

Not even Dr Who can save BBC News

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It's not often you can really impress your teenage children, especially when they are as hard-bitten, cynical and blase as mine. (where do they get it from? It must be their mother). But a ticket to the screening of the [Dr Who](#) Christmas Special at the Science Museum did the trick.

David Tennant is as sparkling in the flesh as he is on screen. Kylie is absolutely fabulous and gives a performance way beyond her usual simpering range. But as the ebullient [Jane Tranter](#) from the BBC made clear, this production is a triumph for the whole of BBC Wales from the make-up artists to the writer [Russell T Davies](#). The whole revamped Dr Who has been witty, innovative, exciting, clever, watchable and a massive hit. Traditional values in a modern setting, as John Prescott used to say. Sitting there with hundreds of celebrities watching this blockbuster bit of TV it was difficult to think that this is an organisation in deep crisis. I know that the BBC is always in crisis but as a good feature by the Guardian's Owen Gibson outlines, it really is at the cross-roads and many people don't think the BBC bosses have a road-map.

One very senior BBC manager recently told me that he could not remember a time when the BBC has been so devoid of friends.

[Ofcom](#)'s plans for a Public service Provider, recently outlined by Ed Richards at a Polis [event](#), which could threaten the licence fee is just one of the big policy decisions coming up in the next half decade which could make or break the Corporation.

Funnily enough, in the BBC News division which is the bit I know and care most about, they do have a plan which makes some sense. In a digital age it is essential to embrace the Internet and public involvement with journalism. It is a no brainer that when you have all this great new technology you can reduce the numbers of people and focus harder on reaching more platforms with better stories. It just doesn't feel like that if you are one of hundreds of BBC staff who are entering the festive period worrying about their career futures.

It is difficult for News to pull a hit out of the bag like Dr Who. Unfortunately, news doesn't have the feel-good factor of a hit Sci-Fi series nor the glamour of stars like Billie Piper and David Tennant. But 2008 has got to be the year when BBC News reminds us of how passionate it is about excellence and innovation in journalism. Even those of us who have been critics and competitors can only hope it rediscovers its mission and that like the great Time Lord, it pulls off a miraculous escape from global catastrophe.

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