

MIJT: Dixit challenges pitfalls of news media virtual world

NEPALI TIMES Kunda Dixit challenged the benefits and pitfalls of new media influence on in-depth journalism in the inaugural Media, Investigative Journalism and Technology Conference at AUT University in December.

New media could be an outlet for stories that due to commercial pressures within newsrooms would not otherwise get published, he said.

However, he admitted that new media did have flaws. "The problem with the internet is that you usually preach to the converted," he said.

And the decreasing amount of space available for investigative journalism in mainstream media meant that longer, in-depth stories were sidelined.

"The internet gives you that space, but even there you are battling very short attention spans," he said.

Focus on people

As a way forward, he suggested multimedia news reports to capture audiences, but warned these pieces needed to be the product of in-depth journalism that addressed the people most affected by it.

More than 100 people attended the successful MIJT conference hosted by the Pacific Media Centre and opened by PMC chairperson John Utanga.

TVNZ's Pacific affairs correspondent Barbara Dreaver was a keynote speaker and other Pacific participants included Kalafi Moala (Tonga Media Network), Patrick Matbob (Papua New Guinea's Divine Word University), Shailendra Singh (University of the South Pacific in Fiji) and Koroi Hawkins (Solomon Islands Television One).

Dixit, well known in the Pacific when based in Manila for the Inter Press Service, worked as a "parachute" journalist for the BBC before civil war broke out in Nepal in 1996. He said war correspondents, including him, behaved like soldiers. They went to a bar at the end of the day and spoke in military jargon.

However, when returning to Nepal, it was no longer "someone else's war".

"Journalism schools teach us not to get too involved; to be a spectator," he said.

"But back home I could not.

"We had to look beyond the battles. We had to look at the human cost."

Dixit pointed to the discrepancies in reporting; when people from developed nations die suddenly and spectacularly, it is front page news.



Kunda Dixit with photographs from his *Frames of War* exhibition at AUT.

Photo: DAVID ROBIE/PMC

However, when more people from developing nations die slowly, it does not make the news.

"It never has," Dixit said.

Dixit, who was the PMC's 2010 Asian Journalism Fellow, said the problem in war reporting in Nepal was that journalists were not involved enough; that there was no space for in-depth stories.

Turning to other means

Colleagues of his turned to documentary filmmaking and writing books because they felt the norms of journalism were inadequate.

Dixit himself decided to tell Nepal's story through pictures.

An exhibition of photographs selected for a trilogy of books edited by him, called *Frames of War*, was launched at the conference by the Dean of the Faculty of Creative Industries, Desna Jury. The images were later donated by the PMC to Amnesty International for display in schools.

PMC director Dr David Robie described the investigative journalism conference – the first of its kind in New Zealand – as a great success. A parallel peace journalism was held on the final day and several ongoing initiatives from the conference, including a "UniMuckraker" investigative project, are ongoing.

External sponsors included the Asia New Zealand Foundation, the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO and United States Embassies in Fiji and New Zealand – Courtney Wilson



Journalism librarian Annie McKillop, Dr Camille Nakhid, George Schuster, Nina Tapu, Tony Murrow, Richard Pamatatau, I'u Tuagalu and John Patolo at the PMC blessing.

Photos: DEL ABCEDE/PMC

PMC blessed at relocated office in AUT Tower

KITEA TIPUNA, AUT University equity adviser, has blessed the relocated Pacific Media Centre in its new office in the AUT Tower on the City Campus.

In traditional tikanga Māori fashion, he “stamped” the new office with PMC supporters following a seminar about using Pasifika library web resources and the new PMC website.

Acting faculty associate dean of research Dr Rosser Johnson also spoke about the importance of the centre’s work.

Welcoming Pasifika, journalism and languages staff, centre director Dr David Robie said it was pleasing to be finally settled in the new “home”.

Journalism librarian Annie McKillop and web designer Tony Murrow spoke along with Dr Robie about the Pasifika media web resources available.

The group also included new Pasifika lecturer Richard Pamatatau who is steering the new Graduate Diploma in Pacific Journalism at AUT University. Pamatatau was formerly Pacific affairs reporter for Radio New Zealand.



AUT equity adviser Kitea Tipuna (from left), Pasifika studentship programme leader John Patolo and Te Tari Awhina senior lecturer I'u Tuagalu at the blessing.

PMC internship winners bound for China, Indonesia

THREE AUT University media graduates have been selected for annual international internships in China and Indonesia organised by the Pacific Media Centre with air fares sponsored by the Asia New Zealand Foundation.

Kim Bowden is bound for the China Daily.com for a three-month stay in April and Yvonne Brill will be going to Beijing later in the year. Corazon Miller plans to go to the *Jakarta Globe* mid-year.

Both Bowden and Miller graduated last year as journalists with a Postgraduate Diploma in Communication Studies and all three were on AUT’s postgraduate Asia-Pacific journalism course.

China Daily’s Jin Limeng says he is delighted that the AUT graduates will be joining his online team.

Two *China Daily* staff are also expected to go to AUT University later in the year on exchange.

AUT’s last journalist on internship was Michele Ong who was in Beijing last year and is now with the *Rodney Times* in Warkworth. Jess Harkins also returned recently from a spell with the *Jakarta Globe*.

“It is great to see our graduates on the Asia-Pacific Journalism course following up with practical experience in the field in the

Milestones

PACIFIC MEDIA WATCH contributing editor **Alex Perrottet** was highly commended in the annual Ossie Awards for best online story category (undergraduate or postgraduate) for his coverage of the aftermath of the Samoan tsunami one year on.

Former Radio New Zealand Pacific affairs reporter **Richard Pamatatau** has been appointed programme leader for the new Graduate Diploma in Pacific Journalism (GDPJ) course established at AUT.

Former Pacific Media Watch contributing editor **Josephine Latu** has been appointed media officer for the Tongan Prime Minister’s Office after a short stint as editor of the *Tonga Chronicle*.

John Pulu, who was mentor of the Pasifika communication studies students who frequented the PMC as the second-year Class of 2008, has been appointed to TVNZ’s *Tagata Pasifika* team. He recently reported the Tonga elections with PMC chairman **John Utanga**.

region,” says PMC director Dr David Robie.

“It is not only valuable for their personal development, but also beneficial for the long-term development of New Zealand media expertise in the region.”

Media, Investigative Journalism Conference 4-5 December 2010

Photos by DEL ABCEDE/PMC



Pacific Journalism Studies



Graduate Diploma in Pacific Journalism

Level: 7, Points: 120, One year full time

The Graduate Diploma in Pacific Journalism addresses the shortage of Pasifika journalists in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is suitable for people wishing to enter the media industry from another career or those already in the industry desiring a qualification. It will also appeal to students from the Pacific region. The programme is enriched by Pasifika and Māori and other media elective papers.

Graduates are able to enter a wide range of journalism and media related careers in both mainstream and Pasifika contexts.

Check out the rest of this information online at:

www.aut.ac.nz

New Pasifika Media Course

A new Graduate Diploma in Pacific Journalism is being offered to fulfil needs in our increasingly diverse media environment at AUT University's School of Communication Studies.

The one year course is an addition to other Pacific media opportunities.

- Certificate in Communication Studies
- Bachelor of Communication Studies
- Postgraduate qualification:
 - Bachelor of Communication Studies (Honours)
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism
 - Master of Communication Studies
 - PhD

The new Graduate Diploma and Postgraduate studies are supported by the school's Pacific Media Centre.

The Pacific Media Centre's goals:

- Publication of the Pacific Journalism Review, peer-reviewed journal on media research in New Zealand and Oceania www.pjreview.info
- Pacific Media Watch D-Space digital repository
- Books and research publications
- Pacific Media Centre website, including Nuis Beat, Postmortem, Global Watch, Special Reports and research resources www.pmc.aut.ac.nz
- Film, photojournalism, TV and digital media research papers
- "Journalist-in-residence" research fellowships and masters and doctorate scholarships



Associate professor David Robie, director of AUT's Pacific Media Centre and former coordinator of the University of the South Pacific regional journalism programme.

"This new course will be a boost for regional Pacific reporting and will also contribute to a higher Pasifika community profile in the New Zealand media. We hope journalists on this programme will push the boundaries of Pacific reporting in a challenging way."

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AUT and Pacific Islands Media Association Pasifika Communications Scholarships

These awards are sponsored and organised by AUT's School of Communication Studies and Office of Pasifika Advancement with the Pacific Islands Media Association (PIMA) for New Zealand resident Pacific Islanders seeking media qualifications. The scholarship is offered to assist one undergraduate and one postgraduate full-time student in communication studies each year.

The scholarship covers tuition fees for a maximum of four papers per semester, student services fee and Student Association fee (AUSM). It does not include books, material fees and miscellaneous charges.

Full tenure, criteria and application requirements in the AUT Scholarships Handbook or visit the AUT website at: www.aut.ac.nz/students/student_services/scholarships/current_aut_scholarships/design.htm

JOHN UTANGA – SENIOR REPORTER, TAGATA PASIFIKA, TVNZ

"I'm really excited that AUT is offering a Graduate Diploma in Pacific Journalism. It has the potential to significantly boost the number of trained Pasifika journalists and serve as a pathway to a significant career in the media.



"Also, many Pacific people already working in ethnic media have had little or no media training; this course is one way in which they can get further understanding of their roles and responsibilities as journalists while gaining a valuable qualification."

VAIMDANA TAPALEAO – REPORTER, NEW ZEALAND HERALD

"Choosing to do journalism at AUT was one of the best decisions I've made. The course was awesome with a balance between theoretical work and practical work. I did the Bachelor of Communication Studies, and being Pasifika was a massive bonus because the course dealt with intercultural topics like how to report fairly on Māori and Pasifika issues.



"Now the new Graduate Diploma in Pacific Journalism is a step forward for upcoming Pacific journalists. We need more Pacific and Māori journalists to tell our stories and to take multicultural New Zealand into the newsroom."

LEILANI MOMOISEA – JOURNALIST, RADIO NEW ZEALAND

Leilani says that the political situation in Fiji is a good example of when Pacific news becomes mainstream news. "Just having that background information would help journalists form their view.



"It would be quite hard to come in cold. In the Pacific in general, you have to take a different approach to reporting. It's probably more difficult because in the Pacific they're not as open to the media. They can easily write you off if you just come in and don't know what you're talking about."

JOHN PULU – AUT STUDENT AND TNEWS INTERN

"I'm a firm believer that Pacific people deserve to be served by and represented in the media and I have worked hard for this goal since leaving high school. I'm passionate about documenting Pacific Island issues and telling our stories."

