

Which website?

YOUR WEB presence was the subject of the LFB September Branch meeting. NUJ New Media Industrial Council chair Gary Herman shared his experience in website design. Gary works on the NUJ's national website www.nuj.org.uk and NUJ Training's website, and runs www.keywordsassociates.com which has designed and built many websites for LFB members.

According to Gary, most of the famous computer catastrophes were down to insufficient attention to the "spec", the specification of what a website or software tool is

for. If you're considering paying someone to set up a website, or setting one up yourself, think very carefully about the "spec": what is the purpose of the site and how may it change in future?

Gary's clients include LFB Committee member and music journalist Angus Batey. Angus wanted his site (www.angusbatey.com) to demonstrate he could write about other subjects too; he wanted to communicate interactively with those following his work online; and he wanted if possible to make some money from the site. Angus asked for Gary to activate a "monetise" function on his site, which adds web adverts for products connected to what Angus was writing about.

Unfortunately, readers of Angus' online articles fail to click on these ads before they leave, resulting in very little income coming his way through the "click-through" micro-payments for directing readers to these internet adverts. Google doesn't pay out any money until he's accumulated \$100 US in micro-payments for "click-throughs".

Angus notes that at the current rate of monetisation, he won't see any actual money until well into the

2030s. Gary cautions that the money "made" out of adverts on your website mostly exists only as theoretical accounting entries.

Many journalists who just want to showcase their published work, Gary says, can get away with do-it-yourself services like Mr Site, for as little as £20, or free services like www.blogger.com and Angus cautions that you should first study carefully the terms and conditions of these services, especially on copyright: see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/0905face.html for a cautionary tale of Facebook's recent attempted rights grab.

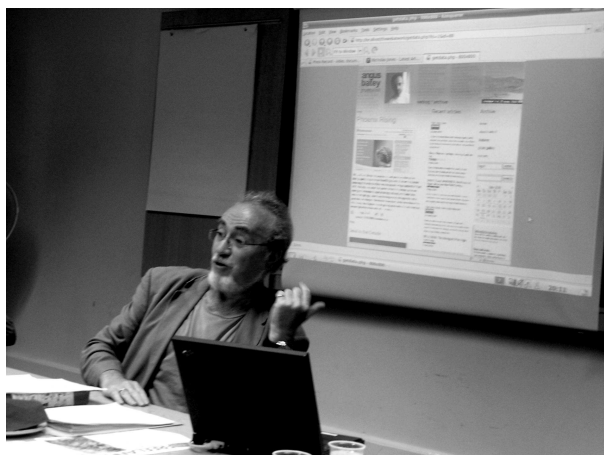
Also, NUJ members can make use of the union's Freelance Directory www.freelancedirectory.org as a (free) stripped-down showcase for a few photos and articles.

Gary is optimistic that the "herd-like migration" of newspapers to the internet won't completely replace print media. It will be a very long time before electronic newspapers become a better delivery system to the places where most people want to read print newspapers – the three "B"s: bedroom, bathroom and breakfast.

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Gary Herman demonstrates the Interwebs

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Tapping of Dutch journo's phone was illegal

AN AMSTERDAM court has ruled that the tapping of a journalist's phone by the AIVD (General Intelligence and Security Service, the Dutch secret service) as part of its investigation into a leak, was illegal.

Journalist Jolande van der Graaf and her editor at the newspaper *De*

Telegraaf came under AIVD surveillance after the March 2008 publication of a story claiming that AIVD misled the Dutch cabinet in the run-up to the government's decision to support the 2003 Iraq war.

The story was based on classified AIVD reports that had been sent to

Ms van der Graaf by persons unknown. The ruling is seen as a victory for protection of sources in the Netherlands.

An earlier court decision, however, established that an AIVD search of Ms van der Graaf's house had been lawful.

Journalist job

THE NUJ's magazine the *Journalist* (www.thejournalist.org) has a vacancy for the post of editor, as the current editor Tim Gopsill is retiring. The editor of the *Journalist* is elected by members: prospective candidates should email nujinfo@googlemail.com and info@nuj.org.uk or call 020 7843 3700 for details and application forms; deadline 21 September. To stand for the post you need to "possess the skills necessary to perform the duties of the editor... and relevant online sections to required standards." You'll also have to prove you've been a full member of the NUJ without a break for five years.

Do BBC websites pay for photos or not?

DO THE BBC pay for photos? Bristol-based photographer and NUJ Freelance Industrial Council (FIC) member Simon Chapman emailed this question to Phil Coomes, the BBC News website's picture editor and photographer. Mr Coomes's reply was: "Many thanks for your email. I'm not aware of us not paying for photographs from professionals. Yes, we do receive material from members of the public that in the main we don't pay for, but most of those images are not news pictures and it offers an interaction with our readers that most people seem to like."

"We do however pay for news and feature stories from photographers and have agreed rates with the NUJ, single shots are £69 and a photo series starts at £270 depending on what is being delivered."

This would seem to be in line

with the Freelance Fees Guide (www.londonfreelance.org/feesguide). But we haven't been able to find out whether anyone has actually been paid the sums quoted above. No-one has told the Rates for the Job site about the BBC news websites paying £69 for photos and £270 for a series – please let us know what you've received via www.londonfreelance.org/rates

Mr Coomes' reply would seem to reflect a change in BBC attitudes compared to two years ago, when photographer Pete Jenkins encountered a BBC radio reporter taking blurry mobile phone photos at an event in Nottingham; these ended up on the BBC News website. Pete asked the BBC why they were using these "truly appalling" shots instead of quality work from freelancers. He was told categorically that the BBC do not pay for web site pics.

BBC Online websites in the "regions" haven't had a budget for freelance shifts for nearly three years. According to our source, it's only "network" online producers, those in London or Birmingham, who are authorised to pay for images. Newsnight can pay fees, but it seems that Spotlight South West or Look East can't, don't or won't pay.

Our regional source felt that BBC regional news desks are encouraged to spend time rummaging through library shots and using the flat-rate contract they have with PA and Getty, rather than force the BBC to buy anything in from freelancers. We've also heard reports from colleagues doing shifts with BBC news websites that staff there hadn't been particularly well trained in negotiating licences for re-use or selling on.

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