



Shaping the Future

COMMISSION ON MULTI-MEDIA WORKING

December 2007

NUJ COMMISSION ON MULTI-MEDIA WORKING 2007

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FOREWORD

Jeremy Dear, NUJ General Secretary

The NUJ launched its Journalism Matters campaign in 2005 to protect standards at a time when publishers were hacking away at their spending on journalism to make way for investment in the “new” digital media. At meetings around Britain and Ireland members proclaimed that they could not do their jobs properly as editors pressed them to deliver on multi-platforms without adequate staffing, pay or training.

Everyone agreed that technology was not to blame. The fault lay with its appropriation by shortsighted media employers. Instead of seizing the opportunity to enhance journalistic content, most seized the potential to reduce costs and boost profits, with the erosion of quality journalism an acceptable price to pay.

Now the media pages are crammed with starry-eyed commentators who talk not just of “new” media but of a “new” journalism, with the open access of the internet effectively allowing anybody to be a journalist. Yes the internet is a brilliant medium for everyone, but not, the NUJ says, at the expense of decent professional journalism.

This report, and the events that happened during its writing – most notably the multimedia agreement signed at The Guardian/Observer in London – demonstrate unequivocally that journalists don’t reject technological change or seek to hold back

the tide. But we do seek to shape the future, to serve not the media corporations but the readers and viewers.

The real threat to quality comes not from technology, not from new media, not even from the “citizen journalism”, but from those who treat information and news as nothing more than a commodity, and journalists as the servants of corporate interests, not the public.

This report brings together the experience of journalists across all media and sectors of the industry. It shows developments happening at different speeds, but a common view shines through: that to take best advantage of the opportunities, companies need to ensure they are adequately staffed, that staff are properly trained, and that the fundamentals of journalism are not sacrificed in the pursuit of technology for its own sake, or for a quick financial return.

There will be those who say of this report that the NUJ is too slow to embrace technological changes, and there will be those who will say we are too keen on them. Both are wrong. We are unashamedly in favour of new media where it enhances good journalism, and unashamedly opposed to moves which undermine it.

BACKGROUND TO THE COMMISSION

The Commission on Multi-Media Working was established at the union's 2007 Annual Delegate Meeting as a result of the following motion:

This ADM recognises the challenges that the union will have to meet as working practices throughout the industry are affected by the rapid implementation of multi-media technology. ADM declares that there is an urgent need for the union to develop strategies to meet these challenges.

ADM congratulates NUJ chapels, especially those in national newspapers that have responded to them with determined action to achieve the best possible earnings and conditions for our members.

ADM thanks NEC and the officials concerned for producing its informative preliminary report in a relatively short time.

ADM resolves to establish at this conference an ADM Commission on Multi-Media Working. It shall consist of: four members elected at this ADM (which shall not include NEC members), two from the NEC and one from the IEC.

ADM believes that those put forward for election to the commission should be members either with experience of multimedia working or from offices where it is being implemented.

The commission will conduct an intensive study into all union-related aspects of multi-media working. It will invite evidence or information from all industrial and other national Councils, chapels and branches, and individual members. It may conduct meetings around Britain and Ireland.

The Commission shall consider the areas of training, health and safety AND the use of freelancers and of 'user-generated content' as well as the wages and conditions of members. It shall produce a report within four months. This report shall include a model agreement on multi-media working for chapels as well as other recommendations for union policies and strategies.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Four members elected to the Commission by delegates at the ADM: Paula Dear, Gary Herman, Jemima Kiss and Helene Mulholland,

Two members elected by the National Executive Council: Donnacha DeLong and John Barsby

One member elected by the Irish Executive Council: Eanna O Caollai

The following officials serviced the work of the Commission: Tim Gopsill, Lawrence Shaw and Jeremy Dear

METHODOLOGY

Evidence was gathered between 15 June and 30 July 2007 from a representative cross-section of media – both geographically (UK and Ireland) and by media sectors.

An online questionnaire (appendix 1) was circulated to all Chapels.

Detailed interviews were held at 15 workplaces. Interviews were conducted variously with union representatives, with senior staff responsible for new media and/or with editorial managers.

Written and/or verbal submissions were made by the NUJ's Freelance Industrial Council, Broadcasting Industrial Council, New Media Industrial Council and Ethics Council.

Further evidence in the form of articles, academic reports and individual contributions from NUJ members was considered.

SCHEDULE OF EVIDENCE

Information was received, either as completed questionnaires and/or from direct interviews, from representatives of the following workplaces/titles:

Press Association, Archant (Norfolk), icWales, Yorkshire Post, Southern Daily Echo, PA Digital, Bucks Free Press, Harcourt Education, EMAP, CMPi, BBC News Interactive, BBC Scotland, Longford Leader, Champion Newspapers, Newyddion Ar-lein, TSL Education, BBC Radio Cumbria, Yorkshire Evening Post, Milton Keynes Citizen, Rochdale Observer, Coventry Telegraph, Sheffield Star, BBC News Online, The Guardian, Which? Magazine, China Dialogue, Evening Gazette (Middlesbrough), Manchester Evening News, Channel 4 News, Meath Chronicle, Greenock Telegraph, Leinster Leader, The Press (York), Reed Business Information, Western Mail and Echo, Newsquest Blackburn/Lancashire Telegraph, Daily/Sunday Telegraph/Telegraph Online, Scotsman Publications, Reed Business Information, University of Central Lancashire, Irish Times, ITV Wales, Oxford Mail, Hereford Times.

A breakdown of the results is at Appendix 1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the last couple of years journalists have found themselves at the sharp end of the race between media owners to become multi-media outlets. But how is this affecting the day-to-day lives of members?

This commission has gathered evidence of a broad range of experiences in different organisations. A number of specific recommendations have been drawn up, but one obvious conclusion to have emerged from this study was that we, as a profession, are working at a time of particularly rapid change that still has a long way to go.

It should be acknowledged that some early signs suggest the change is bringing positive opportunities and in some cases creating, rather than dispensing with, jobs.

As it has done so throughout its history, the NUJ is embracing the new world whilst remaining determined to influence it. Members do not wish to resist change but rather to have a say in how it is implemented. They want change to be made by agreement, with the acceptance of the principle of “voluntarism” through which journalists who have reasonable objections will not be forced to take on new work. They want to expose the negative impacts where they exist and have the power to change them.

Our evidence shows members are clearly greatly concerned about the effects of often ill-conceived multi-media plans on their working lives, on their health and safety and on the quality of the work they produce.

Three quarters of respondents report that integration has brought increased workloads, and in some cases rising stress and longer hours. The health and safety implications of new working practices – with less than a quarter of respondents reporting having H&S elements within new media training – should not be underestimated.

So fast-paced is the nature of change in this area that sections of the commission’s report had to be revised between the writing stage and final editing – a period of just a few weeks – to reflect the shifting landscape.

At the time of final writing, management at the BBC announced wholesale changes to the way News at the corporation is organised – with the rapid integration of TV, radio and online into one multi-media newsroom. One senior manager’s confession that the BBC would have to “feel its way” through integration will ring true with many members facing a similarly confused management strategy.

The speed of change at the BBC is being dictated by the need to make savage cuts, and the unions are rightly concerned about the effect this combination of plans will have on workloads and quality, not to mention the explicit threat of compulsory redundancies from management. The BBC is in many ways ahead of the game in terms of negotiated agreements on multi-media working, but the media world will watch with interest as the BBC and the unions navigate their way through the next few months and years.

Across all media the nature and pace of developments in the way content is being produced and consumed may be all at once exhilarating, terrifying, baffling, inspiring and damaging, but our principles as a union remain the same.

The issues that concern us are how these changes alter our working conditions, our health and safety, and the quality of our output. If we are to adopt new skills we should demand the tools and training we need, and the pay that reflects the work.

The key issues that concern us are: firstly, what should we do to the challenge facing us, and secondly, what tools do our members need to do it?

The recommendations we provide – listed below – should go some way to giving members the confidence and ability to maintain and improve the standard and conditions of journalists’ work.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

Section 3: UNION POLICY

■ The Commission recommends that the union steps up its campaigning and educational work on the positives of new media, as well as the concerns raised in this report, and develops a pro-active strategy for increasing membership and organisation in the sector.

Section 4 (i): AGREEMENTS

The Commission recommends that

- Chapels should be supported to insist that any changes and additional demands imposed on journalists as a result of integration must be negotiated.
- All positions in multi-media workplaces should be subject to the same terms, with agreements embracing all staff. Two-tier workforces, with inferior conditions for website workers, must not be tolerated. Chapels in "old" media where new media are started must include new media workers and ensure they are fairly treated.

Section 4 (ii): PAY

The Commission recommends that chapels should negotiate to ensure that

- Staff taking on specific extra skills, or transferring to shift work that entails unsocial hour working, should be properly rewarded for doing so.
- All staff must be on the same pay scales, regardless of which media they are working in.

Section 4 (iii): WORKING PRACTICES

The Commission recommends that

- Chapels should make clear to their managers that members will work the hours in their agreements or contracts. Those who must work longer must also be able to take time off in lieu and managers must make arrangements for this.
- All chapels should monitor members' hours, particularly when new working practices are being introduced. Where there is evidence that staff are working overtime without recompense, this should be challenged.

■ Any shift changes should be negotiated with chapels and the individuals concerned, and the NUJ should fight for premiums for night working and unsocial hours.

Section 4 (iv): JOBS

The Commission recommends that

- Each title, however small, should have an experienced web editor to oversee internet operations.
- Chapels fighting against the overloading of journalists' work or against the direct uploading to the web of unedited material should be backed forcefully on the grounds of defending professional standards
- Chapels should seek to ensure the replacement of staff transferred from old media to work full-time on the internet operation.
- The union should give support to any member not wishing to "volunteer" or be forced into online working.
- The outsourcing of inhouse departments should be carefully monitored by all chapels where it leads to a deterioration in the quality of work or of the terms and conditions under which journalists are employed.
- Chapels should make sure the guidelines on work experience are followed in their workplaces, and journalism colleges should be asked to warn students of the dangers of unpaid, unregulated work.

Section 4 (v): TRAINING

- Chapels should be encouraged to negotiate agreements covering training, to secure new technology training for all staff who want it. Nobody should be expected to undertake any task for which they have not been trained.
- All chapels should appoint Union Learning Reps, who should themselves be trained and encouraged to make use of their rights to secure high standards of training.
- The union should encourage the formation of a single accreditation body covering all journalism education, and campaign for employers to pay
- The union should step up its own training programme to meet members' needs where employers are failing to do so.

Section 4 (vi): HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Chapels should elect health and safety reps and ensure health and safety training for all involved in video and audio reporting.
- The NUJ should run extra courses for health and safety reps and/or M/FoCs to get up to speed on health and safety regulations around risk assessments and stress.
- Chapels should monitor the workloads of all staff in integrated workplaces
- All agreements should include the employees' right to pull out of any situation in which they feel that their health and safety, and that of anyone with them, is under threat in any way, without the fear of any action against them.

Section 4 (vii): FREELANCE

The Commission recommends

- that the NUJ expand its training courses for still photographers to acquire skills in writing and video;
- that chapels seek in agreements to secure continuity of work and training in new media for regular freelances as well as staff, and ensure that no NUJ members see their work jeopardised by journalists moving into new areas.
- The Commission recommends that the FIC, PRIIC and NMIC be asked to set up a working group to see how to promote NUJ freelances for work in new media areas.

Section 4 (viii): USER-GENERATED CONTENT

- The Commission recommends that all chapels should seek to ensure that their employers adhere to the principles outlined in the NUJ Witness Contributors Code of Practice (Appendix 9).

Section 5: STANDARDS OF JOURNALISM

The commission recommends that chapels should seek to ensure that

- All reporters' copy must be subbed and checked by qualified journalists before posting onto websites
- There is a web editor and sufficient trained staff for every site: experienced journalists employed to check content

Further the commission recommends that the NUJ should

- launch a public campaign on the importance of its Code of Conduct and in particular its relevance in a changing media environment.
- campaign to ensure that the self-regulation regime now being extended to parts of the web is strengthened to ensure the public have an adequate means of redress against inaccurate reporting and that the union continue its campaign for a conscience clause for journalists.

THE UNION AND UNION POLICY

Technology has always affected journalists' working environment and the union has always had to come to terms with it. Generally it has been reactive: democratic institutions are slow to change because decision-making through the levels of bodies involved takes time. This is not necessarily a drawback: it means that decisions can be well informed by taking into account the experience of members across the industry, and in the current climate it stands in contrast to the panicked reaction of many managers. And although the convergence processes have been under way for some time, the pace of change is still accelerating, which gives the NUJ the opportunity to be proactive, to map out the direction it hopes to see journalism going.

The NUJ was born in the 1900s in a period of technological change as feverish as today's: the typewriter, mechanised typesetting and telegraph communications were all invented towards the end of the 19th century, rail transport had become fast enough to deliver newspapers across the whole of Britain overnight, and motorised road transport and the telephone were just coming in. These developments, with the expansion of literacy following the 1870 Education Act, led to the growth of the popular press – the Daily Mail became the first paper to sell a million copies a day in 1899 – which is still going strong.

The press was already making big profits but journalists, especially on local papers, were pitifully paid – that too has not changed much; hence the foundation of the NUJ. Virtually all its members worked in newspapers then, and although first periodicals and later broadcasting were to expand rapidly, newspaper journalism still plays a significant role in the NUJ today – more members work in newspapers than in any other media.

Radio began in the early 1920s but it was 25 years before the union adapted itself to embrace broadcast journalism. The BBC didn't really "do" journalism until the Second World War, and it was only after the war that chapels and branches were established within it. A Radio Council was established – and a Freelance Council and freelance branches, and the Press and PR and Magazine and Book Branches.

The 1970s saw the start of the huge upheaval of computerised setting, with direct input by journalists, and for the first time technology moved to the front of

union deliberations. Direct input pitched the NUJ into an industrial crisis over relations with the unions whose members had done the work that journalists were being required to take over.

But it also meant big changes to the work environment, which the NUJ tackled impressively. ADM in 1977 set up the ADM Committee on Technology (ACT) – the model for the current commission – which produced a 60-page booklet covering every aspect of computerised work. The outcome was a programme of seeking new technology agreements, based on a model agreement, and more than 100 were negotiated on local newspapers alone in the late 1980s. The health effects of working on screen also brought the NUJ to consider health and safety seriously for the first time.

In 1976 the union changed its internal structure, from a geographical to an "industrial" base, with Industrial Councils for newspapers and agencies, magazines and books, broadcasting, freelancers and PRs, but this was not because of technology: the reason was the break-up of the national agreements that had governed newspaper pay and conditions for 60 years. Agreements had always been overseen by the NEC, but now there were simply too many: chapels were reaching their own deals and there was a need to co-ordinate them within their sectors.

The computer revolution was considered radical, and it meant increased workloads – and the need to master new software – particularly for sub-editors, but it did not generally affect the nature of journalism. The digital revolution of the 21st century, however, is doing just that. Pretty well all journalists are likely to be required to work in different media, mastering numerous software packages, to meet 24-hour deadlines. At the same time our costly work has to compete with free user-generated content. One element of the 1978 ACT report was the principle of voluntarism – that no-one should be compelled to take on new work, with no detriment to their job status or conditions should they be exempt. There is less resistance among journalists to new media than in the past – indeed they are widely welcomed and anticipated by most journalists and by the union – but change secured through agreement and voluntarism is likely to lead to better results.

The union has had to change the rules that govern

the way journalists work together. The Code of Working Practices that dated back to 1936, when it was part of the original Code of Professional Conduct, was heavily revised in 2007. Among the changes was to abandon the demarcation between journalistic skills, notably a clause stipulating that reporters shall not normally take photographs, nor photographers write articles, if in doing so they took work off each other.

This is technology-led change as drastic as that of 100 years ago. But then the union was starting from scratch and it knew the world it was working in. Now no-one is so sure. The NUJ is facing the retrenchment of the newspaper industry, the fragmentation of broadcasting into hundreds of channels and the spread of the internet onto thousands of sites, all in an unstable deregulated market.

The union has struggled to encompass internet journalists into its structure, just as it did with broadcasters. The sites that have employed the most journalists are spin-offs from major print and broadcasting outlets – to start with, national papers in the UK and Ireland, the BBC and RTE – and the journalists have naturally been part of the chapels and branches concerned; they have not wanted to be in a separate “new media” sector because their interests lie with their “old media” colleagues. After five years of debate, however, a New Media Industrial Council was established in 2004 and an assistant organiser appointed to help develop the union’s work in the area.

However, lacking the members on the biggest websites (who remain in their related “old media” sectors) it is small and without the organisational expertise and resources of the others. It succeeded in securing recognition at the London bureau of AoL – part of the world’s biggest media conglomerate, AoL Time Warner – and has been able to organise strong resistance to its plans to cut back on staff, but recruitment is difficult in the smaller isolated and largely non-unionised workplaces. Instead of supervising industrial activity it has often fallen back on a role of advocacy for new media within the union.

Despite this, the new media sector has steadily grown in membership and there is a big potential in the sector. But comprehension of new media and the ways of working in them should not be left solely to the New Media Industrial Council. It is a task for the whole union.

It is not the remit of this commission to recommend changes to the NUJ’s structure, but with the certainty that every medium, print or broadcast, will publish also online (if they are not doing so already) and given the constantly shifting nature of media ownership the nature of the NUJ’s organisational structures needs to be examined to ensure they provide maximum support to the union’s industrial work.

The commission notes that the 2007 ADM passed the following motion (number 76):

This ADM recognises that technological convergence, integration and the development of new technologies, alongside changes in the nature of media ownership, are increasingly breaking down the distinctions between different sectors of the media industry.

In light of these far-reaching changes ADM instructs the NEC to review the NUJ’s lay structures to ensure the union is best able to respond to industrial priorities and bring any proposals arising from such a review to the 2008 ADM.

The commission looks forward to the NEC completing this review, taking into account the views of all the relevant bodies in the union.

RECOMMENDATION

- **The Commission recommends that the union steps up its campaigning and educational work on the positives of new media, as well as the concerns raised in this report, and develops a proactive strategy for increasing membership and organisation in the sector.**

UNION AGREEMENTS

NUJ chapels are having to adapt quickly to companies bypassing negotiations for establishing online strategies. Some publishers have been implementing integration a step at a time, some by launching straight into ambitious grand programmes. There are signs now that more of them are now preparing properly thought-out strategies, and the union must be ready to negotiate their implementation.

The publishers of two of the biggest and most important newspaper websites – at the Guardian Media Group in London and the Irish Times in Dublin – were concluding comprehensive integration agreements with the NUJ as the report went to press. The Guardian NUJ chapel has reached agreement after six difficult months of negotiation, and the Irish Times is embarking on discussions over its own far-reaching plans.

But the evidence in workplaces to date has largely shown the watering down of terms, conditions and pay. Companies under pressure from declining sales have become set on dismantling hard-won terms and conditions established over time in print and broadcast. The NUJ is articulating an alternative narrative, encompassing flexibility and a willingness to take up new work with extra pay and resources for the staff expected to deliver.

Responses to the Commission's survey suggest the majority of chapels have not been involved in developing an online strategy which prevents burnout for staff and secures extra pay for new media skills applied and extra workloads. Only 31% of respondents said their house agreement accommodated new media working, suggesting incorporating new modes of working have been tacked on or flagrantly breach the terms of existing agreements.

And changes to terms and conditions from the integration of online practices have been negotiated by the NUJ in only 33% of cases, according to the Commission survey.

One of the best agreements is at the BBC, where the terms of multi-skilling using hi-tech equipment and the development of online working have been covered by NUJ agreements for nearly ten years. In 1998, a major agreement on multi-skilling was struck which provided for negotiations in every area where multi-skilling was planned. Principally this covered reporters working as video

journalists (VJs), without crews, to produce one-person packages for bulletins. The terms included enhanced pay and strict health and safety safeguards. Enshrined was a principle was that multi-skilling would be "at the margins" – namely that new skills applied to new technology did not affect journalists' core function.

And as the BBC developed its vast web operation, all journalists have been employed under the same agreements with the same terms as those in broadcasting.

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

The same continuity has not been maintained by newspaper publishers moving online. At The Guardian, traditionally a powerful NUJ chapel with a very high level of union membership and good conditions, the speed-up of integration was accompanied by management obstruction to union attempts to secure improved conditions.

When the paper went web-first in 2006 the work patterns were simply imposed with four working days' notice. The chapel allowed the move to go ahead, but called a moratorium on future integration without negotiations, and it took months of negotiation in 2007 – backed by the threat of strike action – to work out a comprehensive integration arrangement. Managers tried to rip up the Guardian house agreement in favour of a new one that would create a more flexible workforce across the Guardian/Observer group. The proposed agreement was peppered with proposals to weaken the union's negotiating rights. Instead – in a workplace where NUJ membership is over 95 per cent – they attempted to set up a staff forum to by-pass management/union processes. (At the Telegraph group, where managers by-passed an NUJ agreement in the move to 24/7 multi-media working, the company also tried to use staff forums to consult staff.)

In the deal eventually signed in November 2007 the Guardian and Observer chapels accepted the case for round-the-clock publishing and the opportunities presented to journalism in the digital era, but made it clear the deal was not a *carte blanche* for management to ram through any change which leads to longer hours, higher workloads, a drop in journalistic standards, or worse terms and conditions for staff.

At The Irish Times, an initial consultation document on the planned integration of the company's newspaper

and online operations was presented to the chapel in November. The document outlines how the company will integrate the hitherto separate newspaper and online operations – the website ireland.com – into a “multi-media newsroom of the future”.

The union will be seeking to conserve all jobs at the website, whose staff are to transfer to the integrated operation, and achieve parity of pay and conditions. It is also determined that increased workloads will be matched with increased resources. Assurances have been provided regarding the protection of jobs, but there are concerns over the way in which the transfer will be undertaken and specifically the prospect that current online staff would have to apply for newly created positions in the new newsroom.

REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

In regional newspapers the managements have also tried to brush the union aside in the rush to go online, but negotiations are being resumed in some groups. The Johnston Press group agreed a significant framework agreement with the chapel at the Yorkshire Post/Evening Post, within which detailed provisions can be negotiated, and the union’s intention is to ensure that it applied throughout the group. And while the biggest group, Trinity Mirror, will not talk to the union at a national level, chapels at its Liverpool Post and Echo office were negotiating a wide-ranging agreement as this report was in production.

Another wide-ranging agreement has been reached at the Drogheda Independent weekly series in Ireland, which enshrines a commitment to an increase in staffing level as media operations expand into new media, and extra pay to reward new skills and responsibilities placed on journalists. It allows reporters to take photographs, which caused some friction with freelance photographers who have until now served the paper, but there is a joint union/management working party to supervise the operation of the clause concerned.

In magazines, at Britain’s biggest business magazine publisher, Reed Business Information, a comprehensive agreement has been reached, which covers hours, training etc, and provides for negotiations in the event of any further changes in shifts or hours. The chapel reports that the pace of developments is such that it is becoming out of

date and need to be revisited.

The Commission has decided not to compile a single “model agreement” encompassing all clauses that chapels should be seeking on new media working. Such models, with their long wish lists of ideal conditions, can be daunting for chapels, especially where union recognition is tenuous and granted only for the statutory matters of pay, hours and holidays. Instead it adds as appendix 4 the claim currently being negotiated at the Liverpool Post and Echo, which has been approved by the relevant union bodies and stands as a good summary of what might be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends that

- **Chapels should be supported to insist that any changes and additional demands imposed on journalists as a result of integration must be negotiated.**
- **All positions in multi-media workplaces should be subject to the same terms, with agreements embracing all staff. Two-tier workforces, with inferior conditions for website workers, must not be tolerated. Chapels in “old” media where new media are started must include new media workers and ensure they are fairly treated.**

PAY

The NUJ stipulates that “additional skills merit additional pay”. This was reinforced in the interim guidelines into multi-media working that the union published in 2006, which stated that the added value being brought to publishers’ websites cannot be undertaken on a “cost neutral basis”. It said:

“If companies intend to use existing staff, chapels should try to negotiate additional payments for those whose work changes.”

According to NUJ research published in 2005, journalists were earning on average £6,000 less a year than their colleagues in comparable professions. In local newspapers, the gap was far wider. This was at a time when the integration of new media and traditional print/broadcast workplaces was still a nascent project for many within the industry.

Yet two years on the survey conducted by the commission found few journalists are financially benefiting from their new skills contributions required by companies to deliver multi-media working. Just 22% of chapels said their members had received extra pay for applying themselves to new media.

Just over half of respondents said that staff were expected to work in new media, yet their pay remained the same. This is despite the fact that new media working is increasing workloads. Companies are expanding operations and output, without increasing headcount. Over a third of respondents admitted journalists were working longer hours to deliver new media working, effectively a pay cut, for staff at a time when they are working harder.

It is not just a matter of a heavier workload or even longer hours, but also different hours. As newspapers where staff have worked predictable hours go over to web-first publication, extra shifts are required at unsocial hours, notably at weekends. Journalists at the Telegraph group in London, working in difficult circumstances as managers attempted to ram through a seven-day all-media operation and shed more than 50 journalists in the process without consulting staff, succeeded in winning extra pay for such work. The chapel won a ballot for strike action that forced managers to concede a lump-sum payment of £5,000 for staff accepting new shift patterns with weekend working; they also agreed to restrict the new work to volunteers

only. Increases of up to 5% have been secured for those moving to new rota patterns at The Guardian.

In provincial papers the picture is even less positive. The chapel at a Johnston Press daily reported that staff delivering new media “are not paid a penny extra”, despite the fact that new working practices had increased workloads. A Newsquest chapel said that increasingly integrated online/newspaper practices had led to rising workloads, but no extra money has been negotiated.

In some offices, however, bonus schemes have been devised. Union reps at Archant, Norwich, have negotiated a new bonus based on the number of hits achieved by the website. This year, staff received a £120 extra as a result.

Many employers have attempted to justify their refusal to increase pay to those who take on new skills with the argument that they are more “marketable” in the media economy. There have been cases of some who have acquired video skills leaving regional newspapers to earn more elsewhere, but this is due mainly to the desperately low pay they were earning on the papers. And even if this pay advantage exists now, when video skills are in demand, it will diminish as they become more widespread, particularly as a new generation of multi-skilled journalists emerges from the colleges.

A report into the integration programme at Trinity Mirror newspapers in South Wales commissioned by the NUJ from the school of media and cultural studies at Cardiff University concluded that staff are not being properly compensated for the extra output and skills they were expected to bring to the job. It found staff were over-stretched, with “the same number of workers expected to do more for no extra pay.”

It reported that 84% of staff said they were too busy to take on further responsibilities such as video journalism, and that 82% were resigned to the fact they would not be offered additional pay for the additional work. The report noted:

“It would be wrong for people in positions of responsibility to assume that goodwill is an inexhaustible commodity.”

There is a further pay problem in some offices: that pay rates on “new” media are lower than for journalists on the “old” ones. This has been a particular abuse at the Guardian

of all places, the supposed leader of the integration pack, where the online staff have been on significantly inferior terms since the outset in 1999. It is not just pay: staff on the website have worked a 40-hour, five-day week, compared to the 35 hours worked by newspaper staff on a nine-day fortnight. The chapel has attempted ever since to bring Guardian Unlimited journalists onto the same levels of pay as their newspaper colleagues. The company poured over £500,000 into online pay in 2006 as a result of a ballot for industrial action. But this only narrowed the woeful pay gap.

The Guardian chapel has now seized on the fact that the company plans to step up integration, where online journalists will sit side by side with their newspaper colleagues, and used the 2007 pay round to secure a pay audit embracing web, Guardian and Observer staff, conducted by an independent job evaluator mutually agreed with the union. The chapel intends to use the findings of this audit at the next pay round in April 2009. The NUJ also used the 2007 pay round to raise the editorial minimum wage from £28,000, to £30,000. Likewise at the Telegraph, where despite the concessions won last year there remains a pay disparity between web and print reporters.

These big newspaper-based website offices stand in marked contrast to the BBC, where the pay of online, TV and radio journalists is governed by a single grading system, thanks to the efforts of a strong NUJ chapel when BBC Online was set up. However, there is concern for the allowance paid by the BBC for working unsocial hours. In its latest round of cuts the corporation is proposing to do away with the Unpredictability Allowance (UPA) for new staff. UPA ranges from £2,000 to more than £4,500 per year on top of salary and the outcome would be an effective pay cut for new staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends that chapels should negotiate to ensure that:

- **Staff taking on specific extra skills, or transferring to shift work that entails unsocial hour working, should be properly rewarded for doing so.**
- **All staff must be on the same pay scales, regardless of which media they are working in.**

WORKING PRACTICES

New media working threatens to be a licence for unscrupulous companies to flog their journalists for extra skills and longer working days without any extra pay. Few companies seem to have matched the expansion of their online operations by recruiting extra staff to satisfy the raging appetite for new media output – this despite the fact that much of it, such as podcasting and vidcasting, is more time consuming to package and deliver.

The commission survey showed:

- 25% said new media working had resulted in changes to their shift patterns.
- 37% respondents to the survey said journalists covering all media now worked longer hours.
- 32% respondents said the longer hours breached the negotiated NUJ agreement.

An alarming statistic that came out of the survey is that 75% of respondents felt that integration had led to increased workloads for some or all staff, across all sectors of the union. This is backed up by almost every case study carried out by the commission.

In some cases, internet work has been introduced voluntarily with staff being asked whether or not they wish to train in online working. But in the majority of cases, compulsory online working has been imposed with little or no negotiation with the union.

WORKING HOURS

Journalism has never been a 9-5 culture. But the willingness of professionals to go the extra mile to get the job done properly puts them at risk of exploitation in the context of new media that require a constant supply of material as companies shift to publishing online around the clock.

In the survey, 37 per cent of respondents said their members were now working beyond their hours. But even the 63 per cent who do not are feeling much more pressure to do the extra work within them. It seems that companies are more intent on squeezing the maximum out of staff when they are in the office rather than forcing them to work over the hours. But this is resulting in increased stress levels, which are now impacting on the health of members.

One union rep on a Johnston Press title said:

“The website has created a massive amount of extra work. While we currently do not generally work any extra hours over our shifts, all subs are working constantly with no downtime between deadlines. This means there is no thinking time to be creative, or reading time to catch up on different news stories locally or nationally.

“Members are fed up with it and hoping the union will take a lead in sorting this situation out.

“Some general reporters who are asked by the news desk to produce a video report on an evening event will be forced to come back to the office once the job is finished to create a video report to go online as well as write up the piece for the print edition. Then they will be back in first thing in the morning. A job that could have taken them two hours, now takes four. In principle, they ARE entitled to the hours back. In reality, getting time off in lieu of extra hours is very, very hard. They are at the sharp end of the changes.”

There are obvious limits to using lieu time as a satisfactory mechanism to compensate for excessive hours in workplaces where there are insufficient staff to meet the twin demands of traditional and new media. The temptation not to claim accrued overtime because of the extra pressure it would impose on overstretched colleagues is clearly there.

The chapel at the Oxford Mail held a ballot for industrial action over the way owners Newsquest were introducing “web first” publishing. The ballot was only narrowly won, and instead the chapel opted to monitor workloads and hours and challenge the company on contractual or health and safety grounds if necessary

THE BBC

At the BBC, a growing number of TV and radio correspondents are having to contribute to the website on the stories they are covering. Deadlines have been established for correspondents to file colour/analysis to the website within a certain period after a story has broken, and those boundaries will likely shift again as the new multi-media newsroom takes shape in 2008. Likewise, specialist online correspondents are increasingly being asked to make themselves available for radio and TV two-ways.

News website journalists frequently gather audio for

the site, and have routinely been taking photographs for years, although the site still retains a picture desk, with two professional photographers who are used mainly for feature work.

As BBC News becomes integrated there is a feeling the pressure to deliver across all outlets will increase. While many journalists are keen to take on new skills, the main concerns are around increasing workloads and longer days, plus the potential dilution of skills. One BBC rep said:

There is some resistance to journalists being expected to “go out and do everything” and a sense that journalists with additional new media skills, such as video, stand a better prospect of gaining paid work online than those with only writing skills.

ADDITIONAL ROLES

In some places journalists are having to take on roles even in excess of the technological requirements of digital media. On Archant newspapers, web workers are expected to work “as a customer help desk”, where they are expected to respond to readers’ requests, queries, etc.

The growth of email has increased the proliferation of disgruntled or curious readers writing directly to journalists to pick up on an interesting point, disagree, or contest the facts. Once designated for the letters’ page, the expectation that web journalists will commune directly with their readers can be a time-consuming distraction from their core duties and responsibilities. It suggests “customers relations” on the cheap as journalists are expected to enshrine this PR role in the fabric of their increasingly demanding working day.

The Guardian is pushing web reporters to engage their readership communities – which managers call “customers” – online. The time consuming exercise of aggregating the most interesting blogs on a given topic is increasingly encouraged. The reporter is expected to reply to posts on their blog of aggregated blogs to keep the debate flowing and to take responsibility for ensuring the conversation doesn’t descend into vitriol and abuse. Journalists who have failed to adopt the right Guardian “voice” or felt provoked by the level of personal abuse thrown their way have been pulled aside. The practice also raises questions about the reporter as a “personality” giving his/her own

opinions on their area of professional expertise.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Journalists, probably even more than most other workers, are beginning to use such sites as Myspace, Facebook and Bebo, as a source of material as well as social networking. The NUJ has one of the biggest union groups on Facebook in the world, with well over 1,000 members.

Some employers have banned the use of social networking sites at work, and while it is their right to decide how their IT systems are used, it would be counter-productive, to say the least, to attempt to restrict such activity by journalists. The same would go for email, which journalists must be able to use freely. For employees’ job security, chapels should ensure that their companies have fair and clear policies internet policies, negotiated with the union, which allow such online activity – including for NUJ business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends that

- **Chapels should make clear to their managers that members will work the hours in their agreements or contracts. Those who must work longer must also be able to take time off in lieu and managers must make arrangements for this.**
- **All chapels should monitor members’ hours, particularly when new working practices are being introduced. Where there is evidence that staff are working overtime without recompense, this should be challenged.**
- **Any shift changes should be negotiated with chapels and the individuals concerned, and the NUJ should fight for premiums for night working and unsocial hours.**

STAFFING AND JOBS

The commission survey found that in 45% of offices there had been editorial redundancies since web operations were introduced. But most respondents felt that the redundancies would have happened with or without online working as part of general cost saving measures. In the case of provincial newspapers this was attributed to the controlling groups being anxious to retain their high profit margins at a time when sales and advertising revenue were in decline.

But the paradox of redundancies at a time when companies seek to introduce multi-media working is particularly striking. It appears many companies are looking over their shoulders at the business online strategies already in place, however ill advised these might be.

The most severe losses, though, were at the Telegraph group in London, where the 54 journalists' (and 50 other) jobs lost last year appeared to be part of a company strategy to restructure the workforce for multi-media working. A similar path now looks about to be followed by management at Trinity Mirror's papers in South Wales.

Evidence from the BBC, ITV, Johnston Press and some other TM titles, however, suggests that new positions are being created for internet work. Many posts are for the role of co-ordinating online publishing efforts – with titles such as Web Editor becoming commonplace. Some larger local papers are also taking on dedicated video reporters.

However, the reality is that in many other cases companies are doing it on the cheap. A great deal of the day-to-day work updating the websites is being taken on by current staff on top of their existing workloads. For example, subs on regional papers are having to upload stories to the web and write different headlines, in addition to subbing pages for print.

At the Guardian in London, for example, ambitious plans to expand the new media operations include no increase in the headcount, and since many new recruits will be web designers or technicians, this suggests an overall drop in the number of journalists delivering the content.

Some provincial papers are expecting reporters to make a video report on a story as well as writing two different versions of a story for print and the internet. On others, reporters are being transferred away from the print edition to put together video reports for the website.

While some employers do ask for volunteers to take on the work, the majority are simply demanding that online working is carried out by the existing staff. One Johnston Press union rep said:

“The company asked for volunteers. They said no existing staff would be forced to change the way they work if they didn't want to, and the union was happy with this. But in reality, nobody wants to be left behind or get left out or be less useful. Everyone embraced the online working because they will do anything to keep the business alive, even if just for another 10 years to make sure their pensions are safe. Nobody wants to be a Luddite.”

Yet the principle of voluntarism is important. Journalists often carve out their careers by concentrating on their strengths. Photographers for instance choose their careers because they have a good eye for a picture, and have significant training and experience to produce high quality images. When employers require everyone to do everything they put this work at risk. Losing specialisms in favour of generic journalism also risks overloading the journalists and leads to burnout as they strive to maintain quality in every field.

At another Newsquest title, the Lancashire Telegraph in Blackburn, two new jobs have been created for the website, and a new member of the news desk works half the time on the web. Half the subs upload to the internet. Overtime is compensated by time off in lieu, leaving colleagues to fill in the gaps when this time off is taken, creating what the chapel calls a “vicious cycle” as insufficient staff try to cover the bases.

OUTSOURCING

Payrolls are also starting to be cut by the spread of outsourcing, a phenomenon that has been widespread in broadcasting for 20 years but has come relatively recently to newspapers and agencies. Those specialising particularly in financial information – firstly, Reuters, the national UK newspapers – began shifting certain routine work on statistics and financial reports to Asia about five years ago, taking advantage of skilled and relatively cheap workforces. The NUJ has no objection to this practice provided the local journalists doing the work are employed on decent

wages and conditions and are able to organise themselves in unions and negotiate agreements; the NUJ will always support them in these endeavours.

But in 2007 for the first time a major newspaper group, Independent News and Media in Dublin, decided to outsource all sub-editing work, to newly set up companies. There are consequences for both the pay and conditions of journalists, with such a strongly focussed and traditionally well-unionised element of the staff removed, and for standards of journalism.

Digital technology lends itself readily to outsourcing – and homeworking on the part of staff – since copy can so easily be transferred by email. It is an area the union must watch carefully.

WORK EXPERIENCE

An increasing number of casual journalists are not paid at all. The abuse of “work experience” trainees is becoming a scandal, with large numbers of new jobless graduates offering themselves for free to publishers in the distant hope of getting, if not a job, then at least a line for the CV. The NUJ hears of cases in which “workies” have worked for as long as two years, full-time but unpaid.

Many young journalists are enthusiastic about new media and keen to get experience of working in them. Employers argue to them – and, the Commission has been told, to qualified journalists who are employed but badly paid – that an expertise in new media will make them marketable and is thereby an acceptable substitute for a decent wage. We are approaching the world of independent TV production, where people routinely work for free on a programme in return for a name check in the credits.

The NUJ has produced guidelines to attempt to regulate the practice, which all chapels should seek to ensure are implemented in their workplaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends that

- Chapels fighting against the overloading of journalists’ work or against the direct uploading to the web of unedited material should be backed forcefully on the grounds of defending professional standards
 - Chapels should seek to ensure the replacement of staff transferred from old media to work full-time on the internet operation.
 - The union should give support to any member not wishing to “volunteer” or be forced into online working.
 - The outsourcing of inhouse departments should be carefully monitored by all chapels where it leads to a deterioration in the quality of work or of the terms and conditions under which journalists are employed.
 - chapels should make sure the guidelines on work experience are followed in their workplaces, and journalism colleges should be asked to warn students of the dangers of unpaid, unregulated work.
- Each title, however small, should have an experienced web editor to oversee internet operations.

TRAINING

With the rapid expansion of new skills and new tools, the training of journalists has never been more important. It is an essential element, not just of the production of new media, but of the journalist's ability to work. This is not just an industrial issue but part of the union's perpetual campaign to maintain high standards of journalism. Every journalist should be trained in as many skills as they need, to the highest standards possible.

Demarcation between NUJ members with different skills, who have done different jobs, will become increasingly blurred and the NUJ will need to deal with this. While most are likely to concentrate on one sector or skillset, everyone will need a wider range of skills. As well as writing for various media, these are likely to include:

- taking and editing photos (and uploading them)
- recording and editing sound and video
- laying out and editing print pages
- laying out and editing websites
- producing graphics, including moving graphics
- producing html emails
- managing editorial processes in multimedia.

The Commission has found that at present there is a real gap between what journalists are expected to do and the training they are receiving for carrying it out. The survey responses give a mixed picture:

- 45% reported that staff were trained to carry new roles "as and when required";
- 22% reported "systematic training for designated staff".
- 7% reported "across the board" training for all journalists.

This suggests that most employers recognise that staff will need upskilling for online working, but that they will only pay for it when they have to, rather than looking to upskill their entire workforces in new technologies. They will claim that costs are too high, yet evidence collected by the commission suggests that when selected staff only are upskilled, they are likely to leave for better paid jobs elsewhere.

The biggest area of training currently being undertaken by NUJ members appears to be video reporting among staff journalists on newspapers. There is, again, a huge variation in the quality, quantity and content of the training being provided.

Some Newsquest employees reported being sent on five-day long courses with broadcast professionals and felt that the standard of training was good. However, those who attended the courses were then expected to "cascade" their knowledge down to other staff – meaning not all staff taking videos have been properly trained.

At some Northcliffe titles, emails have been sent to reporters asking them to think about doing video reports, in advance of any training. One email leaked to the NUJ says: "It's simply a case of pressing the red button and pointing it at what is going on."

At one Archant title, only 2 out of 12 reporters have been trained in online working. Training consisted of an 18-hour course at a local college. It had no health and safety element. Staff there say this lack of training and experience shows up in the quality of video, which is "shit", and "embarrassing".

Some groups are training reporters to use video cameras, some are training photographers and others a mixture of the two. It would seem to make sense for photographers, with their trained visual sense, to be trained in video reporting, although photographic staff at one Trinity Mirror title were keen to point out that taking still pictures for print was a different job from shooting video footage.

The NUJ should be gearing up to negotiate training clauses in agreements, and to utilise the statutory position of Union Learning Reps (ULRs). The union already has a programme of selecting, training and supporting ULRs and has produced a draft Union Learning Agreement, which could be negotiated in every workplace. Company training committees (established under the agreements) must review annually the skills needed for future developments. Chapels could draw up lists of training requirements for staff and offer to implement key stages of a convergence plan, working in different new media, on completion of the relevant training.

The NUJ's Professional Training Committee (Profcom) insists that multi-skilling must be to as high a standard as possible. At present many newspapers that insist on National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) qualifications, for example, are prepared to accept much lower standards of training for such website material as video. In the case of what are essentially broadcasting

skills, both college and workplace training should meet the standards of the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC).

JOURNALISM EDUCATION

Multimedia training for students is becoming a vital area of concern. The vast bulk of pre-entry journalism training is done in universities and colleges (incidentally saving employers a large cost). There is a slow shift towards multi-skilling but this needs to be speeded up. All courses should provide print, broadcasting and online training, rather than separate magazine, newspaper and broadcasting courses. But experience at universities suggests that many students are receiving and often indeed indicate a preference for vocational education focusing on precise areas such as TV production, reporting, music writing, or web development. Curriculum design is not yet handling multiskilling well, and very few journalism or media academics are capable of teaching multi-skill disciplines. Colleges are increasingly adopting modular course structures and team teaching approaches.

The NCTJ for instance is developing a magazine syllabus that drops many parts of the newspaper course, such as court reporting and public affairs, yet these areas are vital for most business magazines. Education should not be allowed to skip important areas: in law, for example, those currently in print need to know about the additional responsibilities and liabilities journalists face under broadcasting regulation and legislation.

NUJ policy is in favour of an end to the separate supervising bodies for print and broadcast and the establishment of a single accreditation body for all journalism training. The need for this is becoming more urgent.

And just as it is important for company training to meet the highest standards, so colleges must use the latest versions of hardware and software. The Commission has been told for instance that some students are learning Quark Express 4.0, while the current version is 7.0. This will mean increased expenditure by colleges and there is a need for a mechanism requiring employers to contribute to the cost. Multi-skilled courses will also need multi-skilled educators, which will mean retraining the trainers.

FREELANCES

In terms of training, freelance members stand to lose the most from the adoption of new technologies. With many newspapers operating their own content upload platforms, as well as other disciplines such as vid-casting, pod-casting and blogging, it is clear that freelances, particularly amongst those who shift regularly on newspapers, could fall by the wayside without the provision of training by employers.

Wherever possible freelances should be covered under company learning agreements. The Guardian chapel has secured a commitment to training for casuals and freelances in its new multi-media agreement. However, many freelances will have to fund their own training. The NUJ should make this training available to freelances, keeping up to date with the latest systems and skills used in the industry by a range of employers. The training department has successfully negotiated discounts for Apple Mac computers and some software. It should examine securing a wider range of discounts to enable more people to take up podcasting and video journalism as cheaply as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Chapels should be encouraged to negotiate agreements covering training, to secure new technology training for all staff who want it. Nobody should be expected to undertake any task for which they have not been trained.**
- **All chapels should appoint Union Learning Reps, who should themselves be trained and encouraged to make use of their rights to secure high standards of training.**
- **The union should encourage the formation of a single accreditation body covering all journalism education, and campaign for employers to pay**
- **The union should step up its own training programme to meet members' needs where employers are failing to do so.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety is often overlooked in the field of journalism, and the arena of digital convergence throws up a number of areas of concern. There are two main issues: the use of cameras and other equipment by lone reporters shooting video for websites, and an increase in stress and the risk of “burn-out”, RSI and eyestrain among journalists undertaking more online work.

But fewer than a quarter of survey respondents said that online training in their workplaces included health and safety. Awareness is much higher in broadcasting, where reporters shooting video has been a feature for ten years in some places, and the practices agreed in TV should become the standard for journalists involved in video or audio reporting for other websites.

The single biggest concern is the use of video cameras by reporters. Risk assessments should be carried out before all assignments, covering manual handling, the safety of equipment and so on, and this is the practice in broadcasting. Evidence collected suggests that some groups such as Johnston and Newsquest do recognise the importance of risk assessments, but the reality is that in practice they do not happen.

“Apparently, all video jobs should be risk assessed, and we have been told that this is SUPPOSED to happen. But it doesn’t always.” *Newsquest employee*

“I cannot remember any health and safety aspects in the training I received. As far as I am aware risk assessments are not carried out for reporters going out on jobs with video cameras.” *Johnston Press FoC*

Some editors in the Northcliffe group have been circulating emails asking reporters to take cameras with them when covering incidents such as house fires, with no mention of health and safety considerations.

“There is nothing to stop us using the video camera if we have the basic skills. One example could be if you are on late duty and there is a large fire or other major incident.” *Email from web editor at South Wales Evening Post to all reporters*

At the BBC, the Personal Digital Production (PDP) guidelines on health and safety are a benchmark for good practice – though it is important for NUJ reps to continue

to check that they are being adhered to. (See appendix 8 – BBC Risk Assessment form).

In the BBC there is an agreement that “editors/managers will allocate staff to duties in a reasonable manner, having regard to suitability, qualifications and appropriate skills. Movements between different roles would not be arbitrary and would take individual’s preference into account. But staff would be expected to perform roles for which they were qualified, suitable and had received adequate training.”

It is imperative that editors deploying staff to shoot video should have health and safety training to make sure they are aware of possible dangers and are able to assess the risks before journalists are deployed. Methods of travel to and from locations should be agreed, the carrying equipment over long distances, such as to the top floor of a high-rise buildings with no lift. Insurance must be covered, both for staff and their transport.

The second area of concern is the stress resulting from greatly increased workloads. Almost all the evidence collected points towards members taking on extra work within the scope of their existing roles as well as in new ones. During the writing of this report, a news editor working for a Newsquest title has gone off on long-term sick leave as a result of a huge increase in work because of the “web first” strategy being adopted. The member in question is now seeking retirement on the grounds of ill health.

“I cannot physically carry out the tasks they are asking me to perform, let alone mentally. You would need to be an octopus to be able to do everything they want doing.”

The NUJ chapel at the Oxford Mail is monitoring workloads as the move to online publishing gathers pace. The results are likely to show that online working creates extra work and allow the NUJ to challenge the workloads on health and safety grounds. (See Appendix 6 – Oxford Mail monitoring sheets) The NUJ chapel at the South Wales Evening Post in Swansea is also planning to begin this process of monitoring.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Chapels should elect health and safety reps and ensure health and safety training for all involved in video and audio reporting.
- The NUJ should run extra courses for health and safety reps and/or M/FoCs to get up to speed on health and safety regulations around risk assessments and stress.
- Chapels should monitor the workloads of all staff in integrated workplaces
- All agreements should include the employees' right to pull out of any situation in which they feel that their health and safety, and that of anyone with them, is under threat in any way, without the fear of any action against them.

FREELANCES

The instability of the media industry is likely to impact most seriously on its most precarious participants: the freelances, and not just in journalism but all fields. The union will have to try to afford its freelance members such protection and help as it can.

COPYRIGHT

Publishers have been wise to the possibilities of profiting from digital syndication for years. Since the early 1990s they have been trying to bully freelances into signing away their rights in their work to be able to re-use it in other media without payment. As new publishing vistas open up, publishers want to own, as a contract issued to freelances by EMAP once put it, "all rights, throughout the universe, in media yet to be invented".

The matter has been complicated by the position with video. Publishers such as The Guardian are claiming all rights for video produced under new contracts for freelance photographers who are providing both video and still images; they can retain copyright for the stills. But the union has strong policies on copyright and has helped freelances to organise successfully in groups to resist all-rights contracts without losing work. This work needs to continue and develop.

CASUALISATION

The recent expansion of media has brought about another change running in parallel with digital convergence: the casualisation of workplaces. The proportion of workers for media houses who are on the payroll gets ever lower. Some employers worried at losing advertising revenue in their traditional media have resorted to the traditional safety play of shedding staff and relying on freelances to make up the numbers. Pay rates for both contributed material and casual shifts are relatively low, so pay and conditions generally are undermined.

The union's policy is to maximise the proportion of staff journalists and fight for higher freelance rates, both to help freelances secure decent incomes and to encourage staffing up. The union further seeks for casuals to be taken onto staffs after long periods of regular rostered work and has succeeded in some places. It has also brought successful legal cases to establish that long-term casual

journalists are de facto members of staff and entitled to their benefits.

With multi-media working, casuals become especially attractive to managements who want flexible workers who can be shifted from desk to desk. Many casuals are former staffers made redundant, hired on the cheap as the need arises.

TRAINING

There is always a bona fide need for freelance work, and work in new media requires new skills: familiarity and experience in using new hardware and software that is perpetually being updated. Publishers are likely to want stories for their websites in video, and there is concern among freelances that without these skills they will not get work.

There is also the cost of acquiring the skills and the equipment itself. Freelance video-journalists may well need their own cameras and editing equipment. Licences for image software cost hundreds of pounds and cameras thousands. To shoot and edit a two-minute video package can take a day, which would be uneconomical for shift rates of about £80 in the regions and £150 in major centres.

One freelance representative told us:

"Freelances will have to know how to use every piece of software going. Who pays for the training or the time it takes?"

Training is one area where the union can help. It already has an extensive professional training programme which has an emphasis on up-to-date software. Recently a course in podcasting has been launched.

The need to invest in equipment and software, and to update them as new versions come onto the market every couple of years, will add significantly to the cost of freelancing. The NUJ should take this into account when it revises the rates in the Freelance Fees Guide, and in negotiations over freelance rates.

NEW AREAS OF WORK

There are of course new opportunities as well as problems with new media. There is a huge market for freelance journalistic work on websites that are using non-professional material. Every company and institution has

a website. They spend money on building and designing the sites, then get admin staff or IT managers to write the words that customers will read. This is PR work comparable with writing press releases, but while secretaries might manage a simple product description, they cannot write professional web copy, blog, moderate a discussion group or provide video or audio. The union should be publicising the skills of members to provide website services.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

The work hardest hit by the advance of digital technology is likely to be stills photography, as it is overtaken by video. The quality of video is advancing so fast that frame grabs from reasonable quality cameras will soon be good enough to use as stills, at least on websites and newsprint, if not in magazines that need high quality images to print on harder paper.

National papers are following the PA's lead and training up all their photographers in video. Some local papers are training reporters to do video – compounding the threat to their photographer colleagues, but since local papers employ far fewer photographers on staff than in the past, it is the freelances who have been doing the bulk of the work that will feel the brunt.

Freelance photographers are already becoming squeezed between, on one hand, the market domination of the big image banks, aided by the ease of distribution that comes with digital technology, and on the other hand the use of “citizen journalism” imagery. Freelance photographic commissions have dropped severely, and the fees they command have been falling in real terms for more than 10 years.

Stills photography will not disappear altogether. There will always be niche markets for specialised quality images, but the long-term future of day-to-day news photography is far from secure. Photographers will have to produce video, sometimes in news or feature packages that involve new skills such as writing, interviewing and video editing. They need help to acquire these skills. It is probably harder for most photographers to learn to write than it is for writers to take pictures. Employers are in the main training their staff and the union should be helping freelances, who are the core of the photographic profession.

Union agreements covering the use of technology

should take care to ensure that other members are not disadvantaged by any move of staff into new areas. In the last wave of new technology in the 1970s-80s, when compositors in the print saw their livelihoods threatened, the NUJ adopted a commendable policy of attempting to protect them by, among other things, offering retraining to work in editorial. A similar approach might be adopted now to help photographers.

There has been controversy over the agreement signed at the Drogheda Independent in the Republic of Ireland, which allows editors to determine the allocation of staff to new media without restriction – including that reporters can be required to take photographs – nor extra payment or improved conditions. This has been seen by some as a threat to the livelihoods of photographers, but the issue is wider than that. There were special circumstances surrounding the Drogheda agreement, and there is a procedure for consultation over its implementation, but it should not be seen as a model for other agreements. Chapels should not concede the unqualified transfer of staff into new areas of work without firm agreements on the conditions of a good trade union agreement – pay, hours, training, workloads etc – and without care for the position of any other members whose work may be affected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends

- that the NUJ expand its training courses for still photographers to acquire skills in writing and video;
- that chapels seek in agreements to secure continuity of work and training in new media for regular freelances as well as staff, and ensure that no NUJ members see their work jeopardised by journalists moving into new areas.
- The Commission recommends that the FIC, PRIIC and NMIC be asked to set up a working group to see how to promote NUJ freelances for work in new media areas.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

“We are surely moving towards a situation in which relatively small ‘core’ staffs will process material from freelances and/or citizen journalists, bloggers, whatever (and there are many who think this business of ‘processing’ will itself gradually disappear too in an era of what we might call an unmediated media).” – Roy Greenslade blog, 25 October 2007.

The relationship between the media and the audience has radically changed over the past few years, with the dividing line between the two becoming more blurred. Some, like Professor Greenslade, seem to think that the line will disappear in the future, with professional staff reporters replaced by poorly paid freelances and enthusiastic amateurs.

User-generated content (UGC) has been used by all media since long before the internet became a worldwide phenomenon. One of the most famous examples was the Rodney King beating by Los Angeles police in 1991 – captured by a member of the public on a camcorder and seen all over the world.

But it was the development of software that allowed greater user participation and interaction with the web by the end of the 90s that had such an impact that it fundamentally changed the media landscape. The Battle of Seattle protests and riots were accompanied by the launch of Indymedia in December 1999. It was now possible for individuals and activists to create and publish their own media with greater ease than ever before.

Indymedia’s slogan – “Don’t hate the media, be the media” – fed into a new era of blogs and social networking software as the phenomenon of so-called “citizen journalism” emerged. The ease of self-publishing blogs led many to start their own, particularly in countries with less than free media. Ohmynews in South Korea quickly became one of the most important sites in this movement, as it accepted news submissions from its readers on a large scale. Blogs in China, Iran and other countries became an important outlet for political activists, though soon censorship and persecution of bloggers increased worldwide.

The blogosphere and “citizen journalism” presented an important challenge to the established media. Journalists could now receive instant feedback from their readers, whether they wanted it or not, and mistakes or

flaws in their pieces were quickly pointed out. This led to commenting systems being adopted by most major online publications and the development of a feedback loop that presented the opportunity for journalists to better learn what their audiences wanted.

These new developments could also augment the media as well as challenge what was and was not covered. This was, of course, most stark in countries without free media, but it was a factor elsewhere. Indymedia tended to present a left-wing perspective on the news, while the blogosphere presented a myriad of perspectives, many of which felt, fairly or unfairly, that they were unrepresented in the media.

The challenge to the media was one that the media could have used to improve itself, refocusing on the audience and its needs and improving its coverage. In the UK and US, however, rather than rising to the challenge, some of the media, for instance Trinity Mirror, has ceded ground to the “citizen journalism” sector and has come to regard it as a source of free content while cutting professional journalistic capacity to the bone.

THE CURRENT POSITION

For the mainstream media in the UK, it wasn’t until the bombings of 7 July 2005 that the question of UGC really became an issue for NUJ members.

The implications of the technology had previously been highlighted in 2002 in Dublin, when Indymedia and RTÉ camerapersons, filming a Reclaim the Streets riot that was attacked by the police, found the video that they had been filming for web use appearing as part of the top story on the 6 o’clock news. The possibility that this might happen had been pre-empted by the recently negotiated RTÉ Interactive House Agreement.

However, it was the London bombings and the appearance of footage filmed on camera-phones by members of the public all over the media that highlighted a fundamental change in the relationship between the media and its consumers. Reader’s contributions moved from the letters page to the front page and UGC was a reality across the media spectrum.

In the months following the attacks, much of the media started touting for user contributions. From the BBC to the smallest local newspapers, the media was asking

for people to send in photos and videos. There was no mention of copyright or health and safety, the implications of which became clear during the Hertfordshire Oil Storage Terminal fire later the same year. The situation of people taking photos of the fire brought the very real possibility that people might be badly hurt trying to get photos.

Many in the industry quickly recognised the value of UGC. As the submission to the Commission from the broadcasting sector put it, "Developments such as user-generated content (in radio these are called phone-ins) will add value to the news experience mostly as a first eyewitness or personal account." Andy Collinson, former FoC at ITV Wales, told the Commission, "I think where the only eyewitness report of a major event was filmed on someone's mobile phone; it would be foolish to ignore it and not work it into a larger news item."

CODE OF PRACTICE ON WITNESS CONTRIBUTIONS

However, the union also recognised that there were also challenges and issued a proposed Code of Practice (Appendix 9) for the industry in January 2006. The Code attempted to address issues related to UGC that ranged from defending the rights of originators to defending professionalism and the interests of the union's members. Some of the key recommendations in the Code are:

- The need to uphold section 1 of the Press Complaints Council Code of Practice
- That material produced by NUJ members should be used when such alternatives to witness contributions are available
- That the copyright and moral rights of contributors work should be respected, that they should be legally protected, their safety considered and that appropriate and agreed payment should be made.

The report received some negative feedback from those who misinterpreted it as an attack on "citizen journalism" and the blogosphere. However, in November, the BBC introduced its own guidelines, "Video, audio and stills contributions from members of the public in BBC News output", covering issues identified in the union's Code such as copyright, health and safety, fact checking and payment related to submissions from the public.

The organisation was quoted in the Guardian as saying "Our starting point is that we should aim to apply the same approach to pictures, audio and video supplied by members of the public, as we do to any other material we handle as journalists." Vicky Taylor, the BBC's Editor of Interactivity, confirmed that the union's policy was one of a number of influences on their new policy.

One way or another, the overt touting for user contributions declined over the next year. On one very practical level, a number of senior people in the industry noted that the vast majority of UGC was not of tube bombings or major fires. Robin Hamman, senior producer of the BBC Blogging Network, said at a journalism.co.uk event in December 2006 that a substantial number of pics sent into the BBC were pictures of kittens.

At the same event, Robin described the Manchester Blog Project, a new way of interacting with the blogosphere, which was described at launch as: "Rather than building platforms, we want to help people create their own stuff on existing third party (non-BBC) platforms. Instead of contributors sending us content members of staff here at the BBC sifting through that content in a bid to find the good bits, we're simply going to ask contributors to tell us where they're publishing their content online and we'll keep an eye on it. The BBC won't claim any rights over the content and won't own anything."

THE NEW MEDIA INDUSTRY

Some of the biggest names in the new media industry took a different approach. The portal approach to the web, which had been a mainstay of the output of the major organisations and generally created the most editorial jobs, was hit by the growing popularity of the blogosphere and "Web 2.0" and declined in popularity.

Their solution to this problem was to start buying the popular sites that were challenging their supremacy – Yahoo! bought Flickr, Google bought Youtube, Microsoft invested in Facebook – and soon the big media companies got in on the act, with Murdoch's News Corporation buying Myspace and CBS buying Last FM.

In contrast, AOL, which had merged with Time Warner in 2001, is undergoing its third restructuring in as many years and recently announced plans to cut 20% of its global workforce. AOL UK, where the NUJ is recognised, has seen

its focus change from news-driven editorial to advertising-led output over the past few years.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

According to the submission to the Commission from the freelance sector: "Local news websites are springing up, replacing the role of newspapers, that have no paid-for editorial content, just listings, village corrs and user content. Journalists will disappear from local papers because professional editorial content will disappear. They will just need a couple of subs."

The New Media Industrial Council points out that a number of these websites previously contained proper journalistic content – and NUJ members – and were bought up by the large media companies. The content and members have, in some cases, been driven out as companies like Trinity Mirror see only the potential of the sites for advertising purposes.

In January this year, Trinity Mirror launched a range of new hyperlocal news websites mixing editorial content from their newspapers with submissions from the public. In August, they began publishing free newspapers drawing material from these sites. Darren Thwaites, editor of the Teesside Gazette, told Journalism.co.uk. "The micro-sites are populated by our own content as well as user-generated content. But thanks to the stuff we are getting in from the bloggers it has allowed us to have more content and publish three weekly and three fortnightly [papers] in the most lucrative site areas." These new initiatives follow massive cost cutting and the jettisoning of titles at the end of 2006.

These developments follow similar changes in the media in the United States. In March 2006, it was reported that Gannett, the publisher of USA Today as well as 90 other American daily newspapers, was to begin crowdsourcing many of its newsgathering functions. "The initiative emphasizes four goals: Prioritize local news over national news; publish more user-generated content; become 24-7 news operations, in which the newspapers do less and the websites do much more; and finally, use crowdsourcing methods to put readers to work as watchdogs, whistle-blowers and researchers in large, investigative features," Wired reported.

In his contribution to Ofcom's discussion document,

"A new approach to public service content in the digital media age", Andrew Chitty, Managing Director of Illumina Digital wrote: "Harnessing the power of UGC for Public Service Objectives will mean identifying communities with public service objectives and empowering them to create, mediate and moderate their own content and services."

In and of itself, UGC could be a welcome addition to the range of public service broadcasting by providing alternative viewpoints to the BBC and ITV. However, seen in the light of the proposed cuts in BBC funding and ITV news regional news coverage, it has stark implications.

CONCLUSION

The issue of user-generated content is not an issue of technology; it is one of defending quality journalism. This is not to say that all user-generated content is bad or that there are no quality blogs, but professional journalism, adequately funded and resourced, plays a role in society and democracy that needs to be defended.

Few citizens, however enthusiastic, will be keen to sit through council meetings or in court all day in the hopes that they will find a story without being paid. Few bloggers, even if they manage to monetise their blogs, will have the resources to carry out major long-term investigations and research that could amount to nothing.

User-generated content, while it has a role in modern media, is not a replacement for quality professional journalism.

RECOMMENDATION

- All chapels should seek to ensure that their employers adhere to the principles outlined in the 'Witness Contributors': Code of Practice (Appendix 9).

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Commission recognised that we are in a transitional period in which many employers are still undecided on the level of investment they are prepared to put into new media, and that in the long run staffing should stabilise with proper job allocation and training. Big national media websites already have dedicated staffs and there are signs that regional groups, particularly Johnston Press and Trinity Mirror, are beginning to plan seriously for better-resourced “web first” operations. There will, however, still be professional hazards for journalists in new media.

Good journalism needs to be ethical and original, and to be adequately resourced. To do that, publications must employ sufficient staff. However thorough and hard-working journalists might be, they cannot produce work that is properly checked and considered if there are not enough of them to do it and they are under pressure to produce too much.

In responses to the Commission’s survey, 34% said the quality of new media was professional, 52% said it was adequate, 14% said it was poor.

These figures were closely mirrored in responses to a question on the effect on the quality of traditional media: 14% said the effect was serious, 57% said it was not serious and 29% said there was no effect.

Around half the publishers detailed in the survey, both national and regional, appear to be taking advantage of commercial uncertainty in the industry to cut costs and jobs, with a consequent fall in editorial standards.

Some publishers, most notably the Telegraph Media Group, panicked and tried to transform their news operations overnight, imposing large-scale redundancies in the move to a 24/7 multimedia operation. The situation at the Telegraph is one of the worst picked up by the survey. The group has shed more than 100 journalists over the last three years at the same time as launching a full range of internet services – with the remaining journalists, reduced in number, writing web stories, blogging, podcasting and vidcasting. Telegraph journalists told us of numerous problems relating to quality:

“We are regularly expected to file for the internet after [an event]. This sometimes means missing out on vital parts of the story or important interviews just so we can file a substandard version for the web.”

“It simply isn’t possible to do everything well. The worrying thing is that they don’t seem to care about the quality of pieces that are filed. The priority is to file as quickly as possible.”

“We are increasingly required to file early copy ... This eats into the time we have to produce a final version for the print edition, with a knock-on effect on quality.”

“Many of us are overloaded with work and having to meet earlier deadlines because of the lack of subs to process the copy.”

THE STANDARD OF EDITING

Unsubbed copy being posted to website, which was reported by members at national, regional and magazine titles, is the most serious threat to standards, compounded by the pressure of time and volume of material.

Journalists on a daily group in eastern England told us:

“There are no clear guidelines about what should go up when, whose job it is to put it up, who is checking it legally etc. In some cases reporters are effectively having to act as subs for their own material before posting it to website.”

Some titles at a business magazine group in London are operating a haphazard “open outcry” system to get stories checked:

“The system is that when a writer has done a story they shout ‘Can someone read this story?’ to check it before it goes up. It depends entirely on there being someone to do it. On one occasion a news feature went up to the website and there was no-one on the newsdesk to write a headline so it was done by a technician and it was libellous ... It had to be taken down.”

“Staff expect a serious legal situation in the near future. It will take something like that for them to realise that they need the same processes online that it took newspapers 200 years to get to.”

At a Newsquest evening title in the north west of England journalists complained that:

“News stories are going up unsubbed. Reporters file to the newsdesk who edit the copy then upload it. Reporters

have even been trained to upload copy directly to the internet themselves. There is a strong feeling that Newsquest nationally would be happy for reporters to upload their stories entirely untouched.

Members in some offices, like the magazine group mentioned above, said there are no experienced journalists working on the websites and that copy is handled by web technicians. The quality and legal standard of work must be checked by journalists with a good grounding in media law before being posted online.

The same considerations apply to images as well as words. In its much-publicised first ruling on a newspaper website under its new policy of adjudicating on the internet as well as print, the Press Complaints Commission found against the Hamilton Advertiser over its use of a reader-supplied video showing school students behaving badly in class, which breached the PCC Code of Practice on the reporting of children. Other newspapers in the area had used images with the faces pixelated but no-one on the Hamilton Advertiser website had apparently thought to do so.

A further risk is the thoughtless posting of hoax material. In the "Dorset elk" case a member of the public hoodwinked Sky TV into broadcasting a dramatic image of a forest fire in the American rockies supposedly showing a small heath fire in Dorset; the image was used also by national papers before anyone spotted a pair of elk standing in the middle of the picture. There have been plenty of cases of journalists being duped by hoaxes, but it is now much easier to perpetrate them because of the prevalence of user-generated material. News publishers need to dedicate the necessary resources to make sure this material is checked and verified, something that already happens with the user-content hub at BBC News Online.

MULTI-MEDIA WORK

Editors will have to commission and edit material in different forms for different media. Telegraph journalists said:

"Editors are forced to think in terms of online picture galleries, Your View feedback, podcasts etc as well as the paper. Therefore ... less time to devote to briefing writers and editing copy."

There will be a demand for more visual material, potentially at the cost of serious reporting. At a daily title in the north west of England, we were told,

"Newsquest don't really want interviews on their video reports – they are more keen to have strong visual elements like community events or fun runs. It makes no sense to do a video interview of the partner of a murder victim when a video of pig-racing will bring in ten times as much traffic."

The commission recommends that chapels should strive to ensure that decision-making is in the hands of qualified and experienced editors with the time to devote to all media and that editorial considerations are given priority in setting news priorities.

One of the biggest dangers lies in the ease of copying and pasting text from websites and emails. Quite apart from questions of copyright, journalists under time pressure may be tempted to simply lump text across without proper consideration of its quality or reliability. Inaccurate material, especially of a sensational nature, can be easily perpetuated by being lifted from one site to another; in the event of a problem arising with it, the actual original source may be hard to trace. Reused material should always be identified and attributed to its source. The NUJ New Media Industrial Council said:

"Ease of production makes it important to identify sources and dates."

And the NUJ Ethics Council added, drawing on the European Federation of Journalists JET project guidelines of 1999:

"The original outlet for any text should be identified ... The original source of any previously published information should be identified."

The commission recommends that the importance of checking and attributing material must be emphasised in all training for internet work.

Further, when legal problems or serious questions about accuracy arise with copy, it must be routine to amend or remove it from website archives, and to announce the fact on the site.

OUTSIDE MATERIAL

Visual: There is a concern that user-contributed video, though valuable in reporting live events, is contributing to a lower standard of quality for professional footage.

The commission has been told of extremely poor quality video being produced by print journalists without proper training, and there is a risk that editors will find this acceptable.

Members flagged up special problems with video material from other organisations, whether actuality material such as police or CCTV video, or video news releases (VNRs). Journalists at one Newsquest title said:

“Police will send us video footage of drugs raid. We would never run a press release from the police word for word, but we seem happy to do it with their video.”

The practice of running unedited press releases has been a feature of under-resourced local newspaper journalism for years, but at least it is not difficult to rewrite and even seek an alternative source of opinion to them, if there is time. Editing a VNR is difficult and time-consuming, particularly if it is tightly and professionally produced. Again it is important that when used they are attributed in linking and introductory material and by the imposition of a logo or caption (“POLICE VIDEO” for instance) indicating the source.

The NUJ has long warned of the dangers of the digital manipulation of images and until 2007 there was a clause in its Code of Professional Conduct forbidding the process unless the image is clearly labelled as such. Manipulating images may not be new but it is becoming progressively easier to do as the software becomes more accessible.

The commission recommends that the union revive its campaign to ensure that images manipulated to all but cosmetic effect must be marked with an agreed symbol.

Handling comments posted by users presents more management issues for publishers, who need to decide whether to pre, post or reactively moderate content. There are still few legal precedents, but approving content and then publishing it can make publishers liable for it, rather than letting content go live and then withdrawing it immediately if it is found to be problematic. Not surprisingly, there is a lack of confidence in this area, though online publishers, including the BBC and the

Guardian, are increasingly recruiting dedicated staff to manage this area.

‘ONE-MAN BANDS’

Employing single journalists to produce video reports has a clear impact on quality, as well as implications for the safety of a lone reporter on location with valuable recording equipment. To have to research, interview, film or photograph, edit and script-write is very demanding, particularly where a reporter is expected to file for a print publication at the same time.

Some journalists, encouraged to take up video without being given adequate training or support, have produced very poor quality video. The commission has heard of numerous cases of newspapers and magazines having to ease up on their initial enthusiasm to get lone journalists out on the road in the expectation of their producing broadcast-quality video packages. Journalists at one magazine group said:

“One journalist was trained to edit video; he produced a 4-5 minute piece interviewing at a company event and the results were ‘absolute shite’ and took a week to post. Video is felt to be too time consuming and no other journalists have experience or training.”

In centres where video training has been thoroughly done and the journalists are given proper support, work of high quality is being done, particularly on the websites of TV broadcasters. But the fact is that it takes even a trained and skilled broadcast video journalist, working under the agreements between the NUJ and the BBC, up to a day to produce a presentable two-minute package and it is uneconomical, as well as unprofessional, to demand it of a semi-trained print reporter or photographer.

Members on a daily paper in eastern England told us:

“There is real concern over lack of policy/guidelines and lines of responsibility between papers and web. The web team feel they are being pushed and pulled at the same time by different competing interests ... Things would be better if there was a dedicated video unit subject to the web team so decisions about what to cover and how could be integrated in to day’s news plan. It would also help individual journalists who are like a ‘one-man band’

sometimes having to take video, plus write notes and asking different questions for each media."

The commission recommends that NUJ agreements must ensure that all journalists producing website video should be fully trained to do it.

The practice of reporters taking photographs is becoming widespread, to the detriment of the quality of images in many cases. This effect was recognised when newspaper companies began asking reporters to take pictures in the early 1990, at the advent of digital cameras. The NUJ's experience then was that the practice receded in the wake of reduced picture quality and reporters' reluctance. There seems to be evidence that reporters now are more willing to work with the more user-friendly cameras – and that editors aren't so bothered about the quality of images.

Even where reporters, either by agreement or otherwise, take pictures, they must not, except in the absence of any alternative, be required to take important news or feature pictures, nor to take pictures which would adversely impact on their ability to devote the appropriate time/effort to reporting an event.

'PRODUCTION JOURNALISTS'

This relatively new designation has been applied in big offices to sub-editors now required to work in all media. Pressure on journalists to multi-skill can be as great inside the office as out on the road. They may have to undertake audio and video recording and editing as well as reporting, text editing and blogging. If there are staff shortages, or particular needs in one department, they can find themselves switched around, which can lead to scrappy work even if they have had training. One PJ at the PA told us:

"I have been given the title in readiness for being flung into any department – teletext, digital, page ready, main wire, foreign wire, city – at a moment's notice. Several people are experiencing this – one being required to cover shifts in three or four different departments in the same week – and they find it very difficult to keep switching and changing between departments, accurately remembering, and adjusting to, the demands of the different roles."

Chapels should seek to ensure that production desks are adequately staffed so that journalists can spend more time properly developing their skills in all these new areas.

ADVERTISING PRESSURE

As publishers seek desperately to secure advertising on their websites to replace that lost from their traditional media, there is evidence of greater pressure to make editorial concessions to advertisers. At the Telegraph, we were told:

"The amount of video and audio is often dictated by the commercial partnerships and sponsorships into which the Telegraph enters [with reporters] working flat-out to produce a whole raft of audio, video and internet material as well as normal newspaper stuff [to meet commitments to a sponsor]."

"Writers and news editors are coming under greater pressure to slant stories in such a way that they keep the PR companies happy. ... 'make sure you get Volvo in the intro' etc."

The NUJ Code of Conduct is clear about such practices. It says a journalist should resist "threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information ... and does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement any commercial product or service."

Archant journalists told us:

"There is also a real pressure on web team to bring in advertising through positive news."

It goes without saying that chapels and members must always resist such pressures, but they should be aware of increasing dangers and be prepared to take a stand when necessary in defence of professional and independent reporting.

Such pressures can be internal too, as publishers marketing strategies require cross-promotion of their various media or the prioritising of one above another. Archant journalists said:

"Sometimes it feels like the web and paper are meant to co-operate and at other times they are in competition."

In other offices members reported either that websites

were being used to generate interest and advertising in the paper, or vice versa, with the result that stories were inadequate in one medium. Even at the practical level, inserting promotional material is time-consuming: at the Telegraph members said

“The newspaper production process is slowed down by constant insertion in their pages of cross-reference, ‘lozenges’ and ‘page talkers’ for website and audio-visual spin-offs.”

CONCLUSION: THE BRAND

It is commonly pointed out that with the vast number of information sources online, readers will need professional editors and trusted news organisations to act as gatekeepers, filtering and interpreting that information. The publishers’ solution has been to establish themselves as brands to which readers will turn for the news they want, and those that have been doing so for a decade now, such as the Guardian and the BBC, have achieved some success.

But more publishers are now following this strategy and the picture is becoming increasingly complicated. Readers are going to non-journalistic commercial sites for consumer information they would previously have taken from newspapers and magazines. And as Jane Singer, the Johnston Professor of Digital Media at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Preston, says,

“Increasingly, the dominant websites will point people to non-journalistic sources of news (such as blogs). Google is of most concern here at the moment because of its aggressive acquisitions and development strategy. The fact that users are also seeing disaggregated information increasingly from organisations like Yahoo! must be of concern to conventional news publishers.”

In this context journalists must also establish themselves as a “brand”. Providing they are well trained and resourced, they must be relied on to continue to serve the public interest of providing fair and independent information, in whatever medium and for whatever employer. With publishers wracked with uncertainty, driven by the imperative to maintain profits in a confused and unregulated market, the NUJ will have an important role in maintaining professional standards. The union’s Code of Conduct, newly revised, provides the basis for this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The commission recommends that chapels should seek to ensure that

- All reporters’ copy must be subbed and checked by qualified journalists before posting onto websites
- There is a web editor and sufficient trained staff for every site: experienced journalists employed to check content

Further the commission recommends that the NUJ should

- launch a public campaign on the importance of its Code of Conduct and in particular its relevance in a changing media environment.
- campaign to ensure that the self-regulation regime now being extended to parts of the web is strengthened to ensure the public have an adequate means of redress against inaccurate reporting and that the union continue its campaign for a conscience clause for journalists.

THE FUTURE

Two different industries, media and digital technology, have become increasingly converged with the development of web technologies, and this is only set to increase. In the past few years alone, news publishers have moved from repurposing print stories for the web to introducing whole new media formats that would have been unthinkable a few years earlier: newspapers exploring video and audio, and broadcasters publishing text-based material. If more intense competition within the media industry is not enough, companies are competing against a huge number of other sources that publish news and information – including aggregated news sites like Google and Yahoo, and blogs and independent news sites that can exist because of the liberated economics of web publishing.

Given all those developments, it might be hard to predict what will be around the next corner. But we can look at how the strongest of those trends have developed and in which direction they seem to point. The key trends are:

- Social networking
- Personalisation
- Communication
- Widgetisation
- Mobile

Social networking is a term commonly used to describe sites like MySpace, Facebook and Bebo that invite users to create their own profile of personal information, photos, lists of interests, and connect them to friends. Despite the assumption that these sites are used for finding dates or various more nefarious activities, most users connect to people they already know and as such, the sites tend to replace or supplement emails or instant messaging as communication tools. These sites are also popular among people with specific interests, whether they are Madonna fans or students campaigning against HSBC for introducing fees on student accounts – already proven to be a powerful platform.

Social networking has already moved from a trend to create a virtual teenage bedroom wall to something far more functional – a rich, personalised and multi-purpose hub for communication and organisation. The differentiator for Facebook over other sites is the

introduction of a more extensive developer platform, which means other web-based services, such as video-sharing, film reviews and news headlines, can be added to user profiles. The site's stated aim is to create the web within the web – potentially, users might never need to go to another website if they can do everything – including email – within Facebook.

However much that particular site continues to grow, it is unlikely to dominate the web to the extent it would like. But their strategy is representative of a number of key internet trends. Firstly, the extent to which users can customise and personalise their internet tools will continue to grow and refine. This includes compiling their own daily news package by subscribing to the RSS feeds from the news sites and blogs they trust and want to read daily, whether that is the BBC, the Times or a specialist blog on neurosurgery, for example. Users will require a combination of aggregation tools, like newsreader programmes, that allow them to compile these customised services – with human selection, contextualisation and analysis. Hence the job of the editor and journalist is not on the decline: on the contrary, news has a larger audience than ever, and more than ever users need trusted guides to navigate through it all.

The power of these networks and the enthusiasm they inspire among users has triggered other web publishers, including news sites and broadcasters, to introduce and expand similar networking features within their own sites. ITV famously bought *Friends Reunited* in 2005 expecting to see growth in this area, and others have tried to expand discussion areas, like Telegraph.co.uk, which introduce personalisable services where news can be tailored by subject or keyword. TheSun.co.uk has gone even further and developed MyStreet, a feature that delivers news tailored by postcode. As you'd expect (particularly from The Sun) there is a clear commercial objective behind all these developments – to encourage users to spend more time on sites, and thus drive up advertising revenues.

Very few websites have successfully built a paid-for access model: general news sites have so many competitors that most web users are reluctant to pay for something they can get elsewhere for free. The few sites that have succeeded are providing unique, specialist news or high-quality business news: the Wall Street Journal

claims to be the largest subscription news site in the world, because its readers are generally wealthy and will often directly profit from the investment in that agenda-setting financial markets news. But even that site looks likely to lose its subscription service once Murdoch moves in.

For the rest of the web, the business model is built around advertising and this is unlikely to change. Advertisers sometimes pay for sponsoring certain sections – Intel sponsors the Guardian’s music podcast, for example – but more typically pay per view or for each click on an advert. Publishers need to provide enough inventory for advertisers – who are increasingly interested to push their brands online – by publishing lots of pages of new features. New media platforms like podcasts and video offer more opportunities for sponsorship and advertising: YouTube, which is the web video market leader by some way, has finally introduced adverts in the form of a ten-second overlay at the start of clips. No doubt news publishers will follow suit with a clearer financial incentive for introducing video.

Regular audit figures from the regional and national press and the magazine industry have shown a steady – and in some case dramatic – decline for years. But that trend is largely balanced out by the rise of online readership. Put aside the nostalgia about the addictive scent of printing inks and there many enormous opportunities in digital publishing: new distribution methods to reach bigger audiences and new sources of revenue.

The strategy for start-up web services is generally the same: to build as big an audience as possible and work how to commercialise that service later. Because web users expect content for free on the internet, advertising has become the accepted business model and most newspapers now follow the same web strategy of aiming for big audiences that they can commercialise through ads.

Google’s products challenge news organisations in a number of ways. Though some have objected to its use of extracts of their copyrighted text that appear in search results, most recognise that search engines are essential for building traffic; like the index pages of a book, they point web users to the information they want. Google News aggregates news headlines from 4,500 news sources – rather worryingly excluding blogs but including press

releases – but though a powerful and popular tool, it could not function without the conventional – and expensively produced – news stories it indexes. Google is often viewed with suspicion by traditional publishers, but that might be more because in less than a decade it has developed a \$175bn business in a space where news companies failed to build.

Part of the success of Google and its entrepreneurial counterparts has been to provide tools that enable web users to take control of information in a number of ways, whether that is self publishing to the world through blogs, setting up news alerts on specific companies and issues or, in the form of YouTube, offering millions of on-demand videos. That shift in control of information is key to defining the new era of online news; a generation that now expects to be able to access or receive what they want when they want it and share it with others, taking fundamental control away from news organisations. On one hand, technology enables Burmese pro-democracy campaigners to produce and distribute news for audiences around the world – on the other, it might mean stories like “World’s tallest man saves dolphin” continue to top the BBC’s most-popular news story lists.

The web has empowered independent writers and small news organisations by giving them an equal distribution platform to established media, encouraging a plurality of media voices. It is likely that there may be some impact on this by the introduction of tiered services – part of an issue that has been called “net neutrality”. This would mean that rich corporations could pay to have their content distributed on a faster more reliable, and so leave the independent voices harder to hear.

This transition to wider, less-controlled distribution of news is very difficult for news publishers, used to keeping a very tight reign over where and how their expensive news products are delivered. What can be learnt from the web industry in the past ten years is the significant audiences have largely been built by offering services to large numbers of people for free. eBay, Google, YouTube: the strategy, albeit sometimes accidental, has been to build audiences first and worry about monetising those later. Producing content, on the other, is expensive. That is not likely to change, but the point is the shift in power as distribution moves away from the creators to the aggregators.

Users now control much of the distribution and that trend will not be reversed. It seems the most successful strategies to date have been those publishers that have joined in. The spread of widgets – smaller satellite versions of sites that appear on other sites – and news feeds is a good example. The old mindset would be to think that users should be pulled back to the main website to read the news in context: the new, to make that news available in as many other places and through as many different tools as possible, like satellites to the main sites. RSS can often be commercialised by introducing adverts in feeds, but if not can be seen as an advert for the site's news. The reward for relinquishing a little of that control is building a bigger, and possibly new, younger, audience. And isn't that what most news organisations always say they are aiming for?

Mobile has promised to be The Next Big Thing for content producers for some time, but it does now seem that devices are finally becoming user-friendly enough to inspire their owners to explore what is on offer: Apple's much-hyped iPhone will be a major driver of video, music and web-based content on phones because its interface is more intuitive than previous attempts. Added to that, mobile internet is now being offered through flat rate, unlimited monthly tariffs; it was the same development in broadband rates that helped that market break through.

Many publishers already offer news SMS and sports services for mobiles, but the potential goes far beyond that. Fledgling mobile TV services are already on offer, and geo-location – the targeting of services according to the location of the phone – offers even more potential. Location-based mobile search means more contextual results, so if you search for "pubs, Wellington Road" and you're in Wellington Road Exeter, the search will return results for the road next to you and not the Wellington Road in Aberdeen. News could be targeted in the same way, but who will explore that first?

The challenge for publishers is to keep abreast of developments, now that their future is tied so closely to that of the technology industry, which moves way faster than the media. And of those developments, it takes confidence and a proper understanding of the audience to recognise which will be relevant and useful to their own products.

The challenge for journalists themselves is to stay

one step ahead of their employers. By pre-empting the changes and developments in the industry, journalists will be able to help shape their roles in the way that best suits them without having to rely on blind faith in their management. This is undoubtedly a challenging time for publishing and for journalism, but the demand for news has never been higher. This is an opportunity to seize the moment and change things for the better.

DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

User Generated Content material submitted to media outlets by members of their audience, including comments, photographs and video.

Citizen journalism a term for people who are not professional journalists who self-publish articles on their own blogs or submit content to media outlets.

Witness contributor a term used by the NUJ to specifically describe those who submit images or video material of events to media outlets.

Hyperlocal news from the immediate local environment of the reader.

Portal major websites providing a range of different features, often including news, weather, comment, financial news, discussion forums – e.g. MSN, My Yahoo!

Web 2.0 a description of a range of recent developments on the web, with a focus on participation, user submissions, collaboration and social networking.

Monetise develop as a source of revenue

APPENDICES

1. QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

The NUJ is conducting a survey into the move to integrate print/broadcast and web operations as part of evidence to the Commission on Multi-Media Working.

This is a vital matter for the future of journalists in all media. We hope that all chapels in "old media" workplaces where new media have been introduced will take part.

Please give precise information on numbers, hours, pay rates etc where possible; if not, general or approximate responses will be fine.

YOUR ORGANISATION

Publication title _____

Number of editorial staff _____

1. When was your website launched? _____

2. Which new media does your company deliver? _____

Online journalism _____

Podcasting _____

Vidcasting _____

Blogging _____

Other (please describe) _____

JOBS

3. Who provides this material (please give numbers)? _____

Dedicated staff who work only in new media? _____

All staff _____

Selected staff/volunteers _____

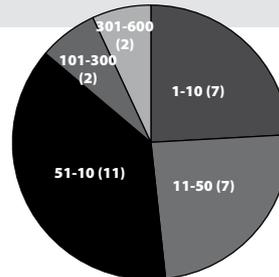
Selected staff/instructed _____

4. How many staff work in all media? _____

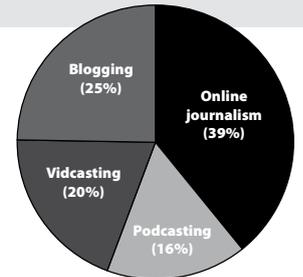
5. Have there been any editorial redundancies since the web operation was introduced? How many? _____

6. Have additional staff been recruited to work on the company's online operation? How many? _____

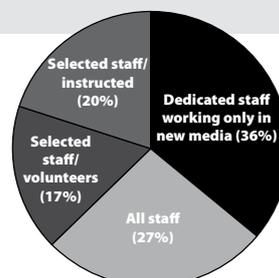
NUMBER OF EDITORIAL STAFF IN ORGANISATION?



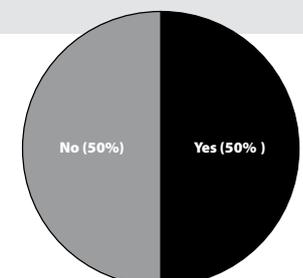
2. WHAT NEW MEDIA DOES COMPANY DELIVER?



3. WHO PROVIDES NEW MEDIA MATERIAL?



5. HAVE THERE BEEN REDUNDANCIES?



PAY AND CONDITIONS

7. Has your house agreement been adjusted to accommodate new media working? _____

If so please give details _____

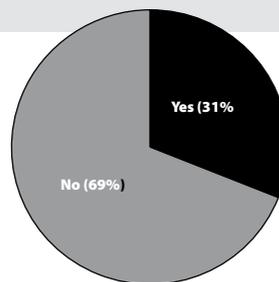
8. Is there extra pay for staff working in multi-media? _____

Is it across the board or for individuals only? _____

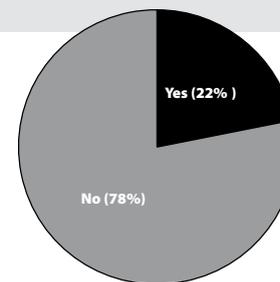
Please give details _____

9. Was it negotiated by the union? _____

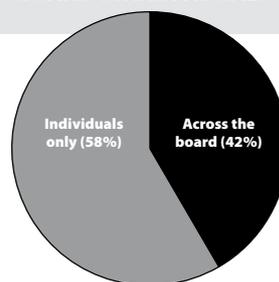
7. HAS HOUSE AGREEMENT BEEN ADJUSTED?



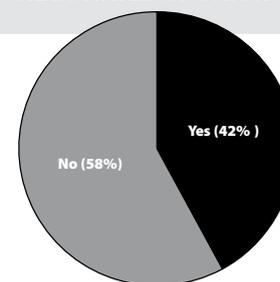
8. IS THERE EXTRA PAY FOR MULTI-MEDIA STAFF?



8. IS EXTRA PAY ACROSS THE BOARD OR INDIVIDUAL?



9. WAS EXTRA PAY NEGOTIATED BY UNION?



HOURS

10. Has the move to new media increased workloads? _____

11. Are journalists covering all media working longer hours?

If so, are these hours longer than those in an NUJ agreement?

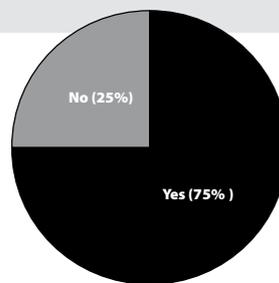
Is there extra payment or time off in lieu? _____

12. Have there been new shift patterns since new media were introduced? _____

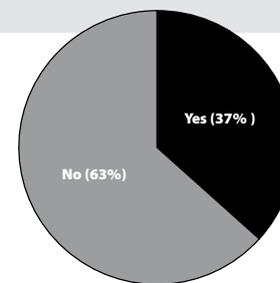
If so, describe the changes: _____

Were they negotiated by the union? _____

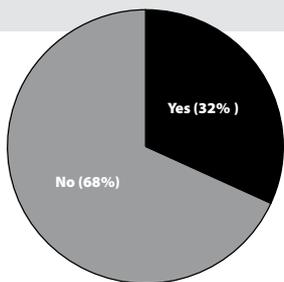
10. HAS MOVE INCREASED WORKLOADS?



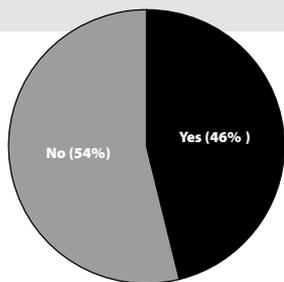
11. ARE ALL-MEDIA STAFF WORKING LONGER HOURS?



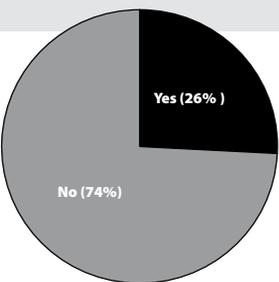
11. ARE HOURS LONGER THAN IN NUJ AGREEMENT?



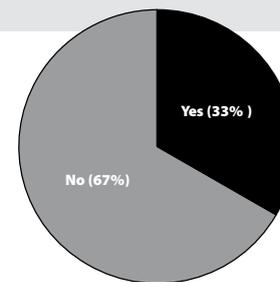
11. IS THERE EXTRA PAY OR TIME OFF IN LIEU?



12. NEW SHIFT PATTERNS SINCE NEW MEDIA?



12. WERE NEW SHIFTS NEGOTIATED BY UNION?



QUALITY OF WORK

13. What training has been provided for journalists doing new media? _____

None _____

As and when required _____

on request _____

systematic training for all designated staff _____

systematic training for all staff _____

14. Does this training cover health and safety, for instance for reporters producing video? _____

Are risk assessments made for this kind of work? _____

15. How would you describe the general quality of new media output? _____

Professional _____

adequate _____

poor _____

16. Has there been a detrimental effect on the quality of the "old media" _____

Very much so _____

Not seriously _____

Not at all _____

17. Does your new media output include a significant element of "citizen journalism" contributions from the public? _____

Please indicate which _____

Still images _____

Video _____

links to YouTube or MySpace pages or the like _____

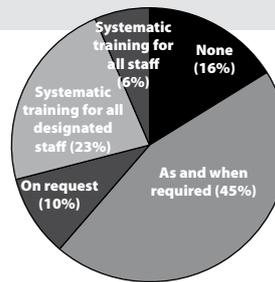
FINALLY

18. The union is considering approaching editors or managers to find out their rationale and their plans for new media. Would this be feasible for your workplace? _____

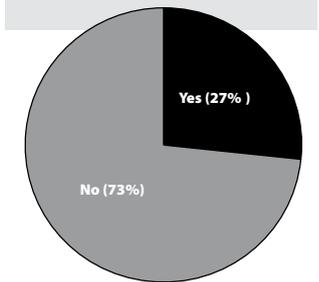
If so, please give the name of an individual to approach _____

19. Any additional comments _____

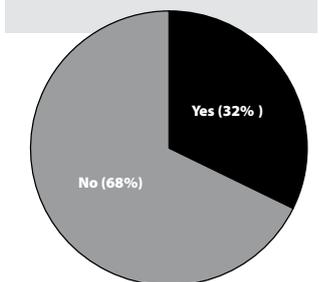
13. WHAT TRAINING HAS BEEN PROVIDED?



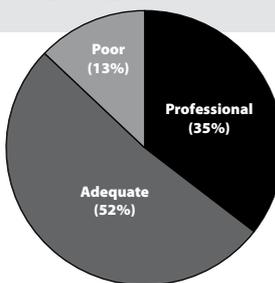
14. DOES TRAINING COVER HEALTH AND SAFETY?



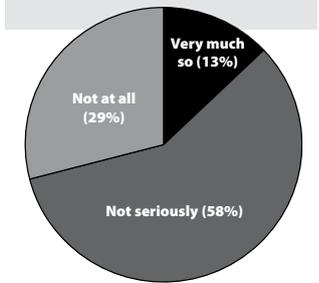
14. ARE RISK ASSESSMENTS MADE?



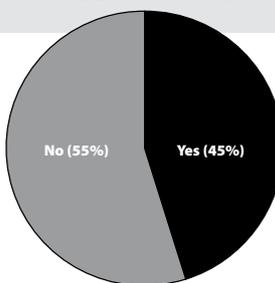
15. DESCRIBE QUALITY OF NEW MEDIA OUTPUT



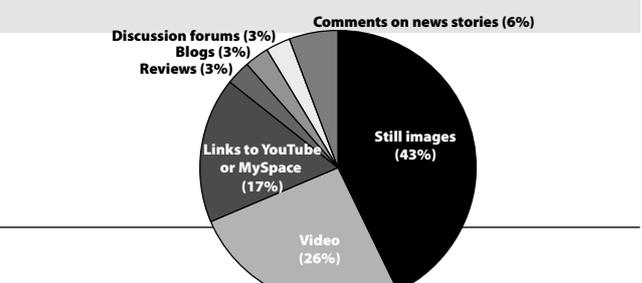
16. DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON 'OLD MEDIA' QUALITY?



17. SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM?



17. INDICATE NATURE OF 'CITIZEN JOURNALISM' CONTRIBUTIONS



2. NUJ AGREEMENT AT GUARDIAN/OBSERVER

How the agreement was reached

It's July 2007, and a mood of uncertainty hangs over everyone at the Guardian as we head towards huge change. Negotiating, and managing, change is tough enough, but the fact there is no template or clear picture for what management has in mind for a bright new media future makes it all the harder for both sides.

Everyone concurs we are facing probably the most complex set of negotiations ever seen at the Guardian. Management have themed the move to 24/7 multi media working on "flexibility".

But flexibility has long been the name of the game in a workplace with a thriving website which has evolved by editors trying new things, and journalists – on both web and paper – willingly going along with their ideas.

The workforce already is relaxed about moving with the times; reporters on the paper have adapted to new media- many without training, staff have embraced pilot projects (not presented to the union) which bedded down into routine work practice. Moreover, the entire editorial workforce routinely work significantly above their contracted hours out of good will and professional pride (a fact publicly conceded by management.)

In sum, the only element of flexibility we resist is when it is used as a byword for watering down terms and conditions.

The context

The chapel is comprised of journalists working for both the newspaper and the web.

The website was set up in 1999, and the skeletal staff base were quickly brought into the chapel. Their terms and conditions have consistently been lifted up over the years, thanks to their newspaper colleagues using pay rounds to argue the webbies' case.

Common terms: everyone is on six weeks' holiday, and enjoys a four-week sabbatical every four years. (There are no proposals by management to change this)

Differences

Pay: disparities have narrowed but still exist across the two mediums, with newspaper staff generally on much higher rates

Job security: All newspaper staff are protected by a no compulsory redundancy clause, GU staff are not (however a motion passed last summer instructs officers to call an emergency motion in the event of any GU member being made redundant)

Working week: GU staff work ten-day fortnights, paper staff

have nine-day fortnights (this is not predicated on whether they work occasional Sundays, but was a union concession some years back when staff were on four day weeks.)

Tools for the job: GU reporters provide their own mobiles; newspaper reporters have company phones.

Changing workplace

For the past 18 months, non-negotiated changes have taken place which have set precedents. This is partly due to the unofficial 'pilot' status of many projects. Instead of negotiating at the outset with the union, individuals were invited to take part. The website, used to trying out new things in the spirit of evolution, began the trend. But this lack of negotiation means multi-media working has not been reflected in extra pay. We raised this in our outstanding pay claim.

Podcasting by both web and paper staff, and now vidcasting, have been introduced.

Blogging: newspaper staff are increasingly asked to blog alongside their normal duties. Some complain this has added to their workloads.

Webfirst

The union – and staff expected to deliver – were given four working day's notice that staff on the Guardian city and foreign desk would be filing first for the web, and then for the paper. Management insisted the lack of warning was due to competitive concerns with the Times. After consultation with affected staff, we decided to accept the business case for rushing it through. We were assured the necessary resources would be put in place to ensure staff did not suffer from longer days/ extra workload as a result. But some journalists indeed report that their working days have got longer. A chapel motion stated that any further attempt to roll out webfirst across other desks without negotiation would be flatly resisted. Since then, we have been kept abreast of further planned developments.

In light of the above, the union was keen to thrash out a framework to ensure any further ventures were negotiated, and not introduced piecemeal, as above.

Change on the table

The precursor to the talks was an announcement relayed in person by the editor, Alan Rusbridger, to all staff. Rusbridger, who saw the potential of website journalism years before his peers, announced to staff in the spring his vision for the future: a shift of resources to its website LINK in the face of declining sales, and a move to 24/7 working and multimedia working. Unlike rivals such as the Telegraph, he made a public

commitment there would be no reduction in headcount as a result. The Guardian chapel had already warned that a move to multi-media working would require more, not fewer, journalists if editorial integrity was to be maintained (Cardiff report). But on the face of it the editor's promise was progress, since elsewhere editors and their bean counters got together and perversely used integration and 24/7 working as an excuse to cut their staff base at a time when they wanted them to deliver more.

So we welcomed the editor's commitment, but realised it still begged questions. Would the workforce still have the same faces, i.e. the current mix of experienced hands and younger journalists? The editor's promise, after all, was not synonymous with keeping editorial headcount intact. An additional web designer will indeed mean one less reporter or sub, which means that those filling content are likely to be fewer than at present.

Management had already engaged in propaganda (a public relations exercise with the media trade press ahead of the editor's announcement). They essentially cast the challenge as one between luddites and forward-looking journalists. Since the chapel at no point argued against integration, 24/7 working or new media (one fifth of the editorial workforce are web journalists) we were perplexed. They cautioned against 1970s trade unionism, which they feared would drag down talks. The irony is that talks have dragged on for almost three months because management have been slow at presenting details for what is admittedly a complex planning operation.

In the background, a new managing editor of Guardian News and Media is at work, looking at cutting costs wherever he can to minimize the paper's losses. We are seeing worrying trends such as individual contracts (breach of house agreement), more short term contracts to keep staff off the pay roll, and a freeze on vacant posts and casuals. The Guardian's managing editor had called us in over August 2006 and signalled that the Guardian would be seeking to deliver changes at the lowest possible cost base. This fact is never far from our minds.

The proposals

Management decide to bundle everything into the mix.

- a new house agreement which would cover jointly the guardian and website, and our sister paper the Observer
- a 24/7 working model, with newspaper, website and observer staff working across all the two papers and the website.
- training (welcome)
- pay – a three-year pay deal, presented as a price tag for accepting 24/7 and the new house agreement. 4.8% the first year (inflation for April, when we submitted our pay claim), and average of inflation for the year for the two successive years.

We reject a three year pay deal (chapel inactivity), accept 24/7 from the start, and reject a joint house agreement with the Observer unless management first agree to extend the

no compulsory redundancy clause which covers Guardian newspaper journalists to Guardian Unlimited (part of the Guardian chapel) and to our colleagues on the Observer (they don't have it either).

Management refuse. The chapel instruct negotiators to deal with the pay claim (representing the Guardian constituency) and the house agreement too. We are more than willing to jointly negotiate the changes necessary to realise 24/7 working.

We plan to amend our existing agreement, and whatever is settled can be wedded together with the Observer's negotiated agreement. The idea is that this will result in an enhanced set of terms for everyone across the two titles, rather than a weak set as envisaged by management.

Weekly negotiations have dragged on since April with management presenting opaque proposals that are fiddly to handle.

Management believe accepting greater workforce 'flexibility' means letting them have more scope to hire and fire staff, (i.e. scrap the no redundancy clause) though they insist this will be offset by a strong commitment to redeployment and retraining. We argue that the latter makes the former need redundant. After all, good journalists remain good journalists, regardless of the medium in which they work. We simply refuse to accept new shifts and new media working as a backdoor attempt to degrade our terms and conditions of employment. It is a sticking point over a totemic issue for Guardian staff, but clearly not a negotiating point for our colleagues at the Observer.

It took management ten weeks of talks to present their proposals for 24/7 working, and probing by union negotiators exposed the lack of details.

Essentially, they want

- new shifts to cover the website from 6am to 3am, phased in after an interim 18/7 rota period. Within two years, they expect all staff to move to this new way of working (i.e. compulsion)
- a job security clause to replace the no compulsory clause. This gives no protection above that already afforded by the law.
- training for all staff is offered.
- Moving most of the workforce to ten-day fortnights, without extra pay.
- moving everyone to 35 working hour weeks, without extra pay (this means 20 hours extra for free). Their argument for not paying is that staff always work way above their contracted hours anyway!

The negotiators have drawn up more acceptable proposals to make 24/7 working. These are not included since they are not complete, or ratified by the committee.

Reading the runes

Despite our clear mandate not to draw up a new house

agreement, but amend our existing one, management is ploughing ahead with a template for a joint house agreement.

Despite our making it clear that removing the no compulsory redundancy is a 'red line' for the chapel, management insist it is necessary to remove it to have a 'flexible' workforce. Claims that they need to get rid of it in case new media projects fail force us to remind them that they routinely offer short-term contracts to new staff – particularly on new media projects – to keep them off the staff roll.

We have been struck that since the editor's announcement in April, management have been slow to present even outline proposals. We accept that this is a complex and taxing task. But we sometimes muse at the tactical advantage for management of drawing talks out as long as possible. In light of their public relations assault earlier this year, this stance suggests they feel, as we do, that the union could not possibly the deterioration of terms and conditions they have in mind, which have nothing at all to do with the principles of integration or 24/7 working, and everything to do with cutting costs. In light of excessive bonuses awarded to senior management over the past two years, we are not impressed.

4. NUJ INTEGRATION CLAIM AT THE LIVERPOOL POST AND ECHO

Draft agreement between Trinity Mirror Merseyside Ltd and the National Union of Journalists (dailies and weeklies chapels) for the introduction of digital journalism (also known as online journalism, new media and multi-media)

PREAMBLE

This agreement is an addendum to the House Agreement between Trinity Mirror Merseyside Ltd, subsequently referred to as the Company, and the NUJ, subsequently referred to as the Union or the Chapel.

For the sake of clarity, the terms 'digital journalism', 'online journalism', 'new media' or 'multi-media' mean the publishing of text, still and moving images in any way other than on newsprint by staff writers, staff photographers and freelance writers and photographers.

SCOPE OF THE AGREEMENT

This agreement covers pay, working conditions, time demands and maintaining output quality, training, job security, health and safety, implications for freelancers.

The Chapel agrees that it wishes to make the most of the opportunities presented by multi-media working and the Company agrees that it will ensure that technological developments do not have an adverse effect on Chapel members nor on the professional standards they seek to maintain while doing their jobs.

Both parties recognize that it is not possible to outline every eventuality in terms of equipment, working practices or final objectives for digital journalism and that techniques and market demands might well change. Full consultation and negotiation will take place between the Company and the Chapel in such circumstances.

PAY AND CONDITIONS

1. The banding system will be revised to recognise the flexibility, extra productivity and added value provided by Chapel members to the Company as a result of the changes in work practices brought about by the introduction of digital journalism.

2. The introduction of digital journalism will not be to the detriment of photographers, who will be given the opportunity to acquire the skills of website video production. It is further recognised that stills photography is highly-skilled work and should be undertaken only by professional photographers. Video photography, which is also recognised as highly skilled work, will not be used to replace specialist stills photography.

3. Journalists will have sufficient working time to produce

written material for newspapers, differently subbed written material or video footage for websites.

4. Sufficient staff will be employed to do the extra work that results from the operation of digital journalism, so that additional and unrealistic pressures are not put onto journalists, consequently increasing the likelihood of stress-related illness, RSI or other health risks.

5. Staff working remotely, either from home or in satellite offices, will not be held responsible for any perceived fall in productivity due to the performance of the GN3 system, either due to bandwidth available on the remote internet connection or due to any other technical factor within the Company's control.

6. Rota changes and other flexibility demands will be regulated by clause 7 of the House Agreement and only be introduced after full consultation and agreement, taking into account current health and safety and anti-discrimination legislation. The Chapel agrees to approach such changes in a constructive manner and any amendments the chapel agrees are reasonable will not form the basis of a claim for a further pay increase.

TRAINING

1. Journalists involved in new media work will receive the necessary training to the highest standard to ensure they are proficient in the use of the new equipment. The Chapel will be kept fully informed of the training programme and any changes to it sufficiently in advance for its observations to be formulated and taken into account.

2. There will be regular reviews of training needs, e.g. those linked to the introduction of new software or upgrading of software.

3. As far as possible, all training will be carried out during normal working hours. However, there will be no obligation on NUJ members to train outside normal working hours. If extra out-of-hours training is required by the Company, those NUJ members prepared to do it will be paid the equivalent of their hourly rate. Such training will also be carried out at mutually agreed times.

4. No journalist or prospective trainee will be refused employment solely because of their previous inexperience of multi-media working.

JOB SECURITY

1. No journalist will be made compulsorily redundant as a result of the introduction of new media working.

2. It is recognised that some journalists will display more aptitude for multi-media work than others. Where any

journalist is asked to make a significant change in their skills (e.g. a writer being required to learn broadcasting skills) and they do not wish to participate in such a role change then, providing the company is still able to progress its overall new media objectives, such refusal will be accepted for existing staff.

3. In the event of any journalist being unable to work satisfactorily using the digital technology, extra individual tuition will be arranged during working hours. In the unlikely event of any journalist continuing to experience difficulty, the appropriate editor will discuss the problem with the person concerned. A Chapel officer will be present unless the journalist concerned states that he/she does not want to be accompanied by a Chapel officer. Every effort will be made to find a mutually acceptable solution to the problem.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. The health and safety of journalists will not in any way be jeopardized by the introduction of new media working practices. Consideration of the health and safety of journalists producing material for online/new media use will be the subject of ongoing discussion and awarded the highest importance.

2. A 'checklist and guidelines' document will be drawn up by representatives of the Chapel and the Company to advise and instruct staff about how to assess health and safety risks, including when video journalism can and, perhaps more importantly, cannot be deployed. This document will be provided to all those commissioning such material, arranging assignments, carrying out risk assessments, and those carrying out such work. Any editor/manager sending journalists on assignments should have the necessary training to carry out risk assessments. The guidelines will also be provided to freelancers commissioned to produce material and to others (who may offer material 'on spec') on request. The guidelines will also be available on request to anyone seeking commissions from the company or considering producing material 'on spec', and be published on the relevant websites as implicit guidance for "citizen journalists" or those providing "user generated content". The document will be regularly reviewed and, when necessary, updated.

FREELANCES/CASUALS

In addition to the provisions in the House Agreement covering freelances, the following will apply:

1. Any freelances/casual workers hired for shifts involving new media work will be paid for sufficient training in advance of such shifts to allow such work to be performed in line with health and safety measures and to the required professional standards. Training budgets will include an allocation for the training of freelances.

2. Freelance photographers who are asked to provide video footage will receive an additional payment to cover additional skills, and/or equipment costs, and/or any costs associated with video production (unless those facilities are provided by

the company).

3. The copyright of still and moving images for online publication commissioned by the daily and weekly papers will remain with the contributor unless specifically agreed otherwise.

4. The company agrees that it will not seek assignment of copyright or other intellectual property rights by freelance contributors to its websites. Unless otherwise negotiated, the company purchases a licence for one website use of freelance material.

5. The commissioning fee buys usage of the work on the online site commissioning the work only for the stated publication cycle of that site (be it seven days, one month etc), unless specifically agreed otherwise. For renewals, archiving etc, see the relevant House Agreement clauses.

DISPUTES AND DIFFERENCES

1. In the event of a dispute or difference arising out of the implementation of this agreement, then both parties will follow the agreed disputes/grievance procedure as defined in the house agreement/company grievance policy.

2. If the Company and Chapel agree that a reputable independent consultant(s) could assist in resolving a dispute or difference, then such assistance can be sought.

5. THE AGREEMENT AT THE DROGHEDA INDEPENDENT

Report by NUJ Irish Secretary Seamus Dooley

Arising from discussions at the Irish Executive Council there has been considerable discussion on the Drogheda Independent House Agreement, which the chapel voted to accept by 20 votes to 2. Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary explains the background to the agreement. The full text is available at www.nuj.org.uk/inner.php?docid=1798

Context: The Drogheda Independent agreement was concluded after six-month tough negotiations led by Des Fagan, Irish Organiser, and the chapel officers at the Drogheda Independent, Fingal Independent and the Argus, Dundalk. The Drogheda Independent is owned by Independent News and Media. Following the decision of INM to withdraw from the national negotiation body for regional newspaper in Ireland, RNAI, the chapel requested assistance from Des Fagan, Irish Organiser, in negotiating a new House Agreement. Withdrawal from the RNAI by the Independent Group subsequently posed a serious threat to NUJ members at the Drogheda Independent chapel but their resolve forced management to the negotiating table.

The Drogheda Independent chapel has 23 staff members (reporters/production journalists) and uniquely in the INM regional division had voted to take industrial action in the face of a threat to the national industry pension scheme. It should be pointed out that within the Independent Group the Drogheda/Dundalk titles journalists are paid significantly less than their colleagues elsewhere and the negotiations were the culmination of a campaign for improved terms and conditions by the chapel.

In reviewing the agreement it is important to remember that there are no staff photographers attached to any titles so the issue of re-training of photographers does not arise. The agreement contains provisions allowing selected, trained reporters to use digital photographic equipment. Implementation of this clause will be monitored by a joint union/management Working Party.

The agreement is unique among recent agreements in that it provides for (a) post-entry closed shop (b) specific provision for a Working Party which will monitor the implementation of technology, taking cognisance of current NUJ policy.

The General Purposes Committee of the IEC was advised of the agreement on May 10th. It was subsequently debated at two IEC meetings and a further meeting is scheduled for Friday July 27th.

The agreement is recommended by the Chapel, by the Irish Organiser and the Irish Secretary because they feel it is the best available from Independent Newspapers. Non-implementation of the agreement will put at risk the benefits won through the negotiations but will not prevent the introduction of new work practices outside the negotiated framework proposed by the NUJ.

The changes in work practices are a quid pro quo for major benefits. It should be remembered that negotiations in the Republic Ireland take place within the context of a national partnership agreement and companies are not obliged to entertain claims which fall outside such agreements.

Main Benefits

- Full recognition of NUJ and recognition of union organisation within company, meetings etc.
- Requirement on non-members to join NUJ before contract of employment is issued.
- Maternity Leave of full pay for 20 weeks. Normally 26 weeks at 80% of salary, subject to a minimum payment of €207.80 and a maximum payment of €280.00 per week. Senior journalists will be on €692 per week gross.
- Flexible working patterns to match the needs of the family and the workplace.
- Notice requirements in line with the RNAI notice when the company wanted to use the statutory requirement originally with a request that employees give them one month notice.
- Appointment of new post, an Assistant Editor to look after free publications.
- New roster, including 35 hour week.
- Rates of pay that provide increases of up to €4000 and €6000 per annum depending on the individual concerned.
- New posts of responsibility with grading structure.

Company Position: In a letter to Seamus Dooley, Irish Secretary on July 11 2007 Declan Carlyle, Human Resources Director set out the company position. Below are extracts:

In relation to the photographic issue, the Agreement caters for the establishment of a Working Party involving editorial management and the NUJ. Implementation of the clauses relating to photographic equipment take due cognisance of current NUJ policy – where is the problem with such a categorical assurance? In the industry, generally, where the front ending of technology has transferred functions/roles to journalists similar working parties were established and led to the orderly transfer, or indeed, the normal evolution of technology. In this particular normal evolution of technology,

the function will, in accordance with the provisions in the Agreement, evolve to other journalists – not other categories of workers.

It should also be noted, this delay denies the benefits of such an agreement to our other regional journalists. As we don't employ a single photographer in any of our regional sites this action does not affect anyone's employment within the Group. Throughout the UK and Ireland many unionised and non-unionised newspapers require reporters to carry cameras. Very few -as we have – have adopted a structured approach which seeks to involve the NUJ."

The Drogheda Independent recognises that professional photography will continue to play an important part in the content of its publications, but not in every image that is published. However,, it is not proposed to simply hand out digital cameras to all staff. One simply has to consider the advancement of digital cameras on mobile phones, where the current technology is comparable to professional equipment only a few short years ago".

Working party on the use of cameras

Following the signing of the Drogheda Independent House Agreement, the management and the NUJ have agreed the terms of reference of the Working Party which will monitor the use of camera equipment by reporters.

The terms are:

Role: To monitor the implementation of clause 6.1 of DICL NUJ House Agreement

Members: The working party should comprise of not less than four members, two of whom should be representatives of the chapel and two representatives from management.

Scope: The working party will take due cognisance of the current policy of the NUJ with regard to;

1. The primacy of news gathering as the core function of reporters
2. The primacy of photojournalism as the core function of photographers
3. The development of an agreed training programme which takes account of experience, skills and aptitudes of individual journalists
4. Adherence to health and safety standards and the application of best practice
5. The effect on current photographic arrangements within the three titles

The parties recognise that professional photography will continue to play an important part in the content of DICL

publications. Photographic services are currently provided through use of photographers engaged on contracts for services and it is envisaged that this combination of service providers will continue.

Following an initial meeting, the purpose of which will be to consult on the implementation of clause 6.1 and to agree the principals outlined in this document, the parties will meet upon request giving due regard to sufficient notice to discuss the workings of the clause 6.1.

Disputes: Should any dispute arise in relation to the above, that cannot be resolved by the Working Party, a meeting shall be arranged, within two weeks of the matter being raised. This meeting shall be attended by senior management of DICL and NUJ officials, and attempts shall be made to resolve the matter at that point.

If in the event the parties cannot reach agreement the disputes procedure as outlined at section 5.4 or any other agreed dispute resolution process shall be initiated.

6. OXFORD MAIL AND TIMES NUJ CHAPEL MONITORING FORM

Record of Work: News Desk

This form is designed to measure your workload to see the impact of changes to working practices with the advent of internet technology.

It is for internal NUJ use only – and will not be shown to management.

To get a good measure of the changes, the union needs to see a normal week of your work BEFORE the changes are brought in, and a normal week after they are brought in.

Day of week	Stories read/edited	Number of hours worked	Additional work undertaken (i.e. internet uploads)	Comments (i.e. general stress levels, quality of work)

Similar dedicated forms have been drawn up for use by reporters, subs and photographers

7. REED BUSINESS INFORMATION EDITORIAL GUIDELINES ON WEB TRANSITION

Editorial Guidelines – Web Transition

February 2007

Introduction

As part of our aim to build awareness of company strategy and the changes facing our editorial teams as a result of the growth of our internet activities, these Guidelines (agreed between the Company and the NUJ), summarise our plans and ambitions for the growth of our websites and products, as well as setting out the support that will be available to editorial staff in the shift from print to web working.

1. Aims

RBI aims to be the first choice online for its target audiences, winning the battle for attention by delivering compelling, superior online offerings. This is the same aim that we have always had for our print products – to be the first choice for readers. However, because the Internet is a very different medium from paper, supporting a far wider range of content types and activities, we cannot succeed by simply reproducing on our websites the type of content we run in our magazines.

We need to:

Deliver “traditional content” in a way that works on the web, using techniques such as tagging and linking to create a great user experience and ensure that our content is highly-ranked by search engines.

Create new online tools and services that exploit the inherent characteristics of the Internet and the latest trends in online behaviour. These will include products based on aggregating content from other sources as well as services based on “web 2.0” concepts, in which user-generated content is a key component. These new offerings will often include audio and video, exploiting the multimedia capabilities of the Net.

In many of our markets, our aspiration is to be a “Super Community”, that is the natural starting point on the Web for our community members whether their aim is to search, browse, research, share or simply catching up with the latest gossip. The new web 2.0, interactive tools are critical if we are going to create genuine online communities, in which the members feel a sense of belonging and ownership in the same way that readers have felt about our magazines.

The strengths we have built up in our magazine business – our brands, our magazine readerships and, critically, our high-quality editorial teams and the content they produce – give us some tremendous advantages over others competing with us for the online attention and loyalty of the same audiences. Our strategy will be based on exploiting these strengths, for

example, by combining user-generated and “professional” content in smart, innovative ways. The talent, creativity and hard work of our editorial teams will remain the cornerstone of our success.

To convert our print successes to the web, we have to change the way we are organised and the way we work. Today, our editorial teams and processes are geared to produce great magazines. So far we have tweaked them and bolted extra bits on to enable these teams to create online content. To be successful in the future, we need to reorganise our teams and redesign our processes so that they are designed from the bottom up to deliver both great magazines and great websites.

2. Communication

Crucial to our success will be timely and thorough discussions with editorial teams at the earliest opportunity, to consider web plans, likely timescales, affect on roles, structures, priorities, the print title and all aspects of the web and print strategies (see Roles & Staffing).

In addition, it is the intention to ensure that ongoing communication and information will be made available via sources such as the RBI wiki, which will include information on best practice, technology terminology, current web projects, etc.

3. Roles/Structures/Resources

Getting the right people in the right roles with the right resources and team structures is critical to our online success.

Although there may not be identical structures across all markets and some roles will inevitably change over time, some key roles already exist within the business or have been identified as being critical to the success of our websites. These include the following:

- Web Editor – responsible for editorial strategy, traffic delivery, managing team
- Production editor – Responsible for site functionality, accuracy, style etc
- Community editor – Responsible for user interaction and user-generated content
- News/content editor – Responsible for “traditional” journalist content on the site, including everything that also appears in the magazine, and the way this content is tagged, linked etc.

Other critical functions, either in separate roles or part of these key posts, will include Web Design and technical Web Management activities, particularly in a site start-up phase.

Some of these roles have existing job profiles and others are or will be created to help determine:

- What skills and experience are required to succeed
- How web and print accountabilities will be structured
- What training might be needed for existing and new staff
- What tools and other resources might be needed
- Where we might look to recruit people, as necessary

To ensure that appropriate and adequate resources are available, discussions will take place in each market with editorial teams with regard to requirements for new roles and any alteration of existing work methods or responsibilities. Where significant changes to roles are proposed, new job descriptions/profiles will be agreed with individuals and with the NUJ. Discussions will also focus on the use of new technology tools plus secondment arrangements, where applicable. Discussions will include clarity with regard to the interrelationships between web and print accountabilities and in particular how the web and print strategies will tie together. The impact of new roles and work methods will be reviewed and assessed on a regular basis within each market.

4. Staffing/Workload

As far as possible, we aim to fill our new online roles from our existing editorial teams.

Whether or not we can do this in each case obviously depends on the nature of the role and the capabilities of individuals, but new opportunities will clearly be available as we develop more online products and services. Enthusiasm and commitment to learn new skills and apply existing skills in new ways will be critical, as will the company's commitment to supply appropriate training, coaching and any other support needed to enable that journalist to be the best candidate for the job (see 5).

It is not envisaged that the creation of websites will result in journalists and production teams having to work extra hours to meet extra demands. Rather, we anticipate different ways of working (aided by appropriate training and resources – see 5 & 6), adjustments to existing workloads, as well as additional web roles in some cases. Where additional web responsibilities are taken on, existing responsibilities will be adjusted correspondingly.

Again, it is not anticipated that changes in work patterns will be needed, however with the increasing globalisation of some markets and with the 24-hour electronic culture, should any changes be sought, this would be with the agreement of individuals and the NUJ.

5. Training/Coaching

Training needs will inevitably evolve as we bring out new tools, as we learn more about what works and doesn't on the internet and as new expertise is developed, therefore training requirements will be constantly reviewed to ensure that we are meeting the needs of individuals and the company.

Other opportunities for journalists to share best practice and experiences will be made available, such as web workshops and use of the RBI wiki.

RBI has always been committed to training its people to get the best from them. A number of web-specific programmes are already in use, but we are putting together a clear programme of training to give our editorial teams the skills they need to succeed online. The specific courses offered will change continually to keep up with changes in technology and online behaviour. Courses currently planned include a series aimed at all RBI journalists, to give a basic understanding of the Internet and online publishing, including how to write for the web, how to use the various tools available, and how to use the web to improve their performance as journalists.

There will also be specific training for people in new online roles, such as editors of community websites, community content managers and web designers, based on the job profiles for these new roles.

6. Technology Resources

In order to succeed online, we need to give our editorial teams the tools and technology they need to turn their ideas into reality. A detailed development project is currently underway to improve and extend the tools available to teams.

Community website platform

Our current community website platform, Core components 1.5, is too inflexible and too slow to develop. RBI's Web Solutions Group is in the process of developing a new architecture for community websites, based on a web services approach, which should enable editorial teams combine in-house developed and bought-in software to give us the flexibility and speed of development that we need.

Authoring tools

We need our journalists to create all content so that it is ready for the web, including providing a web headline, tagging the content and inserting appropriate links. We can't expect them to do this unless we give them tools that make it easy for them to create this type of content. These tools will be developed and rolled out in stages, with appropriate training given as each new tool is delivered. They will include tools to suggest keywords, help locate related content and embed links in copy.

Video/audio content tools

Increasingly we will need to deliver audio and video content on our websites. RBI already has considerable internal resources to support this, including a TV studio. We have already delivered/identified new resources for podcasting, including high-quality digital audio recorders and online services for distributing podcasts.

Other online tools and services

There is a very large and growing pool of powerful online tools and services, many free or cheap to use, that RBI journalists can use to improve their existing content or deliver

new content. For example, RSS readers to help journalists track what is happening on their "beat", wikis and other web 2.0 tools to help journalists with background research. We are in the process of creating a central list of these resources, hosted on the RBI wiki, to help editorial teams find the ones that can help them.

7. Grades

It is the intention to incorporate new roles within the existing agreed RBI Editorial Grading Scheme, by discussion between the company and the NUJ.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY: THE BBC RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

BBC	General Risk Assessment Form – Part A	April 2007- DC
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Division / Studio		Department / Series	
Business Unit / Production Address		Producer / Editor Tel: Mobile:	
Period covered by assessment		Version number	
Outline of risk assessment <i>Summary of what is proposed</i>			
Team members / experts / contractors / etc. <i>List those involved</i>			
Site / Office / Location <i>Outline site/ locations involved</i>			
Assessor Name Signature		Date completed	
Authoriser Name (if not Assessor) Signature		Date authorised	

Hazard list – select your hazards from the list below and use these to complete Part B (add others where appropriate)					
Situational hazards	Tick	Physical / chemical hazards	Tick	Health hazards	Tick
Asbestos		Contact with cold liquid / vapour		Disease causative agent	
Assault by person		Contact with cold surface		Infection	
Attacked by animal		Contact with hot liquid / vapour		Lack of food / water	
Breathing compressed gas		Contact with hot surface		Lack of oxygen	
Cold environment		Electric shock		Physical fatigue	
Crush by load		Explosive blast		Repetitive action	
Drowning		Explosive release of stored pressure		Static body posture	
Entanglement in moving machinery		Fire		Stress	
Hot environment		Hazardous substance			
Intimidation		Ionizing radiation			
Lifting Equipment		Laser light		Environmental hazards	
Manual handling		Lightning strike		Litter	
Object falling, moving or flying		Noise		Nuisance noise / vibration	
Obstruction / exposed feature		Non-ionizing radiation		Physical damage	
Sharp object / material		Stroboscopic light		Waste substance released into air	
Slippery surface		Vibration		Waste substance released into soil / water	
Trap in moving machinery					
Trip hazard		Other			
Vehicle impact / collision					
Working at height					

Risk matrix – use this to determine risk for each hazard i.e. 'how bad and how likely'	Likelihood of Harm				
	Remote e.g. <1 in 1000 chance	Unlikely e.g. 1 in 200 chance	Possible e.g. 1 in 50 chance	Likely e.g. 1 in 10 chance	Probable e.g. >1 in 3 chance
Negligible e.g. small bruise	Very low	Very low	Very low	Low	Low
Slight e.g. small cut, deep bruise	Very low	Very low	Low	Low	Medium
Moderate e.g. deep cut, torn muscle	Very low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Severe e.g. fracture, loss of consciousness	Low	Medium	High	High	Extremely high
Very Severe e.g. death, permanent disability	Low	Medium	High	Extremely high	Extremely high

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">BBC</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Risk Assessment Form – Part B</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.8em;">April 2007- DC</p> </div> </div>					
Activity¹ – Each individual activity you are proposing e.g. <i>general office inspection</i> :		Location – where this activity will take place:		Dates / times:	
Hazards² List what could cause harm from this activity e.g. <i>working at height, trip hazard, fire, etc.</i>	Who exposed List who might be harmed from this activity e.g. <i>staff, contractors, contributors, public, etc.</i>	Risk³ For each hazard, decide level of risk as if you were to do the activity without your controls	Control measures For each hazard, list the measures you will be taking to minimise the risk identified e.g. <i>appointing competent persons, training received, planning, use of personal protective equipment, provision of first aid, etc.</i>	Risk³ For each hazard, now decide level of risk once all your controls are in place	

Continue on separate sheet if necessary

1 – complete separate table for each activity 2 - from hazard list in Part A 3 - from risk matrix in Part A

9. NUJ CODE OF PRACTICE ON 'WITNESS CONTRIBUTORS'

The National Union of Journalists' Code of Conduct states that "a journalist has a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards". Media organisations subscribing to the UK Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice agree that: "All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards."

These commitments to the integrity and reliability of material and the safety of bona fide newsgatherers may be challenged and compromised by the use of "witness contributions".

Therefore:

1. Organisations using material from "witness contributors" agree to uphold section 1 of the Press Complaints Council Code of Practice: That inaccurate, misleading or distorted information should not be published; that any breaches should be corrected quickly, prominently and, where appropriate, with an apology; and that conjecture and fact should be clearly distinguished;
2. Such organisations should check and provide sufficient resources for the adequate checking of witness contributions to establish their accuracy and authenticity before publication;
3. Such organisations recognise that journalists belonging to the National Union of Journalists have agreed to uphold the union's Code of Conduct and will strive to use material from such individuals wherever and whenever such alternatives to witness contributions are available;
4. Such organisations accept that appropriate and agreed payments will be made to witness contributors for all uses of their material and that the terms of licensing will be easily available and clear;
5. Such organisations agree to respect fully the copyright(s) of the witness contributors; material will not be passed to third parties – including the police and security services – without the specific written agreement of a witness contributor, subpoena or similar requirement from a court;
6. Such organisations agree to respect the spirit of witness contributors' moral rights, crediting them appropriately and defending the integrity of their work against (unfair or misleading) alterations;
7. Such organisations agree that they will not make witness contributors provide unrealistic guarantees about legal consequences which witness contributors cannot be expected to know or understand and that they will indemnify such contributors against all liabilities resulting from the publication of contributions made in good faith, including ensuring that individuals' privacy is not breached and that decency and taste are not compromised;
8. Such organisations undertake not to solicit material from

witness contributors which will encourage such individuals to place themselves in danger and to dissuade publicly and actively witness contributors from exposing themselves unnecessarily to unassessed and inappropriate risk(s);

9. Organisations or individuals soliciting material from or offering (commercial) representation to witness contributors agree that they will not offer such material to media organisations in any way that may be inaccurate, misleading or distorted. (Such organisations and individuals should be encouraged to promote their commitment to this Code of Practice.);

10. Organisations subscribing to this Code of Practice agree that it – and the terms of licensing witness contributions – should:

- be disseminated to all staff, members and interested individuals,
- be published on internet and intranet sites,
- be available to the public and to potential citizen witness contributors,
- be displayed on workplace noticeboards, and included in staff induction and employment contract materials and other membership information.