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A Ten-Year Reflection, Backward and Forward

On 18 January 2020, I celebrated a decade at the helm of SMPTE. A significant milestone like ten years is a good time to reflect backward and on the road ahead.

In 2010, our industry was quite different from what it is today. We hear that kind of statement frequently, don't we? But remember that smartphones were still relatively new, and we had not yet seen the iPad or the impact of Netflix's disruption. Life was somehow simpler, and yet we've encountered and embraced a lot of change in the meanwhile.

Back in 2010, 3D was the hottest item on the agenda. I recall attending my very first SMPTE Board meeting, just one week into my tenure when Pete Ludé pitched the idea of a SMPTE 3D event. This initiative resulted in two conferences, held in New York City, focused on the technical issues related to all things 3D from capture to display, including the very important topic of the human visual experience. The SMPTE 2010 Digital Cinema Summit, held at the NAB Show, also focused much attention on these issues as well. It all hit a pretty high note when the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) announced that it would capture and distribute 3D images of the 2010 World Cup tournament. The press was all aflutter that this time 3D would stick. Well, ten years

later, 3D still remains a novelty. I suppose virtual reality and augmented reality could be considered the next generation of this immersive experience. Let's see where these technologies take us.

The explosion of streaming services is another interesting change that took place in the past decade. Back in 2010, there were hardly any services that streamed content. Netflix started getting into the streaming game in the late 2000s but made the shift from its traditional DVD rental business to full-on streaming in 2011. Netflix's first original programmed content was "House of Cards," which debuted in 2013. Since then, Netflix has been a disruptor in streaming, television, and now in how we think of motion pictures. We have the proliferation of content from so many new content creators around the globe because of Netflix. Netflix has also brought a tremendous amount of change to SMPTE by supporting the important standards behind the Interoperable Master Format (IMF) for distribution and archiving of content.

Over a decade, our tastes can change. Remember how you hated the idea of Brussels sprouts as a kid? Today, it is the latest craze in healthy green eating. We've seen tastes change as a certain technology has become more accessible for consumers. With smartphones, iPads, and connected televisions, along with ubiquitous and cheap connectivity, consumers have many more choices on how they consume content. Back in 2010, we were still watching linear television



Barbara Lange speaking at the SMPTE International Conference on Stereoscopic 3D for Media and Entertainment at the Marriott Marquis in New York City in July 2010.

and going to the cinema. Today, we've arrived at the place of content everywhere, when you want it. The young generation of consumers were raised on this model and are not clamoring to sign up for cable any time soon.

I've thoroughly enjoyed the last ten years of my career. I joined an industry that I knew very little about and have had the great fortune of riding a significant wave of change. It is exciting to be a part of this change, and SMPTE is ready to take on these shifts in technology, content creation, and consumer tastes. And I very much look forward to continuing on this journey.

