

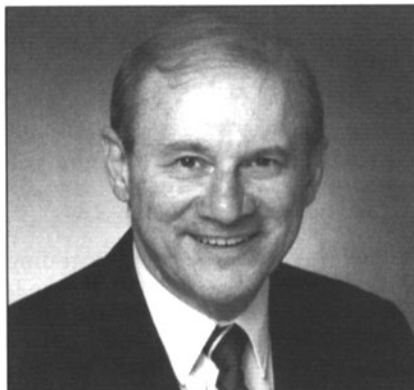
The Society's role as the bridge between the providers of motion imaging technology and the creative users of that technology has never been more important. For the community of interests that SMPTE serves, this is a time of change in the very nature of the business. Totally new service concepts made possible by digital technology are dramatically changing the face of the marketplace.

Increasingly, the products and services in both the worlds of film and electronic media are being created and delivered using digital electronic techniques. Consumers are being faced with a wider choice of options for access to those products and services. Open access, interoperability, flexibility, extensibility, and the increasing use of software to define applications within common hardware and communications channels form the foundation of the new paradigm.

Without a foundation of appropriate standards, such a world will be impossible to achieve, foundering in a storm of incompatibility, of costly but narrow development, premature mortality of products, and services that cannot meet the needs of the new markets and whose potential for growth is severely constrained, and most regrettably, bringing confusion to the consumer. In the market-driven, globally based, consumer-oriented environment, business will be won and retained on the basis of perceived value of services, not by the creation of artificial barriers through incompatibility.

### Reflecting a New Reality

The standards that we create today and use tomorrow must reflect this new reality. The expense of creating them, in both the direct cost of participation in the process and the potential cost of compromise, must be seen as an essential investment in the business. Standards serve both the service provider and the consumer, giving the consumer confidence that products that are compliant will work as



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promised and creating a competitive marketplace that can be addressed by those providing video, sound, and image services. Standards also provide a mechanism that ensures that the product of the creative process can be faithfully reproduced for use by the mass audience for which it was intended, and therefore is beneficial to those wishing to exchange programming or to assist in assessing performance.

### Eight Decades of Standards

SMPTE was founded in 1916 as a professional society to develop voluntary standards, and for almost eight decades it has fulfilled this role, evolving from film to include analog television, electronic digital imaging, and now digital distribution. The standards the Society produces have maintained their quality and relevance, taking a proactive approach to the changing environment and widening participation. Its work is recognized globally and across many industries for its competence and accuracy.

SMPTE Standards, Recommended Practices, and Engineering Guidelines are achieved by consensus of interested parties after a rigorous check of technical soundness, compatibility with other standards, and questions of public interest and fairness. Increasingly, SMPTE documents are finding wide acceptance in a variety of applications and industries. This is essential as the technologies of motion pictures, television, computers, and telecommunications converge, driven by digital processing and economies of scale. The benefits

accrue in commonality of equipment, in economies of scale, in increased business opportunities, and in opening up new areas of application.

SMPTE is also becoming increasingly international in all of its activities and, in the creation of voluntary standards for its constituency, it reaches out to interests worldwide. Its Working Groups and Technology Committees invite participation from all affected industries and areas. Through the increasing use of telecommunications via SEEC and, soon, full access via the Internet, the barriers to participation of time, distance, and cost are being removed.

SMPTE Standards are not mandatory, nor do they have the force of law, as do government regulations, nor are they the subject of international treaties, as are some documents of ITU. Some SMPTE Standards may, however, become the basis of international treaties. While some parts of the world still seek local or regional standards, SMPTE seeks standards of global application, providing its members with the keys to their future well-being.

### Standards are Essential

The industries that SMPTE serves today and the expanded community that it will serve tomorrow recognize the value of standards as the essential element to achieve barrier-free distribution of content, to allow open access to that content by users, and to interface the disparate components of the systems of gathering, production, distribution, and delivery. The future well-being of these industries depends on the achievement of the necessary openness, interoperability, flexibility, and extensibility in such standards and their creative use in bringing new products and services to the marketplace.

SMPTE is proud both of its tradition in enabling, guiding, and contributing to this work, and in providing a mechanism for its members to help guide their own futures. You and your companies are invited to join the SMPTE engineering staff and the approximately 600 volunteer experts working on the over 40 projects upon which your future well-being depends.

This month's message was a joint effort by Stanley N. Baron, SMPTE President, and Kenneth P. Davies, Engineering Vice-President. Stanley Baron is with NBC, Inc., New York, NY 10012; Kenneth Davies is with CBC, Montreal, Que., Canada H4W 1R5.