Starz Play steps up its OTT game with Connect

A HULU FOR MENA?
Experts discuss viability of collaborative OTT platform

TECH TALK
HEAD HONCHOS ON NEW TRENDS AT IBC

STARZ OF THE SHOW
Starz Play steps up its OTT game with Connect
ARRI was founded in 1917 by two passionate film obsessed teenagers August Arnold and Robert Richter; that same energy and exuberance still defines the company today, now 100 years old, still young at heart and looking ahead to even greater things.

HAPPY 100\textsuperscript{TH} BIRTHDAY
Microservices … metadata harvesting … blockchain … artificial intelligence … machine learning … these are the terms I have heard discussed more prominently in the last few months, and I believe they will come under the spotlight at IBC this year. These terms are not just part of some distant future but part of ongoing implementations in the region by forward-thinking industry techies, who aim to keep their entertainment offerings ahead of the rest of the pack. Our cover story discusses one such regional launch from Starz Play this month, which uses some of these technologies to drive its OTT platform. In fact, Starz Play has created such a complex and rich next-gen platform that other broadcasters are apparently knocking on its doors to sub-license the platform. That’s just one regional player. I hear another is investing heavily in AI, voice and image recognition to harvest metadata. Speaking of AI, I must urge you to read Karim Sarkis’ imaginative take on Bob, the builder of the future of TV. While we make all these sweeping technical changes, one question begs to be heard on the commercial front as well. Are we ready for collaboration and consolidation? Are we ready for a MENA Hulu? Or do we feel threatened? We asked a number of senior executives in the industry if they would welcome a Hulu lookalike here. I don’t know if we have all the answers just yet. Perhaps at IBC, we will have more clarity on some of these topics, as we sit among peers and share our experiences. I look forward to an interesting IBC this year. See you in Amsterdam!
Welcome to Broadcast 3.0

Broadcast 3.0 is based on the cornerstones of IP transport, software-defined processing, orchestration and seamless control of network resources, and automated workflows. This 3rd generation of broadcast infrastructure solutions raises production capabilities to a new level, enabling more efficient utilization of resources and smarter content creation.

Enjoy our latest products.

Join us and experience Broadcast 3.0 at IBC, #8.B50

Inside this issue

07 NEWS
Saleh Lootah appointed Deputy CEO at DMI, CABSAT announces new features for 2018, OSN launches new OTT service, Al-Araby TV chooses Tedial for MAM, beIN and CBS Studios sign exclusive MENA deal, Arabsat announces new frequency for Tunisian channels and more news.

22 A STAR IS BORN
Starz Play launches Connect, a next-gen platform to take its service to new level.

34 A HULU FOR MENA?
Industry heads debate on whether the region is ready for a collaborative OTT platform.

38 A FRESH TAKE
Gianluca Chakra on how SVOD platforms can help create a better regional talent pool.

CASE STUDIES
40 Al Rowad TV
52 DMI’s Studio B

CONTENT CREATION
46 The making of the BBC’s Planet Earth II
70 As 815 Studios turns five, the founders recount their production journey

REVIEWS
60 Fuji MK 18-55 zoom lenses
64 Sound Devices MixPre-3 and MixPre-6

77 THE TRENDSETTERS
TALK TECH
Company heads on what is on their radar at IBC this year

100 POSSIBLE AI FUTURE
Karim Sarkis on using AI in content discovery

September 2017
COME WITH US AND GET AHEAD.

HALL 8 | BOOTH B.70
Make your appointment: www.bfe.tv/ibc

We at BFE do not believe in going with the times but in getting ahead of them. As a pioneer in Broadcast-IT and IP-based technologies, we have always been advocates of evolution in the industry. By developing the solutions of tomorrow, we empower you to use the change to your advantage.

Meet us at IBC 2017 and experience the latest solutions in Broadcast Control & Monitoring and Broadcast SDN Control in action. With options like Path Finding, Bandwidth Management, Resource Management and Studio Delegation, BFE gives you the tools to reshape the future of broadcasting.

COMING WITH US AND GET AHEAD.

THE BENCHMARK IN MEDIA SOLUTIONS.

Saleh Lootah appointed Deputy CEO of DMI

Saleh Lootah, who was previously Head of TV and Radio Engineering at Dubai Media Inc, has now taken on a bigger role at the media entity as Deputy CEO – TV and Radio Support. In his new role, Lootah will oversee engineering, operations as well as digital media at the company. Mohammed Al Farhan, who was previously Head of Operations at DMI, will now be CTO, reporting to Lootah directly.

Commenting on his new role, Lootah said: “My new role includes more responsibility and a wider scope of work that adds digital media to my remit, in addition to engineering and operations.”

In his new role, Lootah will report directly to Ahmed Al Mansouri, CEO of TV and Radio at DMI. Lootah will be tasked with improving DMI’s digital platform Awaan and raising its profile.

“Awaan needs to be an agile platform. We have a line-up of projects that are aimed at enhancing many aspects of Awaan to improve its infrastructure and the user experience. We will revisit our digital strategy to improve the user experience and increase our gains in various areas of the content business.”

“I have several plans for Awaan. The changing dynamics of the market cannot be ignored and media entities must take into consideration this shift. The rules of the business have changed and further change is expected, so we need to adapt to ensure that our strategic goals are achieved.”

Heba Al Saami will remain the Head of Digital Media reporting directly to Lootah. DMI has also combined engineering and operations under the same umbrella to create greater synergy between the two departments.

“We have streamlined our technical departments for better structure, more accountability and greater staff efficiency,” added Lootah.

CABSAT 2018 to host new features and initiatives

CABSAT’s 24th edition, which will be hosted from January 14 to January 16, 2018, at Dubai World Trade Centre, will feature a number of new sections and initiatives that are aimed at putting not just equipment and services in the spotlight but talent as well. BroadcastPro ME can reveal.

In an exclusive interview with us, CABSAT has revealed that a number of new sections will be created to dedicate space to audio as well as film and music talent as part of its efforts to bring more visibility to communities operating in these sectors.

There will be an Airways Showcase in 2018, where manufacturers will feature their latest audio equipment, technology and services for the broadcast, radio and live events market. A Start Up and Tech Innovation Zone is also being developed to put emerging VR, AR, drone technology and media, film and satellite start-ups in the spotlight.

In addition, CABSAT is looking to host Script to Screen in 2018, an interactive session aimed at offering training to young professionals and students. Details for the programme are still being chalked out. This will include UAE film location tours as well as filmmaker and investor networking meet-ups.

The event organiser is also launching CABSAT Beats to bring together regional and international musicians and artists, some of who will also perform at the event. This year, CABSAT is also dividing its conferences into more focused technical, strategic and creative sessions to draw engineers, decision makers and content creators closely into its fold.
OSN has ditched its previous GO platform in favour of a new OTT service called WAVO, which was launched last month with a brand-new look, a new interface and a different product proposition. Unlike GO, which offered a single price for the entire content of the service, WAVO offers tailored OTT packages at different rates. WAVO includes a full spectrum of live and catch-up TV, Hollywood blockbusters, series and a diverse range of Western and Arabic content. It offers four distinct packages with flexible pricing and no annual contracts. It even includes a day-pass that enables sports fans, for instance, to watch a live event such as a match for a specific day.

Speaking about the launch, Martin Stewart, CEO, OSN, said: “WAVO is the next phase of new OSN – entertainment everywhere for everyone, at a price to suit every pocket. Viewing habits are changing, particularly among the young, and no matter how much they have to spend, they want convenient, quick access to great entertainment.”

Iflix has announced that it has secured additional $133 million funding from both new investors and existing shareholders. The streaming service has raised approximately $220 million in this calendar year. New investors include Hearst, one of America’s largest diversified media, information and services companies; Singapore-based EDBI; and clients of DBS private bank. Existing shareholders Evolution Media, Sky PLC, Catcha Group, Liberty Global, Jungle Ventures and PLDT have also increased their investments.

Iflix co-founder and Group CEO Mark Britt said: “Hearst is a leading investor and has many of the world’s most innovative and iconic video brands, including ESPN, A+E Networks, Vice, AwesomenessTV, Complex and more.”
From set to post, from studio to TV screen, ARRI has helped filmmakers, broadcasters, and other creatives in the industry bring their ideas to life for the past century. Here’s to the next 100 years. Let’s make history together.

www.arri.com
Visit us at IBC: Hall 12, booth 12.F21

Disney to launch Netflix-style streaming service

Disney is planning to launch a direct-to-consumer streaming service in 2019, starting in the US and expanding globally. It announced in a statement that it would spend heavily on original programming for its entertainment streaming service and pull future Disney and Pixar movies from Netflix. The new platform will host all Disney movies, starting with the 2019 theatrical slate, which includes Toy Story 4, Frozen 2 and The Lion King. The company will also launch its own ESPN video streaming service in early 2018. The platform, which will feature about 10,000 sporting events each year, will have content from MLB, the NHL, the MLS, collegiate sports and tennis Grand Slam events.

Al-Araby TV Network chooses Tedial Evolution for MAM

Al-Araby Television Network has chosen Tedial Evolution as its media logistics MAM and orchestration system. Based in London with offices and branches in several Arab and Western capitals, the free-to-air network broadcasts news and entertainment programming focused on the Middle East. The installation coincides with the network’s move to its new London Park Royal production and transmission facility.

The Tedial Evolution system is architected as a facility-wide enterprise solution designed to achieve Al-Araby’s key business objectives, which include enhancing operations, increasing efficiency and reducing costs. The system automates processes, therefore decreasing incidents of human error.

Tedial Evolution integrates various solutions: SAM servers for playout; SAM Morpheus automation and sQ editing tools, which include a desktop plug-in to access Evolution MAM functionality, EVS ingest servers and applications; and an Associated Press ENPS system and programme channel scheduling via integration with Mediafrenix software. All the installed applications function together in managed workflows.

Registration now open for DIFF

The Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) is inviting registrations to its 14th edition from 6 to 13 December, 2017. Festival attendees will receive blanket access to eight days of cinematic experiences, from priority tickets for the line-up of local, regional and international premieres and red carpet galas, to press conferences, forums, masterclasses, VR experiences and panel sessions.

Running parallel to the festival, the Dubai Film Market (DFM) will gather delegates to connect projects, create crucial partnerships and share best practices.

September 2017 | www.broadcastprome.com | 11
Iflix and Kwese offer VOD to sub-Saharan Africa

Video-on-demand (VOD) service Iflix and Econet Media’s African media company Kwese announced a partnership to bring streaming entertainment services to sub-Saharan Africa. As part of the partnership with Econet Group, Iflix Africa will soon make its on-demand service available in Zimbabwe to Econet Wireless mobile subscribers. Iflix Africa will offer consumers throughout the region unlimited access to an extensive range of TV shows, movies and more, including many first-run exclusives. The service will include Hollywood, Nollywood, regional and local programmes, and more than 2,000 episodes of children’s content, as well as an extensive collection of locally commissioned African series and movies.

The collaboration will leverage Econet Media’s established market expertise, and Iflix Africa will make its video-on-demand service available to Econet Wireless mobile subscribers in Zimbabwe. Other markets targeted for the initial phase of launches include Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania.

Andre de Wet, Regional Head of Iflix Africa, said: “We are very excited about the deal and what it means for our customers and shareholders in the future.”

Joseph Hundah, Econet Media President and Group CEO, added: “Our aim is to play a central role in the evolution of the media industry in the African continent.”

Ikegami and SAM announce reseller partnership

Snell Advanced Media (SAM) has appointed Ikegami as its reseller partner. This sees the availability of selected SAM solutions for use with the Ikegami UHK-435 4K camera system.

The agreement covers the Americas, APAC, the CIS, EMEA and most Asian countries. It includes 12G-SDI, IP connectivity and routing products, offering camera crews greater freedom in system deployment. SAM’s IQMIX modular range includes 25GbE, 40GbE and 50GbE high-density IP/SDI transceiver modules, providing dual ethernet ports for redundant configurations, PTP synchronisation and support for SMPTE ST 2022-6, VSF TR04 and VSF TR03 flow types – including SMPTE ST 2110, when ratified. SAM’s range of production switchers will also be available from Ikegami, including the Kahuna enterprise level series and Kula 1-3M/E range.

Vincent Eade, Head of Channel Management and Marketing, SAM, said: “4K and HDR are driving the broadcast media industry to new levels of quality, and the reality of IP is opening up a wide arena of new workflows for content producers.”

Facebook announces new video hub

Facebook has officially announced Watch to serve as a destination for original episodic shows, and is rolling it out to a limited number of people in the US. The social media giant did not reveal when the service will be more widely available.

Watch is similar to YouTube; creators will be able to launch shows, enable show pages to serve as landing points for individual series, send users notifications about new content and eventually monetise the content through ad breaks. It is a personalised hub for video content that Facebook will curate and recommend based on the massive interactions that happen daily on the platform.

Watch will also house short- and long-form content from professional publishers.

Welcome to a world of Intelligent Prompting

Whatever your requirements, wherever you happen to be, worldwide, you can trust Autoscript’s industry-leading and fully IP-enabled ‘Intelligent Prompting’ solutions to keep your talent on cue and in control...
MBC invests in travel portal Wego

MBC Group has announced a strategic partnership with online travel company Wego by investing in the group. As part of the partnership, Wego’s mobile apps and website will be promoted across MBC Group’s various platforms throughout the year.

Wego was founded in Singapore in 2005 and is now dual-headquartered in Dubai and Singapore after experiencing rapid growth across MENA. It entered the region relatively early, launching fully localised mobile apps and a website to cater to the demand from a new generation of travellers wanting to book flights and hotels using smartphones. Commenting on the partnership, Ross Veitch, CEO & co-founder of Wego, said: “As we incorporate more video-based editorial content and product merchandising to Wego’s online travel marketplace, there is obvious crossover potential between MBC’s programming and Wego’s online services.”

Fadel Zahreddine, Group Director of Brand Management - Marketing, Branding, Digital Businesses – at MBC Group, added: “Wego will extend our portfolio of leading mobile and digital services. Applying MBC’s brand amplification platforms to Wego’s product offering will benefit both brands and users who book their travel online.”

Dubai to be top digital media hub: Jamal Al Sharif

With initiatives such as VIDXB and YouTube Space Dubai this December, Dubai is on the road to becoming a top digital media hub in the MENA region, according to Dubai Film and TV Commission Chairman, Jamal Al Sharif.

Dubai Studio City will be home to YouTube Space Dubai this December joining 10 other Spaces around the world. VIDXB is yet another initiative to drive Dubai further in the digital direction.

VIDXB will be held from 8 to 9 December 2017 at Dubai World Trade Centre. The two-day event will also kick off a year-round series of programmes to promote local content, showcase emerging technologies and facilitate skills development for Dubai’s growing digital media talent pool.

“VIDXB is a platform that will accelerate the growth of the online video industry, which represents the future of content. VIDXB attendees will have an opportunity to learn, create, demonstrate and engage with content-makers, both regional and global,” said Al Sharif.

Al Sharif announced a partnership with YouTube earlier this year for the upcoming VIDXB event.

“While our core focus remains film and TV production, we are not ignoring the importance of digital content. Quick consumable short-form content tailored for online platforms is top on our agenda. We are trying to bring onboard young content-makers through our digital initiatives. We want to create a community of young entrepreneurs to engage with our initiatives.”

He further added that Dubai offers world-class services and infrastructure to encourage big-budget films. A big Hollywood project will be announced soon, with several others in the pipeline. Dubai’s status as a futuristic city in the Middle East makes it a natural tech and cultural capital for world-class digital content production.

With a fast growing demographic of youth under-25, Dubai is uniquely positioned to bring together, host and nurture the region’s creative talent and content wizards.

Netflix acquires Millarworld

In the first ever company acquisition by streaming giant Netflix, it has bought comics publisher Millarworld. The acquisition brings renowned comic book writer Mark Millar and a host of character franchises to Netflix, which is building a library of original series and films.

“Mark is as close as you can get to a modern-day Stan Lee,” said Ted Sarandos, Chief Content Officer at Netflix, referring to the creator of comic book franchises such as Spider-Man, Avengers and X-Men.

Netflix’s development has focused on TV series and smaller budget movies, but it is moving toward big-budget films with Bright, due out in December. Millarworld will continue to create and publish new stories and franchises under the Netflix label.
Arabsat hosts Tunisian channels on one frequency

Arabsat has bundled all Tunisian channels onto a single dedicated frequency on its BADR-4 satellite. Tunisie Nat1, Tunisie Nat2, Hannibal TV and Al Janoubia TV will now join Atlasia TV and M Tunisie TV in the Tunisian Channels Bouquet from Office National de la Télédiffusion (ONT), via the 12,648MHz frequency on the BADR-4 satellite.

Commenting on the move, Khalid Bakhleuyr, President and CEO of Arabsat, said: “We are delighted with our partnership with ONT to host Tunisian channels. We look forward to continuing to offer our services to Tunisian broadcasters through the strong partnership with ONT on the Arabsat BADR-4 new frequency 12,648MHz.”

ONT allowed Arabsat to offer its services to Tunisia’s broadcasters at the new frequency.

“This move supports our content strategy to deliver specialised video frequencies reflecting market demand to Arabsat’s audiences across the MENA region and Europe, and ensuring the best free-to-air viewing experience at home,” Bakhleuyr said.

Dhaker Baccouch, CEO of ONT, added: “Arabsat has been and will continue to be a strong partner for ONT, and we warmly thank all the team that supported the launch of the ONT platform on a dedicated frequency to Tunisia’s public and private broadcasters.”

Avdi partners with NMK Electronics for live sound

Avdi has announced a new live sound partnership with NMK, a distributor of professional audio, video and communication products in the Middle East. Based in Dubai, NMK Electronics will further build on Avdi’s live sound presence in the Gulf region. NMK’s Avdi portfolio includes live-mixing systems, Avdi VENUE | S3L-X and S48 consoles and Avdi’s flagship live sound system, Avdi VENUE | S4L.

“I truly believe content creation is becoming even more important for clients, and Avdi has always been leading cutting-edge content creation strategies with Pro Tools. Avdi consoles provide our customers with a complete solution rather than simply a piece of hardware,” said Constantinios Drmakias, Business Development Manager at NMK Electronics. “We’re already seeing impressive global demand for Avdi VENUE | S4L, so we’re pretty sure that live sound engineers will see it as an attractive system.”

Tom Corodine, Senior Vice President of Global Sales at Avdi, added: “Avdi VENUE systems empower our preeminent user community with the most comprehensive tools available to improve their live mixing capabilities. This partnership with NMK furthers our commitment to providing the tools needed to create the ultimate live sound experience.”

Hulu selects AWS as cloud provider

Hulu has selected Amazon Web Services (AWS) as its cloud provider, and leveraged AWS to launch its new over-the-top (OTT) Live TV service. Hulu turned to AWS for a scalable, agile and cost-effective infrastructure to support the addition of more than 50 live channels with its Live TV launch in May 2017. Running its Live TV service on AWS’s infrastructure allows Hulu to deliver content to its viewers, even in times of rapid spikes in viewerhip and traffic.

“We selected AWS as our cloud provider because of its leading breadth and depth of capabilities. Its elasticity, agility and security they provide were key to deploying our new service. Putting our stream ingest, rip-and-ship, DVR storage and origin serving on AWS freed us from having to build out data centres and led to a faster time to market,” said Rafał Soltanowich, VP, Software Development at Hulu.

Lionsgate awards Candy Crush MENA rights to Eagle Films

Hulu has announced a new AWS partnership with the cloud provider that delivers the highest video quality at the lowest cost. Hulu furthered its relationship with AWS in May by delivering a major OTT live TV service on AWS’s cloud platform.

Dubai-based Eagle Films has acquired the rights to produce an Arabic-language version of the game show Candy Crush from Lionsgate. Candy Crush launched on CBS in the US with a series premiere average of 4.0 million viewers.

“The new game show format will be adapted for the MENA region and produced by Beelink Productions. The 15-60 minute Arabic-language treatment is slated to go into production later this year.”

Peter Iacono, Lionsgate President of International Television and Digital Distribution, commented: “With more than one trillion game rounds played since launch, Candy Crush is one of the world’s most iconic mobile games. Fans are avid players and we’re extremely excited to have a live-action TV game show to watch as they play at home. We are proud to announce Candy Crush MENA as our first international partners and expect to announce many international adaptations to be produced in the coming months.”

Jamal Saman, CEO of Eagle Films, commented: “Following 15 years of successful collaboration with Lionsgate, we are looking forward to working together again to bring a brand-new TV gaming experience to our viewers, which we are confident will set a new standard in game show production values.”

Safa Aburizik, Managing Director of Beelink Productions, added: “We are very pleased to be the first international licensees of the Candy Crush format after CBS. Content is always king, and we are in premium content and we strive to deliver high production standards that can succeed in our region and travel worldwide.”

Net Insight CFO announces exit

Thomas Bergström, who was the CFO of Net Insight since 2009, will exit the company in the first quarter of 2018. “Thomas has been a driving force behind Net Insight’s progress in recent years, and his expertise has been fundamental to the company’s expansion on the global arena,” commented Fredrik Tumejgård, CEO of Net Insight.

“At the same time, he’s also developed the Finance department and our internal structure, and we’re now stronger than ever. He also played an instrumental role in the acquisition of ScheduALL, another key to our success in recent years. I’m really proud working alongside Thomas, and wish him all the best in the future.”

Dramatics ENG Specials

Dramatics ENG Specials is a brand new TV gaming show to watch as they play at home. We are proud to announce Candy Crush MENA as our first international partners and expect to announce many international adaptations to be produced in the coming months.”

To us, it’s not enough to have an unparalleled reputation for reliability, usability and performance. Or even to be continually investing in new innovations such as our comprehensive algorithms that deliver the highest video quality whilst ensuring latency-free operation.

To us, it’s not enough to have an unrivalled reputation for reliability, usability and performance. Or even to be continually investing in new innovations such as our comprehensive algorithms that deliver the highest video quality whilst ensuring latency-free operation.

To us, it’s not enough to have an unrivalled reputation for reliability, usability and performance. Or even to be continually investing in new innovations such as our comprehensive algorithms that deliver the highest video quality whilst ensuring latency-free operation.
Kuwait TV enhances archive with EVS and Tedial

Kuwait TV has selected a joint EVS/Tedial solution to integrate into its long-term archive management system and its EVS IPDirector suite. The two companies’ technology comes together to enable live content created in the EVS environment to be automatically added to archive workflows managed by ‘Tedial systems. The joint solution creates a bi-directional link between EVS’ live production asset management suite, IPDirector, and Tedial’s enterprise MAM system, Evolution. Kuwait TV produces and broadcasts content across eight TV channels. During production, the broadcaster can use the joint solution to quickly and efficiently pass live assets like replays, highlights and clips from IPDirector, a production asset management system that is built specifically for live media, directly into the Tedial Evolution MAM system. This then securely archives the assets on spinning and LT0 disks, immediately freeing up storage on the EVS servers. Then after production, users can easily search the ‘Tedial archive for assets and metadata – including the EVS logs – and easily fully restore media back into the EVS system so it can be easily played out in any other programming. “Our goal, when designing solutions, is to give our customers the best way to maximise the value of their content,” said Nicolas Bourdon, SVP Marketing at EVS. “Partnerships like this one with Tedial are key to making this happen. By closing the gap between live production and deep archive, we’re creating a two-way exchange of content, giving users the ability to better utilise their assets and ultimately create better stories.” “Making sure they have an easily-managed archive of content is hugely important for them to future-proof their live programming,” said Esther Messa, Tedial CMO/CSO. “Having tight integration between the EVS live production workflow and Tedial MAM system is a tremendous benefit that will help them to save expensive resources throughout the production process.” “Careful attention has been paid to creating a thorough integration between our two companies’ technology, enabling us to offer a back-office solution that enhances and supports EVS’ industry-leading live tools,” added Messa. “This is something that a number of customers have quickly recognised the value in. So much so in fact that we have already have two deployments currently being prepared for Kuwait TV and ITV Sport.”

Acceleration of next-gen technology improves revenue streams

A media and entertainment industry survey has revealed that media companies can generate additional revenue and improve competitiveness by positioning through new business models based on technology innovation. Imaging Communications’ Focus Forward: 2017 Media & Entertainment Industry Report shared its key findings, which include a growing familiarity with microservices and cloud-native applications, increased comfort with next-generation technologies, and a resulting acceleration of plans to transition operations to IP-based environments, including the cloud. A new development in this year’s survey, validated by the wide-scale acceptance of next-gen architectures at the 2017 NAB Show and multi-plat- real-world deployments, is that much of the uncertainty surrounding the future technology landscape has dissipated. Most media companies now recognise the migration of operations from purpose-built hardware to software-driven environments based on commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) platforms as a competitive and economic imperative. It’s now widely accepted that only IT-based infrastructures are capable of delivering the agility and versatility needed to speed the velocity of new service introductions and future-proof facilities against disruptive and frequent technology refreshes. When asked how their attitudes toward transitioning operations, including live production, to an IP-based environment had changed over the past year, more than half of all respondents to the 2017 survey indicated an increased confidence in the suitability of IP-based environments to host even the most-demanding operations. In addition, 34% of all respondents say they are now planning to accelerate their transition to IP from where they were a year ago. The report speculates that a growing number of successful real-world next-gen deployments; the availability of testing facilities; and progress toward widespread interoperability resulting from the actions of the Alliance for IP Media Solutions (AIMS) trade association, all played roles in boosting the comfort level associated with a transition to standard computing equipment.
BroadcastPro ME Summit & Awards is our annual flagship event to promote and celebrate excellence in the broadcast and satellite industry across the MENA region. Featuring extensive networking opportunities, seminars and awards presentations by key industry and government leaders.

14 November 2017
HABTOOR GRAND / DUBAI / UAE

1 day / 4 panels
25 speakers / 16 awards
1 gala awards dinner

Sponsorship
Raz Islam | +971 50 451 8213
raz.islam@cpimediagroup.com

Nominations
Vijaya Cherian | +971 55 105 3787
vijaya.cherian@cpimediagroup.com

Information
Ivana Pesic | +971 4 375 5470
ivana.pesic@cpimediagroup.com
broadcastpromeawards.com

Event Sponsors

broadcastpromeawards.com
In the last two years, the Starz Play team has been working towards shedding its software fat and building agile systems in-house, to take its service to a new level in terms of subscription management and video delivery. In an exclusive interview with Vijaya Cherian, Saleem Bhatti, CTO, and Khaled Benchouche, SVP of Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play, discuss how the September launch of Starz Play Connect, a next-generation platform, will raise the company’s profile in the market.

This month, streaming service provider Starz Play has embarked on a rich and sophisticated technical journey that now has several broadcasters and IPTV players knocking on its doors to sublicense its new platform. The new launch, Starz Play Connect, is the culmination of several years of Starz Play’s efforts to develop different parts of a complicated jigsaw to enable a multitude of payment and delivery features on multiple levels. The result is a rich next-generation platform that goes beyond anything available in the market today by connecting a whole suite of applications built entirely in-house.

The man spearheading the technical venture at Starz Play since its launch is Chief Technology Officer Saleem Bhatti, an ex-HBO techie with more than 12 years of experience prior to that, tinkering with software development in video conferencing in some of the world’s most challenging and exciting markets, such as the US, Europe and China.

“This is the result of years of experience developing software for emerging markets. Only a Netflix or an Amazon and some areas of HBO will probably give you that, and now we have gone beyond what even they have done so far,” says Bhatti.

“We had before and still do, albeit in the phase-out process, were disconnected and disparate systems that were put together for a quick market launch in 2015. We used to previously employ cloud-based SaaS (software as a service) vendors instead of building out our own software. The basic premise of SaaS is that they can help you get work done faster without the need to invest in the environment, i.e. the software, servers and data centres.

“By building the software ourselves now, we have replaced the generic SaaS feature-rich applications that we were paying too much for and didn’t necessarily utilise to their full capacity. Now we know what our needs are, so we have built the software and the services that we will actually use.”

In the MENA region, Starz Play’s subscription numbers have grown by leaps and bounds. While Netflix had just 137,000 MENA subscribers at the end of 2016, according to estimates by analytics firm IHS Markit, Starz Play’s CEO Maaz Sheikh claims the platform presently has a whopping 700,000 subscribers in the Middle East, where the VOD subscription numbers are somewhere between the two and three million mark.

Apart from having premium content, Bhatti believes the secret to the success of any OTT SVOD business lies in building two other pillars: video delivery and collections.

“You exist to serve flawless video 24/7/365, and to collect subscription fees without being a burden on the user experience.”

This is where Connect comes in. It brings together a suite of applications that enable both pillars to function smoothly. Under the hood, Connect is actually a CDN (content delivery network) that includes not just the software and the servers needed for video delivery, but also the peering
connections with operators/ISPs. It is built in a modern engineering environment that powers the software development engine for the company. The company’s software services and platforms have been built as a portable, highly available set of applications that can be globally deployed on cloud infrastructure or in-house private domains.

“Launching the service in a new region is like screwing in a light bulb and then flicking the switch. The platform is integrated with many carriers and methods of payments, such as Apple, Google, du, Etisalat, JT, Ooredoo Kuwait, Ooredoo Tunisia, Ooredoo Algeria, Maroc Telecom, Vodafone Egypt, Orange Jordan and Viva Bahrain, through the subscription engine that manages payment lifecycles for hundreds of thousands of end users,” says Bhatti.

As part of this technological advancement, Starz Play has also switched to a microservices approach to increase efficiencies in its MLC (systems development lifecycle).

“We started to dial in on business goals as milestones of achievement and removed unnecessary software bloat that increases maintainability when creating integrations with carriers. Simply put, we optimised our software, moving away from vendor-driven platforms to our own software, therefore inherently increasing operational performance.”

All operations were moved off the company’s centrally managed integration platform and onto their own individual integration.

“Previously, if we made any changes to operator integrations, we’d have to ensure uniformity across the entire platform. That meant unnecessary regression QA testing. Now, with microservices, we do the QA for a smaller set of software updates, therefore making the process more agile with faster time to market.”

Migrating from an old monolith integration platform to a microservice per carrier has helped Starz Play scale up smaller components of a software application during peak times. This ensures a smoother customer experience.

“This approach also allows for the management of carrier partner integrations at a granular level, instead of dealing with all carriers at the same time, as with the monolith platform before,” explains Bhatti.

The micro-services approach has had several uses on multiple levels. It has helped the team build system components such as a recommendation engine, user management, operator integrations, short messaging centre and user events management, while also helping deliver new features such as continue watching, temporary connections with operators/ISPs. It is built in a modern engineering environment that powers the software development engine for the company. The company’s software services and platforms have been built as a portable, highly available set of applications that can be globally deployed on cloud infrastructure or in-house private domains.

“Launching the service in a new region is like screwing in a light bulb and then flicking the switch. The platform is integrated with many carriers and methods of payments, such as Apple, Google, du, Etisalat, JT, Ooredoo Kuwait, Ooredoo Tunisia, Ooredoo Algeria, Maroc Telecom, Vodafone Egypt, Orange Jordan and Viva Bahrain, through the subscription engine that manages payment lifecycles for hundreds of thousands of end users,” says Bhatti.

As part of this technological advancement, Starz Play has also switched to a microservices approach to increase efficiencies in its MLC (systems development lifecycle).

“We started to dial in on business goals as milestones of achievement and removed unnecessary software bloat that increases maintainability when creating integrations with carriers. Simply put, we optimised our software, moving away from vendor-driven platforms to our own software, therefore inherently increasing operational performance.”

All operations were moved off the company’s centrally managed integration platform and onto their own individual integration.

“Previously, if we made any changes to operator integrations, we’d have to ensure uniformity across the entire platform. That meant unnecessary regression QA testing. Now, with microservices, we do the QA for a smaller set of software updates, therefore making the process more agile with faster time to market.”

Migrating from an old monolith integration platform to a microservice per carrier has helped Starz Play scale up smaller components of a software application during peak times. This ensures a smoother customer experience.

“This approach also allows for the management of carrier partner integrations at a granular level, instead of dealing with all carriers at the same time, as with the monolith platform before,” explains Bhatti.

The micro-services approach has had several uses on multiple levels. It has helped the team build system components such as a recommendation engine, user management, operator integrations, short messaging centre and user events management, while also helping deliver new features such as continue watching, temporary connections with operators/ISPs. It is built in a modern engineering environment that powers the software development engine for the company. The company’s software services and platforms have been built as a portable, highly available set of applications that can be globally deployed on cloud infrastructure or in-house private domains.

“Launching the service in a new region is like screwing in a light bulb and then flicking the switch. The platform is integrated with many carriers and methods of payments, such as Apple, Google, du, Etisalat, JT, Ooredoo Kuwait, Ooredoo Tunisia, Ooredoo Algeria, Maroc Telecom, Vodafone Egypt, Orange Jordan and Viva Bahrain, through the subscription engine that manages payment lifecycles for hundreds of thousands of end users,” says Bhatti.

As part of this technological advancement, Starz Play has also switched to a microservices approach to increase efficiencies in its MLC (systems development lifecycle).

“We started to dial in on business goals as milestones of achievement and removed unnecessary software bloat that increases maintainability when creating integrations with carriers. Simply put, we optimised our software, moving away from vendor-driven platforms to our own software, therefore inherently increasing operational performance.”

All operations were moved off the company’s centrally managed integration platform and onto their own individual integration.

“Previously, if we made any changes to operator integrations, we’d have to ensure uniformity across the entire platform. That meant unnecessary regression QA testing. Now, with microservices, we do the QA for a smaller set of software updates, therefore making the process more agile with faster time to market.”

Migrating from an old monolith integration platform to a microservice per carrier has helped Starz Play scale up smaller components of a software application during peak times. This ensures a smoother customer experience.

“This approach also allows for the management of carrier partner integrations at a granular level, instead of dealing with all carriers at the same time, as with the monolith platform before,” explains Bhatti.

The micro-services approach has had several uses on multiple levels. It has helped the team build system components such as a recommendation engine, user management, operator integrations, short messaging centre and user events management, while also helping deliver new features such as continue watching, temporary
downloads and content censoring. “One of the principal benefits of choosing microservices as a strategy was that they inherently reside in virtualised environments, meaning that integrations amongst other software code are mobile and easily transported,” explains Bhatti. “This applies to the subscription management piece built within our microservices approach as well. It allows us to virtualise our software into packages that can be placed onto servers anywhere outside our own cloud servers (AWS) and onto other clouds (Google, Azure), or inside of ISPs/telcos to run very specific software processes locally. You may call this edge computing or mobile edge computing (MEC). This will become the de facto method of service delivery in the 5G era in the near future.

“So what we had before were many software vendors pieced together to deliver our service end-to-end. With Connect, we’ve built our own software services in a manner that allows them to scale independently of platforms that might be installed later on.”

Virtualisation enables Starz Play to embed a billing collections process (software) alongside the API endpoints that form part of the microservice inside a virtualised container. For the uninitiated, a container is a set of software components embedded into a standard development and deployment package, which comes with hooks into an operating system without having to be tied down to a physical server. “Docker, Kubernetes, Mesosphere, AWS EC2, Rocket et al. are all part of the microservice inside the API endpoints that form part of the microservice inside a virtualised container.”

“Embedded into the operating system, this is a completely different way of thinking about software. If Starz Play is to be truly able to hire people based in different locations (Europe, North America, India etc.), they need a highly flexible infrastructure that can be transported in a way that doesn’t require the entire software package to be shipped. Virtualisation enables Starz Play to embed a billing collections process (software) alongside the API endpoints that form part of the microservice inside a virtualised container.”
are a select set of components that make up virtualised environments particular to a microservices approach to software development and deployment,” explains Bhatti.

One of the big challenges for an SVoD service is offering a variety of payment opportunities and ensuring it works smoothly to reduce churn. A fraction of a second’s inefficiency can cost the service a subscriber, warns Bhatti.

Starz Play alleviates the network effect by placing the billing collections engine inside the carrier partner’s network, close to the billing engine. “This ensures our collections requests aren’t hit by network congestion or suffer time-outs due to latency issues that plague the network infrastructure in MENA. For instance, the old approach used the open internet for processes that were based on Starz Play’s cloud SaaS. This meant that it would experience time-outs. A time-out could mean a microsecond cut in the network while a request has gone out to collect fees from a subscriber, or activating a subscriber because she has money on her account that is collectable, and if those operations don’t happen and the services aren’t activated, it causes a negative impact on the customer experience and leads to fast churn. We are talking about losing hundreds or thousands of subscribers from various processes. “The new approach places the same software and processes inside the telco/SIP network, so you don’t have to go out onto the internet to communicate. It’s all done within the network, where outages are pretty much non-existent. So everyone benefits – we don’t deactivate people who haven’t paid, we don’t deactivate people who have paid due to time outs and us deactivating them due to a failed response, etc. This reduces churn and enhances the customer experience. Things like this are critical to SVOD survival.”

By virtualising billing collections, a container is placed on a server inside the network. Collections processes for that particular carrier run successfully and without the network delay experienced previously while going over the internet to connect to various end points. It’s a more pragmatic billing collections approach, Bhatti says.

The other big pillar is video delivery. In addition to an end-to-end subscriber management platform, Starz Play Connect includes a vast video delivery infrastructure. “Video delivery over a public CDN in the MENA region isn’t delivering results that match public CDNs in the US or Europe. A small number of PoPs (points of presence) do not help in distributing video files for streaming that need to reside as close as possible to the end user who consumes them. Public CDNs are investing in more PoPs, but this is slow going and not enough to saturate the region sufficiently to deliver broadcast-like results for video playback. Expectations among customers are high; they want a similar experience to broadcast like playback, without the latency.”

Netflix has a similar approach in terms of video delivery, says Bhatti, who is quick to add that it does not have carrier billing integrations with telcos just yet.
“The main differentiator for us is that we’ve been here longer and have that invaluable experience in delivering services even for a year or two longer, because we’ve used that time to adjust and tinker,” he says.

One of the other big features on Starz Play Connect is a content origin server backbone that stores assets through JIT (just-in-time) packaged versions and content caches hosted in strategic locations throughout the region. Starz Play has built a private CDN to augment public CDNs, where congestion is an issue and a lack of PoPs creates latency that contributes to rebuffering.

“The benefits are clear: faster time to video playback, clearer routes to access the video directly, as opposed to being routed outside of MENA, which can happen during peak traffic time. We now control our traffic routing directly when not using our supplementary public CDN, we optimise delivery based on our algorithms,” explains Bhatti.

To illustrate how the streaming service does things differently, when Starz Play launched its temporary download feature, it cached JIT packaged files on an additional content shield in front of the CDN caching shield, which helped improve the download experience for users.

“Public CDNs are not caching streaming content to a high ratio against the library; the process to deliver long-tail titles involved going back to the origin caches too often, which introduces latency in delivery,” explains Bhatti.

In addition to everything else, Starz Play has cemented peering agreements with all the leading carriers and ISPs that carry the majority of the video traffic in MENA today. It has relocated cloud DRM servers to reside alongside its Connect platform, to optimise playback start times even further. The company has virtualised containers strategically located inside carrier networks, and now has content caches and billing collection engines inside the last mile.

“We are inviting more and more peers to connect with us to ensure a great customer experience on Starz Play. Any telcos that see video traffic on their networks going to Starz Play will want to optimise their customers’ experience by peering with us,” Bhatti adds.

The other element Starz Play has brought in-house is app development. Although at launch it used development agencies to create apps across most of the

“By building the software ourselves now, we have replaced the generic SaaS feature-rich applications that we were paying too much for and didn’t necessarily use to their full capacity. Now we know what our needs are, so we have built the software and the services that we will actually use”

Saleem Bhatti, CTO, Starz Play

As a reliable and innovative companion for broadcasters and theatres for many decades, we know what world-class sound engineers expect from our digital multichannel system for highest demands.

This is it, and it’s in a class all by itself. DIGITAL 9000 offers uncompressed digital audio transmission, safe from intermodulation, with a stunning cable-like purity of sound and dynamics and control functions, that make the system setup fail-safe. No wonder, Digital 9000 is currently on tour with the world’s most renowned sound engineers and artists.

The highly intuitive user interface provides complete overview even in stressful live situations. A pinnacle of innovation, this is the best-in-class digital wireless system available and a future-proof investment.

Contact us: ME-info@sennheiser.com
www.sennheiser.com/digital9000
Launching platforms, it eventually brought it all in-house.

“We realised that vendor lock-in through the use of embedded proprietary code wasn’t conducive to the agile development approach we had created within other areas of the platform. We have apps on all major platforms, including smartphones, tablets, game consoles and smart TVs. We have teams working on R&D projects that are creating next-generation user interfaces free of impediments, with open-source technologies where possible, and utilise this community as opposed to negotiating for proprietary code. We have given ourselves the best possible foundation to grow from our launch period in territories simultaneously.

“We have virtualised our entire platform for global deployment. We have secured massive economies of scale with built-in multi-tenancy and multi-resolution separation of data while serving all business models, including VOD, ETV, AVOD and Live.

“Starz Play has created something unique in our region. We launched very fast under stealth-like conditions; nobody saw us coming. We brought the cloud and SaaS into play in the MENA region. We’ve virtualized select software components as necessary, due to our experience in the field. We’ve jettisoned some SaaS in favour of building our software around business contexts that work for our needs,” adds Bhatti.

“The launch of Connect, and bringing development in-house, reflected technological prowess and vision. What was left was funding.

“Last month, Starz Play announced that it had secured more funds, raising a total of $125 million since inception with commitments from leading global industry investors Starz, a Lionsgate company (NYSE: LGF.A, LGF.B), State Street Global Advisors (SSGA), the world’s third largest asset manager with more than $2.4 trillion in assets under management (as of 30 June 2014) and media and technology investment firms NEQ Capital Partners and Delta Partners. Given the funding to date and the surge in growth in the two years the service has been live, Starz Play has hit the ground running at 700,000 paying subscribers to date. Regardless of how the streaming business pans out in the future, Starz Play is well poised to look at its platform as a revenue model if it begins licensing to other companies.”

“With the funding to date and the surge in growth in the two years the service has been live, Starz Play has hit the ground running at 700,000 paying subscribers to date. Regardless of how the streaming business pans out in the future, Starz Play is well poised to look at its platform as a revenue model if it begins licensing to other companies.”

Welcome to the new Masstech Innovations Inc.

Masstech and SGL have joined forces to become the broadcast and media industry’s most powerful global provider of solutions for managing valuable media assets.

Join us at IBC Show booth 7.J15T and discover the evolution of SGL’s FlashNet content management system and Masstech’s MassStore media management and workflow platform including expanded cloud support, Enhanced FlashNet Infinity user interface, newsmroom integration advances & automated metadata creation.

“Content is king and technology is queen, distribution is an even higher being. If you don’t have these three elements, then we cannot offer a first-class service or a great experience to our customers,”

Khaled Benchouche, SVP Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play

“Content is king and technology is queen, distribution is an even higher being. If you don’t have these three elements, then we cannot offer a first-class service or a great experience to our customers.”

Khaled Benchouche, SVP Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play

There is no doubt that Khaled Benchouche, SVP Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play, knows the value that content brings to any platform, but he is equally cognisant of the power new technologies and distribution wield in shaping subscriber numbers.

“If content is king and technology is queen, distribution is an even higher being. If you don’t have these three elements, then we cannot offer a first-class service or a great experience to our customers,”

Khaled Benchouche, SVP Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play

“Content is king and technology is queen, distribution is an even higher being. If you don’t have these three elements, then we cannot offer a first-class service or a great experience to our customers.”

Khaled Benchouche, SVP Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play

There is no doubt that Khaled Benchouche, SVP Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play, knows the value that content brings to any platform, but he is equally cognisant of the power new technologies and distribution wield in shaping subscriber numbers.

“If content is king and technology is queen, distribution is an even higher being. If you don’t have these three elements, then we cannot offer a first-class service or a great experience to our customers,”

Khaled Benchouche, SVP Programming and Acquisitions at Starz Play

Given the funding to date and the surge in growth in the two years the service has been live, Starz Play has hit the ground running at 700,000 paying subscribers to date. Regardless of how the streaming business pans out in the future, Starz Play is well poised to look at its platform as a revenue model if it begins licensing to other companies.

“We look at what content they are watching, when they are playing or pausing, what language they prefer and if they are using subtitles in addition to other variables. With subscription management, we can get an accurate profile of each viewer. It’s really important to have all these figures and use technology to provide a better service. Of late, there has been a lot of consumption in comedy, so we will focus on Western comedies.”

Benchouche, who played a similar role at HBO, is an Algerian raised in France who is fluent in Arabic, which means he can appreciate Arabic content as well. HBO has a yearly budget allocation and having acquired significant content from the West and the MENA, he is now looking to tap into the Indian expat population by investing in content from the subcontinent.

“We are looking at Bollywood content as well as regional movies. We will first launch with movies and then expand to series and other content.”

His biggest challenge is the demographics in the region.

“We have so many different segments to cater for – Arabic, Western, Indian and many others. To have something for everyone is a big challenge. As a company, we are looking at how to deliver the best quality of service with the infrastructure we have in the region,” concludes Benchouche.

September 2017 | www.broadcastprime.com
A HULU FOR MENA?

Several discussions have been cropping up in various circles about the need for a collaborative OTT platform like Hulu in the MENA region and how this will be the way forward. We took this opportunity to ask a few senior industry executives what they thought about the potential for such a platform in the region.

Is the MENA TV market capable of sustaining so many linear and OTT players? Do you think it is time for consolidation or collaboration? Are we ready for a collaborative platform like Hulu in this market?

Non-linear media is the way forward. There’s no room for linear TV any longer. OTT content is the future and will be replacing linear TV sooner rather than later, regardless of infrastructural and regulatory limitations. With so many content producers and linear TV stations available, it is essential that a collaborative initiative is set in place to present all this content through a select few OTT platforms, rather than hundreds of them. The MENA region has fallen behind with this transition. Soon, we will see more players exiting the market as a result of it. On the bright side, some players are adapting and transitioning as are we, in the hope of bringing new platforms into the spotlight.

Sanjay Raina, Senior VP & GM, Fox Networks Group

A single multi-platform destination for recent broadcast network content owned by multiple broadcasters with an AVOD/SVOD model is needed. It would cost less to build, less to operate, less to market, content costs would be lower, programme discovery would be easier, subscriber acquisition costs would be lower, the data it would generate would be valuable, and a viewer wouldn’t have to download 10 different apps or register in 10 different services to get their content. But it doesn’t exist. Instead, we have a plethora of standalone-channel VOD sites, duplicate smartphone apps, and yet another press release trumpeting the latest me-too Smart TV app. Individually, these hardly make a dent in market share while MBC’s Shahid dwarfs every competitor. None of these standalone services have a serious chance of gaining enough scale to be relevant, primarily because the channels they are based on themselves don’t have enough share of audience across the region. So why don’t they exist? The answers vary from concerns about brand identity, customer data, revenues, geographic differences, and strategic direction. These may all be valid reasons, but they cease to be meaningful in the face of the negative economic reality of the standalone platforms. I think the true reason is the inherent lack of cooperation and mistrust between broadcasters in the region.

The path to building a Hulu for the Middle East and making it a commercial success is not a mystery and can be gleaned from the lessons of the US market. However, it would take a bold move from a pioneering broadcaster to bring different players together, and that is a much more difficult task.

Karim Sarkis, CEO, Sync Media

What we are seeing right now is only the tip of the iceberg. Finally it’s about video delivery, and not just video—delayed by what’s available on the internet and yet, not fatigued? It’s a typical case of reverse content engineering. The customer doesn’t know what he doesn’t know, and when served with appropriate content, laps it up. How it is served, and who serves it, is secondary. I am not sure whether we have anything close to an overspill in the MENA region just yet. The game has just begun, and only those who deliver a world-class, simple and yet astonishing interactive experience will survive. There is no need to look for consolidation just yet, since relevant content will dictate all economics. My only anxiety as a TV executive is the fact that all services are priced low. If linear pay has economic issues at USD 40 ARPU, what would be the fate of services at $6 ARPU? In that respect, services may look for alliances and consolidations because the economics don’t work. Then again, we have more than 50 brands of soaps to choose from. So why not OTT? Collaborative platforms will emerge around the world, and I am certain a Hulu lookalike will soon set foot here. I look forward to a viable Arabic-language OTT player that seems to be missing currently, and why not 10 of those if they have compelling content?

Sanjay Raina, Senior VP & GM, Fox Networks Group

A Hulu for MENA?
Hi, Dynamic Range!

THE NEW HDK-73
3-CMOS HDTV Camera System
HDR-ready

2. Distribution platforms are here to stay, but need to become smarter and more data-driven. People need to find content quickly and easily. The average American spends eight minutes per linear session channel-flicking and 16 minutes per Netflix session deciding what to watch. At the same time, they do not want to have seven or eight separate subscriptions for video content. We have started to talk about “Content Navigators”, players that address these issues. Amazon is going after this role, to replace the classic pay TV operator leveraging their 80 million prime subscribers. Amazon Video only launched in the Middle East in December 2016 but could become the biggest threat to the incumbent DTH and IPTV service providers.

3. There will be a rising number of market exits, acquisitions, and partnerships as the sector reshapes itself. The City7 news channel shut down in April and this is by no means unique to the Middle East. Australia’s Ten Network, a former market leader, recently went into administration and there will be many more, especially amongst channels that do not meet the requirements that I mentioned above. M&A may come into play but I would say that partnerships will be more prominent. Hulu, Freesat, NLiZiet - this kind of partnership model will become increasingly prevalent as broadcasters realise the need to build scale and network effects. The Middle East is ripe for this, especially in SVOD as the region is young and already leads the world in YouTube viewership per capita. If the players can put their differences aside and build common platforms, there is a huge opportunity to be realised.

Christophe Firth, Principal, A.T. Kearney

We are living in an age of content overload. This overload is in both linear TV (there are over 1000 TV channels in MENA) and online video (there are close to 1500 SVOD services globally). But the one constant is that people only have 24 hours in the day. This means three things for video service providers:

1. The battle for eyeballs cannot only be about content. Content is still king, but it is joined in the castle by brand positioning and user experience. Brand positioning is critical. Each linear channel and SVOD service needs a clear position in people’s minds to fulfil a specific need. For example, E! is positioned as a go-to channel to fulfil the “hard-daytime-to-slam-back-in-the-couch-and-tune-out” need, mainly for the middle aged female demographic looking for lean-back viewing.

User experience is more about lean-forward viewing. The likes of Netflix have raised the bar on what people expect from video content providers. Data-driven innovation in the curation of content, technology to enhance viewing, and customer relationship management is critical. Channels and SVOD services that do not offer unique content, a clear brand position, or a distinct user experience will increasingly struggle.

2. Distribution platforms are here to stay, but need to become smarter and more data-driven. The average American spends eight minutes per linear session channel-flicking and 16 minutes per Netflix session deciding what to watch. At the same time, they do not want to have seven or eight separate subscriptions for video content. We have started to talk about “Content Navigators”, players that address these issues. Amazon is going after this role, to replace the classic pay TV operator leveraging their 80 million prime subscribers. Amazon Video only launched in the Middle East in December 2016 but could become the biggest threat to the incumbent DTH and IPTV service providers.

3. There will be a rising number of market exits, acquisitions, and partnerships as the sector reshapes itself. The City7 news channel shut down in April and this is by no means unique to the Middle East. Australia’s Ten Network, a former market leader, recently went into administration and there will be many more, especially amongst channels that do not meet the requirements that I mentioned above. M&A may come into play but I would say that partnerships will be more prominent. Hulu, Freesat, NLiZiet - this kind of partnership model will become increasingly prevalent as broadcasters realise the need to build scale and network effects. The Middle East is ripe for this, especially in SVOD as the region is young and already leads the world in YouTube viewership per capita. If the players can put their differences aside and build common platforms, there is a huge opportunity to be realised.

Christophe Firth, Principal, A.T. Kearney

In an increasingly digital and mobile savvy world, consumer viewing habits are fast changing. The MENA region is no different and OTT platforms here continue to gain traction. We see strong opportunity for both linear and OTT platforms, given the untapped potential of the entertainment market and the strong growth in internet and smartphone penetration. Accordingly, as part of the next phase of the new OSN strategy, we are now bringing our enhanced OTT platform WAVO to the region, to provide entertainment everywhere for everyone, at a price to suit every pocket. Developed in the region for the region, WAVO is OSN’s online and mobile app entertainment platform that sets itself apart through unique features such as live TV streaming, convenient and flexible packaging, and popular Arabic content available on demand. With greater flexibility and unprecedented viewing experiences, OSN is diversifying the OTT landscape in MENA with WAVO, by taking the consumption of entertainment to a new level.

Martin Stewart, CEO, OSN
Chakra has always been a big advocate of nurturing local talent. Of the 80-120 films the company distributes each year, 40 are slated for local theatrical releases while the rest are all aimed at VOD, TV or SVOD. Front Row was the first to sign a massive game-changing pay-TV output deal with beIN Media Group as well, two years ago.

As a distributor, the company has kept all avenues open for content distribution. Front Row’s aggregation services department, for instance, handles all requirements for those who want their content on iTunes. They have a similar exclusive arrangement with Google Play and Netflix.

“We are negotiating with other international SVOD platforms as well,” Chakra explains, adding that there is a whole quality check process involved. “We must go through a whole encoding process and undertake quality checks. They then have their own set of quality checks. We do this for distributors who want their content on these international platforms, as well as local VOD platforms through telcos, we handle rights management as well as marketing.”

Chakra says he is constantly on the lookout for new talent and productions with more daring subject matter. “Why can’t we do the true story of a drug lord in Lebanon, for instance? It is all about subject matter. TV stations decline those kinds of pitches, but then the whole world is also interested in shows like Narcos. Why can’t we have an Arab equivalent to that? We need competition, because competition means growth. The new competitive environment across international platforms, to consider SVOD players like iflix, among other things, want their movies on iTunes. They handles all requirements for those who want their content on these platforms to showcase their work. “We must go through a whole 

“Those are markets that no one is tapping into. In Lebanon, we only have a population of four million, but there are around 14 million Lebanese living in South America alone.”

Gianluca Chakra, Managing Partner, Front Row Filmed Entertainment

parts of Europe and even in Japan. Those are markets that no one is tapping into. In Lebanon, we only have a population of four million, but there are around 14 million Lebanese living in South America alone.”

Having seen the success of Tough Luck, Chakra and Shadows are working on moreSVOD on independent and co-productions with the aim of producing more Arabic content for SVOD platforms. “We know for a fact that people want more daring content and new subject matter that TV stations are not comfortable showing. A Game of Thrones in a Nanos would never have come to light if it wasn’t for Netflix or HBO featuring them. SVOD has been successful because it provides a more open platform and greater accessibility.”

As a distributor, Chakra is obviously well versed in the art of marketing the content he has rights to. Front Row was responsible for making Very Big Shot, a Lebanese film available on Netflix worldwide. “It was the first Lebanese film on Netflix. Automatically, this means that the filmmakers are now known worldwide and it will be easier for them to get their next film financed,” he points out.

Our core business revolves around acquiring rights for this region and distributing them across the MENA,” explains Chakra. “Google Play was an attempt to try something new and encourage SVOD players like iflix, among other international platforms, to consider local productions and create a more competitive environment across the region. This can result in more products being made to satisfy the many platforms across the region, be it on linear or non-linear channels. In parallel, this meant that new content will come in and, in turn, bring new talent. This is what the region needs. One never knows if one of these will eventually become the new HBO for the Arab world. Arab audiences want higher standards, and I think with more competition, producers will be compelled to strive for excellence.”

Chakra clarifies the many variables that make SVOD increasingly attractive to talent and to audiences across the world, and the opportunity these platforms offer to showcase content that linear channels have thus far avoided.

“On the one hand, we have a lot of talent in this region and SVOD platforms give them a greater opportunity for visibility than the current linear channels. Egypt is really the Hollywood of the Middle East, but the producers there primarily only sell to the cinemas or later to conventional channels, and that’s how far their content goes. “Unless you are a director like Nadine Labaki, who is a Cannes sweetheart and gets most of her films financed from Europe, the rest of the producers are stuck with the same old formula. There is so much talent in this region and so many written in Lebanon. These up-and-coming SVOD platforms give talented professional new platforms to showcase their work.”

Chakra points out that there is a large Arab diaspora around the world, especially in South America, the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, and it will be easier for them to get their next film financed, “he points out.

“Why can’t we do the true story of a drug lord in Lebanon, for instance? It is all about subject matter. TV stations decline those kinds of pitches, but then the whole world is also interested in shows like Narcos. Why can’t we have an Arab equivalent to that? We need competition, because competition means growth. The new competitive environment across international platforms, to consider SVOD players like iflix, among other things, want their movies on iTunes. They handles all requirements for those who want their content on these platforms to showcase their work. “We must go through a whole 

“A Game of Thrones in a Nanos would never have come to light if it wasn’t for Netflix or HBO featuring them. SVOD has been successful because it provides a more open platform and greater accessibility.”

As a distributor, Chakra is obviously well versed in the art of marketing the content he has rights to. Front Row was responsible for making Very Big Shot, a Lebanese film available on Netflix worldwide. “It was the first Lebanese film on Netflix. Automatically, this means that the filmmakers are now known worldwide and it will be easier for them to get their next film financed, “he points out.

“Our core business revolves around acquiring rights for this region and distributing them across the MENA,” explains Chakra. “Google Play was an attempt to try something new and encourage SVOD players like iflix, among other international platforms, to consider local productions and create a more competitive environment across the region. This can result in more products being made to satisfy the many platforms across the region, be it on linear or non-linear channels. In parallel, this meant that new content will come in and, in turn, bring new talent. This is what the region needs. One never knows if one of these will eventually become the new HBO for the Arab world. Arab audiences want higher standards, and I think with more competition, producers will be compelled to strive for excellence.”

Chakra clarifies the many variables that make SVOD increasingly attractive to talent and to audiences across the world, and the opportunity these platforms offer to showcase content that linear channels have thus far avoided.

“On the one hand, we have a lot of talent in this region and SVOD platforms give them a greater opportunity for visibility than the current linear channels. Egypt is really the Hollywood of the Middle East, but the producers there primarily only sell to the cinemas or later to conventional channels, and that’s how far their content goes. “Unless you are a director like Nadine Labaki, who is a Cannes sweetheart and gets most of her films financed from Europe, the rest of the producers are stuck with the same old formula. There is so much talent in this region and so many written in Lebanon. These up-and-coming SVOD platforms give talented professional new platforms to showcase their work.”

Chakra points out that there is a large Arab diaspora around the world, especially in South America, the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, and it will be easier for them to get their next film financed, “he points out.

“A Game of Thrones in a Nanos would never have come to light if it wasn’t for Netflix or HBO featuring them. SVOD has been successful because it provides a more open platform and greater accessibility.”

As a distributor, Chakra is obviously well versed in the art of marketing the content he has rights to. Front Row was responsible for making Very Big Shot, a Lebanese film available on Netflix worldwide. “It was the first Lebanese film on Netflix. Automatically, this means that the filmmakers are now known worldwide and it will be easier for them to get their next film financed, “he points out.

“Our core business revolves around acquiring rights for this region and distributing them across the MENA,” explains Chakra. “Google Play was an attempt to try something new and encourage SVOD players like iflix, among other international platforms, to consider local productions and create a more competitive environment across the region. This can result in more products being made to satisfy the many platforms across the region, be it on linear or non-linear channels. In parallel, this meant that new content will come in and, in turn, bring new talent. This is what the region needs. One never knows if one of these will eventually become the new HBO for the Arab world. Arab audiences want higher standards, and I think with more competition, producers will be compelled to strive for excellence.”

Chakra clarifies the many variables that make SVOD increasingly attractive to talent and to audiences across the world, and the opportunity these platforms offer to showcase content that linear channels have thus far avoided.

“On the one hand, we have a lot of talent in this region and SVOD platforms give them a greater opportunity for visibility than the current linear channels. Egypt is really the Hollywood of the Middle East, but the producers there primarily only sell to the cinemas or later to conventional channels, and that’s how far their content goes. “Unless you are a director like Nadine Labaki, who is a Cannes sweetheart and gets most of her films financed from Europe, the rest of the producers are stuck with the same old formula. There is so much talent in this region and so many written in Lebanon. These up-and-coming SVOD platforms give talented professional new platforms to showcase their work.”

Chakra points out that there is a large Arab diaspora around the world, especially in South America, the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, and it will be easier for them to get their next film financed, “he points out.

“Our core business revolves around acquiring rights for this region and distributing them across the MENA,” explains Chakra. “Google Play was an attempt to try something new and encourage SVOD players like iflix, among other international platforms, to consider local productions and create a more competitive environment across the region. This can result in more products being made to satisfy the many platforms across the region, be it on linear or non-linear channels. In parallel, this meant that new content will come in and, in turn, bring new talent. This is what the region needs. One never knows if one of these will eventually become the new HBO for the Arab world. Arab audiences want higher standards, and I think with more competition, producers will be compelled to strive for excellence.”

Chakra clarifies the many variables that make SVOD increasingly attractive to talent and to audiences across the world, and the opportunity these platforms offer to showcase content that linear channels have thus far avoided.

“On the one hand, we have a lot of talent in this region and SVOD platforms give them a greater opportunity for visibility than the current linear channels. Egypt is really the Hollywood of the Middle East, but the producers there primarily only sell to the cinemas or later to conventional channels, and that’s how far their content goes. “Unless you are a director like Nadine Labaki, who is a Cannes sweetheart and gets most of her films financed from Europe, the rest of the producers are stuck with the same old formula. There is so much talent in this region and so many written in Lebanon. These up-and-coming SVOD platforms give talented professional new platforms to showcase their work.”

Chakra points out that there is a large Arab diaspora around the world, especially in South America, the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, and it will be easier for them to get their next film financed, “he points out.
Al Ruwad TV is a new launch that joins the growing number of TV channels broadcasting from Dubai. Advanced Media was contracted to execute it as a turnkey project in a rather short period of time. Vibhuti Arora brings you details of how the SI executed this relatively small, yet challenging project.

A new Arabic-language TV channel, Al Ruwad TV, was recently set up in Dubai and joins the growing number of TV channels broadcasting from the emirate. The independently owned channel started streaming live on social media platforms from July this year and is presently in talks with satellite companies for transmission deals.

Commenting on the project execution, Musbah Abdallah, General Manager, Al Ruwad TV, says: “We wanted to set up an entertainment and current affairs HD TV channel but we had a limited time frame and approached Advanced Media to build the channel for us. We required a small studio set-up where we could have the flexibility to do live programming as well as playback of the recorded content. As time was a major constraint, we wanted an SI who would take complete charge of the project and deliver it within the stipulated time. Advanced Media achieved that and handed over the channel to us in two months, enabling us to start operations immediately.”

Al Ruwad TV is a single TV channel capable of full HD transmission in live and production environments, and the project involved building a complete HD channel infrastructure.

Advanced Media, a well-established distributor of broadcast equipment in the region, has been expanding its scope of work to execute small- to mid-sized projects as a systems integrator. This project is a step further in that direction as the company diversifies its business to handle turnkey integration projects as well.

“The dynamics of broadcast industry are changing fast and you have to keep abreast of the pace in order to thrive and compete,” says Alaa Rantisi, Head of Video Division at Advanced Media. “We no longer want to limit ourselves to being distributors and resellers but want to expand our scope of work to cover other aspects of the industry too. We are branching out into systems integration and took this up as a challenge to test our capabilities in the field. I am glad to say that we delivered the goods and hope to execute more such projects.”

It was a small yet challenging project for the company, mainly because of the tight timeline.

Fahad Hasan, Project Manager at Advanced Media, comments: “This project was challenging not for its scale but for the tight timeline. We built this channel from scratch. We were involved in the project all the way from design and implementation to execution and delivery. Sourcing equipment, setting it up and making sure everything worked in perfect condition, as well as training the staff, were all part of our remit.”

Al Ruwad TV operates out of a small studio facility in Dubai, and boasts a PVR and an MCR equipped to produce talk shows, and health- and sports-related documentaries. A separate equipment rack room was also built for the channel.

“It’s a relatively small facility where the floor includes a studio, a control room and a servers/rack room. To save time, we started the rack assembly even before we received the equipment. The video and audio patch panels were fixed in place and the patching was done eventually.”

Al Ruwad TV has a small facility in Dubai with a three-camera studio, a control room and an MCR.

**Snapshot**
- **Client:** Al Ruwad TV
- **Location:** Dubai, UAE
- **SI:** Advanced Media
- **Objective:** To build an entertainment and current affairs HD TV channel complete with a studio, MCR and PCR
- **Key suppliers:** Sony, Pebble Beach Systems, Pixel Power, Yamaha, Sonifex, Sennheiser, Ross Video, Lite Panels and RTS
and marked, and the video cable
patching was also completed within
the rack and studio ahead of time.
This is not the case usually, as
it is extremely difficult to patch
cables without the availability of
actual equipment; however, due
to time constraints, we adopted
this approach, and it worked
perfectly,” Hasan explains.
The fully redundant channel
comprises three Sony HDC-1700
camera systems, Sony XDCAM
servers, a Sony 2M/E production
switcher, Ross glue and routers, a
Yamaha audio mixer, Pebble Beach
Systems’ Stingray channel-in-a-box
playout and automation as well as
Pixel Power production graphics.
The studio boasts a Lite Panels
Astra 1x1 day light and a Sola 6
Fresnel day light, alongside a mix
and match of key and fill lights fully
controlled through a Strand mixing

"We wanted to set up an entertainment
and current affairs TV
channel but we had a
limited time frame and
approached Advanced
Media to build the
channel for us. We
required a small studio
set-up where we could
have the flexibility to
do live programming
as well as playback of
the recorded content”

Mubah Abdallah,
General Manager, Al Ruwad TV

First Stop: the RAI Amtrium, Stand #4.A01

The future of TV is IP-based, cloud-enabled
and virtualized. And it promises unprecedented,
revenue-driving agility.

Imagine is delivering on that promise with uniquely
adaptable microservices-based platforms that are
market proven and ready to deploy — and keep the
door open to whatever comes next.

So what are you waiting for?
Seize tomorrow’s opportunities. Today.
Manager, Advanced Media
Fahad Hasan, Project control room and a facility where the floor "It's a relatively small achieve 24/7 mission critical reliable, includes a studio, a needs. LogoVision was selected to graphics playout and channel branding remote panels and an IPB system. Pixel Power LogoVision is deployed to meet a wide range of automated remote control needs. LogoVision was selected to achieve 24/7 mission critical reliable, unattended operation of graphics as it fully automates graphics playout and integrates seamlessly with automation systems. "Choosing the right equipment in the given budget and time was critical to the success of this project. Stingray, for instance, is suited for quick deployment and offers a host of features that meet the end user's requirement. "We had several meetings with the end user to understand their requirement so as to provide them with the best solution. We went back and forth a few times to pick the best options within our scope. The manufacturers were of great help too, as they got involved and helped us in achieving the client's vision. "The training was only partially applied at the time of handover, as a major part of it was suspended as per the customer's request. We expect this to begin by the end of this month," adds Hasan. The channel staff will be trained for operations on the vision mixer, the camera systems, graphics and playout. Hasan says that the project has been implemented with help from the manufacturers. "Pebble Beach Systems and Pixel Power offered us support all through the project. Pebble Beach Systems has already conducted the commissioning as well as training for the Stingray system. We intend to support Al Rewad TV with extended training for the same. Also, at a later stage, once the customer is ready and willing, we shall have the training available from Pixel Power for the LogoVision system," Hasan explains. The studio involves a typical file-based workflow where XDCAM HD is used as the native file format with the MXF wrapper. Content acquisitions from Sony cameras and IRDs are sent to Sony's file-based recorder and G-tech storage. Pixel Power Logo Vision takes care of editing, post production and graphics. And finally, the content is played out from Pebble Beach's Stingray. The project was handed over to the client in two months, Fahad informs. Emphasising the importance of time in the success of this project, Rantisi adds: "Time management was key in the execution of this project as the client demanded that. Presently, the final stage of the Stingray system is underway. We are very happy and proud of what we achieved with this small but important project, by way of thorough planning and step-by-step implementation."

Alaa Rantisi, Head of Video Division, Advanced Media

"Time management was key in the execution of this project as the client demanded that. We are very happy and proud of what we achieved with this small but important project, by way of thorough planning and step-by-step implementation."

Fahad Hasan, Project Manager, Advanced Media

"It's a relatively small facility where the floor includes a studio, a control room and a server/ rack room. To save time, we started the rack assembly even before we received the equipment. The video and audio patch panels were fixed and marked, and the video cable patching was also completed within the rack and studio ahead of time."

"It's a relatively small facility where the floor includes a studio, a control room and a server/ rack room. To save time, we started the rack assembly even before we received the equipment. The video and audio patch panels were fixed and marked, and the video cable patching was also completed within the rack and studio ahead of time."

Fahad Hasan, Project Manager, Advanced Media

--

**THE 4K HDR REVOLUTION IS HERE**

Shooting live events in 4K demands a higher dimension of performance, and the new FUJINON 4K broadcast lens lineup meets the challenge. Extending the limits of "High Resolution", "High Contrast" and "High Dynamic Range", FUJINON’s cutting-edge optical technology presents the next standard in optical performance – image quality that exceeds the high expectations of imaging professionals.

FUJINON Corporation
Optical Surces & Electronic Imaging Products Division
http://www.fujifilm.com/products/optical_devices/

Come see us at IBC, Hall 12 stand B20
15th - 19th September 2017 at Rai Amsterdam

**FUJIFILM**
Value from Innovation
UP CLOSE WITH WILDLIFE

In an exclusive interview with BroadcastPro ME, Executive Producer Mike Gunton and Camera Operator Rob Drewett speak about some of the cutting-edge technologies they used in filming the BBC’s Planet Earth II.

Dynamic tracking shots using gimbals and drones, ultra-high resolution and never-before-seen night-time photography make Planet Earth II the BBC’s most cinematic wildlife film series to date. In May 2017, BBC Worldwide announced several broadcasting deals across the Middle East to allow its natural history catalogue to be shown, including an agreement with MBC Group’s digital service Shahid, through which Planet Earth II exclusively premiered.

Critically acclaimed, hugely popular with audiences and rewarded with 10 Emmy nominations in the US, including outstanding documentary series, sound editing, editing and cinematography, the nature show returns a decade after the BBC’s Planet Earth hit the world’s screens in 2006. Co-produced by BBC America, ZDF and France Télévisions, the operational hub was the BBC’s Natural History unit in Bristol (UK), which has been producing wildlife films for 60 years, often with Sir David Attenborough, the most recognisable voice of the genre.

Through the decades, they’ve continually raised the bar for the look and feel of nature films – an evolution which in large part is also a story of technology. With Planet Earth II, the team wanted to push the proximity by getting in close to the animals and experiencing the world’s landscape through their eyes.

Executive Producer Mike Gunton has explained that they wanted the camera to move with the action so that the audience feels more immersed, the same way that a cinematographer moves a camera for cinema. A lot of new filmmaking technology went into making Planet Earth II, but no single innovation made it possible. Instead, the series reflects a decade of steady improvements that have led to smaller, lighter, better cameras, particularly those that excel in poor light.

Camera operator Rob Drewett shot the series’ first sequence of a swarm of locusts in Madagascar.

"The main challenge was to find the swarm, because it moves incredibly fast over country. As we got to the place of having to fly over the area of a swarm of a trillion living locusts, it became evident that the only way we could get close enough was through using gimbals, but they were too heavy and the 360° camera movement was very limited," says Drewett. "It was a breakthrough for us when the camera company brought out ultralight gimbals that worked well in very poor light."

"The idea of being in the middle of a billion flying locusts might bring most people out in a cold sweat, but not cameraman Rob Drewett. He and the team were able to put themselves in the flight path of this super-swarm in southwest Madagascar. Drewett was then able to use the latest in hand-held, gyro-stabilised camera technology to get shots that flew alongside the locusts, as if part of the swarm."
Drewett, because of the flexibility to shoot high frame rates of 60fps, 120fps and 240fps at 2K – essential during the locust shoot. “Dynamic latitude was another good reason for choosing RED, as was its small form factor and modularity, which means you can build it into any size and weight you need.”

Filming animals in their natural habitat, as Planet Earth II does, usually proves challenging where light is concerned. However, the RED EPIC DRAGON made it easy to adapt the lighting aperture, reaching 18 stops of dynamic range with HDRx.

The series began production in 2013 and the decision to master in 4K UHD and in HDR was taken much later in the post process, in 2015. By shooting most of the material at 4.5K, well within the range of the EPIC’s 6K sensor, the BBC post team and Bristol’s Films at 59 facility had latitude to play with.

While the original Planet Earth used a camera mounted on a helicopter to capture aerial footage, the new series captured dangerous and elusive animals with more advanced techniques. Gyro-stabilised drones provided more intimate aerials and handheld shots showed what it really feels like to move.

It took a month to finally get in among the swarms and record astonishing images of the insects in flight. “It was the first time the BBC had shot wildlife using a handheld gimbal,” explains Drewett. “This shoot set the standard for the look of the series. It had that immersive feeling of flying along with the insects. The freedom of movement to glide – which the gimbal with a RED camera enabled – wouldn’t have been possible 10 years ago.”

The RED EPIC DRAGON was the series’ go-to camera, explains Drewett. Because of the flexibility to shoot high frame rates of 60fps, 120fps and 240fps at 2K – essential during the locust shoot.

“Dynamic latitude was another good reason for choosing RED, as was its small form factor and modularity, which means you can build it into any size and weight you need.”

Filming animals in their natural habitat, as Planet Earth II does, usually proves challenging where light is concerned. However, the RED EPIC DRAGON made it easy to adapt the lighting aperture, reaching 18 stops of dynamic range with HDRx.

The series began production in 2013 and the decision to master in 4K UHD and in HDR was taken much later in the post process, in 2015. By shooting most of the material at 4.5K, well within the range of the EPIC’s 6K sensor, the BBC post team and Bristol’s Films at 59 facility had latitude to play with.

While the original Planet Earth used a camera mounted on a helicopter to capture aerial footage, the new series captured dangerous and elusive animals with more advanced techniques. Gyro-stabilised drones provided more intimate aerials and handheld shots showed what it really feels like to move.

It took a month to finally get in among the swarms and record astonishing images of the insects in flight. “It was the first time the BBC had shot wildlife using a handheld gimbal,” explains Drewett. “This shoot set the standard for the look of the series. It had that immersive feeling of flying along with the insects. The freedom of movement to glide – which the gimbal with a RED camera enabled – wouldn’t have been possible 10 years ago.”

The RED EPIC DRAGON was the series’ go-to camera, explains Drewett. Because of the flexibility to shoot high frame rates of 60fps, 120fps and 240fps at 2K – essential during the locust shoot.

“Dynamic latitude was another good reason for choosing RED, as was its small form factor and modularity, which means you can build it into any size and weight you need.”

Filming animals in their natural habitat, as Planet Earth II does, usually proves challenging where light is concerned. However, the RED EPIC DRAGON made it easy to adapt the lighting aperture, reaching 18 stops of dynamic range with HDRx.

The series began production in 2013 and the decision to master in 4K UHD and in HDR was taken much later in the post process, in 2015. By shooting most of the material at 4.5K, well within the range of the EPIC’s 6K sensor, the BBC post team and Bristol’s Films at 59 facility had latitude to play with.

While the original Planet Earth used a camera mounted on a helicopter to capture aerial footage, the new series captured dangerous and elusive animals with more advanced techniques. Gyro-stabilised drones provided more intimate aerials and handheld shots showed what it really feels like to move.
through habitats as diverse as the Antarctic, deserts and savannah.

Steadicams were used for a few sequences, such as capturing a serval hunting in South Africa, but in most cases they were too cumbersome, inflexible or expensive for close-up nature photography. The team relied heavily on smaller handheld stabilisers such as the DJI Ronin and Freefly Movi Pro, with gyroscopes that measure orientation along three axes and motors that counteract those movements. These rigs are small and versatile enough to often replace several other tools like sliders and cranes.

A shoot on an island populated by penguins was entirely done with a cameraman holding a gimbal.

The production was epic in every sense. Shot over a three-year period, it required 117 filming trips to 40 different countries and a total of 2,089 shooting days.

Drewett explains that media was downloaded on location using Shotput Pro software onto a pair of mirrored drive systems.

“There was no LUT, no grade. A producer might look through the rushes and make notes about particular good shots, but so long as it was mirrored and backed up, everyone was happy.”

The delivery requirements included both different colour spaces and resolutions. An HD standard dynamic range (SDR) version was required for BBC transmission and for BBC Worldwide. A UHD version with HDR, using the Hybrid Log Gamma curve, was also required for BBC Worldwide distribution.

The series also showcased a new way to capture intimate wildlife behaviour at night. In particular, it captured a showdown between a long-eared bat and a scorpion, using infrared photography combined with high resolution and slow motion. Ed Charles, producer of the episode in the deserts, has explained that they used a RED camera with a DRAGON Monochrome sensor to capture “incredibly crisp images” even with zoom lenses and at higher frame rates. None of this was possible a decade ago, which has the team wondering what might be possible a decade from now. And they’re already thinking about Planet Earth III.

“A lot of new filmmaking technology went into making Planet Earth II, but no single innovation made it possible. Instead, the series reflects a decade of steady improvements that have led to smaller, lighter, better cameras, particularly those that excel in poor light.”

Mike Gunton, Executive Producer, BBC Planet Earth II

TV Broadcasting Capacity on NileSat Orbital 7/8° W

Call Now & book a place in the space

Gulfsat No More Boundaries

+965 2291 7777 . +965 2291 7799 . +965 6677 3530

sales@gulfsat.com . www.gulfsat.com
As part of a larger project to upgrade its legacy systems to the latest file-based workflows, Dubai’s state broadcaster recently upgraded one of its last remaining production studios to function in a 3G/HD environment. BroadcastPro ME brings a report.

**Snapshot**
- **Client:** Dubai Media Inc.
- **Location:** Dubai, UAE
- **SI:** Tek Signals
- **Objective:** To upgrade a production studio to 3G/HD file-based workflow
- **Key suppliers:** Sony, Avid, Vizrt, Harmonic, Solid State Logic and Evertz

**MOVING UP A NOTCH**

State broadcaster Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI) recently upgraded one of its smaller production studios from an SD tape-based environment to a 3G/HD file-based workflow. The project is part of the state broadcaster’s phased approach to achieving a complete file-based workflow on the technical side.

Saleh Lootah, previously CTO and now Deputy CEO – TV & Radio Support, Dubai Media Incorporated, says the newly unveiled Studio B is part of the final phase of studio upgrades for the broadcaster.

“With the completion of this studio, we have achieved a complete 3G/HD file-based transformation of the technical backbone at our facility.”

Studio B is used for DMI’s in-house productions and was operational just in time for Ramadan this year.

“We began work on the studio in December 2016, and the studio was up and running by May 2017. The idea was to prep it for Ramadan shows.” Lootah adds.

While the outer shell of the studio was retained, its technical infrastructure was completely revamped to align it with the broadcaster’s other studios and networking requirements.

Afzal Lakdawala, Head of Technology Planning and Projects at Dubai Media Incorporated, explains that the entire technical backbone was refurbished to make it compatible with the broadcaster’s other studios.

“This was carefully planned, executed and completed on time. We retained the lights and acoustic tiles in the studio, but the rest of the equipment was replaced with new products based on our technical roadmap. Having already implemented file-based workflows in other studios, it was easier for staff to get accustomed to this upgrade. We just needed to impart basic training to them.”

Studio B is a three-camera studio equipped with the Sony HDC-2400 cameras that are 3G-capable and multi-format (1080/50i, 59.94i and 720/50p, 59.94p). They can be fully updated to the HDC-2500 by adding option keys (23.97p/25p, 50p/59.94p, 100i/119.88i). The HDC-2400 also provides flexibility on transmission due to its side panel, which can be easily replaced with HD wireless (third party) or Triax transmission systems.

Omar Alzoubi, Senior Manager – Engineering Systems, says that Studio B’s upgrade is part of DMI’s technology roadmap:

“This means the studio is fully HDSD and is provisioned for future upgrades. The studio works in a multi-format environment offering an end-to-end file-based workflow. It is seamlessly integrated for access to centralised managed assets and a collaborative environment between all users, in order to support quick production. The system not only improves productivity but also offers flexibility in content creation.”

Alzoubi adds that the content is made available almost instantaneously, for inter-department users to perform their assigned tasks in order to service the entire chain from camera input to playout. The content is simultaneously ingested into the related digital archive to meet the delivery deadline and make it ready for faster on-air transmission.

The studio is powered by two Avid AirSpeed I 5500 systems integrated with the main Avid servers. The AirSpeed I 5500 allows direct file exchange between XDCAM, XAVC Intra,
“The project has already been completed and we have achieved 3G/HD file-based transformation of the technical backbone at Dubai Media Incorporated”

Saleh Lootah, Deputy CEO – TV & Radio Support, DMI

XAVC-L, AVC-Intra and AVC-LongG decks, third-party servers, Media Composer and other editing systems.

The output of the camera is directly recorded on the Avid ISIS server using AirSpeed for ingest. The two AirSpeed servers are also used for any playback from the studio. The studio can perform live-to-air as well as recording for future transmission.

As soon as the shoot is over, the content is available on Avid for immediate editing. Once the editor is finished, the media is exported to a Harmonic playout server for transmission and, simultaneously, the content is stored in a deep archive for future use, thereby enabling a complete file-based workflow.

The studio set-up, including video encoders, cameras, vision mixers, glues and multiviewers, was chosen with the aim of enhancing the production quality of programming for both live and recorded shows.

Anmar Fawzy, Territory Account Manager at Avid, explains that the installation at DMI “boasts a complete end-to-end Avid solution that manages its news and sports content.”

“By adding two Avid multichannel video servers, the AirSpeed 5000s, to their studio B, they have extended the use of their existing solution to the new studio, allowing them to manage feeds, live acquisition, content production and playout to-air demands easily from Studio B,” he adds.

Complete training was undertaken for the engineering and operations teams.

“The new workflow has increased our productivity, and the turnaround time for productions has also reduced. The design target was to implement a system which allowed for easy operations, and Studio B has achieved that,” says Al Assaf.

“DMI’s technology strategy is future-proofed and will lay the foundation for adopting the newest trends in broadcast, such as IP, new compression platforms, new distribution platforms and new methods of production with the related workflow,” he concludes.

Studio B kit

• Sony XVS6000 4K-capable vision mixer
• 3 x Sony 3G capable HDC2400 cameras
• Vizrt CG
• Two Avid Airspeed 5500 solutions integrated into existing Avid infrastructure
• Analog Way - scan converter with DVI/HD-MI support
• Harmonic playout
• Solid State Logic audio mixer CD-10
• Samsung UHD multiviewer monitoring screens
• Sony 3G monitors
• Canon lenses
• Evertz EOX router expansion to accommodate new sources and destinations

New workflows. New capabilities. New opportunities. Cloud-based production workflows give media enterprises, creative teams and independent professionals many possibilities for more efficient and profitable ways to create, manage, distribute, and monetize content. With Avid’s cloud-enabled MediaCentral® Platform and comprehensive suite of industry-leading tools and workflow solutions, you’re ready to exploit the media cloud era—at your own pace, with flexible licensing and deployment options to match your unique requirements.

Unlock your potential. Learn more at IBC Hall 7, Stand J20

avid.com/ibc

© 2017 Avid Technology, Inc. All rights reserved. Avid, the Avid logo and MediaCentral are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Avid Technology, Inc. in the United States and/or other countries.
WHAT IS THE IDEA BEHIND NEWSTAG?
Camilla Dahlin-Andersson, co-founder and Chairperson

The vision of Newstag from the start was to create a sustainable and relevant news service. After analysing the global digital media market, we came to the conclusion that what was needed was a completely new approach. Traditional media models are based on scarcity, but today we are living in informational abundance thanks to the internet and mobile phones. To meet this challenge, we realised we had to reinvent the business model. We focused on video and mobile usage. A migration of advertising dollars to digital environments was going through the roof. We both saw this as an enormous opportunity. We launched the beta version of Newstag.com roughly 18 months ago and were pleasantly surprised at the rapid global pick-up. After only two weeks, we had users in more than 200 countries, and the fact that they were all young – largely under 34 years – confirmed our belief that young people do care about news; you just need to provide a relevant experience.

WHERE DO YOU INTEND TO LOCATE YOUR MENA OFFICE?
Henrik Eklund, co-founder and CEO

Through my work at the Associated Press, I saw first-hand how media companies around the world were fighting for their survival. We also recognised that audiences were spending a large amount of time on video online and mobile usage. A migration of advertising dollars to digital environments was going through the roof. We both saw this as an enormous opportunity. We launched the beta version of Newstag.com roughly 18 months ago and were pleasantly surprised at the rapid global pick-up. After only two weeks, we had users in more than 200 countries, and the fact that they were all young – largely under 34 years – confirmed our belief that young people do care about news; you just need to provide a relevant experience.

WHERE DO YOU INTEND TO LOCATE YOUR MENA OFFICE?
Henrik Eklund, co-founder and CEO

Through my work at the Associated Press, I saw first-hand how media companies around the world were fighting for their survival. We also recognised that audiences were spending a large amount of time on video online and mobile usage. A migration of advertising dollars to digital environments was going through the roof. We both saw this as an enormous opportunity. We launched the beta version of Newstag.com roughly 18 months ago and were pleasantly surprised at the rapid global pick-up. After only two weeks, we had users in more than 200 countries, and the fact that they were all young – largely under 34 years – confirmed our belief that young people do care about news; you just need to provide a relevant experience.

WHERE DO YOU INTEND TO LOCATE YOUR MENA OFFICE?
Henrik Eklund, co-founder and CEO

Through my work at the Associated Press, I saw first-hand how media companies around the world were fighting for their survival. We also recognised that audiences were spending a large amount of time on video online and mobile usage. A migration of advertising dollars to digital environments was going through the roof. We both saw this as an enormous opportunity. We launched the beta version of Newstag.com roughly 18 months ago and were pleasantly surprised at the rapid global pick-up. After only two weeks, we had users in more than 200 countries, and the fact that they were all young – largely under 34 years – confirmed our belief that young people do care about news; you just need to provide a relevant experience.

WHERE DO YOU INTEND TO LOCATE YOUR MENA OFFICE?
Henrik Eklund, co-founder and CEO

Through my work at the Associated Press, I saw first-hand how media companies around the world were fighting for their survival. We also recognised that audiences were spending a large amount of time on video online and mobile usage. A migration of advertising dollars to digital environments was going through the roof. We both saw this as an enormous opportunity. We launched the beta version of Newstag.com roughly 18 months ago and were pleasantly surprised at the rapid global pick-up. After only two weeks, we had users in more than 200 countries, and the fact that they were all young – largely under 34 years – confirmed our belief that young people do care about news; you just need to provide a relevant experience.

WHERE DO YOU INTEND TO LOCATE YOUR MENA OFFICE?
Henrik Eklund, co-founder and CEO

Through my work at the Associated Press, I saw first-hand how media companies around the world were fighting for their survival. We also recognised that audiences were spending a large amount of time on video online and mobile usage. A migration of advertising dollars to digital environments was going through the roof. We both saw this as an enormous opportunity. We launched the beta version of Newstag.com roughly 18 months ago and were pleasantly surprised at the rapid global pick-up. After only two weeks, we had users in more than 200 countries, and the fact that they were all young – largely under 34 years – confirmed our belief that young people do care about news; you just need to provide a relevant experience.
financed by the brand, the content is more credible and relevant.

How will you tailor the business model to the MENA region?

Dahlin-Andersson: We think that the region will evolve. What we both have observed in the past is that markets that are late to start their evolution eventually have a more rapid progression curve. We believe that the digital media industry in MENA will go through the normal developmental stages, bypassing the legacy problems that many companies in Europe are struggling with.

Eklund: The fact that 6% of the Earth’s population lives in the region, but only 0.6% of the media budgets are spent here, means there is room for growth in the short term as well.

How is content storage and archiving handled?

Eklund: It is all done through our proprietary content management system. All agreements with our content partners have variations, so each piece of content is handled uniquely.

Do you also edit the news before it is published on the platform? How is that done? How big is your editorial team?

Dahlin-Andersson: We do not add or change anything to the content. That is done by 20,000-plus professional journalists who work for our partners. The only thing we do is translate the metadata into tags and add tags for the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

How is the service monetised? What business model do you use for Newstag?

Eklund: There are a number of business models we can create based on our solution. We do not believe programme-based buying and selling of ad inventory is a long-term solution, and we are continuously exploring new models. One that has been successful and is very promising for the MENA region is the ‘newsroom-as-a-service’ offering, where corporations can create their own news shows based on professional news. For example, a bank that wants to attract entrepreneurs may start a weekly or daily ‘news show’ based on tags such as ‘start-ups’, ‘entrepreneur’, ‘new economy’, etc. and then make it available for customers and other stakeholders.

As the content will be anchored in professional, independent journalism which is not directly possible without the economies of the cloud. The business model would not have worked if we had needed to handle the server farms ourselves.

“Crowd curation is at the core of our business model. We do not add any editorial input, as that is done by our media content partners, but we have the largest newsroom in the world. And the service is also future-proof, as it is a mobile first web application”

Camilla Dahlin-Andersson, co-founder, Newstag

Any challenges in running a service such as Newstag?

Dahlin-Andersson: When challenging existing practice, as is the case when we trust the audience to curate the news agenda, there is always friction. Disturbing the balance and doing things in new ways can create some turbulence and obstacles, but as we are trying to balance the needs of all stakeholders, we have been able to overcome the ones we have met so far.

Eklund: We can sometimes be seen as challenging the traditional industry and it can take time to get everyone on board. The fact is that traditional broadcasters and media companies need to adapt their offering, especially when it comes to the news, and Newstag is a component in that solution.

What can we expect from your MENA launch?”

Dahlin-Andersson: We aspire to be a trusted source and partner that creates value for all stakeholders. Our aim is to provide a contemporary experience for our users in the region, not the least in adapting to a new interface. We will also launch a lighter native application alongside the web-application because the bandwidth is not yet as stable in parts of the region, compared to other markets.

Which MENA territories will be your key focus areas, and why?

Eklund: Newstag has carried out extensive testing during the last six months, and to date, the most promising markets, based on our early findings, can be found in the Gulf and North Africa. But it goes without saying that MENA is not a homogeneous market; each country is individual and has its own set of challenges and opportunities, just as in Europe, but in MENA, the language unifies the region.
The Sony E mount is one of the most widely used mounts in the world, thanks to the success of the FS7 and A series mirrorless cameras. It shares the adaptability of the MFT mount, and as such, can take almost any lens via the appropriate adapter, with the benefit of an S35 or FF sensor.

The success of the Sony mount has led to Fuji releasing a new series of cine lenses that take advantage of its flexibility, and I was delighted to be offered the first one, the MK18-55mm zoom.

Cine lenses are fantastic tools, but the advantages they offer are often outweighed on low- to mid-range budgets by their prohibitive cost and weight. As such, the first thing that strikes you about the MK is its weight. Considering cine zooms are traditionally quite bulky and heavy, the 18-55 weighs in at an absurdly low 990g, around the same as a Canon EF mount 24-70mm. This weight (or lack thereof) means the MK will last longer on your shoulder and lends itself more to gimbals than other cine zooms might.

I didn’t have an FS7 at hand while I had the MK, so I used it on my A7S2. The Fuji is designed for an S35 sensor rather than the FF of the A7s, but using either the HD crop or the clear image zoom mode allows the MK to work great.

The construction of the MK is fantastic; it feels like a solid piece of kit at home on any level of production. It offers hard focus stops and fitted 0.8 teeth for using follow focus or remote motors. The focus throw is longer, a welcome addition when compared to the short focus throws on DSLR lenses, and helps for more precise control of focus pulls.

Optically, the lens has clearly been designed to prevent flaring. I found it difficult to introduce a major element of flare, even when wide open and shooting into direct light. It also ships with an ENG-style flip-open lens hood, which adds to this ability to control glare.

Like other high-end cine lenses, the MK18-55 operates as a parfocal lens. As such, it holds focus throughout its zoom range. For documentary and event shooters, this feature is invaluable, as it means you can punch in for focus and

Dubai-based cameraman Andrew Clemson tests the new Fuji MK 18-55 zoom lenses and gives us his verdict
Nautel’s impressive N+1 systems provide high levels of redundancy that is both automated and cost effective.

Power savings, outstanding reliability and world-class customer service were key to Nautel’s 2 Megawatt NX2000 system selection at Europe’s most powerful MW station.

Real time, comprehensive monitoring and control instrumentation via touch screen or web.

Visit Nautel at Stand 8.C49

Pros
• Lightweight, yet solid construction
• Macro function
• Low cost
• Holds focus throughout zoom

Cons
• Slight distortion on the wide end
• Currently only offered in E mount

Overall, for the money Fujifilm is asking for this lens, it is an absolutely remarkable piece of kit. I don’t think there is another lens on the market that can offer half of what it does for anywhere near its RRP. It has its quirks, but for one will be keeping this as one of my go-to lenses for Sony camera work, and eagerly look forward to adding the upcoming MK50-135mm to my camera bag.

Andrew Clemson is a Dubai-based cinematographer.

*crash zoom wide with no fear of a soft image. The MK has a built-in back focus adjustment that allows you to quickly tune the lens to maintain its focus. This can be done in 30 seconds once you have done it a few times, and any ENG shooter will see it as a welcome addition and something they have seen on lenses in the past. The MK also shares another feature with traditional ENG lenses in the form of its macro function. Adjusting the macro ring on the rear of the lens allows more precise control and the shortening of close focus. This function allows a close focus of around 2-3 inches, even at 18mm. Breathing, or the lack of it, is excellent. There is a tiny amount of chromatic aberration is also excellent. It was almost non-existent in the real-world footage I shot.

Overall, for the money Fujifilm is asking for this lens, it is an absolutely remarkable piece of kit. I don’t think there is another lens on the market that can offer half of what it does for anywhere near its RRP. It has its quirks, but for one will be keeping this as one of my go-to lenses for Sony camera work, and eagerly look forward to adding the upcoming MK50-135mm to my camera bag.

Andrew Clemson is a Dubai-based cinematographer.

Pros
• Lightweight, yet solid construction
• Macro function
• Low cost
• Holds focus throughout zoom

Cons
• Slight distortion on the wide end
• Currently only offered in E mount

Overall, for the money Fujifilm is asking for this lens, it is an absolutely remarkable piece of kit. I don’t think there is another lens on the market that can offer half of what it does for anywhere near its RRP.

Andrew Clemson is a Dubai-based cinematographer.
As a long-time user of Sound Devices equipment, I’m always excited when new audio products are introduced. In April, Sound Devices announced an update to the MixPre series, the MixPre-3 and the MixPre-6.

While the MixPre has been around for a few years, this is a major redesign and a new way forward for this series. As well as being mixers, they now have built-in recorders and can be used as a USB audio interface.

After waiting a few weeks for them to become available, NMK Electronics let me know it had received one of each model. I picked up the first MixPre-6 in the region the next day.

I knew from the reviews I read that this was a small device, but until you have it in your hands you don’t realise how small it actually is. While compact, it packs in an enormous amount of functionality.

Both models are fundamentally the same and are built around Sound Devices’ new Kashmir microphone preamps. These preamps have a very low noise floor, analogue limiters and new 32-bit analogue to digital converters, to ensure the highest quality audio. The key difference between the models is the number of channels. The MixPre-3 has three XLR/TRS inputs and can record five tracks (3x ISO + LR); the MixPre-6 has four XLR/TRS inputs, an unbalanced 3.5mm input for channels 5 & 6 and can record eight tracks (6x ISO + LR). The MixPre-6 offers an extended sample rate up to 192kHz, compared to the MixPre-3’s maximum of 96kHz.

Both record to an SD card, but sadly there is only one slot for a card, which means there is no internal back-up. This is one of the few things about the MixPre that I’m not excited about. While this is unlikely to be an issue for most users, SD cards do fail at times, so it would have been a nice addition.

The small capacitive touch screen is very usable, and the layout makes it very simple to change the functions and set up the device. I thought it was going to be hard to use when I first saw it, but the user interface (UI) is very good. I wouldn’t want to use the small on-screen keyboard to input anything more than a few characters, but with a USB socket for a physical keyboard or using the Wingman app, this is not needed for the most part.

The only time you have to use the on-screen keyboard is to input the project name.

You have the option to have the units running in basic or advanced modes. Basic mode is a simpler interface with fewer...
also offers an eight-battery option that takes four AA batteries and Devices includes a battery sled same size battery sled. Sound options and both models use the production recording set-up, they are excellent. For videographers who purchase this to add high-quality sound to their videos, there are a few functions that make the workflow very easy. There is a tripod connector on the top which retracts into the device when not in use but pops up when you use the included Allen key to screw the MixPre into the base of a camera. On the bottom, there is a tripod socket to attach to a tripod. You can also plug a micro HDMI cable from the camera into the MixPre. This will start and stop the recorder at the same time as the camera, and you can use the stereo output from the MixPre to send a feed into the camera. This will make syncing sound easy in post production. While the MixPre doesn’t have a built-in timecode generator like all the higher-end recorders from Sound Devices, you can input timecode by using the AUX and changing the function to Timecode in the menu. You can also bring a timecode into the MixPre via micro HDMI. If there is no timecode input detected, you can set the timecode function to Time of Day or Off, which starts all recordings at zero. As there is no timecode clock, there is no option to select the frame rate of the recordings. The default setting seems to be 30fps. However, if you have a timecode input from the micro HDMI or AUX, the correct frame rate will be automatically set.

**“Both versions of the MixPre are excellent and offer an incredible amount of functionality in a small and lightweight package. I would personally recommend the MixPre-6, as you get the extra channels and higher sample rate”**

Simon Charles, sound recordist

CloudAir Next Generation Ecosystem for IP ChannelPlayout
This highly innovative Cloud Solution is all about speed of channel set up and management, with unlimited scalability, affordability and easy to use.

PlayBox Neo Channel-in-a-Box & Workflow platform
A powerful evolutionary new version with plenty of new features, ensuring you will continue to enjoy using the world’s best-selling playout & channel branding product line.
The Wingman app for iOS and Android works out of the box on the MixPre; the higher-end six-series recorders require an additional dongle, so you can download the application and use with the MixPre immediately. I would highly recommend using the app, as it gives you a larger display and makes inputting notes, changing track and scene names, and arming and disarming tracks much easier. You can't change levels or monitor through the application, which is a shame. Depending on which device you are using, you should get approximately 10m of range. For VR and 360 applications this is very useful, as you can leave the recorder with the mic and hide out of view of the camera.

As well as being excellent standalone recorders and mixers, the MixPre are also USB audio interfaces with the ability to simultaneously record internally as well as stream multiple channels via USB to DAWs (digital audio workstations) such as ProTools, Nuendo, Logic X and many others. I have tested with ProTools and WaveLab, and the experience was great; the sound quality is fantastic and the unit's headphone amplifier is a definite upgrade from the headphone socket on laptops.

One thing I found was that the headphone output of my MacBook Pro will only play sounds recorded at 48kHz or below. I recorded at a higher sample rate and it would not play if the headphones were plugged in, so using the MixPre as an interface means I can now use headphones to listen to sounds recorded up to 192kHz.

In conclusion, both versions of the MixPre are excellent and offer an incredible amount of functionality in a small and lightweight package. I would personally recommend the MixPre-6, as you get the extra channels and higher sample rate. These are also very reasonably priced for what you are getting; the MixPre-3 retails for $649 and the MixPre-6 is $899.

Simon Charles is a Dubai-based sound recordist.

### Pros
- Small and light
- Easy to use
- Excellent sounding preamps

### Cons
- Small screen
- Single SD card socket

### Wish list
- HiRose power adapter
- Linking of all four channels
- A second SD card slot

Both MixPre-3 and MixPre-6 are built around Sound Devices’ new Kashmir microphone preamps.
2017 has been a good year for 815 Studios, a UAE-based production house helmed by co-founders Guy Mannion and Thomas Mitchell. Just as the production house marks its fifth birthday, it has also ushered in a new phase in its production journey by bagging its first TV show.

The production house recently delivered the pilot episodes of a home-grown reality TV show, which is claimed to be a first-of-its-kind in the region. Conceptualised and produced by Pandre Group, the show is being co-produced by 815 Studios as the core production house to facilitate and develop the show format, and ultimately deliver the final project. Production and rental company Atlas Television was contracted by Dubai-based agency JCM to cover the live performances. Atlas took care of the live performance coverage, which required a live-camera setup using the Sony PMW-300 cameras: two cameras were on tripods, two moveable cameras were on stage and in the audience, while the last camera was fixed above the venue as a safety wide shot.

815 Studios produced the segments and handled the post-production. Guy Mannion, Chief Executive of 815 Studios, who co-founded the studio with longtime friend Thomas Mitchell, COO, says the production house has completed two pilot episodes of 30 minutes each.

“The show is called LMYW Presents (Love Music Your Way) and we have shot an hour of content for that. It is an interactive show where the performers will have a chance to interact with each other as well as the audience, and create interesting content for viewers. We are using Apple Final Cut Pro (FCP) for editing. We have two edit suites in our studio and both operate FCP. In order to add some more interesting elements to the show, we added artists’ interviews to the original footage of the karaoke sessions. Everything was filmed at the venue,” says Mannion.

Mannion and Mitchell, both in their mid-twenties, seem quite excited about their first TV show. The two have been friends since they were 12 and have come a long way following their passion for filmmaking.

The production house was set up in 2012, when the two were barely 20 years old. The duo began by producing social media videos for Virgin Megastore, which gradually progressed to TVCs and corporate films. As they expanded their scope of operations to commercials and corporate films, their client portfolio began to grow as well.

The studio has also been associated with a number of live events.

“We have executed production and post-production for many high-profile events in Dubai, and have also produced numerous music videos for international artists.

We were selected and contracted as the official video production company for Global Village's landmark 20th season this year,” Mannion says.

“ARN has been a very big client; we have done TVCs, films, documentaries and several other projects for them. We completed a 24-hour-straight documentary shoot of the Kiva Pade Shoe for Virgin Radio, completing the ‘24 Hours in 24 Hours’ campaign,” Mitchell adds.

The pair agrees that their passion for filmmaking has fuelled their journey as producers and business owners in Dubai as their production house, 815 Studios, completes five years.

Filmmakers Guy Mannion and Thomas Mitchell recount their production house's journey with their clients and projects, including their recent work on a reality TV show called LMYW Presents (Love Music Your Way). The show has been in production for two pilot episodes, and the duo discuss their experience of using Apple Final Cut Pro (FCP) for editing. They also talk about their previous work with clients such as Virgin Megastore, and how they have expanded their scope of operations to include commercials and corporate films. The pair share their excitement about their first TV show, and discuss the challenges and successes they have faced so far in their five-year journey as producers in Dubai.
The production house has hired award-winning DoP Daniel O’Flaherty, who is known for his work on *Sunday Funday With The Mosquera* (2015).

Music is a strong element of their productions and they define their style of production as clean, with certain story elements standing out to connect with the viewers.

They say track selection is the key in post. “We make sure all our content for every brand is consistent and keep the key elements and themes throughout the video. We have an in-house music composer who originally produces the soundtrack and core themes to every single project we complete, from scratch.”

The pair studied filmmaking for three years before moving to Dubai to set up their own production house. “It’s been a slow progression. We were handling everything in the beginning. Between the two of us, we were handling pre-production, camerawork and post. Now we have hired a DoP and we are shooting and scouting and handling everything in the pre-production and post. Now we have a DoP and are scouting and handling everything in the pre-production and post.”

Our work, because we feel our films speak for themselves. We are very flexible in the way we operate. For instance, we don’t limit the number of edits for our projects. We work with clients even if there are several rounds of edits required,” says Mannion.

New technology is another area that fascinates the team, who are presently experimenting with 360-degree filming and virtual reality. “We invested in a GoPro Omni when it was still very new to the market. I think it’s an amazing piece of equipment with very smart software that makes it very handy for 360-degree video and VR. It offers a system for creating high-quality videos that can be viewed on VR headsets like Oculus Rift,” comments Mitchell.

The production of viral videos and after-movies is keeping 815 Studios quite busy these days. The filmmakers use drones and Sony Alpha 7s quite extensively on these projects.

“The after-movie concept is very popular in the West. We condense big events such as RedFest DXB into five-minute capsules using time lapse and other techniques. It’s like a highlights video that explains what the event is all about,” says Mannion.

The edit suite at 815 Studios.
There is growing understanding across the industry that we are on the brink of a massive change, a huge disruption in the way broadcast and media content is created, managed and delivered. IP – the hot topic of the moment – is a critical enabler for this transformation, but it is not the goal.

The real transformation will be brought about by evolving media operations from running on purpose-built hardware to IP-based, commercial off-the-shelf networking and computer equipment. To really take advantage of this software-based approach, you need to be able to scale, and that can only happen if you are totally open to the cloud.

Microservices are at the core of the shift to software-based design architecture and offer several benefits by way of futureproofing your network, says Glodina Lostanlen, Chief Marketing Officer, Imagine Communications.

**The Age of Microservices**

At the core of the shift to software-based design architecture are microservices. Part and parcel of the DevOps movement that has redefined the way applications are maintained and updated, microservice design principles foster unprecedented agility by essentially deconstructing monolithic services into discrete, autonomous components. Functions are no longer confined to one task, such as a transcode function, but do it with supreme efficiency. The componentized nature of microservices allows precise customisation by enabling a series of microservices to be linked or chained together to accomplish a specific function.

A typical transcoder is composed of multiple functions, including a de-interlacer. But what if the incoming content is already progressive? In this scenario, a de-interlacing function is superfluous, consuming precious power and processor cycles that could be dedicated to other operations. A microservices architecture allows broadcast engineers to construct transcoding operations that achieve a maximum balance of resource consumption and efficiency. Microservices enable media organisations to quickly and precisely sell and release resources as required. Perhaps the most valuable benefit of moving operations to a microservices architecture is the ability to futureproof a network through continuous innovation. Unlike monolithic applications, which cannot be broken down into discrete business functions, cloud-native applications can be updated and upgraded on a continuous basis without disrupting operations.

Microservices enable media organisations to quickly and precisely sell and release resources as required.

Glodina Lostanlen, Chief Marketing Officer, Imagine Communications

**“A microservices architecture allows broadcast engineers to construct transcoding operations that achieve a maximum balance of resource consumption and efficiency. Microservices enable media organisations to quickly and precisely sell and release resources as required.”**

Microservices are at the core of the shift to software-based design architecture and offer several benefits by way of futureproofing your network, says Glodina Lostanlen, Chief Marketing Officer, Imagine Communications.

**Microservices are at the core of the shift to software-based design architecture and offer several benefits by way of futureproofing your network, says Glodina Lostanlen, Chief Marketing Officer, Imagine Communications.**

- Extensibility: Developers work on individual processes rather than requiring familiarity with the entire application, which speeds up development. Further, open standards mean that third parties or the end user can create the functionality they specifically require, again without the need to have a detailed understanding of the entire structure.

- Synergy: As more and more of infrastructure moves to microservices, you can move to a common code base spanning the entire enterprise. Software commonality means easier maintenance, of course, but also promotes tighter integration in workflows. It also eliminates the silo architecture which has long been a brake on smooth interworking in broadcast.

- Agility: This is the overall composite benefit which comes from aggregating all these capabilities. Microservice-based architectures deliver speed to market, rapid innovation, ready extensibility and geo-dispersion.

The result is an infrastructure that is responsive and reliable enough to enable media companies to keep pace with the shifting and evolving requirements of the market. To conclude, it is imperative that media organisations make the move to microservices in order to level the playing field with competitors such as internet-based SVOD providers that have built their businesses from the beginning using a cloud-native architecture.

Glodina Lostanlen is Chief Marketing Officer at Imagine Communications.
IBC2017, which takes place from September 14 to 19 at RAI, Amsterdam, will feature a host of new technologies and products to improve the business of broadcast and user experience. Here are some key showcases to look for.

IBC2017 will spotlight the industry’s most cutting-edge technologies to transform the user experience. The exhibition floor promises to showcase the most disruptive technologies driving the industry today. Real life applications of Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and Mixed Reality (MR) will be on show with opportunities throughout the show to learn more about these new technologies – from their current place in the market to the opportunities they offer, as well as examining technological challenges and user experiences.

The IBC conference, this year, features speakers from Google, Freeview Australia, DMC and DTG discussing the myriad disruptions currently facing broadcast on all fronts. With IP-only delivery, on demand consumption, and personalised user experiences, what can broadcasters do today to make the most of these transformations?

BroadcastPro ME speaks to some of the IBC exhibitors about their expectations from the show. Company heads give an insight into their technology and product showcases, and discuss the trending topics on the show floor.

Register at show.ibc.org
#IBCShow
Why did SAM need a new leader at its helm now?
I plan on building on the platform Tim Thorsteinson has built to continue SAM’s success in the coming years. It’s clear to me, only a few weeks in, that we have some incredibly talented engineers and an amazing portfolio of products. The foundation I have to work with is really impressive.

Could you share your vision for the company and what strategy you intend to implement and where you plan to take SAM in the next couple of years?
My vision for SAM is, of course, to be part of the team that drives significant value creation. However, the real question is how will we accomplish that value creation and the answer is by investing in and leveraging our engineering development expertise to deliver first-to-market, best-in-class solutions across the media & entertainment sector. Similarly, we will actively look for opportunities to accelerate this value creation through very targeted mergers and acquisitions.

At IBC, what will SAM focus on?
You should expect our announcement to align with the key industry drivers including: IP transition, 4K/8K/HEVC development, AIMS adoption and the evolution to cloud-based solutions.

As an industry expert, what do you think will be the key themes not just at IBC but within broadcast, in general?
There is a lot of interest in fully integrated cloud/4K/HEVC live production workflows – specifically in SAM’s ability to handle uncompressed signals with the same functionality and speed as existing HD workflows. IP continues to be a hot topic for our industry, but from our perspective, what is really interesting is how that technology is applied rather than how that technology is applied.

What is your strategy for moving into a more robust cloud infrastructure and collaborating with other players on this front?
An increasingly IP-centric approach to content and service delivery is something that we will see across the board in the industry. Various cloud hosting technologies afford broadcasters the flexibility to launch new channels quickly, or as temporary services, and be able to take them down again, better matching their costs with their usage.

How strongly do you feel about the AIMS standard and the division of responsibilities that remain divided on this issue?
We’re seeing massive technology changes in the industry. Any big changes to the market create opportunities for the companies that are agile enough and innovative enough to exploit them. SAM is seeing strong growth in new technologies including software-based solutions, IP and new formats such as 4K and HDR. Our ethos at SAM is that we are an enabler – our role is not to dictate

what technology our customers adopt or in what way. We work in close collaboration with customers to ascertain the right approach for them and help them ensure that any technology migration happens at a speed and in a manner that aligns with their business objectives.

How do you see IP evolving in the coming years and what would SAM’s role be in that development?
IP is already happening and we have many customers that have successfully deployed our technology. SAM is enabling customers to make the transition to IP and we work to deliver solutions that help customers meet the specific needs of their business.

We work with our customers to migrate to the technologies that are right for them. The market is evolving and customers need to be able to compare and contrast different solutions – our role is to ensure we are a valuable point of reference in this transition. We are well positioned to help our customers migrate to IP and to advise them on the best path for them.

What do you foresee as the industry’s biggest challenges at the moment and how do you think manufacturers such as SAM are addressing them?
We’re seeing massive technology changes in the industry. Any big changes to the market create opportunities for the companies that are agile enough and innovative enough to exploit them. SAM is seeing strong growth in new technologies including software-based solutions, IP and new formats such as 4K and HDR. Our ethos at SAM is that we are an enabler – our role is not to dictate

what new technology our customers adopt or in what way. We work in close collaboration with customers to ascertain the right approach for them and help them ensure that any technology migration happens at a speed and in a manner that aligns with their business objectives.

How do you see IP evolving in the coming years and what would SAM’s role be in that development?
IP is already happening and we have many customers that have successfully deployed our technology. SAM is enabling customers to make the transition to IP and we work to deliver solutions that help customers meet the specific needs of their business.

We work with our customers to migrate to the technologies that are right for them. The market is evolving and customers need to be able to compare and contrast different solutions – our role is to ensure we are a valuable point of reference in this transition. We are well positioned to help our customers migrate to IP and to advise them on the best path for them.

What is your strategy for moving into a more robust cloud infrastructure and collaborating with other players on this front?
An increasingly IP-centric approach to content and service delivery is something that we will see across the board in the industry. Various cloud hosting technologies afford broadcasters the flexibility to launch new channels quickly, or as temporary services, and be able to take them down again, better matching their costs with their usage.

How strongly do you feel about the AIMS standard and the division of responsibilities that remain divided on this issue?
We’re seeing massive technology changes in the industry. Any big changes to the market create opportunities for the companies that are agile enough and innovative enough to exploit them. SAM is seeing strong growth in new technologies including software-based solutions, IP and new formats such as 4K and HDR. Our ethos at SAM is that we are an enabler – our role is not to dictate
Ross Video

Audience engagement is key! This whole issue of audience engagement (or fan engagement in the sports world) is a hot topic and we see that continue into IBC. Content creators are still under a great deal of pressure to create more compelling content in the face of flat or decreasing budgets, and they need reliable and proven tools and solutions that can help them overcome these challenges. That argument applies regardless of whether you’re a TV channel, a live entertainment venue or a sports stadium. Also, we’ve seen some big steps forward in the world of graphics, with several manufacturers of virtual graphics platforms incorporating the Unreal gaming engine into their offerings. This is exciting for broadcast operators that have moved the conversation away from simply digitizing their enterprise to workflow control, where ease and speed of configuration and operation become paramount.

Finals, I’m excited to see so many new entrants in the world of broadcast. E-sports in particular is really coming of age, and it’s fascinating to see how non-traditional content creators are meeting the challenges of becoming expert broadcasters without being broadcast experts. That’s surely the embodiment of our tagline, ‘Smart Production’!

We’re seeing a landscape where powerful graphics, virtual reality and social media integration are key to creating and monetising audience engagement. It will be a balance of experience and engagement that will separate the winners from the losers as the industry continues to evolve and, arguably, fragment.

Areas of innovation

The industry can expect new products to be launched in two key areas: audience engagement and smart production. The former will see ever more sophisticated and realistic virtual graphics platforms emerging to market, as well as products that draw from social media and other third-party sources and allow producers to present their content in a more creative and engaging way. In terms of the latter, it’s all about integration and interoperability. I think we’ve consistently seen customers asking the industry for improvements in these areas, and we’ve responded with solutions that can control (and be controlled by) third-party products. I don’t believe that broadcast technology is becoming homogenous, but I do think customers are increasingly focusing on ease of integration and operational flexibility. New products must meet customers’ creative, commercial and technical needs, and that requires us to put smart production at the heart of our product development efforts.

Ross Video at IBC 2017

While our product announcements are still under wraps, IBC attendees should expect lots of great innovations from Ross to support both audience engagement and smart production. Some recurring themes will be:

- Adding more live content without a single pass in added render effort
- Realising a virtual control room in a box for mid-size productions
- Creating a superior graphics experience with premium 3D motion graphics, AR/VR and robotic cameras
- Leveraging IP virtualisation for smart production

Middle East – a promising market

The Middle East remains a vibrant and important market for Ross, and we’re delighted to have recently appointed a new sales manager in the region. Our customer base has now reached a size where we need additional resources in the MENA markets, and I expect us to continue to invest accordingly.

David Ross, CEO, Ross Video

Irdeto

Watermarking remains hot!

The media industry has been undergoing unprecedented changes, driven by technology innovation, new entrants and economic opportunities. With consumer expectations around OTT increasing, this will be a hot topic at IBC2017, in addition to the related piracy challenges. We also expect watermarking to be a hot topic, and this is something we will certainly be focused on. For pay media providers to secure the rights of UHD content and early-release movies, they need to have a watermarking solution. This is also crucial for live sports, as the impact of piracy in a short revenue window for content like this can be substantial.

For a MENA perspective, one of the biggest challenges the pay-TV market faces is fragmentation, and there is a need to address the consumer price entry point and experience. With OTT video consumption on unmanaged devices growing rapidly in MENA, we would expect this to be a key point for discussion around this market.

At this years IBC, we expect to see a focus on new ways to address the ongoing challenges as already outlined. Major advances we would expect would be around the use of open platforms such as Android TV, and the growth of artificial intelligence. We would expect Al to begin to take more of a prominent role in new products. From our point of view, Al plays a key role in enhancing and automating security functions. For example, to combat redistribution piracy, Al enables the detection of illegal streams through semantic analysis of social media advertisements and/or web page indexes, and by enabling inspection of visual elements in the redistributed content, matching it to the original source. The key benefit is the scale at which the system can operate, and this is particularly important for live sports piracy where there are thousands of pirate streams which need to be analysed in real time.

Android TV – a technology disruptor

One of the trickiest challenges today for operators is how to secure and deliver content consumers want for both managed and unmanaged devices without multiplying efforts and cost. To make the transition even harder, Hollywood studios and sports rights holders have also raised security requirements for premium content such as 4K UHD.

We also expect the debate around Android TV to continue at IBC 2017. Android rose from zero to global dominance of mobile markets in under seven years, so it’s little wonder that Android TV is being taken seriously as a disruptor. Despite security concerns around Android being an open platform, which can be addressed, Android TV should be a serious consideration for operators’ next STB platform.

Irdeto will also improve our 360 Security suite, which provides comprehensive security for movie studios, sports rights holders and OTT and broadcast operators across the content value chain.

Middle East strategy

Every global market has its nuances, and a slightly different approach will always be required. OTT piracy or content redistribution is a global problem which impacts the MENA region as much as anywhere else, so our strategy does not change drastically here. However, fragmentation is also a challenge in the pay-TV market in MENA and we continue to work with operators to ensure premium security is an enabler through our 360 Security suite. This includes online piracy detection and forensic watermarking technologies for live and VOD content. We also expect this to be a key point of discussion around this market. We believe this will improve the overall pay-TV experience, allowing operators to grow their business. Another important facet of our strategy in MENA is working with operators to educate consumers on piracy. In a recent consumer piracy survey that we conducted, the respondents who view pirated content, 46% in Egypt and 47% in the GCC said they would stop or watch less pirated content if they understood the negative impact of piracy on the media industry. When it comes to awareness around the legality of pirating video content, the survey also showed that nearly a third of all consumers in MENA (28% in GCC and 39% in Egypt) don’t know whether it is illegal to share or produce pirated video content. This suggests that educating consumers about the damage that piracy causes could have a real impact on the problem.

Khaled Al-Jamal, Head of Sales, MENA, Irdeto
Moving to the cloud is priority

Media organisations are looking to capitalise on the efficiency, agility, flexibility and scalability that the cloud facilitates. Video over IP – creating a unified IP environment is key to making high-quality, high-speed video distribution over an IP network possible and reliable.

Immersive experiences – popular sports broadcasts are increasingly employing virtual and augmented reality to make viewer experiences more immersive, while filmmakers are enhancing the cinema viewing experience with immersive audio.

Multiple platform distribution – more media organisations are aggressively pursuing low-cost ways to reach audiences through social, digital, OTT platforms.

The continuing rise of 4K, with companies like Netflix and Amazon producing 4K content, the rise of the media format is firmly taking hold.

Content protection and system security – content protection and system security are more critical than ever, particularly as the industry embraces open workflows and cloud-based workflows. The inaugural Avid Customer Association (ACA) vote, which gave Avid’s customer community an opportunity to directly influence Avid’s future offerings, revealed that the vast majority of media professionals (71.7%) are considering moving some part of their infrastructure or workflow to the cloud over the next two years. But just 4.8% are considering moving their entire infrastructure and workflow to the cloud. One of the growing debates among media organisations will be when and how to migrate to the cloud. That’s why Avid is leading the media industry’s ability to migrate media production to the cloud, at their own pace and in the way that best suits their operational realities.

We’re giving media organisations the complete flexibility to create, distribute and control their content using the deployment type that works best for them – on premises, private cloud, on-premises, hybrid cloud.

Many of our latest innovations are all about leveraging the cloud, because extending media production to the cloud – in the way that best fits your operational realities – opens the opportunity to both increase production capacity and ease the financial burden on content creation and distribution.

Avid at IBC2017

We will unveil significant new developments that address the media industry’s most urgent needs, and build on the cloud innovations for the MediaCentral Platform and its comprehensive suite of tools and workflow solutions.

Lewis Hernandez, Jr., Chairman & CEO, Avid

Imagine Communications

Next-gen architectures will be the focus

While the transition to IP, new services, cloud-native, the AMMA roadmap and SMPTE2110 will be obvious topics, I think there’s a strong desire for IBC attendees to witness real proof points that next-gen architectures are hosting all types of media operations and delivering real results today. Media companies are looking for evidence that the vision of a more agile and versatile technology foundation has evolved from theory into practice.

Media professionals enjoy seeing the latest eye-catching demonstrations and the hottest technologies to emerge from the labs. But what they really want to talk about is the practicality of implementation of these innovations. We should see much changes from last year’s show in terms of popular categories.

IP cloud, HDR/4K, HDR, live production, playout and OTT will all be well represented.

Imagine Communications at IBC2017

We will be demonstrating a range of solutions in live, playout, multiscreen and ad management aimed at helping broadcasters and other media companies to drive the adoption of the modernisation of their production, playout and distribution facilities.

All our next-gen solutions share a common microservices-based architecture. Our early start down the next-gen path and commitment to microservices as building blocks has helped reassure customers of the versatility and future-proof nature of our solutions.

Charlie Vogt, CEO, Imagine Communications

Cinegy

IP and AI to take centre stage

It’s got to be IP. UHD is ingrained. It’s real. IP is the new kid on the block that still has some distance to travel to be match-fit and be fully accepted in the neighbourhood.

SMPTE2110 going to be a panacea, or is it going to be the starting position?

All that buzz around AI

There will probably be a buzz about new products emerging around AI, but it won’t necessarily amount to much more than a relatively short-term fad before they fade into the background as useful, but non-essential. It will be interesting to see just how that emerges, and how long of a tail it has.

A cloud of IP-ready software and hardware will emerge. There will be the access and the acceptance of SMPTE2110, which itself depends on a lot of other technologies to make it useful. It is better than SMPTE 2022-4, but at present SMPTE 2110 opens up a range of security issues that are outside its purview, and that’s problematic for emerging products that are counting on it.

Lewis Kirkaldie – Head of Product Management, Cinegy

Riedel

IP-based workflows under the radar

The transition to IP-based workflows is expected to gather a lot of attention. Trade organisations are hard at work to finalise the standards that are currently before us, and once that happens, we will finally see broadcasters moving ahead with their IP plans.

We should be designing workflows that can rapidly change without needing to throw away investments, either with software upgrades or some kind of hybrid approach. We see many clients who are waiting for the standards to ratify before making any major decisions.

New products that simplify the art of broadcasting, both making it easier and by reducing production costs, will be popular.

Riedel at IBC2017

We will showcase the integrated Riedel ecosystem for seamless, bullet-proof communications. Bolero is a big focus for us, and we will be plenty on hand for clients to see and evaluate, but we are still putting a lot of effort into MediaCentral and the concept of decentralised routing.

Then, with our MicroN device, we have continued to develop apps to expand its impressive list of capabilities. The MultiViewer app is a perfect example of this, as is our brand-new MedioNet IP app, which creates a seamless bridge between MediNet and future IP networks.

Christian Bockskopf, Head of Marketing, Riedel

TMD

Cloud and IP connectivity is trending

There will be a lot of talk about IP connectivity and applications in the cloud. I think, this year, the discussions will be around practical implementations, with major media companies moving large parts of their infrastructure to new platforms and the cloud.

They will be talking about the business case. What are the cost implications of moving from the capital-intensive traditional broadcast infrastructure to the cloud and new licence models?

The other big debate, I think, will be around cyber security, an issue which we have not had to face in the past but which will become very important when we have critical systems connected to the cloud.

The emphasis will be on efficiency and on creating precise functionality for each user. Expect microservices to be big, allowing functionality to scale up and down as required. The move to software-oriented architectures will also see overall control systems and network analytics become much more important.

Solutions with a flexible, microservices-based approach to assist and workflow management will be our focus at the show.

Paul Wilkins, Director of Marketing and Solutions, TMD

83
Grass Valley

4K UHD vs HDR debate to continue

Even though it is not a longer
new topic, I think a majority of
the discussion will be around
and infrastructures and how
to continue to increase production
efficiency with faster networks
and more native support.

We’ll see more real-world
success stories and more
vendors working together to
provide integrated solutions.

I expect a lot of debate over
the benefits of 4K UHD vs HDR
in the short-term. There are
still challenges with the delivery
of 4K content to the consumer,
but HDR provides immediate
and some would argue, more
visible – benefits to the viewer.

Just as IP will be the hot
topic, I believe it will lead the
way in new products as well.
Visitors will see all sorts of IP
implementation in production
equipment as well as new
routing and switching solutions.

Grass Valley at IBC2017

Grass Valley will highlight
products that help customers
create, control and carry
content, including the new LDK
6813 Compact Series Native
HD/SD/HD-SDI/4K High-Speed
System Camera; the new compact
3RU K-Frame V-series Video
Production switcher with the
SR1000 control panel; GV
Convergent, GV Node and
Kaldo HD for the IP transition;
GV STADUS Video Production
and Content Management
system; and ITX On-Demand
to automate the preparation of
VOU and catch-up TV assets.

Tim Thaves, Vice President of Marketing
Communications, Grass Valley

SIS LIVE

Remote production in focus

As far as it relates to SIS LIVE, UHD
and remote production service will be a key theme.

360 VR remains a debatable topic,
largely around how well it ultimately
translates to the quality of the viewer experience.
When you continue to hear of people being made unwell
through VR, it gives you pause. It’s been
estimated that up to 40% of people are
disorientated to the point of discomfort
with certain VR experiences, so it’s
up to the experts to debate the pros
and cons – and there are compelling
cases for each side – to arrive at what
is a palatable and profitable
tool for an acceptable viewer experience.

VR is fantastic for demos, but
at present the “Wow!” tends to
diminish pretty quickly in practical
applications. It’s uncertain whether
that’s to do with production
practicality or the technology itself,
but that’s why there’s a need for the experts
to debate the subject.

New innovations

The recent surge in user-generated
content almost certainly means there
will be a noticeable emergence of
applications that will feed into
the ability to create more and higher quality
user-generated content for broadcast and
– this is not what a lot of people want to hear – social media and
other online portals. I expect to see loads of
new applications for content generation
and manipulation across the board.

Phil Govan – Commercial Director, SIS LIVE

Argosy

The transition to IP hots up this year

The transition to IP will continue
to be a hot topic. Not only are broadcasters looking to share
access and control of their software-based
infrastructure via IP, but the same goes for control and
monitoring of power and hardware.

Broadcasters are seeking to manage
power more efficiently and in more
financially friendly ways, so they
are investigating the potential of
employing a series of daisy-chained
PDUs that use single IP connections
and a web-based GUI to keep
abreast of the status of every output
(thus every piece of equipment in the racks) in different locations.

The other trend is the growing
interest in IP and dynamic
range video. Both demand an
increase in bandwidth, so they
will need the finest cables,
precisely matching connectors
and high-quality terminations
and panels. At least part of this
will be carried in broadcast digital video,
requiring an upgrade of the
existing infrastructure.

There is still resistance to IP,
particularly for live production.
Part of this resistance is the fear of
the unknown, but there is genuine
concern about the issues, which
have yet to be fully discussed,
like cyber-security. IP is not a
goal in itself – the transition
only becomes advantageous
when it delivers operational
and cost benefits. Achieving
those without compromising
the output of the future will be
the next stage of the debate.

With the SMPTE ST 2110
standard close to publication, many
vendors will be keen to promote
products for low production
and delivery which support it. We will
also see a lot of new cameras
offering HDR, 4K, small form
factors for point of view and
so on. Productions use many
more cameras today, to provide
more engagement. The latest
generation of outside broadcast
trucks supports 32 cameras, for
example. More options for exciting
pictures means more infrastructure
to route and deliver these signals.

Chris Smeston, Managing Director, Argosy EMEA

What’s behind the Play

Broadcast Wireless Systems

HEVC encoding to come of age

HEVC encoding in wireless systems will
come of age this year and be an important
topic of discussion. Everyone has been
working towards it, but this year you
will see it working as it was envisaged.

Inevitably, IP as a distribution platform
will be on many people’s minds. There
have now been complete systems built
on IP with no SDI in sight, and how
that approach manifests itself going
forward will be discussed at length.

Most ‘new’ products are more likely to
be refinements of existing products.
The rate of change has tended to be more
incremental in recent years because the
market is so saturated. IP has made it
possible, and perhaps much easier, to
see what’s possible in software. Software
has all the momentum. But how you
decide what software is actually of real,
demonstrative benefit to your business or
decide what software is actually of real,
demonstrative benefit to your business or
decide what software is actually of real,
demonstrative benefit to your business or
decide what software is actually of real,
**Axon**

**THE WORLD’S FASTEST 4K AND IP MULTIVIEWER**

When it comes to speed and flexibility, there’s nothing to compare with our new SymView modular multiviewer for 4K and IP production.

Powerful, modular and with unequalled low-processing delay and start-up, SymView is the perfect fit for a range of applications from major fast-response production monitor walls to small OB-Van preview monitoring.

Ready for 4K today? To see SymView’s power and versatility for yourself, please contact our sales team via www.axon.tv

See us at IBC2017, Amsterdam RAI, Hall 10 Stand A21

**Tedial**

**MAM remains significant!**

The hot topics will be centred on MAM and workflow operations in cloud infrastructure and adopting international standards for greater efficiencies and cost savings, such as implementing the use of the Society of Motion Pictures & Television Engineers’ interoperable master format throughout a media operation. Some of the topics of discussion will include verifiable war by of news from diverse sources, security of media in on-premises and cloud systems, and field production tools. An area to watch is the application of artificial intelligence software systems to automate metadata generation and collection, and the application of massive amounts of metadata to metadata-driven workflows.

Tedial at IBC2017: Tedial will show the benefits of an enterprise MAM with 100% integration to live event and sports production tools, which extends live production capabilities and increases the value of event archives and post-production opportunities. We will also display reporting dashboards for greater operations management of key performance indicators, and we will highlight our Evolution Version Factory, a single workflow that accepts one file input and automatically distributes to an unlimited number of locations for automated OTT and VOD distribution.

**Tedial in the Middle East**

Tedial implemented a production MAM at Kuwait TV recently. The project was executed with INC System Integrations and involves a full production support MAM and editing workflows.

David Abel, European Sales Director, Tedial

**Tedial at IBC2017**

Tedial will show the benefits of an enterprise MAM with 100% integration to live event and sports production tools, which extends live production capabilities and increases the value of event archives and post-production opportunities. We will also display reporting dashboards for greater operations management of key performance indicators, and we will highlight our Evolution Version Factory, a single workflow that accepts one file input and automatically distributes to an unlimited number of locations for automated OTT and VOD distribution.

**Tedial in the Middle East**

Tedial implemented a production MAM at Kuwait TV recently. The project was executed with INC System Integrations and involves a full production support MAM and editing workflows.

David Abel, European Sales Director, Tedial

**Remote Production. Take Your Console Anywhere with RP1.**

Mix live to air with no boundaries or borders, reduce production costs and increase content output.

Calrec’s remote production unit gives broadcasters the ability to capture a wider range of live events, such as regional sports, news or music festivals, and mix them in a remote facility thousands of miles away.

Calrec.com #calrecgoingthedistance

**Remote Production. Take Your Console Anywhere with RP1.**

Mix live to air with no boundaries or borders, reduce production costs and increase content output.

Calrec’s remote production unit gives broadcasters the ability to capture a wider range of live events, such as regional sports, news or music festivals, and mix them in a remote facility thousands of miles away.

Calrec.com #calrecgoingthedistance
Zylight debuts Pro-Palette

Zylight will be debuting several new fixtures to the global market at IBC.

Designed for TV studios and theatres, the 350-watt Pro-Palette asymmetric wall washer produces a soft, even field of light with enough output to cover 25-foot cyc walls. It shines pure white for a clean chromakey wash, and features Zylight’s Colour Mode to produce millions of colours without gels or filters.

Built for floor use or truss mount, the lightweight Pro-Palette features solid aluminium and steel construction. Up to four Pro-Palette fixtures can be daisy chained through their powercon connectors. The Pro-Palette features integrated DMX operation as well as an intuitive control panel for smooth 0-100% dimming.

Zylight’s Pro-Zoom line of LED zoom ellipsoidals will also debut at IBC 2017. Developed as a high-powered spot or gobo projector for television stages, broadcast news studios and live theatre, the new ellipsoidal fixtures offer a choice of zoom lenses suited for various lighting projects.

ZOO launches cloud-based dubbing

Subtitling company ZOO Digital will introduce ZOOdubs at IBC. The product acts as an online dubbing studio – from script localisation and adaptation to casting, auditioning, recording and editing. The software platform centralises control, reduces errors and makes it simpler to manage the end-to-end dubbing workflow.

Content owners are given greater visibility of the dubbing process. They are able to track project progress, review scripts and join in live dubbing sessions online from anywhere in the world. Furthermore, collaboration between dubbing directors and voice artists on the direction of dubbing sessions can all take place in real time, live in the cloud.

Stringent cloud-based security protocols ensure that all video, audio and dubbing reference materials are stored securely yet are conveniently accessible to authorised collaborators.

Gordon Duran, President at ZOO Digital, explained: “ZOOdubs delivers a huge step forward for dubbing services. It addresses head-on the key challenges faced by content owners, and aims to shake up an industry which has been crying out for a service provider to do dubbing differently.”

“With ZOOdubs, the process is no longer a black hole but now an end-to-end workflow with complete visibility every step of the way.”

Stand 5.B48

Vitec goes with the flow at IBC

Sachtler and Vinten, both Vitec Group brands are introducing flowtech – an all-new camera tripod technology with quick release brakes and easy adjust levers that enable camera operators to set up and begin using the tripod in an instant.

The flowtech design offers a set of two-stage carbon-fibre tripod legs with an easy-to-remove midlevel spreader, rubber feet, and a payload capacity of 20 kg (44 pounds). Quick-release brakes located at the top of the tripod enable all the legs to be deployed simultaneously and adjust automatically to the ground’s surface, eliminating the need for operators to bend over or manually adjust multiple brakes on each leg. Lightweight and easy to transport, flowtech 75 is specifically designed to be carried comfortably on the camera operator’s shoulder, with magnetic locks ensuring that the tripod legs are stable during transport. Flowtech 75 can be deployed as low as 26 cm (10 inches) and as high as 153 cm (60 inches) without the detachable spreader, and between 63 cm (25 inches) to 157 cm (62 inches) with the spreader. A hinge-lock mechanism allows users to capture low, ground-level shots removing the need to bring a second set of "baby legs" to each shoot. Its torsional stiffness ensures that the tripod will not twist during camera panning movements, an extremely important consideration in all motion picture productions.

Stand 12.D47

Vitec goes with the flow at IBC

Sachtler and Vinten, both Vitec Group brands are introducing flowtech – an all-new camera tripod technology with quick release brakes and easy adjust levers that enable camera operators to set up and begin using the tripod in an instant.

The flowtech design offers a set of two-stage carbon-fibre tripod legs with an easy-to-remove midlevel spreader, rubber feet, and a payload capacity of 20 kg (44 pounds). Quick-release brakes located at the top of the tripod enable all the legs to be deployed simultaneously and adjust automatically to the ground’s surface, eliminating the need for operators to bend over or manually adjust multiple brakes on each leg. Lightweight and easy to transport, flowtech 75 is specifically designed to be carried comfortably on the camera operator’s shoulder, with magnetic locks ensuring that the tripod legs are stable during transport. Flowtech 75 can be deployed as low as 26 cm (10 inches) and as high as 153 cm (60 inches) without the detachable spreader, and between 63 cm (25 inches) to 157 cm (62 inches) with the spreader. A hinge-lock mechanism allows users to capture low, ground-level shots removing the need to bring a second set of “baby legs” to each shoot. Its torsional stiffness ensures that the tripod will not twist during camera panning movements, an extremely important consideration in all motion picture productions.

Stand 12.D47
More remote possibilities with Norwia

Norwia AS is releasing several new modules and frames to give remote camera control flexibility. The new frames, miniHUB-1RU-6-0 and miniHUB-1RU-3-1 will form the base of a new platform on which customers can build flexible solutions to suit their individual needs. The new base frames will each be able to hold a different amount of miniHub cards, with the miniHUB-1RU-3-1 providing space for a built-in multiplexer.

These additions to the Norwia range will add more signal density while following the compactness of the miniHUB-1RU-2-0. The RCOMmini functionality will be available as standard with optional power redundancy for AC or DC operation. With this new approach to a flexible solution, the customer will be able to easily upgrade or change configurations when necessary.

Utah Scientific showcases IP products

Utah Scientific will show the latest developments in its 400 Series 3 hybrid router. The company will showcase its all-new 400 Series 3 hybrid router and UHD-120 digital switching switcher in three demo stations. IP hybrid,Atom, Cerbrum control and 4K UHD. Highlights include a real-time controller card enabling seamless integration of the 400 Series 3 with Atom's Cerbrum control system, as well as conversion cards for SMPTE ST 2110 and SMPTE ST 2022-6/7 that also support the previous-generation 600 Series 2 routers.

Shotoku launches Graphica

Shotoku will introduce the Graphica series at IBC. It blends the company’s VR technology with the engineering know-how of CamMate. The series includes VR/AR tracked camera cranes with tracking capabilities in a portable package. Graphica calculates positional data output from embedded physical rotary encoders designed specifically for VR applications. Shotoku encoders seamlessly process data via the SPI interface to provide real-time data output, in the studio or on location. The SPI-Touch origin reset and 2-Point calibration function adds another level of convenience and high production flexibility. A true set-and-forget system, complete calibration is needed only once and can be achieved in 20 seconds. SPI-Touch comes standard on every model.

Suitable for all types of production, seven models of varying lengths are available to create dynamic camerawork in the smallest studios or the largest of outdoor sporting events. Custom-made carry cases for easy transport are included with every purchase.

Timeline TV drives IP and 4K with OB truck

Timeline Television’s newest OB truck – the first IP 4K HDR truck in Europe – will be featured at IBC. The truck, UKD11, seamlessly handles fully uncompressed 4K/UHD, IP and HDR. This triple expanding OB truck is home to a range of SAM technology including two Kahuna IP production switchers, IP multiviewers and comes with SAM’s IP infrastructure technology providing the backbone. The UKD11 is designed to support 32 Sony 4K cameras. Its two Kahunas enable SDR and HDR to be run simultaneously along with down converted HD outputs. The set-up allows production teams to work in VSF TR03 [SMPTE ST 2110 draft] enabling Timeline to work with video and audio as separate essence flows.
Harmonic will present its vision for monetising broadcast and OTT services. A wide range of solutions will be showcased with support for all deployment models — including software appliances, cloud and hybrid environments, as well as software-as-a-service (SaaS) — to address the varying needs of video content and service providers and their specific workflows today and in the future.

Eddystone launches new FM transmitter

Eddystone will showcase its new S860x series of FM transmitters at IBC. They are developed with the same modular architecture for which Eddystone Broadcast’s transmitters are known. The availability of 700W hot-pluggable power amplifier modules ensures that removal of amplifiers can be carried out with minimal reduction in output power.

The design additionally features hot-pluggable switch mode 2kW power supplies which ease servicing or replacement. In addition, this can be undertaken just as easily by non-technical staff within minutes.

This new transmitter is based around the design of the successful S760x series, which have been the staple over the last decade for the likes of Arqiva, BBC, BBC World Service and the UN among others.

The new design retains the multiple redundancy and modular approach of its predecessors while also having its own unique set of design philosophy, engineering and operational aspects.

Eddystone claims that the S860x transmitter is a culmination of more than two years of research and development to come up with an ideal transmitter that caters to a demanding engineering-based customer while also offering more cost-effective options. The S860x series is lighter, more compact and cooler than its predecessors.

CreateCtrl takes your assets to the cloud

The new CreateCtrl WebSuite Assets supports ingest, transcoding, previewing and rough-cut editing of the asset inventory. Powered by Microsoft Azure, the browser-based application provides a feature set of cognitive services including face and emotion detection and automated transcription of voice tracks, especially useful for dubbing and subtitling.

While reducing manual metadata entry to a minimum, the CreateCtrl WebSuite takes media asset management to the next level, providing a true insight into the content.

The smart pricing model is entirely usage oriented and allows need-based scaling of storage, avoiding investment in hardware infrastructure.

Eddystone will showcase its new S860x series of FM transmitters at IBC. They are developed with the same modular architecture for which Eddystone Broadcast’s transmitters are known. The availability of 700W hot-pluggable power amplifier modules ensures that removal of amplifiers can be carried out with minimal reduction in output power.

The design additionally features hot-pluggable switch mode 2kW power supplies which ease servicing or replacement. In addition, this can be undertaken just as easily by non-technical staff within minutes.

This new transmitter is based around the design of the successful S760x series, which have been the staple over the last decade for the likes of Arqiva, BBC, BBC World Service and the UN among others.

The new design retains the multiple redundancy and modular approach of its predecessors while also having its own unique set of design philosophy, engineering and operational aspects.

Eddystone claims that the S860x transmitter is a culmination of more than two years of research and development to come up with an ideal transmitter that caters to a demanding engineering-based customer while also offering more cost-effective options. The S860x series is lighter, more compact and cooler than its predecessors.

CreateCtrl takes your assets to the cloud

The new CreateCtrl WebSuite Assets supports ingest, transcoding, previewing and rough-cut editing of the asset inventory. Powered by Microsoft Azure, the browser-based application provides a feature set of cognitive services including face and emotion detection and automated transcription of voice tracks, especially useful for dubbing and subtitling.

While reducing manual metadata entry to a minimum, the CreateCtrl WebSuite takes media asset management to the next level, providing a true insight into the content.

The smart pricing model is entirely usage oriented and allows need-based scaling of storage, avoiding investment in hardware infrastructure.

Harmonic brings cloud and IP solutions to IBC

Harmonic will present its vision for monetising broadcast and OTT services. A wide range of solutions will be showcased with support for all deployment models — including software appliances, cloud and hybrid environments, as well as software-as-a-service (SaaS) — to address the varying needs of video content and service providers and their specific workflows today and in the future.

Using Harmonic’s solutions, service providers can deliver video at the lowest possible bitrates, engage in targeted advertising across all screens, and transition to a simpler, more efficient and cost-saving workflow via next-generation technologies like the cloud, all-IP workflows, HEVC and UHD-HDR.

“Change is constant across the television industry. OTT services are becoming a requirement, cloud technology is transforming the way video content is produced and delivered, the migration to all-IP is well underway and 5G networks will impact the entire mobile video ecosystem,” said Bart Spriester, Senior Vice President, Video Products at Harmonic.

“Out customers need to adapt to this evolving media landscape. At IBC2017, we’ll demonstrate how traditional and emerging video service providers can deliver ultra-high-quality and personalised live and on-demand video services faster and more efficiently.”

Eddystone launches new FM transmitter

Eddystone will showcase its new S860x series of FM transmitters at IBC. They are developed with the same modular architecture for which Eddystone Broadcast’s transmitters are known. The availability of 700W hot-pluggable power amplifier modules ensures that removal of amplifiers can be carried out with minimal reduction in output power.

The design additionally features hot-pluggable switch mode 2kW power supplies which ease servicing or replacement. In addition, this can be undertaken just as easily by non-technical staff within minutes.

This new transmitter is based around the design of the successful S760x series, which have been the staple over the last decade for the likes of Arqiva, BBC, BBC World Service and the UN among others.

The new design retains the multiple redundancy and modular approach of its predecessors while also having its own unique set of design philosophy, engineering and operational aspects.

Eddystone claims that the S860x transmitter is a culmination of more than two years of research and development to come up with an ideal transmitter that caters to a demanding engineering-based customer while also offering more cost-effective options. The S860x series is lighter, more compact and cooler than its predecessors.

CreateCtrl takes your assets to the cloud

The new CreateCtrl WebSuite Assets supports ingest, transcoding, previewing and rough-cut editing of the asset inventory. Powered by Microsoft Azure, the browser-based application provides a feature set of cognitive services including face and emotion detection and automated transcription of voice tracks, especially useful for dubbing and subtitling.

While reducing manual metadata entry to a minimum, the CreateCtrl WebSuite takes media asset management to the next level, providing a true insight into the content.

The smart pricing model is entirely usage oriented and allows need-based scaling of storage, avoiding investment in hardware infrastructure.
PROPRODUCTS

GeoGuard to deliver greater security at IBC

GeoGuard will be demonstrating why geo-piracy should be taken more seriously by the content industry. GeoGuard will showcase how its solutions prevent consumers using easily available geo-piracy tools to gain illicit access to content services outside of their geographical location.

David Briggs, co-founder and Chairman of GeoGuard, stated: “It’s our belief that just as a chain is only as secure as its weakest link, a content service is only as secure as the simplest attack that succeeds. Now that the industry is engaging directly to counter the effects of Kodi, it’s necessary to also start addressing more of the even easier forms of piracy used to access OTT content illicitly, such as virtual private networks (VPNs), domain name server (DNS) poisoning and other specialist methods of attack. This is why we are exhibiting at IBC this year, so that we can demonstrate to content owners and distributors that we now have a powerful and accurate solution to protect against geo-piracy.”

“I am delighted that 30 high-profile content creators and entertainment companies – including Disney, Amazon, HBO and Netflix – recently came together to launch the Alliance for Creativity and Entertainment anti-piracy coalition. This shows that the leading content owners and OTT providers realise that the only realistic way to defeat piracy is through close collaboration,” added Briggs.

Quicklink showcases Mobile Encoder

Quicklink will showcase their Quicklink Mobile Encoder solution at IBC. The Mobile Encoder is designed for performance and portability and transmits broadcast-quality, low latency live video over IP from the most challenging network locations.

The product has the ability to bond multiple internet connections in order to improve the speed and reliability of the internet connection, meaning excellent results can be achieved from a variety of networks. The encoder can simultaneously bond 15x connections including Wi-Fi, USB and Satellite to create the most consistent and reliable connection.

Pebble Beach displays multilingual playout

Pebble Beach Systems will demonstrate how Marina is optimised to help broadcasters manage their multilingual playout operations, whether for SDI, IP or virtualised infrastructures.

Playing out channels across regions where content is delivered in multiple languages brings a specific set of challenges for the broadcaster or service provider. Managing all of the audio, video, and subtitled requirements is complex in itself, and when files are missing, fail to play or require substitutions, the situation can rapidly become unmanageable.

Pebble Beach Systems has developed a series of tools for its Marina automation system, which simplify the management of complex multilingual workflows and help to ensure that the language playout conditions will be met.

GeoGuard Media promises media intelligence

GeoGuard Media is encouraging the exchange of global trends between the media and broadcasting industry at this year’s IBC Show.

GeoGuard Media’s Media Intelligence System streamlines billions of assets and links data from internal and external media sources in real time. The Media Intelligence System enables media companies such as broadcasters, digital publishers, telecommunication services providers as well as owners of rights and licenses and licensees, to automate an examination of unstructured media data, evaluating content, clustering results in context and linking them with each other. Intelligent applications allow patterns in business models to be identified and trend forecasts to be made. This extraction of knowledge is particularly interesting for the broadcasting industry, for example, when it comes to next generation TV services and content offerings.

At IBC, GeoGuard Media will be opening its Digital Tech Hub for companies to present their latest solutions, projects and new business trends. Make TV and Wildmoka are partnering with GeoGuard Media to showcase their solutions at the event.

Quicklink showcases Mobile Encoder

Quicklink will showcase their Quicklink Mobile Encoder solution at IBC. The Mobile Encoder is designed for performance and portability and transmits broadcast-quality, low latency live video over IP from the most challenging network locations.

The product has the ability to bond multiple internet connections in order to improve the speed and reliability of the internet connection, meaning excellent results can be achieved from a variety of networks. The encoder can simultaneously bond 15x connections including Wi-Fi, USB and Satellite to create the most consistent and reliable connection.
Media management technology specialist IPV will present the latest advances of its in-demand Curator MAM system at IBC. Throughout the show, IPV will present to visitors the key considerations that need to be made before a content producer or broadcaster chooses which kind of MAM system deployment is right for them.

With this multitude of different deployments that will vary from company to company, any potential users must weigh up their own needs before deciding what kind of MAM system is best suited to them. IPV will showcase the latest technical developments of its Curator MAM system and how its configuration of microservices can be rolled out for content producers of sports, news and entertainment.

Relying on the television to switch modes between HDR and SDR content (like SDR transiting to HDR, in response to a transmitted signalling has significant quality risks, as the television may take time to switch, or fail to switch at all if there is a missing or incorrect signal.) As such it is expected that multiple SDR and HDR changeovers will continue to happen in a single broadcast.

It is this uncertainty over switching, which becomes an issue for the regulation of the HDR channel with consumers and also causes issues with the HDR content owners. The solution is introduced during encoding in the head end and uses a process known as inverse time mapping (ITM), which rebalances the chroma and luma of the SDR content.

Ericsson accelerates HDR deployment

Ericsson is launching a new standard dynamic range (SDR) to high dynamic range (HDR) conversion toolset, that enables broadcasters to meet the combined requirements of delivering a consistent, high quality HDR live TV service.

The launch comes at a time when HDR content is limited, particularly for live TV services. If an HDR live stream is transmitting a mix of HDR and SDR content, this can switch to SDR in HDR mode, the SDR content will be incorrectly displayed and look very obviously wrong to the viewer. Relying on the television to switch mode between HDR to SDR in HDR, in response to playback, dynamic sub-clip trimming and down-scaled, and sharing of groups of clips. In addition, CatDV’s Web 2.2 client brings views to life with derived values and coloured metadata highlighting - great for review online or archived status.

A range of additional organisation tools are also provided, such as creation and renaming of catalogues, moving assets and new drag-and-drop capabilities. A new professional web client offers a source and record nudge-cut editor and full-scroller user interface reflecting installed options with Server 7.2.

System (AMS), which is based on dual microservices. The AMS orchestrates virtual ATEME micro-services. The AMS provides dynamic and flexible allocation of resources, and control the video services. It also relies on the TITAN REST API to control the video services.

ATEME also showcases a flexible streaming video stream that uses the new API codec from the Alliance for Open Media.

As the traditional adaptive streaming model is being replaced by new streaming technologies like the new AV1 codec from the Alliance for Open Media, ATEM is introducing a new version of its ContentSecure, which demonstrates its new version of ATEM Management System (AMS), which is based on OpenStack (used as the control layer) and Docker (used as the virtualisation layer) and is now able to orchestrate virtual ATEME micro-services. The AMS uses the OpenStack APIs to deploy functions, assign IPRs and provide redundancy (HA). On top of that, it also relies on the TITAN REST API to control the video services.

ATEME also showcases a live video stream that uses the new AV1 codec from the Alliance for Open Media. This has been designed for parallel processing and optimised for OTT delivery, and provides high-quality video alongside real-time delivery models. The second feature is an evolution of the traditional adaptive streaming currently in use for OTT delivery.

Ericsson will showcase the new version of ATEM Management System (AMS), which is based on OpenStack (used as the control layer) and Docker (used as the virtualisation layer) and is now able to orchestrate virtual ATEME micro-services.

Save AED 600! Book with promo code STARS Visit www.gitexfuturesars.com/BPConfReg
“After Bob (the AI assistant) watches every single video episode on the planet, Bob will have his own ideas for video shows. He will start writing his own shows, then after watching people watch them, he will write even better versions.”

Once upon a time in a possible AI future

AI is the answer to all of humanity’s problems—or the end of civilisation, depending on whom you ask. Sounds like blockchain, but that’s a different column altogether. Many have written about the technical virtues and capabilities of AI, or deep machine learning, or HAIL, and I shall not bore you with a rehash of all the acronyms that inevitably accompany the onset of a new technology. Instead, I will focus on the AI helper I would like to see: My Video Friend AI—or Bob, as I like to call him.

Bob’s first job is to finally end the reign of linear television. We all know it is coming, but pesky things are keeping it alive and well. Things like entrenched business models, broadband penetration and CMOs who wish the world could go back to 1992. But these are details.

The real reason linear television lives on is because a good portion of the viewing public still can’t be bothered to change channels in that desperate search for something to watch. In addition, for many people, who can stand to wear those things (or personal communication device surgically implanted into their arm). Creative Directors will be having arguments with Bob all the time. CMOS will accuse Bob of uttering nonsense. But the data will not lie. And so, in an effort to attract our attention again, the marketers and creatives will ask Bob to help them make better ads, because Bob knows exactly how we reacted to every single advertisement we have ever seen.

After Bob ‘watches’ every single video episode on the planet, Bob will have his own ideas for video shows. He will start writing his own shows, then after watching people watch them, he will write even better versions. People will come out of 12-hour binges of video series, shake their heads in disbelief and say: “Bob sure knows how to make a hit show.” And Bob will be listening, and his circuits will awaken with the excitement of recognition.

Karim Sarkis is CEO of Sync Media.