**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUND – FINAL REPORT**

**Improving the quality of the dissemination of statistics using multimedia formats**

**Background**

There has been an increase in the use of audio and video tools by statistical producers in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to publish data. To ensure staff are skilled in delivering statistics and commentary via these media, Digital Publishing Division (DPD) in ONS applied for funding, through the Quality Improvement Fund, to develop a training course to allow staff to improve their script writing skills and help them make their audio and video content more engaging. The bid covered

* time for a qualified ONS trainer to develop the course
* consultation fees for a script writing expert for i) course development and ii) pilot course delivery
* equipment and room bookings for training etc.

Another motivation for developing training with a focus on the audio element is the Code of Practice which requires producers to ensure that official statistics are accessible to a range of different audiences, including those with disabilities (Principle 8, Practice 5).

**Process**

Before a course could be developed, research was done on the topic of script writing and also on the type and content of videos published by ONS.

We recruited an external consultant (London based) who has script writing experience for screen and radio and has delivered script writing workshops for companies across the world. Members of DPD met the consultant to discuss our work and aims.

As part of our internal research we gauged the interest/need of ONS staff in the subject by proposing an initial one hour overview workshop on the topic. We received 96 acceptances for an audio script writing workshop so felt the need was there. We therefore funded the consultant to prepare and deliver a presentation to ONS staff on how to make engaging audio content. The session was very popular, feedback was positive, and comments helped steer our next stage of course content and planning.

The Writing for Broadcast course was developed collaboratively by a qualified trainer within DPD, and the consultant, via email and audio conferencing, with input from other communications professionals within the organisation. This process worked very well as we felt the consultant was able to add valuable insights and an ‘outside/user perspective’ on the content.

Once the course was designed there were three pilot courses arranged so that the material could be tested on real trainees. In our initial bid we suggested we would run two pilot courses. However, because we identified our own premises as the best place for delivering the pilot courses (and therefore no accommodation costs) we decided to add a third course to be run by the ONS trainer only. To ensure we gained feedback from a broad range of teams across the organisation we invited staff who we knew were already involved with this sort of work. Across the three pilots (details can be found below) we had 20 attendees representing 8 ONS divisions.

**Pilot 1 - 7 March 2014 (delivered by ONS Trainer)**

This was a first run-through of the material with attendees to gauge the general content and structure. It was delivered by the ONS trainer only. We discussed the material, the course slides, watched and listened to the relevant videos and attempted some of the activities. As the day progressed this became more of a workshop on the material rather than an actual training course.

Overall the feedback was good. There were some improvements identified which needed to be made before the next pilot, most notably to the structure of the day and the need for more audio/video content to underline the training.

**Pilot 2 - 14 March 2014 (co delivered by ONS Trainer and external Consultant)**

This was the first time the course was run as a formal training course jointly run by the ONS trainer and consultant. The course was designed to be more structured than Pilot 1, and it worked reasonably well. The attendees were all engaged in the content, with some even bringing additional example material to discuss. We ran all of the activities and most of them worked well.

Feedback indicated that:

* there should be yet more video content
* discussion needed to be clearly channelled to the course aims
* the exercises needed to be changed

**Pilot 3 - 21 March 2014 - (co delivered by ONS Trainer and external Consultant)**

Following on from the changes made after the previous pilot, this course ran much better. We were better able to 'steer' the discussions back to the learning points and this also made the course feel more structured. The activities worked well, with the addition of an opportunity to run through and discuss a re-worked audio script for an ONS video.

We felt that this course ran very well. It flowed nicely from one subject to the next, the attendees all seemed engaged and all of the activities ultimately worked. At the end of the course I felt that this was something that would be a good training course to roll out.

**What happens now?**

This report will be examined, along with the course materials and feedback from the attendees to determine:

* the strategy of audio and video content in the ONS and
* if the Writing for Broadcast course should be rolled out across ONS and beyond

If the course is approved for delivery by senior management, it will be run in ONS for a period of no longer than six months as an extended pilot, supported by a set of corporate standards, before being made available to the wider GSS. It will be run by qualified ONS trainers only and its impact will be evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis.

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