

Professor Brian Winston

The Editorial Function in the Age of Digital 'Interactivity'

Professor Brian Winston delivered his talk – The Editorial Function in the Age of Digital 'Interactivity' – as part of Liverpool John Moores University's Liverpool Screen School Research Seminar.

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The Editorial Function in the Age of Digital 'Interactivity'

A 'Cutting out the director' has been an ambition of socially concerned documentary filmmakers since the introduction of Sony video Portapak in the late 1960s first made it technically possible to envisage doing this. From the tapes then made at the Canadian National Film Board through to today's collaborative digital web/i-docs sites, helping people use documentary to aid and illuminate their own socio-political situation has challenged Griersonian patriarchal assumptions about the role of a documentary film director as a person "to command the minds of a generation" (as he put it). There is a line here directly from the 17th Century solicitation of news reports from their readers (aka 'correspondents') by newspaper printers through to the veteran documentary film director George Stoney's regret, in the 1970s, that he had spent his life 'making films [for people] who should have made their own' to today's rhetoric of 'interactivity', 'participation', 'co-creation' (and, it can be added, 'citizen journalism'). How real the redistribution of editorial power is (or can be) is the focus of this talk.

Biography:



Brian Winston has been involved with media since joining Granada TV's World in Action in 1963. He has also worked for the BBC in the UK and in 1985, he won a US prime-time Emmy for documentary scriptwriting at WNET, New York. In 2010, he scripted the documentary feature on Robert Flaherty "A Boatload Wild Irishmen" for TG4. He has written widely on media technology - "Technologies of Seeing" (1996), "Media, Technology and Society" (1998); and free expression - "A Right to Offend" (2012) as well as on documentary where he is the author of "Claiming the Real" (1995, 2008) and "Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries" (2000). Most recently he has edited "The Documentary Film Book" (2013). "The Act of Documenting" (with Gail Vanstone & Chi Wang) is published in January, 2017. He has been a governor of the BFI, sits on the editorial board of the British Journalism Review, is a visiting professor at Beijing Normal University and holds the Lincoln Chair at the University of Lincoln, UK.