OUT OF THE BOX

TELEVISION TAKES CREATIVE APPROACH WITH HYBRID STB LAUNCH

CASE STUDIES
* New studio in Dubai
* Streaming Dubai Tennis

ROUNDTABLE
Managing media across multiple platforms

TRADE SECRETS
Exhibitors at CABSAT share their stories
Case studies for customized designs
- Systems supplies & after-sale support
- System integration & professional services
- Commissioning and training
- Project management, staging and testing

Integrate Smarter!!

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Welcome

The BroadcastPro ME team had the most hectic CABSAT ever this year but also, the most successful. Besides having a beautiful stand that distributed an issue of exclusive stories from across the Middle East and our annual Pro50 book, BroadcastPro ME had the pleasure of organizing a special networking event funded by First Gulf Company and its partners.

The event brought together several high-profile guests from both local and international markets for a memorable evening at the Meydan Beach Club in Dubai. But we are not only about fun. We were back to brisk business early the next morning of CABSAT to host a roundtable on managing media assets across multiple platforms on behalf of EMC Isilon. It brought together senior executives from different broadcast networks and a telco operator.

Every discussion at that roundtable seemed to eventually reach a dead end when the connectivity issue came up. It made the whole group aware of how much the telcos needed to revisit their existing organizational structure to ensure their broadcast and network teams were talking to each other to fix this bottleneck. The good news at that roundtable was that the problem had an easy fix, according to a CTO; the bad news was that telcos don’t talk to broadcasters.

What we took home that day was that the only way forward in a market with such challenges was for broadcasters to collaborate with each other. This was seen as the only solution to counter the connectivity issue for as long as the telcos couldn’t pull their socks up. We hope we can bring the telcos and the broadcasters into a room together for a discussion on how to move forward for the greater good and are in talks with the relevant parties for this.

On another note, BroadcastPro will be on a flight to Vegas for NAB 2013. We’ll be back with all the news for you.

Vijaya Cherian, Group Editor, Broadcast Division
Power to tell stories

What you capture on set will define how your story unfolds. The cutting edge EOS C300 is born to please cinematographers. Lightweight, compact and stunningly simple to operate, it is scalable for any project and affordable even for small independent productions.

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42 ROUNDTABLE
BroadcastPro ME hosted a roundtable on managing media assets across multiple platforms in association with EMC Isilon
Live Production made simple with IP technology.

Step into a new era of live production with the all-new NXL-IP55. Sony’s unique technology enables multi-channel audio and video transmission ensuring superior broadcast quality and very low latency. This new system can handle up to four HD-SDI video sources and boasts a genlock function which allows video sources to be synchronized over an IP network. Flexible and compact enough to use anywhere, the Sony NXL-IP55 provides powerful functions to simplify your production.

Multi-stream IP video transmission with:

- Broadcast quality full HD video
- Up to 8ch Audio Transmission
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- Bidirectional transmission capability for user’s flexibility
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SHARJAH MEDIA CORPORATION UNDERTAKES HD UPGRADE WITH GV

Sharjah Media Corporation (SMC) is upgrading its news studio to HD using the software-based Grass Valley 3G-ready Kayenne 3M/E Video Production Centre switcher, with the new K-Frame and five LDX Premiere camera systems with GV’s fibre 3G transmission system.

Dr Khalid Al Midefa, Director General of SMC, commented that the upgrade provides Sharjah Media Corporation with “a greater flexibility to develop and deliver more quality programming to viewers”.

“This project strongly reafirms the commitment of SMC to explore and adopt the latest technologies and techniques that leverage the power of the media to create a positive impact on the community. We will continue with our strategy of setting new standards in the broadcast industry, which will further strengthen the reputation of SMC as a leading media institution in the Middle East.”

The LDX series will provide SMC with the ability to capture content effortlessly. Key features of the LDX include its new, in-house developed, Xensium-FI imager — which provides high-quality images combined with high sensitivity and low-noise performance.

“We needed a high-quality, future-proof camera to meet our HD requirements and before selecting a vendor, we carried out an extensive test which involved both our technical and operational teams. The final tests involved two of the leading cameras in the market — with two side-by-side shoot outs — and Grass Valley’s LDX camera came out firmly on top,” commented Hamad Abdelrazaq, Technical Director of Sharjah Media Corporation.

“We also conducted extensive research before choosing a switcher, and it was Grass Valley’s support for 3G as well as its modular approach that won us over.”

The Kayenne Video Production Centre with K-Frame provides a modular approach to switchers. Less hardware is required for the installation (a 6 RU frame supports up to 5 M/Es, while the 13 RU frame supports up to 9 M/Es), which calls for a lower initial investment for broadcasters and less space when installed. A simple upgrade licence structure supports increased functionality and performance when production requirements change, providing a future-proof solution.

“Grass Valley has achieved great momentum in the Middle East in the past year and we’re excited to be working with another major broadcaster in the region,” said Alan Wright, Regional President, Europe, Middle East, and Africa for Grass Valley.

“The LDX is fast establishing itself as the new standard in camera systems since its launch a few months ago, and we’re excited that Sharjah Media Corporation is the first broadcaster to order the LDX in the Middle East.”

LDX Premiere is software upgradeable and supports all of Grass Valley’s transmission solutions, providing Sharjah with a solution that they can upgrade as needed. In addition, operational savings are realised through efficient power usage—up to 50% less than other systems.

CAIRO’S AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PREPARES FOR HD WITH BLACKMAGIC

The American University in Cairo is revamping its curriculum as the country prepares for HD broadcasting. Beginning September, the faculty and students at Kamal Adham Centre for Television and Digital Journalism will have access to a broadcast grade HD television studio built around Blackmagic Design products, including the ATEM 2 M/E production switcher and the ATEM 2 M/E broadcast panel.

Founded in 1919, the American University in Cairo is a liberal arts institution offering a range of undergraduate and post-graduate courses. Its Masters programme in Television and Digital Journalism, offered by the Kamal Adham Centre, is a comprehensive programme teaching hands-on skills in the field of news reporting, from writing and production to camera operation and video editing.

The new studio will expose students to new HD work flows, providing them with the knowledge they’ll need for a successful career in broadcast journalism. Products integrated within the new studio were supplied by Wahsh Engineering and the upgrade programme is being led by Rania Aboul Wafa, Assistant Director of Operations and Engineering Services at Kamal Adham Centre for Television and Digital Journalism.

Blackmagic’s ATEM 2 M/E production switcher and ATEM 2 M/E broadcast panel will be used to switch between multiple camera sources; including a total of six HD-SDI and SD-SDI studio cameras, several external campus cameras and a graphics playout system. Sources will all be monitored via eight Smartview HD rack-mounted monitors.

At the heart of the upgrade is a distribution system built around Blackmagic’s OpenGear converters. Providing conversion and cross conversion from SDI, HDMI, analogue and audio, it will link the new facility with the university’s existing SD TV studio.
NEW LIBYAN NEWS CHANNEL DEPLOYS HARRIS KIT

A new TV news channel in Libya has chosen a range of integrated broadcast solutions from Harris Broadcast through its distributor Orbinet International. Orbinet worked with systems integrator Total Media Cast to design and implement the Harris Broadcast solution at the broadcaster’s facility in Tripoli — and has already started testing with the on-air date expected in spring 2013.

The Harris Broadcast solution comprises future-proof infrastructure products integrated within a file-based, tapeless networked environment. The new HD-ready system is being utilised for news production and playout, and includes the Harris Broadcast NEXIO AMP video server and a Platinum integrated router that consolidates video and audio processing.

“We recommended a complete Harris Broadcast solution to Total Media Cast because we were confident in their ability to provide end-to-end solutions that would perform to our customer’s exacting requirements,” commented Elie Eid, Managing Director of Orbinet International.

“With the short on-air delivery time, it is anticipated that the new channel will bring in new revenue streams from on-air TV advertising faster than expected.”

At the heart of the news channel's workflow is the Harris Broadcast NEXIO AMP server platform, which manages the digital content and delivers exceptional reliability, flexibility and format transparency to the new TV channel. The Platinum router forms the backbone of the news playout facility along with standalone Harris Broadcast HView multiviewers for signal monitoring. The complete solution also includes Harris Broadcast 6800+ modular core processing equipment, Inscriber G5 on-air graphics and Velocity editing systems.

“Total Media Cast has set itself a vision of providing high quality TV services using state-of-the-art broadcast communication technology, and we are pleased to have collaborated with Orbinet International and Harris Broadcast for the execution of this key project,” stated Isam Ayad of Total Media Cast.

ARABSAT AND MY-HD MEDIA PARTNER

My-HD Media has signed a long-term strategic partnership with Arabsat, expanding the reach of its channels to over 170 million viewers in more than 80 countries across the Middle East, Africa and beyond. The My-HD Media offering includes MBC Group in addition to several other HD channels.

Commenting on the agreement, Cliff Nelson, CEO, My-HD Media, said: “We aim to build a diversified bouquet of 40 HD family entertainment channels and we are confident that our association with Arabsat will be a long-term profitable collaboration that will add significant value to both parties but most importantly to the end consumer”.

Khalid Balkheyour, President and CEO, Arab Satellite Communications Organisation (Arabsat), added: “The main objective of our alliance with My-HD Media is to provide a commercially viable, mass-market ready, end-to-end distribution platform to the broadcasters on Arabsat. My-HD Media will allow broadcasters to capture additional HD business across MENA. At the same time, we are further expanding Arabsat’s HD reach and leadership in the market. In addition to the exclusive carriage for Saudi League in HD and the already existing choice of attractive, free-to-air HD channels, our viewers will enjoy the new HD channel bouquet carried on the My-HD Media platform.”

SAUDI BROADCASTING CORPORATION CONTINUES MIGRATION TO DVB-T2 WITH HARRIS BROADCAST

Harris Broadcast has secured a new DVB-T2 transmission order from Saudi Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) as the country continues its transition to a national network of digital transmitters and satellite services. The latest phase of the ongoing SBC modernisation programme will add transmitters to sites in Aded and Yabren, bringing the total number of Harris Broadcast-supported DVB-T2 transmission sites to nine. Harris Broadcast will supply compact, energy-saving Maxiva, ULX (3.4kW), Maxiva UAX (2kW) UHF transmitters and Videotek MSA multi-stream analysers in cooperation with Saudi Arabian dealer and systems integrator First Gulf Company (FGC).

MBC3 TO LAUNCH HD SERVICE ON MY-HD MEDIA

MBC Group’s kids’ channel MBC3 is available in HD now on My-HD Media, a television platform that offers a single viewing card solution for HD channels in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). My-HD Media will be the first to offer viewers an English audio option, which is expected to attract non-Arabic speaking viewers to enjoy the channel’s wide range of programmes and serve as an educational tool as well as to help children who want to learn English.

ZEE ALWAN TO AIR TURKISH SERIES

Dubai-based broadcaster Zee Alwan will be adding a host of Turkish series to its repertoire of dramas dubbed in Arabic. The newest shows kicked off with Hareem Al Sultan and Asrar Al Banat last month.

Patrick Samaha, Business Head of Zee’s Arabic channels in the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan, said: “Zee Alwan has firmly established its credentials as a free-to-air platform for viewers in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, bringing the best of original and dubbed series to a wider audience.

“By expanding our current programming to feature renowned Turkish series, we are underlining our commitment to provide world-class entertainment to our viewers.”
Now it’s easy to build your own customized SD, HD and 3 Gb/s SDI router!

Build your own customized router any size you need! Universal Videohub is a powerful broadcast grade routing switcher featuring up to a massive 288 inputs, 288 outputs and 288 deck control ports. You can add interface cards to either regular SDI or optical fiber SDI connections as well as single or dual power supplies and single or dual cross-points for full redundancy. Cards can be removed when powered so all electronics can be swapped at any time for 24/7 reliability!

Industrial Strength Routing Switcher
With up to 288 inputs and 288 outputs, Universal Videohub has enough SDI connections for the largest facility. With so many SDI inputs and outputs, Universal Videohub is perfect for broadcast with multiple feeds, as well as post production where you need loads of monitoring! Universal Videohub also includes 288RS-422 deck control ports for a complete routing solution.

SD ↔ HD Simultaneous SD, HD or 3 Gb/s Video
Universal Videohub handles mixed SD, HD and 3 Gb/s SDI connections all on the same router at the same time. Universal Videohub detects when an input changes, and automatically sets all the connected outputs to match the changed input. For a true broadcast quality solution, all SDI outputs are fully re-clocked and output SDI slew rates update automatically.

World’s Highest Quality
With future proof 3 Gb/s SDI connections built in, Universal Videohub allows twice the SDI data rate than normal HD-SDI. Use 3 Gb/s SDI for 1080p60 and high resolution real time 2048 x 1556 feature film editing. 3 Gb/s SDI allows auto switching between all SD, HD and 2K video formats in both 4:4:4 and 4:2:2 quality.

Network Router Control
Universal Videohub is compatible with hardware control panels such as Blackmagic Design’s Videohub Smart Control and for lower cost includes free software control panels for both Windows™ and Mac OS X™. Software panels let you route from your desktop! Universal Videohub uses ethernet for the control panel interface so you can control your routing from anywhere in the world!

Mix and Match to Customize!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Universal Videohub SDI Interface (4 x SDI I/O)</td>
<td>US$385</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal Videohub Optical Fiber Interface (4 x SDI I/O)</td>
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<td>Universal Videohub 288 Crosspoint</td>
<td>US$19,995</td>
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Learn more today at www.blackmagicdesign.com/universalvideohub
For decades Sennheiser has been a reliable and innovative partner in broadcast and theatre. Therefore, we understand that world-class sound engineers have the highest of demands and expectations. With this firmly in mind, we took all of our extensive experience and rolled it into our first digital multi-channel wireless system. This is it and it’s in a class all by itself: DIGITAL 9000 provides uncompressed digital audio transmission, free from intermodulation, and delivers stunning sound and dynamics with a cable-like purity. Additionally, DIGITAL 9000 offers control functions that make system setup simple and fail-safe. The highly intuitive user interface provides a complete overview of system performance offering peace of mind in challenging live situations. A pinnacle of innovation, DIGITAL 9000 is the best-in-class digital wireless system available and represents a future-proof investment. We’re lifting the curtain. You’ll get to know it. DIGITAL 9000 – The Wireless Masterpiece.
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DIGITAL 9000 – The Wireless Masterpiece.

www.sennheiser.ae

PBS TO DEPLOY STINGRAY IN IRAQ AND TUNISIA

Pebble Beach Systems has secured two deals in Iraq and Tunisia for its deployment. The solution will be installed with two new channels from two new broadcasters in Iraq and Tunisia. The systems will be supplied via Total Media Cast (TMC).

TMC’s General Manager and partner Issam Ayyad said: “Whilst Stingray is new to the market, Pebble Beach Systems enjoys an excellent reputation in the Middle East, and we were impressed with Stingray’s easy-to-navigate user interface, and its ability to switch to the Arabic language.”

QATAR RADIO ADOPTS NETIA’S RADIO-ASSIST 8.1 AUTOMATION SOFTWARE

Qatar Radio has replaced its existing radio automation with NETIA’s Radio-Assist 8.1 digital audio software suite for all five of its main channels. The NETIA software, which Qatar Radio also uses as a disaster recovery solution, gives the broadcaster a more extensive and unified solution that addresses the entire production workflow.

The technical team at Qatar Radio selected Radio-Assist after performing site visits, and extensive testing and evaluation of the software.

Systems integrator Media Group International coordinated Qatar Radio’s full migration to Radio-Assist 8.1, overseeing the copying and conversion of all media, along with associated metadata, into the NETIA software system without interrupting operations and without the loss of any of the broadcaster’s 275,000 elements and assets. With this shift, Qatar Radio has been able to bring all radio production and broadcast functions on to a single platform. The Radio-Assist 8.1 software supports coordination, scheduling, and live broadcasting, as well as an archive of more than 300,000 hours of programming.

Radio-Assist 8.1 is installed on 34 workstations across two sites — Qatar Radio’s main broadcast facilities and a disaster recovery site — and used by 80 staff members on a daily basis. The software supports one principle channel broadcast in Arabic, another dedicated to Quran (religious/Muslim programmes), one channel in French (Oryx FM, with partner RFI), one channel in English, and a channel broadcast in Urdu. The transition of these channels on to Radio-Assist was achieved progressively over the course of a year. Early in the project, NETIA provided training both for administrators and users.

CMS PARTNERS WITH ACCUWEATHER AND NETAPP

Creative Media Solutions (CMS) has announced new partnerships with major international companies such as AccuWeather, Inc., and NetApp, Inc.

Established in 1962, AccuWeather, Inc. is headquartered in State College, Pennsylvania. The company is a specialist in weather forecasting services worldwide.

NetApp, Inc. is an American multinational computer storage and data management company headquartered in Sunnyvale, California. NetApp creates innovative products – storage systems and software that help customers around the world store, manage, protect and retain their data.
SOFTWARE DESIGNED TO BOOST YOUR PERFORMANCE
MEDIA SALES MANAGEMENT & ADVERTISING TRAFFIC
CHANNEL MANAGEMENT & BROADCAST SCHEDULING

- Professional software solutions designed to maximise your efficiency
- Powerful booking engines to handle the daily business
- Easy online access for media buyers around the clock
- Comfortable scheduling features to manage your program grid
- Comprehensive reporting tools to put you in control
- Over 100 channels worldwide working successfully with our software
LEBANON’S STUDIOVISION Chooses GV for New OB Truck

Studiovision Lebanon has chosen Grass Valley to provide the latest outside broadcast (OB) solutions for its new state-of-the-art production truck. The company has installed 14 cameras (12 new LDX WorldCam multiformat HD cameras and 2 LDK 8000 Elite camera systems), a Kayenne 3 M/E Video Production Centre switcher, a Trinix NXT 256X512 routing switcher with integrated multiviewer, a K2 Summit 3G media server, and a K2 Dyno S Elite Replay System in its new OB vans, making them the first 3G-capable OB vans in the region.

“It’s critical for us to be at the forefront of innovation in the industry and to have production tools that are needed to fully accomplish the creative concept of the programme, whatever it might be,” said Michel El Murr, CEO of Studiovision.

“That is why after a competitive review, we decided to work with Grass Valley as we believe that their new LDX series camera system provides the most advanced performance available on the market today. Alan Wright, Regional President for Europe, Middle East, and Africa at Grass Valley added: “Studiovision’s productions are among the best in the region and we’re excited to be working with them as they use the LDX WorldCam to push their production boundaries.”

QVEST MEDIA TO INSTALL TSL’S PAM2 MK2 AT DUBAI TV

Qvest Media will use TSLs 16 PAM2 MK2 multi-channel audio monitoring units for critical operator positions at Dubai TV’s new centralised transmission and ingest room.

The installation will upgrade Dubai TV’s current SD tape-based workflow to a full HD/3G enabled file-based workflow utilising TSL PFL’s PAM2 MK2s for comprehensive decoding and monitoring of stereo and Dolby audio formats throughout its HD broadcast chain. The PAM2 MK2s are supplied by Qvest Media as part of an ongoing TX archive project that will migrate all of Dubai TV’s playout servers onto centralised Omneon Spectrum servers with Pebble Beach automation, and archived onto a StorageTek LTO 5 library managed by Front Porch Digital’s DIVArchive.

“The PAM2 MK2 is an excellent fit for Dubai TV as we move them forward with a 3G-enabled workflow,” said Mohamed Hamid, Project Sales Manager, Qvest Media.

One of the first audio monitoring devices to be fitted with Dolby’s CAT-1100 module, the PAM2 MK2 performs Dolby E decoding and external speaker monitoring, as well as Dolby Digital Plus with surround descriptive audio and stream mixing.

Qvest Media is expected to finish the project by October 2013.

THE APEX GROUP TO HOST SECURITY ROUNDTABLE IN DUBAI

The Apex Group will host an exclusive Security Roundtable event in Dubai, outlining the key trends and tools for securing organisations’ digital assets.

The roundtable, “Securing the Enterprise: Strategies and Resources for Proper Network Protection”, is one of a series of roundtables being hosted by The Apex Group in the Middle East region. Held in conjunction with Level 3 Communications and Prolexic, it will be held at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Dubai, on Wednesday, April 10, 2013 from 12pm – 2.30pm.

“There are scary stories constantly in the media about attacks on organisations’ networks,” said Alex Giannikoulis, CEO, The Apex Group.

“This roundtable is a unique opportunity to hear first-hand from experts about the procedures and tools available to guard against such network attacks, as well as share experiences with peers in the region.”

QVEST MEDIA Appoints NEW General MANAGER

Qvest Media has announced the appointment of Thomas Müller as its new General Manager. Müller succeeds Stephan Seeländer, who has returned to the company group to Wellen+Nöthen in Germany. Seeländer managed the company in Dubai since the beginning of 2009.

Before joining Qvest Media in Dubai, Müller, a 46-year-old graduate in electrical engineering, worked in management positions and in the project field for various media companies in the TV and publishing sector. Müller was Managing Director at Segami and AZ Media and, as Technical Project Manager, accompanied the realisation of ambitious broadcast projects in Germany and Europe.

FEATURE FILMS For GULF Film Fest Announced

Gulf Film Festival (GFF) has announced the titles of films nominated for The Official Gulf Competition – Features Category.

The six-day event running from April 11-17 at Dubai Festival City offers a diverse range of films with the region’s best talent competing for top honours.

Bekas, Shinn, Wadjda, Berlin Telegarm, It’s About To Rain and The Scream are some of the films that will be screened at the festival.

Masoud Amralla Al Ali, Gulf Film Festival Director said: “The festival in its sixth edition presents a panorama of the most important productions from the latest in Gulf cinema all of which demonstrate the significant filmmaking developments in the region.

The festival allows audiences to come and enjoy a diverse range of standout films from Gulf filmmakers that form a solid and impressive foundation for the future of Gulf cinema.”
Dubai-based telecom service provider du and international multiscreen solution provider Visual Unity have teamed up to extend their services to a wider broadcast industry customer base in the UAE. This agreement will enable du to strengthen its position as the preferred provider of content delivery solutions for Middle East broadcasters by offering them end-to-end delivery solutions to execute their online strategy.

Under the terms of the agreement, du will resell Visual Unity services as part of an integrated solution together with its connectivity, satellite, playout and content delivery network (CDN) capabilities. The new partnership will enable du's broadcast customers to view the telecom as a single provider offering an end-to-end content delivery platform. With Visual Unity's broadcast system integration and multiscreen solution, du customers will have further visibility and control of their end to end content delivery flow.

Farid Faraidooni, Chief Commercial Officer, du, said: "Ever since we took ownership of the Samacom teleport in 2007, we have established ourselves as a market leader in satellite services. While we are emphasising our position as a satellite service provider, we are undertaking several initiatives to address the complete set of functionalities required by our broadcast customers, by taking away the heavy lifting and investment to get content to multiple devices. This will allow them to concentrate on their core business – content. Our partnership with Visual Unity is a proof of this commitment."

Gabriel Dusil, Vice President of Marketing and Corporate Strategy, at Visual Unity, added: "Through this strategic partnership with du, we are able to extend our existing turnkey systems and solutions to a wider number of customers across the Middle East region. Visual Unity has more than twenty years of experience in designing such systems, with du's infrastructure and connectivity, we will be able to provide a better service to broadcasters."

Al Jazeera Arabic has unveiled a new look offering SD as well as HD broadcast. The channel's complete refresh, the biggest since 2004, involves a transformation of news studios, programmes and on-air graphics. All of this can be seen in SD, and for the first time in HD on Nilesat. Social media interactivity will be even more integrated into the output.

Ahmed bin Jassim al Thani, Director General of Al Jazeera Media Network, said: "The Al Jazeera screen is part of people's homes, so we've exerted a great deal of effort to modernise our presentation and look. We have employed the best and latest technology in the industry to maximise the production value. Al Jazeera has distinguished itself through outstanding news coverage and reports and the new look adds to that."

Gabriel Dusil.
DU AND VISUAL UNITY TIE TO DELIVER BROADCAST SOLUTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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INC TO USE ARGOSY PRODUCTS FOR KUWAIT TV HD STUDIO UPGRADE

INC System Integrations will work with Argosy’s infrastructure equipment for the upgrade of an existing TV studio and presentation room to full digital HD. The project is part of an ongoing plan by Kuwait TV to expand and upgrade all its existing facilities to HD. Argosy has been contracted by INC to supply complete installation materials and equipment, including racks, cables, connectors, patch panels and MDUs.

“We have a longstanding relationship with Argosy and chose their equipment because the company offers one of the largest range of products available,” said Tariq Qahwaji, operations manager, INC System Integrations.

AL JAZEERA ARABIC REVAMPS

Al Jazeera Arabic has unveiled a new look offering SD as well as HD broadcast.

The channel’s complete refresh, the biggest since 2004, involves a transformation of news studios, programmes studios, and on-air graphics.

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Filmmakers use Panasonic GH3 to Shoot Video in Dubai
New York-based photographer and filmmaker Eduardo Angel and Dubai-based filmmaker Sherif Mokbel were at Gulf Photo Plus’ annual photography festival to discuss the power of the Panasonic’s LUMIX DMC-GH3 camera to produce short films.

The two industry heavyweights hosted a session on producing film and promoting short films, while demonstrating the video recording capabilities of the GH3 camera.

“Compact and light-weight, it puts the fun back in making short films or everyday personal videos. This camera is packed with functions that allow the user to just point and shoot and record fantastic videos. The GH3 also caters to the professional photographer and videographer, because it allows them to be creative by using features such as in-built time-lapse function,” Commented Sherif Mokbel.

LUMIX GH3 features a magnesium alloy full die-cast body and advanced splash and dustproof construction, which was achieved by tightly sealing the sections of the camera body to enable shooting under extreme conditions. The GH3 caters to consumers shooting films and those involved in field-work, according to Hitesh Ojha, Deputy General Manager – Digital Imaging, Panasonic, Marketing Middle East and Africa.

“It has a rugged form factor. With all the newly added bells and whistles, we have a product that best fits the requirements of those who enjoy the expression of photography and videography. It is packed with advanced technologies developed by Panasonic for its professional and expressive video creation.”

Panasonic also offers a full line up of lenses that reinforce the LUMIX GH3.

Al Jazeera Children’s Channel and DisneyTIE
Al Jazeera Children’s Channel (JCC) has announced a new free TV agreement with Disney, Middle East and North Africa (MENA). JCC has acquired the rights to a selection of Disney’s most popular children’s and family content, including Disney and Disney/Pixar movies as well as Disney Channels’ live action and animated series. Shows will include Phineas and Ferb, Kim Possible, Lilo and Stitch and Zeke and Luther. Baraem TV, JCC’s pre-schoolers channel, will feature popular titles like Handy Manny, Little Einsteins and Jojo’s Circus. JCC will also feature popular animated films from Disney including A Bug’s Life, Toy Story, Cars and Tangled. JCC’s Acting Executive General Manager, Haya bint Khalifa Al Nassr, said: “Through this agreement, we at JCC look forward to enriching the entertainment, culturally appropriate and supports their learning and development. All programmes will be dubbed into classical Arabic and will roll out in the coming months.

SmC Chooses Dolphin for Kalba Channel
Sharjah Media Corporation (SmC) will deploy four Dolphin integrated channel devices by Pebble Beach Systems for playout and disaster recovery at Sharqiya from Kalba TV installation.

Sharqiya is the first channel to broadcast from Kalba City and will feature Neptune automation system. Two of the devices will provide main and backup systems for playout, whilst the remaining two will act as disaster recovery for the main Sharjah facility.

Dr Khalid Al Midfa, Director General, Sharjah Media Corporation said, “We are pleased to collaborate with Pebble Beach Systems to deploy the Dolphin integrated channel devices at the new facility in Kalba City. The launch of Sharqiya from Kalba TV marks another important milestone for SmC. The new channel, which will broadcast from Kalba, will focus on Sharjah’s eastern zone and will air specially-produced programmes focused on the Arab viewers.”

Hamad Abdelrazaq, Engineering Director, SmC confirmed, “We chose Dolphin because it acts as a universal media player, providing playback for multiple file formats on the same timeline, without the need for transcoding or rewrapping. We need to be able to handle a variety of formats, including Harris LXF and Avid DV100 files, and Dolphin’s ability to play these natively greatly simplifies our workflow.”

The system from Pebble Beach Systems will handle content management and automation from a single database. It delivers mixer, router and graphics control, and will be supplied as a fully redundant system with mirrored playout servers and no single point of failure.

Dubai One and TwoFour54 Bring a Social Media Travel Series
Dubai One and Qabeela New Media will produce a new social media travel series titled Peeta Planet. The show follows two Emirati entrepreneurs as they travel the world guided by their followers on social media. The series, which will have 12 episodes of 21 minutes each, has been commissioned by Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI) and will be shot during March and May 2013. It will start airing on Dubai One on April 10. DMI has also commissioned 24 five-minute webisodes and a broad range of activities and content for social networks G+, Facebook and Twitter to support the series. The pilot for this first-of-its-kind interactive travel series was developed and supported by twofour54 and Intaj, its media production arm, handled the pilot’s production and post production.

Snell Launches Dubai Office; Appoints Dipesh Makwana for Middle East Operations
Snell has announced the launch of a new sales office in the Middle East and the appointment of Dipesh Makwana as technical sales manager.

Based in Dubai, Makwana will provide pre-sales support for the entire Snell product range to customers throughout the Middle East region. He will report directly to Naresh Subherwal, President, Asia Pacific and Middle East for Snell.

“The media landscape in the Middle East is one of the most vibrant and fastest growing in the world. Since most networks have active HD and 3G operations, there is a world of opportunity there for Snell solutions,” said Subherwal.

“With his technical expertise and strong background in delivering customer solutions, Dipesh will be able to provide the localised support Middle East customers need to build future-proof operations for HD and beyond.”

Prior to joining Snell, Makwana was sports products specialist at Orad Hi-Tec Systems before which he served for 10 years at BSkyB.
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Some of the lucky people reading this may have recently returned from the south of France and MIPTV, where they lunched along the Croisette and attended glittering parties on well-appointed yachts. Or they may have had something more like my own experience of MIP as an exhibitor, and spent three days in a basement, barely seeing natural light and feeling like a hamster on a treadmill of 20 minute meetings.

Whatever the experience, MIP TV and MIP COM (does anyone know the difference?) is where the formats and genres of world television are traded. Programmes are bought and sold, and rights are finely balanced. As we enter the season of ‘Big Shows’, we need to look at which shows draw the audiences.

### TOP DRAMA VS. TOP REALITY SHOWS, LOCALS AND ARABS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
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<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>GENRE</th>
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<td>Series</td>
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<td>Series</td>
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### WHAT’S YOUR GENRE?

It is human to look at our neighbours or rivals and think “They’ve got one, I have to get one too, but it must be bigger, faster and more expensive”, channel managers and commissioning editors are no exceptions, they tend to follow the so called popular trends.

In this region, there is often an assumption that the high drama of Ramadan series is the dominant force. Even outside Ramadan, it is series like Fatma, Harem Al Soltan, Baaet al Waard, AuDET Mohaned and Al Wadaa which are sent to battle on behalf of their broadcasters. They are expensive to produce, time-consuming and take up a significant share of resources, while needing to find advertising budgets to match. Yet, when we look at the audiences for other shows, especially the big reality-entertainment crossover formats such as Arab Idol and X Factor, it is clear that the Arab audience is hungry for entertainment above drama.

### TOP DRAMA SHOWS VS TOP REALITY SHOWS

The figures in the table are a little skewed by the fact that only two episodes of Arab Idol are included. The average will lower over the season, but nevertheless, on an average, the viewing for reality-entertainment shows is actually higher at 36,000 per show versus 21,000 for drama.

Clearly, reality-entertainment shows are also very expensive, but as the MIP crowd knows, there are many experienced production companies who are very skilled at versioning these formats and creating economies of scale. No wheels have to be invented here.

They’re also quite creative at working out the financial deals, and the fact that with a proper audience measurement system, we can now deliver a real and measurable ROI. This will help international formats go on a wider range of channels.

The third genre in this debate is movies. There appears to be an enormous appetite for high-quality movies. From an audience measurement perspective, the movies have the advantage of being relatively short and therefore, they show up highly in the ratings.

### TOP MOVIES

On this basis, a broadcaster might decide to stop dealing with demanding producers and temperamental stars in favour of the more business-like surroundings of studio-distribution deals.

But averages don’t tell the whole story. A single showing of a movie will more easily rate better than a series of episodes, which naturally fall up and down.

Take the top drama programme, Fatma. With an average viewing of 47,000 per show, it looks less attractive than a movie such as Ninja Assassin, which pulled in 62,000. Arab Idol
settle down and probably average around 100-120,000 viewers. *Ninja Assassin* peaked at 99,957 L&A viewers. In the same week, an episode of *Fatima* peaked at over 140,000 viewers, and it regularly peaks at around 110,000 (on an average). However, they’re both eclipsed by *Arab Idol*. The first episode of the new series peaked at an amazing 281,000 – not far short of their peak audience for the final in 2012.

Movies are the ‘Third Man’ here, partly because they have to attract a new audience each time, although the clever scheduler can build up an audience expectation of a certain type or quality of movie at a defined time-slot. MBC 2 works very hard to keep the 10pm and midnight slots with consistent, high-audience movies.

Scheduling is yet another key player to be considered. The best acquisition team in the world can walk away from Cannes with the jewels of global television, but get the scheduling wrong back home and your ruby will have been thrown into the valley of the wolves. I’ll return to scheduling and targets another day.

There’s no single conclusion here. I would never have made a good script writer. As the saying goes, there’s more than one way to skin a cat, I would rewrite that as, there’s more than one genre to catch an audience. The audience will follow the content. Some channels feel that certain genres are not for them, but that’s like deciding that planes aren’t really your thing.

**PAN-ARAB OR NOT**

The final aspect to consider is rights. Those MIP discussions will have involved fine calculations of rights as the producer tries to slice the content into as many parts as possible to maximise their return.

The simultaneous broadcast of the same show, on different channels, covering the same region does not have any equivalents in any other region of the world. It is unique to this part of the world.

The recent launch of *X Factor*, for example, took place on Rotana Khaleejia, MTV Lebanon and CBC Egypt at the same time. What’s interesting is that audiences seem to make their own distinction about the broadcasters and gravitate to the one they prefer. I would love to see pan-Arab figures for this, broken down by country, but as our figures only cover the UAE, unfortunately, we can’t have a definitive analysis.

What we saw, however, is that a significant number of UAE Expat Arabs chose to watch *X Factor* on MTV Lebanon. *X Factor* transforms the viewing of an evening almost single-handedly for MTV Lebanon. The channel starts from a low base early in the evening but builds steadily throughout the show.

**HOW X FACTOR TRANSFORMS VIEWING**

Up to that point, the channel’s most significant property was *Dancing With the Stars*, which had a fairly Lebanese-focused audience. Good figures among the wider Arab expat population for *X Factor* have not only catapulted the channel up the ranks but also had a halo effect on its other programmes.

The performance of one show improves the ratings of the entire channel. In the weeks leading up to *X Factor*, compared to the weeks since *X Factor*, MTV Lebanon has increased its overall ratings haul by nearly 50% and moved up to just outside the top 10 channels.

Having said that, *Arab Idol* is still the big daddy of the reality-entertainment genre. Last year, the final of *Arab Idol* was the single most watched moment on UAE TV, and from the early signs, it is on course to top the figures again this year, with the possible exception of the final of the Gulf Cup football.

The lack of pan-Arab figures makes it hard to be definitive about this but there has to be an argument about the presence of *Arab Idol* on a single network, MBC, rather than the divided approach of *X Factor*. Only the producers can say what made the best commercial sense but it would be fascinating to know how they compared. My guess based on the behaviour we see in the UAE, which is, in many ways, a microcosm of the region, would be that the single-channel, pan-Arab approach had more total viewers than the multi-channel strategy. 

Christopher O’Heam is General Manager of Emirates Media Measurement Company, which has rolled out ‘view’, the UAE’s new television ratings and audience measurement system, and the first in the Middle East.
Selevision takes the hybrid path

Saudi-based media services provider Selevision, which launched a brand new hybrid set-top-box this month, offers a “full service” including traditional broadcast, VoD and catch-up services. In an exclusive interview with BroadcastPro ME, Selevision and The Apex Group talk about the various components of this platform and how it will potentially transform TV viewing in the Arab world.
On April 1 2013, Dammam-based Selevision, which designs and delivers end-to-end, over-the-top (OTT) online video services for consumers and gated communities, launched a new hybrid set-top-box (STB) in Saudi Arabia with phased launches across other parts of the Gulf. The new box, which offers a “full service” on its platform, is introducing the new technology to the market after a year-and-a-half of rigorous testing.

HbbTV platforms are no longer a new technology although its implementation in the MENA region is still fairly nascent and Selevision is one of the first to get its foot in the door.

Ammar Al Hares, Director of Distribution at Selevision calls the box “a smart decoder.”

“This is a plug-and-play OTT device that will provide a TV-like experience across multiple platforms. The box allows traditional TV broadcasts, whether from satellite, or cable providers, to be brought together with video, delivered over the internet and personal multimedia content. In the region, it will offer viewers free-to-air (FTA) channels through satellite connection and value-added services such as on-demand and catch-up TV on the OTT platform.”

Unlike most hybrid boxes that offer premium content, this platform took up the challenge of introducing FTA content, satellite TV channels and a sophisticated Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) as part of its service.

Selevision even has a dedicated team to update the EPG in real-time as most of the FTA channels in the region do not provide one, explains Al Hares.

“Most of the FTA channels come without a guide. We are improving the EPG by offering the viewer several options including the ability to choose the content they want to watch by programme, channel, time and even, the language. A show synopsis is presented in addition to recommended trailers, reminders, and recording options among other things. We are forming a communication link between broadband and satellite,” he explains.

One of the key elements of this

“Our device will, in time, create a momentum for the service it offers. We are introducing something new in terms of technology. Right now, we are in the warm-up stage and foresee the technology gaining traction”

Dr Raed Khusheim, CEO and President, Selevision
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In this case, the objective was to provide Selevision with an advanced and effective means of storing, transcoding, and delivering hundreds of hours of licensed video content for its customers.

Alex Giannikoulis, Founder and CEO, The Apex Group

service, however, is the Content Delivery Network (CDN) component, provided by Level 3 Communications with support from its partner, The Apex Group.

Level 3 is an IP and Content Delivery Network (CDN) service provider operating one of the world’s most connected fibre optic networks. Owning each component of the online ingest and delivery experience, from the fibre optic network to the data centre to the encoding centre and the CDN nodes, enables a high-quality viewing experience for Selevision’s customers.

Services include secure and redundant online storage of video assets; transcoding of video assets from MPEG4 to Flash and HLS formats; adaptive bit-rate streaming with multiple bit rates and a Middle East focused delivery through its Content Delivery Nodes in Jeddah and Doha.

In the Middle East, The Apex Group provides services in partnership with Level 3 and has previously undertaken similar installations for other regional broadcasters. Services include end-to-end modular components for a reliable cloud-based platform for ingest, management, and delivery of online video assets.

“In this case, the objective was to provide Selevision with an advanced and effective means of storing, transcoding, and delivering hundreds of hours of licensed video content to its customers,” explains Alex Giannikoulis, Founder and CEO of The Apex Group.

“Selevision has purchased a managed service to ensure that the content that we are securing and storing for them is delivered throughout the region.”

The Apex Group supports Selevision on the ground, whilst Level 3 ensures that the network and the network management
Content is stored and secured across three different platforms across continents. Storing the content in more than one location ensures that the content can be replicated in another venue should there be a failure at the main operational centre.

“Selevision is acquiring expensive content through deals with Hollywood studios and storing that content is critical. We cache the content on edge nodes in Jeddah and Doha and a Level 3 partner has recently announced that it will host Level 3’s CDN node in Dubai as well,” elaborates Giannikoulis.

Availability of regional delivery nodes was one of the key reasons Selevision chose to work with The Apex Group, explains Giannikoulis.

“Besides the fact that other broadcasters are using this solution, the availability of regional nodes made this solution very appealing to the customer. The availability of CDN and video transmission services aligns very well with Selevision’s own ambitions to expand throughout the Middle East,” he claims.

In addition to the edge nodes, TCP accelerators (transmission control protocol) are deployed to enable the content to travel faster from Europe to end-users in the Middle East.

TCP accelerators help in receiving and sending traffic over the internet, and in more challenging areas, within the region. We also use TCP accelerators to speed up the delivery,” adds Giannikoulis.

With the linear transmission of content reducing, and more people gravitating towards an “anywhere, anytime TV” content experience, such services have become more relevant to the market.

Giannikoulis believes that making quality content easily available will also act as a deterrent to piracy.

“The threat of piracy is hugely decreased as more OTT services are introduced and content becomes readily available at a better price point. People then do not go through the hassle of getting the content illegally where the quality level is poor. Moreover, this type of OTT service increases demand for internet capacity. In the long run, this will be an enabler for telcos,” he adds.

Although the discussions between Selevision and The Apex Group began early last year, this moved into trial and live service only this year.

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“A hybrid set-top-box by itself is nothing to make a noise about, as Ian Wilkinson, Sales & Business Development Manager of The Apex Group, points out. What makes this service different is the availability of FTA channels on the service.

“Hybrid decoders for terrestrial TV were introduced in Europe quite early but satellite channels are paid channels in the West, which took a while to translate into real products as there wasn’t the same perception of urgency. A combination of FTA, movies-on-demand and catch-up as well as OTT is what Selevision is offering and this was what created the challenge. The service could not take off unless it catered to the huge FTA base. The timing is also perfect for the launch of this box as the quality of network delivery has risen, which was not the case say, three years ago. In areas where the bandwidth is good, the

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service will be as good as traditional TV.”

With this launch, Selevision has not just succeeded in presenting the service in a user-friendly format; it has an entire back office that makes the content available for the customer anytime and anywhere.

“In simple terms, the hybrid service enables video storage and streaming using the CDN as the delivery mechanism,” explains Giannikoulis.

Every customer, however, is different so there is always a degree of adaptation to meet specific requirements.

The solutions provided were adapted to regional needs taking into account the infrastructural limitations. For instance, covering the low bandwidth areas in certain parts of the GCC posed a challenge. While the deployment was fairly simple in the UAE, which has a fibre network, certain remote areas in Saudi Arabia were difficult to cover with the same quality.

This was one of the key reasons why Selevision could not go with a full HD solution, according to Al Hares.

“We intend to do this in the future as and when the region is ready to receive it. However, we have the provision for HD, which will work fine in areas with better bandwidth.”

“With CDN services, the introduction is more of a ramp up of traffic rather than a ‘big bang’ approach,” chips in Giannikoulis.

In the meantime, Selevision is constantly looking to add more technical features to its platform in addition to offering content. For one, it intends to introduce HEVC 265 coding while also enhancing the quality of Video on Demand in the region. The high-efficiency video coding standard or HEVC, also known as H.265, promises to cut in half the size of an HD movie file or reduce the bandwidth needed to stream it.

The company eventually hopes to penetrate the entire MENA region.

“We will, in time, go the whole nine yards, with MPEG4 and HEVC to tackle low bandwidth issues. Consumers are embracing over-the-top video, but the quality has to improve and we have plans in place to ensure that,” adds Al Hares.

Making the service more personalised by adding it on multiple devices such as smartphones and tablets is also on the cards. Eventually, Selevision hopes to deploy a network PVR, where no hard drive will be required. Viewers will simply need to be in the network area and retrieve the content as required.

The launch of the hybrid platform is only the start of an evolving project for Selevision, which intends to secure its current customer base and expand into new areas based on having a state-of-the-art service which matches the changing way that end-users view video content.

“**We will, in time, go the whole nine yards, with MPEG4 and HEVC to tackle** low bandwidth issues. Consumers are embracing over-the-top video, but the quality has to improve and we have plans in place to ensure that”

*Ammar Al Hares, Director of Distribution, Selevision*
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service will be as good as traditional TV.”

With this launch, Selevision has not just succeeded in presenting the service in a user-friendly format; it has an entire back end of content that makes the content available for the customer anytime and anywhere.

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In Brief

Dr Raed Khusheim, CEO and President, Selevision was at CABSAT 2013 to introduce the latest Selevision service. He sees the hybrid set-top-box as the next logical step after satellite receivers. The new development stemmed from the need to create a device that would deliver more localised content taking into account the cultural ethos of the region and a definite demand for Arabic language content.

“Our device will, in time, create a momentum for the service it offers. We are introducing something new in terms of technology. Right now, we are in the warm-up stage and foresee the technology gaining traction.

“The service is supported by numerous partners including Level 3 and the Apex Group for CDN, storage and securing content besides other companies that are supporting this project. We have struck deals with Hollywood studios for content creation. Retail partners such as Carrefour will offer the device to the end-users, while telcos such as Batelco in Bahrain and distributors such as Eurostar in the UAE, have also partnered with us. ”

This device plugs into the TV or HDTV and allows viewers to watch films, TV shows, home videos, photos and other media from either computers or devices on the home network, or the internet. The Selevision platform is Wi-Fi enabled which means the viewer is no longer dependent on internet cables or unwieldy connections. The major advantage of the box is the access it provides to FTA channels in the region.

The launch of the hybrid platform is only the start of an evolving project for Selevision, which intends to secure its current customer base and expand into new areas based on having a state-of-the-art service which matches the changing way that end-users view video content.

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www.cmsgulf.tv
Dubai-based 7 Production & Events, which is well known for covering sport and live events in the Middle East, has embarked on a new venture with the launch of a brand new studio at International Media Production Zone (IMPZ).

“Building a studio came as an obvious choice for us when we thought of expanding our business,” says Pierre Tabet, Head of Operations and Projects at 7 Production & Events.

“It was not just an exciting new business model but also a good way to offer more services to our clients. The studio is an extension of our OB vans and was initially started with the aim of providing additional support to our clients. It’s not a transition for us but the next step forward. With this new studio, we can handle different kinds of indoor shoots and provide a more comprehensive package to our clients that include the space, the kit and the crew.”

The studio is fully equipped to enable clients to execute a full-fledged production right from inception to transmission. It supports the production of live as well as taped broadcasts, photo shoots, and different types of TVCs and entertainment programmes for TV.

The studio has already been used since its launch for a couple of commercials and at the time of going to press, 7 Studio had just announced the completion of Al Jalsat.

In Brief

* 7 Production & Events recently added new fly away kits which were used to shoot a full HD show in Lebanon.
* The kit includes 12 Sony HDC1500 cameras, a Ross Video Mixer and a Calrec audio mixer.
* A major regional broadcaster filmed Al Jalsat at 7 Studio. In addition to renting out the studio and kit, 7 managed the sets, sound and lighting for the show. A wide range of cameras including steady cams, super slow motion, triple speed, lipstick, wireless cams and other speciality cameras along with the associated accessories such as an FX-Motion Robotic Camera System and a Jimmy Jib crane with a Dutch roll camera head were provided by 7.
“The studio is an extension of our OB vans and was initially started with the aim of providing additional support to our clients. It’s not a transition for us but the next step forward”

Pierre Tabet, Head of Operations and Projects at 7 Production & Events
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an Arabic TV show for a major broadcaster, which was filmed at the premises.

The studio is spread over an area of 26mx22m (approximately 600 sq m) complete with a 25mx10m chroma area. It is equipped with 10 Sony HDC1500 cameras, and fitted with 25 DeSisti 1K and 2K lights in addition to 25 soft and profile lights. The studio includes LED lighting with 40 Clay Paky moving heads, 96 Avolites channel dimmers and an Avolites Tiger console.

The studio features sound systems from Adamson, complete with microphones, a Sony HD video mixer and a Calrec sound mixer. The entire facility is acoustically treated as well.

With moving headlights and spotlights, in addition to a projection screen and LED screen, the studio can easily allow for multiple shoots at the same time. Moreover, 7 Production & Events also offers its 60-member crew for any manpower support as well as technical and equipment support.

Studio Specs

Four separate production spaces:
- Audio control
- Video production
- Video control
- Edit-suite or second video production

Video:
- Fly-away with the capability of:
  - Up to 14 fibre cameras
  - HD vision mixer ROSS with 32 inputs 2 ME and FX processor
  - Evertz HD matrix
- 10 Sony HDC 1500 cameras
- 5 Canon HJ17s with extenders
- 2 HD Sony mini cameras with WA lenses
- EVS 6 channels

Audio:
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“Production is always fraught with challenges and we expect the same in running a studio as well. Although the basics remain the same, the execution of each job is unique. No two productions are the same; each comes with new challenges and it’s never an easy day.”

Pierre Tabet, Head of Operations and Projects at 7 Production & Events

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Back in 1993, the broadcast of Dubai Tennis Championship began with a crew of four and a very small truck by host broadcaster Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI). Cut to 2013, and as many as 75 people were working on site at any given time to broadcast the event to the world. The difference this year was expanding the coverage to a second platform.

THE NEW BRIEF
A meeting at DMI’s Sports Channel resulted in systems integrator Media Group International (formerly called Salam Media Cast) and manufacturer Editshare working with Aurora Media Worldwide (AMW), a boutique broadcast media agency that is responsible for covering many of the world’s action sports across different media platforms.

Nick Chapman who heads the business development for AMW, wanted to cover the action at Court 1 at the Aviation Club, the venue of the Championship.

For the first time in the event’s 20-year history, the coverage was to be streamed live to a worldwide audience.

Chapman explains: “Broadcasting tennis can be quite challenging. There are instances of shots becoming too bright, coming out straight into natural light. Forecasting those type of issues and then countering them for a hassle-free delivery is where the challenge lies.”

AMW’s experts were flown in from the UK to handle the project.

“Being a boutique outfit, we bring in our staff depending on the requirement of a particular event. This was exactly what we did here. We flew down 35 people from the UK and worked on Dubai TV camera control units. The HD vans, provided by the host broadcasters, were fully loaded offering world-class facilities to the crew,” elaborates Chapman.

A key challenge this time was to edit in real-time and stream a high-quality production sans the glitches. This is where Edishare stepped in.

A new technology was proposed by David Castle from Editshare and Paul Wallis from Media Group International for Aurora TV. The proposal incorporated a portable solution in a very tight timeframe.

“Viewers now expect instant gratification: live, multi camera coverage with instant replay,” explains Castle.

“They also expect near-instant, expertly-crafted highlights packages, available in all media: broadcast as well as online. Craft editing and live production, however, are normally seen as opposites, needing completely different techniques and technology. Worse still, it is difficult to edit the output from live productions because of the time it takes to capture and manage all the material — especially if you have to wait until the end of the live transmission before editing.”

However, the team which was approached in early February brought together several manufacturers to put forth a broadcast solution under the leadership of systems integrator Media Group International (MGI).

“MGI likes to facilitate opportunities for its partners that give them innovative
Gillett was introduced to VidiGo Live, the other partner in this project minutes before the start of the first match. VidiGo enables organisations to engage in video production by providing tools that are user-friendly. The VidiGo range at the site minimised the need for specialised technical staff and helped lower production costs.

VidiGo Live has an intuitive interface and is easy to use enabling the director to get started straight away.

In this case, Editshare helped significantly to take the complexity out of the live production workflows.

“It provided the producers, the editors and the event planners speed, efficiency and reliability. It was seamless productivity without the worry. With Editshare Multicam, you can record a live event and edit at the same time. You don’t have to manage the files because Editshare does that, enabling you to focus on your production,” adds Castle.

Media Group International’s Wallis says this project is likely to be executed in a more sophisticated fashion next year: “This year, the Dubai Tennis organisers asked us to extend our operations for an extra day because of the extraordinarily high impact of this production and presentation. We are definitely likely to be back next year.”

DUBAI TENNIS WTA 2013

The media files, which were given to Perform, who provided the media streaming service.

Castle explains: “Our system simultaneously captured the high-res (in this case, 100 Mbit/s) and the proxy resolution via Flow, Editshare’s asset management system. We also re-wrapped files for the players to have a copy of the match on DVD. Our output was streamed via a leased-line to London, where the commentary was added by Perform, who has the global media rights for streaming the WTA events.”

The production at this year’s WTA was another success story for an evolving new technology that met the demands of a high-pressure production environment.

A key element of this project was VidiGo. Programme Director Westbury

Platforms to showcase their products in a hands-on environment,” says Paul Wallis, Sales Director of MGI.

“For the Dubai WTA 2013, we saw great solution synergies for our partners Editshare and VidiGo, who in conjunction with Aurora, were able to implement a state-of-the-art production solution for the event. This project offered the perfect opportunity to show how we could help the team achieve something different.”

“The requirement was for a fast turnaround of multiple file types with secure media management,” explains Castle of Editshare.

“This offered the perfect opportunity to showcase Editshare’s Studio MC.”

Three court cameras plus a “beauty shot” were fed into Editshare Studio Multicamera and VidiGo Live, which was used for the production of the live stream from Court 1.

The live stream consisted of four video and audio inputs and graphic overlays.

This synchronisation and distribution amplifier (DA) was provided by Axon. The system was set up to edit the footage as it was being captured using an Avid MC on a MacBook Pro.

The Editshare system then rewrapped the media files, which were given to Perform, who provided the media streaming service.

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As loudness-measurement solutions have matured, three approaches have emerged that could inform the loudness process in the Middle East and help regional broadcasters arrive at a standard, says Jon Schorah of NUGEN Audio.

In today's audio engineering world, loudness is king. Europe has EBU R128, and the United States has the CALM Act; the Arab States Broadcasting Union is also considering guidelines as well. Loudness recommendations are becoming not only ubiquitous, but standardised with ITU-R B.S. 1770. The momentum for loudness control suggests that inevitably all broadcasts will need to be loudness-compliant no matter where and for whom you produce audio. It's now just a question of how.

In the face of this growing movement toward standardisation, Middle East broadcasters are outliers — they have no rules to guide them on loudness. Fortunately, for the Middle East, several regions of the world have been delivering loudness-compliant broadcasts for more than a year. As loudness-measurement solutions have matured, three approaches have emerged that could inform the loudness process in the Middle East and help broadcasters arrive at a standard.

1. CONTROL DURING PLAYOUT The first approach is playout processing, a scenario in which real-time processors continuously measure and adjust the station output to ensure loudness compliance. Playout processing delivers a technically compliant broadcast, but this method has its drawbacks. For example, in extreme situations, a particularly loud commercial that has been brought into line with real-time processing can generate a loudness problem if the programming that follows it is relatively soft. One way to refine this approach is to bypass processing when broadcasting compliant material. Rather than processing the entire broadcast, switch processing on only when material is noncompliant or of unknown provenance.

“Processing can often change the nature of the sound considerably and can also introduce issues with dialogue clarity. That said, a file-based loudness solution can often deliver perfectly acceptable results in cases where the original resources are not available or budgets prohibit anything more involved”

Jon Schorah, Creative Director, NUGEN Audio.
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Jon Schorah, Creative Director, NUGEN Audio.
“Loudness recommendations are based on a loudness scale designed to correspond to the human ear. With a visual meter, editors can keep an eye on the meter and loudness profile while relying on their trained ears to make most of the decisions”

Jon Schorah is Creative Director at NUGEN Audio.

**WHAT’S NEXT FOR LOUDNESS CONTROL IN THE MIDDLE EAST?**

Clearly, the audio game has changed, and those that simply go on mixing as before do so at their peril. For example, it used to be common practice to make heavy use of dynamic range compression in order to get a more impactful mix, with a result that was louder but had less dynamic range. However, with loudness standards, this practice will result in a mix that is flatter, quieter, and less impactful. So carrying on as before and brute-forcing a result will be the least creative and satisfying approach for producers and consumers alike.

As international recommendations are all based upon the same ITU standard, most broadcasters have come to agree on how to approach loudness control, and it’s highly likely that any standards that emerge in the Middle East will also stem from the ITU standard. There are, however, issues that have yet to be resolved, most notably the difference between a 5.1 mix and its corresponding downmix. It is common for the downmix to differ slightly in loudness from the 5.1 mix, but what makes the issue more confusing is that the difference can be in either direction, so a simple offset is not a viable solution. Similar situations arise with dual-language, multi-mono stereo, where a consumer’s television can produce an unexpected 3 dB loudness jump depending upon the configuration. Reaching for a magic metadata bullet would be one solution, but that solution assumes the metadata is accurate and the appropriate device is capable of reading and responding properly.

Based on a drop in consumer complaints, it is reasonable to conclude that loudness normalisation has been a success in the regions that have adopted it. As loudness normalisation spreads to other regions such as the Middle East, the foundation that is now in place will continue to be refined. The aim is for loudness to be a primary consideration during production. As tools improve, we’ll use loudness parameters and transferable, objective measures to check whether audio is not only compliant, but also target-appropriate. Audio engineers will use the same tools to produce programming that better satisfies the countless different creative and consumer demands around the world.
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Regional cameramen warm-up to 4K technology

Dubai-based Advanced Media recently invited UK-based DoP Alister Chapman to introduce the Sony PMW-F5 and PMW-F55 cameras to end users. Attendees share their thoughts.

HASAN ASLAN
Freelance Cameraman and Assistant DoP
Attending this workshop would help me in dealing with the Sony PMW-F5 and PMW-F55, which are new cameras. My job is to help DoPs; I take care of the lenses and the camera set-up. 4K technology is still new in the market and not many of us know about the workflow or how to operate the equipment that uses it. I have worked with a range of professional cameras and have also shot in 4K but wanted to learn more about the technology and the new Sony cameras. That’s why I came to this workshop.

I am currently using the RED 5K and the ARRI Alexa 6 HD. Being a freelancer, it’s good to know about different cameras to broaden one’s scope. You never know when you might be required to use the new Sony cameras, so I wanted to be prepared.

BASEL ADEL Y. AL KAYYALI
Cameraman, Dubai TV
I have not used 4K before; we use only HD. Very soon, we might switch to 4K technology as everyone is talking about it and it’s catching up fast. I am ready to use it. Knowing about these cameras and the 4K workflow will definitely help.

It’s a versatile camera for commercials, film features and I personally like it. In my point of view, 4K doesn’t seem so far off to be accepted into the mainstream.

PIERRE ABOUCHACRA
Film Producer/Director
I hope to get a better idea about 4K through this workshop. At the end, the budget decides which camera we choose but it is good to know what the market has to offer. Maybe in the next four-five years, 4K will take over as the mainstream technology but as of now, we are shooting in full HD. I have not produced anything on 4K yet but might do so soon.

MAHMOUD KAMEL
Film Director.
Presently directing a TV series and planning to make a film I have made four feature films before and then came to Dubai to make a TV series for a leading local broadcaster, I use the RED camera. The world of digital cinema is changing fast – one has to constantly update oneself to keep pace with the latest technology. I came to the workshop to get an insight into the new Sony cameras and the 4K technology.

I have to decide on the camera to shoot my upcoming feature film, which we will begin shooting in June this year. The decision to choose the camera will not be purely mine, it will depend on what kind of film it is and the style of filming. It is always good to learn about anything new in the market. Being a director, I feel being technologically savvy empowers you to have more control over a production.

I may use this camera for my upcoming production but the final decision rests with my DoP. The key feature for me in these cameras is the fact that the F5 and F55 give you a lot of freedom in post production.

AWAD MOUSA
Senior Manager, Content Creation Marketing, Sony
It has been a very fruitful workshop. The fact that it is about a concept and technique makes it special and the response has been excellent. We see it
as a step forward towards introducing 4K to the region. Alister Chapman is not new to such workshops, this is the third one we are hosting in association with Advanced Media. Such workshops provide an excellent platform for the exchange of ideas and also give us a firsthand feel of how prepared the market is to receive the new cameras and to embrace the new technology.

**KAVEH FARNAM**
CEO, Advanced Media Trading

This year, our workshop was about a concept and not just about a camera or a particular product. There is a good reason why production houses and TV houses need to invest in 4K; it’s the latest technology and a very empowering one at that. Looking at the situation now, I am reminded about the time when HD was new to the market and was slowly replacing SD.

Now times are changing fast, we are looking at multi-platforms, different devices such as ipads, tablets and smartphones. We need to upgrade our technology fast to survive. Consumers today have many more options, they are more quality-conscious simply because there is better technology, and better quality available out there.

Digital cinema is a reality today, we are ready to adopt 4K, which will eventually be everywhere. The broadcast world is transforming fast and before we know it, 4K will take over.

We had guests from KSA, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and many Dubai-based professionals seeking more information about the 4K workflow and what it offers. This was our third workshop with Alister Chapman; the previous two focused on cameras.

**ALISTER CHAPMAN, DoP and Trainer, UK**

People have heard about 4K and RAW. What we tried to do through this workshop is to help them understand where these concepts fit in the existing workflows. In the future, RAW will become commonplace. This is the time to learn about it. The Sony F5 and F55 cameras can do RAW where one has more control over the workflow and the quality of the product. It follows a film-style workflow, but it still works for documentaries and commercials.

RAW is a difficult concept to grasp; it’s a difficult style of working and more than anything, it is still new. The way you shoot is a little bit different, the way you process is different too and we have tried to educate the attendees of this workshop to familiarise them with the basics of this technology, which would eventually put them in a very good position and equip them to work with 4K.

Knowing about 4K and being able to use it will definitely raise their game with their workflow and the quality of their production. F5 and F55 are suitable for a huge range of shoots; they are excellent for drama, movies, commercials, and even, live news. Internally, they can record compressed information which makes them ideal for news and fast turnaround shoots.

At present, 4K is in its infancy. It is very new and not something everybody is doing at the moment. It reminds me of the time when we had just started using HD. It took four to five years to become mainstream, and today almost everything is HD. I am not sure 4K will ever be quite the same way ingrained in broadcast like HD but it will come.

IMAX is better in 4K. Some Hollywood movies just finished in 4K; lots of commercials are being shot in 4K, and television is being shot in 4K for the flexibility it gives in post production.

I feel people are still getting a hold on HD and embracing another change in the form of 4K is taking a while. Not long ago, the range of 4K cameras was small, very few cameras could do 4K but now it’s more easy to get it. We are warming up to it; there is 4K in laptops, in handheld camcorders; it’s everywhere and it is moving quickly, which is a good sign.

Editing 4K is not so simple, but we will adapt to the technology and I am expecting it to happen quickly, faster than one would imagine.

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In 2012, BroadcastPro ME worked with EMC Isilon to host a roundtable during CABSAT on digital archiving as part of our WorkshopPro series. Technical experts from the region participated in the discussion to share their expertise and exchange their experiences in their respective organisations. This year, the discussion focused on how to manage digital media assets across different platforms.

Managing media across different platforms

The roundtable looked at the challenges experienced by media houses in managing their file-based workflow assets in production and distribution. It also looked at how the participants leveraged cloud platforms, if they did.

David Sallak, Global Chief Strategist for Media & Entertainment, EMC Isilon, moderated the discussion along with Vijaya Cherian, Editor of BroadcastPro ME.

Sallak began by asking how media houses can potentially manage data more easily across different platforms. How do we plan to consolidate our data and optimise our operations, given that we no longer live in a tape environment, he questioned.

He cited a few examples with the aim of provoking discussion as well as sharing some of the ways in which media houses are operating in international markets.

In Australia, for instance, broadcasters are looking at creating files on demand instead of supplying them to everyone.

“If broadcaster A in Australia wants to share a file with other broadcasters, they create a file on demand, so any broadcaster who wants it can reach out and take it. After all, it’s a file, not a signal. This is more appropriate than pushing the content to all of the broadcasters and duplicating the data so many times. The idea must be — if you need it, come and get it instead of me throwing data at you that you do not require.”

A case study that was examined in detail were the benefits US-based CBS enjoyed from being file-based.

Objectives

- How to manage media more easily as more data is created
- Seek consolidation amongst various platforms, to reduce complexity
- Adapt to dynamic workflows more quickly and easily
- Evaluate cloud options for media processing and extended capacity
“They understand if you have a programme to receive, you must have video to deliver by FTP via Aspera (file delivery software). They gave broadcasters two years to receive this and this year, it has become mandatory. Although, they are file-based, they have not saved any money — yet. The common pitch is that it is economical to be file-based, but it is not. It is complicated because there are more formats in files. When it is a video signal, it is SD or HD. You record just one file. When it is file-based, it could be one dozen or two dozen formats. What they like about the file-based workflows is not the money that they save because they don’t. They like the flexibility they have gained to take an object from point A to point B.

Frank Kerrin of OSN and Afzal Lakdawala of Dubai Media Inc. (DMI) did not agree that there are no cost savings.

“I am surprised that CBS did not find any savings in a file-based workflow. We found flexibility and savings because we don’t have to handle tape anymore. We don’t have to ship tape anymore”.

Lakdawala, who represents DMI, which presently has a warehouse full of tapes in all shapes and sizes including two-inch and one-inch tapes, and various other digital beta formats, seconded Kerrin’s opinion.

“Did CBS not find format issues with tapes? This is one of our biggest struggles. Multiple formats are much easier to deal with in a file-based workflow.”

Sallak clarified that CBS has a fairly unique challenge because of the large size of the North American market.

“The cost of transport is a significant factor for CBS within a file-based environment. They have two broadcast centres in New York and Los Angeles, and there are other disaster recovery data centres for broadcasters. When hurricane Sandy hit New York, they maintained complete on-air service and never dropped a frame despite the fact that one of their data centres in New York City in Manhattan was flooded. They were constantly moving data between locations. They maintain a 10GB link between New York and LA to move files between locations. They can move a one-hour file at high resolution in 48 minutes.”

Dom Baillie, CTO of Sky News Arabia wanted to know how much it cost to move 100GB of data between LA and New York.

The cost of 20 cents a megabyte, although expensive, the group agreed, was a lot less than local broadcasters paid the telco monopolies, du and Etisalat in the UAE.

Everyone agreed with Hasan Sayed Hasan that it may be cheaper than satellite but it was still fairly expensive.

The discussion, however, moved to how CBS had maximised the potential of that line. As a huge media house with fingers in several parts of the media pie, CBS leverages
“Broadcasters have just spent millions on their HD infrastructure. They can’t afford a fresh chain of investment in 4K content or the rest of the delivery chain. OTT will provide all of that. Even set-top-boxes may be a thing of the past”

Dom Baillie, CTO, Sky News Arabia

The team at du questioned “the maturity level of asset management systems to handle content across different platforms” and called for standards in MAM systems.

“Are media asset management systems capable of handling a project end-to-end and are there any industry-wide standards that we can follow?” queried Jaya Kumar of du.

Everyone agreed with Master Media’s Hasan that “no MAM system was presently capable of handling the content end-to-end – from the point of the acquisition of content from different platforms to delivering it to different platforms”.

Dom Baillie of Sky News Arabia, however, cautioned against trying to standardise the world of metadata stating that this may not necessarily be the answer.

“We have to learn how to use the metadata appropriately. You can have metadata in any format as long as when it’s visualised, it means something to the person looking at it. That is where customisation comes in. Sadly, there is no one out there who can do that. They generally have a day’s space filled, define or add things to the table but it is not really understanding metadata from multiple sources and presenting it in a way that it is useful. If you have a standard, we will have to define every field of metadata that every country of the world is going to want to look for. You are never going to make it. So you have to be able to understand it, relate it, link it, learn about people and then you start to have a solution.”

David Sallak agreed that this was an emerging challenge for manufacturers.

“There are a lot of options out there, which

its 10GB connectivity between LA and New York to drive content across all platforms including on-air, bill boards and so on.

“When the data is being moved across all platforms, what you have is flexibility,” Sallak pointed out.

“CBS has a broad portfolio so their efficiency is based not on the cost but on the fact that they have been able to streamline their operations. Based on how many services you are offering to make brand impressions, you can gain more efficiencies with a file-based workflow.”

This brought the discussion to managing data and tailoring it to suit different platforms. The key part of this discussion centered around metadata.

“What happens these days is that a lot of metadata is being put into a camera that is shooting in 2K or 4K,” Sallak commented.

“There are automatic presets that instruct the device on how to crop. Therefore, there are metadata reference points on how to crop in and automate that crop when I toss it to a transcode. In the transcode, I will have a large crop version for HD, a smaller version for an iOS device and so on.”

Essentially, there is now an opportunity to preset the metadata in the area of interest to ensure the cropping. So, when the transcoder writes from the file, it reads the metadata and understands what kind of crop-in is required or whether it has to modify the time of the link, the playout or if it must crop-in sooner to make a programme shorter than the original. This allows the end user to make different versions from the same start point.

The transcode can read the metadata and create several different types of results.

This newly emerging technology from Telestream will be demonstrated at NAB this year, we were told.

It is with these evolved technologies that media entities such as CBS that have invested hugely in file-based workflows will eventually see cost savings, explained Sallak.

“When the automations start to enhance your operations, you will begin to see the cost savings. But they haven’t seen that yet because there is a lot of manual process for them to make the different versions of the product appropriate to the device whether it be a computer screen, the large 80” TV or the iPad.”
“When you walk into a control room that is automated, you will not see a single individual running it but there will be 40 channels playing to air and warning systems in place to identify a specification out-of-range channel playout”

David Sallak, Global Chief Strategist for Media & Entertainment, EMC Isilon

is why it is difficult for the manufacturer to give you a sweep of tools in a single product that addresses your unique business needs whether for over-the-top (OTT), IPTV, on-air broadcast or other delivery mechanisms.

“However, if we look at the technologies that have been developed today, the camera technology that defines these regions of interest and the metadata that has been put into these objects depends on each user and their business requirements.

“The original metadata that broadcasters used was time code. It defined the beginning and an end point on the linear object. Now, we have a lot of metadata which we can screen or restrict or expand and use to suit our business. As of now, there is no single tool that does this and uses metadata to its advantage but it is evolving.”

Sallak mentioned that Advanced Media Workflow Association (AMWA) was looking to structure some of the metadata to automate the workflows.

Vizrt, Grass Valley, Google and even EMC Isilon have invested in this definition.

“We see an opportunity to help broadcasters leverage a portion of the standard. We don’t think there is any way in the market for an all encompassing standard as a file-based workflow affords a broad spectrum of opportunities. But within a subset, you can find a part that will help your business. We are choosing that part because we find a lot of advanced customers in TV participating in this.

“When you walk into a control room that is automated, you will not see a single individual running it but there will be 40 odd channels playing to air and warning systems in place to identify a specification out-of-range channel playout. Everything will be automatically corrected.”

Sallak stated that we will see more high-end operations run without a single human being in the room.

“Queuing the schedule, scanning it and playing it – these are the things that are becoming more automated. I see this increasingly as more people look at ways to optimise their business and they do it through file-based workflows.”

Intigral’s Saab pointed out that even if there is no existing system, the possibility of customising a solution to suit one’s business requirements is possible. However, he also pointed out that to make
the above possible, one needed to sit in a more “mature environment”.

“This cannot be applied to this region because we have really bad network speeds. Maybe initially, it is very good but it won’t be for long. When everyone begins to use it, the network will crash,” he commented.

Hasan pointed out that there were other challenges within this region such as the need to include several different languages. With 22 markets and huge language barriers, the question is crucial to the development of TV broadcast in the Arab world.

Sallak pointed out that the language issue has been handled well in Europe. He urged the group to look at their European neighbours and suggested that broadcasters work together to find a common resolution.

“Is there some service that you are already building that can help somebody else as well in a non-competitive but complementary way to overcome these challenges in the region?” he asked.

One of the key points that came out of this part of the discussion was the dire need for connectivity, which as Jaya Kumar of du pointed out is “the backbone of the asset management industry”.

Almost all of the broadcasters complained instantly about the huge connectivity costs and the poor service that the telcos in the region provided.

Melvin Saldanha of Ten Sports pointed out that fibre connectivity wasn’t available until February 2013.

When the discussion moved to one of the key platforms that is challenging the traditional space, namely OTT, connectivity was again considered the biggest hurdle.

However, Baillie pointed out that OTT would still be the road to 4K content.

“Broadcasters have just spent millions on their HD infrastructure. They can’t afford a fresh chain of investment in 4K content or the rest of the delivery chain. OTT will provide all of that. Even set-top-boxes may be a thing of the past,” Baillie said.

Saldanha of Ten Sports agreed that OTT is the best method to take the 4K movement forward. However, he added that connectivity was key here.

Saab added that smart TV manufacturers may bundle an OTT offering.

David Sallak stated that the answer to this worldwide challenge lay in collaboration.

“If there was some alignment that permitted the delivery of bandwidth on demand as opposed to a fixed price per month and sharing some of that bandwidth with multiple broadcasters was possible, that would be ideal. All broadcasters could potentially participate in one bandwidth space as opposed to each one paying for bandwidth at their own independent rates, and this would eventually drive their business into cloud,” he stated.

“They are looking for business models that meet halfway between the cost of infrastructure and the cost of connectivity because this is one of the largest areas to cloud,” he commented.

This led us to the second part of the discussion, which was about cloud and connectivity.

Mark Bayley from Al Jazeera commented here that the Qatari network has its own hubs across the world so it thinks differently about backing up and cloud storage.

“However, it involves the same challenges and costs. The cloud as an outsourcing service is not something we are immediately looking at from the broadcast side. We are more likely to explore this for the web site.”

Sallak stated that this was a good entry point and a great way to leverage the cloud.

The du team recommended that broadcasters look at sharing some content rather than duplicating files.

Saldanha pointed out here that collaboration between Ten Sports and OSN has helped reduce their costs.

“Content sharing should be considered; we share some of our cricket content with OSN where both have rights to different regions.”
It’s a very cost-effective method.”

Saab of Intigral agreed that there can be a centralised part that broadcasters can use instead of everyone investing on the network.

Everyone agreed that there are ways to use shared infrastructure rather than duplicating the file.

This brought everyone to the point of disaster recovery and the connectivity issue, which is a practical challenge in this market.

“What they offer here is to take your archived tapes to them and duplicate them,” commented Kerrin.

Sallak recommended that broadcasters work together to address the archive challenge in a cost-effective manner.

“What you should do is, use the Front Porch or similar HSM service but there is no need to build up all the tapes because there is a data centre that undertakes such services. This could be a reason why the broadcasters could leverage something you could bring to market to address the archive challenge in a cost effective way.”

du stated that a new division called Datamena addresses some of these issues.

Saab stated that such a facility is only available in Italy.

“I think the challenge is to have competitive prices on the network especially in the CDNs and the quality of service. Today, Akamai, Level 3 and so on, which are good internationally are unable to address regional concerns. In the UAE, the network may be better but the main focus for all of us is on Saudi Arabia because that’s where the money is. If you don’t have the quality of service that suits this region, it is a burden for us to deliver quality.”

The solution, according to Saab from Intigral, is to build one’s own CDN.

“We are thinking about building our own CDN. If you have content that you can sell to 100,000 users, you have to have a solid CDN structure. In the GCC, the closest node is in Jeddah, and inside KSA no one has any integration with STC yet.”

Saab added that if they build their own CDN, they can share it with other broadcasters and eliminate the telcos from the equation.

He also proposed the use of a new technology in satellite data for spotting.

Jaya Kumar from du, however, pointed out that what works for one region may not necessarily work elsewhere.

“We have a lot of under utilised satellite capacity, but that may not work in other regions,” he said.

In conclusion, however, the connectivity challenge remained unaddressed owing to the lack of services from telcos. However, the du team promised to take the feedback from the broadcasters back to their management.

Hamad Abdelrazaq of Sharjah Media Corporation called the discussion insightful and said it would help the SMC team see how they could potentially revisit their CDN and mobile service projects.

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**Key takeaways from the discussion**

- Data management for file-based workflows is evolving with essential metadata being incorporated at the production stage. Standardising metadata is going to be difficult. However, customisation, according to one’s need, would be key.

- Connectivity will be the backbone of all file delivery; the quality of service and costs in various parts of the MENA region need to evolve rapidly. This will be faster if telcos work together with major CDN providers.

- Cloud-based archive solutions provided by some of the known Hierarchy Storage Management (HSM) software companies could help some of the broadcasters gain quicker access to content and enable content sharing. Here again, bandwidth and connectivity will remain the bottlenecks.

- OTT – Over-the-top technology will lead in bringing 4K to consumers’ homes through Smart TVs faster than the traditional satellite delivery method.
One-Man Show

Paris-based actor-director, Karim Goury talks about The Man Inside, an experimental documentary. The 50-minute autobiographical film is shot entirely in a hotel room in Kuwait City.

When did you start making films and why?
I started dabbling in filmmaking 20 years ago, with art videos while I was studying in art school in France. Later, I decided to take it up more seriously and began to train in the craft.

Where did you train in filmmaking?
I went to script writing workshops in La Fémis, the famous cinema school in Paris.

What’s your favourite genre?
I like documentaries, especially creative ones, I also enjoy fiction. I particularly like independent films because I feel they give you complete freedom to express yourself.

What’s the idea behind this film?
In my film, I have tried to retrace my father’s steps. I never had a chance to meet him when he was alive. The Man Inside takes place in a hotel room in Kuwait City. My father once worked there some 30 years ago. It’s partly autobiographical as I recount my story before the camera.

What were the challenges you faced while shooting this film?
I shot this film by myself. I was both behind and before the camera at the same time. Each shot took me at least 20 minutes to set and that was a true challenge. I also wrote and produced the film in collaboration with Kuwaiti Film and TV Producer Talal Al-Muhanna. It was a very fulfilling experience.
Autodesk® Flame® Premium software offers innovative tools for visual effects, advanced graphics and 3D compositing in television and film post production. Flame Premium provides powerful ways to integrate ultra-realistic lighting into the core of your 3D toolset and a comprehensive set of effects tools for finishing.

Autodesk Flame Premium includes the real-time color grading functionality of Autodesk® Lustre® software and the full timeline workflow of Autodesk® Smoke® Advanced to offer Autodesk’s ultimate finishing toolset.
Tell us more about the tools you used in production and post.
I used a DSLR Canon 7D camera with prime lenses. It gave the picture the 35mm aspect that I needed.
I recorded the sound with a stereo ZOOM H4N recorder.
I haven’t used any additional lights and only filmed with the natural and artificial lights available in the room.
My editor Françoise Tourmen, edited the film on Final Cut Pro 7 and the sound design and mix was made on Nuendo Software by Thierry Bousquet.

What were some of the highlights of this project?
Being selected for the Muhr Award Documentary Competition at the Dubai International Film Festival was indeed an honour. Although, The Man Inside is my fourth film. I have directed two other documentaries and one short fiction.

What inspired The Man Inside?
The Man Inside was my own little experiment with self-expression. I had visualised the entire film in my mind and thought it over and over again. It was a personal journey and my attempt at giving a tangible form to what was going on in my mind.
I never met my father, which used to make me angry when I was younger but now, I have come to terms with it.

Do you travel a lot?
Yes, I love to travel, especially in the Middle-East. I am half Egyptian, my father was Egyptian and my mother is French. I frequently travel to Egypt, which I regard as my second home, and also go often to Kuwait, Duba and Beirut.

What next?
Now that The Man Inside is completed, I can return to writing my next script, which will be a narrative feature film. It’s something quite different from what I have done so far.

How was it to work with another producer on a subject matter that you regarded as personal?
This was the first time I collaborated with Kuwait-based Talal Al-Muhanna, my co-producer. The experience was wonderful. It was good to have another perspective on the film. I had never worked in Kuwait before but I would definitely like to go back.
Tell us more about the tools you used in production and post.

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What were some of the highlights of this project?

Being selected for the Muhr Award Documentary Competition at the Dubai International Film Festival was indeed an honour. Although, The Man Inside is a very personal film, I see the award as an acknowledgment of the fact that the film has touched a large audience.

While working on the film, I was not sure if the viewers would relate to it, but this award put my concerns to rest.

How many people are there in your team?

It was a one-man show this time. For my next film, I wish to work with an entire crew, so that I can focus on directing other actors.

How many films have you made so far?

The Man Inside is my fourth film. I have directed two other documentaries and one short fiction.

What inspired The Man Inside?

The Man Inside was my own little experiment with self-expression. I had visualised the entire film in my mind and thought it over and over again. It was a personal journey and my attempt at giving a tangible form to what was going on in my mind.

I never met my father, which used to make me angry when I was younger but now, I have come to terms with it. I would also like to add here, that this film was not an attempt to give vent to my anger because I am not angry any more. It was created to tell a story, just like any other story, it just so happens that it is a personal one.

Do you travel a lot?

Yes, I love to travel, especially in the Middle-East. I am half Egyptian, my father was Egyptian and my mother is French. I frequently travel to Egypt, which I regard as my second home, and also go often to Kuwait, Dubai and Beirut.

What next?

Now that The Man Inside is completed, I can return to writing my next script, which will be a narrative feature film. It's something quite different from what I have done so far.

Pro

“I shot this film by myself. I was both behind and before the camera at the same time. Each shot took me at least 20 minutes to set and that was a true challenge”

View of Kuwait City from the hotel window.

What is your inspiration?

While making The Man Inside, I always kept in mind some of the things that have inspired me, such as little things surrounding my life and my Egyptian roots. Good movies inspire me, so much so that some of these films are responsible for my initiation into filmmaking.

I was greatly moved by the film Apocalypse… that’s an inspiration. I have always loved Alain Cavalier’s movies. Chantal Akerman’s News From Home is another favourite.

How was it to work with another producer on a subject matter that you regarded as personal?

This was the first time I collaborated with Kuwait-based Talal Al-Muhanna, my co-producer. The experience was wonderful. It was good to have another perspective on the film. I had never worked in Kuwait before but I would definitely like to go back.
Broadcast professionals from across the world converged at CABSAT 2013 last month. Broadcast Pro ME brings you comments from exhibitors.

PAUL ATKINSON, Marketing Specialist, Canon EMEA

The Middle East being a growing market offers tremendous potential in terms of demand for new products. CABSAT offers a platform for us as manufacturers to get to know the users better, giving them a platform to handle the equipment and ask questions from the experts.

Canon Middle East officially launched the EOS C500 and EOS 1DC, the 4K cinema cameras at CABSAT. We have also introduced the Advanced Video Coding High Definition (AVCHD) based Super 35mm EOS C 100 along with two compact zoom lenses.

The industry outlook seems positive and the region is poised for more growth.

SEBASTIEN VERLAINE, Marketing Manager EMEA, EVS

We have been coming to CABSAT for the past many years to support our interests in the region. We have made investments here and reinforced our local team, and a presence at CABSAT goes a long way in achieving our regional objectives.

CABSAT is the first trade show where we appeared in our new colours. EVS has changed its logo and visual identity, which we officially launched at this year’s CABSAT.

The four key areas of our expertise are represented in these new colours. EVS represents sports, entertainment, news and media – the four divisions within the organisation, each of which operates as an independent entity.

Our presence at CABSAT shows our commitment to our customers and our keenness to expand and get new business opportunities as the region continues to grow.
PETER KYRIAKOS, Head of Marketing, UBM
We have been coming to CABSAT every year. As far as I can see, we are going to be here for many years to come. It is an exciting show as it gives you the heartbeat to what’s happening in the region.

When you represent more than 50 partners, there’s always something you want to showcase and CABSAT provides an excellent platform to do so to our target audience.

This is the right type of show that caters to our regional scope, giving us access to the African and Middle Eastern markets. Our markets are relatively defined in terms of the scope; we need to further expand our reach within the key areas in these markets. Our focus areas include Africa, which is a big market for us and holds a lot of growth potential. We have a very positive outlook for business in the region. We displayed several newly launched products which were available for demos too.

Additions to our cameras range, lights and other equipment are all being displayed for people to try for themselves and to get a firsthand feel of the products.
BASEL AL AREF, General Manager, Oasis Enterprises

CABSAT is a regular feature on our yearly calendar as we have been coming to the event over many years.

It offers us a platform to display and launch new products from our partners; some of the products that we are showcasing will be officially launched at NAB but we already have them here just to warm up the region to the new launches. We are here for greater visibility and to support our clients. More than anything, it further reinforces the image of our company as a turnkey solutions provider and a distributor of some of the leading brands in the GCC.

We are here because of the long-term presence of Oasis Enterprises in the market. This is where we meet our existing clients and announce new agreements.

TIM FELSTEAD, Head of Sales and Marketing, ATG Broadcast

ATG has been coming to CABSAT for many years. The conversations we have had with customers reveal there is a common problem as in the past, a lot of file-based systems workflows were like little microcosms. Now, companies seem to be moving towards integration of those microcosms. AmberFin, whose products we have been promoting since last year, provides a technology that’s central to this process. The region is beginning to adopt the new technology to integrate various processes of a workflow that do not consume too much manpower. On platforms such as CABSAT, we can have a firsthand feel of the market and the expectations of industry players while getting more visibility in the region.

ALAN WRIGHT, President EMEA, Grass Valley

The highlight of our stand this year was the new LDX camera for which the momentum is building, as we begin to get our first orders from the region. We have not launched any new products this year but our existing range has a lot of offerings that hold good potential for the region. Stratus media workflow is a platform that we want to introduce in news and live productions and also the African region, which also happens to be a key market for us. The show this year seemed quite different from the previous editions as we saw a lot of systems integrators with more focus on workflows and solutions and moving away from just products.

JOACHIM BAUSE, General Manager Europe/Middle East, Signiant

Signiant had an independent stand for the first time at CABSAT 2013. Middle East and North Africa constitute strategic markets for us. Our client base in the regions includes big broadcasters who have immense influence in the region.

In the year 2013, we will be executing some big installations.

In order to implement high-end broadcast projects, we needed a local presence to provide local support on service, implementation, after-sales and consulting; with Qvest Media as our local partner we are able to achieve that.

and our presence has grown with every edition of the show. CABSAT is an excellent platform to connect with the customers and also offers a launchpad for new products and announcements. We have officially announced our local presence in the region with our newly-opened office in Dubai that shows our commitment to the region.

The highlight of our stand this year was the compact OB van designed especially for the Gulf region.

The HD OB van offers a compact six-camera OB with full SNG capabilities.

ANTHONY HASEK, Vice President of Sales, Visual Unity

Last year CABSAT was very successful for us as we signed a partnership agreement with du. We see CABSAT as a gateway to the Middle East and the extended region up to South East Asia and the Far East and even Turkey on the other side of the region. This show is a great vehicle for us to showcase our offerings to a niche audience. We have been expanding in the Middle East and our CABSAT presence only reiterates our interest in the region further.

PETER JAKOBSSON, Business Development Director, Broadcast Solutions

This is our third time at CABSAT and our presence has grown with every edition of the show. CABSAT is an excellent platform to connect with the customers and also offers a launchpad for new products and announcements. We have officially announced our local presence in the region with our newly-opened office in Dubai that shows our commitment to the region.

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JURGEN LOOS, Sales Director, BFE

This is the first time we have an independent stand at CABSAT to emphasise our business interest in the region. We want to focus on the Middle Eastern region and our recently-opened regional office is a testimony to that. The recently completed MBC project, the Centre of Information and Culture Saudi Arabia and the Al Kaas project have further strengthened our interest in the region.

We are ramping up our local operations by adding maintenance and support capacity to our regional office in Dubai Studio City.
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ADAM NIGHTINGALE, Senior Director, Strategic Sales, Global, Irdeto

CABSAT is where we connect with the entire Middle East and North Africa which is an exciting market because there is a maturity emerging now. We see a lot of advance thinking and strategising, suffice to say there is good commotion in the broadcast segment in the region.

Some of our key clients in the region include Al Jazeera, ADMC and MBC, reflecting our presence in the market. Seeing the potential to grow further, we want to forge these relationship for robust business opportunities. We do software-based CA solutions that are very widely deployed globally. The same are very well received here that makes us a very efficient and agile platform for securing content. We also build full multi-screen solutions and end-to-end capabilities, giving a very high degree of automation to our customers.

Looking at the current trends the Middle East is going to be a thriving market for multiscreen as device penetration grows and internet penetration grows.

PEYMAN DADPANAH, Business Director, Media Cast

CABSAT provided an excellent platform to educate the market about the new Blackmagic camera, the highlight of our stand this year. We also displayed a number of accessories such as Blackmagic camera viewfinder, tripods and post production equipment giving end-to-end solutions to customers and resellers. A major announcement at CABSAT this year was about our upcoming Media City showroom that will offer a demo room for the new camera and the entire workflow. It will also offer a training facility for users to experience the technology and its offerings.

NIK FORMAN, Field Marketing Manager EMEA, Harmonic

The region has demonstrated tremendous growth in recent times in the deployment of pay TV, and subsequently, value-added services such as multiscreen. We showcased a comprehensive range of next-generation multiscreen production and delivery solutions here. CABSAT provided a platform to show how Harmonic solutions bring bandwidth efficiencies, operational cost savings, and good video quality to such deployments.
ROB SHERMAN, Managing Director, Sony Professional Solutions MEA FZ LLC

4K is one of the main launches at CABSAT from Sony. The F5, F55 and F65 were displayed at our stand along with monitors and recorders. We have tried to familiarise visitors with a 4K working environment. Also on display was our consumer television, the Bravia 84 inch TV monitor, which attracted a lot of attention. CABSAT is an important event for Sony Middle East as it reinforces our focus on the region. This is where we get to meet our existing customers and show them what’s new in terms of products and technology. Besides the latest cameras we also displayed some of our media backbone conductor solutions to give the users an opportunity to get a firsthand feel of the product.

MARK W SMITH, Managing Director EMEA & APAC, ScheduALL

We have been at CABSAT four times before and we see a lot of high quality business associates here. This is where our target broadcasters and potential prospects of business come to meet. Our presence here has grown as has our interest in the region. The Middle East market is the most dynamic market in the world by far, there is lots of demand for what we try to do. Over the last three years, I have seen a continuous progression in terms of the quality of visitors here.

We will be making more announcements at NAB but CABSAT was important to give a taste of what’s to come.

CHRISTIAN UNTERSEER, Managing Partner, Cataneo

This was our first time at CABSAT and we are definitely coming back next year. Regional shows like CABSAT provide an excellent window of opportunity to build business partnerships and to get to know the market better. Rotana is one of the existing clients who has been using our advertising sales platform through web servers in Dubai. Parts of our software features have been especially created or modified to suit the specific requirements of the region.

PAUL HENNESSY, CEO, Media Group International

We made a number of announcements during CABSAT this year, including the change in our name from Salam Media Cast to Media Group International. The other big announcement was the BSI ISO 9001 certification that we received recently.

Our two new offices will be coming up this year – one in Dubai Media City and the other, in Dubai Studio City. This is further testimony to our belief in the region and will help reinforce our position as an established brand name.

ANDY GILES, Head of Sales, Snell Middle East and Africa

We have got more people from the company at this year’s CASBAT than ever before, which shows how focused we are on the Middle East region. We are investing in the region and will continue to do so as the region continues to offer greater growth opportunities.

CABSAT provides a meeting place to network with customers and channel partners, to update them on what we are offering and our areas of development and new product launches and so on.

The opening of our local office in Dubai was a big announcement coinciding with the show this year. Our local presence will offer a first point of contact with the customers in the region and offer pre-sales and post-sales services.
Today's broadcasters need more and more audio channels at ever-higher resolutions, more power to handle this increased channel count and more ergonomic control surfaces to manipulate them.

Naturally, Calrec has the answer.

With the same levels of reliability which Calrec are world-renowned, and a remarkably intuitive control surface which still manages to add enormous flexibility, Apollo is nothing short of revolutionary. Calrec's Bluefin2 DSP engine equips Apollo with more than 1000 channels for 5.1 Surround production and its internal 8192² Hydra2 router turns the console into a powerful networking tool.

The world's most successful broadcasters rely on Calrec consoles.

Apollo is the first of Calrec's new generation.

[Apoll0, From Calrec Form and Function,Seamlessly Matched.]
In the previous issue of *BroadcastPro ME*, we looked at the business models that are being adapted by Multichannel Video Platform Distributors (MVPD) and pure OTT players. This part will look at the technology challenges in delivering a true multiscreen experience to audiences.

**Live Pipeline**
The trend has been to separate encoding from the packaging and encryption functions to provide greater flexibility. Depending on the resilience of the design (N, N+1 or 2N encoders per live stream), the number of single channel encoders can be significant. Therefore, it is important to architect a live streaming solution that provides the required level of resiliency, but also provides efficiency in the overall cost of the solution. The most common approaches for encoding live channel streams and VOD assets involve either the implementation of an appliance, or the use of a software solution on commodity hardware, with the appropriate interface cards for ingesting the live stream. Encoding density can be increased through the use of GPU-based hardware encoding appliances, with devices allowing for 20 separate live streams that encode to four separate bit rates for each stream for SD, and 10 live input streams to six multi-bitrate encoded streams for HD.

Encoders and packagers are typically deployed in pairs with streams spread across multiple devices as appropriate. Failure of a single device can for a short time, reduce the number of bitrates available, but stream delivery with the remaining bitrates will continue. A separate management application monitors availability and automatically handles failover between devices.

Separating packaging from the encoding process provides a scalable solution that supports all of the major adaptive streaming protocol standards in use today and offers the flexibility to package to different formats from a single H.264 source. The Origin Server is the publishing point (gateway) for both live, offline and nPVR contents, and provides advanced feature-rich, virtualised and centrally managed environment. The Origin ingests the products created by the live
and offline transcoders and makes them available for delivery to multiple CDN providers. In addition to live simulcast and VOD applications, the Origin Server also enables ‘Start Over’, ‘Catch Up’ and ‘nPVR’ applications. The Origin enables live TV, video on demand, catchup, Startover and nPVR applications. The Origin needs to be highly scalable for ingest and streaming capacity. Depending on the specific project requirements, the Origin can be a simple HTTP server, or a sophisticated software stack including dynamic re-packaging on the fly and indexing into recorded live channels as described below.

For VOD offline content, the Origin provides a single point of interface for asset management functionality. Once the offline content is ingested to the Origin, the content is available for external back office (such as content management system or CMS) to manage the asset life cycle. Simple commands such as list and delete are available through a RESTful API. Content information such as size, path and type can be queried through a RESTful asset management interface.

Catchup, Startover TV and nPVR applications are possible with an Origin’s sliding window ingest of the live channel. Since the Origin captures live TV content, it is able to keep the channel content in the Origin’s storage for retrieval during or after the show. The captured content can be obtained by the clients via simple HTTP request with URL constructed by using the channel name, start and/or end time of the event. Playlist files can also be generated on the fly based on the HTTP request and returned to the client. When the client downloads the segments based on the playlist, the Origin delivers the segments from its storage.

For large-scale implementation Origin storage needs to be able to scale from 100s of TB to PB scale. The storage also needs to be able to cope with the sustained read and write rates to effectively capture and redistribute multiple streams of video.

By utilising Clustered shared storage, the Origin Server is highly scalable. Additional storage servers or origins can be added independently to scale up the storage capacity and the ingest/download capacity. High availability is a core feature with active-active Origin Servers configuration. The Origin servers make use of clustered storage with built-in redundancy. A typical Origin configuration with Clustered storage can ingest up to 40 Channels’ 320Mbps for Live and output 1Gbps. Storage can be scaled by both capacity and throughput by adding storage or IO nodes. Delivery throughput is scaled by adding additional Origin servers.

**Content Delivery**

Allowing viewers to view content on an anywhere anytime basis requires a unicast stream to be created from a Video Delivery Node to the viewer’s connected device. The content delivery cost incurred is based on the amount of data shipped within the stream and is calculated on a cost per GB basis by global CDN suppliers, such as Level 3, Akamai and Limelight. Therefore, allowing viewers to watch content when they wish to incur additional cost per stream costs vs a broadcast delivery mechanism such as DVB-S, DVB-C and DVB-T. The overall cost of delivering a channel is dependant on the volume of users. Recent research by IHS Screen Digest demonstrates that uni-cast delivery of some channels can be more cost-effective than the cost of a DVB broadcast slot, as illustrated in the figure.

The increase in popularity of HTTP based delivery using technologies such as Microsoft Smooth Streaming; Apple HLS; Adobe HTTP Dynamic Streaming; or DASH, has allowed OTT platforms to commoditise video delivery more than ever before, and pushes the CDN itself down the value chain. More frequently operators are choosing to either run their own CDN – through the use of On-Net CDNs, public cloud hosted caching servers, or on-premises deployments, or simply to use multiple commercial CDNs, allowing aggressive financial negotiation for total cost reduction.

**On-Network (OnNet) CDNs bring benefit to multiple parties**

ISP - An OnNet CDN allows an ISP to guarantee a better level of service to their customers. Although, traditionally within the OTT space, ISPs have been

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"Allowing viewers to view content on an anywhere anytime basis requires a unicast stream to be created from a Video Delivery Node to the viewer’s connected device"

Mark Christie

**CDN COSTS ARE FALLING BUT HAVE NOW LEVELLED OUT**

![Figure: Falling costs of Content Delivery](image-url)
Based on internal testing: performance may be lower depending upon host device. 1 megabyte (MB) = 1 million bytes. Read speeds up to 10 times faster than USB 2.0 drives at up to 190 MB/sec; Write speed lower and varies by capacity. Based on internal testing using a USB 3.0 compatible host; performance will vary depending on host device. 1 megabyte = 1 million bytes. SanDisk, the SanDisk logo, Store Your World In Ours, CompactFlash, and SanDisk Extreme are trademarks of SanDisk Corporation, registered in the U.S. and other countries. The SDXC mark and logo are trademarks of SD-3C, LLC. Other brand names are for identification purposes only and may be the trademarks of their respective holders. © 2013 SanDisk Corporation. All rights reserved.
“HTTP Delivery is not without its challenges. Because of the focus on adaptive bitrates, multiple transcoded profiles must exist for every asset on a platform”

Mark Christie, CTO, KIT digital

cut out of the equation, consumers are naturally driven towards a network provider who can guarantee a better quality of service experience.

**Operators** – OnNet CDN deployments have lower on-going operational costs, because content is stored closer to users, avoids expensive transit networks, and can be done without the involvement of third parties vendors. Netflix’s recent OpenConnect project is an example of where an operator has aggressively partnered with ISPs – either through the deployment of appliances into ISP networks, or by peering at various packet exchanges for low cost, low latency, high bandwidth delivery.

**Consumers** – Fundamentally, consumers simply care about content. The closer the content is stored to them, the quicker they can play back.

HTTP content delivery is not without its critics and drawbacks. The biggest criticism usually sits around analytics and data, which comes down to the lack of a two-way communication channel. With RTMP, information is constantly fed back to the media server, allowing operators to easily construct information about the number of concurrent viewers, historical views, and playbacks. This kind of information is commonly required by content providers as part of a content deal – and hence has commercial implications. Additionally, the lack of this feedback loop means that the server cannot determine the bandwidth capabilities of a client, the current progress through a video for resuming purposes, and so on.

These problems push a requirement for more logic into the player itself. A player must be instrumented with a heuristics engine to determine the total bandwidth available, the quality of playback, or current progress. This functionality however is common in HTTP streaming players; OSMF for example introduced Adaptive Streaming behaviour and Quality of Service (QoS) monitoring. Many platforms further instrument their players to provide constant heartbeat data back to a centralised server for the purpose of stream concurrency information, views, and so on.

HTTP delivery is not without its challenges. Because of the focus on adaptive bitrates, multiple transcoded profiles must exist for every asset on a platform. This can lead to large increase in storage and compute requirements. Several CDNs have attempted to claw their way back up through the value chain by allowing operators to provide a single high quality asset and do on-demand re-transcoding to various profiles at a cost premium – but this can prove difficult. Re-transcoding an asset must be done when that asset is unencrypted, which leaves content providers ultimately uneasy about storing plain assets outside of an operator controlled network.

**Managing the experience across multiple devices**

In order to provide consumers of OTT platforms with maximum flexibility for viewing content, a compelling service needs to be able to deliver a consistent user experience across different families of connected devices, such as games consoles, connected TVs, hybrid set-top-boxes and a range of mobile devices including smartphones, tablets and phablets.

**Form Factor**

Each type of device family has different form factors and methods of input (touch screen, remote control, gesture) which present challenges for the underlying software solution to resolve in order to provide multiscreen delivery. From a brand and usability position, it is important that the interface across different multiple devices remains consistent, but adapts to the unique features of the device. In order to achieve this, the implementation must focus on ensuring the information architecture of the service is designed in such a way that the presentation layer of the service works in an intuitive manner across each device type, with content being sized appropriately for each form factor.

**Certification**

Each device manufacturer may have an internal certification process that any application developed for the device needs to pass before being launched onto the platform. This certification process can add considerable overhead and cost to MPVDs who wish to deliver their service offerings to multiple connected devices.

**Content Protection**

Each different device family may only support a single digital rights management (DRM) technology. Therefore, in order to ensure that content can be played out in a secure manner, the OTT platform may require to encrypt content using different DRM technologies. This is an important consideration when planning which devices will be supported for an OTT platform.

**Device SDKs**

Each device may require expertise in different programming languages and SDKs. For connected TVs each manufacturer has implemented a different approach to how one develops for the target device in terms of language development and SDK functionality. Although the future may standardise towards HTML5 it is clear that each provider will still want to differentiate their device, meaning that the ability to deliver an OTT solution to multiscreen devices will still be a complex, challenging project.
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BOOTH C6025
ANTON/BAUER CHARGED WITH NEW BATTERY
Anton/Bauer, part of Vitec Videocom, a Vitec Group company, and a global provider of batteries, chargers, lighting and other mobile power systems for the professional broadcast, video and film industries, will introduce its newest lithium-ion (Li-Ion) battery, the DIONIC HD at NAB. Part of the company’s Logic Series of batteries, the DIONIC HD powers high-current applications in a lightweight and robust package, making it ideal for digital cinema cameras such as the Sony F65, RED cameras, ARRI Alexa, the Vision Research Phantom series and more.

Delivering up to 10 amps of power, the DIONIC HD is a 183Wh battery featuring special-application Li-Ion cell technology. Employing sixth-generation cell technology, the DIONIC HD incorporates the company’s latest software architecture and an improved LCD for superior safety and reliability in the most extreme environmental conditions. Weighing 40 percent less than a NiCad or NiMH battery, the DIONIC HD has 25 percent more capacity and will run a 30-watt camera, monitors and multiple accessories for more than six hours.

The DIONIC HD also includes the company’s new enhanced RealTime display. Simple and easy to understand, the display indicates both fuel gauge and remaining run-time data simultaneously, without requiring any setup.

BOOTH C4309
HITACHI’S NEW HD LINE
Hitachi Kokusai Electric America will introduce the SK-HD2200 full body HD production camera — a new top-of-the line studio and OB camera that features new 2/3-inch, 1080/60p, progressively scanned, (Ultra-Advanced) UAIT-CCDs, 1,100TVL resolution and 3Gbps HD-SDI signal handling. The company will also introduce the Z-HD6000 CMOS studio camera, which includes a new 2/3-inch CMOS camera processor.

BOOTH C6425
AUTOSCRIPT’S E.P.I.C. MOMENT
Autoscript will bring a range of its popular prompter displays and accessories to NAB, including the award-winning E.P.I.C. (Enhanced Prompting Information Centre) all-in-one prompter display and on-air talent monitor. The first production batch of E.P.I.C. units has already sold out and is being used for studio and OB broadcasts in countries including the US, Germany, Italy and Austria. Robin Brown, Product Manager, Autoscript, said, “It’s fantastic to see that E.P.I.C. is really gaining momentum. E.P.I.C. addresses many major concerns for today’s broadcasters – it simplifies studio equipment, reduces power consumption and enables easier location prompting.” Autoscript will also bring a range of LED TFT prompting solutions to NAB, along with the acclaimed VoicePlus voice activated prompting software, and a variety of innovative accessories designed to solve real-world challenges.

BOOTH SL8620
MEDIAPOWER AT NAB
European media technology solutions provider MediaPower will debut at NAB show this year. The company will launch three new products: Arkki, a media asset management solution-in-a-box; AirGo, an all-in-one production and play-to-air system; and NewsTouch, a touch-based, live presentation standalone appliance. MediaPower will conduct live demos of Arkki and NewsTouch during the show.

BOOTH N2513
MIRANDA STREAMS IN SME-1901
Miranda Technologies will launch its SME-1901 streaming media encoder module at NAB. The SME-1901 is suitable for a wide range of IP-based remote monitoring applications, which includes in-plant CATV replacement to provide IPTV access to multiple sources, whether in-plant or remote, to anyone who typically requires access such as management, engineering or operations. Key features of the encoder include core router and fan-in/fan-out distribution amplification and monitoring. The module also combines high density with high quality, providing H.264 video and high quality AAC audio encoding for up to 20 streams per frame; support for all common streaming protocols; and a six-port 3G/HD/SD distribution amplifier with support for fibre 1/0 via SFP cartridge.

BOOTH SL11808
ADDER SPEEDS UP
Adder Corporation, the digital keyboard, video, mouse (D-KVM) specialist, is to launch the DX500, a DisplayPort KVM extender at NAB. The DX500 extends two DisplayPort video streams and high speed USB (480Mbps), analogue audio and digital audio (SPDIF) over 300 feet (100 metres) of CATx cable. The link is capable of supporting a single 2560x1600 @60Hz screen or two screens running at 1080p resolutions. The link is lossless so every pixel is faithfully reproduced at the receiver unit. Also featuring at the show is the enhanced CCS4-USB command and control switch which includes new support features for complex keyboards and mice and screen identification module.
It’s all about ME, and how the Mobile Experience is energizing the transformation of Media & Entertainment. Second screens are enhancing television with interactive content and applications. Broadcasters and new services alike are making more programming available, fueling the flight from appointment-based viewing.

Continue your evolution at NAB Show® with solutions that will enable you to Meet Expectations for the creation and delivery of dynamic content that thrives in Multiple Environments. It’s a Marketplace Energized…showcasing tools and trends leading news and sports coverage, studio production, post, workflow and asset management as well as distribution technologies for every platform. Give yourself something to smile about. Register today!
DPA ROLLS OUT NEW MICS
DPA Microphones will introduce the d:facto II Vocal Microphone at NAB. Suitable for live music broadcasting, this latest addition to the d:facto line offers an extraordinarily natural sound with high separation and extreme SPL handling, giving users unlimited possibilities for their performances. The d:facto II provides the added benefit of a state-of-the-art adapter system that allows for seamless integration with many professional wireless systems. Christian Poulsen, CEO of DPA Microphones said: “The wireless systems currently available deliver very limited power to drive our high-end condenser capsules, so getting the sound quality we wanted was nearly impossible. We had to be creative and put a huge amount of work and thought into the electronic circuit of the adapter solution. We wanted to be completely true to the input of the vocalist, and with d:facto II we have reached this goal.”

LYNX TECHNIK LAUNCHES YELLOGUI
LYNX Technik AG is launching its new complementary software application, the yelloGUI that permits select yellobricks to be controlled and configured over USB using a PC.

With the new yelloGUI, users have access to a host of advanced settings and adjustments of the individual yellobrick that were not possible before.

The yelloGUI user interface, like the yellobrick modules, was designed to be simple and intuitive. Once the module is connected, a virtual image of the module is displayed showing the user all switches, controls and module indicators.

yelloGUI also displays status information such as the detected video format, HDMI output resolution and frequency, as well audio signals. Module settings can be changed with the click of a mouse. The internal signal flow inside the yellobrick is graphically displayed and dynamically changes when a setting is changed.

KINTRONIC LABS’ NEW UNITS
Kintronic Labs brings new antenna phasor cabinets to NAB. The company describes them as light and economical for “budget-minded” AM owners. Also new from Kintronic Labs will be an antenna tuning unit series, described as economical with typical wide audio bandwidth performance as higher-priced models, but without the non-essential features. Experts will be available to discuss FM antenna repair and rework along with field service, including FM antenna system sweeps to identify transmission deficiencies.

WATCHPAX FROM DATATON
Dataton and Show Sage will formally debut the new WATCHPAX media server. Although small in form factor, WATCHPAX is a powerful WATCHOUT player offering synchronised audio, video and lighting control capability, and taking full advantage of hardware-accelerated video playback.

Dataton WATCHOUT already has an established following within the broadcast community for its ability to enable the automation of multi-display shows in newsrooms, TV studios, live events and digital signage applications. The company believes highly portable and plug-and-play aspects of WATCHPAX will broaden this market still further.

“WATCHPAX is the perfect solution for creative producers wanting the functionality of WATCHOUT in situations where space is limited, such as broadcast studios and many outside broadcast and event locations,” says Fredrik Svahnberg, Marketing Director, Dataton.

“It means you keep the hardware as close to the display source as possible, not connected by long, expensive video cables. With your WATCHPAX media player and display sources set up in a compact area, you minimise potential loss of quality, downtime and install time.”

PRESTO FROM SONNET
Sonnet Technologies will introduce its Presto 10Gbe 1-Port and Presto 10Gbe Server 2-Port 10-Gigabit Ethernet (10Gbe) PCIe cards. These Sonnet adapter cards enable users to connect their computers and servers to high-speed infrastructure and storage systems using the 10Gbe standard, which offers up to 10 times the performance of Gigabit Ethernet, the common wired network connection included with most computers today. Data centres are adopting the 10Gbe standard increasingly for wired networking and specialised applications such as HD video editing using high-performance shared storage systems.

NEVION’S LIVE MEDIA NETWORKING
Nevion, a provider of next-generation managed media transport, will unveil a new broadcast solution for live media networking of all signals involved in a live production—regardless of locations. The Flashlink live media networking solution can be integrated seamlessly with broadcasters’ in-house networks to provide a comprehensive offering that also includes signal processing, routing and contribution.

Flashlink live media networking encompasses all live production signals for studios, events and campus networks where system build time is reduced through an easily configured, streamlined solution. The Flashlink solution provides 10Gbps uncompressed video transport, asynchronous transport of multiplexed audio, Ethernet, data and communications over IP and digital synch distribution - all with the highest fibre utilisation, zero latency and ultra-high quality required by today’s live video broadcasting.

The system design allows for scalability of the video layer without adding cost to any other network function. With seamless integration to broadcasters’ in-house networks, the solution enables streamlined management of the full production process, significantly speeding and improving the live production workflow.
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ScheduALL will unleash its next generation scheduling, now with smart technology at the NAB Show. ScheduALL 5 (S5) has taken workflow to an entirely new level: automating previously labour-intensive functions like slack capacity optimisation, media system integration and third-party connectivity, and so on.

S5 is a milestone in resource management software and precisely addresses the complexities of media, broadcast and transmission businesses. The smart technology in S5 automates workflow based on tunable business parameters that are required for each project. This smart workflow capability will connect, trigger and manage the entire workflow process.

“ScheduALL 5 is the beginning of a sea-change in scheduling. We continue to listen to the needs of the complex industries that we serve, and ScheduALL 5 is our most powerful solution to date,” said Rick Legow, President at ScheduALL.

“Our new smart technology bridges the gap between human-based and automated processes and will revolutionise the world of ERM software.”

The key features of S5 include smart technology, mobility, analytics, connectivity and media-centric workflow.

NETIA will showcase the latest version of its media asset management (MAM) platform, which allows users to manage all processes within the global production environment — from editing through post and distribution — through simple, easy-to-manage workflows and task automation, accessed through one unique and straightforward interface. With the NETIA CMS, users can connect all of their partners and vendors within a single production ecosystem, simplifying the sharing and managing of media assets. The latest version includes new features within its metadata management module. Enriched with a new metamodel editor, this graphical tool enables the user to manage and customise the metadata model structure. It includes a recording feature with which users can schedule specific recordings or continuous channel ingest. Video is stored in the MAM database along with corresponding transcript text files, generated by a speech-to-text engine.

Rohde & Schwarz will introduce the R&S EFL110/210 test receiver and the R&S SLG signal generator. The portable R&S EFL110/210 is ideal for testing cable TV networks to detect undesired electromagnetic emissions. The R&S SLG is a multichannel signal generator that can generate up to 32 satellite transponder signals simultaneously. The compact instrument can simulate an entire uplink/downlink band, effectively replacing complex, multiple-component solutions – for convenient testing of ground stations, satellite payloads, tuners and set-top boxes.

The company has also brought out a new software solution for monitoring and testing broadcast networks that enhances its measurement innovations. R&S BC-NETSTATE is a flexible, non-hardware-specific network management system that is extremely user-friendly. The software includes all major functionality such as error management, alarm correlation and network quality testing. Since each device at the transmitter site or on the network can be monitored, all device parameters can be scanned, processed and displayed.

BW Broadcast will launch V2, the next generation FM Transmitter line at NAB. BW Broadcast’s transmitters have been getting stations on the air for more than 15 years, and the company has LPFM certification for 12 of those. The tried and tested platform is now being taken to a whole new level with the latest launch.

The inclusion of multi-band DSPX audio processing means stations without a dedicated processor sound great, right out of the box. Those who already have external processing benefits from BW Broadcast’s dual-loop virtual VFO exciter and field proven ultra-low distortion modulator integrated into a great performing, highly stable FM transmission system.

Apantac will launch its new Tahoma IP Multiviewer, the latest addition to its Tahoma Universal input multiviewer platform. Tahoma multiviewers accept DVI, VGA, YPbPr, YC, Composite, HDMI and SD-SDI/HD-SDI inputs for multi-image display. In addition to the mix of broadcast and computer inputs, Tahoma IP accepts direct inputs of ASI, H.264 and MPEG4 at resolutions up to 1080P, and supports display of metadata such as close caption, AFD, and WSS. The Tahoma platform allows users to customise on-screen displays of graphics, including: borders, labels, fonts, tally LEDs, clock faces, logos, embedded audio, discrete audio meters and audio/video alarms. Video windows on the display may include multiple labels, and support UMD,OMD, IMD and standalone labels.
JVC ON YOUR SHOULDER

JVC Professional Products Company will be demonstrating the GY-HM70 ProHD camcorder that delivers 1080p HD at 60 frames per second at NAB.

“With the introduction of the GY-HM70, JVC immediately focuses on the entry-level professional video market with a very cost-effective shoulder-mount camera,” said Craig Yanagi, JVC national marketing and brand manager. “At this price, and packed with innovative features, the GY-HM70 will appeal to various market segments where budget is limited but a full-sized camcorder is the preferred choice, such as schools and universities, as well as event and wedding videographers.”

The camcorder has a 1/2.3-inch 12 megapixel CMOS imager and it records 1920x1080 footage in the AVCHD progressive format at 28 Mbps to SDHC/SDXC memory cards.

It comes with a 29.5mm wide-angle GT lens that offers 16x dynamic zoom performance.

BOXX TV REACHES “ZENITH”

Boxx TV will demonstrate a new transmitter and receiver for airborne filming. The system, which uses the latest version of the company’s Zenith transmitter and receiver, will be shown working with a remote controlled multi-rotor device at the company’s NAB booth.

Zenith, which is Boxx TV’s wireless ENG system for longer ranges, operates reliably over ranges of 1km and has achieved 30km distances in a point-to-point set-up. The company has produced a new lightweight model, weighing approximately 400g, for airborne applications. It uses H.264 encoding and 1080/60p and is offered in two versions, for HDMI or HD SDI input. The output from the receiver is delivered as HD SDI. The data rates and signal strengths are controlled using web-based software running on a laptop connected by a Cat 5 cable.

The Zenith transmitter and receiver operate in the licence-exempt 5.1-5.9 GHz band.

DALET DEBUTS MEDIA LIFE

Dalet will debut the Dalet One Cut video editor and Dalet News Suite expanding its Galaxy MAM platform. Dalet will also introduce Dalet Media Life, which leverages Galaxy’s new interface to automate workflows and tasks like mass-ingest, pre-editing, storyboarding, subtitling, captioning, versioning and distribution, from a single user interface. Dalet News Suite is a story-centric, MAM-based newsroom production system with tools for desktop scripting, video editing, graphics and multimedia tools. It supports content creation from ingest through automated playout, archive, and multiplatform delivery. Dalet One Cut is a real-time editor with essential functions including browse, preview, multiple tracks, rough-cut editing and trimmer, and timeline-based editing. It can be used in standalone mode in remote locations, or as a fully integrated editor in Dalet’s end-to-end workflow.

PIXELMETRIX EXPANDS PORTFOLIO

Pixelmetrix will introduce DVStor2 consolidator and Pelican-HD video encoder at NAB. Joining these new arrivals are the OTT media grinder (OMG) with service quality analytics, multi-channel video and audio quality monitoring systems, network management systems, and a host of monitoring tools offering broadcast intelligence to TV broadcasters and telcos worldwide. Also new are the Pelican-HD Video Encoder supports HD-SDI video with embedded audio, mini-XLR with balanced audio, up to 1080p video resolution, including MPEG-2 and H.264 formats.
The digital switchover

Digital switchover is the need of the hour as more countries complete their analogue switch-off and go digital.

There are many different ways for countries to complete the digital switchover. Not only has the process differed in terms of regulatory regimes, business models and technology adopted, but also in terms of the speed. These variations can be attributed to many factors. In some countries, regional obligations necessitate a speedy completion of the process. In others, frequencies must be vacated by broadcasters to allow for the introduction of new wireless telecom services. The number of households relying on analogue television as well as the geographical terrain of the country can also affect the speed of the process.

In December 2006, the Netherlands became the first country in the world to switch-off its analogue terrestrial television platform. In 2013, there are still many countries that have yet to launch a DTT platform, much less select a DTT standard.

From those countries that have completed the switchover, lessons have already been learnt. analogue switch-off requires the active participation of all stakeholders in the television industry, including national administrations, broadcasters, network operators and manufacturers, who need to support the initiative and take positive steps to allow for the completion of the process.

Strong leadership is needed to affirm when and how analogue switch-off will take place and define a clear roadmap. Viewers must have access to adequate information in a timely fashion. While the cost of digital switchover will vary among countries, sufficient resources must be available to support communication and marketing activities and help prepare to assist the vulnerable segments of the population.

Digital Dividend

Because digital switchover allows for the more efficient use of spectrum capacity, it is possible to allocate frequencies in the UHF band to new uses. Mobile telecom operators have applied pressure on governments for access to these frequencies, and many governments, enticed by the prospect of new revenue, have relented.

The ITU's Radio Regulations give mobile telecom operators co-primary allocation status in the 800 MHz band alongside broadcast services in all regions of the world as of 2015. Since 2007, the 700 MHz band can be used by both broadcast and mobile telecom services in the Americas, parts of Asia and the Asia Pacific.

In Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia, the 700 MHz band can be made available to mobile telecom services after 2015.

These changes in service allocations have allowed governments to generate significant new revenue. In its auction of licences in the 700 MHz band, the United States government generated $19 billion. In Italy, the auction of licences in the 800 MHz, 1.8 GHz, and 2.6 GHz bands generated €3.95 billion.

Further such allocations are understandably attractive to governments, and yet, the impact to the DTT platform is considerable.

First, in many countries, existing DTT networks will need to be moved to new frequencies in the UHF band. Changes will be necessary at transmission sites and viewers will need to re-tune their DTT receivers, if not adapt their antennas. The cost will vary depending on such factors as the number of DTT networks to be moved, the number of transmitters to be modified, the number of rearrangements necessary within the UHF band, and the number of households that must be informed of the frequency changes and must adapt their antennas.

Second, DTT services located in frequencies adjacent to mobile telecom services can suffer from interference. This can result in the degradation of existing DTT services if not the full loss of services. In the United Kingdom, the interference of mobile telecom services operating in the 800 MHz band is estimated to cause a loss or degradation of DTT services to 2.3 million households.

Finally, the DTT platform cannot ensure its future viability without the assurance of sufficient frequency capacity in the future. Not only is this frequency capacity necessary to ensure the continued provision of services, but also to allow the DTT platform to introduce new services such as HDTV, video-on-demand, 3DTV and, potentially, ultra high-definition (4HTV).

While new technologies, such as DVB-T2, can be introduced to increase spectrum efficiency, a regulatory regime is necessary that affirms the continued relevance of the DTT platform.

DigiTAG, the only broadcast industry organisation promoting DTT and protecting broadcast spectrum for broadcasters, has developed a new handbook with the aim of helping countries beginning the process gain a comprehensive overview of the topics that must be addressed. The handbook can be downloaded for free from www.digitag.org.
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