



Barbara H. Lange

What Is the World Coming To?

It is always a pleasure to write this column for the Journal. However, at times, it is not easy to find compelling and enjoyable topics. I am not a trained writer, so I do the best that I can and usually enjoy putting thoughts together.

I find this topic of machine learning (ML) to be mesmerizing. It excites and scares me at the same time. The Wikipedia definition seems rather harmless and straightforward—ML is the study of algorithms and mathematical models that computer systems use to improve their performance on a specific task progressively.

These systems use data as the raw materials to build out these algorithms. The more data available, the more fascinating and sophisticated the results. The field of ML is vast, as nearly every aspect of our lives is considered a target for ML. Think of online shopping, the finance industry, sports analysis, and so much more. We probably

have no clue how pervasive ML is within our daily routines.

In SMPTE's world, ML has some interesting applications. From helping broadcast facilities with maximizing network flow to content creators using ML to develop content and scripts, it is something to which we will all have to adapt.

I am excited by this issue because it reflects SMPTE's desire to bring emerging technologies into our space. We need to help our members understand how this technique works and what it means to their businesses. Will it require new workflows, new tools, new human resources, and skillsets? The answer to all those questions is likely to be yes, yes, and yes.

However, there is another world beyond ML. As I reported several issues ago, the SMPTE Board recently approved a significant three-year strategic business plan at its October 2018 meeting. We did not waste any time and are busy working on that plan, laying the initial foundation with milestone markers to guide us through the first year. It is exciting times for us on staff as we learn some new

business techniques and invest in critical tools to help us. In future reports, I plan to write about our progress, providing you with some insights into what we are finding, how we are adapting, and the successes that we will be achieving. It is an ambitious plan, for sure. However, we are well on the way, and the staff is very excited to be working on it.

The foundation of our investment is coming from the Next Century Fund, a restricted portion of SMPTE's Reserve Fund that is strictly managed by Board oversight. These funds come from the generosity of so many corporate and individual donors who believe in SMPTE's work and our very bright future. We embarked on this journey back in 2014 as a lead-in to the centenary year in 2016. I am hoping to reengage with member companies to finally reach our \$4M goal. With about \$1.8M in commitments, we are almost halfway there! If you are interested in contributing to SMPTE's future, please contact me directly at blange@smpte.org. We are grateful for every donation, large or small.

