



SMPTE PDA Update

By Joel Welch

SMPTE strives to regularly add to resources available through the SMPTE Professional Development Academy (SMPTE PDA). As new sources of SMPTE PDA content become available, managing what access is provided to whom becomes a significant challenge.

Though we are still in the early days of compiling SMPTE PDA content that is useful and provides value to SMPTE Members, we've already started to experience the complexities of providing access rights to a variety of Member (and even non-member) groups. To date, we have available:

- SMPTE PDA Now Recordings—Available to SMPTE Members only.
- SMPTE PDA Docs—PDFs of SMPTE PDA Now presentations, select technical papers, and eventually a store of other useful documents—Available to SMPTE Members only.
- SMPTE PDA Anywhere—downloadable 320 x 240 resolution and MP3 only versions of SMPTE PDA Now Recordings—Available to SMPTE Members only.
- Recorded Technical Sessions from the 2007 SMPTE Stereoscopic Symposium—Available to Paid Full Symposium Registrants only.
- Recorded Technical Sessions from the 2007 SMPTE Technical Conference & Exhibition—Available to Paid Full Conference Registrants only.
- Recorded Technical Sessions from the 2008 SMPTE and VSF Joint Conference—Available to Paid Full Conference Registrants only.

From the list above, you can see that there are quite a few resources that are available to very specific groups. We want SMPTE Members to have full, free-of-charge access to the SMPTE PDA Now resources. Is it reasonable to use SMPTE Members' dues to support free-of-charge access of a SMPTE Member benefit to non-members? A password is required to access this content and the password is available to Members only.

Individuals who attend any of the SMPTE conferences have invested a significant amount of time and money to attend these events in person. As such, it was thought that attendees of the SMPTE 2008 Technical Conference & Exhibition should enjoy exclusive access to the recorded sessions and that the general SMPTE Membership might be provided access at some future date. This would be much like the process that movies move through, from exhibition in theaters, to pay-per-view/DVD, and finally broadcast by the networks. Again, a unique password is required to provide access only to those for whom it is intended.

The same goes for recordings from the other conferences. Each specific group of attendees requires a unique password so those who are not authorized to access a specific resource are prohibited from utilizing a "paid for" resource.

The "password challenge" is most difficult for SMPTE Members who attend several conferences and want to utilize SMPTE PDA resources. I completely understand how frustrating it may feel to track so many different passwords.

SMPTE will continue to try to balance ease of access and return on the mix of our Members' investment of membership and conference registration. We will also be looking at the technical capabilities of our website associated technologies, a longer term goal, to find better solutions for making access more convenient while providing appropriate access rights. We will continue to move the organization forward to better serve you—step by step.