

News



Peter Symes Named as New SMPTE Director of Standards & Engineering

Peter Symes has joined SMPTE as the new Director of Standards & Engineering, bringing nearly 40 years of experience in broadcast television.

Symes was previously manager, advanced technology at Grass Valley, Inc., where he was the liaison among many groups on a range of technology topics, with emphasis on issues related to industry standards and patents.

Symes began his television career in the planning and installation department of the British Broadcasting Corp., where he led a group responsible for acquisition and installation of studio cameras and related systems. He moved to the U.S. in 1983, joining Grass Valley Group as a product manager responsible for products, including the 300-series production switcher and the Kaleidoscope digital effects system. During his 23 years with the company, he has represented Grass Valley in a number of organizations including the Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) and SMPTE. He holds several patents and is the joint recipient of an Emmy award for the architecture of a digital picture processor.

In recent years, Symes worked closely with internal and external legal teams on a range of intellectual property issues, and has contributed to the patent policies of both ATSC and SMPTE.

A SMPTE Fellow, and member for 30 years, Symes has served the organization in numerous capacities.



Gavin Schutz Appointed President of AZCAR

SMPTE Engineering Vice President Gavin Schutz has been appointed as President, AZCAR Technologies Inc.

Schutz has extensive experience providing vision, leadership, and strategic direction in technology throughout the media and entertainment industries. He has managed emerging technologies from both operating and engineering perspectives, furthering the strategic and tactical business goals of rapidly growing media companies. In his previous role as senior vice

president, AZCAR Media Services, he was instrumental in developing the company's media strategy and, among his expanded management duties, will now assume responsibility for implementing it.

Prior to joining AZCAR, Schutz was executive vice-president and CTO of Ascent Media Group and a founder of Four Media Company.

ITU Cancels ITU Telecom Europe 2007

The International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) forthcoming ITU Telecom Europe 2007 in Sofia, Bulgaria, scheduled for December has been canceled. The decision was made in order to focus capacity and resources on upcoming ITU Telecom events, as well as a number of new initiatives.

This announcement follows the first meeting of the ITU Telecom Board of Directors, a top-level representation of major global information and communication technologies (ICT) corporations and organizations, who met recently at ITU headquarters in Geneva. The ITU Telecom Board of Directors recommended the cancellation of Europe along with a raft of new measures aimed at enhancing ITU Telecom's position as the leading global networking platform for the ICT industry.

The next ITU Telecom events will take place in Africa and Asia in 2008. ITU's flagship ITU Telecom World will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, October 5-9, 2009.

FCC Publishes Cable DTV Rulemaking Notice and Requires Consumer Warning for Analog TVs

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding proposals to the public to ensure that viewers can receive must-carry TV stations via cable after the completion of the transition to digital transmission on February 17, 2009.

Approximately 32 million cable households receive only analog cable service, and the notice is aimed at finding ways to ensure that they will not lose service after the transition date.

The FCC has also issued a mandate, whereby retailers must disclose that television-receiving equipment without digital tuners will require a converter box to receive over-the-air television after February 2009 deadline.

NHK Begins Testing of Ultra HD

Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) has started public testing of the next-generation Ultra HD standard. This technology includes a resolution of 7680 x 4320, which is up to 16 times clearer than HDTV. The prototype super-fast cameras can capture data at a rate of 4000 frames/sec and the audio component is 22.2 (as compared to today's 5.1 surround sound).

As part of the first public demonstration in Tokyo, Japan, NHK has employed the use of ATEME's encoding technology with MPEG-4 AVC (H.264). A French-based company specializing in MPEG-4 compression solutions, ATEME is cooperating closely with NHK Labs in the design and development of this next-generation standard.

Ultra HD broadcasting consumes a tremendous amount of bandwidth—18 minutes of uncompressed footage consumes 3.5 Tbytes of data and one minute of uncompressed footage consumes 194 Gbytes. The use of ATEME's MPEG-4 AVC compression technology dramatically reduces the bandwidth requirements while maintaining the best quality.

Ultra HD cameras, recorders, encoders, and projectors are currently being developed. The introduction of the full specification for Ultra HD is expected in 2009, satellite transmission tests are estimated to begin in 2011, and by 2020, Ultra HD will be ready for broadcast to households.

Beta Version of HD Channel to Launch on ABC.com's Ad-Supported, Full-Episode Broadband Player

The Disney-ABC Television Group has announced that it will begin to stream content in true high-definition resolution this summer on its Emmy Award-winning ABC.com broadband video.

Launching as a beta test in early July, the full-episode broadband player's HD channel will feature a limited amount of content in true high-definition 1280 x 720 resolution from such series as *Lost*, *"Desperate Housewives,"* *"Grey's Anatomy,"* and *"Ugly Betty."* In conjunction with the launch of the new season in September, a more robust HD programming lineup will be offered.

Additionally, this fall, the ABC.com's full episode player will be expanded further to include national news and local content, in addition to primetime entertainment programming. This new player will be geo-targeted, offering the ability for local ads and content to be more relevant to each individual user.

In April, the full-episode player began offering full-screen

viewing as well as a small "mini" screen that users can position wherever they choose on their desktops, in addition to the two original standard viewing size options.

Motorola Acquires Modulus Video

Motorola, Inc., and Modulus Video, Inc., have signed an agreement, under which Motorola will acquire Modulus Video.

Modulus Video, which specializes in MPEG-4 Advanced Video Coding (AVC) compression systems designed for delivery of high-value video content in the IPTV, cable, broadcast, and satellite marketplace, has partnered with Motorola for over two years bringing high-quality encoding solutions to key customers around the world.

This acquisition will complement Motorola's recent acquisitions of Broadbus, Kreatel, Tut Systems, and Netopia in the creation and delivery of an integrated, end-to-end video delivery system for multiple network architectures.

The transaction should be completed by the third quarter of 2007.

Thomson to Offer Content Mastering, Replication, and Key Management Services in Europe for Digital Cinema

Thomson, through its Technicolor Digital Cinema business is now able to provide digital cinema mastering, replication, distribution, and key management services out of its London digital intermediate and film facility.

The services now being offered out of London will enable Technicolor Digital Cinema to better serve its studio customers with a local presence in addition to its U.S.-based facilities in Burbank, CA, and Wilmington, OH. The London-based location will also be able to master and replicate independent and local content, as well as advertising and alternative content.

The London facility offers JPEG 2K encoding and encryption capabilities for U.S.-based studios, European distributors, and independent producers, creating digital cinema packages. In addition, it offers the ability to create a DCDM by taking the digital intermediate and converting it into the DCI-specified TIFF files in X'Y'Z colorspace.

Initially, the facility will have the capacity to replicate 200 drives per day, and will scale in line with demand. It will be able to replicate multiple versions of feature films simultaneously.

This location will directly interface with U.S.-based operations to provide seamless content, replication, and key management support in Europe.