

## Magic kick-off for Sony's AXN Aussie Illusionist Cosentino debuts 18 Jan

Sony Pictures Television Networks' AXN opens the year on a magical note, with Aussie illusionist and escapologist Cosentino in new four-part original, *The Elements: Cosentino*.

The show, filmed in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan, premieres on 18 January at 9pm (8pm, BKK/JKT).

Celebrities involved in the regional series include *Asia's Got Talent* hosts Alan Wong and Justin Bratton, Singapore's Aaron Aziz, Tabitha Nauseur and Sezairi, Malaysia's Di-



*The Elements: Cosentino*

ana Danielle, Juliana Evans and Joe Flizow, Philippines' Alex Gonzaga, Bianca King, Marc Nelson and Rovilson Fernandez and Taiwan's Alex Niu and Ozi.

The four-part series is themes around the four elements – earth, wind, fire and water.

## 2018: good, bad, sad open Jittery countdown to the Year of the Dog



*The Year of the Dog begins on 16 February*

The first week of 2018 closed with good, bad & sad(ish) news in Asia's video industry, laced with an even stronger sense of linear channel upheaval, the dawn of an age of fewer/better services, a rocking Originals space, another ratings triumph for Japanese commercial TV broadcaster Nippon TV, and a Champagne moment for Avi Himatsinghani, whose four-year-old HITS channel crossed the 10 million homes for the first time.

On the whole, Asia's video industry enters the dying days of the Year of the Rooster crowing about transition, cocksure of the benefits of creativity, innovation and technology, yet filled with uncertainty about, well, everything. And, on top of that, plagued by politics, patchy execution and job insecurity.

Although the Year of the Earth Dog is forecast to be good/prosperous if exhausting, fears are that this Dog's bite

could be worse than its bark.

The reality of the region's shrinking appetite for shelf-space-hogging ancillary brands was hammered home in FOX Networks Group's (FNG) new deal with ABS-CBN-owned Sky, which moves into 2018 with seven fewer channels in the Philippines than it used to have.

The new carriage deal pares the bouquet 30% to 15 channels (including premium services FOX Movies and FOX Sports) from 15 January.

Out the door are both the standard- and high-definition services of FOXCrime, FOX Action Movies and Nat Geo People. Also slipping into the sunset after almost 25 years on air is one of FOX's longest-running channel brands, music network Channel [V]. Although Channel [V] has also been retired in India, it's not clear whether these channel brands are fac-

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ing the axe in other markets in Asia.

FNG Philippines has declined to comment on its new Sky carriage reality or the updated shape of its business.

Sky, on the other hand, is out there with a message of bigger and better, not buying (at least not publicly) forecasts of an era of contraction or consolidation. Instead, the platform is telling domestic customers that there will be replacements for the FOX channels.

"We constantly seek to provide our customers with the best variety of content. We are engaging more channel partners to add more compelling content on our platform to give our subscribers the best TV viewing experience," Sky says.

Most of Sky's channel pack pricing (between Ps299/US\$6 and Ps1,999/US\$40) has not been adjusted for the loss of the FOX channels, although the platform says homes that received the channels through Sky Select will no longer be billed for the subscription.

At the same time, the platform is promoting A+E Networks' Crime and Investigation (CI) channel in place of FOX Crime, Scripps Networks' Travel Channel in place of Nat Geo People, and HBO Asia's Cinemax in place of FOX Action Movies.

The note to pay-TV subscribers, which includes live links to CI, Travel and Cinemax, came less than three weeks after the announcement that Disney was acquiring FOX's international business, including the entire Asia operation... which has given rise to some of the subscription video industry's biggest questions going into 2018. More about that another time...

For all the challenges of the subscription video business, Rewind Networks' founder, Avi Himatsinghani's line about focus and clear propositions paid off in Taiwan on 1 January, when a new carriage deal with Chunghwa Telecom/MOD pushed the four-year-old HITS channel over the 10-million home mark for the first time. A jubilant Himatsinghani says the milestone bodes well for a new year.

Champagne corks popped as loudly in Tokyo as they did at Rewind in Singapore as commercial broadcaster Nippon TV celebrated its fourth consecutive "triple crown"



Chosen China

ratings triumph and promised a year of "aggressively" pursuing opportunities across platforms, including Hulu Japan.

The free-TV broadcaster's all-day ratings (6am-midnight) in 2017 were 8.2%, slightly down from last year's 8.4%. Prime time (7pm-11pm) results at 12% were level with 2016, and Golden Time (7pm-10pm) at 12.4% put Nippon ahead of 2016's 12.3%.

Some of the best news moving into 2018 is that original content remains on a roll, driven in the first week by Netflix's first comedy specials out of Southeast Asia, another Amazon India Original, the premiere in China this past weekend of Sony/iQIYI's drama co-pro, *Chosen*, and GMA Philippines' ongoing affair with online drama under the GMA ONE banner.

Netflix follows emerging markets streaming platform iflix into Southeast Asian stand-up comedy from 19 January, kicking off with Malaysian comedian Harith Iskander's one-hour special *I Told You So*, followed on 26 January with Singapore's Fakkah Fuzz's *Almost Banned* and Kavin Jay's *Everybody Calm Down!* on 2 February. All three will be available globally.

Original content juices aren't flowing as fast for Korean broadcaster MBC for the moment, although all should be well by March. The broadcaster entered the new year struggling to get back onto its weekday drama feet after last year's labour action. Drama pickings are thin in February, once the current series – *Two Cops* and *I Am Not a Robot* – end. The schedule is saved only by attention flowing off the Pyeongchang Olympics from 9-25 Feb.

2018 will undoubtedly also be (another) year of waging war on piracy. 2017 didn't end on a totally fruitless note, with Hong Kong's first successful prosecution of a piracy syndicate circumventing pay-TV channels. Justice, it has to be said, took three years, and although these were the heaviest penalties ever for internet piracy in Hong Kong, they fall well short of the max. Elsewhere in Asia, including Singapore, vendors entered 2018 happily flogging plug-and-play boxes that offer free access to hundreds of channels for a low flat up-front fee. Fair? Of course not. Will regulators step up? Another big New Year question...

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## China shuts 128K sites in anti-porn campaign

Chinese regulators ended 2017 with 128,000 sites on its death-to-porn list. Gone too are more than 3,000 publications deemed illegal by anti-porn watchdog, The National Office Against Pornographic and Illegal Publications (NOAPIP), according to state-backed news agency Xinhua. In total, the NOAPIP says it removed 4.5 million pieces of online pornography last year, and detained more than 30 suspects in special action against VR pornography.

## Amazon flip-flops on anime platform

Amazon has pulled the plug on its standalone U.S. anime platform, Anime Strike, after just one year in a move that doesn't seem to have elicited any wailing from anime specialists. Titles on the US\$5-a-month service have been folded into the main Prime Video offering, that is part of the US\$99-a-year Amazon Prime subscription in the U.S. Strike titles included *Inuyashiki* and *Re:CREATORS*. Anime titles on Prime Video (part of S\$2.99/US\$2.25 a month Amazon Prime membership) Singapore include *Inuyashiki Last Hero*, *Rage of the Bahamut Virgin Soul* and *Kabaneri of the Iron Fortress*.

## Singapore's Mediacorp rolls out single sign-on

Singapore's Mediacorp has rolled out a single-sign-on initiative for streaming platform Toggle and news service Channel NewsAsia, promising users unprecedented personalisation and better customer service. The broadcaster said this week that more than 13m users around the world visit its online properties every month.

## Talpa's *The Wishing Tree* lands in Asia HTV3-DreamsTV Vietnam gets first wish



The Wishing Tree

Vietnam's HTV3-DreamsTV has acquired rights to Talpa's *The Wishing Tree*, giving the feel-good format its first berth in Asia.

The show will be produced by Novel Production in Vietnam and is expected to air in the second half of this year.

The format has children hanging their wishes for someone else on a tree.

HTV3-DreamsTV's Thanh Bui said the show's selling point was its ability to teach viewers, and especially young viewers, "the sense of giving back to the community and giving back to people who don't have what they're having... All dreams are important and all dreams can be achieved with some help. If this show can help families and children through inspiring people to dream and not be afraid of the challenges they may face to get there, it'll be one step in the right direction".

*The Wishing Tree* is the first format sale announced for 2018, following a robust year for formats in Asia.

Vietnam is by far Asia's top formats market by volume, according to ContentAsia's Formats Outlook.

Of the 15 markets in ContentAsia's Formats Outlook for the first half of 2017, Vietnam had 67 formats on air/commissioned, giving the market a 24% share of the regional total of 285 titles.

Vietnam, Thailand and China have always been Asia's most vibrant formats markets. The three markets ended 2016 as the top three as well, with 172 formats (market share of 51%).

Game shows and singing competitions dominated, accounting for 63% (42 titles) of Vietnam's total formats count.

The 28 game shows included long-running format *Deal or No Deal S12* and *Who Wants to be a Millionaire S12/3*.

Talpa's most popular title in Asia is *The Voice/The Voice Kids*. Versions include Cambodia, India, Mongolia and Malaysia/Singapore. Talpa's *Next Boy/Girl Band* has also been sold in Indonesia.

## No end in sight to top dog ratings skirmish

There's no end in sight to Asia's favourite and fiercest ratings battle – the one between ABS-CBN and GMA in the Philippines. 2018 opened with both claiming ratings victory in 2017. Using Nielsen data, GMA says its national share was 42.5% (against ABS-CBN's 36.8%). In Mega Manila, GMA's share was 51.9% against ABS-CBN's 26.7%. ABS-CBN's Kantar data puts the network at 46% share against GMA's 34%.

## FremantleMedia drama trio headed for SKY NZ

SKY New Zealand has picked up three dramas from FremantleMedia International for premium entertainment channel SoHo. Six-part thriller *Hard Sun*, from Wellington-based author Neil Cross (*Luther*) premieres in February. The other two titles are *American Gods*, which also debuts in February, and Australian broadcaster Foxtel's *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, which will air later this year.

## Sports misadventures head to Korea

Korean distributor JCG has picked up rights to U.S.-based GRB Entertainment's most-embarrassing-moments clip show, *Whacked Out Sports*.



Whacked Out Sports

## Military shows under fire in China Regulators usher in 2018 with new review rules

China's film and TV watchdogs ushered in the New Year with stricter rules for television programmes on international news and military affairs, and a stern warning against resurfacing shows that have been suspended.

A notice from the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT) says new programmes must be filed with press regulators a month before broadcast, according to state-sanctioned local daily *The Global Times*.

Entertainment programmes, including

talent shows and reality TV, have to be submitted two months in advance.

Programmes that have been warned or suspended cannot reappear anywhere, including on online platforms, and even if they have been edited, the report says, adding that singling out military affairs for special monitoring amid other strict content controls is a first for China.

The *Global Times* quotes experts as saying that "regulators want to make sure China's military can't be sabotaged by rumors that can disturb normal military activities".

## Slow end to 2017 for Korea, Aus – Netflix SK Broadband, CableLink top Dec speed drops

Netflix delivery on South Korea's SK broadband and Austria's CableLink experienced the biggest ISP speed declines in December, the global streaming platform says in its monthly speed update.

SK broadband's speeds slowed by 0.30 Mbps, decreasing its average to 2.22 Mbps (from 2.52 Mbps in November).

CableLink's speeds declined by 0.38 Mbps, slowing to an average monthly speed to 3.76 Mbps, down from 4.14 Mbps in November.

Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand topped the speed list on the list for December 2017.

Singapore and Hong Kong maintained their positions and increased speeds last year compared with 2016.

Thailand, which placed fourth in December 2016 with average prime-time speeds of 3.25 Mbps, replaced Japan in the top three in December. ISP speed recorded in Japan in December 2016 was 3.39 Mbps.

### WHO'S FASTEST IN ASIA...

1. Singapore	3.89
2. Hong Kong	3.84
3. Thailand	3.56
4. Malaysia	3.4
5. Taiwan	3.34
6. Indonesia	3.22
7. Japan	3.08
8. South Korea	2.81
9. India	2.71
10. Philippines	2.48

Source: Netflix ISP Speed Index. Average prime-time bit rate for Netflix content streamed across all devices

India and the Philippines traded places at the bottom of the list in December last year compared to 2016.



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## Who was at... HBO Asia's 25th Anniversary party



Steve Burton, HBO Asia; Mark Chan, The Walt Disney Company



Tim Goodchild, Lee Soo Hui, Justin Ang, StarHub



Jonathan Spink, HBO Asia; Lars Heidenreich, Mediapro Asia; Tan Tong Hai, StarHub



Katheryn Lim, HBO Asia; Carol Tang, StarHub



Tom Wlaschiha, *Game of Thrones*; Alaric Tay, Director, *Sent*



Frank Smith, HBO Latin America; Yasmin Zahid, HBO Asia; Xavier Aristimuno, HBO Latin America



Phil Goodhew, Warner Brothers; Jonathan Spink, HBO Asia; Jonathan Greenberg, Paramount; Robert Blair, Warner Brothers



Kuo Shu Yau, *The Teenage Psychic*; Kevin Wu, YXM



Chen Ho-Yu, Director, *The Teenage Psychic*; Lim Yu-Shiuan, IFA Media



Khim Ng, Atsushi Miyasaka, Jessy Tse, Thom Arnold, Charissa Chu, Rajiv Dhawn, NBC Universal



Christine Fellowes, Justin Che, NBC Universal; Magdalene Ew, David Simonsen, HBO Asia

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## What's on where...

January 2018	16-18	NATPE	Miami, U.S.A.
	18-19	vdontx asia	Mumbai, India
	30 Jan-2 Feb	8th Asian Side of the Doc	Bangkok, Thailand
March 2018	5-7	FICCI Frames	Mumbai, India
	12-13	INTV	Jerusalem, Israel
	13-15	SPORTELASia	Singapore
	19-22	Hong Kong FILMART	Hong Kong
April 2018	4-6	Content Tokyo	Tokyo, Japan
	7-8	MIP Doc	Cannes, France
	7-8	MIP Formats	Cannes, France
	9-12	MIP TV	Cannes, France
	24-26	APOS	Bali, Indonesia
May 2018	9-11	Busan Contents Market, BCM	Busan, South Korea
	17-23	L.A. Screenings	L.A., U.S.A.
June 2018	6-7	MIP China	Hangzhou, China
	7-9	Vietnam Telefilm	Vietnam
	11-13	DW Global Media Forum	Bonn, Germany
	25	CASBAA Satellite Industry Forum	Singapore
	26-28	BroadcastAsia	Singapore
	26-28	CommunicAsia	Singapore
August 2018	28-29	ContentAsia Summit	Singapore
September 2018	5-7	BCWW	Seoul, South Korea
	13-16	Gwangju ACE Fair	Gwangju, South Korea
October 2018	13-14	MIP Junior	Cannes, France
	15-18	MIPCOM	Cannes, France
	30 Oct-1 Nov	CASBAA Convention	Hong Kong
December 2018	5-7	Asia TV Forum & Market, ATF	Singapore

# Japanese anime rocks Thai Top 10

## But nothing comes close to HBO's *Game of Thrones*

Japanese animation is rocking Thailand, taking a third of the country's top 10 shows – including one of the top three spots – as last year drew to a close.

Netflix originals also put up a good fight, clawing their way onto the list with the last two of the top 10 spots for the week to 6 December for *Stranger Things* and *Marvel's The Punisher*.

But nothing could topple *Game of Thrones*, which triumphed with 70% more demand expressions than runner up, *The*

*Walking Dead*.

The Korean title of the week was *You Who Came From the Stars* (aka *My Love from Another Star*), a drama about an alien who lands in Korea and, 400 years later, falls in love with a Hallyu actress.

The top digital original on the list is CBS All Access' *Star Trek: Discovery*, with almost 3.8 million demand expressions, earning the title fourth place on the overall list.

Netflix originals commanded 60% of the top 10 digital originals list.

### Thailand: Top 10 Overall TV Shows

Rank	Title	Average Demand Expressions™
1	Game of Thrones	14,706,310
2	The Walking Dead	8,987,940
3	One Piece (ワンピース)	4,893,469
4	Star Trek: Discovery	3,765,632
5	You Who Came From The Stars (별에서 온 그대)	3,579,705
6	Dragon Ball Super (ドラゴンボール超)	3,185,751
7	Naruto: Shippuden (Naruto -ナルト- 疾風伝)	3,154,515
8	The Big Bang Theory	2,960,664
9	Stranger Things	2,889,270
10	Marvel's The Punisher	2,869,185

### Thailand: Top 10 Digital Originals

Rank	Title	Platform	Average Demand Expressions™
1	Star Trek: Discovery	CBS All Access	3,765,632
2	Stranger Things	Netflix	2,889,270
3	Marvel's The Punisher	Netflix	2,869,185
4	The Grand Tour	Amazon Video	1,394,306
5	Marvel's Runaways	Hulu	1,356,987
6	Mindhunter	Netflix	1,115,603
7	Ozark	Netflix	1,081,376
8	Godless	Netflix	1,026,802
9	Chance	Hulu	996,416
10	Longmire	Netflix	954,635

Date range: 30 November-6 December, 2017

Market: Thailand

Demand Expressions®: A global metric standard developed by Parrot Analytics which represents the total audience demand being expressed for a title, within a market. Audience demand reflects the desire, engagement and viewership, weighted by importance; so a stream/download is a higher expression of demand than a 'like'/comment.

Note: Local/regional content in this country is still being onboarded by Parrot Analytics



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