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Welcome



One of the industries that has bounced back with renewed vigour is the sports broadcasting sector, and two years of inactivity gave stakeholders the opportunity to visualise innovative ways to entertain viewers. According to the Global Media Report from SportBusiness, the global value of sports media rights in 2021 was \$52.1bn.

There has also been a huge wave of interest in sports across the MENA region. While there has traditionally been interest in football, we now see a growing love for wrestling as well as combat sports. Finally, catering to the needs of the subcontinent crowd, we also see huge investments going into cricket.

As Danny Bates pointed out at the IP Studios Future of Sports Broadcasting Summit, hosted by BroadcastPro Middle East last month, “the organic reach that sports has and the impact it has in terms of cost per acquisition” makes it so rewarding for platforms. “It can be one-third of the cost to acquire a customer to our platform on sport versus entertainment,” he said.

Stakeholders also seem to be calling

for legalising betting, with Mohamed Yehya from IP Studios stating that revenues from sports betting increased by 127% over the last year in the US. Panellists agreed that engagement and interactivity were two massive elements to be exploited in sports streaming in the coming years.

There were so many more fresh insights on how new technologies are going to lead the way to enhance sports streaming, while the chat on hero building within cricket was also a huge eye-opener. BroadcastPro also hosted its first Arabic panel in association with title sponsor IP Studios. But this space is too short to do justice to the discussions at our conference. These will be summarised in the CABSAT show issue coming up next month; in the meantime, videos of the discussions are available at 2022.fsbsummit.com.

Vijaya Cherian, Editorial Director



On this month's cover...

Fractal Studio's MD Asin Samarmand

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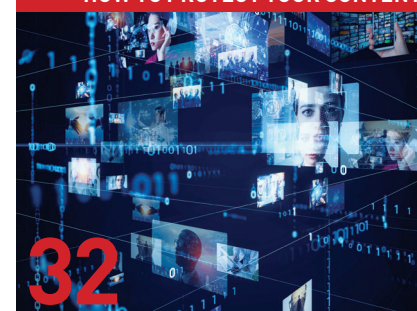
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E-Vision and ADQ to acquire a majority stake in StarzPlay Arabia

E-Vision, a part of e&, formerly known as Etisalat Group, and Abu Dhabi-based investment company ADQ have signed a binding agreement to acquire a majority equity stake of circa 57% in streaming service StarzPlay Arabia.

The e&-led consortium will acquire a controlling stake in StarzPlay Arabia based on a post-money valuation of \$420m, while also investing E-Vision's existing stake and secondary investments to join the other existing shareholders, including Starz and SEQ Investors. Starz and its parent company Lionsgate will maintain commercial agreements for content licensing to the venture. The transaction remains subject to regulatory approvals and certain administrative procedures.

Khalifa Al Shamsi, CEO, e& life, and Chairman of E-Vision, said: "This new development is expected to accelerate E-Vision's transition from focusing on the telecom network business to providing also direct-to-



consumer (DTC) streaming services to consumers across the MENA region."

Jaap Kalkman, Group Chief Investment Officer at ADQ, noted: "The investment in StarzPlay Arabia provides ADQ access to one of the leading SVOD and OTT service providers in the region. With its state-of-the-art technology, distribution strength and compelling and engaging content, StarzPlay Arabia has developed a unique

market positioning in the MENA region and is well positioned for further growth."

Maaz Sheikh, CEO & co-founder of StarzPlay Arabia, said: "StarzPlay Arabia has transformed the region's entertainment sector, bringing truly homegrown competencies to serve the fast-growing demand for streaming services. The investment by E-Vision and ADQ will enable us to grow further by focusing on original content production and advanced customer personalisation."

StarzPlay Arabia has close to 2m subscribers across 19 countries, giving E-Vision an opportunity to strengthen its lead in content aggregation and access the fast-growth MENA video DTC streaming business. This will enable the launch of new product lines, expanded geographic reach and access to advanced technical capabilities. The acquisition provides potential for international expansion, leveraging StarzPlay Arabia's reach across 20 global telcos.

Ninetnine and BluTV partner to launch Helwa TV

Ninetnine and Turkish SVOD service BluTV partnered to launch Helwa TV, a new live linear entertainment TV channel, last month in France. The channel will be launched in other markets, with the US the second in the pipeline.

Broadcast in Arabic and French, the new live linear entertainment TV channel seeks to entertain the Arab and North African diasporas in Europe and North America. It will feature Turkish dramas and originals from BluTV and



film programming from Ninetnine's pay-TV service Le Bouquet Maghreb, as well as Ninetnine's originally produced and licensed content.

Mustafa Alpay Guler, BluTV International MD and Board Member, said: "BluTV sustained a significant growth both in Turkey and abroad in very competitive territories.

We became the largest original content producer in the region as the first SVOD platform in Turkey. Now we are looking to engage our audience with a linear TV offer and are very delighted to partner with Ninetnine for this new project."

Samir Zehani and Adel Hamla, co-founders of Ninetnine, added: "This is an exciting chapter in the development of Ninetnine. Helwa TV will complement our strategy to deliver the very best content to our diverse audience."

Ammar Hina joins NEP's new ME office

NEP Group has opened a new office in the UAE, with Saeed Izadi, current head of NEP's Singapore and India businesses, appointed President of NEP Middle East and overseeing business strategy and operations for all three business units. Also joining the team as Business Development Director for the MENA region is Ammar Hina, former Director of Broadcast & TV Production at UAE Pro League.

Located across from the Khalifa Park in Abu Dhabi, NEP Middle East will provide a wide range of outside broadcast solutions, including both on-

site and remote production services, to enable clients to bring live sports and entertainment to audiences around the region and worldwide.

Hina brings more than 16 years of industry experience to leading business development and operations,



serving as the key contact for clients, major events and cross-divisional initiatives. Throughout his career in broadcast and TV production, he has worked on some of the prominent franchises in the football industry, from the World Cup and Club World Cup to the AFC Asian Cup, the Champions League, European qualifiers and the English Premier League live programming.

MBC Group inks multi-year deal with MGM International

MBC Group and MGM International Television Productions have signed a multi-year deal to develop and co-produce premium original series. The two companies recently partnered on MGM's anticipated shows *Last Light* and *Billy the Kid*, which will air on MBC. Projects produced under the deal will premiere exclusively on MBC Group-owned streamer Shahid VIP throughout MENA, with MGM handling co-production and distribution for the rest of the world. A recent MBC Studios production is *Kandahar*, an action film starring Gerard Butler.

Regional stories in focus at DISCOP Dubai

The organisers of DISCOP Dubai have announced an initiative to showcase homegrown film and TV projects in advanced stages of development and funding. A full-service lounge, the First Look Salon, will cater to the needs of independent MENA producers wanting to shop their projects to production and distribution partners, local OTTs and global streamers seeking non-English language entertainment content.

Patrick Zuchowicki Jucaud, co-Manager of DISCOP Dubai, said: "Tomorrow's transformative potential will come from allowing local creatives to tell stories about their own cultures and then distributing them truly internationally. Our ambition is to showcase +/- 20 projects, from romantic dramas, funny comedies, to action-packed thrillers,

and help their producers fast-track development, funding and distribution." In the meantime, DISCOP Dubai and CABSAT have agreed to join forces and collocate their events, with the DISCOP Content Market, taking place within the halls of the Dubai World Trade Centre, alongside CABSAT.

The two entities were brought together by Heba Korayem, CEO of Dubai-based HConsult. "The MENA region is changing fast. Like everywhere else in the world, viewers' habits are shifting radically and competition for the 18-34 tech-savvy demographic is fierce. The transformative impact of new technologies, data and AI on the local media and entertainment industry was the primary driver behind the co-location of DISCOP Dubai with

CABSAT," Korayem said. A jointly curated learning and networking component, the NextGen Content programme, will emphasise the metaverse, co-production opportunities in MEA and the importance of dubbing and content localisation.

Adnan Hamza, CEO of ABC Marketing and Distribution and Managing Partner of DISCOP Dubai, stated: "Getting the correct translation and dubbing is more important than ever for international rights holders with a focus on expanding into the MENA region. The demand for dubbed programmes has increased by more than 50% from 2020 to 2022. High-quality dubbing has powerfully attracted more viewers and gained significant interest from broadcasters and streaming platforms in the Middle East and North Africa."

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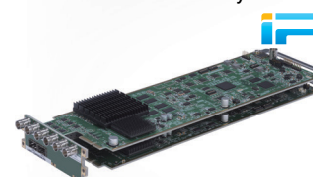


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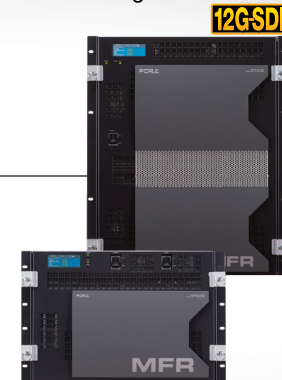
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Egyptian producer Mohamed Hefzy steps down as CIFF president

Producer Mohamed Hefzy has stepped down from his role as President of the Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF). Veteran actor Hussein Fahmy will return to the role. Hefzy was appointed Director of CIFF in 2018 and has been credited with putting the event back on the international map during his four years at the helm. He expected to be in the role for a year or two, but ended up overseeing four editions, with Cairo one of the few festivals to go ahead as a physical event in 2020. He also launched

Cairo Industry Days, which are crucial to connecting the event with the international industry. Hefzy said: "It was always my intention to remain three years as head of the festival, but due to the circumstances and the pandemic, they ended up being four great years. I am proud to have ... worked with a great team of talented individuals with the aim of lifting the festival towards bigger local, regional and international recognition and for being a platform to help the careers and projects of independent filmmakers in the Arab world."



Mohamed Hefzy

Hefzy has continued his work as producer of several movies and TV series during this period, including *Paranormal* for Netflix; Mohamed Diab's *Amira*, which launched from Venice; Hany Abu Assad's *Huda's Saloon*; and the Arabic adaptation of Italian hit *Perfect Strangers*. He also wrote the upcoming Arabic adaptation of US TV series *Suits*. Fahmy has starred in more than 100 Egyptian films and TV and theatre productions. He previously headed CIFF, the grande dame of Arab film events, between 1998 and 2001.

Abu Dhabi Media deploys Dejero for live coverage of Expo 2020

Abu Dhabi Media (ADM) rolled out fourteen Dejero EnGo mobile transmitters and four WayPoint 104 receivers to support its ongoing coverage of Expo 2020. Local systems integrator Ideal Systems was commissioned to build ADM's purpose-built, five-camera studio and gallery at the Expo 2020 site, with five wireless cameras used to capture content from the pavilions.

ADM's production crew used four EnGo mobile transmitters to send live footage and interviews from the Expo's Exhibition Centre pavilions to a WayPoint receiver in the broadcaster's purpose-built on-site studio. The transmitters also provided real-time voice communication to enable the director in the studio to talk to the presenter on the ground.

A further ten EnGo transmitters were used to

stream two daily live shows from the studio in Dubai to three Dejero WayPoint 104 receivers at ADM's HQ, where the receivers reconstructed the feeds, decoded the HEVC and produced the output for broadcast and redistribution worldwide.

Jean-Claude Rahme, Head of OB at Live HD, a government media entity supporting Abu Dhabi Media's coverage of Expo 2020, explained how the use of Dejero's technology saved the organisation substantial time and resources.

"The Expo 2020 exhibition area was huge at 45,000sqm, so the logistics of running fibre lines from location to location or installing antennas for satellite connectivity within a building of this size would have taken up huge resources in terms of installation, maintenance and cost.



A journalist using Dejero at Expo 2020.

"With EnGo, connectivity was very straightforward. We regularly encoded at up to 20Mbps from the pavilions because we were able to use six point-to-point SIM cards to aggregate IAD connections from Etisalat cellular networks and achieve full coverage inside the

building. Because we used EnGo mobile transmitters, there were no limitations when it came to line-of-sight to satellite antennas, nor did we have to rely on a single private network." The Dejero EnGo used Dejero's Smart Blending Technology to create an internet connection by aggregating multiple networks into a single service. This allowed the transmission of high-quality live video with glass-to-glass latency as low as 0.5 seconds over the bonded cellular connections.

"Effectively, Dejero's technology has replaced the need for ENG satellites. This was the best solution for us. Not only did it provide more flexibility and mobility for our production crew on-site, it also gave us completely reliable connectivity," concluded Rahme.

OSN and All3Media International strike new content deal



OSN has announced a new content agreement with All3Media International that brings the BBC1/HBO Max, Stan and ZDF mini-series *The Tourist*, created by Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning producer Two Brothers Pictures, to the OSN platform. Also featured is *Trigger Point*

from executive producer Jed Mercurio, the creator of *Line of Duty*, one of the biggest UK shows this century. The six-part thriller is the debut series from screenwriter Daniel Brierley and has recently been renewed for a second season. The new series is fully available on OSN+.

QSC selects NMK Electronics as distribution partner in GCC and Iraq

QSC has appointed UAE distributor NMK Electronics Trading LLC to distribute its products in the GCC and Iraq. NMK will offer the company's full line of professional audio products as well as the Q-SYS cloud-manageable audio, video and control platform. The collaboration will commence on April 1.

Chant Utukian, Director MEA at QSC, said: "NMK has strong connections with partners and a deep understanding of the market. Together we will further strengthen the QSC brand in the Middle East region."

Muvi Cinemas launches KSA's biggest theatre

Muvi Cinemas has opened a new movie theatre in Riyadh Boulevard City. It is the largest cinema in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with 25 screens. The new location includes a wide range of exclusive moviegoing concepts, including the first 4DX screen in Saudi Arabia and the biggest in the world in terms of seats, among other features. Muvi continues to expand, with 21 cinema locations around the Kingdom and 195 screens.

New Hisense TV buyers to get free StarzPlay subscription

StarzPlay has partnered with Hisense to provide customers with a wide portfolio of video content with bundle deals. As part of the partnership, customers who purchase a Hisense Laser TV will receive a complimentary one-year StarzPlay subscription and access to an extensive content library. All purchases of Hisense ULED televisions above 75 inches



come with a six-month StarzPlay subscription, while customers who purchase any Hisense UHD television between 43 and 65 inches will receive a complimentary one-month StarzPlay subscription. Subscribers can watch StarzPlay's premium content with clear visuals and surround sound provided by Hisense televisions, especially on the Hisense 4K Laser TV.

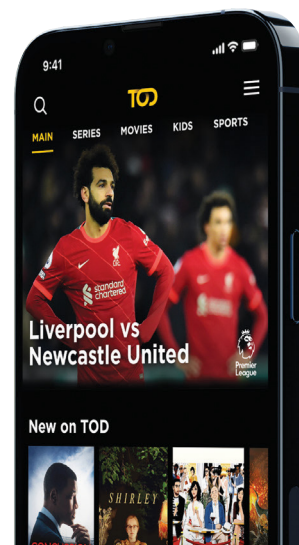
New streaming service launches for MENA viewers

TOD, a new subscription-based OTT platform reported to be a beIN Media Group product, has launched to audiences across MENA. The streaming platform includes more than 10,000 hours of premium entertainment and sports content together with a range of new TOD Originals. The streaming service will exclusively host beIN Sports programming and give viewers the option to opt in for pay-per-view subscriptions to sporting events including the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

A TOD spokesperson said: "With this new subscription-based streaming service, we hope to disrupt the market for the better and power a whole ecosystem of regional content creation. There is nothing like TOD on the market in

terms of premium live and on-demand content combined with premium technology, which makes us very excited."

The service will be accessible across five



devices at any one time to an account holder. TOD offers picture-in-picture mode and parental controls. As part of the Entertainment and All In package features, the platform allows two concurrent live streams.

Furthermore, users will have access to enhanced live content. Sport enthusiasts will have access to the platform's integrated live statistics engine providing live information including team line-ups, team statistics, individual player statistics, live commentary, instant replays and interactive timelines to jump to key moments, for an immersive and unforgettable experience during select sporting events.

TOD is now available on multiple platforms across web, Android and iOS devices.

Yash Raj Films names new CEO

Indian film production and distribution company Yash Raj Films has promoted Akshaye Widhani to the role of CEO, effective immediately. Widhani has previously been Senior Vice-President, Finance and Business Affairs and Head of Operations at YRF Studios. He joined YRF 17 years ago and has been responsible for setting up and running several business verticals. He is a graduate of the Kelley School of Business, Indiana University, with a dual major in Finance and Entrepreneurship. He has also been spearheading recent initiatives for the Yash Chopra Foundation.

Red Sea Lodge mentoring programme selects 12 projects for 2022 edition

The Red Sea International Film Festival (RedSeaIFF) has selected 12 projects from new voices from Saudi Arabia and the wider Arab region for the Red Sea Lodge 2022, a mentoring programme in collaboration with the Torino Film Lab and a key part of the festival's drive to support and promote talent. Six are from Saudi Arabia and the rest are from Egypt, Algeria and Lebanon, with 50% directed, produced and written by women.

The Lodge is made up of five intensive labs designed to take a diversity of talented people



Shivani Pandya (centre) with team members.

at the early stages of their career through the essentials of filmmaking, to bring authentic stories to the screen. The eight-month programme will nurture and support emerging talent,

improve access to Arab content and drive Arab potential on the international stage. The final workshop will take place during the second edition of the festival, scheduled to run

December 1-10 in Jeddah. Shivani Pandya Malhotra, RedSeaIFF Managing Director, said: "Together with the Torino Film Lab, we are thrilled to be unveiling the next 12 unique projects for the Red Sea Lodge. The feedback from past participants has been very encouraging, and this year's selection is an exciting slate of projects with bold cultural and social ambitions from a diverse selection of voices. The Red Sea Lodge is now building momentum and proving to be a vital support initiative which helps Arab talent to reach new heights in their film careers."

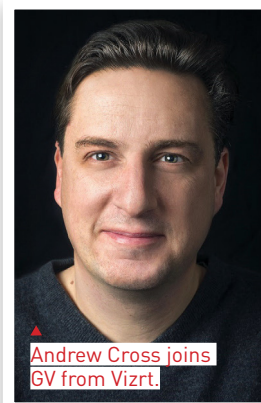
Grass Valley appoints Andrew Cross CEO

Grass Valley has appointed Andrew Cross as CEO, effective immediately. He joins from Vizrt Group, where he was President of Global R&D overall product development across all three brands (Vizrt, NewTek and NDI). He had been CEO of NewTek until it was acquired by Vizrt.

In his new role, Cross will lead the company through what it describes as the next phase to power the digital transformation of its customers and

support them as they transition to the future of media and entertainment through IP, software and cloud-based technologies.

Louis Hernandez Jr, Executive Chairman of Grass Valley, said: "Andrew is an experienced senior leader with deep industry knowledge and a track record of successfully taking media technology businesses into the new era of software-centric, cloud-based video technology. I'm excited to have Andrew



Andrew Cross joins GV from Vizrt.

join at this transformative time for the company and industry. I look forward

to his direction and leadership of Grass Valley alongside the excellent executive leadership team already in place."

Cross will lead the Grass Valley team as it realises its GV Media Universe (GVMU) vision. The GVMU is a digitally connected community that enables media companies to combine on-premise, hybrid and public cloud technologies to build live production environments while adapting to future demands.



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Setting the stage for CABSAT 2022

With CABSAT round the corner, **BroadcastPro** caught up with Thomas Löffler, AVP of Exhibitions at Dubai World Trade Centre, to find out what's new this year

What can the industry expect at CABSAT 2022? What is it most focused on in terms of innovation?
CABSAT, the Middle East and North Africa's leading specialist event for the satellite, digital media and filmed entertainment industries, is set to reunite the region's content and broadcast communities in-person once again for its 27th edition at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), 17-19 May. CABSAT is set to spark meaningful, industry-changing dialogue in the broadcast, content and satellite industries.

This edition will feature a greater focus on sustainability, with the SATEXpo Summit returning under the theme 'Building a Sustainable, Innovative Satellite & Space Sector'. Topics covered at the summit will include sustainability and the clean-up of space debris; new business and financing models; ground operations innovations; ensuring satellite security; AI and machine learning applied to satellite communications; and satellite insurance and risk mitigation.

CABSAT 2022's Content Congress will engage a unique cross-section of senior industry stakeholders with up-and-coming influencers to share insights on how to adapt traditional broadcast models, the benefits of disruptive thinking and the future of worldwide broadcasting. Content Congress will tackle the toughest challenges that the industry now faces, including how the metaverse will create content opportunities; content intelligence: using AI for both your content and your audience data; how to stand out as a vlogger; demonstrating green filming practices; reducing the carbon footprint of the film and TV industries; remote production and the role of the cloud;



Thomas Löffler

Amos Spacecom (both Israel), who operate in the satellite industry.

What new topics or themes can we expect?

CABSAT 2022 sees the event expand into the realm of professional AV. It's important that we support this community, which is a key part of the broader media and entertainment industry, especially as the focus is increasingly on creating profound experiences.

AV manufacturers, solutions integrators, distributors and resellers won't want to miss out on this launch, while venue owners and managers, installers and other end users will benefit from learning about the latest advances in conferencing, sound, lighting, video and streaming technologies to captivate audiences.

The AV Connect buyer matching programme will give thousands of industry professionals, technology buyers, distributors and end users from over 120 countries the opportunity to create targeted high-value connections. Plus, our AV Academy will offer the chance to explore the latest trends and best practices through workshops and masterclasses delivered by leading AV professionals.

What new features should we be excited about?

We look forward to providing attendees with new opportunities to network and connect through a concierge meetings programme. In addition, for 2022 an enhanced Next Gen Content educational and screening programme will place a special focus on how technology's newest mega-trend – the metaverse – will impact the MENA region's entertainment industry.

and deepfakes and synthetic media.

With the global broadcast and media technology market expected to grow from \$41.4bn in 2021 to \$62bn in 2027, it's never been more important to ensure the right strategies are in place to capitalise on these opportunities. CABSAT is the region's super-connector event to engage with thousands of key buyers, thought leaders and decision-makers from over 120 countries.

What new exhibitors can we expect at CABSAT 2022?

CABSAT 2022 will host a range of first-time international exhibitors specialising in broadcast and satellite-related products and services, including TAG Media (Israel), NXT Edition (UK) and Piko TV (Turkey) on the broadcast side of things, as well as Gilat Satellite Networks and

Advanced Media adopts structural changes to achieve vision

From a small office in Bur Dubai to three facilities in the UAE, a service centre in Egypt and a full-fledged showroom and service operation in Saudi Arabia, Advanced Media has made its mark as a distributor and systems integrator in the MENA market. In an exclusive conversation with **BroadcastPro ME**, Advanced Media owner Kaveh Farnam and MD Alaa Al Rantisi share their strategy and vision for the company at its 20th anniversary celebrations

Advanced Media marked its 20th anniversary with Cine2022, a three-day event that was a mix of training workshops, networking opportunities and mini showcases of the brands it represents, as well as an opportunity to welcome more industry professionals to its recently opened showroom on Sheikh Zayed Road.

The distributor, which started off as a “one-man, one-room office” in founder Kaveh Farnam’s words, has gradually expanded with 100 employees in the UAE spread across its offices and service centres on Sheikh Zayed Road and Al Quoz, with an additional large warehouse in Jebel Ali for inventory. With founder Farnam pursuing

his interest in filmmaking for the last few years, Managing Director Alaa Al Rantisi says Advanced Media has been gradually focusing on enhancing its distribution capabilities, expanding to new markets in MENA and growing the digital cinema part of its business, be it through products and infrastructure or through supporting



The Advanced Media team with some of the instructors and brand representatives at Cine2022.

the local community with scholarships, free workshops and funding of independent cinema initiatives.

“We are still doing all the things we used to do, but we will be focusing our attention on distribution and digital cinema-related initiatives in the coming months,” Al Rantisi says. “And we are doing everything structurally within the organisation to grow these segments. This has required us to have a physical presence in certain markets like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, to ensure we have direct access to the customer. We opened the first Sony service centre in Cairo six months ago.”

Farnam seconds this. “Our growth all along this journey has been organic. Our business strategy now requires us to move from being a family-run business to assuming a more corporate role and ensuring we are able to function more efficiently. We now look at ourselves as a medium-sized company with over 100 employees in the Dubai office, ten in Saudi Arabia and three at our Egypt operations. We have trained a new generation of leaders who have been working with the company for several years, and they are now ready to lead the company with their new ideas.”

Advanced Media is now looking to grow various elements within digital cinema as part of its efforts to ensure this ecosystem thrives.

“We recently supported the eighth edition of Reel Palestine at Cinema Akil,” says Farnam. “We have just signed an agreement with the SAE Institute in Dubai, where we will offer scholarships to three students from Palestine and Iran who want to pursue a bachelor’s degree in film annually at the Dubai branch. We are constantly involved in developing training workshops and intend to do more on the filmmaking side to ensure that people are well trained on all aspects of filmmaking, such as scriptwriting and how to bring an idea to reality, to acting, directing, casting, lighting and editing. Our workshops at Cine2022 have been vendor-agnostic and have



Alister Chapman with the Sony Venice 2.

+ Alister Chapman, filmmaker

The Sony Venice 2 digital cinema camera represents the pinnacle of where we are with current camera technology. It’s an 8.6K sensor in full frame, which means you have the ability to shoot anamorphic at 8K resolution. If you want to use legacy cinema lenses, which are typically the 35mm film, you can still shoot at 5.6K even with legacy lenses. So it gives you the ability to use practically any lens that you want to.

And no matter what lens you are using, you’re over 4K and that becomes important because of oversampling. When we talk about K, we’re often talking about pixels. So when we have 8K pixels, we don’t get an 8K resolution image. What we get is an image that is about 6K resolution.

When we’re shooting in the super 35mm mode on Venice 2, we still have nearly 6K of pixels. So we actually record a 4K resolution file; and with cinema and everything else moving to 4K, what that means is the audiences and viewers will get a true 4K image, no matter

what mode you use the camera in.

This also has a dual ISO sensor. So we have our normal sensitivity mode that you would use for your everyday filming in normal light levels, and that is pretty much the same as every other camera, which is 800 ISO. But when you need to shoot in low light and in the dark, or you need to do night filming, you can switch up to a second base ISO, which is 3,200 ISO and there’s no loss of quality. It’s the same resolution. There’s a tiny difference in the noise. It’s not a noticeable difference really.

And that means you don’t have to bring in extra generators and lights, etc. It makes it easier and quicker to shoot in low light, to be able to shoot in places where you couldn’t shoot previously and still get a very high-quality image. The ability to shoot faster, shoot smarter, less energy, less power.

It’s also green; it’s a high-end camera. But in the grand scheme of things, it’s no more expensive than any other camera in its league.

had a greater focus on subject matter rather than brands, to ensure we can carry on through this strategy.”

This has been especially useful for a growing pool of independent filmmakers, social media enthusiasts and influencers, adds Al Rantisi: “A significant part of what we sell today goes towards social media-related activities; so far, the company’s success

has rested in identifying customer segments that will benefit the most from using their equipment.”

“While everybody would go for the big tenders, we found a large volume of the market that lived under the shadow of this big media sector. We went after them. That’s what we still do,” explains Farnam.

The distributor was also proud to

offer the first hands-on experience for the Sony Venice 2 in the Middle East.

“This hands-on experience on the Sony Venice 2 has not even happened in Europe yet. It’s a great treat for those who wanted to try it,” says Al Rantisi. “Essentially, our aim is to ensure that through our various initiatives, we are able to remain closer to the cinema society and the film market.” **PRO**



Attendees at one of the workshops.

+ Gary Adcock, tech consultant

I conducted three workshops that were designed to help bring the knowledge of large-format lending. I spoke about optics, how lenses work and what kind of things you need to look for. The kinds of things cinematographers need to know as they grow into larger formats.

The second day, I did a workshop on high dynamic range imagery, which I believe is the future. If you watch Netflix or HBO Max or even sports, most

productions are being done in HDR. And the complexity of a HDR workflow is quite difficult if you’re not familiar with it. For people that want to get into it, there’re some really easy, simple ways.

So I kept it really down to earth so everybody could understand the things that they needed to do at the front end. Not all cameras can capture an HDR image, not even DSLRs. And sometimes, if you choose a real high-end camera and don’t record

in the right format, it doesn’t give you the right kind of data. So it was important to highlight those elements to the attendees.

And the last thing I spoke about was colour grading. I discussed the science of colour and how to think about it, and the things where colour can fail you, but also some tips and tricks.

The power of filmmaking is so much in how each individual can handle their workflows.



Kevin McGeagh, Head of Virtual Production, The Other End, Toronto

Virtual production (VP) is a rapidly developing area of filmmaking covering the intersection of physical and digital production elements. While the term has become synonymous with real-time LED volumes and in-camera VFX, popularised by several recent high-profile productions, in actuality it is a larger umbrella inclusive of innovations enabling the entire production pipeline. The key to the future of VP is in looking for new and novel approaches while working with existing filmmaking techniques, tools and crew, drawing upon their knowledge and needs to build complementary, empowering creative industry components, not replacements.



Benoît Brismontier with the new Angenieux lens.



Benoît Brismontier, Sales & Marketing, Angenieux

I’m in charge of sales for Angenieux in the Middle East. I’m pleased to be here with Advanced Media to showcase our latest lenses. We have some brand-new lenses here. We are very well-known for our zoom lenses but are also again entering the prime market. Most of the rental houses here like to buy our zoom lenses. This is the first showing of some of our lenses, and we have had some good feedback.



From left: Kevin McGeagh, Head of Virtual Production, and Amir Endallah, CEO & Producer of The Other End.



From left: CEO Kaveh Farnam with MD Alaa Al Rantisi.



Gary Adcock conducted three of the workshops at the event.



BRINGING VIRTUAL PRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

In 2020, *The Mandalorian* marked a paradigm shift for filmmakers and producers. Inspired by its trailblazing production that saw an impressive combination of extended reality and virtual production, Fractal Studio Managing Director Azin Samarmand and Technical Director Olivier Gheysen have now brought the XR-VP revolution to the Middle East.

BroadcastPro ME brings you the exclusive

Fractal Studio opened for business in Dubai last month. The multi-million-dollar set-up is the UAE's first fully integrated extended reality (XR) and virtual production (VP) studio, with a 24x5m customised LED wall taking centre stage at the 650sqm facility. XR and VP offer the opportunity to create hyper-realistic 3D environments paired with powerful real-time render software solutions thus far limited to the gaming industry. With the opening of Fractal Studio, the technology will now become accessible for TV commercials, dramas, feature films, broadcasting and virtual events in the region.

Fractal Studio founders Thierry Louesse and Renaud Barbier explain the thinking behind the facility: "Digital content has become an important part of our lives. There is a growing appetite for documentaries, movies, features and the likes of Netflix, OSN and HBO have some fabulous series. But this means there is also an increasing need to produce more content with more quality, but within a shorter time and budget. The green background studio has considerable limitations specifically within the immersive environment. The use of XR with advanced technologies and an integrated data flow can provide a quick, cost-effective and high-quality output today. With Fractal Studio, we want to be able to provide producers, agencies and so on with a ready-made structure that offers all XR services under one roof so they can be free of logistical constraints and be able to fully express their creativity."

Fractal's state-of-the-art infrastructure might be the most advanced in the world, not just the Middle East. The 24m LED wall is 5m high with a 192° curvature and 2.5 pixel pitch, complemented with a rendering system powered by Disguise that allows up to 8K live rendering

with infinite possibilities. Accompanying that set-up is an Optitrack camera tracking system, a 100G Mellanox network and Lightware connectivity solutions.

Bespoke infrastructure

For the installation of the curved 120sqm LED, Fractal worked closely with INFILED, which created it to Fractal's specifications using next-generation cabinets and 2.5 pixel pitch LED. Since it was a bespoke structure, INFILED was able to optimise it for specific colour spectra that are critical to Fractal's camera use but unavailable in off-the-shelf LED panels. This customisation also allowed the curve of the screen to be placed where Fractal wanted it without having to change the entire supporting structure of the wall.

"Customisation is key to the whole XR process," says Gheysen. "This technology is so new that there is no buyable for it. It's very experimental. You cannot categorise it and say follow these steps to get to the final product. If you really want a good product, you have to customise it and ours took eight months to make."

The quality of the LED screen is the most critical element of a virtual production. Low-quality screens lead to visual artefacts, flickering, scan lines, aberrations and mis-matched colours.

"If not done right, it could become the weakest link in the entire VP workflow. If it's not able to accurately project a wide palette of colours or if its refresh rate is too low, if the matrix is too reflective or has a low angle of vision, the camera will see it. There's no better way to understand your LED product than to point a camera at it as early as possible, since cameras will reveal all the issues," Gheysen remarks.

Fractal's LED gives it a significant lead over any upcoming



It took INFILED eight months to build the customised curved 120sqm LED wall for Fractal Studio.

As this was a bespoke structure, INFiLED was able to optimise it for specific colour spectra critical to Fractal's camera use but unavailable in off-the-shelf LED panels.

competition, not just in terms of infrastructure but technology acquisition too. The surge in demand for XR and VP has already put pressure on manufacturers, with wait times currently stretching from six months to a year.

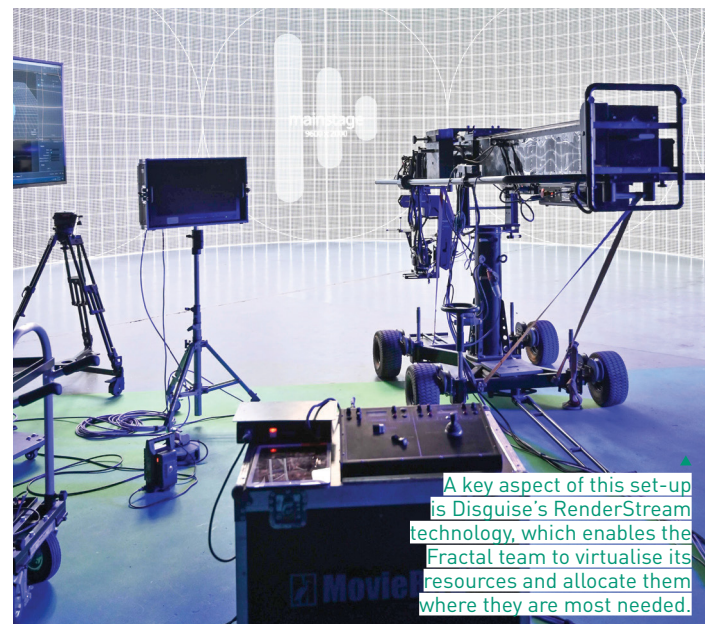
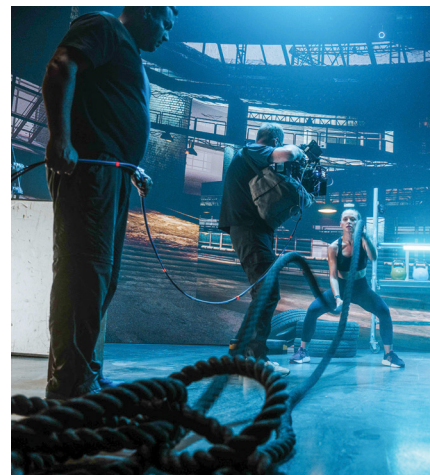
Disruptive tech

XR and VP or any other technology for photorealistic environment creation is useless without real-time rendering. Fractal's USP is its ability to render 8K images live, through the multiple layers of networking in the installation.

The first step in the process is the actual video information, where the rendering of the actual image takes place on rendering nodes that funnel their 'tile' to the controllers taking care of the final projection. These video feeds are then transferred via an L3 100G fibre switch, with each controller receiving up to 50Gbps of data to process.

Control of the system takes place on a separate 10G network, while a third 10G network handles the distribution of media and data transfers that are not time-bound. Due to the need to keep so many rendering nodes and edit stations up-to-date with projects ranging from 25 to 250GB, with the probability of multiple users live editing as well (locally or remote), the media distribution layer is a massive IT infrastructure that allows XR providers to receive tracking information, and to render and project images with minimal delay so the camera can't see the difference between the real and virtual world. Advanced IT infrastructure is thus another important element of the XR process.

Fractal's superior XR capabilities are possible thanks to the use of Unreal Engine's gaming technology, which generates real-time photorealistic 3D scenes with live CGI projection. To tackle the high rendering power needed to manage the LED wall's 24 million pixels, Fractal



A key aspect of this set-up is Disguise's RenderStream technology, which enables the Fractal team to virtualise its resources and allocate them where they are most needed.



selected Disguise for rendering.

"Our decision was guided by the short deadline of the project, the great knowledge that the Disguise team has in the XR world and the fact that their architecture is extremely flexible and scalable. We are now capable of scaling the rendering power depending on the project at hand, ensuring that we have power on demand as opposed to a fixed installation," says Gheysen.

"With Disguise's RenderStream technology, the Fractal team is able to virtualise the resources and allocate them where they are most needed, depending on the project and the scenes at hand."

Another defining trait of Fractal is its XR stage's tracking ability. Using the OptiTrack solution, they can not only track

multiple cameras, physical lights and random objects in the scene but can also undertake full motion capture. The video in/out switching on the premises is handled by Lightware, which reportedly has the best 4K matrices on the market.

"We work with Arri and Red cameras primarily. Dubai-based Filmquip Media is our key partner for all film equipment. They've been with us from day one to ensure we develop our product using tools that the film industry is already familiar with. The cameras are as per what the client needs. We can scale from one camera to four or more cameras. Most commercial shoots need one or two

cameras. For the tracking cameras, because we track the whole volume, there are multiple cameras around the studio," explains Samarmand.

Extended benefits

Fractal's value proposition consists of an entire package to shoot and produce video content, says Samarmand. "Virtual production has so many technical and creative elements involved, so we provide a whole package for those who want it. We can handle all the arrangements in terms of technical environment required for creation, to projection and final pixel on the camera."

The benefits of using XR and VP

"Virtual production has so many technical and creative elements involved, so we provide a whole package for those who want it"

Azin Samarmand, Managing Director, Fractal Studio

compared to traditional filming production are manifold. It encourages a more iterative, non-linear and collaborative process. Creating previs imagery via a real-time engine means sequences can be quickly updated and output at very high levels of image quality. This allows directors to replace the visual effects

with working imagery far closer to the final pixel, making iteration and experimentation simpler, cost-efficient and agile. The use of XR and VP also helps filmmakers eliminate the uncertainty of traditional pre-production, empowering them to collaboratively iterate on visual details in the moment, not deferring all these decisions to post.

Fractal's virtual production can bring any location in the world into the studio. Their team can carry out a shot-by-shot analysis of the entire script, advising the producer on what kind of backgrounds are available. Whether it's the deserts of Arabia or the Golden Gate Bridge of San Francisco, they can all now be shot in Dubai.

Apart from a library of ready-made backgrounds, the Fractal team also works with international UFX/VFX partners to create bespoke backgrounds for clients. The process of choosing or creating a background can be likened to the location recce traditionally conducted by directors. In virtual production, this is done digitally. There's a lot of flexibility with whichever background process filmmakers choose as any element of the background – lighting, and the position of natural elements like the sun or buildings or shadows, can be changed with just a few clicks.

XR creates highly immersive production environments. For instance, when using green screens to create virtual scenes, one of the biggest limitations actors or presenters face is that they cannot actually see the environment they are supposed to be interacting with.

Traditional green screens also require intensive and expensive post-production iterations for things that would have been easily fixed if discovered during shooting.

XR is even more beneficial in a live environment, as studios can make use of CG graphics in the moment. By plugging camera tracking data into Disguise's software, engineers

can render content from the camera's view. Using camera tracking technology, real-time content is generated into the LED walls based on camera positions. This holds the key to extending these small sets into large virtual spaces. When set extensions are switched on, the virtual world continues beyond the LED screens for the viewer at home, rendering in all directions around the stage and accommodating the largest possible programming scale.

"These XR backgrounds are so real that even the camera gets tricked into not seeing the difference between the virtual world and the real one," says Samarmand.

XR and virtual production have the potential to change the whole filming workflow, says Gheysen.

"Traditionally filmmakers had to go on set, shoot, and then post-production takes anything from two weeks to two months. Now this has all been moved up to pre-production. The XR LED allows directors, actors and other creatives involved in the filmmaking process to do a full visualisation of the entire commercial before even getting into the studio. When the crew come



"Customisation is key to the whole XR process. This technology is so new that there is no buyable for it. It's very experimental"

Olivier Gheysen, Technical Director, Fractal Studio

to shoot, it's not a new location for them. They've already seen the environment and know where to place the cameras and shoot from. The director understands better what he is going to see as the final



Fractal Studio founders Thierry Louesse (l) and Renaud Barbier say an XR studio combined with sophisticated data flow integration can provide a cost-effective, yet high-quality output today.

scene, and there are no surprises."

Unlike a traditional shoot, where logistics take up a lot of the cost, a virtual production incurs only a digital cost, says Samarmand. "Producers can save on logistics cost, location permits and time delays. This is more cost-effective once people understand the workflow and what they want to do."

No boundaries

Fractal is working with several international partners to ensure it can provide services on a par with global standards – its VFX partner is in South Africa, its tracking system provider is in the US, and its service systems are in the UK. Samarmand and Gheysen are quick to reiterate the importance of collaborating with good partners.

"The industry as a whole is seeing tremendous growth, and the partners are what are going to make it successful. Although the technology itself was developed in Europe or in the US, vendor support teams are always available online via Zoom or remote access software. In our case, we had the team from INFiLED and OptiTrack come down to guide us personally. It's these things that have allowed us to build and deliver a superior product, because any time we ran into a bump in the road, these guys were there to support us," says Samarmand.

Marco Bruines, Senior Vice President of INFiLED EMEA, says the company is "delighted to be part of this amazing project, as exciting times are coming with the revolution of the XR industry. We've been working closely with Fractal and all other parties involved to achieve this impressive, customised set-up. The combination of the seamless curve, high refresh rate and vivid colours of the massive LED backdrop offer state-of-the art 8K resolutions and allow outstanding quality on- and off-camera."

The human element, of course, remains at the core of the whole

process. Fractal is helping to create greater demand for 3D artists, VFX supervisors, colour and vision supervisors, Unreal Engine artists and video engineers.

"XR needs all these talents to generate its photorealistic content, and the challenge now is to find them. There's also a newfound emphasis on the need for a director right from start of the filming, including the scripting and studio hire process," explains Samarmand.

"XR and VP rely heavily on art direction and how to realistically design sets to have seamless stitching between physical sets and virtual environment. The new challenge is to have them on projects since day one.

"XR-VP is a tool. What you can do and how you develop it depends on

the team you are with. You have to start imagining and writing scripts that fit the use of that tool. Technology is changing every month, allowing us to do more and more, so any limitations will be lifted soon. We are only limited by our imagination and how to use these tools. It is going to take time for directors and storytellers to understand this technology. It was important to onboard film technicians as early as possible to be ready for production. XR-VP is a great ship, and we need a knowledgeable crew to steer it."

The road ahead

Both Samarmand and Gheysen agree that creating awareness and educating industry peers remain central to the success of XR in production.

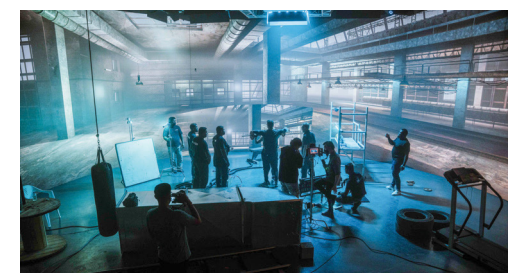
"This is more than cinematography meeting technology," explains Samarmand. "It is putting top-notch technology

together with a multitude of critical elements and then balancing them to get a hyper-realistic final shot. If even one element is out of place, the whole workflow will fail."

Gheysen seconds this. "Most of our industry peers are set in the linear workflow, so to change their mentality and convince them to change the workflow is a big challenge. But filmmakers who visited us have revisited their scripts after seeing what they can do with our technology. They went back and changed their entire approach to the shoot itself, and that's what is needed to achieve something great. Those who take the time to understand tech are at the forefront, they are the ones who will gain the most from it." **PRO**



Various elements in the studio and bottom right, a shoot in progress.



THE BIG MOVE

Seven years after opening a small office with five employees in Dubai's Jumeirah Lake Towers, Augustus Media has moved into a 1,100sqm facility at Dubai Production City. **BroadcastPro ME** takes a tour of the new studios unveiled to the press last month



The central area of the studio facility at Dubai Production City.

Augustus Media has enjoyed considerable success in the Middle East since its launch in 2015, with social media followers across various platforms at 6m and monthly readers at 1m. To up the ante and further support the production of shows for Lovin Dubai, its online news and lifestyle platform serving UAE audiences, and Smashi, which features business, tech and culture news from the Arab world, the media house has invested more than \$1m in a brand-new studio space in Dubai Production City, with a VR room, a podcast room, dark- and light-themed studios, and two studios with complete access to advanced technologies for content production.

“The formats that will drive media consumption of the future are being created now, and we hope to front that movement and be seen as the modern media company of choice in the Middle East,” says Richard Fitzgerald, CEO of Augustus Media. “It was important for us to have the facilities and expertise to be equipped to deliver on that promise, and we found the right partner in Dubai Production City to execute that.”

The idea of expanding the facility came while the team worked on a project for an American company during the pandemic.

“We had initially rented an LED wall but were frustrated with the limitations of the small rental space and equipment.

Richard Fitzgerald says the media house invested north of \$1m in the new facility.

We scouted for a location where we could merge the needs of a modern newsroom, radio station and TV station to cater to all our content creation needs. That's how we discovered this space.”

Augustus roped in Consul for interior design and architecture, broadcast consultant Mediapreneur for production gear, cloud-based automation and playout systems, and Motif for fit-out and construction. With the new space, Augustus Media could build an integrated facility for its podcasts, video productions and news bulletins.

Mediapreneur was called in to help Augustus evolve and adapt to the changes of the media landscape, by creating new studios and using cloud services to automate the process and ensure operational efficiency, while enhancing the viewing experience to serve a rapidly growing audience and offer a better service.

The majority of Smashi shows are broadcast as video; they are also adapted for audio and created in a video environment, and the technology deployed at the new studios makes this possible. Studio one, the main newsroom, is equipped with three Sony SRG-X400 1080 PTZ camera systems and a PixelPlus 2.5 LED video wall. This infrastructure supports news production and live programmes.

Other key gear includes a Fortinge prompter system, a Swit studio lighting system, an Eartec intercom system and a Manfrotto dolly and a tripod. A Soundcraft audio console and Sennheiser microphones wireless system form the main audio part of the audio element. Video/ audio signal processing is provided by Datavideo SE-3200, with a 12-channel digital video switcher.

The second studio, dubbed the YouTube studio by the Augustus team, sports a more casual set-up suitable for talk shows, podcasts and live streaming. While its primary focus is video streaming,



“The formats that will drive media consumption of the future are being created now, and we hope to front that movement”

Richard Fitzgerald, CEO, Augustus Media

it is equipped for podcast production as well. Blackmagic Design cameras connect it with the broadcast facilities. For podcasts, Augustus relies on a RODECaster Pro mixer and Sennheiser headphones and microphones. The

studios are both connected to the main production control room through wall boxes.

With the new studio, Augustus hopes to move from a CAPEX to an OPEX model, a trend that is fast catching on in the broadcast industry. For instance, live production is done on-prem but automated playout takes place in the cloud. This enables the Cairo and Riyadh stations to go live from anywhere, as the main playout and automation system is in the cloud. It offers greater flexibility to stream and gain access to a live event from anywhere.

Augustus' cloud solutions were devised by Mediapreneur CEO Nawaf Al Sullami, who took a deep dive into the media company's strategy, goals, technology roadmaps and upcoming initiatives. After in-depth discussions on conceptual, schematic design and system workflows, Augustus was advised to migrate to VESET Nimbus to power its smart TV application, Smashi TV. This allows it to easily operate remotely in a public cloud such as AWS, with access to a range of all-in-one channel creation tools including live stream and file ingest, scheduling,



Augustus Media's main studio is well equipped to support news production and live streaming.



content management and ongoing 24/7 support for platform users.

Augustus' new premises are a pleasant departure from traditional podcast and streaming venues, which are usually smaller and focused on a single distribution platform. With the remarkable growth spurt of Smashi, Lovin Dubai and Lovin Saudi in recent years, there was an urgent need for bigger premises. Smashi, for instance, is an SVOD (subscription video on demand) and AVOD (advertising video on demand) free streaming service that Augustus plans to launch on more smart TV devices in the coming months, after debuting on Android and IOS. The company is

also building up content for TIZEN OS for Samsung, Roku, Vizio App, Hisence, Snayo and Amazon Fire, in addition to giving distribution rights to telcos.

Egged on by this need to quickly ramp up content, Augustus made the \$1m investment in the new studio in

“We see content like manufacturing. We now have the factory, and a great team to attract the future media talent for us to build a different kind of media company for the region”

Richard Fitzgerald, CEO, Augustus Media

Dubai. While there has been some external funding through debt for its overseas expansion, the cost of the studio has been fully borne by Augustus. The company, which has been profitable for the last five years, sees this as a long-term investment which will allow it to explore various production options to distribute across different platforms.

“We see content like manufacturing. Those that are brave enough to bet on the UAE as a manufacturing hub can leverage economic efficiencies. We now have the factory, and a great team to attract the future media talent for us to build a different kind of

media company for the region,” says Fitzgerald. The new studio is part of that carefully thought-out strategy he has been devising since the first day.

In 2015, Augustus Media launched Lovin, followed by Smashi. In 2017, it claims to have been the first fully foreign-owned media company to step into Saudi Arabia with the launch of Lovin Saudi. Last year, it opened Augustus Misr in Egypt. The new studio will further support the ambitious expansion plans Augustus announced last summer.

The business is expanding its Lovin platform within the UAE and Saudi Arabia, while also making a foray into Pakistan. In the UAE, Lovin will have separate editions for Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Ras Al-Khaimah, while its expansion in Saudi Arabia will see four local editions come up in Riyadh, Jeddah, NEOM and Sharqiyah. In Pakistan,



◀ Broadcast consultant Mediapreneur's CEO Nawaf Al Sullami helped Augustus Media plan and integrate its production and streaming solutions.

its first edition, Lovin Isloo for Islamabad, will be followed by dedicated platforms for Karachi and Lahore.

“Lovin is a local news and horizontal plan; we want it to be in as many cities in the Middle East as possible. Smashi is a more niche streaming service and

a vertical play, with Smashi Crypto, Smashi Gaming, Smashi Green designed to grow along with the rise of OTT consumption,” says Fitzgerald as the company gears up for significant expansion this year. “With the onset of technology, the UAE has seen innovation across many industries and media doesn't need to be any different. The industry needs constant innovation, to embrace new technologies and continued fragmentation of mediums to thrive and prosper. The publishing and broadcast industries are challenged by platforms on one side and the creators on the other; however, by focusing on this region, on digital – content and commercially – and on the IP of our brands, we believe we can continue to build a sustainable profitable media company over decades to come,” he concludes. **PRO**

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STAYING ON SCHEDULE

From tape to tapeless, SD to HD to 4K and beyond, and the rapid rise of the cord-never generation, she has witnessed it all during her seventeen years in the broadcast industry. Meet Ream Abdullah, Senior Planning and Scheduling Manager at Asharq News

How did you come to be working in the broadcast sector?

I began working in the broadcast media industry in 2005, progressing through several roles that allowed me to gain experience in a variety of functions, but it wasn't until later that I realised my true passion was specifically in programming and planning. In 2007, I joined MBC Group as a planner in charge of Al Arabiya, and later took charge of MBC1. I worked my way up to the senior management team over the years, eventually becoming the group's senior planning manager for all Arabic channels. It was a challenging yet fun experience that involved many technical requirements, where part of my role was to understand the audience and their habits and ensure that we have the best offerings at the best time, as well as to research any competitors and set up workflows to ensure smooth operations.

In 2019, I joined Asharq News as senior planning and scheduling manager, which was a great step forward in my career development. In a nutshell, my path started with a passion and evolved into an expertise.

What does your role at Asharq News entail?

My responsibilities are divided into two parts: planning and scheduling. The planning section is primarily content-related and in charge of the channel grid offering. It ensures that compelling content is offered at the appropriate time, based on target audience consumption habits and market research. But most importantly, I have to ensure that the grid designed is appealing to our intended audience. In terms of scheduling, it gathers all the efforts from different departments and displays them on one screen to ensure that the channel looks appealing and smooth.

How has the broadcast industry evolved over your career?

When I first started in the broadcast industry, all our material was provided on tapes; but we gradually transitioned into a tapeless phase, which was a huge technical and operational shift. There was also a shift from having TV and radio as the primary broadcast platforms to transitioning to digital platforms. Over the years, broadcast regulations have changed in a way

that we have been able to align with audience consumption habits, therefore impacting the way we provide our content. One major challenge has been to keep up with the latest technical and digital transformations and developments.

For example, people now use various platforms to select the entertainment content they want to consume at their preferred timings. Therefore, entertainment channels faced and will continue to face challenges in the coming years. However, this is not the case for news-based channels, which will have a rather different formula mostly due to the fact that people will want to watch live news most of the time.

At Asharq, the distinguishing factor is in how the business news and general news programming is delivered. Being a multi-platform news service, we cater to the needs of this rapidly evolving era and understand the need to provide content and news via digital platforms for viewers and users alike to consume at their leisure, according to their preferred times and lifestyles.

What techniques in broadcast scheduling have you mastered over the years? What are your biggest takeaways from being in this industry?

Building a content grid for channels is something I have mastered over the years, as is setting workflows to facilitate work between departments and ensuring efficiency and optimisation in work processes. I was privileged to work with Asharq News prior to the launch date, where I participated in setting technical workflows. Generally, working at a channel is unpredictable and there is no such thing as a systematic offering. Hence it is important to be able to adapt to changes, keep agility in our mindsets and stay up to date with all technological offerings, always one step ahead of the competition.

How has the pandemic influenced broadcasting and scheduling, and programme evaluations? How do you think such changes determine the future of broadcast?

There is no doubt that the pandemic has altered people's habits, which in turn has influenced their interests and how they

consume content. People have shifted away from watching television or free-to-air (FTA) channels in favour of online platforms that provide a wide range of content. Today, FTA channels face a challenge in enticing people to watch television when they can choose different, faster and easier ways. That is why Asharq News offers special dedicated content on both digital and social media platforms, balancing between the content we provide on TV and digitally (whether it's online, on social or through catch-up service).

What big challenges have you faced during your career? How did you overcome them?

Every industry has its challenges. I think what drew me to the media and broadcast industry is my passion. Looking back, one of the challenges I faced at Asharq News was launching a new channel during the pandemic, a time when the rest of the world was shut down while we had to be working around the clock to meet the launch date deadline. The other obstacle during that period was not having the team around physically in the office to deal with multiple technical issues that arose. Nevertheless, we overcame this as a team, with great support from our leadership to facilitate a positive environment in which every member of the founding team contributed to the success of the launch.

Drawing from my experience, and during my time at MBC Group, I can recollect a very challenging situation. I was tasked with launching new channels in a very short time span. It was a new genre and offering, and I had no prior knowledge nor experience in that specific field. I did a lot of research and competitive analysis to come up with the best programming strategy that would allow us to compete in the market, as well as work with the complexities of the technical requirements for such a project. It was very successful.

Today, our main challenge



“It is always essential to keep content appealing and relevant, irrespective of where the content lives on linear or digital”

Ream Abdullah, Senior Planning and Scheduling Manager, Asharq News

is how to meet our target audience's expectations. Whether that be from the actual content or technical offerings, it is always essential to keep content appealing and relevant, irrespective of where the content lives on linear or digital.

What challenges do you face as a woman in your role, and how does the industry treat women?

Irrespective of gender, we all face challenges. At the start of my career, I had to prove myself and my abilities. When others see women working in technical fields and are given a fair chance to prove themselves, it pays off. For me, the gender-related challenge no longer appears to be the obstacle here.

Have you experienced gender bias within the industry? How has this influenced your drive and subsequent work?

It is uncommon to find females in technical fields within the broadcast industry. That kept me on my toes with a need to prove myself and my capabilities all the time. It wasn't an easy journey at first, but with time and experience I was able to grow without being judged because of my gender. Throughout my career, I have also been fortunate to work with supportive leaders and managers

that provided me with a fair chance to shine without bias.

Any message for other women aspiring to join the broadcast market?

This is one of the most rewarding fields to work in, due to its dynamic nature. Working outside your comfort zone is something that moves you forward. It is those moments that develop and grow your character and strengthen you with maturity and experience. The broadcast industry is demanding and competitive, but it can also be very fulfilling. I am proud to say that our CEO is a woman and that our leadership team is also made up of women, proving that gender does not matter, but competence does.

What attributes do you see women bringing to the organisation?

I believe that men and women in any organisation have equal opportunities to prove themselves and add value based on their qualifications and experience, rather than their gender. There must be an equal opportunity for all.

Do you make a conscious effort to hire women in the industry?

I don't hire based on gender; instead, I give equal opportunities based on job skills and candidate potential. If I want the world to be fair to women, I must be fair to everyone else. There are no double standards here.

What is your next challenge within Asharq News?

As a one-year-old channel in the market, we have our work cut out for us. Our first phase, the channel's launch, is now complete, and it is time to focus on achieving our goal of becoming the region's leading source of economic news for Arab viewers everywhere. This is a mutually shared challenge with the entire organisation and the leadership team, and collectively we speed ahead to achieve it. **PRO**



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WHY CONVERGED MEDIA CONSUMPTION REQUIRES A CONVERGED SECURITY SOLUTION

With the growth and penetration of smart TVs as the main device for converged media consumption, it is possible to eliminate the two-silo security approach and leverage a converged security system for delivering hybrid TV services, says **Bo Ferm**

Broadcast TV and streaming – oil and water?

Multichannel video programming distributors – MVPDs, better known as pay-TV operators – have been competing with aggressive over-the-top (OTT) streaming providers for some 15 years. Few probably saw the Netflix launch of its streaming service in 2007 as a defining moment at the time, but with the benefit of hindsight it all looks so obvious.

While streaming providers did not pose an imminent threat to established pay-TV operators, they have been eating away at their subscribers ever since. The result has been relentless cord-cutting and a sharp reduction of linear pay-TV audience. This trend has been further cemented by newer streaming entrants such as Disney+, HBO Max, Peacock and Paramount+, and the parallel trend of free ad-supported TV (FAST) channels and ad-based video-on-demand (AVOD) services.

Content protection then and now

To protect broadcast and pay-TV services from copyright infringement and piracy, MVPDs have relied on conditional access systems (CAS) ever since digital TV was introduced in the mid '90s. Contrast that with streaming service providers, which are required to use digital rights management (DRM) technology for their premium content. These two worlds of content protection have remained distinct and separate, occupying two silos with nothing connecting them. The traditional CAS approach, with its dependence on proprietary security hardware in set-top boxes, is contrasted by the flexibility of DRM-protected streaming over the internet.

MVPDs add streaming services

To counter the OTT offensive, MVPDs first added TV everywhere (TVE) services, allowing authorised viewers to

enjoy their subscribed content on any supported device as well as the big screen. As a condition for offering TVE services, MVPDs had to get acquainted with streaming technology while also deploying DRM content protection.

Beyond the initial TVE offerings, MVPDs have increasingly come to accept that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. The first proof point was the addition of Netflix as part of an MVPD's total offer, in some cases with single-bill convenience and sometimes even a Netflix button on the remote. This soon

“As if MVPDs did not have enough competition from SVOD operators like Netflix, the proliferation of virtual MVPDs is raising the stakes, since these may also offer live services including much-coveted live sports”

Bo Ferm, Product Marketing Manager, Intertrust ExpressPlay

resulted in the need to support hybrid broadcast-OTT services, essentially merging the two kinds of services into a single user interface (UX). As compelling as this offer was for the viewers, it created a great challenge to content protection management.

vMVPDs offer more competition

As if MVPDs did not have enough competition from SVOD operators like Netflix, the proliferation of virtual MVPDs is raising the stakes, since these may also offer live services including much-coveted live sports. Examples of vMVPDs can be found all around the world, including Hulu, YouTube TV and the sports-centric fuboTV and DAZN. They offer competitive packages – average monthly pricing for a US vMVPD service in 2021 was about \$60 per month, compared to about \$100 for traditional pay TV, according to Omdia. This obviously raises the stakes further for MVPDs, which now have every reason to reduce TCO to keep their subscription fees in check.

Converged broadcast TV and streaming offers global opportunities

Despite continued live-linear and on-demand streaming growth, pay TV will remain viable for the foreseeable future. However, broadcast TV and streaming services will evolve towards a hybrid approach where linear pay-TV content co-exists with

live and on-demand streaming services. This is in keeping with the streaming industry's belief that smart TVs will take on more and more of the converged consumption workload, perhaps through the integration of live-event streaming and live broadcast events in a consolidated UI/UX and electronic programme guide (EPG).

There are indeed large global opportunities for converged media consumption, per third-party market research. Total smart TV market share is estimated at about 30% of all TV households worldwide. Smart TV sales are forecast to increase from \$157bn in 2018 to \$258bn by 2024, according to imarc's 'Smart TV Market: Global Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2022-2027' report. Smart/connected TV penetration in the US exceeded 80% in 2021 and was 65% or higher in most European countries. Smart TVs offer converged solutions for media consumption based on standards such as HbbTV, DVB-I and DVB-NIP.

But doesn't converged broadcast TV and OTT streaming media consumption call for a converged security solution?

How to overcome the costly proposition of CAS plus DRM

MVPDs became encumbered with deploying the two silo-based content protection technologies, CAS and DRM, which invariably resulted in higher total cost of ownership. In hybrid broadcast-OTT subscriber devices, two separate security clients were required to protect the MVPD and OTT services. This sometimes required the operator to deal with two vendors, defeating the desire for a unified security approach. The dual content security systems have increased the cost for service providers and device makers through the need for additional backend



infrastructure, security policies, device integrations, certifications, CAS royalties and fees.

With the growth and penetration of smart TVs as the main device for converged media consumption, it is possible to eliminate the two-silo security approach and leverage a converged security system to deliver hybrid TV services. This is a crucial milestone to fulfilling the ultimate objective of transitioning all broadcast services to IP-based delivery. The content protection requirements will now be similar regardless of the content delivery network. At that point, an advanced, network-agnostic DRM system can enable unified content protection, which will allow the gradual discontinuation of the CAS altogether as STBs are replaced by smart TVs.

This two-pronged content delivery approach has seen the introduction of smart TVs as the ultimate hybrid TV device, capable of receiving both broadcast and streaming services, which until recently has required two separate security clients. The single security client approach is made possible thanks to the advanced security technology that comes standard in smart TVs today, with trusted execution environments and secure video paths.

“The dual content security systems have increased the cost for service providers and device makers through the need for additional backend infrastructure, security policies, device integrations, certifications, CAS royalties and fees”

Bo Ferm, Product Marketing Manager, Intertrust ExpressPlay

A converged security strategy for converged media consumption

Good as that may sound, it does not help if operators still have to endure time-consuming and costly client device security integration and certification, as with traditional STBs. What if smart TVs could actually be delivered from the factory with integrated security clients? All the operator needs is a set of pre-provisioned keys, allowing the consumer to get a new smart TV, plug it in, select the service provider and voilà! The service becomes available instantly with no cumbersome set-up for the user, without forcing the service provider to incur costly technical

support to install the new device. And who wants to wait for the proverbial cable guy to show up?

Service providers will benefit from the reduced impact of security hardware costs. The volume of smart TV sets that can be instantly authenticated for use with a provider’s TV service, thanks to pre-integration of the TV with a given converged security platform, then becomes a major consideration when analysing the costs and benefits of competing security systems.

If a converged security platform for broadcast and OTT streaming service providers sounds like nirvana, there actually are already real-world solutions implementing this strategy to solve the pain points that MVPDs face. **PRO**



Bo Ferm is Product Marketing Manager at Intertrust ExpressPlay.

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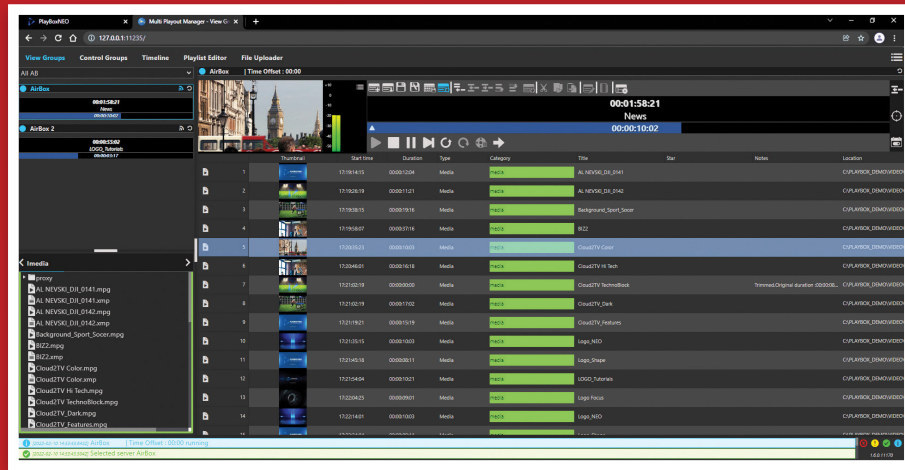
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PlayBox Neo introduces enhanced Multi Payout Manager

PlayBox Neo has announced major enhancements to its Multi Payout Manager (MPM) broadcast playout monitoring and control system, including a new user interface and integrated playout preview.

PlayBox Neo MPM allows multiple AirBox Neo-20 channels to be operated via IP remotely from any place in the world – home, distant office or any network-connected location. Control features include on-the-fly playlist changes, manual triggering of events, user-configurable presets for pushbutton access to logos, IP router control, and subsidiary tools such as graphics/text control.

User/operator management permissions can be assigned at various levels from viewer



to administrator. A built-in web-based playlist editor enables users to create future playlists. MPM also provides support for custom metadata from AirBox Neo-20 and includes a library module for

fast access to MAM. Media files can be drag-and-drop moved from the library to playlist or processed into multiple folders with custom metadata settings such as category and folder colour. A supervisor can also

custom brand the MPM user interface with an organisation's or channel's logo.

PlayBox Neo Multi Payout Manager is available now.

www.playboxtechnology.com

Matrox Imaging releases event-logging tool



The Matrox Gecho is a new event-logging tool for Matrox Rapixo CXP frame grabbers. It helps developers optimise image capture. The utility logs acquisition activity so users can troubleshoot capture errors and measure latencies and execution times to identify performance bottlenecks.

Matrox Gecho simplifies

image-capture debugging and optimisation. Offered with both Matrox Imaging Library X and Matrox Design Assistant X vision software, it records events generated by the Matrox Rapixo CXP device driver and saves these to a JSON or CSV file. Running concurrently with the device driver, Matrox Gecho logs acquisition activity and the trace files can then be loaded into Google Peretto for viewing on an interactively navigable graphical timeline. With Matrox Gecho, users benefit from a simple acquisition log that helps them set up and streamline video acquisition, detecting and correcting performance bottlenecks and errors.

<https://www.matrox.com>

Black Box launches new KVM extenders



Black Box's new KVXHP series quad monitor KVM extenders leverage DisplayPort 1.2 Multi-Stream Transport (MST) technology over Cat 5/6 or fibre to support up to four external displays with minimal cabling at the user's desktop. Offering plug-and-play, point-to-point KVM extension, the KVXHP series gives users access to a remote computer, with a single cable feeding all monitors.

Designed for game developers, 3D CAD developers and other users requiring a large visual canvas and better responsiveness from their keyboard and mouse, the KVXHP extender supports four external MST-enabled DisplayPort monitors with resolutions up to 1,920x1,200 at 60Hz using 8 bits

per colour and 4:4:4 chroma sampling, and provides high-quality audio, EDID management and emulated USB 2.0 (HID). One cable runs from the extender to one monitor, and short rear cable connections connect the other monitors in a daisy chain. For higher-density deployments, an optional rackmount tray holds up to two KVXHP extender units for quick mounting into any 19-inch rack.

www.blackbox.com

Marshall to debut high-bandwidth NDI PTZ camera at NAB 2022

Marshall Electronics will introduce the CV730-BHN high-bandwidth NDI PTZ camera at NAB this year. This new 4K robotic PTZ camera contains traditional outputs, including two simultaneous SDI (BNC) outputs with genlockable 12GSDI and 3GSDI, as well as HDMI and USB3.0 options at the ready.

CV730-BHN also features the ultra-fast, lossless high-bandwidth NDI streaming ability commonly known as full-NDI, while offering



the newly released NDI|HX3 that can deliver similar low-latency and superior quality video performance in slightly less bandwidth network infrastructure.

The CV730-BHN features a Sony 1/1.8" 4K sensor with 9m pixels and a square pixel array packed behind a long 30x optical zoom range

(6.5–202mm). The CV730-BHN is full-NDI compatible with streaming options of high-bandwidth NDI, NDI|HX3 premium video codec and standard IP (HEVC), while also offering 12GSDI, 3GSDI, HDMI and USB3.0 outputs. It is feature-rich and fits into a wide range of broadcast and proAV applications

requiring low-latency streaming with various bandwidth networks. Also included is PoE++ for one-cable-to-camera set-up for video, audio, control, power and tally.

The new NDI|HX3 requires slightly higher bandwidth than the previous

version, but much less than is required for high-bandwidth NDI. It delivers similar low latency as high-bandwidth NDI at less than 100ms end-to-end and video quality performance closer to premium high-bandwidth NDI quality. NDI|HX3 is a big step forward for NDI|HX while reducing the bandwidth requirements of full-NDI and delivering similar speeds and video quality.

The Marshall CV730-BHN will incorporate the premium high-bandwidth NDI FPGA while offering the benefits of NDI|HX3 and standard IP (HEVC) streams. Available in white and black, the CV-730-BHN cameras are scheduled to be available later this year.

<https://marshall-usa.com>

NewTek announces PTZ3 camera with NDI|HX 3 support

NewTek has launched the NewTek PTZ3 camera with NDI|HX PTZ3 support. The PTZ3 is reportedly the first camera on the market to use NDI|HX 3, the latest development from NDI. Users can select NDI|HX 3 as an option for better video with reduced latency, using a fraction of the bandwidth.

The PTZ3 is an IP-based pan-tilt-zoom camera that delivers HD video to the network and interoperability with any of the thousands of applications that support NDI. With single cable connectivity, it allows everyone, including video professionals, technology managers and A/V systems integrators, to expand, grow and evolve productions using their network, while simultaneously



streamlining integration and installation by incorporating power over Ethernet. The NewTek PTZ3 enhances audio connectivity by featuring a professional mini-XLR

mic input connection and a line-level mini-jack. Further, once on the NDI network, the PTZ3 audio can be routed, mixed, enhanced and distributed to thousands

of devices and software, providing creative flexibility. The camera can be added into any workflow with a single Ethernet cable for HD video transfer to 1080/60p, audio, PTZ presets and control, tally and PoE. Users can remotely control the camera from any device via NDI. When combined with the NDI Studio Monitor, users can operate the camera through commonly available control devices, reducing the cost of entry into camera control systems. The PTZ3 costs \$2,795. An IP-based PTZ camera, it delivers HD-quality video over the network while providing interoperability with thousands of NDI-compatible applications.

<https://www.newtek.com>

Dejero to exhibit EnGo 265 mobile transmitter at NAB 2022

Dejero will showcase its new EnGo 265 mobile transmitter with built-in GateWay mode at NAB 2022, as well as integrations with Grabby and Dazzl cloud video platforms. Enhancing productivity and simplifying cloud-based workflows of remote news teams, live events broadcasters and media production crews will be the theme.

EnGo 265 is a mobile transmitter and internet gateway two-in-one device that delivers wireless connectivity. Featuring the new GateWay mode for wireless broadband internet connectivity in the field and glass-to-glass latency as low as 0.5 seconds over bonded cellular connections, it enhances



reliability in all latency settings with its improved blending algorithm. The new mobile transmitter also addresses growing concerns in the

industry around security and data protection with AES 256 encryption, a security-hardened Linux OS and a cryptoprocessor to authenticate the hardware.

Providing the throughput of a wired network while operating in a scenario requiring wireless connectivity, GateWay mode is powered by Dejero's Smart Blending Technology, which aggregates all the available networks to maximise reliability, expand coverage and increase bandwidth, resulting in improved productivity of field crews by allowing them to do more remotely.

The EnGo 265's ability to transport broadcast-quality live video and provide resilient, high-bandwidth internet access from

a single device offers greater convenience to crews and boosts productivity. Field crews can broadcast breaking news, quickly transfer files to prepare and upload packages while in the field, and set up high-bandwidth access points for multiple devices. For film, television and commercial production, teams can leverage an ultra-fast connection to enable real-time collaboration with dispersed teams and accelerate delivery of content from the set directly to post-production, regardless of location – thus reducing the number of people required on set and unlocking huge cost savings.

<https://www.dejero.com>

Dielectric to promote FM Pylon antenna at NAB



Dielectric will display its new FM Pylon antenna at NAB 2022, the broadcast industry's first slot cavity microstrip FM antenna product line. Benefits include multicasting, pattern flexibility, increased reliability and small tower footprint to high-power FM broadcasters.

By reducing the antenna Q factor, it improves bandwidth

1-20% and stabilises the H:V ratio across the band. The 20% bandwidth translates to full FM band operation, the key goal of the design. Dielectric has also included its patented parasitic dipole, which adds a vertical component to the existing horizontal signal. This creates more pattern options for FM broadcasters,

including elliptical and circular polarisation, and contributes to the substantial bandwidth increase.

While Dielectric's special pylon designs for FM radio differ from TV systems, the FMP family carries over many traditional pylon antenna benefits, including optimal downward radiation, smaller

size and lower weight. The pylon design also provides broadcasters and tower crews with top-mounting options in addition to the traditional side-mounted configurations of ring antennas. This is suitable for high-power FM stations that want a top-mounted omnidirectional antenna. It can handle input powers of 100kW and higher, also making it excellent for the combined operation of multiple stations.

Dielectric's FMP designs use full-wavelength spacing between antenna elements. This reduces the number of antenna elements required compared to ring-style designs, which require half-wavelength spacing, hence more elements, to cover the full FM band.

<https://www.dielectric.com>

Chyron releases 4.3 version of Prime Platform

Chyron has released the new 4.3 version of the Prime Platform, which features a full suite of production capabilities including live graphics, production switching, video walls and scaling, touch screen control, branding, venue control and augmented reality.

Version 4.3 of the platform introduces the new Prime Edge module for creation, deployment and management of viewer-controlled interactive graphics. Working with Prime Edge, designers can use the same familiar Prime Designer interface to create graphics with interactivity that allows viewers to determine what they see, whether watching sports, elections, financial news, lifestyle shows or other programmes.

Carol Bettencourt, Vice President of Marketing at Chyron, said: "Imagine the power for viewer retention if you give the viewer the ability to surf content without



ever leaving your stream. For example, while watching election coverage, the viewer could select local or national results, commentary by party or candidate, statistics, and polling data, all of their own choosing. This capability also opens up a tremendous opportunity to increase revenue. Consider a sports broadcast. If viewers can choose the team, player, stats and replays they want to see, this offers multiple

opportunities for sponsorship, instead of just one."

In addition to the introduction of the Prime Edge module, the Prime Platform 4.3 release brings significant new features to some of its other key modules.

Along with enhanced text formatting, the Prime CG now includes a QR code effect, allowing the generation of a QR code for placement in a Prime scene from directly within the application. In this

streamlined workflow, users can dynamically replace the URL to generate QR codes to direct viewers to online content or sponsor content. Other new features support the Prime Platform's utility across a wide range of use cases. Support is now available for 23.98 and 24 FPS, commonly used by Hollywood studios and others to create long-form videos.

Additional support for the NMOS protocol ensures device discoverability and connectivity, underscoring Chyron's commitment to delivering IP-ready solutions.

The Prime Switcher module now features UI enhancements and multiviewer improvements. Most notably, the Prime Switcher includes controls for creating standard DVEs within the switcher interface in addition to the previously available tools for creating DVEs upstream in the Prime CG interface.

<https://chyron.com>

TvONE releases 4K60 output module for CORIOmaster series

TvONE has released a new 4K60 output module for CORIOmaster, CORIOmaster mini and CORIOmaster micro.

The updated firmware and software continue the evolution of the CORIOmaster family of multi-window video processors.

"The 4K60 output module (CM-HDMI-4K-SC-2OUT) gives an immersive video experience for up to 14 outputs for high-end LED installations, projection edge blends or monitor walls. The new module can also be used for dual, independent 4K30 outputs or for 4K60

output cloning. Our dual 4K30 outputs double the amount of 4K outputs available, to allow connection to up to 28 4K

displays, while the new cloning feature makes setting up repeat displays, duplicated side screens and screen recording

much simpler and more efficient to use," the company said.

In addition, the CORIOgrapher set-up and control software for the CORIOmaster family has been updated to version 3.3. The latest version includes enhanced preset management and simpler creation of display layouts. CORIOgrapher version 3.3 is available for CORIOmaster2, CORIOmaster, CORIOmaster mini and CORIOmaster micro.



<https://tvone.com>



“The bar needs to be set so that there is no hunting, hardcoding or restarting from scratch”

Edging closer to 5G content delivery in the cloud

5G edge networks will drive cloud video revenues from \$5bn in 2019 to \$67.5bn by 2024, a CAGR of 67%, according to insights from ABI Research. The performance capabilities of the 5G edge network are empowering communication service providers (CSPs) to deliver immersive, high-quality media and entertainment experiences. End users can experience technologies such as VR and AR, and live and uninterrupted events such as sports games and concerts.

For such experiences, video content must be broadcast in real time without latency or disruption. 5G and edge networks have made this possible for years. Now we are seeing the impact of cloud-native technology working with the edge to handle the increased demand of large-scale video content delivery.

Transforming the edge with Kubernetes

Operators are increasingly adopting cloud-native Kubernetes orchestration tools in edge environments to automate and streamline the use of infrastructure, improving efficiency and agility while reducing costs. Kubernetes has been dubbed the secret weapon for unlocking cloud-native potential, with autoscaling and autohealing abilities that can greatly improve reliability for any 5G service application.

Most operators will be migrating from virtual machines (VMs) to containers. Traditionally with VMs, to scale just one part of an application, such as a VR game, operators need to instantiate an entire additional VM, including

all the compute, store, network resources and guest operating systems associated with it. In many cases this process can take a minute or more.

With containers, applications are broken down into micro-services, where one only needs to scale out the micro-serviced container dedicated to a particular function or task. When you manage these containers with Kubernetes, the scaling of microservices is reduced to seconds.

Furthermore, Kubernetes can be set to auto-scale the microservices based on a number of KPIs, further reducing network reaction times to content delivery requests. Similarly, Kubernetes can heal itself when there is a discrepancy between the declared optimal state and any suboptimal state.

Choosing a Kubernetes solution with care

As more vendors turn to Kubernetes platforms to harness the benefits of cloud automation, the assumption by many is that it is a simple cure-all for any repetitive or scale-out task. While Kubernetes is supporting the mass move to the cloud, variations between platforms and orchestration solutions mean there can be large disparities in time to outcome, resource utilisation, solution costs and opportunities. How you automate is just as important as what you automate, and the ease of use of a system influences an operator's success throughout the lifecycle of its service. Even when deployed across multiple locations and VM and container environments, lifecycle automation, workflow and the overall operations stack need to be unified.

Also relevant to Kubernetes deployments is how to handle stateful workloads such as subscriber information and edge applications, to improve agility and efficiency. However, as Kubernetes microservices add a level of complexity, just snapshotting and cloning storage volumes is no longer enough. For zero-touch automation, one also needs to snapshot the other constructs, such as application metadata, configuration and SLA policies. This enables teams to quickly roll back an entire application to a previous state, or clone it for a fully functional running database from a previous snapshot. The bar needs to be set so that there is no hunting, hardcoding or restarting from scratch. The storage way of doing things goes against the agility and efficiency expected of a platform like Kubernetes and will hamstring an overall solution's capabilities.

Tangible results for improved 5G content delivery

Implementation of the right cloud-native platform has the potential for a 40% reduction in OpEx scalable orchestration and automation services, and is customer-proven to reduce many scale-out tasks from weeks to minutes, while reducing CapEx by 50% by enabling all of this on off-the-shelf hardware.

CSPs that leverage the benefits of a cloud 5G platform to deliver video content will achieve a more competitive service offering, with faster innovation towards delivering high-quality media and entertainment customer experiences in real time. **PRO**

W. Brooke Frischeimer is Head of Product Management at Robin.



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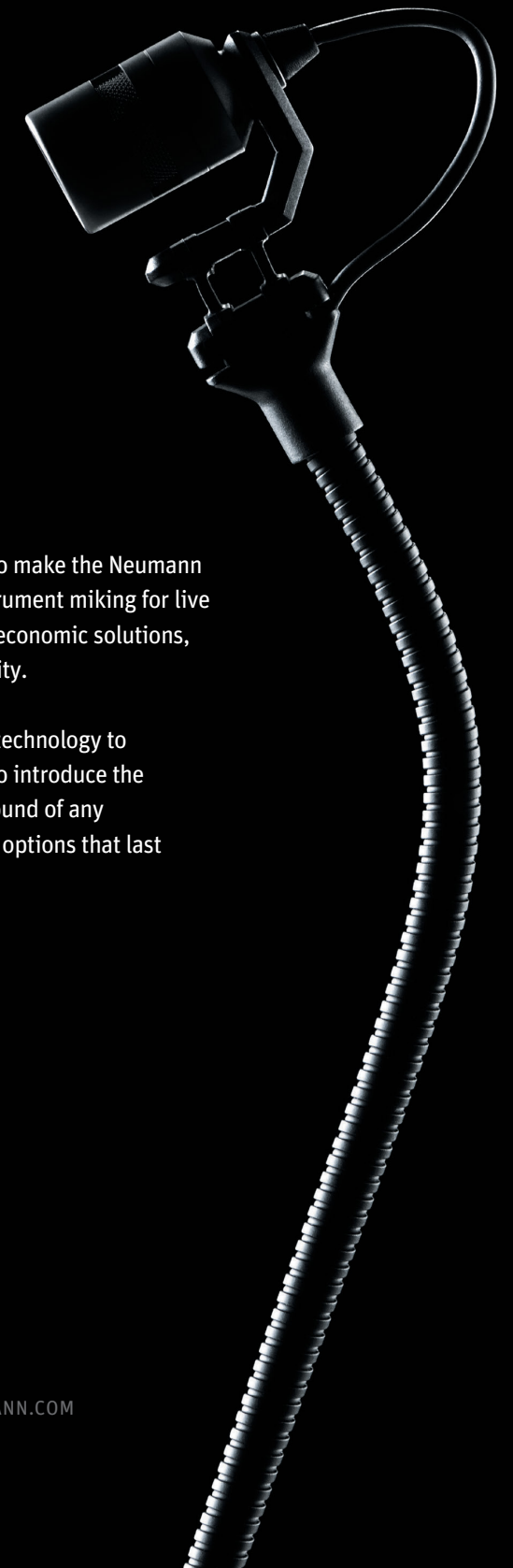
It took us a moment since we had to elevate the electret technology to Neumann standards. But now, it is ready: We are proud to introduce the Miniature Clip Mic System MCM. You can hear the true sound of any instrument. And you can rely on an ROI and on mounting options that last for a long, long time – not just one season.

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