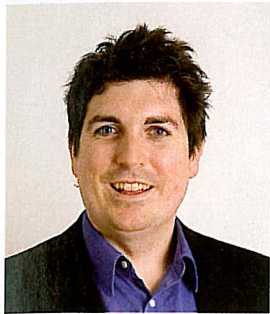


Broadcasting Silver lining to the BBC's clouds



Damian Radcliffe is head of broadcasting at CSV

Now that the dust is settling at the BBC after last month's announcement of substantial cuts to jobs and programming at the corporation, it's a good time to look at how the proposals could affect the sector.

Although Auntie could always do more, she has historically been a good friend to us. Children in Need, the weekly charity appeal on Radio 4, the monthly *Lifeline* charity appeal on BBC One, the corporation's continuing support for the Community Channel and the Media Trust, its 30-year partnership with CSV.... There's no doubt that a healthy BBC can play a crucial role in creating an equally healthy and thriving third sector.

However, after a scandal-ridden summer and a lower than anticipated licence fee settlement, is the BBC still in good health, or is it tired and past its peak?

Despite the doomsayers, I would argue it's still in pretty rude health and still capable of being a good friend to the sector. The proposed MyLocalNow initiative (let's hope it's a working title) – an online, broadband, multimedia, interactive service that would build on the popularity of the BBC's existing local services – will, if it goes ahead, provide local content. This is good news for small community groups that might not want, or be able to get,

regional or national coverage for their work.

To get approval from the BBC Trust – the corporation's governing body – and broadcasting regulator Ofcom, MyLocalNow will probably need to make a decent commitment to user-generated content and citizen journalism (that's content made by licence fee payers). This, too, is welcome news for media-literate parts of the sector, or those with clientele and staff who have the means to make decent films and blogs or use their webcams as 21st-century soapboxes.

The cuts in middle-brow or, as I prefer to call it, light, factual programming and network news are not so good for the sector. Getting your story or your organisation featured in these slots has always been harder than obtaining coverage on smaller scale local services, but they have typically brought with them a cachet, a profile and a national audience that local services can seldom compete with.

So it really is a mixed bag, with potentially more opportunities for the sector at a truly local, grass-roots level – although we'll need to ensure that we have the skills to capitalise on them – but with national coverage becoming even harder to secure. Whether the sector will ultimately be better off as a result of these changes, only time will tell.

Medium and message

WaterAid delivered a knitted petition to Downing Street as part of the charity's End Water Poverty campaign.



'Knitition': the giant scarf is taken through Westminster

A knitted petition, or knitition, created by supporters of WaterAid has helped the development charity reach thousands of new supporters. The Knitted River petition consists of individual knitted blue squares made by WaterAid campaigners from around the world, and was intended to raise awareness of the predicament of people who lack sanitation or safe drinking water.

"We were thinking of ways to engage supporters when a volunteer who liked knitting suggested getting people to knit one square each," explains Jennean Alkadiri, campaign manager at WaterAid. "So we launched Knit a River as part of the End Water Poverty campaign last year. We expected a few thousand people to take part, but ended up getting nearly 100,000."

Supporters took the completed knitted river to Downing Street. It has since been on a year-long tour that has taken it to Glastonbury music festival and the German embassy in London.

Alkadiri feels that it is the originality of the campaign that helped capture people's imagination. She says: "People get tired of signing traditional petitions, but the knitted river makes supporters feel like they were helping to create something. It also helped us to reach a new audience that we have not targeted before, such as Women's Institute members."

WaterAid is keeping a section of the river for future events, the rest is being dismantled to make blankets that will be given to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and homelessness charities.

Indira Das-Gupta

Site Visit www.footballfoundation.org.uk

Organisation **The Football Foundation**
Agency **EIBS**
Spend **£15,000**
Accessibility **W3C accessibility rating AA**

The Football Foundation funds grass-roots football and has given out more than £500m of grants to support the sport since July 2000.

Development

The foundation overhauled its website to make it more accessible and enable people and organisations to apply for grants online. The new site was launched last month.

Design and content

Visitors are welcomed by a clean homepage. It has prominent links to sections of the site that provide information about the foundation and its grant-making procedure and enable people to check the progress of applications for grants. One of the main reasons for the redesign was to enable organisations to make grant applications



online, so it makes sense to flag up this function on the homepage.

Accessibility is good and the site is well signposted. There is also an option on the homepage allowing users to make the text larger throughout the site. The 'apply for a grant section' includes a simple

Navigation 4

Accessibility 4

Innovation 3

Content 4



question and answer feature that will point potential applicants to the particular grants they should apply for. This could be very useful, because there is a selection of grants to choose from. Overall, the site is not particularly groundbreaking, but it does well and is easy to use.

Special features

The most useful feature is the facility that enables grant applicants to monitor the progress of their applications. It provides practical feedback to organisations awaiting decisions.

The Football Foundation says:

"The new website will make life easier for applicants and allow the foundation to get money to the places where it is needed more quickly than ever before."

Andy Rickard