



SMPTE PDA Now—Active Participation is Important

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No doubt, by now you've heard that SMPTE PDA Now live events and SMPTE PDA Anywhere recordings are excellent resources to help with an individual SMPTE Member's professional development efforts. The live sessions are accessible from anywhere in the world using a personal computer and an internet connection and the recordings are in a downloadable format so Members can take SMPTE PDA Content Anywhere.

At first glance, it may seem like SMPTE PDA Now live events push information one way and that attendees are asked to sit and listen passively. Sometimes this is the case, but to really get the most out of the live events, participation is key. Of course that means asking questions of the guest speaker using the integrated text chat function of the online platform. That is one way to participate, but there are others ways that will help you retain new information and perhaps even help other participants learn at the same time.

Many adults learn most effectively when they are actively engaged in the learning environment. Asking questions, posing problems, and sharing experiences relating to the topic at hand are all excellent ways to help maximize the learning benefit for you and others.

You may ask, isn't that distracting? Won't that detract from the session? If done excessively, yes, it could take away from the speaker's

point, but adding your experience, or contributing little tidbits of related information can actually add value to the discussion.

Here's a sample exchange from a recent SMPTE PDA Now event:

PARTICIPANT A: The problem I see is that it will be some time before this automatic AFD metadata decoding capability is built into displays. I don't believe any existing displays or tuners/STBs can handle firmware updates to add this capability.

PARTICIPANT B: Routers are already being built though to utilize the AFD metadata within a plant. [This] should help reduce issues at the display end.

PARTICIPANT A: That addresses the production and distribution, but not the consumer display end.

PARTICIPANT B: If the TV station [sends] the data properly, it will help once the consumer has their display set up however. I do agree with your major point though.

PARTICIPANT C: At this time, a primary application would be at cable head-ends, taking broadcast stations' 16 x 9 signals and converting to 4:3 for their analog channels.

You can see the exchange above was rich and added significantly to the speaker's presentation. It provided additional real-world information and covered an area that was not initially part of the planned presentation.

The bottom line here is that it is important to participate actively in SMPTE PDA Now events. You have expertise to contribute and augment the planned discussion. This helps others, keeps you engaged, and makes for a richer, more effective learning experience. ■



Joel E. Welch, SMPTE's Director of Professional Development, is responsible for creating and implementing educational and professional learning & development (L&D) services through SMPTE's Professional Development Academy (SMPTE PDA) and managing content for the *Motion Imaging Journal*. Welch's 23-year international technical L&D career focused primarily on the start-up and implementation of numerous technical, professional development services in the corporate and association spaces, most notable of which include Continental Cablevision (now part of Comcast), Optus Vision (Australia), Lucent Technologies, and the Society of Cable Telecommunication Engineers (SCTE). Since joining SMPTE in June 2007, Welch has successfully launched a number of SMPTE PDA services including, SMPTE PDA Docs, SMPTE PDA Anywhere, and SMPTE PDA Now.