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Ben relaunched London Student in January 2015 and was instrumental in saving it from collapse. He bought the lsnews.co.uk domain name, moved content over from the old site, London-student.net, designed recruitment posters, commissioned work from student writers for the launch week, and started a countdown on social media.

Since the launch, London Student grew to a small group of four people, and then to about 20 core members today, who commission from over 100 student journalists, due to Ben's pioneering use of cloud-based collaboration network Slack. He puts in an incredible amount of time, always available to help commission and sub-edit students' work, being able to sub articles before going into work and participate in editorial discussions during the day, and attends every general meeting before work on Sundays.

Ben has produced Slack resources to help student journalists with their newsgathering and production, including a work experience guide which lists newspapers and contacts, a press contacts list which shows the PR contact details for every London university, a guide for covering student protests, a libel law guide and a visual instruction manual for WordPress publishing. He collaborated with colleagues to produce community guidelines and guides on style and how to implement good SEO.

Ben was heavily involved in London Student's unrivalled coverage of the NUS National Conference 2015 in Liverpool, including the planning and execution of our coverage, including a live blog, live tweeting, breaking news reports and Snapchat. He worked from the conference floor while another colleague worked in the press room. He worked remotely on Slack in the two weeks building up to the conference, dividing up tasks to look at documents from last year's conference and sharing our findings, and scheduling related content for the week before and after the conference.

Ben's guide on how to cover a student protest was used for London Student's coverage of the national student demo on 4th November 2015. Student journalists live tweeted, live blogged and worked together on a news report at the end of the day; despite battling illness, Ben monitored Twitter using lists to contribute to the live blog and helped sub-edit the report.

In May 2015, Ben resigned so London Student could become a co-operative, honouring its democratic roots. It grew exponentially since then and engaged with the British co-operative community by sending delegations to conferences and was awarded the Young Co-operators Prize of £2,000 by AltGen. He created a formal membership structure, registered as a co-operative with the Financial Conduct Authority and helped in the creation of a mission statement which takes into account London Student's status as a student publisher and as a workers' co-operative. The relaunch attracted over 100 people.

Ben also launched LS15, which used YouGov polling data, interactive charts and high profile student columnists to provide analysis of the youth vote ahead of the General Election. The series used YouGov data, news stories and AxisJS and Datawrapper to provide polling analysis. Articles contained a call-to-action, encouraging students to register to vote.

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1. Introduction

London Student (LS) began publishing in 1979 and grew to be Europe's largest student run newspaper. However, the paper was disbanded in 2013 by the University of London, after several years of decline. In January 2015, whilst undertaking an MA at City University, Ben Jackson set about relaunching LS.

2. Relaunch

Ben initially established a new WordPress website (lsnews.co.uk) and migrated content to it from the previous version. The next phase, recruitment, saw Ben design and circulate posters across University of London campuses and instigate a highly effective social media campaign. A core team of four student journalists then began commissioning work from student writers.

3. Coverage

Ben wasted no time and moved into live coverage. There are three notable examples. At the NUS's 2015 National Conference in Liverpool, Ben worked with three other student journalists using live tweeting, a live blog, breaking news reports and snapchat stories to deliver a highly dynamic array of coverage. Prior to the conference, Ben led several planning workshops over a remote platform, Slack, to ensure time was efficiently used. Ben launched 'LS15' in May 2015. This was aimed at providing analysis of the youth vote ahead of the general election. LS15 was an amalgamation of YouGov polling data, interactive charts and high profile student columnists. LS's coverage of the national student demonstration in central London in November 2015 was based on a guide Ben had written. Coordinating remotely, Ben monitored social media platforms and sub-edited a news report at the end of the day.

4. Transition

Relinquishing his role as interim editor in May 2015, Ben transitioned LS towards a cooperative model. He developed a formal membership structure and registered the paper with the FCA. LS was quickly awarded the Young Co-operators Prize of £2,000 by AltGen, enabling the occupation of an office in Bloomsbury. Ben created a suite of resources and aide memoirs to assist LS journalists in matters ranging from libel to using WordPress. Especially important is the focus of many of these materials on guiding new student journalists. He continues to attend a general meeting each week.

5. Commitment

The relaunch in itself represents a considerable achievement. Few student journalists would have the skills necessary to rebuild the paper from, essentially, nothing. But more importantly, few would possess the required drive, motivation and commitment. However, it is his work in the transition aspect of LS which is so notable, demonstrating not only initiative and a highly sophisticated repertoire of complementary skills such as management and commercial awareness, but a never ceasing selfless commitment to ensure the sustainability of LS and advance student journalism more generally.

6. Conclusion

Ben Jackson has shown outstanding commitment to student journalism in London. Over the last 13 months, he has led the virtual reincarnation of London Student – from a disbanded newspaper to a well-rounded, dynamic and successful publication with a bright future. This remarkable achievement demonstrates outstanding commitment to student journalism should be appropriately recognised.

Links:

1. Work experience guide which lists newspapers and contacts 2. Press contacts list which shows the PR contact details for every London university 3. Guide for covering student protests 4. Libel law guide 5. Instruction manual for publishing on WordPress. 6. Community guidelines 7. Style guide given to new writers 8. Student protest live blog, and news report 9. Article on being awarded the Young Co-operators Prize of £2,000 by AltGen. 10. Formal members

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This statement is to support my nomination of Ben Jackson, from *London Student Newspaper*, for the Award for Outstanding Commitment. “Ben Jackson has been the creative, strategic, editorial, legal and all-round leading soul of London Student since its regeneration in January 2015. It’s hard to imagine it existing in its current form without him.

He launched it from his bedroom, beginning by purchasing the domain name lsnews.co.uk and setting up a sleek, usable WordPress website. He engineered all the press for its re-launch, recruited friends and journalists on board, and used social media with great skill to find, and keep, a core team.

The essence of his leadership is constant input, nourishment and availability. The time, effort and energy he commits are monumental and a real inspiration for the team he leads. As an environmental news reporter I have turned to Ben on several occasions with pitches for stories and ideas, and he has responded helpfully and quickly every time. He makes every member of the London Student team aware that our contribution is meaningful. Both the core group and the wider networks of reporters, editors, photographers and journalists know that we *could* function without his help, but the newspaper, our writing and especially our team spirit would be infinitely poorer.

Ben has worked extremely hard to make all of London Student accessible to everyone quickly and easily. He created a Slack platform for collaboration and discussion, which he checks on daily to reply to our messages and help with discussions. He also organised systems of meetings, divided the Slack platform into channels for each area of the paper’s work, and has been fully attentive to every aspect of its development.

Despite working hard in his job after graduating, Ben attends every weekly meeting, always checks in daily and continues to create bright new ideas for the paper – including photo essays for Instagram, covering protests through Snapchat, and live coverage of the NUS conference in 2015. This coverage was a particularly proud moment for Ben, who engineered a combination of live tweeting, blogging, breaking

news reports and Snapchat to instil a brand new sense of how student journalism can interact with student politics.

In his most kind and helpful display of commitment, Ben works on documents to help the rest of the team with our own aspirations. He has produced:

- a [work experience guide](#) which lists newspapers and contacts
- a [press contacts list](#) which shows the PR contact details for every London university
- a [guide for covering student protests](#)
- a [libel law guide](#)
- a visual [instruction manual for publishing on WordPress](#).

All of these resources occupied a lot of his time to create, and are invaluable for the team, so we deeply appreciate his commitment to creating them.

In summary it is hard to over-state how much Ben *is* London Student in its best form. He created, manages and inspires a group of almost 100 student journalists with effort, skill and good humour. I cannot imagine anyone working harder on a student newspaper and would love his immense dedication to be acknowledged by this award.”

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London Student: Outstanding Commitment Award – Benjamin Jackson

I believe Ben Jackson deserves this award because he has shown utmost dedication and commitment, not just to the cause of London Student, but to student media in London. He relaunched London Student in January 2015. He did all the work himself. He made the site, designed posters and commissioned work from students. London Student has since grown from a group of 4 people to 20 core members today who deal with around 100 writers. Ben is always available to help run the site and answer contributors’ queries. As a contributor myself, I have had an excellent experience writing for London Student with Ben there. He is also always available to help commission and edit students’ work. He uses an app called Slack where he can always be contacted. His dedication can be seen in the fact that he edits articles before going into work in the morning and has editorial conversations while he is at work (he graduated in 2015 from City University London). He was recently on a holiday but he still checked in on Slack to answer pitches and do meetings. He is particularly active in the social media division,

encouraging students to share ideas on innovating with social media. These are just some of the things you don't see, unless you're involved with London Student.

Ben has produced guides to aid student journalists with their newsgathering and production. He has produced a work experience contacts list, a university [PR list](#), a guide for covering student protests, a libel law guide and a guide for WordPress.

He has also encouraged others to help with producing resources. The first thing he collaborated on was the community guidelines, via a Google doc, which incorporated everyone's views. He also worked with others on the [style guide](#), which is given to new writers.

Ben was heavily involved in London Student's coverage of the NUS Conference, with a live blog, tweeting, breaking news reports and Snapchat. He worked from the conference with another colleague. The planning took up a lot of late nights during his master's course but his hard work paid off. No other student newspaper covered the conference from start to finish. I believe London Student did a public service to its readers.

Ben's student protest guide was used for their coverage of the student demo in London last November. Student journalists live tweeted, live blogged and worked together on a news report at the end of the day. Ben helped with the coverage from his bed even though he was ill.

Ben relaunched London Student again as a co-operative on 14th May 2015. Over 100 people gathered to celebrate the work he and his team had done (I was there!).

And last but not least Ben also launched the LS15 project, which used YouGov polling data, charts and columnists (like me!), which gave young people information about the General Election. All the articles encouraged students to register to vote. It was a very successful project.

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I met Ben Jackson when he was editor of Roar! Newspaper at King's College London. He took Roar! from being a mediocre newspaper nobody cared about to being a Mind media award winner and digital-first publication that no one could afford to ignore.

He used his vast experience in student media at King's (he's basically a benevolent Matt Capon) and applied it to London Student, taking it from non-existence to a Guardian shortlisted publication with money, an engaged community, office space and unrivalled student journalism for London.

Ben has shown more commitment than anyone else I've encountered in my three years of being involved in student media. At London Student, he built the site, managed the social media, commissioned articles and recruited everyone. He even took a chance on me when he made me deputy editor.

Thanks to my work with London Student, I now appear regularly on Sky News and I work in the media. Other members have taken work experience placements at the Sunday Mirror, the Guardian and other titles because of their association with London Student. And his work experience guide, which contains information and email addresses for opportunities in the media, is something I wish I had access to when I was an aspiring journalist.

Ben has led and collaborated with students at every step of the way, every single day since he launched the site in January 2015. London Student Co-operative wouldn't be a thing without him. LS Live wouldn't exist, nor would LS's ground-breaking coverage of the NUS National Conference or reports on countless student protests, or the mental health week content or... You get the idea. He laid the foundations and continues to build up.

Ben has created an environment at London Student where new student journalists feel encouraged to learn and thrive. He has such a welcoming persona at meetings when he explains to new attendees how the co-operative functions and he makes sure everyone has a voice during discussions.

Ben gave up the role of interim editor so London Student could become a co-operative and honour the old newspaper's democratic roots. That would be a difficult personal move for anyone to make, but for Ben it was effortless and it made sense. He gave student journalists more power than they would ever have at an SU-affiliated publication. Students are co-owners in London Student thanks to Ben.

Your description of the Outstanding Commitment Award category says you aim to reward people who go above and beyond the call of duty. Ben has gone above and beyond and back again – and he keeps on doing it. To my knowledge, there is no one more committed in student media than Ben. He is often overlooked, sometimes ridiculed, even slandered when it comes to his work on student newspapers. But here's my view – Ben Jackson has given such a huge contribution to student journalism, the effects of his work in the last year will be felt by students for years and years to come.