

Report on JTO – industry strategy workshop, October 17

A 2012 workshop was staged to obtain industry and provider feedback on training requirements for the next three years for newspapers and associated web sites.

A 2009 workshop resulted in a strategic plan for the JTO that has yielded the following benefits for the industry and the tertiary sector: The setting up of a workplace training scheme; the revising of the Level 5 National Diploma in Journalism- the entry level qualification to a newsroom – to allow providers to focus on key requirements; the development of a pathway of learning, from secondary school to the newsroom; a transparent and standardised system for the external moderation of all 10 J-schools; the promoting of journalism as a career; the providing of e-learning material.

The 2012 topics included: Core journalism needs and values; exceeding newspaper readers and online readers expectations; the role of J-schools; JTO workplace training.

Objectives: Agree on strategic objective; industry to provide guidelines for 2013-15.

The JTO's four key strategic areas are: Maintaining the currency and relevance of journalism qualifications; working in partnership with tertiary education providers; ensuring the effective operation and further development of workplace training pathways for journalists; providing careers advice.

Tertiary sector representatives at the table this year were Bernie Whelan, James Hollings, Robin Martin and Jim Tucker.

The programme of the day included:

Reviewing core journalism needs in small group discussions, looking at current and future trends;

What does the current and future situation mean for journalism and readers' expectations?

What skills and attributes do journalists need to succeed?

How do the skills and attributes differ from what is being provided?

Agree a plan to fill the gaps.

A mix of small group and full group sessions were expertly managed by Joan Grace and Mike Fletcher until a final session identifying the gaps to be filled in training. These are:

1 –Web skills required: Editing, subbing and writing for the web; basic “technical skills” including the use of templates; publishing stories to the web; especially how the stories look on mobile devices; live coverage to the web; headlines and tags to achieve readership online; selecting the news; developing content over time; attribution of sources; image management, handling stills, video and audio; links; comment moderation; Knowledge of analytics

2 – Training to close the gaps: Students should come to class with five story ideas; to give them confidence; to understand what “story ideas” are; to prepare them for work experience; to show them “ideas” can include ordinary events and big events.

3 – Understanding the industry and the world (with a good general knowledge): Use of guest speakers; work experience, so they learn about the industry; talking about readers; basic business skills.

Session comment: *“we ask a lot and the students are good”*

4 – Need seen for ongoing professional development of journalists: Revival of gatekeepers (Chief reporters, news editors etc) training conferences discussed; NZJTO support on a cross-industry basis offered; thesis being done on training of newsroom leaders.

This was a brilliant and educational afternoon’s work by everyone involved, and well organized and steered by Joan and Mike. There were congratulations by all involved. My final comment on the day was that there was just one woman from industry and tertiary providers at the table and that we could all ensure next time there was better representation of women, and of ethnic diversity.

Bernie Whelan, Jeanz president