

Review of potential flipbook software (to create HTML5 online flipbooks/digital magazines)

All of the market leading software uses HTML5 so share the same positives. HTML5 is a mix of HTML (which forms the website structure), CSS (for presentation) and JavaScript (for action - JS makes things happen within a site). It is cross platform so works on any device and does not require a browser plug in.

With all the following options there is a chance to try it for free at first. It seems clear from the research that the free options are limited and it is likely we will need the fee paying option.

FlipSnack (£325 pa)

Popular long-standing software, used by some big brands ie The Telegraph, Decathlon.

(a) Content vs Price (amount of content for the price we pay)

A fairly standard price for this type of software and it offers a long list of content. FlipSnack offer a free software package but it is very restricted. This package allows us to have 50 publications in our account at any one time.

(b) Ease of Use

It appears very straightforward, the designs can be created in PhotoShop / InDesign as they are at present and then uploaded to the site. The software ran beautifully on all devices.

(c) Best Features

Everything you would expect from an animated flipbook. Brand specific features: very good HD quality and the user experience was good on the devices I tried; reputedly very good for sharing via social media; includes analytics (own brand); ability to protect content ie watermark; ad free; search engine optimisation; a good animated flip on the magazine.

(d) Scalability

Reports say users are forced into a paid for version to get the features you need ie the ability for viewers to download a pdf; the opportunity to add in videos; the option to create a bookshelf etc. The package selected here is the professional option which is £300 pa less than the top version.

Yumpu (£138.60 pa)

Again popular long-standing software, used by some big brands ie Oxford University Press, Land Rover, Nivea.

(a) Content vs Price

Yumpu is much cheaper than its competition but it did glitch repeatedly on the writer's mobile and tablet and there is very little animation on the page turn (which negates the use of flipbook software). Yumpu allows 5 new publications each day.

(b) Ease of Use

It appears very straightforward, the designs can be created in PhotoShop / InDesign as they are at present and then uploaded to the site. Unfortunately seems to glitch on a mobile and tablet.

(c) Best Features

Brand specific features: v.good price; privacy controls seem better than FlipSnack (for example publications can be password controlled); ad free ; option to publish a teaser publication; only software to offer Google analytics (which we use already); search engine optimisation; there is an option to publish via dropbox but we do not tend to use this software.

(d) Scalability

Option to extend to our own branded web kiosk, the teaser option would be helpful ie showing 3 pages with the link to view the full publication.

Issuu (£372 pa or with ads £180 pa)

Again popular long-standing software, used by some big brands ie Tesco, Red Bull, already used by the Chichester Post.

(a) Content vs Price

More expensive per annum, unless we accept their ad package which reduces the prices. Issuu allows the user to create an unlimited number of publications.

(b) Ease of Use

It appears very straightforward, the designs can be created in PhotoShop / InDesign as they are at present and then uploaded to the site. Software ran smoothly on all devices tested.

(c) Best Features

Everything you would expect from an animated flipbook. Brand specific features: fullscreen sharing - no border around the flipbook offering a closer view on small devices; opportunity for 3 users to have their own login (other options were for 1 user though this isn't a huge issue as officers already share logins for software); Issuu offers the ability to turn a flipbook into an animated gif which might be helpful in terms of storing for the future on our own server but not hugely necessary as all 3 options offer the chance to embed into our websites and social media; unlimited uploads; they claim to offer extra search engine optimisation compared to others.

(d) Scalability

Unlimited publications. Very set up for sales if this was ever a route we wanted to follow.

Recommendation: we try FlipSnack on a free basis at first with the likelihood of subscribing to their professional package as detailed above. If we struggle we will trial the alternatives.

Note re wider content: there were reports that some of the flipbooks published through FlipSnack were inappropriate for minors. We will follow the pattern of other brands and direct viewers to our own website to view our publications and be careful how we categorise them within the FlipSnack software.