

2010 NEWS & CURRENT AFFAIRS WORKSHOP REPORT

To: WITBN Council
From: Te Anga Nathan, GM of News & Current Affairs, Māori Television
Date: 30 March 2010
Subject: News & Current Affairs Workshop, WITBC 2010

Overview

Date: Tuesday, 9 March 2010
Time: 9.30am – 3.00pm
Venue: Formosa Naruwan Hotel, Taitung, Taiwan
Facilitator: Te Anga Nathan, Māori Television.

Present:

- Vera Houle, Director of News and Current Affairs, APTN.
- Norrie Maclennan, Editor Gaelic News, BBC Alba.
- Te Anga Nathan, GM News & Current Affairs; Julian Wilcox, Presenter/Reporter, Kelvin McDonald, Assoc. Producer Indigenous Insight), Māori Television.
- Sara Ellen Anne Eira, NRK Sami Radio.
- Joe Reddington, Leas-Phríomheagarthóir, TG4
- Nā 'ālehu Anthony (Executive Producer), Keoni Lee (Chief Financial Officer) and Amy Kalili (News Anchor), 'Ōiwi TV, Hawaii
- Landuun Ismahasan, (Producer); Tasaw Watan, (Producer); Kolas Yotaka, (Deputy Manager); Michang Lee, (Reporter/ Producer); Ding-wen Liou, (Editor); Patagaw Talimalaw (Producer), TITV.

Content

Welcome / Introductions

Te Anga Nathan welcomed people to the workshop and briefly outlined the subjects to be covered.

The first activity involved getting to know each other better. Participants were split into pairs, with people they did not know, and given the task of finding out more about that person: their background, role at their network, why they chose to work there, and what they love most about working for an indigenous broadcaster. Everybody then introduced their partner to the wider group.

This exercise was very successful and began the process of creating a bond between the groups that would assist our working relationships when we returned to our home countries.

Indigenous Insight Discussion

We began this discussion by watching a 15 minute show reel of the pilot series of Indigenous Insight, featuring stories from each of the six contributing broadcasters. This served as a reminder of our collective success in bringing the series together and also provided a platform for further discussion.

Key areas of discussion were: (1) the optimum number of episodes for the 2010 series and beyond (13 or 26 episodes); (2) production (how to make the production process smoother and more efficient for all involved), (3) programme content (preferred story durations; whether to continue theme episodes or to make the programme more news driven); (4) increasing the number of networks participating in the programme (ie. exploring 'Ōiwi TV Hawaii's capacity to participate in 2010. As NITV Australia was not represented at the workshop we did not discuss their involvement during the workshop, but did speak with Tanya Denning from the network subsequently. The indications were that NITV would like to participate in 2010, if possible.); and (5) how best to make use of the Indigenous Insight programme or stories (where broadcasters could do more to take the programme in its entirety or use stories from the programme).

The main areas of agreement were that:

(a) We would collectively commit to a second series of 13 episodes in 2010 and consider subsequent years later;

(b) We would continue with a mix of themes and news content;

(c) 'Ōiwi TV Hawaii would endeavour to complete the requirements for full membership of WITBN with a view to participating in Indigenous Insight in 2010; and

(d) BBC Alba would investigate screening the programme in its entirety, and TG4 would investigate utilising stories from the programme, in 2010.

News Sharing Discussion

We discussed the possibility of sharing news stories on a more regular basis throughout the year, separate to sharing for the purpose of Indigenous Insight.

Ideas raised included sharing weekly news rundowns and the capacity and desirability of sharing news stories on a daily basis in the nature of an 'indigenous CNN where reporters can broadcast in their native language and still be apart of an international indigenous network - WITBN.

We agreed that:

(a) We liked the idea of sharing news stories over and above Indigenous Insight and would be receptive to story swaps.

(b) It was too early to swap stories daily, but it was an inspirational goal that we viewed warmly.

Broadcaster Presentations

The final segment of the workshop involved each broadcaster providing a 15 minute presentation on their news and current affairs programming.

As Māori Television had been centre stage in most of the early discussion about Indigenous Insight and time was now short, it was decided that it would forego its presentation in the interests of allowing everyone adequate discussion time.

This was an exceptionally good session that gave a helpful insight into a variety of areas, such as: the background and content of each broadcaster's news and current affairs programming; how each was overcoming various obstacles and turning them into strengths (eg. the use of video journalism;

lessons learnt in catering for multiple languages; presenting weather relevant to isolated tribal communities, etc); and identifying programmes whose stories could fit our own programming.

This session was so useful that future WITBC news and current workshops would do well to allocate a longer period of time to this discussion – perhaps, 30 minutes per broadcaster.

Summary of Points of Agreement

To recap, in this workshop it was agreed:

Indigenous Insight

- We support a second series of 13 episodes of Indigenous Insight in 2010.
- The programme should continue to contain a mix of themes and news content.
- ‘Ōiwi TV Hawaii is a prospective contributor to Indigenous Insight 2010, provided it fulfills the requirements for full membership of WITBN.
- BBC Alba and TG4 will both endeavour to utilise Indigenous Insight in 2010.

News Sharing

- We are open to sharing news stories over and above that for Indigenous Insight.
- It is too early to entertain regular daily exchanges of news stories for all broadcasters however this would be a goal to achieve after the completion of the second series of Indigenous Insight if not earlier for some.

Intangible benefits

- The intangible benefits of having the time to share our combined experiences producing news and current affairs for our indigenous stations and the way we report in our respective native languages was immeasurable and will be reflected in the quality of our second series of Indigenous Insight.

- What we found is that we face the same challenges in broadcasting in our native languages and we each do things a little differently, however one was able to take away the strengths of each of the organisations which presented to improve their own news and current affairs offering.

Other Recommendations

- News and current affairs workshops become an integral part of future WITBN conferences to continue to strengthen the ties between news and current affairs executives.
- That the workshop be included in the formal WITBC conference programme and be open to observation by all conference delegates.
- Broadcaster presentations of their news and current affairs programming be allocated at least 30 minutes, (20 minute presentations and 10 minutes Q and A) per broadcaster at the next WITBC workshop such as its value.
- That the WITBN executive funds the attendance of news and current affairs executives to the next conference in Norway in 2012.