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World Radio History





**Spike reaches more men than ESPN.**

**Ouch.**

**Spike**  
TV





3,500

Number of reporters accredited for the funeral of Pope John Paul II

Road to NAB VIDEO SERVERS PAGE 29

Too Much Smoke, Too Little News

Peter Jennings' cancer spotlights dearth of tobacco-industry coverage. Page 24



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ROBINS REPORT

A Man of Few Words

Facing a host of thorny issues that will determine the direction of the TV industry, the NCTA crowd was ready to hear new

FCC chief Kevin Martin give his views. What they got in his first official appearance was less than zero.



Kevin Martin

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WALL STREET HAS SEEN THE FUTURE AND IT'S ALL



Cable touts new services and wows investors

Page 18

By John Higgins and Anne Becker



**THE B&C**

WEEK OF APRIL 1-7

**THE B&C 10**



**BROADCAST TV GROUPS**



**CABLE OPERATORS**



**RADIO**



	CLOSE	WEEK	YTD
Dow Jones	10546.32	0.4%	-2.2%
Nasdaq	2018.79	1.0%	-7.2%

**THE B&C 10**

	CLOSE	WEEK	YTD
Cablevision	\$27.84	-0.7%	11.8%
Clear Channel	\$34.73	0.8%	3.7%
Comcast Corp.	\$32.95	-1.5%	0.3%
Disney	\$28.70	-0.1%	3.2%
EchoStar	\$29.12	-0.4%	-12.4%
Fox Ent.	\$36.35	0.0%	16.3%
Hearst-Argyle	\$25.56	0.2%	-3.1%
Time Warner	\$17.88	1.9%	-8.0%
Tribune	\$39.52	-0.9%	-6.2%
Viacom	\$35.54	1.4%	-4.2%

**GOOD WEEK**

Paxson	\$1.15	66.7%	-16.7%
Granite	\$0.32	6.7%	-22.0%
TiVo	\$5.49	6.2%	-6.5%
Interpublic	\$12.95	5.5%	-3.4%
Cox Radio	\$17.28	2.8%	4.9%

**BAD WEEK**

Knology Inc.	\$2.00	-15.6%	-48.7%
Charter	\$1.42	-11.3%	-36.6%
Pegasus	\$12.00	-9.6%	29.7%
Gabriel Tech.	\$2.60	-8.8%	-11.9%
ValueVision	\$11.35	-8.2%	-18.4%

**PAXSON PUMPED**

**+66%**

It doesn't take much to pump up a company ailing as badly as Paxson Communications. Word that both former talk-show host Byron Allen and talent agency The Firm want to buy it sent Paxson's stock up 66%, though that's only from 65¢ a share to \$1.15. Buying Paxson could cost only \$100 million, but then there's its \$2.2 billion debt.

# Browne Moves Up at Telemundo

President/CEO McNamara exits the Spanish-language network **By Allison Romano**

**T**he new head of Telemundo may be the best candidate for directing the second-place Spanish-language broadcaster's assault on industry heavyweight Univision. He has been the No. 2 at NBC Universal-owned Telemundo for two years.

Don Browne, most recently the network's chief operating officer, took over as president April 8. Former President/CEO Jim McNamara, who had run the network for six years, exited at the end of his contract to pursue TV and film opportunities.

Browne takes over just five weeks before Telemundo makes its upfront pitch to advertisers to spend more on NBC-owned Telemundo. More than \$1 billion is at stake in the Hispanic upfront, and Telemundo's mission is simple: persuade more viewers to make the switch.

Taking on Univision and its sister broadcast network Teletutura, Browne says, is a daunting task. "It takes time to change habits and convince people to go away from something they are familiar with," he says. "But we are chipping away."

5.7/9. Teletutura is pacing at a 3.4/5. Telemundo is growing, with prime time ratings up 3.6% over last season's, but Univision is improving, too, with ratings up 11.2%, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Controlling its programming pipeline is key to Telemundo's strategy. Univision takes most of its fare, including wildly popular *novellas*, from Mexican broadcaster Televisa. To counter-program, Telemundo has ratcheted up original production, creating U.S.-based *novelas* and co-producing some shows in Latin America.

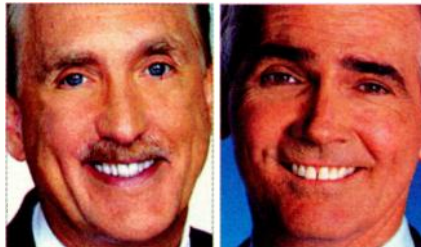
Before NBC ponied up \$2.7 billion for the network in 2001, Telemundo languished under several owners, including Sony and Liberty. With jointly

In contrast, McNamara says, GE and NBC have plowed both time and money into the network. "It was clear they believed in Telemundo and the potential of the Spanish-language market," he says.

The synergies play out on-air and behind the scenes. NBC tripled Telemundo's prime time budget to \$60 million the first year. NBC News helps elevate Telemundo's news operation, and Telemundo shows get plugged on the network and at Universal theme parks. Telemundo aired last summer's Athens Olympics, the first time the games have been broadcast in the U.S. in Spanish. Even Telemundo-owned stations benefited. In cities where both NBC and Telemundo own stations, such as Miami and San Francisco, the stations have combined operations.

Media buyers say Telemundo has made great strides, but there is still room for improvement. "Telemundo has great ideas, but eventually, Univision reproduces them better," says Raquel Tomasino, executive VP/director of media and strategic services for Hispanic-media buyer Castells & Asociados. "It is not because Univision's productions are better but they have the equity with the Hispanic market."

Browne has deep roots with Telemundo and NBC. He joined Telemundo in 2003 and helped guide the network and its stable of stations through the NBC acquisition. He had arrived from NBC-owned WTVJ Miami, where he was president/GM, and had a long run at NBC News, rising to the post of executive VP. ■



Don Browne (left) succeeds Jim McNamara.

**"It takes time to change habits and convince people to go away from something they are familiar with."**

**DON BROWNE, TELEMUNDO**

Season-to-date, Univision is averaging an 18.8 rating/30 share in prime time (which Spanish-language broadcasters define as 7-11 p.m.) among Hispanic households, versus Telemundo's

owned networks, backers are happy to take money out but reluctant to pour much in. "Investments are for return," says McNamara, "and eventually, you want to realize that investment."

# Sony Streamlines TV Operations

Steve Mosko takes on pay-TV duties

**L**ooking to streamline its TV operations, Sony Pictures Entertainment added domestic pay television to the watch of Sony Pictures Television (SPT) President Steve Mosko, who already heads domestic TV production and distribution for network, cable and syndication.

Previously, pay TV had been tucked into the international unit, which is headed by Michael Grindon, president of Sony Pictures Television International. Grindon will continue to oversee all international business.

The new duties for Mosko come as the studio is trying harder than ever to exploit new platforms, such as video-on-demand, for the delivery of its content.

Mosko, who signed on for four more years, says the move is an example of new Sony Chairman and CEO Howard Stringer's call for increased collaboration between units. "We are going to see more groups working closely

together with electronics and other areas," Mosko said.

In the television unit, Mosko's experience will help when Sony's pending acquisition of MGM Studios closes. MGM has more than 7,000 movies in its library, which will need to be sold into network and pay windows in the U.S. Also, as part of the MGM deal, Sony struck a new partnership with Comcast to create premium cable channels, which would also be managed out of SPT.

Sony is getting increasingly aggressive on the cable front. A leading studio in first-run cable production, it produces cable hits like FX's *The Shield* and Lifetime's *Strong Medicine*. The company shares a 50% stake in the Game Show Network (or GSN, as it prefers to be called) with Liberty Media Corp. and is becoming more active in GSN's programming. GSN is expected to ramp up its Las Vegas-based production and is pursuing a deal with a casino to host programs.—A.R.



Steve Mosko



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# CABLE TALKS, WALL STREET LISTENS

High-tech services unveiled at National Show wow investors

**A**fter nearly three hours of fielding questions about new phone, data and video services at the industry's annual trade show last week, Comcast CEO Brian Roberts was surprised when he finally got a question on cash flow. All through his talk on new voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) telephone services, more-advanced video-on-demand services and the continued successful rollout of cable modems, few listeners had any direct questions about finances. It was only at the very end that one institutional investor inquired, in effect, "Will these new services crunch cash-flow margins?"

"I think that's the first 'numbers' question to me," Roberts said. "That speaks volumes. People are coming to this show and trying to 'look out' a little bit, which is what we try to do as business people."

That is a dramatic change from only a year ago. At the 2004 convention, Roberts declared Wall Street to be in "crazy mode." Cable and other media stocks were crashing, and investors spent the day hammering CEOs over downers like the loss of subscribers to DBS and the high cost of introducing new products.

Now the momentum of technology is clearly on cable's side. To be sure, Wall Street is still as skeptical

as ever. But industry insiders—and, more important, outsiders—are wowed by the success some operators are having with lucrative VoIP telephone services, as well as with the wide rollout of video-on-demand services. Analysts expect cable VoIP to grow from around \$700 million in revenue this year to as much as \$6 billion by 2009. VOD revenues are expected to approach \$1 billion this year and nearly \$6 billion by 2013, according to estimates. Fees for new digital video recorders could hit \$1 billion by 2009.

## \$95 BILLION UPGRADE

Industry executives worked hard last week to keep that excitement echoing off every wall of San Francisco's Moscone Center, which hosted the National Cable & Telecommunications Association's National Show. The fundamental theme: a \$95 billion upgrade has made cable systems into a giant computer network, enabling a rich array of products—from elaborate telephone services to networked videogaming, in which players around the country can assault each other.

For a convention hosted by and for cable operators, the spotlight also went to outsiders: Google, Sprint PCS and Cisco, among others, emphasizing the increasing power and flexibility of cable systems. "This year's show is less about the cable industry talking to itself and more about having a real dialogue with the leaders of

many industries whose future will be intertwined with ours," said Steve Burke, chairman of the convention and COO of Comcast, at the opening of the show.

Several ideas seemed to hook the imagination of panelists and attendees, such as how cellular customers' ability to watch TV on their flip phones will affect cable operators. One immediate need for many cable systems: a Google-like search engine for video-on-demand, a simple way for viewers to navigate through what could soon be a daunting array of 10,000 shows and movies. Seagate Technology showcased its removable hard

drives that attach to set-top boxes to let video junkies offload shows recorded on their overloaded DVRs.

But cable's technology boom doesn't mean everyone profits. Programmers complain that the operators are obsessed with products that provide no obvious way for them to make money but threaten to disrupt their existing businesses. DVRs let viewers readily skip commercials. High-definition may be great for operators catering to high-end customers, but it creates high costs for programmers.

Moreover, operators want networks to give them VOD product for free, and it could take years before both sides design an ad model that might meaningfully offset losses as viewers turn away from the

**"THIS YEAR'S SHOW IS LESS ABOUT THE CABLE INDUSTRY TALKING TO ITSELF AND MORE ABOUT HAVING A REAL DIALOGUE WITH THE LEADERS OF MANY INDUSTRIES WHOSE FUTURE WILL BE INTERTWINED WITH OURS." STEVE BURKE, COMCAST**



mother network. "You can't put any food on the table now from VOD," said Bob Wright, chairman and CEO, NBC Universal.

**VOIP: "A HUGE HOME RUN"**

"We ought to figure out a way to grow the opportunities faster than the disruption hurts us," says News Corp. President Peter Chernin.

But many programmers are exploiting the changes. Disney's ABC is pushing its ABC News Now, which was designed to be distributed on digital broadcast, Internet and even cellphones. "We're dealing with media companies that have skin in the game on all platforms," says ABC News President David Westin.

Much to the delight of the biggest operators, the opportunities overshadow—for now, at least—the kinds of issues investors were riveted on a year ago: the threat of competition from DBS, and how telcos would counterattack cable's push into the telephone business. Those threats still exist but aren't as dominant.

The excitement over cable's technology is in many ways the upside of Wall Street's love-hate relationship with cable; investors love the promise of new technology but hate heavy spending to develop it.

Comcast, Insight Communications and Cablevision Systems have each jumped by more than 20% since last year's National Show. Charter Communications and Mediacom, however, have fallen because of

significant operating problems. Still, the cable sector is doing far better than TV and radio stocks, which have dropped in the past year.

Perhaps the hottest product for cable operators is VoIP, which gives an immediate financial kick. With the cost of Internet-phone technology dropping and the quality rising, cable systems offering high-speed Internet can get into the phone business for relatively little capital. Cablevision now offers VoIP to all of its subscribers, and around 15% of them are expected to sign up by year-end, says Morgan Stanley Media Ana-

lyst Richard Bilotti. Time Warner, another company aggressively rolling out VoIP, should have similar penetration by the end of next year. Cox Communications has been offering traditional circuit-switched phone for six years and is expanding into VoIP. It should sell into 25% of its subscribers homes by year-end.

Because the current pipeline is essentially built, the \$35-\$40 in monthly revenue could be immensely profitable. Asked during a panel session where he would invest money other than his own company, Mediacom CFO Mark Stephan said, "I would invest in any cable company that's doing VoIP, because I think it's going to be a huge home run."

Operators are also riveted by VOD, because it's something they can do on their advanced fiber networks but DBS rivals can't truly match. Comcast is particularly aggressive, offering programs to digital subscribers for free. The company is buying a piece of MGM to get VOD rights to older movies and is even starting its own VOD networks. At the show, Comcast debuted on-demand service PBS Kids Sprout, a joint venture with Sesame Workshop and HIT Entertainment aimed at preschoolers.

Bilotti estimates that VOD services will be available in 25 million homes by the end of 2007. But established programmers still don't see the upside. They lose viewers from their main channels, but there's no way to readily sell advertising into VOD,

partly because there are no Nielsen ratings. Says David Zaslav, president of NBC Universal Cable, "Right now, the question is: What's the model?"

Cable's excitement over DVRs is also a competitive response to DBS. The satellite companies have been marketing combo receivers and DVRs for more than three years. Now that cable-equipment

companies are supplying DVRs with integrated cable tuners, operators are deploying them as quickly as box

makers Motorola and Scientific-Atlanta (S-A) can supply them.

Cable should have around 7.5 million DVRs deployed by 2008. That is just 12% of their subscriber base. Since they charge \$8-\$10 monthly, that is not a huge financial kick, but it might keep DirecTV from stealing more customers.

Manufacturers from S-A to Samsung see the cable DVR (which, after all, is essentially a video computer) as the hub for a home-media network, using cable wires to deliver video and music throughout the house—even uploading movies to iPod-like devices.

Cable's broadband systems enable videogamers across the country to face off

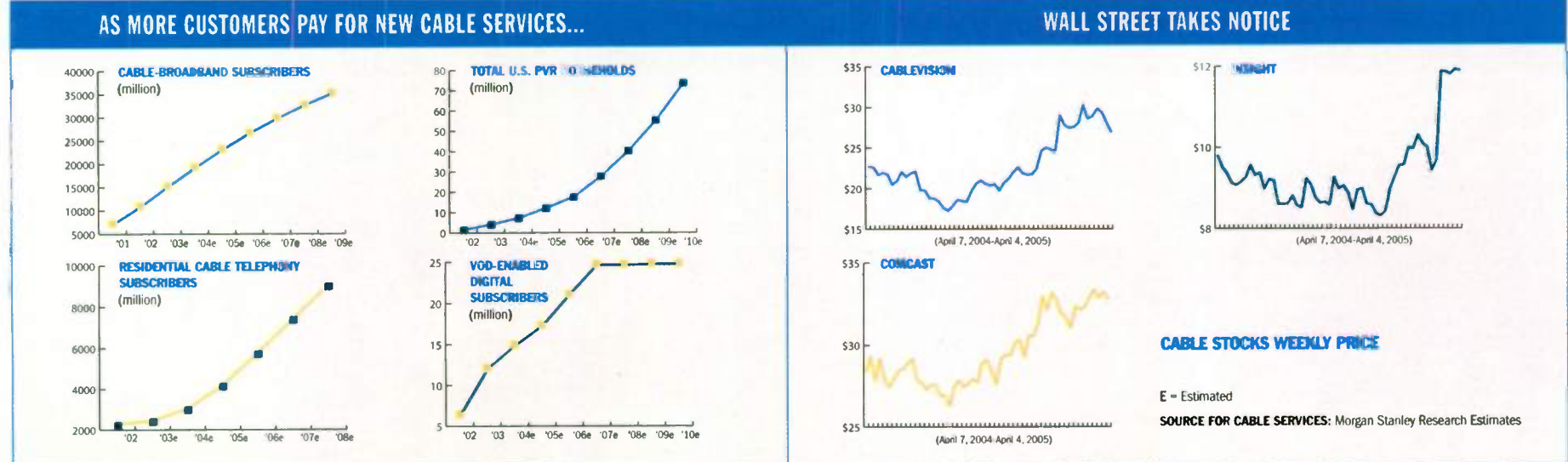
and increasingly interact, yelling at each other through their Xboxes while battling in a virtual martial-arts death match. Says Bing Gordon, chief creative officer of videogame maker Electronic Arts, "You'll pay some money to reach out and touch someone, but you'll pay a lot of money to reach out and kill someone." ■

**"WE OUGHT TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO GROW THE OPPORTUNITIES FASTER THAN THE DISRUPTION CAN HURT US." PETER CHERNIN, NEWS CORP.**



ABC News Now will offer news reports on-demand via several platforms: digital broadcast, cable TV, Internet and cellphones.

**JOHN HIGGINS AND ANNE BECKER**







# Surrounding broadcasters with



A control room with multiple monitors and people working. The room is dimly lit with a blue glow from the screens. In the foreground, a man with glasses and a plaid shirt is wearing headphones and looking at a monitor. To his left, a man in a military uniform is also looking at a monitor. To his right, another man in a suit is looking at a monitor. The background is filled with rows of monitors displaying various data and images.

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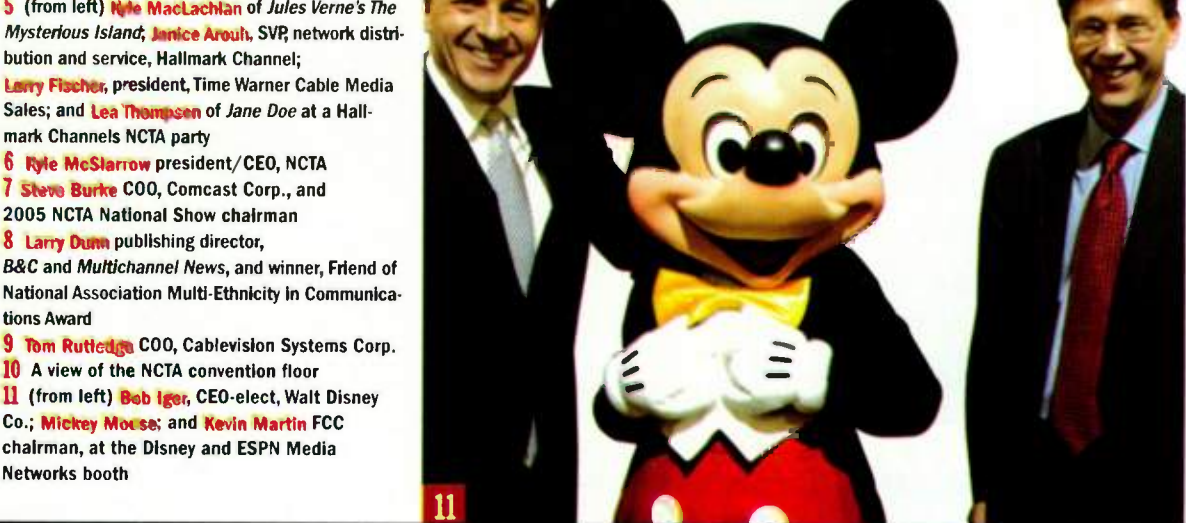
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# National Show 2005

Leaders from Hollywood and high tech invigorate NCTA's annual summit



1 (from left) **Soledad O'Brien** CNN *American Morning*, anchor/panel moderator; **John Chambers** president/CEO, Cisco Systems Inc.; **Jeffrey Katzenberg** film producer/co-founder, DreamWorks SKG, **Jon Miller** chairman/CEO AOL Inc.; **Larry Page** co-founder/president, Google; **Brian Roberts** chairman/CEO Comcast Corp., at the April 4 general session in the Moscone Center  
 2 **Jeffrey Katzenberg** film producer/co-founder, DreamWorks SKG, speaks at the Moscone Center.  
 3 (from left) **Judith McHale** president/CEO, Discovery Communications Inc.; **John Hendricks** founder and chairman, Discovery Communications Inc.; and **James O. Robbins** president/CEO, Cox Communications Inc., toast Discovery Channel's 20th anniversary.  
 4 **Brian Roberts** chairman/CEO, Comcast Corp.  
 5 (from left) **Nyle MacLachlan** of *Jules Verne's The Mysterious Island*; **Janice Arouh**, SVP, network distribution and service, Hallmark Channel; **Larry Fischer**, president, Time Warner Cable Media Sales; and **Lea Thompson** of *Jane Doe* at a Hallmark Channels NCTA party  
 6 **Ryle McStarrow** president/CEO, NCTA  
 7 **Steve Burke** COO, Comcast Corp., and 2005 NCTA National Show chairman  
 8 **Larry Dunn** publishing director, B&C and *Multichannel News*, and winner, Friend of National Association Multi-Ethnicity in Communications Award  
 9 **Tom Rutledge** COO, Cablevision Systems Corp.  
 10 A view of the NCTA convention floor  
 11 (from left) **Bob Iger**, CEO-elect, Walt Disney Co.; **Mickey Mouse**; and **Kevin Martin** FCC chairman, at the Disney and ESPN Media Networks booth

Photos: All photos courtesy of NCTA and Oscar Engig, except Craig I. Mathew (65) and Reed Business (68)



## The Cast (In Order of Appearance)

Aspect Ratios: Native 16:9 and 4:3	As Itself
Frame Rates: 60i, 30p, and 24p	As Itself
3 Progressive Scan CCDs	As Itself
Customizable Cine Settings	As Itself
Canon Interchangeable Lens System	As Itself
20x Professional Fluorite Lens	As Itself
Optical Image Stabilizer	As Itself
SMPTE Time Code	As Itself
Built-In XLR Audio Inputs	As Itself
Four Channel Independent Audio Control	As Itself
SMPTE Color Bars With Tone	As Itself
Program Auto Exposure Modes	As Itself
Zebra Pattern	As Itself
Skin Detail Adjustment	As Itself
3 Custom Presets	As Itself



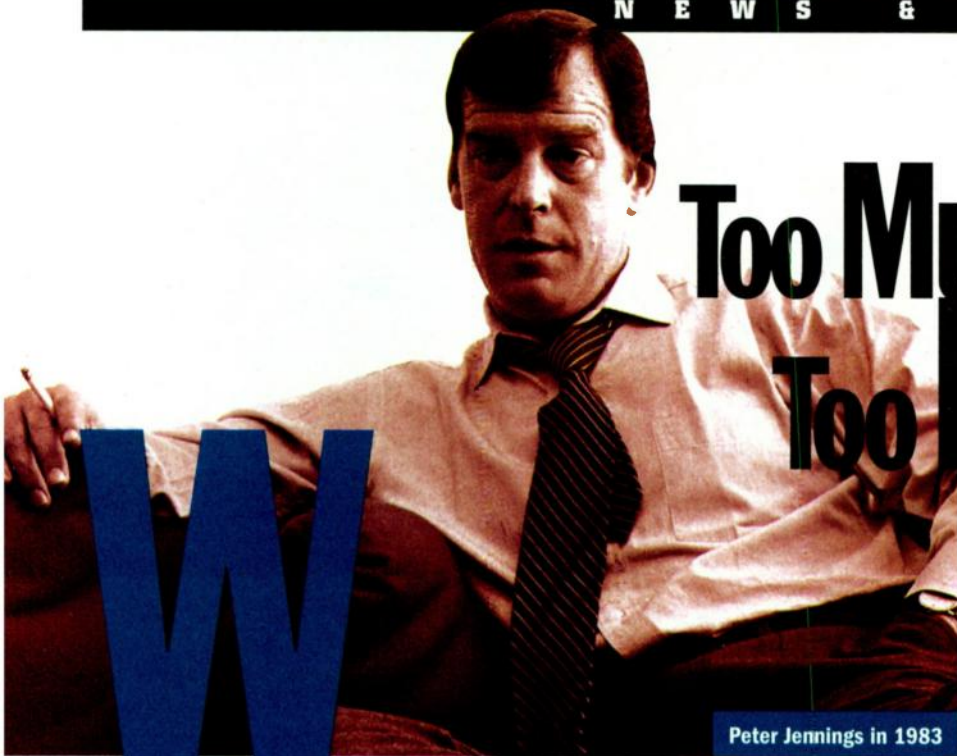
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Peter Jennings in 1983

# Too Much Smoke Too Little Coverage

Though the industry was stunned to learn of Peter Jennings' lung cancer, in recent years network news has turned down the heat on the health dangers of tobacco

By Andrew Tyndall

**W**hen Peter Jennings announced last week that he was suffering from lung cancer and confessed his past cigarette habit, the irony was unavoidable. Just last fall, the ABC News anchorman had hosted *Untold Stories of Betrayal and Neglect*, an hour-long prime time special on “the power of Big Tobacco and the failure of the Congress to do anything about it.”

Jennings introduced the special by asserting that the health dangers of cigarette smoking were an ongoing concern at ABC: “We have kept a Tobacco File at ABC News for more than 20 years.” In fact, the special was mostly a retrospective of the tobacco wars of the mid 1990s—the regulatory disputes and the anti-industry lawsuits. Jennings conceded that the urgency had gone out of the story: “By the late '90s, many people thought the government and the tobacco industry and the public-health community had finally made real progress in the campaign against smoking.”

Sadly, he reflected that relaxed vigilance in his personal life last week, during the raspy message he recorded to end *World News Tonight* with substitute anchor Elizabeth Vargas, when he acknowledged, “Yes, I was a smoker until about 20 years ago. And I was weak and I smoked over 9/11.”

This ebbing sense of crisis about the scourge of cigarettes has also been evident in the agenda of the networks' nightly newscasts—not just Jennings' *World News Tonight* but at CBS and NBC as well. Over the past six years, cigarette coverage has plummeted to less than one-fifth of the volume it received during the heat of the tobacco wars in the mid '90s.

Back then, the clash between Big Tobacco and Big Media was epic. Most vivid was the case of *60 Minutes*' pulling its story on nicotine manipulation by Brown & Williamson. It's so memorable because CBS' suppressed source, Jeffrey Wigand, went on to be the central figure of the movie *The Insider*.

**Just as tobacco supplanted cocaine in the news hierarchy of threats to the nation's health, so now the new focus is on Big Food.**

was astonishing since it marked the substitution of legal drugs for illegal ones in the headlines. The previous five years had seen saturation coverage of President George H. W. Bush's War on Drugs, with the Medellin cocaine cartel, not the Marlboro Man, occupying the position of Public Enemy No. 1.

Of the two networks whose journalists came under legal fire, CBS (524 minutes over the six years vs. ABC's 459 and NBC's 412) followed the story most closely.

At the time, the increased interest in tobacco the substitution of legal drugs for illegal ones in the headlines. The previous five years had seen saturation coverage of President George H. W. Bush's War on Drugs, with the Medellin cocaine cartel, not the Marlboro Man, occupying the position of Public Enemy No. 1.

Since 1999, however, all three networks' news operations have lost interest in the beat, each averaging just 15 minutes each year on tobacco—scarcely more newsworthy than alcohol. And just as tobacco supplanted cocaine in the news hierarchy of threats to the nation's health, so now the focus is on Big Food. Stories on obesity, nutrition, fast food, bioengineered crops and so on receive four times the attention that cigarettes attract.

The news agenda has followed the same fads as Hollywood—from drugs to cigs to gluttony, from *Scarface* to *The Insider* to *Supersize Me*. Unfortunately, the cancer-causing properties of tobacco failed to mimic the shifting emphases of network news coverage.

Even though Jennings swore off cigarettes at the time ABC News began compiling its Tobacco File two decades ago, he now finds himself grappling with an illness that will strike tens of thousands of smokers this year and many more in the years to come. We are sorry that, under duress, he slipped a few years ago, and we wish him the best for a full recovery. ■

## HOT TOPICS

How broadcast networks' average annual coverage (in minutes) has changed over the years

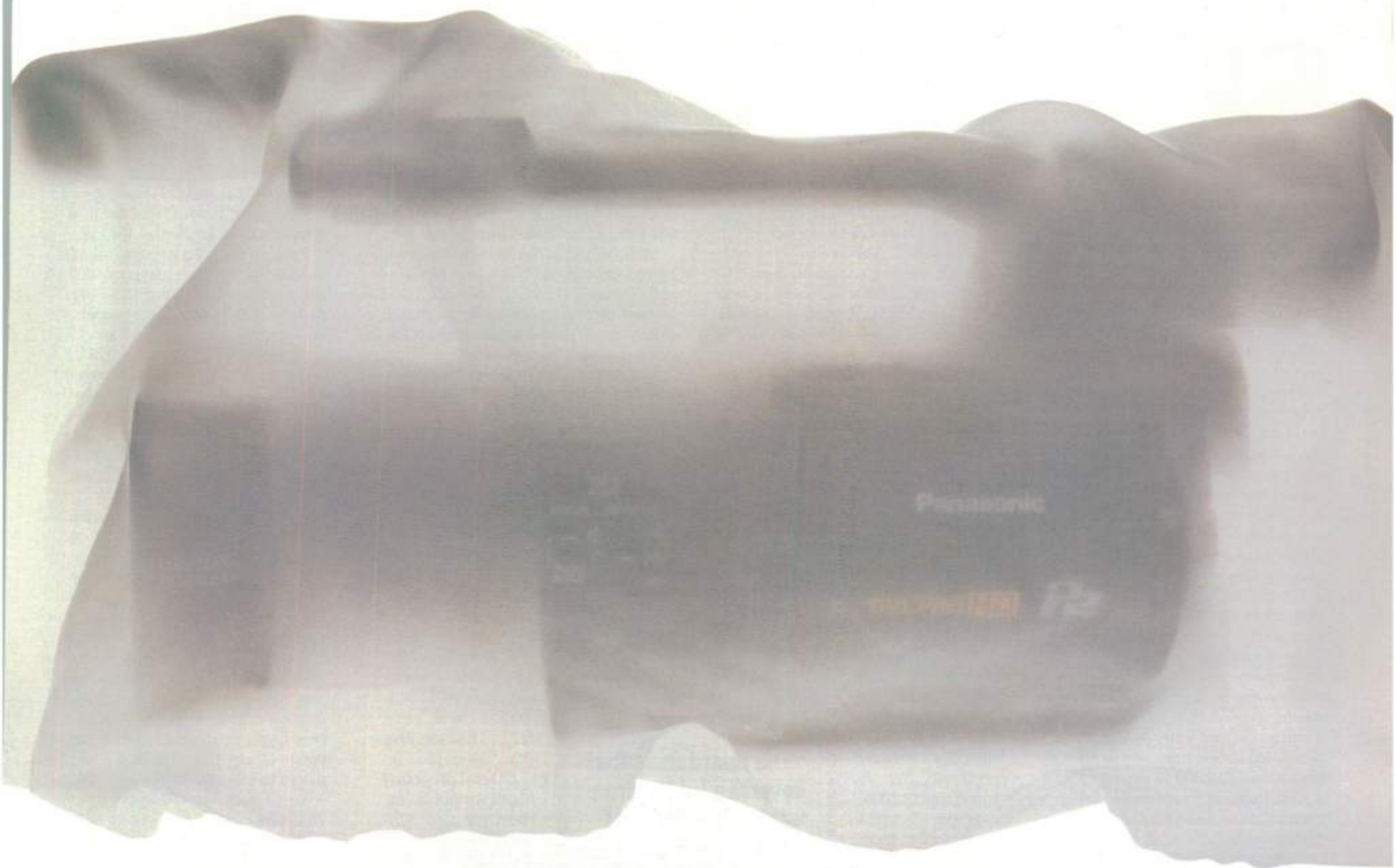
1988-1992				
	TOTAL	ABC	CBS	NBC
ILLEGAL DRUGS	478	147	148	183
TOBACCO	68	27	18	24
ALCOHOL	56	19	17	20
FOOD	77	32	27	18
1993-1998				
	TOTAL	ABC	CBS	NBC
ILLEGAL DRUGS	165	55	56	54
TOBACCO	232	76	87	69
ALCOHOL	45	14	12	20
FOOD	191	56	80	55
1999-2004				
	TOTAL	ABC	CBS	NBC
ILLEGAL DRUGS	78	30	31	18
TOBACCO	42	16	16	10
ALCOHOL	28	9	9	9
FOOD	174	56	65	54

SOURCE: The Tyndall Report



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## STATION TO STATION

## Boston's WBZ Grows A Sunday Magazine

By Allison Romano

After 25 years anchoring local news in Boston, WBZ veteran Liz Walker was itching to develop her own local show. "I had done so many stories on people overcoming obstacles and organizations that help," Walker says. "I wanted to pull that all together."



Liz Walker

That desire is now an on-air reality. *Sunday With Liz Walker* debuted last month on the

CBS owned-and-operated station. Each half-hour program features three stories. A recent episode with a "renewal" theme included reports on a local spa, a nonprofit that outfits women with work clothes, and one neighborhood's religious revival.

The show is WBZ's spin on a growing trend among stations to build magazine shows and lighter entertainment programs starring recognizable talent. "I would much rather have this than a paid program or a syndicated show that isn't cutting it," says GM Julio Marengi. "It gives people another reason to connect with local television."

Crosstown rival WCVB has one of the most famous local programs. Its nightly *Chronicle* magazine show regularly wins its early-evening time slot.

But while local programs are gaining ground, they can still be a tough sell. Last year, Walker persuaded station managers to give her a modest \$5,000 to put together a pilot. Looking for sponsors, she even called on some potential advertisers herself.

When Marengi, former head of sales for Viacom's station group, took over WBZ last year, he fast-tracked Walker's program. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts signed on to underwrite the program, which Marengi says covers about two-thirds of expenses. The station won't reveal the show's budget, but Walker says she has "a lot more" than the original \$5,000.

WBZ did not banish *Sunday With Liz Walker* to an early-morning slot. The show airs at 11 a.m., after CBS News' *Face the Nation*. So far, the program is holding its own. NBC's *Meet the Press* on WHDH wins the time period, but Walker's

## Peabodys Snub Big Four

CBS' Abu Ghraib documentary is networks' only winner

By P. J. Bednarski

The real significance of this year's Peabody Awards, whose winners were named last week, centers on who *didn't* win. Out of 31 program awards in what is arguably one of television's most prestigious prizes, the Big Four broadcast-TV networks won just one.

That was for *60 Minutes II: The Abuses at Abu Ghraib*, the hard-hitting CBS exposé of U.S. mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners, which caused worldwide alarm. In an ironic twist, the producer of the report, Mary Mapes, was later dismissed by CBS after she took the brunt of the blame for a shaky report on President Bush's National Guard record.

Remarkably, the award for *Abu Ghraib* is the first one given to any TV news organization for war coverage since the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003. National Public Radio was also lauded this year for its Iraq reporting.

"The board feels that [TV] coverage was somewhat repetitious," explains

Peabody Awards Director Horace Newcomb. "For example: Imbedded reporters, it seems to the board members, focus on the presence of the reporter on the scene rather than the issues at hand."

Significantly, no election-related programming was honored, other than Comedy Central's *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*, specifically for its "Indecision 2004" coverage, which the Peabody board described as "satire that deflates pomposity on an equal-opportunity basis."

*The Daily Show* previously won for its 2000 election coverage.

Is there a message in the dearth of broadcast-network awards? "The networks ought to re-examine what they are doing," answers Marlene Sanders, a former network news correspondent who chairs the Peabody board.

She was speaking about news, but broadcast networks' entertainment programs were also entirely overlooked. (Last year, the Big Four broadcast networks won two news awards and none for entertainment shows.)

Cable's CNN, MSNBC and Fox News were also Peabody nobodies this year. But the Peabodys were, for the most part, good to cable, which won 12 awards. The History Channel, CNBC, Trio, HBO and The Discovery Channel each won awards for documentaries. Cinemax won two.

BBC America also won two Peabodys—one for the political drama *State of Play* and the other for *The Kumars at No. 42*, a quirky comedy about an Indian family trying to fit into a new life in England.

HBO also won for *Something the Lord Made*, a drama about a white surgeon and a black lab technician pioneering heart surgery while struggling with the strictures of the 1940s Jim Crow South.

In its 64th year, the Peabodys, administered through the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications, represent the oldest honor in electronic media. (The Peabodys also recognize international programming.) With no set categories, Peabody choices can be eclectic, ranging from this year's award for HBO's *Deadwood* to one for Spanish-language Univision's public-service campaign "Salud es Vida...Enterate!" ("Lead a Healthy Life...Get the Facts!").

On the station level, WFAA Dallas, WTVF Nashville, Tenn., WBAL Baltimore and WITI Milwaukee were cited for investigative news coverage.

Several programs heard on public radio were also winners, including *On the Media*, the NPR show produced by New York's WNYC and hosted by

Brooke Gladstone and Bob Garfield. The Peabodys this year will also honor Grant Tinker who, as CEO of MTM Studios and then NBC, helped foster the careers of several talented producers and writers.

Morley Safer, *60 Minutes* correspondent, hosts the awards luncheon, sponsored by B&C, on May 16 at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. He should feel comfortable. He won one in 1965. ■

The entire list of winners and descriptions is at [www.broadcastingcable.com](http://www.broadcastingcable.com).



*The Daily Show With Jon Stewart* received a second Peabody Award for election coverage.

**"The board feels that coverage [of the Iraq war] was somewhat repetitious."**

**HORACE NEWCOMB, PEABODY AWARDS**

show has earned between a 1.5 and 2 household rating, respectable Nielsen marks.

For Walker, the show is about exploring a second phase in her life. She retired from anchoring in January and is a candidate for a master's degree at Harvard University's Divinity School. She is pursuing ordination in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The new show, she says, is another way to connect. "We do stories about local people doing good and giving to their community and the rest of the world."

## ABC News Now Seeks Stations' Help

ABC News is redoubling its efforts to make fledgling digital and broadband channel ABC News Now a viable news service, and local affiliates will be key to the process.

Last summer, the ongoing broadband news service—instituted on cellphones and computers—was expanded to a digital TV channel. ABC pulled the network off in January for retooling, and it will relaunch in July. What has emerged is a multi-platform approach to 24/7 news. "The goal is to make sure we have news available to our audience where they are and on whatever device they want," said ABC News President David Westin.

ABC News Now already reaches 30 million broadband subscribers through Comcast, AOL and SBC/Yahoo. Now the heavy lifting begins: securing cable and broadcast distribution. Since the FCC ruled against must-carry for digital broadcast channels, ABC will have to stump for carriage the old-fashioned way. The network could use retransmission consent to muscle ABC News Now onto cable systems, but parent Disney Corp. has to spread that to its other cable channels, too.

So, to start, ABC News Now, which has hopes of becoming one of the multicast channels on ABC affiliates' digital stations, will be carried on broadcast only by ABC's 10 owned-and-operated stations. The network is pitching the service to affiliates, which it is counting on to provide content. To sweeten the pitch, Westin says stations will be able to put their local newscasts on the channel, plus they will get local cut-ins à la *Good Morning America*. Affiliates have expressed interest in a revenue-sharing arrangement, like NBC's Weather Plus digital channel, which is jointly owned by the network and affiliates.

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**Government Sources:** "Partly cloudy."

— What happened: 12.8 inches of snow —

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**NEWARK, NJ**

Forecast of 1:30 pm, February 26, 2005

**AccuWeather Clients:** "Snow accumulating 6-10 inches."

**Government Sources:** "Light snow accumulations possible."

— What happened: 9.5 inches of snow —

**—STORM OF JANUARY 7-10, 2005—**

**LOS ANGELES, CA**

Forecast of 2:00 pm, January 4, 2005

**AccuWeather Clients:** "Very windy with heavy rain Thursday night and Friday morning bringing flooding. Showers Friday afternoon and evening... Heavy rain and flooding Saturday into Monday."

**Government Sources:** "Rain changing to showers Friday... Chance of rain Friday night through Sunday morning. Rain likely Sunday afternoon and night... chance of rain Monday."

— What happened: severe flooding —

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NAB will reach homes throughout Nevada, thanks to KVVU Las Vegas.

TECHNOLOGY

# A Model of Success

NAB adds a full HDTV station to the show floor **By Ken Kerschbaumer**

Everybody comes to the NAB show looking for the future. This year, the NAB has packed it into one area right off the show floor: a complete, working HDTV station assembled by volunteers with gear lent by 60 manufacturers.

"This really will be a fully operational TV station," says NAB Project Director Nigel Spratling, who came up with the

station, and then sent out e-mails to exhibitors who had gear on that list.

Not everyone was open to helping out, but in some cases, too many equipment manufacturers were. Spratling hit on a simple first-come, first-served approach. "As long as it did the job, we would use it," he says of the HD gear that will make up the exhibit, featuring manufacturers from Avid to Panasonic (see list below).

Seeing is believing. The "station"

with the old station model in his brain. "But when I started talking to the various vendors and began looking at the workflow," he says, "I found the model wasn't the best way to build it today."

For the model station, he needed to rely heavily on IT technologies and management of content as files. That meant fewer tape machines and more video servers. That is different but, he notes, "assembling a facility based on those technologies is a hell of a lot easier when it's from scratch, because you don't have to build around the existing facility."

## KEEPING IT REAL

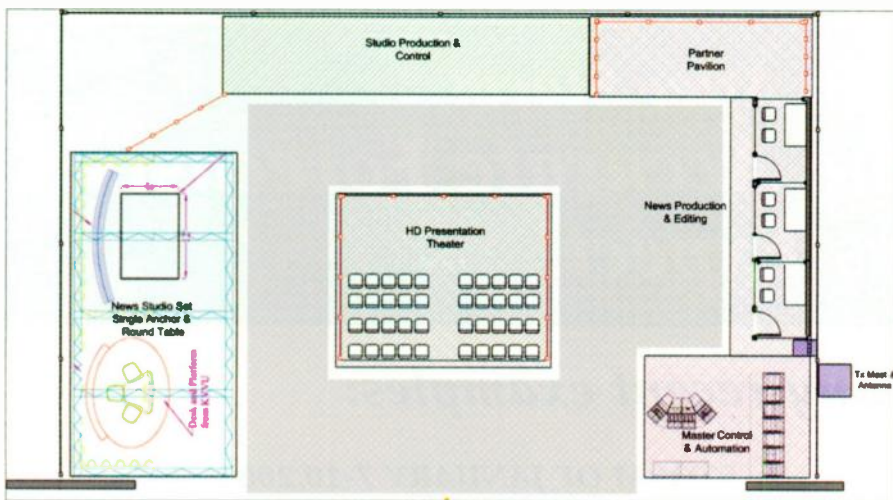
And this facility isn't based on head-in-the-clouds ideals. "One of our big rules was that whatever gear is used must be available today, deliverable today and used today," Spratling says. "This isn't about a future facility that might or might not exist in reality."

The result is a facility that is also surprisingly cost-effective. If all the gear were paid for, Spratling says, it would cost about \$1.5 million. "That's not too far out of line with the costs of building a full TV station using standard-definition gear," he adds.

Spratling and Burst Communications, the Denver-based integrator that has been working hard to assemble the components, will have one of the busiest pre-NAB schedules of anyone at the show.

The final assembly in Las Vegas has already begun, but a process that takes a typical station months will be accomplished in days thanks to pre-wired racks of gear.

And it will come down just as quickly. Says Spratling, "We'll be tearing it down feverishly on April 21." ■



NAB will build a working HDTV station in the North Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center.

idea last August and volunteered to pull it together. "I've been known to have some crazy ideas in the past, and this is about the craziest yet."

The station will have it all: editing, transmission—even Internet streaming. Attendees will be encouraged to take a look around the facility, learning more about the equipment (the exhibit will be sales-pitch free), and also to watch a variety of panel discussions that will take place on two talk-show sets (a news-anchor set will also be on-site).

Those discussions will reach more than just the convention-floor visitors: KVVU, the local Fox affiliate owned by Meredith Broadcasting, will air them live over its digital signal, and the content will also be available via satellite to any other TV station nationwide.

Spratling came up with the idea for the model station when he was looking at the exhibit-floor plan last summer and noticed a 6,000-square-foot empty space on the top floor of the North Hall at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The NAB liked the idea of the station and gave him the go-ahead.

He quickly drew up a list of the equipment he would need to build the

will give broadcasters a sense of what it will take to move from an analog or standard-definition digital plant to a full HDTV plant. Engineers will get a better sense of how they can make the transition, and management will get a better understanding of the economics of the move.



Nigel Spratling led the model-station project.

Although more than 1,500 TV stations are broadcasting a digital or HDTV signal, transmission is the only part of a station's facility affected. Stations still face the daunting (and expensive) challenge of converting such areas as program ingest, routing and cabling, the newsroom, field operations, and even commercial playback to high-def. This exhibit gives an idea of what that leap will be like.

the newsroom, field operations, and even commercial playback to high-def. This exhibit gives an idea of what that leap will be like.

## FUTURE-PROOF

"Converting a station from analog to digital is pretty straightforward, if you want a digital version of the analog plant," Spratling says. "But if you do that, it won't be easily upgradable for future technologies."

He learned that lesson the hard way while planning the station. As an engineer who has been involved in system integration, he approached

## NCTA TECH WATCH

### SET-TOP TRENDS

Interactive television, digital video recording (DVR) and home networking were all the rage at the NCTA National Show in San Francisco last week. Here is a look at some of the top announcements:

New and improved DVR functionality continues to be a trend, with **Gemstar-TV Guide** rolling out a feature that will let users who also have the Gemstar-TV Guide's i-Guide interactive programming guide to program their DVR via cellphone. They'll also be able to check schedules and even download TV-related ring tones, wall-paper and video sneak peeks of shows.

**Digeo** took the wraps off **Moxi Mini**, a low-cost digital set-top box designed for use on secondary TV sets. It ties into the larger, more expensive DVR box and enables sets in other rooms to access DVR-stored content, VOD and even games.

**Samsung** is also getting into the DVR market, signing a deal to help build next-generation Digeo boxes, giving Digeo big-time manufacturing capability to compete with companies like **Scientific-Atlanta** and **Motorola**.

Speaking of Scientific-Atlanta, the company rolled out the **MCP-100**, a box that combines multi-tuner HD DVR functions and multi-room connectivity with DVD burning (at standard-definition resolution).

**Pace** also gave attendees a look at a next-generation box, the **Tahoe HD DVR**, which will incorporate **Sonic Solutions'** DVD-burning technology (Sonic is the leading provider of DVD-burning software).

**Seagate**, which makes DVR hard drives that sit inside the boxes, unveiled **add-on DVR storage** units with a capacity up to 400GB. Such add-ons, which will make it possible for subscribers to offload content for long-term storage, hold the promise of becoming a huge market.

### GAME PLAY

Gaming also made its share of news at the show. Later this quarter, **Time Warner Cable** will make a subscription-based games channel available to customers (first up is Columbia, S.C., before nationwide roll-out). It will mark the U.S. debut for interactive-game publisher **Visiware** and include eight games rotated regularly, with new games added each month.

If you don't have room for a pool table, **Buzztime Entertainment** brings you **Buzztime Billiards**, a digital-cable application that allows subscribers to play against other subscribers in real-time. Look for demonstrations at your local bar.

And **Cablevision**, whose iO system has led the way in gaming, rolled out a new model for **Tetris** and **Asteroids** addicts: letting subscribers pay \$1.95 for 24 hours of unlimited play. Other games will be added soon by **Pixel Play**, a new company that is a partner in the initiative.

## PARTS LIST

Some of the gear used in the experimental all-HD "TV station" at the NAB show

<b>Encoders:</b>	Tiernan
<b>ENG Cameras:</b>	Bexel
<b>HD graphics:</b>	Chyron
<b>HD/SD switching:</b>	Snell & Wilcox
<b>Lenses:</b>	Fujinon
<b>Master control, routing:</b>	Leitch
<b>Newsroom system, editing:</b>	Avid
<b>Plasma monitors:</b>	Panasonic
<b>Studio cameras:</b>	Ikegami
<b>Transmitters:</b>	Axcera
<b>Video servers:</b>	Grass Valley





**PBS**

**DRAWING A TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP**

**FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**



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## LETTER TO OUR READERS



Dear Reader:

This special collaboration between Broadcasting & Cable and PBS highlights some of the revolutionary projects being developed and implemented by PBS to bring our member stations and the American public the highest quality media services. In an era marked by rapidly emerging technology, PBS is at the forefront of innovation.

In the earliest days of the digital transition, PBS was chosen by the FCC to oversee field tests of HDTV. PBS was the first broadcast network to launch its own satellite system. Always a technological leader, PBS even pioneered the development of closed captioning and received an Emmy for Outstanding Engineering Development for this work.

Today, PBS is deploying IT technology in the broadcast environment in ways that dramatically improve efficiency, decrease costs and allow participating member stations to better serve their communities. In addition, we are employing new methods for distributing our award-winning content on an ever-increasing number of platforms.

With the help of our member stations and industry partners, PBS is indeed Drawing a Technology Roadmap for the 21st Century.

Sincerely,



PAT MITCHELL  
President and CEO  
PBS

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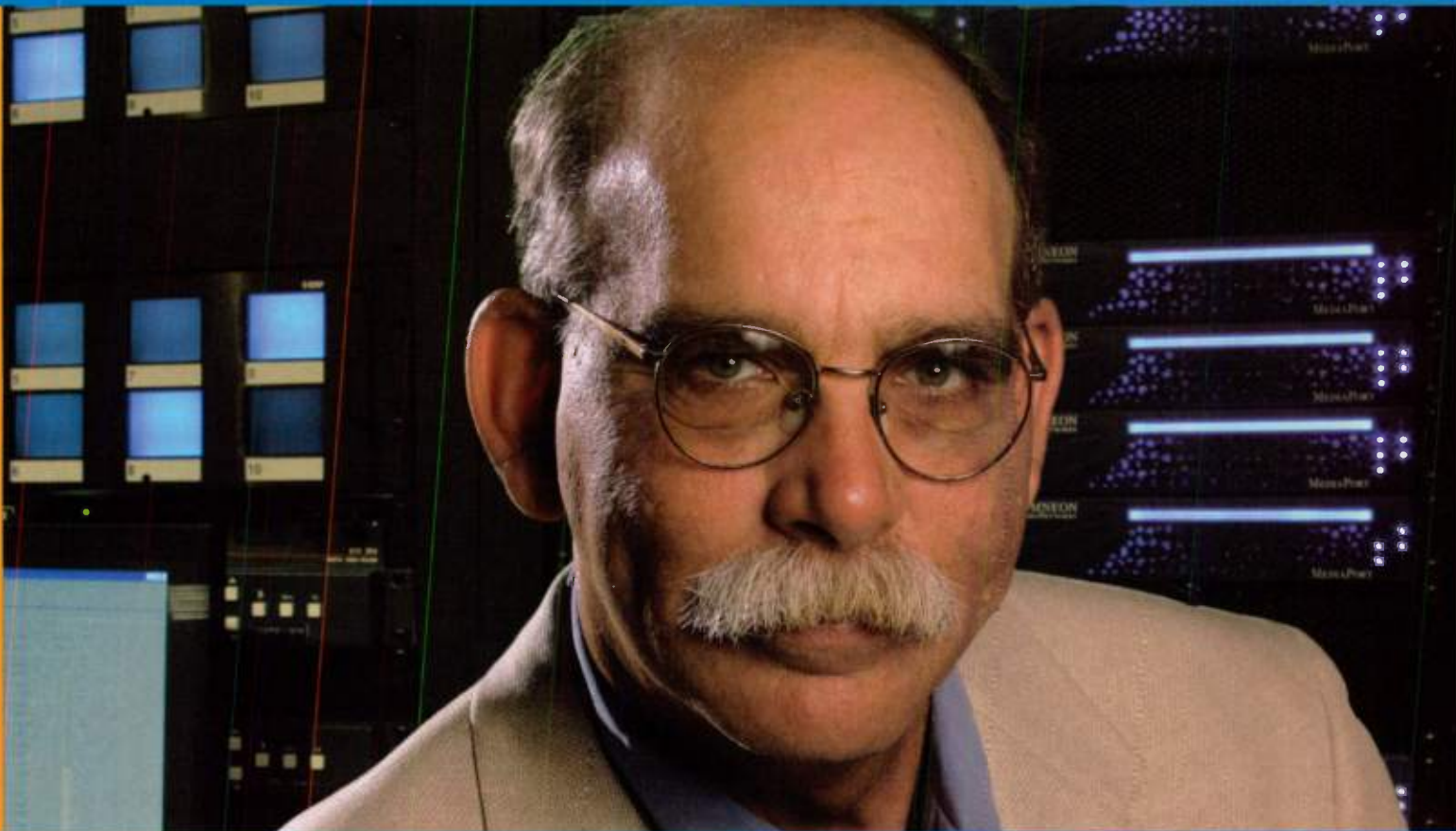
**Alan Popkin**

Director of TV Engineering  
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# MAPPING THE TECHNICAL FUTURE ALONG THE IT ROUTE

## NETWORK EMBRACES COMPUTER METHODOLOGIES TO OPTIMIZE BROADCAST CHAIN

Over the past five years, PBS has undergone a significant transformation in how it thinks about technology. The public broadcaster has always needed to be careful in balancing the requirements of its public service mission against a limited budget. But faced with a large investment in digital television and continued uncertainty over federal funding, PBS has taken an innovative approach in exploiting technology from the Information Technology (IT) market to create new cost efficiencies and operational improvements in its broadcast plant.

Currently, PBS is involved in several major technology initiatives. One is rolling out ACE, a new multi-channel broadcast system that will allow participating member stations to take advantage of modular technology and remote monitoring capabilities from PBS headquarters in Alexandria, Va. Another is developing NGIS, the Next Generation Interconnection System, a new distribution system that will replace traditional program feed recording with faster-than-real-time file transfers. And PBS is currently readying a new Network Operations Center (NOC) in Springfield, VA, that will begin broadcasting in November 2005.

Such IT-based, data-centric environments come with a long list of requirements that traditional broadcast vendors have sometimes been slow to address. Meeting PBS' needs for the IT-driven broadcast future required a change in corporate mindset from some manufacturers, says Ed Caleca, PBS Senior Vice President, Technology, Distribution and Operations.

"You go back eight, nine or 10 years, our strategic suppliers and vendors were almost lethargic," he says. "They had a fixed view of how we operate in the broadcast space. And in effect, they were incrementally making changes to a legacy architecture that had pretty much been in place for many years. They were doing

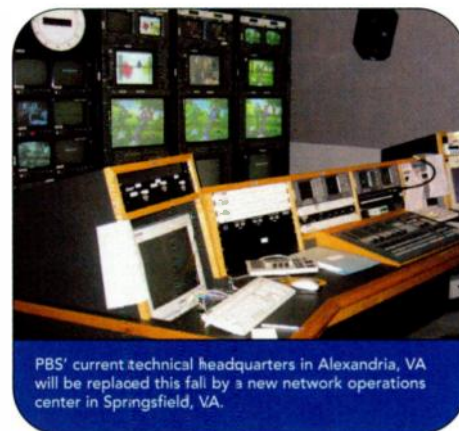
add-ons. There was no real breakthrough in how they approached what needed to get done."

The advent of digital television (DTV) in the late '90s changed all that, says Caleca. After years of uncertainty over DTV formats and transmission standards, stations finally began to invest in new transmission equipment to launch both HDTV and standard-definition multicasting. As the number of DTV stations grew quickly, vendors snapped to attention.

"They stood up and took notice, and said, 'What is our technology roadmap?'" says Caleca. "When we first started having conversations with them, these were the changes we all saw. You had the merging of two disciplines, in broadcast engineering and information technology."

The goal for PBS is to take the best practices and skill sets of both the broadcast engineering and IT disciplines and "let them take you into the future," says Caleca. In that vein, PBS has combined its broadcast engineering and IT staffs. In overseeing PBS' broadcast operations, Caleca works hand-in-hand with André Mendes, PBS Vice President and Chief Technology Integration Officer, Enterprise Technology.

Mendes is a good example of the new thinking that has come to broadcast engineering. With an IT background and professional experience



PBS' current technical headquarters in Alexandria, VA will be replaced this fall by a new network operations center in Springfield, VA.

across several industries including travel and pharmaceuticals, Mendes doesn't view television operations like your typical broadcast engineer. Instead, he is trying to take proven efficiencies from manufacturing and other industries and apply them to broadcasting.

"What we're trying to do is supply chain management, just like Gillette does with Afta razors," says Mendes. "It becomes a radically different proposition. Instead of a manual workflow that depends on very expensive equipment you now have a digital workflow with digital asset management. You can take advantage of technology's evolution to optimize your work flow and work environment at a much lower price point of distribution. So you put your concentration on the creation of new and compelling content."

In nine months' time, close to 60% of PBS's broadcast operations will be IT-based. Mendes says the crucial point for IT technology gaining a foothold in the broadcast plant came around 2000, when microprocessor capability got to the point where a general purpose microprocessor could deal with video. That reduced the economics substantially.

"We're not talking \$1500 chips, we're talking \$200, and Intel chips where they are making tens of millions," says Mendes. "At the same time,



PBS Senior Vice President Ed Caleca says that IT technology requires a new mindset from broadcast vendors.



disk storage got to the point where it became extremely cheap store to video files. The third component was the actual ability to network, both inside of the plant and out of the plant."

The advent of very fast networking technologies like Fast Ethernet, Firewire and Ultra-SCSI in the 1998-1999 timeframe, combined with improvements in compression codecs, allowed video to be moved around simply as digital files.

"You got the ability to treat broadcast quality video as an asset that could be moved around and distributed at a much lower price point," he recalls. "So there was a whole shift in the way media works. That evolved very quickly, from a little postage stamp-size stream to full motion broadcast video in DVD quality. That all happened in the space of four or five years. It was a radical transformation."

Today, PBS is trying to leverage cheap commodity hardware for as many applications as possible, while also getting traditional broadcast manufacturers to adopt the best practices from IT.

"We've seen the industry go from being totally broadcast-centric to IT-based on hardware," says Mendes. "Now we need it to be totally IT-based on software."

This requires a big change in mindset from broadcast vendors, says Caleca, who are used to fiercely defending their turf.

"We're asking them to drop their guard," he says. "The industry has been very protective of its customers. But they're moving to a space where by definition, they have to drop their protections. IT is more open, and you have got to be able to deal with different elements—you are not ever going to be the sole source of technology."

The ACE project is a good example of the type of collaborative thinking that PBS is seeking. To create a modular system that would automate master control functions at member stations, PBS has assembled a diverse consortium of companies that includes consulting firm Accenture; traffic system vendor BroadView Software; chip giant Intel; storage and archiving supplier MassTech Group; software giant Microsoft; routing, switching and branding supplier Miranda Technologies; server vendor Omneon Video Networks; automation supplier OmniBus Systems; satellite operator SES AMERICOM; and systems integrator Ascent Media Systems & Technology Services.

PBS did a deep technical evaluation of the players, trying to find the best vendors for each component while avoiding too much overlap between technologies. Overlap can lead to bickering, notes Mendes.

"What's remarkable is not only the speed with which it developed but also the level of integration that took place," he says. "It used to be, if you want Manufacturer A to speak with Manufacturer B, you had to deal with a proprietary interface. Now all of a sudden you're talking about communications methodologies, you're talking about vendors dealing with XML and standard APIs."

Mendes concedes that transitioning away from proprietary environments is a "very complex business issue" for broadcast manufacturers. But he says that PBS' goal is find software that it can use with hardware to "open bridges with the API," so the software runs the hardware.

"The thought processes are the same, but it creates a bit of dilemma," says Mendes. "From a hardware standpoint you can leverage economies [of scale], but from a software standpoint you have a much smaller area to work with. That's the process vendors are going through now: where can we make money in this brave new world?"

There is a constant creation of "abstraction layers" within the IT world, says Mendes, which in layman's terms, means that the technology has evolved to the point where "you're not worried about something—everybody is running Ethernet, everybody is running TCP/IP,



André Mendes, PBS Chief Technology Integration Officer, is bringing IT thinking to the broadcast world.



PBS offers a wealth of HDTV programming and provides a 24-hour HD feed to member stations.

everyone is using the same operating systems. These all become abstraction layers."

Broadcasting is similar, says Mendes, as technologies like RAID storage arrays and Ethernet networking have become commonplace. He thinks the changing business for broadcast vendors will mirror what has occurred in the IT industry over the last 20 years, as the big computer companies have now become mostly services and software companies.

"They can charge a lot less for software, and a lot more for integration services," says Mendes. "You are also starting to see outsourcing in broadcasting, where stations are starting to outsource their entire infrastructure in order to focus on content. The ACE system is an entire abstraction layer that allows you to run a station based on the traffic system, just by creating a schedule. It's in-house outsourcing."

One issue PBS has faced in embracing IT methodologies and cross-vendor integration, says Caleca, is making sure that skills are developed on "both sides of the house"—the engineering team and the IT team—in order to take advantage of new technology. In this technology shift, the broadcasting industry can look to the hard lessons learned by the telecommunications industry.

"The telecommunications industry had great support, but when it went from analog to digital, there was a huge skill set mismatch," says Caleca, an AT&T veteran. "You want to maximize your human resources. You take someone who knows a lot about the business, and work harder to make sure they are comfortable with new technology. In this industry you can't wait for people to retire—that's a waste of good talent." ■



# PBS ACES MASTER CONTROL

## MEMBERS STATIONS WILL BENEFIT FROM MODULAR COMPONENTS, REMOTE MONITORING

PBS' most ambitious technology initiative will be played out not only at the public broadcaster's Virginia headquarters, but also across the network's 348 member stations. The project is ACE, the network's name for a new modular, multi-component broadcast system that will use IT technologies and IP-based

playout, automation, master control and data movement. Key ACE components include automated channel operations; multi-level automated systems monitoring; remote problem identification, resolution, and escalation; and locally hosted scheduling, traffic, and underwriting functions. PBS will also be maintaining an ACE lab in order to constantly test software updates to the various components of the ACE system before passing them along to ACE-equipped stations.

"It becomes almost impossible for a station moving from the old environment into the IT environment to deal with the constant change," says André Mendes, PBS Vice President and Chief Technology Integration Officer, Enterprise Technology. "Things change so quickly, and you constantly have to be testing out patches, updates, etc."

ACE was born out of research conducted by PBS for the re-design of its Technical Operations Center, which was designed to simplify signal paths and move to an exception monitoring paradigm.

"The goal was reducing the number of touch-points where the signal has to be modified," says Marilyn Pierce, PBS Senior Director, Digital Asset Management for Enterprise Technology. "You have video servers, frame synchs, the demuxer, all the way to master control. These are all separate places with different technology, and they are complicated. So we were looking for ways to simplify the signal and simplify the workflow."

Another important consideration was to bring the alerting function out of the automation system to a third-party platform, using an "exception monitoring" scheme that would allow PBS to monitor multiple locations remotely. The PBS engineering team began looking at technology for ACE at the NAB

2003 show and experimenting with vendors soon afterward.

"We started with the IT platform, working with an integrator to do the racking and heavy lifting," says Pierce. "On September 19, 2003 we had ACE online and broadcasting, acting like a totally separate six-channel master control system. We've been doing endurance testing and full load testing since then."

The ACE system includes a scalable, networked server infrastructure from Omneon Video Networks; network-based automation and video asset management from OmniBus Systems; video interfacing, routing, master control switching, channel branding, and visual/aural facility monitoring over Internet Protocol (IP) from Miranda Technologies; traffic, scheduling and underwriting software from BroadView Software; archiving and content management from Masstech Group; satellite bandwidth and communication services from SES AMERICOM; Microsoft .NET integration architecture and Windows Server software from Microsoft; critical server and desktop components and software-enabling services from Intel; and program management, design,



PBS' ACE laboratory will be used to continually test software updates on behalf of member stations that install ACE.

satellite delivery to automate the master control functions of participating local stations. The ACE system will also allow PBS to remotely monitor the broadcast operations of local stations, a boon to some thinly staffed public broadcasters.

With ACE, PBS has assembled a consortium of leading broadcast and IT vendors to provide stations with a comprehensive solution for



PBS will use the ACE System to remotely monitor member stations across the country, explains Marilyn Pierce, Senior Director of Digital Asset Management for PBS.





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## IPTV READIES FOR ACE LAUNCH

The first station to implement ACE will be Iowa Public Television (IPTV) in Johnston, Iowa. IPTV, which runs nine full-power stations across the state of Iowa, is buying a \$1.7 million, six-channel ACE system that will be installed in early April and should go online by early June.

The IPTV system will have four standard-definition channels, one high-definition channel, and one "fail-over" channel for redundancy. It is currently being built by ACE systems integrator Ascent Media Systems & Technology Services of Northvale, N.J.

IPTV will spend six to eight weeks setting up and debugging the ACE system and training staff in the new workflow that ACE will create. "It replaces our existing automation, our existing play-to-air server, and our existing traffic system," says Bill Hayes, Director of Engineering and Technology for Iowa Public Television. "It's a pretty comprehensive change."

IPTV's existing traffic system generates a playlist that is imported into the automation system to trigger the playback of interstitials and other programming off the server. Once that playlist is made, says Hayes, it is fairly static; changes require manual intervention by an operator.

"With the new system a change in the traffic log immediately ripples down to the automation, and at some point in time, everything based in the archive," says Hayes. "The changes happen almost immediately and in a very short duration, and can be made as close as ten minutes prior to program air."

Budget cuts of some 35% over the last four years forced IPTV to drop its programming from midnight to 6 am, which included educational and distance learning content, as the combined cost of paying master control staff and running its transmitters through the night became too expensive. IPTV now plans to return to a 24-hour broadcast day by taking advantage of the ACE system's remote monitoring capabilities.

"Their ability to monitor feeds is not quite the 'centralcast' model, but it comes close," says Hayes. "We can transfer control to them, and if there is a problem, the system will give them a call. We don't have to have a person sitting at a console six hours a night just to satisfy [FCC] rules on control."

and integration services provided by Accenture. Ascent Media Systems & Technology Services of Northvale, N.J. is handling systems integration for the project.

The ACE system can receive satellite dish inputs as well as studio inputs.

"It's very flexible, it can take actual studio inputs from a studio or remote truck," says Pierce. "Some stations cover their state legislatures, and they can take an input from that into the ACE system, then record the output of that. It's channel based, so they can route to wherever they want—an analog transmitter, a digital transmitter or a cable headend."

The ACE system also provides both analog NTSC and DTV feeds, with the DTV feed going to the station's ATSC encoder. To make sure the electronic program guides that digital televisions use get the most up-to-date information on local member station programming, PBS added a PSIP [Program System and Information Protocol] generator to the lab version of ACE and created an interface between the traffic system and the PSIP generator. This allows for local stations to automatically provide real-time updates of PSIP information.

"It's the law now, PSIP has to be accurate," Pierce explains. "What's changing is when they get that actual schedule and how they get the data. In the early days, they would subscribe to Tribune [Media Services], and it would be only a once-a-month upload. That makes it hard to make changes. So many stations are actually working with traffic vendors to do a day-by-day update. With BroadView, you can actually do an up-to-the-minute update. So

we're pushing master control management more into traffic than actually in master control. We want to move metadata functions upstream as much as possible, so the metadata just sits and runs."

After running the lab in full 24/7 operation for over a year, PBS has gained first-hand knowledge of how much work is actually done by the staff at local stations.

"We've had one major on-air discrepancy, and that was because I forgot to load the traffic data," says Pierce. "These people work hard. You don't really know somebody else's job until you sit in it for a few days."

One of PBS' major goals for the ACE platform was that the system would be robust enough to allow PBS to fully monitor stations from its Technical Operations Center in Virginia. Testing of this functionality has proven successful, and any station that adopts the ACE platform has the option of allowing PBS to monitor its master control operations. For example, the first ACE station, Iowa Public Television, plans to let PBS monitor its operations from 12 a.m. to 6 a.m., when the station currently goes off-air for lack of master control staff.

"One thing we're very clear on is that we're not in charge of broadcasting," says Pierce. "All we do is monitor the participating station's output to make sure they stay on air, and we'll be troubleshooting their output. But at no point do we want to get in the business of running a local market; we're just providing another service to stations. Many stations actually contract out their traffic and scheduling work, and the contracted companies are welcome to come in and use the same platform.

The stations that do elect to install the ACE system will undergo a significant change in their workflow, one that should greatly simplify their day-to-day operations.

"With its efficiencies, they don't have to redo the engineering," says Pierce. "Their traffic system connects to our traffic system, and things happen almost simultaneously."

A typical six-channel ACE system contains four standard-definition channels and one high-definition channel, with a fifth SD channel used as a "fail-over" channel for a total hot, redundant signal path. That system, which PBS calls a "four plus one plus one," says Pierce, includes



The flexibility of the ACE traffic system will allow PBS stations to dynamically schedule programs such as "Newshour with Jim Lehrer."





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# A BUSY 2005 FOR THE PBS TECH TEAM

## NGIS, NOCTOP THE LIST

While officially deploying its groundbreaking ACE system would seem to be enough work for one year, PBS has quite a bit left on its technology plate for 2005. PBS or the organization aims to pick vendors for its Next Generation Interconnection System (NGIS) by the middle of the year, with the rollout to stations scheduled to begin in the fourth quarter. PBS is also readying a new Network Operations Center (NOC) in Springfield, Va., which it is plans to begin broadcasting from in November.

workflow. Another goal of NGIS is to create an effective archive management system at PBS headquarters that will give easy access to PBS' vast historical tape archive, allowing stations to fully exploit the power of DTV multicasting.

NGIS will use IP-based-transmission to send video as files at faster-than-real-time speeds to stations, where they will be captured by "edge" or "catch" servers that link to their automation system, traffic software and playout servers [in other words, for stations that adopt ACE, it will simply link to their ACE systems].

"With NGIS, the main premise is that if you have content in the can, the fastest way and best way to get it to multiple points is to distribute it as a file rather than a real time stream," says André Mendes, PBS Vice President and Chief Technology Integration Officer, Enterprise Technology. "You can send it six to eight times faster, and if you send it as a file, you can check that the file is received, and see exactly what was sent. It eliminates the issue of rain fade, the satellite issue, and it eliminates the need to quality-check the content again. That's part of the supply chain management environment. If you know you have good quality control upstream, if you know you have the same at the station, then that eliminates a whole layer of correction."

The packet-based transmission scheme of NGIS will let PBS take advantage of least-cost routing to send content, which could be on satellite or fiber depending on the application. Most stations will probably continue to receive their content via satellite, though missing data in a file could even be sent through high-speed Internet connections.

"If you get a file, and you're missing packets 17, 18 and 19, you can send it via terrestrial backhaul, and you can just send those packets," Mendes explains. "So the least-cost routing that you find in the telecommunications environment

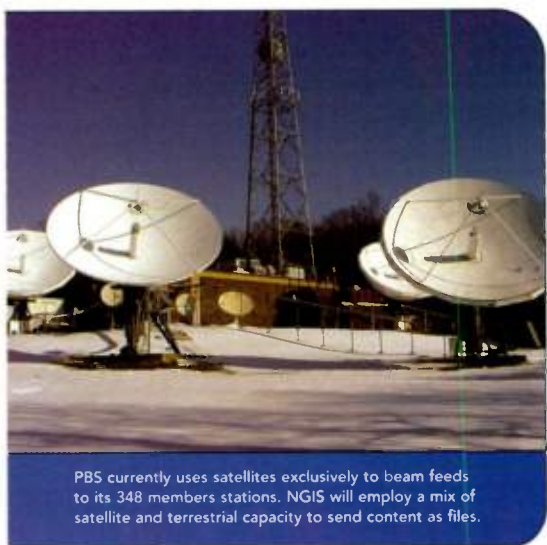
can apply here as well."

Depending on federal funding, the rollout of NGIS will probably include new satellite receive equipment for member stations. PBS hopes to replace their aging Motorola DigiCipher II receivers with DVB-based gear. And the implementation of "catch" servers through NGIS will allow stations to truly exploit the full power of the ACE system, says Marilyn Pierce, Director of Digital Asset Management for PBS Enterprise Technology.

**"Our new control center will be like a large IT environment, where operators can access web pages. From that standpoint, it will be a radical departure from what we have now, which is different control rooms that monitor different schedules."**

— André Mendes, PBS

"There is a built-in capability for an ACE station to receive files," says Pierce. "The idea is once you have files from the ingest process, and you know they're good, why not just send them to playout? By transferring files to the station, we'll be saving on the number of times we process a channel. The idea is to send a file out and do a file exchange through a satellite receiver that is set up for this purpose; it takes that and



PBS currently uses satellites exclusively to beam feeds to its 348 member stations. NGIS will employ a mix of satellite and terrestrial capacity to send content as files.

The NGIS is a complete restructuring of PBS' interconnection system and will affect every member station across the country. ACE is an optional solution that stations can choose to adopt on an individual basis. Both projects will have significant implications for PBS' technical operations over the next decade. The NGIS rollout, which has a projected budget of \$177 million, will not only replace the existing satellite distribution system with a hybrid satellite/fiber architecture but will also change the workflow process of ingesting content—by automating most of that



assembles it on a 'catch' server, before moving it to the Omneon play-to-air server," Pierce continues. "It tells the Omnibus automation system, 'Here's a file,' and auto-registers it into the automation system. Once it's in the automation system, it tells the traffic system 'I have something new.' Then the traffic system fills out the rest of the data, and tells it when to go on air."

NGIS' file-based functionality is especially important when considering how PBS member stations operate compared to affiliates of the major commercial networks. PBS doesn't have a set national program schedule and instead constantly feeds programming to local stations, which then record the programming and schedule it for broadcast as they see fit.

"We don't tell a station to air something Tuesday night at 8 p.m.," says Pierce. "The files may sit on the play-to-air server for a while, so instead of going to Omneon, they'll go to archive registration [MassStore]."

PBS has created a mock NGIS system at its Alexandria, VA technical headquarters. For the "catch" server, PBS is using a generic Hewlett Packard server in conjunction with IP transmission gear from International Datacasting Corporation.

"It's a prototype, with some software we built here, to manage the moving of content and the reassembling of packets," says Pierce. "It's built on the International Datacasting platform. Basically, it's a computer with lots of hard drive space. It's nothing proprietary, it's off-the-shelf as much as possible."

The communication between the catch server and ACE automation system is handled by an OmniBus application. Instead of a traditional 4:2:2 component digital connection, the system uses an IP path.

"So the traffic talks to OmniBus and just says what it needs, such as title information and any daughter clips associated with it, then it sends that to the automation system," Pierce explains. "It's all triggered to getting the main file to the server and that it knows about it. It won't send flag information to the automation, because it doesn't need it."

Currently, PBS feeds an hour-long compilation of promos three times a week. The network takes the promo reel, which is created in an Avid edit suite, and puts it on tape. Then it

is cached, and broadcast out. That scheme will obviously change with ACE, but promos have their own special considerations.

"One of the things we're looking at for promotions is that we need it to be in a format that editors can use," says Pierce. "But there are no effective MPEG-2 editors to get files ready for air. So for promos, we're looking at sending an IMX file through the file exchange. We will still do traditional feeds of it for stations that aren't ready for it yet."

Another option is using the format flexibility of the Omneon server that is included in the ACE system to send promos in DV format.

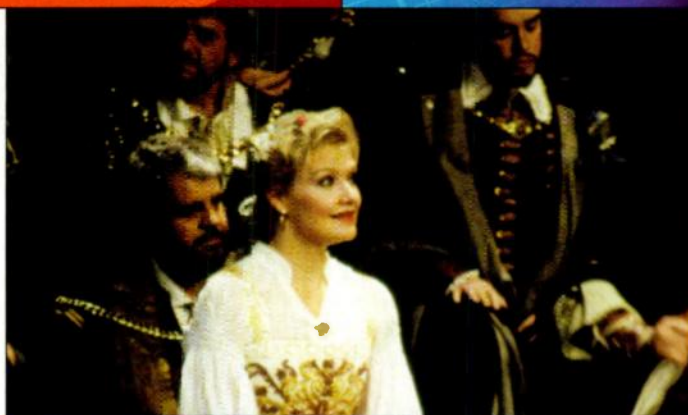
"There is no transcoding with Omneon, as it will work with multiple formats," says Pierce. "So instead of the IMX format, we may do the DV format. Omneon can air that, and it can also go into an Avid editor."

Another NGIS-related function that PBS is currently testing in ACE is the ability to upgrade promos by adding tags, voiceovers, and dynamic tags based on the playlist.

"Traffic would then send that information to the automation system to load the correct tag, add the audio over, even do a DVE [digital video effects] move," says Pierce. "We're getting the creative staff to warm to that idea. Technically, it's possible."

PBS' goal is to have NGIS fully deployed by third quarter 2006. As the first station to implement ACE for master control, Iowa Public Television (IPTV) is looking forward to getting NGIS to complete the picture, says Bill Hayes, IPTV Director of Engineering and Technology. Hayes sees the non-real-time nature of NGIS as a big benefit to his operations.

"That's a great advantage," says Hayes. "A lot of content is ready weeks or months in advance, but it is not fed and instead you wait until the week of airing so it doesn't screw up the real-time environment. It becomes fairly inefficient to do that. The NGIS catch server that resides at the station will catch programming as it comes in. If the programming is due on air in five hours, five days or five weeks, it doesn't matter. If it's there, it talks to the automation and lets know it's there,



The NGIS system will support program distribution for both high definition and standard definition fare such as The Metropolitan Opera Presents "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg."

or if there were any problems in transferring the file. That all gets handled ahead of time. It should reduce the amount of satellite traffic and should result in significant savings. It's really a good way of doing business."

The move to PBS' new Network Operations Center will mean a big workflow shift for network staffers. It will allow PBS to begin to fully take advantage of the ACE environment, which is based on "exception monitoring," i.e. the system monitors itself and alerts operators to any problems.

"Our new control center will be like a large IT environment, where operators can access web pages," says Mendes. "From that standpoint, it will be a radical departure from what we have now, which is different control rooms that monitor different schedules. Instead, there will be one big screen with a couple people watching it."

In the interim, PBS will begin monitoring the early ACE stations from its current Technical Operations Center in Alexandria. When evaluating the ACE monitoring workload, PBS breaks it down on a channel-per-operator basis, not a station-per-operator basis.

"We're targeting one monitoring station for every 25 channels," says Pierce. "When we go live with the Network Operations Center, we will be monitoring stations in New Hampshire, Hawaii, Fairbanks, Alaska, Schenectady, New York, along with Iowa Public Television, some 60 channels. Basically, it will take two monitoring stations to monitor five stations. But there's nothing to say we're tied to that number."

"I think there will be less real streams once NGIS kicks in; it will lower the number of channels," Pierce adds. ■



# PBS CONTENT: CALLING ALL PLATFORMS

## ONLINE SUCCESS SPURS VOD DEVELOPMENT

While PBS has been aggressive in exploiting the possibilities of DTV, that is far from the only digital platform for its content. PBS has been providing digital fare since the 1995 launch of PBS.org, which has grown into one of the most trafficked dot-org sites in the world. Today PBS is also experimenting with providing video-on-demand content to cable operators, with a particular focus on serving young viewers.

"We're really trying to ensure our public service mission continues on the digital platforms," says Cindy Johanson, PBS Senior Vice President for Interactive & Education. "We're also looking at new business opportunities. 'Not for profit' doesn't mean 'Not for revenue.' We're actively looking at solutions that will ensure a sustainable and more financially secure offering for PBS."

The scale of PBS.org is immense. In 2004, PBS.org had over 4.2 billion page views, and the site averages 30 million unique visits a month and 380 million page views a month. There are 1,300 companion Web sites within PBS.org, most of them related to PBS television programs and specials.

PBS has found that 65% of its online visitors are watching more TV on PBS. Johanson says that's no accident.

"They are engaged with the content, and online is pushing people to television, and vice versa," says Johanson. "The editorial process our producers go through when we extend content from the broadcast program ensures that it is not redundant with what we offer on-air, but has added value. As our 'Frontline' executive producer David Fanning puts it, the program on TV becomes an executive summary, inspiring viewers to drill deeper on the Web site. When we launch content on PBS.org, when we work with the producer to show rough cuts, etc., it is an additional on-demand

experience that couldn't be delivered in broadcast."

PBS has always been a leader in providing educational programming, and has extended that success online. 33% of the people who come to PBS.org identify themselves as an educator, including home-schoolers; that 33% has grown by 40% over the last three years.

PBS reaches children before they become students with its "Ready To Learn" initiative, a cross-platform offering for preschool and early elementary children designed to help them gain early literacy skills preparing them for success in school. PBS also provides services for teachers with dedicated Web sites such as PBS TeacherSource, which provides teachers with nearly 4,000 free lesson plans, and PBS TeacherLine, which provides educators with more than 90 courses in mathematics, reading, instructional technology and curriculum mapping.

PBS content is obviously very popular with kids as well, which is why PBS.org's biggest companion Web site is PBSKIDS.org, offering a mix of educational games and smart fun.

"Our interactive games are the number-one feature that children use when they come to PBSKIDS.org," says Johanson. "Our producers are developing robust, immersive experiences

and we plan to expand this offering with premium, downloadable games next year."

Last Fall, PBS began providing some of its content on video-on-demand (VOD) platforms. Its initial VOD offering was "PBS KIDS On Demand," a six-to-eight hour block of content it launched with Comcast and Time Warner. The trial saw very high usage rates and a high retention rate for popular kids' fare like "Barney." So PBS has expanded its VOD efforts into mainstream programming as well.

Several stations throughout the country are offering on-demand in a short window with programs such as "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," including KCTS/Seattle; KOPB/Portland; KQED/San Francisco; KBYU/Salt Lake City; WNPT/Nashville; WQED/Pittsburgh; WGBH/Boston; WGBY/Springfield; and WNET/New York. So far, the early feedback is positive. PBS Kids On Demand continues to gain popularity and has been picked up Insight, Charter, Cablevision and Adelphia. It is now available in 12 million digital cable homes.

In fact, PBS recently reached an agreement with Comcast and children's program producers Sesame Workshop and HIT Entertainment to launch two new children's programming ventures on the digital cable platform. The first component, a 50-hour block of on-demand programming, will make its debut in April. That will be followed by a 24-hour digital network to be introduced in October.

"PBS stations generally stop airing kids' programming around 5 pm, and between 5 and 9 pm is when they were seeing peak usage for VOD," says Deron Triff, PBS Vice President of Digital Ventures. "That's really important, as we were obviously delivering on our mission. And it obviously makes the service really sticky for the cable systems." PBS Senior Vice President Cindy Johanson says. ■



PBS Senior Vice President Cindy Johanson says that PBS has always looked at the Internet as its "first digital channel," and has taken lessons learned on PBS.org and applied them to other platforms.



# PBS CONTINUES ITS TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP WITH DTV

PBS has been a technology vanguard among broadcasters since its creation in 1969. In 1972, it pioneered the development of closed captioning, and went on to win a 1980 Emmy for Outstanding Engineering Achievement for its work. In 1975, it became the first broadcast network to launch its own satellite system. And in 1990 it followed up on its closed-captioning efforts by launching the Descriptive Video Service for visually impaired viewers.

The long evolution of the nation's digital television standard and subsequent conversion to digital broadcasts (DTV) has given PBS another technical arena in which to shine. PBS first formed the Advanced Television Test Center with a six other broadcasters in 1988, and was chosen by the FCC in 1991 to oversee field-tests of high-definition television (HDTV). PBS was heavily involved in the DTV standards process, which culminated in the ATSC (Advanced Television Systems Committee) standard in 1996.

PBS offered its first DTV programming in November 1998 through "Digital Week," which showcased a mix of HDTV documentaries and educational programming along with an "enhanced DTV" trial with Intel that delivered program-related data to personal computers. Seven PBS member stations initiated DTV broadcasts during Digital Week, including WETA, Washington, D.C.; KCTS, Seattle; WITF, Harrisburg, PA; Oregon Public Broadcasting; Mississippi ETV, Jackson, MS; WMVS, Milwaukee; and KCPT Kansas City, MO.

Also in 1998, PBS and Harris Corporation, with support from Philips Electronics, teamed up to launch the Harris/PBS DTV Express, a traveling DTV education center that went on a nationwide road show to demonstrate the possibilities of digital technology in 40 U.S. cities. The partners also developed a layman's guide to digital television, *DTV for Dummies*.

"It was a traveling road show introducing DTV to public television stations, representatives of state government, the federal government and the American public," recalls Ed Caleca, PBS Senior Vice President for Technology, Distribution and Operations. "As the DTV Express truck moved around the country, it became a soapbox for us to start projecting how television was changing and the impact of HDTV."

Caleca has been aboard for most of PBS' DTV ride. He joined PBS in 1997 after working for AT&T for 30 years, most of it in AT&T's media and broadcast businesses, where he sold satellite capacity and other telecommunications products to major networks, with PBS being one of his major clients. His last two big assignments at AT&T as national sales director were coordinating satellite capacity for the 1994 World Cup and the 1996 Olympics.

"That cemented me in the media industry," says Caleca, who views the contacts he made in the broadcast, cable and DBS spaces as a great help in furthering PBS' DTV goals. While Caleca was originally hired by then-PBS President and CEO Ervin Duggan to run the network's broadcast operations and engineering, his role has expanded into distribution as well.

Caleca helped broker carriage agreements for PBS DTV programming with cable operators, including landmark deals with Time Warner Cable in 2000 and Insight Communications in 2002. He was also involved in the agreement reached last January between the Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) and the National Cable Television Association (NCTA) whereby cable operators agreed to carry public broadcasters' digital multicasts. In all, PBS has the ability to reach some 42 million digital cable households with its programming.

The other important relationship for DTV, of

course, is between PBS and its member stations. Caleca says that PBS knew from the beginning that it had to exercise good judgment in utilizing the entire 19.4 Mb/s of a station's 6 megahertz DTV spectrum.

Some 300 member stations are currently broadcasting DTV. While many stations offer a mix of HD and SD multicasts, Caleca says there are "almost two camps" in public television, between those stations that fully embrace HDTV and those that prefer a multicast environment.



One of PBS' DTV experiments was a 1999 collaboration with Intel to broadcast enhanced episodes of the PBS kids program *Zoboomafoo*.

"Finding a way to be a consultative engineering operation and provide leadership to both needs is an operational challenge," he concedes.

PBS currently offers a 24-hour HDTV programming service, which a few stations carry as their sole DTV programming, while others cherry-pick programming to run during different dayparts. While a number of local stations produce their own HDTV content, Caleca would like to see a lot more local HDTV production.

"Our next big challenge is how to get HD editing capability and production gear in the hands of local stations, so their content can be 'ever-green-ed' and used into the future," he says. ■



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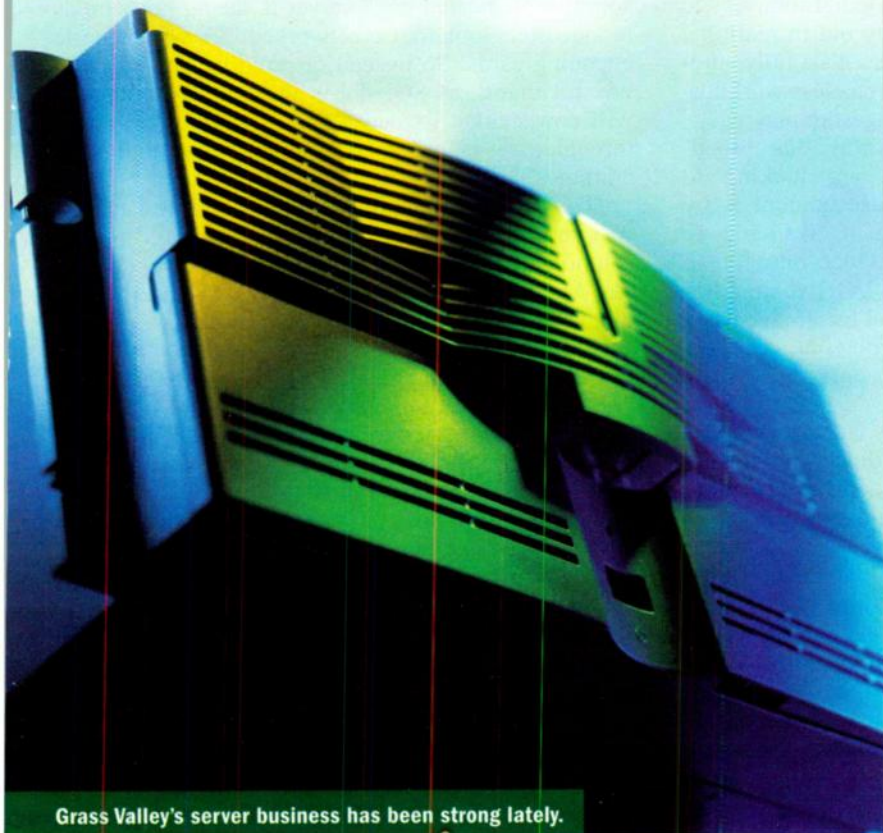




## Part 3

# The Missing Links

Vendors' new server features ease broadcasters' DTV transition **By Glen Dickson**



Grass Valley's server business has been strong lately.

Ten years ago, video servers became the linchpin of information technology (IT) in the television plant. Broadcasters realized how reliable hard drives could be for playing back commercials, syndicated content and network programming, and many quickly replaced their master-control tape decks with video servers. As the price of disk storage decreased and networking technology improved, servers also found their way into production and archiving applications, helping to fuel the dream of a fully tapeless broadcast plant.

However, server sales slowed a few years ago, because the majority of broadcasters aiming to implement servers had already done their buying, and those reliable hard drives were continuing to do their job.

Today, server vendors say the market is healthy again, largely due to programmers' increased commitment to high-definition programming. Vendors have added format-conversion capabilities to their systems to make it easy for broadcasters to simulcast high-definition (HD) and standard-definition (SD) versions of the same program. New transcoding technology allows stations to use a mix of digital acquisition formats for applications like news production. And the steady drop in the price of hard-disk storage and improved reliability of IT networking technologies like Gigabit Ethernet (GigE) are bolstering

sales, as broadcasters look to further automate their plant with IT-centric architectures.

#### STRONG SALES

Roger Crooks, product marketing manager for Profile Servers for Grass Valley, says the last two quarters have seen the strongest Profile sales over the past two years.

"It's a major market rebound," says Crooks. "A lot of our software partners have seen the same thing. It's a good trend, and we've seen that not only in the U.S. but worldwide."

A big factor is customer demand for high-definition capabilities. The sixth generation of the Profile family, the Profile 3500, is designed to ease the transition from standard-definition to HD operations. The format-independent server can store an SD clip and HD clip of a program in the same storage and play it out on the same timeline, easing the burden for broadcasters simul-

casting the same program in SD and HD.

"You can play the HD out, or downconvert it, or put an SD clip and HD clip on the timeline and play them back to back, and upconvert or downconvert as needed, without missing a frame," says Crooks. "An encoder and an up- and downconverter are built right into the server. So you don't need external modular equipment, or 'glue.' It's built inside the box."

Another key feature of the Profile 3500 is that it can accommodate different digital compression formats—such as DV25, DV50, I-frame MPEG-2 or long-GOP (Group of Pictures) MPEG-2—put them on a timeline and play them back to back.

"Previously, what facilities had to do is pick a compression format for a facility, and re-encode anything different to match it," says Crooks. "This was especially a problem for news organizations. Now you can store all the formats on the server, and just like you can play SD and HD on the same timeline, you can put all the formats on a timeline and play them out back to back. That makes it easy for automation to control payout."

#### NEW HD CAPABILITIES

An entry-level HD Profile system costs under \$100,000 for a system with ten 300-gigabyte drives (a total of 3 terabytes of storage); one input channel with a built-in encoder; and three output channels for payout. Storing HD at a compression rate of 50 Mbps would yield 82 hours of storage in such a system.

Omneon Video Networks also will head to NAB with new HD capabilities. An HD-payout component, the MultiPort 4100 Series, provides internal upconversion and downconversion capabilities that allow the Spectrum to play back simultaneous HD and SD outputs from the same timeline.

"Before, you had to pump material that was fed through the server to external devices for up- and down-conversion, and you were using at least two channels to get your SD and HD feeds out," says Geoff Stedman, Omneon VP of worldwide marketing. "This unit treats it as a single channel from the automation perspective, even though it has two outputs. That simplifies the automation complexity. You can build one playlist to run under automation control, and out of the MultiPort 4100 device, you can get simultaneous HD and SD feeds."

An entry-level Omneon Spectrum HD server, with one channel of input, two channels of output and a small amount of storage—45 hours of storage at a compression rate of 19 Mbps—would cost about \$65,000. That doesn't represent much of a premium from a base SD system with six channels and 72 hours of storage, which costs \$50,000.

While Omneon servers have traditionally been used for program payout, an increasing number of customers are using the Spectrum as a storage platform for editing. Stedman says 25% of the systems being sold today are used with some type of editing application. The Spectrum supports the I-frame MPEG, DV and DVCPRO 100 for HD formats, as well as file transfers to Avid and Pinnacle editors. At NAB, Omneon will demonstrate a "direct edit and place" model with Apple's Final Cut Pro nonlinear editor, which allows Final Cut to open up a file on the Omneon server and edit it without ever transferring the material from the server to a workstation.

#### TWO VIDEO-SERVER PRODUCTS

Those new capabilities point to a growing trend in the \$250 million video-server market. "Everybody

wants more performance for fewer dollars," says Pinnacle Systems strategist and fellow Al Kovalick.

Pinnacle Systems has two video-server products.

*Continued on page 30*

**"Everybody wants more performance for fewer dollars."**

AL KOVALICK,  
PINNACLE  
SYSTEMS





## PART 3: IT INFRASTRUCTURE

## The Missing Links

Continued from page 29

the MediaStream, designed for master-control playout operations, and the Thunder, aimed at live-production applications. New features for MediaStream include support for up to 32 audio channels—which is helpful for customers with international operations, such as MTV Europe that require playback in multiple languages—and expanded HD output capabilities. Like its competitors, Pinnacle has added built-in upconversion and downconversion capabilities, allowing a broadcaster to simultaneously produce SD and HD outputs of a program from the same timeline, with both outputs time-synched (on the input side, customers will still need an external encoder).

“We’re giving away HD outputs,” says Kovalick. “When you buy four SD outputs of MediaStream, you get four HD outputs.”

Pinnacle has already sold multiple HD MediaStreams in Japan, where broadcasters are generally storing content at a compression rate of 50 Mbps. With the latest 400-GB hard drives, one storage array can provide up to 80 hours of HD storage, or 400 hours of SD storage, says Kovalick.

“We’re right on the bleeding edge of storage tech,” he says, adding that most customers can get by with one array but tend to buy extra storage in anticipation of expansion.

A typical four-channel MediaStream system—consisting of one SD input, one ASI input and two SD/HD decoder channels with 960 GB of RAID protected storage (which equates to about 250 hours of storage at 8-Mbps compression)—is priced at \$72,000 and includes dual redundant power supplies and GigE networking for file transfer.

Pinnacle will also introduce Thunder HD, the first HD model of the Thunder production server. Available as a still store or with a clip option, Thunder HD serves video and key on each of its two channels and provides real-time DVE (digital video effects) transitions. Thunder HD supports the 1080i and 720p HD formats with native MPEG-2 MXF configurable storage and is able to share content with Pinnacle Deko character generators or Liquid nonlinear editors.

Another server vendor showing new HD capabilities in Las Vegas will be Leitch Technology. Over the past year, “HD has kicked into overdrive,” says Tim Slate, director of product marketing for Leitch’s server division.

Leitch will show its Nexio HD server, which it has already shipped to CNN and Outdoor Life Network. The base unit is a two-channel HD system with eight drives of storage for around \$50,000. It can be scaled up from there with additional storage and channels. The Nexio HD can be also be integrated with Leitch’s Velocity nonlinear editor for production applications. To ease the DTV transition, Leitch is working to add HD upconversion and downconversion capability to Nexio HD by integrating new software codecs.

“It’s not an unreasonable thing to ask for, and we have it on the pretty near-term road map,” says Slate, who says the capability should be a reality by early fall.

The desire by broadcast and cable networks to repurpose their video assets and derive extra revenue is driving them toward a “common warehouse” for assets that is disk-based and can be accessed with an asset-management system, says Bill Thompson, director of broadcast product marketing, SeaChange International. There is also an increased push toward

a tapeless workflow for editors. Both trends are helping to spur server sales.

SeaChange has responded with the MediaClient platform, a network-attached streaming-media platform that uses CIFS (Common Internet File System) file protocols and Internet Protocol (IP) networking to capture, store, edit and distribute video. The MediaClient family includes a series of video-codec clients that read and write video files to the MediaLibrary, a centralized repository of disk storage.

“We have Gigabit Ethernet inputs and outputs, and we have developed codecs that can accept or pump out streamed video,” says Thompson. “It’s a pretty broad stroke. You can have all assets in online form, and having them in the MediaLibrary lets you share files

among multiple users. In the same MediaLibrary, you can play out in real-time to air. So it’s a fully automated, tapeless workflow from ingest to playout.”

One way that broadcasters are looking to repurpose content is by making it available to cable video-on-demand

platforms. SeaChange, a longtime VOD vendor, has developed a content-production tool for broadcasters to prepare their material for VOD playout.

**Server vendors say the market is healthy, largely thanks to programmers’ commitment to high-def.**

### MORE COST-EFFECTIVE

“It’s a low-cost workstation that lets you take a broadcast-quality input file from an ordinary production environment, encode it for VOD, add the necessary metadata, and ship it off to cable headends to play, either on a SeaChange VOD system or one of our competitors’ products,” says Thompson. “It’s the first practical product for content providers to help them fulfill the contracts they are signing with cable operators.”

This VOD-production system, which will be introduced at NAB, will sell for less than \$100,000. That makes it more cost-effective than outsourcing the content preparation function, says Thompson: “If you’re doing any sort of content, this thing pays for itself in a year or two.”

For several years, Silicon Graphics Inc. (SGI) has been making a video server for the broadcast market based on its proprietary IRIX operating system. But SGI has undergone a strategic and technical shift, changing its OS over the past year to the Linux IA64 platform co-designed by Intel and Hewlett-Packard, and creating a storage system, SGI InfiniteStorage, that will be marketed to end users by other technology vendors.

SGI’s shift in strategy addresses the changing role of video servers within the broadcast plant since they surfaced 10 years ago as replacements for videotape recorders, says Chris Golson, SGI senior director for media industries.

Because servers were designed as a “box replacement,” they had to be based on proprietary operating systems to achieve the performance characteristics broadcasters wanted. Over the past 10 years, server manufacturers have increased their channel count, added broadcast features like jog/shuttle capability and tried to interface them with other devices as much as possible.

But while they are still very strong as a playout solution, Golson thinks they have lost traction in other areas where they used to be strong, such as editing and archiving.

Broadcasters are getting content in faster, and they want to be able to handle functions like low-res browsing or ingesting content with metadata and incorporating it into an archive. In those applications, says Golson, the “dedicated-box” server is seeing pressure as broadcasters look to use networked PCs with generic encoding cards. So instead of providing a dedicated box for ingest, as SGI did in the past, the company will now market its new Prism Linux-based system through asset-management companies and nonlinear-editing vendors.

“This is a Linux platform they can write to, and we will be soliciting their work in partnership to offer a solution,” says Golson. “Asset-management companies like Ardendo, which works with CNN and Danish Radio, is evaluating using our platform with their system. So if it becomes part of their system, and their software lies on our Itanium 2 Linux platform, and instead of buying a generic card and PC and writing software to that, they would use our platform.”

SGI is comfortable with having other vendors market its technology. The company has pursued a similar model for its graphics workstations in the past and already has a partnership with Omneon to resell its HD server.

A new player in the video-server/storage space is Exanet, an Israeli company founded in 2000 with venture-capital backing. Exanet started in the digital prepress and graphics markets, netting clients like New York Times Co. and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. It is now targeting the broadcast market and will be exhibiting at NAB for the first time.

Exanet’s strategy is to leverage off-the-shelf components to create large central storage systems that link to other production and playout devices, says Exanet VP of Business Development Per Sjöfors. A basic Exanet system would cost about \$70,000 for 3 TB of storage, he says, adding, “You could have 1,000 clients connected to that.”

“The trend is very clear,” says Sjöfors. “Broadcasters and production houses have changed from buying traditional video equipment and are moving completely to buying IT-specific equipment. When you talk to the large system integrators and VARs [Value Added Resellers], where six months ago their customers were buying traditional video stuff, now it’s all IT.” ■



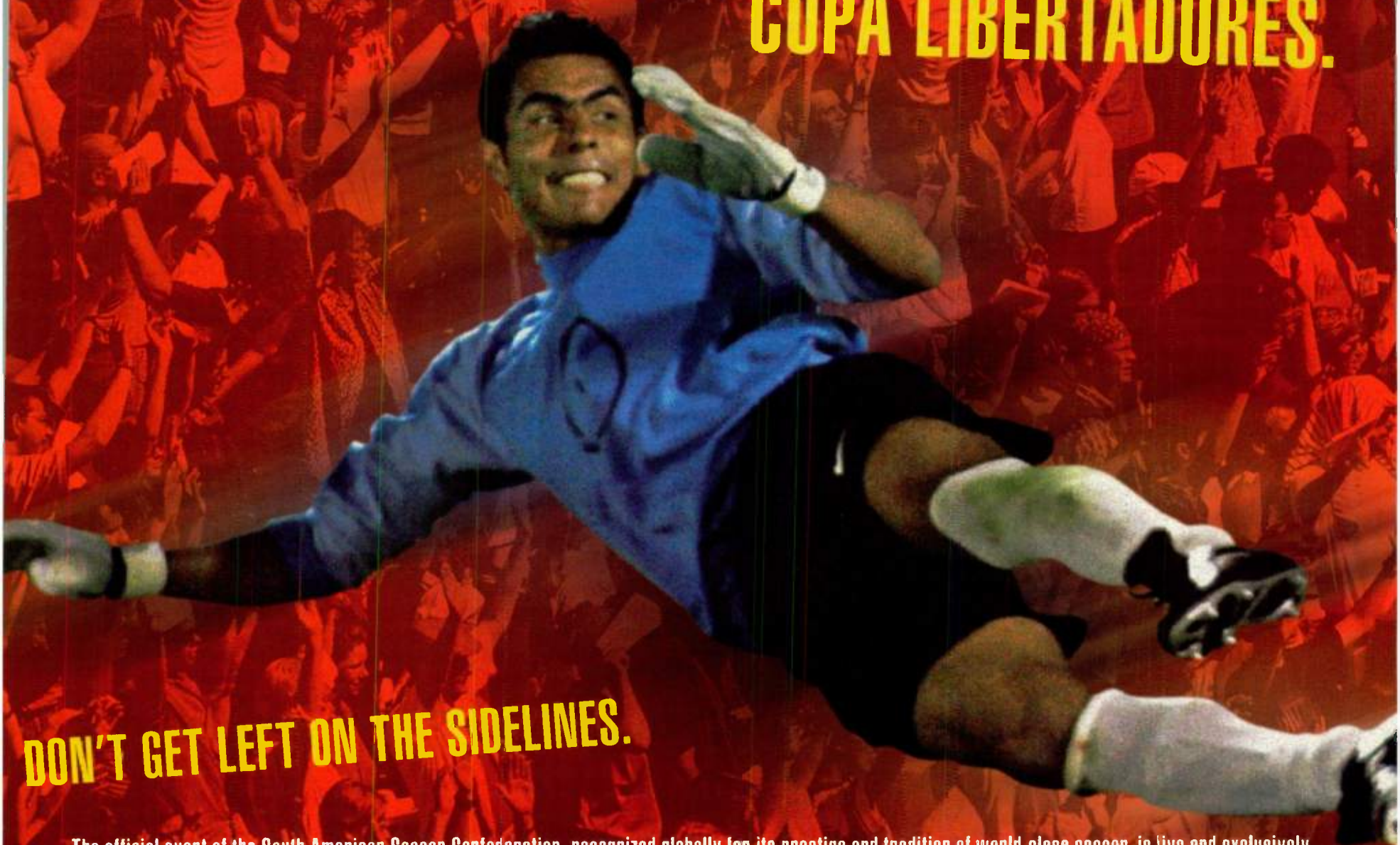
SGI Prism (top); Leitch Nexio HD





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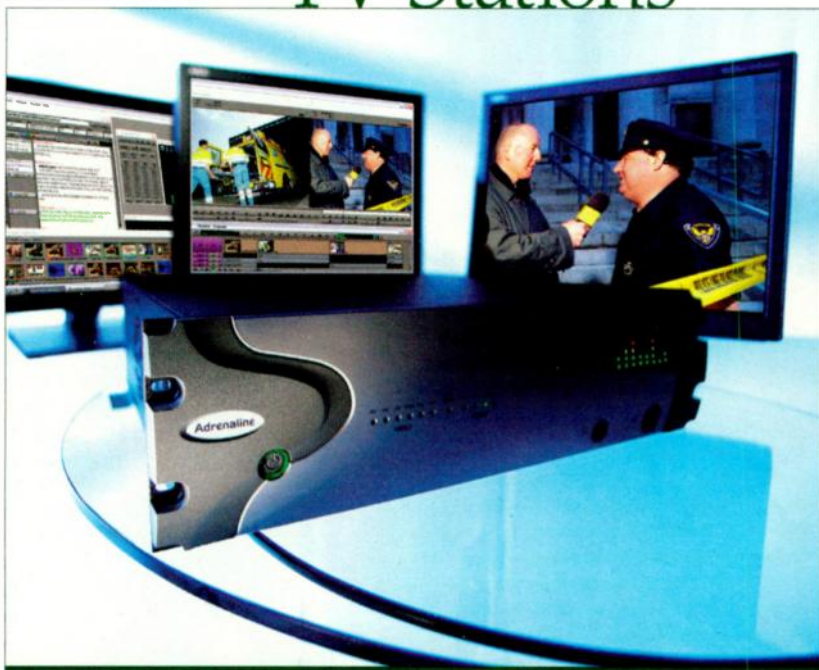


PART 3: IT INFRASTRUCTURE

# Microsoft Looks To Reshape TV Stations

IT can be both the problem and the solution

By Ken Kerschbaumer



Avid's NewsCutter editing system will be part of the demonstration of new technology from Microsoft at the NAB convention next week.

From the standpoint of equipment manufacturers, moving stations to new information-technology (IT) systems has both risks and rewards. The risk is that they will find themselves competing against traditional IT suppliers, which can offer cheaper products because they sell them in large volumes across many industries. The reward, however, is that IT-based gear can be cheaper to design, manufacture, service and update. NAB 2005 will highlight those risks and rewards. Nearly every piece of gear will reflect the move to IT—whether it is an Ethernet connection, software updates or the ability to store content as files.

One of the challenges, however, is that IT-based gear can still find itself within “silos” where the walls—in the form of incompatible file formats or the use of different servers—create barriers between devices and departments to prevent true interoperability.

One of the eye-openers at this year's NAB convention may come from Microsoft. Last week, the company took the wraps off its professional video and film version of its Connected Services Framework (CSF) technology, which does what the name suggests. CSF can be used to create true interoperability between equipment from different vendors without each of them having to write specific “one-off” code. In the TV business, that is huge news.

Microsoft, with the help of Panasonic, Avid, Omnibus, Telestream and North Plains, will demonstrate how CSF can be used to make the creation and movement of digital media assets quicker and cheaper. David Schleifer, VP, Avid broadcast and workgroups, says that CSF is helpful as more and more customers require tighter integration of their systems, “This is another tool that provides a common

framework for tying devices together.”

The key to CSF is that it is based on “Web services,” an over-arching term that refers to the use of Internet-related standards and protocols to build a common platform for inter-device communication. So if all the applications in a facility (or between facilities) are CSF-enabled, they are, in turn, capable of exchanging data and information.

“We're looking to allow people to focus on what they really do well instead of doing processes that should really be done without human intervention,” says David Chow, senior product manager, Microsoft Worldwide Media & Entertainment Group.

From a product standpoint, CSF requires software licensed from Microsoft and the deployment of two Microsoft servers: a SharePoint portal server and a Live Communications Server, costing about \$30,000 combined. SharePoint lets the user review content and check timecodes, while the Live Communications Server allows instant messaging to be deployed systemwide. That way, as the editors complete projects, they can send an instant

message to someone at the traffic system (in this case, Omnibus) to indicate that the content is ready for playout.

The application on display at NAB, however, is only one of its potential uses, according to Dave Alstadter, senior director, Microsoft Worldwide Media & Entertainment Group. “CSF takes static workflows and makes them more dynamic,” he says.

For example, if someone is creating a story and it will be broadcast on TV, sent to the Web, and also sent out to cellular phones, that person will no longer need to create three different assets. Instead, he or she can build the projects and then rely on CSF to complete the final assembly. The result is a saving in both time and money, because less server space is required and employees don't need to spend time transferring the assets to the appropriate distribution channel. It will also be easier for traffic and billing systems to communicate, because they'll be able to share databases and other information.

“We wanted to answer the question of how can someone access and use applications in a streamlined and dynamic fashion rather than having multiple incidents of it in different departments?” says Alstadter.

“The technology works,” says Carlos Montalvo, VP, business development and chief marketing officer, for North Plains, the first provider of digital-asset-management (DAM) systems to embrace CSF. “It's no longer a white paper. Now it's a product.”

The use of CSF goes a long way toward enabling cost-effective media-asset management. One of the problems facing facilities with limited budgets is that DAM usually requires an investment in gear that costs hundreds of thousands of dollars. Montalvo says it is now possible to deploy a system for \$75,000.

“Web services” will be the phrase heard over and over again at this year's show, and for years to come. “We're providing an environment so that vertical applications and even multiple departments can work better together,” says Chow. “Two or more departments can now use one server, and two or more editing stations can now use one server.” If Microsoft's Connected Services Framework is as successful as it's touted to be, it will be one giant leap for station technology. ■

## Q&A

### Time for Holographic Storage

InPhase to demo next-generation system

The double whammy of moving station and network technical plants first to file-based storage and eventually to HD leaves engineers and bosses hunting for inexpensive long-term storage systems.

This might be it. InPhase Technologies will hit the NAB show floor (as part of the Maxell booth) with this hard-to-grasp technology: holographic storage.

Liz Murphy, marketing chief of InPhase Technologies, walks B&C's Ken Kerschbaumer through the new system:

#### What exactly is a holographic drive?

It has electronics, optical media and lasers like those used in other recording technology. And it also has a loader mechanism to feed the media into the drive. But what's different is a camera chip, which is used to record the data, and a spatial light modulator, which encodes the data.

#### So what's the big difference?

It has a lot of very high data density in a very small form factor. A 130-mm disk will hold 300 GB vs. a 120-mm DVD disk that holds roughly 5 GB.

#### What's the secret?

Other recording technologies write a bit at a time, but the modulator records pages of data, with each page holding 1.3 million bits in the form of pixels. And then we change the angle of the laser and write another page, and we can put hundreds of pages in the same location by doing that process.

#### And how cheap is it?

About one-fifth the price of videotape on a per-gigabyte basis, about 50¢ per gigabyte. And over time, that will fall to less than 20¢.

#### How quickly can you transfer data from a video server to the drive?

We're specing a 20-Mbps transfer rate. By 2009 or 2010, we expect to be at 1.6 TB of data per disk with transfer rates of 120 MBps.

#### No offense, but that's a crazy amount of storage.

I've been in this industry a long time, and this is the first one where people are saying, when can I get one. We already have commitments from about 30 companies for early units, and those should be available by the end of 2006. ■

**Microsoft's Connected Services Framework can be used to create true interoperability between equipment from different vendors.**



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- ▶ **INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP**
- ▶ **BRAND DEVELOPMENT**
- ▶ **MENTORING SKILLS**

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The 2005 Brand Builders will be profiled in a Special Supplement published in both Broadcasting & Cable and Multichannel News during the annual PROMAX&BDA conference, June 21-23 at the Marriott Marquis in New York. Award-winners will also be formally recognized at the conference itself.

**ISSUE DATE: JUNE 20, 2005**

**SPACE CLOSE: JUNE 9, 2005**

**MATERIAL DUE: JUNE 13, 2005**



### PROMAX & BDA/BROADCASTING & CABLE/MULTICHANNEL NEWS BRAND BUILDER NOMINATION FORM

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby nominate \_\_\_\_\_ as a Brand Builder, based on the following:

(Attach written reasons why nominee is to be considered for an award)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry forms must be postmarked by **May 5, 2005** for inclusion in judging.

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## DEALS

### TVs

#### KEAT(LP) AMARILLO, TEXAS

**PRICE:** \$200,000  
**BUYER:** Equity Broadcasting Corp. (Greg W. Fess, EVP)  
**SELLER:** Univision Communications Inc. (A. Jerrold Perenchio, chairman/CEO)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 22, 12.9 kW  
**AFFILIATION:** Uni.

#### W68DR REHOBOTH BEACH, DEL.

**PRICE:** \$2,550  
**BUYER:** Victory Television Inc. (William Greene, president)  
**SELLER:** Trinity Broadcasting Network (Paul F. Crouch, president)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 68, 5.5 kW  
**AFFILIATION:** TBN

#### K61HN LEWISTON, IDAHO

**PRICE:** \$2,000  
**BUYER:** Brady Broadcasting (William G. Brady, owner)  
**SELLER:** ESI Broadcasting Corp. (Mike Stocklin, president/director)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 61, 5 kW, ant. -624 ft.

#### K24GP LUBBOCK, TEXAS

**PRICE:** \$1  
**BUYER:** Mako Communications LLC (Michael Mintz, member)  
**SELLER:** Venture Technologies Group LLC (Lawrence Rogow, president)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 24, 10 kW, ant. 666 ft.

#### W63DC AND W65EF OCEAN CITY, MD.

**PRICE:** \$1  
**BUYER:** Chris McHale (Chris McHale, owner)  
**SELLER:** Chang Broadcasting (Jeff Chang, member)  
**FACILITIES:** W63DC: Ch. 63, 11.2 kW, ant. 397 ft.; W65EF: Ch. 65, 7 kW, ant. 398 ft.  
**AFFILIATION:** W63DC: TBN  
**COMMENT:** Jeff Chang is assigning his 50% interest in the CPs for W63DC and W65EF Ocean City, Md., giving Chris McHale 100% ownership in these two CPs.

#### K56GY GREYBULL, WYO.

**PRICE:** Donation

**BUYER:** Central Wyoming College (Joanne McFarlen, president/CEO)  
**SELLER:** Mark Silberman (Mark Silberman, owner)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 56, 0.999 kW

#### K58GQ GLENDON, WYO.

**PRICE:** Donation  
**BUYER:** Central Wyoming College (Joanne McFarlen, president/CEO)  
**SELLER:** Mark Silberman (Mark Silberman, owner)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 58, 0.999 kW

#### K28IE BARSTOW, CALIF.

**PRICE:** Undisclosed  
**BUYER:** Chang Broadcasting (Jeff Chang, member)  
**SELLER:** Equity Broadcasting Corp. (Greg W. Fess, EVP)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 28, 30 kW, ant. 697 ft.

#### K35BW LEWISTON, IDAHO

**PRICE:** No cash consideration  
**BUYER:** Cowles Publishing Co. (Betsy Cowles, chair of the board)  
**SELLER:** Orchards Community TV Association Inc. (H.V. Yochum, president)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 35, 0.174 kW

### STATION SALES SCORECARD

	2005 (YTD)*		2004 (YTD)	
	NUMBER	VALUE (000)	NUMBER	VALUE (000)
Television	9	\$143,550	66	\$896,723
Radio	238	\$556,755	846	\$1,838,643

**SOURCE:** BIA Financial Networks \*As of 4/6/05

**COMMENT:** The only consideration is the continued operation of K35BW without further cost to the seller. K35BW is being used to rebroadcast the signal of KHQ Spokane, Wash.

#### KKRP(LP) ST. GEORGE, UTAH

**PRICE:** No cash consideration  
**BUYER:** TSM Inc. (Ray Carpenter, president)  
**SELLER:** Washington County TV Dept (Ray Carpenter, technical director)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 46, 0.745 kW  
**AFFILIATION:** ABC

#### WRNT(LP) HARTFORD, CONN.; WESA(LP) SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

**PRICE:** Undisclosed  
**BUYER:** R and S Broadcasting LLC (Salvatore Minniti, manager)  
**SELLER:** Salvatore Minniti (Salvatore Minniti, owner)  
**FACILITIES:** WRNT(LP): Ch. 48, 50 kW; WESA(LP): Ch. 34, 45 kW  
**COMMENT:** Transfer from an individual, Salvatore Minniti, to a limited-liability company whose equity members are Minniti and his wife, Rita Minniti

#### K52JO WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

**PRICE:** Undisclosed  
**BUYER:** Hispanic Christian Community Network Inc. (Omar Vasquez, VP)  
**SELLER:** Vernon G. Snyder (Vernon G. Snyder III, owner)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 52, 10 kW  
**BROKER:** The LPTVStore.com LLC

### FMs

#### KTCM(FM) KINGMAN, KAN.

**PRICE:** \$1.7 million  
**BUYER:** Connoisseur Communications (Jeff Warshaw, CEO); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** Maria Salazar  
**FACILITIES:** 100.3 MHz, 48 kW, ant. 505 ft.

**FORMAT:** Spanish/Mexican  
**BROKER:** Michael J. Bergner of Bergner & Co.

#### WHLG(FM) PORT ST. LUCIE (FT. PIERCE-STUART-VERO BEACH), FLA.

**PRICE:** \$1.2 million  
**BUYER:** Horton Broadcasting Co. (Vernon D. Smith, president); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** Horton Broadcasting Co. (Helen B. Horton, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 101.3 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 299 ft.  
**FORMAT:** AC  
**COMMENT:** Smith is buying Helen B. Horton's 20% common stock and 100% voting stock in Horton Broadcasting Co. (HBC), making him 100%

holder of the votes and assets.

#### KVUW(FM) WENDOVER, NEV.; NEW (FM)(CP) LARAMIE (CHEYENNE), WYO.

**PRICE:** \$750,000  
**BUYER:** Mountain States Radio Inc. (Victor A. Michael, president); owns six other stations, including KRQU(FM) Cheyenne  
**SELLER:** Mt Rushmore Broadcasting Inc. (Jan C. Gray, president)  
**FACILITIES:** KVUW(FM): 102.3 MHz, 3 kW, ant. 26 ft.; NEW (FM): 98.7 MHz, 110 W, ant. 1,073 ft.  
**FORMAT:** KVUW(FM): CP-NOA; NEW (FM): CP-NOA

#### WKNZ(FM) COLLINS (LAUREL-HATTIESBURG), MISS.

**PRICE:** \$550,000  
**BUYER:** Rainey Broadcasting Inc. (Kenneth Rainey, president/director); owns one other station, WMXI(FM) Laurel-Hattiesburg  
**SELLER:** Radio Broadcasters LLC (Kenneth Rainey, managing member)  
**FACILITIES:** 107.1 MHz, 2 kW, ant. 541 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Modern AC  
**COMMENT:** John H. Phillips is selling his 50% interest in Radio Broadcasters LLC (RBL) to Cheryl Rainey; the remaining 50% interest in RBL is held by Kenneth Rainey.

#### KXXQ(FM) MILAN, N.M.

**PRICE:** \$450,000  
**BUYER:** IHR Educational Broadcasting (Douglas Sherman, president); owns seven other stations, none in this market  
**SELLER:** Tom Hodgins  
**FACILITIES:** 100.7 MHz, 100 kW, ant. 1,362 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Country  
**BROKER:** MCH Enterprises Inc

#### WSEH(FM) CUMBERLAND, KY.

**PRICE:** \$265,000  
**BUYER:** Regina Kay Moore; owns one other station  
**SELLER:** Cumberland City Broadcasting (Susan Burton, GM)  
**FACILITIES:** 102.7 MHz, 175 W, ant. 1,824 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Country

#### KQNS(FM) LINDSBORG, KAN.

**PRICE:** \$220,000  
**BUYER:** Waitt Radio (George

Pelletier, SVP, radio); owns 42 other stations, none in this market  
**SELLER:** B-B Broadcasting Inc. (Elizabeth A. Chalmers, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 95.5 MHz, 16 kW, ant. 417 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Lite Rock  
**COMMENT:** Buyer has been programming the station.

#### KKVO(FM) ALTUS, OKLA.

**PRICE:** \$150,000  
**BUYER:** Educational Media Foundation (Richard Jenkins, president); owns 121 other stations, none in this market  
**SELLER:** Altus Educational Broadcasting Foundation (Bat Masterson, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 90.9 MHz, 4 kW, ant. 820 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Christian  
**BROKER:** Greg Guy of Patrick Communications

#### WHFD(FM) LAWRENCEVILLE, VA.

**PRICE:** \$100,000  
**BUYER:** Lawrenceville Christian (Katrina T. Chase, president); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** Willis Broadcasting Corp. (Levi E. Willis, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 105.5 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 154 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Black Gospel

#### WWZP(FM) FREELAND (SAGINAW-BAY CITY-MIDLAND), MICH.

**PRICE:** \$75,000  
**BUYER:** Educational Media Foundation (Richard Jenkins, president); owns 125 other stations, including WTRK(FM) Saginaw-Bay City-Midland  
**SELLER:** American Family Association Inc. (Donald E. Wildmon, chairman)  
**FACILITIES:** 90.9 MHz, 240 W, ant. 213 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Christian

#### WUPY(FM) ONTONAGON, MICH.

**PRICE:** \$75,000  
**BUYER:** JBS Ltd (Bruce Lindsey, president); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** S&S Broadcasting (Robert Shulz, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 101.1 MHz, 100 kW, ant. 620 ft.  
**FORMAT:** Country

Continued on page 36



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## DEALS

### Deals

*Continued from page 34*

#### **KVFR(FM)(CP) LAYTONVILLE, CALIF.**

**PRICE:** \$50,000  
**BUYER:** Radio Bilingue Inc. (Hugo Morales, owner/executive director); owns five other stations, none in this market  
**SELLER:** Family Stations Inc. (Harold Camping, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 88.5 MHz, 1 kW, ant. 2,336 ft.  
**FORMAT:** CP-NOA  
**BROKER:** Public Radio Capital

#### **AMS**

#### **KNRC(AM) ENGLEWOOD (DENVER-BOULDER), COLO.**

**PRICE:** \$5.53 million  
**BUYER:** New Radio Venture LLC (Maria Elena Llansa, manager); owns one other station, not in this market  
**SELLER:** NRC Broadcasting Inc. (Tim Brown, chairman/CEO)  
**FACILITIES:** 1150 kHz, 50 kW day/1 kW night  
**FORMAT:** News/Talk  
**BROKER:** Larry Patrick, Patrick Communications; Jody McCoy, Media Services Group

#### **KMZT(AM) PIEDMONT (SAN FRANCISCO), CALIF.**

**PRICE:** \$5.1 million  
**BUYER:** Mapleton Communications LLC (Adam Nathanson, president); owns 28 other stations, none in this market  
**SELLER:** Mt Wilson FM Broadcasters (Saul Levine, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 1510 kHz, 8 kW day/230 W night  
**FORMAT:** Oldies  
**BROKER:** American Radio Brokers Inc./SFO

#### **WYXC(AM) CARTERSVILLE (ATLANTA), GA.**

**PRICE:** \$500,000  
**BUYER:** Clarion Communications Inc. (Charles Shiflett, president); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** Rogers Communications Inc. (William Rogers, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 1270 kHz, 2 kW  
**FORMAT:** News/Talk/Sports

#### **KTTP(AM) PINEVILLE (ALEXANDRIA), LA.**

**PRICE:** \$175,000  
**BUYER:** Benjamin-Dane LLC

(Ronald Reeves, president); owns one other station, not in this market

**SELLER:** Peoples Broadcasting Network LLC (Otto Miller, member)  
**FACILITIES:** 1110 kHz, 2 kW  
**FORMAT:** Ethnic/Gospel  
**BROKER:** Holt Media Group

#### **KCOM(AM) COMANCHE, TEXAS**

**PRICE:** \$164,000  
**BUYER:** Cherry Creek Radio (Joseph D. Schwartz, CEO/president); owns 36 other stations, including KYOX(FM) Comanche  
**SELLER:** Texas West Media Inc. (David B. Bacon, president/director)  
**FACILITIES:** 1550 kHz, 250 W day/54 W night  
**FORMAT:** Country  
**BROKER:** Media Services Group

#### **KUGT(AM) JACKSON, MO.**

**PRICE:** \$150,000  
**BUYER:** Withers Broadcasting Co. (W. Russell Withers Jr., president); owns 21 other stations, none in this market  
**SELLER:** Light & Power Co. Inc. (Larry E. Dunger, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 1170 kHz, 250 W  
**FORMAT:** Christian

#### **WRPN(AM) RIPON, WIS.**

**PRICE:** \$150,000  
**BUYER:** Radio One Communications LLC (Michael Enfelt, member); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** Radio Plus Inc. (Christopher Bernier, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 1600 kHz, 5 kW  
**FORMAT:** News/Talk/Sports

#### **WRSM(AM) SUMITON (BIRMINGHAM), ALA.**

**PRICE:** \$106,501  
**BUYER:** American Trust Corp. (Earl F. Hilliard, president); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** Sumiton Broadcasting Inc. (Herb Steadman, shareholder)  
**FACILITIES:** 1540 kHz, 1 kW  
**FORMAT:** Country

#### **KSWB(AM) SEASIDE, ORE.**

**PRICE:** \$100,000  
**BUYER:** Calcomm Stations Oregon LLC (Cal Brady, manag-

ing member); owns one other station, not in this market

**SELLER:** Cannon Beach Radio LLC (A. Michael Gould, member)  
**FACILITIES:** 840 kHz, 1 kW day/500 W night  
**FORMAT:** Nostalgia

#### **KPGM(AM) PAWHUSKA (TULSA), OKLA.**

**PRICE:** \$100,000  
**BUYER:** Kevin and Dorea Potter (Kevin Potter, owner); owns three other stations, none in this market  
**SELLER:** Pearl Communications Group (Danny L. Hester, president/director)  
**FACILITIES:** 1500 kHz, 500 W  
**FORMAT:** Gospel

#### **WSVS(AM) CREWE, VA.**

**PRICE:** \$95,000  
**BUYER:** Gee Communications Inc. (David Gee, president/owner); owns one other station, not in this market  
**SELLER:** Colonial Broadcasting Co. (John Wilson, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 800 kHz, 5 kW day/275 W night  
**FORMAT:** Country

#### **WZJ(AM) PASCAGOULA- MOSS POINT (BILOXI- GULFPORT-PASCAGOULA), MISS.**

**PRICE:** \$88,000  
**BUYER:** Flagship Radio Group Inc. (Timothy D. Lee, president); owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** Judah Broadcasting Network Inc. (Kevin Grady)  
**FACILITIES:** 1580 kHz, 5 kW day/51 W night  
**FORMAT:** News/Talk  
**COMMENT:** Price includes assumption of \$36,610 back owed by seller to Clear Channel Communications for tower site and equipment building.

#### **WBCE(AM) WICKLIFFE, KY.**

**PRICE:** \$85,200  
**BUYER:** David N. Courtney; owns no other stations  
**SELLER:** WBCE Inc. (Jim Baggett, president)  
**FACILITIES:** 1200 kHz, 1 kW  
**FORMAT:** Gospel  
**COMMENT:** Foreclosure/public auction

**INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:**  
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PEOPLE

# A Traveling Man Stays Local

Sehring focuses on Cincinnati market **By Allison Romano**

**C**hris Sehring, VP and GM for Clear Channel's powerhouse CBS affiliate WKRC Cincinnati, has honed his understanding of localism by traveling the world. During his 30-year career in local TV, Sehring has taken time out to hopscotch the globe, visiting such far-flung locales as Bhutan, Morocco and Peru. In each place, Sehring says, he has made a point of learning about local culture and values. He often travels solo and likes to take spontaneous bus trips to little-known towns.

Abroad or at home, Sehring says, he learns from the locals. "I like to get out into the community and listen. What are their needs? What are their issues?" Cincinnati is hardly exotic, but the city has its own local customs and priorities. Focusing on them is essential to WKRC's continuing success, Sehring says.

A Columbus, Ohio, native, Sehring grew up watching WBNS Columbus, the CBS affiliate that dominates central Ohio. It left a lasting impression. "WBNS is a model for how a good station operates," Sehring says. "They are involved in the community, have great local programming and top-rated newscasts."

WKRC is a similarly strong performer. It is the news leader in the market and ranks among the top five rated CBS stations anywhere in the country. In Cincinnati, *CSI* scores big ratings, and *Survivor* sizzles. Sehring says CBS' programming meshes well with Cincinnati's more traditional, family-oriented viewers.

## THE PROCTER & GAMBLE APPROACH

The southern Ohio region, the 33rd-largest market in the country, is home to several Fortune 500 companies, including the Kroger supermarket chain, Federated department stores and Procter & Gamble, the city's most famous employer. Sehring never worked at Procter & Gamble (or as a "Proctoid," as he refers to a P&G employee), but the consumer-products giant has shaped his views on business.

"They believe in getting return on investment and moving product," Sehring says. That focus, he adds, applies to television, too. "Television is the most powerful medium," he says. "When I meet with nonprofits and advertisers, I tell them the same thing: TV can win the hearts and minds of viewers."

Sehring developed his ad-sales savvy as he moved around the country working for local stations, a common experience for local broadcast executives. After graduating from Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., Sehring worked at sales-rep firm Telerep and spent two years learning the TV-ad-sales ropes. But when the training

program ended, Sehring headed to Europe to backpack, his first of many travel adventures. He came home enlightened but broke, and returned to Ohio to work as a salesman for WSYX Columbus.

From there, Sehring did stints at KPHO Phoenix, Meredith Broadcasting's former independent and now a CBS station, and KMGH Denver, a McGraw-Hill-owned ABC affiliate. At the two stations, he ventured beyond sales, learning about news, programming and promotion. When Clear Channel needed a station manager for WXXA, its Fox affiliate in Albany, N.Y., Sehring got his first shot at station management.

The travels have all been training for

WKRC, where Sehring arrived in 1999 as director of sales. Within a year, he took over as VP/GM, after former WKRC chief Bill Moll was promoted to run the Clear Channel TV-station group. One of Sehring's early moves was rebranding WKRC, which is channel 12, as "Local 12," a positioning Moll says was effective. "Viewers and advertisers know 'Local 12' is not an empty promise,"

Moll says. "It is a thoughtful commitment to local service, to viewers, to advertisers and the community."

As he does when visiting another country, Sehring studies the Cincinnati market closely, looking for trends and opportunities. That is how he hit on the idea for *Nuestro Rincon*, WKRC's weekly Spanish-language newscast. Two percent of Cincinnati residents are Hispanic, and the population is fast-growing. "Someone needed to serve that audience. As the local station, I wanted it to be us," says Sehring. "Some viewers took jabs at us, but they missed the point. We are serving the community." The station hired a bilingual anchor and several producers to work on the newscast. It is an example of Sehring's innovative spirit, Moll says: "Chris is the consummate local broadcaster."

## KARMA CONNECTION

Another way for WKRC to connect with viewers, Sehring says, is to get out into the community. That priority spawned WKRC's "12 on Tour," which sees the station's morning newscast broadcasting from smaller towns across the market.

With these efforts and others, WKRC can count on its eight sister Clear Channel radio stations for promotional support. But it can be challenging to manage, Sehring says. "You can pull in other mediums when it makes sense. That is when it is synergy."

When the Cincinnati Zoo, which advertises on WKRC, was drumming up attention for a new dinosaur exhibit, it called on the station for help. Sehring organized a visit from *Survivor* star Rupert Boneham and recruited the station's Clear Channel radio compatriots to promote the event on-air. The event drew about 4,000 people.

Sehring is vigilant about maintaining WKRC's status and wary of complacency. "It is hard to stay No. 1," he says. "There is a tendency to resist change, but I believe you have to change."

Echoing a bit of Zen he picked up in the Far East, he says, "I believe there is karma for the station. We need to always serve the community." ■

## FIFTH ESTATER



**CHRIS SEHRING**  
VP/GM, WKRC Cincinnati

B. June 5, 1952, Columbus, Ohio

### EDUCATION

B.A., English, Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., 1974

### EMPLOYMENT

Account executive, Telerep Inc., 1975-77; account executive, WSYX Columbus, Ohio, 1977-79; national sales manager, WSYX, 1979-80; general sales manager, WSYX, 1981-85; national sales manager, KPHO Phoenix, 1985-89; general sales manager, KPHO, 1989-93; general sales manager, KMGH Denver, 1993-97; station manager, WXXA Albany, N.Y., 1997-99; director of sales, WKRC Cincinnati, 1999-2000; current position since 2001

### PERSONAL

Married; two children

## FATES & FORTUNES

### BROADCAST TV

**DANIEL HOUTZ**, national sales coordinator, WEWB Albany, N.Y., promoted to marketing director.

**DAVID DOEBLER**, president/GM, WVTM Birmingham, Ala., named president/GM, WVIT Hartford, Conn.

### CABLE TV

At Comcast: **MARK DAVIS**, senior director, engineering, Comcast Southern division, Georgia, promoted to division VP, technical operations; **JOE CONA**, senior director, business operations, Comcast, Jacksonville, Fla., named senior director, coastal region, Jacksonville, Savannah, Augusta and Charleston.

At Cox Communications, Atlanta: **HEATHER BROWN**, director, investor relations, to director, competitive strategy; **LEIGH STOKES**, manager, content and site operations, cox.net and cox.com Web sites, to director, Web strategy.

### PROGRAMMING

**JENNIFER SKORLICH**, VP, NBC Universal Cable publicity and late night publicity, NBC, Burbank, Calif., promoted to senior VP.

**PETER LORI**, audit partner, PPMG LLP, Short Hills, N.J., appointed senior VP, corporate controller and chief accounting officer, Univision Communications, Teaneck, N.J.

**THOMAS ARRIX**, senior VP, sales and client services, CBS Sportsline.com, New York, named senior VP, advertising sales, Univision Online, New York.

**HAYDN ARNDT**, sales director, UK and Ireland television distribution, Walt Disney Television International, named VP, sales liaison, Australia and New Zealand, NBC Universal International Television Distribution, Sydney, Australia.

**J. FREDERICK ROGERS**, VP, institutional advancement, General Theological Seminary, New York, joins Thirteen/WNET New York as managing director, foundation and government grants.

**LISA DOLLINGER**, senior VP, corporate communications, Clear Channel Communications Inc., San Antonio, promoted to chief communications officer.

**BARBARA BEKKEDAHL**, executive VP, advertising sales, The Family Channel/Fox Family/ABC Family Worldwide, appointed director, national advertising sales, Gospel Music Channel, New Jersey.

**TRAVIS MCELFFRESH**, group program manager, MSNBC.com, Redmond, Wash., named





PEOPLE

director, technology.

**CANOL E. MATTEY**, deputy chief, wireline competition bureau, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, named a director, U.S. technology, media and telecommunications (TMT) industry practice, Deloitte & Touche, McLean, Va.

At Sci Fi Channel, New York: **BLAKE CALLAWAY**, associate media director, Lopez Negrete Communications, Houston, joins as VP, brand marketing; **GUNILLA DESANTO**, director, on- and off-air production, promoted to VP, production and project management; **TAHIRA BHATTI-MCCLURE**, director, marketing operations, elevated to VP, marketing operations.

**PATRICK GATES**, senior VP, e-commerce, AOL, Dulles, Va., named executive VP, consumer direct, Discovery Commerce, Silver Spring, Md.

JOURNALISM

**FRANK SESNO**, bureau chief, CNN, Washington, rejoins the network as special correspondent, *Paula Zahn Now* and *CNN Presents*.

**ALAN KRASHESKY**, co-anchor, 6 p.m. newscast, WLS Chicago, named co-anchor, 4 p.m. newscast, as of May 9.

Boston, named VP/sales manager, Eastman Radio, Boston.

**J.D. GONZALEZ**, VP/station manager, Univision Radio, Houston, promoted to VP,

programming services.

**ADVERTISING/MARKETING/PR**  
**JANET SCARDINO**, senior VP, international marketing, AOL, Dulles, Va., appointed EVP/global head of marketing, media

business, Reuters, New York.

At TV Guide affiliate sales and marketing group: **PATRICK DODD**, senior VP, sales operations, named senior VP,

national accounts, Los Angeles; **BETSY BRIGHT-MAN**, regional VP, Eastern region sales, promoted to senior VP, sales operations, Radnor, Pa.; **SHARON**

*Continued on page 40*

## Breakfast Research Forum May 10, 2005, 7am-12 noon Marriott Marquis, New York City

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*Schramm Sports and Entertainment*

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#### **Sandra Murillo-Weber**

Vice President  
Multicultural Market Development  
*Turner Entertainment Networks*

#### **Jeff Valdez**

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**Howard Horowitz**  
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Reuters

RADIO

**SALLY THOUN**, account executive, Westwood One, Los Angeles, named national account manager, Clear Channel Radio Sales traffic division, Los Angeles.

**MARY ANNE KELLEHER**, VP/director, sales, McGavren Guild Radio,





P E O P L E

**Fates & Fortunes**

*Continued from page 39*

**METZ**, VP, national accounts, named VP, affiliate marketing, Radnor, Pa.; **ERIC RUTTER**, director, national

accounts, promoted to VP, Radnor, Pa.; **DAN YOKICH**, regional VP, Western region sales, promoted to VP, national accounts, Los Angeles.

**PATRICK BYRNE**, regional VP, National Cable Communications, Chicago named director, sales, Chicago.

**JIM KIZER**, director, sales, Insight Media,

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**OBITUARY**

**V**eteran media writer and editor **PETER G. AINSLIE** died suddenly on April 2, at the age of 58. A skilled editor and reporter, Ainslie worked at *Women's Wear Daily* before moving to *Time* magazine. At *Time*, he distinguished himself in a number of roles, including reporting and editing. He was adept, covering everything from international affairs to the television industry.

In the mid 1980s, Ainslie became managing editor of *Channels* magazine, where he was promoted to executive editor. His outstanding knowledge and skilled managerial style made him beloved to those who worked with him.

From 1992 to 2000, Ainslie served as director of media



Peter Ainslie

relations for the Warner Music Group. This position allowed him to exercise his extensive writing skills, as he promoted an industry for which he had a profound passion.

In 2001, a challenging time in the company's history, Time Warner corporate tapped Ainslie to create *Keywords*, a company-wide internal magazine. With extraordinary skill and flair, he turned the magazine into an award-winning model of corporate communications.

Born in Johnson City, Tenn., Ainslie attended Dobyns-Bennett High School in the 1960s, participating in the corps of student broadcast announcers at WKPT Kingsport, Tenn. He graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1968.

Ainslie is survived by his parents, Jean and George; sister, Ellen; brothers, Michael and David; his beloved wife, Laurie, and two children, Erin and Patrick, to whom he devoted his life.

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MARKETING: The Challenge of Success	B6
FOR THE RECORD: Milestones	B7

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/DAVID HOLLOWAY





BET heavily promoted *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, helping the movie become the No. 1 grossing film during its debut weekend.

# Dancing Into the Future

## AS ROBERT JOHNSON PREPARES TO LEAVE, BET IS IN REVAMP MODE

**T**hough Black Entertainment Television is about to undergo a major transition with the departure of founder and CEO Robert Johnson at the end of this year, there are already clear signs of how BET will evolve in its new era. While the departure of legendary founders can often produce a difficult transition, BET will be ruled by someone who is intimately familiar with its inner workings.

Debra Lee, who becomes CEO at the end of this year, is currently the company's president and chief operating officer. Trained as an attorney at Harvard Law School, Lee has been with BET for 19 years and has been the company's No. 2 executive since 1996.

And she clearly knows how she plans to steer the ship. "BET is 25 years old, but we have to look ahead to the next 25 years in terms of where we take programming and where we take the brand," Lee says.

To better understand that future, BET top management spent several months last year developing a three-to-five-year plan for the business. As part of that process, they hired outside consultants from Booz Allen Hamilton to study the company's brand and audience by interviewing senior executives, advertisers, affiliates and over 900 African-Americans who had watched BET within a 60-day period.

The study highlighted several things that have become the basis for new programming and marketing strategies. Most notably, Lee explains that BET's programming strategy will now be more tightly focused on African-Americans 18 to 34 and that the company will ramp up its original fare.

That involves producing about one new series each quarter, says Stephen Hill, BET's executive vice president of entertainment and music programming. "We understand it is the way to build the network. We are in development [on the largest slate in our history]; we are looking at the future. We are all wearing our shades because the future is so bright."

Research has indicated that the network's viewers want more comedy and programs that reflect their lives, so BET is working to revitalize its long-running *Comic View* franchise. It is developing new comedy talent and has commissioned at least two new reality shows, Hill notes.

Informational programming, such as *The Cousin Jeff Chronicles* and the *BET Nightly News*, are also part of the push to create more programming that relates to the experiences and lives of BET's core audience.

And, the network also continues to invest heavily in specials and event programming. Besides such shows as *BET Awards* and *Celebration of Gospel*, the network recently aired its first fashion show, *Rip the Runway*, and next fall it will produce a gala event celebrating its silver anniversary.

Last year's research also produced a new on-screen look and marketing strategy says Kelli Lawson, executive vice president of corporate marketing.

Since the late 1990s, BET had promoted itself as the place for African-American stars in the sports, music and entertainment arena with the tagline "Black Star Power." But last year, the network opted to adopt a more down-to-Earth tagline: "It's My Thing."

"It reflects the fact that we want to turn the lens on our viewers to create a meaningful one-on-one relationship on their own terms. Ultimately, we want to give our viewers a feeling of ownership and equity in BET programming," Lawson says.

While BET and Viacom executives stress that the division will continue to be independently managed, some closer ties between BET and various Viacom divisions are in the works. Most important, MTV Networks has taken over BET's affiliate-sales efforts. Lee and Johnson stress that the move is designed to boost their negotiating clout with operators and will not lead to tighter MTVN control over BET.

MTVN will help BET's digital networks build up their distribution, says Paxton Baker, executive vice president of BET Digital Networks and BET Event Productions.

The first priority will be BET Jazz, which reaches about 11 million homes and has been profitable for about three years, even though about 40% of its programming is original. But MTV will also be pushing BET Gospel, which only is available in Atlanta in about 100,000 homes. "MTV Networks is very committed to helping BET Jazz and BET Gospel reach a much wider audience," Baker says.

BET also plans to use Viacom assets to improve its programming and marketing. CBS News is helping BET with its newscast, and it is also talking to Paramount about acquisitions and potential movie projects, Lee says.

BET invested in the film *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* and heavily promoted it during its shows. That helped *Diary*, which was released by Lions Gate, open as the highest-grossing movie on its opening weekend in late February, according to Lee.

"With *Diary* and other films, we have proven time and again that we can really help African-American movies open," Lee says. "We are looking to further develop the movie strategy and put the BET brand on more theatrical movies. Our sister networks, MTV and Nickelodeon, have already been successfully doing that with Paramount."

BET is establishing closer ties to other Viacom entities. It participates in Viacom Plus, which allows advertisers to buy inventory across a number of Viacom platforms. The network also engages in cross-promotions with other Viacom networks and divisions. "There are a ton of promotional synergies that we can leverage by working with our siblings," Lawson says. ■



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# Passing the BET Baton



BET COO Debra Lee  
and outgoing CEO  
Robert Johnson

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/DAVID HALLOWAY

After 25 years of relentlessly promoting and building up Black Entertainment Television's operations, the company's founder and CEO Robert Johnson will be leaving the company to pursue new entrepreneurial ventures at the end of the year. Johnson and president and chief operating officer Debra Lee sat down with *Multichannel News and Broadcasting & Cable* to discuss BET's future. An edited transcript follows:

**MCN:** When you leave BET, how do you see the division's future?

**ROBERT JOHNSON:** When I leave at the first of 2006, I know for a fact that BET will be in great hands, because Debra Lee will become the CEO, and because she has all the authority to make BET the preeminent media company targeting African-Americans in the U.S.

She has the background — she's been with the company almost 20 years and has held a number of key positions on the way to becoming CEO. She has exhibited tremendous leadership running BET, and she has the full confidence of the Viacom [Inc.] leadership: [chairman] Sumner Redstone, [president and co-COO] Tom Freston and [president and co-COO] Les Moonves.

On the Viacom side, when we sold BET to Viacom, Sumner Redstone assured me and Debra that BET would maintain its independent voice and direction in serving African-American viewers and in meeting the needs of our cable affiliates and advertisers. He's kept that promise and at the same time has given us the full support of all the Viacom assets to help us continue our preeminence as an African-American media company. So, walking out the door, I couldn't be happier about the future of BET.

**MCN:** You've said BET will remain an independent company. But how important has Viacom support been?

**DEBRA LEE:** The best part of being part of the Viacom family is that they understand brands. On the cable and broadcast side, they have very distinct brands, and they let executives run those divisions according to the brand strategy. That was one of the reasons we felt comfortable selling the company.

Having said that, they've made all the resources, information and research we need available to us, and we've done several different deals between various divisions. We have a deal with CBS News to help us produce *BET Nightly News*. We've bought programming from Paramount that appeals to our audience. We are in discussions on an ongoing basis about things we can do together. It has given us access to a lot of information and resources that we didn't have as an independent company.

**MCN:** You've been making some changes to your programming strategies?

**JOHNSON:** As Debra said, the future for us is creating content that the 18-to-34 African-American demo wants to see. We've already seen how successful that can be with our *106 & Park*, which is the highest-rated music video entertainment show among any audience, and our BET Awards is the highest-rated award show targeting African-Americans. We are looking at other formats, including reality shows, we want to strengthen our position in comedy.

Debra is also looking for a senior programming executive with deep connections to the Hollywood creative community. Instead of producing shows

in-house, we are looking for the best and brightest people in Hollywood who can produce shows in a way that is economically viable for BET.

**MCN:** BET was a pioneer in convincing advertisers to target African-American audiences and consumers. Yet, some would argue this is still a relatively underdeveloped area. What are you doing to further develop your advertising revenues?

**JOHNSON:** As a company, we have been growing our advertising sales at 15% or more over the last 10 to 15 years. So advertisers realize that BET is one of the most effective ways to target African-American consumers.

One of the reasons Viacom wanted to acquire BET was because they recognized that the fast-growing African-American consumer market is still somewhat underserved in terms of programming content. That means there is an upside in the potential advertising spending targeting that market.

“The best part of being part of the Viacom family is that they understand brands ... They let executives run divisions according to the brand strategy.”

DEBRA LEE

While we recognize that there are competitors coming into that market, we have already faced competitors — whether it is Fox or UPN. We aren't concerned about the competition, because we think there is just so much upside for BET. We think we will continue to deliver Viacom the kind of margin performance they expected when they acquired BET. From a margin standpoint, we are one of the most effective business brands in Viacom.

**MCN:** Over the years, you have complained that BET's affiliate fees are far lower than other networks'.

**JOHNSON:** I've said all along that BET affiliate fees should be higher. We've been in this industry for 25 years. We started when most other programmers started, yet BET's fees are lower. For the most part, the industry has failed to appreciate the attractiveness of the African-American and urban consumer. African-Americans are heavy users of cable. The penetration of basic cable is higher among African-Americans than it is the white community. The penetration in pay TV [among African-Americans] is almost double what it is in the white community. [The take up of] pay-per-view events, boxing and the like, is always going to be higher among African-Americans and Hispanics.

African-Americans are a very loyal, very valuable customer base. We think that programmers who program to that audience ought to be supported and rewarded for delivering that valuable customer base.

We now have the support and clout of Viacom's affiliate arm to help us do that. But it's still an educational process. Operators need to realize that more and more cable customers are going to be minorities. If you are going to sell to that market you have to have programming that is appealing to them, and you have to have executives who reflect that community. ■



# The Birth of BET

## JOHN MALONE AND ROBERT JOHNSON RECALL THE LONG, WINDING ROAD TO VIACOM

**T**he initial impetus that helped turn Black Entertainment Television from an idea into reality came during a 20-minute conversation in 1979. At the time, Robert Johnson was working as a lobbyist at the National Cable Television Association. After an NCTA board meeting, he approached one of the most powerful men in the business, John Malone, who ran MSO Tele-Communications Inc.

Johnson "asked me what I thought about the idea of a channel targeting the black audience," recalls Malone, who is now chairman of Liberty Media. "I told him that it was a terrific idea and asked him how we [at TCI] could help. That was really the start of it."

By that time, Johnson had already traveled a long way. Born into a poor Mississippi family, he excelled in school and was the first of his siblings to attend college. After getting an undergraduate degree at University of Illinois and a masters in international affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, Johnson moved to Washington, D.C., where he worked for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Urban League and then as the press secretary for Congressman Walter Fauntroy.

In 1976, Johnson started down a very different career path. After a chance meeting with an NCTA employee at a party, he landed a job as vice president of government relations with the association.

"I didn't have any background in business," Johnson says. "What really attracted me to the cable industry was that it was such an entrepreneurial industry, a growth industry with lots of very dynamic people."

That entrepreneurial spirit quickly fueled his dreams. "I knew you couldn't start a black channel over broadcast TV, because it was a mass-appeal medium," Johnson says. "But once you had the technological marriage of cable and satellite, the idea of creating a channel targeting African-Americans made sense."

So much sense that it took only 35 minutes to talk Malone into having TCI provide Johnson with a \$320,000 loan and invest \$180,000 for a 20% stake in the fledgling network.

Other operators who were battling to get franchises in urban areas were enthusiastic. By the time BET launched as a weekly two-hour programming block on Jan. 25, 1980, Johnson had lined up distribution on about 350 operators serving some 3.8 million subscribers.

Johnson quickly moved to expand the company's programming. By 1983, it had a 24-hour schedule. "Bob was really the first niche programmer," Malone says. "He was the first one to identify a clear, targeted audience. He understood that the cable industry would increase their market penetration by building a portfolio of niche channels."

But being a pioneer wasn't easy. Many operators were reluctant to pay carriage fees for a network targeting African-Americans, and advertising targeting blacks was virtually non-existent.

Limited revenues forced BET to rely on music videos and other lower-cost



BET's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

programming, a decision that has drawn some criticism over the years.

Malone dismisses those complaints. "Bob is a very solid, disciplined businessman," he says. "He realized that you have to control your expenses and losses so that you don't scare off your investors. He had to operate on a shoe string but he stuck with his idea [of building a network for African-Americans]. He never paid a dividend or high salaries and reinvested everything back into the company. Every year, it got bigger and bigger."

By carefully controlling costs, BET moved into the black in 1986 and began to have an impact far beyond its size. During a period when MTV: Music Television and other cable services were playing little black music, exposure on BET helped establish hip hop and a number of black artists.

In 1991, BET went public, becoming the first African-American owned company to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Johnson pushed aggressively into other businesses, investing in restaurants, magazines, the Internet and other sectors. Some of these enterprises, such as a BET-branded airline, never got off the ground. Others, like the magazine division, never made money and were shuttered.

Meanwhile, Johnson and Malone chafed at the stock's sluggish performance, and in 1998 they bought out other shareholders, taking BET private again.

The decision to sell BET for \$3 billion to Viacom Inc. in 2000 came at a point when media firms were commanding very high multiples, Malone says. "But it was really Bob's decision. I'd gone through that same debate with [former Time Warner Inc. chairman] Ted Turner about staying independent and accepting an offer to sell. It's always a tough call. You've built up your own independent business. But it can get a little scary when everyone is consolidating and has market power and you don't, especially when you see how some of these companies are using their muscle."

Johnson says the sale has allowed BET to "unlock shareholder value," and to keep BET's management

independent, providing it with the resources it needs for future growth.

BET's distribution, for example, has grown from 59.1 million homes in March 2000 to 80 million in March 2005. Meanwhile, the network's audience for total day has grown from 295,000 viewers (248,000 households) in 2000 to 440,000 viewers (369,000 households) between Jan. 1 and March 15, 2005.

Johnson is nearing the end of the five-year contract he signed when BET was sold to Viacom. He has opted to leave at the end of this year to concentrate on several investments, including hotels, restaurants, gaming companies, a jazz label and a regional sports network.

Johnson says he's proudest of having established the network "as an iconic brand that it has penetrated the mindset of society," and of proving that you can create a very valuable business in serving the African-American marketplace. "Hopefully, those two facts will stimulate others to look at this market and African-American management in a positive way." ■



Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly and Robert Johnson at the groundbreaking for BET's headquarters.



The Wayans family, (l. to r.) comedians Keenan Ivory, Damon and Marlon with their mother Elvira, pick up an award at the BET Comedy Awards, which the network uses as a vehicle for product placement.



NEW RIVALS FOR AD DOLLARS  
ARE KEEPING BET ON ITS TOES

# Success

**I**n 1979, when Black Entertainment Television founder and CEO Robert Johnson first proposed creating an ad-supported network for African-Americans, the idea was a novel one. At the time, there was virtually no national television directly targeting African-Americans. "We had to go out and convince people to carve out new budgets," recalls Johnson.

While Johnson says that BET's ad sales have climbed by at least 15% a year during the last decade, BET parent Viacom Inc. no longer breaks out the network's ad revenues. But Brian Wieser, vice president and director of industry analysis at the media-buying firm MAGNA Global USA, estimates that the network's ad revenues hit about \$250 million in 2004, up from \$200 million in 2003. "They've clearly been able to grow the business," he says.

Even so, BET's ad-sales efforts face a number of challenges over the next few years. The network's very success has attracted new competition, both from fledgling cable networks like TV One, which are targeting African-Americans, and from broadcasters like UPN, which are putting more emphasis on urban viewers.

At the same time, there has been an increase in ad spending to reach Hispanics and Asians, and that has "tended to cut into African-American budgets," notes Pepper Miller, president of the Hunter-Miller Group, which advises major companies on marketing to African-Americans.

Miller adds that African-American purchasing power is already \$723 billion, and it will top \$1 trillion in a few years. Yet, *Target Marketing* magazine notes that advertisers spent only \$1.8 billion against African-Americans last year, a tiny portion of the \$263.7 billion ad agency McCann Erickson estimates was spent on advertising in the U.S. in 2004.

Looking forward, some analysts worry that lack of high-quality programming for African-Americans will continue to limit ratings and ad spending. "Networks that target African-Americans have to come up with some industrial-strength programming if they want to attract the ad dollars they deserve," says Howard Horowitz, president of Horowitz Associates.

"The key is still education, education and education," says Louis Carr, BET's president of broadcast media sales, who believes advertisers are still paying far too little attention to the African-American market. "A lot of categories and marketers really don't understand what the difference African-American consumers can make to their bottom line."

BET president and chief operating officer Debra Lee, adds that "packaged goods, the soft-drink and fast-food markets have long understood the value of African-American consumers. The Coca-Cola Co. and PepsiCo have been advertisers on BET since day one, as has [The Procter & Gamble Co.]"

Carr believes further growth will come as they roll out their greatly expanded original programming slate and by targeting industry sectors like video games, travel, pharmaceutical, health and beauty aids, financial services and technology.

The key to "our strategy has been to really engage marketers with these consumers and to give them opportunities where their message can be personally involved with the programming and the audience," Carr says.

One example of that effort has been tours through college campuses and African-American communities — grassroots marketing efforts that have been sponsored by advertisers like General Motors and P&G.

For its 25th anniversary, BET is planning a tour through the network's top 25 markets "that will bring sponsors and their products directly out to the community, to restaurants, shopping malls and night clubs," Carr says. "Once they get out of the office and get involved with the consumer, then they can really understand the value of the market."

BET has also boosted product-placement pursuits. Such efforts, Carr says, are particularly valuable to marketers because of the "trend-setting role" African-Americans play in popular culture, music and fashion. Dodge Magnum cars, for example, were used to ferry stars back and forth at the *BET Comedy Awards* and such beauty products as Cover Girl and Pantene were featured on the *Rip The Runway* fashion special.

Stephen Hill, executive vice president of entertainment and music programming adds that BET officials have been talking with marketers about a number of potential product placements in their upcoming slate of original programming. "It is a natural fit," Hill contends. "African-Americans are very brand-conscious."

To better convey all of those opportunities to advertisers, BET hosted its first upfront presentation last year. "We felt like the time was right to do our first upfront," Carr says. "There was competition popping up touting how well they could reach African-Americans. So we felt it was time to get out there and show them who was the real 300-pound gorilla in this area."

BET will hold its second upfront this year in April in New York City with simulcasts in Detroit, Chicago and Los Angeles. "We will be presenting a lot of new programming — the biggest slate we've ever had," Carr says.

This year, BET is launching a major marketing effort to reach advertisers, industry executives and producers via ads in trade publications, says BET executive vice president of corporate marketing Kelli Lawson. She says BET wants to make people aware of its recent investments in original programming, its new strategy of targeting 18-to-34 year old African-Americans and the strength of its brand in reaching the African-American community. ■



## BET'S FIRST QUARTER CENTURY

### 1979

- AUG. 8** Robert Johnson announces plans to create BET.
- SEPT. 28** MSOs Warner Cable, American Telecommunications Corp. and TelePrompTer agree to carry BET on their systems.
- NOV. 27** MSO Tele-Communications Inc. invests \$180,000 and provides a \$320,000 loan for a 20% stake in BET.

### 1980

- JAN. 25** BET premieres, offering 3.8 million subs in 350 markets two hours of programming on Friday night from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. ET.
- MAY 9** BET makes its first foray into original programming, committing \$1 million for the production of black collegiate sports and cable specials.

### 1981

- JAN. 25** 5.3 million cable subscribers in 544 markets.
- JUNE 26** Premiere of *Video Soul*, a half-hour music program.

### 1982

- FEB. 17** Taft Broadcasting Co. invests \$1 million for a 20% stake.
- AUG. 15** BET's Programming is expanded to a six-hour nightly block from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. eastern time.

### 1983

- APRIL 1** 6.4 million cable subs.
- SEPT. 25** Home Box Office takes a minority stake in BET.
- OCT. 1** BET launches a 24-hour program schedule.

### 1985

- JAN. 25** BET turns five with 8 million subscribers in 40 states.

### 1986

- OCT. 10** U.S.'s first black national news program, *BET News*, debuts.

### 1987

- SEPT. 15** BET launches its first national consumer awareness campaign.
- NOV. 1** 17.4 million subs in 1,000 markets.

### 1988

- DEC. 8** As part of an aggressive push into original programming BET announces plans for nine new shows for the 1989-90 fall season.

### 1989

- JAN. 1** Carriage fees increase to 5 cents per subscriber.
- APRIL 1** BET opens a new \$10 million production facility.
- JUNE 1** 23 million subs in 1,300 markets.

### 1990

- JAN. 25** BET celebrates its 10-year anniversary with 25 million subscribers in 50 states.
- SEPT. 18** BET announces plans for an initial public offering, and establishes BET Holdings Inc. as the new parent company.

### 1991

- NOV. 1** BET's stock begins trading on the New York Stock Exchange, a first for a black-owned media and entertainment company.

### 1993

- MAY 24** *Business Week* lists BET in its "100 Best Small Corporations" issue.
- SEPT. 21** BET announces plans to create BET On Jazz.

### 1994

- JAN. 3** Subs grow 13% in 1993 to 39.1 million homes.
- AUG. 24** BET acquires 72 episodes of *Roc*.

### 1995

- JAN. 25** BET celebrates 15th anniversary with *The Big 15 Kickoff Jam*.
- MARCH 6** A new six-story corporate headquarters opens in Washington, D.C.
- JUNE 2** BET Film Productions and United Image Entertainment premiere their first theatrical film, *Out of Sync*.
- AUG. 10** *A Tribute to Black Music Legends* receives an Emmy.
- SEPT. 22** Michael Jackson is the first person to be inducted into the BET Walk of Fame.
- NOV. 2** BET Holdings Inc. buys out Time Warner's (i.e., HBO's) stake for \$58 million.

### 1996

- JAN. 15** Launch of BET on Jazz: The Cable Jazz Channel
- JAN. 24** O.J. Simpson's first interview following his acquittal gets a 6.9 rating, BET's highest.
- MARCH 19** Debra L. Lee appointed president and chief operating officer

### 1997

- JAN. 31** Launch of BET Movies/STARZ!, the nation's first 24-hour black movie channel.
- OCT. 15** BET bows in Canada reaching 4 million homes.

### 1998

- MAY 5** The debut of BET Soundz, a package of digital music networks.
- JUNE 16** Buys Arabesque Books.
- JULY 30** Shareholders approve a \$378 million deal for Robert Johnson

and Liberty Media Group to take the company private.

### 1999

- AUG. 12** BET Holdings, Microsoft Corp., Liberty Digital LLC, News Corp., and USA Networks agree to make an initial cash investment of \$35 million to create BET.com.

### 2000

- FEB. 7** Launch of BET.com
- MAY 6** BET celebrates its 20th anniversary with a star-studded gala.
- JULY 10** 60 million subs
- NOV. 3** Viacom purchases BET for \$3 billion.
- NOV. 28** Rap-it-Up, a national awareness campaign addressing HIV/AIDS in the African-American community, is created.

### 2001

- JAN. 20** BET airs its first *Celebration of Gospel Special*.
- JUNE 22** The annual *BET Awards Show* pulls in a 4.26 rating.

### 2002

- APRIL 15** Launch of *New Spirit*, BET's third book imprint.
- AUG. 8** 73 million households

### 2003

- JUNE 24** *BET Music Awards* attracts a 4.3 rating and 5.5 million viewers.

### 2004

- JAN. 28** First reality show, *College Hill*, bows with a 1.4 rating, a record premiere of a BET series.
- APRIL 13** BET makes its first

upfront presentation.

- June 29** Fourth annual *BET Awards* sets record with 5.6 million viewers.
- OCT. 13** Robert Johnson inducted into the Cable Center's Hall of Fame.
- OCT. 26** BET's *10th Anniversary Walk of Fame* honoring Smoky Robinson is watched by 2.6 million viewers, a record for the show.
- 2005**
- JAN. 25** BET turns 25 with some 80 million subs.
- FEB. 27** *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* theatrical film grosses \$21.9 million on its opening weekend.
- FEB. 28** First installment of *The Cousin Jeff Chronicles* airs.
- MARCH 24** *Rip The Runway*, BET's fashion and music extravaganza, airs.

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# NIELSEN MARCH 28 - APRIL 3 RATINGS

## THE PRIME TIME RACE Top 10 Basic Cable Shows

March 2 - April 3

PROGRAM	DATE	NET	HHS
1. WWE Raw 10p	3/28	SPIK	3.6
2. Kid's Choice 05	4/2	NICK	3.5
3. WWE Raw 9p	3/28	SPIK	3.4
4. Law & Order 9p	3/29	TNT	3.1
4. Fairly OddParents 7.30p	4/2	NICK	3.1
6. Law & Order 9p	3/28	TNT	2.8
6. Law & Order: SVU 9p	3/30	USA	2.8
6. SpongeBob SquarePants 9:30a	4/2	NICK	2.8
9. SpongeBob SquarePants 9a	4/2	NICK	2.7
9. Fairly OddParents 7p	4/2	NICK	2.7
9. Fairly OddParents 10a	4/2	NICK	2.7

PROGRAM	DATE	NET	18-49
1. WWE Raw 10p	3/28	SPIK	2.8
2. WWE Raw 9p	3/28	SPIK	2.6
3. Newlyweds: Nick & Jessica	3/30	MTV	2.5
4. RW/RR Challenge Inferno	3/28	MTV	2.0
5. The Ashlee Simpson Show	3/30	MTV	1.9
6. South Park	3/30	COM	1.8
7. Battleship Galactica	4/1	SCI FI	1.7
7. MLB: Red Sox vs. Yankees	4/3	ESPN2	1.7
7. CSI 8p	3/30	SPIK	1.7
7. The Shield	3/29	F/X	1.7

SOURCE: Turner Entertainment Research, Nielsen Media Research

## Broadcast Networks

March 2 - April 3

	WEEK	STD
1. CBS	9.3	9.1
2. NBC	6.9	7.3
3. ABC	6.8	7.3
4. FOX	6.2	6.7
5. UPN	2.6	2.5
6. WB	2.0	2.5
7. PAX	0.4	0.5

	WEEK	STD
1. CBS	5.5	5.2
2. FOX	4.9	5.3
3. ABC	4.7	5.0
4. NBC	4.1	4.7
5. UPN	1.8	1.8
6. WB	1.5	1.8
7. PAX	0.2	0.2

## Top 10 Broadcast Shows

	WEEK	STD
1. CSI	CBS	18.8
2. American Idol Tue	FOX	16.9
3. American Idol Wed	FOX	16.3
3. Desperate Housewives	ABC	16.3
5. Without a Trace	CBS	14.8
6. Survivor: Palau	CBS	13.1
7. House	FOX	12.4
8. Grey's Anatomy	ABC	12.2
9. NCAA: N Carolina vs. Michigan St	CBS	11.9
10. Lost	ABC	11.8

	WEEK	STD
1. American Idol Tue	FOX	14.3
2. Desperate Housewives	ABC	14.2
3. American Idol Wed	FOX	13.7
4. CSI	CBS	12.8
5. Survivor: Palau	CBS	10.0
6. Grey's Anatomy	ABC	9.8
7. House	FOX	9.4
8. Without a Trace	CBS	8.5
9. Lost	ABC	8.4
10. NCAA: N Carolina vs. Michigan St	CBS	8.1

SOURCE: Nielsen Media Research

Week	abc	CBS	NBC	FOX	PAX	UPN	WB
<b>28</b>	5.8/9	8.3/13	7.3/11	6.4/10	0.4/1	2.4/4	2.1/3
8:00	47. Extreme Makeover Home Ed: How'd They Do That? 5.7/9	44. Still Standing 5.8/9	44. Fear Factor 5.8/9	41. Nanny 911 6.0/9	124. America's Funniest Home Videos 0.5/1	97. One on One 2.3/4	105. 7th Heaven 2.0/3
8:30		54. Listen Up 5.1/8				97. Cuts 2.3/4	
9:00		14. Everybody Lvs Raymond 9.7/14	25. Las Vegas 7.4/11	28. 24 6.8/10		94. Friends 2.6/4	103. Summerland 2.1/3
9:30	44. The Bachelor 5.8/9	15. Two and a Half Men 9.6/14			129. Mrs. World Pageant 0.4/1	95. Half and Half 2.5/4	
10:00		13. CSI: Miami 9.9/16	22. Medium 8.9/14				
10:30							
<b>TUESDAY</b>							
	5.2/8	8.3/13	5.7/9	13.4/20	0.3/1	1.7/3	1.8/3
8:00	64. My Wife and Kids 4.5/7	17. NCIS 9.1/14	86. Will & Grace 2.9/5	2. American Idol 15.5/24	133. Young Blades 0.3/1	110. All of Us 1.8/3	103. Gilmore Girls 2.1/3
8:30	68. George Lopez 4.3/7		90. Scrubs 2.7/4			106. Eve 1.9/3	
9:00	39. According to Jim 6.1/9		67. Scrubs 4.4/7	7. House 11.3/17	139. Lie Detector 0.2/1	113. Veronica Mars 1.6/2	116. The Starlet 1.5/2
9:30	50. Rodney 5.4/8	24. The Amazing Race 7.9/12	72. The Office* 4.1/6				
10:00	50. Blind Justice 5.4/9		11. Law & Order: Special Victims Unit 10.2/16		133. Diagnosis Murder 0.3/1		
10:30							
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>							
	7.7/12	6.3/10	6.5/10	7.5/12	0.4/1	2.8/4	1.8/3
8:00	10. Lost 10.7/17	33. 60 Minutes Wednesday 6.5/10	76. American Dreams 4.0/6	60. That '70s Show 4.8/8	124. Doc 0.5/1	76. America's Next Top Model 4.0/6	106. Smallville 1.9/3
8:30				60. The Simple Life 4.8/7			
9:00	31. Alias 6.7/10	41. King of Queens 6.0/9	33. The West Wing 6.5/10	3. American Idol 14.8/22	129. Sue Thomas, F.B. Eye 0.4/1	113. Kevin Hill 1.6/2	110. Smallville 1.8/3
9:30		35. Yes, Dear 6.4/10		39. Life on a Stick 6.1/9			
10:00	48. Eyes* 5.6/9	38. CSI: NY 6.3/10	17. Law & Order 9.1/15		129. Diagnosis Murder 0.4/1		
10:30							
<b>THURSDAY</b>							
	4.1/7	14.3/23	7.0/11	3.1/5	0.3/1	3.3/5	1.6/3
8:00	72. Jake in Progress 4.1/7	6. Survivor: Palau 12.0/19	52. Joey 5.2/8	79. Tru Calling 3.6/6	129. Purina Incredible Dog Challenge 0.4/1	97. Blue Collar TV 2.3/4	97. Blue Collar TV 2.3/4
8:30	72. Jake in Progress 4.1/6		54. Will & Grace 5.1/8			79. WWE Smackdown! 3.6/6	122. Starlet 0.9/1
9:00	84. Extreme Makeover 3.2/5	1. CSI 17.2/26	17. The Apprentice 9.1/14	90. Tru Calling 2.7/4			
9:30					133. Diagnosis Murder 0.3/1		
10:00	52. Primetime Live 5.2/9	5. Without a Trace 13.5/22	31. ER 6.7/11		139. It's a Miracle 0.2/1		
10:30							
<b>FRIDAY</b>							
	4.6/8	5.8/10	7.0/12	2.2/4	0.4/1	1.3/2	2.1/4
8:00	70. 8 Simple Rules 4.2/8	60. Joan of Arcadia 4.8/9		87. Bernie Mac 2.8/5	124. America's Most Talented Kids 0.5/1	119. Enterprise 1.4/2	116. What I Like About You 1.5/3
8:30	72. 8 Simple Rules 4.1/7		28. Dateline 6.8/12	101. Malcolm in the Middle 2.2/4			112. What I Like About You 1.7/3
9:00	68. Hope & Faith 4.3/7	43. JAG 5.9/10		106. Arrested Development 1.9/3		120. America's Next Top Model 1.3/2	96. Reba 2.4/4
9:30	78. Less Than Perfect 3.8/6			106. Arrested Development 1.9/3	133. MGM Night at the Movies—Dominick and Eugene 0.3/1		87. Reba 2.8/5
10:00	48. 20/20 5.6/10	28. Numb3rs 6.8/12	25. Law & Order: Trial by Jury 7.4/13				
10:30							
<b>SATURDAY</b>							
	3.7/6	10.7/19	4.8/8	4.6/8	0.3/1		
8:00	64. Wonderful World of Disney—Little House, Part 2 4.5/8	21. NCAA Bridge Coverage 9.0/16	84. Dateline 3.2/6	70. Cops 4.2/7	133. Universal Family Movie—Crackers 0.3/1		
8:30		9. NCAA Basketball Championships—North Carolina vs. Michigan State 10.9/19	63. Law & Order: Special Victims Unit 4.7/8	54. America's Most Wanted: America Fights Back 5.1/9			
9:00	87. Extreme Makeover: Home Edition 2.8/5		35. Law & Order: Criminal Intent 6.4/11		139. Faith Under Fire 0.2/1		
9:30							
10:00	ABC News Special Non-Sustaining						
10:30							
<b>SUNDAY</b>							
	10.0/16	6.6/11	5.8/9	3.2/5	0.5/1		1.5/2
7:00	57. America's Funniest Home Videos 5.0/9	27. 60 Minutes 6.9/13	59. Dateline 4.9/9	101. King of the Hill 2.2/4	124. America's Most Talented Kids 0.5/1		120. Charmed 1.3/2
7:30				90. Malcolm in the Middle 2.7/5			
8:00	17. Extreme Makeover: Home Edition 9.1/14	15. Cold Case 9.6/15	81. The Contender 3.5/6	64. The Simpsons 4.5/7	133. Young Blades 0.3/1		113. Charmed 1.6/3
8:30				83. Arrested Development 3.3/5			
9:00	3. Desperate Housewives 14.8/22		23. Law & Order: Criminal Intent 8.4/12	82. The Simpsons 3.4/5	123. Sue Thomas, F.B. Eye 0.6/1		116. Steve Harvey Big Time 1.5/2
9:30		57. CBS Sunday Movie—John Q 5.0/8		90. The Sketch Show 2.7/4			
10:00	8. Grey's Anatomy 11.1/17		35. Crossing Jordan 6.4/10		124. Diagnosis Murder 0.5/1		
10:30							
<b>Averages</b>							
Week	6.2/10	8.5/14	6.3/10	5.6/9	0.4/1	2.4/4	1.8/3
S-T-D	6.6/11	8.3/13	6.7/11	6.1/10	0.4/1	2.3/4	2.2/3

KEY: Each box in grid shows rank, program, total-household rating/share • Blue bar shows total-household rating/share for the day • Top 10 shows of the week are numbered in red • TV universe estimated at 109.6 million households; one rating point is equal to 1,096,000 U.S. TV homes • Tan tint indicates winner of time slot • (NR) = Not Ranked; rating/share estimated • \*Premiere • Programs less than 15 minutes in length not shown • S-T-D = Season to date SOURCES: Nielsen Media Research, CBS Research • Compiled By Kenneth Ray





## CAREERS

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### TELEVISION

#### RESEARCH CAREERS



#### RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Univision seeks a Research Director for its Spanish-language television stations in Los Angeles. Responsibilities include the compilation, analyses & presentation of Nielsen ratings & marketing data for use by the Sales Dept, News, & internal management. Requirements include a thorough knowledge of Nielsen ratings, Galaxy software, Donovan, Scarborough, Simmons, R.L. Polk, Claritas & TNS/CMR. Advanced user of PowerPoint & Excel. Strong organizational, written, & verbal communication skills. Bilingual Spanish is a plus. Experience requirements include media research at a medium to large market television station, cable or broadcast network, ad agency, rep firm, or syndicator (5-8 yrs min). Bachelor's Degree in related field required.

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### TELEVISION

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##### WRITER/PRODUCER

TPI, a television production and distribution company located in Northern Virginia, seeks a Writer/Producer to research, write, direct and oversee production of documentary videos for sale in the international broadcast market. Individual will determine program content and structure, and write proposals, treatments and scripts. Will also contract professional services, arrange interviews, coordinate travel, direct on-location productions with in-house or local crews, direct editing of program to completion, and maintain records of all production costs and services. Must have at least three years of solid experience in video/film production, with a strong background in research, writing and taking projects through all phases of production to completion. Undergraduate degree in video/film is preferred; related experience in lieu of degree will be considered. Video related training is a plus. Drug test required. Send (no telephone calls) resume, writing samples and reel for consideration to: Human Resources, P.O. Box 220881, Chantilly, VA 20153-0881

#### FINANCIAL CAREERS

##### CONTROLLER

WVUE-TV, New Orleans, is currently seeking a financial professional to join its senior management team as Controller. This position will oversee all Financial and HR functions as well as participate in the strategic decision making process of the TV station. This includes timely and accurate preparation of financial and capital budgets, financial reports and analysis for both local management and corporate. Controller also is responsible for the documentation and review of the station's Sarbanes Oxley compliance program. Position reports directly to the VP/GM and indirectly to the TV Division Controller. Successful candidate must have a BS in Accounting/Finance, 5+ years of financial management, and excellent communications and management skills. Previous broadcast experience a plus. No phone calls please. EEO. Please send resume to: Myra A. Sanchez, WVUE-TV, 1025 S. Jefferson Pkwy., New Orleans, LA 70125. Qualified applicants should apply online at [www.emmis.com](http://www.emmis.com).

#### PRODUCER CAREERS

##### AM NEWS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

We're looking for an experienced news manager to oversee our #1 rated weekday morning shows. The successful candidate possesses excellent editorial skills, and a strong background in news production and promotion. Send recent non-returnable show tape and resume (no calls/faxes) to Cathy Simonds, Newsroom Administrator, WPVI-TV, Suite 400, 4100 City Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19131. EOE

##### ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

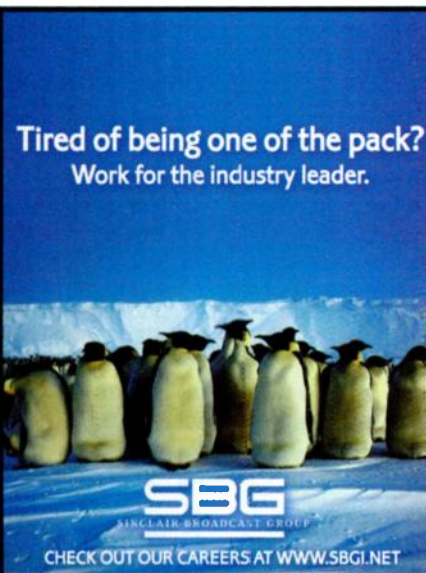
KTRK-TV is accepting applications for an Associate Producer. Applicants should have experience in broadcast journalism. Candidates should understand news feeds, and should have the ability to research and write stories independently, using wire services, assignment desk notes, reporter notes, and other material. Candidates must have experience line-producing a television newscast. Candidates should also be computer literate, and be familiar with the Internet. NewStar experience a plus. Must be willing to work overnights and weekends. Interested applicants should send a cover letter, resume, references, recent writing samples and VHS tape of recent newscast to: Please include where you saw the position advertised. Robin Freese, Executive Producer, KTRK-TV, 3310 Bissonnet, Houston, Tx 77005. No telephone calls please. Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/V/D

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##### MARKETING/CREATIVE SERVICES & COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR

WBIR-TV, the Gannett owned, NBC Affiliate and dominant #1 station in Knoxville, Tennessee is searching for a Marketing/Creative Services & Community Relations Director. Position responsibilities include managing the promotions, graphics and community relations department, providing creative direction internally and externally for the station and maturing an exceptional brand. Person selected will represent the station publicly in the station's many community outreach efforts. This person will be a key member of the station's management team, will participate in the Strategic Planning process, will be responsible for the departmental operating budget process and will assist the general manager and news director in maintaining and advancing the station's leading position in the market. Qualified candidates should possess a BS degree in Broadcasting or Advertising, have 3-5 years of broadcast TV management experience and have excellent people, communication and organizational skills. Interviews will be by appointment only. Please send resume to: General Manager, WBIR-TV, 1513 Hutchinson Ave., Knoxville, TN 37917. EOE

#### VARIOUS CAREERS



##### KDVR THE FOX O&O IN DENVER HAS MORNING NEWS OPENINGS FOR:

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**EDITOR:** Must be able to quickly assemble & edit from multiple sources. Exp w/non-linear editing req'd. Prev newsroom exp pref'd. Send resume & sample tape. Send resume/samples to: KDVR FOX 31/HR, 100 E Speer Blvd, Denver, CO 80203. Detailed postings at [www.fox31.com](http://www.fox31.com) EEO/M/F/D/V

#### IT CAREERS

##### NEWSROOM IT SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR

WPVI-TV, the ABC O & O in Philadelphia, is looking for an IT professional to support the various computer systems and new technology that is transforming our news department & TV station. Candidate must have several years of broadcast IT experience, and must work well under the pressure of multiple daily deadlines. Television newsroom/non-linear experience preferred. Candidate must be proficient in Microsoft Products (Windows, Server2003, Office EtC) as well as hardware troubleshooting and maintenance. A degree in IT or Computer Science/Engineering s preferred, as well as hardware/software certification. Schedule will encompass nights and weekends and flexibility with hours required. Send letter and resume (no calls/faxes) to John Chybinski, IT Manager, WPVI-TV, 4100 City Avenue, Suite 4100, Philadelphia, PA 19131. EOE





## CAREERS

### TELEVISION

#### OPERATIONS CAREERS

##### OPERATIONS COORDINATOR (CLINTON, NEW JERSEY AREA)

NEP Broadcasting is seeking an Operations Coordinator to coordinate client events (sporting, entertainment and related events) for mobile television units including logistics, staffing (drivers, engineers, and related staff), equipment fulfillment, and preparation of production book/schedules in conjunction with operations & sales teams. Requires 5+ years of logistics/project coordination experience. Bachelor's degree in communications, business or related field and broadcasting experience desired. Please send resume and salary history to: NEP Broadcasting, LLC, 2 Beta Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15238, hr@nepinc.com, Fax: 412-820-6045, www.nepinc.com

#### NEWS CAREERS

##### VR ENG PHOTOGRAPHER/NON-LINEAR/ TAPE EDITOR/LIVE SHOT TECHNICIAN

At least 3 years shooting, editing and live shot experience with a TV news department. KU experience is a plus. Must be able to exercise good judgment and cope with very demanding and fast paced news environment, while always being safety conscious. Candidate must be available to work all shifts, including overnight and weekend shifts. Must be available for significant overtime and willing to work holidays. Salary per NABET/ABC Agreement. Send resume to C-C Boggiano, News Operations Manager, WLS-TV, 190 North State Street, Chicago, IL 60601. No phone calls, please. EOE

#### SALES CAREERS

##### ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

WBDC-TV, Washington's WB is looking for an Account Executive with a proven track record in media sales. Candidate must have experience in new business development and agency negotiations. Also must have working knowledge of TV Scan/One Domain, MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Scarborough. Individual must be creative, dynamic, well organized, and have excellent communications skills. EOE. Send resume to wbdc\_hr@tribune.com or WBDC-TV Account Executive, attention Human Resources Dept., 2121 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, DC 20007.

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We are seeking a broadcast professional with a balance of experience between broadcast TV maintenance and computer (IT) maintenance. The successful candidate will have demonstrated knowledge of computer systems, networks, video servers, and station automation. The position requires a minimum of 5 years of experience in broadcast television with extensive knowledge of and experience maintaining analog and digital video-audio systems, switchers, cameras and VTRs. Must be willing to work a varied schedule. Send resume (no calls) to James D. Gilbert, Director of Engineering, WPVI-TV, 4100 City Avenue, Suite 400, Philadelphia, PA 19131; Fax # 215-581-4515; james.d.gilbert@abc.com. EOE

#### TRAFFIC CAREERS

##### TRAFFIC MANAGER

WHNS-TV FOX Carolina Meredith Broadcasting is seeking a Traffic Manager with 3 years experience in a broadcast traffic department. It is the function of the Traffic Manager to ensure broadcast logs are prepared in a timely and accurate manner, and works well with other departments. Knowledge of Wide Orbit or comparable software required. Management duties include supervising staff, training and meeting department deadlines. Resume/cover letter to: GSM, WHNS-TV, 21 Interstate Court, Greenville, SC 29615. EOE

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**Fast Track**

Continued from page 4

join **Universal Television Distribution** where he was senior VP, worldwide communications, for nine years.

"I'm pleased to welcome Jim back to *B&C*," says Editor in Chief **J. Max Robins**. "Working with him for six years back in the '90s when we were both at *Variety*, I saw up close what a first-rate journalist he is and know first-hand what incredible breadth and depth of knowledge about the TV industry that he brings to our team."

Adds Group Publisher **Chuck Bolkom**, "I couldn't be more excited about Jim's joining us. Bringing such a savvy veteran aboard underlines our commitment to expanding *B&C*'s coverage of the Los Angeles television community."

**FAST TRACK**

**Stevens: Not Convinced On Parental Controls**

Sen. **Ted Stevens** (R-Alaska) says he is "not convinced" that parental control of cable content is a sufficient safeguard but he has not made any decisions.

According to his staff, that was the senator's response following his visit with the cable industry at the **National Show** in San Francisco, where he got a "very good explanation" of parental channel blocking controls. "At this point, he is not convinced yet that this is the total answer but believes the cable industry is certainly working to try to find an answer," his office said in a statement.—*J.E.*

**ABC Picks Up Four Shows for Fall**

ABC has re-signed four dramas for next season: hit freshmen *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost*, plus solid performers *Boston Legal* (another freshman) and veteran *Alias* (now in its fourth year).

*Housewives* and *Lost* are effectively no-brainers in the pick-up department. They are the network's biggest hits—*Housewives* is the season's biggest new hit, period—while *Practice* spinoff *Boston Legal* has been No. 1 in its Sunday 10 p.m. time period, helped by the audience delivered by *Housewives*, although new drama *Grey's Anatomy* has been scoring even bigger numbers in its two outings.

If medical show *Grey* continues in that same vein, look for it to get an early pickup as well.—*J.E.*

**Discovery Asks or More Upfront**

Discovery Networks is looking for boosts in ad rates—despite flagging

**FTC Won't Oversee Ratings**

The **Federal Trade Commission** has told Congress that it is not in the business of overseeing the accuracy of media ratings, noting that self-regulation appears to be working.

The FTC concluded that **Nielsen** did not misrepresent its local people meters (LPMs) or fail to disclose "material facts" about the system. Nielsen praised the decision and said it should end the discussion of whether there should be government oversight of the ratings system.

The statement came in a letter from FTC Chairman **Deborah Platt Majoras** to several legislators, including Sen. **Conrad Burns** (R-Mont.), who wrote the agency to ask what authority it had over Nielsen. Burns wasn't happy with the response.

His query came in response to criticism that the new meters, which Nielsen is rolling out in major markets, undercount minorities. Nielsen has conceded some sampling prob-

lems, which it is working to correct in cooperation with the self-regulatory ratings oversight body, the **Media Ratings Council**. But it also says the meters are more accurately tracking the flight of viewers to cable and elsewhere.

**Fox**, which has lost viewers in the new counting method, has backed a group, the **Don't Count Us Out Coalition**, to push Washington to step in. Burns even held hearings on the meters last year.

Majoras said it was not up to the commission to judge "whether the LPM or alternate systems now in use—which have shortcomings as well—come closer to the actual truth of audience viewing behavior" but that, "absent unfair or deceptive practices," it is not the FTC's business to impose standards of accuracy on media-ratings measurement.

Nonetheless, Burns said he would not hesitate to introduce legislation giving the FTC that authority "should the evidence indicate that it would be in the public interest to do so."—*J.E.*



Ted Stevens



Housewives' Longoria



Going Hollywood

ratings—based on optimism that its new shows will help reverse the ratings downtrend at a number of its networks.

Discovery Networks President of Advertising Sales **Joe Abruzzese** told reporters at the upfront presentation that he expected cable ad rates overall would be up 6%-7% in this year's upfront and predicted ad growth for his own networks despite the fact that several are flagging in the ratings. "We're looking for growth in rates, growth in pricing and growth in value," he said.

He may have a hard time convincing ad buyers. In first quarter 2005, **Discovery Channel** was down 26% in prime time ratings, according to Nielsen. **TLC** was down 34%, and **Animal Planet** was down 12%. One bright spot in Discovery's portfolio in the first quarter was **Discovery Health**, up 43%.

TLC led the presentation with several new reality shows including a home-construction show, *The Adam Corolla Project*, hosted by the comedian (who worked in construction

before comedy), *Going Hollywood* about a team of L.A. interns, and *The Sit Down*, in which mob bosses serve as judge and jury to average neighbors and small businessmen with "issues."—*A.B.*

**Q TV Gets Hit of Oxygen**

**Here!**, the most widely distributed gay-TV programmer, says it has signed deals for **Comcast** and **Cox** to carry its programming on-demand that will boost Here!'s reach to 40 million households. (At last count, the pay-TV service was claiming 30 million).

Meanwhile, fledgling **Q Television** is buying its route to visibility. The tiny pay network signed a six-month deal with **Oxygen** to run its show *Q on the Move* from 5:30 to 6 a.m. daily, starting April 14.

That will boost QTV's reach from several thousand paid customers (who get it via RCN) to the more than 53 million households that receive Oxygen.—*J.F.*

**Mandabach Launches Brit-Com Biz**

**Caryn Mandabach**, formerly of **Carsey-Werner**, is launching a U.K.-based company, **Caryn Mandabach Productions**, to handle a new comedy-development-production deal with the **British Broadcasting Corp.**

BBC is putting up the money for Mandabach to develop five comedy scripts in association with the BBC's Head of Comedy Commissioning **Mark Freeland** who says Mandabach has "a nose for mainstream hits."

Mandabach, whose nose led her to such sitcom classics as *The Cosby Show*, *Roseanne*, and *3rd Rock From the Sun* while at Carsey-Werner, already has one script in the works with **Simon Nye** (*Men Behaving Badly*). Mandabach, who had spent two decades with the distributor first as producer and eventually as partner, exited Carsey-Werner last August.—*J.E.*

**Taricani Gets Early Release**

**WJAR Providence, R.I.**, investigative reporter **Jim Taricani**, who was convicted in December of criminal contempt for refusing to reveal a source and sentenced to six months of home confinement, was scheduled to be released April 9, two months early.

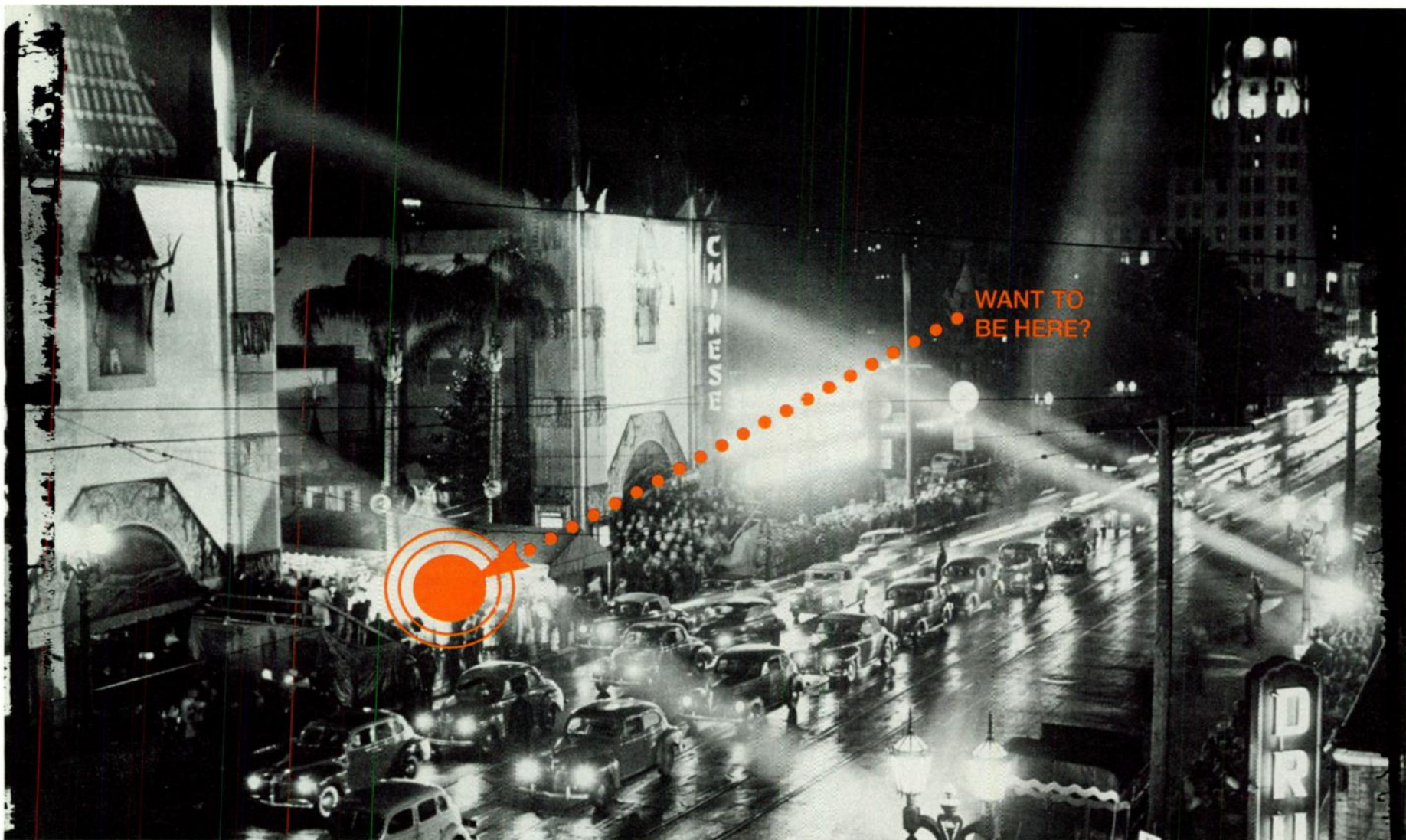
Taricani, 55, was found guilty after a three-year investigation into his refusal to identify a source who gave him an FBI videotape showing corruption in Providence's local government. He is expected to return to WJAR in coming weeks. Throughout the ordeal, the NBC-owned station has paid his legal bills and salary.—*A.R.*

**USA Pins Down WWE Pact**

Pro-wrestling fan sites were abuzz Tuesday with the news that **NBC Universal** had struck a three-year deal to bring **World Wrestling Entertainment Inc.** programming back to **USA Network** starting in October.

In addition to the return of *Monday Night Raw*, which debuted on USA back in 1993, USA will air a one-hour weekend version of *RAW*, with co-owned Telemundo airing Spanish-language versions. As *B&C* reported April 4, NBC U has been sweetening the deal—including a tie-in to co-owned Universal theme parks—to wrestle wrestling away from Spike TV, which itself grabbed the rights from USA in 2000.—*J.E.*





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# Networks Without Distinction

In 1975, when Peabody Awards were announced, the winners included ABC, for its "ABC Afterschool Specials," and that network's made-for-TV movie *Love Among the Ruins*, starring Katherine Hepburn and Laurence Olivier. CBS won for *M\*A\*S\*H*, then in just its fourth season.

A decade later, NBC got a Peabody for *An Early Frost*, a movie about the new killer called AIDS, at a time homosexuality was a too hot topic for most media. CBS News won for a documentary about the new wave of immigrants. CBS also won for a half-hour documentary about ... Johann Sebastian Bach.

Just 10 years ago, CBS News won for *In the Killing Fields of America*, a documentary about the epidemic of violence in America. ABC News won for *Hiroshima: Why the Bomb Was Dropped*, on the 50th anniversary of that horrific event, and CBS won again for presenting August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *The Piano Lesson*.

The above is just a sample of the many winning entries from the Big Four broadcast networks in those years.

A winner this year was CBS News, for its *60 Minutes II: Abuse at Abu Ghraib*. That was one of the biggest stories of the year, but it also comes with its own weird baggage. Not long after the abuse story, Mary Mapes, the producer, was led to the CBS exit for a botched *60 Minutes* story on President Bush's National Guard history, and Dan Rather, the principal reporter on the Abu Ghraib story, retired early from his post as anchor of *CBS Evening News* for his involvement in the same story.

But in 2005, that was the *only* winner from among the broadcast networks.

Significantly, cable networks won a dozen Peabodys for a range of documentaries and dramas. (A full list of winners and a story about the awards can be found at [www.broadcastingcable.com](http://www.broadcastingcable.com)).

The Peabody judges aren't gods, and it's not like there is nothing of real quality on the Big Four, or that cable is so high-brow. (We've watched Spike.)

But being virtually shut out of the Peabodys (coupled with a now yearly humiliation at the Emmy Awards) signals something broadcasters need to think about.

Could it be that the networks are losing some of their audience because, in the move to make news a profit center, they gave up some real estate they undervalued?

The networks should do a little more thinking about how they use the time they have. Put on an occasional documentary about something important and compelling after *Desperate Housewives* or *American Idol*, and a network can perform a magnificent public service and also get impressive ratings. From what we've observed, quality material of any sort attracts upscale consumers, the kind television ad executives are always looking to find.

The better cable networks have understood that and jumped into the gap broadcasters have left them. Those cable networks know what the Big Four might need to recollect: Even a little bit of great television is healthy for the bottom line and, one might add, for the television viewer. There's no shame, only honor in making award-winning television.

## EDITORIAL

## The Cutting-Edge Broadcaster

Below are excerpts from Alan Frank's speech at the TVB conference in New York on March 31. Frank, president and CEO of Post-Newsweek stations, was lauded as B&C's Broadcaster of the Year.

One of my favorite notes I got about this award came from my nephew, a bright young lawyer. He wrote, "Congratulations, Uncle Alan. But this is bittersweet for me—I had \$10,000 on Rather."

So [making wise-cracks] runs in the family! Among the other notes I appreciated was this: "Are you sure this award isn't for Troublemaker of the Year?" I have no idea why that would even be suggested.

But let's talk about local TV for a few minutes...

Free, universal, local over-the-air TV stations are "cutting edge."

No, Wall Street, I haven't lost my mind.

First, most local TV stations have an Internet component. I'd say that

every big- and mid-market and most smaller-market stations have a Web site. And those Web sites are often the most popular ones in their markets.

Second, almost all local TV stations now broadcast in digital. We've spent billions investing in and converting to digital technology. Nearly 1,500 stations are now broadcasting digitally. And the programming is there—more than 2,500 hours per year already are being fed in high-definition.

Third, stations are multicasting. The most prominent example is Weather Plus, the service that NBC affiliates

are beginning to provide. In total, more than 300 stations are multicasting now, offering more free choices to viewers.

Local, over-the-air broadcasting is also *wireless*. This basic fact is somehow overlooked by some. It is perverse to be defending free, universal, local over-the-air broadcasting at the same time our country is struggling to create wireless services for homeland security. We provide crucial emergency information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We accept that responsibility as broadcasters and are pledged

to continue to do so.

Now we have a new FCC chairman, Kevin Martin, and I know that all broadcasters are looking forward to working with his office, the commission and our congressmen to establish an orderly, intelligent transition to digital.

But we also know that 73 million sets are now analog only, with 20 million homes non-cable analog only. And we know that 30 million analog sets are still being sold each year!

Local broadcasters are pledged to working through this transition. We just want to be sure the end result is positive for the American consumer.

Because, finally, on my "cutting edge list" is the fact that we are *local*. And the power of TV comes from localism.

Local TV news is the direct connection to our community. We provide those local connections for stories from around the world, reminding us that all news is local by nature. We're the direct interactive link between our markets and our politicians. This dialogue is fundamental to the democratic.

Like many of you in this room, we at Post-Newsweek are proud to be local broadcasters. There's nothing better.

## AIRTIME Alan Frank

## TWO CENTS

"The mass media can and must promote justice and solidarity according to an organic and correct vision of human development by reporting events accurately and truthfully, analyzing situations and problems completely, and providing a forum for different opinions. An authentically ethical approach to using the powerful communication media must be situated within the context of a mature exercise of freedom and responsibility, founded upon the supreme criteria of truth and justice."

A "final word" from a Jan. 24 letter issued by Pope John Paul II shortly before his death. The apostolic letter "to those responsible for communications" was to commemorate the Feast of Saint Francis DeSales, the patron saint of journalists, as noted on B&C's Web site.

"What a difference a quarter-century makes. The first papal death in the age of 24-hour cable news and minute-by-minute Internet updates has become an epic media event, focusing unprecedented attention on centuries-old rituals. Never before has live television shown the announcement of a pope's death, or his body being borne into St. Peter's Basilica, all juxtaposed with scenes of grief and reflection from around the world." *The Philadelphia Inquirer's Ken Dilanian*

"It strikes me that this is the story of the moment. What cable does and ought to do is cover it as completely as we can." *CNN anchor Aaron Brown, in Rome on assignment for the funeral of Pope John Paul II, quoted in the Detroit Free Press*

"The pope's passing defines Big Story—a religious icon who left the world a changed place is about to be replaced—but the pace of the story has left 24-hour news channels, which did not exist the last time the Vatican chose a new leader nearly 27 years ago, searching for ways to fill all that airtime." *The New York Times' David Carr*

"I want to take you back to what happened here a little while ago. As way of explanation, I am very sorry, which is all I can say except that we were listening to Italian television." *Fox News anchor Shepard Smith, apologizing for prematurely announcing the death of the pope on April 1, noted in The Baltimore Sun*

## WE LIKE LETTERS

If you have a comment about anything in B&C or the media business, we'd like to hear from you. Send your letters, with a daytime phone number. E-mail: [bnletters@reedbusiness.com](mailto:bnletters@reedbusiness.com); fax: 646-746-7028; or mail to BROADCASTING & CABLE, Letters to the Editor, 360 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010. We reserve the right to edit.



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# Time of the Court Jesters

Too many of TV's legal "experts" don't know their habeas from their corpus

**B**efore O.J., Martha, Michael Jackson or Robert Blake, there was a concept of bringing the trials of important legal cases to the eyes and ears of the public. Court TV, which was founded in 1991, was the first national carrier that showed gavel-to-gavel coverage of court cases "in the public interest."

We anchors were taught that our role was to provide balanced coverage, using traditional rules of journalism, where one talked of "on the one hand, on the other hand." Lawyers appeared as guests on both sides of the case so a full and fair airing of the issues could take place.

The commentators were the most well-known and well-respected attorneys in the system. While they were supposed to have a point of view, if the audience knew what side of the issue the anchor stood on, you weren't considered to be doing your job well.

Today, each media outlet now defines balance in its own fashion. On Court TV, if the anchor has a bias, it is disclosed—and the chosen guests and reporters are there to create that balance. My booking producer works diligently with me to find analysts who are real trial lawyers who would be at the top of anyone's list if they needed legal representation.

E! News' coverage of the Michael Jackson trial (where I also appear) imparts balance by re-creating the trial from actual courtroom transcripts and providing discussion by an objective host as well as by three continuing commentators who express views on both sides. While the concept of re-enactments is new in this context, my colleagues and I are some of the most experienced trial lawyers in the country who have participated in complex cases attracting extraordinary public attention. We have truly been in the eye of the hurricane.

In recent years, the degradation of the role of the legal analyst has occurred primarily on cable franchises and radio, with some participation by broadcast networks. For every well-prepared and experienced legal expert who is worthy of respect, there are others who have never tried a case of local, let alone national, significance. These seekers of their 15 minutes of fame claim to have a law practice and clients, which they apparently rarely visit since they are able to spend weeks, if not months, at courthouses observing trials, with or without compensation. They learn that, if they hang around long enough, look good enough and flatter the right field producers and bookers, they can find themselves on television as the "courtroom observer" who then morphs into the role of legal commentator or analyst. They think it is a reality program and more airtime makes them the winner.

They have created a new cottage industry: lawyer as carpetbagger, who books himself or herself on-air simply by being there.

With the additional pressure to fill the airwaves, producers are not really checking out their credentials. A look at the background of some of these commentators may not locate any peers who would call them "experts," but if they stick that label on their lapel, they suddenly become who they say they are. They are rewarded for strong opinions, not balance. They are booked because of proximity, not professionalism. And there is rarely a nod to or even a basic understanding of journalistic concepts.

Some of their counterparts who are not at the courthouse go from station to station spouting words of wisdom by reviewing a three-paragraph wire story. They have not bothered to peruse a transcript at all but feel free to opine because they are television personalities masquerading as experienced trial attorneys. Even

some of those who have admirable credentials have stopped doing their homework since they know that their glib commentary carries the day.

I have enormous respect for the legal profession. It is a serious world where lives and liberty are at stake. Attorneys who appear in the media have a major responsibility: They are forming public opinion.

Unfortunately, the quest for exposure alone has some attorneys forgetting why they went to law school in the first place. They unabashedly state that they want to be seen on television so they can flee their law practice and be the next anchor or talk-show host.

A student of mine at Columbia University Law School said to me, "When I graduate, I want to do what you do." My response: "Practice 20 years and try over 100 jury trials. Then you can do what I do." How ironic that her perception appears to have been correct: Just smile those pearly whites and finance your trip to Redwood City or Santa Maria, and someone may make you a star without your having to pay your dues.

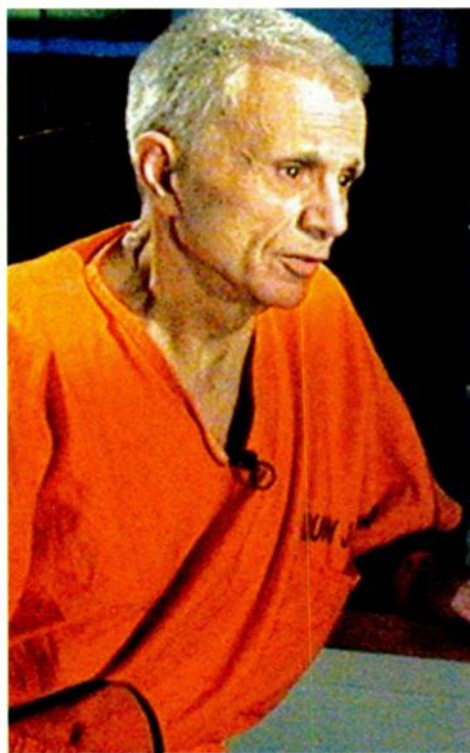
A trial is a living, breathing thing; it changes every day. The changes may be subtle and nuanced. Experienced trial attorneys who deserve the title of legal analyst need time to evaluate and explain the proceedings in a way that helps the public understand the issues and the law involved. A screaming soundbite from a ranting court watcher surely does not serve the public interest. In the end, it is not good journalism—or good law. ■

*Klieman, a former prosecutor and criminal attorney, is a legal analyst/anchor on Court TV, E! Entertainment and NBC.*

## SPEAK EASY By Rikki Klieman



**A screaming soundbite from a ranting court watcher surely does not serve the public interest.**



Robert Blake's trial attracted a slew of legal-analyst wannabes.

INTRODUCING SPEAK EASY. B&C's new column will periodically give readers a place to expand on their views on important media topics.

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