

3rd December 2011



Welcome to IBT's December newsletter with an update on our work and relevant news from the media industry.

New IBT research

Today we are publishing our new research report *The East African famine – did the media get it right?* The research is based on interviews with NGO media officers, news editors, journalists and academics, in the UK and abroad. It concludes that attempts were made by broadcasters and journalists to depart from the stereotypical images of famine and that some coverage succeeded in presenting a more nuanced view. However, reporting frequently lacked context. The report also examines the role of NGO messaging and the images used by some NGO fundraisers. We are publishing it online only, on the IBT website www.ibt.org.uk

New World Service Trustee

The BBC Trust has appointed a new Trustee whose principal role will be to oversee the World Service. The appointment of Lord Williams of Baglan has been widely welcomed. He is a working Labour peer (although he will be resigning the Labour whip) and a former special adviser to the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan and to the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw. He is also a former World Service journalist and editor. We hope to organise a meeting with him in January to which IBT members will be invited.

Changes at Channel 4

Channel 4 has announced that it will air more episodes of *Dispatches* but in a new half hour format. There will be 40 episodes a year, still going out at 8pm on Monday, thus avoiding a direct clash with *Panorama*. Defending the changes, Channel 4 said that its audience research has shown that viewers found an hour too long for some subjects. There will still be occasional one hour episodes. Another change to *Dispatches* will involve a small number of independent producers being contracted to make a number of programmes each, enabling faster, more reactive content.

Channel 4 has also announced that the feature length documentary strand *True Stories* will move from More4 which will be rebranded as a lifestyle channel. *True Stories* will air on both Channel 4 and Film4 and there will be fewer episodes overall. There will be more fully funded commissions and fewer acquisitions.

Future briefings with Al Jazeera English and Google

There are a few places left for next week's briefing with Diarmuid Jeffreys, Editor of *People and Power*, the Al Jazeera investigative documentary strand. Diarmuid will also talk about programming across the whole Al Jazeera English channel. The briefing will take place at 10am on Wednesday December 7th at the IBT offices in Southwark. Please let me know if you'd like to attend.

At 10am on Tuesday January 24th 2012 we'll be hearing from Peter Barron, a former *Newsnight* editor and now Google's Director of External Relations. Demand for this event is likely to be high – again let me know if you'd like to come.

Happy holidays

Mark