

The Times and Sunday Times

Digital and Data Graphics Journalism

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As part of my data fellowship I got the opportunity to write about my semester study abroad experience in Singapore for the annual Good University Guide.

Overview of the Data Fellowship

For my data fellowship I had the wonderful opportunity to work at the Times and Sunday Times as a Digital and Data Graphics journalist. I was part of the team that used data to create charts and graphics to inform, evidence and substantiate stories that were published.

Data Analysis

My job was to look for a story within data. An example of this would be when the Department for Education released a dataset, detailing statistics on the classes of degrees being achieved in AC YR 22/23. At the time, the data was embargoed so there was a rush to comb through the data to pull a story. We saw that a larger than expected percentage of people who achieved 1sts also had achieved D's at A-Levels. Of course, a great news story.

The software I used was Excel/Google Sheets to compile and evaluate and format the data. I then used Datawrapper to create the charts that the readers saw. Datawrapper is an intuitive software that makes data digestible and easy to interact with.

Findings

During my fellowship at the Times and Sunday Times I was involved in producing and researching a number of data-led stories. One of my favourites stories that I worked on was mapping the devastating wildfires in Hawaii this summer.

A challenge posed to the publication of the article was the time difference between the UK and Hawaii. We worked around the clock to secure interviews with Hawaii wildfire experts. This ensured we had all the information needed to produce an accurate representation of the tragedy in time for publication.

Key Skills Learnt

The most valuable lesson I have taken away from being at the Times and Sunday Times is the power of networking. My initiative secured some amazing experiences such as visiting Parliament with the Political Editor of the Times and going to Downing Street to interview striking junior doctors.

Furthermore, I was able to diversify the type of articles I wrote and honed my skills in writing comment and personal pieces.

I also developed my collaboration and team working skills. Often as a new-joiner there is so much to learn and digest, especially in the high-pressure environment of a newsroom. Reaching out to your more experienced peers is something that accelerates your learning and development. Asking questions is very important, even if they may seem silly to begin with.

Finally, I learnt what it was like to be a journalist! Journalism is a tough career to be in. It requires determination, resilience and creativity. You quickly learn that your ideas aren't always what the newsroom is looking for. However, I learnt to use this as motivation to understand what pieces do make it to the finish line and why.



In the turnaround of one day, I helped produce an article to map the devastating Maui wildfires. I spoke to experts based in Hawaii, gathering information, mapping the destruction and investigating exactly what sparked the fire.