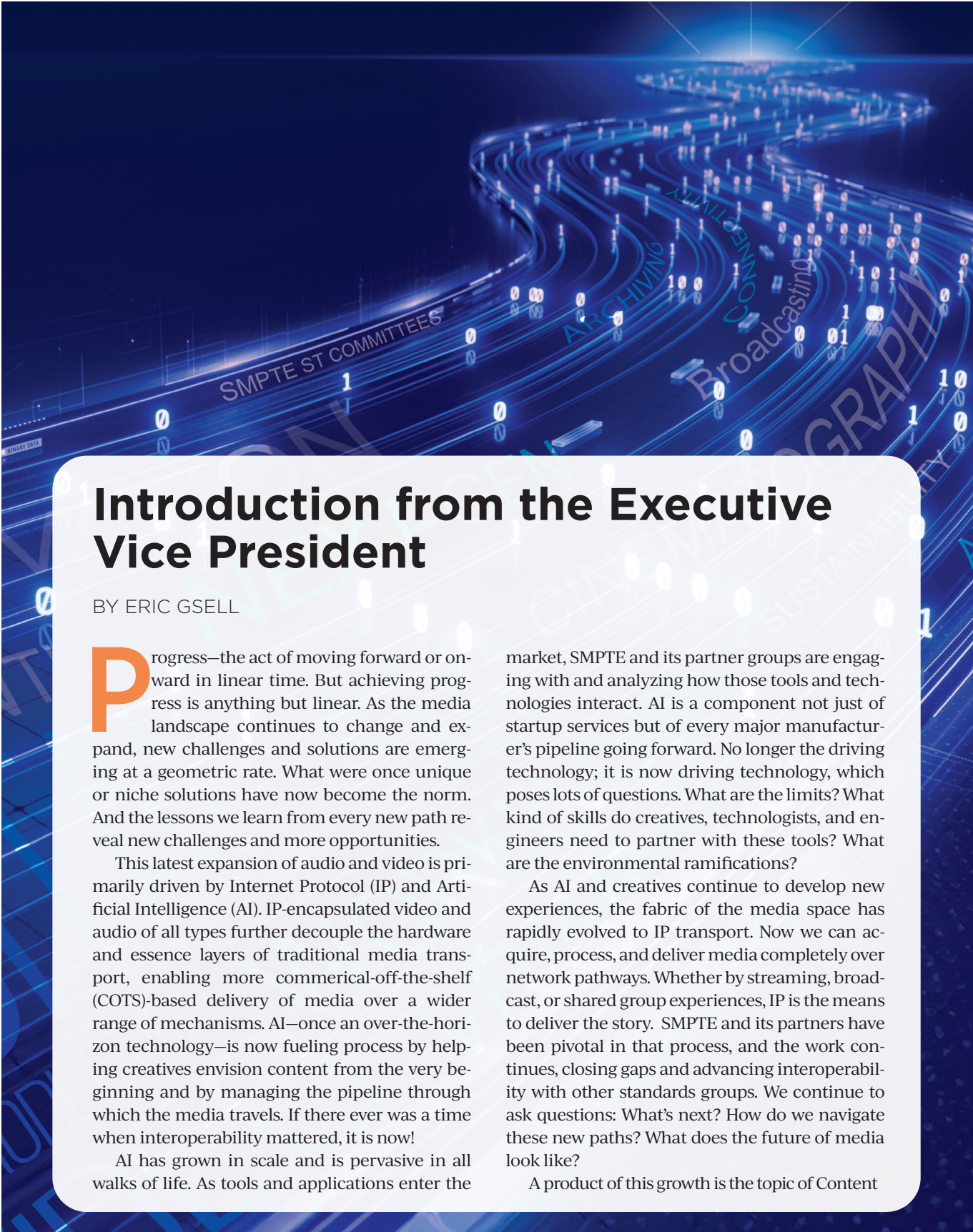




Introduction from the Executive Vice President

BY ERIC GSELL

Progress—the act of moving forward or onward in linear time. But achieving progress is anything but linear. As the media landscape continues to change and expand, new challenges and solutions are emerging at a geometric rate. What were once unique or niche solutions have now become the norm. And the lessons we learn from every new path reveal new challenges and more opportunities.

This latest expansion of audio and video is primarily driven by Internet Protocol (IP) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). IP-encapsulated video and audio of all types further decouple the hardware and essence layers of traditional media transport, enabling more commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS)-based delivery of media over a wider range of mechanisms. AI—once an over-the-horizon technology—is now fueling process by helping creatives envision content from the very beginning and by managing the pipeline through which the media travels. If there ever was a time when interoperability mattered, it is now!

AI has grown in scale and is pervasive in all walks of life. As tools and applications enter the

market, SMPTE and its partner groups are engaging with and analyzing how those tools and technologies interact. AI is a component not just of startup services but of every major manufacturer's pipeline going forward. No longer the driving technology; it is now driving technology, which poses lots of questions. What are the limits? What kind of skills do creatives, technologists, and engineers need to partner with these tools? What are the environmental ramifications?

As AI and creatives continue to develop new experiences, the fabric of the media space has rapidly evolved to IP transport. Now we can acquire, process, and deliver media completely over network pathways. Whether by streaming, broadcast, or shared group experiences, IP is the means to deliver the story. SMPTE and its partners have been pivotal in that process, and the work continues, closing gaps and advancing interoperability with other standards groups. We continue to ask questions: What's next? How do we navigate these new paths? What does the future of media look like?

A product of this growth is the topic of Content

Prevenance and its growing need. The concept of Rights Management has always been important, but with advanced tools, large language models, and foundation models, the ideas of truth and point of origin are gaining necessary traction. Additionally, the safe, secure, and reproducible archiving of all this content is critical. The idea of an exabyte for a single product isn't that far off.

Interchange and interoperability remain at the core of our work. Whether defined in hardware or software, the solutions help pave the way for the future as we wait for the next transcendent technology to transform our landscape. The 2025 MTS conference reflected this more clearly than I ever could in words, and the *Motion Imaging Journal* will illustrate this in the next year.

SMPTE standards have undergone massive change in the past five years, moving to an HTML platform from

inception to completion, providing homogenization and an electronic structure that were badly needed and making publication and revision much more streamlined.

This year's Progress Report shows updates from every facet of our industry; the glass-to-glass, if you will. What might appear to be individual groups solving individual problems represents a concerted effort to continually improve every part of the media pathway. Defining a common look-up table format, MXL, and ATSC 3.0, all of which are critical to the evolving future of media. Internet Protocol Media Experience (IPMX) will take its cues from ST 2110 and the Advanced Media Workflow Association (AMWA) and build that model in the prosumer space, progressing in adjacent markets. There is still a lot of work to be done in open systems architecture (OSA) and video processing (VP). How will agentic AI affect future workflow?

How does all of this reconcile with the MovieLabs 2030 vision?

As members and participants in the media space, we must remain forward-thinking and embrace opportunities that arise, both in our home markets and in partner and adjacent markets. Thanks to our partners, we've repeatedly demonstrated that vision for the future. What will progress look like for SMPTE and the media and entertainment industry in the future? All I know for sure is that SMPTE and all its partners will be there to guide it.

About the Author



Eric Gsell is currently a staff engineer at Dolby Laboratories. A SMPTE Fellow, he has participated in Standards, and local Section management.

DOI: 10.5594/JMI.2025/OUMP6540
Date of publication: 15 November 2025

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