

5th October 2011



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

The future of the World Service

Last month we launched John McCarthy's report on the future of the World Service which identified two key challenges: how can the World Service maintain its distinct identity at a time of cuts and with the impending merger with BBC News and how can it contribute to an improvement in international coverage for UK audiences? The launch was followed by a useful debate in which Peter Horrocks, the BBC's Director of Global News, responded positively to the points made by John. Since then, the BBC Chairman Lord Patten has also made it clear that getting the new arrangements for the World Service right are a priority for him. The report can be downloaded from the IBT website www.ibt.org.uk

Tonight briefing

Last month also saw the latest of our briefings by commissioners. David Warren, the series producer of *Tonight*, ITV's weekly current affairs show, made it clear that he would like to cover more international stories providing he can find a way of framing them which appeals to a mainstream audience. Finding a UK connection remains an important factor. He also pointed out that *Tonight* is watched by more people than any other current affairs programme on UK television and that its audience is older, more likely to be female and different from those who usually watch current affairs on tv. David is happy to receive pitches direct from NGOs and said he would like to improve relationships with the NGO community. Please let me know if you'd like a copy of the briefing notes. These notes are only available to IBT members. If you're not sure whether your organisation is a member, drop me a line.

Next briefing will be with BBC Online

Given the success of these briefings, we will be holding another one later this month, with Steve Herrmann, the editor of BBC Online. Steve will talk through the changes to the BBC website and how NGOs can pitch stories or pictures or video to the site. He'll also explain the BBC policy of crediting NGOs and providing links to external sites. This promises to be a very useful session for media officers who cover online. The briefing will take place at 10am on Thursday October 27th at the IBT offices in Southwark. Places are limited – please let me know if you'd like to attend.

New research from the British Red Cross

The British Red Cross published new research on public attitudes to aid during its Dispatches from Disaster Zones conference last week. The research shows that the UK public feels under informed about how aid works in an emergency and would like to learn more. 4% of people quizzed in an ICM poll said they were 'very well informed' about aid spending whilst 71% said they were 'not very or not at all well informed.' The poll also demonstrated a public appetite for more information about issues like how long it takes to deliver food in an emergency and how long it takes to rebuild homes. There was also interest in how communities are coping 6 or 12 months after a disaster has struck. More detail on the poll findings can be obtained from georginacooper@redcross.org.uk

BBC research shows audiences have a strong interest in international stories

BBC News regularly polls viewers to find out which stories they are most interested in. Their latest – unpublished – research reveals that 3 of the top 5 stories most valued by audiences this year were international: the Arab Spring/Egypt, the Norwegian massacre and the Japanese earthquake. We hope to obtain more details of this research when we meet the BBC News audience research team next month.

Broadcasting update

The Government is going ahead with its plans for a new Communications Bill – there will be a public consultation at the end of the year, after the publication of a Green paper. A major focus for IBT will be the obligations placed on public service broadcasters. Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State at DCMS recently made it clear that one of the aims of the Bill will be to push ahead with deregulation. He said that in the future it will be unrealistic to expect PSBs to deliver the diverse range of content they have in the past, in return for their licences.

Ofcom has launched a consultation on the renewal of the licences for ITV and Channel 5. We'll be putting in a submission arguing that these licensees should have a statutory obligation to produce 'international news and current affairs in peak time.'

Later this week, the BBC will announce in detail where it will make cuts following the new licence fee settlement. There's been much speculation about where the cuts will fall as part of 'Delivering Quality First'. Once these announcements have been made there will be a further public consultation by the BBC Trust to which IBT will be submitting evidence. The consultation is significant and there's no doubt that it will result in some changes being made to the proposals. We know from past experience that our submissions to the Trust have been taken seriously and have often had a significant impact.

CNN backs human trafficking campaign

Later this month CNN will be launching a new documentary called *Not My Life* which has been filmed over a 4 year period across 5 continents. It will take a global look at human trafficking with the aim

of raising awareness of trafficking in the UK and beyond. It's part of CNN's campaign to raise awareness of modern day slavery through its Freedom Project. More details on the project at <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/> More details about the documentary at <http://notmylife.org>

Film Africa

The Royal African Society and the School of Oriental and African Studies have announced details of this year's Film Africa festival which will take place at a number of venues across London next month. The festival includes several UK premieres and a special focus on women film makers. It's a relaunch of the inaugural London African Film Festival which took place in 2008. For details see www.filmafrica.org.uk The Community Channel will also be launching its own Africa season to run alongside the festival. More details to come in due course on its website <http://communitychannel.mediatrust.org/>

Best wishes

Mark