

Section Meetings

Chicago November 8, 2000

The November meeting attracted 75 attendees for a presentation by Paul Breedlove, Texas Instruments, who gave a progress report on the current field demonstrations of the DLP Cinema Projector. There are now 31 demonstration sites worldwide utilizing this prototype system, and the meeting took place in a theater equipped as such.

Breedlove began the presentation by projecting four clips from recent first-run motion picture releases that had been digitally mastered. He then gave a technical overview of the technology being deployed in the projector. The DMD, digital micromirror device, coupled with a xenon lamp provides light output, resolution, and color gamut rivaling that of 35mm film. One benefit of digital projection technology over film is that weave, dirt/scratches, and general film deterioration is eliminated. Breedlove also discussed some of the financial and workflow benefits this technology offers to the motion picture studios. Some studios believe that digital mastering allows them to re-purpose the same master for theater exhibitions, as well as NVOD, DVD, and VHS distribution. There are also potential financial benefits to distributing movie titles via satellite, broadband internet protocol, or DVD-ROM as opposed to shipping multiple film canisters.

Breedlove concluded his presentation by reviewing the field reliability data and some of the improvements being developed in the lab to make the system suitable for high-volume manufacturing and low-maintenance installation. Once these goals are achieved, this technology will begin to gain widespread acceptance. It is predicted that digital projection will eventually replace the film projection systems currently installed in all theaters. Several additional film clips were shown before Breedlove

answered numerous questions from the audience.—Steve Robinson, Secretary/Treasurer

Detroit November 14, 2000

Seventeen members and guests met at the North Farmington High School television studio where Paul Braun, Motorola's Broadband Communications Sector, gave a presentation on the current state of DTV over cable.

Braun began the meeting with an overview, to familiarize attendees with the process of getting some of the 300 to 400 programs available on satellite. They are demodulated, subjected to forward-error correction, decrypted, and then remodulated to an IF signal and sent to the broadcast digital headend. He discussed out-of-band data paths, which provide a downstream connection to the subscriber's set-top box, permitting data-like electronic program guides, initialization information, channel mapping, and EAS emergency information to reach viewers as required. While Telco paths have typically been used for pay-per-view requests, they have not proved useful for other applications, necessitating an RF return, which most cable operators employ as their upstream data path.

Braun also discussed DOCSIS, the digital over cable standard, as well as the various functions controllable through access control such as programming, services and sources, configuration of set-top boxes, anti-taping code downloads, and encryption. This led to the subject of how access control can be scaled to national, local, and regional levels allowing such things as clustering of networks, providing for better coordination of local services across regions. Braun continued by talking about remultiplexing as it relates to the ability of local cable operators to streamline data density by selecting just those services they want to

SMPTE 2001 Conference—Call for Papers

The Australia Section of the Society of Motion Pictures and Television Engineers calls for papers to be presented at its 2001 Conference to be held in Sydney, Australia, July 9-12, 2001.

The conference themed "Compressing Images—Expanding Ideas," will include panels and workshops to complement the paper presentations. The theme for the panels and workshops will cover any aspect of the industry, not just technology. Potential topics include The Home Receiver, Digital Delivery Systems, Digital Compression, Audio, Moneymaking Broadcasting, Non-Technical Production Within Our Business, Training and Education, Film, Graphics and Animation, Broadcast Standards, and Sports TV.

Contributions will assist in shaping the conference, so all are invited to submit requests as to their subjects of interest by January 31, 2001.

For those wishing to discuss ideas or have a topic for inclusion, please contact: SMPTE 2001 Conference Organizer, Expertise Events, P.O. Box 295, Brookvale 2100 NSW Australia; tel: +61 2 9939 4445; fax: +61 2 9993 4251; e-mail: SMPTE2001@expertiseevents.com.au; website: www.smpte-com.au.

extract from satellite signals; he briefly mentioned statistical (rate recoding) and nonstatistical (manually controlled) bit rates.

Digital ad insertion by means of a combination of re-multiplexing and addition of an ad server as well as interactive networks utilizing out-of-band and in-band paths were also mentioned as well as advanced interactive networking using the DOCSIS technology (up to 30.8 Mb/s downstream and 10 Mb/s upstream). The latter, supporting "PC" types of applications like IP telephony, e-mail with large attachments, and gaming.

Finally, attendees were given a demonstration on the features and capabilities of the first generation digital set-top box as well as what will be available in the advanced version, including amenities such as HD capability; optional IEEE 1394 I/Os; greater memory; and a built-in DOCSIS modem.

After this comprehensive look at DTV over cable, the group was given an informal tour of the new studio at NFHS.—Bob Zeichner, Secretary/Treasurer

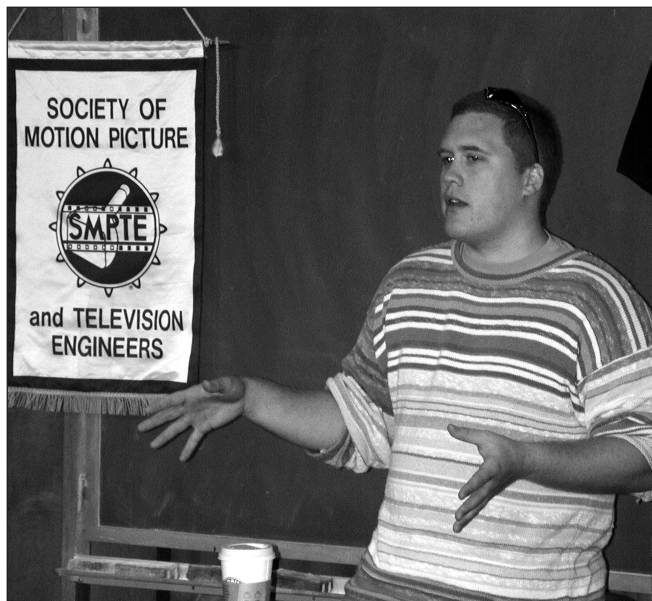
Hollywood

November 15, 2000

The November meeting was a tour of the sound post-production facilities at the 20th Century Fox studio. Prior to the tour, 60 people attended a buffet dinner in the historic Fox Commissary. Other members and guests later joined the group in the Darryl F. Zanuck Theater for a greeting by J. R. Delang, senior vice-president in the post-production facilities at Fox. The group then separated into smaller groups, which were led by staff members of the studio.

The tour included a visit to the video mastering and transfer, and ADR departments, the Foley stages, screening rooms, sound mixing, and related control areas. In recent years Fox has made major upgrades to the studio's technical operations by remodeling a sound stage, constructed when the studio was built in 1928, into editorial, recording, and post-production offices. Many of the departments are connected with fiber-optic lines, enabling extensive high-speed communication between them.

Demonstrations were given in the Little Theater, showing various degrees of using video



Jason Meckler addresses students at the Napa Valley Chapter meeting in October.

for viewing dailies, and a tape of an action scene in a film was shown on the Foley Stage, where the sound was added in post-production.

The tours ended with a return to the Commissary for a Q & A session.—Richard P. May, Section Manager

Napa Valley College Student Chapter October 25, 2000

The Chapter was privileged to host a meeting featuring Jason Meckler, fellow alumni of the NVC Telecommunications program, who took time out of his busy schedule to speak with future engineers.

Meckler works for CT San Francisco (formerly AVTS) as a system engineer. CT rents and supports large-screen video and data projection, video walls, video production and broadcast, and related equipment. His specialty is the setup, installation, and repair of camera systems. Meckler gave students a summary of the types of equipment he repairs. He stated that after graduation, he had a lot to learn about the “real world” of video and television, but believes that the education he acquired at NVC is invaluable.—Greg Martin, Secretary

New York

November 15, 2000

The November meeting at Manhattan Center Studios was standing-room-only for attendees, who listened to three experts review the technology and state-of-the-art of 24-frame progressive HDTV acquisition for television and movies. Dave Wiswell, Panasonic, began with a brief technical tutorial on the 24P process and how it is implemented in the Panasonic product line. He also discussed system-level integration issues such as format conversion, time code conversion, aspect ratio management, and simultaneous SD and HD video streams.

Larry Thorpe, Sony, continued the discussion, focusing more on applications for electronic capture, specifically detailing the architecture and construction of the “digital cinematography” versions of the Sony F-series HD cameras. Thorpe’s broad range of knowledge and personal involvement with such high-profile projects as George Lucas’s *Star Wars* series provided an informative and entertaining lecture. Marker Karahadian, Plus 8 Video, rounded out the evening with a discussion of real-world situations and applications and demonstrated actual hardware accessories designed and manufactured by Plus 8 Video to

aid cinematographers.

Following the meeting, tours of the Manhattan Center Studios and the historic Masonic Ballroom and Hammerstein Opera House were given by Dan Mathers, MSC.—Bill Topazio, Section Chair

Pasadena City College Student Chapter October 24, 2000

With 37 in attendance, the meeting initiated with introduction of the guest speaker, David Dougherty, eight-time Emmy award winning camera operator. Dougherty has 14 years of experience in the film and television industry as a camera operator and camera boom/crane operator. He circulated one of his Emmys among the audience, offering a wonderful experience to hold an actual Emmy statuette.

Dougherty, who currently works on the “Hughleys,” a sitcom for UPN, was initially interested in becoming an art director and attended Junior College to pursue his endeavor. Photography is something that he has always loved and Dougherty believes that composition is one of the key ingredients for his success; the other is motivation. He acquired an internship at a cable company where he learned editing.

According to Dougherty, the first opportunity is usually working as an intern or production assistant. “Show up 15 minutes earlier than your call time,” Dougherty said. He told students that they must be self-motivated. “Give 110%! If you stand out doing the simple tasks, you will be given more responsibility and be considered for promotion.” He told students to extend their services and assistance to employers and to purchase a “Thomas Guide,” because production assistants spend a lot of time driving: picking up, and delivering scripts, meals, demos, etc. Dougherty had this advice: Never say no or I can’t to a job—producers and heads of departments hate to hear this. Don’t limit yourself! While you’re working as a production assistant, meet people

in other departments and learn about their profession. In this way, you will discover the different careers within production. Spend a little time with the art, lighting, grip and camera departments. Learn about the camera; how to set a light; how to set a flag. Eventually you’ll find an area that you desire for a career. Never stop the education process!

Dougherty ended his presentation by stating, “Most of the people you meet in the entertainment industry have a passion for their craft. Find the occupation that you enjoy, the money will come. Persistence beats resistance! Surround yourself with successful people, make contacts and stay motivated. Make your key personnel (producer, director, director of photography, etc.) look impeccable and they’ll want to keep you around.”—Kassa Zakadi, Chairperson

Rochester November 14, 2000

A concentrated audience gathered at WXXI-TV21 in Rochester for the program “Practical Applications for Broadband Networking in Broadcasting.” Project Manager Barry Gostomski, Panasonic Broadcast and Television Systems Company, was the speaker at this joint meeting with the Society of Broadcast Engineers. Gostomski explained the impetus for going digital in today’s marketplace: moving program material losslessly, faster than realtime, and with simultaneous I/O file transfer. Beyond copying or moving files, FTP sets a new paradigm in which the frame rate is now defined by the bandwidth of the network and the receiving device, no longer the transmitter. The varieties of broadband networking he covered included SMPTE 259 SDI/SDTI, ATM, Gigabit Ethernet, Fibre Channel, IEEE 1394, and HIPPI.

The Panasonic Digital Newsroom Automation system reflects the push toward “cart-free” operation and integration of station operations. A typical newsBYTE networked, disk-based workstation connects to

a DNA system configuration via a Fibre Channel 1-Gbit/sec FTP, allowing playout to air even before file transfer is complete. Interconnection to third-party newsroom automation and archival systems facilitates multiformat HD/SD playback, particularly with the AJ-HDR150 VTR with SDI input.

The presentation concluded with Gostomski covering some practical considerations for deployment, mentioning the switch from analog to a server-based system recently installed at the ABC affiliate in Buffalo. There the DNA server went online before its scheduled inauguration and has been on the air ever since. —John P. Weiksnar, Section Manager/

Membership Chair
Rocky Mountain
November 14, 2000



Steve Peck, Columbine JDS, moderates Rocky Mountain Section meeting in November.

The November meeting featured a lively roundtable discussion on the streaming of audio and video media. Richard Tyrell, Columbine JDS, provided opening remarks to the more

than 40 attendees, and John Patti, Westwind Media, offered insight on Westwind's on-going streaming business. Clayton Waddell, Digital Metropolis, also offered an informative discussion on con-

forming material for streaming and DVD applications.—
Rome Chelsi, Section Chair

Industry News

Kodak Haven for Film Preservation

Kodak has announced the opening of the Pro-Tek Media Preservation Center, a film and video preservation vault and film inspection center designed to safeguard valuable motion pictures and television content for posterity. The Pro-Tek Preservation Vaults and Inspection Center, located in Burbank, CA, is designed to store some 600,000 film and video elements in a safe and secure environment. The vaults satisfy stringent ANSI standards that are intended to extend the life of motion picture film for as long as 500 years.

"This new facility is an important component of a concerted effort to help our customers safeguard valuable and often irreplaceable film for future audiences and historians," said Richard (Rick) Utley, vice-president, Prot-Tek Preservation Services for Cinesite Inc., a Kodak subsidiary. "Most studios now

consider the assets in their film libraries as currency for the future. During the 1980s, the VCR significantly increased the value of older films. Today, it is the DVD player, tomorrow's format will have a digital base and mandate a higher quality level for home entertainment use. More than ever, content holders need to preserve the cornerstone media universal for all formats, which is film."

The new facility encompasses three medium-term storage vaults where film is maintained at 45° F and 25% relative humidity. Video is stored at 50° F and 35% humidity. Film stored in this environment will last several hundred years with little base degradation or color fade.

Plasma Flat Screen Booming

Plasma flat screens are the most impressive of the new products in the professional AV communication field. Hope Reports predicts that

unit sales over the next five years will expand more than eightfold, which is practically unheard of. The technology, which took a number of years to evolve into a workable product, involves minute cells where atoms are ionized by energy creating red, green, and blue lights. Fujitsu introduced the first viable product in 1993.

Strategic Alliance to Deliver Streaming Services

Sky Datamann International Ltd., Compaq Computer Ltd., and Streaming21, Inc., have announced the formation of a three-way strategic alliance to jointly develop the market for broadband streaming services in Hong Kong. The trio will offer multimedia broadband streaming services and technologies to customers via Sky Datamann's regional network of value-added data centers.

"The strategic alliance with Compaq and Streaming21 is a big part of our vision for devel-

oping the regional internet infrastructure industry," said Stephen Ho, CEO of Sky Datamann. "Compaq's industry experience and global expertise will enable us to offer the very latest, best-in-class streaming services to our customers with mission-critical internet operations. The Streaming21 technologies provide not only the ability to deliver broadcast quality streaming content, but also create realistic value-added streaming services on a large scale."

Under the agreement, Compaq will provide high-availability infrastructure utilizing Compaq 8-way ProLiant servers. In addition, the Compaq systems integration team will provide software solutions and technology integration services based upon industry-leading technologies from Streaming21, the only carrier-class streaming technology provider in the industry. The joint solution will enable Sky Datamann to offer best-of-breed, realtime and on-demand multimedia broadband streaming services.