



# New Fangled or Old Fashioned?

## *Comparing print newsletters to their electronic cousins*

*By Dana Kader Robb*

Have you ever noticed how people often assume that whatever they're doing or thinking, the majority of the world is doing or thinking too? Nowhere is this more true than in discussions about computers. Mac vs. Windows. Word vs. Wordperfect. Quark vs. Pagemaker. And those of us who are online – to one degree or another – can't understand why everyone else doesn't run out right this minute and buy a computer and Internet (preferably broadband) service. Whaddaya mean you don't have an e-mail address?

### *Accessibility*

Bottom line, everyone gets mail. Unless you are absolutely positive that the people you want to reach all have Internet access (and know how to use it), the only way to be sure to reach them is in print. Some of my clients solve this problem by posting a copy of their print newsletter on their Web site. It doesn't save time or money but it does potentially reach a new, larger market. Or, they may offer an "opt-in" to readers who prefer to receive an e-mail newsletter, while still producing the print version for those who'd rather have it "the old fashioned-way."

Remember also that a person who receives a printed piece holds it in their hands at least once. It is a very proactive form of marketing. The recipient of a linked message must instead react, by taking the time to access your site or open an attachment, wait for it to load and then either print it out or sit and read it immediately.

### *The Look*

If you do decide to send an e-mail newsletter and include your articles as text in the body of the e-mail, you can be certain that everyone who receives it will be able to read it. But you are limited in your choice of fonts. And no graphics or column layout. Not a very attractive marketing piece.

By attaching the newsletter or creating it in computer language (html), you can keep all of the formatting, fonts, colors, etc. However, you need to be sure that your recipients all have the same software and can access the attachment. Plus, download time can become an issue. The last thing you want to do is annoy clients and prospects by sending them a file that takes more than a few seconds to download.

### *Flexibility*

An electronic newsletter offers a ton of added options. You can include a quick survey and later post results, encouraging people to return to your site. You can link to other sites or sources of information. You can take advantage of search engines to bring new prospects to your site. On the other hand, don't try to distribute it at a trade show or meeting!

The bottom line on this issue goes back to a basic marketing principle – know your market and communicate with them the way they communicate. Take advantage of technology only when it makes sense for your business.