



Barbara H. Lange

The World Is Changing, Are You Ready?

I recently attended an event where I learned a lot about what the future holds for us in the media technology industry. It was the latest HPA NET (Hollywood Professional Association Networking) lunch event, and, if you live in the Los Angeles area and have never attended one, you are missing out. The luncheon offers the opportunity to mix and mingle, but the core of the event is the various tables hosted by individuals informing about a specific industry topic. During the event, attendees spend 20–30 min at one table then move to a different table to learn about a new topic. Think of it as speed dating but for media technology topics.

The three tables that I chose were very different. The first, titled “Enhancing the Viewer Experience With Machine Learning and Live Tagging,” was hosted by John Motz (GrayMeta) and Jeremy Craven (AWS Elemental). Here, I learned how GrayMeta and AWS Elemental teamed up with SKY to enhance the live broadcast of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle’s wedding. Using facial recognition and metadata tagging, they were able to offer viewers an interactive experience with inline information within the broadcast

feed. More than 400,000 people viewed the enhanced experience on the SKY app, and SKY posted an on-demand version on their website the next day. This fascinating technology offers many possibilities, for example, learning about the players on the field during a sporting event or learning the specifics on any particular topic while viewing a political debate.

My second table of choice was titled “Post Production in the Cloud—Today and Tomorrow.” Michael Cioni (Panavision) and Ramy Katrib (Digital FilmTree) provided a short introduction of a typical post-production workflow using the cloud. They described how content flows from the camera acquisition through to the editing bay. In today’s environment, there is a two-step process for the content to get from camera to the editing stage. With smarter camera technology, a step can be removed from the process, increasing production efficiency by shortening the timeline. This new technology changes workflows, including delivery of dailies and shifts work from one end of the process to the other, for example, more efficient dailies processing as well as increased volume of metadata content and storage.

The third table was the most amazing to me. In fact, the group was so mesmerized by the general

topic, asking very fundamental questions, we forgot about asking production-related questions altogether! Here, Carleton Curtis (Major League Gaming, Blizzard Entertainment) provided some valuable information about “E-Sports.” Having heard about this notion of e-sports, I had no idea of the extent of this growing business. The gist is that people (mostly young men between the ages of 18 and 25) are professional video gamers. They form teams and compete to win tournaments and prizes, some worth multimillions of dollars. This business is growing so much that leagues have been formed to manage the teams, the rules, and the general business around the sport. The questions directed to Curtis were more about the general understanding of the sport and less about the media technology used. Still, it was fascinating to learn how broadcast technology is used as an underpinning for this burgeoning industry.

There were a total of 13 tables. I could not attend all of them, but I am certain the experience was the same at each table—interesting topics, discussed among 8–10 people. All the topics got me thinking about the opportunity for enhanced viewing, for new business models, and for new players in the industry to take advantage of these technologies. It was a great way to spend a 2-hr lunch. I learned a lot.