THE INSIDE TRACK

EXCLUSIVE BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT HOW DUBAI MEDIA INC. COVERED THE DUBAI WORLD CUP

INTERVIEWS
* Mohammad Abdullah, MD, TECOM
* Oman’s first filmmaker

NAB HIGHLIGHTS
* AVB in focus
* Top ten launches

BOLLYWOOD RULES
Chris O’Heam on TV trends in the Middle East
When we talk about going to Vegas to attend NAB, most people want to know what you do in your after-hours. But if you have been to Vegas many times over and have taken the trouble to endure the 18-plus hours on the plane yet again, I suppose you are not just there to party. This time, I decided not to take the routine PR tours and instead, went around the stands like every other attendee. It gave me the opportunity to queue up and watch the Super Hi-Vision footage shot by NHK, tinker with a few new cameras including the USD 1000 Blackmagic pocket camera, learn more about HEVC and AVB technologies, and attend a few conferences. It was the best decision I made. There's a lot about NAB launches within our magazine and online for those interested.

In the meantime, the hot topic this month is the EPL and I read an interesting blog by Nick Grande of ChannelSculptor on it. The rumours, as we go to press, get stronger that Al Jazeera Sport may have exclusive broadcast rights to the EPL in the MENA region. I can't imagine Abu Dhabi Media (ADM) giving those rights up without a fight. What would ADM do with the entire pay-TV platform it created just to accommodate the demands of the Premier League? Now, if Al Jazeera Sport does indeed manage to acquire the exclusive rights, will it adhere to some of those technical mandates that the EPL is used to demanding from most broadcasters or will it get away without pairing its boxes in time for the season? This time, it's not as straightforward a game as it has been in the past. We'll have to wait and watch.
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Live broadcast of the Dubai World Cup by DMI

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Jean-Claude Rahme has moved from Abu Dhabi Media to Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) as Technical Director.

Ammar Fawzy has joined Avid Middle East as Territory Account Manager.

SYNC MEDIA TIES WITH RED ARROW INTERNATIONAL
Dubai-based production company Sync Media has signed a formats representation and co-production deal with German content producer and distributor, Red Arrow International. According to the deal, Sync Media will exclusively represent and produce Red Arrow International's formats in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Speaking about the deal, Karim Sarkis, CEO of Sync Media said: “Demand for premium content across television and the web in the MENA region is higher than ever. By combining Red Arrow’s catalogue with Sync Media’s localisation expertise, we can create excellent programming for the region’s broadcasters, brands and audiences.”

Jens Richter, MD of Red Arrow International added: “[Sync Media is] perfectly positioned to intensify Red Arrow International’s presence in the Middle East and North Africa. They know exactly what broadcasters are looking for.”

NEW TV CHANNEL FOR OMAN
The Public Authority for Radio and Television of the Sultanate of Oman has announced a new television channel for the Gulf state although a launch date has not yet been announced. Oman Live will cover various local activities and events including celebrations, conferences, and seminars among other official and traditional activities, according to the government’s official news agency, ONA. The launch will include the opening of news bureaux in different governorates.

DUBAI ONE AIRS PEETA PLANET
Dubai One has begun to air Peeta Planet from last month. The social travel series influenced and directed by its followers and fans is hosted by Mohamed and Peyman Al Awadhi from Qabeela New Media. The series is the first of its kind in terms of influencing the content on traditional mediums such as television by online platforms and new media.

A brainchild of the Al Awadhi brothers, it showcases human experiences as the brothers travel around the world, in their national Emirati wear, meeting aspiring trendsetters and connecting with various cultures. The show is based on the interactions and suggestions of followers and members of the digital world who submit their suggestions and offer their insights on where to go, what to eat and who to meet while travelling. The show highlights non-traditional forms of travelling and encourages followers to “social travel” or to connect with like-minded interests for new travel experiences. Peeta Planet was first piloted and supported by twofour54, specifically Intaj and Ibitikar, of the Abu Dhabi Media Zone Authority as a production created by Qabeela New Media.

EGYPT’S AL-NAHAR TV CHOSES HYBRID 3D VIRTUAL STUDIO
Egyptian broadcaster Al-Nahar TV has purchased Hybrid 3D virtual studio solutions from Hybrid, a real-time graphics and robotic camera systems provider. The equipment will transform two studios used for daily news, entertainment and live sports programming for Al Nahar Entertainment and Al-Nahar Sports channels respectively.

Each studio will employ the same configuration of Hybrid products: two Silver II PTZF robotic camera heads, a Cobalt control panel with Mercury control software, and one camera in the ceiling for beauty shots using Hybrid’s Neon trackless virtual set solution.

“We’ve been extremely thorough in our review of the available virtual studio systems,” said Amr El-Kahly, Head of Al-Nahar TV Network.

“We feel confident that the Hybrid virtual studio solutions and robotic camera support will meet our needs. We’re looking forward to all of the design and operational benefits they’ll provide our network.”

Al-Nahar TV Network claims to be one of the top three TV networks in Egypt’s post-revolution era.
**FILM FRATERNITY MOURNS LOSS OF TIM SMYTHE**

Pioneering film producer, Tim Smythe, who was instrumental in putting the UAE on the global film scene, passed away on April 15. Smythe, 54, died after a long battle with cancer.

Smythe founded Filmworks, a Dubai-based production company in 1998. The company is best known for attracting big-budget Hollywood blockbusters to shoot in Dubai and at the helm of its operations, Smythe was the man behind bringing films such as MI4 - Ghost Protocol, Syriana, The Kingdom and Djinn to be shot in the UAE. He also facilitated the shoot of China's action thriller Switch, starring Andy Lau as a special agent, billed as China's answer to James Bond.

Smythe, who hails from South Africa, moved to the UAE in 1993 and within a few years, became well-known in the UAE film circuit. Associated closely with Dubai Film & TV Commission, Smythe is credited for kick-starting the feature film production industry in the country.

His passing away has been described as a big loss by prominent figures of the film fraternity. Having mentored new talent from the region, Smythe will be remembered fondly for leaving behind a rich legacy.

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**IRAQI CHANNEL BEGINS BROADCASTING FROM ABU DHABI**

Private Iraqi satellite channel Al Madar TV commenced broadcasting from twofour54, Abu Dhabi, last month. Al Madar TV will use twofour54 intaj’s production facilities, including its 500 sqm studio space and its Arabic-speaking production team, to enable it to broadcast 24/7.

Al Madar TV will air a mix of original and acquired TV shows to viewers across the Middle East with an emphasis on family general entertainment genres in full HD. Twofour54 intaj has provided an HD and tapeless solution, that includes content acquisition, media asset management, post production, broadcast services and connectivity.

Complementing existing news services currently broadcasting from Abu Dhabi, Al Madar TV is planning to expand soon into online broadcasting utilising the latest technological solutions.

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**MGI PARTNERS WITH NEVER.NO**

Systems integrator Media Group International has teamed up with never.no — a social media integration technology platform for TV broadcasters and producers. The new partnership represents MGI’s efforts to expand its remit into areas such as new media, IPTV, OTT and streaming — all of which are becoming increasingly important to traditional broadcast operations.

“We recognise that today’s broadcast industry needs to incorporate a wider range of technologies in order to give audiences the services they want,” stated Paul Hennessy, CEO of MGI.

“By forging partnerships with [such] partners, MGI is able to help customers embrace new technologies.”

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**FIRST ONLINE STREAMING SERVICE TO LAUNCH IN JUNE**

The region’s first online streaming media platform dubbed ‘icflix’ is set to launch its subscription and on-demand services in the UAE and the MENA region from June, with plans for a global launch later this year. The platform will stream licensed content from Hollywood, Bollywood and Jazwood (Arabic content) including movies, TV series, sports, and children’s programming to a range of connected devices including PCs, Macs, smart TVs, smart phones, tablets and gaming consoles.

The service will be available for a low monthly subscription fee, while selected premium content will be offered on an ‘on-demand’ basis.

---

**MJO TO BUILD NEWS PRODUCTION FACILITY FOR ETHIOPIAN BROADCASTER**

Fortune Engineering PLC, a major broadcast and AV systems integrator based in Ethiopia has selected MJO Broadcast to design and build a file-based news production and playout centre for its client TV South – a regional TV channel managed by the Ethiopian SNNPR mass media organisation.

The new facilities in Hawassa will enable TV South to deploy file-based workflows to create, manage, distribute and archive locally produced content, in both SD and HD. The project involves the provision and integration of playout automation, video servers and workflow from Pebble Beach, an Octopus newsroom system, Avid editing and NetApp storage, archiving from DiskArchive, and Ross Video graphics and broadcast infrastructure products.

“MJO Broadcast’s in-depth understanding of workflows and file-based solutions combined with practical experience of deploying technology in emerging markets has proved invaluable,” stated Abdul Duri, CEO Fortune Engineering.

“Their record of project managing and delivering complex systems has made them the ideal integration partner for this project.”
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ABU DHABI MEDIA COMPLETES FIRST PHASE OF DIGITAL ARCHIVING

Abu Dhabi Media (ADM) has announced the successful completion of the first phase of its digital archiving project. The nine-year programme aims to restore and protect the company’s historical videos, sound files and documents, by converting them into a secure digital format. Set for completion in 2020, the archiving project is divided into a number of stages, beginning with the foundation phase, which ADM has successfully completed on time over the past two years.

Abu Dhabi Media will be engaging an international archiving firm with expertise in digital archiving to partner with the company and oversee the remaining stages of the project, in order to ensure it is completed according to international best-practice.

The foundation phase of the digital archiving project began with a full review and audit of the existing historical assets within ADM. During this phase, more than three million of the company’s records, which were previously held on tape or in physical form at risk of damage, have been converted into a secure digital format. The files were also fully restored, improving image and sound quality, before being classified and archived for future use.

The second phase of Abu Dhabi Media’s digital archiving project is now underway, and will include the restoration, digital transformation and archiving of thousands of important documents and files from within the company’s records. This will build on the first phase of the project, and bring ADM closer to achieving a comprehensive digital archive that preserves both the company’s and the nation’s historical media assets.

NEW DEPUTY EXECUTIVE GM FOR AL JAZEERA CHILDREN’S CHANNEL

Saad Al Hudaiﬁ has been appointed Deputy Executive General Manager of Al Jazeera Children’s Channel. Al Hudaiﬁ has been given the new role in addition to his current position as channel’s Acting Director.

Al Hudaiﬁ will work closely with the Executive General Manager in broadcast and technical services, human resources, and other operational areas, while playing a key role in financial management and business initiatives.

JCC has accelerated its pace of development and innovation and Al Hudaiﬁ’s new role will be a welcome addition in achieving the organisation’s collective vision of being the premier channel for Arab children across the world.

BFE TO REVAMP SMC STUDIO

Shajarah Media Corporation (SMC) has selected BFE for a revamp of its master control and news studio broadcast infrastructure. The first phase to modernise the operation involves upgrading its news studio and to upscale it to HD (3G ready). The second phase focuses on their master control and central router. All of SMC’s studio furniture and equipment racks will be manufactured by BFE in Mainz, Germany.

Shajarah Media Corporation, the public broadcasting station of the emirate of Shajarah, is in charge of many TV channels and a few radio stations. The decision to modernise the studio comes in line with SMC’s goal to become one of the leading broadcasters in the Gulf.

STC AND INTEGRAL PARTNER WITH APPLAND

Appland, mobile web-based Android, iOS and BlackBerry white label app store platform, has entered the Middle East through a partnership with Saudi Telecom Company (STC) in conjunction with digital media solutions provider Integral.

As the first country in the STC Group, STC Saudi Arabia has launched the STC App shop (www.stccappshop.com), a premium mobile applications store with operator billing enabled. Appland will work closely with Integral to deliver a dynamic and active store management service that will grow and retain subscribers, as well as ensure close co-operation with the regional Arabic and global developer, publisher and advertising eco-system. Appland features one-click carrier billing, virtual currency, geo-location, quality assurance, active store management, easy scalability and fully integrated direct-to-subscriber marketing.

TURNER NAMES TAL HEWITT AS GM IN TURKEY, MENA

Turner Broadcasting has named Tal Hewitt to the role of VP & General Manager for its operations in Turkey, Middle East and Africa. Responsible for Turner’s entertainment channel portfolio including Cartoon Network, Boomerang and TCM, the role is an expanded remit for Hewitt who was previously GM for Turner’s operations in Turkey. Hewitt continues to report to Rani Raad, Chief Commercial Officer, CNN International and MD for Turner Broadcasting Turkey, ME & Africa.

ANGOLA’S TV ZIMBO TO UNDERGO MAJOR FACILITIES REBUILD WITH VSC

Broadcast systems integrator VSC Design has been appointed to supply and install the new broadcast infrastructure for TV Zimbo, which is to undergo the construction of a new broadcasting centre at its headquarters in Luanda, Angola.

TV Zimbo was Angola’s first independent TV channel and first started broadcasting in December 2008. VSC Design was key to the launch of the channel back then and has since provided on-going technical support for TV Zimbo.

These new facilities represent a considerable expansion and upgrade for TV Zimbo with the broadcaster moving to HD and tapeless operation and provision of facilities for a future second channel. The new broadcast centre will include a comprehensive newsroom with NCRS, two studios, post production and continuity.

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THE PERFECTION OF ‘2-IN-1’

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STEADYCAM WORKSHOP AT AM STUDIO

Advanced Media Trading LLC hosted a Steadicam Technique Workshop at AM Studio last month. Organised by Glidecam Industries, the workshop featured a hands-on training session on Glidecam stabilisers by certified Glidecam instructor, Stefan Czech from Germany.

The workshop carried demonstrations of HP2000, HD4000, Smooth Shooter, and X10 in addition to a discussion on the journey of camera stabilisers since their invention in 1976. Basic steadycam terms were explained and a detailed demonstration of how to use the systems properly was conducted. The eight-hour workshop also touched upon safety rules of using the equipment.

TAKHAYAL FOUNDER LEAVES

Discovery Communications, which recently acquired Dubai-based media company Takhayal Entertainment and its affiliated companies including Fatafeat, announced the departure of Takhayal’s founder Youssef El Deeb from the company.

Kasia Kieli, President and MD of Discovery Networks Central & Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa said: “Fatafeat has strong brand awareness and is very popular in the region, which is testament to the unique creativity and hard work of its founder Youssef El Deeb. For years he has invested in the company to develop the business and with his strong leadership that has resulted in a great team. We wish him every success with his future enterprises.”

Fatafeat broadcasts to approximately 55 million TV households in the Middle East and North Africa and the in-house studio contains a library of 700 hours of programmes.

YAH LIVE SUPPORTS PANEL DISCUSSION AT MIPTV

YahLive has recently provided its full support to the first panel dedicated to the Arabic TV industry that was conducted as part of MIPTV, the world’s leading international content market and showcase for television and digital entertainment held in Cannes (South of France) from 8-11 April 2013.

This came as part of YahLive’s efforts to support the advancement of the TV industry in the Arab world, enhance viewership experience and expand the customer service offerings through the latest innovations in the broadcast world comprising HD, 3D and interactive TV.

Mohamed Yousif, CEO of YahLive, said: “We are pleased to support the first Arabic TV industry panel focusing on the emerging trends in the Arab world to make use of the latest technologies especially high definition TV (HDTV) and the growing role it is playing. The panel comprised experts from the television industry who provided insights on how to challenge the existing satellite platforms that are increasingly broadcasting in both standard and high definition to the Middle East audience”.

MEDIACAST TO DISTRIBUTE ZOOM IN THE UAE

Dubai-based MediaCast has been appointed distributor of Zoom products for the UAE. Headquartered in Tokyo, Zoom has created a diverse line of audio products from effect processors, to rhythm machines, samplers and audio/video recorders.

“While researching and making forays into media production, we found that Zoom products are an overwhelming favourite among professionals and hobbyists alike,” said Peyman Dadpanah, MediaCast’s Business Director.

“In learning more about Zoom and its products, we find a particularly notable synergy between Zoom’s audio/video recorders and the post production segment. MediaCast is excited about this new relationship with Zoom and we look forward to a successful time ahead.”

SENHEISER’S DIGITAL 9000 IN BRUNO MARS CONCERT

Sennheiser Group used its newly launched Digital 9000 wireless system at the recent Bruno Mars and Paloma Faith concert held at the Dubai Media City Amphitheatre. The Digital 9000 is the result of the largest R&D project in the company’s history and this event marked the first time that the system was used for a live concert in the Middle East. In addition, a number of Sennheiser’s wireless systems, microphones and in-ear monitors were used in the concert, as per the technical rider outlined by the production teams of both the performers.

In order to overcome specific acoustic complexities of the venue such as reverberation from nearby buildings, Bruno Mars, Paloma Faith and the accompanying performers were equipped with a mix of Sennheiser’s G3 and 2000 series in-ear monitors.

ARN LAUNCHES FIRST FILIPINO RADIO STATION

Arabian Radio Network, Dubai, has launched Tag 91.1 a radio station dedicated to the Filipino community here in the UAE.

Tag 91.1 promises local content, 24 hours a day, aimed at the over 600,000 Filipinos who live in the UAE.

Mohamed Almulla, CEO of Arab Media Group, which owns ARN, said: “The Filipino community is underserved in media offerings. This is not only about music but also about local content and events. This is about offering more information on activities and enhanced services to the Filipino diaspora residing in the UAE.”

Mohamed Yousif.
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SPECTRUM GOES LOUD WITH DPA MICROPHONES
Melody House, distributors of DPA microphones have recently supplied Dubai-based firm, Spectrum Entertainment, with a large range of 4099 systems. The systems company provides stage, sound and light design, and has invested in the microphones to support various entertainment events throughout the year.

The 4099 is a clip microphone inheriting the sonic approach from DPA studio microphones to a new instrument microphone. The 4099 microphone and the comprehensive mounting system is meticulously designed and optimised for various applications that include bass, cello, drums, guitars, piano, saxophones, bass clarinets, brass, violins, mandolins and more.

"The 4099 microphones are designed, keeping in mind the requirements of rental companies today. By adding any of the other available mounts, the same microphone can be used for numerous instruments making it a great future-proof purchase," commented Salmaed Manivelu, DPA Product Specialist at Melody House.

VIDIGO ENTERS TURKEY WITH AVKOM TEKNOLOJI PARTNERSHIP
Vidico has partnered with Turkish systems integrator and solutions provider Avkom Teknoyloji to promote its broadcast solutions more actively in the country. The company plans to host its first roadshow in Turkey in June. CCO Reinout Limpers stated that Avkom, with its 18 years of experience in the Turkish broadcast industry, was the perfect partner for Vidico.

Avkom's CEO Zafer PEKÇ added: "Avkom is enthusiastic about the revolutionary broadcasting software Vidico develops. Vidico's products are user friendly, easy to use and very creative. These are some of the reasons why we're excited to work with Vidico. The Turkish broadcasting market will be very pleased to meet Vidico via Avkom. We are thrilled to be the new partner."

SONY PICTURES TELEVISION ARABIA EXPANDS PROGRAMMING
Sony Pictures Television (SPT) Arabia has expanded its non-scripted production slate with three new shows and one returning series in Egypt, Lebanon and Dubai. These new shows follow SPT Arabia's recent success delivering The Voice Arabia for MBC, which generated around 100 million viewers each week.

In Lebanon, SPT Arabia will launch a deal with Future TV to produce a new factual entertainment format called Sing It. Created by Talpa, this first season will run for 14 episodes. In Dubai, SPT Arabia will produce the territory's first local version of Millionaire Hot Seat, SPT's Who Wants to be a Millionaire? spin-off following a 26-episode deal with national broadcaster Dubai Television.

In the meantime, Egyptian broadcaster Al Hayst has renewed its deal for Millionaire Hot Seat, extending its run with 54 new episodes following the show's successful launch in 2012. SPT Arabia has also closed a deal to produce an Egyptian version of Let's Make A Deal, a gameshow format owned by Fremantle and represented in the region by SPT.

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A song and dance at the movies

Movies is one of the few genres where Emirati, Arab and Asian audiences truly overlap, and broadcasters are cashing in on the trend with dedicated movie channels.

Yash, a billionaire, loves Isha, a medical student, and hires Gaurav to watch her while she studies abroad and also woo her for Yash. As luck would have it, Isha falls in love with the poor andlowly Gaurav, instead. Meanwhile, the upper-class Taj is also in love with Isha and their marriage is arranged and... to cut a long story short, they all live happily ever after.

Still with me? You might be one of the tens of thousands of Emiratis and Arab Expats who watched Pyaar Ishq Aaur Mohabbat, one of the most popular movies shown this year.

What’s noteworthy here is that Pyaar Ishq Aaur Mohabbat isn’t an Arabic movie nor was it screened on an Arabic channel. It’s an all-song, all-dance Bollywood blockbuster shown on Zee Aflam, which among Emiratis, beat box-office hits such as Transformers, The Hunger Games and Salt.

The Bollywood-Aflam phenomenon is clearly something that’s generating interest in the market. Of the handful of new channels that have added this year, the Disney channel UTV Movies Arabia and B4U Aflam are both targeting this genre, while the existing channel Imagine Movies has also moved into the territory which previously Zee Aflam had to itself. Zee Aflam is still the undisputed leader, but a look at the figures shows some interesting trends as the new arrivals make their presence felt.

BOLLYWOOD-AFLAM (see Figure 1)

I’ve included MBC2 here as a benchmark, although, of course they focus more on Hollywood movies. Note how the new channels get closer to the established leaders as they build up marketing and viewer promotion.

It could be the plot of a movie itself – a well-established incumbent challenged by upstart rivals upsetting old loyalties. Though I can’t imagine any of them realising they are really in love with the other and getting married, and that probably spoils the ending.

What’s also interesting is that the audience isn’t cannibalised, perhaps a lesson for other genres and channels. It appears to be largely attracting new viewers. In the 13 weeks at the end of 2012, the average total weekly TRP is under 70, but in the first 13 weeks of 2013, it goes up above 90, so that’s additional viewing, with Zee Aflam and MBC2 remaining fairly stable or decreasing, but only very slightly.

It’s largely a Khaleeji audience. Arab Expats prefer the Arabic and Hollywood movies served up by MBC 2, Fox Movies and Rotana Cinema, although they dip into Bollywood too, occasionally.

Interestingly, it’s one of the few genres where Emirati, Arab and Asian audiences truly overlap. If I was an advertiser, I would certainly be looking at it as providing great bhangra for my buck.

The same channels among the South Asian audience display a similar trend. (see Figure 2) How does that translate into commercial returns though? Movies, in general, are a difficult genre in terms of audiences and ratings. A movie channel will certainly be looking at it as providing great bhangra for my buck. The focus in this market has been on time slots and cost rather than rewarding or paying for airtime by generating ratings points, but in future, we hope to see more focus on bringing in viewers and that will be good for movie channels.

FIGURE 1: BOLLYWOOD-AFLAM TARGET: EMIRATIS, UAE, OCT 2012 TO MARCH 2013

| Week | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | Oct-Mar |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MBC 2 | 26.6 | 24.9 | 19.6 | 16.4 | 17.7 | 25.8 | 20.4 | 16.8 | 22.1 | 24.9 | 30.1 | 26.4 | 28.6 | 26.1 | 24.1 | 22.3 | 18.5 | 31.3 | 19.3 | 29 | 14.3 | 11.4 | 21.9 | 20.6 | 17.6 | 22.7 | 21 |
| Zee Aflam | 47.5 | 31.6 | 22.2 | 37.6 | 42 | 27.3 | 28.3 | 26.2 | 54.2 | 38.2 | 29.5 | 51.9 | 43.6 | 31.3 | 24.6 | 17.7 | 46.3 | 39.4 | 38.1 | 40.4 | 53.6 | 40.7 | 43.2 | 41.5 | 20.3 | 28.7 | 27.4 | 35.8 |
| Imagine Movies | 1.3 | 3.8 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 6.9 | 10.1 | 15.6 | 6.6 | 11.1 | 10.3 | 14 | 11.2 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 8.8 | 9.6 | 6.6 | 2.3 | 7.8 | 16.5 | 18.4 | 24.5 | 16 | 13.9 | 18 | 15.7 | 11.3 |
| B4U Aflam | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7.2 | 15.4 | 14.2 | 11.9 | 79.5 | 10.7 | 16.1 | 27.3 | 27.6 | 29.2 | 19.3 | 79.9 | 74.1 | 9.1 |
| UTV Movies Arabia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7.2 | 2.2 | 1 | 2.2 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 2.6 | 0.6 | 4.2 | 6.1 | 7.7 | 5.1 | 2.4 | 4.3 | 7 |
The trick is to predict the types of audience watching each movie or channel, which is of course what advertisers want to know when they part with their cash.

In general, the audiences for movies are mainly male. You might even be surprised that a movie like Titanic is 60% male (Arab Expats) which is in line with the overall population, going up to 75% for an action movie like Ninja Assassin. Even the Bollywood movies get a mostly male Emirati audience, with 55% male viewing for Do Knot Disturb.

Finally, there’s always more than one way to produce research and judge what makes a successful movie.

This table combines multiple viewings. The Angelina Jolie movie Salt, for example, ranked 5th in all HHs at midnight on Wednesday, March 20 after being 6th on Thursday, February 14, also at midnight, and there were several more transmissions. Combine the viewing and it ranks 4th overall.

The list would look very different if we only looked at individual programmes. Inexplicable as it may be to martial arts fans, Ninja Assassin screened only once, yet was 2nd in individual programmes and still comes in at number 5 on combined viewing. On an individual transmission basis, the top Emirati programme would be Beverley Hills Chihuahua, but that might be a plotline where fact is stranger than fiction. PRO

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

FGC's capabilities cover the design, implementation, integration and support of the most sophisticated systems. Additionally, FGC provides turnkey solutions in all systems including high-capacity Media Asset Management and Digital Archiving systems.
DMI’s broadcast of this year’s Dubai World Cup was special in more than one way. Not only did DMI play all of the roles of a host broadcaster for the first time in the history of the event, but also relayed the footage to more than a billion people worldwide, simultaneously in English and Arabic. Vibhuti Arora caught up with the DMI team for an exclusive peek into how they pulled it off
The world’s richest horse race culminated in a spectacular show of thoroughbreds vying for top positions on March 30. With the prize totalling USD 27.25 million, the stakes were high and so was everybody’s interest in the event. The showcase of nine races was estimated to be watched by one billion people in 150 countries worldwide, and the company that made it possible was Dubai’s state broadcaster, Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI).

DMI has been broadcasting the races since the very first edition of the event, in 1996. A lot has changed in the past eighteen years. With every passing year, the event has gotten bigger and better. As the DMI crew tells us, every year they introduce something new to up the profile of the races that they bring to people’s homes across the globe.

This year marked the first occasion when DMI was performing all of the roles of a host broadcaster. The entire production pipeline was filled by DMI, with very
Have you ever wished for an affordable HD lens?

The new XA20sx8.5BERM from Fujinon makes your wish come true. You can look forward to a sharp HD image resolution and a long focal length range from 8.5 to 170 mm. Thanks to the built-in 2x extender, you can increase this to as much as 340 mm. All built into a robust, ergonomic housing for a surprisingly attractive price. Fujinon. To see more is to know more.
little outsourced assistance. Right from production to packaging of the event, complete with VFX and graphics, was done in-house by DMI.

At the helm of the production team was Saleh Lootah, Chief Technology Officer of DMI. According to Lootah the team was ready to take up this kind of challenge.

“The Dubai World Cup this year was a stride forward for us in expanding our infrastructure. The broadcast of the World Cup has definitely given a boost to the team’s confidence. The execution of the entire project in-house without outsourcing crew or equipment was an important milestone for us.

“The preparations began right after IBC last year in September when we finalised the deal to procure the RF links from Vislink,” says Afzal Lakdawala, Head of Technology Planning and Projects, DMI.

“We went live after three months of intense planning, which involved procuring the links, mapping the entire infrastructure for camera positions and coordinating between different departments to carry out their respective jobs. Our packaging and promotions team also debuted with a complete in-house promotional package this year for the Dubai World Cup.”

DMI made a significant investment in procuring the RF HD links from Gigawave, that helped greatly in executing the production.

“Most of our equipment this year was our own, which supports our initiative to source everything in-house so that our dependency on outside vendors reduces to a bare minimum,” adds Lakdawala.

DMI’s channels including Dubai One, Dubai Racing SD and the newly-launched HD channel (especially for the event) and Dubai Sports channel carried the event.

Production
DMI had the entire area covered with cameras extending over an all-weather surface and 2400m turf course in the Meydan Grandstand, which has a capacity to house more than 60,000 spectators. Two OB vans were deployed at the site.

The OB vans that DMI acquired in 2010 are each kitted with EVS production suite for slowmotion and super slowmotion.

John Fee, Outside Broadcast Manager with DMI speaking about the scale of the event says, “From the moment the gates open to the finish line we are the ones with the cameras and we give the feeds to everybody.”

Fee has been associated with the Dubai World Cup for many years. He has seen it grow over the years. From an eight-camera analogue set-up eighteen years ago it has grown into a 30-camera HD set-up today.

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The OB vans received output from 12 cable cameras and 13 radio cameras positioned all across the racecourse.

Explains Fee, “The workflow for us began with live feeds and live mixing, and recording on EVS - hard disk recorder. Then we took the recorded results in post production edit stations for studio editing.”

He adds, “There were cameras on the balconies, one on a moving vehicle (chase vehicle) that went along the tracks where the horses ran, one on a helicopter and cameras at the start and the finish lines. We have been using 12 Sony1400s and Super Slowmotion Sony3300. This year the equipment was enhanced with 10 RF links and a couple of Cineflex cameras on a helicopter and a moving car were also used to track the races. The closely packed network ensured no moment was missed.”

The camera positions were decided three months in advance during a meeting with a team for the world feed and the DMI team to take a survey of Meydan. One of

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Case studies for customized designs
- Systems supplies & after-sale support
- System integration & professional services
- Commissioning and training
- Project management, staging and testing

Integrate Smarter !!

DUBAI Office
Office 2103, Concord Tower | Dubai Media City
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IRAQ Office
Bldg.19, St. 3, District 901 | Abu-Noas Rd., | Baghdad - Iraq
T +964 1 719 53 57 | F +964 1 719 35 49
E-mail: info@avsol.net | www.avsol.net

fb.com/avsol.net
the two OB vans arrived on location a week before and the second one landed three days prior to the event. Fee informs, “We took our positions at least an hour before going live, after a full day rehearsal a day before the actual event.”

In addition to hosting the high-profile event in opulent style, a first for Meydan this year was the installation of the largest screen in the world that played five different feeds at any given time. The live feeds were sourced from DMI’s OB vans.

Transmission
Just a month before the races began, DMI procured ten of Gigawave’s new Clip-On four wireless camera transmitters with H.264 encoding. These enabled the broadcaster to run a robust modulation and provide broadcast quality video and audio at 12Mbps with low delay back to their outside broadcast vehicle.

DMI chose Vislink equipment for RF links and remote camera racking of wireless cameras, including the chase vehicle and the helicopter, totalling thirteen live links.

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Equipment

The recent deal between DMI and Vislink featured Vislink brands including Advent Communications for satcom, Link Research for wireless cameras and Gigawave for portable microwave and wireless cameras:

10 x clip on 4-cam ‘high definition’ ‘low delay’ camera TX unit
- Operating band: 1.97-2.7GHz (0.5MHz Stepsize) H.264 DVB-T, SDI video input to SMPTE-292M (HD) and SMPTE-259M (SD). Integral H.264 encoder and digital COFDM modulator. 16 pre-set RF frequencies.
- Includes 1x clip-on camera Omni transmit antenna
- Includes 1x transit case

9 x triax based diversity receiver system
- 1 x Gigawave MVL-HD3 HD diversity ‘low delay’ receive IF control unit: 19” 2U rack mounted. Equipped for SDI output to SMPTE-292M (HD) and SMPTE-259M (SD) 4-channel high quality analogue/AES audio and DVB-ASI outputs. Complete with integral H.264 & MPEG2 decoder and digital COFDM demodulator. Colour video monitor and IF inputs. Providing full remote control of RF head unit and remote frequency selection. 220VAC and 10-50VDC working with automatic AC priority.
- 4 x 13dBi Gigawave fan beam antenna: 2.5GHz RHCP with ‘N’ type connector and RF cable.
- 2 x adjustable fan beam bracket: to allow mounting of mvl-hd3 head and 2 x fan beam antennas.
- 2 x Gigawave tripods: complete with pan tilt head and carry case

4 - 2 x Gigawave MVL-HD3 compact receiver head unit: working in the 2.2 to 2.7GHz band (500MHz bandwidth), with integral linear (digital) LNA, 2x “N” type connectors, 16 pre-set RF frequencies and LEMO triax connector.

5 - 2 x Gigawave MVL-HD3 compact receiver head unit: working in the 1.9 to 2.4GHz band (500MHz bandwidth), with integral linear (digital) LNA, 2x “N” type connectors, 16 pre-set RF frequencies and LEMO triax connector.

5 x barrel booster 2.0-2.7GHz
- Model L3211-2027. Small, lightweight amplifier which fits directly to output of a wireless camera transmitter. Frequency range 2.0-2.7GHz. Includes ALC in order to provide a constant output power of 750mW type and 1.0W max for input power of 10-250mW. Wide operating DC input range (9-28V) either phantom powered via the RF output of a L1500 or via a 6-pin LEMO connector with supplied Lemo STR & IDX DC cables. The L3211 incorporates LDPD (link digital pre-distortion) for improved adjacent channel rejection, integral harmonic filtering and a power-save mode.

1 x HD handheld RX4 1.95 - 2.7GHz
- Using active signal “maximum ratio combining” (MRC) the unit accepts signals from two antennas to significantly enhance the demodulated performance and increase the operating range. Video decoding may be MPEG2 and H.264/MPEG4 with automatic selection.

3 x digital RF amplifier HPA-D series 2.0 - 2.5GHz
- Input 0.5W output 10 Watt PA
- Power 11 to 30VDC 120 Watts

2 x COL antenna
- RHCP 1.9 - 2.3 GHz
- RHCP 2.2 - 2.6 GHz
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To reduce triax requirements, Gigawave MVL-HD3 systems with their diversity heads and single triax connection to the control and decoder unit were used, halving the length needed. The programme feed from the OB vehicle was then broadcast using Gigawave MVL-HD2 point-to-point links to Abu Dhabi and Dubai for worldwide distribution.

DMI decided to go with Gigawave for a number of reasons including the integrated triax cable receiver option since Meydan stadium already had triax cables within its infrastructure and the fact that the DMI crew was familiar with this equipment. The initiative also comes in line with DMI's strategy to have MPEG4 high definition.

Mohammed Fardan, Head of Operations at DMI explains, “We began work on the project three weeks in advance and started rigging by mid March. There was a total of 45 crew assigned from just the operations department. The brief given to us was no different than the previous years as with every successive edition of the event we try to make it bigger and better and I think we succeeded in doing so this time too.”

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Fadi Said Izzaldin, Head of Creative Services at DMI, “The integration between real footage and 3D was the highlight of the campaign. Last year we did the entire footage with real shots using 10 horses, no VFX was used. This time we used the same number of horses to shoot but did a lot of work in post production to create an effect of hundreds of horses running on the Shaikh Zayed Road with the help of 3D and compositing from different plates. The Epic camera was used to shoot the images of the horses for 4K resolution at 100 FPS. Explains Izzaldin, “The chunk of this job was done during post production and we needed as much resolution as we could manage to track, pan and scan the images, when we placed the horses. A wide range of applications was used such as RedCine for primary colour correction, Adobe CS, Avid DS, nuke and lightwave, among others.”

A comprehensive graphics package for the day including countdowns, live graphics, scripting and coding in VizRT. Fillers and other elements were added to it later.

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“Dubai World Cup 2013 had a series of firsts this year
For the first time ever DMI ran simultaneous programming in Arabic as well as English. Two different studios were running, one in English and another one in Arabic.

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Lootah elucidates, “We plan to shift to full HD, file-based tapeless environment by 2015 and this is a step forward in the right direction. We also hope to achieve the MAM pipeline by then. We are completing our HD upgrade this year, and also upgrading the MCR, creative and post production with the latest software and equipment. The brief given to us was no different than the previous years. As with every successive edition of the event, we try to make it bigger and better and I think we succeeded in doing so this time too” Mohammed Fardan, Head of Operations at DMI.

Fadi Said Izzaldin, Head of Creative Services, DMI, “We provided a unified signal and live feeds were available on the final day of the races in addition to the signal available on satellite for uptake. We began to deploy the equipment a week in advance which gave us more time to test, which in turn was a big confidence booster for our crew as well.”

The procurement of the new Vislink equipment, the team agrees was a good investment and will turn out to be a cost saving in the long-term, as hiring involves huge costs. Dubai World Cup 2013 had a series of firsts this year. For the first time ever DMI ran simultaneous programming in Arabic as well as English. Two different studios were running, one in English and another one in Arabic.

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Visual effects have come a long way. 18 years ago, Forrest Gump, came about as a groundbreaking movie with computer-generated imagery (CGI) that made it possible to present the fully-limbed Gary Sinise as an amputee. At the time, visual effects were just a fraction of the movie, comprising up to 20 minutes of the entire film. Today, entire movies can be conceived and created digitally. The much acclaimed Life of Pi, winner of this year’s Visual Effects Academy Award, has used some sort of visual effects in every scene. The common element that runs through both these films is the extensive use of Autodesk technology to create visual imagery that looks as good as real.

This year’s Academy Award nominations for best visual effects and all five nominees for best animation, including Life Of Pi, The Avengers, Argo and Brave, used visual imagery extensively. Autodesk Maya and other software tools were used to create everything from animation to rendering, modelling and visual effects.

“The five nominated movies contained a total of 7,754 visual effects shots and brought together 30 visual effects studios (many of who worked on multiple films) in more than 10 countries.

“Maya was used to help create at least 13 films nominated for Academy Awards in this year’s ceremony,” informs Chris Bradshaw, SVP, Media & Entertainment, Chief Marketing Officer, Autodesk.

The technology has evolved from stop-motion, claymation and animatronics to greenscreens, CGI and animation, full 3D environments, motion capture and stereoscopy. The coming years will see truly realistic digital actors with accurate facial animation and hair. Virtual production techniques will improve and become more pervasive.

Technological innovation is enabling artists to focus less on technical obstacles and more on telling stories.

“For digital imagery there’s no looking back as digital artists continue to challenge reality, making it increasingly difficult for audiences to distinguish between what is computer generated...
and what is real. In future, more VFX production pipelines will be distributed globally and will operate 24/7, helping to grow the talent pool of artists around the world,” adds Bradshaw.

One of the most exciting examples of visual effects is *Life of Pi*, a film that pushed technology barriers to create very realistic visual imagery.

**THE MAKING OF LIFE OF PI**

The film adaptation of Yann Martel’s novel *Life of Pi* required the visual effects and design work of hundreds of artists.

“The tiger that primarily appears in the film is a digital creation from the effects house Rhythm & Hues (R&H). Artists developed each layer of the animal’s physical make-up, starting with the skeleton which they used to control basic movements then adding the muscle, skin and fur,” explains Bradshaw.

Rhythm & Hues, an international animation and visual effects studio, used Autodesk software including Maya and Mudbox as part of its global pipeline to help deliver 446 stereoscopic 3D visual effects shots for the film. The visual effects work included the film’s computer-generated Bengal tiger, a breaching whale amongst dozens of ocean creatures and more than 110 sky environments.

The production team relied on a global pipeline consisting of Maya for modelling and matte painting, Mudbox for displacement maps and texture painting, and Naiad fluid simulation technology for water simulations, as well as several proprietary animation, compositing, rendering, fur and grooming tools.

During production, Rhythm & Hues collaborated with post production house MPC to ensure that the computer-generated tiger would interact realistically with ocean environments developed by MPC. Using Maya as an intermediary to trade assets, Rhythm & Hues was able to quickly and easily convert their proprietary assets to Maya and share them with MPC.

**SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT LIFE OF PI**

85% of shots featuring the tiger are computer generated (CG); only 24 shots in the film include a real tiger. Six tigers were brought on set for eight weeks in Taiwan.
R&H was tasked with creating varied simulations for the different areas of the tiger’s body to ensure that its muscles moved properly when flexing. The team had the foundational knowledge they needed to complete the task from past muscle work on "Hulk" and skin simulation on "Night and Day."

One of R&H’s greatest challenges on the film proved to be creating realistic tiger interactions with the various ocean environments. Drawing on reference material footage of tigers shot in sanctuaries and zoos prior to production, digital artists were able create realistic facial and body expressions for the tiger. Ang Lee, Director, Life of Pi, without performance capture technology. A professional tiger trainer was then brought into the screening room to assess the realism of each movement.

The CG tiger had 10,000,000 digital hairs, each piece made up of two different levels – the actual hair and guides used to control its flow and motion. In one scene, there is a 360 degree shot of the boat as it is immersed under water. To design realistic aquatic simulations, such as splashes, bubbles and foam, that would interact with the CG tiger required detailed animation. Using its international pipeline, the R&H team was able to overcome these challenges to achieve the desired aesthetic and deliver a truly beautiful scene.
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Global digital cinematography moves beyond rentals

Digital Cinematography seems to be moving more towards owned than rental units unlike the film era, where rental was the more common practice. This is highlighted in Digital Cinematography World tm 2013 that was published in April, following the NAB Convention. The global study looked at DC equipment use and habits amongst four current key segments including motion picture and episodic TV production/post, mobile/OB, independents and rental houses. In all, 1973 professionals responded to a survey conducted in USA, Americas, Europe, Middle East/Africa and Asia-Pacific.

The study indicates that rental is not as dominant as it used to be, and more professionals are opting for ownership of the main means of movie and episodic TV production. This is particularly pronounced amongst independents. While the industry has indicated that broadcast support is being sought, they are, apparently, not the only avenue for the expansion of professional ownership.

In all, 12 product genres were studied, with an aim to quantify them and establish their respective installed bases and growth potential. Among them were cameras, camcorders, DSLRs, cinema lenses (including primes), servers and storage/recorders, lighting, cinema sound, editing and graphics, creative software, tripods and supports, displays and production switchers.

While it remains somewhat difficult to pinpoint why purchases rather than rentals seem to be a growing trend in the digital cinematography market, when film was so much a rental-only market, indications lead to a few contributory factors. Among them, the relative low cost of entry regarding key products such as 4K cameras, the existence of massive quantities of older yet adaptable lenses, including primes, the rise of a broad number of independents and the relative ease of producing movies and episodic TV with electronic gear.

This has further been enhanced by the success of some early 3D movies many of which were made possible by the use of HD and also 4K camera technology. But, unlike 3D, for which enthusiasm has waned dramatically, the interest in 4K (and other K) has continued to build, and this has been most pronounced, while not exclusively, within the main segments of the emerging digital cinematography market.

Ownership behaviour obviously varies by segment, region, product genre and brand. One example of limits, is the fact that with a substantial existing base of already owned lenses from the film era as well as from still cameras, applicable in many cases and re-purposeable, purchase of new primes or zooms has not been quite the runaway success story it could have been. So, the development of DC, despite the excitement it is generating and the opportunities it represents, requires some moderation in assessment.

The forward going assessment is that the market is expected to continue to grow, may attract broadcasters, however slowly, and ultimately spread into institutional segments of the overall market. For now, use of the DC technology is compact. Among the more interesting technology trends tracked in the report was that of most common frame rate use.

Middle Eastern and African respondents, queried about their most preferred frame rates used, indicated that 30fps was the most common setting utilised. The second most popular frame rate that was indicated was 24fps. The third mentioned, although fairly slight, was 60fps. One explanation for the ranking is that this study tracked both movie-making and episodic TV production. Trace amounts of other frame rate settings, at 48fps and 55fps respectively, indicates some interest in experimentation with higher frame rates.

Douglas I. Sheer is the CEO and Chief Analyst of D.I.S. Consulting.
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In a candid chat with BroadcastPro ME, Mohammad Abdullah, Managing Director of TECOM Media Cluster, gives an overview of the milestones so far and what lies ahead.

TECOM Media Cluster has witnessed unprecedented growth in the last year. 2012 was an exceptional year for the media cluster that comprises Dubai Media City, Dubai Studio City, and International Media Production Zone (IMPZ) as it saw notable expansions from its business partners. The media cluster expanded to more than 230 thousand sq. ft., adding 257 new business partners to its portfolio.

The global business information company, Thomson Reuters, increased its footprint within Dubai Media City while broadcaster and broadcast service provider, View Mobile moved from Dubai Media City to Dubai Studio City, and Costra Group, a commercial retail design company expanded its operational space in IMPZ.

At an operational level, Dubai Studio City completed the construction of its first soundstage, with two more due later this year. The 15,000 sq. ft. facility is a first of its kind in the region. Mohammad Abdullah, the head honcho of TECOM talks about all that and more...

Tell us a little about yourself and how you came to this present role at TECOM.

Mohammad Abdullah: I started my career as a broadcast journalist and worked for Emirates Media and Abu Dhabi TV before joining the media cluster. My previous experience gives me a wider perspective to look at issues as it has happened so far, especially after the downturn of 2007-2008. Looking at the trend, growth will be the order of the day for the next few years.

Out of the 257 new companies licensed in 2012 across Dubai Media City, Dubai Studio City, and IMPZ, 233 licensees were new entrants into the Emirate. Most of these are streamed from the film and TV, new media, event management, as well as the services sectors, reinforcing Dubai’s global status.

What role has Dubai Film and TV Commission played in propping up TECOM?

Dubai Film and TV Commission was a new initiative launched last year to promote the emirate as a filming destination for local, regional and international productions across a range of mediums, including film, television, corporate videos, advertisements and online content. This came about after we noticed certain growth in production of TV as well as films. There was a definite demand for such a body to nurture talent and to widen Dubai’s scope as a production hub.

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A successful ongoing short film contest held for three years that is combined with a hands on visual story telling workshop held in local schools. This initiative aims to develop young Emirati’s passion for media.

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environment to companies to flourish by providing them with international standard facilities and state-of-the-art infrastructure.

Big projects such as the soundstages and the Stargate partnership with MBC are going to be game-changers as we expect a lot of movement in the production segment once they are fully established. We are very proud of this initiative and the soon-to-be-ready 50 thousand sq. ft. area soundstage space will add yet another chapter to the growth of the media cluster.

In the coming year, we expect significant growth in mobile internet advertising across the region, in line with an overall rebound across advertising, in general.

We also expect an increase in transparency in the television advertising sector as new tools for audience measurement become more prevalent across the region.

This should lead to greater investment as the industry will have more clarity on how to monetise content.

**What will the new entrants bring to Dubai and what are your expectations from these partnerships?**

While production has been in the spotlight with companies such as Deluxe and Serena setting up shop here, the news sector too has shown strong growth potential for TECOM. We are proud to have Asahi Shimbun, Japan's second largest newspaper with a circulation of more than 10 million; Anba Moscow (Ria Nostovi), a Russian state-owned multi-lingual news agency, and Euronews, a pan European multilingual news TV channel.

**How do you propose to bring in more business? What steps are being taken to:**

Mohammad Abdullah, Managing Director of TECOM Media Cluster

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**“Five years from now we will be expanding further. There is huge potential for growth and success lies in identifying the right areas of growth and tapping into the potential to gain from it”**

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encourage that? What kind of facilities do you offer to new businesses planning to gain a foothold in the media cluster?

We offer several incentives and facilities to attract new businesses. Our objective is to provide a knowledge-based ecosystem and our offerings don’t end at providing visa and real estate. There’s more to it.

In addition to providing the visa, office space, and a one-stop shop for setting up a media business in Dubai, we offer on-going support to our business partners. There are regular networking events and we even lobby for services that we can provide to our partners to give them an environment that is conducive for growth.

Our lobbying for a people meter initiative was a success. Our sister zones in the information and communications technology (ICT) value chain offer a healthy symbiosis for the nurturing and growth of our partners. Then there’s the education zone, which also offers a support system. We have special products to support freelancers, small-and-medium companies; whether it’s providing them with business centres for giving them their own administrated services or other facilities. We regard them as important partners in our growth.

Have you followed any similar models like the media city in Singapore?

There are media clusters in Singapore and Manchester and other places around the world but Dubai has its unique offerings, and for that matter, each media zone offers a unique set of opportunities to their respective clients.

We are located in the heart of the Arab region, which puts us in a very strong position to cater to the 300 million Arabic-speaking population here.

It’s not only the media cluster but the whole package that Dubai as a city offers. It’s an international city and the media cluster compliments that.

Our target audience resides in the Gulf and the wider Middle East, where we have an edge because of the common language.

With regards to film and production, we see a strong potential in the subcontinent as well. Recently, we have seen interest from China with the establishment of major Chinese production companies such as CCTV.

What projects would you like to see here?

My dream is to build a thriving community within the media cluster to cater to different segments of the media in order to create better opportunities for businesses. In the success of these companies lies our success.

It’s not always the big names that raise the profile of your product. Take for example, the partnership between Yahoo and Maktoob, the latter was a small start-up when it entered into this partnership. It did not start big but developed over time. Similarly, we supported Freej when it was newly established and today, it is a well-known brand name.

I can name several Emirati companies that began from scratch to grow into successful enterprises over time.

Where do you see TECOM five years from now?

Five years from now, we will be in expansion mode. There is huge potential for growth, and our success lies in identifying the right areas of growth and tapping into the potential to gain from it.

We are investing in the infrastructure as well as building the knowledge pool to establish a thriving media community here. We will see many of our ongoing projects come to fruition in the next few years. The foundation stone has been laid, we need to build on that.

What are the lessons learnt since you have been in the business?

One important lesson that I have learnt is the importance of closeness between us and our business partners. We maintained close ties even during the downturn, which goes to show our level of commitment to them. We are partners in growth.

When we invite a company to set up a business in any of the business parks, we set out on a journey together. It’s an ongoing partnership and doesn’t end at leasing out space or signing a contract.

There are many challenges such as piracy to name one, but we stand together to seek solutions to counter them.

Do you see any gaps in Dubai that you feel is a challenge for the media cluster?

There are gaps in certain areas as nothing is perfect, we can only strive to achieve perfection. We need to nurture local talent, especially Emirati talent and give them the right avenues to grow.

Building our local talent pool is one of our key focus areas, in the current scenario it needs greater support.

What are the key focus areas that you intend to improve over the next few years?

We want to encourage production and content generation locally.

The Dubai Studio City’s soundstages are a space to watch, as they are poised to be game-changers in this field. Dubai is hosting 14% of public broadcasting channels, which put us in a very good position to generate more content locally.

We will also keep a close watch on new media. Another key development area is events management, which holds tremendous potential.
There are media clusters in Singapore and the media city in Singapore? Have you followed any similar models like partners in our growth. We regard them as important their own administrated services or other with business centres for giving them companies; whether it's providing them support system. We have special products the education zone, which also offers a growth of our partners. Then there's technology (ICT) value chain offer a in the information and communications initiative was a success. Our sister zones that is conducive for growth. Our lobbying for a people meter tapping into the potential to gain from it. Identifying the right areas of growth and our success lies in expansion mode. There is huge potential five years from now, we will be in ve years/ years where do you see TECOM successful enterprises over time. 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This year, GFF ran an impressive line-up of 169 films from 43 countries, with 93 of them from the GCC. There were 78 world premieres, 15 international premieres, 42 Middle East premieres and six GCC premieres among other highlights during the festival.

Alongside the screenings, there were awards, master classes and networking sessions. The festival ran from April 11 to 17 at Grand Cinemas Dubai Festival City, with all screenings free to the public.

Wadjda, the first film shot entirely in Saudi Arabia by the country’s first female filmmaker, Haifa Al Mansour, was screened on the opening gala. The choice of the inaugural film could not have been better as it symbolises what the festival stands for. Patronised by the GFF, Wadjda was extremely well received at several international film festivals, including DIFF. It won top prizes at the Venice Film Festival with screenings in 12 countries. It was the third most watched film in France.
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the felicitation of Kuwaiti stage and film actor, writer and arts administrator, Mohammed Jaber, an icon of the artistic scene in Kuwait and the wider GCC for over 50 years, Jaber was honoured by GFF on the opening night. Jaber performed the lead role in the touching 2012 GFF film Al Salhiyah, directed by Kuwaiti filmmaker Sadeq Behbehani, which follows the life of an ageing businessman.

The festival showcased the works of new and upcoming filmmakers alongside established names, and explored avenues to encourage the craft of filmmaking in the GCC. It offered several initiatives for GCC nationals in the film business at all levels. There was an array of discussion panels, ‘how-to’ sessions and networking events, and two funding initiatives for regional artists, while the second annual Gulf Script Market connected the region’s best scriptwriters with directors and producers.

More than USD130,000 in awards was given away to winners of the Official Gulf Features, Official Gulf Shorts, Official Gulf Student Shorts and International Shorts Competitions. The festival also presented a special recognition award to veteran Emirati actor, Mansoor Al Feeli for his outstanding contribution to the local film industry over a career spanning more than two decades.

GFF offered Crowdfunding Night on April 13, in association with Aflamnah, the Arab world’s first crowdfunding initiative. The interactive session introduced the concept of crowdfunding, analysed the international growth of the phenomenon, shared some best practice examples from across the globe.

Besides the competition films, the festival offered three ‘Official Selection’ programmes: Lights, an array of out-of-competition short films from some of the GCC’s most dynamic talents; Intersections, which favours bold subjects and stylised films from around the world; and Films for Children, a wonderful selection of animated and short films for young audiences.

The Enjaaz programme this year selected three recipients of its first cycle of funding for short films. The selected entries were Ahmed Al-Mutawa’s Faramel, Faiza Ambah’s Mariam and Kurdish filmmaker Rezgar Hussein’s Nasrin.

Yet another initiative launched this year was the announcement of the partnership between Watani, a newly-launched fund from GFF and DIFF to bring projects selected through Enjaaz to fruition.

Filmi has allocated a dedicated fund to support a minimum of four Emirati projects for both production and post production in the coming 12 months and will select two features, fiction or documentary, per Enjaaz cycle in July and February. This additional funding will be available for new and emerging talent from the UAE, who are passionate about bringing stories that reflect the rich diversity of life in the UAE to audiences around the world.

The award for Best Director in the features category was given to Karzan Kader for Bekas and Wadjda won the Best Film. Among the other winners were Ebrahim Najem Al Rasbi’s Moments in the Gulf Students’ Shorts. He also won Best Director for the same film. Gulf Shorts Best film was given to Kobe Van Steenberghe and Hendrik Verté for Baghdad Messi. The Path and Cotton won the awards for the Best Script and Best Director in the shorts category.

The Official Gulf Competition jury comprised prominent Egyptian director Oussama Fawzi, joined by scriptwriter and journalist Faiza Ambah, and award-winning Emirati filmmaker Saeed Salmeen Al-Murry. The International Shorts Competition and the Gulf Student Competition jury was headed by French filmmaker and author Frederique Devaux, along with renowned Emirati director Waleed Al Shehhi and Rima Mismar, film critic and Programming Manager for The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture.
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Dr Khalid Al Zadjali, who produced and directed the first Omani feature film, is a stalwart in his own right. Thanks to his pioneering work in supporting the film industry in the country, he was instrumental in introducing Oman to the filmmaking circuit. As the chairman of Oman Film Society and a consultant to Oman Public Authority for TV and Radio, his passion for films and love of the craft has given an identity to the almost non-existent film industry in the Gulf state.

His first feature film, *Al Boom* was released in 2006 and his second feature, *Aseel* premiered last year during the Dubai International Film Festival. Dr Al Zadjali describes both his films as real stories of real people, showcasing the trials and tribulations of everyday life.

*Aseel*, for instance, is the story of a nine-year-old boy whose father is the sheikh of his village and trains camels for racing. The film brings to life the family’s yearning for their home in the village, which they are forced to leave after a natural disaster. The 90-minute feature, shot in standard definition (SD) also features some scenes in high definition (HD).

*Aseel* has been screened at several film festivals including the recently held Gulf Film Festival and film festivals in Morocco and Cairo. It will also be screened at film festivals in Kuwait, Jordan, Germany and India. The Arabic film has been accepted well by international and local audiences, and comes with English and French subtitles.

As a writer and director, Dr Al Zadjali says he draws inspiration from nature and the country because that’s where life thrives. “Cities are the same everywhere, but countryside gives identity to a place. The
Dr Khalid Al Zadjali, the first Omani to make feature-length films, talks to Vibhuti Arora on the sidelines of the Gulf Film Festival about his films and his vision to take forward what he started 15 years ago.

All for the love of films

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unique characteristics of a place come from the natural surroundings, which is why I like to build my stories around them,” says the filmmaker.

“Films are a wonderful medium to explore and depict human emotions and that’s what draws me to them,” he adds.

His initiation into films began by watching Indian movies of the 60s and 70s. After completing his education in Oman, Dr Al Zadjali went to study filmmaking in Cairo from 1984 to 1989. Thereafter, he pursued two PhDs in cinema and drama and kids’ theatre from Romania and the UK.

“Training in filmmaking gave me a wider perspective on films as I watched more international films, especially European films from Italy and France. That shaped me as a filmmaker.” Al Zadjali’s first film, a 93-second short was produced in 1990, soon after he finished college. In addition to several documentaries under his belt, he has also dabbled in TV serials.

The challenges of making films in Oman

Filmmaking in Oman is still in its infancy, with very little movement on this front but there is hope as film lovers in the country garner support to keep the industry afloat.

Dr Al Zadjali explains, “Producing a film in Oman is not easy. Funding is a big issue, and everything else stems from that. We face difficulties at every step, right from finding a sponsor to arranging equipment to getting technical support and so on. The industry is still underdeveloped and we have a long way to go.”

Although the situation is challenging, Dr Al Zadjali’s passion for films has kept him going. While the feature film industry may still seem nascent in Oman, the Gulf state has more than 83 shorts and documentaries to its credit.

The Oman Film Society has played a key role in encouraging the craft among local Omanis by holding seminars and training workshops for aspiring filmmakers.

“Experimental, non-commercial films are picking up and there is increasing interest among the youth in that genre,” points out the filmmaker.

A number of institutes are now emerging in Oman to offer short media courses.

The Muscat Film Festival, instituted in 2001, brings international films to the country and has acted as a catalyst in introducing different genres of cinema to the local audience.

“Despite our ongoing efforts, we feel the road ahead is long and hard. The problem with Omani films is that they don’t appeal as much to the community. Indian, American and Egyptian films are more popular here. Having said that, budget constraints limit the scope of our films, as a result of which the quality also suffers.”

Dr Al Zadjali hired crew from India to shoot his features. The raw footage was also edited in India for lack of similar facilities in Oman. The film, *Aseel*, had 50

crew on board with 10 technicians who flew down from India to shoot. The film was shot over a period of one month and took two months of post production before hitting the theatres in Muscat.

The actors were not professionals but real life people who played roles in the films. They were all trained by Dr Al Zadjali on the job.

The Omani filmmaker is now working on his third script for a feature film which he intends to shoot in the mountains.

“**Producing a film in Oman is not easy.** Funding is a big issue, and everything else stems from that. We face difficulties at every step, right from finding a sponsor to arranging equipment to getting technical support and so on. The industry is still underdeveloped and we have a long way to go”
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Ki Pro Quad records incoming HD or 4K signals as Apple ProRes files on rugged Pak SSD modules for immediate use in major editing applications. Apple ProRes files are highly efficient, saving storage space while maintaining pristine image clarity. RAW data from the Canon C500 is passed over Thunderbolt™ to compatible computer and storage systems for recording and post-processing for complete color control.

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Pass RAW data via Thunderbolt™ and record 4K Apple ProRes files for the perfect combination of the highest quality and manageable file sizes.

Power and Portability
Ki Pro Quad is small enough to mount directly on most cameras but powerful enough to be the hub of your 4K solution.
Workflows and resource management are central to the delivery of higher throughput and quality programming in today’s file-based environments, says Peter Gallen

The status quo
Many broadcast production systems are moving to a file-based environment, where all the components are integrated for a seamless flow between processes. This is a big improvement from the traditional system. Whilst a file-based system makes the process simpler and more predictable, it doesn’t necessarily guarantee optimum results. In fact, the flow of media might be seamless but this may have little effect on the all-important flow of information which holds the key to the whole process. This means an orchestration of various tasks in a complete workflow. Historically, this orchestration has been achieved with operators interacting and exchanging information at each stage.

The workflow manager
As is the case in other manufacturing industries, the solution is to implement a workflow engine that can tie together all the tasks and sub-systems that are interacting in the typical production workflow and provide some degree of automation, if possible. Some processes will always require operators to interact with tasks: ingest and manual QC being good examples. However, the benefit of deploying a workflow engine is that each task, manual or automatic, should be completed before the next one begins. In addition to that, each task generates metadata that can be stored centrally in a media asset management (MAM) or similar database. It means that managers or supervisors can track the progress of content as it moves through the processes required to make it ready to broadcast. The workflow system will also interact with other independent processes such as ingest, playout and other similar applications.
as traffic and automation, exchanging metadata that is relevant to each task.

This highlights one of the many reasons that MAM can be useful for. Not just is it useful in preserving asset value but also proves valuable in relation to process management. Some broadcasters have already adopted MAM systems as a way to make media easily discoverable. Others have regarded MAM as, at best, a nice item to have rather than an essential component in a world where identifying content value has greater requirements, not least for legacy material currently languishing in physical archives. In this sense, MAM and workflow management are natural partners as they provide different perspectives on content stored or flowing through a media facility. The MAM holds metadata down to the single frame level as well as ownership and rights parameters, which are made available to users inside the production group or more widely in the enterprise and beyond.

In the meanwhile, the workflow manager provides process-oriented information, where precise data about the status of content and delivering an audit trail for every task executed in the system is also preserved in the MAM database.

**BPM**

An extension of the workflow manager is possible using a technique called business process management or BPM, which is commonly used in the world of IT. This complements the workflow manager and provides a link to the business operations of the enterprise. Its role is to take business requirements and to interpret them into tasks and workflows that are then implemented on the production floor. It should also be capable of reporting metrics such as the throughput of the production system and the use of human and technical resources in the system. This data can then be used to identify bottlenecks where more resources are required, for instance, more manpower for particularly tricky processes or technical resources such as adding processing power by installing new servers.

The net result is that even if the workflow/BPM systems are not completely in control they will provide the aggregated information that will enable managers and operators to see what is happening and then enable them to intervene, if required. Ultimately, a BPM system will be able to provide a bridge between the production facility and the media enterprise where applications such as Microsoft’s Sharepoint and other information systems will be able to share workflows and access content, given the appropriate permissions. This will, in turn, have benefits to business as a whole, both operationally and in terms of managing resources at all levels.

**Selecting a system**

Although the use of any workflow manager is likely to benefit broadcasters, in order to gain maximum benefit, the selection of a suitable system is critical. There is a wide range of products on the market today. A suitable system should include at least the following capabilities, which should narrow the field:

Even if the system is supplied with a set of workflows to suit a particular organisation it is essential that existing workflows can be adapted or new ones created without reference to the original supplier. Most users of such systems will require many variations in workflows to suit the requirements of specific channels or clients.

In the long term, having a system that is based on standards and not tied to a particular supplier is essential. An example of this is the use of business process management notation to script workflows in a standard and portable way.

Workflows should always be prescriptive, in other words, operators must be obliged to execute and sign off each task before proceeding to the next one.

The workflow system should include an audit capability and comprehensive reporting. Together these will provide the metrics that will enable system managers to accurately allocate human and technical resources as and when required.

The system should present the users with a user interface that is uncluttered and minimises the need for operators to enter data.

**Conclusion**

For operators and supervisors the benefits of adopting these new technologies become obvious. Rather than fighting with their existing systems, the new ones actually make their everyday tasks simpler and more efficient with less stress and more accuracy. However, this approach demands a cultural shift for media organisations, where processes currently take place in small teams with limited ability to share data.

Any changes of the kind proposed here are largely relevant to the production areas where there should be no place for artistic input. Production requires a reproductive ethos where repeating the same process over and over again with exactly the same outcome is essential. In conclusion, using the proposed technology, operators will find their jobs easier and managers will benefit from the control that accurate information will give them.

“**MAM and workflow management** are natural partners as they provide different perspectives on content stored or flowing through a media facility”

Peter Gallen is Product Manager at Tedial.

Peter Gallen, Product Manager, Tedial.
What’s in store

The latest MAM technology makes for a powerful, affordable gateway to your archive, says Rino Petricola

For many media organisations, particularly those with a sizeable media asset library, money-making opportunities abound, thanks to the demand for content on any screen, anytime. But in order to take advantage of those opportunities, the content must be stored securely and accessed cost effectively for repurposing and distribution — whether it is raw footage captured today for the news tonight, or an historic clip for a long-form documentary film.

A media asset management (MAM) system enables that level of security and access, but traditional enterprise MAM systems take a significant investment to build and maintain, one that many organisations cannot afford. The good news is, with today’s technology, a reliable MAM system doesn’t have to be exorbitantly expensive to offer significant and potentially profitable advantages to an organisation.

The advanced MAM technology available today serves as an organisation’s main interface with its archive. It’s a permission-based web application that enables complete access to all file-based content stored in an organisation’s asset library. In other words, it’s the gateway to all of an organisation’s media assets. It tracks content wherever it is stored — on spinning disk, LTO tape, or even on a shelf — and makes that content available for viewing and easy access.

One particular system integrates hardware and software into a single package, which comes in a compact 2-RU chassis with dual Gigabit Ethernet (GBE) network connections. It uses ID numbers or a customised metadata field to locate, retrieve, and manage the delivery of content, and then allows for viewing that content frame by frame. While enterprise systems typically require months of disruptive development and integration, this new MAM system can practically be installed right out of the box. In effect, you get a plug-and-browse solution with the ability to integrate with all major broadcast systems.

Users can browse content in the form of automatically generated low-bit-rate proxies, create frame-accurate shot lists, and find specific media indexed according to customisable metadata. The technology can even import legacy databases of assets stored on videotape, as well as the associated metadata field mapping for those assets.

Along with virtual asset support, new MAM systems can also offer keyframe and thumbnail support for visual content access, federated database functionality, a metadata model, search capabilities including query thumbnail support, and support for shotlist collaboration among all users. Once a video clip has been located, the system can deliver it to any integrated workflow, or even send it on for publication to targeted online communities.

Partial file restore is a useful operation within media organisations because it allows the user to retrieve only the portion of a media file he or she needs — such as a sound bite rather than the entire speech — which saves both time and system bandwidth. Some MAM systems now support partial file restore, with timecode accuracy that is so critical in partial file restore decisions. Newer versions may even add a revamped and simplified browser.

“HTTP-based adaptive streaming support, makes it possible for client internet browsers to switch between different video and audio bit rates seamlessly and dynamically (depending on available network conditions and CPU power)”

Rino Petricola, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of Front Porch Digital
interface and support for identification and retrieval of clips with non-contiguous timecodes, which is very important for the archivist and preservation community.

Newer versions also include a host of new features for even easier, more versatile media asset management. HTTP-based adaptive streaming support makes it possible for client internet browsers to switch between different video and audio bit rates seamlessly and dynamically (depending on available network conditions and CPU power). The resulting user experience is one of reliable, consistent playback without stutter, buffering, or “last mile” congestion. In addition, many offer portability across operating systems (Windows 7, Mac OS), browsers (Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, Firefox), proxy formats (WMV and H.264), and an increased number of concurrent users.

The new technology in MAM systems can meet the challenges that plague multisite media organisations. By integrating with CSM-related content distribution networks, systems can associate work across these networks, making the content viewable no matter where it is physically located on the network, and at the same time delivering the content to the necessary destination. Powerful capabilities like this create a global, open, active, and connected archive. They can integrate with the industry’s newest cloud-based CSM platforms for moving, archiving, and online video publishing to the cloud. They also address cloud-specific workflows and requirements such as site awareness, whereby a single MAM system can show the enterprise content view of assets stored in different archive systems — be they local, networked, cloud-based, or any combination — with integrated user permissions controlling access.

Systems that are easily scalable will keep up with growing facilities, with licenses available in multiple packs for easy expansion when needed. And because the GUI can now be browser-based, any licensed user can access the system from just about anywhere. Also available as a cloud service, new systems also offer full Unicode support, enabling customisation of the appropriate local language interface.

A new MAM system can enable users in any media operation to search and view content from their desktops, making the system much more functional and operations much more efficient.
Top 10 things that caught my eye at NAB 2013

Less 3D this year and more 4K, improvements to workflow and concentration of distribution to multiscreen seemed to capture most of the attention at the NAB show in Vegas this year.

Canon News Cameras XA20 and XA25 The new Canon cameras showed us what amazing picture quality is now available at the professional entry level using renowned Canon optics. This range of Canon cameras can shoot 28Mbps 60p AVCHD video or 35Mbps 60p MP4 video. Other formats include 24p, 30p, and 60i frame rates at full-HD resolution. The MP4 mode also allows the user to switch to 1280 x 720 recording, or shoot standard definition video with 30p or 24p frame rate options. The other nice feature is the built-in WiFi; you can choose to operate the camera remotely or even upload your video on the web. It looks like Canon has a real alternative to your traditional offerings from Sony and Panasonic; can’t wait to see some user reviews. Expected release date is June 2013.

Harmonic HEVC (high efficiency video coding) The guys at Harmonic really impressed us with their HEVC demonstration. HEVC (H.265) shows a great leap forward from its predecessor (H.264) and is able to move Ultra HD at bandwidths currently used for HD. I suppose that makes this the tech enabler for 4K.

HEVC enables higher compression of video without any loss of quality. No doubt this will bring serious benefits to our OTT clients. Late 2013, we can expect to see the first public rollouts with this.

Blackmagic Design Continually driving the cost of production down and delivering exciting products this year, Blackmagic Design was definitely in the spotlight.

There were several highlights but the pocket camera took the cake. The compact design incorporates a Super 16 sensor, lossless high quality Apple Pro Res and Cinema DNG RAW recording, all packed into an incredibly tiny size! The Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera records 1080HD ProRes files direct to fast SD cards, so you can immediately edit or colour correct your media on your laptop.

The price of 995 USD (without lenses) doesn’t hurt at all, we can all get out there and start shooting movie-like images.
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Axon AVB Recognising the trend for IP-centric operations, Axon has managed to deliver full uncompressed video over IP AVB (audio video bridging). AVB answers the growing need for quick content delivery to a growing range of platforms. Does this spell the end for traditional SDI?

Adobe Anywhere A full demo of the new Adobe Anywhere system was provided to us at this year’s NAB and moves the collaborative working environments on to the next level. Using the suite of Adobe professional tools, you are now able to collaborate and produce amazing productions from virtually anywhere where network connectivity exists (although there are still bandwidth issues in many regions but this will only improve).

The clever part is that none of the media is stored locally so there’s no need for intense file transfers, duplication of media or even use of proxy files. No fancy proprietary hardware needed. Can’t wait to see this launched in the Middle East.

WRN Broadcast Finally a big thanks to the team at WRN/Zume who demonstrated the new F1 App at their party on the 55th floor of the Palm hotel (including bringing along an F1 car). This new app available later in the year really lets the user take control of all of the live action from the races, with more data and stats than ever before. Looks like it’s really geared up for the diehard fans.

This application showed me the future of watching our favourite sports. That combined with hardware manufacturers giving pics from their 4K products, was like icing on the cake and to sum it all, content never looked so exciting.

I can’t wait to subscribe.

Envivo Halo Experience Back to multiscreen tech, Envivo demonstrated some enhancements on improving the user experience and revenue generation using its new Halo server. Essentially, this amazing piece of kit enables the user experience based on individual viewer requests. Envivio Halo Experience facilitates advanced applications including time-shifted TV and network DVR, targeted advertisement insertion, social and personalised TV — without requiring significant changes in the existing multiscreen infrastructure.

Ross Carbonite Extreme An incredible all-in-one package that manages production switching and routing all in one! The production switcher is embedded in the heart of the routing matrix. Traditionally, routing, production switching, multi-viewers, up/down conversion, frame syncing and interconnecting distribution were all separate pieces. Ross collapses all this into one powerful combined package. Up to two Carbonite Production Matrices can be added to the Carbonite eXtreme Chassis providing two independent production systems in one. At the same time, Carbonite eXtreme fulfills the role of a facility router with a full 144×144 switching matrix that can feed your entire production plant or mobile truck. I can’t wait to put this solution into some of my projects.
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THE SONY TOUCH
The AWS-750 Anycast Touch is an evolution of Sony’s popular Anycast AWS-G500. Building on the core values of portability, flexibility and scalability, Anycast Touch offers improved picture quality for live production. Its design uses sliding double touch screen to create an intuitive interface similar to that of a tablet. Developed as an all-in-one solution, Anycast Touch eliminates the need for any of the hardware typically required for professional live streaming such as video switchers, streaming encoders, recorders, audio mixers, titlers and remote camera controllers.

Capable of 10-bit processing with an output of full-HD (1920x1080), Anycast Touch offers clearer, more detailed pictures than similar products on the market, either in SD, HD or a mix of both. Its tilt screen function enables users to use two dual screens whereby video and audio controls are split. Anycast Touch also allows video sources to be conveniently stored in scene folders with settings including titles, logos and effects. Operators can recall the next video source just by touching its thumbnail picture. Content can be easily streamed live over the internet, LAN or other dedicated lines.

FOR-A’S VIDEO SWITCH
For-A introduced the HVS-XT100 and HVS-XT110 HD/SD portable video switchers at NAB. The latest in the company’s line of HVS series switchers, the HVS-XT100 comes with a separate main unit and control panel, while the HVS-XT110 features a compact, integrated design. The HVS-XT100 and HVS-XT110 units include and expand on HVS-300 functions, including mixed HD/SD input, frame synchronisation, multi-viewer capability, re-sizing engine, 2.5D wipe effects, DVE and keyer with chroma key. Two freely assignable Keyers and DSKs channels also come standard, allowing operators to use AUX to expand the range of production when displaying video on a monitor other than the main system. The HVS-XT switchers have a built-in web server and the HVS-XT100 comes standard with eight HD/SD-SDI inputs and four outputs (plus one HDMI output).

GO WITH THE FLOW
Shared media and tapeless workflow solutions provider EditShare previewed, for the first time, upgrades to its asset management software EditShare Flow 3. The new releases include new tools for ingest, logging and browsing that the company believes dramatically improves the overall functionality of the software by providing greater visibility of all media assets including video, audio and still images. In addition to adding many new features to Flow Ingest, Logger and Browse modules, EditShare has significantly expanded Flow production workflow capabilities with the addition of Flow Automation and AirFlow modules.

AJA GIVES A HI-5
AJA has introduced a brand new DVI/HDMI to SDI converter. The new converter allows high quality conversion of computer DVI and HDMI outputs to baseband video over SDI at an affordable price.

The Hi5-4K mini-converter provides a simple monitoring connection from professional 4K devices using 4 SDI outputs to new 4K displays with 4K-capable 1.4a HDMI inputs.

The latest generation of 4K monitors utilise the new HDMI 1.4a connection, which allows a full 4K signal to be passed over a single cable. Typical professional 4K workflows use four SDI cables to carry the full resolution image, making it difficult to incorporate the newer monitors. Hi5-4K is an easy-to-use converter that bridges the gap between these two worlds.

TVLOGIC EXPANDS ITS RANGE OF BROADCAST MONITORS
TVLogic unveiled five broadcast monitors and featured a new 30-inch monitor prototype at NAB. These additions expand the product line to 38 broadcast display models ranging from 2-inch multichannel rack monitors up to a 56-inch 4K monitor.

The featured product was the LUM-300W, a 30-inch 4K DCI (4096 x 2160) monitor designed for on-set 4K motion picture monitoring in addition to 4K post production applications. This monitor is based on the new HDMI 2.0 standard, enabling unprecedented colour gamut, contrast ratio and viewing angle. LVM-182W and LVM-232W, multiformat broadcast monitors with 3G-SDI capability were also part of the show.

“The key features of the LUM-300W are its extremely accurate colour space, making it ideal for colour grading in the field or in post production,” said Wes Donohue, Director of Sales and Marketing at TVLogic. It also has the ability to work with 3D lookup tables. The LUM-300W is scheduled to ship by the end of the year.
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IBC Big Screen
providing the perfect platform for manufacturer demonstrations and ground breaking screenings

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AVERSE HAS THE EDGE
Avere Systems introduced its hybrid Edge filer, Avere FXT 3800 at NAB
The new product contains both flash/solid state drive (SSD) media as well as serial attached SCSI hard drives (SAS HDD) and delivers significant performance gains in benchmark testing.

With the latest hybrid technology, Avere can now automatically tier data across four media types: RAM, SSD, SAS and SATA HHDDs, delivering maximum performance for the hottest files, while at the same time moving cold data out of the performance tier and on to SATA to minimise costs and shrink the data storage footprint. Dynamic tiering assures that every block of file data is located in storage that matches its current level of activity. As a result, the new system is 40% faster than the FXT 3500, the company’s previous top performer on the SPECsfs2008 NFS benchmark test, and is less expensive than flash-only solutions.

“With the new FXT 3800, Avere continues to be on the cutting-edge of file system storage innovation and gives companies a new way to think about the way they purchase data storage,” said Benjamin Woo, analyst with Neuralytix. “Customers can now receive the greatest amount of flexibility and choice by leveraging all four media tiers of storage, while defining the performance and efficiency requirements based on the activity of the data.”

The Edge filer contains 144GB of DRAM, 2GB NVRAM and 800GB of SSD to accelerate the read, write and metadata performance of most active data. It contains 7.8TB of 10k SAS HDDs to store a large working set of recently active data. The FXT 3800’s 2x 10GbE and 6x 1GbE ports allow connectivity to clients and servers for high performance access to active data and to core filers for infrequently accessed data. Each unit can be clustered to other FXT Edge filers with scaling of up to 50 nodes for linear performance and high availability.

AVID’S MEDIA COMPOSER 7
Avid announced new versions of its flagship video editing and audio production applications Media Composer 7 and Pro Tools 11 at NAB this year.

The latest Media Composer features accelerated and simplified file-based workflows including optimised HD delivery from high-res source material and automated media operations.

In addition to this, as a key component of the Avid Everywhere vision, the new release offers Interplay Sphere for Mac support, extending real-time production everywhere.

The other new launch Avid Pro Tools 11 is Avid’s digital audio workstation and features high-powered audio and video engines, 64-bit architecture, expanded metering, and direct HD.

GV’S HIGHER STRATUS
Grass Valley has announced a major new software upgrade for its GV Stratus non-linear production application framework. With the new software version, GV Stratus now supports seamless processing and delivery of content to second-screen and multiscreen distribution platforms. “Content is no longer made for just one screen-operators now face a number of challenges in order to meet the demands of a more dispersed, multiscreen, multiplatform audience,” said Mike Cronk, Senior VP, Marketing at Grass Valley. “They need to be able to send content across numerous distribution channels at the same time, despite the varying requirements for image size, quality, and overall systems management.”

Other significant new features include integration with Grass Valley Smart Playout Centre. This enables customers to segment content for the Cobalt playlist management used by Grass Valley K2 Edge playout nodes to insert promos and commercials.

VISLINK BRINGS IN NEWSTREAM
VISLINK launched the NewStream multi-mode mobile transmission system at NAB. The NewStream is a state-of-the-art vehicle system combining Electronic News Gathering (ENG), Cellular News Gathering (CNG), and Satellite News Gathering (SNG) in one compact rack-mounted unit. It combines both licensed and unlicensed RF technologies together within a user-friendly platform. As the newest addition to VISLINK’s LiveGear brand the NewStream provides multiple ways to transmit up to two simultaneous live videos; anytime, anywhere.

The NewStream was designed with today’s broadcaster in mind. This new platform is cost-effective, space saving and operator friendly, delivering power packed performance in a two rack unit design. The NewStream supports a wide range of frequency bands including 2-2.5, 4.5-5.0, 6.4-7.1, 12.7-13.25, plus a dual band 2/7 GHz option, and with its ergonomic programmable multi-function OLED push button switches, the system minimises front panel congestion while automatically configuring based on the user’s mode of operation.
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PRO PRODUCTS

ORBAN PERFECTS ITS OPTIMOD
Orban launched the Optimod-FM 8600S at NAB this year. The new Optimod-FM 8600S is a 1RU box with Orban’s MX audio processing technology. It is aimed at FM stations. An HD radio upgrade kit is available for creating an 8600S-HD. The 8600S can be controlled via its front panel, but the real depth is found using the PC remote software. Orban says that compared with the Optimod-FM 8500, the 8600S should provide 2-3 dB more high frequency energy, greater transient impact and lower distortion.

ENSEMBLE DESIGN’S BRIGHTEYE
Ensemble Designs introduced the next generation of its BrightEye line of products with a new compact router at NAB. The new product line features illuminated front panel buttons, interactive LCD display, BNC and SFP spigots for flexible I/O configuration, and an Ethernet port for control and configuration.

The new BrightEye Compact Router has eleven BNC connectors that can be configured as either inputs or outputs. In addition, there are two SFP modules slots (small format pluggables), that may be populated for additional inputs or outputs – fibre optic or electrical. Embirionix powered SFPs, about the size of a stick of gum, let the customer choose the preferred type of input or output connectors, including mini BNC and optical. There is a reference BNC for genlocking the unit to house sync.

The unit can be controlled via the dedicated front panel buttons, or from a computer or iPad via the onboard web browser interface. It accepts 3G, HD and SD SDI signals. The outputs follow the inputs. The flexible I/O configuration allows on the fly changes to the number of router inputs and outputs providing flexibility unparalleled in any compact router. The clean switch option allows clean video and audio switching of all sources including asynchronous ones.

A QUANTUM LEAP WITH STORNEXT
Quantum Corp. announced three new StorNext appliances that enable high-speed collaboration and workflow management from ingest through archive for post production and broadcast facilities. The comprehensive StorNext M440 metadata appliance, StorNext QX storage primary disk and StorNext AEL500 mini archive provide a high-performance file sharing and policy-based tiered content archive management system. These appliances are fully compatible with existing Apple Xsan installations and ideal for mid-sized creative workflow environments. Like all StorNext products, they also support the industry’s most popular media asset managers and editing, finishing, ingest, transcode, and playout tools, including products from Adobe, Apple, Autodesk, AVID and Telestream.

BLACKMAGIC DESIGN SHOWCASES ULTRASTUDIO 4K
Blackmagic Design showcased its UltraStudio 4K video playback system at NAB. The system includes 4:4:4 video technology and full-resolution 4K monitoring, and can also handle dual-channel 3-D stereoscopic capture and playback. It can be used on the desktop, while easily installing into equipment racks. The UltraStudio 4K comes equipped with the latest SDI, HDMI and analogue video, and timecode connections, as well as AES/EBU balanced and unbalanced analogue audio. The system is also compatible with Avid Media Composer, Final Cut Pro or Premiere Pro, and the DaVinci Resolve 9.0 colour grading system.

NEWTEC’S MDM6100 MODEM
Newtec launched its latest MDM6100 broadcast satellite modem. This is a next generation DVB-S, DVB-S2 and S2 extensions modem specifically designed for broadcast applications. The new modem is capable of increasing broadcast efficiency by up to 60% compared to DVB-S2, equipping broadcasters and satellite service providers with all of the latest modulation, multistream transmission and wideband transponder support. The MDM6100 can act as a modem, modulator or demodulator, and can be used in conjunction with set-top boxes, professional integrated receiver decoders (IRD) and satellite demodulators. The MDM6100 is designed to migrate existing networks towards a more efficient S2 modulation in a smooth manner. Priority DVB projects such as S2 extensions will become available on the platform as soon as the standardisation efforts are complete.

ASPERA’S SMART DRIVE
At NAB this year, Aspera, Inc. previewed its new file sharing experience that brings together the best of Aspera faspex, Shares, and Sync technologies into a single, unified platform for project-based file collaboration. Unlike the myriad “Drive”, “File Sync” and “File Sharing” services on today’s internet, the Aspera platform allows for transfer and synchronisation of file sets of any size and number with maximum speed at any distance, with complete access control, privacy and security of Aspera technology. It’s architecture allows for deploying on-premise, on the cloud, or a hybrid combination for complete flexibility. This new experience, introduced as Aspera Drive and faspex 4.0, brings remote file browsing, transfer, synchronisation, and package sending and receiving fully integrated into the desktop, browser and mobile platforms with a natural project-based collaboration model. Users enjoy maximum transfer speed, security, and distance-independent collaboration and can access and exchange “big data” with ease from their environment of choice.
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Is AVB the new SDI?

The AVB network is completely synchronous. What you put in is what you get out for very stable, fast and low latency transport.

Audio and video equipment connections have historically been one-way; single-purpose and point-to-point. Until recently, even digital video standards — including the ubiquitous SDI — were often one-way.

While SDI isn’t going away just yet, AVB (audio video bridging) will transform the way broadcasters manage and deliver live production video content. Its ease, interoperability and ability to increase bandwidth are just too compelling not to make the move. Longer-term cost efficiencies in the face of a future that will continue to strain budgets and resources will only make it even more attractive.

AVB defined

An open standard established by the IEEE, AVB is a group of network protocols for the distribution of time synchronised and low latency audio and video streams over Ethernet. In short, all audio and video streams, as well as associated control, metadata and synchronisation needed for a live production, are on a single cable/layer/infrastructure. The design and build of a studio or broadcast facility suddenly becomes a whole lot easier, more flexible and less costly. Removing the inherent bandwidth, speed and set-up problems of single-wire SDI infrastructure, AVB provides agile, easy and instantly connected network access.

The ability to have one connection that can carry multiple streams and work as both an input and output is game changing, particularly when combined with AVB’s support of all existing video formats, but also new emerging UHD formats (4K for example), high quality audio and monitoring/control/metadata with equal ease. AVB utilises standard, off-the-shelf Ethernet switches with AVB software extensions on top, providing broadcasters with a predictable, reliable, consistent and uncompressed video and audio delivery experience. The AVB network is completely synchronous. What you put in is what you get out for very stable, fast and low latency — 2ms delay — transport.

Engineered from the ground up for media streaming applications, AVB allows bandwidth allocation and priority rules based on timing. AVB dynamically assigns and defends bandwidth allocation for AVB streaming by a concept of stream reservation protocol (SRP). AVB devices also periodically exchange timing information so all nodes on the network synchronise their time base reference clocks very precisely for the synchronisation of multiple streams.

Time for a new standard?

SDI has been a working standard for the past 25 years, and it has delivered, but perhaps we’ve pushed beyond SDI’s optimal capacity.

There are three primary aspects of AVB that set it apart from standard Ethernet-based technology. Advanced timing and synchronisation, bandwidth allocation, and traffic shaping — to ensure that lower priority ‘legacy’ Ethernet traffic does not interfere with critical AVB traffic — are all key to the technology’s advantages in today’s content-driven broadcast environment.

Media data is protected by the Ethernet switches in the network, with all non-critical data, such as email, prioritised behind. Non-critical data will still get there quick enough, but not at the same guaranteed rates as video and other critical data.

Furthermore, standard Ethernet infrastructure is based on a ‘best effort’ delivery offering little control of speed and delivery time. AVB provides critical control of bandwidth usage and prioritisation of the network. Congestion will not cause dropping of stream data packets, as the network can never be overloaded. AVB can also easily bridge technologies, enabling composite video, advantageous both now and as content providers transition to AVB.

Helping to set this: AVnu Alliance

There’s an industry alliance working to advance AVB and interoperability between AVB devices. The AVnu Alliance (www.avnu.org) is currently creating compliance test procedures and certification processes that ensure interoperability of networked AVB A/V devices and the highest quality streaming A/V experience.

How quickly will we see adoption?

AVB for A/V is being explored and implemented by the automotive industry. In Broadcast, AVB audio is already embraced for audio processing consoles and intercom. Early adopters will carve a path for widespread adoption over time, perhaps a decade or more. Since there are multiple suppliers for AVB technologies, the costs will stay low and the competition between manufacturers high. This will allow these networks to keep pace with improvements in bandwidth and Ethernet technologies by being highly adaptable and relatively inexpensive.

Jan Eveleens is CEO of Axon.
Exceptional low light performance with the new GY-HM600 Series, with fast file transfer to get your message home.

JVC is ushering in a new era of mobile newsgathering with a line of ProHD hand-held camcorders that shoot and deliver news footage faster and better than ever. The GY-HM600 and GY-HM650 camcorders are each equipped with three full-HD sensors and a fixed wide angle 23x autofocus zoom lens, along with exceptional light sensitivity of F12 at 2000 lux.

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No. 410, 4th floor, Al Khaleej Center, Bur Dubai PO.Box: 44156, Dubai-UAE
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