

Journalism in action- my experience as a Huffington Post Intern

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This is a guest post by LSE student and Bernard Levin Award Winner Natasha Valladares. Part of her prize was an internship at the Huffington Post. Was it a traffic chasing content sweatshop or the cutting edge of the digital editorial revolution?*

The Huffington Post UK claims to represent everything that's current and progressive about journalism today. But while the internet age has revolutionised the way we handle a lot of our daily tasks, it also divides opinion. After two weeks in the central London hub of the Huffington Post, I would argue that the HuffPost UK makes the most of what online journalism has to offer.

The first thing to strike me was the way technology is used to make the reader experience more relevant. With traditional print journalism, the circulation figures give some idea of whether the content appeals to the readership. With the Huffington Post UK, real time analytics give an indication of precisely which articles readers are connecting with, and whether content like videos and galleries increase reader engagement.



This ability to see what appeals to the readers allows the journalism to focus on its audience, and to create a tailor-made news hub that meets the needs of the readers directly. Journalism is designed to inform, to entertain, to question and to answer.

Internet Boon

With the ability to evaluate previous articles, the Huffington Post's online format enables it to inform readers as events happen, with no traditional constraints like a deadline for the morning edition. As far as entertainment is concerned, the ability to include videos and interactive quizzes is another boon of the internet era that amps up the reader experience.

When questioning and answering, the comments, or "conversations" as they are more aptly named on the Huffington Post's site, open up the articles from something static into something much more dynamic. Shared on various platforms such as twitter and Facebook, the conversation grows.

A surprisingly small team runs the whole UK operation, but the office is cohesive with an open-plan layout that allows various sections to share ideas that might inter-relate. I spent time on the Entertainment, News, Student and Lifestyle sections and found that although the content was different, the drive behind presenting it to the public was the same on each desk.

Each section had a real interest in what they were providing and worked to ensure that the content was engaging and up-to-date. International stories were passed back and forth between the foreign editions of the Huffington Post, and revamped to be relevant to the home readership.

Content Culture

A real culture of content creation and content sharing is what underpins the writing at the Huffington Post UK. At the forefront of online journalism, they make full use of what the internet age has offered, and in doing so present

content that's more accessible to the newer generations. When most people now are more likely to be seen clutching a tablet or smartphone on the tube than a book, journalism needs to be technology-ready, and at the HuffPost UK it is.

Ultimately, the internet is responsible for many things, a lot of them negative. Complainants might claim that it's eliminated human contact and ruined the high street – and they might not be wrong. But the internet age has brought with it innovation to be grateful for, and the changes it's brought to journalism are definitely something to welcome.

Prefer Print

There are some things I prefer about print journalism; I still like to buy a physical newspaper and enjoy the (thankfully witty and not search-engine-optimised) headlines. But I also like to get a regular influx of stories on my phone. The paper I read in the morning might give me a full story on something topical, but I still like to keep informed throughout the day with online journalism.

Whatever your personal stance, the reality is that online journalism is here and here to stay, so 'like' it or 'unlike' it, I'm personally looking forward to further investment in reader engagement and the bright future of dynamic online journalism.

This post is by LSE student and Bernard Levin Award winner Natasha Valladares.

** The Bernard Levin Award celebrates a distinguished graduate of the London School of Economics, Bernard Levin, one of the greatest and most admired journalists the School has produced. The award began in 2007. It was developed by Sir John Burgh, David Kingsley O.B.E and Elizabeth Anderson, working with other interested friends of Bernard, LSE Alumni and the LSE Students Union.*

Students were invited to submit a 1000 word piece in the style of Bernard Levin, the judges have met and the reception is to award the winner and highly commended entries as well as to celebrate the hard work of all those who entered and the range of talent at LSE. The winner will receive £500, a two week internship with the Huffington Post, dinner and tickets to the theatre for two, a copy of Bernard's work and a framed certificate. Highly commended entries will each receive a copy of Bernard Levin's work and a framed certificate, as well as an opportunity to visit BBC offices in Salford.

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