

Contents

Introduction	3
Executive Summary	4-5
Findings	6-15
Methodology	16-17
Conclusion and Recommendations	18-19

Appendix 1- Film Festivals' Online Survey Questions (PDF)

Appendix 2- Accompanying Letter Film Festivals' Survey (PDF)

Appendix 3- Screenwriters' Online Survey Questions (PDF)

Appendix 4- Accompanying Letter Screenwriters' Survey (PDF)

Appendix 5- Film Festivals' Qualitative Interview Questions (PDF)

Appendix 6- Screenwriters' Qualitative Interview Questions (PDF)

Appendix 7- Summary Film Festivals' Online Survey Results (PDF)

Appendix 8- Summary Screenwriters' Online Survey Results (PDF)

Note: The appendices are not included in this booklet but can be downloaded at www.scenaristes.org or www.iawg.org

Introduction

This report was commissioned to investigate the role of screenwriters at film festivals, to find evidence of how visible screenwriters and screenwriting are at festivals around the world today.

This undertaking stems from the 2009 World Conference of Screenwriters in Athens where it was resolved that the vital contribution of screenwriters needs to be more fully acknowledged both within the film industry and in the public arena at large. Built on a smaller survey undertaken in 2010 this research aimed to have a larger reach, incorporating statistics and opinions from global film festivals and the experiences of screenwriters, as a first step to better understanding the position of writing within film.

Problems with recognition for writers at film festivals had been highlighted by screenwriters to their Guilds, the research was intended to investigate these concerns, but also to uncover and celebrate best practice at film festivals and most importantly to build an accurate and unbiased picture of how screenwriting is presented in the festival environment. This report was also a chance to understand more deeply, through qualitative interviews, what forces shaped film festivals decisions about inviting and crediting screenwriters and what broader questions and topics this posed.

Themes to be studied in this report were: the invitation of screenwriters to festivals, the crediting of screenwriters in film festival marketing and publicity materials, how screenwriters were involved in film festival events, the celebration of screenwriting at film festivals through awards and retrospectives and whether screenwriters' critical perspectives were involved in festival juries. The data gathered has enabled comparisons to be made between festivals in North America and Europe, to look at the behaviour of larger film festivals as well as those who share a mission to educate audiences. In turn the experiences of screenwriters have been collected to add another dimension to the picture painted.

Conclusions and recommendations from this research form the final part of this report.

Executive Summary

The aim of this investigation was to scrutinise the role of screenwriters at film festivals. It was initiated by the International Affiliation of Writers Guilds and Federation of Screenwriters in Europe. This joint initiative arose from the 2009 World Conference of Screenwriters in Athens, where it was resolved that the vital contribution of screenwriters needs to be more fully acknowledged both within the film industry and in the public arena at large. Investigating how screenwriters were recognised at film festivals was the first step in this broader initiative.

The research into the visibility of screenwriters at film festivals comprised of:

- Two online surveys one for film festivals around the globe and the other for screenwriters.
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews with film festivals and screenwriters.
- 50 film festivals responded to the online survey and 159 screenwriters to theirs. 6 film festivals took part in the qualitative interviews and 3 screenwriters (more information in 'Methodology').

The data found through these four approaches forms this report.

Being There

Based on the understanding that if screenwriters are present at film festivals to talk about their craft, audiences can gain a deeper appreciation of filmmaking; the report scrutinised whether screenwriters were invited to festivals to help represent their films. Film festivals were asked who they'd invited to the **last edition of their festival**.

- Of the 47 film festivals surveyed **48.9% invited no screenwriters** to attend their last festival with free accommodation and travel.
- **80.8%** of film festivals surveyed **invited none or less than 5 screenwriters**.
- Of the largest film festivals surveyed that **invited over 100 guests, one third invited 5 or less screenwriters**.
- Of the **97 screenwriters surveyed** who'd had work selected for film festivals, **47.4% hadn't been invited to a film festival at any point in their career**.
- Award-winning screenwriter Mieke de Jong said: *"The negative experiences of film festivals are mainly about not being invited...Not being invited is the more painful when the film is made from an original script (by the scriptwriter) but is promoted as 'a film by The Director'."*
- In qualitative interviews with film festivals and screenwriters it was highlighted that screening **partners (rights holders, distributors and cultural partners)** with whom festivals share costs, also influenced who was invited to represent a film at festivals.
- **40%** of Festivals surveyed included **'To Educate Audiences about the Process of Filmmaking'** as a key mission of their film festival. Despite their aim to educate audiences **few festivals in this group invited significant numbers of screenwriters to attend their events- 38.9% invited none**.

- Compared to the North American film festivals that completed the online survey the European film festivals created less visibility for the screenwriter. 53.3% of European film festivals that completed the online survey invited no screenwriters to their last festival. For North American festivals the figure was considerably lower at 33.3%.

Awards and Juries

The online survey and qualitative interviews looked at other elements of Film Festivals such as Awards and Juries which can ensure screenwriting is properly celebrated and appraised at film festivals:

- 55.6% of film festivals surveyed didn't have a screenwriter on their Jury in the last edition of their festival.
- 64.4% of film festivals surveyed didn't have a screenwriting award at their last festival.

The 'Auteur Myth' and Financial Restraints

In the online survey and qualitative interviews film festivals surveyed attributed low numbers of screenwriter invitees to a wider belief in auteurism, coupled with financial restraints:

- *"Unfortunately it boils down to money. When it boils down to one person only it does boil down to the director..... Whether it is correct or nor there is this myth about an auteur and the auteur in most people's eyes, also in the eyes of the audience, is always the director."*
FilmFest Hamburg
- A high percentage of European film festivals (73.3%) surveyed included possessory (a film by..) credits in their marketing material for directors, indicating a particular bias towards auteurism in Europe compared to North America (44.4% possessory credit).

Best Practice

The online survey and qualitative interviews found many film festivals around the world to be demonstrating best practice in celebrating the work of screenwriters. Including the Edinburgh International Film Festival which invited a high number of screenwriters to their last edition (60-79) and organised a wealth of industry and public events around screenwriting.

"Coming from a small country with a small industry, film festivals are hugely important to me." Jan Forsström (Screenwriter *The Good Son*).

"At the Festivals I have attended I had the rare and unique experience to see and feel international audience which is so different than my local. Understanding what "works" and touches people outside your country is a revealing and extremely important experience. Of course meeting international directors and producers opens up many new routes for co-production and communication and writers don't get enough chances of those." Noa berman-herzberg (Screenwriter of the Crystal Bear-Winning *The Flood*)

Findings

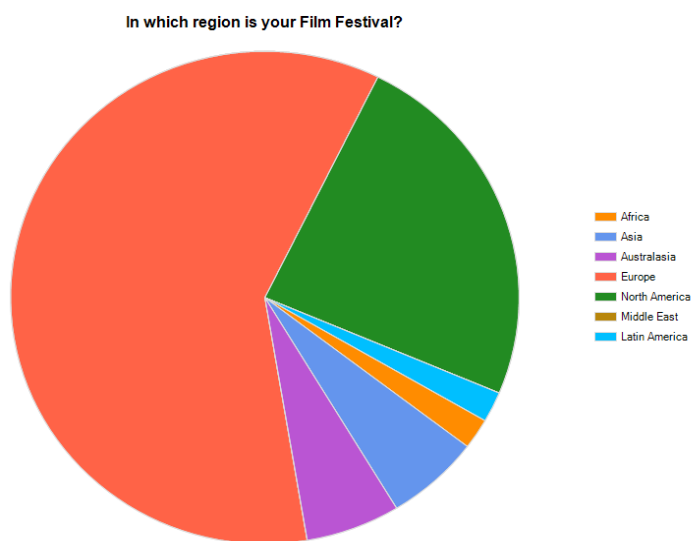
The research into the role of screenwriters at film festivals comprised of four parts:

- Two online surveys one for film festivals around the globe and the other for screenwriters.
- Two sets of semi-structured qualitative interviews with film festivals and screenwriters.

The data found through these four approaches forms this report.

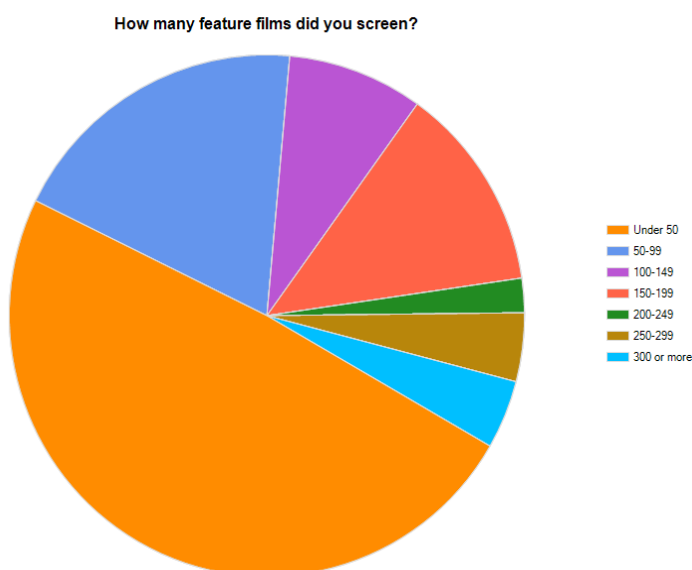
The Online Surveys

Film Festivals Surveyed:



Location

50 Film Festivals completed the online survey from **20 Countries** in **6 Regions** of the World (Europe 60%, North America 24%, Australasia 6%, Asia 6%, Latin America 2%, Africa 2%).



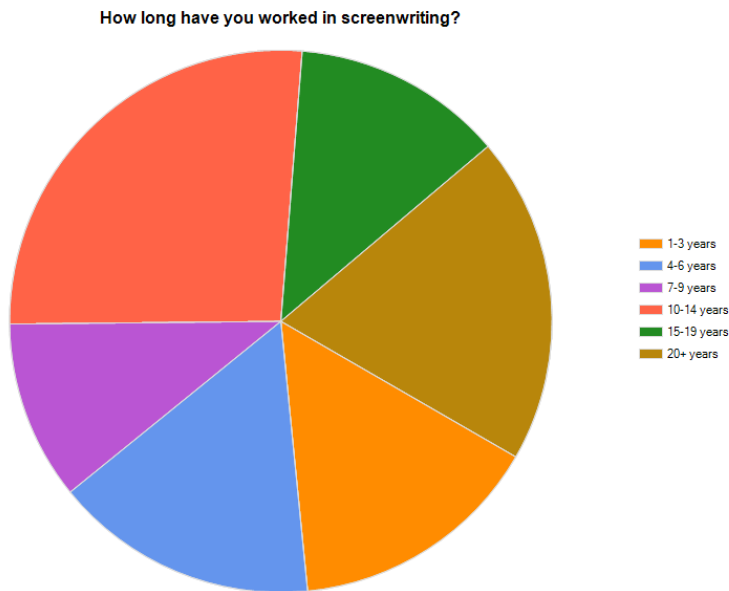
Size

48.9% of Film Festivals surveyed screened **up to 50 feature films**
19.1% screened 50-99 feature films
12.8% screened 150-199 feature films

53.2% of Film Festivals surveyed invited **1-50 guests**
29.7% of Film Festivals surveyed invited **more than 50 Guests**
19.9% of Film Festivals invited **more than 100 guests**
...with free accommodation and travel

Screenwriters Surveyed:

159 screenwriters engaged with the online survey, with 129 (81.1%) completing it. The screenwriters were from 16 countries in 3 different regions, but predominantly European.



Experience

More than a quarter of screenwriters who engaged with the survey had written films for between 10-14 years. This pie chart (left) shows those surveyed had a **relatively even distribution of experience from novice to veteran screenwriters.**

57.9% of screenwriters who took part in the online survey were **male**, **42.1%** were **female**.

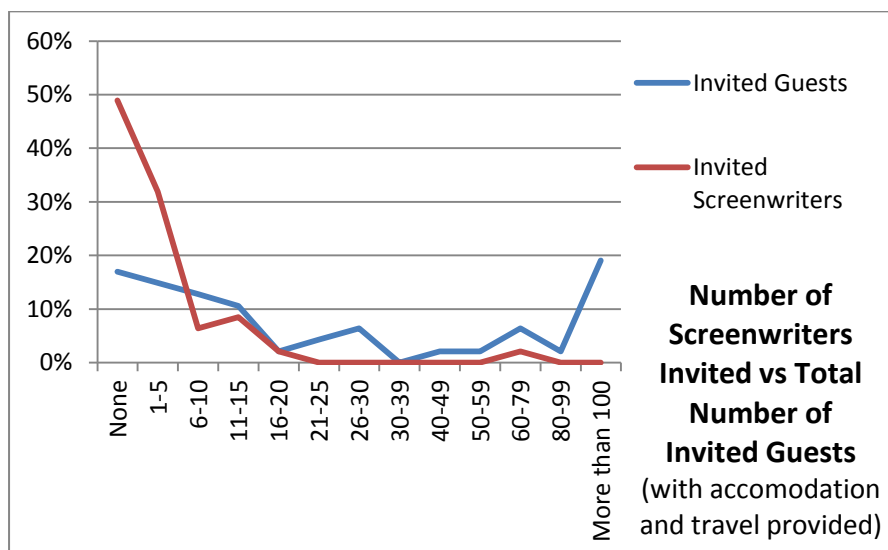
The overwhelming majority of screenwriters surveyed wrote original screenplays: 74%.

23.4% wrote both adapted and original screenplays and 2.6% wrote adapted screenplays.

Being There: Are Screenwriters Invited to Film Festivals?

A key aim of this investigation was to scrutinise whether screenwriters were invited as key creatives to help represent their films and showcase their work at film festivals. We asked Film Festivals who they'd invited to the **last edition of their Festival**.

Of the 47 Film Festivals that responded to the relevant question, **48.9% invited no screenwriters** to attend their last Festival with free accommodation and travel.



This graph displays the sharp contrast between the film festivals surveyed number of invited guests and the numbers of those that were screenwriters.

80.8% of Film Festivals surveyed invited less than 5 screenwriters.

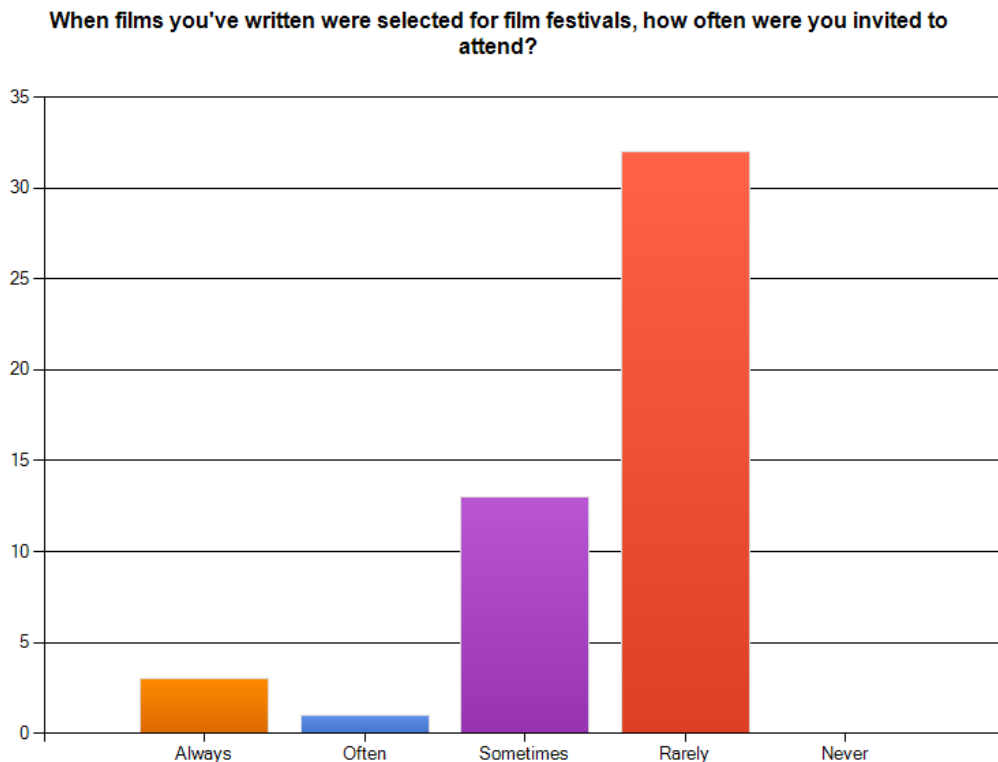
Of the largest film festivals surveyed that **invited over 100 guests**, **one third invited 5 or less screenwriters**.

For the 47 film festivals surveyed and providing guest figures the **smallest total number of guests invited** with free travel and accommodation to all of these festivals was **2384** and the minimum total of screenwriters invited to all of these festivals was just **153**.

This means that on average for every 16 guests that were invited to the last edition of the film festivals we surveyed, just 1 was a screenwriter

Of the **97 screenwriters surveyed** who'd had work selected for film festivals, 52.6% had been invited to a film festival. **47.4% hadn't been invited to a film festival** at any point in their careers.

In the most experienced group of 51 screenwriters that have attended film festivals to present their work. **100% thought that screenwriters did not have enough visibility at film festivals** and **65.7% were 'Rarely' invited to attend festivals with films they had written** (illustrated below).



59.2% of this group of screenwriters were 'Rarely' offered free travel and accommodation when they were invited to attend to represent the film they had written.

In a qualitative interview screenwriter Guy Hibbert (Award-winning screenwriter of *Five Minutes of Heaven*) commented that:

“If it’s an original story then I think the screenwriter should be there [at a film festival] alongside the director. It depends on what the piece is, but the director could come in at the last minute and the writer’s spent three years developing the story, there’s no reason why [s]he shouldn’t be there.”

In comments in the online survey screenwriters repeatedly said **‘the negative experiences of film festivals are mainly about not being invited’** (Mieke de Jong, NL). Despite having many positive experiences at film festivals, Mieke went on to say:

“Not being invited is more painful when the film is made from an original script (by the scriptwriter) but is promoted as ‘a film by The Director’.”

The role of the Rights Holder/Distributor/Screening Partners

In qualitative interviews it was highlighted that the **partners** with whom festivals work to realise screenings and premieres of films influenced who was brought to the event to help tell the story of the film. Where **costs are shared**, as they often are, it is not solely the festival that decides the invitation, but cultural partners, rights holders and distributors. The Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) raised this point:

“Very often we are told by the rights holder who we should invite and also it [the screening, the guests] has to have some relevance to the public and press programme for the film ...very often it’s the director and the key talent.”

In qualitative interview the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival said it gave on average two accreditations per film and left it to the production team or distributor to decide who those representatives should be.

In interview screenwriter Guy Hibbert commented that it was often **in the distributor’s interest** to ensure screenwriters attended film festivals, even though writers were mostly presumed not to be suitable representatives for the film. After asking the distributors to fund his attendance at Sundance Film Festival with his original award-winning screenplay *Five Minutes of Heaven*, Guy illuminated his presence was actually in the distributor’s interest:

*“The constructive thing is that because I attended the premiere and we had a Q&A afterwards, and the judges were at the premiere and at the Q&A, it helped us in promoting the film. It may have had something to do with winning the [Sundance World] Screenwriting Award. So in the end it probably helped the distributors. It was **money well spent**.”*

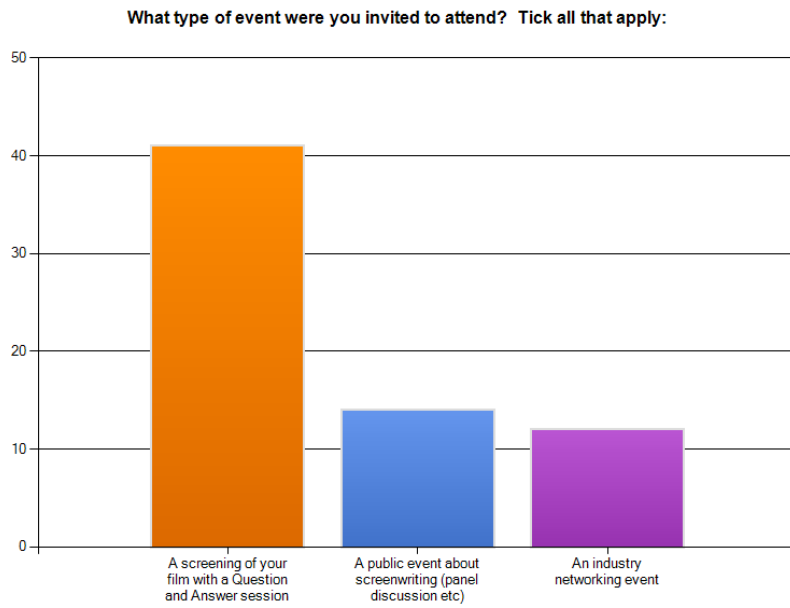
Events

43.2% of the 45 film festivals that responded to the relevant question had **no events focused on screenwriting**.

60% of film festivals that completed the survey had **no industry events for screenwriters**.

53.3% of film festivals surveyed had **1-5 screenwriters speak at Q&A events** following screenings.

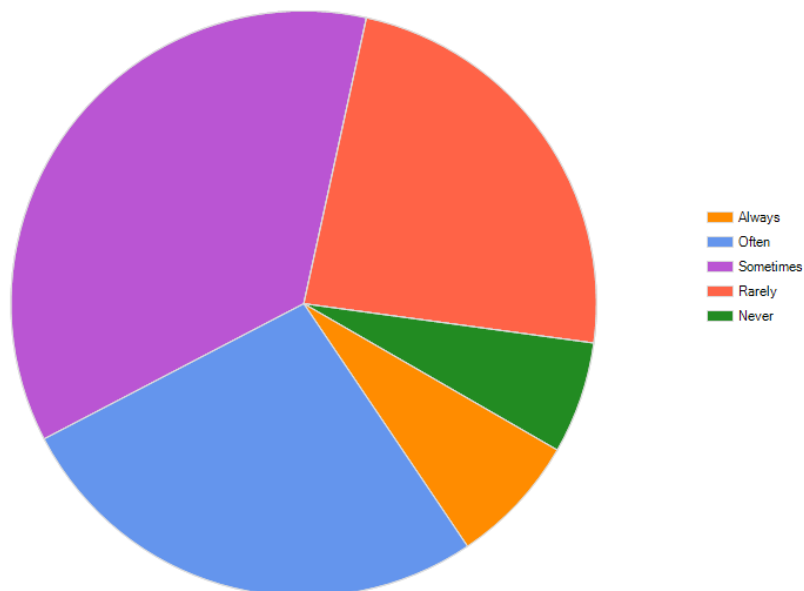
The **49 screenwriters** surveyed that had attended Film Festivals were invited to these events:



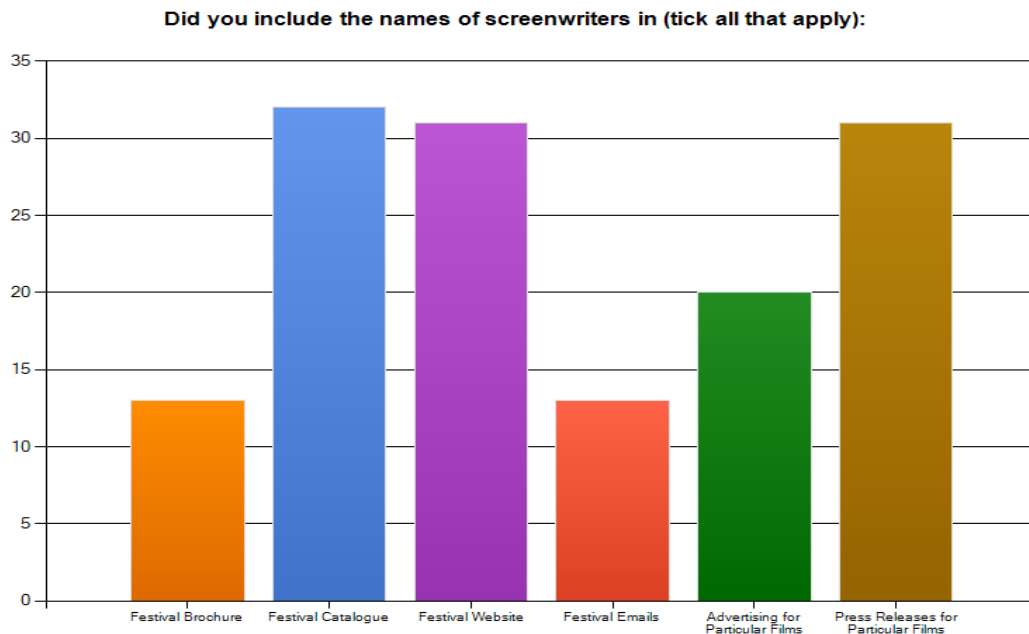
Crediting

How often screenwriters who completed the survey were credited in Film Festival marketing material for their work:

Is your screenwriting credited in film festival marketing materials (brochure, catalogue, adverts, website, emails)?



Film festivals surveyed credited screenwriters in the following pieces of marketing and publicity:



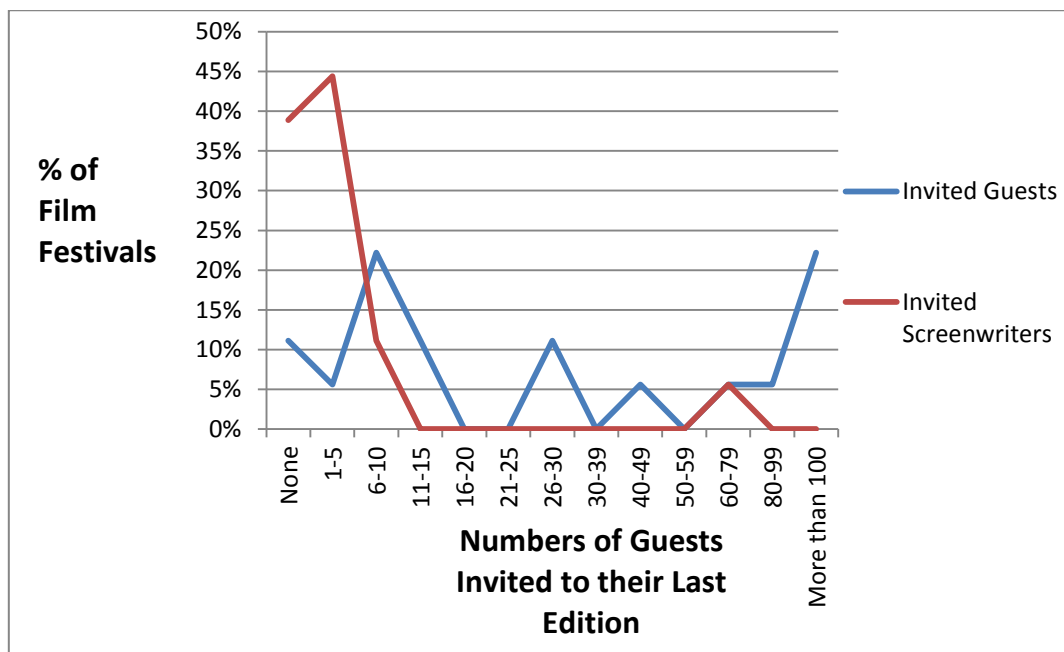
Educating Audiences about Filmmaking

40% of festivals surveyed included **'To Educate Audiences about the Process of Filmmaking'** as a key mission of their Film Festival.

95% of these festivals were from **Europe (60%)** and **North America (35%)**.

Despite their aim to educate audiences about the process of filmmaking **few festivals in this group invited significant numbers of screenwriters** to attend in comparison to their overall number of guests as the chart below shows.

Film Festivals with the Mission of Educating Audiences about Filmmaking



72.2% of this group included a **possessory credit for the director** in their marketing materials.

Although **27.9%** of this group had **no events that focussed on screenwriting**, **61%** had one or more.

72.2% of festivals with an aim of **educating** audiences about filmmaking, **did not have a screenwriting award**.

A European and North American Comparison

Compared to the North American film festivals that completed the online survey the European film festivals created less visibility for the screenwriter.

53.3% of European film festivals that completed the online survey **invited no screen writers to their last festival**. For North American festivals the figure was considerably lower at 33.3%.

55.5% of European film festivals had no events about screenwriting and **37.9%** of European film festivals surveyed had no industry events at which screenwriters and directors could **network**.

Juries and Screenwriting Awards

55.6% of film festivals didn't have a screenwriter on their jury in the last edition of their festival. Out of that group **56%** had not had a screenwriter on their jury in the **previous four years either**.

64.4% of film festivals didn't have a screenwriting award at their last festival.

In qualitative interviews screenwriters Mieke de Jong and Guy Hibbert told of instances in which screenwriting awards for films they'd written were credited to the director of the film. Mieke de Jong:

"I once wrote a film that won a prize for best script at a festival in Belgium, but they forgot to ask me over. The director took the prize and didn't mention in his speech that it was not his script..."

The Heart of the Matter?: The Auteur 'Myth' and Financial Limitations

When asked why the director was often chosen above the screenwriter to represent a film FilmFest Hamburg articulated clearly in a qualitative interview the following point on the 'myth of the auteur':

"Unfortunately it boils down to money. When it boils down to one person only it does boil down to the director..... Whether it is correct or nor there is this myth about an auteur and the auteur in most people's eyes, also in the eyes of the audience, is always the director; which might be right, might be wrong. I agree very often it could be the screenwriter. But the world has kind of agreed upon the director to be the author of a film and as we also know the last few years have seen more directors writing their own scripts."

Like FilmFest Hamburg many film festivals in the online survey commented on the fact that financial restraints meant they could not invite as many guests as they would like. But comments illustrated a prioritisation of the director or lead actor as guests to the festival.

“We do not have a big budget and we prioritise the director or main actor. We would welcome inviting the scriptwriter as well- but in most cases not instead.”

“Larger financial support would probably allow our festival to host more screenwriters.”

“With a limited travel budget we focus on the director and talent in the films we screen.”

“Because we do not have a big budget.. we prioritise the director or main actor. We would welcome inviting the scriptwriter as well - but in most cases not instead.”

The Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) in their qualitative interview also commented on the problem of auteurism:

*“We’re aware of the problems with auteurism, but not just from a screenwriter’s perspective, from a producer’s perspective too. But it’s a difficult one cause we can’t invite three people for each film, often it comes down to the director being the most prominent, but where we can we definitely invite the screenwriter also. **It’s down to budget and it’s a similar situation with producers.**”*

One element of the online survey clearly stated that **73.3% of European film festivals included possessory credits in their marketing material for directors** versus 44.4% of North America festivals that completed the online survey. **This seems to highlight the different film cultures in both regions and a particular bias in Europe for regarding the director as an auteur.** In ten comments following this question in the online film festivals survey only one festival mentioned that they showcased a lot of work by writer/directors.

In his qualitative interview screenwriter Guy Hibbert talked of a relevant experience he had when launching his original screenplay *Five Minutes of Heaven*:

“When we had the press launch at Sundance with the camera and the interviews, the director and the two stars were in front of the cameras, because it’s such a cold climate I was standing actually behind the cameras holding everybody’s coats, whilst they asked how the film came into production. And in fact I was the person to ask about that cause everybody else came on board two years later. So it’s kind of a nonsense, to have me holding the coats listening to them answering questions about how the film came into creation, when I was the one who created it.”

These findings would suggest that more work needs to be done by film festivals to celebrate the contributions of screenwriters and other key creatives.

Networking

“It is good to know filmmakers in other countries, and festivals are THE opportunity to get in touch. Colleagues-screenwriters, directors or producers that you may want to work with some day.” Mieke de Jong (Screenwriter *Winter in Wartime*).

“Coming from a small country with a small industry, film festivals are hugely important to me.” Jan Forsström (Screenwriter *The Good Son*).

Film Festivals can be an excellent way of making new industry contacts and establishing professional relationships that might prove fruitful to a screenwriter's career.

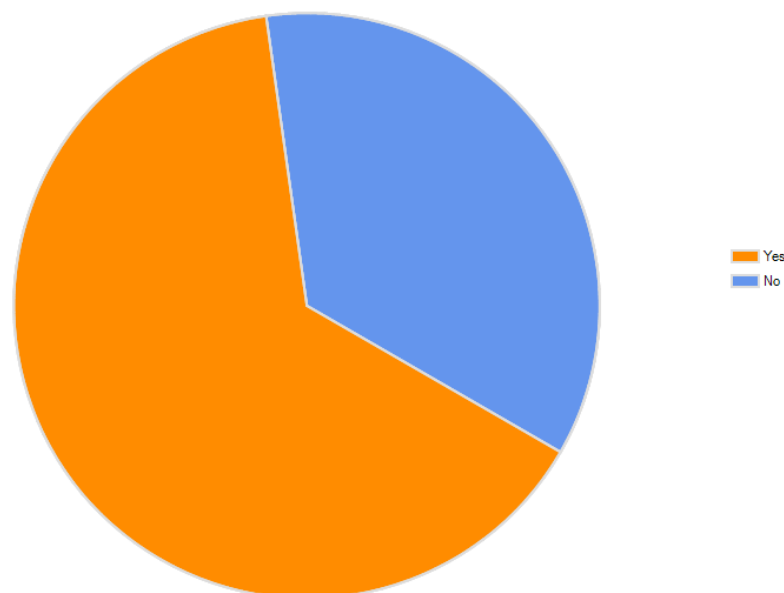
Although networking can happen informally, it is more likely to occur if structures are put in place by the film festival to support it and provide: delegate contact information, means to get in contact, spaces and events to meet at.

However being at a film festival is obviously a pre-requisite. Of the **159 professional screenwriters** that completed the online survey **just 30.8% had been invited to attend film festivals**.

Of **screenwriters** that had been invited to attend film festivals, **only 24.5%** had attended **an industry networking event**.

35.6% of festivals that completed the online survey **didn't** organise any events that enabled **screenwriters and directors to network**. **60%** of film festivals **didn't organise any industry events exclusively for screenwriters**.

Did you organise an event/events that enabled screenwriters and directors to network?



However EIFF showed how effective an Industry Events Programme and their Talent Development Programme can be. For example their 2012 Industry Events Programme included one event featuring screenwriters from different stages of their career and one looking at comedy writing. At Edinburgh this is complemented by an industry system that facilitates easy communication between all members of the film community and ample networking events to meet in person.

Supporting Talent

Only 15.5% of film festivals surveyed had a financial award or bursary for screenwriters. Largely these festivals offered financial support to support new talent in screenwriting.

The Festivals that offered a bursary were: Festival du Cinéma Européen, 168 Film Festival (US), UK Jewish Film Festival, Miami International Film Festival, BUSTER International Film Festival for Children and Youth, FilmFest Hamburg and the Rome International Film Festival.

The Festivals awarded between **€3,000 and £20,000 per annum**. It was detailed that two of the seven awards were for a short film screenplay.

EIFF runs an innovative **online development and networking scheme 'Network'** which supports filmmakers including screenwriters.

Changing Cultures: Best Practice in the Film Festival World

The online survey and qualitative interviews found many film festivals around the world to be demonstrating best practice in including screenwriters and celebrating their work.

As EIFF put it, sometimes they have to work hard to convince screenwriters that some festivals are inclusive of all filmmaking talent:

“Sometimes there’s a preconceived notion that festivals don’t care about screenwriters and it probably comes from the auteur culture...Often screenwriters feel that their work has been edged out or deemed to be less important than the director’s. Edinburgh doesn’t do that, but it’s because of how they’ve been treated elsewhere. Once they’ve been here once they know we love them as much as any other part of the filmmaking experience.”

Highlights of best practice included:

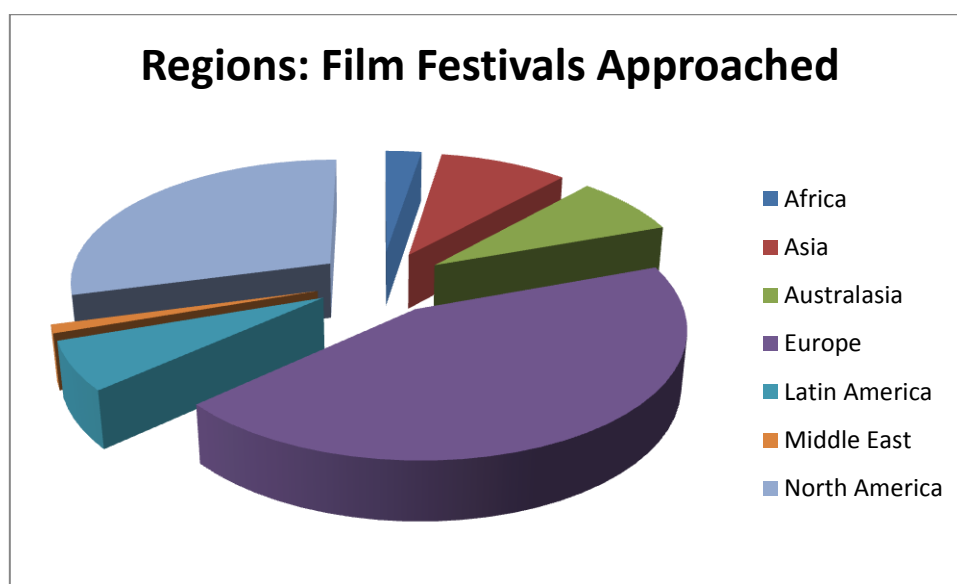
- EIFF’s high numbers of invited screenwriters with free accommodation and travel: **60-79 screenwriters invited** (with 150-199 feature films screened).
- The Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival’s ‘Industry Series’: Education and Career Development for industry professionals in the Asian Filmmaking Community. The workshop for screenwriters featuring Artists Talks & Masterclasses has been enduringly popular.
- FilmFest Hamburg permanently crediting screenwriters in festival publications and their festival website.
- The 7 festivals (listed above) offering financial awards for screenwriting or to support new writing talent.
- EIFF’s 70+ events featuring screenwriters, 5+ events focussed on screenwriting and 5+ industry events for screenwriters; revealing that their interest “in the writing of films as much as the direction” is evident throughout the whole of the festival and transmuted to the industry and public.

Methodology

To gather relevant data two questionnaires were designed online and directed at film festivals and screenwriters, and qualitative interviews were conducted with these two groups.

Film Festivals Online Survey

Please see Appendix 1 for the Online Survey for film festivals. A link to the online survey was included in an email and an accompanying letter (Appendix 2) from screenwriters Richard Curtis and David Seidler was attached, explaining the genesis and aims of the project. The email was sent to 271 film festivals which were selected as feature film festivals from a data base compiled by the Writers Guild of Great Britain. The festivals approached were from these regions around the globe:



There was a five week period for festivals to respond to the survey. During which time email reminders were sent and reminder phone calls were made.

50 film festivals completed the online survey (details provided about these Festivals in the 'Findings' section).

Screenwriters Online Survey

Simultaneously an online survey was sent out to screenwriters. Please see Appendix 3 for the Survey directed at screenwriters. Again a link to the online survey was included in an email and an accompanying letter (Appendix 4) from screenwriters Richard Curtis and David Seidler was attached, explaining the genesis and aims of the project.

The emails were sent out to screenwriting members of the national Writers Guilds affiliated to IAWG and the FSE via organisation officials, as well as directly to attendees of the 2009 World Conference of Screenwriters in Athens.

Again the screenwriters had a five week period to respond to the survey. 159 screenwriters responded (details are provided about these screenwriters in the 'Findings' section).

Film Festivals Qualitative Interviews

To probe issues further semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected film festivals who kindly agreed to take part.

Those Festivals were:

Adelaide International Film Festival

Edinburgh International Film Festival

FilmFest Hamburg

Jaipur International Film Festival

Los Angeles Film Festival

Toronto Reel Asia International Film Festival

Four Qualitative Interviews were conducted and recorded for accuracy with participants' permission via Skype. Jaipur International Film Festival and the Los Angeles Film Festival submitted their answers in writing via email. Although the interviews were semi-structured and follow-on questions were asked, Appendix 5 lists the questions that were the basis for the Interviews.

Screenwriters Qualitative Interviews

As the screenwriters online survey included more opportunity for respondents to contribute comments and experiences, less qualitative interviews were conducted.

Two qualitative interviews (with Line Langebek and Guy Hibbert) were conducted and recorded via Skype and Mieke de Jong submitted her answers via email. The questions that the interviews were based around can be found in Appendix 6.

Researcher

The research was devised and conducted, then written into a report by Freelance Researcher Cathy John employed by the Writers Guild of Great Britain on behalf of IAWG and FSE.

Cathy John is a freelance researcher, writer and visiting tutor in Arts Management at the Arts University College at Bournemouth. Cathy managed film festivals as a Cinema Programmer at the Barbican Centre in London (2008-11) and has also programmed for Birds Eye View Film Festival.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The research undertaken demonstrated that there is much to be improved with the visibility of screenwriters and screenwriting at film festivals.

The research indicated that directors and actors were prioritised as guests over writers, perhaps due to an assumption of a public faith in auteurismⁱ. Yet even festivals that were wary of the concept of auteurism still found themselves having to prioritise the director due to her/his prominence, inviting the screenwriter if there was an additional placeⁱⁱ.

Calls to Action

• **Film Festivals**

Some festivals showed and some screenwriters suggested that concrete things can be done to improve screenwriters representation at Film Festivals.

Improvements could be made by:

- Ensuring that original screenplay writers are invited to festival screenings and public events so as to deepen the public and industry understanding of screenwriting and filmmaking
- Providing an industry events programme with an offering for screenwriters and an opportunity to network with other industry professionals
- Crediting screenwriters in festival marketing and publicity materials
- Establishing a screenwriting award
- Providing a screenwriting bursary to support new writing talent
- Ensuring that screenwriters form part of the festival jury
- Occasionally celebrating the work of screenwriters with a screenwriter's retrospective

• **Film Festivals: Funding Screenwriters Attendance and Events**

In many cases additional funding was stated as needed by film festivals for supporting the invitation of screenwriters to film festivals. Options for addressing this:

- Broader industry organisations could also be used to support and partner on screenwriting focussed events, as the Edinburgh International Film Festival had done with BAFTA.
- There was an appetite on the part of the film festivals that took part in the qualitative interviews to work in closer collaboration with their local/national Writers Guilds to facilitate more screenwriting focussed events.
- FilmFest Hamburg had successfully run a screenwriting award for many years due to specific sponsorship. Sponsorship for screenwriting awards could be an achievable goal for festivals.

• **Distributors and Rights Holders**

Further work needs to be undertaken with distributors and rights holders who often set the agenda for who attends a film festival to represent their film. It could be in their interest to celebrate the writing of their film by providing travel and accommodation for the screenwriter.

- **Screenwriters**

Some positive experiences contributed by screenwriters in the online survey and qualitative interviews, were the result of a screenwriter asking to attend a film festival and either asking a distributor to support their trip or finding funding from other sources. The evidence suggests that assertive behaviour from screenwriters yields rewards.

Impact of this Research: Awareness Raising

The research itself seemed to inspire plans for new approaches, making a positive contribution as an awareness raising exercise:

“From this we are going to organise a separate event for writers.”

“I guess even this survey is a wake-up callIf there was a Fund to enable us specifically to invite scriptwriters then we would be very likely to apply..”

Conclusion: Next Steps

Some festivals commented in the online survey that they felt general attitudes towards directors and screenwriters would need to change prior changing their programme:

“We please our audiences and they would rather meet a director than a screenwriter. The general attitude towards the different roles in the filmmaking process need to change before audiences will respond more enthusiastically to screenwriters.”

Yet other film festivals had experienced audiences’ enthusiasm for screenwriting events:

“We’ve always invited screenwriters, we’ve always done specific events and public facing events, and we found that the public were relatively interested in the mechanics of screenwriting.” Edinburgh International Film Festival

“For some years we worked with the local Screenwriters Guild and we did public readings of screenplays...That was something that was quite successful.” FilmFest Hamburg

Such positive examples would suggest that introducing screenwriting events and having screenwriters present to discuss their work would help *change* audience and industry assumptions about auteurism, and improve understanding of filmmaking in general. With screenwriters present festivals would have a more rounded way of telling the story of a film’s creation.

ⁱ FilmFest Hamburg, Qualitative Interview 31.07.12.: *“Unfortunately it boils down to money. When it boils down to one person only, it does boil down to the director..... Whether it is correct or nor there is this myth about an auteur and the auteur in most people’s eyes, also in the eyes of the audience, is always the director; which might be right, might be wrong.”*

ⁱⁱ Edinburgh International Film Festival, Qualitative Interview 19.07.12.: *“We’re aware of the problems with auteurism, but not just from a screenwriter’s perspective from a producers perspective too. But it’s a difficult one cause we can’t invite three people for each film. Often it comes down to the director being the most prominent.”*