

News

SMPTE and EBU Join Forces on Time and Synchronization

SMPTE and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) are forming a new Joint Task Force to examine and standardize future needs for timing and synchronization in moving picture and related industries.

Current methods of timing and synchronization for television, audio, and other moving picture signals rely on standards that have been in place for over 30 years. Although these standards have proven to be robust solutions that served the industry well, they are predicated on technologies that are becoming increasingly inappropriate for the digital age with, for example, networked content sharing or higher frame rate HDTV image formats, and they now impose unacceptable limitations for the future.

The Task Force, which will be chaired by Hans Hoffmann of the EBU Technical Department and SMPTE Director of Standards & Engineering Peter Symes, will begin by focusing on user requirements. Based on the input to be received from broadcasters, the media, and entertainment industries, the Task Force will publish one or more Requests for Technology (RFT). The industry's responses to these RFT will subsequently be evaluated against the known user requirements. The outcome of this process will be a set of specifications that will be passed to the appropriate SMPTE Technology Committees for due process standardization.

The first full meeting has been scheduled for November 5 and 6 in New York. The Task Force intends to adhere to an aggressive time

schedule, with the goal to publish the final specification by the end of 2008.

SMPTE and CST Announce Memorandum of Understanding

SMPTE and the Commission Supérieure Technique de l'image et du Son (CST) announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing increased cooperation between the two organizations.

The MOU provides for high-level exchange of information between the organizations, fosters increased cooperation in the development of standards of mutual interest, and provides for regular meetings of organization leaders, as well as joint projects where applicable.

Masstech and SGL Advance Toward SMPTE Standard for Interchange of Archive Material

Masstech Group Inc., and Software Generation Ltd. (SGL), have announced substantial progress toward the creation of a SMPTE standard that will allow for the interchange of material between archive management systems.

In 2006, SGL and Masstech Group recognized the need for a standard for archive material interchange, resulting in the formation of the SMPTE V16 committee. This SMPTE standard committee has earned widespread industry support and has attracted a number of prestigious members, who bring experience from some of the industry's leading broadcasting and manufacturing companies.

The SMPTE V16 standard will provide a definition of an exchange format, to enable a video file written in this format to be readable by any archive management system. The format is also to be data tape drive independent. Both companies have pledged their continued support for

development and eventual adoption of this highly important standard.

Ioan Allen Receives Honorary Degree from the University of Nottingham

Ioan Allen, senior vice president of Dolby Laboratories, recently received an honorary degree of Doctorate of Science from the University of Nottingham, being recognized as one of the most accomplished engineers in international cinema.

A pioneer in the 1970s, Allen ushered in a new era in sound technology and aesthetics with his work on the multichannel sound system known worldwide as Dolby Stereo. At Dolby, Allen continues to develop and introduce new solutions throughout the world. Chairman of the Dye Track Committee, which promotes the use of environmentally friendly film soundtracks, Allen helped to rid film of hazardous materials by developing a new system that replaced silver with cyan-dye analog tracks, now an industry standard.

Among his many honors for his contributions to the cinema industry, Allen has received several Scientific and Engineering Awards from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and an Oscar for continuous contributions to film sound.

A SMPTE Fellow, Allen is chair of the SMPTE Film Audio Technology Committee and serves on the Board of Editors.

Help Wanted in Finding the Facts

A book is being written covering the history of electronic editing and videotape recording from 1945 to the current day. If you worked on or with any of the pioneering companies, such as CMX, Ampex, IVC, Cartrivision, Convergence, ISC, BHP, D/Vision, KuB, or Lightworks, please e-mail John Buck at cmx600@gmail.com.