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NATPE GLOBAL 2024

In the Air Tonight:  
The Rebranding of ESPN's  
**MONDAY NIGHT  
FOOTBALL**



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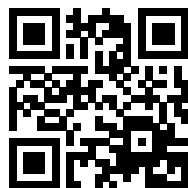
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PUBLISHERS  
TVBIZZ Magazine is owned  
by TVBIZZ Group and  
published for all major  
international TV markets.  
TVBIZZ Group owns and  
operates CEETV  
([www.ceetv.net](http://www.ceetv.net)) and  
TVBIZZ ([www.tvbizz.net](http://www.tvbizz.net)).  
TVBIZZ Magazine is  
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# From Miami to the World



**I**t has been almost four years since our last issue appeared here in Miami, for NATPE. During that time a lot of things changed in the industry, and NATPE changed as well, with a new ownership, new location in Miami and a new concept for the event under the new NATPE Global brand. Following the triumphant comeback in Budapest, it is now Miami's turn to show that NATPE is as vibrant and relevant for the industry as the first major internation-

al event of the year setting up the agenda for 2024. The topics that will be discussed are too many to mention but the prevailing theme will be how new technologies and innovative concepts can help drive the entertainment business further.

TVBIZZ Magazine will also contribute to the talking points with a focus on inspiring creativity, diversity, innovation and pioneering visions. Enjoy your reading!

*The TVBIZZ Magazine Team*



Global SVOD subscribers by platform in 2029 (million)



## SVOD subscriptions to grow by 321 million

Global SVOD subscriptions will increase by 321 million between 2023 and 2029 to reach 1.79 billion – showing continued growth, Digital TV Research estimates. The US will add 30 million subscriptions, following by Brazil (up by 23 million) and India (27 million). Six US-based platforms will have 946 million SVOD subscribers by 2029, up from 751 million in 2023. These platforms will collectively increase their subscriber bases by 196 million. Netflix will remain the largest single platform, adding 44 million subscribers between 2023 and 2029 to take its total to 298 million. Disney+ will have more than 100 million subscribers fewer than Netflix.



## After The Telegraph, RedBird IM to buy All3Media as well?

The Abu Dhabi-backed investment group that has struck a deal to buy The Telegraph is close to securing a £1bn-plus takeover of TV giant All3Media. According to the Financial Times, the investor is close to starting exclusive talks with owners Warner Bros. Discovery and Liberty Global. Other bidders also included Banijay, Sony, Goldman Sachs, Peter Chernin's North Road Company and ITV. All3Media reported revenues of more than £1bn and profits of more than £100m in 2022.



## Disney pays \$8.61 billion to Comcast for Hulu stake

Comcast President Mike Cavanagh, speaking at the UBS investor conference, confirmed that his company got a \$8.61 billion check from Disney for its 33% stake in Hulu, but there is an ongoing evaluation of the value of the streamer which could mean more cash for Comcast. “We expect, and certainly hope to get more than that once the process ends. But it's really just the beginning,” Cavanagh noted. He also confirmed that Peacock has reached a new milestone with 30 million paid subscribers.



## U.S. TV ad spending to drop 5.1% to \$52.3 billion in 2024

GroupM expects U.S. TV ad spending to fall 5.1% to \$52.3 billion in 2024, excluding political ad spending, following a 5.2% decline in 2023. Traditional TV spending is seen dropping 10.7 to \$45.7 billion, while spending on connected TV advertising will grow by 14.8% to \$16.6 billion in 2024, getting a 26.6% share of the TV ad spend.

## Lionsgate closes acquisition of global content platform eOne

Lionsgate announced that it has closed its acquisition of the global entertainment platform Entertainment One from Hasbro. Lionsgate acquired eOne for a purchase price of \$375 million in cash, subject to certain purchase price adjustments, plus the assumption of production financing loans. The acquisition adds 6,500 film and television titles to Lionsgate's library expands its presence in Canada and the UK, among others. Earlier, Lionsgate confirmed that the Studio Business, comprising its Television Studio and Motion Picture Group segments will be combined with Screaming Eagle Acquisition Corp. to launch Lionsgate Studios Corp.

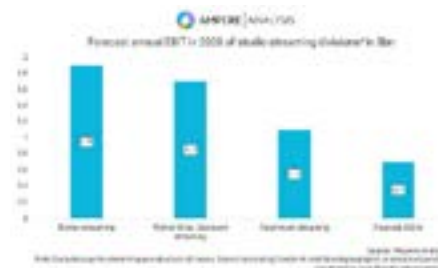
## EU reaches a deal on the world's first comprehensive AI rules

European Union negotiators clinched a deal on the world's first comprehensive artificial intelligence rules, paving the way for legal oversight of technology used in popular generative AI services like ChatGPT that has promised to transform everyday life and spurred warnings of existential dangers to humanity, AP reported. Negotiators from the European Parliament and the bloc's 27 member countries overcame big differences on controversial points including generative AI and police use of facial recognition surveillance to sign a tentative political agreement for the Artificial Intelligence Act.



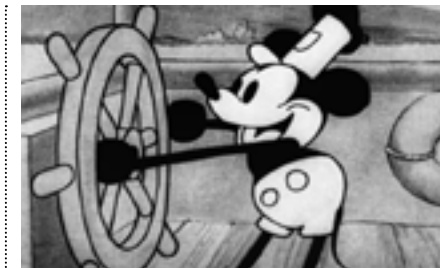
## General Hospital celebrates 60 years on air

ABC's Emmy Award-winning daytime drama General Hospital celebrated its milestone 60th anniversary with a primetime special, General Hospital: 60 Years of Stars and Storytelling, which aired on January 4 on ABC. The television event featured fan-favorite cast members from throughout the years as they pull back the curtain on six decades in Port Charles, including behind-the-scenes moments, bloopers, a special fan tribute and more exciting surprises honoring the series' legacy. General Hospital is the longest-running U.S. scripted drama.



## Ampere: All major studio streaming divisions will be profitable within 18 months

A significant turnaround for studio direct streaming is just around the corner with all major studio streaming divisions (\*excluding sports operations) set to turn a consistent profit within 18 months, the latest research from Ampere Analysis suggests. Ampere predicts that Disney is likely to get there first, as early as calendar Q1 2024. Warner Bros. Discovery will be a close second, reaching consistent profitability by calendar Q3 2024 with both Paramount and NBCU not far behind, achieving the goal by Q1 2025.



## Mickey Mouse is now public domain

The first Mickey Mouse starring cartoon *Steamboat Willie* was released by Walt Disney in November 1928. Since then, Disney has fought to keep the copyright to its most famous character as long as possible. The rights were initially set to expire in 1984 but thanks to lobbying the company managed to extend those to life of the author plus 70 years for a maximum of 95 years. Thus, this January the Disney copyright expired officially and Mickey Mouse is now officially in the public domain in the U.S. but still protected in other countries.



## U.S. cable TV subscriber numbers drop to 1984 levels

Cable TV continued to see its subscriber numbers fall in 2023, according to a report from MoffettNathanson: only 34 million Americans subscribe to cable TV in the third quarter of 2023. This is the lowest number since 1984. The peak in subscriber numbers was reached in 2002 at 67 million. Satellite services, like DIRECTV and DISH, have also seen subscriber numbers drop from a peak of 24 million in 2014 to 15 million at the end of the third quarter 2023.



## Warner Bros Discovery, Paramount will be 'worse off' together – analysts

Warner Bros Discovery and Paramount Global are likely to be “worse off” together as a merger will leave them billions deeper in debt and saddled with dying traditional television assets, according to Wall Street analysts quoted by Reuters. Shares of both companies dropped on news in late December that their CEOs had met to discuss a potential deal. The merger will create what analysts said would be the largest movie studio in Hollywood and a streaming business with the third-highest U.S. subscribers. The firms together will also account for up to 40% of total time viewed on traditional TV. WBD's current debt stands at around \$45 billion and that of Paramount is about \$15 billion.



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# In the Air Tonight: The Rebranding of ESPN's MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

by Georgi R. Chakarov

There are not so many songs in the history of pop music that have turned into true stadium anthems and continue to be played in arenas all over the world long after they first became hits. Being a former radio guy, I could probably come up with about a dozen of such titles, but for today's regular sports fans that number would be even smaller. Nowadays, almost every major sports event tries to come up with its own vision and sound for marketing purposes; something that could stick in the minds of people and become associated as "that

one thing" lighting up the spirit of the game. Very few of these efforts have been truly successful.

Most likely, Phil Collins never thought of his 1981 song *In the Air Tonight* as one that could ever turn into a stadium anthem. In a Rolling Stone interview from 2016, he says: "I wrote the lyrics spontaneously. I'm not quite sure what the song is about, but there's a lot of anger, a lot of despair and a lot of frustration." Certainly, this description is the absolute opposite to what sports anthems are about – winning, joy, triumph. However, the song's contempla-

tive, soul-searching lyrics and the build-up to that famous hard-hitting drum roll have turned it into an all-time favorite pre-game tune for the NFL teams. In an ESPN piece from 2021 about the song's 40th anniversary and its impact on the players, two-time Super Bowl champion Von Miller shares: "To make it to any level of professional sports there is going to be some type of adversity that you will have to overcome, and that's what this song reminds me of, for sure." Still, *In the Air Tonight* was not among the stadium hits at the time but served more as an additional

motivation and inspiration for the players ahead of a tough game.

Last year, the song got a new rendition featuring country star Chris Stapleton in collaboration with hip-hop legend Snoop Dogg and drummer Cindy Blackman Santana by ESPN, creating a new Monday Night Football anthem – the tune that plays at the start of every game telecast to get viewers "in the mood". That cover, driven not only by the trademark drums of the original, but also by Stapleton's potent vocals and masterful guitar solo, has resonated so strongly among players and fans that it be-

came a must-play tune at stadiums across the league this season. A true music celebration of the spirit of the game, the Monday Night Football anthem marks a milestone achievement for ESPN's creative and music teams. Thanks to the song which was part of a multi-year full rebranding of the show, they managed to take the Monday Night Football (MNF) brand to a new level of recognition among fans and viewers, while also creating a new image and added value for both the NFL as an enterprise and Chris Stapleton as an artist.

This is how they made it happen.





It all started in 2021 as ESPN signed a new 10-year deal with the NFL worth \$2.7 billion per season. The Disney-owned station then invested in new talent, and in fall 2022 legendary hosts Joe Buck and Troy Aikman joined the MNF team, while Peyton and Eli Manning, two of the most popular quarterbacks in the NFL’s recent history, had started an alternate presentation the season prior, airing on ESPN2 for 10 games each season.

At the same time, the management of the sports network started planning a major rebrand ahead of the 2023 season – the first season all the benefits of the new rights deal began.

The new and improved offer on ESPN would also include new looks for all football shows, and a new *anthem* for the trademark brand *Monday Night Football*.

In the 1990s and into the 2000s, *Monday Night Football* was famous for its’ Hank Williams rock-country tune *All My Rowdy Friends (Are You Ready for Some Football?)*, remaining as the *anthem* until 2011. ESPN then decided to go in a different direction, mainly due to controversial political statements by the singer. Despite this bitter end, Hank Williams still remained a major factor and one of the toughest tasks of the creative teams would be to find a worthy replacement for the iconic tune.

Emerging from the focus groups conducted by ESPN about what viewers expected from MNF’s brand included nostalgia associated with the Monday night game.

Over the course of the following year, within ESPN’s headquarters, multiple brainstorm sessions were held which focused on potential songs for the next sustainable anthem and, just as important, the artists who could become the faces of the *anthem*.

The Idea

It was only in spring 2023, a mere months before it would eventually debut, that a more concrete idea for the new *anthem* was put on the table by Steve Ackels, ESPN Vice President and *Monday Night Football* producer – *In the Air Tonight* covered by country megastar Chris Stapleton.

He jokingly said, “When I put *In the Air Tonight* out there to my colleagues, I knew I was going to get some eyerolls

like “This song again!”, “This song is from the 80s!”, but the overall reaction was very positive.” Julie McGlone, ESPN Vice President, Creative Content Unit co-signed on the idea as the research showed that the song fully resonated with the fans and the players, and it felt like “a natural fit.” As far as Stapleton, Ackels recalls the moment he knew Stapleton was the best choice: “When Chris sang at the Super Bowl (in February 2023) ....it was one of the most remarkable national anthems I’ve heard.”

McGlone adds: “You listen to his music, and it just catches you. It’s a real tone of strength, excitement, and there is some emotion in the way that he writes his songs. You really feel like you are getting to know him, and anyone who has heard his music is wondering where those lyrics came from. He has got a real soul to him, and he is a badass.”

Claude Mitchell, ESPN Coordinating Director, Music, whose team would ultimately oversee the musical recording of the anthem, sums up: “(When we were ready to move forward), Chris Stapleton was at the top of our list, and it doesn’t happen very often that the #1 pick can actually work out.”

The Production

It is one thing to have an idea and another to make it happen, especially when the production involves various large teams and factors like rights, talent availability, creative coordination, approvals, time management, and more.

As Mitchell notes, they were lucky to secure their first pick, Chris Stapleton pretty quickly after the rights to *In the Air Tonight* were cleared by Phil Collins’ label for the cover.

ESPN’s creative group also mentions it was also Stapleton’s idea to do a collaboration with Snoop Dogg, who is also a big football fan and popular around the NFL, and collectively it was decided to have Cindy Blackman-Santana, one of the most accomplished drummers in the World, led the song’s iconic drum solo.

Work on the recording of the track and the shooting of the video clip started in parallel, and in a lot of ways are two different projects combined into one.



Claude Mitchell,  
ESPN Coordinating Director,  
Music



Julie McGlone  
ESPN Vice President, Creative  
Content Unit



Steve Ackels  
ESPN Vice President and Monday  
Night Football producer

ESPN’s music team put together a brief for Stapleton’s team who enlisted Dave Cobb as music producer. At the same time, ESPN’s creative content team gathered in New York to draw up the whiteboard for the 90-second video – a process that took around nine hours. ESPN’s Rico Labbe, Co-Director, put his creative vision into it and Amanda Paschal, ESPN Producer, managed the production.

Stapleton’s first impression on ESPN’s creative team was very strong: “On our first Zoom call with him he was super down-to-earth and focused on a real collaborative discussion,” says McGlone. “He wanted to be involved from



Cindy Blackman-Santana

the very start, and he was very reverent of Phil Collins and he was very clear that he wanted to pay homage to Phil. It was his idea to take the *No Jacket Required* album cover and represent that in the piece. You see that moment when he is in the tunnel [and also on the magazine’s cover – Ed].”

“Chris had some specific ideas on how his story would progress. We had drawn him in the hat that he has everywhere he goes, and we had him in this long duster and at first his management were not sure about it, but in the end, he actually had a custom-made duster by his tailor, and he loved it. We thought that was a real win because we thought that elevated him in a different way than what we are used to seeing him on stage,” McGlone recalls.

The first audio recording session was completed in May and Stapleton and his producer did their second taping session in July. In between, Cindy recorded the drums section.

Due to the artists’ busy schedule the video shoot was extended through the whole summer with two sessions in July dedicated to Stapleton’s part – one in Charleston where he had a concert, and the other in his hometown Nashville. The Nashville shoot took around 8 hours “which is basically unheard of for talent,” McGlone praises Stapleton’s

input: “His team was also watching every frame, so it felt like they were coming together with us and producing it with us which was fantastic.”

Cindy’s part was shot in warehouse in L.A. on August 24. “Cindy’s signature is when she wears her hair blown out from her Lenny Kravitz days and Santana and she loved to do that again and looked fantastic and she comes across as a real badass on that drum change,” McGlone notes. She would also helped the team with the lighting and its synchronization with her drum hitting.

Snoop Dogg was the last one to shoot his scenes, and also recorded his

vocal part during the same session for which ESPN brought a mobile recording studio on location. That happened on August 28.

“Snoop was very specific, down to the color of the cars, the type of classic cars, his wardrobe which was all custom made. He was also extremely involved in the lyrics. He had seven different verses and we had one of our writers MK Asante work with him to help craft the football language into the rhymes. He recorded those right before he went on to shoot the music videos which was one of the quickest times we have done just about anything,” McGlone notes.



Aikman and Stapleton





Snoop Dogg

Besides MK Asante, Figure and Groove also contributed to the music production.

"The whole track was done, done, done! pretty much within a week before the start of the season. Our first game was September 11, so we had a couple of weeks after Snoop's session to mix the track," Mitchell notes. Work on the video was completed literally hours before it first went on air.

## The Impact

On the morning of Monday, Sept. 18, ESPN published a 30-second teaser video of the anthem on the social media accounts @ESPN and @AdamScheffer which generated over 9 million views. Following the premiere on the *Monday Night Football* doubleheader, the new anthem got a wide media coverage, mainly on print and online, with 12.4 million estimated views on social and

honor. The song crosses many demographics and the drum fill is iconic. It's easily the coolest lead-in music in major sports television in my opinion."

The League apparently also loves it, as Steve Ackels shares: "I got a call, it's probably the biggest game we have this weekend with the Ravens and 49ers [played on December 26 - Ed.], and the Ravens coach John Harbaugh asked for an MP3 of it, as they want to play all during the practice this week. A few minutes later, during that interview, he got a similar message from the 49ers."

McGlone experienced the whole excitement in one of the stadiums this season: "Our version of the song does play in most of the stadiums every week and it's something to see. It is one thing to watch it every Monday in my living room, but it is another thing to watch in the stadiums with the whole place going crazy. I was in Detroit with 60,000 people singing along! And I'm like "This is awesome!"

Julie McGlone also shares her interpretation of the video: "I really like the idea that Snoop was able to deliver the storyline in a creative way each week. [...] I feel like Chris is the foundation with his vocals... it's a comfortable place you see him at the very beginning, and you know that he is going to take you thru. The guitar solo is just so fantastic. He is an incredible guitar player and I really like that section with him and then Cindy just keeps it moving. She is the one who drives the pace, and she really emphasizes some of the real hard hits of football and for us that creates urgency and anticipation."

Mitchell adds: "This whole project has been something that is a little outside of his [Chris'] normal comfort zone and I think that they really were excited as much about the music and also as an opportunity to bring Chris into a new place, and part of why our #1 pick came in was that this created a new great opportunity for us to launch a new Anthem, but also give Chris a really positive, marquee moment at the time of the release of his new album."

He also makes the point that: "Part of what we do as music team is to find opportunities where we not only want artists to help boost our product, but we also want, as a good partner, to boost the artist and make sure that they see a positive benefit."

"The feedback internally was tre-

mendously positive. We've worked on a lot of projects, and I can say that there has been very few things that have been as well received," Claude Mitchell adds.

I ask Steve Ackels whether it was the initial idea to have such strong diversity in the production and he explains: "With anything we do, we try to have an open mind because we know our audience is diverse. It wasn't like 'we have to do this, this and this,' but we do like the aspect that it has a diverse representation and that really relates to our audience."

The ratings have been amazing as well: "The 2023 *Monday Night Football* season (20 games) is the most-watched MNF season of the ESPN era (2006 - present), averaging 17.1 million viewers. The television franchise is up 33% year-over-year," Derek Volner, Director, ESPN Communications - Monday Night Football and NFL Portfolio (who also made this story possible), underlines.

The only thing that is really missing in this chain of success is a chance for the song to leave its mark in the music charts, to which Mitchell replies: "At this point, we would love to see it out in the market, but that's totally up to Chris and his label."

Once again, being a former radio guy, I have no doubt that a single release would get heavy rotation and have a major impact internationally as well, bringing in new fans of football, Chris Stapleton, Phil Collins, Snoop Dogg, Cindy, ESPN and the NFL.



Aikman, Buck and Cindy

## The Visuals

Besides the track and the accompanying video to the anthem, ESPN also fully changed its on-air looks for the start of the new football season. Lucas Nickerson, ESPN Creative Director, Creative Services, shares that it all started from the MNF shield: "We have probably done every version of a shape of shield known to man, so I think where we landed was a refinement of what we did last time but infused enough energy into it and motion that it was an upgrade from the last version."

The main task was to challenge the designers to show thru their visuals what primetime means to them. In two weeks, the ideas were collected and

then slimmed down with six main designers working on the new image and new "Primetime typeface" whose creation started from the MNF brand and then extended to *Monday Night Football* and further. "We had a lot of different curves within the typeface and finally landed on something that felt right - it needed to feel athletic enough, but also unique enough. We did base it a little bit on the width and stature of the typefaces we used in the last rebrand. We knew that that weight really felt well when you read information and titles," Nickerson notes.

Studio Elastic cooperated on the project proving video effects. In his words, the idea was to pay homage to the history of *Monday Night Football*: "We wanted to make sure it wasn't too futuristic with almost like a nod to the past without being historical." He also notes that the whole process took about six months which is relatively short for such type of projects, thus later in the season they started introducing some new visuals which were created just three-four months ago.

"The collaboration across the ESPN Creative Studio is why we're able to generate industry-influencing creative. We've developed a wide range of skillsets to achieve the creative that we conceptualize. The influence of this editorially-paced animation look, paired with a high-end information design system allows for the brand to permeate across the company on all platforms. None of this is possible without strong collaboration led by Art Director Brian Girardin's tremendous attention to detail," Nickerson sums up. ■



Michelle Walton, Julie McGlone, Rico Labbe, Chris Stapleton, Amanda Paschal, Alex Gabriele, Steve Ackels at the Nashville shoot



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# The Tourist is Paying Netflix a Visit in 2024

*The Tourist* is a critically-acclaimed thriller drama television series which stars Jamie Dornan (*The Fall*; *Fifty Shades of Gray*, *Belfast*) as the victim of a car accident who wakes up in hospital with amnesia. The series also stars Australian actress Danielle Macdonald (*Patti Cake\$*, *Dumplin*, *Bird Box*). Joining them in season 2 which moves from Australia to Ireland is Northern Irish actor Conor MacNeill (*The Fall*, *Industry*), with all three of them revealing details about the new episodes of the hit drama to journalists, including TVBIZZ Magazine, when it was announced that the series will be available on Netflix in February 2024.

A year on from their adventure in the Australian Outback, the new season follows BAFTA and Golden Globe nominated Jamie Dornan and Danielle Macdonald, who reprise their roles as Elliot and Helen, as they travel to Ireland together.

Deciding that it's finally time for Elliot to rediscover his roots following the car crash that left him with severe memory loss, the pair find themselves dragged into the dangerous whirlwind of his past life. Whilst Elliot fights with his own demons, Helen is left to pick up the pieces of a larger mystery; forcing them both to confront foes, old and new.

**J**amie, tell us about your character's journey from season 1?

**Jamie Dornan:** I play a man of many identities. In the beginning of the first series, Elliot finds himself in Australia and after a long car chase with a truck, Elliot gets hit off the road and has an accident, waking up with no memory of who he is. A couple of people help Elliot piece things together and try to find answers which essentially leads him to some very dark places. For the second season we pick up with Elliot in Ireland where he tries to discover his real family and get some answers on who he is. Whilst Elliot is in Ireland, he also gets caught

up in all kinds of craziness with people trying to kill him.

**What were you expecting from the second season and what made you want to continue the project?**

**Jamie:** You are always hoping to find an audience that is sort of willing and hungry. We were only ever meant to have the one season; I remember Jack and Harry Williams who created the show saying it will just be one. I don't think we expected it to be the most watched show in the UK that year and when there's that much of an appetite, it felt like the right thing to give people more. With it being so successful there's also a lot of pressure

on the second season. You want to get it right and it's a very different setting. For the second we are in Ireland, which has a very different vibe. It's tricky trying to establish the different settings and make it its own thing but also honour what people loved about the first series. I was excited by it, it's an exciting thing to continue the journey. Selfishly for me, not having to uproot my entire family again was quite a good thing.

**You are an executive producer in season two, how has the experience been?**

**Jamie:** It's been great. It was one of those opportunities that presented

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itself to me and I was excited to do it. It's also nice to do it in a capacity where I already have the relationship with everyone involved and to come into this realm having already committed so much to the project. It's been nice to have a bit more say over the creative aspects of the show and it's something I'm proud of.

**For people who have not seen the previous season, would it be easy for them to step into the story and what should they know before they start watching season 2?**

**Jamie:** They should know It is going to be totally different from what they have watched before, Jack and Harry (the creators and writers of the series Jack and Harry Williams, e.d.) went for really smart, bending and merging genres. If you have watched

it from the first episode of season 1, you'd be convinced you are watching something super-dark and dramatic at the beginning and pretty quick you will realize that is sort of warped humor. Once audiences accept that they are going on this pinbally journey of these genres and feels then they will relax into it.

**Danielle Macdonald:** It does feel like a whole new story in a way. I always think you could come in "blind", without having seen season 1 and you pick up really quickly- it's a guy who has lost his memory and he's trying to figure things out and it is a whole new cast of characters almost so you don't really need to know that much, I feel you can piece it together quite easily...

**Jamie:** You should watch the first season...

**Danielle:** Yes, you should watch the first season (laughing), you want the depth...

**Conor, tell us about the character of Detective Ruairi Slater?**

**Conor MacNeill:** Ruairi is a detective who meets Helen very early on in the series and becomes sort of embroiled in the investigation of these two warring families that Elliot Stanley is also very much involved in. I think Helen reminds him of someone and he has a real affinity with her very quickly.

**Danielle, what do you think makes The Tourist so appealing to viewers and what can viewers expect from season two?**

**Danielle:** I'm excited that it resonated with audiences. I think The Tourist is unique and it is in its own kind of

genre. It's got some darkness in there but it's also quite funny at times. It also has lots of quirky characters. The locations really become a character in the series, and you'll find Ireland is a big part of season two which will draw people in.

**The first season was backed up by this beautiful barren outback setting which influenced the journey. How the new setting influenced your performances this season, how the Irish landscape influences the characters' journeys?**

**Jamie:** The expansiveness and the desolate nature of the outback, as you say, really added to this sort of mass confusion and fear that Elliot found himself in with his loss of memory. There was a bit of worry that, because of how Australian it was, that the continuum of that is so drastically different that it maybe doesn't work but what happens is that it's just becomes its own thing and because of the nature of what is going on with all the characters in this second season, being in Ireland, it just makes sense to be in Ireland, with all the landscapes and the greenery of Ireland just works for what is going on there. It becomes as strong a character in season 2 as it does in season 1. You adapt to it rather than change your performance.

**Danielle:** It is sort of a new own character, It does feel very Irish.

**Conor:** They also write so specifically to location, so honest to where we are.

**Jamie, how does it feel to bring the show home to Ireland?**

**Jamie:** It's amazing. The first day of shooting we were in Kilpedder in Wicklow, and I was walking through the trees and the worst rain I think I've ever seen came in and I thought, this is what it's like to film in Ireland. I had sort of forgotten it being three or four years since I filmed here but Ireland is beautiful. I've been to parts of Ireland that I'd never been to before. We predominantly filmed in Dublin and Wicklow, but we've managed to travel a little bit outside of there and got to showcase what a beautiful place Ireland is. Working with an Irish crew having the same sort of sense of humour has been great. It's been a dream to shoot here.

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The Tourist - Jamie Dornan as Elliot

**How would you tease the upcoming season to the fans of the show?**

**Jamie:** if you are a fan of the show already that is a good thing (laughing). There will be more madness (laughing) and if you are into the characters then you are going to find out so much more about them and see them in all kinds of crazy scenarios, it is a different ride, a different feel than the first season. If we have hooked you into from season 1 there is plenty more to offer with the second season.

**Conor:** I think it's an incredible mystery thriller with a huge comic and joyful heart.

**Danielle, why do you think so many viewers care about your character so much, there was even somebody who wrote she should get her own show?**

**Danielle:** I think Helen is the moral compass in season 1, the only character you can trust she is telling you the truth. Everyone else has a hidden



The Tourist - Conor MacNeill and Danielle Macdonald



agenda. And Elliot doesn't know his past so you can't really trust his memories because they don't exist. You learn to trust her pretty early on so that is what makes people connect with her. Also, she is going thru very real struggles, there is a

lot of wild stuff that happens, lots of circumstances that never happen in real life while Helen goes home to an emotionally abusive relationship and people are "hm, I can relate to that" and she is insecure and people say "I felt that". She is someone that is very

relatable and trustworthy.

**Did you get a lot of reactions regarding the controlling behavior of her cruel fiancée?**

**Danielle:** I was aware of it when I was doing the show but that was secondary to all the craziness that was going on with Elliot's character so when I was doing press for S1 that was the N1 question I was asked and people talked to me about it, it really resonated with people – which I didn't quite realize or expect. Which is sad that so many people can resonate with it but is also right that people can say that is wrong, that is toxic, that people can see that.

**There are some incredible stunts in *The Tourist*, what was the most challenging to shoot?**

**Jamie:** I had to hang off a cliff for a long time. I was harnessed but you couldn't really see it and the whole point of the scene is that I'm hanging there for a comically long period of time. So, this does mean to film it, I really was hanging there for a long time, and I have a dodgy shoulder which really paid the price for hanging there for a whole morning. That was the most tricky and annoying scene to shoot because I'm an old man and my shoulders don't work.

**That balance between comedy, action and almost kind of absurdity in the show is brilliant – how does it look like in the script and what are the challenges for you as actors to translate that on screen and did you have the freedom to explore that after the script was written?**

**Conor:** My character has such hugely polarized personalities that are very very different but they write so well those guys, you just have to trust it. I am trying to make it as real as possible, in comedy it is always the best way because the lines are funny.

**Jamie:** it's easier for Conor coming in, having to do that in the second season and try to fall in step with the sort of odness of the jumping around tone-wise whereas at least Danny and I had a whole season of getting comfortable with that and you sort of don't ever get totally comfortable with it which I think is a good thing.

You should always be on your toes and always be scared - that gives it the energy it needs so you never get comfortable - that's what we are trying to say which is a good thing. When you are reading it sometimes you are like "oh my god why is he making a joke there like he's just found out this horrific thing".

**Danielle:** I had no idea what to expect for season two. I just love the writers and I had an amazing time with them. I think that they have such an interesting way of writing; it's so quirky and grabs you in. So, when they said they had an idea for season two I said yes before I even knew what it was. Mainly because I wanted to work with them again and we had such an amazing time filming season one. Jack and Harry have a unique writing style. You never know where their writing is going to take you or where it's going to lead to. They've got a lot of little "Jack and Harry-isms" in the scripts too which are fun. I think they write because they love the stories, and they don't force it. I also love working with Jamie, so I was in straight away. ■



## The Tourist

The Tourist premiered in January 2022 on BBC One in the UK and on Stan in Australia, and in March on HBO Max in the US. In December, it was announced that Netflix will offer season 1 and season 2 starting February 2024. Season 2 premiered on January 1 this year on BBC One. The series is distributed internationally by All3Media. The hit drama is created and written by Jack and Harry Williams, with their Two Brothers Pictures (an All3Media company) also producing the show. It became one of the UK's most-watched dramas in 2022. Producers for Season 1 included Two Brothers Pictures for the BBC, in association with Highview Productions, All3Media International, the South Australian Film Corporation, HBO Max, Stan and ZDF. Producers for Season 2 were Two Brothers Pictures for the BBC, in association with Stan, ZDF and All3Media International.



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*The Tourist* - Danielle Macdonald as Helen Chambers



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Andre, Dean and Andy

# Making The 1% Club

## Andre Renaud, Dean Nabarro, Andy Auerbach, The 1% Club

*The 1% Club* debuted on ITV in 2022 and quickly turned into one of the most-talked about shows in the UK. BBC Studios started selling the format even before its premiere and took it to key territories like Germany, France and Australia where the quiz gained a hit status in 2023. The format's success is easy to explain: the questions in *The 1% Club* are all about logic and common sense, and anyone can play along.

Stanislav Kimchev met the creators of the format Dean Nabarro and Andy Auerbach of MagnumMedia, as well as BBC Studios' Senior VP of Global Format Sales Andre Renaud at MIPCOM where the distributor organized a live play-along game with market attendees and journalists in order to find out why *The 1% Club* is the fastest selling new gameshow format.

**Let's start with the basics: what makes *The 1% Club* so popular with viewers in the UK and other territories?**

**Andre Renaud:** I honestly think the simplicity of the gameplay is the thing that catches people. When we first started looking at this show, I remember very clearly going: "I get the concept, I understand the game". I think that's the thing that resonates. It's a show that's scalable, a show that's returnable, a show that you can play with family. All of those things make it successful. During the presentation here, you heard ITV say that they had a million viewers on demand afterwards as well. It keeps outperforming where it airs. Germany did really well. Australia is a real success for us too, because we were always told that the potential for gameshow is really tough there. So for it to be successful is down to the gameplay and also the host. I think those two things together to create this sort of entertainment show is what has resonated with people.

If you look at all of the shows that have been successful over the last several years, it's something that's adaptable, something that makes it feel like it can be in my own country. And the fact that you're taking this and you're actually polling your own nation is a really strong success story for why this gets localized. The humor that you can build is a local story.

**What have been the latest deals for the format?**

**Andre:** We announced a deal for Turkey at the market. It was a conversation we started at MIPTV actually. There's one other deal I think you'll find out about soon enough. I do believe that there is opportunity in Poland, in Hungary, I even think Czechia and Slovakia could do it. Bulgaria - absolutely. And Greece, I really think the opportunity for it, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, is high. If something works in Germany, then I think it should work in Poland. And then I'd love to see it in Asia. I'd love to see it in Latin America as well. The show can go anywhere. The fact is that France, Germany, Spain, even

Israel, demonstrates the success and the scalability of the show.

**Dean Nabarro:** Something that we look at in every single territory, whenever we see it go out, the ratings seem to do something different to what ratings usually do. Entertainment television tends to start big and then go down to low. This starts pretty well and then just grows. And I think that's to do with the extra bit of something that makes the format work in all these different territories, which is people wanting to talk about it and to share, in this case, the questions to talk about. This is what is the extra ingredient.

**As you started talking about this, what are the latest trends according to you in terms of formats?**

**Andre:** There's a conversation now about reality with a twist. I think people are talking about it and, you see a lot of them out there. What's also coming through is authenticity, truth in storytelling, factual entertainment about human interest. But I truly also still believe that games, quiz and entertainment are running high. The other thing is that because you can scale it up and down, I think you'll always have space for

entertainment shows, family shows are still ongoing.

**What are BBC Studios' bestsellers right now?**

**Andre:** Some of the shows that we're launching at this market are leaning into that human story. One of them is called *Lost Dogs Live*, which is a format where people are trying to reunite families and their lost dogs. The statistic in the UK is that 93% of lost dogs are found, but only 20% of them actually get back to their homes. We are using social media audience live shows to try and bring people back. I wouldn't want to lose my dog, but at least there's a show out there that's trying to create social media story around it.

We have another one called *Inside Our Autistic Minds*, which is a show about autistic people trying to create a world so people who aren't autistic understand what it is like to be autistic. We're still talking about *Bridge of Lies* that had a Spanish commission as well. But obviously the cornerstone for us has been *The 1% Club*.

**Now let's talk about the development process. The show differs from many other quiz formats by**



The French Version: 100% Logique





Play Along in Cannes

**the fact that it's more of an IQ test rather than testing general knowledge. How did you come up with the idea of a different type of program?**

**Andy Auerbach:** It all started with one question, and this was the car park question. It was a question that Dean and I, on our lunch break, would ask each other these brain teaser type questions and we saw this question and neither of us knew the answer. We couldn't work it out. It was just hard. But Dean took it to his family. He showed it to his 11-year old son and he literally got it within an instant. We thought that was remarkable and then that got us thinking that that was a wonderful thing for a quiz. What if there was a quiz where it didn't matter how well educated you were? It didn't matter if you'd been to university. What if there was a quiz where everyone was on a level playing field because it tested how your brain works, not how much knowledge you have? And we thought that's a great start to a quiz.

**How long did it take to develop the show and put it on air?**

**Dean:** Once we saw that type of question, we did actually start testing. We started writing more ourselves, and we wanted to find out what percent of the country could

get it right. So we sent them to the sort of place that tests who's voting for who and whatever and they test, they send it out to a thousand people. Once we got those percentages, we spoke to ITV and we showed them the questions and it really got them talking. They started playing it themselves. They started arguing about it. I won't name names, but one of them, very high up, didn't do so well and it caused a bit of a moment. At that stage, they asked us to develop it more into a full show and they commissioned a pilot pretty soon. We also got the host on board, Lee, who we knew from doing a different show. Same thing we sent him about 15 questions and straight away he said, I love it, because people got involved. So we did the pilot and then they committed to it. It feels like a long time but actually it was in the world of television, it was pretty quick.

**Any additional research like audience testing?**

**Andy:** No, ITV didn't. They acted on instinct, which is very rare and it's to their credit. They heard an idea, they saw a pilot and they just had faith in it and they commissioned a series very, very quickly, and even before the first series had transmitted in the UK, ITV saw it and liked it so much that they commissioned

a second series, so we were working on season two before anybody knew whether this show would work.

**Andre:** We also secured the commissions in France, Netherlands and Israel before it had even aired.

**Do you consult on the international versions of the show?**

**Andre:** BBC Studios has a group of flying producers. We have one in particular who works really closely with Andy and Dean on it. The whole purpose is to make sure that we understand the essence of it. I always describe it as a seed of a tree growing different branches and Andy and Dean are really exemplary in being involved in that conversation that we have. It's our responsibility to do justice to the work that they've done.

**Andy:** It has been a fantastic working relationship. As Andre says they have producers who make sure

that the quality control around the world is high and they constantly ask us to ask our advice, our opinion.

**Dean:** But the great thing for us has been we've got to know, all of the companies, all the producers that have been making it in the other countries. When it was on in France, I couldn't watch it, but I followed Twitter live. I could see what was going on and it was replicating what happened in the UK. Exactly the same.

When it went out in Germany, we'd spoken to the guys in Germany all the time. We'd know about it. And then you say, you want to know. And then it worked with them. And they taught us a lot. That's the thing we're learning from them as well. Each one of them, like the Australians, have had some great little tips.

**What has been the toughest question in *The 1% Club*?**

**Andy:** That's in a sense the wrong question to ask. Because of course, our toughest question is a 1% question. Also, everybody finds questions, some questions easier than others. So, a 1% question for one person will be much easier for a 1% for another. But I don't know. I mean, what question really, can you think of anything that just really stumped you?

**Dean:** I really think that it's not about the specifics, because if we choose one, it goes against the very nature of what we keep saying, which is that it doesn't matter what we as producers think, right? It doesn't matter. It's not our job to decide what's a harder question for other people, that's what the surveys do. That's what the percentages do. The nation tells us how hard the

question is. The truth is, though, as you said, because it's how your brain works. One person will find 1% question easier than perhaps another 1%. And I don't know what makes that happen.

If we gave you a question and we said there's no time limit, you would do a lot better on the question. In the UK there's an app and every day there's a question but there's no time limit on it. I watch people play it and people are getting it maybe in four minutes and 20 seconds right, because they can do it. But if you give them 30 seconds as you did with your big question - oh, it's harder, it's harder. That's what determines the percentages. What we're saying is not 30% of the country could get this question ever. It's 30% of people can get this question for 30 seconds, in that time. Because that is the key. ■



The 1% Club UK version





# Wonwoo Park

## Korea's Entertainment Guru

Wonwoo Park is the creator of the worldwide smash hit format, *The Masked Singer*, and the CEO and Chief Creator at DiTurn which is specialized in format development. Wonwoo has been working on more than 200 TV shows since 1997 and continues to make a strong endeavor to globalize Korean formats. He is currently developing several shows for FOX under a first-look deal with FOX Alternative Entertainment.

Wonwoo talks with Yako Molhov about the success of *The Masked Singer*, work on new projects and the formats that will follow its footsteps in his opinion.

**Wonwoo, you became famous as the creator of the hit entertainment format *The Masked Singer*. Do you remember how did you come up with the idea for the show? How excited were you to see it produced for the first time in Korea?**

The start of *The Masked Singer* is unforgettable for me. While appearance might be paramount for celebrities, but for singers, musical ability holds greater significance. However, having organized various audition shows, it was disheartening to see audiences voting based on appearance rather than skill. I believed that by concealing identities, we could elimi-

nate such biases. That idea sparked the beginning of *The Masked Singer*.

We had just one month to prepare for the broadcast. Some might have deemed it impossible to pull off a show in such a short time, but I confidently asserted that we could make it happen. As long as we didn't alter the rules or content, I was certain it was achievable. Our focus was on casting performers, rehearsals, set design, and selecting the judging panel. The reason behind our success within this short timeframe was the show's incredibly clear and well-defined rules.

Our first recording lasted until 3 AM, and our initial viewership surpassed 16%. For nine years now, our pilot program became a regular show, and has aired every Sunday evening. Biweekly visits to the studio still bring a rush of excitement to me even today.

**In your opinion what makes *The Masked Singer* so successful?**

*The Masked Singer* is like a captivating swamp that keeps viewers hooked until the very end. Once, a high-school friend visited the studio during a recording. I suggested him to join the shooting, but despite saying he'd only listen to a few songs, he ended up staying until the end.

In Korea, *The Masked Singer* shoots two episodes in a single recording, featuring nine singers every two weeks from 3PM until midnight. Once the audience gets engrossed in the show during that time, they don't leave their seats. Before the masks come off, even if there's a strong con-

viction about who's behind the mask, viewers can't look away from the TV until the reveal.

During the developing phase, envisioning a 60-minute broadcast, I emphasized the thrill of revealing one singer's identity every 10 minutes. I believe that the comedic movement and costumes worked as a likable factor for the audience. Also, because this show presents a new challenge to music enthusiasts by being the 'music quiz show,' I believe it succeeded by proposing a fresh angle to those who enjoy music shows.

**You are also the creator of music entertainment show *My Boyfriend is Better* which CJ ENM distributes and that has been recently acquired by Globo in Brazil. Do you have other new deals for the format and do you expect it to repeat the success of *The Masked Singer*?**

I love all the shows I create, and *My Boyfriend is Better* is one of my favorites. This show delves into the conflict between jealousy and greed within the human emotions. These

I love all the shows  
I create



I'm currently in the process of developing shows structured to generate revenue

emotions are universal, and everybody can feel it. I find immense joy in observing the conflicted expressions of girlfriends torn between money and love. Additionally, I believe that enchanting romantic songs have the power to captivate the hearts of female viewers. My Boyfriend is Better encompasses enough elements to achieve the same level of success as *The Masked Singer*. I also hope for success overseas, akin to the glory attained by *The Masked Singer*.

**You are also the person behind other popular formats like *Round Table*, *Love Maze*, *Mama*, *The Song Was Born*, *Million Seller*, *My Ranking*. In a world where broadcasters and streamers prefer to play it safe and rely predominantly on established formats and reboots when it comes to entertainment, what are the biggest challenges for you in creating brand new shows and convincing them to invest into new ideas?**

Various emerging video platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and others pose a threat as they continue to evolve. Who would have thought we'd be carrying TVs around to watch? Who could have predicted that editing technology would become this convenient? Ultimately, the challenge we're facing now is that investors are turning their attention to those kinds of platforms.

There's undoubtedly difficulty in attracting investors. I'm persuading investors by suggesting our new concepts can be connected to other business opportunities. As one example, I proposed a show to our team's current investors where the judges listen to the music and purchase the music from singer-songwriters. This could potentially evolve into another business related to copyrights. Building relationships with talented singer-songwriters could lead to another show and business opportunity.



*The Masked Singer*

I'm currently in the process of developing shows structured to generate revenue and explaining to investors the additional income streams these shows could bring in.

**What are the latest projects you have been working on and have you considered exploring genres other than entertainment, i.e. scripted?** Much of our focus is directed towards collaborating with FOX. It's gratifying to lead new cultural initiatives from a small country like Korea, especially in the unscripted genres. Initially, creators in Korea always believed in launching in our own country first, but that's not the case anymore. Securing broader audience interest by having overseas networks, who appreciate our ideas, premiere our content first would be a delight for us. FOX stands as a pivotal client in this regard. We're eagerly awaiting the launch of the shows we're preparing with them. Several shows are already in development, and we anticipate some exciting news soon.

Shows like *My Boyfriend is Better*, *Roller Chorus*, *My Ranking*, and *Round Table* - fresh creations from our team - are

gearing up for the global launch. I believe audiences worldwide will laugh, be moved, and find joy in watching our shows.

Additionally, we're working on a new venture - a scripted, drama in a completely innovative interactive format. We're collaborating with seven writers for this show. After this project concludes, I'm considering exploring even more new stories.

**Do you keep a closer eye on the local adaptations of your formats?**

Honestly, I can't watch everything, but occasionally I watch videos from overseas on YouTube. What never fails to impress me is the costumes. It's so remarkable that even replicating it on the original channel like MBC seems challenging. I'm looking forward to the possibility of a global version of *The Masked Singer* where costumes from around the world come together for a singing showdown.

**Being a busy producer do you take time off from work in order to focus on creating new formats? In other words, what is your creative routine?**

To be honest, I don't have much off-time. However, creating new ideas is incredibly

enjoyable to me. Eventually, ideas for new shows stem from the previous work itself. The concept for *The Masked Singer* came from audition shows for selecting the best singers, which led to *My Ranking*. Through *My Ranking*, the idea for *Blindfolded Audience* (a.k.a *Can You Keep Your Money*) emerged, and ultimately, *My Boyfriend is Better* also sparked as a dating show. Constantly deriving new ideas from the work drives me to keep the momentum going rather than stopping work altogether.

**What is your opinion on the hot topic of AI in the entertainment business? Have you used artificial intelligence in your formats? Do you see new opportunities in this sphere?**

Lately, I've been exploring drawing webtoons using artificial intelligence (AI). Drawing isn't my strong suit like a professional comic artist. That's why I'm seeking someone's help in drawing, using AI. I'm currently trying to build a new system to draw webtoons through AI.

I believe AI can offer creators new opportunities. Since AI ultimately learns from human-created data, and it

I believe AI can be a catalyst for creators who have felt stuck in their progress.

extracts results from learning through the information we provide. Human creativity needs to evolve beyond its current state, and I believe AI can be a catalyst for creators who have felt stuck in their progress.

**What do you like watching in your free time? Do you have favorite shows besides yours?**

I mainly watch OTT series or movies at the theater. I enjoy exploring almost all series as if I'm on research. Among the recent movies, I found *The Voyeurs* from 2021 quite enjoyable. And as for recent shows, I found 007: *The Road to a Millionaire* to be entertaining. ■





## Ironside

In the 1967-1975 crime series *Ironside*, Raymond Burr's paralyzed detective often navigated accessibility issues. It was the first TV show to present a wheelchair-accessible van.

# Diversity and Inclusion Milestones on TV

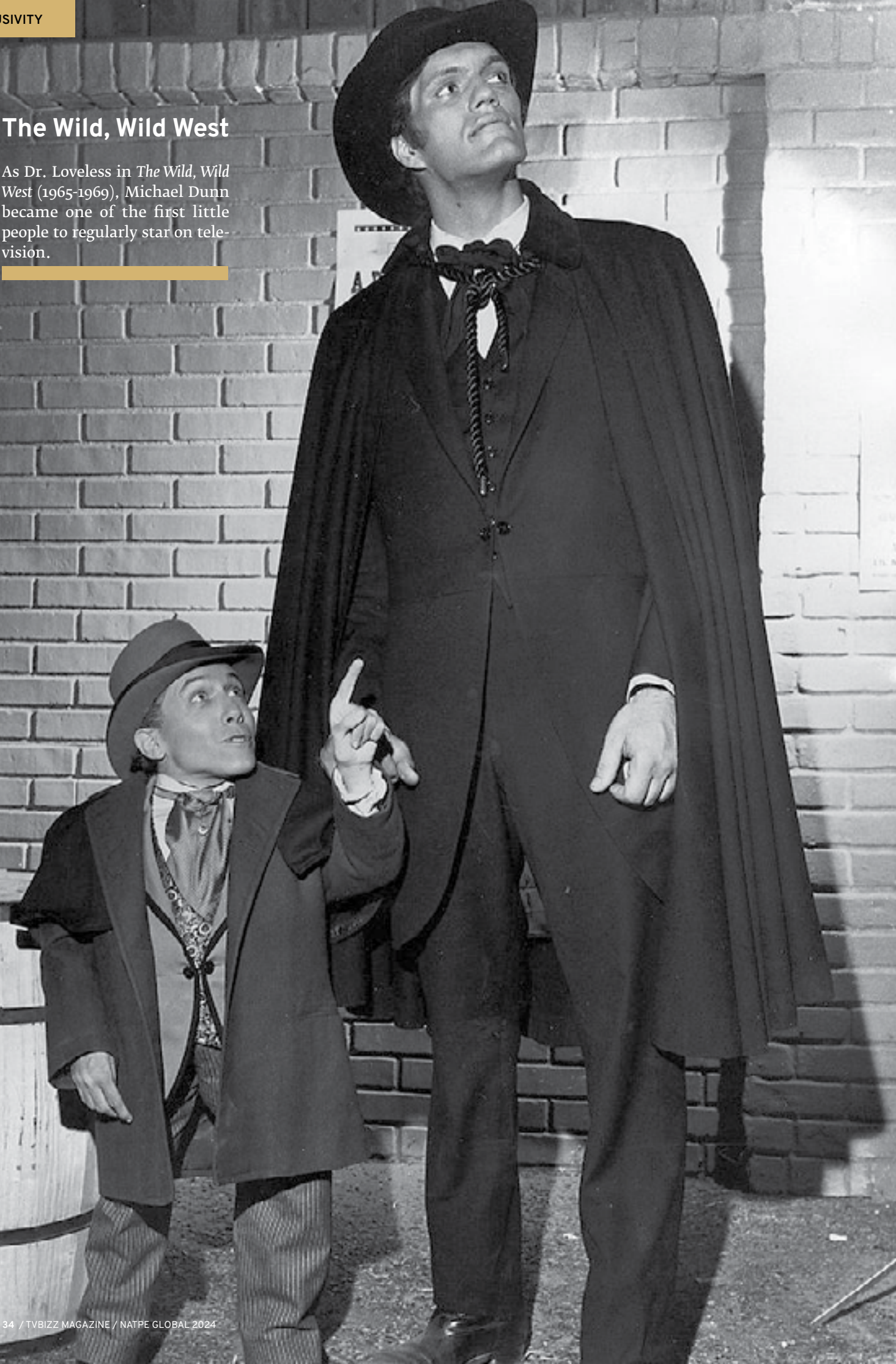
In recent years the television industry has made progress in creating a more inclusive ecosystem. As Nielsen notes in its diversity and inclusion reports, the presence of diverse people on screen and the context in which they are presented can be among the most influential factors in developing our personal attitudes and beliefs.

TVBIZZ Magazine again takes a look back at the role of TV in the diversity and inclusion process on US TV, presenting some of the shows and stars that were "pioneers" and played an important role in terms of representation of racial, ethnic, or people with disabilities and non-traditional sexual orientation. This time we put the focus on Inclusivity.



## The Wild, Wild West

As Dr. Loveless in *The Wild, Wild West* (1965-1969), Michael Dunn became one of the first little people to regularly star on television.



## Fantasy Island

French actor and painter Herve Villechaize became famous on *Fantasy Island* (1977-1983) as Mr. Roarke's assistant, Tattoo, but he is best remembered for his role as the evil henchman Nick Nack in the 1974 James Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun*.

## Diff'rent Strokes

The sitcom *Diff'rent Strokes* featured episodes focused on disability between 1981-1984 that starred Melanie Watson as Kathy Gordon. She's introduced in "Count Your Blessings," when Arnold (Gary Coleman) is upset because he has learned he will not grow taller than five feet.







## Life Goes On

One major exception to standard portrayals of disabled characters was the Emmy award-winning drama *Life Goes On*, which aired on ABC from 1989 to 1993. It cast Chris Burke as the first actor with a Down syndrome on a mainstream television show. He portrayed Corky and was nominated for a Golden Globe and won several Young Artist Awards for his role.

## The Good Doctor

ABC's *The Good Doctor* often drew criticism, but also raised a lot of important topics, for its portrayal of autism via the show's protagonist and head surgeon, Shaun Murphy, played by Freddie Highmore.



## Glee

The Ryan Murphy universe has become known for its attention to disability, for better and for worse. The polarizing *Glee* character of teen wheelchair-user Artie Abrams, played by Kevin McHale — who does not use a wheelchair — drew criticism from viewers for the familiar phenomenon of “cripping up”. *Glee* also featured Lauren Potter as Becky Jackson, a cheerleader with Down syndrome.







## All in the Family

US television has a long tradition of including LGBTQ+ characters. In 1971, the year after the first-ever Pride parade and when homosexuality was still considered a disorder, *All in the Family* became the first American sitcom to show a gay character on TV.



## That Certain Summer

In 1972, *That Certain Summer* portrayed a divorced father (Hal Holbrook) hiding his relationship with a man (Martin Sheen) from his son, while in 1975 ABC's *Hot in Baltimore* featured the first gay couple on US network television.



## The Corner Bar

In 1972, *The Corner Bar* included the first-ever gay series regular on American TV - Peter Panama, played by Vincent Schiavelli.



## Soap

The TV show *Soap* became the first US sitcom to feature an openly gay character, Jodie Dallas played by Billy Crystal. Subsequently, Crystal was the first actor to play an openly gay character on a primetime US TV show, after the gay character on *The Nancy Walker Show*.



## LA Law

In the US, the first same-sex kiss on network television was between two female lawyers on *LA Law* in 1991. NBC received multiple complaints and advertisers pulled their ads from the network, however the show ran for eight seasons and won multiple Emmys. The series was known for breaking taboos.

## Buffy the Vampire Slayer

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* showed girlfriends Willow Rosenberg and Tara Maclay in bed together, and this is considered the first scene of its kind for a broadcast network series. The first lesbian sex scene in broadcast TV history also occurred on the show.

# pocket.watch

## Driving the Kids Entertainment Revolution

In this exclusive interview, Chris M. Williams, Founder and CEO of pocket.watch, talks to Yako Molhov about the success of his studio and the revolution in kids entertainment driven by digital creators.

**C**hris, you are the Founder & CEO of pocket.watch, which specializes in entertaining and inspiring kids and families through digital-first content. What inspired you to start this venture?

I founded pocket.watch in 2017 because I saw very clearly while at Disney and Maker Studios the movement of kids and family audiences from traditional linear TV to YouTube. I saw it in my own home as a parent and in the data at Disney and Maker. I realized there was an opportunity to create a new company that could partner with these massive kids and family creators, stars, characters and IP coming from YouTube and extend them as true franchises into everything from premium series to gaming to consumer products. We ended up creating a whole new category and now, pocket.watch is recognized by everyone, including new platforms, retailers and game publishers.

**What are the major markets and the platforms you distribute your content on? Which are your key partners?**

Our focus is the leading markets around the world for English-language and LATAM-Spanish content, starting with the US and Canada, and extending to the UK, Australia, Mexico, Central and South America, the Middle East and Africa, Europe and other regions with fans of our creators and their content. We have over 45 platform partners around the world, including Nickelodeon/Paramount+, Hulu, Amazon, Peacock, Sky, Comcast, Roku Channel, Pluto, Samsung TV Plus, Univision/ViX, Canela and many more.

**You are among the largest independent kids and family content studios. How many hours of content**



**do you produce annually and what is your distribution strategy?**

Pocket.watch currently has 38.5K hours available for distribution, including the 235 hours and 1080 episodes of premium content produced in the last 12 months. Our distribution strategy is to be everywhere kids are. As kids gain agency over their media consumption, they gravitate towards social video platforms like YouTube and TikTok as they look for content that features kids like themselves. Pocket.watch curates, cures, enriches and packages this content for premium programming services around the world, where it delights kids and is trusted by parents.

**Which are your biggest hits?**

At pocket.watch, we produce originals with our digital creator partners to accompany our massive library. Our current focus is on premiering these originals on our own networks and services, specifically *Ryan and*

*Friends Plus*, the #1 kids and family subscription video service now available on Amazon Channels and Comcast. After an exclusive window on *Ryan and Friends Plus*, we license them to other streaming services and sometimes feature them across our ad supported networks and services including our branded apps and FAST channels.

Some of our biggest hits include *Ryan's Mystery Playdate*, the Emmy-nominated hit series ran for 5 seasons on Nickelodeon; *Love, Diana Adventures* featuring YouTube megastars Diana and Roma starring in an animated original with live-action segments which has generated billions of views across platforms from YouTube to Peacock; *Hobby Kids Adventures* created and animated by Butch Hartman and starring the delightful boys of the hit YouTube channel Hobby Family.

*Toys and Colors Kaleidoscope City* is a new pocket.watch original starring the kids from November's #1 most-viewed YouTube channel in the world, *Toys*



and Colors, in a CG animated/live-action hybrid that teaches kids the value of empathy through fun games and adventures.

#### What are the current trends in kids content production?

The current trends we're seeing are in gaming and CG animation. From pocket.watch's perspective, today's kids programmers are only just beginning to realize the incredible value of this content phenomenon, born on YouTube, of real kids, from diverse backgrounds, having fun with their families in relatable and loving scenarios. The content is packed with positive messages and values, and resonates with Generation Alpha more strongly than everything that came before. It is our conviction that this content is great for kids, they truly love it, and we're committed to bringing it to them wherever they and their families want to consume it.

#### What made you focus on Generation Alpha and what defines this group?

They developed a powerful affinity for stars and characters born on YouTube, and before pocket.watch, were

confined to YouTube. We made it our mission to bring this generation more of what they love to the rest of their lives, from major streamers, to toys at retail, to video games and beyond.

#### pocket.watch relies on creator-led entertainment, working with digital creators. What are the fundamentals of creator-led entertainment and what are the benefits of this type of content? Is this the future of content production?

The fundamentals are seeing other kids and families that they relate to in a way that's similar to how they relate to their own family and friends. The content typically has minimum artifice separating the kid viewers from what's taking place on screen.

The benefits to kids are that they recognize the content as more "real" and are more open to its positive lessons and messages. They see loving environments with parents engaging with kids, even playing with kids, with focus, care and enthusiasm.

From a business perspective, there is a large volume of this content, it's highly responsive to the newest trends, and a fast-changing world,

and perhaps most importantly, it comes to us with a highly discernible track record of past performance. There's a treasure trove of data from its history on YouTube that gives tremendous insights on its future performance, and a set of alignments to help identify content adjacencies as well as potential brand partners, advertisers, consumer products, and market strategies.

#### Artificial intelligence (AI) has been a hot topic in the past few years. What opportunities or disadvantages do you see in this technological advance, and do you plan to develop this segment within your company?

There's a ton of opportunity, mainly to streamline processes and create more efficiency so the team can focus on creativity. For animation, we can utilize CG avatar hosts, simplistic 2D animation, and text-to-animation within Unreal Engine. For post, there's captions and QC sheets. AI is also aiding us in the curation process, identifying common themes among videos, and accelerating our content packaging workflows by aiding copy writing, art creation and image enhancements. For social, we're able to leverage AI tool that transcribes episodes and identifies trending terms to recommend clips for TikTok and Reels.

#### You are one of the key speakers at this year's NATPE Global. What are the main topics and issues you will focus on during your fireside chat at the event?

The focus will be on how we deepen, expand and enhance the powerful connection between the new generation of kids and content creators to delight young audiences and build massive value across a broad spectrum of platforms and business partnerships.

The conversation will delve into the captivating journey of how our creator driven media company has ingeniously transformed digital content into multiplatform global franchises, the impact of the overall creator economy on the media ecosystem, and provide a glimpse into untapped opportunities and innovative ideas that could fuel further growth for the industry. ■

# The Creator Economy

At this year's NATPE Global Brunico, the new owner of the most-established US content market, announced a Fireside Chat with Chris M. Williams, the forward-thinking leader at the helm of pocket.watch HQ, the largest independent kids and family content studio reshaping the landscape of creator-led entertainment. The insightful session revealed how the digital-focused studio has ingeniously transformed digital content into multiplatform global franchises,

the impact of the overall creator economy on the media ecosystem and offered a glimpse into untapped opportunities and innovative ideas that could fuel further growth for the industry.

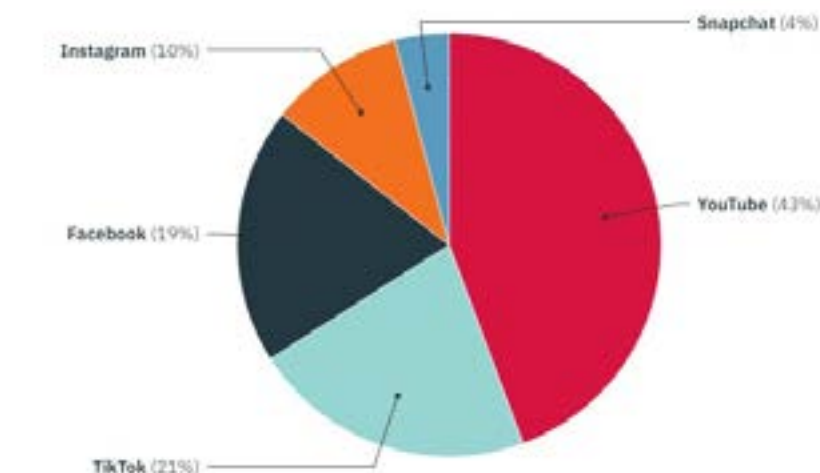
There are over 200 million creators worldwide, according to Linktree. They are using their skills, expertise, and creativity to attract an audience and monetize them. Of these creators, only about 2% (or 4 million of them) have more than 100,000 followers, while most creators (about 140 million

of them globally) have between 1,000 and 10,000 followers. According to Goldman Sachs, the number is 50 million global creators, with a 10-20% compound annual growth rate during the next five years. Creators earn income primarily through direct branding deals to pitch products as an influencer; via a share of advertising revenues with the host platform; and through subscriptions, donations and other forms of direct payment from followers. Brand deals are the main source of revenue at about 70%, according to survey data. Only about 4% of global creators are deemed professionals, meaning they pull in more than \$100,000 a year. Goldman Sachs Research expects their share of the creator universe to stay steady even as the overall ecosystem expands.

Goldman Sachs also expects for the creator economy to approach half-a-trillion dollars by 2027: "As the ecosystem grows, the total addressable market of the creator economy could roughly double in size over the next five years to \$480 billion by 2027 from \$250 billion today", Eric Sheridan, Senior Equity Research Analyst, covering the U.S. Internet sector writes. "That growth is roughly in line with the team's estimates for growth in global digital advertising spend over that period. The analysts expect spending on influencer marketing and platform payouts fueled by the monetization of short-form video platforms via advertising to be the primary growth drivers of the creator economy."

TVBIZZ Magazine takes a closer look at the creator-led entertainment phenomenon and see who are the most-popular creators in 2023 and why are they still relevant. As Williams, who is the former Chief Audience Officer of Maker Studios and former GM of Disney Online Originals, told TVBIZZ Magazine: "I saw very clearly while at Disney and Maker Studios the movement of kids and family audiences from traditional linear TV to YouTube...I realized there was an opportunity to create a new company that could partner with these

U.S. Kids' Favorite Social Media Platform or App

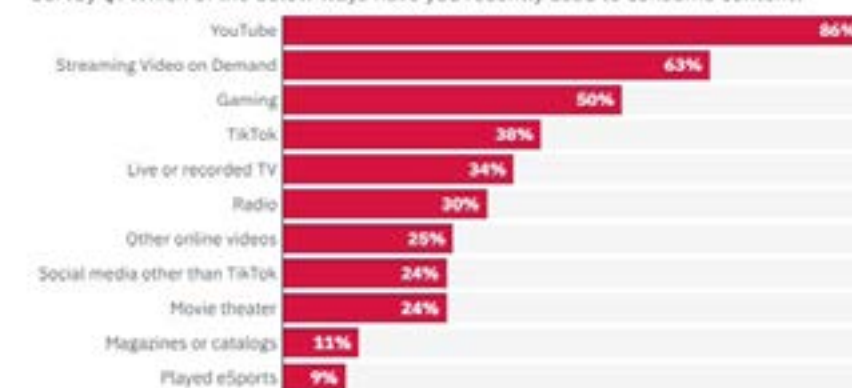


FOR MORE DATA, VISIT [VIZ](#)

SOURCE: PRECISE TV/GIRAFFE INSIGHTS (PRECISE ADVERTISER REPORT: KIDS); BASE: N=2,000 KIDS 2+

Content Platforms U.S. Kids Choose

Survey Q: Which of the below ways have you recently used to consume content?



FOR MORE DATA, VISIT [VIZ](#)

SOURCE: PRECISE TV/GIRAFFE INSIGHTS (PRECISE ADVERTISER REPORT: KIDS); BASE: N=2,000 KIDS 2+







What are the numbers in kids entertainment?

pocket.watch has the most popular kid stars on the planet and it has published some data about its most-popular stars. Leading the chart in both total subscribers and total lifetime views is *Love, Diana* with 304 million subs and 179 billion total lifetime views. Diana shares fascinating and playful adventures in her videos with her parents, Olena and Volodymyr, brother Roma, and baby Oliver. Her content includes vlogging, educational entertainment, roleplays, and children’s songs. Originally from Ukraine, the family behind the channel lives in Dubai for the last 3 years.

*Ryan’s World* is second in terms of popularity with 59.7 million subs and 81.6 billion total lifetime views. *Ryan’s World* is a children’s YouTube channel for children aged 2–6 featuring Ryan Kaji along with his mother, father, and twin sisters.

*Toys and Colors* is a family friendly YouTube channel featuring a group of girls, boys, Aunties, and Uncles who solve problems, learn, and develop good habits together. It is YouTube’s 3! Kid ensemble. They have over 80 million subscribers and receive 1B+ views per month across all of their extremely popular YouTube channel, with 65.2 billion lifetime views.

Who are the most-popular adult creators?

Forbes publishes the benchmark chart in this respect and for 2023 the 50 honorees on their second annual Forbes Top Creator list harnessed their combined 2.6 billion followers to haul in an estimated \$700 million in earnings. That’s up more than 20% from 2022’s \$570 million score. They’re not alone, in 2023 brands have spent an estimated \$21 billion on creator marketing, up from just \$1.6 billion seven years ago, according to the social media research firm, Influencer Marketing Hub.

To rank the world’s Top Creators, Forbes crunched data on the estimated earnings, follower counts, engagement rates, and entrepreneurial activities of thousands of



Jimmy Donaldson (MrBeast)



Olajide Olatunji (KSI)



Jake Paul

internet personalities with the help of the creator marketing firm, Influential.

The first on the list is a real beast – literally. Jimmy Donaldson (*MrBeast*) has earnings of \$82 million, total followers: 312 million and an average engagement rate of 9.8%. *MrBeast*’s fan base is nearly as large as the U.S. population. *MrBeast*’s power and popularity stem from his high production videos and stunts that include surviving in Antarctica

for 50 hours and building a Wonka chocolate factory. The YouTube titan has used his massive clout to earn a fortune in digital ad dollars—and build a real-world empire.

Second in the list of the top adult creators is Olajide Olatunji (*KSI*) with earnings of \$24 million; 112 million total followers and an average engagement of 6.5%. Olajide Olatunji, known as KSI, began reacting to FIFA video games on YouTube in 2009, attracting millions of followers for

his outlandish humor. He’s since gone from comedian to contender, transforming into a rapper and boxer, releasing two singles in 2023, and securing a multiyear distribution deal for his promotional company, Misfits Boxing. He’s the face of Prime Hydration alongside Logan Paul (#6 on the Top Creators list).

Third is Jake Paul with earnings of \$34 million; 66 million total followers and an average engagement of 1.6%. The outrage cycle is no stranger to Jake Paul, the Vine star turned boxer whose stunts on YouTube—such as surprise tattoos, eating dog food, and bathing in Icy Hot—have attracted millions of fans and attracted controversy including allegations of sexual misconduct, scamming fans, and most recently, an SEC charge for undisclosed cryptocurrency sponsorship. Still, Paul’s ability to orchestrate spectacles made him one of the highest-paid athletes in 2022. He landed a sponsorship with the energy drink Celsius, founded the sports betting app “Betr” that raised a \$50 million Series A, and this year, signed an MMA contract to fight in a new pay-per-view division.

What about content creators and artificial intelligence (AI)?

Generative AI and its use in content creation is a hot topic right now. That’s enough to make creators wonder if they should be adding AI to their content creation process, The Leap notes.

In a survey from The Influencer Marketing Factory, 94.5% of content creators said they were already using AI tools for at least one task. Most of them are using it to edit content (21%), generate images and videos (20.9%), or generate text and captions for accessibility (19%). So, if you’re a creator, you should probably be at least trying AI out. While AI offers immense potential, ethical considerations must not be overlooked. The human touch that creators bring to their content is irreplaceable. Striking the right balance between AI-driven efficiency and human creativity will be a key challenge. ■



# CJ ENM – Going for More

In just a few years, Korean giant CJ ENM has established itself firmly on the international TV scene thanks to its hit series and big entertainment shows. But more is coming in 2024 as CJ ENM's Head of Global Marketing Sehee Jang tells Stanislav Kimchev.

**CJ ENM is one of the leading entertainment companies, established in 1995. You offer a vast portfolio of scripted and non-scripted content. What are the main threats and opportunities for your company nowadays as a producer and distributor of K-Content and can you talk**

**a little bit about the far-reaching implications of K-Content to other industries in Korea?**

We proudly insist that the scripted content of the Korean series has gained recognition as top-notch content in the global entertainment industry. With this constant syndrome, from now on, we believe non-scripted content can grasp much more opportunities in the global market. Korean entertainment shows possess undeniable strength to provoke excitement among global audiences with their exciting and diverse formats.

For instance, the format of *I Can See Your Voice* has been remade and aired in approximately 30 countries, and *Jinny's Kitchen* has been serviced in Prime

Video while being loved and praised by global viewers. Like these titles, the popularity of Korean entertainment shows is growing more than ever, which seems to overwhelm the popularity of K-POP, K-dramas, and K-movies.

Specifically speaking, the entertainment shows of CJ ENM are receiving a positive and profound reputation regardless of age and cultural differences, through providing refreshing excitement. CJ ENM plans to further dedicate to producing and distributing much more diversified Korean entertainment shows and focus on enhancing the productive growth of the Korean entertainment show business in the global industry.

**To what do you attribute the huge success of Korean content around the world, both scripted and non-scripted?**

The Korean show business has achieved numerous amounts of development in manifold fields; playwrights, producers, cast, and staff, based on the accumulation of an unrivaled number of experiences and techniques. With solid collaborations with global partners, the supremacy of Korean content has now been recognized not only within the Asian market but also in the global industry. Thanks to our aspiration to develop and demonstrate storytelling methods that can evoke sympathy among viewers from different backgrounds, assisted by splendid production skills, well-made content has been produced.

Furthermore, the development of the Korean show business has positively affected the training of cast and production staff. A lot of talents with prominent capacities and the production staff receiving global recognition have been discovered. To illustrate, Korean actors, staff, and the director of *Squid Game* have been awarded the prestigious Emmy Awards, and other global award ceremonies are spotlighting the excellence of Korean show business. Thus, we believe the staff with strong competency and the mastermind originating from such



*Jinny's Kitchen*



*My Lovely Liar*



talent have influenced the Korean shows' quality, which in the end has addressed the global success of the Korean content business.

**You have most recently announced partnerships with companies from Thailand, the Middle East, you also have been cooperating with US entertainment giants. Have you planned new partnerships for next year and entering new territories, for example Latin America?**

Latin America is an undeniably important market for us. We put strong efforts into selling diverse romance and family-themed series in the Latin American region, considering the viewers' preferences. We especially concentrate on satisfying Latin American audiences by providing Spanish-dubbed content, unlike other markets. For next year, we aim to increase the number of dubbed content to provide various Korean series for the Latin American market.

**What are CJ ENM's latest hit titles and which of your shows have been sold into the highest number of territories?**

CJ ENM is continuously selling both scripted and non-scripted titles. Based on strong partnerships with various global OTT services, such as Netflix, Prime Video, and Disney+, we desire to service the well-made titles of CJ ENM in the global market. To demonstrate, one of our non-scripted titles, *Jinny's Kitchen*, has been globally serviced in Prime Video, and recently, the spin-off series *Jinny's Kitchen: Team Building* has also been released globally. Furthermore, the romance series *My Lovely Liar* has been introduced to global audiences via local streaming platforms and was ranked 1st in more than 141 countries through Rakuten Viki.

**CJ ENM also operates Korea's leading streaming platform TVING. What is your streaming strategy,**

**have you planned expanding TVING's footprint and closing similar deals to that with Paramount?**

TVING's original series are now being introduced to global audiences through Paramount+. *Bargain*, for example, was named as the most-played title in 26 countries, including Canada, Australia, Brazil, Germany, and France, in which Paramount+ is being offered. Moreover, according to Flixpatrol, on October 12th, the title was ranked 1st in the TV show category in Paramount+. Being aligned with this phenomenon, *Bargain* has won "Best Screenplay" in the 2023 Canneseries, along with the "Critics Choice Award" in Seriencamp 2023, held in Germany. In addition, the show has gained global recognition by earning a nomination for the "Best Foreign Language Series" at the 28th Critics Choice Award. The viewers will be introduced to much more TVING original series via Paramount+. ■



### Johanna Törn-Mangs

is responsible for developing Yle's principles for responsible AI. She works as Director and Editor-in-chief at Svenska Yle, the department specialized in content for the Swedish speaking audience at Finland's national public broadcasting company. Johanna has worked as a journalist in Finland for twenty years. She has held numerous management positions, specializing in leading digital media teams. She has also worked as a newspaper, online, TV and radio reporter, as well as a foreign correspondent in the US and Sweden. Johanna holds a Master's of Science in Economics.

# Finnish Yle Introduces All-Encompassing AI Principles

Last October, Finland's public broadcasting company became one of the first media organizations in the world to introduce new principles of responsible artificial intelligence. The principles provide guidance on the use and development of artificial intelligence covering all operations within the company.

Johanna Törn-Mangs was responsible for developing Yle's AI principles and in this exclusive interview with Georgi R. Chakarov shares some of the details which Yle considered during the drawing up of the principles and also provided several examples of how Yle is already effectively using the advantages provided by the various AI tools. Johanna also stressed on the importance of the human factor and the dangers that the uncontrolled use of AI could present in the future, especially when it comes to misinformation.

**Johanna, Finland's national public broadcasting company - Yle - published its new principles of responsible artificial intelligence (AI) in October, becoming one of the first media organizations to do so. How do you define AI at Yle and how do you see its involvement in content, news production and broadcasting?**

Since there is no agreed definition for AI, it is practical for us to define it as a broad term for any system that queries data for output. These kinds of systems have lots in common in terms of what kind of challenges and questions we need to deal with when building or using them. At Yle we are focusing on a responsible approach to AI, and we believe that AI ethics and responsibility will become as important as journalistic ethics in media organizations.

Yes, we want to pilot and experiment with new technologies, but it is not enough to figure out how to accelerate the use of AI and maximize the use. We need to consider how we really want to use AI - what is the responsible way for a public media company? It is crucial that our use of AI is aligned with our mission and values.

We believe that responsibility is not only an intrinsic value but also frees energy, reducing many uncertainties. When there is support and information available for both legality and addressing ethical issues, development decisions become easier to make. Creativity needs boundaries, and these boundaries for responsible AI create psychological safety for experimenting and utilizing AI. It encourages us to focus

more on people instead of technology.

Yle's most important value is trust, and we shall not do anything to compromise the audience's trust in our news and other content. Without trust we cannot fulfill our mission. Transparency and reliability in AI development strengthen public trust in Yle.

One thing that was important when we wrote Yle's principles of responsible artificial intelligence is that they approach AI broadly. It was important for us that the principles cover the entire company, not only journalism, and they cover all technologies, not only generative AI. Writing them was a company wide effort, because we believe that AI affects all parts of the company.

Yle is one of the first media organizations to draft principles of responsible artificial intelligence covering an entire company's operations. They serve as the starting point for more detailed guidelines in the company, for example, generative AI policy, guidelines for developing algorithmic systems/using machine learning in our services, where and how we can use AI generated images, and so on.

**Yle's main principle is that people are always responsible for decisions and the outcome of the use of AI. What kind of safeguards will you introduce and how will you make sure this flagship principle is being upheld at all times?**

We are introducing a new governance model for the use and development of AI - 2024 will be very much learning what works and what does not. The idea is that no application is without a respon-

sible owner. We will use the governance model also to clarify the accountabilities in case of any harm caused by AI and aligning those with our current compliance work. We already have safeguards in the form of policies, checklists and compliance checks, but we will be developing these further to make them work better together to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

**How far along is Yle in terms of AI use? In which departments are you using this technology? Have you already aired/streamed AI-generated content?**

Yle has been a pioneer and we have been conducting AI experiments for



Audio drama character lines in the AI tool



decades, and the company has also taken AI experiments into production. AI has been used to build recommendations for our streaming service Yle Areena, to write news, to cut video clips, to write news in plain language, to suggest headlines, to transcribe and translate texts, to read weather reports on local TV, to write news in Ukrainian, to create audio news from online texts, to create election graphics, to create audio drama, and so on.

Even though we have used AI for a long time, ChatGPT has been a game-changer, because since it was launched, using AI has become much cheaper, easier and the end result is of a far better quality than before. These factors have led to a rising interest among our employees, both journalists and other employee groups, like programmers and HR experts, to start experimenting with and using and developing different AI tools.

AI can be used to automate our processes more to make them more efficient, it can make us work more intelligently, and it can help us innovate new processes and products.

AI helps us in doing many routine tasks much faster and easier, like text-to-speech, speech-to-text, translations, making news in different languages, plain language for the disabled, video and audio editing, syn-



thetic voices, analyzing big amounts of information in investigative journalism, and so on.

We believe that those media companies and individual journalists that are able to start using these tools will have an advantage, since it frees time and resources that can be put on creating new and unique content specifically for our target groups. This means that we can focus on doing journalism that requires human resources, like watchdog journalism, doing local stories by interviewing people in our communities, doing unique investigative journalism in our communities,

demanding answers from politicians, and so on.

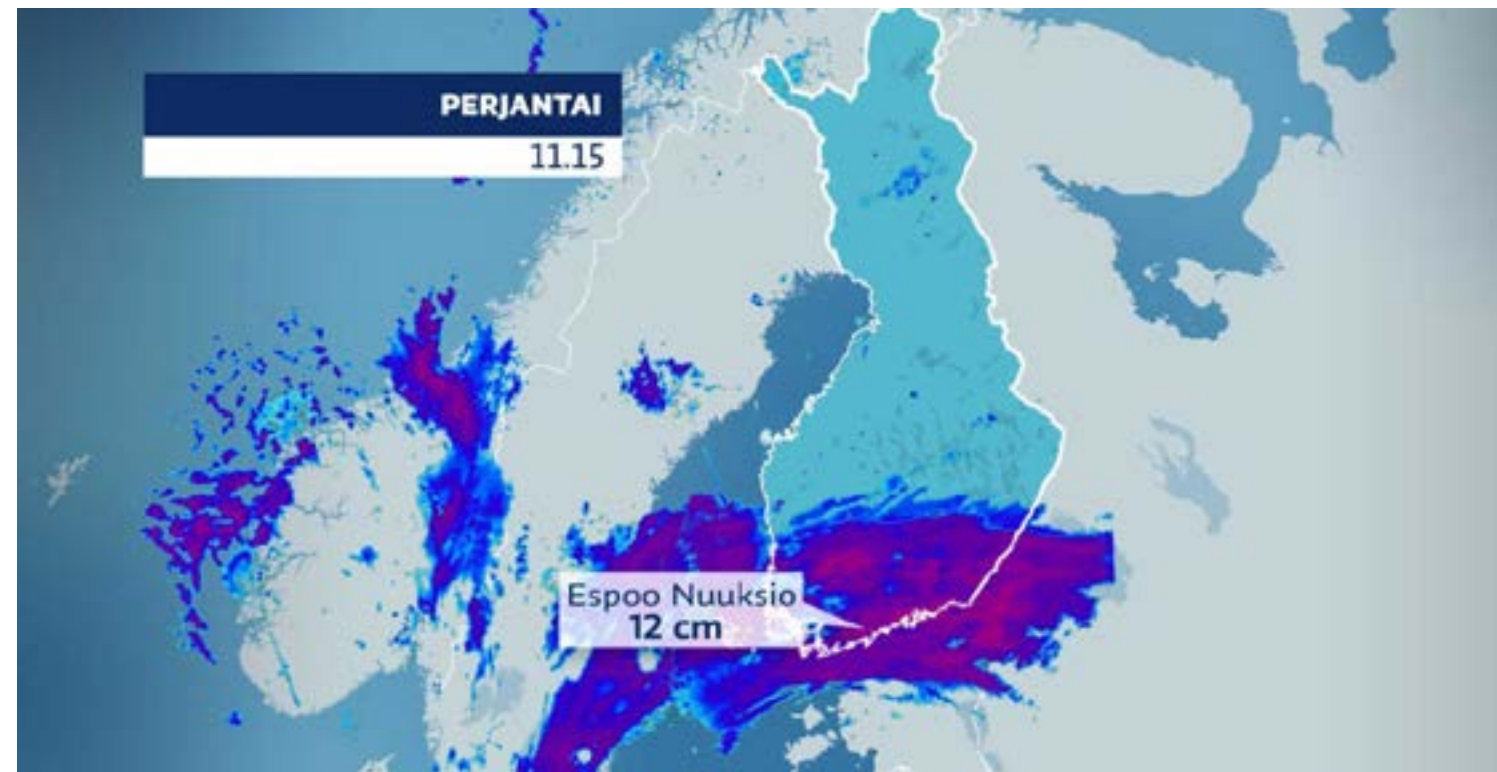
I'd like to describe two of Yle's most interesting uses of AI that were launched recently a little bit more in detail:

#### **Reading weather reports by AI**

The regional weather forecasts were presented in pictures, by showing a map with the weather forecast for the area. Music was played in the background. Because the regional TV news does not have a presenter who could have read the weather forecast, an alternative solution was sought. It was decided to try if the weather forecast could be read out loud with the help of artificial intelligence. The text-based weather forecast sent by the Finnish Meteorological Institute was used as a basis, which each area's producer at Yle modified for publication. After that, automatic processes were created to put a synthetic voice to read the text, which was then automatically sent back and the voice was placed on the weather map. In May 2023, this was put into production. The feedback has been positive all around, people have liked the female voice of the AI and the service for the visually impaired has improved.

#### **The use of AI assisted playwriting and speech synthesis at Yle's drama department**

Yle's drama department had started experimenting with writing AI assisted audio drama in 2017 together with some researchers at University of Helsinki. *Paradise Family* made



with Dramaturg.io but with human actors was published in 2021. When ChatGPT was released in November 2022 Yle's dramaturgist Juha-Pekka Hotinen wanted to test what was possible to do with ChatGPT. He involved four other tech-savvy people in the project - a dramaturgist, a sound designer and two speech synthesis programmers. The aim was to test two things: how to write an audio drama with Chat GPT; and how to create actors for the drama by using speech synthesis.

The team chose the subject of the drama: how the appreciation of art and culture has evolved. The two dramaturgists planned the scenes and instructed AI to write according to the scenes. They also had to explain to ChatGPT what a scene was. The dramaturgists described the main characters, for example age and personality, to ChatGPT. The dramaturgists worked actively with ChatGPT - evaluated the dialogue and the scenes that AI created, and gave new instructions if it wasn't good or interesting enough. Sometimes only the seventh version of the scene was accepted... ChatGPT created the characters, wrote and rewrote the scenes and the dialogue according to the instructions. The voices of six real people were used to create the actors for the play. Some of them are employees at Yle,

and their voices were taken from Yle's TV archive. None of the voices were used as such, they were mixed to create unique voices for each character and were not supposed to be recognizable.

The 47-minute audio drama was ready in the spring 2023 and was published in our streaming service Yle Areena and broadcast on radio in the fall. It is a drama in episodic form, consisting of different scenes and essays about the meaning and value of art in society from different perspectives. The audience thought that it was interesting, weird, funny - but everybody knew that it was written and acted by AI which clearly had an effect on the feedback. According to Yle's dramaturgists, it was artistically on an average level, "we've published better audio dramas made by humans, but also worse". Some quality problems remained - the speech synthesis was not perfect, some scenes could have been worked on more. If these problems had been fixed, the quality would have risen substantially. On the other hand, ChatGPT proved to be quite creative by connecting things in an unexpected way.

#### **What will be the new media experiences Yle has prepared thanks to AI?**

We are accelerating personalization of our services and AI has obviously a central role there. We are utilizing

it for example to enable multi-lingual services as well as finding links between content pieces to help people to discover new content. And of course personal recommendations.

We believe that people will demand personalized news services, and we are working on developing a public service algorithm. However, at this point, we don't believe in customized news only, because of our mission and values. We believe that as a public service company we need to build in our values in our algorithm, which means that we will not only reinforce the audience's pre-existing preferences, but also optimize values like universality, serendipity, exposure of diversity, transparency, collective media experiences, when we develop our recommendation algorithm. It will rather be a model where there are many different ways and opportunities to find and consume content than one big algorithm that rules it all.

#### **What is the perception of AI in Finnish society? Have you seen an increase in the use of such tools in Finland?**

In general, Finns tend to be pragmatic and positive about technology and we have a high rate of digitalization in both our public and private sector customer services. Latest studies found



Dramaturg.io 1.4. - artificial Intelligence program by Essi Salmenkivi

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Juha-Pekka Hotinen in the Artlab studio in Helsinki, where Paradise Family was recorded

that the majority of people in Finland believe AI will boost industry efficiency and personal productivity. At the same time a sizable chunk (around a third of the respondents) think it will weaken privacy protections, decrease the number of jobs and make it harder to access accurate information. Generative AI is currently definitely impacting the perception a lot - many people who were not concerned or did not pay attention before are now forming their views about AI.

I think many media companies in Finland are now accelerating their use of AI. Some are creating new teams and writing their own AI principles. Some have also published new features or products made by AI.

**Yle is constantly assessing AI related risks. What has your research shown in this respect, what are the biggest threats you see in using AI?** AI offers a lot of possibilities for Yle, and we have the resources and the knowledge to use AI in a responsible way. We also have a good coverage of local journalists that will cover the whole country, and good possibilities to create unique journalism that no machine can deliver. However, there are a lot of risks, and for media companies it is crucial to focus on responsible use of AI. One of the biggest ethical challenges is if we can trust the largest AI companies

and be sure that the solutions that they develop are up to our ethical standards.

A big challenge for responsible media will be to make it possible for people to construct their world view with the help of information they can trust. Responsible media companies could cooperate with each other around watermarking and other proofs of authenticity.

The biggest challenge for media companies will, however, be in the media landscape that we are operating in. Companies that have no background in media, and that do not have the same ethical standards as traditional media companies, will be able to overflow the platforms with huge amounts of news and other content made by AI. There will be AI agents that decide what the audience will see. It will be harder for the audiences to find reliable content in the huge amounts of content that look reliable, even though it is not. We will be flooded by fake news, fake pictures, and so on. There has been a lot of discussion about misinformation, and I think that those fears are justified, because AI makes it very easy to make content that looks real. We also have past examples of huge operations to influence elections around the world and AI scales misinformation in an unprecedented way. One future risk that is seldom discussed is what it means for

the whole internet when AI generated content will be fed as a training material for yet another AI.

**As we saw from both the writers' and actors' strikes in the US, one of the major concerns when using AI in the entertainment industry is the issue of copyright. How is Yle addressing those concerns?**

Creators' rights on their work and benefiting from it is a rather big philosophical question and we expect that discussion to continue lively in the coming years. Our principle for copyright states: "When we use AI, we take into account copyright as well as the rights of people working on creative tasks. At the same time, we are aware that machine learning challenges existing compensation models for creative work. We seek new methods together with other players in the industry."

We believe that we are in a transformative phase regarding ways how creative work is compensated. We need to innovate and negotiate within our industry as well as with the technology players while being firm about opposing the overly permissive practices of some technology companies that release products without thoroughly considering potential risks and ethical implications. We are currently prohibiting data scraping in our digital services for commercial purposes. We are also in constant dialogue with copyright organizations we have agreements with.

**As a public broadcaster, have you planned educational campaigns re the use of AI for your viewers/users?** We have said that our goal is that both Yle employees and those who use Yle's services should have the opportunity to understand what the algorithms do and what data they use. We have discussed educational campaigns and our aim is to educate our audience, but we have no concrete plans yet.

Recently we have discussed our approach to AI with the other Nordic public service media companies multiple times, and we are constantly sharing best practices and strategies amongst us. At the moment, we are not developing together, but it is possible to cooperate around this in the future. ■

# Streaming Innovation Alliance: Goals and Challenges

The Streaming Innovation Alliance is a relatively new non-governmental organization set up by leading streaming players to advocate for U.S. policies that would stimulate and not hinder the booming sector of streaming. Greg Saphier, Senior Vice President External Affairs, Motion Picture Association, talked with Yako Molhov about the current goals and challenges faced by the SIA at the start of 2024.

**The Streaming Innovation Alliance announced its formation in September 2023. Who are its founding members and which are the companies that have most recently joined the Alliance?**

The Founding Members include: AfroLandTV, America Nu Network, BET+, discovery+, For Us By Us Network, Max, MPA, MotorTrend+, Netflix, Paramount+, Peacock, Pluto TV, Telemundo, TelevisaUnivision, VAULT, ViX, and The Walt Disney Company.

We're open to new members and have received a lot of inquiries from streamers interested in learning more about our work and how they can join. We have nothing to announce at this time but stay tuned.

**What are the main goals of your organization?**

We have two main goals. Our first goal is to tell streaming's positive story to state and federal policymakers so that decisions affecting streaming services

and their viewers are made with full knowledge of the unprecedented value, diversity, and choice that exist in the highly competitive streaming market today. Our second is to advocate for smart policies that support innovative streaming services and viewers and against poorly thought-out efforts to impose rules designed for very different cable, satellite, or social media platforms to streaming.

We're grateful for the bipartisan advice and leadership of SIA Senior Advisors, former Congressman Fred Upton and former FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, in developing and pursuing these goals.

**You are working with platforms, advertisers, and regulatory bodies on creating a healthy ecosystem for streamers. What are the main elements of a healthy ecosystem and what are the main improvements that all players need to work on to reach this goal?**

Many of the main elements are in place. One element is the free and open competition with multiple options, approaches, and styles delivering new value and choice to consumers while at the same time giving creators new ways to reach audiences. This should be bolstered by light-touch, forward-looking regulation that protects consumers from unfair practices while allowing innovation and creativity to flourish.

The main improvement we are focused on is ensuring all stakeholders appreciate the ways streaming is different from legacy services like cable and satellite television or tech giants like social media platforms. SIA



"Streaming has taken video markets by storm and totally changed the way Americans find and watch video programming practically overnight. And our Alliance was organized to keep that dynamic, forward motion going - advocating for smart policies that build on streaming's success and ensure consumers continue to enjoy the incredible value, diversity, quality, and choice they cherish today."

**SIA Senior Advisor Mignon Clyburn**







**Greg Saphier** SVP of External Affairs at the Motion Picture Association, where he oversees the association's outreach to third party stakeholders. In this role, he educates diverse communities about the creative industries and policy frameworks that support storytellers. Greg also serves on the board of directors of the Copyright Alliance and is an American Council of Young Political Leaders alumnus. Prior to joining MPA, Greg served as senior director of state government affairs for NCTA – the internet & television association, representing the cable industry before state intergovernmental organizations.

members don't use public rights of way or broadcast spectrum and they don't allow unfettered and unvetted user posts and uploads. Policy solutions designed for those very different services and their unique challenges should not be applied to streaming.

**There is an ongoing debate in America whether digital and streaming players like Fubo or YouTube TV should get the same status as cable TV companies. A lot of politicians oppose this move. What is your position on this matter?**

We strongly oppose that proposal, which was considered and rightly rejected by the FCC a decade ago – unleashing the streaming boom consumers enjoy today.

**Do you accept members only from the States and are you exploring a potential international expansion for the Alliance in the future?**

We are focused on US policy and

"Decades old cable rules and suffocating franchise fees and taxes that long predate the internet are no way to regulate today's diverse, connected, innovative new streaming services. American viewers have voted with their remotes and policymakers at all levels of government should reject any new rules for streaming that could threaten innovation, drive up prices, or limit quality, value, and choice."

**SIA Senior Advisor Fred Upton**

audiences right now. A number of our members operate global services, and we do believe the policies and values we advocate are relevant everywhere streaming services operate.

**In September 2023 you released the Streaming Services Survey Research. What are the main take-aways? What do Americans think of streaming services?**

The survey shows that registered voters overwhelmingly favor streaming innovation and are wary of proposals to regulate the market. Seven out of 10 voters polled viewed streaming services favorably, with approval even higher among younger voters and in communities of color. While even larger numbers of voters expressed concern about the risks presented by online social media platforms, those fears do not apply to video streaming services and voters are more than twice as likely to trust streaming services with their data as social media networks. By a 2:1 margin or more, voters worry new regulations could require streaming services to collect more data or deter them from offering sensitive programming. And two-thirds fear new rules will threaten diverse and independent services the most.

**What have been the major threats and opportunities for streamers and how is the SIA addressing them?**

We've been active educating state and federal policymakers about the ways flawed proposals like cable-style regulation or local streaming taxes could hurt consumers

and set back streaming innovation. Streaming is delivering unprecedented value, diversity, and choice to viewers today so new regulations, taxes and fees rightly face a very high bar. Put another way, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

**Let's talk about one of the hottest topics in the past couple of years: artificial intelligence (AI). What are the discussions with your members and partners regarding the technology and its use in streaming?**

We have not directly engaged in the AI debate but our member MPA has weighed in with thoughtful comments. MPA's overarching view, based on the current state, is that while AI technologies raise a host of novel questions, those questions implicate well-established copyright law doctrines and principles. At present, there is no reason to conclude that these existing doctrines and principles will be inadequate to provide courts and the Copyright Office with the tools they need to answer AI-related questions as and when they arise. The Copyright Office has an important role to play in ensuring a careful and considered approach to AI and copyright. At the current time, however, there is no need for legislation or special rules to apply copyright law in the context of AI.

**How has the SAG-AFTRA strike affected your activities?**

We're just glad the strike is over and production is ramping back up – which benefits everyone in streaming and the entire entertainment community. ■

# War in Israel: The Impact on the Television Industry

October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023 marked the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas following the terrorists' campaign in southern Israel that has left more than 1200 Israeli and foreign citizens slaughtered and 240 Israeli and foreign nationals, including children, women and elderly people, taken to the Gaza strip. The attack will go down as one of the worst terrorist attacks in history. As of late December more than 100 people were still believed to be held in captivity by the Iran-backed terrorist group which now controls a only small part of the Gaza strip.

TheMarker reported that around 30 large film and TV productions have been frozen since the start of the war and thousands of people from the industry have lost their jobs while the government is not doing anything to compensate them. The trade unions in the industry appealed to the Minister of Finance, Bezalel Smotrich, and emphasized that the outline published by the ministry ignores the work model and payment conditions of the workers. Zvika Gottlieb from the Film and Television Producers Association said that this is the biggest crisis the Israeli film and TV industry has ever faced as there is no clarity when regular shooting will be resumed.

The website also shared that since the start of the war Israelis have started watching more TV, with Keshet 12 attracting over 50% of the audience in primetime. However, the same source notes that the Israeli TV ad market dropped by a third in November. The channels offered numerous discounts which attracted some smaller advertisers but could not compensate for the decline interest among companies.

During these very difficult times for Israel and its people, TVBIZZ Magazine contacted leading Israeli broadcasters, distributors and content producers to share their thoughts on the impact the war against Hamas has caused to the once booming TV industry in Israel. Dan Weisman, Head of Formats & Development, Reshet 13, Sharon Levi, Managing Director, yes Studios, and Assaf Gil, CEO Gil Formats & Chairman of Gil Productions, answered Yako Molhov's questions.

**How has Israel's war with the terrorists from Hamas affected your business so far, and what will be the long-term effect on the country's media industry?**

**Dan Weisman:** Discussing the long-term effects of the ongoing war in Israel is difficult because the situation is constantly changing. The first month of the war was chaotic, and things have not settled down much since then. On October 7th, all Israeli TV channels switched to broadcasting news, and that is all they have been showing ever since.

All the TV channels had to cancel their regular shows and switch to the news. No one wanted to watch anything else, and the national mood was low. Advertisers stopped spending money, and many shows were postponed or canceled, including Peking Express and Star Academy here at Reshet, and The Traitors at Keshet. Only lately we started to broadcast other shows. Mainly fast to produce talkshows, and one original sitcom. It was a hard decision but we feel the audience needs some kind of a relief, but it's difficult to say when

everything will return to its pre-war state. Due to the ongoing situation in Gaza, the loss of soldiers, and the kidnapping incident, it's hard to predict what will happen next. The situation remains unresolved, and nobody knows how it will eventually end.

**Sharon Levi:** It's hard to answer this question without speaking about our current state of mind. The recent atrocities and ongoing war, plus the constant worry for our hostages and soldiers fighting for our right to live in peace, have definitely taken a toll on everyone in Israel. The creative community and the media industry have been forced to rethink and adapt to the changes and the general mood in our country. We are fortunate to work in an industry that can help make a change, be it from taking an active part in the international pro-Israel propaganda, through broadcasting content for children who have lost their homes and seek security, to a bit of escapist TV in between the news broadcasts. Some of the shows and series that were planned to launch in Q4 have been postponed until we find a timing that is more appropriate.

We are creating content for the Israeli audiences that suit the situation i.e children's content, documentaries about the October 7th massacre, and have taken out content that could trigger negative and PTSD responses from our viewers.

We had a lot of international trips planned in the October-December period, but unfortunately, we had to cancel. However, we are working on creative ways to connect with our clients and penetrate new markets. Long term is quite hard to define at the moment. We continue to focus on co-productions with our international partners who have been very supportive and empathetic to our situation and of course, format and tape sales which are part of our core business, prioritising our new upcoming releases *Night Therapy* (featuring Shira Haas), *Lifeline* (new documentary format) and the new exciting second season of *The Chef* as well as our much-travelled formats such as *Your Honor*, *On the Spectrum* and *The Conductor*.

**Assaf Gil:** The immediate effects have to do with the broadcasters' reaction to freeze any production





Sharon Levi



Dan Weisman



Assaf Gil

that does not feel necessary for them in the near future. The commercial broadcasters have lost at least a quarter of transmission as from October 7th there are no regular shows on the air – only newscasts and the odd comedy show that offers viewers a chance to relax a bit in between terrible news items. We were fortunate to have a few shows in production and so were able to maintain a certain amount of work but a few projects were frozen for the time being like *The Masked Singer* which I hope we can renew soon. But all the productions have no clear transmission dates until the war situation clears. As far as long terms effects are concerned, it is very probable that after the fighting we're heading toward a recession which will lower advertising spending and thus will affect the TV market once more. In short, not an optimistic view...

**What are your expectations from the state in terms of support in this difficult situation and how do you protect your employees?**

**Sharon Levi:** yes Studios is part of a large group of companies which

also include Israel's largest mobile business (Pelephone) and is owned by the strongest telecommunications company in the country (Bezeq). I'm proud to be part of this company, which has been active in volunteer work, given endless donations and undertaken charitable initiatives for the people who have lost their loved ones and their homes and for the soldiers who are fighting behind enemy lines. Our government is expected to support all those who've been affected by the war, including the creative and media industries. We expect the minister of communications to hear our voices and address the needs of the production and broadcast community, although I can imagine that the support may take a long time. We are relying on our international partners to work together with us to bring good, compelling stories from Israel to the world, as have they have done until now and, we assume, will continue to do so.

**Assaf Gil:** The government did publish some support initiatives for business that were affected by the war (at least so far). As we continue to work on a few

productions that were not frozen, we are so far able to pay our employees.

**What has been the reaction from your international partners and clients and do you expect more co-productions shot outside of Israel given the war?**

**Dan Weisman:** I am the head the formats and development department, where I talk to international distributors about new programs that can be made in Israel. We usually communicate through Zoom calls and face-to-face meetings at conferences. Unfortunately, I had to cancel my participation in the MIP conference due to the events of October 7th. But I spoke to everyone I was supposed to meet at the conference, and they were very understanding and empathetic. It's not easy to make people in the international arena understand the situation in our Middle Eastern neighborhood, but I keep trying.

This is an exceptionally complex event to understand when you don't live the history of the conflict and the reality and daily routine in Israel and the Middle East. Many days, we go to

work, and during the day, there are alarms due to missile attacks and, of course - the loss of personal security for each of us following the massacre that happened on the seventh of October undermined a lot of our basic assumptions.

Naturally, many people are very interested in what is currently happening in our region, and the conflict arouses many emotions in the international arena, so I find myself quite a few times as a kind of ambassador of the country - explaining the events and the strength of Israel's reaction to October 7th. I find it challenging to describe the intensity of the physical pain experienced by hearing the stories that are slowly being told in the news releases and newspapers, seeing the videos from that cursed Sabbath, and the kidnapping incident that is still ongoing. You can't stay the same person after these events; it leaves your soul wounded.

**Sharon Levi:** In terms of production, we foresee that those being shot outside of Israel will continue in the near future, and we may also be able to shoot many of them within our borders. The majority of the people we work with are well educated and peace-loving people and therefore have been supportive and empathetic to our situation.

Nonetheless, we are sadly witnessing the rise of hundreds of pro-Palestinian protests and anti-Semitic acts of violence around the world, which have also filtered into our industry.

IDFA in Amsterdam, led by the director of the festival, has not only given a voice to pro-Palestinian protesters but also applauded them as they took to the stage. Stockholm International Film Festival has made it clear that they do not wish to host Israeli content and creators. And although both events have issued belated apologies, for the Israeli community it was too little too late. We urge people to do their research and educate themselves properly without relying solely on what they see on social media. It is vital, especially in the content business with all the responsibilities it brings, that people understand the full 360 story of the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict throughout the years, so they can address it with balance, objectivity, and the facts.

**Assaf Gil:** We have one international drama project that we're involved in and that wasn't affected by the war (due to shoot in the later part of 2024) and the rest of our productions are local adaptations of formats and concerning these, the reactions of our international partners were supportive and positive. All of them understand that these are trying times for the Israeli market and are patient that these times will eventually pass.

**When the war ends do you expect a shift in the themes, issues, and stories being told?**

**Dan Weisman:** The events that took place on October 7th were rare and significant, and I believe that they will bring about significant changes in the country. It is difficult for me to imagine that both the government and the people will not respond appropriately to such a once-in-a-century event.

I am convinced that after the war ends, Israeli society will need to undergo a long period of reorganization. It is difficult to predict how the war and its events will change the political landscape of the country. However, it is almost certain that the war will have a long-lasting impact on the attitudes and opinions of the people.

It is difficult to summarize everything that is happening in the country in a short conversation. The last few months have been dramatic, and only time will tell if the people of Israel will return to their old ways of escapist entertainment or if they will seek something more meaningful.

**Sharon Levi:** After the war (God willing) our country and people will never be the same. We are already looking to adapt to a new reality, taking into consideration that the narrative has changed. Telling aspirational, uplifting and hopeful stories together with documenting the actual events that occurred on October 7th is the main goal. Trying to comfort and heal through content is an important mission as well as sending this message out to the world. We will never forget what happened here (and

is still happening) and we would hope that international broadcasters and streamers will show what occurred and work with us to strengthen the narrative that acts of terrorism should always be overcome.

**Assaf Gil:** Absolutely but it's very difficult to say how. Some think comedy will be needed, other prophesize escapist shows, emotional content... it's very difficult to say. One thing's for sure – after 2.5 months of relentless newscasts, people will need to rest.

**How long do you expect it will take to recover the media and production market in the country?**

**Dan Weisman:** This is the million-dollar question - no one can tell you when the war in Gaza will end and whether a war will break out in the north of the country as well. After it ends, it will take some time before they start producing big primetime shows again. Many programs for all channels have been filmed and edited and are waiting to be reassigned, and the economy must recover at the end of the day. Something encouraging happened in the last war - people returned to watching television, and the ratings prove that television as a device is back in the center of our living room. You need to redefine her role and find a way to keep the audience when the situation in the country calms down.

**Sharon Levi:** To be able to go to work these days and do what we love is a blissful distraction. We are not sitting and waiting for this to be resolved as it will take a long time. Israel is a country that is quick to adapt to ongoing changes and I believe, and already see, that even though some productions and development may have slowed down, we have no plan to stop our creativity. On the contrary, now more than ever, we have a lot more to say. We look forward to the days to come, for our hostages to return home and for the safety of our amazing soldiers, my son included. God bless.

**Assaf Gil:** If the assumptions that recession may be upon us after the war, it might take a very long time to recover but this is yet to be seen. I think we will be lucky to go back to the television situation of October 6th during the course of 2024. ■





Sheila Aguirre



Lisa Kramer



Hannah Pillemer



Courtney Thomasma

# New Advisory Board Tackles New Challenges for Returning NATPE Global

This year, NATPE Global returns with a new ownership, rebranded event and a new location to Miami taking on the challenge to continue the great history of the NATPE brand with a fresh start and a revamped concept aiming to further expand the importance of the first major international market and event of the year in the calendar of executives from the global media industry. To achieve this, the new owners from Brunico Communications set up an Advisory Board made up of top executives advising on the strategy and development of the NATPE brand for the future.

TVBIZZ Magazine did a quick Q&A session about the relaunch of the market in Miami with four members of that board, including: Courtney Thomasma, Executive Vice President of Streaming at AMC Networks, Hannah Pillemer, Executive Vice President, Creative Services, MarVista Entertainment, Lisa Kramer, President of International TV Licensing, Paramount Global Content Distribution, and Sheila Hall Aguirre, Executive Vice President, Co-Production and Distribution, Fremantle International.

## What is your main role and responsibilities as a member of NATPE Global's Advisory Board?

**Courtney Thomasma:** I am excited to represent AMC Networks as a NATPE Global Advisory Board member. As the company's Executive Vice President of Streaming, I bring a wealth of research experience and a data-driven approach to content strategy and brand-building. This board is a great opportunity to collaborate with my peers and share insights on the trends, challenges, and opportunities impacting our industry. Cross-industry cooperation and information sharing are crucial for our collective success during this moment of constant change.

**Hannah Pillemer:** First, I am so honored to be a member of NATPE's Global Advisory Board. As I see it,

I am there, along with my fellow members of the Board, to share real-world experiences, concerns and ideas in an effort to improve and enhance NATPE as an association through its mission, conferences, and programming. Collectively, we have a good understanding of the dynamics of the marketplace of what we want and need from NATPE to be valuable to its members.

**Lisa Kramer:** My role along with the others is to advise on industry current topics that we would like to see discussed and highlighted at NATPE. We also try to come up with ideas to enhance the experience for our fellow attendees and distributors.

**Sheila Aguirre:** NATPE has new owners, and while NATPE is new to Brunico, Brunico is not new to the industry. Brunico has a long-standing, established history as a publish-

er and organizer of global industry events. My role is to support the Brunico team who are working overtime to make NATPE a global success, and to contribute to the event's future growth and development.

## What are the main challenges for the content industry in today's fast-changing world and how is NATPE Global tackling those challenges and issues?

**Courtney Thomasma:** Competition for viewers' attention and loyalty continues to increase with the proliferation of platforms and new options. NATPE is a marketplace and a think-tank that brings together some of the most innovative leaders and companies in our industry. The organization's goal to help us each advance our business, share knowledge, and celebrate collective success is more



important now than ever before. At AMC Networks, we are eager to explore partnerships and collaborations that bring new options and benefits to viewers. NATPE is the perfect place to meet new partners and generate unique ideas.

**Hannah Pillemer:** It feels like we have been saying for years and years that our industry is in a rapid evolution. And, that's still true today. So many changes in consumer behavior and content consumption, in distribution strategies and platforms, an explosion of content creation from every corner of the Globe and, of course, business models. NATPE is focused on ensuring that its members stay well-informed and educated on the marketplace, business trends and how to differentiate themselves from the pack while extracting the greatest value revenue-wise. And, of course, following a few years of virtual interactions, nothing beats being back together in person in Miami - especially in our industry.

**Lisa Kramer:** One of the main challenges is just to keep up with the fast-changing industry, being cognizant of how these changes are impacting our licensees, and adjusting our approach to ensure we can still maximize our opportunities.

**Sheila Aguirre:** There are multiple challenges. In the past few years, we've witnessed declining audiences in traditional media, producers are increasingly struggling to monetize their content, more ad dollars are going to social media, attention spans are shorter, and there's too much content on the market.

NG is about diversity, it's about uniting global industry executives to network, and to encourage meaningful dialogue between producers, distributors and platforms to find real solutions. Content is the foundation for these conversations. The current environment dictates the need to deliver premium content that is unique, that engages audiences, and that can move effortlessly from one platform to another and continue to entertain audiences for years to come after the first episode has aired.

Too much good content is getting lost. Either it's not getting acquired, because there's too much to sort through; or if it is acquired, con-

sumers don't find it because it's not being promoted. Some platforms are only concerned about promoting their own originals, which hinders good content from getting noticed and underserves their audience, but it also opens an opportunity for savvy platforms that want to satisfy their audiences' appetite with the right content. More than ever, there's a need to deliver what consumers want.

**What about the main challenges for your company and you as a content executive, looking into 2024?**

**Courtney Thomasma:** We're dedicated to continuing to deliver shows and movies that our viewers and subscribers love and stand out in a competitive marketplace. To help make this happen, I rely on my relationships with content creators, distributors, partners, researchers, and beyond. Being part of the NATPE community and the Global Advisory Board is a great way to grow and expand these important relationships.

**Hannah Pillemer:** It's all about making an impact right now - about staying ahead of the trends and changes. We are constantly thinking about what's ahead and who is the next gen of meaningful talent to invest in or what's the best way to tell a story to have the most influence. How do we ensure our creative product offerings maintain the consistent quality, impact and marketability on which we have built our reputation and on which our clients have come to expect? Almost everything we do now is curated to the platform or the circumstance. There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. Even when it comes to marketing and PR we need to ensure that we are level-setting for our creative partners and talent so that you're not going to see an out-of-home billboard for a platform that can hit millions and millions of potential viewers through algorithms and "Welcome Screens."

**Lisa Kramer:** The main challenge is always balancing our internal needs with the needs of our clients to come to the best solutions for everyone while making our programming as successful as possible for the company and our profit participants! Growing our IP benefits all stakeholders

- us as owners as well as those who license it in an ever-changing business.

**Sheila Aguirre:** All roads lead to good content. The challenge isn't only about finding a good story, it's also knowing how to tell that story. It has to be told in such an intriguing and unique way that audiences are hooked from the very beginning until the end. But as good as a story might be, it needs to make its way onto the right platform and be given proper promotion. It's supply chain management, each part of the process needs to be skillfully managed to achieve the best end result.

**What are your expectations for the 2024 event which is being organized by its new owner Brunico Communications?**

**Courtney Thomasma:** This event will be a perfect start to 2024, a way to gain invaluable insights and learn best practices from a vast array of industry experts. The unique conversations that will take place in Miami will encourage new thinking and collaboration. After years of attending virtual events, it's a great time to reconnect in person and be a part of the excitement during such an innovative and dynamic time in our industry.

**Hannah Pillemer:** It's great to see NATPE return to its roots and truly serve a Global audience. So much of what we do hits local, regional and global clients and while our company has an enormous foothold in Latin America, whether its clients in the U.S., Canada, Europe and beyond, NATPE is capturing buyers and sellers from around the world and bringing us together again. It will be fascinating to see how, over the next couple of years, all of the content-focused markets find their unique place in our ecosystem.

**Lisa Kramer:** So far Brunico has been open to learn from the attendees via the advisory committee, so I'm looking forward to see how they implement our suggestions!

**Sheila Aguirre:** It's important for Brunico to establish their own identity -- to make themselves known as the company that is remaking NATPE, under new ownership and with a new team -- with the goal to connect the global industry, to tackle the many challenges and incubate solutions. ■



# What's Next After the Strikes

By Yako Molhov

One of the toughest years for television in the United States is over! The Writers Guild of America (WGA) voted to end its strike on September 27; The Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) strike ended just over a month later, on November 8, 2023. The writers and actors managed to secure better pay, more transparency from streaming services and safeguards from having their work exploited or replaced by artificial intelligence. The strikes also resulted in changes and ad-

vancements for future projects, suggesting that the efforts made by unions will have a positive impact on the industry.

2023 proved quite difficult for the entire showbiz industry in the country and while the US writers' and actors' strikes are over, the almost six months of production stoppages led to a reduced supply of content. There is also a significant dose of uncertainty about what exactly the new normal might be.

Part of this new normal is the fact that viewers did not feel the effects of the strike that much. As

Nielsen outlined in its Top of 2023 report: "while the writers' strike constrained the stream of new content for the year, the growing abundance of programs and movies across linear and streaming channels continues to engage TV audiences for about half of their daily time with media. TV engagement has normalized following the heights reported during the pandemic, and the explosion of choice is no longer inspiring increases in TV usage. On average, the typical adult spends more than 10 hours each day with media, with about half dedicated



to TV content. "Nielsen's annual report for 2023 reasserts the importance of traditional TV, while also noting the importance of streaming nowadays: "given the abundance of streamable content, much of which can be watched on demand, streaming has grown to account for a sizable portion of total TV usage, hitting a high-water mark of 38.7% in July 2023. Traditional, scheduled television programming, however, remains a dominant component of the media mix, with broadcast and cable accounting for more than 50% of TV usage throughout the year (53.2% in November). In aggregate, broadcast and cable programming in 2023 through Nov. 30 attracted an audience of 185.1 billion (61.2 billion for broadcast; 123.9 billion for cable)."

The writers' and actors' strikes were indicative of a larger industry problem in Hollywood where employees fought for better wages and working conditions, which have been hurt by the rise of streaming. Streaming has changed how viewers watch TV, but it's also changed how shows are made and how writers and actors are compensated for their work. The 2023 strikes may have contributed to the end of some series, but they also led to a great deal of positive changes for future projects. It will take a lot of time for these

projects, however, to appear on the small screen since writers, unlike in previous strikes, completely abandoned their work during the walk-outs and focused solely on defending their rights, rather than writing in the meantime.

In our MIPCOM issue, we outlined the results of the writers' strike: the WGA announced that the major wins are in terms of pay increases and AI. The pay increases are significant with notable increases for "high budget subscription video on demand" and streaming films. Essentially, the WGA got what it has been demanding from the start when it comes to AI: AI will not be able to write or rewrite literary material, and AI-generated material will not be used as a source material. In other words, an exec won't be able to ask ChatGPT to come up with a story and ask writers to turn it into a script that the exec owns the rights to. The WGA also "reserves the right to assert that exploitation of writers' material to train AI is prohibited by MBA or other law."

The guild announced that it won guarantees of minimum staffing in writers' rooms, a key issue for many of its members. Staffing will be determined by the number of episodes per season. Minimum pay rates will climb by more than 12% over three years. Also, residuals will rise for the use of TV shows and



movies outside of the United States and a bonus will be awarded for the most popular shows on streaming. Among the bigger wins is also

the ability to share in the success of content that performs well on streaming services like Netflix or a residual payment based on viewership, which will be calculated by hours streamed and runtime.

In a major development for the industry, following the deal, studios now will have to provide the WGA with actual data. Specifically "the total number of hours streamed, both domestically and internationally, of self-produced high-budget streaming programs." Netflix, Disney+, Amazon, and the other streamers won't be able to come up with weird metrics or meaningless self-referential rankings to give to the WGA.

SAG's new contract also includes major changes. Actors got an increase in basic wage minimums for a variety of projects for film and television. For anyone with a speaking role, minimums will increase by 7% effective Nov. 9, 2023, another 4% effective July 2024 and another 3.5% effective July 2025. Background actors will get an increase of 11% on Nov.

9 and the same increases as others going forward.

Actors will also get better streaming residuals and bonuses for hit shows and movies, defined as those seen by 20% or more of a streaming service's domestic subscribers in the first 90 days of release or the first 90 days of any year following that first year of release.

Bonuses will equal 100% of an actor's residual, but only 75% will go to the actor directly. The other 25% will go to a joint fund managed by reps from both the AMPTP and SAG-AFTRA, who will distribute it to actors in other streaming shows. The idea is to "spread the wealth".

SAG-AFTRA also got improvements in their pensions and new limits around virtual auditions, which can get costly and take up more time than auditions have in the past. Performers are to be sent audition material at least 48 hours in advance, have new guidelines around memorizing text and may not be asked to use a delivery site that isn't free, among other parameters.

As in the Writers' Guild of America (WGA) strike that ended in October, studios' growing use of generative AI was one of the final issues to be resolved in the SAG-AFTRA strike. The new contract creates protections around various scenarios in which AI would come into play. This includes consent and compensation around digital replicas created while an actor's working on a given project; consent and compensation around digital replicas created outside the scope of a project; and digital alterations to an actor's performance.

Another phenomenon which can be attributed partially to the strikes was *Suits*' growing popularity in 2023. As Nielsen writes in its annual report "with the lines between traditional and streaming growing increasingly blurry, it seems overly fitting that the biggest streaming story of the year involved a program that first ran on cable between 2011 and 2019 before landing on Peacock and Netflix. While the writers' strike had an impact on new content this year, the popularity of *Suits* was undeniable, landing in the top spot of Nielsen's top 10 list for a record 12 straight weeks—longer than Netflix originals *Ozark* (11 weeks), *You* (8 weeks) and *Stranger Things* (8 weeks). During its 12-week run at the top, audiences watched more than 36.8 billion minutes of the legal dramedy."

The studios warned that if a tentative agreement was not reached by the end of last year, the 2023-24 TV season would have been lost, and this summer's theatrical season would have been crippled. Things are not looking that bad now but certainly not rosy either. As Deadline wrote on December 28: "while there was a trickle of pitches in November and early December — a handful of them selling in competitive situations with big commitments including the Octavia Spencer-Hannah Waddingham comedy, which landed a straight-to-series order at Prime Video — the proverbial floodgates are expected to open in January for an influx of big packages. Bidding wars are likely but the overall level of offered commitments will be indicative of how much the industry's ongoing contraction and increased fiscal discipline have taken hold." ■





# 61<sup>ST</sup> SPRING INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION MARKET

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ming, formats, ratings, mergers and acquisitions, VOD and digital from the global TV industry

## JANUARY



### RTL and Talpa offer possible solutions to concerns around their merger

Talpa Network and RTL Netherlands have submitted possible solutions to the concerns around the merger plans. These so-called remedies were submitted to the ACM (Authority for Consumers and Markets) before Christmas and are being presented by them to other market parties, AD reports, quoting an ACM rep. These solutions are assessed by ACM, including through a market test. In this market test, various parties, such as media agencies and the Association for Advertisers, are asked what they think of the solution that Talpa and RTL came up with.

## Real Time

### 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.



### Love Match: new dating series set for Channel 4

Channel 4 have seemingly commissioned a new dating series, from Workerbee Productions, who also produced *The Bridge*. 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".

## FEBRUARY



### 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'."



### Cult shows from the 2000s may soon be returning on TV

The successful return of *Star Academy* has inspired French producers so much so that there have been rumors about a possible comeback of the show *Secret Story*, which has been talked about for years and seems to be unofficially confirmed in a mysterious message of *The Voice* posted on the show's official Twitter account. No channel has officially confirmed that information yet even if some sources suggest that it will be broadcast on Prime Video. The Amazon streaming service is also about to re-launch the production of another reality show created 22 years ago - *Popstars*. A final decision is expected to be made in the upcoming weeks.

### 'The Number 1 survival reality show in the world has arrived on Telefe'

Telefe has shared a new promo titled *Do you dare to challenge yourself?* in which it announces a casting call for a new reality show. "The Number 1 survival reality show in the world has arrived on Telefe. If you are 18 years old or older and would like to live a new experience to test your limits, this is the place for you!", the channel tweeted.

## MARCH



### 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.



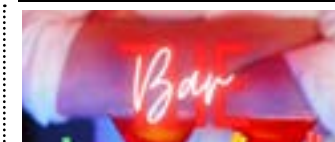
### Coyote announces acquisition of two international formats

Coyote Productions proudly announced the acquisition of two international formats: *Back to School* (Mediaset Distribution) and *Tool Club* (Passion Distribution). "Our ambition, through our Coyote subsidiary, is to create original formats that make sense and that drive us forward. But it's also about identifying the most 'feel good' foreign formats for our customers. Because this has been our DNA for many years and in the current context, relaxing and having fun with the family, while learning things at the same time, is what we all need!", said program director Julien Aubour.

### Taskmaster moves from SVT to TV4

SVT has lost the rights to *Bäst 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.

## APRIL



### The Bar: new reality show in the works at major streamer

*The Bar* is looking for experienced and established bar managers to take part in the new series and are open to take part in a brand new challenge. No further details are available, however casting information can be found online.



### Mediawan acquires international format rights to Hungry for Love

Mediawan Rights' unscripted department boards the sultry food dating format *Hungry for Love*, partnering with the co-producers to distribute the series and bring it to a global audience. Co-produced by Tel Aviv-based global film and television studio Sipur, led by CEO Emilio Schenker, and Stampede Ventures, the Los Angeles-based global media company headed by Greg Silverman, the unscripted series was created by Zipi Rozenblum, Head of Formats for Sipur, and produced by Israeli powerhouse HSCC.



### Red Arrow Studios International brings mystery, romance and adventure to MIPTV 2023

Red Arrow Studios International is heading to MIPTV 2023. Leading the company's scripted offering is *The Cone* (6 x 60'), a gripping new mystery crime drama produced by Kingfisher Films & Keeper Pictures. Further scripted highlights include the premium drama *Plan B* (6 x 45') starring Patrick J Adams and Karine Vanasse, and the youth-skewing comedy drama *Intimate* (8 x 30'). On the formats front is *Stranded on Honeymoon Island*. *Don't Panic* will also be shopped.



MAY



Password: Alan Carr and Daisy May Cooper to front ITV gameshow

ITV have commissioned a full series of *Password*, a new primetime game-show set to film this June and air early next year, based on the hit US version. The commission follows a successful pilot recorded earlier this year with hosts Alan Carr and Daisy May Cooper, who will both return for the full series alongside a ‘special guest’. The series films seven episodes towards the end of June, with audience tickets available via Lost In TV.



Johnny de Mol fronts new gameshow

From June 24 Johnny de Mol will be back on Dutch TV screens with the new show *De Kwis met Ballen* (*The Quiz with Balls*). In the new SBS6 gameshow, a five-person team competes for a cash prize. The further the participants get, the more money can be earned. But with a wrong answer, the player is then pushed into a swimming pool by a ball. The premiere will mark the return of Johnny after his show *HLF8* was cancelled last month.



Seven.One to adapt Austrian reality format

The Seven.One Entertainment Group is planning to adapt the Austrian reality format *Forsthaus Rappensau* (*Forest House Rampensau*) for the German TV audience. The show premiered in Austria last year and became one of the most-watched formats on ATV ever with an average market share of 11.3%. The German version will start shooting in Kärnten in July. It will follow up on the production of the second of the Austrian show. Madame Zheng will most likely produce both versions.

JUNE



Former ATV chief favorite for entertainment role at ORF

Martin Gasteringer is the favorite for the post of Head of Entertainment at ORF, Horizont.at has revealed. Gasteringer is the former Program and General Director of ATV and was last Program Director at Servus TV. ORF’s deadline for applications for the role will expire on Saturday. The entertainment chief will be responsible for show formats and children and family programs. The annual gross pay is set at a minimum of 86.592,91 euros.



The Bar: Rylan to host new Prime Video reality series

Rylan Clark has reportedly been revealed as host of *The Bar*, a new reality series for Prime Video to launch next year. The Sun reports that Rylan Clark is to host the new show, which is understood to be currently filming in Greece. The series follows a group of young Brits, who live together for the duration of the series, as they try to set-up and run a bar in Zante. A source told The Sun: “This show could not be more perfect for Rylan. He’s been really picky about signing up to host a new reality show after Big Brother but this is just ideal...

SVT finds a replacement for Taskmaster

In September, SVT will launch its latest project *The Survivors* (*Överlevarna*), based on the British format *Outsiders*. The new show is meant to replace *Taskmaster* which will move to TV4 from next year. Claes Malmberg is the judge as Sissela Benn, Nisse Hallberg, Evelyn Mok, Torbjörn Averås Skorup, Christoffer Nyqvist and Johanna Hurtig Wagrell move out into the wild to compete in surviving outside civilization. They have ended up in the forest and now it is up to them to overcome their fears and master their incompetence to solve life-changing challenges in the wild.

JULY



Warner Bros. Discovery’s season highlights

Warner Bros. Discovery presented its highlights for the 2023/24 season. The biggest news for Nove was already known: the arrival of *Che Tempo che Fa* and *Fabio Fazio* from Rai 2. Otherwise, the channel has renewed *Don’t Forget the Lyrics*, *Little Big Italy* and its biggest audience hit *Fratelli di Crozza*. There will also be new seasons of *Farmer Wants a Wife*, *Cash or Trash* and *Faking It*. The novelties are comedy shows: *Comedy Match* and *OnlyFun*. *Real Time* will again bet on *Bake Off*, *First Dates*, *Married at First Sight* and *Il Castello delle Cerimonie*. As reported earlier, the channel will premiere *7 Years Switch*, and *First Dates Hotel*.



Format Creation Group chief leaves RTL

Matthias Scholten, the head of the Format Creation Group of the RTL Group, is leaving the broadcaster after 17 years. He informed the management of RTL Netherlands about his decision last week. In 2006 he founded RTL Productions in collaboration with RTL. In 2008 he co-founded RTL Concepts and on November 1, 2009, he became director of Contents at RTL Netherlands. In 2020, he headed the Format Creation Group.



Yle goes for Therapy Dates

*Terapiatreffit* (*Therapy Dates*) is the title of the new dating show premiering today on Yle Areena. In the new dating series, two people find themselves on a blind date. Both before and after the date, the participants get to talk to the psychotherapist Ville Merinen who created the format. Merinen also analyzes the duo’s blind date and opens up his own view of the course of the date to the viewers. During the dinner date, the conversation is supported by question cards. With them, the two go through, for example, their biggest idols and the last times they cried. Season 1 has four episodes and a second one has already been confirmed.

AUGUST



TV 2 freezes production of new shows

TV 2 Denmark has informed the industry players that it will stop producing new shows for an indefinite period of time. The decision is explained with the tough situation on the advertising market. This move will not affect recommissions or projects in development. The broadcaster said that with this announcement they want to be open and transparent to the content creators. This will most likely mean an even bigger crisis on the Danish production market after two years of uncertainties on the fiction front.



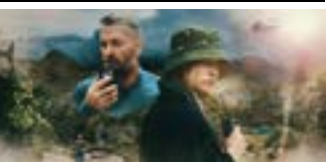
TF1 launches new dating reality show

Reality TV is back in full force on TF1. On Thursday August 24, 2023, the channel will offer the program *Time to Love: La Roue de l'Amour* in the second part of the evening. Produced by Ah! Productions and TF1 Productions, the show, which was originally planned for the group’s reality TV channel TFX, will finally be broadcast at 23.30. TF1 detailed briefly the concept of the show: ‘Five single women will participate in a unique love experience in a place cut off from the world where they will have 100 hours to find love. Behind them, there will be eight men hiding in cabins whom they will meet one after the other’.

Cuatro presents its main season highlights

Cuatro has revealed the main titles that will make up its programming in the next 2023-2024 season. Among the new arrivals on the channel are: WACS: Ellas También Juegan, a docu-reality that follows the day-to-day lives of footballers’ wives, En Busca del Nirvana - Spanish adaptation of the Warner Bros. ITVP franchise Reality Queens of the Jungle and En Guardia: Mujeres Contra el Crimen on which no further details have been disclosed. The dating show *First Dates* produced by Warner Bros. ITVP Spain will remain in the primetime after 7 years of broadcasting. The Media-set Spain channel will also air the new season of the docu-reality *Volando Voy*.

SEPTEMBER



TV 2 launches new survival show shot in Bulgaria

“Ten Danes have accepted the challenge of their lives, without knowing what they have actually thrown themselves into. In a desolate and impassable mountain area in Bulgaria, they are scattered to all winds and must initially manage alone while trying to find the rest of the pack. Can they find each other? And can they stay together?” - TV 2 Denmark teases in the description of its new survival reality show *Flokken* (*The Pack*). Each participant carries an unknown portion of the total prize money, so it is crucial that they finish as many as possible to ensure the best chance of winning the million. In the second phase, they have to locate the spot where they will receive the necessary tools an info to “evacuate” themselves on time. The escape will take place on a heavy raft which they must carry thru the wilderness overcoming various challenges.

RTL4 will Buy or Demolish

*Kopen of Slopen* (*Buy or Demolish*) is the name of the new property show from the creators of *Buying Blind* which will premiere on RTL4 on November 6, airing Mondays at 20.00. Caroline Tensen will host the show in which couples and families with a housing problem are faced with the dilemma: either buy a new house or renovate their current house. Real estate agent Alex van Keulen has 90 days to find them a new home and in the meantime, architect Britta van Egmond designs a renovation plan for their current home, so that it meets all their wishes again. Wise Monkeys is producing.



Reshet invests NIS 60 million in two new reality formats

Walla reports that despite losing a fifth of its audience in primetime over the past year, Reshet is planning a major investment in its winter schedule. The first major launch will be the premiere of the local version of *Peking Express* which will count at least 30 episodes and cost around NIS 30 million. The channel expects that the show will deliver an average rating of 17-18%, well above its primetime average. The other big launch will be that of *Star Academy* which will be even more expensive, according to Walla. For this show as well, the channel expects to double its primetime ratings.

OCTOBER



All3Media International showcases a diverse line-up of formats at MIPCOM

All3Media International will showcase a diverse line-up of formats at MIPCOM 2023, offering local adaptation opportunities for titles such as global smash hit *The Traitors*, gripping culinary competition *Future Food Stars* and proven ratings winner *Head to Head*. The company also presents new show by Primal Media and Motion Content Group for E4, UK, The Underdog aka Alan Must Win. Also on the slate is *Rise and Fall*, the ultimate reality power struggle from Studio Lambert and Motion Content Group for Channel 4, UK.



Mediaset Spain and Gestmusic look for The Best Generation

Mediaset Spain continues to test different formats to increase its ratings and to once again position itself as a tough competition for Antena 3. In order to do this, they have set sights on upcoming formats, which will reach the viewers with the intention to be released in 2024. For this new format called *The Best Generation*, they have joined forces with Gestmusic, a production company with extensive experience in the genre. The objective of the contest will be to pit different generations against each other thru song and dance with the aim of finding, as the title of the project itself suggests, ‘the best generation of all’.



Fremantle secures sales for non-scripted lineup at MIPCOM

Fremantle announced a host of international deals from their ambitious and diverse non-scripted slate, including *Coco Chanel: Unbuttoned*, *House of Kardashian*, and *Whale* with Steve Backshall. The combined sales will roll out across 68 territories.

NOVEMBER



Canal+ announces its return to the Netherlands with a new streaming platform

Canal+ announced that it is returning to the Netherlands with a new streaming service offering European films and TV series, including productions from CANAL+ Originals, Viaplay, Fremantle, Dutch CORE, Lionsgate and Lumière. Canal+ will pursue a close cooperation with Ziggo which inherited its channels when the group left the local TV market in 2004.



The BBC brings The Traitors to the table for series three

*The Traitors* will return to BBC One and BBC iPlayer for a third series and applications are now open for those who wish to play the game. This announcement is made in advance of the hotly anticipated second series which is coming soon. *The Traitors* reached 21M audiences last series, and was the biggest brand new entertainment launch for the BBC since 2021.



Telecinco promotes upcoming highlights, revives Crónicas Marcianas

In a new promo spot on Telecinco, Xavier Sardà announces the surprise return of the legendary format *Cronicas Marcianas* (*The Martian Chronicles*). But this isn’t the only news since the channel has also opted for a new contest called *Celebrity School*. The show pits celebrities against children or teenagers to see who knows more about different school subjects. The program has already aired on the regional channel A Punt, where it was hosted by Eugeni Alemany. Telecinco has also started to promote the seventh season of *Temptation Island* presented by Sandra Barneda as well as a special dedicated to Julio Iglesias.

DECEMBER



Warner Bros. Discovery changes the looks of its Nordic channels

Warner Bros. Discovery is updating the logos for all its Nordic TV channels, a total of 14 channels are getting a new look. In Sweden, the appearance of Kanal 5, Kanal 9 and Kanal 11 is being updated. In Denmark, these are: Kanal 5, 6’eren, Kanal 4 and Kanal 9. In Norway: TVNorge, MAX, FEM and VOX; and in Finland: TV5, Kutonon and Friel. For viewers, the change will be visible in the box from January 15, 2024. The rebrand was carried out by DixonBaxi.



RTVE preps Jeopardy! launch

RTVE is preparing the Spanish version of *Jeopardy!* that has been broadcast for 44 seasons in the United States. Lavinia Audiovisual will be in charge of producing the show, which will be seen on La 1 although the exact date and time have not been announced yet. The show will be hosted by Paco de Benito, known as a contestant on other programs, who will make his TV debut as a host. Along with *Jeopardy!*, RTVE is also working on the adaptations of other international formats like *The Great Bake Off* and *Supernanny*. Likewise, Grand Prix will return in the summer of 2024 and soon *Saber Vivir* and *Cifras y Letras*.



MediaLane and All Right Media announce three format deals in Europe

Iris van den Ende, founder & CEO of MediaLane, an independent production company with their main focus on creating high entertainment content accessible for a general audience, announces that one of their latest formats *Stars on Stage*, is optioned by several countries and the first episode is scheduled to air on RTL4 in The Netherlands in January ‘24. The format, introduced last MIPCOM in partnership with Dutch distributor All Right Media, has been picked up by three major European territories already: Germany (Tresor TV), Spain and Italy.







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