



Florian Schleich

Greetings from the Incoming Standards VP

The first SMPTE standard I ever got to study was ST 377:2004—the file format specification for the beloved Material Exchange Format (MXF). That was in 2005, when I started my career as an undergraduate student at Fraunhofer IIS, Erlangen, Germany. Working there for a few hours a week, I was tasked with implementing small software tools to validate and process prototype Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs). The MXF standard was certainly no light read—I was both impressed and intimidated by its complexity. Frankly, I was quite happy about the publication of the famous *MXF Book* by Bruce Devlin *et al.* when I was still wrapping my head around operational patterns, descriptors, and package types. Now, 17 years after learning about MXF and SMPTE, it is a great honor to be serving the Society as the Standards Vice President. Picking up the baton from Mr. MXF himself is very humbling, to say the least. I thank Bruce for the leadership that he has provided to the standards community during his four years as Standards Vice President and for the guidance and support I personally received from him.

I am determined to continue the trajectory Bruce has set to make SMPTE even more attractive to software-centric projects. Bruce pioneered the Technical Specification (TSP) effort in collaboration with the Digital Production Partnership (DPP) and we collaboratively

evolved it into the Public Committee Draft (CD) process.¹ Public CDs allow for early feedback and quick iteration before submitting documents into the due process that continues to guarantee the high quality the industry is used to from SMPTE engineering documents. While some of our Technology Committees already embrace this agile approach, there is still some room for improvement around the mechanics and methods for soliciting feedback from the respective target audiences outside of SMPTE.

While the Public CD process has undoubtedly increased the accessibility of SMPTE, we need to re-examine the way documents are published in order for SMPTE to stay relevant as a standards body. We need to make sure that users and implementers can easily find and access our specifications. We need to consider alternative business models that eventually allow the consumption of our specifications free of charge. While there are several examples of fantastic open-source software implementations of SMPTE standards—such as AS-DCP Lib, RegXML Lib, and Photon, just to name a few—I am

convinced that tearing down the paywall would significantly improve adoption and support of SMPTE standards in general, but especially in open-source communities.

Just like open-source software projects, SMPTE relies mostly on the work of members. As you all know, most roles at SMPTE—from document editor to drafting group chair to Standards Vice President—are filled by members. Working on SMPTE standards is not necessarily their full-time job. SMPTE is not my full-time job. I am, therefore, very happy to announce that Sally Hattori—SMPTE Fellow and former Education Director—agreed to team up with me to share some of the workload that falls under the responsibility of the Standards Vice President. I appointed Sally as Standards Director for the time being, but we plan to evaluate whether it makes sense to formally define and introduce a new “Deputy SVP” role with a broader scope and responsibility.

I want to close with wishing you all a happy, healthy, and safe new year, and I look forward to hopefully being able to meet many of you in person again this year. Fingers crossed for conducting our June plenary meetings in Utah!

¹[Online]. Available: <https://www.smpte.org/public-committee-drafts>

UPCOMING STANDARDS MEETINGS

28 February–3 March

Virtual

6–9 June

Provo, UT, USA

14–17 September

Geneva, Switzerland