

Freelance Training in the  
UK Broadcast Industry



# User Notes

 **To watch video file**

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Click the appropriate “watch” or “listen” icon to play a short opening montage of views about what it means to be a freelancer in the UK broadcast industry.

Where in-text quotations are taken from the video interviews recorded at BAFTA and Glasgow, the “watch” or “listen” icons offer the opportunity to view or hear the quote in its original context.

# Acknowledgements

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**Frank Paterson** and

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Creative Industries: Television.

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# 1. Introduction

## Introduction

At its inception the B TSR was charged with the task of listening to the voice of the freelance community and taking note of their training needs; then offering insights on those needs and making recommendations to the industry on how to meet them.

In partnership with Skillset two evening events were facilitated providing a forum to hear the views of freelancers. This report commissioned by the B TSR from the University of Hertfordshire is one outcome of those events. It is underpinned by the University's extensive research into labour markets coupled with their particular knowledge of the UK Broadcast industry.

Although attendance was by open invitation, we recognise that participants at both events, were a self selecting group of freelancers that might not be representative of the industry as a whole. However, we were greatly encouraged to find that the mix on both nights was broadly in line with Skillset data on freelancers.

This paper was commissioned to stimulate debate within the Industry and does not represent the point of view of the B TSR. The paper's findings reveal issues that challenge everyone in the Broadcast industry. The research team suggest that there is much to do by all; the employer, Skillset, the training provider and the freelancers themselves in taking responsibility for their own careers. We believe it provides a significant contribution to the debate on the development needs of the freelance community and how they access training opportunities. We are sure it will stimulate a response. We look forward to your comment on this paper and your suggestions for future work.

## 2. Methodology

## Methodology

This report is based on analysis of the following data provided by BTSR:

- 1) Summary tables of the results of questionnaires completed by freelancers during two separate events in Glasgow and London (see Appendix 1-3 for the questionnaire, summary tables and comparison between the two sets of data and similar data from Skillset).

The GCU/CIRCU team analysed the data which is based on a questionnaire completed by 46 [Glasgow] and 120 respondents [London].

- 2) Video recordings of short interviews (around ten minutes) of freelancers in Glasgow (9 interviewees) and London (5 interviewees) (see Appendix 4 for the interview questions).

The team viewed the recordings, focused on the main themes and transcribed significant points.

- 3) Three written summaries of roundtable discussions which took place in July 2007 and February 2008.

The team analysed and structured significant points.

- 4) Secondary materials from Government and industry reports, documents, previous research and scholarly studies (see Appendix 5 for a list of references).

The team carried out a short literature search and reviewed these secondary materials extracting key information or data which was seen as helpful in contextualising the BTSR data.

### 3. Freelance Workers in the Broadcast Industry

## 3.1 Background: The Broadcast Industry and Workforce in the UK

### 3.1.1 Structure of the Broadcast Industry

The UK television industry is largely vertically integrated with most of the broadcasters except Channel 4 making a number of their own programmes. The founding of Channel 4 in 1982 effectively ended the duopoly of BBC and ITV in UK television production as well as the broadcasting sector. Channel 4 therefore has been a major force in the development of the independent sector. The Communications Act 1990 further requires all public service channels to commission 25% of their non-news programmes from the independent production companies (IPCs). Radio in the UK is a mixed economy with publicly funded services (BBC radio), commercial services, local, regional and national services.

Recent advances in digital technology are driving widespread changes across the broadcasting industry. Independent production companies are now a major source of digital content: 35% of IPCs surveyed in early 2005 had produced interactive programming in the previous year and all companies with revenues of more than £20m annually did so (Mediatique 2005: 14). Digital radio (including Digital Audio Broadcasting, DAB) has also been growing (Ofcom 2007: 7).

There is a clear segmentation in the independent sector based on the size of companies. At the top end there are three companies with over £100m turnover in 2005: Endemol, HIT Entertainment and All3media (Mediatique 2005: 3). The film and audio visual industries comprise a large number (11000) of mainly small companies (IES 2004)<sup>1</sup>. In 2002, 96% of those in film and video production had fewer than ten

employees (IES 2004: 23). 23% of independent production companies were 'one-man bands'.

Although the independent sector could have a crucial role to play in supporting training among the broadcasting industry workforce, it is not regulated by a statutory body, unlike the broadcasters which are. Ofcom established the Broadcasting Training and Skills Regulator (BTSR) in 2005 to ensure broadcasters provide relevant, inclusive and cost-effective training and development opportunities under the training mandate of the Communications Act 2003 (BTSR 2006).

### 3.1.2 Employment in the Broadcast Industries

There is a degree of overlap between employment in various sectors of the film production and audio visual (AV) industries<sup>2</sup> in the UK. Boundaries between film and television production, for example, are to some extent permeable. There are estimated to be 160,000 people working in the industries as a whole and 20950 [up from 14900 in 2004] in the independent production sector (Skillset 2004, 2005, 2006). After interactive media, broadcast TV [23,700] and broadcast radio [22,200] were the largest employers in the audio visual media industries in 2004. Around 400 people work in independent radio production (Skillset 2006: 10).

Of those working in the AV industries some 25% were freelance on June 30, 2004 [Skillset census day] making the total number of freelancers working on that day 40,000. Skillset estimates the number of freelancers not working but available on that day as around 50,000. This would give us a total freelance pool of around 90,000. Freelancers are not distributed evenly amongst the various sectors within the industry, with one of the larger sectors, cinema exhibition [16,500 Skillset 2006], having no freelance workforce while others, such as independent

1. The IES research does not distinguish between film and audio visual production companies.

2. There may be no agreed single definition of the Audio Visual Industries, but in relation to its biennial employment census Skillset refers to; cable and satellite tv, terrestrial tv, interactive media, radio, animation, facilities, commercials, corporate production and all film sectors apart from production. Skillset carries out a separate census of film production employment.

production or commercials, have over a half and up to two thirds of the workforce made up of freelancers. Excluding independent television production, television and radio are estimated to have a freelance workforce of between 20% to 25%, perhaps 10,000-11,000 in total.

Broadcast television is made up of a relatively high proportion of workers on permanent contracts (79%) (Skillset 2005: 51) and 73% of those in broadcast television work exclusively in that sector (Skillset 2005: 31). On the other hand, 61% of those in independent productions are freelance or sole traders (Skillset 2005a: 50) and 51% work in more than one sector (Skillset 2005: 31). 35% of those working in radio broadcasting are freelancers (Skillset 2006: 12) <sup>3</sup>.

It is against this background that this report analyses the experiences and training needs of the freelance workers in the broadcasting industries.

### 3.2 Nature of Freelancing

It should be acknowledged that the term 'freelancer' is not unproblematic. The contractual status of a worker can be one of offering a 'contract of service' [an employee] or a 'contract for service' [self-employed]. A freelancer can fall into either category. It follows that the freelance experience also varies from worker to worker. The label could be attached to individuals who have not so far succeeded in gaining paid work, through the early years of employment as a Production Assistant [who may have little say in negotiating his/her contract] to the established and experienced professional with a continuous stream of contracts and the ability to choose which projects he/she works on [See Appendix 7 'What is a Freelancer' for a full discussion].

The data gathered by B TSR<sup>4</sup> suggests that few freelancers work continuously. As noted in the previous section it is estimated that well over half of the freelancers are not working on any

given day. From the B TSR data we can see that nearly half (46%) of the freelancers in London worked less than 100 days a year.

Two thirds of freelancers (66%) from the two B TSR events worked less than 200 days during the previous year. This means that they were out of employment in the broadcasting industries for about 12 weeks per year. This should be set against a more typical working year for permanent employees of 240 days [calculated as 48 weeks at 5 days per week].

While we are unable to confirm that they had not taken work elsewhere, many freelancers are likely to feel the financial impact of significant periods of unemployment. This merits further research focussed on gaining a fuller understanding of the working patterns and lifestyles of freelance workers.

Recruitment in the television industries is deregulated, informal and often ad hoc. For example informal introduction and recommendations are traditionally how production crews are formed. Potential employers routinely telephone previous work colleagues and ask for a verbal testimonial, therefore, reputations and personal contacts are vital for obtaining employment. As a result, freelancers are prompted to network whenever possible with others in the industry. This creates a paradox where industry professionals are obliged to collaborate to obtain employment intelligence and compete for scarce job opportunities.

Since much of the sector's work is short term or fixed term, practitioners tend to start searching for their next job towards the end of their current contract. The research suggests that many freelancers would prefer permanent full-time work but had become freelance due to the lack of permanent positions. Freelance work in the industry is precarious. Two thirds (66%) of freelancers interviewed in Scotland and London

3. The Financial Services Authority states that 'a sole trader operates as an individual without the use of a company structure or partners and has sole responsibility for the actions of the business. Business finances cannot be separated from personal finances insofar as the sole trader has unlimited personal liability and is personally responsible for any liabilities incurred by the business'. <http://www.fsa.gov.uk/Pages/Doing/how/application/glossary.shtml>. Accessed 9 July 2007.

4. The B TSR data, while based on a sample derived from those choosing to attend one of two events in London or Glasgow [168 respondents in total], is broadly in line with that of the Skillset census on this point.

worked for up to three companies during the preceding year. While permanent employment may avoid the precariousness of freelancing, this aspect of the work might provide a welcome variety that, we may speculate, many would enjoy. Freelancers commented on the inability to plan long term careers and conceded that it might be better:



*'Keep your hands in different pots  
[and] have a back up plan.'*



**FAZIA AMJID - Journalist & radio presenter**

Having multiple skill-sets may therefore help freelancers survive in the sector.

Progression in the industry often depends on maintaining good relationships with co-workers and employers. Dex et al (2000) consider how uncertainty in the television sector affects the freelance workers; many cope with the problem by diversifying income resources (such as doing non-media work), building informal networks and thinking of leaving work in television.

As this interviewee suggests,



*'I'm 45 now and I am starting to  
wonder whether I can keep on  
scrabbling around to get work for  
the next 20 years.'*



**PAUL TUCKER - Producer/director**

Freelancers have to be proactive, whether looking for work or training. "London centrism" is mentioned by many of the interviewees in Scotland and this impacts on job and training opportunities, as does the lack of local networks

Nevertheless, there are features of freelance work that may be considered attractive. Many practitioners take on a mixture of types of work and contracts over the year which allows them flexibility and control over their own workload. Freelance work could also offer geographical flexibility.

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## 4. Training

## 4.1 Changes in Training Provisions

Many of those working in senior positions in television and radio were trained by the BBC in the 1970s and 1980s. UK broadcasting has changed dramatically since the 1980s. Now, training for the different roles within the sector usually takes place through formal training courses, degree education or on-the-job learning, rather than through systematic in-house training schemes. There are no set routes into the industry, resulting in a sporadic and fragmented experience of training for many entrants.

The major broadcasters, such as the BBC, Channel 4, 5 and ITV, along with some of the larger non-terrestrial broadcasters, for example Virgin, have dedicated human resources [HR] departments and staff. Some are also able to sustain separate HR and specialist Learning and Development functions. However, in many cases, it will fall to the Departmental or line manager

to establish training needs and skills gaps and in some cases to address this. The larger independents have also been able to develop employment and training practices but many of the smaller companies do not supply formal or systematic training for their employees. Since the independent companies tend to hire the majority of their workforce from a pool of freelancers, the responsibility for training is now largely with the individual. The high cost of training could pose an obstacle for some people aspiring to enter the sector. In recognition of this, some broadcasters have developed schemes, such as the Channel 4 Researchers Training Programme.

The BTSR research shows that freelancers felt that the industry should provide more training; 93% (London) and 100% (Scotland) of respondents wished employers provided more training. In contrast, training does not seem to be a priority for many employers in the sector, as shown by the BTSR data below.

**Table 1: Have you ever been offered training by your employer?**

Have you ever been offered training by your employer?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland %
Yes - regularly	8	7
Yes - occasionally	35	28
No	57	65

Source: BTSR

**Table 2: When you go for a job interview, are you ever asked about the training you've done?**

When you go for a job interview are you ever asked about the training you've done?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
Never	57	38
Occasionally	29	45
Regularly	5	17

Source: BTSR

Freelancers in the BTSR research suggested that broadcasters, such as the BBC, should actively provide training rather than contributing to training funds, as this freelancer producer suggested,


'...I don't think I can advocate formal training programmes for [the role of producer]. What's more useful is production companies and places like the BBC offer supervised way of learning,

so people can have hands-on working at a junior level. They are working with experienced people Training never prepares you for the reality of production which is far more complex.'

Jamie: 2:10

Other suggestions included access to production company facilities and resources in order to share knowledge and good practice.

Freelancers in the BTSR research suggested that broadcasters, such as the BBC, should actively provide training rather than contributing to training funds, as this freelancer producer suggested,

 *'... I don't think that I advocate formal training programmes for that. I think what's potentially much more useful is that production companies and places like the BBC offer a kind of supervised way of working, so people can have hands-on experience at a junior level. They're working with experienced people ... Training never really prepares you for the reality of production, which is far more complex.'*

**JAMIE ISAACS** – Executive producer & creative director

Other suggestions included access to production company facilities and resources in order to share knowledge and good practice.

## 4.2 Skillset

Skillset is the Sector Skills Council for the Audio Visual Industries (broadcast, film, video, interactive media and photo imaging). One of the main funds administered by Skillset, the TV Freelance Training Fund, makes grants available to organisations and individuals to deliver or attend training and development activities. The fund is supported by the major employers in broadcast and independent production for television and aimed at freelancers in the sector. The Independent Production Training Fund (renamed the Indie Training Fund in 2007) is administered by Pact<sup>5</sup>: Freelancers' training may be subsidised by up to 80%, or 100% in the case of new entrants. Skillset does not deliver training but funds other providers. Schemes go out to tender to industry, private training partners and

further and higher educational institutions.

Skillset works with the industry to provide recognised industry standard training schemes, such as the new entrant trainee scheme First Post and the Audio Visual Industries Induction Certificate which have been piloted in London and will be rolled out elsewhere in the country.


Skillset also works with the audio visual industries to identify media training providers whose courses provide the best professional development to the existing workforce and new entrants. Skillset Approval is awarded to those institutions and organisations that achieve an exceptionally high standard laid down and evaluated by industry. Skillset Accreditation provides the same recognition to individual courses.

The UK Film Council and Skillset published A Bigger Picture in 2003, outlining a five-year training and education strategic plan for the UK film industry. There has not been an evaluation and subsequent strategic policy document of equivalent scope for the broadcasting industry although in 2006 Skillset published its TV Skills Strategy and Action Plan;

## 4.3 Types of Training

### 4.3.1 On-the-Job Training

Most interviewees support that suggestion that on-the-job training is the most efficient way of learning, exemplified by this comment:

 *'I found it was all on the job training. It's the fastest way to learn if you have a good teacher.'*

**ALASTAIR WAITE** – Stills photographer

6. Memorandum, DCMS Submission to the House of Commons, September 2003.

This may vary between occupations. Experienced practitioners with up-to-date current knowledge as teachers were seen as vital from many attendees at the roundtable events. Nonetheless, both finding a job and the subsequent availability of experienced trainers/practitioners could be problematic, as the Cine Guilds of Great Britain concedes<sup>6</sup> :

There is evidence that some work experience across the AV industries as a whole is low paid or involves working for free. It is not suggested that this characterises the broadcasters and is more likely amongst small independent production companies. Not being able to perform free work experience also impacts on those economically marginalised, a barrier that affects many underrepresented groups. It also limits the opportunities for those outside the London catchment. Pact's Guide to Work Experience sets out the National Minimum Wage requirements and exceptions. Unpaid volunteers cannot be obliged to perform work or services (Pact 2007), which means that it is likely that there are employers in the sector who are, possibly inadvertently, in breach of employment legislation.

### 4.3.2 Formal Training and Higher Education

The broadcast industry is dominated by graduates and many new entrants are recent university leavers. With the expense of completing degree courses and introduction of tuition fees, this training route could become more exclusive, providing a barrier to the more economically marginalised or risk averse.

Media related higher degrees have increased in popularity in the last ten years. They are potentially a source of training for employment in the media industries. However, the content of these courses vary greatly, particularly in relation to the balance between practice and theory. Some freelancers at the roundtable discussions

argue that many courses do not equip the students with the necessary skills for the sector. One participant asserted that 'universities are a little out of step with the industry'.

The lack of accreditation for formal courses was identified by the roundtable participants as a lack of recognition by the industry. A way forward may be standardisation of grades and competencies across the different occupations in the sector and greater collaboration between industry and higher education.<sup>17</sup> Further and Higher Education Institutions have recently been given Skillset Media Academy status and will "set new standards in higher education for the design and delivery of practice-based courses."<sup>17</sup> Some freelancers at the roundtable discussions argued for a central training institution.

### 4.3.3 Mentoring

Mentoring within organisations and broadcasters, if properly administered and structured, could help junior members of the sector in making new contacts and progressing and this was recognised by many of the interviewees:



*'...just being able to say "so and so's my career mentor", it's "oh well you must be at least worth a look of your CV."*

CLARE LEANEY - Interactive producer

Mentoring is an element of many training initiatives provided by the broadcasters and key sector bodies such as The Foundation Placement Scheme initiated by ITV Yorkshire.

## 4.4 Motivations for Training

Long periods of unemployment are the reality for many freelancers. In such a competitive sector, training could be useful in times of unemployment to gain relevant skills, as this interviewee suggests:


 *'If you're not doing anything you might as well be training, learning new skills.'*



CHOI - Art director

This statement is partly backed-up by the BTSR quantitative data. Although none of the respondents stated that the main motivation to do training was 'downtime', the majority of respondents (58% in London, 68% in Scotland) said they undertook training to improve employability.

Many of the freelancers interviewed mentioned that training in soft interpersonal skills would be useful. From the interviews, it was clear that training was also seen as a way to network and thereby access job opportunities and not simply as a way of acquiring new skills:

 *'...training...[is] important because of other people that you'd meet on it. So ultimately it comes down to networking again.'*




CLARE LEYNAN - Interactive producer

Many of the key sector bodies, BECTU, Women in Film and Television, Pact and Production Guild, already organise networking events, such as Move On Up events.

## 4.5 Experience of/Perceptions about Training

The sample of freelancers interviewed had mixed perceptions of and experiences with training.


Some freelancers who started work many years ago, mostly at the BBC, commented on the quality of training at the time, but they felt that there was a lack of training or alternatives today:

 *'The BBC is no longer... the trainer for everybody... So it would be good if there were some kind of central organisation... through which... we could learn...'*



SIMON MORECROFT - Sound editor radio

One successful freelancer, who ran his own company, recognised the importance of training as a way of retaining employees:

 *'... we are obliged... to train them correctly, to mentor them. They've got to feel safe. They've got to want to stay in the business.'*



NIGEL HEATH - Director Hackenbacker Studios

The roundtable discussions suggest that many freelancers expected broadcasters and production companies to take responsibility for training. In turn, freelancers wished to find out about prospective employers skills and technology requirements.

There were also concerns over the quality of training provisions and some respondents suggested quality control and kite marking as a means to regulate training within the sector. While Skillset has a role in managing training provision, BTSR could potentially address the perceived need to accredit this.

## 4.6 Continuing Professional Development

A theme that emerged at both the July and September events is one of questions around continuing professional development [CPD]. Participants were concerned about; the quality of the provision available, recognition of suppliers, recognition of the qualification by the industry and whether potential employers would attach any value to the CPD obtained. It is clear that some form of

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5. See Skillset website: <http://www.skillset.org/>.

harmonisation and integration of provision would be of benefit to both employers and ‘consumers’ and there is a clear need to explore this further. One way forward would be to consider the operation of CPD in other industrial sectors in the UK that bear some comparison in terms of structure – the IT or construction industries for example – and/or to consider how CPD is effected in the broadcasting industries in other European countries.

## 4.7 Barriers to Training

### 4.7.1 Time/Timing

The irregular nature of freelancing work, combined with the fact that freelancers have to take time out from work in order to undertake training, is seen as a barrier as this freelancer suggests:

 *I can't really commit to any training because I then have to be out of work in order to do it. I started a postgraduate course that I had to leave because I got work.*


CLARE LEYNAN - Interactive producer

Possible solutions may come from employer support such as block release. Evening, weekend and online courses were also welcomed by the roundtable participants. Many freelancers in the roundtable events said they would prefer flexible times and dates to suit their irregular work patterns.

### 4.7.2 Cost/Funding

Not being able to work while undertaking training is only one part of the funding issue.

Training is also considered as being too expensive, especially when it needs to be self-funded as this interviewee points out:

 *there wasn't a lot of funding... the course was very expensive... I would have had to have funded £1200 out of my own pocket, which having a young family... I can't really afford that'*

SEONAI DH MACKENZIE - Operational assistant

The B TSR research found that between 34%-41% of freelancers had to fund their own training.

Although fees were seen as the biggest barrier to training (63% in London, 38% in Scotland), the industry data published by Skillset in 2005 showed that 33% of freelancers undertook free training. The B TSR data suggested fewer freelancers took part in free training (0% in Scotland and only 13% in London). The reason for the difference between the Skillset data and B TSR data is unknown. A possible explanation is that the Skillset sample was more aware of the range of funding possibilities, for example the TV Freelance Training Fund, whereas the large majority of the B TSR sample was unaware (67% in London, 84% in Scotland).

This has two implications; it raises the question of whether the B TSR sample was less engaged with intelligence around funding possibilities and in turn provides a further cautionary note about the representativeness of the B TSR sample; and it also suggests that better public information about the funds and streamlining application procedures may help more freelancers access support for training.

Some freelancers at the roundtable discussions made it clear that they would welcome subsidy/funding from the employers.

### 4.7.3 Availability/Access to Training

The lack of suitable training courses suggested by the Skillset survey (46%) was not found in the BTSR data. Only 10% (London) and 11% (Scotland) of the respondents stated that a lack of suitable courses was a barrier to training.

The BTSR research suggests that in Scotland the majority of freelancers (51%) found it easy to access the right training, whereas in London, only 40% found it easy.

Some interviewees/participants were aware of Skillset and the regional screen agencies but suggested that other training courses were not well advertised. As a result, many suggested a central information point, website or search engine.

The location of training can be an issue for the freelancer, depending on where they are based as training provisions are also seen as London-centric. The quantitative data support this argument as only 4% of the London sample stated that the training location was a barrier, whereas 19% of the Scotland concurred.

In the recent CIRCU research on diversity in the UK film and television industry (Randle et al 2007), lack of physical access for disabled practitioners also emerged as a barrier to job and training opportunities.

### 4.7.4 Level and Nature of Training

Many experienced freelancers in the BTSR research were concerned about career planning and personal professional development. They recognised that in the rapidly changing media environment, skills needed constant updating or refreshing. This is particularly relevant for those working with new technologies:



*'...because you're at the cutting edge there's nobody out there to tell you...You basically have to own the equipment and learn...'*

PHILIP JOHNSTON - Educational DVD producer

Attendees at the roundtable discussions suggested that skills transfer across sub-sectors (for example, journalism, radio and television), and retraining, could help more experienced freelancers whose skills needed updating. Freelancers might also need help to move on up to the next career level. However, mid-career freelancers found sourcing the level of training relevant to them difficult. Some suggested that personal career planning and one to one career advice would be beneficial. Training in business/financial/legal issues may also help those working as independent producers or sole traders.

### 4.7.5 Lack of Benefits

20% of the London sample stated that the training they undertook was not at all useful to their career and only less than one third felt that the training benefited their career. The respondents in Scotland were more positive: only 8% stated that the training was not at all useful whilst 45% felt that it helped a lot.

The interviews support this argument: many freelancers stated that training did not necessarily improve their job prospectus or help finding full-time work. At the roundtable discussions, one freelancer commented that if training was not reflective of real job opportunities, it could be giving people false hope. Therefore, employability appears to be the key benefit that freelancers look for in training.

## 5. Summary

- The BTSR recognise that the data gathered at the two events should be treated with a degree of caution. Information was gathered from freelancers who chose to attend the events. More successful practitioners might have been unavailable at those times while some of those present might have regarded the events as additional networking/job search opportunities. The samples were also relatively small (46 in Scotland and around 120 in London) and therefore might not be representative of the broader picture. We were unable to carry out any statistical analysis due to a lack of raw data. However in broad terms the sample does appear to reflect the industry mix and that represented in the Skillset census data.
- Employees who entered the industry before the 1990s appear to have benefited from an earlier period of in-house training, especially at the BBC. Although many of the broadcaster companies still provide extensive training opportunities, the growth of the freelance sector has made training for the individual freelancer more ad hoc and fragmented. Responsibility for training rests largely with the individual.
- The concept of the portfolio worker might be embedded in the broadcast industry but the assessment of the portfolio seems to be a very limited one; often just based on the last job. There is little opportunity for review or assessment of the individual's overall portfolio of skills and credits.
- The drive to reduce cost by broadcasters with an increase in short term contracts, plus the expansion of the independent production sector, have contributed to the development of an industry in which few employers have a commitment to systematic training or staff career development.
- There is little confidence in degree courses providing new entrants with necessary skills. They were felt to vary a great deal in terms of practical skills training, appropriateness and quality.
- With the fast pace of technological change, training is more important than ever. Both new entrants and experienced professionals require training and updating in cutting edge technology.
- Freelancers would like to see a return to broadcasters' (and other employers') involvement in the provision of training opportunities for them.
- Employability is the main motivation behind freelancers' seeking training opportunities.
- However, we may be making an assumption were we to conclude that training will make freelancers more employable. Data suggest that employers rarely ask about training in interviews and freelancers are not always convinced that the training they have undertaken is helpful.
- The main barriers to training for freelancers are their irregular work patterns, the high costs of training, the lack of availability/access to training opportunities, difficulties of finding the appropriate level and content of courses and the perceived lack of benefits.
- Skillset and the Skillset office in Scotland offer a careers' helpline, one-to-one and email advice to freelancers but many freelancers at the events did not seem to be aware of these services as data from the questionnaires and roundtable discussions shows.
- There is little clarity in career pathways.

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8. The Cine Guilds suggest that there should be  
 — *more funding for proper "trainee" placements on crews—as provided by schemes such as FT2 and the SIF Network; and*  
 — *more working professionals getting involved in the training courses.*  
 (Memorandum, DCMS Submission to the House of Commons, September 2003.)

## 6. Recommendations

- BTRC may wish to lobby for a major evaluation and strategic policy for the broadcast industry, taking into account the Government's position on the creative industries expressed in Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy (DCMS 2008) which focuses on supporting creative individuals and businesses. The objectives include increasing the number of apprenticeships and encouraging employers/skills providers to set up new places of learning.
- BTRC might also take a role in pressing for broadcasters and other employers to provide training for freelancers<sup>8</sup>. Regulators - Ofcom and BTRC - along with Skillset should work towards a strategy of involving independent production companies in training provisions.
- Accreditation and employer recognition will enhance the career prospects of graduates and make training and degree/education courses more relevant.
- Training or educational courses need to be structured and practical. More communication between industry and training providers will also ensure a better match between employers' and employees' expectations. Vocational courses replacing the traditional in house training scheme and apprentice system will create a recognisable training structure. This needs to be complimented by industrial experience and should be endorsed by the sector employers who might in turn contribute to teaching and providing work placements.
- Freelancers, small independent companies and sole traders would benefit particularly from training in business, financial and legal issues related to their employment.
- Training to enable skills transfer, retraining and personal professional development may help more experienced freelancers gain further employment or stay in the sector. There should be a balance between training for new entrants and professional development.
- There needs to be quality control of training provisions. Kite marking, accreditation and standardisation of training were called for by many of the freelancers. Value for money should be a criterion in the assessment of quality of training.
- There is a case for better communications and promotion of Skillset's career planning and advice provisions to professionals in the sector.

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8. The Cine Guilds suggest that there should be  
 — more funding for proper "trainee" placements on crews—as provided by schemes such as FT2 and the SIF Network; and  
 — more working professionals getting involved in the training courses.  
 (Memorandum, DCMS Submission to the House of Commons, September 2003.)

# Appendix 1: Questionnaire from the Freelancer's Events

## Freelance Questions

1. In which sector are you mainly working at the moment (or most recently have worked if not currently employed)?
2. What is your current or most recent job?
3. Approximately how many days have you worked over the past year?
4. How many companies have you worked for over the past year?
5. What was the length of your shortest contract in the past year?
6. What was the length of your longest contract in the past year?
7. Have you received any training in the past year?
8. If yes, how many days training have you received in the past year?
9. Who were the fees paid by?
10. What or who motivated you to undertake the training?
11. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, was it easy to find the right course?
12. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, did it help your career?
13. Do you wish employers provided more training?
14. Have you ever been offered training by an employer?
15. When you go for a job interview are you ever asked about the training you've done?
16. Have you experienced any of the following barriers or obstacles to obtaining training?
17. Did you know before this evening that subsidised training is available via the TV Freelance Fund?
18. If yes, have you ever applied for a course subsidised by the fund?

## Roundtable Questions

1. Share your training experiences good or bad  
Relate a training experience good or bad  
Did you have a mentor? On the job or off the job?  
How easy is it for you to get training?  
What are the barriers or obstacles?  
Does it fit the real needs of the demands of the jobs you get?  
What's the industry good and bad at in enabling and in providing the training itself? Are employers supportive enough?
2. What would good training provision look like?  
How would it be structured? (hours, days, flexibility, method of delivery e.g. online, on the job etc)  
What would most incentivize you to undertake training?  
What form should the subsidisation take?  
How will you know where to find it? And what courses you need?
3. What do you think you are going to need in the future?  
Do you think about the future?  
How do you learn about it?  
What sort of things need to be in place so you know what to get, so you get the right training, at the right time?  
Do you know what skills the industry/potential employers need?  
What should the industry do more of/less of to help you?

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5. See Skillset website: <http://www.skillset.org/>.

## Appendix 2: Comparative Data: London, Scotland and Skillset

## 1. London and Skillset data

1. In which sector are you mainly working at the moment?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers working in TV1 %
Radio	10	23
Terrestrial TV	19	22
Cable and Satellite	4	6
Independent Production	41	48
Interactive Media	4	-
Other	22	-

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2006 Census.

2. What is your current or recent job?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers					Equivalent occupational classifications used by Skillset and endorsed by industry
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %	
Researcher/ Assistant Producer	13	24	5	45	13	30	Production occ's including direction
Director/ Producer/ Journalist	38	14	31	0	16	9	Journalism and sport
-	-	6	7	24	2	14	Producing
Sound	4	0	3	2	1	2	Sound
Camera	10	6	4	5	0	4	Camera
Editor	9	2	4	8	0	4	Post production
Art and Design	5	4	4	2	0	2	Art and Design
Other	21	50	49	37	70	49	Other
Base	-	5,500	1,605	11,913	5,702	24,720	

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

3. Approximately how many days have you worked over the past year?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
1-100	46	22	27	20	26	22
101-200	25	41	38	33	29	34
201-300	21	29	26	35	32	32
More than 300	8	8	9	12	13	11
Base	-	1,203	227	788	102	2,320

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce

4. How many companies have you worked for over the past year?	BTSR event attendees %
None	5
1	21
2-3	40
4-6	24
7-10	7
11 or more	4
Base	-

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

5. What was the length of your shortest contract in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %
< 1month	77
1-3months	17
3-6months	3
6 months - year	0
More than a year	4
Base	-

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

6. What was the length of your longest contract in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %
< 1 month	33
1-3months	24
3-6months	19
6 months - year	12
More than a year	12
Base	-

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

7. Have you received any training in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Yes	34	36	44	38	57	43
No	66	64	56	62	43	57
Base	-	1,052	163	621	114	1,950

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

8. If yes, how many days training have you received in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
1	11	18	18	16	15	16
2-4	43	41	35	37	26	34
5	-	11	13	8	12	11
6-10	24	15	18	14	26	19
11-20	3	5	11	11	9	9
21 or more	19	10	4	13	12	11
Base	-	1,052	163	621	114	1,950

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

9. Who were the fees paid by?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Me (for all freelancers this includes the respondent's family)	34	39	38	49	20	35
Employer	18	34	34	25	43	34
Both myself and employer (not asked this way of all freelancers)	13	-	-	-	-	-
Grant from body or trust	21	7	10	14	9	10
No fees	13	30	40	29	39	33
Other (not asked of BTSR attendees)	-	4	2	4	3	3
Base	-	383	71	235	65	754

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

10. What or who motivated you to take the training?	BTSR event attendees %
An employer	6
A particular job requirement	14
Reskilling	14
Future proofing	8
Downtime	0
Improve employability	58

Source: BTSR event.

12. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, did it help your career?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes - a lot	29
Yes - a little	50
Not at all	22

Source: BTSR event.

11. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, was it easy to find the right course?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes	38
No	45
Employer found it for me	17

Source: BTSR event.

13. Do you wish employers provided more training?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes	93
No	7

Source: BTSR event.

14. Have you ever been offered training by your employer?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes - regularly	8
Yes - occasionally	35
No	57

Source: BTSR event.

15. When you go for a job interview are you ever asked about the training you've done?	BTSR event attendees %
Never	57
Occasionally	29
Regularly	14

Source: BTSR event.

16. Have you ever experienced any of the following barriers or obstacles to obtaining training? (select principle barrier)	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Lack of suitable training courses	10	-	-	-	-	-
Lack of suitable training courses in the UK	-	22	25	26	20	23
Lack of suitable training courses in the nation/region live	-	19	27	24	22	22
Fees are too high	63	56	66	61	56	69
Unsupportive employer	7	0	1	0	0	0
Lack of information about training	5	18	16	17	15	17
Time of training is inconvenient	11	28	27	27	24	27
Place of training is inconvenient	4	21	22	20	22	21
Base	-	452	82	322	41	897

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

17. Did you know before this evening that subsidised training is available via the TV Freelance Training Fund?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes	33
No	67
Base	-

Source: BTSR event.

18. If yes, have you ever applied for a course subsidised by the fund?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Yes and got it	24	-	-	-	-	13,600
Yes but didn't get it	7	-	-	-	-	-
No	69	-	-	-	-	-
Base	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

## 2. Industry with Scotland Data

1. In which sector are you mainly working at the moment?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers working in TV1
Radio	7	-
Terrestrial TV	39	-
Cable and Satellite	0	-
Independent Production	43	-
Interactive Media	0	0
Other	11	-

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2006 Census.

2. What is your current or recent job?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers					Equivalent occupational classifications used by Skillset and endorsed by industry
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %	
Researcher/AP	13	24	5	45	13	30	Production occ's including direction
Director/Producer/Journalist	22	14	31	0	16	23	Journalism and sport
Sound	4	0	3	2	1	2	Sound
Camera	11	6	4	5	0	4	Camera
Editor	7	2	4	8	0	4	Post production
Art and Design	4	4	4	2	0	2	Art and Design
Other	39	50	49	37	70	49	Other
Base	21	5,500	1,605	11,913	5,702	24,720	Other

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

3. Approximately how many days have you worked over the past year?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
1-100	39	22	27	20	26	22
101-200	26	41	38	33	29	34
201-300	17	29	26	35	32	32
More than 300	17	8	9	12	13	11
Base		1,203	227	788	102	2,320

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

4. How many companies have you worked for over the past year?	BTSR event attendees %
None	4
1	20
2-3	44
4-6	16
7-10	9
11 or more	7

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

5. What was the length of your shortest contract in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %
< 1 month	71
1-3 months	16
3-6 months	4
6 months - year	7
More than a year	2
Base	7

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

6. What was the length of your longest contract in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %
< 1 month	28
1-3 months	11
3-6 months	26
6 months - year	28
More than a year	7
Base	

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

7. Have you received any training in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Yes	35	36	44	38	57	43
No	65	64	56	62	43	57
Base		1,052	163	621	114	1,950

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

8. If yes, how many days training have you received in the past year?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
1	0	18	18	16	15	16
2-4	50	41	35	37	26	34
5	21	11	13	8	12	11
6-10	14	15	18	14	26	19
11-20	14	5	11	11	9	9
21 or more	0	10	4	13	12	11
Base		1,052	163	621	114	1,950

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

9. Who were the fees paid by?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Me	41	39	38	49	20	35
Employer	35	34	34	25	43	34
Grant from body or trust	24	7	10	14	9	10
No fees	0	30	40	29	39	33
Other	0	4	2	4	3	3
Base		383	71	235	65	754

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

10. What or who motivated you to take the training?	BTSR event attendees %
An employer	5
A particular job requirement	11
Reskilling	11
Future proofing	5
Downtime	0
Improve employability	68

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

11. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, was it easy to find the right course?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes	51
No	40
Employer found it for me	9
More than a year	2
Base	7

Source: BTSR event.

12. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, did it help your career?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes - a lot	45
Yes - a little	48
Not at all	8
More than a year	7
Base	

Source: BTSR event.

13. Do you wish employers provided more training?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes	100
No	0
Future proofing	5
Downtime	0
Improve employability	68

Source: BTSR event.

14. Have you ever been offered training by your employer?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes - regularly	7
Yes - occasionally	28
No	65
Base	7

Source: BTSR event.

15. When you go for a job interview are you ever asked about the training you've done?	BTSR event attendees %
Never	38
Occasionally	45
Regularly	17
Base	

Source: BTSR event.

16. Have you ever experienced any of the following barriers or obstacles to obtaining training? (select principle barrier)	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Lack of suitable training courses	11	-	-	-	-	46
Fees are too high	38	56	66	61	56	69
Unsupportive employer	8	0	1	0	0	10
Lack of information about training	11	18	16	17	15	17
Time of training is inconvenient	14	28	27	27	24	27
Place of training is inconvenient	19	21	22	20	22	21
Base		452	82	322	41	897

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

17. Did you know before this evening that subsidised training is available via the TV Freelance Training Fund?	BTSR event attendees %
Yes	16
No	84
Base	

Source: BTSR event.

18. If yes, have you ever applied for a course subsidised by the fund?	BTSR event attendees %	All freelancers				
		Terrestrial broadcast %	Cable and satellite TV %	Independent production %	Broadcast Radio %	All sub-sectors merged %
Yes and got it	9	-	-	-	-	13,600
Yes but didn't get it	0	-	-	-	-	-
No	91	-	-	-	-	-
Base	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: BTSR event and Skillset 2005 Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce.

1. The base includes freelancers working in TV on Census Day and systematically excludes freelancers available to the workforce but not working on Census Day.

### 3. Scotland Data

Q1	No.	Percent %
terrestrial TV	3	7
cable & Satellite	18	39
independent Production		0
Interactive Media	20	43
Other		0
	5	11
TOTALS	46	100

Q2	No.	Percent %
Researcher	3	7
AP	3	7
Director	4	9
Producer	5	11
Journalist	1	2
Sound	2	4
Camera	5	11
Lighting		
Editor	3	7
Art & Design	2	4
Other	18	39
TOTALS	46	100

Q3	No.	Percent %
1-100	18	39
101 - 200	12	26
201 -300	8	17
More than 300	8	17
TOTALS	46	100

Q4	No.	Percent %
None	2	4
1	9	20
2-3	20	44
4-6	7	16
7-10	4	9
11 or more	3	7
TOTALS	45	100

Q5	No.	Percent %
Less than 1 month	32	71
1 but less than 3 months	7	16
3 but less than 6 months	2	4
6 months to a year	3	7
more than a year	1	2
TOTALS	45	100

Q6	No.	Percent %
Less than 1 month	13	28
1 but less than 3 months	5	11
3 but less than 6 months	12	26
6 months to a year	13	28
more than a year	3	7
TOTALS	46	100

Q7	No.	Percent %
yes	16	35
no	30	65
TOTALS	46	100

Q8	No.	Percent %
1		0
2-4	7	50
6-10	3	21
11-20	2	14
21 or more	2	14
TOTALS	14	100

Q9	No.	Percent %
me	7	41
employer	6	35
both myself and employer		0
grant from body or trust	4	24
no fees		
TOTALS	17	100

Q10	No.	Percent %
an employer	1	5
a particular job requirement	2	11
reskilling	2	11
future - proofing	1	5
downtime		0
improve employability	13	68
	19	100

Q11	No.	Percent %
yes	18	51
no	14	40
employer found it for me	3	9
	35	100

Q12	No.	Percent %
yes - a lot	18	45
yes - a little	19	48
not at all	3	8
	40	100

Q13	No.	Percent
yes	43	100
no		0
	43	100
more than a year	1	2
TOTALS	45	100

Q14	No.	Percent
yes -regularly	3	7
yes - occasionally	13	28
no	30	65
	46	100
more than a year	3	7
TOTALS	46	100

Q15	No.	Percent
never	16	38
occasionally	19	45
regularly	7	17
TOTALS	42	100

Q16	No.	Percent
lack of suitable training courses	4	11
fees are too high	14	38
unsupportive employer	3	8
lack of information about training	4	11
time of training is inconvenient	5	14
place of training is inconvenient	7	19
TOTALS	37	100

Q17	No.	Percent
yes	7	16
no	38	84
TOTALS	45	100

Q18	No.	Percent
yes and got it	3	9
yes, but did not get it		0
no	30	91
TOTALS	33	100

## Appendix 3: Summary Tables: Data from Scotland, London and Skillset

1. In which sector are you mainly working at the moment?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All freelancers working in TV1 %
Radio	10	7	23
Terrestrial TV	19	39	22
Cable and Satellite	4	0	6
Independent Production	41	0	48
Interactive Media	4	43	0
Other	22	11	0

2. What is your current or recent job?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All sub-sectors merged %
Researcher/AP	13	13	30
Director/Producer/Journalist	38	22	23
Sound	4	4	2
Camera	10	11	4
Editor	9	7	4
Art and Design	5	4	2
Other	21	39	49
Base			24,720

3. Approximately how many days have you worked over the past year?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All sub-sectors merged %
1-100	46	39	22
101-200	25	26	34
201-300	21	17	32
More than 300	8	17	11
Base	-		2,320
Other	21	39	49
Base			24,720

4. How many companies have you worked for over the past year?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
None	5	4
1	21	20
2-3	40	44
4-6	24	16
7-10	7	9
11 or more	4	7
Base	-	

5. What was the length of your shortest contract in the past year?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
< 1month	77	71
1-3months	17	16
3-6months	3	4
6 months - year	0	7
More than a year	4	2
Base		

6. What was the length of your longest contract in the past year?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
< 1 month	33	28
1-3months	24	11
3-6months	19	26
6 months - year	12	28
More than a year	12	7
Base		

7. Have you received any training in the past year?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All sub-sectors merged %
Yes	34	35	43
No	66	65	
57%			
Base	-		1,950

8. If yes, how many days training have you received in the past year?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All sub-sectors merged %
1	11	0	16
2-4	43	50	34
5	-	21	11
6-10	24	14	19
11-20	3	14	9
21 or more	19	0	11
Base	-		1,950

9. Who were the fees paid by?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All sub-sectors merged %
Me	34	41	35
Employer	18	35	34
Both myself and employer (not asked this way of all freelancers)	13	24	
Grant from body or trust	21	0	10
No fees	13	0	33
Other	-		3
Base	-		754

10. What or who motivated you to take the training?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
An employer	6	5
A particular job requirement	14	11
Reskilling	14	11
Future proofing	8	5
Downtime	0	0
Improve employability	58	68

11. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, was it easy to find the right course?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
Yes	38	51
No	45	40
Employer found it for me	17	9

12. Thinking of the last time you undertook some training, did it help your career?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
Yes - a lot	29	45
Yes - a little	50	48
Not at all	22	8

13. Do you wish employers provided more training?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
Yes	93	100
No	7	0

14. Have you ever been offered training by your employer?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
Yes - regularly	8	7
Yes - occasionally	35	28
No	57	65

15. When you go for a job interview are you ever asked about the training you've done?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
Never	57	38
Occasionally	29	45
Regularly	5	17

16. Have you ever experienced any of the following barriers or obstacles to obtaining training? (select principle barrier)	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All sub-sectors merged %
Lack of suitable training courses	10	11	46
Fees are too high	63	38	69
Unsupportive employer	7	8	10
Lack of information about training	5	11	17
Time of training is inconvenient	11	14	27
Place of training is inconvenient	4	19	21
Base			897

17. Did you know before this evening that subsidised training is available via the TV Freelance Training Fund?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %
Yes	33	16
No	67	84
Base	-	%

18. If yes, have you ever applied for a course subsidised by the fund?	BTSR London event attendees %	BTSR Scotland event attendees %	All sub-sectors merged %
Yes and got it	24	9	13,600
Yes but didn't get it	7	0	-
No	69	91	-
Base	-		-

## **Appendix 4: Interview Questions for the Freelancers at the Scotland Event**

1. Who are you and what do you do?
2. How long have you been a freelancer and what kind of work do you primarily do? (Contract; staff; indies; broadcast; corporate?)
3. Are you a freelancer because you want to be... or because you have to be?
4. If it's because you have to be what's stopping you from becoming a company person?
5. Do you get sufficient work to be able to plan a career path? Do you feel in control of what you do?
6. Do you have a vision of where your career will be in 5 years time?
7. Do you feel the industry supports you? Does it offer training in your field?
8. Have you researched what training is available?
9. How concerned are you that lack of training opportunities in new technologies will hold you back?

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## Appendix 7: What is a Freelancer?

## What is a Freelancer?

### Origins of the Term

A freelancer or freelance worker is commonly understood as a person who pursues a profession without a long-term commitment to any one employer. The origin of the term “freelance” is attributed to Sir Walter Scott, where it appears in his 18th century novel *Ivanhoe* to describe a medieval mercenary warrior - a “free-lance”. The phrase was officially recognized as a verb [to freelance] in 1903<sup>9</sup>. While freelance working is very common in the film and television industries it is well established in many other ‘creative’ fields such as design, journalism, photography and copywriting.

### Employee or Self-Employed?

In legal terms contracts are either contracts of service [an employment contract] or contracts for service [a contract to provide a service]. Of course contracts of service vary in their provisions and may, for example, be full-time or part-time, permanent or fixed term. Protection under the employment legislation covers any worker:

*“who is engaged to perform work for an employer on a personal basis [ie the individual performs the work personally rather than organising others to do the work or delegating the work].”<sup>10</sup>*

‘Freelance’ itself is not a term that has a separate legal definition in employment law. Consequently a freelancer may have either a contract of service or a contract for service. We sometimes hear freelancers referred to as ‘freelance employees’, which may sound like a contradiction in terms, but is certainly consistent with their treatment by the Inland Revenue whose guidance states:

*“PAYE must be applied to all payments made to permanent staff and to non-permanent, casual and freelance staff [my emphasis] engaged under contracts of employment, except in the circumstances set out in the following paragraphs.”<sup>11</sup>*

The ‘following paragraphs’ referred to above describe the range of circumstances in which PAYE need not be deducted by an employer and includes, for example, a long list of occupational grades, which broadly speaking describe those grades where a relatively high degree of autonomy exists in the sense that the individual concerned provides the tools of the trade as well as, perhaps, the premises where the work is carried out. There are, however, other exceptions where PAYE need not be deducted [denoting a contract for service and not therefore an employment relationship] and which include situations in which an individual is employed for six days or less. Equally:

*“where the overall pattern of a worker’s activity comprises a large number of separate, short engagements, a worker may be regarded as self employed, even though each of his engagements, viewed in isolation, would suggest that he was an employee.”<sup>12</sup>*

### Who are the Freelancers?

While some of those working as freelancers in the film and television industries may be providing contracts for service as either employers or self-employed, carrying out sub-contracted work, many would be likely to be classed as employees by, for example, an employment tribunal or by the Inland Revenue under its own test. Consequently their work

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9. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freelancer>

10. MacDonald, L. [2004] *Equality, Diversity and Discrimination*, London: CIPD p174

11. Inland Revenue Film and Television Industry Guidance Notes 2003

12. Ibid.

will be subject to the provisions of the full raft of employment legislation. It would be hard to justify, for example, a Production Assistant, unless the grade incorporated the work of script supervision, meeting the IR requirements for self-employment. Thus a freelance PA is almost always likely to be viewed as an employee. Within the BBC the term 'freelance' is taken as analogous to self-employed. A freelancer within the Corporation is characterised as someone who will typically work 'below the line' [for example camera operator, make-up artist or production buyer] rather than as 'above the line' creatives or 'talent'. Furthermore he/she will be hired for specific jobs or projects on an ad hoc basis and may sell his/her services to a range of organisations. As far as payment is concerned he/she will manage his/her own tax affairs and negotiates a rate for the job and invoices for work done. He/she will also supply his/her own tools.

As previously mentioned, the occupational categories regarded as providing a contract for services are specified by the Inland Revenue and there is an agreement in place between the BBC and HM Revenue and Customs on what production-type roles can be engaged on a freelance basis within the Corporation, and in what circumstances. Examples of categories which may be considered as freelance include Art Director, Associate Producer, Choreographer, Lighting Director, Production Manager, Camera Operator, Special Effects Designer. The BBC emphasises that each engagement will be assessed on its own merit. It cannot be assumed that freelance status will be agreed. The nature of the work undertaken in each instance will dictate the relationship between the individual or service company, and the Corporation.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast Skillset's definition describes a freelancer as someone with a contract of less than 365 days a year. This appears to take away many of the characteristics of self-employment associated with the term as implied by the BBC's

usage. The Skillset definition is more concerned with patterns of contract [length of engagement] than the nature of the legal relationship with the employer. Consequently the freelancer becomes an individual who is likely to work for a range of employers, impermanently and who may work on a number of projects over a given period. What the definition fails to do, however, is to highlight the span of the freelance experience.

At one end of the spectrum may be the successful contractor, providing a service on his/her terms and while working on a range of projects, is perhaps gainfully occupied for a significant period of the year. At the other end is the young PA, low paid, inexperienced and essentially returned to the labour market at the end of his/her contract. Here the phrase 'freelance' appears simply to dignify what in other sectors would be labelled temporary or casual work. The category is therefore best conceived as a continuum and could conceivably include individuals who have never managed to achieve paid work and others who have successfully reached a point where they are able to consistently find work, support themselves or even achieve a high standard of living without recourse to work in other industries or sectors.

## The Freelance Experience

*'The free agent scrambles, bee-like, from opportunity to opportunity without regard to boundaries.'*<sup>13</sup>

This reference to the 'boundaryless career', an apparently emerging pattern across a range of occupations in the late 20th Century, is drawn from the authors' analysis of the US film and television industries. The US industry led the way in creating a freelance employment system when the studio system declined and in-house production ended. The UK industry followed suite

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13. Jones, C. & DeFillippi, R. J. (1996) Back to the Future in Film: Combining Industry and Self-Knowledge to Meet the Career Challenges of the 21st Century *Academy of Management Executive* 1996 Vol. 10 No.4 pp.89-103

some years later and in many ways the UK TV industry is emulating this model. It evokes an essentially positive characterisation of the free agent [freelancer] where successive jobs are 'opportunities'. This chimes with the description of the freelance career promoted by Aim Higher where as a freelancer you can;

*“take on jobs which you enjoy, change your hours to suit you, and fit any other responsibilities you may have at home, such as childcare and caring, around your working day”<sup>13</sup>*

Within the structure of the UK broadcasting industries this depiction of flexible working to suit the individual seems an unlikely ideal in many occupations, where the requirements of the job often involve close collaboration as a part of a team of people working together in time and space. Furthermore, the ability to 'take on jobs which you enjoy' may be a luxury open to relatively few freelancers in an industry where supply of labour almost always outstrips demand. The element of choice suggested by the Aim Higher quote also extends to the original motive for operating in a freelance capacity, where the individual is seen to opt for this mode of working in order to gain the benefits of flexibility. However, it may be the case that the only opportunities in some occupational roles are freelance opportunities. Some individuals may, therefore, have freelancing forced upon them when in their ideal world they would be employed on a permanent basis.

The creation of a freelance occupational 'identity' seems to be important. In a study of US film and TV freelancers Randle and Culkin<sup>14</sup> found that new entrants frequently worked in other sectors, for example in bar or restaurant work, to support themselves through periods where paid work in film and television was unavailable.

There is nothing to stop an individual describing him/herself as a freelance worker in any occupational category within the AV industries and, in a technical sense at least, entry barriers are low. However, it appeared to be important to be consistent in promoting oneself in relation to the desired role. Consequently an individual will present him/herself as a script supervisor who happened at that time to be doing bar work, rather than a waiter/waitress who wants to be a script supervisor. Clearly some occupations are more supportive of the ability to leave at short notice to take on a paid film/television project - this is likely to be limited largely to unskilled casual work.

Under some circumstances it may be that the desire/need for a stable income begins to replace the ambition to succeed in the film or tv industry and the sense of occupational identity is eroded. It is also at this stage of a career that issues of class and economic marginality can come into play as the aspiring entrant with the ability to avoid having to support him or herself economically is at an advantage in being able to spend time networking, working for free, job searching or training and is better able to maintain an occupational identity which reinforces his/her aspirations to find continuing work in the industry.

## Conclusions

The term 'freelancer' tells us little about the likely work/life experience of those in the broadcasting industry to whom it is attached. It can be applied to the aspirational entrant who has had little or no paid work within the industry and who may be untrained and possess few skills. It includes individuals who would be viewed as 'employed' by the authorities, if in a temporary position, and who are covered by employment legislation but with little ability to negotiate pay and with little autonomy within the job. It extends to the highly skilled successful

13. [http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/careers\\_\\_\\_guidance/archives/2007/your\\_freelance\\_options\\_Oct.cfm](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/careers___guidance/archives/2007/your_freelance_options_Oct.cfm)

14. Randle, Keith & Culkin, Nigel Culkin [2005] 'Still "A Perfect World for Capital"?' Hollywood in an era of globalization' paper to the 23rd Labour Process Conference, Strathclyde University, March 2005.

professional with many years in the industry, who is genuinely able to choose which projects to accept, negotiate a fee, and has considerable freedom to determine how work is carried out. Those seeking to influence policy making in respect to freelance workers would be well advised to acknowledge the inclusive nature of the term.

# Appendix 8: Freelancers Extended Interviews

## Introduction

From this page you can watch or listen to more extended comments from the interviewees we spoke to at BAFTA in June 2007 and in Glasgow in February 2008. All views expressed are those of the individuals concerned and do not represent the views of the BTSR or anyone associated with it.



### Fazia Amjid



Part-time journalist and radio presenter, enjoying the variety of freelance work.

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### Simon Berthon



Executive Producer, producer, screenwriter, author, described by the Daily Telegraph as a “formidable Second World War historian” one of Britain’s most distinguished writers and producers of television history.

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### Choi



Art director working on feature films and television drama productions, though has also designed sets for promos and commercials. Originally BBC staff, freelance for 11 years.

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### Nigel Heath



Director and audio mixer at Hackenbacker audio post-production studios, working on feature films, primetime TV, commercials and music

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### Jamie Isaacs



Executive producer and creative director (drama) at Twenty Twenty Television.

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### Philip Johnston



Educational DVD producer for 20 years running his own company, shooting and editing his own material.



### Dave King



Picture editor for many years working on drama and factual UK television projects.

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### Clare Leynan



New media interactive producer, currently mainly working on podcasts and with online communities.

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### Seonaidh Mackenzie



Gaelic speaking operational assistant, including occasional camera and editing work. Works freelance for BBC Scotland.

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### Simon Morecroft



Composer, sound designer and editor primarily working on radio drama projects. BBC staff from 1987 to 2006.

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### Mohammed Riaz



Trainee animation producer. With a background in management, decided in 2000 to go into medium communications.

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### Paul Tucker



Producer/director working in broadcast television, making factual entertainment or documentary programmes for independent production companies.

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### Alastair Waite



Currently a stills photographer but would like to move into video camera work.