

CASLIS TORONTO NEWSLETTER

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A Day in the Life of a Guardian Librarian

By Astrid Lange and Richard Nelsson

Guardian Newspapers Ltd (GNL) is comprised of the Guardian, The Observer and Guardian Unlimited and is based in London. The Guardian is a national Monday to Saturday paper, The Observer appears on Sundays and Guardian Unlimited is the online arm of the group. The research department provides a research service to all editorial departments of the company as well as being responsible for archiving the text of the papers. With a staff of 12, the department is open from 10 am till 7 pm, seven days a week. Richard Nelsson, the Information Manager, describes a typical day. (*... and Astrid Lange, Library and Research Specialist, at the Toronto Star comments on the differences and similarities between the two jobs. Like the Guardian group of newspapers the Toronto Star also appears seven days a week, and thestar.com is its online division (based on the same floor as the editorial newsroom). The Star's library also provides research to all editorial departments, and is also responsible for archiving the text and photographs of the newspaper. We stay open a little earlier*



and close a little later, 9 am till 10 pm, working with a staff of 10.)

After battling through London's rush hour traffic on my bike, I normally look forward to a coffee and a few minutes to collect my thoughts when I arrive at work. Today though, I'm barely through the door when I see one of our researchers waving the paper in the air and complaining that her byline is missing from a panel she had spent hours compiling.

This is actually a rare occurrence. One of the research department's jobs is writing sidebars/panel and a policy has been

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Working Constructively with IT: CASLIS Toronto Panel Discussion of November 17

By: Beatrice Kerr, Martin Tomlinson and Tim Tripp

➤ Build the relationship

- Learn the history of the corporate relationship and invest accordingly
- Learn about IT issues and responsibilities
- Learn the language
- Understand the core systems and consider their capabilities

➤ Look for opportunities to partner

- Present your goals aligned to business imperatives as championed by management
- Find the value propositions that benefit you both
- Don't get into "us" vs. "them"

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[continued from “A Day in the Life of a Guardian...”]

agreed whereby work produced by us should, if appropriate, be credited. I fire off an email to the foreign desk about the missing byline and then head off to the 10:30 morning news conference. *(Our manager Joan Sweeney Marsh has fought hard with the Star’s newsroom to get our work recognized in the paper. But occasionally they forget.)*

At the Guardian, all editorial staff are welcome to attend the conference. The run-through of a provisional list of the next day’s news alerts us to the stories we’ll probably be working on. This is followed by an open discussion and today’s topics range from the latest power struggle in Downing Street to the use of vox pops in the paper. This is something that our readers’ editor writes about later on in the week (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1411228,00.html>). *(At the Star, only editorial department heads attend the morning news meeting. I think if the meeting was opened up to anyone it would be chaotic. There’s enough to cover as it is. In Joan’s own words, “Attend daily news meeting with 9 or 10 senior editors, photographers and graphic design specialists. Must be fully briefed on breaking news stories and have a good grasp of the historical significance of events. Oh, and for good measure, could you please provide us with some unique story ideas?” Joan then returns to the library to let us know what research needs to be done for the day.)*

Back in the office I have a meeting with the Guardian’s Freedom of Information specialist. Since the UK FoI Act came into effect on January 1, 2005, the department has been very busy sending out requests and processing the data. We are also responsible for archiving the released documents on Guardian Unlimited (<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/foi/>). The writer has a new project and wants to know if I can spare someone for a day to work with him. Everyone is in today, so I agree. *(The Star has a handful of savvy investigative journalists who often send out Freedom of Information requests. In some cases, the library is called upon to assist in synthesizing the information. In many instances, these investigations become award-winning pieces – Racial Profiling in the Toronto police force is one example. We also provide maintenance and newsroom training. We’re jacks of all trades, you could say!)*



A reply comes back from the foreign desk. The editor in question is adamant that he left the byline on the piece and he blames an over-zealous subeditor for removing it. I inform the chiefs who promises to chase it up.

(Sounds familiar ...)

“Attend daily news meeting with 9 or 10 senior editors, photographers, graphic design specialists. Must be fully briefed on breaking news stories and have a good grasp of historical significance of events. Oh, and for good measure, could you please provide us with some unique story ideas?”

A f t e r lunch I turn my attention to a problem with the text archive. *(Oh so familiar! We joke that we should hire someone from IT full-time to handle all of our database problems!)* The department archives the text from all GNL

publications for both our internal database and external hosts. This is done by four graduate trainees who spend a year with us before going on to library school. As well as doing the archiving, they answer reader’s letters, handle microfilm requests and carry out general house-keeping duties.

Like almost every other news library in the world, you don’t know what the next request is going to be. It could be a fact check, a timeline, a background package or one of those bizarre “did they really ask for that?” kinds of queries. Today someone asks if there is a directory of ex-directory numbers, while another contributor calls to ask why, when he types, “email and sex act” into Google, he’s not quite getting the hits he was hoping for. *(One reporter asked me why he was getting thousands of hits in Factiva. I asked him what his search terms were. He was searching “All Sources” (6,000+ publications) and his search term was “India”.)*

A researcher suggests that a session on basic search skills might be a good idea. Throughout the afternoon staff take queries ranging from finding statistics for an infographic, to digging out a 1952 article from microfilm for a rag-out, to tracing an obscure American magazine feature. We finally get this by posting a message to the ever helpful Newslib listserv. The Association of UK Media Librarians also has a listserv (<http://www.aukml.org.uk>). *(News just happens. It’s true, you never know what to expect. In 2002, our library spent a lot of time researching the history of the Star for its 110th anniversary. During our history quest, a sniper was terrorizing Washington, D. C., and the Canadian census was released. Of course, background research was required for all of it!)*

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➤ **Bring IT in early, keep them involved**

- Be clear on project plans and milestones
- Keep communicating larger goals so that shifts in planning are understandable when they occur
- Be specific about where IT fits in
- Work to discover and support IT knowledge gaps

➤ **Use your reference skills**

- Communicate about your business imperatives
- Conduct reference interviews
- Don't assume that because IT is tech savvy that they know everything about the technology in your area of expertise

➤ **Be honest**

- Don't bluff about things you don't understand



➤ **Build credibility**

- Demonstrate your technical knowledge when you have some

➤ **Remember to treat IT as one of your clients** ♦

Beatrice Kerr is a Manager in the Business Information Services at Deloitte and Touche. Martin Tomlinson is a Manager in the Research and Information Management at Blake, Cassels and Graydon LLP. Tim Tripp is a Senior Project Manager in the Shared Information Management Services at the University Health Network.

Toronto International Film Festival Review

By Susan Murray



I viewed 60 films and 2 shorts at the Toronto International Film Festival (September 8-17, 2005). Some of the most remarkable films were documentaries and many of the films had a social/political context, such as **Les Amants Réguliers**, **Caché**, **October 17, 1961**, **Sisters**, **Tsotsi**, **Vers la Sud** and **Water**.

Here are my recommendations:

Adam's Æbler see **Adam's Apple**

Susan Murray works for the Consumer Health Information Service (CHIS) at the Toronto Reference Library

Adam's Apple / Adam's Æbler (Denmark, 2005), Anders Thomas Jensen

Tale of an infuriatingly saintly preacher who takes several criminal outcasts under his care. The title refers to the most recent arrival's (neo-Nazi Adam) goal to bake an apple cake.

Amants Réguliers, Les (France, 2005), Philippe Garrel

Shot in black and white new wave style, the film revolves around a group of students caught up in the Paris riots of May 1968 and their personal, post-1968 life.

Ballets Russe (USA, 2005), Dan Geller, Dayna Goldfine

Using interviews with the still vigorous dancers and wonderful footage of their performances, this documentary provides a history of the Ballets Russe company from its premiere in Paris in 1909 to its final performance in New York in 1962.

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Brokeback Mountain (USA, 2005), Ang Lee

Based on Annie Proulx's short story published in "The New Yorker" and adapted by Larry McMurtry, **Brokeback Mountain** tells the story of two young cowboys thrown together to tend cattle in 1963, and their lifelong love affair.

Child, The see **L'Enfant**

Chin-jeol-han Geum-ja-ssi see **Sympathy for Lady Vengeance**

C.R.A.Z.Y. (Canada, 2005), Jean-Marc Vallée

This film has been wildly popular in Quebec and is Canada's contender for a foreign language Academy Award nomination. Follows the sexually confused Zachary and his strange and loving family from his fortuitous birth on Christmas 1960 through the 1970's.

Caché / Hidden (France/Austria/Germany/Italy), Michael Hanecke

With an underlying theme of colonialism, **Caché** is a slowly-suspenseful drama featuring a literary couple who receive a series of violent drawings and videos of their home taped from the street.

Der Weisse Massai, The / The White Masai (Germany, 2005), Hermine Huntgeburth

Based on the autobiography of Corinne Hofmann, the film charts the against-all-odds romance of this Swiss business-woman and a Masai warrior in Kenya.

L'Enfant (Belgium/France, 2005), Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne

Winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes, **L'Enfant** looks at petty thief Bruno and what transpires when his eighteen-year old girlfriend and newborn son turn up.

L'Enfer / Hell (France/Italy/Belgium/Japan, 2005), Danis Tanovic

Loosely inspired by Dante's "Inferno" and the second of the "Heaven"- "Hell"- "Purgatory" trilogy that Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski had written before his death. Examines the emotional hell that three sisters' lives have descended into by their father's imprisonment. Emmanuelle Béart also starred in Claude Chabrol's 1994 film **L'Enfer**.

Fateless / Sorstalanság (Hungary/Germany/United Kingdom, 2005), Lajos Koltai

Based on a true story, **Fateless** recreates the horror of the Holocaust tempered by the indomitable spirit of a fourteen-year boy interned in a succession of Nazi concentration camps.

Gabrielle (France/Italy, 2005), Patrice Chéreau

Set in turn-of-the century France and based on Joseph Conrad's "The Return," **Gabrielle** looks at the shattered life of a smugly secure bourgeois gentleman when he receives a troubling letter from his wife. Stars the commanding Isabelle Huppert.

Heading South see **Vers la Sud**

Hell see **L'Enfer**

Hermanas / Sisters (Argentina/Spain, 2005), Julia Solomonoff

The story of two sisters who took different stands during the military dictatorship in 1970's Argentina, whose reunion in 1984 uncovers a dark secret.

Hidden see **Caché**



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A History of Violence (USA, 2005), David Cronenberg

Psychological drama about a model husband/father/ neighbour whose past is suddenly uncovered, threatening everything he holds dear.

No Direction Home: Bob Dylan (USA, 2005), Martin Scorsese

This compelling documentary explores singer-songwriter Dylan's career from 1961-1966 (from acoustic to electric), featuring wonderful performance footage and fascinating present-day interviews with Dylan and those who worked with him. The documentary is as much a social history of folk music as the story of Dylan, looking at important influences him, such as Woodie Guthrie.

North Country (USA, 2005), Niki Caro

Based on a true story, this film explores the brutality inflicted on the women who took on "men's" jobs at a steel mine in northern Minnesota, concluding with their precedent-setting class-action lawsuit. Features Charlize Theron and Frances McDormand in Academy Award performances.

October 17, 1961 (France, 2005), Alain Tasma

Reconstructs the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale's peaceful 1961 demonstration in Paris and its bloody conclusion.

Regular Lovers see **Amants Réguliers, Les**

Shark in the Head/ Žralok v hlavě (Czech Republic, 2005), Maria Procházková

Depicts the unique world of the delusional, but convivial Mr. Seman.

Sisters see **Hermanas**.

Sketches of Frank Gehry (USA, 2005), Sydney Pollack

Explores the life and working style of award-winning architect Frank Gehry, a native Toronto son and designer of the current AGO extension.

Solntse / The Sun (Russia/Italy/France/Switzerland, 2005), Alexander Sokurov

Master director Sokurov (**Russian Ark, Mother and Sun**) paints a sympathetic picture of Emperor Hirohito – who renounced his divinity during the America occupation of Japan in 1945-1946 – and captures Hirohito's humble dignity and humour.

Sorstalanság see **Fateless**

Sun, The see **Solntse**

Sympathy for Lady Vengeance / Chin-jeol-han Geum-ja-ssi (South Korea, 2005), Park Chan-wook

Not for the faint of heart, this is the third film in Chan-wook's vengeance trilogy (**Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance, Old Boy**) that follows the pursuit of the truth by a woman wrongly imprisoned thirteen years for kidnapping and killing a six-year old boy with a remarkable resolution.

Thank You for Smoking (USA, 2005), Jason Reitman

Wildly funny satire about a slick spokesman for Big Tobacco fighting for his career and his son's affirmation. Features Aaron Eckhart (the wanton womanizer from **In the Company of Men**), and bang-on performances from William Macy, Robert Duvall and Rob Lowe.



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Tsotsi (United Kingdom/ South Africa, 2005), Gavin Hood

Voted the most popular film of the festival, **Tsotsi** is the story of the gulf between the haves and have-nots in South Africa told through the eyes of a thief who discovers a baby in the car he hijacks. Adapted from a novel by Athol Fugard.

Vers la Sud/ Heading South (France/Canada, 2005), Laurent Cantet

Female tourists visit Haiti in the 1980's to discover their sexuality amidst the backdrop of the volatile "Baby Doc" regime.

Wallace & Grommit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (United Kingdom, 2005), Nick Park, Steve Box

The cheese loving, inventor Wallace and his canny canine Grommit – stars of the Academy Award winning short **The Wrong Trousers** - are back with a feature length animated adventure where they are charged to eliminate a mysterious beast that threatens the town's vegetable entries in the county fair. Features Helena Bonham-Carter as the dotty Lady Tottingham and Ralph Fiennes as the odious Victor.

Water (Canada, 2005), Deepa Mehta

The films in Deepa Mehta's trilogy - **Fire, Earth, Water** – all challenge Indian customs and were not able to be filmed in India due to their controversy. **Water** focuses on Chuyia, an eight-year widow who rails against her fate to live forever in exile and poverty with other widows, interspersing Chuyia's tale with the rich stories of the other women.

Where the Truth Lies (Canada/United Kingdom, 2005), Atom Egoyan

A tantalizing mystery laced with sexuality. A brash, young reporter tries to learn the truth about a 1950's comedy duo's (reminiscent of Martin & Lewis) breakup and connection with the death of a young chambermaid.

White Masai, The see Der Weisse Massai

Žralok v hlave see Shark in the Head

Films I didn't see that were recommended by others:

April Snow (South Korea, 2005), Wae Chul

Capote (USA, 2005), Bennett Miller

Dear Wendy (Denmark/Germany/United Kingdom/France, 2005), Thomas Vinterberg

Familia (Canada, 2005), Louise Archambault

John & Jane (India, 2005), Ashim Ahluwalia

Live and Become / Va, Vis et Deviens (France/Israel, 2005), Radu Mihaileanu

Proof (USA, 2005), John Madden

Proposition, The (Australia/United Kingdom, 2005), John Hillcoat

The Squid and the Whale (USA, 2005), Noah Baumbach

Walk the Line ((USA, 2005), James Mangold ♣



We still keep our clipping files and find they are a valuable resource for historical questions, but we also have Pages of the Past, which is an electronic archive of the Toronto Star's microfilm going back to 1892.



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A member of staff asks me whether we have a cuttings file on liposuction. We stopped taking cuts in 2000, but have kept the collection, which begins around 1960. It is still an invaluable resource but a number of newer staff are unfamiliar with the labyrinthian world of the cuttings index. I refer her to ResearchNet, our intranet, which includes a full list of the files. This sits on the main corporate intranet and includes an events diary for the year, news specials, Iraqi casualty lists as well as a host of useful links. *(Our library stopped clipping the paper in the mid-1980s. We still keep our clipping files and find they are a valuable resource for historical questions, but we also have Pages of the Past, which is an electronic archive of the Toronto Star's microfilm going back to 1892. And it's searchable! Pages of the Past is a great tool for questions that begin with something like this: "Sometime in the 1930s, maybe in the 1940s, I'm not sure ...")*

Towards the end of the day, I have a meeting with a couple of colleagues about setting up a research department blog. To be honest, while we should be discussing

content, we spend far too long talking about what to call it. Randiblog (research and information blog - geddit?) is one name that is suggested but I'm not sure what kind of message this gives out. *(An interesting idea ... I don't know if anyone here would have the time to maintain a blog. We do keep a list of the craziest reference questions we've received. My all-time favourite: "Quick, I need to know, was John F. Kennedy Jr.'s dog on the plane when it crashed?")*

I leave the office around 6:30, but heading out to the bike shed I come across a crate of books that looks as if it is being thrown out. The librarian inside me means that I can't walk by without rescuing a few biographies for our reference collection. *(We'd love to do that ... if only we had the space!)* ✿

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For more information on CASLIS, check the website at <http://www.caslistoronto.on.ca/>

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