EGYPT TUNES IN
ERTU rings in change with major radio upgrade

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
- Dubai film fest wrap-up
- Cinematic Innovation Summit

SIGNALLING CHANGE
- Sout Al Khaleej, Qatar
- Radio Mirchi, Abu Dhabi
I wish all of you a happy and blessed New Year. May 2014 be filled with new broadcast projects that are innovative, out-of-the-box and award-winning, and may each one of you have a role to play in the success of the MENA region’s TV and film industry.

Technology wise, the broadcast industry in the Middle East is almost on par with international entities with the deployment of HD/3D infrastructure and the availability of multi-platform services.

The one area where we have significantly lacked in the past has been on the content creation side. While Arabic ranks as the sixth language in the world in terms of GDP, the Middle East contributed only 0.72% of the films produced in the world between 2005 and 2010. That is seriously tragic.

The content landscape, however, has seen significant change in the last couple of years and we saw its most visible results this year at the Dubai International Film Festival. The fantastic line-up of Arab films this year is testimony to the rise of Arab cinema and more importantly, the emergence of a new ecosystem to boost production in the GCC.

From just one small Emirates Film Competition in 2003, we have several film festivals today that don’t just attract local talent but also international celebrities. Homegrown cinema, especially, has made definite progress in the UAE with scripts becoming tighter and local filmmakers collaborating with international talent.

In addition, DIFF’s recent partnership with The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will take local films to new heights. DIFF has truly created an appetite in the GCC for more Arabic content that goes beyond Hollywood and Bollywood fare. Alongside that, the UAE government is working hard to create incentives, nurture local talent and build the infrastructure required to create a healthy production ecosystem.

Content is king and while the UAE has recognised this and made significant inroads in this direction, other GCC countries need to follow suit.

May 2014 be a year, when more Arab governments resolve to promote art, culture and cinema, so that more content is created and our filmmakers can tell stories that the world will want to see and hear.
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Get closer to the action with 40x zoom.

The amazing new HXR-NX3 professional camcorder with 40x Clear Image Zoom is the ideal choice for those demanding exceptional clarity and detail. This versatile, feature-packed camcorder can go a long way in unleashing your creative potential.

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Also available special promotion***

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ALSO AVAILABLE SPECIAL PROMOTION***

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NAB Show and CABSAT partner

NAB Show and the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWT) have announced that they will partner to produce the 2014 CABSAT Conference. CABSAT 2014 will bring together visitors from 130 countries and more than 950 exhibitors for a three-day event, combining all aspects of the broader media and satellite spheres including: acquisition and production, pre/post/broadcast audio, management systems, post-production, content and communication, distribution and delivery, satellite and communications and connected devices.

The CABSAT Conference, in partnership with NAB Show, will feature daily keynote, a state-of-the-industry report, technical programmes and panel discussions, focusing on the rapid changes and emerging technology and business trends in broadcasting. Sessions will also address the global transition to digital broadcasting, how these developments affect the digital media and entertainment landscape and how to monetise multi-platform services.

Commenting on the partnership, Chris Brown, Executive Vice President, Conventions and Business Operations at NAB said: “We are pleased to partner with DWT/CABSAT to bring some of the world-class education we offer at the annual NAB Show to this region. It is partnering with leading events such as the CABSAT Conference, to connect creative media professionals from the broader international media community that gathers annually at NAB.”

Also available special promotion**

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ETHIOPIAN NETWORK UPGRADES WITH AVID

Ethiopia’s state broadcaster Oromia Radio and Television Organization (ORTO) has selected Avid to power its content creation workflow, distribution and media management. As the official broadcaster of the Oromia Regional State Government in Ethiopia, ORTO is the first tapeless broadcaster in Ethiopia and has also recently switched from 12-hour to continuous 24-hour broadcasting.

Enabling the transition, Avid solutions are critical to ORTO’s current and future success, Habtamu Dargie, Deputy Director General For Media Technology Development at ORTO, commented: “Having doubled the amount of available airtime, we needed to significantly enhance our production capabilities,” he explained.

ORTO required a tapeless SD/HD production and archive operation to streamline content creation and media management for its transition to a live 24-hour-a-day operation. Avid’s solution was built around its ISIS 5000 shared media storage system, to offer performance, protection, and real-time collaboration for accelerated editorial workflows.

Avid Interplay Production manages and coordinates the content creation, automates workflows and links ORTO’s journalists and editors across the production and editorial ecosystems so that projects can easily move in parallel and be completed faster.

Cédric Caumont, Sales Manager for Avid Africa said: “Like many broadcasters today, ORTO was faced with the challenge to connect creative media professionals in distributed and complex workflow environments, efficiently and collaboratively. It also needed to respond to a broad range of content creation and distribution demands with a single integrated platform in order to handle its new 24-hour format.

“Avid’s media management and storage solutions are integrated, open, and end-to-end, which will ultimately help ORTO rapidly create, access, and distribute content easily.”

The installation, which is now up and running, was implemented by Avid reseller Telmaco, based in Addis Ababa. “Avid is a partner we can rely on to deliver industry leading solutions,” said Drossos Kyriazis, Telmaco’s General Director of Sales and Marketing.

“ORTO now has a streamlined end-to-end infrastructure that enables it to integrate workflows and collaborate seamlessly to create and deliver high quality, inspiring content,” he added.

Rohde and Schwarz brings DVB to Qatar

State broadcaster Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) will be upgrading its broadcast network for FIFA World Cup 2022 using Rohde & Schwarz’s DVB-T2 technology. The main contractor for the project is Media Group International, which commissioned Rohde & Schwarz to integrate, test and put the necessary broadcasting technology into operation. The order includes delivery of new UHF transmitters and upgrading of the existing transmitters to support DVB-T2. To generate the two DVB-T2 multiplexes, Rohde & Schwarz will be delivering new, fully redundant TP-based R&S AVHE1000 headends. The DVB-T2 network is scheduled to go on air before the end of the year. In addition, a new transmitter site for FM and DAB transmissions will be built, which will include a 340 metre-high guyed mast. Rohde & Schwarz will equip this site with seven specially configured FM transmitters and one DAB transmitter.

The company will also integrate the associated transmitter technology and monitoring systems at all sites. Add to this a fibre-optic backbone, which will link the radio and TV broadcasting centres to the different transmitter sites. A monitoring solution from Rohde & Schwarz will be integrated here as well. The headend in the Qatar is the first to be installed by Rohde & Schwarz as part of a full turnkey project in the Middle East.

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Jeem TV buys Scandinavian series

Qatar’s Jeem TV (formerly Al Jazeera Children’s Channel) has acquired the first season of the preschool animated series Ella Bella Bingo from Singapore-based August Media Holdings. The deal gives Jeem TV the exclusive Arabic language rights over Ella Bella Bingo in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Directed by the BAFTA winner and Emmy-nominated Director Ginger Gibbons, the series co-produced by August Media Holdings and Norway’s Kool Productions AS.

Discussing the potential of the series, Jyotirmoy Saha, CEO and Founder of August Media Holdings said: “After its huge success in the Scandinavian countries, we’re excited about Ella Bella Bingo’s journey to the Middle East. What is truly wonderful about this series is that children all over the world can relate to, geographical and cultural barriers notwithstanding.”

Frank Mosvold, the creator and Executive Producer of Ella Bella Bingo added: “Ella Bella Bingo has a talented creative and production team scattered in different parts of the world - Norway, Singapore, England and India. Now, I am excited to see Ella travelling to yet another exciting destination - the Middle East.”

Production of the show’s second season is complete and the series is expected to air in Scandinavia and Asia during Q1 2014. The third season is now in production.

NAVIGATION FILMS DEPLOYS FACILIS

Dubai-based Navigation Films recently installed a Facilis TerraBlock shared storage system to help manage post production on its 4K projects. Since its debut in 2010, Navigation Films has handled several prominent projects for oil and gas companies, airlines, corporations, government agencies and documentary filmmakers. To help manage an influx of 4K projects, the company has invested in a Facilis TerraBlock 34D with 24TB of shared storage space.

Commenting on the new system, Mike Charlton, Managing Director of Navigation Films said: “TerraBlock had a proven track record for being a solid system and we’ve only heard great things about it. It was also scalable, which would allow us to build upon it in the future. Additionally, a surge in 4K project inquiries made 4K-compatibility a top priority for us. We knew TerraBlock could handle the massive volumes of high-res material that 4K requires.”

Since installing TerraBlock, the Navigation Films crew has come to rely extensively on the system. The team shoots on a variety of camera brands including RED, ARRI, Sony, Canon and Blackmagic on a regular basis. Once shot, the footage is ingested into a TerraBlock 34D that is connected via 1 Gbit Ethernet to two Mac Pro workstations running Avid Media Composer, Apple Final Cut Pro 7 and Adobe Creative Cloud, where editing ensues.

Mike Charlton, Navigation Films.

End.

While others were a #hashtag we’ve become a Trend

Inmarsat appoints Globecomm as reseller

Inmarsat has signed an agreement with Globecomm, appointing the specialist managed satellite services provider as a Value Added Reseller (VAR) for Global Xpress, serving the Government market in Africa and the Middle East.

Andy Start, President of Inmarsat Global Government, said: “Globecomm has been an energetic and successful partner of Inmarsat for more than seven years, and its established footprint across many African countries places it ideally to drive early growth of GX services in those exciting and emerging economies. We are very pleased to welcome Globecomm as one of the first GX VARs in the Government sector and look forward to serving clients with them as GX goes live in 2014.”

Venutec to distribute Albiral in KSA

Dubai-based Venutec LLC has appointed Nour Assafiri as the new distributor of the brands Arthur Holm, Pietron Broadcast and Albiral for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The newly appointed distributor claims that with this alliance, Albiral will assure an optimal service to the local systems integrators. Systems integrators, consultants and dealers will benefit from continuous training, engineering support in the development of specific products, logistics and after sales service.

According to Nour A. Assafiri, CEO of Venutec: “The addition of Arthur Holm products to the brands that we currently distribute will be a value addition to our portfolio. The policy of continuous innovation, the quality and the flexibility that Arthur Holm has been delivering, will perfectly fit with our business philosophy”.

Henrik Holm, Albiral Display Solutions CEO, stated: “We believe that Venutec is the perfect partner for us. Its skilled and experienced team will be our extended arm in the region.”
Al Jazeera mulls majority stake in Digiturk

Al Jazeera is considering a bid for a majority stake in Turkish pay-TV company Digiturk to boost its soccer offering ahead of the 2022 World Cup finals in Qatar. Al Jazeera’s move stems from Digiturk’s $321 million-a-year deal for exclusive rights to Turkey’s Super League championship.

OSN offers Fight Network

OSN has partnered with Fight Network to launch, the MENA’s first dedicated combat sports channel. David Butorac, CEO of OSN, said: “We are setting a new trend in sports TV entertainment in the MENA region with the launch of OSN Fight Network HD. We constantly monitor customer preferences and identified a credible opportunity to launch a channel dedicated to combat sports.”

“While young audiences love the adrenaline-rush of this exciting genre of diverse sporting activities, many combat sports are also gaining popularity as a fitness regimen.”

OSN Fight Network HD is a strong addition to the portfolio of major international sporting events presently offered by OSN. The channel’s international programming will feature events and other shows, including Europe’s mixed martial arts, Japanese promotions DEEP and Pancrase, world-class international kickboxing and an extensive classic fights catalogue.

twofour54 and ADM organise media seminar

Some of North America’s top media and entertainment executives attended ‘Spotlight on Abu Dhabi: Business and Creative Opportunities for the Media and Entertainment Industry’ held recently. The event was organised by twofour54 and Abu Dhabi Media (ADM) and hosted by Reed Smith, a global relationship law firm.

By joining forces for ‘Spotlight on Abu Dhabi’, twofour54 and ADM covered a range of topics relevant to North American entertainment industry executives, including: television, film and content creation in Abu Dhabi; the protection of intellectual property rights in the UAE; how media companies are regulated around health and fitness in the region, Physique TV offers a roster of shows covering healthy living. Headquartered in Dubai, the channel plays out in HD from its fully integrated playout facility powered by OASYS Automated Playout.

Commenting on the channel’s content, Peter Einstein, General Manager of Physique TV said: “We produce about 25% of our content in-house with our own production team. The rest of it is acquired. Presently, we have about 600 hours of content available. Our production unit includes two studios with a 2500 sq ft gym studio. “Our mantra for the channel is ‘be your best’. In order to keep the viewers engaged, we offer a good balance in terms of content with a sprinkling of entertainment shows and dramas alongside instructional programmes. The local content is carefully planned with content in English and Arabic.”

The format of Physique TV includes a variety of entertaining, inspiring, instructional and informative shows, such as Yoga Today and CrossFit, MMA All Out and Maximum Bows. The show portfolio also includes fitness-oriented reality TV such as Love in the Wild, All the Right Moves and Push Girls. A roster of cookery shows such as Cooking with Siba and Week in a Day with Rachael Ray, are a part of the channel’s schedule. Then there are Arabic and English news roundups showing including Show Fee Al Fee and What’s Up?, featuring the latest health and lifestyle news including inspiring real-life stories. The objective of the channel is to inspire the audience to get fit while helping them to make informed choices about diet, lifestyle and exercise routines, explained Einstein.

Regarding the management’s plan to establish the channel in the region, Einstein said that marketing is a crucial part of launching and promoting a channel. He stated that social media campaigns and other initiatives were necessary to engage various entities to patronise the channel.

Dubai Municipality has also joined hands with Physique TV to support healthy living. The channel adapts two main sources of revenue including advertisements and distributions. For advertisements, the channel is open to brands that associate themselves with healthy living and active lifestyle.

Einstein added, “Technically, we are very sound with a brand new channel management system and we are now ready for sponsorship opportunities. We provide advertisers with a diverse array of partnership opportunities, including product integration into our in-house shows.”

PHYSIQUE TV LAUNCHES FIRST HEALTH AND FITNESS CHANNEL IN MENA

Physique TV launched as Fight Network HD...

Physique TV is a provider of satellite services in Lebanon, has selected ATEME’s Kyrios CM5000 for its DSNG (Digital Satellite News Gathering) operations.

Based in the centre of Beirut, ISOL is an independent provider of production and news gathering services operating its own fleet of vehicles and flyaways. ISOL clients include leading news broadcasters in the Middle East and throughout the world such as Al Arabiya, Sky News Arabia, CNN, Al Houssa and the BBC.

Housnaa Mansour, Head of Broadcast Operations, ISOL, said: “At ISOL, we often operate under extreme pressure, whether in Lebanon, or when covering news in other Middle East countries. We found the ATEME encoders and decoders to be very well designed for our day-to-day race against time, effectively saving us precious minutes when we need them. “Picture quality was also important in our selection process, as we strive to delight our customers in every aspect of the offered service.”

ISOL selected ATEME’s Kyrios CM5000 encoder in a configuration that is dedicated to news professionals. The encoder includes satellite modulation to save costs and space in vehicles and flyaways and additional features that effectively simplify field operations, reduce set-up time and minimise risks of configuration errors.

Lebanon-based ISOL selects ATEME

Al Jazeera and Sony in landmark deal

Sony Professional Solutions MEA (Sony PSPMEA) has announced the signing of a landmark $143 million project with Al Jazeera Media Network (AJMN). The project involves building state-of-the-art 3G broadcast infrastructure, including a network-wide broadcast IT project, providing unified the broadcast workflows for news and programme planning, production, transmission and archiving. The facility will have multiple high definition studios, and a global media management system (GIMS) offering a collaborative workspace for digital assets within the network, thereby increasing the efficiency of content management, distribution and delivery.

Commenting on the collaboration, Mostafa Souag, Acting Director General of Al Jazeera Media Network said: “This project will enhance communication and transfer of information from and to our 70 bureaus, and between our channels especially Al Jazeera English, Al Jazeera Balkans and Al Jazeera America.”

PSL.jpg

In line with the continued growth of its content assets, the regional media group has selected ATEME’s world-class Kyrion CM5000 encoders for its global master-planning project.

“Sony is proud to be a part of this historic project, which will enhance the broadcast workflow of Al Jazeera Media Network,” said Damien Egan, Solid State Logic Vice President, Middle East.

“This project will enable Al Jazeera Media Network to produce and deliver content in real-time, offering high-quality video streaming to audiences across the globe.”

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PRONEWS
BROADCAST INDUSTRY CONFIDENCE HIGHEST IN TWO YEARS

The IABM (International Association of Broadcasting Manufacturers) concluded its annual two-day International Business Conference recently. The event brought together many of the most respected figures from the broadcast technology arena in a series of keynote and panels debating the future of the broadcast sector.

The conference commenced with key findings from the association’s latest business intelligence report from Peter White, Director General of the IABM. He said: “Although the market is in growth year on year at around 4.5%, this conceals some wildly divergent performance. SMEs in particular seem to be struggling with shrinking sales year on year at about 5%. Profits are also shrinking overall at a rate of minus 24%.

“It is against these figures it was something of a surprise to see that business confidence was at its highest level for over two years. So, hopefully, we will see significant overall market performance improvements in 2014.”

The overall theme of the conference – Navigating through the changing media landscape – focused on transformation and convergence in the industry. Charlie Vogt, President and CEO, Harris Broadcast suggested greater collaboration is a necessity if the incumbents are to present a coherent response to emerging threats from new entrants to the market.

John Ive, conference Chairman and Director of Business Development and Technology at IABM, expanded on the idea of “co-operation in the industry.” “For too long the established players in the broadcast sector have been focused on protecting their individual interests, which are all too-often tied up in proprietary systems. In the meantime, a new wave of competitors from the telco space have shown they have both the ambition, and are illustrated by recent developments, the means to disrupt the status quo.”

Private FM radio stations highest in Iraq and Palestine

Arab Advisors Group’s latest research has revealed that 246 government-owned FM radio stations have been broadcasting in 18 Arab countries since August 2013, while there were 220 private radio stations. The report also analyzed seven regional radio stations that broadcast on FM frequencies in multiple countries.

Liberalization in several Arab countries was the key factor for the growth in private FM radio stations. Out of the 18 countries covered in the report, three do not allow private radio stations, namely: Qatar, UAE, and Yemen. In 2011, Mauritania and Algeria allowed the licensing of private radio stations. By August 2013, Algeria had still not launched any private FM stations, while Mauritania had launched three stations.

The need to broadcast in multiple languages to cater for expatriates adds to the number of FM radio stations even in countries where private FM radio stations do not exist. In the UAE, FM radio stations broadcast in Arabic, English, Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, and Persian.

Joud Hazineh, Arab Advisors research analyst wrote in the report: “By August 2013, Iraq, with 69, leads all the analysed Arab countries with the total number of radio stations, as well as privately owned ones, followed by Palestine, with 60 FM radio stations.

“Algeria, on the other hand, had the highest number of state-owned radio stations, with 56 stations, followed by the UAE with 37 state-owned radio stations.”

Harris Broadcast to acquire Imagine Communications

Harris Broadcast has agreed a definitive agreement to acquire Imagine Communications’ end-to-end solutions portfolio, particularly enhancing its OTT, mobile video and multi-screen TV Everywhere capabilities, while furthering interoperability of technology and systems from both the linear and non-linear TV viewing worlds.

Charlie Vogt, CEO of Harris Broadcast said: “Many of our content originator customers have been adding services for OTT and TV Everywhere, but have had to do so with federated systems for linear and non-linear services.

“This acquisition enables Harris Broadcast to take a leadership position in the OTT and TV Everywhere market, while laying the foundation for the first true software defined integration of sales, scheduling, automation, playout and delivery across both linear and non-linear content distribution networks.

IBM to acquire Aspera

IBM has signed a deal to acquire Aspera Inc. Aspera’s technology helps companies securely speed the movement of massive data files around the world. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Licensed to clients and partners either in the cloud or on premise, Aspera’s high-speed transfer technology reduces transmission times for large files or data sets by up to 99.9% – potentially cutting a 26 hour transfer of a 24 gigabyte file, sent halfway around the world, down to just 30 seconds. Aspera’s patented fasp technology overcomes inherent bottlenecks in broadband wide area networks that slow the transfer of extremely large files, such as high-definition video or scientific research files across distance.

This acquisition builds on IBM’s smarter Commerce initiative by allowing businesses to accelerate their digital supply chain between partners and suppliers. It also expands IBM’s capabilities in managed file transfer with a complementary set of tools to help enterprises further gain control and oversight of their data transfers.

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Beyond distributing broadcast equipment, First Gulf Company is a major force in the broadcast systems sector in the region with the most significant achievements in HD TV Production and Post-Production facilities and studios.

FGC’s capabilities cover the design, implementation, integration and support of the most sophisticated systems. Additionally, FGC provides turnkey solutions in all systems including high-capacity Media Asset Management and Digital Archiving Systems.

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Wohler appoints Senior Exec, EMEA

Wohler Technologies has appointed Liam Connors to the role of Senior Sales Executive in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) for the company’s RadiantGrid business line. From Wohler’s offices in London, Connors will be responsible for RadiantGrid’s expanding U.K., European, Middle East, and African customer base. In addition to raising the profile of RadiantGrid file-based solutions, he will also manage sales of RadiantGrid products to both new and existing customers in the broadcast, media, and entertainment markets.

Craig Newbury, Vice President of Sales for the Wohler RadiantGrid business line said: “Our RadiantGrid line of file-based media transformation solutions provides media enterprises of all sizes with cost-effective solutions for improving the efficiency of their workflows and the productivity of their operations, and I believe Liam has the insight and experience to help existing and potential customers realise the benefits of RadiantGrid.”

MEDIASYS EVENT ATTRACTS VFX PROFESSIONALS FROM THE REGION

Mediasys organised a CG/VFX event recently to showcase its updated product line.

Boony George, MD of Mediasys, said: “Our company has been committed to the CGI and VFX market for a very long time and this CG/VFX meet provided a platform to connect the CGI artists to the makers of the tools they use and other artists from the industry.”

The day featured presentations and demos by manufacturers such as The Foundry, Chaos Group, and Autodesk; each presenting the latest releases of their key products.

The Foundry presented the recently released Nuke 8, Chaos Group gave a preview of the soon-to-be-released V-Ray 3.0 and a surprise sneak-peak of V-Ray for Nuke. Also highlighted were the new features of Autodesk Maya and 3ds Max 2014.

The event hosted broadcasters, video editors, graphic artists, architectural visualisation professionals, offering a networking and learning platform.

PRONEWS

Ronan Keating joins Postman Pat

Irish-born Ronan Keating, former West End musical star and one half of the Irish boy band Boyzone, has joined the cast of the upcoming feature film Postman Pat: The Movie in the role of Fred. The film is set to go into production in May, and stars the voices of cast members Craig Kelly as Postman Pat, BAFTA Award Winner Jim Broadbent as Postman Pat. Academy Award and Golden Globe nominee David Tennant (Weasley in the Harry Potter film series, Doctor Who, Harry Potter) and BAFTA Award Winner Rupert Everett, along with David Walliams (Ocean’s Twelve), who will also star as the voice of the film’s chief nemesis, the evil首创’ll of a certain name.

Keating has already had two cameo appearances in the film, appearing as a contestant who competes against Pat for a coveted prize.

ATEM powers live production at U17 World Cup

ATEM Production Studio 4K Switchers were deployed during the 2013 UAR U17 World Cup as part of a new live production workflow in the six host nation stadiums.

Organisers approached Pulse Middle East, a provider of audio visual and lighting solutions, to not only design and install the new system, but to also provide technical and operational support throughout the world championship of association football for players under the age of 17.

The various stadiums hosting the games during the U17 World Cup were the Al Ahli Stadium (Dubai), Mohamed Bin Zayed Stadium (Abu Dhabi), Al Janira Stadium (Al Ain), Al Jazira Stadium (Abu Dhabi), Sharjah Stadium (Sharjah), Emirates Stadium (Ras Al Khaimah) and Fujairah Stadium (Fujairah).

Coverage of the World Cup’s 52 matches in progress.

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The road to production in MENA

Dubai Film and TV Commission (DFTC), in partnership with Oliver Wyman, a global management consulting firm, released a white paper examining key areas for growth and investment in the MENA media production market, with recommendations for how countries in the region can build world-class media ecosystems.

According to a white paper released by Dubai Film and TV Commission (DFTC), Arabic content production is still below its fullest potential, and presents the biggest opportunity for growth in the Middle East media production market. The white paper titled Opportunities and Challenges in the Middle East and North Africa Media Production Market, was released by DFTC in association with Oliver Wyman, on the sidelines of the 10th edition of Dubai International Film Festival.

The white paper stated that although Arabic is the sixth world language in terms of GDP, there is still a significant lack of Arabic media content. Between 2006 and 2012, the Middle East contributed only 0.72% of the films produced in the world. Furthermore, Arabic TV dramas have historically remained relatively low compared to other languages. According to this study, only 15% of all regionally targeted dramas are produced by local media companies, with the majority produced by local media companies in Turkey.

Egypt established itself early as the leading media ecosystem in Arabic film and TV content production, largely due to its indigenous actors, directors, and other artists. Egypt is also known for its strong talent pool, fostering short-form production such as TV shows and commercials, and more recently expanding into international formats and films. With varied location offerings and proximity to the United States and Europe, Morocco has become a preferred site for Hollywood film production.

Jordan has also benefited from its historic-rich locations and the creation of a strong film commission to ease the filmmaking process. More recently, however, power has begun to shift towards the Gulf countries, where governments are beginning to take a vested interest in the creation of media ecosystems.

More recently, however, power has begun to shift towards the Gulf countries, where governments are beginning to take a vested interest in the creation of media ecosystems. The UAE, in particular, has played an active role, with the government giving incentives to the development of its media landscape. The white paper revealed Dubai’s strong potential to become a global media production hub meeting the highest industry standards.

Dubai’s TECOM Media Cluster has taken measures to ensure ease in doing business, build the necessary infrastructure, and to develop the talent and financing required to move to the next level. Thanks to its many business parks, it has established itself as an economic hub, hosting nearly 5,000 companies, with 1,800 of them located within its Media Cluster (Dubai Media City, Dubai Studio City, International Media Production Zone), spanning the entire media value chain.

The paper highlighted the achievements of Dubai in the areas of production infrastructure, such as the state-of-the-art sound stages at Dubai Studio City and the creation of Dubai Film and TV Commission, which provides the necessary framework to ease the production process for filmmakers.

Due to this focused effort and facilitation from the government and private entities, in less than a decade, Dubai has experienced significant growth in media production. In fact, and even taking the 2008 recession into account, Dubai has experienced a 9% CAGR through 2012. Dubai’s film production industry has grown over the last few years with 10 films being shot in 2012, originating from various countries such as the U.A.E., India, United States, China, Germany, and France.

Indeed, Dubai’s film production industry has benefited from an existing production capability for TV programmes and commercials as well as from its increasingly attractive shooting location. Advertisers have been consistently drawn to its diverse location offerings, enabling it to develop a strong, year-round industry. This can be seen through the significant percentage of Dubai-based crew deployed on large film productions shot in Dubai such as Syriana (2005), Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol (2011), Switch (2012), and The Bourne Legacy (2012).

Jamil Al Sharif, Chairman of Dubai Film & TV Commission, commented on the findings: “Dubai has become the regional trailblazer for the media industry in recent years, benefitting both the emirate and the UAE at large. We acknowledge that gaps remain in areas such as the production of Arabic content, providing access to talent, and audience measurement, and steps are already being taken to improve these. In fact, the first annual report of TV audience figures was released by TVView just this November, and these will be regularly released from now on, providing film and TV producers with the insights they need to secure investment. Building talent and increasing Arabic content are major pillars of the Dubai Film and TV Commission’s mandate and so these areas will be a key focus for us moving forward.”

Three key actions stand out which could dramatically change Dubai’s global position and begin to take it to the next level: improving access to talent by offering longer-term residency to production crew, developing more formalized film incentives, and improving TV audience measurement across the region. According to the paper, if Dubai were to implement such changes, its position as an internationally renowned media production hub will strengthen and grow significantly.

Jeff Youssef, Associate Partner at Oliver Wyman, said: “The global media and entertainment industry generated nearly USD 1.6 trillion in revenue last year, and the direct benefit from employment opportunities to cultural enrichment – generated for a country by the core film and TV industry are substantial. Media production is being increasingly important in a number of countries in the MENA region. However, markets need to assess their performance against key production requirements and take concrete steps to address their shortfalls.”

Lack of people: A challenge

The MENA region’s pan-Arab market suffers due to its lack of a reliable TV audience measurement system. Without timely and reliable data, advertisers cannot be confident in their investment, and they are less likely to spend the full amount they would normally allocate to Pan-Arab TV. Thus, the pan-Arab TV advertising market is heavily depressed compared to benchmarks. Pan-Arab TV advertising spend as a proportion of the regional GDP is 2.5 times lower than Western markets and two times lower than Asia Pacific countries. Significantly lower advertising spend has further implications down the rest of the media chain, reducing broadcaster revenue potential and negatively impacting the spend on content production.
The system needed to be installed at ERTU’s headquarters in Maspero. SCISYS deployed its Dira (branded as dira!) radio automation system and its radio archive system to cater to ERTU’s multiple requirements. Dira is a modular production and playout solution for radio. It supports the complete workflow of a radio organisation encompassing audio acquisition and ingest, material and programme exchange, pre-production and editing, media asset management, scheduling and long-term programme planning, manual, semi-automatic and automatic on-air playout, broadcast reporting and reconciliation, post-production, archiving as well as integrated system management. For each of these domains the Dira product line offers appropriate software modules. Various configuration options provide solutions for different network formats such as current affairs, information and service networks, mainstream programmes and classic or religious networks.

Egypt’s national broadcaster ERTU replaced its existing radio infrastructure with a state-of-the-art solution encompassing automation and archiving. In an exclusive interview with Vibhuti Arora, systems supplier and integrator SCISYS shares the details of the project.

Snapshot
- **End user** - Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU)
- **Key systems integrator** - SCISYS
- **Local Agency** - Egypt Plus
- **Key vendors** - SCISYS, Amily, Magix (Sequoia), Algorithmix (reNOVAtor), iZotope (Alloy), RME, CISCO, HP

Phase two of the project comprised on-site installation of the broadcast solution and training for ERTU’s staff. The new solution enabled ERTU to stay on-air with its scheduled programme regardless of any unpredictable events that may interfere with the daily routine. In addition to the main system in Maspero, a dedicated recovery system at a second site, serves as a fail-safe and can run independently.

The on-site implementation, including infrastructure, final configuration, training and a three-month trial period, took less than one year. However, the delivery was handed over to ERTU only in late summer last year, owing to the unexpected delay caused by political disturbances in Egypt. Although the shipment arrived at customs in Cairo in January 2011, the political situation in Egypt prohibited the uninterrupted on-site resumption of the delivery.

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An online storage area network (SAN) solution was chosen against the near-line and off-line LTO solutions for the former’s long-term advantages.

“An online storage area network (SAN) solution was chosen against the near-line and off-line LTO solutions for the former’s long-term advantages.”

The installation of a digital audio archive is one of the highlights of the project. This hard-disk-based storage system integrates seamlessly with the production system, both of which are accessed using the Dira Highlander client. The scalable archive stores up to 150,000 hours of audio at this stage with the scope for expansion to store ERTU’s 500,000 hours of audio heritage.

The audio library seamlessly integrates into the production and playlist process. Automatic archiving of produced content is crucial as is easy search, retrieval and transfer of archived content back to the playlist system.

The archive and storage back-end is split into two halves across two floors. If either floor is not available the system can still work without operational limitation. The client workstations are deployed across seven floors with 21 on-air studios and 40 production studios.

The workflow

Planning a broadcast, acquiring and finding material, editing audio, scheduling the actual running order and playing out the scheduled items are the main tasks in radio production. To execute these, the editor requires a tightly integrated, comfortable and powerful suite of tools whose core is the editorial client. Further on, flexibility and compatibility are expected from those tools on existing systems.

Instead of separate user interfaces and applications for various content types, like spoken word and script items, Dira presents a single, unified front end to all media stocks without sacrificing any metadata quality. Dira Highlander allows for an arbitrary number of metadata sets through the definitions of views on the audio material and secondary items, which include presenter texts and notes.

The integrated system management solution Dira ISM enables the administrators and support staff to monitor the overall system’s health, including software processes and hardware.

“The integrated system management solution Dira ISM enables us administrators and support staff to monitor the overall system’s health, including software processes and hardware.”

Mona Wahdan, Manager of Automation System, ERTU

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An online storage area network (SAN) solution was chosen against the near-line and off-line LTO solutions for the former’s long-term advantages.
"It includes software processes and hardware. In case of support requests or system health alarm messages, minimum response times are achieved as we can directly to the respective workspace and take action," she explains.

Dira Highlander, however, only provides the user with the information actually valid for a certain item in a user-configurable view that can present the most relevant information first. The actual metadata set available to an item is determined when creating it, by selecting an appropriate, pre-defined template for the piece. The amount of data on any template is completely up to the customer, items with a need for a large amount of metadata can be presented in a tabulated window, thus separating information needed at first glance from detailed, but less frequently accessed information.

With the capability to have any hierarchy of stores in their personal area, journalists can collect all relevant material in one place. Subsequently, any audio can be placed to the schedule or called up for editing, thus providing a seamless integration with all other required tools.

Third-party applications such as advertisement management or craft editing are integrated making use of Dira connect or API technology. Multi-track edits of the built-in editors created on one edit workstation can be completed at any other location even a different site within the network with the third party craft editor from Magix Sequoia.

Commenting on the successful execution of the project, Amira Sharabia, Head of Central Directorate for Studio Projects at ERTU says: "ERTU is proud of the completion of this important project. The new system tightly integrates all involved radio sub-systems of our broadcast operation. This includes the new digital archive, the disaster recovery site and also the regional sites. The new radio broadcast automation and archive system is customised to exactly meet ERTU’s demands. Its future-oriented design offers scalability towards expansions whenever necessary."

Key equipment

Infrastructure:
• 2x Cisco ASA 5500 series firewalls
• 2x Cisco Catalyst 6500 series backbone switches
• 2x Cisco 2960-S series Gigabit floor switches
• Vertical fibre network infrastructure with 10 Gigabit Ethernet uplinks
• Horizontal copper network infrastructure with Gigabit TCP/IP connection
• 5 km fibre cables
• 30 km UTP cables
• 15 km audio cable
• 5 km power cable
• 5 fully equipped 42 U rack space

IT solutions:
• 10x HP DL 380 servers
• 34x HP P2000 storage enclosures
• More than 400TB of hard disk based storage
• 12x HP 2400 workstations
• 22x dedicated SCISYS engineered on-air keyboards
• 120x digital RME soundboards

"The new system tightly integrates all involved radio sub-systems of our broadcast operation. This includes the new digital archive, the disaster recovery site and also the regional sites" Amira Shabab, Head of Central Directorate for Studio Projects at ERTU

The figure on the left depicts the Dira radio broadcast automation and archive system workflow.
INC kits out Qatari radio station

Qatar-based Sout Al Khaleej recently upgraded its existing facility to add a new radio studio and centralise its operations. BroadcastPro ME takes a closer look at the project.

Tech Specs
- Studer on Air 3000 for Studios 1 and 2
- Studer on Air 2500 for DJ room and edit suite
- Studer on Air 3000 as central router
- VSM as a controller for the router
- Maya CENTAURI III 4000 for IP streaming
- BRC 300 as video camera
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"For any future expansion requirement by Sout Al Khaleej, VSM can be integrated with most of the popular broadcast equipment including video routers, video switchers, audio routers, audio consoles, multi-viewers, intercoms and several other third-party devices."

With this installation, Sout Al Khaleej has been able to segregate its rooms for different kinds of programmes. Studio 1, for instance, is being used for talk shows and entertainment as well as educational programmes, while Studio 2 is built to be used as a music production studio. This studio is particularly significant as it has been created to enable local artists to create their albums that will premiere on the radio station. It will also receive the guest singers to sing and participate in interviews. In fact, some well-known music artists have already created their albums in this room although Sout Al Khaleej wanted to keep their names under wraps until the launch of those songs. A special DJ room has also been fitted out to facilitate interviews and talk shows, while a new edit suite has been handed out to the client for voice-over programmes and recorded content.

"The system, which is centralised with a central audio matrix, is also open to expansion. Although this project was awarded to INC in December 2012, the facility could not be fitted out until mid 2013, because the site was not ready. Since then, the systems integrator worked on site for three months with a dedicated team including a project manager, an engineer and five technicians. Sout Al Khaleej is now on air with its new system."

- Vijaya Cherian
Launched in February 2012, Radio Mirchi, is a recent Indian export to the UAE. The Hindi and English radio station owned by Abu Dhabi Media, caters to the South Asian audience, and is best known for its offering of Bollywood music. Station Head Sandeep Sud talks about the channel’s launch and the journey so far

**How has the journey been so far? Can you share some figures and ratings of your channel?**

It has been a fantastic journey full of learnings so far. We are growing stronger by the year. Only two years old and we have established a loyal listenership in the market, which is poised to grow further.

**What is the Hindi radio industry worth in the UAE and what is your share of the pie?**

There are different estimates of the size of the radio industry in UAE, but we estimate the value of the Hindi radio industry at around USD 23 million. Given the scenario, as any market leader, we would want to target 40 to 45% share of this pie – but it is still early as we are only two years old in the UAE.

Radio Mirchi is available on 97.3 FM Abu Dhabi, 88.8 FM Dubai and Northern Emirates and 95.6 FM Al Ain. It currently hosts popular shows such as *Mirchi Mornings* and *Bumper to Bumper* among others.

**What expectations did you have when you first brought the brand to the UAE?**

We have always been a market leader in India and this being the first international venture for the brand, we wanted to establish leadership here too. We were certainly conscious of the fact that the legacy of the brand will only help bring in listeners initially, but it is then left up to the station to deliver. If not, listeners would go back to listen to the other stations, some of which have been around for more than a decade. We can’t rest on our laurels. Hence, we developed our content, based on a lot of research in terms of listening habits, LEP (leisure, entertainment and pastime study), and other factors. The going has been good so far.

**What were the main challenges in launching the radio station here and what are the challenges of running a radio station here?**

We were launching a brand that is extremely popular in India, hence the

“There are different estimates of the size of the radio industry in UAE, but we estimate the value of the Hindi radio industry at around USD 23 million”

Sandeep Sud, Station Head, Radio Mirchi
Sandeep Sud, Station Head, Radio Mirchi

Is the UAE a tough market? What factors ensure survival in this market?

The competitive scenario in the UAE is very much like in any city in India, with multiple players vying for a share of the pie. Having said that, we love it here because we love competition. Besides, we operate in a scenario wherein the listeners’ preferences are constantly evolving. Hence, robust regular research is how we try and ensure that we stay on top of the game. In a nutshell, we don’t just talk, we also listen!

How is this market unique and in what ways is it different from India?

In my mind, a couple of things are different here in terms of the listener profile. In the UAE, we cater to a South Asian audience that includes people from Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh unlike in India. So for example, if there is a cricket match between India and Pakistan, we take a neutral approach. Secondly, the music needs here are quite different from that in India. The audiences here are early adapters to the breaking music, more so than they are in India. It is therefore, important for us to balance the needs of the audience here while staying true to the core values of our brand. Last but not the least, with the limited choice of content on other mediums for many, radio is a mainstream medium delivering larger audiences, share of revenues and therefore, fulfilling larger needs.

What is the turnover/revenue of the channel? Can you share some figures with us?

As mentioned, we would want to achieve leadership in both listenership and revenues. We are happy to report that, so far, we are in line with the projections on both fronts.

Which system does your station run on?

We use the Myriad software in our studios. The heart of the package is Myriad Playout which provides manual, live assisted or fully automated radio playout. All music and audio content is stored on the PC and is instantly available for playback at the touch of a button. Recorded audio is known as carts. Presenters can manually play carts or setup sequences to play automatically. Audio can be edited using the inbuilt SmoothEdit feature. The Find Cart feature helps locate the audio files. Full automation of the system allows the station to run round the clock without interruptions.

The Myriad family also includes music and advert scheduling, CD ripping utilities, multi-media player (for digital platforms) and reporting administration utilities.

The Myriad studio-based playout and automation system includes the Audio Wall, Instant Carts, SmoothEdit, Log Screen and Song / Link Database. Also built in is the Myriad Manager to assist in administrative jobs and advanced advert manager for inserting advertisements where required.

Scheduling of music and jingles is done using AutoTrack that includes basic link scheduling for a complete station scheduling solution.

Live updates including text, links and pictures to web and WAP sites as well as text information to Digital Radio (DAB) services are provided by an application in the software called OCP: Myriad OCP or Online Content Processor is designed to enhance digital broadcasts with additional information and content, driven directly by the ‘live’ information provided by Myriad.

It allows you to add dynamic DAB DL2 text to your DAB broadcasts and add information, hyperlinks, pictures and other information to your web broadcast. Myriad OCP gets information about what is playing and what is going to play, directly from Myriad and can be used to update DAB streams, local links, HTML pages and WAP pages accordingly.

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From Smart Cards to Multiscreen

LED shines bright

LED lighting continues to prove its popularity and effectiveness in filmmaking, broadcasting environments and television production. The wider adoption of LED lighting in production will continue to evolve due to technological advances and innovation.
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PROLIGHTING

“With the advances in LED technology, these lights are exceeding the quality benchmarks for colour temperature and performance”

Chris Marchitelli, VP, Litepanels

cost-effectiveness due to the long lifespan with no bulb replacements, and energy efficiency of the LED (in some instances LEDs use up to 85% less energy than tungsten lights). Other benefits include less heat generation, which translates into greatly reduced cooling costs and shorter strike times, and innovative features such as remotely controlled internal dimming, focus and color adjustment.

In the past, there was the perception that LED lighting could not match traditional lighting in terms of quality and output. Initially, there may have been some truth to that statement but with the advances in LED technology, these lights are exceeding the quality benchmarks for colour temperature and performance.

Traditionally, light fixtures have been measured using the colour rendering index (CRI). This index was developed over 40 years ago and was originally designed to test the colour accuracy of tungsten lamps. A CRI of 100 indicates perfect daylight quality, and many LED fixtures on the market claim high CRI numbers, but do not generate all the colours in the visible spectrum. The better LED fixtures have good CRI numbers but also produce a continuous spectrum of light. This can be seen by how accurately skin tones are reproduced to the human eye or camera. So what separates one LED lighting manufacturer from another? It all starts with how an LED is manufactured. Manufacturers work closely with leading suppliers to select the highest quality LEDs that meet the specific colour and output requirements.

Low cost, off-the-shelf LEDs or those bought from a catalogue simply do not produce the correct or consistent colour. As a result, LED lights for use in film and television applications must be manufactured and selected to very tight standards, ensuring that the end result exceeds customer expectations and helps to produce high-quality images.

A high performing 5mm LED package comprises a series of components that...
Managing heat is critical to maintaining the colour accuracy and maximizing the life expectancy of the LED. Other components of the common 5mm LED package include the actual LED chip, the anode and cathode post and, perhaps most importantly for this application, the lens. The lensing of an LED must be flawless as it has an effect on the light beam patterns, which must be consistent. It also needs to ensure smooth fall-offs, and that there are no chromatic aberrations. Manufacturers go as far as to custom mould the LED lens based on individual customer needs.

Contrary to popular belief, LED lights do indeed produce heat. However, the amount of heat generated is far less than traditional tungsten bulbs as the individual LED lights are much more efficient. Inside the small bubble of the LED is a phosphor coating which glows when stimulated and the greater the voltage differential between the phosphor and the base, the brighter the light that is emitted. The more LEDs that are used in panel type fixtures, the greater the amount of heat generated. Managing that heat is critical to maintaining the colour accuracy, and maximizing the life expectancy of the LED. This is accomplished by not overdriving them through controlled current management, and designing the fixture with the proper thermal management, which include active or passive heat sinks.

LED Fresnels are still fairly new to the market and provide a more collimated light source than the previous LED panels. They offer more control and their traditional and familiar design makes them ideal for both studio and location applications. Recent breakthroughs in surface mount LED technology are now allowing for higher wattage LED emitters. These emitters produce intense heat in a concentrated area, and have in turn driven the need for breakthroughs in thermal management.

Thermal management should be a specific focus as it deserves particular attention during the design and manufacture process. Many different topologies may be used for heat exchange using convection, conduction or radiation. For Fresnel lighting the use of heat sink technology is most effective – a combination of convection and radiation – as a means to dissipate heat. In addition, the use of fans may be effective in blowing heat off the heat sink and moving it away from the LED. In the past, the use of fans was not an option due to noise and reliability concerns, but advancements in fan technology has seen the adoption of bearing-less, laminar blade fans into Fresnel lighting. LED lighting continues to prove its popularity and effectiveness in filmmaking, broadcasting environments and television production. In addition to long-term cost-effectiveness and energy efficiency, LEDs offer inherent advantages to the human element of the industry – gaffers, lighting technicians and on-screen talent.

The wider adoption of LED lighting in this industry will, no doubt, continue to evolve due to technological advances and innovation so that it can deliver more benefits to applications and truly become the dominant force in entertainment lighting.

“Recent breakthroughs in surface mount LED technology are now allowing for higher wattage LED emitters”

Chris Marchitelli, VP, Litepanels.
The 4K UHDTV high-resolution picture format (3840 × 2160 pixels per frame) is emerging as the standard for new multimedia services. It has huge artistic advantages compared with conventional SD and HD production, both for content acquisition and special effects, as well as archiving and repurposing.

4K UHDTV offers opportunities for new service development and differentiation, and many broadcast and media organizations have already started experimental production and services or announced 4K UHDTV plans. For example, Netflix has announced plans for a 4K UHDTV movie service in 2014. BBC and Sky TV this year carried out 4K UHDTV live field tests for sports, and Japanese broadcasters plan to start 4K UHDTV services prior to the 2014 World Cup.

Consumer pull or market push?

The much higher resolution of 4K UHDTV than HDTV enables producers to capture far more detail in scenes and, in turn, provide a more immersive experience, whether bringing to life vast wilderness panoramas or offering crisp, clear action from a sports event. Producers enjoy greater freedom in camera placement and greater artistic licence when they are able to capture a wider field of view, that enables closer viewer engagement. With enhanced post-production effects, the programme director — or, in the case of interactive services, the viewer — can take advantage of very high quality zoom to concentrate on a specific part of the action.

Currently, the main driver for 4K UHDTV comes from the display industry, where manufacturers are looking for the next exciting innovation to tempt consumers to invest in new displays. Though 2013 saw many additions to the available range of 4K UHDTV displays and prices have dropped below USD 1000, consumer demand is still low. In fact, some analysts predict that widespread adoption of 4K UHDTV will not occur until 2020. Consumers are hesitating for several reasons. Many have only just purchased HD displays and aren’t ready for a new investment. Until recently, the only 4K UHDTV displays offered to consumers were 55 inches or bigger, making them impractical for many consumers’ living rooms. Finally, there simply isn’t yet enough 4K content available to consumers, whether direct-to-the-home or via media players.

For broadcasters, the cost of creating a 4K UHDTV channel ranges from $10-$15 million (roughly five times that of a new HD service, according to Deloitte), so the decision to upgrade existing equipment and infrastructure is weighty. While cost will inhibit the launch of 4K UHDTV services, and thereby delay consumers’ purchase decisions, manufacturer initiatives such as the launch of 4K UHDTV media players by Sony will help stimulate the market even though content remains limited.

How are manufacturers supporting 4K UHDTV?

4K UHDTV introduces new artistic opportunities in terms of field of view, resolution (picture detail), extended colour gamut, and improved motion portrayal (progressive scan at higher frame rates), which broadcast and media companies can use in creating new services and differentiating existing services. 4K UHDTV stimulates viewers to start new subscriptions. Improved quality of content delivered to large home displays gives producers broader artistic scope and freedom to create stunning material.

“Currently, the main driver for 4K UHDTV comes from the display industry, where manufacturers are looking for the next exciting innovation to tempt consumers to invest in new displays”

Paola Hobson, Product Manager — Conversion at Snell
possible frame rates and any service that is defined. However, experiments by broadcasters at 50p and 59.94p have been very successful, so whereas content producers have the option of initial acquisition at frame rates up to 120Hz, the first consumer services will most likely be based on 50p or 60p.

The 4K standard supports 10- or 12-bit colour depth, which could enable a more exciting user experience, or cause issues of backwards compatibility with current 8-bit systems. With up to 120 frames per second, uncompressed 4K UHDTV material has high storage requirements. Even a 30-minute 4K UHDTV@50p programme at 10 bits per pixel will occupy more than 900 GB uncompressed, compared with around 90 GB for a 30-minute 1080i programme at 8 bits per pixel.

Fortunately, storage costs continue to decrease while capacity rises. In parallel, new compression methods provide very efficient encoding with minimal picture degradation. HEVC is just one codec helping to reduce 4K UHDTV storage requirements, and tests demonstrate much higher compression ratios for the same picture quality as compared with codecs such as JPEG2000 or H.264. One study reported efficiency gains of 35% and better for HEVC when compared with H.264 for entertainment applications.

4K UHDTV transmission is likely to be compressed, at least initially, as even today’s high-bandwidth links to consumers’ homes have insufficient capacity. However, as improved compression technologies emerge along with more efficient transport mechanisms and higher bandwidth to the home, transmission issues will diminish.

Conclusion

4K UHDTV not only promises broadcasters, media organisations, and content owners the opportunity to develop revenue streams from innovative new services, but also offers producers more artistic freedom. Many elements in the equipment chain from production to consumer are already available or are in development, bringing 4K UHDTV within the reach of many organisations.

Paola Hobson is Product Manager – Conversion, Snell
As the demand for higher resolutions in production increases, so does the need for standards converters in post. Blackmagic Design’s recently acquired Teranex is a product to watch out for, says post production specialist Tony Ruthnam.

In the past few years, Blackmagic Design has slowly and surely become the post-production equipment manufacturer to watch. Through smart acquisitions and high standard R&D and manufacturing, it is perhaps one of the few companies to provide tools spanning production to delivery, servicing all forms of media, from film to web.

The Teranex standards converter is an example of one of Blackmagic’s success stories. Originally developed as the VC100 and intended for military purposes, the unit was an amazing standards converter, used quite extensively in the recent past in 2D to 3D conversions.

Judging by the competition, especially the Alchemist Ph.C made by Snell, this is a serious piece of kit to have in your post-production arsenal. The prices on both these units, however, made them financially out of reach for smaller post-production houses. Blackmagic Design entered this scene and changed the dynamics of post. After acquiring the company, Blackmagic Design proceeded to upgrade the internals and swap out the older chipsets with more modern chips, which has enabled it to not only reduce the manufacturing costs, but also significantly drop the price of the unit, all the way down to $1995 for the standard 2D version and $3995 for the 3D version, making it finally accessible to a larger audience.

Essentially a standards converter allowing you to convert a signal from one format to another, the Teranex is sleek, small and rack-mountable, taking up 1U of rack space. The front portion is made up of buttons to choose the various settings along with a small LCD to check settings and menus as well as monitor picture and audio in some cases. More on this feature to follow.

The LCD monitor is crisp and clear with a matte finish, significantly reducing reflections and glare. The back is made up of a plethora of connections, and based on which unit you pick, there could be a lot, such as in the 2D unit or there could be a lot more such as the 3D unit. Other than 3D processing such as dual channel stereo 3D, the 3D unit is also capable of 4:4:4 signal processing, whereas the 2D unit is limited to 4:2:2 signal processing. There are six preset buttons on the front panel for you to store your preferred setups as well as a lock button to prevent accidental changes. The unit also doubles as a test signal generator with various options available.

Operating Teranex – at least at a basic level – is very straightforward. You connect a video source – which can be 3D to 2K, analogue, HDMI, or 3Gb/s HD-SDI – and select the ‘In’ button to choose which video and audio sources your signal is coming in from (SDI embedded, analogue, AES/EBU). Once the connection is established, the unit will automatically detect the input video format.

Teranex operates on a simple principle – the output determines everything. Once your input has been set up, you choose the output format. You do so by pressing the ‘Out’ button. You can then modify the following options:

- de-interlacing, upsampling, downsampling, aspect ratio conversion, changing frame-rate.

As you can imagine, this gives you absolute control and total freedom in modifying the signal output to any format that you can think of, in order to match exactly the specs that you require. The outputs are also exactly the same as the input so you can output 3Gb/s HD-SDI, HDMI and component/composite analogue.

All flavours of input are supported all the way up to 10 bit and up to eight channels of audio on AES/EBU as well as up to four channels of balanced analogue audio are supported on a DB-25 connector. The ‘upgraded’ 3D version has XLR connectors as well for audio.

Now, this is where the previously mentioned in-built LCD monitor comes into play. The little monitor, as previously mentioned, not only provides the user a way of accessing the user interface to modify settings, but also to check the output in terms of checking out the applied settings. The monitor acts as a confidence monitor, allowing you to check the noise reduction, resizing, proc-amp, etc. Teranex really shines when it comes to noise reduction and ARC settings. You do have some ghosting that appears on certain fast-moving shots but overall, the quality is really high.

The unit is quite noisy as it is fan-cooled, and given that it connects to the
host system through a thunderbolt cable, at this point, until you can locate really long thunderbolt cables, you are limited to having Teranex right next to the system. I decided to really push the unit and try out some unusual workflows. Having recently completed a documentary series, we had a ton of GoPro footage lying around, along with a couple of actual GoPro units. GoPros are fantastic little cameras, that enable you to shoot in places no others can. However, dealing with footage in post is a whole new matter. The camera shoots to H264 in an MP4 container, which requires a full conversion pass in order to make the footage more edit-suite friendly. This can be quite cumbersome and take up a lot of time. Luckily, the GoPro is equipped with an HDMI out (cable sold separately) allowing you to play out straight into the HDMI in port at the back of Teranex and ingest in realtime, saving you quite a bit of time in transcoding. However, you’ve got to watch out for the onscreen indicators of GoPro and just make sure that they are turned off or that there is sufficient pre-roll. Bear in mind that this is an undocumented workflow so it does require a bit of finessing.

As a standards converter, Teranex represents outstanding value for money – what it cost thousands of dollars – and for those setting up an edit suite that needs a little more than simple I/O, it’s an attractive solution, even without the conversion capabilities.

The unit can be used as a standards converter or by connecting it to a thunderbolt enabled NLE, used as an IO for capture for your favourite NLE such as Avid Media Composer, Adobe Premiere or Apple Final Cut Pro. It is also compatible with Photoshop and even Photoshop although these features were not tested in this review.

The unit also comes with Blackmagic’s UltraScope bundled for monitoring video signal levels, which is a very welcome extra. Blackmagic Design is definitely a company to watch out for in the future. If Teranex is an indication of things to come, well then, we’re in for some serious treats in the upcoming months!

**PRO**

• Compact package and affordable price
• Great noise reduction and conversion features
• Can be used as IO for most NLEs

**Con**

• Noisy fans
• Limited by thunderbolt cable length
• Better algorithm for dealing with fast moving images

**Wishlist**

• 4K up and down conversion
• Extra-long thunderbolt cable option
• 4:4:4 signal processing on 2D unit

Tony Ruthnam is a Freelance Editor based in Abu Dhabi.

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**PRO REVIEW**

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**Lupoled 1120 Dual-Color (CRI>94)**

The best LED panels on the market at a very low price

- 1120 LEDs with Colour Rendering Index (CRI) over 94 eliminating the green cast typical of low-CRI panels
- Variable colour temperature from 3200°K to 5600°K in continuous
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- Integrated DMX
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- Light output equivalent to 650W of an Incandescent light source
- Runs on AC adapter or Li-ion battery

Lupoled panels range also includes the models

Lupole 1120 Dimmer and Lupoled 560 DMX.

For information on Lupoled panels range or for professional lights, please contact:

**Lupoled Light**

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7.8% West
Creative Cloud

Adobe introduced the successor to its Creative Suite recently – the Adobe Creative Cloud solution. Adobe expert Renji Mathews brings you the lowdown on the new entrant

A moment of silence for the Adobe Creative Suite please...thank you! And now, meet its successor, Adobe Creative Cloud. It has been completely reinvented to support a more intuitive and connected way of creating, whilst retaining all the creative applications. Although Creative Cloud’s subscription-based model has generated a lot of controversy, we won’t be talking about that here. Instead, this article will review two of the thoroughbreds in Adobe’s post-production stable.

At the heart of Adobe Creative Cloud’s video/post tools is Adobe Premiere Pro CC that comes with a ton of new features. The latest iteration enables users to sync all their settings, workspaces, preferences and keyboard shortcuts securely to the cloud, deploying them on edit bays anywhere in the world by just logging in with the same account. It also sports a redesigned timeline displaying critical information to the editor at a glance. Duplicate frame indicators ensure that media is never accidentally reused through edit indicators make simple edit tasks easier than ever. Clear effects badges on the clips give easy access to effects and parameters directly from the timeline.

Commonly used tasks like nudging clips up and down across different tracks now have keyboard shortcuts. The much requested paste attributes functionality lets you copy only the desired audio/video effects from one clip to another. You can also copy and paste ranges of clips in the timeline now. Multicam editing has also received a total revamp in the new suite. It’s a relief to see intelligent syncing based on the audio tracks, a welcome feature if you are using DSLR footage that does not support time-code. Media management gets a boost with the new Link & Locate feature – quickly track down media files and backups saved on multiple drives.

Another great addition is the Lumetri Deep Colour Engine, (the brains of Speedgrade, Adobe’s colour grading software) that allows for selection from a rich palette of high-quality pre-built looks using the built-in looks browser. Add looks as easily as adding a dissolve!

The only drawback is that these preset looks are not editable, nor can you create your own without the Speedgrade software. You can also import LUTs from other systems. Edit and mix audio with precision using the new Audio Clip Mixer.

Fine-tune audio with the TC Electronic Radar Loudness meter, and access effects plugins like VST3 and Audio units (limited to Mac OS only). This version also adds brand new capabilities for importing and manipulating closed captions, allowing you to import, view, edit, adjust positioning and layout, and export media with closed captions — either embedded or as separate files.

Premiere Pro now integrates with Adobe Anywhere for video, which is a modern, collaborative workflow platform that empowers users of Adobe professional video solutions to work together, using centralised media across any network. The team members can work with files on a shared server, make and review edits without downloading the media files and eliminate geographic boundaries.

Premiere Pro also takes full advantage of computers with multiple GPU cards for significantly accelerated export times. The application is updated with HiDPI support for enhanced viewing on screens like Apple’s retina display. Yet another addition is the smoother...

In Brief

How Adobe Creative Cloud Subscription works

• Buy a single app or the entire suite with a monthly plan.
• Install and run all the apps from your hard drive; you do not run any app from a browser.
• You are required to be online when you install and license your apps. For annual memberships, connect to the web at least once a month to validate your licence.
• Install your apps on two computers – can be a combination of Mac and Windows computers.
• Get 20GB of cloud storage for saving settings & preferences; file sharing and collaboration.

Premiere Pro also takes full advantage of computers with multiple GPU cards for significantly accelerated export times.
workflow when importing or exporting Avid or Final Cut Pro projects. AAF import is more accurate and the big news is that Avid and MXF-wrapped DNxHD media works natively with Premiere Pro. You can extend the power of Adobe Premiere Pro using the integration with Adobe Story, a scriptwriting tool and the Adobe Exchange panel, a convenient way to browse, install and find support for free and paid add-ons.

Adobe After Effects CC
Adobe recently announced its partnership with Maxon, the creator of Cinema 4D, one of the best 3D apps in the market. Cinema 4D plays well with After Effects and has always been the 3D app of choice for several motion graphic artists around the world. Adobe has taken this integration to a new level with the new live 3D pipeline. Entire projects from Cinema 4D can now be imported into After Effects CC as if they were footage items without the need for pre-rendering. Once placed in a composition, their pixels are rendered on the fly as you jump between frames. You can also extract scene data from project files, including the position of lights and cameras, and add new camera moves with a camera you create in After Effects. Access individual layers from the original Cinema 4D file and multi-pass render components such as only highlights or shadows.

I honestly don’t think this pipeline is ready for real-world production just yet because the integrated rendering is pretty slow, even on a hefty system. It’s great for a quick 3D logo or text animation, but I wouldn’t use it for anything more at this point in time.

On the VFX front, Adobe’s Rotobrush has been greatly enhanced with the addition of the new Refine Edge tool. After you have created a basic Matte with Rotobrush, Refine Edge then detects the partially transparent areas where you brush along the Matte edge, revealing fine details such as strands of hair, as well as motion-blurred or out of focus areas. If you’ve ever tried to mask or key hair before, you will understand how tricky this is and how significant this new tool is going to be to your workflow.

A separate Refine Soft Matte effect has been added, enabling you to recover more detail from images that you have already cut out or keyed. The greatly enhanced Warp Stabilizer, rechristened Warp Stabilizer VFX, is yet another amazing tool. It’s like having a small Mocha AE inside After Effects. You can now reveal the underlying tracking points the Warp Stabilizer creates when analyzing your footage, and delete undesired ones to make sure it doesn’t try to stabilize the wrong feature. You
can also now reverse the stabilisation, which allows you to add effects that track the original movement in the footage as well as composite other layers over the shot and have them follow the movement inside that footage. The dramatically improved 3D camera tracker now includes the ability to set ground plane and origin point. It works faster, better, more reliably and even makes it easier to exchange information (like ground plane and origin) with other 3D applications. I consider myself software agnostic, being equally at home with rival products from Apple and Avid. But what I like the most about the Adobe suite is the unparalleled workflow that its dynamic linking capability offers. I have the fact that I can move effortlessly from Premiere Pro to After Effects or Photoshop or Audition or all of them, without dealing with import/export hurdles. This functionality alone, to me, is worth staying with Adobe. Add to that a plethora of tools that Creative Cloud offers, and you have a software that offers you the best in post production.

Pros & Cons

Pros

Premiere Pro:
• Improved File handling and relinking of media; better media browser and timeline, audio syncing for multicam; Lumen deep colour engine with preset looks.

After Effects:
• 3D live pipeline; free copy of Cinema 4D Lite; greatly improved Warp Stabiliser and 3D camera tracking; new Refine Edge tool, Pixel Motion Blur and Layer Shaping.

Cons

Premiere Pro:
• High-spec GPU required for Mercury Playback Engine; rendering is not the fastest and colour grading is not as clever as FCPX.

After Effects:
• Rendering in After Effects when using 3D live pipeline is very slow; high spec GPU is required; no Arabic support.

It is especially useful when compositing CG elements into live action footage.

A greatly enhanced find command takes you directly to the compositions and layers that have missing fonts or effects, saving you a lot of time. I have the seemingly simple additions to the programme such as layer mapping, which addresses After Effects' earlier limited ability to map layers around. It’s going to make arranging layers, and in particular, building 3D objects in After Effects CC, simpler. I was disappointed that there is no direct support for Arabic in Premiere Pro and After Effects. The best alternative workflow is the tried and tested method of importing Arabic material created in Photoshop or Illustrator. Arabic language support is available for Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver and InDesign in the Creative Suite.

So, the question remains, is the upgrade to Adobe Creative Cloud worth it? Or more importantly, are you ready or willing to buy into Adobe's subscription model? While Adobe has not done anything drastic with the subscription implementation since launch, it has fulfilled the promise of releasing significant and useful updates for the software much faster and with more features. I saw more than 175 new features being added across the CC suite in separate updates, as I was writing this article. I consider myself software agnostic, being equally at home with rival products from Apple and Avid. But what I like the most about the Adobe suite is the unparalleled workflow that its dynamic linking capability offers. I have the fact that I can move effortlessly from Premiere Pro to After Effects or Photoshop or Audition or all of them, without dealing with import/export hurdles. This functionality alone, to me, is worth staying with Adobe. Add to that a plethora of tools that Creative Cloud offers, and you have a software that offers you the best in post production.
The inaugural Cinematic Innovation Summit took place in Dubai on December 5 and 6, 2013, preceding the 10th edition of Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF). A first-of-its-kind event, the summit was dedicated entirely to the future of cinematic innovation, throwing a spotlight on the changes to come.

Bringing together up to 200 global leaders from cinema, technology, gaming and financing to discuss the future of cinema. A report

The summit thrilled the attendees by showcasing their 15 years’ experience in production and visual effects, including key VFX positions on films such as Iron Man, James Cameron’s Avatar, The Amazing Spiderman, and 2012. Renowned for his portrayal of the despised creation Gollum in Lord of the Rings trilogy and the revolutionary chimpanzee Caesar in Rise of the Planet of the Apes, Andy Serkis was one of the leading speakers at the two-day summit.

He said that young filmmakers are about to enter one of the most exciting times in cinema.

Commenting on how technology is taking storytelling to the next level, he said: “The authoring of the role is very special, it’s all about the actor, producer, director and the designer coming together and bringing a character to life. We will be utilising this in the feature film Artemis Fowl, based on the namesake novel by George Orwell, where all the characters would be performance captured. We are doing different experiments at Imaginarium, where I am directing remotely and can see a real time playback of what has been shot.”

Reiterating the importance of storytelling and creativity in filmmaking, he said: “But in the end, the success of film will be based on storytelling. Technology should be used to complement the drama not distract from it because for me it’s down to the direction and reflection of the eyes. This is down to the individual actor.”

Vinnemakers and experts who addressed the attending audience on day one, included David Glasser, Chief Operating Officer of The Weinstein Company, Producer of the Bridge of Spies: Daniel Craig and Andy Serkis being adapted for Chinese audience and Ang Lee directing Life of Pi with Indian cast. Cooperation between East and West was one of the main areas of debate for the day. The panel discussion featured Reliance Entertainment’s CEO Sanjeev Lamba, Tony Craig Foon, CEO, Perfect Storm Entertainment, Head of Investment Banking from FPA, Julien Khadroun, David Lande, CEO, Lava Bear Films, and Khalid Benkirane, Film Financing Grants Manager, Doha Film Institute.

Besides partnering with Stephen Spielberg for DreamWorks Studios, Nicholas Cage’s Saturn Films and Tom Hanks’ Playtime Productions for Hollywood movies, Reliance Entertainment also produces and distributes several Bollywood movies. Lamba said: “Throughout India’s 100-year film history, the sector was dominated by family businesses. However, in the last 10 years, that trend is changing which has given companies like ours the opportunity to enter the market. This has in turn led to an increase in the level of co-operation and sharing of not just talent but also technology. This has opened new doors for Indian cinema to become more dominant in the west and vice-versa.”

Executive Producer of Crocodylus: Paper and Hidden Juggles, David Lande concluded: “There have already been cases of Indian filmmakers producing movies not just for the Indian market but also the west, such as Gold & Blueback and it would be very interesting to see how movies like this will help shape future collaborations and market trends.”

The attending audience also witnessed a demonstration of Audio Spotlight.

The demo was done by Joseph Pompei, Founder and Owner of Holosonics, who showcased a truly directional audio system which generates high quality sound and is installed in Walt Disney, Vale Art Gallery, Boston Museum of Science and the Seattle Space Needle.

The summit was closed by celebrated Producer Walter Parkes. He has developed and written stories that have demanded the usage of some of the most advanced filmmaking technologies available: from the first computer tech-thrillers WarGames and Sneakers, to Gladiator, Minority Report and the Men in Black series. While presenting his vision for the future, Parkes pointed out that the key to his success was not to think about the technology first, but the audience.
The 10th edition of Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) concluded last month after eight days of glamorous galas, appearances by the region’s top film personalities, question and answer sessions, and a dedicated industry forum featuring workshops, seminars and commercial platforms.

DIFF showcased 174 films from 57 different countries in 43 languages, including more than 100 films from the Arab world. The lineup of films for 2013 was the most diverse in the festival’s ten years, said DIFF Chairman Abdulhamid Juma.

“At our tenth edition, we see the fruits of our labour over the past decade. We have seen the variety and calibre of the films in our Arab and AsiaAfrica Muhr competitions grow exponentially year on year, showing that our awards programme is nurturing a spirit of innovation and healthy competition among filmmakers from emerging markets. DIFF’s reputation as a prime launch-pad for new films is now well established, and our industry programmes make the Dubai Film Market an epicentre for the business side of cinema each year.”

The festival had many firsts this year including the first ever Cinematic Summit, a tie-up with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, a book on 100 best Arab filmmakers, to mention a few.

In another first, Almahrah, the MENA region’s first crowdfunding platform for creative ideas, brought two crowdfunded films to DIFF 2013.

Moving Images marked the first initiative in the Arab world, dedicated to artists’ films and filmmakers’ art. This long-term initiative that includes screenings and talks, as well as the sharing of expertise and ideas, brought together DIFF and seminal art and culture organisations – Sharjah Art Foundation and Art Dubai.

Shivani Pandya, Managing Director of DIFF, commented: “Moving Images explores the intersection of visual art and film, two disciplines that are very closely linked. Visual aesthetic is a crucial part of cinema, with filmmakers using it to shape and create characters and worlds. Both art and film are exceptional mediums for creative ideas, brought together to inspire one another.”

The team of acclaimed Palestinian film Omar on the opening night of DIFF.
Pro50 has all you need to know about the top players in the region’s broadcast and satellite market. A compilation of profiles of 50 broadcast and satellite companies in the GCC, the hardback coffee table book is a valuable resource for not only business entities but also customers looking for a ready reckoner of key industry players.

Rashed. The centre has produced several feature films that have gained international attention, and has trained young short filmmakers who provide a bedrock for a nascent industry.

Honours and accolades

Multiple Emmy and Golden Globe Award winner Martin Sheen, one of America’s most celebrated actors of his generation and veteran Egyptian film critic Samir Farid, who has championed Arab cinema for nearly 50 years, were given the Lifetime Achievement Award at DIFF 2013.

Ten Arab cinema talents including directors, actors and directors of photography, were honoured during the festival for their distinguished contributions in the top 100 films of Arab Cinema. This followed the announcement of the selection, which was compiled following an extensive voting process that included 475 key Arab film critics, professionals and cultural figures from all across the region.

DIFF – a launch pad for new and upcoming filmmakers

One of the panel discussions hosted by DIFF discussed the future of independent films in the region and how broadcasters can help give them more visibility. Moderated by Vijaya Chctian, Editor of BroadcastPro ME, the panel featured an impressive mix of broadcasters from Europe and the region.

For more information, please contact:

Sandeep Virk
Group Sales Manager
Tel: +971 (0) 50 459 2653
Email: sandeepvirk@cpimediagroup.com

Rodi Hennawi
Sales Manager
Tel: +971 4 440 9106
Email: rodi.hennawi@cpimediagroup.com

For encouraging thought, presenting new ideas, and inspiring audiences.”

Yet another achievement at DIFF 2013 was the hugely successful Dubai Film Market. The business centre of DIFF exceeded past records in terms of requested meetings between attending film professionals. The Dubai Film Connection, DIFF’s project market, which matches projects originating in the Arab world with international funding and production partners attracted 352 pre-booked meetings for its projects, against 271 that were booked during the duration of DIFF 2012.

DIFF added a distinctive programming segment this year called Iraqi Legacy: Children of the Future ‘to shine the spotlight on films from the country’s burgeoning generation of new filmmakers.’

Iraqi cinema is enjoying a renaissance, thanks to young filmmakers who defy the usual beginners’ odds – lack of funding, having to prove oneself to investors – in addition to a lack of infrastructure, no government support, and more than a decade of deadly violence and upheaval in their home country.

Many filmmakers are affiliated with the Iraqi Independent cinema centre, established by two Iraqi filmmakers, Mohamed Al Darraj and Ouday Rasheed.

Moving Images explores the intersection of visual art and film, two disciplines that are very closely linked to shape and create characters and worlds.”

Shivani Pandya, MD, DIFF

Chairman of DIFF, Abdulhamid Juma with DIFF 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award winner Martin Sheen.
revenues for film production. While regional broadcasters have the willingness to support filmmakers, there isn’t enough appetite for indie films in the region. Co-productions with international entities is the way forward to encourage young filmmakers to make experimental cinema. Film festivals in the region are yet another way to give these films more visibility. Releasing films on VoD platforms was a potential solution that emerged during the discussion.

Awards and incentive schemes for young filmmakers in the course of film festivals is a good way to attract talent towards this creative medium. Muhr Awards distributed USD 575,000 to dozens of the Arab world’s best filmmakers as well as their counterparts from Asia and Africa. Both first-time directors and cinema legends such as Syrian Director Mohamed Malas and Egyptian Filmmaker Mohamed Khan entered new films in DIFF 2013, beating hundreds of other entrants. The Emirati Muhr line-up, comprised 15 films that had their world premieres during the festival, including Na’ayma Al Khaja’s The Neighbour. The programme grew by 50%, reflecting a significant increase in submissions from strong first-time filmmakers, explained DIFF Artistic Director Mansul Amralla Al Ali. He continued: “This year’s Muhr Emirati field demonstrates growing confidence and skill in our local artists.”

With more training facilities and funding opportunities available, a genuine cinema community has grown in the UAE, and with it the film industry will continue to make steady progression. “Since DIFF’s inception we have consistently cultivated local talent.” The Dubai Culture and Arts Authority’s campaign, ‘Soul of Dubai,’ showcased three short films in the Muhr Emirates category. The awards of $110,000 represented three Dubai International Film Festival awards of $25,000 for projects participating in its Dubai Film Connection (DFC), a co-production market that pairs projects by regional film professionals with international producers and funding bodies.

Abdulhamid Juma, reflecting on the landmark decennial edition, said: “The sense of community this year was palpable. We are seeing recurrent visitors, both film professionals and cinema lovers, from the region and beyond. “There is a feeling that Arab cinema has ‘arrived,’ with increasing numbers of Arab films on the world stage, winning awards at the most prestigious festivals, and gaining currency even with audiences who have never visited the region. “The Muhr Awards represents a strong community of artistic peers who are working together in a common project of celebrating and elevating the standard of cinema in emerging markets, and it is remarkable for DIFF to be at the centre of that phenomenon.”

In another noteworthy development, it was observed that 40% of the films in the festival’s Arab programming segments were directed by women, making the region one of the most advanced for female filmmakers in the world. Arab female directors have been highly visible on the world stage in recent years due to breakout success stories like Lebanese Director Nadine Labaki’s Where Do We Go Now, which was the highest-grossing Arab film ever, and Saudi Director Haifaa Al Mansour’s Wadjda, which took the highest-grossing film Oscar – and the country’s first feature by a female director.

“There is a feeling that Arab cinema has ‘arrived,’ with increasing numbers of Arab films on the world stage”

Mansul Amralla Al Ali, Artistic Director, DIFF
BASCULAR EXTENDS ROUTER LIFE

Rascal, a supplier of PC-based multi-device control, has announced the full launch of RouteMaster, using TCP/IP to control serial-only routers. By designing RouteMaster, users can control an existing router installation from any web browser via computer, tablet and even mobile phone using Rascal’s web panels. RouteMaster’s support for web-based control panels, built using standards-compliant HTML5 technologies, allows custom control panels to be used on any system, providing unparalleled levels of control flexibility for eXtreme installations. RouteMaster also allows the addition of low-cost hardware panels to existing installations. It facilitates the use of these cost-effective hardware panels — such as Blackmagic Smart Control — to be used with any supported routers. And because RouteMaster supports a wide range of protocols, users can upgrade or replace eXtreme without changing either the control system or the hardware panels.

In addition, because RouteMaster supports both serial and TCP/IP connections, customers can use network protocols to control an RS422 router. This has the advantage that users can extend the number of simultaneous client system or the hardware panels.

And because RouteMaster supports both serial and TCP/IP connections, customers can use network protocols to control an RS422 router. This has the advantage that users can extend the number of simultaneous client connections far beyond the number of serial ports available on existing installations, a clear cost saving without technical compromise.

Archimedia masters the software player

Archimedia has launched Archimedia Master Player v.5.5. An upgrade to the company’s software player, v.5.5 now supports the remainder of all common master formats in use around the world today — including the long-awaited, studio-driven SMPTE IMF — and contains new features that make the player a true 4K-era replacement for videotape.

SMPTE IMF — and contains new features that provide additional functionality tailored to the changing dynamics of modern broadcast.

The latest software also includes new key features that provide additional functionality tailored to the changing dynamics of modern broadcast.

A major new feature is designed to protect Hydra2 sources and destinations when they are being addressed by multiple users across a network. Any user receiving a source can control mic gain, phantom power (48v), or SRC using their own input controls, but they are protected against making accidental changes that may affect the other users also receiving that same source. Users with connections to a Hydra2 destination are protected against other users’ unintentional changes to their connections. This protection scheme applies to direct control of sources and destinations, as well as bulk changes made through memory recalls.

The Mic Open Systems feature is used to control external devices relative to the on-air status of a signal source. Mic Open Systems can cut or dim the feed to a loudspeaker to assist feedback or control relays for switching purposes, such as turning on “on air” lights. These are five Mic Open Systems available on the console.

The latest software also includes local bus meters to monitor and regulate average loudness levels over the duration of a programme. Operators can freely assign 16 loudness meters to any source or output, and these meters can be assigned to the console’s meter upward.

Calrec Audio speaks up

Calrec Audio’s Apolo and Artemis platforms now include a new suite of features and enhancements that provide additional functionality tailored to the changing dynamics of modern broadcast.

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StreamGuys more interactive

StreamGuys has launched its HTML5 player to help broadcasters and streaming services retain and increase audiences with a multiplatform approach, ensuring one player can accommodate revenue-supported live streams on iOS, Android and other mobile and desktop devices.

StreamGuys’ new interactive player supports all popular mobile devices in alignment with the HTML5 markup language. It is popular among broadcasters, publishers and advertisers for its multi-device support.

StreamGuys offers integrated metadata support, which seamlessly synchronises live audio streams with relevant data of interest to consumers. This gives broadcasters and audio publishers a unique opportunity to offer audiences a full-featured, interactive HTML5 player that works on every device. Radio stations, musical artists and other service providers can now easily, and dynamically, display artist and song title information, Amazon Flex links, social network connections and more alongside audio streams.

Quad 3G-SDI...
**IMT improves connectivity**

Integrated Microwave Technologies (IMT) brings its latest RF Central microLite HD Transmitters. Comprising the RF Central microLite HD camera-top transmitter and the RF Central microLite HD camera-back transmitters including the Anton/Bauer and V-Clip mounting options, the complete microLite family of HD transmitters offers a full range of docking options for compatibility with nearly every camera to the market.

Users can mount the RF Central microLite HD camera-top transmitter via a hot shoe, as well as pair it with Leica/Canon cameras mounted lighting solutions. For both the Anton/Bauer and V-Clip battery docking options, the mount is positioned on both sides of the claimed transmitter, allowing it to be connected to the camera. The battery can then be mounted to the transmitter. As a result, users can employ the battery to power the transmitter and to pass power through to the camera. The RF Central microLite HD camera-back Anton/Bauer transmitter conveniently mounts between the Gold Mount and Anton/Bauer Logic Series battery. The newest addition to the award-winning RF Central family of microLite HD products, the RF Central V-Clip microLite HD Transmitter mounts on the end of the cameras between a plate and any V-mount battery.

**Pro Products**

More storage with Avid’s ISIS7500

Avid has introduced the new Avid ISIS 7500 online shared storage system, offering real-time editorial collaboration and larger storage capacity and performance for large-scale broadcast and post production environments.

The next-generation ISIS 7500 represents the continuing innovation of the company’s industry standard storage systems. It provides critical new capabilities to help large media organisations more easily and efficiently deliver higher quality, inspiring content by streamlining and accelerating editorial workflows.

“Media organisations are facing relentless pressure to increase content production while simultaneously improving operational efficiency and controlling costs,” said Chris Gagahne, Senior Vice President of Products and Services at Avid.

“With double the storage capacity of ISIS 7000, ISIS 7500 brings high capacity and performance to large-scale facilities, ensuring the real-time workflows needed to accelerate production and complete projects faster.”

**Telesstream integrates with Blackmagic**

Telesstream has announced the integration of Blackmagic Design’s Intensity and Decklink high performance capture and playback devices with Wirecast Pro 5. This integration allows users to take a live Wirecast programme feed and capture it to a Blackmagic Design product, for use in editing, effects or other broadcast design workflows. This enables even more flexible live streaming production workflows.

“Our customers have asked for a way to take an SDI programme feed directly out of Wirecast,” said Filippe Hasselstrom, Director of Desktop Product Marketing at Telesstream. “We are pleased to announce this can now be accomplished as a result of the integration with Blackmagic Design using the Wirecast 5 Output SDI.”

“It’s very exciting to see Blackmagic Design’s desktop video products integrated with Wirecast,” said Grant Petty, CEO, Blackmagic Design.

“Using Wirecast with Blackmagic’s DeckLink and Intensity products will give customers a high performance, seamless SDI streaming workflow.”

**Marshall in the palm**

Marshall Electronics has released a new HD-SDI miniature camera providing full HD 1920x1080/59.94 video for filming all types of broadcast applications. The CV500 MB is only an inch and a half in size, enabling unobtrusive placement or concealment.

“CV500s are capable of capturing an SDI programme feed directly out of Wirecast,” said Marshall in the palm.

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“Although broadcasters now have to deliver more content to remain competitive, their budgets are being squeezed. Producing more content with fewer resources is now a reality.”

The new OB landscape

Encouraging consumers to watch scheduled content is one of the biggest challenges that broadcasters face. Today’s consumers are more likely than ever to make use of time-shifted viewing, with access to a time and a place that suits them.

Live content is one of the main ways to drive audience engagement, and broadcasters are increasingly looking at covering more sports and live events. We can all expect to see an increase in non-mainstream sports, live events such as concerts, movie premieres, award ceremonies and extended news coverage (such as elections or celebrity weddings) on our TV screens from now on. However, from a broadcaster’s perspective, capturing these types of live event presents something of a challenge.

As broadcasters look to deliver more live content, they have to find a way to affordably produce it, without compromising on quality. Maintaining production values across a growing amount of live events means that any OB set-up, however large or small, has to be able to support full HD quality and be flexible enough to cope with a sports production on the one hand and a red carpet event or concert on the other.

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Although broadcasters now have to deliver more and more content, their budgets are being squeezed. Producing more content with fewer resources is now a reality. This is where commissioning a regular OB truck presents a huge challenge. With a big OB truck or supertruck, the build time of several months means there’s a significant cost associated before you’ve even thought about investing in all the equipment to get it properly kitted out.

At the moment, the OB production world is an environment of two extremes; we have large 20 plus camera sports productions, or small one- or two-camera ENG flyaways. To date, the middle section of the OB market has not really been an area that broadcasters, OB companies or manufacturers have placed much emphasis on. Large OB trucks are impractical for smaller events, and can’t be used in locations that are not easily accessible or where space is at a premium. At the other end of the spectrum, small flyaways are unable to handle the more complex requirements of a six- to eight-camera live production.

The answer is a mid-sized OB vehicle that offers a compact but flexible footprint, and can still cope with a complex production workflow. It is also important to try and combine the maximum amount of functionality in as small a space as possible, while still comfortably housing a large enough production crew, with space for a production gallery, audio workstations and engineering control area.

Low power consumption is also another consideration that needs to be taken into account, particularly when covering events such as festivals or concerts.

A Sprinter van or similar fits the bill. However, the wheel bases limit the space available for equipment. A custom-built trailer, on the other hand, is something that hasn’t really been considered as a solution for the mid-sized OB segment.

The empty floor space means more room for all the OB functionality that you’d expect with a truck, but on a more compact footprint. Flexibility is another area where a trailer delivers; there’s no requirement for a driver with a special HGV licence – you can just hook it up to a 4X4 instead.

It’s not just traditional broadcast content that a mid-sized OB vehicle would be appropriate for. Producing content for non-traditional forms of content delivery, such as IPTV and live web streaming service providers, is an alternative and growing market for a more affordable and compact OB vehicle.

As the number of web streaming and IPTV providers grows, they will have to compete not just with each other but also with broadcasters. Just as it acts as a differentiator for broadcasters, live content offers IPTV and web-based content delivery services to stand out from the crowd.

A more compact and affordable OB option that still provides high quality output offers a convenient way to generate more content, deliver more services/channels and compete with bigger broadcast rivals. This type of mid-range OB would also enable broadcasters looking to deliver their own services via alternative platforms to create a wider range of coverage, including exclusive content from live events specifically for online or mobile access.

Eamonn Dowdall is Business Development Director at Gearhouse Broadcast.
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