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**MEDIA**

# Jet Magazine to Shift to Digital Publishing Next Month

By **LESLIE KAUFMAN** MAY 7, 2014

Jet, the pioneering African-American weekly magazine that rose to prominence covering the civil rights movement, is expected to announce Wednesday morning that it will no longer publish a regular print edition, the latest in a growing list of periodicals avoiding print in favor of digital publications.

Its owner, Johnson Publishing Company, will move Jet to a largely digital format starting in June, delivered through its website and a paid subscription app. Last year, to cut costs, Jet reduced the weekly publication schedule of the digest-size magazine to every three weeks. Now there will only be an annual “best of Jet” print issue.

Linda Johnson Rice, chairwoman of Johnson Publishing, which also owns the cosmetics line Fashion Fair, positioned the move as a way to bring Jet into the modern age.

“Almost 63 years ago, my father, John Johnson, named the publication Jet because, as he said in the first issue, ‘In the world today, everything is moving faster. There is more news and far less time to read it,’ “ Ms. Rice said. “He could not have spoken truer words. We are not saying goodbye to Jet, we are embracing the future as my father did in 1951.”

In moving to digital, Jet joins a number of magazines that have recently reduced or eliminated their print publications after sharp drops in print advertising revenue. Last month, Ladies' Home Journal announced it would be moving to a quarterly newsstand-only print schedule and otherwise would be digital. New York magazine moved from a weekly to a biweekly print edition last month.

Desirée Rogers, chief executive of Johnson Publishing, joined the company in 2010 after serving as White House social secretary for the Obama administration. She cited business reasons for repositioning Jet, including reaching younger readers.

A digital format, she said, made sense since "African-Americans skew higher than the rest of the population in getting their news and information from mobile devices." Besides, she added, readers are demanding more interactive content and the digital format will allow them to vote, for example, on who should be in the popular weekly feature the Beauty of the Week.

Jet has the third-largest circulation in the African-American magazine market with 700,000, putting it behind Ebony and Essence. Johnson Publishing, which is based in Chicago, also publishes Ebony, and said that title would remain in print.

Mr. Johnson started Jet in 1951, five years after Ebony. The publication was billed as "The Weekly Negro News Magazine," and was specifically tasked with being a more news-driven, populist alternative to Ebony, which had a more aspirational tone. The magazine earned a reputation for unflinching coverage of the civil rights movement's early days. In 1955, it published photographs of Emmett Till's mutilated body, a case that spurred many people to become more involved in the movement.

In later years, Jet became known as a place where African-Americans would announce marriages and anniversaries, spawning the slogan "If it isn't in Jet, it didn't happen."

A version of this article appears in print on May 7, 2014, on page B3 of the New York edition with the headline: Jet to Shift to Digital Publishing Next Month.

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