

## Student Media Development Plan 2020

Dev Meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020: Media Officer and Media Chairs, SU President, SU CE, SU Marketing Officer

Plan compiled by Media Officer – April/May 2020

Plan ratified by Media Chairs – 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### Summary

Media groups engagement:

URB: ~40 active members

Bath Time: ~20 active members

Campus TV: ~5 active members

The current sentiment amongst members of Student Media is that collaboration between groups has been effective and is an efficient way to work.

There is a desire amongst members to work together more on large projects such as Freshers Week, breaking campus news, elections coverage, sports events and summer ball.

Outside large events, there is a desire for Media's output to be more student focussed. For example, covering more news relevant to students and having a greater presence on campus. This is a shift away from previous ideology (particularly of URB and CTV) of appearing as a professional outfit, competing with local media outlets and other university media groups (especially those from universities with dedicated media courses). The thought behind being more student focussed is that it will encourage more students not experienced in media to join. Currently most members have had some media experience before starting university. It will also give Media improved prominence on campus and increase the size of its audience.

### Bath Time

In 2019-20 Bath Time have delivered some great journalistic content, but this has tended to come from a small group of regular reporters (mostly committee members) as the group has found it difficult to keep writers engaged. This has also been characterised by a significant drop off in socials after Christmas, although even before Christmas they were not attended by a large group. To combat this, the current committee suggests the following:

- Create a tiered system of reporter levels. Go upwards for going to training and for writing more for the paper. It incentivises getting involved more and could hopefully make the transition to contributor to editor easier
  - Would need to create a perk system that would incentivise going upwards in the system more such as awards throughout the years and reporter pages on the website to highlight each contributor
- Create a community for contributors by holding more socials and monthly issue-specific meetings that discuss the upcoming issue
  - Priority for the commissions from section editors for those people who are in the meetings
  - Will hopefully unearth more stories from campus because in conversation people are more likely to bring up things they have heard that could potentially be a story rather than over message
  - Hopefully build relationships with past contributors and editors who create links in media-focused companies

Bath Time has also struggled with the marketing / design aspect of running a magazine in 2019-20. To combat this, the committee would like to change their constitution to have more than one design editor in a bid to create a full design team further down the line. Currently design is a large part of a magazine in today's society and the work is too much pressure on one individual. Furthermore, when that person graduates, there is a design vacuum – few people have the creative or software skills within Bath Time to continue the high level of design output seen previously. Other ideas:

- Make every section editor do design training

- Make a photographer role

Delivery-wise, Bath Time has moved more online this year. 6 paper issues were planned to be published (curtailed due to COVID-19), and these were well received, however online articles also gained great traction, particularly the sexual assault investigation.

Website stats?

This year, there have been a large number of leftover issues after each distribution cycle. This has been attributed to a lack of distribution points and the unwillingness of AHS to enable increased distribution. It has been suggested at Media Exec that all three Media groups assist with physically handing out copies of release day – e.g. at Arrivals Square, on Parade. This comes in the face of pressure from within the SU and from other Media members to reduce the printing costs of Bath Time if not all issues are being picked up. It should be noted that as the budgets currently work, any recouped funds from Bath Time cannot necessarily be redistributed to URB and CTV. Suggestions from the committee:

- Hold competitions (similar to URB) that force students to follow our pages which means they will see our posts on their feed
  - Will also require building relationships with more places in the city
- Aim to get Twitter verified (many other student publications are) and use this a lot more as Facebook is currently our main platform
- Increase our online exclusives which we started this year and continue the move to put most articles online and the issue as a PDF on our website
- Re-assess the printing numbers as we are left with many over – it is more environmentally friendly to print less as most of our reads come from online

Content has been good and varied in 2019-20, especially sports and entertainment sections which have been enjoyed by readers. However, to improve the magazine content, the committee has suggested:

- Build relationships with societies and groups on campus in order to know more about events and get more people involved
  - Especially continue society of the month
- Truly create a Bath-specific narrative throughout the paper, specifically in news and comment rather than national/international news
  - Get more people going to events, restaurants etc... in town which will require building relationships with more places in the city

## CampusTV

At the beginning of 2019-20, Campus TV did not have a single committee member and its outlook was bleak. The Media Officer took over the running of the group for Freshers' Week and attempt to recruit members of Bath Time and URB into the group to aid FW production. Nonetheless, the output was much lower than previous years at FW.

The Media Marketing Officer later stepped in as CTV Station Manager, spearheading the group from October. This year, a large focus was placed on live events, whether for the SU, University, other media groups or outside commercial clients. Alongside this, some sport / creative / entertainment / news pieces were also published.

This year CTV was able to provide a live focus due to the excellent technical knowledge of those involved. Live streams reached between 50 and 300 viewers on each occasion. The Fight Night outside broadcast brought in ~£200 for CTV, so in the future if more events like this are done, CTV could become self-sustainable. This year's team have begun to put together an 'all-in-one' live box, to make it easier for those without technical knowledge to cover live events in the future. This was curtailed due to COVID-19 but will be worked on at the earliest opportunity.

The creative recorded pieces were not up to as good a standard or frequency as previous years, however the look and feel was still good, mainly due to the editing skills of the technical team. It was noticed that new members found it difficult to get involved as the skills required to operate cameras, audio desks and editing equipment were too niche. It is therefore suggested that more 'everyday' consumer level equipment and

software is purchased in the future, rather than professional level. This may cause a decrease in output quality from a technical perspective but should enable more people to get involved.

Some challenges for 20/21:

Challenges:

- Getting members, especially those interested in the technical side
- Discussion around funding with the SU difficult to have. At a crossroads with CTV funding – current budget (~£500) is not enough to do much with bar fix a few things that break every now and then. Most kit is currently too complicated for the average user to use, requires significant training. Investing around £10k on equipment at once could solve this, bringing in more user-friendly equipment, enabling non-technical or non-experienced people to get involved and encouraging more to join. However, it's difficult to make the business case for £10k when the group only has 5 members...
- Make sure committee is available for the entire week before FW if you want to plan it well!

## URB

URB had a very successful year in terms of member engagement, live show production and creative exploration. With a full schedule seen for the first time in years and good brand awareness owing to excellent Freshers' Week marketing, URB utilised their platform to host a number of large live events, including an SRA Chart Show, Rugby at the Rec, General Election coverage and SU Officer Elections coverage. Live listeners hit the hundreds on these occasions, exemplifying the success of the broadcasts. A strong social atmosphere has also been exhibited at the station all year. However, the committee believed that URB could become an even better media outlet and devised a 5-point plan to achieve this:

1. Stronger SU-facilitated links to, and advertising targeted at, societies

Details:

- Hard to do as students without SU help
- Societies like BUST, MusicSoc, CHAOS could have great shows on URB if offered more wholeheartedly
- Starting in FW, societies need to be made aware of the presence of URB and media as a whole

Benefits

- Broadens range of shows on URB
- Increased breadth of interest base with students
- Increases URB's presence
- Increases URB's listenership
- Strengthens link between Media and the wider SU

2. Stronger foray into podcasts

Details:

- Pushing podcasts as a viable counterpart to live radio show hosting
- Possibility to create a booking system for members of societies to "take-over" a podcast slot each week/occurrence

Benefits

- More people are consuming media content via podcasts now. Uploading past shows as podcasts (the old URB system used to do this automatically to Mixcloud)
- Creating original podcast content will extend URB further into that arena, and increase listenership

3. Getting out and about on campus

Details:

- Continuing to work on URB playout at Bus Stop, Eateries, Little Fresh, and also work on permanent URB playout downstairs in the SU
- Increase of physical presence; Vinyl Sales, Open Studios, Regular music playout on parade (book in slots outside SU / library)

Benefits

- More people will hear "URB", which increases the brand presence and also strengthens the overall media brand
- Increases listenership, recruitment, and general interest in Media

4. Change of focus from 'URB' to 'All of Media'

Details:

- URB is probably the most well known of the 3 groups
- Socials, Marketing, Advertising – All need to be more "Media"

Benefits

- Could help revitalise CampusTV
- Forges stronger connections between 3 groups, more people will do more than just one group. This will be useful for larger projects / events
- Could provide a stronger base for any future rebranding initiatives

5. Bigger push for DJs and DJing

Details:

- Advertise our DJing opportunities to the huge base of students who are interested in it. Opportunities include Cocktails, Events, Gigs in Town, Society Balls
- Advertise to societies (see point 1) that Roadshow can be hired for Events and Balls

Benefits

- Increases recruitment to DJ section of URB
- Increases number of successfully DJed events
- Increases Roadshow income – self-sustainability
- Increases URB/Media membership pool for recruitment into other non-DJ areas of media

Challenges for 20/21:

- URPres in FW was also something that didn't turn out quite how we wanted
- Cross Media collaboration
- Loss of Broadcast Radio Support (contract ended this year)
- Young comm for URB, but with a thorough handover this will be no issue
- Improving further on cross media collaboration
- Regaining public awareness and campus presence post-lockdown
- Big loss of technical knowledge. Must be retained via the UR Bible
- This is compounded by the fact that URB have lost Broadcast Radio support

(We were going to try and get that support with money saved from license fees, but then the uni shut due to covid, from what I understand this situation is going to have quite a bit of damage on the SU finances, which makes me think it'll be very hard to get funding for broadcast support next year, but also in general not sure how this will affect medias funding but it's something that may need to be thought about)

URB/CTV: biggest challenge for CTV and URB will be loss of technical knowledge I worry that when something breaks there will be very few people who actually understand how to fix it