

ContentAsia Summit: “Great Stories, Well Told” 2014 agenda includes 1st ContentAsia Formats

Charo Santos, president and chief executive officer of Philippines' broadcaster ABS-CBN, opens this year's sixth annual ContentAsia Summit in Singapore on 3-4 September. Santos is joined during the two-day event by speakers from across the content spectrum with the best stories from every level of content creation, production and distribution.

The full story is on page 6

Universal unveils new schedules August debut follows Diva's June rebrand

Universal Networks launches new schedules and programming across its channel bouquet in Asia in the first week of August. Changes include regular weekly theatrical and TV movie slots from 7 August and a two-hour branded Telemundo telenovela block from 4 August.

The full story is on page 9

DW Asia revamp planned for 2015 Limbourg expands international profile

German broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) is working on significant upgrades to its Asia service in 2015, says director general, Peter Limbourg. As he celebrates his first anniversary in the role, Limbourg says too that domestic network housekeeping is done and that his agenda in year two will include a lot more facetime with platforms in Asia.

The full story is on page 11

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India's pay-TV industry up 11% a year over the next five years, MPA *Broadcasters continue to benefit big time from digitisation, new report says*

India's pay-TV industry will grow from US\$7.4 billion in revenue in 2013 to US\$12.3 billion by 2018 – an average annual growth rate of 11%, according to industry analysts Media Partners Asia (MPA).

By 2023, MPA predicts that India's pay-TV industry will generate revenues of about US\$16.4 billion. MPA also says in its new report, *India Pay-TV & Broadband – Future Trends*, that broadcasters will continue to be major beneficiaries of digitalisation, capitalising on improved addressability and higher yields.

Broadcaster subscription revenues are expected to grow at 11.3% from 2013-2023. MPA says total pay-TV channel revenues for broadcasters, including advertising and subscription, will grow from

US\$3.3 billion in 2013 to US\$6 billion by 2018 and to US\$8.3 billion by 2023.

India had about 65 million paying digital subscribers at end-2013. Digital cable subscribers will total 50 million by 2018 and 55 million by 2023. Digital cable conversion will climb from 29% in 2013 to 48% by 2018, and 50% by 2023.

MPA expects total pay-TV subs to reach 165 million by 2018 and 180 million by 2023, implying long-term penetration of 80%, adjusted for multiple subscriptions.

Subscriber growth will remain strong between 2015-17 as digital addressable systems continue to roll out. After 2017, digital pay-TV subscriber growth will decelerate as consolidation and monetisation take priority, MPA says.

MPA notes a growing opportunity for alternative platforms, including the Doordarshan-owned Free Dish, head-end-in-the-sky (HITS) and OTT media, to address a widening need gap between TV households and pay-TV subscribers.

DTH revenues will reach US\$4 billion by 2018 and US\$5.5 billion by 2023. DTH industry revenue growth will be driven by robust subscriber additions over 2014-16 and by improved churn and suspension management.

MPA forecasts active DTH subscriber base growth from 37 million in 2013 to 60 million by 2018, and 70 million by 2023. This implies that DTH will have a 39% share of India's pay-TV market by 2023, and a 56% share of the digital market.

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China's StarTimes ups Africa investment, US\$80m HQ opens in 2015

Chinese pay-TV company StarTimes Media is spending almost US\$80 million on its new Africa HQ in Kenya. The 20,000-square-metre centre in Nairobi is scheduled to be complete at the end of 2015.

The development includes production and training facilities and a digital TV research and development centre.

StarTimes has established digital TV networks in 10 African countries and offers a bouquet of local and international channels across a range of genres.

The two newest channels are StarTimes Sport2 (launched 19 July) and Star Swahili (launches August). Sport2 will carry the French League 1, which kicks off on 8 August, as well as the UEFA European qualifiers and other events.

Rewind on a roll, regional net racks up carriage Hits adds Philippines' SkyCable, Indonesia's Indovision

Friday, 1 August, is a big day for Avi Himatsinghani's eight-month-old Hits channel, with two new carriage deals kicking in on major Southeast Asian platforms.

The latest agreement is with Philippines' network SkyCable, which includes a six-month free preview for all SkyCable customers. The SkyCable deal also includes access to Hits' authenticated app on iOS and Android as well as online by the end of this year.

This week's SkyCable announcement follows last week's exclusive deal with Indonesia's Indovision (*ContentAsia Insider*, 25 July 2014) for a phased-roll out across the platform beginning with the Galaxy and Super Galaxy packs. Inclusion in Venus, Okevision and Top TV will follow. The

channel will be subtitled in Bahasa Indonesia and authenticated access to Hits app on iOS and Android and online will be offered from the fourth quarter of this year.

The new deals mean Hits has carriage on three major platforms in Southeast Asia. The channel launched on Singapore's StarHub in December 2013.

The first ratings released earlier in July put the channel in Singapore's top three charts. Hits came in at #3 among international general entertainment channels, with an audience share higher than established rivals among all adults 25+ for the three months from 13 March to 25 June, according to Kantar Media data released by Rewind Networks.

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Candland takes over Disney Asia

New U.S.-based role underscores growing importance of Asia

Disney veteran Paul Candland has been appointed to the newly created position of president, The Walt Disney Company (TWDC), Asia, with oversight of Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia and Greater China, The Walt Disney Company said in an announcement out of the U.S. on Monday (28 July).

The company said the appointment underscored "the growing importance of Asia to The Walt Disney Company's global growth strategy".

Rob Gilby, managing director, TWDC Southeast Asia, reports to Candland. Candland, currently Walt Disney Japan president, reports to Andy Bird, chairman, Walt Disney International.

In another move, Stanley Cheung, MD of TWDC Greater China, has been promoted to chairman of TWDC Greater China, reporting to Bird. SVP Luke Kang assumes Cheung's role as MD of TWDC Greater China. Kang reports to Cheung and Candland.

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Celestial Pics in major deal with El Rey

225 martial arts pics head for U.S. cable

HongKong-based Celestial Pictures has signed a five-year programming

partnership with El Rey Network that gives filmmaker Robert Rodriguez's U.S.-based cable network access to 225 martial arts titles from the Shaw Brothers library.

Celestial Pictures and El Rey said this morning that they were also discussing new original programming concepts

based on the Shaw Brothers' films.

The licensing deal, which expands an existing agreement, kicks off on 1 October.

Titles in the new package include *The Five Deadly Venoms*, *Mad Monkey Kung Fu*, *The Brave Archer Trilogy* and *Have Sword Will Travel*, "which will air throughout the schedule as well as during the network's monthly Kung Fu marathons. All films come with English subtitles and/or English dubbed tracks.

Financial details were not disclosed.

Le Rendez-Vous French fest turns 20

Annual French TV fest, Le Rendez-Vous, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, with participation from buyers across more than 60 markets around the world.

Between 12% and 15% of participants this year will be from Asia and at least seven markets in the region – including China, Korea, India and Japan – will be represented in Biarritz for the show (7-11 Sept).

Organisers TV France International say more than 265 acquisition execs – more than double from year one's 115 – will

attend this year. International sales of French programmes have also doubled in the past two decades. Detailed export figures for 2013 will be released during this year's event.

TV France's new digital platform and plans will be a key focus this year. More than 1,200 titles will be available for screening during the market, which also features premieres of Lagardere Entertainment Rights' *White Soldier* and Newen Distribution's *Witnesses*.



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Dust yet to settle on Thai pay-TV merger

The dust has yet to settle on Thailand's newly minted pay-TV merger, and there's no firm vision yet on what the alliance between GMM Grammy and CTH means for programmers that have multi-million dollar channel carriage deals with the former rivals turned friends.

Earlier this month, GMM Grammy told investors that it was throwing its lot in with rival CTH in a THB1 billion/US\$31.4 million bid to fend off competition, reduce costs and to push subscriptions over the 2.5 million mark – more than three times the current combined total of 800,000.

Grammy said the new arrangement would combine the two platforms' sports and entertainment strengths. However else this plays out, the alliance will almost certainly help relieve CTH of its heavy English Premier League (EPL) commitments, rumoured to be in the region of US\$250 million.

The sale of Grammy's GMM B subsidiary to CTH and the share swap are expected to be finalised by 31 July, Grammy said.

Indonesia's Telkom broadband subs up 42%

Indonesia's state-owned telco Telkom's broadband biz is soaring, with subs up almost 42% at end June compared to last year. Telkom reported 28.69 million broadband subs at end June, including 3.21 million fixed broadband subs and 18.19 million mobile broadband. The remaining 7.27 million are BlackBerry subs. Telkom's net profit for the first half of this year was Rs7.41 trillion/US\$637 million.

ContentAsia Summit: Great Stories, Well Told
2-day agenda includes 1st ContentAsia Formats



Charo Santos, ABS-CBN



Nancy Kanter, Disney Junior



Kathleen Finch, Scripps Networks Interactive



Iris Boelhouwer, Endemol Group

Charo Santos, president and chief executive officer of powerful Philippines' broadcaster ABS-CBN, opens this year's sixth annual ContentAsia Summit in Singapore on 3-4 September.

Santos will be joined on the Asia line up by the people driving Asia's leading subscription packages – Agnes Rosario, vice president of content for Malaysia's Astro, and Janice Lee, managing director of PCCW's Now TV in Hong Kong – along with the programmers heading Asia's drive towards premium local content, including Fox International Channels' Cora Yim and Celestial Tiger Entertainment's Ofanny Choi.

Headline international speakers this year include Nancy Kanter, executive vice president, original programming and general manager, Disney Junior Worldwide; Kathleen Finch, president, Scripps Networks Interactive's Home Category business; and Iris Boelhouwer, Endemol Group's managing director of creative operations.

This year's theme is "Great Stories, Well Told". The two-day agenda – including the first dedicated formats programme – revolves around great stories across

content innovation, creation, production, engagement, curation, new platforms, old platforms doing new things, and – above all – recognising that magic begins with a great story. The 'well told' aspect is the execution and energy that goes into telling it successfully, whatever the platform.

The "digital" part of the agenda is treated as a valuable element of the evolving content ecosystem rather than as a separate part of the content business.

The dedicated formats discussion during ContentAsia Formats on Wednesday, 3 September, will cover a wide range of formats, from scripted, semi-scripted and digital to game shows, kids and factual. The conversation will be driven by the region's top formats creators, producers and distributors.

Two special reports will be published for the ContentAsia Summit – the first *ContentAsia Formats Outlook*, the most in-depth report of its kind in Asia, and *ContentAsia's* second annual list of Asia's Most Influential Women in Media.

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Thailand's Workpoint buys Super 4

Thailand's Workpoint has picked up new Playmobil animated series *Super 4* from French distributor PGS Entertainment. Commissioned by France Televisions, the series is produced by Method Animation and Morgen Studios. The 52-part comedy/adventure series targets kids aged five to nine. The series debuts in 2015.



Super 4

India's NDTV takeover rumours swirl

Indian news broadcaster NDTV ends July at the centre of takeover rumours that have sent its stock soaring to this year's highs. No mention is being made of the buyer yet other than that it's likely to be a local conglomerate. The rumours follow recommendations by regulator TRAI that direct-to-home satellite platforms shift to a per-sub revenue model instead of fixed fees. Insiders say this will save news channels carriage fees.

China tightens info flow

Mainland Chinese authorities say they're willing to grant more press passes – but only if journalists sign secrecy agreements that limit what they can do with the info they gather. No agreement, no official pass, which means no access to key events and interviews. The new rules also prohibit mainland journalists from writing for foreign outlets, uploading stories or info to microblogs, chat services, forums or personal blogs without approval from their bosses. Local media expect about 250,000 versions of the new pass to be issued.

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- knowledge in lighting and set design is a plus
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Only short list candidates will be contacted for interviews. Submitted CVs will not be returned.

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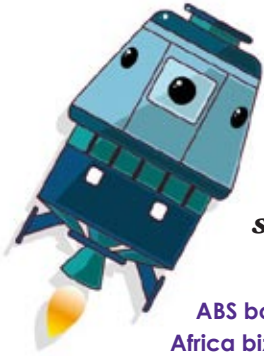
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**ABS boosts Middle East,
Africa biz**

Asia-based satellite company ABS has upped its global game in a deal with Middle East operator Arabsat. The multi-transponder "strategic commercial agreement" for Ku-band capacity on the ABS-3a satellite at 3°W means Arabsat can keep up with rapid increase in demand for capacity over the Middle East/North Africa. Arabsat also plans to launch four satellites of its own. ABS-3a (48 C- and Ku-band transponders) goes up at the end of this year or early 2015. ABS says this is the first time it will be able to provide complete coverage of the Middle East and North Africa.

Eutelsat supports SEA expansion French operator Eutelsat is supporting the Southeast Asia expansion of European broadcasters Newsflux and MCS TV/Altice Group. The two channels – current affairs service i24News and sports channel MCS TV International – have signed new deals for capacity on Eutelsat 70B.

Capacity focus over India, Indonesia SES has picked U.S. manufacturer Airbus Defence and Space to build its new Asia satellite, SES-12, scheduled to launch in 2017 to replace NSS-6. SES-12 at 95°E will serve DTH broadcasting, data, mobile and government markets in the region, with specific emphasis on India and Indonesia.

**Aug reveal for Universal's new schedule
Asia bosses add theatrical movies, telenovelas, original titles**

Universal Networks International rolls out new schedules and programming across its channel bouquet in the first week of August. The Singapore-based regional network has also lifted the lid on its expanded slate of original productions for Asia, including the first local co-pro for sci-fi channel Syfy.

Among the network's new programming initiatives are regular weekly theatrical and TV movie slots from 7 August and a two-hour branded Telemundo telenovela block stripped across Diva's weekday afternoon schedule from 4 August.

The regional network says too that new rights agreements across its bouquet include shorter windows and the ability to offer mobile and online catch-up services.

90% of new series – including the new seasons of *Suits*, *Downton Abbey*, *Rookie Blue*, *My Kitchen Rules* and *The Face* – will be available between one and seven days from the U.S. premiere, says Asia managing director Christine Fellowes.

The branded block from U.S. Spanish network Telemundo (owned by NBCUniversal) kicks off on Diva with *Aurora* (2010/11) and *Cruel Love* (*Perro Amor*/2010) back to back. The block, dubbed into English with local subtitling in select markets, runs from 4.15pm to 6pm. This is the first time the women's channel will air Latin drama, and the titles are first-run in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Philippines.

Theatrical titles on Diva's Thursday schedule include Todd Phillips' 2009 comedy *The Hangover*; *Addicted to Love*, Griffin Dunne's 1997 romantic comedy with Meg Ryan and Matthew Broderick;

and *The Wedding Singer*, starring Adam Sandler as a 1980s wedding singer.

Diva's new schedule also features TV movies on Tuesday nights from 5 August, with titles such as *Taken Back: Finding Hayley*, *Garage Sale Mystery*, *Out of Reach* and *Crimes of the Mind*.

Original productions for entertainment channel E! include season five

of Refinery Media's local modelling show *Supermodel Me*, which will be made in Malaysia this year, as well as the second season of E! celeb reality show *It Takes Gutz to be a Guttierrez*.

E! also continues with news show *E! News* and a fresh series of E! specials. Production has shifted to the

NBC-owned Aussie production house Matchbox Productions, which has set up a base in Singapore.

E!s exclusive acquisitions include *Fashion Bloggers*, a reality show from Australia's Core 3 Entertainment made exclusively for Universal's Style Network in Australia. The series, which starts filming in August, tracks five fashion bloggers.

The first original title on Syfy is a coproduction with Malaysia's Kechara Media and Publications for *The Paranormal Zone* season three, which shifts to a first-window release on the sci-fi channel. The first two seasons were made for Malaysian terrestrial station ntv7, and will air on Syfy around the region from September 2014.

The new schedules follow the mid-June rebrand of Diva, with the tagline "Be Yourself" and an image that's "warm, trendy and with a lust for life". The channel, targeting women from 20-44 years old, is being shaped based on three years worth of High Heel Warriors research into women in Asia, Fellowes says.



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DW Asia revamp planned for 2015

Limbourg ups Asia facetime in year two on the job

German broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) is working on significant upgrades to its Asia service in 2015.

As director general Peter Limbourg celebrates his first anniversary in the role, he says too that domestic network house-keeping is done and that his agenda in year two will include more facetime with platforms and partners in Asia.

The channel revamp, currently set for April next year, involves redoing the English-language line up with more live coverage, more news and more information across a range of themes as well as a new look, new on-air graphics and a new studio.

DW is also focused on using online platforms and social media to strengthen links with viewers and to turn up the volume on Germany's voice on the international stage.

"We have to strengthen our linear TV approach to have a strong brand but we also have to invest in our capacity to bring content via the internet and social media... and have to do much more than we did in the past," Limbourg says.

Already a reliable source of information, DW's goal now is to be among the top three international information sources worldwide, Limbourg says, listing competitors in this space (in no particular order) as BBC, Al Jazeera, Russia Today, France24 and China Central Television (CCTV).

"This will take time," Limbourg says. "We are not pressed to be number one

in the next two years but we are going in the direction of being in the top three information sources worldwide," he adds.

Ultimately, his mission is to make sure that "the voice of Germany as a European continental voice with certain values of tolerance and democracy and with a highly export-orientated economy and globalised approach... is a voice that is heard".

Language customisation is also on the agenda as a way of increasing relevance.

The biggest challenges in making sure DW's voice is loud enough in Asia include making programming more interesting for Asian viewers and users. Distribution is the second challenge, and marketing is third. "This is nothing special for us," Limbourg says, adding: "These are challenges faced by every international broadcaster."

Limbourg says DW's distribution network in Asia is already strong, and that the strategy of mixing programme licensing and channel partnerships will remain in place. "It's a very good concept," he says, adding that at the same time as being a content producer with distribution, DW is also a network with its own mission and "we have to balance it fairly. We should be strong on partner strategy but also be strong within our own network and make



Peter Limbourg

this so attractive that people want the whole network, not only parts of it".

DW's science and tech focus will also be maintained. "Knowledge and science are something DW stands for," Limbourg says, highlighting too the network's politics, culture and sports themes.

"We don't want to be limited to being a science or knowledge channel. We have to give a broad picture. Economics is also very important for us. It links us and brings people together – and it's not just a question of making money. Economic themes are also very important," he says.

What he's definitely not planning are brand extensions into, for example, dedicated factual, entertainment or kids channels.

Limbourg says the network's economics and culture strengths play well in China, and he's hoping for greater exposure across the mainland. "The door is open and we have to go through, he says, adding that differences of opinion in some areas are "nothing that should hinder us from increased cooperation".

"In certain areas you have different opinions and no one is forced to change them. It's a question of respect," he says, adding: "We are willing to give this respect and we want to be respected for our values and opinions."



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ContentAsia's regular section, ContentAsia Formats, looks at formats and format development in Asia, including new seasons, series and trends and what these mean to channels, producers and the overall formats industry in the region.

Junior Bake Off Thailand

Thailand's Nation Multimedia Group's freshly minted digital terrestrial channel, Now 26, launches Asia's first version of U.K. kids' cooking show, *Junior Bake Off Thailand*, in September this year.

The eight-episode 33-minute series premieres on 7 September, airing at 4pm on Sundays, and runs to 26 October.

A spinoff of BBC series, *The Great British Bake Off*, *Junior Bake Off* gives children between seven and 12 years old the chance to become baking champions.

Junior Bake Off Thailand is produced by Thai production house Content Lab, which is also producing Global Agency's singing format *Keep Your Light Shining* for an as-yet-unnamed TV channel in Thailand.

Content Lab's executive producer Gavin Wood, along with BBC Worldwide's executive producer for formats and local production Duncan Cooper, are in charge of production.

Given Thailand's wet weather at the moment, the greatest production challenge so far has been finding a location.

"The show is usually recorded in a large marquee located in a park or the grounds of a country estate. Our recording schedule clashes with Thailand's rainy season, which made shooting in a tent impractical," says Noppakorn Thongman, managing director of Content Lab.

The recording of *Junior Bake Off Thailand* is now located at Thailand's biggest family



Junior Bake Off Thailand

water park, Siam Park, in Bangkok.

Another challenge was training the kids to use electronic kitchen appliances. Most had never used an electric mixer, blender or electric whisk and opted for spoons and hand whisks instead. Ovens are also an uncommon commodity in the Thai domestic kitchens.

"We held a workshop day for all the children so they could become familiar with the appliances. It was a challenging day for them and they learned a lot of other skills, like using digital scales with the tare weight function so the bowl weight was not included when weighing ingredients," says Wood, adding: "One of our bakers put a metal bowl with butter in the microwave but we got to her before the power button was pressed."

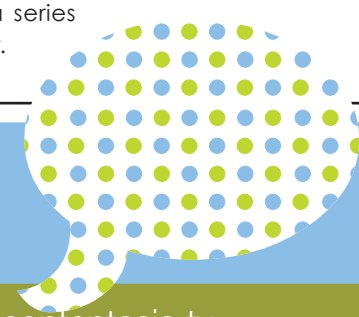
Recipe ingredients have been adapted

for Thai tastes. For example, bread and savoury dishes have been ditched and the challenges built around more popular baked goods. "There is a lively coffee shop culture in Thailand and the demand for cakes, scones, doughnuts, etc is high," Thongman says.

"The children also delivered some inspired and creative bakes far ahead of their age and experience," he adds.

The show's production budget is undisclosed, but is "within the normal range for an international format of this quality and duration", Thongman says.

Launched in April this year, Now 26 is part of Thailand's bouquet of 24 new digital terrestrial stations. The channel's line-up also includes sitcom *How I Met Your Mother* and drama series *White Collar*.





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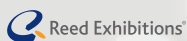
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PLATFORM Toggle



In a regular section looking at up-and-coming platforms in Asia, **Malena Amzah** speaks to William Lee, senior vice president of Singapore's over-the-top service Toggle.

What is Toggle? Toggle is Singapore's MediaCorp flagship internet video service offering entertainment, news and information to viewers across multiple devices, including smart phones, tablets and connected TVs.

Launched February 2013

Who's who William Lee, senior vice president, Toggle

The offering Toggle offers more than 20,000 on-demand titles and 30 channels (include KIX, Thrill, Celestial Movies, Outdoor Channel, KBS World and Bloomberg). Packages include Toggle it-First, where subscribers can watch advanced episodes of the latest MediaCorp dramas and variety shows; The MediaCorp Collection, for classic MediaCorp content; Toggle Original Productions, an offering of original Toggle-branded content; KidsZone, which offers kids movies, channels (Da Vinci Learning, Nick Jr. and Katz Fun) and series such as animated musical/

adventure series *Backyardigans*, action/adventure *Zambezia* and animation *Gogoriki*; and Catch-up TV, which currently carries international TV series *The Walking Dead* season four, talent show *Britain's Got Talent* and *The Real Hustle U.S.A.* Toggle also offers live news streaming of Channel NewsAsia (Singapore feed) and Chinese-language Channel 8 primetime (6.30pm-10.30pm daily) as well as free live streaming of national events for Singaporeans residing overseas, via section SGLink.

Targeted users Toggle targets the general public, especially women in their 30s and 40s.

Subscribers/registered users 352,000 registered users (July 2014)

Price plans The monthly subscription costs SG\$9.90/US\$8 for all access. The catch-up TV service of local original content,

free live streaming of Channel NewsAsia (Singapore feed) and Channel 8 (6.30pm-10.30pm daily) is offered for free.

Upgrades In June, Toggle unveiled a new look, calling the fix "Toggle V2". The aim was to "enhance discoverability and navigation" by adding innovative features that allow quick access to the programmes or add programmes to a favourite list, among others. The fix also includes a kid space KidZone (see offering) and notification feature to alert user of new episode of series in their favourite list. The future plan is to offer a download-to-watch capability on the Toggle app.

Is the service geo-blocked? Toggle is currently only available in Singapore and can be accessed online via any internet service provider.

Where do you place original-produced content in your overall programming strategy? "Original-produced content, which is our Toggle Original Productions, plays a very important part in our overall programming strategy. It is one of the USPs (unique selling points) of the platform."

How are you using social media to expand your online presence? Through social media marketing and Facebook.



William Lee

Most-watched content The most-watched content is Toggle's Catch-Up TV offering: MediaCorp TV content and Channel 8 primetime programmes.

2014 priorities "To bring a seamless brand user experience online, on the apps and on smart TVs. To also enhance the suite of programme offerings with more original Toggle productions."

The best thing that has happened to Toggle so far this year is... "The introduction of the new user interface online and on the apps which has been well received by users so far."

Taiwan baseball league boss quits after rights mess

MP & Silva pulls contract, league left swinging at empty coffers

The chairman of Taiwan's Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL), Huang Zhen-tai, has quit in the wake of the megamess over broadcasting rights management, a consultancy gone wrong, and what was supposed to be the road to riches for the decades-old league.

Sports agency MP & Silva's NT2.04 billion/US\$68 million deal with the league was yanked suddenly and spectacularly earlier this month, a little more than six months into a six-year agreement.

MP & Silva ended the contract on 19 July for breach of contract, but gave no details. The sports rights agency emphasised that the decision to terminate was a "disappointing last resort", and that it had "made every effort to fulfill its commitment to the distribution and broadcast production agreement".

The decision to terminate the exclusive media rights consultancy contract, which included the production of all games, left the league scrambling for funding to keep its four teams going.

The breakdown also put pro baseball in full damage-control mode to maintain broadcast exposure for the rest of the season. MP & Silva outsourced production to Formosa TV, which told local media it was happy to continue production. The games aired on cable sports channel Sportscast; the league told fans this too would continue.

Meanwhile, rival broadcasters haven't ruled out adding CPBL rights to their sports lineups. Fox International Chan-

nels' (FIC) EVP and managing director for Taiwan and China, Joanne Tsai, said FIC was open to taking on CPBL "if the opportunity arises". FIC currently broadcasts Major League Baseball (MLB) and Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) in Taiwan.

Industry insiders say that MP & Silva's decision was almost certainly the result of lower revenues than initially forecast, but may also have involved a dispute over online rights and the league streaming the games on its online channel.

Other sources say MP & Silva may have been banking on Al Jazeera-backed sports outfit, beIN Sports, securing a sports broadcasting license for Taiwan. MP & Silva has partnered with beIN Sports to roll out sports channels in Asia.

The league, which denies allegations that it violated rights, has promised fans that games will continue on-demand and online. The current season started in March and runs to September.

The League's decision to tie up with MP & Silva apparently came after former broadcast partner Videoland came in with a low-ball offer believed to be less than NT\$170 million/US\$5.7 million.

A month after the CPBL contract was announced, MP & Silva opened a Taiwan office and said new senior hires underlined its commitment to maximise its partnership with the CPBL.

MP & Silva said this month that it remained committed to Taiwan and would continue to work on ongoing projects in Taiwan.

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