



## The Shift of Philippine Architectural Media toward Digitalization (2018-2023)

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**ABSTRACT:** This research examines how Philippine architectural communication experienced a renewal after the pandemic crisis. First, through a shift from the country's flagship architectural magazine, BluPrint, toward a personally initiated digital platform, Kanto. Since BluPrint started to become digital in 2018, the publishers aimed at more aggressive targets for new articles. When Covid hit the Philippines in the beginning of 2020, it made BluPrint suffer and confused. The publisher company focused on the business side to diminish the encountered deficit. They started reaching out to a common lifestyle market but the journalists wished to continue addressing architects and the public interested in architecture. As the company wanted to broaden the target, the journalists felt that most of their content did not fit for that expansion. As result of the tension, in December 2020, most of BluPrint's former staff decided to leave and "migrate" for Kanto. Kanto, a digital platform was created out of the former personal blog of one the migrant journalists to be an intellectual venue for art and architecture advocacy. Upon this departure, BluPrint's publisher noticed that not only the magazine could not be published for a whole year in 2020 but also, it lost its journalists for a new competitor. Thus after a significant interruption, the publisher decided to renew BluPrint with a fully new staff. This marks the second shift, the complete digital transition of the originally printed, then blended BluPrint. These dynamic communication aspects of architecture, construction and built environment have not yet been sufficiently investigated, unlike their physical aspects. In order to elaborate findings, after a review of literature on worldwide shifts towards digital media, this paper matches observations on the institutional history and performance of BluPrint and Kanto with a second line of premises, qualitative statements. It reviews how former BluPrint, now migrant journalists are successful on the digital platform Kanto, in a fully different organizational and financial system. It also presents how BluPrint also experienced a renewal with its fully new staff. Behind both shifts, an underlying dilemma between financial success and content success became sharper in times of the increasing and now almost obligatory digitalization. Events and festivals are strongly needed by both online publications to create a tangible and interactive basis for gathering experiences of architecture lovers among themselves and with their "star architects". In summary, the digitalization established a wider variety of journalistic forms which appear in more spontaneous, less focused presentations. While BluPrint strives after a wider viewership with an entertaining character, Kanto tries to deliver more depth in the profession embedded in a variety of artistic and cultural forms. As conclusion, in both shifts, content curation strategies prevailed over technological skills. The described genre shifts propelled deeper changes in both the content and nature of architectural discourse in the Philippines. The shifts also drew up a new relationship pattern between practicing architects, contractors and architectural media.

**KEYWORDS:** Architectural media, BluPrint, Kanto, Media rebranding, Philippine architecture,

### 0. INTRODUCTION

The flagship of Philippine architectural media, BluPrint, encountered serious challenges in 2018 when the readers signalled a strong need for digital information. While the magazine's main income still came from the printed version, the publisher started exploring the possibility of receiving income from the increasingly viewed digital version. They pleaded for a lighter content which caused a resistance of the magazine's journalists who, from 2010 to 2017, managed to increase its distribution through better content quality. Thus they left BluPrint. The publisher tried to substitute them through empowering the remaining assistant BluPrint journalists. Later, it transferred a loyal manager to BluPrint. But this man felt not comfortable to interact with professional architects since he had little knowledge on architecture. Finally, recognizing the low efficiency of these measurements, the publisher invited back former Editor-in-Chief (EIC) Judith Torres but without fulfilling her request to reinstall the whole previous group. After only one issue, Torres could not continue because she got a stroke in November 2019. Pandemic also came and caused a long lockdown. Therefore, BluPrint could not be published in the whole 2020 year. In the same time, the exited BluPrint journalists started engaging



themselves in updating Kanto, a former personal blog of BluPrint's layout artist Kasingsing. They successfully changed it into a professional digital website with high-quality professional information in a reader-friendly way—as they used to do it in BluPrint. But this time, they realized it on a new, independent digital platform. This we call the *first shift*. Then, after one year interval, BluPrint's publishers started re-establishing the flagship magazine with totally new journalists and an EIC who subscribed to their vision of easygoing architectural content for desirably many paying clients. This digital only renewal of BluPrint is considered the *second shift*.

## 1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 1.1. PHILIPPINE ARCHITECTURAL MEDIA BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC

This research is an extension of the researchers' previous investigations on architectural journalism in the Philippines. Their pre-pandemic observations stand in sharp contrast to those after 2018. On BluPrint magazine's pre-pandemic development, one of these researchers' papers delivers a fundamental analysis. (1) On the pandemic challenge, for Philippine architectural media, basic information is offered in interviews with 20 architectural communicators conducted in 2023 and 2024. (2)

### 1.2. SHIFT FROM MAGAZINES TO BLOGS

In the international scenario, shifting of magazines to "blogs" is a frequent reaction to digitalization. Oxford Dictionary defines the genre "magazine" as "a periodical publication containing articles by various writers; esp. one with stories, articles on general subjects, etc., and illustrated with pictures, or a similar publication prepared for a special-interest readership." (3) Magazines can be published in printed or blended (printed version with online website and/or online version) ways. On the other hand, Oxford English Dictionary defines "blog" as "a personal website or web page on which an individual records opinions, links to other sites, etc. on a regular basis." (4) Online and printed publications are competing types of media. (5) But they can still coexist. In his book, *Media Competition and Coexistence: The Theory of the Niche*, John W. Dimmick described how media products competed but could still coexist if they found corresponding niches for distribution. (6) Comparing traditional media and internet, Dimmick and his co-authors stated that there was "a moderately high degree of overlap or similarity between the niches of the Internet and the traditional media on the gratification-opportunities dimension." (7) Tandoc, Lou, and Hui Min prepared a systematic analysis of gratification opportunities that lead readers to decide for a publication. These are: availability, communality, and acceptability. (8)

### 1.3. THE SHIFT'S CONSEQUENCES

Grabowicz emphasized that a wide spectrum of perspectives and opinions was opened by online publications to which viewers can respond in a more personal way. (9) Helen Lloyd noticed an important consequence. "The internet has upset a traditional hierarchy of opinions," she referred with this to "numbers of page views, comments, shares, and likes". For her, these are the ones which now serve as quality criteria—"instead of the architectural critic who will nominate a building to the architectural canon, to be confirmed in its place historically by the printed book." (10) Hermans, Vergeer and D'Haenens perceive beyond the technological change a changed social understanding of the architectural journalist's role, too. "The traditional asymmetrical relationship, in which the journalist determines what is important news for citizens, shifts to a more symmetrical relationship in which the journalist is more responsive and assumes the role of a partner." Changes go beyond a technology-driven approach, towards a complex interaction process. (11)

### 1.4. THE NEED FOR NETWORKING

Networking, the basis of today's social networks, existed even before the challenges of online media. Studies present that architectural communication shifts to networking, a wide use of contacts. For Varnelis, the phenomenon of networking architects started with Philip Johnson. "While it will be up to history to judge the merits of his architecture as well as his influence on the field, there is no question about Johnson's native ability to capitalize on his connections in business and finance, art and architecture." (12) Thus in architecture, networking may mobilize resources for design or construction activities. Networking also results in the establishment and confirmation of "stars", an elite class of architects. Thierstein, Alaily-Mattar proved that star architecture projects cannot be interpreted at physical level only. Instead, the media is their primary site. However, while many architects recognize "stars" of the profession as they are presented by the architectural media, they might not find the media relevant for themselves. Networking practices vary from country to country. (13)



## 1.5. A CHANGED ARCHITECTURAL SCENARIO IN THE PHILIPPINES

On the Philippine situation regarding architectural networking and its expression in architectural media, there is little literature, except for the above-mentioned works of these researchers. For most Philippine architects, oral networking (hearsay or personal acquaintances) is the usual way of getting architectural commissions. Media plays an inferior role in this. Therefore, for many Philippine practicing architects, magazines and other architectural publications seem to be a far, “elitist” world. Poco presents how investors also question iconic initiatives which appear in architectural publications. “Likewise, many owners have scratched their heads and lost money condoning the architect’s “iconic” vision, when what they needed was simply a functioning piece of architecture that serves their needs and not the architect’s ego.” (14) In the Philippine context, architects practicing in developed countries are appreciated but distant. Regarding local colleagues, these researchers’ interviewees reported about strong competitive attitudes that hinder other architects in reaching further achievements. This keeps back Philippine architects from supporting each other. (15) Already decades ago, in his overview on architecture in the Philippines, Klassen reminded Philippine architects of healthy networking, instead of rivalry. (16) He also underlined efforts to create a local architectural direction, “Filipino architecture”. (17) Recent networking among Philippine architects was described in Lico’s book *Arkitekturang Filipino*. (18) In 2021, Lico updated his book with presenting influences of the digital challenge, too. (19)

## 2. BLUPRINT, THE FLAGSHIP PHILIPPINE ARCHITECTURAL MAGAZINE (2018-2023)

Based on the number of its readers and the power of its publisher, One Mega Group, *BluPrint* counted as the flagship of architectural communication in the Philippines.

### 2.1. BLUPRINT BEFORE THE SHIFT FROM 1999 TO 2017

*BluPrint* started in 1999. The initial years, the development, the decrease and the renewal that led to its peak of the magazine (2014-2017) are presented of this author’s earlier publication (see 1.). *BluPrint* started as a commercial magazine with the added intention to support the owner company’s hardware business as a “resource book” for both intellectual and physical solutions. Although the Philippines had design magazines before, *BluPrint* became more resilient than others. The founding editor was followed by LAr. Paulo Alcazaren as EIC. He had at disposal a wide network with architects in the Philippines and abroad, arising from his previous work in Singapore. As the design practice of Alcazaren became stronger, he could dedicate less and less time to *BluPrint*. This led to *BluPrint’s first crisis*. To solve that, internationally educated architect Dominic Galicia was appointed as EIC but he administered only one issue. His resignation opened the way to the EIC appointment of Judith Torres, an investigative journalist. She took over the magazine and reestablished it until her resignation in 2017 when she turned over the editorship to her two trainees.

### 2.2. BLUPRINT’S CRISIS UNTIL ITS SHUTTING DOWN DURING COVID

The resignation of Torres in 2018 led to the *second crisis of BluPrint*. The publisher made efforts to find ways out of the crisis. First, through empowering *BluPrint’s* former assistant journalists Yulo and Carlos, then through transferring a manager from another magazine.

#### 2.2.1. YULO-CARLOS Period (2018-2019/1)

After having successfully established *BluPrint*, Judith Torres resigned from *BluPrint* because her vision started to be increasingly different from the publisher’s commercial orientation. Together with her, layout artist Patrick Kasingsing also resigned. Angel Yulo, a journalist and Carlos, a foreign-born and foreign-trained Filipino architect took over the magazine. As her assistant journalists, they were already earlier introduced to the work by Torres. Now, they became the magazine’s administrators. *Sources*: the published *BluPrint* issues and (20.)

### Content intention

The editors tried to consolidate the orientation of Torres with commercial demands of the publisher. In comparison with previous issues that were dominated by works of renowned architects and offices, a turn toward architecture as a social phenomenon appeared, a common approach with newspapers. This departure from a previous *star architect approach* wished to appeal to nonprofessional readers. Another approach which comes from the nonarchitects mindset appears with the theme “materials” (2018/2 issue). In the



researchers' observation, the last issue published by the two editors was rather intended to fill up space, except for two major articles. In this period, BluPrint's special issues intended to attach influential public personalities to the magazine.

## Theoretical approach

This period was much influenced by the drive to find interesting topics for the non-professional audience. Sometimes, the authors were still able to show theoretical depth: in an outstanding interpretation of the Venice Architecture Biennale (Lawrence Carlos) and in an introduction to the use of vernacular materials (Ar. Sudarshan Khadka). The special issues show almost no deeper theoretical contents. The former assistant editors trained by Torres could hardly consolidate deep architectural reflection with the required commercial orientation.

## Featured buildings

The issues presented the prominent architectural designs connected to social events (the adaptive reuse of National Museum of Natural History (2018/1), the Venice Biennale's Philippine Pavilion (2018/3)). The other featured authors and buildings, mostly foreign, do follow design events (Anthology and Arkitektura festivals, visitation of Harvard Design School in Manila). Instead of designs, the special issues feature short thoughts of design management personalities.

### 2.2.2. ITUM Period (2019/2-3)

Once the publisher noticed that the readers did not give positive responses to the above-mentioned attempts, they transferred Mr. Roumel Itum to BluPrint and appointed him EIC. He used to be assistant editor of My Home, a women's magazine of the same publisher. Itum is journalist but not much experienced with architecture. He took the assignment over temporarily. Torres observed was struggling with his assignment. *Sources:* the published BluPrint issues and (20.)

## Content intention

Itum tried to save the magazine through giving it a stronger social impact. He increasingly connected the magazine to events. He considered this a good way for a better return of investment. However, the previous elegance and meaningfulness of BluPrint could not be regained.

## Theoretical Approach

Itum was not educated in architectural theory. Thus his approach was rather pragmatic. He featured buildings that caught national and international attention in design events, mostly Anthology Festival. Theoretically oriented articles still appeared but came from former editors Carlos and Kasingsing.

## Featured Buildings

Two articles on outstanding buildings (by Lawrence Carlos and Dominic Galicia), and on the adaptive reuse of Manila Post office were added to features of important local and foreign buildings. BluPrint also tried to present design ideas: *Bayanihan Flats* and *Cubo Low-Cost Modular Bamboo Residences*.

### 2.2.3. TORRES' RETURN (2019/4 issue)

Once the efforts of Carlos/Yulo and Itum did not bring the desired commercial renewal of the magazine, the publisher called former EIC Torres back. She returned but, despite his request, she was not allowed to bring back her previous close colleagues. To adjust herself to the situation, beyond deep contents, she also tried to accommodate more of the commercial approach. In November 2019, Torres got a stroke. This prevented her from going to World Architecture Festival (WAF), a world-famous architectural event in December 2019. Layout Director Kasingsing was the one who travelled, made all the covering. Torres remained on sick leave when pandemic surprised the Philippines. *Sources:* the published BluPrint issues and (20.)

## Content intention

The return of Torres brought back a featuring of designers and buildings as she used to do it in BluPrint. The one issue which she edited after her return is a deep featuring of architects and architectural ideas. It appeals to a rather professional audience.

## Theoretical Approach

Torres, again, wanted to elaborate on the Philippine architectural firms' uniqueness and architectural factors— instead of entertainment. The theme "Concrete Plans" (2019/4) indicated theoretical applications referring to the Brutalist trend which was favored in earlier BluPrint issues.



**Featured Buildings**

High-rise and small new structures by renowned Philippine practices returned to the content, together with adaptive reuse proposals ( Manila Film Center and a Locsin-designed house).

**Table 1. BluPrint’s Published Issues (2018)** (Source: the published issues.)

<i>Number</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Intended Content</i>	<i>Theoretical Approach</i>	<i>Main featured buildings</i>
2018/1	<b>A GRAND ENTRANCE</b>	Architecture as social event.	Architecture is branded by social life.	An adaptive reuse for Museum of Natural History.
2018/2	<b>MATERIAL MATTERS</b>	Sustainable and natural materials.	Sustainability and closeness too nature.	Mostly foreign Examples.
2018/3	<b>DESIGN TODAY FOR TOMORROW</b>	Venice Biennale. Short articles of several authors.	Little coherence.	Renowned foreign “star” buildings.
2018/4	<b>CATALYSTS OF CREATIVITY</b>	Architecture as field for creativity.	A connection of the articles is hardly recognizable.	.Finance Center, BGC.
2018/Special	<b>THE DESIGN MANIFESTOES</b>	Design principles.	Venice Biennale as forum.	None, the issue is on manifestoes.

**Table 1. BluPrint’s Published Issues (2019)** (Source: the published issues.)

<i>Number</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Intended Content</i>	<i>Theoretical approach</i>	<i>Main featured buildings</i>
2019/1	<b>THE NEW GREEN</b>	Articles aligned with green legacy.	Communicating sustainability and social responsibility.	Foreign buildings and a local industrial building.
2019/2	<b>BUILD, BUILD, BUILD!</b>	Support for the Government’s program.	Beyond construction, adaptive reuse is needed.	Representative, mostly sports buildings.
2019/3	<b>FORM FOLLOWS VALUES</b>	Renowned Phil. architects again featured in BluPrint.	A return to the celebrity scenario of BP before 2018.	From renowned local and 2 foreign offices.
2019/4	<b>CONCRETE PLANS</b>	Innovative materials.	Materiality (theory of architecture and hardware sales).	Mostly foreign buildings, lack of Philippine Brutalism.

**2.3. PANDEMIC CRISIS: BLUPRINT’S JOURNALISTS LEAVE FOR KANTO**

When Covid hit the Philippines in the beginning of 2020, BluPrint was suffering and confused. EIC Judith Torres was on sick leave after her stroke. Similarly to the other journalists: she had problems with the publisher, One Mega Group. The company





focused on the business side. They wanted the common lifestyle market. But the journalists wished to address architects and the public interested in architecture. As the company wanted to broaden the target, the journalists felt that most of their content did not fit for that expansion. Since BluPrint started to become digital, the publishers aimed at more aggressive targets for new articles. For the journalists, it was a new experience since digital publishing required a tighter publishing cycle with new posts every day. The viewership transferred to a use on daily basis. As result, in December 2020, most of BluPrint's former staff decided to leave BluPrint when they noticed that their and the publisher's vision continued to be very diverging. They wanted to find a better adaptation to the calls of digital times. One of them, Kasingsing updated his personal blog to an intellectual venue for art and architecture advocacy in order to accommodate contributions of his companions who also left BluPrint. In November 2020, it was an impulsive decision of the "migrant" journalists to create Kanto—although they initially did not plan to turn it into a website. So Kanto was launched as a website in January 2021. With that, it became an efficient competitor of BluPrint. (20)

## 2.4. AFTER PANDEMIC: BLUPRINT'S RESTART

BluPrint's shift from blended (printed with online) to a fully digital publication took place with new personnel on a new field. In this shift, the personnel's field experience and not its technical knowledge was decisive. After the pandemic, BluPrint's publisher noticed that not only that the magazine could not be published for a year in 2020 but also, that it lost its journalists for a new competitor. After almost 1.5 years interruption, the publisher decided to hire a fully new staff whereas a strong patron of BluPrint, influential architect William Ti supported the first post-pandemic issue as a guest-editor. However, this was only a transition solution.

### 2.4.1. BluPrint's New Editor-In-Chief

A new Editor-in-Chief, Geewel Fuster, was appointed for the 2021/2 issue, in order to establish a permanent solution. She holds a degree in architecture but she had no extensive experience in journalism but. Suki Salvador, CEO of One Mega explained the choice as follows. "We chose an Editor-in-Chief whom I consider to be a triple threat. Not only is she a licensed architect, but she is also a scion of a top construction company and is poised to take over the enterprise in a few years. Lastly, the new Editor-in-Chief is also a tastemaker in the lifestyle scene in the country. All of these combined is her edge and will surely take BluPrint to the next level. ... Fuster acquired her Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, in 2009. After graduation she immediately worked as a Project Architect at the firm Jonathan O. Gan and Associates where she gained her training not only in the architecture profession but in interior design as well. Two years after, in 2011, after passing the licensure exam, she decided to join her family's construction firm to spearhead the greater success of the company. As a creative, Geewel also loves fashion as much as she loves architecture and design. Her fascination about fashion led her to taking up a short course on fashion branding at SoFa Design Institute and eventually it paved the way for her to create her own brand. She just recently launched her very own lifestyle and fashion brand, Akin Collective. AKIN is a curated collaboration collective, a platform that was built to create meaningful line of special work or art." (21)

### 2.4.2. BluPrint's Changed Organizational Background

To support Fuster, an English teacher and fashion writer, Rick Formalejo became the Managing Editor since April 2022. In its new standard, the editorial team consists of four people. From them, the EIC, the managing editor and one writer are full-time employees. Before the shift, BluPrint's personnel was limited to two fulltime journalists: the EIC and the Layout Editor, with 4-6 regular contributors. After the shift, it employs three full-time employees whereas we hardly see written articles from the EIC. BluPrint is, similarly to before, embedded in a bigger publication system. An important support for BluPrint's renewal is the strong organizational structure of One Mega publishing house with several magazines which can run a professional photo studio (Ed Simons) and a professional marketing apparatus. (22) This is true for the "old" and the "new" BluPrint.

BluPrint keeps on being honoured by the Philippine Government as "the" architecture magazine of the Philippines. The proof for this is official commissions like BluPrint's partnership with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) for the Philippine Pavilion of the Venice Architectural Biennale. BluPrint was among the only three media titles from the Philippines that NCC sent the Pavilion's opening.



**Table 3. BluPrint’s Published Issues (2020-21) (Source: the published issues.)**

<i>Number</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Intended Content</i>	<i>Theoretical approach</i>	<i>Main featured buildings</i>
<u>2020</u>	<b>NO ISSUE WAS PUBLISHED.</b>			
2021/1	<b>HUMANIZING SPACES</b>	Reestablishment of BluPrint under guest-editor Ti.	Humanist and social approach.	Humanist buildings (of Ar. Ti, Kengo Kuma, and others.)
2021/2	<b>WORK AND PLAY</b>	Reestablishment of BluPrint under a new EIC.	A “lighter” approach than before 2018.	Playfulness is expressed mostly in interiors
2021/3	<b>SLOW LIVING</b>	Relaxing architecture.	Slow Living movement.	“Unhurried” resorts, interiors.

**Table 4. BluPrint’s Published Issues (2020-23) (Source: the published issues.)**

<i>Number</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Intended content</i>	<i>Theoretical approach</i>	<i>Main featured buildings</i>
2022/1	<b>BUILDING CHANGE</b>	Spaces that contribute to society.	Architecture contributes to human dignity.	Famous local high-rise buildings, and interiors.
2022/2	<b>THE ART OF MAKING</b>	Cultural spaces.	Support for the city’ identity through culture.	Mostly foreign buildings, a local bamboo pavilion and theatre.
2022/3	<b>BREATHING SPACES</b>	Characteristics of residences for slow living.	The modern home as a refuge.	Mostly local residences for slow living.
2023/1	<b>CHANGING FOOTPRINTS</b>	Spaces that contribute to society.	Architecture and climate change.	Local residences and a local clinic..
2023/2	<b>CREATING CONNECTIONS</b>	Connection of indoor and outdoor.	Integration of nature to built environments.	Residences and parks.

**2.5. BLUPRINT’S CHANGED CONTENT INTENTION AFTER THE PANDEMIC**

In their heydays, until 2018, BluPrint’s Editorial Office produced 6 regular issues and 2-3 extra issues or books (with different format and number of pages). This decreased to no production in 2020. After the shift in 2021, they started with three digital issues which decreased to two issues. Organized content with table of contents, that was the only product before, had now less importance. Instead of previous products (first only printed, later blended with two versions: printed and online), BluPrint now offers a variety of journalistic products in its more spontaneous digital presence. Its stories are not connected to tables of contents, they are rather spontaneous. “So our content is on the magazine’s website but we also use our social media accounts, Facebook and Instagram, to promote previous articles and new ones. So, the website is where we upload our stories.” This is how Managing Editor Formalejo presented the changed content intention. (23)



The reorganized BluPrint is digital only. It publishes a system of mixed contents on its website. These are reflected on its social network pages (Facebook and Instagram). The following contents appear: webzine, design news, designer portrays, design ideas presentations, and books.

-*The webzine* recalls the previous issues which were organized strictly in tables of content. But BluPrint's present webzines are different from those previous products. The webzines are rather monographs with focus on one architect or design. They don't strive after a variety of contents which was so typical for the previous magazine issues. There is a reason for this. A rich variety of other contents do appear but in separate journalistic forms on the website. The webzines appear bimonthly, on the 1st day of each month. In the course of time, they lose importance. In 2023, only two webzines were published, in order to give way to books or other forms.

-*Design news* in form of spontaneous articles are published daily. Every day, BluPrint tries to produce at least two articles a day on its website.

-*Designer portrays* ("BluPrint Perspective") appear monthly, on the 16th of each month. These focus on persons: architects and designers.

- *Design idea presentations* ("Notes on Architecture") show architects who talk about specific details of certain projects. They explain how they came up with a design. The scheduling is flexible. The "Notes" go with videos.

- *Books* are also envisioned as BluPrint's printed publications. With this, BluPrint tries to respond to many architects' desire to have tangible reading in hand. (See 23)

## 2.6. BLUPRINT'S THEORETICAL APPROACH AFTER THE PANDEMIC

The new EIC turned toward a more relaxed approach to architecture. Her first issue focused on playfulness. It seemed to be inspired by blogs to talk to today's Facebook generations with short attention span. Short-impulsed articles mimic social network tweets. This orientation led to a more spontaneous and less critical content shaping.

This shift of theoretical background can be understood from the words of the publishing company's CEO. Mr. Suki Salvador explained the background of the shift which first started from a business vision. But it was also carried by needs arising from the digitalization. "There was a time when I felt BluPrint was too technical. While it spoke primarily to architects and students of interior design and the allied arts, I felt that it was very stiff. It was hard. It was so intimidating for the regular reader that they automatically dismissed it as something that wasn't for them. But, design is for everyone whether you are someone who likes art, or something who can appreciate a beautiful building. People, design professional or not, use space and it is important that they use space properly so that they can move around with ease. A chair isn't just a beautiful product, it is meant to provide support so that your body is taken care of. For the new BluPrint, I thought about what would be practical for the regular person, but at the same time, I didn't want to lose the essence of BluPrint. I didn't want architects and students to think it is basic. From there, I aligned with an editor who shared the same vision. I'm glad I found an ally in our new Editor-in-Chief." (24)

BluPrint's new journalists made best efforts to realize this orientation coming from the publisher. It could be carried out so far as the constraint of personnel and the increasing adjustment to digital conditions allowed it. Under the new EIC, Ar. Fuster, the light and inclusive approach prevailed over deeper architectural discussions or discourses. It gave way to a more spontaneous presence through daily articles with longer features on designs, designers, and design ideas. Lifestyle was emphasized instead of maintaining previous critical and investigative approach. In the new way, the journalist is seriously interested in architecture but his/her role is rather content production. The daily articles, the readers' basic BluPrint experience, are being written by very few people. There were times when the Managing Editor himself wrote all of them, then sometimes together with a full-time writer whose person regularly changes. In 2023, an assistant journalist, Shane Arcega worked only from March to September although she had writing experience with BluPrint already in the first Post-pandemic issues. Usually, writers don't stay longer than one year. This constraint of writers was not so tight in 2021 and 2022 when, probably attempting to mimic pre-pandemic production, at least 5-6 writers were regularly contributing. (See 23)

## 2.7. FEATURED CONTENT IN THE POST-PANDEMIC BLUPRINT

The first pandemic issue is rather a collection of loosely connected articles which are shorter than in previous BluPrint issues. The writers seem to be recommended by Ar. William Ti based on professional performances. William Ti's own project, Horizon Manila Reclamation is the head feature. Once a permanent EIC was appointed, the above-mentioned features bring the resource persons'





original voice, without editorial investigation or even interpretation. The daily articles are almost random (with exception of Maria Rebecca Abay’s articles, from 2021 November to 2022 March or April). International examples of small buildings are the usually featured designs. Local designs come as rarity, mostly under “submissions”.

BluPrint’s publisher and journalists understood that events are the readers’ magnets which attract new customers. Although BluPrint lost its official media partnership with WAF which was transferred to Kanto with the migrant journalists, Venice Biennale’s official media partnership remained with them. They strive to be media partners of new, upcoming and attractive events.

**3. KANTO’S UPDATE**

Kanto, administered by former journalists of BluPrint has managed to establish itself as a strong alternative to BluPrint. It successfully distinguished itself from BluPrint’s online development. Let us review Kanto’s history which was partly presented in the beginning of this study.

**3.1. KANTO’S HISTORY BEFORE THE UPDATE**

Kanto started as a personal blog of Mel Patrick Kasingsing in 2015. He was at that time the Layout Director of BluPrint as well. He started the blog to make personal reflections on ideas he encountered through layouting BluPrint. Step by step he also got writing commissions from BluPrint. After the first Torres-Period of BluPrint, Kasingsing left BluPrint but continued Kanto. Kanto, which was until 2020 only an electronic PDF, was updated to a proper business, with business partners. So they launched our website in January of 2021. (25)

**3.2. KANTO’S ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AFTER THE UPDATE**

The Editor-in-Chief continues to be Mel Patrick Kasingsing, the former layout director of BluPrint. Several BluPrint staff joined him: Judith Torres, former EIC of BluPrint (Editor-at-large), Ar. Adrian Tumang, Miguell Llona, and Angel Yulo as writers. Kasingsing also accepted art manager Balaguer and other writers. BluPrint’s former EIC Judith Torres is now an “Editor-at-Large” of Kanto. She is not a business partner or employee but rather a contributor. In terms of business structure, Kanto is part of an architecture firm, together with his business partners. There are three people in “Architecture Without Ego” (AWE): Adrian Tumang, Nikki Umari, and Kasingsing. Tumang and Umari are architects. Kasingsing, Kanto’s EIC is the only non-architect in the partnership. This firm is doing designs with Kanto as a subsidiary.

Kanto is granted an editorial independence: its agenda is completely separate from the architectural company. It has financial supporters like Lixil company. Only Lixil advertisements appear on Kanto regularly. With this personnel, the researcher assumes that Kanto takes over the advocacy of BluPrint before 2019.

Kanto, somewhat similarly to BluPrint, started with four issues yearly (=a quarterly) and two special issues which were still resembling a “table of content”. But step by step, it is getting more spontaneously organized rather by events or occasions.

**Table 5. Kanto’s Published Issues (2020-21) (Source: the published issues.)**

<i>Number</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Intended content</i>	<i>Theoretical approach</i>	<i>Main featured Buildings</i>
Heirloom	About time	Heritage	Heritage should be protected	Modernist and Brutalist buildings
Anthology Festival 2021	Our city	Festival documentation	Values along cities development	Festival entries
Doers	Silent movers	Creative industry	Significance of creative industry	Personalities presented, no design.
Beauty	The function of beauty	Old and new beauty ugliness.	The complexity of various, sensitive impulses.	Various appearances of beauty, only few buildings.



The Philippines at Expo 2020	Dubai diaries	Ar. Pineda, the designer of the Philippine pavilion.	Ar. Pineda’s impressions: how the design affects him and others.	The Philippine pavilion at Expo 2020.
World Architecture Festival 2021	Eye on ASEAN	Celebration of ASEAN countries performance	Importance of the ASEAN Region.	Public building designs, urban design.
Seven Years of Kanto	A look back	16 of the Editors’ favorite stories, conversations collected in one issue.	Celebration of Kanto’s first year as a website and seventh year as a title.	Brutalist structures
Art of Reading	Open book	Reading in the digital age.	Reading’s importance in the digital age.	Narratives, no design.
Mlkk Studio	HK-based studio	Maiden capsule issue to present this studio.	Participative design process with emphasis on sustainability.	Passive house and sustainable housing.
Live in Lisbon	World Architecture Festival 2022	Covering the event live.	How to win at WAF?	Various entries: residences, sacred buildings, etc.
Road to Singapore	World Architecture Festival 2023	Innovative solutions.	How to win at WAF?	Various entries: residences, schools, etc..

**3.3. KANTO’S CONTENT INTENTION AFTER THE PANDEMIC**

The intention is to present deeper and wider meanings of experiences in art and architecture. This way was common in the pre-pandemic BluPrint but now, it is Kanto which wishes to present them in a deeper and multidisciplinary way. Kanto’s strength is its excellent networking and good contacts to events, competitions and festivals. This comes through the personal contacts of Ms. Judith Torres. Although through its long history, BluPrint inherited a high appreciation of the Philippine Government and many readers. Thus it keeps favored with the Venice Biennale. But most other events would rather select Kanto, despite the diligent and good work of BluPrint’s writers. Similarly to BluPrint, Kanto adapted a more spontaneous way. In its case, this is the fitting form to cover events like World Architecture Festival. In fact, table of contents plays here an even lesser role. There are “issues” but without table of contents, they consists of separate articles that pop out when somebody clicks on the image. Under the actual articles of the given issue, other “stories” also pop out. By now, eleven such issues were published. The even featuring issues are expansive but there is one “capsule issue” which features a design studio. According to Kanto, they wish to create similar capsule issues to feature individual designers or practices. Kanto’s capsule issue is similar to “Perspectives” or “Architects’ Notes” in the terminology of post-pandemic BluPrint.

Kanto also has daily posts on its Facebook and Instagram pages. While on the social network, these contents of the website are distributed to content groups so that the viewer can easier find them. For these daily posts, beyond the “issues”, Kanto’s orientation toward local and international events helps it to discover new and excellent Filipino projects for featuring. On the contrary to BluPrint which diligently publishes articles daily - but the viewer sometimes does not know what is their connection with Philippine life.



### 3.4. KANTO'S Theoretical Approach AFTER THE PANDEMIC

Kanto covers several topics since different sources as inspirations are its goal. These stories are architecture, art, and built heritage. Now, Kanto starts to streamline its content work for three core topics: around 60% architecture and 40% divided between art and heritage.

Kanto is turning more and more to WAF as its official media partner. While BluPrint could keep its rank as official media partner of the Venice Architectural Biennale, WAF's official media partner is Kanto. BluPrint has just an inofficial approach to it. "It is a rich source of editorial content. Kanto's immediate focus is the local market but it also wants to reach out to their ASEAN neighbors. That's not something new. This is what we have been doing even in BluPrint. The reason why there are many WAF stories is because they fulfil several goals. First of all, Kanto is educational. Second, it helps its financial survival without a publishing owner as BluPrint still has it. It fulfils a sales and marketing objective of art because for the sponsor, Grohe, part of the package is that they will come up with so many related articles as possible. That is not a problem because whatever is featured in Kanto that happens to be shortlisted, too. One of the WAF founders, Grohe, a German plumbing fixtures manufacturer, is now owned by Lixil. Thus there is a connection between Lixil and WAF. With this, they have been our faithful partner." (See 20 and 25)

## 4. FINDINGS

Having followed the pre-pandemic history of BluPrint and Kanto, their connections and differences, the following statements can be asserted.

### 4.1. FIRST STATEMENT: CONTENT CURATION PREVAILS OVER TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS

Media technological aspects are the ways how content intentions based upon a deeper theoretical approach are supported by a line of featured buildings and/or artworks. The digital success of both magazines are based more on networking and journalistic skills of their producers rather than on computer technological skills. Since technical professionals can be easier called to assist, content curation strategies prevail over technological skills. While BluPrint's intention was to be a "resource book", Kanto wants to be an "impulse book". More intellectual, faster, generating rather new ideas than resources. Less documentary but thought-generating. The event issues provide full transcripts which are almost the same as an interview book with less editing – giving a stronger intellectual challenge to the reader than BluPrint's stronger edited interviews and essay-formed articles.

### 4.2. THE SECOND STATEMENT: THE SHIFT IN MEDIA MEANS A SHIFT IN THE CONTENT OF ARCHITECTURAL REFLECTION

The shift propelled to a more inclusive understanding of the content, Philippine reflection on architecture and arts. The genre became more plural. Now, the non-tangible distribution supports a content composition arising from a higher diversity of ideas. More philosophical reflections are included—maybe because viewing a digital publication, it is easier to skip a content part which does not fit the interest of the viewer. The digital versions accommodate more decision-oriented challenges for design consciousness. In a more open way, they advocate for new design orientations and a wider distribution of new design ideas, successful functional or design patterns. In this way, it is a more efficient reminder of design principles than what we experienced before the pandemic.

### 4.3. THE THIRD STATEMENT: SHIFT IN GENRE MEANS A SHIFT IN THE NATURE OF ARCHITECTURAL COMMUNICATION

The genre shift (from magazine, a legacy medium, to blog, an interactive medium) means a shift in the nature of communication. Both BluPrint and Kanto try to be interactive: there are no pages, the content is infinite content. Images are laid out accordingly, with less limitations. In texts, transcriptions can be uploaded to the blog in its fullness because the number of pages is not limited by finances. After the shift, these media are interactive. The interactive experience can take place in various ways and intensities.

The closed, complete character of the magazine used to be a one-way message from the editors to the readers. It was also tangible, perceivable. The system of the printed magazine had a theme to which most of the articles are inclined and oriented. The article authors were secondary, the content was emphasized. The migration of journalists to Kanto propelled a more interactive architectural communication. It worked as a catalyst for BluPrint to reinvent itself. At present, Kanto is more personal than the "new" BluPrint.



Here, it depends more on the reader how to connect the impulses. The coming of impulses supports the presence of a more “personal flavor”. Kanto uses this opportunity better than BluPrint.

#### 4.4. FOURTH STATEMENT: THE SHIFT MEANS A NEW RELATIONSHIP PATTERN BETWEEN PRACTICING ARCHITECTS AND THE ARCHITECTURAL MEDIA

Since through a new more differentiated connection, architectural media will not only document the practice but also better animate it. This kind of investigative impulses (from the editors) and application patterns (from the practitioners presented in the magazine) helped practicing architects go to a consent. BluPrint showed ideal practices in its pre-Covid time. Through investigative journalism, and for the fitting “tangible” and “closed” character of the magazine made it possible to see full questions and adequately elaborated responses to it. The readers mostly appreciated in retrospect that BluPrint managed to bring to the out important topics that were not taught in architectural schools. These were: business, international career outlooks, and communication skills. Its complete character, tangible way of the printed issue, gave the impression to keep in the hand a complete body of knowledge on this questions. In the online issue, these investigative aspects appear in a more interactive and a more personally challenging way for practicing architects. The new BluPrint with its variety of journalistic forms call for a plural understanding of the architectural practice. BluPrint/s former investigative practices are now animating Kanto in digital way where architectural contents are embedded into other art entries. In its digital nature, it is easier to find and to identify these contents.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

It is still early to state a significance and effect of the performed change. It is interesting to see how BluPrint’s migrant journalists are now successful on the digital platform Kanto, in a fully different organizational and financial system. We can conclude that the change of both media to the digital platform was successful as they were able to carry out their message. They could also adjust themselves to the necessary organizational changes that digitalization brought. Their hierarchy, their financial support, is now more flexible with a supporting supplier company, Lixil. The struggling of BluPrint in the last years mirror the dilemma between financial success and content success which, in times of an increasing and now almost obligatory digitalization, became sharper.

It also seems that *events, festivals became the most important supporting fields* to architectural media in disseminating architectural advocacies and information. This means that an *oral and personal encounter* of people with “star architects” and among themselves creates an interactive basis for the readers’ experiences to which the digital media adds new impulses. This division of prestigious architectural events (BluPrint for Venice Biennale and Kanto for WAF) proves the two media’s competition. With their events, they try to cut out further slices from new, upcoming events.

In summary, the digitalization brought a wider variety of journalistic forms but in a more spontaneous, less focused presentation. This is true for both competing media. They should find their corresponding niche in the market. While BluPrint is now striving for a wider viewership with an entertaining character, Kanto tries to deliver more depth in the profession embedded in a variety of artistic and cultural forms. For general learning, this means that digitalization involves a wider variety of platforms in flexible but unique ways to deliver messages. Financial responsibility and success help provide guidance. Spontaneous and flexible digital media are necessary in today’s rapidly changing world—but for relaxation, printed publications are still welcome.

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