

Q&A with IAB Digital Summit speaker Dmitry Shishkin

In an exclusive five-part series, Bizcommunity interviews five international speakers set to be featured at the IAB Digital Summit in Association with BBC.com. taking place on 19 February. This week, we chat to Dmitry Shishkin, BBC Digital Development Editor, to find out what he thinks is the 'next big thing' to watch out for in digital development this year...



Dmitry Shishkin, BBC Digital Development Editor

The ways in which audiences consume content is rapidly evolving; how does BBC plan to continue to be ahead of the curve?

Shishkin: We have always been innovative - first with radio, then TV, then websites. The BBC is accustomed to getting a mix of editorial content and relevant technical solutions right. We are constantly looking for new ways to tell stories, especially on digital platforms - projects like BBC Trending, BBC Go Figure or BBC Shorts are all good examples of social storytelling. We firmly believe that it's equally important to keep developing your offer on platforms belonging to the BBC, but also to offer the most relevant content to

different audiences where they tend to spend most of their time, on social media platforms. Content varies greatly, but the beauty of the digital world is that you can try new things, measure the impact, iterate and amend and try them again very quickly. We encourage innovation within editorial teams and try to give them space and support to express themselves for the benefit of wider the organisation and of course audiences across the world.

■ BBC is one of the biggest news organisations in the world. How do you engage and hold a conversation across both online and offline platforms?

Shishkin: The way our newsroom is run underwent huge changes in 2013, bringing together radio, TV and online newsrooms into a single operation. More recently, we've added another layer to the setup, which currently spans English and all foreign languages we work in. We plan and commission our coverage keeping all output in mind, so newsgathering teams deployed to cover stories do so in multiple formats. We train our journalists to be able to work in various mediums, so they fully appreciate what it takes to contribute meaningfully in video, audio, text and pictures. Importantly, we are trying to spread the digital word in every direction, explaining, for example, what works and what doesn't on digital platforms, so the overall knowledge within the organisation is evolving.

■ What are the challenges of integrating real-time content across multiple channels?

Shishkin: Being as large and as complex as we are, there are always going to be pressures as to which outlet gets access to reporters first. The rule of thumb is reporters file a few lines of text first, that can be used on the website, posted on social channels, used as a TV ticker or read on radio. We have many multilingual reporters across the world, who work in several languages every day, so their journalism gets shared as widely as possible.

■ What would you say are the benefits of digitising one's enterprise?

Shishkin: It's a matter of survival. Although TV and radio bring in huge audiences across the world, we understand that audiences are quickly moving into an "on-demand" frame of mind, so the challenge is how you marry together our broadcast, storytelling strengths and granular knowledge of audience preferences and behaviours online. The beauty of a digital world is that it's entirely quantifiable, so you are able to measure the impact of your journalism much better than on TV and radio, thus, for instance, you are able to find the right balance between what audiences need to be told and what else they can get based on their preferences. At the heart of digital strategy is always the audience. The better you know it, the more successful you'll be.

■ In your opinion, what aspect of digital development is the 'next big thing' to watch out for in 2015?

Shishkin: Two things occupy my mind a lot lately. Firstly, how do you create an offer that is intelligent, rich, diverse and relevant, that is based on pre-selected editorial picks, one's history of using news content in the past and relevant recommendations from your social circle. Secondly, and this is related to platforms - how do you take full advantage of chat apps, which could become a very significant way of reaching new audiences around the world. Chat apps suddenly give you access to hundreds of millions of people, but there's one thing to get right - you must create an experience that will develop the audiences' need to use your service day in and day out.

IAB Digital Summit in association with BBC.com and Bookmarks ticket sales are open. Join the local digital industry as it celebrates creativity and innovation with a world-class line up of international and local talent. Seats are limited and due to over 800 entries received tickets are selling fast, go to <http://iabsa.net/summit/home/> to find out more, register to book and avoid disappointment.

To assist in getting you there without breaking the budget, special travel and accommodation packages with kulula.com can be found [here](#), or call 011 454 3534 with any queries.

ABOUT DMITRY SHISHKIN

Dmitry Shishkin is currently responsible for modernising BBC's digital offering for Africa, launching the Africa edition of [bbc.com](#) and [bbc.com/news](#), as well as working with technical start-ups on the continent to find new ways of connecting with African audiences through digital platforms.

■ Q&A with IAB Digital Summit speaker Dmitry Shishkin - 13 Feb 2015

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