

FELIX EDITOR

COUNCIL REPORT

Sam Lovatt

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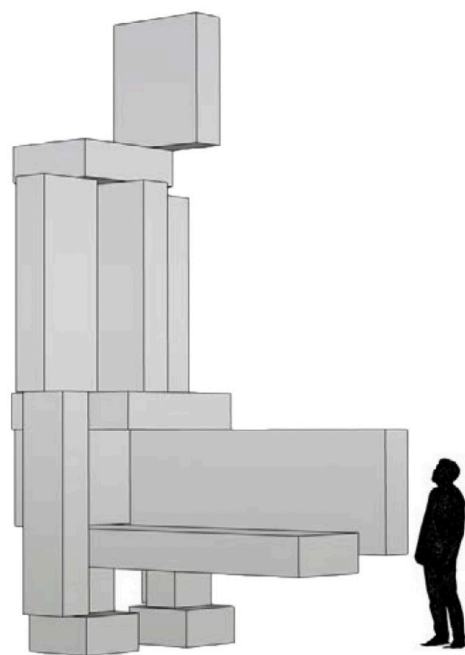
The year so far and 2022 - oh God oh no please not another lockdown

► Consistency in Quality and Quantity

The paper is now putting out 32 - 40 page issues consistently. We have covered both Union and College events to what I believe has been a high standard, and have received praise from both College and Union alike. The large gentleman on the right was a particular hit with many in the College community.

The non-News sections have mostly improved in quality by some way as people settle into their roles. Different volunteers are committed at different level, which is to be expected. Goals for the next two terms will include trying to make some of the sections more eye-catching and interesting to look at. Some newer Section Editors are also not sufficiently trained and their layouts reflect this. Myself and other more experienced members of the paper will work with these individuals to get them more familiar with InDesign and the editing process. We will circulate the Wiki (*see page 6*) more readily and refer to it as standard procedure.

There have also been issues with some instances of copyediting. Similar to the case with some Section Editors. Less experienced copyeditors are not familiar enough with the layout



process and therefore often miss errors in text and layout, some of which make it to the final print version. Again, the use of the Wiki should mitigate this somewhat.

I am very worried about the prospect of another lockdown as the paper did so badly last time. Luckily for us Saj seems to be quite anti-lockdown, but tougher restrictions could mean moving to online-only again, which would have a negative impact on the whole team. It also undoubtedly means that fewer students and staff read the paper which is a great shame.

► The Felix Podcast and Phoenix

THE FELIX PODCAST

Two episodes of the podcast have been recorded and one has been edited and released. Episode one is an interview with Professor Jake Baum of Life Sciences. It is proving difficult to balance the podcast with other commitments within the paper, and volunteers interested in being involved exclusively with the podcast are much desired.

We may look at creating a new committee position specifically for the podcast in the future.

PHOENIX

The first issue of Phoenix, since its revival this year, will be published near the end of January.

It is currently looking to be close to 50 pages long and will be distributed alongside Felix for a number of weeks.

We have had submissions from a wide range of people, including an alumnus who graduated from Imperial College in the 1950s.

Phoenix is currently published using a mix of Felix's print budget and a small ADF grant.

► Changes

DEPUTY EDITOR

The role of deputy editor has been reassigned to the previous chief copyeditor. This follows issues in the internal running of Felix and the new titles more closely align with the roles that the volunteers in question carried out anyway.

DISTRIBUTION

We have reduced our print run to 1000 copies per week, following large wastage of unused copies earlier in the year. We have also carried out analysis of the distribution route and have adjusted where we leave stacks of the paper, and how many copies are left in each place, accordingly. As might be expected the entrance to Central Library remains the most popular place for copies to be picked up, and the EEE building is the least popular.

ADVERTISING SCREENS

We now have three advertising screens across the South Kensington campus. These generate money for the club and provide convenient collection points for students and staff to pick up the paper from. The bins on these are currently the incorrect size and will be replaced in the immediate future.

► IT and Office Equipment

The Felix office flooded during 2020 whilst everyone was working from home. This has not played out well for our office infrastructure in the long run. Further to this, we had over £10,000 of our print budget redacted due to the cease of printing during this time, but were not able to spend it on essentials such as new computers.

We were able to squeeze some money from the Union coffers to the tune of around £2000, with which we bought three new Macs and some monitors for volunteers to edit on. This is half

the number of computers we used to have. To rectify this I have made an application to the Harlington Fund for a similar amount. If successful, we will use this money to buy three more Macs so the office is returned to its former glory. The current situation leads to Section Editors coming down to the office but having no free computer to do their work on almost every week.

We plan to use SGI to buy a new coffee machine and kettle, as the ones we had pre-pandemic are now broken or mouldy beyond belief.

► Reassessment of the Distribution Network

We now have some very useful data on distribution. We have reduced the overall number of copies printed each week, which is kinder on our budget and the planet (and on me when I distribute them all).

We have been able to more accurately distribute papers around campus to account for high traffic areas and ease of places that consistently have a high number of left over copies each week. As mentioned above, the library is the most high traffic area, as may be expected, whilst stacks in EEE often seem largely untouched. The distribution numbers have been noted down for a number of weeks and will be included in the “Bible”. We are aware that reading habits will change over time and these data will be reviewed periodically.

With regard to Phoenix, we plan to distribute a few copies with each

stack of Felix each week around South Kensington campus. As Phoenix is printed once per term it will be the same issue the accompanies the new Felix each week, for a number of weeks in the Spring term.

Distribution to other campuses is something we struggle with as it is difficult to find people consistently attending these campuses who are willing to distribute the paper once we have sent it via the internal postal service.

We are looking at using the print budget saved from the reduction in copies printed to pay someone to effectively distribute the paper each week. They will be paid a relatively high hourly rate to come into campus by 8am on Fridays, give the correct number of copies to the internal postal service and distribute correctly around the South Kensington campus.

► Updating the “Bible” and Wiki

A great deal of progress has been made on this front. The “Bible”, as I’m sure you all remember from diligently reading my first Council report cover to cover, is a very detailed handover document compiled by an Editor from a few years ago. It is marred by being physical rather than digital, which makes it insecure and prone to being misplaced.

The solution to this has been to build a Felix wiki. I have managed to expand this significantly since the last issue of term one was printed, and I imagine I will have done a lot more by the time of this Council meeting.

The wiki will house everything, from a history of Felix, to InDesign instructions, to copyediting guidelines and the style guide. This remains editable and will likely be a work in

progress for years to come.

It has significant benefits: discrepancies in layout will be easier to identify and fix; people new to the paper will have a go-to information repository to get to grips with how the paper operates; it will act as a record and handover documents for future editors and editorial teams. It also allows us to store sensitive details and internal guidance in a more secure way, the details of which I probably shouldn’t go into.

The wiki contains guidance on media law left over from the Bible, which was published in 2018. This all looks reasonable however isn’t sourced. We will check everything over with a media lawyer and publish it again before the end of the year.

► Medianas

Medianas is the huge server located in the West Basement’s main corridor. It is really loud and really hot. I have a feeling these attributes led to its crashing a couple of months ago and losing a significant amount of data, including God knows how many years of past Felix issues’ InDesign files. This is a colossal shame. The good news is that it is now back up and

running, and we have reintroduced a very efficient system that uses the server to make the final publishing cycle as smooth as possible.

We triple back-up most files in Felix, so the PDFs and bound editions of past issues remain pristine, however it does appear that the InDesign files are lost forever.

► Website

The website was not properly managed during the first term. Uploads were sporadic and inconsistent. A couple of Section Editors knew how to upload

but the rest remained in the dark and many didn’t upload a single article. I tried to rectify this during November, by writing detailed instructions on

how to upload pieces to the website, emailing these to all the section editors and asking them to upload the articles so far this year to their sections. This endeavour failed significantly. A week after sending the email, not a single new article had been uploaded. Further to this, when they did eventually start to trickle in, there was a whole host of errors and articles kept getting rearranged on the homepage feed. An example of too many cooks spoiling the broth, I feel.

To solve this, I have managed to

find a dedicated volunteer purely tasked with website uploads. When in the office he is able to go back through previous issues and upload the text and images correctly for each section, for each issue so far this year (quite a task at this point). As he will be more practiced the more he does this, I imagine mistakes will crop up far less frequently. I hope to report on the success of this in my third Council report.

Aims going forward

► Drive social media engagement

Our social media presence has improved a lot this year. Felix's Publicity and Outreach Officer is very well suited to the role.

We will purchase a Canva subscription once we have our first chunk of SGI which will hopefully improve our outreach even further.

Social media is often the chosen method of contact for stakeholders to

contact the paper, which is something we want to encourage. We will always try to be as approachable and responsive as possible.

I was criticised for not Tweeting enough at the last Council meeting so my sincerest apologies go out to all members and I hope I'm doing better as you read this.

► Maintain quality

I believe that the quality of Felix has only gone up since starting the year. Everyone in the team is becoming more experienced and getting a feel for what they are good at, and not so good at.

Some issues have stood out as being exceptionally well received, as mentioned above. Others have

been pretty bland (one issue, where Imperial's collaboration with Coldplay was the front page headline, was not exactly exhilarating).

I am most happy with the Arts section, which is largely self-sufficient and has been of high quality every issue so far. Science and Music are also very creative and need little oversight.

► **Union Oversight and Bootcamp**

Union oversight remains extremely useful for the paper. I enjoy close relationships with a number of permanent staff who help facilitate the paper's function.

The handover between Editors in previous years has been lacking significantly. I will begin work this term, with the Director of Membership Services, on putting together a

“Bootcamp” course for future Editors. This will provide a clear, structured handover for incoming editors and will be supported by the Union far more than has previously been the case. It will involve basics of the job, expectations, practice runs of all essential processes, training/testing of necessary skills and basic training in media law.

► **More Socials**

We had a very successful social in the Union Bar in term one and I hope to hold something similar this term.

Our Christmas meal was cancelled due to the surge in Omicron cases.

This was of course out of our control, and we hope to reschedule to January or February, whenever national and College guidance permits it.