

BBC Trust feedback on local video proposal

After reviewing last week's Google alerts I noticed an article relating to the BBC local video proposals from the Society of Editors.

Entitled "MPs rally against BBC local video proposals" it grabbed my attention for two reasons.

Firstly being editor of BusinessinBerkshire.co.uk I'm interested to hear about any networking opportunities as we expand our horizons. Secondly, what's this BBC video proposal all about? Not sure why the Society of Editor's chose to use a few lines from Hansard to present objections to what I believe would vastly improve local news coverage and re-engage community. Obviously it's a smoke screen to their own commercial concerns but wait, surely the opportunity to generate revenues would be improved by having quality local source of video news.

One argument used by local press is that it would be unfair competition, preventing them from generating revenue as hard copy readership drops off. But hard copy is going to drop so wake up and smell the coffee.

Google is king of the castle with its billion dollar little brother YouTube. They're producing a ton of content around random stuff which allows you to easily copy and paste video code into your own website and increase their content distribution while enhancing your own site. We've used it here to highlight the Birmingham journalist covering the US elections story.

Digging around you don't have to go too far to find out what the BBC are proposing, the BBC Trust has all the documents for you to view regarding the proposed local video production and distribution. What's great is they appear to be opening the door for local websites to use the content freely, in a YouTube type of way. The key benefit being the quality as it will obviously far exceed most of what you find on YouTube as the BBC has standards of production it needs to meet.

If I look around Berkshire the online news coverage is limited. The privately owned local newspapers have taken a much more proactive approach to the delivery of news having rather engaging sites. The regional brands being slower on the uptake and certainly not using their hottest news on the web, pushing out the odd football story but that's about it. They are still trying to encourage newspaper purchase.

Some of the local journalists use our BusinessinBerkshire content regularly as a source and we're only too happy to provide local businesses with the opportunity to maximise their news distribution. In the past they would frequently come to us to help them build up a story. This is less frequent as they move into the Internet market place.

We have little empathy for the Society of Editor's claim that the BBC would be taken food out of the mouths of the local press. For starters, we were running an active online news website before most of the local newspapers but they had zero consideration for our market share, they want to take all the available advertising revenue for themselves as their newspapers recede.

More importantly, I have witnessed with my own eyes, the added value that increased competition brings to a market place. If the BBC are bringing news others would find commercially difficult to generate along with a quality that far exceeds the average online video expectation and there is the opportunity to cut and paste video footage for use freely by other local quality news sources, then I for one welcome them to the online market place and look forward to working with the local editor in the not too distant future.

As urbanisation increases and the population becomes increasingly mixed we need hundreds of specialist local websites to enhance community living. BusinessinBerkshire is the perfect tool to provide the online foundations for local businesses, community groups and private individuals looking to maximise their local, national and international communications. With prices starting at just £99 + VAT per year then we are accessible to those with challenging budgets!

Jonathan Davey
Editor of BusinessinBerkshire.co.uk



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