

To the lighthouse!

BUILDING AND maintaining a profile online was the topic of London Freelance Branch's October meeting. Our speaker was Adrian ("Adi") Gaskill, head of online content at the Process Excellence Network and former head of online at the Chartered Management Institute. He blogs at www.adigaskill.org/blog. See page 3 for advice on copyright implications of putting your work online, from the same meeting.

Online authors need to change "how you think about your writing," says Adi, who believes writers (and photographers) need to create a "strong presence" that will follow you around the world, rather than just your body of work. He outlined five principles:

- **Be yourself:** some of us are now expected, as part of working for a regular client, to send Tweets from the client's corporate Twitter account. This has a disadvantage. What happens to "what you've built up" on their Twitter account?

"If you move, your employer (or client) keeps it," says Adi: "it's wasted work in a way" as far as you're concerned. (See www.londonfreelance.org/fi/1204twit.html on Twitter for journals.)

- **Interact:** on social media, "people are expecting you to be human, to 'make the odd mistake here and there, be authentic and personal.' They want to leave comments on what you've put online, and also expect you to comment on their comments, to interact with them. 'The authors of articles on, say, the

Guardian online don't respond to the comments, they're missing an opportunity. Traditional journalists don't do this," but if you put your work

useful: you're bringing all of these readers with you."

- **Be on top of the trends:** If you're keeping up a conversation



Adi Gaskill makes a point while Mike Holderness finishes his speaking notes
Photo © Matt Salusbury

online yourself you can "engage, give feedback, interact with your audience." Some freelances report being commissioned by the likes of the *Guardian* and asked also to respond to readers' comments as part of the gig, at which point we should start asking "OK, but how much extra?"

- **Manage and cultivate your community:** you want to be a "lighthouse brand", that is the "figurehead and authority on a particular subject. It doesn't matter who you're writing for, they're consuming you rather than your publisher." This, from a client's point of view, is "very

with readers about your work, you "can follow the trends, look at what's happening" and crowd-source information. When you have a community around you, "people are happy to share". Freelances can be more quick-footed than big publishers, so "you can capitalise on information they don't get. Spend a lot of time listening as well as broadcasting."

- **Persevere:** It takes time: "you won't be an overnight success." Take the time to cultivate a following wherever you choose to show your writing or photos, advises Adi.

© Matt Salusbury

New Ways To Make Journalism Pay 2

LFB'S CONFERENCE, New Ways To Make Journalism Pay 2 is subtitled "A Freelance Lifeboat In The Perfect Storm". Recession plus internet crisis = aaaargh! But freelances never made a crust by letting doom and gloom subsume them.

So the conference is about how real freelances are working through this bad time and creating a freelance

future – new media, sometimes from the ground up, sometimes based on old ways and old media, whatever delivers a decent fee.

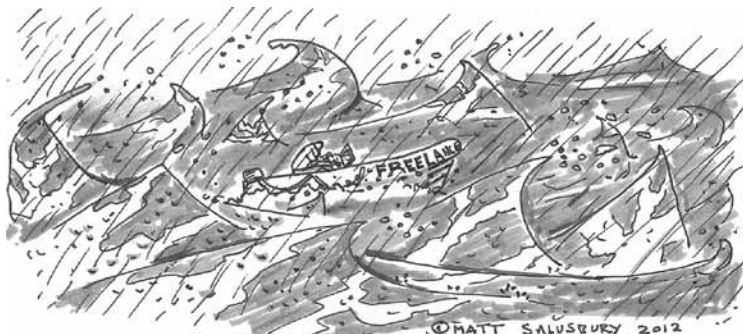
Digital content editor Fiona Culinan in 2009 went "100 per cent digital" after 20 years freelancing in print. She explains: "With the credit crunch and the collapse of advertising budgets, I was suddenly compet-

ing with friends for shifts... Online was where all the action was – and budgets were shifting." So she set up blogs and "taught myself the new digital ropes."

Now she's got a steady flow of work, raising her fees up from £130 a day to "£220 minimum – more for consultancy work." At the conference's "Maximising Social Media And More" session, she'll reveal that it involved a lot of research and putting herself about in new digi-shop-windows.

Fiona has to invent new names for what she does: when she told a BT Group manager at a conference she covered that she was a video blogger, "his reaction was: 'Is that even a job?' I'm happy to say that it is."

Max Glaskin, freelance writer on cycling, airships, brain surgery and



A Freelance Lifeboat In The Perfect Storm © Matt Salusbury

See **NEWWAYS** on p 3

LFB meetings
12 November
Copyright law
changes: meeting in
Parliament
10 December
Seasonal social
See back page &
[www.twitter.com/](http://www.twitter.com/NUJ_LFB)
NUJ_LFB