

What's inside

DW rolls out 1st Euromaxx Malaysia Malay edition debuts on HyppSensasi HD

Malaysian IPTV platform operator, TM Net, has premiered the first local Malay edition of Deutsche Welle's magazine show, *Euro-maxx*, on HyppTV.

The half-hour weekly show premiered on local channel, HyppSensasi HD, coinciding with the start of this year's Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Full story on page 4

Roots breaks Philippines records US\$30m mini-series gives History highest 2-hour average rating ever

A+E Studios' epic series *Roots* has given History in the Philippines its highest two-hour rating average ever. The finale of the four-part mini series was also the number one programme on English-language entertainment cable channels (excluding sports, movies, kids), according to Kantar Media data (urban Philippines panel, *Roots* episode four, 3 June 2016, 9pm-11pm; averaged 81,427 P16+/Rtg% 1.13 in PTV homes).



Fox Nets best & worst week in Asia Mega series deal coincides with S'pore carriage woes

Fox Networks Group (FNG) has just had what could possibly go down in history as both its best and worst week in Asia.

Best because a content coup, pulled off by Chinese entertainment head Cora Yim, gives FNG exclusive global rights (outside of China) to next year's mega mainland series – the epic *Ruyi's Love in the Palace*. The series, a sequel to *Empresses of the Palace*, is expected to be the Chinese drama series of 2017.

Worst because, despite clear efforts to keep the news under the radar until the last possible moment, word started spreading that Singapore cable platform, StarHub, is dropping eight FNG channels in the next few weeks.

And, what's more, hard-fought renewal negotiations for all the others are by no means settled.

When it could be coaxed to issue a public statement, StarHub said dropping channels was "always the last resort".

"Regrettably, when they do happen, it is usually due to pressing reasons which make carriage of the channels unsustainable, such as low viewership or prohibitive costs," said Lee Soo Hui, StarHub's head of media business unit.

FNG Singapore's general manager, Fion Yeo, said the network was "doing our best to keep as many of our channels on air... we are currently in renewal negotiations with StarHub and while we cannot comment on the specifics of that discussion, we remain optimistic that an agreement will be reached".

Are the two – fewer channels in Singapore and higher investment in Chinese content for global distribution – connected?



Zhou Xun stars in *Ruyi's Love in the Palace*

Sure, on some level everything is connected.

Industry leaders for the past few years have talked about an evolution that will see channels divided into two groups – high-end premium and cheap/cheerful/basic. Channels in the middle will be squeezed out as the era of the skinny (some prefer to say "core") bundle takes hold.

If this is the start of the squeeze, it's clear that FNG has no intention of giving up ground on the premium end of the scale by dropping the ball on content investment for its flagship services, such as Star Chinese Channel.

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Hatayama to head Nippon int'l unit

Nippon TV has appointed Atsushi Hatayama as president of international business development.

Hatayama, who joined Nippon TV as a news reporter in 1984, replaces Yukiko Kimishima, who shifts from Tokyo to New York on 1 July as president of Nippon TV International Corporation.



Atsushi Hatayama

StarHub backs Asian studio US\$13 million investment in mm2 completes

StarHub's acquisition of an S\$18-million/US\$13.3-million stake in Singapore-based regional film/TV production house mm2 Asia has successfully closed.

StarHub's chief technology officer, Mock Pak Lam, has been appointed to mm2 Asia's board as a non-executive director, effective 10 June, as part of the investment.

The proposed acquisition of 44 million new ordinary shares was announced in March this year.

mm2 Asia has co-produced and/or distributed more than 50 films across Asia since 2008, including co-producing *Ah Boys to Men* and *Long Long Time Ago*;



Ah Boys to Men

and distributing titles such as Malaysia's *The Journey* and Taiwan's *Café. Waiting. Love*. The company is headquartered in Singapore, and has a presence in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China.

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Limbourg boosts global co-production

DW boss talks about democracy and freedom @ Global Media Forum opening

German international broadcaster, Deutsche Welle (DW) is ramping up international co-productions with broadcasters from around the world, DW director general Peter Limbourg told delegates at the opening of this year's DW Global Media Forum in Bonn on Monday (13 June).

"This is a first in international broadcasting. And an important step in recognising the value of the contribution of regional partners," Limbourg said, highlighting local expertise and perspective.

DW has more than 4,000 partners around the world, including more than 1,000 across all platforms in Asia.

Limbourg said DW's partners "will be playing a vital part in our new digital strategy. Mobile access of information is a growing factor. We want to grasp the opportunity and make sure that our content is available for our users on all platforms".

More than 2,000 delegates from 100 countries are in Bonn for the three-day event. This year's theme is "Media. Freedom. Values."

In his opening address at this ninth annual event, Limbourg expressed strong support for freedom of speech and freedom of the press, which he said were increasingly facing limitations all over the world.

"We want freedom of speech to be a universal right... We want journalists to be able to be critical without having to fear retribution," he said, adding: "Sadly this is being impaired in more and more countries".

"All of us are working for the advancement of open societies and the free exchange of information.

"But still, limitations on political action, on human rights and the freedom of speech continue to threaten the values we expect to be universal," he said.

In today's digital age, "it has become



easier to distribute disinformation and to manipulate.

"Therefore, we need to rethink the way in which we perceive, demonstrate and spread our values. Delivering our journalistic content to our audiences is calling for a new approach," he said.

Reaffirming DW's commitment to digitalisation and multi-screen delivery, Limbourg said a vast number of users was already being reached via mobile and social media. He also said DW would continue to broadcast linear TV, produce radio programmes and make content available in 10 languages online.

"But the most efficient way of contributing to the global debate, is to enable as many of our users as possible to join in directly with solid knowledge of the facts through their preferred social me-

dia channels.

"Only when people are able to communicate freely, there will be change. The possibility to share ideas and values with others and the chance to inspire those, who are still under the control of dictatorial regimes.

"Nothing – and I stress – nothing – justifies a limitation of the freedom of expression to be rooted within a democratic constitution," he said to applause from a packed auditorium.

Limbourg closed by saying that "the end of the freedom of expression is also the beginning of the end of democracy. There are simply no more excuses when this point is reached. Each and every one of us is called upon to stand up and demand the freedom of expression loud and clear."

DW rolls out 1st *Euromaxx* Malaysia

Malay edition debuts on TM Net's HyppSensasi HD channel

Malaysian IPTV platform operator, TM Net, has premiered the first Malay edition of Deutsche Welle's (DW) magazine show, *Euromaxx*, on HyppTV.

The half-hour weekly show premiered on home-grown channel, HyppSensasi HD, coinciding with the start of this year's Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Hosts of the Malaysian edition are local personalities Nina Nadira and Hunny Madu.

This is the fourth localised edition of DW's lifestyle flagship show in Asia. Local editions are on air in China (World Geographic Channel on CCTV Digital Pay-TV/CDP), Vietnam (VTC) and India. Another few territories are in the works for 2016.



Hunny Madu



Nina Nadira

NBCUni celebrates Singapore Pink Dot

Team turns out for local LGBT movement under OUT@NBCUniversal alliance

NBCUniversal's Singapore-based team turned out *en masse* on Saturday, 4 June, to support this year's Pink Dot 2016 and the "freedom to love" movement.

NBCU International, which sponsored the Singapore event for the first time this year, was among 18 sponsors of the event along with Google, Twitter, Bloomberg, Apple and Facebook.

Craig Robinson, NBCUniversal's EVP and chief diversity officer, said NBCU "has long helped increase awareness for the LGBT community through our content, programming and philanthropy and we have great admiration for the courage of those who fight for the rights of the community... we are proud to be the home of OUT@NBCUniversal, the company's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Ally Employee Alliance".

The non-profit Pink Dot SG was established to promote greater visibility of Sin-



gapore's LGBT community.

Pink Dot SG describes itself as a "group for everyone, straight and gay, who support the belief that everyone deserves

the freedom to love. With openness and acceptance, we hope to bring LGBT Singaporeans closer to their family and friends," Pink Dot SG says.

ABS-CBN's licence renewal woes Philippines' net dismisses claims as "purely speculative"

Philippines' broadcaster ABS-CBN has dismissed "purely speculative" claims that its TV/radio broadcasting license will not be renewed when it expires in March 2020.

"We believe that our government will uphold the ideals of democracy, including the rights to freedom of speech and expression," ABS-CBN says, highlighting its commitment "to be in public service by providing news and information that matter to the Filipino, as we have been doing for the past decades".

The current fuss emerged earlier this month when local daily, *The Inquirer*, said ABS-CBN was "in a bind" after failing to have its legislative franchise approved be-

“ “ We believe that our government will uphold the ideals of democracy including the rights to freedom of speech and expression.”

fore the 16th Congress ended on June 6".

ABS-CBN responded by saying that it had opted for an early renewal application in September 2014. "But due to time constraints, ABS-CBN later decided to withdraw the application with the intent of seeking renewal in the 17th Congress," the corporation said.

The Inquirer said ABS-CBN was now

"looking down a more difficult road to getting a new, 25-year congressional franchise from the 17th Congress, especially in the face of its spat with President-elect Rodrigo Duterte".

The paper added that Duterte and his supporters were "unhappy about ABS-CBN's attacks against him during the campaign season".

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all3media ATF formats pitch picks shortlist judges

all3media America's chief executive, Greg Lipstone, heads up the panel of four judges who will select the shortlist for this year's first ATF Formats Pitch Competition in Singapore on 8 December.

The panel also includes Rachel Glaister, all3media International's U.K.-based EVP, press and marketing; Asif Zubairy, ITV's commissioning editor, entertainment; and Deborah Sargeant, chief creative officer, Second Star.

The winner of this year's inaugural contest will receive a S\$20,000/US\$14,700 prize from all3media International, comprising S\$3,500 cash and S\$16,500/worth of consultancy. Entries for the contest, which is open to all formats creators, close on 31 October 2016.

TeamTO opens Beijing office



Angelo Rules

French CGI studio TeamTO has opened its first office in Beijing. Feature film exec Shu Ye, who has worked on movies such as *Seven Swords* and *Curse of the Golden Flower*, will head the new China operation. TeamTO productions include *Angelo Rules*, eOne's *PJ Masks*, Disney's *Sofia the First* and Activision Blizzard's *Skylanders*.

I want...

A quick look at some of Asia's buyers' shopping list for this year.

Who	Buying	Rights
Nina Elavia Jaipuria Executive Vice President and Business Head (Kid's Cluster), Nickelodeon Viacom 18 Media 	Action* Animation Comedy* Entertainment Kids Japanese anime ... buys local and international content	Linear broadcast rights and on-demand rights for all platforms, including TV channels, websites, applications and/or any other platforms or services
Anil Nihalani Head, Connected Media/Toggle Mediacorp, Singapore	Arts Documentary Drama/Korean drama Education Entertainment Feature film Food/Lifestyle/Travel Formats/Reality Kids/Youth Japanese anime Music News Sports Sci-Fi 	Digital Mobile Online OTT
Sun Young Moon Vice President, Programming (National Geographic Channels and English Entertainment channels) Fox Networks Group (FNG) Asia 	Documentary Drama Education General entertainment* Factual* Feature film Formats Lifestyle Food Travel Reality ... buys only international content	Cable Satellite
Didi Cao International Content Acquisition Director Sohu, China	Animation Documentary Drama Entertainment Feature film Formats 	Digital Mobile Online
Sophia Yuen Programming Manager ITV (Programme strategy and acquisition for Asia, Middle East and Africa)	Documentary* Drama* Entertainment* Food Lifestyle/Travel Reality ... buys only international content	Linear Catch-up

*Buying more this year. Source: Buyers, ContentAsia

Clip art

Nickhil Jakatdar is working towards a time when the company he founded is no longer necessary. Meanwhile, he says, there's loads he can do to make video magic in bandwidth-challenged markets.

Vuclip Studios is ramping up original content production to about 10 hours a month, building on a maiden effort in India earlier this year with online series *What the Duck*.

A second season has been commissioned from a local production house in India and three or four new shows are in development right now.

Founder and chief executive, Nickhil Jakatdar, says the success of the cricket-based comedy show *What the Duck* has been encouraging.

"We wanted to see whether we had the capability to produce," he says of the move into originals.

Part of the effort to create its own intellectual property is using data insights to keep risk and costs low.

How low? Low. Jakatdar says online video budgets are way lower than television budgets, perhaps by a factor of 10.

The production initiative is built on data-based insights gleaned from the thousands of hours of third-party content that video delivery platform Vuclip – now majority owned by Hong Kong's PCCW Media – is already streaming, says Jakatdar.

Vuclip Studios was established eight and a half years ago after Jakatdar and a few of his best tech friends came up with a "problem statement" – "How do you provide the best possible mobile video experience for consumers for emerging markets?" – and started figuring out possible answers.

Today, Jakatdar leaps nimbly over the holes currently being poked in Asia's OTT growth story because of challenges such as under-developed broadband/network infrastructure and consumers ability to pay for streaming video.

By now, his compression solutions (the

official description is "dynamic adaptive transcoding technology") and micro-transaction savvy have been proven.

Vuclip has 10 million paying subscribers and 270+ content partners across Asia and the Middle East. Users in Malaysia and Indonesia are watching



“ 20% of people in emerging markets use mobile data. Between 70% and 80% have no clue what data even means.”

between 300 and 400 minutes of video on their smartphones a month. And new markets are being added at a rate of one a month.

Vuclip runs PCCW's Viu services in emerging markets such as Malaysia and Indonesia, where Viu launched at the end of May. Vuclip also offers video/content services to telcos across the region as either Vuclip-branded value-adds or as white label services.

PCCW Media operates Viu in markets with high-speed broadband/mobile and high smartphone penetration, such as Singapore and Hong Kong.

At the same time as eyeing the enormous potential, Jakatdar is open about the end game: an environment in which Vuclip, with all its promises of "an elegant, unbuffered user experience regardless of device or network" to lower-end users, is no longer necessary.

Over time, as consumers in developing markets grow comfortable with apps, they will migrate from Vuclip to Viu, he says.

The migration could be a decade away. Meanwhile, emerging markets

with mobile data newbies and starter smartphones remain Vuclip's sweet spot.

"The reason Vuclip will still be valid over five to seven years is because the penetration of data in these markets is low," Jakatdar says. Today 20% of people in emerging markets use mobile data. "Between 70% and 80% have no clue what data even means," he says.

Things will change – slowly. "They will get into data, but they will start with something simple. Data is still not affordable for them, and affordability will not go through the roof in five years. It will take time," he adds.

Vuclip's challenges are the same as everyone else's, including how much to charge (answer: micro sums, five or 10 cents rather than five or seven dollars), how to bill (answer: carrier billing), keeping users coming back, making the combo free/paid model work,

For now and maybe the next 10 years, the winds will be behind Vuclip's back. "There is still," he says, "a lot of penetration to be had".

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10 Years Ago This Week...

ContentAsia celebrated its 10th anniversary in March 2016. Among other things, we're marking the occasion by looking back (and maybe marvelling a bit at everything that's happened since) at what happened this week in 2006....

NEWS

- News Corp and China Mobile tie up in global media play
- Jakarta speculation mounts about Trans TV sale
- Product placement in China worth almost US\$125m
- Bloomberg revamps morning block as regional viewers rise
- CNN's Tom Mintier leads UBC's news ambitions in Thailand
- Doubts greet Vietnam's first home shopping channel
- New film law may make life tough for Vietnam's TV stations
- Giga offloads ADSL biz to Webs-TV in US\$18m deal

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Telco power turned on over Asia

Eight Asian telcos unite to offer one-stop content carriage

Programmers' way into the mobile market may have just got a little easier.

The full scale launch of Bridge Mobile – an alliance of eight telecommunications companies

across the region – opens up a one-stop route to mobile users in up to eight Asia Pacific markets. This means access to up to 80 million subscribers with one set of negotiations, a single deal, and a lead time of about five months.

Bridge Mobile – like much of the telecommunications world – isn't necessarily described in language common to traditional video content rights negotiators. With the exception, perhaps, of the content they think will work best on mobile – sports, entertainment, news.

Is it a platform provider like Astro, Hong Kong Cable or StarHub Cable Vision? No.

Will it produce or commission its own mobile content from independent production houses? Not right now. "We're not saying no," Bridge Mobile says. "It depends

on what will work. Right now we believe that a lot of the content that we are working on will work better if it comes from a brand recognisable by the end user."

Will it pay minimum guarantees for content? No, but commercial models are open to negotiation, with revenue share the telco industry's preferred option.

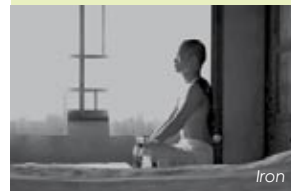
Is it a content aggregator? "Yes and no," says Seow Yoke Kong, vice president of technology and service development.

"Functionally, we perform like an aggregator but we like to think of ourselves as a service enabler allowing rights holders to work through us to the eight operators," Seow says.

This means content owners do not have to negotiate – or inte-

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Shorts stand tall in global hunt for new content



Short-form content, traditionally confined to niche and/or beginner filmmaker status, is the flavour of the moment as companies and corporations ramp up the quest to drive traffic to new platforms.

"This is the renaissance of the short film," says Doug Williams, Fremantle Media Japan MD and co-founder of the eight-year-old Tokyo-based Short Shorts Film Festival and the three-year-old Short Shorts Film Festival Asia. Both festivals ran earlier this month.

For the first time, the film fest has tied up with Jupiter TV in a broad partnership that includes

Continued on page 10

Singapore leads SE Asia into HD future

Singapore pulls Southeast Asia into its digital future this month with the region's first high-definition television trial. Commercial services are being scheduled for year-end.

Hopes are clearly that the FIFA World Cup, which is being aired in HD on Singapore's sole pay-TV platform, StarHub Cable Vision, will drive penetration of HD sets.

StarHub will follow the World Cup with two HD channels, and has scheduled the com-

mercial HD launch for year end. The two channels will feature documentaries and entertainment. Programming details for the new channels have not been released. StarHub, which is believed to be planning a total channel revamp after the World Cup, said it was still talking to distributors about HD content.

MediaCorp, the country's only licensed free-TV broadcaster, is using *Lord of The Rings: The*

Continued on page 9

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Wallace Huo

From page 1

Financials for the *Ruyi* acquisition have not been disclosed. Insiders say the show, starring Zhou Xun and Wallace Huo, will run to about 90 episodes. Revenues so far out of China are rumoured to have topped US\$200 million. Speculation is that mainland OTT rights alone may have reached RMB9 million/US\$1.4 million per episode.

Among other original content investments, FNG is involved in a remake of *My Date with a Vampire* (2017) as part of a broad production/co-production initiative that involves films, drama and TV series with both Chinese and Korean angles. Yim says the goal includes producing high-concept mini series with U.S. studio-equivalent production values.

As important for the broader industry beyond FNG is that StarHub is believed to be cleaning house for new services, including, possibly, a reorg and bump up of its HD offering. Details have not yet been disclosed.

Meanwhile, the six FNG channels going dark from 16 June are Nat Geo Music, Channel V, Channel V Mainland China, Channel V Taiwan, National Geographic Channel HD (the SD version remains) and Mandarin entertainment channel Xing Kong.

Another two FNG-distributed channels – BabyTV and Hindi service Life Ok – will fol-

low out the door on 30 June.

StarHub has been talking to programmers about winding down some channels since the end of 2015.

StarHub's decision is part of a broad re-negotiation of carriage agreements that has taken place in other Southeast Asian markets, such as Malaysia and Indonesia.

In Indonesia, the MNC Group's Indovision slashed an entire satellite transponder, leaving a dozen or so channels scrambling for a new home. Terms for many of the other channels were renegotiated.

For FNG's Chinese group, the increased investment in Chinese content for distribution outside China coincides with massive investment in original content creation by China's online platforms, including iQiyi and Youku Tudou.

Korea continues to be the other significant content force, with KBS series *Descendants of the Sun* being cited as the perfect example of content distribution harmony between China and Korea.

The *Descendants* success is pushing the industry into new habits, such as delivering the complete series well ahead of time to accommodate Chinese censorship regulations and still ensure a simultaneous release.

Editorial Director

Janine Stein
janine@contentasia.tv

Assistant Editor

Malena Amzah
malena@contentasia.tv

Research Manager

CJ Yong
cj@contentasia.tv

Editorial Research

Aqilah Yunus
aqilah@contentasia.tv

Design

Rae Yong

Associate Publisher

**(Americas, Europe) and VP,
International Business Development**

Leah Gordon
leah@contentasia.tv

Sales and Marketing (Asia)

Maslina Masron
mas@contentasia.tv

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