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# Our Relevance in Storytelling

I recently had a conversation with one of our members about a certain collection of films to which that member had a work connection. This has become one of my favorite parts of this job. Our members have a unique connection to film and broadcast, often working on effects that are so small you would only notice them if they were gone, but because they are there, the story and scene are enhanced.

My comment about one of these films was that the effects were incredible, but the storyline was missing an important part of this trope that is as old as time. Even with the team's amazing work, the problem for me lies in a missing element of the script; one element of storytelling that traces back to ancient myths from many cultures. So, despite great technology, I thought the film didn't hold up. The technology did its job, but the story it supported was flawed in my eyes. (This film made some serious cash at the box office, so my eyes don't count for much from a commercial perspective, I suppose.)

Ultimately, however, storytelling is at the core of our work. I have often heard this mentioned at conferences and events since coming on board at SMPTE; this makes me smile. Engineers and scientists are creating an ever-expanding tool

kit for artists to tell stories. From film and scripted shows to live broadcasts, we are telling stories that people connect with, and the technology is there to tell those stories better and increase connection.

Virtual characters and computer animation have revolutionized hair, fur, and fabric textures. The simulations of muscle movement under clothing or the push and pull of different fabrics as a virtual character lays their head on a pillow result from endless hours of work by animators, coders, and others who know it will improve the story.

Technology is utilized to tell news items or live-action sports in realtime with numerous viewpoints or portable 5G nodes to evade censors. These advancements provide us with the best "sense of being there." Because the technology is used to enhance the experience, it allows us to engage audiences.

SMPTE and its membership are situated at the nexus of art and science. It is an amazing crossroad. We collaborate to help people see realtime news or escape the realities of their lives for a few minutes or hours to immerse themselves in a film or series. This is an important role in the entertainment industry, and it is up to the technicians and engineers to get those stories to viewers.

Technological innovations open the minds of artists to try new things, and artists often have ideas they think are unattainable until

they speak with an engineer who says, "I think I know how to make that happen!"

Storytelling is what we all do. While some folks may find their focus in the science, the end goal is a better story. That is what we all strive for, to illuminate the story and bring the creative mind's ideas to reality. There's an old Broadway saying, "They can't go home humming the scenery." It's the same in film and broadcast. If the audience went home only speaking about the special effects, something was lacking in the story. We can't solve that, and we certainly can't hide it. But we can bring reality, atmosphere, fantasy, and many other elements to help good stories become great experiences for the viewers, and that is what our experts do every day. Yes, sometimes the work of our members is used to cover up a shortfall in storytelling, but more often than not, it is used to enhance and magnify in ways that continually astound even the greatest among us.

Let us celebrate great stories and our role in telling them because they are the stories that will last for decades, and SMPTE members have been part of that since the beginning of the art form. Thank you to those who make hair unruly, fur dense, muscles react, and fabric sparkle and float. Among many other abilities, they enhance the storyline and leave people talking about the story they came to see.

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