

Scomodo

<https://engagenow.eu/case-studies/scomodo/>

Scomodo is a free monthly magazine put together by young people. To be more precise, there are 400 high school and university students involved in its creation. It is the most read student newspaper in Italy. Scomodo is a printed magazine which is free of charge and does not contain advertising. The project involves more than 35,000 people and around 7,500 weekly copies are printed and distributed in schools and universities as well as cultural organisations. Its contents offer an alternative culture model, free of political and economic interests. The founder of Scomodo is a 19-year-old student from Rome who is part of the student movement. In 2016, when he was 17-years-old, together with two other peers, he founded the project Scomodo, meaning 'uncomfortable' in Italian.

Scomodo was founded in response to the superficiality of modern journalism in Rome. The magazines focus in on the quality of the content of the articles, promoting critical, reasoned, paused, compact, and independent information. It aims to change the way in which the information is presented, that is to say, the magazine has returned to print to detail content that is valued and allows for the reading of educational articles in a more relaxed manner.

The magazine is not intended to be digital. As previously mentioned, Scomodo was founded in 2016, a period during which online information was gaining the upper hand compared to printed media in terms of dissemination. At the same time, however, fake news and the so-called "post-truth" phenomena were erupting. More importantly the magazine founders realised that online articles were extremely superficial, especially for the younger generation that spends an excessive amount of time on the Internet, rarely reading anything longer than a few lines.

In order to provide more in-depth details of the facts in their articles, they chose to embrace the print media. This decision was not taken for nostalgic or reactionary motives, but rather was the result of very careful and coherent analysis. Scomodo believes that, as long as a teenager actually picks up and reads even half an article in a real newspaper or magazine, something meaningful is occurring. The act of physically holding and having direct eye contact with the printed page restores

A free monthly
magazine made by
more than 400 students

LOCATION: ITALY, ROME

WEBSITE: WWW.LEGGISCOMODO.ORG

YEAR THE PROJECT BEGAN: 2016

DURATION: > 24 MONTHS

ORGANIZER: [SCOMODO](#)

ARTS AND CULTURE SECTORS:

- LITERATURE: WRITING
- LITERATURE: READING
- LITERATURE: COMPREHENSION
- LITERATURE: ORAL EXPRESSION

AGE TARGETS:

- YOUNGSTERS AND ADOLESCENTS
(IN GENERAL)

GENDER TARGETS: ALL

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC TARGETS:

- URBAN

AIMS:

- EMPOWERMENT

value to what they are reading, and is therefore still the only reliable method of concentrating on written content rather than on the alerts and notifications that continually interrupt the reading of an online article.

The magazine is completely free of charge and for this reason, over time, the young participants have searched for different sources of financial support. In 2017 Scomodo launched an online crowdfunding campaign on [Ulule](#), in order to finance the first edition of “[Presente](#)”, the special summer edition. Thanks to this campaign they managed to raise €26,500 euros, thus subsidising the large print run of the special edition.

In December 2017, an online subscription service in support of the project was created, requesting a minimum contribution of €6 a month. Currently they are working on transforming this means of funding into a concrete support network for Scomodo, which will not be confined only to individual subscribers, but will also involve schools, universities, bookshops and important cultural centres in Rome and throughout Italy.

Participants of Scomodo state that ‘Presente’ is a publishing experiment in the form of an annual publication that focuses on what the young generation considers to be the greatest issues of their time. The edition of ‘Presente 2018’ was divided into three publications where editors and young artists worked together to make it possible. They consider this work a very important step in Scomodo’s evolution and an opportunity to ask themselves about their own life in which they are the leaders.

In addition to the magazine, six “[Notti Scomode](#)” (‘uncomfortable nights’) have been organised from 2016 to the now. Notti Scomode, is a series of unique, stand-alone events in Rome. From the first night on October 8th 2016 at the Machiavelli high school in San Lorenzo, and across the following five events over 20,000 people took part. Through ‘Notti Scomodì’, young people from Rome make use of cultural spaces and spaces for artistic expression, consisting of a series of cultural events that take place in abandoned areas of the city of Rome. Through this, they turn abandoned spaces into places of cultural activity. Younger participants know that their participation contributes to the production of the magazine. The result is the connection between the cultural phenomenon and the mass phenomenon; meaning that culture is no longer elitist, but a necessary good in everybody’s lives, enabled by a concrete and palpable meaning.

MAIN GOAL OF THE PROJECT

The project responds to the need to visualise social and cultural alternatives that enrich the city of Rome that are often silenced.

ROLE OF YOUNG AUDIENCES

The teenagers involved are aware that their work in Scomodo holds two different purposes. Not only do they participate in the development of a magazine but they also claim their right to enjoy the free cultural activity. For the magazine they carry out all the different necessary elements: they discuss and exchange ideas, hold editorial meetings, choose the topics to be addressed, perform tasks associated with the assembly of the magazine and analyse the current cultural situation.

Scomodo is a youth initiative to critically rethink the cultural activities of their city. A key achievement is the number of people involved in the project and the reach of the magazine. Even though they are youngsters from different social realities in the city of Rome, they believe in the importance of information and culture in the development of their society.

Scomodo is a great example of teamwork. Due to the numerous areas in which Scomodo operates, youngsters are split into many working groups. From managing social media to physically delivering the magazine, every individual takes part in groups of two or three.

Regarding the editorial management, every month they create three editorial teams, one to oversee each section of the magazine: current affairs, culture and then the “Plus” section, which goes more in-depth into issues dealing with mass culture. There is, in fact, a fourth and a fifth editorial team, or rather one which oversees the “Focus”, the cover story that every month examines in-depth a “hot topic”, and the other that covers the column “Mostri” (“Monstrosities”), highlighting and reporting on Rome’s abandoned spaces. Even though they divide themselves into many smaller and larger groups, participants are nevertheless a united “family”, as each of them tends to operate simultaneously on different areas of the project.

Group meetings are the most important moment for Scomodo in terms of decision-making and operational procedures, particularly in relation to the magazine. Beyond the actual structure created by the writer of an article, the magazine’s content is decided on during the meetings, involving long and often heated discussions. Their aim, from both the editorial and socio-cultural point of view, is to allay any concerns and resolve any issues without having to take sides, therefore avoiding the need for those involved to vote on issues individually.

AIMS

Scomodo is a revolutionary youth project published as a paper-only magazine, an unusual reality in the 21st century. Usually, when thinking about youngster initiatives, we assume they would make use of technology, but in this case Scomodo decided not to resort to the use of technology. This format is paradoxical to the almost unlimited information youngsters are facing everyday through their phones and laptops via the Internet, creating a substantial amount of empty information. For this reason, Scomodo wants to maintain the experience of reading a magazine in print where you hold the contents, improving the quality of information provided through the articles and the independent information presented to the public.

WHY IS IT “A CASE OF GOOD PRACTICE”?

Scomodo is a revolutionary publishing reality, a reformulation of the mode of interaction between culture and youngsters. In fact, it has rebuilt the bridge between mass culture and sociocultural paradigms where young people are empowered through absolute control over the project. The success of the printed magazine is particularly significant when we consider that we live in an era of reading on screen. The traditional mass-media often offers topics that do not interest young people and where the way of telling the news does not work if we consider how young people engage with this information. The news agenda presented by the media daily is done in such a way that it does not engage with young people. This has resulted in an increasingly marked distance between young people and the media. The information is not transmitted with them in mind, nor is the informative language used in the press able to engage their interest.