Independent in every respect

The RTL Journalistenschule: Ten years of training aspiring journalists

Germany
Hindenburg brings history and ratings to life

France
Top Chef inspires viewers

Netherlands
RTL Nederland launches mobile phone brand

Croatia
Johannes Züll is one of the most influential foreigners
Cover: A coach training one of the aspiring journalists at the RTL Journalistenschule.
On 2 January 2001, classes began at the RTL Journalistenschule, Germany’s first training institute for TV and multimedia. In a building in Cologne’s Mediapark, Director Peter Kloeppel and Managing Director Leonhard Ottinger welcomed the first 15 of the 30 students of the first class and introduced them to the curriculum for the next two years. A good ten years later, on 10 February 2011, the same team welcomed the approximately 250 guests who had been invited to a symposium under the heading ‘TV Journalism in the 21st Century – The Next Decade’ followed by a reception at Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland’s premises in Cologne, which are now home to the RTL Journalistenschule as well.

Speakers at the event included Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland’s CEO Anke Schäferkordt, RTL Group CEO Gerhard Zeiler, Jürgen Brautmeier, Director of the Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia, Lothar Mikos, Professor of TV Science at the Konrad Wolf University of Film and Television in Potsdam-Babelsberg, and Marcy McGinnis, Associate Dean at the school of journalism at Stony Brook University in New York.

In his 10th anniversary speech, Gerhard Zeiler called the Journalistenschule a “huge success.” He was quick to admit that he himself, as the then CEO of RTL Deutschland, had to be convinced by then-chief editor Hans Mahr and anchorman Peter Kloeppel that this costly institution was really necessary. But on Thursday evening Zeiler was forceful about his message: “Television needs young journalists who are independent, fair and courageous. The more blogs there are, the more user-generated content is viewed, the more important high-quality professional journalism becomes.”

Zeiler reiterated his commitment to providing TV audiences professional journalism, saying that this is true not just on the figures side – each year, Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland alone invests hundreds of millions in journalistic programmes – but also for a certain understanding of journalism: RTL Group’s commitment, he says, has two strong pillars: “Fairness and independence.”

Earlier that afternoon Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland CEO Anke Schäferkordt had likewise emphasised that she feels information programmes in all their many facets are “indispensable” and pointed out that
Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland’s news and information programmes had “come through the past few, economically difficult years without making any compromises in terms of quantity or quality.” She also highlighted the cooperation between North Rhine-Westphalia’s State Media Office and Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland, which had come under criticism from various quarters in the beginning. One of the accusations at the time was that commercialisation would now creep into the news as well. “The RTL Journalistenschule is a good example for the fact that it is absolutely possible to combine private-sector interests and socio-political efforts,” said Schäferkordt.

In her speech she criticised the tight regulations imposed on TV broadcasters – regarding content or due to the Law on Concentration in the Media: “I feel the approach taken by some media watchdogs, of strapping the industry into a regulatory straitjacket and legislating the quantity and quality of information programming doesn’t make much sense. It not only fails to reflect the individual situation of the various channels or broadcasting groups, it may actually have a counterproductive effect. In general it’s high time to evolve the basic idea behind regulation from a compulsory to a motivational system. Incentives could be a useful tool to motivate broadcasters to fulfil their socio-political role voluntarily and on an appropriate scale.”

Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland fulfils its socio-political mandate with the Journalistenschule among other things. Peter Kloeppel explains the idea: “In the late 1990s, we asked ourselves whether, given the developments in the multimedia realm, we were still training our future journalists well enough. We concluded that there was room for improvement and decided to found a school for TV journalism. At the time, it was absolutely unprecedented. We are proud of having given young people the opportunity to learn journalism at our RTL Journalistenschule for the past ten years. In this way we have managed to establish an ongoing, high-standard promotion of next-generation talent.”

For the students, the journey begins with a two-stage application process: at the first stage, five or six different reporting topics are published on the RTL Journalistenschule homepage. Applicants pick a topic and submit a report in the form of a storyboard. A selection committee views the storyboards submitted and narrows down the pool of applicants to the top 100 candidates. On the selection days, the candidates research and write a report, take a general education test, write an article and go for a job interview. The selection jury is composed of senior Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland editors, experts in journalistic training and other personages in publishing.

1,000 applicants took part in the selection process for the first class of the RTL Journalistenschule. Since then, five classes have completed the training programme, which comprises six months of classroom instruction and one-and-a-half years of editorial practice. The first year of training provides an introduction to basic journalistic skills, including the specific requirements of TV journalism and the technical basics required for camerawork and video editing. The student...
journalists produce their own news and magazine features as well entire shows. Units on press law, ethics in journalism and programme quality and a study trip to Brussels complete the first-year curriculum.

In the second year, an intensive course on online journalism conveys the skills needed for doing journalistic work on the Internet. In a hands-on project, the student journalists produce content for a cooperation partner. One highlight of the second year of training is a ten-day “Broadcast Journalism” course during a study trip to the US. Seminars at Columbia University’s Graduate school of journalism, and visits to editorial offices and background talks in New York and Washington serve to deepen the students’ knowledge on such topics as political and foreign news coverage, transatlantic relations and trends in American TV journalism.

Managing Director Leonhard Ottinger says: “The RTL Journalistenschule concept has proven its worth in these ten years. The intensity and diversity of our training for TV journalism is still unparalleled in Germany. The years ahead will bring many other journalistic challenges as the TV genre continues to evolve and new formats continue to be invented. We have to keep coming up with new training offers, especially in response to phenomena like digitisation and convergence.”

During the final phase, the students deepen their knowledge in workshops on topics like research, reports and documentary formats. On a three-day excursion to Berlin, the student journalists get to discuss the latest developments in political coverage with leading politicians and parliamentary correspondents. When their training ends, the graduates are prepared for starting work.

The school’s shareholders are Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland on the one hand and the Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia on the other. As the office’s director Jürgen Brautmeier explains: “Our involvement is rooted in our legal mandate to promote vocational and further training in media professions. This is based on the belief that solid qualifications are the best investment for a modern, successful broadcaster.”

Apart from training its own students, the RTL Journalistenschule systematically uses its know-how, network of lecturers and technological equipment to provide internal and external coaching on topics in TV journalism. Since 2007, for example, interns at Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland have sat in on the student journalists’ classes. Other offerings include management workshops on editorial management, professional events such as ‘Trendforum TV’, and media and communications coaching.

RTL Journalistenschule Facts & Figures

Since the classes first started on 2 January 2001, a total of 145 students have successfully completed their training as TV editors. The school’s sixth class of 30 students started classes in January 2011. The approximately 130 lecturers who have contributed to the RTL Journalistenschule curriculum since 2001 are successful media editors or entrepreneurs. Past lecturers include Hans Demmel (Managing Director of N-TV), Wolf Schneider (publicist and long-time head of the Henri Nannen Schule) and Markus Gürne (ARD aktuell). Since the school began training students, it has hosted more than 275 seminars – in all each class attends about 55 seminars. All RTL Journalistenschule graduates found jobs following their graduation and today work primarily on editorial teams at Mediengruppe RTL or at public-service and commercial broadcasters, TV production firms and other media companies.
History comes alive

Nearly 8 million TV viewers tuned in for the dramatic two-part movie about the Hindenburg disaster of 1937.

Germany - 8 February 2011

An average 7.84 million viewers aged 3 or older watched the striking TV event on 6 February, which corresponds to a strong 27.7 per cent share of the market of viewers aged 14 to 49. The second part of Hindenburg was broadcast Monday, 7 February, with 7 million viewers tuning in, representing a total audience share of 20.4 percent and an audience share of 26 per cent among viewers aged 14 to 49.

The historical event film about the Hindenburg disaster of 1937, when the pride of the German airship aviation went up in flames, produced with an international all-star cast and a record budget of over EUR 10 million by Teamworx, is the most elaborate production in the history of RTL Television. Full-size reproductions of massive sections of the Hindenburg were built for the film, and CGI specialists created absolutely unprecedented images of the biggest airship ever built and its explosion. The shooting took place in Cologne, Nuremberg and surrounding from September to December 2009.

The drama surrounding the Zeppelin LZ 129 Hindenburg, a masterpiece of engineering, has gone down in the history of humankind as one of the biggest technology disasters of the 20th century. The destruction of the Hindenburg spelled the end to airship traffic, and the causes of the accident haven’t been conclusively settled to this day. The authors Johannes W. Betz, Martin Pristl and Philip LaZebnik tell a great love story and a gripping adventure set against a historical backdrop, and directed by Philipp Kadelbach.

After part one RTL Television showed The Last Hours Of The Hindenburg. The documentary tying in to the TV movie reconstructs the last voyage of Airship LZ 129 from Frankfurt to Lakehurst. It tells the true story of the disaster in historic photo and film material, some of which was previously unpublished. For the first time on German TV, the German passengers were introduced by name and with pictures. The documentary gave the victims and survivors a face and told of their dramatic experiences on board the giant airship.
Lending a helping hand

Each Grundy UFA production is to be given EUR 5,000 to support a community project. The daily series *Alles was zählt* has kicked things off by committing to the *Kindernöte* relief organization.

Germany - 4 February 2011

Ulrike Röseberg and Daniel Aichinger welcomed 20 excited children in the *Alles was zählt* studios canteen. Aichinger sees doing his part as a matter of course: “If I can help make something good happen, of course I’ll do it. It brings me joy as well after all, and interacting with kids in particular gives you back a lot,” explains Aichinger. The two actors began by showing the children the outdoor set, then the studio. The real swimming pool, the fake weights in the gym and of course the big office chair belonging to Dr. Axel Steinkamp-Schwarz (played by Daniel Aichinger) were the most popular items.

As part of this charity initiative the *Alles was zählt* team donated EUR 5,000 to *Kindernöte* and hosted a guided tour of the studio for the children with actors Ulrike Röseberg and Daniel Aichinger. “We deliberately picked an organisation that is working to make things happen here in Cologne,” explains producer Kristin Schade. “People who dedicate themselves to children, are interested in their problems and their everyday lives and want to show them that it’s possible to get together and organise things. We felt *Kindernöte* has a convincing concept, and that is why we want to get involved for the duration.”
The aim of this newcomer masterminded by RTL Nederland together with Vodafone Nederland is not to replace existing providers, but to offer what has been missing in the market: a product targeted at female consumers.

Sizz, the name given to this new brand presented in a press conference on 3 February 2011, is the fruit of extensive market research which enabled the two Dutch market leaders to identify the need for an easier-to-use and more accessible mobile phone product. The slogan of Sizz, “da’s lekker mobiel” (Sizz, enjoy the mobile life), perfectly transcribes the new provider’s intended purpose.

Everything has been thought through to play into the needs of women and open up to them the huge possibilities mobile phones offer these days. For instance, the “How to” and the “Apps we love” sections on the Sizz.nl website were specifically designed with this in mind.

The “How to” section contains short video tutorials explaining different technical aspects of a phone like installing wi-fi, installing e-mail, surfing on the Net, while “Apps we love” links to webinars where subscribers are introduced to interesting applications by independent experts in the fields of entertainment, social media, fashion and health. These two sections will be updated regularly and for the time being can also be viewed on RTL XL and Youtube by non-subscribers.

In addition to simplifying subscribers’ lives, Sizz also gives them access to exclusive offers. The Sizz app allows them to watch a selection of RTL programmes such as RTL Boulevard, Editie NL and Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden, for free and without ads. GTST episodes can be viewed as sneak previews a day before they are broadcast on TV, and subscribers get priority for tickets to RTL events.

A new mobile phone provider

RTL Nederland and Vodafone Nederland launched a new product: Sizz, a phone brand developed based on insights in women’s mobile phone usage.

Netherlands - 7 February 2011
Though the total number of foreign managers at the helm of Croatian companies is declining, many big companies are still run by foreigners, who thus have an influence on the Croatian economy and society. The magazine writes that many right-wing nationalists blame the economic crisis on these foreign managers, accusing them of systematically trying to destroy the Croatian companies. By featuring the 25 most influential foreigners, Nacional clearly speaks out against these accusations: “Almost every one of the foreign managers in our list has advanced the company considerably since taking its helm, made investments, increased revenues, and created new jobs in spite of the problems caused by the global recession,” Nacional writes in its introduction. “That is why these people and the companies they run can hardly be considered the causes of the current economic crisis in Croatia. They are much more likely to serve as the key protagonists of Croatia’s recovery.”

Johannes Züll, CEO of RTL Televizija placed fifth, just behind managers and politicians such as Zoltán Aldott, president of the Croatian oil company Ina, the US ambassador James Foley and the two bankers Markus Ferstl (Hypo Alpe Adria) and Pierre Boursot (Splitska Banka). The magazine describes Züll as “an experienced TV professional whose principal task is to maintain and increase RTL’s solid audience shares in Croatia. Since his arrival in Croatia, Züll has been known to the professional public for his open advocacy of equality among the national TV channels and an end to the long-standing privileged treatment of the public-service broadcaster HTV. The establishment of RTL’s second television channel [in Croatia] has undoubtedly contributed to the recent improvement in RTL’s business results.”
Broadcast on Mondays in prime time and presented by the dynamic Agathe Lecaron – a new recruit – and Stéphane Rotenberg, the second season of this culinary competition features 14 young chefs vying for the title of “Top Chef 2011”, which comes with a generous prize of EUR 100,000.

Judging by the excellent ratings of the first two shows, M6 viewers’ appetites are already whetted: on Monday 31 January 2011, the show’s launch instantly drew 500,000 more viewers than the first show in season one. With 3.2 million viewers and an audience share of 22.2 per cent of viewers under 50, the channel ranked number one for the entire evening in this target market. The second episode, broadcast on Monday 7 February 2011, gradually drew 200,000 more viewers than the previous Monday and, with an audience of 3.4 million, M6 ranked number one with viewers under 50 (24.3 per cent audience share) and was the number two channel with the entire viewing audience (15.9 per cent audience share).

Season two is distinguished by the high standard of its 14 contestants. Chef Ghislaine Arabian is enthusiastic: “This year is of a superb vintage,” she declared during a press conference for the programme’s launch. All the great chefs are standing ready: Thierry Marx, Christian Constant, Jean-François Piège and Ghislaine Arabian. Judging the contestants is the mission of these hard-to-please teachers. One must not, however, forget the favourite chef of the French, Cyril Lignac, who sees his role as more of a coach: “I wanted to be close to the contestants, as I am with the cooks on my own team,” he said. Sudden new developments and outlandish situations will surely be on the menu: “Is it convenient to cook over a wood fire?” asks Thierry Marx. “No, it isn’t. But a professional must be able to adapt.”

This latest edition comes with new features, including a dedicated website that allows viewers to continue the culinary adventure on the Internet once the TV show is over. Another innovation is the I-Phone application developed by the fine pairing of M6 Web and Eclapstudio Mobile Entertainment, whose collaboration has produced a game called “Top Chef le jeu!” The principle: to prepare 35 recipes of increasing difficulty in the virtual kitchen of “Top Chef le jeu!”. It’s a game that requires rapidity, organisation, ingenuity and a cool head, just like the television show.

The programme is also broadcast on the same evenings on RTL-TVI, the Belgian sister station of M6.
At the People’s Choice Awards on 5 January, American Idol was named the ‘Favourite Competition Show’ – other nominees in this category included America’s Got Talent, Dancing With The Stars, Hell’s Kitchen and So You Think You Can Dance.

FremantleMedia Asia also won several awards in January. At the 15th Asian Television Awards, season two of Project Runway Korea was pronounced ‘Best Adaptation of an Existing Format’. The finale of Singapore Idol, aired in 2009, won the prize for ‘Best Music programme’. In all, nearly 1,000 formats from 15 Asian countries competed for the Asian Television Awards.

Deadliest Catch, a docu-reality format produced by the FremantleMedia subsidiary Original Productions, won the award for best non-fictional TV programme at the ‘PGA Awards’ presented by the Producers Guild of America. The Discovery Channel series features various King Crab fishermen in Alaska.

At the Festival International des Programmes Audiovisuels in Biarritz, the Teamworx production Bis nichts mehr bleibt (Till Nothing Is Left) directed by Niki Stein won the ‘Fipa D’Or Grand Prize for Best Screenplay’. In 2010, Bis nichts mehr bleibt scored the second-largest market share among Germany’s ten most popular TV movies, and won the ‘Bavarian TV Prize’, the ‘Kress Award 2010’ for TV / Film production and the ‘North German Film Prize 2010’ for Screenplay.

Cameraman Matthias Fleischer won the ‘Bavarian Film Prize’ for his work in the Teamworx production Das Lied in mir (The Song Inside Me). Each year since 1979, Bavaria’s state government, upon the recommendation of an independent jury, has awarded the Bavarian Film Prize for outstanding achievements in the German film-making industry. The prizes come with a total purse of EUR 300,000, making this one of the most lucrative and sought-after accolades of its kind in Germany.

In its annual report, the business newsletter Newsmedias – L’actualité des médias featured the most prominent actors in France’s audiovisual industry in 2010. Fun Radio and RTL 2, which belong to RTL Group’s French radio operations, ranked first in the three most prestigious categories of the radio section. Fun Radio was crowned the best radio in 2010, Manu à la radio the best morning show in 2010 and RTL 2’s Francis Zegut the best male voice on music radio stations in 2010.

Awards in January

For many RTL Group companies, the year began with assorted accolades. American Idol won a ‘People’s Choice Award’, while FremantleMedia Asia received several prizes at the ‘15th Asian Television Awards’.

Luxembourg - 10 February 2011
“Not the world champions yet, but a victory”

...commented Christophe Dominici, former rugby great and new rugby consultant on the air at RTL Radio in France, after France beat Scotland 34 to 21 in its starting match in the Six Nations tournament on Saturday 5 February. The oval ball is indeed a star on RTL Radio in France: all major rugby matches of 2011 will be commentated live on RTL Radio in France.
“How far will it go?”
The French series Scènes de ménages continues to draw record audiences on M6 while the evening news programmes on other channels are in trouble, reports an independent survey. It is also France’s favourite show on M6 Replay.
France - 10 February 2011

Bauer sucht Frau popular in Austria, too
Season 7 of Bauer sucht Frau, a UFA Entertainment production, scored record ratings on ATV in the 2010/11 TV season. As many as 356,000 viewers watched the season finale on 2 February.
Germany - 4 January 2011

New year, more viewers
According to the official audience figures as measured by AGB Nielsen Media Research, RTL Televizija and RTL 2 were the only Croatian family of channels to increase their audience at the beginning of 2011.
Croatia - 7 February 2011

Collaboration, continued
Universum Film and Senator Home Entertainment have extended their cooperation beyond 2011.
Germany - 7 February 2011

Further expansion of video partnerships
Internet users can now access short video clips of RTL Television highlights on the Bunte.de homepage as well.
Germany - 8 February 2011
**Atrapa un millón most-watched during prime time**
The new game show *Atrapa un millón* was Spain's most-watched programme during prime time on 4 February 2011, enabling Antena 3 to beat its main rival channel Telecinco.
Spain - 8 February 2011

**Adapting Scheißkerle for the screen**
With the Berlin Film Festival about to begin, UFA Cinema has secured the film rights to Roman Maria Koidl's bestselling *Scheißkerle – Warum es immer die Falschen sind*.
Germany - 9 February 2011

**Till Brönner to return as X Factor coach**
In Summer 2011, everything will be coming up *X Factor* at Vox again, and celebrity trumpeter Till Brönner has just been confirmed as one of the show's returning coaches.
Germany - 9 February 2011

**Users prefer “Made in RTL” videos**
RTL Belgium is the leader in video and audio content in French-speaking Belgium with 2.5 million videos viewed each month.
Belgium - 4 February 2011
FremantleMedia Enterprises has appointed Alyssa Cooper Sapire as Vice President, Programming for Children and Family Entertainment.

Based in Los Angeles, she will report directly to Senior Vice President of Children and Family Entertainment Bob Higgins who is based in New York. In this newly created role, Sapire will work closely with Higgins to grow FremantleMedia Enterprises’ (FME) global children’s and family franchises.

Sapire brings more than 16 years of TV industry experience to FME. Most recently, she spent 10 years with Nickelodeon Kids and Family Networks, helping to launch Noggin, The N, and TeenNick Networks – home to the series Degrassi: The Next Generation. She also oversaw series and multiplatform projects including Gigantic, The Assistants, The Best Years, O’Grady and Play With Me Sesame. Prior to Nickelodeon, Alyssa helped to launch Scholastic’s new media business and developed a multiplatform brand for The Walt Disney Company.

“We are delighted to welcome Alyssa to the FME family,” said Higgins. “She brings a great deal of strong story and character development experience within the kids, teen and family markets, and I am confident she will be a great asset to our team as we grow this division.”

Commented Sapire, “I am thrilled to join FME in this new role, and look forward to bringing exciting new shows and franchises to an already significant foundation of great projects in development.”

Through its role in the creative process from beginning to end, FME is establishing a next generation model for the creative development, acquisition, production, and distribution of quality content in the children’s and family entertainment space. With programming that will target demographics ranging in scope from pre-school through high school, FME is bringing innovative and original content to fruition while continuing to expand upon its global portfolio.