

TD 04a - Charlie Phillips discussion

Chris Morris, University of South Wales

[...] what is happening at the Guardian, I think that is the most exciting, the first stage of many to leave. So, I'm here to moderate I'm going to nip out and get some pizza now, but I'll leave it up to you if anyone has questions, who wants to start? Here we go, we have a question to get us going .

Annemiek van der Sanden (Netherlands Film Academy)

Hi, I have a question about rights because you say you put money into a ten minute, so they can make a ten-minute documentary. And sometimes it helps putting funding together to trail the subject longer and to get other finances and other parties on board. But what about the rights of the documentary, who owns the rights?

Charlie Phillips

The standard thing is, only for that short, The Guardian would take total ownership there, but it is negotiable. Like we could pay less towards the commission and let our rights lapse after a certain period. If it is going to become anything longer, then we take no stake in that so the filmmaker retains the intellectual property for the entire project. And they are allowed to exploit it in any way they want. So basically as long as they don't take that ten minutes and claim it's another film or take the ten minutes and make it entirely wholesale unedited in a longer film.

But they can use the ten minutes to make a longer film and they have no claims on the...

No, if basically - as long as they re-edit the material to another project that makes it a little longer. We wouldn't want them to do another ten-minute film so that's the standard thing. But there are cases that we would actually be interested in working with them in a longer film. And we, in some, depending

on the film in some contracts we would say that we get first like, first refusal. If we put more money in over a certain period.

Annemiek van der Sanden

What about sharing the rights with other parties? Do you sometimes do that as well?

Charlie Phillips

Well, we could do.

Annemiek van der Sanden

So that rights are non-exclusive with The Guardian?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah we could do. If its, even more money then we could do. We probably wouldn't do it with a direct competitor, like, probably we wouldn't do it with the New York Times. Though we might like, we would have to be getting different bits of the pie. So basically for one ten minute film, it wouldn't really make sense for the same thing to be on the Guardian, the New York Times, VICE and everyone else. But for the bigger project, we could put some money in and get ten minutes, the New York Times could put money in and get another ten minutes, you know VICE could, so as long as everyone gets their own versions we would be totally up for that.

Annemiek van der Sanden

Thank you.

Delegate

Charlie, I have a question for "fair use" dealing. Could you explain how you see that?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah so, “fair use” is an American law that means that as long as you are commenting on a piece of film - restricted to, I don’t actually know how long it is but it something like 20 seconds of film, you are allowed to use that for free as long as it’s being used for commentary. It has to be, this is very, very specific rules on what does and doesn’t constitute as commentary. So you can’t use it for narrative purposes, it has to be purely you are commenting on that bit. So in American law you can use that without having to pay rights to, to the rights holder. It’s only very recently that people have been trying to use that in the rest of the world. So the two, there are only ever going to be two main test cases, in the UK that I know of and they both have the same lawyer. One of them was on *Beyond Clueless* the film I talked about earlier...

The other one was *Room 237* I think it was *Room 237* which was the Stanley Kubrick film - so that’s, I don’t know if anyone’s seen that. That’s about I think 6 different people’s theories on what *The Shining* means. And that, they weren’t allowed permission to use any Kubrick clips by Stanley Kubrick’s estate. They explicitly said you are not allowed to do this, they did it anyway, they got under fair use laws, they were allowed to distribute the film internationally. And still use clips from some of his films, because it’s pure commentary and so *Beyond Clueless* used the same law basically. But you do, you have to have to attempt, inform the rights holder that you’re doing it. Like you can’t just do it and then say, you know fair use, you’re not allowed to know about this. As long as you have written to them and said, we are going to use this clip from your film and were going to use it under fair use. And then you can do it.

Delegate

But why is it OK to tell them you’re using it and then them say no?

Charlie Phillips

It’s some legal distinction that you have to basically have, I think you have to have to attempted to. Not to clear it from them, I think they basically need to be aware that you’ve done it, if you do it without telling them, then it doesn’t

come under “fair use” laws basically. It’s something to do with the attempt that you’ve made.

Delegate And can you then use 7 times 20 seconds?

Charlie Phillips

No, no it’s just from one film, it’s limited to a certain amount from one film.

Delegate

That’s a shame.

Delegate

So with *The Shining* did they...

Charlie Phillips

No actually that can’t be true because it’s got loads of clips in *The Shining*.

Delegate

20 seconds in one go maybe?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah maybe it is that. 20 seconds in one go.

Delegate

But you have to pay the shareholder anyway? Even under “fair use”?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, you do you pay them a vastly reduced amount.

Delegate

Can you repeat the questions because we were not hearing the questions.

Charlie Phillips

Sorry. It was a question about “fair use” which I referred to in *Beyond Clueless* and then there was a query about like, what you pay to the rights holder.

Delegate

So “fair use” is not, is not free?

Charlie Phillips

It’s not totally free, no, but it is a vastly reduced amount.

Delegate Really? I thought it was free.

Charlie Phillips

I’m not an expert. Its mostly, usually its vastly reduced, sometimes it can be free. If you’re using a much smaller amount somewhere between 5 seconds and 8 seconds or something.

Delegate

Could the Guardian run a set of rules on your website for this?

Charlie Phillips

For fair use? Yeah I’ll have to find out more about it first.

Delegate

Can you tell use the name of the lawyer who deals with this?

Charlie Phillips

I don’t know. I could find out I could ask Charlie who did *Beyond Clueless*, you have to, you have to also set up your company in the US, it has to be a US based company to be able to do it. It’s only under American law, sorry let me repeat the question. The question was, what was the question? Oh yeah can you tell us the name of the lawyer and I just changed the question. So for it to be governed under US law you need to be a US company, so you can be

based here you just need to have a registered address in the USA. Otherwise you're not covered.

Delegate

But then you said internationally those two test cases were successful or not?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah they were, yeah.

Delegate

I'm more interested in your role in The Guardian and what kind of documentaries you commission, or are going to commission, and are they only journalistic or in what directions do they go?

Charlie Phillips

So I haven't commissioned anything yet because I haven't been there long enough. But the kind of, the general rules are, it has to be approximately under 15 minutes, ideally more like 10 minutes. It can be on any subject at all, but ideally it shouldn't be news, it shouldn't be pure journalism. By which I mean non-narrative led so it can't be purely information and kind of reported. That's for me, there are other people you can go to in the Guardian video to do that kind of thing, just not me. We wouldn't do traditional science or traditional history by which I mean we wouldn't do presenter led, high end, you know “historian wandering around a museum” kind of thing. We wouldn't do *Walking with Dinosaurs* so we wouldn't do that sort of thing that TV does very well. But we would do stuff that's kind of fast paced, because it would work online.

We want to do things that feel like a complete, a completely new subject that passes the test of seeing a Tweet about it and going that's something I didn't know anything about. So I have to click on that film and watch it, it needs to pass that test it can't really feel like it's been done before or that you already know about it.

It doesn't need to fit in with Guardian reports or things that have been written about in the Guardian at the moment. It doesn't have to be topical, it's better if it's not topical, simply because we have a news video, commissioning editor, he's doing that kind of thing. So I'd rather have standalone things that kind of set the agenda, or that are going to be things that are going to come up in the news in 3 months, so kind of stealing the march on that.

Delegate

And can they, are they standalone or are they with a written piece?

Charlie Phillips

No, it should be standalone, it may have a written piece around it, but if we did that would be in response to the video, not the other way around. It needs to be global facing. So the ideal thing is that it's a global subject with a global audience, even better if it's a global filmmaker, obviously we're getting lots of pitches from people in the UK obviously. But I'm really interested in non-UK filmmakers as well as UK filmmakers but it's definitely for a global audience. So things that are purely parochial and about the UK, are much harder for us. Because it's just not what the Guardian is about, only 30% of readers of the Guardian are from the UK. It's completely global you know within that, beyond that, I'm genuinely interested in hearing – pitches on anything.

Delegate

What about language and subtitles?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah as long as it's English language or subtitled into English it doesn't matter if the original language is something different that's fine. And then beyond that, we do stuff that is pretty narrative led, so it does need to have a really cracking story arc and it's good if it's character based as well. So things, it's harder for us to do things that are issue lead or purely subject lead and not told through story and or character, because those categories tend to go best online. But you know its kind of like were starting from the ground up, so I'm kind of interested in hearing anything.

Delegate

Good on you, give the money to the artists. Give the money to the artists!

Charlie Phillips

How do you mean?

Delegate

Well you know there are plenty of creators out there just give them the money....

Charlie Phillips

What, to do anything?

Delegate

....and they will deliver for you.

Charlie Phillips

I don't think that's true, no we want to be, were going to be quite controlling.

Delegate

...like control freaks!

Charlie Phillips

About the stuff that we... No, no but like supportive of course because of like. We don't know what's going to, we're doing this because people are going to watch documentaries online. We're not doing it so that a documentary maker has artistic freedom. It's because there is no point if you, if you make a doc but no one sees it that's no, that's fine anyone can do that but that's not what we're about, like we want big audiences for documentary but for good documentaries. So there are some people here that, that is true of, but I don't think that's true of most people.

Delegate

So what are sort of budget are you offering at the moment?

Charlie Phillips

If it's a 15 minute film its approximately [redacted by request]

Delegate So what's your annual budget?

Charlie Phillips

Well we're going to commission about 50 films per year. So it's you know, not everything will get as much as [redacted], but that gives you an idea. Don't, don't report that to the world!

Delegate

You might have said this, this morning but do you think part of the Guardian's reasoning for doing this is part of the response to what's happened to documentary in broadcast television? And, as in a lack of...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, it's a little bit that. The major driver is that we think there is a audience online for documentaries so it's more led by what we think we can independently do for documentary regardless of what's happening on TV. But yeah I definitely think a lot of doc makers are annoyed with the lack of artistic freedom that you get.

Delegate

So there is a kind of gap in the market and...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, I think there is a particular gap in the market for shorter documentaries or longer docs that are going to be serialised across a week, that's possible. So you have you know, 15 minutes a day for 5 days...

Delegate

So you might be commissioning some serialised...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah we might do, I think it's the recognition of there being a online audience out there. But I do think TV is being quite bad, especially documentary in the UK at the moment now.

Delegate

For example Channel 4 and 4OD have been doing it for years and the BBC have got short films online as well, what's going to be different about the Guardian?

Charlie Phillips

Well I don't, I don't know if you've watched any of the stuff on...4OD is updated regularly there are some good documentaries on it. I would take, I would say there aren't any good, I mean stuff that has been on TV's good but most of the shorts that have been commissioned on that directly are clones of TV docs. I mean they are presenter led and they're youth orientated and quite superficial.

Delegate

Well, have you seen *Pockets*?

Charlie Phillips

That one is good yes - name 5 more good ones, I don't think you could! You see *Pockets*, but also *Pockets* was made I don't know about 10 years ago or 5 years ago maybe, yeah so it's not great. And actually *Pockets* was made for *3 Minute Wonder* it wasn't made for online, so *3 Minute Wonder* finished like 4 years ago, so I agree. *Pockets* is amazing but that's, TV, that's, that's Channel 4 is not doing that sort of thing any more and the BBC ... there was the BBC Film Network that was also cut a few years ago. And they did have some quite good stuff on there and now you can like BBC *Fresh* is online but there aren't any commissions available for that. And again it's kind of presenter led, youth facing, it's factual entertainment rather than documentary, and that's actually true of what Channel 4 would do on 4OD as well. So I mean, it sounds like I'm trashing them but they're doing a very different thing to what we are doing. What we're doing is more like VICE are doing and what the New York times are doing with Op-Docs. Yeah.

Delegate

How much would you commission (?? unclear) by existing...

Charlie Phillips

The majority is going to be commission, it wouldn't require that much, because its, even if we acquired we'd probably ask for re-edit. It's got to, at minimum, front load have some of action. Or something that's going to pull people in. so we might acquire something if it had that pull effect.

Delegate

A second question, are you about to commission something because you said you haven't commissioned anything yet.

Charlie Phillips

I'm building up many, many ideas and pitches.

Delegate

And could you gives me, us a example on the sort of things that you'd have ...

Charlie Phillips

I actually don't think I can because its, not that I don't, not because it's secret because I have, I literally have about 200 possible docs that I could commission at the moment and I don't want to mention anything that's not going to. But I mean it has only been 2 weeks, I've been meeting loads of people and so I'm just collecting loads of idea.

Delegate

You couldn't do a fictional one then? Could you invent one?

Charlie Phillips

Like an example if something came up, well it would be, this is sort of answering your questions about the things I'm looking for. I'm not just being coy I literally just don't think I can because I want, I want a range of things.

Delegate

Is there an idea that you want, that if someone presented to you you'd like.

Charlie Phillips

That's a good question yeah.

Delegate

Could you repeat the question again please.

Charlie Phillips

Yeah sure, ok yeah, being asked for an example I'm thinking, they're asking for an example of a theoretical commission. I would say if someone, actually no, I'll give you a specific example that someone hasn't pitched to me. But I would like someone to pitch to me, which is very specific but hopefully is going to be a good one for example.

There is a lovely football team in East London called FC Clapton, and they've existed for I don't know, 100 years or more. Approximately 5 years ago they were adopted by lots of east London socialists and punks and football fans who were annoyed with the corporatisation of football and they adopted FC Clapton as, on the based on the Ultras football fans that you get in Germany. Same kind of, this is a very long explanation, but specifically the kind of fans you get at, I'm trying to think of what to say, Sankt Pauli. That German football team who are very left wing and very punky. So they were like "let's take that model and let's bring that to FC Clapton". And so they have, you know their attendances are only about 500 people although that's very good for lower league football. And they would, at their matches they would set off flares, they would have all these massive banners that would say things like, FC Clapton, feminist football club they will have pro immigrant messages. And things that say support strikes and trade unions.

And if you imagine they go to away games in big numbers, if you imagine you know the dog on dog pub football team with about 50 home fans. Then about 200 away fans who are kind of waving scarves and banners and singing songs on, you know, how we should welcome migration. It's kind of a amazing, so anyway what I want someone to make a doc about, I think it's a interesting story but I think its also very interesting way to talk about British identity, migration, what's happening in football, the gentrification of London, masculinity.

It's kind of, it's taking, it's a way to talk about loads of different issues in something that also has a really natural story arc. You follow them over a season, and they have amazing characters because their fans are insane and there are loads of great details as well like.... they, they because in East London there's quite a big immigration of Polish immigrants when Poland came into the EU, all the markets started selling *Tyskie* beer which is a Polish lager. So all the fans, because there are a lot of Polish fans in the club, they all drink *Tyskie* beer at matches and they made *Tyskie* a sponsor so I think there are lots of really fun details like that and the kind of impact about cultures, right. There is a very specific example of something that I like. Also it's serious, but it would also be something really entertaining.

Delegate

And that's an example of something's that's a subject and obviously you're looking out for character documentaries.

Charlie Phillips

No, no, no, but the way, good point. But the way that I would want it to be pitched to me is story led, so the story and, yeah follow the story of a season. In Clapton FC, FC Clapton. There is actually a separate club called Clapton FC but these people are FC Clapton and that's a whole separate story.

Delegate

What’s the difference between what you are doing and what VICE is doing, and have been doing for 5 years?

Charlie Phillips

It's kind of tone...the formats are kind of similar. But, oh sorry, sorry, yeah it's OK. The question was how are we different to VICE. Because VICE have been doing a lot of online docs, the style of VICE documentary is different to what we would be doing, its generally been presenter lead and the presenter has generally been a white, young, hipster. And they are moving away from that a bit, that's not really a fair characterisation what they're doing is really different. But they are kind of sticking to the model that they, at minimum it's a journalist led, investigation and news piece. Because they have VICE news network which is a news channel. And then what they're doing is primarily for that, which is much more a current affairs lead, which is also more about shock value. And more about tabloid stories, we are...

Delegate Are you going to make more tasteful versions?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah I mean some stuff that we do won't be tasteful. But like we might do some stuff which is a bit like VICE, but won't be. Won't characterise everything we do. Like the, we will bring a Guardian tone to everything, except that the Guardian covers everything from Syrian migrants to celebrity news. So we want to cover the entire spectrum for the Guardian viewers. But generally there will always be a Guardian a responsible Guardian tone. Yeah?

Delegate

I'm interested in the form, you're asking that you want to draw people in and start with some action. Is that because you want to bring new audiences to the documentaries that you're commissioning? Or is that because you think that's what the platform is after?

Charlie Phillips

Well it's new and existing audiences, because you're competing against everything else online so until we get to the point where people know that the Guardian is the destination for documentaries. And so their just coming as a

matter of course which is what people are starting to do with VICE. We do need to acknowledge the online form which does kind of front load action, and by action I, I do mean its not you open with a one minute scene with nothing happening. It's being that you get some kind of challenge let down or question I suppose. Or you're introduced to the main character, it's just something from the start.

Delegate

Would you might evolve that, once you've got a...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah definitely once people are coming to the Guardian as a destination platform we may be more liberal in what we, with what were working with. Because there are different platforms that work best for different documentaries, there are. Some things work best as festival films where you're in cinema and you're watching it on screen, and obviously you can lean back and you can take in the beauty also the other factor as well is the, at the moment online viewing is still dominated by mobile and tablet viewing which people are generally viewing on the move. But people are increasing and starting to hook up their laptop to their TV and watch YouTube on their telly or smart TV's. And once there is a critical mass of people doing that then we can be more confident in something that's a bit more slow and poetic because people would be making appointment to view.

Delegate

What would the minimum length be?

Charlie Phillips

Probably 5 minutes, I reckon. Because I do want something that's going to work as a popular documentary.

Delegate

Is the traditional proposal still a part of the...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah it...

Delegate

So the proposal is the precursor to pitch or?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, well people can come and talk to me or phone me or whatever...

Delegate

But you would still [prefer] proposals...

Charlie Phillips

I'd still want a one page treatment that tells me, what is, what the arc of the film is going to be and I definitely need to see some visuals. Where that's a teaser film or even just some stills of the place or the people. That doesn't really change we can't just take stuff on trust.

Delegate

Can you imagine yourself commissioning a film that's 15 minutes in length that takes place, I mean I appreciate a budget of 15 thousand but. A film that make 5 years to make? Because of the cost, and you know that from the outset and the story ark of length, could you commit to that?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah probably, probably just once at the moment. 5 years is too long but if it was, if it was... if it was yeah, 5 years is too long because I don't know where were going to be in 5 years. If it was something that was going to deliver in probably like 2 years, probably there for 2 years maximum, but yeah I like that idea. Id rather they come to me when they are a year into it and that then it would be ready in another year. But yeah I like things like that, I like that form for a doc.

Delegate

That's a good idea as well, coming with something that's pre-shot and part shot is it easier to sell for you?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, that's better if something been shot, I know I was talking to Sabine [Bubeck-Paaz, commissioning editor] from ZDF earlier. It is quite hard for us to come into something really early, not like, we could do, but I think it would be harder for someone to go off and make a ten minute film if they have just not shot anything and not researched anything, because its going to take a really long time to even get a committed story, maybe if there has been some research done already.

Delegate

Then in terms of, when you work within the BBC structure in production, you kind of know the layers above you, the commissioning editors, the producers the execs or whatever and you kind of know the deadline. And you kind of know, and things will slip for sure, but is your process more nebulous then that?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah it is a bit more nebulous, it, we need to do something about that. Because at the moment it's me and a few other commissioners, people with different responsibilities. And there is one person above us who we go to with recommendations and actually her role is...and our communal role is less to say "definitely yes" and "definitely no"; it's more to compare notes on what we're all interested in the things that we can, holistically fit together, around for the Guardian. So we, so that process is a lot leaner but the thing about deadlines is a bit of an issue. Because we effectively have, we set deadlines but there is no essential transmission date, when we are dictated by a day its more likely to be based around an anniversary or an event or if it's a shorter cut down of a longer doc. If that longer doc is going to go out on *Storyville* in a day or I don't know, it's going to play a festival. Then we might agree that we

want our ten-minute version to coincide with that. So we might, its more likely to be dictated by external factors then us, there's no (???) so yeah.

Delegate

What kind of format are you looking for, format in terms of delivery.

Charlie Phillips

Like technically, like delivery format?

Delegate

Well first of all the format for filming and after that what that delivery to?

Charlie Phillips

We're pretty open minded about it, we used to, the news team used to being sent iPhone footage that's actually ok its fine on video. So if it's a high end camera then you know it's great if it looks really nice, but there are no broadcast guide lines for technical quality, it can be any actual technical quality. And even like the cheap cameras are quite good now so that doesn't really matter so much to us. I mean the delivery formats are pretty standard digital ones like ideally its going to be, ideally its going to be HD you know, a QuickTime file. But really everything can be converted into something else so really its not a major issue for us, we're way more interested in that it works as a doc as a story. Yeah.

Delegate

What are the time frames... your thinking from sort of commissioning the piece to basically putting it online? What would your ideal be I suppose?

Charlie Phillips

I mean I don't really want it to be any more then 3 months, but of course it depends like how much has been shot already. But at the moment we want to get stuff up at quick as we can so really it's like, it's a bit annoying if we have to wait longer then that. Yeah.

Delegate

I was wondering because you were very adamant this morning that filmmakers should all go on the Internet because that's where the audiences are. But how are they going to make a living out of being filmmakers that work for the Internet? Is that, how are they going to make a living you know?

Charlie Phillips

Well there is the end for people like us. [repeats question] "how are filmmakers going to make a living using the Internet?". So yeah there are people like us and VICE who are going to commission them. Specifically for low budget at the moment but our budgets will increase so there's that. Also there is a rise of people watching videos on demand so the more people get used to paying for more Netflix subscriptions and iTunes downloads and that side of things there's revenue that way. And then there are self-distribution platforms like Distrify. Where you keep a much higher portion of the revenue and the longer people get used to watching things online the more its going to change ways to generate money for filmmakers.

I mean you're right it isn't that easy for filmmakers at the moment but it is getting easier but also I think its quite hard to make a living offline as a documentary maker so I don't think it's that. Also long as there are distribution platforms like the one were offering then I think there will be a solution. I don't know, honestly I don't have all the answers at the moment. I think this is the way the audiences are going, business models, there are business models emerging, it's a transitional phase.

Delegate

The earning is at the back of the project. I'm from Holland so we still have a rather generous subsidy system where you make it upfront whether anybody watches the movie or not. You know you're just being paid to be a professional filmmaker. You're allowed to fill in that process.

Charlie Phillips

I mean that's, that's the ideal situation and the ideal situation is quite rare. To Holland basically and a couple of other places. It's most, most, most governments can't justify doing that basically at the moment. So until all the world's economies improve, until we get socialist governments in every country in the world. I just don't, it's just not going to happen so we just need to find another way.

Delegate

Just a little about unions about, what you're doing for safeguarding for employees and contractors and things like that. I mean obviously within the BBC there are very clear, pathways for them.

Charlie Phillips

Yeah. I mean well no. It's not really, it's not my job to do that, it's not like...

Delegate

I'm just thinking if there came a conflict, you know I'll make this film I'll get the check with something, if something goes wrong, what would be the because obviously. If students are going off and something goes wrong. They're right in the beginning of their career this would be a wonderful first start and I can see that clearly. And actually if you talk about the £15,000 for 15 minutes, well certainly within Wales, BBC Wales their commissioning half hour documentaries for the same price. And so, I don't object to the size of that pot I'm just thinking what would be the safeguard for new filmmakers going in and not getting their fingers burnt?

Charlie Phillips

I don't, I how would they get their fingers burnt?

Delegate

Because things go wrong or mistakes get made or well for example if footage gets damaged or in terms of insurance and that kind of stuff so, yeah well yeah indeed, you can't deliver the film for whatever reason so...

Charlie Phillips

I just yeah, that might happen but I well. (a) I haven't thought about it and (b) it's not my job to think about it in that way but I, really think it's unlikely. Seriously that would happen, and part of the commissioning process involves us discussing whether the thing is likely to be delivered like were effectively doing a viability check in commissions....

Delegate

Things like you commission something's that's already half shot...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, if it doesn't if we, look at it from our point of view if we give someone money and the doc doesn't end up getting delivered then you know, it happens likeit just happens its part of the process. If someone delivers us something and we don't like it and we chose not to put it out. We would still pay the majority of that commission fee to the, they're quite vigorous contracts, so I don't, I don't think there would be a problem. I don't think, I suppose that's what this is there's no point, there is no difference in what were doing for our legal protection to most of the people. Yeah.

Delegate

Again I wasn't here this morning so forgive me if you've mentioned this but around crowdfunding and budgets do you have any sense first about crowd funding whether the budgets are realistic and whether the filmmakers are paying themselves? So the question being in spite of the second. In the budgets you're managing, do you make sure there is a part in it about the filmmakers paying themselves or is that up to their discretion?

Charlie Phillips

First part with crowd funding, did everyone hear the question? You in the back with crowd funding you don't really ask questions about the budget, if someone asks for £20,000 it tells you what you need the £20,000 for. Which is usually a particular aspect of the film like the postproduction or distribution in some, India or where ever you don't really ask any questions beyond that. They clearly need the money and if you really want to get into a dialogue about their money you could do, but people just generally don't. On the second part about when the filmmaker pays themselves. It is up to them but I always query if they're going to pay themselves....but it's their decision, they can spend it how they want.

Delegate

Do you, have you any thoughts about interactive?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah, lots of thoughts. Interactive isn't exactly my department, there is a separate interactive department within the Guardian who produce their interactive work. I think that, I'm very excited about what you can do with interactive docs I think the industry is very, very early in its development so at the moment there are lots of people with really good ideas for interactive docs. Lots of filmmakers with good ideas, there aren't enough developers and programmers making themselves available to work with those filmmakers.

So often things get off stunted to the point where a filmmaker has a idea but doesn't know how to deliver it technically. Even when a filmmaker and a developer do get together there is a real lack of money out there for interactive. So the only people really funding interactive are the National Film Board of Canada, Arte France, sometimes the BBC and Channel 4 but not really with externals. And that is about it, sometimes brands and sometimes other private funding oh and the Tribeca New Media Fund as well, but we pretty much, it's hard to get money for these things unless its tied to a immediate TV show in which case maybe Channel 4 would give you a bit of

money but there really isn't a lot of money or infrastructure out there for interactive.

Delegate

But is, one of your secret strategies that the Guardian knows about yet, to commission interactive docs in the future?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah it will happen, there are there are some things happening internally but not involved with me at the moment. But yes that is a space, a good space, yeah.

Delegate

So are you saying it will happen, this current situation is where we are now, were confident down the line...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah well this is the start, it's like a, lots of strategic changes are happening in the Guardian, of which what I am doing is one small part. So everything is just the start of the process. So it may take a year or two until anyone really sees the difference, probably two years actually. Yeah.

Delegate

Can you take us through, probably hypothetical, a sort of editorial process that is nearly in your hand. So the process and how you're going to deal with you know changes that you might have....

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, so the standard thing is that we get three different versions so there are really three separate stages of approval. There is a rough cut stage which we would sit with the filmmaker, or if they're not near to us Skype with the filmmaker. They can send us a link on Vimeo or wherever, like whatever format they want it on. We'd give notes like any other commissioning editor,

for them to integrate and they come back to us with a final cut or something which is more developed than a rough cut and again we would send notes. That might even be the end of the process but then there would be the official third one which is sort of the official sign off process, where we would say oh by the way this is either just me or this is me and someone else on the team with a second opinion, it depends what it is. And after that final approval that's when we'd approve it and it's delivered to us, on the right technical format, and we agree on a launch date on the site which could be tied to a particular anniversary or whatever. And we would notify press and marketing and the social media team so they can make the world aware of it and we would probably also negotiate a launch strategy with the filmmaker so their also going to be publicising it online and offline. So its that, that sort of...

Delegate

It's sort of standard sort of commission...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah really simple.

Delegate

And is that the same with deliverables as well in terms of copyrights and commissions you would expect to see that paperwork?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, yeah standard, yeah I forgot that bit standard like, really standard paper work.

Delegate

Would the Guardian have in house filmmakers as well or is it...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah we do there is also a in-house, its effectively a in-house production company, who also make, who are you know a great set of video journalists and other, you know like some are commissioners but some are commissioners in a particular area like travel commissioner or a sport commissioner....

Delegate

And would you be using them, if you have an idea that you want to get done?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, we generally have great ideas in-house and this is more other people than me. If we generate an idea in-house then we might just get somebody in-house to do it, that's always the cheaper equivalent, so yeah it applies...it applies to something that's sort of news or comment in that case, like for something that's news it's quite unlikely that we would commission someone external that would be in-house journalists. It's quite a big team, yeah. But I don't yeah, I talk to them ...

Delegate

Are you based in King's Cross?

CP

Yeah, nice office. Yeah it's good.

Chris Morris (Moderator)

We have officially 5 minutes on the clock if anyone has any further questions. I've got one which is just simply in 5 years time, that's a long time away because who knows what. What do you imagine, what is now a fledgling nothing would look like in 5 years time? I think I asked you outside but whether you will, whether there will be a archive, of film...

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, so unless our rights collapse and we need to take it down or for whatever reason we would just leave all the films up. There will be a full archive of docs.

Delegate

Could you imagine if, in your head is it the go to place for documentary?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah that's the idea and for longer documentaries as well. We would possibly incorporate a video on demand platform. Plus there genuinely isn't consensus

on what we should or shouldn't be charging, we do feature docs. But there would probably be some kind of video on demand platform in there. And it'll be high end docs, it'll be things that you know, would be a Oscar winner, from the Guardian, that would be nice, might happen.

Delegate

The contracts are they like, rights wise are they open end for the Guardian? Like if the Guardian wants to put it on their site and they keep it for 20 years or something.

Charlie Phillips

Yeah, its rights for the Guardian in perpetuity, but we are really up for negotiating and even (sorry go ahead)

Delegate

Are there non-exclusives like...?

Charlie Phillips

No they're exclusives. The basic things are that they're exclusive and you know forever but, but that's negotiable. It's really not a problem for me if we limit the period of exclusivity and we write into the contract that you know that at like regular points we, the filmmaker can come to us and ask for it to be taken down. Or for it to be made non-exclusive.

Delegate

But if you're doing cut downs of longer films that would be a different kind of contract? If *Storyville* technically...

Charlie Phillips

Well no either, it wouldn't affect the contract of the 10-minute film, it would mean we have a clause in, particularly about that longer film.

Delegate

And that goes to say you don't own the rights for your own film?

Charlie Phillips

Yes, unless, unless we want the first option of coproducing on the film. We are doing something that we are doing in big numbers at the moment. It's a option that we might want if we think would be incredibly on message for the Guardian audience. And then obviously we would pay more then £10,000.

Delegate

What if there was a short film with lots of interactive elements would you talk between your two departments?

Charlie Phillips

Yeah we would co-commission it with the interactive people, similar I mean there is a audio documentary on as well which nobody knows about. So theoretically we could co commission with them and interactive, we could also co commission with the weekend magazine or the travel section, I mean there are different budgets, or the picture desk.

Delegate

Would it be feasible to work together with IDFA?

Charlie Phillips

Yes, we could work with absolutely anyone, so you know the Sundance Institute or with broadcasters potentially, depending on what their, how they feel about online. Potentially we could work with them as well, so yeah, I, obviously we would be partnering with DocFest, because of the links. But yeah I think were going to need to partner with lots of people.

Chris Morris Time for one more is there anybody else? No, well I think we will just say thank you very much, I have to say I have a fantastic idea about a football club in East London (laughter)

Charlie Phillips

I’ve mentioned this to so many people and nobody actually has access, someone has to get access.

Chris Morris

Well, we will have a cup of tea afterwards, honestly you’ll love it.

[ends]