

Manchester Blog Awards Fact Sheet

MANCHESTER
BLOG AWARDS

Each year, the Manchester Blog Awards celebrates the best self-published online writing in the city. Since the first event at Urbis in 2006, the blog awards has significantly contributed to Manchester's image within the UK and internationally as a digitally forward-thinking city, and as a place where ordinary people are engaging with technology in creative ways.

The current renaissance of online lit projects in Manchester - such as Rainy City Stories and several thriving live literature nights - has its roots in the lively new tech-friendly writing scene that the blog awards and the Manchester Literature Festival's Freeplay strand of programming (of which it is a part) have helped establish.

In 2009, we received more than 200 nominations for blog awards, the most ever. 24 bloggers were shortlisted for an award, helping their work reach a wider audience online. The categories were Best Writing, Best Arts and Culture Blog, Best City or Neighbourhood Blog, Best New Blog and Best Personal Blog.

Judges last year included: author and *Guardian* columnist Naomi Alderman; Dave Carter of the Manchester Digital Development Agency, which has supported the awards since 2007; Richard Fair, then of BBC Manchester; author (and former blog award winner) Jenn Ashworth; and Mike Noon of Arts Council England North West, which also supports the awards.

Four blog award winners have gone on to get book contracts (Jenn Ashworth, Chris Killen, Maria Roberts and Danny McFadden). Several more have gone on to have their writing featured in a number of newspapers and media outlets including writing for the MEN, working on projects for the BBC and writing a regular column for the *Guardian*. Each of these writers acknowledges the profile-raising power of the blog awards as a benefit to their work.

The event has grown in popularity each year, with attendance on the night growing each year. The awards website attracted 5,000 unique visitors and 12,000 pageviews between its launch and the announcement of the winners, with people spending around two and a half minutes on the site on average. Videos and photographs were posted online during and after the event, which was covered heavily via twitter as well as by regional print and online media.

The 2010 Manchester Blog Awards event will be held the evening of Wednesday 20 October at Manchester's art and culture hub, the Deaf Institute on Grosvenor Street. Nominations for this year's awards are open until Friday 10 September. For more information, contact organise Chris Horkan at info@manchesterblogawards.com