



The Newsletter for  
Magazine Sellers,  
Buyers & Circulators  
  
From  
**Jack Hanrahan**

Volume 1, Issue 12

October 3, 2008

## WRSS Changing the Verified Game

If you were a doctor or owned a beauty salon, your business would probably be receiving a whole bunch of magazines for free. This could especially be true if the business was located in a major market or in an upscale zip code.

While getting all these free magazines has a lot of upside for the businesses on the receiving end...and their customers, there are some downsides. One of the big drawbacks is that businesses can't easily control what specific titles come in the mail. They don't get a choice. While they are required by ABC rules to receive the chance to opt out of receiving magazines....ALL MAGAZINES, the opt out rules of the ABC don't give public place locations the ability to stop some magazines from coming every week or month.

However, one of the two largest players in supplying publisher-provided verified copies to public places is about to change the game. Waiting Room Subscription Services (WRSS) has built a web-based application that allows public place locations to opt out of receiving specific magazines they don't want to get.



It's a major step...and they're taking it on their own. The ABC isn't requiring them to do this; WRSS is doing it pro-actively...and **it's a real game changer in the area of verified circulation.**

Let's take a step back to ask: Why would a business want to stop some magazines? There's a wide range of possible reasons:

- The business's customer base may not be in sync with the appeal of the magazine
- The magazine's content may be judged inappropriate for display at the business
- The location may get too many titles within an editorial type
- The space available at the business may be too modest to allow all titles received to be displayed

So, what happens to free copies (or verified circulation in magazine land speak) when the public place location can't or doesn't want to display it? Well, no one knows for sure but I know what I do with unwanted mail that comes to me. It goes right in the recycle bin.

**This is a concern many media professionals have about unwanted verified copies.** This is why WRSS's proactive step is a real game changer.

### What Matters Most

WRSS Gives Public Place Locations the Chance to Say "No"

### Also in this issue

The Game Changer from WRSS	1
Portfolio's First ABC Audit	3
Maghound Launches	5
Free Digital Subs	6
Verified + Sponsored by Category - Part II	7
Future's So Bright, Gotta Wear Shades	10

## WRSS Changing the Verified Game

I myself lobbied WRSS for an “opt out by title” approach when I was on the agency side. My view then and now: If verified copies are going to count as part of title’s rate base, it’s important that every copy sent should have a chance of working for advertisers.

In sharing their plans, WRSS President Marc Passarelli gave me a tour of the website they’ve built to gather feedback from the public place locations in their database on the magazines they want...and the ones they don’t want.

The Welcome Page on the website, as you can see, gives businesses the chance to opt out by title or opt out of all magazines, the ability to review prior preferences, update information about their business or share characteristics about their business to assist WRSS in tailoring title selection to the business. The buttons on the Welcome Page clearly indicate that **the site is meant to not only be very interactive for the user but also establish an on-going relationship with the businesses.**

The “opt out” section is laid out by editorial category. Titles within each category are listed alphabetically.

WRSS has listed **every imaginable title** within each editorial genre. It doesn’t matter whether the title is a current WRSS client or not. You don’t need me to tell you why this is smart. The person filling out this section simply checks off the titles they don’t want to receive. Once they complete all editorial types, a screen recaps all “opt out” titles...giving the location one more look at what they won’t be receiving unless they change their “vote”.

Passarelli revealed that all 1.3 million public place locations in the WRSS database have received news of the website and the “opt out” option. He noted that **the website is getting tens of thousands of unique visitors**: “They are opting out of specific titles, adding clarifying information to their addresses...like a suite number which makes the file more deliverable. They’re telling us how many display areas their facility has, telling us average wait times, giving us information about the number of patients/clients they see, etc., etc. It’s fantastic.” The online application is available to locations 24/7 so changes can be made whenever it’s convenient for the business. **All changes are automatically saved and fulfilled in real time.**

WRSS will be using this website for more than just providing the “opt out by title”. Specifically, it will use the site to learn more about the venues, as noted above. This is good for WRSS and good for their client magazines. Anything that helps WRSS and their clients to understand where to send verified copies **and where not to send them should, by extension, be good for advertisers.**

The new approach from WRSS should make a big difference in how verified circulation is viewed by media analysts. While debate will rage on about how much verified is too much, **this is a very positive step toward providing more confidence that copies sent to public places are desired and displayed.** You can’t generate audience if you’re not on display. This is a leadership step...a real game changer.

