

Title: 'TV Wrap' – a case study in freelance campaigning

A career in the TV industry may appear glamorous – but a casualised, vulnerable workforce has found it increasingly hard to secure basic employment rights in the UK. This paper examines the 2005 'TV Wrap' campaign, in which creative freelancers launched a successful, if maverick, web-based campaign, outside an existing union, to improve their lot. The campaign had a major impact on employment policy, practice and attitudes towards the working conditions of freelance television professionals. This paper, presented by a former freelance TV producer, sets out to compare 2 models of campaigning: the conventional trade union model, used by the television union BECTU; and the 'TV Wrap' informal, issue-based online lobby group. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? In this case, what has each model managed to deliver in terms of improving long-term working conditions? Can creative freelancers really claim the status of 'vulnerable workers'? This paper seeks to explore these issues and examine the relevance of 'mobilisation theory' from an industrial relations perspective.

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