

Working as a TV news producer

Rob Cole has produced TV news for decades now, working on anything from international celebrities to global conflicts. He shares the benefit of his considerable experience in the industry

Rob's time behind the cameras has coincided with huge changes in the way news is reported – from a time when everyone bought local newspapers, through the birth of 24-hour rolling news, and now the Internet. But what is the work like on a day-to-day basis?

Rob's always worked in foreign news, so his focus is obviously on news from around the world. As you can imagine, there's a lot of that. Rob comes in early, having checked his phone, social media, and listened to as many news programmes as he could. **(1)**..... Running the foreign section is like a never-ending contest – constantly trying to get his journalists' news presented ahead of the TV station's other sections.

Once you have a story it's then a matter of making sure that wherever the journalist is, the report comes into the building – through satellite, Internet or other routes – and it is ready to run on air on time. **(2)**..... There's nothing like getting a note from the producer at another network congratulating on a job well done. The low points, on the other hand, are much less pleasant: 'I've had colleagues badly injured.'

So how can you become a news producer? Says Rob: 'We get loads of applications. **(3)**..... Don't be put off; people in this business admire people who don't give up easily, for obvious reasons.'

You need to be keen to learn and, of course, take a real interest in current affairs. 'You have to be obsessed with news, constantly following it. Even if you're a creative producer, doing graphics, you still have to care about what's going on in the world. Also, some people think about going into the media just because it

sounds exciting. That would be a mistake; you have to really want to do the job. Luck's involved too, of course. (4).....'.

In some ways, Rob's job should remain fairly constant for the next few years. 'They will always need someone to make decisions and take responsibility for newsgathering. However, what will change is the way in which news is delivered. When I started in TV, the crew used to consist of a reporter, producer, a camera operator, a sound person, and sometimes even a separate lighting person. (5)..... Now there's just the reporter and a multitasking camera operator who also edits and supplies the written material – if you're lucky!'

'Before long there will be a crew of just one, shooting all their own material on a smartphone, then editing and voicing that material, before sending it to head office, where it ends up going straight on air. (6)..... Actually, this has already started to happen. The technology will just get quicker and quicker and smaller and smaller.'

- A** You might write to just the right person at the right time.
- B** Turning the device around and pressing the live app button also enables live broadcasting into the same programme.
- C** They would be loaded down with equipment and some of them would be linked by cable.
- D** With this information, before any stories actually come in, he then decides on the news priorities of the day.
- E** In those days it was possible to start a career in news without even going to university: you went straight into training on a local paper.
- F** Making sure it does so matters, especially given the friendly competition with other TV networks: 'beating the other networks' is a real highlight.
- G** I always endeavour to reply, but from my own experience too many people don't get back to you, so it's best to keep trying.