

The Citizen enters the digital realm

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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If you are a newspaper reader, then you would have noticed by now that the tabloid style newspaper, The Citizen (ABC Q1 2013: 63,854) has undergone some changes.

Its publisher, Eureka Zandberg, says this is much more than a redesign. "This is a rethink of The Citizen. We thought it was about time that we offer the reader a complete journey across a number of platforms, not only print."

These include tablets, mobile and websites. The Citizen boasts a brand new website. It is a responsive site, which means it can be read on mobile devices and tablets in a format suitable to that medium. But says Zandberg, this is just the beginning of The Citizen's digital journey. "While, for now, the focus is still very much on print - the focus will also be on the digital mediums." She explains that the newspaper's journalists are storytellers and tell stories in different ways, on different platforms. "The digital platforms will provide readers with news, in addition to the print product."

A more functional print design

The print product has been redesigned to be more functional. "The redesign takes readers and their lifestyles into account. It allows today's busy readers to navigate it faster. Page 1 navigates one to the best stories of the day and the main stories open up on pages 2 and 3. Colour coding through all the sections in the newspaper assists the readers to find what they are looking for even more easily and quickly," says Zandberg. The sections of the newspaper are therefore easy to find and navigate. "Some sections have been re-engineered. City Vibe is now called City and has a layout that is much more visual than before. Readers can look forward to topics such as wellness, health and relationships."

None of this was done on a whim. It was based on the solid understanding our editors have of their readers, she adds. "In addition, Ask Afrika was commissioned to do research for us towards the end of last year, and we compared this research with AMPS and TGI. To date the feedback has been good."

Look and feel important, but content reigns supreme

The Citizen team will continue to gauge feedback over the next month and then re-evaluate where revisions are necessary. "We will always listen to our readers and accommodate them as far as possible. The value proposition must fit the interests of the readers."

However, while the look and feel is important, Zandberg emphasises that content is the most important element. "We aim to give the reader the best possible content in the most attractive way that is the easiest to consume."

The Citizen was founded in 1976 as an English language newspaper. It emerged a couple of years later that the government had financed the newspaper. However, by the time it was bought by CTP/Caxton, its main readership was black, middle-class men. It underwent a redesign in 2007.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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