

Stellar effort

by STEVE GRANT

IT felt like I was talking to my executioner.

Interviewing the creative minds behind Fremantle's business of the year Media on Mars, it felt like the writing for the Chook wasn't so much on the wall, as it was on the computer screens where the design agency sends nearly all its clients.

The print media across Australia has bled cash to the online world at a staggering rate over the past five years: in 2013 advertising revenue across Australia was down more than \$200m.

And with MoM's joint owner and creator Kammi Rapsey's attributing part of the company's success to a business mentor whose mantra was "internet, internet, internet" it's hard for a paper and ink man not to be gloomy.

Except she's got a more positive take: "I think that what will happen is that there will be a resurgence in newspapers," she told the *Herald*, my ears perking up.

She says there's a growing trend of people reacting adversely to technology taking over their lives, and thinks they'll start wanting the tactile joy of paper back between their fingers. She points to her husband as an example: he knocked back a year's subscription to the online *New Yorker*, preferring to read his benefactor's hard copies once they're finished with them.

Then there's the fact that when MoM wanted to get the message out about its win at the Fremantle chamber of commerce awards (it took top honours, best online, and best design and creativity categories) it was the *Herald* Ms Rapsey called.

Despite the cost-effectiveness of advertising online "we know press is the best way to get



• Simone Nabholz, Jeff Gray, Kammi Rapsey, Roman Karachevtsev, Kate Wilkinson and Ute Hiltenkamp from Media on Mars.

Photo by Steve Grant

exposure" she says.

Ms Rapsey says in order to survive newspapers will have to adapt, just as she has, to keep ahead of the rapidly evolving media game.

She says her company invested in the brightest designers it could find and, despite having a modest staff of eight, is now winning contracts against big industry players.

It doesn't hurt that most of her staff are committed computer geeks who spend much of their own time trawling the net for design innovations.

MoM also hit on the idea of focusing on environmental

projects and the not-for-profit sector, which attracted the eye of a number of councils, who've been the mainstay of its income for much of its 15 years.

Ms Rapsey says many of her clients have little knowledge about the internet, but the company strives to ensure they understand and can use the technology MoM develops for them. This gives her a competitive advantage as many media firms want total control (and the ongoing service cash) of the entire process. It also tailors marketing to ensure companies get the full gamut of email, social media and websites.