

First Brkic's iMaverick, now Media24 to launch new news magazine



By Gill Moodie: @grubstreetSA

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Media luvvies sat up and took notice last week when the news came that Daily Maverick founder [Branko Brkic](#) is launching the country's [first-ever iPad-only daily newspaper](#) in August 2011 (that comes with a free iPad 2 at R395 per month for the wifi-only 16GB version or R499 per month for the 3G 32GB version).



Mavericksta Branko Brkic

Not that the news was really "out", so to speak, as the canny Brkic had been whispering his plans into all the right ears for weeks before the [official announcement](#), ensuring he got a buzz going in the medium that counts most to him - online.

It was all done with the light, deft touch we have come to expect from Brkic - complete with a ZANews YouTube clip to promote [iMaverick](#):

Weekly news magazine from Media24



Mockup of *NewsNow* cover, as taken by André-Pierre du Plessis ([@ap1pel](#)).

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If Brkic's plots and plans are an indication that local journalism is heading boldly off into completely new waters, there's another interesting new product coming our way: a weekly news magazine from [Media24](#).

To be called *NewsNow* and to be launched in September, editor Waldimar Pelsers is busy staffing it up in Cape Town at the moment. It will come out every Friday and the idea is for it to give busy people a digested, aggregated version of the news of the week - both local and international - that they might have missed.

So, not a local *Newsweek* but - and this is where it gets really interesting - more of a new-media offering such as the aggregated Huffington Post in traditional print form. And, true to the accepted convention of aggregated blogging, the magazine will also happily attribute its sources because this

is at the heart of what it's all about.

"We are not trying to invent the wheel by adding our own voice to the market," says Pelser, who was previously news editor of *Beeld*. "We're saying that most of us [the reading public] missed much of what was excellent journalism in the week and what really mattered and was really interesting because the only people who read very, very widely are journalists - whether it be *The Washington Post* or The Huffington Post or Daily Maverick or *Beeld* or *Son*.



Waldimar Pelser, editor of Media24's new *NewsNow*.

"Distil from the public domain"

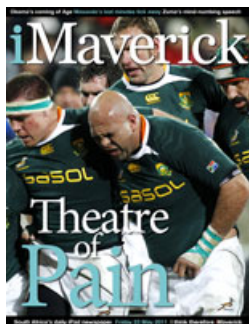
"So we [at *NewsNow*] will read everything and we won't copy and paste - but distil from the public domain," he says. "With South African stories, for instance, we will write an original story but we will have taken into account all the opinions expressed in the South African media and where relevant abroad. It will be a new piece of writing which, for those who might have missed out on the news, will be a sufficient summary. And for those who actually do stay up-to-date with most of the news, it must have a fresh perspective." [*Sounds like Daily Maverick's [First Thing email newsletter](#) to me, except in print and on a larger scale - but will it have the opinion/humour? - managing ed.*]

There will be a range of sections in the magazine - news, business, people and lifestyle, with the news section the backbone - and always one meaty read of the week that will be bought in from either local or international sources. It will start off at 48 pages but Pelser does not want to reveal the print run at this stage.

Interestingly, though *NewsNow* and iMaverick will be very different products and on completely different platforms, the basis for the thinking behind both is the same: that people are overwhelmed by the amount of information and news out there today - what Brkic refers to as a "cacophony of voices". And so the USP for both is to cut through the crap (my term; not theirs) so that the reader get what Pelser calls "substance and flavour".

For both *NewsNow* and iMaverick to succeed, it will depend largely on whether they've got the numbers right - that they have the money to invest heavily in savvy, experienced journalists who are also very good writers. (It may sound odd but in our skills-deficient local industry, these two quality do not necessarily come together - and, when they do, they come at a price).

Not aggregation but all-original content



For Brkic - who is not going the aggregation route but plans to offer all-original content - the challenge will be more acute, as he will need to keep the quality going on a daily basis beyond what is already offered free of charge on Daily Maverick. (Talk to any editor of a daily newspaper and you'll find it's sometime a miracle that the paper gets out at all such is the grind of the daily news cycle when you have a small staff complement.)

I do hope something sustainable will come from both *NewsNow* and iMaverick. Both are such lively additions to our media landscape and I think they will raise the content bar generally.

If Daily Maverick is anything to go by, iMaverick will indeed be a force with which to be reckoned. There's no doubt Brkic's aiming high - creating a market for his app by throwing in iPads - and he's breaking new ground: if he succeeds, iMaverick will pose a serious challenge to the traditional media houses' way of doing business and the local newspapers that play at the high-end of the market.

Brkic really does get new media, he knows quality content (though some of the Daily Maverick pieces would benefit from tighter editing in their second halves) and, most fortuitously, he's not shouldering traditional-media cost structures.

We all know he's bold; now we will see his agility put to the test.

For more:

- Bizcommunity: [Publishing's maverick strikes again](#) by Herman Manson, 13 June 2011
- Bizcommunity: [Is Maverick op die regte iPad?](#) by Chris Moerdyk, 8 June 2011
- AndrewTrench.com: [Is Branko bonkers or brilliant? SA's first daily iPad 'paper' proposition examined](#) 10 June 2011
- Bizcommunity: [First African daily iPad newspaper, iMaverick, launching soon in SA](#) 8 June 2011
- The Media Online: [Maverick DNA spawns iMaverick, Africa's first iPad daily newspaper](#) 8 June 2011
- Bizcommunity: [More sense than rands: SA online journ comes into own](#) by Gill Moodie, 21 July 2010

See also:

- Ap1pel.tumblr.com: [Media24 closing Finweek or combining with new title?](#)
- Bizcommunity: [Finweek now part of Media24 Weekly Magazines](#)
- TechCentral: [Business Day to launch free iPad app](#)

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