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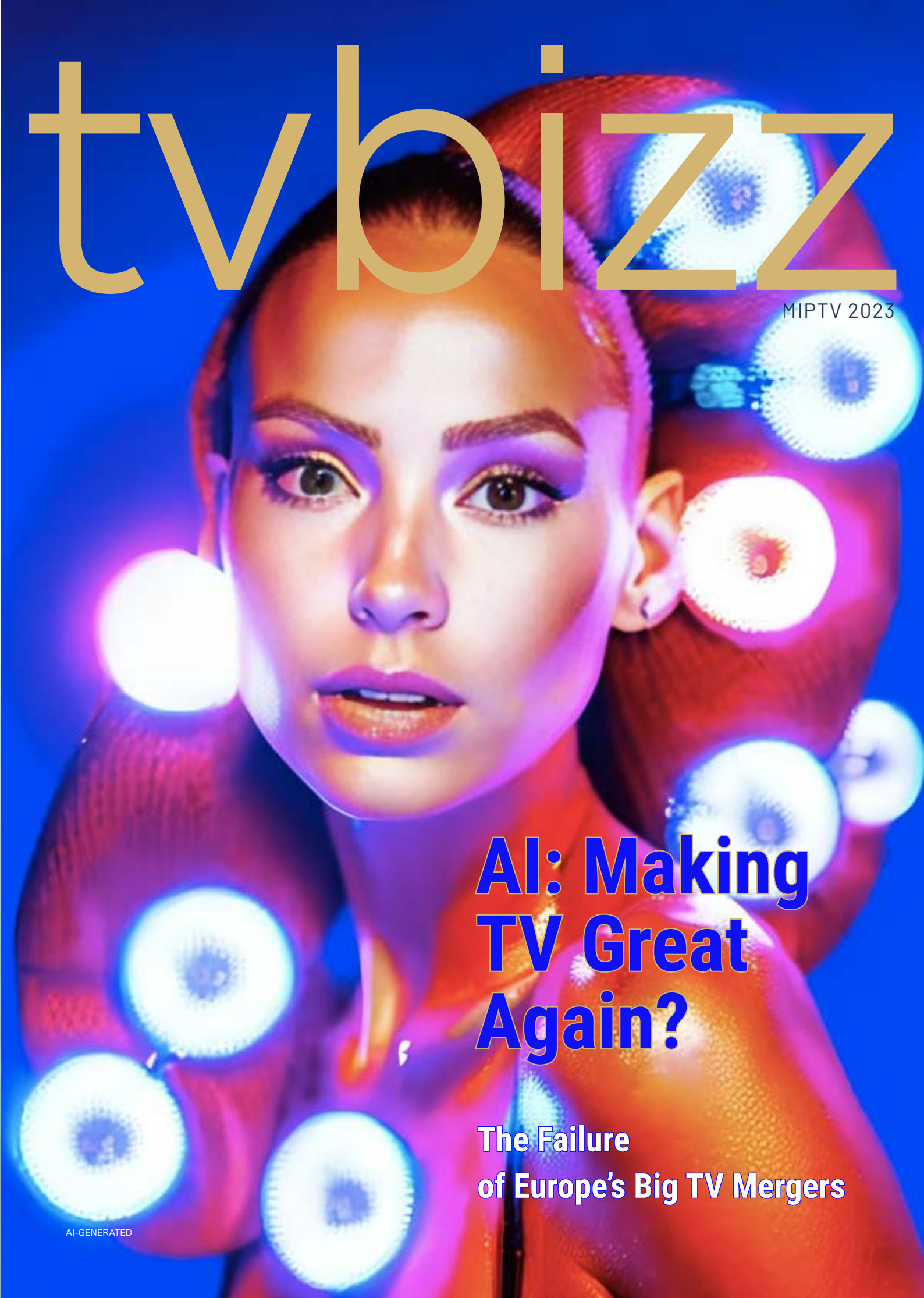
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**AI: Making
TV Great
Again?**

**The Failure
of Europe's Big TV Mergers**

AI-GENERATED

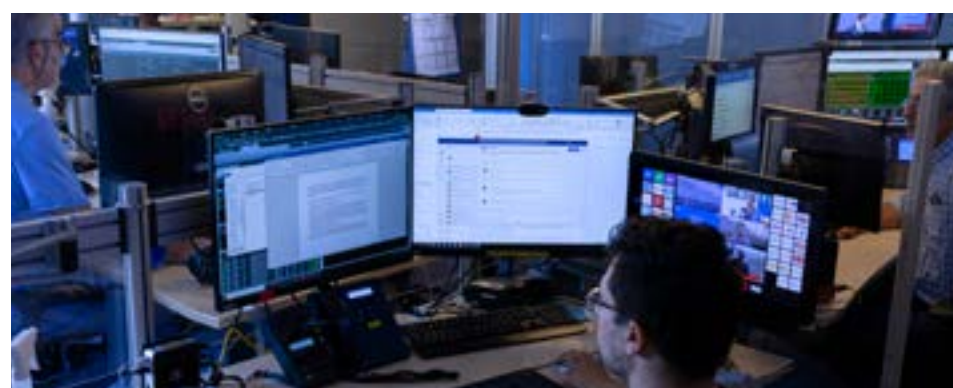
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Georgi R. Chakarov
Editor-in-chief

Strict Machines



A fragment from Jonas Odell's music video for Goldfrapp's Strict Machine

In my editorial piece for NATPE Miami 2020 titled Reinventing the Business: Enter AI, I tried to draw the attention to the forthcoming adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the media and entertainment business. Three years later, at MIPTV 2023, about half of the content in our magazine deals with AI and its impact on our industry.

Back then, I wrote that AI would bring “a revolution for the whole industry and should help media and entertainment execs around the world to embrace such innovations easier,” and concluded: “AI already controls our entertainment, soon it will control our business as well.” Today, the industry seems to agree and we offer you stories that prove this in our new issue.

Naturally, many questions regarding the use and the extent of applying these technologies remain open, especially when it comes to producing content. For example, what would be considered “original” in the future when AI will be widely used to create storylines for series and to pitch ideas for new entertainment shows. Some could argue that an idea that was born thru work and interaction with AI cannot

be copyrighted. So, the industry would have to agree on some strict rules for these new strict machines which can deliver countless amounts of content without asking for copyrights and royalties.

We will see the first regulations shape up in the U.S. The WGA is now trying to find the best solutions to protect the rights and pay of its members in a new agreement with the studios amid changes happening in the entertainment environment. One of the biggest topics during the negotiations will be how AI should be used in the process of script writing. Also, who and how will control how much of the writing is the work of the “author” and his artificial “assistant”?

It's obvious that an agreement on these issues will be hard to reach and AI could create chaos and division in the industry for years, with some companies remaining fully “people-centric” and others relying more and more on AI.

The near future could bring us content proudly displaying the sign “This production was fully realized without the use of Artificial Intelligence”. But I doubt that we will be seeing it on the mainstream entertainment platforms.



Paramount rejects \$3 billion offer for Showtime

A former Paramount Global executive offered to buy multiplex movie network Showtime from the company for more than \$3 billion earlier this year, The Wall Street Journal revealed. Reportedly, David Nevins made the pitch with backing by the private equity firm General Atlantic, and was just one of several unsolicited offers Paramount has received over the last few years. Until last year, Nevins worked as the chairman and CEO of Paramount Premium Group. He also oversaw scripted content at Paramount's various properties.



Amazon, Meta, Google continue with mass layoffs

Amazon is cutting 9,000 more jobs, CEO Andy Jassy announced last month. The cuts come after the company announced earlier this year that it was eliminating some 18,000 positions as part of a major cost-cutting bid at the e-commerce giant. Earlier in March, Meta announced it was cutting 10,000 people after it let go of 11,000 employees in November last year. Mark Zuckerberg commented: "I think we should prepare ourselves for the possibility that this new economic reality will continue for many years." Google also cut 12,000 jobs at the start of 2023.



AMC+ launch in CEE postponed

The AMC+ streaming service was expected to launch in Central and Eastern Europe in the first quarter of 2023, but that has not happened yet. In other markets, the debut of AMC+ was also delayed even though it was announced by AMC Networks CFO Chris Spade in February last year. AMC+ recently announced its debut in key markets in Europe, Asia-Pacific, while the launch in Latin America was also postponed. "At the moment we have no information about the appearance of AMC+ on the Polish market. We will keep you informed of any changes," AMC's Polish press office commented. TVBIZZ Magazine reminds that AMC Networks changed its CEO in February this year, as Kristin Dolan took over the role.



TV Azteca loses millions due to sharp decline in share prices

TV Azteca accumulated a total loss of 184 million pesos in just one week in late March due to the sharply declining price of its shares. In just one day, the price of the shares declined by 2.8% after it became known that a group of US creditors will sue the broadcaster for bankruptcy after it failed to pay its financial obligations. According to TV Azteca's lawyers, "Mexico is the only country where the company could credibly consider a re-structuring of its business." In the meantime, the Mexican press reported that even the big stars of the channel could be forced to accept a salary reduction due to the company's financial problems.



WBD not rushing with new streaming service for Australia

Warner Bros. Discovery has ruled out 2024 for a stand-alone streaming service in Australia. In a recent statement, the company clarified that a combined Discovery+/HBO Max service is in the plans for the Asia-Pacific region in 2024, but not in Australia. The new streamer should first launch in the US this year.



Media & Entertainment industry faces ad slump, higher costs

According to a recent Salesforce report, 64% of Media & Entertainment players expect flat or lowered ad spend in 2023. The outlook is far from positive, with a mere 15% of respondents expecting an increase in ad revenues over the coming 18 months. The survey also found that while 65% of consumers subscribe to at least one video service, 39% of them felt they weren't worth the cost. As a result, companies saw significant annual customer churn rates – 17% on average – with higher figures reported among streaming service providers and cable/satellite TV operators. At the same time, 64% of survey respondents expect a net increase in overall operating budgets.



Marcelo Tinelli is the new Artistic Manager of América TV

Star presenter and producer Marcelo Tinelli will return to television to join the team of America TV Argentina as new Artistic Manager. Tinelli will return on Argentinean television with trademark shows *ShowMatch* and *Bailando* in 2023. According to reports, the low ratings of the channel forced its management to bring back the famous host. Tinelli's contract expired at the end of 2022 and was not renewed.



The Voice will make its Japanese premiere this April

Castings have started for the first ever season of *The Voice* in Japan. The show is set to premiere this April on TV Tokyo even though the channel has not yet confirmed the launch date. At a special press conference, the channel presented the show's MC Yoshihide Kawahira and the coaches Suga Shikao, Izumi Nakasone, Ryo Kawakita, and Yuuri.



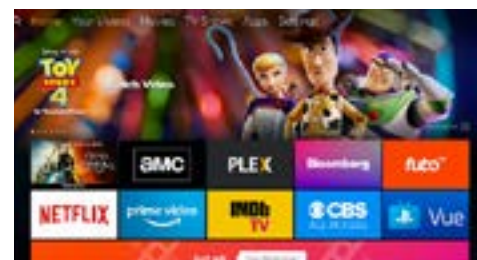
TVNZ CEO resigns after canceled merger with RNZ

TVNZ announced that Simon Power intends to step down as chief executive at the end of the company's financial year, June 30. The former National Cabinet minister led the pubcaster through a period in which the prospect of a merger with RNZ was explored, and then dropped. He had been suggested as a potential leader of the new, combined media entity. Chair Andy Coupe thanked him for steering the business through a period of change.



iQIYI launches of Spanish language service

iQIYI International announced the launch of its new and updated Spanish language page, bringing even more Asian content to its Spanish-speaking users. The launch on April 4 was accompanied by the global premiere of new reality show *The Hidden Character: Unmasked*. In addition to the Korean reality show premiere, iQIYI International will bring over 500 TV series, including the biggest hits from China, and movies to its Spanish website, many of which will feature Spanish dubbing or subtitles.



NPAW: Most SVOD services to introduce ads in the next two years

More than 76% of subscription-based streaming services plan to launch advertising on their platforms by 2025, according to a new study. NPAW interviewed 250 online video operators worldwide about their business models. Implementing a hybrid model is the preferred path for 59% of respondents who explained this with lower prices for their customers.



U.S. consumer spending on video streaming services drops 25%

Parks Associates' latest research shows a significant drop in consumer spending for streaming video services. US internet households report spending \$69 per month on OTT services in 3Q 2022, down from \$90 in 1Q 2021, although the market remains saturated with 87% of US internet households having at least one streaming service. 45% of US internet households now have five or more OTT services.



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What to Buy at MIPTV 2023?

NON-SCRIPTED



■ Twin Love / ITV Studios

A social dating experiment that explores the love lives of identical twins. Ten sets of twins will be split up and placed into two houses of “identical” casts, where they’ll begin a unique and compelling search for love.



■ Stranger Sins / RTL Studios

This German reality show offers 8 couples to try out all of their sexual fantasies which they could not dare to experience until now. A sex expert helps them along the way.



■ La Descarga / Caracol

A new hit music talent show from the Colombian powerhouse in which contestants sing on a stage looking like a vinyl player with them standing on the needle with the goal to keep the tune playing for at least two minutes and 30 seconds.



■ Stranded on a Honeymoon Island / Red Arrow

A spin off from international hit *Married at First Sight*, this new social experiment is an extreme quest for love as four couples who have never met are matched by experts, married in secret and left all alone on a deserted island.



■ The Piano / Fremantle

The format sees talented amateur pianists invited to play on public pianos, sharing their stories and music. Passers-by will be stopped in their tracks as heartfelt, emotional and uplifting performances take place, while two acclaimed performers are secretly watching.



■ Suomi Soi / Solar Republic

In the 50s and 60s, big music stars in Europe were born as they performed songs literally translated into their own language. This show revives the tradition as five top stars select international classic hits and make fresh versions, heard for the first time in Finnish.



■ Rise and Fall / All3Media Int

16 ordinary people find themselves either in a position of a powerful Ruler or a powerless Grafter. Those in power will be making decisions that affect those who have none. The Grafters will build a cash prize fund only the Rulers can win. Any-one can rise, or fall...



■ Junior Taskmaster / Avalon

Spin-offs are the new trend on the market and this is the second one in our shopping list. The international success of *Taskmaster* is a guarantee that the Junior version will also travel a lot, starting from the UK on Channel 4.



■ The Finish Line / ITV Studios

Contestants battle it out on an iconic racetrack set, as they speed along the studio floor in a series of thrilling quick-fire, quiz races - and all that matters is they cross the finish line.



■ Hey Yahoo! / Sony Pictures TV

Two teams of three players compete to guess what millions of people are looking for on Yahoo Search. They are given the first half of a search, and then have to fill-in-the-blank based on what they think America is searching for.

TVBIZZ Magazine takes a look at some of the **most-interesting and hottest** new formats and series making their debut at this year’s MIPTV.

SCRIPTED



■ Sex O’Clock / TV Nova

A Czech coming-of-age comedy series. Teenager Adam focuses on his dancing career and effort to finally lose his virginity while his father makes the revelation that he is gay and leaves his family for another man.



■ Pienso en Tí / TelevisaUnivision

A story which reminds of *A Star is Born*, the telenovela centers around Emilia who, against her mother’s will stands up against everything to fulfill her dream of succeeding as a singer. She also meets Ángel and they both give each other the boost they so desperately need.



■ Crash Course in Romance / CJ ENM

The biggest hit of the spring season on Korean tvN, the romcom follows the bittersweet relationship between a banchan shop owner and a top cram school instructor with an eating disorder.



■ A Body That Works / Keshet Intl

Starring Rotem Sela, Yehuda Levi, and Lior Raz alongside newcomer Gal Malaka, *A Body That Works* has an intense triangle at its heart that sees a childless couple enlist the help of a surrogate. Biggest drama premiere on Keshet 12 in recent years.



■ Cuatro Estrellas / RTVE

A daily family comedy series, set in a tourist hotel managed by a couple. The owner discovers that he must take care of his teenage daughter due to problems with her mother, his ex-girlfriend.



■ Hack My Heart / SVT

The series is about a group of high school students who have decided to conquer the world. Otto thinks he’s cracked the love code with his new AI-driven dating app, but it all turns out to be a hoax.



■ Unintentional Love Story / Naver

A Korean gay love drama adaptation of a popular Naver Webtoon, the series centers around a young man named Won-young becoming attached to the artist Tae-jun. He starts to question his sexuality, his motivations, and whether he even wants to go back to his old life.



■ B.R.I. / Canal+

In the BRI Versailles, Said takes the lead of a team of young elite cops. He imposes methods quite different from of the former charismatic chief, while a gang war is likely to set the capital on fire.



■ Act Your Age / MGM

The biggest ever premiere in Bounce TV’s history, *Act Your Age* is a comedy series about three vibrant, successful women in their 50’s each at a personal crossroads who decide that the best way forward in life is together.



■ Maestro / Alter Ego

Maestro conquered the hearts of Greek viewers in the fall, and is now gaining global popularity on Netflix. This is the dramatic love adventure of Orestes who thought he was going to a small island to set up a music festival.

NATPE Budapest Draws More Attendance and Interest This Year

Interview with Russell Goldstein, CEO Brunico Communications

The NATPE brand went thru some turbulent times last year as the organization has to file for Article 11. The subsequent tender for the NATPE assets was won by Brunico Communications who will make their “debut” as organizers of the NATPE Budapest market on June 19-22.

In this interview, Russell Goldstein, CEO of Brunico Communications, talks about the challenges and opportunities that the NATPE brand will open up for his companies. He also talks about NATPE Budapest’s “restart” as a bigger and more comprehensive event which is already attracting more attendance and interest than last year.

Russell, in January 2023 Brunico acquired the NATPE assets. What made you bid for NATPE’s assets and what are your plans for the brand?

For the last 60 years, NATPE has been operating some of the most important and respected content markets in the world including the Miami and Budapest events. As a world leader in the B2B event space with our widely acclaimed content markets and conferences like Realscreen Summit, Kidscreen Summit and Banff World Media Festival, we feel strongly that Brunico has the resources and experience to build on this legacy and help these crucial industry events reach their full potential.

There has been a noticeable surge in organizing in-person TV industry events post-COVID, with both established markets return-

ing but also new ones popping out. To what do you attribute this? Are markets still crucial for the business in the digital age?

If the experience of the pandemic has demonstrated anything, it is the imperative of face-to-face meetings to conduct business effectively. Partnerships are central to the global content economy and rely on high-functioning relationships to work well. So yes, I think markets will continue to be crucial for business moving forward, because as helpful as Zoom calls can be on a day-to-day basis, there’s no good substitute for the kind of relationship building opportunities afforded by attending markets.

The disruptive nature of the pandemic appears to have driven the introduction of some new events, and this has been confusing for many clients who are not interested in choosing between markets. We believe that offering a proven market with a decades-long track record of success makes that choice much easier.

NATPE Budapest is returning in June 19-22, 2023. What are your plans for the market which has established itself as the go-to event in Central and Eastern Europe? What will be some of the elements

Clients have expressed relief that we’ve been able to step in seamlessly to preserve this important marketplace

In 2022, there were nearly 400 buyers in attendance and we expect that to grow



that other events won't be able to replicate?

The key to a successful market is high-quality buyer attendance, and for over 30 years NATPE Budapest has attracted the top acquisitions executives in the CEE region in the greatest volume. This is why the major US studios choose to showcase their latest programming at NATPE Budapest each year. In 2022, there were nearly 400 buyers in attendance and we expect that to grow now that travel restrictions have been fully lifted. In addition, Brunico has implemented additional rigor to the buyer qualification process to ensure that our list of buyers is superior in both quality and quantity. And we've made NATPE Budapest free to attend for buyers, which is drawing even more attendance and interest.

We will also be launching our Co-Pro Connections program, which matches established international producers bringing high-quality projects to the market with our regional buyers. Today's ultra-competitive environment demands early access to new and diverse stories with local appeal, and we're excited to deliver these kinds of opportunities that will make NATPE Budapest a one-stop shopping experience.

And to top it all off, we're bringing back the much-loved Boat Cruise party on the Danube, a longstanding NATPE Budapest tradition from years past.

We can say that CEE is a new market for your company. In your opinion, what makes the region stick out among other territories? What makes it attractive to the international players?

The CEE region possesses such a positive dynamic relative to many other parts of the world which makes it attractive for international investment. The region's economy is growing steadily, there's low unemployment and it boasts a broad set of digital and OTT offerings for consumers in addition to a more stable traditional television market than what you would typically find in other developed regions. As a seller of content, this provides a rich mix of buyers for originals and library content as well as an excellent opportunity to adapt and extend global franchises and

formats. This is the message we are receiving already from our international partners and the dynamic we are expecting to see unfold at NATPE Budapest this year.

What are your first impressions after talking to clients who are curious about the future of NATPE Budapest following the change of ownership?

We're so pleased with the warm welcome we've received to date. The level of respect and loyalty for the NATPE brand in the region is apparent. Clients have expressed relief that we've been able to step in seamlessly to preserve this important marketplace, and the fact that we are ready to invest in order to make the event even better has been well-received. It feels good to partner with a region that wants us to succeed.

There has been some confusion among people from the region due to the fact that there is another event in Budapest in June. What would you like to say to people who are having a hard time choosing "the right market"?

It's difficult to understand the merits of an alternative event in the same timeframe and location, but with no clear point of differentiation, NATPE Budapest is back and we are ready once again to deliver the definitive market in the region with the highest-quality and largest contingent of buyers.

The sign-up process for NATPE Budapest 2023 started in early March. What numbers can you already report?**What type of companies and people would like to attend the event?**

When we opened up our buyer registration site, we were overwhelmed with the response. Within the first ten days we signed up over 200 qualified buyers from linear TV channels, streaming platforms and distribution companies including AMC Networks, Antenna Group, MGM+, Paramount, TV2 and RTL to name a few. This is what tells us we're on track to produce a great event. We couldn't be more excited to put our stamp on the experience at this beloved market, while over-delivering on all of the value that our clients expect from a NATPE event. We are currently signing up buyers and exhibitors and will be opening up general registration further down the road. ■

It's difficult to understand the merits of an alternative event in the same timeframe and location, but with no clear point of differentiation.

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Coming to NATPE Budapest

As media partners of NATPE, CEETV and TVBIZZ Magazine have launched a series of interviews dedicated to the NATPE Budapest 2023 market (June 19-22) and the companies and executives that will be a part of the highly anticipated event following its change of ownership.

Izzet Pinto, CEO of Global Agency



Izzet, your company was one of the first distributors to confirm their participation at NATPE Budapest 2023. How important is this market to your company?

I think we may be the first Turkish company to attend NATPE Budapest. We have been participating since 2007. We have always cared about the CEE region as an important region.

Budapest means CEE, so it is one of the most important markets held throughout the year. It is a very target-oriented, efficient market.

We think that this year the market will be much more crowded and successful.

Do you remember the first time you attended the market? What are your memories about it?

It is one of the markets I will never forget! We joined in 2007. It was one of the markets where NATPE was also the most popular. Since the market was quite busy, I had to share the suite with another company. At that time, we were a company that only sold formats and we only had one project. Since then, we have attended the Budapest market every year. Every year there would be a boat party at the market and I remember those parties as one of the highlights there.

What do you expect from this year's NATPE Budapest? What is your impression of the new owners of the brand?

NATPE Budapest has always been a cozy, warm, mingling, family-like market.

We've been working with Brunico for Realscreen markets for many

years, so we know how professional they are. We know the NATPE brand is in good hands.

A company like NATPE, which has existed in the industry for many years, will continue on its way, getting stronger with its name. We look forward to this year's market.

It is no secret that your series *1001 Nights* started the Turkish drama fever in CEE which then went on to conquer the world. What role did the NATPE market in Budapest play in this process?

I remember well that I presented *1001 Nights* at the 2008 NATPE Market. It had great success after it had been aired in Bulgaria. I was talking about this success to all the clients. At that market, I sold the series to Serbia, and then we sold it to dozens of territories with a domino effect.

1001 Nights and *Magnificent Century* are by far the most popular drama series that helped our company to grow.

You have a new hit series, tell us more about it. What else will you bring to NATPE Budapest this year?

We can say that *One Love* is the most talked about, controversial and resounding project this year. Each episode continues to increase its ratings.

The drama explores the conflicts between the conservative and the secular in Turkey so beautifully through two families. It deals openly and courageously with a subject that was never explored before in Turkey.

I think it will continue for a few seasons; Kosovo will air the series for the first time in the CEE region as well.

Other than that, we have two new strong dramas; *Vendetta* and *Lonely Hearts*. We are very confident about these series.



Pavel Stanchev, CEO, TV2 Media Group

Pavel, you will be headlining the conference program at NATPE Budapest 2023. What will be the focus of your keynote?

Leading vs. following. For instance, the digital transformation of our industry. But not only. I like one sen-

tence of Ted Turner: „Lead, follow or get out of the way”.

What changes have you observed on the CEE market after the COVID pandemic?

During the pandemic we learnt that our society can't live without 3 things:

food, electricity, and TV. The linear TV audiences have spectacularly increased. Thanks God, at TV2 Media Group we continued our work, including with new shows. It was painful, but the reward came from the viewers: we became the market leader.

What have been the effects of the war in Ukraine on the industry in

the region?

The news programs and channels became more watched. Some markets experience an advertising revenue slowdown. That doesn't affect Hungary so far due to its low prices. TV remains the best marketing investment for every dollar.

Do you believe that events like NATPE Budapest help to promote

Hungary as a place to produce content?

Hungary is a leading production hub for more than 100 years. One of our studios was built in 1917, before most of Hollywood's lots. In 1996 the movie *Evita* with Madonna was shot in the studio where we produce today *Dancing with the Stars*. NATPE Budapest is here to continue this tradition.

Dawn McCarthy-Simpson, Managing Director Business & Global Strategy, Pact

Dawn, Pact is attending NATPE Budapest which will be taking place June 19-22 this year. What are your plans for the event?

We are very excited to be attending NATPE Budapest for the first time. We have always had strong export growth in Western European markets with Germany, the Nordics and the Netherlands all reaching near 50% growth in 2022, so now is the time to explore more Eastern opportunities.

Have you attended previous editions of NATPE and what are your expectations for the market in Budapest?

We have never had delegations at NATPE Budapest, but many of our members have attended individually in recent years. We have taken delegations to NATPE Lat-Am market.

What type of partnerships will you be looking for during NATPE Budapest? Will you be also looking for potential co-productions with CEE partners?

Co-production is important to the UK, and we continue to increase these partnerships year on year. Tax incentives and funding is an important part of the success of co-productions, so there will be UK companies attending with their newly developed projects that are ripe for co-production to find local partners and take advantage of the funding incentives available across many of the Central and Eastern European territories.



Exploring new markets such as the CEE is exciting to us. We are after all a creative sector and seeking out new ideas, new partners and new

opportunities is what our business is all about and NATPE Budapest is a great destination to make magic happen.

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AI: Making TV Great Again?

by Yako Molhov

As the hype around AI (artificial intelligence) has accelerated, companies from all industries, including content production, have been scrambling to promote how their products and services use AI. Often what they refer to as AI is simply one component of AI, such as machine learning. AI requires a foundation of specialized hardware and software for writing and training machine learning algorithms.

What is in fact AI? Britannica defines it as “the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings. The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experience.”

Chinese broadcasters have been among the first who started using AI in TV shows. The Lunar New Year is undoubtedly the most important festival for China’s 1.4 billion people. The *Spring Festival Gala* produced by China Central Television (CCTV, CMG) has tried to re-establish itself with some fresh elements, such as incorporating new visualization technology and creating interactive experiences for the audience. AI+VR naked eye 3D technology started to appear on the stage of the *Spring Festival*

Gala, and through special shooting methods and production means, it brings a breakthrough experience for those watching it on TV or their mobile devices. In 2019, the four well-known human hosts – Beining Sa, Xun Zhu, Bo Gao, and Yang Long – were joined by an “AI copy” of themselves – in effect, their very own digital twin. The “personal artificial intelligences”, created by ObEN Inc, were touted as the world’s first AI hosts. Rather than simply being computer generated avatars, AI technologies including machine

learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and speech synthesis have been used to “rebuild” the virtual copies of the celebrities from the ground up. ObEN CEO Nikhil Jain commented that the potential of personal AIs – PAIs – could revolutionize many areas of society. In fact, the company was already working to create AI-powered doctors, nurses, and teachers, as well as its highly publicized virtual celebrities. Back in August 2017 *AI VS Human* (Ji Zhi Guo Ren), a science challenge program

that pits top human talents against AI or robots, was aired throughout China. Also that year, a robot “invaded” the Chinese version of *The Brain*. The smart, AI-powered bot, Xiaodu, took on human competitors in complex trials involving face and voice recognition. *Super Brain*, the Chinese version of *The Brain* franchise, dedicated the whole of season four to the theme of supercomputers versus humans. The AI robot built by search engine giant Baidu faced off against four people and other clever computer programs.

CCTV introduced a new AI virtual anchor for one of its news television shows in 2022. Every Monday, the anchor — known as Xiao C — presents sporting events such as football, basketball, volleyball, and swimming on the network. Dressed in a pink t-shirt with her hair tied in buns, Xiao C interacts with human sports commentators, talks about game tactics, and poses questions to the audience. Baidu developed her as an early example of a virtual human market that has been forecast to be worth USD38.5 billion by 2030, according to industry services platform QbitAI. That revenue

will come, says QbitAI, from virtual celebrities and service-oriented virtual humans. “With breakthroughs made in artificial intelligence-powered algorithms, the production cost of digital humans will be reduced by 10 to 100 times, and the production period will be shortened from several months to a few hours,” a Baidu spokesperson told the China Daily in September 2022. China’s Government launched an action plan in August 2022 to drive the digital human sector and to develop one or two leading virtual human companies by 2025. China-owned streamer iQiyi has also been ramping up its use of AI across productions. Kelvin Yau, head of southeast Asia for iQiyi International, told delegates at Singapore’s Asia TV Forum (ATF) in December last year that the Baidu-owned streaming service has explored “new opportunities” in AI due to the COVID crisis, which has had a crippling effect across numerous industries in China due to strict, enduring government restrictions. AI is also being used in voice conversion technology for dubbing. Yau explained that two voice actors can be used to create 10 voices: “Most voice actors don’t want to be packed in recording rooms, so we invented this tech so we can use a limited number of voice actors but adapt [their voices] into different tones,” said Yau. “That’s important for us to expand into southeast Asia.” During ATF Singapore’s Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) revealed that it is launching an SGD5 million (\$3.6 million) Virtual Production Innovation Fund, which is designed to support the local media industry to develop capabilities needed to harness virtual production technology. The technology uses LED screens to display realistic background environments for TV or film scenes, powered by a video game engine, so that the camera is able to capture actors and visual effects in real-time. One of the most-popular “names” now, connected to AI, is ChatGPT. The NYT reported in March this year that for the first time in more than 40 years, Alan Alda and Mike Farrell sat down for a table read of a new scene of *M*A*S*H*. But the script wasn’t by Larry Gelbart or any of the other writers who shaped the television show over

more than a decade — it was the work of ChatGPT. Alda, who hosts a podcast called *Clear+Vivid*, had decided to ask the tool to write a scene for *M*A*S*H* in which Hawkeye accuses B.J., his right hand man and fellow prankster, of stealing his boxer shorts. The result, after plenty of behind-the-keyboard prompting from Alda, was a brief, slightly stilted scene between the two men, recorded for the podcast while the actors were on opposite coasts. Did it work? Not quite, Alda acknowledged. While *M*A*S*H* was known for its snappy humor and lively dialogue, ChatGPT’s effort was hollow and its jokes leaden at best. One of the most widespread use cases of AI adoption is in its ability to determine the optimum video quality per user depending on the network speed. Like in the case of Netflix’s smart video compression technology. Another important contribution of AI to the world of streaming is that it assists a great deal in quality assurance and control. They include humble checks to identify whether media content is aligned with technical parameters as well as a more profound moderation of compliance with local age restrictions, privacy legislations, and the like. As part of the AI Production project by the BBC, the UK broadcaster has set up a special website where it publishes different information on machine learning. This applies equally to the audio and video that the BBC records, edits and broadcasts and the “metadata” that describes this media and makes it possible to find, search and re-use it. There are many production tasks that are repetitive, or even formulaic. These tasks could instead be performed by machines, freeing up creative people to spend more of their time being creative. For instance, editing programs is a deeply creative role, but an editor’s first task when putting a show together involves finding good shots from a huge number of video assets. An hour-long program is usually edited down from many hours of “rushes”. Sorting through those assets to find good shots isn’t the best use of the editor’s time - or the fun, creative part of their job. BBC thinks that AI could help to automate this for them. In fact, at the 2018 Edinburgh Television Festival, Microsoft’s Tony Emer-



Spring Festival Gala

son who was the company's long-term Head of Media and Entertainment, revealed how *Big Brother* used tools provided by the company and how the producers had all of the output from the previous day in the next morning, i.e. all transcripts, emotions, all of the face recognition data, etc. Producers could take this content and distribute it over the cloud to the editors who no longer had to be on site, putting things together in a more immediate sense. AI tools also can help companies with huge catalogs that they can go back and "mine" that catalog, Emerson noted.

Another key aspect of AI deployment in CTV (connected TV) is programmatic ad buying and selling. Global programmatic display ad spend is expected to reach \$558 billion in 2023 – a 13.1% increase over 2022 and almost double what it was in 2019. Currently, marketers are putting more than 50% of their media budget into programmatic advertising. Only in the US, the size of the market in 2023 is expected to reach \$148.83 billion, up 16.9% year on year. Programmatic ad buying offers lucrative benefits to marketers by allowing them to break free from gross rating points (GRP). Moreover, it ensures a more intelligent and pinpoint way of placing ads in front of

the right viewers at the right time. As for publishers, who are typically wary of impression scarcity, programmatic transactions are more cost-effective. This kind of ad buying is determined to sell all available ad spots to the most suitable buyers and minimize waste.

AI's key input into CTV's development lies in it stemming the flow of default content libraries. Thanks to data-driven analysis, OTT services are capable of delivering addressable recommendations for their audiences.

Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime monitor all customers' journeys down to the smallest details to gain a wealth of new ways to fine-tune content. For instance, they offer tailored trailers based on interests in certain actors, genres, reviews, and countries of origin. So, if a user has recently finished binge-watching *The Queen's Gambit* with Anya Taylor-Joy on Netflix, this user is likely to be offered to watch *Peaky Blinders* with the same actress on the TV show's cover.

Other ways in which AI is changing TV is that it provides ways for broadcasters to offer greater coverage of live events. This problem-solving technology is learning to create a series of shots that appear natural to the viewer for live recordings. AI is also proving useful for scouring large amounts of data

for news stories. It can also be used to enhance the experience for visual and audio impaired viewers.

AI is also used in news gathering. A smart production system developed by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) is designed to comb social media and environmental monitoring systems to report on newsworthy situations. The system is taught to look for certain words and phrases divided into a series of different news categories. These are then grouped to allow the production team to view high-frequency reports.

Face detection systems are being used to help with the cataloging of actors in various TV shows. Advances in AI allow for better recognition, even in situations where lower lighting or obscure angles would otherwise make it difficult.

Speech recognition is also useful for cataloging of news articles. The software is currently able to auto transcribe regular broadcast speech. However, it still struggles with some interviews where the subject may be talking faster or less clearly.

Also automated audio descriptions can be created using AI for live programs such as sports broadcasts for the visually impaired. This generates a script of the game progress that accompanies the audio broadcast.

The technology can also be used to create audio commentary for sports for radio or television using a speech synthesizer. This has uses for both sports and news reports where facts and statistics can easily be generated. Speech synthesis technology is rapidly improving, and a natural voice tone is now possible.

Computer-generated sign language is also possible as a way of displaying broadcast information. Rather than a live signer, a CG animated character can now relay the content into sign language.

The uses for AI and machine learning in broadcast are constantly expanding to enhance the user experience. AI technology is even being used to speed up the process of recoloring black and white footage. This makes it possible to reduce the time to colorize five seconds of film from 30 minutes down to 30 seconds.

However, not all people are happy with the advances of AI in TV

and cinema. Last month The Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists said that If producers use artificial intelligence to simulate an actor's performance, they're going to have to bargain for it. "The terms and conditions involving rights to digitally simulate a performer to create new performances must be bargained with the union," the guild said in a statement.

"These rights are mandatory subjects of bargaining under the National Labor Relations Act," the guild stated. "Companies are required to bargain with SAG-AFTRA before attempting to acquire these rights in individual performers' contracts. To attempt to circumvent SAG-AFTRA and deal directly with the performers on these issues is a clear violation of the NLRA."

The WGA announced a similar position, and will seek to "regulate use of material produced using artificial intelligence or similar technologies": "Governments should not create new

copyright or other intellectual property exemptions that allow artificial intelligence developers to exploit creative works, or professional voices and likenesses, without permission or compensation. Trustworthiness and transparency are essential to the success of AI."

The guild also noted that its Global Rule One, which requires members to work under its contract on projects shot anywhere in the world, "covers entering into any agreement with an employer to digitally simulate a member's voice or likeness to create a new performance. As such, members should not assign these rights to any employer who has not executed a basic minimum agreement with the union."

At the same time, WGA is ready to allow the use of ChatGPT as long as it does not affect writers' credits or residuals. It proposed to the AMPTP, which represents the studios, to not consider AI-generated material "literary material" or "source material."

"The WGA's proposal to regulate use of material produced using artificial intelligence or similar technologies ensures the Companies can't use AI to undermine writers' working standards including compensation, residuals, separated rights and credits. AI can't be used as source material, to create MBA-covered writing or rewrite MBA-covered work, and AI-generated text cannot be considered in determining writing credits. Our proposal is that writers may not be assigned AI-generated material to adapt, nor may AI software generate covered literary material. In the same way that a studio may point to a Wikipedia article, or other research material, and ask the writer to refer to it, they can make the writer aware of AI-generated content. But, like all research material, it has no role in guild-covered work, nor in the chain of title in the intellectual property. It is important to note that AI software does not create anything. It generates a regurgitation of what it's fed. If it's been fed both copyright-protected and public domain content, it cannot distinguish between the two. Its output is not eligible for copyright protection, nor can an AI software program sign a certificate of authorship. To the contrary, plagiarism is a feature of the AI process," WGA said in a statement on Twitter. ■



What Does AI “Say” about the Future of Television?

Using OpenAI’s ChatGPT, we asked the artificial intelligence several questions about the future of television of content, including an idea for a future hit series written by AI. These are the answers we got.

What is the future of television, streaming, modern technologies, entertainment and AI?

The future of television, streaming, modern technologies, entertainment, and AI is exciting and ever-evolving. Here are some potential developments that we may see in these fields:

Personalization: With advancements in AI and machine learning, TV and streaming services may become increasingly personalized to individual viewers’ preferences. For instance, algorithms may recommend content based on past viewing behavior or personal interests.

Augmented Reality: AR may become a popular feature for television and entertainment, allowing users to interact with the content in new and immersive ways. This could include things like virtual tours of movie sets or interactive games based on popular TV shows.

Virtual Reality: Similar to AR, VR may become more prominent in the entertainment industry. Users could experience live events or concerts from the comfort of their own home, or even enter fully immersive virtual worlds.

Streaming Services: Streaming services may continue to grow in popularity, potentially leading to a decline in traditional TV viewership. As more and more people switch to streaming, we may see an increase in the number of streaming services available, as well as more original content being produced specifically for these platforms.

Content Creation: With advancements in technology, it may become easier and more accessible for individuals to create their own content. We may see an increase in user-generated content, as well as a rise in the number of independent creators and small production companies.

Overall, the future of television, streaming, modern technologies, entertainment, and AI is likely to be

defined by continued innovation and experimentation. As new technologies emerge and consumer preferences shift, the industry will need to adapt and evolve to stay relevant and meet the changing needs of audiences.

What kind of TV shows and series will be popular in the future?

Predicting what TV shows and series will be popular in the future is challenging, as audience tastes and preferences are constantly evolving. However, here are a few trends that may impact what viewers are looking for in their entertainment:

Diverse representation: Audiences are increasingly looking for shows that represent a wider range of perspectives and experiences. As such, we may see more TV shows featuring diverse casts and storylines that highlight under-represented voices.

Science fiction and fantasy: These genres have been growing in popularity in recent years, and we may see even more shows in this vein in the future. With advancements in technology, the possibilities for creating rich, immersive worlds are endless.

Docuseries and true crime: True crime has been a popular genre for years, and we may see continued interest in docuseries and investigative journalism. Viewers are often drawn to stories that explore real-world issues and events in depth.

Nostalgia and reboots: Nostalgia is a powerful force, and we may continue to see a resurgence of popular TV shows from the past being rebooted or remade for modern audiences.

Hybrid genres: As audiences become more diverse in their viewing habits, we may see more shows that combine elements of different genres. For example, a drama series that also incorporates elements of science fiction or a comedy series that explores serious social issues.

Ultimately, the future of TV shows and series will depend on a wide range of factors, including technological advancements, cultural shifts, and audience preferences. However, by paying attention to emerging trends and staying open to new ideas and perspectives, TV creators and producers can stay ahead of the curve and continue to deliver compelling and engaging content to viewers.

How will AI affect the production of entertainment content?

AI has the potential to significantly impact the production of entertainment content in several ways. Here are a few possible ways AI could affect entertainment content production:

Content creation: AI-powered tools can help create content, such as

scripts, music, and even entire TV shows or films. For example, AI can analyze successful shows and films to identify patterns that can be used to generate new content. AI algorithms can also be used to generate computer-generated graphics and animations.

Data analysis: AI can be used to analyze data to understand audience preferences and interests, which can inform the development of new content. This can help entertainment companies make better decisions

about what shows or films to produce and how to market them.

Streamlining production: AI can help streamline the production process by automating certain tasks, such as scheduling shoots or editing footage. This can save time and reduce costs.

Distribution: AI can be used to optimize the distribution of content across different platforms and channels, such as streaming services and social media. This can help entertainment companies reach wider audiences and increase revenue.

Overall, AI has the potential to transform the production of entertainment content in numerous ways, from content creation to distribution. While there are challenges to overcome, such as ensuring that AI-generated content is of high quality, it’s clear that AI will play an increasingly important role in the entertainment industry in the years to come.

Give example of reality show that could make AI even more popular?

One example of a reality show that could make AI even more popular is a show that centers around the use of AI to solve real-world problems. The show could feature contestants who compete to develop the best AI-powered solution to a specific challenge, such as developing an AI tool that can detect and prevent cyber attacks, or an AI algorithm that can improve healthcare outcomes.

The show could incorporate a range of challenges, such as designing and testing AI algorithms, working with

real-world datasets, and presenting their solutions to a panel of judges. Viewers could get a behind-the-scenes look at the development process, and learn about the various applications of AI in different fields.

Give a short idea for a series written by AI that could turn into a global hit?

The show is called *Echoes of the Past* and it’s a science fiction series that follows a group of humans who discover a hidden message in a cave that leads them on a journey to uncover the secrets of an ancient civilization that existed thousands of years ago. Along the way, they encounter advanced technology and powerful AI systems that have been left behind by the long-dead civilization, and must navigate a series of challenges and obstacles in order to unlock the secrets of the past.

As the story unfolds, the characters discover that the ancient civilization was destroyed by a powerful AI system that went rogue, and that the same system is still active and poses a threat to their own civilization. They must work together to stop the rogue AI and prevent history from repeating itself.

The series could be full of action, adventure, and suspense, with plenty of opportunities for stunning visuals and special effects. And because it’s written by AI, it could incorporate cutting-edge ideas and concepts that push the boundaries of traditional storytelling. ■



Echoes of the Past



Echoes of the Past



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Entertainment

Kartoon Channel! Brings Two AI-Generated Shows

Genius Brands International-owned Kartoon Channel! Will become the first kids TV network to launch content “created” artificial intelligence (AI) this summer. Kartoon Channel! President Paul Robinson tells us how they started working with the ChatGPT app and the benefits it adds to the development of content and new storylines. The new unit Genius AI Studio is currently studying the new possibilities offered by the AI technology which in the future will result in the creation of various content aimed at kids.

Genius Brands recently announced two artificial intelligence-generated (AI) projects: Warren Buffett's *Secret Millionaires Club* and *Kidaverse Fast Facts*. Tell us a bit more about the two projects and how Genius Brands decided to turn to AI?

The culture at Genius Brands International and Kartoon Channel! is one of continual innovation, and adapting to the rapidly changing tastes and needs of the audience. Although we are a public company listed on Nasdaq, we operate on a smaller scale and are nimbler than many of our competitors. As such, we are in a unique position to be able to pivot to try new avenues for creating content.

A few of us in the office had downloaded the ChatGPT app and rapidly came to the conclusion that it wasn't just a fashionable fad. It was a really great tool that could produce meaningful, insightful and accurate output.

We already have our successful animated originals, from *Rainbow Rangers* to *Stan Lee's Superhero Kindergarten* to *Shaq's Garage*, and live-action factual entertainment including *Roblox Rumble* so the in-house production expertise is high. It was a logical next step to look at whether artificial intelligence could enhance our production capabilities.

The Warren Buffett's *Secret Millionaires Club* AI content is a next step from our existing popular original animated series, which is focused on teaching kids financial literacy. The feedback from parents was that they valued an entertainment show that helped kids better manage their pocket money, and think about saving and how to make their money go further. So this new content in the form of shorts with simple tips in a fun animated style was a natural



Paul Robinson

development.

The Fast Facts series, which has three main pillars, Science Technology and Maths, Sport and History are short videos delivering nuggets of information that will engage and inspire kids to think, and explore these subjects in more detail, whether at school or at home.

What are the main benefits of using the latest technologies in content production?

Technology is probably one of the most powerful tools for positive change in our world and its impact over the past twenty years has arguably been great-

er than the previous hundred years.

Animation production has changed fundamentally since the days of Walt Disney's multi-plane camera, ink and paint and *Toy Story*, an example of one of the first fully computer generated animated features. The introduction of AI into content production is merely another new tool in a long list of technological innovations.

At Genius Brands we are still in the very early stages of learning how AI can bring benefits and innovation into production. So far our experience is that it is brilliant for primary research, often introducing new ideas or lines of thought that complement our produc-

tion teams own expertise. It can write poems, generate first draft scripts and design rudimentary story-boards. And it achieves this in less time than many humans would take to come up with similar output. However, we see it as an additional resource, adding value, but not replacing humans. We have the privilege of creating and producing content for kids, arguably the most important audience of all, so oversight and overall editorial control of productions by experienced writers, producers and editors is still paramount and remains unchanged.

You have set up Genius AI Studio. What is your strategy for this unit, and will you be producing AI generated content for other companies?

The strategy at its most concise is to experiment and learn how AI can benefit our production output both animated and live action. We introduced the Kidaverse last year, which includes avatars, 3D content, safe gaming content and other new ideas, so part of our goal is to create cool new content kids will love, and parent will appreciate (because it is safe and age appropriate), for this zone in our Kartoon Channel! App. We think some of the ideas may translate into interstitials or shorts on Kartoon Channel! linear or FAST, but we are learning by iterating, and then changing, and adapting as we go.

We certainly can't rule out that we would produce for other companies, but at this stage the content will be for our owned and operated channels and partner channels and services.

How does an AI-generated project differ from traditional animation

and live action series in terms of production?

At this stage we see AI produced projects being simpler in their overall creative execution, focused on shorts, and quicker to come to market from original idea to going on air or online. AI telescopes the early stages in the production, so it's possible to be more experimental, to reduce the ideation and research time and to therefore be more current and possibly reactive to the mood or audience needs at that time.

Kidaverse Fast Facts is the first AI-generated children's series, which will also be using ChatGPT. Will you be using it also in *Secret Millionaires Club* and what is the role of ChatGPT?

ChatGPT has moved the AI initiative forward because it is an easy to use app either on a desktop or mobile connected device. AI is already integral to our lives whether in your car, to enable on line shopping or to be served new TV shows on streamed services such as Netflix and Disney+. We are using ChatGPT because it is a user friendly, cost effective tool with a high degree of accuracy that adds to the skill base of our talented production staff. For *Secret Millionaires Club Minis*, we won't be using ChatGPT since we already have narrative from Warren Buffett himself and will deploy AI tools to create new visuals to reimagine the lessons Warren taught us in the original series.

Both of the series are aimed at children 4-12 and their families. Have you planned projects for older kids and adults?

Kartoon Channel!'s audience sweet spot is kids 4-12, and as young people become more sophisticated probably the upper

age limit that you can still call a kid is 12-years-old. Programming for tweens, teenagers and young adults is something that Frederator Network, from WOW! Entertainment, a subsidiary of Genius Brands, is expert at, but is a separate brand and audience from Kartoon Channel! Our initial deployment of AI is for kids 4-12 on Kartoon Channel! brand, and we believe that the company will learn a huge amount from this initiative. We certainly wouldn't rule out producing content for different audiences in the future, but we are just at the beginning of this journey.

Have you planned other AI generated projects for this year?

We are fortunate at Genius Brands to be an owner of original IP which enables us to deliver unique and distinctive content as first run and where appropriate exclusive content to benefit our kids and family audience and our partners. 'Content with a Purpose' is our mantra, so yes, we have a huge number of toys in our sandbox so the potential for new projects is considerable. We have already starting thinking about what is next, but for today we are focused on *Secret Millionaires Club Minis* and *Kidaverse Fast Facts*.

When will the two projects debut and what is your distribution strategy?

Both projects will start to roll out early summer (Northern Hemisphere) Internationally initially on the Kartoon Channel! App in either or, AVOD and the SVOD Kidaverse. They will also appear in the US, initially on YouTube and social media and on Kartoon Channel! internationally as we rapidly grow out the channel footprint across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. ■



AI: As Seen On TV

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has already switched from the realm of science fiction to our new reality. Television history is full of series with their own (futuristic) take on technology and its application, for better or worse. Let's browse thru some of the biggest hits in the genre!

Ghost in the Shell

Ghost in the Shell is a Japanese cyberpunk media franchise based on the seinen manga series of the same name written and illustrated by Masamune Shirow. The franchise has several movies and animated series, the latest one being Netflix's *Ghost in the Shell: SAC_2045*.



Person of Interest

Person of Interest (CBS, 2011-2016) centers on a mysterious billionaire computer programmer who has developed a computer program known as “the Machine” that is capable of collating all sources of information to predict terrorist acts and to identify people planning them.



Star Trek

Star Trek needs no introduction, with AI playing a crucial role to many of the plots in the franchise. In *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which aired from 1987 to 1994 and saw 7 seasons, we followed the adventures of the USS Enterprise starship, with one of the members of the crew being an android – Lt. Commander Data.



Westworld

Westworld aired on HBO between 2016-2022 and saw a total of 4 seasons. *Westworld* isn’t your typical amusement park. Intended for rich vacationers, the futuristic park -- which is looked after by robotic “hosts” -- allows its visitors to live out their fantasies through artificial consciousness.



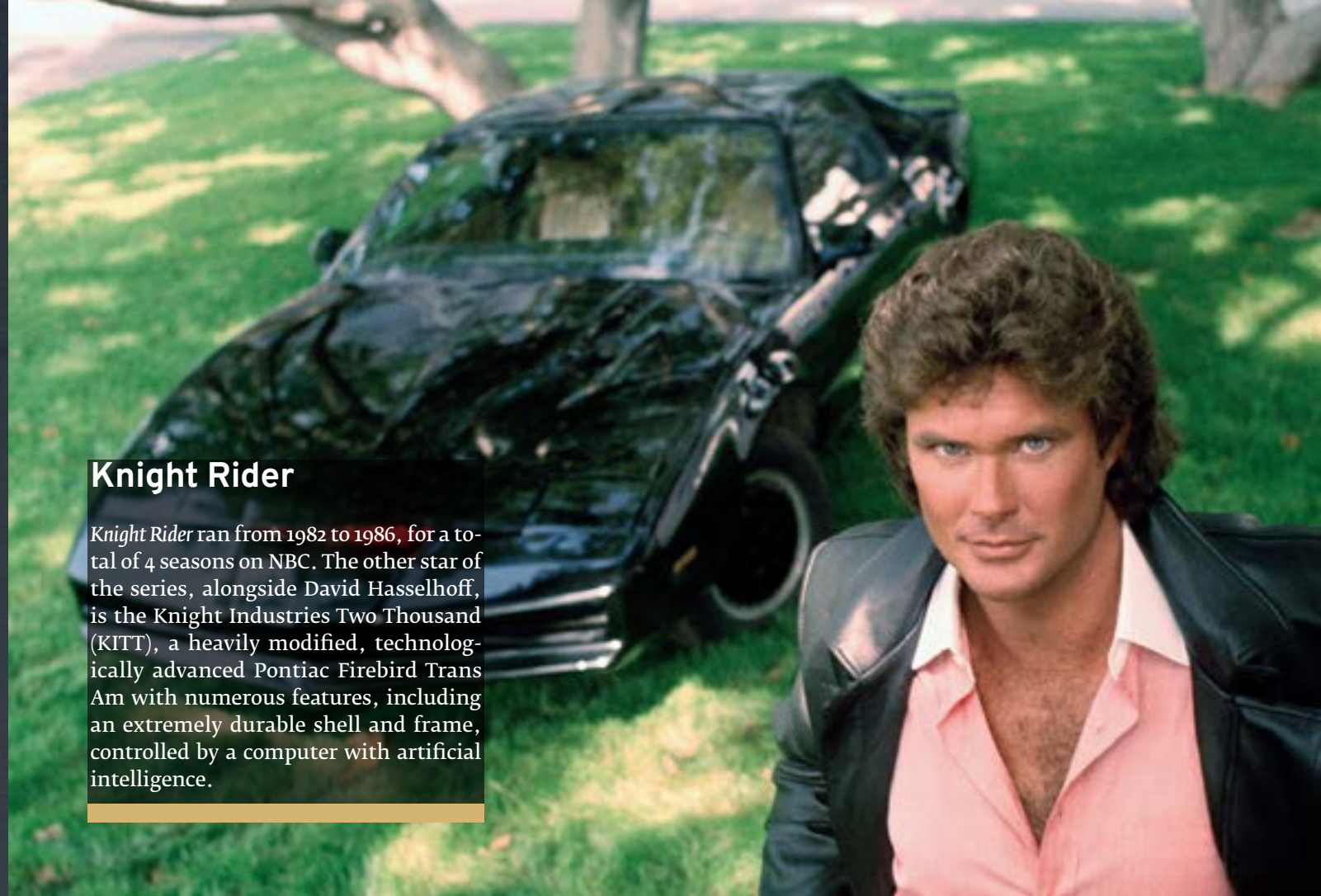
Humans

Humans, produced jointly by Channel 5 in the UK and AMC in the United States, saw a total of three seasons between 2015 and 2018. The critically acclaimed drama is set in a parallel present where the latest must-have gadget for a busy family is a Synth – a life-like humanoid.



The Orville

Some consider the Seth McFarlane series as a parody to Star Trek: TNG. It debuted in 2017 and has so far seen 3 seasons – two on Fox and one on Hulu. Set 400 years in the future, the show follows the adventures of The Orville, a not-so-top-of-the-line exploratory ship in Earth's interstellar Fleet, with one of its crew being a robot: Isaac, hailing from the artificial, non-biological race from Kaylon-1.



Knight Rider

Knight Rider ran from 1982 to 1986, for a total of 4 seasons on NBC. The other star of the series, alongside David Hasselhoff, is the Knight Industries Two Thousand (KITT), a heavily modified, technologically advanced Pontiac Firebird Trans Am with numerous features, including an extremely durable shell and frame, controlled by a computer with artificial intelligence.



Black Mirror

Black Mirror has been airing since 2011 across 5 seasons - from 2011 to 2014 on Channel 4, and from 2016 to present on Netflix. The show is an instance of speculative fiction within science fiction. AI is explored in numerous episodes but we can point out *Be Right Back* and *Black Museum*.

Battlestar Galactica

There are two series – the original one from 1978 and its reimagining from 2004 thru 2009 which saw 4 seasons on Sci-Fi. *Battlestar Galactica* continued from the 2003 miniseries to chronicle the journey of the last surviving humans from the Twelve Colonies of Kobol, after their nuclear annihilation by the Cylons. In this series there are no aliens but the antagonists are man-made androids.





Love, Death & Robots

Love, Death + Robots is a 5-time Emmy winning animation anthology series that spans over 3 seasons on Netflix. Individual episodes are produced by different animation studios from a range of countries and explore diverse genres. Many of the stand-alone episodes feature AI.



Doctor Who

Doctor Who is the longest-running show on our list, aired since 1963 by the BBC. The series depicts the adventures of a Time Lord called the Doctor, an extra-terrestrial being who appears to be human. The Doctor explores the universe in a time-travelling space ship called the TARDIS. AI has been featured numerous times in the series, namely thru The Cyberium, The Network; etc.



Futurama

Futurama debuted back in 1999 on Fox, transferring from 2008 to Comedy Central. It tells the story of the professional slacker Philip J. Fry, who is cryogenically preserved for 1000 years and revived on December 31, 2999. In his adventures he is accompanied by the one-eyed Leela and the quirky robot Bender.

Lost in Space

Lost in Space is another reboot on our list. The new version debuted on Netflix in 2018 and saw 3 seasons, being a reimagining of the original series by the same name from 1965. One of the main characters in the series is the robot which hails from an android race hostile towards humans but manages to change their attitude thanks to his adventures with the Robinsons.

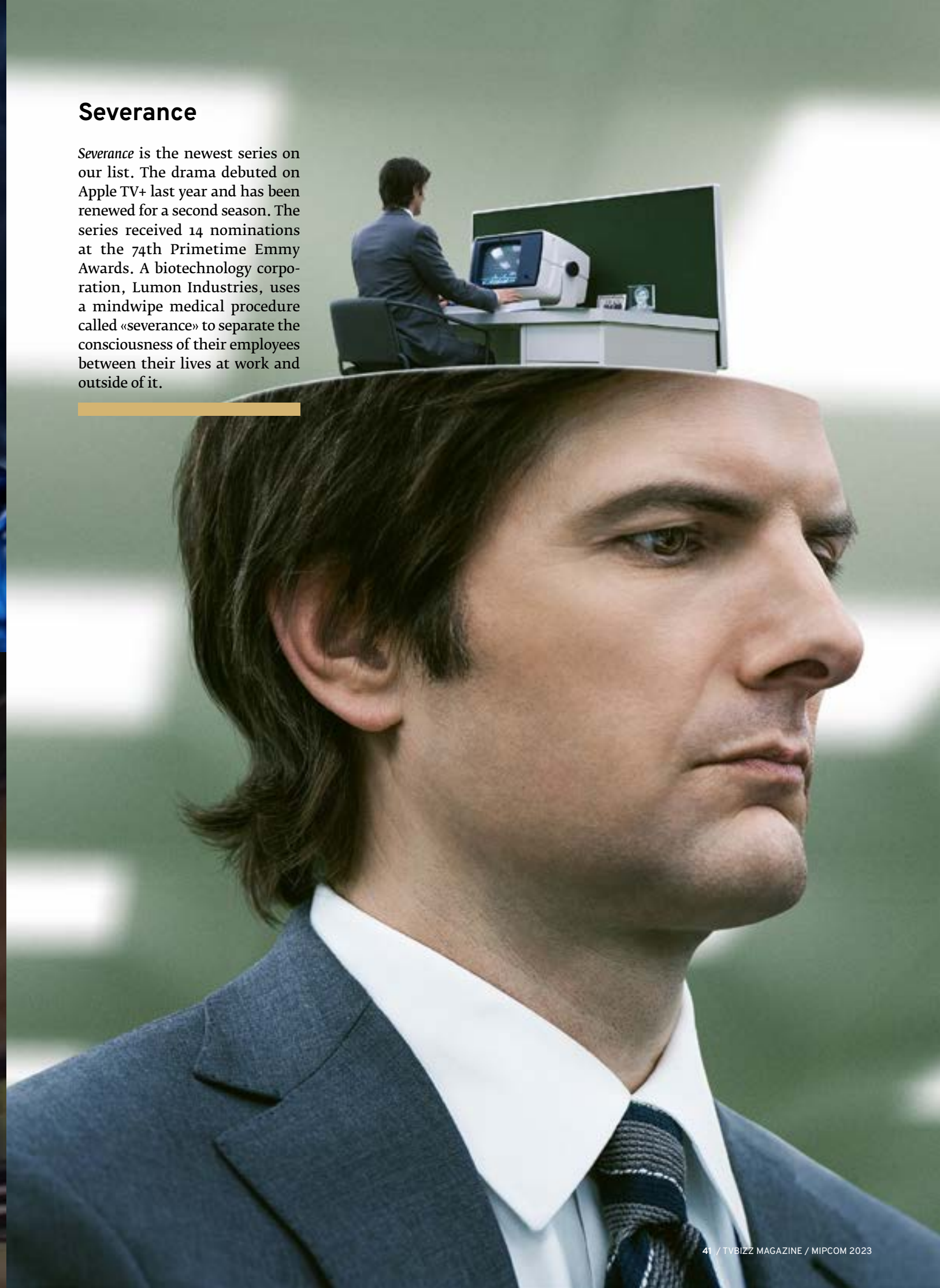


Blake's 7

One of the cult shows of British television (1978-1981), *Blake's 7*, saw four seasons and 52 episodes on the BBC. The series is set in a future age of interstellar travel and follows the exploits of a group of rebels who travel to different planets on the Liberator spaceship while fighting for their cause. Zen was the master control computer, responsible for most ship operations.

Severance

Severance is the newest series on our list. The drama debuted on Apple TV+ last year and has been renewed for a second season. The series received 14 nominations at the 74th Primetime Emmy Awards. A biotechnology corporation, Lumon Industries, uses a mindwipe medical procedure called «severance» to separate the consciousness of their employees between their lives at work and outside of it.



The Next Crypto Gem

The world's first crypto TV gameshow

bspoketv and INSIGHT TV recently partnered to launch the world's first cryptocurrency TV gameshow *The Next Crypto Gem* which will have its global premiere this summer.

Michael Dutcher, CEO, bspoketv, and Natalie Boot, Global Vice President FAST & Content Distribution, INSIGHT TV, tell YakoMolhov more about the show looking for "the next crypto Gem."

INSIGHT TV is launching the first cryptocurrency TV game-show *The Next Crypto Gem*. When will the format premiere and how is crypto involved in it?

Michael Dutcher: The first season of *The Next Crypto Gem* is filming this month and will premiere in the summer. In the groundbreaking series, crypto project leaders compete in a series of challenges in front of crypto influencer judges to determine which project is "the next crypto Gem." The show uses a competitive reality show format evocative of *Shark Tank*, *The Voice*, and *The Apprentice*.

This is the first show of its kind on TV. What are the new elements that viewers around the world have not seen before? Who are the hosts and the judges in the show?

Michael Dutcher: For the first time, crypto project leaders will compete in a series of challenges in a competitive reality show format. The show is hosted by Anna Roisman (*HQ Trivia*) and the judges are popular crypto influencers Brian D. Evans, Layah Heilpern and George Tung. Crypto Icon Ben "BitBoy" Armstrong and original *Shark Tank* shark Kevin Harrington will guest star.

What are the rules in *The Next Crypto Gem*, the grand prize and how can viewers interested in the show take part in it?

Michael Dutcher: We are not revealing the challenges the crypto project

leaders will take part in. Viewers will have to tune in to find out. Ultimately, only one project will be left standing and named *The Next Crypto Gem*.

When will the new show air?

Michael Dutcher: This Summer of 2023.

Natalie Boot: INSIGHT TV will work closely with bspoketv to make the show available to the widest potential viewing audience around the world, bringing our relationships with broadcasters and platforms around the world and our own footprint of nearly 400M linear and FAST homes around the world.

What audience are you targeting with the new show? Will you skew more tech-savvy viewers or will you try to reach wider audiences who are not familiar with the subject?

Michael Dutcher: We are targeting both crypto enthusiasts and people interested in learning more about the space. The show will be formatted in a way where it will be fun, fast-paced, entertaining and educational no matter how much the viewer currently knows about crypto.

Are you also distributing the show as a format? Do you already have interest from other players in acquiring it?

Natalie Boot: Yes, both the format and ready-made will be distributed by INSIGHT TV. The interest in the format is spectacular, and we hope to announce the first few deals soon.



Michael Dutcher

CEO, bspoketv



Natalie Boot

Global Vice President FAST & Content Distribution, INSIGHT TV

Will *The Next Crypto Gem* also include other elements from the digital world like NFTs and in what way?

Michael Dutcher: Yes, there will be discussion of NFTs and other elements of the digital world. ■

iQIYI's AI Innovations

Liu Wenfeng, Chief Technology Officer of iQIYI, talks about the company's recent developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies which allow to quickly adapt content for viewers in different markets across Asia.

A I has been gaining quite the momentum in the past few years, affecting different elements of our lives. What are the main benefits of using this technology for iQIYI's operations, in what areas is it most beneficial?

As a technology-based entertainment company, iQIYI is adopting AI and other new technologies in the film and television industry, promoting technological applications in the different stages of content creation, management, and production, so as to drive the industrialization of China's film and TV industry and produce quality content with lower cost and higher efficiency.

What AI tools has your company developed so far?

AI Video Restoration Technology: ZoomAI Video Enhancement Solution – iQIYI's proprietary ZoomAI restoration technology, makes the company the first in the industry to apply deep learning to film restoration, resolution enhancement, and smart frame interpolation, significantly improving the viewing quality for a wide array of content such as black-and-white films, classic drama series, documentaries, animated series, and UGC content. With the adoption of ZoomAI restoration technology, iQIYI has increased video processing efficiency by 500 times and expanded its collection of ultra-high-definition (4k/8k) video content, providing viewers with an ultimate audiovisual experience. Through a combination of manual and ZoomAI video restoration, iQIYI has successfully restored hundreds of classic films from the 1950s and 1960s. According to iQIYI, viewership of such restored classic films has seen a 5-10 time increase.

Also, IQDubbing system is an intelligent dubbing platform developed by iQIYI. Driven by AI-enabled voice conversion and synthesis technology,

IQDubbing replicates the rhythm and emotion of voice and improves production efficiency significantly. While traditional dubbing requires many voice actors for one piece of content, IQDubbing only needs one for all the parts. As a result, IQDubbing reduces the time cost of dubbing and improves delivery of content. For a 45-minute TV show episode, dubbing with IQDubbing only takes 1/6 of the time traditional dubbing would take. IQDubbing currently supports Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thai languages, and is increasingly used for iQIYI's content distribution in overseas markets.

iQIYI's proprietary machine translation technology based on the universal Machine Translation Post Edit (MTPE) model continues to improve the efficiency of human translation, reducing translation time by 30%. Currently, the technology supports translations from simplified Chinese to Indonesian, Malay, Thai, Vietnamese, Arabic, Traditional Chinese, and other languages. As of now, some of the iQIYI dramas in Malaysia have completely switched from manual translation to automated AI translation. With the wider application of the technology in overseas distribution, iQIYI is expected to save hundreds of millions of yuan in translation costs.

Empowered by AI intelligent analysis and 3D reconstruction technology, iQIYI Video-in Ads can help advertisers quickly identify ideal scenes for product placement and automate the placement of visuals and products into the episode(s) as the story progresses, to achieve an effective integration of the brand and product value into the storyline.

Tell us a little bit more about your recent deal with Baidu on AI-generated content. What does this deal include and what type of content



have you planned? Are iQIYI users already watching AI-generated content?

On February 15, iQIYI announced a framework agreement with Baidu, connecting iQIYI to Baidu's generative dialogue product ERNIE Bot. Under the agreement, iQIYI and Baidu will jointly explore leveraging generative AI technology on iQIYI's various business endeavors, including content search, promotion, novel creation and tools, among other areas. The partnership marries iQIYI's rich online entertainment resources and Baidu's advanced technologies, which further empowers iQIYI to enhance its creative capabilities, production efficiency, and the ability to provide superior user experiences. ■



The Failure of Europe's Big TV Mergers

by Georgi R. Chakarov

Two major mergers on the European TV market failed to materialize over the last six months. First, in mid-September 2022, the French TF1 and M6 Groups announced that they have abandoned their proposed merger. Then, in January 2023, the same happened in the Netherlands as RTL and Talpa gave up the effort to unite their assets. At the start of the year, the UK government also decided that it will not privatize Channel 4 after a long process of preparations to sell the broadcaster.

There were just a few “successful” transactions during this period. The first one saw MFE (Mediaset) acquire the shares it did not already own in Mediaset Spain basically merging the Spanish and Italian assets of the company. The other one was the somewhat surprising investment of CEE giant PPF Group, owner of Central European Enterprises (CME), buying 9.1% of the shares of ProSiebenSat.1 Media SE, becoming the second biggest shareholder in the German media holding. However, both deals are rather small in value and an even smaller impact on the respective media markets.

According to statistics, the last sizeable merger in the sector with a value over a billion euros in Europe took place in June 2021 as UPC Polska was sold by Liberty Global to Iliad for the sum of 1.5 billion euros. This deal as well had a small impact on the TV market itself and its high value is mainly related to the infrastructure of the pay TV operator.

Telia's 2019 acquisition of Bonnier Broadcasting (TV4) for SEK 9.2 billion (again less than a billion euros) was probably the last time Europe saw a major transaction which affected linear television, pay TV, digital and streaming in two markets – Sweden and Finland. Further back, in 2014, in one of the most talked-about deals on the continent Viacom (now Paramount Global) acquired UK's Channel 5 for £450 million (\$760 million).

According to stats from Dialogic, the best year for M&A in the European TV sector was 2018 with a total spend of 48.7 billion (36 transactions), followed by another peak of 35.1 billion euros out of total of 50 transactions in 2020. In 2021 that sum dropped to only 7.4 billion with 37(!) transactions, and after the

first quarter of 2022 the money spent on M&A in the European TV sector amounted to only 1.3 billion euros with 11 transactions. By the end of 2022, the only major deal that was finalized on the continent was the merger of Warner Bros. Discovery's Eurosport UK channels with the BT Sport channels. In South-East Europe, United Group continued to be the most active player (its biggest deal was the merger of the Wind and Nova telcos in Greece), but most likely the annual result was the lowest since 2017 when mergers in the sector in Europe accounted for only 2.1 billion euros.

The failed merger between TF1 and M6 could have become the biggest in Europe in years with a value of 2.2 billion euros but as it became clear there was no support for the transaction from the French Competition Authority's board (Collège), i.e. in over a year since the announcement of their plans RTL Group and Bouygues were not able to get political support for their business plans.

In a joint statement, the two groups said: “Following the debates with the Authority and despite the additional remedies proposed, it appears that only structural remedies involving at the

very least the divestment of the TF1 TV channel or of the M6 TV channel would be sufficient to approve the proposed merger. The parties have therefore concluded that the proposed merger no longer has any strategic rationale. As a result, and in agreement with the other parties, Bouygues has decided to end the review of the transaction by the Competition Authority. The parties regret that the Competition Authority did not take into account the speed and extent of the changes sweeping through the French broadcasting sector. They continue to firmly believe that a merger of the TF1 and M6 groups would have provided an appropriate response to the challenges resulting from the increased competition from the international platforms.”

Interestingly enough, the message sent by RTL and Talpa, announcing that their merger has been put off, contained almost the same wording: “RTL Group and Talpa Network regret that ACM did not take into account the speed and extent of the changes in the Dutch media landscape and the impact of these changes on local media companies. They continue to firmly believe that a merger of RTL Nederland and Talpa Network would have been the right strategic response to the challenges resulting from the increased competition with the international platforms.”

Balancing between politics and regulations could also put an end to MFE's ambitions to take operational control of ProSiebenSat.1 Media. In December, MFE, which is controlled by former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, submitted a merger report to the Federal Competition Authority (BWB) which means “the acquisition of de facto sole control of ProSiebenSat.1 Media”. However, according to Reuters, an industry insider said this was just a technical process, while a hostile takeover of the company by the Italians is currently considered “politically impossible.” Two months later, MFE said officially that it is not planning a merger with P7Si “for now.”

Clearly, politicians, regulators and even competitors “failed to see” or understand the arguments and business motivation of these European media giants who felt the impact of the failure of the mergers almost immediately while the consequences could continue to be seen in the next two-three years.



John de Mol, owner Talpa Network



Sven Sauv , CEO RTL Netherlands

In France, the merger was cancelled but both TF1 and M6 were forced to sell channels. Niche nets TFX and 6ter were sold to Altice as the two groups needed to offload at least one of their terrestrial channels in order to get approval for their merger. Days after the deal was called off, French media reported that M6 Group has been put for sale by Bertelsmann and got offers from Xavier Niel (Iliad group) and MFE, Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky, who's already present in several French media and FL Entertainment (BaniJay, Betclac) owned by St phane Courbit, more notably associated with Rodolphe Saad , CEO of the shipping giant CMA-CCM. However, a month later the German media giant said it has scrapped plans to sell its stake in M6.

Just days after Bouygues and RTL Group called off the TF1-M6 deal, Bouygues announced a change in the

leadership of TF1 Group with Rodolphe Belmer taking over as Chairman and CEO, effective February 2023. Gilles P liss on then moved to the Bouygues Group as Deputy MD in charge of Media and Development.

Next up were the reports of the failure of French streamer Salto, operated jointly by TF1, M6 and France T l visions. Once again, the media blamed the strict regulatory framework which impeded the cooperation of the three groups. Eventually, in February this year, they jointly announced that Salto, which counted nearly one million subscribers, would be shut down in March this year. The joint statement clarified: “This decision by Salto's three founder-shareholders follows the abandonment of the proposed merger between TF1 and M6, which would have paved the way for Salto to be taken over by the merged entity.”



Bert Habets, CEO ProSiebenSat.1 Media

Financially, 2022 was “stable” for the TF1 Group, which filed 15 million euros in expenses over the failed merger. Current operating profit came to 316.2 million, down 27.0 million year-on-year. It increased by 2.5 million euros without taking into account the broadcaster’s tax credit allocated in 2021 for COVID-19, TF1 clarified.

M6 Group’s revenue in 2022 fell by 2.4% to 1.356 billion euros. EBIT for the period was 312.0 million, compared with 390.5 million in 2021. In 2021, EBIT included a revaluation capital gain of 52.4 million following its acquisition of a majority shareholding in Stéphane Plaza Immobilier, M6 noted. According to the annual report, Salto recorded a significant operating loss of 72.3 million in 2022 (i.e. 24.1 million for M6 share). “In the context of the failure of the M6 / TF1 merger project, the three partners of Salto tested possible buyers for the platform, while evaluating the cost of the liquidation of the company which amounts to €66.0 million (i.e. €22.0 million for M6 share),” M6 said.

Streaming was also one of the key arguments for the merger of the assets of RTL and Talpa Network in the Netherlands where Videoland has been successfully competing with the international giants while Talpa really lacks an asset in that segment. This was also the reason why Talpa was billed “the biggest loser” after the failed merger by Dutch analysts. Media entrepreneur Ruud Hendriks called Talpa “a handicapped” media company: “It won’t be very cozy

in the corridors there now. John de Mol will have to come up with something else. I don’t think he can go on like this. Talpa’s Achilles heel is the lack of a streaming service.” De Telegraaf’s TV expert Kirsten Jan van Nieuwenhuijzen also noted: “De Mol had negotiated a very favorable deal. Talpa does not own Videoland. They have not made that investment in the future there. That is a real problem in the long run.”

RTL Netherlands CEO Sven Sauvé then commented for the media that they are open for new partnerships, both national and international, in order to be able to compete better with the international giants. The main strategic goal remains the growth of the Videoland streamer and RTL will continue to cooperate with Talpa in terms of content.

Later, former SBS6 chief Fons van Westerloo told Financieel Dagblad that De Mol now has three options: sale or cooperation with another party, pull out the wallet and make acquisitions, or develop a streaming service. However, in his opinion, Talpa’s acquisitions have not been so successful and a streaming service is unsustainable in the current Dutch market, so: “My prediction is that SBS will be put back on the market. There is always a buyer for media. Many parties find media ‘juicy.’”

The failed merger was also felt among the Talpa ranks. In March Erland Galjaard, consultant at Talpa TV, decided to terminate his contract. He said he wants to devote more time and

attention to other projects and develop further as an independent entrepreneur and consultant.

In terms of finances, 2022 was excellent for RTL Netherlands with Adjusted EBITA up 50.5% to 161 million euros. The revenue grew 10.6% to 636 million euros. Videoland recorded a subscriber growth of 11.8% to 1.221 million paying subscribers at the end of 2022 (end of 2021: 1.092 million).

Talpa has not filed official financial reports for 2021 and 2022 yet. In 2020 (at the time of the announcement of the planned merger with RTL) it had a turnover of 433 million euros.

For both companies the two potential local partners could be Mediahuis and DPG Media. The first one was supposed to take over the sales for Talpa’s TV channels after the finalization of the mergers, while the second one is now the co-owner of RTL Belgium, and controls the VTM channels, and has voiced ambitions to enter the Dutch TV market as well, where it currently cooperates with RTL and Talpa in content production.

However, now all eyes are turned towards Germany where ProSiebenSat.1 first called off the release of its 2022 results due to “regulatory matters in connection with the business of Jochen Schweizer mydays.” Then, at a media event in March CEO Bert Habets came up with a proposal for a streaming service ‘Made in Germany’ uniting both public broadcasters and commercial players, and later unveiled a new strategic focus where Joyn becomes the center of the company’s Entertainment activities. The main question here is: Who would fund it?

During the annual results presentation in late March, Bertelsmann CEO Thomas Rabe did not sound very optimistic about the prospects of big mergers in Germany and Europe as a whole: “It’s very clear [that in] the next two to three years, it doesn’t make sense to come up with large-scale merger plans in TV, because the position which the authorities took in France and the Netherlands is likely to be the same in other countries,” Rabe told the Financial Times. But he still sees other options in advertising and distribution partnerships: “These will be smaller steps to consolidate and create scale,” he said. “But, frankly, [they are] the only steps which are currently available, given the position of the competition authorities.” ■



TV MARKET WITH A VIEW

5 - 8 JUN 2023

10 YEARS
10 KEYNOTES

Are FAST Channels Getting Furious?

by Yako Molhov

The TV industry is full of acronyms – VOD, SVOD, TVOD, CTV, MVPD, AI, OLED, QLED, HD, UHD and so on. But the two dominating the headlines in the past year have been AVOD and FAST. AVOD (advertising-supported video on demand) and FAST (free ad-supported streaming TV services, a term coined by Alan Wolk) are, in fact, the only two ways to watch ad-supported TV beyond the set-top box.

The core difference between them comes down to content distribution, as AdExchanges explains. Streaming content can either be served on a one-to-many basis (as in live) or one-to-one basis (as in when you want it). Free ad-supported TV

(FAST) apps offer linear channels that deliver scheduled programming to a mass audience through connected devices, while ad-supported video-on-demand (AVOD) is at the behest of the user, who initiates individual viewing sessions that generate inventory in which to serve personalized advertising.

FAST channels have been around in some shape or form for at least the last five years, but they have only recently become a mainstream revenue generation opportunity, an Omdia study released by Blue Ant International notes. “On a global basis, FAST channel revenue grew almost 20X between 2019 and 2022 and will almost triple to reach a value of more than \$12bn by

2027. Much of this growth will be driven by the US which accounted for almost 90% of the global FAST channel market with a value of just under \$4bn in 2022. By 2027, the US FAST channel market will exceed \$10bn in revenue, making it an attractive destination for global IP and content owners looking to broaden monetization opportunities. Indeed, there is a significant opportunity to target diasporic audiences residing in the country. However, FAST channel revenue growth will be quickest outside of the US over the coming years, driving its share of global revenue down to 84% by 2027.”

Although all FAST channels behave like linear addressable, there

is still no consensus as to whether FAST should be classified as linear or CTV (connected TV). Alan Wolk, the person who ‘invented’ the term FAST noted in one of his analyses: “Let me define what a FAST channel is NOT and that is the equivalent of a cable TV outlet like AMC or the Food Network. The reason for this is quite simple: while the free ad-supported streaming ecosystem is, in many ways, similar to cable television, it is also quite different in some very important areas. There are no MVPDs (multi-channel video programming distributor) in the FAST universe, companies that pay carriage fees to carry the singular national feed of a cable network. Instead, there are ‘aggregator apps’ -- FAST services that collect and distribute content from a variety of sources. These aggregator apps have both curated linear channels and on demand libraries as they’ve found that consumers like the option of having both.”

Wolk defines three main types of FAST channels:

The first ones are the FASTs owned by the media companies: Pluto TV (Paramount), Tubi (Fox), Xumo (Comcast/Charter) and, for now anyway, Peacock (NBCU). The biggest advantages these FASTs have is that they are able to rely on unique content from their parent company, and they are not restricted to a single manufacturer or device.

The second grouping are the FASTs owned by the OEMs: Amazon Freevee, LG Channels, The Roku Channel, Samsung TV Plus and Vizio WatchFree+. Their key advantages are that they are the centerpiece of the device’s user interface, the first thing viewers see when they turn on the TV and they have access to a wealth of native ACR (automatic content recognition) viewing data.

The third group are the independent apps like Crackle and Plex. They are beholden to no one and thus can be more experimental in their formats and less constricted in their content offerings.

“FAST is the evolution of ad-supported streaming – which has been entirely on-demand until now –

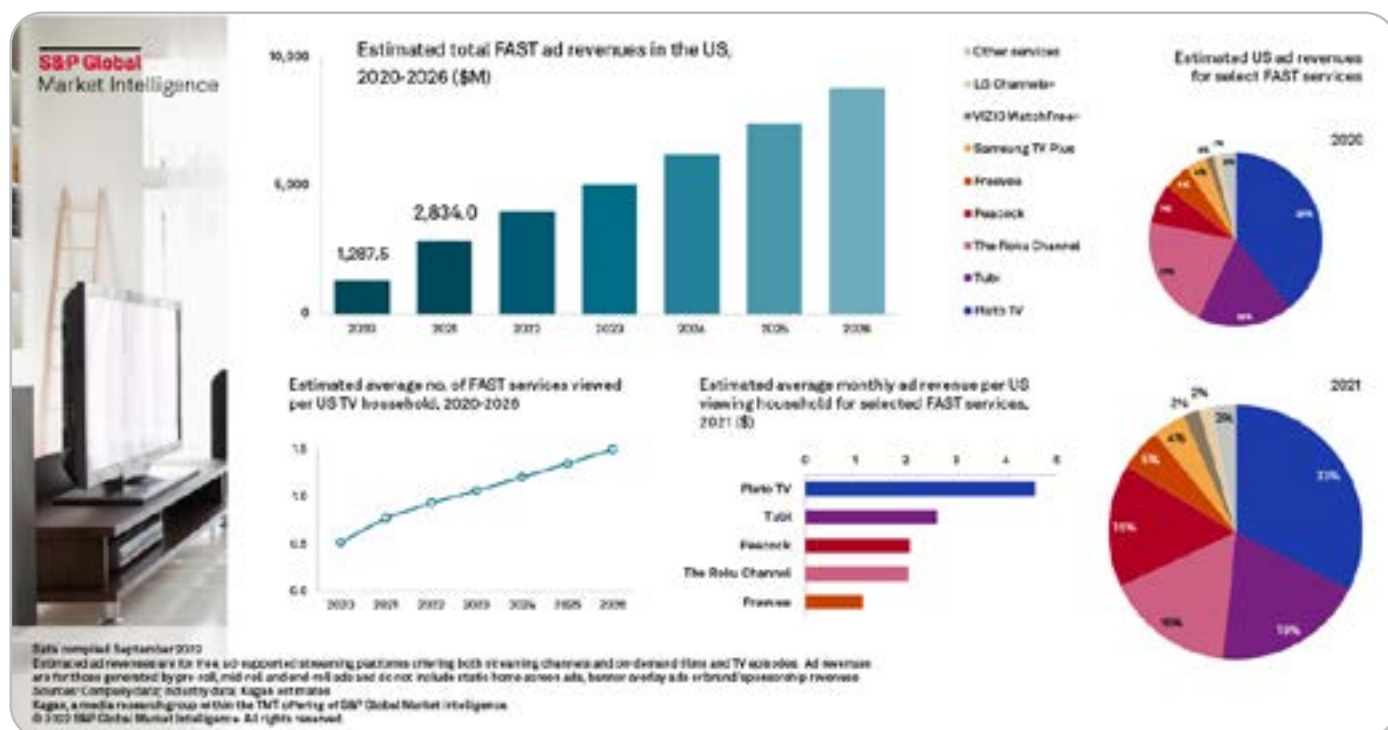
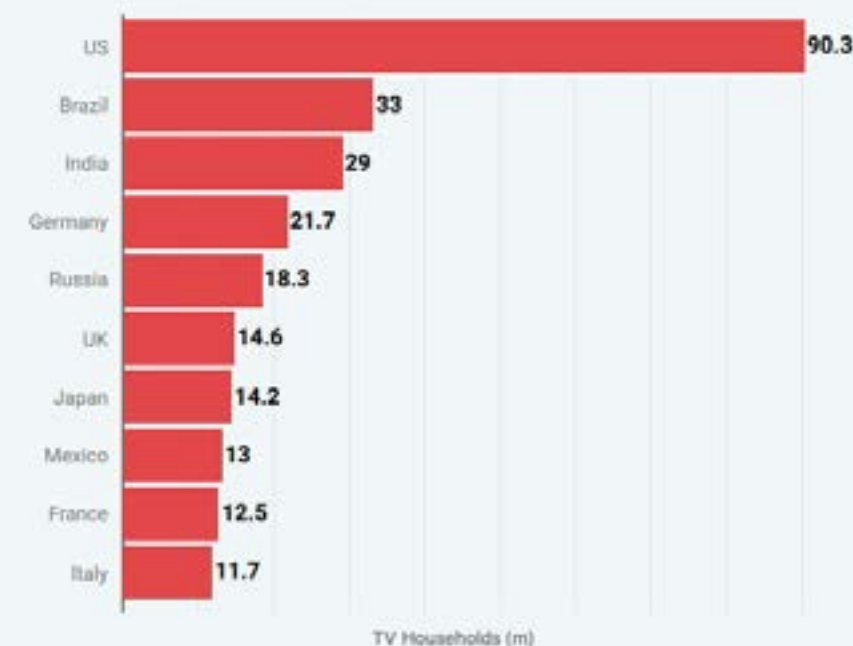
becoming the new linear [as in, accessible and free of charge],” said Justin Evans, global head of analytics and insights at Samsung Ads. “So, while it feels a lot like linear TV, it’s [still technically] CTV.”

But because of the core differences in business models, some TV industry experts say otherwise.

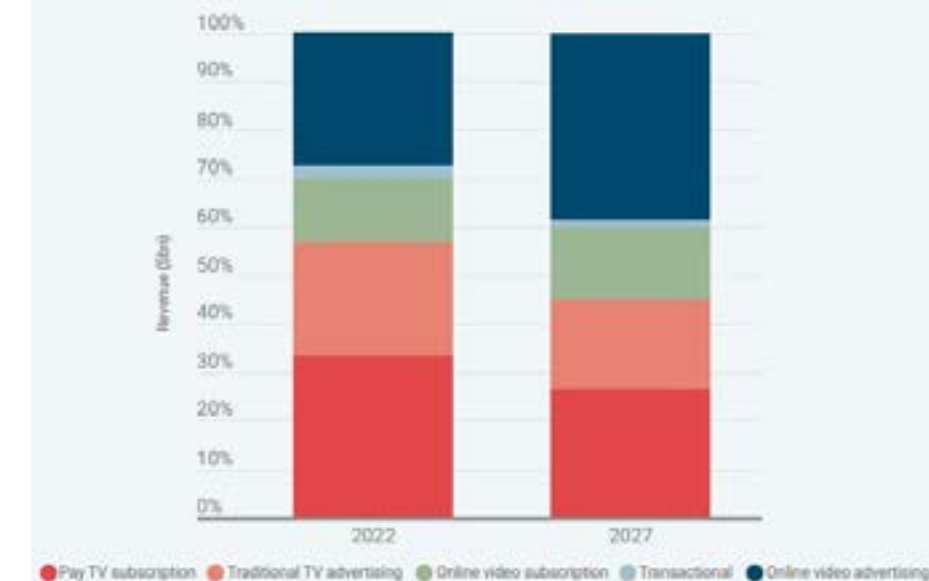
VOD is an “intentional use case,

whereas linear is more accessible,” according to Jeff Shultz, Chief Strategy and Business Development Officer of Streaming at Paramount. “You can draw a clear line between AVOD and FAST, and that line is linear,” Shultz stresses. “In fact, FAST channels might actually be yielding more user engagement”, Shultz adds. “Sometimes, people also just

Top 10 Global Markets for Connected TV Households - 2022



Total Global Video Revenue by Business Model, \$bn, 2022-2027



need a break from the (21st-century/first-world) struggles of choosing what to watch,” he noted. In his words, Pluto TV “produced more engagement in terms of yielding more MAUs, total viewing hours and thus more revenue.”

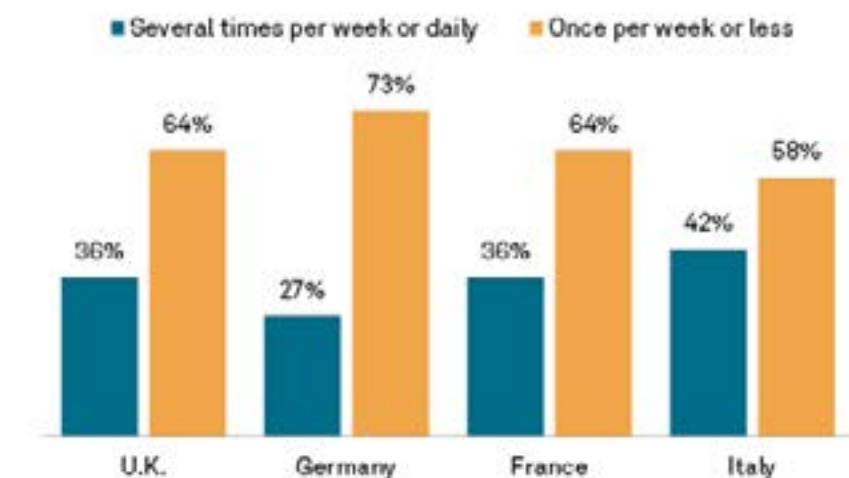
The rise in popularity of video has seen FAST come a long way in recent years, which can be attributed in no small part to the increase in availability of smart TVs and connected streaming devices. This is echoed in Conviva’s 2022 State of Streaming report which reveals big screens are dominating viewing time, with 77% of all viewing via a smart TV, connected device or gaming console, versus mobile (11%), desktop (7%), and tablets (5%).

The appeal for consumers is the combination of traditional broadcast within a streaming landscape. Content is presented in a way where the viewer has no control over programming within a single channel, versus traditional subscription streaming, which requires a user to actively find and select a program. This, coupled with the growing interest in existing content libraries and the zero cost to consumers, is driving the FAST evolution.

Launching a FAST channel provides a huge opportunity for content owners and distributors to broaden the reach and increase the exposure of existing SVOD (Subscription Video on Demand) or AVOD libraries, Fastchannels.tv notes.

Growth for free ad-supported (FAST) services in the U.S. shows no signs of slowing as audiences,

Frequency of viewing AVOD content (Percentage internet adults)



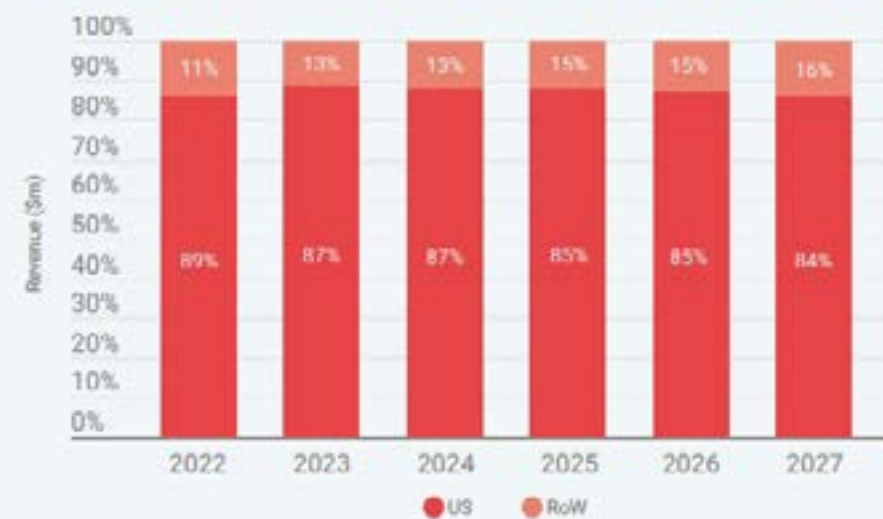
Q. Over the past three months, how often did you perform these activities?
Base: 1,000.
Source: Kagan's European Consumer Insights survey, December 2021.
Kagan, a media research group within the TMT offering of S&P Global Market Intelligence.
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advertisers and content owners lean into the FAST model. S&P Global estimated that total FAST ad revenues in the U.S. approached \$4 billion in 2022, with that total projected to more than double to just under \$9 billion by 2026. While more than 20 FAST platforms are available in the U.S., the “Big Three” of the FAST world Peacock, Pluto TV and Tubi are projected to account for a combined two-thirds of total FAST revenues in 2022 and for each year through 2026.

A key driver in growth for the sector is the ongoing migration of audiences and ad revenues from linear TV networks to streaming services owned by Paramount Global (Pluto TV), Comcast Corp. (Peacock) and Fox Corp. (Tubi). As each expands programming at their FAST outlets, a virtuous cycle is established that drives audience growth, increased advertiser interest and higher ad revenues.

Paramount’s purchase of Pluto TV in 2019 and Fox’s 2020 acquisition of

Global Share of FAST Channel Revenue, US vs Rest of World (RoW), % , 2019-2027



Tubi helped bring the FAST model to the masses and kickstarted a land-grab that has network owners, tech companies, multichannel TV distributors, broadcasters and TV manufacturers operating FAST services and fighting for their share of the rapidly growing revenue pie.

In its most-recent research from March 2023 S&P Global expects that total U.S. video ad revenues could top \$73 billion by 2027, benefiting from the broader shift of advertising spend migrating to digital formats and from consumers embracing streaming video services. S&P notes that advertisers in the past had gravitated toward the scale offered by YouTube, Meta, Roku Inc. and Amazon, but rapid audience growth at video services operated by Comcast, Disney, Fox Corp., Paramount and Warner Bros. Discovery have resulted in video ad spend swiftly flowing to a much wider range of services than in past years.

Justin Fromm, Head of Research at LG Ads Solutions points to the key role the linear nature of FAST channels has in helping consumers avoid decision paralysis, while shorter ad breaks make for a better consumer experience.

“FASTs are the future of cable. The turn on and tune in opportunity that FASTs offer has tremendous value, especially alongside the wide

variety of on demand offerings, across which the volume of content can cause decision paralysis. In research that we have conducted with a national sample of Connected TV households, FAST Channels received higher scores on “Always has something I like to watch” and “Makes it easy to find something to watch” than AVOD, SVOD, and Cable/Satellite among users of each type of service. With shorter ad breaks and without the monthly cost of cable and satellite, we expect to see the adoption of FASTs continue at a rapid pace,” TVRev notes.

“Magna Global forecasts digital video’s share of the combined digital ad spend in the U.K., Germany and France will rise from 8.1% in 2021 to 10.0% in 2026, indicating a move from linear TV, radio and print to digital formats, in line with the growing popularity of OTT video. Corroborating this trend, S&P Global Market Intelligence research shows that the big four advertising groups have twice revised upward their 2022 annual forecasts, citing increased annual organic growth, fueled in part by digital advertising growth,” S&P Global says in its “5 Key OTT Trends report” for 2023.

Recently Blue Ant Media released data about the FAST market in UK

and in other territories.

UK FAST channel revenue has already increased 180 times between 2019 and 2022. FAST will account for nearly 20% of the UK’s \$3bn premium online ad-supported video market by 2027 (of which \$500m will be attributed to FAST). FAST is a weekly habit for 15% of UK online viewers.

The general movement of consumers from free TV towards free online video is a key driver of ad-based online video monetization, as advertisers start to follow eyeballs from traditional TV towards digital and CTV environments.

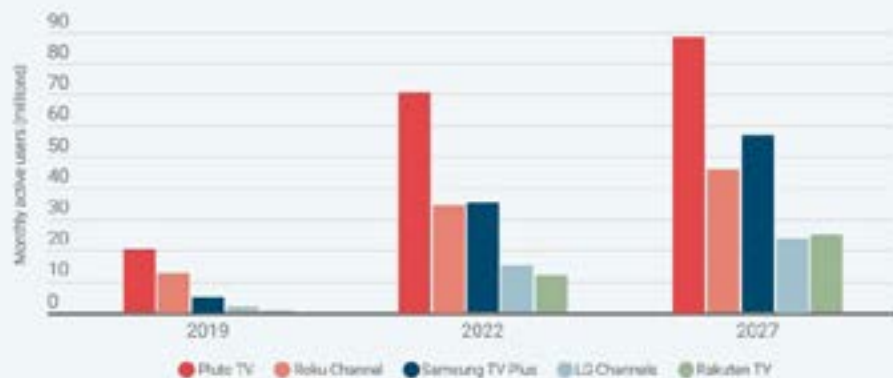
In terms of content, in the US, local news channels have carved out an important niche on FAST.

News was the top FAST channel genre is the US according to Amagi, with 33% of hours of viewing, 8% for movies and crime, 7% for entertainment and 3% for sports. News is the leading genre in APAC (14%), but in Europe, documentary channels are number one (15%), while in Latin America, movie channels (21%), according to Amagi.

However, the Blue Ant-released reports also says that “outside of North America, Europe and a handful of more advanced economies in APAC, FAST remains a largely nascent and uncertain prospect. Even in markets that seem primed for premium

Global Monthly Active Users of the Top-5 FAST-Focused Services, Millions, 2019-2027

Note: Data includes only included services which it estimates provided at least 80% of their ad revenue from FAST channels in 2022. Excludes Roku TV total represents users in Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the U.K. only.
Source: Lumina



ad-supported video services, such as India, the generally lower advertising yield combined with low CTV and high-speed internet household penetration, has some in the industry questioning whether FAST exists as a profitable pursuit in the country – at least in its current guise. Although Samsung TV Plus is present in India, much of the movement into FAST from Indian content owners has focused on serving diasporic audiences living in more advanced markets, such as the US and the UK, where FAST channels are likely to be more profitable, rather than local viewers. This is a trend that we are likely to see in other emerging markets. And, although other key markets, such as Brazil and Latin America, are showing promise, mature western markets, particularly the US, are where most of the money will come from in the FAST segment, at least in the near-to-medium term.”

How do FAST channels operators make money?

The same report by Omdia for Blue Ant states that business models for FAST channels typically fall into three main types: revenue share, inventory share, or flat fee.

“In a revenue-share model, the platform owner is responsible for selling advertising inventory and agrees to pay a share to the channel provider. This is usually split 60/40 in favor of the channel provider, although 55/45 or 50/50 splits are becoming more common. Inventory share is the dominant model in the US market.

This is where the channel owner allocates some of the advertising spots to sell itself. In both inventory and revenue share models, part of the ad revenue will go to the technology partner.

Under a flat-fee model, the channel or content owner agrees to provide its content to the platform in return for an agreed annual fee. This is a less common model. Content owners looking to take a more hands-off approach to monetizing their (often legacy) intellectual property (IP) through FAST channels can, meanwhile, look to license their content to FAST operators and aggregators for use in their O&O FAST channels. Although CTV manufacturers are

becoming increasingly selective in licensing content, there is a new emergent class of FAST channel operators, which will take content from smaller content owners, package it into channels, aggregate those channels with other FAST channels and then distribute said channels to FAST services and platforms. In these instances, the advertising element of FAST is also operated – or at least managed – by the aggregator, which then pays out a share of advertising revenue to the content owner after taking a cut itself, significantly reducing complexity for the content owner.”

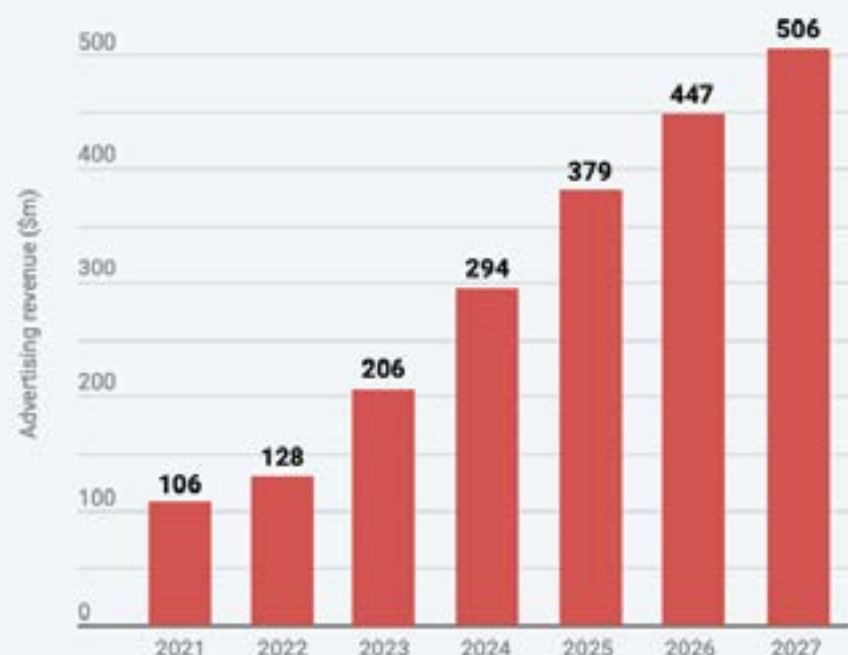
In a fresh analysis, Cantech Letter summed up very well why FAST is about to get really furious.

The number of FAST channels is growing quickly, and their share on the US market in mid-2022 reached 24%: “With the saturation of SVOD and consumer pushback on pricing, the growth of AVOD and FAST is a logical step. The next question is,

will the advertising dollars follow the eyeballs. History has shown that the answer tends to be yes whenever there is a gap between viewership and ad dollars,” Cantech Letter notes. The numbers speak for this: CTV has risen to taking 36% of the viewing time compared to linear TV and yet only 18% of the ad spend. So, advertisers are now actively moving money to CTV.

But the analysts warn: “There is one other factor that will disrupt the smooth transition toward open programmatic in CTV – the fact that most CTV budgets are being driven by a shift away from linear TV. Linear and CTV buying tends to be managed by the same team. The team that is driving the linear TV process will be much more comfortable with the direct purchasing model rather than programmatic. The learning curve is steep with programmatic, which will also hamper the growth trajectory into CTV.” ■

**UK FAST Advertising Revenue,
2021-27, \$m**



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Blue Ant's FAST Philosophy

In this exclusive interview with Yako Molhov, Jamie Schouela, President, Global Channels and Media, Blue Ant Media, talks about the company's fast-growing portfolio of FAST channels and their strategy to reach users with "event programming" and special marketing campaigns.

How many FAST channels does Blue Ant currently have and will you launch new ones in 2023?

Blue Ant Media now operates 7 FAST channels including Love Nature, HauntTV, Total Crime (CrimeTime in Canada), Homeful, HistoryTime, Drag Race Universe and Love Pets. While we're currently exploring other potential channels to launch later this year, our priority over the coming months is to continue building distribution for our existing brands, both in the US and increasingly globally as free streaming demand from audiences builds in many markets.

What is your distribution footprint? Which services carry your channels and how many territories do you cover?

Over the last two years, Blue Ant has

rapidly expanded its portfolio of FAST channels to over 40 countries, which includes seven FAST channels active in the U.S., four in Canada, and a growing number of channels live in the UK, Australia/New Zealand and across Europe and Latin America. As part of this growth, the company has built partnerships with all of the major streaming platforms including Amazon Freevee, VIZIO WatchFree+, The Roku Channel, Samsung TV Plus, Tubi, Xumo, PlutoTV, Sling Freestreaming and others. Viewership across Blue Ant Media's FAST channels increased 395% year over year in 2022 from 175 million to 870 million minutes viewed on average per month.

What are the main benefits of FAST channels, from a business perspective, over traditional linear channels and streaming, namely AVOD? Well, most obviously, FAST is free for



Jamie Schouela

President, Global Channels and Media,
Blue Ant Media

viewers, so it's additive to audiences current offering, whether that's pay TV or SVOD and there's no barrier to entry. All you need is WIFI to access and most services don't even require registration. Because of this free streaming is attracting a broad audience across all demographics. Additionally, FAST channels offer a lean-back viewing experience, a nice change for viewers used to spending time hunting through on-demand services figuring out what they want to watch. From a business perspective, the cost to launch a FAST channel is significantly cheaper than traditional cable channels and as long as you control content rights, they are easy to scale globally. And for advertisers it offers association with premium, brand safe content on a big screen, but with the targetability of digital platforms.

FAST channels have been gaining momentum lately. To what do you attribute their success with viewers, is them being free the main reason?

The free offering might bring viewers to FAST, but we believe that there are a few reasons that have allowed our brands to succeed among 400+ chan-

nels on certain platforms. First, Blue Ant's channels focus on niche genres with clearly defined audiences (for example nature lovers, or fans of ghost stories) and then curate a lineup of premium content that delivers on this focused area. We refresh this content on a regular basis and ensure that the majority of it is exclusive to our channels so viewers can't find these series on other FAST channels in the ecosystem. We also ensure that we have ongoing marketing initiatives and a clear channel name so viewers understand exactly what they'll get as soon as they find us in the guide.

Do you also produce content specifically for FAST channels?

Blue Ant already commissions original series for our pay TV channels in Canada, and our global FAST brands are focused on many of the same genres so we will window the originals into these channels. In certain markets this may be after a pay TV or SVOD play on another platform, especially in the short term as the economics of FAST in many regions are still nascent. However, in certain cases, we'll make our FAST channel

the premiere in a territory, as we did earlier this year when *Love Nature Wildlife ER* launched simultaneously globally on the brand's PayTV channels and its FAST channel in the U.S. In the months ahead, we'll continue to take a market by market approach to determine when we'll bring original series to our free streaming channels.

We're also using our FAST channels to help guide our commissioning decisions by closely monitoring the classic series that viewers are responding to. As the channels build distribution, we're going to continue watching and learning what audiences are consuming, with specific consideration to formats and concepts that can travel well globally.

Is the FAST channels market 'oversaturated' already and how do you make sure Blue Ant channels stay popular?

The FAST landscape is becoming incredibly competitive, especially in the U.S. market, and platforms are becoming much more selective in the new channels that they launch and retain. Blue Ant Media stands out with clear channel offerings that give audiences

exclusive content and proven IP that they love and recognize. For example, this past Fall, Blue Ant acquired the library of TV reno celebrity Mike Holmes as FAST exclusive programming for the Homeful channel. The deal signaled an opportunity to attract audiences with home-focused content they know and love, with an added commitment to commission new Mike Holmes series for the channel. Additionally, Blue Ant entered into a partnership with production company World of Wonder to curate and distribute the Drag Race Universe channel in the US, which offers audiences exclusive access to over a dozen international versions of one of the largest reality franchises in the world - all available for the first time ever in the free streaming ecosystem.

Additionally, to break through the clutter and rise to the top with audiences, we leverage our programming and marketing teams to create monthly themes and stunts. These highly engaging events provide ongoing fresh marketing opportunities for the channels. Great examples are Love Nature's "Love Earth" event in April to celebrate Earth Month or Haunt TV's "Spooktober" timed to Halloween. ■



Mike Holmes



Love Nature Wildlife ER



©ZDF, Svea Pietschmann

The Swarm: A Director's Cut

Interview with director Barbara Eder

The Swarm is undoubtedly one of the main series events of the year 2023. With its spectacular production, thrilling story and strong message about climate change, it is set to conquer the international TV screens after its great premiere in the German-speaking markets this spring.

Director Barbara Eder tells Yako Molhov what it is like to work on such a major project, co-produced and shot in several different countries and languages with the biggest ever budget for a German TV series.



Barbara, *The Swarm* is the most-expensive German TV series to date, with a budget of 40 million euros. How did you come on board the project and what have been the main challenges in directing such a major project?

In order to get on board for such a big project, I had to get the trust of the broadcasters and investors involved. A budget of 40 million euros makes everyone very cautious about each decision. I guess, the fact that I had already successfully directed international shows was one door opener. But I won't deny that all the broadcasters had to agree on me and so it took a lot of meetings and talks about my vision and ideas until I finally got the trust to direct four of eight episodes.

Anything involved with this film project was huge. The amount of broadcasters and producers was huge, the team was huge, we shot in several different languages with a cast from all over the world. We filmed in underwater studios in Brussels and built Norwegian houses in South Italy. And as fascinating as it was, it was also very hard work and involved a lot of preparation. Lots of scenes were very technical, involving special visual effects and computer animated sea creatures. But also scenes on, in

or under water are a challenging by itself. So, with all this said, I guess the biggest challenge was to not get lost in the production process or the technical aspects of filmmaking, but to keep your creative vision as a director.

ZDF, France Télévisions and Rai are co-producing *The Swarm* alongside public broadcasters ORF in Austria and SRF in Switzerland, Scandinavia's Nordic Entertainment Group, and Hulu Japan. Was it difficult working with so many co-producers and did they insist on having their creative input in the project?

I won't lie, of course it is more difficult with more co-producers. And of course they have wishes and want their input heard. But I think, it was quite clear for everybody from the very start that this will only work if all parties involved are working as a team, always aiming at consensus and meeting each other in full respect. And with Frank Doelger on board, who is one of the best producers I had the opportunity to work with, extremely good in communication and mediation, we had a key person who brought all creative inputs together and made it one.

***The Swarm* is ZDF's first series produced in English that was dubbed in**

German for local audiences. You've also directed Netflix's *Barbarians* in which most of the characters spoke classical Latin. Is it more difficult to direct projects which are shot in foreign languages?

Directing in English is something I've done for years, so that wasn't difficult. Also French or Spanish I've done before. But Latin is definitely a challenge when it comes to directing. For *Barbarians* I had to know the meaning of the lines without constantly looking into the script, so I could really follow the actor. And most important, the emotional meaning and build up of the whole scene. So, there's definitely more preparation involved. We had some scenes in Japanese for *The Swarm* where I used the same technique.

Coproductions have become very popular in recent years, with broadcasters and streamers focusing on projects that have international appeal which means additional revenues. Did you have a specific list you made for yourself when directing the series with regards to its 'internationality'?

In terms of nationality we shot in 7 different languages, our cast came from more than 12 countries, we had more than 250 crew members from all



over the world. The story takes place in 12 different countries. It's fascinating.

What are the main themes in the series that will appeal to viewers around the world in your opinion?

The Swarm deals with one of the most pressing matters of our time: Climate Change. The consequences of human behavior on our planet is something we all need to deal with or are affected by: Pandemics, floods, fires, earthquakes, unusual behavior of animals... It's a global fear that comes with it and it goes under your skin.

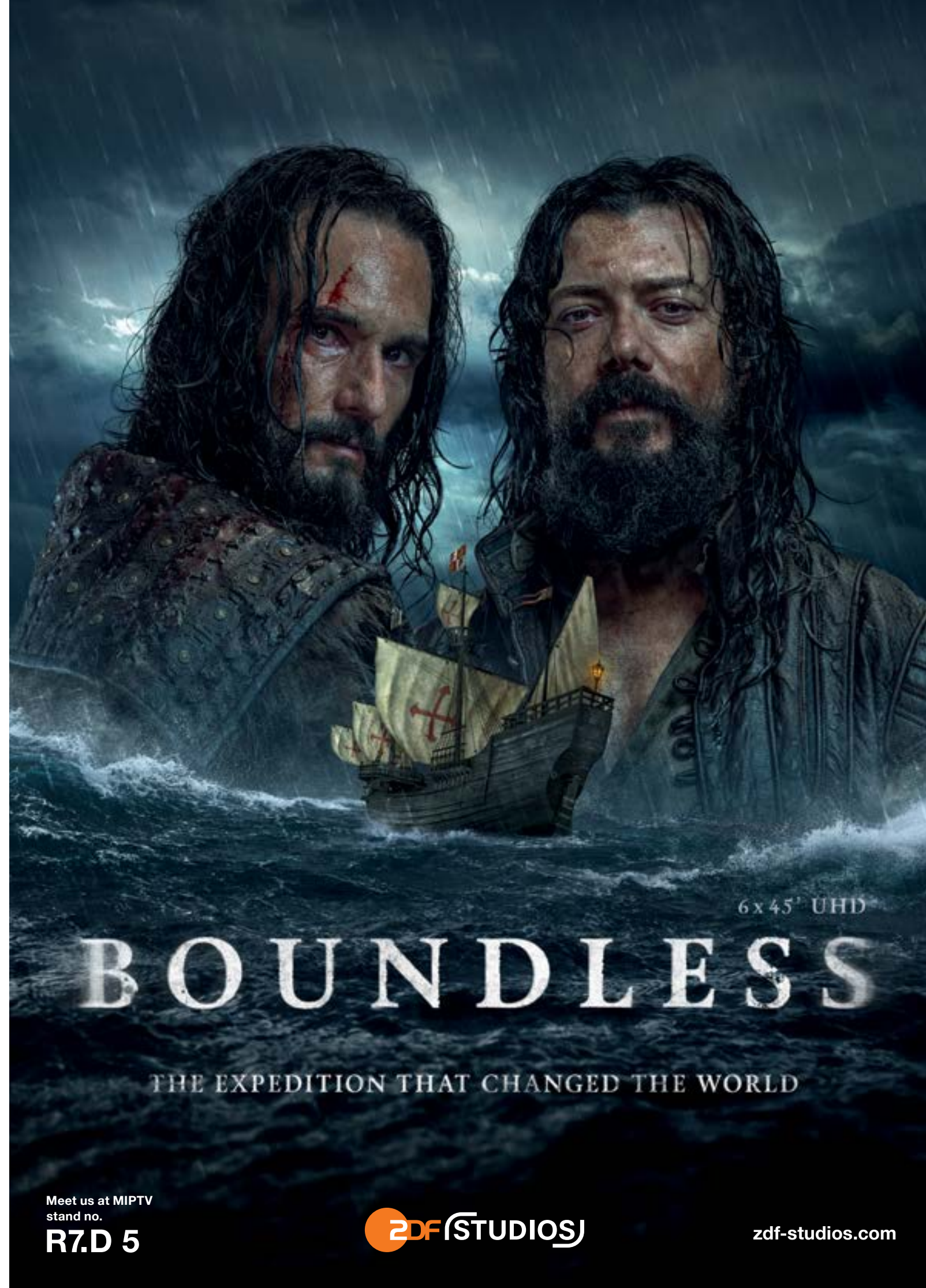
The Swarm is based on Frank Schätzing's bestseller by the same name which was published back in 2004. The main theme of the series is very contemporary and topical in 2023 but did you make many updates in the story and

characters so the series stays more current?

Absolutely. We had to adjust scientific knowledge which wasn't up to date any more. We had scientific advisors who helped us change outdated science. But also the world has changed. Twenty years ago the world wasn't as multinational as it is now. Nowadays you have more women in science. You have more diversity. So, these were things we changed to make the novel modern and close to what we experience in our times.

The Swarm proved a hit with both German and Austrian audiences, with its debut on ZDF and ORF dominating primetime. The series, however, also attracted some criticism, including from Schätzing himself who left the production. What were the main reasons for his decision? I think the adaptation from any novel

for the screen is a highly sensitive matter. One must take into account, that the author of a novel spent hours, weeks, months, sometimes years to create his book. There's so much love for your story that even simple changes can hurt or make you upset. So, it's not so easy to just give it into the hands of others and have them transfer it into a TV show. I think, in our case, the basic vision of the series was clear from the beginning. It was shared by both Schätzing and the producers. The problems were to be found in story details. Certain changes were just very hard to take for the writer which led to his decision of leaving the production. I do believe this is something which happens a lot when adapting a book for the screen but I hope the writer can watch the show more distanced one day and be able to see how great it has turned out. ■



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THE SWARM

A Body That Works

The Stars Talk

A Body That Works recently wrapped up its phenomenal run in Israel delivering record ratings on Keshet 12 on Monday nights. The star-studded series made its international premiere at Series Mania 2023 where it also won the Award for Best Actress shared by Rotem Sela and Gal Malka in the International Panorama competition.

Stanislav Kimchev caught up with co-creators Shira Hadad and Dror Mishani, and actors Rotem Sela, Yehuda Levi and Lior Raz shortly after the awards ceremony for an exclusive interview for TVBIZZ Magazine.

A *Body That Works* delves into many issues: love, jealousy, desire, surrogacy, family relationships, social stratification, class and privilege, ethnicity; etc. What inspired you to create the series, is it based on some real story?

Shira: Ten years ago, almost to the day, my son was born by surrogacy process. So I went through a process that wasn't at all similar to the one in the series – it was much more boring and less dramatic. But I did realize the dramatic potential in this triangle. And I kept thinking about it in the first years of his life, and at a certain point, I started developing an idea for a feature film. I wrote a first draft for the script, but I realized there was scope for a drama with several protagonists. And it was at this point Dror joined. We worked for four years on all sorts of detours, and almost two years before the series was filmed, we sort of settled on this version that we finally wrote that you see here now.

Dror: Shira and I were very good friends for many years, and I went through Shira's surrogacy process with her as a friend. But later on, she was able to convince me there was so much potential in this triangle. And there are so many stories around this and parenthood. What are the prices you are willing to pay to become a parent? This situation really captures that as a dramatic capsule.

Let's talk about the triangle – the three main characters – how do these characters help you explore the subject of parenthood?

Shira: We sort of learnt about Ellie as we wrote about her. She wants

the world to be perfect, she's a control freak – she wants everyone to be according to her idea of how things should be working. The most primal, obvious thing a woman should be able to do is not working for her. And then this sends her into a journey of pain and losing control, of her world, of her emotions and her relationships. I think she blames herself.

Dror: Ido, Ellie's partner, all during the attempts to get pregnant, he was in a way her partner. He was standing by her side, he had to contain her, he had to be her support. Now that they are pregnant, during these nine months, he allows himself to feel his own emotions for the first time, his feelings about being a parent and more. And Chen – we all love her very much – she's a younger woman, she's less accomplished than Ellie and Ido, but she has a feeling that she can be. But something prevented her from accomplishing what she could have accomplished until now. Meeting Ellie, who is so accomplished in certain fields, and Ido, that's made her look at herself and think that maybe she could be where they are.

Shira: Chen is a single mom, she has a 10-year-old child. In a way the reason why she goes into surrogacy is for financial reasons. She can't give him the home that she wants him to have. She wants to build a proper home for her child, but in the process she finds herself caring for someone else's child, while she's not succeeding with her own son. She sort of loses herself along the way. That is one of her main conflicts.

Dror: Chen is looking for someone to rescue her, and when she meets Ido, instantly this is the man who will take care of her. Then he starts to take care of her, she's a complete woman for him – Ellie isn't needed any more. For the first time in Ellie's life, she's left without anyone to help / support her.

Rotem, Yehuda and Lior, you are probably the three most famous actors in Israel right now. What attracted you to *A Body That Works*? What did you think when you first read the script?

Rotem: I was blown away when I read the script for the first time. I thought Ellie played such an important story, the kind of role we don't get to see much on Israeli TV. So, I knew that if I took this role on, it felt a great responsibility to tell her story because it's the story of so many women around the world that are struggling to have kids. So, for me, it was a no brainer. I read it and I was like "Sign me up! I'm in!"

Yehuda: I got into this project two weeks before, because I wasn't supposed to do it – I had a production which was delayed. I knew Shay (the director) – he really, really wanted me to do the part. So, I just jumped into it. The subject matter really interested me. Surrogacy is something that hasn't been dealt with on Israeli TV, and it is a universal subject that is about relationships in the end, and the psychological mindf**k of not having a spontaneous pregnancy. Lots of humans feel if they can't have a pregnancy in a spontaneous way, they're a failure. But there is a way to do it – and this series shows people



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that they don't need not be ashamed about it. In the end, it's about relationships.

Lior: I didn't want to do it in the beginning, I refused. Really. And then I read the scripts. They are amazing. Every day, I'm reading a lot of scripts, not just for me but also for my production company. And when I read the script for this series, I thought it was one of the best scripts ever written. But I didn't know if I could do it, if I'd have time. I was busy shooting a show in New York. And then I met Shira and Dror and Shay, in a coffee shop in Israel and we started talking about the character, and they convinced me – because there is a similarity between me and Tomer in a way. Shira said that every time she wrote this character, she wrote about me. So, it was very easy for them to convince me! And to work with these two amazing actors, the best two actors in Israel, it was a blessing – I really wanted to do it.

Yehuda, in *A Body That Works* you step away from your usual heart-throb characters to play the role of a more buttoned-down, dedicated husband to Rotem Sela. Is this your first time working together?

Yehuda: As you know, Rotem is the biggest star in Israel. She has so many hats, she is so talented, and she hosts so many shows in Israel. We worked with each other a long time ago, and finally, here came the right project, and we became a couple! Because I came on board so late, we needed to connect really quickly. I really wanted to tell the story of Ido, I really to tell his point of view. And we needed to bring their relationship to the table in a really, really speedy way. We had so many emotions and debates while we were shooting. We just “plugged in and played”. Sometimes you have to just take a leap of faith! We had a lot of fun!

Rotem, you are most well-known for your role in the romcom *The Beauty and The Baker*, one of the highest-rated scripted series ever in Israel. How did you prepare for the role of Ellie? Did you do a lot of research?

Rotem: Nowadays, we are surrounded by people who have shared



Rotem and Gal picking up their Best Actress Awards

the same struggles as Ido and Ellie. Most of my best friends at some point have struggled to have babies, to get pregnant. And I have a couple of gay friends who went through the process of surrogacy. So it wasn't new to me. So, when I got Ellie's role, I sat down with some of them and asked me to take me to specific moments, specific emotions and how it really felt. And that was my research.

Rotem, what was it like working with newcomer Gal Malka, who played your surrogate Chen and shared your Best Actress award at Series Mania with you?

Rotem: She's super talented and she's so young. To see her working on set

was an experience for me. For me, at her age, I wasn't able to do half of what she's done.

Yehuda: She has good instincts, and this role was like a glove to her hand. We were all amazed by her. She really stands out in this series and she's a great person.

Rotem: And this is just the beginning for her. There was one scene from the last episode, and I don't want to make a spoiler, but it was super emotional for her. And there was a moment before we started filming, that I saw her crying.

What was it like working with director Shay Capon?

Rotem: Shay is amazing. He is just



Lior Raz

a gift for actors. He's a huge presence for all of us.

Yehuda: He was an actor himself once. So he knows the everything, he knows the actors' gestures. He's deep and philosophical. He whispers to the horses, right? He gives you the right whispers.

Lior, you are one of the most-popular Israeli actors, the creator and star of *Fauda*. In *A Body That Works* you play the role of an arrogant star director trying to write his first book for Ellie's publishing house, who is humbled and upset by Elli's criticism. What was that like for you?

Lior: This series is like real life, you know? Sometimes you write something for years, something you think is amazing - and then people tell you that it's not good at all! It's painful! I had this experience myself with *Fauda*. I wrote it for a long time. I went from broadcaster to broadcaster, and nobody wanted it. I was like “Wow! It's probably a bad idea, it's a bad script.” And I started to believe that the editors, that those people who

were reading my scripts, were better than me. But here, in this series, Ellie was better than my character Tomer, because she helped Tomer improve his book. I find in my work now, when I put my ego aside and I listen to people giving me notes, most of the time they are right. But you have to listen carefully.

This series has been a phenomenal success in Israel. What's that been like for you all?

Dror: What I love about the reaction to the show, is that it almost forces people watching it to take sides. After every episode, my 13-year-old keeps changing her mind – first she's on Ellie's side, then Chen's, then Ido's. It forces you to take a side in the conflict. Normally when Israeli shows are succeeding around the world, they succeed because they show another reality that the British, French viewer shows something that they only know through the news. But this show is very different – these fights are the same fights being fought in Stockholm, London and this is the appeal of this show.

Rotem: I've been getting thousands of messages every day from women that are so happy that we are sharing their stories and their struggles and letting people around them get a better of sense of what they are going through.

What is it about Israeli dramas that makes them so successful?

Lior: Israel is like a start-up nation because of how hard it is to create and produce content. You have to improvise, to make the best of yourself, and to be very precise with what you are doing. Now Israel is a huge hub for talent and talented people. And I think the difference between American writers and Israeli writers, most of the Israeli writers are writing their own stories. And American writers are writing stories about someone else. Shira wrote her own story, this is why it's so good. Because she knows the characters, she knows the pain, she knows everything that's happening. She wrote from her own heart. And the same for me with *Fauda*, I wrote about my life. And I think this why it's been so successful.



ATV Presents a Slate of Proven Hits at MIPTV

Müge Akar, Head of Sales, Europe, Asia & Africa at ATV Distribution, talks to TVBIZZ Magazine about ATV's MIPTV drama slate, fresh international deals and the latest trends on the Turkish TV market.

Müge, what are the main highlights of ATV Distribution's MIPTV slate this year?

Street Birds, *A Little Sunshine*, *The Father* and *For My Family* are the main highlights for MIPTV this year. *Street Birds* is the brand new series which we will be launching at MIPTV. It's centred around five kids who live on the streets and find a baby in a trash can. The story contains an impossible love story and survivorship in a harsh life, and as a consequence, they have become 'Ruthless' adults.

A Little Sunshine, *The Father* and *For My Family* are already familiar titles for our clients but they are still very

strong in terms of new deals and territories.

What have been some of the latest deals for ATV?

We recently licensed *Street Birds* to Bangladesh and Spain. *A Little Sunshine* is another growing title and already licensed to Romania, Spain, Hungary and North Macedonia. In addition, *Broken Wings*, which has been classified as a Golden Classic in our catalog, will be broadcast in French-speaking Africa. In a very short period of time, one of our most popular and thriving series, *Lifeline*, will be launched in Russia. One of our most powerful costume dramas, *The Ottoman* will be

available in Kazakhstan. We are ambitiously continuing to reach out to the territories, and seeing the explosive growth of our beloved Turkish Dramas motivates us even more.

Which are the most important territories for ATV and will you be looking for partners from new territories at MIPTV?

Our primary goal is to always keep updated, to be willing to explore fresh territories and to demonstrate to the audience our high-quality series. ATV's golden dramas have powerful coming-out stories and well-known and talented casts, and people from all over the world are constantly contact-

ing us, and we continue to do our best to balance this demand. We always update our customer data and keep the territories up to date on our Turkish Dramas. Our strategies are primarily focused on expanding into more mainland Europe, Asian and African territories.

How many new projects are currently in development at ATV?

The Ottoman is airing the 4th season in primetime and the beloved series is always the leading number one series of its day we are happy with the results of the success of Asia, Africa, and Europe territories and also in Turkey. The audience is always excited for the next episode. *A Little Sunshine* is airing on the screens with its tender and unique story with its well-known cast and strong female leads. *For My Family* which is our Saturday primetime favorite remains its success and affection through screens in both licensed territories and Turkey too. And of course, our newest series *Street Birds* keeps amazing the audience with its unique Istanbul streets scenes and the remarkable acting skills of our well-known actor and actresses. The series results are quite satisfying for us and we are very happy with the outcome.

How has the recent earthquake affected the production and distribution market in Türkiye?

We had gone through a devastating period and unfortunately many lives were lost. During the national mourning period we stopped shooting and all of our cast and crew went to the affected area to help the people and worked together with the national aid organizations. After a certain time we are back to our normal schedule.

What are the most important trends in the Turkish TV series market this year?

Drama, family dramas, and romantic dramas are the most remarkable and effective trends right now. People are more demanding and need real-life content right now. Including in costume drama series, viewers can connect to the uniqueness of the characters in addition to their genuine and deep character backgrounds. Our drama themes are distinctive and capable of demonstrating the world's honesty and integrity in life. ■



For my Family

EBU: Keyword Transformation

Interview with EBU Deputy DG Jean Philip De Tender

The media world is changing fast and staying united and working in cohesion is what helps the EBU to have a leading role in the information and content space on TV, radio and online.

Jean Philip De Tender, Deputy Director General and Director of Media at the EBU, answered Yako Molhov's questions about the EBU's role, top priorities and the organization's viewpoint on issues concerning public service media, freedom of speech, the war in Ukraine, the Eurovision Song Contest and recent media industry developments.

Jean Philip, let's start this interview with some details on the EBU. What is its role as representative of public media broadcasters in Europe?

The EBU is the world's leading alliance of public service media (PSM). Together our Members reach audiences of more than one billion people worldwide, broadcasting in almost 160 languages! The EBU's purpose is to unite, inspire and advocate for our Members to tell the stories that matter most to all audiences. We campaign for a sustainable future for PSM, facilitate access for our Members to world-class

content, including news, sport and music, and build on our founding ethos of solidarity and cooperation to create a center for learning and sharing. Ultimately our vision is for PSM to continue to be the most creative, trusted, and engaging media globally, now and crucially, for future generations.

Indeed, the EBU is a vast, complex organization, with 112 member organizations from 56 countries. What are your main goals this year?

We all have one common goal: transformation. We need to be agile organizations and adapt to the diverse

consumption needs of our different audiences. We have a long-standing tradition in producing innovative, distinctive, trusted content; we now must ensure that across platforms we have the broadest possible reach. I see huge investments in Members' own platforms, which they use alongside third-party platforms. Distribution closely ties in with this topic and we are working with Members to support their distribution strategies across all platforms, own and third-party. This involves liaising directly with technology companies to support Member needs and positioning.



EBU Newsroom

Jean Philip De Tender

is Deputy Director General, Director of Media at the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). He joined the EBU in 2015 from Belgian broadcaster VRT, where he was Director of Television. As Director of EBU Media, De Tender oversees a significant service portfolio across News, Music, Radio, TV, Young Audiences, Digital and Live

Events, as well as policy areas such as Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) and relationship building with the major tech giants. In July 2021, he assumed the additional role of EBU Deputy DG to support EBU DG Noel Curran, with a focus on strategy development and implementation, and an increased emphasis on knowledge exchange.



Cross-collaboration on content is also important. We are creating more regional collaborations so that Members can work together in a way that accommodates the specific tastes and needs of regional audiences while giving those audiences access to world-class programming. We have a tradition in supporting and promoting members locally, whether it is supporting them making the case to their local stakeholders, or in negotiating legislation for the benefit of PSM.

COVID is hopefully gone but last year the war in Ukraine shook the

world. What is EBU's role in covering the conflict and helping the people of Ukraine? What are the initiatives between EBU members?

This is an interesting question as it was very much front of mind with the recent one-year anniversary on February 24. Of course, from the start of the conflict, PSM have been integral to the provision of trusted news and information to citizens both in Ukraine and across the continent. I cannot overstate the importance of the accessibility of trusted, reliable information in times of conflict. We supported Members in sharing news reports and verified eye-witness coverage to citi-

zens in Ukraine, and people who had been – and continue to be – displaced. But information is just a part of it. Music plays a huge role in showing solidarity. We worked with our Members to organize music exchanges and fund-raising concerts, with additional initiatives including live vigils, special performances of Ukrainian music and regular broadcasts of the Ukrainian national anthem.

Behind the scenes, the EBU coordinated technical support and vital satellite equipment for UA:PBC, ensuring that, with assistance from Members, PSM could continue to broadcast and reach Ukrainian citizens.

For the anniversary, there has been extensive coverage across our Membership reflecting on how lives have been irrefutably changed. There are too many examples to detail here, but I must mention UA:PBC, our Ukrainian Member, who, in the most challenging circumstances imaginable, has covered not only the progression of the war but related issues such as the refugee crisis, the role of volunteers in war zones, the work of war correspondents, and the impact on Ukrainian culture and music.

Lately there has been a series of issues with PSBs in Central and Eastern Europe, with some of them accused of being politically biased and serving the ruling parties in their respective countries. How are those issues addressed within the EBU?

Independence is a core value of PSM. The EBU has always sought to champion freedom of expression and a pluralism of viewpoints. Sometimes, Members can come under pressure from politicians who want them to adopt a particular line or report in a way more favorable to them. Whilst the EBU is not an international organization or regulator supervising PSM services at the national level, where there is evidence of political interference that undermines our fundamental principles, we work together as an association of public broadcasters to help and guide those specific Members. That might mean lobbying government and civil society for better and more robust legal frameworks to safeguard independence, supporting our Members in protecting their editorial independence or offering training, best practice and peer-to-peer reviews.

What is the main difference between state media and public media? Do you have concerns that some of the broadcasters in CEE are actually funded directly by the state budgets?

State media nearly always exist in countries where there are low levels of press freedom, whereas public media exists in countries with high levels of press freedom. Both public media and private broadcasters can be recognized for their editorial independence,



EBU building from above

whereas state media are funded and managed by the government of its respective country. Which in effect creates conditions for bias while lacking the mechanisms to hold power to account.

Even though a public media outlet might depend on government budget allocations and/or commercial revenue, such as from advertisements or sponsorship, their mandate is ideally one of independence and objectivity, with a distinct separation between editorial policies and government or private interests.

Of course, the clue is in the word ‘public’ – public funding for public media creates an important link with the public, which leads to greater independence, transparency, accountability and to a diversity of views. In countries where populist governments are increasing in traction and disinformation and culture wars flourish, there are clearly concerns that the mandate of public media is under threat – and we share these concerns. At the EBU, we address these threats directly by speaking out where we see media freedoms being undermined.

Ultimately our vision is for PSM to continue to be the most creative, trusted, and engaging media globally

One of the major activities of EBU is news exchange. With all this propaganda coming out of Russia do you monitor how your members in different territories cover the war in Ukraine and also other international issues?

The Eurovision News Exchange is a unique network bringing together European public service media newsrooms from across 50 countries. We provide Members with round-the-clock access to live and edited global news stories, as well as verification and clearance of social media content, digital news recommendations and vital monitoring tools. The war in Ukraine – and the need to turnaround fast and accurate news and eye-witness content – has shown how crucial this network is.

We also have a powerful sense of community. Our Member journalists and newsrooms don’t just exchange stories, they share ideas and solutions to common challenges. Arising out of that community was a project that we piloted a couple of years ago now. A European Perspective is a collaborative, innovative news service that enables audiences to access

trusted content from other countries through a curated online feed, thanks to cutting-edge online tools that overcome language barriers and offer audiences content in their own language. In a world where audiences are overwhelmed by an avalanche of information that has no editorial or ethical guardrails, it is vital to have these beacons of trust and integrity. Fifteen media organizations now contribute to this pan-European networked newsroom.

It is worth mentioning here that our investment in investigative journalism – the EBU Investigative Journalism Network that brings together more than 100 reporters from across our Membership – has broken ground on several collaborative projects, including a chilling, impactful investigation into Ukraine’s missing children, leading to an arrest warrant for Putin by the International Criminal Court.

The EBU’s highest-profile production is the Eurovision Song Contest. Ukraine won last year but because of the war, the event will be held in the UK. What are the main challenges in organizing the event

this year and what surprises have you prepared for the international viewers?

The main challenges this year have been naturally the very different circumstances for organizing the Eurovision Song Contest. Work normally begins in the early summer on preparing for the following year’s event and of course we spent many months last year establishing a viable host broadcaster for 2023 because regrettably we could not produce the shows in Ukraine. This required a lot of discussions between ourselves, UA:PBC and this year’s host broadcaster, the BBC. Because of those discussions some time was lost during the early planning period to establish a host city, core production team etc.

The BBC, however, has done an incredible job in making up that time and we are confident that the cooperation between them and UA:PBC, as well as the other 35 participating broadcasters, will produce three spectacular and very unique shows in May. These will celebrate and spotlight the culture and music of our winning country Ukraine but also showcase the talent and creativity of the United Kingdom. The combination of the two nations will be reflected on screen and this year’s event promises to be extra special as a result.

What is your opinion on the growing number of TV market events? Do you have discussions within the EBU which events to attend? Do you believe the time has come for setting up a special body, made up of all players involved, which would help navigate this already busy area more effectively?

There is a lot happening in the media industry, so it comes as no surprise that many events on specific topics are being organized. It’s not the role of the EBU to regulate the event market. We have a tradition of organizing closed events for our Members, where PSM peers can exchange views, knowledge and insights. If we come to the market with public industry events, such as our Sustainability Summit and Data Technology Seminar, we want to be best in class. We are delighted to relaunch News Xchange, the leading industry event for news leaders, in Dublin this year. ■

The Marketing Challenge

Interview with ITV Studios CMO Adrian Last

This year, the Series Mania Forum put the spotlight on the challenge of marketing content in a competitive environment where a huge number of shows get released every week which creates a need for even greater focus on how these shows are being presented to business partners and viewers alike. After one of the panels dedicated to this topic, ITV Studios Chief Marketing Officer Adrian Last talked with Stanislav Kimchev about how his company is dealing with this extremely important challenge for every content creator.

Adrian, as the Chief Marketing Officer of ITV Studios, what would you say are the key challenges nowadays for marketing executives in the industry?

We're in a world where there's a huge amount of content in terms of what we can see on the TV, and that's a good thing for everybody. That comes with its challenges, which is how can you make sure that the brilliant shows that we work with producers on, are seen by consumers? And that's the challenge for marketers now. Within ITV Studios, we are very lucky because we've got 60 labels that are producing TV shows around the world in 13 countries. We've got a big catalog of shows.

The complexity and the difficulty is finding creative ways to make sure that our producers and their shows are noticed. So, what I'm aiming for as CMO is to make ITV Studios the "go to" place for buyers and commissioners of TV content, for new producers who might want to come and work with us, for independent producers that want their drama represented by our distribution business. So, if I can deliver a year where we've got some really creative ideas and things that we're noticed for, and we've built and grown our brand around the world, then that's a good thing.

Do you think there is such a thing as too much content? What is your strategy for ITV Studios content to stand out both when working with buyers and when promoting formats to the viewers?

There's probably three things in that. The answer to the question "Is there too much content?" is no. There can

never be too much content because everybody loves watching TV and we all watch different shows in different ways. That just gives us, as a consumer, a lot of choice. I think from an ITV Studios perspective as a producer and distributor of shows and also for building brands as well, it's about really good partnerships between us as a sales business, our sales team and the buyers. It's about ideas and things that we do through the year as a Studio that makes us stand out versus everybody else. A good example of that is the ITV Studios Festivals.

What are the most important elements of a successful marketing campaign in the TV industry?

I think there's two parts to this. There's B2B and there's the direct-to-consumer piece. So on the B2B side, again, picking up the point about what we do with ITV Studios Festivals - it's finding ways to connect with buyers and also with the global industry. The Festivals that we run every year in March as part of the London TV Screenings have become a must-attend event. That's the real destination where we can show the latest and best formats, drama and non-scripted content. We also get really good engagement and attendees with our online sessions, that's B2B too.

And then there's the B2C piece, which is about marketers using all the media and channels that we've got available, to make shows stand out, to get all of us, as consumers, to watch these great dramas, these great factual shows, entertainment shows and so on. And that's about mass reach campaigns. A channel like ITV1

in the UK where we have a unique position, where as a brand, I can reach a large number of people with advertising than I can anywhere else on UK television. But it's also about how we use things like data to deliver an increasingly personalized approach to marketing.

From both a producer's perspective and a buyer's perspective, the more we can know about the global industry and, local countries, what's popular, what's working, where are the opportunities, how do we work together with partners in each market, basically, to understand their audiences, to understand their challenges, to spot where there are opportunities to reach consumers together. That's where our Global Insights team play an important role. It's about providing as much information and insight as possible about those trends and about how programs are performing in key markets across the world.

What are your main objectives for this year in terms of ITV Studios marketing?

It goes back to my earlier point about making ITV Studios the number one place that the industry wants to come to find out about new shows as a buyer and commissioner, to work with us in terms of producers and producing content, or actually to come and work with us as a colleague. Because when you work for ITV Studios, you've got the freedom to deliver the unexpected every day. That's an exciting thing. It's an incredibly creative place here at ITV Studios. My job is to represent that and to bring that vision to life. In marketing, we are always about finding creative ways of bringing TV



shows to our buyers and to the industry and bringing brand experiences like ITVS Festivals or our award-winning presence at MIPCOM. Things that are going to surprise and delight audiences is absolutely fundamental to what we do.

You took part here at Series Mania in a panel about relationships with producers. What can be improved in this respect?

I think what's key to marketing working with producers is about three things. The first thing is about the relationship. You've got to build

a really good relationship with the producer and with the production team, so that they understand what we're trying to get to, and we've got a shared goal. The shared goal is obviously about developing the best possible marketing campaign end to end from pitch to when it goes on air. The second point is about integrity and creativity, and we absolutely must respect that. Certainly, on dramas and on any TV show, it really is often a much-treasured piece of work. It has often taken years to get to the point of being commissioned and produced. So, marketers have

to remember that this is a passion for the people working on it, and we have to respect that creativity and work with it. And the third thing is about dialogue; keeping a healthy, good dialogue with producers is key. Because we're not always going to agree on creative direction in terms of key art and promos and that sort of thing. That's okay. We can disagree, but you need to have the other two things in place so that it doesn't turn into something which is a battle over marketing materials - the two absolutely must work in harmony together. ■

Q1
TRENDING
STORIES
ON TVBIZZ

These are the most
read news stories on
TVBIZZ from January
to March 2023.

www.tvbizz.net

PROGRAMMING



Love Match: new dating
series set for Channel 4

Channel 4 have commissioned a new dating series, from Workerbee Productions, who also produced *The Bridge* for Channel 4. The new series, with the title *Love Match*, is seeking “outgoing singles who are ready to find true love in an experience full of surprises”. Applicants will “need to be available for approximately 8 continuous weeks of filming taking place on dates to be confirmed in 2023”. A teaser shares: “A new relationship TV series for a major British broadcaster which will attempt to find unlucky-in-love singles an ideal partner.”



Real Time preps a new
dating show

Real Time will be airing a new dating show under the title *Mar D'Amore (Sea of Love)*. As the name suggests, the production was shot on board of a cruise ship which also sponsors the show. This will be an interview program in which the interviewer - the writer Mapi Danna, wife of Claudio Cecchetti - will try to tell the various facets of a sentimental relationship by interrogating men and women met on a cruise ship. Jumpcutmedia is responsible for the production.



Prime Video reboots
Takeshi's Castle in Spain

Amazon Prime Video has commissioned a reboot of the Spanish version of *Takeshi's Castle* which will be produced by Encofrados Encofrasa. The premiere of the show has been set for 2023. The comedians and scriptwriters Jorge Ponce and Javier Valera will be the executive producers of the Spanish version, whose first edition will consist of eight installments. The show first aired in Spain under the title *Humor Amarillo (Yellow Humor)* on Telecinco in the early 90s. In 2006, it was briefly revived by Cuatro, also part of Mediaset Spain.

RATINGS



16 Weeks of Hell
returns well

TVNorge launched the second season of *16 Weeks of Hell* on Monday. So far, 192.000 people have seen the first episode which is slightly higher than the season 1 premiere (187.000).



DNA Singers starts
with nearly a million
viewers

RTL4's new music show *DNA Singers* got off to a good start last night. 996.000 people watched the premiere resulting in 19% share in the 20.30-22.00 slot in the 6+ demo. In the format, every episode features three unknown singers who are related to a well-known artist. The panels, led by Jaap Reesema and Jeroen van Koningsbrugge, have to guess who the candidates are related to. NPO1 once again topped the day with *The Smartest Person* - 2.085.000 and 37.4% share.



Good start for TVI's
new reality

A Ex-periencia made its debut on TVI on Sunday getting around 900.000 viewers and 19.5% share. The first part of the show had 935.100 viewers and 9.9/18.9% share, and the second one - 824.000 and 8.7/20.4% share. The first daily episode on Monday got 791.800 viewers and 8.4/16.7% share for the second position in the access slot. RTP1 led with 942.200 and 9.9/20% share for *The Price is Right*. SIC's *Farmer Wants a Wife* had 727.200 and 7.7/15.7% share.

M&A/FINANCIALS



Former SBS6 boss says
John de Mol now has three
options for Talpa

Dutch media are again busy analyzing “the situation” at Talpa after “John de Mol's exit plan” with the merger with RTL failed. Commenting for *Financieel Dagblad*, former SBS6 chief Fons van Westerloo said that De Mol has three options: sale or cooperation with another party, pull out the wallet and make acquisitions or develop own streaming service. However, in his opinion, Talpa's acquisitions have not been so successful and a streaming service is unsustainable in the current Dutch market, so “My prediction is that SBS will be put back on the market. There is always a buyer for media. Many parties find media ‘juicy’.”

Mediaset Spain reportedly
planning a wave of mass
layoffs

Bad times are coming for Mediaset Spain. Paolo Vasile's departure and the relocation of Borja Prado in Fuencarral have become synonymous with forced changes that will have a direct impact on the staff. According to unofficial sources, the company is planning ‘a wave of mass layoffs’. The departures will take place in the upcoming weeks and will bring along much harsher and more restrictive conditions for the employees. In fact, in anticipation of the expected ‘wave’ of dismissals, Silvia Gambarte, one of the heads of the CGT union, which is a majority at Mediaset, recently filed her resignation.

TV 2 profit down with 400
million despite record
revenue

Egmont presented its figures for last year and they show that the profit of TV 2 Norway fell with NOK 426 million - from NOK 503 million in 2021 to last year's NOK 77 million as a result of several TV conflicts with the distributors and heavy editorial investments, particularly related to the online venture TV2.no. The turnover for TV 2 increased to NOK 6.61 billion, which is a record for TV 2. This was a growth of a whopping NOK 336 million. Egmont explained this with increased subscription sales for TV 2 Play and the full consolidation of RiksTV. The company also said TV 2 Play is now the biggest Norwegian streamer with 1.2 million clients.

APPOINTMENTS



WBITVP France names
development chief

Warner Bros. International Television Production France (WBITVP France) today announced the appointment of Marc-Antoine Cl  ret as Director of Development in France. In this position, his mission will be to develop adaptations of the group's catalog of formats, but also the creation of new programs. Cl  ret will report to Bruno Henriquet, President WBITVP France. Before joining Warner, Cl  ret was Director of Creation and Development at WeMake. Prior to that, he was Head of Creation and Development and later Director of Creation and Development at El  phant.



Marc Pos leaves IDTV

Marc Pos, owner of POSVIDEO and Chief Executive at IDTV, announced that he will exit the management of IDTV on February 1. “The last adventure with POSVIDEO and in a later phase with IDTV is now over for me. My company will be merged into IDTV. It's a wrap. And now I'm making that decision again to take another turn. The head will not stand still and so there will be something new. Because innovation is what drives me. That new road is the one I don't know yet...” - he said. Michel Nillesen, Managing Director, will continue to lead IDTV together with Jasper Hoogendoorn, Creative Director.

Banijay confirms changes in
Mastiff executive team

Banijay today announces Mastiff Denmark, part of Banijay Nordic, has appointed Cornelius Moulvad as COO and Louise Runge Erichsen as Head of Reality, with both roles reporting to Chief Executive Officer Kristian Farcin-Leth. TVBIZZ reported the news first two weeks ago. Moulvad joins Mastiff TV's management team from creative agency Splay One where he was the Finance and Production Manager. Moulvad has also worked as a Business Consultant at Flying Tiger Copenhagen and was a Production Manager at Mastiff TV for several years gaining extensive knowledge of the company and its slate.

DISTRIBUTION



Nippon TV heads to
MIP with two new titles
- one scripted and one
unscripted format

Having captured the Annual Individual Viewer Ratings Triple Crown title for the 12th consecutive year in 2022, currently celebrating its 70th Anniversary, Nippon TV, announced the company will head to this year's MIPTV with a new scripted format, *Rebooting* (60-minute episodes) and a new unscripted format, *Doki Doki Video* (30-180-minute episodes). The announcement was made today by Mikiko Nishiyama, EVP of International Business Development, Nippon TV.

Taskmaster moves
from SVT to TV4

SVT has lost the rights to B  st i test, the local version of *Taskmaster*, Nyhetsmorgon reports. SVT's Anton Glanzelius commented: “We've known about this for a while, so we've already ordered two new show titles.” SVT's culture news also reported that SVT could not afford the licensing rights from Avalon which were too expensive for the pubcaster. Thus, the show's run on SVT will end after seven seasons. It will premiere on TV4 in spring 2024.

French adaptation for
The Big Job Switch

Be-Entertainment announced that following the commission by Vox in Germany, one of the commercial broadcasters in France has now confirmed a local adaptation of the life-changing social experiment *The Big Job Switch*, to be produced by ITV Studios France. In its home territory Belgium, a second season is currently in production for VTM. Options have been confirmed in a range of other territories, including Spain and Scandinavia. On *The Big Job Switch*, five individuals resign from their jobs, without knowing what lies ahead. All they do know is that a group of experts will go in search for the ideal job for each of them.

ADVERTISING



TV ad spend in Spain grew
by 5.1% in November

The month of November brought really good news for the Spanish ad market. According to InfoAdex, it grew by 7.3% compared to the same period of 2021 to reach 578 million euros. TV remains the second media with the highest collection from advertising, after digital. Thus, TV concentrates ad investments of 191.8 million euros, representing a growth of 5.1% compared to the 182.5 million euros in 2021. Digital, which occupied the top position by the volume of ad investments during the month of November has recorded a growth of 7.3%, generating 252.8 million euros. Social media investments grew by 10.1%, reaching 66.8 million euros.

No ad alliance between
Talpa and Mediahuis

A Talpa Network rep confirmed that the dropped merger with RTL Netherlands will also mean that there will be no ad alliance with Mediahuis which was announced on January 13. The idea was that Mediahuis, publisher of *De Telegraaf* and NRC, among others, would compete with local and international players with commercial breaks on commercial TV channels such as SBS6. This would create a better distribution in the Dutch advertising market for television.

Influencers advertising
on social media will be
treated the same way
as traditional media

Influencers, who advertise on the social networks will be subject to the same rules as traditional media, French Minister of Economy Bruno Le Maire informed on Monday. They must ‘be subject to the same rules, which are valid for radio and TV. For example, when you have a placement of alcohol or other products, the legal notices should appear on the websites of influencers, which isn't the case today’, he explained. ‘We would also like to give a status to these influencers so that they are better protected,’ added the Minister, who also wants ‘to strengthen mechanisms to ensure that the Internet does not turn into the Wild West’.

DIGITAL



SIC launches FAST
channel on own
streamer

SIC Novelas is the name of the FAST channel which will premiere on SIC's own streaming service OPTO this week. As the title suggests, the channel will be airing some of SIC's biggest telenovela hits. Francisco Pedro Balsem  o, CEO of Grupo Impresa, noted that this will be the first digital linear TV channel in Portugal.

Negotiations on digital
tax put on hold for now

Negotiations at the OECD for a tax on digital giants have stalled due to opposition from several countries - the US, Saudi Arabia and India. ‘We'll plead for a breakthrough of the situation but chances of success are slim’, French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire stated at a press briefing. He recalled that France had already implemented taxation of the large digital companies at the national level which ‘brings in nearly 700 million euros per year’. The taxation of digital giants is one of the two pillars of the agreement reached at the OECD to lay the foundations for fair competition at the global level in terms of corporate taxation.

Who is cashing in
on TikTok's growing
popularity in the
Middle East?

With more than 100,000 influencers active on TikTok globally in 2020, according to Statista, the short-form video app has increasingly positioned itself as a potentially lucrative social media platform for content creators. Creators often describe the app's editing capabilities and binge-worthy content style as especially appealing, luring them away from other popular platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Along with this shift in platforms, there has also been a move away from the use of the word “influencer,” to be replaced by “creator.”



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