

New record for Loerie Awards

The Loerie Awards 2005 has broken the record books with over 3 500 entries, almost 500 more than in 2004. The most impressive growth is in the Design Category, which has grown from 355 entries last year to over 800 entries in 2005; almost 200 of these are student entries, another category which showed impressive growth.

The Loerie Awards managing director Andrew Human says the increase in the number of entries is a clear sign of the industry's support of the changes that have been made this year: "This, coupled with the fact that we have at this early stage sold almost all tickets to the gala event in October, shows that the industry backs the new direction of The Loerie Awards."

In addition, he says, the new online entry system, developed by Six Million Dollar Media in partnership with the One Show, has made entering work easier than ever before and allows agencies to enter multiple pieces of work without having to duplicate information.

Student entries were promoted this year with a reduced student entry fee of R130 versus R300 last year, to make the awards more accessible and meeting one of the organising committee's goals of fostering creative excellence at all levels.

Another benefit on the online entry system is that all entries are automatically provided with coded labels for easy identification. This means that each entry has a unique ID with which it can be tracked.

Human pointed out that this had had major implications for the judging process because it affords anonymity. "This year, for the first time, all entries will be anonymous - no agency name, no art director - just a number. I believe this is a huge step forward in alleviating any bias in the process. The work is judged for what it is, and not for who did it.

He added that the online entry system, hosted courtesy of Hetzner Internet Hosting, and coupled with the online payment interface provided by Paygate, has performed impeccably.

And the industry performed true to form when it came to planning for the entry deadline. According to statistics provided by Hetzner, entries trickled in until the last week of July, with the closing date set at 31 July.

During that final week, website requests jumped from a couple of hundred a day to a peak of 15 400 on 21 July and usage dropped immediately when an extension to 12 August was announced. Once again the pressure of a deadline was required to get entries in and, on August 12 - the final deadline day, the highest usage of the system was recorded with almost 18 000 requests.

Judging for this year's Loerie Awards takes place at the AAA School of Advertising (Johannesburg) from 1 September to 30 September. Finalists will be announced as soon as they are confirmed at the end of the judging week. Bronze, Silver, Gold and Grand Prix winners will be announced at the Gala Events on 15 and 16 October in Margate.

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