, instead of staid hierarchies, rule, and you have to keep up" (Brand, 1996, p. 38). This editorial statement which uses the theme of keeping up with (in the case of *Wired* – networked) 'futures' and the latest products is a common marketing device used by most commercial magazines.

Conclusion

In the case of *Wired*, keeping up with the latest and future ECI technologies and online developments is a promotion for an investment in the magazine itself. *Wired* is constructed by its publisher as being a new form of media and cutting-edge publication which when consumed by its readers will assist them to keep up with the new and future techno-lifestyle. It may be cynical to position *Wired*'s promotional master narrative – the rhetorical 'desire to be wired' – as a purely deterministic and economic activity. As Wertheim points out, "People will only adopt a technology if it resonates a latent desire" (1999, p. 29). This is arguably true. Nevertheless (and considering its commercial nature), the promotional master narrative constructed by *Wired* forms part of a more general and determinist historical discourse of technology, desire and consumption. In this narrative the consumption of new technology is positioned within the promotional rhetoric of "constant unsatisfied desire, the constant hope of forthcoming and never realised plenitude" (Kaplan, 1987, p. 28). The promotional master narrative implicit in *Wired*'s economically dependent, techno-utopian contexts, exhorts the keeping up with a high-tech future, as well as the endless hyperconsumption of ECI goods and services. The aim is to satiate and situate oneself, one's 'soul' and one's company both materially and spiritually in a *Wired*-constructed techno-corporate future.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Old and new media (*Wired* and *HotWired*)

> In mid-1994, there really wasn't anything on the World Wide Web
> you could call a "magazine". Today there are dozens, if not hundreds
> – nobody, not even the indexers at Yahoo, knows for sure how many.
> What made the difference? To cite the Web's newfound popularity
> doesn't explain much, given that it was partly caused by the growth of
> online publishing. It's possible, however to find a few more tangible
> factors in the Web's evolution from the beginning of '94 and beyond.
> One factor was the growing engagement of journalists with the Net.
> Not only were more articles written about the Internet, but more
> articles were being written for it in the form of bulletin board
> postings, Usenet articles, and Web pages. Writers were starting to see
> the Net as a medium as well as a subject. A second factor was the
> release of Mosaic Netscape, now Netscape Navigator, the [then]
> dominant Web browser on the market. With Netscape, many users
> were finally able to see the point of the Web; the client was faster,
> having been optimized for slow connections, and it made pages look a
> lot nicer. It also offered authors new tools for controlling page design,
> principally through extensions to HTML, the encoding language of
> Web documents. A third factor was the debut, on October 27, 1994, of
> *HotWired* (Macrone, 1996, p. 23-24).

This quote from Web designer Michael Macrone is significant because it
contains three key areas addressed in this chapter which are magazines, evolution
and *HotWired*. This chapter examines the 'old' and 'new' media forms that exist in
the hypermedia environment. It does this by focussing on *Wired* magazine and its
electronic derivative *HotWired*. This is because *Wired* was the first commercial print
magazine to be connected technologically and literally to the Internet via the
publisher's website *HotWired* (which contained an electronic version of *Wired*).
Further, the publisher's claim of reinvention of the print magazine (*Wired*) lay in its
connection to the *HotWired* website.

Wired and *HotWired* were promoted as a new media package for potential
Wired readers and advertisers. Both the print and online media were linked together
via cross promotion, staff writers, editorial content and technology. Together they
were marketed to *Wired* magazine readers as a new media package whereby to 'fully

experience' the innovation, one had to read the print magazine and use the *HotWired* site. This method of synergetic media cross-promotion was (and remains) a common practice among media/ECI companies. What was significant at the time was the company's use of the Internet to connect its print magazine to, and embed it within, the *HotWired* site. This decision – to take the print magazine online – heralded an alternative, evolutionary trajectory open to print magazines. The Internet and WWW–based media altered not only the form and textuality of print-based media, but also challenged modes of production and consumption previously established in print based publishing.

This chapter will discuss these areas comparatively using the *Wired* publisher's (then) new media package, comprising the print magazine *Wired*, and electronic web-based *HotWired*. *HotWired* is critical to the investigation of the research questions because the site includes an online version of *Wired* magazine. This chapter outlines the hypermedia environment in which these two media co-exist, and addresses issues raised by new media, media convergence and the transference of media content using the example of *Wired* magazine and the *HotWired* site. The purpose of the chapter is to interrogate similarities and differences between the two locations for the magazine, and to investigate further the *Wired* publisher's claim that his team, have reinvented the magazine. Using the metaphor of environment, and the analogy of evolution, a comparison of the print and electronic form allows the reader to critique the similarities and differences of both.

The new media environment

> Once upon a time there was the mass media, and they were wicked of course, and there was a guilty party. And Art (ah what luck!) offered alternatives, for those who were not prisoners of the mass media. Well it's all over. We have to start from the beginning, asking one another what's going on (Eco, 1987, p. 150).

Eco's statement (which revisits the Frankfurt School's discussion regarding the corrupted nature of the mass media) is used in this context to spotlight the debates regarding what were once known as the 'mass media' and what are now often called the new media (Barr, 2000, p. 17). McLuhan also used this term (mass

media) in the 1960s to describe the electronic media, yet it appears to be generally applied to the most recent reconfigurations, integration and expansion of older mass media industries and media forms. The revisiting of the old goes hand-in-hand with the creation of newer media forms and environments, including those brought about by digital technologies and technological convergence at the levels of industry, forms and texts.

If we were to uncritically adopt a binary 'before and after' perspective, we could describe the commercial media environment prior to convergence as being discrete, linear, hierarchical, regulated, mass mediated and more or less contextual. Conversely, the new hypermediated communications environment is convergent, networked, interactive, and computer-mediated. One computer networked to another denotes new media, however, the most notable element of the new media environment is the Internet. One particular platform connected to the Internet is the WWW, which is where *HotWired* is situated. The WWW was, during 1993-1996, the most commercial, interactive, graphical user face connected to the Internet. According to Kitchin, the WWW:

> consists of multimedia data (mostly text and graphics) which is stored as hypertext documents (documents that contain links to other pages of information). Using a browsing program such as Netscape Navigator allows users to connect to a computer server and to explore and interact with information stored there (Kitchin, 2000, p. 5).

'Web' is an operative word, and is also a metaphor that describes types of computer-mediated networks. Comprised of an electronic/digital architecture, these networked, integrated computer systems are three-dimensionally 'matrix-like'. Within this context, information flows are decentralised, hypertextual and transcend geographical national boundaries. Information regulation within this communications environment is from a 'real world' perspective, difficult. The WWW presents a level of instability regarding the control and flow of information. Further, information speed is an operative principle - particularly regarding graphics, sound and video - and stimulates an ongoing quest and desire to increase the rate of data delivery.

From an activities perspective online environments, like the WWW, comprise properties and domains where humans (individual, groups; political, educational, business, transnational corporate) and technology (hardware, software, artificial

intelligent agents – Bots[77]) dependently interact and mediate relationships, identities and practices. The ubiquity of this evolving online techno/human communication system may seem decidedly 'cyborgian[78]' as Gaggi points out "there was never such a cyborg as the Internet. It achieves almost a life of its own, different from, though dependent on, the life of individuals who use it and become part of it" (Gaggi, 1997, p. 112).

The wider hypermedia environment (which includes the WWW) comprises premodern, modern and postmodern communication technologies and practices. It moves from the icon and the scroll to the online community. The emergence and development of this convergent, interconnected, hypermedia communications environment and these communications technologies, was not, however, solely socially determined. Nor did it just occur in a technologically deterministic fashion. The Internet evolved in a complex manner and was contingent on a series of interdependent, technological, political, social, economic, and material factors (Innis 1951, Franklin 1990, Deibert 1997).

The concept of new media when considered in this context is not so much new or 'revolutionary' but rather representative of a contingent evolutionary process of convergence, divergence and reappropriation. One example of this is the Internet itself, since it continues to grow and manifest in ways other than the military application for which it was originally designed. Another is *Wired* magazine, which is available in print and online within the *HotWired* site. It represents an ECI convergence of print, electronic and digital media, as well as a divergence (material/digital) within the evolutionary context of print magazines. For example, the combination of hypertext and interactivity allows *Wired* readers access to other websites or stories from *Wired* in any order. Online *Wired* readers can suit their individual needs and whims by having the information they want, when they want it (provided it exists in the historical context). This mode of personalised interactivity

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[77] Waltz defines Bots as "computer operated agents" He states: "Not only do they function as impromptu services, such as information delivery, but also a bot can be a programme within a programme" (2000, p. 127). According to Leonard "bots have been around since the early 1960s. But there is no consensus on what particular sequence of encoded ones and zeros truly classifies a bot...The word *bot* - a slang truncation of *robot* - describes everything from a simple logon script...to complex programs" (1997, p. 11).

[78] Derived from the term cyborg. Defined by Haraway (1991, p. 149) as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction".

represents, in one sense, a shift in communication from "the single point/mass-national broadcasting paradigm [which] is giving way to...multi-perspectival/transnational narrowcasting" (Deibert, 1997, p. 196).

The combination of print and online forms may allow convergent tailoring of the product, but it also represents a divergent broadening of communication practices in terms of choice regarding the types, evolving modes and forms of communication available. One can buy a print copy of *Wired*, access it online free of charge, or do both; signifying a choice of communicative experiences and environments.

To suggest therefore, that a print magazine like *Wired* is simply 'available online' or 'transferred online' undermines this contingent process of the convergent and divergent evolution of both the print magazine and the alternative/complementary, electronic/digital version. It is preferable instead to consider how the print version of *Wired* has been adapted to accommodate, suit or exploit the WWW environment.

This investigation of convergent/divergent media can be done through the analogy of evolution. This approach is not, as Deibert states, "to be confused with nineteenth-century "Social Darwinist" views of progressive development, [instead media] evolution...is a contingent, open-ended process" (Deibert, 1997, p. 30). Deibert's approach combines medium theory with a "media as environments" (Deibert, 1997, p. 30) metaphor to study this type of evolutionary process whereby "species prosper by 'selecting' for certain physical characteristics" (Deibert, 1997, p. 30). Some media characteristics will survive differently according to their " 'fitness' or match with the new media environment" (Deibert, 1997, p. 31). Leonard, who also uses an evolutionary analogy to study the history of Bots, states: "The key variable, in determining fitness is habitat. The better the species is fitted to a habitat, the more likely it is to prosper and reproduce" (Leonard, 1997, p. 33). This type of evolutionary analogy can be used to understand how the WWW environment favours some characteristics of the print media and print culture and not others. Further, we can analyse why some characteristics of the printed *Wired* magazine transferred to the *HotWired* site and remained – even prospered – while some did not (or have not been able to, at this stage).

The most obvious difference between the print version of *Wired* and its electronic equivalent is the material form. Transferring the print version of *Wired* to the WWW has lead to a separation of the material paper form from its content. Traditionally, magazines were (and still are) defined as being print media forms. They comprise covers, ink, and pages which were either glued, stitched, stapled or bound, as well as different paper types (glossy, matte, recycled), paper textures and paper thicknesses which can be flat, raised and/or embossed.

The different material characteristics of paper are utilised as a promotional tool to interpellate and signify the type of readership the magazine publisher constructs (i.e. upmarket, quality, economy). The material absence of paper in the online environment is significant to the extent that paper traditionally helped distinguish one magazine (as well as the readership) from another, and contributed to each individual magazine's persona. Other material features connected to the form of the magazine – paper type, thickness, trim size, shape, ink types, production and picture quality, and design differences – become more standardised in the digital domain to accommodate the computer screen format. In this material sense, print magazines significantly lose their 'aura'[79] of difference from each other when transferred to the WWW. The loss of the print paper object in favour of the computer screen communication also creates an experiential tactile shift for consumers in that they lose the material, three-dimensional aura of print. This is particularly relevant in terms of the tactile experience of paper, such as being able to feel, turn and smell the different textures of a print magazine.

Another experiential feature connected to print magazine consumption is the process of acquisition and ownership of the discrete object itself. Readers acquire a medium which can be rolled up, collected, read in bed, be an object of display, given

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[79] In this context, the material features of the discrete print object disappear when translated online into a binary code. The concept is taken from Benjamin's text, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. He states:

> The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is effected is the authority of the object. One might subsume the eliminated element in the term "aura" (Benjamin, 2001, p. 3).

away, carried on the person, taken anywhere and read at various times and in different places. This activity highlights experientially and materially, the discrete, portable and temporal nature of the magazine print form.

Print magazines communicate the experience of consuming discrete tactile objects because the content is physically bound within a material context. Every monthly issue printed remains the same; once it has been offered for sale. Buying or acquiring an issue of a print magazine means one is obtaining a copy that cannot be altered over time by the publishers, it is fixed. Every copy is identical through time and issued in a chronological order. Unlike print, the electronic derivative can not be fixed in time and can be altered and changed to accommodate circumstances. A sense of ownership, time, access and the text (even the experience of having the same issue as everyone else) changes with an online magazine. In this example, the online magazine issue is not bought, owned, or discrete as it is in the print media, but embedded and consumed in a hyperlinked, decontextualised, interactive, online network.
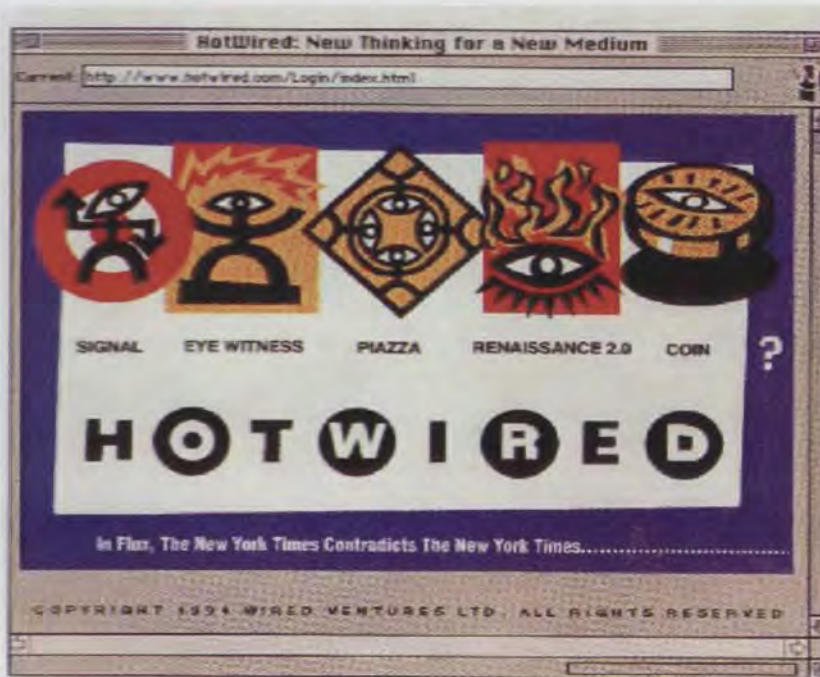
Figure 8.1. The original *HotWired* site (1994) and 'frontdoor' link to copies of *Wired*. Image taken from Macrone (1996, p. 27).

Figure 8.2. The 1995 *HotWired* homepage which, displays *Wired* magazine's link/channel (see right column). Image taken from Macrone (1996, p. 24).

In the case of *Wired*, the editorial contents of the print version are embedded as the *Wired* micro-site/link within the *HotWired* website. This micro-site includes the editorial content of the latest *Wired,* and a menu of all the *Wired* back issues (see figures 8.3, 8.4 & 8.5).

Figure 8.3. *Wired* 2(1). Part 1 of screen image. Upon entering the *Wired* microsite the magazine's cover and Table of Contents are displayed (see right side of the screen), along with *HotWired* and *Wired*'s facilities, links and advertisements.
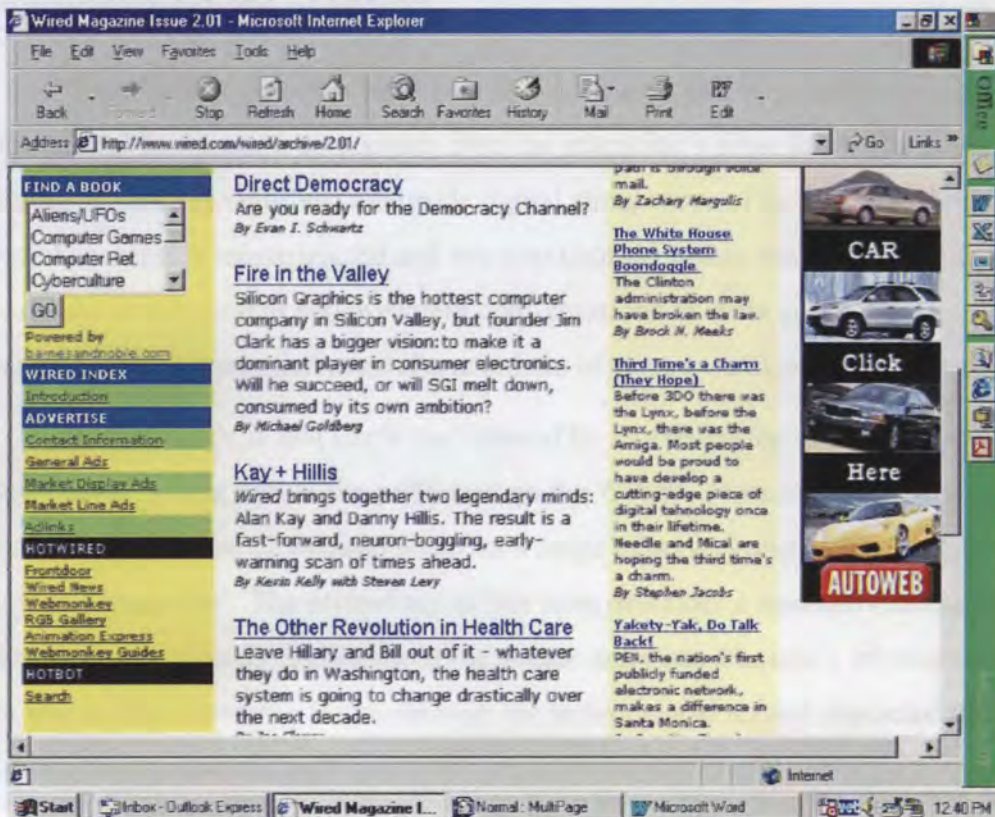
Figure 8.4. *Wired* 2(1), part 2. What you would see when scrolling down the screen.
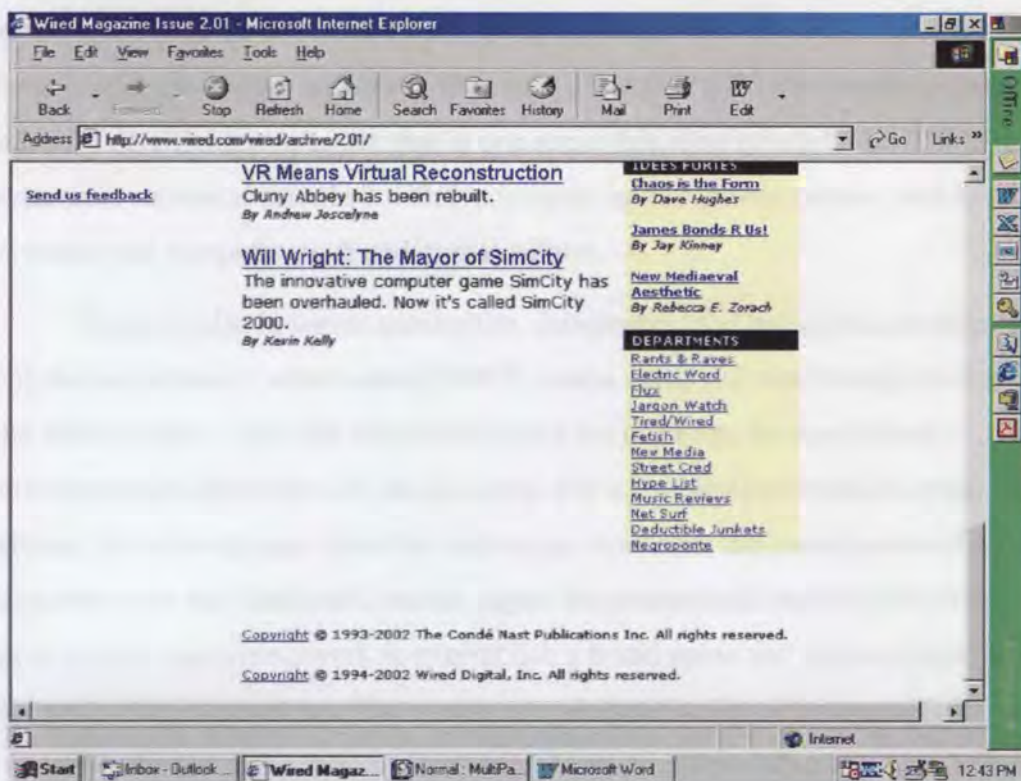
Figure 8.5. *Wired* 2(1), part 3. Bottom of screen and *Wired* microsite.

Media convergence and divergence

What these devices represent is an evolutionary process of convergence of online textual forms and a divergence from the magazine's print form. The *Wired* brand name (the key signifier) alongside digital simulations of its covers and the editorial contents is reconstructed and recontextualised within the *HotWired* site. This results in convergent and divergent configurations of cross-promotional, synergetic textual forms that are a characteristic of electronic/digital publishing.

The difference is that *HotWired* (owned by HotWired Inc. prior to becoming Wired Digital[80]) is an online site published on the WWW. Nonetheless, *HotWired* was and is (at the time of writing) listed on a range of servers and sites as an 'electronic magazine'. The etymology of this term describes a medium that can be accessed simultaneously (unlike the serial access and issue frequency of print) and a form that is miscellaneous. It also denotes the technical and textual characteristics

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[80] HotWired Inc. is now known as Wired Digital. According to Lycos Inc, "In May 1998, Wired Digital and *Wired* magazine became separate companies after Wired was sold to Advance Magazine Publishers/Condé Nast. In June of 1999 Nasdaq: LYCOS acquired Wired Digital and all its premium properties" (Lycos, 2000, p. 5). For details of the *Wired* sale to Condé Nast see *1998's Really Big Deals* (Sibler, 2000, p. 2).

derived from both the print and electronic media. McLuhan believed, "The contents of one medium is always another" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 8). To discuss this within the context of *HotWired* we can see that in one sense this view is valid. The WWW as media environment is inscribed with typographic and linguistic culture, and also with electronic and computer-mediated digital culture.

There are also however similarities, differences, and biases that are dependent upon the environment within which WWW media exist, and which shape its form (like Internet sites). Thus the electronic/digital environment favours both the convergence and divergence of media forms. For example *HotWired*, like most other websites, has a homepage. Here, the homepage represents the convergence of a print magazine cover and Table of Contents pages. Its promotional and user function (like that of a print magazine cover), is to establish a brand name and identity while also listing what the site contains. The user is provided with a list of items – also known as channels, hyperlinks or micro-sites – which are available within (and sometimes beyond) the *HotWired* site.

Accessing the information listed on both print and electronic media differs in terms of communicative execution and technological mediation. Print (as discussed in chapter three) requires the reader to turn a page by hand while the online site requires the click of a mouse both on the user's computer screen and site's hyperlink. Access to the *HotWired* homepage is decentralised yet always accessible because the *HotWired* link appears on every page of the site. That is, every time the user clicks onto a channel or micro-site within *HotWired*, the site's homepage content list (other micro-sites) reappears, sometimes in different formations but usually in the left sidebar. Because users/consumers are positioned within both a hyperlinked site and a 'magazine' environment, this continual appearance of the homepage contents via the site's hyperlinks functions to orientate and locate the user within the *HotWired* site. The hyperlinked nature of the homepage contents creates an experiential and technical context for the user by providing a continual sense of site location and brand name.

Establishing a sense of site context is essential in a convergent, hyperlinked, communications environment. Given that online media and online sites run a variety of convergent media forms (including radio, print and television broadcast), there is not as much differentiation between online site media forms as in the material

domain, because what was once consumed serially and discretely is now consumed at a single site via a computer. Each online site therefore has to establish its own identity, system of signs, language and technical capabilities in order to differentiate itself from other sites, and retain its users whilst they are operating in a hyperlinked environment.

Navigation on the site (like that of a print magazine) has a typographic bias with links appearing in written formats and codes. Consequently the site mimics, via simulation, the print media (although this is changing as images and icons continue to replace written words). Signifiers of print and to a lesser extent, manuscript culture (e.g. icons, and symbols) are used to orientate the reader and describe online site features, and navigational instructions. The culture of print is perpetuated in the naming of online features. For example, the term, 'page', is still used to describe what are essentially units of computer-mediated information, as well as the actual computer screen interface/conduit to information (i.e. the homepage).

These typographic features, which link *HotWired* to the material magazine, indicate the evolution of a media product that is convergent, divergent and computer-mediated. It combines a variety of media forms including print, interactive television/video, interactive computer games and audio/radio. Further, the production of online publishing sites such as *HotWired* and its *Wired* micro-site, has lead to the evolution of another class of professional online 'magazinists' in the same sense that print magazines did in the 19th century. In the case of *HotWired*, the roles of the *Wired* print magazinists and publisher have evolved to accommodate the online form. As Macrone points out, magazinists adopted new roles as site 'producers' in the online context. He states:

> HotWired's content areas are called *channels*, their content *programming*, and their editors *producers*. The last term, at least, is hard to argue with; it captures much better than *editor* the job of assembling and constantly updating multimedia content (Macrone, 1996, p. 24).

Hypermedia: interactivity, speed, time, space and form

This last sentence highlights two characteristics of online electronic publishing and the electronic magazine. Both characteristics differentiate online

publishing from print media publishing. Interactivity and the speed at which information on a site can be accessed and manipulated at any time online are from the site producers' perspective, production features that allows *HotWired*'s channels/micro sites to be constantly adapted and updated. Unlike print media production, online production allows faster lead-times both for following up and/or updating, correcting and responding to requests or previous stories that have appeared in *HotWired*. These features not only change previously established orders of print production, but are also connected to the evolution of information distribution within the online environment. For example, print relies on physical distribution and distribution companies. Electronic distribution is almost immediate, cutting down distribution time and cutting out distribution companies all together.

Combating space and geography with regards to the delivery of information and entertainment has been a traditional feature of the print media. The printed page itself implies the relevance of space in that there is little of it, the area is limited -- unlike the hypertextual online site where space is irrelevant, but bandwidth is everything. Electronic sites do not combat 'space' but rather 'time' in terms of production and consumption. There is downloading time, direct marketing with a time lag to delivery and electronic mail order, all of which signify the constant need to update information. Combating time in the online environment thus highlights the continuing need for speed. There is also an economic currency attached to speed with regards to distribution and consumption. For example, online sites (particularly news and financial information providers) are increasingly racing against time in terms of updating their pages, and also racing against competitors who are attempting to 'capture' consumers with promises of speedier access to information.

This is unlike readers of the print version of *Wired*, where, regardless of the point at which the print reader 'enters' the text, there is always a definitive material boundary and contextualised exit point. The material characteristics of the print form means it can only contain a certain amount of information – therefore only a certain amount of information can be consumed regardless of the type of reading/consumption taking place.

In comparison, the online *Wired* micro-site presents users with a potential textual arrangement whereby "There is no center, no vanishing point, no primary axis, no clear unitary authorial voice that, like a vanishing point, implies a clear

subject to which the text speaks" (Gaggi, 1997, p. 105). Theoretically and experientially, Gaggi is describing a decontextualised, matrix-like, hypertextual arrangement and communicative environment. Consuming/reading is hypertextual. Both text and subject are decentred. One does not so much 'read', 'watch' and 'listen' but combine all to navigate tangentially via links in a system. As Gaggi points out –
"The text is no longer a one-way communication system in which information and ideas proceed only from author to reader, but a communication system in which all participants can contribute to and effect the content and direction of the conversation" (Gaggi, 1997, p. 103).

Connected to the issue of time is frequency which is defined by the Magazine Publishers of America (MPA) as "the number of times an audience is exposed to a magazine, an advertising message, or an advertising campaign [and] the period issuance of a publication (e.g. monthly, weekly)" (MPA, 2000, p. 2). This term – when discussed as 'period issuance' and/or issue frequency – describes a temporal context, a commodification and segmentation of time. Period issuance is a feature of print magazines: early electronic versions of *Wired* textually mimicked the period issuance of its print form, whereby the *HotWired* site offered a search via covers and issue numbers of the print magazine. This is not surprising considering the issues themselves are grounded in print, but it does set up an interesting dichotomy regarding time and form. For example, the date of the magazine text, and the materiality of the print form denote typographically a fixed, integrated, historical moment in time. *Wired* has a monthly date of issue on its cover, while a page of *Wired* downloaded from *HotWired* will have the time, day, month and year of access on it: and, if downloaded much later, a much later time, day, month and year. The transference from offline print to online text reveals how the temporal currency and periodicity has been atomised to seconds. This is only technically determined and visually apparent at the moment of downloading the page.

A page that has been downloaded (even if it hasn't been 'read') is still a unit of consumption. This is when consumer time with regard to acquisition is marked; its appearance on the text is measured in seconds. Unlike print magazine acquisition and consumption, downloads and page printouts of online magazines are mediated directly through technological activity rather than human activity (as at the newsstand counter). Time therefore relates to online magazine consumption and

acquisition in a technologically dependent way and can (depending on the magazine site, user server and user technology) 'take' or 'save' time, as well as requiring that the end user has access to a computer, printer and paper.

Let us assume that one has acquired a print version of *Wired*. In this context, 'consumer' time as it relates to acquisition has already been captured at the moment of purchase. In order to capture 'reader' time, the print form monopolises page space via adverts and editorial. This notion of page space being monopolised by producers, changes when the contents are transferred to the *HotWired* site because consumers can change and format their own pages. The sign systems previously set upon (and locked physically into) paper pages now exist in a more ephemeral, interactive electronic form. In this context, the online *Wired* text is unstable in time and form, unlike printed versions of *Wired*.

The construction of an online *Wired* culture and 'community' becomes more visible online, due to interactivity. From this perspective, the ability to interact with the online text highlights an integral temporal and experiential difference between offline print production and online electronic publishing. It alters the traditional relationship between the offline producers and consumers/readers. For example, *HotWired* has interactive 'chat' facilities, and online forums, to allow communication between *HotWired* readers, online and offline *Wired* readers and staff, plus *HotWired* staff. *HotWired* users can access both print and electronic versions of *Wired* and discuss the contents in online 'chat' forums with other *Wired* readers and *Wired* staff. Once again, the lead-time for interaction between producers and consumers is decreased when material is positioned online. This contributes to the interactive process of communication and helps consumers become more visibly incorporated into the *Wired* 'community'. Thus, online interaction allows readers to experience their own engagement occurring 'before their eyes' so to speak, unlike when a reader writes a letter to the magazine, and waits to see if it will be published in *Rants & Raves* — (the *Wired* letters pages).

As a reader, being witness to our own and others' mediated interaction via online chat forums is an interactive experience quite unlike that of 'reading' a print magazine or 'watching' television. Online users have the potential not just to 'read' and 'watch' *Wired* but to visibly 'watch' their interactions with the site producers and the text. Experientially, the visibility of online interactive action becomes most

apparent when *HotWired* readers become authors and producers, when readers manipulate, and customise their personal version of *HotWired*'s homepage via their personal computers. 'Personalising' and customising the communicative experience of consuming *HotWired* is not particular to that site alone. It is also a growing characteristic of the online experience. As Deibert comments:

> Not only does the hypermedia environment contribute to "de-massification" through an increased diversity of choice among channels, it atomizes it all together by the increasing "interactivity" of the communication process. Perhaps the best example is on-line "personalized" newspapers, which allow users to access sidebar stories or tangentially related news and video clips at their own discretion. The result is a completely different news experience for each individual user (Deibert, 1997, p. 197).

Deibert's comment highlights epistemological reformations of the information, education and entertainment contexts which are part of the evolution in communication technologies, communicative experience and consciousness (Innis 1951, Ong 1982, Heim, 1987). This dynamic is evident in the emergent modes relating to online reading and textual navigation as well as to navigation consumption practices. For example, online 'reading' of *Wired* is a hybrid process of using postmodern tangential hypertext links to find a particular issue on the *HotWired* site, combined with the (modern) linear mode of print reading off a (premodern) scrolling (postmodern) screen. Thus the online *HotWired* technologies and environments relocate the reader/user/consumer experience of the text in time and space.

Techno-panic and cross-media promotion

By offering *Wired* readers free access into the *HotWired* site and the subsequent online services available via *HotWired*, the parent company (Wired Ventures Ltd) constructs a synergetic promotional cycle between *HotWired* (which is promoted in *Wired*) and *Wired* (which is promoted on the *HotWired* site). Of course, it seems logical to suggest that *Wired*'s publisher was initially using an 'old' media form like print (i.e. *Wired*) to promote a 'new' online electronic one (i.e. *HotWired*) and vice-versa. In so doing however, *Wired* publisher's synergetic promotional process inverts a traditional 'moral techno-panic' order, which occurs whenever a

new mode of communications technology emerges (Evans & Butkus 1997, p. 62). As Green states: "Old media often circulate moral panics (Cohen 1981 [1972]) about the introduction of new media" (Green, 2000, p.10). In the case of the Internet it has been frequently constructed as a medium which could supersede (if not replace) the print media.

Following the emergence of the Internet, it has become usual for newspapers to respond with headlines and excerpts such as: "Farewell to the book...Is there, or has there ever been a time when the book is likely to be swallowed by new technology?" (Albert, 1998 p. 4), "Does the digital age spell doom for the book?" (Nowland, 1999, p. 15), "Gutenberg Galaxy meets Gates Universe...If the future brings newspapers without news, journals without pages and libraries without walls, what will become of the traditional book? Will electronic publishing wipe it out?" (Darnton, 1999, p. 38). Not surprisingly, these types of 'techno-panic' stories by print publishers were, at the time, held together with an angle that ultimately promoted the benefits of print media as opposed to online 'equivalents'.

Wired, however, actively participates in these 'techno-panic' stories from the perspective that 'old media' such as their print magazine will continue after, and benefit from, new media convergence. For example, when discussing the likely outcomes of technological convergence for the commercial media, Barr makes direct reference to *Wired* as being a promoter of this type of techno-panic rhetoric. He states:

> One of the biggest future communications agendas is whether convergence will bring knock-out competition to the established media forms, resulting in the death of major media as is so commonly predicted in new magazines such as *Wired*. A more likely outcome is that we will see their continuity, complementarity and adaptability, just has been the history of print, radio, television and telephony to date. Paradoxically, the old media seem to be thriving and prospering in this age of new media (Barr, 2000, p. 156).

Given Barr's argument, *Wired* magazine is an example of 'old media', 'thriving and prospering' through its defense and the promotion of its own online site and online 'competitor' *HotWired*. One typical example of this rhetoric is a *Wired* article which stated "The Encyclopaedia Britannica was revered as an intellectual status symbol for more than 200 years — until networks came along and cut the

business down to size" (Rossney, 1995, p. 72). This type of statement forms part of the *Wired* producers' complex promotional interplay where print promotes the online media as well as serving its own interests.

This cross-promotional interplay is also part of the synergetic exchange. For example, *Wired* would advertise the writers, stories, and issues appearing in *HotWired*'s online forum. The *Wired* brand name, aesthetic style and written narratives were also often promoted directly in other media (television, newspapers, magazines) and in advertising via joint advertising campaigns (*Wired/* IBM), as well as indirectly in a variety of on and offline media[1]. Regardless of whether some *Wired* ventures later failed or receded from public attention, the significance is that the company's promotional synergetic cycle extended beyond both specific *Wired* forms. *Wired*'s brand name, aesthetic style and 'wired' narrative had (via direct and indirect promotion) spread and become incorporated into other media forms. Therefore the triumph of printing above electrical/digital, in this circumstance, is not only about *Wired* itself continuing, but also about the copies; that is the other formats that mirror or simulate or mimic the *Wired* motif, insofar as these allow the *Wired* narrative to continue and become dynamic in its mimetic-like replication through other media.

The online marketing environment: promotion, consumption and context

Compared with the 'real-world' publishing industry the Internet is, however, a different environment in which to do business. As Cunningham and Flew (1997, p. 429) point out, the Internet is an uncertain media environment compared with the traditional, centralised, commercial media environment. This is a point not lost upon advertisers and publishers wishing to position themselves within this online environment. Leonard (1997) comments on the problem of adapting offline-marketing strategies to the online world in his discussion of problems arising in creating virtual worlds:

> But the wizards soon discovered that testing boundaries is dangerous
> business. Social engineering is far from a perfect science. Reality is a
> mess, and reality modeling is even messier. Every problem solved

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[1] This includes the television show - *The Simpsons*, which featured the lead character Homer reading a copy of *Wired* magazine. As well as television, *Wired* magazine also featured in numerous academic, newspaper, radio, Internet, and magazine articles.

engendered new, unforeseen dilemmas. Every effort at programming a new world led directly to old-world bugs. And just as was true in meatspace – where real people met face-to-face – the business of economics proved to be the toughest nut to crack (Leonard, 1997, p. 4).

With regards to magazine publishing 'the business of online economics' has altered traditional relationships between advertisers and publishers. This is because the online environment presents a different arrangement of media forms, and new ways of arranging editorial content in relation to advertising content. In the case of *HotWired*, for example, paid advertising and sponsorship reside in its homepage screen (banners and sidebars) and are replicated again on the *Wired* micro-site (see figures 8.3, 8.4 & 8.5). Advertising, like the transferred *Wired* magazine editorial content, becomes another hypertextual link embedded in the *HotWired* site[12].

Print magazines like *Wired* – and electronic sites like *HotWired* – are still marketed as content providers for paid advertisers and sponsors. Unlike their print magazine predecessors, maintaining a single promotional context online is difficult because of the hyperlinked and hypertextual character of online sites. Specialist print magazines are extremely context driven and can be described as providing both context and content. This is due, firstly, to the print magazine's issue frequency, which confers the ability to present a specific yet rhetorical projection (i.e. a particular type of lifestyle) over regular periods in time. Secondly, its material dimension makes it impossible for the reader to textually dislocate advertising and editorial because both co-exist in a rigid, discrete form. Thirdly, advertising and editorial in print magazines are locked into the page and consequently the content anchors and locates the reader more effectively in time, space, place and context; necessarily exposing the reader to advertising messages.

When online, advertising has the potential to dislocate the reader from the site. For example, a keyboard stroke can take the reader/user off the site - which sometimes is hard to return to since the 'previous page' key is often disabled by advertising sites. Conversely, *Wired*'s print magazine issues locate the reader in time via pages with their note of date and issue. Thus the print magazine is a rigid textually-confined media form. Advertising - both covert and overt - intermingles

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[12] The *Wired* micro-site did not include paid advertising apart from a single banner until the January 2000 issue. This edition began a trend of integrating advertising links within the online *Wired* text.

and at times collapses within editorial content in the print form. The materiality of the print magazine provides a creative textual and experiential context in time and space – one in which advertising and editorial content co-exist at the moment of consumption. This situation differs significantly from the online experience.

Online advertising material differs in size, quantity, form, quality and volume from the offline print variety. The advertising banner was (and remains) the most common form of WWW site advertising [63]. According to Hunter Madsen, Wired Ventures Ltd 'invented' the ad banner with the launch of *HotWired*, whereby one third of the browser frame was apportioned for advertising (Madsen, 1996, p. 208). However, as Madsen states, "the ad banner has always had a size problem that has rendered it financially inadequate for publishers and creatively difficult for advertisers" (Madsen, 1996, p. 208). Not only is this problematic for advertisers but also, as *NetGuide* publisher Beth Haggerty points out, for consumers, because large Web banner advertising "interrupts your [reading] experience" (Haggerty cited in Sucov, 1996, p. 2).

These issues, along with economic problems arising for both electronic publishers and advertisers, relate to readers/producers/advertisers negotiating the electronic media form specifically and the online environment generally. Madsen (a former senior partner at the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency), was (at the time of writing) vice president for commercial strategy at *HotWired*. As a *HotWired* representative he provides a succinct yet ironic explanation of the problems, differences and similarities between electronic and print magazine advertising:

> Web sites that normally run to hundreds or thousands of pages in depth typically post banners only on the 10 or 20 most highly visible pages, and then only a few banners at a time. Thus advertising that ordinarily covers less than 5 percent of the website's total page space is expected to carry the tab for the entire enterprise. Compare this economic model with that of magazines, which, as editorial

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[63] At the time of publication Madsen's article, *Reclaim the Deadzone* described how click-through rates on banner advertising since the end of 1996 had declined. Using data issued from the IT company Intel as an example Madsen stated: "it [Intel] disclosed that, across a dozen Web locations where it advertises its site, click through ranged only between 1 and 6 percent...A couple of years ago, things were different. Click-through rates of 20 to 30 percent were not uncommon" (1996, p. 212). Madsen (1996, p. 212) attributes the decline being due to poor quality "company" sites rather poor banner quality which is why advertisers began shifting their campaigns onto search engines and away from corporate and info-tainment sites.

operations, resemble websites in some telling ways. Most magazines devote 40 to 60 percent of their total page space to advertising yet expect to receive no more than half of their operating revenues and profit from this source (the rest comes from subscription and newsstand sales). Even if you held aside its high production and distribution costs, the typical magazine would still need to devote one-fifth of its real estate to ads or else shut down. Web publishers might get away with offering less ad space if they charged relatively more for it than print and other media do...The usual cost to reach 1,000 pairs of upscale, highly educated, mostly male eyeballs with a full page ad in a business magazine runs between $50[US] and $100[US]. On the web, the cost can range widely from $10[US] to $175[US], depending on extras. The average rate is around $35[US] (Madsen 1996, p. 208).

And, usually, the reader pays no equivalent of the subscription fee. Madsen's (1996) comments regarding the 'widely' differing prices charged by websites for advertising resembles (or is reminiscent) of the unregulated advertising rates which existed in the American magazine publishing environment in the late 19th century (Peterson 1972, Tebbel & Zuckerman 1991). This wide difference in price existed before the industry became regulated, and before it established standardised advertising systems. The 'middling' effect occurring where Madsen (1996) describes an average advertising cost of [US]$35 is an indicator that electronic niche targeting is not yet as refined or precise as has been hyped or hoped. As his comments demonstrate, it seems where and how to position advertising online is problematic both technologically, creatively and economically. Search engines (at time of writing) appear to be the preferred site for advertisers over corporate and info-tainment sites like *HotWired*. Not surprisingly HotWired Inc (as it was then known) launched its highly successful search engine *Hotbot* in May 1996 (Wired Digital, 1996, p. 2). Of all the online properties that comprised HotWired Inc, *HotBot* appeared to be the most promising advertising vehicle.

Online design and product differentiation

Creating a visual experience is an integral promotional feature of modern print magazine advertising. The creative visual experience of the print magazine is constructed through design. Design links and incorporates editorial perspectives with advertising content and establishes the magazine's individual persona. From a visual and marketing perspective, the printed page offers advertisers and publishers size

quality and guaranteed exposure in terms of image reproduction compared with that available via an electronic site. Websites provide a smaller area, and less variety in quality in terms of image resolution and prompts to 'click through' to the advertising content. This may change, however, as the technology, creativity and marketing improves.

As discussed in chapter four, design is also a promotional device, which in print form, creates a synergetic promotional textuality linking advertising and editorial. The covert, promotional synergy of print is not as evident when a magazine is positioned online as in the *Wired* micro-site with a *HotWired*. The online site presents instead a 'billboard effect' created by many different editorial and promotional micro-sites. The synergetic graphic design, as contextualised in the print version of *Wired*, cannot be replicated in the WWW based *Wired* micro-site. This is due to the hypertextual characteristics of the online form, which more clearly separates advertising from editorial content. Hypertext decontextualises the design arrangements previously operating (and materially set) in *Wired's* print form.

These online characteristics thus alter the graphic textuality of covert and overt forms of advertising and promotion previously employed in the print version of *Wired*. A specific example of this dynamic occurs when the *Wired* print editorial department *Fetish* (that reviews and visually displays new ECI products) is transferred online. What results are an alteration of the department and a diminishing of its promotional capacity (see below figures 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10 & 8.11).

Figure 8.6. The print version of *Fetish* in *Wired* 2(1).

Figure 8.7. The online version of *Fetish* in *Wired* 2(1).

Figure 8.8. The print version of *Fetish* in *Wired* 2(1).
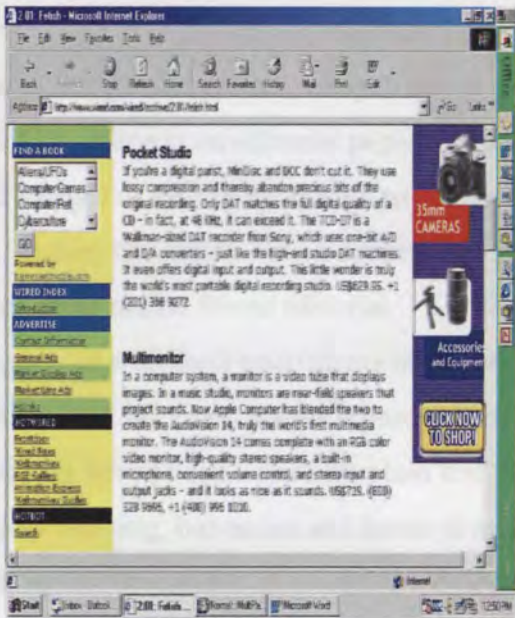
Figure 8.9. The online version of *Fetish* in *Wired* 2(1).

Figure 8.10. The print version of
Fetish in *Wired* 2(1).
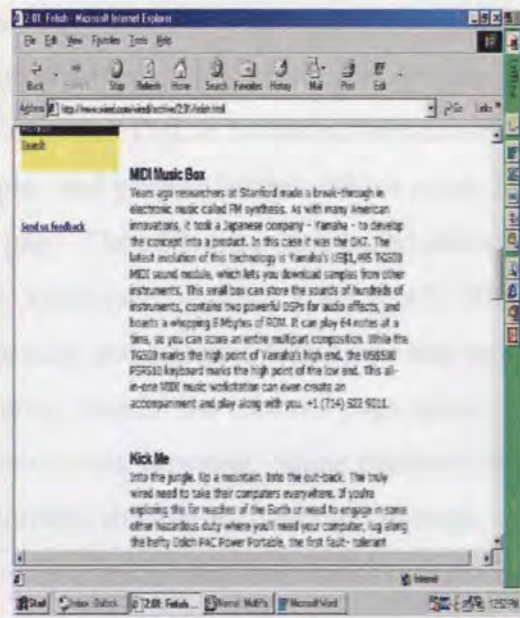
Figure 8.11. The online version of
Fetish in *Wired* 2(1).

The change is due to the separation of design and product images from editorial copy. What readers are presented with online is an editorial page of white space and text-based copy with no product images or synergetic design to connect with other advertising and editorial pages.Further, the online *Fetish* department's text-based graphic arrangement is typical of other online *Wired* editorial departments, columns and features in comparison with their equivalents in the print magazine. Apart from including smaller sized (and inferior), colour reproductions of the magazine's cover, electronically transferred *Wired* back issues are plain text. This arrangement is less visually exciting, and less enticing, but easier and faster to read because the text and page space are not 'enhanced' by colourful, coordinated design and synergetic advertising as is the case with its print version. Here lies a paradox. The print version constructs a vision of the online 'alter ego' that is more textually, (if not experientially), exciting than the reality of the online site. *Wired*'s offline textual representations exceed those achieved by the online persona. The magazine exemplifies the promotional capacity of print whereby advertising is as much magazine content as is the editorial. The experience of print advertising is integral to the formation of the print magazine's persona and implicit in (though largely absent from) the imaginary construction of the online magazine.

The *Wired* website pages demarcate advertising and editorial copy through design, colour and layout. The presentation of advertising is privileged, whereas written content is the dominant feature of editorial. Online banner advertisements are generally in colour, and feature photographic and graphic images, which reside in the page banner across the top, or below, the page. The editorial is text-based and usually overlaid upon a simulation of white 'page' space (see figures 8.3, 8.4 & 8.5). This clear demarcation of *Wired*'s online advertising and editorial page space was to alter slightly with the introduction of ads appearing 'inside' the editorial page space boarder with the January 2000 edition. Prior to this, however, online editions clearly demarcated the editorial and advertising through the use of colour and through editorial page borders.

HotWired and its *Wired* micro-site, constructs a much simpler graphic arrangement than is the case with its print relative. This is as much an economic and marketing choice as a technical and design choice. The banner ads represent an attempt to capture the attention and time of consumers. This is a necessary consideration when considering the speed at which other media forms can be consumed. A magazine page can be flicked; the television can be surfed. Consumers are not used to waiting for slow page downloads. Speed and economy are, according to Macrone (1996, p. 25), chief factors in the design process of an online site. This suggests one of the reasons why *HotWired* and the *Wired* micro-site, originally contained simple graphic design in order to save screen download time (Macrone, 1996, p. 25).

Print and online strategies: the commercial re-mix

Creative, technological, economic, material, temporal, spatial and experiential factors explain why back issues of the online version of *Wired* do not contain advertising and design elements in the same ways that the print copies do. Hyperlinked media separates advertising and editorial content more significantly than does print media. Online publishing alters (and is different from) the creative practices and economic strategies of print magazine publishing whereby advertising is an integral component (both separate and complementary) in the construction of the print magazine's persona.

When discussing the problems, strategies and possibilities associated with advertising online Madsen argues that the main problem facing the market is how to "mesh [advertising] thematically [and experientially] with info-tainment sites" (Madsen, 1996, p. 218). In other words, the creation of an experiential context comprising advertising and editorial content within a decontextualised online media form/environment seems paradoxical – yet it is what print magazines do superbly well. While the Internet presents a new type of advertising vehicle, reformatting and repositioning the content poses problems. The electronic transference of *Wired* content does not guarantee the same transference and experience of design, advertising and editorial content due to differences inherent between the online and offline media forms and environments. These differences also bring into question the changing relations of power between online consumers and producers. Not only is it difficult for advertsisers to capture consumer time and attention, but online consumers have more opportunity to bypass content and advertising that they do not wish to read.

Wired offers a classic case of convergence of new and old media. As Barr (2000) points out, "Convergence has generated greater cross-pollination of the advertising and marketing agreements" (Barr, 2000, p. 26). The combination of the Internet, and convergence of the ECI industries with the electronic publishing domains, has created alternative synergetic market routes for advertisers and media products. New media companies like Wired Ventures Ltd, offer advertising access to two types of consumer demographics, that are situated within a contextualised print magazine medium and within a decontextualised electronic Internet environment. This type of synergetic (yet divergent) media activity brings into question the changing role of the content-provider from the perspective of both advertisers and publishers operating within the traditional mediascapes of print, television and radio.

Online properties like *HotWired,* and the offline print magazine *Wired,* can be constructed as content-providers to create audiences for paid advertisers and sponsors. This thesis suggests they are content, context and brand name providers. Some of the business and marketing techniques employed by Wired Ventures Ltd provoke a redefinition of (and even question the relevance of) who the content provider is. This stops short of a 'reinvention' of the magazine form, however. The issue of content provider *qua* service provider was raised in a report by the American

trade magazine *The Folio: Plus*, when it outlined *HotWired*'s symbiotic Internet partnership with the transnational clothing company Levi-Strauss:

> On HotWired's site, the brand experience and the site content appear seamless to the visitor. HotWired calls this a co-branding sponsorship. Hershel Sarbin, senior advisor to Cowles Business Media, warns, "the Internet is a medium that encourages major brands to create or aggregate content on the Web without reference to or dependence upon traditional publisher brands (*The Folio: Plus*, 1996, p. 2).

This report was written two years after the initial launch of the 1994-1996 *HotWired* site. Nowadays the distinction between online content provider, advertiser and publisher is less clear as software type, function, speed and accessibility override notions of what variety of site (commercial or not) one is using. The 'glocalised'[84] (global/local) Microsoft Network 'mega' sites like *ninemsn* are proof of this in that they combine entertainment, information, computing and corporate culture. This type of 'mega' corporate online site qua 'network' is typical in its convergent mix of global/local telecommunications, IT and commercial media. Not only is it easier for many users to adopt Microsoft's online software (i.e. Explorer is bundled with the rest of the software package), but also the 'logic' of the 'co-branding' status of the site which integrates global/local advertising, information, entertainment and software, creating an audience for the links within it (Baumgartner, 2001, pp. 91-101). This 'logic' of convergence is not surprising when we consider the art/science nature of the online environment. Different media (like print magazines, television and radio) are disconnected from their previous material forms and contexts and integrated within online sites.

Conclusion

The convergent texts and market partnerships which permeate the publishing of *Wired* and *HotWired* present issues regarding the magazine form itself and how information/data is distributed, marketed and positioned under the guise of advertising, information and entertainment. These issues (and other questions such as

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[84] Glocal (i.e. global/local). In this instance this term is used to describe a transnational product that has been culturally and symbolically adapted to suit a particular country. When discussing this term within the context of CMC communities, Guila and Wellman state " Operating via the Net, virtual communities are glocalized. They are simultaneously more global and local, as worldwide connectivity and domestic matters intersect" (Guila & Wellman, 1999, p. 187).

whether it matters who the content provider is), form part of a larger dialogue regarding the evolution and reconfiguration of the media in the online environment. When discussing relationships between print and online media – this chapter focuses on the evolution of *Wired* magazine from its print to its online form. Some of the key areas regarding this evolution concerned the specific characteristics of online magazine form and content which were described as convergent, hypertextual, interactive, ephemeral, translatable, mosaic-like and decontextual. This differs from the traditional print magazine equivalents in that content is contextualised within physical paper products that are distributed initially en mass (i.e. one-to-many). Transferring the print medium online results in a loss of the discrete material object and its distribution time is minimised. With regards to production and consumption there are change in power relations whereby consumers become producers and authors of their individual experience of the online magazine form.

A study of the print and online versions of *Wired* content draws out and highlights differential characteristics of the online environment. In the case of *Wired* magazine, the company's new media package did not represent the reinvention of the print magazine but signified an evolutionary trajectory that connected print magazines specifically (and publishing generally), to the Internet. Technological convergence became a central feature of this trajectory because it led to convergent and divergent shifts in material, textual and industrial forms of new media, new media production and ways, times and places of media consumption. Finally, connecting and embedding *Wired* magazine to the Internet via *HotWired* represents not only the evolution of the print magazine but also an additional mode of communication. It signifies another evolutionary shift in the way humans communicate by altering where and how, when and by whom, media can be produced and consumed.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

Magazines perform many functions. They promote, entertain, inform and educate. As such they can be viewed as aesthetic, symbolic and commercial texts. More specifically, magazines are about 'imaginings', and exceeding expectations of everyday life. They textually construct imagined futures, constituencies, desires, and new advertising markets for readers, publishers and advertisers. Magazines have always done this and *Wired* is no exception. From a metaphorical perspective, the arrival of *Wired* and *HotWired* magazines on the US publishing scene in 1993 and 1994 represented an evolutionary fitness between magazine culture, Internet culture and online imaginings.

This thesis studies *Wired* magazine from the period 1993 to 1996. This period in time was highly significant because it represented the genesis of online communication and its integration into popular culture. The aestheticisation and promotion of ECI goods and services (plus the promotion of online, techno-lifestyles) became evident within popular culture via mainstream media texts, music, advertisements and government policies: *Wired*'s development was part of this dynamic. As Hayward (1992) and Galvin (1995) have pointed out technoculture became part of the general cultural development of Western societies.

Wired magazine was an important text within this cultural context. It was at the forefront of the popularisation and promotion of ECI technology, convergence and online activity through its upmarket, corporate and utopian constructions of techno-lifestyle. *Wired* was an overtly commercial media product that was marketed/positioned within the mainstream, American publishing industry. It is within this commercial context that *Wired* became the first lifestyle magazine specifically to promote a culture predicated on the consumption of high tech, online goods and services. Unlike other lifestyle magazines (such as *Better Homes and Gardens*) that construct lifestyles of a decidedly terrestrial nature, *Wired* constructed

an imaginary lifestyle defined by and through online and computer-mediated modes of communication and the consumption of luxury consumer goods and services.

Wired represents a technological, textual and material site of convergence with regards to publishing and online culture. Technological convergence as a topic informed the magazine's content. It was also inscribed materially within the contents of the text and at the level of production of the text. *Wired* was inscribed both with traditional, modern modes of publishing and also with new hypermediated modes of online production. Not only did this dynamic construct a connection between old and new media forms; it also represented an evolutionary trajectory. Thus the print magazine evolved through a direct connection to the Internet via the publisher's site, *HotWired.*

The offline/online scenario established and promoted by Wired Ventures Ltd warrants attention because it represents the shape of things to come, and the "shape of things to consume" (Miles, Cawson, & Haddon, 1992, p. 67) with regards to magazine publishing, magazine culture and online culture. The impetus for the study reported here began with the magazine's November 1993 editorial announcement that the publisher was "trying to reinvent the magazine...going beyond paper by making our hard copy edition a gateway to our interactive services" (Rossetto, 1993, p. 12). This thesis examines this claim: that the magazine was being reinvented. The claim demands an examination because it suggests significant changes of magazine form, content and publishing in terms of where, how, when and by whom magazines can be produced and consumed.

As this thesis proposes in chapters one and eight, the notion of new media, and the claim of reinvention, is deterministic – thus problematic. The claim undermines the possibility that evolutionary processes were at work within magazine publishing. This theoretical proposition about media evolution was introduced in chapter one and informs the majority of this thesis. It is historical in its approach and is a derived from the medium theory as employed previously by Innis (1951), McLuhan (1964), and Ong (1982). To avoid a reductive determinist and/or constructivist analysis of media (either technologically or socially) the thesis adapts the work of Ronald Deibert who combines medium theory with an "ecological holist" (1997, p. 37) model. As such, media are recognised metaphorically as an 'environment' and change is viewed through an evolutionary analogy. Deibert

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used this concept to study the relationship between shifts in international relations and changes in communication environments. I have used this approach to examine shifts and alterations in the material and textual magazine form. I combined Deibert's concepts with critical textual analysis to examine the textual and promotional constructions at work in *Wired*. This synthesis of approach allows a study of medium, form, textuality and content. The aim of this thesis is to extend magazine research in this area.

Magazine research that studies the material features of the form, and the relationship between form and content, is generally lacking, hence this work continues a significant project. Chapter two acknowledges and discusses this in the literature review, which also addresses how magazine research is under-represented when compared with other media like television, radio, newspapers and online media. This suggests that research within the area is underdeveloped. My review of literature supports this statement, which is also acknowledged in the work of other researchers such as Schmidt (1981), Ballaster et al (1991, p. 51), Jolliffe (1995), Prior-Miller (1995), Tinkler (1995), Abrahamson (1995, 1996), Beetham (1996, p. 12), Benston (1997), and Bonner (1997).

Wired is both a communication technology and a contemporary form of commercial media. It is also regarded and positioned by my thesis as a promotional text. *Wired* operates in a culture predicated upon promotion and spectacle. This theoretical position is informed by Wernick, who sees promotion as the dominant 'cultural condition' of contemporary Western societies (1991, p. 386). His proposition regarding the promotional 'nature' of culture provides a critical framework and background for the thesis and situates *Wired* as a promotional text whose function is to promote an online lifestyle.

To study Rossetto's claim of reinventing the magazine, the argument of the thesis narrowed down to concentrate specifically on *Wired*. Using medium theory and critical textual analysis, chapter three studies material, textual, temporal and spatial characteristics of the print form. This was done to understand the relationship between form, content, textuality and the way the content is structured in relation to the form. The conclusion drawn is that *Wired* conforms to an understanding of what a print magazine is. For example, *Wired* demonstrates the traditional material characteristics of print. It is a discrete, physical, tactile, paperbound product

comprised of ink, images and typography, front and back covers, advertising and editorial content.

Further, like its modern predecessors, *Wired* demonstrates the same editorial structure that Abrahamson (1996) outlines in his study of the 1960s specialist magazine. It organises its editorial contents into the traditional departments, columns and features that were and remain a common characteristic of 20th century print magazines. Finally, the arrangement of the text is hierarchical and sequential. Textual navigation is signified as linear and sequential through the use of the Table of Contents pages, and the numerically driven page system. The linearity and numerical sequencing are, however, contradictory and belie the miscellaneous, postmodern arrangement of the text. As discussed in chapter three, the *Wired* text (like most magazines), is a fragmented one, comprising multiple, mini meta-narratives. In each issue, editorial stories – and at times advertising – may start and end in different sections within the magazine. This 'seemingly' miscellaneous content is, however, a highly structured, synergetic and promotional format. Editorial content as demonstrated in this section of the argument, is organised to complement and accommodate the placement of paid advertising and establish a promotional reciprocity between the two.

Wired's persona is discussed as part of an argument that design functions as a promotional, structural and aesthetic device for both publisher and advertisers. It creates a thematic context for the content, and is integral in constructing an identity for the magazine. The promotional function of design is a modern characteristic which evolved in the early 20th century, when advertisers and editorial departments began working together to construct integrated promotional and aesthetic packages for consumers. Establishing a promotional context is based on thematic and stylistic similarity, (rather than difference) between advertising and editorial content. In this respect *Wired*'s design performs the same type of promotional function that the design of its modern predecessors like *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* did in the 1920s and 1930s.

In terms of magazine design, production techniques that include computer-mediated production and the use of computer-generated imagery have evolved as part of *Wired*'s editorial and advertising content. Not only does this evolution inform the aesthetic style of the magazine but it is also used in *Wired* to promote the

consumption of ECI technologies. Even so, some of the most spectacular computer-generated imagery appears in the magazine's (non-ECI) consumer accounts, like Absolut Vodka. Paid advertising functions not simply as promotional content but also as an aesthetic component integral to the formation of the magazine's identity and the construction of a techno-lifestyle. Ironically, constructing the magazine's futuristic, computer-mediated, online aesthetic relies on the application of premodern media like ink and paper, in conjunction with modern design techniques – such as photography, photo-montage, and collage. These features are combined with computer-mediated typography, layout and computer-generated images. Like the publisher's content, the magazine's design promises more about the Internet experience than the reality of online culture and lifestyle could deliver at that time. Regardless of the unfulfilled promise, the combined modern and computer-mediated production techniques succeed in producing a futuristic, postmodern, print-mediated 'vision' of online navigation, consumption, practices, places and identities.

Textual constructions that exceed everyday reality are discussed further as the argument progresses. Chapter five focuses on how the text constructs its imagined constituency and representation of techno-lifestyle. The argument is that, just as design exceeds the reality of online experience, so the construction of online lifestyle and imagined constituency exceeds that experienced by the 'reader'. As demonstrated in the discussion, it is a common marketing strategy in commercial magazine publishing to construct an aspirational lifestyle for the reader. What differentiated *Wired* from other magazines at the time was the publisher's marketing concept that converged the magazine's 'quality lifestyle' products and brand names with ECI technology products and online culture. The publisher, through the magazine, provided an opportunity for established technology accounts to extend their reach by entering the commercial consumer mainstream, as well as providing a vehicle through which the brands of established (non-ECI) consumer account products were propelled into the area of online culture and markets.

The magazine constructs an aspirational lifestyle for its readers through, first, an editorial persona that presents itself as a knowledgeable authority, and which advises, entertains and informs its constituency of the latest ECI events, issues, products and services. Second, this persona *qua* projection is always positioned above and financially ahead of the imagined/ target reader market. This positioning is

evident in the 'top end' of the magazine, where unattainable products (such as submarines) are promoted through editorial departments like *Fetish*. A concession is made, however, via the paid advertising whereby more 'everyday' and attainable products (such as software and alcohol) are advertised.

From a commercial publishing perspective, the magazine projects an aspirational constituency based not on geography but on spending power and upon a desired connection to the future. What is signified textually by the magazine's editorial and advertising content is an affluent, masculine, techno-corporate 'wired' persona that is constructed as consuming the latest high-tech ECI goods and services as well as particular non-ECI luxury goods and services: James Bond as corporate whiz kid. Most importantly, the magazine's techno-corporate lifestyle includes a futuristic projection/construction of unattainability and possibility. These constructions are commercial devices that function to keep the magazine alive as something for advertisers and readers to invest in economically, symbolically and ideologically. The magazine made it hip to be hypermediated – computer technology was nerdy no more.

Constructing the future, however, presents disjunctures with the present. These disjunctures are studied in an analysis of contradictory critical issues regarding ECI futures as constructed in *Wired*'s techno-corporate narratives. The major contradiction is the magazine's coupling of McLuhan's (1964) 'global village' and utopian discourses of empowerment through technology with no recognition of the very limited access to the technology in 1993-1996. Speaking rights, access and participation within these reconstructed online discourses are dependent on where participants are positioned socially, economically and (to some extent) geographically.

The argument suggests that *Wired*'s constructed techno-narratives uncritically reposition traditional 'offline' issues and power imbalances within an online context thus presenting and perpetuating them as a given, or in natural transition. By deconstructing the *Wired* text in this way it becomes clear that the Internet is positioned as a white, corporate, American, masculine, commercial site dominated by computer nerds and businessmen. Offline social hierarchies, particularly in reference to race and gender, are reinscribed into the online culture while online participation is represented as a predominantly commercial activity.

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Desire, by selling a dream of the future, keeps most commercial projects operating. People spend money on goods and services in order to bridge a perceived gap; to move themselves from where they are to a more desired state. Provided the packaging of desire remains cogent and coherent it creates a demand for the magazine that extends into the future. The argument continues through an investigation of how desire for new technology, computer-mediated forms of communication and online experiences are articulated through *Wired*'s editorial and advertising. This also demonstrates how human technological 'desires' operating through *Wired* are not new, but evolutionary derivatives of older philosophical, political, spiritual and market imperatives. These perspectives are informed by utopian and deterministic discourses of technology. Finally, *Wired*'s technological discourses and desires are recontextualised as promotional statements to sell technology, and to perpetuate investment in consumption of that which is yet to exist.

The argument begins its conclusion by examining the relationship between *Wired, HotWired* and one of its components – the *Wired* microsite. This comparative study of the print and online forms begins by outlining characteristics of the hypermediated online environment. Further, it discusses why and how certain characteristics of the print form 'adapt' to the online site, while others do not. For example, by considering temporal, spatial, experiential, consumption and textual formations we see how elements of discrete, contextualised, linear, material media forms give way to convergent, hypertextual, decontextualised, interactive forms and forums.

This section of the argument concludes the study of *Wired*'s evolution, convergence and divergence as a media form with regards to the Internet, computers, magazines and publishing. The evolutionary analogy is continued by comparing and contrasting different media components in order to suggest the argument that 'new' media such as *Wired* and *HotWired* are not a reinvention but a continuing process of media evolution. *Wired* and *HotWired* both exhibit characteristics of previous, existing and emergent media forms. Having established this conclusion a number of findings emerge regarding magazines in general and *Wired* and *HotWired* in particular.

The print magazine *Wired*, its electronic derivative *HotWired*, and its micro-site *Wired*, perform the same functions as their modern magazine predesessors.

Magazines aim to inform, educate, entertain and promote goods and services. As such they construct particular constituencies of readers, along with packaging symbolic and commercial desires. The *Wired* print magazine's primary function is to promote online goods and services and make visible an aspirational online culture for its readers to desire. The print magazine does what most commercial lifestyle magazines have traditionally done, which is to promote itself by fuelling a desire for the new, the future and the unattainable. In the case of *Wired*, the magazine constructs a particular type of online experience and an affluent high tech lifestyle designed to attract its target readership.

Unsurprisingly, the arrival of the magazine's Internet alter ego *HotWired* made the disparity between online expectation and reality more visible. *HotWired* could not live up to the expectations created in print by *Wired*. The print magazine's function was to construct and promote that which it is not, and that which *HotWired* could not be at that time. Paradoxically, the online lifestyle and experience constructed through graphic design (and realisable in print) was lost when the magazine was transferred online. The online version at the time was unable to 'live up to' the expectations created by the print magazine. In failing to deliver what was 'promised' by *Wired*, the *HotWired* online magazine form was compromised in its promotional capacity. *HotWired* in 1994 (inception) – 1996 lacked the colour, vivacity and intensity of its print incarnation. The distinct and individual editorial persona established in print was also absent in the online version of *Wired* because the form was available only as a decontextualised, hypertextual, micro-site linked specifically to the *HotWired* site, and generally to the online WWW network.

This study of *Wired* and *HotWired* is set within a historical context, from 1993 to 1996 and both media forms at this time were owned and run by one company, Wired Ventures Ltd. There have been many changes since this time. In May 1998, Wired Ventures Ltd sold its print magazine *Wired* (for an estimated $[US] 85 million) to Condé Nast in order to focus on its online ventures (Sibler, 2000, p. 2). It is not unusual for a new, successful and independently published magazine to be taken over, bought or sold after a three-year period (Peterson, 1972, Janello & Jones 1991). In this respect *Wired* magazine's sale to Condé Nast after five years conforms to traditional market expectations and followed an accepted trajectory for print magazine publishing. After selling the print magazine the

company renamed itself Wired Digital Ltd and went into partnership with another online company, Lycos, that later took over the *HotWired* site.

Since being taken over by Condé Nast the circulation figures and advertising pages for *Wired* magazine have risen, while the magazine has changed its paper thickness and toned down its signatory 'over-the-top' fluorescent cyberdelic design. The magazine sells more but has lost its distinctive, flamboyant and evolutionary trend-setting editorial persona. Establishing a distinctive identity is one of the hardest things to do in magazine publishing and something that Wired Ventures Ltd did well through *Wired* magazine. *Wired*'s outstanding print design, along with articles that informed, entertained, provoked and irritated has disappeared somewhat with the new corporate takeover/makeover. It would be interesting to compare the Wired Ventures Ltd construction of *Wired* with the reincarnation resulting from the Condé Nast takeover, but that is outside the scope of this thesis.

Significant from a media/communication studies perspective, is the investigation of the publisher's link to (and promotion of) the Internet and online culture. As discussed in the body of the argument this 'new media' package is an example of the synergetic cross-promotion of different media. The publisher not only produced a divergent online magazine form but also created, within the context of magazine publishing, alternative online marketing routes and used these to construct conventionally desirable consumer demographics. Specifically, the publisher's claim of reinvention lay in their print magazine's connection to, and promotion of, the Internet, online culture and computer-mediated modes of communication. In effect, however, what was transferred online was only the print magazine's brand name and editorial content, pasted into the *HotWired* site. This coupling of a print magazine with online media does not represent the reinvention of the magazine form. It does however, represent an evolutionary trajectory that connects print magazines specifically, and publishing generally, to the Internet.

Wired also represents an evolution of existing human/technological communication processes and a change in the pattern of media consumption to encompass the possibility of patterns of consumption and interaction. As David Crowley (1994) notes:

On-line materials, such as On-Line BookStore and Electronic Newsstand, seem more like sales tools for promoting the real things than attempts to establish an alternative medium of delivery. Yet, even complimentary activity like this, in which a newer medium is used to promote the products of an older one, widens the perceived use of the electronic spaces...All this may now have less to do with reading than a new form of talking (Crowley, 1994, pp. 17-18).

When considering this quote within the context of *Wired* my final conclusion is that the magazine enriched our vocabulary and our imagination and gave us the raw material with which to continue a creative construction of a yet-to-be realised online future. *Wired* (circa 1993-1996) represented a specific (and contentious) publishing vision for the potential of the computer-mediated future, and offered a graphic blueprint for how that future continues to relate to, and develop from, the present. *Wired* may have not have been a reinvention of the magazine, but it is no poorer for that. It is a fascinating and illuminating example of magazine evolution in an era of a developing online culture.

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APPENDIX 1

Wired 3(10) Breakdown

Shaded areas indicate paid advertising

Left Page: **Inside cover**:100% Ad *Microsoft*	**Right Page 1**.100% Ad (*Microsoft*) (ends)
pg.2 100% Ad :*Chrysler Corporation*	pg.3 100% Ad: *Chrysler Corporation* (ends)
pg.4 100% Ad: *Motorola*	pg.5 100% Ad :*Motorola,Inc.* (ends)
pg.6 100% Ad: *Samsung*	pg.7 100% Ad: *Samsung* (ends)
pg.8 100% Ad: *Microsoft*	pg.9 100% Ad :*Microsoft* (ends)
pg.10 100% Ad: *Microsoft*	pg.11 100% Ad *Microsoft* (ends)
pg.12 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote	pg.13 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote cont.
pg.14 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote	pg.15 100% Ed: Main Feature Lead/Visual quote cont.
pg.16 100% Ed: Contents page (cont.)	pg.17 100% Ed: Contents page (ends)
pg.18 100% Ad: *Dewers Whiskey*	pg.19 100% Ad: *Dewers Whiskey* (ends)
pg.20 100% Ad: *Discovery Channel Online*	pg.21 100% Ad: *Discovery Channel Online* (ends)
pg.22 100% Ad: *CMP Publications, Inc*	pg.23 100% Ad: *CMP Publications, Inc* (ends)
pg.24 75% Ad:*Virgin Records* 25% Ed: Staff dept	pg.25 100% Ad: *Airwalk*
pg.26 100% Ad: *Fujitsu*	pg.27 100% Ad: *Fujitsu* (ends)
pg.28 75% Ad: *RAI Corp* 25% Ed: Staff dept	pg.29 100% Ad: *Cathay Pacific*
pg.30 100% Ed: Dept: Rants and Raves (cont.)	pg.31 100% Ad: *Levi Strauss &Co*
pg.32 100% Ad: *Radius-*	pg.33 100% Ad: *Radius* (ends)
pg.34 100% Ed: Dept: Rants and Raves (ends)	pg.35 100% Ad: *Chrysler Corporation*
pg.36 100% Ad: *Media 100*	pg.37 100% Ad: *Media 100* (ends)
pg.38 100% Ad: *Nortel*	pg.39 100% Ed: Dept: Electric Word
pg.40 100% Ed: Dept: Electric Word	pg.41 100% Ed: Dept: Electric Word (cont.)
pg.42 100% Ad: *Nintendo*	pg.43 100% Ad: *Nintendo* (ends)
pg.44 100% Ed: Dept: Electric Word	pg.45 100% Ed: Dept: Electric Word (cont.)
pg.46 100% Ed: Dept: Electric Word (ends)	pg.47 100% Ad: *Motorola, Inc.*
pg.48 100% Ad:*US Robotics*	pg.49 100% Ad: *US Robotics* (ends)
pg.50 100% Ad: *Wollongong*	pg.51 100% Ed: Dept: Scans (cont.)
pg.52 100% Ad: *AT&T*	pg.53 100% Ad: *AT&T* (ends)
pg.54 100% Ed: Dept: Scans (cont.)	pg.55 100% Ad: *Nike*
pg.56 100% Ed: Dept: Scans (cont.)	pg.57 100% Ad: *Joe Boxer*
pg.58 100% Ed: Dept: Scans (ends)	pg.59 100% Ad: *The Columbia House Company*
pg.60 100% *Ad: Touché Touch Pad*	pg.61 100% Ed: Dept: Fetish (cont.)
pg.62 100% Ad: *Microsoft*	pg.63 100% Ad: *Microsoft* (ends)
pg.64 100% Ed: Dept: Fetish (cont.)	pg.65 100% Ad: *Budweiser*
pg.66 100% Ed: Dept: Fetish (ends)	pg.67 100% Ad: *1.aEyeworks*
pg.68 100% Ed: Dept: Reality Check	pg.69 100% Ad: *VLSI Technology, Inc*
pg.70 100% Ed :Dept: Raw Data	pg.71 100% Ad: *ITC@55 Broad*
pg.72 100% Ed: Dept: Geek Page	pg.73 100% Ad: *Toshiba America Consumer Products, Inc*
pg.74 100% Ed: Dept: Follow the Money	pg.75 100% Ad: *Fujitsu*
pg.76 100% Ed: Dept: Deductible Junkets	pg.77 100% Ad: *Americas TELECOM 96,ITU*
pg.78 100% Ed: Dept: Updata	pg.79 100% Ad: *Xircom,Inc*
pg.80 100% Ed: Dept: Cyber Rights Now	pg.81 100% Ad: *Burn:cycle:- Philips*
pg.82 100% Ed: Column: Electrosphere 1.	pg.83 100% Ad: *SkyTel*
pg.84 100% Ed: Column: Electrosphere 1. (cont.)	pg.85 100% Ad: *Hush Puppies*
pg.86 25% Ed: Column: Electrosphere 1. (ends) +	pg.87 100% Ad: *Sega Saturn*

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APPENDIX 2

Consumer advertising accounts that regularly appeared in *Wired* from January 1994 to December 1995.

Luxury Goods:
Timex: watch.
Swatch: watch.
1A Eyeworks: reading glasses.
Raybans: sun glasses
OxygenSkates: rollerblades.

Alcohol/Spirits
Absolut: vodka.
Dewars: Scotch whisky.
Smirnoff: vodka.
Stolichnaya: vodka.
Bombay Sapphire: gin.
Tangury Gin: gin.
Remy Martin: cognac.
Budweiser: beer.
Glenlivet: Scotch whisky.
Jose Cuervo: tequila.
Johnny Walker: Scotch whisky.
Zima Brewing Co: beer.
Sauza: tequila.
Bacardi: rum.

Finance/business
Visa Card.
New York Stock Exchange.
Dow Jones and Co.

Automobiles/Companies
Toyota.
Saturn.
Saab.
Chrysler.
Volkswagen.
Mercedes Benz.
Nissan.
Umcorp.

Tolletries
Calvin Klein.
Hugo Boss.
Kohler Body Spa.

Travel
Cathay Pacific.
Abercrombie and Fitch.

Clothing Brands
WiredWare
Nike.
Re-union.
Gap.
Jane Barnes Menswear.
Joe Boxer Underwear.
Airwalk.
Diesel.
Hush Puppies Shoes.
Levi-Strauss.
GeekWear.
New Balance Shoes.
Simple Shoes.

Hotels
Chateau Marmont
Hollywood.