

Message from the Executive Director

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SMPTE Progress on Center Stage

The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers was founded in 1916 because the emerging movie industry needed standards. Nearly 100 years later, SMPTE remains at the center of the stage, playing a crucial role in the transformation of the global media content business.

An example of this work today is in 21DC (formerly known as DC28), the SMPTE technology committee on digital cinema. 21DC includes more than 300 members from more than 20 countries, and has published more than 20 documents with more on the way. Interestingly, there are already more than 5,000 digital cinema screens in the U.S., alone.

Digital cinema has opened the door to stereoscopic digital 3-D, and work continues in SMPTE to explore the technologies and establish the standards for what just might be a successful rebirth of this art form. But 3-D will not be confined to movie theaters; as I write this today, I am sitting in the initial meeting of the SMPTE 3-D to the Home Task Force where we have participation by more than 150 individuals representing more than 80 companies dedicated to a home solution. SMPTE's job is to create standards for content producers that ensure maximum benefit of the new technologies and do it in a timely manner.

Another current example is the Task Force on Timing and Synchronization, a joint initiative of SMPTE and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). This group is charged with pre-empting the need for replacement standards for time labeling and synchronization. Both time labeling and synchronization are covered by existing standards (SMPTE Timecode and the Color Black reference signal) that are adequate today, but neither meets the needs of the future. SMPTE and EBU have brought together a cross-industry team of users and manufacturers to establish a consensus on needs and technology for new standards.

SMPTE is the focal point where organizations and individuals create a solid base of standards on which our industry is built (past, present, and future). In addition to the creation of its own standards, SMPTE collaborates with many other organizations that are part of the larger content technology chain. Each year, the SMPTE Progress Report is a means for these organizations and individual players to provide updates on the progress being made in the evolution and revolution of content creation, management, distribution and display. I commend our volunteer leadership for again compiling an insightful report, this year under the direction of SMPTE Board of Governors Executive Vice President, Ken Fuller. A Society such as ours depends on the engagement of volunteer leaders who are also subject matter experts to keep us on the cutting edge—and thanks to Ken, this is another great addition to the SMPTE library.