



The Star Malaysia's teen journalist programme

The Star news editor Wong Chun Wai, currently The Star's CEO, giving the BRATs of 1996 a talk on how The Star's News desk operates.



Today, the BRATs is an exciting year-long multimedia journalism programme, one which continues to train and produce journalists and media professionals.

What is BRATs?

The BRATs young journalist programme has humble beginnings.

Its first workshop, back in 1993, was open to only a handful of participants. Some editors and journalists from The Star thought it would be nice to show some budding writers what life was like as a professional journalist.

At the end of the workshop, the participants gave themselves a name: BRATs - Bright, Roving and Annying Teenagers.

Today, over two decades later, the BRATs is probably the Malaysia's most popular and recognisable young journalist programme, having produced countless journalists and media professionals through a unique, exciting year-long programme.

Participants of the BRATs Penang 2013 camp on Armenian Street, part of a UNESCO World Heritage site in Penang, Malaysia.



Participants of the BRATs Ipoh 2014 camp in Perak, Malaysia working on their stories, photos and videos during Day Three of the camp.

The camps

To join the BRATs programme, students have to join one of three **BRATs camps**, held throughout the year, each in a different Malaysian city.

Forty of the country's best young writers are selected (based on essay applications) for each camp.

A team from R.AGE -- comprising an editor, journalist, photographer and videographer -- will give the participants a crash course in journalism through a series of **workshops** on Day One.

On Day Two and Three, participants are divided into groups and sent on field assignments curated by the R.AGE team.

By Day Four, the participants have to deliver stories, photos and videos based on their assignments.

Throughout the camp, they are also required to live tweet their group's progress on the official [BRATs Twitter account](#).

The workshops at BRATs camps focus a lot on the intangible soft skills journalists acquire over the years. Participants often tell us these skills give them confidence, especially in terms of speaking up and questioning things.



A journalist from The Star giving the participants of BRATs Kuala Terengganu 2013 camp a workshop on video journalism.

The workshops

BRATs are equipped not just with technical skills during the BRATs camps.

The workshops conducted by the R.AGE team during the camps focuses just as much on the intangible skills of journalists (objectivity, fairness, social responsibility, critical thinking, people skills, etc.) as it does on photography, videography and writing skills.

The trainers seek to impress on them how important these traits are, especially in the digital age where responsible journalism can often be lacking. We use these “journalistic skills” also as a form of personal development training, showing the participants how to speak confidently in front of camera, how to work towards a goal/deadline, and to think on their feet.

On top of that, they are also taught multimedia reporting, based on R.AGE’s award-winning social media engagement strategies. They are taught how to produce online news featurettes for video, soundslides for photos and engaging live social media reporting.

And most important, they are taught how to do all this on a deadline.



The assignments

The R.AGE team curates the field assignments for all the BRATs camps, something which we take great pride in. We want to show the youth how exciting journalism can be, and that it can open doors to amazing experiences that few others will ever get.

In the past five years alone, the BRATs have bathed elephants, played with orang utans, toured a 40-storey-high oil rig, interviewed local celebrities, gone on a four-wheel-drive adventure through the Malaysian rainforest, and so much more. At each camp, at least one field assignment will be on a local traditional culture. During the BRATs 2011 camp in Kelantan, for example, the BRATs watched a traditional Malay shadow puppet performance in a village surrounded by paddy fields, where they also interviewed the puppet masters as well as their master musicians.

The field assignments require participants to work together in groups, and to think on their feet just like professional journalists so they can get all the stories, interviews, photos and video footage they need.



Participants who successfully complete the BRATs camps join the BRATs family and continue their education in journalism for as long as they like. They receive assignments every few days which they can volunteer for through a Facebook group. The assignments can range from events and trips to celebrity interviews, like the ones above. You have (from left) international YouTube stars including David Choi, Kina Grannis and Jason Chen; The Click Five frontman Kyle Patrick; and pop singer Greyson Chance.

The BRATs family

Those who successfully complete the BRATs camps then join the BRATs “family”, which now consists of over 2,000 former camp participants.

The BRATs family works together to produce a print section within The Star every week, under the continued guidance of R.AGE journalists and editors as well as senior BRATs members.

They receive and propose assignments daily on a Facebook group, and any member of the family can volunteer for these assignments.

They also handle the BRATs Facebook page, official Twitter account and website (currently under reconstruction).

BRATSpeak Yes, you can

It's never too late to start doing what you love.

BY ANWAR FAN
 I remember my first time at a professional concert. I was 10 years old and I had a lot of friends with me. We were all excited to see the band perform. I had heard that they were the best in the country. I was a little nervous, but when they started to play, I knew I was in for a treat. The music was so good, and the band was so professional. I had never seen a concert like that before. I was so impressed that I decided to become a fan. I had found my passion. I had found something that I loved to do. I had found my way.

Being creative
 For the love of Malaysia, let the children doodle.

BY MY MAMA NANSA
 I have always been a creative person. I love to draw and to make things. I have always been a creative person. I love to draw and to make things. I have always been a creative person. I love to draw and to make things.

BRATs
 The BRATs family handles a few different media platforms including (from left) their own print section in The Star, Facebook and Twitter.

BRATs You are posting, commenting, and liking as BRATs — Change to Ian Yee

Page Activity Insights Settings Build Audience Help

BRATs Community

Timeline About Photos Likes More

3,358 likes

Steve Lam, Aileen Loo and 172 others like this.

What have you been up to?

BRATs @starbrats · Jul 16

Mistika talks about what's behind the hype of the 2014 World Cup. [#BRATspeak](#) [rage.com.my/content/storie...](#)

mistikaidris

Only tragedy happening in Brazil now.

#BRATspeak

FOLLOW THE BRATs!
 Our BRATs young journalists are always going for cool assignments. Follow their live updates on social media!

Instagram [instagram.com/starbrats](#)
Facebook [facebook.com/starbrats](#)
Twitter [twitter.com/starbrats](#)

View more photos and videos

BRATs @starbrats · Jul 16

We totally agree! RT @[thestar_rage](#): Is it time Malaysians stop this online mob mentality? [rage.com.my/content/storie...](#)

The BRATs media platform

At the moment, the BRATs' ever-growing family produces content all year long, all coordinated by a committee comprising of BRATs alumni from the past two years. They are a mini self-sustaining publication of their own. Their content is published in print (The Star newspaper, circulation of over 330,000), [Facebook](#) and the R.AGE website (currently under construction for a Sept relaunch and rebranding).

The BRATs committee also engages readers through [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (@starbrats). Their content ranges from issue stories and opinion pieces to educational trips and celebrity interviews.



The BRATs legacy

The BRATs programme continues to receive hundreds of applications every year. It has produced countless journalists and media professionals over the past 21 years, including:

- E! News Asia host Marion Caunter
- Prominent Malaysian digital media expert and former newspaper editor Niki Cheong
 - Former The Star Putrajaya bureau chief Teh Eng Hock
 - Fashion writer and Asia's Next Top Model winner Sheen Liam
 - R.AGE journalist and former radio deejay JayDee Lok
 - Former Hot Magazine Malaysia editor Yeow Mei Ann

But perhaps the most important result of the BRATs programme is the platform and community it has created for aspiring journalists in Malaysia; a platform that excites and inspires them to carry on the best traditions of our noble profession.



Thank you!