



SMPTE PDA Update

By Joel Welch

SMPTE's Professional Development Academy is committed to helping its members grow professionally. We strive to address technology topics of highest need and greatest impact to the motion imaging industry using the most appropriate learning platforms.

In looking at the broad range of experience levels of SMPTE members, it becomes obvious that one size does not fit all when it comes to learning. At one end of the knowledge spectrum, there are the folks who are experts in a field. They design, apply, and perhaps invent technologies for use in motion imaging. These folks are likely to have a very deep, theoretical understanding of the technology and have spent many years applying that knowledge.

On the other end of this knowledge continuum, are individuals who use technology every day. They have mastered the practical application of the technology, but may desire a greater understanding of how the technology works. They may have “learned as they went,” come up through the ranks, or perhaps started out in one craft area and now find themselves needing a deeper understanding of the technology that supports their vision.

One-off, realtime, online educational webcasts, such as those found in the SMPTE PDA Now calendar, are good for addressing “hot topics” of fairly narrow scope, addressing specific problems or issues, or providing an overview. SMPTE PDA Now events are used to fill a tightly focused knowledge gap, update existing knowledge within a specific area, to provide context from which to work.

Onsite seminars are best used when a practical element is required or when it is important to apply theory with feedback/guidance from an instructor. If application of a technology is relatively complex, it is a likely candidate for an onsite seminar. Onsite seminars are best utilized for moderate coverage, accompanied by practical application.

For those who wish to acquire a fundamental understanding of technology theory, in a very broad sense, or those relatively new to a specific technology area, such as data communications or networking principles, a formal distance education program starts to make sense. Distance education programs are fairly structured, and are delivered over an extended period of time, such as weeks or months, and allow for some level of participant flexibility within the course structure. Distance education is an excellent way to gain solid understanding of theory and critical fundamentals that can serve as a springboard for further learning or enhanced application.

As you can see, deciding which platform to use depends on the needs of the learner. SMPTE members have a wide range of learning needs and as such, SMPTE's Professional Development Academy will strive to meet these learning needs with the appropriate application of various learning platforms. In the upcoming months, we hope you will join us for our “Hot Topic” SMPTE PDA Now events, but also keep an eye out for SMPTE PDA onsite seminars and distance education courses; each designed specifically to address the learning needs of SMPTE Members.