

somethingdark

a b o u t S D k

further information

This document complements the information presented on the "What is SDK?" page, providing greater detail on what *SomethingDark* (SDK) is all about, how we got here, and where we want to go.

SDK is a cultural magazine featuring avant-garde photography and art, poignant nonfiction writing and edgy fiction. Our emphasis is on that terrain where fashion, eroticism, psychology and politics intersect; we seek vision and expertise to create a distinctive and stylish mix. Through creative and inquiring processes, SDK is a forum for re-assessing what is of value in contemporary society.

We are committed to SDK's orientation, aesthetics and standards: we are serious about quality of design; quality of informed, inquiring thought and imaginative flair expressed in polished writing; the quality of production and finish that present photography and art in all their splendour; and the quality of artistic inspiration, design and finish in the limited amount of advertising we are prepared to accept.

Occupying the space between internet and print

SDK is a *webmagazine*, occupying a unique and innovative space between the internet and a traditional print publication. Unlike most news, magazine- and journal-style websites, which depart from their print-published counterparts in format, look and feel simply because they *were* developed with by-now conventional website design in mind, SDK has been developed with the format, look and feel of a print magazine.

Unlike standard websites that churn through content at a voracious pace – and often compromising quality as a result – SDK has a much more measured, old-fashioned print-magazine's publishing cycle, and this is why: the fast-food approach to publishing and the media is a corrosive agent detrimental to intelligence and individuality, and thus to society and culture. The nature of SDK's genre and our uncompromising approach to content, site development and value-added web-based features demand the utmost commitment in time and expertise to produce, and considering SDK is the welcome burden of only two people, we make no apologies for stating outright that each issue is a custom-produced creation that we will not be prepared to publish until it meets our standards. We owe this commitment to quality and the long-term relevance of every issue to our contributors, to our readers, to our future sponsors and supporters, and to ourselves. Thus do we unashamedly liberate ourselves from deadlines, and will let each issue of SDK speak for itself. We know this philosophy flies in the face of publishing industry traditions, but, unlike mass-produced internet and print publications that proliferate and offer so little, we are confident it will ensure both the currency of every issue of SDK through to publication of the subsequent issue, *and* the reputation of SDK as a magazine of enduring value.

What does this mean for contributors and advertisers?

It means you will benefit from prolonged exposure for the cycle of the issue of SDK in which you are featured. Additionally, all back issues of SDK will be archived and available online on the broader SDK website.

Our approach to website technology and development

Many sites claiming "magazine" status are the result of off-the-shelf, template website development software or blog packages. Unlike these sites, SDK employs cutting-edge website design to combine our traditional print-magazine format with the interactivity and resources of the internet, to fulfill our

vision of greater value-added functionality and to present contributors, advertisers and visitors alike with the best that both the worlds of print and internet have to offer. We achieve the former in the ways that quality magazines have always made their mark: through careful editorial planning, application and design. We achieve the latter by pushing the boundaries of current web-development technologies as applied to online publications to organise, present and link information that is contained in the magazine proper, that is hosted on the broader SDK website, and that is external to both the magazine and the SDK website but that is directly relevant and actively linked by us in ways defined by SDK's genre, themes, aesthetics and standards. We use this approach to create an accessible, integrated *magazine* that is both dynamic and realises the strategic goal that "the whole must be greater than the sum of its parts".

We have produced a document explaining in some detail what we are doing in terms of website development (please see our [HTML vs Flash](#) page), but, briefly, we link and present data in ways that enhance the relevance, coherence and cohesiveness of the magazine. For example, the SDK website is designed to host directories of contributors, resources, reviews and advertisers. These directories are not part of the magazine proper, but each one is displayed as a site menu item and provides easy access to the relevant information in every published issue of SDK magazine. Active links to SDK site-hosted profiles and other information on contributors, worthwhile resources, information-enhancing references and advertisers featured in a particular issue of SDK magazine are displayed – or will be, according to our development schedule – in the footer of the website while *that particular issue* of the magazine is being viewed.

This approach to internet publishing represents extremely complex and innovative programming; the objective is to make SDK's magazine-reading experience a clean yet dynamic one that is at the same time as close as possible to the experience of reading a traditional print magazine. We hope you see what we mean when we say SDK is a new breed of internet publication that is built from the ground up as a *magazine* for the World Wide Web.

By the same token, however, because of the complexity of SDK's design, some web browsers that do not conform to de facto development standards will not render SDK at its best. Therefore, if SDK appears a little ragged around the edges, a little unfinished on your screen, we would urge you to update your browser or to try a different one. Unfortunately, at present, some browsers and operating systems will always render SDK in their own, unique manner (please see our [SDK Updates](#) page entry for Fri 16 Oct, 2009 for a discussion of these issues).

HTML or flash? Why we went with the former

We had quite a decision to make when choosing the medium in which to deliver *SomethingDark* – specifically, whether to use a flash player, or whether to apply ourselves to some serious HTML coding. After much investigation and consideration, it became apparent that HTML beats flash hands-down when it comes to delivering content on the web. Flash works very well – a website can look like a print publication on screen, even mimicking the turning of pages and allowing zoom-in – but HTML is much more accessible, considerably reduces demands on bandwidth compared with flash, and, in our case, allows us to add a great deal of dynamic content. Our unique SDK "Issue Credits" system is a case in point: under each page-spread of the magazine, visitors can see footnotes, relevant "additional information", useful external resources, and contributors for those two pages as well as contributors and external resources for the whole issue. This is dynamic, web-based content, and we'll doff our hats to anyone who can implement such features in flash.

Furthermore, we are a team of two, we're self-financed and don't go for large and expensive advertising campaigns, so getting our content out onto the internet and picked up by search engines is vital; the rumours that search engines can read and index flash are neither here nor there – they still can't index the individual pages locked into flash files and certainly wouldn't be able to follow all the internal and external links we have. Flash can look impressive, but we're convinced that, by using HTML to it's maximum potential, we'll be operating in another league, technically. Additionally, it won't take much for us to produce a (less-informative and -interactive) flash version of SDK to add to our main, HTML version; and, significantly, we are already into our second generation of mobile-device content.

For more information on the research we've done on relevant and competing technologies, the decisions we had to make, and the rationale behind those decisions, see our [HTML vs Flash](#) page.

Looking to the future

Of course, the expertise and time required to develop and sustain such a magazine and the infrastructure of its supporting website – editorially as much as web development – demand that we seek ways to generate revenue. The scenario is as obvious as it is stark: we either build up an income base to support SDK, or, ultimately, SDK cannot exist. But – and this is important in a world where the demand for never-ending growth and “wealth creation” on the part of both macro-economic system and its constituent industries and corporations has led the international financial system and individual economies to the brink of collapse – we are not chasing, and will not chase, revenue for its own sake. In this approach we find freedom of association.

We are serious when we say we are committed to the cultural orientation of SDK, and we are committed to providing more than just a stimulating and thought-provoking magazine: we are also committed to providing a resource platform for those who share our visions of culture, society, creativity and eroticism.

If you have been provoked by any of the above, or if ambiguity has been seasoned with curiosity, then you might like to know more; in that case, you are welcome to contact us. On the other hand, if you've broken into a sweat of anticipation, then welcome to *SomethingDark*.

Daryl Champion, editor, SDK

Chris Cook, designer, SDK

www.somethingdark.eu
contact@somethingdark.co.uk

PO Box 54
Hereford HR1 9DQ
United Kingdom