

AI and the New Media Landscape: Navigating Change and Building Together

BY RICHARD WELSH



I write this as I sit in Vegas on day one of NAB Show. SMPTE, as always, has put on a stellar program for the conference. The SMPTE conference has been newly rebranded and restructured as Visual Innovation and Brilliant Engineering (VIBE). As one would expect, AI is featuring heavily in the conversation. The difference is that AI is woven into the narrative of other technologies and workflow advances. Of course, it's inevitable that as any technology matures, it fades into the background of products and services and is no longer the central focus of conversation. But much remains to be discussed with AI. In the race to productize and deploy AI, many questions around trust, creative rights, and ethics remain unanswered.

The media industry has been heavily impacted by the wholesale theft of creative work to build generative language, music, image, and video models. This is not universal; many companies are building generative tools using ethically sourced data, and those creating the media to train models are properly compensated. However, this is not the mainstream. As an industry, it is up to us to protect our creative work—especially where legislation often lags behind, conflicts with the protections we seek, or lacks jurisdiction in a global context. Further, as we see the rise of convincingly faked generative media, we need to



provide both education and an effective trust layer that will help the public determine the provenance of the media they consume. Because of the ease with which false narratives and fake media can be produced and disseminated via platforms that are impossible to prevent, our industry must step up to the task. The work of SMPTE alongside C2PA to develop provenance technology and standards that can be embedded in media to verify authenticity is one of the most important efforts in our industry.

Supporting our standards work is more important than ever, and as we have moved to make standards free for our members, we aim to open access to these essential tools for building the products and services of the future—we need the support of all of you, our members. As we navigate this new age of AI everywhere and a media landscape shifting beneath our feet, SMPTE is providing the foundations that enable certainty and confidence in building the next generation of technologies. The more we can engage with the full breadth of companies and individuals in our industry, the stronger we can make these foundations. I encourage you to go out and talk to your community, especially companies or individuals who aren't aware of SMPTE's work, and encourage

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them to join us. I believe in SMPTE's mission, which has been a strong foundation for over a century and remains just as relevant today. We are a place for everyone to come together and build the fundamentals that will shape the industry as we want it. It won't build itself—it takes all of us

to make it happen. I hope you enjoy this edition of the journal, and the great insight within is a perfect example of this foundational work.

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