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New technology is changing consumer behaviour...

NAB 2018 Confirms: The Future is Now!

by Brian Slott Kristiansen, Managing Director, Danmon Group Systems

The April 2018 NAB Show in Las Vegas confirmed that the broadcast media industry is moving into a world of virtualisation and cloud technology.

As software designers and supporting service providers are positioning themselves to deliver on their promises with regards to IP, augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence, cognitive services and wide-network workflow.

The role of systems integrators in this advancing market is to provide impartial and reliable support to our customers, not least in times of rapid technical progress. This support is based in our case on proven in-depth understanding of the opportunities generated by these developments. These opportunities are creating major business challenges for broadcasters, production companies and media content owners. New technology is changing consumer behaviour. These changes in turn are generating new business models including new modes of content distribution.

Network security
Major trade shows like NAB have long been a useful pointer to future developments in broadcast technology. This year was no exception, both in the exhibition halls and in the conference presentations. One issue gaining increasing attention is the need for attention to security in an increasingly internet-connected industry. The consensus of opinion was that broadcasters need to adopt a proactive rather than reactive approach to security. Many broadcasters already maintain a disaster recovery facility as protection against their main production and transmission centre goes out of action. Network



security is an extension of this mindset and can be achieved in a variety of ways.

IP-based remote production
IP-based alternatives to traditional outside broadcasting were addressed by several conference speakers. This approach reduces the need to field truckloads of very expensive equipment 'on the road', supported by large production teams needed to operate the equipment once on site. Being able to keep most of the equipment and operational staff in-house with just a minimum equipment and operational staff presence at the source location offers a much more efficient way to produce high-quality content. The use of a private/leased IP connection was recommended as a reliable way to achieve secure routing and low latency.

Artificial intelligence
AI was promoted by many NAB exhibitors this year. One proposed application aims to create in real-time a link between a camera's viewpoint and a 2D image of a field of play. The objective is to allow the addition of graphics effects to the real image with the right visual perspective. A neural network-based approach

calculates what a 2D version of the field would look like from an in-stadium camera. Then, realising the link between the two, elements can be added automatically.

HD HDR
After several years of promotion by camera and display manufacturers, 4K UHD was overshadowed this year by the realisation that high dynamic range combined with the already established nominally 2K HD standard was an attractive route forward for television production and transmission. This is certainly an issue for digital terrestrial television broadcasters where UHD makes inefficient use of the available delivery spectrum.

Internet-based broadcasting
The strongest single message emerging from NAB was the increasing viability of internet based broadcasting for television channels addressing tightly themed sections of the global viewing audience. This has long been a popular and successful medium for catchup and 'red-button' supplementary channels produced by established terrestrial and satellite broadcasters. The spectacular success of companies such as Amazon Video, Apple TV,

Google Play, Netflix, Vimeo and YouTube in the general entertainment sector is proof that the internet is a perfectly robust medium for special-interest channels funded by subscription, direct video advertising, sponsorship or a mix of all three. Broadcasting really can now address vertical markets whether on a specific region or specific subject basis. In summary, the broadcast media industry needs to be ready to seize the opportunities generated by these major technical advances. The future is now!



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