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From the Editor

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From the Editor

This morning I had breakfast with a friend who was frustrated because she couldn't find a place to buy the *New York Times* in our neighborhood in Phoenix, Arizona. This evening I attended a dinner sponsored by the design faculty at Arizona State University, where the keynote speaker was Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist, who's as responsible as anyone for why classified ads—the economic backbone of the news business—have gone online, and why my friend couldn't find the newspaper that day, and why sometime soon... but no need to finish the sentence.

I'm writing this editorial, my first as the new editor of *Places*, in April 2009. The information revolution—the accelerating decline of the daily papers, the explosive rise of web-based journalism, the messy confusion of it all—is much in the news. And here at *Places* we are in the midst of our own exciting transition, from a hard-copy journal compiled, edited, printed and distributed three times yearly, to a web-based journal that will be open access, continuously available and updated often. Online, *Places* will continue to publish peer-reviewed scholarship and photographic essays, but we'll also feature topical critique, text and audiovisual interviews, timely reviews of books, exhibitions, and projects, and multimedia formats including slideshows, mapping, animation, film and video. Articles and reviews will be extended and enhanced with hyperlinks, and the site will support—and encourage—interactive discussion. To guide us in this transition, we've engaged the Connecticut-based Winterhouse Studio, whose online experience ranges from scholarly journals for Yale and Harvard to the websites for the *Paris Review*, *Poetry Foundation*, and the *New Yorker*. Our plans are to launch the new site this fall.

Transitions—not to say revolutions—are never easy. Personally and professionally—as a lifelong bibliophile and also as co-founding editor of the print journal *Harvard Design Magazine*—I'm intensely aware of the pleasures of print, of its heft and portability, its permanence and presence. Yet it's clear that the future of periodical literature is online, and it's clear too that we're gaining as much as we're giving up. The economic and environmental arguments for going digital are strong. Just as compelling are the editorial opportunities—opportunities for greater reach and readership, for wider impact for the design professions. Certainly the time is ripe for lively and immediate online debate about the future of buildings and landscapes and cities, as a new administration rolls out plans for what's likely to be an historic investment in built infrastructure, as global crisis spurs design activism and energy. At this pivotal moment I'm delighted to be taking on the editorship of *Places*, at once to extend the admirable legacy of my predecessor Donlyn Lyndon and to work to take full creative advantage of what's quickly become the most powerful communication medium of our day.

—Nancy Levinson