

Multimedia journalist of the year – Martin Hilditch

Martin's creative and ambitious approach exploited different platforms to better engage *Inside Housing's* existing readers and expand its reach to new audiences.

The use of a range of media was fundamental to both the concept and successful delivery of one of *Inside Housing's* most ambitious projects.

As part of its Cathy at 50 homelessness campaign, Martin devised and ran a competition that set out not just to mark the 50th anniversary of Ken Loach's seminal film about homelessness, but to produce a Cathy Come Home for the 21st century.

The competition's central aim was to challenge stereotypes about social housing and homeless people – a concern of the publication's readers that many think has had a damaging impact on tenants' lives and on government attitudes to the sector.

Martin aimed to do this by reaching outside the sector to engage up-and-coming film-makers, bringing fresh perspectives to the table in the process. Readers contributed a £15,500 prize fund for the competition, demonstrating their enthusiasm and engagement. This was to help develop a final, longer film once a winner was selected. Entrants were asked to submit test footage for a film and a synopsis.

The competition was almost a job in its own right, running over six months and involving several strands. Firstly, Martin had to connect with film-makers – basically engaging an entirely new audience. He made sure that the competition had its own branding and that Reel Homes Twitter twitter.com/reelhomesfilm and Facebook facebook.com/reelhomesfilm accounts were created, which were used to target film schools and film-makers (for example with a shareable poster).

Secondly, there was a need for content to populate the pages. An example of this is Martin's interview with film-maker and BAFTA breakthrough Brit Daisy-May Hudson to help engage new readers www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/49653, promoting the interview on his own account as well as on the Reel Homes Twitter and Facebook pages.

At the end of the process *Inside Housing* had successfully engaged more than 30 young film-makers and shortlisted 10 entries. The final step was to connect them with an audience. Martin made them available to readers online www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/50591 and also organised a screening event. The packed event was a commercial success for *Inside Housing*, attracting United Living as a headline sponsor. Homelessness charity Cardboard Citizens was so impressed it arranged a separate screening event events.arts.ac.uk/event/2017/5/9/Cardboard-Citizens-Film-Screening-Reel-Homes. The winning entrant will deliver a final, longer film using the funding later in 2017.

Martin's exceptionally imaginative approach saw *Inside Housing* branch out successfully into new territory. He used a range of media to engage and enthuse new and existing audiences, deliver 10 short films and promote them at a commercially successful screening event. For these reasons he deserves to win.