

Helsingin Sanomat Foundation

Final report

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I consider myself lucky for the chance to participate in the Reuters Institute's Journalism Fellow Programme in Oxford. The past academic year in Oxford meant both a break from a hectic work life, but also gains in skills, understanding the global media, new people and new thoughts.

In September 2018, the Reuters Institute itself experienced new beginnings. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, a danish-born professor of media, was appointed as the new Head of the Institute. Nielsen is very focused on raising the bar of media research and his active participation in discussions about the media both offline and online is important. Following Nielsen on Twitter will give you a basic course of media development in the world!

The Institute also employs a group of high profile media researchers. During past academic year, there were quite a lot of people changing positions or leaving the Institute.

Nevertheless, the personnel of the Institute are a very warm and welcoming bunch of people - the journalist fellows are welcome to sit with the researchers during the work days and use the facilities even at night and on weekends. We took the advantage of empty space and held quite a few parties in the seminar room of Norham Gardens...

The weekly programme for journalist fellows included three seminars on Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Wednesday mornings, each fellow held a presentation on a specific theme - most often something from their own countries. Throughout the year, the Wednesday morning seminars built a fascinating view of the state of the media around the world, from Palestinian war propaganda to Youtube journalism in Russia. My presentation included a lesson on podcasts as a new form of audio media. On Wednesday afternoon, the Institute arranged a series of lectures at Green Templeton College. This lecture series was open to the public and included media and politics professionals. such as Professor of Media Sarah Banet-Weiser from London School of Economics who lectured on popular feminism and journalist Helen Lewis from New Statesman with a focus on British politics journalism.

On Thursday the seminar often offered Reuters Institute's own researcher's topics. We learned about qualitative and quantitative research methods and coding in R language. On Thursdays one of the researchers also arranged an academic reading group where we chose interesting academic articles for discussion.

A new feature this year were journalist fellows' seminars at the end of each academic period. We arranged three half- or full day seminars of panel discussions and lightning talks with our own experiences of media in focus. All seminars were open to the public and the last one was held in London at the Royal Society with a special interest in the future of the global media.

As Oxford is only a hour away from London, we had the possibility to visit several newsrooms throughout the year. We visited i.e the BBC, Google and the Sun, meeting editors and discussing their daily work and the state of media.

In addition to this, the Institute arranged different events in Oxford where the journalist fellows participated. These events included e.g an event with a diplomat programme and a seminar with a very well known keynote speaker - the former US Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton.

During my year in Oxford, the most of my working hours were spent with my own research paper. The result of the journalist fellows' research is not meant to be strictly academic, but more a journalistic approach to the question. My research is titled *So you have a podcast? How newspapers and broadcasters are working with new forms of audio*. In the paper, I investigated four countries and eight newsrooms who all have some experience in producing podcasts. My aim was to compare and investigate the reasons behind the podcast phenomenon and also give out practical advice to newsrooms considering starting their own podcasts.

My supervisor for this work was Nic Newman, who also is the head researcher for the Digital News Report. During the last academic year, Newman also published two studies on smart speakers and voice. His research and insights helped me to form my own research questions. It was also important to have someone who could connect you to interviewees and other helpful people - without his connections I would have struggled to get in touch with people.

For someone interested in science and academia Oxford offers a lot of things to do. I attended a lot of different talks all around the university: This year, topics of democracy, Brexit and climate change were incredibly popular. Especially events at Oxford Martin School and Oxford Internet Institute were often very interesting with high profile speakers and lively discussion from the audience.

I also participated in courses from the Oxford University Language Center, studying academic writing and spoken communication.

In my free time, I participated in an amateur orchestra playing the viola. I also learned to wake up really early: Joining the Green Templeton College's boat club required early mornings at the Isis river, rain or no rain!

The best experience of my journalist fellowship was however the time spent with the other fellows. The programme attracted 20 passionate professionals all around the world, and I am in awe of the commitment of my fellows working in dire conditions. Journalists living in China, Nigeria, India and Brazil go through such hardships in their daily working lives I as a Nordic public broadcaster employee struggle to understand.

Most of all, the journalist fellowship has meant a group of friends with birthday celebrations, pub visits, movie nights, trips and shared life. I hope that our Whatsapp group continues to update me on their lives and shared moments.

All in all, this year has been an incredible ride - and one of the best in my life so far. I want to thank Helsingin Sanomat Foundation and the Reuters Institute for this experience.