

SMPTE at HPA 2025

BY RUSSELL POOLE



The annual HPA Tech Retreat, held 16-20 February, in Rancho Mirage, CA, isn't just a technology showcase. It's an opportunity for the industry's most game-changing minds to exchange ideas. Because SMPTE is home to many of these great minds, our Society had much to say during this retreat. SMPTE leadership led several sessions on hot topics like AI and the endurance of Consensus Standards. These sessions were educational and entertaining, providing an excellent showcase of everything SMPTE is currently doing for the industry.

Richard Welsh: Is the industry Sitting on an AI Goldmine or a Ticking Timebomb?

The first SMPTE session of HPA was led by SMPTE President and Senior VP at Deluxe Media, Richard Welsh, who detailed the pros, cons, and potential future of AI. The half-hour sessions covered everything from money-making, and saving, features of AI, to its dangers and environmental impact. Intellectual property and copyright were also big questions addressed in the presentation.

"Creative work, in particular, belongs to the person who created it," said Welsh. "But can you protect it realistically if you don't have any recourse to defend the ownership of that work? That is my ticking time bomb."

The bulk of his presentation concerned archiving data from film projects that often go unused/unseen, such as deleted scenes, script notes, and concept art. He urged companies to tag and copyright that data and use it in AI training tools. This way, the data can have a life beyond film and television, creating content in virtual spaces and making breakthroughs in other industries.

Sally-Ann D'Amato, Renard Jenkins, Andy Maltz: From Disruption to Durability, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Consensus Standards.

The session began with a rousing applause for the introduction of SMPTE's new Executive Director, Sally-Ann D'Amato.

The warm welcome enshrined the new era of SMPTE and created an exciting atmosphere in the room. The excitement continued with the introduction of Past SMPTE President, Renard Jenkins, and General Intelligence's Andy Maltz.

The session continued with Jenkins and Maltz emphasizing the importance of consensus Standards. Maltz pointed out that Standards are used in everyday life and Jenkins stated, "There is a rumor that SMPTE is anti-open source. This is not true. We are pro-interoperability. The two concepts can coexist."

Maltz gave a PowerPoint presentation that supported Jenkin's words, particularly through the lens of AI. The international collaborative efforts of ISO/TC 36 JCT1/SC 42 have produced more than 30 published AI documents. This collaborative effort sprouts through open-source work and incorporates those efforts into Standards that can be used by the international technology community.

The session concluded with a brief panel discussion on the efficiency of standards, focusing on strategies to accelerate the standardization process. The general consensus was that pre-standardization work and documenting existing practices are key to accelerating the process. The biggest piece of advice, though? Don't wait until you need a Standard. Always innovate before a problem arises, and the technology will appear in a flash.

Conclusion

The 2025 HPA Tech Retreat was an opportunity for organizations to make their mark on the industry, share ideas, and collaborate on future plans. SMPTE not only introduced new leadership but also ensured the industry was informed about our initiatives and vision for transforming media technology in the future. HPA was an introduction to a new SMPTE, and we made a great first impression.

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