

ACTO9

local public service television directory

Volume 3 SCOTLAND'S PUBLIC SERVICE SPECTRUM Three further papers from the Forum held at the Scottish Parliament on 14th February 2007

1 Film & Media at MIMAC

Graeme Cambell, Development Officer, MiMAC, Fife

2 Speech at Scottish Parliament

Jaqui Devereux, Acting Director, Community Media Association

3 Community Groups and Digital Communication

Gavin Yates, Head of Communications, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

ACTO is an advisory committee of local television organisations working alongside the Institute of Local Television. **ACTO**'s initial objective is to share information supporting the introduction of local digital terrestrial television as an independent form of local public service broadcasting.

ACTO was established in 2003 by local television members of the Community Media Association to focus on the introduction of local digital terrestrial television services - or 'local DTT'.

Through the Institute of Local Television **ACTO** is represented on **Open Channels for Europe!** the organisation representing European local and open channels in exchanging information on European practice and in negotiation with the European parliament on small-scale TV provision.

Personal and institutional affiliation to **ACTO** is by a small annual subscription (see page 7) entitling subscribers to copies of Institute of Local Television research and reports as well as to **ACTO** directories. Subscribers also receive early announcement of local TV conferences, forums, workshops and are offered networking and support with submissions to regulators and government as well as encouragement with local-tv related activities.

ACTO - local public service television directory - encourages local lines of research and documentation and promotes publications which support a wide public engagement with small-scale local TV.

This is the twenty ninth edition of the **ACTO - local public service television directory**.

ACTO back issues can be downloaded from www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html

WEBSITES

For information:

on local and community TV in Europe: **www.obs.int/db/persky/eu.html**

on community TV channels worldwide: **www.openchannel.se/**

UK's Community Media Association: **www.commedia.org.uk/**

UK examples of local and community TV programmes:

www.showcase.commedia.org.uk/

website of NvTv Belfast's Local TV Channel: **www.nvttv.co.uk**

Public Voice is the leading voluntary sector coalition campaigning for citizens' interests in communications policy and regulation:

www.politics.co.uk/campaignsite/public-voice-53436683.htm

Ofcom - the UK's independent regulator and competition authority - site includes sections on codes, guidelines and consultations: **www.ofcom.org.uk/**

..... provides an extensive catalogue of consultations and reports - for background to local TV look out the public service broadcasting consultations Phase 1-3 and you can join the Ofcom email list for updates on future consultations and publications

inter-ACT!#5 media activism in South Korea. You can subscribe to this regular

English language newsletter at **<http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/inter-act>**

Institute of Local Television **www.localtvonline.com/** shared with The Broadcasting Trust, website lists publications, provides background papers, illustrates local TV DVDs, 2.4 Ghz TV studies

Ofcom's spectrum dividend review consultation

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2005/11/nr_20051117

Film & Media at MIMAC

Graeme Cambell, Development Officer (first delivered at Borders Local TV Briefing)

MIMAC, which stands for Moving Image Media Access Centre, is a film making, training, equipment resource, production and networking hub, serving Fife and the surrounding area and sits within Theatre and Arts.

We exist because we believe that Hollywood is not some distant concept that lies beyond the horizon, but lives and breathes within our own villages, towns and cities.

Hollywood dominates the global moving image landscape because the American film and television industry controls the means of production from programme making to programme distribution. It is something they do very well and many of us have been influenced by American life through our exposure to it.

British Television is well respected but our film industry swings from 'bust to broke'.

Within Scotland, we have always been under represented in both film and television. As a result, the world has never really seen our own rich culture of stories, places and people and what is reflected back to us has a narrowness, which may show elements of Highland and Glasgow life, but rarely Fife or Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders.

Time and time again in Scotland, I come across attitudes from people who should know better, that doubt the ability of their own community to master the rich possibilities of the digital revolution and become their own producer of film and television, but doubters aside, it is happening and happening at a growing and exciting rate.

In terms of Fife, prior to the creation of MIMAC, we took the decision of developing moving image, not through the vain hope of attracting Hollywood through selling us as a tartan shortbread tin, fantasy for location work, but by investing in our own people, by providing the means for them to produce their own film and television through the new digital technologies.

This we did by setting up a moving image media access centre, MIMAC for short in 2002.

MIMAC serves as a central hub for moving image in the area by not only acting as a first point of contact for communities wishing to learn and produce moving image projects but also as a supporting resource for school, college and university students wishing to develop and enhance their moving image portfolios, for further studies and eventual employment. In addition to this the growing industry of free lance practitioners in the community and broadcast sectors, use MIMAC to access specialised training and equipment.

The MIMAC resource is based around digital video. It is portable, affordable but above all, of a quality that is broadcastable. That resource consists of digital camcorders including high definition and digital edit suites running video editing, effects and sound programmes. We have a small core staff on the Council payroll, in addition to employing a team of free lance film makers, animators and moving image specialists for specific projects. From this modest resource we can deliver most moving image requests.

I now present a snap shot of the type of projects which MIMAC delivers.

Because of the spread or rather lack of spread of BBC and ITV coverage in Scotland, many regions tend to get missed out unless something highly dramatic and probably

negative occurs, such as the small Fife fishing village of Cellardyke being bombarded with World news crews recently, thanks to a dead bird being found in the harbour. The coverage tends to be clichéd and lack depth, partially because the broadcasters parachute in and parachute out with no real understanding of local issues. Had local TV been active in the area, then certainly, local programme makers could have covered it to the same quality but probably in more depth, than the London based satellite trucks. The story would probably also have broken a week earlier as the local press were on to it.

My first clip represents local news, of very much local interest to Fife, but demonstrates what local film makers are producing.....clip from the '700th' played. A MIMAC documentary on the 700th anniversary of the Kirkcaldy Links Market.

Opportunity is key to what moving image can deliver in the community sphere. Excluded groups can find in the moving image experience, a confidence which can break a cycle of despair and open up exciting new horizons. My next clip is a drama called 'Careless'. This was produced by a group of young people, all with experiences of foster care. Our Social Work service approached us because these young people wanted to tell their story through a film, but not through some 'street jive' flashy pop video, but through a real movie, shot on location with them as cast and crew.....clip from the MIMAC produced, drama, 'Careless' screened.

'Careless' achieved many objectives. For the Social Work service, it was a way of getting professionals to deal with the future of foster care. For two universities it became a teaching aid, but for the young people it opened up a new way of expressing themselves, of learning new skills and for some of the group, acting and video production courses at college.

Within education, moving image projects can not only provide a new and stimulating art form for children to engage with, but there is growing academic research from such organisations as the 'General Teaching Council', that the skills learned in these projects have positive effects on standard curriculum subjects.

The next clip is from an animation project, where the children developed a story in conjunction with their French lessons and through workshops, built sets and models and mastered digital video animation.....clip from the MIMAC supported animated film, 'Un Mystere dans le Jardin', screened.

Increasingly MIMAC world's of community based film making is merging with mainstream broadcasting. This is illustrated by the next clip which tells a fascinating and relevant story in terms of local programme making.

MIMAC supports around 200 members. These range from film students and what is loosely called independent or low budget film makers, shooting documentary, drama, animation and sometimes experimental. Also included are individuals who wish to engage. They may have a story they want to turn into a film but don't know where to begin or voluntary and community groups who wish to produce videos about their lives, causes and concerns. We support all through a stepping stone training programme, ranging from beginner taster sessions, introductory workshops and advanced short courses. All are encouraged and helped to access our equipment resource to produce their own videos, DVD's etc. We can match writers with camera people, actors with locations and editors with musicians, and through our monthly screening event and annual film festival, find audiences and inspiration for future projects.

Robin Mitchell is one of our members and he took an idea all the way to ITV.....

...clip from the MIMAC supported documentary, 'And so Goodbye', screened.

I have only touched on what MIMAC does but I would suggest that if we are able to do this in a region of Scotland which is not in the media mainstream, on modest resources, then the rest of the country could ?

The situation though is not perfect, for although we can produce, difficulty lies within distribution and that is why local TV is such a crucial development.

MIMAC along with Pilton Video is part of 'Media Access Projects Scotland' and we are campaigning for more support for this sector, including support for regions that do not have media access projects, so I am delighted to be able to lend support to 'Moving Image Borders', who are here today and planning to launch shortly.

So with the programme makers in place, the Executive's commitment through Local Authorities to Media Literacy, I suppose the only remaining question is what delivery system to use for our local TV ?

Extract of speech made by Graeme Campbell, Film & Media Officer at MIMAC to the Local TV Forum, Dumfries 24th April 2006.

Speech at Scottish Parliament

Jaqui Devereux, Acting Director, Community Media Association

Thank you for inviting me. I am here wearing two hats:

1) As Acting Director of the Community Media Association, the UK representative body for community media practitioners. The community media umbrella includes community radio and television broadcasters, both on traditional platforms and the internet, and community based film and new media groups.

The distinctive feature of community media is that communities themselves access and embrace media in order to broadcast for rather than to the community. In other words, communities doing it for themselves! The sector has huge numbers of volunteers and trains thousands of people every year in media, ICT and other transferable skills. One quarter of the CMA membership is based in Scotland.

The UK government has acknowledged the social and economic impact of the sector and its real benefits in terms of community cohesion, social inclusion and giving people a voice.

The Digital Dividend refers to the release of spectrum for other uses following Digital Switch Over in 2012. We at the CMA believe it is vital that the future use of this spectrum benefits us all as citizens and communities and that it enables further community development through free access for communities to use media to inform, include and give voice to their aspirations.

2) Wearing my second hat, the CMA is a member of Public Voice, which is a loose coalition of voluntary sector organisations with a real commitment to ensuring that the voice and needs of the citizen are included fully in Communications legislation and practice.

Ofcom, the communications regulator, has put forward their view of what should happen with the spectrum released as a result of the Digital Dividend. Their view appears to be that public benefit will best be achieved through auctioning off the spectrum to the highest bidder, with no intervention or regulation to ensure that the spectrum is a) used, b) used effectively and c) used to maximise public benefit to us as citizens.

While spectrum is not actually a “thing”, it may be useful to use the analogy of land. This is the spectrum equivalent of selling off the school playing fields in the 1980’s. Spectrum is a finite physical resource, or if you prefer has finite physical uses, and once “sold off” would be unlikely ever to come back into the public domain.

Both Public Voice and the Community Media Association believe spectrum is a public asset, not a “commodity” to be bought and traded in an unregulated market. At the very least some of this spectrum must be reserved to ensure its availability for public purposes which commercial operations, free from regulation, would never provide or cater for. The notion that we in the voluntary sector could “buy” the spectrum for these purposes is risible.

The birth of radio and television was here in Scotland. We urge you, and our colleagues throughout the UK, to respond to the Ofcom Consultation, whether in detailed technical terms, or just to say “No”. The only way to preserve spectrum as a public asset is by us all making it plain to Ofcom and to government that the “total free market” approach is neither economically and socially effective, nor morally sustainable.

The deadline for receipt of responses to Ofcom on the Digital Dividend Review is 20th March 2007.

Community Groups and Digital Communication

Gavin Yates, Head of Communications, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

The emergence of community digital television bandwidth could have some significant gains for community groups across Scotland. In terms of increasing awareness of different community projects, making potential volunteers aware of opportunities and to increase the transparency of the sector as a whole.

Civil society organisations

There are approximately 50,000 community organisations in Scotland, employing 120,000 people and making up a sizeable percentage of GDP. Although media communication is essential to the community sector (extending networks and publicising issues), the complexity and expense of television production can deter community groups from participating in community television. However, digital television opens up new possibilities, such as short form programming and data delivery.

Community television has a role to play in teaching and assisting civil society organisations to use digital media technology to their advantage.

Without the necessary allowance of bandwidth these vital advantages are diminished.

New content forms, such as digital storytelling (which uses still images and voice-overs in the construction of elegant 2 minute films), or data delivery (fact sheets or web-page style content), can allow voluntary sector groups to participate in television broadcasting.

Many Scottish charities are already exploiting web-based methodologies successfully that would naturally port to digital TV and enrich society and help government achieve some of it's goals in terms of community empowerment and citizen interaction.

E-government

Governments and local authorities are increasingly using digital technology to provide public access to information, delivery of services, community consultation and policy deliberation. Although the Internet has made it easier to organise personal affairs – from online forms and payments to genealogy – it has failed to successfully spark public debate. The broadcast media and the press have traditionally been the means by which governments communicate with the public. A portion of community spectrum could be used for communication between government and citizens, allowing for deliberation, campaigns and polling on specific issues at local, state or federal levels.

Community groups need effective ways to communicate with government and digital TV could be one such conduit.

The BBC's Action Network (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/>) is a good example of citizen deliberation in a media space. Articles can be posted on the site, informing citizens of events in their local area. Forums encourage citizens participate in debate and create networks. This kind of initiative would reach a broader audience via digital television, with content ranging from short video campaigns, interviews and soap box commentary to full documentaries and live broadcasts.

Sale of books/DVDs and your voluntary subscriptions of £30.00 per year help keep ACTO afloat. To support send cheques made out to Institute of Local Television marked ACTO on the back.



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