

News

SMPTE Engineering Standards Committees Converge in Paris

SMPTE engineering standards committees met in Paris, France, on September 12-17, for the third round of meetings this year.

The event, hosted by Institut National de L'Audiovisuel (INA), included over 80 representatives of manufacturers and users with additional support from Harris/Leitch and Thomson Grass Valley.

The meetings included work on the Television Systems Technology Committee (S22), which reviewed a draft document relating to a broadcast exchange format, addressing the automation and traffic system domain within a broadcast facility. Work was also completed on a four-part document—SMPTE 2032-1, 2032-2, 2032-3, and 2032-4, “Media Dispatch Protocol Specifications”—along with the mapping specification and basic pull target profile. The Committee on Wrappers and Metadata (W25) discussed ongoing work on mapping VC3 coding units into an MXF generic container, carriage of event-oriented metadata, and groups and types registries.

The highlight of the event was a tour of the INA facilities, which included a presentation on the Brava Project, which is supported by the European Commission. The project is aimed at developing tools for digital restoration of large amounts of broadcast archive documents (video and film) and is of considerable importance for the preservation of European cultural heritage. The system provides for network access to shared media, acquisition devices, realtime video, and HD-video restoration.

The next meetings will be held on November 30 to December 4, 2007, at Disney Studios in Burbank, CA. Information on SMPTE engineering standards committees and how to participate is available at www.smpte.org/standards/.—Mark S. Hyman

DCI Complete Compliance Test Plan for D-Cinema Validation

Digital Cinema Initiatives (DCI) has announced the completion and availability of the DCI Compliance Test Plan (CTP).

Six months ago, DCI engaged CineCert LLC to finalize the CTP, which includes validated test procedures for the DCI Specification, version 1.1, including all referenced SMPTE standards. It details test procedures appropriate for each class of digital cinema device, such as projectors, servers, and media blocks.

With the availability of the CTP, DCI continues to promote its Digital Cinema System Specification, which sets forth the technical specifications developed by the six DCI member studios and serves as a guide to manufacturers, system integrators, exhibitors, and other stakeholders for digital cinema standardization, interoperability, and quality.

DCI is considering several entities that have expressed interest in becoming licensed facilities to perform the tests detailed by the Compliance Test Plan. A selection process is under way, and testing entities will be named in the near future.

ATSC Names Next TSG Board Chairman

The Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) has named John Henderson as the next Chairman of the Technology and Standards Group (TSG).

“John Henderson has a long history of contributions to the ATSC Digital Television standards—from leading system-specific tests of the original digital systems and the Grand Alliance system to his most recent contributions as TSG vice-chair, the chair of our Specialist Group on Receivers and a number of other leadership roles,” said Glenn Reitmeier, ATSC Board of Directors Chairman, NBC Universal. “John’s deep technical knowledge and balanced perspective on system and receiver design is widely recognized by ATSC members.”

Henderson has been an active participant in ATSC for many years, contributing to its technology and standards group, the planning committee, and the board’s strategic planning and membership subcommittees. He replaces William Miller of ABC, whose term as TSG Chairman will expire on December 31, 2007.

Panavision Acquires Plus 8 Digital

Panavision has announced the acquisition of Plus 8 Digital, one of North America’s largest digital camera rental companies.

“This transaction is another step forward in Panavision’s strategy of diversifying our camera product offerings generally and our digital offerings specifically and broadens our reach to cinematographers working in all segments of our business,” said Bob Beitcher, President and CEO, Panavision. “We are very fortunate to combine our efforts with the employees of Plus 8 Digital as well as Marker Karahadian, the company’s founder and owner.”

Plus 8 Digital operates five digital camera rental facilities in Burbank, New York, Houston, Vancouver and Toronto.

It was among the first rental facilities in North America to introduce Carl Zeiss HD DigiPrimes, the Thomson Viper, and Panasonic Varicam. Their extensive HD inventory includes over 20 Viper cameras.

Panavision Inc. is a leading designer and manufacturer of high-precision camera systems, including film and digital cameras, lenses, and accessories for the motion picture and television industries.

New Pinnacle PCTV HD Solutions Turn PCs into No-fee HDTVs with Full PVR Capabilities

Pinnacle Systems is extending its Pinnacle PCTV line of TV tuners. The newest additions to the Pinnacle PCTV family are designed to meet the needs of a wide range of consumers with three products: Pinnacle PCTV HD Ultimate Stick, the industry's only USB 2.0 TV tuner stick that provides plug-and-watch TV viewing on a PC without any installation; Pinnacle PCTV HD Card, a HDTV tuner card which includes support for FM radio; and Pinnacle PCTV Remote Kit for Windows Media Center. The new

TV tuner products provide users with the ability to capture, view, record, and playback high-quality HD and SD TV, without having to purchase a new HDTV and pay monthly service fees.

Genum Opens Office in Munich

In efforts to broaden the company's global sales organization, Genum Corp. has announced the opening of a sales and support office in Munich, Germany. The new office, headed by Ewald Liess, will serve Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The opening of the Munich office is the latest in a series of strategic moves announced by the company in August 2007 in order to provide greater accessibility to Genum's extensive line of industry-leading, high-performance optical, analog and mixed-signal products for video transport and data communications applications. Genum recently announced the establishment of new offices throughout Asia and North America, as well as new distributors covering Europe, Asia, and Israel.

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Dianne Purrier, Managing Editor

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