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SMPTE Education: Past, Present, and Future

SMPTE has a proud history of education initiatives, and since the Society’s inception in 1916, Education has been at the forefront of the Society’s activities carried out through Section meetings, conferences, and the society’s publications, mainly the *Journal*.

Publications

Dissemination of information began with the publication of the first *Transactions of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* in July 1916, predating the addition of “television” which did not yet exist! In the 1930s, the Society decided to change the name to the *Journal* to broaden the scope of material from just quarterly meeting reports to include content from other sources. Although the focus and name of the publication have shifted over the years, the *Journal* has always served the function to document significant technical developments in motion picture and later television, starting in 1950.

Conferences

The Society has been educating its membership since the first gathering in Washington, District of Columbia, in July 1916. With growing interest in the Society, by 1921, SMPTE meetings took place in New York, Atlantic City, Chicago, Rochester, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Montreal, Dayton, and Buffalo (**Fig. 1**). Conferences were two to three times a year,

until 1918 when they became biannual events held in May and October and until 1975 when they were reduced to once per year. In 1985, the Society’s annual meetings began to alternate between conventions centers in New York and Los Angeles. Since 2008, the Annual Technical Conference & Exhibition has been solely held on the west coast in Hollywood, California. Through out the past 100 years, the format, names, and locations of these annual events have changed, but one constant remains. These meetings continue to serve as a gathering for introduction, discussion, and the exchange of knowledge for emerging technologies in the motion imaging industry.

In the late 1990s, SMPTE joined with five other international societies to partner in the International Broadcasting Convention (IBC), the international exhibition and conference held annually in Amsterdam. Through its many expert members, SMPTE supports the conference by programming various topical sessions.

Over the years, SMPTE has also sponsored topic-specific conferences that address emerging technology trends and issues. A long-standing partnership with the National Association of

Broadcasters (NAB) is a two-day program, which is now called the “Future of Cinema Conference,” focusing on technology topics in cinema. In 2013, SMPTE launched a two-day conference, in partnership with Stanford University, focused on the growing entertainment activities in the Silicon Valley, which is now entitled “Entertainment Technology in the Connected Age.” In recent years, SMPTE has also begun to produce conferences in Europe, in partnership with local organizations, such as the European Broadcasting Union (Switzerland) and the Fernseh- und Kinotechnische Gesellschaft

(FKTG) (Germany).

Education Strategy and Services

In recent years, efforts to strengthen the Education pillar have continued with the formation of the Education Strategy Committee (ESC) in 2014 to provide education-related guidance and recommendations to the Board of Governors on education initiatives. The committee includes members from academia, industry, and SMPTE staff.

Today, SMPTE offers a variety of education services, with the goal of providing the global motion imaging industry a number of ways to learn about important current and emerging technologies.

continued on p. 20



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FIGURE 1. President greets SMPTE at the White House in 1930.



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Today, SMPTE offers a variety of education services, with the goal of providing the global motion imaging industry a number of ways to learn about important current and emerging technologies (Fig. 2). SMPTE produces technical webcasts; a monthly single-topic technology e-Newsletter, SMPTE Newswatch; virtual courses; the Digital Library; and even educational wall chart inserts within the *Journal*.

The Society’s Digital Library, which was launched in 2011, not only provides access to SMPTE standards but also holds the entire library of the *SMPTE Journal*, going back to the first days of SMPTE as well as many conference papers. Overall, the library is 100 years of content, including many historically important articles. The *Journal* archive is available free of charge to members.

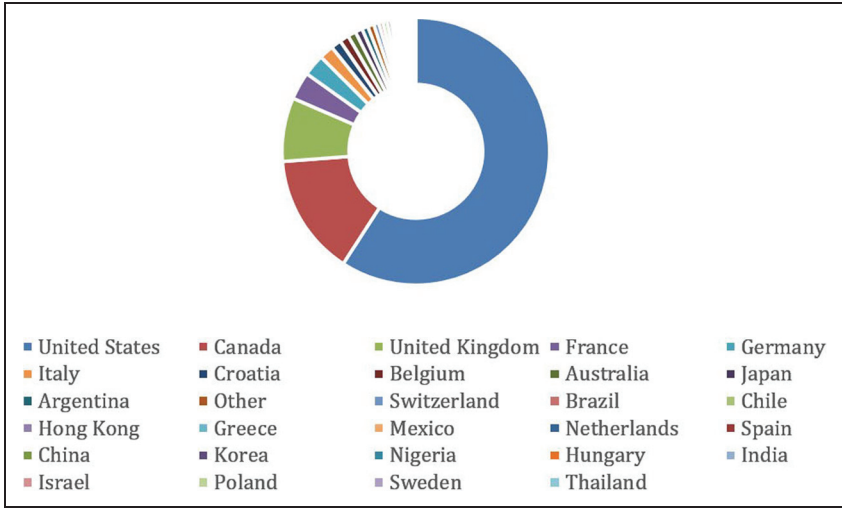


FIGURE 2. SMPTE's Global Education Audience.

The “Monthly Education Webcasts” were the first online education service, which was launched in 2008. These continue to be popular with members and nonmembers alike. They are convenient and provide a broad range of technology topics.

Technologies covered include those which are widely deployed, but slightly understood, as well as those which are in the early deployment phase. Each of these webcasts is presented by an expert on the topic and always includes the opportunity for

webcast guests to speak directly to the presenter. All webcasts are captured and posted for member on-demand playback. They are also a free SMPTE Member benefit.

More recently, general webcast offerings have been expanded. They now include quarterly series, including one on emerging technologies, and an exclusive, invitation-only series for Executive Members. Finally, a strategically significant series of webcasts is produced to cover SMPTE standards and progress made by the SMPTE Standards Community. No one can help educate the industry on SMPTE standards better than SMPTE itself. With a growing diversity of standards with ever-increasing complexity, this is one of the priorities for the education team.

The SMPTE Virtual Classroom was implemented in 2012 to provide global access to deeper, more intensive learning opportunities on



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technologies of particular importance to the industry. As of this writing, offerings include intensive, multi-week courses on routing, switching, and internetworking (Cisco's world-renowned Cisco Certified Network Associate program), Essentials of IP Media Transport for Broadcasters, and Navigating the Ultra High Definition (UHD) Ecosystem. Future courses will include SMPTE's Interoperable Master Format standard and others covering various SMPTE standards. The Society's virtual courses include self-study, narrated lessons, assignments, quizzes, and final exams. Interaction is encouraged through the use of course-specific online discussion forums and weekly, live, online instructor coaching sessions. Instructor coaching sessions are captured for on-demand viewing. Participants who complete the minimum course requirements

receive a "certificate of achievement" for their efforts.

Education for the Future

Future education plans include adding to education efforts on SMPTE standards. To ensure all levels across the motion imaging industry are covered, several types of media will be implemented. For general, high-level understanding of various SMPTE standards, short summary videos are planned. Webcasts will provide an opportunity to discuss the video topics a little deeper. Select standards will continue to form the basis of future SMPTE virtual courses. This approach will help to raise awareness of SMPTE standards by enhancing understanding, but it will also allow individuals to choose the education service that best matches the depth and scope of coverage needed.

Scholarships

Beyond these education services, the Society is committed to supporting the education of students and future industry leaders. The long-standing Louis Wolf Jr. Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to help support students with their education in programs related to SMPTE's field of interest. In addition, the ESC is working on a number of other programs, including grants and awards programs, which will help ensure that students, young professionals, and, in some cases, even well-seasoned members of the industry are able to access post-secondary, graduate, and professional development education opportunities. These programs are vital to ensuring that SMPTE remains strong, continues to foster innovation, and develops critical standards while remaining a driving force in elevating the motion imaging industry. 



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