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The Time Project Pilot

Final Report

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sign_ Screen Industries Growth Network

Screen Industries Growth Network

The Screen Industries Growth Network (SIGN) is a unique, business-facing initiative supporting the TV, film and games industries in Yorkshire and the Humber. SIGN aims to make this region the UK's centre for digital creativity, and a model of diverse and inclusive activity. In order to do this, SIGN connects companies, support agencies and universities through a programme of training, business development, research and evaluation.

SIGN is a £6.4M project, starting in Summer 2020, and funded by Research England, the University of York, and its partners. The University of York leads the initiative, working with Screen Yorkshire and eight other Yorkshire universities. An extensive network of collaboration ensures that SIGN is equipped to deliver maximum impact across the region.

Report written October, 2020.

1. Introduction

Share My Telly Job (SMTJ), a Community Interest Company which aims to champion better working practices in the TV industry. They do this through promoting job-sharing and education for broadcasters, production companies and workers about the benefits and practicalities of flexible working. In consultation with Dr Rowan Aust (University of Huddersfield), SMTJ developed the idea for 'The Time Project' to collect data on working time to highlight patterns of overworking in television production, and to understand who faces the greatest burden of this work. Together with the Screen Industries Growth Network, based at the University of York, a pilot project was designed an run to test the feasibility of The Time Project.

In September and October 2020, a pilot survey of TV workers in the UK was undertaken to collect data on working time and associated data. The aim of the pilot was to evaluate the value and approach of a survey for a larger version of The Time Project. Data about participants was collected in a sign-up survey and then four weeks of working time data was collected using three sets of questions and two reminder processes:

- w/c 7th and 14th Sept - question set 1 with weekly reminders
- w/c 21st Sept – question set 2 with weekly reminders
- w/c 5th Oct – question set 3 with daily reminders

The aim of a pilot study is to test a research method before applying it to a larger group of participants and/or over a longer period of time. Pilots allow researchers to test data collection protocols, question design, identify gaps in knowledge, understand the potential range of responses and gauge the willingness of participants to engage in the process and share data.

This pilot allowed us to gather a range of insights into the above and at the same time draw illustrative findings based on the sample of participants. The key findings are as follows:

- Participation rates for those with a concern in the topic were high. This was indicated by relatively high conversion rates from the expression of interest to undertaking the survey, comments about the research in feedback questions on the survey and via email.

- The pilot was skewed by a very high proportion of female participants. This meant multi-dimensional analysis produced results which were not robust. It is assumed this can be addressed in a larger version of the project for gender, but future sample frames should take into account the value of low participation rates from workers in niche areas of the TV industry to maximise efficient use of participant's time.

- By design the sample size is low compared to the population of the industry, therefore it is not possible to make claims of representativeness of the results. This is an important caveat when reporting the findings and claims are only made about the sample, not the wider industry. The results can be treated as

illustrative of the people in the sample and the kinds of results a larger survey might collect.

- Across weeks 1-3, the average working week was 53.2 hours. This is above the 48 hour level for the Working Time Directive by 5.2 hours and above the UK average full-time working week of 37.2 hours (2019) by 16 hours.

- Reporting of non-working weeks was low. If these data are important for any larger project, the messaging about the purposes of the recording time needs to make it clear non-working weeks is relevant.

- Most people provided data for most questions.

- Weekly reminders are better received and led to better response rates than daily ones.

- Reminders are best sent on either Friday or Sunday depending on when the working week ends for participants.

- It is unclear if the impact of COVID influenced the hours worked.

2. Survey Design

The pilot involved two types of survey: a survey to register people on the pilot and timesheet surveys. Each was designed in different ways and the full question sets are attached separately.

2.1. Sign-up Survey

The sign-up survey was designed to collect information on the personal characteristics of participants which drew on standard questions designed to be inclusive and used by organisations such as the Office for National Statistics, Cabinet Office and other academics surveys. It asked about:

- Age
- gender identity
- gender at birth
- sexual orientation
- the region in which participants live
- ethnic group
- nationality

- three socio-economic background questions
- if they have children
- caring responsibilities
- physical health conditions and illnesses
- mental health conditions and illnesses

Including questions such as these means data protection and ethical considerations were crucial. Any research which collects personal and identifying characteristics is rated 'high' for ethical approval and safeguards should be put in place. In this case, we did this by not sharing individualised data with anyone other than the research team.

The sign-up survey also asked about a participant's TV career:

- When they started in the TV industry
- Their first role in the industry
- The role they most commonly do now
- If people worked outside of TV for more than a year after starting in the industry

The questions in this survey were designed to a) provide data which could be used as the basis for analysis of working time data, b) understand how willing people were to provide personal data. On both counts the sign-up survey was a success as it allowed us to do analysis on different groups of people, albeit not to draw robust conclusions because of the skewed gender bias and small overall size. More importantly, it demonstrated participants were willing to share a great deal of personal data.

In a larger version, this data would be essential to understand the representativeness of the sample.

2.2. Time Sheet Survey

The time sheet survey was developed through an iterative process before participants started the pilot. This involved the SMTJ and University of York teams.

The time sheet survey asked two broad sets of questions. First, about if people were working, and if they were, the contract people were on. Second, about the work they had done that week.

After the first two weeks of data collection, the survey was changed to test new questions suggested by SMTJ, change the wording of questions and in response to ideas from participants. The latter included asking about start/end times, breaks, travel for work, formatting of the survey and wording of questions/answer options.

The number of questions fluctuated in the different iterations, but it appears very few people felt the survey was too long. In weeks 1 and 2, 96% of respondents thought the survey was easy to understand and 98% agreed it was quick to complete.

Some of the answer options worked better than others. For example, limiting the choices for employment type and tax status worked well as it used official terminology recognisable to participants. The characteristics of contracts (e.g. days per week, hours etc), in contrast, didn't work as well because of the great variety of circumstances. The responses added under 'Other, please state' options provides some more examples which should make these questions better (see below in section 4.2), but it is an area which should be examined for any future survey.

3. Participation

Before the pilot began 120 people expressed an interest in taking part to SMTJ. Of these, 88 registered for the pilot using the sign-up survey (73.3% of the expressions of interest) and 70 of these people entered usable data in week 1 (79.5% of registrations), 69 in week 2 (78% of registrations) and 58 in week 3 (65% of registrations). In week 4 of the pilot reminders were switched from an end of the week

reminder to daily reminders. This switch saw a huge reduction in participants entering their data with fewer than 10 people entering data for either five or seven days. Therefore, week 4 is not included in this analysis. Of those who responded in week 4, 43% thought daily updates were better than weekly updates, but the overall participation in week 4 is a more powerful indication of what is more effective.

We suspect the main reason for non-engagement in weeks 1-3 was people not working and believing they didn't have anything to report, despite the opposite being stated in emails and follow-ups with the two people who wanted to withdraw because they weren't working. It could be the fact they weren't working meant they didn't want to reminded of this by completing the survey. If non-working weeks is important for any larger project, the messaging on the purposes of the recording time needs to make it clear what is relevant and why it is important to record this data.

Across the first three weeks, 77 different people took part in the pilot for at least one week.

The sample is skewed towards female participants (79.2% female). This is likely a reflection of the SMTJ community/networks from which respondents were sought. This limited the depth of analysis that could be undertaken e.g. it was not possible to examine gender differences against other questions with a number of categories which would reduce N below 10.

The sample is predominately made up of people aged 30-49 (66%) and no participants were under 20.

The sexual orientation of participants is more diverse than the UK population as a whole, and this is to be expected for a creative industry such as TV.

More than half of the sample live in London. This is not surprising given the nature of the TV industry.

It is hard to speak to the representativeness of the ethnic identity or nationality of participants as the large number of categories meant some responses received low numbers. Moreover, there is debate about the accuracy of ethnic identity statistics of workers in the UK television industry. The sample is 81% is White British or White Other, but the sample does include 11 different ethnic groups.

As one would expect for a sample of TV workers, 69% of respondents do not believe they come from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The majority of people started work in in the TV industry after 2000 and most started in editorial (56%), craft and tech (17%) or production (16%)

The sample includes people with children (22%): 23% of female respondents and 19% of male respondents.

We asked about caring roles with 18% of participants having childcare responsibilities and 6.5% have caring responsibilities for adults.

The sample also includes people with physical health conditions or illness (15.6%) with 7% stating these reduce their ability to carry out day to day activities. For mental health conditions and illnesses, 14% experience them and 10.4% state these reduce their ability to carry out day to day activities.

With a relatively low sample size compared to the population of the industry, it is not possible to make claims of representativeness of the results. This is an important caveat when reporting the findings and claims are only made about the sample, not the wider industry.

There are, however, a series of interesting and useful findings which provide insight into the work experiences of participants and/or can feed into a larger version of the project which are outlined in the next section.

4. Results

4.1. What's not included

The vast majority of respondents were working in the weeks for which they were reporting data. For instance, in weeks 1 and 2, only 16 of the 139 responses were for people not working. For 9 of these 16 responses, work was lined up but hadn't started in those weeks. Similarly, the vast majority of respondents stated they were working full-time (96%). To enable rigour in the analysis, only those working full-time were included in the working time analysis below

4.2. Employment Types

As you can see in Table 1, most people were employees or self-employed, with the former paying tax through PAYE exclusively and the latter mainly Schedule D (Table 2). Only 16 people were working as directors.

Table 1 - Employment types

	%	N
Director of Ltd Company	22.2	16
Employee	41.6	30
Self-employed	36.1	26

Table 2 - Tax and employment status (%)

Tax status	Employment status			
	Director	Employee	Self-employed	Total
PAYE	2.9	41.7	1.4	45.8
Schedule D	0.0	0.0	31.9	31.9
IR35	12.5	0.0	0.0	12.5
Don't know	4.2	0.0	0.0	4.2
Other	1.4	0.0	2.78	4.2

(n=71)

Almost a quarter of respondents (22%) did not know the hours they should be working and a further 35% had a contract they described as other (i.e. not included on the listed options. These included 11 day fortnights, "30 hours or 4 days" and stated hours

contracts such as 37.5, 42.5, 45, 46, 55. In contrast, 8.3% of participants could identify their contract was for five days a week. This variation is something important to clarify before any larger version of this work.

Only 9% of participants were on yearly salaries and these people were primarily in senior executive/development roles with pay packages reflecting this: four of the five who shared salary details earn over £50,000.

As Table 3 below shows, the major of participants are employed on a weekly rate, the average of which is £1245. The low numbers for other pay rate periods mean averages are skewed, but the range for day rates is £105 (runner working in factual) to £595 (gallery director working in factual entertainment).

Table 3 - Pay rate period

	%
Weekly rate	72.2
Day rate	15.3
Yearly salary	8.3
Hourly rate	2.8
Flat fee	1.4

N=71

In relation to lead time before a contract started, 43% of respondents reported knowing about a job less than a fortnight before it began (30 of 70 participants).

Table 4 - Contract length and time in advance it was secured

Contract lead time	**Average contract length (weeks)**
Less than a week	16
1-2 weeks	22
3-4 weeks	14
1-2 months	14
More than three months	12

N=70

4.3. Working time

Across weeks 1-3, the average working week was 53.2 hours. This is above the 48-hour level for the Working Time Directive by 5.2 hours and above the UK average full-time working week of 37.2 hours (2019) by 16 hours.

Daily averages ranged from 8.7 – 10.3 Monday-Friday with the weekends having much lower averages (Table 5)

Table 5 - Average Daily Working Hours (participants working full-time)

	Mon	**Tues**	**Wed**	**Thurs**	**Fri**	**Sat**	**Sun**	**Total**
7th Sept	10.0	10.0	10.4	9.7	8.6	2.3	1.5	52.7
14th Sept	9.9	10.0	10.3	10.2	9.1	2.7	2.0	54.2
21st Sept	9.2	10.0	10.1	10.1	8.5	2.5	2.5	52.7
All weeks	9.7	10.0	10.3	10.0	8.7	2.5	2.0	53.2

Of the working weeks entered[1], 54% of them were for hours less than the average indicating those who work above the mean work much higher than it. This is borne out in the range of hours reported:

- Entries above 53 hours/week: 53 – 98.5 hours (range = 45.5 hours)
- Entries below 53 hours/week: 21 – 53 hours (range = 31 hours)

Proportion of working weeks over:

- 37.2 hours: 87% (UK average)
- 48 hours: 62% (working time directive)
- 60 hours: 29%
- 70 hours: 13%
- 80 hours: 4%

Four people worked longer than 90 hours in a week (Table 6).

Table 6 – Details of participants working more than 90 hours

Role	Genre	Hours reported								Place
		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	
Assistant Producer	Fact Ent	9	8.5	15	16	15	19	16	98.5	On location
Editor – Offline	Children's	17	10	10	10	9	20	20	96	Home
Production Manager	Ent	14	16	14	16	16	16	3	95	On location
Producer/Director	Ent	12	15	12	14	14	14	12	93	On location

Across weeks 1-3 there was no difference between the average hours worked by men and women. But it should be noted that the sample here is 83% female.

Table 7 - Working hours by gender (weeks 1-3)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	N
Female	10.0	10.0	10.3	9.8	8.9	2.4	1.8	53.2	129
Male	8.5	10.4	10.4	10.6	7.9	3.0	2.7	53.2	27

Working weeks done on location were the longest (Table 8) with the shortest being for people working at home. This is not surprising given the different activities being undertaken in these places.

Table 8 - Working hours average for place of work (weeks 1-3)

Place of Work	Mean Weekly Hours	N
On location	59.6	40
Office based	51.7	18
Home	49.2	72
Studio based	64.1	9
Post-production facilities	53.6	10

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[1] Data here refer to the number of weeks entered, not the number of participants, so the data includes entries from single respondents for each week they entered.

Other (please specify)	49.6	4

NB: Categories with fewer than 10 entries greyed because results not robust

Table 9 - Weekly Hours by Job Role Grouping

Job Role Grouping	Mean Hours	N
Craft and Tech	56.0	19
Editorial	55.0	61
Post VFX SFX	53.0	31
Production Grades	51.1	26
Directors	52.9	8
Development	38.1	7
Writers	52.3	3

NB: Categories with fewer than 10 entries greyed because results not robust

Reflecting the data for place of work, the mean hours worked by job role grouping[2] is higher for those in craft and tech who are unlikely to be able to work from home.

People in the 20-29 year-old age category worked fewer hours a week that those in their 30s and 40s (Table 10). And those with less experience in the industry work fewer hours (Table 11).

Table 10 - Weekly Hours by Job Role Grouping

Age group	Mean Hours	N
20 - 29	47.6	43
30 - 39	55.3	65
40 - 49	55.0	37
50 - 59	58.9	8
60 - 69	80.0	1
Prefer not to say	34.3	2

NB: Categories with fewer than 10 entries greyed because results not robust

Table 11 - Weekly Hours by Time Since Starting in the TV Industry

Row Labels	Mean Hours	N
Less than 5 years	51.0	24
5-10 years	51.4	45
11-20 years	57.1	52
More than 20 years	55.0	26

The participants with caring responsibilities worked longer hours on average (Table 12), although it should be noted that although there are 32 entries for working hours from people with caring responsibilities, this only represents data for 17 different people.

Table 12 - Do you have caring responsibilities?

	Mean Hours	N
No	52.2	121
Yes	56.8	32

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[2] The full list of job roles and corresponding job role groupings is in Annex A (thanks to Michelle from SMTJ for compiling it).

In week 3 we asked about breaks, precise details of working days (e.g. times people started work) and job satisfaction. In Table 13 you can see 38% of respondents missed breaks every day or almost every day and 32% didn't miss any breaks. Of the latter group, 43% worked at home.

Table 13 - How often did you miss breaks in your working day?

	%
I didn't miss any breaks	32
I missed breaks once	4
I missed breaks a couple of times	10
I missed breaks on a few days	16
I missed breaks almost every day	16
I missed breaks every day	22

N=50

On job satisfaction, 78% felt satisfied with their work for that week. The people who agreed they were felt satisfied worked 15 hours fewer than those who disagreed. We should be wary here, however, of assuming post hoc ergo proctor hoc, i.e. that one caused the other, and a low number of responses (11 disagreed with feeling satisfied).

Table 14 - This week I was happy with the number of hours I worked

	%	Mean hours	N
Agree	42	47.8	21
Disagree	58	56.2	29

Table 14 show that people dissatisfied with the number of hours they worked, on average did more hours. Again, we need to avoid assumptions of causality without further information, but we can see the value of including job satisfaction questions.

4.4. Other Insights

The data reveal a series of other interesting insights. For example, examining week one data for full-time workers, we find that 48% of people were working in the same job role grouping as the first role they had in the industry. This is more likely to be the case for newer entrants, as one would expect, but not always the case.

Although participants weren't asked to complete data for w/c 28th Sept, half a dozen did so, including two who insisted after they emailed to check, and I told them there was no need. This level of dedication is encouraging.

SMTJ provided an extensive list of job roles which was essential for this pilot. But participants managed to add others which were integrated into the list for the second and third iterations of the time sheet survey.

In some of the open answer questions, feedback sections and 'other' answer boxes, participants included questions or queries which didn't relate to the survey. These included questions about finding out more about their contracts, employment type or tax status. A mechanism for answering this might be a consideration for a larger survey, even if it is just signposting to BECTU or other sites.

5. Conclusions

Overall, we think this pilot was a success for the following reasons.

First, it helped us achieve the aim of a survey to test data collection methods and in so doing the survey questions and response options were improved. Participation rates for those with a concern in the topic were high. This was indicated by relatively high conversion rates from the expression of interest to undertaking the survey, comments about the research in feedback questions on the survey and via email. Furthermore, most people provided data for most questions and when asked, 96% of respondents thought the survey was easy to understand and 98% agreed it was quick to complete

Second, the data show interesting findings which can be used to highlight over work in the industry and the need for a larger survey. The key statistic is that across weeks 1-3, the average working week was 53.2 hours. This is above the 48 hour level for the Working Time Directive by 5.2 hours and above the UK average full-time working week of 37.2 hours (2019) by 16 hours.

Improvements can be made for a larger version of this survey. For instance, reporting of non-working weeks was low. If these data are important for any larger project, the messaging about the purposes of the recording time needs to make it clear non-working weeks are relevant. Weekly reminders are better received and led to better response rates than daily ones. Reminders are best sent on either Friday or Sunday depending on when the working week ends for participants.

6. Annex A

Role	Department
1st Camera Assistant	Craft and Tech
2nd Assistant Camera	Craft and Tech
Art Assistant	Craft and Tech
Art Department Assistant/Runner	Craft and Tech
Art Department Head	Craft and Tech
Art Director	Craft and Tech
Assistant Costume Designer	Craft and Tech
Assistant Floor Manager	Craft and Tech
Assistant Set Decorator	Craft and Tech
Camera Assistant	Craft and Tech
Camera Operator	Craft and Tech
Camera Operator – Location	Craft and Tech
Camera Operator – Studio	Craft and Tech
Camera Person	Craft and Tech
Camera Trainee	Craft and Tech
Concept artist	Craft and Tech
Costume Assistant	Craft and Tech
Costume Designer	Craft and Tech
Costume Standby	Craft and Tech
Costume Supervisor	Craft and Tech
Data Wrangler	Craft and Tech
DIT	Craft and Tech
Drone operator	Craft and Tech
Electrician	Craft and Tech
Engineer	Craft and Tech
Floor Manager	Craft and Tech
Grip	Craft and Tech
Hair & Make-up Artist	Craft and Tech
Hair & Make-up Assitant	Craft and Tech
Hairdresser	Craft and Tech
Health and Safety Officer	Craft and Tech
Home economist	Craft and Tech
Lighting Desk Operator	Craft and Tech
Make-up artist	Craft and Tech
Production Buyer	Craft and Tech
Props buyer	Craft and Tech
Props master	Craft and Tech
Props wrangler	Craft and Tech
Sound Assistant / Boom Op	Craft and Tech
Sound Engineer	Craft and Tech
Sound Graphic Designer (Broadcast, Motion)	Craft and Tech
Sound Recordist	Craft and Tech
Stunt Coordinator	Craft and Tech
Stunt Person	Craft and Tech
Vision Mixer	Craft and Tech
Assistant Commissioner	Development
Commissioner	Development
Development AP	Development
Development Assistant Producer	Development
Development Exec	Development
Development Intern	Development
Development Producer	Development
Development Researcher	Development
Head of Development	Development
Digital Producer	Digital
Digital/Social Producer	Digital
2nd Assistant	Directors
3rd Assistant Director	Directors
Assistant Director	Directors
Director (PSC)	Directors
DV Director	Directors
Gallery Director	Directors
Multi Camera Director	Directors
Series Director	Directors
Archive Producer	Editorial
Archive Researcher	Editorial
Assistant Producer	Editorial
Casting & Talent Executive	Editorial
Casting Assistant	Editorial
Casting Assistant Producer	Editorial
Casting Executive	Editorial
Casting Producer	Editorial
Casting Researcher	Editorial
Celeb Booker	Editorial
Celeb Producer	Editorial
Celebrity producer	Editorial
Consultant	Editorial

Contestant verifier	Editorial	SFX Supervisor	Post VFX SFX
Editorial Trainee	Editorial	SFX Technician	Post VFX SFX
Entertainment Producer	Editorial	VFX Artist	Post VFX SFX
Executive Producer	Editorial	VFX Editor	Post VFX SFX
Forward Planning Producer	Editorial	VFX Producer	Post VFX SFX
Gallery Producer	Editorial	Accounts	Production Grades
Games / Task Producer	Editorial	Assistant Production Coordinator	Production Grades
Junior Producer (Questions)	Editorial	COVID Assistant	Production Grades
Junior Researcher	Editorial	COVID Officer/Manager/Supervisor	Production Grades
Producer	Editorial	Head of Production	Production Grades
Producer/Director	Editorial	Junior Production Coordinator	Production Grades
Production Executive	Editorial	Junior Production Manager	Production Grades
Researcher	Editorial	Librarian	Production Grades
Runner	Editorial	Library Assistant	Production Grades
Self Shooting AP	Editorial	Line Producer	Production Grades
Self Shooting Producer / Director	Editorial	Location Assistant	Production Grades
Senior Producer	Editorial	Logger	Production Grades
Senior Researcher	Editorial	Production Assistant	Production Grades
Series Producer	Editorial	Production Co-Ordinator	Production Grades
Shooting PD	Editorial	Production Manager	Production Grades
Shooting Researcher	Editorial	Production Secretary	Production Grades
Translator	Editorial	Promotions assistant	Promotions
Actor	On Screen	Promotions manager	Promotions
Reporter	On Screen	Head of Talent	Talent
3D artist	Post VFX SFX	Talent Manager	Talent
Animator	Post VFX SFX	Screenwriter	Writers
Assistant Editor	Post VFX SFX	Script Editor	Writers
CG Artist	Post VFX SFX	Script Supervisor	Writers
CG Producer	Post VFX SFX		
Colourist	Post VFX SFX		
Colourist Dailies	Post VFX SFX		
Compositor	Post VFX SFX		
Dubbing Mixer	Post VFX SFX		
Edit Producer	Post VFX SFX		
Editor - Online	Post VFX SFX		
Editor – Offline	Post VFX SFX		
Graphic Designer	Post VFX SFX		
Graphics Operator	Post VFX SFX		
Post-Production Manager	Post VFX SFX		
Series Editor	Post VFX SFX		
SFX Assistant	Post VFX SFX		