

LFB Twitter feed

You can now follow the latest London Freelance Branch updates in 140 characters or fewer via Twitter at www.twitter.com/NUJ_LFB

'How to pitch to me'

WE HEARD from editors on how to pitch to them at the February London Freelance Branch meeting – specifically from *Economist* deputy book and arts editor Emily Bobrow, and from Mark Wagstaff, art editor of music magazine *Mojo*.

Mark was gloomy about the increasingly limited market for commissioned photo shoots. *Mojo* was now more likely to use library pictures of established acts it specialises in than to need new artists depicted – though the rates for a cover or main interview shoot weren't to be sneezed at, if you could break into the magic circle.

Emily said that, in contrast, her "magazine has surprised everyone by doing really well, even though it is so boring and uncool." The *Economist* has stayed ahead partly by being slow to embrace new things: a reliable, dependable brand in an information glut. But it has now become a model of how to use the internet. The *Economist* topped 100,000 digital subscriptions last year, mostly for

iPad and smart-phones. With this profitable growth into new platforms, she's commissioning copy for the website that wouldn't have been used before. For journalists who would pitch to her, she advises:

- It's essential to follow up. New arrivals enter a no man's land, with editors thinking that if a writer was interested or hungry enough, they would follow up, within a week – longer and it's already collected dust.
- A pitch should be short – three or preferably two short paragraphs, perhaps "an awesome haiku". Nothing sinks an editor's heart more than a potentially promising email from an unknown that's too long. Writing for the *Economist* means stripping away unnecessary words and even syllables. If writers can't do that in an email, they can't do it in filed copy.
- Pitches by e-mail? Definitely: everyone hates the phone.
- Be a reader. Know the magazine before you pitch. Editors find it irksome to get a pitch indicating lack of knowledge of what the magazine

does. Pitches resembling something they've already run recently are especially insulting.

- And the pennies? £75 for 400-500 word blog items, up to £175-£250 for leading pieces with lots of original reporting.

© Pdraig Belton



Economist deputy book and arts editor Emily Bobrow, standing, with *Mojo* arts editor Mark Wagstaff, seated at left

Image © Tony Rizzo

Rights ranks rearrange

THINGS are changing on the copyright front – some for the better, with widened support for some of our central demands. On 13 March the Creators' Rights Alliance – the CRA, of which the National Union of Journalists is a founder member – co-organised a meeting at the House of Commons with Consumer Focus, the statutory consumer champion, to explore areas of common ground.

The CRA has already noted that in the digital age copyright and the rights to be identified and to defend the integrity of your work – the so-called "moral rights" – are important to every citizen – since before long everyone will be a published or broadcast creator through the likes of Facebook or YouTube.

Creators' and consumers' organisations agree on the need for automatic and enforceable moral rights, particularly creators' right to be identified, and better metadata identifying creators throughout the distribution chain. We are agreed on the importance of addressing problems with contracts – both those between end-users and intermediaries and between creators and intermediaries. And we share an interest in working out the details of economic rights reverting to creators after a certain time or when not exploited.

Separately, the Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance stated in its submission to the government's consultation on copyright: "Moral

Rights should be unwaivable. The paternity right should be automatic and not have to involve an assertion." And the British Library – one of the bodies most active in pressing for changes to allow it to do more without asking individual creators – notes that "as creators have to assert their moral rights and they can be waived, this in itself may have a causal effect on the number of orphan works. We therefore believe that the government should consider these issues..."

The NUJ has also submitted to Leveson (page 1) that journalists having moral rights is essential to ethical and accountable reporting.

The NUJ's submission to the consultation – all 15,000 words – is available at www.londonfreelance.org/ar and summarises the points we have made in an intense round of meetings, including one with the Minister responsible, Baroness Wilcox. The nitty-gritty concerns the conditions that would have to be met before proceeding with proposals for "extended collective licensing". That would allow organisations like the British Library or the BBC that want to put archive material online to pay one cheque to each collecting society for it to distribute to members and non-members alike.

Echoed by many other respondents, the NUJ says that "at the heart of the present consultation... is an economic illiteracy: through-

out, income from licensing copyright works is counted as a cost to the economy – whereas fashion design, for example, is counted as income. The NUJ shares the British Copyright Council judgement that this represents an 'unjustified ideological shift'. And we are working with many others in opposing cuts to income from educational institutions.

The government is due to report on all the submissions in June. Then later – O frabjous joy! – there will be another consultation on detailed proposals to change the law.

© Mike Holderness

We speak up for libraries

IN APRIL 2011 London Freelance Branch passed a motion arguing that libraries are more than mere collection of books: they provide internet access to the public, offer students quiet spaces for their homework and jobseekers a place to pursue employment. Increasingly, they furnish a workplace for freelancers.

Of 4612 libraries in the United Kingdom, an estimated 10 per cent have closed in the past two years, or hover under threat of closure. We supported a lobby of Parliament on 13 March: for more see www.speakupforlibraries.org – and to find your Member of Parliament to tell them of your support go to www.theyworkforyou.com

Possible Newsquest action

The result of an NUJ "indicative ballot" of staff working for Newsquest titles suggests they would be prepared to take industrial action over a pay freeze and Newsquest's refusal to give them a pay rise this year. The NUJ would legally have to hold another ballot of Newsquest workers before any strike or other industrial action. Watch www.nuj.org.uk for updates, and (eventually) possible strike or industrial action dates on which you may choose to find yourself unavailable for work with this media group.

JR for Jason

A application for Judicial Review has been granted on behalf of NUJ London Photographers' Branch member Jason Parkinson against a production order ordering to hand over to Essex police footage from the Dale Farm traveller site evictions in October. The application, granted on 19 March, also covers ITN, the BBC, Hardcash Productions and BskyB, all of which were also ordered to hand over footage from the evictions. Check the Newsroom pages of www.nuj.org.uk for updates.