

We 'absolutely need journalism on top of it'

WELL OVER a hundred NUJ freelance journalists attended – for free – the Google News Lab training event in March. Many had come from a long way out of London. A training day in Google's tools for journalists was the idea of LFB's own Hina Pandya, who opened the event. She noted that the day had been "a year in the making", with her negotiating with Google on behalf of the NUJ's Freelance Industrial Council.

Our host was Google News Lab's Matt Cooke, formerly a radio freelance. Matt described Google News Lab as developed "specifically for journalists" – who apparently tell Google that what they need most is help with research, reporting, distribution via social media. But "you absolutely need journalism on top of it, otherwise it's just nice visuals."

Google image search's "search tools" include a usage rights filter, but Matt warned that "it's not a silver bullet – still look at that image

and see exactly how it's labelled" regarding usage rights. LFB's Phil Sutcliffe reminded attendees that "labelled for use – that absolutely doesn't mean cleared for use... We absolutely don't want to steal from our colleagues." Contact the owner.

Ob YouTube (a Google product) Matt said: "I appreciate those who think this is just fluff." Many media outlets will now have a YouTube channel with a 30-second video on the front page – we watched the BBC's YouTube channel, noticeably more conversational than their other output. *The Economist's* YouTube videos are just graphics with a voice over, while Irish broadcaster RTE specialises in 30-second videos that are just five subtitled photos. Short YouTube videos are a way to "advertise your long form."

YouTube have a license to distribute these, but it's the YouTube user who owns the content. You see a lot of "scraping" in which people

have just filmed a YouTube video on a screen and claimed it as theirs. While "no tool will stop that," Amnesty International now have a site that helps journalists authenticate "user-generated" videos.

Also worthy of investigation are Google public data explorer – it collates all the statistics from various (named) sources – and Google My Maps (for which you'll need a Google account). This allows you to add your own editorial to a map and import spreadsheets and photos into it. You can use Google Maps in your journalism if you attribute it as "map data Copyright Google".

At Google's request there was no photography anywhere else in the building, so you'll have to take my word for it that there was a "Google toilets" sign.

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• The longer version of this online has links to videos of the day. (You'll need your membership number.)

Salon in Salford

Following the very successful Freelance Salon event in London – see the January *Freelance* at www.londonfreelance.org/fi/1512salo.html – the concept is going on tour. Put the date in your diary if you're in the North of England: **Wednesday 18 May**, at the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester from 6pm to 9pm. For details of speakers please revisit www.londonfreelance.org/fi/1603salo.html

Savings for members on essential insurance

IF THE NUJ gets enough members signing up to Imaging Insurance's professional indemnity insurance, we could get a better deal on premiums for these policies. For all freelancers including "Image-makers" (photographers, photo-journalists, video and film makers,) and "Writers" (journalists and authors), Imaging Insurance offers policies which are tailored to your individual needs.

Professional Indemnity Insurance: In these litigious times most freelancers now consider Professional Indemnity Insurance, or "libel insurance" as many writers refer to it, an essential business protection.

"Writers" Professional Indemnity Insurance covers you for claims resulting from words you write and professional services you provide, such as PR and Media advice. This insurance was devised specifically for NUJ members and provides cover for claims resulting from negligence, libel, slander, defamation, breach of someone else's copyright, confidential-

ity or privacy. Automatically included is cover for legal defence costs, so even if you are in the right and someone is just "having a go", the policy provides you with the back-up to prove it in court if necessary.

Cover is provided for material published, for example, in newspapers, magazines, business publications, books, on websites (both yours and other people's), blogs, and social media including Twitter, Facebook and so forth.

As an NUJ member you get cover for all the material you have had published since the first day of your current continuous NUJ Membership and also free Public Liability Insurance with a limit of liability of £1 million.

Public Liability and Products Liability Insurance: Public Liability Insurance is offered with a choice of limits of liability of £1 million, £2 million, £5 million or £10 million. PL Insurance covers you if you accidentally injure someone or damage

someone else's property, and is essential for any self-employed person or business.

Image-makers' Professional Indemnity Insurance covers you for claims resulting from photo, video or film images if, for example, you fail to produce work to a professional standard for a client, or breach someone else's copyright, confidentiality or privacy.

Equipment and Business Property Insurance: Photo, video, film, computer and all other business equipment can be covered on a new for old or agreed value basis. And if you have your own premises, you can also cover business buildings, fixtures and fittings.

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Is Freedom of Information losing ground?

THE REPORT rejecting narrowing the Freedom of Information Act, that mandates release of public bodies' documents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is welcome: especially its rejection of the proposal to levy deterrent charges.

But *Private Eye*, ever the enemy of warm fuzzy feelings, points out that the report also recommends abolishing the relatively inexpensive first port of call for appeals against refus-

als by the Information Commissioner to order release of documents. Were this recommendation to make it into law, such appeals – routine when journalists request information – would have to go straight to the Upper Tribunal of the Administrative Appeals Chamber.

Such appeals may get more common. Before 2009 the Information Commissioner overturned more than half of government refusals

of requests that could "prejudice the conduct of public affairs" – for example by revealing splits. Then Christopher Graham was appointed Information Commissioner and the proportion fell to one in six.

These are mere recommendations. What they demand is vigilance when any proposal to change the law goes to Parliament. See page 1 for details of petitions...

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Grant alert

The Grace Wyndham Goldie BBC Trust Fund provides assistance for people currently or previously in broadcasting, their children and dependants. The Trust helps towards educational costs or grants to relieve short term domestic hardship not covered by help from other sources. Applications need to be in by **31 July**. Details and forms are at <http://tinyurl.com/gracegoldie>