

IBC Pans out

By David Fox

Panasonic won't be exhibiting at IBC next year, following a decision to focus on reaching key broadcast customers more directly and not to use "a mass-market tool, an exhibition, for a non mass market," said Jaume Rey, general manager European sales & marketing, Panasonic Broadcast Europe.

The decision is unrelated to costs or to any unhappiness with the IBC organisation, and is based purely on the way it thinks is best, at the moment, to reach customers.

"The customers we targeted at this exhibition are the high-end market," with whom Panasonic already has a relationship. "People don't come here to place

orders, unlike at NAB, but to know our direction and strategy, and if it fits in with their needs or not," he stated at IBC.

Rey feels that Panasonic should be more focused on its key customers rather than having to dilute its message for the broad sweep of visitors that go to IBC and that Panasonic's market and that of IBC no longer fit together as well as in the past.

"We prefer to be able to address a more fine-tuned message to each customer than trying to address everyone at once," he explained.

He believes that "an exhibition is a consumer marketing tool, but broadcast is not a consumer market. We are spending a lot of money



Jaume Rey: "We are extremely thankful to the IBC organisation"

for five days and not getting an appropriate return on investment." Instead, Panasonic will invest more in targeted marketing, aimed directly at key customers.

"We will continue to do exhibitions and road shows through national Panasonic companies, which can address the broader

market." People also now learn more about the product specifications via the internet, he said.

"We are extremely thankful to the IBC organisation, who have been very helpful over the years, and will still keep working with them in different ways," said Rey. Panasonic is part of the IABM, one of the key stakeholders in IBC.

He is keen to emphasise that this isn't a cost-saving measure, as it intends to invest more in other marketing. "We are going to spend more money, but the point is that we will be able to spread our message more effectively. It is a very important decision for us and it is important for us to explain it to as many people as possible," he added.

Rey didn't rule out returning to IBC in future. "But, it's the wrong marketing tool for us for this market at the moment."

www.panasonic-broadcast.com

Brown's lifetime honour

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— "the ultimate go at a stabiliser for camcorders" — and new arms, the G Series, with a far greater range. "They are docile from the lowest to the highest, thanks to a new [patented] geometrical trick," he explained.

He is now returning to "semi retirement", to write an autobiography, dealing with the years 1964–1984, and how he got into the business, which promises "some great stories."

Nigel Meakin won an award for the BBC's *Himalaya with Michael Palin — Annapurna To Everest*. "The care and thought that has gone into the framing of every shot is very evident," noted GTC chairman, Dave Ballantyne.

Alan Duxbury won for *Ray Mears Bushcraft — Aboriginal Britain* (BBC), and "has undertaken extreme commissions with skill, tenacity, energy and bravery," said Ballantyne. Duxbury is currently recovering from serious injuries sustained in a helicopter crash during filming in America with Mears, but hopes to be fit to shoot a new series next year.

The GTC's technology awards went to: Panasonic Varicam, which "forms part of a remarkably flexible total production system," said Ballantyne; and Vinten's Osprey Elite pedestal for enabling "lightweight cameras to be used in the same flexible manner as a full-sized studio pedestal and camera."

TG4 first for commercials

FlipFactory and Adstream improve workflow

By Fergal Ringrose

Ireland's Gaelic-language television channel TG4 is the first European user for Telestream's FlipFactory TrafficManager commercial workflow automation application — in combination with new digital delivery services from Adstream.

"The beauty of the new technology is the advanced level of automation and operational efficiency it provides us," said Neil Keaveney at TG4. "Now we can receive commercials, news packages, promos, etc. digitally without having to go to tape. The entire workflow is seamless, from receipt to playout. It drastically reduces the steps involved, and the need for operator intervention, which saves

us time and money. Operational staff are obviously delighted with the elimination of one of the more mundane aspects of their job."

Adstream utilises Telestream's FlipFactory universal transcoding application at their materials preparation facilities in London and Sydney to encode media files to a common format for delivery to cache servers located at the broadcast sites. Telestream developed a software plug-in which monitors the Adstream cache server to automatically detect the arrival of new commercials, extract appropriate metadata, and deliver the information to the station's traffic application.

Once the traffic operator has



accepted the commercial, FlipFactory TrafficManager automatically transcodes the media file into the format used by the Profile broadcast server, and notifies the OmniBus automation system that the new clip is ready for playout. TG4 ordered Telestream from John Roche at Irish distributor Eurotek

www.telestream.net

full custom drivers for Adobe Premiere Pro 1.5 with more than 40 realtime effects and transitions in 8-bit, 10-bit and DV.

Blackmagic CEO Grant Petty emphasised the importance of supporting PCIe, calling it "the standard of the future" thanks to its speed and low cost. "If you don't support PCIe, you miss a part of the market," he said.

"Now Blackmagic has a great system for the exciting low cost Windows PCs that feature both low price and enough power for multilayer uncompressed editing and effects," Petty added.

www.blackmagic-design.com

BlackMagic goes to Extreme

By Carolyn Giardina

At IBC BlackMagic Design unveiled its new DeckLink Extreme PCIe — a PCI Express capture card with 10-bit SDI and analogue component/composite video connections. The technology is available for \$895.

This PCIe version of the company's DeckLink Extreme capture card features a high speed PCIe 1 lane interface running at 2.5Gbps. It supports Windows XP and DirectShow, as well as



BlackMagic's Grant Petty: "the standard of the future"

Work on MXF files 'finished too early'

Metadata compliance

By Richard Dean

Contrary to expectations, MXF-compliant files are not always compatible with each other, according to George Boath of transcoding and file distribution specialists Telestream.

The whole idea of the widely-supported Material eXchange Format (MXF) initiative was to develop a file structure that provides a universal 'wrapper' of metadata around programme content ('essence'), in a bid to ensure interoperability between different platforms and applications.

But at Telestream's press conference at IBC, Boath claimed that in

reality as little as three to four metadata parameters have been agreed out of 60 preferred by the EBU.

"Pro-MPEG may have let the child leave home too soon," admitted Pro-MPEG forum chairman Dr Nick Wells of BBC R&D at the show. "But all the components are in place, and it's up to the industry to achieve file compatibility."

Maintenance of MXF is now with SMPTE, but some observers claim the organisation is not really set up to ensure compliance. Wells adds that the Institut für Rundfunktechnik (IRT), the R&D institute for public broadcasters in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, is now playing an increasing role in monitoring interoperability, following the establishment of a dedicated MXF Test Center in Germany.

www.irt.de/index_e.html

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