

# Siegfried Foessel: Leading Media Technology Innovation and Standardization

By Russell Poole

**E**very now and then, an innovator comes along and completely transforms the industry. Siegfried Foessel is one such innovator. In the world of imaging and video processing for broadcast and media production, Foessel is a leader with more than 80 publications and patents across 10 patent families. His work has had a global impact, and he is still working for a better future.

Foessel completed his studies in electrical engineering at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen, Germany, in 1989. Since then, he has worked at the Fraunhofer Institute IIS, Erlangen, Germany, worked on his doctorate, and held several team leadership positions. While working on his doctorate, he met one of the great influences of his career, Prof. Dieter Seitzer. “On the one hand, he was very demanding, but on the other hand, he always made you feel like you are one of the best people who can achieve anything,” says Foessel.

Leaders need teachers, and the best have several. Franz Kraus, former Arri CEO, mentored Foessel in the workplace. Foessel led the Fraunhofer team that co-developed Arri’s first digital cinema camera. This was one of many goals of Kraus. “[Kraus] always wanted to uncompromisingly develop the highest quality movie cameras for his customers,” says Foessel.

Foessel’s camera development was one of his proudest achievements. He also led JPEG’s Digital Cinema Ad Hoc Group and edited DCP and IMF digital cinema and broadcast profiles. He collaborated with Hollywood studios on the digital cinema certification test plan. His team successfully brought digital cinema production tools, such as easyDCP, into the market and, recently, he participated in the development of JPEG XS for video over Internet Protocol. EasyDCP even earned him a Joseph-von-Fraunhofer award, the highest award given at Fraunhofer. He served as president of Fernseh-und Kinotechnische Gesellschaft (FKTG), a German equivalent of SMPTE, for eight years.

Foessel began working with SMPTE in 2002 after making a career shift to media technology. “SMPTE



has always been the most influential standardization group and community in the media technology world,” says Foessel.

His time at SMPTE has been marked with success, publishing more than 20 journal and conference papers and serving on technology committees and the board of the European region. This impressive resume continues to grow as he works toward new goals for himself and the future. “First, I’d like to continue developing new and exciting technologies,” says Foessel. “Second, I’d like to bring creative and technology people closer together so that they work jointly on good movies. With the start of our new long-term project CreatiF at the HFF, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, we have a good base for such cooperation.”

Foessel chairs national and international standardization bodies. He is a SMPTE Fellow, IEEE senior member, Fraunhofer IIS Moving Picture Technologies Department head, and HFF University of Television and Film, Munich technology study program professor. He represents the Fraunhofer-wide Digital Media business area.

He and his wife enjoy French food and wine and hope to buy a holiday home in southern France soon.