

# : The awards ... the good, the bad, and the ugly

By [Our Reporter](#)

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As awards evenings go, The Bookmarks 2013 cleverly played on the nature of the digital medium it represented by being very interactive and engaging.

## The entertainment

Audience participation was the thread throughout the evening and MC, 5FM's shock jock, Gareth Cliff was quick to respond to chirps from the audience, while a real-time version of the radio station's MashLab audience participation concept that ran over the course of the two-hour show.



First the audience chose a subject for a song (time travel), then music industry heavyweights AKA, DJ Naaldekoker, DJ Hi-Tec, Jon Savage and Arno Carstens had to come up with the lyrics and tracks, while a designer was chosen from the crowd to do the artwork - the source of which were images tweeted from the audience. The final version, which was performed live as the closing act of the show, was also [uploaded onto the Cloud](#). No doubt, it was downloaded a few times before the end of the evening.

The highlight of these interludes was Carstens', who was supposedly secreted away in a nearby hotel, antics which included puffing on an electronic cigarette, swigging from a wine glass, contributing the occasional grunt and, at one stage, spitting on the floor.

All of this, however, did distract a tad from the main reason for the evening...

## The awards

Award ceremonies have been known to bore the pants off the audience by showing the same clip over and over for all the categories in which the work has been entered. It was a pity in this case that the audience didn't get to see some of the award-winning clips at all. If only to illustrate the level of quality the judges were looking for in entries.

The digital space, being a relatively new playground for agencies, comprises an interesting mix of full-service big hitters, who are transitioning into this market, and smaller agencies completely focused on this medium. The awards reflected this dichotomy.



O&M Cape Town celebrates their success at The Bookmarks 2013.

Not surprisingly, Ogilvy & Mather Cape Town repeated their Loeries performance, this time topping the trophy table with nine awards, including two golds, four silvers, and three bronze medals. Hot on their heels was Hellocomputer with three golds and two silvers, for a total of five awards. In addition two of its team were the best in their disciplines. Matt Thompson (Best Creative) and Ryno van Niekerk (Best User Experience Designer).

Following them on the log was a plethora of digital specialists - [Gloo](#), [iKineo](#), Liquorice and [Quirk](#), with four awards apiece.

Having only been in the market for three years, [NATIVE VML](#) seems to be set on fulfilling its self-stated ambition of becoming South Africa's leading digital agency. Not only was it chosen as Agency of the Year, but its managing director Jarred Cinman was named the Best Individual Contribution to SA Digital Media & Marketing and Elizabeth Janse van Rensburg, NATIVE VML's Cape Town Group Account Director received the Best Client Service award.



NATIVE, Agency of the Year at The Bookmarks 2013.

Their campaigns also won them four awards. The Exchange, NATIVE VML's cashless fashion boutique, received a gold in the Social Media Campaigns category. The Nedbank Ke Yona campaign received a silver award in the Branded Content category as well as a bronze in the microsites category. Isuzu Trail View was awarded a bronze in the Browser-based Software category.

## Lessons learned

The infancy of this industry is still very much apparent in the fact that no prizes were given in some of the categories. What emerged from the judges' comments at the workshop the previous day was that the work entered into those categories was not good enough, or there was simply no work entered in that category.

This point was made quite clear, when a rather indignant young man in the audience questioned why there no award was given for copywriters. One of the international judges, Laura Jordan Bambach, answer was very simple. "There were no entries."

The winners in the editorial categories were predominantly news sites, with Mail & Guardian winning for the Best Editorial Team, Janine Willems and Rebecca Davis from EWN and [Daily Maverick](#) respectively shared the individual editorial category.

If nothing else, the sixth The Bookmarks awards is a very clear compass of where the emerging digital industry is now and where it needs to be.

While it celebrates the brilliant, innovative work that is being done in the digital realm, it also exposes, warts and all, where the chinks are.

Maybe this is a very good yardstick of where agency heads should be looking to build skills and grow talent. It may stand them in good stead in the long run.

Bizcommunity.com published the winners last week, [take a look at them here](#).



Jarred Qinman receives his award for Best Individual Contribution to SA Digital Media & Marketing at The Bookmarks 2013.

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