

## The comeback of the catalog

by [Jessica Jimenez](#), July 22nd, 2010, Thursday.

Category: [Online And New Media](#), [Retail](#), [Trends](#)



I usually do not pay that much attention to the catalogs I receive in the mail. Occasionally, I'll skim through the pages of [J. Crew](#) or [REI](#), but that's about it. I like to make in-store purchases or, if necessary, order online. So will these catalog mailers soon become obsolete? Not just yet, according to the retail industry. It is just time to get more innovative with the catalog's creation, appearance, and content.

In fact, several retailers have decided to [revamp their catalogs](#) in hopes to push more traffic to their

websites. [J.C. Penney](#) is aiming for more targeted catalogs versus the former "catch-all" ones. For example, the catalog called The Little Red Book specifically presents full ensembles for women instead of just separates or certain brands. A spokesperson for J.C. Penney explains that their catalogs are intended to "tease the store's website, where customers can find more info, such as videos or an interactive guide for denim." The catalog works in conjunction with the store's website, thus encouraging readers/shoppers to visit the actual site.

Speaking of denim—in August [Barneys Co-Op](#) is launching a 3D catalog that will focus on its denim collection, which is geared toward its predominantly younger audience. 3D glasses will be included. Simon Doonan, creative director of [Barneys New York](#), says that because "the Internet is so exciting and so immediate, we have to up the ante with direct mail and really make direct-mail pieces memorable, make

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them into keepers.” Given the current and thriving 3D movie trend, it makes sense that retailers would give this approach a try considering their demographic.

[Catalogs.com](#) founder Leslie Linevsky believes catalogs aren’t disappearing, but simply adjusting. The environmental impact, along with postage rates, leads retailers to lower the number of catalogs mailed. Linevsky claims that, “[Sears](#) is probably one of the best flippable catalogs online.” Perhaps, in the future, more retailers will adjust accordingly and opt instead for more cost effective online catalogs.

Whatever approach is taken, it seems as if the immediate survival of the catalog will rely heavily upon its connection to the retailer’s website.

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Jessica Jimenez is a search editor for Hoover's and focuses on updating the people data within our company profiles. In 2008 she completed her Master of Liberal Arts degree, and the higher education beat quickly captured her interest. Jessica has been with Hoover's since 2004.

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