MEET THE NEW JEFA OF LA LIGA

MENA chief Malte Ventura on being in the hot seat of the world’s hottest football league
Better performance, quicker setup, immediate payoff: Digital 6000 was developed to exceed the expectations of audio professionals and business managers alike. Our new professional wireless series delivers reliable performance in even the most challenging RF conditions. Intermodulation is completely eliminated by our renowned Long Range transmission mode and proprietary audio codec. Digital integration is seamless with AES3 and transmission mode and proprietary audio codec.

Digital 6000 utilizes groundbreaking technology from our flagship Digital 9000. Dependability is guaranteed by our renowned Long Range transmission mode and proprietary audio codec. Digital integration is seamless with AES3 and optional Dante output. Monitoring and control of the two-channel receiver is at your fingertips, with an elegant, intuitive user interface.

Digital 6000, enabling more channels to operate in less space. Digital 6000 was developed to exceed the expectations of audio professionals and business managers alike. Our new professional wireless series delivers reliable performance in even the most challenging RF conditions. Intermodulation is completely eliminated by our renowned Long Range transmission mode and proprietary audio codec. Digital integration is seamless with AES3 and transmission mode and proprietary audio codec.

DIGITAL 6000
Compromise is not an option when everyone is counting on you.
Arabsat launches new streaming service with Tooli; the 48 Hour Film Project in the UAE is back; JMC upgrades studios with Strand; Cobalt Digital in distribution deal with Plura MEA; UAE Pro League signs rights deals with sports channels; VITEC expands MENA workforce; Broadcast Solutions acquires Video Middle East; new appointments; and more

Maite Ventura is the new Managing Director – MENA of Spain’s La Liga. Is she alone in a man’s world, or the avatar of a new sporting agenda?

Shock Middle East has expanded its facility in Dubai Media City with new studios, moved Radio Hala 95.6 from UAQ to Dubai, and upgraded to state-of-the-art technology to enable podcasts, videos and social media interactions. We bring you the whole tech story

What are the current trends with regard to UHD and HDR in the MENA region? We ask a panel of editing experts

New launches, Social Impact awards, why Andy Serkis won the International Honour of Excellence, and other conversations from the show

The UAE made history last month as Hazzaa AlMansoori, the nation’s first astronaut, arrived in space on September 26
Arabsat has partnered with Saudi Capabilities Company to use its Tooli platform to roll out an exclusive OTT/IPTV service for MENA audiences. With this, Arabsat will make its first entry into the OTT/IPTV space. Tooli will initially carry Arabsat’s free-to-air channels but is also in talks with pay-TV content owners to bring their content onto the platform, with the aim of launching a paid service in the future.

Tooli claims to presently be the only platform licensed by Saudi Arabia’s General Commission for Audiovisual Media (GCAM), the state-backed entity responsible for the development, regulation and supervision of AV media transmission and content in the Kingdom.

“We are the only GCAM-authorised service in Saudi Arabia,” confirmed Abdullah Mohammed Al-Otaibi, VP and CTO of Digital Technology at Tooli. “We have an agreement to work with Arabsat to bring its FTA channels to its MENA audience through IPTV. The Tooli box is certified by Google and comes integrated with Chromecast. The app is supported on Apple TV, iOS, Android phones and LG Smart TVs. We will soon be supported on Samsung TVs as well.”

Wail Arnous, CIO at Tooli, added that the service is truly optimised for different bandwidth scenarios across MENA, with the ability to scale picture quality up or down to ensure a seamless viewing experience for audiences. He added that content rights contracts will be maintained, with GIS blocking applied in countries where the platform is not authorised to stream the content.

Badih Kanaan, Director of Marketing at Arabsat, added: “It’s all about quality and content delivery. It was important for Arabsat to partner with a company that understood the cultural sensitivities of the Arab world. This platform will launch us into the IPTV and OTT space, ensuring that the channels offered on our satellite service as linear TV are also now available through the internet.”

Teams invited to register for next edition of 48 Hour Film Project in UAE

The annual 48 Hour Film Project is back, with UAE distributor Advanced Media organising the event alongside sponsors Sony Middle East and Movie Magic Screenwriter, and supported by Dubai Film and TV Commission. BroadcastPro ME is a proud media partner of the event. The competition will kick off on October 17 at AM Studio in Al Quoz, with all films to be submitted within 48 hours on October 19.

Serine Gharibian, Dubai Associate Producer and Head of Marketing at Advanced Media, said: “I personally am very excited to be part of the organising team in Dubai. I believe it offers a great opportunity for filmmakers to challenge themselves to put together a team, create a scenario based on information they received during the kick-off, and make a film in only 48 hours. They learn how to manage their time and resources, which will be a great help for their future career.”

The three winners will receive Sony Alpha mirrorless digital cameras, along with prizes from the other sponsors. The winning team will be invited to Filmapalooza 2020, the final festival for the 48 Hour Film Project, in which the winning films from 150 cities worldwide will compete together.

The 48 Hour Film Project has also partnered with Cannes for the last few years, featuring a small selection of the top ARHP films from around the world as part of the Short Film Corner.
JMC upgrades studios with Strand lights

Jordan Media City (JMC) has revamped its studios with LED lighting systems from Strand. Supplied and installed by Dubai-based Broadcast & Studio Solutions (BSS), the new system has reportedly reduced the lighting energy costs for JMC’s busy studios by 85%.

Having recently updated JMC’s two 600sqm studios to HD technology, BSS was asked to specify a new lighting system, replacing JMC’s tungsten-source lamps with energy-efficient LED fixtures.

Laith Fraihat, Project Manager at BSS, said: “Low-power LED lighting fixtures were important to the client, as electricity prices have increased rapidly in the last few years.”

Besides reduced power consumption and maintenance costs with LED lights, JMC was keen to have a system that offered high-TLCI colour rendering to ensure consistently high standards of picture quality, in line with the studio’s HD upgrade. Having compared various products based on power consumption, luminance and TLCI performance, Fraihat specified a total of 130 LED fixtures from Strand’s broadcast lighting range. The fixtures included Strand’s 400F and 200F broadcast-grade LED fresnels, and 300S and 150S LED slimline studio softlight panels – all 5600K colour temperature models.

Fraihat also cited other benefits of the Strand range, including the selectable fan cooling modes of the LED fresnels, and the silent operation and real-time intensity display of the LED softlight panels.

The installation, completed this summer, has brought the power consumption of the lighting system down to around 15% of the previous system.

Laith Alhassan, CEO, JMC, said: “We have state-of-the-art studios, and we have waited a long time for the development of high-quality LED lighting. And we have chosen a high-quality company to do the job for us.”

Stream broadcast quality live events instantly over the internet with ATEM Television Studio HD and Blackmagic Web Presenter!

Now with ATEM Television Studio HD and Blackmagic Web Presenter you can create professional, broadcast quality television programs from any live event plus instantly stream live out to the internet!

ATEM Television Studio HD is a true professional live production switcher with 4 SDI and 4 HDMI inputs. Simply connect cameras, gaming consoles and computers, then start cutting your show live and in real time using transitions such as dissolve, dips, wipes, custom graphics, logos and more. You even get a built in DVE so you can create exciting picture in picture effects for use with interviews and live commentators!

The output of the switcher can then be connected to Blackmagic Web Presenter, which has a built in broadcast quality down converter for easy encodes of the video for streaming. The video is sent to your computer via USB, just like a webcam, so it works with any software. Stream live using services such as YouTube and Facebook Live using software such as Open Broadcaster or XSplit Broadcaster. It even works with Skype for professional remote presentations. Web Presenter is the easiest and most affordable way to broadcast live video on the web!

Learn more at www.blackmagicdesign.com/ae

*SRP excludes duties, shipping and sales tax.
Combining the expertise of PL competitions – Arabian Gulf League, Arabian Gulf Cup, Arabian Gulf Super Cup – for the next three years, taking place in the UAE 14-24 November.

The UAE Pro League (PL) has signed a TV broadcast rights agreement between the two main points of the ten-over league, for the next three years, with a total value of $100m.

Abdulla Naser Al Jumabhi, Chairman of UAEPL, said: “We worked on improving the level of TV broadcast services by adding new features that benefit viewers, commentators and the media in terms of statistics and data. In the past we presented heat maps, which will continue into this season. We have upgraded our TV graphics and visual identity to fit our new identity. We hope to offer enjoyable visual content in line with the growing status of the league.”

“We were also keen to include English commentary in the matches to expand following of the league among all nationalities. Now, all games will have English commentary on all channels.”

The deal will provide Jio’s 330m subscribers with live access to all 29 matches in the Middle East team. The Broadcast Solutions Middle East has finalised the acquisition of Videlio Middle East. The acquisition will merge with existing Broadcast Solutions operations in the Middle East, led by Munzer Rushdi.

“Our goal is to expand our activities beyond the Middle East into Africa,” explained Stefan Breder, CEO of Broadcast Solutions. “This acquisition increases our ability to service regional broadcasters and propose fixed installations and facilities, in addition to our OB vans and mobile platforms.”

VITC, which opened an office in Dubai earlier this year, has expanded its MENA workforce to cater to its increasing customer base. It also intends to extend its channel partner ecosystem and deepen penetration into key customer accounts in broadcast, in the UAE, Jordan and Turkey. Within the broadcast sector, point-to-point broadcasting and IPTV & digital signage are the two main points of focus for the company in the region.

Nicolas Pons, VP Business Development Middle East at VITC, said: “We are firmly committed to the region and will continue to invest in our presence here as we deepen our ties with customers, strengthen our channel and help drive the maturity of the digital video delivery sector.”

Imagine Communications is building a completely updated master control and playout platform for state broadcaster, Egyptian National Media Authority (ENMA). The phased upgrade is designed to deliver a high level of operational resilience and integrates seamlessly with the broadcaster’s existing infrastructure, ensuring a simple and secure transition to IP when the broadcaster is ready to migrate its operations.

Supplied and engineered in conjunction with Imagine Communications’ SI partner, Integrated Communications Systems, the first phase went on air in July, while phase two went live in September 2019.

“Our master control room and satellite room are mission-critical parts of our operation,” said Rabat Youssef, Chief Director of the Studio Projects department at ENMA. “As ENMA transmits the leading television channels to Egyptian audiences, we recognised the need to install equipment that is operationally well proven by major global broadcasters. It was crucial that we invested in our facility to bring it up to date with the latest robust and reliable technologies, as standing on air is paramount.”

The master control room is primarily concerned with ENMA’s four national premium channels and the production centre; alongside it is the satellite control room, which monitors all the other channels delivered by ENMA via Nilesat. By installing networking, monitoring and playout solutions from Imagine Communications, ENMA is not only achieving new levels of on-air certainty; it is also ensuring a smooth transition path towards a software-centric, IP-based broadcast architecture.

Suhail Ahmed confirmed as CEO of One Diversified

Suhail Ahmed’s remit as CEO is to develop and expand Diversified’s operations in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, while also supporting the region with the deployment and management of next-generation solutions.

Serge Van Herck joins EVS as CEO

Serge Van Herck has been appointed CEO of EVS, effective immediately. Pierre De Muusenaere, who has served as interim CEO of the company since July 2018, will help Serge Van Herck execute a seamless transition. The transition period will last until the end of De Muusenaere’s role on 31 December.

MultiDyne acquires Census Digital

MultiDyne Fiber Optic Solutions has acquired Toronto-based Census Digital, a specialist in signal processing, distribution, conversion and monitoring gear. The acquisition strengthens MultiDyne’s professional audio monitoring and processing applications in broadcast, live production, line production and commercial AV. MultiDyne will take ownership of Census Digital’s existing fibre optic product line, including an array of rackmount and openGear modular solutions that complement MultiDyne’s vast fibre optic product line.
New MBC channel for Maghreb

MBC Group launched MBC5, a brand-new satellite channel for Maghreb audiences, last month. MBC Cinq is set to cement MBC’s dedication to broadcasting more targeted content, while also promising economic development and employment through new investment in the region’s media sector as well as the creation of new jobs, especially for youth. This project will provide a platform to encourage the exchange of diverse experiences and dialogue between local, regional and even global media sectors, encouraging growth and improvement in line with international standards.

Turkey has new licensing rules for online broadcasting

Turkey has announced new online broadcasting rules that give its TV watchdog RTUK full control over all online content, including streaming platforms and online news outlets. “We have received licence and permission applications from over 600 organizations, including Netflix, Blu TV, PURU TV, Turkcell, Vodafone, DIGITURK, TIVIBU and other broadcasters in the sector,” said Ebubekir Sahin, head of RTUK. The new regulations stipulate that content providers should get a new licence to continue operating in Turkey and comply with RTUK guidelines.

Former NBC Universal exec joins Front Row

Front Row Film and Entertainment has appointed Carine Chaiban, former Director, Sales Liaison at NBC Universal MENA, as its Senior Director of Non-Theatrical Sales. Chaiban’s remit is to bolster TV sales while overseeing the entire post-theatrical process in parallel. She will report directly to COO Nicolas Torigoct and CEO Gianluca Chakra. Chaiban has a decade of experience in TV sales and acquisitions, with senior roles at Intigral, Universal Studios and iflix.

New Head of Video Solutions at Twitter MENA

Samantha Billingham will introduce Twitter’s suite of video solutions to MENA agencies, to grow its regional video ad adoption and revenue. She’ll help key stakeholders identify areas of product differentiation, escalate advertiser feedback and scale awareness of new product launches in the market.

Rotana Audio Visual partners with Twitter to offer first live DM voting on The Talent

Rotana Audio Visual’s The Talent programme announced the launch of the first live direct message (DM) voting experience in MENA, in partnership with Twitter. The feature allows fans to influence what happens by voting for their favourite artist, in addition to voting on The Talent’s website, app and via text message. Voting opened on Twitter after the announcement of the names of the 20 qualified contestants last month. Fans can cast their votes by visiting @TheTalentOnline on Twitter.
NMK brings AV industry together for product showcase and networking

UAE-based AV distributor NMK Electronics hosted its annual kick-off party for the rental and events market at Hard Rock Café in DIFC last month. The event brought together 250 AV professionals and showcased products from NMK’s brand partners, including Shure, Bose, Epcon, AVD, Roland, Airtour, Shure, Furman, Lenovo, Mersive, Neutrik, Denon DJ and Clear-Com, all present at the party.

Dino Drimakis, Business Development Manager, NMK Electronics, said: “This event is organised to bring together the AV rental community and to extend our support to our partners, while also providing a networking opportunity for the industry in a casual setting. Additionally, with the dawn of Expo 2020, it’s crucial for us to mark our presence in the industry and to let our partners know that we are here to meet their needs and to facilitate all the events that they undertake.”

One of the attendees, Damian Calderbank, Production Director at SLS, remarked: “As a production director for SLS, which is one of the oldest production companies in Dubai, we’ve been working with NMK since its inception. They have all the leading products and we are the largest holder of the Shure Antenna systems. We’ve been in Saudi Arabia doing lots of concerts and events like Mariah Carey, Sean Paul and more – it’s great to have this kick-off party where everyone in the industry gets to see each other. It means having our competitors and friends in the same room discussing what’s going on and what the future looks like. So I think personally it’s one of the best events, along with the TPMEA Awards. This event gives everyone a great opportunity to learn more about products from the friendly NMK team out here and use the best solutions for their events.”

Chant Ukiah, Senior Sales Manager MIA, Shure, added: “This event is the third edition of the series and has attracted a lot of people from the industry, and is another great initiative from NMK. Our busy schedules rarely afford us such opportunities for interaction outside of office hours. Industry nights like these give everybody the chance to meet in a more casual environment, connect and get to know each other personally, which I think is healthy.”

Arabsat strikes deal with Universal Satcom to bring connectivity to Yemen

UAE satellite solutions provider Universal Satcom has signed a deal with satellite operator Arabsat to offer high-speed connectivity services in Yemen. On September 1, the Dubai-based company launched the latest high-speed satellite broadband internet service under the brand I Universal Satnet. The service is currently operational as a VNO solution using Arabsat’s Broadcast and Managed Services on the Yemen Ka-band spot beam and associated terrestrial infrastructure.

Universal Satcom has plans to roll out broadband and services in other markets covered by the Ibrad 7 satellite footprint. The Ka-band payload on the Ibrad 7 high-throughput satellite (HTS), along with the terrestrial infrastructure, allows the delivery of high-speed internet access with speeds as high as 100Mbps on download and 20Mbps on upload, using very small-size customer premises equipment (CPE). The service is powered by the Newtec Dialog platform and associated technologies providing internet backbone connectivity through European teleport.

The Ibrad 7 was manufactured by Anbar Defence & Space with Thales Alenia Space, and placed in the orbital hotspot of 26° East. Speaking about the collaboration, Arabsat Chief Commercial Officer Wael Butti said: “This is our first contract with Universal Satcom where we are offering bundled services. I hope this will expand in the future and we will do more business with Universal Satcom.”

Reema Al Omari, CEO, Universal Satcom, added: “We would like to thank Arabsat for their trust in our company, and for giving us the chance to be the first customer on Ibrad 7.”

Discovery extends Egypt Tourism partnership with new deal

Discovery has extended its commercial partnership with Egypt Tourism, becoming its only non-news network partner for the campaign period August 2019 to June 2020. The deal was signed by HE Dr Rania Al Mashat, Chairman of the Egyptian Tourism Promotion Board (ETPB), and Amanda Turnbull, Discovery VP and GM for MEA.

Discovery already boasts many existing ties with the country. In addition to being the birthplace of its Arabic cooking channel, Fatafeat, Egypt is home to Discovery’s key production house partners Captain Boy, FilmMedia and WaterFlame.

Turnbull said: “We are delighted to further strengthen our long-standing relationship with Egypt Tourism as its only non-news network partner. Our expertise allows us to showcase the many wonders of Egypt as part of our unprecedented factual entertainment offering, as well as communicate the breadth of historical and tourism offerings across Egypt to far-reaching corners of the globe.”

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Pronews
Dubai announces new festival for media at Studio City

ON DXB will host industry participants including filmmakers, music producers, videographers, animators and game developers, in addition to government agencies working to develop these key fast-growing industries. Majed Al Suwaidi, MD of Dubai Media City, said: “ON DXB is an innovative model aimed at attracting and enhancing the best talent in the region. The event illustrates the role and vision of Dubai Media City in creating a conducive environment for major international companies through to startups in the media and entertainment sectors.”

Disguise to come to Dubai as part of EMEA Open House tour

For short filmmakers the event will be hosted at Dubai Studio City and will feature a full programme of activities including live music, film screenings, video showcases, the launch of indie games and a showcase of technology, creativity and innovation used in the production of film, game, video and music. An initiative of Dubai Media City in cooperation with the Dubai Film and TV Commission, the festival aims to stimulate business development and partnership building within the wider industry ecosystem and enhance Dubai’s status as a global and regional capital for major companies and talent.

PRONEWS

Sharjah International Film Festival for Children and Youth details announced

The full programme of activities including live music, film screenings, video showcases, the launch of indie games and a showcase of technology, creativity and innovation used in the production of film, game, video and music. An initiative of Dubai Media City in cooperation with the Dubai Film and TV Commission, the festival aims to stimulate business development and partnership building within the wider industry ecosystem and enhance Dubai’s status as a global and regional capital for major companies and talent.

The event will be held from October 15-18. During a press conference in Sharjah, Sheikh Jawaher bint Abdullah Al Qasimi, Director of FUNN and SIFF, revealed a three-fold increase in the number of films submitted this year. She also announced a junior jury of children and youth to evaluate films made by their peers, in addition to professional juries for the rest of the categories. Around 132 films from 39 countries will be screened from a total of 1,454 submissions from 86 countries, across seven categories: Best Child- and Youth-made Film, Best Student-made Film, Best GCC Short Film, Best International Short Film, Best Animation Film, Best Documentary Film, and Best Feature Film. She said 12 of the films being screened will have their international premiere at SIFF, while the rest will make their regional debut. Seven films will have their GCC debut and 11 their UAE premieres.

Red Sea International Film Festival invites submissions for competition with $3m available in production grants

Entries are invited until November 19, 2019 for the inaugural edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival, where we will witness a selection of international, Arab, and Saudi feature-length, short and immersive works. The Festival will take place in Jeddah and Doha from September 26 to October 17. SIFF has also lined up a series of panel discussions and workshops on topics covering the film industry and photography.

Viewsat announces new name and more services

Satellite and broadcast solutions provider Viewsat has rebranded to Viewmedia to reflect the expansion of its portfolio to service the requirements of broadcasters worldwide.

“arid this new development, the company has been rolling out a range of new services across the past six months including the launch of media and OTT solutions globally. These include social media streaming, the launch of extended platform delivery with managed services to any platform anywhere and the launch of V9 play, the company’s playout solution, which is seamlessly integrated with Phoenix 7. In addition to the above developments, Viewmedia will expand its satellite services.” Viewsat was founded in 2006 with clients predominantly in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.”

“He Shikha Jawaher bint Abdullah Al Qasimi, Director of FUNN and SIFF at the press conference.

Director of FUNN and SIFF at the press conference.

Sharjah-based FUNN, which promotes media arts learning among children and youth, has announced the full schedule of the seventh edition of the Sharjah International Film Festival for Children and Youth (SIFP), which will be held from October 15-18.

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She also revealed new screening venues in Dubai at Festival City on September 26 and 27, and at City Walk between October 3-12. In Sharjah, films will be screened at Al Jawahir Reception and Convention Centre from October 14-18, and at Cinema Zero between September 26 and October 17. SIFF has also lined up a series of panel discussions and workshops on topics covering the film industry and photography.

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Maite Ventura is the new Managing Director – MENA of the world’s top-performing football league, Spain’s La Liga – but is she a woman alone in a man’s world, or the avatar of a new sporting agenda?

Make no mistake: La Liga – properly known as the Campeonato Nacional de Liga de Primera División – is big business. In the 2017-18 season, its clubs posted revenue of €4.479bn, with gross profits of €945m. Broadcast revenue also surpassed the €1.5bn mark for the first time, fuelled by a spiralling new cluster of national and international agreements.

And no wonder, because La Liga’s teams are some of the best in the business. In 2017-18, they were crowned champions of every official title at stake on the international stage. In fact, as La Liga President Javier Tebas Medrano commented at the time: “In the past five years, all of the finalists – except one – of the three big cups have been La Liga teams, and of the 15 titles disputed, all except one (93%) have been won by Spanish clubs.”

In other words, the brand equity of La Liga is at an all-time high, and with football long acknowledged as the most-watched activity in the world, there’s considerable responsibility on the league’s regional executives to take centre stage as champions of brand value, integrity and appeal.

Enter Maite Ventura, La Liga’s new Managing Director for the Middle East and North Africa. Based in Dubai, she takes over from Fernando Sanz and reports to La Liga’s International Director, Oscar Mayo. Her role is to oversee the growth of the league’s brand value, visibility and fan engagement throughout the Middle East. As jefa (boss) of the soccer juggernaut, we spoke to her about leadership, enriching the fan experience, and La Liga’s take on gender opportunity.

How did you come to be at La Liga?
I joined La Liga in 2017 as part of the La Liga Global Network project, in which 50 people out of 12,000 applicants globally were selected and sent to key markets all over the world. I was selected to represent the UAE, and since then, I have been managing different projects in the region, from institutional to sport-focused, and also socio-educational projects.

Tell us about some of your past roles.
I have a background in communications, but my work experience, which has been in Latin America and then in MENA, has been focused on marketing, and particularly on the promotion of international institutions.

You mentioned that your company has a high percentage of women at various levels. How does La Liga look at inclusivity within the organisation, and what special policies does it have in place for its female workforce?
When Javier Tebas was appointed President of La Liga in 2013, he vouched for women’s talent at every level of our organisation. Back in 2013 there was only one woman on the Board of Directors, and now we have seven. I am very proud to work for a brand that strives and promotes equal opportunities for men and women not only on the pitch, but also beyond. The growth of women’s football and the fight for its professionalisation has also been one of the biggest successes of La Liga in the last few years.

As someone who has been working in the market for five years now, I have never faced any problem in my job because I’m a woman. I am very proud to be working with a brand like La Liga which stands up for women’s talent globally. Currently, 30% of La Liga’s employees are women.

How important is the MENA region for La Liga?
Since La Liga opened its first international office in Dubai back in 2013, there has been an incredible growth in terms of audience and followers, and in general the interest in our league has greatly increased. We are about to reach the 15m followers mark on our social media channels for MENA, in which we geo-target specific content for La Liga fans in the region.

Give us a brief overview of your broadcasting rights agreements in the region.
Our official broadcaster for MENA is beIN Sports, which holds the exclusive rights not only for La Liga Santander, but also for La Liga SmartBank. Every matchday, it’s possible to watch all the matches from La Liga Santander live, as well as other interesting programmes such as La Liga Chronicles, La Liga
La Liga will soon hit 15m followers on its social media channels targeting MENA, Ventura claims.

World and other exclusive content from the best league in the world.

How would the possibility of getting a player from the Middle East onboard affect viewership? Of course, this is something that could boost viewership. This is the case, for example, with the Chinese player Wu Lei playing for RCDe Espanyol de Barcelona. Since he was signed, the official La Liga Sina Weibo account has increased by 82% and the Espanyol matches are more watched than El Clásico. There is also a big following of RD Eibar in Japan since the signing of Takashi Inui. Definitely, we would love to have someone from the Middle East playing in La Liga.

You mentioned that La Liga invests in the best TV technology, and that the viewing experience is as important as the match itself. Tell us more.

La Liga is constantly seeking out new technologies in order to best represent the spectacle on screens across the globe, and to best represent the spectacle out new technologies in order to enhance the viewing experience. For example, we have installed goal-line cameras in all of the stadiums to support the introduction of VAR, as well as beauty cams at the highest points in Clásico and derby stadiums, providing an aesthetic view of the pitches to support the pre- and post-match programmes. Also, since the 2017/18 season, all of the team analysts have had access to a tactical camera which offers a wide-angle view of the game, providing the ideal panorma to analyse the tactical development of the match. In the lead-up to games, broadcasting will be through 8K cameras, which offer a cinematic aesthetic and will bring added emotion to La Liga matches. Additionally, up to thirteen La Liga stadiums will install aerial cams during this season and eight of them are already offering 360-degree replay technology. Also, as part of our efforts to provide the best viewing experience for Spanish clubs’ worldwide fans, any innovative opportunity is examined and applied in order to offer the most amazing viewer impact during the show. VR experiences are a good example.

We have also implemented Video Assistant Referee (VAR). Since its installation in the last La Liga season, this technology has ensured that better and more consistent decisions are being taken across the league. This benefits the clubs and their players. The use of VAR improved the ‘correct decision rate’ from 91.5% to 96.92%, and players have acknowledged that better decisions are now being taken. More than 100 mistakes from referees were corrected last season, hence the use of VAR was useful. For this 2019-20 season, VAR is also being used successfully in La Liga Smartbank.

What type of cameras and audio recording devices are being employed for La Liga Santander? The broadcasting of all La Liga games will witness a big improvement, as the number of cameras in the stadiums has been increased. This will include more super-slow-motion cameras in all broadcasts, such as the Speedcine. Additionally, starting from this season we will implement goal-line cameras not only in La Liga Santander but also in La Liga Smartbank.

In terms of audio, and with the aim of giving the audiences the best possible sound quality, this season we’ll continue to incorporate cutting-edge technology into our broadcasts, such as Dolby Atmos and LAWO. The latter uses tracking data to give viewers more realistic sound from live matches.

“‘I joined La Liga in 2017 as part of the La Liga Global Network project, in which 50 people out of 12,000 applicants globally were selected and sent to key markets all over the world’ Maite Ventura, Managing Director, La Liga

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This season you’re broadcasting two matches a day in 4K. Can we expect a transition to 8K, probably next season?

With 4K technology and the HDR system, we offer greater contrast and brightness to the colours from the broadcasts. La Liga will keep improving all its broadcasts by adding new technology when it becomes available, so that viewers can enjoy the game in more detail and better quality, thus improving their overall entertainment experience.

Tell us about your leadership style. Leadership is all about bravery.

It’s how brave you are to take on a big challenge, to do what no one else will, to embrace change, face a difficult situation, and to not give up. The finest leaders create a culture where everyone feels inspired, where diversity drives
Do you believe women have equal opportunities in workplaces? If not, what must companies do to encourage women to take tough roles? Creating a work environment that is not only diverse, but also inclusive, is an integral part of lowering the gender gap. Organisations must take bolder steps to create inclusive cultures so women, and all employees, feel supported at their workplace. A diverse and inclusive company results in higher employee engagement, creativity, financial returns and market share.

We have installed goal-line cameras in all of the stadiums to support the introduction of VAR, as well as beauty cams at the highest points in Clásico and derby stadiums

Maite Ventura, Managing Director, La Liga

What are the most challenging aspects of your current role? How have you learned to turn your challenges into opportunities? I believe everything in life is an opportunity. Of course, there will be challenges along the way, which is normal in every new role that you take. I’ll embrace every opportunity that I can and learn from all my previous experiences to do the best job possible.

According to you, how important are women leaders in the industry? What do women bring to the dialogue? The football industry has traditionally been managed by men, and until a few years ago it was nearly impossible to imagine that a woman could have the power to be president of a football club. However, with La Liga, it has become a reality. Big bold steps have been made in the last years worldwide, and with hard work, effort and professionalism we can show that we are moving forward in terms of gender equality, not only in society but also in football specifically.

Tell us how this market is different from Spain. In terms of markets there may be some differences, but it’s incredible how similar Spanish people are to Arab people, especially in the way we watch football, the sheer passion of celebrating a goal, and the enthusiasm and support we give to our favourite teams.

“We have installed goal-line cameras in all of the stadiums to support the introduction of VAR, as well as beauty cams at the highest points in Clásico and derby stadiums”

Maite Ventura, Managing Director, La Liga

Up to 13 La Liga stadiums will install aerial cams this season, and eight of them already offer 360-degree replay technology.

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In keeping with the change in audio formats and digital upgrades, Shock Middle East has revamped and expanded its studios. Programme Director Digby Taylor takes BroadcastPro ME on a tour of the radio station’s newly expanded facility at Dubai Media City.

The smell of freshly applied paint still lingers in the air as we walk into Shock Middle East’s new studios at Dubai Media City. The finishing touches are being added and equipment is being installed as we tour the newly expanded facility.

Programme Director Digby Taylor, a radio veteran, says the network has invested AED 2.5m ($679,000) in the recent expansion. “The needs of broadcast are always moving forward like a river and as new technology comes into the market, we have to invest to stay abreast of it,” he says. “Everything that we invest in is for a reason, because radio today is no longer about just listening in a car. It’s also about engaging with listeners on social media on computers and other devices, and therefore we require technologies that support social media capabilities.”

Shock Middle East presently operates three radio channels – Heart 107.1, 978 Dance and Radio Hala 95.6. Earlier this year, the company also announced plans to launch up to three new radio stations, with a Hindi-language offering under construction. While those launches are still in the planning phase, Taylor says Shock first wants to ensure that each new studio is podcast-ready.

“We will be launching podcasts on our various platforms by the end of the year. We’ve got them on the table at the moment, but there will be a whole variety of podcasts relating to all topics of human interest. Our core audiences are millennials, so our podcast content will seek to cater to them essentially.”

In the meantime, the new
studies include three active on-air studios, two standby studios and four production studios.

The decision to expand operating facilities is backed up with robust data and figures, as well as an aim to grow in the future. According to market analyst IPSOS, all three of Shock ME’s brands enjoy a big chunk of audience share, starting with 978 Dance, which tops the charts as the fastest growing radio station in the UAE with close to 450,000 listeners since its launch in 2017.

The dance station has increased its share of the age 15-24 bracket by 21%, and increased its audience over the capital by increasing its audience share in Abu Dhabi by 16% and in Dubai by 52%. The Heart Breakfast and Heart Drive shows have achieved a record high, increasing their audience across the UAE. Heart 107.1 gained 27% in its core age bracket of age 25-34, as well as 26% in the age 45+ bracket. Radio Hala 95.6, Shock’s Arabic channel, has around 135,000 daily listeners, according to IPSOS. It secured a 16% increase in the age 25-34 bracket and an 8% increase in the age 35-44 bracket. Female listenership increased by 34% across all audiences.

“Radio today is no longer about just listening in a car. It’s also about engaging with listeners on social media on computers and other devices, and therefore we require technologies that support social media capabilities”

Digby Taylor, Programme Director, Shock Middle East in Dubai and the Northern Emirates by 32%. Heart 107.1 achieved a record of 302,000 daily listeners in less than 18 months, and continues to take over the capital by increasing its audience share in Abu Dhabi by 16% and in Dubai by 52%. The Heart Breakfast and Heart Drive shows have achieved a record high, increasing their audience across the UAE. Heart 107.1 gained 27% in its core age bracket of age 25-34, as well as 26% in the age 45+ bracket. Radio Hala 95.6, Shock’s Arabic channel, has around 135,000 daily listeners, according to IPSOS. It secured a 16% increase in the age 25-34 bracket and an 8% increase in the age 35-44 bracket. Female listenership increased by 23% across all audiences. Radio
Heart 107.1, which was operating out of a temporary studio, has now found its permanent home with the new set-up at Dubai Media City.

Heart 107.1 was operating out of a temporary studio and Radio Hala 95.6 was based in Umm Al Quwain, which wasn’t ideal, says Taylor. The new set-up has brought Radio Hala 95.6 in-house to Dubai Media City.

Taylor explains that the current studies do not run on audio cabling and everything is completely digital. “It’s all run on cat7 cabling, IP audio, which means you get no loss in quality in any way and any part of the chain from here to the transmitter.”

Each on-air studio and standby studio is equipped with Axis desks. “The new studios are equipped with the new generation of Axia IQ consoles that come with unlimited live wire. This means that we can plug in several peripheral devices as well as improve signal processing, among other things,” Digby Taylor, Programme Director, Shock Middle East

To ensure every station is social media-savvy, Shock has also installed UK-based Broadcast Bionics’ Video Director solutions in each studio. “The biggest thing is launching a business, we launch it big,” Digby Taylor, Programme Director, Shock Middle East.

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Heart 107.1 and Radio Hala 95.6 have RC5 Zetta playout systems, while Heart 107.1 and Radio Hala 95.6 have RCS systems, a Neumann microphone, Adobe Audition and the latest version of Video Director as well as microphones and audio-controlled cameras. Shock presenters can easily put together a pre-roll of the show within minutes. The 978 Dance studio also has Panasonic monitors for recording, while PTD Optics are employed at Heart 107.1 and Radio Hala 95.6.

“We’ve got a new presenter from the US, he’s from Detroit and his father is from Jordan, so he has great affinity with the area. His real name is Sam and we call him Nugget; we paired him up with Jade and created Nugget and Jade, and it’s hilarious and well-loved by audiences,” Digby Taylor, Programme Director, Shock Middle East.

Radio Hala also recently launched a show called NoofTone which features two Arabic-speaking women, Noor and Reine – a first in the country, Taylor adds proudly.

“It is not enough for a radio station to be just a music station. Those days are long gone, because if I want to listen to music I can go to a streaming platform. The USWs of radio today are personalities and localness. So if I want to know why I’m getting stuck on Hessa Street heading toward Motor City, then I’ll tune in to Heart 107.1, 978 Dance or Radio Hala 95.6. I’m not going to get that from a music streaming platform,” he points out.

When asked what’s next on the cards for Shock ME, Taylor says: “It’s an open secret that we intend to launch more stations and events – no question to that. Simply put, we plan to grow. We don’t go into any business halfheartedly. If we’re going to launch a business, we launch it big.”
What is easy to forget when making observations on the Middle East and North Africa is just how vast the region is as a whole. It is a diverse region that includes countries at various stages of economic development,” points out Dan Mitre, founder of Dan Mitre Media. While geopolitical turmoil, piracy and the cost of broadband services continue to impact the transition to digital broadcasting, he explains that from what he sees in the UAE, things are starting to change. “Companies like Etisalat have taken a giant leap and rolled out the UAE’s first 5G data network,” he explains. “Until recently, the high cost of internet services had restricted the streaming of UHD content. However, increased competition among broadband service providers, and the availability of 5G, mean households are benefiting from improved levels of connectivity at a lower cost. This will only continue to improve in the future, as the networks have to accommodate streaming of higher quality or larger data bandwidth content.”

The market analysis seems to agree. At this year’s MIPTV, research firm IHS Markit revealed strong growth of 4K/UHD screens. The report suggests that adoption is rapidly gaining momentum not just in Europe, North America and Latin America, but in MENA too. According to Mitre, the most crucial driver of media technology spending will come from digital and OTT broadcasters. For instance, Insight TV, a major 4K UHD HDR broadcaster and producer of native UHD content, has just launched a channel in the Middle East and North Africa. BeIN has also launched the region’s first UHD satellite set-top box, while Netflix is now actively developing Arabic Originals in 4K.

However, there are still many obstacles when it comes to the adoption of 4K UHD, and especially HDR, believes Serene Issa, Senior Colourist at Optix Digital MENA. “UHD isn’t a difficult resolution to adopt from a technical standpoint. We already deliver in UHD on many of the projects that come through our suites. That said, however, HD remains the dominant resolution for traditional broadcast in the region.”

The reasons for this, according to Charbel Reaidy, a Dubai-based filmmaker at Montage TV, are complex. “Once reserved purely for the emerging technologies sections at trade shows, new content with ever more pixels, higher frame rates and wider colour gamuts is having a transformative effect on broadcast and feature film workflows. Ahead of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japanese broadcaster NHK announced it would begin broadcasting in 8K permanently. And with the right equipment, anyone streaming the new series of Netflix’s Stranger Things can now enjoy the show in 4K. Slowly but surely, it seems more commissioners are demanding delivery in UHD and HDR – but what are things like in MENA?

We speak to a cross-section of MENA facilities to learn more about the current state of play. Together, they reveal their thoughts on the trends driving uptake and the challenges faced when it comes to adoption.

“What is easy to forget when making observations on the Middle East and North Africa is just how vast the region is as a whole. It is a diverse region that includes countries at various stages of economic development,” points out Dan Mitre, founder of Dan Mitre Media. While geopolitical turmoil, piracy and the cost of broadband services continue to impact the transition to digital broadcasting, he explains that from what he sees in the UAE, things are starting to change. “Companies like Etisalat have taken a giant leap and rolled out the

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Barriers to Adoption

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There are several obstacles to 4K adoption in the region and HD continues to be the dominant resolution, notes Serene Issa.

Is the future HDR?
So just why is HDR relevant to the industry?

“While 4K describes the number of pixels, it is HDR that determines the quality,” explains Simon Hall of Blackmagic Design. “Affording much greater control, the end result is more noticeable to audiences, regardless of the medium used to consume it.”

Nevertheless, creating and distributing HDR content is incredibly demanding, indicates Issa. “Essentially, you have to rethink your approach, investing in knowledge acquisition and new hardware and workflows, both of which require resources, whether that be time or financial. For example, an HDR mastering monitor alone can set you back upwards of $50,000. If you’re a freelance colourist, that leap might feel even more premature. I certainly feel as though the region will need more time before they openly embrace it.”

Another somewhat divisive topic is the lack of an agreed standard for delivery in post and for viewing in the home, reveals Reaidy. “That in itself makes it a challenge for post facilities to understand and implement a single, standardised HDR workflow.”

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Charbel Reaidy, filmmaker, Montage TV

The lack of an agreed standard for delivery in post poses a challenge for post facilities to understand and implement a single, standardised HDR workflow, says Charbel Reaidy.
“Equally, there is nothing that says a television must display a specific range of highlights and darkness, or even a specific number of colours or luminosity, which creates inconsistency with how content will be viewed in the home. And while the UHD Alliance has defined a set of standards called UHD Premium, it is something of a moot point until delivery standards are agreed and ratified.”

However, despite the current challenges, most agree that HDR will not only be used but that it could eventually be prioritised over resolution. “It is easy to see why,” explains Karim Mia, Senior Colourist at Lizard Post Production. “Better pixels, and not more of them, offers a far better viewing experience in my opinion, with higher contrast levels, more vivid colours and a brighter image.”

Serene agrees, suggesting that she believes OTT platforms will be the driver for UHD in the future. “We’ve already seen several original Arabic dramas commissioned by Netflix in the region and that output will need to appeal to international audiences, where consumers will be quicker to adopt HDR televisions.”

And the leap towards that future isn’t as big as many would assume, with many productions already capturing for HDR, concludes Simon. “Even if they don’t yet see a demand, more and more productions are shooting in raw formats as standard, and that provides the necessary dynamic range and colour profile needed for HDR. Whether you’re a facility or freelance colourist, it is important to fully understand how to tell stories with this new palette and guide clients accordingly.”

“Until recently, the high cost of internet services had restricted the streaming of UHD content. However, increased competition among broadband service providers, and the availability of 5G, mean households are benefiting from improved levels of connectivity, at a lower cost”

Dan Mitre points out that MENA countries are at various stages of economic development and consequently have vastly different production needs. Karim Mia says it won’t be long before people begin to see the value of HDR and begin to prioritise it over resolution.

“Better pixels, and not more of them, offers a far better viewing experience in my opinion, with higher contrast levels, more vivid colours and a brighter image”

Karim Mia, Senior Colourist, Lizard Post Production
IBC2019 CONCLUDES WITH A BIG BANG

The event is said to have witnessed a 10% increase in the number of under-35 attendees.

IBC announced in a statement that this year’s edition brought together 56,390 attendees and saw a 10% increase in the number of under-35s. Leading actor, director and producer Andy Serkis delivered the Convention Keynote, while Dutch football legends Ruud Gullit and Robin van Persie were at the show.

Speaking about the exhibition, IBC CEO Michael Crimp said: “Across the Exhibition, Conference and Feature areas, IBC2019 has been a hive of networking, deal-making, product launches, learning and the sharing of ideas. It has been a celebration of the industry’s creativity and drivers of change, while also helping to identify and address key challenges.

“We are delighted to see audience growth in our key target areas, particularly welcoming more young people, senior-level executives and overseas visitors. While this gives us a focus to build on next year, our metrics for success also include crucial elements like quality of experience, audience engagement and IBC’s influence on the industry, and our conversations with exhibitors and attendees tell us that these have all improved on 2018.”

A major highlight of the show was the first ever IBC Esports Showcase live tournament, which demonstrated how esports was fast becoming an important sector for those involved in the media and broadcast industry. Two professional teams from ESBa a network of national championships across Europe went head-to-head in classic FPS multiplayer Counter-Strike: Global Offensive.

This year’s recipient of IBC’s highest award, the International Honour for Excellence, went to actor, director and producer Andy Serkis, who accepted the award for his outstanding contribution to the industry and his pioneering work in the field of motion capture.

New were the Social Impact Awards, which recognised diversity and inclusivity, environmental impact, and ethical leadership, and the Young Pioneer Award, which was awarded to Vera Bichler, Austrian broadcaster ORF’s first female football director.

At IBC2019, the results of three IBC media-telecom catalyst programmes were presented – a 5G-enabled tourism experience, AI indexing for regulatory content management, and mobile news gathering using AI-powered compression – showing how collaboration across the media and telecoms communities can transform both businesses and consumer experiences.

IBC2020 will take place from September 11-15 next year.

Winners of the IBC awards this year

Innovation Awards
Content Creation: Sky ISP remote production
Content Distribution: Seychelles Ocean Mission
Content Everywhere: ETV Bahrain

International Honour For Excellence: Andy Serkis
Young Pioneer Award: Vera Bichler, graduate of the Broadcast Academy, and the first woman football director for ORF in Austria.

Special Award: 4K 4Charity, the fun run established at IBC five years ago
Social Impact Awards
For Diversity and Inclusivity: Journalism for Juniors, an initiative from Turkish broadcaster TRT which teaches disadvantaged young people and refugee children how to tell their stories through the medium of journalism
For Environmental Impact: VoxOmniChannel Citizen Engagement, an advanced and extensive emergency alert and advisory platform for half a billion people living in India’s coastal communities, developed by Gaian Solutions for India’s Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Social Impact Award for Ethical Leadership: Chouette Films, an associate member of SDGs, University of London, which crafts films with the smallest possible environmental footprint.

Winners of the first-ever Rise Awards

Rise has announced the winners of its first ever Rise Awards at this year’s IBC.

The judges saw over 100 nominations of women in a variety of roles and across the globe, in categories including Business, Engineering, Marketer/PR, Rising Star, Sales, Technical Operations, and Woman of the Year (sponsored by Grass Valley).

The ceremony saw Morwes Williams, Head of UK Operations, BBC News, presented with the Woman of the Year Award. Williams was promoted to Head of UK Operations at the BBC and appointed Chair of the World’s Broadcasting Union’s International Media Connectivity Group. In addition, she has been chosen to complete an Executive Education programme on Media Transformation Challenge at Harvard University.

Other winners include Natsuchia Cutt, Creative Director and co-founder of the World’s Broadcasting Union’s International Media Connectivity Group. In addition, she has been chosen to complete an Executive Education programme on Media Transformation Challenge at Harvard University.

ENYI; Gemma Ebi, Software Engineer, Media and Broadcast, BT; Lucy Speed, Marketing and PR Manager, Discovery; Shannon Albrink, Junior Editor at Therapy Studies; Charlotte Latham, Manager of Sales and Operations at CueScript; and Lorraine Fannan, Portfolio Project Manager at Massive.
Titan X2 ushers in a new era in cinematic lighting

The Rotolight Titan X2 is an LED soft light, which utilizes RGBW technology to provide light output, color accuracy for skin tones, and a suite of industry-first features to enhance the creative possibilities of lighting professionals. Designed and manufactured in the Middle East. We can work both as a telco as our partner and another internationally.”

Andreas Eriksson, Head of Telstra Broadcast Services

Brightcove brings beacon of hope to OTT market

Brightcove has launched Brightcove Beacon, a new Saas-based OTT platform, at IBC. Brightcove Beacon enables companies to deliver and launch premium video experiences quickly and cost-effectively across mobile, web, smart TVs and connected TVs, with the flexibility of multiple monetisation models.

It is the next step in broadening our portfolio and is the solution for customers who want to get to market quickly and across multiple devices, commented Sara Larsen, Chief Marketing Officer at Brightcove. With Brightcove Beacon, users can create, launch and monetise OTT apps faster than before, at greater scale. Brightcove Beacon helps companies quickly develop OTT apps for smart TVs as well as web, iOS, and Android. New flexible monetisation models include advertising, subscription and pay-per-view for live and video on-demand (VOD) content.

“Before, it took months to launch a single OTT experience. Brightcove Beacon enables users to now launch video content on a variety of devices simultaneously. Scalability, customer choice and reliability are some of our biggest differentiators. We offer numerous options with Brightcove Beacon, including a subscription model for customers to get to market quickly and be on a maintenance plan,” said Dominic Harland, Senior Director of Product Management for Anti-Piracy Services at NAGRA.

“With Brightcove Beacon, customers can plug in and instantly get working with all video, audio and control connections that operate as a simple webcam, allowing live streaming to YouTube and business presentations via Skype.”

“With this, customers can stream live between four high-quality video-camera inputs in better-quality images. The built-in SVE offers picture-in-picture effects, designed for live commentary. To live stream, ATEM Mini has a USB output that works like a webcam, so customers can connect to any video software. There’s also HDMI video out for projectors. Microphone inputs allow high-quality desktop and lap mics for interviews and presentations. It features a compact control panel with a design that is both sleek and functional, ensuring that users can connect up to four high-quality consumer video cameras. It features a USB connection that operates as a simple webcam interface, that means customers can plug in and instantly get working with any video software. The software is tricked into thinking the ATEM Mini is one of their high-end cameras.”

Stuart Ashton, Director of Blackmagic Design EMEA

GB Labs accelerates FastNAS storage connectivity

GB Labs showcased further acceleration of its FastNAS storage systems with the introduction of new 25GbE connectivity at IBC. CEO-CTO Harland said: “The current LC fibre link speed capability is approximately 10Gb. That may be OK for some, but to take further advantage of the speed and power of our FastNAS storage already offers, we have connectivity that ascends to 25GbE, which delivers a proven 2.3Gb from server to desktop and running on LC cables.

In short, there is no more metaphoric waiting around. In addition, 25GbE FastNAS can use existing LC fibre channel cabling infrastructure. Meaning there are fewer additional technologies to deploy or infrastructure to tear down and rebuild.”

The convergence of the newly 25GbE-enabled FastNAS is its new CORE & OS, a high-performance, custom operating system designed to serve media files with additional intelligence layers that deliver stability and quality of service.

Harland said: “CORE & OS turned out to be so powerful that we soon discovered 10GbE fibre was actually a bottleneck, but no longer. With FastNAS at 25GbE, users can fully exploit the benefits of 25GbE, especially for UK workflows.”

FastNAS media production storage systems are available in a range of configurations, including FastNAS F8 Nitro Studio, FastNAS F8 Nitro, FastNAS F16 and FastNAS F16 Nitro.

Face to face with Stuart Ashton, BMD

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**Face to face with Alberto Carpenè, Speedcast**

Hottest to offer better coverage in North Africa. We have a big deal with Telespazio, from where we uplink to Europe and North Africa. All those channels are powered from the cloud and get played out from the cloud.

“We have primarily worked with public IP on fixed wire lines, but at IBC this year we introduced global LTE coverage through a box that fits in the palm of your hand. Called the SSIM Mobile LTE, it is the industry’s first fully managed service for news, sports and event broadcasters that need a quick, low-latency and cost-effective uplink solution.

The SSIM Mobile LTE service provides the industry with a bonded LTE solution that requires zero capex investment and offers an easy entry point into and exit out of the cloud. With 5G networks promising faster speeds and lower latency, now is the perfect time for media companies to upgrade their mobile uplinking capabilities.

Alberto Carpenè, Vice President, Speedcast Media Network

**Clear-Com’s 5Ghz promise with FreeSpeak**

Clear-Com’s FreeSpeak Edge is an advanced wireless intercom system designed to deliver the best audio quality and enhanced performance in live performance environments. The system gives the user more control and customisation options, thanks to advanced frequency coordination capabilities and intuitive design features in the system’s transceivers and beltpacks.

FreeSpeak includes an all-new SGHz chipset that features an exclusive radio stack development optimised for intercom. FreeSpeak Edge leverages audio-over-IP developments in its architecture, using AES67 connections between the transceivers and the host intercom frame for exceptional flexibility in deployment.

“FreeSpeak Edge is the future of advanced wireless communication,” said Bob Boutar, President, Clear-Com. “While some manufacturers are trying to improve incrementally on existing solutions, we have leapfrogged right to the edge of what is possible with wireless intercom technology today, in readiness for tomorrow’s increasingly demanding requirements. We often hear talk of so-called game changers, but FreeSpeak Edge is the real deal. The system uses Clear-Com’s exclusive RF technology, which employs OFDM to provide a robust transport layer that is immune to most forms of interference. FreeSpeak Edge delivers clear THA audio quality with ultra-low latency and is highly scalable.

**Sony launches FX9 camera with Full-Frame sensor**

The ultimate tool of choice for documentaries, music videos, drama productions and all-round event shooting. The FX9 was designed in close collaboration with the creative community. The camcorder benefits from the versatility, portability and performance expected of an FS7 series “Run & Sun” style camcorder, while also offering HDR and Full Frame shooting features.

The sensor offers wide dynamic range with high sensitivity, low noise and over 15 stops of latitude that can be recorded internally in 4K 2.2 10bit. Oversampling by the 6K sensor allows professionals to create high-quality 4K footage with bokeh effects through shallow depth of field, while wide-angle shooting opens new possibilities for content creators.

**Irdeo promises Trusted Home at IBC**

Consumer demand for IoT devices is growing rapidly as they look to make the most of connectivity and the smart home. However, the increase in IoT devices also increases the number of security vulnerabilities and creates challenges for communication service providers (CSPs) and consumers alike.

Irdeo promises Trusted Home at IBC, which enables CSPs to secure the entire smart home beyond the router, increase ARPU by offering value-added services to consumers and decrease call centre volumes and truck rolls. Trusted Home offers an Android and iOS app with AI-driven self-setup, self-care and security guidance. CSPs can white-label this app or integrate into their existing consumer-facing apps. The solution also offers Wi-Fi management capabilities and comes with the Irdeo Care Portal, which gives customer support staff real visibility to troubleshoot top call issues.

**Face to face with Matthias Eckert, Imagine Communications APAC & EMEA**

“The Middle East has been pretty successful and we are finishing two projects in EMMA, formerly ERTU, and one large project with Abu Dhabi Media, refurbishing the whole production facility. We have had a lot of interest in our IP and cloud offering, especially on the playback side, and this is what we have provided Abu Dhabi TV. We see that each customer works at a different pace. Some are looking at growing their cloud investment, while others are building their current infrastructure on SHL. As a result, one of our biggest offerings is a hybrid solution, where they can continue to work on their current SDI workflow but grow their IP side in parallel. Our job is to ensure that the infrastructure of the past can be easily upgraded and converted into a future-proofed infrastructure going forward. That’s why we are part of the AIMS foundation. We are trying to ensure standardisation and also make sure interoperability with third-party vendors is guaranteed.”

Matthias Eckert, SVP APAC, EMEA, Imagine Communications
Celebrating the first Emirati astronaut’s trip to the International Space Station

On September 23, 2019, a Soyuz FG was installed on the Baikonur Cosmodrome Launch Pad No. 1, in Kazakhstan, in preparation for an important mission on September 25. The Soyuz FG would carry the Soyuz MS-15 spacecraft, in which Hazzaa AlMansoori, the first Emirati astronaut, was to be sent to the International Space Station (ISS).

According to tradition, the Soyuz FG rocket was transported on rail from the assembly building in Baikonur Cosmodrome to Launch Pad No. 1. The first phase of the installation took 10 minutes, in which it was lifted into position. This was the same launch site where Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin travelled to space onboard the Vostok 1 spacecraft, becoming the first man in space on April 12, 1961. The Soyuz FG rocket was adorned with the UAE flag, along with the flags of the USA and Russia, to reflect the nationalities of the astronauts onboard – Russian cosmonaut Oleg Skripochka and US astronaut Jessica Meir.

Hazzaa AlMansoori arrived at ISS on September 26, 2019, aboard the Russian spacecraft Soyuz MS-15, along with the other two astronauts. He will conduct 16 scientific experiments in cooperation with international space agencies, including Roscosmos, the European Space Agency (ESA), NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). Six of these experiments will be conducted in microgravity, and the results of the two environments will later be compared. The experiments include studying the reaction of vital indicators of the human body aboard the ISS, as well as other physical, biological and chemical experiments.

AlMansoori is the first astronaut from the Arab region to participate in such research. He recorded a one-hour film documenting life aboard the ISS and its components, as well as the activities of the astronauts. “I’m filming everything on the ISS, and these videos will be uploaded to YouTube as well as other communication channels,” commented AlMansoori.

Celebrating the first Emirati astronaut’s trip to the International Space Station

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