

Speech: Jeremy Wright – Society of Editors speech

Good morning.

Appearing at the Society of Editors is a challenging prospect for most politicians.

But I was keen to come here today both to celebrate our press and to contribute to this critical debate about its future.

Today's theme is 'The Trust Factor and how to fund it', and every day in my role I see the importance of trust in our communities.

And I see the vital work that all the different elements of our civil society do to reinforce it.

Our press has a level of trust and freedom that is rightly envied and respected across the world.

But a free and trusted press must also be a sustainable press.

A benefit of the digital revolution is that so many people from around the world can now see your content.

But I recognise there is a real problem in converting that interest into revenue.

And the strength and sustainability of our press is something that should concern us all.

Especially when we look at this in a global context.

Across the world, we are seeing journalists under threat and state sponsored disinformation drowning out the free and open press.

And the risks of a diminished press are very real. A less informed public, a democratic deficit and less of a spotlight on vital public institutions. Institutions like the courts.

In my previous role as Attorney General, I was always impressed by the diligence of the journalists who informed the public about complex and challenging cases.

And the careful way in which they, most of the time, combined accurate reporting with respect for the law so everyone is able to get the fair trial they deserve.

It is a good example of the importance of a healthy and sustainable free press.

A Press that gives people not just what they want to read but what they ought to read, makes our society is stronger.

And helping you to deliver that is one of my big priorities in my new role as Secretary of State at DCMS.

Cairncross Review

As many of you know the Government has set up a Review under Dame Frances Cairncross in recognition of the pressing need to sustain high quality news.

Thank you for your engagement with it, whether it's through our expert panel or through sharing your views in the consultation. We are on course to publish the review early next year.

Now, this is an independent review and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to speculate on or pre-judge its findings.

But it is clear that the days of print sales and print advertising meeting the costs of producing quality journalism are largely behind us.

And that the trend for consumers to seek news content online will not be reversed, but will, if anything accelerate.

But I am confident that the review will show there are ways for quality journalism to go from strength to strength in the digital era.

It is undeniable that the digital revolution has led to a world in which the value of quality content is not sufficiently rewarded.

This means an understandable but harmful trend towards cheaper to produce content, which endangers the investigative journalism that needs time and resources to do well.

There is an urgent need to turn this around. On the one hand, I firmly believe that technology is a force for good and that social media platforms have brought great opportunities.

But many of these platforms are powered by the sharing of news, and it is vital that the producers of this news are recognised and rewarded.

I have urged Dame Frances to look carefully at this point.

Of course, whilst I believe the Cairncross Review will be an important step in setting out a new future for our quality press, it will not be a silver bullet. Nor will it produce one single model for every publisher to follow.

And so it is important that we all look at what is within our gift to change, as we strive to strengthen our free press and democratic engagement.

Representation

The government is thinking long and hard how to support a vibrant press

industry in the years ahead.

But the press must also look at itself. Not only in terms of testing new business models, but in terms of remaining relevant to our discourse as a society in representing and reflecting the communities that you serve.

In Edinburgh I spoke of how our Public Service Broadcasters are national institutions, and today as I speak to another group of institutions that are vital to the fabric of our nation, my message is the same. The transfer of trust from generation to generation can no longer be taken for granted. But neither is it unachievable.

The shift to online presents opportunities to engage new audiences. And proper representation is vital to winning and maintaining their trust.

That means greater ethnic and gender diversity and greater diversity in the background of those who work in the press industry, and drawing on the talents of more of the country's geography.

We are currently in Manchester, where the BBC and ITV now produce much of their output.

And whilst it will of course be disappointing for this great city that it was not announced as the new home for Channel 4's National Headquarters, I must congratulate Leeds, and indeed Glasgow and Bristol for securing new Channel 4 creative hubs.

And I congratulate Channel 4 for seeing the value of getting beyond the capital and using the creativity that can be found in all parts and communities of the UK and I am delighted that they have committed to commission more content outside London too.

Proper representation can be achieved in a variety of ways. And I would urge you, just as you ask probing questions of others, to ask probing questions about the make up of your own organisations.

Not simply because it is the right thing to do, but because it makes good business sense.

A more representative press is more likely to reach more people.

Investigative journalism

And there are some areas in which we should all want more people to read what you produce.

And finally I want to touch on an area in which I think our press is the best in the world – the exceptional quality of investigative journalism.

Some of this has been through traditional sources, like the Guardian and Channel 4's excellent work on Cambridge Analytica.

Standing side by side with first class investigative journalism online.

Like BBC Africa's excellent online investigation into the killing of civilians by soldiers in Cameroon, which went viral worldwide on Twitter, showing there is still appetite for dogged and forensic investigative journalism.

It has been encouraging to see new outlets like BuzzFeed working with traditional media to break headline hitting stories, and I am sure we will see more of these in the coming years.

I really wanted to come here today and applaud the importance of what you do.

British journalists regularly produce stories that drive major changes for the better in politics and society more broadly.

And you have been sharing your investigative skills with others too. There has been some excellent work on media literacy by publications represented in this room, helping young people to develop the critical thinking skills they need.

These initiatives are so important, especially in an era where disinformation is prevalent, and often commercially lucrative.

Thank you for this work, and the Government is looking at how we can complement it to help people of all ages separate fact from fiction.

Because high quality investigative journalism holds our institutions to account and makes our country, and public life, a much better place.

And it's the kind of journalism that can and must be part of the antidote to so called 'fake news'.

Conclusion

So, at a time when trust is in short supply, our media is as important as it has ever been.

The fight against disinformation and the sustainability of our press are two sides of the same coin.

You help guarantee a society with rigour and accuracy at its core. And you do excellent work. We might not always like what you write about us. But your right to report and publish freely is critically important for us all.

Thank you very much and I'm looking forward to taking your questions.

[News story: Lord Chancellor and Lord](#)

Chief Justice to address the inaugural international forum on online courts

The Lord Chief Justice, The Right Honourable The Lord Burnett of Maldon, will open this inaugural forum in London on 3 December 2018.

He will welcome delegates and speakers from over 20 countries to the two-day event to discuss the successes, challenges and technological advances being made in justice systems globally.

The Lord Chancellor, The Rt Hon David Gauke MP, will also address delegates. He will emphasise the importance of reform to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of justice systems in a digital age, and reinforce the UK's place as a global leader in legal services.

The forum will be jointly chaired by Susan Acland-Hood, Chief Executive of HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and Professor Richard Susskind, President of The Society for Computers and Law.

The first day will focus on international representations about online courts and other advanced technologies.

The second day will look forward and generate discussion around some of the central issues that will face policymakers, judges, technologists, and lawyers, who are planning or introducing online courts. Discussion panels will be chaired by leading legal figures from the UK.

The event will be hosted by DLA Piper UK LLP in London on 3 and 4 December 2018.

Susan Acland-Hood commented:

We're continuing to look closely at the experiences of our international counterparts in designing and delivering our 1bn reform programme to transform the justice system in England and Wales, making it more effective and accessible for all using modern technology and ways of working. "We're delighted that both the Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor will be welcoming leaders from across the world to London to share their experiences, debate ideas and create new collaborations and partnerships.

Professor Richard Susskind OBE FRSE, President of the Society for Computers and Law, Forum Co-Chair added:

I have no doubt that the work of courts around the world will increasingly be conducted online. Here indeed will lie the key to providing greater access to justice. I am therefore hugely excited

that the Society for Computers and Law is co-hosting this pioneering international gathering devoted to online courts.

For further details, including the full programme and registration details, visit the [Society for Computers and Law](#).

More details are available about the [HMCTS reform programme](#) and other [reform events](#).

[News story: Breathe easy with cleaner air: new funding to fight pollution](#)

Air pollution can have a huge and potentially fatal impact on human health, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and people suffering from lung and heart conditions.

A new competition from Innovate UK is to invest almost £5 million to reduce the cause of emissions from vehicles, minimise the amount of particulates produced and improve air quality.

Many of the particulates in the air come from vehicle and surface wear, as well as non-road vehicles and equipment. Addressing these sources will help to reduce harmful emissions and create cleaner air for everyone.

Commenting on the importance of tackling air pollution, [British Lung Foundation](#) Director of Policy, Alison Cook said:

The UK's poor air quality truly is a public health crisis. We know that air pollution affects us all, and that children, the elderly and people with heart and lung problems are most at risk.

That's why finding new solutions to clean up the air we breathe is so important. This competition is a fantastic initiative from Innovate UK and could ultimately result in a healthier future for us all.

We recently released [a report on particulate matter around UK health centres](#). The findings revealed that over 2,000 hospitals and GPs are in areas of unsafe air pollution according to limits set by the World Health Organisation.

Particulate pollution is extremely harmful to our health, as the particles are small enough to pass through the lungs and into the bloodstream. It's not right that hundreds of thousands of patients are breathing in dirty air as they seek medical care, and it shows

just how crucial it is that we solve the UK's pollution problem as soon as possible.

Non-exhaust and non-road pollution

Organisations can win funding to work on ideas that go beyond exhaust and road vehicle fumes:

- emissions, either from road vehicle brake and tyre wear or road surface abrasion
- industrial equipment and non-road vehicles used on construction sites, such as excavators, bulldozers, front loaders, cranes and compressors with combustion engines
- refrigeration units in vehicles including vans or heavy goods vehicles

Projects in this competition should develop and demonstrate products or services in these 3 areas.

This is a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition that is being run in 2 phases.

Up to 6 projects can get funded contracts for feasibility studies in the first phase, where there is up to £300,000 available. The best projects will be invited to apply to a second phase, worth £4.5 million, to take their ideas further, develop a prototype and test its effectiveness.

Part of the Strategic Priorities Fund

The competition is part of the Strategic Priorities Fund being delivered by [UK Research and Innovation](#) for clean air.

The programme is a collaboration between the Natural Environment Research Council, Innovate UK, Medical Research Council, Economic and Social Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the [Met Office](#) and the [National Physical Laboratory](#). It will bring together leading researchers, businesses and government departments to minimise the effects of climate change on the environment and protect communities.

Clean growth is one of the [Grand Challenges](#) set out in the government's [modern Industrial Strategy](#). It aims to lead the shift to clean energy through the development, manufacture and use of low-carbon technologies, systems and services.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 12 November 2018, and the deadline to register is at midday on 9 January 2019
- organisations of any size can lead a project, working alone or with others
- in phase 1, projects can have costs up to £50,000 including VAT and last

up to 3 months. Phase 2 projects can have costs up to £1.5 million including VAT

- projects should complement the work already being done in this area to increase the number of low or zero-emission vehicles on the roads.
- there will be [a briefing event on 13 November 2018](#) in London and online, where organisations can find out more and how to submit a quality application
- applicants will be notified by 22 February 2019

[News story: HMCTS sign lease for the Civic Centre with Newcastle City Council](#)

Work to bring civil, family and tribunal hearings into one accessible building in Newcastle city centre have taken a step forward with the signing of a new lease.

The development will provide a modern, fit for purpose building for local people, legal professionals, judiciary, and courts and tribunals staff. The new courthouse is expected to open by 2020.

We have been working in partnership with Newcastle City Council to develop plans and designs for the Civic Centre, which is being fully refurbished and will include the new Civil, Family and Tribunals (CFT) courthouse.

Linda Ventress, HMCTS regional estates strategy lead, said:

This new court will help provide a modern, fit for purpose building for the people of Newcastle. We are delighted to see the next stage of the project begin and look forward to bringing civil, family and tribunal work into one location, making it easier and more efficient for people to access justice.

This is the first part of a wider plan for the courts in Newcastle, which will also see conversion of the existing Newcastle Combined Court into a Criminal Justice Centre.

The government is investing £1bn in reforming courts and tribunals, including making significant improvements to the condition and design of court buildings. This will improve the experience of visiting or working in a court, and lead to better value for taxpayers by reducing operating costs and increasing the efficiency of the estate.

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