

Editorial

WELCOME TO another issue of *What Next?* Apologies for the delay, but the editor's computer, which dated from the early Stone Age, finally gave up the ghost and had to be replaced (thanks to Roy Wall for helping to sort this out).

Unlike the publications of the various left groups, *What Next?* lacks even the most elementary organisation to distribute it, so for our sales we are dependent on individual subscriptions and the shrinking number of radical bookshops. The most copies any issue of the journal has ever sold is 350, which falls well short of the sort of print-run that would allow us to upgrade from a photocopied to a properly printed version, and raises unit costs to the point where we are running at a loss on both subscriptions and bookshop sales.

Happily, a solution is to hand in the form of the internet. The *What Next?* website was launched in April 2002, after the proprietors of Porcupine Bookcellar and Woburn Books kindly allowed us to blag some of their free webspace. At the time of writing (late February 2003), the total number of pages that have been visited since then runs at close to 100,000. However you slice it, that amounts to considerably more readers than we reach through subs and shops.

Reactions to our site, the design of which could charitably be described as minimalist, divide into two basic categories. Comrades with some expertise in the field of website design tend to take one look at it and burst out laughing. On the other hand, we have had some favourable comment from readers

who welcome the fact that the site is quick and easy to get around. My own theory is that website designers are a bit like the far left, in that they tend to assume, mistakenly, that the general population shares their own view of the world. In reality, whereas internet nerds will sit in front of their computer screen lost in admiration at the sophistication of some animated graphic, your average punter sits there drumming their fingers on the table wondering how long it will take for the bloody thing to download. (Admittedly, as broadband becomes more widely available this may well change.)

However, our website has now made a concession to modern technology by providing a PDF version of the journal. This means that visitors to the site will be able to download the articles in the same layout as they appear in the printed version.

An additional appeal for website visitors is that for reasons of space – we are limited to a maximum of 48 pages by our printer – not all the material that is available on the site appears in the printed edition.

The basic idea, therefore, is to persuade readers to access *What Next?* on the internet rather than take out a sub or buy a copy. This gives rise to a slogan which we believe is unique in the history of advertising, in the publishing or any other industry: "Do Not Purchase This Product!"

However, for those technophobes among you who prefer a magazine that you can actually hold in your hands, subscription rates are given below.

Bob Pitt, editor

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Only £10 for 6 issues including postage (overseas, add £2)

Send cheques, made out to R.Pitt/What Next? to

24 Georgiana Street London NW1 0EA

Or read it for free online at <http://mysite.freemove.com/whatnext>